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Ecological Impact Assessment

Stagecoach Depot, Pontllanfraith

Presented to: Lidl Great Britain Ltd

Issued: February 2024

Lucion Contract Reference: 122843.649598

Report Details

Client	Lidl Great Britain Ltd
Report Title	Ecological Impact Assessment
Site Address	Stagecoach Depot, Pontllanfraith
Contract Reference	122843.649598
Lucion Contact	Chris Savage (Chris.Savage@luciongroup.com)

Quality Assurance

Issue No.	Status	Issue Date	Comments	Author	Technical Review	Authorised
3	Final	24th February 2024	Amended following updated landscaping plans	Jordan Lane Consultant Ecologist	Danni Phillips Senior Ecologist	Chris Savage Associate Director

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Non-Technical Summary

Lucion Delta-Simons Ltd ('Lucion') was instructed by Lidl Great Britain Ltd (the 'Client') to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) of land at Stagecoach Depot, Penmaen Road, Pontllanfraith, Blackwood, NP12 to inform a planning application for the construction of a new Lidl store.

This assessment addresses the potential effects of the development on ecology and nature conservation. This Report describes the methods used to assess the effects; the baseline conditions currently existing at the Site and within the immediate surrounding area; the mitigation measures required to prevent, reduce or offset any significant adverse effects and the likely residual effects after these measures have been adopted, as well as any proposed enhancement measures. A summary of residual effects is provided overleaf.

An ecological desk study undertaken in November 2024 identified the following:

- No internationally designated statutory sites within 6 km of the Site;
- Two nationally designated statutory sites within 2 km of the Site;
- One locally designated statutory site within 2 km of the Site; and
- Twenty-three non-statutory designated sites within 2 km of the Site. The closest being Enterprise Way Grassland, Pontllanfraith Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) located approximately 100 m east of the Site boundary.

The Site covers an area of 0.85 ha and comprised modified grassland, bare ground, individual trees, developed land/ sealed surface and two buildings at the time of the survey. The habitats present on-Site are widespread on both a local and national scale, with none of the habitats being considered rare. All of the vegetated habitats on-Site are to be lost as part of the Proposed Development, however, native shrubs/scrub, ornamental planting, scattered trees and hedgerow planting are proposed which will increase the species and structural diversity on-Site, resulting in a minor beneficial effect that is non-significant. Furthermore, this is considered to contribute to a Net Benefit for Biodiversity.

The construction phase will result in the loss of suitable bird nesting and foraging habitat, particularly associated with the scattered trees in the eastern section of the Site. Suitable habitat will be removed either outside the main nesting bird season, or subsequent to a nesting bird check by a suitably experienced ecologist immediately prior to removal. Further, appropriate mitigation through the implementation of the proposed landscaping strategy, and the provision of nest boxes is anticipated to result in a negligible effect for birds in the local area that is of neutral significance.

The Site is considered to be of low value for foraging/commuting bats, as the Site is largely devoid of vegetation and subject to high levels of noise and artificial light disturbance. The buildings and trees were assessed as having negligible suitability to support roosting bats. Any bats which may utilise the Site are likely to be relatively light-tolerant species only. It is anticipated that a sensitive lighting scheme will be implemented on-Site to reduce light-spill onto boundary habitats. Following the implementation of appropriate low-level lighting the development will have a negligible effect of neutral significance for bats.

The Site offers suitable foraging and commuting habitat for hedgehogs. As such, precautionary working methods will be implemented during removal of any vegetation and best practices measures will be utilised during the construction phase to ensure individuals don't become trapped in any open excavations.

Summary of Residual Effects

Important Ecological Feature	Geographic Value	Characterisation of Unmitigated Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation	Residual Effect Significance
Designated Sites	Regional and Local	Pollution events Dust deposition	Minor adverse, Non-significant	Works to follow good practice dust suppression methods to avoid pollution on statutory sites, particularly for Memorial Park Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located 260 m west of the Site.	Negligible effect, Neutral significance
Habitats	Site	Habitat Loss	Minor adverse, Non-significant	The application of tree root protection and environmental best practice for any existing or planted trees. Areas of native shrubs/scrub, ornamental planting, scattered trees and hedgerows are proposed on-Site post-development to compensate for the loss of existing habitats and provide increased species and structural diversity.	Minor beneficial, Non-significant
Birds	Site	Habitat loss Nest destruction/ disturbance through noise and vibration	Minor adverse, Non-significant	Sensitive timing of works and/or watching brief with regards to the removal of, and works within close proximity to, suitable nesting habitat. Externally mounted bird boxes to the built Store building will maintain local bird biodiversity from habitat loss.	Negligible effect, Neutral significance
Bats	Site	Increased lighting on-Site	Minor adverse, Non-significant	It is anticipated that a sensitive lighting strategy will be implemented during operation to reduce light spill onto boundary habitats.	Negligible effect, Neutral significance

Important Ecological Feature	Geographic Value	Characterisation of Unmitigated Impact	Significance Before Mitigation	Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation	Residual Effect Significance
Hedgehog	Site	Habitat loss	Minor adverse, Non-significant	Precautionary Working Methods should be implemented for any removal of vegetation. Best practice measures are required during the construction phase to ensure individuals don't become trapped in open excavations.	Negligible effect, Neutral significance

Table of Contents

Tables

Appendices

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Survey

Lucion Delta-Simons Ltd ("Lucion") was instructed by Lidl Great Britain Ltd (the "Client") to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) of land at Stagecoach Depot, Penmaen Road, Pontllanfraith, Blackwood NP12 2DY (hereafter referred to as the 'Site'). The purpose of the EcIA is to inform a planning application for the construction of a new Lidl store at the Site.

This assessment will do the following:

- Establish the baseline ecological conditions at the Site;
- Provide details of ecological mitigation measures incorporated through design evolution as an intrinsic part of the project design;
- Detail any ecological mitigation measures to be implemented during Site clearance and construction;
- Identify any residual ecological effects after avoidance and mitigation measures have been considered;
- Identify any compensation measures required to offset residual effects;
- Provide recommendations for how mitigation and compensation may be secured and monitored;
- Set out details of ecological enhancement measures to be included within the Proposed Development; and
- Provide sufficient information to determine whether the project accords with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation and, where appropriate, to allow conditions or obligations to be proposed by the relevant authority.

The Site location and the red line boundary are shown in Appendix A (Figure 1).

1.2 Site Description

The Site is centred at Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference ST 18082 96440, to the north of Pontllanfraith, Wales. The Site covers an area of 0.85 ha and comprised modified grassland, bare ground, individual trees, developed land/sealed surface and two utility buildings.

Directly to the north of the Site is the B4254 road and roundabout with residential buildings beyond. An industrial estate containing several utility buildings lie just outside the Site boundary to the south and west. Blackwood play park is situated further to the west on an area of developed land for future housing development. The town of Pontllanfraith is to the south-east of Site, and a series of woodlands and fields run alongside the A4048 road to the east.

The habitats present on-Site are shown in Appendix A (Figure 2).

1.3 Proposed Development

It is understood from the plan provided by the Client (see Drawing 1 in Appendix B) that the development will comprises a retail store with designated customer parking areas (hereafter, the "Proposed Development").

The construction phase of the Proposed Development will comprise the following:

- Clearance of areas of bare ground, individual trees and modified grassland habitat on-Site;
- Creation of areas of native shrubs/scrub, ornamental planting, scattered trees and hedgerow planting in accordance with the Proposed Landscape Plan (see Drawing 1 in Appendix B).

The operational phase of the Proposed Development will comprise the following:

- The commercial operation of the newly built retail store and its associated carpark/hardstanding areas.

2.0 Legislation & Policy Summary

Planning guidelines, international commitments, legislation and planning policies relevant to the protection, conservation and enhancement of nature conservation interests are detailed below.

2.1 National Policy and Guidance

Specific habitats and species of relevance to the Site receive legal protection in the United Kingdom under various pieces of legislation, including:

- The Environment (Wales) Act 2016;
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006;
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997; and
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Where relevant, this assessment takes account of the legislative and policy protection afforded to specific habitats and species. Lucion does not purport to provide specialist legal advice and where necessary the reader should also consult the original legislation, references to which are included in Appendix C.

The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales 2015

The Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) for Wales is the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan for Wales. The Plan comprises three parts:

- *'Part 1: Our Strategy for Nature, sets out the commitment to reversing the loss of biodiversity in Wales, and the objectives for action. It contains our ambition: 'To reverse the decline in biodiversity, for its intrinsic value, and to ensure lasting benefits to society' and our objectives, to:*
    - *1: Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels.*
    - *2: Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management*
    - *3: Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degraded habitats and habitat creation*
    - *4: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats*
    - *5: Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring*
    - *6: Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery*
- *Part 2: Our Action Plan set out those actions which had been specifically identified to meet our objectives to reverse the decline of biodiversity.*
- *Part 3: The Nature Recovery Framework sets out the governance and partnerships involved in nature recovery in Wales, and the relationships between them.'*

2.2 Local Policy and Guidance

Local planning policies relating to ecology are generally based on national planning policy, the conservation of species protected under the above legislation and the protection of designated sites. However, relevant local policy and guidance documents are outlined below.

2.2.1 Caerphilly County Borough Adopted Local Development Plan Up to 2021

Caerphilly adopted a Local Development Plan (LDP) in 2010 covering up until 2021. This covered the Council's land use strategy, vision for the future, and aims and objectives to deliver this vision. It also set out a policy framework to control and guide development. A full review of the LDP was undertaken in October 2024 with the second replacement LDP for 2020-2035 currently being prepared. The second revision Delivery Agreement was previously approved in 2021, but the Welsh Government raised objections to the Preferred Strategy in 2022, which has therefore resulted in a delay in plan preparation. The revised LDP Is timetabled to be adopted in August 2027.

The eight key components of the LDP Strategy are as follows:

- Target development to reflect the roles and functions of individual settlements;
- Allow for development opportunities in the Heads of the Valleys Regeneration Area;
- Promote a balanced approach to managing future growth;
- Exploit brownfield opportunities where appropriate;
- Promote resource efficient settlement patterns;
- Ensure development contributes towards necessary infrastructure improvements;
- Ensure development provides necessary community facilities; and
- Reduce the impact of development upon the countryside.

The following policies of particular relevance to ecology include:

Policy CW4 – Natural Heritage Protection

- Development proposals that affect locally designated natural heritage features, will only be permitted:
    - *Where they conserve and where appropriate enhance the distinctive or characteristic features of the Special 2 49 Landscape Area (SLA) or Visually Important Local Landscape (VILL).*
    - *Within, or in close proximity to sites designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS), Green Corridors, or Local Priority Habitats and Species, where proposals either:*
        - *Conserve and where appropriate enhance the ecological or geological importance of the designation, or*
        - *Are such that the need for the development outweighs the ecological importance of the site, and where harm is minimised by mitigation measures and offset as far as practicable by compensation measures designed to ensure that there is no reduction in the overall value of the area or feature*

Policy CW6 - Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerow Protection

- Development proposals on sites containing trees, woodlands and hedgerows, or which are bordered by one of more such trees or hedgerows, will only be permitted provided that:
    - *Where arboricultural surveys are required, they are submitted and approved, including any mitigation, compensation or management requirements, as part of the planning application.*
    - *Root systems will be retained and adequately protected for the duration of all development activity on site.*
    - *Development proposals have made all reasonable efforts to retain, protect and integrate trees, woodlands or hedgerows within the development site.*
    - *Where trees, woodlands or hedgerows are removed, suitable replacements are provided where appropriate.*
- Policy NH3 - Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation
    - Identifies a number of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation across the area to be protected.

In 2021, a Review Report was produced to evaluate the progress being made in relation to implementing the LDP and determine any revisions which may be required to the original document. The Review Report concluded that a full revision of the Adopted LDP was needed as a matter of priority.

2.2.2 Natural Resources Wales Area Statements

The Natural Resources Policy identifies national priorities for sustainably managing natural resources based on evidence from the State of Natural Resources Report. Natural Resources Wales have developed Area Statements which contribute towards implementing the Natural Resources Policy in a local context. These Area Statements guide the sustainable management of natural resources by evidencing the extent of these resources, their benefits, and ways they can continue to deliver benefits.

Caerphilly is covered by the South-East Wales Area Statement, which takes a landscape-scale approach, considering where and why to build ecosystem resilience to address the increasingly complex and widespread environmental, social and political challenges that transcend traditional management boundaries. Part 1 of the environment (Wales) Act set out the objective of sustainably managing natural resources through building resilience into Wales' natural resources and ecosystems so they can continue to provide valuable services. The Area Statement provides a framework for the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR), identifying four strategic themes:

- Linking our Landscapes;
- Climate Ready Gwent;
- Healthy Active Connected; and
- Ways of Working.

3.0 Methodology

The baseline for this EcIA has been established through a combination of desk study and field surveys.

3.1 Scope of the Assessment and Zone of Influence

The ecological features considered as part of this assessment were as follows:

- Designated sites;
- Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for conservation (HPI and SPI respectively); and
- Species protected by wildlife legislation.

Given the small size of the Site, and its location, the Zone of Influence (ZoI) was taken to be the Site boundary and its immediate environs only. The exception for this was for designated sites and great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus*. Details of the zone of influence for these features is provided in Section 3.2.

3.2 Desk Study

3.2.1 Data Search

In November 2024, available records of protected and notable species were collated from the local record centre, South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC), along with the non-statutory designated sites from within 2 km of the Site centre.

A search for internationally, nationally and regionally designated statutory sites for nature conservation was undertaken using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website. The search radius was 6 km from the Site centre for internationally designated statutory sites and 2 km from the Site centre for nationally and regionally designated statutory sites.

In addition, free and publicly accessible Ordnance Survey maps and aerial photographs were searched for waterbodies on, or within, 500 m of the Site boundary. This information has been used to assess the Site for its potential to support GCN the results of which are found in Section 4.3.

3.3 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Survey

The habitats on-Site were subject to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) on 13th November 2024 by a Lucion ecologist. The PEA was undertaken to the following current guidance: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2017), *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*; and *BS 42020: 2013 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for Planning and* Development.

The following was undertaken during the survey:

- Habitats were classified and mapped using the standard UK Habitat Classification and methodology (UKHab Ltd., 2023). Dominant plant species were recorded in each different habitat. The plant species nomenclature followed that of Stace (2019). The list of plant species was compiled in accordance with methodology required to establish UK Habitat Classification types up to at least level 3, and to levels 4 or 5 wherever possible. Care was taken to accurately record all habitats of priority importance (if present). Secondary codes were added to polygons where deemed appropriate, taking special care to map mandatory codes for habitat mosaic, complex and origin. Survey was undertaken at the fine scale minimum mapping unit (MMU) of 25m^2 (polygons) and 1m width and 5m long (lines). Key ecological features below the MMU in either area or length were mapped as points;
- Habitats were classified and assessed in terms of both their conservation importance and potential to support notable and/or protected species, and widespread invasive plants (based on habitat suitability and/or field signs/evidence);

- Habitats on-Site were surveyed for the presence of, or field signs to indicate the presence of protected or notable birds, amphibians, reptiles, mammals and widespread invasive plants. This included an external visual assessment of any trees/buildings on the Site for potential bat roost features and any evidence of bat activity, and an assessment of the Site's suitability to support commuting and foraging bats (Appendix D), in line with Collins (2023); and
- If HPIs under the NERC Act 2006 were found to be present these were recorded. Further, an assessment of any hedgerows at the Site, which will be adversely affected by the proposed development, was undertaken using the hedgerow criteria outlined in the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. The purpose of the assessment was to ascertain whether the hedgerows are classified as 'nationally important' and, therefore, protected under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. The assessment involves a scoring system which relies on particular features, number of woody and floral species present within the hedgerow habitat, and the age of the hedgerow.

3.4 Survey Limitations

There were no limitations to the survey in terms of access or weather conditions.

The survey was undertaken at the sub-optimal time for identifying plant species, however, given the urban nature of the Site and the ability of the ecologist to identify enough plant species to confidently classify the habitat types, this is not considered to be a significant constraint.

3.5 Ecological Impact Assessment Methodology

This EcIA has been carried out following the principles set out within the *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) in the UK and Ireland; Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine* updated by CIEEM in 2019, the full details of which are provided in Appendix E.

The baseline conditions described in this report were accurate at the time at which the survey was undertaken. Should at least two years pass by, and/or conditions on-Site/Site usage change prior to the commencement of works, an update survey should be undertaken.

4.0 Baseline Conditions

The following section describes the baseline ecological conditions at the Site, outlining the results of the desk study and field survey findings. Current management is anticipated to remain unchanged up until development and, therefore, baseline conditions at the time of writing this assessment are anticipated to reflect those at the commencement of the Proposed Development. The conservation importance of the features identified have been evaluated using the geographical scale outlined in Appendix E.

The pertinent information from the data search is set out in Section 4.1 below for designated sites, whilst data search records for the species are discussed in the relevant species sections. Full results of the data searches are available to the Client on request.

4.1 Desk Study

4.1.1 Designated Sites

The results of the MAGIC data search and SEWBReC desk search indicate:

- No internationally designated statutory sites within 6 km of the Site centre;
- Two nationally designated statutory sites within 2 km of the Site centre;
- One regionally designated statutory site within 2 km of the Site centre; and
- 23 locally designated non-statutory sites within 2 km of the Site centre. All 23 of these sites are Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

Table 1 sets out the statutory designated sites identified and considered relevant to the Site.

Table 1 - Statutory Designated Sites within 2 km of the Site

Site Name	Designation	Distance and Direction from Site Boundary	Designation Criteria Summary
Memorial Park Meadows, Pontllanfraith	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	260 m west	A large area of unimproved grassland made up of four fields which are the remnants of a traditionally managed farm unit now completely surrounded by urban development. The site supports extensive areas of the meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis* sub community of the common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* – crested dog's-tail *Cynosurus cristatus* mesotrophic grassland type with a diverse range of both grass and herb species. Many of these are characteristic of the 'old meadow' type of grassland including meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, yellow rattle *Rhianthus minor* and bird's foot- trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*. It also supports large populations of locally rare species, including greater burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis*, lady's mantle *Alchemilla xanthochlora* and bistort *Polygonum bistorta*.
Penllwyn Grasslands	SSSI	1.15 km west	This SSSI is composed of a mosaic of habitats including wet acid grassland, woodland, scrub and tall herb vegetation. It has an extensive area of species-rich moor grass *Molinia sp.* representing the sharp-flowered rush *Juncus acutiflorus* – cross-leaved heath *Erica tetralix* sub-community of the purple moor grass *Molinia caerulea* – meadow thistle *Cirsium dissectum* fen meadow type. The woodland habitat is dominated by oak *Quercus robur*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*,

			birch *Betula pendula* and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*; with the scrub dominated by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and gorse *Ilex europaeus*.

Table 2 sets out the non-statutory designated sites identified within 2 km of the Site and considered relevant to the Site. Due to the Site being within an urban environment and isolated from connecting habitat, only sites closer to the Site boundary have been listed. The other 17 SINC's are not within range to be of any constraint to the development.

Table 2 - Non-Statutory Designated Sites within 2 km of the Site

Site Name	Designation	Distance and Direction from Site Boundary	Designation Criteria Summary
Enterprise Way Grassland, Pontllanfraith	SINC	100 m east	A block of broadleaved woodland in the western part with a canopy of oak *Quercus sp.* and beech *Fagus sylvatica*, and a tangled understorey including bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, bird cherry *Prunus padus* and hawthorn. The ground flora is very sparse in the centre of the wood, but a number of semi-natural indicator species are present at the margins. The remainder of the site consists of marshy and neutral grasslands and post-industrial land with at least 40 indicator species collectively.
River Sirhowy	SINC	180 m east	Watercourse with resident populations of bullhead *Cottus gobio*, and brown trout *Salmo trutta*, as well as acting as a migratory route for anadromous species such as Atlantic salmon *Salmo salar* and sea trout *Salmo trutta trutta*. The river corridor includes the river, the riverbanks and the adjacent semi-natural habitats such as woodland, trees, wetland, hedgerows and species-rich grassland, to retain "ecological functionality". The river valley is lined by trees along most of its length, and flows in a largely natural, rocky channel.
Glan-Brynar Woodlands, Pentwynmawr	SINC	220 m east	A mix of habitats including three small broad-leaved woodlands, three small fields of damp neutral / marshy grassland, a small area of semi-improved acid grassland and a disused railway-line. The broad-leaved woodland and marshy grassland have an assemblage of semi-natural and indicator species. Hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* are known to occur in the local area with the woodland providing suitable habitat to support the species, including roosting opportunities for bats and nesting birds.
Penmaen Carr, East of Blackwood	SINC	460 m north	This SINC includes two small stands of wet woodland dominated by a canopy of alder *Alnus glutinosa* and ash, with a dense understorey of holly, bird cherry and bramble. The ground flora is generally species-poor but includes yellow pimpernel *Lysimachia nemorum*, remote sedge *Carex remota*, lady fern *Athyrium filix-femina*and mosses *Bryophyta sp*. The site has important commuting opportunities for bats with woodland having potential to support both bats and dormice.
Penllwyn Woodland	SINC	490 m south-west	The majority of this SINC supports semi-natural broadleaved woodland; the northwestern corner being of ancient origin, although it may have been partially cleared in the last 100 years. Parts of the

			site support marshy grassland that was more extensive in the past. It is currently unmanaged with litter being a problem in places from garden activities near to the edge of the site. The site holds potential to support a variety of butterfly and moths, including opportunities to support both bats and reptiles.
Blackwood Riverside Woodlands, North East of Blackwood	SINC	660 m north	An almost unbroken belt of woodland and scrub extending for over 2km along the Sirhowy River valley. There is a mix of mature and young woodlands, on a range of substrata. The older woodlands generally support a canopy of beech and oak with holly and bracken, while many of the younger woodlands have developed more recently on colliery spoil, and still include a high proportion of early successional species such as downy birch *Betula pubescens*, hawthorn, common gorse *Ulex europaeus* and willow species *Salix sp*. An important foraging and commuting route for several species of bats.

4.1.2 Priority Habitats

The MAGIC Maps data do not highlight the presence of any Priority/HPI habitats on-Site, or within 50 m of the Site.

4.2 Habitats

Figure 2 in the appendices shows the extent of habitat types and boundary features. Descriptions of the habitat types and dominant plant species found at the Site are provided below. Habitat descriptions and codings are as listed in the UK Habitat Classification: Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd, 2023). Photographs of the Site survey are located in Appendix F.

Habitats recorded on-Site were:

g4 Modified Grassland

Strips of modified grassland at a sward height between 5-8 cm were located along the north boundary (Appendix F, Photograph 1), north-east section (Appendix F, Photographs 2 and 3) and south-east section (Appendix F, Photographs 4 and 5) of the Site. The strip along the northern boundary besides the entrance to the bus depot contained more unmanaged grassland with some litter from the nearby roadside and public footpath. The grassland comprised dominant perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, frequent ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, occasional cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus,* and rarely occurring common daisy *Bellis perennis* and selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*.

The north-east and south-east patches of grassland besides the coniferous trees were found to be more species-rich. Species recorded within these habitats were dominant perennial ryegrass, abundant common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, frequent common knapweed *Centaurea nigra* and common dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, and occasional ribwort plantain and selfheal. The south-east section of grassland had a greater quantity of ruderal and scrub species, including frequent bramble, wild teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*, common knapweed and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, occasional spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, cow parsley, hazel, herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* and willow species, and rarely occurring cow parsnip *Heracleum maximum*.

The grassland is considered to be of low ecological importance due to the poor condition and low diversity of species present. The modified grassland is also relatively small in size with only narrow patches located along the northern and north-eastern site boundaries and a more ruderal section in the south-east that is exposed to littering.

w 510 Bare ground

A narrow strip of bare ground associated with a line of coniferous trees was located along the east and south-east Site boundaries (Appendix F, Photographs 6 and 7). Species present within this area included occasional ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, spear thistle and herb Robert.

The bare ground is in poor condition and is considered to be of low ecological importance to the Site.

33 Individual trees

A number of scattered trees were present along the eastern Site boundary and eastern extent of the southern Site boundary. Trees recorded along the canopy was dominated by Leyland Cypress *Cupressus × leylandii* with the occasional field maple *Acer campestre*, common ash, hawthorn, cherry and holly. A single European hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* was situated in the south-east corner.

Of all the habitats on-Site, the scattered trees offer the greatest ecological value. However, the species are generally non-native and widespread within the local area.

u1b Developed land; sealed surface

The majority of the Site was hardstanding habitat which was used for bus parking and maintenance (Appendix F, Photographs 8 and 9). A single track on the east side of the Site allowed vehicles from the B4254 road to enter onto the parking depot. No species were present on this habitat due to it being sealed with tarmac for people and vehicle use.

The habitat is of negligible ecology importance to the Site being developed land with no suitable habitat available for species.

u1b5 – Buildings

Two utility buildings were present on-Site: a warehouse (Building A) located to the north and a small storage building (Building B) to the west. Building A appeared to be used for bus maintenance and repair, having large shutter doors on the southern aspect to house the vehicles (Appendix F, Photographs 10-13). Building B appeared to be used to store equipment and machinery for the repair of vehicles (Appendix F, Photographs 14 and 15).

Both the warehouse and storage building lacked suitable features to support roosting bats. There were gaps located between the roof and steel girders that may provide suitable nesting opportunities for local bird species such as pigeons, seagulls and starling. However, the buildings are fairly exposed to the elements and susceptible to large amounts of noise disturbance, resulting in them having negligible ecological importance to the Site.

Descriptions of the buildings are provided in Table 3, below.

Table 3 – Building Descriptions

Building Reference	Building Description	Photograph Reference
Warehouse (Building A)	A large warehouse depot with concrete render walls and steel cladded sheeting on the southern aspect. Large shutter doors are situated on the southern aspect to station buses. The roof is pitched and made from corrugated sheeting with steel girders positioned in the interior to support the warehouse. The interior is an open warehouse that is used to repair and maintain buses, as well as store mechanical equipment. The warehouse is lined with heavy duty industrial concrete flooring.	10-13
Storage building (Building B)	A small brick-built utility building located to the west of the main warehouse depot. It has a pitched roof made from corrugated steel and lead flashing. Two doors are located on the eastern and southern aspects of the building. The building is used to store mechanical equipment.	14-15

4.3 Species

Amphibians

There were four records of amphibians of conservation concern returned by the data search which were within 2 km of the Site and from the last 10 years. These were all common frog *Rana temporaria,* with the closest record found 900 m north-west of the Site in 2020. There were no records of GCN found within 2 km of the Site within the last 10 years. The most recent GCN record was located 1.7 km south-east of the Site boundary in 2013.

No waterbodies were present on-Site. A review of aerial photographs and OS maps revealed that there are five waterbodies within 500 m of the Site which may support breeding amphibians. One of these waterbodies is a large pond located approximately 20 m to the east of the Site. There are no available records of previous GCN surveys conducted at this pond. However, it should be noted that in addition to a lack of suitable amphibian habitat on-Site; this pond is separated from the Site and surrounding habitats by Penmaen Road, which acts as a significant barrier for dispersal. Even if GCN (or other amphibian species) were present at this pond, it is considered unlikely they would travel onto Site.

GCN are therefore not considered to be a constraint to proposed development and will not be considered further in this Report.

Reptiles

The data search included seven records of two species of reptile: slow worm *Anguis fragilis* and common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* within 2 km of the Site and within the last 10 years. The closest records for both slow worm and common lizard were approximately 900 m north of the Site boundary in 2016.

A reptile check was not conducted during the walkover, however the on-Site habitats were of negligible suitability to support reptiles. The Site was also separated and fragmented from suitable off-Site habitat by buildings/roads.

Based on the above, there is therefore a likely absence of reptiles on the Site, and this species group will not be considered further in this assessment.

Birds

There were records of 58 notable bird species of relevance to the Site returned by the records centre within 2 km of the Site and from the last 10 years. This includes the following species listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA (1981, as amended): barn owl *Tyto Alba*, Cetti's warbler *Cettia cetti*, crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*, fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*, marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, merlin *Falco columbarius*, peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus*, red kite *Milvus milvus*, redwing *Turdus iliacus* and Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*. It also includes the following species listed on the Red List of BoCC (Stanbury *et al.,* 2021): fieldfare, herring gull *Larus argentatus*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, lesser spotted woodpecker *Dryobates minor*, merlin, mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, skylark *Alauda arvensis*, spotted flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, tree pipit *Anthus trivialis*, tree sparrow *Passer montanus*, whimbrel, whinchat *Saxicola rubetra*, woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*, yellow wagtail *Motacilla flava* and yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*.

Habitats present on the Site suitable for nesting birds include the scattered trees, and Buildings 1 and 2. No bird species were recorded during the survey visit.

Even though no bird species were recorded during the walkover, there is potential for common local species to nest, forage and commute onto the Site. However, the habitats are narrow in size and fragmented from surrounding habitats, with only species that are tolerant to excessive noise disturbance from the nearby roadside and industrial works likely to be present during development.

Bats

The data search returned 18 records of bat species within 2 km of the Site and within last 10 years. The species included common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus,* noctule *Nyctalus noctula,* Brandt's bat *Myotis brandtii*, lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros* and greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*. The closest record was a Brandt's bat recorded 1.2 km north of the Site boundary in 2023.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

Buildings 1 and 2 were assessed as having Negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

Ground Level Roost Assessment of Trees

A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) identified no tress with Potential Roosting Features (PRF) which could support bats. The trees on Site were therefore assessed as having Negligible suitability to support roosting bats.

Preliminary Commuting and Foraging Habitat Assessment

The Site contained limited foraging and commuting habitats for bats and has poor connectivity to favourable habitats in the wider area. While the modified grassland and scattered trees were considered likely to support invertebrates, the food source of bats; these habitats were small and of mostly poor condition. In addition, there were large amounts of artificial lighting from streetlights and headlights in the area.

As such, the Site was assessed as being of Low suitability to support foraging and commuting bats.

Badgers

The data search returned no records of European badger M*eles meles* found within 2 km of the Site centre in last 10 years.

There were no potential badger setts, mammal tracks or field signs found during the PEA walkover. The Site itself provided unsuitable habitat for sett-digging and was also isolated from any surrounding suitable habitat by two-lane roads to the north and an industrial estate to the south.

Based on the above, the Site is considered unsuitable to support badger and this species will not be considered further in this Report.

Hazel dormice

There were no records of hazel dormice within 2 km of the Site centre within the last 10 years. The Site also contains no suitable habitat to support hazel dormice and has a lack of connectivity to other habitats off-Site.

Based on the above, the Site is considered unsuitable to support hazel dormice and this species will not be considered further in this Report

Other Protected or Otherwise Notable Species

The data search returned 27 records of west European hedgehog *Erinaceous europaeus* within 2 km of the Site centre within the last 10 years. The closest record was located 380 m east of the Site boundary in 2020. The modified grassland habitat is suitable for west European hedgehogs, such that they may inhabit, or venture onto, the Site to forage.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

The data search included records of 70 invasive plant species within 2 km of the Site centre within the last 10 years: grey squirrel *Sciurus carolinensis,* signal crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus*, greater periwinkle *Vinca major*, Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Spanish bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica*, variegated yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. Argentatum*, montbretia *Crocosmia pottsii x aurea = C. x crocosmiiflora,* budgerigar *Melopsittacus undulatus*, ring-necked parakeet *Psittacula krameria*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus*, Wilson's honeysuckle *Lonicera nitida*, harlequin ladybird *Harmonia axyridis* and Himalayan honeysuckle *Leycesteria Formosa*. The closest record was a grey squirrel located approximately 170 m east of the Site boundary in 2015.

There were no INNS recorded during the walkover, such that they will not be considered a constraint in this Report.

4.4 Summary of Important Ecological Features and Geographic Value

The species scoped out as important ecological features above due to their likely absence from Site would be highly unlikely to experience effects from the Proposed Development and are not therefore considered below.

The 'important ecological features' identified above with the potential to experience effects as a result of the Proposed Development are listed in Table 4, below, along with their geographic importance. These features will be the subject of the ecological impact assessment in section 5.0.

Table 4 - Identified Important Ecological Features

Important Ecological Feature	**Geographic Value**
Designated sites	Regional and Local
Habitats	Site
Nesting birds	Site
Bats	Site
Hedgehog	Site

5.0 Assessment of Effects

The evaluation in this section is based on the baseline information presented above, review of design proposals, consultation with the design team, knowledge of likely construction practices to be employed, and reasonable assumptions regarding operation.

For purposes of the assessment, it is assumed there has been no change in the condition of the Site since the Site survey (unless otherwise stated).

5.1 Important Ecological Features and Potential Effects

5.1.1 Designated Sites

Potential Impacts

During Construction

A total of 23 non-statutory designated sites are situated within 2 km of the Site, the closest of which are as follows:

- Enterprise Way Grassland, Pontllanfraith SINC located 100 m east of the Site,
- River Sirhowy SINC located 180 m east of the Site and
- Glan-Brynar Woodlands, Pentwynmawr SINC located 220 m east of the Site.

In addition, Memorial Park Meadows SSSI is located 260 m west of the Site.

As such, there is the potential for adverse impacts resulting from dust deposition or a pollution event to these nearby sites.

Without mitigation, the Proposed Development has the potential to have a minor adverse effect, which would be non-significant.

Avoidance and Mitigation

During Construction

Standard environmental good practice measures will be applied during the construction phase, including measures to control dust, and to prevent pollution. These can be secured through the preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Assessment of Residual Effects

Provided the above mitigation is completed, the potential residual effects are considered to be negligible, and of neutral significance.

5.1.2 Habitats

Potential Impacts

During Construction

There is the potential for negative effects upon the off-Site trees within proximity to the Site boundary due to physical harm from Site clearance/construction works such as damage from machinery. For example, any construction works within proximity to these trees have the potential to cause damage to the structure, roots and health of the trees.

Without mitigation, the Proposed Development has the potential to have a minor adverse effect that is not significant.

During Operation

The habitats present on-Site are widespread on both a local and national scale, with none of the habitats being considered rare. The development will result in the loss of all on-Site habitat. The majority of habitats are considered to be of negligible/low ecological value, however, the scattered trees offer greater ecological value. If habitats planted during construction are not managed appropriately during operation, then there is the potential for additional biodiversity loss from the Site.

Without mitigation, the Proposed Development has the potential to have a minor adverse effect that is not significant.

Avoidance and Mitigation

During Construction

For off-Site trees in proximity to the Site boundary it is important that a root protection zone is implemented so that the roost systems are not disturbed or damaged during construction activities.

Dust suppression measures such as bowsers and water cannons are to be utilised during construction to reduce the amount of dust pollution on-Site and in surrounding statutory and non-statutory Sites.

During Operation

The proposed loss of scattered trees and modified grassland habitat on-Site is to be compensated for through the provision of native shrubs/scrub, ornamental planting beds, scattered trees and hedgerows on-Site. These habitats would provide an extension as well as buffer to semi natural habitats currently adjacent to the Site. They will also increase the species and structural diversity on-Site, contributing to a Net Benefit for Biodiversity.

Assessment of Residual Effects

Following the implementation of avoidance, mitigation and compensation on-Site, the potential residual effects on habitats are anticipated to be minor beneficial, and not significant.

5.1.3 Birds

Potential Impacts

During Construction

The construction phase will result in the loss of suitable nesting habitat i.e. the scattered trees and buildings. There is, therefore, potential for permanent adverse effects on nesting birds in the area as a result of such clearance.

In addition, construction works being carried out within proximity to nesting birds may affect them indirectly, depending on the works being carried out, and the species of bird affected. Noise and vibration disturbance effects may result in birds being repeatedly flushed off nests, causing disruption to feeding activity, or even abandonment of nests. This is considered to be a temporary impact.

Further to the potential direct effects on birds whilst they are actively nesting, the removal of suitable vegetation will result in the direct loss of foraging opportunities for birds.

Without mitigation, this is considered likely to have a minor adverse effect that is not significant.

During Operation

During operation, if habitats planted during construction are not managed appropriately during operation, then there is the potential for additional biodiversity loss from the Site. As the Site mostly consists of developed land, it offers limited nesting habitat opportunities for birds. However, the clearance of foraging habitats on-Site may cause a loss of birds nesting locally in the surrounding areas.

Without mitigation, this is considered likely to have a minor adverse effect that is not significant.

Avoidance and Mitigation

During Construction

Where practicable, vegetation clearance and building demolition at the Site should be undertaken outside of the main nesting bird season (i.e. clearance carried out between September and February inclusive). Conflict with the development can be avoided by managing the land to discourage nesting birds up to the works commencing.

If these works cannot be restricted to within this period, an Ecological Watching Brief should be maintained during the main bird breeding season to ensure that no nesting birds are adversely affected. This will entail checking all suitable habitat for nesting birds due to be removed, and a buffer of at least 10 m beyond that area, by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to the commencement of works. If, during the Ecological Watching Brief, birds are found to be within the area due to be cleared or the buffer zone, measures to prevent any disturbance to breeding birds, including the cessation of vegetation clearance, or construction works in areas close to breeding sites until the birds have completed breeding, will be put in place until the chicks have fledged.

During Operation

To reduce the net loss of bird breeding habitat on-Site, bird boxes will be installed on the store post-development to provide opportunities for nesting. In addition, native scrub, tree and hedgerow planting will provide additional nesting opportunities once established.

Assessment of Residual Effects

Following the implementation of avoidance and mitigation on-Site, the residual effects for birds are of negligible effect and neutral significance.

5.1.4 Bats

Potential Impacts

During Construction

The high levels of construction noise and vibration on-Site may result in some disturbance to foraging and commuting bats, particularly if construction is still being undertaken into the hours of dusk in the summer months where bats are more active. This temporary impact could cause disturbance to local bat feeding behaviour in the area.

Without mitigation, the Proposed Development has the potential to have a minor adverse effect that is not significant.

During Operation

Bats are considered unlikely to rely on any aspect of the Site for commuting and foraging, given its open nature and exposure to high levels of artificial illumination from streetlights and road traffic noise. Any bats that do make use of the Site are likely to be light-tolerant species only.

Avoidance and Mitigation

During Construction

The construction phase of works has the potential to result in temporary disturbance to bats through increased lighting, noise and vibration, both on foraging and commuting corridors. However, as the Site is within an urban landscape there is unlikely to be rarer bat species present with only local light-sensitive species within the vicinity of works. In addition, it is anticipated that during the main active bat season (April-October, inclusive), construction works will generally cease or be winding down before dusk when bats emerge and will not begin before dawn when bats return to roosts. Therefore, generally additional artificial lighting will not be required, and there are not anticipated to be any negative effects upon bat foraging and commuting behaviour from noise across the Site since construction works will not coincide with the timing of bat activity.

In certain circumstances, for example, in late autumn or early spring when daylight hours are limited but weather conditions may be suitable for bats to be active, there may be a brief overlap between bat activity and on-Site construction works. During this period, lighting may be required to enable the construction works to progress, and this along with any associated noise, may temporarily alter bats foraging and commuting activity across an area of the Site. However, the combined effects of lighting and noise from construction works during these occasional circumstances would only be a temporary deterrent to foraging and commuting bats in a concentrated area, and not across the wider Site and this is not anticipated to have any adverse impact upon bats.

During Operation

In order to avoid any impacts to more light tolerant species of bat, it is anticipated that a sensitive lighting strategy will be implemented to reduce light spill onto boundary habitats.

Assessment of Residual Effects

Subsequent to the application of avoidance and mitigation, the residual effects on bats are considered to be negligible effect and neutral significance.

5.1.5 Hedgehogs

Potential Impacts

During Construction

There is the potential for hedgehogs to be killed/injured during Site clearance works.

In addition, there is a direct risk of harm to hedgehogs should they fall into pits or trenches left open overnight during the works. Should they become trapped they may be at greater risk of predation, starvation and susceptibility to extreme weather conditions.

In the absence of mitigation this could result in a minor adverse effect which is not significant.

Avoidance and Mitigation

During Construction

Clearance of vegetated habitats will be undertaken with an awareness for the potential presence of hedgehog and any individuals found should be caught with gloved hands and moved to an alternative suitable habitat away from the proposed works.

During the construction phase of works, no open pits or trenches will be left uncovered or alternatively without a mammal escape ramp overnight. This measure could be secured through implementation of a CEMP.

Assessment of Residual Effects

Subsequent to the application of avoidance and mitigation, the residual effect on hedgehogs is considered to be negligible effect and neutral significance.

5.2 Enhancement

A number of 1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace boxes are to be externally mounted onto the new Store building. The boxes will be erected at least 5 m from ground level in a sheltered and shaded location.

6.0 Conclusions

The habitats present on-Site are widespread, in both a local and national context. Whilst there is likely to be a temporal delay in achieving the biodiversity objectives for the Site (i.e. whilst new habitats become established), it is anticipated that in the long term there will be no significant residual effects on habitats or protected species resulting from the Proposed Development.

7.0 Disclaimer

The recommendations contained in this report represent Lucion's professional opinions, based upon the information referred to in Section 1.0 of this report, exercising the duty of care required of an experienced Ecology Consultant. Lucion does not warrant or guarantee that the Site is free of bats or other protected species.

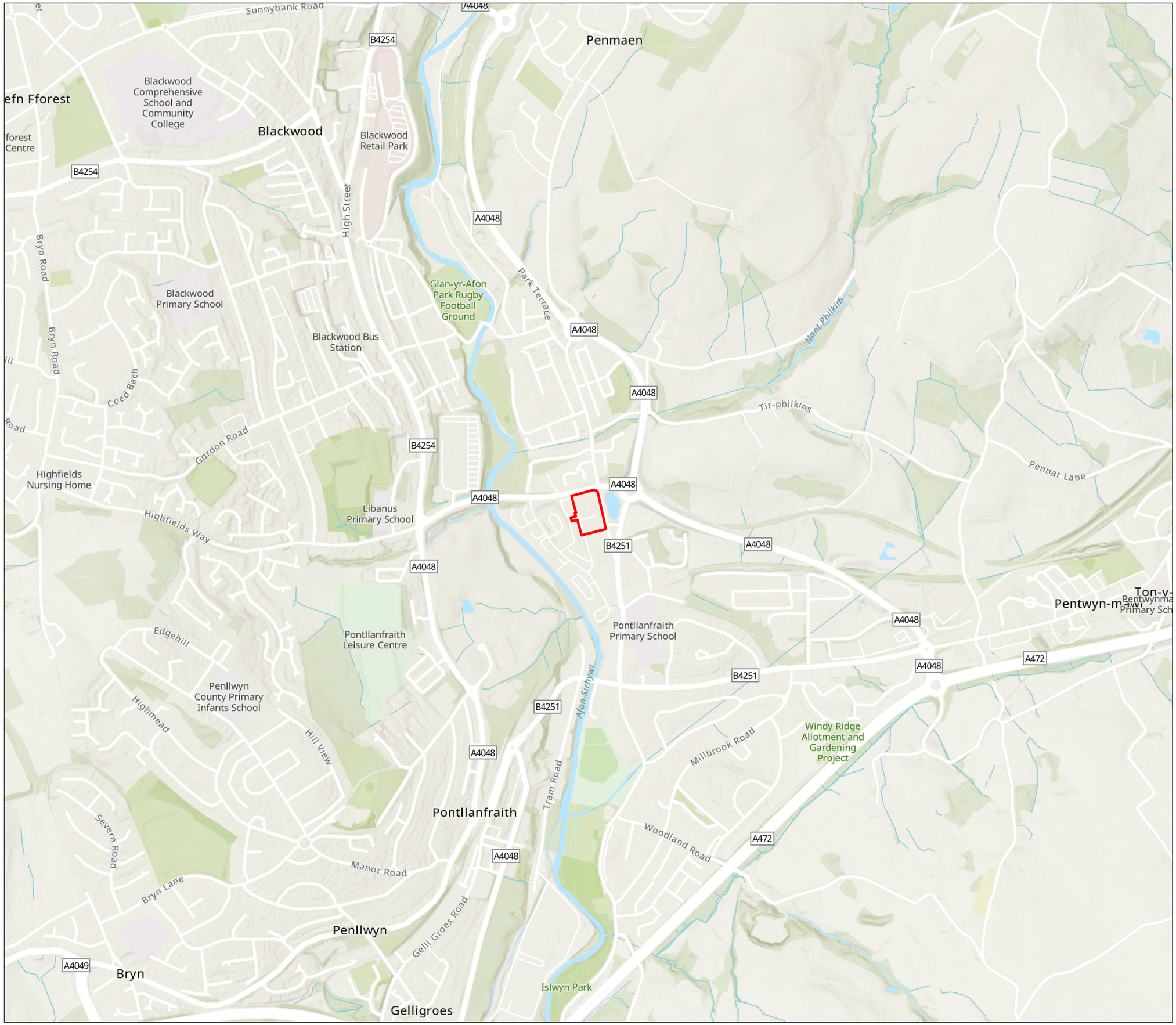
The behaviour of animals can be unpredictable and may not conform to characteristics recorded in current scientific literature. This report, therefore, cannot predict with absolute certainty that animal species will or will not occur in apparently suitable locations or habitats or that they will not occur in locations or habitats that appear unsuitable.

No part of the survey included an assessment of the materials and conditions of any buildings. No part of the survey included an asbestos assessment, nor did it represent an appraisal of other deleterious materials or hazardous substances.

This report was prepared by Lucion for the sole and exclusive use of the Client and for the specific purpose for which Lucion was instructed as defined in Section 1.0 of this report. Nothing contained in this report shall be construed to give any rights or benefits to anyone other than the Client and Lucion, and all duties and responsibilities undertaken are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Client and not for the benefit of any other party. In particular, Lucion does not intend, without its written consent, for this report to be disseminated to anyone other than the Client or to be used or relied upon by anyone other than the Client. Use of the report by any other person is unauthorised and such use is at the sole risk of the user. Anyone using or relying upon this report, other than the Client, agrees by virtue of its use to indemnify and hold harmless Lucion from and against all claims, losses and damages (of whatsoever nature and howsoever or whensoever arising), arising out of or resulting from the performance of the work by the Consultant.

Appendix A – Figures

Figure 1 – Site Location Plan



Legend

Site boundary

0 100 200 300 400 Meters

N

Figure	Site Location Plan		
Job	Stagecoach Depot, Pontllanfraith		
Client	Lidl		
Figure No. 1	Revision A	Date 12/12/2024	
Drawn BB	Checked JL	Scale 1:10,000 @ A3	
Job No. 122843.649598		Central GR 318082E 196440N	

DO NOT SCALE.
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION.

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Figure 2 – UK Habitat Plan

Legend

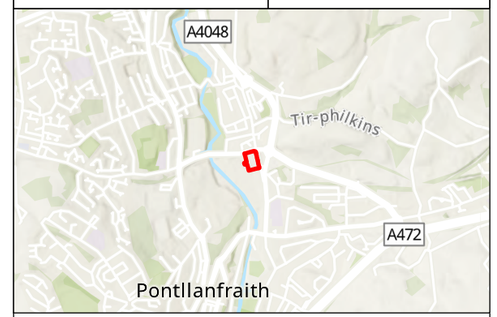
- Site boundary
- g4 - Modified grassland
- u1b - Developed land; sealed surface
- u1b5 - Buildings
- w - Woodland and forest
- ITr - Individual tree (rural)

Secondary Codes	
10	Scattered scrub
33	Line of trees
81	Ruderal or ephemeral
510	Bare ground

0 5 10 15 20 Meters

N

Figure	UK Habitat Plan		
Job	Stagecoach Depot, Pontllanfraith		
Client	Lidl		
Figure No. 2	Revision A	Date 12/12/2024	
Drawn BB	Checked JL	Scale 1:500 @ A3	
Job No. 122843.649598		Central GR 318082E 196440N	



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Appendix B – Drawings

Drawing 1 – Proposed Development Plan

DO NOT SCALE!
ALL DIMENSIONS SHOULD BE CHECKED ON SITE BEFORE WORK COMMENCES

PROPOSED ACCESS/EGRESS TO SUIT DESIGN STANDARDS TO HIGHWAY CONSULTANTS DESIGN DETAILS.

RED LINE BOUNDARY
8642 SQM / 2.1 ACRES

B4254

EXISTING SUBSTATION

SALES AREA
1334 m²

114 CAR PARK SPACES
INC 6 DISABLED, 9 P&C, 2 EVC

PENMAEN ROAD

Council Depot

SCALE BAR 1:500
0 5 10 15 20 30 40 50

SCHEDULE OF AREAS (TYPE 1300)	
SALES =	1334 m²
WAREHOUSE=	410 m²
ANCILLARY=	218 m²
GIA =	1962 m²
GEA (EX. CANOPY) =	2045 m²
GEA (INC. CANOPY) =	2215 m²

Rev.	Date	Description	Drawn
A	11/03/2024	STORE UPDATED TO LATEST SPEC. AREAS UPDATED ACCORDINGLY.	NG

htcarchitects
York Place Studio
8 Britannia Street
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LS1 2DZ
T:(0113) 244 3457
W: www.htcarchitects.co.uk
E: info@htcarchitects.co.uk

client
Lidl GB Ltd.

project
Blackwood

drawing title
Proposed Site Plan - Option 11

date February 2024
status Feasibility
scale 1:500 @ A3
drawn KE checked LS
job no. 2973 dwg no. F422 rev. A

Drawing 2 – Proposed Landscaping Plan

WOODSIDE
MAES Y COED

Norway Maple

B4254

Palisade Fence

Rough Ground Vegetated

Palisade Fence

COUNCIL DEPOT

Oak
Alders
Hazel

Attenuation Pond

0m 10m 20m

Palisade Fence

COUNCIL YARD

G5 Sycamore & Ash

Rough Ground Vegetated

Palisade Fence

Retaining Wall and Platform

Sycamore

G8 Goat Willow

Retaining Wall

Block A

1 to 3

Mainly Bramble & Buddleia

WB

BUS DEPOT
WASHERY

T2 Norway Maple

Tarmac

Leyland Cypress Line

RESIDENTIAL AREA

PENMAEN ROAD

B4251

51

39

Existing Trees and Vegetation

Grass Areas

Bank/ Contours

Fence

Application Boundary

Proposed Tree Planting

Proposed Hedge

Proposed Planting Beds

Proposed Native blocks

Sparrow Terrace

In accordance with Ecologist's recommendations

CA-2025- BKWD-03 Rev A
14 Feb2025
Revised layout

CA-2025- BKWD-03 Rev B
18 Feb2025
Bird boxes added

Corscadden Associates
77 Fairleigh Road
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Tel 07966 423074
email ca@corscaddenassociates.com

Project
PENMAEN ROAD
PONTLLANFRAITH
NP12 2DY

Drawing Title
LANDSCAPE PROPOSALS OVERALL

Scale
1:500 at A2

Date
30 January 2025

Drawing No
173 CA-2025- BKWD-03 Rev B

Appendix C – References

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Appendix D – Assessment of Structures, Trees and Habitats for Bats

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Assessment of Structures and Habitats for Bats

Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats.

Suitability	Description	
	Structures (Roosting)	**Habitats (Commuting and Foraging)**
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year.	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of year.
Negligible	An inspected structure which is considered to have no features likely to be used by roosting bats, however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features likely to be used as flightpaths or by foraging bats, however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, inadequate space, shelter, protection and conditions, and/or the low suitability of surrounding habitats means that it is unlikely to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats due to its quality and connectivity. For example, a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream that is isolated from the surrounding landscape. Alternatively, suitable but isolated habitats that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are of adequate size, shelter and protection, with suitable conditions and surrounding habitat to support a bat roost but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type not individual species conservation status).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flightpaths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by large numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for long periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and the surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flightpaths such as flowing waterbodies, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edges. High quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats, such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to, and connected to, known roosts.

NB: A structure may be identified to support a confirmed/suspected roost due to the presence of bat(s) and/or evidence such as droppings, staining and feeding remains, but will still be allocated a level of suitability from the table above.

Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats.

Suitability	**Description**
None	Either no Potential Roost Features (PRFs) in the tree or highly unlikely to be any
Further Assessment Required (FAR)	Further Assessment Required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree
Potential Roosting Feature (PRF)	A tree with at least one PRF present
PRF – L (Low Roost Suitability)	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats
PRF – M (High Roost Suitability)	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony

The above tables have been adapted from Collins, J. (ed). 2023.

Appendix E - Ecological Impact Assessment Methodology

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Ecological Impact Assessment Methodology

The methodology for the EcIA follows the principles set out within the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) in the UK and Ireland; Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine updated by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) in 2019 and comprises a staged approach to assessing the potential impacts resulting from the proposed development on the ecological features within the ZOI.

The EcIA has involved the following stages:

- Determination of baseline conditions;
- Identification of important ecological features;
- Identification of potential impacts and effects;
- Identifying likely significant effects;
- Designing appropriate avoidance and/or mitigation for impacts and effects;
- Assessment of residual effect significance;
- Assessment of cumulative impacts and effects; and
- Identification of compensation and enhancement measures.

Baseline Conditions

Baseline conditions have been established following the methodology outlined in the above sections.

Important Ecological Features

Important ecological features have been identified based on existing statutory, policy and conservation objectives. In accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines the value or potential value of an ecological resource has been determined within a defined geographical context in line with the table below.

Potential Impacts and Effects

The potential impacts on any important ecological features are identified during construction and operation, and prior to any mitigation, based on available baseline data, an assessment of design proposals and construction methods, and available information on the existing conservation status of the features in question.

Impacts are then characterised in terms of the following attributes:

- Positive or negative – i.e. a change that improves or reduces the quality of the environment;
- Magnitude – i.e. the size of an impact in quantitative terms where possible;
- Extent – i.e. the area over which an impact occurs;
- Duration – i.e. the time for which an impact is expected to last;
- Reversibility – i.e. is the impact permanent or temporary; and
- Timing and frequency – e.g. related to breeding seasons.

The likely effects of potential impacts on important ecological features largely depend upon their sensitivity, whilst the level of certainty that an impact will occur as predicted is based on professional judgment. Only the impacts likely to result in significant effects have been described in detail within the report. Impacts that are either unlikely to occur, or if they did occur are unlikely to be significant have been scoped out and justification for scoping out provided.

Geographic Scale	Example Criteria for Classification at each Geographic Scale
International	Habitats meeting the criteria for Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Area (SPA) site. A species present in internationally important numbers (>1% of international population). Notable species which is part of the cited interest of an SPA or SAC and which regularly occurs in internationally or nationally important numbers.
National	Habitats meeting the criteria for a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ), or National Nature Reserve (NNR). A species present in nationally important numbers (>1% of UK population). A species which is part of the cited interest of a SSSI and which regularly occurs in internationally or nationally important numbers. Rare breeding species (e.g. birds with <300 UK breeding pairs).
Regional	A local site with important regional habitats or significant populations of Species of Principal Importance (SPIs) under the NERC act. Species present in regionally important numbers (>1% of regional population). Species listed as priority species, which are not covered above, and which regularly occur in regionally important numbers. Sustainable populations of a species that is rare or scarce within a region. Species on the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red or Amber List and which regularly occur in regionally important numbers.
County	A local site with a habitat that is characteristic of the county or rare on a county scale, or with significant populations of locally important species. Species present in county important numbers (>1% of county population). Species listed as priority species, which are not covered above, and which regularly occur in county important numbers. Sustainable population of a species that is rare or scarce within a county. A site designated for its county important assemblage of species. Species on the BoCC Red or Amber List and which regularly occur in county important numbers.
Local	A site which has wildlife corridors likely to be essential to allow viable movement of species or improve the biodiversity of the area. Species listed as priority species, which are not covered above, and are rare in the locality. Species present in numbers just under county importance (<1% of county population). Sustainable population of a species that is rare or scarce within the locality. A site whose designation is just under for inclusion for its county important assemblage of a particular species on site. Other species on the BoCC Red or Amber List and which are considered to regularly occur in locally important numbers.

Likely Significant Effects

In accordance with the CIEEM guidelines, an ecologically significant effect is 'an effect that either supports or undermines the biodiversity conservation objectives for 'important ecological features' or for biodiversity in general'.

Using an approach to valuing impacts that involves professional judgement and reference to available conservation objectives, neutral and minor effects are considered to be not significant, while moderate and major effects are assessed to be significant. The table below provides a comparison of the terms used.

Effect Significance	Type of Effect	Equivalent CIEEM Assessment
Significant	Major beneficial	Significant positive impact on biodiversity conservation objectives at given geographical context
	Moderate beneficial	Positive impact on biodiversity conservation objectives at given geographical context
Non-significant	Minor beneficial	Limited positive impact on biodiversity conservation objectives at given geographical context
Neutral	Negligible	No significant impact on biodiversity conservation objectives at given geographical context
Non-significant	Minor adverse	Limited adverse impact on biodiversity conservation objectives at given geographical context
Significant	Moderate adverse	Adverse impact on biodiversity conservation objectives at given geographical context
	Major adverse	Significant adverse impact on biodiversity conservation objectives at given geographical context

The evaluation of significant effects has been based on the best available scientific evidence. Where sufficient evidence is not available, the precautionary principle has been applied. Therefore, where it is not possible to robustly justify a conclusion of no significant effect, a significant effect has been assumed. Any uncertainty has been acknowledged within the report.

Avoidance and/or Mitigation

Negative impacts have been avoided and/or mitigated where possible, in line with the mitigation hierarchy as presented within the CIEEM Guidelines.

Assessment of Residual Effect Significance

Once the impacts of the proposed development have been assessed, and all attempts to avoid and mitigate ecological impacts have been finalised, an assessment of the residual impacts is undertaken to determine the significance of their effects upon ecological features.

Cumulative Impact Assessment

The following types of future development within the same zone of influence have been considered as part of the cumulative impact assessment in relation to each important ecological feature:

- Proposals for which consent has been applied which are awaiting determination and are visible on the local planning portal;

- Projects which have been granted planning consent, but which have not yet been started or which have been started but are not yet completed (i.e. under construction); and
- Proposals which have been refused permission but which are subject to appeal and the appeal is undetermined.

Compensation and Enhancement

Compensation measures were taken to offset residual effects resulting in the loss of, or permanent damage to ecological features despite mitigation, where required. Compensation has only been considered as a last resort, in line with the mitigation hierarchy.

Enhancement measures have been agreed over and above any mitigation or compensation measures, in order to provide a biodiversity net gain.

Appendix F – Site Photographs

Site Photographs

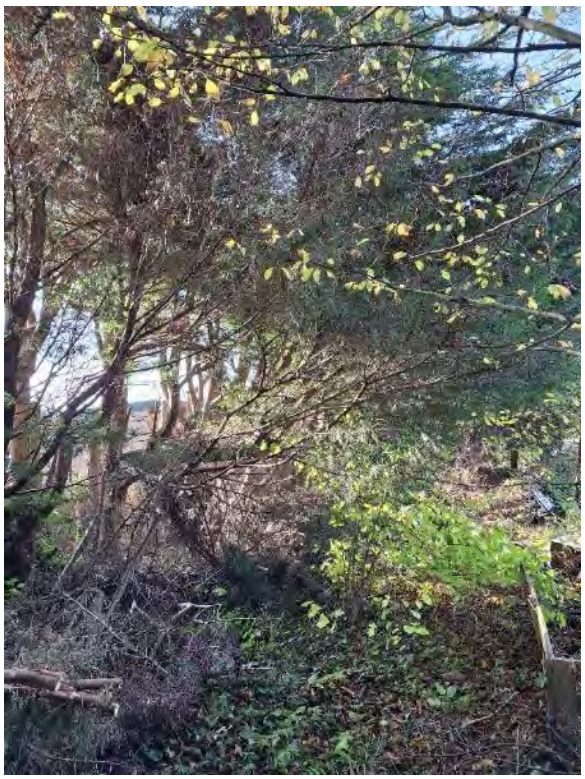
Photograph 1 – Strip of modified grassland along northern boundary. Poor condition with litter present

Photograph 2 – North-east section of modified grassland

Photograph 3 – Tarmac driveway in north-east corner with modified grassland and scattered trees

Photograph 4 – South-east section of modified grassland with some ruderal vegetation

Photograph 5 – Wild teasel and bramble amongst some of the ruderal vegetation within the modified grassland to the south-east



Photograph 6 – Scattered trees located within south-east corner

Photograph 7 – Scattered trees with bare ground along east Site Boundary

Photograph 8 – Looking north-east at developed land used as a bus parking depot

Photograph 9 – Developed land; sealed surface habitat in south of Site

Photograph 10 – Building A: East aspect of large warehouse depot

Photograph 11 – Building A: North aspect (front) of warehouse depot besides B4254 road

Photograph 12 – Building A: South aspect of warehouse. Shutter doors located to the rear to allow buses to enter and be repaired

Photograph 13 – Building A: Interior of warehouse. Steel girders and concrete flooring with no potential bat roost features

Photograph 14 – Building B: South aspect of smaller storage building. Single storey with a pitched roof and brick walls

Photograph 15 – Building B: East aspect (front) of storage building. No bat roost potential found