



Parc Ynni Calon y Gwynt

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Appendix 5L: Access Road Riparian Mammal
Report





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LEGISLATION AND POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. WSP UK Ltd. (WSP) was commissioned by Wind2 to provide ecological support services including a riparian mammal survey to support the construction of an access road which would facilitate the construction of the Parc Ynni Calon y Gwynt, Powys, mid-Wales (approximate central grid reference: SO 001 983) (hereafter referred to as the 'Main Site').
- 1.1.2. The Main Site is located on the hills to the north of the A470 trunk road, approximately 3.5 km east of the village of Carno, 3.5 km north of the village of Pontdolgoch and 12 km north-west of Newtown. To facilitate the construction of the Energy Park on the Main Site, an access road is required to be constructed (hereafter referred to as the 'Combined Site'). The access road is planned to extend for approximately 4km from the southern grid reference SO 01372 93553 to the northern grid reference SO 01139 97325, at which point the access road joins with the Main Site. The route will bisect farmland, hedgerows, woodland and scrub and will connect the A470 to the Energy Park. The access road will hereafter be referred to as the 'Site' and works to facilitate its construction will hereafter be referred to as the 'Access Road'. The Access Road is shown within **Figure 5L-1**, which consists of a central line (the Site) and a 20m buffer each side of the indicative line.

1.2. ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the Access Road and the Main Site were produced separately by WSP in April and May 2024 respectively^{1,2}. Desk studies carried out as part of the PEAs did not identify any records of water vole *Arvicola amphibious*, however, a single otter *Lutra lutra* record was identified approximately 1km from the Combined Site. The PEAs identified watercourses with suitability to support otter and water vole. It was recommended that riparian mammal surveys were completed on watercourses and associated habitats bisected by the Access Road (**Figure 5L-1**) including 200m upstream and downstream to confirm suitability for riparian mammals and confirm presence / likely absence. The Main Site has been subject to separate riparian mammal surveys, the results of which are details in **Appendix 5K**.

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); and
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA).
- 1.3.2. Otters are additionally protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations')³.
- 1.3.3. The context and applicability of this legislation is explained within **Annex 5L.2 – Policy and Legislation**.

¹ WSP UK Ltd. (2024a). Calon Y Gwynt Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) - Access Road. April 2024.

² WSP UK Ltd. (2024b). Calon Y Gwynt Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) - Main Site. May 2024.

³ His Majesty's Stationary Office (2017). The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitat Regulations)

- 1.3.4. Planning Policy Wales 2024 (PPW)⁴ 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 commissioned WSP to complete a riparian mammal survey in accordance with good practice guidance^{5,6}. The survey aimed to:
- Establish the presence and likely distribution otter within the Survey Area including the 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; and
 - If these species are likely to be present, assess the value of the Survey Area for otter and make recommendations as to how proposals should account for otter 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 Assembly Government (2024). Planning Policy Wales. Edition 12.

⁵ Chanin, P., (2003) Monitoring the Otter, *Lutra lutra*. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No. 10., English Nature, Peterborough,

⁶ 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 were present or likely absent, a survey was completed with regard for current good practice guidance^{5,6}. The survey comprised two visits to determine suitability for these species to utilise water features within the survey area and to identify otter and water vole field signs. The location of the water features are shown on **Figure 5L.1**. For simplicity the methods used for otter and water vole surveys have been combined below.

2.2. OTTER AND WATER VOLE SURVEY

- 2.2.1. Watercourses bisected by the Access Road were surveyed 200m upstream and downstream over the course of the two visits.
- 2.2.2. The survey comprised two visits in the summer of 2024, each included the following:
- 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);
 - 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* entrances; and
 - Field signs for water vole: droppings, latrines, feeding stations, burrows, 'lawns', nests, footprints and runways in vegetation.
- 2.2.3. The presence of any field signs or evidence relating to other relevant wildlife such as badger, mink *Neovision vison* or brown rat *Rattus novegicus* were also recorded. For areas which could not be accessed, binoculars were used from a distance. 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.
- 2.2.4. The surveys were completed by competent surveyors with experience in undertaking otter and water vole surveys. The surveys were undertaken on the following dates:
- 16th June 2024; and
 - 29th July 2024.

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:
- 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.

- It was not possible to survey watercourse 5-7 (**Figure 5L.1**) during the first survey due to access. This was not considered to be a limitation, as the watercourses were dry during the second visit and thus considered unlikely to have been used by water vole or otter.

2.3.2. This finding is considered valid for a period of two years, in the absence of any significant changes in site management. However, an update extended Phase 1 habitat survey carried out in Spring 2026 identified no changes in the habitats within the Site and their suitability to support otter and water vole. Therefore, this finding is considered valid for a further two years, until Spring 2028.

3. RESULTS

3.1. OVERVIEW

- 3.1.1. No evidence of otter was recorded during the 2024 surveys (**Table 5L-1**). The watercourses were assessed as being only suitable to support commuting otter, with the woodlands surrounding watercourses 1-3 potentially providing suitable habitat for otter resting places. The watercourses surveyed are shown on **Figure 5L-1**. Photographs of watercourses surveyed are shown in **Annex 5L.1**.

Table 5L-1 - Summary of Results

Date	Description
Survey 1 - 16 th June 2024	- No evidence of otter or water vole was noted during the survey. - Watercourses 1-5 were surveyed during this survey. - Watercourses 1-5 were not considered to be suitable to support water vole, as they were either dry or lacked the emergent vegetation and bankside structure suitable for this species. - Watercourses 1-5 were considered suitable for commuting otter only. The watercourse were likely to be seasonally dry and unlikely to support a suitable food source for otter across the season. - The woodland surrounding watercourses 1-3 may be suitable to support otter resting places, although no evidence recorded.
Survey 2 - 29 th July 2024	- No evidence of otter noted during the survey. - Watercourses 1-7 were surveyed during this survey. - Watercourses 6 and 7 were dry at the time of survey.

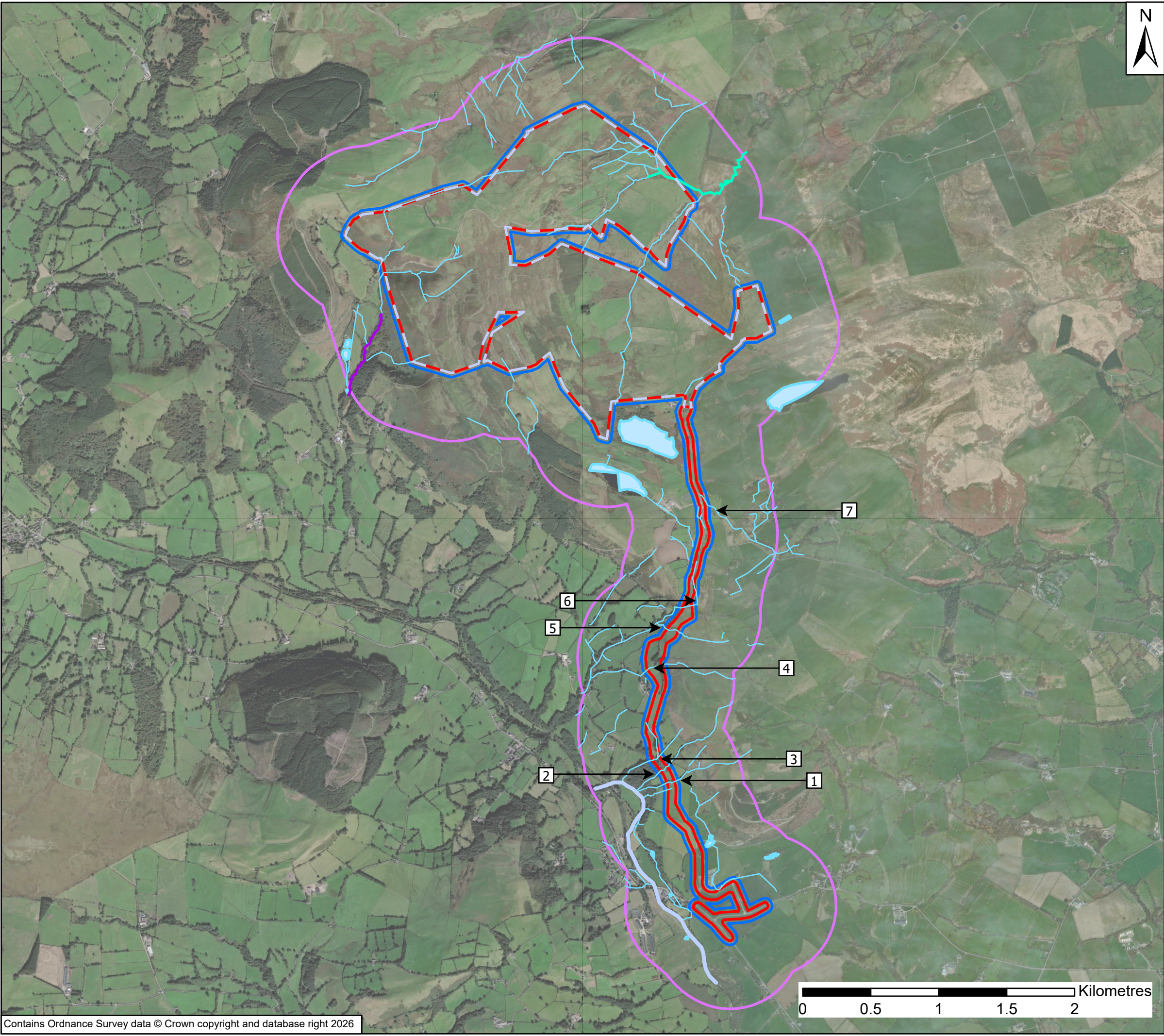
4. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1.1. Water voles were considered to be likely absent from the Survey Area at the time of survey; therefore, no avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures focussed specifically on this species are required. This finding is considered valid for a period of two years, in the absence of any significant changes in site management.
- 4.1.2. No evidence of otter was recorded during the surveys; however, the watercourses were considered to be suitable for otters to commute from the Afon Carno ~200m downstream into the wider landscape. It is possible that the woodlands surrounding watercourses 1-3 may be suitable to support otter resting places.
- 4.1.3. As otter are highly mobile, there is a risk that the resting places and potential holt locations may be used prior to commencement of the works, or new resting places begin to be used. As such, it is recommended that a pre-works check be carried out, at least 8 weeks prior to the start of any construction activities on site.
- 4.1.4. During construction, overnight works should be avoided, with lighting of the watercourse and retained riparian habitats kept to a minimum.
- 4.1.5. As it is understood that the watercourses are to be culverted, it is recommended that the design of any culverts should be of sufficient diameter (at a minimum of 150 mm) to allow otter to commute through.
- 4.1.6. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is recommended to be implemented to prevent pollution of the Afon Carno and the River Severn from the Proposed Development.

5. FIGURES

Figure 5L-1 - Water features within 500m of the site

Document Path: \\uk.wspgroup.com\central data\Discipline Management\Environmental\1. Service Lines\Ecology\9. Marketing & Bidding\4. Submitted Bids\5. Cardiff\2023\Calon Y Gwynt Wind Farm\IT\GIS\mxdl\CalonYGwent_ArcPro\CalonYGwent_NantCarno.mxd Date Saved: 6/17/2026 7:13 PM



Legend

- Combined Site
- Combined Survey Area
- Site
- 500m search area
- Standing waterbodies
- Unnamed river/stream
- Afon Carno
- Nant Cwmgerwyn
- Nant y Llyn Mawr
- Watercourse number



Client:

WIND2

Project:

CALON Y GWYNT
Riparian Mammal Survey Report

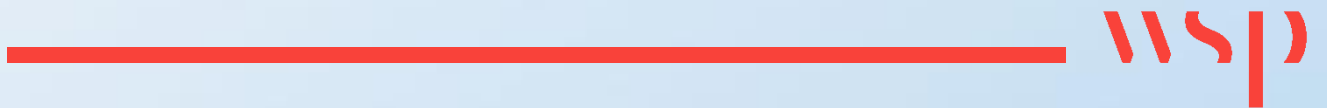
Title

Water Features within 500m of the Site

Drawing No:	Figure 5L.1	Drawn:	AS
Date:	6/17/2026	Checked:	MB
Scale:	1:27,000 @ A3	Approved:	MC

Annex 5L.1

RAW DATA



Feature and Grid Reference	Notes	Photo
Watercourse 1 SO 0099 9454	The watercourse is 1m wide at its widest point, dry unless heavy rain, heavily poached by livestock with no suitable emergent vegetation. The watercourse is considered to have negligible value for water vole. The water levels likely fluctuate with long periods of no/low water. The banks were also very limited in suitable vegetation with high levels of grazing. The watercourse is unlikely to support fish or any suitable food source for otter. It is likely that the watercourse is only suitable for commuting otter. No signs of otter noted, and watercourse is considered only likely to be used for commuting purposes. The watercourse joins the Afon Carno ~200m downstream. It is possible that there would be resting site for otter within the wider woodland, but none were noted during the survey.	
Watercourse 2 SO 01028 94676	Nant yr Amros is a seasonally dry ditch. The watercourse is considered to have negligible value for water vole. The water levels likely fluctuate with long periods of no/low water. The banks were also very limited in suitable vegetation with high levels of grazing. The watercourse is unlikely to support fish or any suitable food source for otter. No signs of otter noted, and watercourse is considered only likely to be used for commuting purposes. The watercourse joins the Afon Carno ~200m downstream. It is possible that there would be resting site for otter within the wider woodland, but none were noted during the survey. The watercourse leads into a man-made pond, roughly 25x15m no macrophyte cover, trees surrounding	

Feature and Grid Reference	Notes	Photo
	with approximately 70% shade, likely not stocked or waterfowl, potentially dry but not annually appears to be filled via culvert from watercourse.	
Watercourse 3 SO 0094 9472	The watercourse has shallow banks within no emergent vegetation. The water levels likely fluctuate with long periods of no/low water. The banks were also very limited in suitable vegetation with high levels of grazing. The watercourse is not considered suitable to support water vole and unlikely to support fish or any suitable food source for otter. It is anticipated that the watercourse is only suitable for otters to commute along. No signs of otter noted, and watercourse is considered unlikely to be of any importance for otter. The watercourse joins the Afon Carno ~200m downstream. It is possible that there would be resting site for otter within the wider woodland, but none were noted during the survey.	

Feature and Grid Reference	Notes	Photo
Watercourse 4 SO 00941 95408	The watercourse is considered to have negligible value for otter or water vole, as it is dry fully during the summer months.	
Watercourse 5	Dry at time of both surveys. Considered to be of negligible suitability to support otter.	NA
Watercourse 6	Dry at time of both surveys. Considered to be of negligible suitability to support otter.	NA
Watercourse 7	Dry at time of both surveys. Considered to be of negligible suitability to support otter.	NA

Annex 5L.2

LEGISLATION AND POLICY



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; or 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). Licensing 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 in both the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP). 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.



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