

TECHNICAL NOTE				VELOCITY	
Client	Sustainable Amesbury			Page No.	1 of 7
Project	Solstice Park Extension - Objection			Project No.	21/079
Subject	Transport Objection			Document No	SPO001
Prepared By	CG	Authorised By	CG	Date	February 2022

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 NOTE PURPOSE

- 1.1.1 This technical note has been produced to support an objection by Sustainable Amesbury to proposed development plans for an extension to Solstice Park, Amesbury, which have been submitted for consideration in the Wiltshire Local Plan Review.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 1.2.1 The development proposals focus on new industrial and distribution employment space to the east of the existing Solstice Park business park on a greenfield 63.64 hectare site. **Figure 1-1** shows the location of the site.

**Figure 1-1: Site Location and Local Context**



Image source: Google Earth



TECHNICAL NOTE				VELOCITY	
Client	Sustainable Amesbury			Page No.	2 of 7
Project	Solstice Park Extension - Objection			Project No.	21/079
Subject	Transport Objection			Document No	SPO001
Prepared By	CG	Authorised By	CG	Date	February 2022

## 2 TECHNICAL ANALYSIS

### 2.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.0.1 The further extension of Solstice Park, Amesbury, would be inappropriate in transport terms for the following key reasons:

1. The site is poorly located for local and regional distribution, as set out within the framework of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 Freight Strategy (March 2011).
2. We forecast the vast majority of employees (c.80%) would not live in Amesbury, would not have realistic options to travel on foot, by bicycle, or by public transport, and therefore the location is inherently unsustainable in transport terms and development would be contrary to the stated aims of paragraph 105 of the NPPF.
3. The existing rat running through the Solstice Park exit from the A303 is of concern to National Highways (formerly Highways England) and is not conducive to the safe and efficient expansion of logistics operations.
4. Significant additional delay and congestion is forecast during the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down improvement works.

2.0.2 Each of these points is expanded upon in the sections below.

### 2.1 POOR LOCATION

2.1.1 Section 2.6 of the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026 Freight Strategy (March 2011) [WLTPFS], describes advisory routes and sets out:

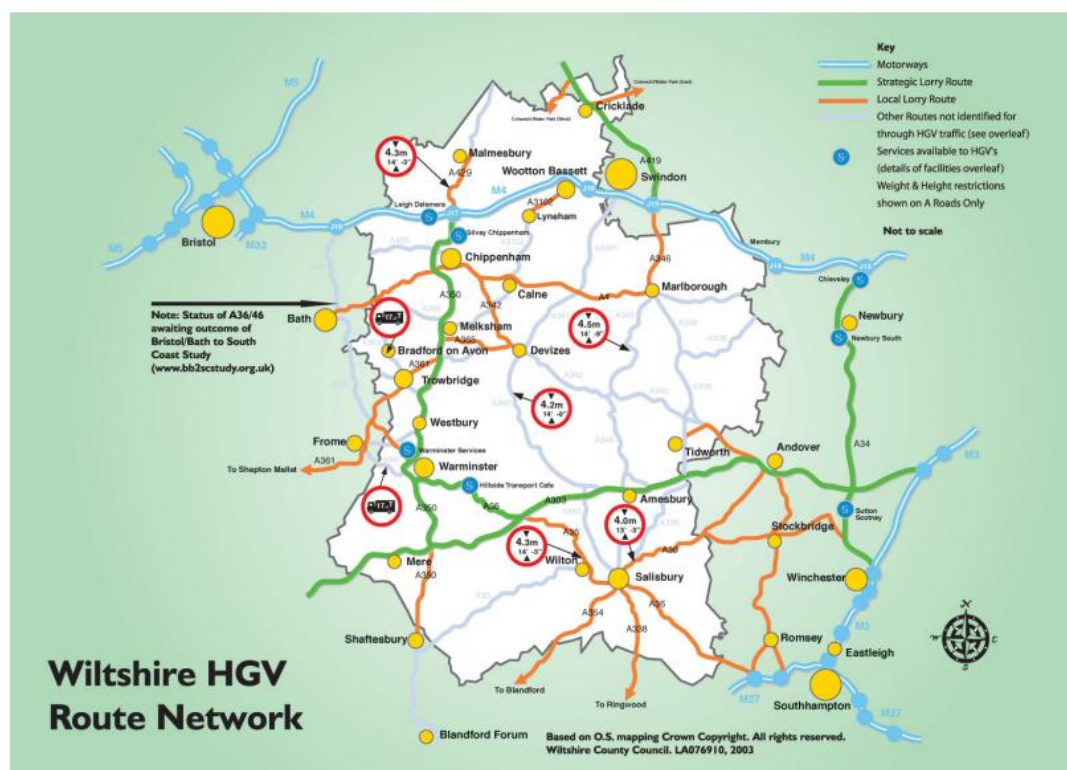
*“Since the first LTP, Wiltshire Council has promoted advisory freight routes where preferred routings for road freight have been encouraged. Drivers wishing to pass through the county without stopping are encouraged to use the M4, A303, A350 or A34. These routes (excluding the A34) coincide with the highest levels of freight traffic currently found on the county’s network and are in accordance with the Wiltshire Structure Plan Policy T10...”*

2.1.2 The WLTPFS provides a diagram of the “current advisory freight routes”, which is reproduced, overleaf. As can be seen from the diagram of the Wiltshire HGV Route Network, Amesbury is not well connected to the strategic HGV network, with the exception of the London radial A303 corridor. Direct routes north and south of Amesbury to other parts of the county and beyond are not identified for through HGV traffic.



TECHNICAL NOTE				VELOCITY4	
Client	Sustainable Amesbury			Page No.	3 of 7
Project	Solstice Park Extension - Objection			Project No.	21/079
Subject	Transport Objection			Document No	SPO001
Prepared By	CG	Authorised By	CG	Date	February 2022

## Current advisory freight routes



2.1.3 In terms of reducing unnecessary or undesirable HGV mileage, Amesbury is in just about the worst possible location within the HGV network, almost exactly halfway between the two appropriate locations for intensifying HGV distribution, the A3030/A36/A350 triangle to the west and Andover / the A3030/A34 corridors to the east.

2.1.4 The WLTPFS states at paragraph 1.2 of its introduction:

*"...a balance has to be found between the efficient distribution of freight and the effect that this distribution has on the society it serves. There is a need to maintain economic vibrancy and growth, with the realisation that we have to transport our goods and services in the most sustainable way. The council recognises this and takes seriously the need to achieve a more sustainable distribution of freight that balances the needs of the economy, the environment and society."*

2.1.5 It goes on to say at paragraph 1.7

*"The implications of freight traffic are a significant influence in setting spatial planning policy, and a regular consideration in development control. In policy terms, core strategies guide new development towards the most appropriate locations, and provide the framework within which individual planning decisions are reached. Alignment with the freight strategy is an important consideration. The development control process is a vital tool that helps ensure development is properly located. The ability of the local road network to accommodate development that generates and/or attracts freight traffic is a compelling factor in determining the suitability of any proposals."*





TECHNICAL NOTE				VELOCITY	
Client	Sustainable Amesbury			Page No.	4 of 7
Project	Solstice Park Extension - Objection			Project No.	21/079
Subject	Transport Objection			Document No	SPO001
Prepared By	CG	Authorised By	CG	Date	February 2022

2.1.6 Paragraph 2.13 of the WLTPFS states:

*"...Journeys that have a delivery or a starting point within the county should attempt to make the minimum use of the access routes to enable deliveries or to reach the local and strategic lorry routes for the continuation of the journey."*

2.1.7 The proposed extension to Solstice Park cannot reasonably fulfil a role as a regional distribution centre, in accordance with current strategic transport policies, due to its poor connectivity north and south. Distributors would inevitably send their vehicles along the shortest most cost effective routes, using the A345 and other roads that are specifically identified as being inappropriate for the distribution of HGV movements. This would lead to unacceptable safety, congestion, noise and vibration impacts on existing users of these roads and residents living on them.

2.1.8 In addition to the general inappropriateness of Solstice Park traffic using the A345, there is the more specific problem of the lack of highway capacity, as identified in the Wiltshire Local Plan Transport Review (January 2021, prepared by the consultant Atkins). The Review shows (in Figure 3-10 of the Atkins report, reproduced below), that routes through Amesbury and into Salisbury will be operating in excess of capacity (i.e. any additional traffic will worsen already unacceptable levels of queuing and delay).

**ATKINS**  
Member of the SNC Landon Group

Figure 3-10 - Impacts of mitigation in Salisbury and Amesbury

With Local Plan (Do-Minimum)

With Local Plan Mitigation (Do-Something)



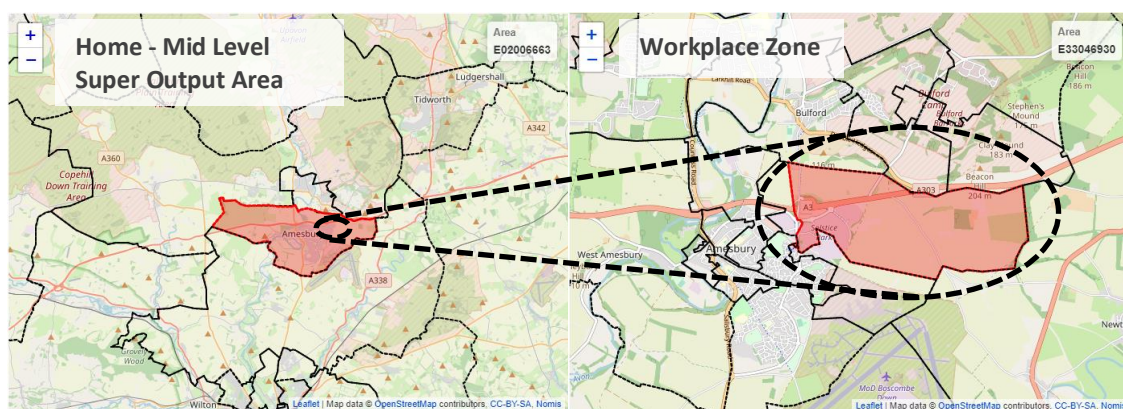
Impacts forecast by traffic volume to road capacity ratio (V/C%), AM peak period (08:00-09:00)



TECHNICAL NOTE				VELOCITY	
Client	Sustainable Amesbury			Page No.	5 of 7
Project	Solstice Park Extension - Objection			Project No.	21/079
Subject	Transport Objection			Document No	SPO001
Prepared By	CG	Authorised By	CG	Date	February 2022

## 2.2 UNSUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT TRAVEL PATTERNS

2.2.1 The proportion of Solstice Park employees living locally (living within the area immediately around Amesbury as shown in the panel, below left; and working in the Workplace zone shown in the panel, below right) is approximately 22%, with 78 out of 345 employees living within Amesbury (based on 2011 Census data).



2.2.2 It is likely, therefore that any expansion would likely result in nearly 80% of employment trips coming from origins other than Amesbury, where it would be unrealistic to expect travel to occur on foot, by bicycle or by public transport. Travel will therefore be predominantly by car, adding to the existing congestion issues on the local highway network, and contrary to Paragraph 105 of the NPPF, which states:

*“The planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making.”*

## 2.3 SOLSTICE PARK RAT RUNNING

2.3.1 National Highways (then Highways England) identifies in its A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Modelling Report (October 2018) that:

*“Approximately 21% of A303 westbound traffic was observed to divert from the A303 at either Solstice Park or Countess roundabout and use the local road network before re-joining the A303. The majority of these, approximately 13%, were observed to use the local road network through north Amesbury before re-joining the A303. A further 8% were observed to divert from the A303 and use The Packway, before re-joining the A303. Approximately 10% of the observed traffic using The Packway on the August Friday (10:00-19:00), had diverted off the A303 before re-joining the A303 past Stonehenge.”*



TECHNICAL NOTE				VELOCITY	
Client	Sustainable Amesbury			Page No.	6 of 7
Project	Solstice Park Extension - Objection			Project No.	21/079
Subject	Transport Objection			Document No	SPO001
Prepared By	CG	Authorised By	CG	Date	February 2022

2.3.2 The identification of existing rat-running through Amesbury leads to the conclusion that any additional traffic added at Solstice Park extension would either: travel on the A303, increasing congestion there and causing more existing traffic to divert and rat run through Amesbury; or, more likely, the Solstice Park traffic would itself rat-run through Amesbury, to avoid the congestion of the A303 approach to the Countess roundabout. In either eventuality, the increase of rat-running traffic through Amesbury, will increase congestion, pollution, noise and severance, compromising pedestrian and cyclist safety and leading to lower health outcomes for local residents.

## 2.4 A303 AMESBURY TO BERWICK DOWN IMPROVEMENT WORKS

2.4.1 National Highways Identifies that should the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down improvement get the go ahead, the construction programme will be 5 years.

2.4.2 National Highways advises that:

*“Traffic flows on the A303 will be maintained throughout the duration of the works, except for very occasional overnight closures to facilitate tie-ins between the new and existing road. There may also be closures for safety reasons during certain construction operations, such as off-loading large items of plant and equipment.”* and *“Even though construction of the tunnel may take up to 5 years, we will aim to complete and open the Winterbourne Stoke bypass and Countess flyover as soon as efficiently possible, to bring benefits to local communities at the earliest opportunity.”* Source: A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down “Improving journeys, reuniting the Stonehenge landscape (March 2019).

2.4.3 Irrespective of the best efforts of National Highways there will inevitably be additional disruption, congestion and delay on the A303 in the immediate vicinity of Amesbury. As there are no acceptable alternative HGV routes in the Wiltshire HGV Route Network serving Amesbury, all HGV traffic located at Solstice Pak, will a) be severely inconvenienced, and b) be very likely to make use of local connecting roads, inappropriate for intensification of HGV traffic.

2.4.4 During these five years the temporary traffic management of the A303 traffic will be significant, introducing delays and congestion that is likely to make it far more desirable for longer distance traffic to use the M4 or M3/M27/A36 or A31 corridors to circumnavigate the disruption. None of these routes can be served by a distribution centre located in Amesbury.



TECHNICAL NOTE				VELOCITY	
Client	Sustainable Amesbury			Page No.	7 of 7
Project	Solstice Park Extension - Objection			Project No.	21/079
Subject	Transport Objection			Document No	SPO001
Prepared By	CG	Authorised By	CG	Date	February 2022

## 3 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1.1 This technical note has been produced to support an objection by Sustainable Amesbury to proposed development plans for an extension to Solstice Park, Amesbury, which have been submitted for consideration in the Wiltshire Local Plan Review.
- 3.1.2 Our analysis demonstrates four significant areas of transport objection, where potentially severe environmental, safety and highway capacity and routing issues combine with an incompatibility with the directions of the NPPF, namely:
1. The site has no appropriate connections north or south on the Wiltshire HGV Route Network, and is poorly located to serve destinations in Wiltshire and the surrounding areas. Amesbury as a location for further intensification as an industrial and logistics hub is fundamentally flawed, as one of the key outcomes would be to encourage HGV traffic where it is specifically planned not to be increased.
  2. The vast majority of employees (c.80%) would be travelling from remote locations and would need to travel by car. The location is therefore inherently unsustainable in transport terms and development would be contrary to the stated aims of paragraph 105 of the NPPF.
  3. The existing rat running through the Solstice Park exit from the A303 is of concern to Highways England and an intensification of HGV movements into and out of Solstice Park would lead to worse congestion, pollution, noise and severance, compromising pedestrian and cyclist safety in Amesbury and lead to lower health outcomes for local residents.
  4. The proposed A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down improvements will cause significant additional disruption to the operation of the A303. As noted, the site has no alternative connections on the Wiltshire HGV Route Network, and the more desirable alternative routes around the disruption cannot reasonably be served by a distribution centre located in Amesbury.
- 3.1.3 In conclusion, Amesbury is not an appropriate location in transport terms for intensification of industrial and logistics employment floorspace. Development would be contrary to local, and national transport policies, and would likely result in severe highways and environmental impacts. If there is demand for this type of employment space within Wiltshire, it should be located close to interchanges on the Wiltshire HGV route network.

