

VIA EMAIL

Katie Lloyd  
Lead Adviser  
Wiltshire Conservation Team



6<sup>th</sup> February 2015

Dear Katie

### **Site Improvement Plan - Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats**

The Bath and Bradford on Avon Bats SAC lies within the Cotswolds AONB and mostly within the Cotswold Scarp NIA. The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2013 – 18 identifies bats as a priority species and areas important for bats (batscapes) as a priority habitat. Both are supported by Management Plan policies:

**BP1:** *There is no further net loss of characteristic habitats and species.*

**BP2:** *A linked large-scale landscape approach is taken to the conservation and expansion of coherent and resilient ecological networks within and adjoining the AONB.*

**BP3:** *The biodiversity resource of the Cotswolds AONB is sufficiently understood to guide the successful conservation of the characteristic habitats and species.*

**BP4:** *Targeted action is taken for the recovery of characteristic species and the enhancement of characteristic habitats.*

Consequently there is good symbiosis between the SIP and the Cotswolds AONB Management Plan

The Board would, therefore, be interested in working with Natural England and other partners to deliver action within the SIP.

### **Plan summary.**

The inclusion of climate change as a priority/issue in the plan summary would be useful. Climate change may affect the bat population both directly and indirectly by, for example, influencing changes in land management. Likewise, the predicted spread of Chalara dieback of ash could have devastating impacts on woodlands, hedgerows and tree lines in the SAC area.

### **Issues and actions - planning**

It would be helpful to explain in the summary what the issues are in terms of new development such as new lighting, development on feeding sites, loss of connectivity through hedgerow/woodland removal, disruption of flight routes by traffic etc.

Conserving, enhancing, understanding and enjoying the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

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More information on the connectivity between and around sites in particular would be helpful, as some development sites may at first seem remote from specific SACs but may be on commuting routes.

### **Issues and actions – land management**

Any advice needs to take account of AONB designation.

A longer term view is also needed to take account of the impacts of climate change and tree disease to ensure continuity of foraging habitats and flight-lines.

There may be some opportunities for improvements in land management and community engagement by offering advice and guidance for local green space management and improvement (playing fields, copses and other open spaces).

### **Change to conditions – 7A and 7B**

Caving groups could well be interested in being a delivery partner to investigate mine stability.

### **Funding**

Obtaining funding is becoming increasingly challenging. There is, however, one potential opportunity in the form of the Bathscapes Landscape Partnership Bid. Actions to provide guidance, information and to engage people within the SIP fit well with Bathscapes. Natural England is part of the partnership and it would be worth discussing the SIP with Amy Couthard. The bid is still in its stage1 application phase and the deadline for submission is May 2015.

Magnificent Meadows and the Board's Sustainable Development Fund may be able to assist some actions.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss any of the above points, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Mark Connelly  
Land Management Officer