

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON A EUROPEAN SITE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES REGULATIONS, 2017</p>	
	<p>Sections A, B and C have been completed as a shadow HRA by Ethos Environmental Planning</p>
<b>PART A: The Proposal</b>	
<p><b>1. Type of Permission</b></p>	<p>Outline</p>
<p><b>2. NSC Application reference n</b></p>	<p>20/P/2990/OUT</p>
<p><b>3. Site Location/ Grid reference/Bat SAC SPD consultation zone</b></p>	<p>Land Off Butts Batch Wrington ST 46643 62414 Bat SAC SPD Consultation Zone: B (lesser and greater horseshoe bats)</p>
<p><b>4. Related documents, plans</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminary ecological appraisal, February 2020 (Ethos EP)</li> <li>• Protected species assessment, October 2020 (Ethos EP)</li> <li>• Biodiversity net gain assessment, October 2020 (Ethos EP)</li> <li>• Lighting Strategy, November 2020 (Designs for Lighting Ltd)</li> <li>• Lighting plan, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020 (Designs for Lighting Ltd) 1731-DFL-LSD-001</li> <li>• Landscape Plan, 16<sup>th</sup> Nov 2020 (The Landmark Practice) (20_P_2990_OUT-3256_BUTTS_BATCH_LANDSCAPE_PLAN_REV_B_RCD-2988487.pdf)</li> <li>• Annex V calculations, GHS HEP worksheet &amp; LHS HEP worksheet, June 2021 (Ethos EP)</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Description of proposal</b></p>	<p>Outline planning application for the erection of up to 71no. dwellings (including 21 no. affordable housing units (30%)), the provision of play facilities and public open space/ecological mitigation land, with associated works; with access from Butts Batch for approval and appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved for subsequent approval.</p>
<p><b>6. European site name(s)</b></p>	<p>North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC</p>
<p><b>7. List of interest features:</b></p>	<p><b>North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC</b></p> <p>Annex I habitats: Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates (<i>Festuco-Brometalia</i>) (important orchid sites) <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines. Caves not open to the public.</p> <p>Annex II species:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i></li> <li>• Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>8. Is the proposal directly connected with or necessary to the management of the European site for nature conservation?</b></p>	<p>No</p>
<p><b>If the answer to Q8 is “Yes” proceed no further. NSC Assessing Officer to sign and date form (Part D) and send copy to Natural England for comment (Part E)</b></p>	

## PART B: Required Data and Mitigation Plans

### 9. Bat survey data and mitigation

#### Site Description

The site was dominated by agriculturally improved grassland and was bordered by hedgerows to the north, south and south east. There was a farm track to the north of the site and permanent pasture beyond the track. There were residential dwellings to the north-east of the site, paddocks to the east, Half Yard Road to the east and pasture to the south and west.

The site was set in a predominately rural setting comprising arable and pasture fields intersected by hedgerows, woodland copses and woodland. The Congresbury Yeo ran east-west approximately 110m south of the site and there was a block of woodland 180m south west of the site. the M5 motorway was located 8.4km west of the site.

Existing habitats comprise modified grassland and hedgerow.

#### Bat Roosts

No bat roost were recorded on site. There were no existing structures and no trees with potential for roosting bats.

#### Bat Survey Data – Activity

Twelve species of bat were recorded on the static detectors, namely common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, Nathusius's pipistrelle, noctule bat, Leisler's bat, serotine, whiskered/Brandt's bat, Natterer's bat, Daubenton's bat, brown long-eared bat, lesser horseshoe bat and greater horseshoe bat. Species most frequently recorded were soprano pipistrelle, common pipistrelle and noctule.

The modified grassland was assessed to be poor quality commuting and foraging habitat for bats. The hedgerows were assessed as being the key bat habitat features on site, offering high quality suitable habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

No horseshoe bats were recorded during the activity surveys. LHS and GHS were recorded across the majority of the static surveys and the numbers of records were relatively consistent with the exception of the September and October results which showed a spike in records of LHS (and to a lesser extent GHS). A late summer/ autumn spike in activity is very typical of lesser horseshoe activity when they 'bomb burst' from their traditional breeding grounds to transitional roosts and swarming sites (which may then become their hibernation sites). Key commuting routes were found to be west-east/east-west (see figure below).

Overall, the results show that for the majority of the year, the hedgerows are equally important but are used on a relatively infrequent basis by LHS and GHS. However, it is highly likely that there is a maternity roost of LHS near to the site, and these bats are using the hedgerow that traverses the site to commute to their hibernation roosts in the wider environment.



The mitigation measures focus on maintaining all hedgerows as dark corridors. Compensation and enhancement measures will focus on creating new commuting routes, and a mosaic of high-quality foraging habitat in the south of the site.

### **Mitigation, compensation and enhancement**

The development proposals include the retention and enhancement of hedgerows around the boundaries of the site and new native species rich hedgerows will be created along the western boundary and in the south of the site. This will strengthen the boundaries of the site as foraging and commuting routes. The inclusion of buffers between the proposed development and the hedgerows will also help maintain dark corridors.

Proposed water bodies (attenuation basins and shallow scrapes) are included in the east and south of the site respectively. Ponds are listed within the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC Guidance as a habitat of value to horseshoe bats, particularly as a prey source for LHS. Other recommended habitats included within the guidance are 'tall, bushy hedgerows at least 3metres wide and 3 metres tall'. Existing and new hedgerows will be managed to develop/maintain tall, bushy hedges and water bodies of value to foraging LHS/GHS. These features will be accessible to LHS/GHS bats because they are located along the existing commuting routes.

New hedgerows will be created within the street scene and an extensive new native species rich hedgerow will be created along the western boundary and to the south of the existing hedgerow traversing the site, creating strong linear features for bats and corridor with creation of ponds and shallow scrapes along the southern retained habitat area to aim to recreate floodplain meadow habitat reflective of the historic water meadows characteristic of the local area. The grassland will be seeded with species rich-wetland mix for biodiversity value. The management will allow the grassland habitat to re-establish as tussocky grassland.

### Sensitive Lighting Strategy

To avoid the impacts of artificial lighting on commuting/foraging bats, a sensitive lighting strategy has been prepared, in line with best practice Bats and lighting guidance, to minimise light spill on to bat habitat, in particular the boundary hedgerows providing dark corridors (not exceeding 0.5 lux). This has been demonstrated by a lux contour plan.

The final lighting plan will be secured either through a condition and/or at reserved matters stage. LPA ecologist comments (8<sup>th</sup> April 2021) seeking to further reduce light spill from lighting columns 158A and 1A are noted and can be addressed with additional measures such as baffle or cowl or other suitable measures.

### 10. Is replacement habitat required as mitigation?

*(Development should retain and enhance existing habitats and/or features of value to bats. Where this is not possible or only partially possible appropriate mitigation such as replacement habitat will be required. Annex 5 of the North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC Technical Guidance V1.1. May 2017 sets out methodology and metric for calculating how much replacement habitat should be provided. HEP excel worksheet to be provided for calculations).*

The Site is located in within Density Band B for both lesser and greater horseshoe bats. The replacement habitat calculations have been carried out using the greater horseshoe bat and lesser horseshoe suitability indices.

The assessment for replacement habitat has been undertaken for the southern section of the site. Habitats retained/enhanced/created under DEFRA Biodiversity Net Gain 2.0 metric has been excluded. The created habitat excluded includes neutral grassland, amenity grassland, ponds, and all other habitat associated with the proposals north of the existing southern hedgerow. This approach ensures a further precautionary measure in the application of two different metrics to the development site (HEP and BNG).

### Existing habitats:



**Proposed habitats:**



Refer to the submitted HEP worksheets for LHS and GHS.

**No off-site replacement habitat is required. Sufficient and accessible provision has been provided on-site (within ownership) – the HEP calculations show no loss of bat habitat; that a gain of 1.47 (GHS) / 0.21 (LHS) habitat units will be provided.**

The grassland will be managed as species-rich conservation grassland, and a monitoring regime can be secure by condition.

The replacement bat habitats will have no significant light level increase (i.e. below 0.5lux). This is demonstrated in the submitted Lighting layout plan with predicted lux contours.

## PART C: Risk Assessment

### 11. What potential hazards are likely to affect the interest features?

Sensitive Interest Feature: (Refer to Pt7)	Potential hazard:	Potential exposure to hazard and mechanism of effect/impact if known:
<b>North Somerset and Mendip Bats SAC</b>		
Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous substrates ( <i>Festuco-Brometalia</i> ) (important orchid sites)  European Dry Heaths  <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines  Caves not open to the public	Temporary habitat loss / damage during construction	N/A
	Permanent habitat loss / damage during operation	N/A
Greater horseshoe bat (GHB) <i>Rhinolophus Ferrumequinum</i>	Temporary loss / disturbance of roost sites	N/A
	Temporary Loss / degradation of foraging habitat	Habitat being temporarily impacted and lost during the construction phase (north of the hedgerow) is poor quality foraging habitat. Habitat to the south of the hedgerow is being retained and enhanced.
	Temporary Severance of flight lines	No temporary severance of flight lines. Boundary habitats (flight lines) are being retained.
	Temporary noise and vibration disturbance	During works construction noise could cause disturbance of bats foraging on site and/or commuting, possibly impacting on the local horseshoe bat population by disrupting usual patterns of behaviour.
	Temporary light Disturbance	During works construction noise could cause disturbance of bats foraging on site and/or commuting, possibly impacting on the local horseshoe bat population by disrupting usual patterns of behaviour.
	Permanent loss / disturbance of roost sites	N/A
	Permanent loss / degradation of foraging habitat	In the absence of a soft landscaping scheme, there would be some loss of sub-optimal foraging habitat.
	Permanent severance of flight lines	No permanent severance of flight lines. All boundary habitats (flight lines) are being retained.
	Permanent noise and	There is likely to be some increase in vehicle movements to meet growing demands of production.

	vibration disturbance	
	Permanent light Disturbance	In the absence of sensitive layout and lighting design, and landscaping design, the increased levels of lighting on the site following development would be considered an adverse impact, which would thereby have a likely significant effect on the greater horseshoe bat population of the North Somerset and Mendips Bat SAC.
Lesser horseshoe bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Temporary loss / disturbance of roost sites	There may be short term, temporary impacts of disturbance during construction without mitigation.
	Temporary Loss / degradation of foraging habitat	<b>As GHB</b>
	Temporary Severance of flight lines	<b>As GHB</b>
	Temporary noise and vibration disturbance	<b>As GHB</b>
	Temporary light Disturbance	<b>As GHB</b>
	Permanent loss / disturbance of roost sites	N/A
	Permanent loss / degradation of foraging habitat	<b>As GHB</b>
	Permanent severance of flight lines	<b>As GHB</b>
	Permanent noise and vibration disturbance	<b>As GHB</b>
	Permanent light Disturbance	<b>As GHB</b>
<b>12. Is the potential scale or magnitude of any effect likely to be significant?</b>	See below.	
<b>a) Alone?</b>  <b>CONSTRUCTION</b> <u>i) Temporary loss /disturbance of roost sites</u> N/A  <u>ii) Temporary loss / degradation of foraging habitat / iii) Temporary severance of flight lines</u> Not significant. While there may be some temporary disruption to the existing habitats of the site during the construction period, the key boundary habitats for foraging are being retained.  <u>iv) Temporary noise and vibration disturbance</u> Not significant. This is considered to have a likely negligible impact on foraging and commuting bats due to the day time hours of construction works.  <u>v) Temporary light disturbance</u>		

Not significant. This is considered to have a likely negligible impact on foraging and commuting bats due to the day time hours of construction works, limiting interaction of the development activities' lighting disturbance with the times bats will be using the site.

#### **OPERATION**

i) Permanent loss /disturbance of roost sites

N/A.

ii) Permanent loss / degradation of foraging habitat / iii) Permanent severance of flight lines

Not significant. Key boundary habitat and key foraging areas are being retained and enhanced and kept dark (below 0.5lux).

iv) Permanent noise and vibration disturbance

Not significant. The impact from a change in permanent noise and vibration disturbance over the exi

v) Permanent light disturbance

Not significant with implementation of sensitive lighting strategy which has been design to minimise light spill onto bat habitat, which is demonstrated to be below 0.5lux on sensitive habitats.

**Provided the lighting strategy, soft landscaping plan is conditioned, is considered that there will not be any likely significant effect (alone) on the qualifying species and that the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features should be maintained.**

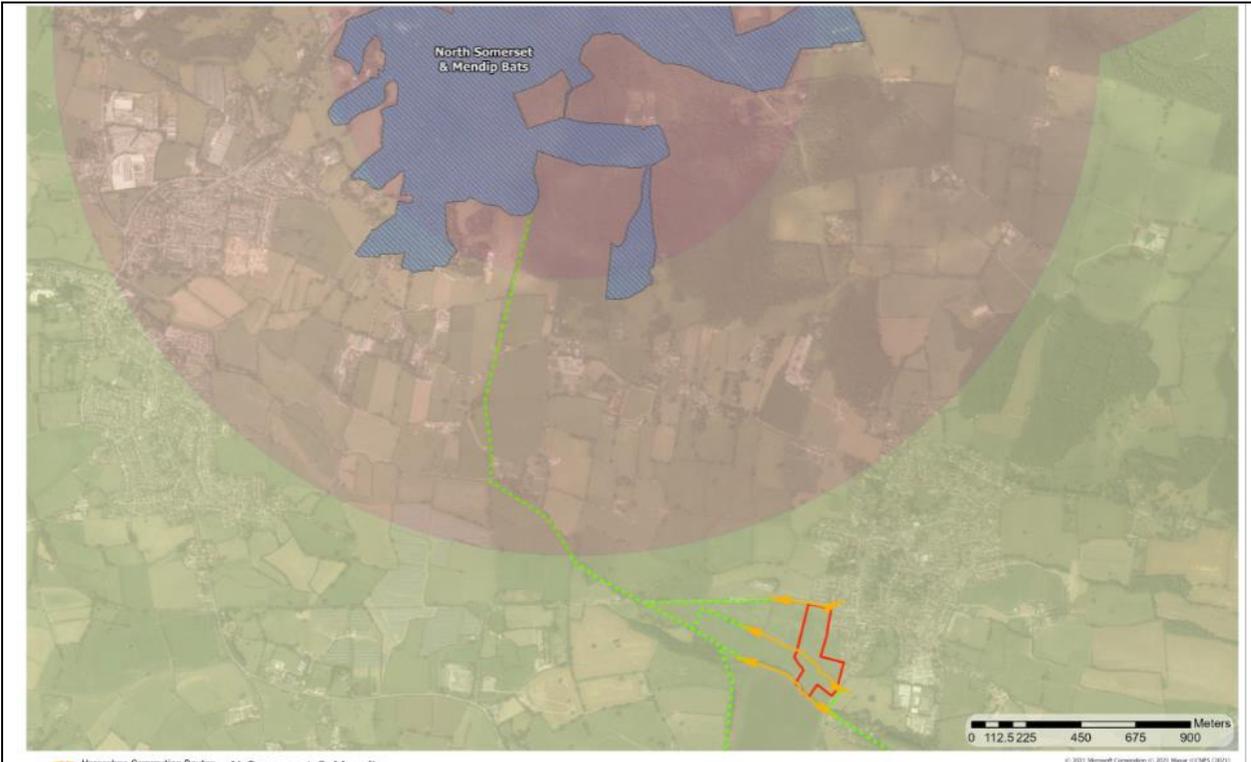
**b) In combination with other plans or projects?**

*(State the scope of the assessment, for example the focus may be on green corridors between application site and nearest SAC units. Explain conclusion and which plans/projects have been included, including those associated with other functions).*

#### **Scope**

Review is focused on current applications around Wrington area – particularly those sited within the key green corridors/flight lines between the site and the nearest SAC unit: Kingswood to the northeast (NB Minor householder applications in the local area are not considered to have potential for in-combination cumulative impacts, so have been scope out).

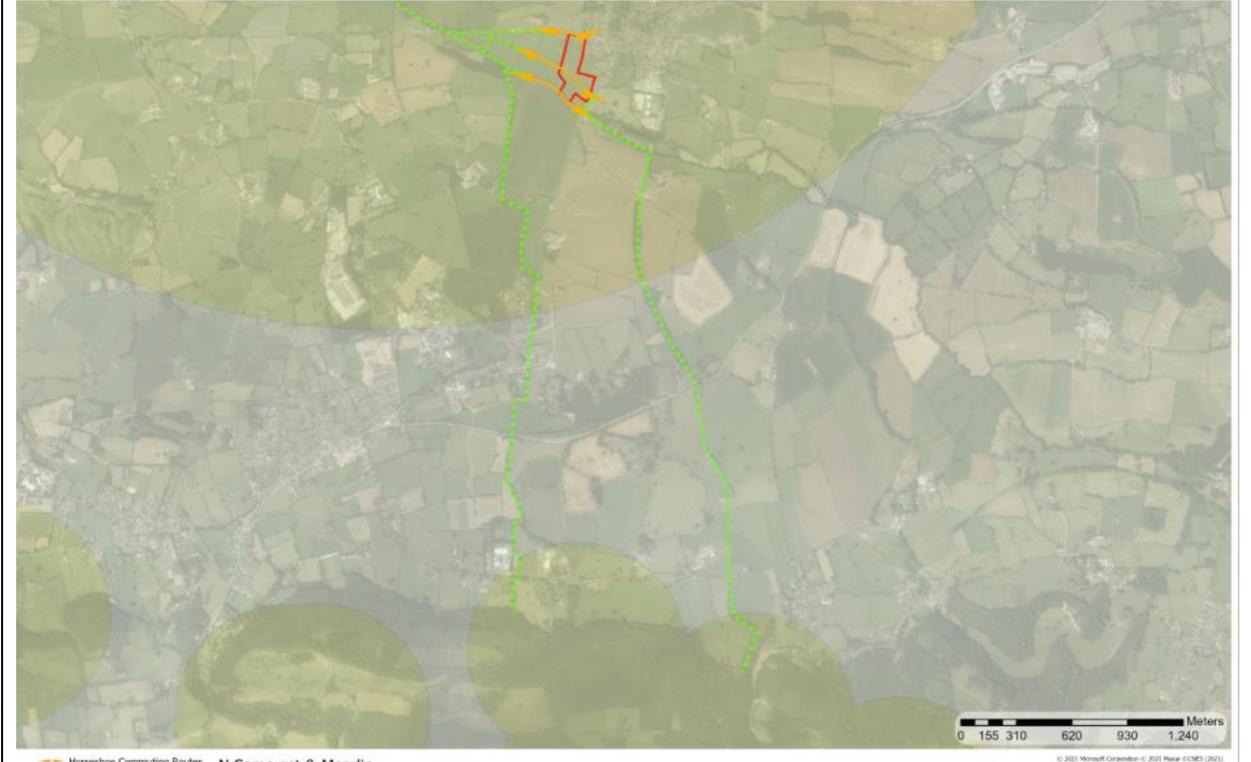
The key cumulative development impacts are the potential for loss of foraging areas; increased habitat disturbance, and increased lighting. Horseshoe bats are known to be sensitive to light and street lighting has been shown to have significant negative impacts on the selection of flights routes by bats (Stone et al. 2009).



- Legend**
- Horseshoe Commuting Routes
  - Possible links to SAC
  - Site Boundary
  - SAC
- N Somerset & Mendip SAC Guidance**
- A
  - B
  - C
  - Juvenile Sustenance Zone

Butts Batch, Wrinton  
Possible Links to SAC 1 of 2

Scale: 1:11,998  
Date: 07/06/2021



- Legend**
- Horseshoe Commuting Routes
  - Possible links to SAC
  - Site Boundary
  - SAC
- N Somerset & Mendip SAC Guidance**
- A
  - B
  - C
  - Juvenile Sustenance Zone

Butts Batch, Wrinton  
Possible Links to SAC 2 of 2

Scale: 1:16,349  
Date: 07/06/2021

Following review of NSC's planning portal map, it is assessed that there are 5 major applications in proximity to the site with potential for in combination effects. One of the applications (Cox's Green, Wrington) has been approved and is currently being built but has been included due to its close proximity to Butts Batch, Wrington and the shared bat commuting route along the Congresbury Yeo. The applications are listed below:

- Hinkley Point C Connection Project –which includes the installation of overhead powerline, installation of underground power cables from Hinkley Power station across the district (via Sandford) to Avonmouth. This project includes the construction of three substations, including one at Sandford.
- Two major residential schemes in Sandford – Land North of Sandford Primary School (Strongvox, 118 dwellings), and Land off Greenhill Lane (Aurora, 85 dwellings).
- Land at Cox's Green, Wrington (18/P/2691/RM). Construction is underway for 55 residential dwellings and associated landscaping.
- Gatcombe Farm Industrial Estate, West Hay Road, Wrington, BS40 5GF (21/P/0019/OUT). Redevelopment of Gatcombe Farm Industrial Estate entailing demolition and site clearance; construction of 38 No. dwellings (class C3) and 450sq.m offices (class E) in 2 No. buildings.

#### **Hinkley Point C Connection Project**

An agreement will be secured under the S106 of the 1990 Act between National Grid and the Joint Councils to cover monitoring to ensure the following:

*agreement has been secured under section 106 of the 1990 Act between the National Grid and the Joint Councils to cover payment for a monitoring service to cover— (a) installation, use of and maintenance of temporary bat flyways; (b) phasing of hedgerow removal and reinstatement works within the cable installation area through any Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; (c) maintaining bat foraging habitats in accordance with the Habitat Evaluation Procedure and associated calculations, including seeding of topsoil and subsoil piles; (d) installation of and eight years' maintenance of the reinstated permanent bat flyways (hedgerows) from the date of installation; (e) installation of and maintenance of relevant plantings at Sandford substation,*

In considering the temporary nature of impacts of the Hinkley Point C Connection Project and the integral mitigation measures and monitoring of the scheme's potential impacts, it is considered that the potential for cumulative impacts (such as disturbance to/ fragmentation of commuting routes) with these schemes are unlikely. Once complete, the habitats reinstated, and this scheme has incorporated design principals and mitigation measures to retain dark foraging habitat and commuting routes.

The residential developments to the east, will entail loss of sub-optimal foraging habitat, and embedded mitigation will retain and protect key linear commuting and foraging features, as well as providing bat habitat enhancements in line with the guidance. These developments are to the west of this site, and it is considered that key corridors between the site and the nearest SAC unit are retained in the landscape, therefore it is considered that these developments will not have a significant in-combination effect.

Also of relevance to potential in-combination effects – is the strategic transport corridors identified in North Somerset - the Banwell Bypass, which is proposed in the vicinity of the site. At the landscape scale, it is envisaged that in addition to on-site development mitigation of bat habitat, that in-combination effects of increasing areas of development can be addressed through securing and enhancing off-site strategic bat habitat replacement areas through landscape-scale strategies.

The proposed development at the Gatcombe Farm Industrial Estate is located within 700m of the SAC and surveys recorded a lesser horseshoe maternity roost, lesser horseshoe bat day and night roosts and greater horseshoe bat day roosts (low numbers of bats). Surveys also recorded lesser and greater horseshoe bats using the boundary hedgerows and scrub for foraging and commuting. It is possible that bats using commuting from the site at Butts Batch Wrington north to the SAC could use the commuting features at Gatcombe Farm as it is located under 1km away. Mitigation measures have been recommended within the ecological reports for Gatcombe Farm to ensure that commuting features and foraging habitat is protected.

Whilst the development at Cox's Green, Wrington is under construction, it is deemed relevant to this application due to the shared commuting route along the Congresbury Yeo. Surveys recorded horseshoe bats using the Congresbury Yeo and a central dissecting hedgerow at the Cox's Green site, and mitigation measures focused on pulling the development away from these features with the development footprint being located in the north of the site. The same approach has been taken with proposals and mitigation measures at the Butts Batch, Wrington site which will maintain connectivity along the Congresbury Yeo past both developments.

For the purpose of this HRA, it is assumed that the integral mitigation for the above listed applications are anticipated to maintain connectivity and therefore no in-combination effects are considered likely.

**It is considered that there will not be any likely significant effect of in-combination effects on the qualifying species and that the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features should be maintained.** Recommended conditions are outlined overleaf.

### PART D: Councils' Conclusion

**13. Conclusion:**  
Is the proposal likely to have a significant effect on a European site?

Name of Assessing Officer:

### PART D: Consultation with Natural England on Part C

**14. Natural England comment on conclusion:**

Name of NE Officer:

## **Recommended draft conditions:**

### **CEMP**

A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) shall be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority before works commence. This shall include detailed mitigation strategies for avoidance of harm to protected and notable species and specification of buffers and fencing for the protection of ecological features and trees. Works shall be implemented in strict accordance to the approved methodology.

Reason: To comply with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); and in accordance with North Somerset's Core Strategy policy CS4 and Site and Policies Plan Part 1, Development Management policy DM8.

### **LEMP**

Prior to the Reserve Matters Phase, a landscaping and ecological management plan (LEMP) for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include planting specifications comprising locally appropriate native species; annual habitat management prescriptions; table of works and monitoring regimes; and location and installation prescriptions of species-specific enhancements. Implementation of ecological enhancements are to be signed off by the ecological consultant, with notification provided to the LPA.

Reason: To ensure the development contributes to the protection and enhancement of the site's ecology in accordance with CS4 of the North Somerset Core Strategy

### **LIGHTING**

No external lighting shall be installed until details, including: (i) specification of the type and location of the proposed lighting; (ii) existing lux levels affecting the site; (iii) the proposed lux levels; and (iv) lighting contour plans, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any external lighting shall be installed and operated in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To reduce the potential for light pollution in accordance with Policy CS12 of the North Somerset Core Strategy and to protect bat habitat in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).