

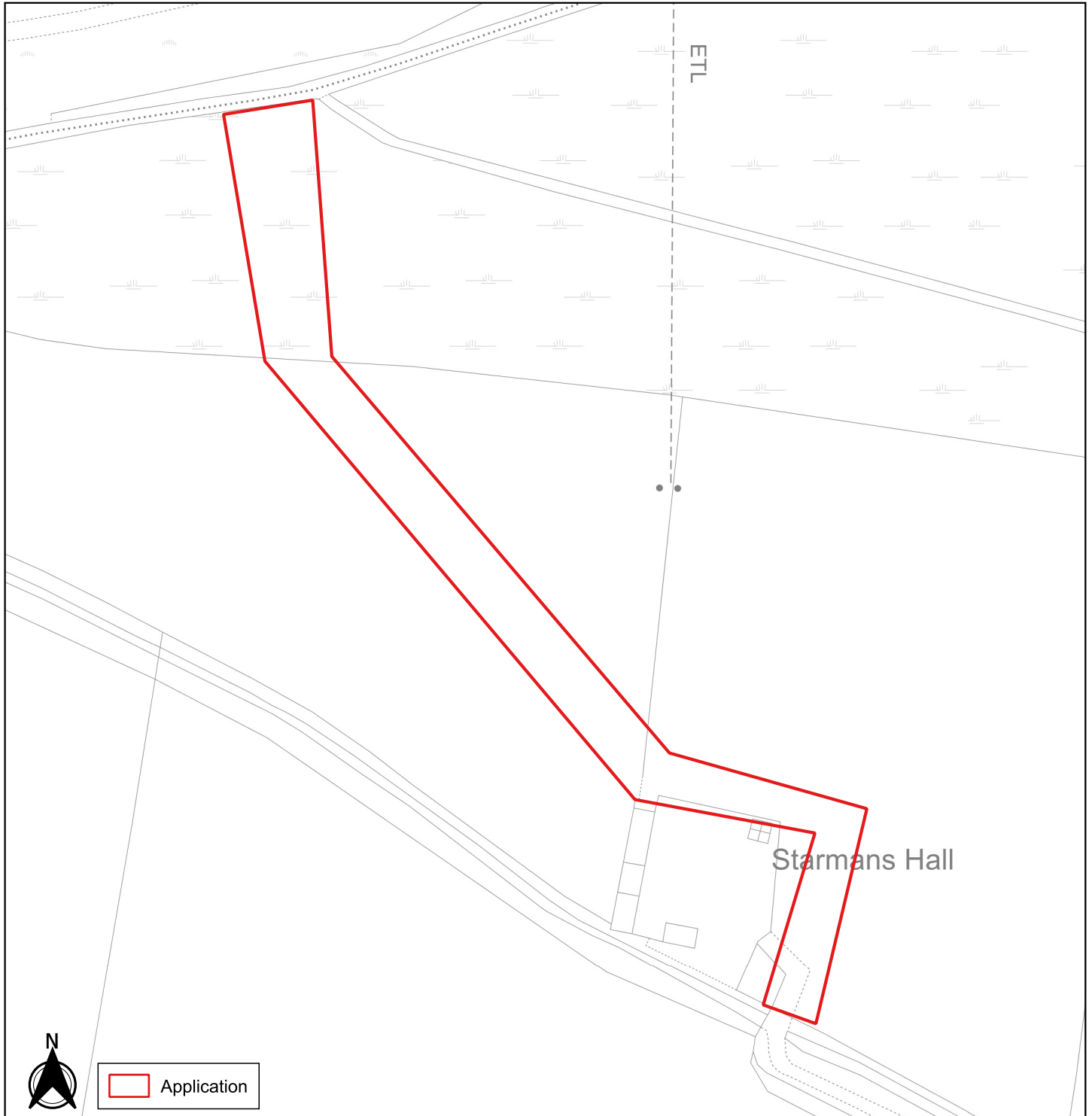
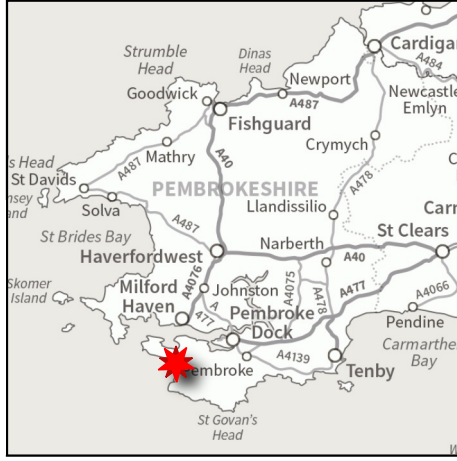
NP/24/0092/FUL

Land at Castlemartin Corse, adjacent to Starmans Hall, Castlemartin, Pembroke, Pembrokeshire, SA71 5HW
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Parc Cenedlaethol
Arfordir Penfro
Pembrokeshire Coast
National Park

Graddfa/Scale: 1:1,250



PLANNING COMMITTEE

Ref No: NP/24/0092/FUL

Proposed Development: Installation of tilting weir, walkway structure and boardwalk

Site Location: Land at Castlemartin Corse, adjacent to Starmans Hall, Castlemartin, Pembroke, Pembrokeshire, SA71 5HW

Applicant: The National Trust

This application is being presented to the Development Management Committee as the Director with responsibility considers that it raises matters of public and / or Member interest. A call-in request from a Local Member was received in relation to this application but after the 21-day deadline.

Summary:

The National Trust have been looking at potential wetland restoration opportunities at Castlemartin Corse Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is part of the National Trust's property at Gupton Farm, Pembrokeshire. The primary aim is to restore and establish carbon rich habitats within the SSSI.

To enable this, it is proposed to install a water control structure in the form of a tilting weir within the main river that flows through the SSSI reedbed and connects to the Castlemartin Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Attached to the tilting weir would be a walkway, and a boardwalk is also proposed to allow maintenance access to the weir.

The site is in a sensitive location within the SSSI, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, the South Pembrokeshire Coast National Landscape Character Area (NLCA). The site is also close to the Limestone Coast of South West Wales Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Castlemartin Coast Special Protection Area (SPA).

The application is considered to comply with the requirements of both National and Local Planning policy and is recommended for approval. A draft HRA has been undertaken but not at the time of report writing agreed by NRW, delegated authority to approve subject to this being agreed is therefore sought.

1. Consultee Response

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| • Stackpole & Castlemartin Community Council: | No Response |
| • Angle Community Council: | No Response |
| • CADW - Protection & Policy: | No Response |
| • PCNPA - Planning Ecologist: | No Response |
| • PCC - Drainage Engineers: | Informative |
| • Natural Resources Wales: | Conditional Consent |
| • PCNPA - Access Manager: | No Adverse Comments |
| • PCC - Coastal and Rivers Engineer | No Adverse Comments |

2. Public Response

A site notice and neighbour notification letters were posted in accordance with requirements of the *Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) Order 2012*. No representations have been received.

3. Policies considered

National Policy

All planning applications in Wales need to be determined in accordance with the statutory National Development Plan:

- [Future Wales: The National Plan 2040](#) (FW)
- [Planning Policy Wales 12](#) (PPW12).

Technical Advice Notes

The Future Wales Plan should be seen and read as a whole, and in conjunction with National planning policy in the form of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) as well as considering the following Welsh Government Technical Advice Notes (TAN's)

www.gov.wales/technical-advice-notes:

- TAN 5 – Nature Conservation and Planning
- TAN 15 – Development and Flood Risk

Local Development Plan 2 (Adopted September 2020)

Additionally, within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, The Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) is also the relevant development plan with the following Policies being applicable to this proposal. These policies can be viewed on the Policies page of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park website: <https://www.pembrokeshirecoast.wales/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/LDP-Text-for-Adoption-Web.pdf>

- Policy 01 (National Park Purposes and Duty)
- Policy 08 (Special Qualities)
- Policy 11 (Nationally Protected Sites and Species)
- Policy 14 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park)
- Policy 29 (Sustainable Design)
- Policy 30 (Amenity)
- Policy 32 (Surface Water Drainage)
- Policy 59 (Sustainable Transport)
- Policy 60 (Impacts of traffic)

These policies can be viewed on the Policies page of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park website: <https://www.pembrokeshirecoast.wales/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/LDP-Text-for-Adoption-Web.pdf>

LDP2 Supplementary Planning Guidance

In addition, the Authority produces Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) on various topics, and these may be material considerations in the determination of any future application made. In respect of the proposal the most relevant SPG's are:

- Biodiversity
- Landscape
- Minerals Safeguarding

4. Constraints

- Special Area of Conservation - within 500m
- Special Protection Area - within 500m

- Site of Special Scientific Interest - within 50m
- Ancient Monument - within 500m
- Potential for surface water flooding
- Recreation Character Areas
- Affordable Housing Submarkets
- Within Site of Special Scientific Interest consult NRW / Planning Ecologist_20m
- Landscape Character Area
- Special Area of Conservation - within 50m

5. Relevant Planning History

- No relevant history

6. Officer's Appraisal

Site and Proposed development

The site is located approximately 150 metres north of Starman's Hall, the B4319, Stackpole and Castlemartin. This is a countryside location comprising of a stream and wetland. The proposed development will introduce a tilting weir as set out in the attached plans to increase the size of the wetland area with the aim of improving water quality and increasing biodiversity.

Current Proposal

Insert details of site and development, namely: the proposal comprises:

A boardwalk measuring approximately 50m in length constructed of recycled plastic piles measuring 5500mm x 100mm x 100mm

Tilting Weir constructed of sheet piles approximately 9.7m wide and approximately 4400mm high with walkway over.

The walkway and board walk are for access and maintenance only and will not be open to the public.

7. Key Issues

The application raises the following planning matters:

- Policy and Principle of Development
- Siting, Design, and Impact upon the Special Qualities of the National Park
- Amenity and Privacy
- Biodiversity Protected Sites & Landscaping
- Access and Parking
- Surface Water Drainage
- Green Infrastructure

(a) Policy and Principle of Development:

Section 38 of *The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004* requires that in determining a planning application the determination must be in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan for the National Park comprises Future Wales - The National Plan 2040 (FW) and the Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2).

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (FW), was adopted on 24th February 2021 and is the National Development Framework for Wales, and the national tier of the Development Plan. Policy 4 (Supporting Rural Communities) of FW states that Strategic and Local Development Plans must identify their rural communities, assess their needs, and set out policies to support them.

On page 104, Future Wales states that: '*National Park Authorities are unique planning entities with a specific remit to reflect the distinctive characteristics of their areas...and that Future Wales policies respect the functions of National Parks in terms of their statutory purposes...*'.

The primary objective of PPW12 is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of Wales, as required by the *Planning (Wales) Act 2015*, the *Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015* and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty.

A well-functioning planning system is fundamental for sustainable development and achieving sustainable places. PPW12 promotes action at all levels of the planning process which is conducive to maximising its contribution to the well-being of Wales and its communities.

The planning application proposes less vulnerable development, namely a tilting weir, boardwalk and walkway structure. Flood Risk Map confirms the site to be partially within Zone C2 of the Development Advice Map (DAM) contained in Technical Advice Note (TAN) 15: Development and Flood Risk (2004). The Flood Map for Planning identifies the application site to be at risk of flooding and falls partially into Flood Zone 2 Rivers and Flood Zone 3 Sea.

Section 6 of TAN15 requires the Local Planning Authority to determine whether the development at this location is justified, and sets out tests in section 6.2 of TAN15.

The final test (iv) is for the applicant to demonstrate through the submission of an Flood Consequences Assessment (FCA) that the potential consequences of flooding can be managed to an acceptable level.

The FCA ('National Trust – Castlemartin Corse – Flood Consequences Assessment' by JBA Consulting, dated January 2024, version 2) shows that the risks and consequences of flooding are manageable to an acceptable level. NRW have no objection on flood risk grounds, to the application as submitted.

NRW are happy with the principle of development within the flood zone and Officers consider the proposal complies with relevant National Policy on development within the flood zone.

Policy 01 (National Park Purposes and Duty) supports development proposals within the National Park which are compatible with the two National Park purposes which include the conservation and enhancement of the National Park and promotion of the public understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities. These purposes are considered alongside the duty to foster the economic and social well-being of local communities. The proposal is considered to be compatible with the National Park purposes and duty.

The restoration of habitats within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is supported in principle by Future Wales, PPW, TAN 5, Policies 8 (Special Qualities) and 11 (Nationally Protected Sites and Species) of LDP2, the Biodiversity SPG and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Management Plan (NPMP). Compliance with Policy 8 (Special Qualities) and Policy 11 (Nationally Protected Sites and Species) is discussed in greater detail below.

In summary Officers consider that the principle of development is acceptable and in accordance with the requirements of Future Wales, Planning Policy Wales and LDP 2 Policies 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty), 8 (Special Qualities) and 11 (Nationally Protected Sites and Species).

(b) Siting, Design, and Impact upon the Special Qualities of the National Park:

Policy 08 (Special Qualities), of LDP2, is a strategy policy which refers to the special qualities of the National Park and lists priorities to ensure that these qualities will be protected and enhanced.

These qualities are characteristics and features which individually or in combination contribute to making the National Park unique.

Policy 14 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) of LDP2 seeks the conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, resisting development that would cause significant visual intrusion, be insensitively or unsympathetically sited within the landscape, and/or fail to harmonise with, or enhance the landform and landscape character of the National Park.

Policy 29 (Sustainable Design) of LDP2 requires all development proposals to be well designed in terms of place and local distinctiveness.

A Planning Statement has been submitted with the application and Construction Management Plans. The proposed scheme is within the South Pembrokeshire Coast National Landscape Character Area (NLCA). The South Pembrokeshire Coast NLCA spans from Pendine in the east to the limestone cliffs and bays of the Angle Peninsula in the west. Inland, a limestone plateau with gentle rolling scarp and vale landform is covered by mixed agricultural fields and hedgerows.

The Authority's Landscape Character Area SPG characterises the location as part of LCA 6 Castlemartin/Merrion Ranges. The special qualities of this location are identified as including a large tract of exposed open coastal grassland landscape which has a settled feel with strong coastal character. The SPG notes that there are extensive views of the open sea from much of the higher ground and along the coast from the coastal path and states that there are habitats of international importance here and areas are of outstanding ecological value as a consequence.

There are no public rights of way that pass through the site. There is a non-permissive footpath south of the site, which runs along the northern boundary of the field adjacent to Starman's Hall. Bridleway SP6/1 is located approximately 500m southwest of the site. Gupton Farm Campsite and Gupton Farm Surf Lodge is located approximately 500m southeast of the site boundary.

During the construction phase, local landscape and views will be temporarily affected due to the presence of machinery and site accommodation. The potential adverse effects from the construction works are temporary and will only last the duration of the construction phase. In addition, there would be extremely limited public viewpoints of this.

There will be a permanent impact from the addition of the tilting weir, walkway and boardwalk. However, given the limited public viewpoints, the small scale of the development and the presence of existing built development at Starman's Hall, officers agree with the submitted Planning Statement and its conclusions that there would not be a detrimental impact on the South Pembrokeshire Coast NLCA or the National Park LCA 6 and the general visual amenity of the National Park.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been produced. The CEMP sets out measures to ensure that there are no detrimental environmental impacts from construction activities. It acknowledges that a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will need to be adopted prior to construction commencing. Officers consider that the TMP could be subject to a pre commencement planning condition.

Given the above, officers conclude the proposal would accord with the requirements of Future Wales, PPW12 and policies, 8 (Special Qualities), 14 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) and 29 (Sustainable Design) of LDP2.

(c) Amenity and Privacy:

Policy 30 (Amenity) of LDP2 seeks to protect the amenity of people living in the National Park and states that development will not be permitted where it has an unacceptable adverse effect on amenity, particularly where:

- a) the development would have a detrimental impact on the quality of the environment currently enjoyed by people living, working or visiting the Park; and/or
- b) the development is of a scale incompatible with its surroundings; and/or
- c) the development leads to an increase in traffic or noise or odour or light which has a significant adverse effect; and/or
- d) the development is visually intrusive.

Policy 30 (Amenity) supports Policy 14 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) in not allowing development that creates a visual intrusion.

The land has no immediate neighbours and will not result in development which is incompatible with its surroundings or which would have a detrimental impact on the quality of the environment. The development is considered to have an acceptable impact on residential and wider amenity and accords with Policy 30 (Amenity) of the PCNPA LDP2.

(d) Biodiversity Protected Sites & Landscaping

PPW12, TAN5 and LDP2 Policy 11 (Nationally Protected Sites and Species) requires biodiversity considerations to be taken into account in determining individual applications. The presence of a species protected under UK or European legislation is a material consideration when dealing with applications that are likely to result in disturbance or harm to the species or its habitat.

To comply with Planning Policy Wales 12 (2024) and the *Environment (Wales) Act 2016*, planning authorities are expected to ensure every development positively contributes to biodiversity.

The planning Statement sets out the measures the applicants have gone through to ensure the protection of and net benefits in terms of biodiversity increase the proposed development will bring to the area.

Due to the potential impacts the proposal would have upon the interest features of the SAC and SPA, a shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) has been undertaken and submitted with this application. The HRA has screened the proposal and then gone on to Appropriate Assessment (AA) stage.

As a result of the AA, it is concluded that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the SAC or SPA, either alone or in combination with any other plans or projects, subject to the mitigation measures set out in the shadow HRA. The PCNPA Ecologist has confirmed that she supports the conclusions of the shadow HRA and has submitted the information to NRW for their consideration. No confirmation of agreement had been received from NRW at the time of report writing and therefore delegated approval subject to their confirmation that the assessment is satisfactory is requested.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has also been undertaken. This included a site survey and desk-based assessment. The PEA concludes the following:

- With regard to birds, mitigation will be needed to avoid adverse impacts, such as vegetation clearance taking place outside the bird nesting season where appropriate.
- In terms of bats, works should be carried out in daylight and any artificial lighting minimised. Any floodlights should be fitted with a directional cowl to avoid light spill.
- Regarding Otter, an Otter spraint was recorded on the small wooden footbridge at National Grid Reference SR 89366 99816. No other signs of Otter were found, although the channels provide potential habitat and commuting corridors. Pre-works checks for Otters should be undertaken prior to works starting on site. In addition, works near watercourses should not be undertaken at night and lighting should avoid watercourses. Excavations left overnight should be covered or an escape ramp utilised.

- No signs of Badger were recorded on the site, however, there are records of them in the area along with potential habitat.
- Potential Water Vole habitat is present, although no field signs of Water Voles or burrows were observed on site. It is recommended that checking surveys are undertaken prior to works commencing.
- Suitable habitat for reptiles surrounds the site but outside the area of works. However, as a precautionary approach, any potential hibernation areas should be removed during the active reptile season only.
- Suitable habitat for amphibians is present on site. Furthermore, whilst there are no records of Great Crested Newts (GCN) within 2km of the site, there are several features nearby that are suitable for breeding habitat. However, these would be outside the works area. Therefore, it is recommended that a low impact method statement for GCN should be completed prior to the commencement of works.
- The watercourses on site have the potential to support freshwater and marine fish species. However, no fish data is available and to establish which species are present would require further survey work. An alternative approach would be to assume fish are present and apply appropriate mitigation measures during construction, such as undertaking construction during months that would minimise sensitivity to fish and Lamprey species, conducting works in the dry and de-watering using fish friendly pumps. In addition, the larger Brownslade Lake Channel would be unaffected by the works.

General avoidance measures, biosecurity measures and pollution prevention measures are also set out in the PEA.

A Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment has been undertaken to evaluate the potential effects of the proposed scheme on the ecological, hydromorphological and chemical quality of the scheme water bodies.

From the assessment, it is concluded that the proposed scheme has the potential to improve the biological, hydromorphological and chemical quality elements of watercourses in the long term. The scheme would involve the creation of habitat, increase the diversity of species and condition of the watercourses. No long-term negative impacts upon the quality elements are anticipated as a result of the proposal, subject to various pollution prevention measures (identified in the assessment) being implemented.

The proposal states that there are considered to be several benefits to ecology and biodiversity as a result of the proposed scheme. It notes that the National Trust is committed to sustainable improvement of the ecohydrological condition of the SSSI over the medium term (with a 20–50-year time horizon from present). The proposed scheme would allow maintenance of higher water levels within the axial ditch of Castlemartin Corse during warmer-month periods which would:

- Maintain high year-round water levels within the reed-swamp; and
- Provide a higher downgradient hydraulic boundary condition to the fen-meadow seepage slope. In turn, this could raise the water table across the seepage slope, extending soligenous conditions upslope, and also extending the period of seepage higher up the slope.

Under the scenario where lower water levels are maintained in the main ditch, the tilting weir would allow water levels within the Corse to be managed independently. As such, it would allow optimisation of drainage management for both agricultural land up-valley, and nature conservation

within Castlemartin Corse. It would also help to deliver the National Trust's long-term overall conservation vision for Castlemartin Corse for the SSSI features to be in a favourable condition and improved water quality and hydrology.

NRW and PCNPA Planning Ecologist have reviewed all surveys carried out including the HRA. NRW have responded with two conditions ensuring that the 'Castlemartin Corse – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Final Report' by JBA Consulting, dated February 2024, revision P06. and;

'*JBA Consulting - A9296 – Castlemartin Wetland Flow Control Structure – Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)*', by Edwards Diving Services Ltd, dated 7th February 2024, document reference: A9296-4, Version 4e included in the approved list of plans. This will ensure the development is carried out in accordance with all measures set out above.

PCNPA Planning Ecologist has not given a formal response at the time of writing this report however, she has informally advised that she is satisfied with the information received and considers that the shadow HRA is robust and has asked NRW to confirm that this can be used as a final HRA by the Authority. Members will be verbally updated at committee once a formal consultation response has been received.

Given the above, Officers consider that the proposed scheme would have an overall beneficial impact on the ecology and biodiversity of the area, particularly within the Castlemartin Corse SSSI. As a result, it would be in accordance with Future Wales, PPW12, TAN 5 and Policy 11 of LDP2 and the Biodiversity SPG.

(e) Access and Parking

Policy 59 (Sustainable Transport) of LDP2 is a strategic policy that ensures opportunities are taken to improve and promote sustainable travel choices and reduce the need to travel by car by permitting proposals that assist in delivering improved traffic and parking management. Additionally, Policy 60 (Impacts of traffic) of LDP2 permits development where appropriate access can be achieved.

The proposed development will not be open to the public and will once developed only draw limited maintenance traffic. Officers accept that during construction a number of vehicles and machines will be accessing the site. A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be necessary to ensure highway safety. The TMP will be approved by this authority prior to the commencement of works.

Subject to the inclusion of the pre commencement condition officers consider that the proposed development is in accordance with Policies 59 (Sustainable Transport) & 60 (Impacts of Traffic) of LDP2.

(f) Surface Water Drainage:

Policy 32 (Surface Water Drainage) of LDP2 requires that development will be required to incorporate sustainable drainage systems for the disposal of surface water on site. This is to minimise adverse environmental impacts during construction and upon completion.

PCC Civils have no adverse comments with regard to the proposals, the applicant should be made aware that ordinary watercourses must not be filled in, culverted, or the flow impeded in any manner, without the prior written consent of Pembrokeshire County Council under Section 23 Land Drainage Act 1991 as amended by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. A copy of the consultee response will be included with any decision notice granted.

(g) Green Infrastructure

Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales 12 states that green infrastructure plays a fundamental role in shaping places and our sense of well-being, and is intrinsic to the quality of the spaces we live, work and play in.

It also states that a green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications and that the green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the stepwise approach has been applied.

At the time of writing this report no GI statement has been received however PCNPA Tree & Landscape Officer is expecting one and foresees no immediate problems with the proposed development. Planning Committee Members will be updated verbally once the officer has sight of the GI statement. As the scheme as a whole is seeking to enhance biodiversity it is considered that wider green infrastructure benefits will be delivered by the scheme as a whole.

8. Conclusion

The proposed scheme would have several benefits to the hydrology, water quality, ecology and biodiversity of the Castlemartin Corse SSSI, which would also be of benefit to the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park without harming the SAC and SPA. The proposed scheme would involve the creation of habitat, increase the diversity of species and condition of the watercourses.

Officers consider that the proposed development meets the requirements of Future Wales, Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12) and the relevant policies of the PCNPA LDP2 as set out in Policy 01 (National Park Purposes and Duty) Policy 08 (Special Qualities) Policy 11 (Nationally Protected Sites and Species) Policy 14 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) Policy 29 (Sustainable Design) Policy 30 (Amenity) Policy 32 (Surface Water Drainage) Policy 59 (Sustainable Transport) and Policy 60 (Impacts of traffic). The proposal can therefore be supported.

In reaching a recommendation, regard has been given to the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the *Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015*. It is considered that this recommendation is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objective of supporting safe, cohesive and resilient communities.

9. Recommendation

APPROVE, subject to the following conditions:

1. The development shall begin no later than five years from the date of this decision.

Reason: Required to be imposed pursuant to Section 91 (1) of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* (as amended).

2. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans and documents:

- Location Plan Rev P01
- General Arrangement Rev P03
- Construction Detail (1 of 3) Rev P03
- Construction Detail (2 of 3) Rev P03
- Construction Detail (3 of 3) Rev P03
- Castlemartin Corse – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Final Report' by JBA Consulting, dated February 2024, revision P06.
- JBA Consulting - A9296 – Castlemartin Wetland Flow Control Structure – Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)', by Edwards Diving Services Ltd, dated 7th February 2024, document reference: A9296-4, Version 4,e

Reason: In order to be clear on the approved scheme of development in the interests of protecting visual amenity and the special qualities of the National Park. Policy: Local Development Plan 2 – Policies 1 (National Park Purposes and Duty), 8 (Special Qualities), 14 (Conservation of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park) and 29 (Sustainable Design).

3. Traffic Management Plan Needs Inserting

10. Informatives

PCC Civils letter included on any decision notice granted