

Appendix 8G Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report



NGED

UPPER OGMORE GRID CONNECTION

Appendix 8G: Report to Inform Habitats
Regulations Assessment - Screening Report





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Appendix 8G: Report to Inform Habitats Regulations
Assessment - Screening Report

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QUALITY CONTROL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

National Grid Electricity Distribution commissioned WSP UK Ltd to provide ecological support for the Upper Ogmore grid connection project. The Proposed Works are to install overhead lines (OHL) and underground connections (UGC) to link with the Upper Ogmore Wind Farm. The Site is located south of Croeserw and centred at Grid Reference (E) 287980, (N) 194848. It is approximately 9km long split into four sections:

- 1.1 km western OHL;
- 1.7 km western UGC;
- 3.0 km eastern OHL; and
- 3.2 km eastern UGC.

This report provides information to enable the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA): Stage 1 Screening Assessment of the Proposed Works; in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The Site is located within 10 km of the Blackmill Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Blackmill Woodlands SAC is designated for habitat features and is not considered to be functionally linked to the Site.

Owing to the distance between the SAC and the Site, and the lack of impact pathways, the screening assessment identified that there will be no likely significant effects (LSE) on the Blackmill Woodlands SAC as a result of the Proposed Works alone or from in-combination effects.

The Proposed Works will not need to proceed to Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 WSP UK Ltd (hereafter referred to as 'WSP') has been commissioned by National Grid Electricity Distribution (NGED) to provide ecological support to support the proposed Upper Ogmores Grid Connection (the 'Proposed Works'). The Proposed Works are to install overhead lines (OHL) and underground cables (UGC) to link with the Upper Ogmores Wind Farm. The 'Site' is located within Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) and Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council (NPTCBC). The Site (**Figure 8.1** of the EIA report) is located south of Croeserw and centred at Grid Reference (E) 287980, (N) 194848
- 1.1.2 The Proposed Works is approximately 9 km long split into four sections:
- 1.1 km western OHL;
 - 1.7 km western UGC;
 - 3.0 km eastern OHL; and
 - 3.2 km eastern UGC.

1.2 THE HABITATS REGULATIONS

- 1.2.1 This report sets out information to support the 'Competent Authority' in undertaking their Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Stage 1: Screening Assessment of the Proposed Works. Stage 1 identifies the Likely Significant Effects (LSE) resulting from the Proposed Works, upon the qualifying interest features of International Sites¹.
- 1.2.2 The definition of 'International Site' for the purpose of this report is set out in Section 3, and includes any of the following:
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or candidate SAC (cSAC);
 - Special Protection Area (SPA) or potential SPA (pSPA); and
 - Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site) – as a matter of Welsh government policy.
- 1.2.3 This report has been produced with regard to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) ('The Regulations').
- 1.2.4 A description of the Proposed Works and associated ecological baseline assessments to inform the development are provided in Section 2.
- 1.2.5 The methodology for HRA Stage 1: Screening Assessment is set out in Section 3. The identified International Sites are described in Section 4 whilst consideration of potential effects of the

¹ 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.

Proposed Works upon the International Sites (including in-combination effects) and whether these are likely to be significant is provided in Section 5.

1.3 REPORT PURPOSE

1.3.1 The aims of this report are to:

- Introduce the Proposed Works and provide ecological context within the existing landscape;
- Identify the potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Works;
- Identify International Sites which lie within the Ecological Zone of Influence (EZol^{2,3}); and
- Identify whether any of the impacts associated with the Proposed Works, both alone and in combination with other plans or projects, could result in LSEs on any of the International Sites identified, and hence indicate whether further assessment of those impacts is required or not (i.e., through a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment).

² The CIEEM EcIA Guidelines define the EZol as the area over which important ecological features may be subject to significant effects resulting from a proposed works; this may extend beyond the footprint of the Proposed Works. The EZol may vary for each ecological feature due to the varying mobility range of the feature being assessed. For example, the EZol for otter (which are mobile) will be greater than the EZol for habitats (which are sedentary). The EZol also changes with the type of impact pathway, e.g excavation of land only affects habitat removal at the location of the impact, whereas a pollution incident adjacent to a watercourse may transmit impacts kilometres downstream.

³ CIEEM (2024). Guidelines For Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland. Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.3 – Updated September 2024 Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROPOSED WORKS

2.1.1 The Proposed Works will consist of the following:

UNDERGROUND CABLING WORK

- Installation of UGCs: underground cabling work will involve placing cables and ducts within trenches. An open cut method will be used to create the trenches along the existing road network and all works will follow the standard industry best practice technique for installation of underground cables⁴.

OVERHEAD LINE WORK

- Installation of OHL: carried on wooden H poles, consisting of two single wooden poles joined by a crossarm with bracing. At the termination points only, two sets of H poles will be located side by side. The poles will mostly be 12 m above ground level in height (extending to a maximum of 15 m in height), and span length between poles will be between 90 m and 130 m (influenced by topography and the surrounding environment). The OHL route will be installed as straight as possible although there will be some deviations to avoid environmental features such as trees, where practicable. The construction and maintenance of OHL will be in accordance with NGED (2024) Policy Document: OH6/4⁵

CREATION OF A TEMPORARY CONSTRUCTION COMPOUND

- Construction of a temporary compound to be used during the construction phase, The compound will measure approximately 30 m x 30 m and be located west of the Site, on an area of existing hard standing. No excavation or site clearance will be required to facilitate creation of the temporary construction compound.

OPERATION

- The Proposed Works will integrate the consented Upper Ogmores Wind Farm and will remain active for the duration of the wind farm operation (assumed up to 30 years).

DECOMMISSIONING

- The Proposed Works will be left in situ and has potential to become integrated into NGEDs wider distribution network.

⁴ NGED (2021) Standard Technique: CA6A/7, Relating to the Installation of Underground Cables. Available at: <https://www.nationalgrid.co.uk/documents/tech-info/underground-cable-construction/66000-volt>

⁵ NGED (2024) Policy Document: OH6/4, Construction, Maintenance and Replacement of Low Voltage Overhead Services. Available at: <https://www.nationalgrid.co.uk/documents/tech-info/overhead-construction>

2.1.2 It is anticipated that that works will begin in September 2028 and take nine months to complete. The works required and the order of their completion are listed as follows:

- Five months for trenching and laying the ducts;
- Three months for erecting overhead line poles; and
- One month for cable pull through and jointing works.

2.2 ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

2.2.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken in 2024 by CSA Environmental⁶, comprising a desk study and a UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey. The PEA identified potential ecological constraints to be considered for the Proposed Works.

2.2.2 The PEA identified Blackmill Woodlands SAC located approximately 9km south-east of the Site.

2.2.3 Additional protected species surveys of the Site were carried out for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*⁷, bats^{8 9}, and water vole *Arvicola arvensis*¹⁰. Ornithological surveys¹¹ were also completed.

2.2.4 The PEA and additional protected species surveys identified the Site and surrounding area to have potential to support bats, water vole, brown hare *Lepus europaeus*, harvest mouse *Micromys minutus*, a range of bird species, common reptile species, common amphibian species (excluding great crested newt), and terrestrial invertebrates.

2.2.5 The PEA recommended a HRA Stage 1: Screening assessment to determine whether the Proposed Works will result in LSEs on the designatory features of the Blackmill Woodlands SAC⁶.

⁶ CSA Environmental (2024). Upper Ogmores Wind Farm – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, August 2024. Report No: CSA/6891/01

⁷ CSA Environmental (2024). Upper Ogmores Wind Farm, Maesteg – Great Crested Newt Report, November 2024. Report No. CSA/6891/02

⁸ CSA Environmental (2024). Upper Ogmores Wind Farm – Bat Survey Report, November 2024. Report No: CSA/6891/03

⁹ WSP (2025). Upper Ogmores Grid Connection – Bat Aerial Tree Climbing Survey Report (July 2025).

¹⁰ CSA Environmental (2024). Foel Trawsnant Wind Farm – Water Vole Survey Report, November 2024. Report No: CSA/7086/04.

¹¹ WSP (2024) Upper Ogmores Grid Connection – Ornithology Survey Report.

3 HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT APPROACH

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 This section sets out the applicable methodologies and assumptions for the assessment of the Proposed Works with regards to the requirements of The Regulations.
- 3.1.2 The Regulations place a duty upon Competent Authorities to consider all plans or projects to determine if there is likely to be a significant effect on International Sites before permission can be granted. Should LSEs be identified during the screening process, it is necessary to further consider the effects by way of an 'Appropriate Assessment'. Overall, this process of assessment is known as the HRA, and further details of the applicable legislative context are summarised within Section 3.2 below.

3.2 HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT CONTEXT

LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

- 3.2.1 The Habitats Directive¹² is translated into UK law through the Habitats Regulations; Regulations 63 (1) states that:

'A Competent Authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which-

(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site¹³ or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site,

– must make an Appropriate Assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives,'

63 (5) in the light of the conclusions of the assessment, and subject to regulation 64 (considerations of overriding public interest), the competent authority may agree to the plan or project only after having ascertained that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the European site or the European off shore marine site (as the case may be)'.

- 3.2.2 The Regulations make allowance for projects or plans predicted to have an adverse effect on the integrity of a Habitats Site to be completed if they satisfy 'imperative reasons of overriding public interest' (IROPI)¹⁴ and other derogations. Regulation 64 and 68 relates to such situations.

¹² Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (2013) OJ L 206, 22.7.1992, p. 7.

¹³ European Sites are included within our definition of International Sites.

¹⁴ IROPI are '(a) reasons relating to human health, public safety or beneficial consequences of primary importance to the environment, or (b) any other reasons which the competent authority, having due regard to the opinion of the Welsh Ministers, consider to be imperative reasons of overriding public interest.'

3.2.1 Following the UK's departure from the European Union, the UK Government has issued guidance (Defra, 2021) on the implementation of these regulations, providing detailed instructions on implementing the regulations and conducting assessments, to ensure continuity in habitat protection despite the departure from the EU. This guidance clarifies that:

“SACs and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in the UK no longer form part of the EU's Natura 2000 ecological network. The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 have created a national site network on land and at sea, including both the inshore and offshore marine areas in the UK. The national site network includes:

- existing SACs and SPAs
- new SACs and SPAs designated under these Regulations.

Any references to Natura 2000 in the 2017 Regulations and in guidance now refers to the new national site network.

Maintaining a coherent network of protected sites with overarching conservation objectives is still required in order to:

- fulfil the commitment made by government to maintain environmental protections; and
- continue to meet our international legal obligations, such as the Bern Convention, the Oslo and Paris Conventions (OSPAR), Bonn and Ramsar Conventions”.

3.2.2 The Competent Authority is required to consult Natural Resources Wales (NRW) (the statutory nature conservation body in Wales) in all cases where an Appropriate Assessment is required.

POLICY CONTEXT

3.2.3 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Welsh Government, 2024)¹⁵, provides the overarching national planning policy framework. PPW policies guide the planning process and HRAs are a specific assessment that must be carried out when plans or projects could affect European sites.

3.2.4 PPW paragraphs 6.4.29 and 6.4.30) that sites designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention for their internationally important wetlands (commonly known as Ramsar sites) and potential SPAs (pSPA) are also considered in the same way as SACs, SPAs and cSACs. As a matter of good practice, potential SACs (pSACs) should also be considered in the same way.

CASE LAW CONTEXT

3.2.5 In HRA, case laws play a crucial role in defining how the regulations should be interpreted and applied. They outline the legal standards and procedural requirements that must be followed during the assessment process. These provide an important source of jurisprudence as regards the interpretation of various legal provisions. Some case laws help to ensure that assessments are conducted correctly, reflecting the latest judicial interpretations and ensuring the protection of the Habitats Sites.

¹⁵ Welsh Government (2024) Planning Policy Wales. Edition 12. February 2024.

3.2.6 It should be noted that this report has taken account of the 2017 European Court of Justice (CJEU) ruling (C-323/17 – People Over Wind and Peter Sweetman v Coillte): “Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive must be interpreted as meaning that, in order to determine whether it is necessary to carry out, subsequently, an Appropriate Assessment of the implications, for a site concerned, of a plan or project, it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site.”

3.3 STAGES OF HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

3.3.1 The HRA process includes distinct stages of assessment, including the following elements, as set out within the PPW Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (TAN 5), Annex 6:

- Determining whether the development plan, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, is likely to have a significant effect on any International Sites or International Offshore Marine Sites and if so:
 - Scoping the “Appropriate Assessment”;
- Undertaking the “Appropriate Assessment” (in consultation with NRW) to identify any significant effects that the development plan may have on International Sites or International Offshore Marine Sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, in view of those Sites’ conservation objectives;
- Where the “Appropriate Assessment” identifies potentially significant impacts on an International Site or International Offshore Marine Site, identifying whether there are possible alternative solutions or mitigation measures which, if adopted, will avoid, or counteract those adverse impacts;
- Determining, in the light of the “Appropriate Assessment”, whether the development plan will or will not adversely affect the integrity of any International Site or International Offshore Marine Site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects;
- Where there is a possibility that the plan could have such an adverse effect, determining whether there are any alternative solutions to the development plan, or to the potentially damaging elements within that plan, which would avoid or reduce such effects upon the International Site(s) or International Offshore Marine Site(s); and
- Where there are no such alternative solutions, determining whether there are IROPI for giving effect to the development plan.

3.3.2 The integrity of an International Site is defined as the coherence of the site’s ecological structure and function, across the whole of its area, which enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or populations of species for which the site has been designated (TAN 5 Annex 13). An adverse effect on integrity is likely to be one which prevents the site from making the same contribution to favourable conservation status as it did at the time of designation, and/or inhibits its restoration to a favourable conservation status.

3.3.3 The precautionary principle is applied at all stages of the HRA process. In relation to HRA Stage 1: Screening Assessment, this means that projects or plans where effects are considered likely and those where uncertainty exists as to whether effects are likely to be significant must be subject to a Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment.

3.4 STAGE 1: SCREENING METHODOLOGY

- 3.4.1 The Proposed Works has been subject to HRA Stage 1: Screening to assess the potential for LSEs. This involved considering whether there are any clear cause-effect pathways between the Proposed Works and International Sites. Each development impact is considered, and its pathway assessed to understand the likelihood of an impact resulting in a significant effect on International Sites.
- 3.4.2 When screening in / out International Sites and their features of interest, it needs to be established whether there is a pathway between the likely development impacts (causes) and the possible effect they may have on qualifying interest features of International Sites. Where there are no pathways to affect International Sites from the Proposed Works, they are not considered further. Where a pathway is identified, consideration is then given to whether there is a 'mechanism' for LSEs to occur. The screening methodology considers the sensitivity of the qualifying interest features in question to the identified impact pathways.
- 3.4.3 LSE can result from the Proposed Works itself (alone) or in combination with other plans or projects. In combination effects have been considered in this screening report where potential effects from the Proposed Works alone are identified above a *de minimis* (or trivial) level in accordance with the HRA Handbook¹⁶, but are not by themselves considered significant.
- 3.4.4 If the Competent Authority considers there will be no LSEs upon the qualifying interest features from the identified impact pathways alone and in combination with other plans and projects, the Proposed Works may proceed without further assessment.

3.5 CONSULTATION

- 3.5.1 No formal consultation with key engagement groups (Local Planning Authority (LPA), NRW or Welsh Government (WG)) has been undertaken in respect to the Proposed Works as part of the HRA Stage 1: Screening Assessment at the time of writing.

¹⁶ Tyldesley, D. and Chapman, C (2023). The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook.

4 RELEVANT DESIGNATED SITES

4.1 IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT INTERNATIONAL SITES

- 4.1.1 The HRA Stage 1: Screening Assessment identified one International Site within 10 km of the Site; Blackmill Woodlands SAC (the location is shown in **Figure 8.2** of the EIA Report).
- 4.1.2 The reasons for designation of this site and its conservation objectives are summarised in Table 4-1, as are the most important threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the Site. All information has been collated from standard data forms¹⁷ and Core Management Plans¹⁸.
- 4.1.3 The overall aim of the conservation objectives is to maintain the sites in 'favourable conservation status'. The Habitats Directive provides further interpretation of the meaning of 'favourable conservation status' within Article 1 parts a, e and i, as below:
- '(a) conservation means a series of measures required to maintain or restore the natural habitats and the populations of species of wild fauna and flora at a favourable status as defined in (e) and (i);*
- (e) conservation status of a natural habitat means the sum of the influences acting on a natural habitat and its typical species that may affect its long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long-term survival of its typical species within the territory referred to in Article 2. The conservative status of a natural habitat will be taken as "favourable" when:*
- *Its natural range and areas it cover within that range are stable or increasing, and*
 - *The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and*
 - *The conservation status of its typical species is favourable as defined in (i);*
- (i) conservation status of a species means the sum of the influences acting on the species concerned that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations within the territory referred to in Article 2; The conservation status will be taken as "favourable" when:*
- Population dynamics data on the species concerned indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and*
- The natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and there is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis'.*
- 4.1.4 The Proposed Works has not been conceived to further the conservation of the International Sites, nor is it essential to the management of this International site. Therefore, further consideration of the Proposed Works within the HRA process is required.

¹⁷ JNCC. (2016). SACs in the United Kingdom [online]. Available at: <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/>.

¹⁸ NRW (2022). Core Management Plan including Conservation Objectives for Afon Wysg / River Usk SAC.

Table 4-1 - Relevant International Sites within 10 km and Known Threats and Pressures on These Sites

Site Name	Distance from the Site	Summary of reasons for designation from SAC Standard Data Form (JNCC 2015)	Conservation Objectives	Activities with greatest effect upon the site, as listed on SAC standard data form (JNCC)
Blackmill Woodlands SAC UK0030090 (70.05ha)	8.7 km SE	Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, that are a primary reason for selection of this site: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Old sessile oak woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> in the British Isles. 	Maintain favourable conservation status for the Annex I habitat feature ¹⁹ .	<p>High Negative impacts:</p> H04 Air pollution, air-borne pollutants <p>Medium Negative Impacts:</p> I01 Invasive non-native species A04 Grazing <p>Low Negative Impacts:</p> I02 Problematic native species B07 Forestry activities - other

¹⁹ Countryside Council for Wales (CCC) (2008) Core Management Plan for Blackmill Woodlands Special Area of Conservation.

5 SCREENING OF POTENTIAL EFFECTS

5.1 APPROACH

- 5.1.1 This section identifies whether the impacts associated with the Proposed Works are likely to give rise to significant effects upon the Blackmill Woodlands SAC. Details of the Proposed Works used to inform the assessment of LSEs are provided in Section 2.1. As noted in Section 3.2.5 – 3.2.6, mitigation measures designed to address effects can only be considered at the HRA Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment. Any measures intended to avoid or reduce adverse effects of the Proposed Works on International Sites (i.e. “mitigation measures”) or best practice measures have therefore not been considered during this Screening stage.
- 5.1.2 The following mitigation measures have not been included during the HRA Stage 1: Screening Assessment:
- The Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP);
 - Ecological Management Plans (EcMPs);
 - Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) management plan;
 - Specific / targeted mitigation measures to avoid or minimise impacts of construction disturbance on designatory features; and
 - Pollution prevention controls.

5.2 ECOLOGICAL ZONES OF INFLUENCE

- 5.2.1 The Ecological Zone of Influence (EZoI) refers to the area where impacts resulting from Proposed Works, and the potential pathways for those impacts, may reach and affect the qualifying features of International Sites.
- 5.2.2 Table 5-1 details the EZoI for potential effects (in the absence of mitigation) of the Proposed Works on International Sites. These EZoI take into account the nature of the Proposed Works and the potential pathways.

Table 5-1 - Impact Pathways and Ecological Zones of Influence

Effect	Cause	Likely Zone of Influence
Disturbance of key species	Excessive noise and vibration resulting from Proposed Works	300 m of construction zone (precautionary basis) ^{20,21}
Habitat degradation – dust deposition	Pollution and contamination incidents associated with the Proposed Works, such as construction dust deposition onto habitats	50 m of construction zone ²²
Habitat degradation – hydrological pollution	Pollution (e.g. oils or silt), contamination incidents associated with run off from excavation, piling, vehicle movement, wheel wash and stockpiling	Within 10 km downstream (functionally linked habitat) ²³
Habitat degradation – INNS	Spread of INNS during vegetation clearance	Within 30 km downstream (functionally linked habitat)

5.3 CONSIDERATION OF EFFECTS IN ISOLATION

5.3.1 The information included within Sections 2 and 4 has been used to identify whether potential effect pathways between the Proposed Works and the International sites identified. An assessment has been made whether these are likely to result in significant effects upon International Sites.

NO LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

5.3.2 The Blackmill Woodlands SAC is the only International Site determined to fall within the EZol of the Proposed Works, therefore all sections hereafter refer to this International Site only.

5.3.3 The Proposed Works will not result in any land loss from the International Site. Owing to the distance between the Blackmill Woodlands SAC and the Site (9 km apart), the following impact pathways are considered to be outside of the EZol and therefore will not result in LSE on the designatory features of the International Site:

- Disturbance of key species; and
- Habitat degradation – dust deposition.

²⁰ Conservative distance based on information detailed in ‘An overview of fish bioacoustics and the impacts of anthropogenic sounds on fishes’ (Popper and Hawkins, 2019).

²¹ <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/natural-information-otters-and-development-2011.pdf>

²² In line with guidance in Holman *et al* (2014) *Guidance on the assessment of dust from demolition and construction*. Institute of Air Quality Management, London.

²³ Conservative distance based on information documented in Sediment Transport and Deposition. Retrieved from Fondriest Environmental Learning Centre: <https://www.fondriest.com/environmental-measurements/parameters/hydrology/sediment-transport-deposition/>.

5.3.4 Furthermore, due to the distance and the intervening topographical features, there is no functional connection between the Site and the International Site. Therefore, no LSE on the designatory features of the International site is anticipated as a result of the following impact pathways:

- Habitat degradation – hydrological pollution; and
- Habitat degradation – INNS.

5.3.5 No LSEs on the International Site are expected from the Proposed Works.

5.4 POTENTIAL IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

5.4.1 LSEs can result from the Proposed Works alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. In-combination effects for LSEs are considered fully at the Appropriate Assessment stage where mitigation for the Proposed Works LSEs can be considered²⁴.

5.4.2 The 2018 - 2033 BCBC Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)²⁵, the BCBC planning portal, the 2011-2026 NPT Local Development Plan²⁶, and the NPT planning portal. have been reviewed to obtain information on other projects, plans and developments from the last five years in proximity to the Structure that could give rise to in-combination effects with the Proposed Works.

5.4.3 No projects, plans or developments from the last five years were identified that could give rise to in-combination effects with the Proposed Works.

²⁴ Planning Inspectorate (2022). Guidance: Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects – Advice Note Ten: Habitats Regulations Assessment relevant to nationally significant infrastructure projects. Version 9.

²⁵ BCBC (2024). 2018-2033 Replacement Local Development Plan – Written Statement Adopted Plan. Available at: <https://www.bridgend.gov.uk/media/izcfgp1f/written-statement.pdf>

²⁶ NPT (2016) Local Development Plan (2011-2026) Adopted January 2016. Available at: http://media.npt.gov.uk/media/ca2fbumd/ldp_written_statement_jan16.pdf?v=20240823155047

6 SCREENING CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 No potential impact pathways (both from the Proposed Works alone and in-combination with other projects or plans) that could result in LSEs on qualifying features of the Blackmill Woodlands SAC were identified at the HRA Stage 1: Screening.
- 6.1.2 The Proposed Works will not need to proceed to HRA Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment.



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