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## **BAT PRESENCE / ABSENCE SURVEY**

**At**

### **Huyton Cricket Club**

Huyton Lane  
Huyton  
Liverpool  
L36 7XD

**NGR: SJ 44443 91320**

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|---------------|-----------------------------------------|
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ycobella Cox'.

|                |                            |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Date:          | 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 2025 |
| UES reference: | UES04790/03                |

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A bat presence / absence survey was undertaken at Huyton Cricket Club, Huyton, by Bowland Ecology in 2020 (report reference BOW17/941) which found a day roosting common pipistrelle within Building 1. An updated bat scoping survey was undertaken by United Environmental Services (UES) Ltd in January 2025 (see report reference UES04790/04), which assessed Building 1 as having moderate potential to support roosting bats, Building 2 as having low potential and Building 3 as having negligible potential. As such, additional bat presence / absence surveys were recommended of Buildings 1 and 2, which were carried out by UES in May 2025.

The objective of the presence / absence surveys was to establish whether or not bats are using the buildings on site to roost, and if so to assess the type and importance of roosts in order to inform the planning process. The surveys were carried out to recognised guidelines, timings and weather conditions, with particular reference to Natural England and Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) publications. The proposed development is for a housing scheme and will include the demolition of Buildings 2 and 3, and the conversion of Building 1 into a community centre. Numerous residential dwellings will also be constructed onsite.

The areas surrounding Huyton Cricket Club provide low-moderate quality habitat for bats. The site itself offers unlit green space with scattered trees and scrub that will provide foraging opportunities, whilst roosting opportunities may be available within the buildings and trees. Pockets of higher quality habitat are present within the surrounding area such as the River Alt which is located adjacent to the northeastern boundary of the site and directly connects to Huyton Wetland SBI to the southeast. These habitats will likely support an abundance of invertebrates upon which bats can forage. Further afield, Tushingham Lake and Stadt Moers Park, which contains areas of woodland and Neverley Brook, will provide further foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities.

A single species of bat was recorded during the presence / absence surveys: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*. Activity was generally low during both emergence surveys with common pipistrelles observed commuting to the north, and along the hedgerows and treeline. Foraging bats were also observed along the eastern boundary of the site and above Building 2.

**Although no bats were recorded roosting within Buildings 1 and 2 during the updated surveys, due to the known presence of a historic common pipistrelle day roost within Building 1 in 2020, there remains a residual risk that bats may use the building to roost in the future. As such, the works to Building 1 should proceed under a non-licensed method statement to protect bats in the event that they are present at the time of the works. The method statement will outline the mitigation and compensation measures required to safeguard protected species throughout the duration of the development.**

**Due to the presence of breeding birds within the building, it is recommended that the works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary**



This report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 6, which provide visual representations of the survey results and statutory and planning context.



# **1 INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Author, surveyors and qualifications**

This report is compiled and written by Bethany Dineley BSc and UES Graduate Ecologist. Other surveyors include:

- Nathan Rimmer, UES Sub-contractor. Nathan is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2020-50733-CLS-CLS (level 2).
- Toby Leverett BSc MSc, UES Graduate Ecologist.
- Stephen Atkinson, UES Sub-contractor.

All surveyors have the knowledge, skills and experience identified within CIEEM's "Competencies for Species Survey: Bats" (2013), or were under the supervision of a surveyor with the required competencies.

## **1.2 Survey objectives**

UES was commissioned in December 2024 to conduct site surveys which include the following activities:

- Conduct internal and external building inspections to look for field signs of bats
- Confirm bat presence or likely absence by conducting emergence and re-entry surveys of the buildings
- Assess the type and importance of the roost(s), if present
- Recommend appropriate mitigation and compensation, if applicable

## **1.3 Proposed development**

The proposed development is for a housing scheme and will include the demolition of Buildings 2 and 3, and the conversion of Building 1 into a community centre. Numerous residential dwellings will also be constructed onsite.

## **1.4 Structure of the report**

This report sets out the methodology, results, and recommendations in relation to a specific bat survey. Recommendations are in line with statutory legislation and planning policy objectives.

The report should be read in conjunction with appendices 1 to 6, which give visual representations of the survey results.



## 2 METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 General

All surveys were carried out to recognised guidelines, timings and weather conditions, with reference to Natural England and BCT publications (see references for further information).

The habitats on site and in the surrounding area were assessed during a walkover survey and through studying aerial photographs to gauge their suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

### 2.2 Building inspections

The building on site was searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2023).

#### 2.2.1 External inspection

The external inspections of the building were carried out from ground level using binoculars, and using ladders and an endoscope to investigate suitable gaps. The objective of the survey was to find and record any signs of bat use, for example:

- Bat droppings
- Feeding remains
- Grease staining / urine marks
- Corpses or skeletons

The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of a building. The following areas were searched, where present:

- Roof and ridge tiles
- Lead flashing
- Eaves
- Fascia and barge boards
- Windowsills and panes
- Walls
- Gaps under felt
- Cracks / holes in woodwork or behind cladding
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar

#### 2.2.2 Internal inspection

The internal inspections covered all the accessible rooms and roof spaces within the building.

Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces, which were searched for any field signs of bats using high-powered torches and an endoscope, where considered necessary by the licenced ecologist. The following features were searched, where present:

- Roof beams and junctions
- Gaps under felt
- Dividing walls
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar



- Cracks / holes in woodwork
- Floor or other surfaces on which droppings could accumulate

## 2.3 Emergence, re-entry, and trapping surveys

Potential roost access points were identified during the building inspections. These points were covered by a surveyor during the dusk emergence and dawn re-entry periods.

Bat echolocation, flight and habitat characteristics were recorded where possible, to determine the species. The level and type of bat activity was also recorded to establish how bats are using the site.

### 2.3.1 Equipment

BATLOGGER M bat detectors and recorders were used during the surveys. This device records bat echolocation calls across the full spectrum, with a sensitivity range of 10 – 150 kHz. The integrated heterodyne live monitoring also allows the observer to hear the echolocation calls in real time, with automatic tuning. The recordings are individually time/date, GPS and temperature stamped, and are of high enough quality to produce time expansion quality sonograms.

Anabat Walkabout bat detectors were also used during the surveys. This allowed the observer to hear bat echolocation calls and see the sonograms in real time, aiding identification. All registrations were automatically recorded onto a memory card and time/ date stamped. The device can record and display both zero crossing and full spectrum bat echolocation calls and has a built-in GPS and mapping system.

Nightfox Whisker Night Vision Binoculars were used in conjunction with Nightfox XB5 940nm Low Glow Infrared LED Flashlights to monitor part of the building during the surveys. The Binoculars were positioned alongside surveyors to cover potential roost access points and recorded video footage to be reviewed post-survey. Surveyors can use the binoculars during the survey as a night-vision aid.

Guide Track IR Pro Thermal were used in conjunction with infra-red LED illuminators to monitor parts of the building during the surveys. The cameras were positioned to cover potential roost access points. Footage of the survey was recorded and reviewed post-survey.

### 2.3.2 Weather conditions

Table 1 - Weather conditions and survey timings

| DATE     | SURVEY TYPE                   | TIMINGS       | SUNSET / SUNRISE | TEMP. | WIND         | RAIN                  | CLOUD COVER |
|----------|-------------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------|--------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 02/05/25 | Emergence (Buildings 1 and 2) | 20:28 – 22:13 | 20:43            | 13°C  | Light breeze | Dry                   | 10%         |
| 23/05/25 | Emergence (Building 1)        | 21:02 – 22:47 | 21:17            | 15°C  | Light breeze | Light – moderate rain | 100%        |



## **2.4 Survey limitations**

Light to moderate rain was recorded consistently during the emergence survey on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025. However, despite the weather conditions, low levels of bat activity were still observed.



## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Habitat assessment

Huyton Cricket Club is located to the northwest of Huyton, a town in the Metropolitan Borough of Knowsley. The habitats on site include buildings (the main pavilion and two outbuildings), grassland, bramble scrub, and mixed scrub. Two hedgerows are located on site - one along the southern boundary and the other along the northwestern edge of the site. A number of trees are scattered throughout the site, which may offer foraging opportunities for bats.

The immediate surrounding area consists of residential housing with associated gardens and trees, patches of amenity grasslands to the north, east and west of the site, and commercial buildings to the south. These habitats will provide low-quality foraging and roosting opportunities for bats in the local area. The River Alt runs directly adjacent to the site along the woodland on the eastern boundary. The river offers further commuting and foraging opportunities for bats by providing an abundance of invertebrates for prey.

In the wider surrounding area (2km), habitats are similar in composition and landscape. Additionally, areas of deciduous woodland are located approximately 933m northeast of the site, and Neverley Brook is located in Stadt Moers Park approximately 1.32km southeast of the site. This area also contains Tushingham's lake. These habitats will support an abundance of invertebrates upon which bats can forage, whilst roosting opportunities will be available within mature trees.

### 3.2 Building inspections

#### 3.2.1 External inspection

There are three buildings at Huyton Cricket Club, these buildings have been numbered for the purposes of the report (see Appendix 1 – Site plan).

**Building 1** is the pavilion building, which is generally in poor repair. It is of dormer bungalow construction, with a total of 6 dormers (on all aspects). The building features numerous PRFs which may be used by bats:

- Numerous raised and missing roof tiles
- Gaps in the verge pointing of the roof
- Raised lead flashing around dormers
- Deteriorated timber cladding with gaps creating crevices and also permitting internal access
- Deteriorated timber fascia and bargeboard with gaps

Additionally, there is a gap between the gutter pipe and the overhanging eaves on the southern aspect (photograph 7). This area is where a confirmed common pipistrelle day roost was observed during bats surveys in 2020 by Bowland Ecology. A historical birds' nest was identified on the north-eastern eaves.

**Building 2** is a disused outbuilding: constructed from corrugated metal sheeting (timber frame), with a curved corrugated roof. The building is mostly tightly sealed, presenting limited opportunities for roosting bats. The only PRFs identified are small gaps between the corrugated roof and timber frame of the building; these lead to a cavity between internal timber cladding, thus presenting a suitable PRF for bats.

**Building 3** is also a disused outbuilding. The roof of the building is missing, but the timber rafters remain. The walls are constructed of breeze block which feature cavities between them; due to the exposed top of these blocks, it is assessed as unsuitable for use by bats. A gap is present in the brickwork above a roller shutter door on the south-western aspect, however, this is also exposed to poor weather and assessed as unsuitable. The building is surrounded by bramble on all sides apart from the western aspect, creating a cluttered environment. No bat droppings were found during the external building inspection.

### 3.2.2 Internal inspection

**Building 1** is in very poor condition internally too; both vandalism and water damage have rendered the building unsafe in some areas, and it is cold and draughty. There are five loft voids present within the building, which could not be fully inspected due to health and safety concerns, however they were viewed either from loft hatches or through holes in the ceiling. The loft spaces are constructed of timber rafters and purlins with bitumen felt lining, which appears to be torn in some areas throughout the inspected loft voids. Additionally, cobwebbed areas are visible throughout. There is some light ingress entering through the boarded-up window and the interior timber cladding, which showed significant damage.

**Building 2** is internally lined with timber cladding; the external PRFs lead into a cavity between the roof and the cladding, providing a suitable opportunity for bats.

**Building 3.** Although internal access was not provided at the time of the survey, the building has no roof, so the surveyors were able to view the interior using ladders. No suitable PRF's were identified. Furthermore, as the building has no roof, it is exposed to the elements, making it unsuitable for bats to roost.

**No bat field signs were found during the internal building inspections.**

## 3.3 Activity summary

Table 2 – Bat activity summary

| DATE     | SURVEY TYPE | SPECIES            | NOTES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 02/05/25 | Emergence   | Common pipistrelle | A low number of common pipistrelle bats were observed commuting west, and foraging above Building 2 and along the eastern boundary of the development site.<br><br>Additional common pipistrelles were recorded, but not directly observed.            |
| 23/05/25 | Emergence   | Common pipistrelle | A low number of common pipistrelle bats were observed foraging along the hedgerow and north along the treeline. However, activity was generally low during the survey.<br><br>Additional common pipistrelles were recorded, but not directly observed. |



## **4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1 Evaluation of results**

The areas surrounding Huyton Cricket Club provide low-moderate quality habitat for bats. The site itself offers unlit green space with scattered trees and scrub that will provide foraging opportunities, whilst roosting opportunities may be available within the buildings and trees. Pockets of higher quality habitat are present within the surrounding area such as the River Alt which is located adjacent to the northeastern boundary of the site and directly connects to Huyton Wetland SBI to the southeast. These habitats will likely support an abundance of invertebrates upon which bats can forage. Further afield, Tushingham Lake and Stadt Moers Park, which contains areas of woodland and Neverley Brook, will provide further foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities.

A single species of bat was recorded during the presence / absence surveys: common pipistrelle. Activity was generally low during both emergence surveys with common pipistrelles observed commuting to the north, and along the hedgerows and treeline. Foraging bats were also observed along the eastern boundary of the site and above Building 2.

Despite the presence of suitable PRF's, quality of the surrounding habitats and known presence of a historical roost within Building 1, no bats were observed roosting within Buildings 1 and 2 during the presence / absence surveys.

### **4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures**

#### **4.2.1 Bats**

Although no bats were recorded roosting within Buildings 1 and 2 during the updated surveys, due to the known presence of a historic common pipistrelle day roost within Building 1 in 2020, there remains a residual risk that bats may use the building to roost in the future. As such, the works to Building 1 should proceed under a non-licensed method statement to protect bats in the event that they are present at the time of the works. The method statement will outline the mitigation and compensation measures required to safeguard protected species throughout the duration of the development.

#### **4.2.2 Birds**

A historical bird's nest was identified underneath the eaves of Building 1. Due to the presence of breeding birds within the building, it is recommended that the works take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible, a breeding bird nest check should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works by a suitably experienced ecologist and an ecological clerk of works appointed if considered necessary.



## 5 CONCLUSION

Huyton Cricket Club provides low-moderate quality habitats for bats in the local area. Roosting opportunities may be available within residential dwellings and trees in the surrounding area, whilst the River Alt, Huyton Wetlands and other high-quality habitats will provide foraging and commuting opportunities.

Although no bats were recorded roosting within Buildings 1 and 2 during the updated surveys, due to the known presence of a historic common pipistrelle day roost within Building 1 in 2020, there remains a residual risk that bats may use the building to roost in the future. As such, the works to Building 1 should proceed under a non-licensed method statement to protect bats in the event that they are present at the time of the works. The method statement will outline the mitigation and compensation measures required to safeguard protected species throughout the duration of the development.

Due to the presence of nesting birds in the buildings, works on site will also need to be mindful of breeding bird legislation, as detailed in section 4.2.2.



## 6 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2013). *Competencies for Species Survey: Bats*.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2024). *National Planning Policy Framework*.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature.

Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (2004). *The Bat Workers Manual*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) JNCC



## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1 – Site plan**



# Huyton Cricket Club, Huyton

## Site plan

— Building boundary





## Appendix 2 – Aerial photographs



## Huyton Cricket Club, Huyton

Close aerial photograph

— Development boundary

— Building boundary



**Huyton Cricket Club, Huyton**

Wide aerial photograph



Site location



## Appendix 3 – Photographs



Photograph 1 – Southwestern aspect of *Building 1*



Photograph 2 – Northeastern aspect of Building 1.



Photograph 3 – Southeastern aspect of Building 1.



Photograph 4 – Missing roof tile on Building 1.



Photograph 5 – Gaps in the mortar of the end tiles and underneath the raised lead flashing on Building 1.



Photograph 6 – A gap in the overhanging porch where the timber connects to the wall plate.



Photograph 7 – Gaps between the bitumen felt and timber which creates a suitable crevice for bats.



Photograph 8 – Southwestern aspect of Building 2.



Photograph 9 – Northeastern aspect of Building 2.



Photograph 10 – A gap between the timber cladding and corrugated roof on Building 2.



Photograph 11 – The eastern aspect of Building 3.



Photograph 12 - Remaining timber rafters on Building 3, showing the absence of a roof.



Photograph 13 – Gap above the roller-shutter door on Building 3.



Photograph 14 – Dense bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. scrub adjacent to Building 3.



Photograph 15 – Internal space of Building 1.



Photograph 16 - Internal space of Building 1.



Photograph 17 – Damaged ceiling within Building 1.



Photograph 18 – Interior of Building 1.



Photograph 19 – The interior of Building 2.



Photograph 20 – Interior of Building 3.



## Appendix 4 – Infrared photographs



Infrared photograph 1 – Northern aspect of Building 2 on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.



Infrared photograph 2 – Northwestern aspect of Building 1 on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.



Infrared photograph 3 – Northeastern aspect of Building 1 on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.



Infrared photograph 4 – Southeastern aspect of Building 1 on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.



Infrared photograph 5 – Southern aspect of Building 1 on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.



Infrared photograph 6 – Southern aspect of Building 1 on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025.



Infrared photograph 7 – Northeastern aspect of Building 1 on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025.



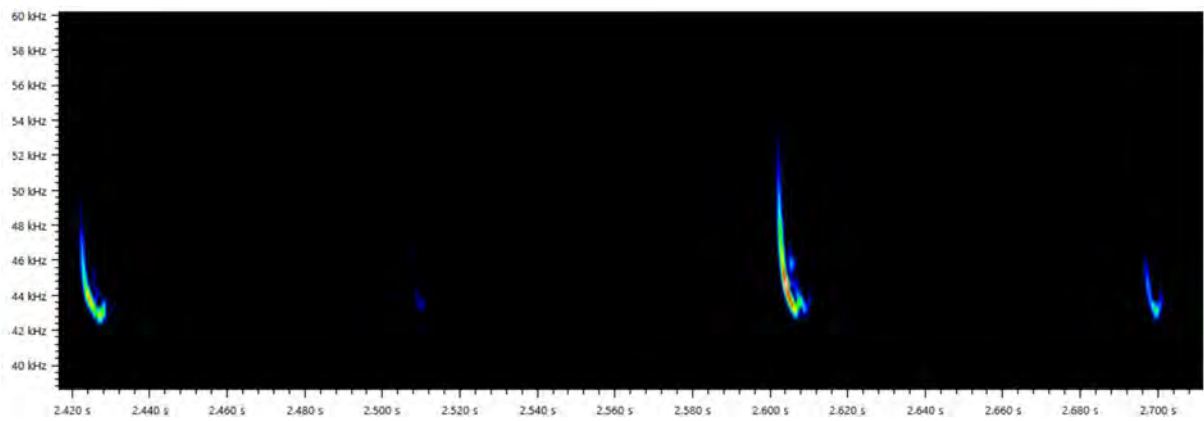
Infrared photograph 8 – Northwestern aspect of Building 1 on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025.



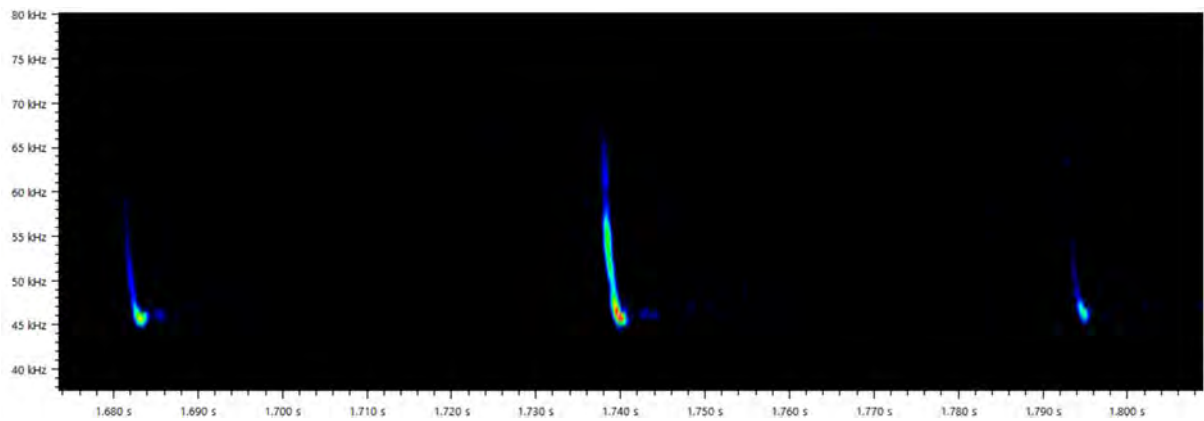
Infrared photograph 9 – Southeastern aspect of Building 1 on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025.



## Appendix 5 – Results



Sonogram 1 – Common pipistrelle recorded at 20:18 on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2025.



Sonogram 2 – Common pipistrelle recorded at 21:24 on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025.



## **Appendix 6 – Statutory and planning context**

## Ecological assessments

Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of the legislative protection that is relevant to the findings of this report.

### Bats

In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU exit) Regulations 2019 (known as the “Habitats Regulations”). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] ... uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by Natural England.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and, in many cases, a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) provides guidance on the interpretation of the law in relation to the natural environment and development.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.

## Birds

All wild birds, their nests and young are protected throughout England and Wales by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or damage or destroy the nest or eggs of breeding birds. The legislation applies to all bird species, common and rare.

In addition to the protection afforded to all wild birds, more vulnerable species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act receive enhanced protection when breeding. Schedule 1 species, including their dependent young, are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance whilst at or near the nest, in addition to the protection afforded the more common species.

The NERC Act offers further protection to the nests of some species that regularly re-use their nests, even when the nests are not in use.

The leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status of 244 UK bird species. "Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds" is the most recent publication summarising their findings. Three lists, Red, Amber and Green, have been produced based on the most up-to-date evidence available and criteria include conservation status at global and European levels and, within the UK: historical decline, trends in population and range, rarity, localised distribution and international importance. These lists are a valuable resource when considering conservation priorities.

## Planning policy

National Planning Guidance is issued in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF). The most relevant section is 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Key relevant principles stated in 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment are;

- 187.** 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.
- 192.** 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<sup>68</sup>; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation<sup>69</sup>; 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

- 193.** 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<sup>70</sup> 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.