



Preliminary Roost Assessment

**Land behind 4 Manor House Court,
Heath Road, Reading RG6 1NA**

27 March 2025

Preliminary Roost Assessment of land behind 4 Manor House Court, Heath Road, Reading RG6 1NA

REPORT DETAILS

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CLIENT DETAILS

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management, nature conservation,
communication materials, design and wildlife
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The contents of this report detail the findings of a Preliminary Roost Assessment undertaken on two buildings on the land behind 4 Manor House Court, Heath Road, Reading RG6 1NA. The proposed works will result in the demolition of the existing buildings.

The main findings of the survey are detailed as follows:

Feature	Survey Findings	Recommendations
B1	Internally there was no bats or evidence of bats and features suitable for bat roosting. B1 is well lit and does not provide bat suitable habitat conditions. Externally, there were no obvious gaps or crevices which could be used by roosting bats. The south and west side of the roof could not be surveyed. B1 offers no bat roosting potential.	There are no foreseen impacts on roosting bats, and the proposed works will be highly unlikely to cause disturbance, injury or death to bats, nor result in the destruction of a bat roost and/or block bats from accessing their roost. No further bat surveys are required.
B2	Internally and externally, there was no bats or evidence of bats, and the bright internal conditions do not promote conditions suitable for roosting bats. Externally, there are some gaps under felt tiles and below the ridge flashing. However, within context of the site, these are highly unlikely to be utilised by roosting bats. B2 offers negligible bat roosting potential.	As a matter of precaution, the lead flashing along the apex of B2 should be removed carefully by hand and inspected underneath before being discarded. Bats and their roosts are highly protected by law. If bats are discovered during development works, works must be halted, and the advice of a qualified ecologist must be sought.
Other habitats and considerations	The site is located within a local and wider landscape that provides high-quality habitat for bats, but the site itself has low biodiversity value. There are six known bat roosts within 2 kilometres of the site, with the closest record relating to a known common pipistrelle roost 400 metres west of the site (2014). No trees will be impacted by the works. Birds could begin nesting on site at any time.	Lighting recommendations have been made to reduce impacts on bats which may be using the treelines to the northeast of the site.

1 INTRODUCTION

The land behind 4 Manor House Court, Heath Road, Reading RG6 1NA (hereafter referred to as ‘the site’), is centred on Ordnance Survey Grid Reference SU 74402 72093 and comprises two buildings and a courtyard. Building 1 (B1) is a detached, disused indoor swimming pool. Building 2 (B2) is a detached disused workshop. B1 and B2 are both proposed for demolition.

The aim of the PRA is to assess the status of roosting bats on the site and to determine the existence and location of any ecologically valuable areas. With regards to roosting bats, this information will serve to assess the ecological impact of the proposals and identify any ecological constraints and/or mitigation measures that may be required.

Figure 1: The approximate site boundary (blue) and structures surveyed (red)

(Source: Google Earth, 2022)



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

Freely available online datasets were searched for licences granted for works involving bats within 2 kilometres (km) of the site, and for records of relevant designated sites within this same radius. Additionally, maps/aerial images were interrogated for features of bat interest.

Table 1: Summary of resources used during the desk study

Resource	Information assessed
Google Earth	Assessment of the local landscape. Latest image date: July 2022
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website ¹	Records of licences issued by Natural England for works affecting bat species within 2 km of the site; any relevant site designations within 2 km of the site; Special Areas of Conservation designated for bat interest within 10 km of the site; Priority Habitats in the local area

2.2 Field Survey

A site visit was undertaken on 24 March 2025 between 14:00 and 14:30 hours. The survey was carried out by Kristina Wood.

Kristina Wood is a terrestrial ecologist and Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Kristina holds a Natural England bat Class 1 survey licence registration (licence number available upon request).

The work, analysis and reporting was undertaken in line with CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct², the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines³ and other relevant guidelines and legislation as listed in the Appendices of this report.

2.2.1 Preliminary Roost Assessment

An assessment was carried out on the structures due to be impacted by the proposed works; the disused swimming pool (B1) and disused workshop (B2), to determine their potential to support roosting bats. The assessment included an internal and external investigation of structures for signs of bat activity such as droppings, rub or scratch marks, staining at potential roosts and exit holes, live or dead bats, and features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats, such as raised or missing tiles. Particular attention was given to the floor and flat surfaces, window frames and features within the roof space (where relevant).

The suitability of B1 and B2 to support bats was rated from no suitability to high suitability in accordance with Section 4.3 of the Bat Conservation Trust's Good Practice Guidelines, and recommendations for further survey requirements are also taken from Collins (2023).

¹ [Magic Map Application \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/)

² <https://cieem.net/resource/code-of-conduct/>

³ [Bat Survey Guidelines 23](#)

2.3 Limitations

The survey was undertaken at a time of year considered optimal for undertaking preliminary bat roost assessments, however, bats are highly mobile animals and unpredictable in nature, and as such, they can begin roosting in suitable structures at any time.

The results of this report are valid up to 18 months and/or if the conditions of the site change significantly, as per the Advice Note on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys produced by CIEEM in 2019⁴.

The south and west aspects of B1 and the north and east aspects of B2 could not be surveyed.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Natural England Protected Species Licences

Within 2 km of the site there are six records for licences issued by Natural England for works affecting bats entered on the MAGIC⁵ website. These licences relate to the damage and destruction of known resting and breeding places of brown long-eared bats *Plecotus auritus*, common pipistrelle bats *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, and soprano pipistrelle bats *Pipistrellus pygmeas* between 2010 and 2014. The closest record relates to a known common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle roost 400 metres (m) west of the site in 2014 (2014-500-EPS-MIT).

3.1.2 Site Designations

Within 2 km of the site there are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or National Nature Reserves (NNRs). Within 10 km of the site there are no SACs designated for bat interest.

Highwood Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (located 570m northeast of the site) hosts mixed lowland woodland with a heathland area. Maiden Erlegh Lakes LNR (located 960m southeast of the site) hosts lowland mixed deciduous woodland, ancient semi natural woodland and eutrophic open water. These habitats are of moderate to high interest for bats, but viewing of aerial imagery shows low ecological connectivity between the site and these LNRs in the form of gappy hedgerows and treelines.

3.1.3 Priority Habitats

The nearest parcel of deciduous woodland (a Priority Habitat) is located just 240m southwest of the site, whilst the nearest parcel of ancient woodland is located 570m northeast (Highwood LNR). There are many other medium and large parcels of deciduous and ancient woodland within the local and wider landscape. Additionally, there is a significant area of woodpasture and parkland (a BAP

⁴ <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>

⁵ [Magic Map Application \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/)

habitat) 240m southwest of the site. These habitats are known to support many species of bats, but have low ecological connectivity to the site.

3.1.4 Site Context

The site is situated within a high-density residential area, surrounded by a landscape that includes mature treelines, woodland, and open fields. The broader area is also characterised by a mix of residential buildings, treelines, woodland, agricultural land, waterbodies and open fields of undetermined use.

Figure 2: Imagery showing the site (in red) in relation to the surrounding landscape

(Source: Google Maps, 2022)



3.2 Preliminary Bat Roost Survey

A daytime site visit was undertaken on 24 March 2025. At the time of the survey the temperature was 12°C in bright and sunny conditions. Additional site photos can be found in the Appendices.

3.2.1 Structure B1 (subject to demolition)

B1 is a single storey, detached building containing a disused swimming pool and associated facilities. It has a slightly pitched roof, with glass along the apex.

External Survey

Building B1 is constructed with panelised wooden cladding, which was found to be in good condition, with no signs of deterioration such as gaps caused by lifted or rotting wood. There are no soffits or fascias present that could provide potential roosting sites for bats, nor are there any suitable spaces around the uPVC drainpipes. Additionally, the large windows on the east elevation are well-fitted to the structure, leaving no crevices that could serve as potential roosting locations.

The roof has a slight pitch and was challenging to observe from ground level. However, the tiles appear to be composed of a thin felt material, which does not provide suitable habitat for bat roosting.

Due to the proximity of the neighbouring property and boundary wall, the west and south elevations of B1 could not be directly surveyed. However, it is reasonable to assume that these elevations are constructed and maintained to the same standard as those that were assessed.

Figure 3: The east elevation of B1



Internal Survey

Due to the presence of the eastern glass wall and the glass window along the roof apex, the internal environment of B1 is well-lit, making it highly unsuitable for bat roosting. Additionally, there are no internal features that could provide suitable roosting opportunities.

Furthermore, B1 does not contain an enclosed loft space.

Figure 4: The internal of B1, as seen from the front (north) facing south



3.2.2 Structure B2 (subject to demolition)

B2 is a single-story, detached structure previously used as a workshop. It features a pitched roof, a single door located on the west gable end, and windows along the south elevation.

External Survey

B2 is constructed with panelised wooden cladding, which was found to be in good condition, with no signs of deterioration such as lifted or rotting wood. The soffits on the west gable end and south-facing elevation do not provide any potential roosting opportunities for bats.

The roof consists of thin felt tiles laid over a wooden structure, with multiple gaps present. Additionally, lead flashing runs along the length of the roof apex, where further gaps were observed.

The north and east elevations of B2 could not be directly surveyed due to the proximity of the boundary wall. However, it is reasonable to assume that these elevations are of similar construction and condition to those that were assessed.

Figure 5: The south elevation of B2



Internal Survey

Due to the presence of windows along the southern elevation, the internal environment of B2 is well-lit, making it highly unsuitable for bat roosting.

B2 contains an enclosed loft space, which was inspected through a hole in the ceiling on the southeast side using a high-powered torch. The loft space has a maximum height of approximately 1m at the apex, and the A-framed timber beams provide minimal, if any, suitable crevices for roosting. Additionally, the void is subject to light spill due to the damaged ceiling, further reducing its suitability as a roosting habitat.

No bats or evidence of bat activity were found within B2, and no internal features suitable for roosting were identified.

Figure 6: The internal of B2, as seen from the front (west) facing east



3.2.3 On-site Habitat

The site is bordered to the north and northeast by three mature trees, which are located outside the site boundary but overhang the area. Additionally, there are raised, unmanaged flowerbeds within the site. Overall, the on-site habitat is of low value for bats, and the neighbouring habitats are of moderate value.

3.2.4 Tree Assessment

No trees are due to be impacted by the proposed development, therefore no tree assessments were undertaken.

3.2.5 Nesting Birds

There was no evidence of nesting bird activity associated with B1 or B2. However, it is possible that birds could begin nesting on or near the structures at any time during bird nesting season.

4 EVALUATION

An internal and external survey of the built structures on-site revealed no bats or evidence of bat activity. However, as bats and signs of their presence are not always detectable during surveys, the assessment also considered features that could potentially support roosting.

Internal inspections of B1 and B2 identified unsuitable roosting conditions, primarily due to significant light spill from windows and a lack of suitable roosting features. The loft space within B2 is not sufficiently tall to accommodate void-dwelling bat species, which require adequate space to drop from their roost positions to gain flight. Additionally, the space is likely too bright to be suitable for crevice-dwelling bats.

Externally, both B1 and B2 are fitted with thin felt roof tiles. While these tiles have gaps, they are unlikely to provide suitable bat roosting habitat due to their instability and lack of temperature regulation. Furthermore, B1 has a near-horizontal roof pitch, which makes it unsuitable for bat use. The lead flashing along the apex ridge of B2 does feature some gaps where it has lifted. However, any potential for roosting in this area should be considered within the broader context of the site, which offers low biodiversity value. In contrast, neighbouring properties have a moderate biodiversity value and provide better roosting potential, including features on large buildings. Trees on a neighbouring property offer some (albeit limited) connection to the local and wider habitats, but these trees will not be impacted by the proposed development.

Considering the above factors, the site is categorised as having **negligible bat roosting potential**. This aligns with Collins (2023), which observes that there are no obvious habitat features on-site likely to be used by roosting bats. However, a small element of uncertainty remains, as bats can occasionally utilise small or seemingly unsuitable features. In line with this categorisation, **no further bat survey work is deemed necessary for the site**.

It is important to note that the surrounding local and wider landscape contains habitats highly suitable for bats. Therefore, it is recommended that caution is exercised when removing the lead flashing from the apex of B2. The area should be carefully inspected beneath the flashing before disposal.

Furthermore, it is crucial that both the homeowner and building contractors remain vigilant and fully aware of their legal obligations should bats (or any other protected species) be discovered during works. Bats and their roosts are strictly protected by law (see Section 6.2). If bats, or evidence of their presence, are encountered during development, all work must cease immediately, and the advice of a qualified ecologist should be sought. Additional surveys may be required to assess the nature of any roosts present, and a derogation licence (from Natural England) may be necessary to proceed with works that impact the roosts.

4.1 Lighting

Due to the trees found to the east of the site, it is recommended that any development which takes place should be considerate of this when implementing any new lighting regimes during the construction and operational phases. To reduce the likelihood of disturbing bats, during the construction phase there should be no temporary nighttime lighting from sunset to sunrise, and all

works must be completed in daylight hours. If emergency lighting is required, it should follow the following specifications:

- Lighting should be directional, facing away from the neighbouring treelines, and set using a steep ground-ward angle and on short columns (no higher than 3m);
- Use a lamp no greater than 2000 lumens (150 watts), using light sources that peak higher than 550 nanometres, which avoids the UV, white and blue wavelengths;
- Warm white spectrum LED (<2500 Kelvin) should be used over a cool white spectrum;
- Cowls, hoods, baffles or louvres should be used to avoid light spillage off-site;
- Use of reflective surfaces under the light should be avoided

In addition, the following recommendations should be employed post-development:

- Any lighting to the north and east of the site should use sensor activated lamps;
- Variable lighting regimes must be utilised to lower lighting levels during periods of reduced human activity (e.g. 22:00-05:30)

4.2 Nesting Birds

No evidence of bird nesting was identified on or within B1 or B2. However, birds could potentially begin nesting anywhere on site at any time during bird nesting season. The proposed works could therefore cause disturbance, injury or death to nesting birds.

If work is to be carried out during bird nesting season (March to August, inclusive), the homeowner and site contractors must be aware of their obligations towards nesting birds and must check for them prior to commencing the works. If an active bird nest is discovered, an exclusion zone must be put in place (minimum 5m), and works must be halted in that area. Breeding birds and their nests are protected by law and all active nests must be retained until the young have fledged. Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works.

5 CONCLUSION

The proposed development involves the demolition of B1 and B2 at 'land behind' 4 Manor House Court, both of which have been confirmed to offer negligible bat roosting potential. As such, the proposed works are highly unlikely to cause disturbance, injury, or death to bats, nor are they expected to result in the destruction of any bat roosts, cause disturbance to bats, or obstruct their access to roosts. Such impacts would constitute an offence under the legislation outlined in Section 6.2.

Given the inherent uncertainty due to the unpredictable nature of bats, it is recommended that the lead flashing on B2 be carefully removed and checked for bats before disposal. Should bats, or evidence of their presence, be discovered during development, the advice of a qualified ecologist should be sought.

Additionally, recommendations for appropriate working methods during the bird nesting season should be followed to ensure that nesting birds are not adversely affected by the proposed works.

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Additional photos from the Site Visit on 24 March 2025

B1: north



B1: east



B1: facing north



4

B1: internal



B1: internal



B2: south



B2: southeast



B2: south



B2: west



B2: internal



B2: internal



B2: loft, facing north



Trees to northeast of site



6.2 Bat Legislation

All species of bats receive special protection under UK law, including the strict species protection provisions of the EU Habitats Directive as implemented in England and Wales by Part 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (the “2017 Regulations, amended by the 2019 Regulations due to Britain leaving the EU”), and Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended by the 2019 Regulations) makes it illegal to:

- i. Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- ii. Deliberately disturb bats in a way that would significantly affect their local distribution or abundance, or affect their ability to survive, breed or rear young; or
- iii. Damage or destroy a roost – regardless of whether the action was deliberate or not.

Furthermore, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb bats whilst they are occupying a structure or place which is used for shelter or protection, or to damage, destroy or obstruct access to this structure or place.

Eight of the UK bat species are also listed as Priority Species on the UK BAP⁶, highlighting them as species of conservation concern.

⁶ [UK Biodiversity Framework - Biodiversity policy & advocacy - Bat Conservation Trust \(bats.org.uk\)](https://www.bats.org.uk/biodiversity-framework/)

6.3 Industry Guidance and Standards

This report has been written with consideration to:

- Bat Conservation Trust (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 4th edition.
- Bat Conservation Trust (2019). National Bat Monitoring Program Annual Report 2019.
- 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.
- 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.
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- Harris, S. & Yalden, D. (2008). Mammals of the British Isles: Handbook, 4th Edition. The Mammal Society, Southampton.
- Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018). Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK. Bats and the Built Environment Series Publication: http://www.bats.org.uk/news.php/406/new_guidance_on_bats_and_lighting
- Mathews F, and Harrower C. (2020). IUCN – compliant Red List for Britain’s Terrestrial Mammals. Assessment by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England, Peterborough ISBN 978-1-78354-485-1.

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.

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).

6.4 Table 4.1 from Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines

Table 4.1. Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement.

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^b and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ^c).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten *et al.*, 2016 and Jansen *et al.*, 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

6.5 Planning Policy

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.