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BAT SCOPING SURVEY

At

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Manchester
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NGR: SJ 87308 94696

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A bat scoping survey of 816 Stockport Road was undertaken by United Environmental Services (UES) Ltd on 24th June 2024. The objective of the survey was to establish the suitability of the buildings onsite to support roosting bats, based on a site-specific survey and habitat assessment. The buildings were searched externally and internally (where accessible) for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2023).

The habitats on site and in the surrounding area are considered to offer poor quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats as the majority of the area comprises urban habitats, with small residential gardens and areas of grassland providing the only source of invertebrates on which bats may forage. Furthermore, connectivity between suitable habitats is relatively poor due to the presence of well-lit busy roads.

The quality of roosting habitat within the buildings is negligible, with limited potential roosting features (PRFs) identified. All PRFs identified were fully inspected and either found to be superficial or unsuitable and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded.

The buildings are considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats, and no evidence was found to suggest present or historic use by bats. As such, no further survey or mitigation work is required for the development to proceed, with regards to bats.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 3, which give visual representations of the survey results.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author, surveyors and qualifications

This report is compiled and written by Bethany Dineley BSc, UES Graduate Ecologist. Other surveyors include:

- Daniel Smith BSc MScRes, UES Ecologist. Daniel is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2024-12117-CL18-BAT (level 2).

All surveyors have the knowledge, skills and experience identified within CIEEM's "Competencies for Species Survey: Bats" (2013), or were under the supervision of a surveyor with the required competencies.

1.2 Survey objectives

UES was commissioned in May 2024 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Conduct internal and external building inspections to look for field signs of bats
- Assess the suitability of the buildings for use by roosting bats
- Recommend further surveys, mitigation and compensation, where appropriate

1.3 Proposed development

The proposed works involve the demolition of the existing structures on site and the construction of a new building (approximately 17 residential units and 4 GF retail units).

1.4 Structure of the report

This report sets out the methodology, results, and recommendations in relation to a specific bat survey. Recommendations are in line with statutory legislation and planning policy objectives.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 3, which give visual representations of the survey results.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

All surveys were carried out to recognised guidelines, timings and weather conditions, with particular reference to Natural England and BCT publications (see references for further information).

The habitats on site and in the surrounding area were assessed during a walkover survey and by studying aerial photographs, in order to gauge their suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

2.2 Building survey

The buildings onsite were searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2023). This was conducted on 24th June 2024 by Daniel Smith.

2.2.1 External inspection

The external inspection was carried out from ground level using binoculars, and also using ladders and an endoscope to investigate suitable gaps. The objective of the survey was to find and record any signs of bat use, for example:

- Bat droppings
- Feeding remains
- Grease staining / urine marks
- Corpses or skeletons

The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of a building. The following areas were searched, where present:

- Roof and ridge tiles
- Lead flashing
- Eaves
- Boxed soffits
- Fascia and barge boards
- Windowsills and panes
- Walls
- Gaps under felt
- Cracks / holes in woodwork or behind cladding
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Air bricks
- Grills
- Vents

2.2.2 Internal inspection

The internal inspection covered all of the accessible rooms and roof spaces within the building. Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces, which were searched for any field signs of bats using high-powered torches and an endoscope, where considered necessary by the licenced ecologist. The following features were searched, where present:

- Roof beams and junctions
- Gaps under felt
- Dividing walls
- Chimney breasts
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar

- Cracks / holes in woodwork
- Floor or other surfaces on which droppings could accumulate

2.3 Survey limitations

No limitations were encountered during the survey, which was undertaken during the peak bat survey season.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat assessment

816 Stockport Road is located in an urbanised area in the south-east of Manchester. Habitats onsite consist predominantly of hardstanding and buildings, which provide poor quality foraging and roosting opportunities for bats.

The immediate surrounding area consists of residential and commercial buildings. There are several small areas of green space, largely comprising amenity grassland and residential gardens. These habitats will provide foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the local area. However, connectivity between the habitats is relatively poor due to the presence of well-lit busy roads.

Habitats in the wider surrounding area are similar in composition with pockets of higher quality habitat present, including Highfield Country Park, Nutsford Vale Park and Birchfields Park. These parks contain areas of rough grassland, woodland, scattered trees, waterbodies and parkland, which will provide high quality foraging and commuting habitat for bats. However, connectivity between these habitats and the site is poor due the presence of well-lit busy roads and large areas of hardstanding.

In summary, the habitats onsite and in the surrounding area are considered to offer poor quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats as the majority of the area comprises urban habitats, with small residential gardens and areas of grassland providing the only source of invertebrates on which bats may forage. Furthermore, connectivity between suitable habitats is relatively poor due to the presence of well-lit busy roads.

3.2 Building survey

3.2.1 External inspection

There are three buildings present at 816 Stockport Road. For the purposes of the report, the buildings have been numbered B1-B3.

B1 is a small single-storey garage currently being used as a car mechanics workshop. The building is constructed from metal with two flat roofs (see Appendix 2 - Photograph 1). The southern roof comprises corrugated metal sheeting, and the northern roof is constructed from fiberglass. Both sections are single skinned. No potential roosting features were identified during the building inspection. There are gaps between the building and the adjacent brick wall; however, upon closer inspection the gap was considered unsuitable for use by roosting bats (see Photograph 2).

B2 is a large single-storey garage currently used as a carpet shop and warehouse, which is constructed from single skinned corrugated metal sheets (see Photograph 3). No potential roosting features were identified during the building inspection. There is a gap between B1 and B2; however, it was considered unsuitable for use by roosting bats (see Photograph 4). The metal sheeting to the rear of the building is warped which provides a large gap, but it was not considered suitable for bats on inspection (see Photograph 5). Gaps in the rolling shutters above the entrance of the building were also discounted as being suitable for use by roosting bats (see Photograph 6).

B3 is a small timber shed with a timber flat roof lined with bitumen felt. There is a gap around the doorframe suitable for use by bats; however, no external potential roosting features were identified (see Photograph 7 and 8).

No bat droppings or other field signs of bats were found during the external building inspection.

3.2.2 Internal inspection

No potential roosting features were identified during the internal inspection of the buildings and the buildings are of a construction type that doesn't typically support roosting bats; B1 and B3 are boarded out internally (see Photograph 9 & 10 and Photograph 12 & 13 respectively), and B2 is constructed from single skinned corrugated metal sheets (see Photograph 11).

No bat droppings or other field signs of bats were found during the internal building inspection.

4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

4.1.1 Qualitative assessment of foraging habitats

The habitats on site and in the surrounding area are considered to offer poor quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats as the majority of the area comprises urban habitats, with small residential gardens and areas of grassland providing the only source of invertebrates on which bats may forage. Furthermore, connectivity between suitable habitats is relatively poor due to the presence of well-lit busy roads.

4.1.2 Qualitative assessment of roosting habitats

The quality of roosting habitat within the buildings is negligible, with limited PRFs identified. All PRFs identified were fully inspected and either found to be superficial or unsuitable and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded.

4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures

The buildings are considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats, and there is no historic or recent evidence of bat use in the buildings onsite. As such, no further surveys or mitigation measures are required, with regards to bats.

5 CONCLUSION

The habitats on site and in the immediate surrounding area are considered to offer poor quality foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. In addition, connectivity with higher quality habitats in the wider surrounding area is likely to be restricted due to the presence of well-lit busy roads.

The quality of roosting habitat within the buildings is negligible, with limited PRFs identified. All PRFs identified were fully inspected and either found to be superficial or unsuitable and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded.

As no bats were found to be using the buildings onsite to roost, no further mitigation or compensation measures are required, with regards to bats.

6 REFERENCES

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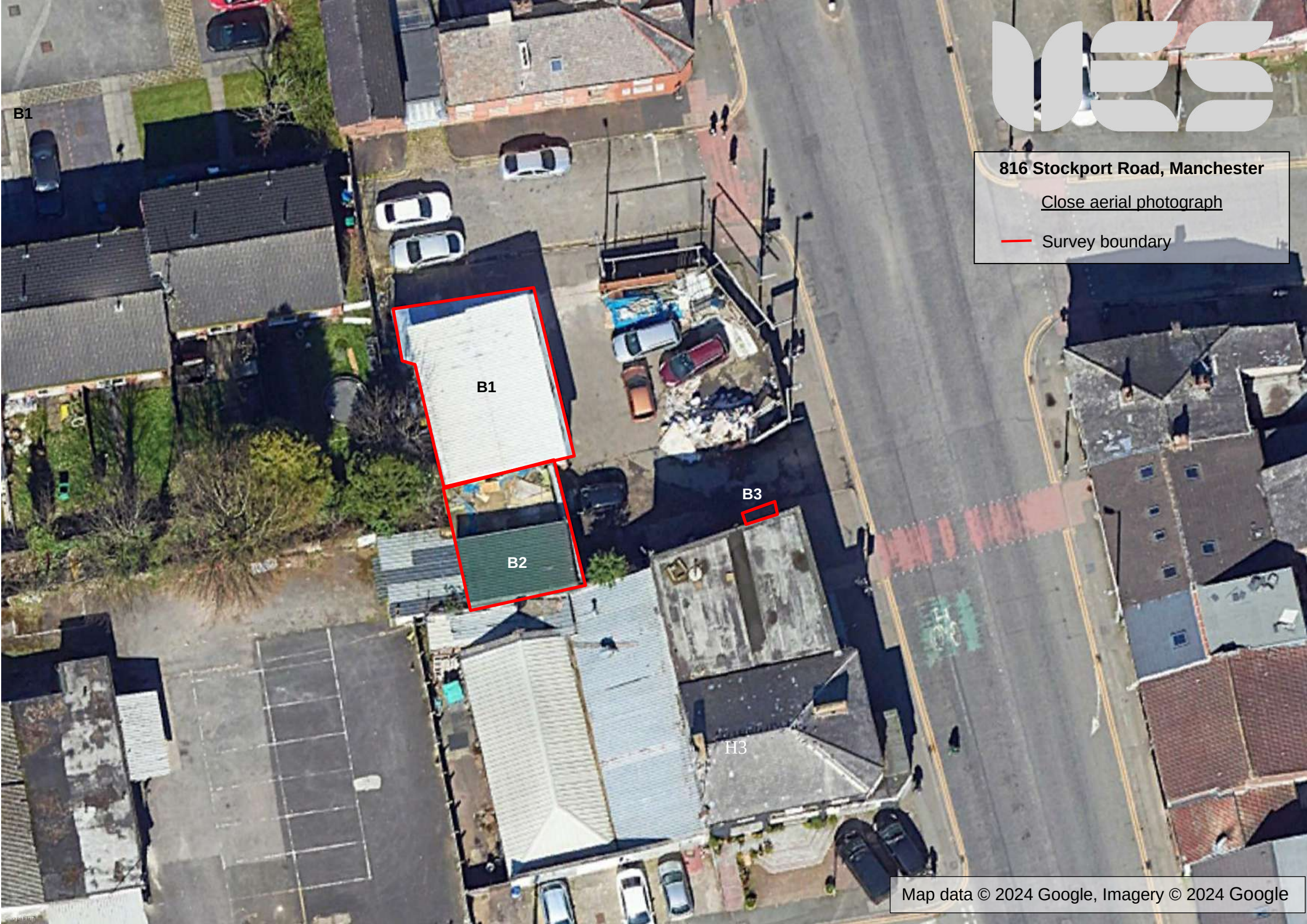
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Aerial photographs


B1
B1
B2
B3
H3
816 Stockport Road, Manchester
Close aerial photograph
Survey boundary
Map data © 2024 Google, Imagery © 2024 Google


816 Stockport Road, Manchester
Wide aerial photograph
Site location
Map data © 2024 Google, Imagery © 2024 Google

Appendix 2 – Photographs



Photograph 1 – East aspect of Building 1 with two different roof heights.


Photograph 2 – Gap inbetween brick and corrugated metal sheeting located on the western aspect of Building 1.



Photograph 3 – Eastern aspect of Building 2 showing internal usage.


Photograph 4 – Gap between Building 1 and Building 2.



Photograph 5 – Warped metal sheeting at the rear of Building 2.



Photograph 6 – Gap in roller shutter unit above the entrance of Building 2 on the western aspect.



Photograph 7 – Northeast aspect of Building 3 with timber wall and bitumen lining on the roof.



Photograph 8 – Southeast aspect of Building 3.



Photograph 9 – Interior of Building 1, east section with lower roof.


Photograph 10 – Interior section of Building 1, west section with a higher roof, with corrugated metal walls.



Photograph 11 – Interior of Building 2 with well-sealed single skin metal walls.



Photograph 12 – Interior of Building 3, large gap present above the door.



Photograph 13 – Interior of Building 3, well-sealed and no cavities.

Appendix 3 – Statutory and planning context

Ecological assessments
Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

Bats
In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the "Habitats Regulations"). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] … uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by Natural England.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and, in many cases, a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) provides guidance on the interpretation of the law in relation to the natural environment and development.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.

Planning policy

National Planning Guidance is issued in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF). The most relevant section is 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Key relevant principles stated in 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment are;

174. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

179. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity[61]; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation[62]; and
b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity

180. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons63 and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.