

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	16/02/2026
Application number:	PL/2025/07604
Proposal:	Install new foul primary settlement tank at the eastern extremity of the "known to be serviceable" system. Install pump chamber which will pump settled effluent to the dosing syphon of existing plant, discharging into renovated existing filter beds & ultimately discharged into the Pond System. Depth of primary tank would be approx. 5m deep with an inlet some 2m below existing ground level affording gravity connections into the primary tank. Rising main from pumped effluent would be shallow & avoid deep excavations likely to encounter existing foundations & services.
Site address:	Tarmac Construction LDT, Trowbridge Road, Westbury, BA13 4LX
Case officer:	Andrew Thomas

Recommendations:

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

Further Information Required:

	Issue	Policy/Legislative Compliance	Date information requested & Further information required	Satisfactorily addressed (Document & Date)
1	Priority Habitat	NPPF, CP50, LNRS	16/02/2026 -Information to demonstrate no adverse impact of Priority Habitat, including mitigation as relevant	

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 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:

- Design and Access Statement, Such Salinger Peters, September 2025
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment, Alder Ecology, July 2025

The site comprises a former cement works; it is proposed to renovate the onsite sewage treatment plant, and install new foul water infrastructure to connect to the sewage treatment plant.

COMMENTS:

Salisbury Plain Special Protection Area (SPA) 6.4km buffer

This application lies within the 6.4km zone of influence of the Salisbury Plain SPA and potential impact of recreational pressure on stone curlew, in combination with other plans and projects, must be considered.

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 given the scale and nature of the development (there will be no additional overnight accommodation created), there is no mechanism for adverse effect. The HRA has concluded that the application is not likely to have significant impacts on Salisbury Plain SPA and subsequently the application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

Bath & Bradford on Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

TWBMS Grey Zone

The application site is located within the boundary of the grey zone of the Trowbridge & Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS), and therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The application must be considered under the Habitats Regulations.

The grey medium risk zone represents an area where new residential development is likely to result in increased recreational use of important woodland bat sites. In order to conclude the AA favourably, new residential development proposals for 49 dwellings or less within the grey hatched medium recreational risk zone will be expected to provide a financial contribution per dwelling towards the council's strategic recreational pressure mitigation scheme. This application is not for residential development, and therefore, a financial contribution is not required.

A test of likely significance (screening assessment) has been carried out by Wiltshire Council as required under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (also known as the Habitat Regulations). There will be no loss of bat habitat (with primarily existing areas of hardstanding and bare ground to be impacted), and no new lighting is proposed. As such, the proposal is not considered likely to adversely affect roosting bats, or foraging or commuting habitat, and the principles of the TWBMS are not considered further. The application is screened out of Appropriate Assessment with respect to the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC.

Important habitats

It is understood that the treated water will be discharged into the ponds <10m from the existing filter beds and red line boundary. Whilst it is acknowledged that the treatment plant may have discharged into the pond system in the past, the site was demolished in 2016, i.e., the ponds have not been discharged into for 10 years. Ponds are categorised as a habitat of principle importance, or priority habitat, under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. Furthermore, the woodland bordering the ponds (and 60m northeast of the red line boundary) is mapped on Natural England's Priority Habitats Inventory as lowland mixed deciduous woodland.

No information has been provided about the ecological impacts of wastewater discharge on these habitats. For instance, it is not known what the current pond condition is, what species use it (including protected species), whether there has been/will be any betterment, whether a reed bed system is proposed/in place, whether an environmental permit is required/has been obtained, etc. Consultation with the Environment Agency may be required ([Planning and transport authorities: get environmental advice on planning - GOV.UK](#)).

Paragraph 192 of the NPPF states that plans should:

“promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats”.

Wiltshire’s Core Policy 50 states:

“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, and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.”

As such, the applicant must provide further information about the anticipated impacts on the surrounding habitats, with particular reference to the pond systems, prior to the determination of the application.

Biodiversity Net Gain

From 12 February 2024 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). The applicant is seeking to apply the de minimis exemption, as the development meets the following criteria and is therefore below the de minimis threshold, meaning the development:

- o does not impact an onsite priority habitat (a habitat specified in a list published under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); and
- o impacts less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero and less than 5 metres in length of onsite linear habitat (as defined in the statutory metric).

Note to case officer: you should be satisfied that the proposals meet the above criteria and act accordingly. Further information will be required from the applicant prior to determination in the event the application is considered to be subject to mandatory biodiversity net gain.

Other comments

It is noted that the renovation of the existing filter beds will require the removal of a large area of scrub and ruderal vegetation. This is not captured in BNG requirements as this area of land falls outside of the redline boundary. Nonetheless, in line with NPPF and with CP50, applications that do not fall into the category where Biodiversity Net Gain is required must still ensure that no net loss of functional habitat for the benefit of wildlife in the local area will occur as a result of the proposed development. In addition, gains for biodiversity, relevant to local habitats and wildlife populations, should form part of the proposed development.

The ecology report recommends that 2 bird boxes, 2 bat boxes, and 1 hedgehog box are installed on the wider site. These enhancements – as well as wildlife-friendly plantings – should be secured via a condition. A reptile mitigation plan and wildlife protection plan are also recommended. These should ensure appropriate and sensitive site clearance measures are implemented. Again, said mitigation plans should be secured via a planning condition.

CONDITIONS: wording to be provided once all issues addressed.

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

Ecologist	Date
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