



25<sup>th</sup> August 2026

## RE: ECOLOGICAL REVIEW OF PROPOSED NEW FACILITIES AT FAIRWOOD LAKES, DILTON MARSH, WILTSHIRE

Terrawise DM (the client) is proposing to submit a s73 application to Wiltshire Council to vary planning condition no. 2 (Approved Plans) of application 20/11097/FUL (approved in 2022) at Fairwood Lakes, Dilton Marsh, Wiltshire, hereafter referred to as the 'site'. The application will seek a new layout to the northern part of the site, including a new facilities building with a padel court, a spa building, new car parking layout and ancillary outbuildings such as a buggy cover and storage.

This document provides an impact assessment of the proposals on the ecological interest of the site. Please refer to the Inspired Partnership Limited (IP) drawing: 523-3023 Rev. 03 Proposed Site Plan, in conjunction with this statement.

### Habitats

The proposals mainly impact already developed land, such as the existing car parking, play area and facilities buildings. A small number of shrub beds will also be lost. There are no ecological constraints with the loss of these habitats. The proposed car parking will result in the loss of some mature and semi-mature trees, to the east of Lake 1 on the site boundary. These trees form part of a plantation woodland, including White Poplar, Silver Birch and Lime, typical of the plantation woodlands found throughout the site. The ground flora is species-poor.

Habitat creation, including multiple new trees, is proposed for the southern part of the site and tree planting can also be included within parts of the northern areas, all of which would adequately compensate for the loss of part of a species-poor plantation woodland, as well as shrub beds.

### Bats

The site lies within the Core Area for a Greater Horseshoe Bat (GHB) *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* core roost at Westbury Leigh<sup>1</sup>, part of the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Therefore, during the previous planning application, consideration was given to the usage of the site by Greater Horseshoe bats. Bat transect surveys were undertaken to support the planning application, finding low numbers of GHB foraging along the site boundaries. It was agreed to provide a

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<sup>1</sup> Bat Special Areas of Conservation – Planning Guidance for Wiltshire (2015)

nature trail along the site boundaries at the southern end of the site, incorporating a new hedgerow to be planted opposite the existing boundary vegetation, creating a dual hedgerow, with a wildflower grassland strip along the middle between the two hedgerows, enhancing and providing suitable GHB foraging and commuting habitat, as well as foraging and commuting habitat for other bat species. This was also designed with an aim to limit lightspill from the lodges, coupled with a sensitive lighting scheme across the whole development zone. The bat habitat mitigation has been slightly changed during a subsequent s73 application for the redesign of the holiday lodges at the southern end of the site and the site layout still provides adequate mitigation and compensatory habitat for bats, including a wildflower bund and two new waterbodies.

During an Ecological Appraisal of the site in July 2025 (Rachel Hacking Ecology<sup>2</sup>), none of the trees within any of the plantation woodlands were found to support Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) for bats. A storage barn at the north-western edge of the site was found to support evidence of a bat roost. No other bat roosts were located during the PEA survey and other buildings, including those to be impacted upon from the facilities proposals, were classed as offering negligible bat roosting suitability.

The proposed locations of the facilities, car parking and spa building will not impact upon any bat roosts or potential bat roosts. The trees to be lost are at the edge of the tree belt/woodland. The woodland does offer suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat but the loss of the trees will not sever a linear landscape feature, it will slightly shorten it only. Therefore, coupled with a sensitive lighting scheme, the retained trees and the wider site will continue to provide suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat.

Bat boxes will be erected onto the retained trees.

Given the above measures, and the fact that only a low number of GHB were observed using the site boundaries during previous surveys, it is considered that the new facilities layout will not deleteriously impact upon the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.

#### Water Vole & Otter

No evidence of Water Vole or Otter was found during the ecological survey, despite thorough searches of the lake edges and ditches. The new spa facilities are located on the bank of Lake 1, which will impact upon the lakeside habitats such as ruderal vegetation, marginal vegetation and a scattered scrub. There is not expected to be any impact on Water Vole or Otter from the proposals but it is recommended that a pre-commencement survey for Water Vole and Otter is undertaken. If evidence of Water Vole activity is found or an Otter holt is found, a mitigation strategy must be produced and implemented.

#### Nesting Birds

The proposals will impact upon suitable bird nesting habitat (i.e. the woodland and shrubs). The vegetation clearance for the development should take place outside of the bird nesting season (which is generally considered to be March to August inclusive). If work to vegetation must take place between

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<sup>2</sup> RHE.4650 Updated EcIA at Fairwood Lakes, Dilton Marsh, Wiltshire 2026

March and August, a nesting bird check will be required by a suitably experienced ecologist and any active nests left undisturbed.

#### Other Protected Species

No other protected species constraints exist on site (see EclA report) and the facilities development is not expected to impact on other protected species, such as reptiles, Badger or Great Crested Newt.

#### Summary

The new facilities proposals will not impact on Priority Habitat or high-quality habitat, with only a small part of species-poor plantation woodland, shrub beds and a small amount of ruderal vegetation and marginal vegetation affected. Habitat creation will adequately compensate for the loss of these habitats. It is anticipated that no protected species will be deleteriously impacted upon by the proposals. A pre-commencement check for Water Vole and Otter will ensure that these species are protected where necessary. The provision of bat boxes, bird boxes, species-rich landscaping and new waterbodies will provide high-quality protected species habitat as well as attract other wildlife.



Dr Rachel Hacking  
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