



Preliminary Roost Assessment



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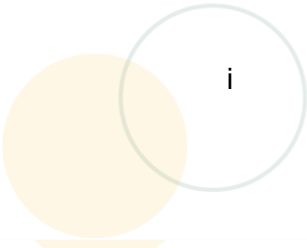


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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The client, Medha Shrivastava, has instructed ACP Consultants Ltd to conduct a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA). The survey was commissioned to accompany the planning application to the Reading Borough Council for the “extension and loft extension” (hereafter referred to as ‘the proposed development’) at 12 Knowle Close, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7LH (hereafter referred to as ‘the site’). The site is currently classed as residential and will remain so post-development. The proposed site plan can be found in **Appendix 1**.

To the author’s knowledge, there are no previous ecological reports relating to the site.

1.2. Scope of Report

A Preliminary Roost Assessment records all features suitable for roosting, foraging, and commuting bats and evaluates those features present on site within the context of the wider area. Any physical evidence of roosting bats present at the site is recorded or collected. Possible ecological constraints regarding bats, resulting from the proposed development, are identified and recommendations for further bat surveys and mitigation measures required to obtain planning permission or other statutory consent, as well as comply with wildlife legislation.

The following actions were undertaken to achieve these aims:

- Desk study research was carried out.
- A field survey was undertaken to record the baseline ecological information pertaining to bats and the site’s suitability for bats.
- Potential impacts on bat habitat and features of value to bats, resulting from the proposed development, were identified.
- Recommendations for further surveys and appropriate mitigation were made if required.
- Opportunities for the enhancement of the site for biodiversity under the NPPF (2025) and local policies, have been set out.

This assessment has been conducted in accordance with good practice guidelines, the National Planning Policy Framework (2025) and relevant local supplementary guidance.

Relevant planning policy and legislation can be found in **Appendix 4**.

1.3. Proportionality

BS 42020:2013 – 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 193 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.

1.4. Validity Statement

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months, unless works have taken place since the production of this report. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion (CIEEM, 2019).

1.5. Limitations

To date, bat records have not been purchased for the site. Considering the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present, and the assessed suitability of the site for bats, the purchase of bat records is not expected to add any significant weight, or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined within the report.

This limitation has been taken into account and given the appropriate weighting during the evaluation of the site and requirement for further surveys and mitigation.

2. Methodology

To achieve the objectives set out in the scope of the report, a desk study was completed, followed by a site visit. This site visit assessed the suitability of the site for bats and recorded any field signs of protected species. This report has been written in line with the *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing 2nd edition* (CIEEM, 2017) and *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition* (Collins, 2023).

2.1. Desk Study

The desk study is undertaken by reviewing the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC; Defra, 2026). Statutory designated sites local to the site (usually 2km radius) and European designated sites for bats within influencing distance of the site (usually 10km radius) are noted. Landscape value is assessed by recording the presence of notable and priority habitats and viewing satellite imagery (Google Earth, OS Maps) of the site for connectivity to the local landscape. Granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) within influencing distance of the site are obtained and considered, either from MAGIC or, where relevant, the Local Environmental Record Centre (LERC). If data has been obtained from the LERC, this data has been analysed and summarised in the report owing to confidentiality and the raw data not being suitable for release into the public domain.

2.2. Site Survey

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW; PRA) comprised a visual, non-invasive appraisal of built structures from the ground to inspect external features which bats could use for roosting or as egress points, and signs of bat usage such as fur staining, droppings, urine, scratch marks, and feeding remains. Where necessary, binoculars were used to view the features up close.

The internal inspection of built structures included lofts and cellars, and comprised a detailed, up-close visual inspection using a torch and binoculars where necessary. The internal areas were searched for roosting bats themselves, and features which bats could use for roosting, access points, and evidence of bat usage such as fur staining, droppings, urine staining, scratch marks and feeding remains.

A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) was undertaken for any trees, which comprised a visual appraisal from ground level using binoculars to identify potential roosting features (PRF) and where possible, an up-close inspection of PRFs using a ladder and torch.

Habitat suitable for bats was categorised in line with Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 6.2 of the *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines 4th edition* (Collins, 2023).

Equipment

- A high-powered torch with focusing beam.
- Laser distance measurer.
- Binoculars.
- Anemometer.
- Ruler.
- Measuring tape.
- Dropping sample vials.
- FFP2 unvented mask.

3. Results

3.1. Desk Study

The site is located at National Grid Reference SU 69987 75858 and has an approximate area of 0.1ha. A site location plan is provided in **Appendix 3**.

3.1.1. Local Landscape

Site and Surrounds

The site is a residential property with a private vegetated garden, comprising a lawn, shrubs and trees. The site is situated in a residential area, near playing fields, a parcel of deciduous woodland (~200m south of the site), and a golf course which contains deciduous woodlands, and an ancient woodland (~1000m west of the site). The site is connected to these areas via residential gardens and lines of trees. The habitats on-site, and connectivity of the site to the wider landscape, provide some value to foraging and commuting bats. However, the site is small in extent and not considered likely to represent a significant resource of local bat populations in the context of the wider landscape.

3.1.2. Designated Sites

The Hartlock Wood Special Area of Conservation (European designated site), is located ~8000m northwest of the site. The primary reason for notification is due to the presence of Annex I habitats (Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (*Festuco-Brometalia*) (* important orchid sites) and *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles. This site could be of value for local bat populations. There are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the site.

3.1.3. Protected Species

There are nine granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats within 2km of site. Details of the records are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Bat records within 2km from site

Ref	Distance & Direction	Species	Impacts Allowed
2014-3600-EPS-MIT	~250m west	Common pipistrelle	Damage of resting place. Destruction of resting place.
2015-18560-EPS-MIT	~350m northwest	Brown long-eared, Soprano pipistrelle	Destruction of resting place.
2014-2980-EPS-MIT	~400m south	Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle	Destruction of resting place.
2017-29064-EPS-MIT	~450m southwest	Soprano pipistrelle	Destruction of breeding site.
2015-13539-EPS-MIT	~650m southwest	Common pipistrelle	Destruction of resting place.
2015-14137-EPS-MIT	~800m southwest	Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle	Destruction of resting place.
2016-27061-EPS-MIT	~1050m southeast	Brown long-eared, Common pipistrelle	Destruction of resting place.
2018-35917-EPS-MIT	~1450m northeast	Common pipistrelle	Destruction of resting place.
EPSM2013-6025	~1900m northeast	Brown long-eared	Destruction of resting place.

3.2. Site Survey

The survey was undertaken by Charlie Drapala (CL18 bat license) on 20/05/2026.

Table 1: Summary of conditions during survey

Factor	Recorded Value
Temperature (° Celsius)	18
Humidity (RH%)	75
Wind (Beaufort Number)	4
Cloud Cover (%)	60
Precipitation	None

3.2.1. Bats

There were three buildings on-site: the main residential building (B01), a lean-to (B02) adjoined to B01, and a garage (B03) adjoined to B02 on the southern elevation. All buildings were subject to assessment as they will be impacted by the proposed development.

Building B01

B01 is a detached bungalow, with a bare brick façade and cross-hipped roof with clay tiles and two chimneys.

All soffits, windows, and doors were well-sealed. There were no lifted or missing roof tiles, and the chimneys were in good condition, with the lead flashing well-sealed. No external access points or roosting features were observed.

On inspection of the loft space, which was partially boarded, consisting of mineral wool insulation and bitumen roof lining, no light ingress or access points were observed. However, an old wasp's nest was noted.

The building B01 is assessed as having **negligible value** for roosting bats.



Northern elevation



Western elevation



Northern and eastern elevations



Eastern elevation



Overview of loft space

Building B02

The lean-to was connected to the southern elevation of B01, and was not accessible from the interior of B01, and therefore assessed as its own building. The façade was bare brick, and the pent roof was constructed from plastic roofing sheets. The lean-to was well-sealed with no access points or roosting features observed externally.

The interior space was brightly lit, due to the partially clear plastic roof, making the space unsuitable for roosting bats. Additionally, no access points were observed internally.

The building B02 is assessed as having **negligible value** for roosting bats.



Eastern elevation of B02 and garage (B03)



Internal space of B02

Building B03

The garage was connected to the southern elevation of B02. The façade was bare brick, with a hipped roof comprising clay tiles. The garage doors and windows were well-sealed. No lifted or missing roof tiles were observed, and the soffits were well-sealed.

The interior of the garage was not inspected. However, due to no external access points or roosting features identified, it is considered unlikely that suitable bat access points would be identified during an internal inspection.

The building B03 is assessed as having **negligible value** for roosting bats.



Southern and eastern elevations of B03



Western and southern elevations of B03

There is **no** hibernation value for bats on-site.

The site is assessed as having **moderate value** for foraging and commuting bats, due to connectivity of the site to the wider landscape.

3.2.2. Birds

All buildings (B01 to B03) have negligible suitability for nesting birds, and no habitat for Schedule 1 birds was observed on-site.

4. Impact Assessment, Recommendations and Enhancements

This section includes further work to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. Impacts as a result of the proposed development are assessed, and recommendations for mitigation and further survey work are given below.

4.1. Impacts Assessment and Recommendations

4.1.1. Bats

Roosting Impacts:

Bats are unlikely to be roosting within these buildings, owing to a lack of identifiable roosting features, and therefore, no impacts are expected on roosting bats as a result of the extensions and loft extension to buildings B01, B02, and B03.

Roosting Recommendations:

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 must be contacted for further advice.

Foraging and Commuting Impacts:

The proposed development will increase the amount of lighting on site, which could spill onto bat foraging or commuting habitat and deter bats from using these areas.

Foraging and Commuting Recommendations:

Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Strategy:

A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted throughout the proposed development during and post development. This should be designed in accordance with Guidance Note GN08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (Institution of Lighting Professionals, 2023). Parameters can be found within the guidance, and include avoidance of light spill on to key habitats or features which bats may use for roosting, foraging or commuting.

4.1.2. Birds

Impacts:

Birds are unlikely to be nesting within the buildings (B01 to B03), due to a lack of suitable features. Therefore, no impacts to nesting birds are anticipated as a result of the proposed development.

Recommendations:

None.

4.2. Enhancements

The following are opportunities for enhancement which could be incorporated into the proposed plans to improve the site's biodiversity post-development.

Bats

The installation of two bat boxes externally mounted on the building at the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats. They will be suitable for pipistrelles (which have been identified locally through EPSL data). Suitable bat boxes include Vivara Pro VK WS 02 Bat facade box or similar

alternative brand. 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.

Birds

The installation of two small-hole bird boxes at the site, such as the Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Box or similar alternative brand, will provide additional nesting habitat for birds. The boxes should be positioned 3m above ground level on the dwelling, on a north or east elevation, where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight.

Appendix 1: Proposed site plan



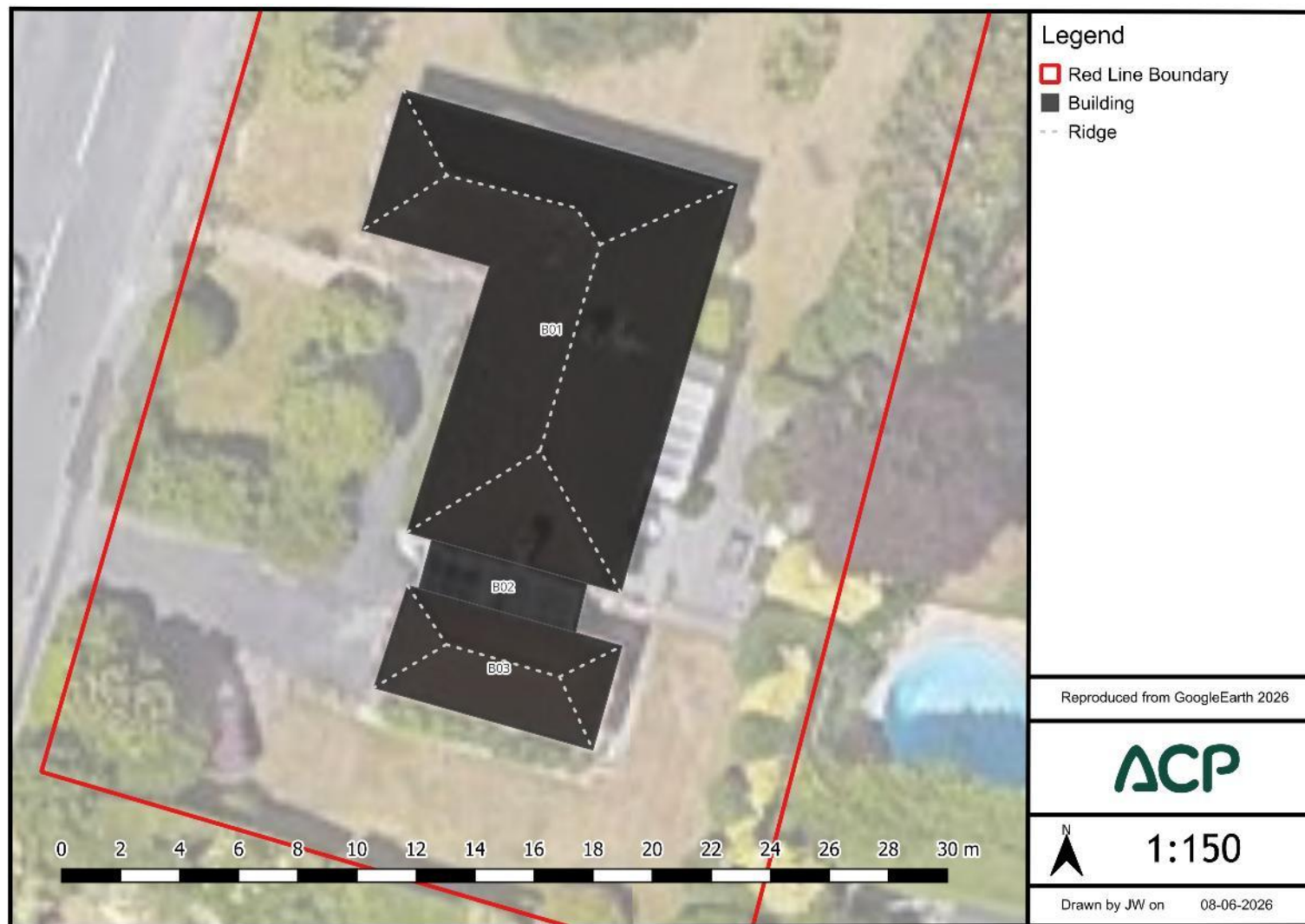
EXISTING SITE PLAN



PROPOSED SITE PLAN

	PROJECT:	12 Knowle Close Caversham	DRAWN BY:	P.S.	DRAWING TITLE:		 archibute7@gmail.co.uk
	PROPOSED REAR/SIDE/FRONT EXTENSIONS		DATE:	26/12/2025	LOCATION AND BLOCK PLAN		
			SCALE:	AS SHOWN@A3	DRAWING NUMBER:	KC-01	
			FILENAME:	25058			

Appendix 2: PRA Map



Appendix 3: Site location map



Appendix 4: Planning Policy & Legislation

This section summarises the relevant national and local legislative and policy background, statutory and non-statutory guidelines relevant to the potential commercial development.

National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (2025)

Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

The principal national planning policy guidance with respect to the potential development is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The most recent update of the NPPF was published in December 2024 by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This guidance sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. Three dimensions to sustainable development have been identified in the NPPF: economic, social, and environmental.

The NPPF Section 187 states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

Section 188 states that:

“Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.”

Section 189 states that:

“Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads⁶³. The scale and extent of development within

these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas."

Section 190 states that:

"When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development⁶⁴ other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated."*

Section 192 states that:

"To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and*
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity."*

Section 193 states that:

"When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate."*

Section 194 states that:

"The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or

projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site."

Environment Act 2021

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents>

Effective 2024, the statutory mandate for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as established by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, requires all developments subject to Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to provide a minimum +10% gain in biodiversity value. This requirement is a mandatory condition of planning permission, applicable to all new developments except those expressly excluded under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024.

Pursuant to the statutory framework established by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021, every grant of planning permission is subject to a biodiversity gain condition under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This condition mandates that the biodiversity gain objective be satisfied via a minimum +10% net increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development baseline. This requirement serves as a condition precedent; accordingly, a Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted to and discharged by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in writing prior to the commencement of development. Any material operations initiated in the absence of such approval shall constitute a breach of planning control under Section 171A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Statutory provision requires that significant on-site biodiversity enhancements be maintained for a duration of no less than 30 years following the development's conclusion. This requirement is satisfied through the imposition of a planning condition, a planning obligation, or a conservation covenant. Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, LPAs are empowered to utilise section 106 (s106) agreements to facilitate the delivery of on-site enhancements, the transfer of registered off-site biodiversity gains, or the use of statutory credits, while ensuring compliance through rigorous monitoring and reporting frameworks.

Species and Habitats Legislation

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents>

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidates all various amendments made to The Conservation (Natural Habitats & c.) Regulations 1994, in respect of England and Wales. The 1994 Regulations transposed the EC Habitats Directive 1992 (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora) into national law.

Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive list (respectively) habitats and species for which member states are required to establish and monitor SACs. The EC Birds Directive provides a similar network of sites (SPAs) for all rare or vulnerable species listed in Annex I and all regularly occurring migratory species, with particular focus on wetlands of international importance.

Together with SACs, SPAs form a network of pan-European protected areas known as 'NATURA 2000' sites.

The Habitats Regulations also make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade on the animals listed in Schedule 2, or pick, cut, uproot, destroy or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 4.

This legislation was amended in January 2021: The main changes to the 2017 Regulations are:

- “the creation of a national site network within the UK territory comprising the protected sites already designated under the Nature Directives, and any further sites designated under these Regulations
- the establishment of management objectives for the national site network (the ‘network objectives’)
- a duty for appropriate authorities to manage and where necessary adapt the national site network as a whole to achieve the network objectives
- an amended process for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
- arrangements for reporting on the implementation of the Regulations, given that the UK no longer provides reports to the European Commission
- arrangements replacing the European Commission’s functions with regard to the imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI) test where a plan or project affects a priority habitat or species
- arrangements for amending the schedules to the Regulations and the annexes to the Nature *Directives that apply to the UK.*”

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981)

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69?view=extent>

The WCA is the primary UK mechanism for statutory site designation (Sites of Special Scientific Interest [SSSIs]) and the protection of individual species listed under Schedule 1,2,5 and 8 of the Act, each subject to varying levels of protection.

Bats are fully protected under Schedule 5 and as such in England and Wales it is an offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Damage or destroy a bat roost
- Deliberately or recklessly disturb a bat
- Deliberately or intentionally obstruct access to a roost
- Possess, transport or sell a bat or parts of bats (dead or alive)

The consequences are outlined as 6 months in prison and/or an unlimited fine.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW 2000)

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>

This legislation strengthens the provision of the 1981 WCA (as amended), both in respect of statutory sites such as SSSIs and protected species. It also places a statutory obligation on Local Authorities and other public bodies to further conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their functions, thus providing a statutory basis to the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process, which began in 1994. Section 74 of the Act lists the habitat types and species of principal importance in England. The UK Biodiversity action Plan has now been superseded by the ‘UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework’ (July 2012), however, many of the species and habitats in the UK and local BAPs have not been updated and are still considered relevant to date.

A Bill to amend the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to extend the right of public access to the countryside, including to woodlands, the Green Belt, waters and more grasslands; and for connected purposes is currently in second reading in the House of Commons (November 2022).

Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC 2006)

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

The act places a duty of public authorities regarding the conservation of English wildlife and biodiversity. Section 41 sets out a list of species “of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity”. Such species include but are not restricted to:

- Barbastelle
- Bechstein’s
- Noctule
- Brown long eared
- Greater horseshoe
- Lesser horseshoe

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act (1996)

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/3/enacted>

Because of the Wild Mammals Act, UK mammal species are protected from any unnecessary cruel acts. Such acts include any actions which may cause unnecessary suffering to the animal. As such, all UK bat species are protected under this law.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/51/contents>

Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, it is illegal to intentionally harm, injure, kill, and treat badgers with cruelty. The law also protects their setts from damage, destruction, or obstruction, and from having dogs sent into them. The Act consolidates previous laws, making it an offence to dig for badgers, sell, possess or control them without a licence, and badger baiting.

Appendix 5: Reference List

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