

Notice of proposal to carry out an operation affecting a site of special scientific interest (SSSI)

Names of site of special scientific interest (SSSI):

- Afon Tywi SSSI
- Glan Pibwr stream Section SSSI. Within 2 km of remediation works.

Name and address of public body or statutory undertaker:

Northern Divers (Eng) Ltd

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We hereby give notice to Natural Resources Wales under Section 28H of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 that we propose to carry out, in the exercise of our functions, the operation(s) specified below.

Proposed operation

Previous surveys and a diving inspection carried out in 2022 had identified a section of exposed pipeline which crosses the Afon Tywi at National Grid Reference (NGR) SN 40112 17236, towards the Southwest riverbank, of approximately 9.0m in length.

A follow up inspection and topographical survey of the full water section was carried out on the 26th of June 2024. The results confirmed that the area of pipeline exposure and minimal cover remains almost the same. As a result, the proposed activities involve the installation of rock filter mattresses over the exposed pipeline, covering 12.0 m length x 3.0 m wide, for its protection.

Details of proposed operations:

The proposed remediation works will take ten days to complete: eight days working below water and two days for mobilisation.

The works will involve the use of a modular pontoon, as a main workboat, with propulsion systems. The pontoon has a small crane (Hiab) on board, which will be used to load up the mattresses and equipment at the rowing club in Carmarthen. Once loaded, the pontoon will travel to the works site, use a 4-point anchoring system to secure its position, and start operations on site.

On-site operations involve:

- Dive inspection of exposed pipe section
- Infilling of any scour either side of pipeline, if required, with granular fill.
- Placement of mattresses
- Securing of mattresses with ground anchors which are pushed into the bed (no piling).
- Jetting outer edges of mattresses into the riverbed. The mats will be laced together and jetted into the riverbed along the up and downstream faces. In addition, 'Duck Bill Anchors' will be set through the mattresses and driven into the riverbed.

The sketch below (Figure 1) shows the mattresses placed across and next to the pipeline (pink horizontal tube).

Once the mattresses have been placed. The pontoon will return to Carmarthen for the night and repeat the process listed above the next work day.

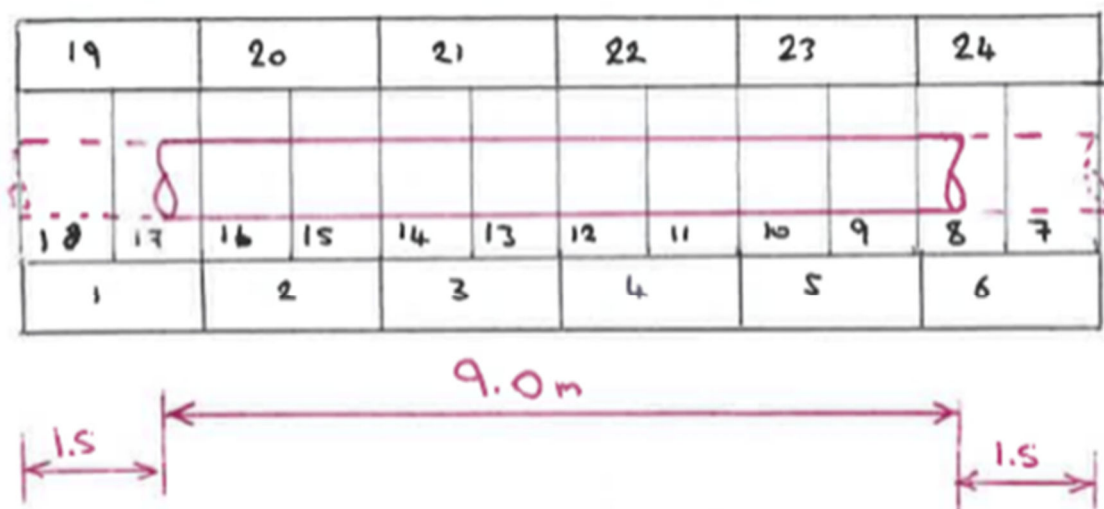


Figure 1-Proposed rock mattress layout

Note: -

- There is no need for welfare facilities on site, and there will be no access and use of the shore or river banks, besides the landing site at Carmarthen rowing club. Hence, there will be no disturbance to river bank.
- No pontoon anchoring or excessive disturbance to the river bed.
- No activities that could potentially generate underwater noises such as piling, use of explosives, geophysical, acoustic deterrent devices and multibeam echosounders will be undertaken.
- In addition, works will take place during the day time only. Appropriate marking and lighting will be used on the pontoon / workboat during operations and navigation between Carmarthen and the works site. Mattress will reduce navigation clearance by 300mm.

Timing of proposed operations (including avoidance of certain weather conditions):

The works will take 10 days to complete. 8 days working below water (2 days mobilisation). It is anticipated for the works to be carried out in March/April 2025.

High water levels could restrict the works being undertaken. Therefore, the works must take place following a period of dry weather and when the tidal conditions are optimum.

Land on which operations are to be carried out (include map):

The pipeline location (Figure 2), National Grid Reference (NGR) SN 40112 17236, is approximately 4.2km downstream from Carmarthen in Carmarthenshire in the West Wales and The Valleys region. It lies in the section of the Afon Tywi that is part of the Tywi & Taf & Gwendraeth- Three Rivers Estuary (WFD water body GB531006013400).

Excluding the loading and mobilisation site i.e., Carmarthen rowing club (Figure 3)- NGR SN 41276 19881, there will be no access and use of the shore or river banks. Delivery of materials to site will be by sea using the workboat/ pontoon.

Tir-Isaf Farm is used as a landmark to identify proximity to the remediation works site.

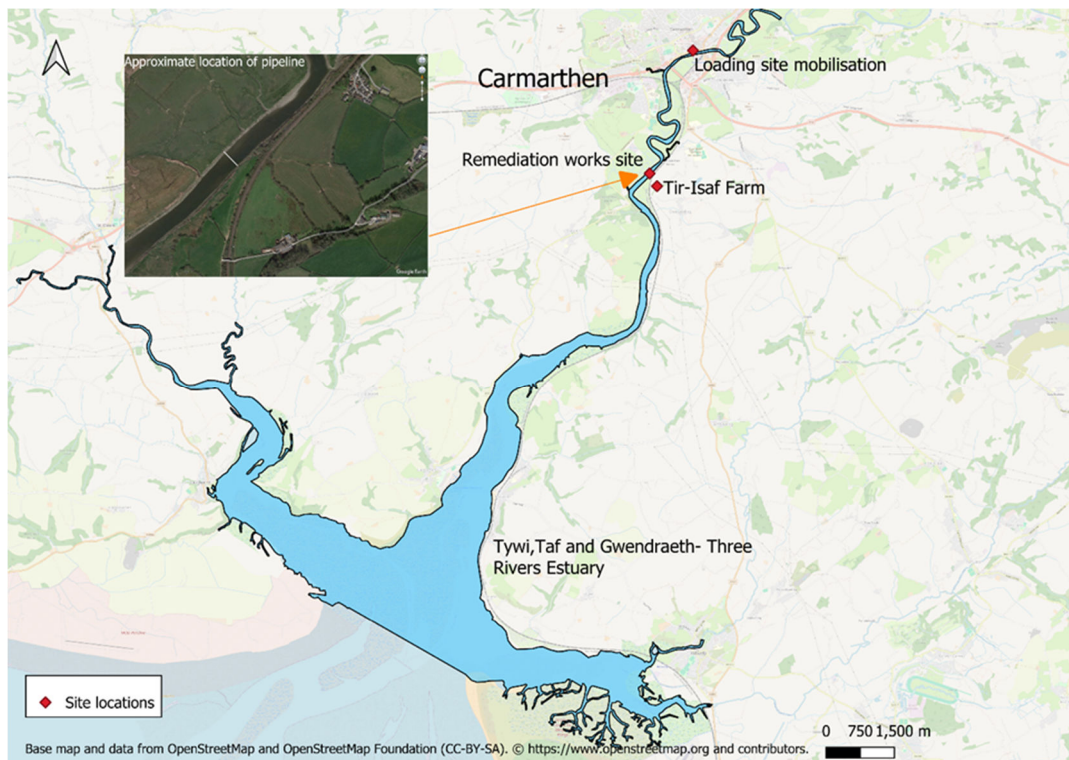


Figure 2- Point location of pipeline and Carmarthen rowing club



Figure 3 - Aerial view of Carmarthen Rowing Club

Type of materials to be used:

Stone type: Granite 40mm to 70mm

Net material: 3mm synthetic polyethylene braided knotted nets.

Net apertures: 32mm

Net Yarn thickness: 3mm

Net colour: black

The material grading is between very coarse gravel and cobble.

Storage of materials:

There will be no construction materials, removed objects, jetties or cofferdams that will result in deposits in need of storage or disposal. Neither will there be dredging, and disposal activities undertaken.

Precise routing and types of vehicles to be deployed:

Once mobilised the pontoon will depart from The Quay Centre (where Carmarthen rowing club is located) to the point of works daily in the duration of the operation. One each way trip per day.

Vehicles – Workboat/Pontoon and Small Inflatable provided by Scaffloat and/ or Northern Divers similar to figures shown in Figure 4 below.



Figure 4- Images of modular pontoons

Mitigation measures:

Pollution Prevention Guidelines Construction works at the site are to be undertaken in accordance with best management practices including the following Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPG), formerly produced by the Environment Agency:

- PPG1¹: Understanding your environmental responsibilities – good environmental practices
- PPG5²: Works and maintenance in or near water

Following these PPG's will help to mitigate the proposed works from giving rise to potential pollution incidents.

Pollution prevention measures will be incorporated into the site setup in line with PPG5, including:

- Storing fuel, oil and materials securely and in accordance with legal requirements.
- Plant working within the channel to utilise bio-oil.
- Mobilised sediment - Sediment traps to be installed within channel downstream of works area and regularly checked and changed as necessary.
- Pollution prevention measures will be monitored, and action taken as necessary during construction, based on visual inspection.
- Spill kits to be available on site along with oil/chemical absorbent booms.
- Regular observation of water quality (observe colour, smell, oily sheen, litter); and
- Ecological impacts (site staff to cease work and seek advice if necessary).
- Any non - native invasive species will be dealt with in accordance with recommendation as set out by the project ecological advisor.
- All personnel to be made aware of any non – native invasive species and the correct method of removal and best practice.

All best practice bio-security measures will be implemented to reduce the spread of invasive, non-native species with 'Tool box' talks prior to works commencing.

Other mitigation measures adopted include:

- Issuance of a notice to mariners, informing about timescales and locations of the works, to minimise interference with other river users.

Further information:

The Risk Assessment and Methos Statement (RAMS) and a schematic of the exposed pipeline is also attached.

Please note that this SSSI assent application is submitted in relation to a NRW marine application named "Afon Tywi Pipeline Protection". A schematic of the exposed pipeline is also attached.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/basic-good-environmental-practices-ppg1-prevent-pollution>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/works-in-near-or-over-watercourses-ppg5-prevent-pollution>