

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**Expansion of Traveller Site
Land between Cwmafan & Dan y Bont,
Pontrhydyfen,
Neath Port Talbot,
SA8 3AX**



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SUMMARY

I & G Ecological Consulting Ltd were commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of an area of land off the B4286 between Cwmafan and Dan y Bont, Pontrhydyfen, Neath Port Talbot (the site) centrally located at OS Grid Reference: SS79287 93930. This report presents the findings of both a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and a desk study undertaken in October 2025. The proposed development is for the expansion of the traveller site to provide 2 more family pitches, and conversion of existing stables to day rooms.

A PEA was undertaken, consisting of a desk study and an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey conducted in October 2025. The PEA was undertaken in order to determine the ecological baseline of the site, as well as to identify any ecological constraints necessary for informing an application for Planning Permission in relation to the proposed development at the site.

The development site consists of a block of land currently utilised as a stable yard to the east of the B4286. It lies between an existing traveller site and an area of grassland and orchard. To the east is the river Afan. The parcel of land for the proposed development is approximately 0.12 hectares in size. The majority of the site is buildings and hard standing, with small areas of improved grassland and the tree-lined afon Afan corridor. Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam are present on site. The proposed development may negatively affect the following designated sites, habitats, and protected or priority species:

- Improved grassland
- Wooded river corridor
- Otter
- Bats
- Birds

The following mitigation is proposed for the development:

- Fencing out of retained habitat
- Root Protection Zones for riparian trees
- A Sensitive Lighting Scheme during construction and operation to minimise disturbance to nocturnal species that may be using the site and surrounding area, including otter and bats.
- General precautionary working methods during construction.
- The installation of a bat box on the stables
- Management of INNS
- Landscaping with pollinator and berry bearing flowers and shrubs

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 I & G Ecological Consulting Ltd were commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of an area of land off the B4286 between Cwmafan and Dan y Bont, Pontrhydyfen, Neath Port Talbot (the site) centrally located at OS Grid Reference: SS79287 93930. This report presents the findings of both a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and a desk study undertaken in October 2025.

1.1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide sufficient information for the Local Planning Authority to assess the ecological impact of the proposed development in its entirety, and to identify whether further information is required before a full assessment can be formed. The report aims to identify any ecological constraints present in relation to the proposed development, such as the presence of protected species and habitats, whilst providing recommendations for further surveys and mitigation measures where required.

1.1 Site Details

1.1.1 The site consists of a block of land currently utilised as a stable yard to the east of the B4286. It lies between an existing traveller site and an area of grassland and orchard. To the east is the river Afan. The parcel of land for the proposed development is approximately 0.12 hectares in size.



Figure 1. Aerial image of the approximate site location, shown in red. (from Apple® Maps).

1.2 Proposed Development

Expansion of traveller site to provide 2 more family pitches, and conversion of existing stables to day rooms.

1.3 Relevant Planning Policy and Legislation

- 1.3.1 The Environment Wales Act (EWA) Section 6 (Welsh Government, 2016) places a duty on public authorities to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity' and seek to 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'. The duty replaces the Section 40 duty in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act 2006), in relation to Wales, and applies to those authorities that fell within the previous duty. Section 7 lists both Priority Species and Habitats of Principle Importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales.
- 1.3.2 Furthermore, Edition 12 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Welsh Government, 2024) establishes the land use planning policy for Wales, as set forth by the Welsh Government. It provides a structure for the effective formulation of Local Planning Authorities' development plans, supported by twenty-one Technical Advice Notes (TANs) organized around different topics. Specifically, TAN 5 - Nature Conservation and Planning gives guidance on how the land use planning system should support the safeguarding and enhancement of biodiversity and geological conservation.

PPW 12 aims to maintain and establish areas where:

- The role of landscapes, historic environments, habitats, biodiversity, and the unique characteristics of coastal, rural, or urban environments in contributing to natural and distinctive places are recognised, appreciated, protected, and improved.
- Further fragmentation of habitats is avoided wherever possible, and green networks, corridors, and habitat connections within developed areas are protected and improved.
- The features and characteristics of sites designated for their landscape or nature conservation significance are fully evaluated and safeguarded, while the network of sites is acknowledged as the foundation for improving the resilience of ecosystems.
- The opportunity to enhance the resilience of ecosystems is seized in all areas by addressing issues such as building on floodplains, diffuse pollution, soil compaction and sealing, ensuring the protection of peat resources, and improving coastal flood defense strategies in urban areas and coastal margins.

Paragraph 3.36 of PPW outlines the utilization of the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) methodology by the planning system, with the following identified as its primary components:

- Improving the resilience of ecosystems and ecological networks
- Halting and reserving the loss of biodiversity
- Maintaining and enhancing green infrastructure based on seeking multiple ecosystem benefits.

1.4 Relevant Local Planning Policy

The LDP is the development plan for Neath Port Talbot, superseding the Unitary Development Plan, and provides the basis for decisions on land use planning in the County Borough up to 2026. The LDP guides the future development of an area, providing a clear vision for the County Borough setting out where, when and how much new development can take place over the next 15 years (2011-2026). The aim is to provide developers and the public with certainty about the planning framework for Neath Port Talbot.

Under the Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Welsh Government, 2021), development should 'Safeguard areas for the purposes of improving the resilience of ecological network and ecosystems services, to identify areas for the provision of green infrastructure and to secure biodiversity enhancement (net benefit)'.

Relevant environmental policies for this development are outlined below:

Strategic Policy SP15 Biodiversity and Geodiversity

LDP Objective: OB 15

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.

Policy EN 6 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

Policy EN 7 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:

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.

Policy SP 16 Environmental Protection

LDP Objectives: OB 2, OB 16 and OB 17

Air, water and ground quality and the environment generally will be protected and where feasible improved through the following measures:

1. Ensuring that proposals have no significant adverse effects on water, ground or air quality and do not significantly increase pollution levels;
2. Giving preference to the development of brownfield sites over greenfield sites where appropriate and deliverable;
3. Ensuring that developments do not increase the number of people exposed to significant levels of pollution.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 A desk study was conducted on 07/10/2025 with the purpose of determining any existing ecological information pertaining to the site and surrounding environment relevant to the proposed development. The sources utilised and the type of information obtained are summarised in Table 1.

Table 1. Sources of ecological records.

Source	Information and data sets	Search buffer from the site centre/boundary
West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre (WWBIC)	- Protected and priority species. - Non-statutory designated sites.	2km 1km
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)	- International statutory designated sites. - National statutory designated sites. - Standing waterbodies.	10km 5km 0.25km

- 2.1.2 The search buffers within Table 1 were chosen to cover the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the proposed development in relation to protected and priority species, habitats, and designated sites.
- 2.1.3 The impact the proposed development may have on the biological features of nearby designated protected sites has been fully considered.
- 2.1.4 An evaluation of previous ecological surveys relevant to the proposed development has been undertaken.
- 2.1.5 A search for standing waterbodies within 0.25km of the site using aerial imagery has been undertaken to assess the likelihood of potential site use by Great Crested Newt in accordance with the Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook (Langton et al., 2001).

2.2 Field Survey (Phase 1 Habitat Survey)

- 2.2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat Survey was conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist on 12/10/2025, using the methodology outlined in the Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey (JNCC, 2010). Additionally, the habitats present on site were assessed for their potential to support protected species, and visual surveys were used to search for signs that such species are using the site.

2.2.2 Signs of site use by protected species may relate to the following:

- Evidence of badger – setts, well-worn paths and runs, snagged hair, latrines, sites and foraging.
- Evidence of otter - spraint marking, slides, hovers, resting sites.
- Evidence of dormouse – nests or foraged hazel nuts with characteristic round gnawing holes.
- Evidence of birds – nests.
- Evidence of bats – bat droppings or urine staining adjacent to a Potential Roost Feature (PRF).
- Evidence of reptile – sloughs.
- Evidence of amphibians – spawn.
- Evidence of water vole – droppings, latrines, foraging signs and footprints.

2.2.3 The presence of any invasive non-native plant species listed under Schedule 9, Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were also noted and mapped during the site survey. These species include Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*). Additionally, species which are not listed under Schedule 9, Section 14, but are known to be invasive to ecosystems in the United Kingdom were also noted and mapped during the site survey, including Butterfly Bush (*Buddleja davidii*) and Ground Elder (*Aegopodium podagraria*).

2.3 Survey Limitations

- 2.3.1 A species may be perceived to be absent within the surrounding area due to a lack of records returned during the desk study. However, a lack of records does not necessarily indicate a species is absent from the area and may be a result of a combination of multiple factors. These factors include, but are not limited to, a lack of surveying within the search buffer area, recent colonisation of a new area, low population density, and how cryptic the species in question may be.
- 2.3.2 The findings presented within this report are valid for an 18-month period following the survey, in line with CIEEM (2019) guidance. Should the proposed development scope change in any way, then an updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal will be required.
- 2.3.3 The field survey was undertaken outside the main flowering season for plant species (May to August); however, it is not considered to have impacted the outcome of the survey.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

Connectivity to the surrounding landscape

- 3.1.1 The site is connected to the wider landscape via the afon Aon corridor to the east and broadleaved woodland to the west.



Figure 2. Aerial image of the landscape surrounding the site with the approximate site boundary shown in red. (from Apple® Maps).

Previous ecological surveys

- 3.1.2 None known.

Designated sites (statutory)

Designated sites within 10km of the proposal include –

Crymlyn Bog SAC is within the relevant search buffers (Table 2).

Designated sites (non-statutory)

The site is adjacent to the river Afan, which is a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), and the Ancient Semi-natural woodland (ASNW) to the west beyond the B4286 is also a SINC. This woodland also contains Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS), an NRW priority area.

Table 2. Summary of designated sites within the search buffer area.

Site name	Designation	Distance and connectivity to site
Crymlyn Bog	SAC	7.5km to the west. No connectivity

Relevant key findings on designations

3.1.3 There is no connectivity between the site and the SAC within the search buffer.

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Requirement

3.1.4 N/A

Light pollution

3.1.5 The site has a relatively low level of light pollution in keeping with its rural location (see Figure 3 below for site radiance level).

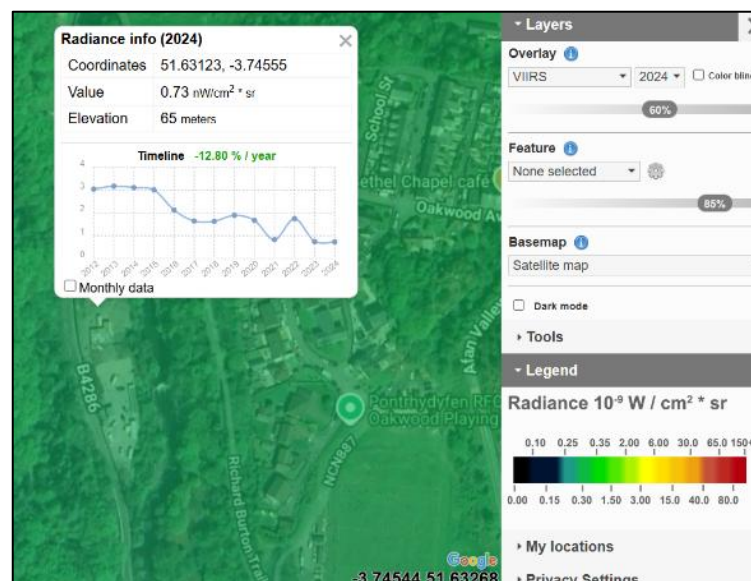


Figure 4. Radiance level at the site (VIIRS Data Base (2023), accessed 14/10/2025, available at <https://www.lightpollutionmap.info>).

Priority and protected species

3.1.6 A summary of priority and protected species records found within 2km of the candidate site can be found in Table 3.

Key records

3.1.7 The buffer area around the site supports a good number and diversity of bat records, many associated with the Afan river corridor. Pipistrelle, common pipistrelle and noctule are recorded within 500m.

3.1.8 Otter is recorded from 9 locations, the nearest 200m away on the Afan. Badger is recorded 766m away. Hedgehog are recorded from 5 locations, the closest 1.4km away.

3.1.9 Kingfisher, dipper and grey wagtail are recorded from the river Afan in the near vicinity of the development. Eel, salmon and brown/sea trout are recorded on the Pelenna and Afan.

3.1.10 Common toad is recorded within 500m of the site, with common frog and smooth newt recorded beyond 1km. Adder, slow worm and grass snake are recorded within 500m of the site, and common lizard at 589m.

3.1.11 Bluebell are recorded at 13 locations within the search buffer, the closest 480m away.

3.1.12 Himalayan balsam and Himalayan honeysuckle are recorded within 100m of the site. Butterfly bush, Himalayan cotoneaster, New Zealand willowherb, Wilson's honeysuckle, monbretia and entire-leaved cotoneaster within 500m, wall cotoneaster, cherry laurel and hollyberry cotoneaster are recorded within 1km.

Table 3. Priority and Protected species records within 2km of the site.

Priority and protected		Number of records (number of species)
Groups	Species	
	Bat	1
	Common pipistrelle	4
	Soprano pipistrelle	2
	Pipistrelle	7
	Myotis	2
	Whiskered	1
	Daubentons	3
	Noctule	4
Other Mammals	Badger	6
	Hedgehog	5
	Otter	9
	Hare	2
	Polecat	2
Reptiles & Amphibians	Grass snake	4
	Adder	11
	Common lizard	10
	Slow-worm	9
	Common frog	1
	Common toad	2
	Smooth newt	2
Fish	Eel	2
	Brown trout / sea trout	10
	Salmon	3
Birds	Schedule 1	252 (38)
	Category 2	250 (29)
Invertebrates	Marsh fritillary	0
	Other invertebrates (Category 1)	36 (20)

Plants	Category 1	14 (2)
INNS	Plants	130 (18)

3.2 Field Survey

Timing and weather

3.2.1 The timing of the field survey and the prevailing weather conditions are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. A summary of weather conditions during the field survey.

Date	Prevailing weather conditions			
	Temperature	Wind speed	Cloud cover	Weather
12/10/2025	14°C	2mph	10%	Dry, sunny

Habitats on site

3.2.2 The following Phase 1 habitat types were present at the site:

- **B.2.2** Improved grassland
- **J3.6** Buildings
- **J4** Bare ground

3.2.3 Descriptions of the habitats present on site using Phase 1 survey habitat classification can be found in Table 5.

3.2.4 The extended Phase 1 habitat plan in Appendix I illustrates the distribution and extent of the habitats present on site, in addition to the location of each Target Note. Furthermore, a full species list (including scientific names) can be found in Appendix III.

Habitat descriptions

The site consists of a stable block and hard standing, with a strip of improved grassland to the boundary fence with the B4286, and a strip alongside the top of bank of the river Afan. Further down the bank is a line of trees on/beyond the red-line boundary. Stands of Japanese knotweed is present along the boundary.

3.2.5 The grass along the road boundary is dominated by rye grass with frequent red fescue and occasional Yorkshire fog, cocksfoot and meadow grass. Nettle, silverweed and dock are also frequent with the majority of herbs either occasional or rare. These include creeping and meadow buttercup, yarrow, knot grass, dandelion, white clover, ragwort and daisy.

- 3.2.6 The first 1-2m of the top of bank alongside the Afan is improved grassland with ryegrass dominant and creeping buttercup and dock frequent. There is a patch of black nightshade, and herb Robert, chickweed and sow thistle are also present with patches of Himalayan balsam.
- 3.2.7 Towards the site boundary with the Afan are stands of Japanese knotweed, with a line of alder and a single ash, sycamore and guelder rose. The ash and a number of the alder show die-back in the crown.

Table 5. Habitats and linear features on site.

Habitat / Linear feature	Species present
A1.1.1 Broadleaved woodland Location and extent: Along the boundary with the river Afan	Alder, ash, guelder rose, sycamore, black nightshade, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed.
B4 Improved grassland Location and extent: Along the boundary with the B4286 and along the Afan corridor	Perennial rye grass, Yorkshire fog, cocksfoot, smooth meadow grass, red fescue, soft rush, field horsetail, dandelion, cats ear, bugle, creeping buttercup, ribwort plantain, charlock, meadow buttercup, yarrow, broad leaved dock, daisy, white clover, lesser trefoil, common ragwort, sticky mouse ear, cut leaved geranium, creeping cinquefoil, knotgrass, nettle, silverweed, redshank, hairy bittercress, common field speedwell, fleabane, greater plantain, lesser chickweed, smooth sow thistle, herb Robert, alder, ash, guelder rose. sycamore, Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed.

3.3 Protected and priority species on site

- 3.3.1 The confirmed presence, or likelihood of presence, of each protected, priority, and notable species that are considered relevant to the site is discussed below. Species that are not considered relevant to the proposed development at the site have been omitted.

Otter

- 3.3.2 No incidental evidence of otter was identified during the site survey, however access to the lower river bank was precluded by Herras fencing and stands of Japanese knotweed.

- 3.3.3 The Afan has a number of records of otter with the nearest record 200m away. The cover along the bank will provide commuting habitat for otter, but the presence of dogs on the site are likely to preclude the presence of resting sites. Habitat on the far bank appears to be good for otter.

Bats

- 3.3.4 No incidental evidence of bats (including droppings, staining, or smells) was found on site. The trees along the Afan are semi-mature with no obvious roosting potential. The buildings offer low roosting potential, with single span corrugated roofs.
- 3.3.5 The riparian corridor will provide a range of bat species with potential flight lines and foraging habitat.
- 3.3.6 The site has a relatively low level of light pollution.

Birds

- 3.3.7 The riparian trees will provide foraging opportunities and nesting sites for a range of species.

Invertebrates

- 3.3.8 The limited grassland habitat on site is suitable for more common species of invertebrates.

Reptiles

- 3.3.1 No incidental evidence of reptiles was identified during the site survey.
- 3.3.2 The development site is partially shaded by woodland to the west, and the habitat is either too low and open or too rank to support a significant reptile interest.

4. SITE ASSESSMENT

4.1 Ecological Value and Impact Level Criteria

4.1.1 The value of habitats and ecological features at the site is assigned according to their level of importance using the following terminology:

- International value
- National value
- Regional value
- County value
- District value
- Local value
- Site value
- Negligible value

4.1.2 The criteria used to assess the predicted impact level of the development to each ecological receptor relevant to the proposed development is found in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Impact level criteria

Severity of Impact	Impacts to Ecological Feature
Severe	Extensive irreversible damage or permanent loss of feature.
Major	Extensive loss of feature and/or quality and integrity of key characteristics; major long-term disruption and/or permanent damage to key ecological processes.
Moderate	Partial but significant loss of feature, but does not adversely affect the integrity and ecological function of the feature; significant and noticeable changes to the attributes, quality, or vulnerability of the feature.
Minor	Minor measurable changes in attributes, quality or vulnerability; minor loss of, or alteration to one (or more) key characteristics, features or elements.
Negligible	Very minor loss or detrimental alteration to one or more characteristics, features or elements.
Neutral	No detectable impacts.

4.2 Overview of Development Impacts

4.2.1 The proposed development may result in the loss or damage to improved grassland and riparian corridor, and the spread of INNS. An overview of the potential effects resulting from the proposed development are as follows:

- Loss of improved grassland
- Loss of riparian corridor
- Spread of INNS
- Impact on the afon Afan
- Loss of otter foraging and commuting habitat

4.3 Impacts to Designated Sites

4.3.1 Potential for impacts on statutory designated sites are considered to be negligible.

4.4 Impacts to Habitats and Features

4.4.1 The following habitat/features were identified on site and the impact of the proposed development to these habitats/features is discussed below:

- Improved grassland
- River corridor and riparian woodland

Improved Grassland

4.4.1 This habitat is common, of low ecological interest and has been assessed to have **Negligible value**.

4.4.2 Loss or damage to this habitat will be **negligible** without mitigation.

Riparian Corridor

4.4.3 The riparian corridor is impacted by INNS, but provides important connecting habitat along the Afan for species such as otters and bats, and shade, cover and food input for fish species and aquatic invertebrates. This habitat is likely to fall into the NPT Watercourses SINC by NPT Local Authority and has been assessed to have **County value**.

4.4.4 Loss or damage to this habitat will be **major** without mitigation. This area is to be retained under the current plans.

4.5 Impacts to Species

4.5.1 The following protected or priority species were identified as present, likely present, or unconfirmed at or within the vicinity of the site:

- Otter
- Birds
- Bats
- Eel, salmon and brown/sea trout

4.5.2 The predicted impact of the proposed development without mitigation to protected or priority species relevant to the site is summarised in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Impacts of the proposed development to relevant priority and protected species.

Protected or priority species	Impacts of proposed development without mitigation
Otter	Loss or reduction of riparian habitat could form a barrier for otter to commute along the afon Afan corridor. Loss of dense cover could reduce resting site opportunities. Impact to the afon Afan could reduce prey availability.
Birds	Loss or reduction of tree cover may result in adverse impacts to foraging and nesting birds. Furthermore, a permanent increase in human activity on site may discourage more timid bird species from using the site.
Bats	Insensitive artificial lighting schemes both during and after construction and loss or reduction of riparian corridor may result in adverse impacts to roosting and foraging bats.
Fish	Sedimentation and pollution impact upon the afon Afan will result in direct impacts to fish species and reduction in spawning habitat. Loss of riparian cover will result in raised stream temperatures and impacts to salmonids, and a loss of food input.

4.6 Impacts to Ecosystem Resilience

4.6.1 Area loss can cause populations of organisms to decline due to a decrease in habitat size. If the proposed development is to be undertaken without any mitigation, the impact on ecosystem resilience is anticipated to be **major**. Should the results of any further surveys listed in Section 5.5 confirm the likely presence of any protected species, this assessment may require updating by a suitably qualified ecologist.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Site Overview

The combination of desk and field surveys undertaken at the proposed development site identified that the majority of the site has negligible or no ecological value. The riparian corridor, which would qualify as a SINCC under the LDP has **County value** ecologically.

- 5.1.1 Recommendations necessary for the informing of the design process are provided below, as well as recommendations for biodiversity mitigation and enhancement in order to fulfil the Biodiversity and Resilience of the Ecosystems Duty (Section 6 Duty) of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016. They are of a generic nature as no details of the planned development are available.

5.2 Designated Sites

- 5.2.1 N/A

5.3 Mitigation Measures During Development Construction

- 5.3.1 Retained habitat outside the development footprint should be fenced out prior to site clearance and commencement of works. No materials or waste shall be stored on these areas nor should they be utilised for machinery or plant.
- 5.3.2 Root Protection Zones should be protected for the trees along the afon Afan.
- 5.3.3 Vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive)
- 5.3.4 All works are to be undertaken during the day and any artificial lighting will be kept to a minimum during construction to minimise disturbance to nocturnal species which may be foraging in the surrounding area, including bats, otter and hedgehog.
- 5.3.5 Precautionary working methods are recommended during construction to minimise the risk of harm to badger, reptiles, otter, amphibians, and hedgehog. These may enter the site for a variety of reasons, such as foraging in new territory and fleeing predation, and may therefore be at risk during construction. Precautionary working methods include:
- Preventing and protecting mammals from accessing materials through the use of spoil-proof fencing.

- Fencing off and covering of open excavations, in order to prevent animals becoming trapped or injured. Ramp-like structures should be installed to allow any animals that may become trapped to leave the groundworks.
- If possible, access routes and machines should be chosen with the minimisation of sediment run-off as a priority.

5.3.6 Site lighting to be minimised and directed away from adjoining habitat features.

5.3.7 Working methods to ensure that no polluted run-off reaches any streams or waterbodies. This may include silt fencing, cut off ditches and attenuation features. Spill kits should be available on site and construction staff trained in their use. No storage of oils and fuels, or refuelling should take place in the vicinity of any watercourses or ditches.

5.3.8 A bat box should be attached to the outside of the barn on the eastern elevation to give access to the Afan corridor.

5.3.9 Roof and surface water drainage should be directed to a SUD's system.

5.3.10 A number of the alder, and the ash tree along the Afan are showing signs of disease. Alder showing signs of *Phytophthora* disease respond well to coppicing, which will keep the root ball alive and maintain bank stability. Planting of willow (grey or crack) between the existing riverbank trees will help to maintain bank stability and enhance the river corridor. The willow should be managed on a long rotation to prevent them becoming too large and unstable. Downy birch is another suitable species for this location.

5.3.11 Himalayan balsam on site should be either pulled and the stems broken immediately above the root, or cut low to the ground before seeding each year. The Japanese knotweed should be treated with glyphosphate following best practice.

5.3.12 All machinery and plant should arrive on site clean and be cleaned before leaving site to ensure no spread of INNS. A management plan is required to control the Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam on site.

5.4 Mitigation Measures During Development Operation

- 5.4.1 External lighting should be minimised and where used, designed to reduce spill into the wider countryside and maintain dark corridors for species such as bats, otter and badger.
- 5.4.2 Landscaping should incorporate native pollinator friendly and berry bearing flowers and shrubs. See GIS Site Plan 08B

5.5 Further Surveys

- 5.5.1 Providing the river bank is protected then no further surveys are considered necessary.



6. WILDLIFE LEGISLATION

6.1 Otters and the Law

6.1.1 The otter is a European Protected Species (EPS). It is against the law to damage or destroy an otter breeding site or resting place, or deliberately to capture, kill, injure or disturb an otter.

6.1.2 Otters are fully protected by the following pieces of legislation:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (regulation 42) fully protects otters, making it **an offence to**: -
 - *Intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill an Otter.*
 - *Damage or destroy a breeding or resting place of an Otter, or intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any structure or place used for shelter or protection*
 - *Intentionally or recklessly disturb an Otter in a place used for shelter or protection, or deliberately disturb Otters in such a way as to be likely significantly to affect (i) the ability of any significant group of Otters to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young, or (ii) the local distribution or abundance.*
 - *Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a place used for shelter or protection.*
 - *Possess an Otter (alive or dead), or any part of an Otter*
- Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW [Countryside Rights of Way] Act 2000) fully protects otters, making it **an offence to**: -
 - *Intentionally or recklessly disturb any otter while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection*
 - *Intentionally or recklessly obstructs access to any structure or place used by an otter for shelter or protection*
 - *Sell, offer or expose for sale any otter*

6.1.3 For any disturbance to occur a derogation or **EPS licence** must be gained from Natural Resources Wales. To gain an EPS Licence from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), NRW must be satisfied that:

- i. granting the licence would not be detrimental to the Favourable Conservation Status (fcs) of the populations of species concerned within its natural range.
- ii. the derogation (licence) is in the public interest of Health and Safety or for other reasons of over-riding public interest, including those of a socio-economic nature or will have a benefit of primary importance to the environment.
- iii. there is no satisfactory alternative to the derogation which would allow the described development to proceed but which would avoid or reduce the need for any adverse impact to the species.

6.1.4 Otters are also protected by:

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and now the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- Annex II Habitats Directive (protection through Special Areas of Conservation)
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species and Species of Principal Importance in Wales

6.2 Bats and the Law

6.2.1 Bats are protected by the following pieces of legislation:

- Schedule 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW [Countryside Rights of Way] Act 2000)
- The Environmental Damage (Prevention & Remediation) Regulations 2009 – A protected species and its habitat is protected under this legislation as well as others.
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (regulation 42) fully protects all bats and their roosts, making it **an offence to deliberately kill, injure or capture** (take) bats; *to deliberately disturb bats; damage or destroy bat roosts* or resting places (this is considered an “Absolute Offence” as damage and destruction may detrimentally effect the Continuous Ecological Functionality of that roost / resting place); possess or transport a bat or any part of a bat; sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats or parts of bats.
- For any disturbance to occur a derogation or **EPS licence** must be gained from Natural Resources Wales. To gain an EPS Licence from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), NRW must be satisfied that:
 - i. the licence would not be detrimental to the Favourable Conservation Status (fcs) of the populations of species concerned within its natural range.
 - ii. the derogation (licence) is in the public interest of Health and Safety or for other reasons of over-riding public interest, including those of a socio-economic nature or will have a benefit of primary importance to the environment.
 - iii. there is no satisfactory alternative to the derogation which would allow the described development to proceed but which would avoid or reduce the need for any adverse impact to the species.

6.2.2 Bats are also protected by:

- Appendix III of the Bern Convention
- Appendix II of the Bonn Convention (including the Convention's Agreement on the conservation of Bats in Europe)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and now the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- All bats are listed in Annex IV of the EC Habitats Directive and the British species listed in Schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations 1994 (as amended) and are therefore designated as *European Protected Species*. These *protected* species are afforded enhanced

protection and more stringent licensing provisions than those protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WACA) alone.

6.3 Hazel Dormouse and the Law

6.3.1 The hazel dormouse is a European Protected Species (EPS). It is against the law to damage or destroy a dormouse breeding site or resting place (summer or hibernation nest), or deliberately to capture, kill, injure or disturb a dormouse.

6.3.2 Dormice are fully protected by the following pieces of legislation:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (regulation 42) fully protects dormice, making it **an offence to**:
 - *Intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill a dormouse.*
 - *Damage or destroy a breeding or resting place of a dormouse, or intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy any structure or place used for shelter or protection*
 - *Intentionally or recklessly disturb a dormouse in a place used for shelter or protection, or deliberately disturb dormouse in such a way as to be likely significantly to affect (i) the ability to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young, and includes in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate or (ii) the local distribution or abundance.*
 - *Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a place used for shelter or protection.*
 - *Possess a dormouse (alive or dead), or any part of a dormouse*
- Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW [Countryside Rights of Way] Act 2000) fully protects dormice, making it **an offence to**:
 - *Intentionally or recklessly disturb any dormouse while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection*
 - *Intentionally or recklessly obstructs access to any structure or place used by a dormouse for shelter or protection*
 - *Sell, offer or expose for sale any dormouse*

6.3.3 For any disturbance to occur a derogation or **EPS licence** must be gained from Natural Resources Wales. To gain an EPS Licence from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), NRW must be satisfied that:

- i. granting the licence would not be detrimental to the Favourable Conservation Status (fcs) of the populations of species concerned within its natural range.
- ii. the derogation (licence) is in the public interest of Health and Safety or for other reasons of over-riding public interest, including those of a socio-economic nature or will have a benefit of primary importance to the environment.

- iii. there is no satisfactory alternative to the derogation which would allow the described development to proceed but which would avoid or reduce the need for any adverse impact to the species.

6.3.4 Dormice are also protected by:

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (England) and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- Annex II Habitats Directive (protection through Special Areas of Conservation)
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species and Species of Principal Importance in Wales

6.4 Reptiles and the Law

6.4.1 All of the UK native reptiles are protected by law. The common species of reptiles found in this locality are common lizard, slow-worm, adder and grass snake. It is illegal to intentionally kill or injure these species under Section 9 (1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

6.4.2 All native UK reptiles are considered of 'principal importance' under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This places a duty on every public authority, in exercising its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

6.4.3 Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF April 2012), the presence of any Protected Species (which includes all reptiles species) are a material planning consideration. The ODPM 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System, provide additional advice and support the NPPF.

6.5 Amphibians and the Law

6.5.1 All of the UK native amphibians are protected by law. The common species of amphibians in this locality are common frog, common toad, smooth newt and palmate newt. It is illegal to intentionally kill or injure these species under Section 9 (1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

6.5.2 The common toad is considered of 'principal importance' under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This places a duty on every public authority, in exercising its functions, to have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

- 6.5.3 Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF April 2012), the presence of any Protected Species) which includes the Common Toad) are a material planning consideration. The ODPM 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System, provide additional advice and support the NPPF.

6.6 Birds and the Law

- 6.6.1 All species of bird are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Protection was extended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Under the above legislation it is an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

- 6.6.2 Certain species are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and receive protection under Sections 1(4) and 1(5). The protection was extended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. There are special penalties where the offences listed above are committed for any Schedule 1 species and it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb any such bird when it is building its nest or while it is in or near a nest containing dependant young; or
- disturb the dependant young of any such bird.

6.7 Badgers and the Law

- 6.7.1 The protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it illegal to kill, injure or take a badger, or interfere with a sett. In addition, they are listed on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, which prohibits certain methods of killing and capture.

6.8 Water Voles and the Law

- 6.8.1 Water voles are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, receiving full protection since 2008. The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), lists the following offences:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take water voles (Section 9 (1)).
- Possess or control live or dead water voles or derivatives (Section 9 (2)).
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection (Section 9 (4) (a & c)).
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles whilst occupying a structure or place used for that purpose (Section 9 (4) (b)).
- Sell water voles or offer or expose for sale or transport for sale (Section 9 (5)).

- Publish or cause to be published any advertisement which conveys the buying or selling of water voles (Section 9 (5)).

6.9 Environment Act (Wales) 2016

- 6.9.1 This act has replaced the section 40 duty in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act 2006), in relation to Wales, and applies to those authorities that fell within the previous duty. It came into force in May 2016.
- 6.9.2 Section 6 of the Act places a duty on public authorities to 'seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity' so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. In doing so, public authorities must also seek to 'promote the resilience of ecosystems'. Under Section 6, public authorities will be required to report on the actions they are taking to improve biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience.
- 6.9.3 Section 7 of the Act places a duty on public authorities to take steps to maintain and enhance biodiversity. This section replaces the duty in section 42 of the NERC Act 2006. The Section 7 Priority Species under this act is a list of the living organisms of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales. The Section 7 Priority Habitats is a list of the habitats of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales.

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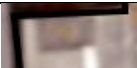
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APPENDIX I: EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN



Phase 1 Habitat Code Key:

Colour	Code	Description
	A1.1.1	Broadleaved woodland
I	B4	Improved grassland
	J3.6	Buildings
	J4	Bare ground
	INNS	Japanese knotweed

APPENDIX II: SURVEY PHOTOGRAPHS

Improved grassland



Riparian Corridor

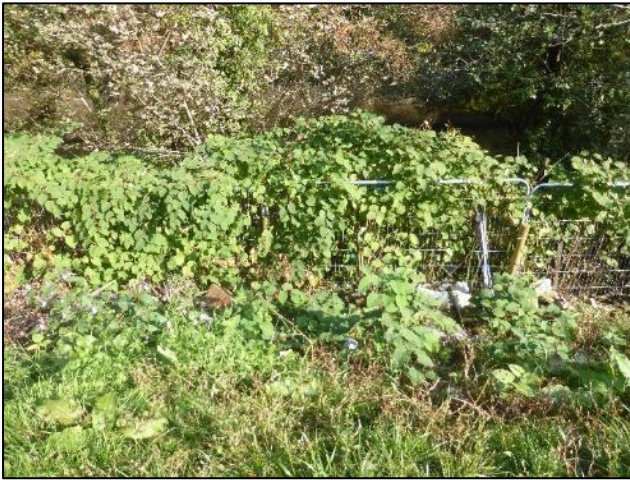


Buildings, Hard standing / track





INNS



APPENDIX III: FULL SPECIES LIST

Common name	Scientific name
Cock's foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Red fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>
Yorkshire fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>
Smooth meadow grass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>
Rye grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Soft rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>
Black nightshade	<i>Solanum nigrum</i>
Hairy bittercress	<i>Cardamine hirsuta</i>
Bugle	<i>Ajuga reptans</i>
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Meadow buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>
Cats ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>
Charlock	<i>Sinapis arvensis</i>
Chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>
Cut leaved cranesbill	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>
Creeping cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
Broad leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>
Fleabane	<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>
Herb Robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>
Common knotgrass	<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>
Sticky mouse ear	<i>Cerastium glomeratum</i>

Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Broadleaf Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>
Redshank	<i>Persicaria maculosa</i>
Silverweed	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>
Smooth sow thistle	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>
Common field speedwell	<i>Veronica persica</i>
Lesser trefoil	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>
Broad leaved willowherb	<i>Epilobium montanum</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>
Himalayan balsam	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>
Japanese knotweed	<i>Fallopia japonica</i>
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>
Guelder rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>
Field horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>