

ecological support,
management and solutions

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To whom it may concern,

This letter is to confirm our recommendations following the introduction of the pumping station within the bat corridor.

First and foremost we have been informed that there is no other alternative for the siting of the pumping station. Our concerns of its location within the bat corridor were highlighted and taken on board by the design team however we were informed it was unavoidable. Through discussions we ensured that it was located as far south as possible and therefore as far away as possible from the confirmed Serotine roost.

Recommendations for design and landscaping:

We have stipulated that rather than a concrete or tarmac access road Geocell / Bodpave will be utilised. This will then be seeded with EM2 General Purpose Meadow Mixture containing 13 wildflower species. It was considered that this approach would result in a minimal area of hardstanding and the increased floral diversity would help compensate for the small area to be lost. It is hoped this will act as a valuable enhancement of the site for foraging bats.

This wildflower area will be allowed to establish via the following management:

First year: Perennial species take at least a full year to establish. Annual weeds arising from the soil seed bank and grass growth will be controlled by mowing throughout the first year to minimise competition and weed seed production.

Once Established: During the second year the area will be left to flower and cut in mid summer. However grassland which is consistently cut late in the season year on year reduces species diversity therefore, to maintain maximum floral diversity, the area will be managed in sections at different times from late June to the end of August from year three and onwards.

We have been reassured that access to the pumping station, and therefore disturbance within the bat corridor, will be extremely marginal (once a year) and operations will take place during the day. Similarly no lighting will be introduced within the bat corridor. Therefore it is considered unlikely bats will be impacted by the operations of the pumping station.

Required ecological input prior to works:

As this section of the site has been maintained as a reptile buffer, prior to works getting underway a reptile capture and translocation will need to take place following methodology outline below:

Timing: The optimum period for capture of reptiles is April to June and September. Therefore works will get underway in April, providing weather conditions are suitable (i.e. between 10°C and 20°C with little or no wind or rain).

Fencing: The reptile exclusion fence line will be diverted to ensure there is a contained safe area for reptiles.

Distribution of Refugia: The refugia used will be a mixture of bitumen roofing felt and corrugated metal. This will be distributed at an increased density to aid the capture effort.

Catching: Suitably qualified ecologists, with experience in reptile capture, will carry out the reptile capture and relocation. Any reptiles captured will be translocated into the receptor area.

Capture Effort: Only two Slow Worms were recorded on site. This combined with the limited area being caught out, means it is considered only a low number of capture days will be required. No works will take place until an ecologist has confirmed that the adequate level of reptile capture has been undertaken (i.e. five negative visits).

Any further vegetation clearance will be supervised by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist as we are now in bird nesting season.

Two hibernacula have already been constructed on site. These are located away from the area of impact and it is considered these now provide a valuable ecological enhancement.

Conclusion

Although the location of the pumping station within the bat corridor will lead to the temporary disturbance of habitats suitable to reptiles and foraging bats, by implementing the mitigation and compensation outlined above it is considered unlikely there will be significant residual impacts towards the protected species.

Kind regards,

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