

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Abi Gazzard
Date:	01/07/2026
Application number:	PL/2026/03491
Proposal:	Variation of Condition 2 (Approved plans and documents) of PL/2026/00705 to allow for changes to the mounting system and an increase in 1 panel
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:

- Planning Statement, Spirit Solar Ltd, undated
- Trees & Hedges, Spirit Energy Ltd, May 2026
- Block Plan, Spirit Energy Ltd, May 2026
- Proposed Front, Rear and Side Plan, Spirit Energy, May 2026

The site comprises garden habitat where the installation of 95 ground mounted solar panels over <0.03 ha has been approved (PL/2026/00705). This application seeks to vary Condition 2 (approved plans) to allow for changes in the mounting system, and an increase of 1 panel. The redline boundary, and general location of the arrays, remains the same as previously approved.

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). As previously noted, BNG applies to this solar array proposal.

At the full application stage, a completed small sites statutory metric calculation (Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric), Jack Taylor, February 2026) was accepted. It was proposed that BNG would be achieved on-site via the planting of trees.

The proposed variation of Condition 2 does not alter the baseline estimate, nor does it change the plans for tree planting, as per the 'Trees & Hedges' plan provided. As such, there are no BNG-related concerns. **The applicant is reminded that a Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted prior to the commencement of development.**

Summary

I have no ecology-related objections to the proposed variation of Condition 2.

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

Ecologist Abi Gazzard	Date 01/07/2026
---------------------------------	---------------------------