

# A465 River Clydach Bridge

## Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Alun Griffiths (Contractors) Ltd

61593

August 2026





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August 2026

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This report will be deemed to be accepted by the client as final if no comments are received within two weeks of issue.

**S0** – Work in progress

**S1** – For coordination

**S2** – For information

**S3** – For review and comment

**S4** – For approval

**FI** – Final



## CONTENTS

|                                         |               |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Contents</b>                         | <b>i</b>      |
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                | <b>- 1 -</b>  |
| <b>1 Introduction</b>                   | <b>- 3 -</b>  |
| 1.1 BACKGROUND                          | - 3 -         |
| 1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION                    | - 3 -         |
| 1.3 PROPOSED PROJECT                    | - 4 -         |
| 1.4 PURPOSE OF REPORT                   | - 4 -         |
| 1.5 QUALITY ASSURANCE                   | - 4 -         |
| <b>Legislation and Planning Policy</b>  | <b>- 6 -</b>  |
| 1.6 LEGISLATION                         | - 6 -         |
| 1.7 LOCAL PLANNING POLICY               | - 6 -         |
| <b>2 Method</b>                         | <b>- 7 -</b>  |
| 2.1 DESK STUDY                          | - 7 -         |
| 2.2 FIELD SURVEYS                       | - 7 -         |
| 2.3 LIMITATIONS                         | - 7 -         |
| <b>3 Baseline Ecological Conditions</b> | <b>- 9 -</b>  |
| 3.1 DESK STUDY RESULTS                  | - 9 -         |
| 3.2 FIELD SURVEY                        | - 16 -        |
| <b>4 Ecological Constraints</b>         | <b>- 20 -</b> |
| <b>5 Recommendations</b>                | <b>- 24 -</b> |
| 5.1 GENERAL                             | - 24 -        |
| 5.2 DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS               | - 24 -        |
| 5.3 CONSTRUCTION CONSIDERATIONS         | - 24 -        |
| <b>References</b>                       | <b>- 28 -</b> |

## APPENDICES

**Appendix A** – Legislation and Planning Policies

**Appendix B** – Target Notes and Phase 1 Habitat Map

**Appendix C** – Site Plan

## List of Abbreviations

| Abbreviation   | Full Description                                            |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CIEEM</b>   | Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management |
| <b>CEMP</b>    | Construction Environmental Management Plan                  |
| <b>EcIA</b>    | Ecological Impact Assessment                                |
| <b>INNS</b>    | Invasive Non-native Species                                 |
| <b>JNCC</b>    | Joint Nature Conservation Committee                         |
| <b>LDP</b>     | Local Development Plan                                      |
| <b>LERC</b>    | Local Environmental Records Centre                          |
| <b>OS</b>      | Ordnance Survey                                             |
| <b>PEA</b>     | Preliminary Ecological Appraisal                            |
| <b>PRA</b>     | Preliminary Roost Assessment                                |
| <b>SAC</b>     | Special Area of Conservation                                |
| <b>SEWBRcC</b> | South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre                |
| <b>SINC</b>    | Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation                 |
| <b>SSSI</b>    | Site of Special Scientific Interest                         |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### PURPOSE

TACP (UK) Ltd (TACP) was commissioned by Alun Griffiths (Contractors) Ltd in 2026 to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at the A465 River Clydach Underbridge, Monastery Road, Neath (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). The Site comprises the bridge structure and habitats immediately surrounding the River Clydach. The central grid reference for the Site is SS 73781 97168 and the Site boundary is shown in Appendix B.

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been commissioned to support proposed maintenance and strengthening works to the A465 River Clydach Underbridge. The works will be undertaken within and immediately adjacent to the bridge structure, and include temporary working areas associated with the planned refurbishment and maintenance activities.

This report provides an ecological overview of the Site and its surrounding habitats, including identification of ecological receptors and an assessment of the potential ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the proposed works.

### RESULTS

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken by TACP on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2026 which consisted of a desk study and field survey following the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) guidelines and standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey protocol (JNCC, 2010).

The Project may have an impact on wildlife and habitats affecting the following protected and notable species:

- Bats
- Otter
- Nesting birds
- Badger
- Water vole
- Reptiles
- Invasive Non-Native Species (Japanese knotweed)

The Site comprises habitats associated with the tidal River Clydach corridor, including broadleaved woodland, poor semi-improved grassland, improved grassland, swamp vegetation, bare ground and running water. The Site has the potential to support roosting, commuting and foraging bats within the bridge structure, trees and river corridor, whilst the River Clydach and associated riparian habitats provide suitable habitat for otter and water vole. Woodland, grassland and riverbank habitats provide suitable nesting, foraging and sheltering habitat for birds, whilst limited suitable habitat for reptiles is present within areas of grassland, woodland edge and bare ground. Two stands of Japanese knotweed were also recorded within the Site.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the PEA, TACP recommends that a further Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the bridge is undertaken prior to commencement of works to establish the current status of the roost and determine whether further bat surveys or mitigation are required. The outcome of the further assessment should be used to establish whether the proposed works can proceed under appropriate mitigation or whether a Natural Resources Wales bat licence is required. The ivy-covered silver birch tree identified as TN3 should only be subject to further bat assessment where it is proposed to be removed, pruned or otherwise directly impacted by the works.

Vegetation clearance should be undertaken using a precautionary approach to avoid harm to reptiles, nesting birds and other wildlife. Where possible, vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (March to September inclusive). Where vegetation clearance is required during this period, the affected areas should first be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist to confirm the absence of active nests.

A pre-construction check for otter, water vole and badger should be undertaken where works commence more than six months following the survey date.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be implemented to ensure appropriate ecological protection measures are in place during the works. This should include pollution prevention measures to safeguard the River Clydach, sensitive lighting design to minimise impacts on commuting and foraging bats, and measures to protect retained habitats and trees.

Appropriate biosecurity measures should be implemented to prevent the spread of Japanese knotweed recorded within the Site. All temporary working areas should be reinstated following completion of the works, with any habitats temporarily affected by construction restored to their pre-construction condition or better.



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 TACP (UK) Ltd (TACP) was commissioned by Alun Griffiths (Contractors) Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in support of proposed maintenance and strengthening works to the A465 River Clydach Underbridge, located at Monastery Road, Neath (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). The proposed works comprise the repair and refurbishment of the existing highway bridge structure to ensure its continued safe operation and include works within and immediately adjacent to the tidal reach of the River Clydach (hereafter referred to as 'the Project'). The central Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference for the Site is SS 73781 97168, and the Site boundary is shown in Appendix D.
- 1.1.2 This PEA was commissioned to identify whether there are known or potential ecological receptors (nature conservation designations and protected and notable habitats and species) that may constrain or influence the design and implementation of the Project. The PEA was undertaken in accordance with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017). The PEA addresses relevant wildlife legislation and planning policy as summarised in section 2 of this report.
- 1.1.3 In order to deliver the PEA, a desk study and an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey were undertaken by an appropriately experienced ecologist, to identify ecological features within the Site and the wider potential zone of influence.
- 1.1.4 This report provides an ecological overview of the Site covered by the Project, including a description of the potential ecological receptors and gives a preliminary ecological appraisal in relation to the Project as it currently stands. This appraisal includes general recommendations for mitigation and enhancement in relation to the potential impacts identified, based on available information.

## 1.2 Site Description

- 1.2.1 The Site comprises a small area surrounding the A465 River Clydach Underbridge and includes sections of the River Clydach, adjacent grassland, broadleaved woodland and areas of marginal vegetation. A small area of poor semi-improved grassland is present to the north of the bridge and provides access from the rear of a residential property. The grassland had been recently cut at the time of survey, although taller ruderal vegetation was present along boundary margins.
- 1.2.2 To the south of the bridge, on both the eastern and western banks of the River Clydach, the Site comprises cattle-grazed grassland with areas of marginal vegetation associated with the river corridor. Common reed (*Phragmites australis*) was present along sections of the riverbank, forming a narrow fringe of swamp vegetation. The River Clydach at this location is tidally influenced and is characterised by exposed rocky, gravelly and muddy margins.
- 1.2.3 A narrow strip of broadleaved woodland is present along sections of the river corridor and adjacent road embankment. The woodland canopy comprises silver birch (*Betula pendula*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and goat willow (*Salix caprea*).

- 1.2.4 The wider area surrounding the Site comprises a mosaic of tidal riverine, grassland and estuarine habitats associated with the lower reaches of the River Clydach and its confluence with the Neath Estuary. Although the surrounding floodplain is subject to tidal influence, no saltmarsh vegetation was identified within the surveyed area.
- 1.2.5 Access to parts of the grazed grassland was restricted by the presence of cattle, including a bull and calves. Consequently, areas beyond the immediate survey corridor, and outside the Site boundary were assessed from accessible locations only. The grassland observed on both sides of the river appeared broadly similar in composition, although transitional habitat was noted between the grazed grassland and riverbank vegetation.

### 1.3 Proposed Project

- 1.3.1 It is understood that the Project will require temporary access and working areas on both sides of the River Clydach to facilitate maintenance and strengthening works to the existing A465 River Clydach Underbridge (Refer to Appendix C). The works will be undertaken within and immediately adjacent to the bridge structure and associated river corridor.
- 1.3.2 Temporary construction infrastructure is anticipated to include scaffolding, access arrangements, working platforms and associated construction compounds or storage areas. Construction activities will be concentrated within the existing bridge footprint and adjacent land on the eastern and western banks of the River Clydach.
- 1.3.3 Following completion of the works, all temporary infrastructure will be removed and areas temporarily affected by construction activities will be reinstated where required.

### 1.4 Purpose Of Report

- 1.4.1 A PEA is typically a rapid site assessment, the primary objectives of which are to identify:
- Likely ecological constraints associated with the Scheme
  - Any mitigation measures likely to be required (with reference to the Mitigation Hierarchy)
  - Any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA). (It should be noted that where a PEA does not identify the need for further survey, adequate information may be presented to fully identify ecological impacts)
  - Any opportunities available to deliver ecological enhancement.
- 1.4.2 Taking the above into account, the objectives of this report are therefore to:
- Document the method and findings of the desk study.
  - Document the method and findings of the field surveys.
  - Detail the key ecological constraints associated with the Scheme.
  - Provide information on the potential need for mitigation.
  - Make recommendations for additional surveys, if required and;
  - To inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) if required.

### 1.5 Quality Assurance

- 1.5.1 This survey and subsequent report was undertaken in line with TACP's Integrated Management System (IMS), certified to ISO 9001, 14001 and 45001, accredited by LRQA

UK. This was combined with our adaptability to ensure that projects are managed efficiently to maximise project and client benefits.

- 1.5.2 Our Quality accreditation has been in place for over 20 years. The IMS includes procedures for Strategic Management, Project Management and Office Management. It sets out how projects are to be managed to ensure deadlines are met and high-quality deliverables provided in a sustainable and environmentally sensitive way.
- 1.5.3 All TACP's projects and schemes are delivered in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and consequently, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Alongside this and our established IMS, all our projects are also delivered in accordance with a range of internal policies, including: modern slavery, Health and Safety; Sustainability; Anti-Bribery; Safeguarding; and Social Value.
- 1.5.4 All TACP Ecologists who worked on this Project follow the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) code of professional conduct (CIEEM, 2025) when undertaking ecological work.

## 2 LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

### 2.1 Legislation

- 2.1.1 There are several Acts and Regulations which refer to the protection of wildlife. These are summarised in Appendix A. In particular, the legislation relating to possible protected species on the Project is outlined in Table 3 below. This is a brief summary of the legislation and is not to be regarded as a definitive legal opinion. When dealing with individual cases, the client is advised to consult the full texts of the relevant legislation and obtain further legal advice.
- 2.1.2 Compliance with legislation may require relevant protected species licences prior to the implementation of works for the Project.

### 2.2 Local Planning Policy

- 2.2.1 Local Development Plans (LDPs) must be produced by every Local Planning Authority in Wales. Any Project proposal will be tested against the policies within the LDP. The LDPs follow the planning guidance provide in PPW, including biodiversity and natural heritage policies. These include protecting designated sites and other areas of importance for biodiversity conservation; safeguarding protected species and priority species, including those listed in local biodiversity action plans and retaining, creating and enhancing features of importance for biodiversity conservation where appropriate.

#### 2.2.2 Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (2011–2026)

- 2.2.3 The adopted Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2026 provides the statutory framework for land use planning within the County Borough. The Plan contains a range of policies intended to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity. In particular, Strategic Policy SP15 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) seeks to protect designated sites, protected species, and habitats and species of principal importance. Detailed policies including EN6 (Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites) and EN7 (Important Natural Features) require development proposals to safeguard ecological interests and maintain important habitat features and ecological connectivity where appropriate.
- 2.2.4 Given the location of the Site within and adjacent to the tidal River Clydach corridor, particular consideration has been given to habitats associated with the watercourse and the maintenance of ecological connectivity along the river corridor.

#### 2.2.5 Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) (2023–2038)

- 2.2.6 Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council is preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for the period 2023-2038, which will replace the adopted LDP upon adoption. The emerging RLDP places increased emphasis on responding to the climate and nature emergencies, strengthening ecological resilience, enhancing green infrastructure and supporting nature recovery. The RLDP aligns with the requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and national planning policy objectives relating to biodiversity conservation and enhancement.

### 3 METHOD

#### 3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 The objectives of the desk study are to review the existing information available in the public domain concerning species and habitats to identify the following:

- Internationally, nationally and locally designated sites, up to 1 km from the Project using the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website ([www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk));
- Protected and Priority species records and records of locally designated sites within 2 km of the Site were obtained from Aderyn, Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC) Wales biodiversity information system ([aderyn.lercwales.org.uk](http://aderyn.lercwales.org.uk));
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) designated for bats within a 10 km radius of the Site in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2016) recommendations;
- Section 7 list of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation of Biological Diversity in Wales;
- Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW), Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS), Restored Ancient Woodland Site (RAWS) or Ancient Woodland Site of Unknown category (AWSU) within or adjacent to the Project boundary using Data Map Wales ([Home | DataMapWales](#));
- Aerial photographs and Ordnance Survey (OS) maps were reviewed to identify features of ecological interest surrounding the Project including ponds within 500 m, nearby areas of ecological interest and features connecting these habitats (hedgerows, watercourses, railway lines).

#### 3.2 Field Surveys

##### Phase 1 Habitat Survey

3.2.1 An Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey was carried out by Charlotte Ingram, BSc on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2026 to provide a baseline to assess the value of the habitats and their potential to support protected species. This survey was conducted following appropriate Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines and the methods outlined in the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)'s 'Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a Technique for Environmental Audit' (JNCC, 2010). All habitats within the sites were classified and mapped with detailed target notes and species lists produced for each habitat area (Refer to Appendix B).

3.2.2 The survey involved a site walkover and preliminary assessment of key habitats, land use and ecological features. The plant species defining the habitat types on the Project were recorded. Evidence of any invasive plant species subject to legal controls was recorded. The Project was assessed for its potential to support protected or notable species in order to identify potential ecological constraints and to guide recommendations for further surveys.

#### 3.3 Limitations

3.3.1 Biological records can be received from a wide variety of sources and may or may not be comprehensive and accurate. However, if assessed in conjunction with a Phase 1 Habitat survey, they can contribute to a robust ecological assessment of a site.

- 3.3.2 Livestock, including a bull and cows with calves, were present within the southern grazed field during the survey. Consequently, access to parts of the field was restricted for health and safety reasons. Habitat assessment of areas beyond the immediate survey corridor was therefore limited and these areas were assessed from a distance where possible.
- 3.3.3 Recent hot, dry weather prior to the survey had resulted in some vegetation becoming desiccated, making identification of certain plant species more difficult in places. This is not considered to have affected the overall habitat assessment.
- 3.3.4 Despite the limitations described above, there are deemed to be no significant limitations to this PEA.

## 4 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

### 4.1 Desk Study Results

4.1.1 A desk study was undertaken of all designated sites and protected species using records obtained from the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) within a 2km area of the site.

#### Designated Sites

4.1.2 The results of the desk study of designated habitats, sites and features within proximity to the Project are listed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 - Desk Survey Results Designated Sites**

| Designation   | Distance From Site                                     | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Statutory     | Approx. 1380m south-east                               | <b>Eaglesbush Valley Local Nature Reserve</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Non-statutory | SS7402996958<br><br>Approx. 111m away from the Site    | <b>Tennant Canal Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)</b><br><br>Tennant Canal SINC is designated for its species-rich aquatic and emergent vegetation, associated wet grassland and carr woodland habitats. The canal provides ecological connectivity between Pant-y-Sais Fen and Crymlyn Bog and supports notable species including otter, kingfisher, fen raft spider, reptiles, dragonflies and potentially water vole.       |
|               | SS7457897457<br><br>Approx. 720m away from the Site    | <b>Roman Way Reedbed SINC</b><br><br>Small common reed ( <i>Phragmites australis</i> )-dominated reedbed providing habitat for reedbed specialist bird species including Cetti's warbler ( <i>Cettia cetti</i> ), reed warbler ( <i>Acrocephalus scirpaceus</i> ) and reed bunting ( <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i> ). Located adjacent to the Tennant Canal and associated wetland habitats.                                                      |
|               | The Site is contained within the boundary of this SINC | <b>NPT Watercourses SINC</b><br><br>The Site is located within the NPT Watercourse SINC and is situated within a wider landscape supporting numerous non-statutory designated sites associated with the River Clydach, Neath Estuary, Tennant Canal and Neath Canal. These sites are designated for a range of wetland, estuarine, grassland and woodland habitats and support notable assemblages of birds, bats, otter, water vole, reptiles, |

| Designation | Distance From Site                                                     | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             |                                                                        | invertebrates and notable plant species. Collectively, they contribute to an extensive network of interconnected habitats and ecological corridors within the lower Neath Valley.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|             | <b>SS7369798397</b><br><br><b>Approx. 947m<br/>away from the Site</b>  | <b>Coed Bach A'r Cwm SINC</b><br><br>Ancient semi-natural broadleaved woodland associated with the Afon Clydach valley, supporting diverse woodland flora including wild service-tree ( <i>Sorbus torminalis</i> ) and providing suitable habitat for bats and invertebrates. Forms part of an important ecological corridor linking adjacent woodland habitats.                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|             | <b>Approx. 777m<br/>away from the Site</b>                             | <b>Neath Canal SINC</b><br><br>Species-rich canal habitat supporting notable aquatic and emergent flora, with associated wet grassland, carr woodland and estuarine habitats. The canal provides habitat and movement corridors for otter ( <i>Lutra lutra</i> ), water vole ( <i>Arvicola amphibius</i> ), kingfisher ( <i>Alcedo atthis</i> ), reptiles including grass snake ( <i>Natrix helvetica</i> ), common lizard ( <i>Zootoca vivipara</i> ), slow-worm ( <i>Anguis fragilis</i> ) and adder ( <i>Vipera berus</i> ), together with a range of breeding birds and odonata species. |
|             | <b>SS7277599204</b><br><br><b>Approx. 1281m<br/>away from the Site</b> | <b>Dyffryn Woods SINC</b><br><br>Ancient woodland site comprising a mosaic of semi-natural broadleaved woodland and plantation woodland, now dominated by birch ( <i>Betula</i> spp.), willow ( <i>Salix</i> spp.) and other broadleaved species. The site supports habitat suitable for bats, birds and badger ( <i>Meles meles</i> ), and is notable for supporting the rare blue ground beetle ( <i>Carabus intricatus</i> ), the only known Welsh population of the species. The woodland forms part of a wider connected woodland network linking adjacent ancient woodland habitats.   |
|             | <b>SS7613398640</b><br><br><b>Approx. 1862m<br/>away from the Site</b> | <b>Catwg Wetland SINC</b><br><br>Floodplain wetland habitat comprising a mosaic of reedbed, swamp, scrub and wet grassland associated with the Neath Valley floodplain. The site provides an important wildlife corridor between the Neath Canal and surrounding habitats and supports species-rich vegetation including common reed ( <i>Phragmites australis</i> ), southern marsh-orchid                                                                                                                                                                                                  |



| Designation | Distance From Site                                                       | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             |                                                                          | ( <i>Dactylorhiza praetermissa</i> ), sneezewort ( <i>Achillea ptarmica</i> ), red bartsia ( <i>Odontites vernus</i> ) and common bird's-foot-trefoil ( <i>Lotus corniculatus</i> ). The habitat provides suitable refuge, breeding and foraging habitat for bats, nesting birds, amphibians and reptiles.                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|             | <b>SS7361095805</b><br><br><b>Approx. 34m away from the Site</b>         | <b>Neath Estuary SINC</b><br><br>Extensive estuarine habitat comprising coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, intertidal mudflats, saltmarsh and river channels associated with the Neath Estuary. The estuary supports a diverse assemblage of birds including whimbrel, lapwing, curlew, kingfisher, Cetti's warbler and peregrine, together with otter. The habitat provides an important foraging, commuting and overwintering resource for a range of wetland and coastal species.         |
|             | <b>SS7350695117</b><br><br><b>Approx. 1730m to the south of the Site</b> | <b>Giant's Grave SINC</b><br><br>Mosaic habitat comprising areas of scrub, acid grassland, dry heath, and bare ground. These complementary habitats support a diverse invertebrate assemblage, including several notable species, and provide suitable habitat for reptiles including grass snake, adder and slow-worm. The site is recognised for its importance for invertebrates and its potential value as a reptile receptor site.                                                         |
|             | <b>SS7389896097</b><br><br><b>Approx. 811m away from the Site</b>        | <b>Square Pond SINC</b><br><br>Floodplain wetland comprising open water, willow carr, reedbed, fen and species-rich grassland habitats. The site supports a diverse aquatic and emergent flora and provides habitat for otter, bittern, little egret, kingfisher, Cetti's warbler and a range of notable wetland plant species. The SINC forms an important ecological link between the Neath Canal and Neath Estuary habitats and provides suitable habitat for bats and scarce invertebrates. |
|             | <b>SO SS7719297761</b><br><br><b>Approx. 1963m Away from the Site</b>    | <b>Gnoll Country Park SINC</b><br><br>Mixed woodland and pond complex within Gnoll Country Park comprising broadleaved woodland, areas of ancient woodland, ponds and watercourses. The site supports a range of wildlife associated with woodland and aquatic habitats, including Daubenton's bat and grass snake. It forms part of an interconnected network of woodland                                                                                                                      |

| Designation | Distance From Site                                                            | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             |                                                                               | habitats in the Neath area, providing valuable habitat connectivity and bat dispersal opportunities.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|             | <b>SS7304496914</b><br><br><b>Approx. 523m away from Site</b>                 | <b>Pentrefrynnon SINC</b><br><br>Diverse brownfield floodplain habitat comprising a mosaic of scrub, woodland, species-rich grassland, marshy vegetation and open mosaic habitat on previously developed land. The site supports a range of notable plant species and provides suitable habitat for otter, bats, reptiles, amphibians and a variety of bird species. The habitat forms an important ecological corridor between the Tennant Canal and surrounding floodplain habitats, although several invasive non-native plant species are present. |
|             | <b>SS7685095288</b><br><br><b>Approx 1380m from the Site</b>                  | <b>The Waun, Cimla SINC</b><br><br>Extensive mosaic of wet grassland, valley mire, native woodland and ancient hedgerows associated with the Crythan Brook corridor. The site supports species-rich marshy grassland communities and a diverse assemblage of plants, birds and invertebrates, including several notable and declining species. The habitat provides suitable habitat for otter, bats and reptiles and is maintained principally through sympathetic grazing management.                                                                |
|             | <b>SS7408597301</b><br><br><b>Approx. 36m from the Site</b>                   | <b>Gwlyptir Mynachlog Nedd SINC</b><br><br>Large floodplain wetland complex comprising extensive reedbed, purple moor-grass and rush pasture, scrub, broadleaved woodland and sections of the Neath Canal. The site supports a mosaic of wetland habitats of high ecological value and provides important habitat connectivity within the lower Neath Valley. Much of the site is characterised by marshy grassland and reedbed communities maintained through periodic grazing.                                                                       |
|             | <b>SS7463895651</b><br><br><b>Approx. 1543m to the south-east of the Site</b> | <b>Garth Mor</b><br><br>Secondary broadleaved woodland dominated by W10 woodland communities and associated with the South Wales Upper Coal Measures. The canopy is largely dominated by sycamore, with oak, birch, black poplar, willow, ash and beech also present. The woodland supports a diverse ground flora                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

| Designation | Distance From Site | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|             |                    | including bramble, garlic mustard, enchanter's-nightshade, herb-Robert, ferns, honeysuckle and bluebell. The habitat provides suitable habitat for bats and a range of woodland bird species including song thrush, dunnock and bullfinch. |

## Habitats

4.1.3 The desk study also revealed that a number of Priority Habitats were located within the surrounding 2km of the site. These included semi-natural broadleaved woodland, restored ancient woodland, plantation on ancient woodland, NRW priority area (Woodland – PAWS), NRW Priority Area (Lowland Wetland) and B-Lines. Whilst these are not designated, they do hold NERC (2006) status. These results are summarised in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 – Priority Habitats within 2km of site**

| Habitat Type                               | Location                                                     | Relevant Legislation |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Semi-natural broadleaved woodland</b>   | Outside of the Site, north, south-east, south and south-west | NERC (2006)          |
| <b>Restored ancient woodland</b>           | Outside of the Site, to the south-east and north-west        | NERC (2006)          |
| <b>Plantation on ancient woodland</b>      | Outside of the Site to the north and north-west              | NERC (2006)          |
| <b>NRW Priority Area (Woodland - PAWS)</b> | Outside of the Site, to the north and north-west             | NERC (2006)          |
| <b>NRW Priority Area (Lowland Wetland)</b> | Outside of the Site, to the south-west                       | NERC (2006)          |
| <b>B-Lines</b>                             | Outside of the site, to the east                             | NERC (2006)          |

## Protected and Priority Species

4.1.4 These are summarised in Table 3. It is noted that the absence of records of other flora and fauna does not necessarily discount the possibility of protected species being on the site or in the vicinity.

**Table 3 – Protected and Priority Species Potential**

| Species              | Results                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Legislation                                                                                                                                   |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bats</b>          | Several bat species have been recorded within 2km of the Site, including: Common Pipistrelle ( <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> ), Soprano Pipistrelle ( <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> ), Daubenton's Bat ( <i>Myotis daubentonii</i> ), Brown Long-eared Bat ( <i>Plecotus auritus</i> ), Whiskered Bat ( <i>Myotis mystacinus</i> ), Natterer's Bat ( <i>Myotis Nattereri</i> ) | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)<br><br>Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017<br><br>Environment (Wales) Act 2016 |
| <b>Dormice</b>       | No records.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)<br><br>Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017<br><br>Environment (Wales) Act 2016 |
| <b>Otters</b>        | Otters have been recorded within 2km of the Site, the closest being 36m away                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)<br><br>Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017<br><br>Environment (Wales) Act 2016 |
| <b>Badgers</b>       | Badgers have been recorded within 2km of the Site, the closest being 294m away                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)<br><br>Protection of Badgers Act 1992                                                          |
| <b>Water voles</b>   | Water voles have been recorded within 2km of the Site, the closest being 434m away                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)<br><br>Environment (Wales) Act 2016                                                            |
| <b>Other Mammals</b> | Hedgehog have been recorded within 2km of the Site, the closest being 169m away                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)<br><br>Environment (Wales) Act 2016                                                            |

| Species                   | Results                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Legislation                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Great Crested Newt</b> | One record of Great Crested Newt exists within 2km of the Site, 739m away.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)<br><br>Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017<br><br>Environment (Wales) Act 2016                                                                   |
| <b>Other Amphibians</b>   | Several species of amphibian have been recorded within 2km of the Site, including: Common Toad ( <i>Bufo bufo</i> ), Common Frog ( <i>Rana temporaria</i> ), Smooth Newt ( <i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i> ) and Palmate Newt ( <i>Lissotriton helveticus</i> ).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)<br><br>Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017<br><br>Environment (Wales) Act 2016                                                                   |
| <b>Reptiles</b>           | Common lizard ( <i>Zootoca vivipara</i> ) and slow-worm have been recorded within 2km of the Site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)<br><br>Environment (Wales) Act 2016                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Birds</b>              | Aderyn returned records of 72 Category 1 bird species within 2 km of the Site, including estuarine, wetland, woodland and farmland species. Notable records included kingfisher ( <i>Alcedo atthis</i> ), Cetti's warbler ( <i>Cettia cetti</i> ), barn owl ( <i>Tyto alba</i> ), red kite ( <i>Milvus milvus</i> ), peregrine ( <i>Falco peregrinus</i> ), lapwing ( <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> ), curlew ( <i>Numenius arquata</i> ), redshank ( <i>Tringa totanus</i> ), whimbrel ( <i>Numenius phaeopus</i> ), greenshank ( <i>Tringa nebularia</i> ), oystercatcher ( <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i> ), ringed plover ( <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> ), black-tailed godwit ( <i>Limosa limosa</i> ), water rail ( <i>Rallus aquaticus</i> ) and common sandpiper ( <i>Actitis hypoleucos</i> ). | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)<br><br>Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000<br><br>The Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Directive 2009/147/EC)<br><br>Environment (Wales) Act 2016 |
| <b>Invertebrates</b>      | Aderyn returned records of several notable invertebrate species within 2 km of the Site, primarily associated with wetland, woodland, grassland and brownfield habitats. These included blue ground beetle ( <i>Carabus intricatus</i> ), marsh fritillary ( <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> ), pearl-bordered fritillary ( <i>Boloria euphrosyne</i> ), dingy skipper ( <i>Erynnis tages</i> ), long-horned bee ( <i>Eucera longicornis</i> ) and moss carder bee ( <i>Bombus muscorum</i> ). Notable odonata records included variable damselfly                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)                                                                                                                                                                  |

| Species       | Results                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Legislation                                    |
|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|
|               | ( <i>Coenagrion pulchellum</i> ), scarce blue-tailed damselfly ( <i>Ischnura pumilio</i> ), beautiful demoiselle ( <i>Calopteryx virgo</i> ), hairy dragonfly ( <i>Brachytron pratense</i> ), golden-ringed dragonfly ( <i>Cordulegaster boltonii</i> ) and keeled skimmer ( <i>Orthetrum coerulescens</i> ). These records are largely associated with the wider network of woodland, wetland, canal and estuarine habitats surrounding the Site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                |
| <b>Plants</b> | Aderyn returned records of several notable plant species within 2 km of the Site, primarily associated with wetland, estuarine, floodplain and woodland habitats. These included flowering-rush ( <i>Butomus umbellatus</i> ), fringed water-lily ( <i>Nymphoides peltata</i> ), ivy-leaved duckweed ( <i>Lemna trisulca</i> ), narrow-leaved water-plantain ( <i>Alisma lanceolatum</i> ), spiked water-milfoil ( <i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i> ), wild celery ( <i>Apium graveolens</i> ), royal fern ( <i>Osmunda regalis</i> ), early marsh-orchid ( <i>Dactylorhiza incarnata</i> ), pyramidal orchid ( <i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i> ), devil's-bit scabious ( <i>Succisa pratensis</i> ), wild service-tree ( <i>Sorbus torminalis</i> ), common cow-wheat ( <i>Melampyrum pratense</i> ), yellow bird's-nest ( <i>Monotropa hypopitys</i> ), sea-purslane ( <i>Atriplex portulacoides</i> ), rock sea-lavender ( <i>Limonium binervosum</i> ), long-spiked glasswort ( <i>Salicornia dolichostachya</i> ) and common cord-grass ( <i>Spartina anglica</i> ). These records are largely associated with the wider network of wetland, woodland and estuarine habitats surrounding the Site. | Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) |

## 4.2 Field Survey

### Habitats

4.2.1 The habitats identified during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, within the Project boundary and their descriptions are shown in Table 4. A plan of the Site showing the location and distribution of these habitats is shown in Appendix D.

**Table 4 - Habitats Identified During Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey**

| Main Habitat               | Sub-Habitat             | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Woodland and Scrub</b>  | Broad-leaved Woodland   | <p>Broadleaved woodland is present in several discrete parcels throughout the Site. The largest area is located on the eastern side of the River Clydach, where it borders the A465 and extends beneath the bridge structure, connecting woodland present on both sides of the river. Additional woodland is present on the western riverbank north and of the bridge and adjacent to the A465 on the western side of the river to the south of the bridge. The canopy is dominated by silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>), sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>) and goat willow (<i>Salix caprea</i>), with occasional hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>). Gorse (<i>Ulex europaeus</i>) was also recorded locally within the eastern woodland area.</p> <p>The understory within the western woodland parcels was generally sparse due to recent clearance works undertaken to facilitate access to the bridge. Ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>) was locally abundant and a recently felled tree was observed within the woodland north of the bridge in the western parcel adjacent to the A465.</p> <p>Two stands of Japanese knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i>) were recorded within the woodland habitat on the western bank, located north and south of the bridge (Target Notes (TN) 1 and 2). A further target note (TN3) relates to an ivy-covered silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) located north of the bridge. Dense ivy cover prevented a detailed inspection of the trunk; however, the tree was considered to have potential to support features suitable for roosting bats.</p> |
| <b>Grassland and Marsh</b> | Semi-improved Grassland | <p>Small areas of poor semi-improved grassland are present within the northern part of the Site, immediately north of the bridge on both the eastern and western sides of the River Clydach, with a further small area present south of the bridge adjacent to a trampled muddy crossing point used by livestock. The grassland within the western area forms part of an access route from the rear of a residential property and had been recently mown at the time of survey, although taller vegetation was present along field margins and boundaries.</p> <p>The habitat supports a short sward comprising species including daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>), dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.), ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>), yarrow (<i>Achillea millefolium</i>) and creeping cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla reptans</i>). Boundary</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |



| Main Habitat         | Sub-Habitat   | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                      |               | <p>and less frequently managed areas supported taller ruderal species including cow parsley (<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>), wild parsnip (<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>), common sow-thistle (<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>), hairy willowherb (<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>), hoary mustard (<i>Hirschfeldia incana</i>), bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) and common horsetail (<i>Equisetum arvense</i>). Occasional oak (<i>Quercus</i> sp.) saplings were also recorded.</p> <p>The habitat is generally species-poor and exhibits some ruderal influence, particularly along margins and transitional areas adjacent to the river corridor.</p>                                                                                               |
| <b>Swamp</b>         | Reed Swamp    | <p>A narrow fringe of swamp vegetation was present along the western bank of the River Clydach south of the bridge. The habitat was dominated by common reed (<i>Phragmites australis</i>) and formed a linear transition between the river channel and adjacent grazed grassland.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Open Water</b>    | Running Water | <p>The River Clydach flows through the centre of the Site beneath the A465 Underbridge. At this location, the river is tidally influenced and comprises a flowing watercourse with exposed rocky, gravelly and muddy margins. Large sections of the river corridor within the Site occur beneath the bridge structure. Marginal vegetation was present locally along the banks, including areas of reed swamp dominated by common reed. The river forms an important ecological corridor through the Site and is hydraulically connected to the downstream Neath Estuary.</p>                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Miscellaneous</b> | Bare Ground   | <p>Areas of bare ground are present throughout the Site, particularly beneath the bridge structure, where a substantial proportion of the survey area is located. On the western bank, bare ground comprised predominantly exposed gravel and compacted earth with little or no vegetation cover. More extensive areas of bare ground were present on the eastern side of the River Clydach, where muddy substrates occurred beneath the bridge and along livestock access routes associated with cattle movement between the river and adjacent grazing land. Vegetation cover was generally absent or sparse due to ongoing disturbance. The habitat was often transitional with adjacent grassland, woodland and riverbank habitats.</p> |



## Protected and Priority Species

Details of protected and priority species recorded on Project are shown in Table 5. A plan of the Site showing the location and distribution of habitats with potential for protected or priority species are shown in Appendix D.

**Table 5 - Phase 1 Protected Species Results**

| Species           | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Bats</b>       | Trees within and adjacent to the Site, together with the A465 River Clydach Underbridge, have the potential to support roosting bats. A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) identified one ivy-covered silver birch tree (TN3) with potential bat roosting features; however, a full assessment was not possible due to dense ivy cover. The bridge structure contains crevices and sheltered features which may provide opportunities for roosting bats. The woodland, river corridor and associated vegetation also provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats. |
| <b>Otter</b>      | The River Clydach and associated riparian habitats provide suitable habitat for otter. No evidence of otter, such as spraints, couches or holts, was identified during the survey. However, the river corridor provides suitable commuting and foraging habitat and otter presence cannot be ruled out. In addition, a local resident reported observing otter within the River Clydach in proximity to the Site.                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Birds</b>      | No evidence of nesting birds was recorded during the survey. However, the broadleaved woodland, scattered trees, grassland habitats and river corridor provide suitable nesting, foraging and sheltering habitat for a range of bird species. Therefore, nesting birds may be present during the breeding season.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Badger</b>     | No evidence of badger, including setts, latrines, paths or foraging signs, was recorded during the survey. The woodland and grassland habitats present on and adjacent to the Site offer some potential to support commuting and foraging badgers. A local resident also reported previous badger activity on land adjacent to the Site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Water Vole</b> | The River Clydach and associated bank-side vegetation provide suitable habitat for water vole. No evidence of water vole was identified during the survey.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Reptiles</b>   | Areas of poor semi-improved grassland, woodland edge and bare ground within the Site provide some suitability for common reptile species. Habitat suitability is limited by the small size and fragmented nature of the grassland areas, recent vegetation management and regular disturbance associated with grazing and maintenance activities. No evidence of reptiles was recorded during the survey, however their presence cannot be entirely ruled out.                                                                                                                  |
| <b>INNS</b>       | Two stands of Japanese knotweed were recorded within the Site (TN1 and TN2). Appropriate biosecurity measures will be required during construction works to prevent the spread of this species. Japanese knotweed is highly invasive and can be spread easily, with regrowth occurring from small fragments of the rhizome.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

## 5 ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS

5.1.1 The potential impacts of the Project on habitats and protected or notable species identified during the desk study and field survey are outlined below.

### Priority and Protected Species

5.1.2 The following Priority Species (listed under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016) and/or protected species were identified as present or considered likely to utilise habitats within or adjacent to the Site:

- Bats
- Otter
- Nesting birds
- Water vole
- Reptiles
- Badger

### Bats

5.1.3 The local records search returned records of bat species within the vicinity of the Site. The River Clydach corridor, associated woodland habitats and the A465 River Clydach Underbridge provide suitable commuting, foraging and potential roosting habitat for bats.

5.1.4 A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) identified one ivy-covered silver birch tree (TN3) with potential bat roost features; however, a detailed assessment was not possible due to dense ivy cover. In addition, the bridge structure contains crevices and sheltered features that may provide opportunities for roosting bats.

5.1.5 Further ecological assessment will be required in relation to bats prior to commencement of works. The Client has provided TACP with the findings of an ecological survey undertaken in April 2025, which identified a confirmed bat roost within the A465 River Clydach Underbridge. This information has been considered alongside the findings of the current PEA.

5.1.6 Given the presence of a previously confirmed roost within the bridge structure and the nature of the proposed maintenance and strengthening works, a further Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the bridge should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to commencement of works. The assessment should determine the current status of the roost and establish whether additional bat activity surveys or other further assessment are required.

- 5.1.7 Where the ivy-covered silver birch tree identified as Target Note 3 (TN3) is proposed to be removed, pruned or otherwise directly affected by the works, a further Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) or other appropriate tree-roost assessment should also be undertaken to determine its current suitability for bats.
- 5.1.8 The findings of the further assessment should be used to determine whether the proposed works can proceed under appropriate mitigation and working methods or whether a licence from Natural Resources Wales is required in respect of impacts to a bat roost. Any lighting associated with the Project should be designed to minimise impacts on commuting and foraging bats through the use of directional lighting, low lux levels and avoidance of light spill onto retained vegetation and the river corridor.

### **Otter**

- 5.1.9 The local records search returned records of otter within the surrounding area. The River Clydach and associated riparian habitats provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat for otter.
- 5.1.10 No evidence of otter, including spraints, couches or holts, was recorded during the survey. However, a local resident reported observing otter within the River Clydach adjacent to the Site.
- 5.1.11 Whilst the proposed works are temporary in nature, activities undertaken adjacent to the river have the potential to cause disturbance to commuting and foraging otter. A pre-construction check is recommended where works commence more than six months following the survey.

## Birds

5.1.12 Records obtained during the desk study identified bird species within the surrounding area. The woodland, grassland and riparian habitats present within the Site provide suitable nesting, foraging and sheltering habitat for a range of bird species.

5.1.13 In addition, the River Clydach provides suitable habitat for kingfisher, whilst the wider estuarine environment may support a range of wetland and coastal bird species.

5.1.14 Vegetation clearance undertaken during the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) has the potential to disturb or destroy active nests. To avoid impacts, vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the nesting season where possible, or preceded by a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.

## Reptiles

5.1.15 Records obtained from SEWBRc returned records of reptiles within the local area. The presence of semi-improved grassland, areas of longer sward, bare ground, and a wood pile on Site provide suitable habitat for reptiles.

5.1.16 While the majority of the Site is subject to regular disturbance and management, the less intensively managed margins, semi-improved grassland area and refuge features increase the likelihood of reptile presence.

5.1.17 Given the temporary nature and limited scale of the proposed works, targeted reptile surveys are not considered necessary. Instead, precautionary mitigation should be implemented, including supervision of any vegetation clearance of longer grassland under ecological watching brief, undertaken in a directional manner towards retained habitat.

## Nesting birds

5.1.18 A desk study identified records of nesting birds within the surrounding area. Vegetation on Site, including trees and grassland, provides suitable nesting habitat.

5.1.19 Vegetation clearance undertaken during the bird nesting season (March–September inclusive) has the potential to disturb or destroy active nests.

5.1.20 To avoid impacts, vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the nesting season where possible. If this is not feasible, works should be preceded by a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.

## Badger

5.1.21 The desk study returned records of badger within the local area. Woodland and grassland habitats within and surrounding the Site provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat.

5.1.22 No evidence of badger, including setts, paths, latrines or foraging signs, was recorded during the survey. However, a local resident reported previous badger activity on adjacent land.

5.1.23 Given the absence of evidence within the Site, significant impacts to badger are considered unlikely. However, a pre-construction check should be undertaken where works are delayed by more than six months from the survey date.

## **Water Vole**

5.1.24 The River Clydach and associated bank-side vegetation provide suitable habitat for water vole, and records of the species were returned during the desk study.

5.1.25 No evidence of water vole, including burrows, feeding stations or latrines, were recorded during the survey.

5.1.26 Given the presence of suitable habitat, a precautionary approach should be adopted during works adjacent to the river and a pre-construction check should be undertaken prior to any works affecting bank-side vegetation.

## **Reptiles**

5.1.27 Records obtained from the desk study returned records of reptiles within the local area. Areas of poor semi-improved grassland, woodland edge habitat and bare ground provide limited suitable habitat for common reptile species.

5.1.28 Habitat suitability is constrained by the small size and fragmented nature of the grassland areas, together with ongoing disturbance from grazing, maintenance activities and bridge use.

5.1.29 Given the limited extent of suitable habitat and the temporary nature of the proposed works, targeted reptile surveys are not considered necessary. Instead, a precautionary vegetation clearance method should be adopted, including directional strimming towards retained habitat where required.

## **INNS**

5.1.30 Two stands of Japanese knotweed were recorded within the Site at TN1 and TN2.

5.1.31 Construction activities involving vegetation clearance, ground disturbance and the movement of soils have the potential to spread Japanese knotweed both within and beyond the Site.

5.1.32 Appropriate biosecurity measures should be implemented throughout the works. Areas containing Japanese knotweed should be clearly identified and avoided where possible, and any works within affected areas should be undertaken in accordance with an appropriate knotweed management strategy.

## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 General

- 6.1.1 Based on the findings of this PEA, the Site supports habitats suitable for a range of protected and Priority Species, including bats, otter, water vole, reptiles, badger and nesting birds. In addition, the Site contains areas of Japanese knotweed and is located within the tidally influenced River Clydach corridor.
- 6.1.2 Further ecological assessment will be required in relation to bats prior to commencement of works. A precautionary approach to vegetation clearance, construction activities and works adjacent to the river should be adopted.

### 6.2 Design Considerations

#### Lighting

- 6.2.1 Artificial lighting should be avoided wherever possible. Where lighting is required for health and safety reasons, it should be directional, operated at the lowest practicable intensity and designed to minimise light spill onto the River Clydach, adjacent woodland and retained vegetation.
- 6.2.2 Temporary lighting should follow current Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals guidance to minimise impacts on commuting and foraging bats.
- 6.2.3 A sensitive lighting strategy should be implemented throughout the construction period. Lighting should be directed away from the River Clydach, broadleaved woodland, mature trees and other vegetated corridors used by commuting bats. Light spill onto the river corridor should be avoided wherever possible, and luminaires should be fitted with cowls, hoods or shields to prevent upward and lateral light spill. Warm-spectrum LED lighting (typically below 3000 Kelvin) should be used in preference to cool white lighting, and lighting should only be operational when required for health and safety purposes.

#### Habitat Retention and Protection

- 6.2.4 Habitat loss should be minimised wherever possible. Particular consideration should be given to the retention and protection of broadleaved woodland, poor semi-improved grassland, swamp vegetation and riparian habitats associated with the River Clydach.
- 6.2.5 The River Clydach and associated riverbank habitats form an important ecological corridor and should be protected from unnecessary disturbance during the works.

### 6.3 Construction Considerations

#### Bats

- 6.3.1 The Environmental Screening Report (SWTRA, 2025), noted that there are trees adjacent to the ZOI that have potential to support roosting bats, with pruning works required. The report also stated that a confirmed bat roost was noted within the Bridge. As this survey was carried out in August 2024, it is recommended that a further Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) are carried out prior to commencement of works, by a suitably qualified ecologist, to confirm any changes with regard to features present within trees or changes relevant to the bat roost within the bridge structure.

- 6.3.2 The PRA will provide information as to whether further bat surveys are required. As the River Clydach Bridge is covered by the A465 Scheme Wide EPSML: S090957/4, as long as this is still valid, no further licence application would be required. The licence should be checked with regard to any associated works to ensure these are covered.
- 6.3.3 Further recommendations with relation to night working, light spill, disturbance are detailed within the Environmental Screening Report.

### **Vegetation Clearance**

- 6.3.4 Vegetation clearance should be undertaken under ecological supervision where required.
- 6.3.5 Clearance of grassland and ruderal vegetation should be undertaken progressively and in a directional manner towards retained habitat to allow mobile fauna to disperse safely.

### **Nesting Birds**

- 6.3.6 Vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March to September inclusive), where possible.
- 6.3.7 Where this is not possible, a nesting bird check should be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to commencement of works.

### **Otter, Water Vole and Badger**

- 6.3.8 A pre-construction check for otter, water vole and badger should be undertaken where works commence more than six months following the survey date.
- 6.3.9 Particular care should be taken during works adjacent to the river to avoid disturbance to riparian habitats.
- 6.3.10 Should any evidence of protected mammals be identified during the course of the works, activities within the affected area should cease and advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

### **Pollution Prevention**

- 6.3.11 Appropriate pollution prevention measures should be implemented throughout construction to prevent contamination of the River Clydach.
- 6.3.12 Fuels, oils and chemicals should be stored in designated bunded areas away from the river and spill kits should be readily available on Site.
- 6.3.13 No materials, debris, concrete washout, hydro-demolition arisings, grit blasting residues or contaminated water should be permitted to enter the River Clydach.

### **Trees**

- 6.3.14 Retained trees should be protected throughout the construction period. No storage of materials, plant or machinery should occur beneath retained trees or within protected root zones.

### **Excavations**

- 6.3.15 Any excavations left open overnight should either be covered or fitted with a suitable means of escape to prevent animals becoming trapped.

### **Invasive Non-Native Species**

- 6.3.16 Two stands of Japanese knotweed are present within the Site (TN1 and TN2). These areas should be clearly marked and avoided where possible.



6.3.17 Appropriate biosecurity measures should be implemented to prevent the spread of Japanese knotweed through vegetation management, soil movement or vehicle tracking.

6.3.18A Japanese Knotweed Management Plan should be prepared where works are proposed within or adjacent to affected areas.

### **Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)**

6.3.19A CEMP should be prepared and implemented prior to commencement of works. The CEMP should include, but not be limited to, the following measures:

- Installation of protective fencing and buffer zones around retained habitats and ecological features;
- Pollution prevention measures for works adjacent to the River Clydach;
- Procedures for the protection of bats, nesting birds, otter, water vole and badger;
- Biosecurity measures relating to Japanese knotweed;
- Appropriate control of lighting to minimise impacts on commuting and foraging bats;
- Emergency spill response procedures; and
- Ecological toolbox talks for contractors.

### **Reinstatement**

6.3.20 All temporary working areas should be reinstated following completion of the works.

6.3.21 Disturbed grassland and riverbank habitats should be restored to their pre-construction condition or better using appropriate locally occurring species where required.

6.3.22 Any areas temporarily affected by construction activities should be monitored and remediated where necessary to ensure successful habitat recovery.

## REFERENCES

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Environment (Wales) Act 2016; [Environment \(Wales\) Act 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996; [Wild Mammals \(Protection\) Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

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The Hedgerow Regulations 1997; [The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992; [Protection of Badgers Act 1992 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

SWTRA (2025); A465 River Clydach Access Track; Environmental Screening Report

# Appendices

**Appendix A**  
**Legislation and Planning Policies**

In addition to habitats, several species have been afforded protection through international/European and national law. Other species are considered to contribute to our 'quality of life'. Although these species do not benefit from legal protection, they can be material considerations in the planning process. Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) covers birds, Schedule 5 covers other animals and Schedule 8 covers plants. The table below outlines the key forms of protection afforded to species.

Species including bats, otters and great crested newts are listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Badgers are protected under their Act: The Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Activities affecting protected species must usually be conducted under a licence obtained from the appropriate body (in Wales, this is Natural Resources Wales. In England, this is Natural England).

Developers must be able to show that all reasonable measures have been taken to ensure that protected species are not subject to disturbance. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has strengthened enforcement powers and introduced a new offence of "reckless disturbance" that applies to both protected sites and species.

**Table 1 – Legislation in Detail**

| Legislation                                             | Brief Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>The Habitats Directive</b>                           | The Habitats Directive 1992 (Directive 92/43/EEC sets out the legal framework requiring EU member states to protect habitat sites supporting vulnerable and protected species, as listed within the Directive. The need for an assessment of impacts on Natura 2000 sites (the collective name for European designated sites, including SPAs and SACs) is set out within Article 6 of the Directive. The Directive is transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017) (the "Habitats Regulations") and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>The Birds Directive</b>                              | The Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Directive 2009/147/EC (the codified version of Council Directive 79/409/EEC as amended)) provides a framework for the protection, management and control of all species of naturally occurring wild birds in the European territory of Member States, including the UK. The provisions of the Birds Directive are transposed into UK law by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)</b> | <p>The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principal mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. This legislation is the means by which the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and (partially) the Birds Directive and the Habitats Directive are implemented in the UK.</p> <p>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has strengthened this legal protection (see below).</p> <p>A small number of plant species are listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, which includes species such as Japanese knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i>), Himalayan balsam (<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>), montbretia (<i>Crocus x crocosmiiflora</i>), giant hogweed (<i>Heracleum mantegazzianum</i>) and some cotoneaster species (<i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.). It is illegal to plant or to cause these plants to grow in the wild, and legal</p> |

| Legislation                                                                              | Brief Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                          | disposal methods for vegetation and soil subject to disturbance or clearance from a site must be used.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Convention on Biological Diversity and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000</b> | <p>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides a statutory framework for biodiversity conservation. The Act places a duty on Government Departments and the National Assembly for Wales to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity and maintain lists of species and habitats for which conservation steps should be taken or promoted, in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity.</p> <p>Schedule 9 of the Act amends SSSI provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, including provisions to change SSSIs and providing increased powers for their protection and management. The provisions extend powers for entering into management agreements; place a duty on public bodies to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs; increases penalties on conviction where the provisions are breached; and introduce a new offence whereby third parties can be convicted for damaging SSSIs.</p> <p>Schedule 12 of the Act amends the species provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, strengthening the legal protection for threatened species. The provisions make certain offences 'arrestable' and create a new offence of reckless disturbance.</p> <p>The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was published in 1994, and was the UK Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which the UK signed up to in 1992. It provides the framework for fulfilling the UK's responsibilities towards the Convention on Biological Diversity. Conservation of biodiversity (the variety of life on earth) is an essential element of sustainable development.</p> |
| <b>Environment (Wales) Act 2016</b>                                                      | <p>The Environment (Wales) Act puts in place the legislation needed to plan and manage Wales' natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up way. Part 1 relates to the sustainable management of natural resources. This ensures that the way in which the use of and the impacts on natural resources do not result in long term decline. The aim is to sustainably manage natural resources in a way and rate that meets the needs of present and current generations without compromising the needs of future generations.</p> <p>The Act also contains at section 7, a duty for the Welsh Ministers prepare and publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in their opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in relation to Wales. This section replaces the duty in section 42 of the NERC Act 2006.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>The Protection of Badgers Act 1992</b>                                                | <p>The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to wilfully take, kill, injure or ill-treat a badger, possess a dead badger or any part of a badger. Setts interference includes damaging or destroying a sett, obstructing access to a sett, and disturbing a badger whilst it is occupying a sett. The Act defines a badger sett as 'any structure or place, which displays signs indicating the current use by a badger' and Natural England takes this definition to include seasonally used setts.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

| Legislation                            | Brief Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                        | Work that may disturb badgers or their setts is illegal without a development licence from the relevant statutory body.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>The Hedgerow Regulations (1997)</b> | <p>The Hedgerow Regulations (1997) make provision for the protection of important hedgerows in England and Wales. The regulations affect hedgerows which are 20 m or more in length, or connected at both ends to another hedgerow of any length.</p> <p>They relate to hedgerows which are on, or adjoining land used for the following purposes: agriculture or forestry; the breeding or keeping of horses, ponies or donkeys; common land; village greens; and SSSIs (They do not include hedges that are attached to, or marking the boundaries of a private house. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly remove or cause or permit another person to remove a hedgerow or intentionally or recklessly remove, or cause or permit another person to remove, a hedgerow which is the subject of a hedgerow retention notice.</p> |

## National Planning Policy

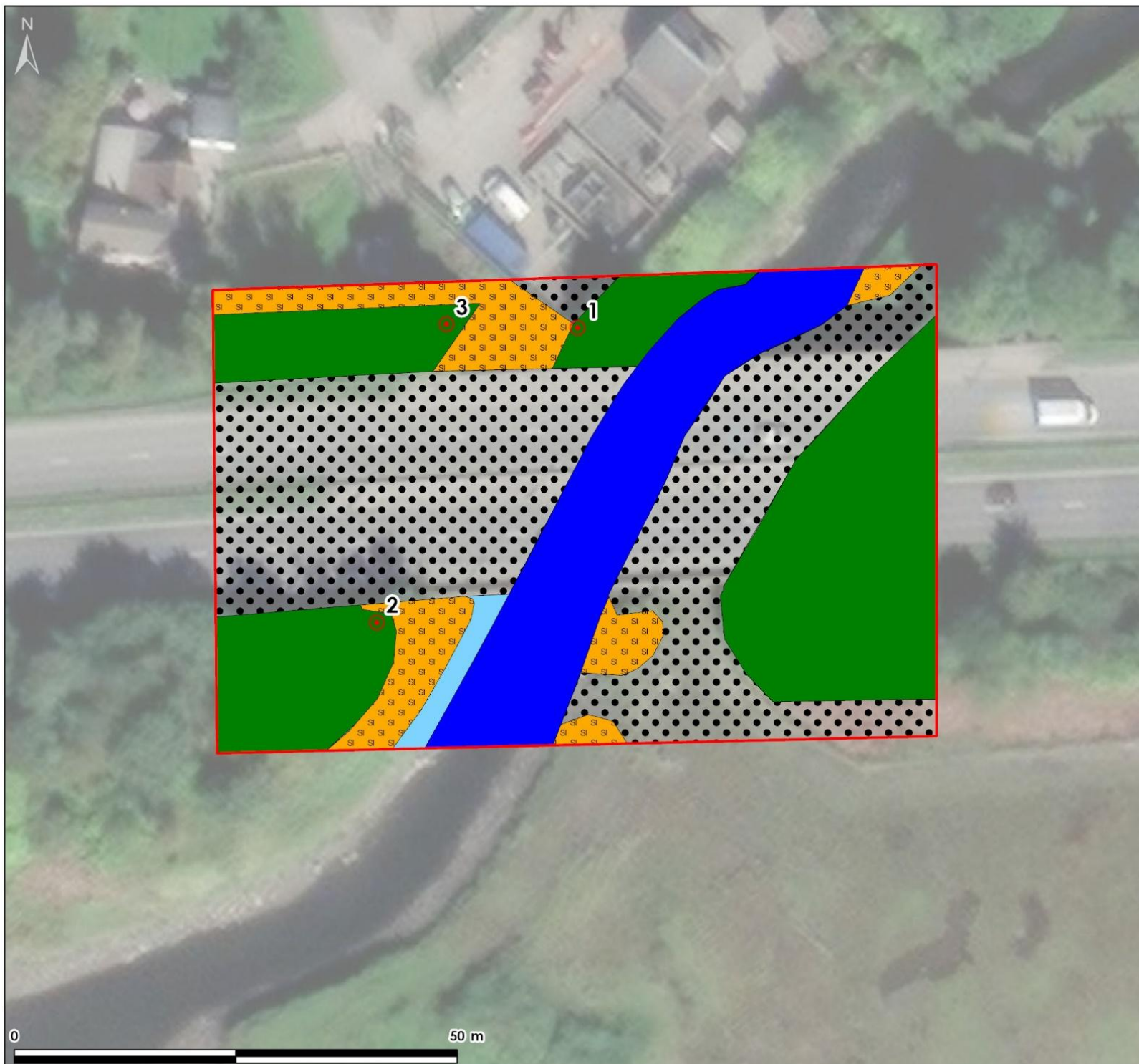
**Planning Policy Wales** (11th Ed. February 2021) sets out the land use planning policies of Welsh Government. It provides the policy framework for the preparation of Local Development Plans. Chapter 6, Distinctive and Natural Places, outlines Welsh Government's objectives for the conservation and improvement of natural heritage.

The Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is supplemented by a series of Technical Advice Notes. **TAN 5** provides guidance on how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. It provides advice on areas including the key principles of positive planning for nature conservation, nature conservation in Local Development Plans and development management procedures. It also provides advice on development affecting designated sites and habitats, in addition to protected or priority habitats and species.

Key Principles include that the town and country planning system in Wales should integrate nature conservation into all planning decisions; that the town and country planning system should look for development to provide a net benefit for biodiversity conservation with no significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and that they should ensure that the UK's international and national obligations for site, species and habitat protection are fully met in all planning decisions.

**Appendix B**  
**Phase 1 Habitat Map**





## Legend

— Indicative Redline Boundary

● Target Notes

### Phase 1 Survey

#### Woodland and scrub

■ A.1.1.1 (Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland)

#### Grassland and marsh

■ B.2.2 (Semi-improved neutral grassland)

#### Swamp, marginal and inundation

■ F.1 (Swamp)

#### Open water

■ G.2 (Running water)

#### Miscellaneous

■ J.4 (Bare ground)

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| P1 | S2 | 04/08/2026 | First Issue | TR | CI | IB |
| V. | S. | Date       | Description | B. | C. | A. |

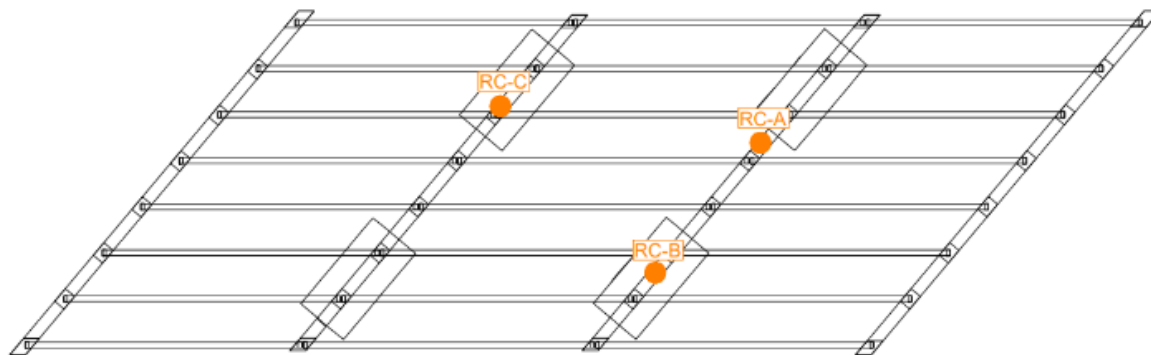


4th Floor, James William House,  
9 Museum Pl, Cardiff CF10 3BD

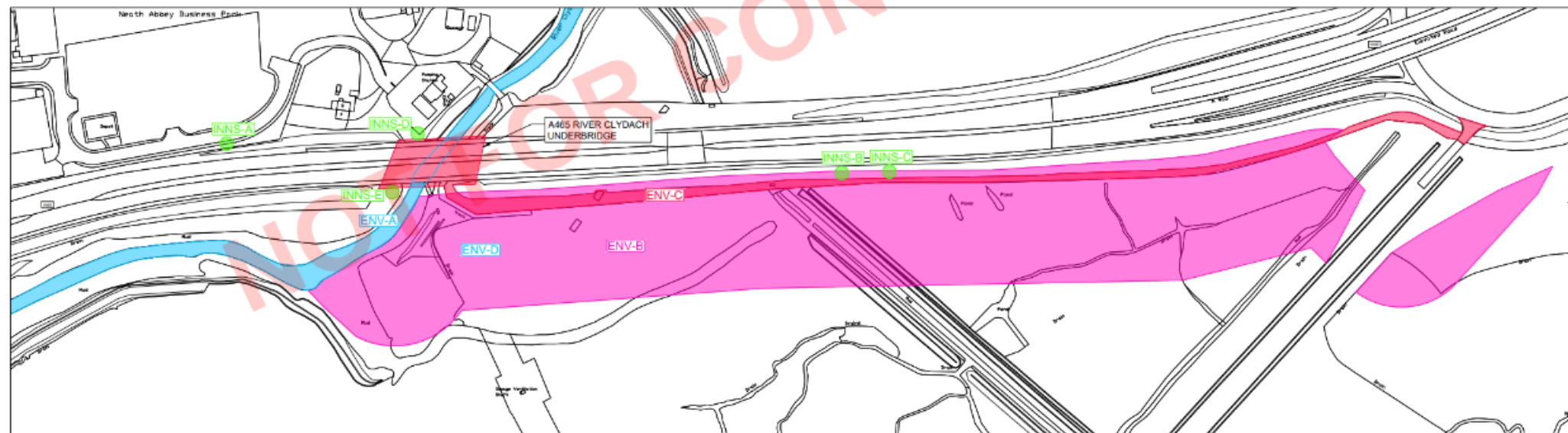
Alun Griffiths Contractors  
A465 Clydach River Bridge  
Phase 1 Survey

Drawing no.: 61593\_DWG\_Phase1Survey

**Appendix C**  
**Site Plan: Proposed Works and Location**



RIVER CLYDACH UNDERBRIDGE PLAN  
SCALE 1:200



PLAN  
SCALE 1:1250

TABLE 1. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS KEY

| REFERENCE                               | DESCRIPTION                                                   | DESIGNER'S RISK ASSESSMENT REFERENCE |
|-----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| RC-A & RC-B                             | PRESENCE OF BATS PREVIOUSLY CONFIRMED WITHIN EXPANSION JOINT. | 20                                   |
| RC-C                                    | PRESENCE OF BATS PREVIOUSLY SUSPECTED WITHIN EXPANSION JOINT. | 20                                   |
| ENV-A                                   | RIVER CLYDACH (TIDAL)                                         | 3, 4, 25 & 26                        |
| ENV-B                                   | COASTAL SALT MARSH AND SALINE REEDBEDS.                       | 3, 4, 25 & 26                        |
| ENV-C                                   | EXISTING ACCESS TRACK.                                        | 3, 4, 25 & 26                        |
| ENV-D                                   | ADJACENT WORKING FARM & LIVESTOCK.                            | 21 & 22                              |
| INNS-A, INNS-B, INNS-C, INNS-D & INNS-E | JAPANESE KNOTWEED.                                            | 19                                   |

**HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION**  
REFER TO DESIGN RISK ASSESSMENT DRA  
DOCUMENT SP06\_301-ATK-SBR-SWTRA-03-RA-CB-000002  
FOR DETAILS OF THE IDENTIFIED RISKS.

**SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION**

In addition to the hazards/risks normally associated with the types of work detailed on this drawing, note the following significant residual risks (Reference shall also be made to the design hazard log).

Construction  
SIGNIFICANT RISKS ARE SHOWN WITHIN TABLE 1 OF THIS DRAWING.

Maintenance / Clearing

None

Use

None

Decommissioning / Demolition

None

| Checker    | Revised    | Drawn   | Checked | Reviewed | Authorised | Issue Date |
|------------|------------|---------|---------|----------|------------|------------|
| FOR TENDER |            |         |         |          |            |            |
| Checker    | FOR TENDER | Revised | Drawn   | Checked  | Reviewed   | Authorised |
| Issue Date | 02         | PO1     | DR      | SA       | BP         | 13/03/25   |
| FOR TENDER |            |         |         |          |            |            |
| Checker    | FOR TENDER | Revised | Drawn   | Checked  | Reviewed   | Authorised |
| Issue Date | 02         | PO2     | DR      | SA       | BP         | 30/04/25   |
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| Issue Date | 02         | PO3     | DR      | SA       | BP         | 01/05/25   |

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FOR TENDER

Sheet

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Project Title

A465 60 River Clydach Underbridge

Drawing Title

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

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