Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Rachel Whyte
Date:	10/04/2024
Application number:	PL/2023/10772
Proposal:	Standing of an additional two residential caravans (two statics) and the storage of two touring caravans on the land, refurbishment of site through ancillary works.
Site address:	Land at 2 The Holdings, Ashton Common, Steeple Ashton, Wilts
Case officer:	Jonathan Maidman

Recommendations:

	No comment
	Support
	No objection
	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
X	Objection - further information required
	Objection in principle
X	HRA required

Further Information Required:

	Issue	Policy/Legislative Compliance	Date Information Requested & Further Information Required	Satisfactorily Addressed (Document & Date)
1.	Habitat Regulations Assessment - Bats	WCA 1981, Hab. Regs.	**10/04/2024** – Sensitive Lighting Strategy	**NO**
2.	TBMS	TBMS	**10/04/2024** – Confirmation of number of units.	**NO**

The outstanding document(s) listed above are needed to enable the council's ecology team to consider all the relevant impacts and benefits of the proposed scheme. The council's ecologists will provide a further response once <u>all</u> the above information has been submitted via the case officer.
Please Note: When resubmitting a revised document, ALL changes must be highlighted to enable review.

Thank you for consulting Ecology, I have reviewed the application and supporting documents against OS Maps and aerial photography of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory sites and existing records of protected species.

The application has not been supported by an ecology report. A review of publicly available mapping data shows the site to comprise habitats typical of residential gardens. The site is bounded by overgrown mature hedgerows and trees. Photographs from the site visit (carried out on 19/02/2024) shows that boundary hedgerows and trees have been cut back and the site now comprises gravel only with no vegetation. Whilst boundary hedgerows have been retained, these are now cut into a box shape. The conditions onsite are consistent with the submitted proposed block diagram (received 06/03/2024) and the application appears to be wholly retrospective.

Biodiversity No Net Loss

A Small Sites Biodiversity Metric has been completed using the information available. This indicates a deficit of 0.2709 habitat units. Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity. The Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy requires development to demonstrate no net loss using an established metric. Given the retrospective nature of this application a contribution into an approved mitigation scheme to the value of the deficit would be required to demonstrate no net loss. The Council have their own biodiversity mitigation scheme with a unit price of £30,000 for habitats. The total contribution required would therefore be £14,613 (i.e., £8,127 (£30,000 * 0.2709) for habitats. **Payment must be secured via a legal agreement.**

A commitment to tree planting on the site and sensitive management of the retained hedgerows for the benefit of biodiversity would be welcomed. This could be shown on an updated block plan.

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

The application site is located within a consultation zone for Bechstein bats associated with the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats SAC and therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of that site.

Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy

The application site is located within the red high-risk zone of the Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (TBMS) SPD (adopted Feb.2020). The Red Zone is located within 600m of woodlands or trees known to support maternity roosts for Bechstein's bat. New development of greenfield or residential brownfield sites within this zone is likely to result in high and unacceptable risks to bat populations, as a result of increased recreational pressure on key woodland sites and/or as a result of habitat loss. As such, development of new sites within this zone is highly unlikely to be permitted, and there should be no net increase in new residential curtilage or light levels within the zone.

Proposed Mitigation Strategy

Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Section 63 of the Habitats Regulations must be carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (the LPA) to determine the potential significant effects and the suitability of any measures proposed to avoid or mitigate those effects. The mitigation strategy proposed for the AA is as follows:

- Sensitive lighting strategy
- A contribution towards the delivery of mitigation to address strategic recreational pressure associated with the TBMS, at a rate of £641.48 per dwelling.
- A contribution towards habitat mitigation as per the TBMS, at a rate of £777.62 per dwelling.

Further Information Required

Insufficient information has so far been submitted to enable the AA to be undertaken, which must be completed and the conclusion agreed with Natural England prior to the application being determined.

1. Sensitive Lighting Strategy

   The Sensitive Lighting Strategy must demonstrate that light spill on the boundaries will be <0.2 lux on the horizontal plane and <0.4 lux on the vertical plane. Where baseline levels are above the lux levels stated here, the development design should ensure there is no increase above existing background light levels. Section 8.3 of the TBMS should be consulted when designing the strategy.

2. Confirmation on the number of units proposed.

   It is understood that there have been some discussions over the number of units proposed during the application process. The number of units proposed must be confirmed for the AA. The final number of units would need to be secured appropriately secured should planning permission be granted.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist	Date