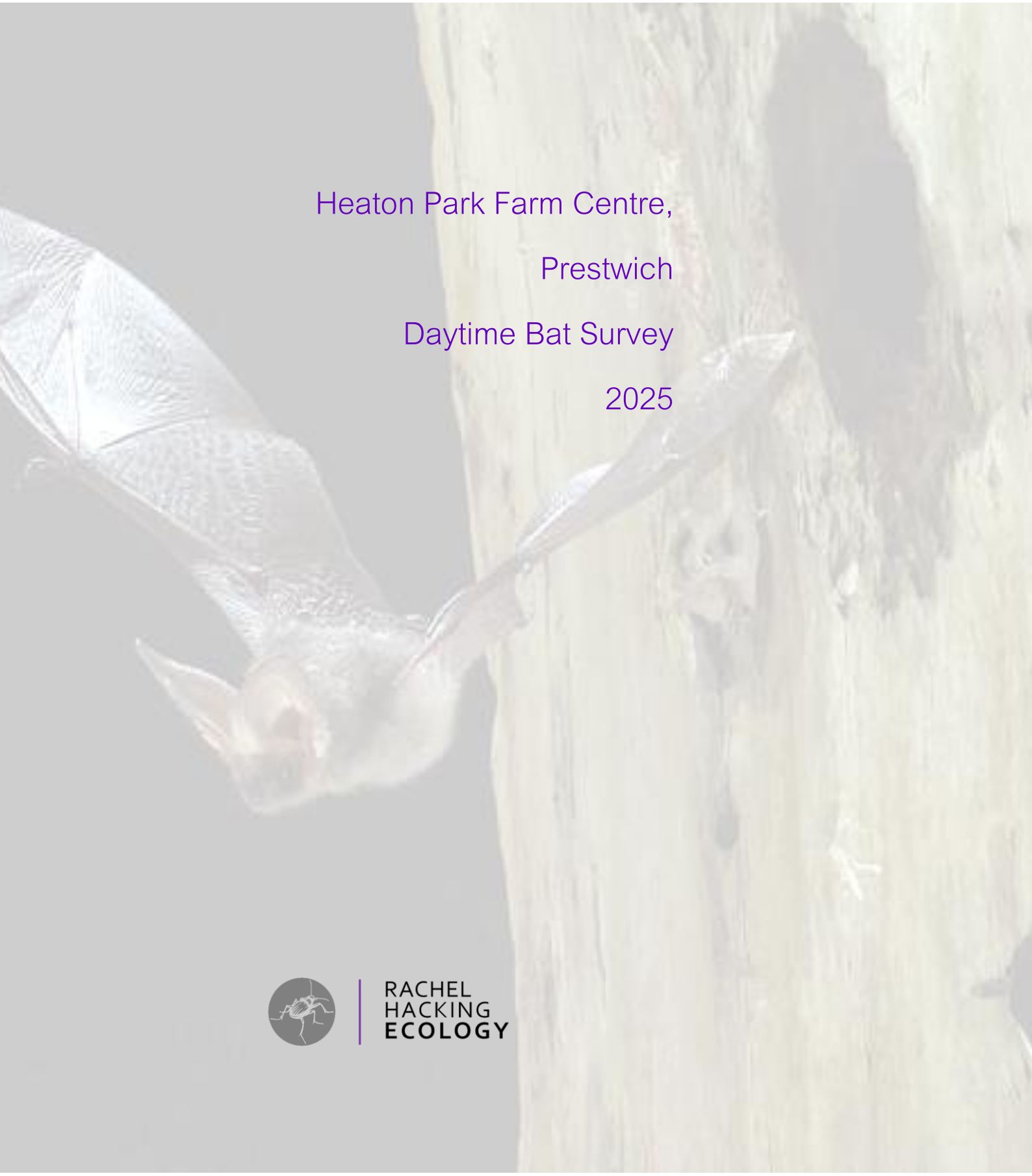


Heaton Park Farm Centre,

Prestwich

Daytime Bat Survey

2025

RACHEL
HACKING
ECOLOGY

Client	Manchester City Council
Project Title	Heaton Park Farm Centre, Heaton Park, Prestwich
Project Reference	RHE.4597
Project Leader	Bethany Halfpenny
Contact Details	[redacted]

	Name	Position	Date
Author	Bethany Halfpenny	Junior Ecologist	09/07/2025
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Revision			

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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing roof replacement and repair works at Heaton Park Farm Centre, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the potential for roosting bats at the site and assesses the potential impacts of the development on bats. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

Ecological Interest

Six buildings on site are assessed as offering low potential to support roosting bats and one building on site is assessed as offering high potential to support roosting bats. The site is situated in good quality bat foraging habitat.

Outcomes

Further survey work is required to establish the status of roosting bats and inform mitigation requirements. Survey specifications are outlined in this report.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd (RHE) was commissioned in 2025 by Manchester City Council (the Client) to carry out a Daytime Bat Survey at Heaton Park Farm Centre (the 'site'). The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SD 8317 0443 (see Figure 1).

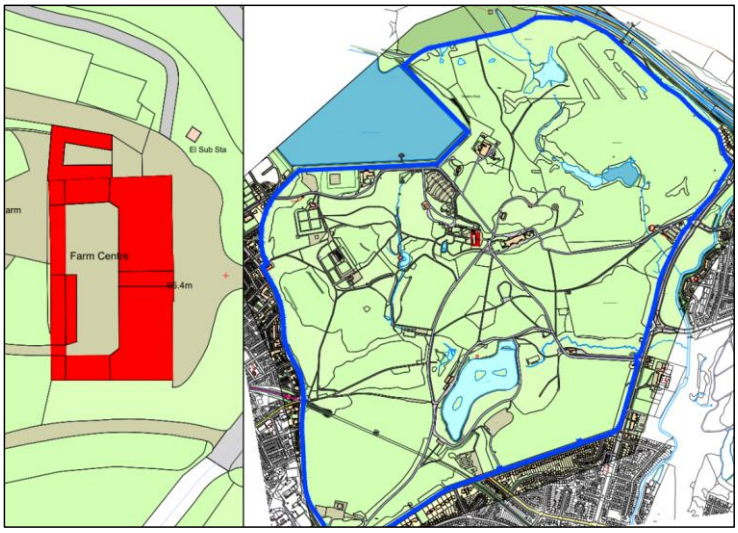


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site (red lines) courtesy of © Manchester City Council

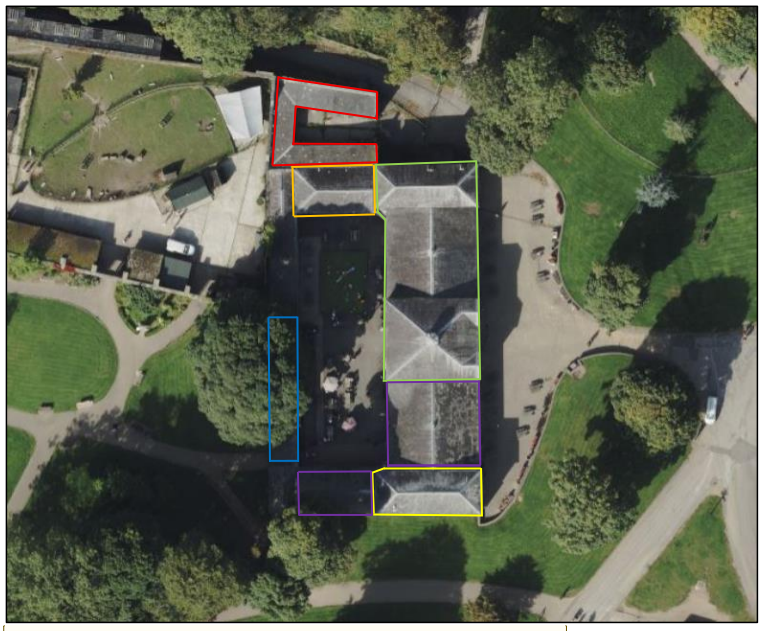


Figure 2 Map showing the different building sections courtesy of © Bing Maps

Commented [LR1]: Really like this, make it very clear, well done!

Table 1. Figure Two Map Key	
Line	Area
	Peacock Area
	Storage Area/ Toilets
	Clocktower
	Café & Education Centre
	Stables (1), (currently unused)
	Stables (2), (used)

Description of Development

1.1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for roof replacements and repair works.

1.2 Scope of Work

1.2.1 The Client commissioned RHE to undertake an external and internal assessment of the site.

1.3 Aims of the Survey

1.3.1 The aims of the survey were to:

- Assess the potential of the site to support roosting bats;
- Identify the requirement for any further detailed surveys.
- Inform impact assessment and mitigation requirements.

2. Methods

2.1 Daytime Bat Survey

2.1.1 The exterior of the buildings was surveyed from the ground using binoculars and a high-powered torch. Features offering potential access to roosting bats were recorded. Such features may include suitable gaps in roof coverings, gaps behind external cladding/facia and gaps in masonry.

2.1.2 Evidence indicating the presence of roosting bats was also searched for. This may include bat droppings on walls, windows or on the ground below roost entrances or staining from fur oil around roost entry points.

2.1.3 The interior of the buildings, including the roof voids, was surveyed to identify any evidence indicating use by roosting bats. Such evidence may include bat droppings, feeding remains, urine splashes, live or dead bats and staining from fur oil on timbers.

2.1.4 Droppings collected on the survey were sent to an approved laboratory for DNA analysis.

2.2 Assessment Criteria

2.2.1 Surveys were undertaken in accordance with current guidelines[1]. Interpretation of survey findings and assessment of roosting potential was undertaken using professional judgement and criteria described in published guidance[1,2].

2.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

2.3.1 Lucia Ruiz Mut (Ecologist) and Bethany Halfpenny (Junior Ecologist) visited the site on Tuesday 1st July 2025. Lucia is a Bat Licensed Ecologist (2025-12728-CL18-BAT) with over three years of experience undertaking similar surveys.

Weather

2.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was cloudy and humid with an average temperature of 18°C Weather conditions were suitable for a full assessment to be undertaken.

---

[1] Collins, J. (Ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists-good practice guidelines. 4th edn.* The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

[2] Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

3. Results

3.1 Survey Constraints

3.1.1 The site was fully accessible, with no survey constraints.

3.2 Habitat Appraisal

3.2.1 The site is located in the grounds of Heaton Park. The park features multiple habitats including running water, standing water, woodland and modified grassland, offering suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat.

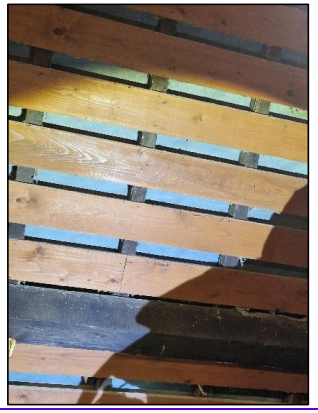
3.3 External and Internal Survey

3.3.1 The Farm Centre is made up of several spaces including an office, reception area, café, education centre, public toilets, storage facilities and attached stables.

3.3.2 The results of the internal and external survey of the building are present below in Table 2.

Table 2. Buildings Bat Roost Assessment			
Building Area	Description	Photographs	Bat Roost Potential
Peacock Area	On the northern side of the building part of the roof area is used to house Peacocks *Pavo cristatus* overnight. The roof has a gable end to the west and is comprised of slate tiles with no lining or insulation present. Gaps are present in between tiles and crevices are present in brickwork. The south elevation is constructed from open boarding, allowing a lot of light into the building. Summary: Gaps and crevices present a range of potential entry points to the building for bats although lighting and exposed conditions lower the potential to support roosting bats.	 	Low



Storage Area/ Toilets	At the southern corner of the building a public toilets area and above storage facility exists. The second storey of the building is predominantly used to house archive materials. The roof is a mansard roof, comprising of slate tiles, lining and timber cladding on the interior. A large window facing east is present at the far end of the second storey and throughout the floor it is warm. Summary: Gaps and crevices at other points in the structure could provide access to the building for bats, lining present and room temperature make the building suitable to support roosting bats. However, due to high levels of human disturbance due to the building usage, the building suitability for roosting bats is lowered.	  	Low

Clocktower	The largest roof void is underneath the clocktower on the eastern side of the building, containing three 'rooms'. To assist with clarity, this report breaks the space down into two sections to discuss specific details, as outlined below. The roof is gable ended with slate tiles and is lined throughout. Cracks in the brickwork and between soffit boards and tiles are visible from the outside.	 	High

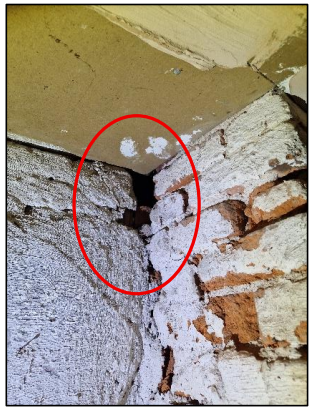
Section one of the roof void is comprised of two smaller rooms, both with false ceilings. Section two of the room void is one large room, with no false ceiling. The entirety of the roof void was warm.

Section One:

Multiple gaps in the brickwork were recorded as well as holes in the false ceiling.

Some ceiling holes had been temporarily covered up. Lining could be seen through the holes in the false ceiling as well as showing roof beams.







Section Two:

Section two is an open space where some building materials are stored and has a raised wooden structure to the west of the room.

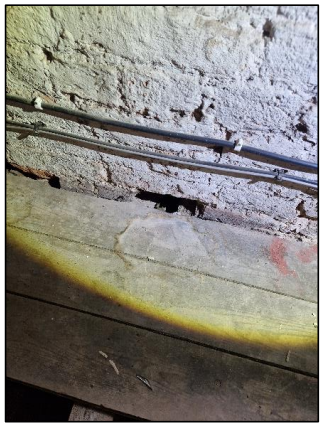
Gaps between linings were recorded as well as at the corners of walls.

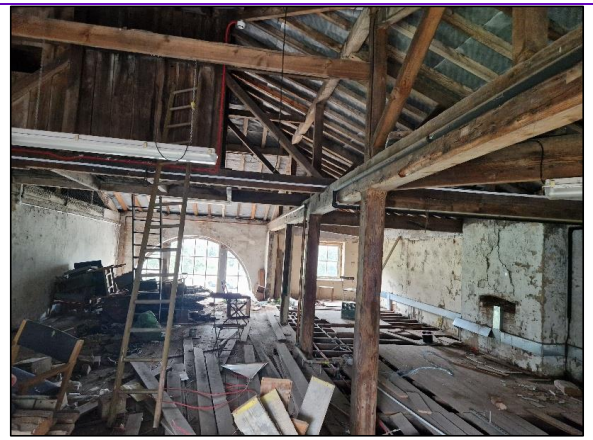
Occasional scattered droppings found around the space were sent for DNA analysis and determined to belong to Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (see Appendix 2).

Summary:

Multiple gaps and crevices provide several entry points for bats; high temperatures recorded throughout the space also provide high conditions to support roosting bats, supported further by the positive DNA analysis of droppings taken from the space during the survey.

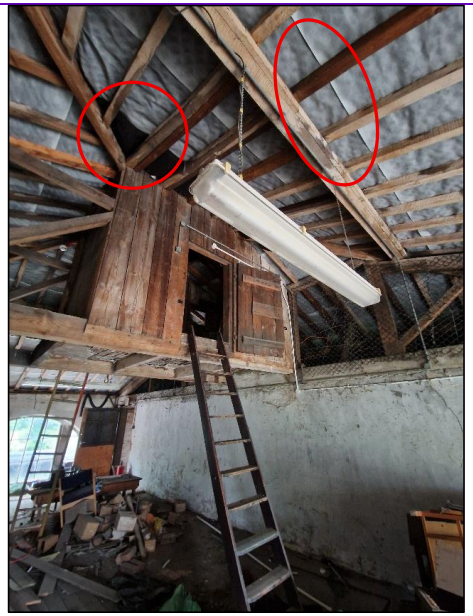








Café & Education Centre	The roof for the café and education centre building is comprised of slate tiles. Notable gaps are present on the roof for the café, especially at the edges where the gutter has come partially loose. The interior of the café, education centre and office space have all had roof conversions, with no void for access available. Summary: Gaps are present within the roof tiles although further assessment of the roof was unobtainable due to a lack of roof voids.	 	Low

Stables (1, currently unused)	Along the western part of the structure, unused stable facilities are present. The roof is a pent roof comprised of slate tiles and has no interior lining or insulation present. Door and windows offer entry points to the structure. Netting has been placed around the windows and edges of roof on the interior. Building is well lit, and bird faeces were present.	 	Low

Stables (2, used)	At the north of the building 'L' shaped stables are present. The roofs consist of slate tiles with skylights in-between. Gaps are present in door frames as well as between linings. Evidence of bird faeces and nesting activity was recorded in parts of the stables. **Summary:** Entry points to the building for bats are available through gaps in the roof tile work, roof lining and between window and door frames; providing roosting opportunities for bats despite being exposed to natural elements and nesting birds being present.	 	Low

4. Assessment

4.1 Interpretation of Results

4.1.1 The site is located close to good quality bat foraging habitat. The presence of gaps behind the soffit boards, at the gable ends and hanging tiles offer suitable access points and may allow bats to access the wall cavity or roof voids, these offering several PRFs.

4.1.2 **Six** buildings are assessed as offering **low** potential to support roosting bats (peacock area, storage area/toilets, café, education centre, stables 1 and stables 2). **One** building is assessed as offering **high** potential to support roosting bats (clocktower).

4.2 Potential Impacts

Bats

4.2.1 Refurbishment of buildings could result in impacts to bats and their roosts. In the absence of mitigation, the proposed development could result in the destruction of a bat roost and the killing/injuring of individual bats, should these be present.

Nesting Birds

4.2.2 Works to buildings could results in the destruction of active birds' nests, should these be present.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Further Surveys

5.1.1 Further surveys are required to assess to that status of roosting bats on site and inform mitigation requirements.

5.1.2 According to current guidelines[3] it is recommended that buildings offering high roosting potential are subject to three dusk emergence survey visits to be undertaken between May to September, with at least two being undertaken between May and August; and that buildings offering low roosting potential are subject to at least one dusk emergence survey to be carried out between May and August.

5.2 Mitigation Measures

Nesting Birds

5.2.1 Impacts on nesting birds should be avoided by carrying out works outside of the bird breeding season (March-August). If works have to commence during this time checks immediately before clearance (maximum of 48 hours prior commencing works) by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required. If nesting activity is detected work in that area will need to stop until the ecologist considered that nesting activity is finished.

5.2.2 Bird boxes and/or bricks should be incorporated within new buildings to maintain and enhance nesting opportunities.

General Precautions

5.2.3 Field survey results are valid for a limited duration and no investigation can provide a complete description and characterisation of a site. The composition of habitats and species can change depending on environmental variables and the mobility of species, so the results of a study become less reliable over time. In some cases, surveys that are three years old may be acceptable for a project assuming that habitats have not significantly changed in the intervening period, but for protected species it is likely that survey data will need to be no more than 18 months old. Please note, for licensing purposes, survey data should generally be from the current or most recent survey season.

5.2.4 This report is considered to be valid for two years. After this, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted to assess its validity. An assessment update may be required.

[3] Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2025) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 187 and 193, shown below:

- 187. 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 and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;
  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.
- 193. 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 reasons70 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.

Legislation

All bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (Amendment) (EU Exit), which make is an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

Proposed development works that are likely to disturb or destroy bats or their roosts will need to obtain a licence from the relevant Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (e.g., Natural England) prior to work commencing.

Appendix 2: Bat Dropping eDNA Results

WARWICK
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

EcoWarwicker
Ecological Forensics

15 July 25

Re: Identification Results for Lucia , Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd

Job number 21694, received 03 July 2025
Sample labelled: RHE 4597 Heaton Park Farm Centre, Clock tower, 01/07/2025
PCR amplification successful. DNA sequence:
ATGACAAACATTCGAAAATCCCACCCCCTGATCAAAATCATCAATAACTCATTCATTG
ATCTACCAGCTCCATCAAACATTTCAGCATGATGAAATTTTGGGTCCCTATTAGGCAT

Phylogenetic analysis identification: *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*

Confirmed by maximum likelihood, maximum parsimony, bootstrap 100%.

Best regards,

Professor Robin Allaby

The results and conclusions in this report are based on an investigation of mtDNA sequence analysis. The results obtained have been reported with accuracy. The interpretation represents the most probable conclusion for the DNA sequence obtained rather than the sample provided given current levels of species data. It should be borne in mind that different circumstances might produce different results. Therefore, care must be taken with interpretation of the results especially if they are used as the basis for commercial recommendations.