

DAVID CLEMENTS ECOLOGY LTD

**MERTHYR TYDFIL COUNTY BOROUGH
SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION
CEFN FOREST
SURVEY & ASSESSMENT FOR SINC DESIGNATION**

February 2013

**David Clements Ecology Ltd
Carlton House, 5 Herbert Terrace, Penarth, Glamorgan, CF64 2AH
Tel: 029 20 350120 Fax: 029 20 711997
clements-d@dce.org.uk**

Site Name: CEFN FOREST

Grid Ref(s): ST 062 992 (W); ST 062 998 (N); ST 066 994 (E); ST 065 986 (S)	Site No.:
Status: Site surveyed in November 2012, and assessed against relevant criteria January 2013	Candidate <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
	Proposed <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
	Confirmed <input type="checkbox"/> Date:

Summary - Reasons for Selection/Interest of Site:

The site forms part of the semi upland habitat mosaic on eastern slopes of the Mynydd Merthyr.

Conifer plantations are extensive across the site but support a good assemblage of ancient woodland indicator species, which persist along woodland margins and rides. Heath and acid grassland also occurs in these areas. Smaller areas of semi natural broad leaved woodland, bracken/ffridd, acid grassland and heathland occur around the site, forming part of the habitat mosaics within the site.

Alder woodlands and dense bracken/acid grassland mosaic occurs to the south of the site and forms part of the Tarran y Gigfran SINC as well as an area of dry heathland to the west of the site, which forms another part of the SINC.

Important bird species recorded within the site which are likely to be either breeding and or overwintering include raven and Eurasian woodcock. It is likely that the habitat mosaic within the site is important for numerous bird and other faunal species but that these are under recorded.

Meets SINC Selection Criteria No.s:
H20, H1, H6, H9 & H10

Criteria in use : WBP (2008) Mid Valleys SINC Criteria

Primary Features i.e. Qualifying criteria:

Mosaic habitats and common land (H20) – Mosaic of semi upland habitats comprising extensive conifer plantation, with supporting semi natural broad leaved woodland, acid grassland, ffridd and heathland,

Woodland (H1) – replanted woodland with a range of semi natural woodland indicators & Conifer woodlands that support remnant heathland/acid grassland mosaics

Secondary Features i.e. Contributory criteria:

Acid grasslands (H6)

Heath and Grass heath habitats (H10)

Ffridd communities (H9)

UK BAP	Priority Habitats: Lowland mixed deciduous woodland Upland heathland	Priority Species: Bats (foraging)
LBAP	Key Habitats: Broad leaved woodland Grassland Heathland Coniferous plantation Ffridd	Key Species:

Protected Species:

Previously identified areas of interest contained within SINC:			
Small areas already included within SINC designations- Tarran y Gigfran			
See continuation sheet:		See Confidential File:	Yes No
Other statutory/non-statutory wildlife sites contained by/adjacent to SINC:			
Tarran y Gigfran Mynydd Merthyr			
Additional notes: Further consideration should be given to including this site within a wider 'semi upland' SINC, integrating with adjacent SINC's 'Tarran y Gigfran' and St Tydfil West, to strengthen its designation as a SINC			

Main sources of data:		
Forestry Commission South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc) Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council		
Validation survey(s):	Surveyor	Date
	C Pooley	Nov 2012
Remarks:		

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by David Clements Ecology Ltd (DCE) on the instructions of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC). It sets out the results of an ecological survey and assessment of an area of land known as 'Cefn Forest' in the Merthyr Tydfil county borough of Glamorgan, in South Wales. The site is one of several areas of conifer woodlands, owned by the Forestry Commission (FC), that have been identified as potential Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and require further assessment. This report aims to establish whether this site is worthy of consideration as a SINC.
- 1.2 The site consists of an area of FC land known as Cefn Forest (See Plan 1d). The site slopes down from the Mynydd Merthyr in the west towards the A470 to the east. The eastern boundary is bordered by the cycle route 'the Taff Trail'. The site can be described as a semi upland area which lies between about 250m AoD along the eastern margin, rising to approximately 400m AoD along the western margin.
- 1.3 Conifer plantations are the dominant habitat within the site. There is small area of semi natural broad leaved woodland to the south of the site which borders a stream running along its southern boundary. Small areas of acid grassland and heathland also exist in open areas, not subject to forestry planting and where felling has taken place.
- 1.4 The site overlies Carboniferous shales and sandstones of the Upper Coal Measures. The soils that have developed over these rocks are generally acidic in nature, being wet and with a peaty surface where drainage is impeded, and freely draining and loamy on more steeply sloping ground.
- 1.5 The remainder of this report sets out the results of the ecological survey, together with an assessment of the biodiversity value of the habitats, features and species recorded against the criteria for the selection of SINC's in the 'Mid Valleys Area' (WBP 2008). These attributes are also assessed against the Biodiversity conservation priorities set at the UK, Wales, County and County Borough level (BRIG 2007; WBP 2007; GlamBAG 1999; MTBP 2008).
- 1.6 A SINC boundary is proposed to enclose all of the land areas which are judged to meet one or other of the SINC designation guidelines.
- 1.7 Designated Sites of Biodiversity Interest**
- 1.7.1 The site does not contain any statutory sites of nature conservation interest, such as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) or Local Nature Reserves (LNRs). There are however a number of 'County Wildlife Sites' adjacent (See Appendix 6), which are non-statutory sites, recognised locally as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC's).

County Wildlife Sites

- 1.7.2 Tarran y Gigfran SINC, which is composed of two areas (to the north and south) lies partly within the site and extends further to the south. The SINC comprises of dry heathland with bilberry and ling heather, bracken covered slopes, dry acid grassland, semi natural oak and beech woodland, wet alder woodland and streams. The southern SINC extends partly into the south of the site, where it includes alder woodland, dense bracken with scattered trees and small pockets of semi natural broad leaved woodland as well as a small area of semi improved acid grassland. The northern SINC extends partly into the west of the site, where it comprises an area of acid dry heath and bracken.
- 1.7.3 Further to the north lies Mynydd Merthyr SINC, comprising upland 'Ffridd' and moorland habitat. Dry acid grassland covers most of the site with smaller areas of bracken and marshy grassland.
- 1.7.4 County Wildlife Sites are one of a class of non-statutory nature conservation designations which are recognised throughout the UK under a wide range of titles. County Wildlife Sites are so-called 'third tier' sites, generally ranked below sites which are of international or national biodiversity significance, but which are considered to have substantive nature conservation value in the sub-national (ie regional or district) context. They are usually designated at the county or county borough level by the relevant local planning authority, and are recognised as a planning constraint in the relevant statutory development plan. The framework for the identification and designation of 'Wildlife Sites' is set out in various Government documents, and is referred to in *Planning Policy Wales* (2011) and *Technical Advice Note (Wales) 5: Nature Conservation & Planning*, 2009.

2.0 METHODS AND APPROACH

- 2.1 The study area was surveyed on 16th November 2012, and was subject to an Extended Phase 1 survey as recommended by the Institute of Environmental Assessment (IEA 1995). This is based on the Phase 1 vegetation classification methodology developed by the former Nature Conservancy Council (NCC 1990), a nationally-accepted and standard method for the rapid survey and appraisal of ecological habitats which is based primarily on the recording of vegetation and its classification into defined habitat categories. Dominant and conspicuous flora species are recorded and ‘target notes’ are prepared for any features of particular interest.
- 2.2 The methodology also requires the recording of conspicuous fauna species such as birds, herptiles (i.e. amphibians and reptiles), mammals and invertebrates such as butterflies and dragonflies, paying particular attention to the presence (or possible presence) of any rare or protected species.
- 2.3 The methodology for the assessment of the site is give at Section 4.0.

Data Trawl

- 2.4 In addition to original survey, a data trawl was carried out in order to obtain access to any existing information about the site which may be held by nature conservation bodies in the region. The bodies contacted included:
- Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council (MTCBC)
 - South-East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc); and
 - Forestry Commission (FC)

SEWBRc is the main repository for biological data and species records in the region.

3.0 SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Vegetation and Habitats

- 3.1.1 The results of the vegetation and habitats survey are shown on Plan 1 of this report, and are described briefly below. Lists of the species recorded are given at Appendix 1. Representative photos are included in Appendix 2.

Notable Plants

- 3.1.2 No nationally or regionally rare or scarce species have been recorded within or adjacent to the site.

Notable Habitats

- 3.1.3 None of the habitats identified are considered to be of international or national importance. The site contains habitats, such as upland heathland and lowland deciduous woodland, which are 'Priority Habitats' of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP: BRIG 2007) and its Welsh equivalent (WBP 2007).

Broadleaved Woodland

- 3.1.4 Semi natural broad leaved woodland is restricted to the south of the site (Target Note 1, see Plan 1), where it occurs along the length of the stream, which runs just below the site boundary.
- 3.1.5 This area of woodland comprises predominantly mature alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), with several younger trees present in addition to mature oak (*Quercus* spp) and downy birch (*Betula pubescens*) which are locally frequent. These alder woodlands are dry in character, with good ground flora comprising wavy hair grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*), heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*), wood sorrel (*Oxalis acetosella*) and bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*). Common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*) also occurs frequently and creeping soft grass (*Holcus lanatus*) occurs frequently in some parts. Mosses are abundant and ferns such as lady fern (*Athyrium filix-femina*), soft shield-fern (*Polystichum setiferum*) and male-ferns (*Dryopteris* spp) occur occasionally.
- 3.1.6 These areas of semi natural broad leaved woodland all form part of the Tarran y Gigfran SINC. It is possible that these areas of alder woodland are ancient woodland, but are not included in the inventory due to their small size (Sothorn 1986, see Appendix 3). The broadleaf woodlands of the site collectively support at least 10 of the species which are listed as being indicative of ancient woodlands in 'the Mid Valleys SINC criteria' (WBP 2008).

Conifer woodlands

- 3.1.7 Conifer plantations comprising pure stands of spruce (*Picea* sp) and larch (*Larix* sp) cover the majority of the site.

- 3.1.8 The larch plantations tend to be more open, with more a more diverse ground flora. The ground is abundant with grasses and mosses, along with ferns (including *Dryopteris* spp, hard fern (*Blechnum spicant*), soft shield-fern, polypody (*Polypodium* sp) and lady fern)) and herbs such as wood sorrel which are abundant in parts. Lichens, including *Cladonia* are locally frequent. Holly (*Ilex aquifolius*) also occurs within the understory occasionally. In some areas, the ground is very damp and supports marshy species such as rushes (*Juncus* spp) and tufted hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*).
- 3.1.9 Where there is dense spruce, and no or little light penetrating through into the ground, there is little and or absent ground flora. These areas are largely covered with needle litter although in some parts, particularly within the periphery of the plantation; the ground flora comprises occasional ferns such as shield-fern or *Dryopteris* species, mosses, grasses such as common bent, and herbs such as wood sorrel.
- 3.1.10 Along the edges of the plantation bilberry occurs occasionally along with wavy hair grass (*Deschampsia flexuosa*) and occasional ling heather (*Calluna vulgaris*). Heath bedstraw (*Galium saxatile*) is also present along with occasional tormentil (*Potentilla erecta*).
- 3.1.11 The conifer woodlands of the site support at least 9 of the species which are listed as being indicative of ancient woodlands in 'the Mid Valleys SINC criteria' (WBP 2008).

Acid Grassland

- 3.1.12 Small areas of acid grassland occur through the site, many of which are largely dominated by dense bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*). Frequent grasses include common bent, brown bent (*Agrostis vinealis*), sheeps fescue (*Festuca ovina*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and crested dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*). Amongst the sward herbs including heath bedstraw and tormentil occur occasionally in addition to other herbs such as clovers (*Trifolium* spp), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*) and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*).
- 3.1.13 A larger area of acid grassland exists to the south-west of the site, which comprises abundant common bent, with sweet vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), sheeps fescue, Yorkshire fog and brown bent. Herbs present include tormentil, sheeps sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and heath bedstraw. Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg) occurs occasionally across this area, and bracken and rushes are locally frequent. Previous phase 1 surveys (Appendix 4), indicate that these areas are felled conifer plantation that have developed into acid grassland.
- 3.1.14 A small area of acid grassland, which occurs in a mosaic with bracken to the south of the site, forms part of the Tarran y Gigfran SINC.
- 3.1.15 The dry acid grasslands of the site collectively support at least 8 of the species which are listed as being indicative of species-rich acid grasslands in 'the Mid Valleys SINC criteria' (WBP 2008).

Bracken Community

- 3.1.16 Dense bracken dominates the majority of areas, which are not forestry or woodland. Young broad leaf trees such as silver birch are often found scattered across these areas. Where these stands are less dense, bracken occurs in a mosaic with acid grassland as described above in paragraph 3.1.12.
- 3.1.17 Dense bracken found in the south of the site, and which occurs in a mosaic with semi natural broad leaved woodland forms part of the Tarran y Gigfran SINC.

Dry Heathland

- 3.1.18 Patches of dry heathland, which largely comprise of bilberry, occur along tracks and within bracken dominated slopes, particularly around rocky outcrops. Ling heather also occurs occasionally along with wavy hair grass, heath bedstraw and tormentil.
- 3.1.19 A larger area of dry heathland also occurs to the west of the site, which is dominated by bilberry shrubs occurring with frequent wavy hair grass. These areas of bilberry occur in a mosaic with tufted grasses such common bent and sheeps fescue, which are scattered across the heathland. Herbs such as heath bedstraw and tormentil occur occasionally. This area of heathland forms part of the Tarran y Gigfran SINC.

Ponds

- 3.1.20 No ponds occur within the site although at the time of the survey, many of the tracks were waterlogged and supported aquatic vegetation such as floating sweet grass (*Glyceria fluitans*), common starwort (*Callitriche stagnalis*) and water-crowfoot species (*Ranunculus (Batrachium) sp.*).

Streams & Ditches

- 3.1.21 The Nant Aberfan runs from west to east, just outside the southern boundary of the site.

Historic Records

- 3.1.22 Data was obtained from the Phase 1 habitat survey of the county which was undertaken by the former Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) during the period 1979-1997 (see Appendix 4). This earlier survey classified the majority of the site as being coniferous plantation with smaller pockets of semi natural broad leaved woodland, semi improved acid grassland and continuous bracken as well as a larger area of acid dry dwarf shrub heath.
- 3.1.23 The site remains largely similar, with the majority of habitats mapped between 1979 and 1997 remaining. The only change in habitats being areas of bracken which are now supporting a higher proportion of scattered trees and areas of acid grassland, where forestry has been cleared.

3.2 Fauna

Mammals

- 3.2.1 There was no evidence of any protected mammal species recorded during the present survey of the site, although several species might be expected to occur.
- 3.2.2 No records currently exist of dormouse within or immediately adjacent to the site (SEWBrEC data, 2012). The site is considered potentially to have a limited potential for dormouse, although it is possible that they may be present within natural broadleaf woodland occurring within the site although this is limited in extent within the site and where present the understory is scarce, with a limited amount of hazel, which is known to be this species favoured food source. The conifer woodland with the site could also potentially support dormice particularly where it is well connected to existing semi natural broadleaf woodland and remnant ancient semi natural broad leaved woodlands.
- 3.2.3 There are no waterbodies within the site although there is a fast flowing stream immediately to the south of the site. The stream is assessed as having low potential for water voles due to limited habitat features suitable for this species. No records of water voles exist from the site and or in the immediate area (SEWBrEC data, 2012).
- 3.2.4 No otter records exist from the site but numerous records exist from the river Taff, located to the east of the site (SEWBrEC data, 2012). There are limited suitable habitats for otters within the site, and it is likely that the A470 which lies between the river Taff and the site would be a significant barrier to any movement of otters.
- 3.2.5 Several records of foraging and or commuting common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle bats exist from the Taff Trail which runs along the eastern boundary of the site (SEWBrEC data, 2012). A pipistrelle roost has been recorded in a house within 500m of the site. The woodland within the site is likely to provide good foraging habitat for several species of bats and mature trees within the site could provide suitable roosting sites for bats.
- 3.2.6 Dormouse, water vole, otter and bats, and the habitats that support them, are afforded protection under UK and EU legislation, including the 'Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and are also listed as 'Priority species' under the UK BAP and its Welsh equivalent with dormice, otter and bats being subject to separate Action Plans within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Merthyr Tydfil county borough.

Birds

- 3.2.7 No bird records exist from the site the site to date however during the current survey; a number of species were recorded including jay, raven and Eurasian woodcock. The latter being listed as a bird of conservation concern in Wales and the UK.
- 3.2.8 Other species, known to be protected and/or a priority for conservation recorded within 500m of the site include common crossbill (SEWBrEC data, 2012). It is likely that this species would also utilise much of the habitat present within the site.

Reptiles

- 3.2.9 No reptiles have been recorded within the site although suitable habitats occur within the site that may support common species such as slow worm, common lizard as well as less common species such as grass snake and adder.
- 3.2.10 All reptiles are afforded partial protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and are listed as 'Priority species' under the UK BAP and its Welsh equivalent, and included within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).

Amphibians

- 3.2.11 No amphibians have been recorded within the site. There were a number of small pools at the time of the survey which are likely to be ephemeral but could potentially support small numbers of common breeding amphibians such as common frog. Damp woodlands occur within the site that may be suitable for foraging and or commuting amphibians and stone walls may provide areas for hibernation and shelter.
- 3.2.12 No records of the rare and protected great crested newt are available for the site or within 500m. None of the habitats recorded during the survey have been assessed as having potential to support breeding great crested newts. Great crested newts and their habitat are protected under EU and UK legislation, and are 'Priority species' in both the UK and Welsh BAPs, as well as being subject to an Action Plan within the LBAP.

Invertebrates

- 3.2.13 No records of invertebrates exist from the site (SEWBRc data, 2012) and none were recorded during the survey.
- 3.2.14 A number of moths, which are listed 'Priority Species' for research, have been recorded within the local area including grey dagger, knot grass, flounced chestnut, ear moth, dusky brocade, garden tiger, dark brocade, latticed heath, small heath, small square-spot, small phoenix, dusky thorn, grey mountain-carpet, autumnal rustic, garden dart, rustic, wall, brindled beauty, dot moth, broom moth, shoulder-striped wainscot, powdered quaker, white ermine, buff ermine, anomalous, hedge rustic, cinnabar, dark-barred twin-spot carpet and neglected rustic (SEWBRc data, 2012).
- 3.2.15 It is possible that these and other scarce and notable invertebrate species may occur on the site, particularly in the wet grasslands, heathlands and ancient wet woodlands.

Fish

- 3.2.16 Brown trout, a UK and Local BAP species, has been recorded from the River Taff, located just east of the site. It is possible that this and other resident and migratory fish may be found within streams present to the south of the site.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF THE SITE

- 4.1 There is currently no nationally accepted system for the categorising of sites or features of biodiversity significance below the level of national value, criteria for which are set out by the former Nature Conservancy Council (1989, as amended). However, guidelines for the identification of non-statutory sites of county significance (i.e. SINC's) are available for South Wales (SWWSP 2004), and there is also guidance for the identification of SINC's in the Merthyr Tydfil county borough context which is based closely on the South Wales guidance (WBP 2008).
- 4.2 The following assessment of the biodiversity significance of the habitats and species of the Cefn Forest site is therefore based on comparison against the county and county borough SINC guidelines (WBP 2008), and also makes reference to the conservation priorities listed in the Biodiversity Action Plans which have been produced for the UK BAP, its Welsh equivalent, and at the local level. The latter comprise published action plan priorities for both Merthyr Tydfil County Borough (MTBP 2008) and the former Glamorgan county area (GlamBAG 1999), within which the majority of Merthyr Tydfil County Borough falls.
- 4.3 The assessment results are summarised in the following section and refer to the site as a whole. During the assessment process, however, all parts of the site were individually assessed.
- 4.4 The recommended cSINC is shown at Plan 2. The boundary is considered to represent the definitive minimum boundary for any SINC designation in accordance with the survey data which is currently available.

4.5 Habitats

- 4.5.1 The habitats identified to date on the site are assessed against the UK, Welsh and local Biodiversity Action Plan priorities, and any qualifying habitats are indicated together with any qualifications or notes. Where a Habitat Action Plan (HAP) is given for the habitat concerned in the Merthyr Tydfil Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), the reference number of this is also given.
- 4.5.2 The habitats are then assessed for qualification against the relevant habitat designation guidelines for SINC's in South Wales and Merthyr Tydfil County Borough.

Table 1: Assessment Against BAP Priorities

Habitats Represented on the Site	UK BAP Priority Habitat		Wales BAP Priority habitat		Glamorgan BAP Priority		Merthyr Tydfil LBAP Habitat Action Plan		
	Yes	a	Yes	a			Yes	Broad leaved woodland (HAP 1)	Lowland Mixed deciduous woodland and would also contribute to 'Ffridd' habitat (HAP 10)
Semi natural Broad leaved woodland	Yes	a	Yes	a			Yes	Broad leaved woodland (HAP 1)	Lowland Mixed deciduous woodland and would also contribute to 'Ffridd' habitat (HAP 10)
Conifer woodland plantation							Yes	Conifer woodlands (HAP 9)	Conifer woodlands
Semi improved acid grassland									Would contribute to 'Ffridd' habitat (HAP 10)
Bracken									Would contribute to 'Ffridd' habitat (HAP 10)
Dry heathland	Yes	b	Yes	b			Yes	Heathland (HAP 3)	Upland heathland

- a Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
b Upland heathland

- 4.5.3 ***Ffridd habitats*** (HAP 10): Fridd is a complex mosaic of habitats consisting of heath, bracken, acid grassland, woodland, coal spoil and rhos pasture. It is an important and characteristic habitat of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough's valley sides, often stretching from one end of the Borough to the other.

4.6 Assessment Against SINC Designation Guidelines

- 4.6.1 The following section sets out the relevant SINC selection guidelines for each of the habitats identified at the Cefn site, together with an assessment of the degree of qualification by the site.

Guideline H1: Woodlands

The SINC designation guidelines for Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All ancient woodlands as recorded in the Ancient Woodland Inventories, including Planted Ancient Woodlands (PAWS)

None identified although it is possible that the alder woodland is ancient woodland but not included in the inventory due to small size

All semi natural woodlands over 0.25 ha which support an assemblage of ancient woodland indicators and/or semi natural woodland plant species
[referred to in Table 1 of the Guidelines: no threshold is set, but the number should be 'significant']

Semi natural broad leaved woodland, is found to the south of the site which supports overall 10 ancient woodland indicators.

All wet woodland sites over 0.25 ha with an assemblage of ancient woodland indicators or wetland groundfloras

None present

All planted woodland over 0.25 ha that support an assemblage of ancient woodland indicators, or other species rich habitats

Conifer woodlands within the site support at least 9 ancient woodland indicator species in addition to acid grassland and heathland habitats, although these are restricted to woodland margins and rides

Smaller areas (less than 0.25 ha) of semi natural habitat or wet woodlands as SINC if they are either particularly species rich, support important faunas, or if they form part of a larger SINC designation, or complex of habitats, or fulfil a strategic linking function between SINC areas or other habitats

None present

All conifer plantations which support important species, or species assemblages, or which support habitats, which would qualify under other Habitat criteria (e.g. bogs or heathland)

At least 9 ancient woodland indicators occurred within conifer woodland habitat. In addition, to supporting acid grassland and heathland habitats. These species and habitats are largely restricted to woodland margins and rides

Site qualifies under this guideline? Yes/borderline

Guideline H2: Wood pasture, parklands, orchards and veteran trees

The SINC designation guidelines for Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Parkland sites which derived from ancient woodland and continue to support large mature trees (often referred to as 'coedcae')

None present

Parkland sites, of whatever origin, containing good numbers of large over-mature trees

None present

Over-mature/veteran trees >3.7m circumference at 1.3m from base, or individuals that are estimated to be at least 200 years old which exhibit veteran tree characteristics such as rot hollow, bracket fungi or a large proportion of dead wood

Several mature trees present along streams, which could potentially be over 200 years old

Examples of orchards which are, or were, traditionally managed and which still contain several old fruit trees

None present

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline H3: Scrub Communities

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Structurally-diverse and species-rich mixed scrub sites over 1 ha in size
[minimum of six scrub species is suggested]

None present

Significant stands of gorse(over 1 ha in size) and/or stands which support key associated species

None present

Smaller stands of scrub (including less species rich areas) if they form an integral part of a larger SINC designation or complex habitat mosaics or fulfil a strategic linking function between SINC.

None present

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline H4: Neutral Grasslands

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All example of crested dog's- tail- common knapweed grasslands (MG5) over 0.2 ha.

None present

All stands of species-rich MG1 and MG6 with at least 8 species from Table 2 and over 0.2 ha

None present

All stands of species-rich atypical NVC neutral grassland, with at least 8 species from Table 1 over 0.2 ha. In particular important grassland communities, which occur on road verges, brown field sites, are often not easily referable to NVC community

None present

From Table 8, any grassland site which supports a population of rare or very restricted species in the Mid Valleys area:

- Wood bitter vetch
- Moon wort
- Soft- leaved sedge
- Meadow saffron
- Dyer's greenweed
- Adder's-tongue fern
- Green winged orchid
- Greater butterfly orchid
- Meadow saxifrage
- Common meadow -rue

None present

The species poor MG10 grassland (which will rarely support 8 species from Table 2) will be designated where it either occurs as large areas or wet semi improved grassland, where it creates a linking function between other habitats, or forms part of a habitat mosaic (often in association with marshy grassland communities

None present

The South Wales Guidelines identify that all stands of MG4, MG11, MG12 and MG13 will be considered for SINC designation. Currently there are no records of these four communities in the Mid Valleys area, however if any sites are found then they will be designated as SINC if over 0.2 ha in size

None present

Smaller areas (less than 0.2 ha) of species-rich grassland, or larger stands (over 1 ha) of more species poor semi improved grassland if they form an integral part of a larger SINC designation or complex habitat mosaics or fulfil a strategic linking function between SINC

None present

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline H6: Acid Grasslands

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All examples of unimproved acid grasslands over 0.2 ha

None present

All examples of semi improved acid grasslands over 0.5 ha, which retain a relatively high diversity of indicator species [the presence of at least 7 indicator species is suggested as a threshold, from Table 4 of the Guidelines]

None present

*Smaller areas (less than 0.5 ha) of unimproved or semi improved acid grassland if they form an integral part of a larger SINC designation or complex habitat mosaics or fulfil a strategic linking function between SINC*s

Smaller areas of semi improved acid grassland support, which support at least 7 acid grassland indicator species overall, occur across the site and contribute to the habitat mosaic of the wider site

Site qualifies under this guideline? Yes/borderline

Guideline H7: Marshy Grasslands

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All areas of:

Blunt-flowered rush – marsh bedstraw fen meadow (M22)

Purple moor grass – meadow thistle fen meadow (M24)

Meadowsweet – wild angelica (M27)

None present

All examples of species rich M25 over 0.2 ha, which include 12 species in Table 5 and all stands of M25 (8 species from Table 5) over 0.5 ha [the presence of at least 12 indicator species is suggested as a threshold, from Table 5 of the Guidelines]

None present

All stands of marshy grassland (and associated dry grassland habitats), which have been identified as potential, suitable or good condition marsh fritillary habitat

None present

*Smaller areas of marshy grassland if they form an integral part of a larger SINC designation or complex habitat mosaics (including wet heath) or fulfil a strategic linking function between SINC*s

None present

Site qualifies under this guideline? No

Guideline H9: Ffridd Communities

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All large stands of ffridd over 10 ha

None present

Smaller stands of species-rich bracken habitat, including violet-rich fritillary butterfly habitat

None present

Smaller areas of ffridd if they form an integral part of a larger SINC designation or complex habitat mosaics or fulfil a strategic linking function between SINC

Small areas of Ffridd are scattered across the site, contributing to the mosaic of habitats within the site.

Site qualifies under this guideline? Yes/Borderline

- 4.6.3 The draft Merthyr Tydfil County Borough SINC guidelines also specify that ‘ffridd’ habitats (ie semi-upland valleyside habitats containing complex mosaics of heathland, bracken, woodland, wet flushes, acid grasslands and scree) should also be considered for selection. The valleyside slopes in the south-west can be considered to comprise ‘ffridd’ vegetation.

Guideline H10: Heathlands & Grass-Heath Communities

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All examples of unmodified wet heathland and wet grass-heath, and where cross-leaved heath is still present even though reduced in its cover due to grazing pressure

None present

All examples of unmodified dry heathland

None present

Examples of degraded heathland, secondary heathland and grass-heath mixtures which either meet the guidelines for designation as acid grassland (and are thus designated as such) or which have at least 10% dwarf shrub heath cover

Heathland occurs in a mosaic with acid grassland along woodland tracks and rides, where shrub heath cover comprises at least 10% of the habitat

Site qualifies under this guideline? Yes/borderline

Guideline H12: Bog Habitats & Flushes

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All examples of undegraded bog habitats

None present

All degraded bog habitats with the potential for restoration or which support some distinctive features of the habitat type

None present

Individual neutral, basic or acid flushes of any size, provided they are not grossly modified by agricultural improvement

None present

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline H15: Watercourses

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All examples of stretches of main river where the river bed and banks remain comparatively unmodified and the water is not grossly polluted

None present

All examples of stretches of smaller watercourses (ie streams, canals, brooks etc) which are comparatively unmodified within the last 100 years, which support good aquatic, emergent or bankside plant communities, and the water is not grossly polluted ['good' plant communities are defined in the Guidelines]

None present

All examples of system of reens and/or ditches with a diverse aquatic flora and/or fauna (including the associated habitat, e.g. field systems on river floodplains)

None present

All stretches of watercourses which support protected species, including otter and water vole

None recorded

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline H16: Standing open water

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All examples of lakes and ponds which have largely unmodified, semi natural beds and banks, good water quality and/or which support good aquatic, emergent or bank side plant communities

None present

All examples of ponds which score 'High' or 'Very High' when assessed using methodology set out in the National Pond Survey (Pond Action, 1998)

NA

All ponds which qualify under individual relevant Species Criteria (flora, invertebrates, amphibians or birds)

NA

All less valuable ponds if they occur as integral features larger mosaic SINC

NA

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline H18: Mineral Spoil Tips and Other Post Industrial Land

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All examples of species-rich mineral spoil tips/post industrial lands that have naturally re-vegetated with a diverse range of native and archeophyte non woody plant species. The constituent habitats will be assessed against individual habitat criteria as set out in this document as part of a large mosaic SINC.

None recorded

All examples of lichen heath on mineral spoil tips which support 8 key lichen-heath species identified in the Strategic Conservation Assessment of Heathland and Associated Habitats on the Coal Spoils of South Wales (Miller HS, Clarkson, B and Smith, PL., 2007)

None present

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline H20: Mosaic Habitats

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Any coherent site which comprises at least 3 distinct habitats types, where at lone is approaching SINC selection status in its own right, providing that improved species-poor or degraded elements of low or negligible conservation interest do not form a significant proportion (ie >25%) of the total site area

The site supports a mosaic of habitats. Conifer plantation woodland, which makes up the largest proportion of the site, qualifies under the woodland criteria, due to the supporting a good assemblage of ancient woodland indicator species as well as species indicative of heathland and acid grassland. Smaller areas (which make up less than 25% of the site) including semi natural broad leaved woodland along with acid grassland, bracken/ffridd and dry heathland, form a mosaic with plantation woodland, and meet the criteria due to their role as connecting habitats across the site and contributing to the integral value of the whole site.

'block designations' of extensive areas of open countryside where semi-natural upland features predominate

NA

Site qualifies under this guideline?

Yes

Guideline H21: Rock Exposures

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All occurrences of limestone pavement, especially where supporting a rich gryke flora (i.e. mixtures of species characteristic of calcareous woodlands and grasslands, living within the cracks and furrows)

None present

Inland cliffs, crags and associated screes, where these support species of interest

None present.

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline H22: Other Features

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Continuous sections of disused railway lines supporting semi-natural vegetation

None present

Continuous sections of green lanes and other linear features which have either more-or-less continuous semi-natural woody boundaries on both sides, or wide flowery verges and/or unsurfaced trackways

None present

All examples of areas where there are significant populations of ant hills and/or where several are estimated to be in excess of 50 years old
[estimated by volume at 1litre of soil/year]

None present

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

4.7 Species

Guideline S1: Mammals

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Any sites supporting breeding (or probable breeding) species (other than bats) which are listed as fully or partially protected on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA), together with any areas which are critical for nesting, foraging, roosting (laying up), territorial or other significant use, will be selected. These species currently comprise water vole, otter, pine marten, dormouse and red squirrel

None recorded

The presence of established breeding populations of the following species, which are nationally declining, regionally important or UK/LBAP Priority species or statutory protected species, together with any areas that are critical for nesting, foraging, territorial or other significant use are key associated species for SINC selection. These species comprise brown hare, harvest mouse, water shrew, yellow-necked mouse and badger.

None recorded

The presence of breeding badgers is not, in itself, considered a valid reason for site selection. However, the presence of badger setts should be considered to be an additional supporting reason for the selection of sites which also qualify under other guidelines, ie on habitat grounds or for species other than badger.

None recorded

Any significant roosting sites [for bats] including vital flight and commuting routes and priority feeding areas attached to roosts. Also included should be any structures such as tunnels, icehouses, basements, gunnery emplacements, pill boxes etc which are used as roosts

None recorded to date, although it is likely that the mature trees on the site support roosting bats

Also for consideration are any significant winter roosts (hibernation roosts) of any of the species listed in Table 8 [of the Guidelines]

None found to date

Site qualifies under this guideline? No

Guideline S2: Birds

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Sites supporting breeding populations, of any size, of species marked with an 'A' in Table 9 [of the Guidelines]

None recorded

Sites supporting wintering or passage refuelling populations, of any size, of species marked with an 'A' in Table 10 [of the Guidelines]

None recorded

Any site with 100 or more bird species recorded in the previous five years

Insufficient information

In addition all species on list 'B' will be identified as contributory features within a habitat

Birds recorded within the site that are likely to be breeding and or overwintering include raven and Eurasian woodcock.

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline S3: Reptiles

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All sites with adder or grass snake colonies

Insufficient information

In addition the occurrence of slow worm and common lizard will be considered a supporting reason for selection of a site, which also qualifies under other criteria (i.e. on habitat grounds or for species other than reptiles)

Insufficient information

Sites with significant populations of 1 or more reptile species will also be considered for selection

Insufficient information

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline S4: Amphibians

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Sites supporting four or more species of amphibian

Insufficient information

All great crested newt sites

None recorded

In addition the occurrence of any amphibian will be considered a supporting reason for selection of a site, which also qualifies under other criteria (i.e. on habitat grounds or for species other than amphibians)

None recorded

Sites with significant populations of 1 or more amphibian species will be considered for selection

Insufficient information

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline S5: Fish

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Water bodies supporting resident populations of any species listed in Table 11

None recorded

Watercourses regularly used as migratory routes by anadromous species listed in Table 11

Insufficient information

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline S6: Invertebrates

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Any site which supports a species which is listed in the UK Red Data Book [ie in the 'threatened' categories] or on the 'Section 42' list (WAG 2007)

Insufficient information

In addition, the occurrence of the following will be supporting reasons for the selection of a site which also qualifies under other criteria (i.e. on habitat grounds)

- *Any site which supports an important assemblage or population of 'Nationally scarce species'*
- *Any site which supports a species, recorded from 10 or fewer 10km grid squares in Wales*
- *Any site that supports a significant population or assemblage of LBAP priority species*

Insufficient information

Lepidoptera - Butterflies

Any site that supports a section 42 species and/or that fulfils the criteria for a Wales Action Plan Priority Species as shown in list 'A' in Table 12a

Sites will be considered for selection with 2 or more species from list 'B' in Table 12a, other LBAP species not already included or where 10 or more species of any butterfly occur (including common species)

Insufficient information

Lepidoptera - Moths

Any site that supports a section 42 species and/or that fulfils the criteria for a Wales Action Plan Priority Species as shown in list 'A' in Table 12b

Insufficient information

Sites that support significant populations or assemblages of species that fulfil the criteria for priority species in the Wales Action Plan, which are not already listed in Table 12b, will be considered for selection.

Insufficient information

Odonata – Dragonflies and Damselflies

Any site which supports a species from list 'A' in Table 13

In addition, sites which support significant populations or assemblages of species in, list 'B' of Table 13 will contribute towards the designation of sites that qualify under criteria

Insufficient information

Orthoptera – Grasshoppers and allied insects

Any site which supports a species, which is 'Nationally scarce'

Insufficient information

Any site which supports a species from list 'A' in Table 14

Insufficient information

Any site which supports 3 or more species from list 'B' in Table 14

In addition the occurrence of species in list 'B' will be supporting criteria for selection of a site, as a species assemblage, which also qualifies under other criteria

Insufficient data

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline S7: Vascular Plants

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Any site with one or more 'primary' species present [Listed 'A' in Table 15 of the Guidelines]

None recorded

In addition the occurrence of a contributory species from list 'B' in Table 15 will be a supporting reason for selection of a site, which also qualifies under other Christmas criteria [listed in Table 16 of the Guidelines]

None recorded

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline S8: Fungi

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

All grassland sites supporting 9 or more species of waxcap

Insufficient information

Any site which supports a species, which is listed in the UK Red data Book or as a section 42 species

Insufficient information

Any site that supports a species recorded from 10 or fewer 10km grid squares in Wales

Insufficient information

Any site that supports a species recorded from 3 or fewer sites within Vice Counties VC41 and VC35

Insufficient information

In addition the presence of UK BAP or LBAP Priority Species or nationally

scarce or uncommon species will be a contributory features

Insufficient information

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline S9: Mosses and Liverworts

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Any site which supports a species that is listed in the Red Data Book for Mosses and Liverworts or as a Section 42 species

Insufficient information

In addition, any site that supports a species recorded from 3 or fewer sites within the Mid Valleys area, which supports a significant population of National or LBAP Priority Species, or which is scarce or local in the area will contribute to a SINC designation.

Insufficient information

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

Guideline S10: Lichens

The SINC designation guidelines for the Mid Valleys state that the following should be considered for SINC selection:

Any site which supports a species that is listed in the Red Data Book for Lichens or as a Section 42 species

Insufficient information

In addition, any site that supports a species recorded from 3 or fewer sites within the Mid valleys area, which supports a significant population of National or LBAP Priority Species, or which is scarce o local in the area will contribute to a SINC designation.

Insufficient information

Site qualifies under this guideline?

No

4.8 Summary of Compliance with Guidelines

4.8.1 The following table summarises the compliance of the habitats and features of the site with the Guidelines for the Mid Valleys against which they have been tested.

Guideline	Subject	Compliance
H1	Woodlands	Yes/borderline
H2	Wood Pasture, Parkland, Orchards and Veteran Trees	No
H3	Scrub Communities	No
H4	Neutral Grasslands	No
H6	Acid Grasslands	Yes/borderline
H7	Marshy Grasslands	No
H9	Ffridd habitat	Yes/borderline
H10	Heath & Grass-Heath Habitats	Yes/borderline
H12	Bog Habitats & Flushes	No
H15	Watercourses	No
H18	Mineral Spoil Tips and Post-Industrial Land	No
H16	Standing Water	No
H20	Mosaic Habitats	Yes
H21	Rock Exposures	No
H22	Other Features	No
S1	Mammals	No
S2	Birds	No
S3	Reptiles	No
S4	Amphibians	No
S6	Invertebrates	No
S7	Vascular Plants	No
S8	Fungi	No
S9	Mosses and Liverworts	No
S10	Lichen	No

5.0 REFERENCES

Biodiversity Reporting & Information Group (BRIG 2007) *Report on the Habitats & Species Review: A Report to the UK Biodiversity Partnership*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Glamorgan Biodiversity Action Group (GlamBAG 1999) *Draft Habitat Action Plans for Glamorgan*.

Merthyr Tydfil Biodiversity Partnership (MTBP 2008a) *Guidelines for the Selection of SINC's in Merthyr Tydfil*. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

Merthyr Tydfil Biodiversity Partnership (MTBP 2008b) *Action Plan for Wildlife in Merthyr Tydfil: The Merthyr Tydfil Biodiversity Action Plan 2008-2013 (Adopted Version)*. Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.

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Nature Conservancy Council (NCC 1990) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: a Technique for Environmental Audit*. NCC Peterborough.

Rodwell, J (Ed) (1991 - 2000) *British Plant Communities*. Vols 1-5. Cambridge University Press.

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB 2009a): Birds of Conservation Concern: The Population Status of Birds in Wales, 2. RSPB, Sandy.

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Sothorn E (1986) *Glamorgan Inventory of Ancient Woodlands (Provisional)*. Nature Conservancy Council.

South Wales Wildlife Sites Partnership (SWWSP 2004) *Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales*. Gwent Wildlife Trust.

TACP (1996) *Landscapes Working for Wales: A Landscape Strategy for the Borough of Merthyr Tydfil. 4. Technical Annex*. Welsh Development Agency, Mid Glamorgan County Council, Merthyr Tydfil Borough Council.

Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP 2008) *Criteria for the Selection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the County Boroughs of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil & Rhondda Cynon Taff (The 'Mid-Valleys Area')*. Wales Biodiversity Partnership/Welsh Assembly Government.

Wales Biodiversity Partnership Government (WBP 2007) *List of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biological Diversity*. Welsh Government, Cardiff.

APPENDIX 1: SPECIES RECORDED

All species recorded by DCE 2012 unless otherwise indicated:

SEWBrEC: Miscellaneous SEWBrEC records

Flora

Latin	English names	Indicator species							Source
		W	NG	CG	AG	MG	MST	TF	
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow								
<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	Common bent								
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping bent								
<i>Agrostis vinealis</i>	Brown bent				x				
<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Alder								
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet vernal grass								
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False oat grass								
<i>Athyrium filix-femina</i>	Lady fern								
<i>Betula spp</i>	Birch species								
<i>Blechnum spinant</i>	Hard fern	x							
<i>Callitriche stagnalis</i>	Common water starwort								
<i>Calluna vulgaris</i>	Ling heather	x			x				
<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	Wavy bittercress								
<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	Cuckoo flower		x			x			
<i>Chamerion angustifolium</i>	Rose bay willowherb								
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle								
<i>Cladonia spp</i>	Cladonia lichens								
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn								
<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	Crested dogs tail								
<i>Dactylus glomerata</i>	Cocks foot								
<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	Tufted hair grass								
<i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>	Wavy hair-grass	x			x				
<i>Digitalis purpurea</i>	Foxglove								
<i>Dryopteris affinis</i>	Scaly male fern	x							
<i>Dryopteris spp</i>	Male fern species	x							
<i>Epilobium montanum</i>	Broad leafed willowherb								
<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	Great willow herb								
<i>Festuca ovina</i>	Sheeps fescue			x	x				
<i>Galium saxatile</i>	Heath bedstraw				x				
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb robert								
<i>Glyceria notata</i>	Plicate sweet grass					x			
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy								
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog								
<i>Holcus mollis</i>	Creeping soft grass								
<i>Ilex ilex</i>	Holly								
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft rush								
<i>Kindbergia praelonga</i>	Common feather moss								

<i>Larix spp</i>	Larch species								
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial rye grass								
<i>Nardus stricta</i>	Matt grass								
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	Wood sorrel	x							
<i>Pinus contorta</i>	Lodgepole pine								
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Rib wort plantain								
<i>Plantago major</i>	Broad leaved plantain								
<i>Polypodium spp</i>	Polypody species	x							
<i>Polystichum spp</i>	Shield fern species	x							
<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	Self heal								
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken								
<i>Quercus petraea</i>	Sessile oak	x							
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping buttercup								
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	Bramble								
<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Sheeps sorrel								SEWBRc data
<i>Rumex spp</i>	Dock species								
<i>Picea sitchensis</i>	Sitka spruce								
<i>Polytrichum commune</i>	Common haircap moss								
<i>Potentilla erecta</i>	Tormentil		x		x	x			
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Ragwort								
<i>Taraxacum officinalis agg</i>	Dandelion								
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover								
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red clover		x						
<i>Ulex spp</i>	Gorse species								
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Nettles								
<i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i>	Bilberry	x			x				
	SWWSP 2004 'Indicator Species' Totals	10	3	1	7	3	0		
		W	NG	CG	AG	MG	MST	TF	

Key (Flora)

Status

RDB – Red Data Book

BAP – UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species (UKSG 1995; UKBG 1998)

NT – Near Threatened

W&CA 1991 – Wildlife and Countryside Act: confers protection in UK context

PS – Primary Species in SWWSP (2004)

CS – Regionally Uncommon - Contributory Species in SWWSP (2004)

IA – Invasive Alien

Local – Local in Glamorgan

Indicator Species (Mid Valleys Criteria, MVSP 2008)

W – Woodland, NG – Neutral Grassland, CG – Calcareous Grassland, AG – Acid Grassland, MST – Mineral Spoil Tips

SINC Selection

Sites which support 8 neutral grassland, 8 calcareous grassland, 7 acid grassland or 12 marshy grassland indicator species should be considered for selection as a SINC.

Any site with one or more Primary Species should be considered for selection as a SINC, with the occurrence of Contributory Species, being a supporting reason for its selection

Birds

Latin Name	English name	EU Birds Directive	Wildlife & Countryside Act	UK BAP	Wales BAP	UK BOCC	Wales BOCC	SINC Status (Breeding)	SINC Status (Wintering)	LBAP Species	Status on site	Source
<i>Corvus corax</i>	Raven		G					B	B		Locally common resident breeder, especially in the uplands	
<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	Jay	2b	V								Common resident breeder and occasional passage migrant	
<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	Eurasian woodcock	2A 3B	S			A	A	B	B		Uncommon resident, chiefly in upland woodlands, but also at coastal sites in winter, especially during hard weather; the number of 'roding' birds has declined in recent years	SEWBRcC

Key (Birds)

EU Birds Directive 1979:

1 : Annex 1 species: special conservation measures apply

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981: confers protection in UK context

G : Species protected under general provisions of WCA against killing, injury, capture and disturbance while nesting: protection extends to nests, eggs and young

S : Special cases: identified 'game' species which may be killed under licence in certain circumstances

V : 'Pest' species: may be killed or taken under licence in special circumstances

1 : Schedule 1: additionally protected by special penalties

UK BAP (Biodiversity Action Plan, 1995; 1998)

P : Priority Species

Wales BAP

W : List of Species & Habitats of Principle Importance for the Conservation of Biological Diversity (2003)

UK Birds of Conservation Concern: lists compiled by the bird conservation agencies (2009)

R : Red List: species of greatest concern

A : Amber List: birds of moderate concern

Wales Birds of Conservation Concern: lists compiled by the bird conservation agencies (2009)

R : Red List: species of greatest concern

A : Amber List: birds of moderate concern

SINC Status: lists compiled in *Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales* (2004)

A : Qualifying species

B : Contributory species

LBAP

MT : Species listed in the Merthyr Tydfil Local Biodiversity Action Plan

APPENDIX 2: REPRESENTATIVE SITE PHOTOGRAPHS (November 2012)



1. View of track leading into site from south east



2. View of larch ground flora



3. Open area beside track with bracken & scattered trees



4. Alder woodland in south of site



5. Track through dense spruce plantation



6. Acid grassland between conifer plantations



7. Waterlogged track leading through forestry



8. Alder woodland beside stream in south of site

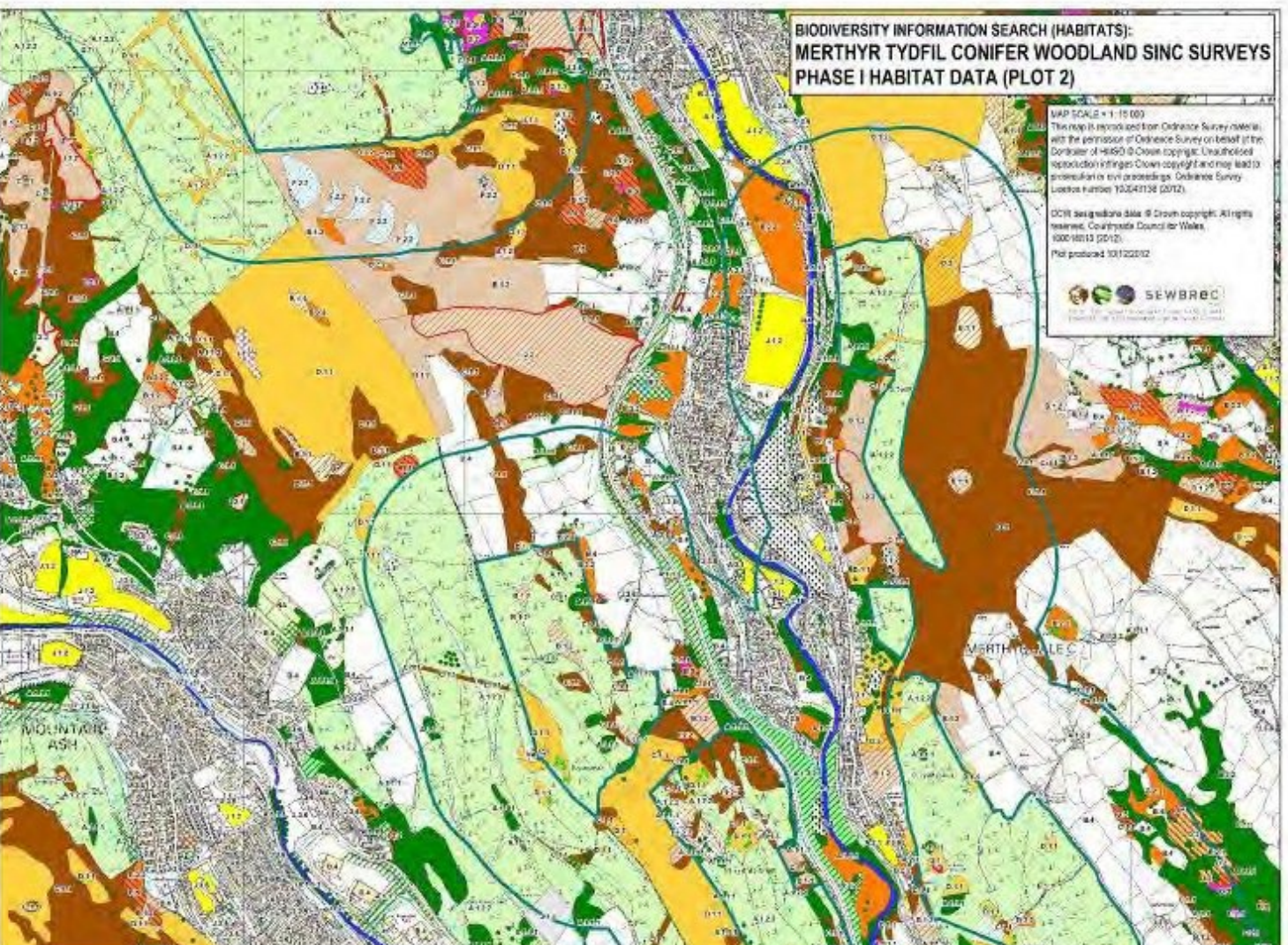


9. View of pond (2) within quarry

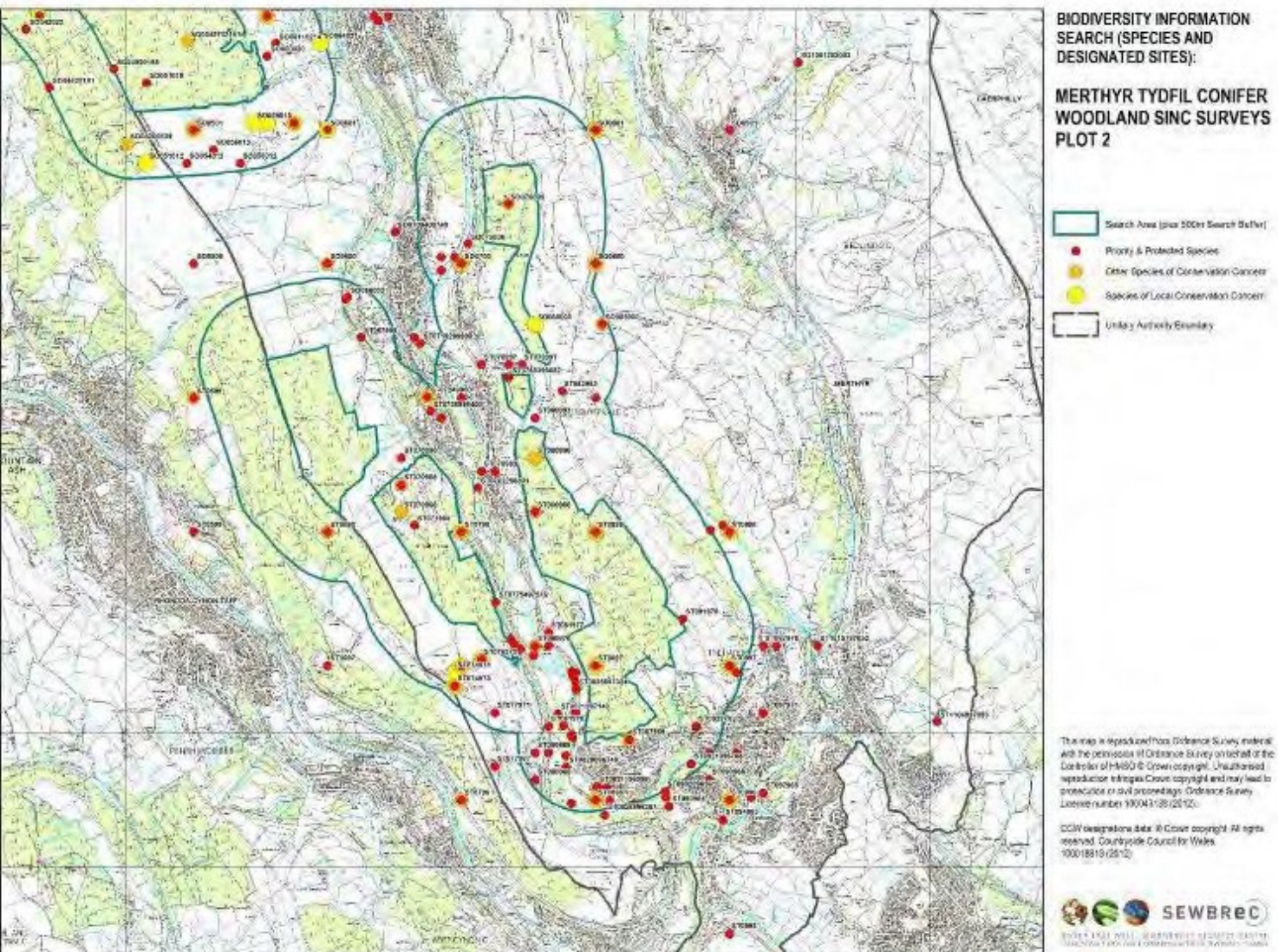


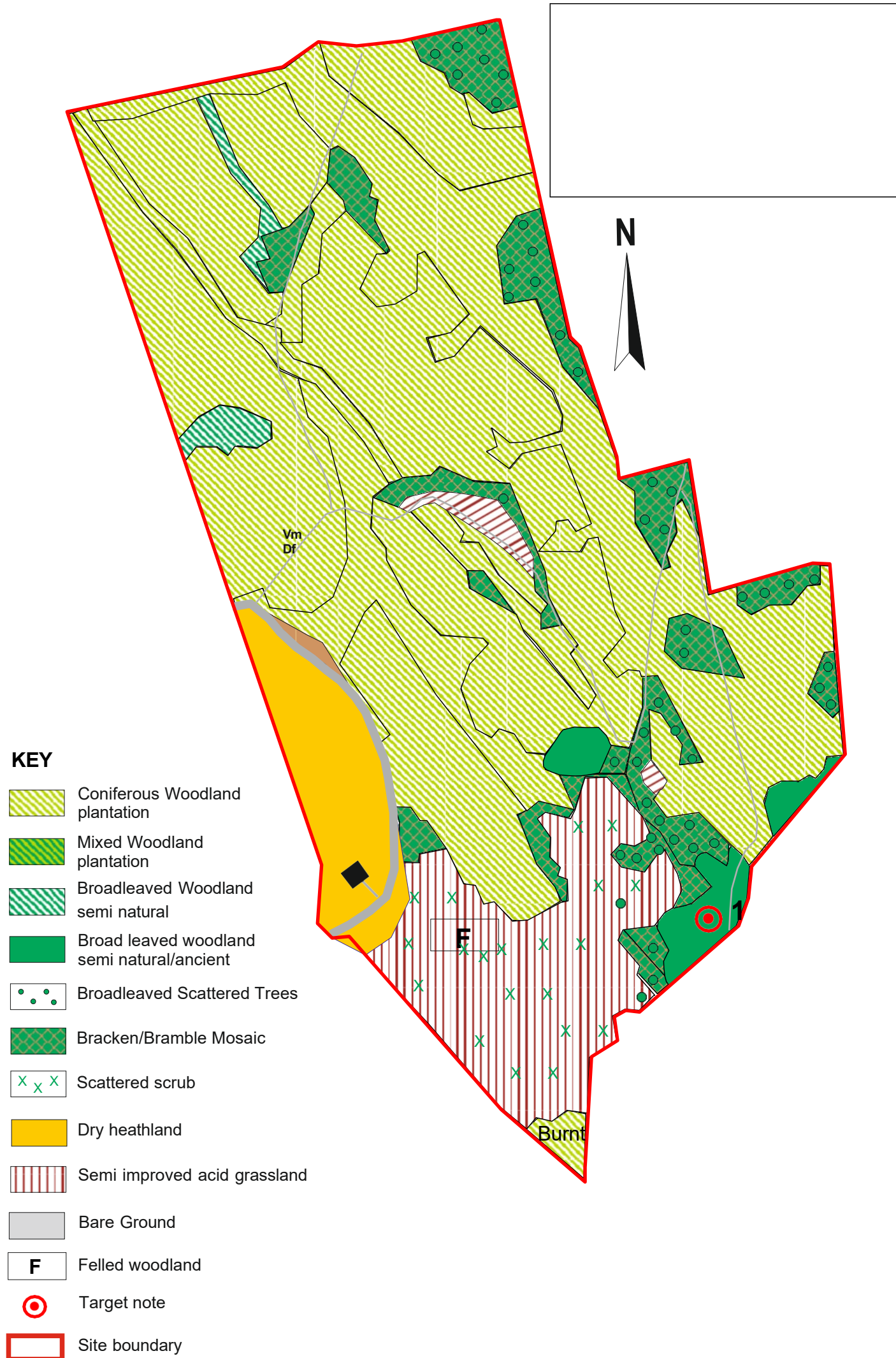
10 Marshy grassland, ditches & pools in quarry

APPENDIX 4: PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY (SEWBRec data, 2012)



APPENDIX 5: SPECIES RECORDS WITHIN 500m (SEWBRc data, 2012)





**Merthyr Tydfil SINC Assessment
Surveys**

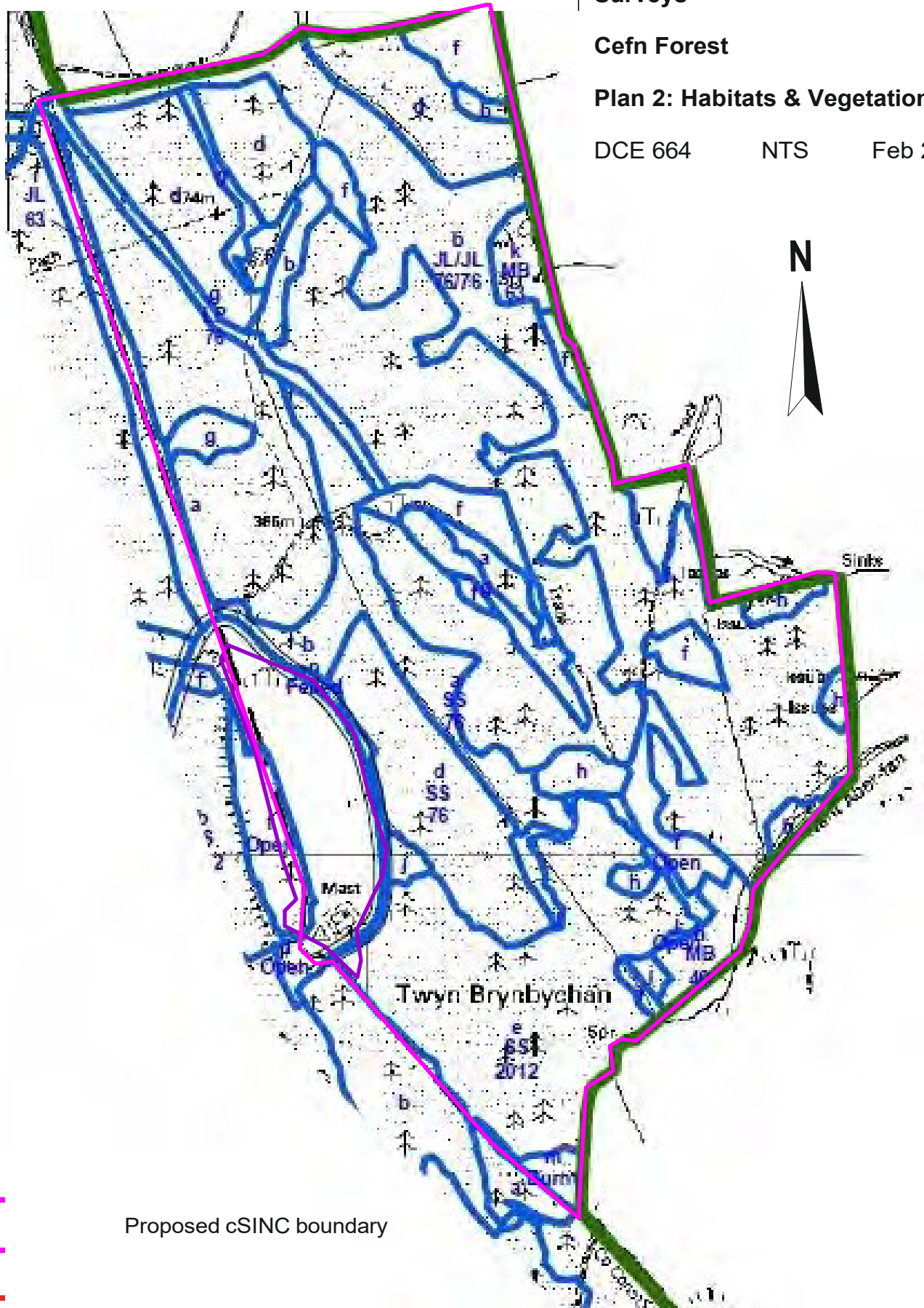
Cefn Forest

Plan 2: Habitats & Vegetation

DCE 664

NTS

Feb 2013



Proposed cSINC boundary



Site boundary



Existing SINC