

James Conboy

HS2@chilternsociety.org.uk

Dear Dr Conboy,

FOI-21-3974

Thank you for your information request which was received on 04 January 2021. I have processed your request under the Environmental Information Regulations ('EIR') 2004 ('the Regulations') because the information you have requested concerns work affecting the environment according to the definition in Regulation 2. Section 39 of the Freedom of Information Act ('FOI') 2000 ('the Act') exempts environmental information from the Act but requires us to consider it under the EIR.

REQUEST

Would you please provide (under the Environmental Information Regulations)

- Details of the measures taken to protect these species, during the destruction by your contractors of the woodland at Grims Ditch which took place in November 2020
- Any evidence gathered regarding the success or otherwise of such measures.

RESPONSE

In terms of mitigation for loss of habitat for protected species, the scheme through the Grim's Ditch area is overwhelmingly through an intensive arable farmed landscape and thus wildlife opportunities are historically limited.

Presence of roost opportunities was assessed and is unlikely to be a limiting factor on the local bat population, and a multitude of alternative potential roosting features are present throughout the woodlands and hedgerows across this landscape.

As no bat roosts were confirmed in the trees at Grim's Ditch, HS2 Ltd's mitigation during construction has taken the form of ensuring all trees were fully assessed by licensed bat ecologists and, although no evidence of breeding birds or roosting bats was identified, the tree felling was undertaken with supervision of a suitably experienced professional ecologist in a manner that would not cause harm to any other wildlife present.

We are withholding information regarding protected species under Regulation 12(5)(g) – protection of the environment to which the information relates.

Please refer to **Annex A** attached for a full explanation of the legislation applied.

Right to Review

If you are unhappy with the way we have handled your request or with the decisions made in relation to your request, you may complain in writing to HS2 Ltd. Please find below details of HS2 Ltd's complaints procedure which includes your right to complain to the Information Commissioner.

Please remember to quote reference number **FOI-21-3974** in any future communication relating to this request.

Yours sincerely,

Sent on behalf of Carl Bird

Briefings, Correspondence and FOI Manager
High Speed Two (HS2) Limited

Your right to complain to HS2 Ltd and the Information Commissioner

You have the right to complain to HS2 Ltd within 40 working days of the date of this response about the way in which your request for information was handled and/or about the decision not to disclose all or part of the information requested.

Your complaint will be acknowledged, and you will be advised of a target date by which to expect a response. Initially your complaint will be re-considered by the official who dealt with your request for information. If, after careful consideration, that official decides that his/her decision was correct, your complaint will automatically be referred to a senior independent official who will conduct a further review. You will be advised of the outcome of your complaint and if a decision is taken to disclose information originally withheld this will be done as soon as possible.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF