



Preliminary Roost Assessment

Vicars Croft, Monk Hesleden, Hesleden, Hartlepool, Durham TS27 4QA

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Status	Issue	Name	Date
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Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.

Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.

This approach is enshrined in Government planning guidance, for example, paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework for England.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.

(BS 42020, 2013)

Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Michael McCallum to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Vicars Croft, Monk Hesleden, Hesleden, Hartlepool, Durham TS27 4QA (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the conversion of a garage into living space, including the raising of the roof (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”).

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in Table 3 of this report.

Feature	Foreseen impacts	Recommendations <i>Measures required to adhere to guidance, legislation and planning policies.</i>
Roosting bats (B1)	Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within this building and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on bats in this location as a result of the proposed development. It is to the consultants understanding that the main residential dwelling will not be impacted by the proposed development.	In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice.
Foraging and commuting bats	The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats.	None.
Nesting birds (B1)	The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.	Works should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building should be undertaken immediately, by qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.
Other ecological constraints	None identified.	N/A

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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Michael McCallum to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Vicars Croft, Monk Hesleden, Hesleden, Hartlepool, Durham TS27 4QA (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the conversion of a garage into living space, including the raising of the roof (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”). A plan showing the proposed development will be provided in Appendix 1 when available.

The aim of the PRA was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how bats could use the site for roosting, foraging or commuting. This has been undertaken with due consideration to the “Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines” publication (Collins, 2016).

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author’s knowledge, by any other consultancy.

1.2 Site Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference NZ 45403 37254 and has an area of approximately 0.02ha comprising a residential dwelling and associated yard/garden area with agricultural fields to the west.

A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

1.3 Scope of the Report

This report provides a description of all features suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats and evaluates those features in the context of the site and wider environment. It further documents any physical evidence collected or recorded during the site survey that establishes the presence of roosting bats. It provides information on possible constraints to the proposed development as a result of bats and summarises the requirements for any further surveys to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve planning or other statutory consent and to comply with wildlife legislation.

To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- A desk study has been carried out.
- A field survey has been undertaken, including an external survey and internal inspection of built structures where possible, to determine the presence or the suitability of any features which bats could use for roosting and to assess the suitability of the site’s bat foraging and commuting habitat.
- An outline of potential impacts on any confirmed or unidentified roosts has been provided, based on the proposed development.
- Recommendations for further surveys and mitigation have been made, along with advice on the requirements for a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) application if appropriate.
- Opportunities for the enhancement of the site for roosting, foraging and commuting bats have been set out.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

The desk study included a 2km radius review of statutory designated sites with bat qualifying interests and granted EPSL records for bats held on magic.gov.uk database. An assessment of the surrounding landscape structure was also completed using aerial images from Google Earth and OS maps.

2.2 Field Survey

The survey was undertaken by Elen Griffin (Accredited Agent to Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2016-22119-CLS-CLS) on 29th November 2021

The PRA focussed on one built structure which will be affected by the proposed development as well as providing an overview of the wider site and the surrounding landscape for bat roosting, foraging and commuting habitat.

For any surveyed buildings:

A non-intrusive visual appraisal was undertaken from the ground, using binoculars to inspect the external features of the building for features which bats could use for roosting, including access or egress points and for signs of bat use including droppings, scratch marks, insect remains and urine smear marks. An internal inspection of the building was also made, including the living areas and any accessible roof spaces, using a torch and ladders. The surveyor paid particular attention to the floor and flat surfaces, window shutters and frames, lintels above doors and windows, and carried out a detailed search of numerous features within the roof space. An endoscope was used to complete a close-up inspection of any accessible features, where appropriate.

2.3 Breeding Birds and Other Incidental Observations

The surveyor also made note of any other ecological constraints observed during the survey, notably the likelihood of presence or signs of breeding birds, and the suitability of the site for barn owls *Tyto alba*.

2.4 Suitability Assessment

Built structures were categorised according to the likelihood of bats being present and the types of roost that the identified features could support. This is summarised in Table 1 for buildings below. Roost suitability is classified as high, moderate, low and negligible and dictates any further surveys required before works can proceed.

Table 1: Features of a building that are correlated with use by bats

Classification	Feature of building and its context
Moderate to high	Buildings or structures with features of particular significance for larger numbers of roosting bats e.g. mines, caves, tunnels, icehouses and cellars. Habitat on site and surrounding landscape of high quality for foraging bats e.g. broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that would be used by commuting bats e.g. river and or stream valleys and hedgerows. Site is proximate to known or likely roosts (based on historical data). Buildings with high suitability could support roosts of high conservation value such as maternity or hibernation roosts.

Low	A small number of possible roost sites or features, used sporadically by individual or small numbers of bats. Potential roost features may be suboptimal for reasons such as shallow depth, poor thermal qualities or upwards orientation with exposure to inclement weather or predators. Habitat suitable for foraging in close proximity, but isolated in the landscape. Or an isolated site not connected by prominent linear features. Few features suitable for roosting, minor foraging or commuting.
Negligible	Unsuitable for use by bats.

2.5 Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the features on site in the context of their suitability for roosting bats, this does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of bats being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on site and in the local area, the ecology and biology of bats as currently understood, and the known distribution of bats as recovered during the desk study. Bats are highly mobile creatures that switch roosts regularly and therefore the usage of a site by bats can change over a short period of time.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

A small section of the roof was covered with a light layer of snow, given the small area covered this was not considered to be a notable limitation as the vast majority of the roof was visible .

3.0 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Desk Study Results

A summary of desk study results is provided below.

3.2 Designated Sites

No statutory designated sites with bat qualifying interests were identified within 2km of the site.

3.3 Landscape

A review of aerial photographs (Google Earth) the magic.gov.uk database and OS maps has been undertaken. Collated together, the value of the landscape for bats is described below:

The site is in Monk Hesleden, a village in south east County Durham. The landscape is dominated by agricultural fields with boundary hedgerows and trees as well as small scattered woodland copses, ponds and irrigation ditches which could be used by bats for roosting, foraging and commuting.

3.4 Historical Records

One EPSL record for bats has been returned within 2km of the site. This relates to the destruction of a resting place of common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* in 2009 (licence ref: EPSM2009-783).

3.5 Field Survey Results

The PRA focussed on one built structure which will be affected by the proposed development as well as providing an overview of the wider site and the surrounding landscape for bat roosting, foraging and commuting habitat. The results of the field survey are illustrated in Appendix 3. The weather conditions recorded at the time of the survey are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Weather conditions during the survey

Date: 29/11/2021	
Temperature	2°C
Humidity	76%
Cloud Cover	75%
Wind	6mph
Rain	None

Building B1 Exterior

B1 is a single storey semi detached garage building with a pitched and gabled roof. The walls are brick built and rendered with roughcast. The render all looks to be in excellent condition with no gaps or cracks in which bats could roost.

The roof is clad with slate tiles, which, for the most part, are in excellent condition. Two slightly slipped tiles were noted along the western elevation, the client indicated that these were still in situ up till the recent storm.

No other gaps or lifts were identified along the impacted roofline under or in which bats could roost.

One wooden garage door is present along the eastern elevation which is well fitted with no gaps which would allow bats to enter B1.

The soffits are constructed of wood and look to be in good condition and well fitted to the exterior walls allowing for no ingress points for bats.

A missing tile was noted along the western elevation of the main residential dwelling, as with the slipped tiles the client indicated that the tile was in situ prior to the recent storms. The remaining tiles on the main dwelling roof looked to be in good conditions with no suitable roosting features for bats.



Eastern elevation with B1 indicated by the red rectangle (pictured above).



Western elevation with B1 indicated by the red rectangle (pictured above).



B1 western elevation roof (pictured above).



B1 eastern elevation roof (pictured above).



B1 northern elevation gable end (pictured above).



B1 example of soffits (pictured above).



B1 slipped tiles (pictured above).



Missing tile on the main dwelling building which will not be impacted by the proposed development (pictured above).

B1 Interior

There is no loft space within B1.

The roof structure is built from timber beams including ridge beam. The roof is unlined and the underside of the tiles are visible from the interior of B1.

Dense cobwebs are present along the beams and the underside of the tiles which can indicate lack of recent activity by void dwelling species.

Some small gaps were noted which allowed light to enter the interior of B1, likely present as a result of the displaced tiles due to recent storms.

B1 is currently used for storage and as such is subject to high levels of disturbance.

In addition to inspecting the interior of B1 the consultant also inspected the accessible loft space in the main dwelling. No light was seen entering the loft space indicating it was well sealed despite the lack of roof lining however large volumes of cluster flies were noted within the loft space.



B1 internal roof structure



B1 internal roof structure

B1 Evidence of bats

There was no evidence of roosting bats located internally or externally on the survey building.

B1 Breeding birds and other incidental observations

Disused birds nests likely swallow and sparrow were noted within B1.

Foraging and Commuting Habitat

Areas of woodland to the south of B1 are likely to provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

4.0 Conclusions, Impacts and Recommendations

4.1 Informative Guidelines

A summary of the relevant legislation and planning policies is provided in Appendix 4.

Bats

Bats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019).

There are three possible outcomes of this survey, each with specific recommendations. These are outlined below:

Confirmed bat roost

Best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) recommend additional surveys for confirmed roosts. Three further surveys are required to characterise the bat roost present including species, roost type and access points to inform an EPSL application to Natural England. Surveys must be completed during the active bat season (May – September). At least two of the surveys should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August, and at least one of the surveys should be a dawn re-entry survey.

Low, moderate or high likelihood of a bat roost present

Best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) recommend additional surveys for features assessed as having low to high suitability for roosting bats. One, two or three further surveys are required to confirm presence or likely absence of a bat roost, based on a low, medium or high roost likelihood evaluation. Surveys must be completed during the active bat season (May – September). If more than one survey is recommended, at least one of them should be completed during the optimal survey period mid-May to August, and at least one of the surveys should be a dawn re-entry survey. If two or one further survey is recommended these surveys must be completed during the optimal survey period (mid-May to August). For low and moderate roost likelihood evaluation the survey effort recommended at this stage is iterative and if bats roosts are confirmed in the building, a further survey will be required to provide sufficient information to inform an EPSL application to Natural England.

Negligible likelihood of a bat roost present

Buildings assessed as comprising negligible suitability for roosting bats do not normally require further surveys. However, if bats are found during any stage of the development, work should stop immediately, and a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted for further advice.

Birds

Legislation protects all wild birds whilst they are breeding, and prohibits the killing, injuring or taking of any wild bird or their nests and eggs. Certain species of bird, including the barn owl, are subject to special provisions; it is an offence to disturb any bird or their young during the breeding season.

4.2 Evaluation

Taking the desk study and field survey results into account, Table 3 presents an evaluation of the value of the site for bats and also details any other ecological constraints identified such as nesting birds in relation to the proposed development which will comprise a garage conversion.

Table 3: Evaluation of the site for bats and any other ecological constraints

Feature	Survey conclusions (with justification)	Foreseen impacts	Recommendations <i>Measures required to adhere to guidance, legislation and planning policies.</i>	Biodiversity Enhancements <i>The Local Planning Authority has a duty to ask for enhancements under the NPPF (2021) and County Durham Local Plan</i>
Roosting bats (B1)	<p>B1 has negligible value for roosting bats due to a lack of potential roost features.</p> <p>Although one missing tile was noted along the main dwelling roof it is to the consultants understanding that the main dwelling roof sill not be impacted by the proposed development and the new roof height of B1 will be well below the eaves of the existing residential dwelling.</p>	Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within this building and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on bats in this location as a result of the proposed development.	In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice.	<p>The installation of a minimum of two bat boxes on mature trees around the site boundaries or on retained buildings will provide additional roosting habitat for bats e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2F Schwegler Bat Box (trees) 1FF Schwegler Bat Box (trees) 2FN Schwegler Bat Box (trees) Beaumaris Bat Box (buildings) Vivara Pro Woodstone Bat Box (buildings) <p>Or a similar alternative brand.</p> <p>Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.</p> <p>Alternatively, bat boxes could be incorporated into building e.g.</p>

				Habibat Bat Box Schwegler 1FR Bat Tubes Bat tubes should be inserted into the fabric of the building during construction, positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance and facing landscapes areas, away from artificial light.
Foraging and commuting bats	The woodland to the south could be used by local bat populations for foraging and commuting. These could also be used by bats dispersing from nearby roosts outside of the site.	The proposed development will not result in the removal of any habitats which could be used by foraging or commuting bats.	None.	None.
Nesting birds (B1)	A number of disused birds nest were identified within B1.	The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.	Works should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building should be undertaken immediately, by qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.	The installation of a minimum of two bird boxes on mature trees around the site boundaries or on retained buildings will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. Schwegler No 17 Swift Nest Box (buildings) Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace (buildings) Schwegler 1B Nest Boxes (trees) Schwegler 2H Robin Boxes (trees) Woodstone Nest Box (buildings or trees)

				<p>Or a similar alternative brand.</p> <p>Tree boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Small-hole boxes are best placed approximately 1-3m above ground on an area of the tree trunk where foliage will not obscure the entrance hole.</p> <p>Swift and sparrow boxes should be positioned at the eaves of a building and can be incorporated into the fabric of the building during construction.</p>
Other ecological constraints	None identified.	N/A	N/A	N/A

5.0 Bibliography

- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.
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Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan

Not available at the time of writing this report.

Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3: Bat Survey Plan



Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy Related to Bats

LEGAL PROTECTION

The ***Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*** came into force when Britain left the European Union on 31st January 2020. It covered amendments relevant to this survey to:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981: England and Wales (x1 amendment)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (x29 amendments)

All species of bat are fully protected under ***The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*** (amended by the ***Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*** which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements and protected sites after the UK leaves the EU) through their inclusion on Schedule 2.

Regulation 43: Protection of certain wild animals - offences

(1) A person is guilty of an offence if they:

- (a) Deliberately captures, injures or kills any wild animal of a European protected species,
- (b) Deliberately disturbs wild animals of any such species,
- (c) Deliberately takes or destroys the eggs of such an animal, or
- (d) Damages or destroys a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,

(2) For the purposes of paragraph (1) (b), disturbance of animals includes 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.

Bats are also protected under the ***Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*** through their inclusion on ***Schedule 5***. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; measurable gains in biodiversity in and around developments are incorporated; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 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'. This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

County Durham Local Plan (adopted 2020)

The County Durham Local Plan can be viewed here: <https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/3266/Development-Plan-for-County-Durham>

The following planning policies are relevant to bats and are summarised below:

- Policy 41 Biodiversity and Geodiversity - Proposals for new development will not be permitted if significant harm to biodiversity or geodiversity resulting from the development cannot be avoided, or appropriately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for. Proposals for new development will be expected to minimise impacts on biodiversity by retaining and enhancing existing biodiversity assets and features and providing net gains for biodiversity including by establishing coherent ecological networks.
- Policy 43 Protected Species and Nationally and Locally Protected Sites - In relation to protected species and their habitats, all development which, alone or in combination, has a likely adverse impact on the ability of species to survive, reproduce and maintain or expand their current distribution will not be permitted unless: a. appropriate mitigation, or as a last resort compensation, can be provided, which maintains a viable population and where possible provides opportunities for the population to expand; and b. where the species is a European protected species, the proposal also meets the licensing criteria (the 3 legal tests) of overriding public interest, no satisfactory alternative and favourable conservation status.

Durham Biodiversity Action Plan

The Durham Biodiversity Action Plan can be viewed here: <https://neenp.org.uk/natural-environment/biodiversity-priorities/>

All bat species are listed under the plan.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by Natural England will be required for works likely 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 and hibernate). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficiency/success to be monitored. The legislation may also be interpreted such that, 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 (Garland & Markham, 2008).

There are 17 species of bat breeding in England and Natural England issues licences under Regulation 55 of the Habitats Regulations to allow you to work within the law.

Licences are issued for specific purposes stated in the Regulations, if the following three tests are met:

- The purpose of the work meets one of those listed in the Habitats Regulations (see below);
- That there is no satisfactory alternative;
- That the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status (FCS) in their natural range

The Habitats Regulations permits licences to be issued for a specific set of purposes including:

1. ***include preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of over-riding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;***
2. scientific and educational purposes,
3. ringing or marking
4. conserving wild animals

Development works fall under the first purpose and Natural England issues bat mitigation licences for developments.

EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES POLICIES

In December 2016 Natural England officially introduced the four licensing policies throughout England. The four policies seek to achieve better outcomes for European Protected Species (EPS) and reduce unnecessary costs, delays and uncertainty that can be inherent in the current standard EPS licensing system. The policies are summarised as follows:

- Policy 1; provides greater flexibility in exclusion and relocation activities, where there is investment in habitat provision;

- Policy 2; provides greater flexibility in the location of compensatory habitat;
- Policy 3; provides greater flexibility on exclusion measures where this will allow EPS to use temporary habitat; and,
- Policy 4; provides a reduced survey effort in circumstances where the impacts of development can be confidently predicted.

The four policies have been designed to have a net benefit for EPS by improving populations overall and not just protecting individuals within development sites. Most notably Natural England now recognises that the Habitats Regulations legal framework now applies to 'local populations' of EPS and not individuals/site populations.