

SANDVIK OSPREY LTD
LAND OF JUNCTION 38, M4, MARGAM
REQUIREMENTS FOR ECOLOGICAL SITE SUPERVISION

Background

Soltys Brewster Ecology were commissioned by Sandvik Osprey Limited to produce a document setting out the requirements for ecological site supervision works associated with the development of a parcel of land found near Junction 28 of the M4 in Margam (central grid reference: SS 79275 86280). The site has received planning approval for a new metal processing facility (planning application: P2021/1255) and a number of pre-commencement conditions require ecological input. The following note is submitted in order to discharge Condition 10 (as detailed below).

Condition 10 – ‘No development shall commence on site until the role, responsibilities and operations to be overseen by an appropriately competent person (e.g. an ecological clerk of works or on-site ecologist) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The appointed person shall undertake all activities identified in both the Construction Environmental Management Plan and the Environmental Statement in addition to measures to address ecological legislation and works in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: To ensure that the ecological mitigation is overseen by an appropriately competent ecologist, and to ensure the development complies with Policy EN7 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan’.

The purpose of the current document is to set out all activities associated with the construction phase of the development which shall require ecological site supervision, as identified in Chapter 10 of the submitted Environmental Statement (Boyer Planning, 2022) and the CEMP produced by Tetra Tech (2023) to inform discharge of Condition 7 of the planning approval.

Actions to be undertaken under direct ecological supervision

This section provides an overview of the construction activities associated with development at the site which shall require ecological supervision. To ensure the measures set out in the document are upheld, it will be the responsibility of the Contractor to liaise with the project ecologist ahead of commencement of each of the listed activities, so that the Ecologist can make provisions to attend the site as and when required. The principles of this strategy are based on the agreed mitigation measures as set out in Section 10.115 of Chapter 10 of the submitted Environmental Statement (Boyer Planning, 2022).

Toolbox Talk

A toolbox Talk will be given by the project ecologist prior to the start of works to ensure site managers and operatives are aware of the various ecological constraints and mitigation measures that are to be implemented at the site.

Timing of Works/Programme

No detailed or finalised works schedule was available at the time of writing however, initial ground works for the main production buildings and services building are anticipated to take place from November 2023. Construction is anticipated to progress over multiple years with ground works required for the office and amenities buildings due to start in August 2024.

Biodiversity Protection Zones

As identified in the CEMP (Tetra Tech, 2023), a series of 'Biodiversity Protection Zones' (BPZs) are to be instated at the site. The BPZs will incorporate the retained areas of semi-improved neutral and marshy grassland in the northern extent of the site, sections of woodland copse and the retained boundary hedgerows. A physical barrier will be implemented along the specified features (e.g. single heras fencing), and Root Protection Areas (RPAs) will be encompassed within the above stated buffers as defined by the Tree Constraints Plan (ArbTS, 2022). The BPZs will function as contractor exclusion areas and will be clearly demarcated using appropriately robust fencing and signage at the outset of site preparation/clearance works. No activities associated with the construction of the scheme will be undertaken in the BPZs, including stockpiling of materials or waste, storage, vehicular/plant access, welfare facilities etc. and fencing will be maintained until construction activities at the site are complete. Access tracks will be sited as far from BPZs as practical.

In order to allow works to proceed for the installation of some site features e.g. attenuation basins, drainage connections etc., the BPZs may need to be adjusted based on *in situ* assessments. In such cases compensatory widening of buffer zones can occur in nearby suitable areas and any such changes will first be agreed between the site manager and project ecologist. In addition, the alignment of the protective fencing will be reviewed by an ecologist on site during the installation process and throughout the construction period.

Vegetation Clearance

Badgers

While 2021 Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey and 2023 Updated Walkover Survey (SBE, 2021; SBE, 2023) found no evidence to suggest current use of the site by Badger (e.g. setts, latrines or footprints), the occasional use of the site by foraging/commuting Badgers could not be precluded. In the unlikely event a badger sett is discovered within the construction zone during vegetation clearance works (e.g. within parcels or scrub or hedgerow boundaries), all works will immediately cease, and the project ecologist or National Resources Wales (NRW) will be contacted for advice on how to proceed.

Bats

Tree T409 is to be removed under the agreed layout plan. This tree was assessed to hold Moderate Potential to support roosting bats (see Target Note 7 – SBE, 2021). However, roost emergence/re-entry surveys undertaken between July and August found no evidence of a roost within the tree, and as such this tree was subsequently downgraded to Low Potential. In accordance with best practice guidance (BCT, 2016) this tree will require no further survey work but a precautionary approach will be taken towards its removal, in line with best practice guidance. Under direct ecological supervision, the tree will be section felled by a suitably qualified arborist in October/November 2023, or in early spring (March) of 2024 with sections lowered to the ground by rope and retained in-situ for 24- 48hrs to allow any bats present to escape. In the unlikely event roosting bats are found, all works will immediately cease, and the project ecologist or National Resources Wales (NRW) will be contacted for advice on how to proceed. Any work to this tree in spring (March 24) will be preceded by a thorough check for nesting birds as described in the following section.

Breeding Birds

Clearance of woody vegetation at the site (including broadleaved trees, hedgerows and scrub) will be undertaken outside the breeding bird season wherever possible (i.e. clearance possible September – February inclusive). Where works within the breeding season are unavoidable, clearance will be immediately (within 24 hours) preceded by a thorough check for the presence of nesting birds by a suitably experienced ecologist. In the event an active bird nest is discovered, an appropriate exclusion zone (minimum 3m) around the nest will be determined and clearly demarcated by the ecologist. No works will be carried out within the exclusion zone until the ecologist confirms the nest is no longer in use.

Reptiles and Amphibians

The majority of habitats found at the site (i.e. grazed improved and poor SI grassland) were considered unsuitable to support common reptiles however, the smaller areas of more species-rich grassland to the north, as well as the hedgerow and woodland margins, were considered to have greater suitability to support small populations of common reptiles such as Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis*. Under the agreed layout plan, most of the habitats at the site holding the greatest suitability to support common reptiles will largely be retained and protected within the abovementioned BPZs however, a sensitive approach to vegetation clearance across the rest of the site shall be adopted in order to encourage dispersal of any individuals present toward retained habitat and minimise the potential risk of injury to any reptiles (and amphibians) that may be present. This would include cutting of fringe grassland and boundary vegetation via a two-stage directional process.

Initially, any woody vegetation will be cut to ground in the preceding winter (September – February inclusive) to avoid conflict with the nesting bird season. Where this is not achievable, clearance of any woody vegetation will be preceded by a thorough check for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist. Remaining grass/non-woody vegetation of areas to be cleared along hedge bases/field margins etc. will then be strimmed to a height of 50mm in phases as follows. Vegetation will initially be cut to a height of 150mm and all arisings will immediately be removed and composted/disposed of off-site. Cutting will be undertaken using hand tools (strimmers, brushcutters etc.) and undertaken in one direction towards retained habitat to allow any reptiles present to disperse into the retained area outside the construction footprint for that development phase. No less than 48 hours after the initial cut, remaining vegetation will be cut to a height of 50mm in the manner described above and all arisings immediately removed from site. This directional cutting will be undertaken under direct ecological supervision and only during the period when reptiles are active – i.e. possible from April to September/October 2023 or March/April 2024. Should any reptiles (or amphibians) be encountered during these sensitive clearance works, the ecologist will be at hand to safely capture and transport any individuals to a suitable habitat found elsewhere at the site (e.g. retained grassland habitat in northern extent of the site or within defined BPZ's).

Excavation Works and Storage of Materials

Badgers and Hedgehogs

Any open excavations, trenches etc. deeper than 300mm and with a bank of 45° or greater will be covered up at night or installed with a mammal escape ladder. The escape ladder will be a wooden board (minimum 300mm wide), set at a shallow angle that would allow any trapped animal to easily climb out

of excavations. Similarly, any temporary exposed open pipe will be capped in such a way as to prevent Badgers or other wildlife gaining access and prior to the start of works each morning, a visual check will be undertaken to ensure no Badgers or other small mammals (e.g. Hedgehogs) have become trapped. If an animal was discovered, a means of escape will be provided, and the animal allowed to disperse into retained habitat prior to the re-commencement of works. The project ecologist will be available on call to attend site as required in this scenario.

Ecological Mitigation

As per the submitted Ecological Statement (ES) (Boyer, 2022), bird boxes are to be provided onto retained trees in order to provide replacement for loss of nesting resources at the site. A total of 10no. bird boxes¹ will be installed on suitable retained trees situated along the eastern site boundary and within the retained hedgerow corridor running from east to west throughout the site. The boxes will be orientated away from direct sunlight (i.e. will not face southwards) and will be installed at a minimum height of 3 metres from ground level. The boxes will be installed prior to works commencing under the direction of the ecologist. Indicative locations for the bird boxes are shown on the plan in Appendix I.

¹ 5no. Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Boxes (or similar design for use by hole nesting species) and 5no. Vivara Pro Barcelona WoodStone Open Nest Boxes (or similar open-fronted design)

Sandvik Osprey Ltd

Land of Junction 38, M4, Margam – Planning Conditions

Ecological Supervision Note

E21102203 / Doc03

References

Arboricultural Technician Services Ltd (ArbTS) (2022). *Site – Steel Proposal J38. Arboricultural Report*.
Project Reference – ArbTS_1171.3_Steel Proposal J38. Dated: 8th November 2022.

Bat Conservation Trust (2016). *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

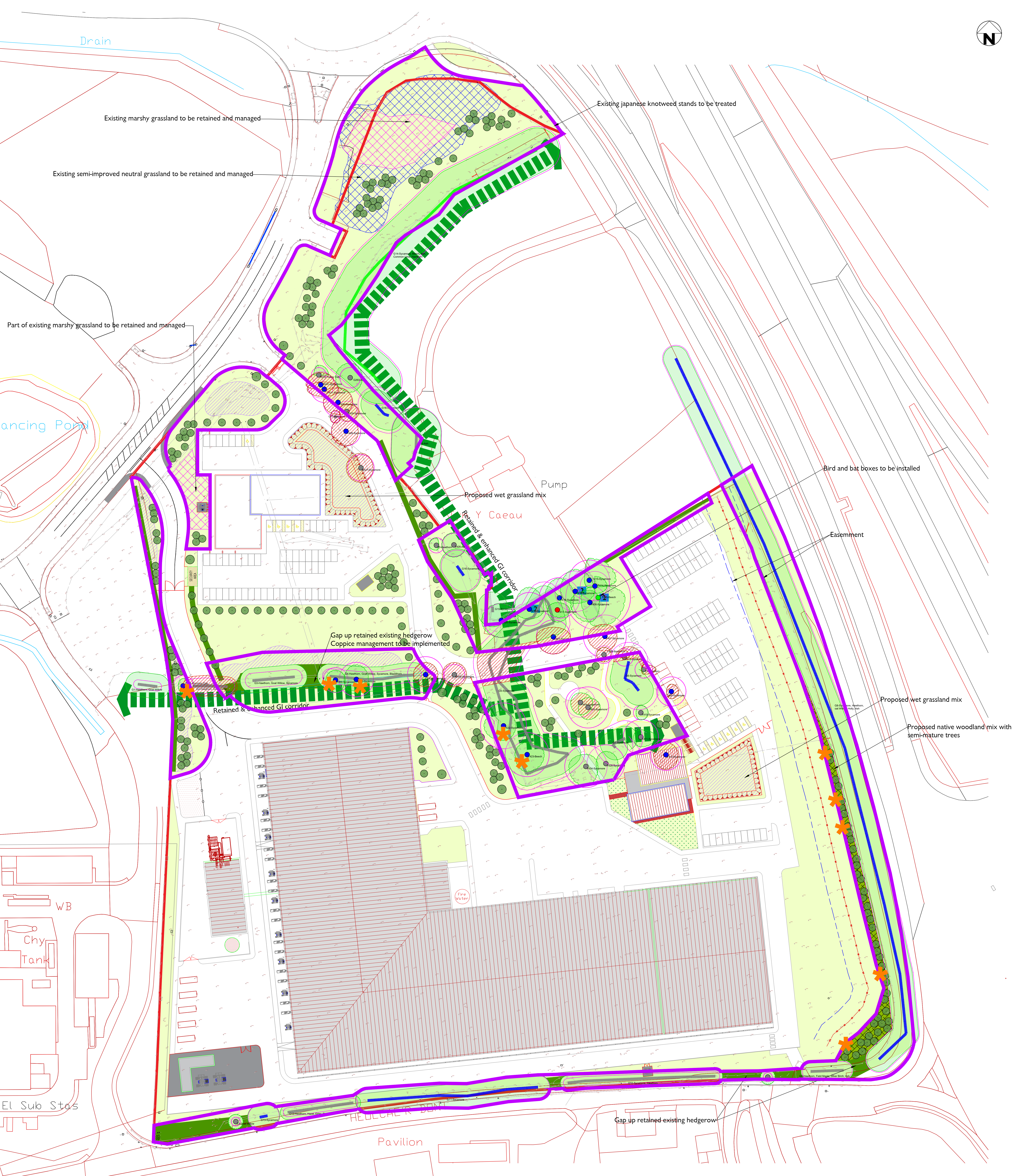
Boyer Planning (2022). *Environmental Statement: Land off Junction 38 of the M4, Margam. Chapter 10. Ecology & Nature Conservation*.

Soltys Brewster Ecology (2022). *Land off Junction 38, M4, Margam. Ecology Note to Inform EIA Scoping*.
Document Reference: E21102201/DOC 01 – 02 FEBRUARY 2022.

Tetra Tech Limited (2023). *Sandvik Osprey, Margam. Construction and Environment Management Plan*.
Document Reference: B032061.

APPENDIX I ECOLOGY MITIGATION PLAN

DRAFT



Proposed Tree

-  Proposed Native Woodland Mix
-  Proposed Native Hedge Mix
-  Proposed Meadow Mix
-  Proposed Grass
-  Proposed Biodiversity Protection Zones (BPZs)

✳️ **Proposed location for mitigation (bird boxes)**
 - to be agreed on site with the project ecologist. In total, 5no. Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Boxes (or similar design for use by hole nesting species) and 5no. Vivara Pro Barcelona WoodStone Open Nest Boxes (or similar open-fronted design)

-  Retained marshy grassland
-  Retained semi-improved neutral grassland

Plant List

Native Woodland Mix (W1)		
1 per m ² sward randomly planted in single species of between 3-5 species		
%	Latin Name	Common Name
5	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Black Alder
10	<i>Betula pendula</i>	Silver Birch
5	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Common Dogwood
10	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Common Hazel
5	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Common Hawthorn
5	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Common Holly
5	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab Apple
15	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scots Pine
5	<i>Prunus padus</i>	Bird Cherry
15	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Common Oak
5	<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Grey Willow
10	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan

Trees		
Code	Latin Name	Common Name
T1	<i>Acer rubrum</i> 'Armstrong'	Red Maple 'Armstrong'
T2	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Common Alder
T3	<i>Betula utilis</i> var. <i>jacquemontii</i>	Himalayan birch
T4	<i>Castanea sativa</i>	Sweet Chestnut
T5	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Common Beech
T6	<i>Malus</i> 'Evereste'	Crab Apple 'Evereste'
T7	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scots Pine
T8	<i>Prunus avium</i>	Gean or Wild Cherry
T9	<i>Quercus robur</i>	Common Oak
T10	<i>Tilia cordata</i> 'Streetwise'	Small Leaved Lime 'Streetwise'

Native Hedge Mix (HM1)
Note: Plant in a 1m prepared line, 6 plants per linear metre in a double staggered row in the

%	Latin Name	Common Name
10	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Common Dogwood
20	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Common Hazel
40	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Common Hawthorn
5	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Common Holly
5	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Honeysuckle
5	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
5	<i>Rosa canina</i>	Dog Rose
10	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	Rowan

Meadow Mix			
Code	Name	Specification	Additional Info
MM1	Seasonal flood tolerant meadow mix	Emorsgate Seeds EC1	Sown at 2g/m ²
		Emorsgate Seeds EM8	Sown at 4g/m ²
MM2	Standard general purpose meadow mix	Emorsgate Seeds EC1	Sown at 2g/m ²
		Emorsgate Seeds EM2	Sown at 4g/m ²

PL02	04.04.23	Updates bird boxes and BPZs	CC/B5	Y0
PL01	22.03.23	Planning Issue	B5	CO
Rev.	Date	Comment	Approved	Drawn

PRELIMINARY | **PLANNING** | DESIGN | TENDER | CONSTRUCTION

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Land off Junction 38, M4, Margam

□ drawing title

Ecology Mitigation Plan

Ecology Mitigation Plan

○ scale ○ drawn ○ approved ○ date

1:500 © A0 CC BS Mar 2023

○ drawing no. _____ ○ revision _____

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58 Project Number Originator Zone Level Type Role Number

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