

Species Protection Plan (SPP)

Land off Redbourne Road, Hibaldstow, DN20 9NN

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Site Address: Land off Mill Road, Redbourne Road, Hibaldstow, DN20 9NN

Proposal: Erection of a general purpose agricultural building and extension to an existing agricultural building.

1. Introduction

This Species Protection Plan (SPP) outlines the steps that will be taken to avoid harm to protected and priority species specifically hedgehogs, bats, and nesting birds during the site clearance, demolition, and construction phases of the proposed agricultural development.

The development site comprises an existing farmyard within an agricultural holding. While the site is primarily low in ecological value, measures must still be taken to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

2. Legal Context

The following species are protected under UK legislation:

- Bats: Fully protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is illegal to disturb, injure, or destroy bats or their roosts, whether occupied or not.
- Nesting birds: Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is illegal to disturb nesting birds, damage active nests, or take eggs.
- Hedgehogs: Listed as a UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and a Species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act 2006. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly harm or kill hedgehogs.

3. Pre-Construction Measures

Ecological Site Walkover

- A pre-commencement ecological walkover survey will be conducted no more than 48 hours before any works commence.
- This will confirm the absence (or presence) of active bird nests, hedgehogs, or potential bat roosts in any buildings or vegetation to be cleared.

Contractor Briefing

- A meeting will be delivered to all site operatives at the start of construction to raise awareness of protected species.
- All personnel will be informed of:
 - Legal obligations
 - Species likely to be encountered
 - Procedures to follow in case of discovery

4. Protection Measures by Species

4.1 Nesting Birds

- Vegetation clearance (hedgerows, trees, shrubs) will be scheduled outside of the nesting bird season (March–August).
- If active nests are found, a buffer zone of at least 5 metres will be established and maintained until the young have fledged (approx. 2–3 weeks).

4.2 Bats

- Although no known roosts exist on site, if demolition of any structures or tree works occurs, it will be carried out under supervision if the building has any potential to support roosting bats (e.g., gaps, lifted tiles, crevices).
- If a bat or roost is encountered:
 - All work will cease immediately
 - The ecologist will be informed
 - Natural England will be contacted and a licence obtained if required

4.3 Hedgehogs

- Prior to ground clearance, a slow and staged strimming process will be used to allow hedgehogs to move away:

- First strim to 20 cm
 - Wait 24 hours
 - Then strim to ground level
- Any excavations or open pits will be:
 - Covered overnight or
 - Fitted with escape ramps (planks or boards at 45°)
- Log or brash piles, if present, will be checked by hand prior to removal
- Construction materials (e.g., pipes, timber) will be stored on pallets or raised platforms to prevent hedgehogs from using them as nesting sites

5. During Construction

- The appointed contractor will maintain daily site checks for any wildlife activity or unexpected species presence.
- Any works that may disturb protected species will be stopped and advice sought from an ecologist.

6. Compliance and Reporting

- The development will be carried out in full accordance with this Species Protection Plan.
- A record of measures taken, including photographs and ecologist reports, will be kept on file and available for inspection by the Local Planning Authority or statutory consultees upon request.