SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Derogation Licence Application (Regulation 54)

ESB Networks Depot, Tiernaboul, Killarney, Co. Kerry
Applicant: ESB Networks
Ecologist: Katy Steele

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1. Introduction

This Supporting Information document is submitted in accordance with Part E of the NPWS Derogation Application template. It accompanies an application under Regulation 54(2)(c)(i) These works fall under public safety, as the existing structural damage presents risks to staff, contractors, and building users.

The purpose of this document is to:

- Provide full details of the bat surveys, site use, roost characteristics, and ecological context.
- Describe the nature, extent, and timing of the proposed works.
- Present the mitigation measures designed to ensure the **favourable conservation status** of the bat species present.
- Supply the expanded justification for Tests 1–3 required under the Habitats Directive.
- Provide drawings, photographs, and other evidence relevant to the assessment.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- The completed derogation application form
- The Bat Survey Report (WSI, CK/PC/KS)
- The Bat Access Tile Supervision Short Report (23 Oct 2025)
- ESB correspondence on building upgrades and soffit/partition design
- Sketches and annotated plans (included as Plates)

2. Objectives and Ecologist Information

2(a) Objective of Proposed Works

The objective of the proposed works is to carry out essential electrical, fire-safety, insulation and soffit/attic upgrade works at the ESB Networks depot in Tiernaboul, Killarney. These works are required to address end-of-life building systems, ensure staff safety, and meet regulatory compliance standards. Because a bat roost is present in the attic and soffit structures, a derogation under Regulation 54(2)(c)(ii) is required to allow these works to proceed under ecological supervision.

2(b) Ecologist – Qualifications and Relevant Experience

Lead Ecologist: Katy Steele
Bat Ecologist / Ecological Surveyor

Qualifications & Training

- NPWS Bat Handling Licence holder
- QQI Level 5 Ecology & Practical Fieldwork (Distinction)

- Additional training in bat ecology, attic roost inspection and protected species survey methods

Relevant Experience

- Experience conducting attic roost surveys, soffit-access roost assessments, bat activity surveys and internal building inspections
- Survey experience with Wetland Surveys Ireland under senior bat ecologists, including Conor Kelleher and Dr Patrick Crushell
- Supervised the bat access tile installation (2025) and soffit-access inspections
- Contributor to multiple Regulation 54 Derogation applications, including the previous successful derogation for this ESB site

Senior Ecological Oversight (Consultative Support)

Conor Kelleher (ACIEEM)
Senior Bat Ecologist

- One of Ireland's most experienced bat specialists, with 30+ years of professional experience
- Co-author of Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland (L. Marnell, C. Kelleher & J. Sleeman)
- National expert in attic, soffit and structural roost mitigation, and responsible for supervision or design on numerous derogation projects throughout Ireland
- Provides ongoing professional support and technical guidance to the lead ecologist on this project
- On-call for consultation during the proposed works to ensure best-practice compliance with Irish bat conservation standards

2(c) Trainees Involved

No trainees are involved in this application or in the proposed works.

3. Background to Proposed Activity

The proposed works relate to the ESB Networks depot at Tiernaboul, Killarney, Co. Kerry. The building is owned and operated by **ESB Networks** and functions as a daily operational base for approximately **47 staff**, including technicians, clerical personnel and engineers. It is also a designated **storm-response assembly point** servicing approximately 51,000 customers in the region.

The depot contains an attic space above the southern end of the building, which was confirmed to support a roost for *Plecotus auritus*, *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and *Nyctalus leisleri*. Roost use was identified through internal inspection, droppings, and external observations of bats accessing the building through fascia/soffit gaps, with a supervised bat access tile installed in October 2025 to formalise and protect the existing entry point.

The building requires essential internal upgrades due to end-of-life electrical, fire-safety, insulation and structural systems. These works are necessary to ensure public safety, regulatory compliance and a safe workplace environment. Previous issues included water ingress and ceiling damage within the office below the roost area.

Planning history: Internal refurbishment works of this nature do not require planning permission.
Policy context: The works are required to meet statutory health and safety standards and must comply with strict protection obligations under the Habitats Directive.
Zoning: Zoning is not relevant, as the activity is confined to internal building upgrades and does not alter land use.

This background context sets out the need for the works and the importance of ensuring bat conservation measures are fully integrated into the project design.

4. Details of Proposed Activity

The works proposed by ESB Networks include:

4.1 Attic Works

- Installation of a timber-framed partition wall (100 × 44 mm frame, finished with 18 mm plywood) creating a retained bat-roosting area.
- A marker was placed in the attic by the bat ecologist during the site visit to indicate the minimum safe distance from the active bat-roosting area (confirmed by recent droppings) to the point where any construction could begin. ESB subsequently inspected the marker and measured the distance from the southern gable to this point as 7.2 metres, and their proposed partition wall location now reflects this measurement. This ensures that the retained bat area remains fully intact, undisturbed, and ecologically appropriate in size and position.
- A lockable access door will allow for future maintenance and ecological checks.
- Replacement of insulation and installation of new electrical and fire-safety systems will occur **outside** the retained bat area.
- Any unavoidable minor works **within** the retained bat area will be completed **only under direct bat-ecologist supervision**, ensuring no disturbance to roosting opportunities.

See Plate 2 for the attic layout and Plate 3 for the partition wall proposal.

4.2 Soffit and Fascia Replacement

- Existing damaged timber soffits to be replaced with PVC.
- Bat access points will be **maintained or recreated exactly**, using measurements and observations from October 2025 supervision.
- No foams, sealants, or expanding products may be used.

- All soffit works will occur **under bat-ecologist supervision**.

4.3 Roof / External Works

- No direct works will occur to the installed bat access tile.
- Roof-level works will avoid disturbance to the retained bat area.

4.4 Timing of Works

All works affecting bats will take place between **25 February 2026 and 30 April 2026**, as agreed with NPWS during the on-site meeting.
This timing avoids the maternity season and the early hibernation period.

The derogation licence is requested for the full 2026 calendar year to allow ESB Networks administrative flexibility, including the option to complete any minor finishing touches in the next available bat-safe window, if required, without altering the ecologically supervised works period above.

If weather conditions delay natural bat movements in late February, or if ESB require earlier access for urgent safety reasons, any hibernating bats encountered will be removed safely under licence by the supervising bat ecologist. This will only occur where essential and will follow established NPWS bat-handling and rehabilitation protocols, ensuring full welfare protection for any bats encountered.

4.5 Lighting

ESB have confirmed that the original external lighting proposal has been reduced and no pole-mounted yard lights will be installed. Only existing wall-mounted lights on the administration building and the store building will be upgraded.

Light sources will be kept below roof level and orientated downward to avoid spill onto the roof ridge or southern attic area, preserving the established bat commuting route toward the tree line.

No lighting will be directed toward the bat access tile or the southern elevation. This reduced and downward-directed lighting design significantly lowers disturbance risk and complies with bat-friendly lighting principles.

A review of the updated ESB lighting layout and luminaire specifications (Drawing E102) confirms that the proposed lighting poses no significant risk to the bat roost, as all fittings are positioned below roof level and directed downward.

The Type A fitting located beneath the installed bat access tile is fully down-lit and will not illuminate the tile or the southern attic area. Type D fittings along the established bat commuting path are moderate-output and equipped with visors; when directed downward they will maintain dark conditions along the adjacent tree line. Type B units are positioned at ground-floor level under the soffit, set back beneath the overhang, and do not cast light toward the elevated soffit access point.

While the existing proposal is already low-impact, a general recommendation will be provided to ESB to preferentially use **2700 K warm-white luminaires** where feasible during future replacements, in line

with bat-sensitive lighting principles. Based on the revised lighting design, no further lighting mitigation is required to maintain dark conditions at the roost entrance and along the bat commuting route

5. Ecological Survey and Site Assessment

5(a) Pre-existing Information on Species at the Location

Previous knowledge of bats at this site originates from routine ESB staff observations, the **2025 bat survey**, and the **previous derogation licence (DER-BAT-2025-331)**. Roost use had been identified in the southern attic area of Office 7, with access through soffit gaps. The presence of soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, and Leisler's bat was anticipated prior to the 2025 surveys due to known local distributions and previous records in the Killarney region.

5(b) Status of the Species in the Local/Regional Area

All three species recorded — soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), and Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*) — are widespread in County Kerry.

- *P. pygmaeus* is abundant in the region.
- *P. auritus* is locally common in traditional buildings.
- *N. leisleri* is less frequently encountered but is well established in the wider Killarney landscape.

None of the species are considered scarce locally, and the roost represents a *typical, small-scale attic roost* with no evidence of a maternity colony.

5(c) Objectives of Survey

The objectives of the survey were to:

- Determine roost presence, species, and roost type.
- Identify all bat access points.
- Assess potential impacts of the proposed ESB works.
- Provide mitigation recommendations to support the Regulation 54 application.

5(d) Description of Survey Area

The survey area included:

- The **southern attic space** above Office 7.
- Associated soffit and fascia boards around the same area.

- The attic's felt underlay (roof-felt) beneath the timber sheathing provides narrow loose-filled voids identified as part of the roost habitat.
- The exterior southern elevation of the building.
- Internal office spaces affected by roof and soffit issues.

The attic is partially insulated, with limited standing height and existing structural timbers.

5(e) Survey Methodology

Survey work was completed in July 2025 (WSI – CK/PC/KS) and followed best practice including:

- Internal attic inspection
- Dusk and dawn observations
- Acoustic monitoring
- Dropping and field-sign assessment
- Inspection of soffit/fascia access points
- Weather conditions suitable for bat activity (dry, mild evenings, no strong winds)

A follow-up supervision visit in **October 2025** documented bat access tile installation and confirmed the building's roost-use patterns.

5(f) Survey Results

Species Recorded

- *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* – droppings and activity recorded
- *Plecotus auritus* – droppings and roost use confirmed
- *Nyctalus leisleri* – droppings present indicating occasional use

Access Points

- Two soffit gaps used for entry prior to soffit deterioration.
- A **bat access tile**, installed October 2025, is now the primary confirmed access.

Roost Characteristics

- Roost type: **day roost with potential winter use**
- Roost location: Southern attic (Office 7 attic space)
- Droppings: 15+ observed

- Maximum observed individuals (based on signs & limited sightings):
    - 2 BLEB
    - 2 *N. leisleri*
    - 2–3 soprano pipistrelles

Additional Notes

No evidence of a maternity roost or large aggregation was found.

5(g) Population Size Class Assessment

Using NPWS size-class categories, the roost corresponds to:

- Small day roost (<10 individuals observed or inferred)
- Shared by multiple species but at low numbers
- No maternity activity present

This roost is typical of mixed-species attic usage in the region.

6. Evidence to Support the Derogation Tests

6(a) Test 1 – Reason for Derogation (Public Safety)

The reason for this derogation is public safety under Regulation 54(2)(c)(i). While emergency stabilisation works were permitted under the 2025 derogation, at the ESB Networks depot in Tiernaboul, further safety-related repairs are still required within the attic and soffit structures, including electrical, fire-safety, insulation and structural upgrades needed to meet current health and safety standards. These works cannot be completed without entering or working adjacent to the established bat roost.

The depot is a designated storm-response facility, providing operational support to approximately 51,000 customers. Maintaining a safe and functional building is an imperative requirement for public safety and continuity of service.

Bats are present within the attic area and use soffit/fascia gaps and the installed bat access tile. Without a derogation, necessary repairs would risk disturbing or excluding bats and would therefore contravene strict legal protections.

The derogation is required to allow safety, compliance and essential infrastructure works to proceed, while maintaining protection of the bat roost through mitigation.

6(b) Test 2 – Absence of Alternative Solutions

A range of alternatives were considered, including the "do nothing" option and construction variations. These are summarised in the table below.

Alternative	Reason Unsatisfactory
Do nothing	Unsafe and non-compliant conditions would persist. Electrical, insulation and fire-safety systems require replacement. Not feasible for staff safety or statutory obligations.
Repair works without mitigation	Would risk excluding or harming bats. Would breach EU Habitats Directive and Wildlife Act obligations.
Full attic or roof replacement	Would cause significantly more disturbance and loss of roost features than a targeted, supervised upgrade. Not proportionate to the scale of required works.

There is no satisfactory alternative that would address the building's essential safety requirements while also protecting the bat roost.

7. Monitoring the Impacts of the Derogation

7(a) Test 3 - Verification of Correct Implementation of Mitigation

All works within or adjacent to the bat-roost area will be carried out under the supervision of a licensed bat ecologist. The ecologist will verify:

- Correct installation and positioning of the internal partition wall.
- Preservation of the retained bat-roosting area in the southern attic.
- Accurate recreation of soffit access points during fascia/soffit replacement.
- Protection and continued functionality of the installed bat access tile.
- Use of bat-safe materials and avoidance of lighting within the retained bat space.
- Absence of any disturbance, exclusion, or harm to bats during the works.

A supervision log will be maintained documenting the dates, observations and outcomes of on-site checks.

Contingency for encountering hibernating bats:

In the unlikely event that works are required before the agreed bat-safe window, or during a period of prolonged cold weather when bats remain in torpor, any hibernating bats encountered will be removed safely under licence by the supervising bat ecologist.

Removal will only occur where absolutely necessary and will follow NPWS handling and welfare guidelines. Bats will be transferred to a secure, temperature-controlled holding container, assessed for

injury or dehydration, and either released later the same night (if appropriate) or held temporarily under the ecologist's rehabilitation licence until suitable release conditions arise.

This ensures that no bat is harmed, and that full compliance with licence conditions is maintained even under exceptional circumstances.

7(b) Post-Works Monitoring and Reporting

At completion of the works, the bat ecologist will undertake:

- A full inspection of the retained roost space behind the new partition wall.
- Confirmation of active access routes (bat access tile and recreated soffit gaps).
- Verification that no materials or insulation obstruct roost features or flight paths.
- A dusk activity check (optional but recommended) to confirm continued bat access and use.

A concise post-works report will be submitted to NPWS, detailing:

- Mitigation measures implemented
- Ecological supervision outcomes
- Access point verification
- Roost condition after works
- Any observed bat activity (if applicable)

This report will accompany or precede the final licence return.

7(c) Corrective Measures

If any issues are identified - such as blocked access, inappropriate materials, or alterations that reduce roost suitability - corrective measures will be taken immediately in consultation with NPWS.
These may include:

- Re-opening or adjusting access points
- Removal of unsuitable materials
- Additional minor adjustments to restore roost functionality
- Further ecological supervision as directed by NPWS

Corrective actions will be documented and reported.

8. Plates

Plate 1. Installed bat access tile (23 October 2025).

Installed under ecological supervision to provide a long-term, secure access point for bats using the attic roost. The tile is now the principal confirmed entry route.

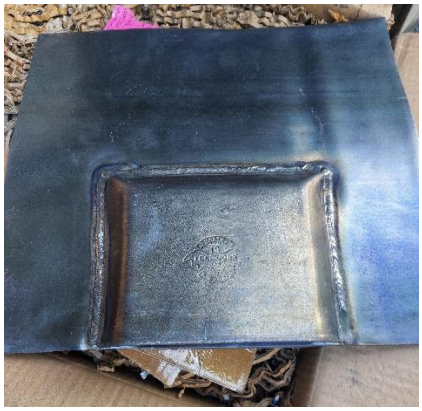
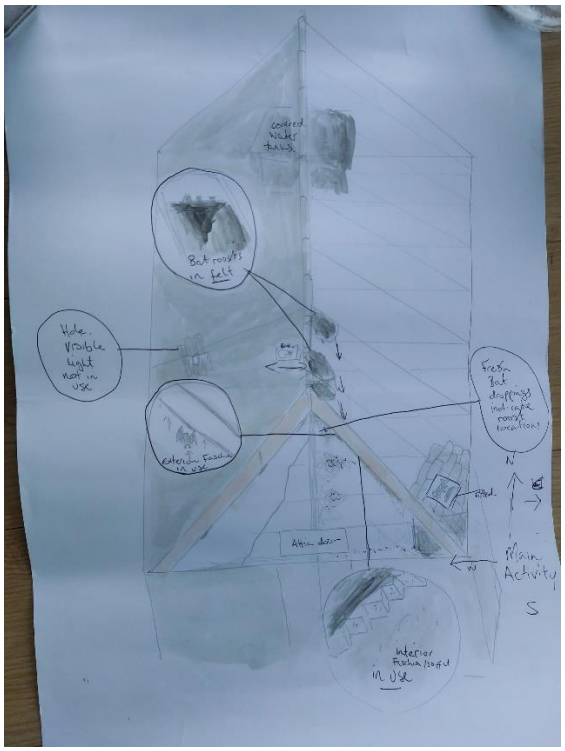
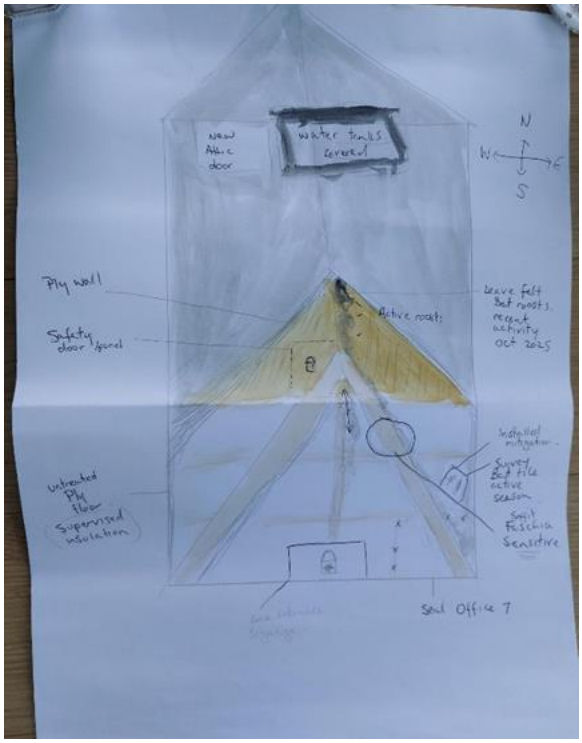


Plate 2. Attic sketch showing roost layout and location of the proposed partition wall.

Hand-drawn annotated plan demonstrating the area of bat activity, the area to be retained bat (southern attic) and proposed partition position from the gable.





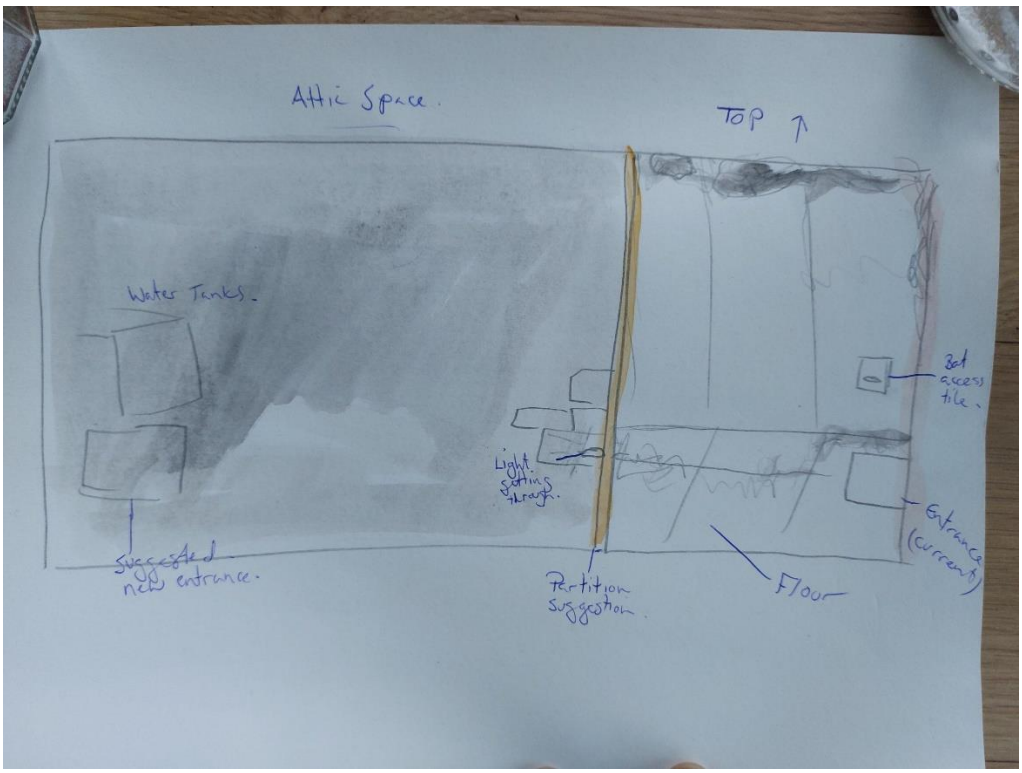


Plate 3. ESB Networks proposal for partition wall installation.

Extract from ESB technical drawing showing timber framing dimensions and precise placement of the partition wall to secure the retained bat area.

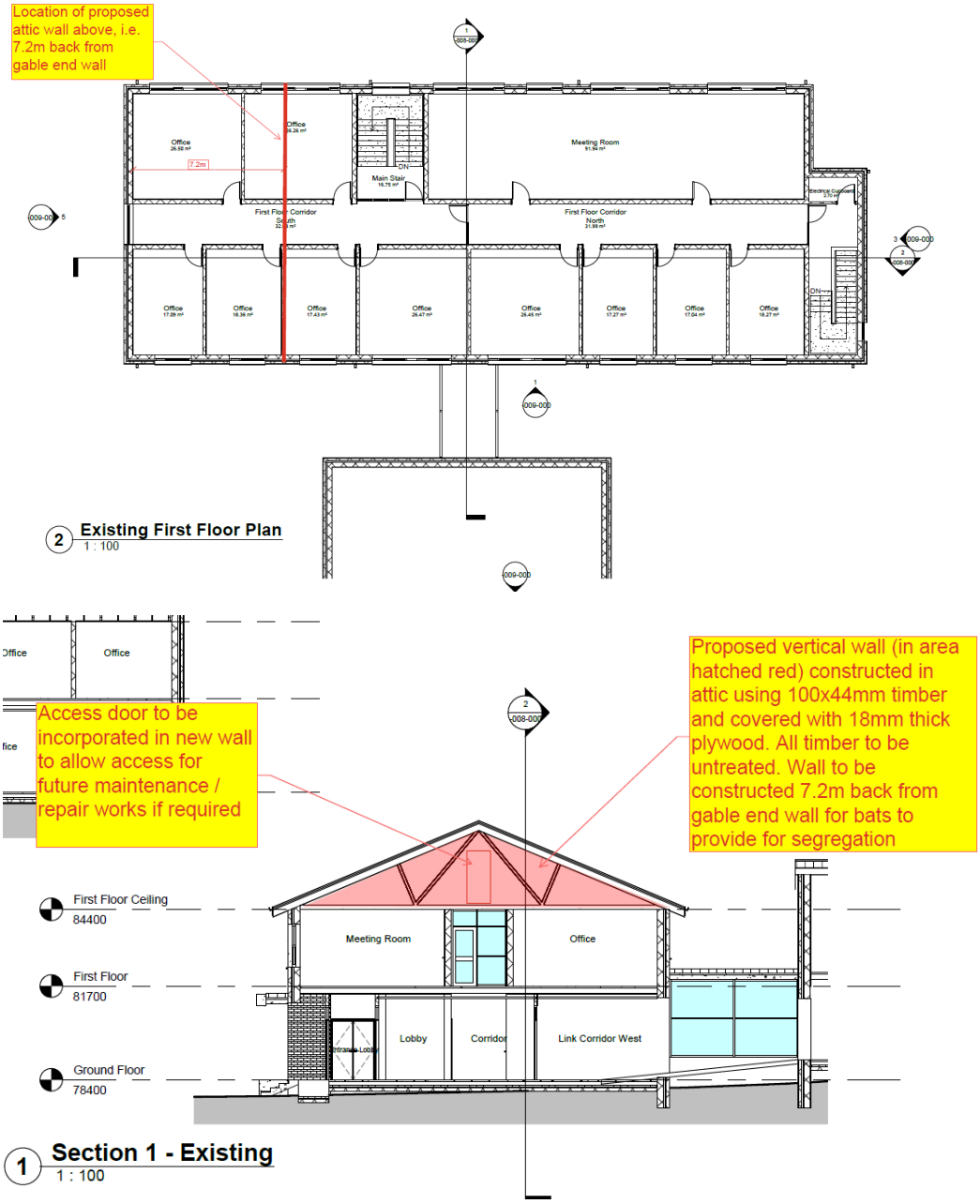


Plate 4. Existing soffit access point used by bats

Photograph/screenshot illustrating one of the soffit gaps being used by a soprano pipistrelle bat to access the attic roost. Blue dots note bat and entrances

Plate 5. Soffit gap to be retained during supervised replacement works.

Image showing the exact location of the soffit bat access feature that will be deliberately maintained during PVC soffit installation.

Gap used by soprano pipistrelle; this access will be retained during soffit replacement.

Current dilapidated condition of fascia, during surveys no bats were observed using these boards.

Plate 6. Internal evidence of bat roost use in southern attic and droppings in Office 7.

Droppings and structural features recorded during July 2025 surveys confirming multi-species day roost activity.

Droppings scattered on the walls inside office 7

One of the attic roosts, in loose felt (above droppings) in proposed retention area

9. References

Wetland Surveys Ireland (2025). *Bat Survey Report – ESB Networks Depot, Tiernaboul, Killarney.* Prepared by Conor Kelleher, Dr Patrick Crushell & Katy Steele.

Steele, K. (2025). *Bat Roost Supervision Report – Installation of Bat Access Tile, 23 October 2025.*

ESB Networks (2025). *Technical Drawings and Works Specifications* – Attic partition wall proposal and soffit/fascia replacement details.

NPWS (2025). *Guidance on Applications for Regulation 54 Derogations for Annex IV Species.*

NPWS (2025). *Derogation Licence Application Template (Regulation 54).*

European Commission (2021). *Guidance Document on the Strict Protection of Animal Species of Community Interest under the Habitats Directive.*

Kelleher, C., Marnell, L. & Sleeman, D. (2009). *Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland.* National Parks & Wildlife Service.

10. Ecologist Details and Licensing

Lead Ecologist:
Katy Steele
Bat Ecologist / Ecological Surveyor
NPWS Bat Handling Licence: *Active at time of works*
Licensed Bat Rehabilitator: *Experienced in the care, stabilisation and rehabilitation of injured or torpid bats, including species-specific handling, thermal regulation, hydration and short-term recovery management.*
Role: Preparation of Supporting Information; bat survey input; supervision of soffit works and attic access; post-works inspection; provision of rehabilitation support should any injured or compromised bat be encountered during works.

Katy Steele has extensive experience as a bat carer, including the safe recovery of bats in torpor, the management of injured or weakened individuals, and appropriate ecological handling methods. This ensures that if any bat is discovered in a vulnerable condition during the works, appropriate intervention can be provided immediately and in compliance with NPWS licence conditions.

Senior Ecological Oversight:
Mr. Conor Kelleher (ACIEEM)
Senior Bat Ecologist
Role: Professional oversight and technical guidance to support mitigation design and bat-related decision-making during works.

All works requiring supervision will be carried out by the licensed ecologist, with senior expert consultation available throughout the works period. No trainees are involved in this project.

This Supporting Information is submitted in accordance with Part E of the NPWS derogation licence application process.