

Combined Night-time Bat Walkover (NBW) survey and Automated/static survey.

Version One. 30.10.2025
Prepared for: The Northern Group

SITE NAME:	Land at Station Road (The Secret Lake) Nelstrop Rd N, Levenshulme, Stockport M19 3WH.
PROJECT No:	12596
CLIENT NAME:	The Northern Group
SPECIALIST:	Amenity Tree
DATE PREPARED:	28.10.2025
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Site Description Location and Context
- 1.2 Proposed works
- 1.3 Purpose and Brief of this Report

2. Methods

- 2.1 Summary of survey methods
- 2.2 Pre-Survey data search / existing report data
 - 2.2.1 Habitat Assessment
- 2.3 Surveyor information

3. Results

- 3.1 NBW: Survey 1
- 3.2 NBW: Survey 2
- 3.3 Automated/ static survey 1
- 3.4 Automated/ static survey 2

4. Assessment

- 4.1 Constraints on survey information or equipment
- 4.2 Potential impacts of development

5. Conclusions, recommendations, and enhancement

- 5.1 Conclusions and recommendations
- 5.2 Enhancement measures
- 5.3 Mitigation licenses

6. Summary

- 6.1 Summary

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Legislation

1. Introduction.

Site description, location and context

The site is located in Levenshulme, Stockport. Habitats identified onsite include mixed scrub, other woodland; mixed (mainly broadleaved), reedbed, reservoir, sparsely vegetated land, bramble scrub, urban trees, developed land/sealed surface. The site is land locked, primarily by industrial, residential commercial surroundings.

Figure 1

Aerial view of the site, with the development boundary



Note. National Grid Reference: SJ 8874 3945

Proposed works

The client is proposing the development of a site in Levenshulme, Stockport. The proposed development comprises of the erection of new residential properties including apartments and residential dwellings. The proposal also highlights restoration of the main lake (within the central parcel) for public recreation with the implementation of fishing huts and seating areas.

Purpose, aims and objectives of this report

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal dated 24.04.2025 stated.

“Bats are comprehensively protected under UK and European legislation. Bats are largely ubiquitous there is green infrastructure linking the site to the wider landscape. The site contains good foraging habitat. Trees will need to be removed for development which could contain bat roost(s). The section of retaining wall and the bridge structure over the Fallowfield Loop may be affected by the proposals and contain features suitable for crevice dwelling Bat species.

“A night-time bat walkover survey (NBW) coupled with a static detector for 5 days for two occasions is sufficient survey effort to advise the planning application if bats are present on this site. High levels of anti social behaviour may necessitate the need for further transect surveys as leaving static detectors on site may not be viable due to ASB”

As optimal habitat for foraging and commuting for bats has been identified onsite, the PEA outlines the requirement for two Night-time Bat Walkover (NBW) surveys. These two surveys should be undertaken during the active period which is in April-October, the BCT 2023 Guidelines indicate this survey should investigate seasonal variance of bat behaviour, so the survey visits are undertaken within summer and autumn.

Two deployments of an automated/static device were also undertaken to continuously record bat echolocation calls throughout the night; each deployment period lasted for 5 consecutive days.

Therefore, the purpose of this report is to establish the extent and nature of bat activity across the site and shall aim to:

- Establish absence or presence (including species) within and adjacent to the site boundaries
- Estimate the assemblage of bat species and the nature of bat activity for example feeding, commuting, and / or roosting and / or socialising.
- Establish the importance of the habitats in relation to bat use
- The objective of the report is to be able to assess the impact of construction and any applicable mitigation or enhancement measures in relation to the extent and use of the habitat by bats.

2. Methods

2.1 Summary of survey methods

These surveys are designed around the 2023 BCT Bat Surveys Good Practice Guidelines 4th Edition Chapter 8: Bat Activity Surveys. This shall specifically include an assessment of habitat to ensure a reasonable survey effort in relation to habitat suitability has been achieved.

The ecologist will go to the predetermined starting position (positioned near potential roost features/flight lines shortly before sunset) and remain in position until 30 minutes to an hour after sunset. The ecologist will record a timestamped narrative about their observations. Observations that will be recorded may include flight direction, flight height, flight pattern, call type and response to ecological features and general conditions. The survey will continue between 2-3 hours after sunset (dependent on activity levels) and a Night Vision Aid (NVA) ("NightWhisker Binoculars") will be utilised throughout the survey to aid observations. An "Echo Meter Touch 2" and "BatBox Duet" will be utilised to record echolocations.

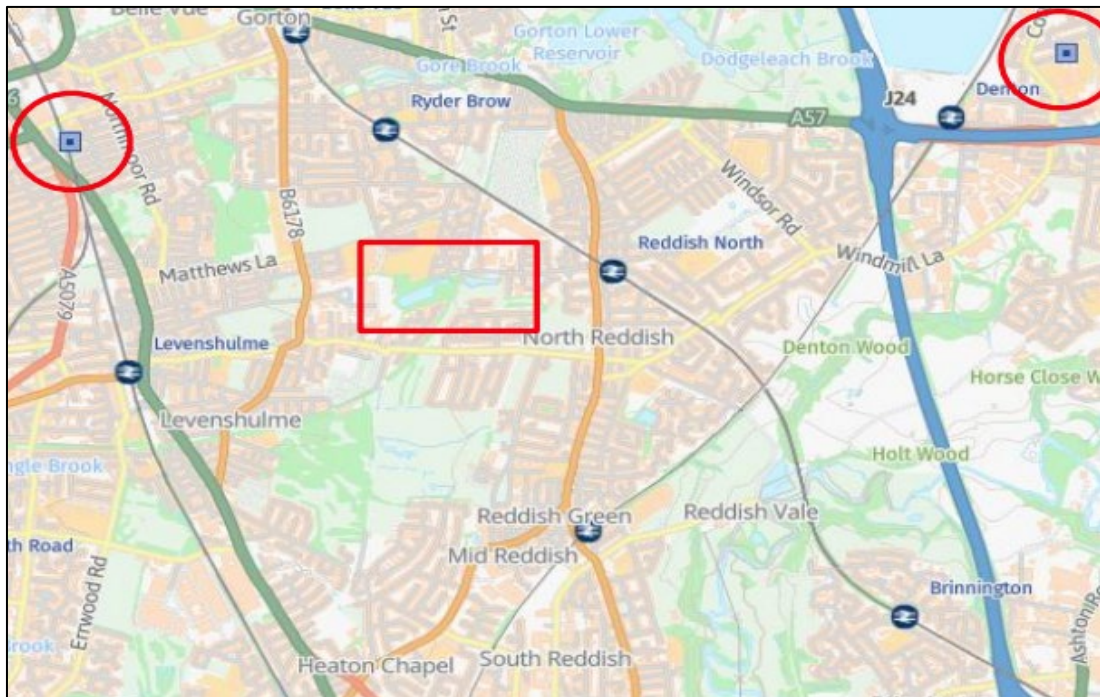
Considering the 2023 update in the Bat Conservation Trust Survey Guidelines (BCT 2023), the transect walkover surveys (now referred to as NBW surveys) were combined with automated static detector surveys which recorded bat calls for a total of 10 nights in 2 separate deployment periods (5 continuous nights for each deployment). The first static surveys were undertaken in summer and the second was undertaken in autumn as the BCT 2023 guidelines advise surveys to monitor bat activity should be undertaken seasonally to identify foraging/commuting areas at different points during the active season.

2.2. Pre-Survey data search / existing report data.

The closest granted European Protected Species (EPS) license application by Natural England was for bat species located approximately 2km to the northwest for C-pip from 2016, with the second closest being to the north east at 3.2km from 2011. (See below image with the site highlighted in red and the locations of EPS locations highlighted in red circles).

Figure 2

Proximity of previously granted EPS licenses for bat species.



Amenity Tree Care were commissioned to undertake additional surveys for bats including an updated Ground Level Tree Inspection (GLTA) in accordance with the updated 2023 guidelines. As a result of this, PRF-M were identified and subject to further emergence survey during the optimal period in 2025, the results concluded that no subsequent mitigation/license application is required.

2.2.1. Habitat assessment

Habitats identified onsite include mixed scrub, other woodland; mixed (mainly broadleaved), reedbed, reservoir, sparsely vegetated land, bramble scrub, urban trees, developed land/sealed surface. The site is land locked, primarily by industrial, residential commercial surroundings. The habitats within the development boundary have good connectivity to wider mature woodland as linear habitats such as structure woodland plantation belts, hedgerows, railways are present within a 1km of the impacted area, these may act as important wildlife corridors for bat navigation. Overall, the habitats onsite provide potentially good foraging and commuting habitat for a range of protected bat species.

2.3. Surveyor information

Ryan Whitmarsh is an experienced ecologist who has attained a BSc (Hons) degree. He is experienced in a range of ecological surveys for protected species, has attended courses on bats and currently working towards a Class 2 Bat License. He is an accredited agent on Simon Brain's (Managing director) NE Class 2 license (70619:OTH:CSAB:2016).

3. Results

3.1. NBW Survey 1

Figure 3.

The pre-determined route with monitoring points.



Conditions/times of NBW 1:

Date: 30/06/25	Start	End
Time	21:38	00:18
	Started walking route: 22:05	Sunset: 21:40
Precipitation	0%	10%
Temperature	23°C	19°C
Cloud Cover	2 Oktas	1 Oktas
Wind (0-12 Beaufort)	1	2

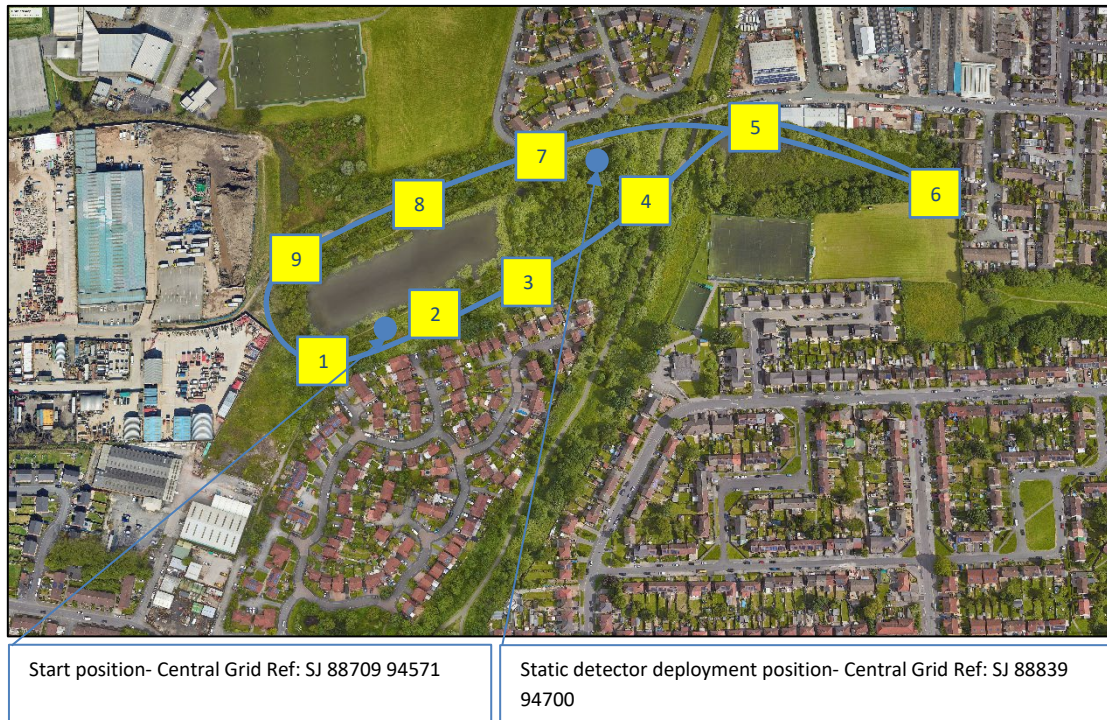
NBW: Results:

Time	Species	Monitoring point	Notes/observations
22:03-22:33	C.Pip	Starting Position	Three bats recorded foraging along the surface of the main lake at 3m height with low, circular and erratic flight.
22:38	C.Pip	1	Two bats recorded foraging above the main lake surface, feeding calls recorded.
22:41	C.Pip	2	A single bat observed commuting E-W.
22:43-22:50	C.Pip	3	Social calls recorded from two bats passing along the southern woodland edge; sporadic feeding calls also recorded.
22:56	C.Pip	5	Bat heard but no visual; social calls recorded.
22:59	C.Pip	5	Bat heard but no visual; feeding calls recorded.
23:12	C.Pip	6	Bat heard but no visual (probable commuting bat).
23:27	Noctule	8	Bat heard but no visual, brief call.
23:32	C.Pip	8	Bat observed foraging above main lake surface; low erratic flight at 2m.
23:38-22:45	C.Pip	1	Bat heard but no visual; continuous feeding calls.
00:04	C.Pip	6	Bat heard but no visual (probable commuting bat).
00:11	C.Pip	2	Single bat recorded foraging above the main lake surface.

3.2. NBW: Survey 2

Figure 4

The pre-determined route with monitoring points.



Conditions/times:

Date: 24/08/25	Start	End
Time	19:01	21:31
	Stated walking route: 20:01	Sunset: 19:01
Precipitation	0%	0%
Temperature	14°C	12°C
Cloud Cover	0 Oktas	0 Oktas
Wind (1-12 Beaufort)	2	2

NBW: Results:

Time	Species	Monitoring point	Notes/observations
20:24	C.Pip	3	Bat heard (faintly) but no visual.
20:32	C.Pip	2	Bat/s heard (social calling) and at least 2 bats observed flying over the lake, from SW to NE. Constant bat foraging/feeding activity between Monitoring Points 2 – 1.
20:38 – 20:42	C.Pip	1	Bat/s heard (social calling) and observed foraging over the lake again for several minutes.
20:44	C.Pip	8	Bat heard (commuting) but no visual.
20:51-20:54	S.Pip	7	Bat heard and observed foraging for several minutes near Monitoring Point 7.
20:56	C.Pip	7	Bat heard (social call) but no visual.
20:59	S. Pip	7	Bat heard loudly (social calling) but no visual.
21:00	C.Pip	7	Bat heard and observed foraging over the lake.
21:10	S.Pip	7	Bat/s heard feeding and observed continuously foraging over the lake near Monitoring Point 6.
21:18	C.Pip	6	Bat not heard but observed in the distance over the lake.
21:30	C.Pip	6	Bat not heard but observed in the distance over the lake.

NBW Summary.

Visual sightings of bats was restricted underneath the woodland tree canopies, so the ecologist remained stationary for longer periods at the monitoring points located on the woodland edges to optimise sightings of bat species to accurately identify foraging and commuting behaviour. An assemblage of 3 species was recorded during these walkover surveys this included: Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle and Noctule. Common pipistrelle calls were consistent throughout the survey and predominantly consisted of feeding and commuting individuals around the woodland edges and the main lake. Feeding behaviour was identified by the ecologist by sightings of low-erratic flight patterns as opposed to feeding calls on a detector. A single Noctule (*Nyctalus*

noctula) call was recorded but no visuals were made; due to the regular intervals between pulses and volume of the calls it was concluded that the bat was commuting across the site at a considerable height. Two records of soprano pipistrelle were made during the second walkover; one of these records consisted of a social call but no visual observation was made.

3.4. Automated/static survey 1:

Conditions/time static detector recordings:

Date: 20.07.25	First Recording	Last Recording
Time	21.43	04.43
	Sunset: 21.25	Sunrise: 05.04
Temperature	22.7°C	16°C
Total Recordings	284	

Date: 21.07.25	First Recording	Last Recording
Time	20.52	04.43
	Sunset: 21.22	Sunrise: 05.07
Temperature	16°C	16.7°C
Total Recordings	596	

Date: 22.07.25	First Recording	Last Recording
Time	19:15	22:36
	Sunset: 21.21	Sunrise: 05.09
Temperature	16.7°C	17.1°C
Total Recordings	359	

Date: 23.07.25	First Recording	Last Recording
Time	19:11	06:35
	Sunset: 21.20	Sunrise: 05.10
Temperature	16.9°C	19.2°C
Total Recordings	333	

Date: 24.07.25	First Recording	Last Recording
Time	19:10	21:39
	Sunset: 21.18	Sunrise: 05.12
Temperature	18.8°C	19.6°C
Total Recordings	415	

Automated/static survey 1 summary.

The summer static survey revealed that only Common and Soprano Pipistrelles were recorded; the majority of calls recorded were the result of commuting or foraging bats and generally occurred in the early morning (typically between the times of 04:30-06:45). Overall bat activity during the course of this 5-night deployment period was inconsistent. Relatively poor weather conditions (increased precipitation) during the early evening on 20.07.25 and the late morning of 24.07.25 was thought to be a factor causing the fluctuations in activity between the nights. Bat calls in the evening and morning demonstrated a similar pattern of activity, this included feeding and social calls. In summary the calls shortly after sunset were more frequent than those recorded around sunset.

3.5. Automated/static survey 2.

Conditions/time static detector recordings:

Date: 26.09.25	First Recording	Last Recording
Time	19:00	06:20
	Sunset: 18:56	Sunrise: 07:03
Temperature	13.9 °C	11.8 °C
Total Recordings	17	

Date: 27.09.25	First Recording	Last Recording
Time	19:38	22:36
	Sunset: 18:54	Sunrise: 07:05
Temperature	15 °C	12 °C
Total Recordings	431	

Date: 28.09.25	First Recording	Last Recording
Time	19:15	22:36
	Sunset: 18:52	Sunrise: 07:06
Temperature	15.5°C	5.2 °C
Total Recordings	32	

Date: 29.09.25	First Recording	Last Recording
Time	19:11	06:35
	Sunset: 18:49	Sunrise: 07:08
Temperature	14.7 °C	8.8 °C
Total Recordings	47	

Date: 30.09.25	First Recording	Last Recording
Time	19:10	21:39
	Sunset: 18:47	Sunrise: 07:10
Temperature	15.8 °C	12.5 °C
Total Recordings	153	

During the 2nd deployment period, only a single species was recorded (Common pipistrelle). On the first night (26.09.25) Common pipistrelle calls only occurred in the early evening shortly after sunset for approximately 2 hours (19:00-21:00); the calls were consistent and comprised of commuting, feeding and social calling. On nights 2, 3 and 5 (the 27th, 28th and 30th), brief periods of social calling and commuting bats were recorded throughout the night. Recordings from night 4 (29/09/25) showed that Common pipistrelles were commuting and feeding shortly after sunset (19:00-20:30); social calls, however, were sporadic throughout the night.

Overall, the second deployment period showed that a single common species (Common pipistrelle) was using the site throughout the 5-day period for a variety of purposes including socialising, feeding and commuting.

4. Assessment

4.1 Constraints for survey information and equipment.

It was considered that no constraints were applicable that impacted survey data. Bat calls were identifiable with the equipment used. The summer of 2025 has been unusually warm and consistently dry providing a lengthened period of optimal foraging opportunities for bat species.

The surrounding areas are largely residential providing an abundance of roosting opportunities in the direct vicinity of the development boundary. The habitats associated with the site itself are considered good for bat foraging as they are largely variable and suitable for invertebrates to live and breed. The site has potential to support a variety of bat species due to the diverse habitats identified onsite; for example, Daubenton's bat could be drawn to the culverted ditch, reservoir and reedbed for foraging.

5. Conclusions, recommendations, and enhancement

5.1 Conclusions

Bat presence on the site has been established by these surveys and species and frequency of site visits by bats has been confirmed from the NBW and static surveys.

Levels of bat use have been established, and numbers of animals and activity from bats is confirmed as being from three species: common and soprano pipistrelle and noctule. Whilst the number of bat records appear high, they are consistent with a small local bat population being present on site feeding and foraging.

Therefore, there is some importance of the site habitats to the bat species that are present and have been recorded during this survey. The results have demonstrated that the site does not hold Annex 2 bats species and no specific mitigation for commuting and foraging is needed for the common species recorded.

The loss of foraging areas in the eastern section (woodland and reedbed) of the site will not have a significant impact on local bat population as a few records in low numbers was recorded using this area.

In addition, the proposed layout shows retention and restoration of the main lake (reservoir); bat activity (particularly foraging) was prevalent in these areas. The woodland to the north of the reservoir is also outlined as retained in the proposed plan. Preservation of this habitat will ensure a key commuting route across the central area of the site is protected, minimising detrimental impacts on connectivity which is crucial for bat navigation. Considerations regarding lighting will also be required to reduce the levels of light pollution which can also sever bat commuting routes.

5.2. Recommendations and Enhancement Measures

It has been established that the site is of some importance to the local bat population and therefore no further surveys are required. Furthermore, the proposed design retention of the reservoir and some woodland habitats; so, the impact that development may have on habitat connectivity appears to be minor.

Enhancement measures

The site is being used for commuting and feeding by the local bat population and the study areas offer some importance to that population. Under the National Planning Policy Framework and the NERC Act 2006 there is a requirement to improve existing environment through enhancement.

The site shall be subject to a bat specific planting plan aimed at maintaining the ecological connection between site and the wider landscape. Research has found that lighting can cause considerable disturbances to bat and may interfere with bat navigation during nocturnal commuting flights to suitable feeding sites.

It is recommended by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Engineers that lighting at ground level should be below 3 Lux (BCT & ILE 2008). The site was found to be largely unaffected by lighting and there were only low levels of light spill from the residential units and infrastructure located on the southern boundaries. The redevelopment will seek to ensure that lighting should be appropriately designed to ensure minimal light spill, particularly on the southern boundary. This could be achieved by:

- Ensuring lights are only erected where they are needed, illuminated only during the period that they will be used, and at levels that enhance visibility.
- Using narrow spectrum bulbs, to lower the range of species affected by lighting, and avoiding the use of light sources that emit ultraviolet.
- Ensuring that there are no bare bulbs or lights that point upwards.
- Ensuring that the spread of light is kept near to or below the horizontal plane.
- Reducing the height of the lighting columns since light at a low level reduces ecological impact. Ensuring only low-level lighting that is as directional as possible is provided and that light emitted from these fixtures is below 3 lux at ground level.

- LED lighting, ideally amber LED (bat-lamps) that have a negligible UV component may be a preferred option since these show a low insect attractiveness comparable to low pressure sodium lamps and they are more directional, thus reducing light spill (Fure 2012).
- Where possible, external lights should comprise sensor activated lamps (Jones 2000; BCT & ILE 2008) so that lights are only operational when they are needed.
- Avoiding the illumination of habitat features used by bats, notably the boundary tree and linear hedgerows. In addition to the planting and lighting plans suitable bat boxes shall be installed to provide supplementary roosting opportunities.
- There are no requirements for mitigation licensing as there is no requirement for anyone to carry out activity prohibited under wildlife legislation in relation to commuting and foraging bats.

6. Summary

As a result of the NBW surveys, bats were found to be commuting, socialising and feeding which was attributed to a two common bat species in low numbers. The static surveys further confirmed that areas of interest for bat include the woodland edges, reedbed (eastern parcel) and main lake (central parcel) which hold commuting significance in for 2 bat species (Common and Soprano pipistrelle).

The favourable conservation status of the bat species present on this site can be maintained within the development plans because significant areas that the local population of common species are using are retained and enhanced.

Enhancement plans can be suited to bat species using site by introducing appropriate measures within the development. This will facilitate the improvement of the foraging areas and the immediate environment to maintain the areas of biological connection. The provision of artificial roosting within suitably lit conditions into the development could lead to an improvement in conditions for bat species particularly if development can bring a reduced level of Anti Social Behaviour. Habitat fragmentation has been a

major reason for bat decline and the maintenance of suitably lit foraging on the site is also required as part of the enhancement measures for bats.

There are various linked linear habitats (woodland belts and railway lines) are in the direct vicinity of the site, providing alternate routes to areas of increased ecological significance.

Appendix One – Legislation

All bat species in the UK are fully protected under The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2010 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2 of the Act. Regulation 41 prohibits:

Deliberate killing, injuring or taking (capture) of bats

Deliberate disturbance of bats in such a way as to:

impair the ability to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young; or

affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of bat species; or impair their ability to hibernate or migrate

Damage or destruction of a bat breeding site or resting place i.e. roost

- Keeping, transporting, selling, exchanging or offering for sale whether live or dead or of any part thereof.

All bat species in the UK are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct the access to any place of shelter or protection used by bat(s)
- Sell, offer or expose for sale, possess or transport a bat(s) for the purpose of sale.

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by the relevant countryside agency (e.g. Natural England) will need to be applied for to allow derogation from the relevant legislation i.e. for works liable to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young, hibernate, migrate). In certain circumstances, important foraging areas and/or commuting routes can be regarded as being afforded *de facto* protection, for example, where it can be proven that the continued usage of such areas is crucial to maintaining the integrity and long-term viability of a bat roost.

Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 2010

The species protection provision of the EC Habitats Directive 1992, as implemented by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, comprises three “derogation tests” which must be applied by the Local Planning Authority when deciding whether to grant planning permission for a development that could harm a European Protective Species. The three tests are that:

- The activity to be licensed must be for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety.
- There must be no satisfactory alternative; and,
- Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of the species must be maintained.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to submit sufficient information to address these tests when applying for planning permission. For development activities, an EPSM Licence application can only be obtained after planning permission has been granted. However, the granting of planning permission does not guarantee that a licence will be issued by the relevant countryside agency.

National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012) sets out the Government's national policies on different aspects of planning in England. Section 10 paragraphs 109 to 125 details planning policies on the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

In summary:

The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: *'minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.'* (NPPF Section 15, para 187)

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- If significant harm 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 (Section 10, para 118).
- Proposed development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted (Section 10, para 118).
- Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted (Section 10, para 118).
- Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged (Section 10, para 118).
- Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss (Section 10, para 118)
- Potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation, listed or proposed Ramsar sites and sites identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites, should be given the same protection as European sites (Section 10, para 118).
- The presumption in favour of sustainable development (para 14) does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or

Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined (Section 10, para 119)

- Planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation (Section 10, para 125).

Local planning authorities must take account of the conservation of protected species when determining planning applications. The presence of protected species is a material consideration when assessing a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. This requirement has important implications for bat surveys as it means that, where there is reasonable likelihood of bats being present and being affected by the development, surveys must be carried out before planning permission is considered' (BCR 2012). For the Local Planning Authority to adequately assess a development proposal against National and Local Planning Policy, full comprehensive ecological surveys need to be carried out and suitable mitigation strategies compiled prior to the submission of any planning application. This information will be reviewed by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the relevant countryside agency and other conservation bodies.

Any developer should, in the first instance, consult the relevant Local Plans to assess the suitability of their proposal (refer to NPPF Section 10 paras 113 to 117).

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC)

Part 3, Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 states that 'every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity', otherwise known as the Biodiversity Duty. Under Section 41 of the Act, the Secretary of State must publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This list is based on those species listed in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) as priority species. The S41 list replaces the list published under Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.

Biodiversity Action Plan

Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) set out actions for the conservation and enhancement of biological diversity at national, regional and local level. They consist of both Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs), and species and habitats listed within these are defined as being of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Local authorities must consider these species and habitats when determining planning applications.