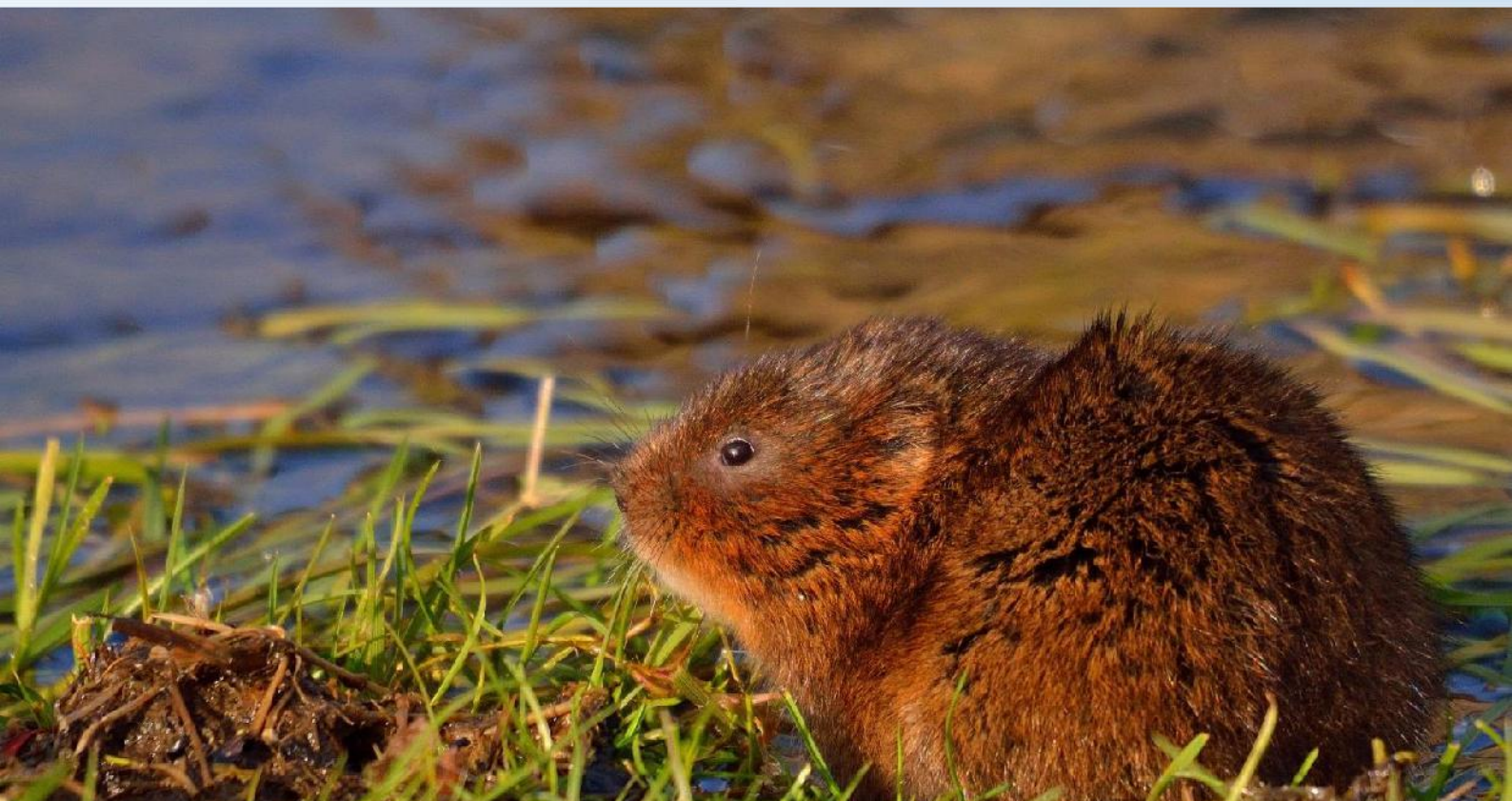




Parc Ynni Calon y Gwynt

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Appendix 5K: Main Site Riparian Mammal Report



Parc Ynni Calon y Gwynt

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Appendix 5K: Main Site Riparian Mammal Report

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WSP

1 Capital Quarter

Tyndall Street

Cardiff

CF10 4BZ

Phone: +44 2920 769 200

WSP.com



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Prepared by	Lokender Thakur			
Signature				
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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
--------------------------	----------

1. INTRODUCTION	1
------------------------	----------

1.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND	1
1.2. ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	1
1.3. LEGAL PROTECTION OF RIPARIAN SPECIES	2
1.4. BRIEF AND OBJECTIVES	2

2. METHODS	3
-------------------	----------

2.1. OVERVIEW	3
2.2. OTTER AND WATER VOLE SURVEY	3
2.3. NOTES AND LIMITATIONS	3

3. RESULTS	4
-------------------	----------

3.1. OVERVIEW	4
---------------	---

4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	5
--	----------

5. FIGURES	6
-------------------	----------

TABLES

Table 5K-1 - Survey Results	4
-----------------------------	---

FIGURES

Figure 5K-1 – Site Location Plan	6
Figure 5K-2 – Waterbodies and survey Results	6

ANNEXES

ANNEX 5K.1

PHOTOGRAPHS

ANNEX 5K.2

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WSP UK Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'WSP') was commissioned by Wind2 Ltd to undertake riparian mammal surveys in support of the prospective Parc Ynni Calon Y Gwynt (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). It is understood that the Proposed Development will comprise up to 11 turbine locations, a temporary construction compound, on-site substation and control building, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and new and upgrade to existing access tracks.

The location of the Proposed Development, hereafter referred to as the 'Site', is centred on British National Grid (BNG) reference SO 001 983. It is located on the hills to the north of the A470 trunk road, approximately 3.5km east of the village of Carno, 3.5km north of the village of Pontdolgoch and 12km north-west of Newtown.

Previous ecological surveys identified suitable habitat within and surrounding the Site for otters and water vole, in the form of waterbodies and slow-flowing and steep banked ditches within the Site.

To establish whether otter and water vole are present or likely absent, watercourses and associated habitats that would be affected by the Proposed Development, including 200m upstream and downstream of the locations within the Proposed Development footprint (Survey Area) were surveyed where safe and accessible. Two surveys were undertaken to account for the optimal survey window and the methodology followed current good practice guidelines^{1,2}.

During the surveys no water vole evidence was recorded, and the watercourses were considered of low suitability to support water vole. Water voles are considered likely absent from the Survey Area.

Limited evidence of otters was recorded during the surveys suggesting watercourses may be used for commuting by otters. A potential otter holt was identified but due to suboptimal habitat suitability, limited on-site food availability, it is unlikely that otter would be affected by the Proposed Development. However, pre-construction surveys are recommended at least eight weeks prior to works commencing.

It is recommended that the design of any culverts should be of sufficient diameter to allow otter to commute through. Avoidance measures, to be secured in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), are recommended to minimise effects on commuting and foraging otters and water voles.

The findings presented in this report represent those at the time of survey. Otter and water vole are transient in nature, therefore new holt sites or burrows may occur subsequent to this report. Therefore, a pre-works check is recommended at least eight weeks prior to works commencing.

¹ Chanin, P., (2003) Monitoring the Otter, *Lutra lutra*. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No. 10., English Nature, Peterborough.

² Dean, M., Strachan, R., Gow, D. and Andrews, R. (2016) The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series). Eds Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The Mammal Society, London.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. WSP UK Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'WSP')³ was commissioned by Wind2 Ltd to undertake riparian mammal surveys in support of the prospective Parc Ynni Calon Y Gwynt (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development'). It is understood that the Proposed Development will comprise up to 11 turbine locations, a temporary construction compound, on-site substation and control building, Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) and new and upgrade to existing access tracks.
- 1.1.2. The location of the Proposed Development, hereafter referred to as the 'Site', is centred on British National Grid (BNG) reference SO 001 983. It is located on the hills to the north of the A470 trunk road, approximately 3.5km east of the village of Carno, 3.5km north of the village of Pontdolgoch and 12km north-west of Newtown.
- 1.1.3. An Access Road is proposed to extend 4.6km south from the Site, to comprise 3.1km of new Access Road, and 1.5km of upgrades to an existing road. In this report, when discussed together, the Site and the Access Road are referred to as the 'Combined Site'. The Site boundary is shown in **Figure 5K-1**. The access route is not included in the red line boundary on **Figure 5K-1**, as this was surveyed for riparian mammals separately (see **Appendix 5L: Access Road Riparian Mammal Survey Report**).

1.2. ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the Site was produced by WSP in May 2024 (see **Appendix 5A: Main Site Preliminary Ecological Appraisal**). The PEA identified suitable habitat within and surrounding the Site for otter *Lutra lutra*. This was in the form of waterbodies and slow-flowing and steep banked ditches within the Site. The PEA also identified suitable water vole *Arvicola amphibious* habitat in the form of slow-flowing and steep banked ditches throughout the Site. The desk study undertaken for the PEA in May 2024 returned one record of otter from last ten years within 1km of the Combined Site. The record was located approximately 2.54km south of the Site.
- 1.2.2. The PEA therefore recommended that otter and water vole surveys were completed on watercourses and associated habitats, including 200m upstream and downstream of the Site. This was to determine the presence or likely absence of otters and water vole within the Site.
- 1.2.3. Riparian mammal surveys on the Access Road were undertaken over two visits in June and July 2024. No evidence of otter was recorded during these surveys however the watercourses were considered to be suitable for commuting otters. Woodlands surrounding watercourses within the access road were considered to be suitable for otter resting places. Full details of the survey, results and subsequent recommendations are presented within **Appendix 5L: Access Road Riparian Mammal Survey Report**.

³ WSP have provided this report solely for the use of the recipient and accepts no liability to any third parties or any other party using or reviewing the report or any part thereof. WSP makes no warranties or guarantees, actual or implied, in relation to this report, or the ultimate commercial, technical, economic, or financial effect on the project to which it relates, and bears no responsibility or liability related to its use other than as set out within the scope of the contract under which it was supplied.

1.3. LEGAL PROTECTION OF RIPARIAN SPECIES

- 1.3.1. Otter and water vole are protected under the following national nature conservation legislation:
- Section 7 of the Environment Wales Act (2016)⁴; and
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA)⁵.
- 1.3.2. Otters are additionally protected under:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations')⁶.
- 1.3.3. The context and applicability of this legislation is explained within **Annex 5K.2 – Policy and Legislation**.
- 1.3.4. Planning Policy Wales (PPW)⁷ 2024 forms the basis for planning system decisions with respect to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and the species it supports, including otter and water vole. The policy sets out that the planning system should protect and enhance biodiversity by promoting the protection and recovery of priority species populations. Paragraph 6.4.35 of PPW (2024) states that the presence of protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal.

1.4. BRIEF AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.4.1. Wind2 Ltd. commissioned WSP to complete a riparian mammal survey of waterbodies and associated habitats that would be affected by the Proposed Development, including 200m upstream and downstream of the locations within the Proposed Development footprint wherever safe and accessible (Survey Area) in accordance with good practice guidance^{8,9}; The survey aimed to:
- Establish whether otter is present within the Survey Area and determine the distribution of otter and confirm presence or absence of holts or resting places within the Survey Area;
 - Establish whether water vole is present or likely absent from the Survey Area;
 - If present, evaluate the value of the Survey Area for otter and water vole and make recommendations as to how proposals should account for otter and water vole with respect to legislation, planning and biodiversity policy.
- 1.4.2. The results of this survey, and subsequent recommendations, are included within this report.

⁴ Welsh Government. (2016). The Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

⁵ His Majesty's Stationary Office (HMSO) (1981). Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000)

⁶ HMSO (2017). The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitat Regulations).

⁷ Welsh Assembly Government (2024). Planning Policy Wales. Edition 12.

⁸ Chanin, P., (2003) Monitoring the Otter, Lutra lutra. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No. 10., English Nature, Peterborough.

⁹ Dean, M., Strachan, R., Gow, D. and Andrews, R. (2016) The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series). Eds Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The Mammal Society, London.

2. METHODS

2.1. OVERVIEW

- 2.1.1. To establish whether otter and water vole are present or likely absent within the Survey Area, a combined survey approach was undertaken due to the cross-over in habitat and survey methodology of these species. Two surveys were conducted by surveyors experienced in undertaking similar surveys, on 28 August 2025 and 31 March 2026 and the methodology followed current good practice guidelines^{8,9}.

2.2. OTTER AND WATER VOLE SURVEY

- 2.2.1. Seven waterbodies were identified during survey within the Survey Area where access was possible. The locations of the water bodies surveyed are shown on **Figure 5K-2**.
- 2.2.2. The survey included the following:
- 2.2.3. The recording of habitat variables and features relevant to water voles and otters (for example: general habitat type, shore/bank substrate, bordering land use, vegetation, disturbance level, bank profile, water depth).
- 2.2.4. Field signs for otter: animals (alive or dead), feeding/prey remains, spraints, other secretions, pathways, slides, paw prints, holts and couches. Features that have high potential to be attractive to otters were examined, including bases of large trees, dense vegetation, confluences of waterbodies, culverts and disused badger *Meles meles* holes.
- Field signs for water vole: droppings, latrines, feeding stations, burrows, 'lawns', nests, footprints and runways in vegetation.
- 2.2.5. The presence of any field signs or evidence relating to other relevant wildlife such as mink *Neovison vison* or brown rat *Rattus norvegicus* were also recorded. Information was recorded using a Geographic Information System (GIS) to record the location of each field sign or feature, with photographs taken, and details recorded.

2.3. NOTES AND LIMITATIONS

- 2.3.1. Every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the Survey Area; however, the following specific limitations apply to this assessment:
- 2.3.2. The findings presented in this report represent those at the time of survey and reporting. Otter and water vole are transient in nature, therefore new holt sites or burrows may occur subsequent to this report.
- 2.3.3. Watercourse 4 and watercourse 5 were surveyed for 150m and 30m downstream respectively before they flowed into a steep ravine. Llyn Mawr was not surveyed due to access issues and was also outside the Site boundary.
- 2.3.4. This finding is considered valid for a period of two years (until March 2028), in the absence of any significant changes in site management.

3. RESULTS

3.1. OVERVIEW

3.1.1. A total of seven watercourses were surveyed within the Site on two occasions to account for seasonal variation in the riparian mammal activity. The watercourses comprise narrow streams, shallow channels, trenches and ephemeral features, with variable flow ranging from dry or seasonally dry channels to free-flowing sections with low water depths. Vegetation around the banks of watercourses was dominated by grazed grassland, rushes *Juncus* spp., tussocky grassland and locally marshy vegetation. Most watercourses showed evidence of livestock poaching, shallow water depths or periodic drying, limiting their suitability for riparian mammals. The results of the surveys are summarised in below. The location of watercourses and survey results are also shown in **Figure 5K-2**. The Photographs of each watercourse are shown in **Annex 5K.1**.

Table 5K-1 - Survey Results

Watercourse No.	Otter	Water Vole
1	Watercourse dry at time of survey; no evidence of otters identified and no foraging or resting habitat.	Watercourse dry with grazed banks; not suitable for water vole. No evidence recorded.
2	No resting sites identified; otter spraint (see Figure 5K-2) recorded during both surveys approximately 5–10 m north of a culvert, indicating likely use as a commuting corridor rather than foraging habitat.	Habitat considered suitable to support water vole; no confirmed signs (no burrows, latrines or feeding remains) recorded during either visit.
3	No evidence of otter; no resting opportunities noted.	Ephemeral channel; not suitable for water vole.
4	No evidence of otter; shallow, narrow channel with limited habitat suitability for foraging and resting.	Low suitability due to shallow water depths and livestock poaching; no evidence recorded.
5	No evidence of otter; very shallow and partially dry stony channel with limited connectivity.	Very low suitability; shaded and stony channel; shallow and partially dry with livestock poaching. No evidence recorded
6	No evidence of otter; free-flowing in places but shallow with no suitable resting sites.	Not assessed as suitable; ephemeral sections and limited bank structure. No evidence recorded.
7	No confirmed resting sites; a potential otter holt recorded, tall and narrow, with a depth of approx. 1.5m (see Figure 5K-2), though occupancy could not be confirmed. Potential otter holt is approximately 91m from the existing track. Watercourse is unlikely to support fish but may be used for commuting.	Habitat suitable to support water vole; no confirmed evidence recorded. Small mammal burrows noted but considered too small for water vole; no latrines or feeding stations observed.

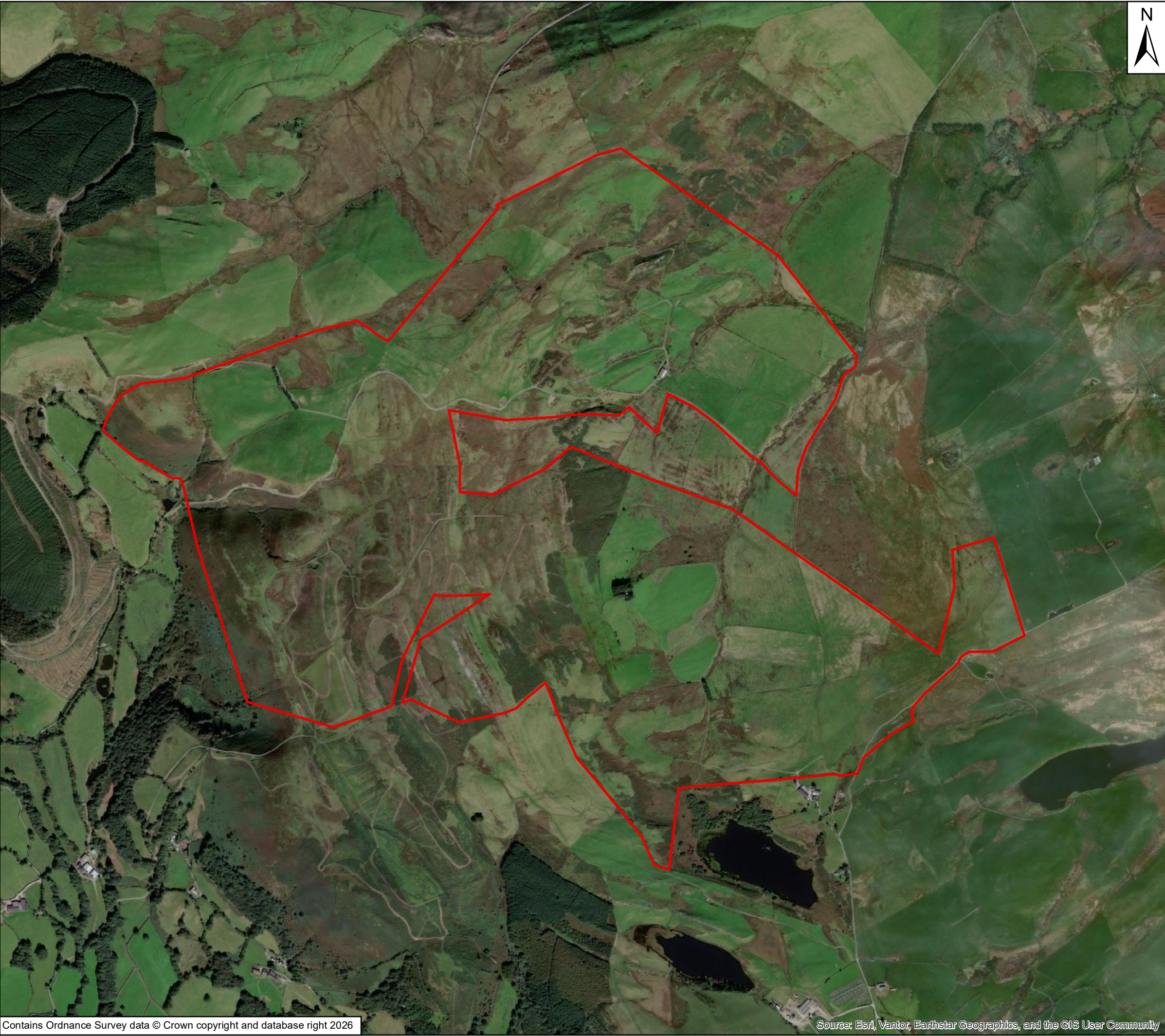
4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1.1. Given the absence of water vole evidence during two survey visits and the low suitability of the watercourses, water voles are considered likely absent from the Survey Area. Therefore, no avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures focussed specifically on this species are required.
- 4.1.2. Limited evidence of otters was recorded during the surveys comprising an otter spraint and potential otter holt, suggesting watercourses may be used for by otters. The potential holt is located approximately 91m from the existing access track which leads to T11. It was assessed unlikely to represent a natal otter holt due to suboptimal habitat suitability, limited on-site food availability. As such, it is unlikely that otter would be affected during construction or operation of the Proposed Development. Therefore, based on these results and subject to works being situated at a minimum distance of 50m (at the closest point) from the potential holt no additional mitigation measures are necessary. However, pre-construction surveys are needed and the findings of these will confirm final requirements.
- 4.1.3. It is recommended that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is produced. An outline CEMP (oCEMP) has been produced and submitted alongside the ES, and details the following measures with respect to otters:
- Provision of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to carry out pre-construction surveys and advise on ecological and environmental matters during the construction of the Proposed Development;
 - Covering of excavations at night (or provision of an escape route);
 - Restrictions to vehicle movement outside of daylight hours and speed controls;
 - Night working restrictions;
 - Restrictions on light spill onto habitats that may be used by otter;
 - Design of any culverts such that the diameter is large enough for otter to pass through;
 - Pollution prevention measures;
 - Noise, vibration and dust control measures; and
 - Biosecurity measures.

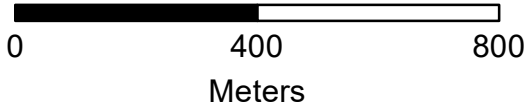
5. FIGURES

Figure 5K-1 – Site Location Plan

Figure 5K-2 – Waterbodies and survey Results

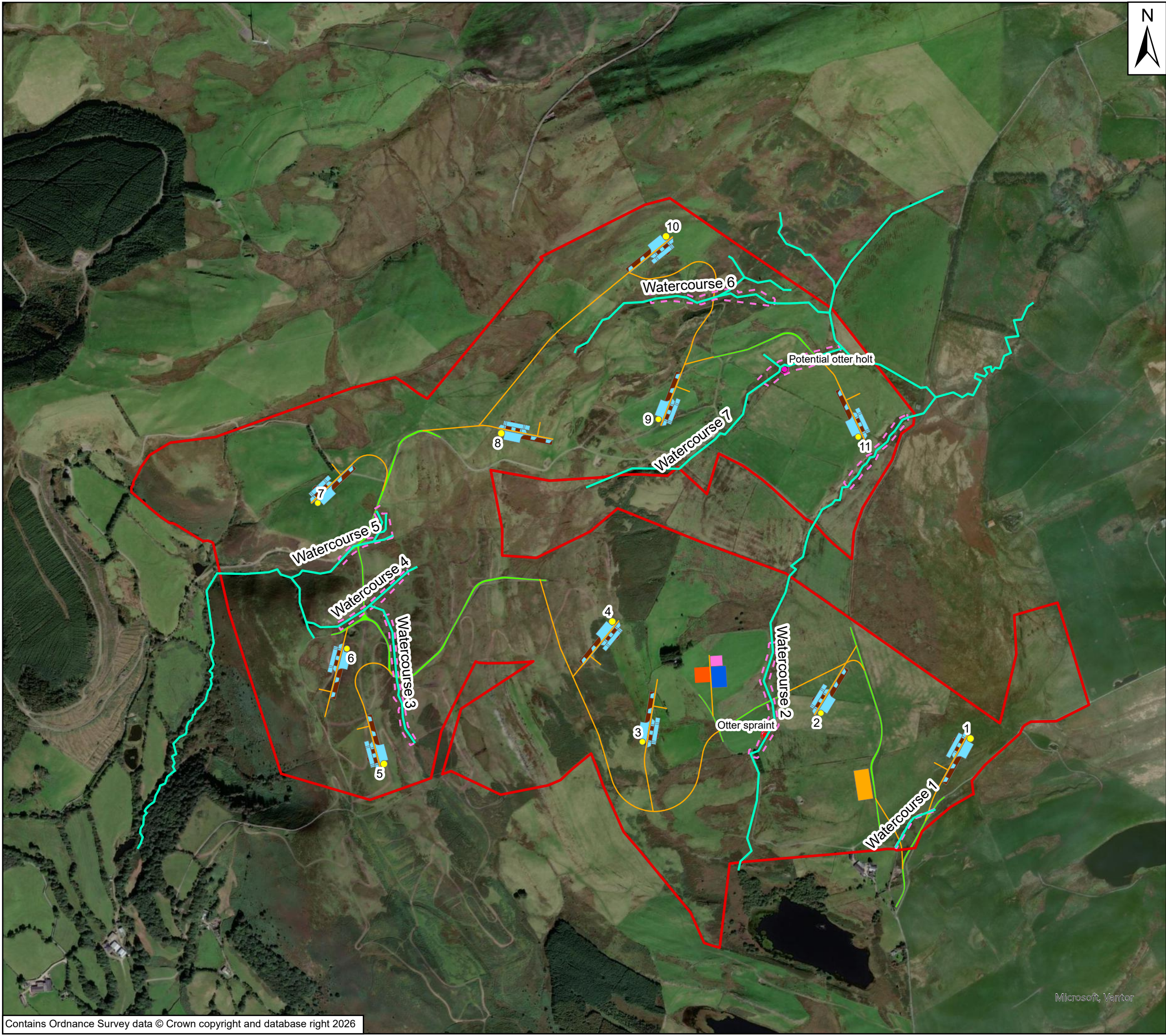


Key
 Site



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Project:	Parc Ynni Calon y Gwynt		
Title:	Site Location Plan		
Drawing No:	Figure 5K.1	Drawn:	LT
Date:	06/05/2026	Checked:	MB
Scale:	12,500 @ A3	Approved:	ET

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N

Key

Site Boundary

Survey Area

Turbines

Existing Access Tracks

Turbine Crane Pad

Substation Compound

Temporary Construction Compound

BESS Compound

Clear Working Areas

New Access Track

Watercourses

Survey Results

Otter spraint

Potential otter holt

0250500

Metres

wsp

Client:

Wind2 Ltd.

Project:

Parc Ynni Calon y Gwynt

Title

Waterbodies and Survey Results

Drawing No:

Figure 5K.2

Date:

6/18/2026

Scale:

1:12,000 @ A3

Drawn:

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Checked:

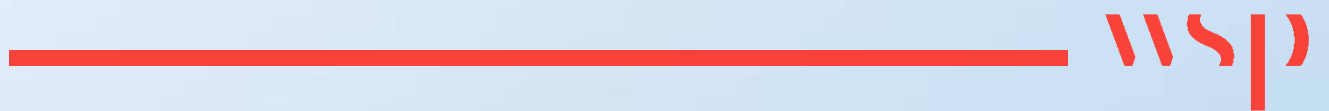
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Approved:

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Annex 5K.1

PHOTOGRAPHS



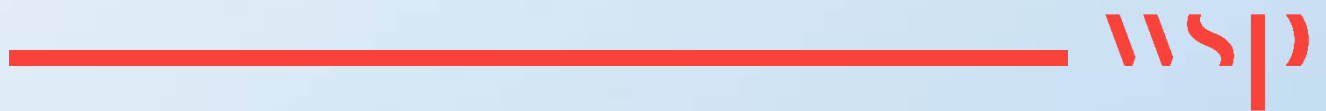
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Watercourse 3 SN 99519 97977	
Watercourse 4 SN 99412 98198	

Feature and Grid Reference	Photographs
Watercourse 5 SN 99386 98403	
Watercourse 6 SO 00251 99191	
Watercourse 7 SO 00779 98980	

Feature and Grid Reference	Photographs
	

Annex 5K.2

LEGISLATION AND POLICY



LEGISLATION

OTTER

The otter is classified as a European protected species and is listed on Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. This species is subject to the provisions of Regulation 41 of those Regulations. Otters are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, these pieces of legislation make it an offence to:

- intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill otter;
- possess or control any live or dead specimens or any part of, or anything derived from;
- deliberately disturb otter; or
- intentionally, deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy an otter holt or resting place, or obstruct access to such a place.

Otter are also listed as a Species of Principal Importance (SPI) for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Wales in accordance with Section 7 of the Environment Wales Act (2016). Under Section 7, public bodies have a duty to have regard for the conservation of SPI when carrying out their functions.

WATER VOLE

Water vole are fully protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended), meaning it is an offence to kill, injure or take this species; damage or destroy places of rest or shelter, or disturb this species whilst occupying a place of rest or shelter.

Otter are also listed as a Species of Principal Importance (SPI) for the Conservation of Biodiversity in Wales in accordance with Section 7 of the Environment Wales Act (2016). Under Section 7, public bodies have a duty to have regard for the conservation of SPI when carrying out their functions.

Due to the high level of protection afforded to both otter and water vole, and their habitat, mitigation for this species is governed by a strict licensing procedure administered by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) (normally, planning permission must be obtained before a licence can be sought). Licencing is subject to three tests, as defined under the Habitats Regulations, these must also be applied by the planning authority before granting permission for activities affecting dormice. For permission to be granted the following criteria must be satisfied:

- The proposal is necessary *‘to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment’*;
- ‘There is no satisfactory alternative’; and
- The proposals ‘will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range’.

PLANNING POLICY COMPLIANCE

Planning Policy Wales (2018) states that ‘*development plan strategies, policies and development proposals should be formulated to look to the long-term protection and enhancement of the special characteristics and intrinsic qualities of natural environments.... Biodiversity loss should be reversed, pollution reduced, environmental risks addressed and overall resilience of ecosystems improved.... This means both protecting and enhancing landscapes, habitats, biodiversity...*’.

Otter and Water vole are also priority species under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act, 2016. They can therefore be a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal (as per the ODPM circular 06/2005 (Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2002)).

The reader should refer to the original legislation for the definitive interpretation.



1 Capital Quarter
Tyndall Street
Cardiff
CF10 4BZ

wsp.com