

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jessica Cracknell
Date:	18/12/2025
Application Number:	PL/2025/07726
Proposal:	Electric vehicle charging facility
Site Address:	Land North of Bath Road, Chippenham, SN14 0BJ
Case Officer:	Peter Crozier

Recommendations:

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

Further Information Required:

	Issue	Policy/Legislative Compliance	Date information requested & Further information required	Satisfactorily addressed (Document & Date)
1	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021)	18/12/2025 The condition assessment sheets and for the baseline habitats have not been submitted.	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 your consultation on the above application. I have reviewed the submitted documents against OS maps, aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and existing records of protected species.

The following submitted documentation was reviewed to inform this response:

- Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Metric Assessment. August 2025. EcoLogic Consultants Ltd. Report Ref. 250405 rev01;
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. 23 July 2025. rev02;
- Lighting Strategy. 19 September 2025. Designs for Lighting. Project No. 4182. Doc Ref. 4182-DFL-ELG-XX-RP-EO-13001. Rev. P01;
- Arboricultural Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan. 19 September 2025. NB Tree Management;

- Planning Site Layout. 24 September 2025. InstaVolt Ltd. Drawing No. 10829-0001_01-PL. Rev. D;
- Location and Block Plan. 23 July 2025. InstaVolt Ltd. Drawing No. 10829-0001_02. Rev. A;
- Planning, Design and Access Statement. September 2025. Lone Wolf Planning. Version v1.

Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland

Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland borders the site. In accordance with Core Policy 50, development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource.

Policy GI5 of the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan seeks to protect existing trees, woodland and hedgerows and requires their retention wherever possible, especially those of arboricultural, ecological or amenity value. Where tree loss is unavoidable, development proposals should provide replacement planting and demonstrate an overall increase in tree canopy cover, with a preference for native and large-canopied species.

Protected Species

The Ecological Impact Assessment identified the site as providing suitable habitat for foraging and commuting bats, with negligible potential to support roosting bats. The construction of the electric vehicle charging facility will result in the removal of an area of modified grassland, individual trees, a line of trees and mixed broadleaved woodland which is considered to be functionally valuable to foraging and commuting bats. Proposals for the planting of species-rich native hedgerows, new tree and woodland planting, and grassland and scrub enhancement will maintain and enhance habitat functionality and ecological connectivity across the site for bats. Therefore, it is my view that there is no mechanism for adverse effect on bat species.

Where possible, vegetation removal should 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 must be conducted no more than two weeks before vegetation clearance begins. The applicant is advised to check any structure or vegetation capable of supporting breeding birds and delay removing or altering such features until after young birds have fledged. Damage to extensive areas that could contain nests/breeding birds should be undertaken outside the breeding season.

Given the presence of suitable habitats for amphibians and reptiles, a precautionary method of working should be undertaken including a sensitive (phased) vegetation clearance methodology between the months of March and October. A number of reasonable avoidance measures and good working practices were included within the report which are welcomed. These could be secured via a Construction Method Statement.

Lighting

A lighting strategy has been submitted in support of this application, Lighting Strategy (19 September 2025. Designs for Lighting. Project No. 4182. Doc Ref. 4182-DLF-ELG-XX-RP-EO-13001. Rev. P01). The indicative light spill diagram (17 September 2025. Designs for Lighting. Project No. 4182. Rev. P01) shows that the existing woodland to the east, the proposed woodland planting to the north, and key bat commuting corridors identifies light levels exceeding 0.5 lux. 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. Further information will be required to demonstrate that key bat habitat will not exceed 0.5 lux, these lighting measures will be secured through planning condition.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

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 July 2025. rev02) confirming the baseline and predicted post-development biodiversity units of the site has been submitted (including the habitat 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	1.90 Habitat units
	0.08 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	No

The condition assessment sheets for the baseline habitats have not been submitted. This information is a minimum requirement set out in Article 7 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and must therefore be submitted for review by the ecology team prior to determination.

Note to case officer: Appendix 4: Biodiversity Metric Assessment (Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Metric Assessment. August 2025. Ref. 250405. Rev. 01) identifies the areas of habitat creation/enhancement which contributes to the applications proposed BNG 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.

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).

CP50 and NPPF requires the inclusion of biodiversity enhancements. Ecological Enhancements within section 5 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are provided through the installation of bat and bird boxes, tree and woodland planting, hedgerow planting, scrub and grassland enhancement during. The location of these ecological/biodiversity enhancements must be included in the site plan drawings (Appendix 6: Compensation and Enhancement Plan. Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Metric Assessment. August 2025. EcoLogic Consultants Ltd. Report Ref. 250405 rev01) and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission.

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

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Ecological Impact Assessment and Biodiversity Metric Assessment. August 2025. EcoLogic Consultants Ltd. Report Ref. 250405 rev01;
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. 23 July 2025. rev02;
- Lighting Strategy. 19 September 2025. Designs for Lighting. Project No. 4182. Doc Ref. 4182-DFL-ELG-XX-RP-EO-13001. Rev. P01;
- Arboricultural Method Statement & Tree Protection Plan. 19 September 2025. NB Tree Management.

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

2. Construction Method Statement (CMS)

No development shall commence on site (including any vegetation removal or works to existing structures), until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Method Statement shall include all precautionary measures to be implemented during the construction period, for the protection of sensitive habitats and species known to be present within or adjacent the site, with particular reference to Bats, Nesting Birds, Reptiles, Trees, Hedgerows, Woodland and Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland.

The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved Construction Method Statement.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection, mitigation and compensation for protected species and priority habitats throughout the construction period.

3. Lighting

Prior to commencement of development, a lighting plan that includes a Lux Plot, shall be submitted to the LPA for approval. The plan will demonstrate that bat habitat (trees, scrub and hedgerows) on the perimeter of the site will remain below 0.5 lux.

All lighting provided on site shall 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.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area and to minimize impacts on biodiversity caused by light spillage to areas above and outside the development site.

INFORMATIVES:

Protected Species

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species including for example, breeding birds and reptiles. The protection offered to some species such as bats, extends beyond the individual animals to the places they use for shelter or resting. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's website for further information on protected species.

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

Ecologist	Date