

Ein cyf/Our ref: CAS-294225-R9L8
Eich cyf/Your ref: 25/0983

Newport City Council
Civic Centre
Newport
NP20 4UR

Dyddiad/Date: 17 December 2025

Annwyl Syr/Madam/Dear Sir/Madam,

BWRIAD/PROPOSAL: CHANGE OF USE OF EXISTING INDUSTRIAL BUILDING (USE CLASS B2) TO DATA CENTRE (USE CLASS B8) INCLUDING RECLADDING OF EXTERNAL ELEVATIONS, INSTALLATION OF ASSOCIATED PLANT AND EQUIPMENT, AND ANCILLARY WORKS.

LLEOLIAD/LOCATION: LIBERTY STEEL, CORPORATION ROAD, NEWPORT, NP19 4XE.

Thank you for consulting Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru (CNC)/Natural Resources Wales (NRW) about the above, which we received on 27 November 2025.

We have concerns with the application as submitted because inadequate information has been provided in support of the proposal. To overcome these concerns, you should seek further information from the applicant regarding flood risk. If this information is not provided, we would object to this planning application. Further details are provided below.

The planning application proposes a less vulnerable development. The Flood Map for Planning identifies the application site to be at risk of flooding and within Flood Zone 2 and 3 (Sea).

We refer you to Section 10 of Technical Advice Note 15: Development, flooding and coastal erosion, dated 2025 (TAN15) for advice on how you should consider this application in line with current planning policy. Our role is to provide you with detailed advice on the findings and conclusions of the Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) in relation to flooding from rivers and/or the sea, including the impact on flooding elsewhere. For advice on flood risk from surface water and or small watercourses you should consult with your Lead Local Flood Authority.

Therefore, we have reviewed the FCA undertaken by Egniol dated November 2025 referenced ECL.10544.R05.001. Our advice to you is that the FCA fails to demonstrate

that the potential risks and consequences of flooding are manageable for the reasons explained below.

We note that the data centre will be installed upon a new sub-structure fitted within the existing steelworks building allowing the data centre to be located on first floor with parking provided at ground floor.

We note that the FCA states the topography within the site and immediately external to the existing steelworks building is 8m AOD. The first and second floor heights are above ground levels are 3.9m and 7.8m giving estimated floor levels of 11.0 and 15.8m AOD respectively.

Section 4 within the FCA discusses climate change implications for the site but not within lifetime of development context. Within section 5 of the FCA the flood risk for the site is discussed, the Flood Maps for Planning (FMfP) outlines are provided, and it confirms that River Usk hydraulic modelling is available from NRW. It states that “hydraulic river modelling and related work is planned in order to determine modelled flood levels and flood depths within the site or immediately adjacent”.

At present, rather than using the modelled information, the FCA anticipates that design flood levels are likely to range between 9.75 – 10.75m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) across the wider site. This implies that the flood levels are lower than the stated first-floor levels where the data centre will be located.

It states that hydraulic river modelling is to be undertaken as part of the second stage of design to establish accurate flood levels and depths for the site and adjoining areas. We would expect this assessment to be carried out prior to determination so that a full assessment of the risk of flooding over the lifetime of the development is undertaken.

Whilst the proposed first floor levels is likely to be above extreme flood levels given the elevated nature, we cannot confirm the depth of flooding on site, nor provide a technical flood risk response in line with TAN 15.

The ground floor car park will be formed at the existing level, expected to be circa 8m AOD. Without hydraulic modelling we cannot confirm that the risk of flooding will be to the site. We advise that the site as a whole should be designed to be flood free.

The FCA does state that the centre will include construction techniques that are flood resilient and/or flood resistance in accordance with best practice, however there are no details within the FCA regarding emergency plans. Whilst we recognise the nature of the change of use, we would suggest a more detailed assessment is undertaken to ensure occupiers are aware of the flood risk over the lifetime of the development so it can be designed accordingly to best mitigate against tidal flooding and that any emergency plans are appropriate.

Paragraph 15.4 of TAN15 is clear that where insufficient information is provided, the planning authority should use its powers to request further information. Furthermore, should you be minded to go against our advice, you should inform us at the earliest opportunity prior to granting consent and allow reasonable time for us to make further representations.

Please note, if an amended FCA is not submitted or any subsequent amended FCA fails to demonstrate that the consequences of flooding can be acceptably managed over the lifetime of the development, then we are likely to **object** to the application.

Protected Sites

The development site is located 80m from the River Usk Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and River Usk Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

We have considered the Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report (by Egniol Planning Ltd, dated November 2025) submitted in support of the above application and note it concludes that there are no identified impact pathways that could give rise to likely significant effects on the River Usk SAC or any other European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects

From the information provided, we consider that the proposal is not likely to have a significant effect on the SAC. Our advice may change should modifications be made to the proposed development prior to the determination of the application. If there are any changes to the proposed development which may affect the consideration of potential environmental impacts, please consult us again before you determine the application.

As the competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is for your Authority to carry out the test of Likely Significant Effects for the proposed development. Should you conclude that the proposal is likely to have a significant effect on a SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, an appropriate assessment must be made on the implications of the project for that site in view of its conservation objectives. You must for the purposes of the assessment consult NRW and have regard to any representations we make within such reasonable time as you specify.

Protected Species

No ecological information has been submitted in support of this application. However, we note that there are records of great crested newts and otters in the vicinity of the site. We recommend you seek the advice of your Authority's internal ecological adviser about the requirement for further information to be submitted in support of the application, the need for bespoke surveys and the scope of further information, where required.

Other Matters

The advice in this letter relates to matters which are included on our [consultation topics list](#). We do not rule out the potential for the proposed development to affect other environmental interests that are not included on this list.

We advise the applicant that, in addition to planning permission, it is their responsibility to ensure they secure all other permits/consents/licences relevant to their development. Please refer to our [website](#) for further details.

Advice for the Developer

Pollution Prevention

Due to the proximity of the site to watercourses, all works at the site must be carried out in accordance with Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) 5: Works and maintenance in or near water, and GPP 6: Working on construction and demolition sites, which are available on the [NetRegs website](#).

If you have any queries about the above, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yn gywir / Yours faithfully,

K Murphy

Cynghorydd - Cynllunio Datblygu/Advisor - Development Planning
Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg a byddwn yn ymateb yn Gymraeg, heb i hynny arwain at oedi./Correspondence in Welsh is welcomed, and we will respond in Welsh without it leading to a delay.