Consultation Response from KC, Ecology Unit
2023/91179 Land adjacent to, 137, Meltham Road, Lockwood, Huddersfield, HD4 7BG
Outline application for erection of one dwelling
Date Responded: 30/05/2023 **Responding Officer: Gareth Hey** **Responding Ref:**

Assessment

No ecological information has been submitted with the application; therefore, the proposals cannot be assessed against local and national policy. The site is located within the bat alert layer and the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network. In addition to this, there is a record of a bat roost within 100m of the site. At this stage, it is unclear whether the trees (particularly those to be lost to the proposed development) present within the site offer suitable roosting opportunities for bats.

In addition to bats, the trees on site that are scheduled to be removed are likely to provide suitable habitat for nesting birds.

The government circular on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (ODPM, 2005) and recent explanatory note from Natural England (Natural England, 2020) indicates that information on protected species, and in particular European protected species (including bats), should be made available prior to determination.

In addition to the above, the proposals have not demonstrated a biodiversity net gain in accordance with LP30 (ii) which requires development to "*minimise impact on biodiversity and provide net biodiversity gains through good design*". Guidance released June 2021 by Kirklees Council within the Biodiversity Net Gain Technical Advice Note indicates that a 10% net gain should be achieved on sites within the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network.

Advice to planning officer

The applicant should engage with a suitably qualified ecologist to undertake a bat scoping survey of the trees on the site. The survey should be undertaken in accordance with methods outlined by the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and Bat Roosts in Trees (Bat Tree Habitat Key (BTHK), 2018). The report of the above should cover whether there are potential impacts to roosting, commuting and foraging bats during and post-development i.e. as a result of new lighting provisions, due to the location of the site as a potential commuting route for bats.

The trees on site that are due to be removed are likely to provide suitability for nesting birds. It is recommended that these trees are inspected by a suitably qualified ecologist, prior to their removal.

The applicant should also demonstrate how negative impacts to the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network are to be avoided and a how a biodiversity net gain is to be achieved post-development. This is fundamental in order to determine if the proposals can be brought forward in line within Local Plan Policy LP30.

The application should not be determined until the necessary assessments have been received and a Biodiversity Net Gain demonstrated.