Preliminary Ecological Assessment

Project: Land at Cramic Way, Port Talbot

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1. Introduction

The client proposes the construction of industrial units on a parcel of land situated at Cramic Way, Port Talbot. The development site is centered at grid reference SS7643089937. To accommodate any future building footprint, associated parking areas, and an access road, clearance of much of the existing vegetation within the central portion of the site is anticipated.

Plans propose the placement of 12 building units within the centre of the site with parking and access road along the south of the units.a rain garden is proposed for the east corner of the site along with a vegetated area in the far west of the site.

The site lies within Port Talbot and is bounded by Heilbronn Way Road (the A48) to the north, a railway line to the east, the River Afan to the west, and established industrial units to the south. This report will assess the potential of the land within the site boundary to support habitats and species and the implications that any future development proposals could have on them.

1.1 Site Description

The proposed development site is a roughly flat parcel of land of irregular shape. To the northeast, beyond Heilbronn Way Road (the A48), an area of scrub extends for approximately 60 m until it meets a railway line. The railway line runs north west to south east across the wider landscape. Port Talbot Bus Station lies around 60 m northwest of the site on the opposite bank of the River Afan, with St Joseph's Churchyard located a further 100 m northeast. The River Afan, located approximately 20 m west of the site, flows in a northeast to southwest direction across the broader landscape. The A4241 runs approximately 60 m southwest of the site. Cramic House, with associated buildings and parking areas, is situated approximately 20 m to the south and southeast, while Station Road Car Park lies around 70 m east.

In the wider landscape the M4 motorway is located approximately 410 m north of the site. Residential areas extend eastwards towards the M4, which curves northwards and lies approximately 660 m east. Further residential streets extend northwest towards Neath Port Talbot Hospital, situated approximately 960 m from the site. To the south, Port Talbot Docks are located around 590 m away, while an area of scrub and marshy grassland is present approximately 450 m southwest.

Within 500 m of the site, a small pond is identifiable on aerial mapping, situated approximately 460 m southeast within the Harbourside Law Courts Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). No other ponds are evident within 500 m of the site boundary,

although additional waterbodies within woodland or residential areas may not be visible on mapping or aerial imagery.

Figure 1. Pond locations within 500 m of proposed development site (indicated in red boundary)

1.2 Survey Constraints

The site visit was completed during early December which is a sub optimal time of year to undertake habitat assessments. However, it was still possible to draw broad conclusions on habitat types within the site boundary.

Access to the far western extent of the site, where it adjoins the River Afan, was restricted. The river at this location is fast-flowing, and the presence of dense scrub made it difficult to obtain clear views or safe descent to the riverbank. As a result, direct access to survey the river edge within this area was considered unsafe and was not undertaken.

Access to the underside of the road bridges located adjacent to the northwest and northeast of the site was restricted due to the presence of the river and railway line beneath each structure. As a result, direct inspection of the bridge undersides could not be undertaken. Consequently, an assessment of their potential to support bat roosting or bird nesting was not possible.

A review of Google Earth imagery indicates that the site has been subject to periodic vegetation clearance over the past 15 years. Aerial photography from April 2025 shows the majority of the site as bare ground following clearance activities (See Figure 2 below).

Figure 2. Historic Google Earth imagery of the site dated April 2025 showing recent vegetation clearance.

1.3 Surveyor Experience

Beth Lewis is an associate member of Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Beth is an ecologist with seven years experience undertaking a wide range of flora and fauna surveys. All survey work is undertaken following JNCC Phase 1 Survey Guidelines and CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2nd Ed 2017).

2. Desktop Study

A data search was undertaken via Aderyn (*LERC Reference: 0256-630)* for the proposed development site and surrounding area. A 1 km buffer around a central point of the proposed development site was searched. Protected species and records of note returned within 500 m of the site include:

- Four records of Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)- closest record being approximately 270 m to the northeast.
- Four records of Otter (*Lutra lutra*)- closest record being approximately 340 m to the northeast of the site.
- Two records of foraging and commuting activity were returned for Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)- the closest being approximately 360 m southeast.
- One record of Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*)- located approximately 350 m southeast.
- 21 records of Invasive Non-native Plant Species (INNPS) were included within the within 500 m of the site for five different species. These include: Cotoneaster Monbretia (*Crocosmia aurea x pottsii = C. x crocosmiiflora*), Japanese Rose (Rosa rugosa), Wall Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis),* White Stonecrop (*Sedum album*) and Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*). The closest record being Himalayan Balsam located approximately 60 m southwest.
- 68 records of invertebrates were returned within 500 m of the site for 10 different species. These include Brown-banded Carder Bee (*Bombus humilis),* Buff Ermine *(Spilosoma lutea),* Cinnab*ar (Tyria jacobaeae),* Garden Tiger (*Arctia caja)*, Great Green Bush-cricket (*Tettigonia viridissima),* Lackey *(Malacosoma neustria*), Latticed Heath *(Chiasmia clathrata),* Shrill Carder Bee (*Bombus sylvarum)*, Small Blue *(Cupido minimus)* and Wall *(Lasiommata megera).*
- Six bird species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA1.1) were returned within 500 m of the site. These include: Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*), Cetti's Warbler (*Cettia cetti*), Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), Little Gull (*Hydrocoloeus minutus*) and Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*).
- 11 bird species are listed under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 were returned within 500 m of the site. Species include: Black-headed Gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), Dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus),* Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), Kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), and House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus).*

Records of note returned for the rest of the 1 km buffer zone are detailed below:

- Adder (*Vipera berus).*
- Four records of Badger (*Meles meles*).
- Two records of Grass Snake (*Natrix helvetica).*
- Harvest Mouse *(Micromys minutus*).
- Six records of fish were returned within 1 km of the site for species including Brown/ Sea Trout *(Salmon tutto)* and Atlantic Salmon *(Salmo salmar).*
- Two records of bat roosts were returned within the rest of the buffer zone for Common Pipistrelle.
- 12 records of bat commuting and foraging activity were returned within the rest of the buffer zone for species including: Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula)* and unidentified bat species.
- 11 records of invertebrate species were returned within the rest of the buffer zone for species including Dusky Brocade (*Apamea remissa),* Adonis' Ladybird (H*ippodamia variegata),* Black-tailed Skimmer *(Orthetrum cancellatum)*, Golden-ringed Dragonfly *(Cordulegaster boltonii),* Grayling (H*ipparchia semele)*, Long-winged Cone-head *(Conocephalus fuscus),* Moss Carder Bee *(Bombus muscorum)*, Short-winged Cone-head *(Conocephalus dorsalis),* Small Heath (Coenonympha pamphilus), Speckled Bush-cricket (*Leptophyes punctatissima) and* White-line Dart *(Euxoa tritici).*
- 14 records of *b*ird species are listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA1.1) within the rest of the buffer zone for species including: Fieldfare *(Turdus pilaris)*, Black Redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros)*, Brambling (*Fringilla montifringilla),* Goldeneye *(Bucephala clangula)*, Hoopoe (*Upupa epops),* Little Ringed Plover *(Charadrius dubius)*, Long-tailed Duck (C*langula hyemalis),* Mediterranean Gull *(Ichthyaetus melanocephalus),* Osprey (Pa*ndion haliaetus),* Pintail (*Anas acuta),* Purple Sandpiper *(Calidris maritima),* Redwing (*Turdus iliacus),* Scaup (*Aythya marila) and* Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus).*
- Six bird species are listed under Section 7 (S7) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (EWA 2016) within the rest of the buffer zone for species including: Curlew *(Numenius arquata),* Grasshopper Warbler *(Locustella naevia*), Ringed Plover *(Charadrius hiaticula),* Skylark (*Alauda arvensis)*, Tree Pipit *(Anthus trivialis)* and Tundra Swan *(Cygnus columbianus).*

2.1 Protected Sites

A data search for species records was undertaken for the proposed development site and surrounding area up to a 1 km buffer. The search also considered statutory and non-statutory protected sites.

Statutory Protected Sites

There are no statutory designate sites within 1 km of the development site.

Non-Statutory Protected Sites

Two Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) were returned within 1 km of the site. The site itself lies within the Neath Port Talbot (NPT) Watercourses SINC designation. This designation encompasses a large area of the county and provides protection for watercourses, with a focus on safeguarding their ecological value and associated habitats.

The Harbourside Law Courts SINC is located approximately 260 m south of the proposed development site. This designation is afforded due to the presence of a notable invertebrate population and areas of Open Mosaic Habitat on previously developed land.

The proposed development site sits approximately 260 m north of a B-Lines designated area. B-Lines are non-statutory protected sites which aim to restore and create wildflower habitats forming stepping stones that link existing wildlife areas together creating a network of habitats across the landscape benefiting not only pollinators but a host of other wildlife.

2.2 Potential Impacts to Protected Sites

The development site lies within the Neath Port Talbot Watercourses SINC and is directly adjacent to the River Afan. This SINC designation provides protection for watercourses within its coverage, recognising their ecological value and associated habitats.

It is essential that the riparian corridor to the west of the site is safeguarded against indirect impacts arising from the proposed development. Appropriate pollution control measures must be implemented to prevent surface water run-off or discharge into the River Afan. In addition, measures must be adopted to minimise light spill from the site, thereby avoiding illumination of riparian habitats and any nocturnal species utilising the corridor.

It is recommended that a vegetated buffer zone is established and maintained between the river to the west and the nearest extent of the development footprint. No construction activities, material storage, temporary structures or parking should be permitted within this buffer zone. This buffer must be retained throughout the construction phase and post-completion, providing a protective separation between the river habitat and onsite works, thereby reducing potential disturbance and light intrusion.

3. Phase 1 Survey

3.1 Habitats

A walkover survey of the site was completed on the **5th December 2025**. All areas of the site were accessible. A species list can be found in Appendix 1, photographs of the site can be found in Appendix 2 and a map of the habitats found within the site is provided in Appendix 3.

The site is bordered by a tarmac access track along its southern boundary and a tall retaining wall to the north, above which sits Heilbronn Way road. To the east, the site is bounded by a railway line, while to the west the land slopes down a banking to the River Afan. The northern boundary wall supports limited ivy growth in places.

The site is predominantly flat, with small bankings formed from previous ground works and spoil piles. The central area currently supports a mosaic of tall ruderal vegetation, interspersed with low-lying bramble scrub and patches of shorter ephemeral/perennial vegetation.

Tall ruderal vegetation species including broad-leaved dock, cock's foot, common vetch, cow parsley, creeping bent, creeping buttercup, creeping cinquefoil, creeping thistle, dandelion, evening primrose, Hart's-tongue fern, hawkweed species, hoary mustard, hogweed, knapweed, mugwort, mullein, nettle, ragwort, ribwort plantain, rosebay willowherb, sow thistle, St John's wort species, sweet vernal grass, traveller's joy, wall-rocket, winter-cress and woundwort species.

Species within the ephemeral short perennial vegetation include bristly oxtongue, broad-leaved dock, cock's foot, common field-speedwell, creeping bent, creeping buttercup, creeping cinquefoil, dandelion, dove's-foot crane's-bill, evening primrose, hawkweed species, hogweed, lesser swine-cress, ragwort, red clover, ribwort plantain, silverweed, St John's wort species, sweet vernal-grass, wall-rocket and winter-cress.

Additional features include rock and stone piles in the eastern section, with taller scrub and willow species present towards the far east, the species including butterfly bush, gorse and goat willow. A small fenced-off area is located in the far west, containing two derelict metal structures surrounded by tall ruderal vegetation and bramble scrub. This area was not accessible during the survey.

Towards the western boundary, bramble scrub becomes dominant as the site approaches the river. Scattered trees are present in this area, some supporting ivy growth along their trunks.

Japanese knotweed was recorded in small patches across much of the site.

3.2 Great Crested Newts (GCN)

Great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus)* are a European protected species and are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Deliberate taking or destroying of eggs,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Great crested newts (GCN) are listed on schedule 5 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 which protects them from intentional or reckless disturbance or obstruction when using a structure or place for shelter and / or protection. It is also an offence to sell, offer or expose for sale a GCN. GCN and Common toad are listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

There are no records of GCN within 1 km of the proposed development site. No ponds are present within the site itself, and only a single pond is located approximately 460 m southeast of the site. Habitat connectivity between this pond and the site is considered poor, due to the presence of roads, industrial areas and residential properties.

The site is relatively isolated to the west and north, with the River Afan and a retaining road wall acting as barriers to amphibian movement. To the east, the railway ballast provides suitable sheltering habitat for amphibians, although this is also bordered by a tall road wall along its northern edge, further limiting connectivity.

Within the site, habitat quality for amphibians during their terrestrial life stages is good. The tall ruderal vegetation, short perennial and scrub interface provide commuting and foraging opportunities, while stone piles offer excellent shelter and refugia. The site appears largely disused, but has been subject to clearance operations in the past.

GCN typically require a network of suitable breeding ponds within the local landscape. Given the absence of ponds within the site, the limited availability of waterbodies in the surrounding area, and the poor habitat connectivity between the site and the nearest pond, it is considered unlikely that GCN are present within the development site. **No further survey recommendations are made for this species.**

3.3 Dormouse

The Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius)* is a European protected species and is protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Dormouse is listed on schedule 5 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 which protects them from intentional or reckless disturbance or obstruction when using a structure or place for shelter and / or protection. It is also an offence to sell, offer or expose for sale a native dormouse. Dormouse is listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

There are no records of hazel dormouse within 1 km of the proposed development site. The majority of habitats within the site boundary are considered unsuitable for dormouse use. The short perennial and tall ruderal vegetation provide neither shelter nor foraging opportunities, while scrub present within the site, although superficially suitable, is patchy and lacks connectivity to surrounding habitats that dormice may utilise.

The site is further constrained by barriers to movement by the River Afan to the west, a retaining road wall to the north, and industrial land to the south. As a result, the site is not connected to larger areas of woodland or continuous scrub in the wider landscape.

Given the limited suitability of habitats, poor connectivity to the wider landscape, and the absence of local records, the presence of hazel dormouse within the site boundary is considered unlikely**. No further survey recommendations are made for this species.**

3.4 Bats

All British bats are a European protected species and are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) also protects all species of British bat and their roosting locations. British bats are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance and or obstruction of their roosting places. Barbastelle, Bechstein, Noctule,

Brown long-eared, Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle, Greater horseshoe and Lesser horseshoe bats are also listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

The data search returned limited bat records within the local area. This is thought to indicate a lack of recording rather than an absence of species. The closest bat commuting and foraging record is approximately 360 m southeast for common pipistrelle. Only two roost records were returned within 1 km of the site both for common pipistrelle bats with the closest record being a day roost located approximately 780 m west of the site.

Bat Habitat Assessment

The site is dominated by a mosaic of ruderal vegetation and shorter ground vegetation, with scattered patches of willow and butterfly bush around its periphery. No mature tree lines or hedgerows are present within the site. Although the site itself lacks mature vegetation features, the riparian corridor of the River Afan is likely to be used by bats for commuting and foraging purposes.

Vegetation within the site is broadly suitable for bat foraging, but connectivity to the wider landscape is limited. The riparian corridor of the River Afan to the west provides the only significant link to the wider landscape which bats may use.

No further survey work is recommended for bats within the site. However, it is recommended that a vegetated buffer zone be retained along the western boundary of the site. This will help to maintain the functionality of the riparian corridor for commuting bats and minimise the overall loss of vegetation within the site. In addition, light spill into the western area should be minimised to reduce potential impacts on bat commuting and foraging activity.

Bat Building Assessment

All buildings within the site boundary were subject to an external assessment for bat roosting potential. Internal surveys of the buildings were not possible at the time of the site inspection due to fencing restricting access. All assessments were undertaken following the guidance within the *BCT Good Practice Guidelines 2023 (4th Edition).*

Two derelict metal structures were recorded in the western part of the site. Located at approximate grid reference SS 76374 89931. These structures, resembling shipping containers, were in a state of disrepair with the roof and sides collapsing. Doorways were propped open, and numerous gaps provided access into the internal space. Due to their metal construction, lack of thermal insulation, and absence of suitable dark spaces, voids or crevices, these structures were assessed as having negligible suitability for bat roosting. No

further survey work is recommended for these structures. See Appendix 2, Photo 12 for images of these structures).

Bat Tree Assessment

There were no mature trees within the site. Scattered trees were present along the western boundary and were subject to a cursory ground-level assessment for their potential to support roosting bats. These trees were viewed from accessible areas of the site only, with bramble scrub hindering access to their bases, consequently, they were assessed from the east.

Some trees in this area supported thin ivy growth along slender trunks, but coverage was limited. Ivy did not form a thick lattice behind which bats could possibly roost. No visible gaps, cracks, or other features suitable for bat roosting were noted during the survey.

It is anticipated that these trees will not be impacted by the proposed works, as they are located outside the development site boundary along the river's edge. Therefore, no further survey work in relation to bats is required for trees within or immediately adjacent to the site. Should any trees along the western boundary require removal to facilitate development, it is recommended that additional ground-based visual bat assessments are undertaken prior to works.

3.5 Otters

The Otter (*Lutra lutra)* is a European protected species and is protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. In summary, they are protected from:

- Deliberate capture, killing and injuring,
- Deliberate disturbance of a breeding site or resting place,
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Otter are listed on schedule 5 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 which protects them from intentional or reckless disturbance or obstruction when using a structure or place for shelter and / or protection. It is also an offence to sell, offer or expose for sale an otter. Otter is listed in section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 which makes them a key species to sustain and improve biodiversity.

A total of nine records of otter were returned within 1 km of the site. Five of these records are associated with the M4 corridor to the north, while four relate to spraints recorded along the River Afan just north of the site, the most recent of which dates to 2024. The site

lies immediately adjacent to this riparian corridor, providing excellent connectivity between these recent records and the site itself.

Otters typically prefer secluded locations for holt creation to avoid disturbance. They are known to travel considerable distances from river corridors in search of suitable resting or holt sites. The site is dominated by disturbed ground with short perennial vegetation and taller ruderal growth, which offers little shelter or suitable habitat for otters. However, scrub patches could provide potential resting areas for otter.

The river bank along the western boundary could not be directly accessed during the survey, and therefore the presence of otter resting places along this section of the river could not be assessed. It is considered likely that otters could utilise the River Afan for commuting and foraging purposes. The scrub along the western boundary of the site could be used by otter, however, no evidence of mammal movement through the vegetation was noted.

The presence of otter within the development site boundary is considered to be highly unlikely. As such, **no further survey recommendations for this species are made**. However, given the likely presence of commuting and foraging otter along the River Afan a wildlife sensitive lighting strategy will be required to prevent indirect impacts to the river. A buffer zone between the top of the river bank and closest edge of the development site boundary is also recommended.

3.6 Badger

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. In summary they are protected from:

- Taking, killing or injuring;
- Cruelty;
- Interfering with a badger sett;
- The selling and possession of badgers;
- Marking or ringing.

Badgers are also listed on schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended.

Badgers tend to have a variety of setts with different uses and functions within the territory for the family unit. In general there is usually a main sett which the family will use the most. There are then annex, subsidiary and or outlier setts which depending on family structures and environmental pressures may be used at different times of the year. As female badgers tend to have their cubs over winter the disturbance and damage of badger setts is

prohibited between December and June inclusive. NRW are the licensing body for any actions which may contravene the above legislation.

Four badger records were returned within 1 km of the site. Two are records of road casualties along the M4 further northwest, while two are of live sightings northeast of the site further past the M4 motorway.

Badgers favour a dry sloping site for digging their setts preferably within woodland or even under a large hedgerow bank. Badgers are creatures of habit and tend to follow regular pathways between their setts and foraging grounds. The site comprises of recently disturbed ground with google earth imagery showing vegetation disturbance as recent as April 2025. Periodic vegetation clearance within the site reduces the likelihood that a badger population will reside within the site long term due to disturbance. No mammal pathways were noted on site during the survey visit.

Although the site appears superficially suitable for badger foraging and commuting use, by the presence of scrub vegetation, it is not well connected to suitable habitat in the wider landscape due to the urban nature of the surroundings along with the river and retaining wall restricting badger movements north and west.

The presence of a badger sett within the site boundary is considered to be highly unlikely. **No further survey recommendations are made for this species.**

3.7 Birds

All breeding birds are protected under schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended. Under this Act it is an offence to:

- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Enhanced protection is afforded to species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act, this additional protection makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

The shipping containers, small stands of scrub and scattered trees around the site are considered suitable for use nesting birds. The tall ruderal and short perennial vegetation are also suitable for foraging use by common local bird species. **A precautionary approach to**

the removal of habitat with bird nesting potential will be required. Compensation measures for the loss of bird foraging and nesting habitat will be required.

3.8 Reptiles and Amphibians

Reptiles such as the slow-worm, common lizard, adder and grass snake are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended). They are protected from killing, injuring and sale. They are protected from killing, injuring and sale. They are also listed in section 6 of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The four widespread species of amphibian i.e. the smooth newt, palmate newt, common frog and common toad, are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) by Section 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This section prohibits sale of these species. Common toad is listed in Section 7 of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

Four records of reptiles and no amphibian records were returned within 1 km of the site. The closest record being for slow-worm located approximately 350 m southeast. One record or adder was returned approximately 510 m north of the site whilst two records of grass snake were returned over 800 m away to the north and south.

Reptiles prefer a mosaic of habitats with diverse vegetation structure creating open areas and nearby cover to provide protection from predators and the elements. Common amphibian species require still pools of water for breeding purposes and damp conditions with foraging habitat during their terrestrial life stages.

The scrub, short perennial and tall ruderal vegetation within the site are considered suitable for foraging and commuting use by reptile and amphibian species. However there is limited habitat connectivity to the wider landscape. A retaining wall and road forms the north boundary and the River Afan is present along the western boundary restricting movement. The site also appears to be subject to periodic habitat clearance works. The presence of reptiles and amphibians within the site is considered to be unlikely. **No further survey recommendations are made for this species.**

3.9 Other Mammals

Records for mammal species listed under S7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 returned via the data search include hedgehog and harvest mouse.

Hedgehog - nine records of hedgehog were returned within 1 km of the site with the closest record being approximately 270 m to the northeast. is considered likely to be present within the site, at least on occasion. Hedgehog is considered to be a species of principal

importance, for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales. As such consideration must be given to this species in any plans proposed for the site.

Harvest Mouse - one record of harvest mouse was returned approximately 620 m south of the site. The habitats within the site boundary are considered unsuitable for use by harvest Mouse.

3.10 Invertebrates

A small number of invertebrate records were returned from the data trawl within 1 km of the site. This is thought to indicate a lack of recording rather than an absence of presence. Notable lepidopteran species records, those species that are listed under S7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, returned from the data trawl include: Invertebrate records including Lackey, Buff ermine, Knotgrass, Small blue, Dingy skipper and Brown-banded carder bee. The site supports a mosaic of habitats that provide a variety of opportunities for invertebrates across different life stages. The interface between bare ground, shorter vegetation, and taller ruderal growth creates a diverse structural range of habitats.

The habitats of the site were assessed for their potential to support invertebrates using the Invertebrate Habitat Potential Assessment (IHPA) as found in *CIEEM inpractice Issue 112*, June 2021. The IHPA protocol has been produced to allow ecologists without specialised entomological expertise to identify key habitats and features likely to support important invertebrate assemblages. Full details of habitat types can be found in Appendix 5.

Table 1. Invertebrate Habitat Assessment

Habitat Element	**Grade**
Decaying Wood – H1	D - Minor
Rotational Management – H2	E - Negligible/Absent
Nectar Resources – H3	D - Minor
Wet Substrates – H4	C - Moderate
Other Water Habitats – H5	D - Minor
Structural Patchwork – H6	D - Minor
Still Air (S) – H7	D - Minor
Still Air (H) – H8	E - Negligible/Absent
Connectivity – H9	D - Minor
Ecoclines – H10	D - Minor
Bare Earth – H11	D - Minor

Based on the Invertebrate Habitat Potential Assessment (IHPA) the site, in its current state, is considered to have potential to support common and widespread generalist species of invertebrate only.

4. Recommendations and Mitigation

Planning consent is sought to create 12 industrial units within the development site boundary. Development proposals indicate units will be sited within the central area with parking immediately south. A rain garden is proposed for the east and an area of vegetation is proposed to be retained along the west of the site. It is considered highly likely that the vast majority of habitats within the site boundary will require removal to facilitate the development proposals. The habitats within the site boundary are considered to have local value for wildlife.

As the development proposals are progressed they will need to consider the below aspects for ecology within the site design. Our general recommendations are:

- The River Afan is a designated SINC and protected via the planning process. Whilst the development proposals will not directly affect the river, a buffer zone is recommended between the top of the river bank and the closest edge of development. A buffer of at least 5 m is recommended to help reduce lighting and noise disturbance along the river.

- Pollution prevention measures will be required as part of the development proposals to ensure no negative effects to the water quality of the River Afan are experienced. A Sustainable Drainage Strategy will also be required to ensure no water is discharged into the river from the development site and any storage or works compound must be kept away from bankings that slope towards the watercourse in the west of the site.

- A root protection zone (RPZ) must be implemented around any retained trees which lie adjacent to or within the boundary of the proposed development site. British Standard BS 5837, Trees *in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations* will be followed. Measures will include clear marking of the RPZ to guarantee no machinery is used or digging carried out in that area. This will ensure that there is no detrimental impact to the trees and the flora or fauna it supports.

- The shipping containers and scrub within the site have potential for use by nesting birds. The removal of shipping containers and scrub must be completed outside of the bird nesting season of March to August inclusive. If this is not achievable an ecologist must inspect any vegetation or structure with the potential for birds to be present for active birds' nests prior to removal works beginning. If an active nest is identified a buffer zone of at least 5 m around the nest must be observed until the chicks have fledged. Only then can the vegetation be removed or building demolished. Greater buffer zones around nests may be required depending on the species and habitat the nest is within.

- Careful consideration must be given to the use of lighting within the development site, as this can adversely affect the activity of a variety of fauna, particularly foraging bats, nesting birds and invertebrates. Light spillage into adjacent semi-natural habitats must

be avoided and brightness kept to the lowest permissible level in the areas adjacent to such habitats. All lighting must meet recommendations in the *BCT Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night*.

- An Invasive Non Native Species Management Strategy will be required to ensure all areas of Japanese knotweed are appropriately dealt with within the the site boundary. Advice should be sought from an independent contractor on the best way to deal with knotweed within the site boundary and biosecurity precautions should be implemented during site works to prevent the spread of invasive non-native plants both on and off site.

5. Biodiversity Enhancements & Green Infrastructure

The Environment Act (Wales) 2016 places a duty on competent authorities and councils to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Chapter 6 of *Planning Policy Wales (version 12),* paragraph 6.2.5 requires Green Infrastructure considerations to be included with all planning applications. Development proposals must detail how green infrastructure considerations which are proportionate to the scale and nature of the plans are being provided.

Green infrastructure currently within the site takes the form of small stands of scrub, short perennial and tall ruderal vegetation. Small stands of Japanese knotweed are scattered across the site boundary and the River Afan flows just past the western boundary. This provides good habitat connectivity to the wider landscape, however, the immediate area around the site is urban in nature.

Detailed development plans are not available at present however general considerations to green infrastructure to be considered as part for the development include:

- Paragraph 6.4.42 of Planning Policy Wales (version 12) requires that at least three trees of a similar type and compensatory size are planted for every tree lost.
- Sensitive lighting to prevent light spill into adjacent natural habitat. Light spill could affect how wildlife move through habitat within the site and also the habitats adjacent to the site.
- The provision of a vegetated buffer between the River Afan and closest edge of the development site boundary should be provided. This will help reduce indirect impacts onto the River Afan but also provide and enhance habitat connectivity along the wester boundary of the site.
- Native species should be used within the soft landscaping works on the site. The provision of tree and hedgerow planting around the site would offer visual and biodiversity benefits for the site. Suitable long term management of soft landscaping also helps ensure spaces are useful to wildlife.

The Environment Act (Wales) 2016 places a duty on competent authorities such as Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to conserve and enhance biodiversity. The below bullet points are some simple measures that could be achieved to enhance the biodiversity of the site:

- The provision of integrated bird boxes upon any new buildings created on site. A variety of bird boxes can be used but all boxes must be placed at least 2 m high from ground floor.

- The provision of integrated bat boxes upon any new buildings created on site. A variety of bat boxes can be used but all boxes must be placed at least 2 m high from ground floor. Bat boxes must be located at least 2 m away from any external light source including windows.

- All fencing across the site must be hedgehog friendly in design. A friendly design is considered to allow passage of small animals across the site. Close board or mesh fencing should provide either a continuous gap between the bottom of the fence and ground of approximately 13 cm or 13 cm by 13 cm gaps cut every 3 m along fencing.

- The creation of at least one butterfly bank within the grounds of the site would be welcomed. A butterfly bank creates a range of micro climates and habitats for use by invertebrates. In simplified terms, a butterfly bank requires a mound of poor quality soil to be created ideally 30 m long and 'C' shaped. At the base of the bank a gravel substrate should be spread a few metres in width. The mound can then be seeded with a native seed mix and subject to low intensity cut and collect mowing.

- A reptile hibernacula can be created within the grounds of the development site using rubble and brash from on site clearance works. The hibernacula must at least measure 0.5 m in depth, 2 m wide and 2 m long each. It will be made by creating layers of wood, brash, rubble and soil. The hibernacula will create a mound approximately 0.3 m above ground level which will be covered over with soil and seeded using a native seed mix. A diagram of a Reptile Hibernacular is located in Appendix 6 for reference.

- A bug hotel could be created within the development, making use of wooden pallets or reclaimed materials. Twig piles, bamboo canes, pine cones and leaves could be placed within sections of the pallet along with old roofing slates, terracotta pot pieces and logs with holes drilled into them. All providing some dryer areas and other damp sections to attract a wide range of invertebrate species. Pollinator friendly planting will also encourage a range of invertebrate species within the site. Perennial meadow planting containing a wide range of native species will allow flowering year on year.

Appendix 1 – Plant Species Recorded

Common Name	*Scientific Name*
bramble	*Rubus fruticosus sp*
bristly oxtongue	*Picris echioides*
broad-leaved dock	*Rumex obtusifolius*
butterfly bush	*Buddleja davidii*
cock's foot grass	*Dactylis glomerata*
common field-speedwell	*Veronica persica*
common vetch	*Vicia sativa*
cow parsley	*Anthriscus sylvestris*
creeping bent	*Agrostis stolonifera*
creeping buttercup	*Ranunculus repens*
creeping cinquefoil	*Potentilla reptans*
creeping thistle	*Cirsium arvense*
dandelion	*Taraxacum lacistophyllum*
dove's-foot crane's-bill	*Geranium molle*
evening primrose	*Oenothera biennis*
gorse	*Ulex europaeus*
Hart's-tongue fern	*Phyllitis scolopendrium*
hawkweed species	*Hieracium sp.*
hoary mustard	*Hirschfeldia incana*
hogweed	*Heracleum sphondylium*
japanese knotweed	*Fallopia japonica*
knapweed species	*Centaurea sp.*
lesser swine-cress	*Coronopus didymus*
mugwort	*Artemisia vulgaris*
mullein	*Vebascum sp.*
nettle	*Urtica dioica*
ragwort	*Senecio jacobaea*
red clover	*Trifolium pratense*
ribwort plantain	*Plantago lanceolata*
rosebay willowherb	*Chamaenerion angustifolium*
silverweed	*Potentilla anserina*
sow thistle species	*Sonchus sp.*
St John's wort species	*Hypericum sp.*
sweet vernal-grass	*Anthoxanthum odoratum*
traveller's joy	*Clematis vitalba*
wall-rocket	*Diplotaxis tenuifolia*
goat willow	*Salix caprea*
winter-cress	*Barbarea vulgaris*
woundwort	*Stachys sylvatica*

Appendix 2 – Site Photographs

Photo 1. Access road along south of site, view looking west..

Photo 2. Access road and building along southern boundary of site. View looking east.

Photo 3. Vegetation within the site and northern boundary wall with Heilbronn Way road.

Photo 4. View of far northwest of land adjacent to site. Heilbronn Way road bridge over river.

Photo 5. River Afan and Heilbronn Way road bridge.

Photo 6. Japanese knotweed stand in western area of site.

Photo 7. View looking northeast. Low lying scrub and vegetation.

Photo 8. View looking along northern boundary of site.

Photo 9. Central area of site. Ephemeral short perennial vegetation growth.

Photo 10. Rock and stone pile in northwest of site.

Photo 11. Building bordering south of site.

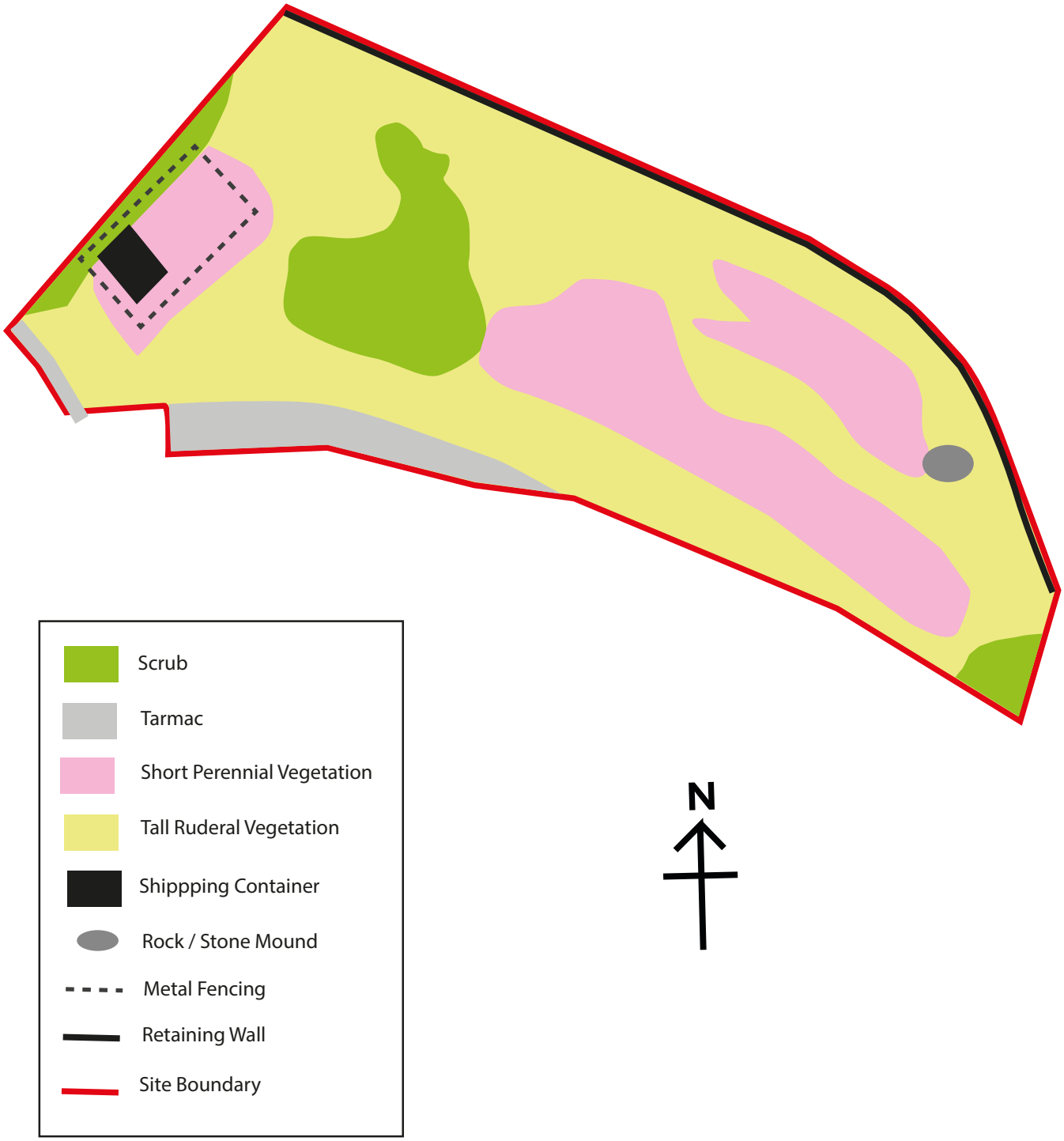
Photo 12. Derelict metal structures in west of site.

Appendix 3– Site Habitat Map

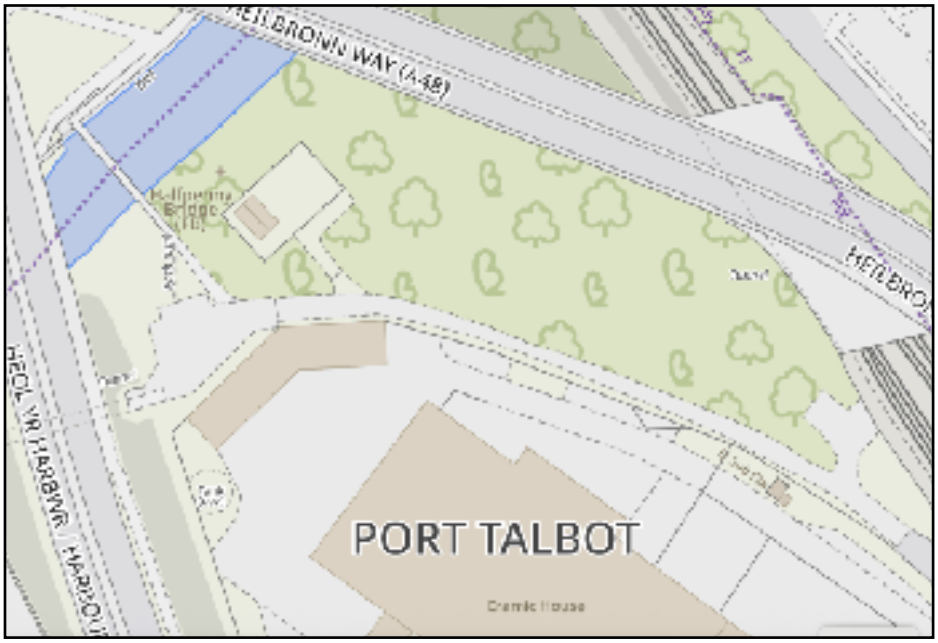
CRAMIC WAY, PORT TALBOT

Habitat Map

December 2025



Appendix 4 - Aerial View of Site Location

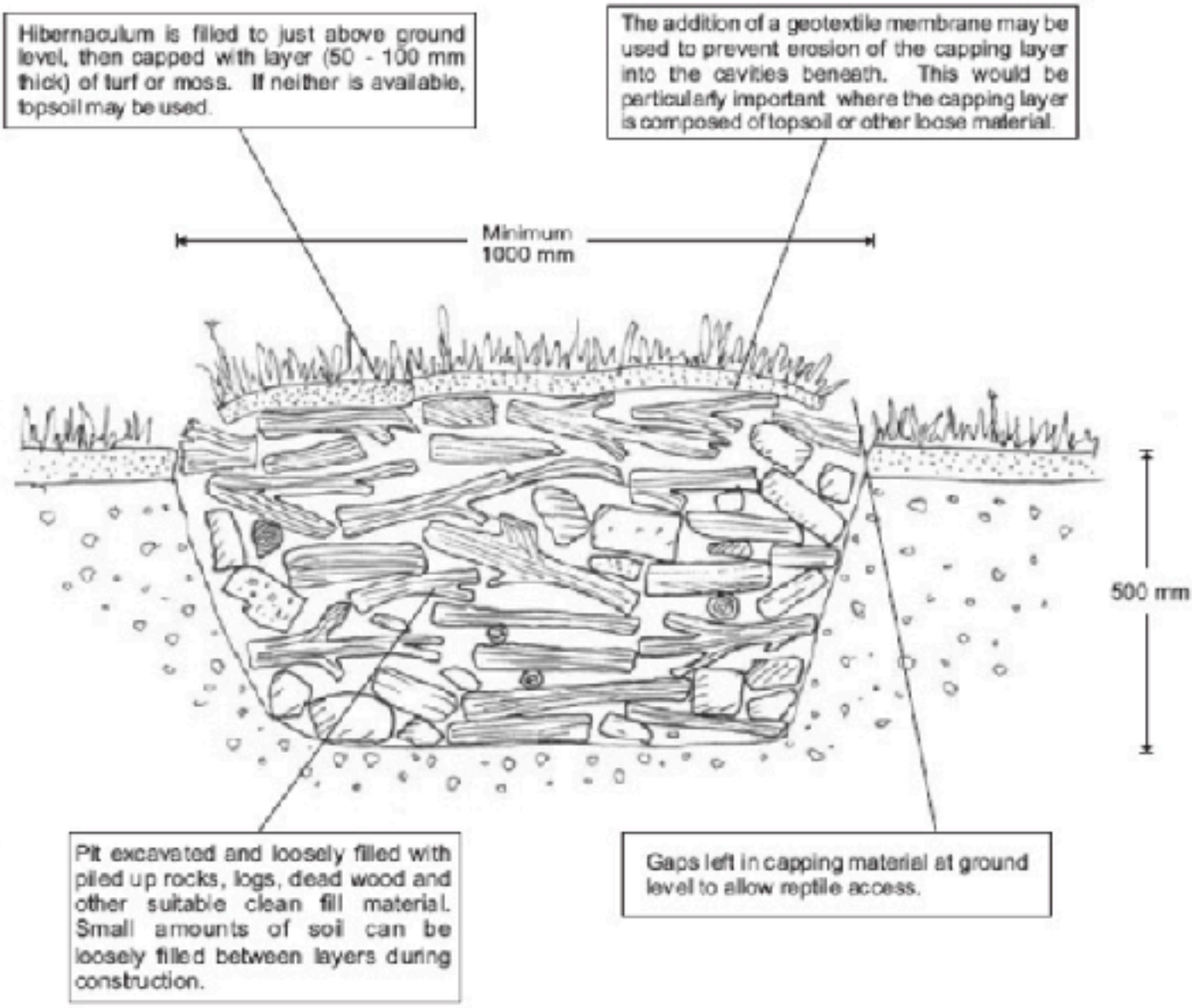


Appendix 5 – Invertebrate Habitat Potential Assessment

Table 1. Summary of the 11 habitat elements assessed by IHP survey.

Habitat element	No.	Comments
Decaying Wood	HE1	In all its forms; from decaying wood on/in large trees to woodland floor debris
Rotational Management	HE2	Planned or serendipitous; and whether for nature conservation or other purposes
Nectar Resources	HE3	As a proxy for nectar- and pollen resources, as assessment of pollen resources is impracticable on a walk-through survey
Wet Substrates	HE4	Including marginal, marshy, muddy and seasonally inundated habitats, as well as flushes
Open Water Habitats	HE5	The open water element of rivers, lakes, ponds, streams, ditches, etc.
Structural Patchwork	HE6	Habitat mosaics, including, but by no means restricted to open mosaic habitats on previously developed land
Still Air (S)	HE7	Suntraps and still-air microclimates in open situations; the term 'still air' is used in preference to 'wind breaks' as many rigid wind breaks are likely to produce turbulent air in their lee
Still Air (H)	HE8	Humid still-air microclimates in sheltered and shaded situations
Connectivity	HE9	Landscape-scale connectivity between the site and external habitats
Ecoclines	HE10	A graded transition between two or more broad habitats
Bare Earth	HE11	Unshaded bare or sparsely vegetated well-drained substrate, regardless of soil type

Appendix 6 - Reptile Hibernacular



Source: Highways Agency (2005) *Design Manual for Roads and Bridges: Volume 10 Section 4 Part 7 – Nature Conservation Advice in Relation to Roads and Reptiles*