

**CYNGOR CEFN GWLAD CYMRU
COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES**

**CORE MANAGEMENT PLAN
INCLUDING CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES**

FOR

**Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites Special Area of Conservation
(SAC)**

SAC EU Code UK0030132

(THIS MANAGEMENT PLAN ONLY ADDRESSES THE SAC FEATURES)

Version: 1

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Approved by: *TimJones*

**More detailed maps of management units can be provided on request.
A Welsh version of all or part of this document can be made available on request.**



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PREFACE

This document provides the main elements of CCW's management plan for the site(s) named. It sets out what needs to be achieved on the site(s), the results of monitoring and advice on the action required. This document is made available through CCW's web site and may be revised in response to changing circumstances or new information. This is a technical document that supplements summary information on the web site.

One of the key functions of this document is to provide CCW's statement of the Conservation Objectives for the relevant Natura 2000 site(s). This is required to implement the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994, as amended (Section 4). As a matter of Welsh Assembly Government Policy, the provisions of those regulations are also to be applied to Ramsar sites in Wales.

1. VISION FOR THE SITE

This is a descriptive overview of what needs to be achieved for conservation on the site. It brings together and summarises the Conservation Objectives (part 4) into a single, integrated statement about the site.

The site supports a breeding population of over 1000 adult great crested newts as identified by torch surveys in the spring. The population of newts is stable or increasing, with at least 100 display/breeding ponds present across the site. Native macrophyte plants cover many of the ponds, but at least 40% of the surface remains as open water. Fish are absent from all breeding/display ponds that support great crested newts, and wildfowl are only seen in small numbers. No non-native aquatic species will be present in any of the ponds. Water bodies throughout the site will exhibit a diverse range of seral conditions. Tall vegetation that surrounds the ponds will not cause excessive shading.

On land, vegetation, together with fallen trees, and large stones provides refuge areas for the newts during the day as well as suitable foraging areas, and hibernation places for amphibians. Great crested newts disperse between the ponds using a network of terrestrial corridors, formed by hedgerows and rough grasslands, together with habitats, such as grassland between ponds using ponds, woodland or scrub, that function as stepping-stones. Between sites, new surface water management systems will be amphibian friendly and will therefore not hinder newt dispersal.

Semi-natural oak woodland will cover at least 10% of the site, and will be maintained as far as possible by natural processes. The main factors affecting the viability of the woodland will be controlled to ensure its long-term survival. The woodland is dominated by native broadleaved species characteristically oak with birch, alder and some ash. The sparse shrub layer will comprise of hazel with occasional holly, wych elm and hawthorn. The field and ground layers will be a patchwork of many species, developed in response to local soil and humidity conditions, with such species as ivy, bramble, honeysuckle, broad buckler fern and male fern, with great wood-rush and bluebell being locally abundant. Exotic species such as beech, and cherry laurel will be absent.

The woodland will include trees and shrubs of all age, including a proportion of old veteran trees. A dynamic naturally occurring pattern of gaps will provide structural diversity, with plentiful tree seedlings developing into saplings in the open glades. There will be abundant dead and dying trees throughout the woodland providing habitat for invertebrates, fungi and lower plants. Areas of woodland supporting stands of non-native species including beech, sycamore and conifer in the canopy, will be managed to favour native broad-leaved species. Long-term management will follow largely non-intervention guidelines, eventually to achieve a semi-natural broadleaved woodland whose canopy will not be completely closed.

Recreational activities will be sympathetic to newt conservation and not be for off roading or fishing purposes. All sections of the local community will be aware of the ecological value of the site and of the implications caused by the introduction or transference of fish between ponds.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Area and Designations Covered by this Plan

Grid reference(s): SJ291678

Unitary authority(ies): Flintshire County Council

Area (hectares): 207.52 ha

Designations covered:

The Deeside and Buckley Newts Site SAC is notified as three component SSSI's:

- Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI
- Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI
- Maes y Grug SSSI

Detailed maps of the designated sites are available through CCW's web site:

<http://www.ccw.gov.uk/interactive-maps/protected-areas-map.aspx>

A summary map showing the coverage of this document is available on our website.

2.2 Outline Description

This composite site in north-east Flintshire is situated on the coastal slopes overlooking the Dee Estuary. The solid geology of the site consists of deposits of Carboniferous Middle Coal Measures. These include siltstone, mudstone, sandstone, fireclay and coal. The clay and coal mineral deposits have been commercially exploited. These are in part overlain by glacial boulder clay. Soils are predominantly loamy to clayey and slowly permeable.

Water bodies throughout the site support one of the largest breeding populations of the great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) in Great Britain. Great Britain is considered to support one of the strongholds for this species in Western Europe. North East Wales is the stronghold for this species in Wales, owing to the high density of ponds within the predominantly agricultural landscape. However, it is under significant threat from loss of habitat due to agricultural intensification, pond senescence and urban expansion.

The site also supports significant populations of other widespread amphibian species including smooth newt *Triturus vulgaris*, palmate newt *T. helveticus*, common frog *Rana temporaria* and common toad *Bufo bufo*. Many of these water bodies have been created by past mineral exploitation. Others have been created for stock watering purposes whilst more recently they have been created specifically to conserve the amphibian populations.

Surrounding terrestrial habitat is rich and varies from neutral and acid grasslands, through *Molinia* mires to scrub, lowland dry and wet heath and mature broad-leaved woodland. Lowland dry and wet heath are an uncommon habitat type in North East Wales. This mosaic of habitats forms an important foraging, sheltering and overwintering area for adult and juvenile newts

The site supports stands of semi-natural broadleaved woodland which is composed predominantly of oak Quercus spp and ash Fraxinus excelsior, with sycamore Acer pseudoplatanus, beech Fagus sylvatica, birch Betula pendula and alder Alnus glutinosa locally prominent. There is a distinct but usually sparse shrub layer which is typically composed of hazel Corylus avellana with occasional holly Ilex aquifolium, wych elm Ulmus glabra and hawthorn Crataegus monogyna. The field layer is dominated by ivy Hedera helix, bramble Rubus fruticosus, honeysuckle Lonicera periclymenum, broad buckler fern Dryopteris dilatata and male fern Dryopteris filix-mas. However, in a few areas great wood-rush Luzula sylvatica and bluebell Hyacinthoides non-scripta are locally abundant. Whilst the extent of broad leaved woodland within the site is quite small, it is important because of the range of species characteristic of this type of woodland. Oak and ash dominate the woodland canopy, with alder and birch trees growing in wetter parts of the site. Broadleaved woodland communities, supporting fallen deadwood, form high quality newt terrestrial habitat.

2.3 Outline of Past and Current Management

The overall site is a network of remnant semi-natural and post-industrial vegetation. The area has been exploited over recent centuries for its mineral resources, principally clay and coal, leaving a legacy of old mineral workings. These workings were allowed to naturally revegetate following the cessation of mineral extraction operations. Many of the workings (notably the claypits) have subsequently been used for landfill with domestic waste. In addition to mineral extraction, land uses within and adjacent to the site include commercial and residential development, agriculture and recreation.

Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI:

Brookhill (SAC Units 18-22)

Brookhill supports the most significant component population of great crested newts within the SAC. This population was originally identified breeding in a large water body located within the active claypit at Brookhill in 1995. At the time, it was in the process of being engineered for use as a landfill site, for which planning permission had been granted by Alyn and Deeside District Council to its own waste disposal department (now AD Waste Limited – a council-owned company) in 1992. Although an Environmental Assessment was prepared in support of this application, the importance of this claypit for great crested newts was not identified. To safeguard the newly-discovered newt population therefore, CCW negotiated and licensed interim avoidance proposals in 1995 and subsequently a comprehensive conservation scheme in 1997. The conservation scheme involved the creation of 22 new receptor ponds and the provision of 7ha of terrestrial habitat for amphibian conservation purposes in 1997. Between 1997 and 2000, over 2500 great crested newts, as well as other amphibian species were translocated into the receptor ponds. Translocation was considered at the time to be the most effective way of safeguarding the population, and ensured the availability of secure terrestrial and aquatic habitats. Monitoring of this translocated sub-population has confirmed the continued presence of the species in large numbers, in the new ponds. AD Waste Limited, in association with North East Wales Wildlife (previously Deeside Urban Wildlife Group), manage land at Brookhill specifically for amphibian conservation purposes. Annual management action includes pond clearance and grass cutting.

Standard (SAC Units 10 and 14)

The Nature Conservancy Council (NCC) first confirmed the presence of a great crested newt population within a claypit at Standard in August 1988. The site at the time had been reactivated to remove clay and coal deposits, under an existing mineral planning permission. Relandscaping of the site resulted in the removal of much of the former brickworks with its semi-natural grassland and scrub. Only the large flooded claypit and some adjacent terrestrial habitat remained. The then owners of the site, Alyn and Deeside District Council, had

acquired the site in 1985 for domestic landfill and were utilizing the mineral permission to engineer a site suitable for its intended purpose for landfill. The NCC became aware of the great crested newt interest on 28 June 1988, and co-ordinated and undertook an emergency rescue operation to remove amphibians between 4 August to 14 September 1988. 2138 adult and sub-adult great crested newts were removed under licence, issued on 15 August, together with large numbers of larvae (plus adults/larvae of the two other common newt species) to a range of ponds in North East Wales and North West England. The rescue operation was only of limited duration and inevitably, part of the population was not rescued. Licensed translocation to multiple sites was considered at the time to be only viable option that could be implemented to safeguard individual amphibians. However, today translocations of this scale would have to be undertaken over a number of years, utilizing appropriate capture techniques, to one appropriate and secure receptor site. This case was listed in a report entitled “Conservation of Triturus cristatus habitats in the UK”, that was submitted to the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention (Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats) by Societas Europaea Herpetologica and World Wide Fund for Nature (International) in November 1992. This report, highlighted the decline of this Bern Convention Annex II listed species in the UK. The outcome of submission of this report is not known.

The mineral operators of the site, Clay Colliery Company Limited, created two ponds adjacent to the former claypit, and these together with three settlement ponds, used during the mineral extraction phase and then retained, now support sizeable populations of great crested newts and other species of amphibian. Additional ponds and habitat will be created when landfill operations are completed in approximately two years time. AD Waste Limited, with the assistance of the Deeside Urban Wildlife Group and Flintshire County Council’s Countryside Service have managed land at Standard for amphibian conservation and access purposes. Management operations previously undertaken include gorse control and the construction and maintenance of footpaths. Fish have recently been illegally introduced to lagoons used by the newts as breeding ponds (SAC Unit 14).

Flintshire County Council’s Countryside Service manages the adjoining land at Etna (SAC Unit 7) as a Country Park for nature conservation and public enjoyment purposes. Conservation management currently includes pond creation and restoration; woodland management and the annual mowing of grassland.

Parry (SAC Unit 39)

In 1996, the Deeside Urban Wildlife Group identified the presence of four species of amphibian within proposed extraction areas of the claypit at Parrys. Subsequently in 1999, the previous owners of the site, Hanson Brick Limited, commenced the implementation of an appropriate amphibian conservation scheme. This scheme involved the licensed *in-situ* translocation of approximately 100 great crested newts and other species of amphibian from working areas into a specifically created amphibian conservation area, 1.7ha in size. *In-situ* translocation was considered at the time to be the most effective way of securing viable aquatic and terrestrial habitat as well as safeguarding the integrity of the great crested newt population. Management previously undertaken has included pond maintenance and fish control.

Lane End (SAC Units 4 and 5)

The significance of the cluster of ponds within and adjacent to Knowl Hill was confirmed after amphibian species were recorded breeding in the adjoining claypit at Lane End Brickworks. To safeguard the amphibian interest of the site, the previous owners of the site, Hanson Brick Limited, commenced the licensed implementation of an amphibian conservation scheme. To-date, this has included the reprofiling of banks adjacent to the claypit and erection of permanent fencing to prevent animals gaining access to operational areas of the site.

Planning consent has given in 2005 to infill the main breeding pond and subsequent creation of over 50 new ponds. These works form part of a larger scheme that includes residential development and creation of a public open space.

Buckley Lower Common (SAC Unit 36)

Flintshire County Council’s Countryside Service manage Buckley Lower Common for nature conservation and recreational purposes. There are 9 registered graziers though none appear to currently exercise their rights within this unit. Management action undertaken by the Countryside Service has included pond restoration and scrub clearance.

Connah’s Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI

Wepre (SAC Units 62, 67, 69 and 70)

Flintshire County Council’s Countryside Service manages Wepre Country Park and Gathering Grounds Wood and Llwyni Pond Local Nature Reserve for nature conservation and public enjoyment purposes. North East Wales Wildlife manages habitats that function as links between compartments of the SAC. Conservation management actions include pond creation and restoration; removal of predatory fish; coppicing of woodland and the annual mowing of grassland.

Broad oak Wood (SAC Units 48 and 50)

North East Wales Wildlife and Flintshire County Council’s Countryside Service manage Broad oak Wood as a non-statutory nature reserve. Management operations previously undertaken include tree planting, pond creation and the creation and maintenance of footpaths within the woodland.

Maes y Grug SSSI

In 1989 the presence of a population of great crested newts was confirmed at Maes y Grug following exhaustive survey. Although ideal terrestrial habitat was present, suitable breeding sites were not available at the site until the late 1980's when new ponds were created and colonised by amphibians. In 1991 permission was given for open cast coal extraction. Mineral extraction operations occurred in 1991 and 1992. The site was restored in 1993 in part to agriculture and in part for nature conservation. This included the creation and management of a number of wetland features which have subsequently been re-colonized by the indigenous population of great crested newts. North East Wales manage the main breeding pond and surrounding terrestrial habitats as a nature reserve. Conservation management includes pond creation and maintenance.

2.4 Management Units

The plan area has been divided into management units to enable practical communication about features, objectives, and management. This will also allow us to differentiate between the different designations where necessary. In this plan the management units have been based on tenure and section 15 agreement areas.

A map showing the management units referred to in this plan is shown below:

Management units of Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites SAC

The following table confirms the relationships between the management units and the designations covered:

SAC	SSSI	ISIS	SAC	SSSI	Unit Name	CCW	Other
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Unit Number	Unit No.	Unit Ref				Owned/ Occupied	
Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI							
1	1	1928	✓	✓	Chester Road		
2	2	1929	✓	✓	Optec Ponds		
3	3	1930	✓	✓	Drury New Road		
4	4	1931	✓	✓	Knowl Hill		
5	5	1932	✓	✓	Lane End		
6	6	1933	✓	✓	Buckley Football Ground		Flintshire County Council
7	7	1934	✓	✓	Etna Country Park		Flintshire County Council
8	8	1935	✓	✓	Etna Road Fields		
8	9	1936	✓	✓	Caerphilly Road		
10	10	1937	✓	✓	Standard		Flintshire County Council
11	11	1938	✓	✓	Burntwood Fields		
12	12	1939	✓	✓	A55 Meadow (South)		
13	13	1940	✓	✓	A55 Meadow (North)		
14	14	1941	✓	✓	Standard Lagoons		Flintshire County Council
15	15	1942	✓	✓	Ewloe Fields		
16	16	1943	✓	✓	Globe Way		Flintshire County Council
17	17	1944	✓	✓	Globe Pool		Flintshire County Council
18	18	1945	✓	✓	Brookhill Newt Reserve (South)		
19	19	1946	✓	✓	Brookhill Way		Flintshire County Council
20	20	1947	✓	✓	Brookhill Newt Reserve		Flintshire County Council/North East Wales Wildlife
21	21	1948	✓	✓	Brookhill Landfill		Flintshire County Council
22	22	1949	✓	✓	Buckley Railway line		Flintshire County Council
23	23	1950	✓	✓	Brookhill Fields		
24	24	1951	✓	✓	Liverpool Road		
25	25	1952	✓	✓	Liverpool Road Woodland		
26	26	1953	✓	✓	Smithy Lane Fields No 1		
27	27	1954	✓	✓	Smithy Lane Fields No 2		
28	28	1955	✓	✓	Smithy Lane Fields No 3		
29	29	1956	✓	✓	Ewloe Barns		
30	30	1957	✓	✓	Ewloe Barns Meadow		
31	31	1958	✓	✓	Oaks Farm		
32	32	1959	✓	✓	Pinfold Lane		
33	33	1960	✓	✓	Alltami Road Fields (No 1)		
34	34	1961	✓	✓	Alltami Road Fields (No 2)		
35	35	1962	✓	✓	Alltami Road Fields (No 3)		
36	36	1963	✓	✓	Buckley Lower Common		Flintshire County Council
37	37	1964	✓	✓	Silverlyn		
38	38	1965	✓	✓	Pentre Lane		

	39	1966		✓	Buckley Middle Common		Flintshire County Council
39	40	1967	✓	✓	Parrys		
Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI							
40	1	648	✓	✓	Wepre School		Flintshire County Council
41	2	649	✓	✓	Rawlings Pond		Flintshire County Council
42	3	650	✓	✓	Wepre Lane		
43	4	651	✓	✓	Well Field		Flintshire County Council
44	5	652	✓	✓	Pentre Farm		
	6	653		✓	Cae Llys		
45	7	654	✓	✓	Broadoak Meadow		<i>Proposed</i> Flintshire County Council
46	8	655	✓	✓	Broadoak Wood		<i>Proposed</i> Flintshire County Council
47	9	656	✓	✓	Broadoak Marsh		<i>Proposed</i> Flintshire County Council
48	10	657	✓	✓	Broadoak Wood Nature Reserve (North)		North East Wales Wildlife
49	11	658	✓	✓	Quiet Field		Flintshire County Council
50	12	659	✓	✓	Broadoak Wood Nature Reserve (South)		Flintshire County Council/North East Wales Wildlife
51	13	660	✓	✓	Llwyni Meadow		Flintshire County Council
52	14	661	✓	✓	Llwyni Pond		Flintshire County Council
53	15	662	✓	✓	Llwyni Drive		Flintshire County Council
54	16	663	✓	✓	Llwyni Valley (Upper)		North East Wales Wildlife
55	17	664	✓	✓	Hillsdown Greenway		North East Wales Wildlife
56	18	665	✓	✓	Llwyni Valley (Lower)		North East Wales Wildlife
57	19	666	✓	✓	Gathering Grounds Wood		Flintshire County Council
58	20	667	✓	✓	Chiltern Reservoir		
59	21	668	✓	✓	Hollowbrook Meadow		North East Wales Wildlife
60	22	669	✓	✓	Broadoak Field		<i>Proposed</i> Flintshire County Council
61	23	670	✓	✓	Wepre Wood		
62	24	671	✓	✓	Ewloe Castle		Flintshire County Council
63	25	672	✓	✓	Castle Park		
64	26	673	✓	✓	Castle Hill Fields		
65	27	674	✓	✓	Castle Hill Field 1		
66	28	675	✓	✓	Castle Hill Field 2		
67	29	676	✓	✓	Wepre Park		Flintshire County Council
68	30	677	✓	✓	Killins Farm Fields		
69	31	678	✓	✓	Wepre Golf Course		Flintshire County Council
70	32	679	✓	✓	Wepre Fishing Pond		Flintshire County Council
Maes y Grug SSSI							
71	1	227	✓	✓	Cobblers Wood		North East Wales Wildlife
72	2	228	✓	✓	Cobblers Wood (Plantation)		North East Wales Wildlife
73	3	229	✓	✓	Mount Pleasant Pond		Flintshire County Council
74	4	230	✓	✓	Maes y Grug Pool and Reedbed		Flintshire County Council
75	5	231	✓	✓	Cobblers Wood Meadow		Flintshire County Council
76	6	232	✓	✓	Cobblers Wood Meadow (North)		North East Wales Wildlife

77	7	233	✓	✓	Cobblers Wood (North)		North East Wales Wildlife
78	8	234	✓	✓	Maes y Grug Plantation		
79	9	235	✓	✓	Maes y Grug Meadow		
80	10	236	✓	✓	Maes y Grug Pasture (No. 1)		
81	11	237	✓	✓	Maes y Grug Pasture (No. 2)		
82	12	238	✓	✓	Maes y Grug Pasture (No. 3)		
83	13	239	✓	✓	Coed Maes y Grug		
84	14	240	✓	✓	Maes y Grug Farm		

3. THE SPECIAL FEATURES

3.1 Confirmation of Special Features

<i>Designated feature</i>	<i>Relationships, nomenclature etc</i>	<i>Conservation Objective in part 4</i>
<i>SAC features</i>		
<i>Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site</i>		
Not applicable		
<i>Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site</i>		
1. Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i> (EU Species Code: 1166)		1
<i>Annex I habitat present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection</i>		
2. Old sessile oak woodland with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i> (EU Habitat Code 91AO)	Generally referred to as broad-leaved woodland throughout the plan	2
<i>SPA features</i>		
Not applicable		
<i>Ramsar features</i>		
Not applicable		
<i>SSSI features</i>		
3. An exceptional population of great crested newts	Refer to feature 1	Actions in this plan will address this issue
4. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland		Not addressed in this plan
5: A mosaic of semi-natural grassland		Not addressed in this plan
6. An assemblage of the five widespread amphibian species		Not addressed in

namely common frog, common toad, palmate newt, common newt and great crested newt		this plan
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3.2 Special Features and Management Units

This section sets out the relationship between the special features and each management unit. This is intended to provide a clear statement about what each unit should be managed for, taking into account the varied needs of the different special features. All special features are allocated to one of seven classes in each management unit. These classes are:

Key Features

KH - a 'Key Habitat' in the management unit, i.e. the habitat that is the main focus of management and monitoring effort, perhaps because of the dependence of a key species (see KS below). There will rarely be more than one Key Habitat in a unit.

KS – a 'Key Species' in the management unit, often driving both the selection and management of a Key Habitat.

Geo – an earth science feature that is the main focus of management and monitoring effort in a unit.

Other Features

Sym - habitats, species and earth science features that are of importance in a unit but are not the main focus of management or monitoring. These features will benefit from management for the key feature(s) identified in the unit. These may be classed as 'Sym' features because:

- a) they are present in the unit but are of less conservation importance than the key feature; and/or
- b) they are present in the unit but in small areas/numbers, with the bulk of the feature in other units of the site; and/or
- c) their requirements are broader than and compatible with the management needs of the key feature(s).

Nm - an infrequently used category where features are at risk of decline within a unit as a result of meeting the management needs of the key feature(s), i.e. under Negative Management. These cases will usually be compensated for by management elsewhere in the plan, and can be used where minor occurrences of a feature would otherwise lead to apparent conflict with another key feature in a unit.

Mn - Management units with no special feature present but which are of importance for management of features elsewhere on a site e.g. livestock over-wintering area included within designation boundaries.

x – Features not present in the management unit.

The table below sets out the relationship between the special features and management units identified in this plan:

Background information on Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites SAC

Deeside and Buckley Newt Sites SAC is a composite site and comprises of three-component SSSI's Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI, Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI, and Maes y Grug SSSI. This site is included in the Natura 2000 series primarily for the population of great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* for which it is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. It is also of European interest for the area of old sessile oak woodland, for which the site is considered to support a significant presence.

In addition to the great crested newt population and sessile oak woodland, the site also supports the following SSSI features, namely an assemblage of widespread amphibian species including the

common frog, common toad, great crested newt, palmate newt and smooth newt; mosaic of semi-natural grassland and semi-natural broadleaf woodland.

Buckley Claypits and Commons	Management unit																
SAC Unit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
SSSI Unit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
SAC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SSSI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SAC features																	
1. Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S
2. Old Sessile Oak Woodland with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i>																	
SSSI features																	
3. An assemblage of the five widespread amphibian species namely common frog, common toad, palmate newt, common newt and great crested newt	Not addressed in this plan																
4. Mosaic of semi-natural grassland	Not addressed in this plan																
5. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	Not applicable to this site																

Buckley Claypits and Commons	Management unit																
SAC Unit	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
SSSI Unit	18	19	20	21	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33
SAC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SSSI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SAC features																	
1. Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S
2. Old Sessile Oak Woodland with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i>																	
SSSI features																	
3. An assemblage of the five widespread amphibian species namely common frog, common toad, palmate newt, common newt and great crested newt	Not addressed in this plan																
4. Mosaic of semi-natural grassland	Not addressed in this plan																
5. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	Not applicable to this site																

Buckley Claypits and Commons	Management unit						
SAC Unit	34	35	36	37	38		39
SSSI Unit	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
SAC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
SSSI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SAC features							
1. Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S		K S
2. Old Sessile Oak Woodland with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i>							
SSSI features							
3. An assemblage of the five widespread amphibian species namely common frog, common toad, palmate newt, common newt and great crested newt	Not addressed in this plan						
4. Mosaic of semi-natural grassland	Not addressed in this plan						
5. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	Not applicable to this site						

Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands	Management unit																
SAC Unit	40	41	42	43	44		45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	53	54	55
SSSI Unit	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
SAC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SSSI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SAC features																	
1. Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S
2. Old Sessile Oak Woodland with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i>										K H		K H					
SSSI features																	
3. An assemblage of the five widespread amphibian species namely common frog, common toad, palmate newt, common newt and great crested newt	Not addressed in this plan																
4. Mosaic of semi-natural grassland	Not applicable to this site																
5. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	Not addressed in this plan																

Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands	Management unit														
SAC Unit	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
SSSI Unit	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	32	32
SAC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SSSI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SAC features															
1. Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S
2. Old Sessile Oak Woodland with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i>						K H		K H				K H			
SSSI features															
3. An assemblage of the five widespread amphibian species namely common frog, common toad, palmate newt, common newt and great crested newt	Not addressed in this plan														
4. Mosaic of semi-natural grassland	Not addressed in this plan														
5. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	Not addressed in this plan														

Maes y Grug	Management unit													
SAC Unit	71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84
SSSI Units	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
SAC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SSSI	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
SAC features														
1. Great crested newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S	K S
2. Old Sessile Oak Woodland with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Blechnum</i>														
SSSI features														
3. An assemblage of the five widespread amphibian species namely common frog, common toad, palmate newt, common newt and great crested newt	Not addressed in this plan													
4. Mosaic of semi-natural grassland	Not applicable to this site													
5. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	Not applicable to this site													

4. CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

Background to Conservation Objectives:

a. Outline of the legal context and purpose of conservation objectives.

Conservation objectives are required by the 1992 'Habitats' Directive (92/43/EEC). The aim of the Habitats Directives is the maintenance, or where appropriate the restoration of the 'favourable conservation status' of habitats and species features for which SACs and SPAs are designated (see Box 1).

In the broadest terms, 'favourable conservation status' means a feature is in satisfactory condition and all the things needed to keep it that way are in place for the foreseeable future. CCW considers that the concept of favourable conservation status provides a practical and legally robust basis for conservation objectives for Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites.

Box 1

Favourable conservation status as defined in Articles 1(e) and 1(i) of the Habitats Directive

“The conservation status of a natural habitat is the sum of the influences acting on it and its typical species that may affect its long-term natural distribution, structure and functions as well as the long term survival of its typical species. The conservation status of a natural habitat will be taken as favourable when:

- Its natural range and areas it covers within that range are stable or increasing, and
- The specific structure and functions which are necessary for its long-term maintenance exist and are likely to continue to exist for the foreseeable future, and
- The conservation status of its typical species is favourable.

The conservation status of a species is the sum of the influences acting on the species that may affect the long-term distribution and abundance of its populations. The conservation status will be taken as 'favourable' when:

- population dynamics data on the species indicate that it is maintaining itself on a long-term basis as a viable component of its natural habitats, and
- the natural range of the species is neither being reduced nor is likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future, and
- There is, and will probably continue to be, a sufficiently large habitat to maintain its populations on a long-term basis.”

Achieving these objectives requires appropriate management and the control of factors that may cause deterioration of habitats or significant disturbance to species.

As well as the overall function of communication, Conservation Objectives have a number of specific roles or purposes:

- Conservation planning and management.

The conservation objectives guide management of sites, to maintain or restore the habitats and species in favourable condition.

- Assessing plans and projects.

Article 6(3) of the ‘Habitats’ Directive requires appropriate assessment of proposed plans and projects against a site's conservation objectives. Subject to certain exceptions, plans or projects may not proceed unless it is established that they will not adversely affect the integrity of sites. This role for testing plans and projects also applies to the review of existing decisions and consents.

- Monitoring and reporting.

The conservation objectives provide the basis for assessing the condition of a feature and the status of factors that affect it. CCW uses ‘performance indicators’ within the conservation objectives, as the basis for monitoring and reporting. Performance indicators are selected to provide useful information about the condition of a feature and the factors that affect it.

The conservation objectives in this document reflect CCW’s current information and understanding of the site and its features and their importance in an international context. The conservation objectives are subject to review by CCW in light of new knowledge.

b. Format of the conservation objectives

There is one conservation objective for each feature listed in part 3. Each conservation objective is a composite statement representing a site-specific description of what is considered to be the favourable conservation status of the feature. These statements apply to a whole feature as it occurs within the whole plan area, although section 3.2 sets out their relevance to individual management units.

Each conservation objective consists of the following two elements:

1. Vision for the feature
2. Performance indicators

As a result of the general practice developed and agreed within the UK Conservation Agencies, conservation objectives include performance indicators, the selection of which should be informed by JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring¹.

There is a critical need for clarity over the role of performance indicators within the conservation objectives. **A conservation objective, because it includes the vision for the feature, has meaning and substance independently of the performance indicators, and is more than the sum of the performance indicators.** The performance indicators are simply what make the conservation objectives measurable, and are thus part of, not a substitute for, the conservation objectives. Any feature attribute identified in the performance indicators should be represented in the vision for the feature, but not all elements of the vision for the feature will necessarily have corresponding performance indicators.

As well as describing the aspirations for the condition of the feature, the Vision section of each conservation objective contains a statement that the factors necessary to maintain those desired conditions are under control. Subject to technical, practical and resource constraints, factors which have an important influence on the condition of the feature are identified in the performance indicators.

¹ Available through www.jncc.gov.uk and follow links to Protected Sites and Common Standards Monitoring.

4.1 Conservation Objective for Feature 1:

Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (EU Species Code: 1166)

Vision for feature 1

The vision for this feature is for it to be in a favourable conservation status, where all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- No less than 600 great crested newts will be present on the site
- At least 50 display/breeding ponds will be found throughout the entire site
- Great crested newt larvae will be found in 25 or more of the breeding ponds
- Half of the display/breeding ponds on the site will have a water depth of 10cm or more during the summer months.
- Native macrophytes will cover at least half of the pond surface yet some of the water surface (40%) will still remain open.
- Aquatic marginal vegetation will be present around the ponds
- Breeding/display ponds will not be heavily shaded by surrounding vegetation
- Algal blooms and surface sheens will be absent from display/breeding ponds
- Fish will not be present in breeding/display ponds which support great crested newts
- Only small numbers of water and wildfowl will be seen on the ponds
- The terrestrial habitat surrounding breeding ponds will comprise of refuge areas for newts, foraging areas, areas of hibernacula and corridors which will aid the dispersal of great crested newts
- Off site habitats that function as stepping stone or corridors located between SAC compartments will be maintained for migration, dispersal, foraging and genetic exchange purposes
- Off-site features that impact on successful dispersal, such as roadside gully-pots, will not be subject to future construction
- Non-native aquatic species will not be present
- Amphibian chytridiomycosis will not be present
- All factors affecting the achievement of the foregoing conditions are under control.

Performance indicators for Feature 1

The performance indicators are part of the conservation objective, not a substitute for it. Assessment of plans and projects must be based on the entire conservation objective, not just the performance indicators.

Note that management unit numbers cited refer to SAC compartments only.

Performance indicators for feature condition		
Attribute	Attribute rationale and other comments	Specified limits
A1. Extent and distribution of adult great crested newts <i>Triturus cristatus</i> in breeding ponds	Night counts of adults during the breeding season.. Target =1,000 Based on the number of great crested newts required to maintain a viable population - knowledge provided by staff with experience of the site.	<i>Upper limit:</i> Not required <i>Lower limit:</i> Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI Man.Unit Lower Limit 2-4 20 5 20 7 20 10 20

	<p>[Monitoring should take place each year to allow for any climatic variation between years]</p>	<table border="0"> <tr><td>14</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>200</td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>36</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>38</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>39</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2"><i>Total for SSSI 350</i></td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2"><u>Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI</u></td></tr> <tr><td>Man.Unit</td><td>Lower Limit</td></tr> <tr><td>40</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>41</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>42</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>45</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>48</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>49</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>51</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>52</td><td>70</td></tr> <tr><td>57</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>69</td><td>40</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2"><i>Total for SSSI 150</i></td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2"><u>Maes y Grug SSSI:</u></td></tr> <tr><td>Man.Unit</td><td>Lower Limit</td></tr> <tr><td>73:</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>74</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>75:</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>77:</td><td>75</td></tr> <tr><td>13:</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2"><i>Total for SSSI 100</i></td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">for at least four years in a six year reporting cycle</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="2">Total = 600</td></tr> </table>	14	20	20	200	21	10	36	20	38	10	39	10	<i>Total for SSSI 350</i>		<u>Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI</u>		Man.Unit	Lower Limit	40	5	41	5	42	5	45	5	48	5	49	5	51	5	52	70	57	5	69	40	<i>Total for SSSI 150</i>		<u>Maes y Grug SSSI:</u>		Man.Unit	Lower Limit	73:	5	74	5	75:	5	77:	75	13:	5	14	5	<i>Total for SSSI 100</i>		for at least four years in a six year reporting cycle		Total = 600	
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<p>A2. Evidence of breeding success</p>	<p>Based on the number of breeding ponds showing recruitment which are required to maintain a viable population - knowledge provided by staff with experience of the site.</p> <p>[A breeding pond is defined as a pond in which <i>T. cristatus</i> is/or is likely to conduct egg laying, and successful metamorphosis once in every 4 years]</p>	<p><i>Upper limit:</i> Not required <i>Lower limit:</i> 1 or more breeding ponds with evidence of recruitment per each of the following Management Units</p> <p><i>Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI</i> 2,4, 5,7,10,14, 21, 36,38,39</p> <p><i>Connah's QuayPonds and Woodlands SSSI</i> 40, 41,44, 45, 48, 51, 52</p> <p><i>Maes y Grug SSSI</i> 71, 73, 74,75, 77, 79, 80, 83, 84</p> <p><i>Upper limit:</i> Not required <i>Lower limit:</i> 5 breeding ponds with</p>																																																														

		<p>evidence of recruitment per each of the following Management Unit</p> <p><i>Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI</i> 20</p> <p><i>Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI</i> 57</p> <p><i>Maes y Grug SSSI</i> None</p>
Performance indicators for factors affecting the feature		
Factor	Factor rationale and other comments	Operational Limits
F1. Extent of breeding/display ponds	<p>Based on the number of breeding and display ponds required to maintain a viable population and to clarify the situation for legal purposes - knowledge provided by staff with experience of the site.</p> <p>[A breeding pond is defined as a pond in which <i>T. cristatus</i> is/ or is likely to conduct egg laying, and successful metamorphosis once in every 4 years]</p> <p>[A display pond is defined as a pond in which adults and sub-adults occur between March and May]</p>	<p><i>Upper limit:</i> 10% of the area of the site <i>Lower limit:</i> 2% of the area of the site and at least 1 breeding/display pond per each of the following Management Units,</p> <p><i>Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI</i> 2,4, 5,7,10,14, 21, 36,38,39</p> <p><i>Connah's Quay Ponds & Woodlands SSSI</i> 40, 41,44, 45, 48, 51, 52</p> <p><i>Maes y Grug SSSI</i> 72, 74, 77</p> <p><i>Upper limit:</i> Not required <i>Lower limit:</i> 10 breeding/display ponds across Management Units</p> <p><i>Buckley Claypits and Commons</i> 20</p> <p><i>Connah's Quay</i> 57</p> <p><i>Maes y Grug</i> None</p> <p>Overall Target total No. = 40 display/breeding ponds</p>
F2. Macrophyte Plant cover	<p>Based on the amount of plant material required for egg laying and the area of open water required for displaying - knowledge provided by staff with experience of the site.</p>	<p><i>Upper limit:</i> 60 % of display/breeding ponds will have <u>75%</u> native macrophyte cover across</p> <p><i>Lower limit:</i> 60 % of display/breeding ponds will have <u>50%</u> native macrophyte cover across</p>

		<p>Management Units</p> <p>Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI</p> <p>Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI 40, 41,44, 45, 48, 51, 52, 57</p> <p>Maes y Grug SSSI 71, 73, 74,75, 77, 79, 80, 83, 84</p>
F3. Water depth	<p>Based on the standard CSM parameters for this feature.</p> <p>Influenced by siltation and build-up of decaying vegetation.</p>	<p><i>Upper limit:</i> Water depth 10m between July and September in 50 % of display/breeding ponds</p> <p><i>Lower limit:</i> Water depth > 10 cm between July and September in 50 % of display/breeding ponds</p> <p>Management Units</p> <p><i>Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI</i> 2,4, 5,7,10,14, 20, 21, 36,38,39</p> <p><i>Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI</i> 40, 41,44, 45, 48, 51, 52, 57</p> <p><i>Maes y Grug SSSI</i> 71, 73, 74,75, 77, 79, 80, 83, 84</p>
F4. Presence of pollution	<p>Based on the water conditions that are appropriate for successful breeding - knowledge provided by staff with experience of the site.</p>	<p><i>Upper limit:</i> No surface sheens and algae blooms on display/breeding ponds in</p> <p><i>Lower limit:</i> Not required</p> <p>Management Units</p> <p><i>Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI</i> 2,4, 5,7,10,14, 20, 21, 36,38,39</p> <p><i>Connah's Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI</i> 40, 41,44, 45, 48, 51, 52, 57</p> <p><i>Maes y Grug SSSI</i> 71, 73, 74,75, 77, 79, 80, 83, 84</p>

<p>F5. Extent of shading</p>	<p>Based on the water conditions that are appropriate for successful breeding - knowledge provided by staff with experience of the site.</p> <p>[Pond shading: % estimated for any tree/shrub cover greater than 1 m, for trees and shrubs up to 5m from a pond. Shading estimated for trees/shrubs casting shadow over a pond between 10am and 4pm]</p>	<p><i>Upper limit:</i> 20 % shading on the southern margin or 60 % of the total pond margin shaded on 50 % of breeding/display ponds</p> <p><i>Lower limit:</i> Not required</p> <p>Management Units</p> <p><i>Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI</i> 2,4, 5,7,10,14, 20, 21, 36,38,39</p> <p><i>Connah’s Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI</i> 40, 41,44, 45, 48, 51, 52, 57</p> <p><i>Maes y Grug SSSI</i> 71, 73, 74,75, 77, 79, 80, 83, 84</p>
<p>F6. Extent and quality of terrestrial habitat</p>	<p>Based on the habitat required to provide foraging areas, hibernacula and connectivity for dispersal - knowledge provided by staff with experience of the site.</p>	<p><i>Upper limit:</i> Not required <i>Lower limit:</i> Terrestrial “newt” habitat with a 250m radius from a breeding/display pond in Management Units</p> <p><i>Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI</i> 1-5, 6-36, 38-39 <i>Connah’s Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI:</i> 40-41, 43-52, 54-57, 60-70 <i>Maes y Grug SSSI:</i> 71-84 must have all And Management Units</p> <p><i>Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI</i> 6, 37; <i>Connah’s Quay Ponds and Woodlands SSSI</i> 42, 53, 58, 59</p> <p>must have at least one of the following characteristics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Refuge areas, i.e. shady areas within the rough/tussocky grassland; scrub, fallen deadwood; underground crevices, tree root systems, mammal burrows, rubble piles, and/or old walls. 2. Foraging areas, i.e. grasslands and woodlands. 3. Potential hibernacula, i.e. log piles or piles of rubble. <p>And not less than 90% of the site</p>
<p>F7 Dispersal routes</p>	<p>Existing dispersal corridors should be maintained and no new obstructions created.</p> <p>Assessed visually. Baseline from 2006 aerial photographs.</p>	<p><i>Upper limits</i> No increase (or change in position) of barriers, such as roads and hedges. <i>Lower limit</i> There should be no significant loss,</p>

		or fragmentation, of hedgerows and other dispersal corridors.
F8. Presence of water and wildfowl	Based on the standard CSM parameters for this feature.	<i>Upper limit:</i> 3 pairs of water and wildfowl per hectare of open water between April and September in Management Units <i>Buckley Claypits and Commons SSSI</i> 2,4, 5,7,10,14, 20, 21, 36,38,39 <i>Connah's Quay</i> 40, 41,44, 45, 48, 51, 52, 57 <i>Maes y Grug</i> 71, 73, 74,75, 77, 79, 80, 83, 84 <i>Lower limit:</i> Not required
F9. Presence of fish*2	Based on knowledge from staff with experience of the site that the presence of fish will be detrimental to the great crested newt population	<i>Upper limit:</i> No fish species (including sticklebacks) present in any ponds <i>Lower limit:</i> Not required
F10 Presence of non-native aquatic plant species, especially <i>Crassula helmsii</i>	Based on knowledge from staff with experience of the site	<i>Upper limit:</i> No non-native aquatic plant species present in any ponds <i>Lower limit:</i> Not required
<p>*1 'Newt' habitat includes woodland, scrub, parkland, un-improved/rough grassland, bracken/tall herbs, wetland and ponds, plus gardens and amenity grasslands, which can also provide valuable habitat for newts.</p> <p>*2 'Wildfowl' are defined as stocked ducks, swans or geese and naturalised Canada geese as well as native water bird species.</p>		

Other factors considered include –

Owner/occupier objectives – The site has 50 owners/occupiers with varying interests in the site including quarrying, landfill, housing and development, conservation of protected species and habitats and recreation.

Recreational use – The site is located within the communities of Deeside and Buckley and is used regularly for recreational purposes. Some management units are within country parks.

4.2 Conservation Objective for Feature 2:

Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles (EU Habitat Code: 91AO)

Vision for feature 2

The vision for this feature is for it to be in a favourable conservation status, where all of the following conditions are satisfied:

- Old sessile oak woodland will occupy at least 10% of the total site area
- The woodland is maintained as far as possible by natural processes
- The trees and shrubs are mainly native broadleaved species dominated by oak with some, birch, alder and ash
- The occasional sycamore may be present but will not become dominant anywhere in the canopy or the under-storey

- Beech and conifer species will be largely absent from the canopy, under-storey and the woodland as a whole
- The abundance of individual native tree species will vary throughout the woodland. There may be dense stands of one species or mixture of several species occupying a given area at any one time
- Existing canopy gaps which occur over great crested newt ponds will be maintained, and supplemented by a changing patchwork of naturally occurring pattern of gaps and temporary glades which will give rise to structural diversity
- The woodland will contain trees and shrubs of all ages and sizes, as a mixture or in single aged groups
- Plentiful native tree seedlings throughout the site will develop into saplings in the open glades
- The field and ground layers will contain such species as ivy, bramble, honeysuckle, broad-buckler fern, male fern and greater wood-rush
- Exotic species such as rhododendron and cherry laurel will not be tolerated within the woodland
- There will be abundant dead and dying trees with holes and hollows, rot columns, torn off limbs and rotten branches throughout the woodland
- All factors affecting the achievement of these conditions are under control

Performance indicators for Feature 2

The performance indicators are part of the conservation objective, not a substitute for it. Assessment of plans and projects must be based on the entire conservation objective, not just the performance indicators.

<i>Performance indicators for feature condition</i>		
<i>Attribute</i>	<i>Attribute rationale and other comments</i>	<i>Specified limits</i>
A1. Habitat Extent	Extent should not increase at the detriment of other SAC features. Lower limit is based on current extent	Upper limit: 33% (68ha) Lower limit: as at SAC designation 10% (21 ha)
A2. Canopy cover	There should be a varying pattern of canopy breaks over time within the whole site area	Upper limit: 90% Lower limit: 70%
A3. Canopy Composition	In some areas non-native trees, such as beech and conifer will be tolerated in the short to medium term, so long as they are not freely re-generating in the understorey. Sycamore should make up less than 5% of the canopy	Upper limit: none set Lower limit: 95% of the canopy forming trees are native species
A4. Regeneration potential	Once gaps are created the rate of regeneration and species comprising the regeneration will be assessed. Viable seedlings/saplings are taken to be healthy/vigorous native tree species reaching a minimum height of 1.5m and comprise species that will replenish the canopy – namely oak, birch, alder and ash	Upper limit: none set Lower limit: signs of seedlings growing through to saplings to young trees at sufficient density to maintain canopy density over 10 year period
A5. Dead wood	The dead wood will consist of a mixture	Upper limit: none set

	of fallen trees, broken branches, dead branches on live trees, and standing dead trees > 20cm in diameter	Lower limit: 30 cubic metres per hectare throughout
Performance indicators for factors affecting the feature		
Factor	Factor rationale and other comments	Operational Limits
F1. Invasive species	Rhododendron ponticum / Cherry laurel These plants should not be allowed to flower due to their invasive nature. If possible they should be eradicated from the site	Upper limit: no flowering (seed-bearing) plants Lower limit: absent from site
F2. Non-native species	Beech / Larch Non-native beech and larch trees can be accepted as part of the canopy in the short to medium term with the long term aim of removing them from the woodland	Upper limit: no beech/larch seedlings or saplings to be allowed to grow to set seed Lower limit: absent from site
F3. Recreation	Large parts of the wood are open to public use with several well developed footpaths	Upper limit: 10% bare ground Lower limit: not required

5. ASSESSMENT OF CONSERVATION STATUS AND MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

This part of the document provides:

- A summary of the assessment of the conservation status of each feature.
- A summary of the management issues that need to be addressed to maintain or restore each feature.

5.1 Conservation Status and Management Requirements of Feature 1:

Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (EU Species Code: 1166)

Conservation Status of Feature 1 within the site:

Unfavourable (2007)

The condition of the feature, as demonstrated by annual torch survey counts carried out on the site 2007, is assessed as **unfavourable, declining**. Total counts for the composite site were below the lower limit for the site (300 individuals). Evidence of recruitment was recorded in 2007. Actions are being actively carried out to facilitate recovery.

The data informing the above conclusions were derived from CCW in house monitoring and staff and volunteers from Flintshire County Council's Countryside Service and North East Wales Wildlife. Great crested newt monitoring has taken the form of 3 or 4 torch counts between April and May together with an appraisal of recruitment during August, in accordance with the national monitoring guidelines.

Management Requirements of Feature 1:

Based on the information available to date (2007) the feature is in unfavourable condition. Great crested newts are found in low numbers and great crested newt larvae are only found in a small number of ponds. The principle reasons for this are, the presence of fish in breeding ponds, pond pollution, and *Crassula helmsii* covering large areas of the pond surfaces.

The great crested newt is dependent on a mosaic of terrestrial and aquatic habitats for breeding, shelter and hibernation. Each of these is discussed in further detail below. The provision of log and rubble piles within terrestrial habitats will provide suitable areas for shelter, protection and hibernation.

Pond Management

Excessive growth of aquatic and emergent plants, accumulation of decaying vegetation and silt and scrub encroachment can lead to the gradual loss of open water areas that are important to breeding newts. This is likely to be an ongoing problem. Periodic weed and silt removal will be required to maintain sufficient open water in all water bodies but this must be undertaken very carefully under licence at the correct time of the year to avoid disturbance to breeding newts and/or preventing damage to breeding sites/resting places. Native vegetation and silt should be left on the sides of the pool prior to disposal to allow amphibians and other aquatic creatures to return to the water. Alternative methods must be employed if non-native plant species are present. Bio-security techniques must be employed to minimize risks associated with the accidental spread of non-natives.

Pond construction and maintenance will need to be required for the purposes of ensuring seral diversity within the overall site. Additional ponds will therefore continue to be created within the SAC to increase the extent of aquatic habitat available to great crested newts, and thus increase the range

and extent of suitable breeding habitats. Whenever appropriate further ponds should be created off-site for the purposes of creating “stepping stones” between SAC compartments. This action will contribute to the delivery of actions associated with maintaining the conservation status of the species.

Water Quality

Owing to the urban location of the site, there is the potential for pollutants to enter the water bodies. Vegetation will act as a buffer to diffuse pollution entering ponds and consequently stands of emergent vegetation should be encouraged. However water pollution is not considered to be a significant factor affecting the presence of great crested newts on this site.

Woodland, Scrub and Hedgerow Management

As far as possible, natural ecological processes should be allowed to operate within the wooded areas. These will, in time, create natural clearings, enable the promotion of tree and shrub regeneration, and ideally allow the steady accumulation of both standing and fallen deadwood, which are essential elements in a natural system. Any active management should aim to complement natural processes, to enhance the various vegetation communities now present, and to promote a greater diversity of woodland structures by encouraging a mixed-age distribution of trees and the wider development of a shrub and ground layer. Care should be taken during such work to avoid disturbance to the newts or their places of shelter.

Owing to a substantial area of the overall site being managed as a community woodland and amenity public open space, it is expected that a high degree of public usage will prevail within this area. As a result dangerous trees, hanging branches and standing dead timber, that are likely to be regarded as a safety hazard, may need to be cut down and retained on site. Fallen and cut timber must be allowed to accumulate on site and retained for the purposes of providing shelter, hibernation sites and foraging habitat for newts.

Hedgerows should be managed by trimming and periodic layering. They should be protected from grazing livestock and their bases left undisturbed to protect the newts.

Grassland Management

Open habitats such as grassland are important feeding areas but the sward should be long enough to provide cover for the newts and their prey. Areas of grass should be left uncut over the summer months to create rank grassland communities that provide both cover for newts dispersing from breeding and natal ponds and as foraging habitats. Consequently, extensive grazing or cutting is not strictly necessary as the newts can thrive in rank grassland and scrub. However, grassland management regimes should lead to the creation of a mosaic of grassland habitats. Frequent cutting for amenity purposes will only be permitted within 1m of statutory and permitted footpaths.

Other Factors to be considered:

Invasive Plants

Non-natives water plants such as *Crassula helmsii* can reproduce very rapidly and lead to a reduction in the open water habitat available for newts. At present (2007) *Crassula helmsii* has been removed from a number of ponds, however it is still problematic in management units 2 and 41. Greater control will be required to prevent the spread of this plant on this site by the effective implementation of bio-security techniques.

Predators

Amphibian breeding ponds should ideally contain no predatory fish, as fish will predate newt larvae. Fish have been removed from some ponds using the technique of electro-fishing, netting and pumping. However the presence of fish is still a problem in management units 2, 14, 20, 36, 67 and 74. Without further removal of fish from ponds in the SAC great crested newt recruitment will decline. Members of the public also need to be discouraged from translocating fish between ponds for recreational fishing purposes. To facilitate effective fish control, the use of piscicides must be considered.

Water/wildfowl, although not currently a significant problem, have the potential to predate newt eggs/larvae if numbers are allowed to increase. Consequently land managers must be advised to actively discourage the feeding or introduction of waterfowl. If numbers increase, water/wildfowl numbers will need to be controlled.

Obstructions to Movement

Hedgerows and other linear landscape features must be present to enable the migration and dispersal of individuals, and facilitate genetic exchange between neighbouring newt populations. These features should not be removed or altered so as to restrict newt access. These may be on or off-site.

Off-site, newts can become trapped in roadside gully-pots during migration to and from breeding ponds. Once trapped, it is unlikely that animals will be able to escape. Where gully-pots are present, measures should be undertaken to reduce the likelihood of newts becoming trapped and to rescue those that do. In the medium to long term, alternative surface water management systems, that do not include gully-pots, should be installed.

Other potential barriers to newts, such as new roads, paths, walls and high kerbs should not be installed without providing adequate crossing points.

Development

The SAC lies within and at the edge of both residential and industrial areas of Deeside and Buckley. Consequently, owing to its location, pressure from development is likely to occur in the future. There is insufficient information on the nature and scale of future development and consequently potential impacts cannot be effectively assessed. However, appropriate scheme design and implementation will ensure that both direct and indirect impacts are either avoided or considerably minimized. This effectively prevents impacts on either the integrity and/or the feature of the SAC.

Recreational Use

The site is used heavily for recreational purposes as it is close to the communities within the environs of Deeside and Buckley. Management units 7, and 63, 67, 69 -70 are managed as Country Parks. Unit 36 forms a component part of open access common. Recreational fishing within the site will not be permitted except in established water bodies and where its continuation will not impact on newt breeding, colonization or dispersal.

**5.2 Conservation Status and Management Requirements of Feature 2:
 Id sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles (EU Habitat Code: 91AO)**

Conservation Status of Feature 2 within the site:

The SAC monitoring carried out on the feature in 2002 found the feature to be in an Unfavourable condition.

Management Requirements of Feature 2

The canopy compositions failed in all sample points due to the high proportion of undesirable tree species within the canopy.

Current and future positive management should continue to remove non-native and exotic species from the woodland, and reduce the presence of sycamore in the canopy. The presence of non-natives not only affects the canopy composition of the woodland but also the regeneration potential due to the large number of non-native seedlings/saplings. Where gaps occur intervention may be required to reduce the likelihood-undesired species replenishing the canopy. The dead wood composition of the woodland should be increasing as undesirable species are removed.

6. ACTION PLAN: SUMMARY

This section takes the management requirements outlined in Section 5 a stage further, assessing the specific management actions required on each management unit. This information is a summary of that held in CCW's Actions Database for sites, and the database will be used by CCW and partner organisations to plan future work to meet the Wales Environment Strategy targets for sites.

Unit Number	CCW Database Number	Unit Name	Summary of Conservation Management Issues	Action needed?
001	000227	Cobblers Wood (South)	Key conservation management issues concern woodland management and the maintenance of aquatic habitat. Fallen deadwood must be provided for use by amphibians as sheltering/hibernation habitats.	Yes
002	000228	Cobblers Wood (Plantation)	Conservation management works essential concern tree maintenance.	Yes
003	000229	Mount Pleasant	Management works in this unit include vegetation clearance and management of the pond.	Yes
004	000230	Maes y Grug Main Pool and Reedbed	Key conservation action includes aquatic habitat management, scrub (gorse) removal and pond creation. Target number of new ponds for this unit = 2. Canada geese will also need to be subject to control.	Yes
005	000231	Cobblers Wood Meadow	The following conservation works are required: (1) grassland management; (2) pond creation/management (3) control of scrub; (4) Canada goose control; and (5) fish removal. Target number of new ponds to be constructed in this unit = 3.	Yes
006	000232	Cobblers Wood Meadow (North)	Conservation management action concerns grassland management and pond creation. Target number of new ponds = 2.	Yes
007	000233	Cobblers Wood (North)	Key conservation management action required within this unit includes woodland management, aquatic habitat management and vegetation clearance.	Yes

Unit Number	CCW Database Number	Unit Name	Summary of Conservation Management Issues	Action needed?
008	000234	Maes y Grug Plantation	Pig grazing has been used to control bramble/scrub. This needs to be subject to critical appraisal. Key concerns are the degradation of amphibian sheltering and foraging habitats.	Yes
009	000235	Maes y Grug Meadow	Aquatic habitats need urgent management. Gorse scrub needs to be controlled. The Canada goose population needs to be subject to control. Fish removal from the main lake is also required.	Yes
010	000236	Maes y Grug Pasture (No 1)	Canada geese numbers to be significantly reduced. Target number of new ponds = 1. Fish removal in the main lake is required	Yes
011	000237	Maes y Grug Pasture (No 2)	Grazing regime needs to be subject to modification. Pond creation is required: Target = 1.	Yes
012	000238	Maes y Grug Pasture (No 3)	Grazing levels need to be reduced or modified. One new pond needs to be constructed.	Yes
013	000239	Coed Maes y Grug	Conservation management works within this unit include woodland management, scrub (gorse) control, and aquatic habitat management. Use of pigs as a means of controlling gorse needs to be critically appraised and regularised (if ultimately considered to be appropriate).	Yes
014	000240	Maes y Grug Farm	Conservation management within this unit requires appropriate aquatic habitat and grassland management. Use of a section of this unit for pig grazing is of concern to CCW. This type of activity is likely to adversely affect amphibian terrestrial foraging and sheltering habitat.	Yes
015	000648	Wepre Lane County Primary School	Conservation management requirements for this compartment include pond maintenance and control of scrub.	No
016	000649	Rawlings Pond	Key management actions at this site include control of non-native plant species and pond maintenance	Yes
017	000650	Wepre Lane	Conservation management action must focus on maintaining the integrity of this unit.	No
018	000651	Well Field	Key management actions associated with this unit include pond creation (n=3) and creation of a grassland community. The remainder of this unit should be left to develop into woodland.	Yes
019	000652	Pentre Farm	Key actions associated with this unit include woodland and scrub management, and pond restoration.	Yes
020	000653	Cae-llys	Management requirements within this unit principally concern pond restoration and subsequent maintenance.	No
021	000654	Broadoak Meadow	Management requirements for this unit include pond restoration, creation and maintenance and appropriate management of grassland communities.	Yes
022	000655	Broadoak Wood	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No

Unit Number	CCW Database Number	Unit Name	Summary of Conservation Management Issues	Action needed?
023	000656	Broadoak Marsh	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
024	000657	Broadoak Wood Nature Reserve (North)	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
025	000658	Quiet Field	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
026	000659	Broadoak Wood Nature Reserve (South)	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
027	000660	Llwyni Meadow	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
028	000661	Llwyni Pond	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
029	000662	Llwyni Drive	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
030	000663	Llwyni Valley (Upper)	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
031	000664	Hillsdown Greenway	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
032	000665	Llwyni Valley (Lower)	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
033	000666	Gathering Grounds Wood	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
034	000667	Chiltern Reservoir	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
035	000668	Hollowbrook Meadow	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
036	000669	Broadoak Field	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
037	000670	Wepre Wood	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
038	000671	Ewloe Castle	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
039	000672	Castle Park	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
040	000673	Castle Hill Fields	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
041	000674	Castle Hill Field 1	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
042	000675	Castle Hill Field 2	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
043	000676	Wepre Park	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
044	000677	Killins Farm Fields	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
045	000678	Wepre Golf Course	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
046	000679	Wepre Fishing Pool	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
058	001156	Barndie Cottage Bank	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
059	001928	Chester Road	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
060	001929	Optec Ponds	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No

Unit Number	CCW Database Number	Unit Name	Summary of Conservation Management Issues	Action needed?
061	001930	Drury New Road	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
062	001931	Knowl Hill	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
063	001932	Lane End	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
064	001933	Buckley Football Club	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
065	001934	Etna Country Park	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
066	001935	Etna Road Fields	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
067	001936	Caerphilly Road	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
068	001937	Standard	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
069	001938	Burntwood Fields	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
070	001939	A55 Meadow (South)	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
071	001940	A55 Meadow (North)	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
072	001941	Standard Lagoons	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
073	001942	Ewloe Fields	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
074	001943	Globe Way	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
075	001944	Globe Pool	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
076	001945	Brookhill Newt Reserve (South)	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
077	001946	Brookhill Way	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
078	001947	Brookhill Newt Reserve	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
079	001948	Brookhill Landfill	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
080	001949	Buckley Railway Line	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
081	001950	Brookhill Fields	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
082	001951	Liverpool Road	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
083	001952	Liverpool Road Woodland	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
084	001953	Smithy Lane Fields No 1	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
085	001954	Smithy Lane Fields No.2	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
086	001955	Smithy Lane Fields No.3	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
087	001956	Ewloe Barns	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No

Unit Number	CCW Database Number	Unit Name	Summary of Conservation Management Issues	Action needed?
088	001957	Ewloe Barns Meadow	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
089	001958	Oaks Farm	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
090	001959	Pinfold Lane	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
091	001960	Alltami Road Fields No.1	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
092	001961	Alltami Road Fields No.2	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
093	001962	Alltami Road Fields No.3	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
094	001963	Buckley Lower Common	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
095	001964	Silverlyn	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No
096	001965	Pentre Lane	This unit is considered to be under appropriate conservation management.	No

7. GLOSSARY

This glossary defines the some of the terms used in this **Core Management Plan**. Some of the definitions are based on definitions contained in other documents, including legislation and other publications of CCW and the UK nature conservation agencies. None of these definitions is legally definitive.

- Action** A recognisable and individually described act, undertaking or **project** of any kind, specified in section 6 of a **Core Management Plan** or **Management Plan**, as being required for the **conservation management** of a site.
- Attribute** A quantifiable and monitorable characteristic of a **feature** that, in combination with other such attributes, describes its **condition**.
- Common Standards Monitoring** A set of principles developed jointly by the UK conservation agencies to help ensure a consistent approach to **monitoring** and reporting on the **features** of sites designated for nature conservation, supported by guidance on identification of **attributes** and monitoring methodologies.
- Condition** A description of the state of a feature in terms of qualities or **attributes** that are relevant in a nature conservation context. For example the condition of a habitat usually includes its extent and species composition and might also include aspects of its ecological functioning, spatial distribution and so on. The condition of a species population usually includes its total size and might also include its age structure, productivity, relationship to other populations and spatial distribution. Aspects of the habitat(s) on which a species population depends may also be considered as attributes of its condition.

Condition assessment	The process of characterising the condition of a feature with particular reference to whether the aspirations for its condition, as expressed in its conservation objective , are being met.
Condition categories	<p>The condition of feature can be categorised, following condition assessment as one of the following²:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Favourable: maintained; Favourable: recovered; Favourable: un-classified Unfavourable: recovering; Unfavourable: no change; Unfavourable: declining; Unfavourable: un-classified Partially destroyed; Destroyed.
Conservation management	Acts or undertaking of all kinds, including but not necessarily limited to actions , taken with the aim of achieving the conservation objectives of a site. Conservation management includes the taking of statutory and non-statutory measures, it can include the acts of any party and it may take place outside site boundaries as well as within sites. Conservation management may also be embedded within other frameworks for land/sea management carried out for purposes other than achieving the conservation objectives.
Conservation objective	The expression of the desired conservation status of a feature , expressed as a vision for the feature and a series of performance indicators . The conservation objective for a feature is thus a composite statement, and each feature has one conservation objective.
Conservation status	A description of the state of a feature that comprises both its condition and the state of the factors affecting or likely to affect it. Conservation status is thus a characterisation of both the current state of a feature and its future prospects.
Conservation status assessment	The process of characterising the conservation status of a feature with particular reference to whether the aspirations for it, as expressed in its conservation objective , are being met. The results of conservation status assessment can be summarised either as ‘favourable’ (i.e. conservation objectives are met) or unfavourable (i.e. conservation objectives are not met). However the value of conservation status assessment in terms of supporting decisions about conservation management , lies mainly in the details of the assessment of feature condition , factors and trend information derived from comparisons between current and previous conservation status assessments and condition assessments.

² See JNCC guidance on Common Standards Monitoring <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-2272>

Core Management Plan	A CCW document containing the conservation objectives for a site and a summary of other information contained in a full site Management Plan .
Factor	Anything that has influenced, is influencing or may influence the condition of a feature . Factors can be natural processes, human activities or effects arising from natural process or human activities, They can be positive or negative in terms of their influence on features, and they can arise within a site or from outside the site. Physical, socio-economic or legal constraints on conservation management can also be considered as factors.
Favourable condition	See condition and condition assessment
Favourable conservation status	See conservation status and conservation status assessment . ³
Feature	The species population, habitat type or other entity for which a site is designated. The ecological or geological interest which justifies the designation of a site and which is the focus of conservation management.
Integrity	See site integrity
Key Feature	The habitat or species population within a management unit that is the primary focus of conservation management and monitoring in that unit.
Management Plan	The full expression of a designated site's legal status, vision, features, conservation objectives, performance indicators and management requirements. A complete management plan may not reside in a single document, but may be contained in a number of documents (including in particular the Core Management Plan) and sets of electronically stored information.
Management Unit	An area within a site, defined according to one or more of a range of criteria, such as topography, location of features , tenure, patterns of land/sea use. The key characteristic of management units is to reflect the spatial scale at which conservation management and monitoring can be most effectively organised. They are used as the primary basis for differentiating priorities for conservation management and monitoring in different parts of a site, and for facilitating communication with those responsible for management of different parts of a site.
Monitoring	An intermittent (regular or irregular) series of observations in time, carried out to show the extent of compliance with a formulated standard or degree of deviation from an expected norm. In Common Standards Monitoring , the formulated standard is the quantified expression of favourable condition based on attributes .
Operational limits	The levels or values within which a factor is considered to be acceptable in terms of its influence on a feature . A factor may have both upper and lower operational limits, or only an upper limit or lower limit. For some factors an upper limit may be zero.
Performance indicators	The attributes and their associated specified limits , together with factors and their associated operational limits , which provide the

³ A full definition of favourable conservation status is given in Section 4.

standard against which information from **monitoring** and other sources is used to determine the degree to which the **conservation objectives** for a **feature** are being met. Performance indicators are part of, not the same as, conservation objectives. See also **vision for the feature**.

- Plan or project** **Project:** Any form of construction work, installation, development or other intervention in the environment, the carrying out or continuance of which is subject to a decision by any public body or statutory undertaker.
Plan: a document prepared or adopted by a public body or statutory undertaker, intended to influence decisions on the carrying out of **projects**. Decisions on plans and projects which affect Natura 2000 and Ramsar sites are subject to specific legal and policy procedures.
- Site integrity** The coherence of a site's ecological structure and function, across its whole area, that enables it to sustain the habitat, complex of habitats and/or the levels of populations of the species for which it is designated.
- Site Management Statement (SMS)** The document containing CCW's views about the management of a site issued as part of the legal notification of an SSSI under section 28(4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as substituted.
- Special Feature** See **feature**.
- Specified limit** The levels or values for an **attribute** which define the degree to which the attribute can fluctuate without creating cause for concern about the **condition** of the **feature**. The range within the limits corresponds to favourable, the range outside the limits corresponds to unfavourable. Attributes may have lower specified limits, upper specified limits, or both.
- Unit** See **management unit**.
- Vision for the feature** The expression, within a **conservation objective**, of the aspirations for the **feature** concerned. See also **performance indicators**.
- Vision Statement** The statement conveying an impression of the whole site in the state that is intended to be the product of its **conservation management**. A 'pen portrait' outlining the **conditions** that should prevail when all the **conservation objectives** are met. A description of the site as it would be when all the **features** are in **favourable condition**.