

## Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

### ECOLOGY

|                            |                                                                                                      |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Officer name:</b>       | Jenna Buss                                                                                           |
| <b>Date:</b>               | 17/02/2026                                                                                           |
| <b>Application number:</b> | PL/2025/09801                                                                                        |
| <b>Proposal:</b>           | Proposed Conversion of Existing Stone Barn, Erection of a New Detached Dwelling and associated works |
| <b>Site address:</b>       | Land adjacent Long Cottage, North Street, Mere, Warminster, BA12 6HH                                 |
| <b>Case officer:</b>       | Sarah Hill                                                                                           |

#### 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. December 2025. Stark Ecology
- Proposed Elevations 10403 P-02. May 2024. Baxter Green Architects
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric. December 2025. Georgis Starkie

#### Protected and Notable Species/Habitats

The site is located in the town of Mere surrounded by urban development. The proposal is to convert the existing barn on site to a residential dwelling and build on part of the existing garden to create an additional dwelling.

#### Bats

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal identified use of the barn by bats. During the surveys, evidence of bats in the form of droppings were identified, DNA analysis confirmed brown long eared bats. During the August emergence surveys 1 brown long eared bat was recorded entering the building. No other bats were seen to emerge or enter the building during the July, August and September emergence surveys. Common Pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, serotine, noctule and brown long eared bats were recorded foraging and commuting over the site.

The building was assessed as a night roost of low numbers of brown long eared bats. 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.

The proposed mitigation includes retaining a dedicated bat roost within the building. The loft space will measure 3 m by 2 m with a height of approximately 1 m and will be accessed via a slate entry point on the eastern roof slope. Bat friendly or bitumastic felt lining will be used. This provision is shown on the architect's drawings and should be secured through any granted permission. -friendly or bitumastic felt lining will be used. This provision is shown on the architect's drawings and should be secured through any granted permission.

### **Hedgehog**

Hedgehog were noted on each of the emergence surveys commuting through the site. To allow hedgehogs continued use, any new boundary fencing must include a 12cm x 12cm gap at the base to ensure continued foraging and commuting routes are not impeded, as outlined within the Ecological Appraisal.

Precautionary working methods are included within the ecology report for reptiles which is welcomed and should be secured with any permissions granted.

### **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 confirming the baseline and predicted post-development biodiversity units of the site has been submitted.

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         | 0.03 Habitat units  |
|                                                               | 0 Hedgerow units    |
|                                                               | 0 Watercourse units |
| Are there any <a href="#">irreplaceable</a> habitats on-site? | No                  |
| Has any habitat <a href="#">degradation</a> 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.

The submitted metric indicates 0.25 biodiversity units or less will be required to meet the 10% BNG requirement and that on-site BNG is not achievable. In these circumstances statutory credits can be bought without providing evidence that insufficient off-site options are available in England. For further information please refer to guidance on Statutory Biodiversity Credits on the

GOV.UK website (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/statutory-biodiversity-credits>) under 'How to prove statutory credits are needed'

#### **CONDITIONS:**

1. The development will be carried out in strict accordance with the following documents:
  - Discussion and Conclusions section of Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. December 2025. Stark Ecology
  - Proposed Elevations 10403 P-02. May 2024. Baxter Green Architects
  - Statutory Biodiversity Metric. December 2025. Georgis Starkie

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

#### **INFORMATIVES:**

##### **Bats**

The roof space of the existing barn to be converted 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.

##### **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.

#### **Final sign off – all matters addressed:**

|                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Ecologist<br>Jenna Buss | Date<br>17/02/2025 |
|-------------------------|--------------------|