

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jessica Cracknell (Ecologist)
Date:	23/09/2025
Application number:	PL/2025/05943
Proposal:	Residential development for up to 20 dwellings, associated works including infrastructure, ancillary facilities and landscaping. Construction of a new vehicular access off Spitfire Road.
Site address:	Land East of Spitfire Road, Calne
Case officer:	Jonathan James

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)
1	Enhancements and Mitigation	NPPF, CP50	23/09/2025 Enhancement measures suggested in ecological impact assessment to be shown on site drawings/plans.	NO
2	Ecological Parameters Plan (EPP)	NPPF, CP50	23/09/2025 An EPP To be submitted in support of the Outline application and adhered to at REM.	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:

- Ecological Impact Assessment & Biodiversity Net Gain. 22 May 2025. Ecology Solutions;
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. 23 May 2025. Ecology Solutions;
- Arboricultural Survey, Impact Assessment and Protection Plan. 27 June 2025. MBP Arboriculture. Version. V4;

- Illustrative Masterplan. 19 June 2025. Robert Hitchins. Drawing No. 381.UD.01;
- Design & Access Statement. July 2025. Robert Hitchins. Rev. B;
- Planning Statement. 01 July 2025. Pegasus Group. Ref. P23-2672.

The mitigation and enhancements outlined in the submitted Ecological Assessment must be clearly incorporated into an Ecological Parameters Plan (EPP), and subsequent plans at Reserved Matters stage. Key measures include but are not limited to:

- Creation of species-rich grassland using native seed mixes
- New and enhanced scrub and hedgerow planting using native species to ensure long-term ecological functionality.
- Retention and protection of all hedgerows and trees during construction, with protective fencing at canopy width.
- Setback of the proposed outfall to reduce stream bank impacts, with immediate planting of aquatic and marginal vegetation around the headwall and wet ditch to stabilise banks and provide new aquatic habitat.

The retention of existing hedgerows and trees is welcomed; however, the proposed layout severs the northern commuting corridor. Replacement planting, such as large specimen trees as recommended in the Ecological Assessment, must be shown on the submitted plans to ensure ecological connectivity is maintained. **To align with the Wiltshire Green Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Strategy we request the northern boundary of the site is reviewed to ensure the significant corridor is continued throughout the development.**

Reptiles

Reptile surveys undertaken within the adjacent site between April and May 2022, confirmed the presence of Slow Worm and Grass Snake. Given the similarity of habitats, it is considered likely that reptiles are also utilising the application site. Reasonable avoidance measures should be included within a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) which can be secured by condition.

Badgers

Any identified badger setts must be retained within the development proposals wherever possible, with a minimum 30m buffer from built form or construction activities. Where retention is not feasible, any active setts impacted by the scheme must be closed under a Natural England licence, following best practice protocols. Given the potential for new badger setts to be established, an updated badger survey should be undertaken no more than six months prior to the commencement of development. Should the status of badgers on the site have changed, the mitigation measures will need to be revised accordingly.

Water Voles/Otters

Surveys undertaken along Abberd Brook in March 2025 recorded no direct evidence of Otter or Water Vole within the section adjacent to the Application Site. However, records confirm both species are present within the wider area. The watercourse itself was assessed as offering suitable habitat for dispersal and foraging. The proposed development includes installation of a headwall to discharge surface water into the brook, which could result in indirect impacts through siltation, runoff or localised bank loss. Mitigation measures set out in the ecological impact assessment are supported and should be included within a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) which can be secured by condition.

Bat Species

The Site is assessed to offer moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats in the form of hedgerows, scrub, grassland, scattered trees and an adjacent watercourse, Abberd Brook. Higher quality habitats are present in the surrounding area making it more likely species will use on-site habitats, connecting to the wider landscape. Four bat commuting and foraging corridors were

identified. The eastern, southern, and western will be retained, while the northern corridor will be intersected by the proposed new access road, resulting in a partial loss of hedgerow. All identified key commuting and foraging routes must be retained, buffered and shown in the provided Ecological Parameters Plan, with replacement planting for lost sections of hedgerow to restore connectivity.

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. Suitable lighting to ensure dark foraging and commuting routes can be retained could be secured via condition.

Whilst the hedgerows are largely retained dark buffers are not specified (m) on the plans or reports therefore the application does not demonstrate that they will be adequately buffered from the development to ensure functionality will be maintained. To ensure ecological functionality for foraging and commuting bats is retained it is expected that an undeveloped continuous dark corridor is provided along key bat habitat.

Nesting Birds

The scrub and hedgerows across the site provide suitable nesting habitat for a range of bird species. Where possible, habitat removal must be scheduled outside the bird breeding season (1st March–31st August) to avoid potential disturbance. If removal during this period is unavoidable, a pre-works nesting bird inspection will be conducted no more than 48 hours before clearance.

Compliance with Core Policy 50

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and to seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. The NPPF also encourages applications to deliver measurable net gains (para 186 d).

Ecological enhancements within Section 10.3 of the Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Net Gain report are provided through the installation of log piles, five bat and bird boxes. **The location of the bat and bird boxes must be included in the site plan drawings and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission.**

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 (23 May 2025. Ecology Solutions) confirming the baseline and predicted post- development biodiversity units of the 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	2.70 Habitat units
(baseline) biodiversity value	0.93 Hedgerow units

	1.44 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	No

In order for the council to fulfil its BNG monitoring responsibilities. A BNG monitoring contribution will be required and secured via a separate legal agreement.

Ecological Parameters Plan (EPP)

An Ecological Parameters Plan (EPP) is required to ensure compliance with Core Policy 50, the NPPF and Policy NE4:Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows from Calne Community Neighbourhood Plan 2 2023-38.

An Ecological Parameters Plan (EPP) is required. The EPP must clearly identify those areas of the site which are unconstrained, those areas where sensitive design or restrictions may be required, and any areas of the site which are to be retained, remain undeveloped, enhanced, form part of the landscaping for the purposes of protecting and enhancing biodiversity and any areas to be used as compensatory habitat in line with the submitted ecology documents, including the Biodiversity Net Gain Calculator spreadsheet. The EPP will become an 'approved document' of any outline permission granted and any reserved matters application must be in compliance with the plan.

The EPP must include:

1. A scaled drawing showing existing ecological features, distinguishing between those to be retained and those which will be lost e.g. hedgerows, trees, water features, badger setts etc
2. Specify the minimum distance from each feature to the footprint of development e.g. to curtilage of properties, car parks, roads.
3. Specify the buffer distance from light sensitive ecological features where the increase in lux levels will be zero or, if lux contours have been modelled, show contour lines for 1, 0.5 or 0.1 lux depending on the sensitivity of ecological features
4. Identify where new habitats will be created on site, include minimum area in hectares or length in metres and habitat type
5. Identify areas where habitat enhancement will be undertaken, include minimum area in hectares or length in metres and habitat type, e.g. defunct hedgerow to be grubbed up and replanted
6. Provide stand-off distances to the footprint of development e.g. curtilage to properties, car parks, roads for each tree to be retained, sufficient to ensure the tree will survive throughout the operational phase without risk of it being removed for health and safety, loss of amenity or liability reasons.
7. Provide cross-sectional drawing to show profile of SuDs, ponds or wetland features to demonstrate there is adequate room for these features to have gently profiled sides and thereby maximise their biodiversity potential.

CONDITIONS: these will be added once the issues above have been addressed

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist	Date
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