

BELLWAY HOMES

CRAIG Y PARCAU, BRIDGEND

ECOLOGY NOTE: APPLICATION OF STEP-WISE APPROACH

October 2025



soltysbrewster
E C O L O G Y

4 Stangate House,
Stanwell Road,
Penarth,
Vale of Glamorgan,
United Kingdom.
CF64 2AA

Telephone:- 033 00 13 00 12
e-mail:- enquiry@soltysbrewster.co.uk
Web Site:- www.soltysbrewster.com

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Issue	Revision	Stage	Date	Prepared by	Approved by	Signed
1	-	Draft for review	10 September 2025	Laurence Dean (Ecologist)	Dr M. Watts (Director)	
2	Text edits	Draft for client review	12 September 2025	Laurence Dean (Ecologist)	Dr M. Watts (Director)	
3	N/A	Work in Progress for Pre-App	17 September	Laurence Dean (Ecologist)	Dr M. Watts (Director)	M. WATTS
4	Inclusion of updated proposed site layout and associated text edits	PAC Submission	20 October 2025	Laurence Dean (Ecologist)	Dr M. Watts (Director)	M. WATTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Soltys Brewster Ecology were instructed by Bellway Homes to provide advice and guidance in relation to a proposed development at a site in Bridgend County Borough of Wales, centrally located at OS Grid Reference: SS 88960 78609. The site has been allocated for proposed redevelopment as part of the Bridgend Local Development Plan (LDP) review, encompassing the construction of approx. 108 residential properties at the site, with associated landscaping, drainage infrastructure, access roads, and other supporting amenities (see Appendix I).
- 1.2 In Wales, Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required to apply a step-wise approach in regard to ecology during the planning process. This begins with avoidance, ensuring developments are designed to prevent harm to designated sites, habitats, and species where possible. Where avoidance is not achievable, mitigation measures should be applied to reduce impacts, with residual effects addressed through compensation (e.g. habitat creation or enhancement). Finally, opportunities for biodiversity enhancement are expected to be secured, in accordance with the Section 6 duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience. This step-wise hierarchy is set out in Planning Policy Wales (2024) and Technical Advice Note 5 (Welsh Government, 2009) and ensures that ecological considerations are embedded into the decision-making process during planning.
- 1.3 The current document describes how the step-wise approach has been considered throughout the design process for the proposed redevelopment scheme at the site, with reference to ancient woodland and other semi-natural woodland in particular, as the features of greatest ecological importance at the site. The current (October 2025) and previous draft or testing layouts – for example used to inform the LDP promotion - have been used to illustrate how the step wise approach has been applied.

2.0 THE SITE

- 2.1 The site, approximately 6.5ha in size, supports a range of habitat types (see Appendix V). The majority of the area comprises 2no. parcels of agricultural grassland separated by a narrow parcel of woodland, partially designated as a Restored Ancient Woodland Site and as part of the Coed-y-Tyle Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) (see Appendix VI). Other habitats include additional areas of woodland, mature species-rich hedgerow, ephemeral / short perennial vegetation, scattered mature trees, 2no. derelict buildings, and a dry ditch/drain. Semi-natural woodland and species-rich mature hedgerows are listed as Priority Habitats and are subsequently considered of most ecological significance at the site.

3.0 APPLICATION OF STEP-WISE APPROACH

- 3.1 At the time of the production of the current document, there have been 4no. iterations of the proposed site plan produced between 2020 and 2025 (see Appendix I – IV). Alterations to each successive iteration were made to minimise impact to the ecology at the site, and woodland habitats in particular, with consideration of the step-wise approach.
- 3.2 The following sections describe how the step-wise approach was considered during the design of key elements of the proposed development.

Woodland Crossing Point

- 3.3 The two field parcels at the site are proposed for development into two residential areas, referred to as the eastern and western development parcels. Access to the western field parcel is required to achieve the proposed design.
- 3.4 Access to the western field parcel directly from the adjacent A48 dual carriageway has been considered in order to avoid creating a link through the woodland corridor. An existing arm from the A48 Broadlands roundabout serves the eastern development area. Providing an access direct off the A48 into the western parcel is unlikely to be accepted by the LPA as it would be located too close to the Broadlands roundabout. The western boundary of the site is located approximately 110m west of the give-way on the eastbound approach to the Broadlands Roundabout and, in order to provide sufficient visibility splays, any access will

need to be located away from the western boundary, moving it closer to the roundabout/give-way line. In addition, the A48 is a principal route through Bridgend and from a highway perspective, the creation of an additional access may contribute to traffic queues and delays. Furthermore, the construction of a second junction in this area would require significant widening of the A48, likely affecting the existing tree line on the northern boundary of the application site, in order to provide a dedicated right-turn lane.

- 3.5 As a result of the limitations discussed in the previous paragraph, improving existing access to the site from the Broadlands Road roundabout was considered appropriate, and the required access to the western development parcel is planned to be provided via an access road through the area of woodland that separates the two proposed development parcels.
- 3.6 The original route of the woodland crossing point for the access road was proposed to go diagonally through the centre of the woodland (see Appendix IV). However, this design did not minimise the footprint of the access road and did not account for root protection zones of mature trees. Therefore, the crossing point design was amended as a straight line through the narrowest part of the woodland to minimise its footprint through the woodland area and reduce impact to existing mature trees (see Appendix III). However, under this design, the woodland parcel would be split and approx. 2no. ecologically valuable mature oak trees (Category A) considered suitable for roosting bats would have required felling. Therefore, following completion of baseline ecology and arboricultural surveys and consultation within the Bellway Development Team, the proposed woodland crossing point was relocated to the northern extent of the woodland parcel to make use of an existing track that connects the two field parcels (Appendix I-II). This design was chosen as only a single mature ash tree (displaying signs of ash dieback infection) would require felling and minor crown reduction to 2no. mature oak trees would be required to achieve the proposed design.

Other Woodland Areas and Mature Scattered Trees

- 3.7 Impacts to additional woodland areas and mature scattered trees as the site were avoided where possible throughout the design process.
- 3.8 Under the current proposed scheme (Appendix I), minimal impacts are anticipated to boundary habitats. These include woodland areas adjacent to the northern, eastern, and

southern site boundaries, mature trees within the hedgerow along the western site boundary.

- 3.9 Furthermore, under the current proposed scheme, the vast majority of mature scattered trees at the site are to be retained. All trees assessed as Category U in an arboricultural assessment for the site (Treescene, 2025), typically ash trees displaying signs of ash dieback infection, that are in high-risk areas at the site (e.g. next to proposed plots, footpaths, public spaces, etc.) are proposed for removal. Furthermore, a lesser proportion of Category C trees in high-risk areas are proposed for removal. However, the current proposed scheme has been designed to enable the vast majority of Category A and B trees at the site to be retained.
- 3.10 Impacts to nesting birds and roosting bats in trees proposed for felling will be mitigated for via a combination of measures, including timing vegetation removal to avoid bird nesting season and sensitive felling methods used for tree assessed as PRF-I (suitable for individual roosting bats).
- 3.11 Any reduction to woodland area at the north-east and south of the site will be mitigated for via replacement planting or natural woodland regeneration as part of a woodland management plan.

Attenuation Features

- 3.12 Previous iterations of the site layout proposed 4no. attenuation features to be situated within semi-natural woodland habitat, with 2no. features positioned within the footprint of the Coed-y-Tyle SINC and 2no. features positioned within semi-natural woodland at the south of the site (Appendix III). However, this design was considered sub-optimal in terms of minimising impacts on the Coed-y-Tyle SINC and semi-natural woodland habitats present within the site.
- 3.13 In order to reduce impacts and disturbance to the SINC and semi-natural woodland habitats, the number of attenuation features located within woodland areas was reduced in an updated proposed site layout, with 2no. smaller features proposed to be located within the SINC woodland area and a single larger feature to be situated within poor semi-improved grassland to the south-east of the site (Appendix II). However, these proposals would still result in disturbance and loss of woodland within the Coed-y-Tyle SINC due to the positioning of the 2no. smaller attenuation features.

- 3.14 Therefore, following completion of baseline ecology and arboricultural surveys and consultation within the Bellway Development Team, the design and positioning of the proposed attenuation features was altered. 2no. larger attenuation features are proposed in the current proposed layout for the site, with one feature to be located within poor semi-improved grassland habitat at the south-east of the site and one feature to be located partially within semi-natural woodland habitat at the south of the site, outside of the footprint of both the Coed-Y-Tyle SINC and RAWS (Appendix I).

Hedgerows

- 3.15 Existing hedgerows at the site are to be retained where possible in the current proposed design (Appendix I), including existing hedgerows bordering the western field parcel, as well as hedgerows bordering the eastern field parcel to a lesser extent.
- 3.16 Any hedgerows removed will be mitigated for via replacement planting of species-rich hedgerow at a ratio of 3:1 (three meters of hedgerow planted per one meter of hedgerow removed). Hedgerow removal will be subject to seasonal constraints to mitigate impacts to nesting birds and will be undertaken outside of bird nesting season.

Buildings

- 3.17 The existing buildings at the site (Building A and Building B) have been assessed as being in poor condition and are considered unsuitable for retention.
- 3.18 Under the current proposed design, the buildings are proposed for demolition. However, a suite of bat surveys conducted on the buildings in 2025 by Soltys Brewster Ecology confirmed a small number of Common Pipistrelle bats to be roosting within Building A, and individual Brown Long Eared (BLE) and Lesser Horseshoe (LHS) bats to use both buildings as feeding perch habitat.
- 3.19 Therefore, an EPS licence from Natural Resources Wales is required to be obtained prior to any demolition works which will detail appropriate mitigation measures for bats. These will include the provision of replacement roosting opportunities for Pipistrelle bats via the inclusion of suitable bat boxes onto retained mature trees and new buildings at the site, as well as the creation of a suitable replacement feeding perch structure suitable for use by BLE

and LHS bats.

4.0 Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement

4.1 The following avoidance, mitigation, and enhancement measures are therefore considered appropriate to the construction and operational phases of the future development at the site:

Avoidance

- Retention and protection of priority habitats as far as possible (e.g. semi-natural woodland and species-rich hedgerows);
- Vegetation clearance (trees and scrub) to avoid nesting bird season and be undertaken over the winter period (between September – February).
- Removal of brash pile feature suitable for use by hibernating herpetofauna to avoid main hibernation season (to be undertaken between mid-March – September).

Mitigation

- Woodland crossing point (access road) to be located at the north of the woodland parcel and make use of an existing track to minimise habitat loss/disturbance to the Coed-y-Tyle SINC and RAWS.
- Design of site lighting to minimise artificial light spill onto boundary features and all retained PRFs within mature trees to limit impacts to bats and other nocturnal wildlife. Any increase in lux level to be less than or equal to 0.5 lux.
- Covering of any excavations overnight or means of escape provided during construction phase to minimise risks to Badger and any other small mammals that may become trapped.
- Any required security fencing to include an access gap at the bottom to allow continued connectivity for Badger and other small mammals post-development;
- Environmental management plan prepared for construction and operational phases to limit risk to the River Ogmore, Coed-y-Tyle SINC, Chapel Hill SINC, Restored Ancient Woodland, and other retained habitats;
- Timing constraints for construction works to reduce disturbance to Otter and other nocturnal species.
- Planting of new native hedgerow to mitigate for loss of hedgerow required to facilitate the construction of the proposed scheme
- Creation of replacement structure suitable for use as a feeding perch by Brown Long-eared bat and Lesser Horseshoe bat to compensate for the loss of feeding perch

habitat within existing buildings proposed for demolition. Replacement structure must be constructed prior to demolition.

- Creation of roosting opportunity for Pipistrelle bats to compensate for the loss of roosting habitat within existing buildings proposed for demolition. Achieved through the inclusion of suitable bat boxes onto retained trees prior to demolition.

Enhancement

- Inclusion of bat and bird boxes onto retained trees and new buildings;
- Provision of new native tree/shrub woodland planting (or natural regeneration) to provide additional habitat resources for a wide variety of wildlife and compensate for any loss of woodland area;
- Strengthening of existing hedgerows with new native tree planting;
- Landscape plan to include native tree and shrub species or those with a known benefit to local biodiversity;
- Creation of log/brash piles within appropriate habitats to enhance site suitability for herpetofauna (reptiles and amphibians);
- Enhancement of created and retained grassland and SUDs areas with a species-rich meadow seed mixture to promote value to wildlife;
- Management and control of invasive Himalayan Balsam within the site boundary;
- Implement Management Plan for retained and proposed planting to maintain and enhance value to Biodiversity.

References

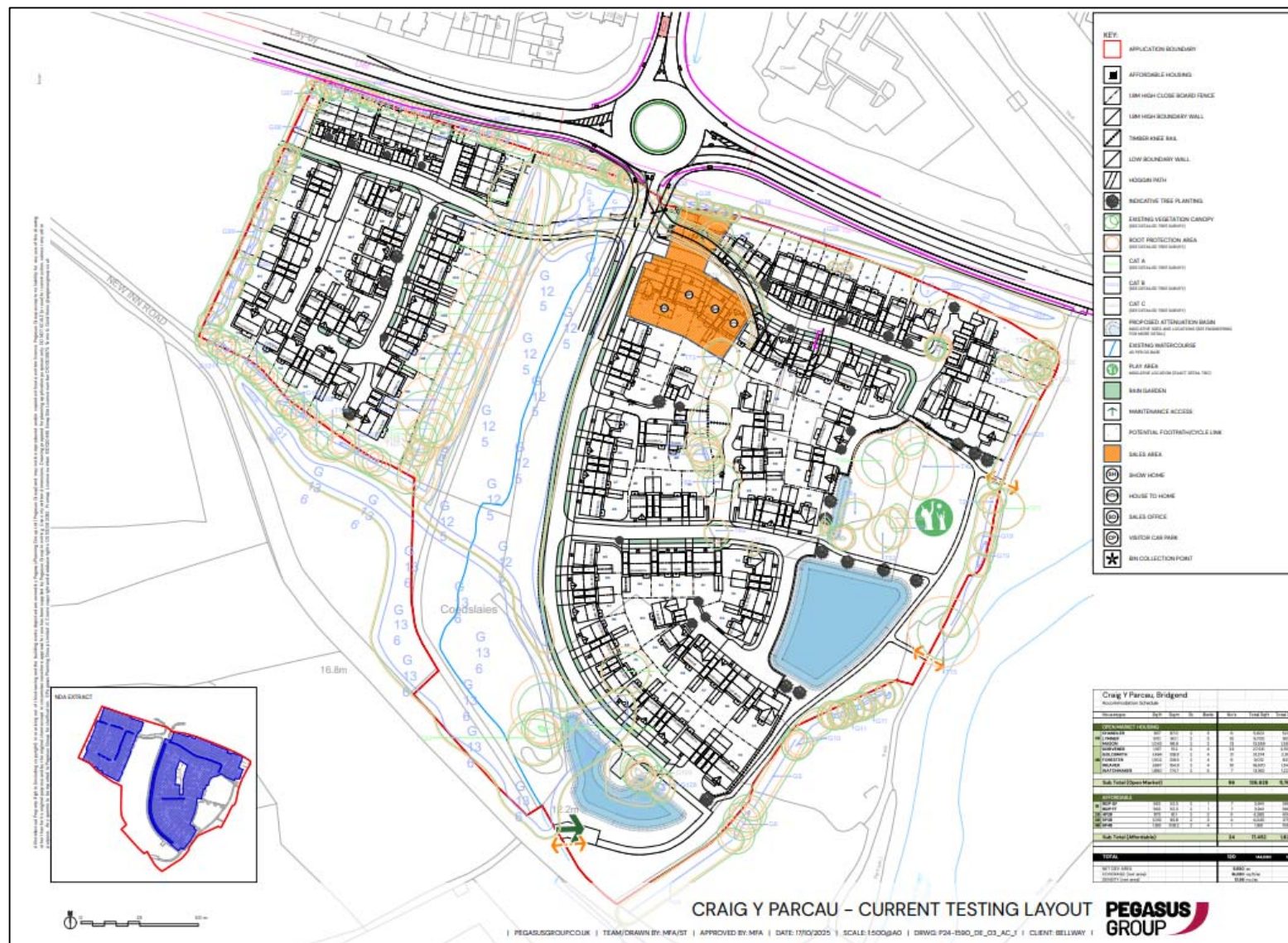
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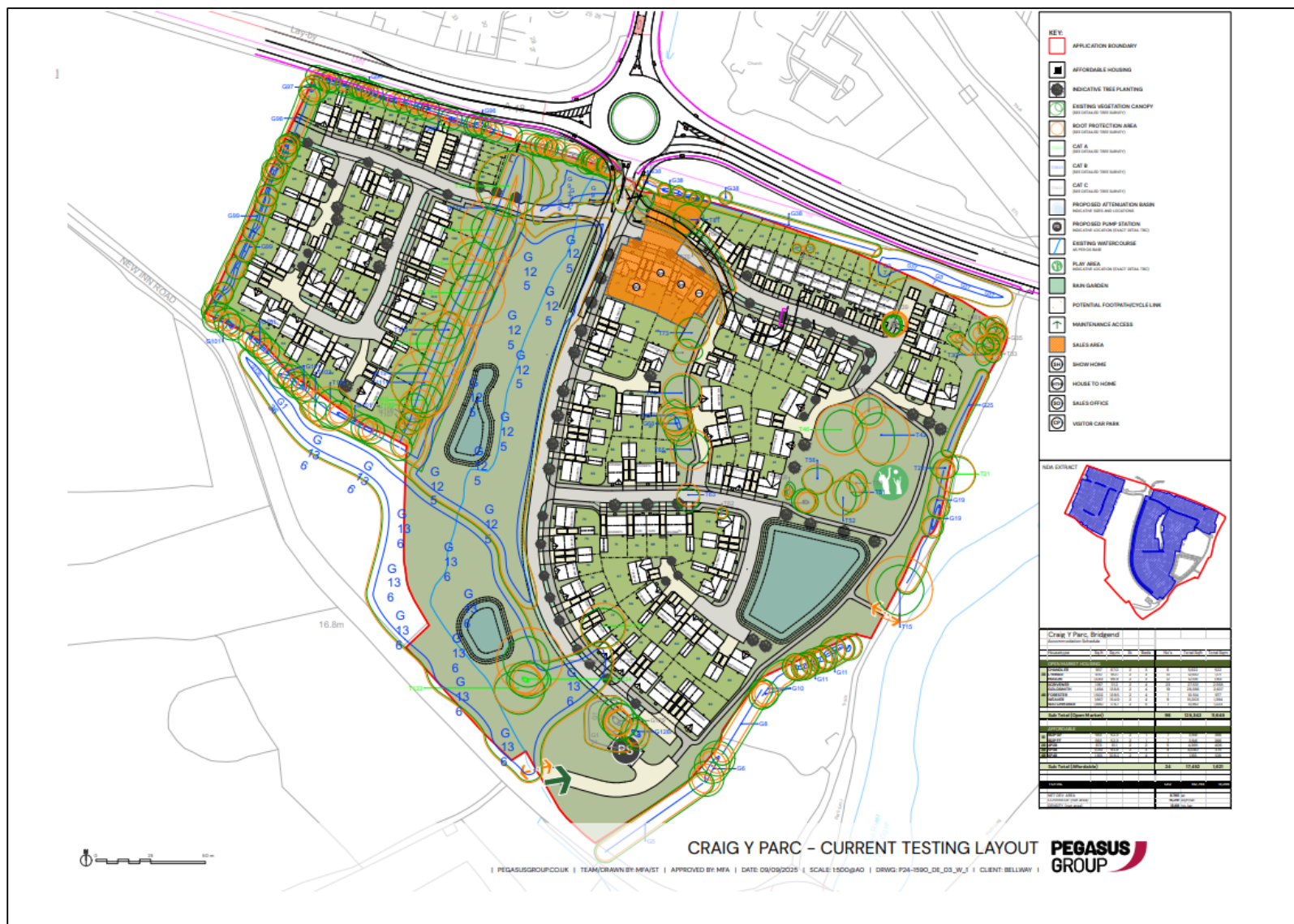
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APPENDIX II PREVIOUS PROPOSED SITE PLAN (SEPTEMBER 2025)



APPENDIX IV ORIGINAL PROPOSED SITE PLAN (APRIL 2020)

The following proposed site plan has been extracted from an Ecological Appraisal report produced for the site by Ethos Environmental Planning in April 2020.



APPENDIX V PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN (JULY 2025)

The following Phase 1 habitat plan has been extracted from a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report produced for the site by Soltys Brewster Ecology in July 2025.



APPENDIX VI DESIGNATED SITE MAP

The following plan shows designated sites and Priority Areas located within a 1km radius of the site. Data provided by the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) in November 2024.

