

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	03/12/2025
Application number:	PL/2025/08416
Proposal:	Construction of new 6 bed chalet bungalow to replace an existing barn with an extant consent to convert to a dwelling.
Site address:	Greenacre Barn, Lower Westbury Road, Bratton, Westbury, BA13 4RH
Case officer:	Andrew Thomas

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Support
☐	No objection
☒	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
☐	Objection - further information required
☐	Objection in principle
☒	HRA completed. Appropriate Assessment with a positive conclusion has been sent to Natural England must agree the conclusion (within 21 days) prior to the application being permitted.

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

Information considered:

- Bat Survey, Crossman Associates, March 2025
- Site Plan, Larner Sing Limited, September 2025
- Design, Access and Planning Statement, undated

The site comprises a modern barn surrounded by farmland. It is proposed to demolish the barn and construct a bungalow.

COMMENTS:

Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA) 6.4km buffer

This application lies within the 6.4km zone of influence of the Salisbury Plain SPA and in light of the HRA for the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the HRA for the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan it is screened into Appropriate Assessment due to the potential impact of recreational pressure on stone curlew in combination with other plans and projects.

A strategic Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared pertaining to development within the 6.4km zone of influence that could result in a likely significant effect on the SPA as a result of an increase in recreational / visitor pressure. The AA reached a conclusion of no adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA or its qualifying features provided that the council's mitigation strategy continues to be implemented. Annual stone curlew monitoring and protection measures continue to be secured by the Council.

In March 2025 Natural England (NE) confirmed that the 2024 strategic AA for Salisbury Plain SPA continues to be supported by NE.

Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

The application site is located within the grey zone of the Trowbridge & Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS) and therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Section 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) 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 bat survey report confirms that the barn has negligible potential to host roosting bats, and as per the plans, there will be no loss of functional habitat in the wider site. However, the potential increase in recreational pressure on the SAC must be considered. The grey medium risk zone represents an area where new residential development is likely to result in increased recreational use of important woodland bat sites. In order to conclude the AA favourably, new residential development proposals for 49 dwellings or less within the grey hatched medium risk zone will be expected to provide a financial contribution of £925 per dwelling towards the Council's strategic recreational pressure mitigation scheme.

For this development, the cost of mitigation via the Council's strategic scheme would be £925 for the 1 dwelling. The mitigation is required prior to the commencement of development and must be secured by planning obligations.

Where a Section 106 agreement is not in place, mitigation can alternatively be secured under Section 111. Where the applicant elects to use a S111, the strategic mitigation must be secured upon the granting of planning permission by completion of S111 process.

The AA concludes no adverse effects on the SAC site, subject to the contribution listed above. This AA has been sent to Natural England (03/12/2025) and the application must not be determined until they have agreed with the LPA's conclusion.

Biodiversity Net Gain

From 12 February 2024 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Based on the information available the biodiversity gain planning condition is not considered to apply to this application as the development meets the following criteria and is therefore below the de minimis threshold, meaning the development:

- o does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
- o impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

Note to case officer: you should be satisfied that the proposals meet the above criteria and act accordingly. Further information will be required from the applicant prior to determination in the event the application is considered to be subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain.

Enhancements

In line with the NPPF and CP50, applications that do not fall into the category where Biodiversity Net Gain is required must still ensure that no net loss of functional habitat for the benefit of wildlife in the local area will occur as a result of the proposed development. In addition, gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed

development. The ecology report's recommendations of a swallow nest cup and bat box are welcomed, and details should be secured via a condition.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Section 4 of the Bat Survey, Crossman Associates, March 2025, including lighting recommendations and precautionary measures

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

2. Enhancements for Biodiversity

Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancements – including the type and locations of bat and bird nesting opportunities – 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.

Sign off by WC Ecologist will only be given once ALL outstanding information has been submitted and agreed sufficient.

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 03/12/2025
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