

Pelenna Link Road – Peatland Impact Assessment



November 2024

Project Description

This Peatland assessment has been prepared to support the ongoing planning application for the upgrade of an existing forwarder extraction track to forest road specification in the Pelenna forest block. This document should be read in addition to the “Pelenna Link Ecological Survey Report” prepared to support the temporary and permanent Ordinary Watercourse Consent application approved by NPTCBC in July 2024.

The scheme is approximately 150m in length, 5m width for the purposes of timber haulage. The track will be upgraded by laying locally sourced 300mm+ aggregate with side drains both sides. The running surface of the track will be constructed with crusher run (80mm down) and a final dressing of Type 1 material. Total thickness of road to be approximately 500mm. Works will include the replacement of the existing watercourse crossing with a clear span arch culvert, aligning with the wider Pelenna catchment improvements.

Ground Conditions

The BGS map viewer shows the site is underlain by superficial deposits of Peat (Figure 1). The bedrock geology of the area is the Upper Coal Measures, encountered locally as interbedded sandstone, mudstone and coal. The site generally drains towards a shallow valley (crossed by an existing timber structure, to be replaced by clear span arch culvert). The watercourse and general drainage are ENE to WSW direction.

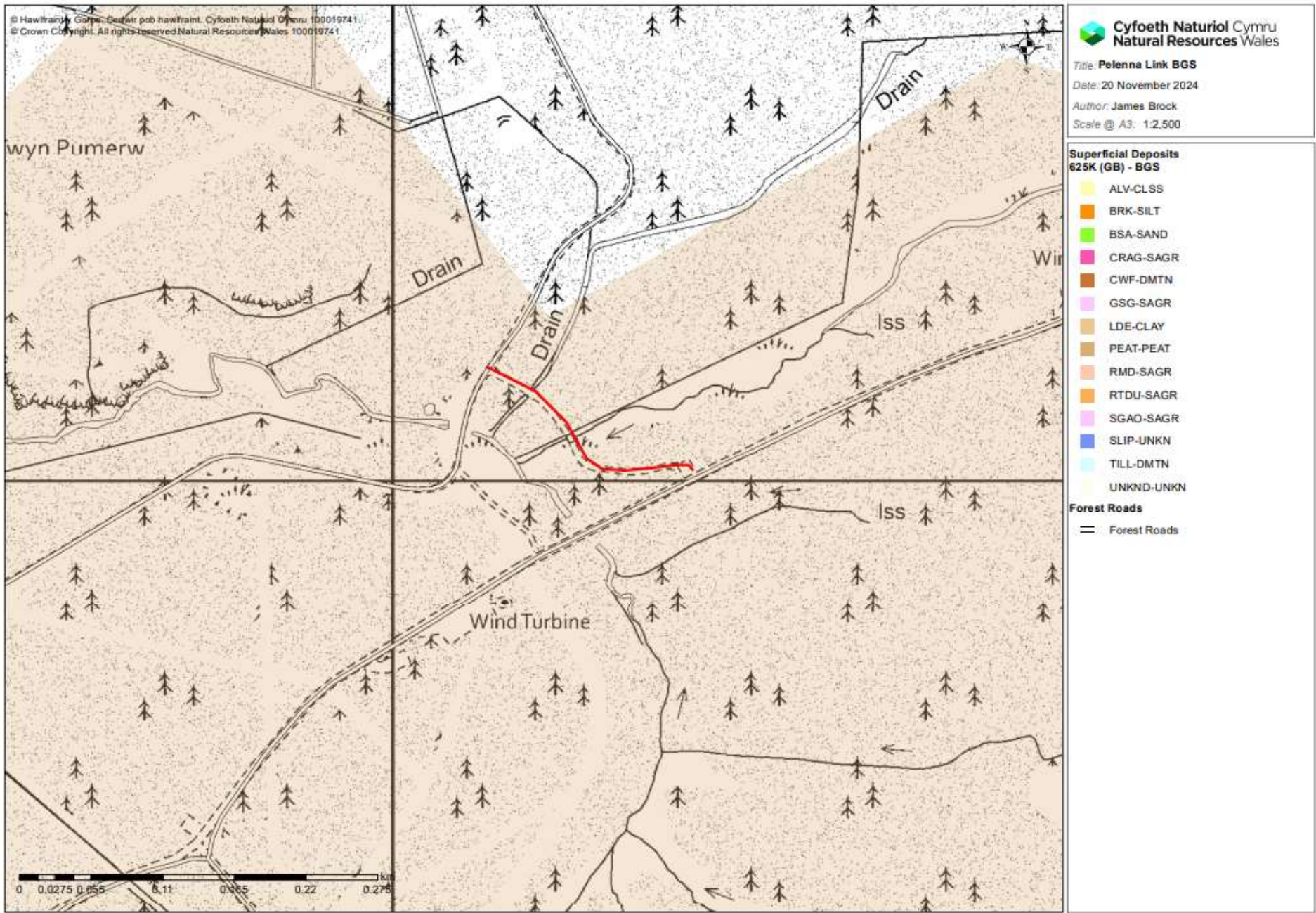


Figure 1 - Superficial Deposits

To ascertain the depth of peat along the road alignment, a peat probing exercise was completed with the support of the NRW Peatland restoration team during October 2024. The depths of peat probing are presented in Figure 2 below.

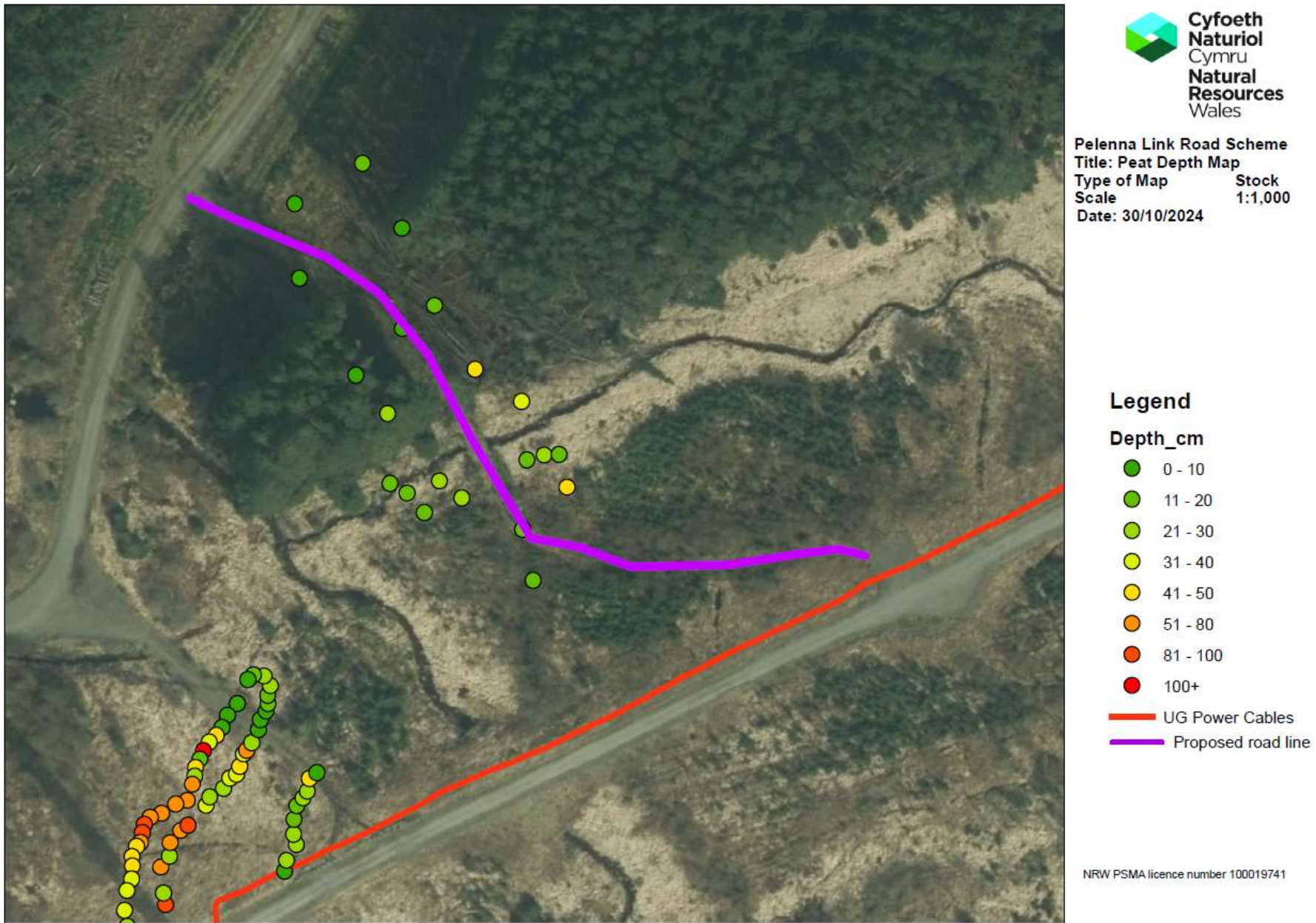


Figure 2 - Peat Probe Depths

Peat deposits of varying depths were encountered along and adjacent to the proposed road line. No deposits thicker than 20cm were encountered along the route. Peat depths between 40-50cm were encountered at 2No. locations to the east of the road alignment, however, it is not envisaged that these areas will be detrimentally impacted as part of the proposed works as they are located over 10m from the proposed alignment. There is therefore deemed to be no impact on “deep peat” with the proposed road alignment. An interpolation of the available data set is presented in Figure 3 and shows the average depth of peat along the route to lie between 20-30cm.

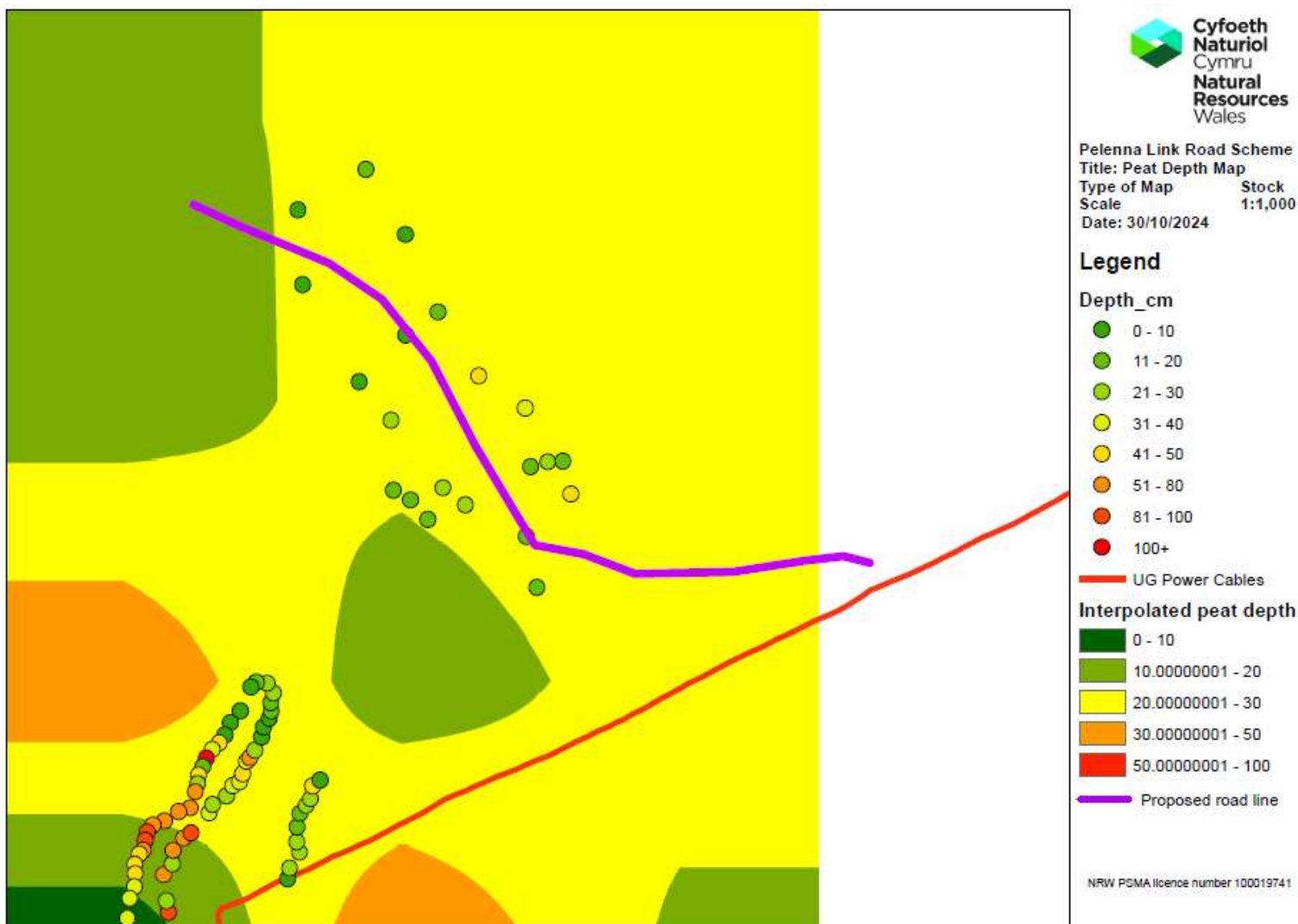


Figure 3 - Peat Depth Interpolation

Peatland Improvement

As part of the proposed project, naturally regenerating timber will be removed from the route alignment and stumps upturned to align with the wider peat land restoration programme. Peatland restoration activities such as ditch blocking and stump overturning will also be completed in the recently clear-felled area to the north of the watercourse (Figure 4). These activities will be beneficial to both the peatland and the water quality of the wider Nant Pelenna catchment.

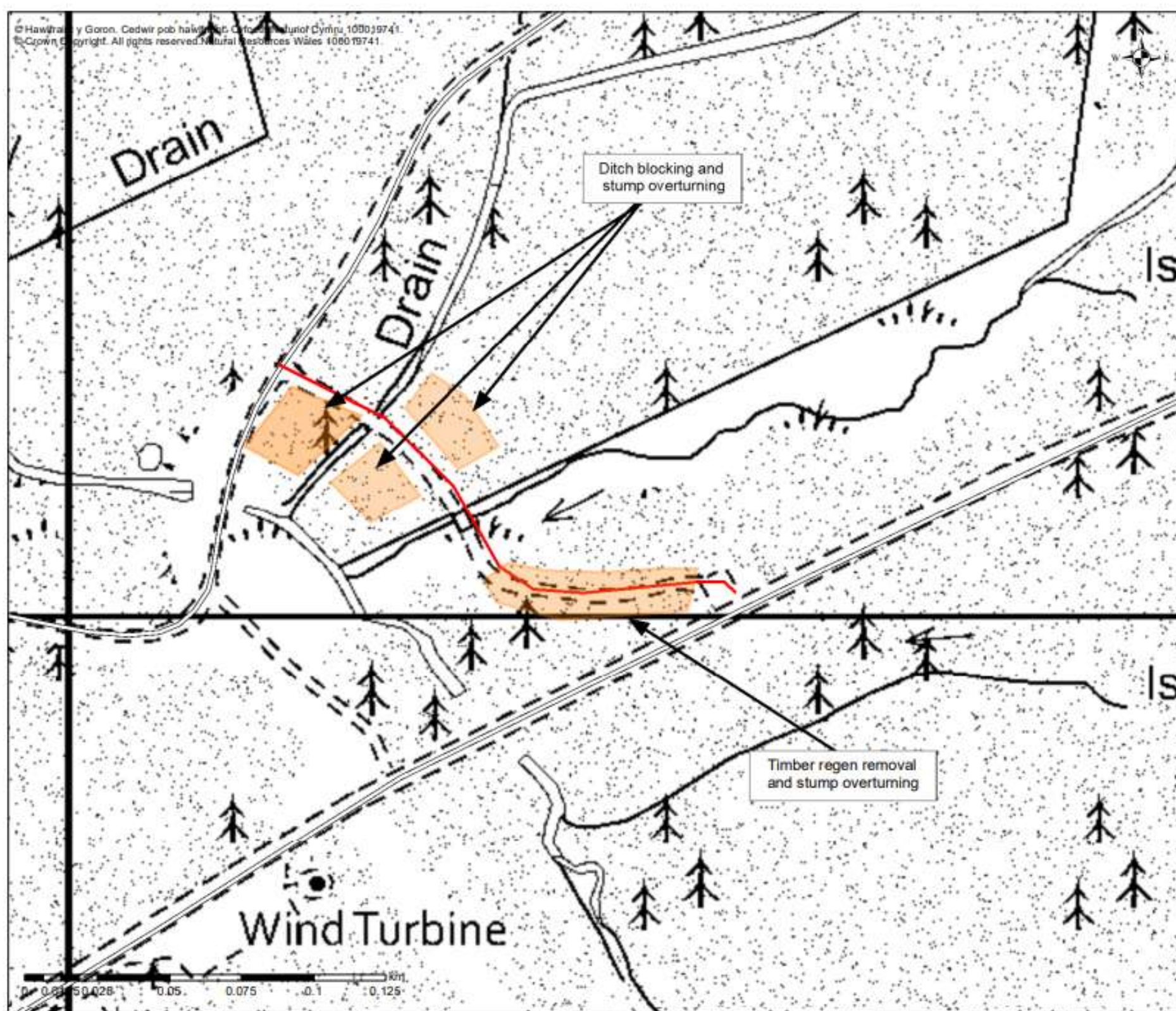


Figure 4 - Peatland Improvement