

Appropriate Assessment of Effects on a European Site

This is a record of the appropriate assessment of Wiltshire Council required by Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). The project has been assessed as likely to have significant effects on one or more European protected sites and is not directly connected to or required for the management of such sites.

PART A: INFORMATION REVIEWED	
Information about the plan or project	Application Number: PL/2026/00782 Site Address: Land at Sling Road, Bulford, Wiltshire, SP4 9AP Proposal: The erection of 8 dwellings and associated infrastructure. 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. Therefore, the application is screened into Appropriate Assessment (AA) under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
European site(s)	River Avon SAC Hampshire Catchment
List of European Site interest features and Conservation Objectives	Qualifying Features: Annex 1 Habitat Type - Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation; Rivers with floating vegetation often dominated by water-crowfoot Annex II Species <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i>; Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>; Sea lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i>; Brook lamprey <i>Salmo salar</i>; Atlantic salmon <i>Cottus gobio</i>; Bullhead The conservation objectives for the site are: Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; ➤ The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species; ➤ The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats; ➤ The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species;

	➤ The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely; ➤ The populations of qualifying species, and, ➤ The distribution of qualifying species within the site. European Site Conservation Objectives for River Avon Special Area of Conservation Site Code: UK0013016 published by Natural England 27 November 2018 (Version 3)
Information about the SAC	The River Avon is one of the most diverse chalk streams in the UK, with over 180 species of plants, one of the most diverse fish faunas, and a wide range of aquatic invertebrates. The River Avon is Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) includes a number of rivers and adjacent habitats. Conservation objectives for the SAC and supplementary advice for implementing them have been published by Natural England (NE)^{1,2}. These are underpinned by targets for various chemical and physical attributes of the river in line with Common Standards Monitoring Guidance (CSMG). Development within the catchment has the potential to have a detrimental effect upon its qualifying features through direct damage, sedimentation, pollution, disturbance, or changes to its hydrological regime. Currently development in the catchment has resulted in elevated levels of phosphorous through foul water discharges from sewage treatment works and package treatment plants preventing the conservation objectives from being achieved and causing the river to be in unfavourable condition. Development that 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. Elevated phosphorous preventing the conservation objectives from being achieved and causing the river to be in unfavourable condition.
Other relevant plans or projects	Wiltshire Core Strategy adopted January 2015
PART B: IMPACT PREDICTION ALONE	
Impact	Predicted Effect of Impact
Elevated phosphorous through discharge of phosphorus in wastewater.	Yes - The submitted nutrient calculation calculated a total phosphorus budget of 0.88 kg TP/year pre 2030 and 0.20 kg TP/year post 2030. The budget has been approved by Wiltshire Council.

Desmoulins whorl snail requires wetland conditions found in flood zone 3. The SAC could be affected even if the application affects wetland habitat outside the SAC boundary. Examples of impact could be trampling, direct loss, land drainage, grazing etc.	The application does not lie in flood zone 3.
Nutrient Enrichment ((Water is "fertilized" causing increased plant growth and accumulation of organic matter that can degrade water quality)	Not predicted
Alterations to groundwater flows could occur where developments require deep excavations, extensive EA response may indicate potential for significant effects since it is responsible for permits for water abstraction and any works within 8m of a main river.	Alterations to ground water flows are not predicted.
Toxic contamination (poisonous chemicals enter the river system directly or indirectly).	Toxic contamination is not predicted.
Physical changes (e.g. works/works traffic close to the river bank/in flood plain. Modification of river banks or beds, including retaining walls, laying of pipes across the river bed).	The application lies 370m from the Nine Mile River and 2.4km from the banks of the SAC therefore physical changes are not predicted.
Is there a risk of discharges which do not fall under the EA regulation system e.g. use of detergents, oil storage etc in agricultural apps?	This is an application for residential development.
Construction phase impacts e.g. surface run-off, solid debris falling into river, damage to banks, water abstraction, soil disturbance, spread of invasive non-native plants.	The application lies 2.4km from the banks of the SAC therefore construction impacts are not predicted.
PART C: IMPACT PREDICTION IN-COMBINATION	
In combination with other plans or projects?	
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	
PART D: CONSEQUENCES FOR CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	

Does the project or plan have the potential to cause delays in progress towards achieving the conservation objectives of the site by:	
Adversely impacting the extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species/	Yes - Increased phosphorus levels causes the rapid growth of plants through Eutrophication. This results in adverse impacts on the qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species.
Adversely impacting the structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats	Yes - Increased phosphorus levels causes the rapid growth of plants through Eutrophication. This results in adverse impacts on the structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats.
Adversely impacting the structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species	Yes - Increased phosphorus levels causes the rapid growth of plants through Eutrophication. This results in adverse impacts on the structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species.
Adversely impacting the supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely	Yes - Increased phosphorus levels causes the rapid growth of plants through Eutrophication. This results in adverse impacts on the supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely.
Reducing the population of key species.	Yes - Increased phosphorus levels causes the rapid growth of plants through Eutrophication. This results in adverse impacts on the population of key species.
Reducing the distribution of qualifying species within the site.	Yes - Increased phosphorus levels causes the rapid growth of plants through Eutrophication. This results in adverse impacts on the distribution of key species.

PART E: MITIGATION PROPOSED

The development lies within the Mid Avon Netheravon catchment where the Council's mitigation scheme is currently available but confirmation of the use of Council credits has not been secured by the applicant.

A Council-led scheme of phosphorus credits may be available for development which meets certain criteria at a fixed cost per kilogram of phosphorus, provided supply of mitigation is available at the time of purchase.

However, the planning permission will neither secure bespoke mitigation nor reserve any Council phosphorus credits. Mitigation ensuring the development does not add to the existing nutrient burden has therefore been secured by the following planning condition:

The development hereby permitted shall not commence until evidence of compliance to the Wiltshire Council River Avon Special Area of Conservation Mitigation scheme, or an alternative approved mitigation package addressing the additional nutrient input arising from the development, has been submitted to, and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To accord with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and Wiltshire Core Strategy Core Policy 69.

Mitigation will therefore be required to remove the calculated phosphorus burden of 0.88 kg TP/year from the catchment prior to the commencement of construction.

To ensure compliance with the prevailing mitigation strategy a water usage condition has also been secured with this permission which states:

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

Development will not commence until mitigation has been submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority. Discharge of Grampian condition will be subject to AA. Development will not be permitted to commence until that AA has been concluded favourably.

PART F: CONCLUSION

Is the project likely to affect site integrity?

a) Alone?

With the mitigation measures secured there is anticipated to be no likely significant effect.

b) In combination with other plans or projects?

With the mitigation measures secured there is anticipated to be no likely significant effect.

Recommendation:

Name of officer(s) making the assessment and date

Jenna Buss Senior Ecologist 02/10/2026

Natural England Comments

Name of Natural England officer and date