



Pennant Walters

Mynydd y Glyn

Dormouse Survey Report 2022



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October 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1 Project background

Pennant Walters is seeking planning permission for a wind farm for up to seven turbines on land at Mynydd y Glyn (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’). The Site lies within the Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council administrative area and is located approximately 3km west of Pontypridd, National Grid Reference (NGR) ST 03626 89459. The Site comprises a plateau of extensive semi-improved acid grassland used for grazing livestock with steep-sloping sides and measures approximately 182.27 hectares (ha) (see **Figure 1.1, Appendix A**).

1.2 Purpose of this report

The scoping response from Natural Resources Wales (NRW) outlined that dormouse should be considered as part of the impact assessment as this species may be present on Site; this report details the methods and results from dormouse surveys conducted on Site and has been prepared to inform an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) for the Site.

1.3 Site context

The Site is situated within the Rhondda Valley and is located approximately 3km west of Pontypridd. The Site comprises a plateau of extensive semi-improved acid grassland used for grazing livestock with steep-sloping sides. Blanket bog is present within the Site, which is designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). The site is bordered by habitats synonymous with those on-Site, as well as conifer plantation woodland in the northeast. In the wider landscape surrounding land use is dominated by livestock grazing agriculture, with plantation conifer woodland managed for forestry, and small urban settlements.

2. Methods

2.1 Desk study

A data-gathering and review exercise was undertaken by Wood in 2020, this report has reviewed the obtained information that is relevant to dormice:

- South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) – Records of dormouse within a 2km radius of the Site boundary; and
- Examining aerial imagery on Google Earth to determine suitable habitat and connectivity to the Site¹.

2.2 Field surveys

Habitat assessment

Site visits were undertaken on 29 April and 01 May 2020 by a suitably qualified ecologist, where on-site habitats were evaluated for their suitability to support dormouse nesting, commuting and foraging in advance of the scheme design being finalised. Following the evolution of the scheme design an additional habitat-based assessment was conducted on 12 and 24 of August 2022, based on the layout of the Proposed Development. The assessment was undertaken under guidance provided by the Dormouse Conservation Handbook². Relevant species legislation can be found in **Appendix B**.

Dormouse nest survey

In 2022 a dormouse survey was conducted using nest tubes, survey locations focussed on areas of most suitable dormouse habitat which were either within or connected to areas which may be impacted by proposed vegetation works. Surveyed habitats comprised the following:

- woodland edge habitat;
- tree line; and
- scrub.

A total of 75 nest tubes were deployed, with the survey area split into two survey areas. Tubes were set out at approximately 20m intervals. A summary of the distribution and tubes is presented in **Table 2.1** and illustrated on **Figure 2.1**.

The nest tubes were installed on Site in suitable vegetation on 26 May 2022, with survey visits undertaken between **July and October 2022**, inclusive. Surveys were carried out in accordance with the Dormouse Conservation Handbook³, by a licensed ecologist (Katie Watkins - S090821/1). During these monthly visits, any signs of dormouse, including individuals, nests and feeding signs (e.g. gnawed nuts) were recorded. Survey dates and weather conditions are shown in **Table 2.2**.

¹ Google Earth accessed 06 December 2021.

² Bright, P., Morris, P., and Mitchell-Jones, T. (2006) The dormouse conservation handbook 2nd Edition. English Nature.

³ Bright P., Morris P., Mitchell-Jones T. 2006. *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook second edition*, English Nature

Table 2.1 Dormouse survey layout.

Survey Section	Number of nest tubes	Description
A	50	50 tubes were deployed in woodland edge habitat and hedgerow.
B	25	20 tubes were deployed in hedgerow and 5 tube were deploy in scrub.

Table 2.2 Survey dates and weather conditions.

Survey Date	Start Time	End Time	Temperature	Wind	Rain	Cloud Cover
05/07/2022	10:00	13:30	17 °C / 18°C	Calm	None	80%
03/08/2022	09:00	12:00	18 °C / 20°C	Light	None	75%
01/09/2022	12:00	15:30	19 °C / 21°C	Light	None	60%
05/10/2022	10:00	13:00	16 °C / 18°C	Light	None	95%

Best practice guidance provides an index of the probability of detecting dormouse presence in tubes in each month between April and November using a minimum of 50 nest tubes as standard. Using this scoring system, a survey effort of 20 is required to meet the minimum standards for detecting dormouse presence. The survey effort at the site achieved a survey score of 22, which is considered to have met the effort indicated in the guidance as shown in **Table 2.3** below.

Table 2.3 Index of probability score per month for nest tubes deployed between April and November.

Month	Index of probability score (Bright et al. 2006) for 50 tubes	Score achieved during the survey
April	1	0
May	4	4
June	2	2
July	2	2
August	5	5
September	7	7
October	2	2
November ⁴	2	0

⁴ A November survey will be undertaken, points not currently included.

Month	Index of probability score (Bright et al. 2006) for 50 tubes	Score achieved during the survey
Total Score	25	22

2.3 Limitations

No limitations were recorded during these surveys. Livestock were noted to be grazing in the grassland across the Site, including cattle, which limited access to some areas based on health and safety concerns. However, this did not prevent access to suitable dormouse habitat or survey nest tubes as there was alternative access available.

3. Results

3.1 Desk study

No records of dormouse were returned by SEWBReC within 2km of the Site.

3.2 Field surveys

Habitat assessment

The Site is formed by a large hill which supports a range of habitats with a heavily sheep grazed plateau dominated by semi-improved acid grassland and poor semi-improved grassland to the southeast. These areas are intersected by dry-stone walls and fencing for livestock control, with wet heath/acid grassland mosaic and blanket bog also identified in the centre of the Site. Dense and scattered bracken was recorded in a large continuous block to the east of the Site and frequently along the access route to the west. There is a small block of continuous scrub to the south and a parcel of scattered scrub to the west of Site. A short section of broad-leaved tree line is adjacent to the A4233 to the west of the Site, this consisted of young hazel, hawthorn and field maple but is separated from the wider landscape by Collenna Road to the south. A hazel hedgerow is adjacent to the Site in the southeast and is connected to the wider landscape however the hedgerow shows signs of being over managed and in places has become gappy reducing its suitability for dormouse.

The habitats present within the Site are not considered to be typical of habitat that would support dormouse. There are no hedgerows present, the continuous scrub in the southeast of the Site and scattered scrub to the west is low in species diversity, has a sparse understorey, is limited in area and has no connectivity to potential off-Site habitat that could support the species.

Dormouse nest survey

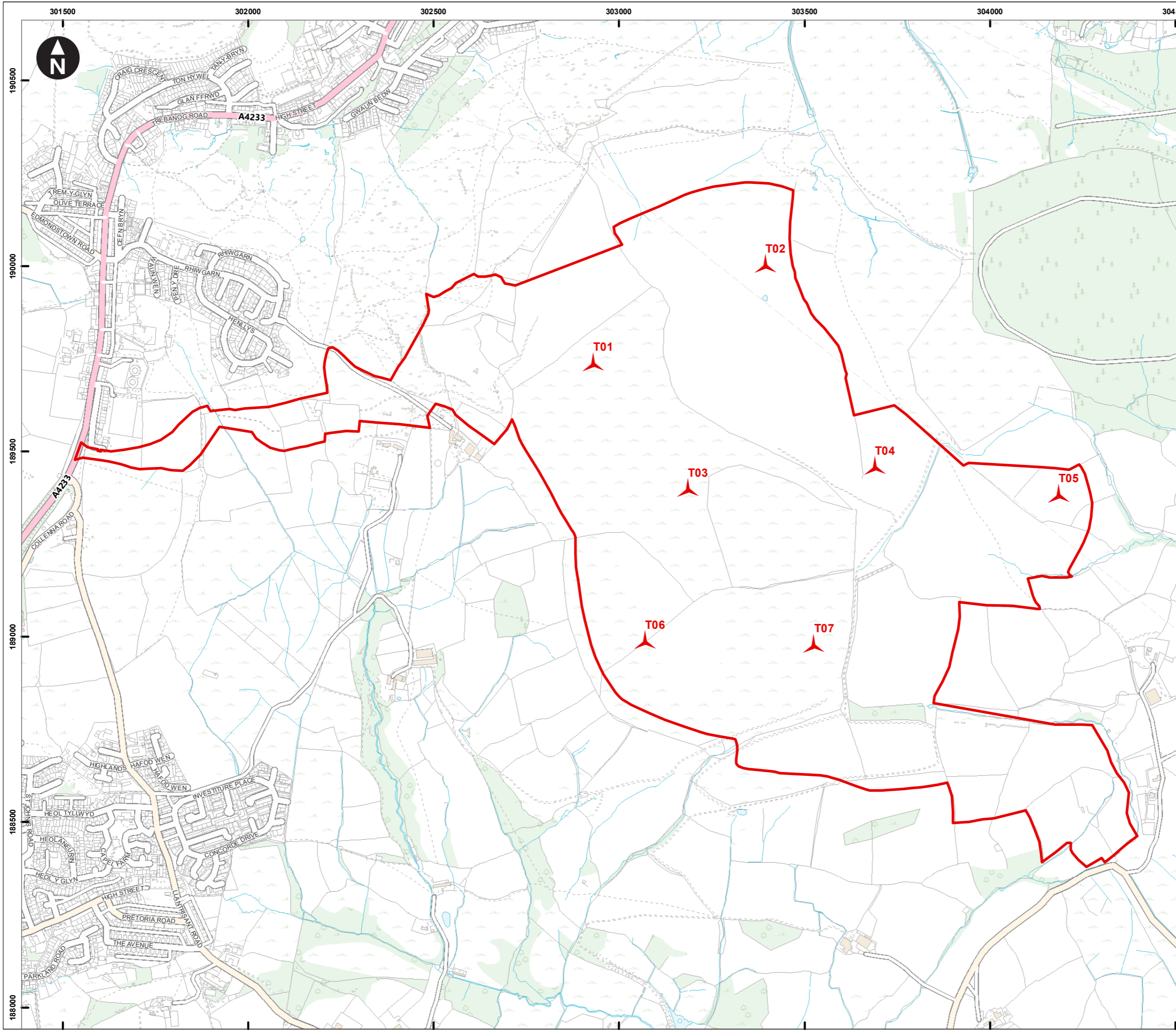
The nest tube survey recorded no evidence of dormouse on Site. This included no evidence of any individuals, nests or feeding signs (e.g. gnawed nuts). Other small mammal species were recorded using the tubes. The detailed results of each survey visit can be found in **Table C.1, Appendix C**.

4. Conclusions

A dormouse survey of the Site was undertaken comprising a desk study, habitat-based assessment and nest tube survey. The desk study found no records for dormouse within 2km of the Site. The habitat assessment recorded sub optimal habitat for dormouse within the Site. The dormouse surveys recorded no evidence of dormouse presence on or adjacent to the Site, indicating the likely absence of the species.

Appendix A

Figures



- Key
- Site boundary
 - ▲ Proposed turbine location

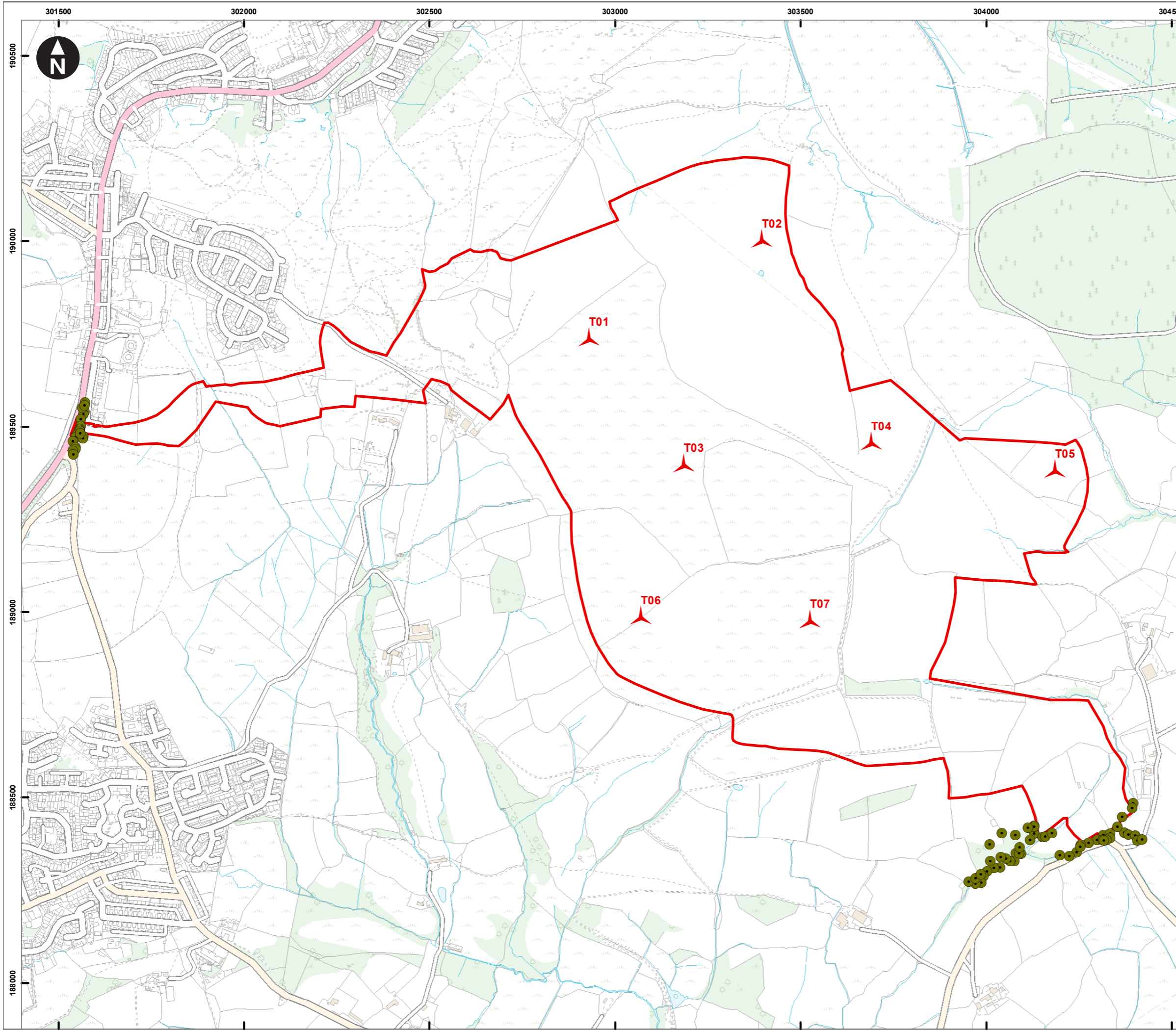
0 100 200 300 400 500 600 m
 Scale at A3: 1:10,003
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 0100031673

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Figure 1.1
Site location

October 2022





- Key
- Site boundary
 - Proposed turbine location
 - Nest tube location

0 100 200 300 400 500 600 m
Scale at A3: 1:10,000
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Figure 2.1
Nest tube locations

October 2022



Appendix B

Projected Species Legislation

All wild mammals (including rabbits and foxes)

Under the *Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996* it is an offence intentionally to cause unnecessary suffering to any wild mammal.

Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)

Dormouse is listed in Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended). This species is afforded full protection under Section 9(4) of the Act and Regulation 43 of the Regulations. These make it an offence, *inter alia*, to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal;
- Deliberately disturb any such animal, in particular in such a way as to be likely to:
 - ▶ Impair their ability to survive, breed or reproduce, or rear or nurture their young;
 - ▶ Impair their ability to hibernate or migrate; and
 - ▶ Affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of that species.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any such animal;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any of these animals while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that any of these animals uses for shelter or protection.

Appendix C

Dormouse Survey Results

Table C1 Dormouse survey results

Date	Tube	Dormouse present?	Sex	Age	Notes
01/09/2022	B25	No	-	-	Unconfirmed start of mammal nest – Likely wood mouse
05/10/2022	B25	No	-	-	Wood mouse nest
05/10/2022	B23	No	-	-	Male adult wood mouse within nest

