

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	13/01/2026
Application number:	PL/2025/07598
Proposal:	Installation of 416 ground mounted solar panels and electrical enclosure.
Site address:	Pythouse Farm, Tisbury, Salisbury, SP3 6PA
Case officer:	Sarah Hill

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:

- Proposed Block Plan, Singleton Design, P961/03, Rev A
- Design and Access Statement, Nadder Community Energy Group
- Bat Transect Survey Report, Enims, July 2025, October 2025
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report, LC Ecological Services, December 2025
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric, DC, November 2025

The site comprises a plot of species-poor modified grassland to the north of existing farm buildings and solar panels, and bound by woodland to the west and hedgerow to the east. It is proposed to install 416 further solar panels and an electrical enclosure.

COMMENTS:

River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Hampshire Catchment

This development falls within the catchment of the River Avon SAC and has potential to cause adverse effects alone or in combination with other developments through discharge of phosphorus in wastewater.

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council) as required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This concluded that since there is no proposal to create additional overnight accommodation, there would be no overall mechanism for adverse effect. The HRA has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the SAC and subsequently the application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Chilmark Quarries Special Area for Conservation (SAC)

The site lies within consultation zones for Barbastelle and Greater Horseshoe bats associated with the Chilmark Quarries Bats SAC. It therefore has the potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of the SAC. 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.

An Appropriate Assessment has been completed by the LPA with a favourable conclusion, subject to suitable mitigation measures being secured by condition and implemented. In this case, a Construction Method Statement (CMS) and lighting condition should be applied. The AA has been sent to Natural England (13/01/2026) and the application must not be determined until they have agreed with the LPAs conclusion.

Bats

Following a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in November 2024, bat transect surveys were undertaken in May-September 2025, and static monitoring surveys in September 2025. Common pipistrelles were the most frequently recorded species. No Barbastelle or Greater horseshoe bats were recorded (the site falls within the core area buffers of said Annex II species). A low number of unidentified *Myotis* calls were recorded by the static detectors on 4 of 13 survey nights, but it is not known if these belonged to Bechstein's bats. Otherwise, no evidence of Annex II species was recorded. The bat survey report concludes that the site had "moderate" levels of bat activity from common bat species, and "low" levels of activity from uncommon species.

The highest levels of bat activity were recorded at the woodland edges and around the farm buildings – the proposed solar panels would be set back from the woodland by 20m and hedgerow by 12m at their closest points. As such, the potential impact of habitat loss (loss of 0.12 ha of modified grassland) is considered to present a low risk to bats. Risks of disturbance and fragmentation can be managed through a CMS and lighting condition, as above.

Other protected species and sites

The woodland to the east of the field boundary is considered to be deciduous woodland Priority Habitat, adjoining Pythouse Planting County Wildlife Site (CWS) (~110m from the site boundary). Habitats of the wider landscape are therefore of good value to bats, badgers, nesting birds and other protected wildlife. **Precautionary measures for the protection of the adjoining woodland and such species should be detailed within the Construction Method Statement.**

In line with the NPPF and with CP50, applications must ensure that gains for biodiversity relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations should form part of the proposed development. The ecology report recommends the installation of bat boxes in the wider site. **The details, locations and implementation of these ecological enhancements should be secured via a condition.**

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 (Biodiversity Net Gain Report, LC Ecological Services, December 2025; Statutory Biodiversity Metric, DC, November 2025) confirming the baseline and predicted post- development biodiversity units of Site has been submitted (including the condition assessment sheet and map).

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	0.57 Habitat units
	0.00 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	No

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 document:

- Section 4 of the Bat Transect Survey Report, Enims, October 2025
- Biodiversity Net Gain Report, LC Ecological Services, December 2025

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

2. Construction Method Statement

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, and the bordering 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. Artificial 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.

4. Ecological enhancements

Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal, details of the number, design and locations of 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.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 13/01/2026
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