

Ecology note

Red House Farm, Ashbocking, Suffolk

PREPARED FOR
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Background

BASEcology was commissioned in August 2020 to undertake further ecological work at Red House Farm within Ashbocking village (Suffolk) to help discharge the following planning conditions (to be submitted concurrently with reserved matters submissions) for a small residential development (five dwellings) granted outline planning permission (including access, with all other matters reserved) by Mid Suffolk District Council in January 2018 (DC/18/00355):

Condition 4 – Action required prior to commencement development: mitigation to be agreed

'No development shall be carried out until proposals for the mitigation of the impact of the development on protected Suffolk European Sites have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, and the Local Planning Authority has confirmed in writing that the provision of the proposed mitigation has been secured. Such proposals must provide mitigation in accordance with the emerging joint (Draft) Habitats Regulations Assessment Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy, or for mitigation to at least an equivalent effect. Provide details of the manner in which the proposed mitigation is to be secured.

Reason: In order to safeguard protected wildlife species and their habitats in accordance with the NPPF and Habitats Regulations. This condition is required to be agreed prior to the commencement of any development as any construction process to ensure adequate time for any agreement to be secured and be implemented prior to construction.

Condition 5: EPS Licence

Concurrent with reserved Matters: Submission of. Copy of the EPS licence for Bats The works to demolish the redundant agricultural buildings and existing flat, which are identified within the ecological assessment (BASEcology, July 2015), shall not in any circumstances commence unless the local planning authority has been provided with either:

A licence issued by Natural England pursuant to Regulation 55 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 authorizing the specified activity/ development to go ahead; or

B) a statement in writing from the relevant licensing body to the effect that it does not consider that the specified activity/development will require a licence.

Reason: To conserve and enhance Protected and priority species and allow LPA to discharge its duties under the UK Habitat Regulations, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended and s40 of the NERC Act 2006 (Priority habitats & species) and s17 of the Crime & disorder Act 1998.

Condition 6: Ecological mitigation

Concurrent with reserved Matters: Compliance with the recommendations of the ecological report. All ecological mitigation and enhancement measures and/or works shall be carried out in accordance with the details contained in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Basecology, July 2015) as already submitted with the planning application and agreed in principal with the local planning authority prior to determination.

Reason: In the interests of wildlife.

Condition 4 – Action required prior to commencement development: mitigation to be agreed

In order to discharge Condition 4, a financial contribution of £487.56 has been made to the Suffolk Coast Recreation Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) on 28th April 2021 – reference RAM330014362. This figure has been calculated on the basis of four new dwellings within Zone A (a contribution is not required for a replacement dwelling).

The RAMS is designed to help reduce the impact of increased levels of recreational use on European Sites, due to new residential development in the Suffolk Coast area, and to provide a simple, coordinated way for developers to deliver mitigation for their developments.

Condition 5 – EPS Licence

In order to discharge Condition 5, a low impact class licence (LICL) will be obtained from Natural England once the reserved matters associated with the application are approved. Note a licence cannot be obtained prior to reserved matters as outlined in the conditions of the LICL:

'All consents necessary for the proposed activity must have been granted (planning or other) before applying to register the site. For all consents that have been granted, all conditions or Reserved Matters relating to wildlife species and habitat issues (which are intended to be and are capable of being discharged) must be discharged and in place.'

A LICL is considered more appropriate than a traditional European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) as it has been developed to enable a more proportionate approach to licensing to be taken in certain situations where the conservation importance of the roost is concerned low: for example, a commercial building where a day roost of two common pipistrelle bats has been found. It is purposefully designed to reduce the application paperwork, scrutiny of the three derogation tests that need to be met prior to a licence being granted, and the speed with which a licence decision is made. Note a LICL was first introduced in December 2016 which is why it was not referenced and recommended within the previous bat survey report.

In order to support a LICL application, an updated dusk re-entry survey was undertaken by three licensed bat ecologists on 14th May 2021. The updated survey was required in accordance with the following best practice guidance which is summarised in the sections below:

- CIEEM (April 2019) Advice Note on The Lifespan of Ecological Reports & Surveys
- BSI Biodiversity — Code of practice for planning and development

CIEEM Advice Note

The following information is provided by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) with regards to the lifespan of ecology reports and surveys.

'It is important that planning decisions are based on up-to-date ecological reports and survey data. However, it is difficult to set a specific timeframe over which reports or survey data should be considered valid, as this will vary in different circumstances. In some cases there will be specific guidance on this (such as for the age of data which may be used to support an EPS licence application). In circumstances where such advice does not already exist, CIEEM provides the general advice set out below.'

Table 4: The lifespan of ecological reports & surveys

Age of Data*	Report / Survey Validity
Less than 12 months	Likely to be valid in most cases.
12-18 months	<p>Likely to be valid in most cases with the following exceptions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where a site may offer existing or new features which could be utilised by a mobile species within a short timeframe (see scenario 1 example); • Where a mobile species is present on site or in the wider area, and can create new features of relevance to the assessment; • Where country-specific or species-specific guidance dictates otherwise. <p>Report authors should highlight where they consider it likely to be necessary to update surveys within a timeframe of less than 18 months.</p>

* '18 months – 3 years' and 'more than 3 years' categories have not been included in the table above as these are not relevant for mobile species survey reports

Scenario 1 example – 'Trees or buildings on site have been surveyed for evidence of bat roosts and none were found; new roosts may be present, and trees or buildings may have developed new features which were not previously present. An update bat roost survey is likely to be required.'

BSI Biodiversity Code of Practice

The following information is provided as standard or model planning conditions and planning "informatives".

Time limit on development before further surveys are required – Condition

If the [... development or a specified phase of development...] hereby approved does not commence (or, having commenced, is suspended for more than 12 months) within X years from the date of the planning consent, the approved ecological measures secured through Condition X shall be reviewed and, where necessary, amended and updated. The review shall be informed by further ecological surveys commissioned to i) establish if there have been any changes in the presence and/or abundance of [... insert relevant habitat and/or species ...] and ii) identify any likely new ecological impacts that might arise from any changes.

Where the survey results indicate that changes have occurred that will result in ecological impacts not previously addressed in the approved scheme, the original approved ecological measures will be revised and new or amended measures, and a timetable for their implementation, will be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority prior to the commencement of development [... or specified phase of development ...]. Works will then be carried out in accordance with the proposed new approved ecological measures and timetable

NOTE This condition can be used in situations where any delay in the commencement of development or a specified phased of development might mean that the original survey information, and subsequent impact assessment, is out of date and consequently any associated mitigation, etc., no longer relevant. This might particularly be an issue where there might have been changes in the distribution or abundance of mobile protected species on site.

IMPORTANT: If any protected species are identified in the new surveys that were not previously known to be on site, and are likely to be harmed by the development, then a protected species licence might be required before works can commence.

Survey Methodology

Three surveyors (all licensed bat ecologists) were used for the emergence dusk survey which commenced two hours prior to sunrise and ended 15 minutes after sunrise. The location, appearance, flight characteristics and time of sightings of bats were duly noted where possible during each survey. Equipment included 3 x EM Touch 2 Pro, 2 x iPad, 1 x Samsung tablet, 1 x Canon xA40, 2 x floodlights (positioned opposite the previous roost site recorded in 2015) and 2 x Anabat Walkabout. The survey was undertaken in suitable weather conditions: temperature = 10.1°C – 9.4°C (start and end); wind = beaufort scale 1 (light air); cloud cover = 100%.

Baseline Conditions

The detailed bat surveys undertaken in 2015 recorded a small common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* roost located underneath the eaves of the highly modified barn opposite the western annex, as shown on Figure 1 below. The collective information indicates the roost was either a summer or transitional roost as only one bat was recorded using the roost on two separate occasions (15/06/15 & 20/08/15). Common pipistrelle are considered common and widespread at all geographic levels.

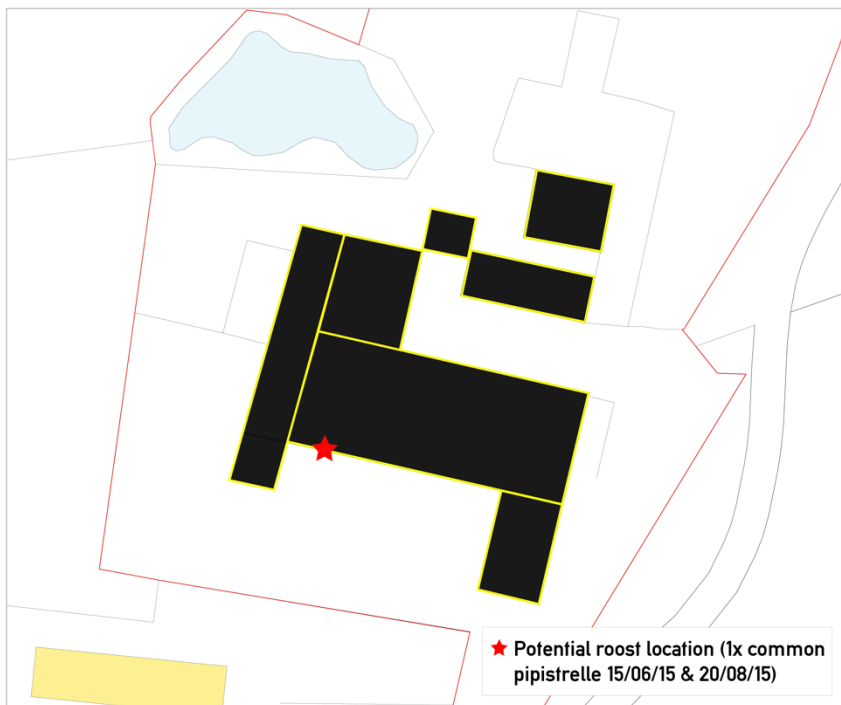


Figure 1: 2015 bat roost location

An updated Preliminary Roost Assessment to support a modified planning application was undertaken in 2018. The results of the survey indicated there were no structural changes to the buildings that could provide new roosting opportunities, and no signs of bats were noted to indicate the presence of new roosting sites (in addition to those recorded during the 2015 surveys).

In 2021, an updated dusk survey was undertaken in May to support a L1CL application. The results of the survey revealed low levels of bat activity and one potential [small] roost (1x common pipistrelle) from the north-eastern corner of the main barn. No bats were observed exiting from the previous roost location identified in 2015. The results of the survey indicate the site is

capable of supporting individual/small numbers of common bat species and therefore there are no significant material changes to the previous 2015 and 2018 survey results.



Figure 2: 2021 potential bat roost location

Low Impact Class Licence

The collective results from the 2015, 2018 and 2021 surveys indicate the site is suitable for a LICL as detailed in Table 1 below. The mitigation and compensation requirements of a LICL are detailed underneath in Table 2. The licence will be submitted once the reserved matters associated with this planning application are approved.

Table 1: LICL qualifying criteria

Species and situation	Qualifying criteria	Applicable to the site
Bat species present or using the structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> Soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> Brown long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i> Whiskered <i>Myotis mystacinus</i> Brandt's <i>Myotis brandtii</i> Daubenton's <i>Myotis daubentonii</i> Natterer's <i>Myotis nattereri</i> 	YES
Assemblage of species	No more than three of the species listed above are present or using the structure	YES
Number of roosts	No more than three roosts in total (across all structures)	YES
Number of bats	<p>Individuals or small numbers (in total) of any species listed above. If more than one species will be affected, it is the total number of bats which must be considered.</p> <p>The conservation status of bat species varies across regions, and what can be considered 'small' numbers of bats is different for different species. The Registered Ecological Consultant must take these factors into account, along with individual species ecology when deciding if proposed works can be covered by WML-CL21. Note that for some species, even small numbers of bats may indicate more important roost types not covered by WML-CL21.</p> <p>The unexpected discovery of one or more individual bats of a species as listed above, found during the hibernation season in situations where there had previously been a thorough assessment that concluded that their presence was highly unlikely (see Annex C).</p>	YES
Roost type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feeding roosts 	YES

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Night roosts Day roosts Transitional roosts/occasional roosts <p>These are all roosts that are considered to be 'low conservation significance roosts' for the purpose of WLM-CL21</p>	
Impacts	Capture, disturbance of small numbers of bats and/or damage or destruction of low conservation significance bat roost/s	YES
Other licences	<p>With the exception of survey licences there is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No other bat licence (e.g. an individual licence) in place; No application for a bat licence has been submitted, and No reason to believe that an individual licence will be required for the site. 	YES

Table 2: Mitigation and compensation requirements for works conducted under LICL

Description	Requirements under WML-CL21
Mitigation	This is expected for all sites registered under a LICL and where possible it is expected that roosts and access points will be retained or re-created as part of the mitigation.
Compensation	<p>Based on the situations covered by a LICL, there is no expectation for compensation to be provided. However, it may be appropriate to provide a proportionate level of compensation in some cases. For example, where more than one species and/or more than one roost will be impacted, the provision of one feature, suitable for the species (box/tile/brick/crevice) per roost to be impacted would be considered appropriate within or close to the structure to be affected.</p> <p>Where bat boxes are provided these are expected to be retained for a minimum of five years, even if they are not immediately occupied by bats.</p> <p>WML-CL21 will not cover any enhancements or compensation over and above what is required for this licence. However, these may be required as part of a planning, or other, consent.</p>
Timings of works	<p>Activities involving the exclusion, capture and/or handling of bats must only be undertaken in conditions suitable for bats to be active. Should individual/s bats be found unexpectedly in cold or adverse weather conditions Annex C of the LICL must be followed.</p> <p>Best practice methodology must be followed at all times.</p>
Monitoring and maintenance	There is no expectation of post-development monitoring or maintenance and these will not be covered by the licence.

Condition 6 - Ecological Mitigation

The following measures will be carried out once the reserved matters associated with this application are approved in compliance with the mitigation and enhancement recommendations of the previous ecological reports.

Table 3: Mitigation & enhancement recommendations for bats

Mitigation & enhancement recommendations	Details	Compliance
Licence	A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) must be sought prior to the commencement of any site works	Please refer to Condition 5 section above – a LICL application will be submitted once the reserved matters are approved
Tool box talk	All staff working on site should receive a toolbox talk (TBT) prior to the recommencement of construction works. The TBT will focus on structural features of interest for roosting bats, protective legislation, and the risk of bat presence on-site.	Please refer to example TBT overleaf which will be provided to all relevant workers on-site.
Soft strip	Demolition works should commence upon the roof, with tiles individually removed by hand in a 'soft-strip' fashion. Timber cladding should similarly be removed by hand, with care and attention also given to any other areas of the barn or outbuildings showing signs of suitable structural damage (i.e. with a potential crevice behind).	A work permit system will be adopted (see overleaf for example) to ensure all work stages are fully understood and signed off appropriately in order to ensure works adhere to the conditions of the LICL (and also in accordance with the previous ecology reports).
Timing of works	As a precaution, the demolition of buildings with potential to be used by roosting bats must be undertaken outside the core hibernation period, taken to be mid-November to February (a	The timing of works will be undertaken in accordance with the LICL requirements (as

	time when bats are considered to be particularly sensitive to disturbance).	detailed within Table 2 – LICL mitigation and compensation requirements).
Site lighting	In terms of bat activity and disturbance, works should be undertaken during daylight hours (i.e. 07:00 to 19:00) and artificial lighting should be avoided wherever possible. Where this is not possible (i.e. during certain construction activities), low sodium lighting should be used as this is known to decrease the magnitude of impact on bat species. Furthermore, light spillage onto any linear features should be avoided by the use of directional lighting (i.e. the use of hoods and / or cowls). Any lighting schemes must be reviewed by a suitably qualified ecologist.	Works will also comply with the following best practice guidance in relation to site lighting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN08:2018
New bat features	It is recommended that the new roosting features installed must be Ibstock bat bricks (or similar), Ibstock Bat box C and / or Schwegler 1FR bat tubes. At least two of these are recommended for each building. The new bat features should be installed at a height of at least 4m, on a variety of aspects to ensure varied thermal conditions are present within the new roosts. This will ensure that roosts with suitable conditions are present within the site throughout the year and in varied weather conditions.	Features to be installed on the new buildings during construction phase (these cannot be installed prior to construction).

Table 4: Mitigation & enhancement recommendations for birds

Mitigation enhancement recommendations &	Details	Compliance
Vegetation removal	Any vegetation removal, or actions that will impact upon vegetation, should be carried out outside of the peak bird breeding season. If this is not possible, works should only be carried out during this period if preceded by a survey to identify any active nests or nests being built. Any such nests would then require temporary exclusion zones to be placed around them until such time that the dependent young have fledged and left the area. The distance of which would depend on the species recorded. The peak bird breeding season extends between February and August (inclusive), although active nests can theoretically be encountered at any time of the year.	The development does not necessitate any vegetation clearance; as shown on Figure 2 below the site extent is limited to the existing buildings and hardstanding. Furthermore, as per Condition 7 (landscape protection) the vegetated site borders will be adequately protected throughout the course of the development.
Site lighting	Artificial lighting should be standardised within the development plans where it cannot be otherwise reasonably avoided. In instances where it is deemed necessary, it should be designed and positioned to minimise any adverse impacts on the retained surrounding vegetation. Such measures include the use of hoods and cowls and directional lighting away from adjacent areas of hedgerows/scrub/trees.	Works will comply with the following best practice guidance in relation to site lighting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance Notes for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light GN01:2020
Habitat compensation	Any suitable habitats to be lost should be replaced within the site with native and locally appropriate species.	As per comment above and Figure 2, no natural habitats are to be lost.



Figure 3: Site plan

TOOLBOX TALK – BATS

Red House Farm

INTRODUCTION TO BATS

There are 17 species of bat in the UK and of these six are endangered or rare and six other species are classed as vulnerable. Because so many bats are endangered, both UK and European legislation gives them complete protection. Since they tend to return to the same roosts each year, these sites are also protected whether the bats are present or not.

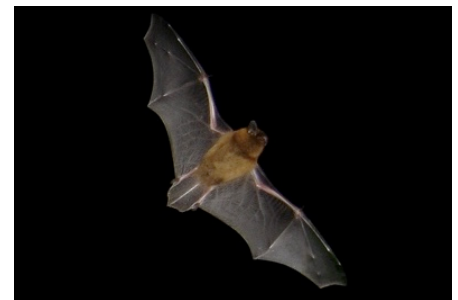


LEGISLATION

It is a criminal offence for anyone to:

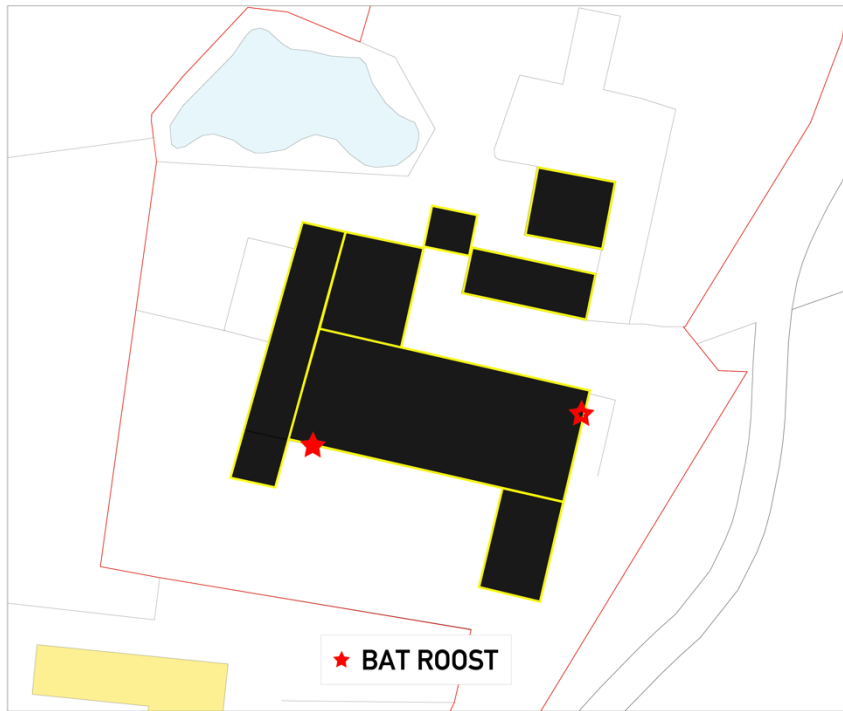
- deliberately capture, injure or kill bats
- damage or destroy a breeding or resting place
- obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places
- possess, sell, control or transport live or dead bats, or parts of them
- intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it's in a structure or place of shelter or protection

Breaking the law can lead to 6 months in prison and an unlimited fine.



ROOST IDENTIFICATION & LOCATION ON-SITE

Previous survey of the site identified two small bat roosts located on the eastern and southeastern corners of the main barn building (as highlighted on the map below).



Look out for bats and signs of bats such as droppings concealed in the roof timbers and damaged areas of brickwork. Droppings are dark brown or black, about 4-8 mm in length, and look like mouse droppings but crumble easily, as they are made up of insect fragments. In well-established roosts, droppings may be several centimeters deep.

RESPONSIBILITY ON-SITE

If you think you have found a bat or a bat roost on site, IMMEDIATELY stop all works in the area and contact the licensed ecologists responsible for managing the site (*LICENSED ECOLOGISTS DETAILS TO BE ADDED TO FINAL TBT*).

DON'T try to touch or handle a bat. They are very delicate and you are very likely to cause them serious harm – it is also breaking the law.

Ecological Permit to Work

This permit is issued as a document to protect species that have been recorded on this site against unlawful harm

Permit Ref No.		Site Location		Date permit is from		Date permit is closed and time	
Species on permit		Licence		Licence holder		Licensed issued by	

Prerequisite questions

1. I am the responsible person managing and in charge this site?	Yes	No
2. Have I had a site induction?	Yes	No
3. Have I been given the site ecological toolbox talk, understood and signed it?	Yes	No

If all questions 1-3 are yes go to authorised works

Authorised Work

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Work /Actions not Authorised (which would be in breach of the Natural England licence or the law)

1.	Working on site without toolbox talk until it is signed of as all
2.	Fires, gas release, smoke, vapour or liquid releases in areas outside authorised work areas which are not signed off by ECoW (Ecological Clerk of Works)
3.	Dismantling or disturbance in any way top any part of the site that is not in authorised work area
4.	Not recording or reporting any species to ECoW that is mentioned on the site ecological toolbox talk
5.	To harm, disturb or kill any protected species

Authorisation

Name of ECoW		Name of Responsible & person in Charge	
Signature of ECoW		Signature of Responsible & person in Charge	
Position of ECoW		Position of Responsible & person in Charge	
Date		Time	

Conclusion

The information within this report has been collated in order to discharge planning conditions 4, 5 and 6 for a small residential development (five dwellings) granted outline planning permission (including access, with all other matters reserved) by Mid Suffolk District Council in January 2018 (DC/18/00355). The supportive information to discharge the conditions is summarised as follows (note a bat licence cannot be granted until all planning matters are resolved):

- **Condition 4:** a financial contribution has been made to the Suffolk Coast Recreation Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS).
- **Condition 5:** a low impact class licence (LICL) will be submitted once the reserved matters are approved (a licence cannot be granted until all conditions or Reserved Matters relating to wildlife species and habitat issues (which are intended to be and are capable of being discharged) are discharged and in place.
- **Condition 6:** the following measures will be employed to ensure the development is compliant with the recommendations outlined in the previous ecological reports:
 - LICL application will be submitted once the reserved matters are approved (development cannot start until this approved)
 - Toolbox talk delivered to all workers on site prior to works commencing
 - A work permit system will be adopted to ensure all work stages are fully understood and signed off appropriately in order to ensure works adhere to the conditions of the LICL
 - The timing of works will be undertaken in accordance with the LICL requirements
 - Works will comply with the following best practice guidance in relation to site lighting
 - New bat features to be installed on the new buildings during construction phase (these cannot be installed prior to construction)