

Dear Councillor Day,

We understand that there is a badger sett in close proximity to the area identified for development in the above application. Please can you pass the following comments to the Planning Officer dealing with the application and the members of the Planning Committee, as we see that it is due to be decided by the Committee on Thursday 20 November.

European badgers are an iconic mammal of the British Countryside, much loved for their inquisitive nature & their social bonds with the clan members.

Badgers are also the UK's last remaining native large carnivore, living in one of the most depleted landscapes on Earth for natural biodiversity.

Badgers & their setts are protected by law - 'The Protection of Badgers Act 1992' which strictly prohibits any malicious or negligent act which disturbs badgers or their homes.

Development projects can result in the loss of badger habitat (foraging areas), the increased urbanisation of badgers, an increase in garden problems for surrounding homeowners & a high increase in road casualties.

Badgers are ecosystem engineers & the loss of viable habitat for badgers has wide reaching consequences for other native plants & animals.

Information below regarding guidelines for an artificial sett to be built by the developer;

Artificial sett success rates are highly variable and depend on several factors, including correct design, suitable location, and proper implementation. They should not be the first option; avoidance and retention of existing setts should always be prioritised wherever possible.

Ideally, natural setts would be retained, but in reality, if a sett becomes surrounded by development, its long-term value to the badgers may be compromised. Therefore, context is key when considering whether to retain or replace a sett. Artificial setts, as a *last resort* (though not always treated as such), can provide a safe alternative within a site that is due for development.

There is limited published data on artificial sett success rates. Some are reported to be successfully occupied and used long-term, while others face issues such as flooding or remain unused. In many cases, artificial setts provide a temporary refuge: badgers may use them during works, then later establish or enlarge a natural sett elsewhere within their territory.

Key factors for success;

Appropriate Design and Size:

Artificial setts should replicate the complexity and size of the original sett as closely as possible, including multiple chambers and tunnels.

Optimal Location:

- Locate the new sett within the existing badger territory, ideally no more than 200m of the original sett.
- Choose a quiet, undisturbed site that can be protected with at least a 30m buffer zone with connectivity to established mammal paths and foraging areas.
- Select a site already used or visited by the badgers, not an area they don't already go to, or outside their regular range.
- Ensure good drainage (preferably on a slope) to prevent waterlogging - climate change is potentially a big problem with the very wet winters we are having.
- Integrate with existing cover, such as hedgerows or scrub, to provide shelter and connectivity, and add additional planting of native fruit and nut trees for food sources and seclusion.

Advance Construction:

Construct the artificial sett well in advance of any exclusion works to allow badgers time to locate and become familiar with it.

Encouragement/Baiting:

Using attractants such as peanuts and golden syrup can help draw badgers to investigate and begin using the artificial sett.

Correct Exclusion Procedure:

When excluding badgers, follow best-practice protocols carefully. If the original sett is not properly destroyed after it is confirmed vacant and after the appropriate monitoring, then badgers may attempt to return if it is not destroyed fully.

Ongoing Monitoring:

Post-construction monitoring, e.g. via trail cameras, is essential to confirm use, track occupancy over time, and identify any issues (e.g. drainage problems).

The ecologist should oversee that all the mitigation plans are followed by the developer. If an artificial sett is decided upon, the following should be adhered to;

-what mitigation measures are proposed to ensure that visiting badgers are protected during construction

-no chemicals are left unattended

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-all trenches are covered when not in use as to ensure the site is safe for visiting badgers

Licences are granted by Natural England between the period- 1 July- 30 November.

Gloucestershire Badger Group would be happy to be involved once decisions have been made

We understand that the area in question is an AONB area of outstanding natural beauty, a designation for land in England & Wales that has a high landscape value. The primary purpose is to 'conserve & enhance the natural beauty of the landscape, ensuring these areas are protected, which includes wildlife.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards

[REDACTED], Chair, Gloucestershire Badger Group

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