

Council Planning Consultation Response

ECOLOGY

Officer name:	Elizabeth Burrows (senior ecologist)
Date:	25/09/2026, 06/10/2026
Application No:	PL/2026/04386
Proposal:	Construct 2 no. affordable houses with associated access and parking area.
Site Address:	Land at Top Lane, Stourton, Warminster, Wiltshire, BA12 6QA
Case Officer:	Verity Giles-Franklin

Recommendations:

☐	No Comment
☐	Support
☐	No objection
☐	Condition (no objection subject to conditions)
☒	Objection - further information required
☐	Objection in principle
☐	HRA.

Further Information Required:

	Issue	Policy/Legislative Compliance	Date information requested & Further information required	Satisfactorily addressed (Document & Date submitted)
1	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - Baseline	Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990	Amend red line and baseline assessment to accord with submitted plans.	

The outstanding document(s) listed above are needed to enable the council's ecology team to consider all the relevant impacts and benefits of the proposed scheme. The council's ecologists will provide a further response once all the above information has been submitted via the case officer.

Please Note: When resubmitting a revised document, **ALL** changes must be highlighted to enable review.

Thank you for your consultation on the above application. I have reviewed the submitted documents against OS maps, aerial photographs of the site and surrounding area, together with GIS layers of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and existing records of protected species.

Please refer to red text addressing an error in the consultation response dated 06/10/2026.

Information considered:

- Ecological Impact Assessment. (L Gilbert, July 2026).
- Proposed Site and Location Plans, Typical Site Section and Store Building – Plan and Elevations. Drawing No. 25035-2. (Brimble LEA, June 2026).
- Stourhead Western Estate – Top Lane Development Biodiversity Net Gain – Assessment Report. (V Gallagher, November 2025).
- BNG Metric. (V Gallagher, 13 November 2025).

COMMENTS:

The landscape surrounding the site includes sensitive habitats within statutory and non-statutory designated sites that are important for biodiversity and protected and notable species. However, given their distance from the site and minor scale and nature of the development, significant impacts are unlikely. The site itself

is of low ecological value and, subject to implementation of the mitigation measures set out in Section 6 of the Ecological Impact Assessment, adverse ecological effects are not anticipated.

Biodiversity Net Gain

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 (BNG Metric, V Gallagher, 13 November 2025) confirming the baseline and predicted post- development biodiversity units of the site has been submitted (including plans within Stourhead Western Estate – Top Lane Development Biodiversity Net Gain – Assessment Report. (V Gallagher, November 2025)).

The following issues must be addressed in the baseline prior to determination:

- ~~Appendix 1 Baseline Habitat Plan in the in the Ecological Impact Assessment shows the red line boundary extending into a vegetated bank at the southern boundary. The red line boundary on the Proposed Site and Location Plans, Typical Site Section and Store Building – Plan and Elevations also includes this land. This strip of land is not however included in the biodiversity net gain assessment, refer to Figure 1 of the Top Lane Development Biodiversity Net Gain – Assessment Report. The biodiversity net gain assessment must be amended include all the land with the red line application area as submitted. Once this has been addressed the baseline units can be confirmed.~~

The above comment was made in error. The vegetated bank is included within both the metric and the baseline plan. However, the submitted baseline metric does not include the site access or the road. While it is acknowledged that the road itself will not generate biodiversity units, the entire red line boundary should, strictly speaking, be represented within the baseline assessment.

Furthermore, the Proposed Site and Location Plan, Typical Site Section, and Store Building Plan and Elevations and aerial photography indicate that construction of the new access may require the removal of a section of hedgerow and/or scrub. This area does not currently appear to be accounted for within either the metric or the BNG Report.

Once these matters have been addressed and the baseline assessment updated accordingly, the baseline biodiversity units can be confirmed.

Notwithstanding the above issue being addressed the submitted metric and Stourhead Western Estate – Top Lane Development Biodiversity Net Gain – Assessment Report indicates significant gains in habitat units which is welcomed. The Proposed Site and Location Plans identifies the areas of habitat creation/enhancement which contributes to the applications proposed BNG however detail on the plan is limited. Confirmation of how the development will achieve BNG is a post-determination matter however consideration should be given to how any proposed BNG will be secured.

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

- Large areas of mixed scrub of high condition are proposed. Given the management limitations reduction of the condition to a lower more realistically achievable condition should be considered.
- Septic tanks are proposed in the area of scrub to the east meaning scrub would not be suitable in this location.
- Surrounding the development in scrub may significantly obstruct the view from the properties and be undesirable to the residents reducing the viability of delivery in the long-term.

DRAFT CONDITIONS:

The following, or similarly worded, draft conditions are recommend:

COMPLIANCE WITH SUBMITTED DOCUMENTS

The development will be carried out in broad accordance with the following documents:

- Mitigation and enhancement measures detailed in Section 6 Ecological Impact Assessment. (L Gilbert, July 2026).

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

ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENTS

Prior to the commencement of any works, including vegetation removal and demolition, details of the number, design and locations of ecological enhancement features including (delete as necessary) bat boxes, bird boxes, reptile features and hedgehog hibernacula 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.

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REASON: To provide mitigation /enhancement for biodiversity

Informative

General Protected Species

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species including for example, breeding birds and reptiles. The protection offered to some species such as bats, extends beyond the individual animals to the places they use for shelter or resting. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's website for further information on protected species.

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

Ecologist	Date