

APPLICATION FOR FULL PLANNING PERMISSION CASE OFFICER REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/05040
APPLICATION TYPE:	Full planning permission
SITE ADDRESS:	Showell Farm, Showell, Chippenham, SN15 2NU
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Proposed ground mounted solar array on paddock
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve

Date of site visit: 07.10.2026

PROPOSAL

Planning permission is sought for the installation of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array within a paddock associated with Showell Farm. The proposed development comprises 35 solar panels, each rated at 485W, mounted on dark metal frames.

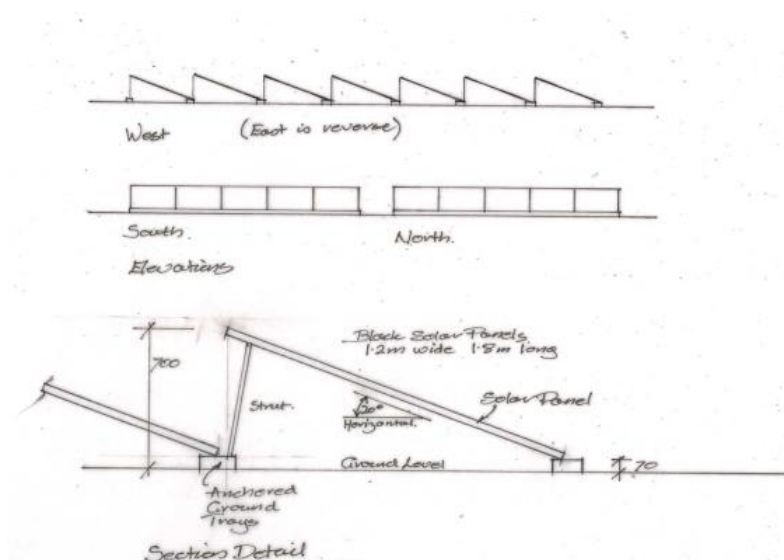
The solar array would be located within the paddock to the west of Showell Farm (approximately in the location shown in orange on the aerial view below) and would occupy an area measuring approximately 12.23m by 5.67m.



Below: view of the paddock where the panels would be sited, alongside the boundary wall:



The panels would be mounted above ground on anchored support frames and are shown to have a maximum height of approximately 1.3m above ground level – see extract of submitted elevations and section below:



SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The application site comprises a paddock associated with Showell Farm, located in the open countryside outside any defined settlement boundary. The site lies to the west of the main

farmstead and is not subject to any landscape designations. Whilst the application site itself is not designated, Showell Farmhouse together with a granary and a barn within the farmyard are listed buildings. The nearest heritage asset is Showell Farmhouse, located approximately 30m east of the proposed solar array.

Below: view of Showell Farm from the road. The paddock in which the panels would be sited is behind the farmhouse.



There are no public rights of way crossing or adjoining the application site. The paddock is currently used as ancillary land associated with the farm and no new vehicular access, hardstanding, buildings or external lighting are proposed as part of the development.

In terms of flood risk, the site is located within Flood Zone 1 and Environment Agency mapping indicates a low risk of flooding from rivers and surface water. However, groundwater mapping indicates that groundwater levels may be at or close to the ground surface, creating the potential for groundwater emergence and localised ponding within topographic low points.

PLANNING HISTORY

None that is relevant to this application

RELEVANT POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Development Plan:

The development plan for Wiltshire comprises the *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)* (*adopted January 2015*) and any made neighbourhood plans, which remains the principal statutory planning document guiding development across the county. In line with Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Though the development plan is considered as a whole, those parts deemed to be particularly relevant to this application are listed below:

The adopted *Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS)*, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 10 Spatial Strategy for the Chippenham Community Area
- Core Policy 41 Sustainable Construction and Low-Carbon Energy;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;

Draft Wiltshire Local Plan

At Full Council on 19 May 2026, the elected members of Wiltshire Council agreed to withdraw the emerging Wiltshire Local Plan. The said Plan has no material weight for the purposes of the application.

In accordance with Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2026, on 30th June 2026 Wiltshire Council published a notice of intention to prepare a new local plan for Wiltshire. The next stage is a Scoping Consultation which commences on 2nd September 2026. This plan is at a very early stage and currently carries no weight for decision making.

Neighbourhood Plan:

There is no Lacock Neighbourhood Plan at the time of writing.

Supplementary Planning Documents and other Guidance:

- Wiltshire Design Guide (adopted April 2024)
- National Design Guide

National Planning Policy:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

ISSUES

The main issues that need to be addressed in this case include:

- Whether the development is acceptable in principle
- Whether the scheme constitutes high quality design
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable impact upon the reasonable living conditions of the adjoining occupants
- Whether the scheme would preserve or enhance the historic environment
- Whether the scheme would have an acceptable landscape impact

- Are there any other planning issues raised by the development?

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The views of consultees are material considerations in the determination of the application. However, the decision-maker must exercise their own planning judgement. Where consultees raise concerns or recommend conditions, these have been considered and are addressed within the assessment section of this report.

WC Public Protection: No comments received

Lacock Parish Council: No objection

"Lacock Parish Council makes no objection in relation to this planning application."

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended), the application was publicised by way of:

- Neighbour notification letters sent to adjoining and nearby properties
- A site notice displayed near the site

These methods were used to inform interested parties and provide a period of 21 days for comments to be submitted.

At the time of writing no representations had been received.

ASSESSMENT

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states:

"If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purposes of any determination to be made under the planning Acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise."

In accordance with this statutory requirement, this application has been assessed against the relevant policies of the Development Plan, including the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and, where applicable, any made Neighbourhood Plans. Consideration has also been given to the policies of the NPPF (NPPF) as a material consideration in the assessment.

The assessment below considers each of the main issues identified above. Each topic is assessed in turn with reference to the relevant policy context, the evidence submitted, consultee responses, and all other material considerations, before a conclusion is reached.

Principle of Development

The application site lies outside the limits of development defined by the Wiltshire Core Strategy and is therefore located within the countryside. Core Policies 1 and 2 seek to direct growth towards the County's settlements in accordance with the spatial strategy.

The proposal does not comprise residential, commercial or other built development ordinarily associated with settlement growth. Instead, planning permission is sought for a modest ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array associated with the existing property.

Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy supports measures which contribute towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and encourage the generation of energy from renewable and low-carbon sources. Similarly, the climate change provisions of the NPPF support the transition to a low-carbon future and recognise the role renewable energy development can play in tackling climate change.

Policy S5 of the NPPF provides support for development involving engineering operations and infrastructure, including energy infrastructure, and advises that such development should be approved unless the benefits are substantially outweighed by any adverse effects when assessed against the policies of the Framework.

The principle of development is considered acceptable subject to the considerations below.

Design and Impact on the Character and Appearance of the Area

Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to achieve a high standard of design that responds positively to local character, context and distinctiveness.

Policies DP3-DP4 of the NPPF seek to ensure that development is well-designed, visually attractive, sustainable and responsive to its surroundings. Development should contribute positively to local character, create high quality places and support healthy and inclusive communities.

The proposal comprises a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array consisting of 35 panels supported on metal mounting frames. The array would occupy a relatively small area within an existing paddock associated with Showell Farm and would not involve the construction of any buildings, hardstanding, external lighting or other built infrastructure.

By virtue of its limited scale, low-profile design and siting within an existing paddock associated with the farmstead, the development would not appear unduly prominent or visually intrusive within its immediate surroundings. The proposal would represent a modest addition to the site and would not materially alter the established character of the area. Sited beyond the farm and its buildings, it would not be visible from any public areas.

The colour and appearance of the solar panels and supporting frame are typical of this form of development and are considered appropriate in the context of the proposed use. Overall, the proposal is considered to respond appropriately to its setting and would not result in unacceptable harm to the character or appearance of the area. The proposal therefore

accords with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Impact on Heritage Assets

From the point of view of the historic environment, the main statutory duties are set out within the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Section 66(1) requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings and any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Core Policy 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and their settings.

Core Policy 57 requires development to respond positively to local character and historic context through high quality design.

Policies HE4-HE10 of the NPPF recognise heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource and require proposals affecting heritage assets to be assessed having regard to their significance and the contribution made by their setting.

The application site lies within a paddock associated with Showell Farm. Showell Farmhouse, together with a granary and barn within the farmstead, are designated heritage assets. The proposed solar array would be located approximately 30m west of the farmhouse and would therefore form part of its wider setting.

The proposed solar array would introduce a modern feature within the wider setting of the listed buildings. However, by reason of its modest scale, low profile, location within an existing paddock associated with the farmstead, and the presence of existing boundary treatments and vegetation, the proposal would not adversely affect the way in which the significance of the listed buildings is experienced or understood. The proposal would therefore preserve the significance of the designated heritage assets and their settings.

Having undertaken this balancing exercise, it is considered that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh any heritage harm that may arise. The proposal therefore complies with Section 66(1) of the Act, Core Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant heritage provisions of the NPPF.

Amenity

Core Policy 57 (Point vii) of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires development to respect the amenity of existing occupants and ensure appropriate amenity levels for future residents.

Policies DP3-DP4 of the NPPF seek to secure high quality places that promote health, wellbeing and inclusive communities.

Policy L2d(ii) of the NPPF requires development to maintain safe access and egress for occupiers and users, and acceptable living standards for residents and neighbours in terms of access to daylight, sunlight, privacy and external amenity space

The proposal comprises a modest ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array within an existing paddock associated with Showell Farm. The development would not introduce any new residential accommodation, external lighting, significant traffic generation or other activities likely to result in material impacts upon neighbouring amenity. The array is located approximately 30m west of Showell Farmhouse and the nearest neighbouring residential properties, outside of the farm complex are Showell Cottages, located approximately 150m to the north-east of the site.

The Council's Public Protection Officer was consulted on the application but no response had been received at the time of writing this report. Having regard to the scale and nature of the proposal, together with its separation from neighbouring residential properties, it is not considered that the development would give rise to unacceptable impacts in respect of noise, disturbance, odour, vibration, loss of privacy or other amenity considerations.

Whilst some short-term activity would occur during installation of the solar array, this would be temporary in nature and, particularly in the context of wider development activity occurring in the surrounding area, would not result in significant adverse impacts upon residential amenity. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to accord with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

Climate Change / Carbon Impact Section

Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to minimise emissions and support the transition to a low-carbon economy. Policies CC1-CC3 of the NPPF support the transition to a climate-resilient and low-carbon future and require development to contribute towards climate change mitigation and adaptation, including through sustainable design, energy efficiency, the efficient use of resources and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

The proposal comprises the installation of a ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array to generate renewable energy. The development would support reductions in carbon emissions and contribute towards the transition to a low-carbon future through the generation of electricity from a renewable source.

Whilst the contribution of the proposal would be modest in scale, it would nevertheless provide a clear environmental benefit and would be consistent with the objectives of Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the climate change objectives of the NPPF.

Landscape and Visual Impact

Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy seeks to protect, conserve and enhance landscape character and quality and requires development to respond appropriately to its landscape setting.

Policy N2 of the NPPF seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment and requires development to take account of landscape character, local distinctiveness and the natural beauty of the countryside.

The application site comprises an existing paddock associated with Showell Farm located within the open countryside on the edge of Chippenham. The proposed solar array would be positioned within the paddock to the west of the farmstead.

Whilst the development would introduce a new feature into the landscape, the array is modest in scale and would be viewed in the context of the existing farmstead and surrounding development – most notably the Siemens development, which can be seen in the photograph taken on site, below:



Visibility of the proposal from the wider area is limited by existing boundary vegetation, field hedgerows and built form associated with the farm. The proposed location behind the existing farm buildings also reduces its prominence in public views.

The proposal would not result in the loss of important landscape features and would not adversely affect the character, quality or distinctiveness of the surrounding landscape. Any visual effects would be localised and limited in extent.

Accordingly, it is considered that the proposal would conserve the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape and accords with Core Policy 51 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and Policy N2 of the NPPF.

Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposal benefits from the small sites exemption to the statutory Biodiversity Gain condition and therefore Biodiversity Net Gain is not required in this instance.

PLANNING BALANCE AND CONCLUSION

The application site lies outside any defined settlement boundary and is therefore located within the countryside. However, the proposal does not comprise development that would undermine the spatial strategy of the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Instead, it seeks permission for a modest ground-mounted solar photovoltaic array associated with the existing property.

The proposal would contribute towards the generation of renewable energy and support the transition to a low-carbon future, objectives which are supported by Core Policy 41 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the climate change and renewable energy provisions of the NPPF. The proposal is also consistent with Policy S5 of the NPPF, which provides support for energy infrastructure where any adverse effects do not outweigh the benefits of development.

The proposal has been carefully assessed in respect of its impact on the character and appearance of the area, landscape character, neighbouring amenity and the significance of nearby heritage assets. For the reasons set out in this report, it is considered that the development would not result in unacceptable adverse impacts in these respects.

Taking all material considerations into account, the identified benefits of the proposal, including the generation of renewable energy and contribution towards climate change mitigation, outweigh any limited adverse effects arising from the development. The proposal is therefore considered to accord with the development plan when read as a whole and with the relevant provisions of the NPPF.

RECOMMENDATION: That Planning Permission be GRANTED, subject to conditions:

1. Time Limit

The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Approved Plans

The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Block and Location Plan 2692/1 received 20 July 2026

Plan, Elevations & Section for Solar Array 2692/2 received 20 July 2026

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning