

RSK TECHNICAL NOTE

Project No.: 2486040
Title: Port Talbot Steel Works-Vodafone Mast- Ecological Constraints Report
Date: 09/02/2024
Status: Rev00

1.0 VODAFONE MAST ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This technical note details potential ecological constraints associated with the proposed mobile phone mast development at Tata Steel, Port Talbot.
- 1.1.2 The site is within the former scrap management site for the Tata Steel Infrastructure, which sites approximately 250m southeast of the works reservoir, 167m west / southwest of Coke Road and 620m east / northeast of the coastline.
- 1.1.3 The site will be developed for a 27m high mobile phone mast with associated foundation plate, gantry, power cabinet, dishes and antennae.

1.2 Methodology

- 1.2.1 A suite of ecological surveys, including a preliminary ecological appraisal, have been completed on the site on behalf of Tata Steel by RSK Biocensus over 2022 and 2023.
- 1.2.2 Therefore, a desk based assessment was undertaken, reviewing the existing information available for the site.

1.3 Results

- 1.3.1 There are two statutory designated sites within 2 km of the site boundary, comprising two SSSIs.

Table 1: Statutory sites within 2km of the site boundary

Site name	Reasons for designation	Approximate distance (m) from site
Margam Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	The last remaining example of the once extensive coastal levels in West Glamorgan. Bounded to the seaward by dunes and to landward by high ground, the meadows provide an agriculturally-managed freshwater habitat which hosts many	1320

	species of plant on the edge of their geographical range, and nationally important invertebrates. Mesotrophic marsh, fen meadow and ditch communities support flowering-rush (<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>), frogbit (<i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i>), arrowhead (<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>), Cyperus sedge (<i>Carex pseudocyperus</i>) and brown sedge (<i>C. disticha</i>) on the edge of their range, with others such as lesser water-plantain (<i>Baldellia ranunculoides</i>), tubular water-dropwort (<i>Oenanthe fistulosa</i>) and marsh helleborine (<i>Epipactis palustris</i>) of local interest. The nationally rare beetle (<i>Halplus mucronatus</i>), the dragonfly (<i>Sympetrum sanguineum</i>) the regionally rare beetle (<i>Anacaena bipustulata</i>), and the water-bug (<i>Corixa panzeri</i>) have all been found in the ditches. The SSSI is located south of the site boundary.	
Eglwys Nunydd Reservoir SSSI	The largest sheet of fresh water in the county. On the site of Margam Moors which, before being reclaimed for the Abbey Steel Works, were a notable site for wildfowl. The reservoir attracts large numbers of wintering waterfowl and passage migrants. Notable species including Great Crested and Little Grebes, Mallard, Gadwall and Coot now breed. The SSSI is located to the south east of the site boundary.	1790

Habitats

- 1.3.2 The site predominantly consisted of hard standing with bunds along the boundary supporting scrub and a building.

Protected / notable Species

- 1.3.3 The building was not suitable to support roosting bats and there was no evidence of other protected / notable species within the area to be impacted by the works.
- 1.3.4 A male and female peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), a Schedule 1 species, were observed on a gas holder, approximately 600m to the south of the site on three survey visits. During one survey the female landed briefly on top of the holder (the only occasion a peregrine was seen landing on top of the structure). The pair then flew around the holder, one bird landing on a narrow ledge while the other perched on a stair handrail. The ledge is narrow, no faeces or young birds could be seen in the vicinity of the ledge during the surveys, adults were not observed taking food to the structure and no feeding remains or faeces were visible on the ground below the ledge. Breeding could not be ruled out as the top of the gas holder could not be viewed and the ledge could only be viewed from below.

1.4 Conclusion

- 1.4.1 The mast development will not necessitate the removal of any existing vegetation and access to the site will be along existing roads. It will also not cause significant disturbance to any protected / notable species on the wider Tata Steel site.
- 1.4.2 Given the requirement under Planning Policy Wales for every development to provide a Biodiversity Net Benefit, it is recommended that five bird boxes are purchased and donated to Tata Steel for them to install as part of their wider biodiversity improvement works. No improvements within the footprint of the works are recommended as it is in the middle of a highly active area of the site and anything placed here would be very isolated and disturbed.