

*Condition 31 - Unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the construction of any segregated footpaths and/or cycleways within a phase shall incorporate external lighting that is in full accordance with details to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include information on how the specification of any such lighting will safeguard bat activity within the vicinity. Thereafter such external lighting shall remain in place at all times.*

Footpaths within the areas of open space are intended to remain private and will be managed and maintained by the approved Managing Agent. It is proposed that these footpaths remain unlit.

The introduction of external lighting in these locations would result in unacceptable impacts on established landscaping and ecology. In particular, the installation of lighting columns and associated underground cabling would risk harm to retained trees through root disturbance, conflicting with the principles of BS 5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction. Ongoing maintenance requirements would also necessitate repeated access within root protection areas, leading to further potential degradation of tree health.

From an ecological perspective, lighting of these corridors—particularly adjacent to tree belts—would adversely affect nocturnal species, including bats. Artificial lighting is known to disrupt bat commuting and foraging routes, contrary to guidance set out in Bat Conservation Trust and Natural England, which emphasises the importance of maintaining dark corridors. Retaining these footpaths as unlit routes will therefore better safeguard biodiversity and ensure compliance with ecological mitigation objectives.

Furthermore, the absence of lighting will help preserve the semi-natural character of the open space and avoid unnecessary urbanisation of green infrastructure. Given that these routes are not intended to serve as primary commuter corridors, and will remain under private management, the provision of lighting is not considered essential for their function.

On this basis, it is considered that the omission of lighting represents a more sustainable and environmentally sensitive approach, while still allowing for appropriate use and management of the footpath network.