

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	25/02/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/00442
Proposal:	Technical Details Consent for the erection of 2no. dwellings with associated access, parking, turning, landscaping and private amenity space – and removal of existing barns (following the approval of PL/2025/06697)
Site address:	Land at Newlands Farm, Rodbourne Road, Corston, Malmesbury, SN16 0HB
Case officer:	David Millinship

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)
a)	Baseline surveys and mitigation	CP50, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Habitat Regulations 2017, NPPF	25/02/2026 -Reptile survey results and mitigation - GCN survey results and mitigation OR signed and countersigned Impact Assessment Conservation Payment Certificate (IACPC) for District Level Licencing	

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:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, All Ecology Ltd, December 2025
- Location Plan & Existing Site Plan, Fowler Architecture & Planning, December 2025
- Proposed Site Plan, Fowler Architecture & Planning, December 2025
- Landscape Proposals, Acla, January 2026
- Tree Protection Plan, Naturally Trees, December 2025
- Planning Statement, Fowler Architecture & Planning, January 2026

The site comprises a grassland field with two buildings, where it is proposed to demolish the buildings and construct two dwellings. The site is located in a rural area, bordered by grassland to the north, east and south, with residential properties to the west.

COMMENTS:

Protected and notable wildlife

Bats

The site contains two disused barns, one of which is fully open to the elements with a metal corrugated roof. The second barn has concrete-block walls but, again, is exposed to the elements with some sections of roof missing. Overall, the buildings and trees were not considered to offer any roosting opportunities for bats.

The site is of some foraging value, possessing open grassland areas, scrub and hedgerow, and is well-connected to other suitable habitats. Given that the site is likely to be currently unlit, new lighting should be designed to avoid light spill onto sensitive features such as boundary hedgerow, managing the residual risk posed to species such as bats. Further, the ecology report recommends that roosting opportunities are included in the new buildings, in line with Wiltshire's Core Policy 50 (CP50) and the NPPF. Should planning permission be granted, a biodiversity enhancements condition should be applied to ensure enhancements for bats and other species are provided.

Reptiles

Reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are listed in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act) as species of principal importance (priority species). The ecology report states that there is "significant potential for presence" of reptiles, given the optimal reptile habitat reported (scrub, ruderal vegetation and open areas for basking). Therefore, the report concludes that a reptile survey is required. **Please could the applicant confirm whether surveys have been undertaken and, subsequently, what mitigation is proposed?** Sufficient and appropriate information and/or mitigation measures to ensure no net loss of local biodiversity resource as a result of the proposed development must be submitted.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

GCN are a European Protected Species 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. Sufficient and appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that GCN are not adversely affected as a result of the proposed development must be submitted as part of the proposal.

The site contains habitats suitable for use by GCN during their terrestrial phase (e.g., hedgerow, scrub and ruderal areas), most of which will be removed. There is a pond 64m south of the site as well as 260m southeast. The ecology report identifies that survey work will be required to inform any mitigation, or alternatively, the applicant may wish to consider District Level Licensing (DLL). Instead of carrying out site-specific mitigation and compensation, the applicant can apply to Natural England to determine whether the scheme is eligible for DLL. Once the scheme is accepted under the District Level Licensing Scheme for Great Crested Newts, the Impact Assessment and Conservation Payment Certificate (IACPC) (which must be signed by the applicant and countersigned by Natural England) is submitted to the LPA. **This information (either the IACPC, or a survey-informed mitigation plan) is needed to determine whether**

adequate mitigation for the loss of GCN habitats can be successfully accommodated by the development.

Nesting birds

The adults, young, eggs and nests of all species of birds are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) while they are breeding. Please be advised that works should not take place that will harm nesting birds (such as vegetation clearance or building demolition) from March to August inclusive. 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. The ecology report's recommendation of nesting provisions for swifts and house martins is welcomed.

Other

The site backs onto open grassland which, in turn, is connected to Gauzebrook Meadows County Wildlife Site approximately 200m north of the red line boundary. Also 200m north is Gauze Brook waterway, associated with water vole records.

CP50 requires that CWSs are protected from the effects of development, and that proposals must demonstrate how features of nature conservation can be protected. It is therefore recommended that a Construction Method Statement (CMS) is secured via planning condition, to include details of precautionary measures on habitats and protected species, as appropriate.

In line with the NPPF and with CP50, applications must also 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. The required survey data and mitigation (as above) will need to be considered within the overall layout/scheme. At present, for example, it is not clear which areas of the site can be retained/enhanced for reptiles.

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). Based on the information available, the biodiversity gain planning condition is not considered to apply to this application as it is for self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

- consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
- consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding (as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015), as indicated in the application form.

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.

IN SUMMARY: Insufficient information has been submitted. In carrying out its statutory function, the LPA must be reasonably sure that the proposal will not result in significant adverse effects on protected species. The information outlined above must therefore be submitted and reviewed by the LPA's ecology team prior to determination of the application. I therefore maintain a holding objection until all the issues listed above have been suitably 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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