



R & D Ecology

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Cato Data Centre

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Prepared For:

Logan PM / ILI Cato Ltd

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. An Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) has been undertaken for the proposed Data Centre development at Cato. The aims of this report are to provide a current baseline of the Application Site, identify any actual or potential habitat and species constraints pertinent to the Development, and outline recommendations for avoidance, mitigation, compensation (where necessary) and enhancement for ecology.
- 1.2. All surveys and assessments have been undertaken with the relevant best practice guidance, including guidance set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).
- 1.3. An extended phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken on 22nd November 2024 and 8th June 2025, which identified 10 habitat types within the survey area. The main habitats within the Application Site include (but not limited to) arable, grasslands, trees and scrub, with a waterway (Dronachy Burn) also dividing the Application Site.
- 1.4. The Proposed Development does not lie within or adjacent to any statutory designated environmental sites. Within 15km of the Application Site there are five Natura 2000 designated sites; all Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Within 5km of the Application Site there are three other environmental designated sites; two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and one Local Nature Reserve (LNR).
- 1.5. A single Local Wildlife Site is located within 1km of the Application Site (Auchtertool Linn), Which is partially located within the Application Site.
- 1.6. During the extended phase 1 habitat site visit, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected and notable species present within the local area.
- 1.7. Additional species-specific surveys were then undertaken, including:
 - Breeding Bird Survey
 - Badger Survey
 - Bat Survey
 - Otter & Water Vole Survey
 - Pine Marten Survey
 - National Vegetation Classification Survey
- 1.8. Appropriate measures including further survey works and mitigation have been recommended within Chapter 6 of this EcIA to protect local ecology.

2. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

- 2.1. R & D Ecology Ltd. have been appointed by Logan PM to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) for a proposed Data Centre and associated infrastructure (the “Proposed Development”) on lands at Camilla, Auchtertool, Kirkcaldy Fife KY2 5XW (the “Application Site”).
- 2.2. Please refer to Figure 1, Appendix A for Site Location Map.

SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.3. The Application Site comprises of agricultural lands including arable and livestock grazed grassland. Scrub and trees are also present within the Application Site, with a waterway (Dronachy Burn) running west to east across the site.
- 2.4. Habitats within the wider landscape are mainly comprised of agricultural lands, with the residential area of Auchtertool located approximately 0.2km east. Scattered woodland, scrub and trees are also present across the local landscape, with Camilla Loch located approximately 0.5km east of the Application Site.

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION

- 2.5. Data Centre and associated infrastructure.

SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

- 2.6. An Ecological Impact Assessment was undertaken to inform the submission of a planning application to the Local Planning Authority for the Proposed Development. The aims of this report are to:

Determine the main habitat types within and immediately adjacent to the Application Site, and assess their potential to support protected/notable species;

Identify any actual or potential habitat and species constraints pertinent to the Proposed Development;

Assess the potential impacts of the Proposed Development during each of the phases of development; and

Recommend how the Proposed Development can avoid, mitigate and, if necessary, compensate, and/or enhance the Application Site to provide net benefits for biodiversity.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORITY

- 2.7. Dawn Thompson is an experienced ecologist with over nineteen years of experience in ecological surveys and assessments and holds a BSc (Hons) in Environmental Biology. Dawn is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), and the Association of Environmental Clerks of Works (AECOW). Dawn has experience in undertaking and managing a range of surveys and assessments for a variety of developments including renewables, utility, roads, flood prevention, residential and commercial. Dawn also holds NatureScot bat and otter survey licences.
- 2.8. Rhys Newell is an ecologist with over nine years ecological surveying experience including badger, otter, beaver, breeding birds and bats. Rhys is an associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Projects that Rhys has worked on include a flood prevention scheme, renewables, utilities, residential and commercial developments.

3. LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

LEGISLATION AND POLICY

3.1. This ecological assessment has been undertaken with regard appropriate legislation:

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981¹

The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Amendment (Scotland) Regulations 2019²

Invasive Non-native Species (EU Exit) Scotland (Amendment etc.) Regulations³

Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004⁴

Environment Act 1995⁵

Conservation of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended)⁶

Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004⁷;

The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011⁸;

The Water Environment and Water Services (Scotland) Act 2003⁹ (as amended) (WEWS);

Land Use Strategy for Scotland (2011)¹⁰

National Planning Framework 4¹¹; and

The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Scotland) Regulations 2017¹².

¹ Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

² Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2019/64/introduction/made>

³ Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2020/473/contents/made>

⁴ Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/6/contents?text=nature%20conservation#match-1>

⁵ Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1995/25/contents?text=Environment%20Act%20#match-1>

⁶ Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/51/contents?text=badgers#match-1>

⁷ Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2004/6/contents>

⁸ Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2011/6/contents/enacted>

⁹ Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2003/3/contents>

¹⁰ Available at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/topics/environment/countryside/landusestrategy>

¹¹ National Planning Framework 4 - gov.scot (www.gov.scot)

¹² Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2017/102/contents/made>

GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS

BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity¹³

- 3.2. The British Standards Institute has published BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for Planning and Development which offers a coherent methodology for biodiversity management. This document seeks to promote transparency and consistency in the quality and appropriateness of ecological information submitted with planning applications and applications for other regulatory approvals.
- 3.3. BS 42020:2013 cites CIEEM EcIA Guidelines as the acknowledged reference on ecological impact assessment. These guidelines are consistent with the British Standard on Biodiversity, which provides recommendations on topics such as professional practice, proportionality, pre-application discussions, ecological surveys, adequacy of ecological information, reporting and monitoring.

CIEEM Guidelines

- 3.4. The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) have produced guidance on Preliminary Ecological Appraisal¹⁴ (PEA), Ecological Impact Assessment¹⁵ (EcIA) and Ecological Report Writing¹⁶.
- 3.5. EcIA is a process of identifying, quantifying and evaluating potential effects from activities such as those relating to development on habitats, species and ecosystems.
- 3.6. The aims of their EcIA guidelines are to:
- promote good practice;
 - promote a scientifically rigorous and transparent approach to Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA);
 - provide a common framework to EcIA in order to promote better communication and closer cooperation between ecologists involved in EcIA; and
 - provide decision-makers with relevant information about the likely ecological effects of a project.

¹³ BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development

¹⁴ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

¹⁵ CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland. Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine.

¹⁶ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing

Other Guidelines / Documents

Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey¹⁷

Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition)¹⁸;

Legally protected species UK¹⁹

Bat Roosts in Trees²⁰

Birds of Conservation Concern UK²¹

Monitoring the Otter *Lutra Lutra*²²

Surveying for Badgers – Good Practice Guidelines²³

Surveying for Red Squirrels²⁴

The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook²⁵

Surveying for Pine Marten²⁶

The Eurasian Beaver Handbook²⁷

UK BAP Mammals: Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation ²⁸

Developing with Nature Guidance²⁹

¹⁷ JNCC (2003) Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit. JNCC, Peterborough

¹⁸ Collins, J. (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines¹⁸ (3rd edition). Bat Conservation Trust

¹⁹ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-3415>

²⁰ BTHK (2018) Bat Roosts in Trees – A Guide to Identification and Assessment for Tree-Care and Ecology Professionals.

²¹ http://www.rspb.org.uk/wildlife/birdguide/status_explained.aspx

²² Chanin, P. (2003). Monitoring the Otter *Lutra Lutra*. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers, Monitoring Series (No. 10).

²³ Scottish Badgers (2018) Surveying for Badgers – Good Practice Guidelines

²⁴ Gurnell J, et al (2009). Forestry Commission Practice Note 11. Forestry Commission, Edinburgh.

²⁵ Dean, M., Strachan, R. Gow, D. and Andrews, R. (2016). The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series).

²⁶ UK BAP Mammals: Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation (2012)

²⁷ Campbell-Palmer et al. (2016) The Eurasian Beaver Handbook – Ecology and Management of Castor fiber

²⁸ Wheeler et al. (2012) UK BAP Mammals: Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation

²⁹ NatureScot (2023) Developing with Nature Guidance - Developing with Nature guidance | NatureScot

4. METHODOLOGY

STUDY AREAS

- 4.1. Various ecological study areas (ESA) have been assessed during different sections of this PEA for the Proposed Development, following standard best practice measures. Each study area is outlined within Table 4-1 below.

Table 4-1: Study Areas

Zone of Influence	Distance from Application Site
Natura 2000 designated sites	15km
All other statutory designated sites	5km
All non-statutory designate sites	1km
Biological Records	2km
Phase 1 Habitat Survey	50m
Species Scoping Survey	50m
Breeding Bird Survey	Application Site
Bat Activity Survey	Application Site
Badger Survey	100m
Pine Marten Survey	250m
Otter and Water Vole Survey	200m up and down stream

- 4.2. The study areas are considered to be sufficient to cover the potential zone of influence (Zol) of the Proposed Development.

DESK STUDY

- 4.3. A desk-based assessment was undertaken on 21st November 2024 and 8th June 2025 to collate available ecological information for the Application Site and the surrounding area. This included a search of statutory designated sites within a 5km radius of the Proposed Development, including: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), RAMSAR Sites and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). In addition, all Natura 2000 designates sites (SPAs and

SACs) have been included within 15km of the Application Site. The descriptions of each of these sites was obtained utilising the NatureScot website³⁰.

- 4.4. National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway website³¹ was also searched for historical species records within 2km of the Proposed Development on 21st November 2024.

FIELD SURVEY

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 4.5. An extended phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken on the 22nd November 2024 and 8th June 2025 by Dawn Thompson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM MECW and Rhys Newell ACIEEM. This survey covered all land within 50m the Application Site (the ecological survey area). Survey work was carried out in accordance with the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) guidelines in order to produce a phase 1 habitat map, which is contained within Figure 3, Appendix A of this document. Target notes have been used to highlight features of importance, and habitats too small to clearly demonstrate on the map.
- 4.6. This habitat classification method provides a standardised system to record and map semi-natural vegetation and other wildlife habitats to assess the potential importance for nature conservation.
- 4.7. An updated survey of the grassland areas was undertaken by Dawn Thompson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM MECW and Rhys Newell ACIEEM on 10th May 2026, to confirm the categorisation of habitats, and confirm the flora species present.

Ground Water Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems

- 4.8. A phase 1 habitat survey was conducted on the 22nd November 2024 and 8th June 2025 by Dawn Thompson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM MECW and Rhys Newell ACIEEM. Both surveyors then undertook a NVC survey for the relevant areas within and adjacent to the Application Site on the 8th June 2025
- 4.9. A total of 18 quadrats were assessed across the survey area. Each quadrat total area was 2m x 2m, and assessed by using 16 0.5m x 0.5m set quadrats, each with 25 individual squares. The coverage of each flora species was determined by counting the number of squares each species is present.

³⁰ NatureScot SiteLink. Available at: <https://sitelink.nature.scot/home>

³¹ Available at: https://records.nbnatlas.org/explore/your-area#56.1028|-3.2577|13|ALL_SPECIES

- 4.10. SEPA Guidance Note 31³² was reviewed to aid in the identification of wetland habitats which are reliant on ground water and surface water. Any wetland habitat observed within the ESA was assessed using the SEPA guidance to determine whether it was a Ground Water Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystem (GWDTE).

Species Scoping Survey

- 4.11. The potential for supporting protected, rare or notable species within each of the habitats was noted.
- 4.12. In the context of this report, rare, protected, or otherwise notable species of flora or fauna were those considered to meet any of the following criteria:

Species protected by UK or European legislation;

UK Post 2010 UK Biodiversity Framework priority species or Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) species;

Nationally rare or nationally scarce species;

Species of Conservation Concern (e.g. JNCC Red List, RSPB/BTO Red or Amber Lists).

- 4.13. The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended, makes it an offence to release or allow to escape into the wild any animal, plant or micro-organism not ordinarily resident in the UK (as listed in Schedule 9 of the Act). Plant species listed in Schedule 9 were searched for during the survey. Examples include species such as giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).
- 4.14. Table 4-2 below outlines the relevant habitat and field signs that indicate the presence of protected or notable species within the survey area.

Table 4-2: Indicative Habitats and Field Signs

Species	Indicative Habitat(s)	Field Signs
Bats	Roosts – trees, buildings, bridges, caves, etc. Foraging habitats – woodland, hedgerow, water bodies, parkland, grassland etc.	In or on potential roost sites: droppings stuck to walls, urine spotting in roof spaces, oil from fur staining round roost entrances, feeding remains (e.g. moth wings under a feeding perch).

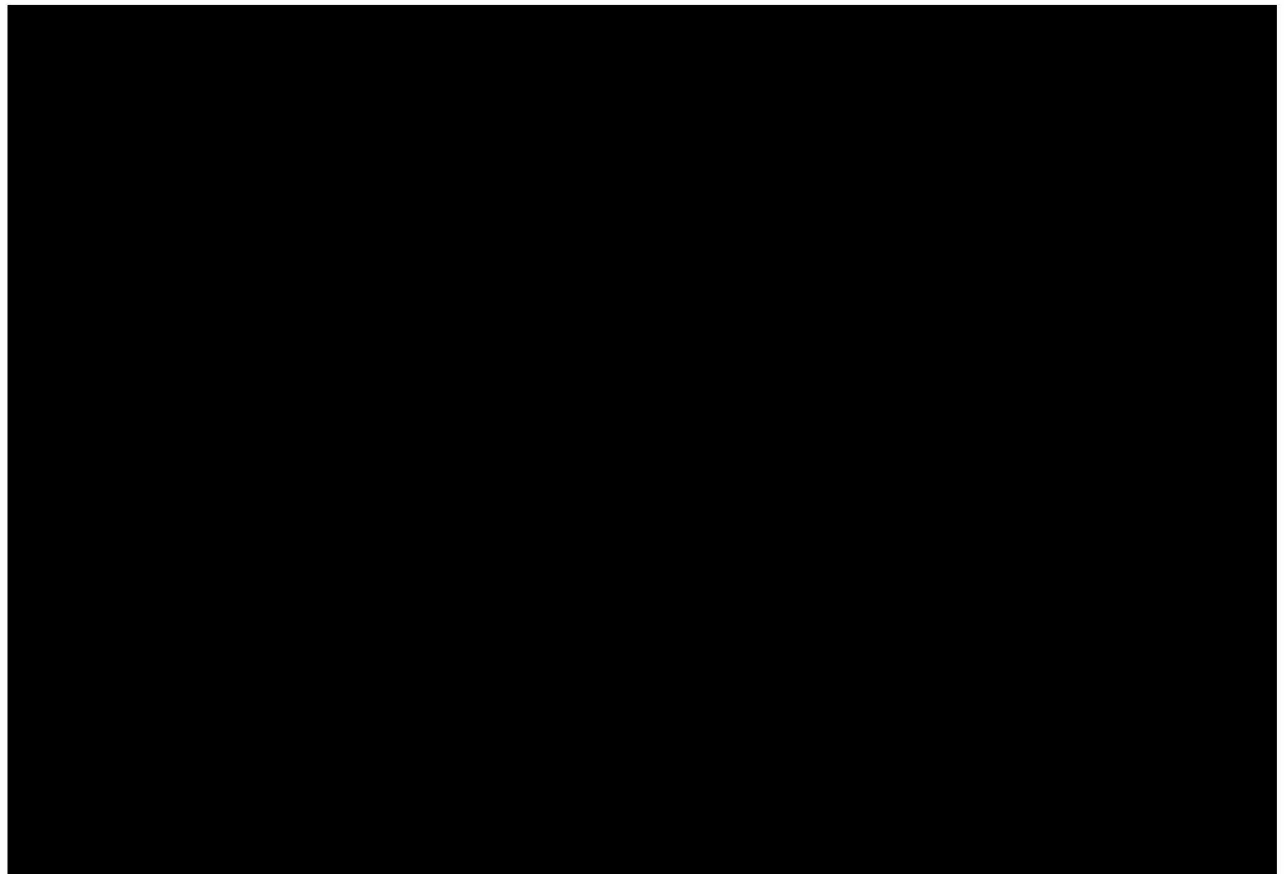
³² SEPA Guidance Note 31 (2014) Guidance on Assessing the Impacts of Windfarm Development Proposals on Groundwater Abstractions and Groundwater Dependent Terrestrial Ecosystems

Badger	Found in most rural and many urban habitats.	Excavations and tracks, sett entrances, latrines, hairs, well-worn paths, prints, scratch marks on trees.
Otter	Watercourses and adjacent habitats.	Holts, above ground resting places, prints, spraints, slide marks into watercourses, feeding signs (e.g. fish bones).
Beaver	Water courses and adjacent habitats.	Lodge, dam, feeding signs, felled trees, prints and trails.
Water vole	Water bodies/water courses.	Burrow entrances, prints, distinctive latrine areas, feeding signs (cropped 'grazing lawns' on water's edge).
Red squirrel	Woodland.	Dreys, feeding remains.
Pine marten	Woodland.	Dens, scats, footprints.
Reptiles	Rough grassland, log and rubble piles.	Shedded skins.
Great crested newt	Ponds within 500 m of suitable habitat within the Application Site. Suitable (terrestrial) habitat includes rough grassland, scrub and woodland, log and rubble piles and other debris, animal burrows.	No specific field signs.
Birds	Trees, hedgerows, woodland, grassland, scrub and buildings etc.	Nests, feathers, egg shells.
Freshwater pearl muscles	Waterways.	Suitable substrate.
Salmonids and other fish species	Waterways.	Suitable substrate.

BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

- 4.15. The breeding bird surveys (BBS) were undertaken by Dawn Thompson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM MECW on the dates outlined below:
- Visit 1 – 18th April 2025
 - Visit 2 – 10th May 2025
 - Visit 3 – 8th June 2025
- 4.16. Surveys were conducted early morning, to coincide with maximum bird activity, but avoiding the dawn chorus.
- 4.17. A fixed transect route was walked during each of the survey periods. Please refer to **Appendix C** for full details.

BADGER SURVEY



- 4.21. The 'foraging potential' of areas within the survey boundary was determined by a subjective assessment of the availability and number of potential food sources.
- 4.22. Where setts were found, their status and level of activity was noted. Definitions of status and level of activity are detailed below.
- 4.23. Sett status:
- Main sett – usually continuously used, signs of badger activity, large number of holes and notable spoil mounds.
 - Annexe sett – usually located close to a main sett (within approx. 150m) and connected by well used paths. Annexes may not be continuously occupied.
 - Subsidiary sett – lesser used setts comprising a few holes and without associated well used paths. Subsidiary sett are not continuously occupied.
 - Outlier sett – one or two holes without obvious paths. These are used sporadically.
- 4.24. Levels of activity:
- Well used - Open with minimal debris but may not show signs of activity e.g. fresh digging.
 - Part used - would require some excavation to allow badger to enter.
 - Disused - entirely full of debris or leaves and would require considerable excavation before a badger could enter.
 - Collapse - Where tunnel or chamber has collapsed e.g. by passage of farm animals or people.
 - Air hole - small hole, too small for a badger to enter, created by badgers from tunnel below. May eventually be enlarged to form an entrance with little or no spoil.

- 4.28. A mammal walkover including pine marten was undertaken by Rhys Newell ACIEEM and Dawn Thompson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM MEnvCW on 10th May 2025 covering all suitable land within

[REDACTED]

- 4.29.

[REDACTED]

- 4.30. The survey was undertaken in accordance with current best practice measures³⁴.

- 4.31. A search was made for all field signs including:

- Individual pine marten;
- Dens;
- Resting-up sites (couches);
- dung;
- Footprints;
- Pathways through vegetation;
- Feeding remains;

- 4.32. Where potential dens or resting places were noted, care was taken to limit any disturbance of these areas.

Pine Marten Trail Camera Survey

- 4.33.

[REDACTED]

OTTER SURVEY

- 4.34. The otter walkover survey was undertaken by Rhys Newell ACIEEM and Dawn Thompson BSc (Hons) MCIEEM MEnvCW on 10th May 2025 covering all suitable land within the Application Site and adjacent 50m, plus 200m up and down stream.

- 4.35.

[REDACTED]

- 4.36. The survey was undertaken in accordance with current best practice measures³⁵.
- 4.37. Weather conditions during the survey were: dry and bright. No periods of heavy rainfall had occurred within the previous 48 hours of the survey.
- 4.38. Grid references of any relevant otter signs were recorded with a digital GIS mapping software. Relevant otter signs include: otter slides on the banks, spraints, feeding stations, resting places and mammal holes.
- 4.39. A search was made for all field signs including:
- Individual otter;
 - Holts;
 - Resting-up sites (couches);
 - Spraints;
 - Footprints;
 - Pathways through vegetation;
 - Slides;
 - Feeding remains;
 - Sign heaps; and
 - Scratches on rocks and other substrates.
- 4.40. Where potential holts or resting places were noted, care was taken to limit any disturbance of these areas.

WATER VOLE SURVEY

- 4.41. The water vole walkover survey was undertaken in tandem with the otter walkover survey. The “Ecological Survey Area” (ESA) covered all land within the Application Site and adjacent 50m, plus 200m up and down stream.
- 4.42. The survey was undertaken in accordance with current best practice measures³⁶.

³⁵ Chanin, P. (2003). Monitoring the Otter *Lutra Lutra*. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers, Monitoring Series (No. 10).

³⁶ Dean, M., Strachan, R. Gow, D. and Andrews, R. (2016). The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series).

4.43. Grid references of any relevant water vole signs were recorded with a digital GIS mapping software. Relevant badger signs include:

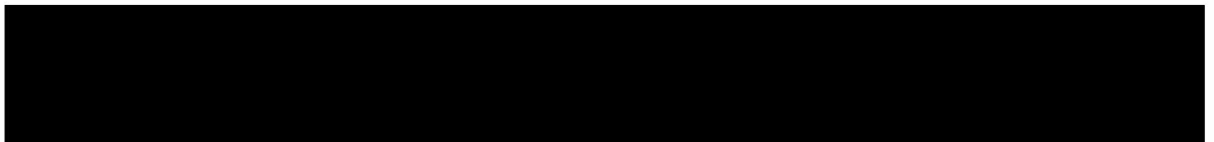
- Burrows;
- Faeces;
- Latrines;
- Runways;
- Nests;
- Feeding stations;
- Lawns; and
- Footprints

BAT SURVEY

4.44. All surveys were undertaken in accordance with current BCT guidelines³⁷.

Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

4.45.



4.46.



4.47. Signs of bats commonly found during searches are:

- Droppings – typically found on the ground beneath roof exits, adhered to walls or on flat surfaces such as windows.
- Urine spots on window glass and other smooth surfaces.
- Fur oil stains, indicating a roost entrance.

4.48. Suitable roosting features include:

³⁷ Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition)

- Holes in walls, pipes, gaps behind window frames, lintels and doorways.
- Cracks and crevices in stonework and brickwork.
- Gaps between ridge tiles and ridge and roof tiles, usually where the mortar has fallen out.
- Gaps between lintels above doors and windows.
- Broken or lifted roof tiles.
- Lifted lead flashing around chimneys, dormer windows, roof valleys and ridges and hips or where lead flashing replaces tiles.
- Gaps between the eaves, soffit board and outside walls.
- Gaps behind weatherboarding, hanging tiles and fascia boarding.
- Suitable entry and exit points around the eaves, soffits, fascia and barge boarding and under tiles.
- The presence of cavity walls and rubble-filled walls.
- Bat droppings on the ground, ledges, windows, sills or urine on window-sills.

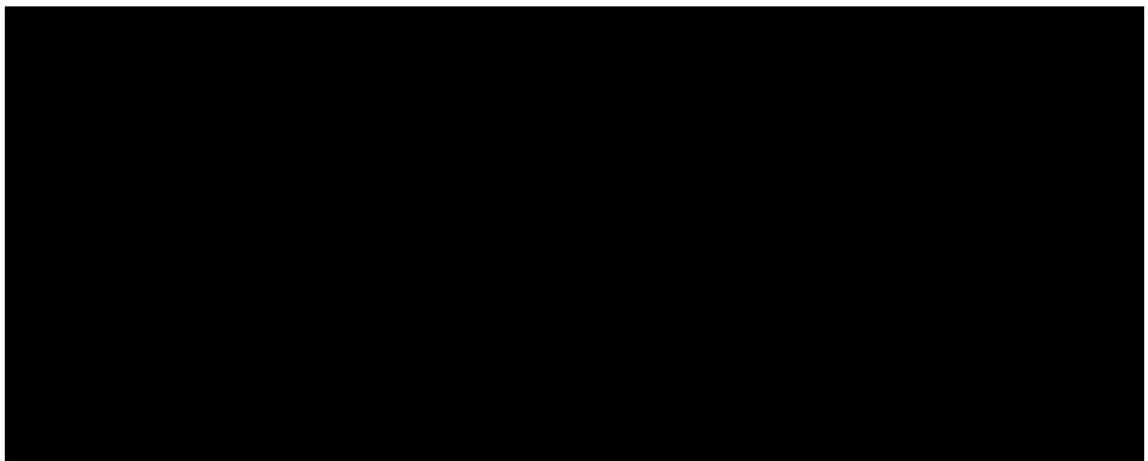
Activity Surveys

4.49.

4.50.

4.51.

4.52.



LIMITATIONS

- 4.53. Results of the assessment undertaken are representative of the time that surveying was undertaken.

- 4.54. The absence of records returned during the data search does not necessarily indicate absence of a species/habitat from an area, but rather that these have not been recorded or are perhaps under-recorded within the search area.
- 4.55. An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey does not aim to produce a full botanical or faunal species list or provide a full protected species survey but, enables competent ecologists to ascertain an understanding of the ecology of the Application Site in order to:
- Broadly identify the nature conservation value of a site and preliminary assess the significance of any potential impacts on habitat/species recorded; and/or
- Confirm the need and extent of any additional specific ecological surveys that are required to identify the true nature conservation value of a site.
- 4.56. No other limitations were encountered or assumptions made during either the desk study or the field survey and it is considered that with the access gained and recording undertaken an accurate assessment of the site's ecological value has been made.

5. BASELINE CONDITIONS

DESIGNATED SITES

- 5.1. The Proposed Development does not lie within or adjacent to any statutory designated environmental sites. Within 15km of the Application Site there are five Natura 2000 designated sites; all SPAs. Within 5km of the Application Site there are three other environmental designated sites; two SSSIs and one LNR.
- 5.2. One Local Wildlife Site (Auchtertool Linn) is located within 1km of the Application Site.
- 5.3. Each of these sites are outlined in Table 5-1 below and can be found in Figure 2, Appendix A. The site descriptions are derived from the original site citations available from NatureScot, and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

Table 5-1 Designated Sites

Site Name	Designation	Qualifying Features	Distance and Direction	Connectivity
Auchtertool Linn	Local Wildlife Site	No documentation available to confirm notable features. However, the LWS comprises of scrub/woodland and a section on the Dronachy Burn.	0km Located within the eastern section of the Application Site (outwith the core working areas).	Yes

Camilla Loch	SSSI	Meso-eutrophic loch Open water transition fen Springs (including flushes)	0.42km E	Yes
Cullaloe Reservoir	SSSI	Eutrophic loch	3.37km SW	No
Cullaloe	LNR	Loch supporting wildlife	3.37km SW	No
Outer St Andrews Bay Complex	SPA	Arctic tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>), breeding Black-headed gull (<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>), non-breeding Common gull (<i>Larus canus</i>), non-breeding Common scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>), non-breeding Common tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>), breeding Eider (<i>Somateria mollissima</i>), non-breeding Gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>), breeding Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>), non-breeding Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>), breeding	4.78km S	No

		Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>), non-breeding Herring gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>), breeding Herring gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>), non-breeding Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>), breeding Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>), non-breeding Little gull (<i>Hydrocoloeus minutus</i>), non-breeding Long-tailed duck (<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>), non-breeding Manx shearwater (<i>Puffinus puffinus</i>), breeding Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>), breeding Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>), non-breeding Red-breasted merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>), non-breeding Red-throated diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>), non-breeding Seabird assemblage, breeding Seabird assemblage, non-breeding		
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		Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>), breeding Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>), non-breeding Slavonian grebe (<i>Podiceps auritus</i>), non-breeding Velvet scoter (<i>Melanitta fusca</i>), non-breeding Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding		
Firth of Forth	SPA	Bar-tailed godwit (<i>Limosa lapponica</i>), non-breeding Common scoter (<i>Melanitta nigra</i>), non-breeding Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>), non-breeding Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>), non-breeding Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>), non-breeding Eider (<i>Somateria mollissima</i>), non-breeding Golden plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>), non-breeding	5.24km SE	Yes

		Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>), non- breeding Great crested grebe (<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>), non-breeding Grey plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>), non- breeding Knot (<i>Calidris canutus</i>), non-breeding Lapwing (<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>), non-breeding Long-tailed duck (<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>), non-breeding Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>), non- breeding Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>), non-breeding Pink-footed goose (<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>), non-breeding Red-breasted merganser (<i>Mergus serrator</i>), non-breeding Red-throated diver (<i>Gavia stellata</i>), non-breeding		
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		Redshank (<i>Tringa totanus</i>), non-breeding Ringed plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>), non-breeding Sandwich tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>), passage Scaup (<i>Aythya marila</i>), non-breeding Shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>), non-breeding Slavonian grebe (<i>Podiceps auritus</i>), non-breeding Turnstone (<i>Arenaria interpres</i>), non-breeding Velvet scoter (<i>Melanitta fusca</i>), non-breeding Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding Arctic tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>), breeding Common tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>), breeding Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>), breeding Fulmar (<i>Fulmarus glacialis</i>), breeding Gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>), breeding		
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		Guillemot (<i>Uria aalge</i>), breeding Herring gull (<i>Larus argentatus</i>), breeding Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>), breeding Lesser black-backed gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>), breeding Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>), breeding Razorbill (<i>Alca torda</i>), breeding Roseate tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>), breeding Sandwich tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>), breeding Seabird assemblage, breeding Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>), breeding Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>), non-breeding		
Loch Leven	SPA	Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>), non-breeding Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>), non-breeding Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>), non-breeding Pink-footed goose (<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>), non-breeding	8.69km NW	Yes

		Pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>), non-breeding Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>), non-breeding Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>), non-breeding Tufted duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>), non-breeding Waterfowl assemblage, non-breeding Whooper swan (<i>Cygnus cygnus</i>), non-breeding		
Forth Islands	SPA	Arctic tern (<i>Sterna paradisaea</i>), breeding Common tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>), breeding Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>), breeding Gannet (<i>Morus bassanus</i>), breeding Kittiwake (<i>Rissa tridactyla</i>), breeding Lesser black-backed gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>), breeding Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>), breeding Puffin (<i>Fratercula arctica</i>), breeding Roseate tern (<i>Sterna dougallii</i>), breeding	9.53km S	No

		Sandwich tern (<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>), breeding Seabird assemblage, breeding Shag (<i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i>), breeding		
Imperial Dock, Leith	SPA	Common tern (<i>Sterna hirundo</i>), breeding	14.42km S	No

- 5.4. Where connectivity does not exist, there are no pathways for impacts. Therefore, only those designated sites with connectivity to the Application Site outlined above have been considered further in this assessment.

HABITATS

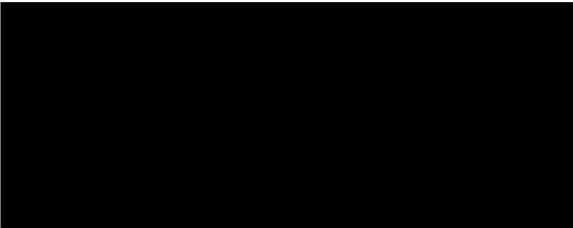
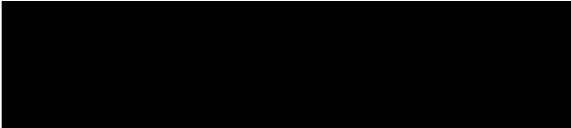
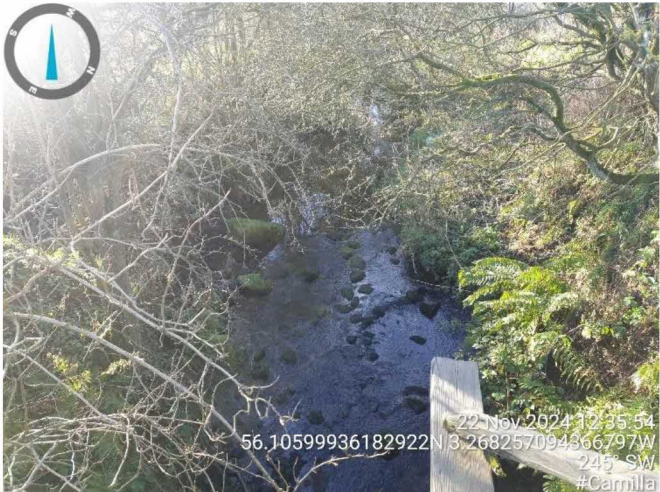
- 5.5. An extended phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken on 22nd November 2024 and 8th June 2025, which identified 10 habitat types within the survey area, each of these are outlined below along with other relevant target notes. In addition, the phase 1 habitat map is shown within Figure 3, Appendix A.
- 5.6. Habitats present within the survey area are summarised within Table 5-2 below.

Table 5-2 Summary of Habitats Recorded

Phase 1 Habitat	Species Present	Other Observations	Photographs
A1.2.2 Coniferous plantation woodland	Sitka spruce.	Ground vegetation includes mixed grass species and bracken. Offers potential to support a variety of species including badger, red squirrel, herptiles and nesting birds.	

A2.1 Dense / continuous scrub	Gorse, broom, willow.	Offers potential to support a variety of species including badger, herptiles and nesting birds.	
A3.1 Broadleaved scattered trees	Hawthorn, blackthorn, ash, hazel, sycamore, beech, willow.	Offers potential nesting habitat for a variety of farmland birds. Mature trees may offer potential bat roosting habitat. Treelines also offer good commuting habitat for bats, with connectivity to the wider environment.	

B2.2 Semi-improved neutral grassland	Cocks-foot, creeping soft grass, false oat grass, perennial rye grass, Yorkshire fog, common nettle, field thistle, common spotted orchid, ribwort plantain, broadleaf plantain, meadow buttercup, cow parsley, broadleaved dock.	 Offers potential foraging habitat for a variety of wildlife and nesting habitat for ground nesting birds.	 22 Nov 2024 12:16:38 56.104129693354N 3.2691814663507435W 277° W #Camilla
B4 Improved grassland	Perennial rye dominant, creeping softgrass, meadow oat grass, cocksfoot, white clover.	Livestock grazed. Offers potential for ground nesting birds, depending on length of grass sward during the breeding season.	 22 Nov 2024 12:39:24 56.10670704148967N 3.268608873677733W 285° W #Camilla

B5 Marshy grassland	Dominated by common rush, with perennial rye, creeping softgrass, meadow oat grass, cocksfoot.	Offers potential for herptiles species and ground nesting bird.	 22 Nov 2024 12:39:33 56.10671183319959N 3.268618643116248W 286° W #Camilla
G2 Running water	N/A	 	 22 Nov 2024 10:35:54 56.10599936182922N 3.268257094366797W 245° SW #Camilla

J1.1 Arable	N/A	The fields included a mixture of stubble, recently ploughed/sown at the time of the survey.	
J3.6 Buildings	N/A		

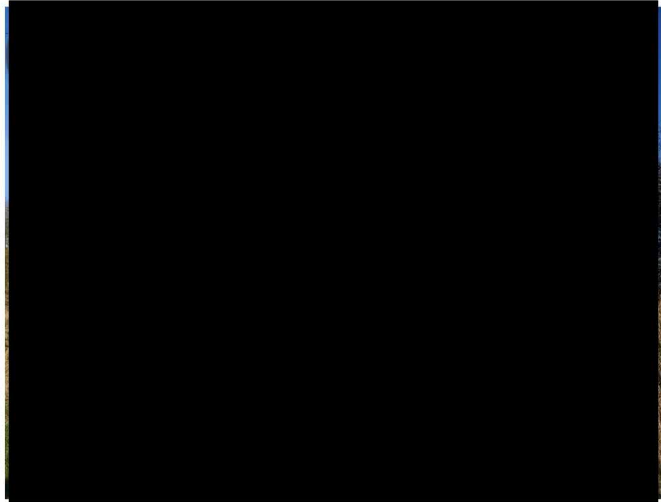
J5 Other	N/A	Includes existing roads / access tracks and a battery energy storage system.	 22 Nov 2024 12:52:03 56.108183223522914N 3.2654728112810485W 353°N #Camilla
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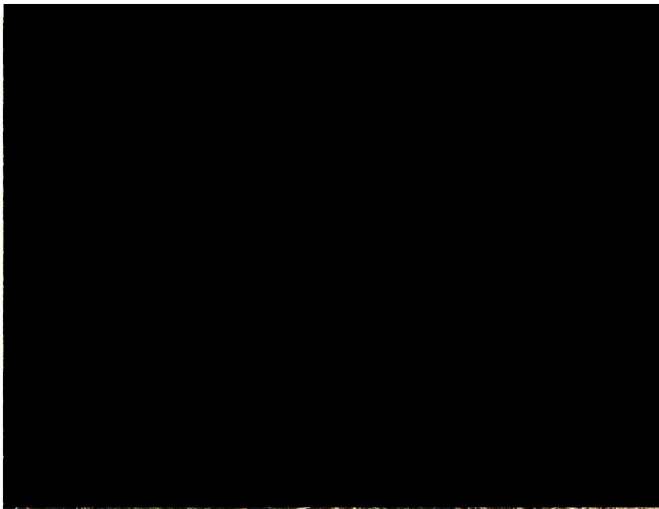
Target Notes

5.7. Table 5-3 outlines target notes recorded during the extended phase 1 habitat survey.

Table 5-3 Summary Target Notes

Target Note	Description	Photographs
1		

2		
3	Battery Storage Site	 22 Nov 2024 12:52:03 56.108183223522914N 3.2654728112810485W 353° N #Camilla

4	Stockpile of decaying straw bales	
5		

6	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
7	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

The image is a solid black rectangle. It is framed by a thin white border on the left and top edges, suggesting it might be a scan of a physical document or a windowed application. There is no text, imagery, or other content within the black area.

Ground Water Dependant Terrestrial Ecosystems (GWDTEs)

- 5.8. GWDTEs have been recorded within and adjacent to the Application Site.
- 5.9. Please refer to Appendix G – NVC Survey Report for full details.

SPECIES

- 5.10. Please refer to Table 7-1, Appendix B for Summary of Biological Records.

Flora

Desk based

- 5.11. The desk-based assessment did not return records of notable or invasive non-native species (INNS) or within the study area.

Field survey

- 5.12. No evidence of protected flora species was noted during the habitat survey, or subsequent ecological site visits. However, common orchids were noted within several areas of grassland.
- 5.13. It should be noted that multiple areas (Target Note 9) were noted to contain horsetail, which can be invasive, leading to issues within agricultural grounds.

Amphibians & Reptiles

Desk based

- 5.14. Records of common frog and toad were returned during the data search. Other herptiles species may be present, as these species are often under-recorded across the country.

Field survey

- 5.15. Habitats within and adjacent to the Application Site offer potential to support herptile species, including grassland, scrub, riparian vegetation and woodland.

Birds

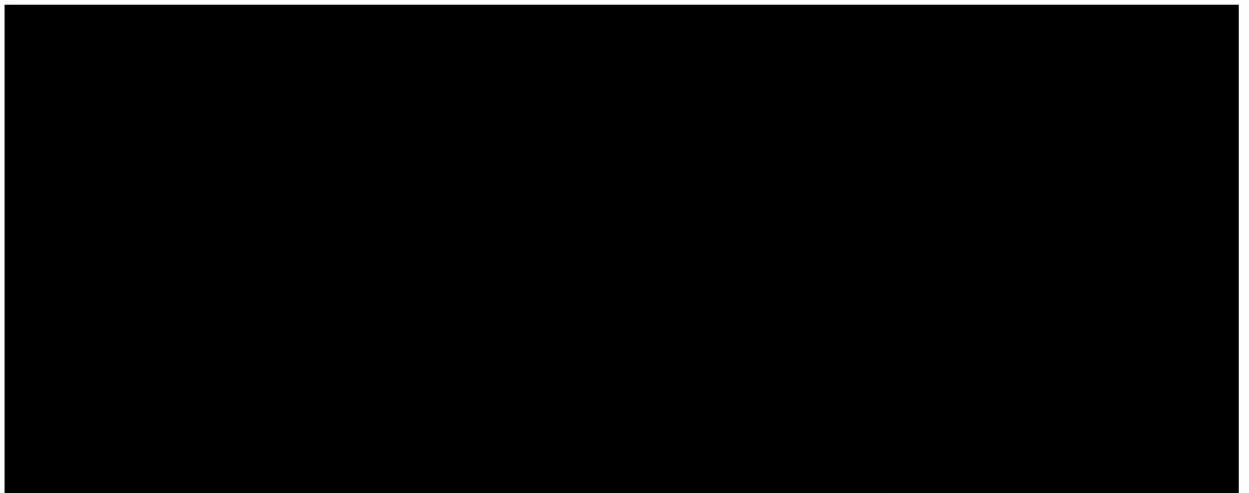
Desk based

- 5.16. A wide variety of birds associated with farmland were returned during the data search, including, skylark (red listed), sedge warbler (amber listed), greenfinch (red listed), yellowhammer (red listed), house sparrow (red listed), tree sparrow (red listed), song thrush (amber listed) and lapwing (red listed).

Field survey

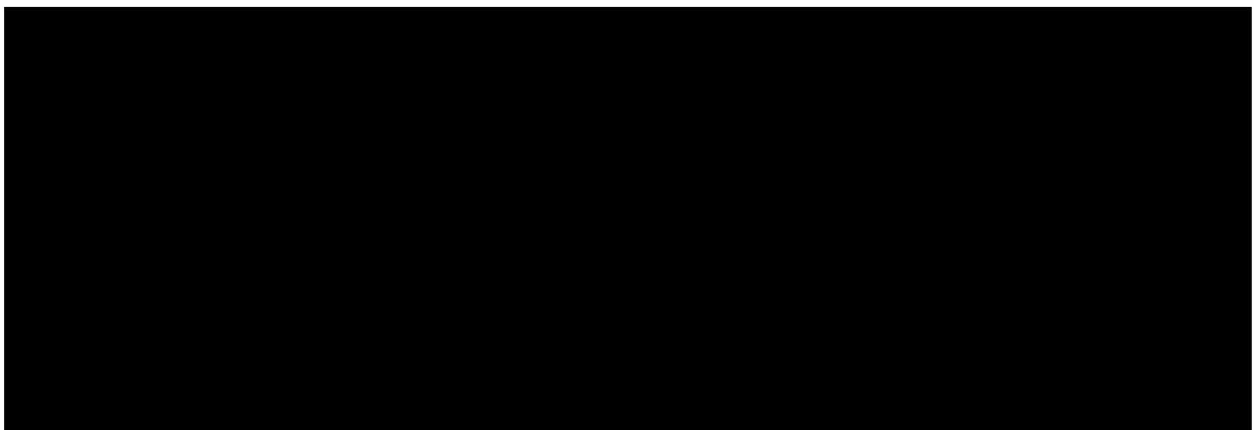
- 5.17. Casual bird observations during the extended phase 1 habitat site visit included skylark, song thrush, black-headed gull, crow, blue tit, great tit, coal tit, robin and wood pigeon. Goose droppings were also noted at the northeastern section of the Application Site during the same visit.
- 5.18. Breeding Bird Surveys (BBS) were undertaken between May and July 2025 to record ground nesting species within and directly adjacent to the Application Site.

5.19.



- 5.20. Please refer to **Appendix C – Breeding Bird Survey** for full details.

Mammals



Otter

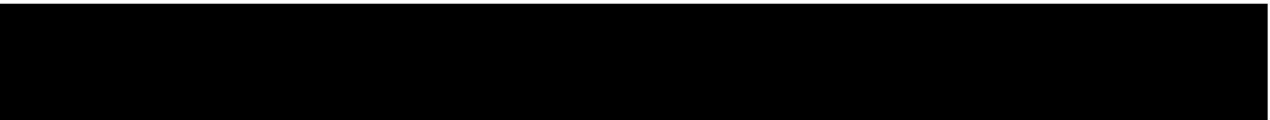
Desk based

- 5.23. Although no records of otter were present within the 2km study area, this was extended to 5km given the large distances otter travel within their territories. Several records of otter were noted within the 5km study area.

Field survey



- 5.25. The waterway provides connectivity to the wider landscape, including other suitable otter habitat.



- 5.27. Please refer to **Appendix F** for the otter survey report.

Beaver

Desk based

- 5.28. No records of beaver were returned within the survey area.

Field survey

- 5.29. No evidence of beaver activity was noted within the survey area.

Water Vole

Desk based

- 5.30. The presence of water vole within the study area was confirmed by the data search.

Field survey

- 5.31. Although the surveyors noted that the waterway within the Application Site and adjacent banks offer good habitat for supporting water vole, the walkover survey undertaken in May 2025 did not return evidence of this species.

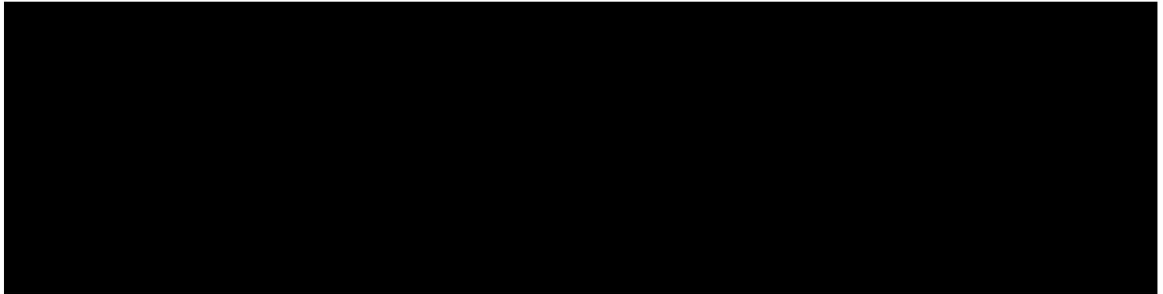
5.32. Please refer to **Appendix F** for the water vole survey report.



Field survey

5.34. The Application Site offers foraging and commuting habitat for local bats, with good connectivity to the wider landscape via the waterway, woodland, treelines and scrub.

5.35.



5.36.

6. IMPACTS, MITIGATION, COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES

DESIGNATED SITES

- 6.1. Of the nine environmental designated sites within the relevant study areas, only four have connectivity to the Application Site; Auchtertool Linn Local Wildlife Site, Camilla Loch SSSI, Firth of Forth SPA and Loch Leven SPA.

In the Absence of Mitigation

Auchtertool Linn Local Wildlife Site

- 6.2. The LWS partially falls within the Application Site, but is out with the main development area.
- 6.3. As onsite enhancement measures include the provision of a new walking route along the railway line, this may require the removal / pruning of several trees.
- 6.4. In the absence of mitigation, it is therefore considered that the construction phase of the Proposed Development may lead to:
- Potential contamination of the waterway and/or groundwaters;
 - Potential loss of a small number of trees;
 - Potential disturbance of wildlife occupying the LWS.
- 6.5. Appropriate mitigation measures have been outlined within Paragraphs 6.12 – 6.16 below to prevent significant impacts from the proposed works.
- 6.6. It is considered that the operational phase of the Data Centre, including the public footpath is unlikely to lead to a significant increase in disturbance of the LWS as this area is currently subject to a level of disturbance from existing farming practices, and local dog walkers.

Camilla Loch SSSI

- 6.7. Camilla Loch is a small naturally occurring meso-eutrophic water body, with an extensive and diverse area of freshwater transition mire at the west end of the loch. The north ridge supports an area of herb rich calcicolous grassland and along its base gives rise to several base-rich flushes. These habitats are dependent on water chemistry and availability (i.e. water levels within the loch and adjacent ground waters).

- 6.8. In the absence of mitigation, the Proposed Development has potential to impact the SSSI through the alteration of ground and surface water chemistry and/or water availability within the west catchment area of Camilla Loch.
- 6.9. Appropriate mitigation measures have been outlined within Paragraph 6.13 below to prevent significant impacts from the proposed works.

Firth of Forth SPA and Loch Leven SPA

- 6.10. Given the separation distances between the Application Site and each of the two SPAs (5.24km and 8.69km respectively), it is considered that the only qualifying species associated with these SPAs that are likely to commute the large distances on a regular basis is pink-footed goose.
- 6.11. A review of Mitchell, C. (2012)³⁸ was undertaken to assess feeding pink-footed geese within proximity of the Application Site. As the Application Site does not fall within a known core foraging area, it is considered that the Proposed Development is unlikely to affect the Firth of Forth SPA or Loch Leven SPA.

Mitigation Measures

- 6.12. Best practice pollution prevention measures³⁹ will be adopted throughout the construction phase, including but not limited to GPP 5: works and maintenance in or near water. These measures will include the management of surface waters potentially laden with silt.
- 6.13. Hydrogeological assessment to highlight potential ground water sources, including aquifers will be undertaken prior to the commencement of works. This assessment will also provide information on likely surface and ground water connectivity between the Application Site and Camilla Loch, in addition to the other water sources within the loch's catchment area. The assessment will determine the level of potential impacts for the loch from the Proposed Development through a reduction in water resources (if any).
- 6.14. Any loss of trees within the LWS will be compensated by additional planting, at a minimum ration of 2 trees per tree lost. Root protection zones (minimum of 12 times tree diameter at 1.5m) to be implemented during the works (unless otherwise directed by a suitably experienced arboriculturist), to ensure all retained trees are not impacted.
- 6.15. Pre-commencement surveys have been outlined within the relevant species sections below, to protect local wildlife, including breeding birds, otter, water vole, badger, pine marten and red squirrel.

³⁸ Mitchell, C. (2012) Mapping the distribution of feeding Pink-footed and Iceland Grey Lag Geese in Scotland

³⁹ Guidance available at: [Guidance for Pollution Prevention \(GPP\) documents | NetRegs | Environmental guidance for your business in Northern Ireland & Scotland](#)

Residual Effects

- 6.16. With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above, no significant negative effects are predicted for Auchtertool Linn Local Wildlife Site.
- 6.17. As outlined within Paragraph 6.13 a hydrogeological assessment will be required to confirm no significant negative effects for Camilla Loch SSSI from the Proposed Development.
- 6.18. No significant negative effects are predicted for Firth of Forth SPA and Loch Leven SPA.

HABITATS

In the Absence of Mitigation

- 6.19. In the absence of mitigation, the main habitats that will be lost under the Proposed Development footprint include B2.2 Semi-improved grassland, B5 Wet grassland, B4 Improved grassland and J1.1 Arable.
- 6.20. The loss of improved grassland and arable land is not considered significant, as these habitats are of low ecological value.
- 6.21. The NVC survey concluded that the wet grassland within the Application Site is MG10 - *Holcus lanatus*-*Juncus effusus* rush-pasture, which is classed as Moderately groundwater dependant depending on the hydrogeological setting.
- 6.22. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, the Proposed Development has the potential to lead to the contamination of ground waters (assuming the habitat is a groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE)), and significant abstraction of groundwaters, leading to impacts for local GWDTEs. However, where Hydrogeological assessment is undertaken, and rules out the presence of groundwater (aquifer), impacts will be greatly reduced.
- 6.23. As construction works will occur within proximity to the Dronachy Burn, mitigation measures will be required to prevent sedimentation of the waterway, or accidental release of chemicals into the aquatic environment.
- 6.24. As works will occur within proximity to retained trees and woodland, indirect loss may occur in the absence of mitigation, through root severance or soil compaction.

Mitigation Measures

- 6.25. Hydrogeological assessment to be undertaken prior to construction, with appropriate measures outlined as required.

- 6.26. The landscape plan for the Proposed Development includes the creation of habitats throughout the Application Site, outwith the Core Development Area. It is recommended that the wet grassland is translocated to a suitable area (where surface and/or ground waters will maintain the wet conditions) within the Application Site, such as the proposed floodplain.
- 6.27. It is also recommended that species-rich areas of the semi-improved neutral grassland should also be translocated to suitable receptor sites within the Application Site.
- 6.28. The potential grassland receptor areas onsite are currently improved grassland and arable land. Therefore, the translation has the potential to lead to no loss (or minimal loss) of existing higher value grassland availability onsite.
- 6.29. As additional habitat creation is proposed within the remaining Application Site (outwith the core Development Area (as detailed within Figure 4 - Landscaping & Habitat Scheme)) which will lead to a biodiversity net gain, in accordance with NPF4.
- 6.30. A Grassland Translocation Plan will be required prior to the construction phase, to outline the required measures for cutting, storing and translocating the turves. This will also include monitoring of stored turves, ensuring that they are not allowed to dry out.
- 6.31. The management of grasslands (retained, translocated and new) will be outlined within a Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan prior to the commencement of works.
- 6.32. Given the presence of G2 Running water, which connects to the wider aquatic environment, standard best practice pollution prevention measures will be required during the construction phase to prevent significant impacts through contaminated surface waters leaving the CDM area.
- 6.33. Root protection areas (12 times tree diameter, measured at 1.5m) to be implemented for all retained trees and woodland prior to the commencement of works. Protection areas should be clearly demarcated with appropriate fencing throughout works.

Residual Effects

- 6.34. With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above, no significant negative effects are predicted for onsite (or adjacent) habitats.

SPECIES

Flora

In the Absence of Mitigation

- 6.35. The Proposed Development will not lead to a loss of protected flora species.

- 6.36. Horsetail (Target Note 9) was noted within several areas of the Application Site, which is known to be invasive, and therefore can lead to issues within agricultural grounds. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, the Proposed Development has the potential to spread horsetail throughout the Application Site and adjacent landscape through the movement of soil, vehicles/plant and people.

Mitigation Measures

- 6.37. It is recommended that an updated map of this species is produced prior to the commencement of works, and a suitable management plan is produced and implemented throughout construction, which will include appropriate biosecurity and methods to deal with the contaminated soils.

Residual Effects

- 6.38. With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above, no significant negative effects are predicted for local flora.

Amphibians & Reptiles

In the Absence of Mitigation

- 6.39. As detailed above, the dense ground vegetation and stockpile materials within and adjacent to the Application Site offer potential to support herptile species. These species can be impacted during vegetation removal, becoming trapped due to habitat fragmentation, or injured/killed by machinery. Therefore, the cutting of ground vegetation or stripping of topsoil shall be undertaken in a suitable manner to allow for the escape of amphibian and reptile species.
- 6.40. Appropriate mitigation measures have been outlined within Paragraphs 6.41 – 6.44 below to prevent significant impacts from the proposed works.

Mitigation Measures

- 6.41. Site preparation works including vegetation stripping should be avoided during the months of mid-October to mid-March to avoid injury to hibernating herptiles. It is also recommended that where the Proposed Development will impact the decaying straw bales at Target Note 4, this should be done outwith the herptile hibernation period.
- 6.42. Where these works must be undertaken during this time, pre-commencement checks (including fingertip searches) should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist immediately prior to works in each area. Any herptile species found will be translocated to an agreed receptor site nearby, outwith the core working areas. Care to be taken when handling

individuals during the hibernation period, to ensure these are not warmed up from handlers body heat.

- 6.43. It is recommended that the cutting of grass and other ground vegetation is undertaken in two phases; phase 1 – cut to no less than 150mm, working from the central area towards suitable habitat such as riparian habitat or field boundaries, with phase two being undertaken in the same manner, cutting to 70mm.
- 6.44. The retention of a minimum of 10cm gap between ground level and bottom of onsite fencing will allow for the free movement of small wildlife including herptile species.

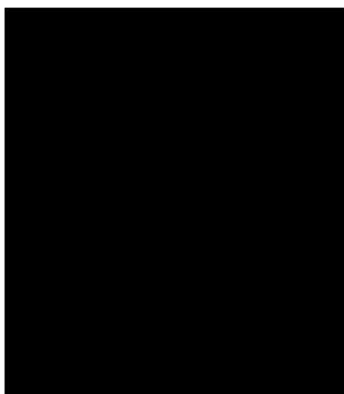
Residual Effects

- 6.45. With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above, no significant negative effects are predicted for local herptile species.
- 6.46. Post-construction enhancement measures may increase the Application Sites potential to support notable herptile species.

Birds

In the Absence of Mitigation

- 6.47. Ground nesting bird surveys have been undertaken to confirm the absence/presence of ground nesting species, [REDACTED]
- 6.48. The surveys recorded a total of 6 individual ground nesting bird species were recorded during the survey period. In the absence of mitigation, the Proposed Development has the potential to lead to the loss / damage of active nests, and long-term loss of nesting habitat.
- 6.49. Most of the probable nesting birds were noted within the wet grassland, or semi-improved grassland adjacent to the wet grassland.
- 6.50. It has been assumed that the maximum count of each species are breeding pairs; therefore, it is considered that the following number of nests / territories may be impacted / lost.



- 6.51. [REDACTED]
- Appropriate mitigation and compensation measures have been outlined within **Paragraphs 6.52 - 6.56** below.

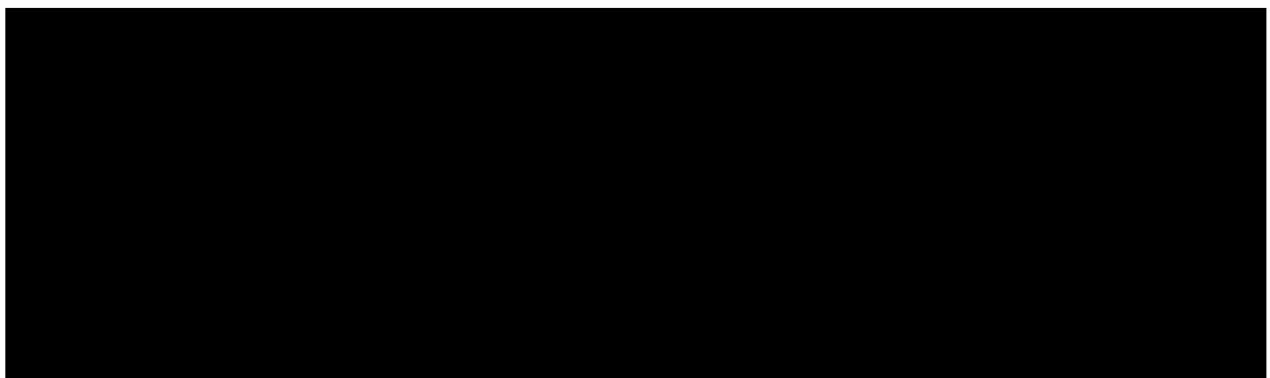
Mitigation Measures

- 6.52. The landscape plan for the Proposed Development includes the creation of habitats throughout the Application Site, outwith the Core Development Area. It is recommended that the wet grassland is translocated to a suitable area (where surface and/or ground waters will maintain the wet conditions) within the Application Site, such as the proposed floodplain.
- 6.53. It is also recommended that species-rich areas of the semi-improved neutral grassland should also be translocated to suitable receptor sites.
- 6.54. A Grassland Translocation Plan will be required prior to the construction phase, to outline the required measures for cutting, storing and translocating the turves. This will also include monitoring of stored turves, ensuring that they are not allowed to dry out.
- 6.55. The management of grasslands (retained, translocated and new) will be outlined within a Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan prior to the commencement of works.
- 6.56. Given the potential for nesting birds throughout the Application Site, it is also recommended that a general nesting bird check is undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist for any works carried out during the breeding season (March to August inclusive). Where required, the ecologist will outline additional measures to protect any active nests, including relevant protection buffers around the nest, to be implemented until young have fully fledged.

Residual Effects

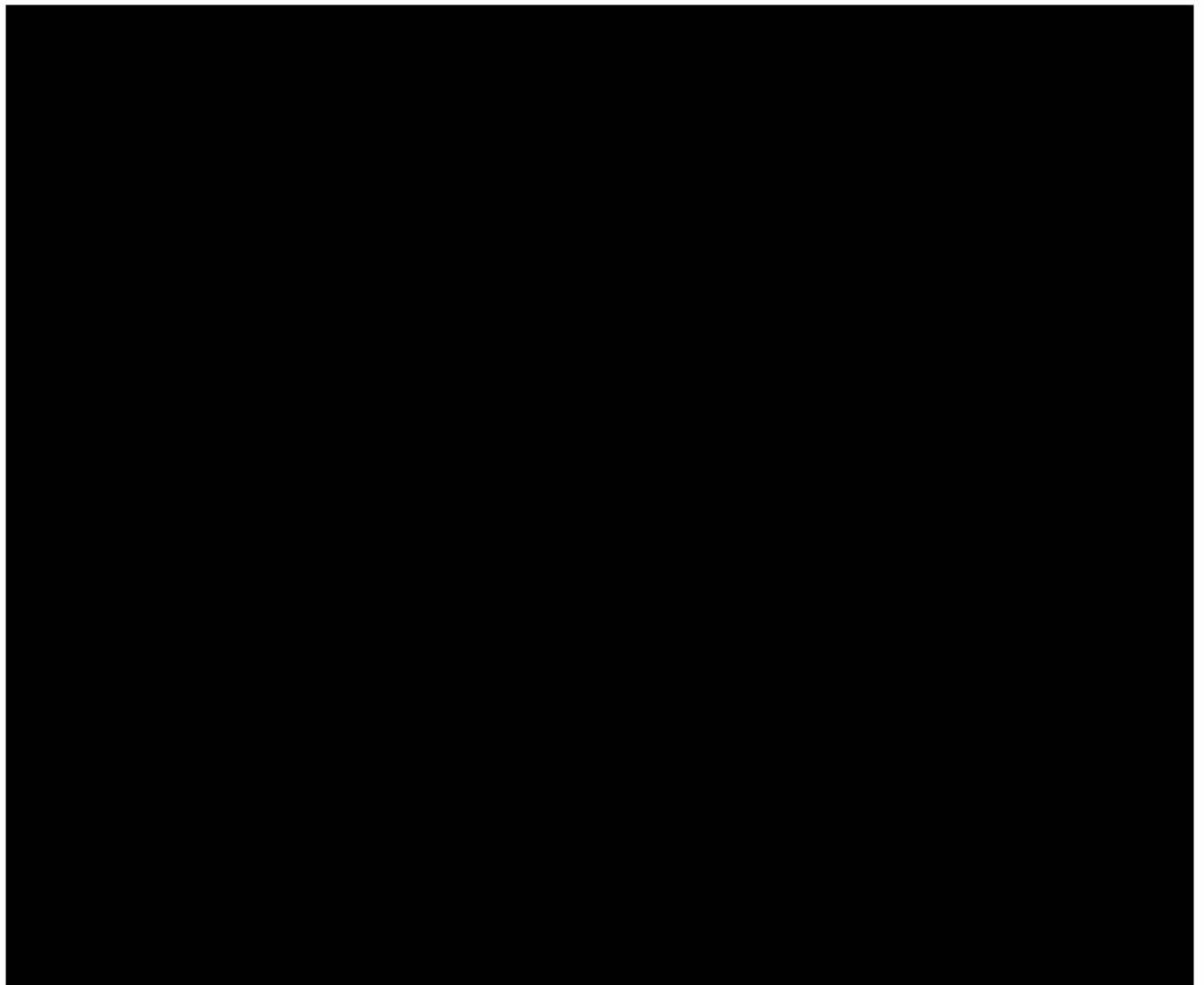
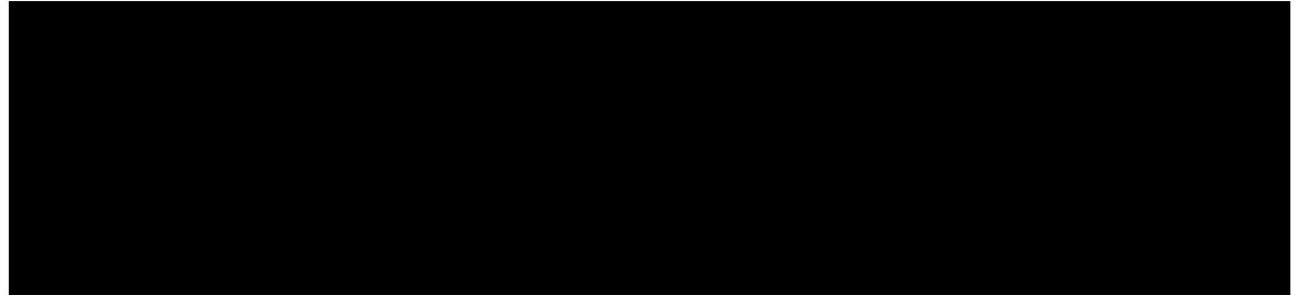
- 6.57. With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above, no significant negative effects are predicted for local bird species.

Mammals





Mitigation Measures



Residual Effects

- 6.67. With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above, no significant negative effects are predicted for badger.

Otter

In the Absence of Mitigation

- 6.68. Although no otter holts or resting places, or water vole burrows were noted within the survey area, [REDACTED]

6.69. [REDACTED]

6.70. [REDACTED]

- 6.71. The retention of the waterway and adjacent riparian habitat is essential to maintain the existing wildlife corridors within the local area. Onsite enhancement measures proposed include planting of the riparian habitats and adjacent areas, which will be beneficial for otter and other wildlife.

Mitigation Measures

6.72. It is considered that these areas can be protected through the implementation of standard best practice pollution prevention measures⁴⁰ to prevent silt laden surface / contaminated waters entering the waterways during the construction phase.

6.73. From the current baseline data, it is unlikely that the Proposed Development will lead to significant impacts for local otter or water vole. However, the following precautionary mitigation measures should be implemented during the construction phase:

Pre-commencement otter & water vole walkover survey a maximum of 4-week prior to the commencement of works, to provide an updated baseline;

All contractors to be briefed about the potential presence of otter within proximity to the site, and the requirement to cease works and contact a suitably experienced ecologist for advice;

All excavations to be securely covered, or a ramp at 45° to be provided at the end of each working day throughout construction to prevent accidental trapping of otter;

Temporarily exposed open pipe system to be capped in such a way as to prevent otter gaining access at the end of each working day; and

Implementation of best practice pollution prevention measures.

6.74. Additional mitigation measures may be required, depending on the results of the pre-commencement otter and water vole survey.

Residual Effects

6.75. With the implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above, no significant negative effects are predicted for otter.

Beaver

In the Absence of Mitigation

6.76. No evidence of this species was noted during the ecological walkover surveys.

6.77. Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, no significant impacts are predicted for this species, from the Proposed Development.

⁴⁰ NetRegs - [Guidance for Pollution Prevention \(GPP\) documents | NetRegs | Environmental guidance for your business in Northern Ireland & Scotland](#)

Mitigation Measures

6.78. No mitigation measures have been recommended.

Residual Effects

6.79. No significant negative effects are predicted for this species, from the Proposed Development.

Water Vole

In the Absence of Mitigation

6.80. No evidence of water vole activity has been recorded during the walkover survey.

Mitigation Measures

6.81. No mitigation measures have been recommended.

Residual Effects

6.82. No significant negative effects are predicted for this species, from the Proposed Development.

Bats

In the Absence of Mitigation

6.83. The loss of arable and improved grassland will not be significant for foraging and commuting bats.

6.84. The Proposed Development will not lead to habitat fragmentation.

6.85. No significant loss of trees within the Application Site, along the riparian habitat is anticipated from the Proposed Development. The proposed enhancement measures seek to improve the existing riparian area and wider landscape within the Application Site. The proposed habitat enhancements will lead to a potential increase in prey sources for foraging bats by creating a wider mosaic of habitats.

6.86. Trees within the Application Site were noted to offer negligible bat roosting opportunity at the time of the assessment. However, as features can occur over time, especially during stormy weather, it is considered features may develop prior to construction, depending on the period of time between surveying and construction. Therefore, in the absence of

mitigation, the Proposed Development has potential to impact roosting bats. Therefore, precautionary mitigation measures have been outlined in **Paragraph 6.95** below.

6.87.

6.88.

6.89.

6.90. Artificial lighting at night can lead to disturbance of foraging and commuting bats, as well as displacement from areas. The Proposed Development has the potential to increase artificial lighting at night, and impact foraging and commuting bats (along with other wildlife) in the absence of mitigation. Appropriate mitigation measures have been outlined within **Paragraphs 6.96 – 6.97** to protect foraging and commuting bats.

Mitigation Measures

6.91.

6.92.

6.93.

6.94.

6.95. An updated ground-based tree assessment for bat roost potential should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works, to provide an updated baseline.

6.96. As bats can be displaced by artificial lighting at night, it is recommended that any outdoor lighting is minimised, and not directed onto the trees, woodland, scrub, waterway and boundary habitats. Lighting should be in accordance with BCT guidance⁴¹.

⁴¹ Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night

- 6.97. Measures implemented for minimising artificial lighting at night onsite will include (but not limited to):

Construction Phase

Lighting during the construction phase (task lighting) will only be used where required for works to proceed safely;

Task lighting will not be focused onto the trees, woodland, scrub, waterway and boundary habitats or Auchtertool Linn Wildlife Site; and

All task lighting will have appropriate shades to focus light towards to required working area;

Operational Phase

Energy efficient (low energy consuming) LED light sources, with optimal beam control to ensure focus the illumination downwards, limiting light spill to adjacent landscape;

High colour rendering ($R_a > 80$) and correlated colour temperature of 2700K, which has a reduced blue wavelength and no UV content contributing to a reduced impact on wildlife (not attracting insects or disturbing the foraging or roosting of bats; dependant on species); and

Controlled by means of a simple intelligent control system or have locally mounted presence detector (PIR) required at high level for late / early hour operation.

Residual Effects

- 6.98. No significant negative effects are predicted for bat species, from the Proposed Development.

ENHANCEMENTS

- 6.99. Enhancements measures have been proposed as part of the Proposed Development to achieve biodiversity net gain in order to satisfy Policy 3 of NPF4.

- 6.100. Enhancement measures include:

Enhancement of exiting riparian habitat;

Enhancement of exiting/retained scrub habitat;

Planting of new trees, including semi-mature trees;

Planting of new scrub areas;

Creation of new meadow areas, in addition to the translocated meadow habitat;

Planting of new hedgerow; and

Installation of wildlife boxes (birds, bats, hedgehog and invertebrates), and herptile hibernacula.

- 6.101. Please refer to Figure 4 – Appendix A for the Landscaping & Habitat Scheme Layout for locations of the above habitat creations.
- 6.102. Only native species (of locally sourced origin) will be planted / sown onsite.
- 6.103. A Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan will be produced prior to the commencement of works, which will outline full details of each enhancement, including flora species to be planted / sown, relevant measures to be taken during habitat creation, and the long-term management of these habitats for wildlife.
- 6.104. It is considered that with the implementation of the above enhancement measures, the Proposed Development will increase the biodiversity value of the Application Site and provide a higher level of connectivity for local wildlife with the wider landscape.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1. The Application Site and adjacent landscape have been assessed for its general biodiversity value, as well as its potential to support ecological receptors.
- 7.2. Habitats of biodiversity value within the Application Site are G2 running water, B2.2 semi-improved neutral grassland, B5 wet grassland, B2.1 dense scrub and A3.1 broadleaved scattered trees.
- 7.3. Ecological features of interest within and adjacent to the Application Site include bats, badger, pine marten, otter and breeding birds.
- 7.4. Table 7-1 summarises the impacts and the recommended measures to reduce the potential effects of the Proposed Development on the protected/notable ecological features that are or may be present within the zone of impact (Zoi).
- 7.5. It is considered that with the implementation of the above measures, all significant negative impacts from the Proposed Development upon protected and notable habitats and species will be mitigated in line with relevant wildlife legislation and national/local planning policy relating to biodiversity.

Table 7-1: Summary of Mitigation

Ecological Features	Phase of Development	Impacts	Mitigation / Compensation / Enhancement Measures
Auchtertool Linn Local Wildlife Site	Construction	Potential contamination of the waterway and/or groundwaters	Hydrological assessment to highlight potential ground water sources, including aquifers will be undertaken prior to the commencement of works.
			Best practice pollution prevention measures will be adopted throughout the construction phase, including but not limited to GPP 5: works and maintenance in or near water. These measures will include the management of surface waters potentially laden with silt.
		Potential loss of a small number of trees.	Any loss of trees within the LWS will be compensated by additional planting, at a minimum ration of 2 trees per tree lost.
			Root protection zones (minimum of 12 times tree diameter at 1.5m) to be implemented during the works (unless otherwise directed by a suitably experienced arboriculturist), to ensure all retained trees are not impacted.
Camilla Loch SSSI	Construction / Operational	Potential disturbance of wildlife occupying the LWS	Pre-commencement surveys have been outlined within the relevant species sections below, to protect local wildlife, including breeding birds, otter, water vole, badger, pine marten and red squirrel.
			Potential to impact the SSSI through the alteration of ground and surface water chemistry and/or
Camilla Loch SSSI	Construction / Operational	Potential to impact the SSSI through the alteration of ground and surface water chemistry and/or	A hydrogeological assessment to be undertaken.
			Best practice pollution prevention measures will be adopted throughout the construction phase, including but not limited to GPP 5: works and

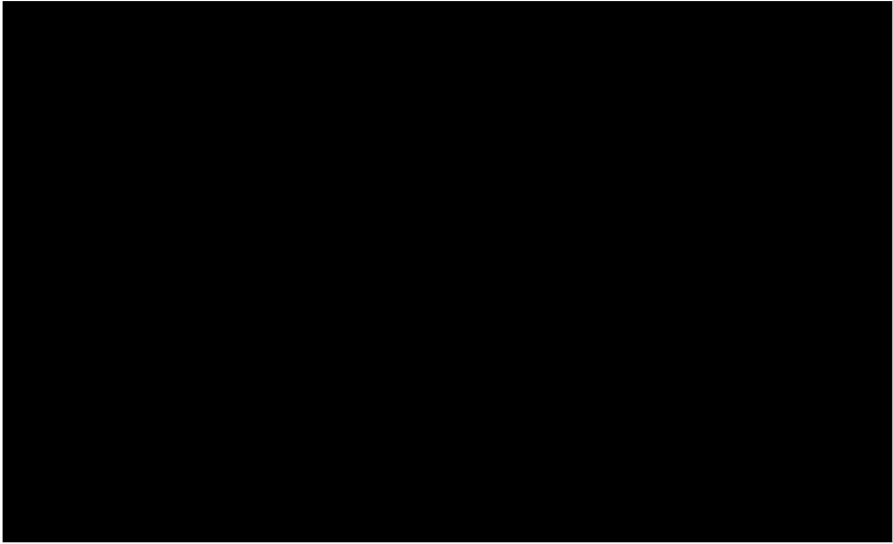
		water availability within the west catchment area of Camilla Loch.	maintenance in or near water. These measures will include the management of surface waters potentially laden with silt.
Habitats	Construction	Loss of existing habitats under the Proposed Development footprints, including grassland, trees and scrub	It is recommended that the wet grassland is translocated to a suitable area (where surface and/or ground waters will maintain the wet conditions) within the Application Site, such as the proposed floodplain. It is also recommended that species-rich areas of the semi-improved neutral grassland should also be translocated to suitable receptor sites within the Application Site. A Grassland Translocation Plan will be required prior to the construction phase, to outline the required measures for cutting, storing and translocating the turves. This will also include monitoring of stored turves, ensuring that they are not allowed to dry out. The management of grasslands (retained, translocated and new) will be outlined within a Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan prior to the commencement of works. Any loss of trees and scrub to be compensated through onsite enhancement.

		Contamination of ground waters (assuming the habitat is a groundwater dependant terrestrial ecosystems (GWDTE)), and significant abstraction of groundwaters, leading to impacts for local GWDTEs	Hydrogeological assessment to be undertaken prior to construction, with appropriate measures outlined as required.
		Sedimentation of the waterway, or accidental release of chemicals into the aquatic environment	Standard best practice pollution prevention measures will be required during the construction phase to prevent significant impacts through contaminated surface waters leaving the CDM area.
		Indirect loss of trees / woodland in the absence of mitigation, through root severance or soil compaction	Root protection areas (12 times tree diameter, measured at 1.5m) to be implemented for all retained trees and woodland prior to the commencement of works. Protection areas should be clearly demarcated with appropriate fencing throughout works.

Horsetail	Construction	Potential to spread horsetail throughout the Application Site and adjacent landscape through the movement of soil, vehicles/plant and people.	It is recommended that an updated map of this species is produced prior to the commencement of works, and a suitable management plan is produced and implemented throughout construction, which will include appropriate biosecurity and methods to deal with the contaminated soils.
Amphibian and Reptiles	Construction	Injury/death and habitat fragmentation	Two stage cutting of vegetation in advance of works (Stage 1 - 150mm vegetation height, Stage 2 – 70mm (or preferred height). Cutting / clearance will occur from centre working out towards field boundaries / retained habitats.
			Site preparation works including vegetation stripping should be avoided during the months of mid-October to mid-March to avoid injury to hibernating herptiles. Where these works must be undertaken during this time, pre-commencement checks (including fingertip searches) should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist immediately prior to works in each area.
			Any herptile species found will be translocated to an agreed receptor site nearby, outwith the core working areas. Care to be taken when handling individuals during the hibernation period, to ensure these are not warmed up from handler's body heat.

			The retention of a minimum of 10cm gap between ground level and bottom of onsite fencing will allow for the free movement of small wildlife including herptile species.
Nesting Birds	Construction	Loss of habitat for ground nesting birds in the absence of mitigation	Translocation of high value grassland habitat within the Application Site.
		Disturbance of nesting birds / destruction of active nests	It is recommended that a general nesting bird check is undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist for any works carried out during the breeding season (March to August inclusive). Where required, the ecologist will outline additional measures to protect any active nests, including relevant protection buffers around the nest, to be implemented until young have fully fledged.

Otter	Construction	Potential to impact otter through general disturbance, and indirect impacts through contamination of the waterway	Implementation of standard best practice pollution prevention measures to prevent silt laden surface / contaminated waters entering the waterways during the construction phase.
			Precautionary mitigation measures to be implemented during the construction phase, including: • Pre-commencement otter & water vole walkover survey a maximum of 4-week prior to the commencement of works, to provide an updated baseline; • All contractors to be briefed about the potential presence of otter within proximity to the site, and the requirement to cease works and contact a suitably experienced ecologist for advice;

			• All excavations to be securely covered, or a ramp at 450 to be provided at the end of each working day throughout construction to prevent accidental trapping of otter; • Temporarily exposed open pipe system to be capped in such a way as to prevent otter gaining access at the end of each working day; and • Implementation of best practice pollution prevention measures.
Bats	Construction		
		Loss of potential roost habitat – trees (negligible roosting potential at time of assessment, but may develop features overtime)	An updated ground-based tree assessment for bat roost potential should be undertaken prior to the commencement of works, to provide an updated baseline.

8. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – MAPS

Figure 1 – Site Location Map

Figure 2 – Environmental Designations Map

Figure 3 – Habitat Map

Figure 4 – Proposed Development Layout

APPENDIX B – BIOLOGICAL RECORDS

APPENDIX C – BREEDING BIRD SURVEY

APPENDIX D – BADGER SURVEY

APPENDIX E – BAT SURVEY

APPENDIX F – OTTER & WATER VOLE SURVEY

APPENDIX G – PINE MARTEN SURVEY

APPENDIX H – NVC SURVEY

Camilla Data Centre Site Location Map Figure 1

Legend

-  Application Site
-  Excluded area

Drawing Number: 140/431/01/B
Date: 18.03.26
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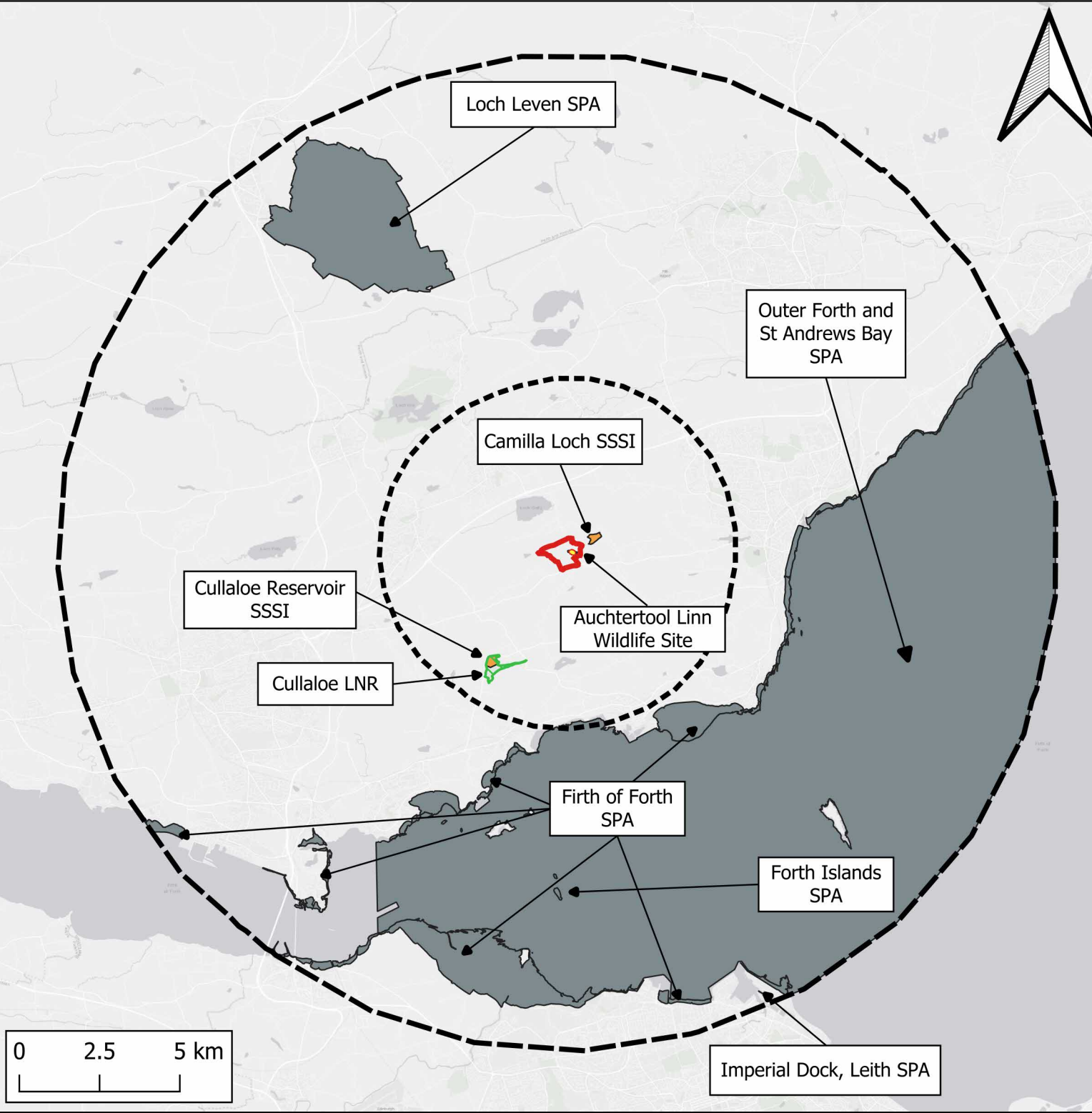
0 0.5 1 km



Camilla Data Centre Environmental Designations Figure 2

Legend

-  Application Site
-  5km buffer
-  15km buffer
-  LNR to 5km
-  SSSI to 5km
-  SPA to 15km
-  LWS to 1km



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Camilla Data Centre Phase 1 Habitat Map Figure 3

Legend

-  Application Site
-  50m Buffer
-  Excluded area
-  Target Notes
-  A1.2.2 - Coniferous plantation woodland
-  A2.1 - Dense/continuous scrub
-  A3.1 - Broadleaved scattered trees
-  B2.2 - Semi-improved neutral grassland
-  B4 - Improved grassland
-  B5 - Marshy grassland
-  G2 - Running water
-  J1.1 - Arable
-  J3.6 - Buildings
-  J5 - Other habitat
-  Area not accessed

Drawing Number: 140/431/3/B
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