

Date: 19 September 2019  
Our ref: 280728  
Your ref: 18/P/5118/OUT



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North Somerset Council  
**BY EMAIL ONLY**  
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Dear Mr Underhay

**Planning consultation: Final HRA/AA Bristol Airport 18/P/5118/OUT**

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 05 September 2019 which was received by Natural England on the same date.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

**Internationally and nationally designated sites – no objection subject to securing mitigation**

The application site is in close proximity to the North Somerset & Mendip Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC). This site is also notified at a national level as a series of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI(s)).

In considering the European site interest, Natural England advises that you, as a competent authority under the provisions of the Habitats Regulations, should have regard for any potential impacts that a plan or project may have<sup>1</sup>. The [Conservation objectives](#) for each European site explain how the site should be restored and/or maintained and may be helpful in assessing what, if any, potential impacts a plan or project may have.

**Appropriate Assessment**

Natural England notes that your authority, as competent authority, has undertaken an appropriate assessment of the proposal in accordance with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended). Natural England is a statutory consultee on the appropriate assessment stage of the Habitats Regulations Assessment process.

Your appropriate assessment concludes that your authority is able to ascertain that the proposal will not result in adverse effects on the integrity of any of the sites in question. Having considered the assessment, and the measures proposed to mitigate for all identified adverse effects that could potentially occur as a result of the proposal, Natural England advises that we concur with the assessment conclusions, providing that all mitigation measures are appropriately secured in any

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<sup>1</sup> Requirements are set out within Regulations 63 and 64 of the Habitats Regulations, where a series of steps and tests are followed for plans or projects that could potentially affect a European site. The steps and tests set out within Regulations 63 and 64 are commonly referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' process.

The Government has produced core guidance for competent authorities and developers to assist with the Habitats Regulations Assessment process. This can be found on the Defra website. <http://www.defra.gov.uk/habitats-review/implementation/process-guidance/guidance/sites/>

permission given, as set out in *Part D Recommended Conditions*.

### **Replacement Habitat – Off-Site Area**

Natural England is supportive of the proposed off-site woodland management proposals, which we agree meet the Bat Guidance SPD criteria and expect to result in enhanced habitats and foraging opportunities for greater and lesser horseshoe bats in a location that is in close proximity to maternity and other known roosts. Ongoing monitoring is however necessary and is being proposed by the applicant and Natural England would wish to be kept informed of progress with the proposals.

Should there be any proposed changes to the off-site and/or on-site mitigation proposals relating to horseshoe bats, Natural England would wish to be consulted at the earliest opportunity to ensure these are acceptable in ecological terms. With respect to the off-site proposals, we are pleased to note in the AA, paragraph 10, that *a revised approach would need to be agreed in writing with NSC and Natural England*.

We would be happy to comment further should the need arise but if in the meantime you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact us.

For any queries relating to the advice in this letter please contact me on 07900 608311.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Grundy  
Somerset, Avon & Wiltshire Area Team