

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jessica Cracknell
Date:	23/01/2026
Application Number:	PL/2025/09067
Proposal:	Construction of three houses with access from Winterslow Road
Site Address:	Land to the rear of the Old Railway Hotel (formerly the Porton Hotel), Winterslow Road, Porton, SP4 0JU
Case Officer:	Becky Jones

Recommendations:

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

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:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey Report. 23 October 2025. Daniel Ahern Ecology. Doc Ref. 5780.1;
- Natural England Nutrient Neutrality budget calculator for the River Avon SAC. Phosphate Nutrient budget;
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. 23 October 2025. Daniel Ahern. 5780.1;
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric -Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology. 30 September 2025;
- Landscape Plan. 26 March 2024. JPS Landscape Design. Drawing No. LANDP001;
- Tree Survey & Arboricultural Impact Assessment. March 2023. Hellis Solutions Ltd. Ref. 22/09/198/NH. V3.0;
- Proposed Plans, Section & Principal Elevations, Scale 1:200. 30 May 2024. Relph Ross Partnership Ltd. Drawing No. 20/3332/200 B. Rev. B;
- Technical Note – Lighting. 08 October 2021. Designs for Lighting Ltd. Doc Ref. 3658-DFL-ELG-XX-TN-EO-13001-S3-P02;
- Planning Statement. November 2025. Spruce Town Planning Ltd.

Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA)

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 January 2026 Natural England (NE) confirmed that the 2026 strategic AA for Salisbury Plain SPA continues to be supported by NE.

New Forest Protected Sites

The proposed development site lies within the 15km 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). Given the very small scale of the development and the location within the 15km zone of influence, resulting impacts would be de minimis. 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.

Habitat Regulations Assessment: 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. Appropriate Assessment 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 submitted nutrient calculation calculated a total phosphorus budget of 0.46 kg TP/year pre 2030 and 0.2 kg TP/year post 2030. The budget has been approved by Wiltshire Council.

A Council-led scheme of phosphorus credits will be available for development which meets certain criteria at a fixed cost per kilogram of phosphorus, provided supply of mitigation is available. A completed Hampshire Avon Credit Screening Approval Certificate is required to apply for this scheme. The ecology section of this certificate has been completed by the Council's ecology team for this application. This certificate can only be issued by the case officer if the application meets the two deliverability tests. Further details of the Council-led scheme, including eligibility criteria, current cost to purchase credits, and details of how to apply, is available on our website [Phosphorus and nitrogen mitigation - Wiltshire Council](#).

Ecology officer approval	Document reviewed – 23/01/2026
Approval of Nutrient Budget	Pre 2030 budget - 0.46 kg TP/year Budget approved - Yes
	Date - 23/01/2026

A strategic Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared for qualifying planning applications for residential and non-residential development, within sewered and non-sewered areas of the River Avon SAC catchment. The AA reached a conclusion of no adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC or its qualifying features and has been endorsed by Natural England (NE) provided that the council's mitigation strategy continues to be implemented.

These comments assume that this application qualifies for and will be proceeding with the Council-led scheme.

The mitigation fee and administration charge for the scheme can be paid by a section 111 agreement. It is also possible to pay the mitigation fee through a section 106 agreement or unilateral undertaking.

NEXT STEPS:

- The case officer will send you the credit screening approval certificate
- Once you have received this you can apply directly via this form: [Development Application in the Hampshire Avon Catchment](#)
- You will then be emailed directly when credits are available (expected 2 weeks)
- There is then the option of securing credits via a Section 111 form which will be sent to you.

If the application does not qualify for the Council-led scheme, or the applicant decides not to proceed with the scheme, details of an alternative mitigation strategy must be submitted for review and the Council's ecology team consulted. Any alternative mitigation scheme would be subject to a bespoke Appropriate Assessment.

Bat Species

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identified the site as providing low potential to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats. The construction of the new buildings will not require the removal of any vegetation considered to be functionally valuable to foraging or commuting bats. Therefore, it is my view that there is no mechanism for adverse effect on bat species.

A number of trees on the eastern boundary of the site may have potential PRF's for bats. Under the current proposals, no such trees are scheduled for removal. Should plans change and any of these trees require removal, further surveys will be required and the mitigation measures will need to be revised accordingly.

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. 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.

Nesting Birds

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.

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 October 2025. Daniel Ahern. 5780.1) 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 (baseline) biodiversity value	0.98 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

Note to case officer: The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation (23 October 2025. Daniel Ahern. 5780.1) does not provide information on how the development will achieve 10% BNG. 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 187 d).

While it is not expected that this development will result in significant loss of habitat, both CP50 and NPPF requires the inclusion of biodiversity enhancements. Ecological enhancements are provided through the installation of bird and bat boxes within section 5.5 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey Report. The location of ecological/biodiversity enhancements must be included in the site plan drawings (see condition below) and will become an enforceable part of the planning permission.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Sections 4 and 5 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey Report. 23 October 2025. Daniel Ahern Ecology. Doc Ref. 5780.1;
- Natural England Nutrient Neutrality budget calculator for the River Avon SAC. Phosphate Nutrient budget;
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric. 23 October 2025. Daniel Ahern. 5780.1;
- The Statutory Biodiversity Metric -Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology. 30 September 2025;
- Landscape Plan. 26 March 2024. JPS Landscape Design. Drawing No. LANDP001;
- Tree Survey & Arboricultural Impact Assessment. March 2023. Hellis Solutions Ltd. Ref. 22/09/198/NH. V3.0.

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

2. Water Efficiency in Hampshire Avon Catchment

The overnight development hereby approved shall be designed to ensure it does not exceed 110 litres per person per day water consumption levels (which includes external water usage) and a water efficiency assessment should be submitted. Before the development is brought into use, a water efficiency report certifying that this standard has been achieved shall be submitted to the local planning authority for its written approval.

REASON: To ensure compliance with the prevailing mitigation strategy for nutrient neutrality in the water catchment within which this development is located.

A water efficiency calculation will be needed to discharge this condition. For guidance on how to do this and what is required, please refer to the following document: '*The Building Regulations 2010 – Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency*', Appendix A (p36-44). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/504207/BR_PDF_AD_G_2015_with_2016_amendments.pdf

3. 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
- Birds
- Badgers
- Reptiles

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.

4. Ecological Enhancements

Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, 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.

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.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist	Date
Jessica Cracknell	23/01/2026