

Ecology Team Consultation Response	
Date:	25.06.2025
Planning Ref:	4/25/2097/0F1
Description:	Full refurbishment of vacant industrial building to offices including new windows and doors along with ancillary external works to service the building.

The development is in close proximity to the River Ehen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) therefore a shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment is required before a decision can be made.

Suggested Planning Conditions

Bat European Protected Species Licence (EPSL)

The applicant must apply for a bat EPSL from Natural England upon being granted planning permission. Prior to the works proceeding, this EPSL must be submitted to the council and must be accepted prior to the start of works.

A walkover survey/check must be carried out within 3 months prior to an EPSL application submission by a suitably experienced ecologist to ensure that conditions have not changed since the most recent survey was undertaken.

As compensation, three 2F Schwegler bat boxes should be incorporated into the development to provide enhanced crevice-style roosting and nesting habitat for common pipistrelle, in addition to cavity-style bat boxes on the surrounding trees to support local noctule populations.

Breeding Birds

To mitigate disturbance effects vegetation clearance should take place outside of the breeding bird season (which runs March to August, inclusive). Where this timing is not possible the area should be checked prior to removal by a suitably experienced ecologist and if active nests found, vegetation left untouched and buffered until all birds have fledged.

Small Mammals

All development work should be carried out with care to avoid these small mammals such as hedgehogs. Contractors should be briefed about the potential presence of hedgehogs and Works should be supervised during initial clearance of the Site to avoid injury to any disturbed individuals.

Sensitive Lighting Scheme

A sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented during and after construction to avoid indirect disturbance to foraging and commuting bats, birds and small mammals that may be using the nearby river, trees and grassland, and should include the following elements:

- Sensitive positioning of lighting to avoid unnecessary spill onto the nearby river, trees and grassland.
- Angle of lighting: avoidance of direct lighting and light spill onto areas of habitat that are of importance as commuting pathways and/or foraging areas;
- Type of lighting: studies have shown that light sources emitting higher amounts of UV light have a greater impact to wildlife. Use of narrow-spectrum bulbs that avoid white and blue wavelengths are likely to reduce the number of species impacted by the lighting;
- Reduce the height of lighting columns to avoid unnecessary light spill.

This should be in line with the guidance note for Bats and Artificial Lighting (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023).

Ecological Supervision

In order avoid committing a wildlife offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the applicant must employ an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) for the initial clearance works. The ECoW will ensure the avoidance and protection of breeding birds, small mammals, herptiles (if any) and ensure the works adhere to the procedures set out in the CEMP.

Biodiversity Net Gain

No development hereby permitted shall commence until:

- a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority demonstrating a 10% net gain,
- b) the planning authority has approved the plan in writing,
- c) the onsite habitat provision is accompanied by a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan in place for 30 years as the gains here constitute 'Significant On-site Gains', this monitoring plan is to be accepted by the council and,
- d) Monitoring results are to be programmed to be submitted to the council. These should include evidence demonstrating how BNG is progressing towards achieving its objectives, evidence of arrangements and any rectifying measures needed. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.