

Ecological Impact Assessment

October 2023

**Corneli Primary School,
North Cornelly, Bridgend**

Prepared by
CSA Environmental

on behalf of
WEPco

Report No: CSA/4833/02

This report may contain sensitive ecological information. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to determine if this should be made publicly available.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Redevelopment of the existing education facility is proposed at Corneli Primary School, North Cornelly, Bridgend, for which detailed planning permission is sought. Proposed works include the demolition of three existing school buildings, minor loss of grassland, introduced shrub and areas of hardstanding. A single new school building will be erected, with associated carparking, sports pitches and soft landscaping, including new hedgerow and tree planting.

CSA Environmental was instructed by WEPco (Welsh Education Partnership) to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of the proposed development. To inform this assessment, a desktop study followed by bat surveys and habitat surveys were undertaken.

The Site presently comprises a mixture of buildings, hardstanding and modified grassland with some hedgerows and trees.

The Site lies within close proximity to a number of statutory and non-statutory sites, including two Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Potential impacts to these designations are explored in detail through a separate Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening report.

Habitats within the Site are generally common and widespread, with the features of most ecological value comprising woodland, trees and hedgerows around the periphery of the Site. The scheme seeks to retain hedgerows and other habitats wherever practicable, with compensatory planting provided within retained open space areas.

Habitats on-site have the potential to support nesting birds and any clearance of this should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (March to August inclusive).

At the time of writing a Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ground Level Roost Assessment has been completed by TACP. The survey found two buildings on-site to have low bat roosting potential (Buildings B3 and B4), and a third (Building B1) to have low to negligible potential (considered within this report to have low potential). Trees surveyed were all found to have negligible roosting potential.

Provisions for ecological enhancement have been provided here-in. New habitat creation is proposed to include native tree and hedgerow planting, nectar-rich grasslands and incorporation of bird and bat boxes within the new building and on retained boundary trees.

Based on successful implementation of the proposed avoidance, mitigation and enhancement, the development is not anticipated to result in any significant residual negative effects on important ecological features. The scheme is considered to accord with all relevant nature

conservation legislation, as well as with the provisions of the Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006-2021 currently under review with a Replacement LDP 2018-2033 due imminently).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by CSA Environmental on behalf of the WEPco. It sets out the findings of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of proposed development at Corneli Primary School, North Cornelly, Bridgend (hereafter 'the Site'). Planning permission is sought for the redevelopment of the school site, including the demolition of three on-site buildings, loss of hardstanding and small areas of modified grassland. Proposals comprise erection of a single new school building, as well as delivery of associated carparking, sports pitches and soft landscaping.
- 1.2 The scope of this assessment has been determined with consideration of best-practice guidance provided by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018) and the Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development published by the British Standards Institute (BS 42020:2013).
- 1.3 The Site occupies an area of c. 3.1ha and consists of a mixture of buildings, hardstanding and amenity grassland with modified hedgerows and trees (see Habitats Plan in Appendix A). The Site is located around central grid reference SS 8193 8165, to the south-west of Pyle. The landscape context of the Site is dominated by the villages of North Cornelly to the south and Pyle to the north, with the M4 corridor to the south, and a mixture of arable and pasture fields connected by a network of field boundary hedgerows to the south.
- 1.4 A desk study and field survey, including a UK Habitat Classification survey were undertaken for the Site in August 2023 as part of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), the findings of which are presented herein. In addition, the following further survey work was undertaken in August 2023:
 - Preliminary Roost Assessment of Buildings and Trees
- 1.5 This EclA aims to:
 - Establish baseline ecological conditions at the Site.
 - Determine the importance of ecological features which could be affected by the proposed scheme.
 - Identify any likely significant impacts or effects of the proposed development on important ecological features, in the absence of mitigation, including cumulative impacts.
 - Set out any measures necessary to effectively avoid or mitigate likely significant effects, and identify residual impacts.
 - Identify any compensation measures required to offset residual impacts.
 - Set out potential ecological enhancement measures that may be secured by the proposed scheme.

- Confirm how proposed mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures could be secured.
- Provide sufficient information to determine whether the project accords with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation, and where appropriate, to allow conditions or obligations to be imposed by the relevant authority.

1.6 An EclA can be used for the appraisal of projects of any scale. This is a best practice evaluation process, recommended by CIEEM (2018). It is intended that the evaluation of findings presented here-in will aid the Bridgend County Borough Council in their review of the planning application.

2.0 LEGISLATION, PLANNING POLICY & STANDING ADVICE

Legislation

- 2.1 Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of particular relevance to this PEA includes:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992
 - The Environment Wales Act 2016
 - Future Wales: The National Plan 2040
- 2.2 This above legislation has been addressed, as appropriate, in the production of this report. Further information on the above legislation is provided in Appendix B.

Planning Policy Wales

- 2.3 The Planning Policy Wales (PPW) 11 (Welsh Government, 2021) sets out the government planning policies for Wales and how they should be applied. Chapter 6: Distinctive and Natural Places, is of particular relevance to this report as it relates to ecology and biodiversity. Further details are provided in Appendix B.
- 2.4 Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009), which is referred to by the PPW, provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation and their effects within the planning system.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.5 A number of local planning policies relate to ecology, biodiversity and/or nature conservation. These are summarised in Table 1 of Appendix B. These policies have been addressed, as appropriate, in the production of this report.

Standing Advice

- 2.6 Natural Resources Wales Standing Advice (Natural Resources Wales, 2015) regarding bats and planning, aims to support local authorities and forms a material consideration in determining applications. Standing Advice has therefore been given due consideration, alongside other detailed guidance documents, in the production of this report.

3.0 METHODS

Desk Study

- 3.1 An ecological desk study was undertaken in August 2023 comprising a review of online resources and biological records centre data as detailed below.
- 3.2 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online database was reviewed to identify the following ecological features (based on the Site's likely 'zone of influence' in respect of such features):
 - Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites within 10km of the Site (including possible/proposed sites)
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) within 3km of the Site
 - Other relevant data e.g. Ancient Woodland Inventory within 1km of the Site
- 3.3 A review was undertaken of the location of any such designations, their distance from and connectivity with the Site, and the reasons for their designation. This information was used to determine whether they may be within the proposed development's Zone of Influence (Zoi).
- 3.4 South-East Wales Environmental Records Centre (SEWERC) was contacted for details of any non-statutory nature conservation designations and records of protected/notable habitats and species. This information was requested for an area encompassing the Site and adjacent land within c. 2km of its central grid reference. This search area was selected to include the likely zone of influence of effects upon non-statutory designations and protected or notable habitats and species.
- 3.5 Further online resources were reviewed for information which may aid the identification of important ecological features. The Woodland Trust's online Ancient Tree Inventory was reviewed for known ancient or veteran trees within the Site and adjacent land. Interactive online mapping provided by the charity 'Buglife' was used to determine whether the Site falls within an Important Invertebrate Area.
- 3.6 As Natural Resources Wales does not have specific published guidelines for assessing great crested newts in Wales, Natural England's Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (2001) was followed, a desktop search was undertaken to identify ponds within 500m of the Site which may have potential to support breeding great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*, using Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, the MAGIC database and aerial photography.

- 3.7 Where possible under the terms of the data provider, relevant desk study data are presented in Appendix C.

Field Surveys

- 3.8 A UK Habitat Classification ('UKHab') survey was carried out in fine and dry weather conditions on 09 August 2023 by Rhiannon Taylor ACIEEM, FISC¹ Level 3, encompassing the Site and immediately adjacent habitats that could be viewed.
- 3.9 UKHab is a unified and comprehensive system for mapping and classifying habitats, designed to provide a simple and robust approach to surveying and monitoring, and replaces Phase 1 Habitat survey methods. The method allows for identification of important habitat types, including habitats of Principal Importance under Section 42 of the NERC Act (2006) and Habitats Directive Annex I habitats.
- 3.10 The following parameters were adopted for the UKHab survey undertaken for this PEA:
- UKHab Professional edition (Butcher *et al.*, 2020, commercial End User Licence Agreement (EULA))
 - Minimum Mappable Unit (MMU):
 - 10m²/0.001ha (polygons)
 - 5m (linear)
 - Primary Habitats recorded to a minimum of Level 2 (see below) with UKHab codes provided
 - Mandatory secondary codes used
 - Base-mapping comprising a combination of aerial imagery and topographic information
- 3.11 Primary Habitats are recorded to a minimum of Level 2. Where the survey is conducted at an appropriate time of year (e.g. May to July for grassland) habitats may be recorded to Level 3, 4 or 5, only if conditions and the experience of the surveyor allow.
- 3.12 Alongside the UKHab survey, additional field survey information was collected, comprising:
- Detailed floral species lists recorded for each identified habitat/parcel
 - Evidence of, or potential for, European Protected Species (EPS) (including bats, great crested newt, dormouse and otter)
 - Evidence of, or potential for, other protected species (including birds, reptiles, water vole, badger and certain invertebrates)
 - Evidence of, or potential for, other notable species (including S42 Species of Principal Importance as well as notable, rare, protected or controlled plants and invertebrates)

¹ Field Identification Skills Certificate, Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland

- Any other survey information relevant to ecological matters
- 3.13 Results of the UKHab survey are presented on the Habitats Plan in Appendix A. Appendix D provides photographs of the habitats at the Site and Appendix E provides a list of floral species recorded in each habitat parcel. Nomenclature for higher plants within this report is consistent with the fourth edition of The New Flora of the British Isles (Stace, 2019).

Further Survey Work

- 3.14 The following detailed field survey work was carried out in August 2023, with full methods and results provided in the relevant Appendix:
- Preliminary Roost Assessment - Structures

Limitations

- 3.15 The update walkover survey was conducted at an optimum time of year and in good conditions. A small section of the Site was assessed from adjacent land due to lack of access. Limitations to bat surveys are addressed in the relevant appendix.

Evaluation and Assessment

- 3.16 Ecological features are identified, evaluated and assessed in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (2018), with detailed methods provided in Appendix F.
- 3.17 It is an established principle (CIEEM, 2018) that EcIA is an iterative process. Specialist advice on the avoidance and mitigation of the potential negative effects of the proposed development has been input from an early design stage.

4.0 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

Nature Conservation Designations

Statutory

- 4.1 There are no statutory designations covering any part of the Site.
- 4.2 Two international statutory designations were identified within 10km of the Site. These were the Kenfig SAC (c. 1.1km west) and Cefn Cribwr Grasslands SAC (c. 2.1km east). Kenfig SAC supports a range of coastal habitats, including sand dunes and cliffs. Cefn Cribwr Grasslands SAC supports mesophile grassland and broadleaved woodland habitats. Given the legislative frameworks underpinning international designations, these are considered to be important at the International level. There is no hydrological connection between the Site and either SAC and therefore no direct impact pathways. Additionally, given the proposals for a new school, an increase in daily visitors as a result of proposals is unlikely. The implications of the development of the Site on the two SACs is further explored in the accompanying Habitats Regulations Assessment Report. No significant likely effects are anticipated and international designations are scoped out of further assessment.
- 4.3 Five national statutory designations were identified within 3km of the Site. Two of these relate to locations at Kenfig SAC, Kenfig SSSI (c. 0.8km west) and Kenfig Pool and Dunes NNR (c. 1.1km west). Penycastell, Cefn Cribwr SSSI is located c. 2.1km east of the Site and comprises a series of fields located at the south of Kenfig Hill. Wuan Cimla SSSI is located c. 2.7km north-west of the Site, and is an extensive area of wet lowland heath and grassland, influenced by a series of spring lines and overlying Coal Measures strata. As SSSIs are administered and designated under national legislation, these sites are considered to be important at the National level. The five nationally designated sites are not ecologically connected to the Site and the Site is highly unsuitable to support the habitats or species that they are designated for; as such, they are not considered to be a constraint to development and scoped out of further assessment.
- 4.4 Two local statutory designations were identified within 3km of the Site. These were Kenfig Pool and Dunes LNR (c. 1.9km west), the reasons for designation are consistent with that of the Kenfig Pool and Dunes NNR and Frog Pond Wood LNR; an area of woodland with a pond and wetland habitat, located c. 2km east. These sites are important at the Local level, however, there is no hydrological connection between the designations and the Site and given the proposals for a new school, a significant increase in visitor numbers is not anticipated. Local designations are scoped out of further assessment.

4.5 The Site falls within the Western Wales River Basin District. It shares no hydrological connectivity with any statutory river, wetland, estuary or coastal designation which has been identified in advice from Natural Resources Wales as being vulnerable to increases in nutrient loading from new development.

4.6 The above statutory designations are described in Table 1 below.

Non-Statutory

4.7 Three non-statutory designations are present within 2km of the Site. North-Eastern Dunes and St James' Church Wood Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) are both located c. 0.5 km north of the Site and Cornelly Quarry SINC c. is located c. 0.8 km south. North-Eastern Dunes SINC supports semi-improved and marshy grassland, St James' Church Wood SINC comprises broadleaved semi-natural woodland and improved grassland. Cornelly Quarry SINC forms an area of limestone cliffs reclaimed by scrub with woodland.

4.8 As SINCs are designated according to criteria applied in a county context, these sites are considered to be ecologically important at the County level.

4.9 Due to the nature of the proposals being a new school facility, the development of the Site is not likely to have an effect upon the non-statutory sites there will be no new additional residential homes or dwellings that would result in higher visitor numbers. Furthermore, there is no hydrological connectivity between the Site and the designations. As such, non-statutory designations are not considered further and are scoped out of further assessment.

4.10 These non-statutory designations are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Statutory and non-statutory designations within search radii

Site Name & Designation	Distance & Direction from Survey Area	Special Interests or Qualifying Features
International Designations within 10km		
Kenfig SAC	c. 1.1km north-west	This designation comprises a mosaic of coastal habitats including estuaries, cliffs and sand dunes.
Cefn Cribwr Grasslands SAC	c. 2.1km east	This SAC supports broadleaved woodland and mesophile grassland.
National Designations within 3km		
Kenfig SSSI	c. 0.8km north-west	This SSSI is designated for presence of extensive sand dune habitats and standing waters.
Kenfig Pool and Dunes NNR	c. 1.1km west	This NNR comprises dunes and broadleaved woodland
Penycastell, Cefn Cribwr SSSI.	c. 2.1km east	This SSSI comprises an area of broadleaved woodland.

Stormy Down SSSI	c. 2.3km south-east	Designated for geological interest
Waun Cimla SSSI	c. 2.7km north-east	Area of woodland and meadow grassland habitat.
Local Designations within 3km		
Kenfig Pool and Dunes LNR	c. 1.9km east	This reserve comprises sand dunes and other protected coastal habitats such as cliffs.
Frog Pond Wood LNR	c. 2km west	Area of woodland, ponds and wetland supporting a range of species.
Non-statutory Designations within 2km		
North-eastern Dunes SINC	c. 0.5km north	Semi-improved neutral grassland and marsh/marshy grassland
St James' Church Wood SINC	c. 0.6km north-east	Broadleaved semi-natural woodland and improved grassland
Cornelly Quarry SINC	c. 0.8km south	Limestone cliffs/tiers reclaimed by scattered and dense continuous scrub with areas of broadleaved semi-natural woodland

Ancient Woodland

- 4.11 There is no ancient woodland, as shown on the ancient woodland inventory, covering any part of the Site or immediately adjacent land.
- 4.12 No trees on or adjacent to Site are listed on the Ancient Tree Inventory.

Habitats and Flora

- 4.13 Habitats recorded on-site are illustrated in Appendix A and D with detailed species lists provided in Appendix E. Relevant UKHab codes are provided within parentheses for each habitat type recorded e.g. Other Neutral Grassland (g3c). The habitat descriptions should be read in conjunction with the Photographs provided in Appendix D.

Notable Flora Records

- 4.14 South-East Wales Environmental Records Centre provided a total of 512 records of 192 notable plant species were identified within the search area. Many of the records relate to locations within designated sites. Those of potential relevance to the Site include a record of bee orchid *Ophrys apifera* from a location c.200m south-west of the Site in 2001 and records of white stonecrop *Sedum album*, montbretia *Crococsmia x crocosmiiflora* and cotoneaster species *Cotoneaster* sp. from 2009, c. 400m to the north-east of the Site. No protected or notable plant species were recorded on-site during the update survey. Species recorded were common and widespread and typical of the habitats present.
- 4.15 No invasive non-native plant species were identified during the update Site walkover.

Modified Grassland (g4); Frequently Mown (64)

- 4.16 The largest proportion of the Site is modified grassland (g4) comprising amenity areas and a large sports pitch at the east of the Site, as shown in the Habitats Plan and Photo 1 (see Appendix A and Appendix D respectively). Perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* dominates the sward with abundant white clover *Trifolium repens*. Other herbs present include dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., daisy *Bellis perennis*, dock *Rumex* sp. and common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*.
- 4.17 A thin strip of modified grassland is present at the north of the Site adjacent to the school entrance on Greenfield Terrace and is managed for amenity use.
- 4.18 Modified grassland is a common habitat, with limited ecological value due to its poor species diversity, intensive maintenance regime and widespread distribution. The grassland on-site is typical of its type and dominated by common species. As such it is deemed to be important at less than Local level and is scoped out of further assessment.

Buildings (u1b5); educational buildings (92)

- 4.19 There are four school buildings on-site. Each building varies in size and structure, as shown in Photos 2 and 3.
- **Building B1** - The main school building comprises a single storey, flat-roofed structure to the south-west, with a single-pitched corrugated roof on the northern part of the building. The building features a mix of metal, uPVC and wood external wall coverings.
 - **Building B2** - is a flat roofed modular building.
 - **Building B3** - A new building is located in the centre of the Site and is known as the Children's Centre. The building is constructed from brick with a single pitched tile roof. Glass panels form a strip along the ridge of the roof and providing high light levels internally.
 - **Building B4** - A large two-storey building is located toward the south-west of the Site and is currently in use as classrooms. The building is constructed from brick with plastic wall coverings. The building has a flat roof and lead flashing with some small gaps.
- 4.20 The buildings comprise a manmade feature of low ecological interest in their own right and as such are scoped out of further assessment. The importance of these buildings for protected species are discussed in the relevant sections below.

Developed Land, Sealed Surface (u1b); Carpark (89)

- 4.21 There are several areas of hardstanding throughout the Site, including access routes, parking, playground and sports facilities (Photo 4).

- 4.22 Areas of ornamental planting are present around the school, including raised beds which are present in two locations along the eastern boundary and south-west corner of the Site.
- 4.23 Developed land, sealed surface offers low ecological value as a habitat and is of less than Local importance, therefore it is scoped out of further assessment.

Hedgerows (h2) and Trees

- 4.24 Short stretches of hedgerow are present within the Site and often along external boundaries. Hedgerows H1, H2, H3 and H5 are located adjacent to residential gardens and are unmanaged on the Site side. Hedgerows, where present, comprise short features supporting a range of species, including bramble *Rubus fruticosus agg.* and some ornamental, non-native species including forsythia *Forsythia x intermedia* and escallonia *Escallonia sp.* Table 2 below provides a summary of hedgerow features on-site.

Table 2. Summary of hedgerows at the Site

Hedgerow Reference	Species	Description
H1	Sycamore, ivy, bramble,	Short stretch of hedgerow adjacent to residential dwelling. Measures c. 3m tall x 2m wide.
H2	Virginia creeper <i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i> , bramble	Short hedgerow adjacent to school gates, measures c. 2m tall x 2m wide.
H3	Leylandii, lilac <i>Syringa vulgaris</i> , hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> , ivy, holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> , <i>Prunus sp.</i> , bramble, willow <i>Salix sp.</i> , ornamental rose <i>Rosa sp.</i>	Hedgerow adjacent to residential dwelling, unmanaged features. Measures c. 3m-5m x 2m.
H4	Escallonia	Linear strip of monocultural tree planting adjacent to school car park. Measures c. 4m tall x 2m wide. No obvious management.
H5	Buddleia, ivy, holly, bramble, willow	Short hedgerow stretch adjacent to residential gardens, unmanaged.

- 4.25 A number of individual mature trees are located around the Site for ornamental purposes. Species include horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*, field maple *Acer campestre*, oak *Quercus robur*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, hazel *Corylus avellana* and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. A single tree, T18, a Swedish whitebeam *Sorbus intermedia* is located within modified grassland at the front entrance of the school.

- 4.26 Hedgerows in Wales are considered a Priority Habitat under Section 7 of the Environment Wales Act 2016. Only hedgerows that are Ancient and Species-Rich are LBAP habitats in Bridgend County Borough, and as the hedgerows on-site comprise mainly ornamental species, none are considered to qualify as LBAP status. As such, the sections of native are considered to be of Local level importance.

Broadleaved and Mixed Woodland (w1); Unmanaged (80), Semi-natural woodland (37)

- 4.27 A strip of broadleaved and mixed woodland (w1) is located at the south-eastern corner of the Site, adjacent to the playing field (Photo 5). The woodland appears to be unmanaged but there are clear paths present within the understorey, including an area used as an outdoor educational feature. Species of tree within the woodland include field maple, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, sycamore, alder *Alnus glutinosa*, willow *Salix sp.*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, ivy *Hedera helix* and oak.
- 4.28 Although Woodland is a S42 Habitat of Principal Importance in Wales, the woodland on-site is not a habitat listed within the LBAP for Bridgend County Borough as it does not qualify as Wood Pasture & Parkland, Wet Woodland, Upland Mixed Ash Woodland or Beech & Yew Woodland. However, as this habitat comprises a S42 Habitat, the on-site parcel of woodland is considered to be of Local level importance.

Fauna

Bats

- 4.29 A total of 58 bat records were identified within the search area, dating from 1982 to 2021. Species returned in the data search include common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, *Myotis sp.* and Nathusius pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*. The nearest of these records is located c. 0.65km north-west and is for a common pipistrelle dating from 2021. A number of records for small bat roosts have been returned within the search but these are located out of North Cornelly, c. 1km north-east.

Preliminary Roost Assessment / Ground Level Tree Assessment

- 4.30 A Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ground Level Tree Assessment was undertaken at buildings and mature trees within the Site on 01 August 2023 by TACP.
- 4.31 Four buildings and a cluster of small trees were surveyed during the survey. Buildings B3 and B4 were found to have 'low' potential, with Building B1 having 'low to negligible' potential. For the purpose of this report Building B1 has been considered to have 'low' potential.

- 4.32 Of the trees surveyed, all were found to have 'negligible' bat roosting potential. The Preliminary Roost Assessment Report is being finalised by TACP and will be provided once complete.

Badger

- 4.33 A total of 25 records of badger *Meles meles* were returned in the search area, dating from 1974 to 2023. The nearest record is of a road casualty located c. 0.5km south-east of the Site along the M4 Motorway.
- 4.34 The woodland block has potential to support badger but given the location of the school within a built-up area, opportunities for this species are limited. No setts or other evidence of badger was recorded on-site during the field survey.
- 4.35 Badgers are a common and widespread species, with their legal protection intended to prevent cruelty rather than as a reflection of any conservation concern. Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. No evidence of badgers was found on-site, and there is very limited suitable habitat to support the species, and the Site is isolated from more suitable areas for badger. As such, the badgers are scoped out from further assessment.

Dormouse

- 4.36 Three records of dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* were identified within the search area, dating from 2004 to 2018. The three records are located within woodland c. 1.6km north-east of the Site.
- 4.37 Habitats on-site offer very limited opportunities for dormouse. Hedgerow stretches are short and do not offer connectivity to areas of off-site high quality habitat such as woodland. Similarly, as the woodland block on-site is isolated and surrounded by residential development it does not provide connectivity to extensive off-site habitat. Consequently, dormice are scoped out of further assessment.

Riparian Mammals

- 4.38 A single historic record of water vole *Arvicola amphibius* was identified within the search area. Nineteen records of otter *Lutra lutra* were identified, dating from 2004 to 2022, all located over 500m from Site.
- 4.39 These species rely on the presence of nearby aquatic habitat for survival. No suitable habitat is present on or near to the Site for water vole or otter, therefore these species are considered likely absent and as such, scoped out of further assessment.

Other Mammals

Brown hare

- 4.40 Eighteen records of brown hare *Lepus europaeus* were identified within the search area. Records date between 2000 and 2019. The nearest record to the Site is from 2016 within farmland c. 1.1 km to the east.
- 4.41 Brown hare are often found on extensive arable or pastoral land and use this for foraging and dispersal. Habitats on-site are unsuitable for brown hare and therefore this species is not considered further.

Harvest mouse

- 4.42 Two records of harvest mouse *Micromys minutus* were identified within the search area, both c. 1.9km south from the Site.
- 4.43 This species utilises areas of tall reed or grassland habitat, both of which are absent from the Site and consequently the species is not considered further.

Hedgehog

- 4.44 A total of 42 records of hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* were identified within the search area, dating from 2004 to 2022. The closest record is from c. 200m south of the Site within a residential garden.
- 4.45 The woodland habitat and grassland on-site may provide suitable foraging and dispersing habitat for this species, which may also utilise adjacent residential gardens. The presence of hedgehog commuting through the Site is expected, particularly along hedgerow bases and woodland. Hedgehogs are designated as a Species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act 2006, however a notable population is not anticipated and this species is scoped out of further assessment.

Birds

- 4.46 A total of 1756 records of 189 bird species were identified within the search area, dating from 1925 to 2023. The majority of records relate to specialist species such as waterbirds and waders, located within designated sites such as Kenfig SAC. No records related directly to locations within or adjacent to the Site.
- 4.47 Records with relevance to the Site include herring gull *Larus argentatus* subsp. *Argentatus*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris* and swift *Apus apus*. The closest record is of swifts located c. 0.2km north-east within a residential garden. Starling and swift are red listed on the Bird of Conservation Concern (BOCC) 5.
- 4.48 Habitats on-site are common and widespread in nature and therefore will be expected to support a range of generalist species. Woodland, trees and scrub have the potential to support nesting birds, with the grassland providing foraging opportunities. Given the likely presence of

generalist bird species, any populations are considered to be important at less than Local level and as such as scoped out of further assessment.

Reptiles

- 4.49 A total of 72 records of four reptile species were identified within the search area, including slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix natrix* (syn. *N. helvetica*), adder *Vipera berus* and common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*. The nearest records, from 2022, are of a slow worm at a location c. 0.4km north within a recreation ground.
- 4.50 Habitats on-site are managed and sward height of grassland is kept short. The Site is isolated within the centre of North Cornelly with poor connection to areas of suitable habitat. On balance, habitats on-site are considered unlikely to support reptiles and as such, reptiles are scoped out for further assessment.

Amphibians

- 4.51 A total of 71 records of five amphibian species were identified within the search area, including common frog *Rana temporaria*, common toad *Bufo bufo*, great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*, smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris* and palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus*. The closest record is of a common toad c. 0.65km north of the Site. Most records are related to Kenfig SAC.

Great crested newt

- 4.52 The SEWBRC provided 25 records of great crested newt. The closest record dates from 1980 at a site c. 0.9 km south of the Site, on the opposite side of the M4 Motorway. All other great crested newt records are located over 1.3 km from the Site.
- 4.53 Despite spending much of their annual lifecycle within the terrestrial environment, great crested newts are dependent upon the presence of suitable aquatic breeding habitat in order for a population to persist. No potential breeding ponds were identified on-site during the site survey, with none identified within a dispersible range of the Site based on OS mapping.
- 4.54 Habitats on-site are isolated and well managed. Hardstanding offers no suitability for great crested newts and grassland maintained with a short sward, as it is on-site, is unsuitable for this species, although the hedgerow bases and woodland could offer limited potential in the unlikely event the species were present within the Site.
- 4.55 On balance of the absence of ponds on-site and within the wider area, and the absence of biological records, this species is considered to be likely absent and is scoped out of further assessment.

Invertebrates

- 4.56 A total of 963 records of 282 invertebrate species were identified within the search area. Most records returned in the data search are related to surveys undertaken at designated sites such as Kenfig SAC.
- 4.57 The Site is situated within an Important Invertebrate Area (IIA), South Wales Coast IIA. No further information is given on this IIA at present, however it likely covers the specialist coastal habitats.
- 4.58 Although the Site is located within an IIA, the current habitats on-site are common and widespread and as such are likely to support a range of generalist invertebrates. The Site is not anticipated to support a notable assemblage of invertebrates and therefore this group of species are not considered to pose a constraint to development and are scoped out of further assessment.

Future Baseline

- 4.59 The Site is presently under amenity management, with regular cutting of grassland and boundary vegetation to maintain safe outdoor areas for school children. These management interventions maintain the on-site conditions in a relatively stable state. There is no known intention to cease this management, other than to accommodate the proposed development should planning permission be granted. As such, the future baseline status of important ecological features is not anticipated to vary significantly from that at present.

Summary of Ecological Features

- 4.60 Table 4 below summarises all important ecological features identified within the respective zones of influence, together with the geographic context of their importance:

Table 4. Summary of important ecological features and their geographic context

Ecological Feature	Geographic Context of Importance and/or Protection Status
International Designations	International
National Designations	National
Local Designations	County
Hedgerows and Trees	Local
Woodland	Local
Bats	Local (TBC)
Nesting Birds	W&CA 1981 (as amended)

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

The Proposed Development

- 5.1 Planning permission is sought for redevelopment of the school at the Site. The following impact assessment is based on the Landscape Illustrative Masterplan prepared by Ares Landscape Architects (Drawing Number: BR0301-ALA-00-ZZ-DR-L-0001) on behalf of WEPco.
- 5.2 The construction phase of the proposed development will comprise the following:
- Demolition of Buildings B1, B2 and B4 (B3 will be retained)
 - Removal of Hedgerow H4 (ornamental hedgerow)
 - Removal of one tree (T18) from the southern entrance to the school
 - Construction of a single new school building
 - Delivery of associated car parking, playgrounds and soft landscaping to include new tree planting on-site and c. 200m of new hedgerow
- 5.3 The operational phase of the proposed development will solely comprise the use of new school buildings and the grounds for educational pursuits.
- 5.4 It is expected that the levels of human activity, including use of vehicles, anthropogenic noise and artificial lighting across the Site will be similar to the Site pre-development due to the nature of the proposals.

Assumptions

- 5.5 The following assumptions have been made during the assessment of potential effects of the proposed development on important ecological features. Although 'assumed' and therefore taken as part of the pre-mitigation scenario, these measures are referenced in the proceeding sections where integral to the mitigation strategy.
- 5.6 In accordance with BS42020:2013, it is assumed that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or similar will be secured by planning condition. In addition to the construction phase impact avoidance and mitigation measures identified in the following sections, the document will detail standard environmental control measures, including though not limited to the following:
- Implementation of strict protection measures for the root protection areas of retained trees and hedgerows, in accordance with BS5837:2012
 - Standard best practice construction phase pollution prevention and control measures
 - Sensitive working methods and timing to avoid direct impacts to nesting birds (generally vegetation removal outside nesting season of March through August)

- Sensitive working methods to avoid harming hedgehogs and badgers (although scoped out of assessment, badgers are protected under the Badger Act 1992 making it an offence to injure or kill a badger) during the construction phase
 - All working measures needed to comply with the terms of EPS derogation licencing specific to the development phase or works activity (if required)
 - Updated ecological surveys, where necessary, to identify shifts in the baseline ecological condition in order that revised impact avoidance and mitigation measures can be adopted as required
- 5.7 In accordance with BS42020:2013, it is assumed that a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) (or similar) will be prepared. This document will set out management for the establishment and long-term management of newly created and retained habitats to maximise benefits for biodiversity.

Potential Impacts and Ecological Effects

Hedgerows, Woodland and Trees

- 5.8 A short section (c. 40m) of ornamental hedgerow H4 will be lost as part of the proposals, along with a single tree, T18, a Swedish whitebeam that was noted in the Arboricultural Survey Report (Barton Hyett Associates, 2023; report ref: BHA_5685_TS) to show visible root damage. Both the ornamental hedgerow and damaged non-native tree hold low ecological value.
- 5.9 Aside from Hedgerow H4, all other hedgerows will be retained based on the Landscape Illustrative Masterplan. Due to the footprint of the new buildings being in close proximity to the existing hedgerows H1, H2 and H5, there is the potential for damage to the hedgerows such as damage to the roots, during the construction phase.
- 5.10 Based on the Landscape Illustrative Masterplan, the woodland at the south-east corner of the Site will be retained. The footprint of the proposed new buildings and soft landscaping is located far enough (c. 40m minimum) from the woodland that there will be no detrimental impacts. Damage to retained hedgerows, trees and woodland during the construction phase would potentially damage priority habitats, with impacts likely to be negative at the Local level.

Bats

- 5.11 As discussed above, boundary Hedgerows H1, H2 and H5 along the west of the Site may potentially be impacted by the proposals. Although retained, without appropriate mitigation, there is potential for them to be damaged during the construction phase which in turn would be detrimental for bats that may forage and disperse along them.

- 5.12 Boundary hedgerows along the eastern boundary, and woodland will be retained and unaffected by the development, thus maintaining an intact dispersal corridor for local bat populations.
- 5.13 Boundary vegetation could be affected by artificial lighting, and in turn dispersing/foraging bats. However, it is unlikely that construction works would occur during nighttime hours. The operational phase of the school could also result in the boundary vegetation being negatively affected by artificial lighting without appropriate design to avoid important ecological features.
- 5.14 Although the roost assessment report has not been finalised, the initial survey results show the categorisation of the buildings to have 'low' roost potential and as such they are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status. Any roosts, if present, are likely to comprise small roosts of common species, important at no more than Local level. Once survey work is complete this section of the assessment will be updated if necessary.
- 5.15 Providing that dark corridors remain along the hedgerow boundaries, the level of impact that the development has on dispersing/ foraging bats is minimal, and is likely to be significant at the less than Local level.

Mitigation by Design

- 5.16 It is an established principle (CIEEM, 2018) that, wherever possible, potential negative effects should be avoided through 'Mitigation by Design', as this gives greater certainty over deliverability, demonstrates a well-designed scheme and ensures the correct application of the 'Mitigation Hierarchy' (as advocated by BS42020:2013, Defra 2019 and CIEEM, CIRIA & IEMA 2016).

Hedgerows, Woodland and Trees

- 5.17 The proposed development will result in an increase in the number of hedgerows and trees which once established, will result in a net gain in mature vegetation and compensate for the proposed hedgerow loss (Hedgerow H4). None of the hedgerow along the eastern site boundary, woodland or other trees on-site will be removed as part of the proposals.
- 5.18 Existing vegetation and boundary features will be enhanced with new tree planting and soft landscaping to strengthen boundaries at the west of the Site. In addition, new trees will be planted across the Site to compliment other measures within areas of greenspace. New planting will include a significant proportion of native species or cultivars of known wildlife benefit and the condition of new and existing vegetation is to be favourably managed to promote species diversity and strengthen wildlife corridors.

Bats

- 5.19 As shown on the Landscape Illustrative Masterplan, new green infrastructure will be delivered across the Site, including new hedgerow and tree planting and nectar-rich grassland. This new planting along with the retention of on-site woodland and hedgerows (H1, H2, H3 and H5) will enhance the Site for commuting and dispersing bats by extending current foraging and dispersal habitats. Appropriate management of new and retained habitat for the benefits of wildlife will be set out in a LEMP (or similar).

Additional Mitigation

Hedgerows, Woodland and Trees

- 5.20 In order to prevent accidental damage of retained vegetation during construction, works will be undertaken in-line with BS5837:2012 "Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – recommendations".
- 5.21 The Root Protection Areas of retained mature trees and vegetation will be respected during subsequent construction works.
- 5.22 Mitigation works including infill and replacement planting in boundary hedgerows with native species and the planting of new native species trees on-site will more than compensate for the loss of ornamental hedgerow (H4) and ornamental tree (T18). The native species planting will increase diversity of habitats on-site which will benefit a range of fauna, including bats, birds, invertebrates and other wildlife.
- 5.23 The proposed development will increase the number of hedgerows, trees and thicket on-site. The scheme is proposing new, native-species hedgerow planting along the western boundary and planting of new sections of ornamental hedgerows within the new carpark to the north. Formal landscaping will be delivered at the south of the Site near the new school entrance. New hedgerows, particularly boundary hedgerows will increase the connectivity of the Site across the wider landscape, as well as providing linear ecological features through the Site itself. New native trees will be planted to compliment other habitat creation measures within areas of open space.

Bats

- 5.24 A sensitive lighting strategy will be designed such that light spill from streetlamps and on-site lighting will be minimised and directed away from retained or ecologically valuable habitats at the east of the Site (woodland and hedgerows). This will help to maintain dark corridors for bats and other nocturnal wildlife around the periphery of the Site.
- 5.25 Following completion of the Preliminary Roost Assessment report, this section of the report will be updated as necessary.

Residual Effects

5.26 Table 5 below summarises the assessment of potential impacts on each important ecological feature, proposed mitigation and the assessed residual effects.

Table 5. Summary of effects

Important Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts and Effects	Avoidance & Mitigation Measures	Mechanism by which Measures are Secured	Residual Effects
Hedgerows and trees	Removal of hedgerow sections for vehicular and pedestrian access	Strengthening of boundary vegetation Management of Public Open Space (POS) for biodiversity gain	LEMP (or similar) secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Bats	Potential killing or injury during construction works (TBC) Minor loss of dispersal habitat Increase in artificial lighting	EPS licence, precautionary working methods (TBC) Delivery of new vegetated habitats Sensitive lighting strategy	LEMP, CEMP (or similar) and lighting strategy secured through Planning Condition,	TBC
Badger	Potential killing or injury during construction works	Precautionary working methods	CEMP (or similar) secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Birds	Potential damage or destruction of nests and eggs	Sensitive timing of works / nest checks by ecologist	CEMP (or similar) secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Hedgehog	Potential killing or injuring during construction works	Precautionary working methods	CEMP (or similar) secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect

5.27 Subject to the implementation of the above mitigation, no significant residual effects on any important ecological features are anticipated to result from the construction or operation of the proposed development.

Cumulative Effects

- 5.28 Due to the scale and nature of the proposed development, and lack of significant effects to ecological features, a detailed assessment of potential cumulative effects has not been undertaken.

Compensation

- 5.29 No significant residual negative effects on important ecological features are anticipated to result from the proposed development, following the inclusion of impact avoidance and mitigation measures described above. As such, no compensatory measures are proposed.
- 5.30 A Biodiversity Metric Assessment will be undertaken to assess the Site for any habitat losses and gains, and the need for any 'on-site habitat biodiversity offsetting measures' that might be necessary in order to deliver a biodiversity net gain (typically taken to mean 10% increase from baseline' DEFRA December 2017 consultation). The results of the Biodiversity Metric Assessment will comply with the emerging Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 legislation for biodiversity gains.
- 5.31 It is considered that by focussing new development on areas of existing hardstanding or buildings, and delivering new native planting and ecologically valuable habitats where possible, the Site will be able to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

Enhancement

- 5.32 The Landscape Illustrative Masterplan includes landscape planting enhancements which will make positive contributions to on-site biodiversity.
- 5.33 New habitat opportunities will provide opportunities for species confirmed to be present on-site at baseline, such as nesting birds, and other species that may be present in the area but do not currently utilise on-site habitats. In addition, a range of additional ecological enhancement measures should be delivered as part of the proposals, as identified below. Further details will be set out in a LEMP (or similar) at the detailed design stage, however as an indicative guide:
- Inclusion of plant species of known wildlife value within the landscaping scheme, including night-scented varieties to benefit bats.
 - Provision of new bat roosting opportunities: At least four bat boxes to be erected on mature trees or new school building. These will be a purpose-built, durable and long-lasting variety such as available from Schwegler or similar. Where possible, these should be incorporated into the fabric of the new school building.

- Provision of new bird nesting opportunities: At least four bird nesting boxes to be provided on the building or retained mature trees to benefit generalist bird species.
- Creation of log piles: Timber generated from tree clearance works at the Site used to make at least two log piles for wildlife benefit. These will be sited within existing woodland where they will be least disturbed. New material can be added as required following any future management works.
- Provision of hedgehog houses: A hedgehog house to be provided within a suitable area in the woodland on-site to provide an enhancement to hedgehogs in the local area.

Monitoring

- 5.34 No post-development monitoring of important ecological features is proposed. However, it is anticipated that there will be ongoing monitoring of newly established and enhanced habitats as part of Public Open Space.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 In the absence of any mitigation measures, the proposed development would have the potential to result in negative effects significant at up to the Local level. However, with the implementation of some straightforward mitigation and precautionary measures as proposed here, the development is not anticipated to result in any significant residual negative effects on important ecological features.
- 6.2 The Landscape Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates the potential to deliver net benefits for wildlife in the form of additional habitats, with the opportunity to provide additional biodiversity enhancement measures alongside the new school.
- 6.3 The measures set out herein can be secured through appropriate conditions attached to any planning consent, and the development may therefore be delivered without harm to nature conservation interests. Specifically, it is anticipated that planning conditions would be used to secure:
- Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or similar: In addition to wider environmental controls and best practice construction management, the document will set out construction-phase impact avoidance measures with respect to nesting birds, badger and hedgehogs.
 - Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) or similar: This document will detail the establishment and long-term management of retained and newly created habitats to maximise benefits for wildlife. It will include a graphical Ecological Enhancements Plan, setting out the number, type and position of enhancement features.
 - Lighting Strategy: A sensitive lighting strategy to accompany the detailed layout, ensuring that dark corridors are maintained, and minimising light spill to retained and newly created habitats.
- 6.4 Based on the successful implementation of avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures set out herein, the scheme is considered to accord with all relevant nature conservation legislation, as well as with the provisions of the Bridgend Local Development Plan.

7.0 REFERENCES

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Appendix A

Habitats Plan



- Site boundary
- Other neutral grassland (g3c)
- Modified grassland (g4)
- Woodland (w)
- Dense scrub (h3)
- Allotments (616)
- Ground level planters (845)
- Introduced shrub (847)
- Developed land. sealed surface (u1b)
- Buildings (u1b5)
- Hedgerows (h2a)
- Built linear feature (u1e)
- Fence
- Inaccessible- surveyed from adjacent land
- Individual trees
- ⊙ Target note
TN1 - Clearings for forest school



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Project	Corneli Primary School, Bridgend	Date	September 2023	Drawing No.	CSA/4833/101
Drawing Title	Habitats Plan	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	A
Client	WEPCo	Drawn	RC	Checked	AP

Appendix B

Legislation and Planning Policy

The **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017** transposes Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, and aspects of Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds, into UK domestic law. The Regulations make prescriptions for the designation and protection of Sites of Community Importance ('European sites', e.g. Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) and European Protected Species (EPS).

The **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** (as amended, principally by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) forms the basis for protection of statutory designated sites of national importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest; SSSIs) and native species that are rare and vulnerable in a national context. Additionally, badgers are protected under the **Protection of Badgers Act 1992**.

The **Environment (Wales) Act 2016** sets out the required for the 'sustainable management of natural resources' together with new ways of working to achieve this. Section 6 under Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (the S6 duty) for public authorities in the exercise of functions in relation to Wales. The S6 duty requires that public authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and promote the resilience of ecosystems. Section 7 of Part 1 replaces the duty in Section 42 of the NERC Act 2006, to publish and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitat in Wales of key significance, to sustain and improve biodiversity.

The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (2011-2020) lists the UK's most threatened species and habitats and sets out targets and objectives for their management and recovery. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) process is delivered nationally, regionally and locally and should be used as a guide for decision-makers to have regards for the targets set by the framework and the goals they aim to achieve. The UK BAP has now been replaced by the UK Post-210 Biodiversity Framework, however, it contains useful information on how to characterise important species assemblages and habitats which is still relevant.

The **Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) 2020** for Wales was originally published in December 2015 at the Nature Recovery Plan. It is the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Wales under Aichi target 17 of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD) strategic Plan for Biodiversity. It sets out the commitment to reversing the loss of biodiversity in Wales and objectives for action.

The **Planning Policy Wales 11 (Welsh Government, 2021)** sets out the government planning policies for Wales and how they should be applied. With regards to ecology and biodiversity, Chapter 6: Distinctive

and Natural Places, states that development plan strategies, policies and development proposals should be formulated to look at the long term protection and enhancement of special characteristics and intrinsic qualities of places, be these of natural, historic and built environments, ensuring their longevity in the face of change. This means both protecting and enhancing landscapes, habitats, biodiversity, geodiversity and the historic environment in their own right, as well as other components of the natural world, such as water resources or air quality. Biodiversity loss should be reversed, pollution reduced, environmental risks addressed and overall resilience of ecosystems improved.

The PPW recognises the planning system has a key role to play in helping to reverse the decline in biodiversity and increase the resilience of ecosystems. Paragraph 6.4.3 sets out the principles that local planning authorities should apply when determining planning applications:

- Support the conservation of biodiversity, in particular the conservation of wildlife and habitats; and must provide a net gain in biodiversity
- Ensure action in Wales contributes to meeting international responsibilities and obligations for biodiversity and habitats;
- Ensure statutorily and non-statutorily designated sites are properly protected and managed;
- Safeguard protected and priority species and existing biodiversity assets from impacts which directly affect their nature conservation interests and compromise the resilience of ecological networks and the components which underpin them, such as water and soil, including peat; and
- Secure enhancement of and improvements to ecosystem resilience, by ensuring any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimised, mitigated and as a last resort compensated for, and by improving diversity, condition, extent and connectivity of ecological networks.

Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (Welsh Assembly Government, 2009), which is referred to by the PPW, provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation and their effects within the planning system and is a material planning consideration.

Local planning policies of relevance to ecology, biodiversity and/or nature conservation within the Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006-2021 have been set out in Table B.1 below. The Replacement Local Development Plan is currently going through consultation.

1.1. Local planning policies of relevance to ecology, biodiversity and/or nature conservation have been set out in Table 1 below.

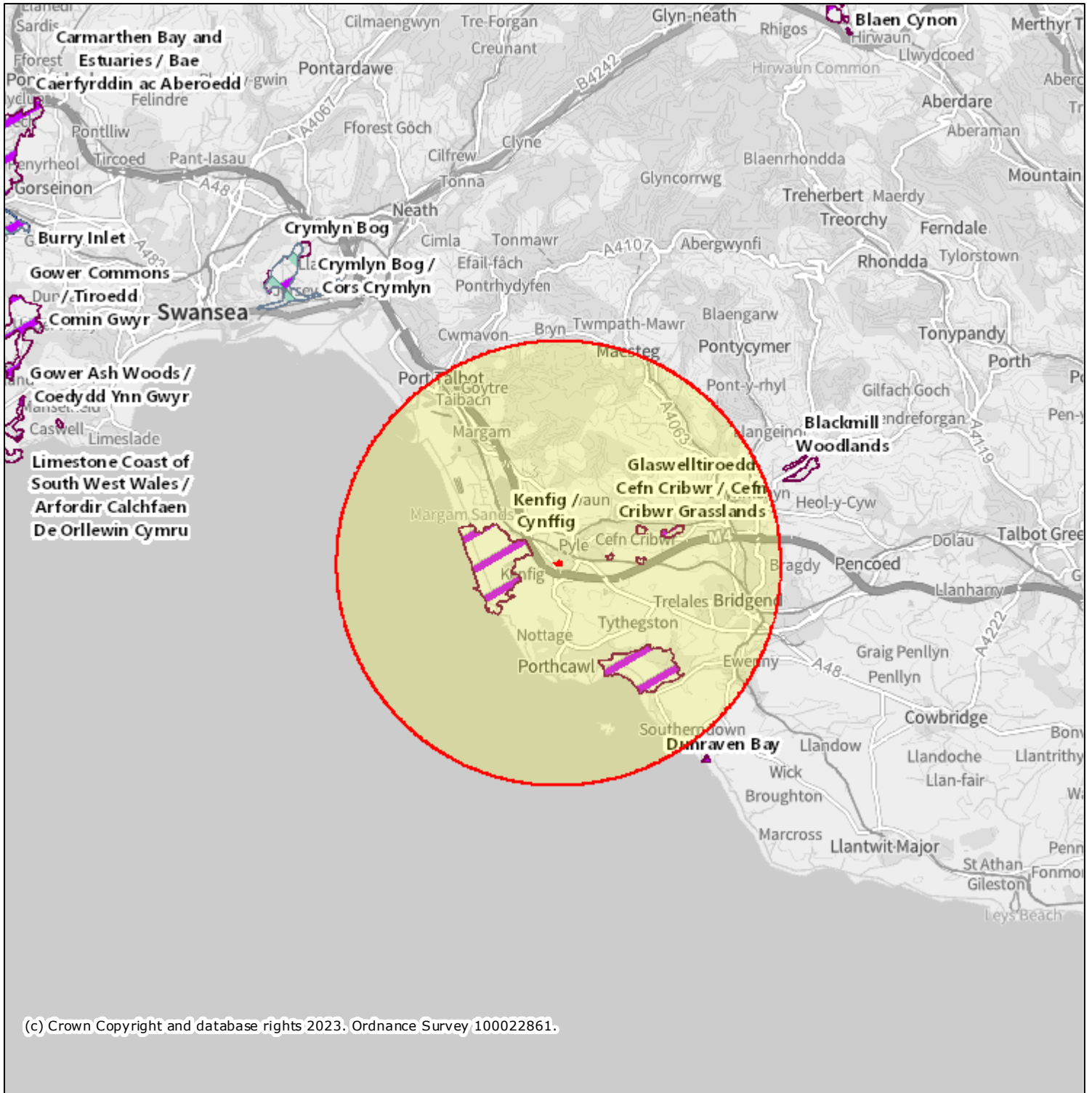
Table 1. Summary of regional and local planning policy relating to ecology

Policy	Summary
Bridgend Local Development Plan 2006-2021 (adopted 2013)	
Policy ENV4: Local/Regional Conservation Sites	<p>Development within or adjacent to a:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Local Nature Reserve 2. Site of Importance for Nature Conservation or; 3. Regionally Important Geodiversity Site; <p>should be compatible with the nature conservation of scientific interest of the area, whilst promoting their educational role. Developments which would have an adverse impact on these sites will not be permitted unless the benefits associated with the development can be demonstrated to outweigh the harm and/or the harm can be reduced or removed by appropriate mitigation and/or compensation measures.</p>
Policy ENV5: Green Infrastructure	<p>Green infrastructure will be provided through the protection and enhancement of existing natural assets and the creation of new multi-functional areas of green space. Green infrastructure corridors will connect locations of natural heritage, green space, biodiversity or other environmental interest, They will be safeguarded through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not permitting development that compromises their integrity and therefore that of overall green infrastructure framework; 2. Using developer contributions to facilitate improvements to their quality and robustness; 3. Investing in appropriate management, enhancement and restoration, and the creation of new resources.
Policy ENV6: Nature Conservation	<p>Proposals for development or redevelopment will be required to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the first instance, retain, conserve, restore and enhance wherever possible existing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland; • Trees; • Hedgerows; • Wetlands; • Watercourses; • Ponds; • Green Lanes/Wildlife Corridors; • Geological Features; • Other Natural Features or Habitats. 2. Where this is demonstrated not to be possible, suitable mitigation or compensatory measures will be required to secure biodiversity including future management programmes.




Policy	Summary
	3. Avoid or overcome harm to nature conservation assets and/or species of wildlife which may either be resident, in-situ or which can be demonstrated within the site on a migratory basis.

Appendix C

Desk Study Information



Legend

-  Ramsar Sites (Wales)
-  Special Areas of Conservation (Wales)
-  Special Protection Areas (Wales)



Projection = OSGB36
 xmin = 230500
 ymin = 154900
 xmax = 332100
 ymax = 209600

Map produced by MAGiC on 8 September, 2023.
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Site Check Report Report generated on Fri Sep 08 2023

You selected the location: Centroid Grid Ref: SS81928166

The following features have been found in your search area:

National Nature Reserves (Wales)

NNR Code

00033

Name

MERTHYR MAWR WARREN

Cartesian Area (Ha)

324.233345

NNR Code

00046

Name

KENFIG POOL AND DUNES

Cartesian Area (Ha)

513.721057

Special Areas of Conservation (Wales)

Name

Kenfig / Cynffig

Reference

UK0012566

Marine

p

Date Notified

13/12/2004

Cartesian Area (Ha)

1190.898167

Name

Glaswelltiroedd Cefn Cribwr / Cefn Cribwr Grasslands

Reference

UK0030113

Marine

n

Date Notified

13/12/2004

Cartesian Area (Ha)

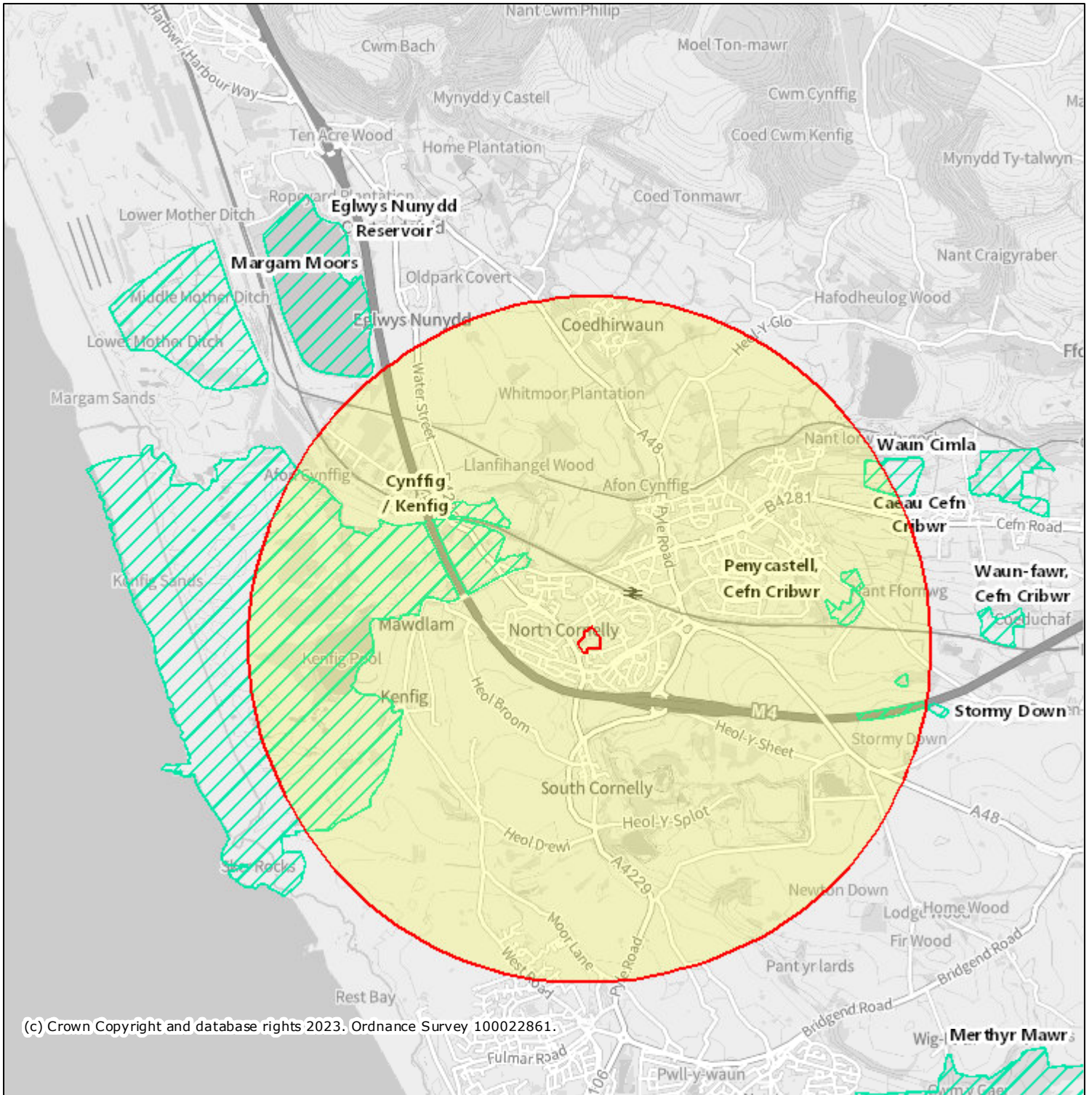
58.19722

Ramsar Sites (Wales)


No Features found

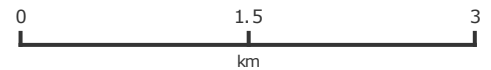
Special Protection Areas (Wales)

No Features found



Legend

 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Wales)



Projection = OSGB36

xmin = 271400

ymin = 177000

xmax = 291700

ymax = 187900

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Site Check Report Report generated on Fri Sep 08 2023
 You selected the location: Centroid Grid Ref: SS81928166
 The following features have been found in your search area:

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Wales)

Name Cynffig / Kenfig
Eastings 279100.35431
Northings 181700.645382
First Notified 01/01/1953
Last Notified 28/03/2003
Confirmation Date 12/12/2003
Cartesian Area (Ha) 776.689996

Name Cynffig / Kenfig
Eastings 279100.35431
Northings 181700.645382
First Notified 01/01/1953
Last Notified 28/03/2003
Confirmation Date 12/12/2003
Cartesian Area (Ha) 776.689996

Name Cynffig / Kenfig
Eastings 279100.35431
Northings 181700.645382
First Notified 01/01/1953
Last Notified 28/03/2003
Confirmation Date 12/12/2003
Cartesian Area (Ha) 776.689996

Name Stormy Down
Eastings 284775.026008
Northings 181043.227579
First Notified 27/02/1986
Last Notified Null
Confirmation Date Null
Cartesian Area (Ha) 6.400079

Name Stormy Down
Eastings 284775.026008
Northings 181043.227579
First Notified 27/02/1986
Last Notified Null
Confirmation Date Null
Cartesian Area (Ha) 6.400079

Name Penycastell, Cefn Cribwr
Eastings 284288.177821
Northings 182016.400381
First Notified 04/12/2000
Last Notified Null
Confirmation Date 29/08/2001
Cartesian Area (Ha) 7.815113

Name Penycastell, Cefn Cribwr
Eastings 284288.177821
Northings 182016.400381
First Notified 04/12/2000
Last Notified Null
Confirmation Date 29/08/2001
Cartesian Area (Ha) 7.815113

Name Waun Cimla
Eastings 284699.308083
Northings 183144.945082
First Notified 24/03/1992
Last Notified Null
Confirmation Date 09/12/1992
Cartesian Area (Ha) 15.388443

Appendix D

Photographs



Photograph 1. Modified grassland and sports pitch.



Photograph 2. Building B1 that is proposed for demolition.



Photograph 3. Building B4 that is proposed for demolition.



Photograph 4. Areas of hardstanding around school buildings.



Photograph 5. Woodland within the south-east corner of the Site.



Photograph 6. Hedgerow H4 that is proposed to be lost during development.

Appendix E

Habitats and Flora Species List

Table 1. Habitat Polygons

Site Name		4833 - Corneli Primary School			
Survey Date and Surveyor(s)		08/08/2023 RT			
Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat Parcel Number/Habitat Type			
		Modified Grassland	Other Neutral Grassland	Woodland	Intro shrubs and flower beds
Herb Species					
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	x			
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley		x		
<i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i>	Lady's Bonnet				x
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Daisy	x			
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rosebay willowherb		x	x	
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle		x		
<i>Epilobium sp.</i>	Willowherb		x		
<i>Fragaria sp.</i>	Strawberry				x
<i>Fuchsia sp.</i>	Fuchsia				x
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved crane's-bill	x			
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy	x			
<i>Malva sp.</i>	Mallow				x
<i>Mentha sp.</i>	Mint				x
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain	x			
<i>Senecio sp.</i>	Ragwort	x			
<i>Taraxacum agg.</i>	Dandelion	x			
Grasses					
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False oat-grass				x
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial rye-grass	x			
<i>Poa sp.</i>	Meadow-grass	x	x		
Woody Species					
Broadleaved					
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple			x	
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore			x	
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Common alder			x	
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	Beech			x	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash			x	
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy			x	
<i>Prunus avium</i>	Cherry			x	
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate oak			x	
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble			x	
<i>Ulmus sp.</i>	Elm			x	

Table 2. Linear Habitats

Site Name		4833 - Corneli Primary School				
Survey Date and Surveyor(s)		08/08/2023 RT				
Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat Parcel Number/Habitat Type				
		H1	H2	H3	H4	H5
Woody Species						
<i>Broadleaved</i>						
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore	x				
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn			x		
<i>Escollonia sp.</i>	Redclaws				x	
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy	x		x		x
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly			x		x
<i>Parthenocissus quinquefolia</i>	Virginia creeper		x			
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	Cherry laurel					x
<i>Prunus sp.</i>	Prunus (domesticated)			x		
<i>Rosa sp.</i>	Rose			x		
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat willow			x		

Appendix F

Evaluation & Assessment Methods

- 1.1. Ecological features are evaluated and assessed in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 2018 Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA). For clarity, the evaluation and assessment process adopted within this EclA is set out below.

Establishing Potentially Important Ecological Features

- 1.2. Ecological features are assessed where they are considered to be important, and where they may be impacted by a proposed development. A feature may be considered important for a variety of reasons, such as quality, extent, rarity and/or statutory protection. Table 1 below sets out a non-exhaustive list of ecological features that are typically considered, along with key examples:

Table 1. Potentially important ecological features (adapted from CIEEM 2018)

Potentially Important Ecological Features	Typical examples
Statutory designated sites under international conventions or European Legislation	Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA)
Statutory designated sites under national legislation	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR, Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
Non-statutory, locally designated wildlife sites	Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), County Wildlife Sites (CWSs), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)
National biodiversity lists	Habitats or Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity (Section 41, NERC Act 2006), Ancient Woodland Inventory
Local biodiversity lists	Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species or habitats
Red Listed / Rare Species	Species of conservation concern, Red Data Book (RDB) species, Birds of Conservation Concern, nationally rare and nationally scarce species
Legally Protected Species	E.g. species listed under Sch.5 of the W&C Act 1981, or Sch.2 of the Hag. Regs. 2017
Legally Controlled Species	E.g. species listed under Sch.9 of the W&C Act 1981

- 1.3. It should also be noted that the social, community, economic or multi-functional importance attributed to ecological features are not assessed as they fall outwith the scope of this assessment.

Establishing Likely Zone of Influence

- 1.4. The 'zone of influence' for a project is the area over which ecological features may be subject to significant effects as a result of the project and associated activities. The project's zone of influence varies across different ecological features, which have different vulnerabilities and

sensitivities. For the purposes of this assessment, the following zones were considered:

- International statutory nature conservation designations up to 10km from the Site
 - National and local statutory nature conservation designations up to 3km from the Site
 - Non-statutory locally designated wildlife sites up to 1km from the Site
- 1.5. These arbitrary distances are considered sufficient for identifying the nature conservation designations which could be subject to significant effects. However, it is acknowledged that in certain circumstances effects beyond these distances are possible and should be considered as far as is reasonably practicable to do so.
- 1.6. For other ecological features, such as habitats and species, the appropriate zone of influence is described and justified as appropriate within the report, depending on their respective sensitivity to an environmental change.
- 1.7. The results of professionally accredited or published scientific studies have been used and referenced, where available, to establish the spatial and temporal limits of the biophysical changes likely to be caused by specific activities, and to justify decisions about the zone of influence.

Geographic Context and Significance Criteria

- 1.8. The importance of ecological features, as well as the significance of any likely impacts and their effects, are considered here within a defined geographic context:
- International
 - National
 - Regional
 - County
 - Local
- 1.9. The size, conservation status and the quality of features are all relevant in determining their importance and assigning this to the geographic scale. Where the importance of a feature is considered to fall below the Local scale, they are scoped out of detailed assessment.
- 1.10. Impacts and their effects are taken to be significant where they support or undermine biodiversity conservation objectives, with the scale of significance defined according to the above geographic context. Where an impact or effect is unlikely to be perceptible at a Local scale, this is taken to be not significant.

Characterising Ecological Impacts and their Effects

1.11. Where likely significant ecological impacts and effects are identified in connection with the proposed project, these are considered and described with reference to the following characteristics (where this is helpful in accurately portraying the ecological effect and determining the scale of significance):

- Positive or negative (i.e. does the anticipated change accord with nature conservation policies and objectives?)
- Extent (i.e. the spatial area over which the impact or effect may occur)
- Magnitude (i.e. the quantified size, amount, intensity or volume)
- Duration (i.e. the timeframe over which the impact or effect may occur, in both human and ecological terms)
- Frequency and timing (i.e. the number of times an activity occurs, where this is likely to influence the effect)
- Reversibility (i.e. is spontaneous recovery possible or may the effect be counteracted by mitigation?)

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