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Our Ref: RSE_703-L1

Briony Horner
IBA Planning
Issued by email to: briony@ibaplanning.co.uk

RE: RUSTLING END, CODICOTE, HERTFORDSHIRE: VALIDITY OF ECOLOGICAL DATA

RammSanderson Ecology Ltd undertook a suite of bat surveys at the above site in 2016 (report reference RSE_703-01-V1). These surveys identified the presence of roosting bats within the barn and made detailed mitigation recommendations which provided the basis of any Natural England Licence process for the site.

It is understood that due to unforeseen family circumstance of the client that the proposed works were not taken forward at the time and that planning is only now being sought. You therefore raised a query in respect of our report and the validity at the time of the survey data which is now two years old, especially in respect of Section 3 'Accurate lifespan of ecological data'.

I have reviewed our report and can confirm that we consider the findings and information provided in the report remain valid and can be used in conjunction with the soon to be submitted planning application and in the data are acceptable in respect of Obtaining a Natural England Licence for the site. Subsequent to the release of our report, DEFRA and Natural England provided an update on licence policy providing four new policies in respect of European protected species. Pertinent to this case is Policy 4:

> ***Policy 4: Appropriate and relevant surveys where the impacts of a development can be confidently predicted***
>
> *Interpretation of Policy:* This policy is specifically designed for those sites where a repeat survey would normally be necessary simply to secure a site licence. It is quite common for a full suite of survey and impact appraisal to be completed for planning, however the delays of the planning process and sale of sites prior to construction commencing, often means that 2 to 3 years have passed before full planning is granted work on site begins. If this isn't considered at an early stage, the need to then postpone commencement, or full planning/reserved matters applications to repeat an already valid survey can delay a project for a year or more. This policy allows older data to be used for sites where impacts can be confidently predicted i.e. where the habitats haven't changed and there is little reason to suggest the population of a protected species would also have changed in order to make an appropriate assessment of impacts.

It is considered that the above policy befits this site especially in light of the survey results which have identified a roost of a species which is common in a local and national context. It is therefore, in this instance considered that no additional or repeat surveys are at all necessary to meet the requirements of the planning permission being sought and that the mitigation methods proposed are entirely applicable for this site without alteration as the impacts are confidently understood with compensation clearly identified.

Ultimately this site will require a Natural England licence to legitimise the works and will encompass mitigation and compensation as identified. In order to obtain a licence an ecologist must have visited the site 3 months prior to any application and so it is recommended for the licence purposes a repeat daytime and single nocturnal assessment is undertaken in the summer prior to works commencing. However, this would be a requirement of the licence and is not considered necessary as a precursor to any planning application and or approval given the wealth of knowledge available for the site.

I trust this letter is satisfactory to your requirements. Should you need any further clarifications please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely



Nick Sanderson BSc(Hons) MSc MCIEEM Director