



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Andrew Avery
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Our Ref: JH20663

27 February 2020

Dear Mr Avery,

Thank you for your email of 23rd February concerning bat conservation. I am delighted to hear Somerset is home to so many of the UK resident bat species and agree the Environment Bill is an important measure to protect them.

The Environment Bill will place environmental ambition and accountability at the heart of government, and legislative measures will be introduced to address the biggest environmental priorities of our age, including nature recovery. This will help deliver on the commitment to leave the natural world in a better condition than we found it.

Also, the Government has committed to developing a Nature Recovery Network and, in the long term, to create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site series. A new framework for Local Nature Recovery Strategies will be legislated for in the Environment Bill, to help support the Nature Recovery Network - creating places that are richer in wildlife.

I am pleased to tell you that the Bill will also require the preparation and publication of Local Nature Recovery Strategies, mapping nature-rich habitats, so that investment can be targeted where it will make the most difference. The Government will provide data, guidance, and advice, but these local plans will embrace local knowledge to strengthen links between neighbouring communities and support the wider Network.

The Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) will scrutinise Government policy to ensure the environment is at the heart of decision making. Crucially, it will have the power to run its own independent investigations and enforce environmental law, including taking government and other public bodies to court where necessary. I believe that it is vital we have the required protections and mechanisms in place to protect our wildlife.

Yours sincerely,

Member of Parliament for the Wells Constituency

www.jamesheappey.org.uk