

CHATGPT

**In the matter of: PL/2025/06872 (PL/2024/09412): The Old Vicarage, Coombe Bissett,
SP5 4LR - Replacement House**

Everything below the red line is simply copied and pasted from CHATGPT.

"Please can you find for me the part of the Conservation and Habitats Regulations 2017, as amended, that discusses bat surveys being needed every 12-18 months? Thank you.

What people are usually referring to (the “12–18 months” rule) is **professional guidance and best practice** about how long survey data remain valid — not a statutory requirement in the Regulations. Authoritative guidance and advice notes (CIEEM, Bat Conservation Trust, Natural England/local planning authorities and many local ecological reports) commonly state that ecological / bat survey results are usually considered valid for around **12–18 months** in many circumstances, but that the precise validity depends on site changes, species, and professional judgement. Examples: CIEEM advice on lifespan of ecological reports (12–18 months guidance), BCT/CIEEM bat survey good-practice documents, and local planning/ecology reports that set a 12–18 month validity. ([CIEEM](#))

A couple of useful sources I checked (so you can see the wording yourself):

- Regulation 43 (offences re: European protected species — bats) on [legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk). This is the statutory provision that underpins protection (it does **not** set survey-frequency). ([Legislation.gov.uk](https://www.legislation.gov.uk))
- CIEEM Advice Note: **Age of data — survey/report validity** (explains the common convention: <12 months = likely valid; 12–18 months = likely valid in many cases but with exceptions; 18 months–3 years = normally needs a site visit/partial update). ([CIEEM](#))

- Bat Conservation Trust / Good Practice Bat Survey Guidelines (professional good practice used by ecologists). (cdn.bats.org.uk)
- Example local authority / ecological report wording that explicitly states “findings valid for 12–18 months.” ([Chelmsford City Council](#))

If you want, I can do one of the following now (pick one and I’ll run it immediately):

1. Pull the **full text** of Regulation 43 from legislation.gov.uk and paste it (short excerpt under 25 words + link citation), or
2. Download and extract the **CIEEM advice note** section that discusses 12–18 months and paste the exact paragraph, or
3. Find local planning authority policy wording for a specific council (e.g. Wiltshire or your LPA) about how they treat bat survey age.

Which of those would you like me to do now?

Yes please - 2: Download and extract the CIEEM advice note section that discusses 12–18 months and paste the exact paragraph

Here's the exact paragraph from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Advice Note: **“Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys” (April 2019)** that mentions the 12-18 month period:

“12-18 months Likely to be valid in most cases with the following exceptions:

- **Where a site may offer existing or new features which could be utilised by a mobile species within a short timeframe (see scenario 1 example);**
- **Where a mobile species is present on site or in the wider area, and can create new features of relevance to the assessment (see scenario 2 example);**
- **Where country-specific or species-specific guidance dictates otherwise.**

Report authors should highlight where they consider it likely to be necessary to update surveys within a timeframe of less than 18 months.” ([CIEEM](#))

If you like, I can send you a **PDF extract** of the full Advice Note showing this section in context (for downloading/archiving).

Please can you find Wiltshire Council's - planning authority - policy wording about how they treat bat survey age.

Got it — I searched Wiltshire Council planning guidance and related Wiltshire documents. Short answer up front: **Wiltshire’s planning guidance does not lay down a fixed statutory rule that bat surveys are “valid for 12–18 months.”** Instead Wiltshire directs applicants to follow the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) / professional guidance and expects survey timing and repeat-survey need to be decided by a competent ecologist (i.e. professional judgement). Below are the relevant policy excerpts and sources I found.

What I found (quotes + sources)

- From Wiltshire’s **Bat SAC (developers’) guidance** (excerpt in the Council document): **“Survey should follow BCT Bat Survey Guidelines.”** (wiltshire.gov.uk)
- From Wiltshire’s **Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (SPD)** (planning guidance / SPD referencing Wiltshire policy): **“Bat surveys are seasonally constrained. A substantial suite of surveys may take up to 12 months to complete and should therefore be ...”** (context: the SPD explains seasonal constraints and survey requirements and how mitigation/strategy is applied). (wiltshire.gov.uk)
- From a Wiltshire planning case comment / officer ecology note (example of practice in cases): Wiltshire officers will sometimes state it is “unreasonable to require the applicant to submit a bat survey” where disproportionate, and they refer to consulting ecologists and Natural England where required — demonstrating Wiltshire uses proportionate, case-by-case judgement rather than a rigid age rule. (development.wiltshire.gov.uk)

How Wiltshire treats “age” of surveys in practice

Wiltshire’s documents consistently point applicants to **BCT and professional guidance** (and to Natural England where relevant). Those professional guidance documents (e.g. CIEEM advice note; BCT Good Practice Guidelines; and the GOV.UK “Bats: advice for making planning decisions”) are where the commonly-cited **“12–18 months”** time window appears as a rule of thumb for report/survey currency — not in Wiltshire’s legislation or policy itself. See: CIEEM (12–18 months guidance) and GOV.UK bat planning advice. ([CIEEM](http://cieem.org))

Key documents I used (so you can inspect them)

- Wiltshire Council — *Bat Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) – developers’ guidance* (Wiltshire / Natural England). (wiltshire.gov.uk)
- Wiltshire Council — *Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (SPD)*. (wiltshire.gov.uk)
- Wiltshire Council web pages on ecology / biodiversity & planning (policy pages referencing survey requirements). (wiltshire.gov.uk)

- CIEEM — *Advice Note: Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys* (contains the 12–18 month wording). ([CIEEM](#))
- GOV.UK — *Bats: advice for making planning decisions* (Natural England guidance used by LPAs). ([GOV.UK](#))

Conclusion / plain practical answer

- **Wiltshire relies on professional guidance and ecologist judgement rather than a Wiltshire-only statutory “12–18 months” rule.**
- In practice, **Wiltshire documents point to BCT/CIEEM/Natural England guidance**, and those professional documents are where the 12–18 month rule of thumb appears. (wiltshire.gov.uk)

If you want, I can now (pick one) — I’ll run it immediately:

- Extract and paste the exact paragraph(s) from the Wiltshire *Bat SAC developers’ guidance* PDF (I already have the reference), or
- Pull the exact paragraph from the Wiltshire *Trowbridge Bat Mitigation Strategy (SPD)* that discusses survey timing, or
- Assemble a one-page summary you can attach to a planning application explaining Wiltshire’s approach and quoting the CIEEM 12–18 month text (with citations).

Tell me which and I’ll fetch it right away and paste the exact wording.”

END