

East Park Energy Development Consent Order (EN010141)

Further information in relation to Written Representations: inadequate bat data

Bats in the development area including Swineshead Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

The applicant has not submitted adequate bat data in relation to the development area, which means that the assessment of impacts on bats is meaningless. Surveys, over consecutive survey seasons, should be undertaken to assess all direct and indirect impacts on bats throughout the development area, including:

- Loss of foraging and commuting routes;
- Disturbance and / or loss of roosts;
- Disturbance and / or loss of maternity roosts;
- Polarised-light attraction effects in relation to insects and knock-on effects for bat feeding.

Swineshead Woods SSSI is of note for several bat species, although the data is not currently comprehensive. Bat records comprise:

- Nathusius pipistrelle (seen prior to 2016. Conservation status: near threatened);
- Daubenton's;
- Noctule;
- Soprano pipistrelle;
- Common pipistrelle;
- Natterer's;
- Barbastelle, multiple individuals (Conservation status: vulnerable (bats.org.uk)).

Barbastelle can forage up to 20km, although typically 5-7km from their woodland roosts.

Further surveys would be consistent with Natural England's requirements placed on National Highways for the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet DCO Examination.

At present, there is a risk that the applicant may breach legislation in relation to bat populations. Further advice should be sought from Natural England and other relevant stakeholders including Bedfordshire Bat Group.

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