

**Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.**



WOODLANDS LODGE, HOYLAND.

MAP REF: SE 36330 00737.

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: 260351/EcIA.

Date: 8th May 2026.

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to apply for planning consent to make alterations to the existing buildings at Woodlands, 106 Hawshaw Lane, Hoyland. Those works are to construct a new hydro pool and play area.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. That survey was carried out on 26th March 2026.

1.4. This report has been converted into an Ecological Impact Assessment suitable for submission to the Local Authority in support of the application.

1.5. Appendices I and II of this report provide additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the broad habitat types throughout the survey area.

2.3. The survey area and immediate surrounding area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989). *Surveying Badgers*. Mammal Society: -

- * Badger setts.
- * Badger latrines or dung pits.
- * Badger snuffle holes and evidence of foraging.
- * Badger paths.
- * Badger prints in areas of soft mud.
- * Badger hairs caught on fencing.

2.4. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Rob Strachan, Tom Moorhouse and Merry1 Gelling (2011).

Water Vole Handbook: Third Edition: -

- * Water vole burrows.
- * Water vole faeces and latrines.
- * Water vole feeding stations.
- * Water vole runs.
- * Water vole prints in areas of soft mud.
- * Water vole lawns.
- * Predator field signs.

2.5. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs

in line with the P Chanin (2003). *Monitoring the Otter and Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Monitoring Series No10 Guidelines*: -

- * Otter prints in soft mud.
- * Otter spraints.
- * Otter Holts.

2.6. The survey area was searched for watercourses and waterbodies. Where found, and where safe to enter the water, all were thoroughly searched for the presence of crayfish, for approximately 50m in each direction of the site, by searching under rocks and logs. Where stated, crayfish traps were also deployed into the watercourse. All survey work was carried out in accordance with the *Conserving Natural 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 1, Protocol for Monitoring the White Clawed Crayfish*.

2.7. The survey area was searched for mature trees and derelict buildings and where found these were checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)* by looking for the following signs: -

- * Holes, cracks or crevices.
- * Bat Droppings.

2.8. The land immediately adjacent to the survey area was assessed for bat roosting potential and bat foraging potential. Connective routes and flight lines were also assessed whilst on site and using maps of the area.

2.9. The area within 500m of the survey site was cross referenced to maps to highlight all ponds close to the site. Where possible, all ponds identified were accessed using agreed access or public rights of way to assess the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be present.

2.10. The survey area was assessed for the potential for reptiles and suitable reptile habitats. Where applicable the area was also searched for the presence of reptiles.

2.11. Where appropriate, the habitat within and surrounding the survey area was searched for species such as hazel, oak, honeysuckle, bramble and other species which may provide potential habitat for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Field signs such as feeding remains and nests were also searched for where possible, in line with P Bright, P Morris and T Mitchell-Jones *the Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition*.

2.12. Where appropriate, the area within and surrounding the survey area was assessed for its potential to house habitat for red squirrels. Field signs of red squirrels were searched for at least every 50m, looking for any dreys, feeding signs or sightings of red squirrels.

2.13. All surveys were carried out in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.14. This document is prepared in line with The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on Planning Authorities to give material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications. The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance on “Natural Environment” also promote sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity and that it is conserved and enhanced within the development.

2.15. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

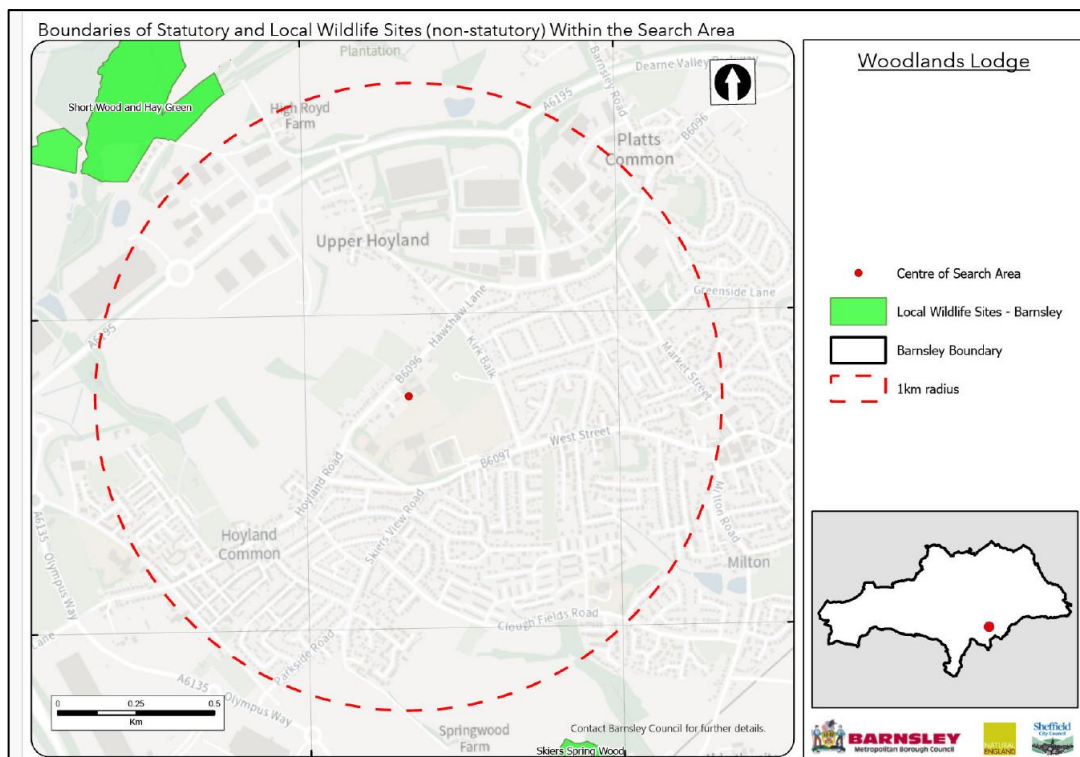
2.16. This survey was carried out by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years’ experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England survey licences for barn owl, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

3. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to Barnsley Biological Records Centre for existing records of designated sites and protected species within 1km of the survey area.

3.1.2. There are no national or international designated sites in the search area and no Barnsley Local Wildlife Sites. The closest Local Wildlife Site is Short Wood and Hay Green, 1.19km to the northwest.



3.1.3. There are abundant amphibian records, predominantly at Tankersley where there is a known population of great crested newts 3km to the southwest.

3.1.4. There are abundant bat records in the surrounding area but none that apply to the survey area.

3.1.5. The data search results are available to the client on request but must not be placed in the public domain.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The aerial photograph below shows the location of the survey area, marked with a red arrow and the surrounding area. The site is located at the edge of the residential area of Hoyland with industrial and commercial areas to the west around the Birdwell exit of the M1 motorway.



3.2.2. The survey area is within the Woodlands site which is shown below shaded in yellow. The survey area is in the southwest corner of this site.



3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix II of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats that are on the site. The primary habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- g4 – Modified grassland.
- u1 – Vegetated garden.
- u1b – Developed land, sealed surface.
- u1b5 – Buildings.
- u1e – Built linear feature.

3.3.2. Please note that works are in progress on the site, works additional to those to be included in this application. Where habitats have been affected and degraded, this report addresses the habitats before degradation and includes historic photographs taken before any works started. Biodiversity calculations have been calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, the current version at this time.

3.3.3. g4 – Modified grassland.

3.3.3.1. There are two areas of modified grassland on the site.

3.3.3.2. The first is a lawned area in front of the existing buildings, shown in the first photograph below.

3.3.3.3. The second area is a long strip of grassland alongside the existing access road to the site, shown in the second photograph below.



3.3.3.4. Species present include perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), annual meadowgrass (*Poa annua*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), thistle (*Cirsium* sp(p)) and dock (*Rumex* sp.).

3.3.3.5. The condition assessment for this habitat is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of the grassland is poor, passing four criteria but failing the essential criteria.

3.3.4. Secondary code 200 – Individual trees.

3.3.4.1. Within the two areas of grassland there are three trees that will be impacted by the proposals.

3.3.4.2. In the area of grassland in front of the existing buildings there is a large and mature sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) tree, T12 in the arboricultural report, described as early mature with four stems and 18m high, shown in the photograph below.



3.3.4.3. The condition assessment for this tree is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of this tree is good, passing five criteria.

3.3.4.4. Within the grassland adjacent to the existing drive there are two trees, T6 and T7 in the arboricultural report. One is described as a semi-mature Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*) and the other as a semi-mature cherry (*Prunus avium*) tree. These are shown below and both will be lost in order to widen the access drive to the site.

3.3.4.5. The condition assessment for these trees is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of these trees is moderate, passing four criteria.



3.3.4.6. There is a further tree within the survey area and that is tree T8 in the arboricultural report, described as a mature beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) tree 20m high. This tree will be retained.



3.3.4.7. The condition assessment for this tree is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of this tree is good, passing six criteria.

3.3.5. u1 – Vegetated garden

3.3.5.1. There are two areas of flower borders, classed as vegetated garden, one of which is shown below. These contain a variety of garden plants including daffodil (*Narcissus pseudonarcissus*), montbretia (*Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora*), hellebore (*Helleborus* sp.) and geranium (*Geranium* sp.).



3.3.5.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat

3.3.6. u1b – Developed land, sealed surface.

3.3.6.1. There are extensive areas of hard standing along the existing drive to the site and in the large car parking area behind the existing buildings. There are also hard standing pathways around the existing buildings and along the south eastern side of the site where there are areas of concrete and shed bases.





3.3.6.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.7. u1b5 - Buildings

3.3.7.1. There are the existing buildings present on the site. Where any of the existing buildings will be affected by proposed works under this application, these are dealt with in detail later in this report.



3.3.7.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.4. u1e – Built linear feature.

Secondary codes: 853 – mortared stone wall, 612 – fence.

3.3.4.1. There are mortared walls around the existing garden, as can be seen in the photograph below.



3.3.4.2. There are timber boundary fences around the site.



3.3.4.3. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. There were no badger setts or badger field signs present anywhere within the survey area.

3.4.2. There is no watercourse on or close to the site and therefore no habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish.

3.4.3. The nearest pond is 850m north of the survey area, on the opposite side of the busy Dearne Valley Parkway. Any amphibians present in that pond would be unlikely to travel to the survey area.

3.4.4. The proposed new hydro pool will adjoin one of the existing buildings on the site. That building is shown below.



3.4.4.1. The building is constructed with well-pointed stone walls and with a pitched, hipped end roof above with close fitting tiles that are all in place and with well-sealed ridge tiles.



3.4.4.2. The eaves of the building are well sealed with the gap behind the fascia board sealed with a metal grid that will prevent bats or birds from accessing the gap.

3.4.4.3. The building was assessed in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines, Edition 4, to have a negligible potential for roosting bats.

3.4.5. The three trees that are to be lost to the development were assessed for Potential Roost Features (PRF) and none were found. The mature tree to be retained has partial ivy cover and therefore may contain concealed Potential Roost Features.

3.4.6. The area on and around the site is assessed to be medium to high value habitat for foraging and commuting bats. That habitat will remain post development.

3.4.7. There are opportunities for nesting birds in the trees within the survey area. No nesting bird activity was identified during the survey.

3.4.8. The site is assessed to have no potential for reptiles as the habitat on site is unattractive to reptiles with busy main roads around the survey area and there are no reptile records for the immediate area around the site.

3.4.9. The site is assessed as an unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse as it lies well outside of their natural range and the habitat is totally unsuitable.

3.4.10. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels, located outside the natural range for the species.

3.4.11. There is one alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act present on the site. Montbretia was found growing in the flower beds in old photographs, but this had already been removed and disposed of prior to this site survey.

3.4.12. The site has low suitability for hedgehogs as the site is confined, busy and there are busy main roads adjacent.

4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS.

4.1. Designated Sites.

4.1.1. Assessment.

4.1.1.1. There are no international or nationally designated sites within the data search area and therefore there will be no impact on such sites.

4.1.1.2. There are two Barnsley Local Wildlife Sites close to the survey area but not close enough for there to be any impact on those sites.

4.1.2. Mitigation.

There is no requirement for mitigation measures as none of the designated sites is close enough to be affected by the proposals.

4.1.3. Residual Effects.

There will be no residual negative impact on designated sites.

4.2. Habitats.

4.2.1. Assessment.

4.2.1.1. Baseline biodiversity calculations have been carried out using the Statutory Metric tool, the current metric at the time of writing this report. The calculations have been completed for baseline area habitats. The condition assessments for each habitat are shown in the attached condition assessment document and the baseline biodiversity values are shown in the attached metric calculation tool as well as being listed below.

4.2.1.2. *Area Habitats – Pre Development.*

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Modified grassland	0.122	Low	Poor	0.24
Developed land, sealed surface	0.124	V.Low	N/A	0
Developed land, sealed surface - Buildings	0.177	V.Low	N/A	0
Vegetated garden	0.009	Low	N/A	0.02
Two mature trees	0.0326	Medium	Moderate	0.26
Two smaller trees	0.0733	Medium	Good	0.88
Total (Excl trees)	0.43			1.40

4.2.1.3. There are 1.4BU of area habitat on the site pre-development.

4.2.1.4. There are no linear habitats present on the site.

4.2.2. *Mitigation.*

4.2.2.1. The two trees beside the drive will be lost because they will be in the footprint of the new drive. The other trees on site will be retained.

4.2.2.2. In addition, thirty-four new small, moderate condition trees will be planted on the site to achieve the required 10% BNG.

- Twelve new fruit trees will be planted along the side of the drive way.
- Ten new trees will be planted down the side of the building backing onto the church
- Twelve new trees will be planted on the grass area at the front of the building.

4.2.2.3. All areas of modified grassland will be retained.

4.2.3. Residual Effects.

4.2.3.1. The following table shows the area biodiversity present on the site post development.

4.2.3.2. Area Habitats - Post Development.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Modified grassland - retained	0.122	Low	Poor	0.24
Developed land, sealed surface	0.121	V.Low	N/A	0
Developed land, sealed surface - Buildings	0.177			0
Individual trees – retained – 2 large trees.	0.0733	Medium	Good	0.88
34 new trees	0.1384	Medium	Moderate	0.42
Total (Excl trees)	0.21			1.55

4.2.3.3. This will provide 1.55BU of area habitat on site post development and will give the following results with a 10.29% BNG while satisfying all trading rules.

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change <small>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Area habitat units			0.14
	Hedgerow units			0.00
	Watercourse units			0.00
Total net % change <small>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)</small>	Area habitat units			10.29%
	Hedgerow units			0.00%
	Watercourse units			0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	1.40	1.54	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓				
No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓				
No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓				

4.3. Species - Bats.

4.3.1. Assessment.

4.3.1.1. The building on the site that will be affected by the proposed extensions was assessed in line with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines, Edition 4, to have a negligible potential for roosting bats. The proposed development will have no impact on roosting bats in buildings.

4.3.1.2. The two trees that are to be lost to the development were assessed for Potential Roost Features and none were found. The mature tree to be retained has partial ivy cover and therefore may contain concealed Potential Roost Features. The proposed development will therefore have no negative impact on bats roosting in trees.

4.3.1.3. The area on and around the site is assessed to be medium to high value habitat for foraging and commuting bats. That habitat will remain post development and therefore the proposed development will have no impact on foraging bats.

4.3.2. Mitigation.

All works will be undertaken with due care and, in the unlikely event a bat is found, the bat will be covered and protected and work will cease at that location until further advice has been sought from a license ecologist.

4.3.3. Residual Effects.

There will be no negative residual impact on roosting or foraging bats.

4.4. Species – Nesting Birds.

4.4.1. Assessment.

There are opportunities for nesting birds in the trees within the survey area. If either of the trees to be removed are removed during the nesting bird season, this would impact on any nesting birds present.

4.3.2. Mitigation.

4.3.2.1. All vegetation clearance will be undertaken outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to September each year.

4.3.2.2. Should any vegetation need to be removed during the nesting season, this will be preceded by a nesting bird survey, carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist no more than two days in advance of the proposed works. Should any active nests be found, these will be left undisturbed until the young have fledged and left the nest.

4.3.3. Residual Effects.

There will be no negative residual impact on nesting birds.

5. COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES.

5.1. It will be necessary to incorporate biodiversity enhancements in the new building on the site in line with the NPPF.

5.2. To provide additional biodiversity enhancements in line with the NPPF, one new integrated bat brick will be built into the new building. Where there is no new build, one surface mounted bat box will be provided instead.

5.3. Integrated bat bricks will be Habibat boxes, as shown below or equivalent to match the external materials of the building.



5.4. Surface mounted boxes will be Beaumaris boxes, as shown below or equivalent.



5.5. Two Swift nest boxes will be provided. Where possible these will be integrated but if this is not feasible, it will be surface mounted.



5.6. One bee brick tower will be provided within the site to provide breeding opportunities for solitary bees.

Prepared by:	
Derek Whitcher, BSc, MCIEEM, MCMI	Date: 8 th May 2026.

Checked by:	
Ruth Georgiou, BSc, MCIEEM	Date: 8 th May 2026.

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JNCC, Peterborough.

Appendix I. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man-made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Appendix II. BAT INFORMATION.

Ecology

There are currently 18 species of bat residing in Britain, 17 of which of which are known to breed here. They are extremely difficult to identify in the hand and even more so in flight.

Many species appear to be diminishing in numbers, probably due to habitat change and shortage of food, caused by pesticides, as insects are their sole diet.

As their diet consists solely of insects, bats hibernate during the winter when their food source is at its most scarce. They will spend the winter in hollow trees, caves, mines and the roofs of buildings.

Certain species, particularly the pipistrelle (the commonest and most widespread British bat) can quickly adapt to man-made structures and will readily use these to roost and to rear their young.

Surveys

During walkover surveys, bat roosts can be identified by looking for:

- Suitable holes, cracks and crevices within any building, tree or other structure.
- Bat droppings along walls, window cills, or on the ground.
- Prey remains, such as insect wings.

Further investigations can be made using endoscopes, by carrying out aerial inspections of trees or by conducting bat activity surveys during dusk and dawn over summer months.

Legislation

Bats are protected under Appendix II and III of the Bern Convention (1982), Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (some species under Annex II), Annex II of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and EUROBATS agreement. Numerous species are also listed

under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) making them species of principal importance.

All bats and their roosts are therefore protected in the UK. This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any bat, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

The UK has designated maternity and hibernacula areas as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) under the Habitats Directive. Implementation of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan also includes action for a number of bat species and the habitats which support them.

Where development proposals are likely to affect a bat roost site, a licence is required from Natural England.

Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA PRE DEVELOPMENT.



Appendix IV. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA POST DEVELOPMENT.

