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10 May 2018
1897

Job ref: B

Dear John

European Protected Species – Site scoping survey: Barn at Green Banks, Grindleton, Clitheroe.

You have requested a European Protected Species scoping survey as a condition of a planning application to Ribble Valley Borough Council (RVBC) for building alterations at the above property.

The Local Planning Authority is required to take account of the impact of a development on protected species compliant with current planning policy (National Planning Policy Framework). RVBC requires an appraisal of the likely impact of the proposed development on all bat species that are present or likely to be present at the site, in addition to any mitigation and enhancement measures that may be necessary.

As a consequence of the historical declines in bat populations during the second half of the twentieth century, all bats and their roosts are protected by UK law. The depletion of natural habitats throughout the UK means that some bat species are now more than ever dependent on houses and other structures as roosting sites. This dependence makes them vulnerable to developments which cause damage or destruction of bat roosts, particularly where maternity roosts are involved, resulting in negative impacts on local bat populations.

Since 2008 bats have been included in the list of UK Biodiversity Indicators which aim to show the response of species to the pressures, changes and threats to our natural and built environment.

A preliminary roost assessment (scoping survey) has found signs of bat and barn owl activity at the property.

Evidence of bats, barn owls and other protected species automatically triggers the need for further survey effort before the impact of the development can be fully determined. The aim of the survey is to establish the species which are present, their numbers and roost status.

A minimum of one dawn emergence survey or dawn roost re-entry survey is required during the optimal survey period 1 May to 31 August and a survey report submitted to the planning authority.

Please find a copy of the survey report below.

Yours sincerely

David Fisher

PRELIMINARY ROOST ASSESSMENT – BAT SURVEY REPORT

Barn at Green Banks, Grindleton, Clitheroe.

Date of survey: 8 May 2018

Introduction

Since 2008 bats have been included in the list of UK Biodiversity Indicators which aim to show the response of species to the pressures, changes and threats to our natural and built environment. The Local Planning Authority is required to take account of the impact of a development on protected species in accordance with current planning policy (National Planning Policy Framework).

The survey covers roof voids (where these are safely accessible) and all external features of the property likely to be affected by the proposed building operations. The timing of the survey is not dependent on whether bats or wild birds are active at the time of the inspection.

The principle aim of the survey is to determine the presence of European Protected Species and to establish whether bats, barn owls and other nesting birds such as barn swallows, swifts and house martins have been active within any part of the building that is likely to be affected by the proposed development.

Ribble Valley Borough Council requires an appraisal of the likely impact of the proposed development on all bat species and other protected species that are present or likely to be present at the site, in addition to any mitigation, compensation and enhancement works that may be necessary before any works are undertaken.

From the developer's perspective, the primary objective of the survey is to ensure that works can proceed lawfully without breaching the Habitats Regulations.

Timing of survey / weather conditions

The preliminary roost assessment was carried out Tuesday 8 May 2018 between 10.30 and 12.00. The weather at the time of the survey was mild, dry and bright (min. temperature: 15ºC, cloud: 50%, wind: light SE, rain: nil), providing optimal conditions for this level of survey.

Personnel

The inspection was carried out by David Fisher (EED Surveys) - an ecological consultant and Natural England licence holder since 1989.

Current licence:

Natural England Class Licence WML - A34 – Level 2 (Registration Number: 2015 – 12106-CLS-CLS)

Survey objectives

Collect robust data to provide an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposed development on bat populations and other protected species.

Facilitate the design of mitigation, enhancement and monitoring strategies for bats and all protected species.

Provide a clear assessment of risk to bats and other protected species enabling the Local Planning Authority to reach an informed planning decision.

Assist clients in meeting their statutory obligations.

Facilitate the conservation of local wildlife habitats, bat populations and other protected species.

Survey methodology

The survey methodology is designed to determine the likely presence of bats within the property and does not necessarily prove absence.

The survey method involves a search of the enclosed roof voids to identify potential or actual roost locations, feeding signs and access points. The external inspection includes a visual inspection of the property normally from ground level using binoculars to look for signs of roosting bats.

The search is made using a high-powered lamp *(Clu-lite CB2 - 1,000,000 candle power),* close-focussing binoculars *(Leica Trinovid 10 x 32 BN)* and digital camera *(Sony Cyber-shot HX300)*. A systematic daylight inspection of the structure is undertaken to identify any evidence of protected species such as droppings and urine spots, bat corpses, bat fly larvae, fur oil staining, feeding remains such as discarded moth and butterfly wings and other insects fragments, odour or noise of movement or squeaking calls from hidden bats in a roost.

The survey methodology follows the recommended guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust - *Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd Edition, Hundt, L (2012),* Natural England *(Survey Objectives, Methods and Standards as outlined in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines, 2004)* and Chapter 3 - Survey and Monitoring Methods, *(Bat Worker's Manual, JNCC, Mitchell-Jones AJ and McLeish, AP, 3rd Edition 2004).*

Non-invasive survey methods were used to assess the use of the property by protected species.

Survey limitations

The preliminary roost assessment (scoping survey) may be undertaken at any time of the year and is not dependent on whether roosting bats are present at the time of the site visit. The scoping survey is a daylight inspection of the site and does not include activity surveys ie. dusk emergence or dawn roost re-entry surveys.

Crevice-roosting bat species are able to roost within narrow gaps and cavities, frequently less than 25mm wide; solitary roosting bats are sometimes overlooked during daylight inspections, particularly in situations where bats have gained access in rubble walls, cavity walls, box soffits, wall claddings or beneath roofing materials.

Evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings or staining on external walls and surfaces is frequently removed by the action of wind and rain. In some situations it is not possible to inspect every location where bats are likely to roost, therefore lack of evidence does not necessarily equate to evidence that bats are absent.

Bats in the Ribble Valley

Ten bat species have been recorded in the Ribble Valley and the Forest of Bowland AONB in recent years. All UK bat species feed exclusively on insect prey. Bats are present within a very wide range of habitats, both urban and rural, particularly where there are areas of standing open water, significant river channels, broadleaved woodlands, conifer or mixed plantations and other high quality semi-natural habitats where flying insects and invertebrates are more abundant and roost opportunities are available.

Although some species are largely dependent on trees and woodland, all locally occurring species are known to rely on built structures for at least part of their life cycle; these include residential properties, barns, agricultural buildings, garages, commercial premises, offices and factories, cellars, bridges and culverts.

All bats are warm-blooded and are attracted to warm structures in summer. Contrary to popular belief, buildings constructed since 1970 are frequently used as maternity roosts between May and August when pregnant females gather, sometimes in considerable numbers at suitable sites to give birth to their young.

During late summer and autumn adults and young bats leave their breeding roosts and disperse within the wider district; there is also increasing evidence of seasonal movement and migration by certain species.

Hibernation normally occurs at locations with stable, cool and humid conditions between October and April, this being a period of relative inactivity, enabling bats to survive the winter when insect prey is generally scarce.

Pre-existing information

There are no local records of bat activity at this property.

Pre-survey data sources

(1) European Protected Species (EPS) – ie. locally significant bat roosts or species records within the district.

(2) Locally, regionally or nationally important wildlife and conservation designations.

(3) EPS surveys undertaken at this site and other properties within 2km of the site.

(4) National Biodiversity Network (NBN) terrestrial mammal records (chiroptera) for the 10km grid square.

(5) Local bat records - East Lancashire Bat Group (ELBG) / North Lancashire Bat Group (NLBG)

(6) Interactive maps: *Natureonthemap* (Natural England) and *Magic.gov.uk*.

The following bat species have been recorded within the 10km national grid square SD 74 (Ribble Valley):

Common name	Scientific name	Status of local population
Natterer's bat	(*Myotis nattereri*) [1 2]	widespread / local
Whiskered bat	(*M. mystacinus*) * [1 2]	widespread / local
Brandt's bat	(*M. brandtii*) [2 3]	widespread / uncommon
Daubenton's bat	(*M. daubentonii*) * [1 2]	widespread / local
Brown long-eared bat	(*Plecotus auritus*)* [1 2]	widespread / local
Common pipistrelle	(*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)* [1 2]	widespread / common
Soprano pipistrelle	(*P. pygmaeus*)* [1 2]	widespread / common
Noctule bat	(*Nyctalus noctula*) [1 2]	widespread / local

*NBN data [1]East Lancashire Bat Group [2]EED Surveys [3] North Lancashire Bat Group

Location of the property

The property is situated on Green Lane, Grindleton; this is a rural location with the boundary of the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB. The buildings are situated on gently rising south-facing ground overlooking the Ribble Valley at an elevation of approximately 100 metres.

Although the site is adjacent to two occupied dwellings at Green Banks, the property is close to open countryside with extensive permanent pasture, small woodland copses, mature hedgerows and other well-established field boundaries. The site is relatively close to a deeply-wooded river valley at West Clough Brook some 300m west of the site. There are three large beech trees within 20 metres of the barn and a prominent line of large beech trees extending eastwards from Green Lane.

There are no areas of standing open water or river channel adjacent to the site; the nearest significant water courses are the River Ribble approximately 0.5km south of the site and West Clough Brook. The location of the property provides moderate habitat connectivity for feeding, foraging and commuting bats and wild birds.

A local data search has shown there are no designated nature conservation sites immediately adjacent to the property ie. Special areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Biological Heritage Sites (BHS), National Nature Reserves (NNR's), Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) or Regionally Important Geological and Geo-morphological Sites (RIGS).

The property is located in figures 1 and 2 below:

Figure 1: Location of the property - NGR: (SD 754 451)

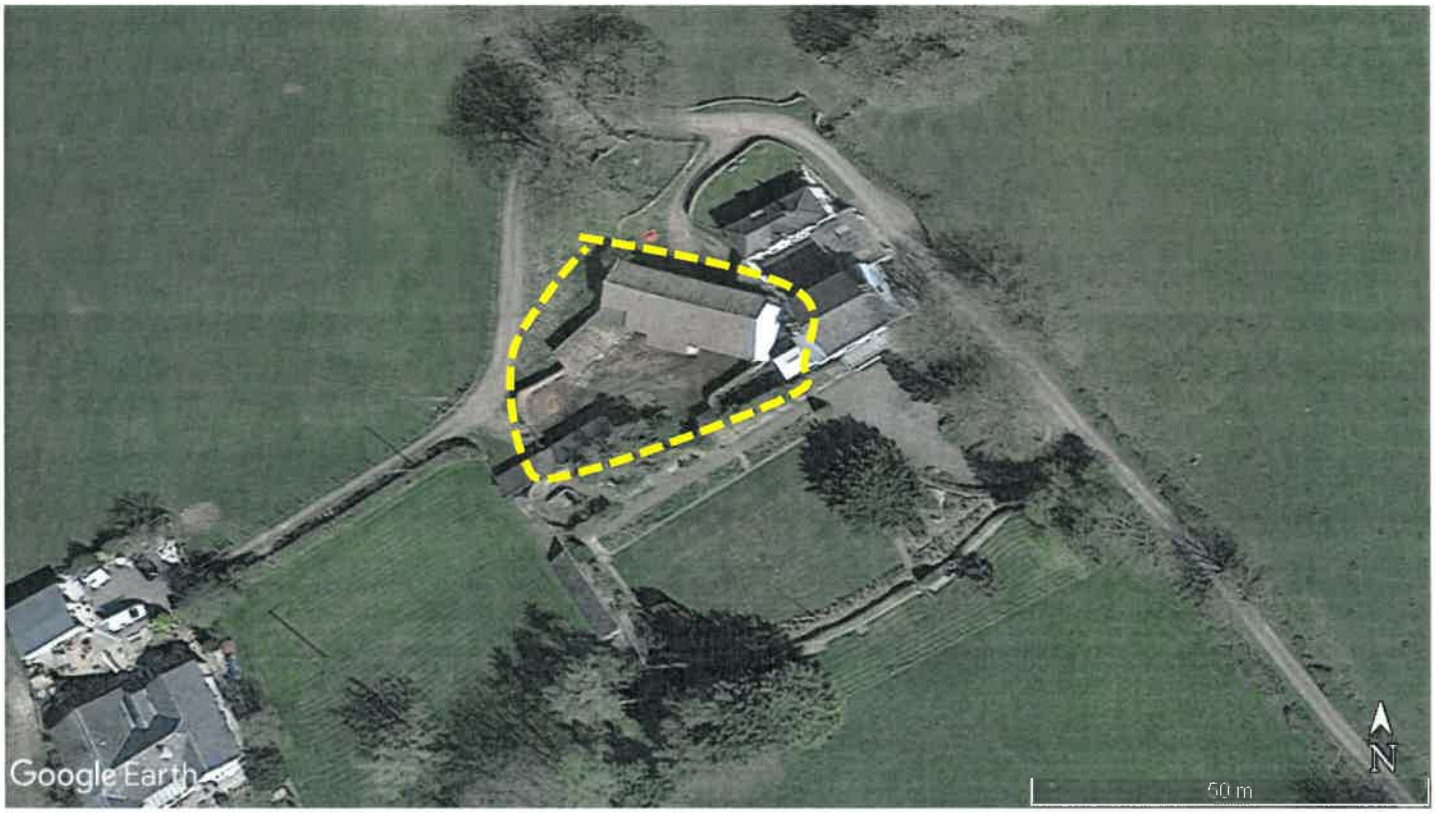

Figure 2: Location of the property at Green Banks.

Description of the property

The barn is a substantial stone building comprising two adjoining structures (Barns A and B in figure 3) in addition to 2 No. out-buildings within the yard to the south (shown as structures C and D in figures 4 and 7).

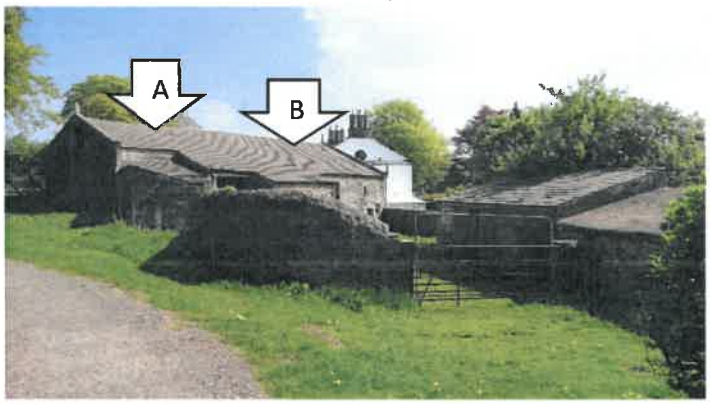

Figure 3: View of property from south-west

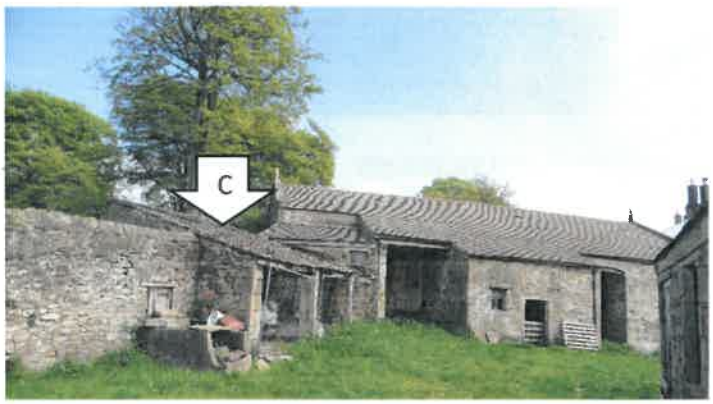

Figure 4: South elevation – outbuilding C

Figure 5: North elevation

Figure 6: Lean-to out-building C

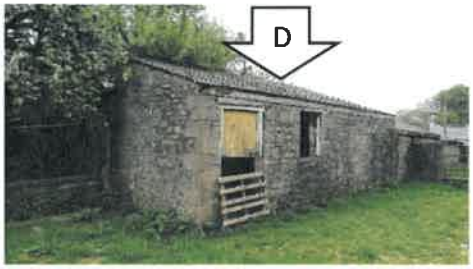

Figure 7: out-building / stone shed D

Figure 8: Barn A - roof bays

Figure 9: Barn B - roof bays

Figure 10: Under-croft Barn B

Figure 11: Hay loft - Barn B

Figure 12: Hayloft Barn A.

Figure 13: Roof Barn B

Barn A:

This is a three-bay barn with post-and-truss timber roof frames and duo-pitched roof clad with concrete tiles and lined with bitumen felt (figure 8). Internally there is a timber hayloft with an under-croft leading to a single storey rear extension (south elevation – figure 4). There are large timber wagon doors on the north and south elevations, the south door has a small timber loft situated above the entrance.

The building has a well-manured earthen floor although no animals are currently present. A large open window on the west elevation and three small glass slip skylights admit good natural light; the building is generally cool, dry and well-ventilated. A door in the under-croft leads to the adjoining building – Barn B.

Barn B:

A three-bay timber post-and-truss roof clad with tiles and lined with bitumen felt (figure 9). A large hayloft at the eastern end of the barn (fig. 11) has a ground floor cubicle shed / shippon below (fig. 10).

The barn has an earthen floor, a wagon door to the north elevation and two ground floor rooms to the south elevation leadings into the cubicle shed under the loft. All roof areas are tiles and lined with bitumen felt; the roof lining is perished and torn in places causing ingress of rainwater onto the loft area.

Outbuilding C:

Open-fronted lean-to shed; the mono-pitched roof has rafter-with-purlin construction clad with stone slates (unlined) and a concrete floor; the structure is light, draughty and wholly unsuitable for attracting roosting bats.

Out-building D:

Lean-to stone built shed with duo-pitched slate roof (unlined); the building has an unglazed window and half-open stable door with earthen floor. The building is unlikely to attract roosting bats although barn swallows are likely to find the building suitable for roosting and possibly nesting.

Proposed works

(1) Conversion of barns A and B into a dwelling.

(2) Out-buildings C and D are unlikely to be affected.

Survey results

There is no evidence of any significant roosting, perching or feeding activity by bats within any of the buildings.

A small number of relatively scattered bat droppings are present on the upper surface of the hayloft in Barn A. There are no accumulations of faeces in any part of the property.

A number of barn owl pellets and urine splashes are also present on the upper surface of the loft in Barn A indicating roosting perches on the timber spars.

A nesting blackbird is present in the rear under-croft of Barn A.

Barn swallows are numerous around the property and are likely to roost in the buildings each spring / summer.

Evaluation of results (bats)

Although the building has moderate potential for attracting roosting bats, there are no significant accumulations of faeces or signs of perching and feeding at the site.

A small number of scattered bat droppings on the loft in Barn A is indicative of flight and foraging activity in the barns; the main feeding and foraging period is likely to be between April and September although solitary bats are sometimes active throughout the year, particularly during mild weather.

Potential of the barn to support roosting bats

Negligible potential	Low potential	Moderate potential	High potential

Likely risk of disturbance to roosting bats

Negligible Risk	Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High risk

Impact assessment

Negligible impact	Low impact	Moderate impact	High impact

Evaluation of results (barn owls)

The presence of 80 barn owl pellets (castings) and white urine splash marks on the floor of the loft in Barn A indicates recent occupation by barn owl *(Tyto alba).*

There is currently no evidence of nest material, feathers, discarded egg shells or young birds at the site.

Further survey effort is required to establish how many birds are active and whether nesting has occurred.

Summary

The initial scoping survey has found evidence of bat and barn owls activity at the property; the building has moderate potential to support roosting, perching and feeding bats and roosting barn owls, barn swallows and other wild birds.

Evidence of protected species found during the scoping survey automatically triggers the requirement to carry out further survey effort in Barns A and B during the optimal survey period.

A minimum of one dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey should be carried out between May and August to determine whether protected species are roosting and nesting in the buildings.

The results of the summer activity survey will determine whether mitigation / compensation measures are required to enable the works to proceed without causing disturbance, injury or death to protected species.

ANNEX 1

Recommendations / mitigation advice

Action	Summary
1. Timing constraints	Barn swallows – avoid disturbance between 1 May and 31 August inclusive.
2. Further survey effort at this site	**REQUIRED** Minimum effort: One dusk emergence or dawn re-entry survey - Barns A and B. Activity surveys must be undertaken between 1 May and 31 August.
3. Detailed method statement	**REQUIRED** The method statement is based on the results of the dusk / dawn activity survey.

4. Licence requirement (EPSL)	Unlikely to be required.
5. Legal responsibility	The onus lies with the applicant to ensure that no offence will be committed if the development goes ahead, regardless of planning permission being granted.
6. Roosting barn owls	Evidence of roosting owls in Barn A (figure 11) above the hayloft. **Caution:** Barn owls are the Schedule 1 species most affected by barn conversions. Schedule 1 birds receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Barn conversions are not refused because of barn owls, roosting / nesting although provision is usually required as a planning condition to secure their long-term future at the site. The developer may be required to provide alternative roosting and nesting opportunities such as the inclusion of artificial nest-boxes on / near the site. Barn owl status should be checked immediately before works are due to begin.
7. Nesting barn swallows	Roosting and nesting birds are likely to be present during spring and summer. All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence (with certain exceptions) to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.

ANNEX 2

Wildlife legislation – Bats and the law

All bat species in the UK receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (amended by the Environment Protection Act 1990). The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act to also make it an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct a place that bats use for shelter or protection. All species of bats are listed on Schedule 5 of the 1981 Act, which makes it an offence to:

- *intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bat.*
- *intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a wild bat uses for shelter or protection. This is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not.*
- *intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.*

The protected status afforded to bats means planning authorities may require extra information (in the form of surveys, impact assessments and mitigation proposals) before determining planning applications for sites used by bats. Planning authorities may refuse planning permission solely on grounds of the predicted impact on protected species such as bats. Recent case law has underlined the importance of obtaining survey information prior to the determination of planning consent[1].

"It is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by a development proposal, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision." [2]

All British bat species are included in Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007, (also known as Habitats Regulations) which defines 'European Protected Species' (EPS).

[1] Bat Mitigation Guidelines, AJ Mitchell Jones, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, (2004) ISBN 1 86107 558 8
[2] Planning Policy Statement (PPS9) (2005) , Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. ODPM.

Protected species (Bats) and the planning process

Our built environment has the potential to have major negative impacts on biodiversity. However, if done sensitively, the development and refurbishment of buildings can, in fact, increase the ecological value of the site.*

For development proposals requiring planning permission, the presence of bats, and therefore the need for a bat survey, is an important 'material planning consideration'. Adequate surveys are therefore required to establish the presence or absence of bats, to enable a prediction of the likely impact of the proposed development on them and their breeding sites or resting places and, if necessary, to design mitigation and compensation. Similarly, adequate survey information must accompany an application for a Habitats Regulations licence (also known as a Mitigation Licence) required to ensure that a proposed development is able to proceed lawfully[1].

The term 'development' [used in these guidelines] includes all activities requiring consent under relevant planning legislation and / or demolition operations requiring building control approval under the Building Act 1984.

Natural England (Formerly English Nature) states that development in relation to bats *"covers a wide range of operations that have the potential to impact negatively on bats and bat populations. Typical examples would be the construction, modification, restoration or conversion of buildings and structures, as well as infrastructure, landfill or mineral extraction projects and demolition operations".*[2]

* Designing for Biodiversity, RIBA (second Edition - 2013) [1] Bat Surveys, Good Practice Guidelines, BCT (2007. [2]Tony Mitchell-Jones, (BMG, 2004)

Natural England – North of England offices are located at:

Crewe: Natural England, Electra Way, Crewe Business Park, Crewe, Cheshire, CW1 6GJ 0300 060 2922

Kendal: Natural England, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Rd, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 7RL 0300 060 2122

Manchester: Natural England, 3rd Floor, Bridgewater House, Whitworth Street, Manchester, M1 6LT 0300 060 1062

ANNEX 2

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