

Wiltshire Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Jenna Buss
Date:	28/07/2026
Application number:	PL/2025/09484
Proposal:	Outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access for up to 135 dwellings, the creation of new vehicular access with footways from Swindon Road, provision of informal and formal open space, together with associated highways, landscape, earth works and level changes, foul and surface water drainage facilities, utilities provision and other associated and necessary infrastructure.
Site address:	Land North of Swindon Road, Royal Wootton Bassett
Case officer:	Gen Collins

Recommendations:

	No Comment
	Support
	No objection
x	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
	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:

- Ecological Impact Assessment. November 2025. EAD Ecology
- Parameter Plan STN-GEN-SW-DE-MP-13. August 2025. Stantec
- Illustrative Masterplan STN-GEN-SW-DR-MP-06H. August 2025. Stantec
- Ecology Parameter Plan. June 2026. EAD Ecology
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric. November 2025. EAD Ecology
- IACPC. DLL-ENQ-WILT-00132. October 2025. Natural England

Protected and Notable Species/Habitats

A suite of ecological surveys were undertaken in support of the outline application for 135 dwellings. The baseline ecological surveys were originally carried out from 2022 onwards, with updated UK Habitat Classification surveys and bat roost and activity surveys completed more recently. Whilst some of the earlier surveys are now beyond the standard validity period, the updated survey work, together with confirmation from the ecologist that no significant changes have occurred within the site or surrounding habitats, provides sufficient confidence that the survey findings remain representative of current site conditions. On this basis, the submitted ecological information is considered adequate to inform the application, and no further ecological surveys are requested at this stage.

Bats

A bat roost of common pipistrelle were identified within the building which will be lost to development. Bats and their roosts are afforded stringent protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and as such are a material consideration within the planning consultation process. Sufficient and appropriate mitigation measures to ensure that bats are not adversely affected as a result of the proposed development must be submitted as part of the proposal, and shown on development drawings, where bats are present, or likely to be present. Replacement roosting opportunities are proposed within the new buildings which is welcomed, these roosting opportunities must be included on technical drawings prior to commencement. An updated ecological parameters plan is required to ensure these ecological features are integrated into the development and can be secured by condition.

A European Protected Species (EPS) bat Mitigation Licence will need to be obtained for the lawful construction of this development. In terms of ecology, sufficient information has been provided to ensure that favourable conservation status of bats can be maintained should the application be approved.

Ground level tree assessment found no evidence of bats roosting within the trees on site.

A number of bat species including Annex II bats were recorded on site during the transect surveys. The surveys identified the northern hedgerow boundary as an important foraging and commuting route for bats. We welcome the Ecological Parameters Plan which establishes a dark corridor along the northern boundary. The scheme design has ensured the retention of this feature which should be secured.

Great Crested Newt

A suite of surveys for great crested newt were undertaken and GCN identified in close proximity to the site. Although no ponds exist on site, suitable habitat for the newts terrestrial phase is present within the boundary features and hedgerows. A District Level Licence has been sought, **DLL-ENQ-WILT-00132** and signed by Natural England which is welcomed.

The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates that the existing hedgerow features will be retained and the northern boundary maintained as a dark foraging and commuting route buffered by open space habitat and green infrastructure. The attenuation basin on site could be a beneficial ecological feature if it were to be designed to retain water permanently.

Additional detailed information will be required at reserved matters to ensure that the green infrastructure provides connectivity throughout the site allowing the safe movement of species through the site particularly hedgehog and providing additional nesting opportunities for birds, as outlined within the submitted EIA. This could be secured via an updated ecological parameters plan once the final design is known.

Pre commencement surveys will be required and should be detailed within the CEMP which should be secured by condition.

Reptile surveys undertaken in 2022 recorded no evidence of reptiles within the site. Whilst the survey commenced shortly after the deployment of artificial refugia, resulting in a relatively limited settling-in period, survey visits were carried out throughout the peak survey season in April and May. Had a reptile population been present, it is considered likely that individuals would have been detected during this period. Furthermore, the proposed layout retains areas of open space and suitable habitat within the northern part of the site. As such, should reptiles have subsequently colonised the site since the surveys were completed, suitable habitat would remain available within the development to accommodate any such presence.

BNG

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 (Statutory Biodiversity Metric. November 2025. EAD Ecology) confirming the baseline and predicted post- development biodiversity units of the site has been submitted (including the condition assessment sheets (where applicable) and maps).

Information in the completed on-site baseline habitat tabs is accepted as accurate based on the information submitted. The pre-development (baseline) situation is summarised below.

On-site pre-development (baseline) biodiversity value	13.57 Habitat units
	7.35 Hedgerow units
	0.00 Watercourse units
Are there any irreplaceable habitats on-site?	No
Has any habitat degradation of occurred?	No

The Biodiversity Gain Plan must be accompanied by a completed Biodiversity Metric with the following issues addressed:

- Other neutral grassland is unlikely to achieve “good” condition within an urban environment, the proposed condition should be revised to a more appropriate target.

The proposed BNG is considered ‘significant’ due to:

- the scale and nature of the application (major);
- units required (23.02 units), and
- the BNG proposed (including medium distinctiveness habitats of scrub neutral grassland and trees).

A Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) will be required and should be secured via condition.

In order for the council to fulfil its BNG monitoring responsibilities, a Biodiversity Net Gain On-site 30 year Monitoring Fee 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.

In order for the council to fulfil its monitoring obligations, the BNG monitoring fee would be £12,000 plus legal fees payable on commencement of development.

CONDITIONS:

1. The development will be carried out in strict accordance with the following documents:

- Parameter Plan STN-GEN-SW-DE-MP-13. August 2025. Stantec
- Illustrative Masterplan STN-GEN-SW-DR-MP-06H. August 2025. Stantec
- Ecology Parameter Plan. June 2026. EAD Ecology
- Statutory Biodiversity Metric. November 2025. EAD Ecology
- IACPC. DLL-ENQ-WILT-00132. October 2025. Natural England

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

2. No development shall commence on site until a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (the HMMP), prepared in accordance with the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan and including:

- a non-technical summary;
- the roles and responsibilities of the people or organisation(s) delivering the HMMP;
- the planned habitat creation and enhancement works to create or improve habitat to achieve the biodiversity net gain in accordance with the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan and schedule for implementation;
- the management measures to maintain habitat in accordance with the statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan for a period of 30 years from the completion of development; and
- the monitoring methodology and specification of a Monitoring Pack (to include but not exclusively up to date Management Actions Logs, Habitat Condition Assessment Reports, metric calculation; and corresponding post intervention Habitat Map) which shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority in years 2 (two) 5 (five) 10 (ten) 15 (fifteen) 20 (twenty) and 30 (thirty) of the Maintenance Period,

has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority.

The created and/or enhanced habitat shall be managed and maintained in accordance with the statutory HMMP at all times thereafter.

REASON: To ensure the development delivers a biodiversity net gain on site in accordance with Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

3. At Reserved Matters, the Ecological Parameters Plan will be resubmitted to encompass the bat and bird nesting opportunities outlined within the Ecological Impact Assessment. (November 2025. EAD Ecology). The design will ensure the green infrastructure will allow movement throughout the site and provide access for mammals including hedgehog passes in addition to the provision on the current plan (Ecology Parameter Plan. June 2026. EAD Ecology). This document will set out the ecologically sensitive areas of the site that will be retained, protected and enhanced.

REASON: To protect the ecologically sensitive features of the site.

4. 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.
- Mitigation strategies already agreed with the local planning authority prior to determination, such as for great crested newts, dormice or bats; this should comprise the pre-construction/construction related elements of strategies only.
- 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.

5. All lighting provided on site shall 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.

REASON: In the interests of the amenities of the area and to minimize impacts on biodiversity caused by light spillage to areas above and outside the development site.

INFORMATIVES:

Nesting Birds

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.

GCN

The scheme will be operating under a District Level Licence (DLL) for Great Crested Newts. Great Crested Newts are protected under Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation.

Bats

The building on site is used as a bat roost. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is an offence to harm or disturb bats or damage or destroy their roosts. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. The applicant is advised that a European Protected Species Licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission.

Future conversion of the roof space to living accommodation or replacing the roof could also breach this legislation and advice should be obtained from a professional bat ecologist before proceeding with work of this nature.

Final sign off – all matters addressed:

Ecologist Jenna Buss	Date 30/07/2026
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