

Lauren Taylor
PWA Planning
Manchester

4th March 2026

Land at Causeway Farm

Bat Survey Validity & Recommendations

Dear Lauren,

This letter has been prepared following the receipt of an invalidation notification from Ribble Valley Borough Council in relation to the proposed development at Causeway Farm. The authority notes that the bat surveys submitted with the application are out of date. Etive Ecology prepared the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) submitted with the application, with previous bat surveys having been undertaken by Bowland Ecology in 2022, following survey guidelines issued in 2016.

This letter sets out the justification as to why the 2022 surveys remain valid and reliable, to the point whereby the application can be validated with confidence. Recommendations are also given in relation to the survey effort required to be undertaken during the 2026 survey season, in order to further inform the application.

Assessment of Value to Bats

In 2022 the site was described by Bowland Ecology as consisting “*of two fields, grazed by livestock at the time of survey with a linear hedgerow separating the two and a small watercourse running along the south-eastern extent of the site*”. The original PEA (e3p, 2022) noted “*the site was found to comprise improved grassland fields, hedgerows, a treeline, dense scrub, areas of tall ruderal, a dry pond, and a pond holding water*”. The PEA Report noted five trees with Low bat roosting potential and hedgerows/treeline on site having Moderate suitability for foraging/commuting bats.

The 2022 bat survey effort was undertaken in line with the current survey guidance at the time (BCT, 2016). Three activity transects were undertaken (July/August/September) and a static detector was left on site for five nights after each visit. The survey results indicated low levels of bat activity focused along the site boundary corridors, comprising five species of locally common/widespread bats.

The 2025 PEA found the site to comprise the same composition of habitats as 2022; modified grassland (sheep-grazed), two ponds, scattered trees and patches of ruderals and scrub. The site boundaries comprised native hedgerows with trees and a water-course along the southeast boundary. The likely value of the site to foraging/commuting bats was assessed to be Moderate.

As a result of the same composition and land-use of the site in 2025 compared to 2022, there is no reason to expect that the level of bat foraging/commuting activity would be any different. On this basis, the 2022 survey results form a reliable baseline as to the value of the application site for bats.

Recommended Survey Effort (2026)

To ensure the baseline is accurate and up to date, the bat survey effort should be repeated in 2026. These surveys should follow the current survey guidelines (BCT, 2023).

It is recommended that one transect survey (night-time bat walkover survey) be undertaken per season (Spring/Summer/Autumn) and that at least five nights of static monitoring be undertaken per month from April to October inclusive.

All survey work should be undertaken by a bat-licensed ecologist, during suitable weather conditions and using appropriate survey equipment. Data should be analysed and reported upon completion of the survey effort. Recommendations regarding appropriate and proportionate mitigation should be made as part of the reporting process.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the existing site at Causeway Farm has been found to be of potential value to foraging/commuting bats. Data from 2022 indicates low levels of activity and in 2025 the site was found to be of a similar composition and condition to that described in 2022. It is therefore reasonable to assume that levels of bat activity will not have changed significantly in the intervening period, and that the 2022 Bat Survey Report can be relied upon for the validation of the current planning application. Further bat activity surveys should be undertaken in 2026 to reconfirm the findings from 2022. Any significant changes will be reported and appropriate mitigation recommended.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please do get in touch.

Kind Regards,

Russell Grey

Russell Grey

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