

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jenna Buss
Date:	16/06/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/02572
Proposal:	SELF BUILD conversion of agricultural barn (non designated heritage asset) to C3 residential, demolition of modern dilapidated timber barn, minor alterations to retained barns, hard and soft landscaping, nutrient neutrality, Pre-Packaged Treatment Works (PPTW) and hard and soft landscaping.
Site address:	Oysters Farm, Gutch Common, Shaftesbury, SP7 9BE
Case officer:	Joe Richardson

Recommendations:

	No Comment
	Support
	No objection
x	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
	Objection - further information required
	Objection in principle
x	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 Assessment. March 2026. KP Ecology
- Drainage and PPTW Summary Note. February 2026. Benchmark
- Landscape Plan 751-1-R4. October 2025. The Landscape Service
- Natural England Nutrient Neutrality budget calculator for the River Avon SAC

Protected Species and Habitats

We note the application to convert the existing agricultural barn to a residential dwelling with associated works.

The buildings were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats and nesting birds. No evidence was found to support this and the barns were assessed as having negligible potential to support bats and barn owl. Barn 1 is damp due to water ingress and is well lit from the open doors and windows and holes in the roof. Barn 2 is an open sided building formed by corrugated metal sheeting.

No evidence of other protected or notable species were identified on site. Gutch Common SSSI designated for its lowland meadows, is located to the south and west with priority deciduous woodland habitat in Semley Common Local Wildlife Site to the south-west. Due to the nature and location of these sites, they are unlikely to be directly impacted by the proposal. However, these habitats support a number of mobile species including bat and dormice which could be impacted indirectly through increased lighting and removal of vegetation, as these habitats are functionally

linked via hedgerow networks. It is stated that the boundary features present are situated outside of the red line boundary and will be retained post construction which is welcomed. A construction environment management plan will be required to ensure there are no impacts to these habitats during construction, this could be secured by condition.

The landscape plan submitted outlines additional hedgerow planting and wildflower meadows to be created which is welcomed and aligns with 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. This landscaping should be secured by condition.

Although no direct impacts on the adjacent boundary habitats are anticipated, there is potential for indirect effects arising from increased lighting, which may disrupt ecological foraging and commuting corridors. No lighting details have been submitted in support of the application, all lighting provided on site should be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institute of Lighting Engineers in their publication GN01:2021, 'Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light' (ILP, 2021), and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

Bird and bat boxes will be installed as part of the proposal which is welcomed and should be secured by condition.

Habitat Regulations Assessment: River Avon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Hampshire Catchment

This development falls within the catchment of the River Avon SAC and has potential to cause adverse effects alone or in combination with other developments through discharge of phosphorus in wastewater. Appropriate Assessment 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.

The submitted nutrient calculation calculated a total phosphorus budget of 0.20 kg TP/year. The budget has been approved by Wiltshire Council.

A Council-led scheme of phosphorus credits will be available for development which meets certain criteria at a fixed cost per kilogram of phosphorus, provided supply of mitigation is available. A completed Hampshire Avon Credit Screening Approval Certificate is required to apply for this scheme. The ecology section of this certificate has been completed by the Council's ecology team for this application. This certificate can only be issued by the case officer if the application meets the two deliverability tests. Further details of the Council-led scheme, including eligibility criteria, current cost to purchase credits, and details of how to apply, is available on our website [Phosphorus and nitrogen mitigation - Wiltshire Council](#).

Ecology officer approval	Document reviewed – 16/06/2026
Approval of Nutrient Budget	Pre 2030 budget – 0.20 kg TP/year
	Budget approved - Yes
	Date - 16/06/2026

Council-issued phosphorus credits are expected to be available; however, to ensure that adequate mitigation is secured and deliverable for this development, the necessary credits must be secured as part of the permission.

Where Council mitigation is secured with the permission, a strategic Appropriate Assessment (AA) has been prepared for qualifying planning applications for residential and non-residential development, within sewered and non-sewered areas of the River Avon SAC catchment. The AA reached a conclusion of no adverse effects on the integrity of the SAC or its qualifying features and has been endorsed by Natural England (NE) provided that the council's mitigation strategy continues to be implemented.

The applicant has confirmed that they will be securing credits with the permission. The application must not be positively determined until the P-credits have been secured.

In the absence of a legal agreement the mitigation fee and administration charge for the scheme can be paid by a section 111. The administration fee must be paid on the granting of permission, the mitigation fee is payable prior to commencement of development.

The cost of phosphorus credits from the Council's strategic scheme to mitigate the burden would be £8,500.00 (£42500 per 1 kg/TP) plus legal and admin fees.

NEXT STEPS:

- *The case officer will send you the credit screening approval certificate*
- *Once you have received this you can apply directly via this form: [Development Application in the Hampshire Avon Catchment](#)*
- *You will then be emailed directly when credits are available (expected 2 weeks)*
- *There is then the option of securing credits via a Section 111 form which will be sent to you.*

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 is for self and Custom Build Development, meaning development which:

- consists of no more than 9 dwellings;
- is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares; and
- consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding (as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015).

CONDITIONS:

1. The development will be carried out in strict accordance with the following documents:
 - Preliminary Ecological Assessment. March 2026. KP Ecology
 - Landscape Plan 751-1-R4. October 2025. The Landscape Service
 - Natural England Nutrient Neutrality budget calculator for the River Avon SAC

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

2. The proposed package treatment plant and drainage field shall be installed, maintained and operated in accordance with the submitted specification and

details hereby approved. Any subsequent replacements shall have an equivalent or improved performance specification. The package treatment plant and drainage field shall be installed, connected and available for use before the development is occupied and they shall be maintained and operated thereafter for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: To provide ongoing and adequate nutrient mitigation for the nutrient neutrality water catchment for the life of the development and to ensure that any future package treatment plant is of an equivalent or improved standard.

3. The overnight development hereby approved shall be designed to ensure it does not exceed 110 litres per person per day water consumption levels (which includes external water usage) and a water efficiency assessment should be submitted. Before the development is brought into use, a water efficiency report certifying that this standard has been achieved shall be submitted to the local planning authority for its written approval.

REASON: To ensure compliance with the prevailing mitigation strategy for nutrient neutrality in the water catchment within which this development is located.

A water efficiency calculation will be needed to discharge this condition. For guidance on how to do this and what is required, please refer to the following document: '*The Building Regulations 2010 – Sanitation, hot water safety and water efficiency*', Appendix A (p36-44). https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/504207/BR_PDF_AD_G_2015_with_2016_amendments.pdf

4. Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancement features including bat boxes and bird boxes, shall be submitted to the Local Authority for approval. The approved details shall be implemented for the lifetime of the development and before completion of the final works.

REASON: To provide mitigation /enhancement for biodiversity.

5. No development shall commence on site (including any vegetation removal or works to existing structures), until a Construction Method Statement has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Construction Method Statement shall include all precautionary measures to be implemented during the construction period, for the protection of sensitive habitats and species known to be present within or adjacent the site, with particular reference to:

The tree and hedgerow boundary features to be retained.

The development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved Construction Method Statement.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection, mitigation and compensation for protected species and priority habitats throughout the construction period.

INFORMATIVES:

Nesting Birds

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 from March to August inclusive. All British birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 while birds are nesting, building nests and sitting on eggs. 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. Damage to extensive areas that could contain nests/breeding birds should be undertaken outside the breeding season. This season is usually taken to be the period between 1st March and 31st August but some species are known to breed outside these limits.

PTP

A non-mains sewerage system is proposed. The area in which the development is located is within close proximity to the River Avon and may experience flooding and ground water conditions of concern. Primary responsibility for ensuring sewage systems for new developments are adequate lies with the Building Control Department. We would recommend you satisfy yourself that a non-mains sewerage system is appropriate and practicable in the circumstances taking into account ground water conditions throughout the year. For further guidance see the National Planning Practice Guidance "Water supply, wastewater and water quality."

Any installation of a Package Treatment Plant needs to meet approval of Environment Agency's requirements under their permitting role.

Bats

There is a low risk that bats may occur at the development site. Many species of bat depend on buildings for roosting, with each having its own preferred type of roost. Most species roost in crevices such as under ridge tiles, behind roofing felt or in cavity walls and are therefore not often seen in the roof space. Bat roosts are protected all times by the Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 (as amended) even when bats are temporarily absent because, being creatures of habit, they usually return to the same roost site every year. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation or substitute for the need to obtain a bat licence if an offence is likely. If bats or evidence of bats is found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist or the applicant is advised to follow the advice of a professional ecologist or to contact Natural England's Batline through the internet.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist Jenna Buss	Date 17/06/2026
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