

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jenna Buss
Date:	10/06/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/02606
Proposal:	Erection of agricultural store
Site address:	Bitham House, Cutting Hill, Hungerford, RG17 0RW
Case officer:	Joe Lesam

Recommendations:

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

I have reviewed the application and supporting documents against OS Maps and aerial photography of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory sites and existing records of protected species.

The following submitted documentation was reviewed to inform this response:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. March 2026. All Ecology
- Block Plan 251014-03. April 2026. Fowler Architecture and Planning
- UK Hab Baseline Habitat Plan. All Ecology
- Biodiversity Net Gain Design Stage Report. April 2026. All Ecology

Protected and Notable Species

The Ecological Walkover Survey undertaken did not identify any protected or notable species present on site. A number of specimen trees were located in areas of modified grassland, with an area of blackthorn scrub to the south of the development boundary.

It is noted that the hedgerows present are likely to support the most biodiversity and are likely to be used as foraging and commuting routes for a number of species. These will be retained on the whole with small sections being removed for access. Replacement hedgerows are proposed within the BNG report, discussed further below. Hedgerows are important ecological corridors and should be retained where possible and be maintained as dark foraging and commuting routes for biodiversity. Lighting should follow guidance as laid out in the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals (2023) Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night.” as in accordance with the ecology report.

It is noted that a small area of the existing scrub appears to have been cleared to allow for fencing to be installed. The proposals within the ecology report suggest this area will be retained and will be allowed to establish which is welcomed.

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 confirming the baseline and predicted post-development biodiversity units of the site has been submitted however is not currently accepted.

The following issues must be addressed in the baseline prior to determination:

- The scattered trees have been excluded from the baseline on the basis of their size; however, this application area does not comprise vegetated garden habitat where different recording rules apply. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide requires that individual trees are included within the baseline where they are distinct features and not part of another habitat type. In practice, all established trees of a size sufficient to fall within the metric size classes (e.g. small and above) should be recorded. From the submitted photographs, it appears that a number of trees meet this criterion and should therefore be included as individual trees within the baseline assessment.

Offsite BNG

It is intended that an area of land (Woodland Planting Plan 23/2/4-03. Fowler Architecture and Planning) would be enhanced to achieve a 10% gain. All land located outside the redline application boundary of the development site is considered off-site (refer to information here [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 items 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.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist Jenna Buss	Date
-------------------------	------