



Craig y Perthi Solar Farm

Environmental Statement

Appendix 6.3 Dormouse Survey Report

Prepared for



JBM Solar Projects 25 Limited

July 2023
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Document Control

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Dormouse Surveys
Craig y Perthi Solar Farm
January 2023

A report by
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Report details

Central grid reference: ST 392 876
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Declaration of compliance

BS 42020:2013

This study has been undertaken in accordance with British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity, Code of practice for planning and development.

Code of Professional Conduct

The information which we have prepared 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.

Validity of survey data and report

The findings of this report are valid for 36 months from the date of survey. If work has not commenced within this period, an updated survey by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required.

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1. Introduction

Western Ecology has been commissioned to complete a Dormouse survey of land at Craig y Perth near Whitson. Proposals are for a solar farm and associated infrastructure. The survey area relates to scrub/tree management along ditch margins.

1.1. Survey aims

The aim of the survey is to determine presence or potential absence of Dormice on the assessment site, allowing assessment of the potential impacts of any proposals for the assessment site, and identify any constraints that may be applicable to its development in the future. Therefore, any further surveys and mitigation proposed within this report, will be in relation to pre-construction works, i.e. clearance works.

Where impacts are considered significant¹, mitigation will be proposed based on the mitigation hierarchy suggested in Paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework and detailed in Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 8-018-20140306 of National Planning Practice Guidance.

1.2. Survey constraints

All surveys were completed at an optimal time of year to detect the presence or potential absence of Dormice.

1.3. Legislation and policy guidance

The following international and national conservation legislation is relevant to Dormice and their habitat:

- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations, 2011;
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended);
- Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 as being of principal importance for the purposes of conserving biodiversity.
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

¹ For the purposes of this report, a practical approach has been taken to define the term 'significant'. If an effect is sufficiently important to be given weight in the planning process, or to warrant the imposition of a planning condition, it is likely to be 'significant' in the context of the level under consideration (BSI, 2013).

2. Survey methodology

2.1. Desktop survey

The desktop survey collated existing biological records for Dormice from adjacent areas. This comprises an important part of the assessment process, providing information on ecological issues that may not be apparent during the site survey.

Consultees for the data search included:

- South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre - records of Dormice within 5km of the centre of the site.

2.2. Dormouse nesting tube survey locations

The dormouse survey was undertaken following best practice guidance for surveying dormice using nest tubes, as set out within *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook* (Bright, *et al*, 2006).

Fifty Dormice nest-tubes were installed on 30th March 2022 with tube locations shown in Map 1.

Tubes were placed within the hedgerows, between 1 – 2.5 meters in height, with the entrance to the tube facing inwards towards the centre of the hedgerow. Tubes were also placed on near-horizontal branches of woody scrub, and trees within the broad-leaved woodland areas. Each tube was numerically referenced (the number written on the backend of each tube) with a permanent marker.

Nest-tubes are not adequate for dormice to breed in, as there is limited space to raise young. They are only suitable for short-term nesting and use as a survey method to identify presence or potential absence.

2.3. Sampling methodology

Nest-tubes were placed in the hedgerows and inspected for the presence of dormice or dormouse nesting material by a licensed dormouse ecologist, for the duration of April to November 2022. All nest-tubes were inspected and recorded on dormouse survey sheets.

There is an established scoring system to determine the thoroughness of any nest-tube survey (see Table 1). All the monthly scores for the period over which the tubes are deployed, are added together. Potential absence should not be based on a search effort score of less than 20 (Chanin & Woods, 2003). This is the index of probability of finding dormice nesting material in nest-tubes in any one month.

However, when Dormice are proven present, survey effort can stop.

Table 1. Nest-tube scoring system (The Dormouse Conservation Handbook, 2nd Ed.)

Month	Index of probability
April	1
May	4
June	2
July	2
August	5
September	7
October	2
November	2
Total	25

3. Results

3.1. Desktop survey

The biological record search returned 82 records for Dormouse within 5km of the Site. The closest records are from 2018 and associated with the rail corridor to the south of the proposed development, 400 metres from the survey area.

3.2. Dormouse tube survey

The tubes were checked for dormouse nests and dormice during site visits (see Table 2). The surveys were conducted following best practice guidance, for surveying dormice using nest tubes as set out within *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook* (Bright, *et al*, 2006).

Table 2. Dormouse survey results

Date	Comments
28 th April 2022	No evidence of dormice
25 th May 2022	No evidence of dormice
29 th June 2022	No evidence of dormice
27 th July 2022	No evidence of dormice
25 th August 2022	No evidence of dormice
27 th September 2022	No evidence of dormice
30 th November 2022	No evidence of dormice

3.3. Summary of survey results

No evidence of Dormouse was found during the survey. An index of probability of score of 25 was achieved and the active season was included in the survey. A score of 20 is required to allow confidence in an assessment that Dormice are likely absent.

It is likely that Dormice are absent from the assessment site.

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Legend

- Proposed development area
- Dormouse tubes



Title: Map 1. Location of Dormouse tubes

Project: Craig y Perth solar farm -
lapwng mitigation area

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4. Evaluation of the site for Dormouse

It is likely that Dormice are absent from the assessment site.

The proposed scrub/tree removal is unlikely to have an adverse effect on Dormice.

5. Recommendations

Dormice are likely to be absent from the assessment site. Neither a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence nor method statement will be required for the proposed development.

References

British Standard 42020: 2013. Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development. British Standards Institution, London.

Bright, P, *et al.* 2006. The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (2nd Edition).

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