

SECTION A – MATTERS FOR DECISION

Planning Applications Recommended For APPROVAL

App. Number:	P2025/0187
Location:	Land At Tyn-Y-Caeau, Margam, Port Talbot, SA13 2NR
Description of Development:	Erection of a data centre (use class B8) and supporting infrastructure, parking, alteration to access, drainage, landscaping and associated works. Including demolition of existing annex and retention of the existing building for ancillary use, substation and power connection to the existing Western Bio Energy biomass Plant.

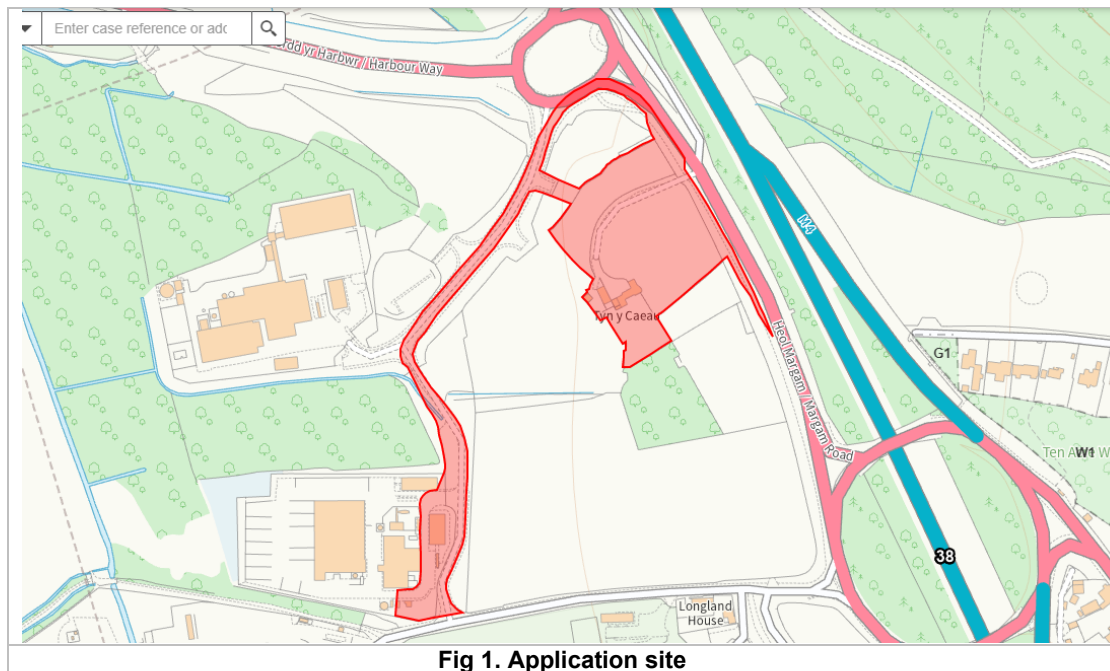
BACKGROUND

The application requires a decision from the Planning Committee as it is an application for a major development that is a departure from the development plan.

SITE AND CONTEXT

The application site comprises approximately 1.72 hectares of land at Tyn-y-Caeau, Margam, located to the south-east of Port Talbot. The site lies to the west of the A48 (Margam Road) and north of Junction 38 of the M4 Motorway (Margam Interchange). It forms part of the southern edge of Port Talbot's built-up area, within a corridor characterised by transport infrastructure and established industrial and energy-related development.

The land is generally flat and low-lying, forming part of the Margam Marsh Landscape Character Area (LCA 1) as identified in the Neath Port Talbot LANDMAP Landscape Assessment (2004). Ground levels fall gently from approximately 16.5m AOD in the centre to 10m AOD along the western boundary. The site lies within the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area. The site is partly within Flood Zone 3 (tidal and fluvial), this relates to the proposed buried electricity line route. There are no public rights of way within the site, although the Wales Coast Path (National Cycle Network Route 4) runs immediately adjacent to the eastern boundary alongside the A48.



The site accommodates the former Tyn-y-Caeau farmhouse and two associated outbuildings - a single-storey annexe and a small detached barn - set within an enclosed area of hardstanding, grassland and scrub. The buildings are currently vacant. A private access driveway leads from the A48 in a left-in/left-out arrangement, bordered by a line of mature trees and hedgerow planting. The site boundaries are defined by dense vegetation, including mature trees and native hedgerows, which provide screening and enclosure. An avenue of broadleaved trees follows the main driveway, and a number of trees within and around the site are subject to Tree Preservation Order No. T364.



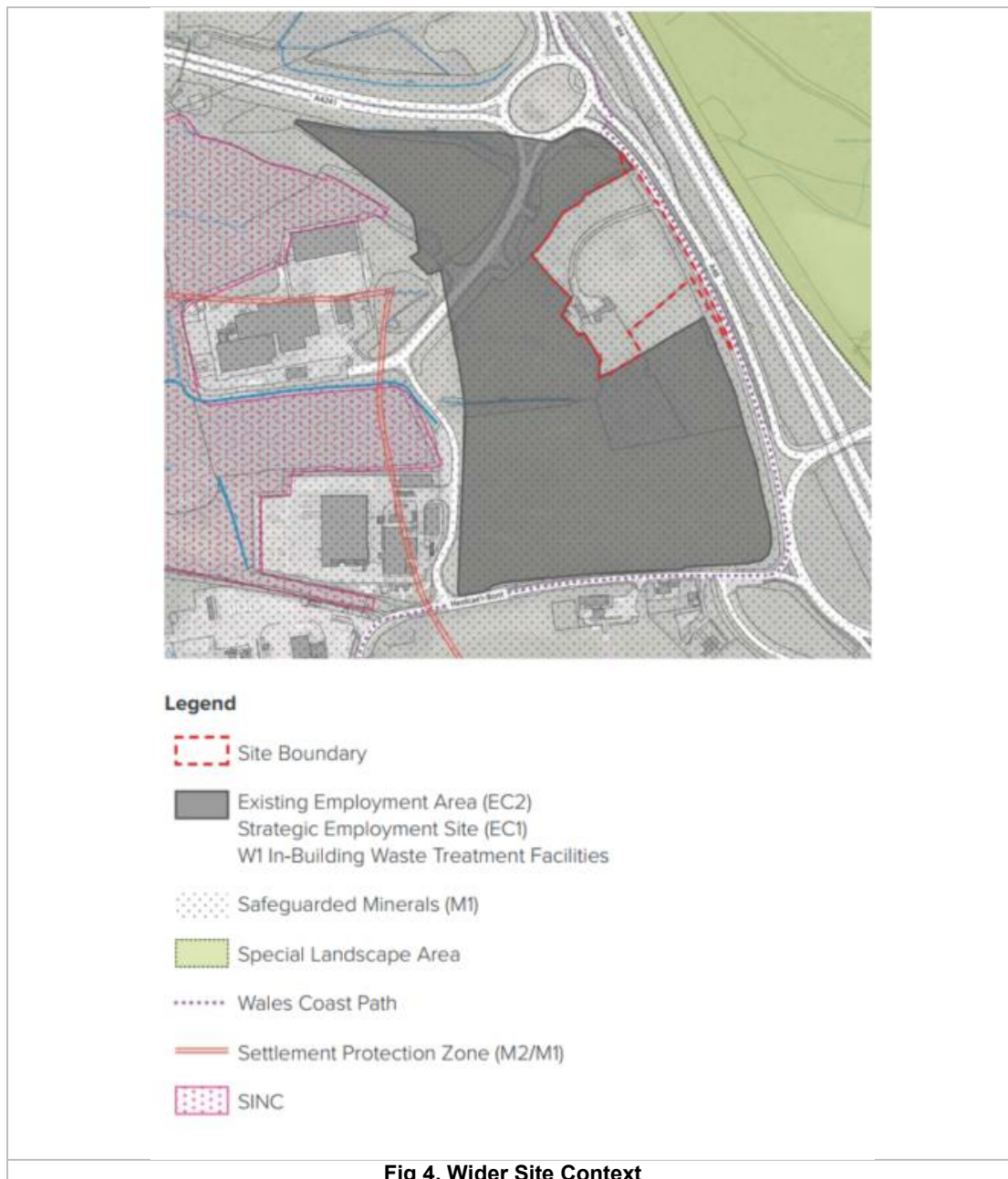
Fig 2. View from the centre of the site, towards Tyn-y-Caeau building, located on the southwest part of the site (PDAS)



Fig 3. View of the southern facade of Tyn-y-Caeau

Vegetation on site comprises semi-improved neutral grassland, dense scrub, broadleaved trees and hedgerows, as identified in ecological surveys undertaken in support of the application. Invasive plant species, including Japanese knotweed, are present. Ecological surveys have recorded Soprano Pipistrelle and Lesser Horseshoe bats roosting within the main building, with hibernation confirmed in the basement. Habitat is also suitable for badger, barn owl, breeding birds, and reptiles. The ecological value of individual habitats ranges from negligible to local importance.

To the west, the site adjoins land occupied by the Western Bio-Energy Plant and the Margam Green Energy Plant, both forming part of the Longlands Lane industrial area. These large-scale energy and industrial facilities include associated infrastructure such as silos, flues, and plant buildings. To the north, the site is bounded by the A4241 Harbour Way, which connects the Port Talbot steelworks and dock areas to the M4. To the south, the land comprises open grassland and beyond this Longlands Lane that provides the access road to the Margam Green Energy Plant and other industrial premises. To the east, beyond the A48 and M4 corridor, the land rises steeply to form the wooded ridge of Margam Mountain, which encompasses Margam Park, a Grade I Registered Historic Park and Garden containing Margam Castle, Margam Abbey, and other designated heritage assets.



The wider context (figure 4) includes a concentration of industrial, transport and energy uses west of the motorway, contrasting with the historic and rural landscape to the east. The M4 motorway forms a strong visual and physical boundary separating these two character areas. The site lies approximately 850m west of the Hen Eglwys scheduled monument, 900m west of Margam Abbey, and 1.3km west of Margam Castle, all located within the Margam Registered Park and Garden. The Chain Home Low Radar Station (GM488) is situated around 725m north of the site on elevated ground.

The site lies outside, but in close proximity to, the Margam Special Landscape Area (SLA) and the Margam Conservation Area, both located east of the M4 corridor. It also borders the non-statutory Margam Mountain Historic Landscape, which forms part of the wider upland ridge overlooking the coastal plain of Port Talbot.

Views towards the site are generally limited and filtered by existing vegetation, boundary planting and adjacent industrial structures. Open views are available from short sections of the A48, Harbour Way, and Longlands Lane, while partial glimpses may be obtained from elevated ground within Margam Country Park and Mynydd y Castell Camp. These sites lie within the Zone of Theoretical Visibility identified in the submitted Landscape and Visual Appraisal, though the development sites visual envelope is primarily contained to the west and south-west.

In summary, the site forms a partially brownfield parcel of enclosed land containing disused buildings, vegetation and internal access infrastructure, positioned within a transitional area between industrial development and the historic parkland landscape of Margam. It occupies a visually contained position west of the M4 corridor, surrounded by energy infrastructure, road networks and mature landscape features that define its current context and character.

DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT

The application seeks full planning permission for the redevelopment of land at Tyn-y-Caeau, Margam to accommodate a data centre (Use Class B8) with associated infrastructure, landscaping, parking and access works, together with the partial retention of the existing Tyn-y-Caeau building for ancillary use and the establishment of a power connection to the adjacent Western Bio-Energy Plant.

Overall Site Layout and Quantum of Development

The proposed development occupies an area of approximately 1.72 hectares. It comprises a single main data centre building positioned broadly in the western and central part of the site, with ancillary infrastructure and landscaped areas around the periphery. The scheme aims to make direct use of electricity from the nearby Western Bio-Energy facility and includes the land necessary to provide a private electricity wire.

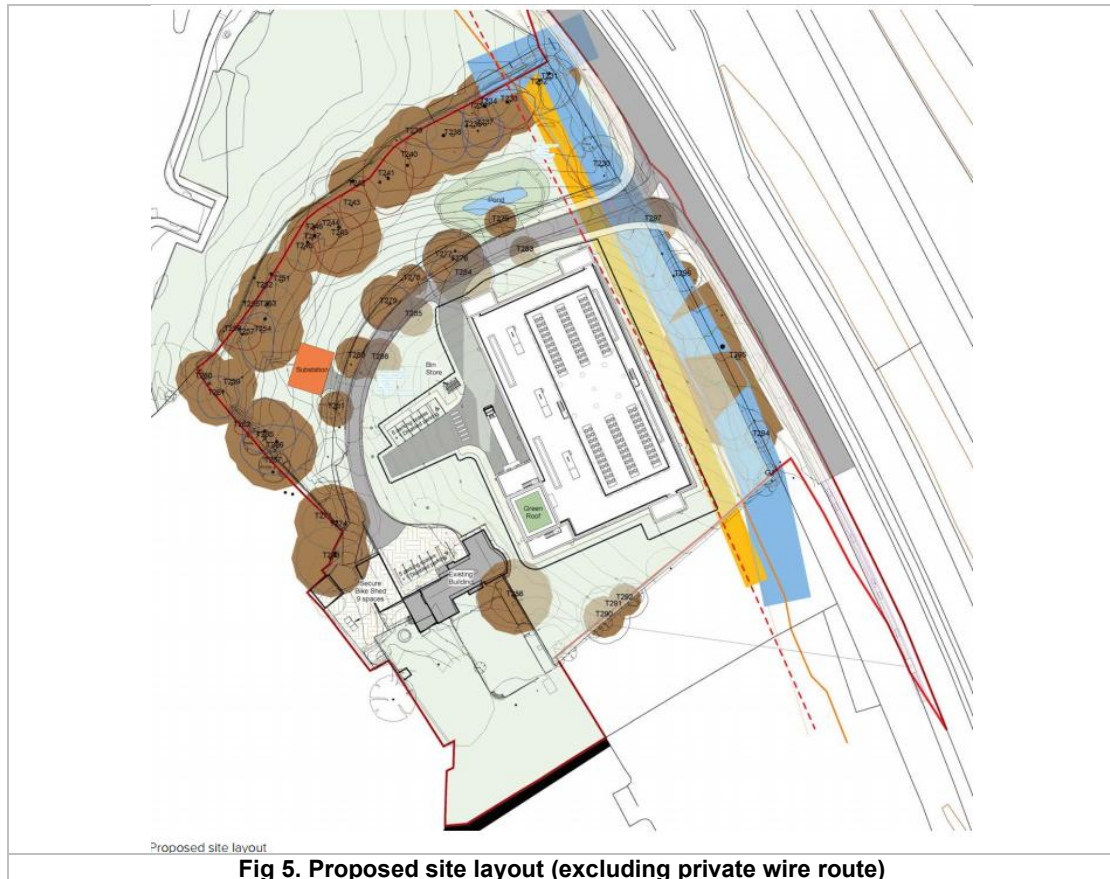
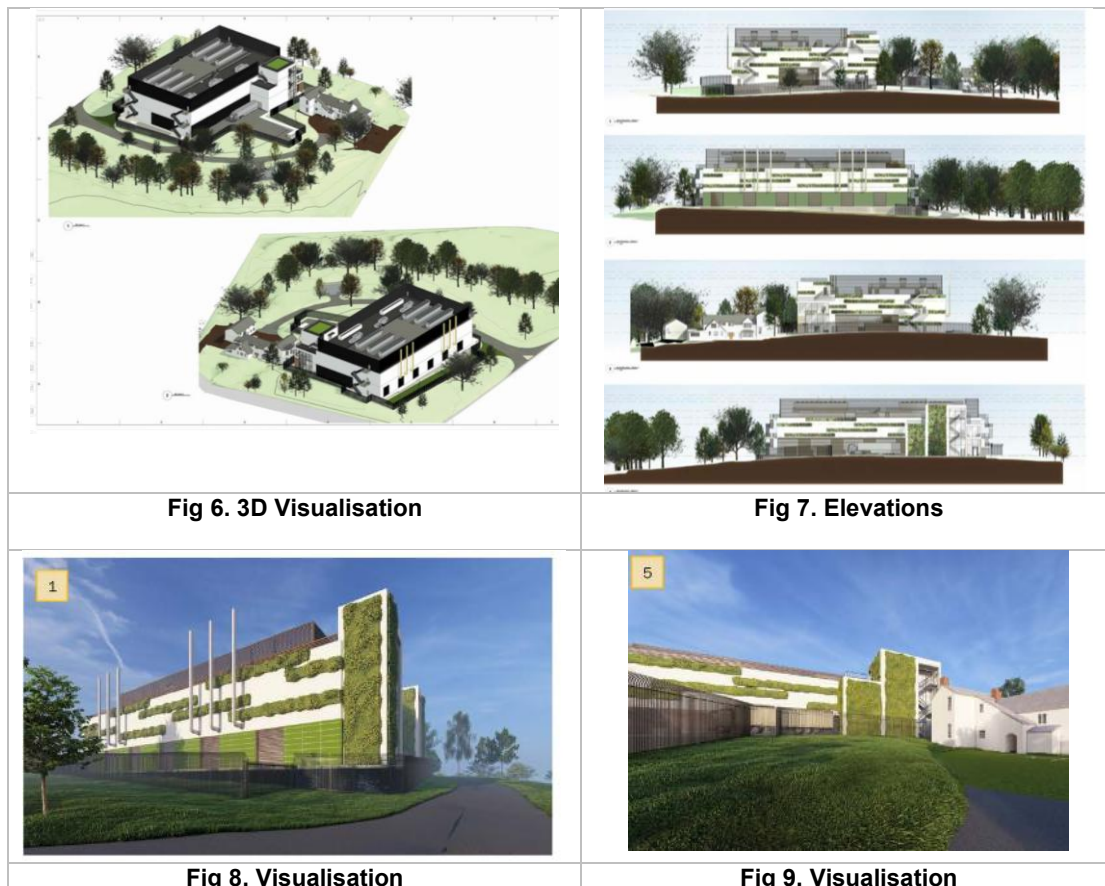


Fig 5. Proposed site layout (excluding private wire route)

The main data centre building will have a rectangular footprint aligned roughly north-south and a maximum height of 18 metres. The footprint of the data centre building is around 2,670m², the applicant indicates that the development could draw up to 12 MW of electricity from the WBE Biomass plant (the plant generates 15MW). The building will house the data halls and associated plant, electrical and mechanical equipment, control and monitoring rooms, offices, welfare accommodation, and ancillary storage. External features will include generator compounds, transformers, and an equipment yard located to the rear and side elevations. The development includes back up electricity generators and a direct grid connection to ensure that the data centre has an uninterruptable energy supply.

The existing two-storey Tyn-y-Caeau farmhouse is proposed to be retained and refurbished for use as ancillary office, welfare or security accommodation associated with the operation of the data centre.



The single-storey annexe and detached barn are to be demolished, together with removal of redundant hardstanding and resurfacing of the internal yard.

Access and Circulation

Vehicular access will be taken from a similar point to the existing gated entrance on the A48 (Margam Road). The access will be substantially altered and upgraded to an improved standard. The access is to a dual carriageway and it will therefore maintain a left-in/left-out arrangement. An internal access road will extend westwards from the entrance to the main building, with provision for two-way traffic, service vehicle turning, and emergency access.

A dedicated parking area will provide approximately 12 car spaces for staff and visitors, with additional cycle storage and accessible bays. Six spaces are located adjacent to the offices and six spaces are provided west of the loading area. Provision is also made for HGV and delivery bays, a loading and service yard, and pedestrian routes connecting the retained building, car park, and main entrance.

Energy and Utilities Infrastructure

The proposal includes an underground power connection linking the data centre directly to the WBE Biomass Plant immediately to the west. This will allow the facility to utilise renewable electricity generated on the adjacent site.

A substation and associated switchgear will be installed within the site boundary. Limited information has been provided on this equipment which will

need to be finalised with the distribution network operator. Backup diesel generators and battery storage units will be positioned within the service compound to ensure continuous operation in the event of supply interruption.

Surface water will be managed through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) including attenuation basins, swales, and wet-tolerant planting, with discharge rates restricted to greenfield run-off rates in accordance with SAB requirements.

Building Design and Materials

The data centre is proposed to be a contemporary industrial structure with modular elevations finished in a combination of composite cladding panels, metal louvres, and living green walls. A green roof system will be incorporated to improve visual integration and enhance biodiversity.

External lighting, security fencing, and CCTV will be installed around the perimeter, designed to comply with operational and safety standards. The architectural treatment will include muted tones and materials consistent with neighbouring energy and industrial buildings.

Landscaping and Green Infrastructure (GI)

The landscape strategy, as described in the LVA and GI Statement, retains the majority of boundary trees and hedgerows, including all Category A specimens identified in the arboricultural assessment.

Enhancement measures include:

- New native tree and hedgerow planting along the southern and western boundaries;
- Wildflower grassland to be established along the eastern edge adjacent to the A48;
- Wet-tolerant marginal planting around the attenuation basin;
- Removal and management of Japanese knotweed in accordance with an Invasive Species Management Plan; and
- Creation of bat and bird boxes, log piles, and other ecological features to deliver biodiversity enhancement.

The landscape design also provides a visual buffer between the built form and surrounding areas, while maintaining existing enclosure from mature vegetation.

Sustainability and Environmental Measures

The submitted Sustainability Statement confirms that the data centre will employ energy-efficient technologies and high-performance building services to reduce operational demand. Cooling systems will utilise air-source heat exchange and waste heat recovery, while the building fabric will be designed to achieve low air-tightness and thermal bridging values. The applicant outlines how the development will promote circular-economy principles, including material re-use, sustainable procurement, and recycling during construction. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure will be provided within the staff parking area.

Ecological Mitigation

In accordance with the Ecological Impact Assessment, a range of measures are proposed to avoid or reduce effects on protected species, including:

- Retention of existing roosting features within the Tyn-y-Caeau Farmhouse building;
- Implementation of Bat Licence requirements and hibernation monitoring;
- Timing of demolition and vegetation clearance to avoid the bird breeding season;
- Installation of bat boxes, bird boxes, and reptile refuges; and
- Long-term management of newly created habitats through a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan.

Relationship to Adjacent Development

The site is located adjacent to land forming part of the Strategic Employment Site EC1/2, which has an extant permission (ref: P2021/1255) for a metal processing facility totalling 28,500m² of floorspace. That development surrounds the Tyn-y-Caeau site on two sides - west and south - with the A48 forming the eastern boundary and an agricultural field allocated for employment use to the north.

Summary

In summary, the proposed development comprises the redevelopment of a 1.72-hectare brownfield site at Tyn-y-Caeau to deliver a data centre and supporting infrastructure, with ancillary use of the retained farmhouse, new access and parking, renewable energy connection, and comprehensive landscape and ecological enhancement works.

The scheme integrates with the surrounding industrial and energy uses west of the A48 and is designed to reuse existing infrastructure and connect directly to local renewable energy sources.

NEGOTIATIONS:

Following validation of the application, a review of the submitted documentation identified the need for additional information to address technical matters raised during internal and external consultation. The case officer engaged in discussions with the applicant's planning agents and technical consultants to ensure that sufficient information was provided to enable a full and informed assessment of the proposal.

Specifically, the following matters required further submission or clarification:

• Ecology:

Following comments from the Council's Ecologist and Natural Resources Wales (NRW), additional survey work and clarification were requested in respect of bat roost potential, hibernation features, and habitat connectivity. An updated Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) prepared by EnZygo to supplement the original submission of an EclA by Tyler Grange. A new EclA was received in late October 2025. These documents provided additional detail on species activity, mitigation measures, and biodiversity enhancement

proposals. These were referred to the Council Ecologist who raised further concerns that hibernation surveys had not been completed and that mitigation remained uncertain. The applicants were advised of this concern and a deadline agreed to submit additional information. Additional information in the form of an updated EclA incorporating hibernation surveys and outline mitigation proposals were received on the 13 March 2026. These were referred to the Council's Ecologist and NRW, both of whom advised that the proposals for and details of the bat mitigation were insufficient. Three further submissions of revised detail for the bat mitigation were received on the 9, 23 and 28 April 2026 to address continuing concerns of NRW and the Authority's Ecologist. The final response from these consultees are provided below.

- **Highways:**

Consultation with the Local Highway Authority highlighted the need for further detail regarding access design, vehicle tracking, parking provision, and swept-path analysis for service vehicles. The applicant provided more detailed access drawings and vehicle manoeuvring diagrams, along with clarification on proposed staff numbers, parking management, and servicing arrangements to support the assessment of transport impacts.

- **Active Travel:**

In response to feedback from the Active Travel Officer, additional information was requested to demonstrate pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the site and existing infrastructure on the A48 corridor. Supplementary details were provided, confirming the inclusion of cycle parking facilities, footway links, and opportunities for integration with the Wales Coast Path / National Cycle Network Route 4 adjacent to the eastern boundary. Revised and additional submissions were received and circulated to consultees for further review.

Throughout the process, the applicant's agent maintained regular contact with the case officer to provide clarification and ensure that all outstanding technical queries were addressed prior to finalising the recommendation.

PLANNING HISTORY

A search of Council records indicates that the site and adjoining land have been subject to a number of historic planning applications relating to industrial and energy development around Junction 38, Margam. The most relevant entries are summarised below:

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Decision Date	Notes
P2022/1061	Change of use of dwellinghouse with detached studio apartments and associated land to a truck stop, including guest house, café, spa facilities, HGV parking, EV charging hub,	Application in progress	—	Affects Tyn-y-Caeau building and curtilage. No decision as of March 2026.

Reference	Proposal	Decision	Decision Date	Notes
P2021/1255	internal access road and infrastructure. Erection of a metal processing facility comprising processing plant, warehouse and store, office building, amenity building, laboratory, services building, substation and associated infrastructure (Margam Strategic Employment Site EC1/2).	Approved	2022	Adjacent to the application site; surrounds the land on three sides (north, west and south).
P2020/0104	Screening opinion for the erection of 10 office, industrial and storage/distribution units (Use Classes B1, B2 and B8) with associated engineering works.	EIA not required (RDSCR)	25 February 2020	Land adjacent to Western Bio-Energy Plant.
P2020/0059	Screening opinion for 10 office, storage and distribution units on 6.2 ha area.	EIA not required (RA)	29 January 2020	Land adjacent to M4 Junction 38.
P2014/0835	Installation of underground foul water drainage system associated with Margam Green Energy Plant.	Approved	30 October 2014	Nearby infrastructure scheme.
P2014/0420	Discharge of conditions (landscaping, reptile mitigation, ecological scheme) relating to permission P2012/0189.	Approved	11 November 2014	Land near Western Wood Energy Plant.
P2012/0189	Construction of access road linking Biomass 2 to Peripheral Distributor Road (Stage 2).	Approved	6 March 2014	Adjoining highway link serving Longlands Lane.

These records confirm a consistent pattern of industrial, energy and employment-related development surrounding the site since the early 2010s, associated with the Margam Energy and Employment Zone identified in the adopted LDP.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultee	Response
Natural Resources Wales	Raised initial concerns regarding the adequacy of ecological surveys, particularly in relation to bat activity, lighting impacts, and the need for appropriate mitigation and habitat management. NRW also provided comments on drainage, surface water management, and the requirement for a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and pollution prevention measures to protect nearby watercourses. Additional ecological survey information has since been submitted. This has been reviewed by NRW who do not object subject to conditions and consider that the Authority must determine if the development can pass the tests for the issuing of a European Protected Species licence.
Cadw	No objections. Confirmed that the development would not adversely affect the setting of designated heritage assets, including Margam Park Registered Historic Park and Garden.
Heneb (formerly Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust)	No objections, subject to a condition requiring an archaeological watching brief during groundworks.
Welsh Government Transport Directorate	No objections and no direction issued, subject to a directed condition regarding access arrangements onto the A48.
NPT Highways	No objections subject to standard conditions.
NPT Drainage	No objections. Confirmed that the drainage strategy is acceptable in principle, subject to separate approval under the Sustainable Drainage (SuDS) Approval Body (SAB) process prior to commencement.
Health and Safety Executive (HSE)	PADHI assessment completed – HSE does not advise against the granting of permission. Subsequent clarification confirmed the building sensitivity level and site classification were appropriate.
NPT Ecologist	Initial response requested further information regarding bat roost potential, hibernation surveys, and details of

Consultee	Response
	lighting, habitat creation, and long-term management. Additional ecological material was submitted as identified in the negotiations section above. Subject to the most recent ecological mitigation proposals the proposal was considered acceptable.
NPT Contaminated Lnd	No objection. Requested a precautionary condition requiring notification and appropriate remediation should unexpected contamination be encountered during development.
NPT Digital Relationship Manager	
NPT Environmental Health (including noise and air quality)	Support the proposal and note alignment with the strategic objectives of the Swansea Bay City Deal and Welsh Government digital infrastructure policy.
NPT Tree Officer	No objection, subject to conditions controlling operational noise levels, generator testing hours, and dust management during construction.
Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Authority	No objection. Provided comments on tree protection and replacement planting, to be secured through the approved landscape scheme.
NPT Public Rights of Way	No comments or objections. Provided general advice on fire hydrant provision and emergency access arrangements.
NPT Active Travel	No objection. Confirmed that no Public Rights of Way are affected by the proposal.
Dwr Cymru Welsh Water	Initial concerns raised regarding the detail of the active travel provisions of the proposal. Details not provided, and conditioned.
The Coal Authority (now the Mining Remediation Authority)	No objections. Provided standard advice on foul and surface water drainage connections, noting that SAB approval will be required prior to commencement.

Consultee	Response
Wales and West Utilities	No objections. Confirmed no recorded coal mining risks within or adjacent to the site and offered standard advisory notes.
	Standard advice and utilities plan provided, advising liaison with WWU prior to any works near underground apparatus.

REPRESENTATIONS

Application Publicity

The application was publicised as a major development and as a departure from the development plan as defined under the Town and Country Planning (General Development Management) (Wales) Procedure Order 2012.

The application publicity was as follows - Placing site notices in various locations on the highway near to the site and an advert was placed in the South Wales Evening Post.

Two written representations were received: one from a local resident of Abbots Close, Margam, and one from Margam Green Energy Ltd, an adjoining landowner.

The key points raised are summarised below:

Neighbour Representation

The resident raises objection to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The site is considered inappropriate due to over-industrialisation in the Margam area, loss of green space, and proximity to Margam Crematorium, which they consider incompatible with a large-scale industrial use.
- Concern that the development would lead to loss of biodiversity and conflict with the Council's Biodiversity Duty Plan 2023–2026 and recent Welsh Government commitments relating to the declared climate and nature emergencies.
- The development is said to involve high energy consumption, continuous cooling requirements, and possible water use and emissions from back-up generators.
- Fears of noise, light and air pollution, and additional traffic generation on the already congested local network, potentially undermining existing air-quality objectives for the Port Talbot area.
- Limited local economic benefit, given that data centres typically require only a small on-site workforce.

The representation requests that greater scrutiny be given to environmental and sustainability impacts and that alternative brownfield sites be considered.

Adjoining Landowner Representation

Margam Green Energy Ltd, operators of the adjacent biomass plant, have made representations raising the following points:

- The proposed energy connection between the data centre and the biomass plant is shown to cross land outside the applicant's control, including a private access road maintained by Margam Green Energy and land owned by the Welsh Government.
- No agreement has yet been reached for the rights of access or connection across this land.
- They request that any decision clearly record that these rights are unresolved and that, if planning permission is granted, a condition precedent be imposed requiring clarification and consent before development commences.
- They also encourage the Council to progress the adoption of the private access road to provide certainty for both parties.

Pre-Application Consultation (PAC)

In accordance with Section 61Z of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (as amended), the applicant carried out a statutory Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) prior to submission.

Bilingual notices were displayed on and around the site on 31 January 2025, and consultation ran for 28 days from 1 February to 1 March 2025. The PAC Report confirms that consultation letters were issued to adjoining landowners, local Members, Margam Community Council, and relevant statutory consultees, including NPTCBC (Highways, Drainage, Ecology and Planning Policy), Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, CADW, Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government Highways, and the Mid and West Wales Fire and Rescue Service.

Responses raised points relating to highway access, surface-water drainage, ecology, flood risk, and heritage setting. One public representation was received querying potential traffic and visual effects.

In response, the applicant updated and expanded the submission package to include a Bat Hibernation Survey, Flood Consequences Assessment, Landscape and Visual Appraisal, and Heritage Impact Assessment.

The submitted PAC Report confirms that statutory consultation requirements were met and outlines how these responses informed the final application.

REPORT

Planning Policy Context

National Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

The Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 (WFGA 2015)

The WFGA 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in exercising its functions to meet its sustainable development (or wellbeing) objectives. This report has been prepared in consideration of the Council's duty and the "sustainable development principle", as set out in the 2015 Act. In reaching the recommendation set out below, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Future Wales – the National Plan 2040

[Future Wales - the National Plan 2040](#) is the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. Future Wales forms part of the development plan and sets out a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and wellbeing of our communities.

Outcome 11 of FW states that "decarbonisation commitments and renewable energy targets will be treated as opportunities to build a more resilient and equitable low carbon economy". FW aims to ensure that the planning system will help Wales "lead the way in promoting and delivering a competitive, sustainable decarbonised society

The following policies are of particular relevance to the assessment of this application:

- Policy 1 – Where Wales Will Grow

Promotes sustainable growth in and around the National Growth Areas, including Swansea Bay and Port Talbot, encouraging investment in employment and infrastructure that supports low-carbon transition.

- Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure

Requires development to maintain and enhance biodiversity, support ecological connectivity, and integrate green infrastructure into site design.

- Policy 11 – National Connectivity

Supports improved digital and physical connectivity across Wales, including investment in broadband, data and energy networks that underpin economic resilience.

- Policy 17 – Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure

Promotes renewable energy generation, grid connection and the co-location of energy-intensive uses with low-carbon sources - directly relevant to this proposal's functional link with the Western Bio-Energy Plant.

- Policy 18 – Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance

Supports the development of energy infrastructure that contributes to Wales' decarbonisation targets and energy security.

- Policy 19 – Digital and Energy Infrastructure

Supports the deployment of data centres, digital infrastructure, and energy technologies across Wales to improve connectivity and resilience, provided environmental and amenity impacts are appropriately managed

Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024)

The primary objective of PPW is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio economic Duty. A well functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places.

PPW promotes action at all levels of the planning process which is conducive to maximising its contribution to the well being of Wales and its communities. It encourages a wider, sustainable and problem solving outlook which focuses on integrating and addressing multiple issues rather than on an approach which is fragmented, un coordinated and deals with issues in isolation. It provides an opportunity to remove any actual or perceived problems in current approaches and stimulate and support innovative and creative ideas as well as high standards of evidence and assessment to underpin the preparation of development plans and strategies and individual proposals. Monitoring and learning from development outcomes so as to drive sustainable improvements in planning practice is also important.

The following parts of PPW are of particular relevance to the assessment of this application:

- Paragraphs 3.3 – 3.17 – Good Design / Making Better Places
- Paragraphs 3.30 – 3.37 – Sustainable Management of Natural Resources
- Paragraphs 3.55 – 3.56 – Previously Developed Land
- Paragraph 3.60 – Development in the Countryside

Transport and Accessibility

- Paragraphs 4.1.1 – 4.1.4 – Integrated Planning and Transport
- Paragraphs 4.1.5 – 4.1.18 – Sustainable Transport
- Paragraphs 4.1.19 – 4.1.25 – Active and Social Streets
- Paragraphs 4.1.26 – 4.1.35 – Active Travel

- Paragraphs 4.1.36 – 4.1.39 – Public Transport
- Paragraphs 4.1.40 – 4.1.42 – Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles
- Paragraphs 4.1.43 – 4.1.49 – Traffic Management
- Paragraphs 4.1.50 – 4.1.55 – Car Parking
- Paragraphs 4.1.56 – 4.1.57 – Transport Assessments

Economic Development and Infrastructure

- Paragraphs 5.4.1 – 5.4.2 – Economic Development and Appropriate Locations
- Paragraph 5.7.3 – 5.7.12 – Electricity Grid Network and Energy Storage
- Paragraph 5.7.13 – Energy Hierarchy for Planning
- Paragraphs 5.7.14 – 5.7.15 – Renewable Energy Targets
- Paragraphs 5.8.1 – 5.8.7 – Sustainable Buildings
- Paragraph 5.9.1 – Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy
- Paragraphs 5.9.11 – 5.9.13 – Local Energy Generation
- Paragraphs 5.10.1 – 5.10.7 – Digital and Data Infrastructure

Natural Environment and Green Infrastructure

- Paragraphs 6.2.1 – 6.2.3 – Green Infrastructure
- Paragraphs 6.2.6 – 6.2.10 – Green Infrastructure Assessments
- Paragraphs 6.2.11 – 6.2.14 – Integrating Green Infrastructure and Development
- Paragraphs 6.3.6 – 6.3.17 – Characteristics of Local Landscapes
- Paragraph 6.4.1 – 6.4.17 – Step-Wise Approach and Landscape Protection
- Paragraphs 6.4.33 – 6.4.35 – Protected Species and Biodiversity Enhancement
- Paragraphs 6.6.17 – 6.6.27 – Water Resources and Flood Risk Management
- Paragraphs 6.7.6 – 6.7.8 – Framework for Air Quality and Soundscape
- Paragraphs 6.9.16 – 6.9.21 – Land Contamination

Technical Advice Notes

PPW is supported by a series of more detailed [Technical Advice Notes](#) (TANs), of which the following are of relevance: -

- [TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning \(30 September 2009\)](#)
- [TAN 11: Noise \(31 October 1997\)](#)
- [TAN 12: Design \(31 March 2016\)](#)
- [TAN 15: development, flooding and coastal erosion \(31 March 2025\)](#)
- [TAN 18: Transport \(31 March 2007\)](#)
- [TAN 21: Waste \(23 February 2017\)](#)
- [TAN 23: Economic Development \(28 February 2014\)](#)
- [TAN 24: The Historic Environment \(30 May 2017\)](#)

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

Overview

The development plan for the purposes of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is the [Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011 – 2026 \(Adopted January 2016\)](#) (hereafter LDP). When considering the grant of planning permission the plan should be considered as a whole, within the LDP the following policies are of particular relevance.

Strategic Policies

- **Policy SP1** Climate Change
- **Policy SP2** Health
- **Policy SP3** Sustainable communities
- **Policy SP4** Infrastructure
- **Policy SP5** Development in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area
- **Policy SP11** Employment Growth
- **Policy SP15** Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- **Policy SP16** Environmental Protection
- **Policy SP18** Renewable and Low Carbon Energy
- **Policy SP19** Waste Management
- **Policy SP20** Transport Network
- **Policy SP21** Built Environment and Historic Heritage

Topic Based Policies

- **Policy SC1** Settlement limits
- **Policy I1** Infrastructure Requirements
- **Policy EC1** Employment Allocations
- **Policy EC3** Employment Area Uses
- **Policy EC4** Protection of Existing Employment Uses
- **Policy EN2** Special Landscape Areas
- **Policy EN6** Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites
- **Policy EN7** Important Natural Features
- **Policy EN8** Pollution and Land Stability
- **Policy M1** Development in Mineral Safeguarding Areas
- **Policy RE2** Renewable and Low Carbon Energy in New Development
- **Policy W3** Waste Management in New Development
- **Policy TR2** Design and Access of New Development
- **Policy BE1** Design

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- [Planning Obligations](#) (October 2016)
- [Parking Standards](#) (October 2016)
- [Pollution](#) (October 2016)
- [Renewable and Low Carbon Energy \(July 2017\)](#)
- [Design](#) (July 2017)

- [Landscape & Seascape \(May 2018\)](#)
- [Biodiversity and Geodiversity](#) (May 2018)
- [The Historic Environment](#) (April 2019) (incl. [Schedule of Buildings of Local Importance](#) and [SPG: Schedule of Designated Canal Structures](#))

EIA and HRA Screening

An EIA Screening Request (Ref: P2024/0791) was submitted to the Local Planning Authority under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 for the proposed data centre development.

A formal Screening Determination was issued in 2024, confirming that the proposal does not constitute EIA development, as it is not likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of its nature, scale, or location. Accordingly, an Environmental Statement was not required.

In respect of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), the potential effects of the development on European designated sites have been screened as part of the consideration of this application, in accordance with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This assessment has been informed by the submitted ecological information, including the Ecological Impact Assessment, and by the advice of Natural Resources Wales and the Council's Ecologist. Having regard to the nature and scale of the proposal, its distance from any European protected sites, and the absence of direct hydrological or ecological connectivity, it is concluded that the development is unlikely to have a significant effect on any European site, and therefore no further Appropriate Assessment is required.

Issues

The key planning issues considered in the determination of this application are as follows: the principle of development, given that the site lies outside defined settlement limits and represents a departure from the Local Development Plan; placemaking, design and the built environment, including the layout, appearance and functionality of the proposed development; landscape and visual impact, particularly in relation to views from the surrounding countryside and adjacent transport corridors; potential effects on heritage assets; the impact on residential amenity, including noise, air quality and lighting; highway access, traffic generation and active travel connections; flood risk and drainage, especially in relation to the underground cable connection; ecology, biodiversity and arboriculture, including updated bat survey findings; ground conditions and contamination, having regard to the site's position within the historic coalfield; and the proposal's contribution to sustainability and resource efficiency.

The report also addresses planning obligations, third-party representations, and any outstanding consultee matters, before presenting the overall planning balance and recommendation.

Principle of Development

The starting point for assessing the principle of the proposed development is Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the adopted Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan Context

The operative development plan for the area is the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011–2026, adopted in January 2016. The LDP's settlement strategy is designed to direct most new development to within defined settlement limits, where services and infrastructure are readily available, and to manage development in the countryside to protect its character and ensure sustainable patterns of growth.

The LDP Proposals Map identifies the application site as lying outside any defined settlement boundary. The land is therefore considered to be within the countryside for policy purposes. The adjoining land to the north, west and south forms part of the Strategic Employment Site EC1/2 - Margam, which is allocated for B1, B2 and B8 uses under Policy EC1 (Employment Allocations) of the Plan.

While the site lies directly adjacent to this allocated employment land, it is not included within the designated employment allocation boundary. Accordingly, the proposal represents a departure from the adopted development plan, as the development of a large-scale employment-type use (a data centre) is proposed on land identified as countryside rather than within a defined settlement or allocation.

Relevant Local Policies

Policy EC1 supports new employment development within the identified allocations, while Policy EC2 (Existing Employment Areas) allows for appropriate expansion or intensification within existing operational employment areas. Development outside such boundaries is normally restricted by Policy SC1 (Settlement Limits), which resists new built development in the countryside unless it falls within a limited range of exceptions (such as agriculture, forestry, renewable energy, or essential infrastructure).

Other relevant strategic policies include:

- SP11 (Employment Growth) - to support a competitive and diverse local economy;
- SP5 (Coastal Corridor Strategy Area) - identifying Margam (Junction 38) as key locations for employment growth; and
- SP18 (Renewable Energy) - which encourages developments that promote low-carbon and renewable energy solutions.

On this basis, while the proposal would deliver a high-value digital infrastructure use, it does so on land not allocated for employment purposes and therefore requires specific justification against national and local policy objectives.

Nature of the Proposed Use

The proposed development is for a data centre, which falls within Use Class B8 (storage and distribution) but functions as a specialist infrastructure use associated with digital data storage and transmission. Such facilities are typically energy-intensive and require secure, uninterrupted power supply, high-capacity broadband connectivity, and 24-hour operational capability. These characteristics distinguish data centres from conventional warehouse or industrial uses and often necessitate siting close to energy generation or transmission infrastructure.

In this instance, the applicant's intention is to co-locate the proposed data centre with the existing Western Bio-Energy (WBE) Plant, which lies to the west of the application site. The WBE facility generates renewable electricity and heat through the combustion of sustainably sourced biomass. Under Welsh and UK energy policy, biomass generation is classed as a low-carbon technology, as the CO₂ emitted during combustion is substantially offset through the carbon absorbed during the growth of the feedstock material.

The proposed development would connect directly to the WBE plant via a private underground cable, allowing the data centre to utilise locally produced renewable electricity. This co-location would minimise transmission losses and provide a secure, continuous power supply essential for data operations, while enabling a significant reduction in operational carbon intensity compared with grid-sourced electricity.

In policy terms, this approach aligns with the principles of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, both of which promote the clustering of renewable and low-carbon energy uses within strategic growth areas. Future Wales identifies the Swansea Bay and Llanelli National Growth Area as a focus for decarbonised energy generation, digital innovation, and green infrastructure investment. The direct integration of a high-energy digital facility with an existing renewable power source therefore reflects the transition towards a net-zero, resource-efficient economy envisaged by national policy.

Furthermore, the proposal is an example of industrial co-operation, whereby energy from one process is reused by another, supporting circular-economy principles under Policy SP1 (Climate Change) and SP18 (Renewable Energy) of the LDP.

Viability of existing WBE plant

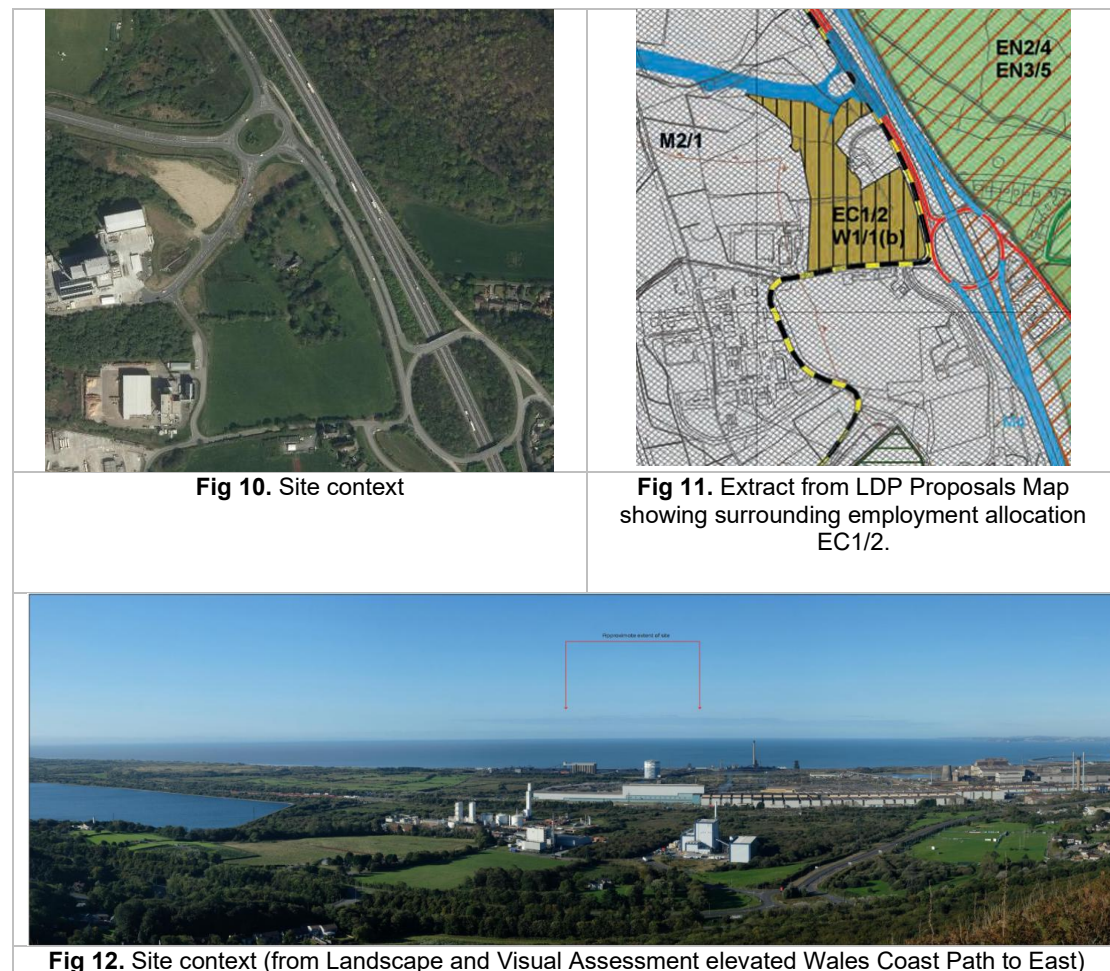
The applicant has advised that the proposed development would provide a long-term off-take for electricity generated by the adjacent Western Bio-Energy biomass facility, particularly in the context of the expiry of Renewable Obligation Certificate (ROC) support. The Planning, Design and Access Statement (PDAS) explains that *“without a replacement for ROC subsidy, the plant is unviable at current power prices”* and that the data centre would act as a *“long-term customer for the energy generated”*, helping to *“secure a sustainable future for the business”* and extend its operational life.

While these benefits are noted, the ongoing commercial viability of the existing facility and the business model of the applicant are not matters to which significant weight can be afforded in the determination of this planning application. The planning assessment must instead focus on the land-use planning merits of the proposal.

Assessment of the Site's Relationship to the Employment Allocation

Although the application site lies outside the EC1/2 employment allocation, it is functionally and visually integrated with that area.

To the south west and separated by a field is the WBE plant; to the west lies the Margam Green Energy Plant; and to the south and west the fields have planning permission for a metal processing facility (ref. P2021/1255) within the employment allocation. These existing and consented developments effectively surround the application site on two sides, with the A48 and M4 corridor forming a strong boundary to the east and north (as shown below).



As such, the site forms a relatively small residual parcel of land between the allocated employment zone and the transport corridor. Its development would represent a logical consolidation of the existing employment cluster, rather than an isolated encroachment into open countryside. Furthermore, the proposal would utilise existing access infrastructure, shared utilities, and landscape buffers already established as part of the surrounding industrial area.

The wider area has been subject to significant industrial and energy-related development over time, including the nearby Western Bio-Energy biomass facility and associated infrastructure. Planning permissions have also been granted for employment and industrial uses within the adjoining Margam employment area. As a result, the application site does not read as isolated open countryside but instead forms part of an established and evolving industrial, energy and infrastructure cluster associated with the wider Port Talbot / Margam area.

National Policy and Material Considerations

At the national level, both Planning Policy Wales (PPW, Edition 12) and Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 place significant emphasis on promoting digital infrastructure, low-carbon energy, and resilient economic growth. Future Wales identifies the Swansea Bay and Llanelli National Growth Area (which includes Port Talbot and Margam) as a key focus for such investment, encouraging co-location of energy-intensive uses with renewable energy generation.

In this context, the proposed development aligns with national objectives for:

- supporting the transition to a digital economy;
- maximising the use of renewable energy to decarbonise high-energy uses; and
- delivering strategic employment opportunities within key growth areas.

The functional co-location with the WBE Plant represents a site-specific justification, as it provides a direct renewable energy source and infrastructure synergy that would not be easily replicated elsewhere within the existing settlement or employment boundaries. Such a relationship is consistent with the principles of sustainable location, energy efficiency, and resource circularity promoted through Policies SP1 (Climate Change) and SP18 (Renewable Energy) of the LDP, as well as Policy 16 (Renewable and Low Carbon Energy) of Future Wales.

Conclusion on Principle

- The site lies outside defined settlement limits and beyond the EC1/2 employment allocation, and the proposal therefore represents a departure from the adopted LDP when assessed against Policies SC1 and EC1.
- The development, however, would form a logical extension to an established industrial and energy cluster, and would benefit from direct co-location with the Western Bio-Energy facility, providing an identifiable functional justification.
- The proposal would contribute to digital infrastructure capacity and align with national objectives for low-carbon economic growth within the Swansea Bay and Llanelli National Growth Area.

Whether this justification is sufficient to outweigh the policy presumption against new development in the countryside is a matter for overall planning balance. Nonetheless, it is accepted that the site's context, relationship to existing employment land, and renewable energy connection represent material considerations that are directly relevant to the assessment of the development's principle in this specific location.

Placemaking, Design and Built Environment

Introduction

National planning policy, as set out in Planning Policy Wales (PPW, Edition 12, 2024), places placemaking at the heart of the planning system. Paragraph 2.9 of PPW states that good design is not simply about appearance, but about achieving the right development in the right place, reflecting local character, providing environmental resilience, and promoting well-being.

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 builds on this approach, with Policy 1 (Where Wales Will Grow) and Policy 9 (Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure) emphasising the need for sustainable, energy-efficient and well-connected places.

At local level, the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan 2011–2026 provides specific policy requirements through:

- BE1 - Design, which requires development to demonstrate high design quality, appropriate scale, form and materials, and respect for local context;
- SP2 - Health, promoting environments that support physical activity and well-being;
- SP4 - Infrastructure, requiring sufficient provision for utilities and movement networks; and
- BE3 - Sustainable Building Design, encouraging low-carbon construction and energy-efficient technologies.

The Council's Design SPG (2017) and Green Infrastructure SPG (2020) provide further guidance on site layout, access, landscape integration and visual mitigation.

Design Approach and Layout

The layout positions the main data-hall building centrally within the western portion of the site, aligned north–south. Ancillary elements - including generators, transformers, and a substation - are grouped within a screened service compound to the west.

The retained Tyn-y-Caeau farmhouse is located behind the data centre building and is proposed to be refurbished for ancillary office, welfare and security functions, maintaining a visual reference to the site's former use.

A single vehicular access from the A48 (Margam Road) is retained and upgraded, serving an internal loop road, staff and visitor parking, and service vehicle turning areas. The internal layout is capable of maintaining clear

separation between pedestrian, cycle and vehicular movement, in line with Active Travel Act (2013) principles.

Externally, the development incorporates green infrastructure corridors around the perimeter, SuDS features integrated with landscape planting, and new native tree and hedgerow belts reinforcing the existing vegetated boundaries.

Scale, Massing and Appearance

The proposed data-centre building is of rectangular form, with a maximum height of approximately 18 metres to ridge. While substantial in scale, its height and massing are consistent with existing energy and industrial buildings to the west and south, including the Western Bio-Energy and Margam Green Energy plants.

The architectural treatment employs modular cladding panels, louvred ventilation bays, and green façade elements, using muted grey and green tones to blend with the surrounding industrial landscape and nearby vegetation. A green roof system is proposed to reduce visual contrast and assist in rainwater attenuation.

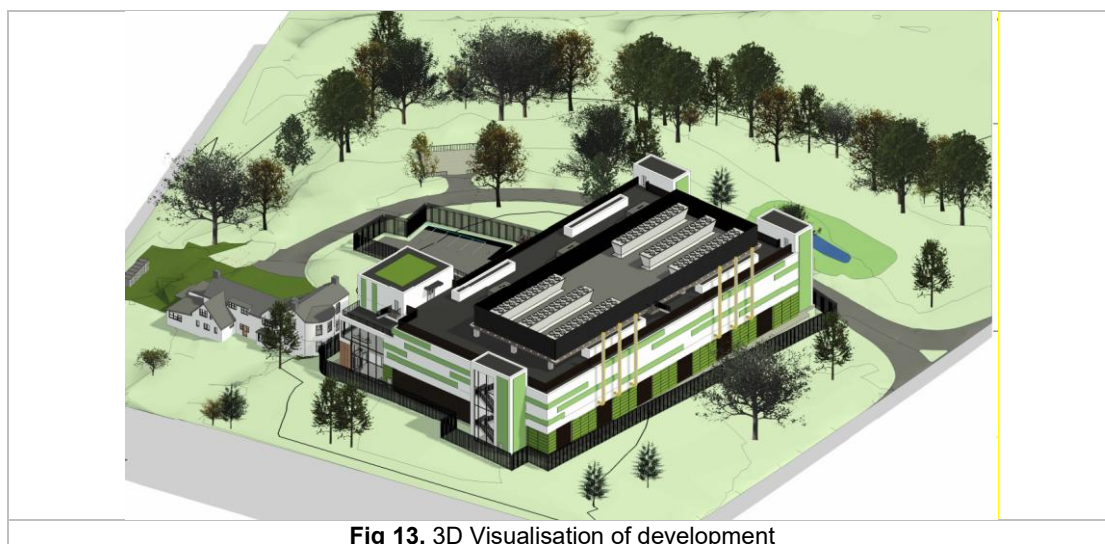


Fig 13. 3D Visualisation of development

Security fencing, lighting and CCTV are incorporated, designed to meet operational requirements while minimising visual intrusion through dark-finish materials and directional lighting.

Placemaking and Integration

Although the development is primarily functional in nature. The scheme is viewed to have been informed by placemaking principles appropriate to its context. The retention of mature trees, introduction of active travel links, and clear internal circulation pattern contribute to a coherent layout. Landscape buffers provide a transition between the operational areas and the A48 corridor, softening the site's appearance from public viewpoints and reinforcing its containment within the wider industrial zone. The refurbished farmhouse building within the site and the entrance creates a modest sense of arrival and maintains a visual link with the site's previous character.

Green infrastructure measures, such as wildflower meadow areas, wetland planting around SuDS basins, and ecological enhancements support PPW's aim of delivering multifunctional spaces that contribute to environmental resilience.



Sustainable Design and Construction

In accordance with LDP Policy BE3 and PPW Chapter 5, the building design incorporates a range of sustainability measures, including:

- Direct connection to the adjoining Western Bio-Energy Plant for renewable electricity;
- Use of energy-efficient mechanical and electrical systems with low air-tightness and high insulation standards;
- Provision of electric-vehicle charging points and secure cycle storage;
- A green roof and landscaped SuDS network supporting biodiversity and surface-water management; and
- Re-use of on-site materials where possible during construction.

These measures align with the national decarbonisation objectives set out in Future Wales Policy 16 (Renewable and Low-Carbon Energy).

Assessment Against Policy

While the site lies outside the defined settlement limits, its immediate context is characterised by industrial and energy-related development. In such a location, national and local policy expect new proposals to demonstrate design quality, functional efficiency, and environmental sensitivity rather than traditional placemaking features associated with urban or residential settings.

The proposal would introduce a large-scale building in an area that is already dominated by similar built forms, and its layout, massing and materials respond appropriately to that context. The design includes appropriate landscape and green infrastructure measures, ensuring visual integration and environmental enhancement consistent with Policies BE1, BE3, and SP14 of the LDP.

However, as the site remains within open countryside, the development represents a departure from the spatial strategy of the Plan. Its design response therefore mitigates, but does not remove, the fundamental policy conflict associated with new built development outside settlement boundaries. In landscape and design terms, the scheme is functionally and visually compatible with the adjoining employment and energy uses, and the quality of design and environmental integration are material considerations to be weighed in the overall planning balance.

Landscape and Visual Impact

A Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA) prepared by Tyler Grange (August 2024) accompanies the application, supported by a Heritage Impact Assessment (Paul Stamper Heritage, 2024) and a Green Infrastructure Statement. The LVA has been undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA3) and considers both landscape character and visual effects arising from the proposed development.

Policy Context

At national level, Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) emphasises the importance of protecting and enhancing the special qualities of all landscapes, including those without formal designation. Paragraph 6.3.3 states that development should be informed by the local landscape character. It is noted that some landscapes are already shaped by industrial and infrastructure uses, and that development in such locations should be designed to integrate with the prevailing character.

Locally, the following Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011–2026 policies are relevant:

- SP14 - The Countryside and the Undeveloped Coast, which seeks to protect the countryside from inappropriate development;
- SP15 - Biodiversity and Geodiversity, promoting protection and enhancement of natural assets;

- BE1 - Design, requiring development to respect local context and landscape setting;
- EN2 and EN3 - Special Landscape Areas (SLA) and Green Wedges, which protect locally important landscapes from intrusive or inappropriate development; and
- EN7 - Important Natural Features, which seeks to retain trees, hedgerows, and landscape features contributing to local character.

The site is outside any defined settlement limit, and while not within a designated SLA, lies adjacent to the Margam SLA and opposite the Margam Registered Historic Park and Garden (Grade I).

This location within open countryside means development must be assessed carefully against the policy presumption against sporadic or visually intrusive countryside development.

Baseline Landscape Context

The site lies within Landscape Character Area (LCA) 1: Margam Marsh, as identified in the NPT Landscape Assessment (2004). This flat, low-lying coastal plain accommodates major transport and industrial infrastructure, including Harbour Way, the Western Bio-Energy Plant, and the Margam Green Energy Plant. The land rises sharply to the east to form the wooded ridge of Margam Mountain, which contains the Registered Historic Park and Garden and associated heritage assets.

The application site is a partially enclosed area containing disused buildings, hardstanding, and grassland, bordered by mature trees and hedgerows. To the west and south, the landscape is dominated by large-scale industrial and energy facilities, while to the east, the A48 and M4 corridor form a strong visual and physical boundary separating the industrial plain from the parkland landscape beyond.

Landscape Character Effects

The LVA identifies that the site's existing landscape character is semi-industrial and already influenced by adjacent energy and infrastructure uses. The proposal would result in a permanent change to the land's character from unmanaged semi-natural vegetation to developed land containing a substantial building, hardstanding, and associated infrastructure.

The design and siting have been informed by the industrial context provided by the existing energy plants and screened by retained tree belts and new planting. The scheme also proposes green roofs and walls, wetland planting, and native woodland and hedgerow reinforcement, all of which would help the development assimilate into the landscape and maintain the visual structure along the A48. Although the proposal would intensify built development in the

immediate area, it would do so in a setting that is already characterised by industrial and energy infrastructure, rather than in a wholly rural landscape.

Visual Effects

The ZTV (Zone of Theoretical Visibility) identifies a limited visual envelope due to surrounding vegetation, topography, and built form. Potential visibility is largely confined to nearby transport routes and adjacent industrial land.

- From the A48 (Margam Road), views are partial and filtered by vegetation;
- From Harbour Way and within the Western Bio-Energy site, the development would appear within a context of comparable industrial buildings;
- Glimpsed views would be possible from the M4 motorway, though fleeting and set against existing industrial backdrops;
- From Margam Country Park and elevated ground to the east, the development would be seen, if at all, as a distant component within the established industrial foreground.

As such, the magnitude of visual change would generally reduce with distance, and the greatest influence would be localised to the immediate industrial setting.

Landscape Mitigation

The submitted Green Infrastructure Statement and Ecological Impact Assessment includes a mitigation strategy comprising:

- Retention of all TPO-protected trees and key hedgerows;
- New native planting along the southern and western boundaries;
- Wildflower grassland and wetland habitats around the SuDS features;
- Green roof and façade planting on the data centre building; and
- Implementation of a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) to secure long-term maintenance.

These measures align with LDP Policies BE1, SP15 and EN7, which seek to protect local landscape structure and enhance biodiversity.

Assessment Against Policy

While landscape and visual considerations have been integrated into the scheme's design, it remains the case that the site lies within open countryside, outside any defined settlement limit or employment allocation. Policy SP14 of the LDP establishes a clear presumption against new built development in the countryside unless it is justified by functional need or accords with specific exceptions. The proposal would therefore introduce a large-scale industrial building in an area that is not designated for such use, representing a departure from the spatial strategy of the LDP.

While noting this position, the site's context - being immediately surrounded by existing energy and industrial infrastructure - provides a degree of containment and physical association that distinguishes it from isolated rural sites. The development's design and mitigation measures would minimise its wider

landscape and visual impact and maintain the green edge to the A48 corridor. It is also noted that the site forms part of the transitional fringe between the industrial plain and the upland parkland landscape, rather than part of the open countryside further east or south.

On balance, while the proposal conflicts with the strict spatial policy approach of Policy SP14 (The Countryside) due to its location outside settlement limits, the landscape and visual evidence indicates that the resulting effects would be limited in extent and localised, and that the proposal would read as part of the existing industrial cluster west of the A48 rather than an encroachment into open rural landscape.

Accordingly, the policy conflict in locational terms is acknowledged, but the landscape and visual impact itself would not be significant, provided the proposed mitigation is secured and maintained in accordance with LDP Policies BE1, SP14, and EN7.

Heritage and Archaeology

Policy Context

The protection and enhancement of the historic environment is a key objective of both national and local planning policy. Planning Policy Wales (PPW, Edition 12, 2021) (Chapter 6 – Distinctive and Natural Places) requires that development proposals protect the significance of historic assets and their settings, ensuring change is managed in a sensitive and sustainable manner. Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Policies 8 and 9) similarly seeks to safeguard nationally important heritage assets and ensure that development respects the historic environment and its contribution to local distinctiveness.

Locally the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011–2026 contains several relevant policies:

- SP14 - The Countryside and the Undeveloped Coast, seeking to conserve the character and qualities of the countryside, including its cultural heritage;
- BE1 - Design, requiring proposals to respond positively to local context and historic character; and
- EN10 - Historic Environment, which requires development to preserve or enhance the setting of Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments, and Registered Parks and Gardens.

These are supported by TAN 24: The Historic Environment (2017) and the Council's Heritage SPG (2018).

Baseline and Site Context

The Heritage Impact Assessment (*Paul Stamper Heritage, 2024*) identifies that there are no designated heritage assets within the application site, although several lie within the wider landscape. These include Margam Abbey

(Scheduled Monument GM005 / Grade I Listed), Margam Castle (Grade I Listed), Hen Eglwys (GM163), Mynydd y Castell Camp (GM162), Chain Home Low Radar Station (GM488), and the Margam Registered Historic Park and Garden (PGW(Gm)52).

The site occupies part of the low-lying coastal plain west of the A48 and M4 corridors, which provide a strong physical and visual boundary separating the industrial and energy landscape to the west from the historic parkland and upland setting of Margam Park to the east. Historically, Tyn-y-Caeau was a small agricultural holding associated with the Margam Estate but lay outside the designed park landscape. The area has since been heavily modified by industrial and energy infrastructure, including the Western Bio-Energy and Margam Green Energy plants, which now define its visual context.

Assessment and Consultation Advice

The proposal has been reviewed by Cadw and Heneb (formerly the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust). Cadw confirmed that the development would not have an unacceptably damaging effect on the setting of any Scheduled Monuments or the Margam Registered Historic Park and Garden. Cadw agreed that any distant visibility from elevated parts of Margam Park or from the Chain Home Low Radar Station would occur within a landscape already characterised by large-scale industrial structures and would therefore not harm the significance or understanding of those assets.

Heneb advised that the site lies close to the line of a Roman road (RR60c-05a) and may contain archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits associated with earlier land use. They recommended that a programme of archaeological work, in the form of a watching brief during groundworks, be secured by condition to ensure any remains are appropriately recorded and preserved by record.

The submitted HIA and Landscape and Visual Appraisal both demonstrate that the development would be visually contained within the existing industrial landscape. The A48 and M4 corridors, together with intervening woodland, substantially restrict intervisibility with the Margam historic landscape. Where distant views are possible from elevated ground, the development would appear as a minor element in the foreground of a built-up industrial scene rather than as an intrusion into open parkland.

Assessment Against Policy and Conclusion

In policy terms, the proposal represents new built development within open countryside outside defined settlement limits, where there is a general presumption against such development under LDP Policy SP14.

However, the site lies within an area that is already industrial in character, physically and visually separated from the Margam Park heritage landscape by the motorway corridor and intervening vegetation. The proposal would therefore not intrude into the designated historic landscape, nor adversely affect the

setting or appreciation of the key heritage assets identified. The scale, massing and materials of the proposed building have been designed to integrate with the adjoining energy infrastructure, and the landscape mitigation measures - including green roofs, boundary planting and vegetated buffers - would further reduce visibility.

Subject to the inclusion of an archaeological watching brief condition as recommended by Heneb, the development would appropriately manage potential archaeological interests and avoid harm to the significance of the historic environment. On this basis, the proposal is considered to be consistent with the objectives of PPW Chapter 6, Future Wales Policies 8 and 9, and LDP Policies BE1 and EN10, ensuring that the historic environment is conserved and any archaeological potential is safeguarded in accordance with TAN 24.

Impact on Residential Amenity

Policy Context

The protection of residential amenity is a key principle of both national and local planning policy. PPW requires that development protects health, amenity, and the environment, avoiding adverse effects on communities (Chapter 6 – Distinctive and Natural Places). Technical Advice Note (TAN) 11: Noise and Welsh Government Air Quality Guidance set out the approach to assessing these impacts.

At the local level these policies are relevant to residential amenity:

- BE1 - Design, requiring development to safeguard amenity through appropriate siting, scale and orientation;
- EN8 - Pollution and Land Stability, which seeks to prevent unacceptable impacts from noise, dust, air, water or light pollution; and
- SP2 - Health, promoting development that supports physical and mental well-being.

Existing Residential Context

The site lies within an established industrial and energy landscape to the west of the A48 and M4 corridor. The nearest residential properties are located to the east of the motorway at Ten Acre Wood (approximately 275m), Longlands Lane (approximately 300m), and Abbot's Close (approximately 580m). These dwellings are separated from the site by major transport corridors and dense roadside vegetation, providing a substantial physical and acoustic buffer. There are no residential properties directly adjoining the site, and the intervening infrastructure and topography significantly limit potential intervisibility.

Representations Received

Public consultation generated a written representation from a local resident. In relation to residential amenity, the issues raised primarily relate to:

- Potential noise disturbance from plant and generator operation;

- Possible air quality impacts from generator emissions;
- Lighting and visual impact, particularly at night; and
- Traffic and construction disturbance.

These matters are considered below in the context of the submitted assessments and consultee responses.

Noise and Vibration

A Noise Impact Assessment (Formant Ltd, September 2024) was submitted with the application. Baseline noise monitoring was undertaken east of the A48 where existing background levels are dominated by motorway and traffic noise. Predicted operational noise levels from the cooling plant and standby generators were found to be at least 10 dB below existing background levels, representing a “low impact” under BS 4142:2014+A1:2019. Generator testing will occur infrequently and during daytime hours.

Construction noise would be temporary and controllable through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), which will secure appropriate hours of work and mitigation measures. The Council's Environmental Health Officer has raised no objection, subject to conditions controlling operational noise and generator testing.

Air Quality

An Air Quality Impact Assessment (RPS, 2024) considered both construction and operational emissions, including dust and exhaust from standby generators. Dispersion modelling demonstrates that concentrations of NO₂, PM₁₀, and PM_{2.5} at the nearest residential receptors would remain well below relevant air quality objectives.

Construction dust was assessed as medium risk but can be reduced to not significant with standard mitigation measures set out in a CEMP agreed by condition. Operationally, generator use will be infrequent and predicted pollutant levels are negligible. Accordingly, Environmental Health raised no objection, subject to standard conditions.

The proposal therefore complies with LDP Policy EN8 and PPW paragraph 6.7.5.

Lighting, Privacy and Outlook

No standalone Lighting Assessment has been submitted.

However, lighting is addressed within the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) and Landscape and Visual Appraisal (LVA), both of which confirm that external lighting will be low-level, directional, and designed to minimise spill into surrounding habitats and public areas. Given the separation distances to the nearest residential properties and the presence of intervening screening, the development would not result in any overlooking, loss of privacy, or visual dominance. To ensure appropriate control, a lighting design scheme will be

required by condition, to demonstrate that illumination levels and direction are compatible with residential and ecological sensitivity.

Traffic and Construction Impacts

Concerns regarding construction disturbance and operational traffic were raised in representations. The site will use the existing A48 access, and the Highways Authority has raised no objection, subject to a Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) and conditions securing visibility and routing controls. Construction effects would be temporary and controllable, while operational traffic generation is expected to be low, limited primarily to staff and servicing vehicles.

Conclusion

The submitted technical assessments demonstrate that noise, air quality, and lighting impacts would be within acceptable limits, and no loss of privacy or outlook would occur given the site's separation from residential receptors. While a local resident has raised amenity concerns, these have been thoroughly assessed, and no statutory consultee has identified unacceptable impacts subject to appropriate conditions. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to safeguard residential amenity, in accordance with LDP Policies BE1 and EN8 and the relevant provisions of PPW (Edition 12) and TAN 11 (Noise).

Flood Risk and Drainage

Mapping from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) identifies that part of the proposal - specifically a section of the underground cable connection linking the data centre site to the adjoining Western Bioenergy Plant - passes through an area designated as being at risk of flooding. The main development site itself lies within an area of low flood risk.

NRW were consulted on this matter and advised that, given the nature of the works, a Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) was not required. Their response stated that:

“Given that the works within the flood zone are limited to an underground cable connection and will not result in loss of floodplain storage or increased risk elsewhere, we do not consider a Flood Consequences Assessment necessary in this instance.”

Accordingly, no further flood risk assessment was sought, as the limited and subsurface nature of the works would not alter surface levels or impede flood flows.

A Drainage Strategy prepared by JRC Consulting Engineers (Ref: 2365-JRC-XX-RP-C-1001, March 2025) accompanies the application. The report confirms that the development will incorporate a comprehensive Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) in accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), TAN 15

(Development, Flooding and Coastal Erosion), and the National SuDS Standards.

The scheme utilises infiltration-based drainage, informed by site-specific permeability testing. Surface water will be managed through a combination of permeable paving, geocellular soakaway tanks, and an infiltration pond located along the northern site boundary, providing attenuation for the 1 in 100-year rainfall event plus a 45% climate change allowance. Pollution control measures include petrol interceptors serving the parking and service yard areas.

Foul water will discharge to the public sewer network operated by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, subject to agreement of final connection details.

The Council's Drainage Section raised no objection, confirming that the proposed drainage strategy is acceptable in principle, subject to separate approval under the Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (SAB) process prior to the commencement of development.

In summary, the proposed drainage design demonstrates compliance with the surface water hierarchy and will ensure that development does not increase flood risk on or off site. The approach accords with LDP Policies BE1 and SP16 of the LDP and the relevant provisions of PPW and TAN 15.

Highways, Access and Active Travel

Policy Context

PPW emphasises the need for developments to promote sustainable transport choices, improve accessibility, and maintain highway safety. Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Policies 12 and 13) seeks to integrate land use and transport planning to reduce private car dependency. Relevant LDP policies include:

- TR2 - Design and Access of New Development, requiring safe and efficient access for all users;
- TR3 - Transport Assessments, ensuring that major development proposals fully assess their impacts;
- SP20 - Transport Network, promoting efficient and sustainable transport systems; and
- BE1 - Design, requiring layouts that enable safe and convenient movement.

These are supported by the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, which requires local authorities to plan for and promote walking and cycling routes.

Site Access and Highway Network

The site is accessed from the A48 Margam Road, a principal local highway under the control of Neath Port Talbot Council. At the M4 junction it is the responsibility of Welsh Government. The existing left-in, left-out access, will be retained and upgraded to accommodate the data centre.

A Transport Assessment (Vectos, 2024) and Transport Note (July 2025) demonstrate that the proposed access provides visibility splays of 160 metres, exceeding the 144 metres required based on recorded 85th percentile speeds (49 mph). A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit (RSA) has been completed and accepted by the Local Highway Authority (LHA), with subsequent RSA stages to be undertaken under a Section 278 Agreement.

The LHA has identified a specific concern regarding Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) turning movements associated with this and previous proposals for a lorry park using the same access. In particular, it was noted that larger articulated vehicles exiting the site may need to use the outside lane of the A48 to turn at the M4 Junction 38 roundabout in order to re-join the eastbound M4 carriageway. This manoeuvre could create potential conflict with other vehicles and therefore represents a highway safety concern if generated in significant numbers.

The data centre proposal would give rise to very limited HGV activity, restricted to occasional deliveries, maintenance visits, and emergency servicing. The Transport Assessment confirms that such movements would be infrequent and well within the capacity of the existing access and local highway network. The LHA has therefore advised that, although the manoeuvre remains undesirable in highway terms, the very low HGV traffic associated with this proposal means that the risk is limited and does not warrant an objection. It is noted that they do not take the same view on the lorry park application currently pending determination on the same site as this would generate a substantially higher volume of HGV trips and remains unacceptable on highway safety grounds. Accordingly, for the data centre, the access geometry, visibility and projected vehicle movements are considered acceptable, subject to conditions securing detailed design and implementation.

Welsh Government (M4 Junction)

The Welsh Government Transport Directorate was consulted due to the site's proximity to Junction 38 of the M4, which forms part of the strategic trunk road network. Following review of additional information from the applicant, the Directorate did not issue a Direction and raised no objection, confirming that the development would not adversely affect the operation or safety of the motorway junction.

Construction Traffic

A framework Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) has been submitted and reviewed by the LHA. It sets out controls to minimise impacts during construction, including:

- Routing of all HGVs via the A48 and M4 Junction 38;
- Restricted delivery hours to avoid peak periods;
- On-site parking and laydown areas for construction vehicles;
- Banksman-controlled access to manage vehicle movements; and
- Measures to prevent mud and debris from being deposited on the highway.

The CTMP will be secured by condition and implemented throughout the construction period.

Active Travel and Sustainable Transport

The Council's Active Travel Officer raised an objection, identifying:

- The absence of continuous pedestrian and cycle connections along the A48 corridor;
- Lack of internal active travel facilities, such as showers, lockers and limited detail;
- Limited connection to public transport and safe crossing provision; and
- The need for local crossing improvements to support active travel accessibility.

The Transport Assessment, Framework Travel Plan (FTP), and Transport Note collectively address these issues. The site lies within an established industrial area, where the A48 lacks continuous footway or cycle infrastructure and is physically constrained by the adjoining highway embankments. Given the proposal's nature and low staff numbers (approximately 20 employees on site per day), the Active Travel potential is inherently limited, and extensive off-site provision would be disproportionate.

The Framework Travel Plan nevertheless includes measures to promote sustainable staff travel, including:

- Secure and covered cycle parking;
- Appointment of a Travel Plan Coordinator;
- Promotion of car sharing and flexible working; and
- Monitoring and reporting of travel patterns to the Council.

In response to consultation, the applicant has also agreed to localised pedestrian crossing improvements near the site access to improve safety and connectivity. These works will be secured by condition requiring submission of an Active Travel Improvement Scheme prior to occupation, to be developed in consultation with the Council's Highways and Active Travel teams. It is noted that signal controlled crossings would be preferred by the Active Travel team, however it is accepted that these would be disproportionate to the scale of development proposed.

This approach provides a pragmatic and proportionate enhancement consistent with the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, without imposing disproportionate obligations on the development.

Conclusion

The proposed access and associated infrastructure have been assessed by both the Local Highway Authority and the Welsh Government Transport Directorate, with no objections raised subject to standard conditions.

The LHA's concern regarding HGV turning movements at the A48/M4 junction is acknowledged; however, due to the very low frequency of HGV movements associated with the data centre, this issue is not considered significant in this case and they have not objected.

Subject to the recommended conditions securing detailed access design, a CTMP, and localised active travel improvements, the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of highway safety, access, and sustainable transport, and accords with LDP Policies TR2, TR3, BE1 and SP20, the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, and the relevant provisions of PPW and TAN 18.

Ecology, Biodiversity and Arboricultural Considerations

Policy Context

PPW emphasises that maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and ecological resilience is central to sustainable placemaking. Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 (Policy 9) requires developments to protect, enhance and restore biodiversity and ecological networks.

Relevant LDP policies include:

- EN6 - Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites, which seeks to protect habitats and species of principal importance;
- EN7 - Important Natural Features, which requires conservation and enhancement of trees, woodland, and hedgerows; and
- BE1 - Design, which expects development to incorporate biodiversity enhancement as part of good design.

These are supported by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and TAN 5: Nature Conservation and Planning, which together place a duty on local planning authorities to ensure that sufficient ecological information is available to inform decision-making.

Ecological Assessment Work

An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) was initially undertaken in 2024 to establish baseline ecological conditions on the site. This identified semi-improved grassland, scrub, hardstanding and boundary woodland and hedgerows forming part of the wider Margam ecological corridor. Bat activity, breeding birds and common reptiles were recorded, but no confirmed bat roosts were identified at that time.

Following consultation, both Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and the Council's Ecologist advised that further survey work was required to fully understand bat usage of the disused farmhouse within the site, particularly outside the active season.

An updated EclA was subsequently submitted by Enzygo Environmental Consultants (October 2025), incorporating additional survey work undertaken during spring, summer and autumn 2025. This identified a greater level of bat activity than previously recorded, including common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule and lesser horseshoe bats, and confirmed that the farmhouse has high potential for roosting and hibernation, due to its basement structure, stable internal conditions and accessible features.

While no bats were confirmed roosting or hibernating during the periods surveyed, the EclA concludes that further winter hibernation surveys are required to determine whether bats are present and to fully assess the ecological impacts of the proposal. This survey work was completed during the consideration of the application and led to substantial delay in its determination.

Following the survey work an updated Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), together with subsequent bat mitigation and compensation details, was submitted following consultation with the Council's Ecologist and Natural Resources Wales (NRW). The ecological surveys confirmed the presence of bat roosts within Building B1 (Tyn-y-Caeau farmhouse), including lesser horseshoe bat and soprano pipistrelle day roosts together with a lesser horseshoe bat hibernation roost located within the cellar.

The submitted mitigation strategy has subsequently been revised and agreed with the Council's Ecologist and NRW. The scheme has been specifically designed to retain and protect the confirmed roosting features within the building. In particular, the existing cellar hibernation roost and identified upstairs bat roost area are to be retained and safeguarded as part of the refurbishment works. The agreed mitigation measures include controlled working methods, ecological supervision, sensitive lighting controls, retention of dark commuting corridors, timing restrictions, and provision of additional bat roosting enhancements within the site.

NRW has advised that, subject to the mitigation proposed and the implementation of appropriate safeguards, the development is not likely to be detrimental to the maintenance of the local bat population at a favourable conservation status. The development will require a European Protected Species (EPS) licence from NRW prior to the commencement of any works affecting the roosts.

In considering the application, the Local Planning Authority must have regard to the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), including the need to consider whether the relevant derogation tests under Regulation 55 are likely to be capable of being met. These tests require that:

- there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest for the development;
- there is no satisfactory alternative; and

- the authorised actions will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

Having regard to the strategic economic and regeneration benefits associated with the proposal, including the delivery of a significant digital infrastructure investment linked to existing renewable energy infrastructure, officers consider that the proposal is capable of satisfying the public interest test. In addition, given the relationship of the proposal to the existing biomass facility, grid connection infrastructure and operational requirements of the development, officers are satisfied that there is no satisfactory alternative solution that would avoid impacts on the building entirely. Furthermore, having regard to the agreed mitigation strategy and NRW's advice in relation to favourable conservation status, officers are satisfied that there is a reasonable likelihood that an EPS licence would be capable of being granted by NRW.

Arboricultural Considerations

A Tree Survey and Arboricultural Report (2024) identifies trees mainly along the site's northern and western boundaries, predominantly Category B and C specimens with no Category A trees. The proposed layout retains all higher-quality trees and requires only limited clearance of scrub and self-seeded vegetation. Protective fencing will be installed in accordance with BS 5837:2012, and additional native planting will enhance both ecological and landscape value and secure the requirements of PPW for tree planting. The Council's Tree Officer raised no objection to the proposals.

Conclusion

Subject to conditions securing the ecological mitigation measures, lighting controls, ecological supervision, biodiversity enhancement measures and compliance with the approved EclA and bat mitigation strategy, the proposal is considered acceptable in ecological terms and compliant with Policies SP15, EN6 and EN7 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan, Planning Policy Wales Edition 12, Technical Advice Note 5 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

Policy Context

PPW and Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 require that development proposals fully consider ground conditions, land stability, and contamination to ensure that land is suitable for its intended use.

Relevant LDP policies include:

- EN8 – Pollution and Land Stability, which seeks to ensure that contamination and instability risks are identified and mitigated; and
- BE1 – Design, which requires that development does not cause or suffer from adverse environmental conditions, including contaminated land.

Site Investigation and Findings

A Geo-Environmental Report (Blandford Consulting, July 2024) was submitted in support of the application. The assessment included a review of historical mapping, geological and hydrogeological data, and information from the Mining Remediation Authority (MRA), British Geological Survey, and Public Health England (Radon). The site lies on the southern edge of the South Wales Coalfield, underlain by the Middle Coal Measures (Upper Carboniferous). The investigation found no evidence of shallow coal workings, and no mine entries within or immediately adjoining the site.

The nearest recorded coal seams occur at depths between 230 and 350 metres, which were last worked in 1913 and are therefore long since inactive. The Mining Remediation Authority confirmed that while coal-bearing strata underlie the area, there are no recorded or probable shallow workings, no mine entries, and no evidence of ground movement or instability associated with past mining. Accordingly, the MRA has no objection and does not require further investigation or remedial action in this case.

Contamination and Environmental Risk

Historical land-use mapping and environmental records indicate that the site has historically comprised agricultural and open land, with no contaminative uses or nearby industrial activities likely to have affected ground quality. The qualitative risk assessment concluded that no plausible pollution linkages exist, and the site presents a very low risk to future users, construction workers, and controlled waters. No evidence of significant soil contamination, landfill gas, or mine gas was identified. While methane generation can occur in former coalfield areas, the MRA data indicate low gas potential in this locality, and no additional gas protection measures are required. A Radon Report from Public Health England confirmed that the site is not within a Radon Affected Area, and therefore no radon protection measures are required under Building Regulations.

Groundwater and Hydrology

The site is underlain by Secondary A Aquifers in both superficial and bedrock deposits, though the overlying glacial till (boulder clay) provides a low-permeability barrier that limits vertical migration of surface contaminants. The site does not lie within a Groundwater Source Protection Zone or Drinking Water Safeguard Zone, and there are no abstraction licences or surface water

features within or adjacent to the site. As a result, the risk of contaminant migration to controlled waters is considered negligible.

Recommendations and Monitoring

The submitted investigation concludes that the site is suitable for the proposed development and that no remediation is necessary. However, it recommends that, during construction, any unexpected contamination encountered should be assessed by a qualified environmental consultant, and appropriate remedial measures undertaken if necessary. This aligns with the advice of the Council's Contaminated Land Officer, who raised no objection subject to a condition requiring a reporting protocol for unexpected contamination.

Conclusion

The Geo-Environmental Assessment confirms that the site poses no significant risk from contamination, instability, or former mining activity. The Mining Remediation Authority has confirmed that there are no mining-related hazards, and the Council's Contaminated Land Officer is satisfied that standard precautionary controls are sufficient. Subject to a condition securing the reporting of unexpected contamination, the proposal is considered acceptable in respect of land quality and stability. The development therefore complies with LDP Policies EN8 and BE1 and the relevant provisions of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), TAN 15, and CLR11 – Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination.

Sustainability, Energy Efficiency and Resource Management

Policy Context

PPW places sustainable development and resource efficiency at the heart of the planning system, encouraging proposals that minimise energy demand, make prudent use of natural resources, and support the transition to a circular economy. Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (Policies 17 and 19) similarly seeks to reduce carbon emissions, promote low-carbon infrastructure, and ensure developments contribute positively to national decarbonisation targets.

Relevant LDP policies include:

- SP2 – Health, which promotes development that safeguards well-being through sustainable design;
- SP16 – Environmental Protection, which requires efficient use of resources and effective waste management; and
- BE1 – Design, which seeks energy-efficient, adaptable, and resilient development.

Sustainable Design and Construction

A detailed Sustainability Statement (2025) accompanies the application and outlines measures to ensure the development accords with national and local sustainability objectives.

Key features include:

- Adoption of a fabric-first approach to reduce heat loss and improve energy performance;
- Integration of renewable and low-carbon technologies, including air-source heat pumps and potential future photovoltaic panels on suitable roof areas;
- Use of locally sourced and recycled construction materials where feasible to reduce embodied carbon; and
- Orientation and building layout designed to optimise natural daylighting and minimise artificial lighting requirements.

The applicant states that the building envelope will be designed to exceed the energy efficiency standards of Building Regulations Part L, while operational energy demand will be closely monitored to ensure long-term carbon reduction performance.

Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy

The applicant states that the proposal has been designed to reflect circular economy principles by minimising the consumption of raw materials and promoting the reuse and recycling of resources throughout the construction and operational phases. Construction methods will prioritise off-site prefabrication and modular components, reducing waste generation and transport movements. Water efficiency measures, including low-flow fixtures and fittings and rainwater attenuation systems, will also contribute to sustainable resource management and reduce the burden on public infrastructure.

Waste Management

While no standalone Site Waste Management Plan has been submitted, construction waste management will be addressed through the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) required by condition. The supporting Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) confirms that the appointed contractor will prepare a Construction Method Statement to include:

- Arrangements for segregation, recycling, and licensed disposal of construction waste;
- Prohibition of on-site waste burning; and
- Monitoring of materials recovery rates in accordance with best practice.

Operational waste will be minimal, limited mainly to office-based refuse and periodic electronic waste (WEEE) associated with server equipment, which will be collected by a licensed contractor for recovery and recycling.

A dedicated refuse and recycling area is provided within the site layout to enable efficient collection and management of waste.

Conclusion

The proposal demonstrates a clear commitment to sustainability and resource efficiency through its energy-efficient design, use of renewable technologies, and application of circular economy principles. Waste management will be appropriately controlled through the CEMP and operational management procedures.

Overall, the development is consistent with the objectives of Policies SP2, SP16 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011–2026), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), and Future Wales Policies 17 and 19.

Economic Benefits

Although no standalone Economic Statement has been submitted, the proposal would deliver a range of direct and indirect economic benefits consistent with the objectives of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) and Future Wales – The National Plan 2040.

During construction, the development would generate temporary employment opportunities for local and regional contractors, with potential to support apprenticeships, supply-chain businesses, and professional services. The operational phase would provide a number of skilled technical and maintenance roles, together with associated service and security employment.

More significantly, the proposal represents a strategic investment in digital and energy infrastructure, supporting Wales's transition toward a low-carbon and data-driven economy. The development will utilise renewable power from the adjacent Western Bio-Energy Plant, demonstrating innovation in co-location and energy efficiency.

While the number of permanent jobs is modest, the proposal would contribute to the competitiveness and resilience of the regional economy by providing high-quality data capacity within South Wales and facilitating future inward investment. The Authority's Digital Relationship Manager has provided a written statement from the Swansea Bay City Deal to support the application.

Accordingly, the scheme aligns with the Welsh Government's Economic Mission, Future Wales Policy 11 (National Digital Infrastructure), and LDP Policy SP11 (Employment Growth), and should therefore be afforded positive weight in the overall planning balance.

Planning Obligations

The Council's approach to securing planning obligations is set out in the Neath Port Talbot Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG, 2017), which establishes that obligations will only be sought where they meet the tests set out in Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) - namely that they must be:

1. Necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms;
2. Directly related to the development; and
3. Fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind.

The SPG identifies the types of development and circumstances where contributions may be sought, focusing primarily on schemes that generate a quantifiable demand for infrastructure or community facilities such as housing, retail, education, or open space.

Given the nature of this proposal - a data centre with a limited on-site workforce and no associated residential or retail element - the development does not generate a demand for off-site community infrastructure or services that would ordinarily give rise to a financial contribution.

As discussed above there is a need for proportionate measures to enhance Active Travel connectivity in the immediate vicinity of the site, consistent with LDP Policies TR2, TR3 and SP20 and the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.

These works are localised in scale and directly related to the development's operation and will therefore be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition requiring the submission and implementation of an Active Travel Improvement Scheme, to be agreed by Planning Team in consultation with the Council's Highways and Active Travel teams prior to occupation.

All other infrastructure and mitigation requirements, including those relating to drainage, ecology, construction management, and landscaping, will similarly be secured through planning conditions. Accordingly, no planning obligations or financial contributions are required in this case.

Other Matters

Mineral Safeguarding

The site lies within a Coal Mineral Safeguarding Area identified under Policy M1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan. Given the site's location within an established industrial corridor, its proximity to significant infrastructure, and the limited scale of any viable remaining resource, the prior extraction of the mineral would be unrealistic and impracticable. The proposal therefore complies with Policy M1, and the development would not result in the sterilisation of a viable mineral resource.

Major Accident and Disaster Considerations

The potential for the development to be affected by, or to increase the risk of, a major accident or disaster has been considered in accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, paragraph 5.15.3). The site lies close to the BOC industrial gases facility and adjacent to a high-pressure trunk gas main along the A48.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was consulted under the PADHI system and advised that it does not advise against the granting of planning permission. A clarification response confirmed that the site layout, separation distances, and approach to the building are acceptable. Accordingly, the proposal is considered to present no unacceptable risk in respect of major accidents or disasters.

Utilities and Infrastructure

Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, Wales & West Utilities, and the relevant statutory undertakers have confirmed no objection, subject to adherence to standard advisory notes and protective measures during construction. There are no capacity or connection constraints that would preclude the development proceeding.

Third-Party Representation

One letter of representation was received from an adjoining landowner during the course of determination. The representation raised the following main points:

- Clarification regarding land ownership and access rights relating to the shared access with the Western Bio-Energy Plant;
- Concern regarding the extent of land included within the red line boundary, particularly in relation to visibility splays and easements; and
- Potential for traffic interaction or conflict between vehicles associated with the proposed development and existing site operations using the shared access.

The matters raised were taken up with the applicant, who subsequently reviewed and resubmitted the ownership certificates. Certificate B was correctly completed and served on the relevant parties in accordance with Article 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012. Issues of land ownership, access rights, and easements are private legal matters between the relevant parties and are not material planning considerations, provided that the appropriate ownership certification has been submitted.

The grant of planning permission would not confer ownership rights or override any third-party interests in land, and it remains the applicant's responsibility to secure all necessary legal rights prior to implementation of the development. In

relation to the operational concerns raised, the Local Highway Authority has assessed the proposal and confirmed that the level of traffic associated with this use is limited and can be accommodated safely within the existing access arrangements, subject to the conditions recommended elsewhere in this report.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

The proposal has been assessed against the relevant national and local planning policy framework, including Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024), Future Wales – The National Plan 2040, and the policies of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011–2026.

Principle of Development

The site lies outside of the defined settlement limits and therefore represents a departure from the adopted LDP, which seeks to direct new development to within or adjoining established settlements. It also lies adjacent to, but outside of, the designated employment allocation (EC1/10 – Margam). However, the proposal must be considered in the context of its relationship with the adjoining Western Bio-Energy (WBE) Plant, with which it will operate in a co-located and functionally linked manner. The development would utilise renewable power generated by the WBE facility, supporting the transition to low-carbon infrastructure and contributing to national energy resilience objectives set out in Future Wales (Policies 17 and 18). While not in accordance with the strict locational policies of the LDP, the functional relationship between the two uses provides a site-specific justification that materially distinguishes this proposal from other forms of development in the open countryside.

Environmental and Technical Considerations

All environmental and technical matters have been comprehensively assessed. Ecology and Biodiversity: Detailed ecological surveys and additional bat assessments have been submitted, with the applicant providing appropriate mitigation and enhancement of the site.

- **Landscape and Visual Impact:** While the site is within open countryside, it is visually associated with existing energy and industrial uses. The proposed built form will be read within this context, with landscaping and planting providing adequate mitigation.
- **Highways and Active Travel:** The Local Highway Authority and Welsh Government Transport Directorate have raised no objections, with improvements to local crossing points secured by condition to address active travel concerns.
- **Drainage and Flood Risk:** The drainage strategy demonstrates that surface water can be managed via SuDS-compliant infiltration measures, and NRW confirmed that a Flood Consequences Assessment is not required for the limited underground cable element within the flood zone.

- Ground Conditions: The Mining Remediation Authority and Contaminated Land Officer raised no objection, confirming the site is suitable for development with only standard precautionary conditions.
- Residential Amenity: The nature of the development, together with the separation from sensitive receptors, ensures no unacceptable impacts from noise, air quality, or lighting.

Each technical consultee has either confirmed acceptability or identified that any residual impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated through the use of planning conditions.

Sustainability and Economic Considerations

The proposal aligns with the Welsh Government's decarbonisation and digital infrastructure agendas, supporting the growth of low-carbon industries and data storage capacity in South Wales. The development will create specialist technical employment opportunities during both construction and operation, while contributing to local supply chains. The design incorporates energy-efficient systems, potential use of renewable power from the adjoining WBE Plant, and construction techniques that support circular economy principles, consistent with the objectives of Future Wales Policies 17 and 19 and LDP Policies SP2, SP16 and BE1.

Overall Planning Balance

When assessed against the development plan as a whole, the proposal represents a departure due to its location outside settlement limits and employment allocations. However, significant material considerations weigh in favour of the development, including:

- The co-location and functional synergy with the existing Western Bio-Energy Plant, allowing direct use of renewable power;
- The contribution to low-carbon infrastructure and digital resilience at both regional and national levels;
- The limited environmental and amenity impacts, all of which can be satisfactorily mitigated by condition; and
- The economic and sustainability benefits consistent with the priorities of Future Wales and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Taking these matters together, it is considered that the benefits of the proposal clearly outweigh the policy conflict with the LDP's settlement boundary provisions and justify the development as an acceptable and sustainable form of growth at this location.

Conclusion

Subject to the recommended conditions securing the required mitigation and enhancement measures, the development is considered to represent a sustainable and well-considered proposal that accords with the overarching objectives of national policy and, notwithstanding the identified departure, can be supported within the terms of the planning balance.

Accordingly, it is recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to the conditions set out below and to no objection being received from Natural Resources Wales or the Council's Ecologist on the updated ecological submissions.

Recommendation.

Approval, subject to the following conditions.

Time Limit

1. The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this permission.

Reason:

Required by Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

Approved Plans

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved drawings and documents:
 - 1044 - FUT - V1 - ZZ - DR - Z - X160 - Site Location and Block Plan
 - 1044 - FUT - V1 - ZZ - DR - Z - X100 – Site Wide Layout
 - 1044 - FUT - V1 - ZZ - DR - Z - X150 - Site Wide Layout - Height Strategy
 - 1044 - FUT - V1 - 00 - DR - Z - X200 - Site Layout Level Ground
 - 1044 - FUT - V1 - 01 - DR - Z - X210 - Site Layout Level First
 - 1044 - FUT - V1 - R1 - DR - Z - X260 - Site Layout Level Roof
 - 1044 - FUT - V1 - R2 - DR - Z - X265 - Site Layout Level Gantry
 - 1044 - FUT - ZZ - ZZ - DR - Z - X400 - Site Elevations
 - 1044 - FUT - V1 - ZZ - DR - Z - 0600 - External Fibre, Power and Water Routes Site Wide
 - 2464_0120_P4_IAP - Impermeable Area Plan
 - 2464_0500_P4_Drainage Layout - Drainage layout plan
 - 2464_0600_P3_External Works Layout - External Works plan
 - C24103-ATP-DR-TP-003 - Swept Path Analysis plan
 - 2335-URB-XX-XX-DR-LA-102- SW GA - Softworks
 - 2335-URB-XX-XX-DR-LA-101- HW GA – Hardworks
 - 2335-URB-XX-XX-DR-LA-100_Illustrative Landscape Masterplan - illustrative Landscape Masterplan

- Planning Design and Access Statement
- C24103/TA01 - Transport Assessment
- C23103/TP01 - Travel Plan
- Heritage Impact Assessment
- BC/MB/07.24.05. - Geo-Environmental Report
- 2464- JRC-XX-XX-RP-CE-1001_P2 - Drainage Strategy / SAB Compliance
- Ecological Impact Assessment (2024/2025)
- Green Infrastructure Statement
- 08.24/TYC/V4 – Tree Survey
- 17163_R01b_OK_AW - Landscape and Visual Appraisal
- P1334/REP02 - Noise Impact Assessment
- 794-ENV-AIR-21341 – Air Quality Assessment
- Sustainability Statement
- Bat Mitigation Technical Note – Land at Tyn-y-Caeau, Margam, by by enzygo, dated 28 April 2026.

Reason:

For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

Pre-commencement

3. Before beginning any development at the site, you must do the following:-

a) Notify the Local Planning Authority in writing that you intend to commence development by submitting a Formal Notice under Article 24B of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (DMPWO) in the form set out in Schedule 5A (a newly inserted Schedule) of the DMPWO (or in a form substantially to the like effect); and

b) Display a Site Notice (as required by Section 71ZB of the 1990 Act) in the form set out in Schedule 5B (a newly inserted Schedule) of the DMPWO (or in a form substantially to the like effect), such Notice to be firmly affixed and displayed in a prominent place, be legible and easily visible, and be printed on durable material. Such Notice must thereafter be displayed at all times when development is being carried out.

Reason:

To comply with procedural requirements in accordance with Article 24B of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012 (DMPWO) and Section 71ZB of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

NOTE: Templates of the required Notice and Site Notice are available to download at www.npt.gov.uk/planning

4. No development shall commence (including site clearance or demolition) until a detailed highways Construction Method Statement (CMS) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CMS shall include details of:
- a) the parking of vehicles of site operatives and visitors
 - b) loading and unloading of plant and materials
 - c) storage of plant and materials used in constructing the development
 - d) the erection and maintenance of security hoarding
 - e) wheel washing facilities
 - f) measures to control the emission of dust and dirt during construction
 - g) a scheme for recycling/disposing of waste resulting from demolition and construction works
 - h) scheme for the erection of temporary/semi temporary signage warning drivers of speed restrictions.
 - i) Scheme for controlling construction traffic associated with the development which should include the following:
 - Number of HGV vehicles associated with the construction phase
 - What days and times deliveries will be permitted to enter the site
 - Construction traffic route
 - What mitigation measure are proposed to minimise the impact on disruption and highway safety.
 - j) The Construction Method Statement shall be signed by a competent person(s).

The approved Statement shall be adhered to throughout the construction Period.

Reason:

To ensure highway safety and to minimise disruption during construction in accordance with Policy TR2.

5. The Framework Construction Traffic Management Plan (Ref: C24103/CT01 Issue 2) has been submitted by the applicant. This shall be updated and submitted post planning permission, prior to the commencement of works on the site and this shall be agreed with the LHA and WG. Temporary traffic management requiring closure of lane(s) on the A48 north of M4 Junction 38 where undertaken, shall not cause queuing to the roundabout.

Reason:

As directed to be imposed by Welsh Government Transport Directorate, to ensure highway safety and to minimise disruption during construction in accordance with Policy TR2.

6. No development including site clearance, shall commence until a site wide Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP should include:

- a) Construction methods: details of materials, how waste generated will be managed;
- b) General Site Management: details of the construction programme including timetable, details of site clearance; details of site construction drainage, containments areas, appropriately sized buffer zones between storage areas (of spoil, oils, fuels, concrete mixing and washing areas) and any watercourse or surface drain.
- c) Biodiversity Management: details of tree and hedgerow protection; invasive species management; species and habitats protection, avoidance and mitigation measures.
- d) Soil Management: details of topsoil strip, storage and amelioration for re-use.
- e) CEMP Masterplan: details of the extent and phasing of development; location of landscape and environmental resources; design proposals and objectives for integration and mitigation measures.
- f) Control of Nuisances: details of restrictions to be applied during construction including timing, duration and frequency of works; details of measures to minimise noise and vibration from piling activities, for example acoustic barriers; details of dust control measures (incorporate the mitigation measures set out in Section 7 of the Air Quality Impact Assessment (RPS Ref 794-ENV-AIR-21341 v1.1, dated 10 January 2025); measures to control light spill and the conservation of dark skies.
- g) Resource Management: details of fuel and chemical storage and containment; details of waste generation and its management; details of water consumption, wastewater and energy use
- h) Pollution Prevention: The relevant pollution prevention measures should be employed during the development and all efforts must be made in order to safeguard that pollutants do not enter the environment. More information can be found here: [Guidance for Pollution Prevention \(GPP\) documents | NetRegs | Environmental guidance for your business in Northern Ireland & Scotland](#). The relevant pollution prevention measures should be employed during the development and all efforts must be made in order to safeguard that pollutants do not enter the environment (including but not limited to: GPP 1, 6, 21 and 22).
- i) Details of the persons and bodies responsible for activities associated with the CEMP and emergency contact details
- j) Details of a suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works, who shall be employed to oversee the ecological aspects of the works, as set out within the Ecological Impact Assessment (October 2025) by Enzygo.

The CEMP shall be implemented as approved during the site preparation and construction phases of the development.

Reason:

To safeguard amenity and prevent pollution in accordance with Policy EN8 and EN9 of the LDP.

7. No development shall take place until details of both hard and soft landscape works have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall reflect the submitted detail within the Illustrative Landscape Masterplan (2335-URB-XX-XX-DR-LA-100_Illustrative Landscape Masterplan) and Green Infrastructure Statement, details shall include:

- a) statement setting out the design objectives and how these will be delivered;
- b) earthworks showing existing and proposed finished levels or contours;
- c) means of enclosure and retaining structures;
- d) other vehicle and pedestrian access and circulation areas;
- e) hard surfacing materials;
- f) minor artefacts and structures (e.g. furniture, play equipment, refuse or other storage units, signs, etc.), and
- g) water features.

Soft landscape works shall include: planting plans; written specifications (including cultivation and other operations associated with plant and grass establishment); schedules of plants noting species, plant supply sizes and proposed numbers/densities where appropriate; an implementation programme (including phasing of work where relevant).

The landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details during the first planting season immediately following occupation of the development. The completed scheme shall thereafter be managed and maintained in accordance with the LEMP approved under condition 8.

Reason:

In the interests of maintaining a suitable scheme of landscaping to protect the visual amenity of the area, to maintain the special qualities of the landscape and habitats through the protection, creation and enhancement of links between sites and their protection for amenity, landscape and biodiversity value, and to ensure the development complies with Policies SP15 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

8. No development shall take place until a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan ('LEMP'), including long-term design objectives, management responsibilities and maintenance schedules for all landscaped areas has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The LEMP shall include the following:

- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed;
- b) Constraints on site that might influence management;
- c) Aims and objectives of management which will include the provision of biodiversity net gain within the site as shown within the Biodiversity Net Gain Plan;
- d) Prescriptions for management actions;

- e) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five year period);
- f) Details of the body or organisation responsible for implementation of the plan; and
- g) Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.

The LEMP shall also include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body responsible for its delivery. The plan shall be for no less than 30 years. The plan shall also set out (where the results from monitoring show that conservation aims and objectives of the LEMP are not being met) how contingencies and/or remedial action will be identified, agreed and implemented so that the development delivers the fully functioning biodiversity objectives of the originally approved scheme. The LEMP shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development and shall thereafter be carried out as approved.

Reason:

To protect and enhance biodiversity in accordance with Policies EN6 and EN7.

9. No development shall commence until a scheme of off-site highway works has been secured through a Section 278 Agreement under the Highways Act 1980. The works shall include, but not be limited to:
 - a) Improvements to the site access arrangements and adjacent highway network;
 - b) Alterations to carriageway markings, kerbing, visibility splays and pedestrian/cycle facilities;
 - c) Localised Active Travel Improvements; and
 - d) Any ancillary highway works identified as necessary to accommodate the development.

The development shall not be brought into use until the approved highway works have been completed in accordance with the Section 278 Agreement.

Reason:

In the interests of highway safety and to ensure the development is adequately served by the public highway, in accordance with Policies TR2 and SP20 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

10. No development, including site clearance, demolition, ground works or delivery of materials, shall commence until an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) and Tree Protection Plan (TPP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The AMS shall be prepared in accordance with BS5837:2012 and shall include:

- a) details of tree protection fencing and ground protection, including specification, location and installation timing;
- b) details of any works proposed within or adjacent to RPAs, including construction methods, foundation solutions and surfacing;
- c) details of any specialist tree protection systems (including no-dig solutions such as cellular confinement systems) where required; and
- d) a programme of arboricultural supervision.

All works shall thereafter be carried out in full accordance with the approved AMS.

Reason:

To ensure all existing trees are protected throughout the construction of the development, in the interest of visual amenity, and to ensure the development complies with Policies SP15 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

11. No development shall take place until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured agreement for a written scheme of historic environment mitigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local planning authority. Thereafter, the programme of work will be fully carried out in accordance with the requirements and standards of the written scheme.

Reason:

To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource.

Action conditions

12. Prior to the commencement of above-ground works, full details of all green roofs and living walls shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include:
 - a) location and extent
 - b) substrate depth and composition
 - c) planting specification
 - d) drainage and irrigation
 - e) implementation and maintenance programme
 The approved scheme shall be implemented prior to first beneficial use and retained thereafter.

Reason:

To secure biodiversity and design quality. In accordance with Policies BE1 and EN8 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

13. Prior to its installation, full details of lighting shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Lighting Plan should include:

- a) Details of the siting and type of all external lighting to be used
- b) Drawings setting out light spillage in key sensitive areas, in particular all bat access points and all retained vegetation on and surrounding the site
- c) Details of lighting to be used both during construction and operation
- d) Measures to monitor light spillage once development is operational

The lighting shall be installed and retained as approved during construction and operation. No additional external lighting shall be installed thereafter.

Reason:

A lighting plan should be submitted to ensure lighting details are agreed prior to installation and to reduce the impacts of lighting in the interest of protected species, and their habitats and commuting corridors. In accordance with Policy EN8 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

14. Any contamination that is found during the course of construction of the approved development that was not previously identified shall be reported immediately to the Local Planning Authority. Development on the part of the site affected shall be suspended and a risk assessment carried out and submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Where unacceptable risks are found remediation and verification schemes shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These approved schemes shall be carried out before the development is resumed or continued.

Reason:

To ensure the site is suitable for its proposed use, in accordance with Policy EN8.

15. No development shall be occupied until details of localised Active Travel improvements to the crossing points on the A48 and M4 Junction 38 slip road have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include renewal of tactile paving, widening of the crossing points, and repainting of road markings, and shall be implemented prior to occupation.

Reason:

To promote sustainable travel in accordance with Policies TR2 and TR5 and the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013.

16. Prior to the installation of rooftop plant, a BS4142:2014 + A1:2019 assessment shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Any recommended noise mitigations measures in the form acoustic louvers, if required, shall be implemented to demonstrate that there is no acceptable risk to local amenity. Any mitigation shall be implemented prior to first use and retained thereafter.

Reason:

To protect the amenity of the locality, especially for people living and/or working nearby, in accordance with Local Development Plan EN8.

17. Prior to installation, details of the electricity substation and enclosure shall be submitted and approved. The substation shall be constructed in accordance with the approved details prior to first use.

Reason:

In the interest of visual amenity, to ensure compliance with Policy BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

18. Prior to their use in the construction of the development hereby permitted, details and where requested samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

In the interest of the visual amenity of the area and to ensure the development complies with Policy BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

19. Prior to the first occupation of the development, details of the emissions performance of the proposed emergency generators shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This shall include technical details for the proposed generators demonstrating that the generators will achieve the same emission levels or cleaner than that specified in the submitted Air Quality Assessment (RPS 2025). The emergency generators at the site shall thereafter accord with the approved details.

Reason:

In the interest of the local environment to ensure the development complies with Policies EN8 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

20. Prior to the first use of the development, a detailed Active Travel and Inclusive Access Scheme for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:

- a) details of all pedestrian and cycle routes within the site, including path widths, gradients and surface materials, demonstrating compliance with Active Travel (Wales) Act design guidance and relevant Active Travel Guidance (ATAG) standards;
- b) details of all pedestrian crossing points within the site, including the provision of dropped kerbs and tactile paving in accordance with guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces;

- c) details of accessible routes between parking spaces, cycle parking, building entrances and key facilities;
- d) details of cycle parking provision, including location, type, security and natural surveillance; and
- e) confirmation of any on-site carriageway sections proposed to operate as shared-space or low-traffic environments, together with supporting design justification where applicable.

The approved scheme shall be fully implemented prior to first occupation of the development and thereafter retained and maintained for the lifetime of the development.

Reason:

To ensure safe, inclusive and accessible movement within the site for pedestrians and cyclists, in accordance with the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013, Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), and Policies TR2 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

21. No development shall commence to install the proposed private wire connection between the application site and the nearby energy facility, until details of the wire connection have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The submitted details shall include:

- a) the routing of the cable connection;
- b) details of any trenching, supports, cabinets or above-ground infrastructure;
- c) details of crossing points, access works and reinstatement measures;
- d) measures for the protection of trees, ecology and existing infrastructure; and
- e) a timetable for implementation.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason:

To ensure the satisfactory appearance and environmental integration of the development and to safeguard visual amenity, ecology, trees and highway infrastructure in accordance with Policies BE1, EN6 and EN7 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

22. Prior to the commencement of above-ground works, a Sustainability Implementation Plan shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan shall demonstrate how the sustainability and resource efficiency measures identified within the approved Sustainability Statement shall be incorporated into the development, including:

- a) energy efficiency measures;
- b) measures to minimise operational energy demand;
- c) water efficiency measures;

- d) waste minimisation and recycling measures during construction and operation;
- e) implementation of green infrastructure measures including green roofs and living walls; and
- f) measures to support sustainable travel and electric vehicle charging.

The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved Sustainability Implementation Plan.

Reason:

To ensure the delivery of sustainable development and resource efficiency measures in accordance with Policies SP2 and SP15 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan, Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 and Future Wales.

Regulatory Conditions

23. The vehicular access, internal roads, parking, servicing and turning areas shown on drawing - 1044 - FUT - V1 - ZZ - DR - Z - X100 – Site Wide Layout shall be constructed in full prior to first beneficial use and retained thereafter. These areas shall not be used for any purpose other than the parking, turning and servicing of vehicles associated with the development.

Reason:

In the interests of highway safety and to ensure adequate access to the site, in accordance with Policy TR2.

24. The emergency back up generators shall only be operated:
- a) During a mains power failure and private wire power failure; and
 - b) For routine testing of the emergency generators serving the development, which shall only take place between the hours of 07:30 to 18:00 Monday to Friday and 08:00 to 13:00 on Saturdays

Reason:

To protect amenity and air quality in accordance with Policy EN8 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

25. The off-site highway works secured under the Section 278 Agreement shall be subject to a Road Safety Audit stage 1-4 in accordance with GG 119 of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. Each stage of the Road Safety Audit, together with Designer's Response, shall be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Welsh Government standards, as part of the Section 278 approval process.

Reason:

In the interests of highway safety and to ensure adequate access to the site, in accordance with Policy TR2.

26. The development shall be carried out in full accordance with the ecological mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures detailed in the Ecological Impact Assessment (CRM.9026.001.EC.R.001B, 9 April 2026), the Green Infrastructure Statement (#2335, March 2025) and the Bat Mitigation Technical Note – Land at Tyn-y-Caeau, Margam, by by enzygo, dated 28 April 2026. The bat roosts within Building B1, including the cellar hibernation roost and upstairs roosting area, shall be retained and protected. No works affecting bat roosts shall commence until a European Protected Species licence has been obtained from Natural Resources Wales. All works shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the licence. No site clearance or tree removal shall take place until an updated bat survey (and any necessary licence from NRW) has been undertaken demonstrating that these works will not impact any bats that may be using these features.

Reason:

To protect and enhance biodiversity in accordance with Policies EN6 and EN7.

27. The approved tree protection measures (under Condition 10) shall be installed in full prior to the commencement of development and shall be retained and maintained for the duration of construction. No excavation, level changes, storage of materials, vehicle movements or construction activity shall take place within any Root Protection Area except where expressly approved within the Arboricultural Method Statement.

Reason:

To ensure all existing trees are protected throughout the construction of the development, in the interest of visual amenity, and to ensure the development complies with Policies SP15 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

28. The development shall be carried out under the supervision of a suitably qualified arboricultural consultant, in accordance with the approved Arboricultural Method Statement (under Condition 10). A schedule of supervision and written records of site visits shall be maintained and made available to the Local Planning Authority upon request.

Reason:

To ensure all existing trees are protected throughout the construction of the development, in the interest of visual amenity, and to ensure the development complies with Policies SP15 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

29. No retained tree shall be cut down, uprooted, topped, lopped or otherwise damaged except in accordance with the approved plans and Arboricultural Method Statement (under Condition 10).

Reason:

To ensure all existing trees are protected throughout the construction of the development, in the interest of visual amenity, and to ensure the development complies with Policies SP15 and BE1 of the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan.

30. The car parking and cycle parking facilities, including provision for electric vehicle charging (a minimum of one space), shall be implemented prior to the beneficial use of the development and retained thereafter.

Reason:

To ensure adequate parking and sustainable travel options, in accordance with Policy TR2 and NPT Parking Standards SPG (2016).

31. The operational use of the data centre shall comply with the noise limits specified in the Noise Impact Assessment (RPS Ref 794-ENV-NIA, 2025).

Reason:

To safeguard residential amenity in accordance with Policy EN8.

32. The development shall be used as a Data Centre and for no other purpose including any other purpose in Class B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended), or in any provision equivalent to that Class in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting that Order with or without modification.

Reason:

To safeguard amenity and highway safety in accordance with Policies TR2 and EN8.

33. The annexe building which is identified for demolition within the Planning Design and Access Statement shall be demolished and the site restored in accordance with the agreed landscaping scheme prior to the first beneficial use of the data centre.

Reason:

To ensure that the building is demolished in accordance with the application in the interests of the setting of the farmhouse building in accordance with Policy BE1 of the Local Development Plan.