Specification

Ecological Assessment Programme

Reference number HISEAP22042025

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## Specification

1.1 Background

Homes in Somerset is seeking a professional consultant to undertake inspections and surveys to identify the presence of bats and nesting birds within the roof voids of their residential properties prior to roof works being undertaken. The contractor should be prepared to work during daylight and dusk hours to carry out these surveys. They may also be required to carry out the duties of the ecological clerk of works and prepare and organise bat licences where required.

It is anticipated that inspections may be required on up to 40 properties a year but this is not guaranteed and will depend on budgets and location of roofing works. Additional ecological works and tasks, including those related to other protected species, may also be required as part of this contract. However, orders will be placed on an as and when required basis, there is no minimum guaranteed volumes of work during any year. Homes in Somerset require ecological services within the district of Somerset. Tenders should only be submitted by providers who are both experienced and qualified ecologists and must be registered with the CIEMM.

There are currently approx. 40 properties within Somerset which require inspections to be undertaken. Tenderers should use this number only as a guide as it is subject to change and there is no guarantee as to the exact properties which will require inspections. Under the terms of the contract there can be no claim made by the appointed consultant if no work is forthcoming during the contract period.

From the first initial identification of potential endangered species (bats) being present:

* An ecologist will be contacted, and a meeting will be arranged to survey the site.
* Homes in Somerset will be reliant on the consultant to follow the current standards required and they will be required to accept full liability for the accuracy of any work undertaken.

1.2. Requirements

Homes in Somerset requires that any survey and results be delivered as promptly as possible within a four-week period, depending on contractor availability. The number of hours to undertake a full survey can be site specific and will be agreed upon in advance.

Depending on level of activity, a licence to interfere with animals primarily bats, and other protected species, may be required from Natural England. This will be dependent on a full ecological survey and method statement of works.

The sites will adhere to the requirements set by Natural England in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats snd Species Regulations 2010 and any other UK regulations that may provide legal protection to bats and their habitats.

Ecologists will work within the agreed legal working window for the species involved.

During roofing works, the ecologist may need to be onsite to assess the works and ensure the conditions of the licence are met.

Once the roof/s have been completed, the ecologists are typically not required during the reinstatement process.

The final duty of the ecologist is to write a full report of on-site operations to be submitted back to Natural England, if this is a requirement of the licence conditions.

The ecologist will determine the extent of the survey required, which may include the following:

 **1. Building inspections**

External inspections – these will be carried out as a minimum to allow for rapid assessment of properties scheduled for roofing works.

Where evidence of bats is found or numerous suitable features present a follow up internal inspection will be required.

On occasion external and internal inspections to a number of properties within the same area may be arranged together. Homes in Somerset will advise where this is possible due to location of the properties.

**2. Analysis of Bat Droppings**

Where bat droppings have been found these will require DNA testing and analysis to identify the species present.

1. **Dusk Emergence Bat Surveys**

Bat Emergence bat surveys will be required where evidence of bats has been identified in 1 above. This may include further surveys as considered necessary where the suitability of potential roosting features have been identified. Surveys will need to be carried out in consideration of maternity and nesting periods.

Dusk surveys will need to be carried out 15 minutes prior to sunset and up to 1.5 hours after sunset. Therefore it is anticipated that surveyors will be onsite for 2 hours during this period and prices should reflect this as no additional payment will be made for surveys during this period unless identified in the pricing schedule.

1. **Ecological Clerk of Works**

The consultant will be required to attend properties identified as needing an ecological clerk of works present where potential bat roosting features have been found. This is an adapted approach to recommendations included within the good practice guidelines (Bat Conservation trust 2016)

A Bat Ecological Clerk of works will be required to oversee the removal of the tiles by the roofing contractors this will be to provide guidance and to ensure steps are taken to obtain the most appropriate form of bat licence and associated timescales should bats be found. Before works can commence the bat ecologist will brief roofing contractors on the safe removal of tiles and other materials that may conceal a roost or be affected by the works.

Where a bat licence is required the ECoW will be required to attend the licensed renovation work once the licence is obtained.

The presence of nesting birds must also be considered.

1. **Bat licence preparation**

The consultant will be responsible for completing the application for the most appropriate licence for the works being undertaken and the presence of bats that have been identified.

The necessary findings and supporting evidence will need to be provided by the consultant and the application form completed on behalf of Homes in Somerset. Homes in Somerset will sign and submit the necessary form but the completion of any details for this form will be a requirement of the consultant.

Where mitigation measures are required these can be discussed with Homes in Somerset prior to submission.

The ecologist will advise Homes in Somerset of any requirements that are necessary to meet current regulatory requirements. Homes in Somerset will rely on the consultant for this service and the appointed consultant will be responsible for any audit of the steps taken to provide Homes in Somerset with the guarantee that the service meets legislative requirements and ensures that HIS have been compliant in carrying out their obligations.

1.3 Performance measures

Consultants will be required to complete the following:

External surveys will be required to be completed within 5 working days of being advised of property location by HIS

Internal surveys if required will be required to be completed within a further 5 working days

Bat dropping DNA testing to be completed within a further 5 working days

Dusk surveys to be completed within 5 working days or within 3 working weeks of initial external survey

Clerk of works duties to be completed as required when identified within the original internal survey

Bat licence application completions to be completed within 2 weeks of identification of the need for a licence application

The consultant will carry out as necessary any risk assessments to ensure safety of staff and surveyors. This will include any mitigation measures required in terms of lone working and working outside of daylight hours.

## 1.4 Social Value

##### Homes in Somerset have considered how the services they commission and procure might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of their administrative areas. The obligation is compulsory in relation to proposed service contracts that are governed by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and discretionary for all other contracts.

##### “Social value” is a way of thinking about how scarce resources are allocated and used. It involves looking beyond the price of each individual contract and looking at what the collective benefit to a community is when a public body chooses to award a contract. Social value asks the question: "If £1 is spent on the delivery of services, can that same £1 be used to also produce a wider benefit to the community?"

##### In the circumstances of the matter Somerset Council has determined that the procedures set out in the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 will be applied to this procurement exercise.

## 1.5 Contract information

Homes in Somerset intends to award a contract for an initial period of 24 months with an option to extend by up to 36 further months.

## 1.6 Payment terms

Homes in Somerset standard payment terms are to pay in arrears following the delivery of the Goods, services or Works. Suppliers will be required to submit an invoice with photographic evidence quoting a valid Authority Purchase Order number and details of the goods/services provided. Payment will be affected within 30 days of receipt of an undisputed invoice for goods/services received. Submission of invoices without the inclusion of the Purchase Order number may be rejected or payment could be delayed.