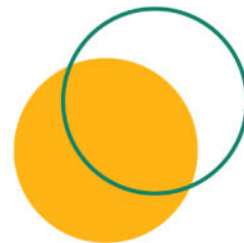




Preliminary Ecological Appraisal



Binsted Farms Ltd.
Land South of the Blackhorse Pub, Binsted Lane, Binsted, Nr Arundel, West Sussex, BN18 0LN

February 2026

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Summary

Purpose	• ACP Consultants Ltd. Was instructed by the client (Binsted Farm Ltd.) to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) to support a planning application at Binsted Lane, Binsted, Nr Arundel, West Sussex, BN18 0LN. • The proposed work is for the construction of six new lodging facilities, alongside a gravelled car-parking area and associated soft landscaping.
Work Undertaken	• A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) have been undertaken, including a Defra (2025) based desktop study and a site visit conducted in March 2025. • PEA guidelines from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 2013 have been adhered to, and habitats have been classified using UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at https://www.ukhab.org). • The PRA was conducted in accordance with the latest published best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023).
Potential Constraints	• No further bat surveys are recommended due to the lack of bat records within close proximity and the internal context of the shed on-site. • If any modifications to existing hedgerow is undertaken during the bird nesting season, it has been recommended that vegetation is checked for signs of nesting birds by a licensed ecologist prior to works. There was no suitable habitat for all other protected species including reptiles, Great Crested Newts, water voles, otters, badgers and amphibians, and no further surveys in relation to these species have been recommended.
Conclusions	• The proposed development is not considered to conflict with any national, regional or local planning policies and will not have any significant or adverse impacts on protected species and their habitats, provided recommendations for nesting bird surveys (Section 5) are followed where necessary. • This report is valid for a period of 18 months from the survey date.

Table of Contents

Summary	ii
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Overview	1
1.2 Objectives	1
2 Methodology	2
2.1 Desktop Study	3
2.2 UKHab Site Survey	3
2.3 Limitations	4
3 Existing Baseline	5
3.1 Overview	5
3.2 Site Location	5
3.3 Existing Baseline Conditions from Desktop Study	6
3.3.1 Protected Species	6
3.4 Habitats on site	7
3.5 Protected Species	7
3.6 Baseline Summary	7
4 Results and Evaluation	8
4.1 Survey Conditions	8
4.2 UKHab Survey	8
4.2.1 Building (u1b5)	8
4.2.2 Modified Grassland (g4)	9
4.2.3 Native Hedgerow (h2a)	10
4.3 Protected Species	10
4.4 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Results	11
5 Discussions and Recommendations	13
5.1 Potential Constraints	13
5.2 Further Surveys and Mitigation	13
5.2.1 Further Surveys	13
5.2.2 Habitat Protection	13
5.2.3 Protected Species	13
6 Conclusions	14
Appendices	15
Appendix A: UKHab Map	16
Appendix B: Existing and Proposed Site Plans	17
Appendix C: Planning Policy & Legislation	19
National Policy	19
National Planning Policy (December 2024)	19
6.1.1 Relevant National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, 2016)	21

Species and Habitats Legislation	21
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)	21
The Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention 1979)	22
The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981)	22
The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000	22
Local Policy: Epsom and Ewell Draft Local Plan (2022-2040)	22
Appendix D: Legal Information Regarding Bats	25
What you must not do	25
Activities that can harm bats	25

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Binsted Farm Ltd. ('the client') is seeking consent for a proposed development at the Land South of the Black Horse Pub, Binsted Lane, Binsted, Nr Arundel, West Sussex, BN18 0LN (thereafter referred to as the 'potential development site'), which is within the Arun District Council (ADC).

ACP Consultants Ltd. was instructed by the client to produce a Preliminary Ecology Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment to accompany the planning application to the ADC for consent to undertake the proposed works. Relevant planning policy and legislation can be found in Appendix C.

The proposal is for the construction of six new lodging facilities, alongside a gravelled car-parking area and associated soft landscaping.

A Preliminary Ecology Appraisal and a Preliminary Roost Assessment has been prepared to assess the site's feasibility for this proposed development and identify need for any further consideration.

Local Authorities are tasked with determining new development and local planning applications against a wide range of social, economic, and environmental criteria. The purpose of this report is to assess whether the development proposal is compliant with the relevant local policies in terms of ecological impact as a result of the proposed commercial development.

This assessment has been carried out in accordance with good practice guidelines, including the National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and applicable local supplementary guidance.

The remainder of this report is presented in the following order:

- Section 2: Methodology;
- Section 3: Baseline Ecological Conditions;
- Section 4: Results and Evaluation;
- Section 5: Discussion and Recommendations;
- Section 6: Conclusions.

1.2 Objectives

- To survey and determine the ecological value of the site according to the UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)
- To identify how protected species are / may be using the site in order to assess its functionality to the local populations, including a detailed Preliminary Roost Assessment for bat presence / absence;
- To consider impacts to all habitats immediately adjacent to the site;
- To consider potential impacts to local statutory and non-statutory site either within 2km or for European level designations, a buffer deemed as appropriate by the relevant Planning Authority; and
- To assess the suitability of the proposed development site in terms of existing ecological factors.

2 Methodology

To achieve the objectives outlined in Section 1.2, a desktop study was completed followed by a site visit undertaken by Ayan Chakravartty. This site visit assessed the sites dominant habitat types and made note of any field signs of protected species.

During the inspection of the site a Preliminary Roost Assessment was also undertaken to determine the potential for bat roosting and establish whether bats are using, or have used, the site for roosting. The assessment was conducted in accordance with the latest published best practice guidelines (Collins, 2023). All accessible parts of the building were inspected for signs of bat presence (droppings, feeding remains, straining from oils and urine, and scratch marks).

Table 1: Guidelines for assessing the proposed development site for bats (from Collins, 2023).

Suitability	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flightpaths and foraging habitats	Number of activity survey visits required
None	<i>No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).</i>	<i>No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).</i>	None
Negligible	<i>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.</i>	<i>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.</i>	None
Low	<i>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 and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by a larger number 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).</i>	<i>Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.</i> <i>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.</i>	One
Moderate	<i>A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their</i>	<i>Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such</i>	Two

Suitability	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flightpaths and foraging habitats	Number of activity survey visits required
	<i>size, shelter, protection, conditions 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).</i>	<i>as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens</i> <i>Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.</i>	
High	<i>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 and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.</i>	<i>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.</i> <i>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.</i> <i>Site is close to and connected to known roosts.</i>	Three

2.1 Desktop Study

The desk study was undertaken by referring to the following data sources:

- Defra (2025). Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)

2.2 UKHab Site Survey

On the 5th of March 2025, the field survey was completed at the site in order to obtain detailed baseline information regarding the habitats and possibility of protected species present.

The assessment identifies sites, habitats, species and other ecological features that are of value based on factors such as legal protection, statutory or local site designations such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Based upon this, recommendations for further, more detailed surveys are made as appropriate to confirm presence / absence of a protected species.

A UKHab Survey involved identifying and mapping the dominant habitat types within the site boundary. The survey and identification of habitats was undertaken in accordance with the UKHab Ltd (2023) methodology. UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (<https://www.ukhab.org>).

During the survey, a note was made of any field signs indicating the presence of protected species and the location of these signs was mapped. A record was also made of any other animal species identified

within the site or adjacent areas during the survey. The results of the habitat survey are shown on UKHab Map, Appendix A.

2.3 Limitations

The results of the survey and assessment work undertaken by ACP Consultants Ltd. are representative at the time of surveying.

This document does not contain a comprehensive list of botanical species on site. Only plant species characteristics of each habitat and incidental observations of notable plant species were recorded. In addition, many plant species are only evident at certain times of year and so some plant species may have gone undetected.

Any third party and external data sources used may vary due to the quality and scale, the supporting information used to define locations/boundaries and sensitivity of the data itself. ACP Consultants Ltd. cannot take responsibility for the accuracy of external data sources and as such discrepancies and inaccuracies may occur.

3 Existing Baseline

3.1 Overview

The following section sets out the existing conditions in relation to ecology for the proposed development. Relevant ecological information is available from several sources including local, regional, and national ecological reports and websites. Additionally, these sources were used to evaluate the surrounding habitat for bat suitability. This included any potential important habitat corridors (linear habitat features), feeding grounds or potential roost opportunities, such as large expanses of woodland. For the purpose of this assessment, some data has been obtained from Defra provided geographical sources¹.

3.2 Site Location

Data obtained from Defra shows the proposed development is not located on any type of protected land. Two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are located 3.55km northeast and 2.35km north of the proposed development site. No Ramsar, Special Area of Conservation (SAC), or Special Protected Area (SPA) are within 5km of the site.

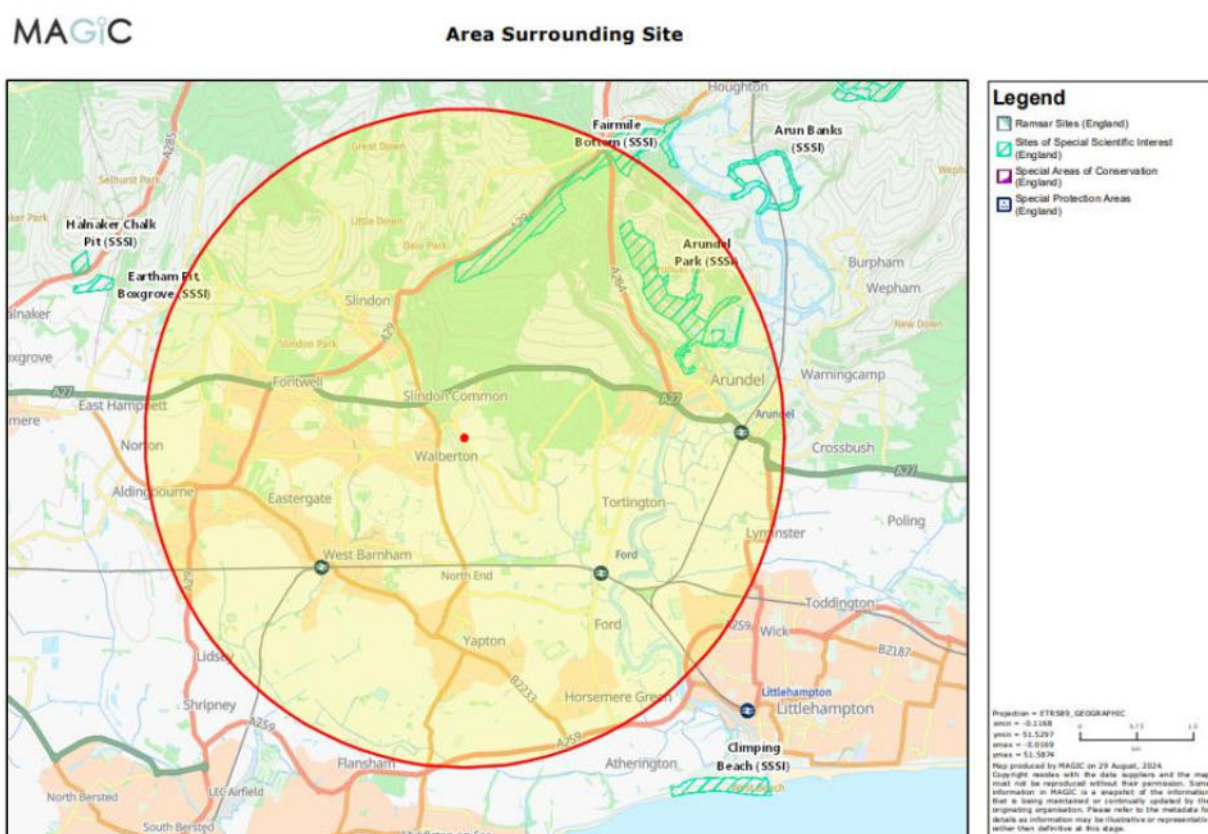


Figure 3.1 - Designations surrounding potential development site (highlighted in red) (Source: Defra)

¹Figure 3.1 Area surrounding potential development site (highlighted in red) (Source: Defra). Defra (2024). Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGiC)

3.3 Existing Baseline Conditions from Desktop Study

The development site, highlighted in red, is situated in Arundel. The site is immediately adjacent to farmland and is near a church and plant nursery in a rural setting. The closest area of Broadleaved woodland is present 0.4km northwest of the development. The closest area of ancient broadleaved woodland is present 0.3km northwest of the proposed development site.

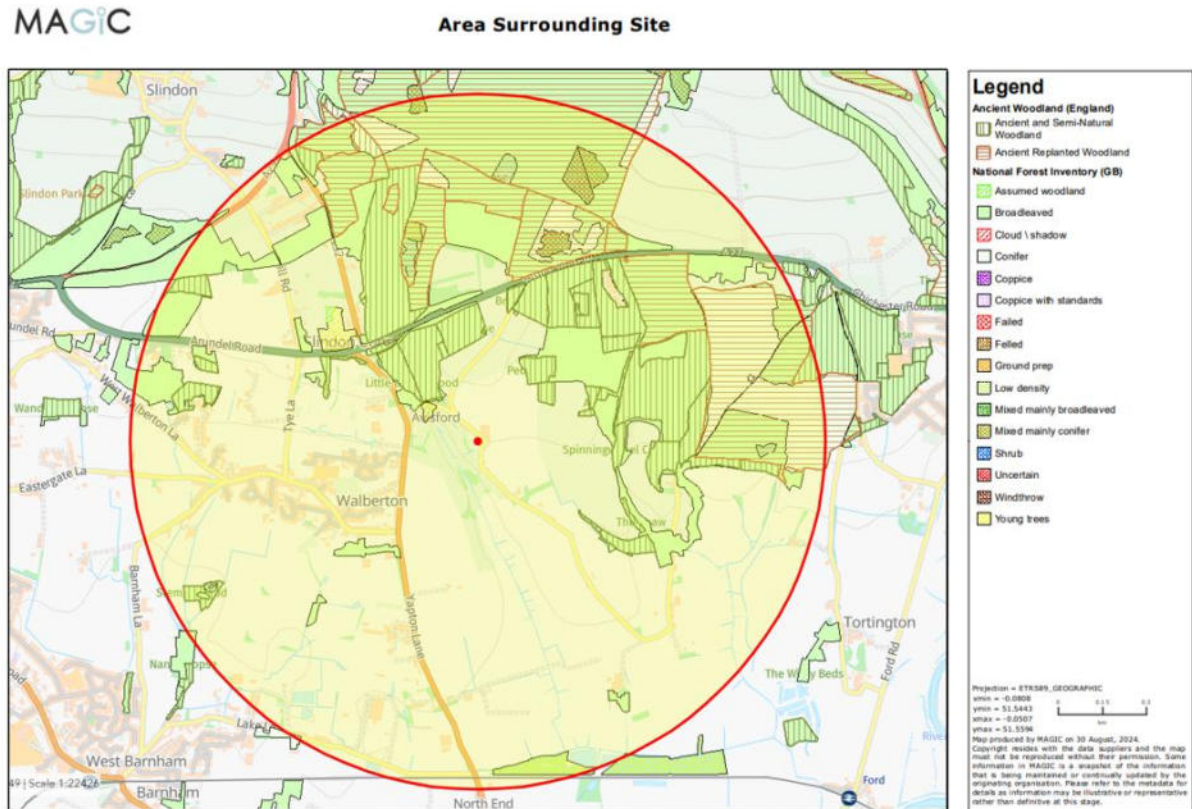


Figure 3.2 - Area surrounding potential development site (highlighted in red) (Source: Defra)

3.3.1 Protected Species

Figure 3.3 shows that there have been recordings of protected species present within 2km of the potential development site. Granted European Protected Species Applications show bat records present 0.7km northwest and protected mammal (Hazel Dormouse) records present 1.7km west of the proposed development site. No Great Crested Newt Pond returns were found within 2km of the proposed site.

MAGiC

Area Surrounding Site

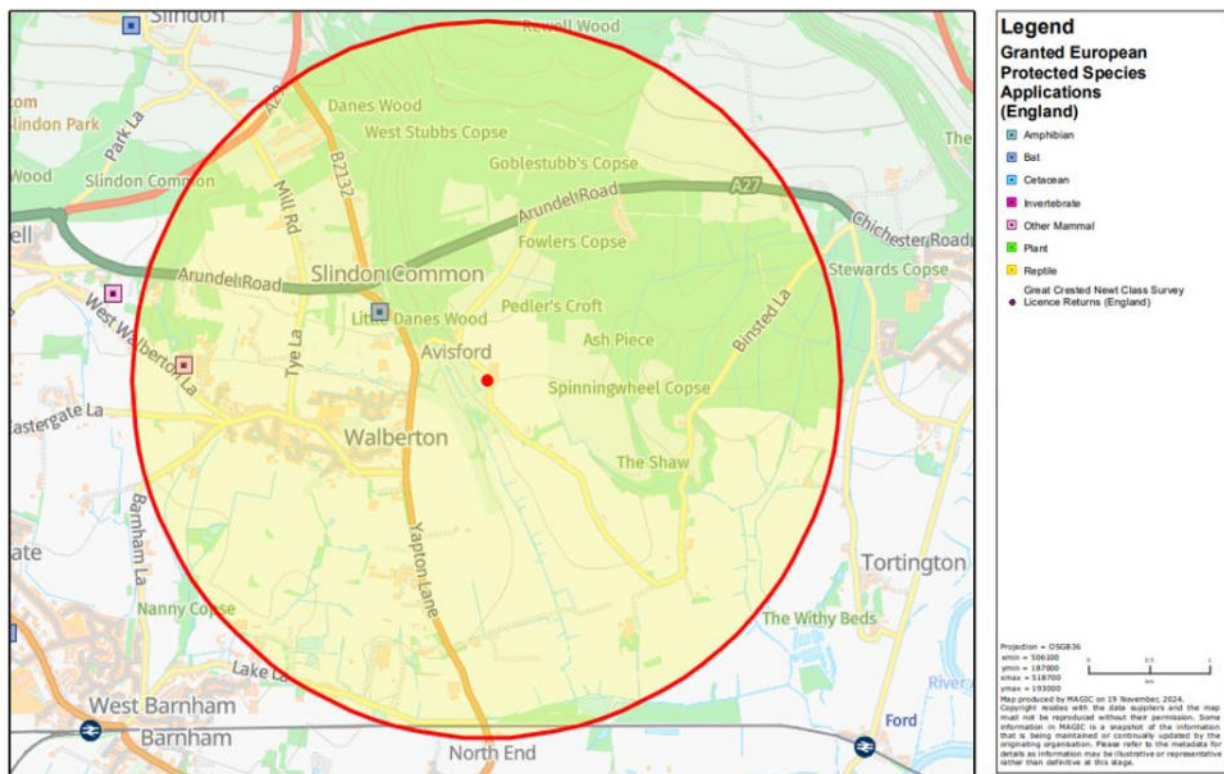


Figure 3.3 - Protected Species within 2km of the potential development site (Source: Defra).

3.4 Habitats on site

The habitats on site should be read alongside the UKHab Map (Figure 1, Appendix A). The site comprises of a Building (ub15), Modified Grassland (g4), and Native Hedgerow (h2a).

3.5 Protected Species

No presence or evidence of protected species were recorded during the survey. No trees exist within the proposed development area, and there is no suitable living habitats for nesting birds or bats other than a simple shed structure which has been assessed (Section 4.4).

3.6 Baseline Summary

Based on the data obtained from Defra and the UKHab survey, the proposed development does not seem to be negatively affecting any Special Sites of Scientific Interest. Protected species potentially could be present on site.

4 Results and Evaluation

4.1 Survey Conditions

Table 2: Summary of conditions during survey

Abiotic Factor	Survey 1
Survey type	PEA
Date completed	05.03.2025
Temperature	13 degrees Celsius
Precipitation	None
Weather Conditions	Clear Skies

4.2 UKHab Survey

The site comprises Buildings (ub15), Modified Grassland (g4), and Native Hedgerow (h2a).

Habitat types detailed below are listed in order of the UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (<https://www.ukhab.org>). The species list provided in this report reflect only those taxa observed during the survey.

4.2.1 Building (u1b5)

Figures 4.1 - 4.2 show the existing areas of developed land on-site (the building/shed). The shed comprises of wood panel walling and mineral felt roofing. Overall, the panelling and felt roofing was in good condition with no holes or missing panels that could be used as potential access points by bats. Figures 4.3 and 4.4 demonstrate the internal structure of the shed and show the good condition of the building and lack of potential roosting features or evidence of bat presence (such as feeding remains or bat droppings).



Figure 4.1- ub15 Building



Figure 4.2- ub15 Building



Figure 4.3- ub15 Building



Figure 4.4- ub15 Building

4.2.2 Modified Grassland (g4)

The majority of the site comprises Modified Grassland (g4), shown in Figures 4.5 and 4.6. This grassland is subject to regular mowing and grazing, resulting in limited botanical diversity, with only a few vascular plant species present beyond the existing grass species.



Figure 4.5 Modified Grassland (g4)



Figure 4.6 Modified Grassland (g4)

4.2.3 Native Hedgerow (h2a)

A native hedgerow borders the northern edge of the site (Figures 4.7 and 4.8). It appears to be regularly trimmed and well-maintained. The existing hedgerow is expected to remain largely unaffected by the proposed development.



Figure 4.7 Hedgerow (h2a)



Figure 4.8 Hedgerow (h2a)

4.3 Protected Species

Defra (2025) was used to provide Protected Species records for within 2km of the site. This was primarily due to the nature of the proposed development. Results of bat records within a 2km buffer can be seen below in Table 3.

Table 3: Table showing Protected Species Records within 2km of the Site

Species/Group	Desk Study Record	Potential Habitat	Other Relevant Factors	Potential Constraint?
Bats	Granted European Protected Species Applications show bat records present 0.7km northwest.	No suitable habitat on site (building has negligible suitability).	No signs of bats were found on site.	No
Badger	None within search parameters.	No suitable habitat on site.	No signs of badger were found on site.	No
Reptiles	None within search parameters.	No suitable habitat on site.	No signs of reptiles were found on site.	No
Great Crested Newt (GCN)	Granted European Protected Species Applications show GCN records present 0.3km north-east.	No suitable habitat on site.	No signs of Great Crested newts were found on site.	No

Species/Group	Desk Study Record	Potential Habitat	Other Relevant Factors	Potential Constraint?
Water Vole	None within search parameters.	No suitable habitat on site.	No signs of water vole were found on site.	No
Otter	None within search parameters.	No suitable habitat on site.	No signs of otter were found on site.	No
Birds	None within search parameters.	The existing building and hedgerow could provide suitable nesting habitat.	No signs of nesting birds were found on site.	Possible
Amphibians	None within search parameters.	No suitable habitat on site.	No signs of amphibians were found on site.	No

4.4 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Results

There is one building present on the site. This building was inspected during a Preliminary Roost Assessment for potential roosting features. These roosting features have been summarised in Table 4 below. The building reference column related to photographic figures shown in section 4.2.

Table 4: Site features and descriptions linking to photos.

Building Reference	Internal or external	Description (if applicable)	Suitability for Bats	Use by birds	Bat Signs, Access Points and Features
Figure 4.1	External	External building roofing wooden panelling and mineral felt roofing	Negligible	None recorded	N/A
Figure 4.2	External	External building roofing showing wooden panelling and mineral felt roofing	Negligible	None recorded	N/A
Figure 4.3	External	External building roofing showing no space for internal voids	Negligible	None recorded	N/A
Figure 4.4	Internal	Internal roofing showing lack of internal voids	Negligible	None recorded	N/A

The building is constructed of wood panels, which are in relatively good condition (Figures 4.2 & 4.3), with no missing sections or gaps in the panelling. The pitched roof is covered with mineral felt, a

material that does not create voids suitable for roosting features. Additionally, an inspection of the internal structure revealed no internal voids that could serve as internal roosting features.

Furthermore, only one bat record was identified in close proximity to the site. Given the lack of bat records in the area, the absence of potential access points for roosting, and the good condition of the building, the likelihood of bat presence is considered negligible, and no further surveys are required.

5 Discussions and Recommendations

5.1 Potential Constraints

The following habitats and species have been identified as possible constraints to the proposed development:

- Nesting Birds

5.2 Further Surveys and Mitigation

5.2.1 Further Surveys

Due to the previously stated findings regarding nesting bird habitat, it is recommended that any native hedgerow being removed or modified on site, should be surveyed for nesting birds prior to removal. It is worth noting that surveying for nesting birds is only required if vegetation clearance takes place within the breeding season (March – August inclusive).

It is worth noting that results and further recommendations made are based on what was present on-site at the time of survey only.

5.2.2 Habitat Protection

It should be noted that external lighting could affect nocturnal species such as bats, therefore, a sensitive lighting scheme is recommended.

During construction and operation of the site, all relevant waste components should be stored securely with a waste management strategy in place to prevent spills and leaks into the wider environment.

In order to minimise the risk of harm to animals using the site it is recommended that preventative measures are in place during construction. These precautions are:

- Keep all fuel and other harmful substances in a locked area;
- Ensure any spillages are treated;
- Mammal ladders (such as a plank) or earth ramps to be placed in any open excavations at the end of each day;
- Cap off any open pipes at the end of each day; and
- Cover any open holes or install mammal ladders or earth ramps in any open excavations at the end of each day to prevent animals from becoming trapped.

5.2.3 Protected Species

If works take place within the breeding season (March – August inclusive), any vegetation that is to be modified or removed should be further checked for signs of nesting birds by a qualified surveyor.

6 Conclusions

This report provides an assessment of the following potential key impacts associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposed development at the Land South of the Black Horse Pub, Binsted Lane, Binsted, Nr Arundel, West Sussex, BN18 0LN. The aims were:

- To survey and determine the ecological value of the site according to the UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (<https://www.ukhab.org>);
- To consider impacts to all habitats immediately adjacent to the site;
- To identify how protected species are / may be using the site in order to assess its functionality to the local populations, including a detailed Preliminary Roost Assessment for bat presence / absence;
- To consider potential impacts to local statutory and non-statutory site either within 2km or for European level designations, a buffer deemed as appropriate by the relevant Planning Authority; and
- To assess the suitability of the proposed development site in terms of existing ecological factors.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal including a UKHab survey of possible ecological affects and Preliminary Roost Assessment has been undertaken for the proposed development. Further surveys involving nesting birds should be carried out if works take place within the breeding season (March – August inclusive).

It can, therefore, be concluded that the proposed development is not considered to conflict with any national, regional or local planning policies and will not have any significant or adverse impacts on protected species and their habitats, providing that no site work takes place without the surveys detailed in Section 5 being completed and if necessary, mitigation measures being implemented before construction.

Appendices

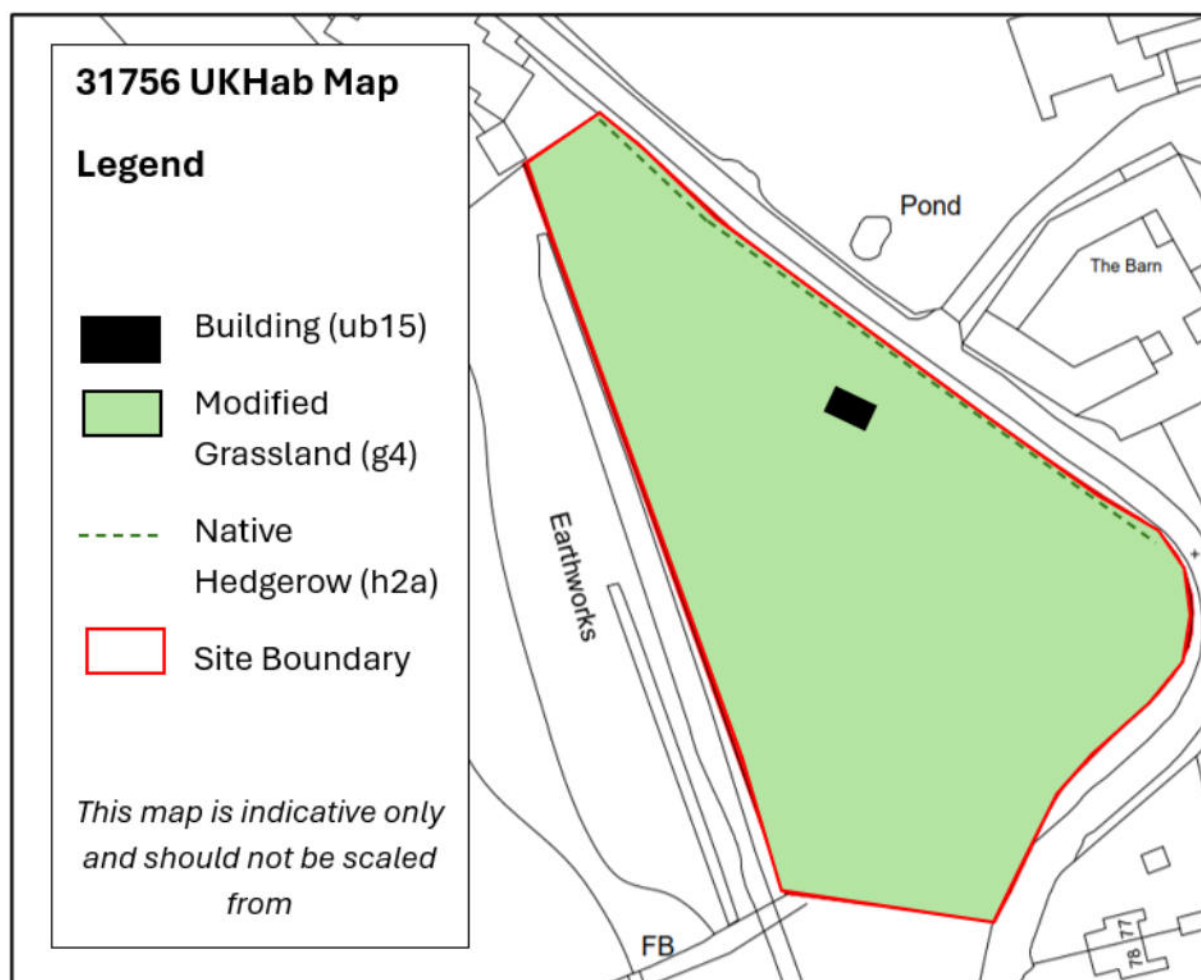
Appendix A: UKHab Map

Appendix B: Existing and Proposed Site Plans

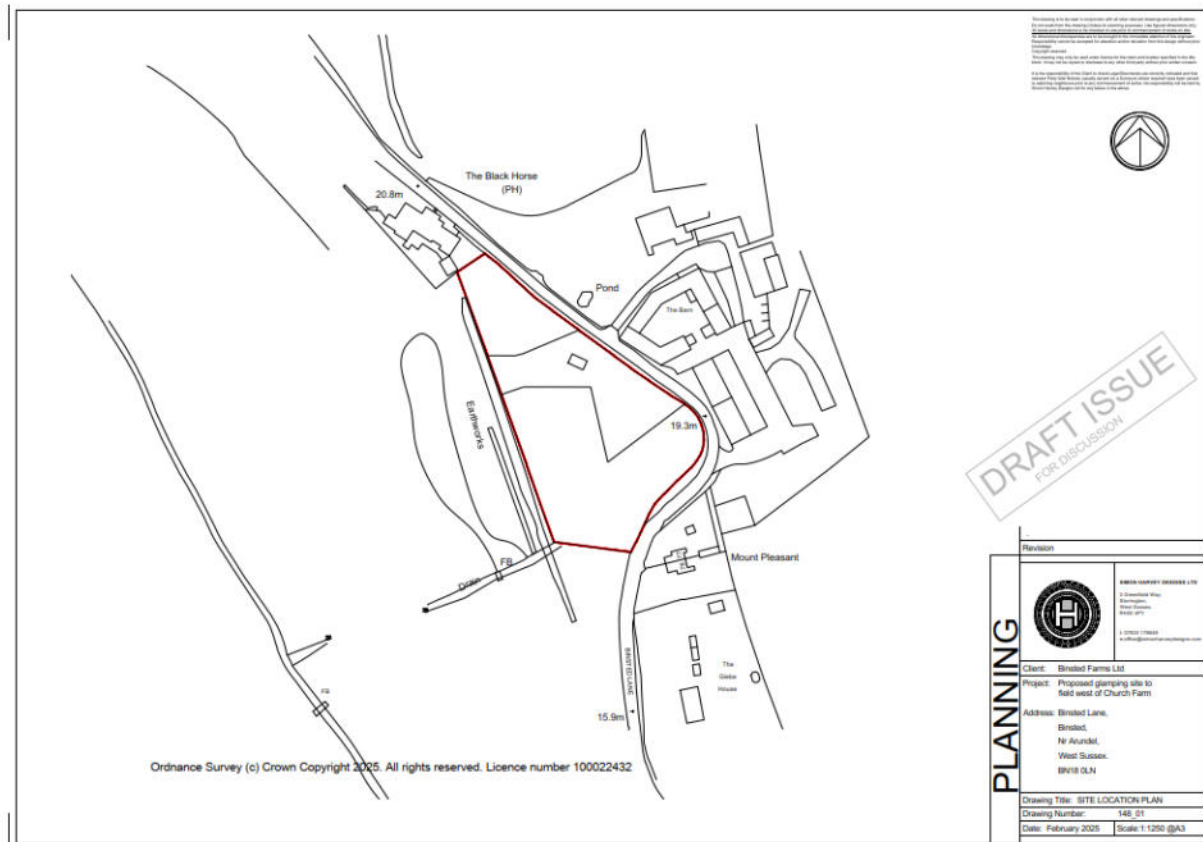
Appendix C: Planning Policy & Legislation

Appendix D: Legal Information Regarding Bats

Appendix A: UKHab Map



Appendix B: Existing and Proposed Site Plans





Appendix C: 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 (December 2024)

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."

6.1.1 Relevant National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG, 2016)

NPPG is a web-based resource which brings together planning guidance on various topics into one place. It was launched in March 2014 and coincided with the cancelling of the majority of Government Circulars which had previously given guidance on many aspects of planning.

The guidance note on 'Natural Environment' explains key issues in implementing policy to protect and enhance the natural environment, including local requirements. This has been referred to when preparing this report. It states that:

"Planning authorities need to consider the potential impacts of development on protected and priority species, and the scope to avoid or mitigate any impacts when considering site allocations or planning applications. Guidance on the law affecting Habitats Sites, protected species and SSSIs.

Natural England has issued standing advice on protected species. A protected species mitigation licence from Natural England may be required before any work can start."

The PPG also states that:

"Information on biodiversity and geodiversity impacts and opportunities needs to inform all stages of development (including site selection and design, pre-application consultation and the application itself). An ecological survey will be necessary in advance of a planning application if the type and location of development could have a significant impact on biodiversity and existing information is lacking or inadequate. Pre-application discussions can help to scope whether this is the case and, if so, the survey work required.

Even where an Environmental Impact Assessment is not needed, it might still be appropriate to undertake an ecological survey, for example, where protected species may be present or where biodiverse habitats may be lost.

As with other supporting information, local planning authorities should require ecological surveys only where clearly justified. Assessments should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed and the likely impact on biodiversity. Further guidance on information requirements is set out in making an application."

Biodiversity net gain is mentioned in the PPG and states that:

"The National Planning Policy Framework encourages net gains for biodiversity to be sought through planning policies and decisions. Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats in association with development. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures. It may help local authorities to meet their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006."

Species and Habitats Legislation

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

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 Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention 1979)

The Convention on Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention 1979) aims to ensure conservation and protection of all wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats (listed in Appendices I and II of the Convention), to increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to afford special protection to the most vulnerable or threatened species (including migratory species).

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

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.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

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).

Local Policy: Epsom and Ewell Draft Local Plan (2022-2040)

We are aware that the Epsom and Ewell Council are currently reviewing a new local plan, accordingly we have drawn relevant policies from the draft of this new plan.

'The Epsom and Ewell Local Plan will set out a vision for how Epsom and Ewell will develop as a place up to 2040. It looks at our future needs for development and provides guidance as to where it will go and what it will look like.'

Policy DM11: Trees, Woodlands, and Hedgerows

'Trees, Woodlands, and Hedgerows

- 1) *Development proposals will be permitted where:*
 - a) *they do not result in the loss of, or damage to, ancient trees, trees, woodlands and hedgerows that make or are capable of making a significant contribution to the character or amenities of an area, unless the benefits would clearly outweigh the loss and replacement planting is provided.*
 - b) *existing trees and their root systems are protected, prior to, during and after the construction period*
 - c) *they make provision for new streets to be tree lined and new trees, which must be sited to allow sufficient space for them to grow to maturity, both above and below ground ensuring that trees will not:*
 - i. *disrupt underground and overhead utilities;*
 - ii. *obscure sightlines for infrastructure such as CCTV and drivers of larger vehicles;*
 - iii. *hinder pedestrian mobility as a result of heavy leaf-fall or exposed roots; and*
 - d) *they incorporate a long-term management plan for planting schemes'*

Policy S14: Biodiversity

'Biodiversity

- 1) *Development proposals will be permitted where they will not have an adverse impact on biodiversity or geodiversity. Where harm or loss cannot be avoided, mitigation will be required such that it can be robustly demonstrate that:*
 - a) *there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of international, national and local designated sites;*
 - b) *there will be no adverse impact on the conservation status of priority species;*
 - c) *there will be no loss or deterioration of a priority habitat type, and/or irreplaceable habitat;*
 - d) *there will be no adverse impact on the conservation objectives of Biodiversity Opportunity Areas; and*
 - e) *there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of linkages between designated sites and priority habitats.*
- 2) *The weight attributed to the protection of nature conservation interests will be commensurate to their status and significance, and any other designation applying to the site, habitat or species concerned. For proposals that affect nationally protected sites, very special circumstances would be required to robustly demonstrate that the benefits of the development proposal clearly outweigh the loss or harm and that appropriate compensation will be sought.*
- 3) *Effective avoidance, mitigation and compensation will be secured through the imposition of planning conditions or planning obligations as appropriate, including monitoring for the effectiveness of these measures.*
- 4) *Unless an exemption applies, development will be permitted provided that it can demonstrate the provision of a minimum 10% increase in biodiversity units when set against the baseline biodiversity value. This may include the creation, restoration, enhancement and subsequent maintenance of habitats and features.*
- 5) *Major development should calculate this through the most up to-date version of the Biodiversity Metric (or its equivalent). For development of 9 dwellings or less, the latest small sites metric (or its equivalent should be used to calculate net gain.*
- 6) *Biodiversity net gain should be delivered using the following hierarchy:*

- a) *On site as part of the development*
- b) *Where on site delivery is not feasible then this should be provided on land adjacent to, or as close to the development site as possible;*
- c) *As a last resort, net gain should be secured on land within the borough boundary.'*

Appendix D: Legal Information Regarding Bats

All bat species, their breeding sites and resting places are fully protected by law - they're European protected species.

You may be able to get a licence from Natural England if you cannot avoid disturbing them or damaging their habitats, or if you want to survey or conserve them.

What you must not do

You're breaking the law if you do certain things including:

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

Either or both of the following could happen if you're found guilty of any offences:

- *you could be sent to prison for up to 6 months*
- *you could get an unlimited fine*

Activities that can harm bats

Activities that can affect bats include:

- *renovating, converting or demolishing a building*
- *cutting down or removing branches from a mature tree*
- *repairing or replacing a roof*
- *repointing brickwork*
- *insulating or converting a loft*
- *installing lighting in a roost, or outside if it lights up the entrance to the roost*
- *removing 'commuting habitats' like hedgerows, watercourses or woodland*
- *changing or removing bats' foraging areas*
- *using insecticides or treating timber*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bats-protection-surveys-and-licences>