

PROTECTED SPECIES, DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING: GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS.

2. BATS



Bats may use any barn, other old building or roof space in Carmarthenshire, including new structures in urban areas. You may not have noticed the bats presence – they often roost in the tiny spaces, cracks and crevices in roof spaces or behind weatherboards, fascia and tiles. Some bat species have declined alarmingly. In addition to loss of habitats where they feed, loss or damage to roost sites is a major factor in their decline.

BATS IN CARMARTHENSHIRE

There are 17 species of bat in the UK of which at least 10 occur in Carmarthenshire. Each bat gives birth once a year, early in summer, the females tending to gather together in a communal roost to give birth and bring up their young. This is when they are most likely to be seen using buildings. By the end of the summer these roosts are generally vacated. In winter they hibernate and live off body fat stored during the autumn.

BATS AND THE LAW

All of our bat species are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). In summary, it is illegal to deliberately capture, injure or kill any bat, to deliberately damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat, or to deliberately disturb a bat which may significantly affect its ability to survive or the local distribution or abundance of that species. It is also an offence to obstruct their place of shelter or protection (roost). A roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time. 'Damage' would include operations such as timber treatment in roost areas.

BATS AND THE PLANNING SYSTEM

The presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a local planning authority is considering a development proposal which, if carried out, would be likely to result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat. LPAs also have a duty to have regard for the European legislation so that any effects on bats must be considered as early as possible in the planning process.

SURVEY

Where bat presence is possible it is advisable to investigate the presence of bats at the pre-planning application stage. Survey information is required to help inform the application process and identify what mitigation may be necessary. This should be carried out by licensed bat worker. You should not carry out the survey yourself as you may overlook signs of bat occupation that a trained person would find.

(A) Houses. (i) Demolitions.

(ii) For buildings where bats are known or suspected by the applicant or which fit the criteria listed below (C and D). Applicants can seek advice from the Countryside Council for Wales if unsure.

(B) Barns and other traditional buildings inc. churches, chapels – changes to or demolition of.

(C) Buildings with complex roof structures of any age – changes or demolitions to buildings such as schools, offices, hostels, pubs and hotels, hospitals etc.

(D) Developments to listed buildings.

(E) Developments involving the loss of mature trees or trees with obvious cavities, flaking bark, exposed tears and cracks or splits.

(F) Developments affecting buildings/trees where bats are known to be present or are adjacent to known bat roosts.

(G) Developments impacting on underground structures e.g. tunnels, mines, cellars, ice-houses.

(H) Road scheme developments, inc. works to bridges

NB. Bats may be found in other situations beyond those listed above. For example, pipistrelle bats will occupy modern buildings and built structures. Householders, developers, and those acting for them, should be mindful that disturbance of any roosts or harm to a bat or bats is a criminal offence.

WHAT IF BATS ARE PRESENT?

- If the proposal would affect bats then a licence to undertake the work may be required from the Welsh Assembly Government. The presence of bats rarely prevents development but adequate measures must be taken to ensure that are not adversely affected.

- If bats are found after the development has started work must cease and CCW contacted immediately.

For further information please contact:

CCW, Llys Tawe,
King's Road,
Swansea SA1 8PG
Tel.: 01792 634960
www.ccw.gov.uk

Bat Conservation Trust
Wales
Unit 7, Castleton Court,
Fortran Road, St Mellons
Cardiff CF3 0LT
Tel.: 029 2036 2531
www.bats.org.uk

The Planning Division,
40 Spilman St,
Carmarthen SA31 1LQ
Tel.: 01267 224970

Biodiversity Officer,
40 Spilman St,
Carmarthen SA31 1LQ
Tel.: 01267 224653



BIOAMRYWIAETH
HOLL GYFOETH BYWYD
★ ↓ 🐾 🐾
BIODIVERSITY
THE VARIETY OF LIFE