

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jenna Buss
Date:	07/01/2026
Application number:	PL/2025/09869
Proposal:	Removal of existing buildings/structures and erection of 9 no. dwellings with associated parking, turning, landscaping, private amenity space and access arrangements
Site address:	Goatacre Farm, Goatacre Lane, Goatacre, Calne, SN11 9JA
Case officer:	Samantha Stockley

Recommendations:

	No Comment
	Support
	No objection
x	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
	Objection - further information required
	Objection in principle
	HRA completed/required

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

The following submitted documentation was reviewed to inform this response:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Roost Assessment. July 2025. Arbtech
- Bat Emergence and Re Entry Surveys. October 2025. Arbtech
- Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment. October 2025. Arbtech
- Proposed Site Plan. 25022-02. August 2025. Fowler Architecture and Planning
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric. October 2025. Jade Lemm

Protected and Notable Species/Habitats

An ecological assessment was submitted in support of the proposals which is welcomed.

The existing hardstanding, buildings and tall forbs will be removed as well as areas of mixed scrub, grassland, and trees T1 and G2. The hedgerows and trees T2-T7 and introduced shrub will be retained.

Bats

The initial ecological assessment identified a number of buildings with bat roosting potential and evidence of bat droppings within building B1. Further emergence surveys were undertaken of buildings B1-B6, the remaining buildings were assessed as having negligible potential to support bats.

Building B1 is a confirmed day roost for common pipistrelle bats within the western section and a transitional/occasional roost in the eastern section. The proposal would result in loss of bat roosts. Bats and their roosts are afforded stringent protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and as such are a material consideration within the planning consultation process.

A European Protected Species (EPS) bat Mitigation Licence will need to be obtained for the lawful construction of this development. In terms of ecology, sufficient information has been provided to ensure that favourable conservation status of bats can be maintained should the application be approved.

Mitigation in the form of 18 integrated bat boxes to provide additional roosting habitat for bats is proposed. Vivara Pro Build in Woodstone Bat tube and Ibstock bat box C are recommended. However, the locations of the proposed bat roosts are not provided and will be required prior to commencement of works.

Additional bat species were recorded foraging and commuting around the site to include soprano pipistrelle, brown long eared, serotine and noctule as well as common pipistrelle bats. Key flight lines were indicated along the track that runs north to south along building B4 and the hedgerow that borders the sites western edge, by the western elevation of B3. Retention of these foraging and commuting routes should be retained with minimal lighting in line with current guidance.

Hedgerows to be retained and created, as outlined within the metric and site plan appear to form part of the residential curtilage. This is not accepted as cannot be secured in perpetuity. Suitable green infrastructure to secure foraging and commuting routes post development must be retained outside of residential curtilages. This could be secured by condition.

Reptiles/Amphibians

The site has limited habitat to support reptiles and amphibians. The OS map indicates a pond is present on site however, the ecology report confirmed that the area was dry during the survey and filled with bramble and tall forbs.

A Natural England Rapid risk assessment returned a result of 'offence highly unlikely' for GCN. Habitats on site are suboptimal and the probability of GCN on site is considered low.

There remains potential for reptiles to be present and a precautionary working method statement is recommended which is welcomed. This should be secured by condition.

Birds

Nesting birds were identified in buildings B1 and B4, demolition works should be scheduled outside of the bird nesting season. All British birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 while birds are nesting, building nests and sitting on eggs. 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. This season is usually taken to be the period between 1st March and 31st August but some species are known to breed outside these limits.

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 (Statutory Biodiversity Metric. October 2025. Jade Lemm) 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	0.70 Habitat units
	0.29 Hedgerow units
	0 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	No

Whilst the baseline is accepted, issues exist with the metric that must be addressed within the Gain Plan when submitted These include;

- A metric error occurs in the on-site habitat creation tab where mixed scrub is calculated at 0ha. This habitat creation must be greater than 0.0ha or removed from the metric.
- The proposed hedgerows to be retained and created lie within the residential curtilages and cannot be secured in perpetuity. The hedgerows must be retained outside of the residential areas or considered to be included within the vegetated gardens and therefore lost to development.

CONDITIONS

1. Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of opportunities for bats and 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.

2. 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 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.

3. No development shall commence on site until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP), prepared in accordance with the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan and including:
 - a non-technical summary;
 - the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;
 - the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan and schedule for implementation;
 - the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and
 - the monitoring methodology and specification of a Monitoring Pack (to include but not exclusively up to date Management Actions Logs, Habitat Condition Assessment Reports, metric calculation; and corresponding post intervention Habitat Map) which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in years 2 (two) 5 (five) 10 (ten) 15 (fifteen) 20 (twenty) and 30 (thirty) of the Maintenance Period,

has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The created and/or enhanced habitat shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the statutory HMMP at all times thereafter.

REASON: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

4. 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.

INFORMATIVES:

Nesting Birds

All British birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 while birds are nesting, building nests and sitting on eggs. 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. This season is usually taken to be the period between 1st March and 31st August but some species are known to breed outside these limits.

Building 1 is used as a bat roost. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is an offence to harm or disturb bats or damage or destroy their roosts. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. The applicant is advised that a European Protected Species Licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission. Future conversion of the roof space to living accommodation or replacing the roof could also breach this legislation and advice should be obtained from a professional bat ecologist before proceeding with work of this nature.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist Jenna Buss	Date 26/01/2026
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