



BIODIVERSE
CONSULTING

LIDL – KINGS MEADOW

**SHADOW HABITATS REGULATIONS
ASSESSMENT**

FOR: LIDL GB LTD

REF: BIOC25-743 | V1.1



BIODIVERSE

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CLIENT	PROJECT	
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Biodiverse Consulting Ltd. was commissioned by Lidl GB Ltd to undertake a shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (SHRA) of the proposed Lidl foodstore at Kings Meadow, Brecon, LD3 8LA.

This report aims to assist Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority (BBNPA), as local planning authority and competent authority, in its Habitats Regulations Assessment of the development, and presents the Stage 1 (Screening) assessment and the Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment.

SUMMARY OF SHRA FOR LIDL – KINGS MEADOW, BRECON	
Statutory Designated Sites	Five European Sites lie within 10 km of the Site. Four further Designated Sites beyond 10 km were scoped in because of downstream hydrological connectivity and/or mobile qualifying species: • River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC – adjacent. The Afon Tarell (part of the SAC) runs along the southern Site boundary, and foul drainage to Brecon Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) provides a further hydrological connection • Brecon Beacons / Bannau Brycheiniog SAC (6.47 km south), Drostre Bank SAC (6.83 km north-east), River Wye / Afon Gwy SAC (7.55 km north-east) and Llangorse Lake / Llyn Syfaddan SAC (8.99 km east). No hydrological, air quality, recreational or functional pathway • Usk Bat Sites SAC (c.12 km south-east) and Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar site (more than 50 km downstream). No pathway capable of producing a Likely Significant Effect
Stage 1 – Screening Assessment	Potential impact pathways to the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC screened: 1. Foul water: Phosphorus and other effluent pollutants 2. Operational surface water: Pollution via infiltration and exceedance flows 3. Construction-phase pollution: Sediment, cement, fuels and contaminated soil 4. Disturbance of Otter and migratory fish: Noise, vibration, lighting and activity 5. Loss or degradation of functionally linked riparian habitat 6. Spread of invasive non-native species 7. Direct loss of, or damage to, habitat within the SAC

SUMMARY OF SHRA FOR LIDL – KINGS MEADOW, BRECON	
	8. Changes to the flow or hydrological regime 9. Reduced water availability from potable supply 10. Air quality: Traffic emissions and nitrogen deposition 11. Recreational pressure and public access
Appropriate Assessment Impact Pathways	Likely Significant Effects on River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC cannot be excluded, alone or in combination, through the following pathways, which are taken forward to Appropriate Assessment: 1. Foul water: Phosphorus and other effluent pollutants 2. Operational surface water pollution 3. Construction-phase pollution 4. Disturbance of Otter and migratory fish 5. Loss or degradation of functionally linked riparian habitat 6. Spread of invasive non-native species 7. Direct loss of, or damage to, habitat within the SAC 8. Air quality: Traffic emissions and nitrogen deposition
Mitigation Measures	• Pumped connection to the public sewer only, with standby pumps and 24 hours' emergency storage • Any crossing of the Afon Tarell by the foul connection made without works in the channel or on its banks • Treatment of service yard runoff before infiltration • Operational Environmental Management and Maintenance Plan • Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), including biosecurity measures • Second riparian mammal survey visit (April 2027) and pre-commencement Otter survey • Invasive non-native species (INNS) survey (June to September 2027) and, if INNS are present, an INNS management plan • External lighting in accordance with the Lighting Impact Assessment, keeping the river corridor dark • Arboricultural Method Statement to protect the wooded bank • Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)

SUMMARY OF SHRA FOR LIDL – KINGS MEADOW, BRECON	
Conclusion	Stage 1 screening concludes that Appropriate Assessment is required for the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC only. Likely Significant Effects on all other European sites, and on the River Usk SAC through the remaining three pathways, are excluded alone and in combination. The Shadow Appropriate Assessment concludes that, with the mitigation measures above and the proposed drainage scheme secured, the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC, alone or in combination with other plans or projects.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations), which apply in England and Wales, require a competent authority to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) before consenting to a plan or project that may affect a European site (defined in Section 1.6)¹.

Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority (BBNPA) is the local planning authority and competent authority for this application. This report is prepared on behalf of the applicant to inform its assessment and is therefore termed a shadow HRA (sHRA).

Biodiverse Consulting Ltd. was commissioned to provide BBNPA with the information it needs to discharge its duty. Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the statutory nature conservation body for Wales, must be consulted on any Appropriate Assessment.

1.2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

The Site is at Kings Meadow, Brecon, LD3 8LA (approximate central grid reference SO 03191 28269), within the Bannau Brycheiniog (Brecon Beacons) National Park (Appendix A).

The 1.06 ha area surveyed for the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)² comprises Grassland, Woodland, Scrub, a Line of Trees and small areas of hardstanding. The Site is unused and closed to public access. The application boundary, revised in September 2026, encloses 1.18 ha³ and runs along the north-western edge of the Afon Tarell, leaving the river channel outside it⁴.

The Site is bounded by the A40 to the north-east (residential areas of Llanfaes beyond), the A470 to the north-west (commercial units of Brecon Enterprise Park beyond) and the Afon Tarell to the south (Ffrwdgrech Industrial Estate beyond), with the A40/A470 roundabout adjoining its northern tip.

The Afon Tarell is part of the River Usk / Afon Wysg Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Afon Wysg (Isafonydd) / River Usk (Tributaries) Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)⁵. It flows

¹ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (SI 2017/1012), as amended, regulation 63. Regulation 63(3) requires the competent authority to consult the appropriate nature conservation body, which in Wales is Natural Resources Wales.

² Biodiverse Consulting Ltd (2026) Kings Meadow: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report. Ref BioC25-743, V1.0, 24 March 2026, Section 1.1.

³ htc architects (2026) Kings Meadow – Brecon: Site Location Plan, drawing 3223-P400 rev A, 10 September 2026 (site area 11,812 m²).

⁴ Corscadden Associates (2026) Kings Meadow, A470 Brecon: landscape drawings CA-2026-BRKM-01 Rev A (Existing Features, revised boundary, 24 September 2026) and CA-2026-BRKM-02 to -08, and Planting Schedule, 1–22 September 2026.

⁵ Natural Resources Wales (2022) Core Management Plan including Conservation Objectives for Afon Wysg / River Usk SAC. Version 3, September 2022, management unit table (Afon Tarell – source to confluence with the River Usk, GB109056033070).

north-east along the southern boundary at approximately 135 m AOD, at the foot of a steep wooded bank 5–7 m below the developable part of the Site, and joins the main River Usk approximately 820 m downstream⁶. Pathways between the Site and the SAC are described in Section 3.

1.3 PROPOSALS

The proposed development comprises a Lidl foodstore with associated car parking, access, servicing and landscaping⁷. It would create substantial areas of hardstanding while retaining the wooded slope adjacent to the Afon Tarell. Construction and operation could affect the River Usk SAC through changes in surface water drainage, foul water management, traffic emissions and activity close to the river corridor.

All built development, including the access, lies outside Flood Zone 3 (the river corridor), more than 4.5 m above the 0.1% annual exceedance probability flood level⁸, and the application drawings show no works within the channel or on the banks of the Afon Tarell. The foul connection point advised by the sewerage undertaker would, however, require a crossing of the river (Section 1.3.1). The proposed layout is shown in Appendix B.

The landscape proposals retain the wooded bank and river corridor as a conservation area (Conservation Area 3), separated from the car park and service yard by a 1.1 m high mesh conservation fence with maintenance gates. Landscaping and habitat enhancements include native tree, shrub and Hedgerow planting, rain gardens, hibernacula and log piles. A small number of trees and a section of Hedgerow would be removed. Boundary treatments adjacent to the service yard include a retaining wall and handrail.

1.3.1 Drainage Strategy

The drainage strategy set out in the Flood Consequences Assessment & Drainage Strategy (FCA)⁹ is summarised below:

- **Foul Water:** Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) has confirmed¹⁰ that the public sewerage system, which drains to Brecon Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW), can accommodate the foul flows, and advised connection between manholes SO03270901 and SO03270904. These lie c.370 m south-west of the Site beyond the Afon Tarell, so the pumped connection

⁶ Waterco Limited (2026) Kings Meadow, Brecon: Flood Consequences Assessment & Drainage Strategy. Ref 17891-FCA & Drainage Strategy-04, 7 October 2026, pages 1 and 5.

⁷ htc architects (2026) Kings Meadow – Brecon: Proposed Setting Out Site Plan, drawing 3223-P410 rev F, 24 September 2026; Proposed Surface Treatments Plan (P414 rev B), Proposed Boundary Treatments Plan (P415 rev B) and Proposed Levels Strategy (P416 rev A), September 2026; and Proposed Lidl Foodstore, A470, Kings Meadow: Design & Access Statement, Rev D, September 2026.

⁸ Waterco Limited (2026) Flood Consequences Assessment & Drainage Strategy, rev 04, pages 6 and 15.

⁹ Waterco Limited (2026) Kings Meadow, Brecon: Flood Consequences Assessment & Drainage Strategy. Ref 17891-FCA & Drainage Strategy-04, 7 October 2026, pages 3 and 9–14.

¹⁰ Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (2026) Pre-planning enquiry response to Waterco, ref PPA0010218, 20 July 2026, reproduced in FCA Appendix G (FCA pages 5 and 13).

would cross the river. A closer connection, to the private sewer upstream of DCWW's pumping station c.30 m west of the Site, is being discussed with DCWW and would also be pumped; the final point is not yet agreed. No package treatment plant is proposed

- **Surface Water:** Infiltration testing to BRE 365 recorded rates of 6.89×10^{-5} to 2.17×10^{-3} m/s in glaciofluvial sand and gravel (a Secondary A aquifer), with no groundwater encountered to 7.45 m below ground level. Runoff from the roof, plant area, service yard, loading bay and footways (Drainage Area 1, 3,170 m²) and the car park (Drainage Area 2, 3,840 m²) will discharge to two soakaways beneath the car park (inverts 139.00 m AOD), sized for the 1 in 100-year plus 40% climate change event; greater flows will pond within the car park. No discharge to the Afon Tarell or the public sewer is proposed
- **Treatment:** Car park runoff will pass through permeable-surfaced parking bays, whose CIRIA C753 mitigation indices (0.7 total suspended solids, 0.6 metals, 0.7 hydrocarbons) match the medium pollution hazard indices for non-residential car parking, and a rain garden is proposed. HGV loading bay runoff will pass through a proprietary separator before the Drainage Area 1 soakaway

1.4 SITE CONTEXT

This assessment is contingent on foul and surface water being managed by wholly separate systems, with no surface water discharged to the combined or foul sewer network and no new outfall to the Afon Tarell.

1.5 REPORT PURPOSE

The objectives of this report are to:

- Identify the European sites that could be affected by the development, and the qualifying features and conservation objectives against which effects must be judged
- Identify all potential impact pathways to those sites and screen each for a Likely Significant Effect (LSE), alone or in combination with other plans and projects, without regard to mitigation
- Where an LSE cannot be excluded, assess the implications for the site's conservation objectives and identify the mitigation needed for the competent authority to conclude that site integrity will not be adversely affected
- Identify any further information, survey or assessment required before the competent authority can conclude its Appropriate Assessment

1.6 HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

HRA is a staged assessment, undertaken in accordance with the Habitats Regulations, of whether a plan or project may affect the qualifying features of a European site, before deciding whether to undertake, permit or authorise it.

European sites include¹¹:

- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and potential SPAs (pSPAs)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and candidate SACs (cSACs)
- Listed or proposed Ramsar sites

HRA has four stages:

- **Stage 1 – Screening:** Assessing whether the project would have an LSE on a European Site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, without consideration of mitigation. If an LSE cannot be excluded, Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment (AA) – applies; otherwise, the project may be authorised
- **Stage 2 – Appropriate Assessment:** The competent authority assesses the implications of the project for the European Site's conservation objectives to determine whether it would adversely affect the site's integrity. If it can be ascertained beyond reasonable scientific doubt that it would not, the project can be authorised; if not, Stages 3 and 4 apply
- **Stage 3 – Alternative Solutions:** Where the project would damage the integrity of a European Site, alternative solutions that would deliver the project objective(s) must be considered. If every alternative would also affect its integrity, Stage 4 applies
- **Stage 4 – Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI):** Projects that adversely affect the integrity of a European Site may proceed for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, subject to compensatory measures being secured

In *C G Fry & Son Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government*¹², the Supreme Court confirmed that regulation 63 applies at later consent stages, such as approval of reserved matters or discharge of conditions, where that decision authorises the project to proceed. This assessment should therefore be revisited if the drainage strategy, lighting or construction methods change materially at detailed design.

¹¹ Welsh Government (2024) Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12, February 2024, Chapter 6; Welsh Assembly Government (2009) Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning. As a matter of policy in Wales, potential SPAs, candidate SACs and listed or proposed Ramsar sites are given the same protection as designated European sites.

¹² *C G Fry & Son Ltd v Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and another* [2025] UKSC 35, judgment of 22 October 2025.

In Wales, development affecting phosphorus-sensitive river SACs is addressed through the Welsh Government's Interim Planning Policy Statement on Development in SAC Rivers¹³ and its practical planning guidance, NRW's advice to planning authorities on nutrient sensitive SACs¹⁴ and BBNPA's Nutrient Statement¹⁵, which are applied in Sections 3 and 4.

1.7 BASELINE INFORMATION

1.7.1 Desk Study

The following data sources informed the screening:

- Aerial imagery and Ordnance Survey mapping of the local area
- A search of MAGIC and NRW designated site data for European sites within 10 km and nationally designated sites within 2 km, extended beyond 10 km to European sites hydrologically connected to the Site or supporting mobile qualifying species (Section 2)
- Records of non-statutory designated sites and protected and priority species within 2 km, obtained from the Biodiversity Information Service for Powys and Brecon Beacons National Park (BIS)
- Review of the JNCC site accounts, NRW Core Management Plans (including conservation objectives), NRW phosphorus compliance assessments, BBNPA's Nutrient Statement, and the FCA, Air Quality Assessment (AQA)¹⁶, Design & Access Statement, Arboricultural Report and landscape proposals for the development

1.7.2 Surveys

1.7.2.1 Habitats

A PEA walkover survey was undertaken on 10 March 2026 by Biodiverse Consulting Ltd, outside the optimal botanical season, so the habitat results are indicative. No waterbodies or invasive non-native plant species were recorded on site; the Afon Tarell lies immediately to the south. Habitats comprise Modified Grassland (0.67 ha), Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (0.32 ha) on the steep bank above the Afon Tarell, Bramble Scrub, Developed Land (Sealed Surface) and a Line of Trees. No habitat within the Site is of a type for which any European site is designated, but the wooded bank adjoins the SAC and is considered in Section 3 as supporting habitat.

¹³ Welsh Government (2025) Interim Planning Policy Statement on Development in SAC Rivers, 5 August 2025. To be inserted into Planning Policy Wales as paragraphs 6.6.30 to 6.6.39.

¹⁴ Natural Resources Wales. Advice to planning authorities for planning applications affecting nutrient sensitive Special Areas of Conservation (as updated). The development types in and out of scope are reproduced in Pembrokeshire County Council's nutrient guidance (revised 4 June 2026), <https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/planning-and-ecology/phosphates-> [accessed 30 September 2026].

¹⁵ Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority (2024) Nutrient Statement, December 2024.

¹⁶ SLR Consulting Ltd (2026) Lidl, King's Meadow, Brecon: Air Quality Assessment. SLR Project No. 425.068000.00001, Revision v1.3, 6 October 2026.

1.7.2.2 Protected Species

The PEA recorded no field signs of Otter, but the desk study returned 22 Otter records within 2 km (nearest 584 m), the wooded bank provides suitable terrestrial habitat and connectivity along the Afon Tarell is strong, although noise from the adjacent roads reduces suitability. A riparian mammal survey (two visits between April and September) was recommended; the first visit was completed on 7 September 2026 (Section 1.7.2.3).

The Afon Tarell was assessed as highly suitable for migratory fish, and one record of European Eel was returned (1,096 m). Twelve bat species were recorded within 2 km, including Lesser Horseshoe Bat (191 records, nearest 186 m) and Greater Horseshoe Bat (one record, 1,135 m). A Pedunculate Oak (T1) on the Site has potential roost features, and the further bat surveys recommended are being carried out in the 2026/2027 survey seasons.

1.7.2.3 Riparian Mammal Survey

A riparian mammal survey of the Afon Tarell was carried out on 7 September 2026 by Ben McLean BSc (Hons) MCIEEM and Ella Newton BSc (Hons), in dry conditions with sunny spells (16°C, Beaufort 1, 7/8 cloud)¹⁷, covering the watercourse alongside the Site and about 100 m upstream and downstream. The second visit is scheduled for April 2027.

Evidence of Otter was widespread, with 15 spraints at 12 locations, including beneath the A40 and A470 bridges, indicating regular use of the river corridor. Two potential Otter resting places (each a pair of burrows) were found on the opposite bank, neither showing signs of recent use. Smaller cavities beneath roots and stumps, in the rock and retaining walls and in outfall pipes may also offer resting opportunities. No Otter resting places were found within the Site, and no evidence of Water Vole was recorded.

The survey confirms that Otters, a qualifying feature of the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC, regularly use the river alongside the Site. As a precaution, the two pairs of burrows are assumed to be Otter holts; although outside the Site, they could be affected by noise, activity and lighting from the development.

1.7.2.4 Trees

A tree survey to BS 5837:2012 on 20 April 2026 informs an Arboricultural Report comprising an Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement¹⁸. It recorded two individual Oaks, four tree groups and one Hedgerow, including a veteran Oak (T1)

¹⁷ Kings Meadow riparian mammal survey results, Survey 1, 7 September 2026. Surveyors: B. McLean BSc (Hons) MCIEEM and E. Newton BSc (Hons).

¹⁸ ArbTS – Arboricultural Technician Services Ltd (2026) Arboricultural Report including Tree Survey Data & Tree Constraints Plan, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tree Protection Plan and Arboricultural Method Statement: 1 Kings Meadows, Brecon. Ref ArbTS_2400.2_1, September 2026.

in the centre of the Site, trees along the A40 (G2), woodland on the riverbank above the Afon Tarell (G3, with G4 at its north-eastern end) and an overgrown Hedgerow along the A470 (H1).

The proposals require removal of the veteran Oak, a second Oak (T2), a small Sycamore group (G1) and 55 m of Hedgerow; the remaining trees, woodland and Hedgerow will be retained and protected during construction. Limited excavation within the woodland root protection area will be carried out under arboricultural supervision. T2 and G1 lie next to the proposed service yard and do not overhang the river.

2 DESIGNATED SITES

European sites within 10 km were identified from MAGIC and NRW data. As a project's zone of influence depends on its impact pathways rather than a fixed distance, the search was extended to European sites beyond 10 km that are hydrologically connected to the Site or whose mobile qualifying species were recorded nearby. No SPAs or Ramsar sites lie within 10 km. The sites considered are summarised below and in Table 1, and their locations are shown in Appendix C.

River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC (UK0013007): Adjoins the Site. The Afon Tarell, which forms the southern boundary of the Site, is part of the SAC; the main River Usk lies 446 m north of the Site, approximately 820 m downstream along the Tarell

Brecon Beacons / Bannau Brycheiniog SAC (UK0030096): Lies 6.47 km south of the Site in the uplands of the central Brecon Beacons, upslope and upstream of the Site

Drostre Bank SAC (UK0012878): Lies 6.83 km north-east of the Site

River Wye / Afon Gwy SAC (UK0012642): Lies 7.55 km north-east of the Site within a separate river catchment

Llangorse Lake / Llyn Syfaddan SAC (UK0012985): Lies 8.99 km east of the Site and drains north via the Afon Llynfi to the River Wye

Usk Bat Sites / Safleoedd Ystlumod Wysg SAC (UK0014784): The nearest component, Buckland Coach House & Ice House SSSI, lies approximately 12 km south-east of the Site. Included because its qualifying species, Lesser Horseshoe Bat, is mobile and has been recorded nearby

Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren SAC (UK0013030), Severn Estuary SPA (UK9015022) and Severn Estuary Ramsar Site (UK11081): Lie more than 50 km south-east of the Site at the mouth of the River Usk. Included because they are hydrologically connected to the Site via the Usk, through which the migratory fish for which the SAC and Ramsar site are designated pass

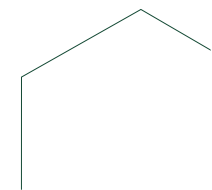
TABLE 1: DESIGNATED SITES SUMMARY¹⁹

SITE NAME & DESIGNATED	SITE CHARACTERISTICS	QUALIFYING FEATURES	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	DISTANCE/ DIRECTION FROM SITE
River Usk / Afon Wysg Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Site code: UK0013007 Area: 967.97 ha Component SSSIs include River Usk (Upper Usk) / Afon Wysg (Wysg Uchaf) SSSI and Afon Wysg (Isafonydd) / River Usk (Tributaries) SSSI, which includes the Afon Tarell.	Large river system rising on the Black Mountain and flowing east through Brecon to the Severn Estuary at Newport. The SAC comprises the main river, tidal reach and tributaries, including the Afon Tarell. The Usk is one of four UK sites with a known breeding population of Twaite Shad, which do not pass Crickhowell bridge, considered a complete barrier. Sea Lamprey are mainly restricted to the lower reaches. Phosphorus: In 2021, 88% of the Usk water bodies assessed	Annex II species (primary reason for selection): - S1095 Sea Lamprey <i>Petromyzon marinus</i> - S1096 Brook Lamprey <i>Lampetra planeri</i> - S1099 River Lamprey <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i> - S1103 Twaite Shad <i>Alosa fallax</i> - S1106 Atlantic Salmon <i>Salmo salar</i> - S1163 Bullhead <i>Cottus gobio</i> - S1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> Qualifying features (not a primary reason):	As set out in the Core Management Plan: - Qualifying species populations are stable or increasing over the long term and range is not being reduced - Flow regime, water quality and physical habitat are maintained in, or restored as far as possible to, a near-natural state - Breeding, spawning and nursery sites are maintained as suitable habitat, and the addition or release of excessive quantities of fine sediment is avoided - Migratory fish complete their migrations and life cycles largely unhindered by barriers, pollution or depleted flows	Adjacent. The Afon Tarell (part of the SAC) forms the southern boundary, c.5 m from the PEA survey boundary. Hydrologically connected by groundwater and overland flow to the Tarell, and by foul drainage to Brecon WwTW, which discharges to the River Usk.

¹⁹ Site information is taken from the JNCC site pages (<https://sac.jncc.gov.uk>) and from the conservation objectives in NRW (2022) Core Management Plan for Afon Wysg / River Usk SAC, v3; Countryside Council for Wales (2008) Core Management Plans for the Brecon Beacons, Llangorse Lake and Usk Bat Sites SACs; Natural Resources Wales (2014) Core Management Plan for Drostre Bank SAC, v3; Natural Resources Wales (2023) Core Management Plan for Afon Gwy / River Wye SAC, v4; and Natural England (2018) European Site Conservation Objectives for the Severn Estuary SAC, v5, with the JNCC data form for the Severn Estuary SPA and Ramsar information sheet [accessed 30 September 2026].

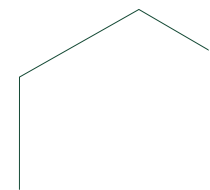


SITE NAME & DESIGNATED	SITE CHARACTERISTICS	QUALIFYING FEATURES	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	DISTANCE/ DIRECTION FROM SITE
	failed their targets. The Core Management Plan records Atlantic Salmon and H3260 vegetation as unfavourable (2012 assessment) and Otter as favourable.	- H3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculus fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation - S1102 Allis Shad <i>Alosa alosa</i>	- Widespread availability of undisturbed resting and breeding sites allows a large Otter population to thrive - Riverbanks retain, in general, at least 50% high canopy cover - Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed are actively managed to control their spread	
Brecon Beacons / Bannau Brycheiniog SAC Site code: UK0030096 Area: 268.63 ha Component SSSI: Brecon Beacons SSSI (units 1, 4, 8 and 9).	An upland site designated for its rocky slopes with calcareous and siliceous chasmophytic vegetation. The Old Red Sandstone cliffs are the most southerly example of calcareous rocky slopes in the UK and support Purple Saxifrage <i>Saxifraga oppositifolia</i> at its most southerly British location.	Annex I habitats (primary reason for selection): - H8210 Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation - H8220 Siliceous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation Qualifying features (not a primary reason): - H4030 European dry heaths - H6430 Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities of	The Core Management Plan seeks to keep the cliffs, crevices, scree and ledges free from damaging disturbance and grazing; to maintain populations of their typical and rare plants (including Purple Saxifrage, Green Spleenwort, Fir Clubmoss and rare hawkweeds) large and widespread enough to be sustained; and to maintain or restore the extent, quality and age structure of the heath.	6.47 km south, in the uplands, upslope and upstream of the Site. No hydrological connection.



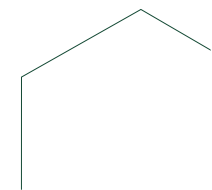


SITE NAME & DESIGNATED	SITE CHARACTERISTICS	QUALIFYING FEATURES	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	DISTANCE/ DIRECTION FROM SITE
		plains and of the montane to alpine levels		
Drostre Bank SAC Site code: UK0012878 Area: 12.58 ha Component SSSI: Drostre Bank SSSI.	A small woodland and grassland site designated for species-rich <i>Molinia</i> meadow, with transitions to rush pasture, base-rich flush and wet alluvial woodland.	Annex I habitat (primary reason for selection): - H6410 <i>Molinia</i> meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (<i>Molinion caeruleae</i>) Qualifying feature (not a primary reason): - H91E0 Alluvial forests with <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> and <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (priority habitat)	The Core Management Plan requires the extent of each habitat to be stable or increasing, its structure, function and typical species to be maintained or improving, and the factors affecting it to be under appropriate control.	6.83 km north-east, upslope of the Site. No hydrological connection.
River Wye / Afon Gwy SAC Site code: UK0012642 Area: 2,147.64 ha Cross-border site; component SSSIs in Wales include the River Wye (Upper	An extensive cross-border river system with characteristic aquatic vegetation and an exceptional assemblage of Annex II species, including the densest and most well-established Otter population in Wales and	Primary reason for selection: - H3260 Water courses with <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitriche-Batrachion</i> vegetation - S1092 White-clawed Crayfish <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>	The Core Management Plan sets objectives for the extent, structure and function of the qualifying habitats and for the population, range and supporting habitat of the qualifying species, with performance indicators including site-specific phosphorus targets.	7.55 km north-east, in a separate catchment (the Site drains to the Usk). No hydrological connection.



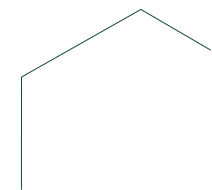


SITE NAME & DESIGNATED	SITE CHARACTERISTICS	QUALIFYING FEATURES	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	DISTANCE/ DIRECTION FROM SITE
Wye), River Wye (Tributaries) and Afon Llynfi SSSIs.	the best known site in Wales for White-clawed Crayfish.	- S1095 Sea Lamprey; S1096 Brook Lamprey; S1099 River Lamprey - S1103 Twaite Shad; S1106 Atlantic Salmon; S1163 Bullhead - S1355 Otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> Qualifying features (not a primary reason): - H7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs - S1102 Allis Shad <i>Alosa alosa</i>		
Llangorse Lake / Llyn Syfaddan SAC Site code: UK0012985 Area: 215.44 ha Component SSSI: Llyn Syfaddan (Llangorse Lake) SSSI.	The largest natural lake in south Wales and an outstanding example of a natural eutrophic lake of glacial origin, with surrounding fen, swamp, wet grassland and woodland.	Annex I habitat (primary reason for selection): H3150 Natural eutrophic lakes with <i>Magnopotamion</i> or <i>Hydrocharition</i>-type vegetation	The Core Management Plan seeks no loss of lake area; a typical aquatic plant community; nutrient, pH and dissolved oxygen levels typical of the lake type with no excessive growth of cyanobacteria or green algae; and a natural hydrological regime, shoreline, substrate and sediment load.	8.99 km east. Drains north via the Afon Llynfi to the River Wye; no hydrological connection.



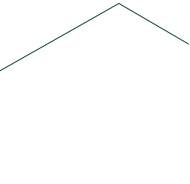


SITE NAME & DESIGNATED	SITE CHARACTERISTICS	QUALIFYING FEATURES	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	DISTANCE/ DIRECTION FROM SITE
Usk Bat Sites / Safleoedd Ystlumod Wysg SAC Site code: UK0014784 Area: 1,686.03 ha Component SSSIs: Mynydd Llangatwg, Siambre Ddu, Buckland Coach House & Ice House, and Foxwood SSSIs.	Supports one of the largest maternity roosts of Lesser Horseshoe Bat in the UK, with hibernation sites in caves. The bats feed mainly along woodland edges, large hedges and tree-lined rivers within and around the SAC and between its components in the Usk valley between Llangorse and Abergavenny.	Annex II species (primary reason for selection): - S1303 Lesser Horseshoe Bat <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> Qualifying features (not a primary reason): - H4030 European dry heaths; H7120 Degraded raised bogs; H7130 Blanket bogs; H8210 Calcareous rocky slopes; H8310 Caves not open to the public; H9180 <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravines	The Core Management Plan seeks to maintain the Lesser Horseshoe Bat population and the roosts, hibernation sites and connected foraging habitat on which it depends.	c.12 km south-east (nearest component: Buckland Coach House & Ice House SSSI). Outside the Usk valley foraging area described in the Core Management Plan.
Severn Estuary / Môr Hafren SAC (UK0013030) Severn Estuary SPA (UK9015022) Severn Estuary Ramsar site (UK11081)	A large macro-tidal estuary that receives the River Usk at Newport. The SAC (73,714 ha) is designated for estuarine habitats and migratory fish, the SPA and Ramsar site for internationally important wintering waterbirds, and the Ramsar site also for its run of	SAC: H1130 Estuaries; H1140 Mudflats and sandflats; H1330 Atlantic salt meadows; H1110 Sandbanks; H1170 Reefs; S1095 Sea Lamprey; S1099 River Lamprey; S1103 Twaite Shad. SPA: Wintering Bewick's Swan, Gadwall, European White-	The conservation objectives seek to maintain or restore the extent, distribution, structure and function of the qualifying habitats and habitats of qualifying species, the supporting processes on which they rely, and the populations and distribution of the qualifying species.	More than 50 km south-east (straight line), at the mouth of the River Usk; considerably further along the river. Hydrologically connected via the





SITE NAME & DESIGNATED	SITE CHARACTERISTICS	QUALIFYING FEATURES	CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES	DISTANCE/ DIRECTION FROM SITE
	migratory fish between sea and river.	fronted Goose, Dunlin, Shelduck and Redshank, and a waterbird assemblage. Ramsar: Criteria 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8, including the run of Salmon, Sea Trout, Sea Lamprey, River Lamprey, Allis Shad, Twaite Shad and Eel.		River Usk (downstream).





3 STAGE 1 – SCREENING

3.1 APPROACH

Regulation 63(1) of the Habitats Regulations requires an Appropriate Assessment where a plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, and is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site. The development is not connected with or necessary to the management of any European site.

The screening test is precautionary and its threshold is low: An LSE must be assumed unless it can be excluded, based on objective information, that the project will have a significant effect on the site's conservation objectives^{20,21}. Welsh Government guidance confirms that the question at this stage is whether a significant effect is possible, rather than probable²².

In accordance with *People Over Wind*²³, measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on a European site, such as a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), a sensitive lighting scheme or SuDS treatment, are not considered at screening. The development is therefore assessed as described in Section 1.3, including its inherent design (all built development outside the river corridor and no works in the channel), but excluding any measure intended to protect the SAC.

The screening follows a source–pathway–receptor approach. Each potential construction and operational impact was identified, and the presence of a pathway to each European site and the sensitivity of its qualifying features were considered in the light of its conservation objectives, having regard to the HRA Handbook²⁴. Effects on habitats and species outside a site's boundary that could affect its conservation objectives, such as riparian habitat used by Otter, are included²⁵.

3.2 SCREENING OF EUROPEAN SITES

Table 2 summarises the screening of each European site identified in Section 2. All except the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC are screened out because there is no pathway by which the

²⁰ *Landelijke Vereniging tot Behoud van de Waddenzee v Staatssecretaris van Landbouw, Natuurbeheer en Visserij* (Case C-127/02), judgment of 7 September 2004.

²¹ *R (Champion) v North Norfolk District Council* [2015] UKSC 52.

²² Welsh Government (2024) Practical planning guidance to support development, particularly the delivery of affordable housing, in Special Areas of Conservation river catchments affected by phosphorus. Prepared by DTA Ecology, December 2024 (published August 2025), Section 3.2.

²³ *People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta* (Case C-323/17) ECLI:EU:C:2018:244, judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union (Seventh Chamber), 12 April 2018.

²⁴ Tyldesley, D. and Chapman, C. (2013, as updated) *The Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook*. DTA Publications Ltd.

²⁵ *Holohan and Others v An Bord Pleanála* (Case C-461/17), judgment of 7 November 2018.



development could significantly affect their qualifying features. The River Usk SAC is taken forward to the screening of individual impact pathways (Section 3.3).

TABLE 2: STAGE 1 SCREENING OF EUROPEAN SITES

EUROPEAN SITE / DISTANCE	PATHWAYS CONSIDERED	SCREENING CONCLUSION
River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC (UK0013007) Adjacent	The Afon Tarell, part of the SAC, adjoins the Site, which is connected to the SAC via groundwater, overland flow, foul drainage to Brecon WwTW, traffic on the adjoining roads and the proximity of construction and operational activities to the river corridor.	Taken forward to screening of individual impact pathways (Section 3.3, Table 3).
Brecon Beacons / Bannau Brycheiniog SAC (UK0030096) 6.47 km south	The SAC lies upslope and upstream of the Site, with no hydrological pathway. Its cliff, scree and heath habitats would not be affected by emissions at this distance. Development traffic on nearby roads would remain well below the screening thresholds of 1,000 AADT for light vehicles and 200 AADT for heavy vehicles ²⁶ . A foodstore would not generate recreational use of the uplands.	No LSE , alone or in combination. Screened out.
Drostre Bank SAC (UK0012878) 6.83 km north-east	The SAC lies upslope of the Site with no hydrological pathway, so its <i>Molinia</i> meadow and alluvial woodland would be unaffected; development traffic on nearby minor roads would be negligible and no recreational or other pathway exists.	No LSE , alone or in combination. Screened out.
River Wye / Afon Gwy SAC (UK0012642) 7.55 km north-east	The Site drains to the Usk catchment, with foul flows treated at a works discharging to the Usk, so there is no hydrological pathway to the Wye. Any effects on Otter or fish would be confined to the Afon Tarell and are assessed under the River Usk SAC. No material traffic or recreational pathway exists.	No LSE , alone or in combination. Screened out.
Llangorse Lake / Llyn Syfaddan SAC (UK0012985) 8.99 km east	The lake drains via the Afon Llynfi to the River Wye and is not hydrologically connected to the Site or to Brecon WwTW. Development traffic on local roads	No LSE , alone or in combination. Screened out.

²⁶ Holman, C. et al. (2020) A guide to the assessment of air quality impacts on designated nature conservation sites, Version 1.1. Institute of Air Quality Management, London.



EUROPEAN SITE / DISTANCE	PATHWAYS CONSIDERED	SCREENING CONCLUSION
	near the lake would be negligible, and a foodstore would not increase recreational pressure on the lake.	
Usk Bat Sites / Safleoedd Ystlumod Wysg SAC (UK0014784) c.12 km south-east	The Site lies c.12 km from the nearest SAC component, contains no suitable Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosts, and is not functionally linked to the SAC population. Bats using the Site will be addressed through the protected species regime (2026/2027) and the Ecological Impact Assessment.	No LSE , alone or in combination. Screened out.
Severn Estuary SAC (UK0013030), SPA (UK9015022) and Ramsar site (UK11081) More than 50 km south-east (downstream)	Any water quality changes would be diluted to negligible levels before reaching the estuary, with no pathway to estuarine habitats or waterbirds. Phosphorus is the relevant nutrient in the Usk catchment. Twaite Shad, Allis Shad and Sea Lamprey do not reach the Site, and any effects on Salmon or Lamprey in the Tarell would be local and are assessed under the River Usk SAC (Table 3).	No LSE , alone or in combination. Screened out.

3.3 IMPACT PATHWAYS – RIVER USK / AFON WYSG SAC

The following potential impact pathways to the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC were identified from the project description (Section 1.3), the PEA and the FCA:

- Nutrient (phosphorus) enrichment and other effluent pollution arising from foul water, via the sewer network and Brecon WwTW
- Pollution arising from operational surface water, via infiltration to groundwater and exceedance flows
- Pollution arising from construction (fine sediment, cementitious material, fuels and oils, contaminated soil and dust)
- Disturbance, displacement or injury of Otter and migratory fish arising from noise, vibration, artificial lighting and human activity during construction and operation
- Loss or degradation of functionally linked riparian habitat (the wooded bank) suitable for Otter and providing shade and bank stability
- Introduction or spread of invasive non-native species
- Direct loss of, or physical damage to, habitat within the SAC



- Changes to the flow or hydrological regime of the Afon Tarell
- Reduction in water availability arising from potable water demand
- Air quality effects, including nitrogen deposition, arising from development-generated road traffic
- Recreational pressure and increased public access to the riverbank

Each pathway is screened in Table 3; where an LSE cannot be excluded, it is taken forward to Appropriate Assessment (Section 4).

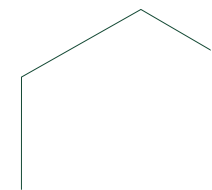


TABLE 3: SHRA STAGE 1: SCREENING OF IMPACT PATHWAYS – RIVER USK / AFON WYSG SAC

IMPACTS INCLUDING PATHWAY	RECEPTOR	QUALIFYING FEATURES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED	ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL FOR A LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT?
Nutrient (phosphorus) enrichment and other effluent pollution arising from foul water (operation).	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	- H3260 <i>Ranunculus</i> vegetation - Atlantic Salmon, Sea, River and Brook Lamprey, Bullhead, Twaite and Allis Shad - Otter (via prey)	Foul flows would connect to the public sewer for treatment at Brecon WwTW, which discharges to the River Usk within the SAC²⁷. A foodstore is within scope if it attracts customers or employees from outside the catchment; Welsh Government guidance therefore requires a nutrient budget unless evidence demonstrates otherwise²⁸. The store is likely to draw some customers and staff from outside the Usk catchment (e.g. from settlements draining to the Wye, and visitors to the National Park), so a net increase in phosphorus load cannot be excluded without that evidence. Brecon WwTW's permit was reviewed by NRW in November 2023 and has included a 2 mg/l phosphorus limit since 31 December 2025; BBNPA has stated that it will undertake an Appropriate Assessment, in consultation with NRW, for new connections to the	YES Screened in. Appropriate Assessment required (Section 4).

²⁷ Brecon & Radnor Express (2025) '£9m Brecon wastewater upgrade aims to boost River Usk's health', 13 August 2025, reporting completion of phosphorus removal at Brecon WwTW; Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, 'Our investment in the River Usk', <https://corporate.dwrcymru.com/en/community/investment-projects/river-usk> [accessed 30 September 2026].

²⁸ Ricardo for Welsh Government (2025) Nutrient Budget Calculator Guidance: a guide on how to calculate a nutrient budget for a development using the Nutrient Budget Calculator for Wales. Issue 1.4, 2 May 2025, Sections 1.6 and 4.2.1.

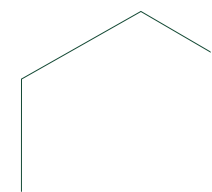




IMPACTS INCLUDING PATHWAY	RECEPTOR	QUALIFYING FEATURES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED	ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL FOR A LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT?
			works ²⁹ . DCWW has confirmed network capacity, but not capacity within the revised permit or compliance with all its conditions (Section 4.2.1). A pumped connection also risks untreated spills to the Afon Tarell if pumps or power fail, or from a rising main crossing the river. An LSE cannot be excluded.	
Deterioration of water quality arising from operational surface water (suspended solids, metals, hydrocarbons, de-icing salt), via infiltration to groundwater and exceedance flows.	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	- H3260 <i>Ranunculus</i> vegetation - Atlantic Salmon, Lampreys and Bullhead (spawning and nursery habitat) - Otter (via prey)	Runoff from c.7,010 m² of roof, service yard, loading bay and car park will discharge to two soakaways (inverts 139.00 m AOD) in glaciofluvial sand and gravel, approximately 20–30 m from, and 4 m above, the Afon Tarell. Infiltration rates of up to 2.17×10^{-3} m/s indicate that infiltrated water would reach the river quickly through the Secondary A aquifer, which is likely to be in hydraulic continuity with it. Retail car parks and delivery yards are a medium pollution hazard³⁰, and dissolved metals and hydrocarbons can harm fish and invertebrates. Flows above the 1 in 100-year plus 40% event would pond at the southern edge of the car park, close to the wooded bank. The permeable paving, rain garden and the	YES Screened in. Appropriate Assessment required (Section 4).

²⁹ BBNPA (2024) Nutrient Statement, paragraphs 27–31.

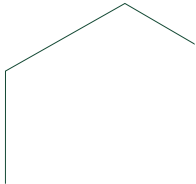
³⁰ Woods Ballard, B., Wilson, S., Udale-Clarke, H., Illman, S., Scott, T., Ashley, R. and Kellagher, R. (2015) The SuDS Manual (C753). CIRIA, London, Table 26.2.





IMPACTS INCLUDING PATHWAY	RECEPTOR	QUALIFYING FEATURES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED	ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL FOR A LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT?
			separator proposed for the loading bay are not relied upon at screening. An LSE cannot be excluded.	
Deterioration of water quality arising from construction (fine sediment, cementitious material, fuels and oils, disturbed contaminated soil, dust).	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	• H3260 <i>Ranunculus</i> vegetation • Atlantic Salmon, Lampreys and Bullhead (spawning and nursery habitat) • Otter (via prey)	Construction will strip, re-profile and excavate c.0.87 ha of developable land at the top of the steep bank above the Afon Tarell, with the car park, service yard, retaining walls and soakaways approximately 10–30 m from the channel. An existing drain of unknown connectivity lies within the retained southern strip, and a private 225 mm surface water sewer crossing the south-west of the Site discharges directly to the Tarell; either could carry site runoff to the river. Ground investigation recorded polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons in a former road sub-base. Fine sediment smothers the gravels used for spawning by Salmon and Lampreys and reduces egg and embryo survival ³¹ ; the Core Management Plan identifies diffuse pollution and siltation of spawning habitat as a significant factor in the decline of Usk Salmon. Cement washings and fuel spills are acutely toxic to fish. Pollution prevention measures within a CEMP cannot be taken into account at screening.	YES Screened in. Appropriate Assessment required (Section 4).

³¹ Kemp, P., Sear, D., Collins, A., Naden, P. and Jones, I. (2011) The impacts of fine sediment on riverine fish. *Hydrological Processes*, 25, 1800–1821.





IMPACTS INCLUDING PATHWAY	RECEPTOR	QUALIFYING FEATURES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED	ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL FOR A LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT?
			An LSE cannot be excluded.	
Disturbance, displacement or injury of qualifying species arising from noise, vibration, artificial lighting and human activity (construction and operation).	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	• Otter • Atlantic Salmon, Lampreys and Bullhead	The Afon Tarell and its wooded bank lie within the range of the SAC's Otter population (22 records within 2 km), and the conservation objectives seek widespread availability of undisturbed resting and breeding sites. Otters are largely nocturnal and sensitive to disturbance at resting sites³². The riparian survey recorded 15 spraints at 12 locations along the reach, including beneath the A40 and A470 bridges, and two pairs of burrows on the opposite bank, assumed on a precautionary basis to be Otter holts (Section 1.7.2.3). Construction (including any piling or vibro-compaction), night-time deliveries to the loading bay and lighting of the car park, service yard and building would take place approximately 10–30 m from the river. Artificial light at night delays and disrupts the downstream movement of Salmon fry and smolts^{33,34}, and Lamprey migration takes place largely at night³⁵. Open excavations	YES Screened in. Appropriate Assessment required (Section 4).

³² Chanin, P. (2003) Ecology of the European Otter. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Ecology Series No. 10. English Nature, Peterborough.

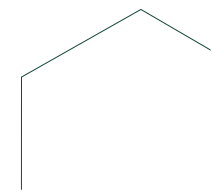
³³ Riley, W.D., Bendall, B., Ives, M.J., Edmonds, N.J. and Maxwell, D.L. (2012) Street lighting disrupts the diel migratory pattern of wild Atlantic salmon, *Salmo salar* L., smolts leaving their natal stream. *Aquaculture*, 330–333, 74–81.

³⁴ Riley, W.D., Davison, P.I., Maxwell, D.L. and Bendall, B. (2013) Street lighting delays and disrupts the dispersal of Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) fry. *Biological Conservation*, 158, 140–146.

³⁵ Maitland, P.S. (2003) Ecology of the River, Brook and Sea Lamprey. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Ecology Series No. 5. English Nature, Peterborough.

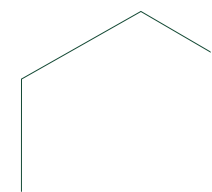


IMPACTS INCLUDING PATHWAY	RECEPTOR	QUALIFYING FEATURES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED	ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL FOR A LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT?
			present a risk of injury to Otter, and additional traffic on the A40 and A470, which cross the Tarell at either end of the Site, could marginally increase the risk of Otter road casualties. An LSE cannot be excluded.	
Loss or degradation of functionally linked riparian habitat outside the SAC (wooded bank and Line of Trees) through tree removal, root damage, bank destabilisation or edge effects.	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	• Otter (resting and commuting habitat) • Atlantic Salmon, Lampreys and Bullhead (shade, woody debris, bank stability)	The 0.32 ha of Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland on the steep bank between the developable area and the Afon Tarell lies outside the SAC but supports it: The PEA identified it as suitable terrestrial habitat for Otter, and the conservation objectives seek, in general, at least 50% high canopy cover on riverbanks. The riparian survey found no burrows on the Site's side of the river, although smaller cavities beneath roots and stumps offer potential resting opportunities (Section 1.7.2.3). Effects on habitat outside a European site must be considered where they could affect its conservation objectives. The woodland is to be retained, but the car park, service yard and retaining walls are close to its upper edge, and the Arboricultural Impact Assessment identifies excavation within the root protection areas of the bank woodland and the removal of two Sycamores (G1) and an Oak (T2) at the top of the bank (Section 1.7.2.4). Tree loss, root damage or bank destabilisation could	YES Screened in. Appropriate Assessment required (Section 4).





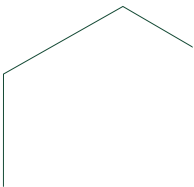
IMPACTS INCLUDING PATHWAY	RECEPTOR	QUALIFYING FEATURES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED	ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL FOR A LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT?
			reduce shading, increase sediment input and remove potential Otter resting sites. An LSE cannot be excluded.	
Introduction or spread of invasive non-native species (construction and landscaping).	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	- H3260 <i>Ranunculus</i> vegetation - Atlantic Salmon, Lampreys and Bullhead (via bank erosion and siltation)	No invasive non-native species were recorded, but the survey was undertaken in March, before species such as Himalayan Balsam are readily detectable. The Core Management Plan requires Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed to be actively managed to control their spread in the SAC. Construction plant, imported soils and landscaping immediately upslope of the river could introduce or spread such species, which would then disperse downstream. An LSE cannot be excluded.	YES Screened in. Appropriate Assessment required (Section 4).
Direct loss of, or physical damage to, habitat within the SAC (channel and banks), including barriers to fish passage.	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	All qualifying features	The revised application boundary excludes the channel of the Afon Tarell, all built development lies outside Flood Zone 3 (the river corridor) and no outfall, bank works or in-channel works are proposed. However, the foul connection advised by DCWW would cross the Afon Tarell, and the route and crossing method have not been defined (Section 1.3.1). An open-cut crossing would excavate the bed and banks of the SAC, which may include spawning gravels and H3260 vegetation, and a leaking main could discharge	YES Screened in. Appropriate Assessment required (Section 4).





IMPACTS INCLUDING PATHWAY	RECEPTOR	QUALIFYING FEATURES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED	ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL FOR A LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT?
			sewage to the river. Indirect effects of works near the SAC are addressed above. An LSE cannot be excluded.	
Changes to the flow or hydrological regime of the Afon Tarell.	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	All qualifying features	Surface water will be infiltrated on site for all events up to the 1 in 100-year plus 40% climate change event, maintaining recharge broadly as at present, with no direct discharge to the Tarell. The drainage hierarchy that leads to this design is a statutory requirement for new development in Wales³⁶, not a measure to protect the SAC. No groundwater was encountered to 7.45 m below ground level, so no dewatering is anticipated, and no abstraction is proposed. The development would not measurably alter flows in the SAC, alone or in combination.	NO Screened out.
Reduction in water availability arising from potable water demand.	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	All qualifying features	The store will be supplied from the public mains, and no private abstraction is proposed. A foodstore's demand is small and largely substitutes for existing demand from its customers and staff, and the FCA reports that DCWW's water resources and drought plans identify no stress on supplies. Public water supply abstractions are	NO Screened out.

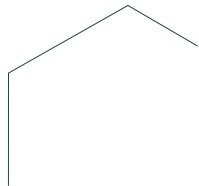
³⁶ Welsh Government (2018) Statutory standards for sustainable drainage systems – designing, constructing, operating and maintaining surface water drainage systems, Standard S1 (surface water runoff destination). Approval of drainage by the SuDS Approval Body is required under Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.





IMPACTS INCLUDING PATHWAY	RECEPTOR	QUALIFYING FEATURES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED	ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL FOR A LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT?
			licensed by NRW and planned through DCWW's water resources management plan, both of which are subject to the Habitats Regulations. No LSE would arise, alone or in combination.	
Air quality effects (oxides of nitrogen, ammonia and nitrogen deposition) arising from development-generated road traffic.	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	- H3260 <i>Ranunculus</i> vegetation - Fish and Otter	The SAC lies within 200 m of the A40 and A470, which will carry development traffic. The AQA predicts that this traffic, alone and in combination, would add more than 1% of the critical level for ammonia and of the critical loads for nitrogen and acid deposition over c.1 ha of the Afon Tarell beside these roads, where existing levels already approach or exceed them (AQA, Tables 6-6 to 6-11). The critical loads applied are for Bog and Woodland habitats, not the qualifying features. The Air Pollution Information System (APIS) advises that a nitrogen critical load cannot be set for freshwater habitats, whose response depends on the balance between nitrogen and phosphorus ³⁷ , and the nutrient pressure on the Usk is overwhelmingly waterborne phosphorus (agriculture	YES Screened in. Appropriate Assessment required (Section 4).

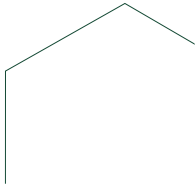
³⁷ Air Pollution Information System (APIS). 'Are freshwater systems (e.g. flowing water, mesotrophic and eutrophic waters) sensitive to acid and nitrogen deposition?' <https://www.apis.ac.uk> [accessed 30 September 2026].





IMPACTS INCLUDING PATHWAY	RECEPTOR	QUALIFYING FEATURES POTENTIALLY IMPACTED	ASSESSMENT	POTENTIAL FOR A LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECT?
			and legacy soil phosphorus c.67%, wastewater treatment works c.21%)³⁸. Although the qualifying features are unlikely to be sensitive to these changes (Section 4.2.8), the AQA's screening thresholds are exceeded, so an LSE cannot be excluded on a precautionary basis.	
Recreational pressure and increased public access to the riverbank.	River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC	• Otter • Atlantic Salmon, Lampreys and Bullhead (spawning gravels)	The development creates no residential population or overnight accommodation and is not a recreational destination. No public access to the retained woodland or riverbank is proposed; the proposed pedestrian connection links the store to the adjoining highway. There is no mechanism for increased recreational use of the Afon Tarell, alone or in combination.	NO Screened out.

³⁸ Usk Catchment Partnership (2025) River Usk Nutrient Management Plan (April 2025), as summarised in Monmouthshire County Council (2026) Replacement Local Development Plan Phosphate Position Paper, February 2026.



3.4 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

The in-combination test ensures that effects which are not significant alone are not dismissed where they could become significant together with those of other plans or projects³⁹. The relevant plans and projects include the following:

- 1) The adopted Brecon Beacons National Park Local Development Plan and its emerging replacement⁴⁰
- 2) Extant and pending planning permissions in Brecon that drain to Brecon WwTW or lie near the Afon Tarell, such as the outline permission for 30 dwellings⁴¹
- 3) Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's investment programme and NRW's review of wastewater permits
- 4) The River Usk Nutrient Management Plan

The eight pathways screened in alone are assessed in combination with these plans and projects in Section 4.4.

Of the three pathways screened out, two (changes to the flow regime and recreational pressure) would have no effect, so cannot contribute to an in-combination effect. The third (water availability) involves a small, largely substitutional demand on a public supply that is licensed and planned at catchment scale, so an in-combination LSE can be excluded.

No LSE in combination arises through the screened-out pathways or on the other European sites.

3.5 SCREENING CONCLUSION

Without mitigation, LSEs on the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC cannot be excluded through the following pathways, which are taken forward to Appropriate Assessment (Section 4):

- 1) Nutrient (phosphorus) enrichment and other effluent pollution arising from foul water
- 2) Deterioration of water quality arising from operational surface water
- 3) Deterioration of water quality arising from construction
- 4) Disturbance, displacement or injury of Otter and migratory fish
- 5) Loss or degradation of functionally linked riparian habitat
- 6) Introduction or spread of invasive non-native species
- 7) Direct loss of, or physical damage to, habitat within the SAC

³⁹ *Wealden District Council v Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government* [2017] EWHC 351 (Admin).

⁴⁰ Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (2013) Local Development Plan 2007–2022, adopted December 2013; Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority (2025) Draft Delivery Agreement for the Local Development Plan 2025–2045.

⁴¹ Brecon & Radnor Express (2026) 'Developers given extra time to progress 30-home Brecon scheme', 10 June 2026. The scheme drains to Brecon WwTW and was the subject of an Appropriate Assessment with which NRW agreed.

- 8) Air quality effects, including nitrogen deposition, arising from development-generated road traffic

LSEs on the Brecon Beacons, Drostre Bank, River Wye, Llangorse Lake and Usk Bat Sites SACs, and on the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar site, are excluded alone and in combination, as are LSEs on the River Usk SAC through changes to the flow regime, water availability and recreational pressure.

4 STAGE 2 – APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The Appropriate Assessment considers the implications of the development for the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC, in view of its conservation objectives, through the eight pathways screened in at Stage 1 (Section 3.5). It establishes whether it can be ascertained that the development will not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC, alone or in combination with other plans or projects, which is the case only where no reasonable scientific doubt remains as to the absence of such effects⁴².

Unlike screening, the Appropriate Assessment may take account of measures intended to avoid or reduce harmful effects on the SAC⁴³, provided they are effective, sufficiently certain and secured by planning condition, obligation or another statutory regime. Section 4.2 assesses each pathway without mitigation, Section 4.3 sets out the mitigation required and Section 4.4 considers effects in combination.

4.1 DETAIL TO INFORM APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

The qualifying features, conservation objectives and condition of the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC are summarised in Table 1. The features relevant to the screened-in pathways are the H3260 *Ranunculion* vegetation, Atlantic Salmon, the three Lamprey species, Bullhead and Otter. Twaite and Allis Shad do not reach the Afon Tarell and Sea Lamprey are largely confined to the lower Usk (Table 2), so these species are relevant only to the foul water pathway, through the discharge from Brecon WwTW to the main river.

Several conservation objectives are not being met. Most Usk water bodies, including the Afon Tarell, failed their phosphorus targets in 2021 and only 54% met them in 2024; Atlantic Salmon and the H3260 vegetation are assessed as unfavourable, while Otter is favourable (Table 1). Where a feature is unfavourable the objective is to restore it, so the development must neither add to the pressures responsible nor hinder restoration.

In addition to the information used for screening, this assessment draws on:

- The first visit of the riparian mammal survey (Section 1.7.2.3)
- The Arboricultural Report (Section 1.7.2.4)
- The landscape proposals, planting schedule and revised application boundary (Sections 1.2 and 1.3)

⁴² *Waddenzee* (Case C-127/02).

⁴³ *People Over Wind and Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta* (Case C-323/17).

- The architect's revised drawings (September 2026) and Design & Access Statement (Section 1.3)
- The Lighting Impact Assessment (LIA) for the external lighting⁴⁴
- BBNPA's Nutrient Statement, which sets out its approach to new connections to Brecon WwTW

The detailed drainage design, including the foul connection route, and the construction methodology and CEMP were not available at the time of writing. The outstanding surveys are timetabled as follows:

- Second riparian mammal survey visit: April 2027
- Invasive non-native species (INNS) survey: June to September 2027
- Pre-commencement Otter survey: No more than 4 weeks before works begin

None of these surveys is needed before determination, as each informs measures secured by condition before works begin (Section 4.3). The bat surveys recommended in the PEA inform the Ecological Impact Assessment, not this assessment (Table 2). For each outstanding item, this assessment defines the outcome that must be achieved and how it should be secured; only DCWW's consultation response needs to be obtained before BBNPA can complete its assessment (Section 4.3.1).

4.2 IMPACT PATHWAYS INCLUDED IN THE ASSESSMENT

Each pathway screened in at Stage 1 (Section 3.5) is assessed below without mitigation.

4.2.1 Nutrient (Phosphorus) Enrichment and Other Effluent Pollution Arising from Foul Water

Foul flows would be pumped to the public sewer, either at the connection point advised by DCWW south-west of the Site or, if DCWW agrees, via the private sewer upstream of its pumping station to the west, and treated at Brecon WwTW, which discharges to the River Usk within the SAC (Section 1.3.1). The store would create no overnight population, but some customers and staff will live outside the Usk catchment, so a small net increase in the phosphorus load reaching the works cannot be ruled out (Table 3). The Design & Access Statement's water use target of 13 m³ per month⁴⁵ indicates that foul flows would be small.

NRW reviewed Brecon WwTW's permit against the revised phosphorus targets in November 2023, introducing a phosphorus limit of 5 mg/l from 28 November 2023, tightened to 2 mg/l from 31 December 2025, and a scheme has been undertaken to address non-compliance with the flow

⁴⁴ Services Design Solution Ltd (2026) Brecon LIA: External Lighting – Lighting Impact Assessment Report. Document 08998L-SDS-ZZ-EX-RP-E-7082001, S3-P02, 24 September 2026.

⁴⁵ htc architects (2026) Design & Access Statement, Rev D, September 2026, page 10.

passed forward to full treatment⁴⁶. DCWW's £9 million upgrade of the works, adding phosphorus removal, was reported complete in August 2025⁴⁷, and the tightened limit is now in force.

BBNPA's Nutrient Statement, reflecting NRW's advice, explains that new connections to a works with a reviewed permit remain subject to HRA, but that a conclusion of no LSE on water quality is likely where the sewerage undertaker confirms that there is capacity to treat the additional wastewater within the revised permit limits and that the works is operating in compliance with its permit conditions, including those for flow, final effluent quality and flow passed forward⁴⁸.

For Brecon, BBNPA screens in new connections, undertakes an Appropriate Assessment in consultation with NRW and expects to approve most such proposals provided that DCWW continues to confirm capacity and compliance. NRW agreed the Appropriate Assessment for the 30-dwelling scheme (Section 3.4), which was informed by DCWW's confirmation that its flows could be accommodated and concluded that planning conditions would avoid adverse effects.

This accords with Welsh Government policy, under which a decisionmaker applying the integrity test may rely on action already secured to avoid deterioration, such as a tightened permit, if decisions on new development are tied to its delivery⁴⁹. At Brecon that action has been delivered.

DCWW's pre-development response confirms that the network can accommodate the flows and envisages no problems with treating domestic discharges at the works; in a passage that does not name the works, it also states that the works met its flow passed forward requirement at the time (FCA Appendix G). However, it does not confirm capacity within the revised permit or compliance with the flow and final effluent quality conditions and is reliable only until July 2027. Without that confirmation, it cannot be ascertained that the works can accept the development's flows in compliance with its permit.

Two further risks arise. The pumped connection could release untreated sewage to the Afon Tarell, directly or through the surface water system, if the pumps or power supply failed. A rising main crossing the river could also leak into it (Section 4.2.7).

Without mitigation, an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC through this pathway cannot be excluded.

4.2.2 Deterioration of Water Quality Arising from Operational Surface Water

Runoff from c.7,010 m² of roof, service yard, loading bay, footways and car park would infiltrate through two soakaways beneath the car park, approximately 20–30 m from the Afon Tarell, into

⁴⁶ BBNPA (2024) Nutrient Statement, paragraphs 27–30.

⁴⁷ Brecon & Radnor Express, 13 August 2025.

⁴⁸ BBNPA (2024) Nutrient Statement, paragraphs 21–23 and 31.

⁴⁹ Welsh Government (2025) Interim Planning Policy Statement on Development in SAC Rivers, paragraphs 6.6.33–6.6.34.

glaciofluvial sand and gravel. This Secondary A aquifer is likely to be in continuity with the river, and its high infiltration rates mean that pollutants would have little opportunity to be attenuated before reaching it.

The car park would drain through permeable paving suitable for its medium pollution hazard. The service yard and loading bay are also a medium hazard, with fuel or oil spills from delivery vehicles the most likely source of contamination. Exceedance flows could pond beside the retained woodland and run onto the bank, and runoff reaching existing drainage infrastructure could discharge directly to the Afon Tarell.

Suspended solids, metals and hydrocarbons from these sources could harm fish, their spawning gravels and the invertebrates on which they feed. Without mitigation, an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC cannot be excluded.

4.2.3 Deterioration of Water Quality Arising from Construction

Construction would involve clearance, stripping and re-profiling of the developable area (c.0.87 ha) at the top of the bank; excavation for soakaways, foundations, retaining walls of up to 1.0 m and services; and concrete and surfacing works. The southern edge of the car park lies within the root protection areas of the bank woodland, where the Tree Protection Plan shows supervised excavation.

Rain on exposed ground on this slope would carry fine sediment towards the river, overland through the woodland or via the existing drain and private sewer. Fine sediment smothers Salmon and Lamprey spawning gravels and reduces egg survival, while cement, fuels and oils are toxic to fish and invertebrates (Table 3). Excavation could also mobilise the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons recorded in a former road sub-base.

Without mitigation, an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC cannot be excluded.

4.2.4 Disturbance, Displacement or Injury of Otter and Migratory Fish

The riparian survey results are set out in Section 1.7.2.3. The two pairs of burrows, assumed on a precautionary basis to be Otter holts, lie approximately 20–30 m from the proposed car park and service yard, beyond the retained wooded bank and river channel.

The holts are already exposed to considerable disturbance: The A40 crosses the river c.30 m from the north-eastern pair, the Ffrwdgrech Industrial Estate adjoins the opposite bank, and people and dogs were seen beside the stream during the survey. Neither pair showed signs of recent use. Nevertheless, the development would bring construction, car park and delivery activity closer to them and introduce artificial light to the currently unlit Site. The Design & Access

Statement indicates one or two deliveries a day, usually before the store opens⁵⁰, so in winter the service yard and loading bay would be used in darkness.

Otters are largely nocturnal and most sensitive to disturbance at resting and breeding sites (Table 3). The main risks are noise and vibration from earthworks and any piling near the bank; construction or operational light spill onto the wooded bank, channel or opposite bank; night-time activity in the service yard and loading bay; trapping in open excavations or pipes; and a marginal increase in road casualties at the A40 and A470 crossings.

Light on the channel would also disrupt the downstream migration of Salmon fry and smolts and the largely nocturnal migration of Lampreys (Table 3).

Without mitigation, an adverse effect on the Otter and fish features cannot be excluded.

4.2.5 Loss or Degradation of Functionally Linked Riparian Habitat

The bank woodland (G3), which is suitable for Otter, shades the channel and stabilises the steep bank, is to be retained with the trees of G4 at its north-eastern end (Section 1.7.2.4), within a river conservation area behind a 1.1 m mesh conservation fence that would keep customers, dogs and vehicles off the bank.

Two Sycamores (G1) and an Oak (T2) at the top of the bank would be removed. Their crowns do not extend over the river, so their loss would not materially reduce shading of the channel but would thin the woodland edge next to the service yard. The veteran Oak (T1) and the Hedgerow section along the A470 are not part of the riparian habitat.

The southern edge of the car park and the retaining wall of up to 1.0 m along the southern side of the service yard would be built within or close to the root protection areas of G3. Without protection, root severance, soil compaction, level changes or spillages could cause the decline or loss of bank trees, reducing canopy cover contrary to the objective of at least 50% high canopy cover on riverbanks (Table 1), destabilising the bank and increasing sediment input to the river. Edge effects such as light spill and dumping of materials would degrade the woodland as Otter habitat.

Without mitigation, an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC cannot be excluded.

4.2.6 Introduction or Spread of Invasive Non-Native Species

No invasive non-native plants were recorded by the PEA survey in March 2026, the tree survey in April or the riparian survey in September. However, the PEA survey was too early in the year for species such as Himalayan Balsam to be readily detected, and near-vertical sections of bank could not be fully inspected.

⁵⁰ htc architects (2026) Design & Access Statement, Rev D, September 2026, page 11.

Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed spread readily along river corridors, and the Core Management Plan requires them to be actively managed within the SAC (Table 1). Plant and materials brought to the Site, imported topsoil and new planting could introduce them, and disturbance of the bank could spread any present downstream. No species in the planting schedule is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981⁵¹, but the risk from construction remains.

Without mitigation, an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC cannot be excluded.

4.2.7 Direct Loss of, or Physical Damage to, Habitat within the SAC

The connection point advised by DCWW lies c.370 m south-west of the Site beyond the Afon Tarell, so the rising main would cross the river; the route and crossing method have not yet been defined (Section 1.3.1). An open-cut crossing would excavate the bed and banks of the SAC, which may include gravels used by spawning Salmon and Lampreys and H3260 vegetation, and release sediment downstream. A trenchless crossing would avoid the channel, but drilling fluid could break out into the river, and launch and reception pits could damage bank trees or disturb the holts on the opposite bank (Section 1.7.2.3).

Once in use, a leaking or burst rising main could discharge untreated sewage to the river. A connection upstream of the pumping station to the west would not cross the river (FCA Appendix D), but has not been agreed. Without mitigation, an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC cannot be excluded.

4.2.8 Air Quality Effects Arising from Development-Generated Road Traffic

The AQA predicts that development traffic, alone and in combination, would add up to 36% of the critical level for ammonia ($1 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) and up to 41% and 24% of the critical loads it applies for nutrient nitrogen and acidity, where existing levels already approach or exceed these thresholds; oxides of nitrogen would remain below their critical level (AQA, Tables 6-4 to 6-11). Increases above 1% of the thresholds are confined to c.1 ha of the Afon Tarell from the A470 crossing to beyond the A40 bridge, 0.1% of the SAC (AQA, Figures 6-1 and 6-2).

The critical levels and loads applied are the most sensitive that APIS lists for habitats that may occur in the SAC, rather than values for its qualifying features (AQA, pages 15–16 and 25). The critical loads are for Bog and Woodland habitats: The affected reach is an urban river corridor with no Bog habitat. Nitrogen deposition on the bank woodland may alter its ground flora, epiphytes and fungi⁵², but would not cause the loss of the trees that shade the channel or the root cavities that offer Otter resting places, which the conservation objectives seek to retain (Table 1).

⁵¹ Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, section 14 and Schedule 9, Part II.

⁵² Air Pollution Information System (APIS). 'Nitrogen deposition :: Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland', <https://www.apis.ac.uk/nitrogen-deposition-broadleaved-mixed-and-yew-woodland> [accessed 7 October 2026].

The H3260 vegetation has no nitrogen critical load, as freshwater plant growth depends on the balance of nitrogen and phosphorus, and the nutrient pressure on the Usk is overwhelmingly waterborne phosphorus (Table 3). Even at the maximum modelled rate over the whole affected area, deposition would add less than 4 kg of nitrogen a year to the river, a very small addition to the nitrogen it already receives from its catchment.

For ammonia, the 1 µg/m³ critical level applies where lichens and bryophytes are an important part of the ecosystem; for higher plants it is 3 µg/m³ (uncertainty range 2–4 µg/m³)⁵³, which the maximum predicted total of 2.0 µg/m³ does not exceed (AQA, Table 6-7). The Water-crowfoots and other higher plants of the H3260 vegetation would therefore not be affected, and its aquatic mosses, such as *Fontinalis*, grow in the water⁵⁴, where they are exposed to dissolved nitrogen rather than to ammonia in the air.

Fish and Otter are not sensitive to these concentrations, and the changes would not measurably affect the water quality, flow or physical habitat on which they depend. The development would therefore not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC through air quality, alone or in combination, and no mitigation is required.

4.3 MITIGATION

The measures below are required to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC and are summarised in Table 4 with the mechanism securing each. Most can be secured by standard planning conditions; the surface water measures would also be subject to approval of the drainage by the SuDS Approval Body (SAB), without which construction cannot begin⁵⁵. No mitigation is required for air quality (Section 4.2.8).

4.3.1 Foul Water (Phosphorus)

DCWW's pre-development response confirms network capacity (Section 4.2.1). Before the application is determined, DCWW should also confirm in its consultation response that:

- The point of connection to the public sewerage system is agreed, and the network, including any pumping station receiving the flows, can accommodate them
- Brecon WWTW has capacity to treat the additional flows within its revised permit limits
- The works is operating in compliance with its permit conditions, including those for flow, final effluent quality and flow passed forward

⁵³ APIS. 'Ammonia :: Higher plants', critical levels from UNECE (2007), <https://www.apis.ac.uk/ammonia-higher-plants> [accessed 7 October 2026].

⁵⁴ JNCC. H3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation, <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/habitat/H3260/> [accessed 7 October 2026].

⁵⁵ Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Schedule 3, paragraph 7; Welsh Government (2018) Statutory standards for sustainable drainage systems.

This confirmation determines whether an adverse effect can be excluded, so it cannot be left to a planning condition. BBNPA has stated that it will consult DCWW on new applications proposing connections to the works.

Provided that confirmation is given, the following should be secured by condition:

- Foul drainage to discharge only to the public sewer, with no package treatment plant or other private discharge (any alternative would require a fresh HRA)
- No first use of the store until the approved connection to the public sewer has been completed and is operational
- A pumping station with duty and standby pumps, an automated pump exercise regime, telemetry and high-level alarms, and emergency storage for at least 24 hours' inflow⁵⁶, located away from the wooded bank and maintained for the life of the development
- No connection of foul drainage to the surface water system, the existing drain or the private 225 mm sewer

The development's phosphorus load would then be treated to the standard NRW has set for the works, within the permitted capacity, and no nutrient budget would be needed; a budget using the Welsh Government calculator, informed by evidence of where customers and staff live, would be required only if DCWW could not confirm capacity. With these measures, the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC through this pathway.

4.3.2 Operational Surface Water

The drainage design submitted to the SAB must provide treatment that prevents negative impacts on the quality of the receiving water (Standard S3). To give BBNPA certainty that the SAC will be protected, a planning condition should require the approved design to include:

- Treatment of service yard and loading bay runoff before it reaches the soakaway, by components whose combined mitigation indices at least equal the medium pollution hazard indices (Section 1.3.1)⁵⁷, with an additional component in view of the connection to the SAC: The separator now proposed should be followed by a further component, such as a filter drain
- A shut-off valve on the service yard outlet, operated under the store's spill response procedure, so that a fuel or oil spill can be contained before it reaches the soakaway
- Permeable paving for the car park and the rain garden, as proposed

⁵⁶ Welsh Government, Approved Document H: Drainage & Waste Disposal (2002 edition incorporating 2010 amendments), paragraph 2.39, which advises that the receiving chamber of a pumped foul drainage installation should be sized to contain 24 hours' inflow to allow for disruption in service. The FCA (page 13) adopts this.

⁵⁷ CIRIA (2015) The SuDS Manual (C753), Chapter 26.

- Soakaways with at least 1 m of unsaturated ground between their base and the highest groundwater level, positioned as far from the bank as the layout allows
- Exceedance flows held within the car park by kerbs and levels, with no flow route onto the wooded bank or into the existing drain
- No connection of site drainage to the existing drain or the private 225 mm surface water sewer
- An Operational Environmental Management and Maintenance Plan for the lifetime of the development, covering sweeping, inspection of treatment components and soakaways, and minimal use of de-icing salt

With these measures, runoff would be treated to at least the standard required for a medium-hazard site before infiltration, spills in the service yard could be contained, and no runoff would reach the river directly. The development would not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC through this pathway.

4.3.3 Construction Pollution

A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), including a pollution prevention plan based on current guidance for construction sites and works near water^{58,59}, should be approved before any works begin, including site clearance, and implemented in full. It should include:

- An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECow) to brief site staff, supervise sensitive works such as those at the top of the bank, and monitor compliance
- Installation of the tree protective fencing and the conservation fence before any other works, so that the bank woodland is a construction exclusion zone with no access, storage or plant
- Cut-off drains and silt fencing along the southern edge of the working area, settlement or treatment of water pumped from excavations, and no discharge of site runoff to the woodland, the river, the existing drain, the private sewer or the new soakaways
- Protection of the existing drain and the private sewer from silt and spills throughout the works
- Phasing of earthworks to minimise the area and duration of exposed ground, with stockpiles on the northern part of the Site, covered or seeded, and suspension of earthworks in heavy rain
- Fuel, oil and chemicals stored in bunded containers holding at least 110% of their contents, refuelling on a designated impermeable area on the northern part of the Site away from the bank and drains, and spill kits kept on site and on plant

⁵⁸ Masters-Williams, H. et al. (2001) Control of water pollution from construction sites: guidance for consultants and contractors (C532). CIRIA, London.

⁵⁹ Natural Resources Wales, Northern Ireland Environment Agency and Scottish Environment Protection Agency (2018) GPP 5: Works and maintenance in or near water. Version 1.2, February 2018.

- Concrete and cement washout only in a lined, contained area away from the bank and drains, with washings removed from the Site
- Identification, handling and disposal of contaminated soil, including the sub-base containing polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, without runoff from stockpiles
- If piling is required, a method that avoids percussive piling and does not create a pathway for contaminants to groundwater
- A pollution incident response plan, including immediate notification of NRW

These are established measures of well-understood effectiveness. With the CEMP secured by condition and implemented under ECoW supervision, the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC through this pathway.

4.3.4 Disturbance of Otter and Migratory Fish

During construction, the CEMP should also require:

- A pre-commencement Otter survey of the reach covered by the riparian survey, carried out no more than 4 weeks before works begin⁶⁰, to check the two holts for signs of use; if either is in use, or a resting place is found on the Site's side of the river or closer to the works, works should not start until NRW has been consulted on the need for a licence
- No night-time working, and no construction lighting directed towards the wooded bank or the river, with any lighting needed in winter kept to the minimum and switched off when not in use, and any security lighting activated by motion sensors
- Excavations covered at night or provided with an escape ramp, and pipes and ducts capped, so that Otters cannot become trapped
- Piling, if required, by a non-percussive method

For operation, the LIA models all external lighting at full output, without the effect of louvres, on the August 2026 site plan and without topography, and predicts less than 0.5 lux across the Site boundaries (LIA, pages 13–14 and 19–21). The external lighting should be installed in accordance with the LIA and the Welsh Government's good practice guidance on dark skies, which identifies Bannau Brycheiniog as an International Dark Sky Reserve and advises that rivers, riparian corridors and burrows should not be lit⁶¹, and should include:

⁶⁰ NatureScot (2024) Standing advice for planning consultations – Otters, updated August 2024, advises that pre-construction surveys are carried out as close to the start of works as possible and no more than three months before. A shorter interval is proposed here because the holts lie within the 30 m exclusion zone it recommends for non-breeding holts.

⁶¹ Welsh Government (2025) Good Practice Guidance: Planning for the Conservation and Enhancement of Dark Skies in Wales. WG49481, pages 23, 46 and 64.

- Isoline drawings for the final layout confirming that light from the development would not exceed 0.5 lux on the woodland side of the conservation fence, on the river channel or on the opposite bank
- Luminaires with no upward light and no tilt, on columns no higher than 5 m, directed away from the river, with louvres along the southern edge of the car park and service yard to limit back spill
- Warm white light of 2,700 K or less
- External lighting switched off automatically outside 07:00–23:00 and dimmed by presence detectors at quiet times, with any service yard lighting needed for deliveries outside those hours controlled by motion sensors and timers
- No lighting of the conservation areas or the wooded bank

The boundary treatments plan shows an exposed concrete retaining wall with a 1.1 m steel handrail along the southern side of the service yard, with the mesh conservation fence beyond; neither would contain light or noise. A solid screen, such as a close-boarded or acoustic fence on the retaining wall in place of the handrail, should be provided along the southern side of the service yard and loading bay to contain light from vehicles and the building and noise from deliveries. Delivery vehicles should use broadband (white noise) reversing alarms and switch off engines while unloading.

The second riparian survey visit, scheduled for April 2027, should be completed before works begin. If it records a resting place on the Site's side of the river, works should not start until NRW has been consulted on the need for a licence, as for the pre-commencement survey; in operation, such a resting place would be protected by the same unlit, screened and fenced woodland edge.

With these measures, the holts would remain separated from the development by the river, the retained woodland and a screened, unlit edge; the channel would remain dark; construction would take place in daytime with safeguards against trapping; and the conservation fence would keep people and dogs off the bank. Otters could continue to use the reach, and fish migration would be unaffected, so the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC through this pathway.

4.3.5 Riparian Habitat

The Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan should be secured by condition and implemented in full. Among other things, they require:

- Tree protective fencing installed before any works, under the supervision of the appointed arboriculturist, and retained until construction is complete

- Excavation within the root protection areas of G3 only under the constant supervision of the arboriculturist, using hand tools, an air spade or a small excavator with a toothless bucket, with roots over 25 mm in diameter retained unless the arboriculturist directs otherwise
- No stacking or discharge of building materials, fuels or cement within 20 m of the stems of retained trees
- Regular site inspections by the appointed arboriculturist, acting as Arboricultural Clerk of Works, at a frequency agreed with the Authority and reported in writing within a week of each visit

In addition:

- The retaining walls and the southern edge of the car park should be designed so that no excavation, change in level or foundation extends into the bank woodland beyond the areas identified for supervised excavation, and the method for works at the top of the bank should be included in the CEMP
- The conservation fence should be installed before works begin and retained permanently
- A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) should secure the long-term management of the three conservation areas, including retention of the bank woodland and its deadwood, replacement of any bank trees that are lost, maintenance of the fence, removal of litter and control of invasive species
- The native tree, shrub and Hedgerow planting in the landscape proposals should be carried out in the first planting season after construction, with failures replaced for at least five years

With these measures, the bank woodland would be retained intact, its canopy over the river maintained and its edge buffered by new native planting, and the loss of G1 and T2 would be compensated within the conservation areas. The development would not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC through this pathway.

4.3.6 Invasive Non-Native Species

The CEMP should include a biosecurity method statement, and the LEMP should provide for monitoring, covering:

- An INNS survey of the Site and bank in the growing season (June to September 2027) before works begin and, if INNS are found, an INNS management plan approved and implemented before works
- Cleaning of plant, equipment and footwear before arriving at and leaving the Site (Check, Clean, Dry), with a wash-down area away from the bank and drains
- Imported topsoil and other materials certified free of invasive plant material
- Planting stock from reputable, biosecure nurseries

- Annual inspection of the conservation areas and the bank for invasive species for at least five years, with prompt control of any found

These measures are standard and effective when implemented. With them in place, the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC through this pathway.

4.3.7 Direct Damage to SAC Habitat

If the foul connection crosses the Afon Tarell, the foul drainage scheme required by condition (Table 4) should be approved in consultation with NRW before works begin and should include:

- A crossing made without works in the channel or on the banks, by a trenchless method or within an existing structure such as the A470 bridge
- Launch and reception pits, compounds and the pipe route outside the bank woodland and its root protection areas, and at least 30 m from the two holts (Section 4.3.4) unless agreed with NRW
- For a trenchless crossing, a drilling design and breakout risk assessment based on ground investigation at the crossing, and a drilling fluid breakout plan with monitoring of the river during drilling under ECoW supervision
- A rising main sleeved or ducted where it crosses the river and pressure-tested before use
- Extension of the pre-commencement Otter survey and the CEMP to the route and crossing

An open-cut crossing would not be consistent with this assessment and would require a fresh HRA. With these measures, no works would take place in the channel or on its banks, the risk of drilling fluid reaching the river would be negligible and any leak at the crossing would be contained, so the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the SAC through this pathway.

TABLE 4: SUMMARY OF MITIGATION AND HOW IT IS SECURED

PATHWAY	KEY MEASURES	SECURING MECHANISM	TIMING
Foul water (phosphorus)	DCWW confirmation of the connection point, capacity within the revised permit and compliance; connection to the public sewer only (no package treatment plant); resilient pumping station with standby pumps, alarms and 24 hours' emergency storage.	DCWW consultation response; planning conditions (foul drainage scheme; no first use until connected).	Before determination; before commencement; before first use.

PATHWAY	KEY MEASURES	SECURING MECHANISM	TIMING
Operational surface water	Treatment of service yard and loading bay runoff; shut-off valve; permeable paving and rain garden; soakaway design; exceedance routing; no connection to the existing drain or private sewer; Operational Environmental Management and Maintenance Plan.	SAB approval; planning condition specifying these elements.	Before construction; lifetime of the development.
Construction pollution	CEMP with ECoW; construction exclusion zone on the bank; silt and runoff control; management of fuel, concrete and contaminated soil; piling method; incident response.	Pre-commencement condition (CEMP).	Before any works, including site clearance; throughout construction.
Disturbance of Otter and fish	Second riparian survey visit (April 2027) and pre-commencement Otter survey; no night-time working; safeguards against trapping; external lighting in accordance with the LIA (no more than 0.5 lux from the development on the woodland, channel and opposite bank; 2,700 K or less; controls); screen to the service yard; delivery management.	CEMP; lighting condition; condition requiring the surveys.	Before works; before external lighting is installed; lifetime of the development.
Riparian habitat	Compliance with the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan; design and method for works at the top of the bank; permanent conservation fence; LEMP; native planting.	Conditions (tree protection, CEMP, LEMP, landscaping).	Before works; first planting season; lifetime of the development.
Invasive non-native species	INNS survey (June to September 2027) and, if INNS are found, management plan; biosecurity; certified imported soils; biosecure planting stock; monitoring.	CEMP; LEMP.	Before works; at least five years after planting.

PATHWAY	KEY MEASURES	SECURING MECHANISM	TIMING
Direct damage to SAC habitat	Any crossing of the Afon Tarell without works in the channel or on its banks; pits and route clear of the bank woodland and holt; drilling design, breakout risk assessment and plan; sleeved main; Otter survey and CEMP extended to the route.	Planning condition (foul drainage scheme approved in consultation with NRW); CEMP.	Before works; throughout construction.

4.4 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

The plans and projects that could act in combination with the development are identified in Section 3.4. For foul water, the phosphorus discharged from Brecon WwTW is controlled by its permit, which NRW reviewed against the revised targets and which limits both the flow and phosphorus concentration of the discharge. Each new connection, including the 30-dwelling scheme, depends on DCWW confirming that it can be accommodated within that permit.

Provided that confirmation is given, the combined discharge remains within the limits set by NRW, and the development would not contribute to an in-combination effect. Other sources of phosphorus in the catchment are being addressed through the River Usk Nutrient Management Plan.

For air quality, the AQA’s in-combination results include traffic from other plans and projects (Section 4.2.8). For the other six pathways, the mitigation in Section 4.3 would leave at most negligible residual effects, confined to the Site and the adjoining reach of the Afon Tarell, which would not combine with those of other plans or projects to become significant. No other plan or project affecting this reach or its banks has been identified; BBNPA should confirm this from its planning records.

The development, with the mitigation in Section 4.3, would therefore not adversely affect the integrity of the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC in combination with other plans or projects.

5 CONCLUSION

The proposed Lidl foodstore at Kings Meadow, Brecon, adjoins the Afon Tarell, part of the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC, and would connect to the public sewer draining to Brecon WwTW. Of the European sites considered, only the River Usk SAC was screened in, through eight pathways assessed in Section 4 and summarised below.

Foul water (phosphorus). NRW has reviewed Brecon WwTW's permit, and its 2 mg/l phosphorus limit has applied since 31 December 2025. DCWW has confirmed network capacity. Subject to DCWW confirming before determination the point of connection, capacity within the revised permit and compliance, and to conditions requiring a resilient pumped connection to the public sewer with 24 hours' emergency storage, no package treatment plant and no first use until the connection is made, no adverse effect would arise.

Operational surface water. Runoff will infiltrate close to the river. Treatment of service yard runoff before infiltration, a shut-off valve, permeable paving, controlled exceedance routes, no connection to the existing drain or private sewer and an Operational Environmental Management and Maintenance Plan, secured through SAB approval and condition, would prevent pollution.

Construction. A CEMP with an ECoW, a construction exclusion zone on the bank, silt and runoff controls and the safe storage and handling of fuels, concrete and contaminated soil would prevent pollution.

Disturbance of Otter and fish. Otters use the reach regularly, and two pairs of burrows on the opposite bank, assumed to be holts, lie approximately 20–30 m from the works. Daytime working, safeguards against trapping, the second survey visit and a pre-commencement survey, external lighting that follows the Welsh Government's dark skies guidance and keeps light spill below 0.5 lux on the bank woodland, channel and opposite bank, and a screen to the service yard would avoid significant disturbance.

Riparian habitat. The bank woodland is retained within a fenced river conservation area. Compliance with the Arboricultural Method Statement and Tree Protection Plan, careful design of works at the top of the bank and a LEMP would maintain the woodland and its canopy.

Invasive non-native species. A pre-commencement INNS survey (with a management plan if INNS are found), biosecurity measures and monitoring would prevent the introduction or spread of invasive species.

Direct damage to SAC habitat. The foul connection advised by DCWW would cross the Afon Tarell. A condition requiring any crossing to be made without works in the channel or on its banks, with drilling fluid controls and a sleeved main, would avoid damage to the SAC.

Air quality. The AQA predicts increases in ammonia and nitrogen deposition on the Afon Tarell beside the A40 and A470 above the thresholds used for screening. The critical loads exceeded are for habitats that are not qualifying features, and ammonia would remain below the critical level for higher plants, so no adverse effect would arise and no mitigation is required.

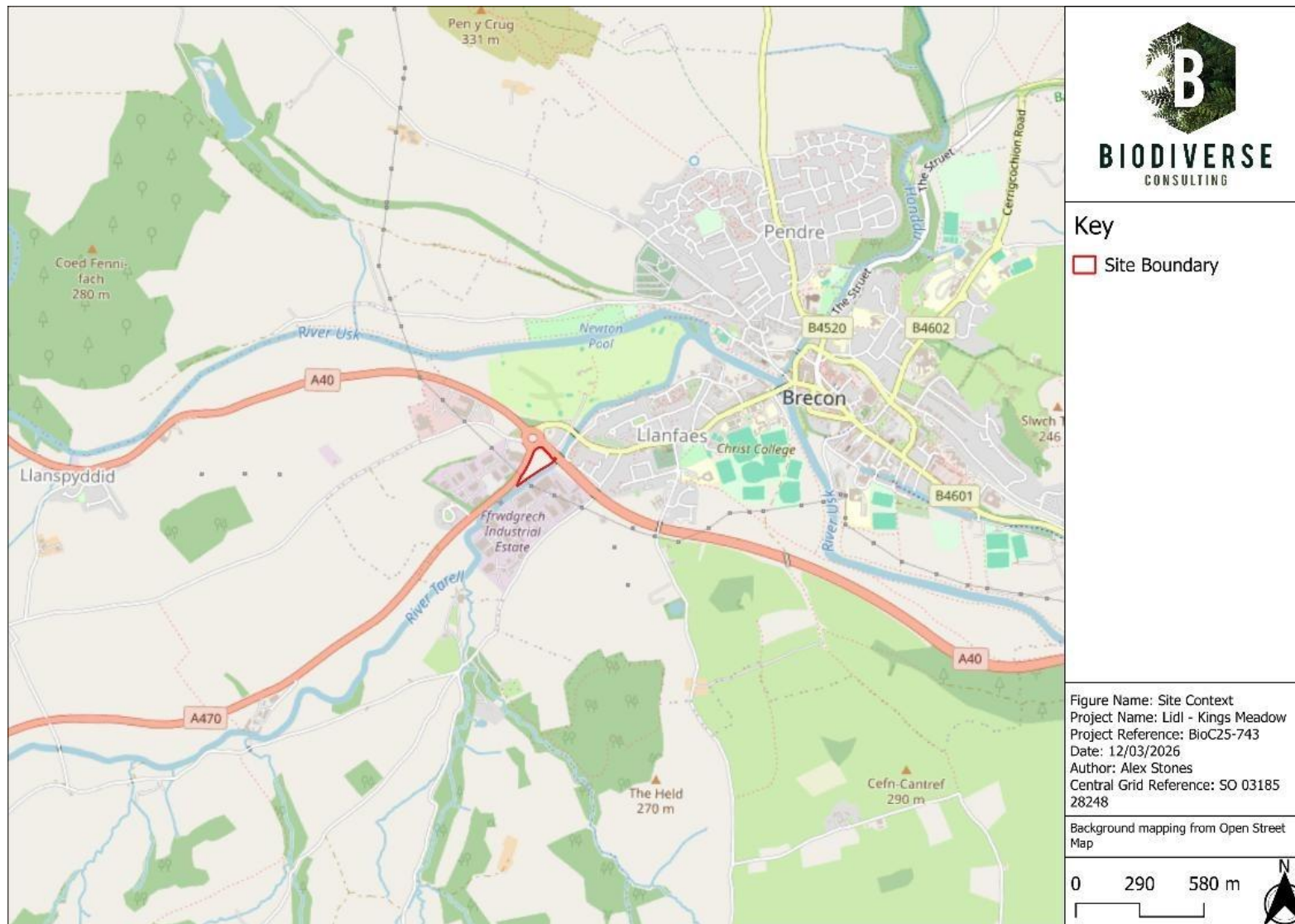
Provided that DCWW gives the confirmation described above and the mitigation in Section 4.3 is secured by planning conditions and SAB approval, the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the River Usk / Afon Wysg SAC, alone or in combination with other plans or

projects. This conclusion should be revisited if the drainage strategy, layout, lighting or construction methods change materially (including any proposal for an open-cut crossing of the Afon Tarell), or if BBNPA's expected revised Nutrient Statement changes its approach to Brecon WwTW.

APPENDICES



APPENDIX A: LOCATION PLAN



Parc Menter Brecon

0m 10m 20m 30m

B & M Home Store

A40 Brecon Bypass

Afon Tarell SAC

Ffrwdgrech Industrial Estate

Legend:

- Existing Trees and Vegetation
- Existing Grass Areas
- Proposed Grass Areas
- Proposed Planting Beds
- River and Drain
- Proposed Native Sheds Seeded
- Proposed Tree Planting
- Structural Tree Trench
- Proposed Hedge
- Proposed Rain Garden
- 1.10m 50x50mm Mesh Conservation Fence
- Hibernaculum
- Log Piles
- Application Boundary

CA-2026-BRKM-03 Rev A
24 Sept 2026
Revised boundary

Conservation Areas:

- Conservation Area 1
- Conservation Area 2
- Conservation Area 3

Planting Details:

- H1 Hawthorn, Hazel Ash, Holly Overgrowth Hedge with trees Off Site behind Site boundary fence
- H2 Triple Row 15mm 35Ac, 35Cb, 40Cm, 35 la
- H3 Triple Row 38mm 90Ac, 100Cb, 100Cm, 90 la
- H4 Double Row 12mm 20Ac, 20Cb, 20Cm, 20 la
- H5 Double Row 21mm 30Ac, 40Cb, 60Cm, 30 la
- H6 Single Row 18mm 10Ac, 20Cb, 20Cm, 10 la
- H7 Double Row 12mm 20Ac, 20Cb, 20Cm, 20 la
- H8 Double Row 5mm 7Ac, 9Cb, 9Cm, 8 la
- H9 Double Row 50mm 65Ac, 80Cb, 80Cm, 70 la, 10Ca, 10Ps, 10Vc, Ps
- G2 Sycamore Hgt 12m B2
- G3 Sycamore, Ash, Goat Willow, Hawthorn Common Oak, Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland Which is Restored Ancient Woodland Site. Hgt 13m B2
- G4 Ash Sycamore Hgt 12m C2

Infrastructure:

- Trench 1 2.0x 13.65m
- Trench 2 2.0x 25m
- Trench 3 2.0x 35m
- 1.10m 50x50mm Mesh Conservation Fence
- Maintenance Gate
- Hibernaculum
- Log Pile
- Road Sign
- Log Pile

Notes:

- 2No Schwieger 18 Bird Boxes & Schwieger 2F-DP Bat boxes to be located in accordance with Ecologist's recommendations once additional bird nesting and bat funnel surveys complete and mitigation known.

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Project
KINGS MEADOW
A470 BRECON
LD3 8EG

Drawing Title
PROPOSALS OVERALL

Scale
1:500 at A2

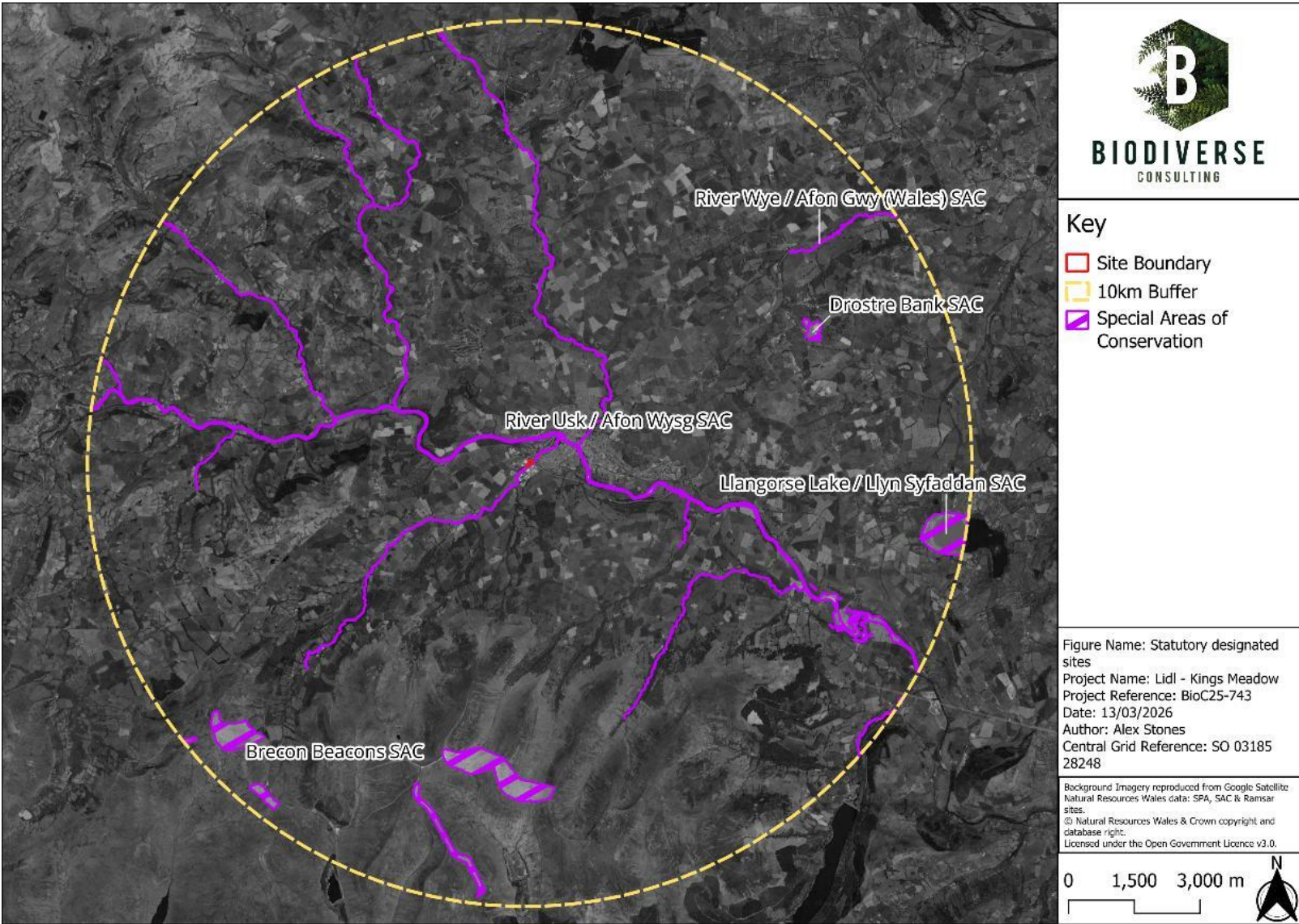
Date
1 Sept 2026

Drawing No
CA-2026-BRKM-03 Rev A

173



APPENDIX C: EUROPEAN SITES WITHIN 10KM



APPENDIX D: LEGISLATION

This Appendix provides a brief overview of the legislation and processes that apply to sHRA in England and Wales, including legislation that relates to marine/offshore projects.

Habitats Directive

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations) and the Offshore Habitats Regulations aim to ensure the long-term conservation of certain species and habitats by protecting them from possible adverse effects of plans and projects. The Habitats Regulations cover England and Wales, including inshore waters up to 12 nautical miles (“nm”); beyond 12 nm, the Offshore Habitats Regulations serve the same function for the UK’s offshore marine area.

The Habitats Regulations provide for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (“SACs”) to protect habitats and species of international importance, and the classification of Special Protection Areas (“SPAs”) to protect rare and vulnerable birds and regularly occurring migratory species within the UK and internationally. SACs and SPAs, referred to in legislation as European sites, form part of the UK’s national site network.

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance 1971 (“the Ramsar Convention”) provides for the listing of wetlands of international importance (Ramsar sites). Government policy is to afford Ramsar sites in the United Kingdom the same protection as sites within the national site network (collectively referred to in this sHRA as “Protected sites”).

Before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a relevant plan or project, a competent authority must make an Appropriate Assessment (AA) of the implications of the plan or project for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The UK implemented the Habitats and Birds Directives through secondary legislation comprising the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Habitats Regulations) and the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (Offshore Habitats Regulations).

The UK withdrew from the EU in January 2020 and is no longer bound by EU legislation unless it forms part of domestic law. Recognising the continued importance of protecting biodiversity, the UK Government passed EU Exit legislation to ensure that the habitat and species protection and standards of the Nature Directives continue to be implemented in the same or an equivalent way.

STATUTORY CONSULTATION

Under the Habitats Regulations and the Offshore Habitats Regulations the Competent Authority must, for the purposes of an AA, consult the appropriate nature conservation body and have regard to any representation made by that body within such reasonable time as the authority specifies.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) is the Statutory Nature Conservation Body (“SNCB”) for Wales, including Welsh inshore waters.

The role of the Competent Authority is to determine whether a plan or project or part thereof will have a significant effect on protected sites, and if so to carry out an Appropriate Assessment.



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