Scout Bridge Farm, Penistone

Bat Roost Assessment

June 2013

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1 Introduction

This report presents the results of a bat roost assessment undertaken on 26th June 2013 at Scout Bridge Farm, Huddersfield Road, Penistone, S36 7BX. The assessment was commissioned in relation to a development proposal to convert an outhouse/garage into living accommodation.

The location of the building is presented in Figures 1 and 2 at approximate grid reference SE2390104492. This report was completed to support planning decisions in relation to the application.

Figure 1: Location of building (red outline) within grounds of Scout Bridge Farm (red pin)



Figure 2: Location of building (yellow pin) within the wider environment



2 Survey Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

The following web sources were searched for ecological data of most relevance to the site.

- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC).
- Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 mapping.
- Aerial imagery.

Barnsley Biological Records Centre also provided a data search for the site + 2km radius.

2.2 Bat Roost Assessment

The property was subject to a detailed internal and external inspection for signs of bats on 26th June 2013 by Gemma Longman (GradCIEEM) with support provided by Toby Fisher MCIEEM (holding Natural England bat survey licence number CLS0529) of Quants Environmental. The survey was undertaken in accordance with the standard methodology[1] and was conducted during the optimal survey season (May to September).

The exterior of the property was searched for signs of bats such as droppings and for potential bat access points. The interior of the building was inspected for evidence of bats including droppings, scratches, staining, urine marking, corpses and feeding remains i.e. insect wings. The survey also assessed the structural features of the property and surrounding habitats to determine the likelihood of bats being present within the building during the main active season (April/May to August/September). This would in turn allow the assignment of a classification (negligible to high) of the potential of the property to support bat roosts.

[1] Hundt L (2012) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition, Bat Conservation Trust. ISBN-13: 9781872745985.

3 Survey Results

3.1 Desk Study

Protected Sites

Protected sites are shown in Appendix 2. The nearest protected site is Scout Dike Reservoir ~400m to the north-west. A search on MAGIC showed that there are no statutory protected sites within 2 km of Scout Bridge Farm.

Protected / Notable Species Records

Bat records provided by BBRC are shown in the table below. There are no bat records within 250m of the site.

Grid Ref	Date	Location	Scientific Name	Common Name
SE2303	25/04/1988	Thurlstone	*Nyctalus noctula*	Noctule
SE247036	17/07/1989	Penistone	*Nyctalus noctula*	Noctule
SE2304	27/05/1991	Penistone	*Nyctalus noctula*	Noctule
SE247036	09/07/1991	Penistone	*Nyctalus noctula*	Noctule
SE24500610	06/08/2011	Gunthwaite Dam	*Nyctalus noctula*	Noctule
SE24500610	06/08/2011	Gunthwaite Dam	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus 55kHz*	55 Khz Pipistrelle
SE248059	29/08/1997	Gunthwaite	*Plecotus auritus*	Brown Long-Eared Bat
SE247036	31/07/1987	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE247036	18/08/1987	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE247036	27/05/1988	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE247036	16/07/1990	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE248036	02/08/1990	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE235050	26/04/1991	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE234050	06/06/1991	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE234050	22/06/1991	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE247036	08/07/1991	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE234050	27/07/1991	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE2403	08/02/1993	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE249039	28/06/2001	Penistone	*Chiroptera*	Bats
SE2304	27/05/1991	Penistone	*Myotis daubentoni*	Daubenton's Bat
SE24500610	06/08/2011	Gunthwaite Dam	*Myotis daubentoni*	Daubenton's Bat
SE247036	18/08/1987	Penistone	*Myotis mystacinus*	Whiskered Bat
SE20	07/08/2000	'BARNSLEY MBC'	*Myotis mystacinus*	Whiskered Bat
SE2303	25/04/1988	'BARNSLEY MBC'	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE247036	09/06/1988	Penistone	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE247036	07/07/1988	Penistone	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE247036	15/08/1988	Penistone	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE247036	17/07/1989	Penistone	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE2304	27/04/1991	Scout Dyke Reservoir LWS	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE2304	27/05/1991	Scout Dyke Reservoir LWS	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle

Grid Ref	Date	Location	Scientific Name	Common Name
SE247036	09/07/1991	Penistone	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE247036	27/07/1991	Penistone	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE247036	27/07/1991	Penistone	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE247036	28/07/1991	Penistone	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE247036	16/07/1993	Penistone	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE248038	13/07/1997	Penistone	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE236035	28/07/1997	'BARNSLEY MBC'	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE233038	01/08/1998	'BARNSLEY MBC'	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE2404	16/04/2008		*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE2403	31/07/2008		*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE24500610	06/08/2011	Gunthwaite Dam	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	Pipistrelle
SE247036	20/07/1990	Penistone	*Myotis brandti*	Brandt's Bat

3.2 Property Description and Bat Roost Potential Features

Also refer to photographs in Section 3.4. The building is a modern brick-build single storey outhouse/garage with a loft cavity and three rooms; each accessible by one of three garage doors. The property has a limited number of gaps and crevices suitable for bats.

The brick work and windows were tightly sealed with no suitable gaps and the terracotta tiles on the roof appear to be in good condition with no suitable gaps or crevices for bats. Potential entry or egress points consisted of:

- A small gap between the UPVC soffits and brick work running along the front and rear of property. However, this was heavily cobwebbed indicating lack of habitual use by bats (photo 4).
- A small gap between the guttering and soffit, running along the front and rear of property. However, these did not appear to recede sufficiently for use by bats. Additionally, cobwebs were present.
- Crevices between the stepped brick work and soffit on each corner at the rear of the property (photo 5).
- A gap between the mortar joints of the corners at the rear of the property, above the guttering at each corner on the rear of the building; cobwebs present (Photo 5).

The roof void of the property is lined and features wooden support beams and wooden rafters with breeze blocks on the far wall (south-east elevations). The lining of the loft space is in good condition and no tears/gaps were apparent. Limited roosting opportunities were visible for crevice-dwelling species between the wooden support beams and the lining of the roof.

In summary, the property contains limited suitable roost sites for bats and the building is assessed as having low-medium bat roost potential.

3.3 Bat Habitat Description

The farm is situated on the north-western edge of Penistone. The surrounding land use is pastoral and arable. A hedgerow comprising ornamental firs separates a stream bordered by broad leaved trees from the property. The stream; located immediately north of the property and which leads to Scout Dike Reservoir (situated 440 metres northwest of the property at its nearest point); provides linear connectivity and foraging opportunities for bats.

A semi-improved meadow is situated adjacent (west) to the property, which along with the ornamental and mature garden planting within the vicinity, also provides opportunities for foraging bats.

Bat activity levels are expected to be moderate to high in the area due to the suitability of the foraging/commuting habitats.

3.4 Photographs

Photo 1: Front of property (south facing). Note the proximity to trees (bordering stream) to the rear of property



Photo 2: Internal of middle room of building



Photo 3: Roof cavity



Photo 4: Gap between soffit and brick work (note cobwebs)



Photo 5: Gap between stepped bricks and gap between soffit and mortar on corner of rear of building (red arrows)

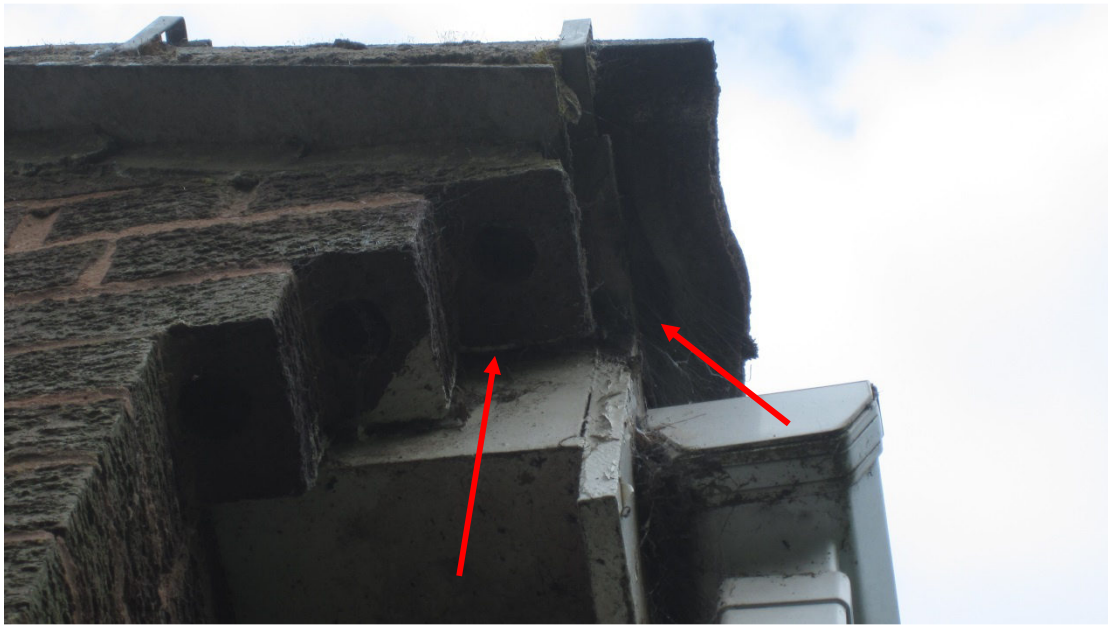


Photo 6: Stream immediately to the rear of the property (north)



Photo 7: Semi-improved meadow and tree line providing optimal foraging habitat (adjacent to building)



Photo 8: Rear of property backing on to ornamental firs, broadleaved trees and stream



4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 *Conclusion and Key Recommendations*

No bats or evidence of bats were recorded during the internal or external inspection including a search of cavities as far as was possible. Whilst no evidence of bats was observed, in respect to the optimal surrounding habitat for bats along with (limited) roost potential in the building, the property is considered to be of ***low-medium potential*** for use as a bat roost.

It is understood that **the work proposed will not affect the roof or any features likely to support bat roosts**. If the development necessitates structural alterations/removal of the roof, soffits or guttering, further survey works are recommended to fully confirm presence / absence of bats from these structures. Presence / absence surveys comprise dusk / dawn emergence surveys of the buildings during the bats main activity period (May to September).

It is considered that, provided the following mitigation measures are adopted and that work to the roof is avoided, the proposed works can proceed without likely significant effects on bats and without adversely affecting the favourable conservation status of bats.

- In the event that bats or evidence of bats such as droppings are found during works, work must stop immediately and advice should be sought from a licensed bat worker, the Bat Conservation Trust or Natural England.
- Contractors must avoid handling a bat where possible. Leave the bat to disperse of its own accord, or wait for the licensed handler to collect the bat. If it is necessary to remove a bat to avoid it being harmed, gloves must be worn. It should be carefully placed in a cardboard box and kept in the dark in a quiet place until the licensed bat worker arrives on site.
- Although not considered to be essential mitigation, a potential biodiversity enhancement would involve the installation of 1 – 3 woodcrete bat boxes (1FQ or 1WQ Bat Box by Schwegler) at the site. Wooden bat boxes are not recommended due to lessened durability and impermanence. The bat box should be preferably located underneath the eaves, adjacent to a habitat feature such as trees and located outside external light spill. The bat box should have a clear 1-2 metres drop from the entrance. The box should be sheltered from strong winds and it should be exposed to the sun for part of the day. The ecologist can advise on the most suitable position when on site. Bat boxes can be purchased through a variety of web sources including http://www.wildcareshop.com & http://www.nhbs.com

4.2 *Other Recommendations*

Birds

Although no bird nests were identified, birds could nest within the trees, scrub and building on the site during March-August. Any works affecting birds nest should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season (March to August). If this is not possible, the affected areas (buildings and vegetation) should be checked for the presence of bird nests by a suitably qualified ecologist. If active bird nests are present, these should be retained in situ undisturbed until the nests are no longer active.

Appendix 1: Legislation and Conservation Context

Nesting birds

All wild birds in the UK are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or its eggs. Bird species listed in Schedule 1 of the 1981 Act, e.g. barn owl, receive further protection which makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb these species while building a nest or in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or to disturb dependent young of such a bird.

Bats

All British bat species are fully protected through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 as a European Protected Species (EPS). They also receive some protection through inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Under the legislation, it is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat. It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection; or obstruct access to any structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

It is also an offence to deliberately disturb a bat; in particular any disturbance which is likely (a) to impair their ability - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

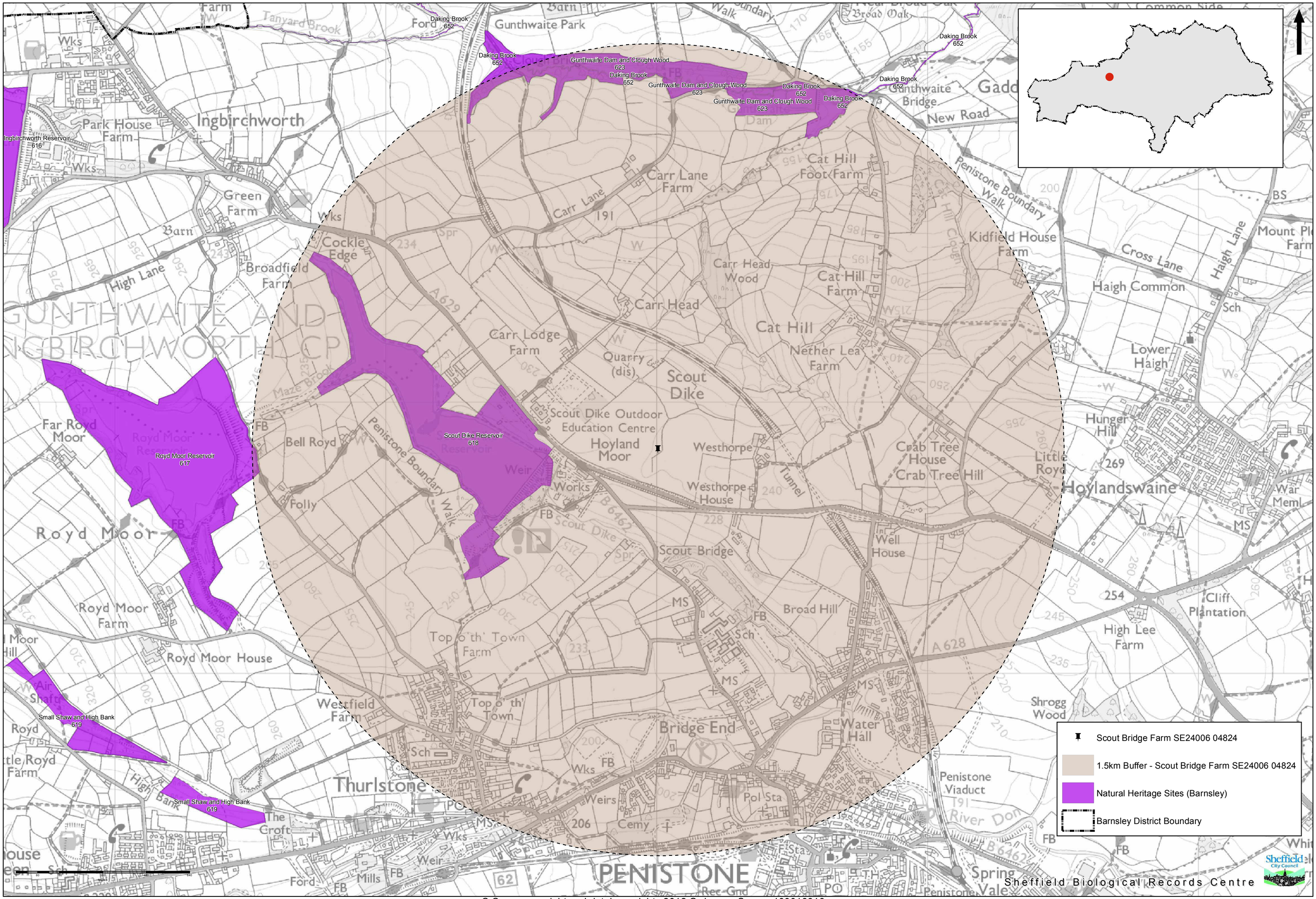
The 'appropriate authority' (Natural England in England) has powers to issue licences for various purposes including - (a) scientific or educational purposes… and (e) preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment. The appropriate authority shall not grant a licence under this regulation unless they are satisfied - (a) that there is no satisfactory alternative, and (b) that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range. It is an offence for any person authorised by virtue of a licence to which this paragraph applies to contravene or fail to comply with any condition which the licence requires him to comply with.

Several species of bat including brown long-eared and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* are identified as UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species and are also listed on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 as a Species of Principal Importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

Appendix 2: Information provided by BBRC

Nature Conservation Sites - 1.5km Buffer of Scout Bridge Farm

Date: 02/11/2012



Sheffield Biological Records Centre

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