

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Kirsten Pryde
Date:	09/07/2025
Application number:	PL/2025/01783
Proposal:	Establishment of stables, paddocks and area to exercise horses. Area for personal not commercial use.
Site address:	PLOT 2-3, NEWTON LANE, WHITEPARISH, SP5 2QQ
Case officer:	Amy Houldsworth

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Support
☐	No objection
☒	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
☐	Objection - further information required
☐	Objection in principle
☐	HRA completed

Further Information Required:

	Issue	Policy/Legislative Compliance	Date information requested & Further information required	Satisfactorily addressed (Document & Date)
				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 all 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 following submitted documentation was reviewed to inform this response:

- Lots 3 and Lot 4 Layout
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by Arbtech 12/02/2025
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Arbtech 10/01/2025
- Location Plan
- Biodiversity Metric Calculation tool

Matters Considered:

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)

New Forest SPA, New Forest SAC and New Forest Ramsar site

The proposed development site lies within the 13.8km zone of influence for the New Forest internationally protected sites, which comprises the New Forest SPA, New Forest SAC and New

Forest Ramsar site. Therefore, the application is screened into appropriate assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) on account of its potential to cause adverse effects on the New Forest protected sites through increased recreational pressure which may occur alone and in-combination with other plans and projects. Many of the special features of the New Forest protected sites afforded protection are vulnerable to adverse effects associated with an increase in recreation as demonstrated in Natural England's supplementary advice issued for the SPA on 19 March 2019 and for the SAC on 18 March 2019.

However, as the proposal does not involve an increase in the number of residential units, it is not expected to contribute to additional recreational visits or associated pressures on these designated sites. Moreover, the proposed works are of a relatively minor nature and are not anticipated to result in any direct or indirect impacts on the integrity of the New Forest designations. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no pathway for a likely significant effect, and the proposal can be screened out of the requirement for Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations.

River Test Catchment - Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar site, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site.

WCS policy CP50 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) and the NPPF requires the Local Planning Authority to ensure protection of important habitats and species in relation to development and seeks enhancement for the benefit of biodiversity through the planning system. Whilst the application site is not adjacent to any rivers or in any respective flood zones, it is situated within the River Test catchment which drains into the Solent. This region is protected by a number of international designations including the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar site, Portsmouth Harbour SPA and Ramsar site, Solent and Southampton Water SPA and Ramsar site; as well as the nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) that underpin these international designations.

The Solent water environment is one of the most important for wildlife in the United Kingdom. It is protected under the Water Environment Regulations and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) as well as through national legislation for many parts of the coastline and adjacent maritime areas. Natural England has confirmed high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus are entering this water environment and that there is sound evidence that this eutrophication is causing excessive growth of plants and algae which reduces oxygen and light levels and is leading to negative effects on the special features for which the European sites are designated. These nutrient inputs mostly come either from agricultural sources or from waste water from existing housing and other development.

Natural England currently advises that every permission for new dwellings in the [River Test Catchment Area](#) could result in increased nutrients entering the Solent area ([NE776 Edition 5 Nutrient Neutrality and Nutrient Mitigation.pdf](#)) from the increase in waste water and land use change. Accordingly, the Local Planning Authority considers this proposal is likely to lead to significant effects on the European Sites and an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is required.

However, since the proposal that is subject of this application will not increase the number of residential units in the catchment, there is no mechanism for adverse effect. The proposed works are also relatively minor nature and there is no likelihood of direct impacts to the river itself. This proposal would therefore be screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Protected Species

The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Arbtech 10/01/2025 provides a clear overview of the species present on site. The report includes appropriate mitigation recommendations to avoid or minimise potential impacts on biodiversity. Notably, the installation of bat and bird boxes has been proposed to enhance roosting and nesting opportunities on site, contributing to biodiversity gain. The ecological surveys have been undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist and are in accordance with current industry guidelines. The recommendations made are considered proportionate and appropriate to the findings, and I am in agreement with the conclusions drawn in the submitted report. In order to ensure that these recommendations are accommodated and are enforceable within the development, the condition set out below requires that the locations of bat and bird boxes are shown on site plans.

Lighting

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. An increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which could result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas. This will likely result in a significant negative impact upon the health of bat populations across the region. Artificial light at night can have a substantial adverse effect on biodiversity. Any new lighting should be for the purposes for safe access and security and be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institute of Lighting Engineers in their publication GN01:2021, 'Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light' (ILP, 2021), and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) this application is required to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). The Biodiversity Gain Plan condition will automatically apply if approval is forthcoming.

A completed statutory metric calculation confirming the baseline and predicted post-development biodiversity units of Site has been submitted (including the condition assessment sheets and maps).

Information in the completed on-site baseline habitat tabs is accepted as accurate based on the information submitted. The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	3.68 Habitat units
	0.60 Hedgerow units
	0.0 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	Yes

It is acknowledged that the stable block and access track have already been constructed, resulting in habitat degradation within that part of the site. As such, the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric has appropriately used a baseline based on the pre-development habitat conditions. These conditions were determined using a combination of anecdotal and photographic evidence, along with aerial imagery. The area has been assessed as likely reflecting the condition of the adjacent grassland and has therefore been assigned a moderate condition classification. This approach is considered reasonable and ensures that the BNG

calculations reflect a more accurate and representative baseline for assessing biodiversity impacts and gains.

It is intended that an area of land (Appendix 4 – Post Development Habitat Plan - Proposed of the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by Arbtech 12/02/2025) would be enhanced to achieve a 10% gain.

All land located outside the redline application boundary of the development site is considered off-site (refer to information here [Make off-site biodiversity gains as a developer - GOV.UK](#))

All off-site biodiversity gains sites must be registered on the national biodiversity gains site register. Guidance on how to register a biodiversity gains site including a list of items required to apply can be found here - [Register a biodiversity gain site - GOV.UK](#). In order for the Biodiversity Gain Plan condition to be discharged all off-site gains must be shown on the Biodiversity Gain Plan as allocated to this development on the national biodiversity gains site register.

Off-site gains must be secured via a legal agreement for at least 30 years. This must be a planning obligation (Section 106 agreement) or conservation covenant. Wiltshire Council will not enter into a Section 106 agreement for off-site gains unless the off-site gain site has been verified. Contact ecologychargeableservice@wiltshire.gov.uk to request further information on site verification.

Note to case officer: The Appendix 4 – Post Development Habitat Plan - Proposed of the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by Arbtech 12/02/2025 identifies the areas where habitat creation/enhancement which contributes to the applications BNG is proposed however detail on the plan is limited. Confirmation of how the development will achieve BNG is a post-determination matter however consideration should be given to how any proposed BNG will be secured.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

The development will be carried out in strict accordance with the following documents:

- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment by Arbtech 12/02/2025 Section 4 Recommendations to Deliver BNG
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Arbtech 10/01/2025

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

2. Lighting

No external light fixture or fitting will be installed within the application site unless details of existing and proposed new lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details will demonstrate how the proposed lighting will impact on bat habitat compared to the existing situation.

The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To avoid illumination of habitat used by bats.

3. Bat and Bird Boxes

Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of enhancement features for biodiversity, such as bat roosts and nesting opportunities for birds (e.g. bat and bird boxes), shall be submitted to the local authority for approval. The approved details shall be implemented before occupation of the final works.

REASON: To provide mitigation /enhancement for biodiversity.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist Kirsten Pryde (Graduate Ecologist)	Date 09/07/2025
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