

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	29/01/2026, 26/02/2026
Application number:	PL/2025/09925
Proposal:	Construction of 18 hole adventure golf course and associated parking
Site address:	Basset Down Complex, Hay Lane, Basset Down, Swindon, SN4 9QP
Case officer:	Audrey Lo

Recommendations:

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

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:

- Planning, Design and Access Statement, Wessex Planning, December 2025
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Luscinia Ecology, November 2025, [updated February 2026](#)
- Biodiversity Statement and Biodiversity Gain Plan, Luscinia Ecology, November 2025, [updated February 2026](#)
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Mel Granato, November 2025
- [Planting plan showing bird box details, Greenspan, January 2026](#)
- [Layout Plan, 5245 Revision 3, Greenspan, February 2026](#)

The site comprises an existing golf course/venue where it is proposed to construct an 18-hole adventure golf course.

[The applicant has provided updated documents, including a plan showing the specifications and approximate locations of three proposed bat boxes, in effort to satisfy the recommended biodiversity enhancements condition and also clarify the setting of the proposed BNG. My second comments are shown below in blue.](#)

COMMENTS:

Protected species and habitats

The only habitats to be affected are previously-managed amenity grassland, one tree, and hardstanding. Although these are of limited ecological value, it is noted that the surrounding habitats could be used by badgers, reptiles, amphibians, nesting birds and bats. As such, the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal sets out appropriate precautions for the construction phase, including pollution prevention, sensitive lighting, and exclusion fencing for amphibians. The report

also advises a pre-works inspection by a professional ecologist holding a great crested newt licence. This is because whilst the on-site habitats are of limited value for great crested newts, there is a waterbody immediately adjacent to the site as well as 43m southwest. **All recommendations outlined in Section 5 should be adhered to, and secured via a condition.**

One small tree will be removed, though this was found not to have any potential bat roosting features. The site may be used by foraging and commuting bats as it links to good habitat in the wider area (woodland to the east, a line of trees and grassland to the south, with fields further beyond). **A condition should be set to ensure that any new lighting is wildlife-sensitive and agreed with by the council.**

In line with the NPPF and CP50, the report proposes that three woodstone bird nest boxes will be installed. **The locations of these enhancements are not shown on any plans, therefore, a biodiversity enhancement condition should be applied.**

A plan was submitted that details the specification of the three bird boxes (Vivara pro WoodStone boxes) and indicated an approximate location adjacent to the site boundary. Whilst the bird boxes were, in principle, acceptable, these biodiversity enhancements cannot be secured off site via a planning condition. Following further correspondence, a revised layout plan was emailed showing the locations of the three bird boxes now within the redline boundary. I am therefore satisfied that the revised layout plan demonstrates sufficient enhancement for biodiversity, and said plan should be secured with an appropriately-worded condition.

Biodiversity Net Gain

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, map and habitat condition assessments (*'Biodiversity Statement and Biodiversity Gain Plan, Luscinia Ecology, November 2025'*; *'Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Mel Granato, November 2025'*) confirming the baseline and predicted post-development biodiversity units of the site have 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	0.45 Habitat units
	0.00 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation 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.

It is noted that 38 trees are proposed for 'habitat creation'. However, these are not marked on the on-site post intervention map (Figure 4 of the Biodiversity Statement and Biodiversity Gain Plan). If these are intended to be planted outside of the red line boundary, then the applicant should be

made aware that all land located outside the red line application boundary of the development site is considered off-site ([Make off-site biodiversity gains as a developer - GOV.UK](#)).

All off-site biodiversity gains sites must be registered on the national biodiversity gains site register. Guidance on how to register a biodiversity gains site including a list of item required to apply can be found here - [Register a biodiversity gain site - GOV.UK](#). In order for the Biodiversity Gain Plan condition to be discharged, all off-site gains must be shown on the Biodiversity Gain Plan as allocated to this development on the national biodiversity gains site register.

Off-site gains must be secured via a legal agreement for at least 30 years. This must be a planning obligation (Section 106 agreement) or conservation covenant. Wiltshire Council will not enter into a Section 106 agreement for off-site gains unless the off-site gain site has been verified. Contact ecologychargeableservice@wiltshire.gov.uk to request further information on site verification.

The applicant has confirmed that the proposed BNG will be achieved within the red line boundary (on-site), as mapped in Figure 4 (post-intervention map) of the updated Biodiversity Statement and Biodiversity Gain Plan.

CONDITIONS

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Section 5 of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Luscinia Ecology, November 2025, [updated February 2026](#)
- Biodiversity Statement and Biodiversity Gain Plan, Luscinia Ecology, November 2025, [updated February 2026](#)
- Bird boxes as shown on the Layout Plan, 5245 Revision 3, Greenspan, February 2026

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

2. Enhancements for Biodiversity

~~Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancements — such as nesting opportunities for birds and roosting opportunities for bats — 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. Artificial lighting

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 and light spill onto sensitive habitats and wildlife.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 26/02/2026
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