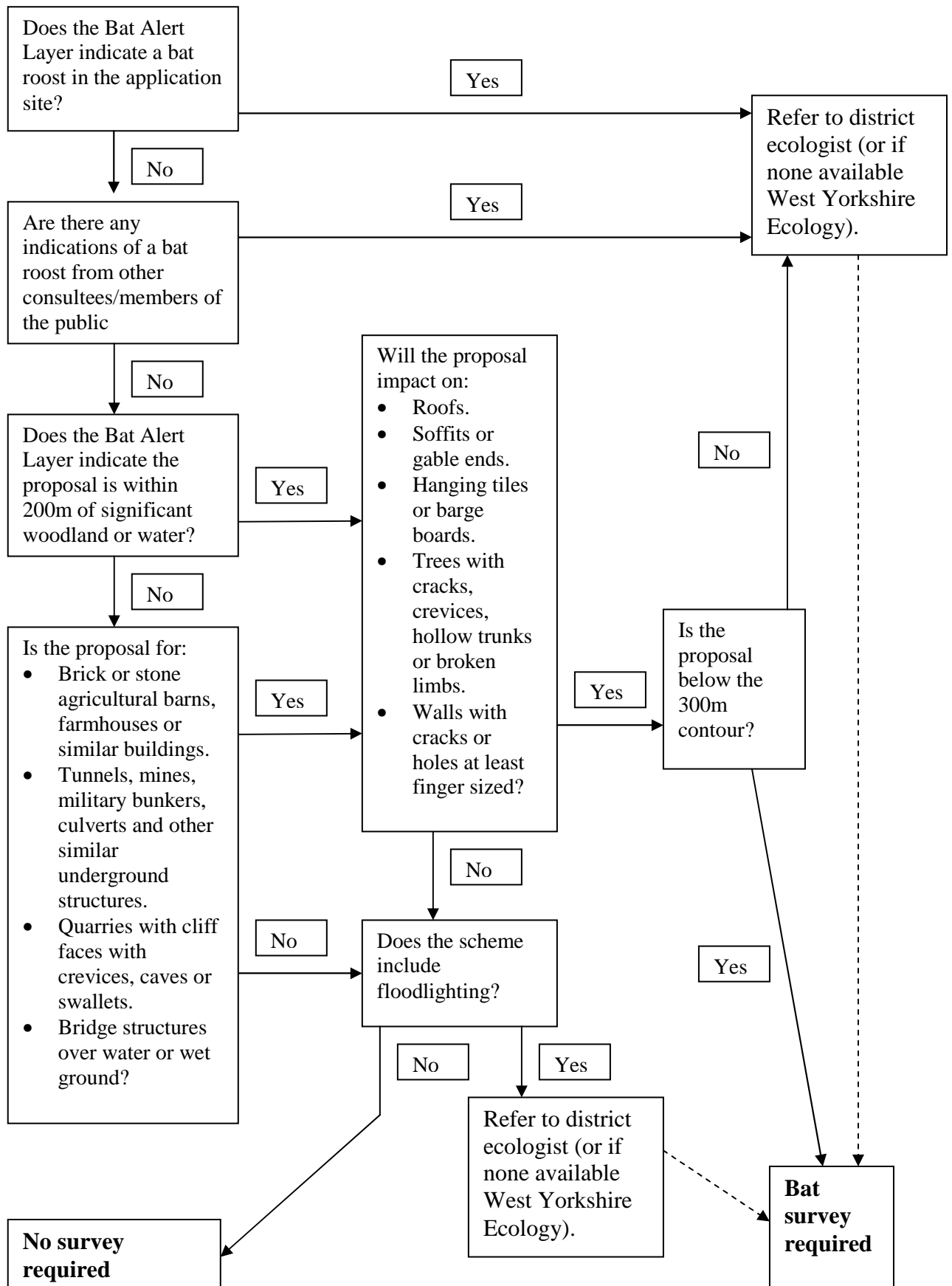


Bat Alert Layer Guidance – Flow Diagram



The following standard wording should be included in any request for a bat survey.

"The structure and location of your proposal indicates that there is a reasonable likelihood of a bat roost which may be affected by your development proposal. A bat survey will be required before your application can be validated. This must meet the "Minimum Standards for Bat Surveys in West Yorkshire" (www.ecology.wyjs.org.uk) and other current best practice guidance and be undertaken by a licensed bat worker. These guidelines will normally require dawn or dusk surveys to be undertaken between May and August (September to mid October is sub-optimal but may be accepted). A copy of this report should be lodged with West Yorkshire Ecology to add to the Ecological Record"

Background

This document has been prepared by West Yorkshire Ecology in consultation with ecologists and countryside staff from the districts of West Yorkshire and Natural England. The primary purpose is to identify planning applications which need to be accompanied by bat surveys at the earliest possible stage, ideally in pre-application discussions.

In drawing up this Alert Layer, reference has been made to “Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines” Bat Conservation Trust 2nd Edition (2012) and “Bat Mitigation Guidelines” English Nature (2004), which represent current best practice.

All species of bat are protected under the EC Habitats Directive, transposed into UK legislation by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). Subject to some specific exceptions this makes it a criminal offence to intentional or recklessly capture or kill, disturb in a place of shelter or destroy the resting place of, any bat. The Planning Authority has a duty to have regard to bats under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires planning authorities to take account of priority species within planning policies. Government Circular (ODPM 06/2005) sets out more details of statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system for protected species. Paragraph 99 states:

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

Approach

ODPM Circular 06/2005; para. 99 states that “...*developers should not be required to undertake surveys for protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development*”.

West Yorkshire Ecology has records for a good number of bat roosts but it is not a comprehensive list. The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT 2012) have produced a trigger list for circumstances where there is a “reasonable likelihood” (ODPM Circular 06/2005; para. 99) of bats being present. West Yorkshire Ecology has reviewed this list in the context of West Yorkshire bat roost data and have rationalised the trigger list into the attached flow diagram and geographical areas marked on the Planning Department “Bat Alert Layer” which highlights areas within 200m of significant water or woodland, features which are good bat feeding habitat.

Bats are reasonably likely to be present in the following situations:

- Where a roost is indicated on the alert layer.
- In areas within 200m of significant woodland or water bodies
- In all areas, excluding the upland areas shown on the alert layer, associated with the following structures
 - Brick or stone agricultural barns, farm houses or similar buildings.
 - Tunnels, mines, military bunkers, culverts and other similar underground structures.
 - Quarries with cliff faces with crevices, caves or swallets.

- Bridge structures over water or wet ground.

Proposals should be considered to “affect bats” in buildings where the plans indicate disturbance to one of the following features:

- Roofs.
- Soffits or gable ends.
- Hanging tiles or barge boards.
- Trees with cracks, crevices, hollow trunks or broken limbs.
- Walls with cracks or holes at least finger sized.

For underground structures which might be used for hibernation, changes to the flow of air can also “affect bats”.

More specialist advice is recommended before requesting a bat survey for the following situations:

- Known bat roosts.
- Upland areas over 300m outside of river valleys which may be too exposed for bat roosts.
- Reports of bats emerging from structures or trees by members of the public.
- Additional evidence from a developer/householder indicating that use of a structure by bats is unlikely. These will usually be photographic evidence which shows that a building is sealed and is highly unlikely to provide access for bats (Note: a bat can fit through a hole as small as a finger). These tend to be very modern houses with sealed soffits and close fitting tile roofs.
- Schemes that include floodlighting.

In these circumstances it is recommended that the matter is referred to either the District Council Ecologist or if none, the Senior Ecologist at West Yorkshire Ecology (01924 306 793). Further clarification or advice is also available from these source

Wording requests for surveys

The following standard wording should be included in any request for a bat survey.

“The structure and location of your proposal indicates that there is a reasonable likelihood of a bat roost which may be affected by your development proposal. A bat survey will be required before your application can be validated. This must meet the “Minimum Standards for Bat Surveys in West Yorkshire” (www.ecology.wyjs.org.uk) and other current best practice guidance and be undertaken by a licensed bat worker. These guidelines will normally require dawn or dusk surveys to be undertaken between May and August (September to mid-October in sub-optimal but may be acceptable). A copy of this report should be lodged with West Yorkshire Ecology to add to the Ecological Record”

References

- BCT (2012) – Bat Conservation Trust (2012) Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidance. 2nd Edition.
- EN (2004) – English Nature (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines.
- ODPM Circular 06/2005 – Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system.