

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	14/04/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/01035
Proposal:	Application for external alterations, part demolition of existing structures and hard and soft landscaping
Site address:	Avonside Enterprise Park, New Broughton Road, Melksham, SN12 8AD
Case officer:	James Taylor

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:

- Proposed Site Plan, BGY, July 2025
- Existing Site Plan, BGY, July 2025
- Ecological Impact Assessment Report, Wildwood Ecology, September 2025
- Illustrative Masterplan, Greenhalgh, June 2025
- Landscape Masterplan, Greenhalgh, P5, February 2026
- Cover letter/planning statement, Turley, March 2026

The site comprises an industrial estate proposed for redevelopment. Particularly, the upper floors of existing buildings will be converted into residential units. The current application concerns landscaping of the site, as well as external alterations and some demolition works.

COMMENTS:

Protected species and habitats

Habitats

There are no important habitats on-site that will be lost as part of the current proposal. The site does not fall within any protected sites or consultation zones. It is, however, adjacent to the Bristol Avon/River Avon, which comprises a Priority Habitat and County Wildlife Site. This river ultimately connects to the extent of the River Avon that is statutorily designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

As recommended by the ecology report, as well as response from the Environment Agency, a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) will be necessary.

Bats

All buildings on-site, excluding Scott's Gym, were found to be of negligible bat roosting potential. Scott's Gym – which is to be demolished under the current proposal – was found to have numerous potential roosting features, and therefore assessed as having high bat roosting potential. In July-September 2025, this building was subject to three emergence surveys. No emergences were noted, but lesser horseshoe were observed foraging within a dark corridor between the building and tree line to the southeast. As such, and considering the large number of features present, the ecology report recommends that the building is removed under supervision of a bat licenced ecologist. This recommendation should be adhered to, and secured via a compliance condition.

Species recorded using the river corridor include pipistrelles, brown long-eared bats, noctules, but also rarer species (and Annex II species) such as greater and lesser horseshoes. It will therefore be appropriate to ensure any new lighting – of the wider site – is wildlife-sensitive, and a condition has been recommended.

Other

Although no evidence of otter, water vole, or beaver was identified on-site, these species may be using the nearby River Avon. Precautionary measures, to ensure the risk posed to them remains minimal, should be outlined in the aforementioned CEMP.

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.

Biodiversity enhancements

Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy requires all development to demonstrate no net loss of biodiversity and to seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. The NPPF also encourages applications to deliver measurable net gains (para 193d). The ecology report recommends the inclusion of multiple bird and bat boxes, but these do not appear to be shown on any plans. As such, a biodiversity enhancements condition should be applied. Suitable enhancements could include swift and bat bricks, invertebrate blocks and habitat piles in, e.g., the isolated corner(s) of species-rich grassland. The proposed tree plantings through the site are welcomed and will improve the site relative to the current scenario, with the site being currently entirely paved.

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 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.

CONDITIONS:

1. Compliance with submitted documents

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

- Section 4 of the Ecological Impact Assessment Report, Wildwood Ecology, September 2025

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

2. Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP)

Prior to the commencement of works, including demolition, ground works/excavation, site clearance, vegetation clearance and boundary treatment works, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to the local planning authority for approval in writing. The Plan shall provide details of the avoidance, mitigation and protective measures to be implemented before and during the construction phase, including but not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Identification of ecological protection areas/buffer zones and tree root protection areas and details of physical means of protection, e.g. exclusion fencing.
- Working method statements for protected/priority species, such as nesting birds and reptiles.
- Work schedules for activities with specific timing requirements in order to avoid/reduce potential harm to ecological receptors; including details of when a licensed ecologist and/or ecological clerk of works (ECoW) shall be present on site.
- Key personnel, responsibilities and contact details (including Site Manager and ecologist/ECoW).

Development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved CEMP.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection and mitigation for ecological receptors prior to and during construction, and that works are undertaken in line with current best practice and industry standards and are supervised by a suitably licensed and competent professional ecological consultant where applicable.

Note to case officer: It is noted that the Environment Agency have recommended a similar condition, and it may be appropriate to combine them.

3. 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 habitat used by bats.

4. Biodiversity Enhancements

Prior to the commencement of any works, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancements – such as bird and bat boxes – 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.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 14/04/2026
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