

COLEG GWENT KNOWLEDGE QUARTER, NEWPORT

Statement to Inform Habitat Regulations Assessment

for

WEPCo

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THE **Landmark**
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**D denotes a Draft version*

The information which we have prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

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FIGURE 1: DESIGNATED SITES PLAN

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 The Landmark Practice (TLP) was commissioned by WEPCo in July 2026 to prepare a Statement to Inform Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) to inform a planning application for a new vocational college with associated infrastructure and landscaping (hereafter referred to as the 'Proposed Development').
- 1.2 This Statement to Inform HRA has been prepared to provide Newport City Council (who is the Competent Authority (CA)) with the information they require to undertake an HRA in accordance with Section 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Legislation and Policy

- 1.3 European Union (EU) Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of habitats and of wild flora and fauna (known as the 'Habitats Directive') protects habitats and species of European nature conservation importance. Thus, in conjunction with Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (the 'Birds Directive'), the Habitats Directive establishes a network of internationally important sites designated for their ecological importance.
- 1.4 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are designated under the Habitats Directive and promote the protection of flora, fauna and habitats. Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated under the Birds Directive in order to protect rare, vulnerable and migratory birds. These sites form a Europe-wide network of designated sites known as 'European Sites.' The network of these sites within the United Kingdom's territory form part of the UK National Site Network under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as amended (the 'Habitats Regulations').
- 1.5 In addition, wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention 1971 ('Ramsar sites') are afforded a high level of protection within the planning system. Historically, this protection was provided through national planning policy, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which require Ramsar sites to be treated as equivalent to SPAs and SACs when considering development proposals. Following the enactment of the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, Ramsar sites are now also afforded statutory protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). National policy protections continue to apply, including in relation to proposed Ramsar sites, potential SPAs, possible SACs and sites identified as compensatory measures for adverse effects on Habitats Sites.
- 1.6 The term 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' is used to cover the process of assessing the effects of a project or plan on National Site Network sites and Ramsar sites.

Aims

- 1.7 The aims of this report are to:
 - Identify those Habitat Sites that fall within the potential Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the proposed scheme, by way of consideration of their qualifying interests, conservation objectives and favourable (or otherwise) conservation status.
 - Identify any effects/impacts of the proposed scheme that are likely to have significant effects on the identified Habitat Sites either alone or in-combination.

- Identify ways in which the proposed scheme can be modified to avoid/mitigate impacts on Habitat Sites to an acceptable level.

1.8 The purpose of this document is to provide the CA with the information required to assess whether the project (i.e. proposed scheme) may have an adverse effect on the integrity of the Habitat Site, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects in the local area.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Overview of the HRA Process

- 2.1 This report has been produced using the Habitats Regulations Assessment Handbook – England and Wales (DTA Publications, 2013). The Handbook is intended to supplement Defra guidance (Defra, 2012) by bringing together all relevant law, policy, methodology, technical advice and good practice into one comprehensive source.
- 2.2 The HRA follows a four-stage hierarchical approach. Each of those four stages contains a number of steps comprising the tests or procedures that are required by the Habitats Directive. The current scheme is only concerned with Stage 1: Screening (Test of Likely Significant Effect) and (Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment).

Stage 1: Screening (Test of Likely Significant Effect)

- 2.3 This stage seeks to identify any likely significant effects of a plan or project on a National Site Network site(s), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. If the outcome of this stage is that no likely significant effect is identified (either alone or in combination) then no further assessment is required. Following the ECJ ruling (People over Wind and Sweetman), application of mitigation measures must not feature in this analysis.

Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment and the Integrity Test

- 2.4 Should the Stage 1 Screening identify that a plan or project could lead to likely significant effects on a National Site Network site(s), then it becomes necessary to proceed to Stage 2, which is often referred to as Appropriate Assessment (AA). AA considers whether a plan or project could adversely affect the integrity of one or more National Site Network site(s), either alone or in combination with other plans or projects.
- 2.5 The assessment should consider the implications of any identified impacts in view of the site's conservation objectives and its conservation status. If the potential for adverse effects on site integrity is identified, this assessment should also consider measures to control the identified impacts so as to avoid adverse effects on site integrity.

Scope

- 2.6 This report has been produced by TLP to provide sufficient information to Newport City Council to enable it as the CA to undertake an HRA.
- 2.7 In accordance with Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations, the HRA should be undertaken by the 'competent authority', using evidence provided by the applicant (if requested) and in consultation with Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

“(1) A competent authority [in this instance Newport City Council], before deciding to undertake, or give consent, permissions or other authorisation for, a plan or project which:

- *Is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), and*
- *Is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site; must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site’s conservation objectives.*

(2) A person [the applicant] applying for any such consent, permission or other authorisation must provide such information as the competent authority may reasonably require for the purposes of the assessment or to enable it to determine whether an appropriate assessment is required.”

Additional Information

2.8 As is often the case, the European/National Site Network sites referred to in this report are subject to multiple designations. In England and Wales statutory National Site Network sites are also notified as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). As such the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are also relevant. The act imposes an important general duty on a range of authorities exercising functions which are likely to affect SSSIs. This general and overarching duty requires an authority to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of the authority’s functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the features for which sites are of special interest. It applies whenever an authority is exercising its functions, including when it has the power to take action, and applies at every stage from the formulation of plans, to the carrying out of operations and the making of decisions.

2.9 Due to the overlap and interplay between designated sites, the assessment below draws upon information produced to support the planning application and information freely available from Natural England and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) in relation to designated sites.

Information used in this assessment

Desk Study

2.10 A data search using Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) was used to determine which Habitat Sites fell within 20km of the Proposed Development. European site citations, conservation objectives and threats and pressures on the Habitat Site were obtained through:

- Designated site citation documents
- Conservation objectives for each habitat
- Information sheet
- The Landmark Practice (2026) Ecological Appraisal

Limitations

2.11 The findings of this report are to inform the assessment made by the CA and do not seek to replace the formal assessment to be undertaken by the CA.

- 2.12 This report is based on information collected on Site in accordance with industry guidelines and the scope of surveys used to inform other consented development in the local area. The survey data is considered accurate and sufficient for the purposes of informing the assessment process.

3.0 HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

Scope of Assessment

Description of Project and Site Description

- 3.1 The Proposed Development comprises the provision of a vocational college with associated infrastructure and landscaping.
- 3.2 The Proposed Development is to be the subject of a reserved matters planning application. The proposals at the time of writing this report can be found in Ecological Appraisal (TLP, 2026).
- 3.3 The Proposed Development received outline planning consent in 2022 (ref: 22/0814) for the 'demolition and redevelopment of the Site for circa 54,000 square metres of flexible floorspace for educational use, or any other use within use classes a1 (shops), a2 (financial and professional services), a3 (food and drink), b1 (business), c1 (hotels), d1 (non-residential institutions) and d2 (assembly and leisure), with all matters reserved'.
- 3.4 The Proposed Development covers an area of 0.9 ha. The approximate grid reference is ST 31418 87896. The local planning authority is Newport City Council. The Site comprises mainly hardstanding, buildings with some areas of modified grassland, scattered trees, and ruderal / ephemeral vegetation. To the south and west lie commercial and residential areas, while to the east and north lies the River Usk.

Zone of Influence

- 3.5 A Zone of Influence (Zoi) of 10km for Habitat Sites and other statutory sites with functional links is considered proportionate for the area of the Site and anticipated impacts from the Proposed Development. This covers SAC, SPA, and Ramsar (including proposed Ramsar sites, potential SPAs, and possible SACs) as well as any marine components that may be present. This is shown on **Figure 1**.

Functionally linked land

- 3.6 Functionally linked land is land that is beyond the boundary of the Habitat Site but may also support the qualifying features of the Habitat Site or suitable habitat which the qualifying features rely on. Should the land be considered 'linked' it may therefore become important in maintaining the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of the qualifying feature.

Habitat Site

- 3.7 The Habitat Sites considered as part of this assessment are shown in **Table 1** below.

Table 1 - Habitat Sites included within the Zone of Influence of the Proposed Development

Site	Distance from the Site	Qualifying features	Conservation Objectives	Threats and Pressures
River USK SAC	60 m east	Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site 1095 Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) 1096 Brook lamprey (<i>Lampetra planeri</i>) 1099 River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) 1103 Twaite shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>) 1106 Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>) 1163 Bullhead (<i>Cottus gobio</i>) 1355 Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection 1102 Allis shad (<i>Alosa alosa</i>)	<u>Conservation objectives for the water course (NRW, 2014)</u> The ecological status of the watercourse is a major determinant of Favourable Conservation Status for all features. The required conservation objective for the watercourse is defined below. - The capacity for the habitats in the SAC to support each feature at near natural population levels, as determined by predominantly unmodified ecological and hydromorphological processes and characteristics, should be maintained as far as possible, or restored where necessary. - The ecological status of the water environment should be sufficient to maintain a stable or increasing population of each feature. This will include elements of water quantity and quality, physical habitat and community composition and structure. - Flow regime, water quality and physical habitat should be maintained in, or restored as far as possible to, a near-natural state, in order to support the coherence of ecosystem structure and function across the whole area of the SAC. - All known breeding, spawning and nursery sites of species features should be maintained as suitable habitat as far as possible, except where natural processes cause them to change. - Flows, water quality, substrate quality and quantity at fish spawning sites and nursery areas will not be depleted by abstraction, discharges, engineering or gravel extraction activities or other impacts to the extent that these sites are damaged or destroyed. - The river planform and profile should be predominantly unmodified. Physical modifications having an adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC, including, but not limited to, revetments on active alluvial riverbanks using stone, concrete or waste materials, unsustainable extraction of gravel, addition or release of excessive quantities of fine sediment, will be avoided. - River SSSI features should be in favourable condition. In the case of the Usk Tributaries SSSI, the SAC habitat is not underpinned by a river habitat SSSI feature. In this case, the target is to maintain the characteristic physical features of the river channel, banks and riparian zone. - Artificial factors impacting on the capability of each species feature to occupy the full extent of its natural range should be modified where necessary to allow passage, e.g., weirs, bridge sills, acoustic barriers. - Natural factors such as waterfalls, which may limit the natural range of a species feature or dispersal between naturally isolated populations, should not be modified. - Flows during the normal migration periods of sea and river lamprey will not be depleted by abstraction to the extent that passage upstream to spawning sites is hindered. - Flow objectives for assessment points in the Usk Catchment Abstraction Management Strategy will be agreed by NRW as necessary. It is anticipated that these limits will concur with the standards used by the Review of Consents process - Water Quality targets follow those in the revised Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Rivers (JNCC 2016).	<u>Standard Data Form (JNCC, 1998)</u> - Invasive non-native species - Grazing - Forestry activities - Pollution to surface waters (limnic & terrestrial, marine & brackish) - Soil pollution and solid waste (excluding discharges) - Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions - Forest and plantation management & use - Other ecosystem modifications <u>Habitat Regulations Summary Report (Natural Resources Wales, 2026)</u> - Physical alteration of water bodies, water abstraction, and flow modification from dams and weirs - Pollution from agriculture, livestock, forestry, and urban sources contributes to eutrophication and sedimentation, degrading plant communities. - Invasive species such as Japanese knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i>), Himalayan balsam (<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>), signal crayfish (<i>Pacifastacus leniusculus</i>), and Chinese mitten crab (<i>Eriocheir sinensis</i>) - Climate change - Loss of resting, natal, foraging habitats.

Site	Distance from the Site	Qualifying features	Conservation Objectives	Threats and Pressures
			- Potential sources of pollution not addressed in the review of consents, such as contaminated land, will be considered in assessing plans and projects. <u>Conservation objectives for Features 1-7 - fishes</u> - The Conservation Objective for the watercourse must be met. - The population of the feature in the SAC is stable or increasing over the long term. - The natural range of the feature in the SAC is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future. - There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain the feature’s population in the SAC on a long-term basis. <u>Conservation objectives for Feature 8 - otters</u> - The population of otters in the SAC is stable or increasing over the long term and reflects the natural carrying capacity of the habitat within the SAC, as determined by natural levels of prey abundance and associated territorial behaviour. - The natural range of otters in the SAC is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future. - The safe movement and dispersal of individuals around the SAC is facilitated by the provision, where necessary, of suitable riparian habitat, and underpasses, ledges, fencing etc at road bridges and other artificial barriers. <u>Conservation objectives for Watercourses of plain to montane levels with the <i>Ranunculion fluitantis</i> and <i>Callitricho-Batrachion</i> vegetation</u> - The Conservation Objective for the watercourse must be met. - The natural range of the plant communities represented within this feature should be stable or increasing in the SAC. - The area covered by the feature within its natural range in the SAC should be stable or increasing. More information on the typical species expected to be found with each management unit in the SAC is required.	
Severn Estuary Ramsar	3.6 km south	Ramsar Criterion 1 Due to its immense tidal range (the second-largest in the world), the Severn Estuary supports a unique physical environment and associated biological communities. The Habitats Directive Annex I features present within the SAC include: - H1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by seawater all the time - H1130 Estuaries - H1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide - H1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) Ramsar Criterion 3 The site supports unusual estuarine communities characterised by reduced species diversity but high biological productivity.	<u>Conservation Objectives (NRW, 2009)</u> Full conservation objectives for each of the qualifying habitats and species can be found in Appendix A.	<u>Habitat Regulations Summary Report (Natural Resources Wales, 2026)</u> - Water pollution from mixed sources. - Marine litter, and climate change-related effects such as temperature increases and altered species distributions. - Habitat change and changes in ecological processes in relevant species assemblages due to climate change. - Diffuse pollution from agriculture in their catchments, coastal development, and activities such as dredging and port expansion. These contribute to nutrient enrichment, siltation, and contamination. - Overgrazing and abandonment of saltmarsh management has led to poor vegetation structure and reduced biodiversity in some Estuaries. The regional status of a number of commercial fish stocks associated

Site	Distance from the Site	Qualifying features	Conservation Objectives	Threats and Pressures
		Ramsar Criterion 4 The site is important for the migration of fish species between marine and freshwater environments. Species include Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>), sea trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i>), sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>), river lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>), allis shad (<i>Alosa alosa</i>), twaite shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>) and European eel (<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>). The estuary is also of particular importance to migratory birds during spring and autumn migration periods. Ramsar Criterion 5 Assemblages of international importance. The site regularly supports internationally important assemblages of waterbirds. Species with peak counts in winter: 70,919 waterfowl (five-year peak mean, 1998/99 to 2002/03) Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance. Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation): <u>Species with Peak Counts in Winter</u> - Tundra swan (<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>), NW Europe 229 individuals, representing an average of 2.8% of the Great Britain population (five-year peak mean 1998/99 to 2002/03). - Greater white-fronted goose (<i>Anser albifrons albifrons</i>), NW Europe 2,076 individuals, representing an average of 35.8% of the Great Britain population (five-year peak mean 1996/97 to 2000/01). - Common shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>), NW Europe 3,223 individuals, representing an average of 1.0% of the population (five-year peak mean 1998/99 to 2002/03). - Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera strepera</i>), NW Europe 241 individuals, representing an average of 1.4% of the Great Britain population (five-year peak mean 1998/99 to 2002/03). - Dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina alpina</i>), West Siberia/Western Europe 25,082 individuals, representing an average of 1.8% of the population (five-year peak mean 1998/99 to 2002/03). - Common redshank (<i>Tringa totanus totanus</i>) 2,616 individuals, representing an average of 1.0% of the population (five-year peak mean 1998/99 to 2002/03). <u>Species/Populations Identified Subsequent to Designation for Possible Future Consideration Under Criterion 6</u> Species Regularly Supported During the Breeding Season - Lesser black-backed gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>), Western Europe/Mediterranean/West Africa 4,167 apparently occupied nests, representing an average of 2.8% of the breeding population (Seabird 2000 Census). <u>Species with Peak Counts in Spring/Autumn</u>		with estuaries is also of concern. Invasive non-native species, including Pacific oysters (<i>Magallana gigas</i>) and American slipper limpets (<i>Crepidula fornicata</i>), are expanding. - Coastal squeeze, due to sea level rise and fixed defences, continues to reduce intertidal habitat extent. - Recreational activities, shipping, aquaculture, and legacy pollutants also pose ongoing and widespread risks. - Coastal development, marine pollution from residential, industrial and agricultural sources, and activities such as bait digging and shellfish aquaculture and collecting. <u>Habitat Regulations 9A Report for Wales (NRW, 2026)</u> - Climate change - Urban and infrastructure development - Extraction and cultivation of biological living resources - Extraction of non-renewable resources - Agricultural related practices - Alien and problematic species - Geological events, natural processes - Plant and animal diseases

Site	Distance from the Site	Qualifying features	Conservation Objectives	Threats and Pressures
		- Ringed plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>), Europe/Northwest Africa 740 individuals, representing an average of 1.0% of the population (five-year peak mean 1998/99 to 2002/03). <u>Species with Peak Counts in Winter</u> - Eurasian teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>), NW Europe 4,456 individuals, representing an average of 1.1% of the population (five-year peak mean 1998/99 to 2002/03). - Northern pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>), NW Europe 756 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the population (five-year peak mean 1998/99 to 2002/03) Ramsar Criterion 8 The fish assemblage of the Severn Estuary and its tributaries is among the most diverse in Britain, with over 110 species recorded. Atlantic salmon (<i>Salmo salar</i>), sea trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i>), sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>), river lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>), allis shad (<i>Alosa alosa</i>), twaite shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>) and European eel (<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>) use the estuary as a migration route to spawning grounds within tributary river systems. The site is also an important feeding and nursery area for many fish species, particularly allis shad and twaite shad, which feed on mysid shrimps within the estuary.		
Severn Estuary SAC	3.6 km south	<u>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site</u> 1130 Estuaries 1140 Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide 1330 Atlantic salt meadows (<i>Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae</i>) <u>Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site</u> 1110 Sandbanks which are slightly covered by sea water all the time 1170 Reefs <u>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</u> 1095 Sea lamprey (<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>) 1099 River lamprey (<i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>) 1103 Twaite shad (<i>Alosa fallax</i>)	Conservation objectives (Natural England, 2019) Ensure that integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the Favourable Conservation Status of its Qualifying Features, by maintaining or restoring; - The extent and distribution of qualifying natural habitats and habitats of qualifying species - The structure and function (including typical species) of qualifying natural habitats - The structure and function of the habitats of qualifying species - The supporting processes on which qualifying natural habitats and the habitats of qualifying species rely - The populations of qualifying species, and, - The distribution of qualifying species within the site. <u>Conservation Objectives (NRW, 2009)</u> Full conservation objectives for each of the qualifying habitats and species can be found in Appendix A.	<u>Standard data form (JNCC, 2007)</u> - Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions - Changes in abiotic conditions - Modification of cultivation practices - Other urbanisation, industrial or similar activities - Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities <u>Site improvement plan (Natural England, 2015)</u> - Public access / disturbance - Physical modification - Impacts of development - Coastal squeeze - Change in land management - Changes in species distributions - Water pollution - Air pollution: impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition - Marine consents and permits: minerals and waste - Fisheries: Recreational marine and estuarine - Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine - Invasive species - Marine litter - Marine pollution incidents

Site	Distance from the Site	Qualifying features	Conservation Objectives	Threats and Pressures
				<u>Habitat Regulations Summary Report (Natural Resources Wales, 2026)</u> • Water pollution from mixed sources. • Marine litter, and climate change-related effects such as temperature increases and altered species distributions. • Habitat change and changes in ecological processes in relevant species assemblages due to climate change. • Diffuse pollution from agriculture in their catchments, coastal development, and activities such as dredging and port expansion. These contribute to nutrient enrichment, siltation, and contamination. • Overgrazing and abandonment of saltmarsh management has led to poor vegetation structure and reduced biodiversity in some Estuaries. The regional status of a number of commercial fish stocks associated with estuaries is also of concern. Invasive non-native species, including Pacific oysters (<i>Magallana gigas</i>) and American slipper limpets (<i>Crepidula fornicata</i>), are expanding. • Coastal squeeze, due to sea level rise and fixed defences, continues to reduce intertidal habitat extent. • Recreational activities, shipping, aquaculture, and legacy pollutants also pose ongoing and widespread risks. • Coastal development, marine pollution from residential, industrial and agricultural sources, and activities such as bait digging and shellfish aquaculture and collecting. • Fishing.
Severn Estuary SPA	3.6 km south	The Severn Estuary qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive by regularly supporting an internationally important wintering population of Bewick's swan (<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>), an Annex I species. During the period 1988/89 to 1992/93 a mean peak of 289 birds (1.7% of the north-west European population, 4.1% of the British wintering population) used the estuary. The Severn Estuary qualifies under Article 4.2 as a wetland of international importance by regularly supporting in winter over 20,000 waterfowl. In the five-year period 1988/89 to 1992/93 the average peak count was 68,026 waterfowl, comprising 17,502 wildfowl and 50,524 waders. The Severn Estuary also qualifies under Article 4.2 by regularly supporting in winter internationally important numbers of the following five species of migratory waterfowl (average peak means for the period 1988/89 to 1992/93): • 3,002 European white-fronted goose (<i>Anser albifrons albifrons</i>) (1.0% NW European, 50.0% British) • 2,892 shelduck (<i>Tadorna tadorna</i>) (1.2% NW European, 3.9% British) • 330 gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>) (2.8% NW European, 5.5% British)	<u>Conservation Objectives (Natural England, (2019)</u> Ensure that the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate, and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the aims of the Wild Birds Directive, by maintaining or restoring; • The extent and distribution of the habitats of the qualifying features • The structure and function of the habitats of the qualifying features • The supporting processes on which the habitats of the qualifying features rely • The population of each of the qualifying features, and, • The distribution of the qualifying features within the site. <u>Conservation Objectives (NRW, 2009)</u> Full conservation objectives for each of the qualifying habitats / species can be found in Appendix A.	<u>Standard data form (JNCC, 1995)</u> • Human induced changes in hydraulic conditions • Changes in abiotic conditions • Modification of cultivation practices • Other urbanisation, industrial or similar activities • Outdoor sports and leisure activities, recreational activities <u>Site improvement plan (Natural England, 2015)</u> • Public access / disturbance • Physical modification • Impacts of development • Coastal squeeze • Change in land management • Changes in species distributions • Water pollution • Air pollution: Impact of atmospheric nitrogen deposition

Site	Distance from the Site	Qualifying features	Conservation Objectives	Threats and Pressures
		41,683 dunlin (<i>Calidris alpina</i>) (2.9% East Atlantic Flyway, 9.6% British) 2,013 redshank (<i>Tringa tetanus</i>) (1.3% East Atlantic Flyway, 2.6% British) The Severn Estuary also supports nationally important wintering populations of a further ten species: 3,977 wigeon (<i>Anas Penelope</i>) (1.6% British) 1,998 teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>) (2.0% British) 523 pintail (<i>Anas acuta</i>) (2.1% British) 1,686 pochard (<i>Aythya ferina</i>) (3.8% British) 913 tufted duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>) (1.5% British) 227 ringed plover (<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>) (1.0% British) 781 grey plover (<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>) (3.7% British) 3,096 curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>) (3.4% British) 246 whimbrel (<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>) (4.9% British total) 3 spotted redshank (<i>Tringa erythropus</i>) (1.5% British) [Severn Est In addition, during passage periods, the estuary supports nationally important numbers of: Ringed plover - Spring migration: 442 birds (1.4% British passage) - Autumn migration: 1,573 birds (5.2% British passage) Dunlin - Spring migration: 3,510 birds (1.7% British passage) - Autumn migration: 5,500 birds (2.7% British passage) Whimbrel - Spring migration: 246 birds (4.9% British passage) - Autumn migration: 66 birds (1.3% British passage) Redshank - Autumn migration: 2,456 birds (2.0% British passage) The Severn Estuary also supports a nationally important breeding population of a migratory species. In 1993, 2,040 pairs of lesser black-backed gull (<i>Larus fuscus</i>) bred on the islands of Steep Holm and Flat Holm within the estuary. This represents 2.5% of the British total.		- Marine consents and permits: minerals and waste - Fisheries: Recreational marine and estuarine - Fisheries: Commercial marine and estuarine - Invasive species - Marine litter - Marine pollution incidents <u>Habitat Regulations 9A Report for Wales (NRW, 2026)</u> - Climate change - Urban and infrastructure development - Extraction and cultivation of biological living resources - Extraction of non renewable resources - Agricultural related practices - Alien and problematic species - Geological events, natural processes - Plant and animal diseases

4.0 STAGE 1 – SCREENING OF LIKELY SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS

- 4.1 The Habitat Regulations Assessment (DTA, 2013) states that a significant effect is any effect that would undermine the conservation objectives of a Habitat Site. There must be a causal connection or link between the subject plan or project and the qualifying features of the site which could result in possible significant effects on the site. These effects maybe direct or indirect and the decision as to the existence and scope of the possible effects must be judged on a case-by-case basis.
- 4.2 The HRA screening stage is intended to be a ‘preliminary examination’ if significant effects cannot be excluded on the basis of objective information without extensive investigation, a plan or project should be considered to have a likely significant effect and taken through to an appropriate assessment.

Pathways and or Threats that may affect the Habitat Site as part of the Development

- 4.3 Potential pathways of effect to the qualifying features of the River Usk SAC and the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar. The threats pathways that are being considered as part of Stage 1 include:
- Air pollution
 - Water pollution
 - Invasive species
 - Public access / disturbance
- 4.4 The remaining identified threats and pressures have not been considered further, as no pathway for effects has been identified between the Proposed Development and the designated sites.

Air pollution

Construction

- 4.5 The Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) identifies the Zone of Influence (Zol) for fugitive dust emissions as extending up to 50 m from the construction boundary and up to 50 m of the route(s) used by construction vehicles on the public highway, extending to 250m from the Site entrance. SACs are considered as ‘high sensitivity’ receptors to dust deposition (IAQM, 2024).
- 4.6 IAQM guidance (2020) specifies that if there are an increase of more than 1000 light duty vehicle (LDV) Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) movements or 200 heavy duty vehicles (HDV) AADT within 200m of an ecological designation, there is potential for a noticeable change in air quality and further assessment may be required.

River Usk SAC

- 4.7 The Proposed Development is located approximately 60 m away from the River Usk SAC which means that likely impacts from fugitive dust is considered unlikely. The construction traffic however is expected to access the Site via the A4042, sections of which lie within 50 m of the SAC. Therefore, Likely Significant Effects cannot be ruled out.
- 4.8 The Air Quality report (Stantec, 2026) assessed the unmitigated risk associated with construction activities including track out as ‘medium’ due to the proximity of the Proposed Development to the River Usk SAC. This assessment reflects the use of

construction materials with varying dust generating potential including high dust risk materials such as concrete and lower dust risk materials such as metals and timber.

- 4.9 As a result, **likely significant effects** in relation to fugitive dust deposition on the River Usk cannot be excluded and therefore further Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment is required.
- 4.10 Vehicle movements are considered to vary throughout the construction period with short periods of peak HGV movements. When averaged over a full year period these are considered to be significantly lower than the AADT (Stantec, 2026).
- 4.11 It is therefore considered that there will be **no likely significant effects** from construction traffic on the River Usk SAC.

Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar

- 4.12 The Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar site is located 3.6km south of the Site however these designated sites are hydrologically connected to the River Usk. Therefore, impacts to the River Usk SAC from fugitive dust could have knock on effects downstream and affect the qualifying habitats and species of the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar.
- 4.13 As a result, **likely significant effects** in relation to fugitive dust cannot be excluded and therefore further Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment is required.
- 4.14 The Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site are hydrologically connected to the River Usk SAC however it was considered that there will be no likely significant effects from construction traffic pollution on the River Usk and therefore it is considered that there will be **no likely significant effects** on the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar

Operation

- 4.15 Operational road traffic emissions were assessed as part of the Air Quality Assessment (Stantec, 2026). As no on-site parking is proposed for staff or students, the trip generation assumptions used within the assessment are considered to represent a worst case scenario, with actual traffic flows likely to be lower than those predicted.
- 4.16 The assessment estimated that the Proposed Development could generate up to 811 AADT movements, of which four would comprise heavy-duty vehicle (HDV) movements. The Air Quality Assessment concluded that the majority of these trips would be redistributed, or replacement journeys associated with the former Newport Leisure Centre, which occupied the Site prior to its demolition, and the relocation of the existing Coleg Gwent campus, rather than representing a net increase in traffic on the surrounding road network.
- 4.17 In addition to the above due to the Site's urban location and the fact that there is no on-site parking it is expected that sustainable transport will be used by a greater proportion of staff and students.
- 4.18 It is therefore considered that there will be **no likely significant effects** from operational traffic on the River Usk SAC and the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar.

Water pollution

Construction

- 4.19 The Site is located within 60 m of the River Usk SAC and therefore in the absence of mitigation it is possible that runoff from, accidental fuel or oil spills and contaminated runoff from construction works could enter the watercourse in the absence of mitigation. The River Usk SAC is connected to the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar and therefore impacts to The River Usk also has the potential to impact the Severn Estuary.
- 4.20 Therefore, there is potential for **likely significant effects** and Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment is required.

Operation

- 4.21 The Proposed Development would discharge surface water to the River Usk SAC via a dedicated drainage system (Stantec, 2026). However, the drainage strategy incorporates a range of embedded Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) measures, including rain gardens, permeable paving, green roofs, filter strips, and proprietary treatment measures designed to improve water quality prior to discharge. The proposals would also remove a substantial proportion of surface water runoff from the existing combined sewer network. Subject to implementation of the drainage strategy and compliance with the Statutory SuDS Standards for Wales (Llywodraeth Cymru, 2018), adverse effects on the water quality of the River Usk SAC are considered unlikely.
- 4.22 Therefore, **no likely significant effects** as a result of operational water pollution are anticipated.

Invasive species

Construction / Operation

- 4.23 The River Usk Site Management Statement (SMS) identifies Japanese knotweed, and Himalayan balsam as a threat to the watercourse.
- 4.24 The Proposed Development is not expected to spread invasive species as neither of these species are present on Site. No other invasive species were identified on Site.
- 4.25 The Severn Estuary Site Improvement Plan identifies several invasive non-native species as threats to the designated site including Australian barnacle (*Austrominius modestus*), Chinese mitten crab (*Eriocheir sinensis*), and the Pacific oyster (*Crassostrea gigas*) as invasive species as well as sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) and Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*).
- 4.26 The Proposed Development will not spread invasive species as most of these are aquatic or estuarine species and there are no aquatic habitats on Site. Furthermore, the Site is not hydrologically connected to the Severn Estuary. As such no pathways exist through which the Proposed Development could contribute to their spread.
- 4.27 It is therefore considered that there will be **no likely significant effects** during construction and operation.

Public Access / Disturbance

Construction / Operation.

- 4.28 Disturbance and increased public access are not identified as threats to the integrity of the River Usk SAC. The Transport Statement (Stantec, 2026) found that the Proposed

Development will generate 1389 two-way total person movements in the AM peak and 248 two-way total person movements in the PM peak.

- 4.29 In addition to this the qualifying features of the SAC are predominantly aquatic species and habitats, which are unlikely to be affected by the presence of additional people. Otter (*Lutra lutra*) is a qualifying feature of the SAC, however, the section of the River Usk within Newport is already subject to disturbance from noise and artificial lighting, and therefore disturbance effects on otter are considered unlikely.
- 4.30 The Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar site are located approximately 3.6 km south of the Site. Given the separation distance and the nature of the Proposed Development as a college, it is extremely unlikely that there will be an increase in members of the public visiting the Site which could result in disturbance to the qualifying features of these designated sites. Significant effects are therefore considered highly unlikely.
- 4.31 It is therefore considered that there will be **no likely significant effects** during construction or operation on the River Usk SAC or the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar.

5.0 STAGE 2: APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The following sets out the process of Appropriate Assessment (AA) where a plan or project has, at the HRA Screening stage, been deemed to result in a LSE upon a National Site Network site. The AA considers whether a plan or project could result in an Adverse Effect on Integrity (AEol) of one or more National Site Network site(s).
- 5.2 The AA should provide the objective scientific basis necessary to enable the Competent Authority to make a decision in respect of site integrity with an appropriate degree of confidence.

Air pollution

- 5.3 The mitigation with regards to dust control is detailed within the Air Quality Assessment (Stantec, 2026) however these measures must be detailed in a Dust Management Plan, within the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Measures include but not limited too.

Communications

- Develop and implement a stakeholder communications plan, including community engagement before works commence.
- Display the contact details of the person responsible for air quality and dust management at the site boundary.
- Display the head office or regional office contact details.

Management

- Prepare and implement a Dust Management Plan (DMP), approved by the Local Authority.
- The DMP may include dust deposition monitoring, dust flux monitoring, real-time PM₁₀ monitoring and visual inspections.
- Record all dust and air quality complaints, identify the cause and implement corrective actions promptly.
- Make the complaints log available to the Local Authority on request.

- Record any exceptional incidents causing dust or air emissions and document actions taken to resolve them.

Monitoring

- Undertake daily on-site and off-site inspections where receptors are nearby.
- Carry out regular checks of dust deposition on nearby surfaces including vehicles, street furniture and window ledges within 100m of the Site.
- Clean affected surfaces where necessary.
- Conduct routine inspections to ensure compliance with the Dust Management Plan.
- Increase inspection frequency during high-risk dust-generating activities and periods of dry or windy weather.
- Agree the location of any dust deposition or continuous PM₁₀ monitoring with the Local Authority.
- Where possible, commence baseline monitoring at least three months before works begin.

Site Preparation and Maintenance

- Locate dust-generating activities and machinery as far as practicable from sensitive receptors.
- Erect solid barriers or screens around dusty activities and stockpiles.
- Fully enclose particularly dusty operations where practicable.
- Prevent runoff of water, mud and sediments from the Site.
- Keep fencing, barriers and scaffolding clean using wet cleaning methods.
- Remove waste materials from site as soon as reasonably practicable.
- Cover, seed or fence stockpiles to prevent wind-whipping.

Vehicle and Plant Management

- Ensure all vehicles switch off engines when stationary and prohibit unnecessary idling.
- Use mains electricity or battery-powered equipment in preference to diesel or petrol generators where practicable.
- Impose maximum speed limits of:
 - 15 mph on surfaced haul roads; and
 - 10 mph on unsurfaced haul roads and work areas.
- Implement a Travel Plan promoting walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing.

Construction Operations

- Use cutting, grinding and sawing equipment with suitable dust suppression measures such as water sprays or extraction systems.
- Maintain an adequate water supply for dust suppression.
- Use enclosed chutes, conveyors and covered skips.
- Minimise material drop heights during loading and unloading operations.
- Ensure equipment is available to clean spillages immediately using wet cleaning methods.
- Avoid bonfires and the burning of waste materials.

Earthworks

- Re-vegetate exposed surfaces and stockpiles as soon as practicable.

- Use hessian sheeting, mulches or tackifiers where re-vegetation is not immediately possible.
- Restrict removal of surface coverings to small working areas at any one time.

Construction Materials

- Avoid scabbling of concrete surfaces where possible.
- Store sand and aggregates in bunded areas and prevent them drying out.
- Deliver cement and fine powders in enclosed tankers and store them in silos fitted with emission control systems.
- Ensure smaller supplies of fine materials are sealed and stored appropriately.

Trackout and Highway Cleanliness

- Use road sweepers on Site access roads and local highways as necessary.
- Avoid dry sweeping of large areas.
- Ensure vehicles leaving Site are covered to prevent material loss during transport.
- Inspect haul routes regularly and repair any defects promptly.
- Record all haul route inspections and maintenance actions.
- Install hard-surfaced haul routes and damp them down regularly using sprinklers or water bowsers.
- Provide a wheel-wash facility with rumble grids where practicable.
- Ensure sufficient hardstanding between wheel-wash facilities and the site exit.
- Locate site access gates at least 10m from sensitive receptors where possible

- 5.4 With the implementation of the above measures, the risk of pollution events forming atmospheric dust affecting the nearby designated sites would be appropriately managed. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development would not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of The River Usk SAC and Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar Site with respect to fugitive dust.

Water pollution

- 5.5 Although no longer in force, the following Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPG) and Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) are still considered useful.

- PPG 1: Understanding your environmental responsibilities – good environmental practices
- PPG 6: Working at construction and demolition sites
- PPG 7: Safe storage – The safe operation of refuelling facilities
- GPP 5: Works and maintenance in or near water
- GPP 21: Pollution incident response planning
- GPP 22: Dealing with spills.

- 5.6 The PPG and GPP must be implemented by the contractor and detailed within the CEMP or similar binding document.

- 5.7 The following additional measures must be implemented during construction:

- Risk assessments and toolbox talks for contractors doing any refuelling activities.

- Bunding of refuelling area.
- Emergency incident strategy.
- Spill kits must be available on Site at all times.
- Signage must be on Site in contractors compounds relating to sensitivity of the Habitat Sites.
- A waste disposal plan must be in place for the Site, detailing where all waste generated will be stored prior to removal.

5.8 With the implementation of the above measures, the risk of pollution events affecting nearby designated sites would be appropriately managed. It is therefore considered that the Proposed Development would not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of River Usk SAC and the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar with respect to water pollution risk.

6.0 IN-COMBINATION EFFECTS

6.1 In-combination effects are those that when considered in isolation are considered not significant but when combined within the impacts of other plans or projects are likely to reach a significant level.

6.2 Pathways and/or threats that have been screened out are not included within the assessment as they are not considered to have a Likely Significant Effect (LSE). Pathways and/or threats that have been taken to Stage 2: Appropriate Assessment generally do not require an in-combination assessment. It is only when there is a risk of de minimis/appreciable (adverse) effect (above de minimis threshold) that an in-combination assessment should be undertaken.

6.3 Given the above it is considered that no in-combination assessment is required.

7.0 CONCLUSION

7.1 The Proposed Development has been screened for any LSE on the conservation of Habitat Sites either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. It has been determined that in the absence of mitigation or detailed assessment there is potential for LSE on the River Usk SAC and the Severn Estuary SAC, SPA and Ramsar.

7.2 At Stage 2 Appropriate Assessment concluded that the threats and potential impacts to the Habitat Sites can be mitigated through dust control measures and water pollution measures. It is recommended that these should be secured through planning conditions.

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A: CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES (NRW, 2009)**Severn Estuary SAC Conservation Objectives****SAC Interest Feature 1: Estuaries**

The conservation objective for the estuaries feature is:

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. The total extent of the estuary is maintained.
- II. The characteristic physical form (tidal prism/cross-sectional area) and flow (tidal regime) of the estuary are maintained.
- III. The characteristic range and relative proportions of sediment sizes and the sediment budget within the site are maintained.
- IV. The extent, variety and spatial distribution of estuarine habitat communities within the site are maintained.
- V. The extent, variety, spatial distribution and community composition of hard substrate habitats and their notable communities are maintained.
- VI. The abundance of the notable estuarine species assemblages is maintained or increased.
- VII. The physico-chemical characteristics of the water column support the ecological objectives described above.
- VIII. Toxic contaminants within the water column and sediments are below levels that would pose a risk to the ecological objectives described above.
- IX. Airborne nutrient and contaminant loads are below levels that would pose a risk to the ecological objectives described above.

SAC Interest Feature 2: Sandbanks which are Slightly Covered by Sea Water All the Time

The conservation objective for the subtidal sandbanks feature is:

- I. The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:
- II. The total extent of the subtidal sandbanks within the site is maintained.
- III. The extent and distribution of the individual subtidal sandbank communities within the site are maintained.
- IV. The community composition of the subtidal sandbank feature within the site is maintained.
- V. The variety and distribution of sediment types across the subtidal sandbank feature are maintained.
- VI. The gross morphology (depth, distribution and profile) of the subtidal sandbank feature within the site is maintained.

SAC Interest Feature 3: Mudflats and Sandflats not Covered by Seawater at Low Tide

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. The total extent of the mudflats and sandflats feature within the site is maintained.
- II. The variety and extent of individual mudflat and sandflat communities within the site are maintained.

- III. The distribution of individual mudflat and sandflat communities within the site is maintained.
- IV. The community composition of the mudflats and sandflats feature within the site is maintained.
The topography of the intertidal flats and the morphology of the feature, including the dynamic processes of sediment movement and channel migration across the flats, are maintained.

SAC Interest Feature 4: Atlantic Salt Meadows (*Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae*)

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. i. The total extent of Atlantic salt meadow and associated transitional vegetation communities within the site is maintained.
- II. ii. The extent and distribution of the individual Atlantic salt meadow and associated transitional vegetation communities within the site are maintained.
- III. iii. The zonation of Atlantic salt meadow vegetation communities and their associated transitions to other estuarine habitats is maintained.
- IV. iv. The relative abundance of the typical species of the Atlantic salt meadow and associated transitional vegetation communities is maintained.
- V. v. The abundance of the notable species of the Atlantic salt meadow and associated transitional vegetation communities is maintained.
- VI. vi. The structural variation of the saltmarsh sward (resulting from grazing) is maintained within limits sufficient to satisfy the requirements of conditions iv and v above and the requirements of the Ramsar and SPA features.
- VII. vii. The characteristic stepped morphology of the saltmarshes and associated creeks, pills, drainage ditches and pans, and the estuarine processes that enable their development, are maintained.
- VIII. viii. Any areas of (*Spartina anglica*) saltmarsh (SM6) are capable of developing naturally into other saltmarsh communities.

SAC Interest Feature 5: Reefs

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. The total extent and distribution of *Sabellaria* reef within the site are maintained.
- II. The community composition of the *Sabellaria* reef is maintained.
- III. The full range of different age structures of the *Sabellaria* reef is present.
- IV. The physical and ecological processes necessary to support the *Sabellaria* reef are maintained.

SAC Interest Feature 6: River Lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*)

The conservation objective for river lamprey is:

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes¹, each of the following conditions are met:

- I. The migratory passage of both adult and juvenile river lamprey through the Severn Estuary between the Bristol Channel and any of their spawning rivers is not obstructed or impeded by physical barriers, changes in flows, or poor water quality;
- II. The size of the river lamprey population in the Severn Estuary and the rivers which drain into it, is at least maintained and is at a level that is sustainable in the long term;
- III. The abundance of prey species forming the river lamprey's food resource within the estuary, is maintained. I
- IV. Toxic contaminants in the water column and sediment are below levels which would pose a risk to the ecological objectives described above..

SAC Interest Feature 7: Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*)

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes¹, each of the following conditions are met:

- I. The migratory passage of both adult and juvenile sea lamprey through the Severn Estuary between the Bristol Channel and any of their spawning rivers is not obstructed or impeded by physical barriers, changes in flows, or poor water quality
- II. The size of the sea lamprey population in the Severn Estuary and the rivers which drain into it, is at least maintained as is at a level that is sustainable in the long term;
- III. The abundance of prey species forming the sea lamprey's food resource within the estuary, is maintained.
- IV. Toxic contaminants in the water column³ and sediment are below levels which would pose a risk to the ecological objectives described above..

SAC Interest Feature 8: Twaite Shad (*Alosa fallax*)

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. The migratory passage of both adult and juvenile twaite shad through the Severn Estuary between the Bristol Channel and their spawning rivers is not obstructed or impeded by physical barriers, changes in flow, or poor water quality.
- II. The size of the twaite shad population within the Severn Estuary and the rivers draining into it is at least maintained and is at a level that is sustainable in the long term.
- III. The abundance of prey species forming the twaite shad's food resource within the estuary, particularly at the salt wedge, is maintained.
- IV. Toxic contaminants in the water column and sediment are below levels that would pose a risk to the ecological objectives described above.

Severn Estuary SPA Conservation Objectives

SPA Interest Feature 1: Bewick's Swan

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. The five-year peak mean population size for the Bewick's swan population is no less than 289 individuals (i.e. the five-year peak mean between 1988/89 and 1992/93).

-
- II. The extent of saltmarsh at the Dumbles is maintained.
 - III. The extent of intertidal mudflats and sandflats at Frampton Sands, Waveridge Sands and the Noose is maintained.
 - IV. The extent of vegetation with an effective field size greater than 6 ha and unrestricted bird sightlines exceeding 500 m at feeding, roosting and refuge sites is maintained.
 - V. Greater than 25% cover of suitable soft-leaved herbs and grasses during the winter season throughout the transitional saltmarsh at the Dumbles is maintained.
 - VI. Aggregations of Bewick's swans at feeding, roosting and refuge sites are not subject to significant disturbance.

SPA Interest Feature 2: Wintering European White-fronted Goose

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. The five-year peak mean population size for the wintering European white-fronted goose population is no less than 3,002 individuals (i.e. the five-year peak mean between 1988/89 and 1992/93).
- II. The extent of saltmarsh at the Dumbles is maintained.
- III. The extent of intertidal mudflats and sandflats at Frampton Sands, Waveridge Sands and the Noose is maintained.
- IV. Greater than 25% cover of suitable soft-leaved herbs and grasses is maintained during the winter on saltmarsh areas.
- V. Unrestricted bird sightlines exceeding 200 m at feeding and roosting sites are maintained.
- VI. Aggregations of European white-fronted geese at feeding and roosting sites are not subject to significant disturbance.

SPA Interest Feature 3: Wintering Dunlin

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. The five-year peak mean population size for the wintering dunlin population is no less than 41,683 individuals (i.e. the five-year peak mean between 1988/89 and 1992/93).
- II. The extent of saltmarsh and associated strandlines is maintained.
- III. The extent of intertidal mudflats and sandflats is maintained.
- IV. The extent of hard substrate habitats is maintained.
- V. The extent of vegetation with a sward height of less than 10 cm throughout the saltmarsh is maintained.
- VI. The abundance and macro-distribution of suitable invertebrates within intertidal mudflats and sandflats is maintained.
- VII. The abundance and macro-distribution of suitable invertebrates within hard substrate habitats is maintained.
- VIII. Unrestricted bird sightlines exceeding 200 m at feeding and roosting sites are maintained.
- IX. Aggregations of dunlin at feeding and roosting sites are not subject to significant disturbance.

SPA Interest Feature 4: Wintering Redshank

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

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- I. The five-year peak mean population size for the wintering redshank population is no less than 2,013 individuals (i.e. the five-year peak mean between 1988/89 and 1992/93).
 - II. The extent of saltmarsh and associated strandlines is maintained.
 - III. The extent of intertidal mudflats and sandflats is maintained.
 - IV. The extent of hard substrate habitats is maintained.
 - V. The extent of vegetation with a sward height of less than 10 cm throughout the saltmarsh is maintained.
 - VI. The abundance and macro-distribution of suitable invertebrates within intertidal mudflats and sandflats is maintained.
 - VII. The abundance and macro-distribution of suitable invertebrates within hard substrate habitats is maintained.
 - VIII. Unrestricted bird sightlines exceeding 200 m at feeding and roosting sites are maintained.
 - IX. Aggregations of redshank at feeding and roosting sites are not subject to significant disturbance.
-

SPA Interest Feature 5: Wintering Shelduck

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. The five-year peak mean population size for the wintering shelduck population is no less than 2,892 individuals (i.e. the five-year peak mean between 1988/89 and 1992/93).
- II. The extent of saltmarsh is maintained.
- III. The extent of intertidal mudflats and sandflats is maintained.
- IV. The extent of hard substrate habitats is maintained.
- V. The abundance and macro-distribution of suitable invertebrates within intertidal mudflats and sandflats is maintained.
- VI. Unrestricted bird sightlines exceeding 200 m at feeding and roosting sites are maintained.
- VII. Aggregations of shelduck at feeding and roosting sites are not subject to significant disturbance.

SPA Interest Feature 6: Wintering Gadwall

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. The five-year peak mean population size for the wintering gadwall population is no less than 330 individuals (i.e. the five-year peak mean between 1988/89 and 1992/93).
- II. The extent of intertidal mudflats and sandflats is maintained.
- III. Unrestricted bird sightlines exceeding 200 m at feeding and roosting sites are maintained.
- IV. Aggregations of gadwall at feeding and roosting sites are not subject to significant disturbance.

SPA Interest Feature 7: Internationally Important Assemblage of Waterfowl

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:

- I. The five-year peak mean population size for the waterfowl assemblage is no less than 68,026 individuals (i.e. the five-year peak mean between 1988/89 and 1992/93).
- II. The extent of saltmarsh and associated strandlines is maintained.

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- III. The extent of intertidal mudflats and sandflats is maintained.
 - IV. The extent of hard substrate habitats is maintained.
 - V. The extent of vegetation with a sward height of less than 10 cm throughout the saltmarsh is maintained.
 - VI. The abundance and macro-scale distribution of suitable invertebrates within intertidal mudflats and sandflats is maintained.
 - VII. The abundance and macro-scale distribution of suitable invertebrates within hard substrate habitats is maintained.
 - VIII. Greater than 25% cover of suitable soft-leaved herbs and grasses during the winter on saltmarsh areas is maintained.
 - IX. Unrestricted bird sightlines exceeding 500 m at feeding and roosting sites are maintained.
 - X. Waterfowl aggregations at feeding and roosting sites are not subject to significant disturbance.

Severn Estuary Ramsar Conservation Objectives

Ramsar Interest Feature 1: Estuaries

The conservation objective for the “estuaries” feature of the Severn Estuary Ramsar Site is to maintain the feature in favourable condition, as defined by the conservation objective for the SAC “estuaries” feature”, in so far as these objectives

Ramsar Interest Feature 2: Assemblage of Migratory Fish Species

(Sea lamprey, river lamprey, twaite shad, allis shad, Atlantic salmon, sea trout and eel)

- I. The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition when, subject to natural processes, each of the following conditions is met:
- II. The migratory passage of both adults and juveniles of the assemblage of migratory fish species through the Severn Estuary between the Bristol Channel and their spawning rivers is not obstructed or impeded by physical barriers, changes in flow, or poor water quality.
- III. The size of the populations of the assemblage species within the Severn Estuary and the rivers draining into it is at least maintained and is at a level that is sustainable in the long term.
- IV. The abundance of prey species forming the principal food resources for the assemblage species within the estuary is maintained.
Toxic contaminants in the water column and sediment are below levels that would pose a risk to the ecological objectives described above.

Ramsar Interest Feature 3: Internationally Important Population of Waterfowl – Bewick's Swan

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition as defined by the conservation objective for SPA Interest Feature 1: Bewick's Swan.

Ramsar Interest Feature 4: Internationally Important Population of Waterfowl – European White-fronted Goose

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition as defined by the conservation objective for SPA Interest Feature 2: Wintering European White-fronted Goose.

Ramsar Interest Feature 5: Internationally Important Population of Waterfowl – Dunlin

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition as defined by the conservation objective for SPA Interest Feature 3: Wintering Dunlin.

Ramsar Interest Feature 6: Internationally Important Population of Waterfowl – Redshank

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition as defined by the conservation objective for SPA Interest Feature 4: Wintering Redshank.

Ramsar Interest Feature 7: Internationally Important Population of Waterfowl – Shelduck

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition as defined by the conservation objective for SPA Interest Feature 5: Wintering Shelduck.

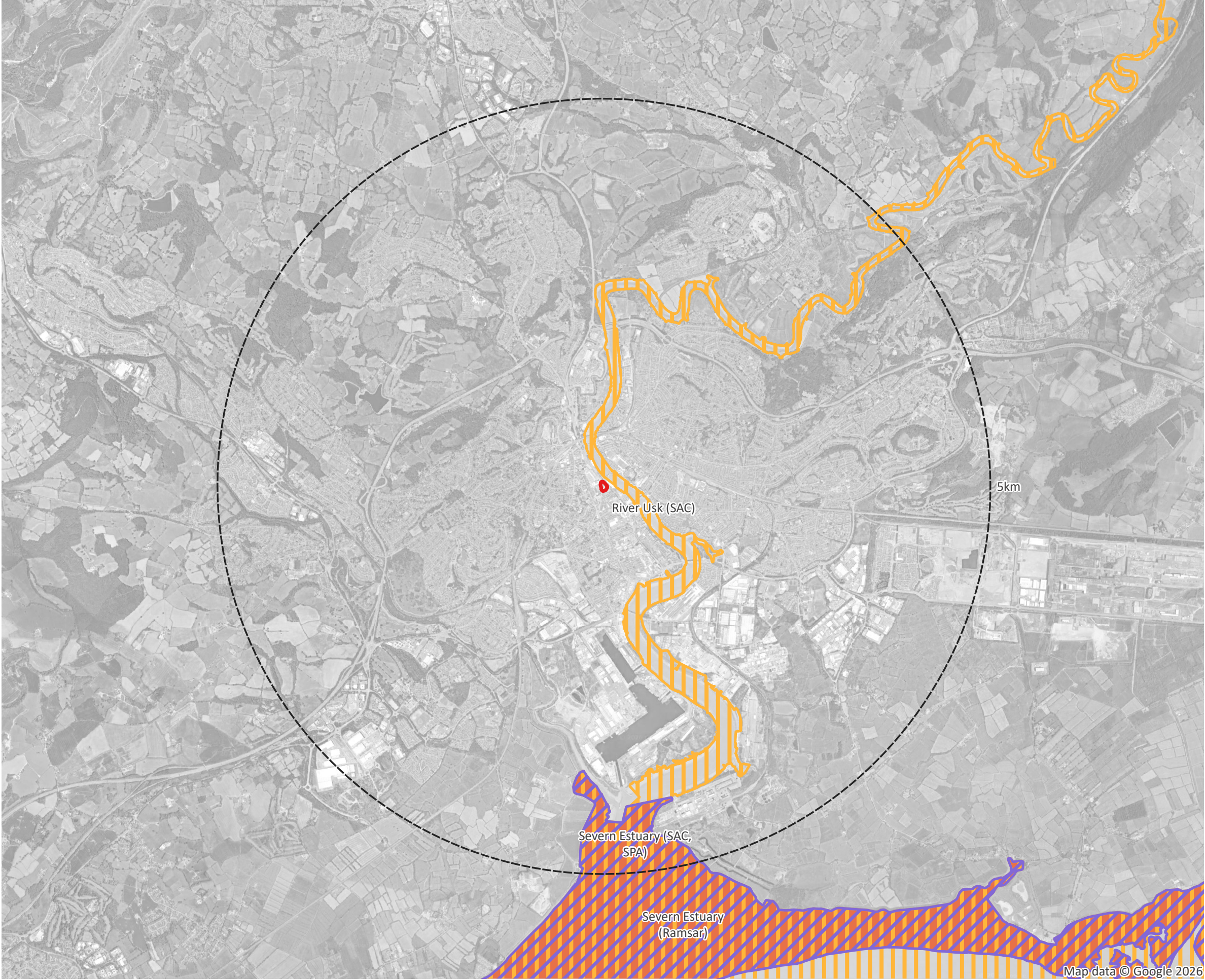
Ramsar Interest Feature 8: Internationally Important Population of Waterfowl – Gadwall

The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition as defined by the conservation objective for SPA Interest Feature 6: Wintering Gadwall.

Ramsar Interest Feature 9: Internationally Important Assemblage of Waterfowl

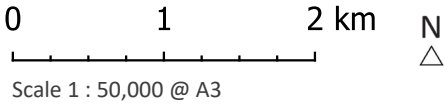
The feature will be considered to be in favourable condition as defined by the conservation objective for SPA Interest Feature 7: Internationally Important Assemblage of Waterfowl, with specific reference to the individual species and population figures that comprise the assemblage.

FIGURES



Legend:

- Site boundary
- Radial extent
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Ramsar site



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FIGURE 1
Designated Sites Plan

THE Landmark
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