

CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN

Proposed ground mounted solar PV array with a generating capacity of up to 1.3MW, including development of ancillary structures, fencing and landscaping works,

Sun Fields, Dream Fields, Lane From B4290 To Gelli Bwch Farm, Jersey Marine, Neath, Neath Port Talbot, SA10 6JU

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1.0 Scope

This Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been formulated to support the discharge of planning condition 8 of approved planning application P2023/0356.

The following plan is a qualified assessment based on current information and is subject to refinement as the project evolves. We have prepared our plan to outline how this project will be constructed including a review of the construction methodology, site logistics and environmental measures to be undertaken. This report also describes the proposed outline programme and key activities for the construction works. Potentially significant environmental impacts associated with these activities are identified and where necessary, proposals for mitigation are outlined.

Input has been sought and provided from Hawkeswood Ecology, specifically in relation to Invasive species management, species and habitats protection, avoidance and mitigation measures. This is attached as Appendix 3 of this report.

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Planning for the construction is necessarily broad at this stage and may be subject to modifications during detailed construction planning. Consequently, a number of aspects of construction in relation to environmental issues cannot, at this stage, be accurately predicted. For examples, the number of vehicles required during site works will be dependent on the progress of the works against the construction program.

This document provides details all necessary pollution prevention measures for the construction phase of the development of the procedures to be followed in the event of a pollution incident and sets out a procedure for recording and reporting of such incidents, should they occur.

The procedure also sets out the requirement for the establishment of Pollution Incident Control Teams where the size, complexity or the environmental risks identified at Construction Phase dictates.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

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N395-A08 - PROPOSED SITE PLAN Rev (G)

Hawkeswood Ecology Report Ref. HE/47/2023 - Mitigation and Biodiversity Enhancement - Issue 2 (December 2024)

Hawkeswood Ecology Report Ref. HE/47/2023 - Green Infrastructure Statement, Dreamfields Solar Farm - Issue 1 (2 December 2024)

N395 - A17 CONSTRUCTION ACCESS - VISIBILITY SPLAY (A)

N395 - A16 OPERATIONAL ACCESS - VISIBILITY SPLAY (A)

N395 - A09 PROPOSED PV ARRAY AND SITE ENCLOSURE DETAILS (B)

Planning Design and Access Statement

PAC Report

22-005-P-03E Landscape Strategy/Planting Plan

Air Quality Technical Note (ref: 0128 - July 2023) prepared by Greenavon Air Quality Consultants

Drainage Technical Note (ref: C1853 Rev.C - October 2023), prepared by CB3 Ecology Statement re potential run-off issues and SAC

Agricultural Land Classification Report (ref: KCC3512 - July 2023) prepared by Kernon Countryside Consultants

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (ref: HE/34/2021 - Issue 1) prepared by Hawkeswood Ecology Ltd

In Season Walk Over (follow up to PEA) Report prepared by Hawkeswood Ecology Ltd

Landscape and Visual Appraisal (ref:2311/EH/LVA001) prepared by Bea Landscape Design Ltd

Heritage Settings Assessment (ref:2169 - February 2023) prepared by Archaeology Wales

N395 - A07 - SITE LOCATION PLAN - (B)

2.0 Background

The purpose of document is to ensure that the site contractor develops and implements a CEMP to help ensure that construction activities are planned and managed in accordance with the environmental requirements of the project.

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Construction activities in general have the potential to impact on the environment. They have an interface within existing infrastructure, industry and commercial zones, domestic housing, and settlements. There is a watercourse located on the site.

Other sensitive receptors will be identified prior to and during the construction works. A list of sensitive receptors will be prepared and maintained by the Environmental Representatives of the construction teams. This will form the basis of any risk assessment for environmental issues for works in or adjacent to these areas. Such receptors may include buildings roads (in terms of dust), water bodies and other receptors potentially at risk from the effects of construction activities.

The objectives of the method statement are to:

- Prevent Pollution during the Construction Phase of the development.
- Ensure a safe place of work.
- Establish the criteria for Safe Systems of Work.
- Provide Protection of staff and the environment from potential exposure to harmful materials.
- To provide protection of environment from contamination.
- To enable the construction operation to be completed on time and to the required standard.

All works will be carried out to comply to all statutory health, safety and environmental legislation including: the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Construction Design and Management Regulations 2015, The Construction Health Safety and Welfare Regulations 1996, The Special Waste Regulations 1996 and all Duty of Care legislation.

3.0 Site Parameters

Before commencing works the Site Manager will ensure that all correct Construction Procedures are being followed and that all relevant information is available, including:

- All drawings are available e.g. Setting Out and Service Drawings
- All Services have been located and marked out. (Services to be located by hand digging)
- Permit to Dig system is being adhered to
- The contents of this Method Statement have been discussed with operatives carrying out the works and a record signature obtained.

Relevant Contractual & Legal References

- Collection & Disposal of Waste Regulations 1988 (amended 1989)
- The Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2011
- Controlled Waste (England & Wales) Regulations 2012
- Site Waste Management Plans Regulations 2008
- Hazardous Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2005
- The Environmental protection Act 1990

4.0 Planning and Implementation

Phasing and Drainage

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The existing development is classified as greenfield, with the land currently being used for agricultural purposes. The land has been assessed as being of poor agricultural quality. HR Wallingford's greenfield run off tool suggests that the existing ground should be suitable for infiltration with a soil index classification of 3, as defined in Flood Studies Report (NERC, 1975). There is also an existing field drainage network that further compliments the natural free draining ground which is located along the western boundary of the site and discharges to a heavily wooded area located along the northern boundary of the site.

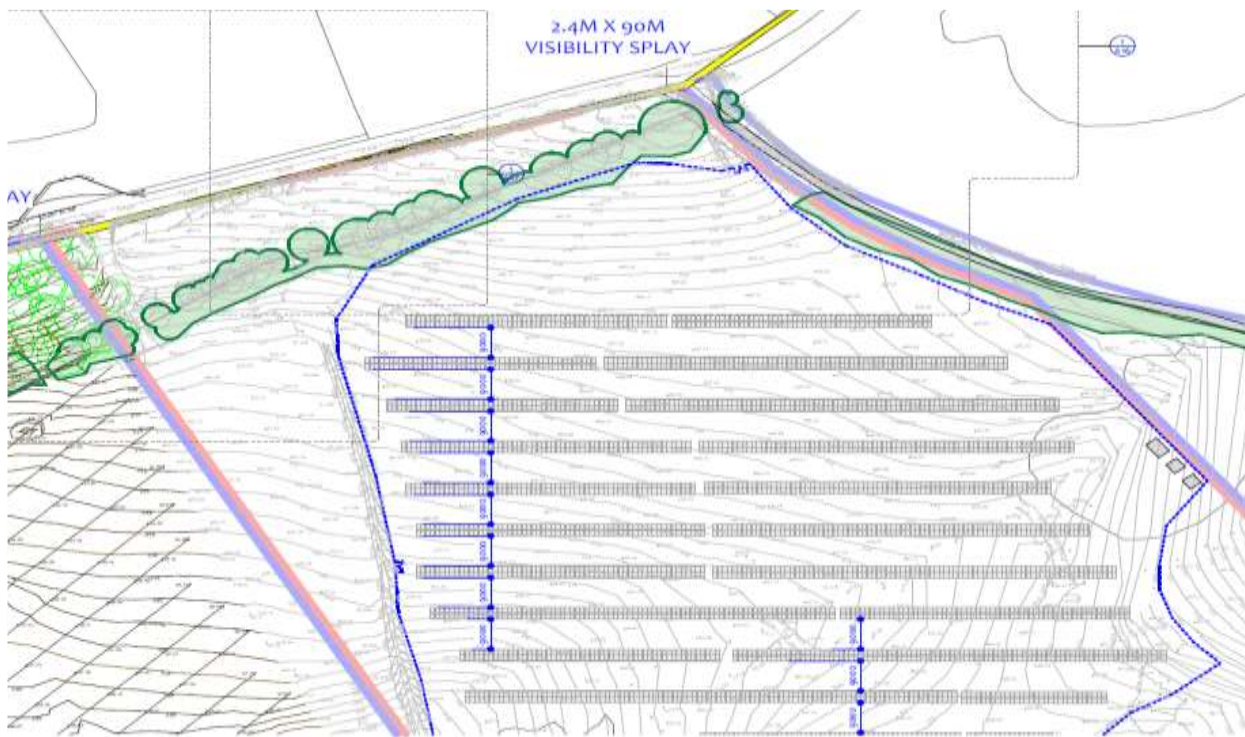
The proposed development will involve the construction of a ground mounted solar farm. The solar farm will comprise of 2594 PV panels, which will each be fixed and mounted onto a metal frame. The panels will be laid out in a series of straight arrays running generally east to west across the site.

The metal framework will be supported by mounted posts approximately 5m apart, depending on the orientation / configuration of the panels. The mounted system will be fixed to a non-intrusive ballast system. The panels will be arranged to avoid existing field drainage ditches. The development also requires the construction of 3No. GRP enclosures to house the mains LV panel, transformer and ring main unit. The GRP enclosures are constructed off raised concrete plinths.

5.0 Solar Panel construction

The plans show that the PV Array modules would be set in rows on an east-west axis, with the panels facing south. The rows of panels would be set at distances of 9m between rows, in order to maximise the efficiency of solar generation to and prevent any overshadowing between rows.

Proposed site showing location of PV Array Modules



The elevations show that the modules would be ground mounted using screwed in anchors with the panels angled at 30 degrees.

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The plans show that the PV Array modules would be set in rows on an east-west axis, with the panels facing south. The rows of panels would be set at distances of 9m between rows, in order to maximise the efficiency of solar generation to and prevent any overshadowing between rows.

The Park Tegra Ground Anchor screws directly into the ground, making it a quick and popular solution. It is recommended to use a 2.5-tonne cylinder head hydraulic auger unit with a reverse option for optimal installation.

For grounds that require more pressure, a 4-5 tonne auger unit is more suited. An auger adapter is provided to fit the auger unit, facilitating the installation process



The mounting system is constructed from high-quality materials including aluminium, stainless steel, and galvanised steel (EN ISO 1461). This ensures long-lasting durability and resistance to corrosion, making it suitable for various environmental conditions

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Augers will be muffled to reduce noise pollution to surround residential areas

The site comprises grass pasture that slopes down towards the south to north.

The proposed PV array will be constructed over the existing landform and aligned to follow the prevailing ground contours; no re-profiling should take place.

DC cables from the solar arrays are typically routed in channels suspended under the solar modules. DC string cables will be run to the end of each array row, enter into an underground duct and run along the end of the arrays to the inverter housing units. Where DC cables are buried, they should be in marked ducting that provides mechanical protection. For agricultural sites where the land is not cultivated or arable then cables must be buried to at least 0.6m.

Due to the site's ground make up it is thought that 0.6m is sufficient.

This access will be the sole access to the site during the construction period and for the limited access required when the site is operational. No vehicle parking, loading or unloading will take place within the public highway. All routes will be kept free of obstacles and trip hazards during the period of installation.

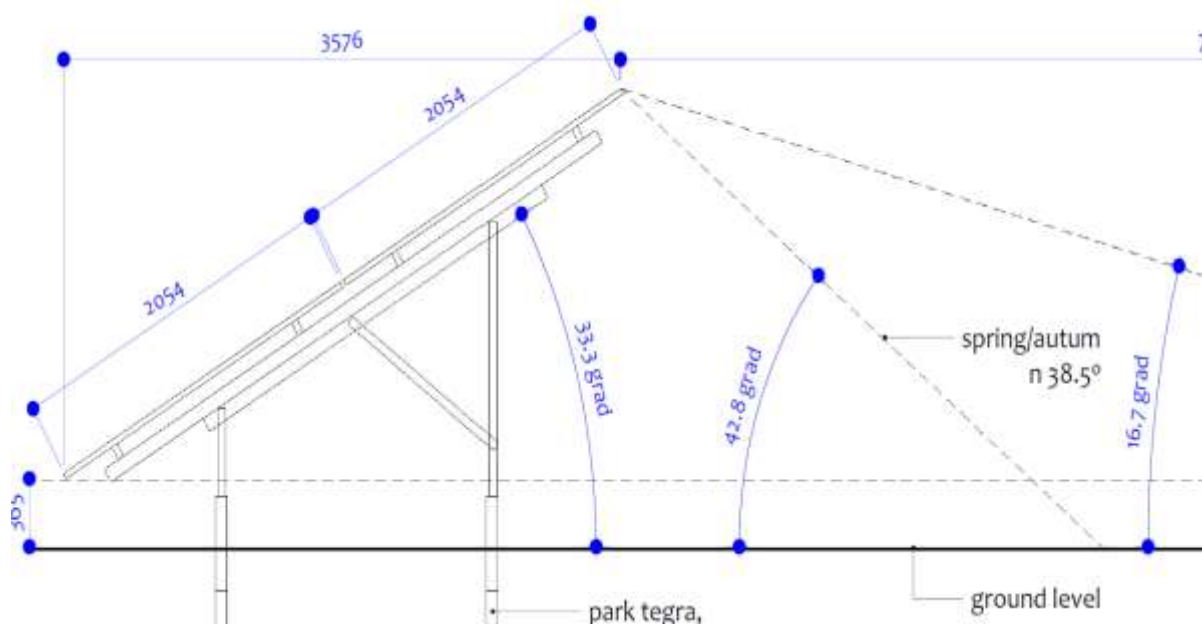
Entrance gate will be close at all times and warning signs will be erected at the entrance and along the road Please note Appendix 1 for details

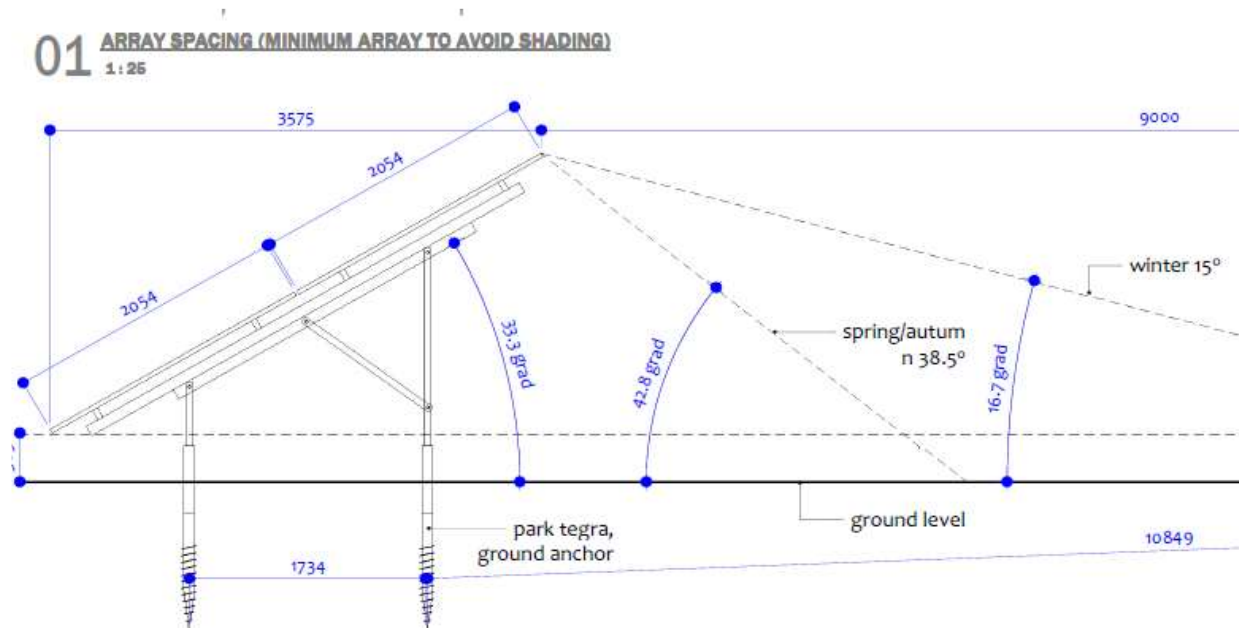
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The installation and use of access tracks within the solar farm area should be kept to minimum. Vehicular movement on the site should be restricted to designated access tracks. No access tracks between rows of solar panels, other than those considered in the proposals, should be constructed. Instead, the site operation team should aim to service the facilities utilising a pickup vehicle and an excavator to excavate the compound area and the vehicle thus minimising the compaction of the soils.

Plant Equipment would include but would not be limited to the following:

Equipment	Function
Vibrating Roller	Compacting access track (if in scope) and temporary Compound
Dump Trucks	Earth Removal
JCB Digger	Trenching. Preparing temporary Compound Area, Attachment for the Auger





Proposed Fencing

The proposed development would include the development of 2-metre-tall wire mesh security fencing to ensure the panels remain safe and secure during the operational phase of development. The operation of the development will also be requiring cabling within the site and a proposed transfer and inverter enclosure, which will be located adjoining the eastern boundary of the site.

Prepare the Foundations

Holes to be dug about 600mm deep and 300mm in diameter Add a layer of gravel at the bottom for drainage and then Concrete

A mix it at a 1:2:4 ratio (cement, sand, and aggregate) for strength make sure it's not too watery—it should hold its shape without being too stiff. Let it cure for at least 48 hours to ensure the posts are solid.

Position the Posts

Once the concrete has set, it's time to get the posts in place. Use a string line or a laser level to make sure they're perfectly aligned along the fence line.

Attach the Mesh Panels

Start at one of the end posts and attach your first mesh panel using tamper-proof fasteners. These are worth investing in—they keep your fence secure and stop anyone from undoing them easily.

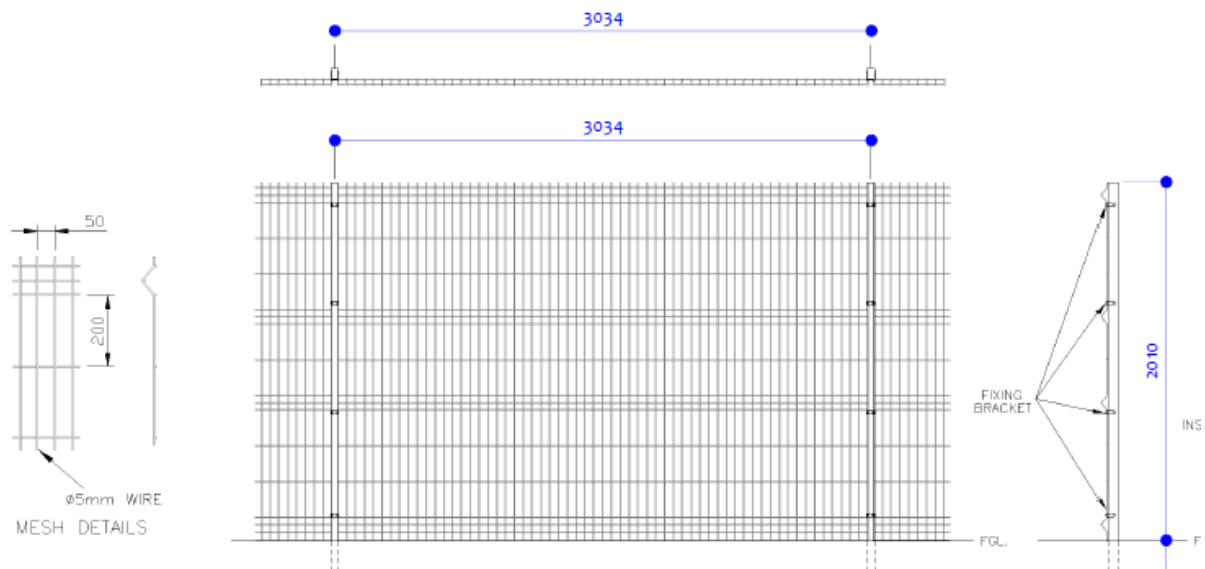
To get the right tension, you might need a tensioning tool. It'll keep the mesh panels tight and looking neat.

Install the Gate

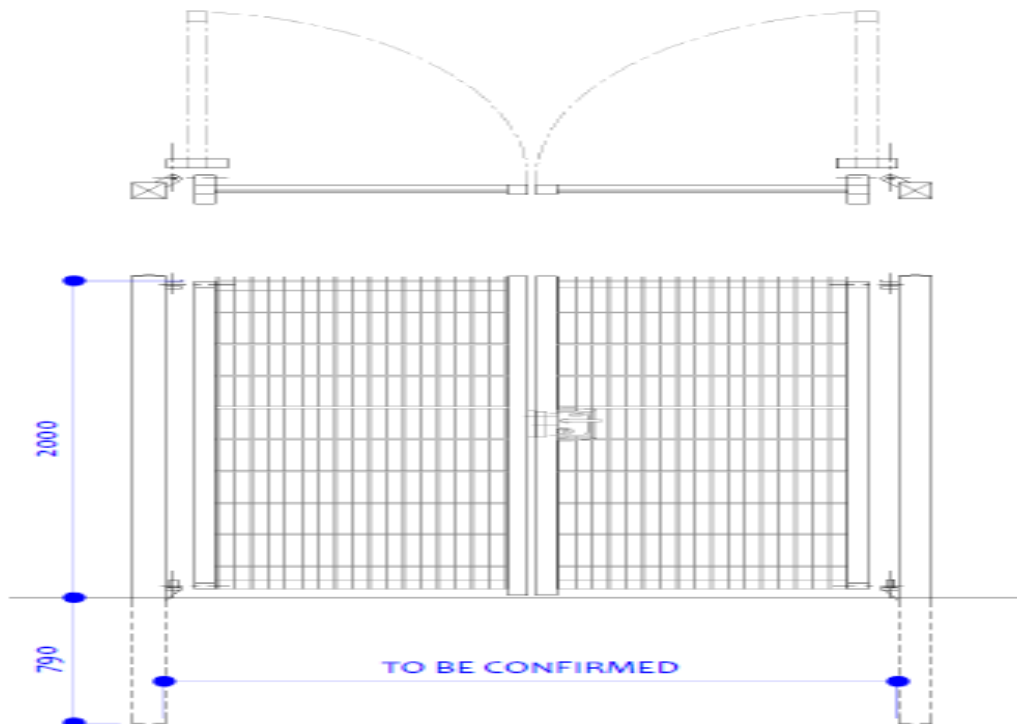
Gate posts need extra reinforcement since they'll take more wear and tear. Hole to be deeper with the foundation—about 800mm

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When hanging the gate, make sure it's level and opens smoothly. Leave a gap of about 50mm between the gate and the ground so it doesn't drag and don't forget to install a sturdy latch or locking mechanism to complete the setup



Access Gate



6.0 Site Access

Access to the site would be provided from the two existing fields access from the public highway to the north. Given the nature of the use once operational, no pedestrian or public access will be provided.

The proposed use as a solar farm would generate only two vehicular movements on the highway once operational Hales proposed to use a pickup van as such,

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Prior to being operational deliveries of solar panels and transformers/ invertors will be brought in when bases have been completed so they can be installed straight away

7.0 Dust Emissions

Construction activity can result in temporary impacts from dust if unmanaged. Dust emissions arising from the construction are a potential physical impact, giving rise to nuisance, soiling of vegetation.

- Dust observational monitoring will be carried out throughout the duration of the works and will be.
- Dust from mixing concrete will be very limited and is a considerable distance from residential properties,
- The loading of road vehicles shall be in such a manner as to minimise the generation of fugitive dust and, when appropriate,

8.0 Protection of Public Highway

Site Vehicles will not be loaded/unloaded on the public highway a designated area will be installed within the site perimeter,

No parking will be allowed out on the public highway as a designated area will be installed for the use of 1-2 vehicles inside of the site perimeter, No solar panels will be stored on site as they will be delivered to Hales main premises on Milland Rd Neath and will then be taken up to site by means of a pick-up truck which will carry upwards of 10 panels per trip so we envisage approximately 5 trip per day

A wheel wash area will be installed by the site entrance consisting of a jet wash area where there will be a designated washout area in a suitable place, we will ensure that water from wheel washing facilities from the wash down areas is contained and not allowed to soak into surrounding ground. We will channel the used water to a catchment area,

No Plant or machinery will be left near the entrance over-night

A temporary storage area with welfare facilities to be being installed and will be fenced off and lockable gates installed

No packaging or rubbish left near entrance that could blow onto the Highway.

There will be security cameras in place at the entrance to monitor site perimeter

Gates will be locked at the end of each shift.

9.0 Surface-water and Ground-water Pollution Prevention

A topographic survey of the site has been undertaken which confirms that the site falls from west to east and from south to north.

The drainage strategy for the site is to maintain the existing drainage regime with any rainfall that lands on the solar panels running onto the surrounding grassed areas and infiltrate into the underlying topsoil and being distributed through the topsoil and subsoil into the existing ground water system. The proposals do not alter the existing surface water drainage regime nor change the volume of water entering the ground water system. Any exceedance flows or excess run off will drain to the existing field drainage system with no change to the volume of runoff generated post development compared to the current arrangement.

Hales will monitor the field drainage system during the installation of the solar panels and also Hales do not envisage any runoff to the unclassified highway,

An acro channel is proposed to be inserted and awaiting information

10.0 Refuelling

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There is to be no fuel kept on site at present and what little plant/machinery on site will be filled up on a daily basis within site temporary compound and spill kits and drip trays will be in use and located in the storage container.

11.0 Waste Compound

A temporary hard standing area will be designated for the waste compound near the farm buildings. The area will be segregated from the main works by Heras fence with segregated skips for different waste streams. The on-site procedures regarding the segregation and disposal of waste will be communicated during the site induction. A COSHH bin with a sealed lid will be provided in the waste compound for the disposal of any COSHH items. The management and segregation of waste will be managed by the site foreman on site to prevent the buildup of waste around the proposed site and that waste is being designated to the correct skip. We envisage it will only be packaging from the Solar Panels.

In addition to the above, the principals of Reduce, Reuse, Recycle will also be implemented throughout the construction project.

The principal contractor will ensure that all surplus or waste materials from either materials imported to site or from those generated on site are dealt with responsibly. Relevant waste and resource management procedures will be communicated to all operatives during the initial site induction. This will include details on the appropriate segregation, handling, recycling, reuse and return methods to be used at all appropriate stages of the project.

A specific area shall be laid out and labelled to facilitate the separation of materials for potential reuse, recycling, and disposal. Recycling and waste receptacles are to be kept clean and should be marked clearly in order to avoid contamination of materials.

Potential waste streams during the construction process includes the following:

PV module packaging material. PV modules typically arrive on wooden pallets, and these will be either returned to the manufacturer or forwarded to a pallet management company for reuse. These pallets are often encased in either wood crates or cardboard boxes; this material will be segregated and then removed from the site on a regular basis.

Packing materials for other various components, such as screws, cabling, and mounting frames. Any non-recyclable waste will be segregated for regular removal to an appropriate landfill.

Food waste from workers. Personal rubbish will be collected along with non-recyclable packaging materials, for disposal at an appropriate landfill.

Appropriate welfare facilities including toilets will be hired for the duration of the construction period.

To prevent silt runoff and dust creation, any waste soils that have been excavated from the site will be re-used as backfill material or re-distributed around the site and used for remediation and biodiversity enhancement features.

(Please note location of waste compound in Appendix 1)

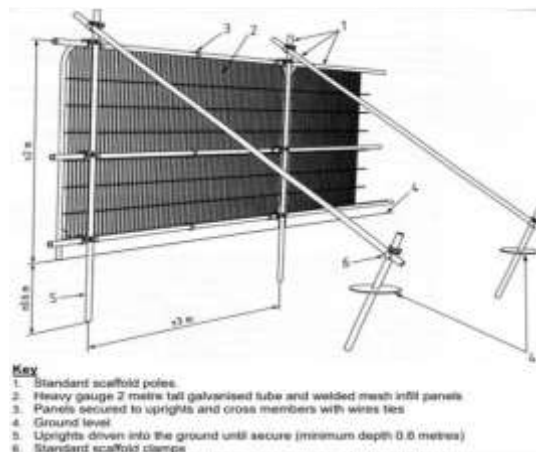
12.0 Tree Protecting measures.

Construction Operatives to be briefed and the remaining work to be finished regarding the retaining wall construction and operatives to be briefed by an Arboriculturist regarding tree safe methods and safe removal of building materials before any further work is to be carried out. Gravel and soil to be removed around the retained trees and 100mm depth of leaf mulch to be applied,

It has been recommended that tree planting of 22 standard sized native oak trees be planted between October to March in the area detailed on the tree constraints plan and any tree failures to be replanted during the following tree planting season,

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Hales to install Tree protective measures regarding Signage and Heras panels depicting Scaffolding Tube Tree Protection Fencing is a heavy duty and robust option to safely secure a perimeter to protect trees in the designated area. It is constructed with Temporary Mesh Fencing Panels which are supported using a range of High Yield Scaffold Tubes which are fixed using Pins and Couplers which can be found below.



13.0 Biodiversity Management

Any works on trees and scrub should be undertaken outside the accepted bird breeding season of March to August. There is no licence for the destruction of active bird nests and nest translocations invariably fail, in addition nest searches are often unsuccessful and miss nesting birds. Development timing is a key consideration should such works prove necessary. Checks should also be made prior to works undertaken outside the breeding season if the weather is fine as climate warming is leading to an extended breeding season.

In addition, if any trees are identified for removal, an inspection for potential use by roosting bats should be undertaken before works commence.

Before any further scrub clearance is undertaken a search will be made for the presence of badger setts.

Removal of scrub will be undertaken with due regard to the potential presence of reptiles and great crested newt.

All works will be undertaken by hand operated machinery (i.e. Rushcutters/chain saws).

Initial cuts will be made to a minimum height of approximately 10cm and will not reach to the ground level.

Before a cut is made to ground level, the Site will be walked over by a suitably experienced ecologist to look for great crested newts. The major impact on the ground vegetation would appear to be the trenching for cabling. It is recommended at this point, prior to a re-evaluation of the grassland, that the turfs in the semi-improved acid grassland area are removed and stored during trenching and replaced on completion.

14.0 Pollution Incidents Categorisation and Definitions

All pollution incidents must be managed and reported in accordance with the procedure. In order to be able to report appropriately on a pollution incident, the following definitions will be applied.

Pollution incidents are designated as "Major" and "Minor." The classification of an incident as "Major" or "Minor" where "significant environmental damage" has been caused is subject to

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the reporting procedure and will be determined by the Site Operations Manager and, as appropriate, environmental specialists.

In the event of a major environmental incident works will stop in the affected area until relevant controls have been implemented to ensure compliance or to prevent further environmental damage. The procedure below (*Table 1.0*) will be followed and include Instructions for all Site Staff in the event of a Pollution Incident" will be followed.

An incident that has occurred due to a failure in management systems and which has caused significant environmental damage.
An incident in breach of legal requirements (i.e. a breach of a legal consent or dispensation or causing a statutory nuisance).
An activity which does not comply with environmental procedures and gives rise to significant environmental pollution, contamination, or harm.
An activity identified as a breach of best practical means as set out in the relevant Section 61 Consent.
Working outside of consented working hours, as defined within the Section 61 Consents, without having notified the relevant EHO of the offence.

Environmental non-compliance with the Specialist Environmental Procedures will also be categorised and reported as a "pollution incident."

In addition to the classification of pollution incidents, "environmental damage" and "emergency" are defined as follows:

- Environmental damage – emissions to air (which for the purpose of this procedure includes noise), water and land which exceed specified levels of environmental legislation and standards and/or impact to a protected species or habitat; and
- Emergency – an event or series of events that are uncontrollable and which require assistance from external agencies.

An incident which has occurred due to a failure in management systems.
An incident which has potential to cause environmental damage.
An activity which does not comply with environmental procedures.
A major environmental incident that was normally avoided.
The use of an item of equipment which is considered to be neither best practice nor operating in accordance with best practicable means.

	Action	Responsibility
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1	Immediately stop work on site. Take appropriate safe actions to prevent further pollution occurring	Personnel present at the incident site
2	Notify Environmental Representative/Foreman/Team Leader of incident, possible environmental impact, and effect on works	Senior staff member at the incident site
3	Notify Ste Operations Manager, Pollution Incident Control Team and Site Safety Officer	Environmental Representative
4	Identify nearby sensitive receptors and take appropriate safe actions to prevent migration of pollutants	Environmental Representative / Incident Control Team
5	Monitor areas for further. contamination/migration of pollutants	Environmental Representative
6	Agree and implement remediation techniques (prepare method statements if required)	Senior staff members at the incident site
7	Complete Pollution Incident Control report. Senior staff member to provide instruction to re-start works on remediation of the incident	Senior staff member at the incident site

Table 1.0

15.0 Minor Spillages – roles and responsibilities

General Roles and Responsibilities

The roles of the pollution incident control teams are described in the following section. The Hales Safety Officer will maintain a register of all spillages, how it occurred, how it was cleared and how the contaminated material was disposed of.

Pollution Incident Control Teams

In the event of a pollution incident occurring on site, trained emergency pollution incident control Person will be called upon to implement immediate remediation works.

The Hales Safety Operator will be responsible for appointing Pollution Incident Control Person members for their section of the works.

A register of the Pollution Incident Control Teams will be developed by the construction team and maintained on site. The register will contain:

- Details of the names and roles of the Pollution Incident Control Team members and their contact telephone numbers.
- Names and contact telephone numbers of external parties; and
- Details of the locations of spill kit equipment will also be included.

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In addition to the information held onsite, emergency contacts and telephone numbers will be provided below (to be developed further upon contractor appointment):

Position	Name	Contact Number
Ambulance – Fire & Rescue - Police	Emergency Services	999
Site Manager	G Hale	07984012591
Site Safety Adviser	MP Whelan	07538432098
Site First Aid Attendant	G Hale	07984012591
Local Accident & Emergency Hospital	Morrison Hospital Heol Maes Eglwys. Morrison Swansea SA6 6NL	01792 702222
NRW Hotline	24 Hour Emergency	0800 807060
Health & Safety Executive	Ty Myrddin Old Station Road Carmarthen Dyfed SA31 1LP	01267 223267
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council – Environmental Health Officer – Pollution Control	The Quays Brunel Way, Briton Ferry Neath SA11 2GG	01639 686949

Inspection Procedures

In order to maintain controls on pollution control, the Pollution Incident Control Team person and / or site supervision will undertake weekly inspections of the areas where there is a pollution risk and where control measures are in place, as part of the Site weekly inspections.

Activities to be addressed & Control Procedures

On discovery of an environmental/pollution incident the procedures detailed in Table 1.0 will be followed. It should be noted that the detailed control and remediation of the pollution incident will depend upon its severity.

Monitoring, Auditing and Reporting

Monitoring will be undertaken via monthly audits, performed by the site Safety Officer, and by weekly H&S inspections undertaken by site supervision / management.

Full auditing will be undertaken with the Site Safety Officer responsible for maintaining records of all pollution incidents within the team. Reporting of major and minor incidents will be undertaken on the appropriate proforma.

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Major environmental incidents will be recorded on "Environmental Incident Notification Report" proforma and by using the system Defect Reporting procedure. These forms will be copied and filed at the site, as environmental incidents.

The Site Operations Manager (SOM) will be immediately notified verbally, of a major incident occurring and an incident report form will be completed and copied to the SOM as soon as is practicable but no longer than 24 hours following the incident.

All minor environmental incidents must be reported to the SOM. The completed forms will be copied to the Site Manager within 48 hours of the incident. The SOM will maintain a record of all major incidents. These will be reviewed monthly to continually improve on the environmental management systems in operation on site.

Training requirements

Specific training for Pollution Incident Control Teams will be provided prior to the commencement of major construction works on site. This will include:

- familiarisation with the Pollution Incident Control Plan.
- procedures to be followed in the event of a spillage.
- specialist training on the use of spillage control materials will be provided for the pollution incident.
- control team(s) by the equipment manufacturers.
- training on the disposal of spent spill-kit products, in accordance with the Waste Management Plan; and
- procedures for the notification of pollution incidents

The Site Manager and Site Safety Officer will be responsible for all training activities in respect of this plan.

16.0 Deliveries & Traffic Movement

All construction traffic entering and leaving the site should be closely controlled and consideration given to the local surrounding area small to medium sized vehicles making deliveries to the site or removing waste material etc, should avoid prohibited routes. There are no known weight limits on the approaching roads leading to the development site.

All material deliveries and waste removal will be transferred from within the grounds of the construction site. Deliveries will not be unloaded from the main access road to the proposed site, site Waste to be collected from the appropriate waste collection point within the temporary site compound where a small tipper skip will be located.

Typical deliveries will be scheduled to be:

- Outside of peak traffic times – between 8.00-9.00am and 3.00-4.00pm
- Deliveries to be direct to site and space provided within the site for storage, no deliveries will be stored outside of the site boundaries.
- Ensure clear passage is available to nearby facilities within the Lane.
- Parking will be monitored by contractor to ensure no concerns are raised with the local businesses
- Contractor/visitor parking to be onsite or located within the Farm Parking area.
- Delivery routes from JCG Building Milland Rd to Gelli Bwlch farm via.
- Milland Rd turn left and merge on to the A465,
- At the Llandarcy Interchange take 2nd left on to the B290,
- Take the first exit on your right and follow the road to Prettyman Drive and keep left to the western side of Llandarcy village and follow signage to entrance of dream fields Scheme.

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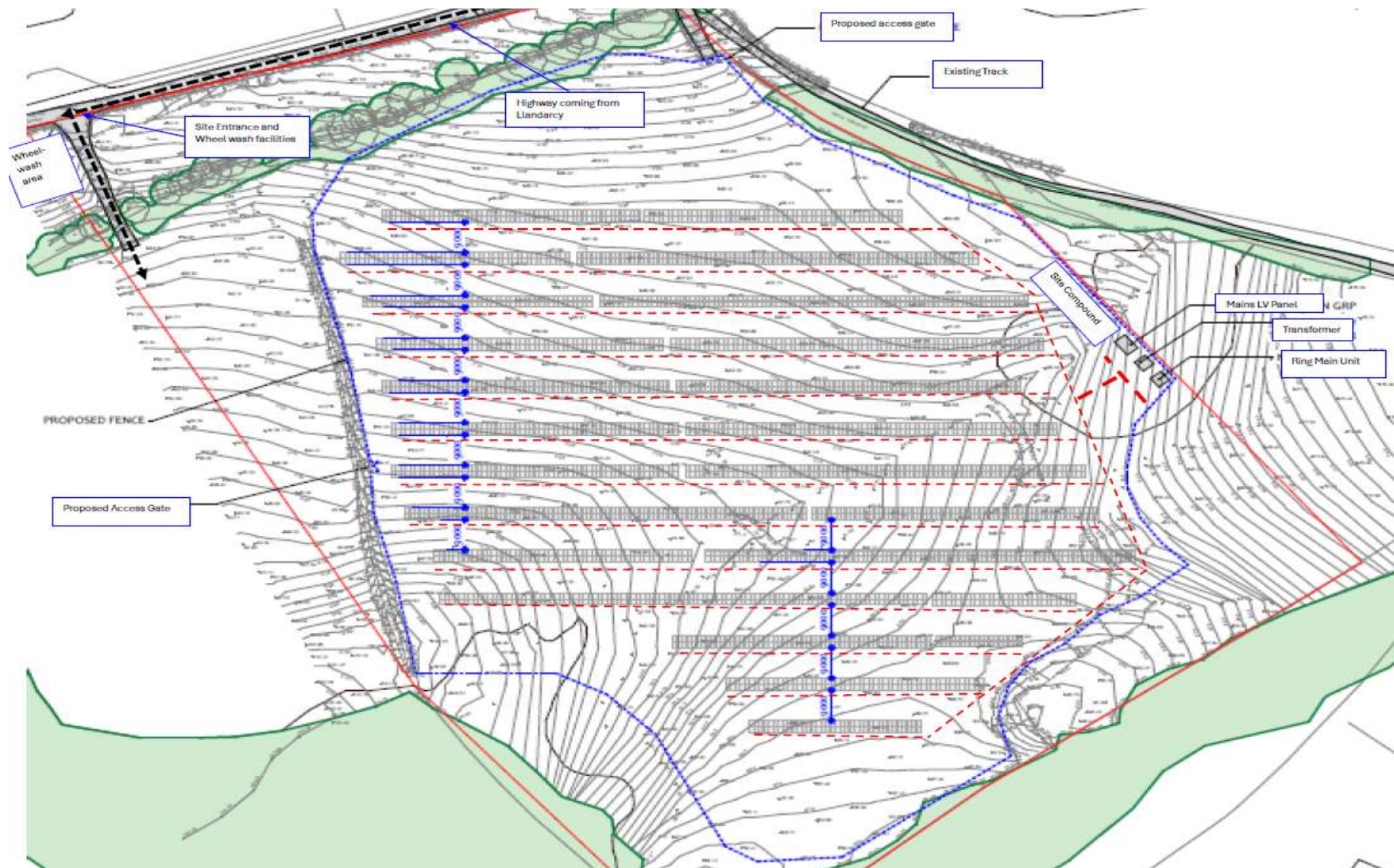
The proposed deliveries will cause minimum impact to the highway and residents along the proposed route.

Working Hours

It is proposed that the working hours for the project will be as follows:

- Monday – Friday | 8.00am to 6.00pm
- Saturday | 8.30am to 1.00pm
- Sunday & Bank Holidays | No Working Hours

Appendix 1 Site set up



Appendix 2 Soft Landscaping Strategy



Appendix 3

Invasive species management, species and habitats protection, avoidance and mitigation measures.

See also Chapter 12, Tree Protection Measures and Chapter 13, Biodiversity Management.

Introduction

Throughout the processes described in this chapter the Mitigation Hierarchy will be followed offering a stepwise assessment of actions to minimise any impacts upon biodiversity of the Site and surrounding areas, including the Crymlyn Bog Special Area of Conservation. The Mitigation Hierarchy involves the following steps:

- 1. Avoidance:** Prevent harm to biodiversity by project design.
- 2. Minimise:** Take measures to reduce the extent and intensity of the harm if impacts cannot be avoided.
- 3. Restoration:** Restore damaged and degraded ecosystems to previously functional state
- 4. Offsetting:** If harm cannot be fully prevented, mitigated, or restored, remaining losses are compensated for by actions elsewhere, such as creating or enhancing habitats.

Invasive Non-Native Species Management

No non-native invasive species were identified during survey at Dreamfields Solar Farm Site, however, Himalayan balsam and Rhododendron have been identified from the wider Gelli Bech Farm site. Rhododendron appears to be isolated in a mature hedge line along a stream at the east of the Gelli Bwch Site and there is no potential for it to be affected by the proposed works.

Himalayan balsam is abundant in disturbed areas around Gelli Bwch Farm and there is potential for its spread if it is disturbed without precautions being taken.

Access to the Solar Farm is from the highway to the north and will not ordinarily pass through Gelli Bwch Farm. The Solar Farm Site will be fenced against entry during the operational period. Although it is not foreseen, should any vehicles need to utilise the farm tracks for access during the construction period they will be subject to the following:

- A toolbox talk will be given to staff by a suitably experienced ecologist on invasive species removal, and their management on site.
- A plan of the wider site (blue ownership) showing the location of Himalayan balsam will be produced. The maps will be updated as necessary through the construction period.

- If travelling through an identified area of Himalayan balsam, personnel would be reminded of biosecurity requirements, for example information on the locations of any newly identified stands.
- No plant, equipment or personnel would leave an area with Himalayan balsam without ensuring that as far as reasonably practicable all mud and/or plant material has been removed from vehicles, equipment, and clothing.
- Washdown areas would be set up at designated entry/exit points to invasive species demarcated areas and all plant and equipment or personnel shall be cleaned prior to leaving this area. For example, a jet wash for equipment and buckets to contain contaminated clothing.
- The storage and use of topsoil and other excavated materials for landscaping would be carefully managed to ensure that there is no risk of contamination of such materials.
- If soils potentially containing Himalayan balsam seeds are taken offsite, the soils are classified as controlled waste and there is a duty of care for their proper disposal. The soil must be transported by an appropriately licensed carrier and disposed of at an appropriately licensed waste disposal facility.
- Continuing inspection of the Site for the presence of Himalayan balsam to be undertaken throughout its growing period (March – October) and removal before seeding can occur if it is found to be present. The vegetative waste will be safely disposed of on Site.

Protection of Habitats

Habitats affected by the development are woodland, scrub, semi-improved acid grassland and modified agriculturally improved grassland. Woodland and scrub where retained will be protected against impacts by the use of Heras fencing as described in Chapter 12, Tree Protection measures, to avoid negative impacts.

Works affecting the semi-improved acid grassland will comply with the recommendations made in the report *Mitigation and Biodiversity Enhancement, Entrance and Solar Farm, Dream Fields, Llandarcy. Hawkeswood Ecology – December 2024*.

Where works are to take place in the area of the solar farm field supporting semi-improved acid grassland, turves will be removed from areas identified for trenching and stored whilst the works take place.

Turves will be stored in a manner not to cause dieback of herbs (i.e. not stacked) and kept damp if cut during the growing season. Following completion of the works, the turves will be carefully placed into position on the prepared fill. No imported material will be used to fill in any gaps.

References are also made in this document to wild flower seeding in the area of modified grassland here disturbed and these works should be undertaken on completion (paragraph 3.15 second bullet).

Protection of Species

Any further works to remove scrub or removal of trees will only be undertaken at an appropriate time of year. Any works affecting trees on Site will only be undertaken following the completion of an assessment for the presence of roosting bats in line with legislation current at the time of the works.

Tree and scrub removal should not take place in the bird breeding season (March – August). Should it be necessary to remove scrub or any other potential breeding habitat it will only occur following a nest search undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist.

Prior to commencement of works the following species assessments will be undertaken:

- Badger – a search of suitable habitat on the Site and an area up to 30 metres outside the Site boundary for the presence of badger setts;
- A search of any affected suitable terrestrial habitat for the presence of great crested newts