

## BRIEFING NOTE

**Project:** Land Adjacent to Harts Farm Way

**Subject:** Bat Tree Assessment

**Client:** Peak Gen Power Limited

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> December 2014

### Background

Ecological Survey and Assessment Limited (ECOSA) were previously contracted by Peak Gen Power Limited to undertake an extended Phase 1 survey<sup>1</sup> of an area of secondary woodland proposed for the construction of a 20MW generator compound, which will supply the national grid during shortages and emergencies. This survey was undertaken in September 2014.

Subsequently comments received by Havant Borough Council (HBC) Ecology Team raised a concern about the bat roosting potential of trees to be removed as detailed below:

*"The application is accompanied by an Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment (ECOSA, September 2014) which provides a sound appraisal of the site's current ecological constraints. Whilst I have no issues with this report, it does conclude that further detailed survey works is required in order to assess the potential presence or tree-roosting bats. The Phase 1 survey highlighted that "removal of trees could cause harm to individual bats or the destruction of roosts. The development will also reduce the amount of available foraging habitat. There will be increased lighting and human presence post-development. Further survey is therefore recommended". It is clear then that the applicant's ecologist has recommended additional survey effort in order to fully assess the potential impacts.*

*I do however note that this application also includes a document (undated and anonymously authored) called 'Arboricultural Survey and Proposed Actions during Development/Operation' which sets out proposed changes to the site layout and provides details of the trees to be impacted. The ecologist's recommendations may therefore require revision after a review of this document – in other*

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<sup>1</sup> ECOSA (2014) Land adjacent to Site 4, Harts Farm Way, Havant - Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment Report FINAL 180914

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*words, if it can be demonstrated that no trees with bat roosting potential are to be impacted then this would negate the need for further survey. Further information on this issue would be useful.”*

Therefore, the purpose of this briefing note is to provide further information in order to address the comments made by HBC in relation to the application and, where necessary, provide further impact assessment and mitigation measures as necessary. This briefing note is based on a ground level tree assessment carried out by ECOSA in December 2014.

### Bat Survey Methodology

The site was visited by Simon Boswell (bat licence reference CLS02035) of ECOSA on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2014. During the site visit, a specific assessment was completed on eleven trees proposed to be removed as detailed in the Arbtech arboricultural report<sup>2</sup> produced for the site. The survey assessed the potential of these trees to support roosting bats based on the presence of features such as holes, cracks, splits, loose bark and ivy cladding. The tree assessment was based on the existing arboricultural report for the site with tree numbers from this report utilised to allow a correlation between the results and tree losses as part of the proposals. The survey conformed to current Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines<sup>3</sup> and the trees were graded for their potential to support bats based upon the criteria outlined in the BCT guidelines (**Table 1**).

**Table 1** Tree visual inspection bat roost potential categories

| Confirmed Roost                                                                                                                         | Category 1*                                                                        | Category 1                                                                                                                             | Category 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Category 3                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Roosting bats known to be present based on evidence such as bats heard internally, or droppings, staining or scratch marks at entrance. | Trees with multiple, highly suitable features capable of supporting larger roosts. | Trees with definite bat potential, supporting fewer suitable features than category 1* trees or with potential for use by single bats. | Trees with no obvious potential, although the tree is of a size and age that elevated surveys may result in cracks or crevices being found; or the tree supports some features which may have limited potential to support bats. | Trees with no potential to support bats. |

### Survey Constraints

The two white willow *Salix alba* could not be inspected closely because of a dense area of bramble *Rubus fruticosus* aggregate, however an inspection with binoculars provided a robust assessment of the bat roosting potential of these trees.

<sup>2</sup> Arbtech Consulting Limited (2014) Land off Harts Farm Way - Arboricultural Impact Assessment

<sup>3</sup> Hundt L (2012) *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Bat Conservation Trust (BCT)

## Bat Survey Results

All the trees surveyed were immature or semi-mature specimens which have not developed features such as cracked limbs, rot holes or dense coverings of ivy which would provide suitable roosting features. Four species were recorded amongst the twelve trees surveyed; Norway maple *Acer platanoides*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, white willow and poplar species *Populus* species. **Table 2** provides a BCT category for each tree in-line with current best practice guidelines.

**Table 2:** Ground level bat survey results

| Tree Number <sup>4</sup> | Species      | Potential Roosting Features                                                       | BCT Category <sup>5</sup> |
|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 2                        | Norway maple | No potential roosting features present, tree is immature and in good condition    | 3                         |
| 3                        | Norway maple | No potential roosting features present, tree is immature and in good condition    | 3                         |
| 5                        | Norway maple | No potential roosting features present, tree is immature and in good condition    | 3                         |
| 6                        | Norway maple | No potential roosting features present, tree is immature and in good condition    | 3                         |
| 9                        | Norway maple | No potential roosting features present, tree is immature and in good condition    | 3                         |
| 10                       | Sycamore     | No potential roosting features present, tree is immature and in good condition    | 3                         |
| 12                       | Sycamore     | No potential roosting features present, tree is immature and in good condition    | 3                         |
| 14                       | Sycamore     | No potential roosting features present, tree is immature and in good condition    | 3                         |
| 15                       | Sycamore     | No potential roosting features present, tree is immature and in good condition    | 3                         |
| 16                       | White willow | No potential roosting features present, tree is semi-mature and in good condition | 3                         |
| G3a                      | White willow | No potential roosting features present, tree is Semi-mature and in good condition | 3                         |

## Conclusions and Recommendations

All the trees proposed to be felled were assessed as having negligible potential for roosting bats (BCT category 3) and therefore no further recommendation are required in regards to these trees. Should works on site be delayed beyond December 2016, or further trees be included within the felling proposals, it may be necessary to update this report.

It should be noted that there are other recommendations within the ECOSA extended Phase 1 ecological report<sup>1</sup> written previously in relation to bats. These recommendations should be followed through the construction and operational phases of the development.

<sup>4</sup> As referenced in Arbtech Arboricultural Survey (2014).

<sup>5</sup> Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) provides four categories (1\* - 3) for the assessment of trees and their value to bats with category, 1\* being the highest potential for supporting roosting bats and category 3 being trees with negligible potential for supporting roosting bats.