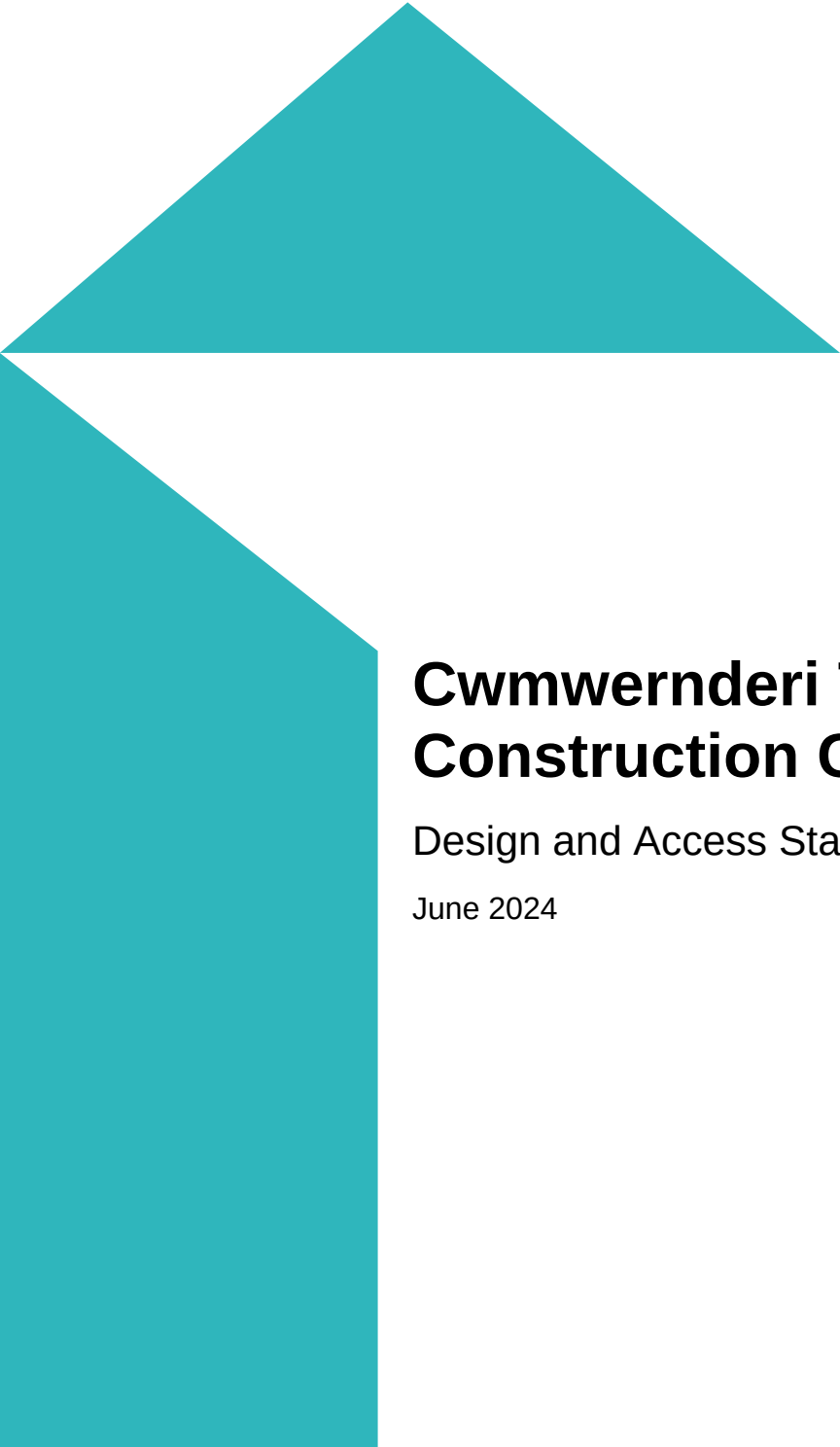




Cwmwernderi Temporary Construction Compound

Design and Access Statement

June 2024

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1.1 Introduction

This Design and Access Statement (DAS) has been prepared on behalf of Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) to support a temporary satellite construction compound at Cwmwernderi Reservoir.

The temporary satellite construction compound is required to facilitate necessary maintenance works to Cwmwernderi Reservoir as there is limited scope for a construction compound to be located adjacent to or within the operational boundary of the reservoir on land owned by DCWW.

The main works are being carried out under DCWW's permitted development rights and comprise of measures to increase the drawdown capacity of the reservoir.

The site is located approximately 5km to the east of Port Talbot at Cwmwernderi Reservoir within the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council area. The location of the site is displayed on the Site Location Plan (reference B14504-123532-XX-XX-DR-ZA-PN9015) submitted as part of this application.

The following documents have been submitted with this planning application:

Table 1 Planning application documents

Document	Reference
Design and Access Statement	This document
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report	B14504-123532-12-XX-RP-NB-EI0024
Site Location Plan	B14504-123532-XX-XX-DR-ZA-PN9015
Site Compound Layout Plan	B14504-123532-XX-XX-DR-ZA-PN9017
Office Unit Plan	21-0416-001
Welfare Unit Plan	21-0416-002

This document explains the need for the scheme and how the objectives of good design and subsequent restoration of the site have been considered in the development process.

1.2 The Scheme

The proposed scheme is for a temporary satellite construction compound to facilitate necessary maintenance works to Cwmwernderi Reservoir. The area of land within the red line boundary as shown on the Site Location Plan (reference B14504-123532-XX-XX-DR-ZA-PN9015) and is approximately 0.26 hectares.

The compound will comprise of an office unit, welfare unit, shelter, toilet facility and shower, storage container, water tank and site generator, a skip/refuelling area and parking bays shown on the Proposed Site Compound Layout drawing (reference B14504-123532-XX-XX-DR-ZA-PN9015).

The compound will be secured with a perimeter heras fence and access gate and will be required until December 2026, from which it will then be removed, and the land reinstated to its former condition.

1.3 Planning history

Planning permission has previously been granted for two temporary construction compounds to support the required works at Cwmwernderi Reservoir under planning application references

P2021/0987 and P2021/1059. **The current planning application only seeks consent for one temporary construction compound formerly consented under P2021/0987.**

1.4 Need for the Scheme

The scheme is required in order to undertake reservoir safety improvement works at Cwmwernderi Reservoir, as required under the Reservoirs Act 1975. In April 2020, an inspection under Section 10 of the Reservoirs Act 1975 was undertaken, with recommendations made to improve reservoir safety. A number of the recommendations made were deemed to be 'Matters in the interests of Safety' (MITIOS). These recommendations are statutory in nature and enforceable by the Enforcement Authority (National Resources Wales).

During the inspection it was noted that the access bridge to the valve tower was in a very poor condition, whereby the draw off valves and scour penstock on the tower were in poor repair and subsequently inoperable, and that the pipework within the tunnel had significant corrosion in areas with a lack of formal pipe support and thrust restraint.

Additionally, it was identified that the flow being discharged from the washout downstream of the dam was very low and unlikely to meet the requirements of the guidance on drawdown facilities.

The measures raised in the Section 10 Report are as follows:

Measures to be taken in the Interests of Safety under Section 10(3)(c) of the Act:

1. The valve tower access bridge and access tower be removed and then modified with facilities for reliable upstream control or safe access and reliable drawdown reinstated by another means.
2. Permanent works are installed to meet the guidance given in the recent document on drawdown rates at the reservoir.
3. The screen on the valve tower inlet be removed.
4. The scour pipework be modified to discharge near the outlet of the tunnel.
5. The pipe in the tunnel is either temporarily restrained or permanently restrained just in case transient pressures are experienced.

Measures to be taken under Section 10(3)(b) of the Act (Maintenance)

6. The redundant equipment and concrete slabbing be removed from the crest and the crest be reformed/regulated with the new crest levelling pins established onto the core.

There is a requirement for a temporary satellite construction compound to facilitate necessary maintenance works within the operational boundary of Cwmwernderi Reservoir as there is insufficient space adjacent to and within the operational boundary of the reservoir on land owned by DCWW.

In light of the requirements for measures to be taken by DCWW in the interests of safety and maintenance in accordance with The Reservoirs Act 1975, a temporary satellite construction compound is required. Additional justification is provided below:

- There is no space within the DCWW operative boundary of Cwmwernderi Reservoir for a compound.
- There is no telephone signal at the toe of the dam, therefore the primary site compound is approximately located 1 mile away from the reservoir as there is a need to be able to communicate with the design team and other services during the works.
- 24-hour security is required on site for health and safety reasons and providing the ability to make a call in the case of an emergency.

- Due to access restrictions, it is not possible for plant and machinery to be delivered to the toe of the dam. This will need to be off loaded at the compound areas and then transferred to the working area.

1.5 Planning Policy

Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council adopted the Local Development Plan (2011 – 2026) in January 2016 which will be used to guide development in the County Borough for the 15-year plan period.

The Council are also in the early stages of preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2023 – 2038, however adoption is anticipated in April 2027 and is therefore too early in the process to be considered a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

The proposed temporary satellite construction compound is situated outside the development boundary with the following relevant policy designations as stipulated on the proposals map as part of the Local Development Plan:

Table 2 Planning policy

Policy	Summary
M1 Development in Mineral Safeguarding Areas Safeguarded Minerals – Safeguarded Category 1 Sandstone Resource	Development proposals within mineral safeguarding areas will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that: 1. The mineral concerned is no longer of any value or potential value; or 2. The mineral can be extracted satisfactorily prior to the development taking place; or 3. In the case of temporary development, it can be implemented, and the site restored within the timescale that the mineral is likely to be needed; or 4. There is an overriding need for the development; or 5. The scale and location of the development would have no significant impact on the possible working of the resource.
SP21 Built Environment and Historic Heritage SP21/4(a) Landscape of Historic Interest – Margam Mountain	The built environment and historic heritage will, where appropriate, be conserved and enhanced through the following measures: 1. Encouraging high quality design standards in all development proposals; 2. Protecting arterial gateways from intrusive and inappropriate development; 3. Safeguarding features of historic and cultural importance; 4. The identification of the following designated sites to enable their protection and where appropriate enhancement: (a) Landscapes of Historic Interest; (b) Historic Parks and Gardens; (c) Conservation Areas; (d) Scheduled Ancient Monuments; and (e) Listed Buildings and their curtilage
EN 2 Special Landscape Areas EN 2/4 Special Landscape Areas - Margam	In order to protect areas of high landscape quality, the following Special Landscape Areas are designated: - EN2/4 Margam Development within the designated Special Landscape Areas will only be permitted where it is demonstrated that there will be no significant adverse impacts on the features and characteristics for which the Special Landscape Area has been designated.

Due to the temporary nature of the scheme, it is not anticipated to have any material effect on the policies listed above. The scale of location of the development will have no significant impact on the possible working of minerals, it will not affect the built environment and historic heritage of the area or cause significant adverse impacts on the features of the Margam Special Landscape Area.

Due to its temporary nature and requirement to facilitate maintenance works to a DCWW owned asset, the scheme is considered to conform with the planning policy framework of the adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011-2026.

The design of the scheme has strived to eliminate and minimise impacts where possible. The cabins, fencing and stone will be removed and the land will be left to revegetate naturally once the proposed maintenance works have been completed, as scheduled in December 2026, and the temporary satellite construction compound is no longer required.

1.6 Design

The installation of the temporary satellite construction compound will involve clearing the area of vegetation, grinding down any stumps and putting down stone as a base to withstand temporary construction cabins and associated vehicle movements throughout the duration of the proposed works.

At the completion of the proposed works, the cabins, fencing and stone will be removed, and the area left to revegetate naturally.

1.7 Biodiversity

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR) has been produced and submitted with the planning application (document reference B14504-123532-12-XX-RP-NB-EI0024).

The PEAR submitted to support the planning application includes reference to two temporary construction compounds. Reference should only be made to the 'Primary Compound' for the purposes of this planning application.

Planning policies within the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Local Development Plan relating to biodiversity and nature conservation are as follows:

Table 3 Biodiversity planning policy

Policy	Summary
SP15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity	Important habitats, species and sites of geological interest will be protected, conserved, enhanced and managed through the following measures: 1. The identification of the following Internationally and Nationally designated sites within the County Borough to enable their protection: (a) Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites; (b) Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs); (c) National Nature Reserves (NNRs). 2. The identification and protection of sites of regional and local importance; 3. The protection of important natural heritage features.
EN6 Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites	Development proposals that would affect Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs), sites meeting SINC criteria or sites supporting Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) or S42 habitats or species will only be permitted where: 1. They conserve and where possible enhance the natural heritage importance of the site; or 2. The development could not reasonably be located elsewhere, and the benefits of the development outweigh the natural heritage importance of the site. Mitigation and/or compensation measures will need to be agreed where adverse effects are unavoidable.
EN7 Important Natural Features	Development proposals that would adversely affect ecologically or visually important natural features such as trees, woodlands, hedgerows / field boundaries, watercourses or ponds will only be permitted where:

Policy	Summary
	1. Full account has been taken of the relevant features in the design of the development, with measures put in place to ensure that they are retained and protected wherever possible; or 2. The biodiversity value and role of the relevant feature has been taken into account and where removal is unavoidable, mitigation measures are agreed.

A desk study was undertaken as part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report and no statutory designated sites or Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) were identified within the zone of influence (2km and 10km respectively).

The compound is situated within The Neath Port Talbot Watercourses SINC. 0.26ha of SINC designated land is being removed, however no watercourses (for which the SINC is designated) is to be impacted as part of the works. Neath Port Talbot Biodiversity Team (Rebecca Sharp and Laura Palmer) have been contacted about the main works, and they are happy that the impact on the SINC will be minimal, as long as there are standard pollution prevention measures in place no other specific mitigation is required (email dated 12.03.2021). In addition, Neath Port Talbot Biodiversity Team have been recontacted (June 2024) to ensure that they are still aware of the proposed work and still agree with the mitigation measures in place.

There are no waterbodies within the site and the OS maps show there are no standing waterbodies within 250m of the compound.

No protected species records were returned within 500m of the compound, with no dormice or great crested newts recorded within 2km of the site. No records for invasive non-native species were returned from within the site.

The results of the desk study and site visit as set out in the PEAR for protected and notable species determined that the plantation woodland is likely to be of local importance for nesting birds and the felled plantation woodland habitat is likely to be of local value for reptiles. The compound is of local value for common amphibian species.

The habitats present on site are common, widespread locally and of local value. 0.26ha will be temporarily lost. The felled plantation will be cleared and the process of succession will restart.

Based on the size and scope of works and lack of statutory designated sites within 2km, no other designated sites will be impacted by the works.

Results of the assessment and recommendations are set out in the PEAR submitted with this application for the impact of the development on the Neath Port Talbot Watercourses SINC, nesting bird habitats, common amphibians' habitats, and reptile habitats.

1.8 Access

Access to the site is to be taken from the village of Bryn on existing forestry roads directly to the north of Cwmwernderi Reservoir (easting 281802.481 northing 191854.646) as shown on the Site Location Plan (reference B14504-123532-XX-XX-DR-ZA-PN9015) as submitted with this application.

The satellite construction compound is temporary in nature to facilitate the proposed maintenance works at Cwmwernderi Reservoir and the cabins, fencing and stone will be removed upon completion of the proposed works.

1.9 Conclusion

To conclude, the proposed scheme will facilitate the necessary maintenance works at Cwmwernderi Reservoir as set out in Section 1.4 of this Report.

The design of the Scheme has strived to eliminate and minimise impacts where possible with the site being felled plantation woodland where the process of succession will restart.

The proposal is considered to be policy compliant, and this document addresses the requirements of a Design and Access Statement.

