

Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Elizabeth Burrows, Senior Ecologist
Date:	17/04/2026
Application No:	PL/2025/07258
Proposal:	Variation of condition 2 (Approved Plans) of application 20/11097/FUL relating to site layout, lighting, ecological enhancement and lodge details.
Site Address:	Fairwood Lakes Holiday Park, Fairwood Road, Dilton Marsh, Westbury, BA13 4EL
Case Officer:	Andrew Thomas

Recommendations:

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

Appropriate Assessment with a positive conclusion must be sent to Natural England, who must agree the conclusion (within 21 days) prior to this application being permitted.

Further Information Required:

	Issue	Policy/Legislative Compliance	Date information requested & Further information required	Satisfactorily addressed (Document & Date submitted)
1	Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC	Habitat Regulations, CP50, NPPF 15. Para 187 a and d.	Amended Ecological Enhancement Site Plan and Ecological Impact demonstrating that the ecological mitigation will deliver outcomes that are equal to or a betterment than provided for the parent application. Amended Lighting Plan or Lux Plan. Confirmation of increase in development footprint (m2)t.	
2	Mitigation (protected species water vole and reptiles)	CP50, NPPF 15. Para 187 d.	Amended Ecological Enhancement Site Plan and Ecological Impact Assessment.	

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 your consultation on the above application. I have reviewed the submitted documents against OS maps, aerial photographs 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:

- Site Plan – s73 Master Plan Dwg 523-3002-s4

- Ecological Enhancement Site Plan Dwg 523-3004-S4 Rev 01
- Lighting Plan dwg 523-3003-S4 Rev A

COMMENTS:

An Ecological Assessment has not been submitted in support of this application. The amended layout appears to result in a reduction of ecological mitigation, specifically bat commuting habitat, through a reduction in area and disturbance from increased lighting. The development is located within consultation zones for the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC and has the potential to support protected and notable species (bats, water vole, reptiles and nesting birds). As a result, an update Ecological Impact Assessment is required. Insufficient information to determine potential impacts on the following habitats and protected/notable species: Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC, foraging and commuting bats, water vole, reptiles and nesting birds.

In carrying out its statutory function, the LPA must be reasonably sure that the proposal will not result in significant adverse effects on protected habitats or species. The information outlined above must therefore be submitted and reviewed by the LPA's ecology team prior to determination of the application.

Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC

The Site lies within a Core Area as defined by the Bat Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire due to its location within 2 km of a core roost for greater horseshoe bats (GHB) at Westbury Leigh. The Site also lies on the Yellow Zone as defined by the Trowbridge and Westbury Bat Mitigation Guidelines (TWBMS). Appropriate Assessment (AA) under Section 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) must be carried out by the relevant Competent Authority (the LPA) to determine the potential significant effects and the suitability of any measures proposed to avoid or mitigate those effects.

Insufficient information has so far been submitted to enable the AA to be undertaken, which must be completed and the conclusion agreed with Natural England prior to the application being determined.

Records confirm GHB and lesser horseshoe bats (LHB) roost within 400m. Surveys to determine the status and activity of GHB and LHB were undertaken in 2022 and were reported in an Ecological Appraisal and Mitigation Strategy prepared by Malford Environmental Consulting (dated 22 August 2022). While this report has not been submitted in support of the current application, its findings remain relevant and have informed these comments.

The 2022 surveys confirmed that GHB used all the boundaries at relatively low intensity and duration indicating commuting activity rather than sustained foraging. The greatest and most sustained activity was recorded at hedgerow 3 (H3) at the eastern boundary.

Site Layout

The layout approved with 20/11097/FUL included mitigation required to conclude the AA positively. Specifically mitigation specified on the approved Ecological Enhancement Site Plan prepared by Ashely Design (February, 2018) included a nature trail around the perimeter of the Site including wildflower grassland and new hedge planting to create a green lane with dual hedge suitable for use by commuting bats, specifically GHB. The number of cabins proposed by the parent application was reduced to 50 to specifically accommodate this require mitigation.

Whilst the nature trail specified on the approved Ecological Enhancement Site Plan Dwg 2626-20-03 Rev A appears to remain largely intact there is a notable reduction in the southwest corner for the provision of an undefined structure. Hedgerow planting required to provide corridors of habitat across the site and mitigation for the loss of woodland habitat are no longer proposed and have been replaced with native

bush planting. While the proposed Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) have the potential to provide bat foraging habitat, this is dependent on their detailed design, long-term management, and lighting.

The submitted Master Plan or Ecological Enhancement Site Plan does not include details required to provide certainty that the required mitigation (quantum m2, habitat types and management objectives) will be secured if permission is forthcoming. To resolve this, it is recommended that the Ecological Enhancement Plan is amended to include, but not exclusively, measured buffer distances, habitat requirements (specie-rich grassland, native scrub and trees) and the required primary management objectives to deliver biodiversity benefits (foraging and commuting bats and reptiles).

In order to be acceptable, the amended Ecological Enhancement Site Plan and accompanying Ecological Impact Assessment must demonstrate that the proposed ecological mitigation measures will deliver outcomes that are equivalent to, or represent an enhancement over, those secured under the parent application.

Lighting

The Lighting Plan and Lighting Calculations approved with 20/11097/FUL prepared by Ashely Design (February, 2019) demonstrated that external lighting would be kept to a minimum and limited to Low Level Lighting Bollards along access roads.

The Lighting Plan dwg 523-3003-S4 Rev A proposes a greater number of lighting units many of which are adjacent to the bat habitat/ nature trail on decking which may lead to unacceptable levels of light spill onto the dark zone. In addition, whilst it is noted that the proposed cabins have minimal fenestration on most sides they are now orientated so the elevation with large windows look out onto the bat habitat increasing the risk of light spill onto the dark corridors to unacceptable levels.

It is recommended that the lighting units on the decking are removed and where the dark flight lane is narrow cabins are rotated to reduce light spill. Alternatively, a plan demonstrating anticipated light levels along the dark flight lane will be acceptable (below 0.5 lux) must be submitted.

Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy - inner yellow zone (habitat creation)

The application site is located within the yellow medium risk zone of the Trowbridge & Westbury Bat Mitigation Strategy (TWBMS). The yellow medium risk zone represents the areas where habitat has been shown to be of importance, or is highly likely to be of importance for bats associated with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC, and in particular the yellow zone takes into consideration the foraging areas and flightlines of horseshoe species and Bechstein's bats and is anticipated to be able to accept a degree of development pressure provided applications are designed in accordance with the principles in the TBMS.

In accordance with Para 9.1.2 of the TWBMS any development on new greenfield sites must, where appropriate, contribute to strategic habitat requirements via contributions as follows:

All non-residential development types are required to contribute £29,137.50 per hectare (index linked from 2018) to be paid before commencement towards habitat mitigation detailed in Appendix 1 of the TWBMS.

To determine whether a financial contribution is required, the total development footprint (cabins, access roads, and associated infrastructure) within the southern field must be confirmed in square metres (m²) for both the parent application and the current variation (VAR). The contribution would be calculated on the basis of any increase in the development footprint, or reduction of bat habitat, compared to that already permitted, with the increase multiplied by £29,137.50.

Developer contributions must be secured through a Section 111, Section 106 or Unilateral Undertaking at the time of permission with contributions secured prior to commencement. The applicant should be

directed to the Guidance Note for Completing Agreements Under S.111 of the Local Government Act 1972. Where the applicant elects to use the S111 process the fee must be paid and S111 signed by both the applicant and the council on the granting of planning permission.

Salisbury Plain SPA - 6400m Buffer

This application lies within the 6.4km zone of influence of the Salisbury Plain SPA and in light of the HRA for the Wiltshire Core Strategy and the HRA for the Wiltshire Housing Site Allocations Plan it is screened into Appropriate Assessment due to the potential impact of recreational pressure on stone curlew in combination with other plans and projects.

A strategic Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared pertaining to development within the 6.4km zone of influence that could result in a likely significant effect on the SPA as a result of an increase in recreational / visitor pressure. The AA reached a conclusion of no adverse effects on the integrity of the SPA or its qualifying features provided that the council's mitigation strategy continues to be implemented. Annual stone curlew monitoring and protection measures continue to be secured by the Council.

In January 2026 Natural England (NE) confirmed that the strategic AA for Salisbury Plain SPA continues to be supported by NE until end of December 2026.

Water voles

Reports submitted with the parent application confirmed Lakes 2 and 3 support a large population of Water Vole predicted to be of county importance. It is noted that on the proposed Site Plan – s73 Master Plan Dwg 523-3002-s4 lodges cabins 1 -5 have been pulled back from the lake edge which is likely to reduce the risk of harm to water vole in this location and therefore welcomed. Lodge 14 on the eastern bank of Lake 2 is new and has potential to impact on protected and notable species including Water vole.

The requested Ecological Impact Assessment must be amended to reassess the impact on water vole.

Reptiles

As reported previously the development will result in the loss of the majority of habitat within Fields 2 and 3 reported as potentially suitable for use by reptiles.

The nature trail and associate habitats must ensure habitat suitable for widespread reptiles is retained. A condition is required to ensure methods to avoid harm to reptiles are included in a CEMP.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

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 application was made under section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and:

- the original planning permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates was granted before 12 February 2024; or
- the application for the original planning permission to which the section 73 planning permission relates was made before 12 February 2024.

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, an updated Ecological Assessment and amended plans are required to address the issues detailed above:

- a. Update of baseline conditions in relation to protected and notable species, specifically bats, water vole, reptiles, and nesting birds.

- b. Assessment of the development impacts using the updated baseline and focusing on changes and additions compared to the parent application.
- c. An evaluation of the proposed mitigation measures compared with those previously approved, including consideration of spatial extent, buffer distances, quantum of habitats and habitat specifications.
- d. Amended Lighting Plan and or a lighting assessment to demonstrate compliance with dark corridor requirements and to confirm that artificial lighting will not adversely affect bat commuting and foraging routes.
- e. In order to conclude the AA positively it must be demonstrated that the amendments will not as a minimum result in a reduction of bat commuting functionality.
- f. Amended plans in response to the Ecological Assessment to demonstrate no significant impacts on protected sites and protected and notable species.

DRAFT CONDITIONS:

All conditions must be reapplied.

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

Ecologist	Date