

Our ref: 20899/JS

17<sup>th</sup> June 2024

c/o Vistry Yorkshire, Miller Homes & Countryside  
Partnerships Limited

## RE: Blackmoorfoot Additional Buildings – Dusk Emergence Survey

### Introduction

Ecus Limited (Ecus Ltd), was commissioned in April 2024 by Vistry Yorkshire, Miller Homes and Countryside Partnerships Limited to carry out a bat emergence survey in relation to five buildings present on the circa 30-hectare (ha) area of land to the north of Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield (central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR): SE 11370 14757), hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’.

The survey was requested to confirm the presence/likely absence of roosting bats at the Site prior to demolition of up to seven buildings to facilitate mitigation and compensatory habitat creation in relation to

On 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October 2023, Ecus Ltd carried out a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) to inform proposals for the development of 700 residential properties, a care home and local centre along with associated access and landscaping at the Site. Five of the six buildings were considered to be of ‘Low’ suitability with the remaining building assessed to display ‘Negligible’ suitability for roosting bats in line with good practice guidelines (Collins, 2023), and as such, one dusk emergence survey of the five buildings with ‘Low’ suitability was undertaken on 20<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

This letter report details the findings of the dusk emergence surveys of the five buildings undertaken in May 2024. Methodologies employed during the survey are described in full, along with the survey findings, evaluation and assessment. The requirement for any further ecological survey and recommendations for mitigation and compensation measures are provided where appropriate.

### Methodology

A single dusk emergence survey of each of the five buildings with ‘Low’ suitability was undertaken by nine experienced bat surveyors on 20<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024 following good practice guidance at the time of survey (Collins, 2023). Surveyors were positioned to cover all elevations of the buildings during the survey.

Surveyors used a combination of visual assessment and detection using industry-standard recordable bat detectors and night vision aids (NVAs) i.e. Canon XA series infrared cameras each accompanied by an infrared lighting rig. Surveyors recorded the species and number of bats using any roosts at the buildings (where present) and also recorded incidental bat activity observed in the locality during the survey period. The dusk emergence surveys commenced 15 minutes prior to sunset and finished 1.5 hours after sunset. The survey was conducted during a period where the weather conditions were conducive to bat activity, being warm and dry, with low wind.



The surveys were digitally recorded to allow bat echolocation calls to be analysed using Kaleidoscope sound analysis software, with species identification confirmed with reference to the bat call parameters presented in ‘*British Bat Calls: A Guide to Species Identification*’ (Russ, 2021). NVA footage was also reviewed to ensure that no bat roosts were missed throughout the survey by surveyors.

Survey details are shown in Table 1 below, with surveyor locations illustrated on Figure 1.

**Table 1: Dusk Emergence Survey Conditions**

Date/ Time	Building Reference	Surveyors	Air Temp. (°C)	General Conditions	Detector Type
20.05.2024	A1, A2, A3	NF, TL, JS, TH, AB	Start: 14 End: 12	Dry, 100% cloud cover, very light breeze (Beaufort Scale: 1)	Anabat Scout
29.05.2024	89	JS, LS	Start: 11 End: 11	Dry, 40% cloud cover, moderate breeze (Beaufort Scale: 4)	Anabat Scout
30.05.2024	90	TH, LS	Start: 12 End: 11	Dry, 60% cloud cover, very light breeze (Beaufort Scale: 1)	Anabat Scout

NF – Natasha Firth (Bat licence class 1 2022-10434-CL17-BAT, MCIEEM), JS – James Storey, LS – Leah Smith, TL – Thomas Lyons, TH – Toby Haenfling, AB – Arleya Baxter

## Survey Limitations

The survey was undertaken in the appropriate season in line with the good practice guidelines in operation at the time and as such no limitations were encountered during the nocturnal bat survey.

## Findings and Evaluation

No bat roosts were identified in either of the five buildings at the Site during the dusk emergence surveys undertaken on the 20th, 29th and 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

Bat activity was recorded around all five buildings during the surveys, of which the majority related to common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, with noctule *Nyctalus noctula* also recorded. Activity was largely concentrated around dense vegetation surrounding the buildings with activity highest between 30 minutes and up to one hour after sunset.

## Assessment and Mitigation

### Proposals

Proposals for the Site include demolition of up to five of the buildings to provide space for mitigation relating to prior to the full development commencing.

## **Legislation**

All species of bat occurring within the UK are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under regulation 41 bats are protected from deliberate capture, injury or killing, from deliberate disturbance and from deliberate damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place (roost).

All UK bats are also included on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb bats while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection, or to obstruct access to any such place.

Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, brown long-eared, greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, noctule and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* bats are included as priority species under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Certain bat species are also included in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) for Kirklees, including common pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*, Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri* and whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*.

## **Assessment & Conclusions**

No roosting bats were identified to be associated with the five buildings during the dusk emergence surveys. Given that the buildings are considered to be of 'Low' suitability for roosting bats, and no roosting bats have been recorded during any of the dusk emergence surveys undertaken of the buildings, it is considered that roosting bats are currently likely absent from the buildings. As such, no further surveys or mitigation to allow the proposals for demolition of all six of the buildings is required to proceed. These results are valid for a period of 12 months, as such if demolition of the buildings has not commenced by May 2025, update bat surveys will be required.

Bats are highly transient and whilst the likely absence of roosts has been established via dusk emergence surveys, the presence of roosts cannot be ruled out completely given the presence of suitable roosting features. In the unlikely event that any evidence of roosting bats is identified or suspected at any time during the demolition, such as live or dead bats, droppings and feeding remains, works should cease immediately, and an ecologist should be immediately contacted for further advice. It is likely that an ecologist would need to attend site before any works recommence to determine how works may proceed legally, which may include the requirement for a mitigation licence issued by Natural England.

As detailed in '*Blackmoorfoot – PBRA Report*' reference 20899, dated February 2024, long term roosting provision will be provided at the Site as part of the residential development to compensate for the loss of suitable roosting features in the buildings across the Site and provide ecological compensation for bats on the new properties. This will comprise of a single bat box per two buildings constructed (i.e. 369 bat boxes) which should be installed across the Site beneath the eaves of the properties (at least 4 m high).

Yours sincerely,

James Storey  
Consultant Ecologist

## References

Collins, J. (2023) '*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)*'. The Bat Conservation Trust, London

Ecus Ltd (2023) '*Land off Blackmoorfoot Road, Huddersfield – Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment Report*', 20899

Russ, J. (2021) '*British bat calls: a guide to species identification*'. Pelagic Publishing, Exeter

**Figure 1: Dusk Emergence Survey Surveyor Positions**



### Key

-  Surveyor Locations
-  Camera Directions
-  Buildings

**Vistry Yorkshire, Miller Homes & Countryside Partnerships Limited**

**Blackmoorfoot Additional Buildings Dusk Emergence Survey**

Figure 1  
Dusk Emergence Survey  
Surveyor Positions

Rev	Date	Drawn by	Checked by
A	31.05.2024	JS	NF

Site centred on:	SE 11370 14757
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• Brook Holt • 3 Blackburn Road • Sheffield • S61 2DW •  
• tel: 0114 266 9292 • www.ecusltd.co.uk •