

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jessica Cracknell
Date:	15/01/2026
Application Number:	PL/2025/08483
Proposal:	Change of Use from Agricultural to Equestrian and construction of a new outdoor riding school to include the extension of an existing track to serve the same
Site Address:	Land at Home Farm, Livery Road, Winterslow, Salisbury, SP5 1RJ
Case Officer:	Hayley Clark

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 submitted)
1	Mottisfont Bats SAC	Habs Regs, WCA, NPPF, CP50	15/01/2026 Assessment of the impacts of Bats in relation to Mottisfont Bats SAC	NO
2	Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)	Habs Regs, WCA, NPPF, CP50	15/01/2026 An Ecological Assessment has not been submitted in support of this application, assessing the potential impacts on protected habitats and species, including Chickard Wood CSW/Ancient Woodland.	NO
3	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021)	15/01/2026 Submission of the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool, assessed by a suitably qualified ecologist with the associated baseline habitat maps and condition assessments	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:

- Small Sites Metric (The Statutory Biodiversity Metric). 23 October 2025. Rev. 1;
- Designations & Priority Habitats. 20 October 2025. Open Street Map;
- Planning Application Site Plan: 20 x 40m Menage (800m²);
- Block Plan. 23 October 2025. Woolley & Wallis;
- Planning Design and Access Statement. 20 October 2025. Woolley & Wallis.

New Forest Protected Sites

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.

A test of likely significance has been carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council). This concluded that given the nature of the development and the absence of any increase in overnight accommodation, there would be no recreational impact on the New Forest, therefore there is no mechanism for adverse effect. The Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the New Forest SPA, New Forest SAC and New Forest Ramsar site and the proposal is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

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.

A test of likely significance has been conducted by the relevant Competent Authority (Wiltshire Council). This assessment determined that, due to the lack of any increase in water supply, drainage installation within this development, there will be no mechanism for effect on the River Test catchment. The Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on the River Test Catchment and the proposal is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA): Mottisfont Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

The application site is within a consultation zone for Barbastelle bats associated with the Mottisfont Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of that site. 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.

Insufficient information has so far been submitted to enable the AA to be undertaken, which must be completed and the conclusion agreed with Natural England prior to the application being determined. No bat activity surveys or ecological surveys have been undertaken to assess the sites potential for foraging and commuting use. No assessment of the impacts upon the SAC have been considered. Additional information is required to include an assessment of the impacts upon bats, specifically those associated with the Mottisfont Bats SAC.

County Wildlife Site (CWS) and Ancient Woodland

Part of the application site lies within Chickard Wood County Wildlife Site (CWS), which is classified as ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland. Ancient woodland is an irreplaceable and protected habitat under NPPF paragraph 193(c). Paragraph 193.c of the NPPF which states that *'development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists'*. Woodland of this type is also important to protected and notable species including bats and dormice. It is anticipated that bats use the area for foraging and commuting and therefore the woodland edge must be protected from damage during construction.

Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 50 states *"All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development"*. The ancient woodland is also designated as a County Wildlife Site, with regard to such sites Core Policy 50 states *"Sustainable development will avoid direct and indirect impacts upon local sites through sensitive site location and layout, and by maintaining sufficient buffers and ecological connectivity with the wider environment."*

While the submitted information indicates that works are confined to the southern part of the site on existing grassland and that no direct works are proposed within the CWS or ancient woodland, the use of the access track raises concerns regarding indirect impacts during construction and occupation. In particular, the potential for encroachment into the woodland, vegetation clearance at the woodland edge, or works to the access road, which has not been adequately assessed and could result in damage to or loss of woodland habitat.

Further information is required to confirm whether any works are proposed in close proximity to the ancient woodland and to demonstrate how woodland trees and habitats would be protected. This should include clear avoidance and protection measures to ensure no loss or degradation of the woodland during construction and subsequent occupation. Should proposals change such that tree or scrub removal within or adjacent to the woodland is required, further surveys would be necessary and mitigation measures would need to be reviewed and revised accordingly.

Protected Habitats and Species

No ecological information has been submitted in support of the application and therefore insufficient information to determine potential impacts on habitats and protected/ notable species has

been provided. Should any be identified, additional information will be required to support the application including an impact assessment and where appropriate, avoidance and/or mitigation measures to minimise those impacts. In carrying out its statutory function, the LPA must be reasonably sure that the proposal will not result in significant adverse effects on protected habitats or species. The information outlined above must therefore be submitted and reviewed by the LPA's ecology team prior to determination of the application.

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 (Small Sites Metric (The Statutory Biodiversity Metric). 23 October 2025. Rev. 1) confirming the baseline and predicted post- development biodiversity units of the site has been submitted.

Where statutory protected sites or priority habitats are located within 500 m of the development site boundary, guidance requires careful consideration of the biodiversity metric used and assessment by a suitably qualified ecologist. In this instance, part of the site lies within ancient woodland, which is an irreplaceable priority habitat. As such, the use of the Small Sites Metric (SSM) is not considered appropriate. In accordance with current guidance, where priority habitats may be affected directly or indirectly, the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool must be used, this ensures that potential impacts on priority habitats are fully assessed and that the biodiversity baseline has been informed by a suitably qualified ecologist.

A completed statutory biodiversity metric calculation must therefore be submitted, showing the calculations of the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat on the date of application (or proposed earlier date) including the publication date of the biodiversity metric used to calculate that value; a description of any [irreplaceable habitat](#) (as set out in [column 1 of the Schedule to the Biodiversity Gain Requirements \(Irreplaceable Habitat\) Regulations 2024](#)) on the land to which the application relates, that exists on the date of application, (or an earlier date); and plan(s), drawn to an identified scale and showing the direction of North, showing onsite habitat existing on the date of application (or earlier proposed date), including any irreplaceable habitat (if applicable).

Note: this is a summary, please refer to Paragraph: 011 [Biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK](#) for full details.

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 187 d).

CP50 and NPPF requires the inclusion of biodiversity enhancements for wildlife, such as bird and bat boxes. Further details should be provided on the number and types of bird and bat boxes to be included, and the location of these enhancements must be included in the site plan drawings and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission. Bird/bat boxes will continue to be available for bats/birds for the lifetime of the development. Please see condition below.

I therefore maintain a holding objection until all the issues listed above have been suitably addressed.

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

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

Ecologist	Date