

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	02/04/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/00705
Proposal:	Proposed installation of 95 panels mounted via a low profile ground mounted racking system.
Site address:	Holt Farm, Ground Corner, Holt, Trowbridge, BA14 6RT
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

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:

- Block Plan, Spirit Energy, February 2026
- Trees & Hedges, Spirit Energy, February 2026
- Planning Statement, Spirit Solar Ltd, undated

The site comprises garden habitat where it is proposed to install 95 ground mounted solar panels over <0.03 ha. The garden is bordered by trees/hedges, with two lakes 60m northeast, and grassland fields to the north and west.

COMMENTS:

Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats Special Area for Conservation (SAC)

The site is located at the edge of a Greater Horseshoe core roost buffer (consultation zone) associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon SAC. The current proposal therefore has potential to result in significant adverse impact on the special features of the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon SAC.

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 currently proposed development which (i) involves no overall loss of a roost of a qualifying species, (ii) does not propose net loss of any key habitat (only a small area of garden vegetation will be removed, with trees added to achieve a net gain), and (iii) does not propose any additional external lighting, there is no mechanism for adverse impact on the Conservation Objectives of the SAC, and the proposal can be screened out of Appropriate Assessment.

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).

A completed small sites statutory metric calculation (Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric), Jack Taylor, February 2026) confirming the baseline units of the site has been submitted. The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	0.1255 Habitat units
	0.00 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	No

It is proposed that BNG will be achieved on-site via the planting of trees. 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.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 02/04/2026
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