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BAT PRESENCE / ABSENCE SURVEY

At

5 Rainsough Brow

Prestwich
Manchester
M25 9XN

NGR: SD 380794 402249

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'K James'.

Date:	16 th October 2023
UES reference:	UES02819/04



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A bat scoping survey was undertaken at 5 Rainsough Brow, Prestwich, Greater Manchester by United Environmental Services (UES) Ltd in November 2019 (see report reference UES02819/01). Large sections of the building could not be accessed for an internal inspection, and as such, the buildings on site were initially assessed as having high potential to support roosting bats. Two bat presence / absence surveys were carried out by UES on the 9th and 24th June 2020 (see report reference UES02819/02). Common pipistrelles *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* were the only species recorded during both the emergence and re-entry surveys and no bats were observed to be roosting within any of the buildings on site.

An updated internal and external inspection of the buildings was undertaken by UES prior to the emergence survey on 12th July 2023, and the buildings were re-assessed as having moderate potential to support roosting bats. Two updated bat presence / absence surveys were carried out by UES on 12th July and 14th August 2023.

The objective of the updated surveys was to establish whether bats have since occupied any of the buildings on site for roosting purposes, 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 habitats on site are of limited suitability for foraging and commuting bats. However, habitats within the surrounding area provide optimal quality habitats including semi-mature woodland, open grassland and wetland habitats including watercourses and waterbodies. The connectivity between habitats in the local area and the proposed development is excellent.

The quality of roosting habitat within the buildings on site is considered to be moderate due to the abundance of predominantly external potential roosting features (PRFs), such as gaps under raised roof slates, under lead flashing and at the eaves of the buildings. No field signs of bats were found during either the external or internal building inspections.

Two species of bat were recorded during the surveys: common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. Moderate to high levels of common pipistrelle activity were recorded during the first emergence survey, with soprano pipistrelles recorded to a lesser extent. Only low levels of activity were recorded during the second re-entry survey.

No bats were found to be roosting within the buildings on site. Therefore, no further survey or mitigation work is required for the development to proceed, with regards to bats.

Due to the presence of breeding birds in the buildings on site, it is recommended that the initial site clearance (including vegetation) and demolition 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 survey 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 5, 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 Noah Fulton BSc, UES Graduate Ecologist. Other surveyors include:

- Tom Kenwright BSc MSc ACIEEM, UES Senior Ecologist. Tom is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2023-11076-CL18-BAT (level 2).
- Alasdair Grubb BSc ACIEEM, UES Sub-contractor. Alasdair is licensed by Natural England to disturb, take and handle all species of bats under licence number 2022-10906-CL18-BAT (level 2).
- Ysobella Cox BSc MBiol, UES Graduate Ecologist
- Ella Wilding, UES Sub-contractor
- Mark Jeffries, 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 June 2023 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 development proposals include the demolition of the existing buildings on site and development of four new dwellings.

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 5, 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 particular 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, in order to gauge their suitability to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

2.2 Building inspections

The buildings on site were searched both externally and internally for bat presence and features associated with bat activity, as detailed in BCT guidance (Collins, 2016).

2.2.1 External inspection

The external inspections of the buildings were carried out from ground level using binoculars, and also 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 buildings. The following areas were searched, where present:

- | | |
|---------------------------|---|
| • Roof and ridge tiles | • Gaps under felt |
| • Lead flashing | • Cracks / holes in woodwork or behind cladding |
| • Eaves | • Gaps in brickwork and mortar |
| • Boxed soffits | • Air bricks |
| • Fascia and barge boards | • Grills |
| • Window sills and panes | • Vents |
| • Walls | |

2.2.2 Internal inspection

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



- Chimney breasts
- Gaps in brickwork and mortar
- Cracks / holes in woodwork
- Floor or other surfaces on which droppings could accumulate

2.3 Emergence and re-entry 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, in order 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 survey. 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.

An Anabat Walkabout bat detector was 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.

ANABAT SCOUT bat detectors and recorders were used during the survey. 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.

A Canon XA11 Professional Video Camera was used in conjunction with an infra-red LED illuminator during the presence / absence surveys. Footage of the survey is recorded and reviewed post-survey. During the survey, the camera was positioned to focus on previously identified PRFs and potential roosting locations. This allowed for greater confidence that any bats using the building would be identified, even when ambient light levels prohibited surveyors from observing bats.



2.3.2 Weather conditions

Table 1 - Weather conditions and survey timings

DATE	SURVEY TYPE	TIMINGS	SUNSET / SUNRISE	TEMP.	WIND	RAIN	CLOUD COVER
12/07/23	Emergence	21:19 – 23:04	21:34	15°C	Light breeze	Dry	10%
14/08/23	Re-entry	04:16 – 06:01	05:46	16°C	Light breeze	Moderate	100%

2.4 Survey limitations

Moderate rain was recorded throughout the re-entry survey on 14th August. Light rain was recorded from 05:30 onward. Bats were still recorded as being active during the survey; therefore, this is not considered to have significantly affected the results.



3 RESULTS

3.1 Habitat assessment

5 Rainsough Brow is located on the outskirts of Prestwich, a suburban town in the borough of Bury, Greater Manchester. The habitats on site include several buildings and associated gardens. The habitats on site and within the surrounding area are similar in composition to when the initial scoping survey was carried out in 2019.

The immediate surrounding area comprises woodland and a mixture of residential housing to the north and east. A variety of greenspaces are present, particularly to the north-west, west and southeast. To the north-west lies Drinkwater Park through which the River Irwell flows within 250m of the proposed development site. The park contains a good allocation of woodland in addition to grassland and other waterbodies. These habitats will provide excellent foraging, commuting and roosting opportunities for bats in the local area and are well connected to the proposed development site by the areas of surrounding woodland.

In the wider surrounding area (within 2km), the habitats are similar in composition; the landscape is a mosaic of semi-urban areas, woodland, meadows around the River Irwell and amenity green space (such as golf courses and recreational parks). Several local nature reserves (LNRs) also lie in the wider area.

In summary, the habitats are considered to be of high quality for foraging, commuting and roosting bats.

3.2 Building inspections

3.2.1 External inspection

There are three buildings on site which are due to be demolished under the proposed development plans. These buildings have been named for the purposes of the report: main house, garage and log store.

The Main House is a two-storey building with bonded red brick walls and a multi-pitched roof, with several dormers and gable ends (see Appendix 3 – Photo 1). The wooden fascia boards show several areas of significant rot and gaps between the boards and brick work are apparent. The roof is constructed from slate roof tiles and clay ridge tiles and is generally in good condition, although there are multiple raised roof-tiles and gaps in the ridge-tile mortar, which provide PRFs for bats (Photo 2). There is lead flashing around all the dormers and the chimneys which are slightly raised in parts.

There are two single storey extensions to the west and north of the property (Photo 5 and 6): one has a shallow pitched roof and one has a flat roof. Both have boxed soffit eaves in good condition and due to their more recent construction, their roofs have fewer PRFs such as raised tiles. The eastern aspect of the main house has a wooden-clad porch with a tiled roof. One of these tiles has slipped revealing a large gap (Photo 8). The house has wooden window frames, most of which are in good condition, but several PRFs are visible between the frames and brickwork.

The Garage is a two-storey building with a pitched slate tile roof, clay ridge tiles and a single dormer on the southern aspect. The bonded brickwork is in good condition, but the wooden window frames show significant rot (Photos 12 & 15). The roof tiles are generally in good



condition, but there are many raised tiles and damage to the verge pointing which provide suitable PRFs (Photo 14). The wooden fascia boards around the eaves are generally in good condition, though there are several gaps where bats could enter (Photo 18). The dormer is rotten around the window frames, and there are several broken panes which allow access to both bats and birds (Photo 14). A willow obscures the western aspect of the dormer making this partially unsuitable for use by roosting bats. Scrub was observed to encroach into the open doorway present on the eastern aspect providing a large access point into the internal structure.

The Log Store is a small single storey building with a pitched roof (Photo 10). Similar to the Main House and Garage, there are many raised tiles on the roof and gaps between fascia boards and brick work. The brick work is in good condition. There is also a brick-built BBQ close to the log store with significant cracks in the brickwork (Photo 9). These provide some low quality PRFs for bats, although these were closely inspected and no evidence of bats was found.

No bat droppings or other field signs of bats were found during the external building inspection. This is consistent with the findings of the November 2019 external building inspection.

3.2.2 Internal inspection

The Main House roof void contains a small crawl space that was accessed in its entirety during the updated internal inspection. It can be accessed through two loft hatches on either side of the house (east and west), although these do not cover all roof voids. Inspection was possible along the linear loft space (running north-south), but not along the loft space perpendicular to this.

The roof is lined with a plastic membrane which is in very good condition. There is blanket floor insulation throughout the roof cavity. No bat droppings were found during the inspection; however, several rat and mouse droppings were found (Photos 16 & 22). More evidence of birds was found near the eastern inspection hatch (droppings, feathers and an old nest), indicating that access points are present. There were several substantial wasp nests present in the western loft space (Photos 17 and 18).

The Garage has one large room that appeared to have been used as a loft for keeping chickens in 2019. The void was not accessible due to the surrounding scrub. The roof is internally clad with sarking boards. No visible signs of bat presence were found internally, however, the gap between the roof tiles and sarking boards could not be inspected for droppings. The first storey of the garage is heavily cluttered and connected to the second-storey floor via numerous gaps at the eaves (Photo 23).

The Log Store roof is internally lined with bitumen felt which is in good condition with numerous PRFs at the junctions between the ridge beam and rafters (Photo 24). No evidence of bats was found inside, but as with the Garage, gaps between roof tiles and the underlying felt could contain field signs of bats which are not accessible or visible.

No bat droppings or other field signs of bats were found during the internal building inspection. This is consistent with the findings of the November 2019 internal building inspection.



3.3 Activity summary

Table 2 – Bat activity summary

DATE	SURVEY TYPE	SPECIES	NOTES
12/07/23	Emergence	Common and soprano pipistrelle	Common and soprano pipistrelles were recorded constantly throughout the survey (common pipistrelles to a greater extent). Numerous bats were observed and recorded simultaneously foraging and socialising over and around the buildings on site and within the woodland to the west and north. Flight paths were identified in all directions.
14/08/23	Re-entry	Common and soprano pipistrelle	Common and soprano pipistrelles were recorded (common pipistrelles to a greater extent) commuting from south to north within the woodland, foraging within the surrounding woodland, and passing around the main dwelling from north-east to southwest.



4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Evaluation of results

The areas surrounding 5 Rainsough Brow provide optimal habitat for foraging, commuting and roosting bats. Areas of greenspace to the north-west, west and south-east comprising broadleaved woodland will provide abundant invertebrate communities on which bats can forage. Additionally, the surrounding parkland, grassland and watercourses will provide suitable commuting corridors. The greenspace surrounding the site connects the buildings to areas of good quality habitat mosaics in the wider surrounding landscape comprising woodland, meadows, watercourses, and sub-urban habitats that will provide numerous additional roosting opportunities.

The buildings on site provide moderate quality habitat for roosting bats. Having said this, no bats or evidence of bats such as droppings were found during the updated building inspections or presence / absence surveys.

Two species of bat were recorded during the bat presence / absence surveys: common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle. Activity was generally moderate to high during the emergence survey with common pipistrelle bats recorded continuously foraging and commuting across the site. A lower level of common pipistrelle activity was recorded during the re-entry survey. Soprano pipistrelles were recorded to a lesser extent.

Despite the favourable conditions, no bats were recorded roosting in the buildings on site.

4.2 Mitigation and compensation measures

4.2.1 Bats

As no bats were found to be using the buildings or structures on site to roost, no further mitigation or compensation measures are required with regards to bats.

4.2.2 Birds

Due to the presence of breeding birds in the buildings on site, it is recommended that the initial site clearance (including vegetation) and demolition 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 survey 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

5 Rainsough Brow is situated in an area that provides optimal quality habitats, including semi-mature woodland, open grassland and wetland habitats including watercourses and waterbodies. The habitats on site are of limited quality.

Having said this, no field signs of bats, such as droppings, were found during the building inspections. Furthermore, no bats were recorded roosting in the buildings on site, despite the favourable conditions.

As no bats were found to be using the buildings or structures on site to roost, no further mitigation or compensation measures are required with regards to bats.

Due to the presence of nesting birds in the buildings, works on site will 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*.

Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2021). *National Planning Policy Framework*.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*. (3rd ed.) The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

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

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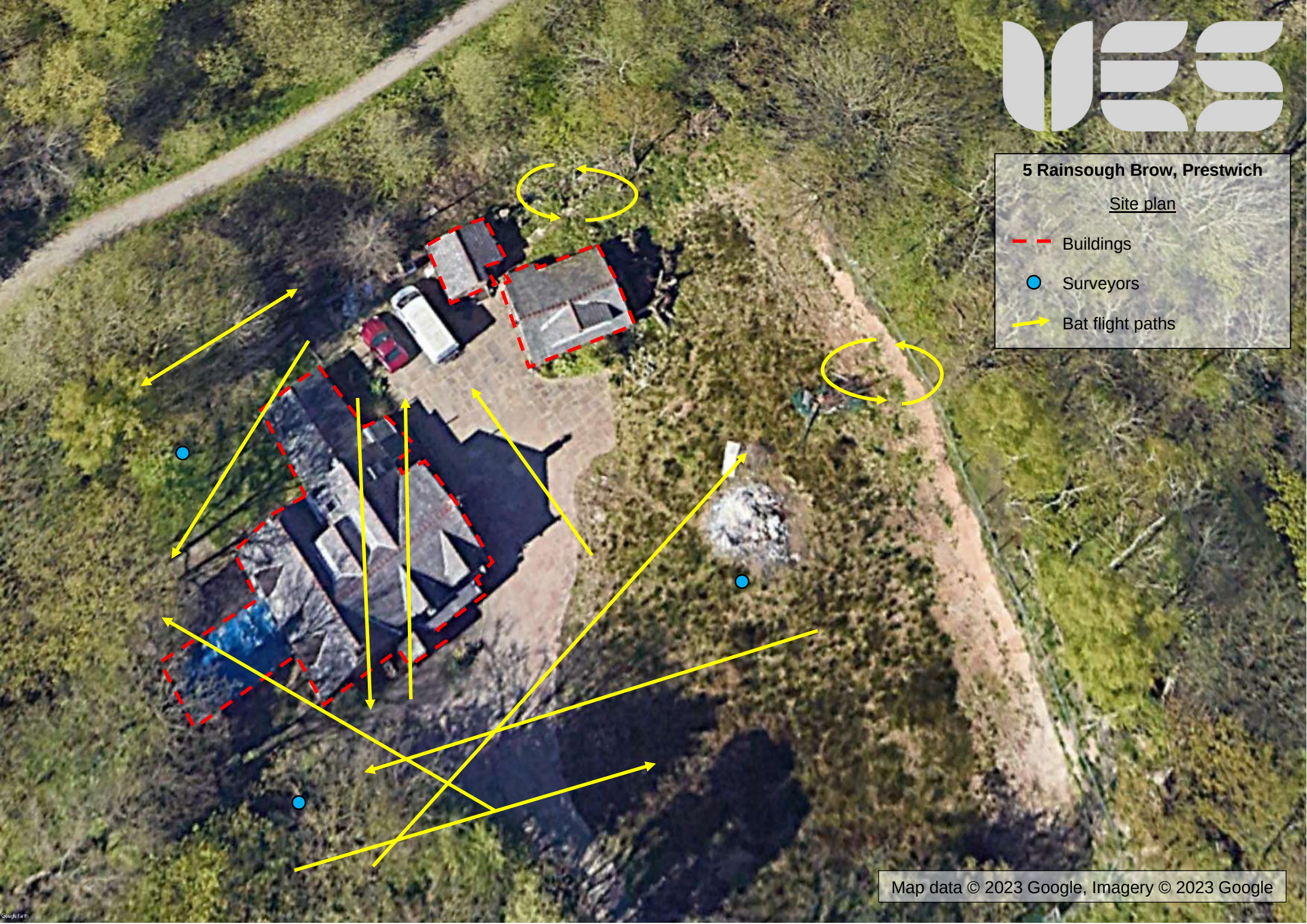
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan

5 Rainsough Brow, Prestwich

Site plan

-  Buildings
-  Surveyors
-  Bat flight paths





Appendix 2 – Aerial photographs



5 Rainsough Brow, Prestwich

Close aerial photograph

— Main dwelling

— Garage

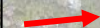
— Log store





5 Rainsough Brow, Prestwich

Wide aerial photograph

 Site location





Appendix 3 – Photographs



Photo 1. The front (southeast aspect) of the main house.



Photo 2. Gaps in tiles and loose flashing on the front of the house



Photo 3. Gaps beneath the wooden fascia boarding.



Photo 4. Single storey, pitched extension to the rear (northwest aspect) of the house.



Photo 5. Northeast aspect (left) and northwest rear aspect (right).



Photo 6. Southwest aspect (left) and southeast front aspect (right)



Photo 7. Northeast aspect of the main house.



Photo 8. Lean-to on eastern aspect showing loose tile.



Photo 9. Brick BBQ in garden that has partially collapsed. Cracks in mortar provide PRFs for bats.



Photo 10. Southwest facing aspect of log store building.



Photo 11. Cleared garden showing semi-mature woodland behind house.



Photo 12. Garage outbuilding showing southwest facing gable end.



Photo 13. Showing damage to the gable rendering that was previously deemed superficial.



Photo 14. Rear of garage. Gaps between fascia and brick work, and broken verge pointing. Bramble has since encroached into the central door. Also showing damage to the verge pointing.



Photo 15. Southern aspect of the garage. Showing open windows and rot around window frame. A willow has since obstructed the western half of the dormer.



Photo 16. Mouse droppings in the loft space of the main house.



Photo 17. Western loft space, showing wasp nests.



Photo 18. Large wasp nest in western loft space.



Photo 19. North facing in western roof space



Photo 20. Showing eastern loft space. Note plastic lining.



Photo 21. Showing northern gable of eastern loft space. More evidence of bird droppings and old nest.



Photo 22. Rat droppings in eastern loft space.



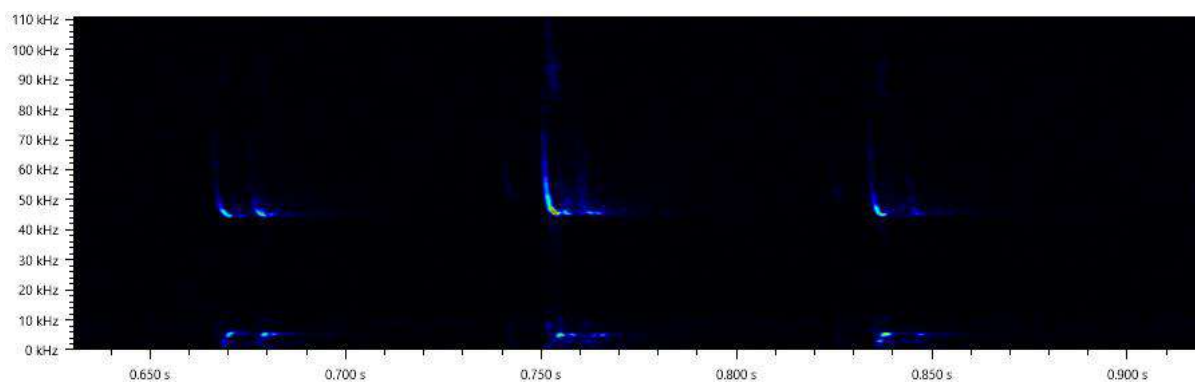
Photo 23. Garage internal.



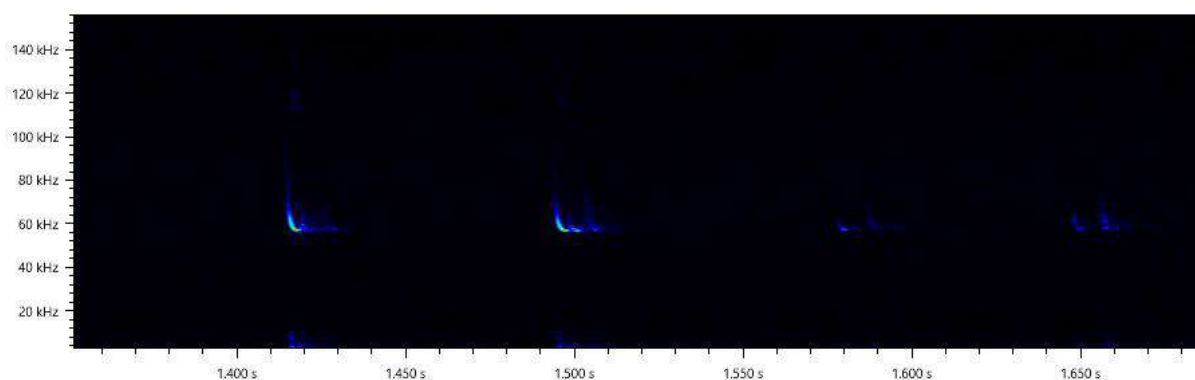
Photo 24. Log store internal showing gaps above the wall plate.



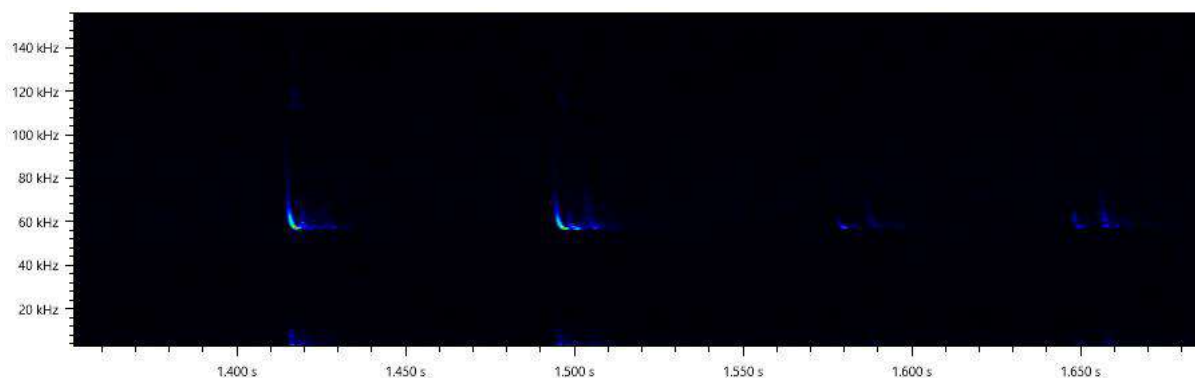
Appendix 4 – Results



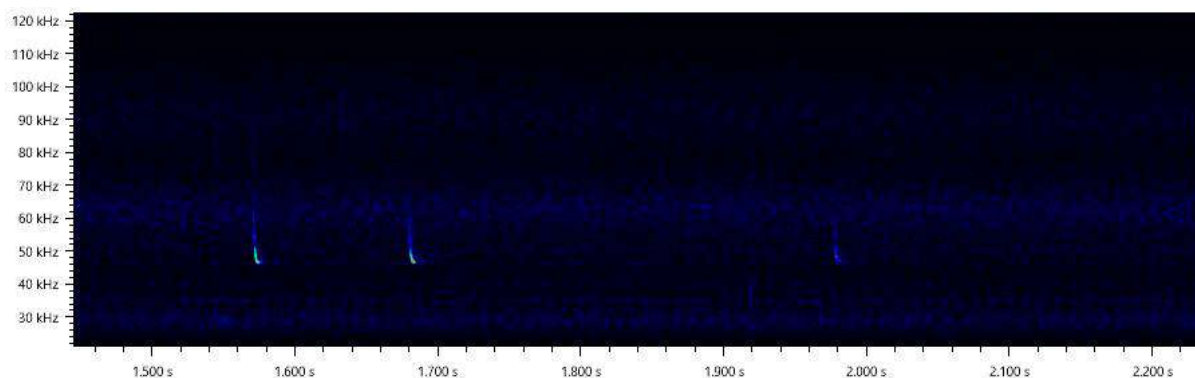
Sonogram 1. Common pipistrelle recorded at 22:07 on 12th July 2023.



Sonogram 2. Soprano pipistrelle recorded at 22:07 on 12th July 2023.



Sonogram 3. Soprano pipistrelle recorded at 04:07 on 14th August 2023.



Sonogram 4. Common pipistrelle recorded at 04:20 on 14th August 2023.



Appendix 5 – 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 2021 (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 2021 (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;

- 174.** 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;
 - 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.
- 179.** 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 biodiversity⁶¹; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation⁶²; 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
- 180.** 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 reasons⁶³ 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.