

Planning Dept (Attn Mrs D Haywood)
Havant Borough Council,
Public Service Plaza, Civic Centre Road,
Havant, Hants PO9 2AX

BARRATT'S SINAH LANE DEVELOPMENT – APP/18/00724

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON LOCAL BAT POPULATION

1. Introduction.

The above application by Barratt's has been subject to many amendments, the latest being a revised Phasing Plan on 3 September. On 11 June 2020 HBC Planning advised that Barratt's had "leapfrogged" the due planning process and submitted their application direct to the Government Planning Inspectorate. There have been some 540 objections to the application. These have been wide and varied but it is believed the impact of the development on the local bat population and their roosts has not been fully assessed and updated.

2. Bat Activity in 2020 – Sinah Lane and North Shore Road.

The proposed site north of Sinah Lane has lain fallow this year and is covered in wild flowers which has been a haven for wild life including small mammals such as hedgehogs, slow worms and newts. There has been an abundance of ground and flying insects in the field. It has also been a hunting ground for regular visitations by airborne predators such as buzzards , peregrine falcon, sparrowhawk and kestrel.

During this summer and autumn there has been a marked increase in bat activity as witnessed by residents along Sinah Lane and North Shore Road. This is reinforced with audio and video evidence with recordings of the following species in varying numbers:

Common, Soprano and Nathusius' pipistrelle

The "Large" and Lesser Noctule

Common Serotine

Alcathoe and Natterer's Myotis

There was a particularly very active period in mid-July when bats swarmed in large numbers as flying ants emerged in nearby gardens.

This noticeable overall increase in local bat activity compared with previous years may be due to the ground and airborne insect life in the "wild" field. This would provide the bats with additional foraging

opportunities along their recognised commuting corridor towards Sinah Lane and North Shore Road.

3. WYG Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan (EMMP) - Jun 2018 and Revision March 2020

On behalf of Barratt's, WYG produced the above comprehensive plan which included a section on bats and their roosts, a protected species by law. The EMMP does include mitigation measures for bats including bat boxes on trees and bat bricks on some residences on site.

Three bat surveys were carried out in the site field and surrounding woodland in October 2016 and also in April and June 2017. A summary of the findings of these surveys are as follows:

- 24th October 2016. Low level of activity. Common and Soprano pippistrelle bats.
- 18th April 2017. Medium level of activity. Common and Soprano pippistrelle and some serotine bats.
- 13th June 2017. Low level of activity. Common and Soprano pippistrelle and serotine.

In the EMMP, WYG state that "the surveys are only valid for **two years** from the date of the survey", i.e. from July 2017, but subject to review if circumstances change.

In March 2020 WYG updated the 2018 EMMP where they accepted that bat roosts are mobile and that "trees will be subject to pre-commencement inspection..." ; however there is no mention of a full survey of the site area being carried out as the previous surveys are now invalid.

Barratt's identify the need of a lighting footprint during construction so as not to disturb foraging bats. However, they have not finalised the permanent artificial lighting plan for the whole site as yet, so there is no evidence when street lighting will be taken into consideration.

4. HBC Planning - Habitat Regulatory Assessment (HRA) dated 13 March 2020 and Planning Application Response of Planning Policy dated 15 September 2020.

The HRA and Response above issued by the Planning Dept focus on the Brent Geese issue but make no mention of other habitats for mammals including bats.

5. Conclusion.

As there has been a marked increase in bat activity during the last six months in the area of the proposed development site, it is recommended that HBC Planning carries out the following actions:

- facilitates a new bat survey to be carried out by Barratt's specialist before any decision is made on the Application.
- insists that Barratt's final street lighting plan is completed before a decision is made and it will take into account roosting, commuting and foraging requirements for the current local bat population.
- if development approved, to ensure dust and noise levels will be managed on site during the building phase so there is minimum impact on bats, especially during early dawn and dusk feeding times.
- Manages all mitigation factors regarding woodland roosting sites, and on-site bat boxes and bricks.
- Amends the HBC Planning HRA and Response document to include mammals, including bats.

It is also recommended that HBC Planning updates the Government Inspectorate on this and any other matters which have changed since Barratt's went direct such as the ongoing traffic, infrastructure and flooding issues on Hayling Island.

30 September 2020