

Ein cyf/Our ref: CAS-312509-Z1M6
Eich cyf/Your ref: 26/0191

Newport City Council
Civic Centre
Newport
NP20 4UR

Dyddiad/Date: 29 July 2026

Annwyl Syr/Madam/Dear Sir/Madam,

Bwriad/Proposal: Outline planning application for the creation of a secure compound and the installation of external plant and equipment to create a modular data centre together with associated equipment and structures, engineering operations, staff accommodation and associated works

Lleoliad/Location: Liberty Steel, Corporation Road, Newport, NP19 4XE

Thank you for consulting Natural Resources Wales (NRW) on the revised Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report (received 06/07/2026) and your Authority's Habitats Regulations Assessment (received 29/06/2026) for the above application.

Habitats Regulations Assessment

We have reviewed the submitted 'Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report, Proposed Modular Data Centre Development Liberty Steel Works, Corporation Road, Newport, prepared for Era4 Limited' published 1 July 2026. This concludes that the proposed development is not likely to have a significant effect on the River Usk Special Area of Conservation (SAC) or Severn Estuary SAC/Special Protection Area (SPA)/Ramsar site, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects and therefore concludes that an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is not required. We have previously advised that we have concerns that an adverse effect from the proposed development on protected sites cannot be ruled out, and this position remains. We also understand that the application site has been cleared.

We have also considered your Authority's AA, contained within the draft report relating to the proposed application prepared by the case officer, starting at paragraph 8.17. Our response should be taken as NRW's formal representation, as the appropriate nature conservation body, to your AA under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

The AA concludes that subject to the implementation of recommended planning conditions, including relating to a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), noise assessment and lighting scheme, there will be no likely adverse effect on the integrity of the River Usk SAC and Severn Estuary SAC/SPA. We agree with the conclusions of the AA that, subject to the implementation of the recommended planning conditions there will be no likely adverse effect on the integrity of the River Usk SAC and Severn Estuary SAC/SPA.

We note that your Authority's HRA does not include consideration of the Severn Estuary Ramsar site. Although Ramsar sites are not legally subject to the Habitats Regulations, it is Welsh Government and UK Government policy that they should be treated as though they are national site network sites (SAC and SPA), including with respect to HRA and to any non-SAC/SPA features. We therefore advise that your Authority's HRA should include consideration of the Severn Estuary Ramsar site and its features.

Our advice in this response relates to the Applicant's revised HRA Screening Report and your Authority's own draft HRA only. We refer you to our previous responses dated 30 April 2026 (our reference: CAS-304537-D5Z2) and 09 June 2026 (our reference: CAS-310462-T3W3) for our advice on additional matters.

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.

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

Yn gywir / Yours faithfully,

Annabelle Evans

Cynghorydd - Cynllunio Datblygu/Advisor - Development Planning

Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru/Natural Resources Wales

E-bost/E-mail: southeastplanning@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk

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.