

REPORT FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	15 TH January 2020
Application Number	19/10043/FUL
Site Address	Salt Store and Gritter Garage Netton SP4 6AT
Proposal	Demolition of the existing salt store building from 1500, and construction of larger salt store of 2500 tonnes capacity. Extend existing 6-bay vehicle store to a 10-bay facility (additional bays to allow for deeper plan for snow plough attachments to vehicles). Welfare building to be extended to provide increased storage space accessed from vehicle bays.
Applicant	Wiltshire Council
Town/Parish Council	DURNFORD
Electoral Division	Bourne and Woodford Valley Cllr M Hewitt
Grid Ref	415158 136427
Type of application	Full Planning
Case Officer	Lynda King

Reason for the application being considered by Committee

This application comes to the Strategic Committee at the request of Cllr Hewitt to enable it to be considered alongside Application 19/09327/FUL (Erection of two new factory facilities and associated access road, parking, service yard and refuse storage areas, for Naish Felts and Wallgate Washrooms, land adj Salt Depot, High Post) elsewhere on this agenda. The proposal is deemed appropriate for consideration by the Strategic Planning Committee as the provision of this facility is part of a county wide approach.

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to assess the merits of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation that the application be approved.

2. Report Summary

This application proposes the expansion of facilities and buildings on the Wiltshire Council Salt Depot at High Post, to the south of Amesbury. The reason for the development is to facilitate the expanded fleet of gritting vehicles operated by Wiltshire Council from this site in times of adverse weather conditions by way of providing additional parking bays for the vehicles and an enlarged Salt Barn to store the salt needed to grit the County's highways. A small extension to the administrative building on the site is also proposed.

The expansion of the parking bay building increases the capacity of the site from 6 vehicles to 10 and allows the capacity for snow plough attachments to be made to vehicles.

The new Salt Barn is significantly larger than the existing and has a different orientation on the site to allow for ease of access and protection from the prevailing weather.

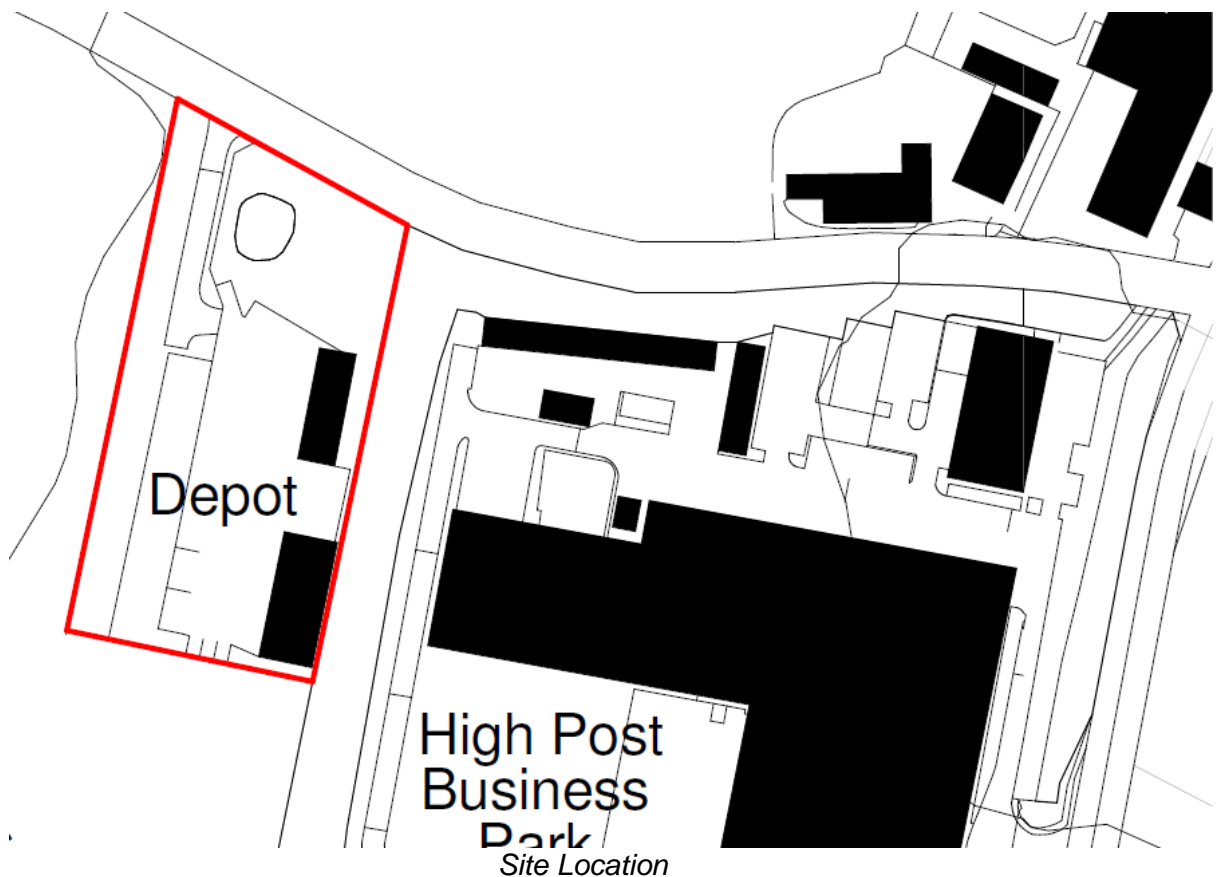
No expansion of the site boundary is proposed, and the site will remain in seasonal use only. The proposal provides the opportunity to further landscape the site to enable it to be assimilated into the wider landscape more satisfactorily, and to improve the lighting of the site to reduce the level of illumination in the future.

This application needs to be viewed with application 19/09327/FUL which proposes the construction of new factory premises on land to the south as the access to the proposed new site uses the existing private access off the highway serving the Salt Depot. There is a public Weighbridge that is affected by the adjacent proposal that needs to be considered.

3. Site Description

The site lies to the west of High Post, to the south of Amesbury. It is accessed off the minor road that serves the Woodford Valley, close to the traffic light-controlled junction with the A345 Salisbury to Amesbury road.

The application site lies adjacent to the High Post Business Park, which has a very substantial planted bund around it screening the site from the east and south. To the north and west is open farmland. There are other commercial developments in the vicinity, mainly to the north.



The site currently accommodates the following elements related to the operational requirements:

- Welfare and offices within a single storey building attached to the vehicle store.
- A single storey dual pitch building structure accommodating vehicular garaging space.
- A single storey mono pitch building structure accommodating salt storage.
- Fuel pumps and associated underground and surface tanks,
- A vehicle washdown area.
- Gulley emptying bays.
- A weighbridge.
- Drainage filtration system, including reed beds to the northern end of the site.
- 8no staff parking bays.

The majority of the site is covered in hardstanding, with some grassed area, and with relatively recent hedging to the along the western boundary.

4. Planning History

S/2008/8002 - Erection of new Salt Store Depot – approved with conditions

5. The Proposal

Wiltshire Council owns a number of Highway Depots across the county containing a salt store activity. Currently the council is well provided for in the east of the county whereas historic infrastructure exists in the west. The Council has identified a potential need for more efficient locations and distribution of its 34 gritter vehicle fleet along with the salt storage capacity. Therefore, new and re-configured sites are required at various geographical locations with the ability to better deliver gritting services across the county.

The council has reviewed its assets and has determined that it needs to concentrate facilities in three of its sites, namely Warminster, Royal Wootton Bassett and High Post. Three of the council's salt stores, Semington, Mere & Warminster are under review by the Environment Agency (EA) because they do not comply with current requirements as they are not roofed and are sited on permeable surfaces and the run-off is entering water courses. Therefore the storage of salt on these sites is currently being reduced with a view to looking forward to new appropriate facilities.

The decision has been made to use the identified sites at Warminster, High Post and Royal Wootton Bassett. In this context, the depot at High Post forms part of a wider strategy, with a current planning application under consideration for the extension of the Royal Wootton Bassett capacity from 1000 to 2000 tonnes capacity (19/10042/FUL).

The application proposes: -

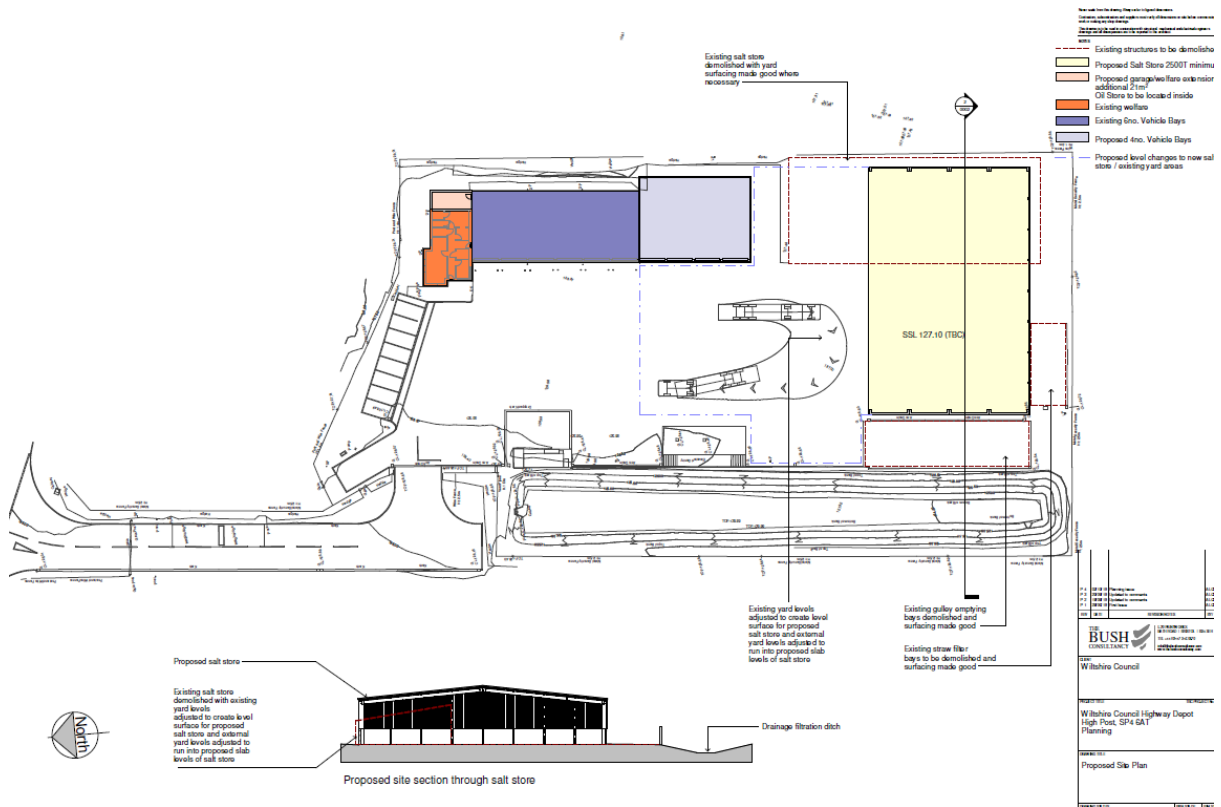
- (a) a small extension to the existing welfare and office building to provide a store room accessed from the vehicle store.
- (b) demolition of the existing salt store building of 1500 tonnes capacity, and construction of a new salt store building of 2500 tonnes capacity.
- (c) extend existing 6 bay vehicle store to a 10 bay facility (additional bays to allow for deeper plan for snow plough attachments to vehicles).

The development also involves works to the site as a whole, including removing the gully emptying bays and straw filter bays which are now not operationally required at this site.

The extension to the welfare building is to the rear of the existing single storey building and is 21sqm in extent with a flat roof to match the existing.

The additional 4 vehicle parking bays are an extension to the existing garage block and the main elevation matches the design, materials and height of the existing building. It is deeper to the rear to allow for snow ploughs to be attached to the gritter lorries if necessary.

The replaced Salt Store building is in the same location as the existing but is turned through 90 degrees so that the open side is away from the prevailing weather. It is a larger footprint than the existing building, at 36.5m x 25.8m and 10.1m high, compared to the existing at approx. 30m x 12m and 6.3m high. The ridge height of the new building has been kept to a minimum, with it's height being dictated by the need to achieve a certain eaves level to enable the barn to be accessed by the vehicles.



Proposed Layout

Materials to the proposed buildings have been selected that match the existing palette of finishes to the current buildings:

- Timber cladding to the walls of the welfare accommodation.
- Flat roof membrane finish to the roof of the extended welfare accommodation.
- Timber cladding to the walls of the garage building extension.
- Profiled metal cladding to the roof of the garage building extension with translucent rooflights.
- Timber cladding to the walls of the new salt storage building.

- Profiled metal cladding to the roof of the new salt storage building with translucent rooflights.
- External materials to the yard will be concrete slab construction to any areas of the amended yard.

No alterations to the access to the site from the highway are proposed, although there are internal circulation amendments due to the access arrangements with the proposed development of the adjacent site for Naish Felts and Wallgate Washrooms new factory units. This application (19/09327/FUL) is considered elsewhere on this agenda.

The proposal also includes alterations to the external lighting of the site to significantly reduce the amount of external glare and light pollution from the premises when in operation. The lighting strategy proposed to replace a number of the existing lighting columns which have non-directional lights and to replace them with LED directional lighting to illuminate the working areas only, and not the surrounding area. A number of existing security lights will remain, but other lighting on the new buildings will now all be directed only at the working area and will be kept switched off when the site is not in operation.

6. Local Planning Policy

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan for an area, except where material considerations indicate otherwise. The development plan in this case comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) and saved policies from the Salisbury Local Plan (2003).

Wiltshire Core Strategy –

CP1 – Settlement Strategy

CP2 – Delivery Strategy

CP3 – Infrastructure Requirements

CP4 – Amesbury Area Strategy

CP51 - Landscape

CP57 – Ensuring high quality design and place shaping

CP58- Heritage

Salisbury Local Plan-

C6 – Special Landscape Area

PS1 Community Facilities and Services

NPPF - Paragraph 11 sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Development plan proposals that accord with the development plan should be approved without delay. Where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out-

of-date then permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of approval would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the NPPF or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted. Where development is found to be wholly or partially inconsistent with the provisions of the Development Plan, then the decision maker must determine whether there are other material considerations that should influence the decision.

7. Summary of consultation responses

Durnford Parish Council - The Parish object to the application on the following grounds:-

- 1) Impact of additional traffic on the Woodford Valley, coupled with the impact of traffic generated by the proposed adjacent development 19/09327/FUL, would be unacceptable
- 2) The proposed new buildings will not fit well into the landscape and will be clearly visible from the surrounding area and the salt store is utilitarian and ugly. The landscaping around the existing development is poor and much more needs to be provided to screen this proposal as well as the existing.
- 3) Light Pollution. The existing Salt Depot is a source of light pollution and the Parish can see nothing in the current proposal that will significantly improve on this situation.

In conclusion the Parish states that: - *This area of Wiltshire is under constant pressure for inappropriate development, the Energy Storage Facility (luckily refused by Planning Committee and Planning Inspector), Naish's twin factories and this scheme are all submitted with little or no real consideration for the quality of the countryside and those who live or come to enjoy the peace and tranquility that exists here. It is ironic that there is much quoting of the quality of the landscape and its character whilst attempting to justify imposing a "larger mass and height of building" on to it. We again request that you do not consider this application in isolation and that you do not allow the increase in industrial development in a rural environment.*

The detailed comments from the Parish Council can be viewed in full at Appendix A

Woodford Parish Council – the Parish's general objections are as follows:

- 1)The proposal will contribute to increasing traffic within an already overstretched road system in the Woodford Valley.
- 2) Some of the proposed replacement buildings are substantially larger and higher than the existing, the screening for which is completely inadequate.
- 3) The existing Industrial developments at High Post generate substantial light pollution as does the existing Salt Store. The proposed development will make this situation worse.

In conclusion the Parish comment that: -

We believe that the Salt Store redevelopment could be acceptable on its own provided that adequate screening is installed and potential additional light pollution properly addressed and as increased traffic will not be as substantial as would be caused by

19/09327/FUL on the neighbouring site. The Salt Store development might be acceptable in these circumstances, but not if allowed in conjunction with the two factory developments adjacent.

The detailed comments from the Parish Council can be viewed in full at appendix B

Wiltshire Highways - The swept path drawing submitted confirms that there will continue to be adequate space for the large highway vehicles to turn within the site and the vehicle access is not proposed to be altered as part of this application. Therefore, I wish to raise no highway objection.

Wiltshire Council Landscape Officer – Support subject to conditions. Please include standard landscape conditions. The applicant should maximise the opportunity for onsite planting by including hedgerow trees within the new hedgerow.

Wiltshire Council Drainage – Supports the proposal subject to conditions.

8. Publicity

A site notice was erected on the site with the expiry date for comments of 28th November. Neighbour notification letters were sent to adjacent commercial units.

Three letters of objection have been received in respect of this proposal and the comments raised are summarised below:

- The original scheme was approved despite the development being contrary to existing Local Plan policies, and the study that justified the development must be flawed as the new stores are unsuitable or inadequate for purpose.
- The new buildings are much more prominent and intrusive in the Special Landscape Area due to their increased height and bulk.
- The existing landscaping scheme is inadequate, and the new scheme makes no proposals to improve it. The landscaping around the site should be significantly improved and should include trees that will quickly grow to a substantial height.
- There is significant light pollution from the existing use.
- There is no proper traffic plan, and this development would lead to in excess of 40% more traffic using the Woodford Valley.
- No benefit to local communities.
- This application must be considered with 19/09327/FUL (the development proposed on the adjacent site)

9. Planning Considerations

Section 70(2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 require that the determination of planning applications must be made in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

a. Principle of development

The initial grant of planning permission for the Salt Depot, under application number S/2008/8002 in 2008, considered the strategic need for a salt and gritting depot to be located in this sensitive landscape location outside of any site allocated for development. It was considered that the need for such a facility in this location, coupled with the low impact design of the buildings and the landscaping to screen the site was sufficient justification to grant consent, subject to suitable conditions.

Whilst the site remains outside of the defined limits of development (Core Policies 1 and 2), saved policy PS1 from the Salisbury Local Plan permits proposals which redevelop or enlarge existing facilities which are located outside settlements where the proposed development would take place within the existing boundaries of the site. As such, the principle of the proposed works is considered acceptable.

The Parish Councils and local objectors have commented that this application should be considered in tandem with the proposed erection of 2 factory units on adjoining land (application 19/09327/FUL) which is reported elsewhere on this agenda, and that the cumulative impacts of both proposals warrant the refusal of planning permission. However, it is accepted planning practice that each application is considered on its individual merits, and unless the impacts of the two applications combined would be so severe, then each will be considered as free-standing proposals. It should also be noted that the two schemes are not dependent on each other for their development. Both are free-standing applications which can be carried out independently of each other, and as Members are aware, the grant of planning permission is no guarantee that the development will actually take place. This strengthens the argument to consider each on its individual merits.

It is also a relevant material consideration that the works will enable the Council to deliver the necessary precautionary service to seek to keep roads open and safe during the winter period, and that it will help rectify the unacceptable environmental impacts of the current methods of salt storage across the county.

b. Site specific considerations

As has been set out above, the site is located in a Special Landscape Area and due consideration needs to be given to the impact of this proposal on the landscape quality of the area. However it should be noted that this is a local non-statutory designation Saved from the Salisbury Local Plan, not a national designation.

The impact of the proposed extension to the welfare building, which is set to the rear of the existing flat roofed building, will have no impact on the landscape and is acceptable. The extension to the vehicle parking bays will be a continuation of the existing low-level structure and is seen against the backdrop of the substantial screening around the High Post Business Park and again will have little visual impact in the wider area.

The new Salt Store, however, is a bulkier and higher building than the one it replaces and will project closer to the open western boundary than the existing structure. It is

designed to be agricultural in appearance and the materials to be used are timber cladding for the walls and profile metal sheeting for the roofs, to match the existing buildings on the site. The building has a low profile, with the highest point of the ridge closer to the landscaped belt to the east around High Post. It is considered that due to the form of this building and materials to be used, it will not be prominent in the wider landscape and therefore is not contrary to the provisions of Policy CP 51.

This application looks to address the existing, inadequate, lighting arrangements at the site which significantly add to the visual impact of the depot in the landscape, and which is raised by objectors to the scheme. At present there are a series of lamp columns around the site which do not have directional lighting fitted to them, and the lights therefore illuminate the night sky as well as the working areas of the depot. It is proposed to remove these columns and replace them with directional lights attached to the buildings, which are therefore lower than at present, and that these lights will only be operational when the depot is in use and will be turned off at other times. There are existing security lights around the welfare building, and it is proposed that only those immediately outside the entrance to that building will remain on at all times, and others will be operated by motion sensors. All other lights on the site will only be switched on when the site is in operation and the light conditions require it. The estimate is that the lights will be switched off for about 80% of the year.

Objectors to the development have raised the fact that the existing landscaping around the site is not very effective, and the Landscape Officer has requested that a landscaping condition be attached to any permission, which also requires that suitable trees be planted in the hedgerows to minimise the impact of the development on the wider landscape. It is considered that this condition is necessary.

There is no objection to the proposal on road safety grounds from Highways Officers. The proposal increases the number of gritter lorries that can operate from the site from 6 to 10, although the application form does not indicate that there will be an increase in the number of staff working from the premises. This site is not in use all year round, it is only operated when the weather conditions are such that the County's roads need to be gritted and cleared for public safety reasons, and this is no more than 5 months of the year on average. It is not envisaged, therefore, that the development will lead to a significant increase in traffic movements in the area, and that the impact on vehicles passing through the Woodford Valley will be slight. This level of usage would not warrant the refusal of planning permission for the development.

10. Conclusion (The Planning Balance)

This application proposes the construction of new facilities at an existing Salt and Gritting Depot to enable this necessary function serving the County's roads and keeping them safe for users to operate at an optimal level and therefore there is a strategic need for this development.

The proposal is for the expansion of facilities on an existing site, and it does not expand beyond the existing site boundaries. It will have a greater impact on the wider landscape than the existing operation due to the increase in scale and bulk of the buildings, but

with a more substantial landscaping scheme, and an improved lighting strategy the impact of the development will be mitigated. The buildings and materials to be used have also been chosen to minimise the visual impact of the development.

The additional traffic generated by the development can be accommodated with the existing access arrangements, and there is sufficient space within the site to accommodate all the vehicles likely to be using the area. There is no objection from the Highways Officers to the proposal.

It is therefore concluded that this proposal is acceptable and is not contrary to any national or local policies that would prevent the granting of planning permission.

RECOMMENDATION

Grant – subject to the following conditions:

1. 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. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Those contained in Appendix B Section 6.2 of the Design and Access Statement dated October 2019 submitted with the planning application.

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

3. The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall accord with those set out in the application form.

REASON: In the interests of visual amenity and the character and appearance of the area.

4. No development shall commence on site until a scheme of landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the details of which shall include the provision of suitable hedgerow trees.

REASON: The application contained insufficient information to enable this matter to be considered prior to granting planning permission and the matter is required to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority before development commences in order that the development is undertaken in an acceptable manner, to ensure a satisfactory landscaped setting for the development.

5. The lighting strategy shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown on plan no. 7642/E/200 P1 dated Oct 2019 and shall be implemented within 12 months of the salt store being first brought into use.

REASON: To protect the character and appearance of the area and to minimise pollution of the night skies.

6. No development shall commence on site until a scheme for the discharge of surface water from the site including SuDS (sustainable drainage systems) and all third-party approvals, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Scheme details shall include any required off-site capacity improvements needed to allow the site to be served, and to include a programme allowing sufficient time for the delivery of any required improvements.

REASON: To comply with Core Policy 67: Flood Risk within the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015) and to ensure that the development can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk to others.

7. The salt store shall not be first brought into use until surface water drainage, including any required off-site capacity improvements to allow the site to be served, have been constructed in accordance with the approved scheme.

REASON: To comply with Core Policy 67: Flood Risk within the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015) and to ensure that the development can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk to others.