

INTERNAL MEMORANDUM

To: David Cross
From: Ecologist
Ask for: Matt Davies
Ext: 5278
Memo #: 2

Date: 09th March 2020

SUBJECT: P/20/0031 – Land at Trago Mills, Swansea Road, Merthyr Tydfil

(Proposed development – construction of petrol filling station with canopy and retail building, with associated auto carwash, jet wash facilities and valeting air/water facilities)

Considering recent aerial imagery, the construction footprint appeared to consist mostly of bare ground, with some elements of sparse vegetation.

Within 1km of the site there are known records for protected species, e.g., bats (closest record – 597m from site and closest roost record – c1.0km from site), otter, great crested newt (closest record 535m from site), invertebrates (including Marsh Fritillary butterfly), birds (including Schedule 1 species), reptiles, amphibians, hedgehog, fish, fungi & slime moulds; vascular plants.

There are 14 designated sites within 1.0km of the site (1x Site of Special Scientific Interest; 10x Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation; 1x Ancient Semi Natural Woodland; 1x Regionally Important Geological Site; 1x NRW Priority Area (Heathland and Grassland)).

A site visit demonstrated the development footprint to comprise bare ground with a negligible amount of succession by pioneer species. A PEA will not be required in this instance however, in accordance with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 enhancement of the site in terms of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience will be required.

This planning application seeks to construct an alternative petrol filling station design to that approved under P/03/0130. Therefore, this provides an opportunity to redesign the station in order to maximise biodiversity gains.

In my view, a more radical design could be achieved, perhaps in the style of the petrol filling station at the Gloucester Services on the M5, which incorporates green roofs – this uses a bespoke perennial wildflower seed mix to match native species, but not grow excessively, minimising the amount of maintenance necessary (a hydroseeding system was used). This approach has minimised the environmental impact and blended the buildings into the surrounding habitat.

Regardless of whether a radical redesign (as outlined above) is acceptable, there needs to be enhancement of the site footprint in accordance with the EWA and green

roof(s) would be a good way to achieve this.

In addition, there will need to be enhancement off site on the sides of the plateau that the site sits upon. The site boundary should be enlarged to include the plateau sides (which I assume is also within the ownership of the applicant). A landscape plan should be submitted for approval.