

Planning Advice Number 7 / 2015
Bats and Development



All bats are European Protected Species (EPS) and the law protects them and their roosts. It is an offence to harm or disturb bats or their roosts whether this is deliberate or unintentional. Roosts are protected whether bats are present or not. Aberdeenshire Local Development Plan Policy E1 Natural Heritage, aims to safeguard habitats and species protected under British and European Law. This leaflet provides guidance on how development may affect bats.

Bats can be found in new and old buildings and in a range of other structures. They are found throughout Aberdeenshire in both urban and rural environments.

If it is suspected that a development may impact on bats, the Council is legally obliged to require a survey and undertake a full assessment of the effects on bats **before a planning application is determined**. Submitting a quality survey with a planning application will save time in processing the application and may reduce your costs.

If evidence of bats is discovered following commencement of development, work must cease immediately and the advice of Scottish Natural Heritage must be sought.

As a general guide the following types of development will require a bat survey:

1. Works to the roof space of any constantly heated building including hospitals, residential homes, schools and swimming pools.
2. Proposals which include demolition or removal of buildings and structures with roof voids and complete or almost complete roof structures; and extensions or conversions where works will affect the roof space.
3. Works to bridge structures (especially over water and wet ground), tunnels and other underground structures.
4. Proposals significantly affecting suitable habitat e.g. rivers and other water bodies, woodland, hedgerows and lines of trees.
5. Proposals affecting old and veteran trees, and/or trees with obvious holes, cracks or cavities.
6. Proposals affecting any feature or location where bats are known to be present.

Survey Standards

Bat surveys must be undertaken by a suitably experienced person, who would generally have a survey licence. Surveys must be undertaken in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Guidelines.

Surveys must be undertaken at the correct time of year. This will depend on the weather and the type of roost likely to be present, but will generally be between May and August.

Surveys should also report the presence of other protected species which may be affected by the proposals, such as barn owls.

For further information see:

BCT Guidelines: 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition 2016)'. <http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/batsurveyguide.html>

The Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM) guide for homeowners outlining what to expect from a bat survey http://www.cieem.net/data/files/Publications/Bat_Survey_Guidelines_for_UK_Home_Owners.pdf

Once a survey is completed

Where a detailed survey report provides evidence of bats, appropriate action and /or mitigation must be agreed with the Planning Authority and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) prior to the granting of planning permission. If an impact on bats cannot be avoided, the Planning Authority must satisfy itself that the conditions required for the grant of a licence will be met. Licenses are issued by SNH and must be obtained prior to commencing work on site.

What you can do to help bats

You can make your development bat friendly by incorporating provision for roosting and feeding bats.



For further information

[Email: planning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning@aberdeenshire.gov.uk)

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/planning

Other useful contacts

Scottish Natural Heritage

Tel: 01224 266500

licensing@snh.gov.uk

Tel: 01463 725000

www.snh.gov.uk

Bat Conservation Trust

www.bats.org.uk

Tel: 0845 1300228

