

Bat - Winter

A bat survey must be submitted if required. Preliminary roost assessment, visual inspections and desk-based work (checking for records) can be carried out at any time of year. Phase 2 surveys to detect bat activity can only be undertaken during May to September with the use of bat detectors and emergence counts. If evidence of bats is found and/or further survey work is recommended by the ecologist, we will register applications with a Phase 1 survey but cannot issue a decision until any required Phase 2 survey has been undertaken and a NET signed BP and certificate issued. – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bats-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects>

Bat Survey

Over the past year, we have sometimes validated planning applications without all the relevant ecological surveys (particularly bat surveys), in recognition of the fact that COVID-19 restrictions may have led to difficulties for applicants and agents in supplying the appropriate surveys. All relevant information was still required before a decision could be issued. However, we have stopped this approach for all applications submitted from 1 August 2021, following the easing of lock down restrictions. This means that a survey will again be required at the validation stage. This will help to reduce delays later in the process and meet the Council's legal obligation.

A Bat Survey may be required on a site in a rural area or within a town location immediately adjacent to green infrastructure (e.g. open field, public open space, park, former railway line, woods/forest) if a development involves the following:-

- Any building or structure with an existing bat record or subject to a report of bat activity,
- Demolition of an existing house or some outbuildings (depending on type of construction),
- Conversion of house attic space, and/or installation of roof lights or dormer windows,
- House extensions that tie-in to an existing enclosed roof space,
- Renovation or conversion of derelict buildings (structures with roofs),
- Conversion or demolition of agricultural barns / farm buildings (structures with roofs).

Legislation under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 dictates that any structures or place which a bats use for shelter or protection are protected by law from damage or destruction whether occupied or not. This legislation has been incorporated into planning policies. This means that planning authorities have a legal obligation to consider whether bats are likely to be affected by a proposed development.

Please note if the survey is positive, a bat mitigation plan (BMP) is required. The BMP must be approved by the Council's Natural Environment Team (NET) who issue an approval certificate. The completed BMP and the approval certificate must be submitted to the case officer before a decision on the application can be issued. More information is available at this link:

<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/countryside-management/biodiversity/planning-for-biodiversity>

All appraisals for wildlife or geological interests must be undertaken by a suitably qualified person. Please note that bat surveys and biodiversity mitigation plans will be time limited and may require renewal.