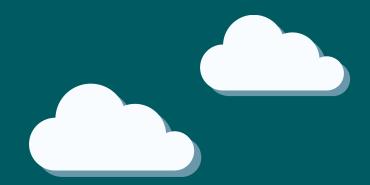
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Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm

Category 6: Environmental Statement

Volume 5, Annex 5.1: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

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www.awelymor.cymru

RWE Renewables UK Swindon Limited

Windmill Hill Business Park
Whitehill Way
Swindon
Wiltshire SN5 6PB
T +44 (0)8456 720 090
www.rwe.com

Registered office:
RWE Renewables UK
Swindon Limited
Windmill Hill Business Park
Whitehill Way
Swindon



AWEL Y MÔR OFFSHORE WIND FARM

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Onshore)

Prepared for: GoBe Consultants (on behalf of Awel y
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1.0 Introduction

Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm (AyM) is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be provided as part of a Development Consent Order (DCO) application under the Planning Act 2008 and also as part of a Marine Licence (ML) application under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009.

SLR Consulting was commissioned by GoBe Consultants, on behalf of Awel y Môr Offshore Wind Farm Ltd,(the Applicant) in May 2020 to undertake the onshore ecological work necessary to inform the EIA. This report comprises a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)¹ of the areas that may be affected by construction and operation of the onshore aspects of AyM comprising the landfall location, 100m wide cable corridor and substation (hereafter referred to as "onshore infrastructure"). The report is submitted to the AyM EIA Evidence Plan Expert Topic Group for information and comment, in advance of further proposals for habitat and species specific surveys. A preferred route had not been identified at the time the PEA commenced; this report therefore presents information for three potential onshore infrastructure options (refer to Drawing 1). However, in January 2021 the preferred option was decided and as such Section 4 onwards in this report relates only to it (Landfall 5, Cable Route Option 5, Substation Zone 5, refer to Drawings 7 and 8).

As AyM progresses, the emerging scheme design will continue to be refined and so the precise locations and final extent of the proposed scheme are subject to change. Therefore, the scheme details presented in this report may vary from those that are ultimately presented in the Environmental Statement (ES).

1.1 Background

An EIA Scoping Report was prepared in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 and Regulation 6 of the Marine Works (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2007. The Scoping Report was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) in June 2020. Within the Scoping Report, full details are provided as to the proposed approach for ecological survey and assessment; which as a first step includes PEA. The intention is to use the outcome of the PEA to capture the presence of, or potential for, important ecological features that may be affected by the proposed development and to scope the requirements for additional species or habitat specific survey. The Scoping Opinion, in response to the Scoping Report, was provided by PINS in July 2020. Comments made in the Scoping Opinion have been taken into account within this report, where relevant. Both documents are available at the Planning Inspectorate website²; their content is not repeated here and readers should refer to the original documents for details.

1.2 Study Area

In accordance with Table 76 in the Scoping Report, this PEA has been undertaken across the following areas:

 Habitats within three AyM onshore infrastructure options that were under consideration at the time of survey, plus the surrounding 100m (ie 100m either side of the corridor and to all sides of any other infrastructure). The PEA includes all areas landward of Mean High Water Springs (MHWS), but also

²https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/projects/wales/awel-y-mor-offshore-wind-farm/?ipcsection=docs



¹ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition, December 2017.

considers intertidal areas in respect of birds.

The 100m buffer (around the proposed 100m cable corridor options) is based upon the premise that indirect impacts (such as noise or dust deposition) to un-designated habitats and/or species (except those noted at the bullet points below) beyond 100m are unlikely to be significant.

 Water courses and water bodies up to 250m from the onshore infrastructure options under consideration at the time of survey (where these may be suitable for use by otter *Lutra lutra*, water vole *Arvicola amphibious* or great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus*).

A 250m up/downstream search area has been used for otter and water vole, since these are highly mobile, territorial species. It is therefore possible that effects from the proposed development, such as habitat loss, may impact populations of these species that occur outside of the scheme boundary. It is worth noting that potential hydrological impacts do not have such a bearing on this search area as a) they would be mitigated at source as part of good construction practice and b) both these species have a degree of tolerance to short term changes in water quality or flow, assuming adequate habitat remains present.

The 250m search area for GCN breeding ponds is based upon published guidance that states that the majority of adult GCN stay within 250m of breeding ponds³ and that beyond 250m impacts to GCN are normally low⁴.

• Intertidal (where relating to birds) and onshore elements of nationally designated sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR)) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within 2km from the onshore infrastructure options under consideration at the time of survey and internationally designated sites (Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Ramsar Sites) within 10km.

The extended search area for designated sites is because even small adverse impacts to these may be significant. Many designated sites exist to protect mobile species, such as bats and birds, which could be affected whilst passing through the project site, or suffer fragmentation/barrier effects due to the size, location and nature of the project. Designated sites which support important aquatic habitats or species may also be affected through hydrological impacts at distance from source.

Within this report the following terms are used:

- Study Area: This is the 2km zone around the three onshore infrastructure options.
- Survey Area: This is the 100m zone around the three onshore infrastructure options.

Areas other than these, which have been included in the PEA (such as ponds within 250m, or internationally designated sites within 10km), are specifically described.

⁴ Natural England Standing Advice (note that Welsh equivalent does not exist) available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/great-crested-newts-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects



³ Langton, T.E.S., Beckett, C.L., and Foster, J.P. (2001), Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook, Froglife, Halesworth.

1.3 Purpose of this Report

This report presents the findings of the PEA. The report seeks to:

- establish baseline conditions and identify important ecological features present (or those that could be present), as far as is possible at this time;
- identify important ecological features that could be impacted by the project, where possible;
- provide initial suggestions for mitigation or compensation, where possible, (noting that at this stage all recommendations are preliminary, depending on results of further surveys or final project design);
- to establish requirements for more detailed surveys; and
- to identify potential opportunities for biodiversity enhancements as part of the project (these suggestions also remain preliminary, depending on results of further surveys or final project design).

1.4 Evidence of Technical Competence and Experience

This PEA has been authored by Jess Colebrook, a Principal Ecologist at SLR Consulting with over 20 years' experience as a professional ecologist. She is a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of CIEEM (MCIEEM). Jess is leading the onshore ecological work necessary to inform the EIA for the project, has been involved in the scoping and consultation process, undertook the habitat surveys and authored this report. Additional technical support and Quality Assurance review has been provided by Duncan Watson. Duncan is a Technical Director at SLR Consulting with over 23 years' professional ecological experience. He is also a Chartered Environmentalist (CEnv) and a full member of CIEEM (MCIEEM).



2.0 Methodology

2.1 Baseline Data Collection

2.1.1 Desk Study

A desk-based study has been undertaken to identify sources of pre-existing ecological data of relevance, that could inform the EIA. Table 2-1 lists the data sources that have been identified and indicates whether data were obtained for scoping (noting that the scoping report covered a significantly larger area than this PEA) and/or this PEA.

Table 2-1
Baseline Data Sources

| Source | Summary | Date Obtained for scoping | Date updated/ obtained for PEA |
|---|---|---------------------------|---|
| Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) jncc.gov.uk website | Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA) details. | 11 December 2019 | 22 January 2021 |
| Natural Resources Wales (NRW) Ile.gov.uk website | Datasets for: Ancient Woodland Inventory 2011; Candidate Special Areas of Conservation; Felling Licence Applications; Habitat Networks; Local Nature Reserves (LNR); National Forest Inventory 2016; National Nature Reserves (NNR); NRW Species Data on the NBN Gateway; Ramsar Sites; Saltmarsh Extents; Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); SACs; SAC and SPA Monitoring Programme Results; SPAs; Terrestrial Phase 1 Habitat Survey; and Traditional Orchards. | 11 December 2019 | 22 January 2021 |
| NRW Designated Site Search https://naturalres ources.wales/gui dance-and- | Statutory designated site details: | 12 December 2019 | 22 January 2021 |



| Source | Summary | Date Obtained for scoping | Date updated/ obtained for PEA |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| advice/environm ental- topics/wildlife- and- biodiversity/find- protected-areas- of-land-and- seas/designated- sites/?lang=en | Local Nature Reserves. | | |
| Cofnod (North Wales Biological Records Centre) | LWS; Protected Species Records; Bird Records; Phase 1 Habitat Information; and Ancient Woodland. | 13 December 2019 | Update for PEA not required. Renewal(s) for preferred onshore infrastructure option will be sought. |
| British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) | Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) Data; National ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> breeding survey data; and Non-estuarine shorebird survey data. | Not obtained for scoping report | Detailed data not yet obtained. Relevant data for the preferred landfall and cable route will be obtained and included in the relevant bird survey reports. |
| Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) | Ornithological data not otherwise held by Cofnod. | Not obtained for scoping report | RSPB hold no additional data of relevance – referred to BTO and Cofnod for records |



| Source | Summary | Date | Date |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| | | Obtained for | updated/ |
| | | scoping | obtained for PEA |
| Coed Cadw | Data in respect of Coed y Gopa & Coed Bryngwenallt Reserve | Not obtained for scoping report | No longer deemed necessary; species records held by Cofnod |
| North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT) | Data in respect of NWWT Reserves; and locally occurring wildlife | Not obtained for scoping report | No reserves within 2km, species data held by Cofnod |
| National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Gateway | Protected and notable species records. | 13 December 2019 | 22 January 2021 |
| Clwyd Bat Group | Monitoring data for important bat roosts in the region, including Coed y Gopa. | Not obtained for scoping report | Data held by Cofnod |
| Denbighshire County Council (DCC) | Details for Roadside Nature Reserves; Annual reports for little tern Sterna albifrons colony at Gronant; Records for selected other bird species (e.g. Cetti's warbler Cettia cetti, peregrine falcon Falco peregrinus, common kingfisher Alcedo atthis, curlew Numenius arquata and lapwing Vanellus vanellus); Records for selected other species (dormouse Muscardinus avellanarius, GCN); and Details for grant-aided woodland planting and habitat improvement projects. NB: LWS information confirmed to be held by Cofnod, and LWS selection criteria old/outdated. | Not obtained for scoping report | Not yet obtained. |
| Conwy County Borough Council (CCBC) | Local wildlife information. NB: LWS and species information confirmed to be held by Cofnod, and LWS selection criteria old/outdated. | Not obtained for scoping report | N/A |
| Gwynt y Mor OWF Environmental Statement (ES) Onshore Ecology Chapter & Appendices | Surveys undertaken in 2005 including: Extended Phase 1 habitat survey; Wintering bird survey; and Breeding bird survey. | | N/A |



| Source | Summary | Date Obtained for scoping | Date updated/ obtained for PEA |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Burbo Bank Extension OWF ES Ecology Chapter & Appendices | Surveys undertaken in 2011 and 2012 for habitats, plants, hedgerows, barn owl <i>Tyto alba</i> , breeding birds, wintering birds, bats, badger <i>Meles meles</i> , dormice, otter, water vole, reptiles, GCN and natterjack toad <i>Bufo calamita</i> . | 02 December 2019 | N/A |
| North Wales Windfarms Connection Project ES Ecology Chapter & Appendices. | Surveys undertaken in 2014 for GCN, dormouse, bats, birds, otters, water vole, dormouse, reptiles, badgers, habitats and hedgerows. | 02 December 2019 | N/A |
| Elwy Solar Farm Scoping Report and Ecological Appraisal | Surveys undertaken in 2019 for habitats and extended to include the additional recording of the presence, or likely presence, of protected species, invasive species and other species of conservation significance. Habitat Suitability Assessment undertaken at ponds, interim results for Wintering Bird Survey. | N/A | 22 January 2020 |
| Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI): Denbighshire Rare Plant Register (May 2014) | which have international or national rarity status, irrespective of their rarity in Denbighshire, as well as plants that are locally rare or scarce. | | 22 January 2020 |
| Clwyd Bird Recording Group Atlas https://cbrg- atlas.cofnod.org.u k/ | Clwyd Bird Recording Group Atlas https://cbrg-atlas.cofnod.org.u Provides distribution maps showing records of bird species within the Clwyd recording area (i.e. Denbighshire and Flintshire). Species maps are derived from data held by Cofnod. | | January 2021 |
| North-East Wales Bird Reports 2015-2018 | ird Reports covering all of the bird species recorded in the region | | January 2021 |
| Other Online Source of Ornithological Records | Sources reviewed included the WeBirdNorthWales blog http://webirdnorthwales.blogspot.com/ , the Birdguides website https://www.birdguides.com/ , and various local Twitter accounts. | Not obtained for scoping report | January 2021 |



2.1.2 Field Surveys

The field survey comprised two main elements:

- mapping of habitats in this instance habitats have been mapped using UKHab v1.1⁵, as agreed at the scoping stage, to capture the presence of Section 7 and Annex 1 habitat types; and
- noting evidence of, or potential for, protected or notable species, or other important ecological features (such as veteran trees or invasive non-native species), such that specific follow up surveys can be scoped and undertaken thereafter.

Habitat Survey

Approximately 25% of the Survey Area could be accessed for field survey, the remaining area was mapped via aerial photograph interpretation, with ground truthing from public rights of way where feasible. It is estimated that approximately 70% of the area was visually observed either via direct access or from roads/public rights of way. Refer to Drawing 2 which shows the extent of field survey and aerial interpretation locations for full details. The aerial images used in this process were the most recent commercially available at 12.5cm and 25cm resolutions and are dated 2016⁶. The minimum mapping unit used was 25m² or 5m length. However, due to the large extent of the survey area and early project stage, habitat boundaries were "snapped" to the nearest OS Mastermap topography vectors (boundaries for the preferred corridor, substation and landfall locations will be reviewed during 2021 as further field survey is undertaken and access to land parcels is obtained).

In addition to aerial photograph interpretation OS Vector Map Local datasets (dated 07/07/2020) were used to identify the presence of waterbodies and watercourses within 250m of the three onshore infrastructure options (shown on Drawing 5). This method was used as small watercourses and ponds are often difficult to discern on aerial images; and although it remains fairly crude is considered appropriate for PEA. Smaller field ditches and ponds within 250m of the preferred cable route, landfall and substation will be ground truthed/accurately mapped during 2021 as full access permission is obtained.

Habitats were mapped to Level 3 of the UKHab Primary Habitat Hierarchy including mandatory secondary habitat codes (numbers 10-41), for all locations within the Survey Area. If field survey access was possible habitats were mapped to Level 4 (where appropriate), plus mandatory secondary codes. Boundary fences were not mapped. Additional secondary codes or photographs were recorded where possible; these have been retained in a GIS and are not presented in this report, but will form part of the final reporting and assessment for the habitats present along the preferred cable route, landfall and substation location.

The PEA field survey was undertaken by Jess Colebrook CEnv MCIEEM over a period of 15 days in 2020; specific dates were as follows; 17, 18, 26, 27, 28 August and 8, 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22 September and 15 October.

Protected Species Survey/Habitat Based Assessments

During the field survey, additional notes were made in respect of signs of, or habitat suitability for other important ecological features such as protected species (for example undertaking GCN Habitat Suitability Index



⁵ Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020) The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 1.1 at http://www.ukhab.org/

⁶ Supplied by ©Bluesky International Limited

(HSI)⁷ assessments at accessible ponds and identifying trees or structures with potential for use by bats).

Details of these additional notes have been retained on a GIS database and are not presented in this report. However, pertinent findings that inform the scope of additional survey requirements have been included for the preferred onshore infrastructure option in Section 4 and are shown on Drawings 7 and 8.

2.1.3 Limitations

Desk Study

Desk study data are unlikely to be exhaustive, especially in respect of species, and are intended mainly to set a context for the study. It is therefore possible that important habitats or protected species not identified during the data search do in fact occur within the study area. Interpretation of maps and aerial photography has been conducted in good faith, using recent imagery, but it has not been possible to verify the accuracy of any statements relating to land use and habitat context outside of the areas, which were subject to field survey.

Field Survey

The majority of the Survey Area was not accessible for field survey such that aerial photograph interpretation and where possible, views from publicly accessible areas were used to determine habitat type and protected species habitat suitability. Most notably, this means that signs of protected species could not be sought for those areas and could also mean that Section 7 habitats or other ecologically important features are present but as yet undetected. Nevertheless it is still considered possible to meet the purpose of this PEA report (as set out in Section 1.4) and it should be noted that "top up" survey will be completed as part of follow on work in 2021 related to the preferred cable corridor, landfall and substation.

The field survey was undertaken during late summer and early autumn, and therefore could have missed spring and early summer flowering species that may have died back. Due to the majority of the survey area comprising arable farmland with low habitat diversity, plus other habitats that are readily identified at any time of year, this is not considered to be a significant constraint to the PEA.

The late summer/early autumn timing of the PEA field survey is also suboptimal with regard to locating signs of protected or notable faunal species, due to the density and height of vegetation. It is therefore possible that evidence for species such as otter, badger or water vole may have been missed as a result. In addition, this period is also suboptimal for the recording of HSI pond assessments in respect of GCN. Nevertheless, it is considered that sufficient field survey and desk study information is available to undertake the PEA in respect of faunal species. In this regard, it is noted that the PEA is not intended to include detailed surveys for protected or notable faunal species but rather to determine the potential for them to occur and therefore highlight further survey requirements.

2.2 Determining Important Ecological Features

Ecological features can be important for a variety of reasons and the rationale used to identify them is explained below. Importance may relate, for example, to protected status, the quality or extent of the site or habitats therein; habitat and/ or species rarity; the extent to which such habitats and/or species are threatened

⁷ Oldham, R.S., Keeble, J., Swan, M.J.S., and Jeffcote, M. (2000) Evaluating the Suitability of Habitat for the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus). Herpetological Journal 10: 143-155.



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throughout their range, or to their rate of decline.

Important habitats are considered here to be those which:

- match descriptions of habitats listed on Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive, so far as it applies to the UK
 and as transposed to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- match descriptions of habitats of principal importance for biodiversity under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016;
- comprise irreplaceable habitats; such as (but not limited to) limestone pavement, sand dunes, ancient woodland and veteran trees⁸; and/or
- comprise a significant habitat resource for an important species (see below).

It is worth noting here that Local Biodiversity Action Plans were sought for both Denbighshire and Conwy but appear to no longer be available online, or elsewhere, having been archived in 2017. In addition, it has been confirmed that there are no current LWS selection criteria for either county.

Important species are considered here to be those:

- of European conservation importance (as listed on Annexes II, IV and V of the Habitats Directive or Annex 1 of the Birds Directive⁹) so far as it applies to the UK and as transposed to The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- protected under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- of principal importance for biodiversity under Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016;
- Red Listed using International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) criteria¹⁰ (e.g. in one of the UK Species Status Project¹¹ reviews, in the Species of Conservation Concern Red List¹², Birds of

⁸ Referenced in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 10 (2018) and PPW Technical Advice Note 5. Nature Conservation and Planning (2009)

⁹ These pieces of legislation are based upon data that remains relevant to the UK, regardless of its non-EU status. ¹⁰ IUCN (2012) IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. Version 3.1. Second edition. IUCN, Gland.

IUCN (2012) Guidelines for Application of IUCN Red List Criteria at Regional and National Levels. Version 4.0. IUCN, Gland.

IUCN (2016) Guidelines for Appropriate Uses of IUCN Red List Data. Version 3.0. Adopted by the IUCN Red List Committee.

IUCN (2019) Guidelines for Using the IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. Version 14. Prepared by the Standards and Petitions Subcommittee.

¹¹ The Species Status project is the successor to the JNCC's Species Status Assessment project, providing up-to-date assessments of the threat status of various taxa using the internationally accepted Red List guidelines (http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1773)

¹² Eaton et al. (2015) Birds of conservation concern 4: the population status of birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British Birds 108: 708-746

Conservation Concern in Wales¹³ or, where a more recent assessment of the taxonomic group has not yet been undertaken, listed in a Red Data Book);

- which are listed as Near Threatened or Amber Listed (e.g. in one of the UK Species Status Project reviews, in Birds of Conservation Concern in Wales¹⁴, or in the Species of Conservation Concern Amber List¹⁵);
- which are listed as a Nationally Rare or Nationally Scarce species (e.g. in one of the Species Status Project reviews) or listed as a Nationally Notable species where a more recent assessment of the taxonomic group has not yet been undertaken; and/or
- endemic to a country or geographic location (it is appropriate to recognise endemic sub-species, phenotypes, or cultural behaviours of a population that are unique to a particular place.



¹³ Johnstone, I. and Bladwell, S. (2016) Birds of Conservation Concern in Wales 3: the population status of birds in Wales. Birds in Wales 13 (1).

¹⁴ See 13

¹⁵ See 12

3.0 Results

3.1 General Context

The Study Area is situated on the north Wales coast on low-lying predominantly agricultural land situated between the towns of Abergele, Rhyl, Rhuddlan and St Asaph. The A55 dual-carriageway crosses the area from Abergele to St Asaph, with the A547 running east-west from Abergele to Rhuddlan. The A548 is the main coastal road between Abergele and Rhyl.

The River Clwyd bisects the Study Area, flowing from St Asaph northward into Rhyl. The River Gele is also within the Study Area and flows east across the Study Area into the River Clwyd south of Towyn.

The Study Area comprises three broadly distinct areas (refer to Drawing 1 for locations):

- Coastal Strip: This area is densely populated, including extensive residential and holiday accommodation.
 Pedestrian footpaths are present directly adjacent to the beach, as is a golf course at the easternmost proposed landfall. Man-made sea-defences including imported rocks are present, along with shingle and sand beaches.
- North of the A55: the land is low lying with a network of drainage ditches; seasonally wet in places. A
 significant area comprises "Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh" (see below). Often intensively
 agricultural, most of the land is used for grazing sheep and cattle. Hedgerows and woodland are
 relatively scarce.
- South of the A55: Here the land begins to rise up on to the limestone, the topography is more undulating, field sizes are smaller, and boundaries are typically well established hedgerows and sometimes drystone walls. Whilst still predominately agricultural, permanent pasture is more common, as are woodlands and hedges.

3.2 Designated Sites

There are two SPAs, one Ramsar site and three SACs within 10km of the onshore infrastructure options under consideration at the time of survey, and two SSSIs and three LNRs within 2km. Table 3-1 and Drawing 3 provide an overview of statutory designated sites within the Study Area, and within 10km in respect of SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites.



Table 3-1: Statutory Designated Sites

| Site name & Designation | Distance from the three corridor/landfall/ substation zone options under consideration at the time of survey (m) | Reason for Notification/Designation |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| Liverpool Bay SPA | 266 | The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive (2009/147/EC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain populations of the following species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive in any season: Red-throated diver Gavia stellata (non-breeding); Little gull Hydrocoloeus minutus (non-breeding); Little tern (breeding); and Common tern Sterna hirundo (breeding). The site qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographical populations of the following regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed in Annex I) in any season: Common scoter Melanitta nigra (non-breeding). |
| Dee Estuary SPA | 3,417 | This site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by supporting populations of European importance of the following species listed on Annex I of the Directive: During the breeding season; Common tern; and Little tern. On passage; Sandwich tern Sterna sandvicensis Over winter; Bar-tailed godwit Limosa lapponica. |

| Site name & Designation | Distance from the three corridor/landfall/ substation zone options under consideration at the time of survey (m) | Reason for Notification/Designation |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| | | This site also qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographical populations of the following regularly occurring migratory species (other than those listed in Annex I) in any season: |
| | | On passage; |
| | | Redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i> Over winter; |
| | | Black-tailed godwit Limosa limosa islandica; Curlew; Dunlin Calidris alpina alpina; Grey plover Pluvialis squatarola; Knot Calidris canutus; Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus; Pintail Anas acuta; Redshank; Shelduck Tadorna tadorna; Teal Anas crecca; and Assemblage qualification: A wetland of international importance. The area qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting at least 20,000 waterfowl Over winter, the area regularly supports 130,408 individual waterfowl. |
| Dee Estuary Ramsar | 3,417 | The site qualifies under Ramsar Criteria 1, 2, 5 and 6 as follows: Criterion 1 Extensive intertidal mud and sand flats (20 km by 9 km) with large expanses of saltmarsh towards the head of the estuary. |



| Site name & Designation | Distance from the three corridor/landfall/ substation zone options under consideration at the time of survey (m) | Reason for Notification/Designation |
|-------------------------|--|--|
| | | Criterion 2, it supports breeding colonies of the vulnerable natterjack toad. Criterion 5 Assemblages of international importance: Species with peak counts in winter: Non-breeding season regularly supports 120,726 individual waterbirds. Criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance. Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at the time of designation): Species with peak counts in spring/autumn: Redshank Species with peak counts in winter: Teal; Shelduck; Oystercatcher; Curlew; Pintail; Grey plover; Knot: Dunlin; Black-tailed godwit; Bar-tailed godwit; and |
| | | Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at the time of designation): Species with peak counts in spring/autumn: Redshank Species with peak counts in winter: Teal; Shelduck; Oystercatcher; Curlew; Pintail; Grey plover; Knot: Dunlin; Black-tailed godwit; |



| Site name & Designation | Distance from the three corridor/landfall/ substation zone options under consideration at the time of survey (m) | Reason for Notification/Designation |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Dee Estuary SAC | 3,417 | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: • Mudflats and sandflats not covered by seawater at low tide • Salicornia and other annuals colonizing mud and sand • Atlantic salt meadows (Glauco-Puccinellietalia maritimae) Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: • Estuaries • Annual vegetation of drift lines • Vegetated sea cliffs of the Atlantic and Baltic Coasts • Embryonic shifting dunes • "Shifting dunes along the shoreline with Ammophila arenaria (""white dunes"")" • "Fixed coastal dunes with herbaceous vegetation (""grey dunes"")" * Priority feature • Humid dune slacks Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection • Sea lamprey Petromyzon marinus; • River lamprey Lampetra fluviatilis; and • Petalwort Petalophyllum ralfsii. |
| Llwyn SAC | 9,376 | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: • Alluvial forests with Alnus glutinosa and Fraxinus excelsior (Alno-Padion, Alnion incanae, Salicion albae) * Priority feature |
| Elwy Valley Woods SAC | 879 | Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: • Tilio-Acerion forests of slopes, screes and ravines * Priority feature |
| Traeth Pensarn | 645 | Traeth Pensarn is of special botanical interest for its vegetated shingle beach plant communities. |



| Site name & Designation | Distance from the three corridor/landfall/ substation zone options under consideration at the time of survey (m) | Reason for Notification/Designation |
|--|--|--|
| SSSI | | |
| Coedydd ac Ogofau Elwy a Meirchion SSSI | 879 | The site is of special interest for its semi-natural broadleaved woodland, its rare flowering plant assemblage, its scarce bryophyte assemblage and the geological and palaeontological interest of Galltfaenan, Cefn and Pontnewydd Caves. |
| Rhuddlan Pond LNR | 630 | Rhuddlan Pond Nature Reserve is an accessible reserve including ponds and meadows. |
| Brickfields Pond LNR | 1,227 | Brickfields Pond, set in west Rhyl, is a local nature reserve popular for a range of recreational activities, including a 1km circular route of the pond. The site was once a clay pit, which was later filled in to create the Brickfield Pond seen today. |
| Kinmel Dunes LNR | 1,997 | Kinmel Dunes is one of the few surviving fragments of sand dune in the locality. This small sand dune system is home to a variety of native maritime plants. Seals can sometimes be seen close to the shore and bird life includes skylark, kestrel and ringed plover. |



A further 70 non-statutory LWS occur within the Study Area, twelve of which are either located within the three route corridor/substation option locations or within a 100m buffer from these. These are also illustrated on Drawing 3, and a list of sites is provided at Appendix A. Further detail in respect of the reason for importance of these LWS is not currently available, but any available details in respect of the sites within the buffer zone of the preferred corridor, landfall and substation will be obtained and used to inform the ES.

3.3 Habitats

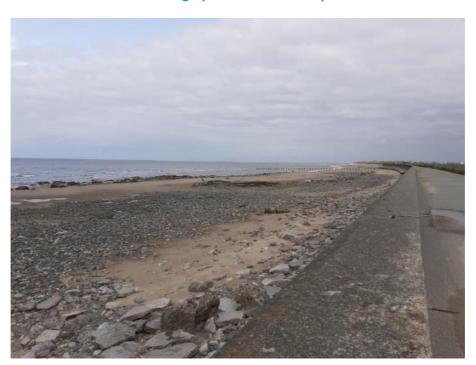
Habitats within the Survey Area were mapped to Level 3 of the UKHab Primary Habitat Hierarchy including mandatory secondary habitat codes (numbers 10-41) where applicable and possible. If field survey access was possible habitats were mapped to Level 4 (where appropriate), plus mandatory secondary codes. Boundary fences were not mapped. Refer to Drawing 4 (Habitat Plan). Ponds and watercourses within 250m of the three onshore infrastructure options are shown in Drawing 5 (Ponds and Watercourses). More details will be provided for the preferred onshore infrastructure option, once surveys of the outstanding areas have been completed, in a separate Habitat Survey report which will be appended to the PEIR and ES.

General descriptions for the various habitats encountered, including illustrative photographs, are provided below. Detailed descriptions have not been provided within this report, but will be made available for the preferred corridor, landfall and substation once full survey access has been obtained and further surveys have been completed. All data are stored in a GIS and could be made available upon request.



3.3.1 Marine Inlets and Transitional Waters

The coastal areas are all heavily modified, with promenades/sea walls present. Photograph 3-1 illustrates the sand, gravel and the eroded remains of previous sea defences present at the beach at Rhyl (Landfall 5).



Photograph 3-1: Beach at Rhyl



3.3.2 Cropland – Arable and Horticulture

Cropland is most abundant north of the A55. Maize was a common crop at the time of survey, but barley and brassicas were also noted, as shown in

Photograph 3-2.

Photograph 3-2: Cropland: Barley Crop near Towyn (top) and Maize Southeast of Rhyl (bottom)







3.3.3 Neutral and Modified Grassland

The majority of the Survey Area comprises grassland that has been agriculturally improved to various degrees; no species-rich grassland was noted but due to the lack of full survey access its potential presence in areas which weren't accessible cannot be ruled out at this stage. Lower-lying fields north of the A55 were commonly more diverse than those south of it, with less dominance of perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* and greater occurrence of crested dogs tail *Cynosurus cristatus* plus agricultural weed species such creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, common nettle *Urtica dioica* and dock species *Rumex spp* as well as species associated with damper conditions such as creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, hard rush *Juncus inflexus* and soft rush *J. effusus*. The most agriculturally improved fields were dominated by perennial rye grass, sometimes with white clover *Trifolium repens* and were used for grazing cattle or for silage, less commonly for hay.



Photograph 3-3: Grassland North of the A55



Photograph 3-4: Grassland South of the A55

3.3.4 Hedgerows and Scrub

Hedgerows are widespread across the Survey Area though most common south of the A55 the majority of which appeared to be managed via flailing. Most hedgerows were species-poor, dominated by a mixture of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), though even these hedgerows often included mature oak trees (*Quercus spp*). The most species-rich hedgerows were noted to occur in the part of the Survey Area that lies to the south of St Asaph Business Park, and also included species such as (but not limited to) wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), bird cherry (*Prunus padus*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).



Photograph 3-5: Hedgerows: Species-poor, Flailed with Trees South of St Asaph Business Park (top) and Unmanaged, North of Bodelwyddan (bottom)





3.3.5 Standing Open Water

Ponds occur at greatest density around St Asaph Business Park, and to the southeast of Rhyl in the area between the A525 and B5119. Ponds are scattered across the remainder of the area north of the A55 but are scarce south of the A55, away from the St Asaph Business Park area. Many of the ponds at the business park have been created specifically as part of previous mitigation measures for GCN.

Photograph 3-6: Ponds: Mitigation Pond at St Asaph Business Park (top), Field Pond south of the A55 bottom)





3.3.6 Rivers and Streams

There are two rivers and a network of streams and ditches present within the Survey Area. The major water course is the River Clwyd of which the section within the Survey Area is tidal and is illustrated in Photograph 3-7. The Afon Gele (Photograph 3-8) runs east to west through the low-lying fields east of Abergele and south of Towyn prior to joining the River Clwyd. The Afon Gele is much modified, forming part of the drainage network

for the low-lying fields in this part of the Study Area. Numerous small ditches and streams are present, particularly in the northern part of the Survey Area.



Photograph 3-7: River Clwyd







3.3.7 Fen Marsh and Swamp

Linear swamps and reedbeds are associated with the drainage network in the fields north of the A55, as illustrated in Photograph 3-9, with additional small reedbeds also present at Rhyl Golf Course (near Landfall 5).

Photograph 3-9: Swamp and Reedbed east of Rhyl (top) and close to the River Clwyd (bottom)





3.3.8 Urban

Urban areas are concentrated at the coast, plus at Rhuddlan, Bodelwyddan and St Asaph Business Park. These were not subject to detailed survey.

3.3.9 Woodland and Forest

Woodland is relatively scarce within the Survey Area, in part as a result of the cable routing and substation siting considerations RWE has made to deliberately avoid such areas. Access restrictions prevented field survey of most of the woodland present, to the extent it was not possible to classify it beyond UKHab level 3 Broadleaved Mixed and Yew woodland, dominated by oak and ash. Many of these woodlands have been subject to management such that they are, or contain elements of, plantation. Conifer plantation woodland is very scarce within the Survey Area.



Photograph 3-10: Broadleaved Woodland at Princes Gorse (North of A55)



Photograph 3-11: Broadleaved Woodland at close to St George (top) and along a bridleway at St Asaph Business Park (bottom)





3.3.10 Section 7 Habitats & Ancient Woodland

Whilst the majority of the Survey Area comprises agricultural grassland used for grazing cattle and sheep which is of limited ecological importance, the following habitats of Principal Importance (i.e. those included under Section 7 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016), many of which are also included on Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive) are confirmed to be present, and are shown in general terms on Drawing 7 for the preferred cable

corridor, landfall and substation:

- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland the largest blocks of woodland are considered likely to include this category¹⁶. It is also worth noting here that there are thirty small blocks of ancient woodland (Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)), as listed in the Ancient Woodland Inventory, within the Survey Area. Most of these are part of larger woodland areas that extend beyond the Survey Area boundary. The vast majority of these are located south of the A55 and west of St Asaph Business Park; north of the A55 there are two blocks between Ysbyty Glan Clwyd and Pengwern, and a further two south east of Rhyl.
- Hedgerows most of the hedgerows within the Survey Area are likely meet the Section 7 definition¹⁷, which states:
 - "A hedgerow is defined as any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide, and where any gaps between the trees or shrub species are less that 20m wide. Any bank, wall, ditch or tree within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow is considered to be part of the hedgerow habitat, as is the herbaceous vegetation within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow. All hedgerows consisting predominantly (i.e. 80% or more cover) of at least one woody UK native species are covered by this priority habitat, where each UK country can define the list of woody species native to their respective country".
- Many of the fields north of the A55 and associated with the Afon Gele and River Clwyd drainage network are considered likely to meet to the description of Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (including those that have been agriculturally improved), which is¹⁸:

"Grazing marsh is defined as periodically inundated pasture, or meadow with ditches which maintain the water levels, containing standing brackish or fresh water. The ditches are especially rich in plants and invertebrates. Almost all areas are grazed and some are cut for hay or silage. Sites may contain seasonal water-filled hollows and permanent ponds with emergent swamp communities, but not extensive areas of tall fen species like reeds; although they may abut with fen and reed swamp communities."



¹⁶ Section 7 Habitat definitions align with the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat Descriptions published in 2008 and updated in 2011, available at https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/2728792c-c8c6-4b8c-9ccd-a908cb0f1432/UKBAP-PriorityHabitatDescriptions-Rev-2011.pdf

¹⁷ See 16

¹⁸ See 16

Photograph 3-12: Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh adjacent to the River Clwyd





Reedbeds – the largest linear reedbeds and those at Rhyl Golf Course are considered to meet the Section
 7 description;¹⁹

"Reedbeds are wetlands dominated by stands of the common reed Phragmites australis, wherein the

SLR

¹⁹ See 16

water table is at or above ground level for most of the year. They tend to incorporate areas of open water and ditches, and small areas of wet grassland and carr woodland may be associated with them."

- Rivers The River Clwyd and Afon Gele are likely to meet the definition by virtue of supporting other
 protected and/or Section 7 species such as otter and water vole, rather than for habitat type/quality per
 se; and
- Ponds; most ponds in the area are likely to meet the Section 7 definition by supporting GCN and/or other Section 7 or Red Data Book species.

Welsh Habitat Network Areas²⁰ are also identified within the Study Area and are shown on Drawing 6. In its 2013 report, NRW states "The habitat network layers offer a general guide to how habitats are functionally related in the landscape, and therefore can be interpreted to help locate conservation action such as habitat restoration and expansion."

3.4 Species

The following sections are based on a combination of desk study information, field survey data and an assessment of the likely value of the habitats present for each species or group of species.

3.4.1 Plants

The desk study confirms that numerous notable, rare or invasive non-native plant species occur within 2km of the proposed corridors, landfalls and substation zones; this includes two species listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and nine species listed on Section 7 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016. In addition, a further 60 species listed on the Red Data Book (RDB) (Wales) and/or the Red Data Book (UK)²¹ also occur within the 2km Study Area. A table listing these species is included at Appendix B.

Many of the records are associated with coastal habitats, habitats along the River Clwyd or woodlands. Whilst there is a record for Butchers broom *Ruscus aculeatus* (RDB) within the Survey Area, it is close to the remains of a dwelling and is considered most likely a garden escape in this instance. The habitat survey undertaken to date would also suggest that areas at Rhyl Golf Course and habitats immediately adjacent to the River Clwyd are the areas most likely to be associated with important plant species.

During the field survey in 2020, a mature black poplar *Populus nigra* was noted south of St Asaph Business Park at grid reference SJ 01749 72993. This species is a relatively rare hardwood in the UK and efforts are underway to conserve its genetic diversity²²; female trees are particularly scarce (the sex of the tree within the Survey Area is unknown). This species is believed to be have been included as a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) species; the current LBAP status for Denbighshire and Conwy remains to be confirmed.

Invasive non-native species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were not

²² Cottrell, J., A'Hara S., and Adams, K. (2018) Forestry Commission Research Note Conservation of Black Poplar: insights from a DNA fingerprinting approach.



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²⁰ Latham, Sherry & Rothwell, (2013) CCW Staff Science Report No 13/3/3 Ecological Connectivity and Biodiversity Prioritisation in the Terrestrial Environment of Wales.

²¹ See 11 and the JNCC Conservation Designations for UK Taxa 2020 available at https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/478f7160-967b-4366-acdf-8941fd33850b

present in the dataset provided by Cofnod. However, several of these species, such as Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, *Cotoneaster* species, and *Rhododendron ponticum* were noted within the Survey Area during the field survey but were nowhere found to dominate.

3.4.2 Fish

Comments received at the scoping stage and desk study data confirm that European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*), brown trout (*Salmo trutta*) and bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) have been recorded in the River Clwyd and/or its tributaries. These species are considered important for the following reasons:

- European Eel Listed as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List and is a Section 7 species listed in the Environment Act (Wales) 2016;
- Atlantic salmon is included on Schedule 4 of the Habitats Regulations (may not be taken or killed in certain ways) and also included on Section 7 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016;
- Brown trout included on Section 7 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016; and
- Bullhead included on Schedule 4 of the Habitats Regulations (may not be taken or killed in certain ways).

Whilst the Atlantic salmon, brown trout and bullhead records are confined to the main river system and tributaries, it is possible that European eel make use of other smaller water courses and ponds within the Study Area.

3.4.3 Invertebrates

The desk study confirms that numerous notable invertebrate species occur within 2km of the potential onshore infrastructure options; the majority of records are for butterflies and moths recorded at Bodelwyddan, St Asaph Business Park and Rhuddlan (refer to Appendix C for the full list). This includes two species listed (in respect of sale only) in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016; white-letter hairstreak *Satyrium w-album* and pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria euphrosyne*. Pearl-bordered fritillary is associated with woodland habitats and needs abundant foodplants (violet *Viola* species) growing in short, sparse vegetation, where there is abundant leaf litter. White-letter hairstreak is dependent on elm *Ulmus* species; wych elm was noted to be abundant in some hedgerows south of St Asaph Business Park.

A further 40 species are listed on Section 7, four of which are also included in the Red Data Book (UK)²³; small pearl-bordered fritillary *Boloria selene* which uses damp grassland, plus small heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*, wall *Lasiommata megera* and grayling *Hipparchia semele* which are associated with dry grassland and/or open stony habitats.

Habitats within the Study Area that are considered to be most valuable to invertebrate species broadly match those listed for important plant species, namely habitats immediately adjacent to the River Clwyd, coastal habitats, hedgerows and ancient or semi-natural woodland.



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3.4.4 Amphibians

The desk study confirms that breeding GCN have been recorded at many of the ponds within the Study Area, with a well recorded population at St Asaph Business Park. GCN is protected through its inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is also a Section 7 species. Glascoed Nature Reserve (location indicated on Drawings 7-8) at the extreme southwest of the business park includes numerous breeding ponds and is managed for the benefit of the species. Mitigation for GCN has been and remains an integral part of the development of the business park.

In addition, common toad (*Bufo bufo*), listed on Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), palmate newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*) and common frog (*Rana temporaria*) have been widely recorded at ponds within the Study Area.

Three records for natterjack toad (*Epidalea calamita*) were included in the Cofnod dataset within 2km of the proposed corridors, landfalls and substation zones. The records were from Rhyl, Abergele and Pensarn with unspecified dates prior to 1919, prior to 1960 and prior to 1995. It is understood from discussion during Expert Topic Group (ETG) meetings that no extant populations occur at these locations currently.

Rough grassland, hedgerow, wetland and woodland habitats are suitable for use by this species group and are present across the Survey Area. However, away from St Asaph Business Park ponds are scarce south of the A55; this part of the Study Area is therefore less likely to be of importance for this species group.

3.4.5 Reptiles

Four species of reptile have been recorded within the Study Area. These include:

- Adder Vipera berus a single record from St Asaph, dated 1907;
- Slow worm Anguis fragilis 14 records, the majority of which are from St Asaph Cemetery;
- Grass snake Natrix natrix seven records from St Asaph Cemetery, St Asaph Business Park and Glan Clwyd Hospital; and
- Common lizard Zootoca vivipara 18 records, also from St Asaph Cemetery, coastal habitats at Rhyl and Glan Clwyd Hospital.

All the above species are protected from intentional killing, injuring and sale under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are listed on Section 7 of the Environment Act (Wales) 2016.

Habitats that may be suitable for use by reptiles occur across the Survey Area and include rough grassland, field margins, hedgerows, scrub, woodland edges and wetlands.

3.4.6 **Birds**

Cofnod data and the other relevant data sources reviewed (see Table 2-1) include records for a wide range of legally protected or otherwise notable (e.g. Section 7 species) bird species within the Study Area. These include 42 species that are protected through inclusion on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), 37 Section 7 species, 30 species listed under Annex 1 of the EU Birds Directive, 44 species red listed



as 'Birds of Conservation Concern'²⁴ and 65 species amber listed as 'Birds of Conservation Concern'. A full list of these species, including scientific names, is provided in Appendix D.

Breeding Birds

The desk study information suggests that certain locations within the Study Area may be of more importance to the above species. The following sites produced records of legally protected or otherwise notable bird species during the breeding season²⁵:

- Afon Clwyd black-headed gull, little egret, ringed plover, oystercatcher, mallard, shelduck and teal;
- Bodelwyddan Castle and Estate willow warbler, dunnock, lesser spotted woodpecker, marsh tit, spotted flycatcher, and tawny owl;
- Bodrhyddan Hall, Dyserth barn owl, bullfinch, lesser redpoll, redstart, spotted flycatcher, and tawny owl;
- Brickfields Pond, Rhyl bullfinch, mallard and shelduck;
- Bryn Meiriadog and Cefn Meiriadog bullfinch, house sparrow, kingfisher, peregrine, swift and willow warbler;
- Coed y Morfa, Prestatyn Barn owl house sparrow;
- Ffrith Beach –linnet, peregrine, ringed plover, skylark, starling and swift;
- Kinmel Bay dunnock, herring gull, house sparrow, kestrel, skylark and willow warbler;
- Marine Lake, Rhyl lapwing, oystercatcher and shelduck;
- Pensarn Beach meadow pipit and ringed plover;
- Rhuddlan inc. Rhuddlan Nature Reserve –herring gull, house martin, lapwing, meadow pipit, skylark, song thrush and swift;
- St Asaph Business Park, including Glascoed Nature Reserve barn owl, dunnock, herring gull, house sparrow, peregrine, starling, swift and tawny owl; and
- St George barn owl, bullfinch, house martin, lapwing, linnet, peregrine and skylark.

Based on the desk study data, three species included on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and/or Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive may breed within the Study Area: barn owl, kingfisher and peregrine. Suitable habitat for barn owl (foraging and nesting habitat) is present throughout the Survey Area. Suitable habitat for kingfisher within the Survey Area is limited to larger waterbodies and watercourses. No

²⁵ Records during the breeding season do not necessarily infer that breeding took place at the relevant site.



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²⁴ MA, Aebischer NJ, Brown AF, Hearn RD, Lock L, Musgrove AJ, Noble DG, Stroud DA and Gregory RD. (2015). Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British Birds 108, 708–746

suitable habitat for breeding peregrine (e.g. quarries, rock faces, tall buildings, etc) was noted within the Survey Area during the field survey.

As set out in Section 3.1 the Study Area comprises three broadly distinct areas. The coastal strip includes few areas that are not built up, which are largely limited to the beaches and Rhyl Golf Course / Ffrith Beach area, which forms part of the Grass Focal Network (Drawing 6). Notable breeding species that could be present in these areas include ringed plover and a number of passerine species. It is understood that little tern has historically bred at Rhyl Harbour but there are no recent records (Joel Whalley, Denbighshire County Council, pers. comm.). The extant little tern colony at Gronant lies outside the 2km Study Area to the east.

North of the A55 the land is largely low-lying agricultural land with a network of drainage ditches, much of which represents "Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh" and/or is included in the Grass Focal Network (Drawing 6). Hedgerows and woodland are relatively scarce. This area is likely to support a range of farmland passerine species throughout and less-intensively managed areas could potentially support breeding waders. The Afon Clwyd and other larger waterbodies could also support breeding wildfowl. Barn owl and kingfisher could both be present, where there is suitable nesting habitat.

South of the A55, the smaller pastoral fields and more frequent woodland and hedgerows are likely to support a range of farmland and woodland passerine species. Suitable habitat for breeding waders or wildfowl is very limited. Barn owl could be present, where there is suitable nesting habitat and kingfisher is also possible, although suitable nesting habitat is limited.

Non-breeding (Wintering) Birds

The following sites produced records of notable bird species during the non-breeding season (winter):

- **Afon Clwyd** bar-tailed godwit, black-tailed godwit, common sandpiper, curlew, lapwing, golden plover, greenshank, little egret, oystercatcher and shelduck;
- Brickfields Pond, Rhyl black-headed gull, black-tailed godwit, common gull, curlew, gadwall, pochard, shelduck, shoveler and wigeon;
- Pensarn Beach/Belgrano curlew, dunlin, lapwing, golden plover, lesser black-backed gull, oystercatcher, red-throated diver, sanderling, shag, shelduck and whimbrel;
- Towyn Fields (south of Towyn) common gull, curlew, oystercatcher, shelduck and shoveler;
- Marine Lake, Rhyl curlew, lapwing, mallard, teal and wigeon;
- **Kinmel Bay** common gull, curlew, dunlin, great black-backed gull, greylag goose, lapwing, little egret and redshank; and
- **Ffrith Beach** black-headed gull, common gull, curlew, dunlin, herring gull, lapwing, sanderling and starling.

As noted in relation to breeding birds, the coastal strip includes few areas that are not built up and habitat that could support important populations of non-breeding birds is largely limited to the beaches and the few coastal



waterbodies. These areas could support notable populations of a range of waterbird species²⁶, although it is noted that most of the beaches are subject to relatively high levels of human disturbance.

North of the A55 the flat, open fields and drainage ditches could potentially support a range of waterbird species, especially those areas representing "Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh", many of which are subject to LWS designation, e.g. the Clwyd Estuary and Adjacent Fields LWS, Abergele Grazing Marsh LWS, Coed Gors LWS and Morfa Rhuddlan LWS. The intertidal habitat at the Afon Clwyd could also support a range of waterbird species and the area is also likely to support a range of farmland passerine species.

South of the A55, the smaller pastoral fields, woodland and hedgerows are unlikely to support important waterbird populations, although they are likely to support a range of farmland and woodland passerine species.

3.4.7 Mammals

Bats

At least eight bat species have been recorded within the Study Area, and are listed below:

- Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*; there is a significant summer and hibernation roost southeast of Rhyl, a maternity colony south of Abergele and records within caves in woodland to the south of the Study Area.
- Brown long-eared bat Plecotus auritus; there are maternity colonies records in the St Asaph area;
- Noctule bat Nyctalus noctula; a maternity colony was noted in 2009 at a tree south of the existing National Grid substation at Bodelwyddan;
- Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*; there is a maternity roost at Bodelwyddan Castle Grounds, roosts are also present at Moelfre and Tywyn;
- Soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*; there is a small roost in a bat box in the St Asaph area and two other small roosts in the Moelfre area at the west of the Study Area;
- Daubenton's bat Myotis daubentonii; recorded hibernating in caves in woodland to the south, historically (>25 years ago) also recorded at Bodrhyddan and Tywyn;
- Natterer's bat Myotis natterri; small roosts recorded south of Abergele, south of St Asaph and in caves
 in woodland to the south; and
- Myotis species; recorded in caves in woodland to the south, and in St Asaph.

All bat species in the UK are protected through inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Noctule, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat and lesser horseshoe bat are also Section 7 Species.

²⁶ The definition of waterbirds used here follows that used by the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS) and includes: wildfowl (ducks, geese and swans), waders, rails, divers, grebes, cormorants and herons.



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559 trees/woodlands have been identified within the Survey Area which are likely to have Potential Roost Features (PRF). Numerous buildings and structures are also present within the Survey Area that may also be used by roosting bats. Given the number of features identified they are not shown or described here, although indicative locations of trees with PRF are shown for the preferred onshore infrastructure option in Drawing 8. Potential roosts that may be impacted will be verified through additional survey at the preferred route corridor, landfall and substation locations and results provided as part of the subsequent bat survey report, to be appended to the ES.

The Survey Area includes numerous habitats that are suitable for use by commuting and foraging bats, such as hedgerows, woodland edges, watercourses and wetlands.

Badger

The badger receives protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Badger has been recorded in the Study Area. Woodland and hedgerows are particularly suitable for sett digging, and the grassland fields for foraging. Evidence of badger in the form of active setts and latrines was located in the Survey Area during the field survey. Details for the location of these have been retained by SLR and used to inform this PEA, but are not included here due to the threat of persecution of this species if this information enters the public domain. This information will be included in a subsequent confidential badger survey report (along with data for the areas not covered yet) which will be appended to the ES (sett details will be provided in a separate confidential annex).

Otter

Otter is fully protected through its inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and in Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is also a Section 7 species.

Cofnod records confirm that otter has been recorded on all the major watercourses in the Study Area, and many of the smaller ones. No records for otter holts are contained in the available data, but a mother and two cubs were recorded in 2006 and 2007 on the River Clwyd at Rhuddlan. A fresh spraint was noted adjacent to the River Clwyd at Rhuddlan during the field survey, at grid reference SJ 01691 78415.

Otter are also likely to utilise the ditch and pond network present in the area, particularly during the amphibian breeding season when frog, toad and newt prey would be abundant.

Water Vole

Water vole is fully protected through its inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is also a Section 7 species.

Cofnod records confirm that water vole has been recorded at many of the small water courses in the northern parts of the Study Area. Reedbeds and ponds in the Survey Area may also be used by this species if suitable food plants and cover are available.

Dormouse

Dormouse is fully protected through its inclusion in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and in Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), it is also a Section 7 species.



Cofnod holds nine records for dormouse within the Study Area. Seven of these are from the more wooded areas south of the A55 and west of St Asaph Business Park. The remaining two occur a short distance north of the A55, west of the A525.

Within the Survey Area suitable woodland and hedgerow habitat for use by dormice is most prevalent south of the A55. Hazel nut searches were undertaken within accessible woodlands/hedgerows during the field survey but no evidence of the species was recorded. Special effort was made to record the presence of dormouse food plants within hedgerows during the field survey; hazel was not found to be as abundant as anticipated, but other species such as bramble, elm and honeysuckle were locally frequent. The network of woodland and hedgerows in the southern parts of the Survey Area are considered suitable for use by dormice, but are often suboptimal due to their highly managed (flailed) character, which is likely to limit flowering/fruiting potential food resources. There is less of a linked network of hedges north of the A55, and of those present and observable, most were unsuitable for use by dormice due to lack of food plants.

Other Mammals

Three other Section 7 mammal species are noted to occur within the 2km Study Area: polecat (*Mustela putorius*), hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*). Polecats typically use lowland woodland habitats, wetlands and farm buildings; these habitats are widespread across the Survey Area. The Survey Area also includes numerous habitats that are suitable for use by hedgehog such as hedgerows, woodland edges, scrub, and gardens. Suitable habitat for brown hare is also present across the Survey Area, including the grassland for foraging and woodland and hedgerows for cover.



4.0 Confirmation of Important Ecological Features and Requirements for Further Survey

4.1 Preferred Onshore Infrastructure Option

In January 2021 landfall location 5, cable route 5a and substation zone 5 (Drawing 1) were identified as AyM's preferred options for onshore infrastructure associated with AyM OWF. As stated in Section 1, this section of the report relates only to these preferred onshore infrastructure options rather than for those options which are not being taken forward. The following sections provide additional detail in respect of important ecological features that may be affected by the preferred onshore infrastructure option and outlines the scope of additional ecological surveys considered necessary to inform the EIA process. Readers should bear in mind that the recommendations are made based upon the best available data collected to date but may be subject to update and amendment as required, as additional ecological field survey data is gathered.

Further to the selection of preferred onshore infrastructure options, RWE has progressed with design work in order to inform EIA work that will be presented in the PEIR. The emerging additional design work has led to some minor changes in route corridor, landfall and substation zones which have occurred after the 2020 PEA survey. This accounts for some minor discrepancies between boundaries shown on Drawings 1-6 and those on Drawings 7-9. This also means that for some relatively small areas there has been no field survey or aerial interpretation of habitats to date. These areas will all be subject to detailed survey in 2021, with results included in later reports that will be appended to the PEIR and ES.

4.2 Important Ecological Features and Further Survey Requirements

The important ecological features identified to date that may be affected by the preferred onshore infrastructure option are identified in Table 4-1 and shown on Drawings 7-8. Table 4-1 identifies where further survey is necessary in order to robustly evaluate potential ecological impacts of the project as part of the EIA, where no such information is needed, and where impacts have been scoped out. The scope proposed below will also be subject to continual iterative refinement, as data is gathered and/or in response to changes in the design of onshore infrastructure.

It is worth noting here that it is recognised that the potential for air quality impacts upon designated sites may need to be assessed. However, this has not been considered here as construction traffic movement and routeing is currently being finalised and would inform the consideration of air quality impacts upon designated sites. Details of any such assessment will be provided separately at a later date.

Table 4-1
Important Ecological Features that may be Affected and Requirements for Further Survey

| Important Ecological Feature | Reason for Importance | Further Survey Required |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| Liverpool Bay SPA | Statutory Designated Site | Where it lies within proximity to the preferred landfall location, Liverpool Bay SPA does not include any intertidal habitat and none of the qualifying features are reliant on terrestrial habitat, except for little tern, which breeds outside the Study Area to the east. It is therefore beyond the scope |



| Important Ecological Feature | Reason for Importance | Further Survey Required |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| | | of the onshore assessment and no further survey is required as part of onshore assessment. |
| Dee Estuary SPA/SAC/Ramsar | Statutory Designated Site | This site is >3km distant from the preferred cable corridor, landfall and substation. Due to the separation distance and lack of (onshore) hydrological connection, no direct impacts are anticipated to arise as a result of the onshore infrastructure and as such no further survey is necessary as part of onshore assessment. |
| Llwyn SAC | Statutory Designated Site | This site is >10km from the preferred cable corridor, landfall and substation, has no mobile notified features (e.g. bats or birds) and/or no hydrological connection. It is proposed to scope this site out of further assessment. |
| Elwy Valley Woods SAC, underpinned by Coedydd ac Ogofau Elwy a Meirchion SSSI | Statutory Designated Site | This site is 1.5km from the preferred cable corridor, landfall and substation, has no mobile notified features (e.g. bats or birds) and/or no hydrological connection. It is therefore proposed to scope this site out of further assessment. |
| Traeth Pensarn SSSI | Statutory Designated Site | This site is 6.5km from the corridor, landfall and substation, has no mobile notified features (e.g. bats or birds) and/or no hydrological connection. It is therefore proposed to scope this site out of further assessment. |
| Graig Fawr SSSI | Statutory Designated Site | This site is approximately 2km from the preferred cable corridor, landfall and substation, has no substantially mobile notified features (e.g. bats or birds, though an important population of silver studded blue <i>Plebejus argus ssp. caernensis</i> butterflies are noted present) and/or no hydrological connection. It is therefore proposed to scope this site out of further assessment. |
| Brickfield Pond, Rhuddlan Pond and Kinmel Dunes | LNR | These sites are between 0.5 and 3km distant from the preferred cable corridor, landfall and substation, such that no direct or indirect impacts are anticipated. It is proposed to scope these sites out of further assessment. |
| Y Ffrith, Prestatyn | LWS | LWS partly lies within 100m of the preferred cable corridor and landfall and existing roads within the LWS may be used as construction haul roads. Habitat survey of areas within 100m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor and proposed haul roads that were not accessible in 2020 is therefore |



| Important Ecological Feature | Reason for Importance | Further Survey Required |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| | | proposed, once access is obtained. |
| Bryn Cwnin Wetland | LWS | LWS partly lies within 100m of the preferred cable corridor. Habitat survey of areas within 100m of the cable corridor that were not accessible in 2020 is therefore proposed, once access is obtained. |
| Clwyd Estuary and Adjacent Fields | LWS | LWS partly lies within the preferred cable corridor. Habitat survey of areas within 100m of the cable corridor that were not accessible in 2020 is therefore proposed, once access is obtained. |
| Coed Cord/Coed y Saeson | LWS | LWS located >100m from the cable corridor and is not hydrologically linked to it. No direct or indirect impacts are anticipated. It is proposed to scope this site out of further assessment. |
| All other LWS listed at Appendix A | LWS | Remaining LWS are all located >250m from the preferred landfall, cable corridor and substation and are not hydrologically linked to them. No direct or indirect impacts are anticipated as a result of lack of potential impact pathways. It is therefore proposed to scope these sites out of further assessment. |
| Habitats | ASNW and other Section 7 Habitats, plus areas within Welsh Habitat Network Areas | Habitat survey of all areas within 100m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor, substation and other associated construction areas that were not accessible in 2020 is proposed, once access is obtained. All areas will be surveyed to UKHab level 4 (where applicable), plus mandatory codes $(10-41)$ as a minimum. Section 7 habitats will be assessed to UKHab level 5 (where applicable), plus mandatory codes $(10-41)$. |
| | | Hedgerow assessment will be undertaken at locations which may be breached, in order to ascertain if hedgerows meet the definition of "Important Hedgerow" under the wildlife and landscape criteria of the Hedgerow Regulations 1992. Based on information obtained to date, c.63 hedgerows may be breached. This assessment will be targeted, informed by a review undertaken during the UKHab survey where species rich (more than five woody species noted) will be identified, and detailed scrutinising of desk study detail undertaken to determine if the hedge is likely to support important species defined in the Regulations. |

| Important Ecological Feature | Reason for Importance | Further Survey Required |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| | | |
| Plant species | Protected or notable species | Habitat survey of all areas within 100m of the preferred onshore infrastructure locations and other associated construction areas that were not accessible in 2020 is proposed, once access is obtained. Detailed survey of areas that are known or suspected to support protected or notable plant species, and that may be significantly impacted, will be undertaken. Such surveys would comprise searching discrete areas of suitable habitat specifically looking for rare species, during the appropriate season (dependent on likely species). |
| | | Based on information to date it is considered that the only locations that may warrant such effort are selected areas within Rhyl Golf Course / Y Ffrith LWS and habitats immediately adjacent to the River Clwyd, although this can only be confirmed following completion of the remaining habitat surveys. Invasive non-native plant species will be recorded during the habitat survey. |
| | | |
| Fish: Atlantic salmon, brown trout, European eel and bullhead | Protected or notable species | The River Clwyd is the only significant water course within the preferred corridor. Existing data in respect of populations of important fish species will be sought to inform the assessment — at this stage it is considered unlikely that further surveys will be needed given the nature of the proposed works in that area. |
| Invertebrates | Protected or notable species | Additional survey for invertebrate species is not proposed for the purpose of EIA given that most habitat loss will only be temporary in nature and will only affect a relatively small proportion of most of the habitats affected. Assessment of impacts to this species group will be via a precautionary habitat-based assessment, focussing on a) areas where permanent habitat loss is likely (i.e. west of St Asaph Business Park, at the substation location) and b) areas that are known or suspected to support potentially important populations of rare/notable species. Based on data to date, this is considered to include Rhyl Golf Course and the adjacent Y Ffrith LWS and woodland and scrub southeast of Rhyl. |
| GCN and common toad | Protected or notable species | It is proposed to deviate from "standard" survey effort, whilst |



| Important Feature | Ecological | Reason Importance | for | Further Survey Required |
|----------------------|------------|----------------------|-----|---|
| | | | | following standard methods ²⁷ , given the known presence of GCN at most ponds within 250m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor, substation and other associated construction areas and the well recorded population at St Asaph Business Park. |
| | | | | All ponds within 250m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor, substation and associated construction areas will be subject to |
| | | | | HSI survey; and |
| | | | | presence/absence survey, unless existing desk study data confirms presence in one of the last five breeding seasons (i.e. 2016-2020). Presence will be assumed if GCN have been recorded within the last five years, or if the pond occurs within 250m of another with a positive record in the last five years. |
| | | | | The c.16 ponds at Glascoed Nature Reserve will be assumed to support a large population based on desk study data. The Cofnod data for these ponds is difficult to interrogate with respect to absolute numbers or survey effort, but suggests these ponds are surveyed annually. Further effort will be made to locate the original source data and/or more detailed information. |
| | | | | Except for Glascoed Nature Reserve, all ponds that support GCN and that are within 250m of permanent or 100m of temporary habitat loss will be subject to population size class assessment unless desk study data confirms population size within the last three breeding seasons (i.e. 2018 – 2020). The population size will be assumed to remain as last recorded. |
| | | | | This level of survey effort is considered sufficient to evaluate the ecological importance of the GCN population present for the purpose of EIA, and to determine if a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) is likely to be obtained. It is important |

²⁷ Biggs, J., Ewald, N., Valentini, A., Gaboriaud, C., Griffiths, R.A., Foster, J., Wilkinson, J., Arnett, A., Williams, P. and Dunn, F. (2014). 'Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt', in Appendix 5. Technical advice note for field and laboratory sampling of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) environmental DNA.

Langton, T., Beckett, C. and Foster, J. (2001). 'Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook', (Halesworth: Froglife).



| Important Ecological Feature | Reason for Importance | Further Survey Required |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|--|
| | | to note that additional survey would almost certainly be required in future in order to obtain current data with which to inform any future EPSL application. |
| | | Habitat modelling for GCN is not proposed as it is not considered to assist with the impact assessment process in this instance. However, an assessment of terrestrial habitat suitability for great crested newt of areas within the preferred landfall, cable corridor, substation and other associated construction areas will be undertaken. |
| Reptiles | Protected or notable species | The habitat survey completed to date has indicated that moderate or highly suitable reptile habitat (in the form of hedgerows, scrub and rough field margins) occurs at the proposed substation location, where permanent habitat loss will occur. The substation area will therefore be subject to more detailed habitat suitability assessment, then presence/absence survey undertaken following standard methods ²⁸ at areas of moderate or highly suitable habitat that could be permanently affected. |
| | | Surveys for reptiles in areas that would only be subject to relatively small-scale temporary loss are not considered necessary provided Reasonable Avoidance Measures are employed during construction. Further details of proposed Reasonable Avoidance Measures will be provided in the ES. |
| Breeding Birds | Protected or notable species | As set out in the Chapter 10.1 of the EIA Scoping Report, breeding bird surveys will be targeted at areas in which significant effects on protected or notable bird species are possible. |
| | | Given the nature of the project most effects on breeding bird species will be temporary in nature (e.g. disturbance or temporary habitat loss). |
| | | Significant effects are therefore only likely in respect of: species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and/or Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive; and breeding waders or notable wildfowl species, for which even temporary effects could be significant. Surveys for these species, where suitable habitat is present, will |

²⁸ Froglife (1999). Froglife Advice Sheet 10: reptile survey. Froglife, London.



| Important Feature | Ecological | Reason fo Importance | Further Survey Required |
|----------------------|------------|-------------------------|---|
| | | | therefore be required. |
| | | | Assuming that standard mitigation measures are employed during construction and habitats are quickly reinstated following construction, temporary effects on farmland and woodland species, even those species which are regarded as notable, are not likely to be significant. Detailed surveys for these species are therefore not considered necessary along much of the preferred cable route. |
| | | | Permanent effects will be limited to the substation. Permanent loss of habitat and disturbance could give rise to significant effects for the full range of protected or otherwise notable species and surveys at the preferred substation location will therefore be required. |
| | | | On the basis of the above, the following surveys are proposed to inform the EIA (survey areas are shown in Drawing 8): |
| | | | Ffrith Beach / Rhyl Golf Course – the survey will cover areas within the proposed landfall zone and associated haul roads/construction areas, plus a 250m buffer (excluding built-up areas). Three survey visits will be completed between April and June using a territory mapping method²⁹. All protected and notable species will be recorded, with a particular focus on ringed plover. The survey method is broadly compatible with the recommended survey method for ringed plover³⁰. |
| | | | Clywd Estuary and Adjacent Fields LWS / Coastal Floodplain Grazing Marsh — within these areas the survey will cover all areas that lie within the preferred cable corridor, plus a 250m buffer. Three survey visits will be completed between April and June using a territory mapping method. All protected and notable species will be recorded, with a particular focus on breeding waders and other waterbirds. The survey method is compatible with the recommended survey |

 ²⁹ e.g. Marchant, J. (1983). Common Bird Census Instructions. BTO, Thetford.
 ³⁰ Gilbert, G, Gibbons, D.W. & Evans, J. (1998) Bird Monitoring Methods: A Manual of Key Techniques. RSPB, Sandy.



| Important E | cological | Reason fo Importance | r | Further Survey Required |
|----------------|-----------|--------------------------------|---|--|
| | | | | Substation - the survey will cover all areas that lie within the preferred substation zone plus a 100m buffer. A 100m buffer is considered sufficient here due to the lack of suitable habitat for breeding waterbirds. Three survey visits will be completed between April and June using a territory mapping method. All protected and notable species will be recorded. Barn Owl - the survey method follows the methodology set out by Gilbert et al³⁰. All potentially suitable trees and potentially suitable structures (where accessible) along the preferred cable route corridor, substation and associated construction areas, plus a 100m buffer³², will be inspected in early spring. Trees and structures which are confirmed to have potential to support nesting barn owls will then be re-inspected between June and mid-July. Additional dusk visits may be required during the summer period if re-inspection visits are inconclusive. All inspections of potential nest sites will only be undertaken by an ornithologist holding a Schedule 1 barn owl licence. Kingfisher – where not covered by other breeding bird surveys, a search for suitable nesting habitat for kingfisher will be undertaken in conjunction with surveys for water vole and otter. If suitable habitat is |
| | | | | recorded additional survey visits, by an ornithologist holding a Schedule 1 kingfisher licence, may be required to confirm presence/absence. |
| Non-Breeding E | Birds | Protected o notable species | | Wintering bird surveys commenced in October 2020 and will be completed in March 2021. The survey specifically targets intertidal and wetland habitats and coastal grasslands, where these could potentially be used by significant numbers of wintering waterbirds. As set out in Chapter 10.1 of the EIA Scoping Report, significant effects on other wintering bird |

³¹ O'Brien, M. & Smith, K.W. (1992) Changes in the status of waders breeding on wet lowland grassland in England and Wales between 1982 and 1989. Bird Study 39: 165-176.

³² The maximum disturbance distance for barn owl is 50-100m (Ruddock, M & Whitfield, D.P. (2007) A Review of Disturbance Distances in Selected Bird Species.



| Important Feature | Ecological | Reason for Importance | Further Survey Required |
|----------------------|------------|------------------------------|---|
| | | | species are unlikely and therefore surveys for other species were not considered necessary. |
| | | | The survey area (Drawing 8) includes the preferred landfall location, the Afon Clwyd and low-lying coastal fields where habitat is potentially suitable for waterbirds (and/or in areas where there are previous records of waterbird species), where these lie within 250m of the preferred cable route corridor. A 250m buffer was included to allow for possible disturbance effects during construction. |
| | | | Surveys of intertidal areas comprise monthly 'through-the-tide' counts, whereby waterbirds are counted and mapped hourly throughout a full tidal cycle. Surveys of the coastal fields comprise monthly mapped counts of waterbirds within the survey area. |
| | | | The survey scope and methods were discussed and agreed with the ETG prior to the survey commencing. A separate winter bird survey report, providing full details of survey methods and results, will be appended to the ES. |
| Bats | | Protected or notable species | Surveys will be undertaken in accordance with published good practice guidelines ³³ unless otherwise stated. |
| | | | Activity survey will be undertaken at hedgerows, woodlands and/or riparian areas which may be removed, illuminated or breached. Based on current information, there are c.63 breaches. |
| | | | Based on the habitat survey findings to date, habitat within the Survey Area is considered to be of varying quality for use by foraging and commuting bats, and it is therefore proposed to subdivide into the following areas for the purpose of activity surveys (listed from north to south), based upon definitions provided Table 4.1 of survey guidelines ³⁴ . The survey effort proposed at each meets the recognised standard, but goes beyond in terms of automated detector installation such that at least one third of breaches will be surveyed as described. |

³³ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edn). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.



³⁴ See 33

| Important Feature | Ecological | Reason Importance | for | Further Survey Required |
|----------------------|------------|----------------------|-----|---|
| | | | | Landfall south to railway: low potential. No potential flight line severance, no survey proposed. |
| | | | | South of railway, north of A525: high potential One transect defined. One survey visit per month (April – October) undertaken at dusk or dawn. |
| | | | | Six automated bat detectors installed, data collected on five consecutive nights per month (April – October). |
| | | | | Area between A525 and A547 (River Clwyd): Moderate potential. |
| | | | | One transect defined. One survey visit per month (April – October) undertaken at dusk or dawn. |
| | | | | Four automated bat detectors installed, data collected on five consecutive nights per month (April – October). |
| | | | | All areas south of A547: high potential Two transects defined. One survey visit per transect per month (April – October) undertaken at dusk or dawn. |
| | | | | Six automated bat detectors installed per transect, data collected on five consecutive nights per month (April – October). |
| | | | | Preliminary roost assessment will be undertaken at trees within 100m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor, substation and other associated construction areas; initial findings from the habitat survey completed to date indicate there to be at least 120 trees, plus additional areas of woodland that may support PRF within this area. |
| | | | | Trees which could potentially be lost or damaged or disturbed by the project and initially assessed with moderate or high potential to support bats would be subject to an at-height PRF inspection (where safe to do so) during the active season (May – September) to better determine the roost potential and gather evidence of roosting bats (if present). |
| | | | | Further presence/absence surveys would be undertaken at trees which are still considered to have moderate or high |

| Important Ec | cological | Reason Importance | for | Further Survey Required |
|--------------|-----------|------------------------------|-----|--|
| | | | | potential to support bats following the at-height PRF inspection and which may be removed or damaged. In general this would involve a total of two to three survey visits (depending on the level of roost potential) during May-September, each comprising the at-height PRF inspection (where safe to do so), and/or dusk emergence and/or dawn re-entry surveys. Deviations from this may be necessary due to structural safety issues or difficult sight lines, in which case tree-specific alternative methods would be used. Confirmed roost trees would be subject to additional survey as necessary in order to characterise the roost(s) present. No buildings or structures are to be removed, and all construction works are anticipated to be at least 35m from residential properties. Survey for bats at buildings is therefore not currently proposed. This would be reviewed if plans change and works may be located closer to buildings or structures with bat roost potential. |
| Badger | | Protected notable species | or | Survey of all areas within 100m of the preferred options that were not accessible in 2020 is proposed, in conjunction with the habitat survey, once access is obtained. Survey will follow standard methods ³⁵ and include a search for the presence of active badger setts and signs. |
| Otter | | Protected notable species | or | Otter survey will be carried out at all potentially suitable watercourses crossing the preferred cable corridor, substation and other associated construction areas, plus 250m up and downstream, as shown on Drawing 8. Survey methods will be informed by current references ³⁶ and surveys will take place in conjunction with surveys for water vole (below). |
| Water Vole | | Protected | or | Water vole survey will be carried out at all potentially suitable watercourses crossing the preferred cable route corridor, |

³⁵ Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) (2003). 'Best Practice Guidance - Badger Surveys', Inverness Badger Survey 2003, Commissioned Report No. 096.

Chanin, P. (2003). 'Monitoring the Otter', in Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers, Monitoring Series No 10, (Peterborough: English Nature).



³⁶ Chanin, P. (2003). 'Ecology of the European Otter', in Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers, Ecology Series No. 10, (Peterborough: English Nature).

| Important Ecological Feature | Reason for Importance | Further Survey Required |
|--|------------------------------|---|
| | notable species | substation or associated construction areas, plus 200m up and downstream as shown on Drawing 8. Surveys will be undertaken in accordance with standard methods ³⁷ , which require up to two visits, two months apart, between April and October. |
| Dormouse | Protected or notable species | Based on current information there is limited potential habitat for use by dormice north of the A525, with increasing fragmentation, diminishing quality and lack of records as you progress northward of the A55. It is therefore proposed to undertake nest tube survey only at hedgerow breaches in the area south of the A525. |
| | | Hazelnut searches would be undertaken at woodland within the preferred cable route corridor, and substation boundary plus surrounding 100m. Nest tube survey would be undertaken at all hedgerows that may be breached south of the A525 and which are potentially suitable for use by dormice. |
| | | Dormouse survey would follow standard methods38, with up to 25 nest tubes per hedgerow crossing; the number of tubes is driven primarily by the need to install them at c.10m spacing; if dormouse are present in the survey area then this quantity of tubes is considered sufficient to determine presence/likely absence. Tubes would be installed in April 2021 and checked monthly April – November 2021 (eight visits in total) by a dormouse licence holder. |
| Other Section 7 Mammal Species: hedgehog, brown hare, polecat. | Protected or notable species | Detailed surveys are not proposed as part of onshore assessment given that most habitat loss will only be temporary in nature and will only affect a relatively small proportion of most of the habitats affected. Instead habitat-based assessment will be undertaken for these species and used as a basis for impact assessment. |

³⁸ Bright, P.W., Morris, P.A. and Mitchell-Jones, A. (2006). 'Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition', (Peterborough: English Nature).



³⁷ Dean, M., Strachan, R., Gow, D. and Andrews, R. (2016). 'The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook', The Mammal Society Mitigation Guidance Series, Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin (eds.), (London: The Mammal Society).

4.3 Potential Requirements for Mitigation or Compensation Measures

A brief outline of the mitigation/compensation requirements that have so far been identified is described below. It is limited to mitigation/compensation that is likely to be required based on current data but does not include things which would be entirely dependent on the results of further surveys and project design, e.g. mitigation for loss of tree bat roosts. The final mitigation/compensation proposals will be subject to detailed, species and location-specific refinement, once all necessary data have been obtained, with full details provided in the ES and Outline Ecological Management Plan (OEMP). At this stage it is envisaged that general points are likely to include:

- compensation for permanent loss of Section 7 habitats; to include planting/creation of equivalent habitat type, quality and extent (within Welsh Habitat Focal Areas if possible), as appropriate.
- mitigation/compensation for temporary loss of habitat to include reinstatement and other measures as described above.
- mitigation to minimise impacts to important species through careful alignment, scheduling and/or deterrence and/or exclusion measures as necessary (under licence, if appropriate). Details will depend on the results of further surveys and the detailed design;
- mitigation/compensation for permanent and temporary loss of terrestrial habitat and possible loss of ponds (although loss of ponds will be avoided if possible) used by great crested newt, common toad and potentially reptiles, particularly near to Glascoed Nature Reserve at St Asaph Business Park, and near ponds southeast of Rhyl;
- mitigation/compensation for temporary loss of habitat used by water vole or otter, particularly in northern parts of the preferred cable corridor; and
- "dead hedge" blocking of hedgerow breaches during construction and whilst replacement hedges
 establish afterward, to minimise barrier effects to bats, dormice and other mobile species, and to enable
 continued use as a foraging/sheltering resource by dormice, reptiles and breeding birds.

4.4 Potential Opportunities for Biodiversity Enhancements

Further design work for the preferred onshore infrastructure options is ongoing and so detailed development plans are not available at this time and a number of surveys have not yet been undertaken. Therefore, the recommendations listed below to provide nature conservation enhancements and biodiversity net gain, as required under relevant planning policy, are necessarily generic at this stage. The list below is not exhaustive and may change depending on the detailed design of the project, the results of further survey work and land ownership constraints. Full details will be provided in the ES and OEMP.

- planting new species-rich hedgerows, or gap-planting existing hedgerows, with a specific focus on providing habitat for notable species which may be present in the relevant areas, e.g. planting that is rich in dormouse food plants and/or including elm for use by white-letter hairstreak.
- pond and wetland creation and maintenance for use by amphibians, reptiles and water vole.
- new woodland creation and maintenance, to link and/or fortify the existing habitat network, i.e. within Welsh Habitat Focal Areas if possible;



- creation and maintenance of sheltered wildflower meadows and glades, including dry stony areas for use by invertebrates and nesting/foraging bird species;
- creation of reptile and amphibian refugia at field boundaries;
- installation of bird and bat boxes at appropriate trees/woodland; and
- installation of artificial holts and/or water vole platforms adjacent to watercourses.



5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This report comprises a PEA of the areas that may be affected by construction and operation of the landfall location, cable corridor and substation for the proposed AyM OWF. A preferred route had not been identified at the time the PEA commenced; this report therefore presents information for three onshore infrastructure options (refer to Drawing 1). However, in January 2021 the preferred landfall, cable corridor and substation zone were decided and as such Section 4 onwards in this report relates only to those options (Landfall 5, Cable Corridor 5, Substation Zone 5, refer to Drawings 7 and 8).

The PEA is informed by desk study and field survey undertaken in summer and autumn 2020. Field survey access was gained to approximately 25% of the Survey Area, with the remainder being assessed via aerial photograph interpretation. Limitations to the desk study and field survey are described within the report but are not considered to significantly affect the conclusions of the PEA.

Important ecological features that are, or could be, present within the Survey Area have been determined and described. Important ecological features that could be impacted by the project, and therefore where further survey is required, are summarised in Table 5-1, with further details provided in Section 4.2. It is also recognised that the potential for air quality impacts to designated sites may need to be assessed. However, this has not been considered here as the details of construction traffic movement and routes is being finalised. This will be assessed separately at a later date.

Table 5-1
Summary of Important Ecological Features and Further Survey Requirements

| Important Ecological Feature | Reason for Importance | Further Survey or Desk-based Assessment Required |
|---|--|---|
| Y Ffrith, Prestatyn LWS, Bryn Cwnin Wetland LWS and Clwyd Estuary and Adjacent Fields LWS | Non-statutory Designated Sites | These three LWS lie within, or within 100m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor and/or associated construction areas. Habitat survey of areas within 100m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor and associated construction areas that were not accessible in 2020 is therefore proposed, once access is obtained. |
| Habitats | ASNW and other Section 7 Habitats, plus areas within Welsh Habitat Network Areas | Habitat survey of areas within 100m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor, substation and associated construction areas that were not accessible in 2020. Hedgerow assessment will be undertaken at areas which may be breached. |
| Plant species | Protected or notable species | Habitat survey of all areas within 100m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor, substation and associated construction areas that were not accessible in 2020 is proposed, once access is obtained. Detailed survey in areas that are known or suspected to support protected or notable plant species, and that |

| Important Ecological Feature | Reason for Importance | Further Survey or Desk-based Assessment Required |
|---|------------------------------|---|
| | | may be impacted, would be undertaken. |
| Fish: Atlantic salmon, brown trout, European eel and bullhead | Protected or notable species | The River Clwyd is the only significant water course within the preferred corridor. Existing data will be sought and reviewed to determine whether further information, such as survey data, is required. |
| Invertebrates | Protected or notable species | Assessment of impacts to this species group will be via habitat-based assessment, focussing on areas where permanent habitat loss is likely and areas that are known or suspected to support potentially important populations of rare/notable species |
| GCN and common toad | Protected or notable species | Presence/absence and population size class survey undertaken at identified ponds within 250m of of the preferred landfall, cable corridor, substation and associated construction areas, unless suitable existing data are available. Habitat suitability assessment also undertaken of terrestrial habitats. |
| Reptiles | Protected or notable species | Presence/absence survey undertaken at the substation where permanent loss of suitable habitat may occur. |
| Breeding Birds | Protected or notable species | Breeding bird survey undertaken at Ffrith Beach / Rhyl Golf Course, Clwyd Estuary and Adjacent Fields LWS / areas of Coastal Floodplain Grazing Marsh and at the Substation Zone. Additional survey for the Schedule 1 species barn owl and kingfisher at suitable habitats within 100m of the preferred cable corridor. |
| Non-Breeding Birds | Protected or notable species | Wintering bird surveys commenced in October 2020 and will be completed in March 2021. The survey scope and methods were discussed and agreed with the ETG prior to the survey commencing. |
| Bats | Protected or notable species | Activity survey will be undertaken at hedgerows, woodlands and/or riparian areas which may be removed, illuminated or breached. |
| | | Preliminary roost assessment will be undertaken at trees within 100m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor, substation and associated construction areas; |



| Important Ecological Feature | Reason for Importance | Further Survey or Desk-based Assessment Required |
|--|------------------------------|--|
| | | trees with moderate or high potential to support bats that could be lost or damaged or disturbed would be subject to an at-height PRF inspection (where safe to do so) during the active season (May – September) and further dusk/dawn emergence/return surveys as required. |
| | | No buildings or structures are to be removed; survey for bats at buildings is therefore not currently proposed. |
| Badger | Protected or notable species | Survey of all areas within 100m of the preferred landfall, cable corridor, substation and associated construction areas that were not accessible in 2020 is proposed. |
| Otter | Protected or notable species | Otter survey at suitable watercourses crossing the preferred cable corridor, substation and associated construction areas, plus 250m up and downstream. |
| Water Vole | Protected or notable species | Water vole survey at suitable watercourses crossing the preferred cable corridor, substation and associated construction areas, plus 200m up and downstream. |
| Dormouse | Protected or notable species | Hazelnut searches would be undertaken at woodland within the preferred cable corridor, substation and associated construction areas plus surrounding 100m. Nest tube survey would be undertaken at all hedgerows that may be breached south of the A525 and which are potentially suitable for use by dormice. |
| Other Section 7 Mammal Species: hedgehog, brown hare, polecat. | Protected or notable species | Habitat based assessment will be undertaken for these species and used as a basis for impact assessment. Detailed surveys are not proposed. |

A brief outline of the mitigation/compensation requirements that have so far been identified is described within Section 4.3 of the report. The final mitigation/compensation proposals will be subject to detailed, species and location-specific refinement, once all necessary data has been obtained, with full details provided in the ES and OEMP. Measures are likely to include (but are not limited to) compensation for permanent loss of Section 7 habitats; to include planting/creation of equivalent habitat type, quality and extent within Welsh Habitat Focal Areas (where possible) and mitigation to minimise impacts to important species through careful alignment, scheduling and/or deterrence and/or exclusion measures as necessary (under licence, if appropriate). Details will depend on the results of further surveys and the detailed design.

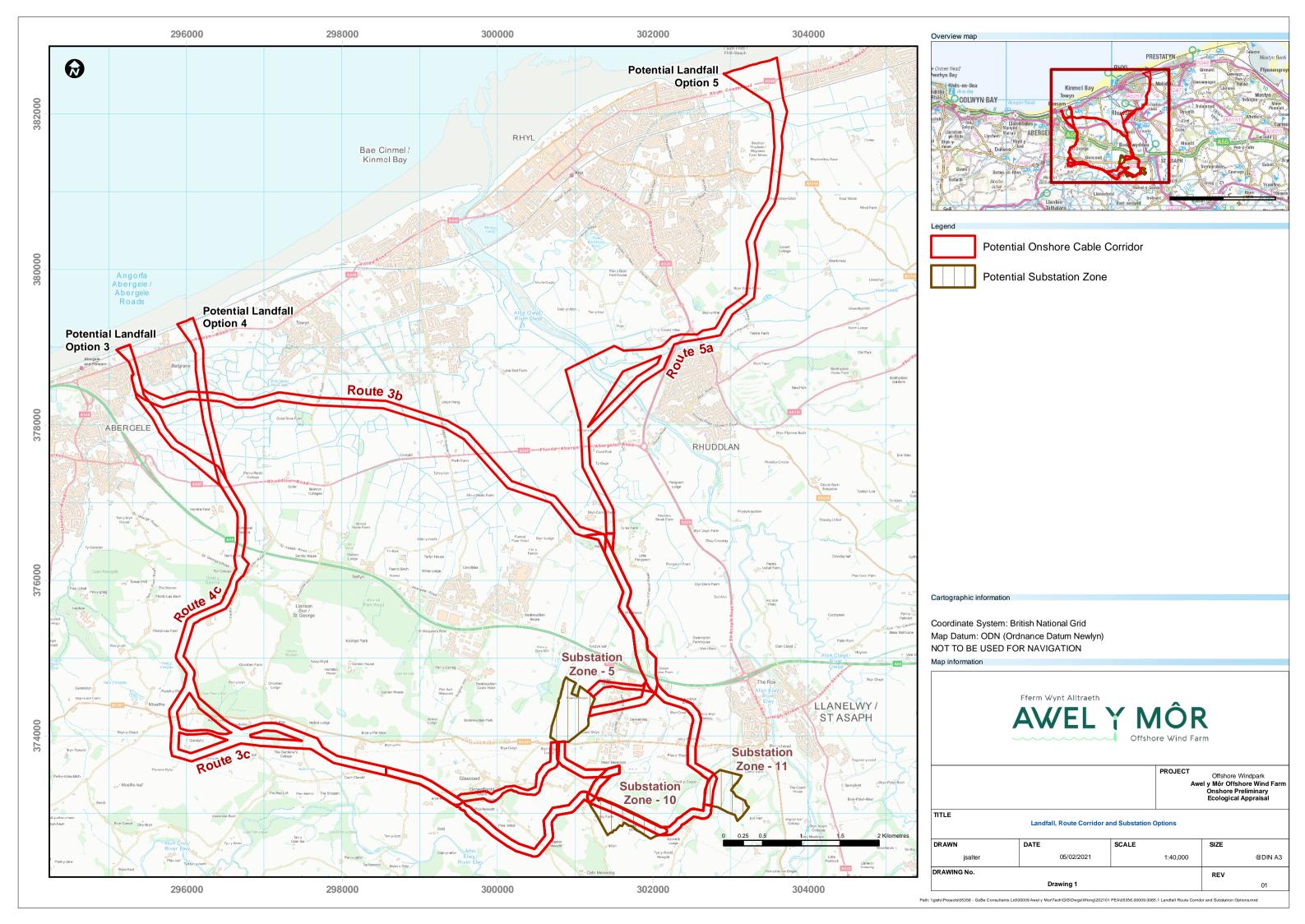


Possible biodiversity enhancements are also suggested and include planting of species rich hedgerows, pond, wetland and wildflower meadow creation, creation of reptile/amphibian refugia and installation of bird and bat boxes. The list of enhancements is likely to change depending on the detailed design of the project, the results of further survey work and land ownership constraints. Full details will be provided in the ES and OEMP.



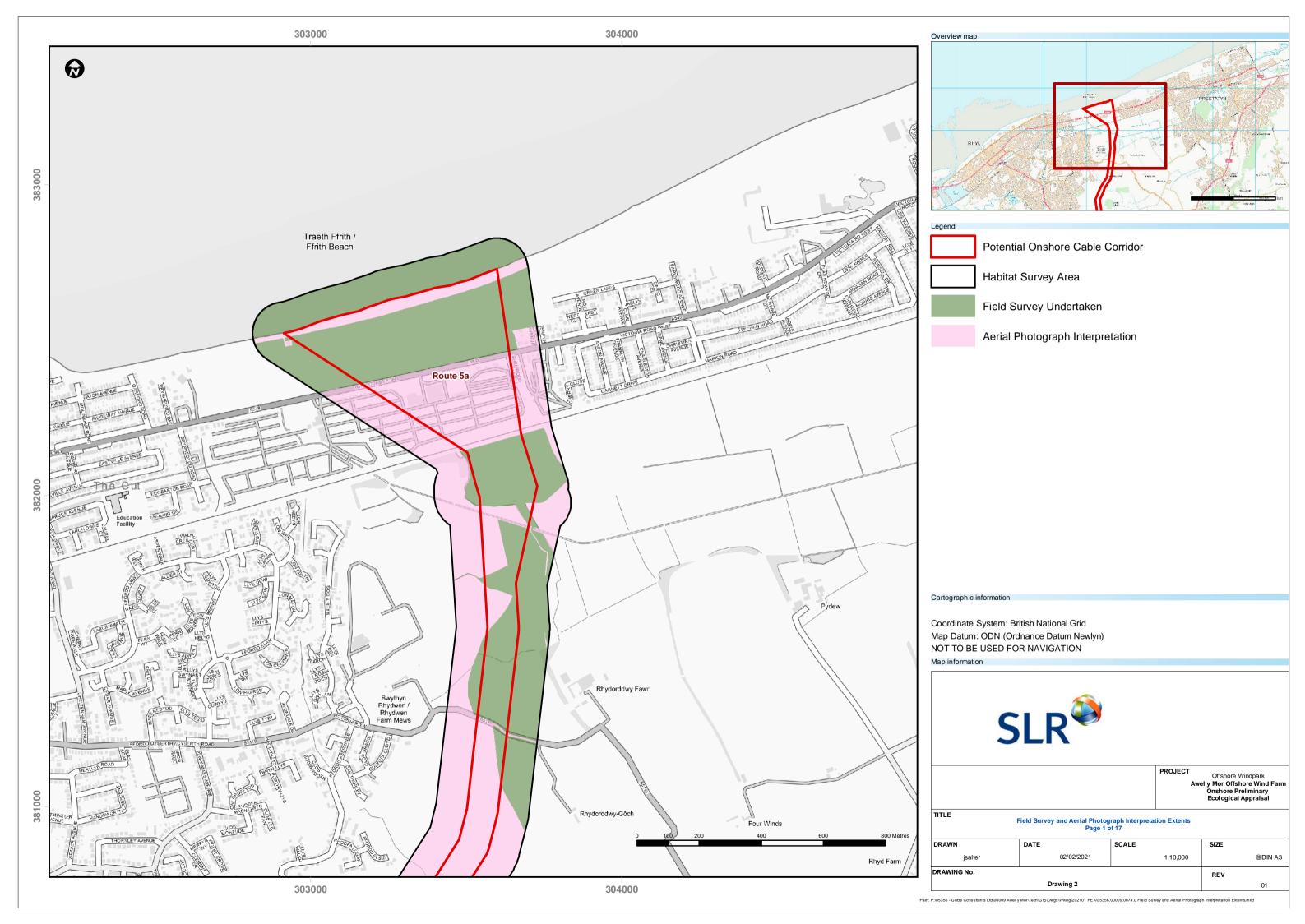
DRAWING 1

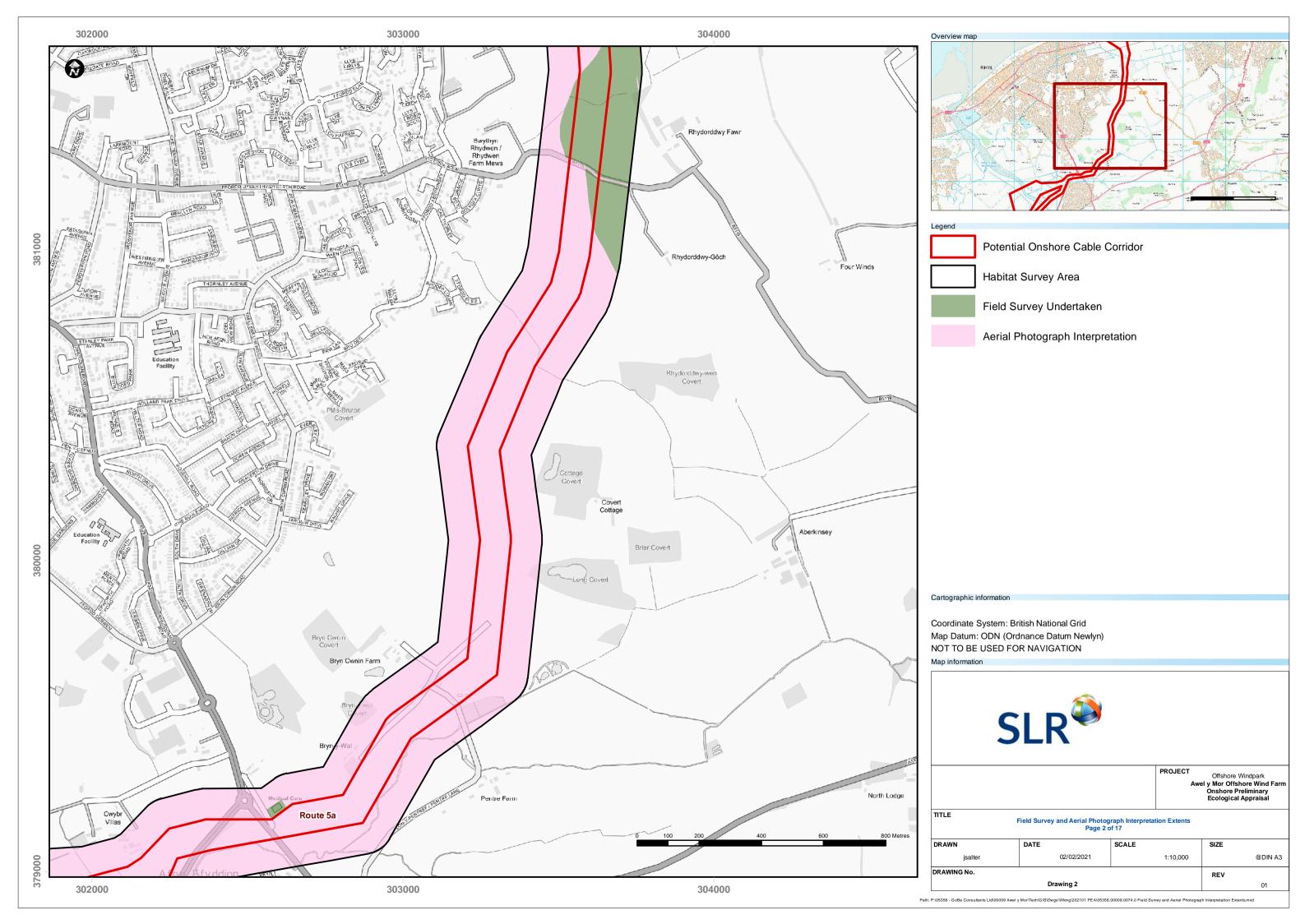
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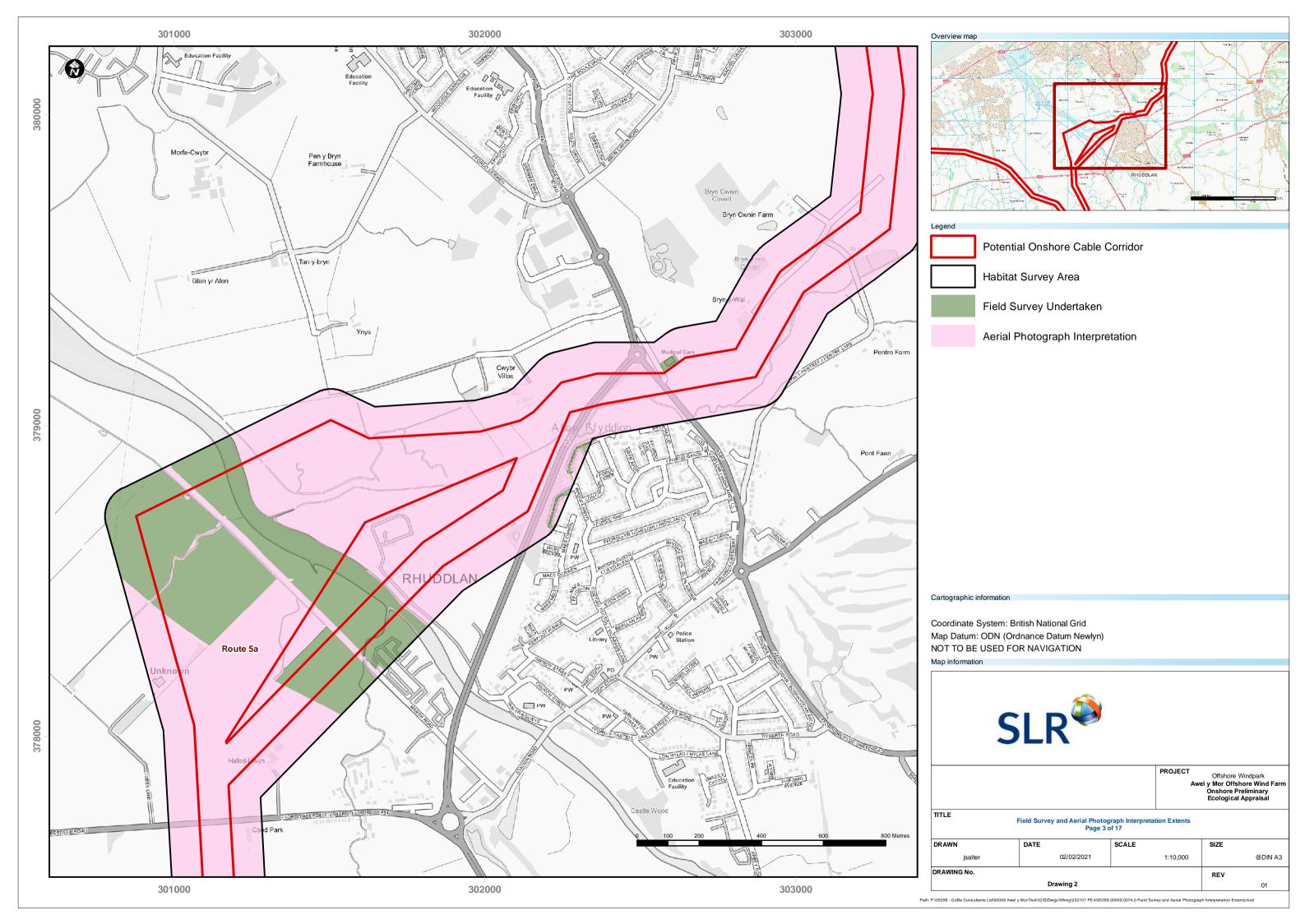


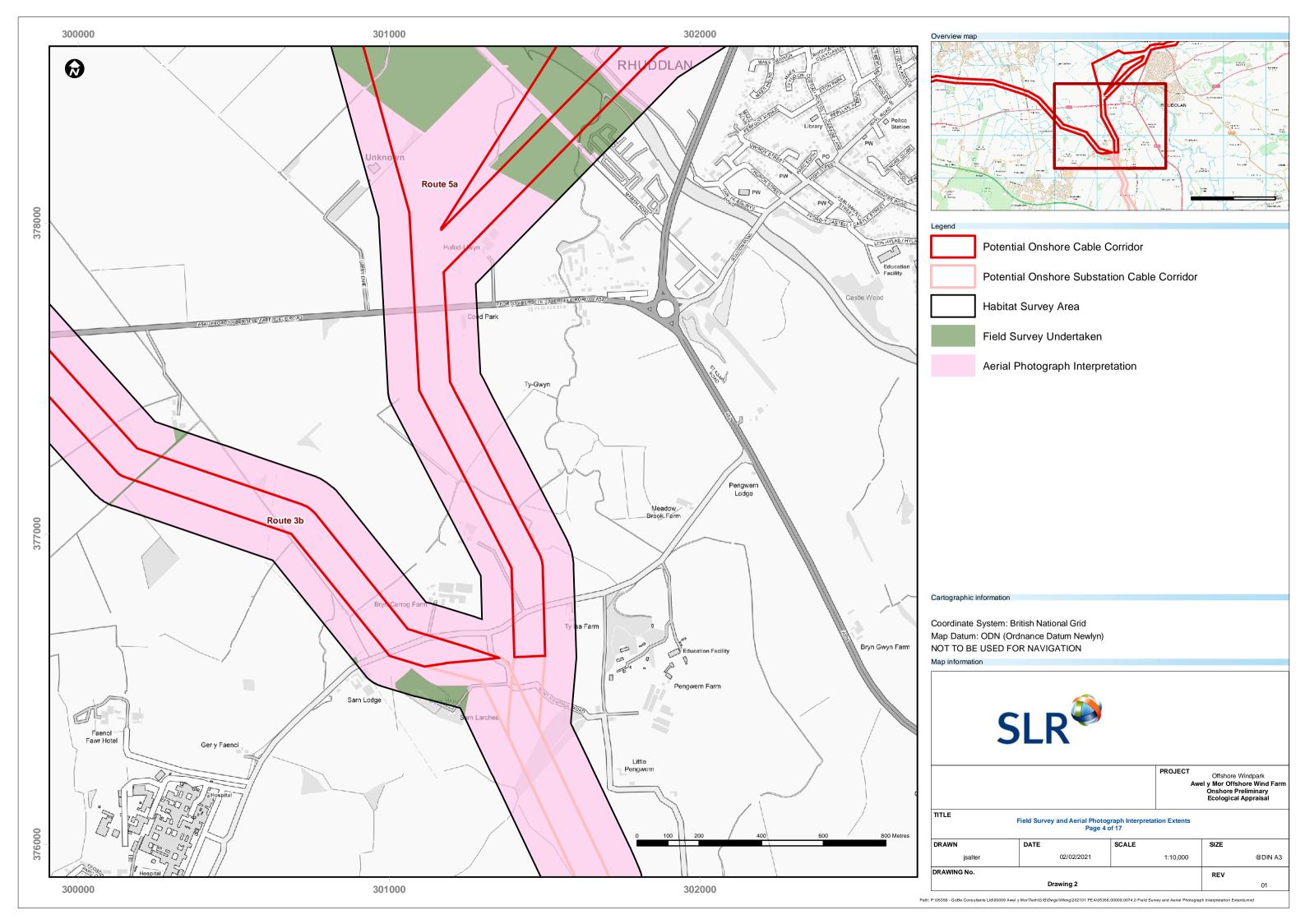
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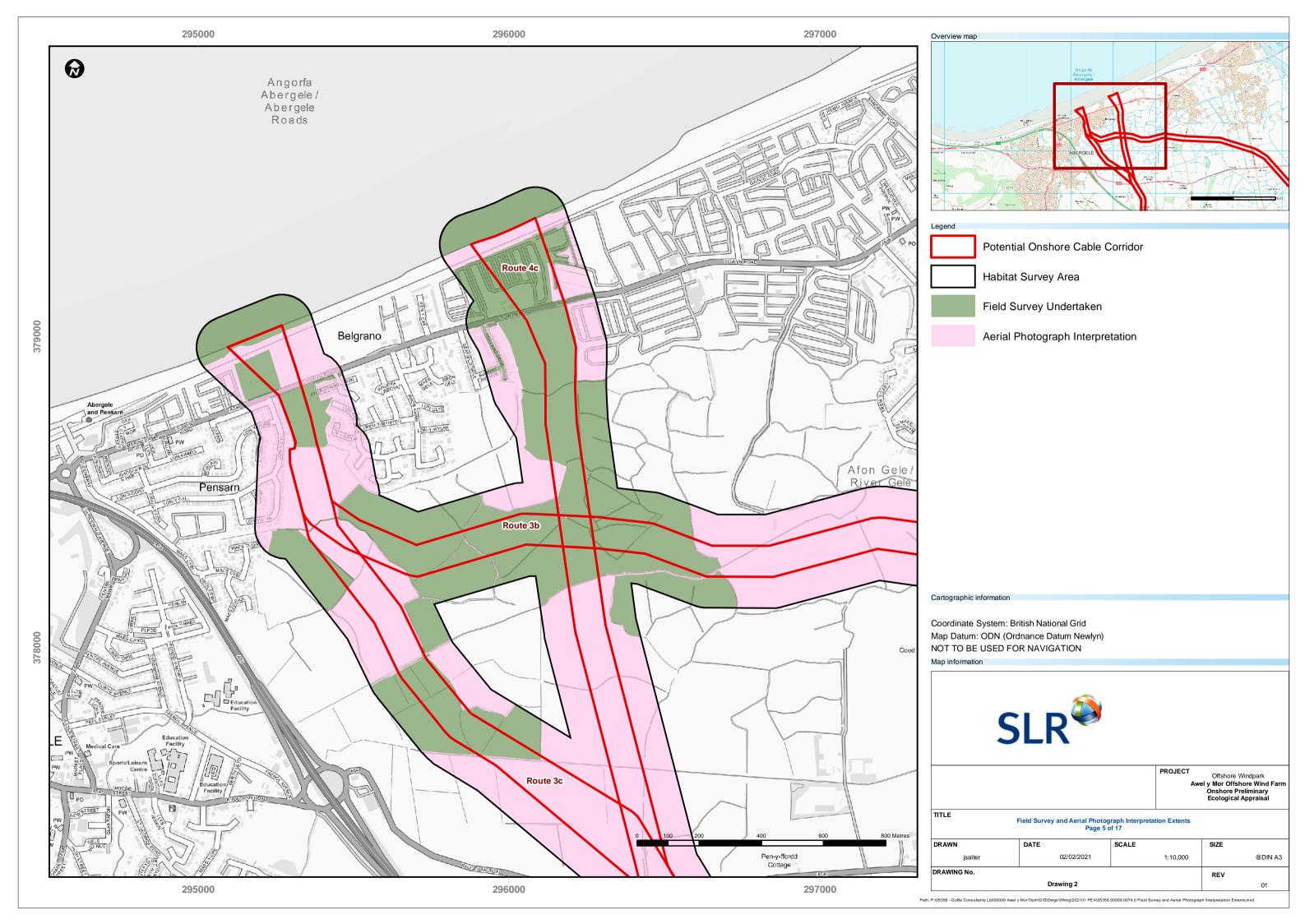
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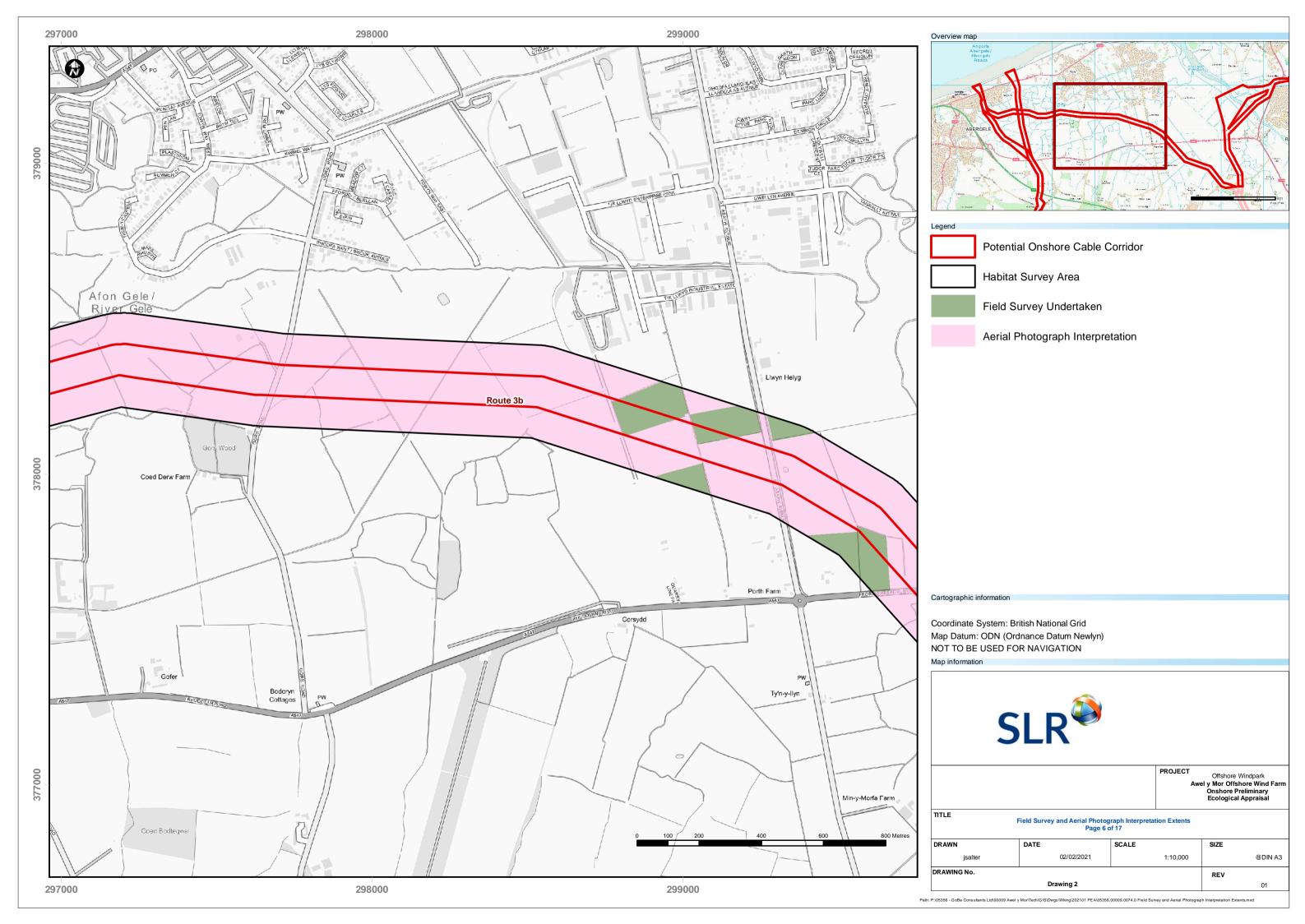


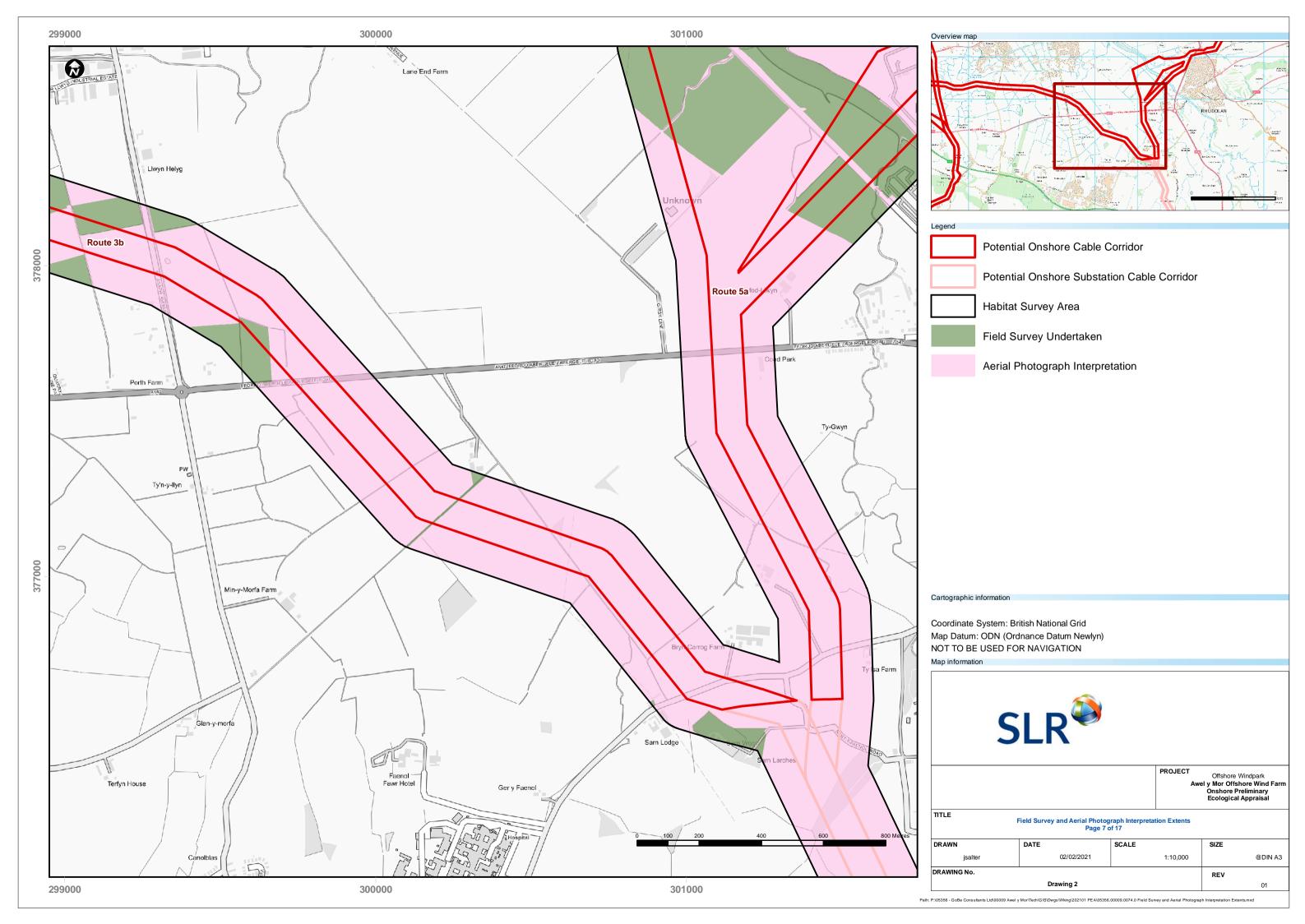


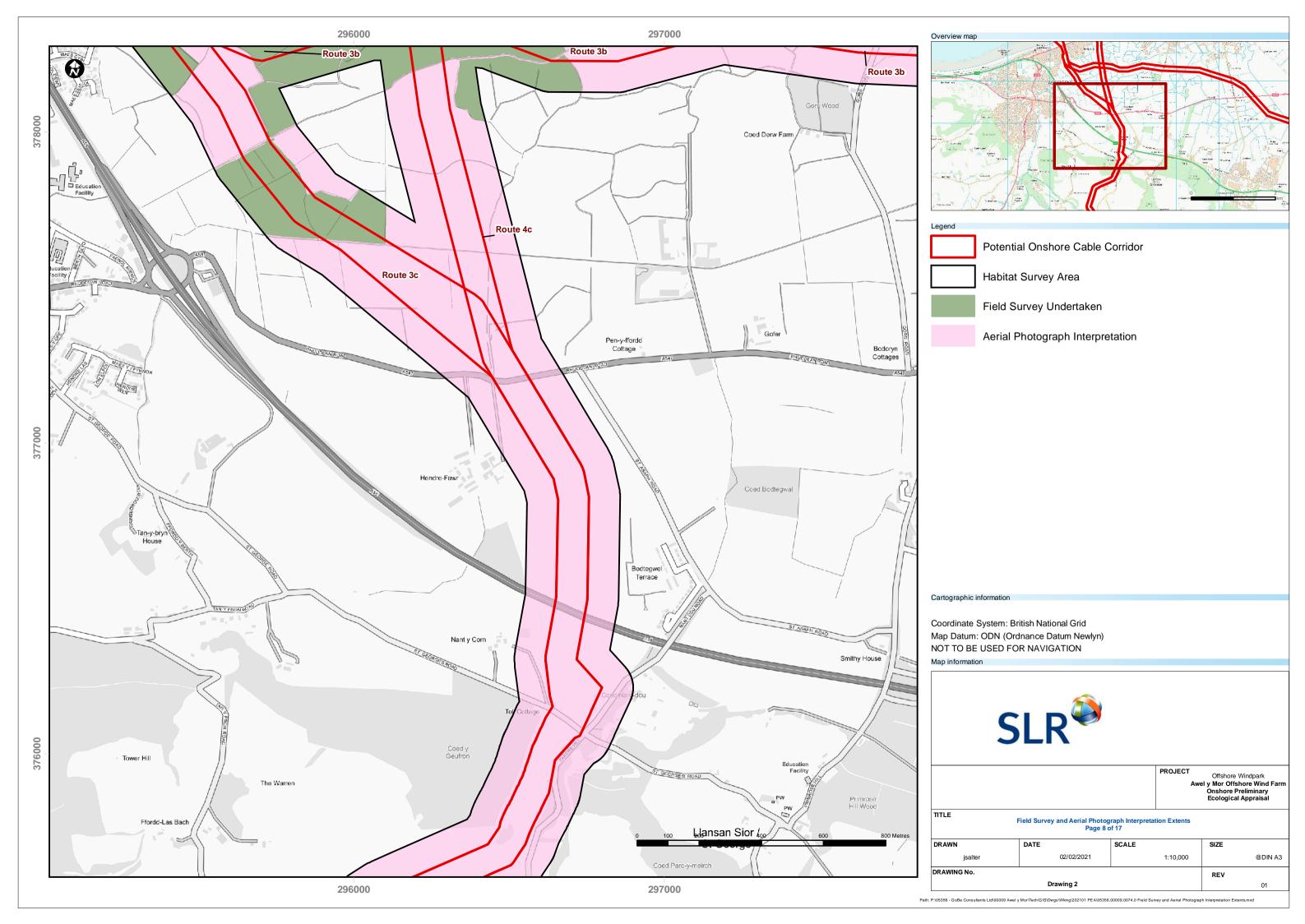


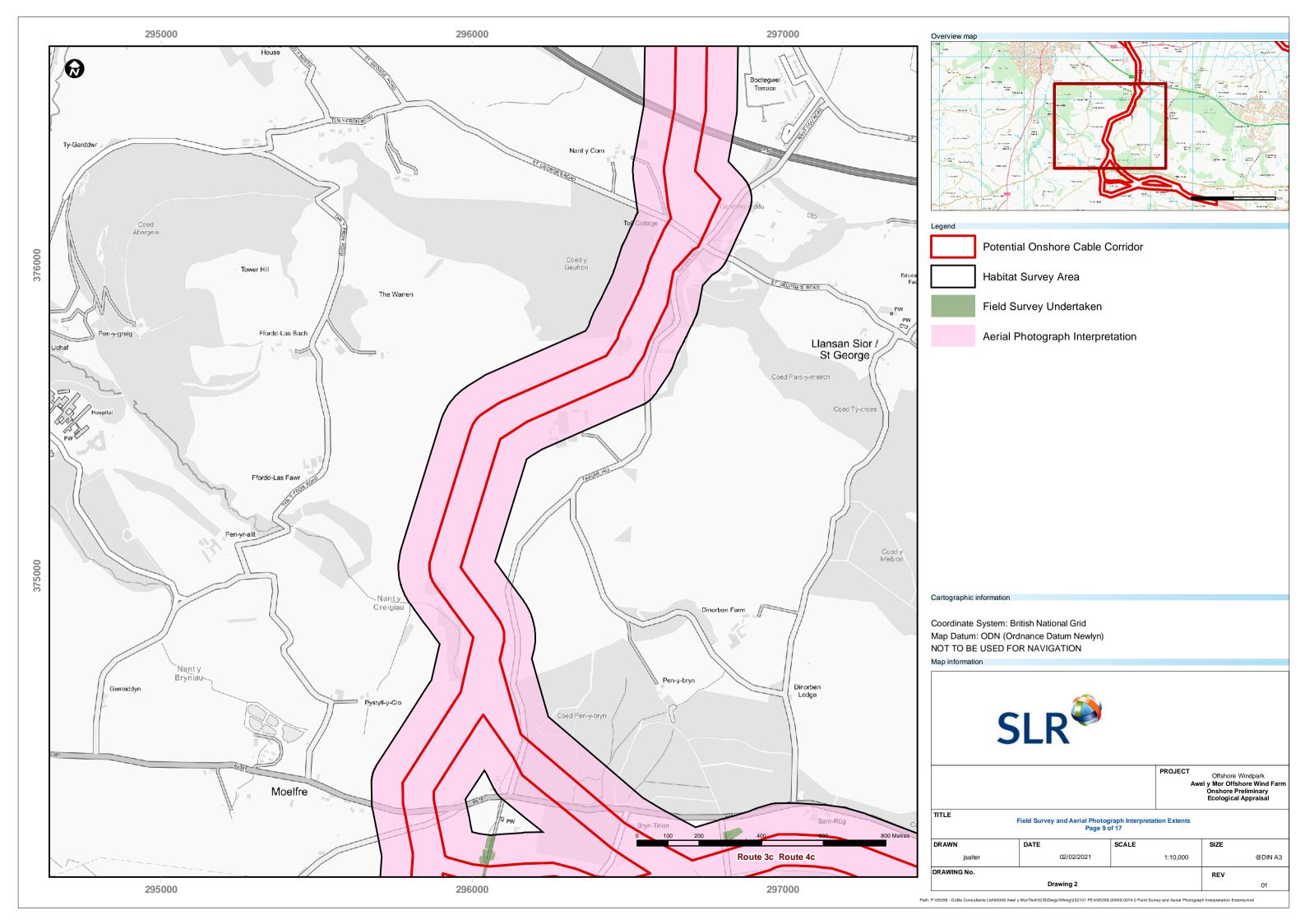


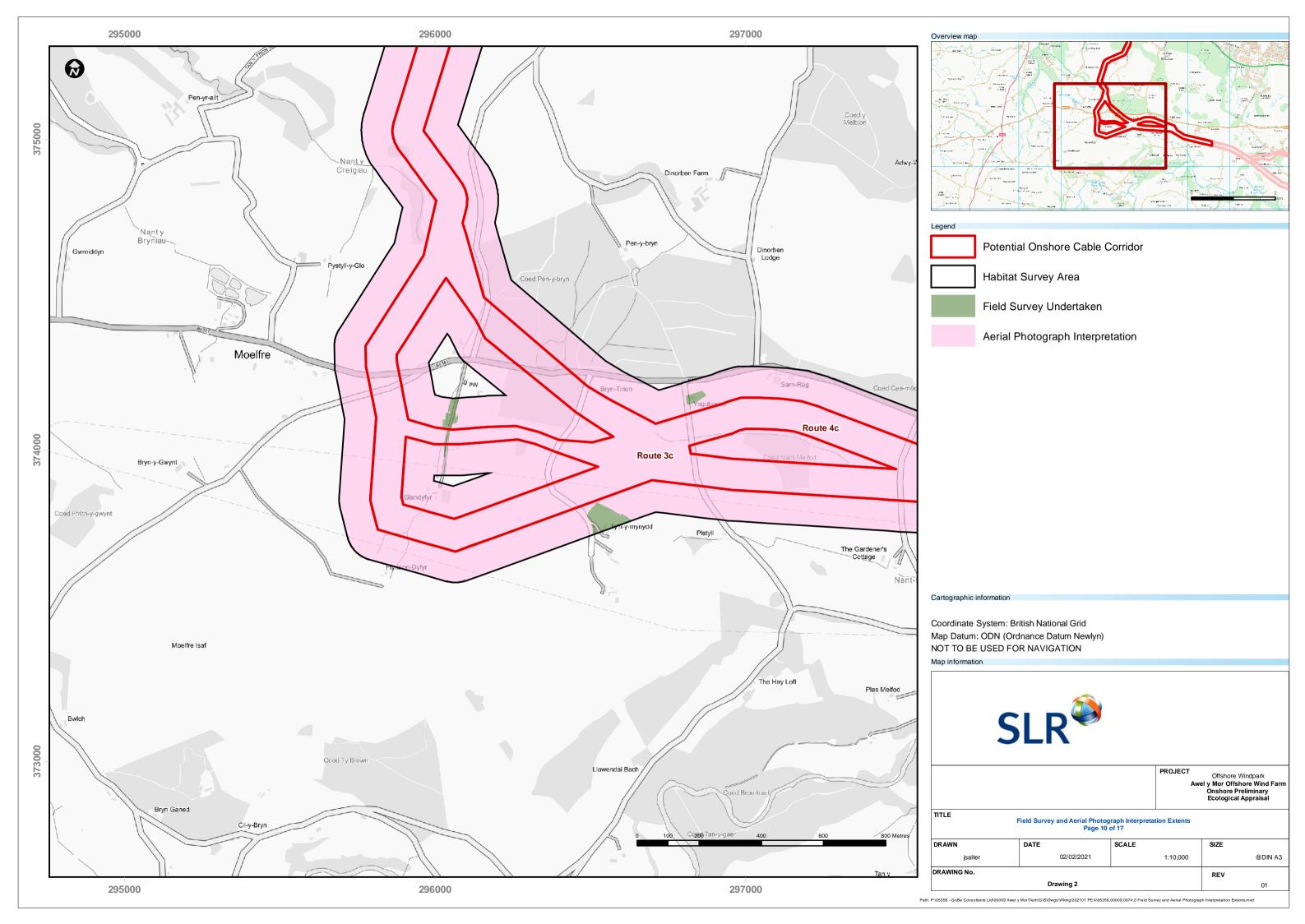


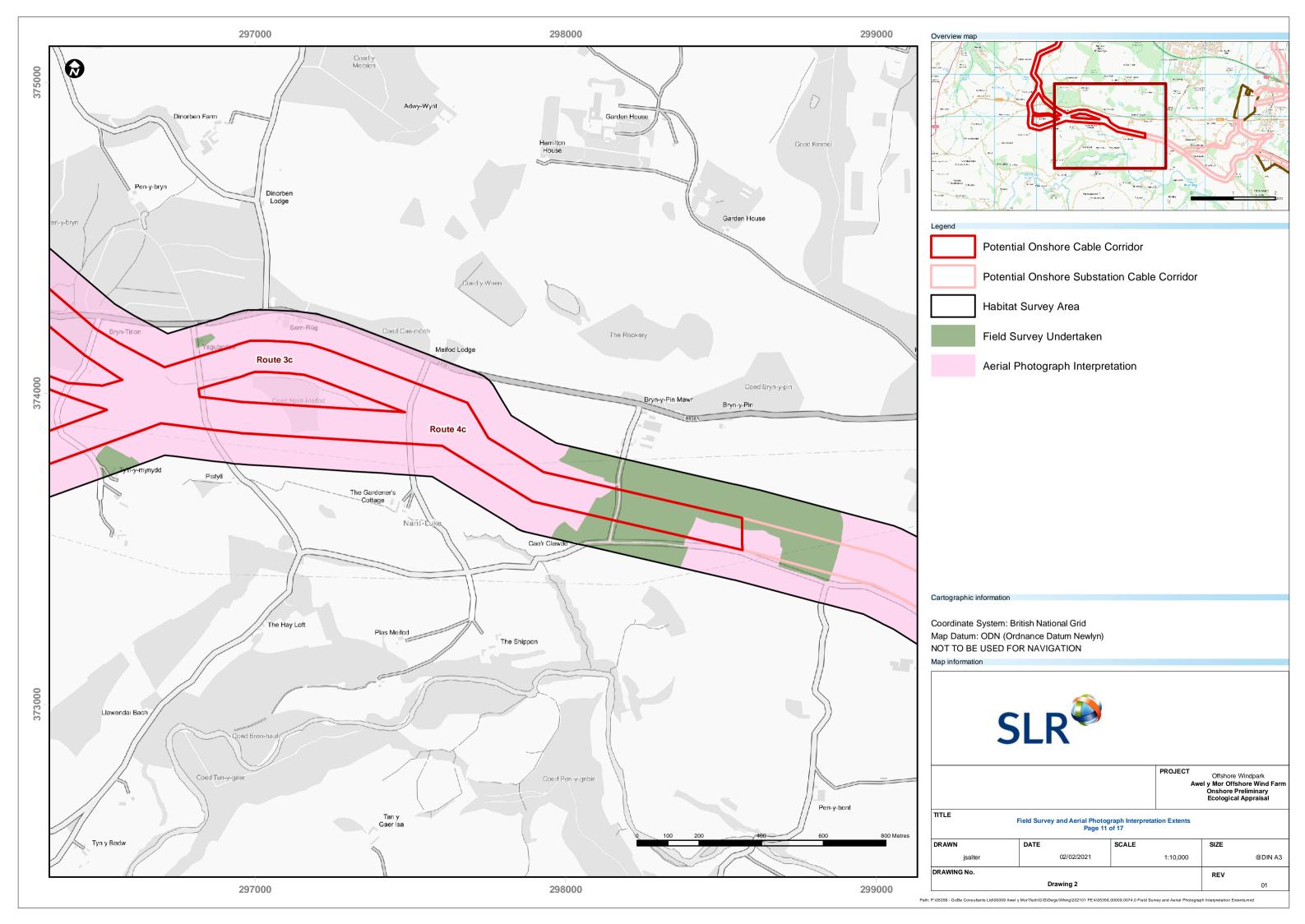


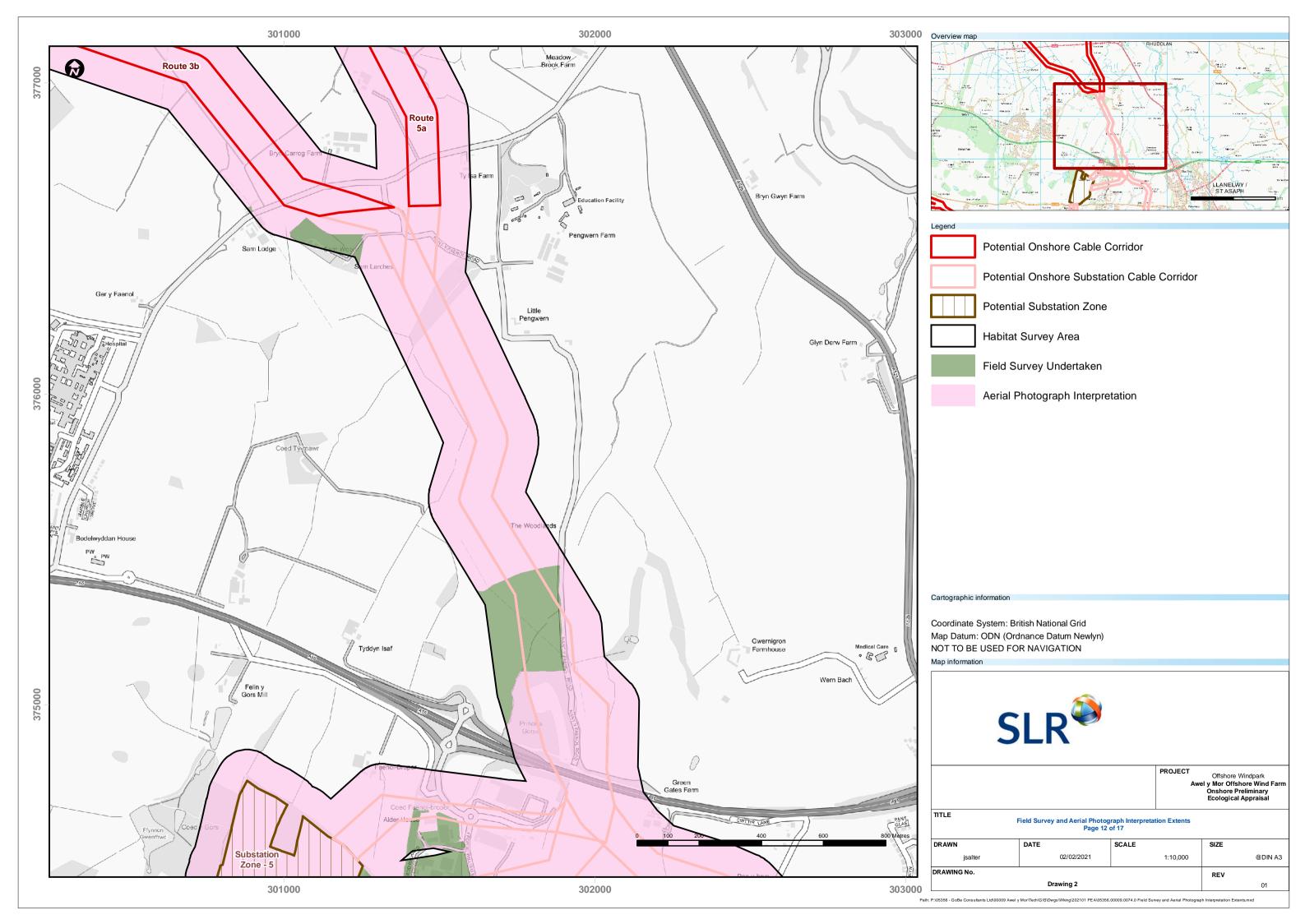


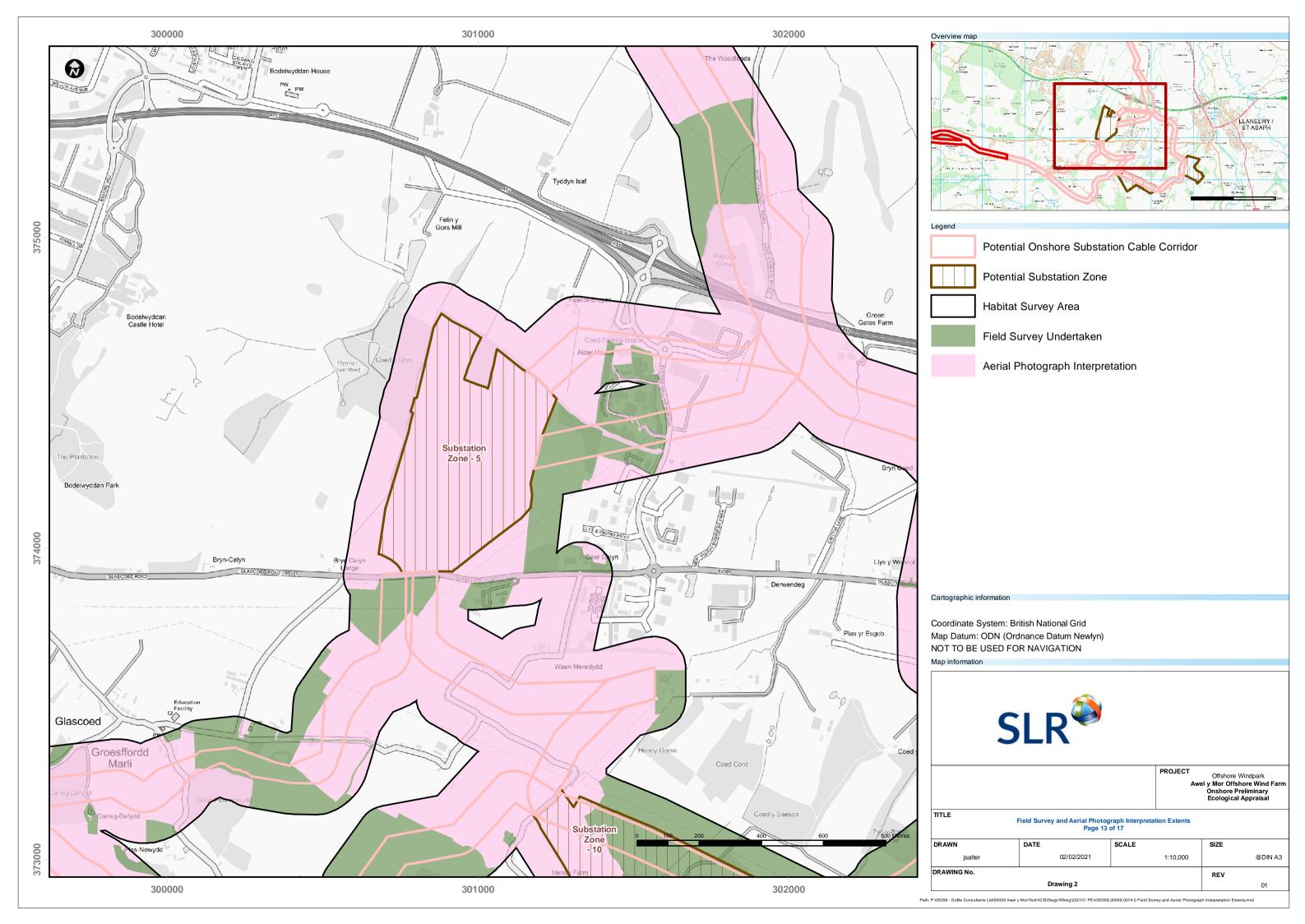


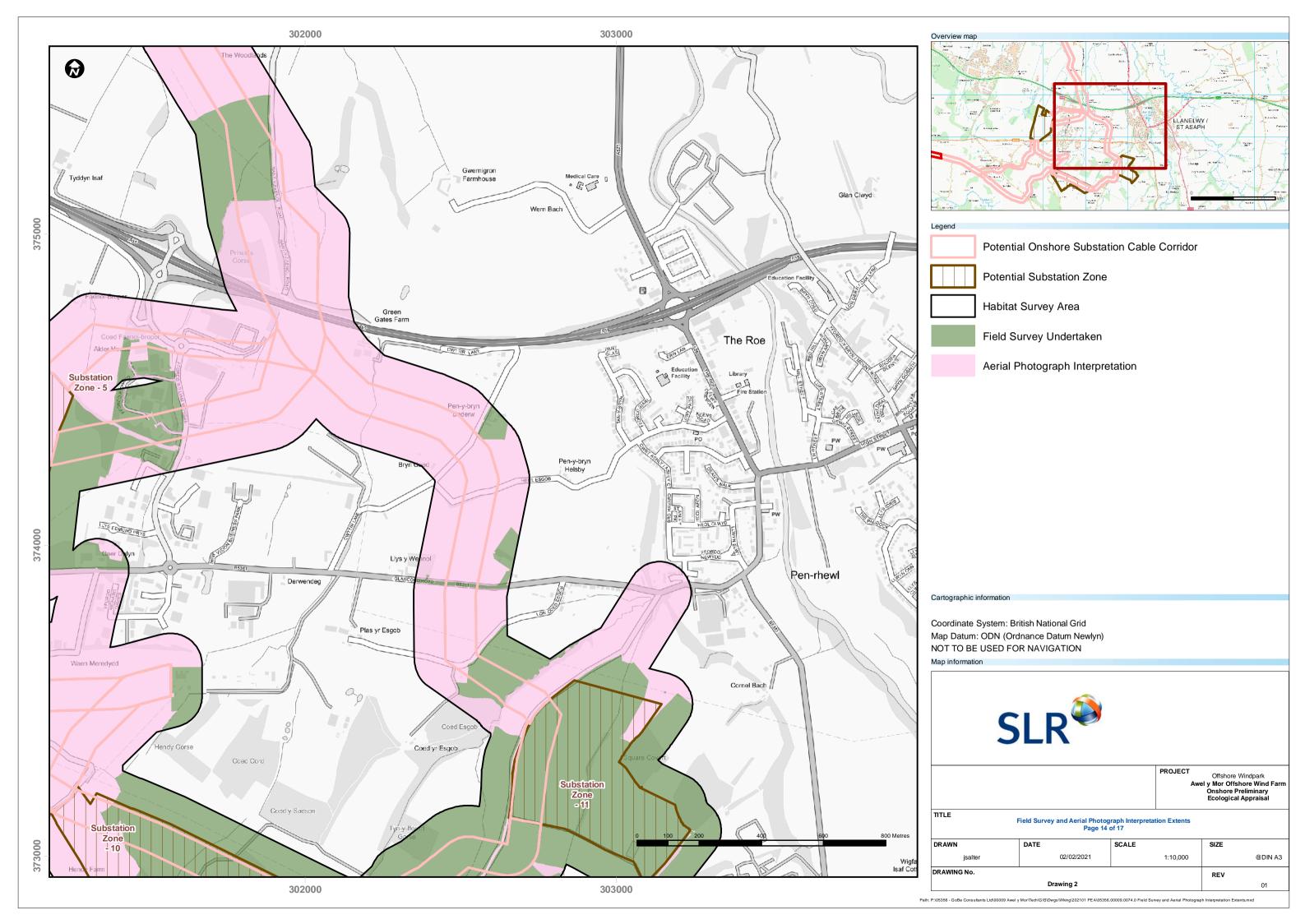


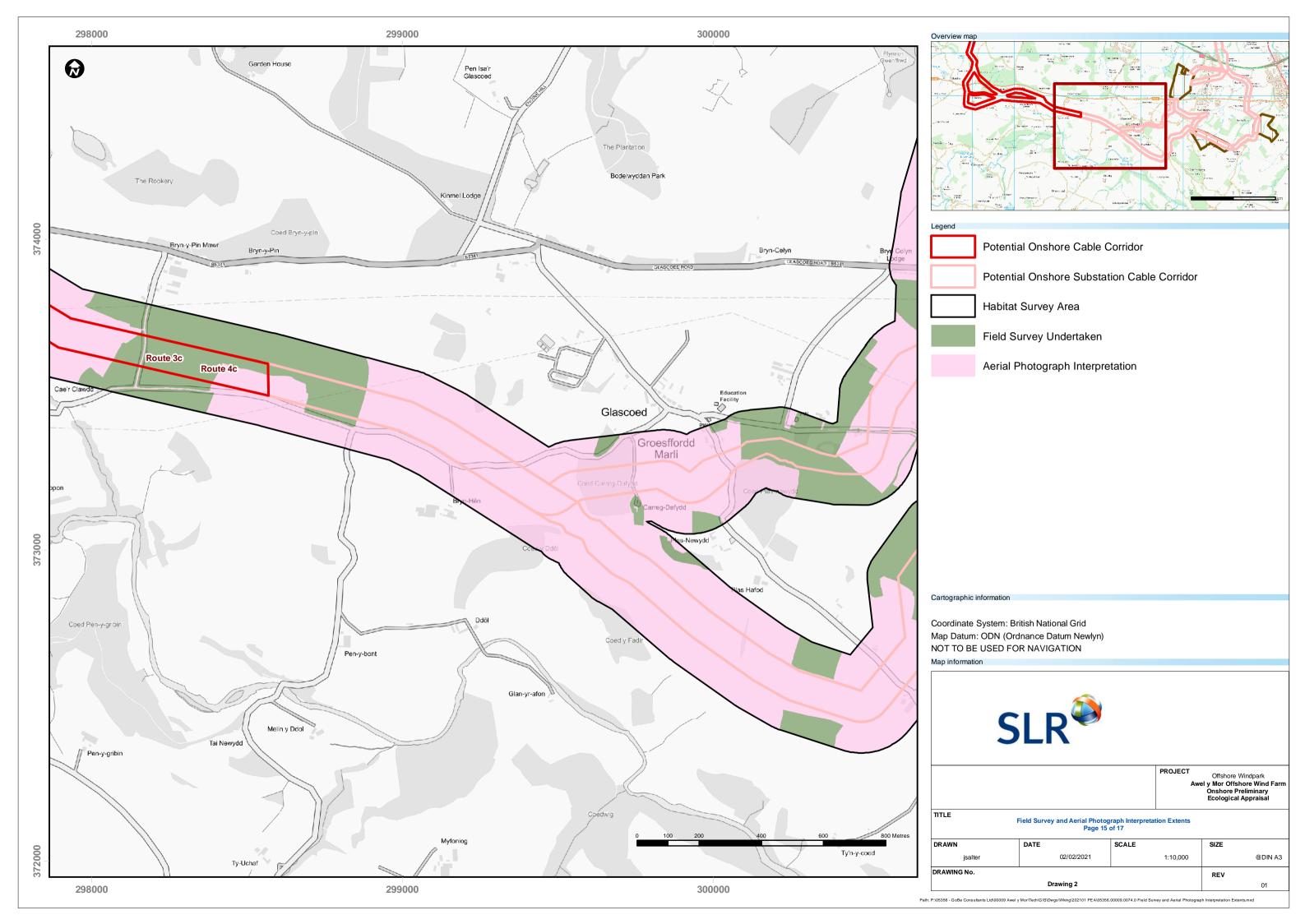


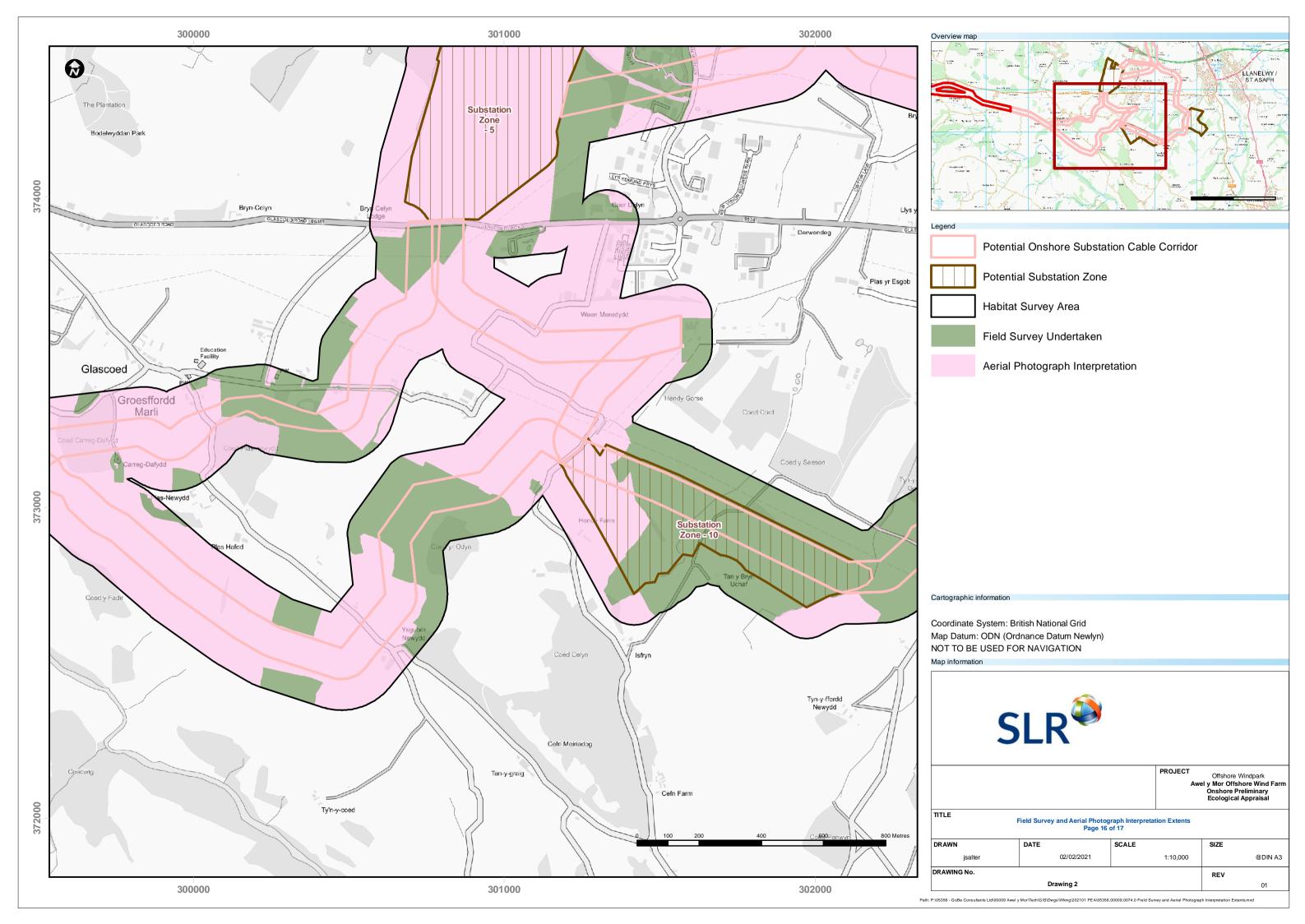


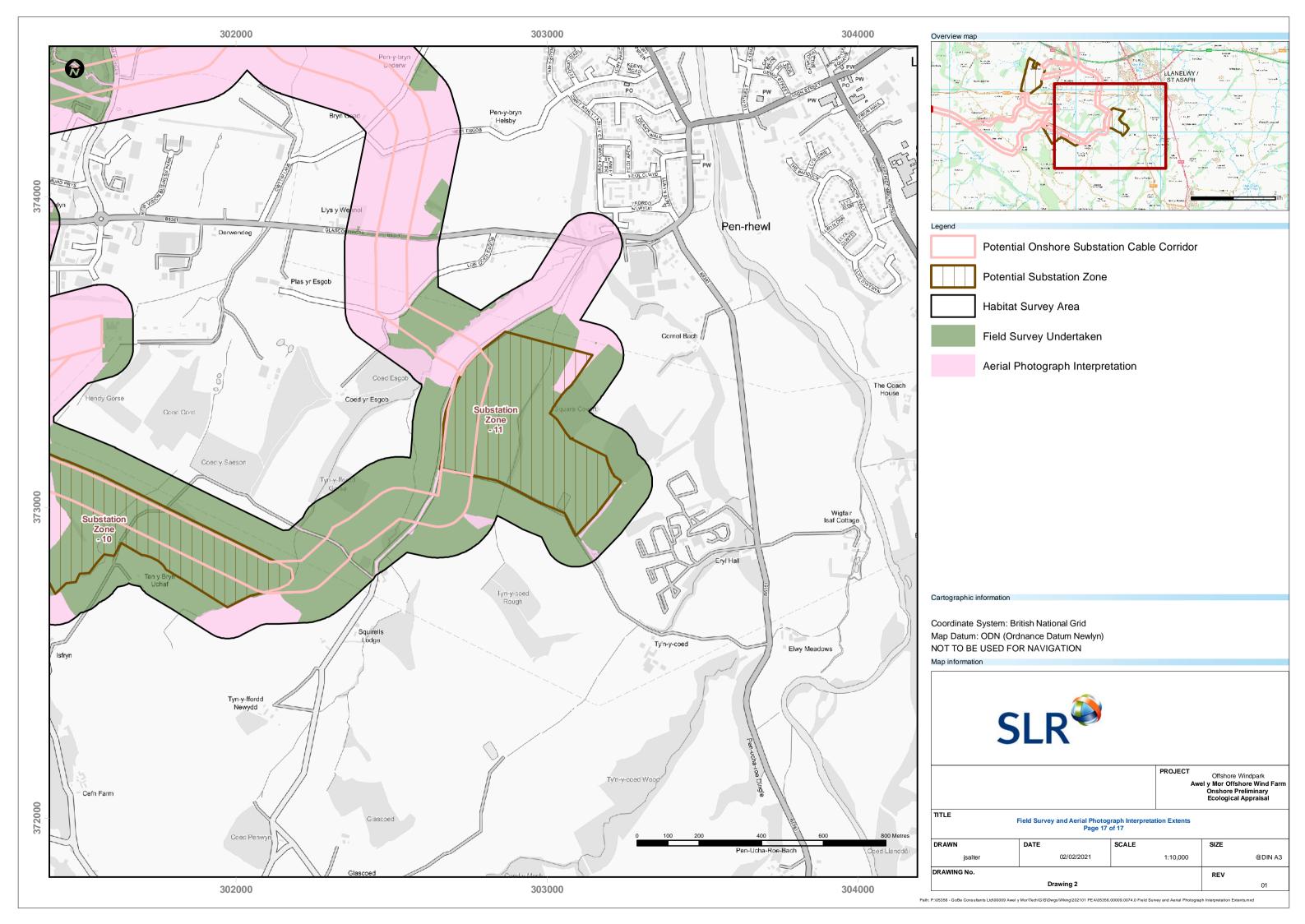






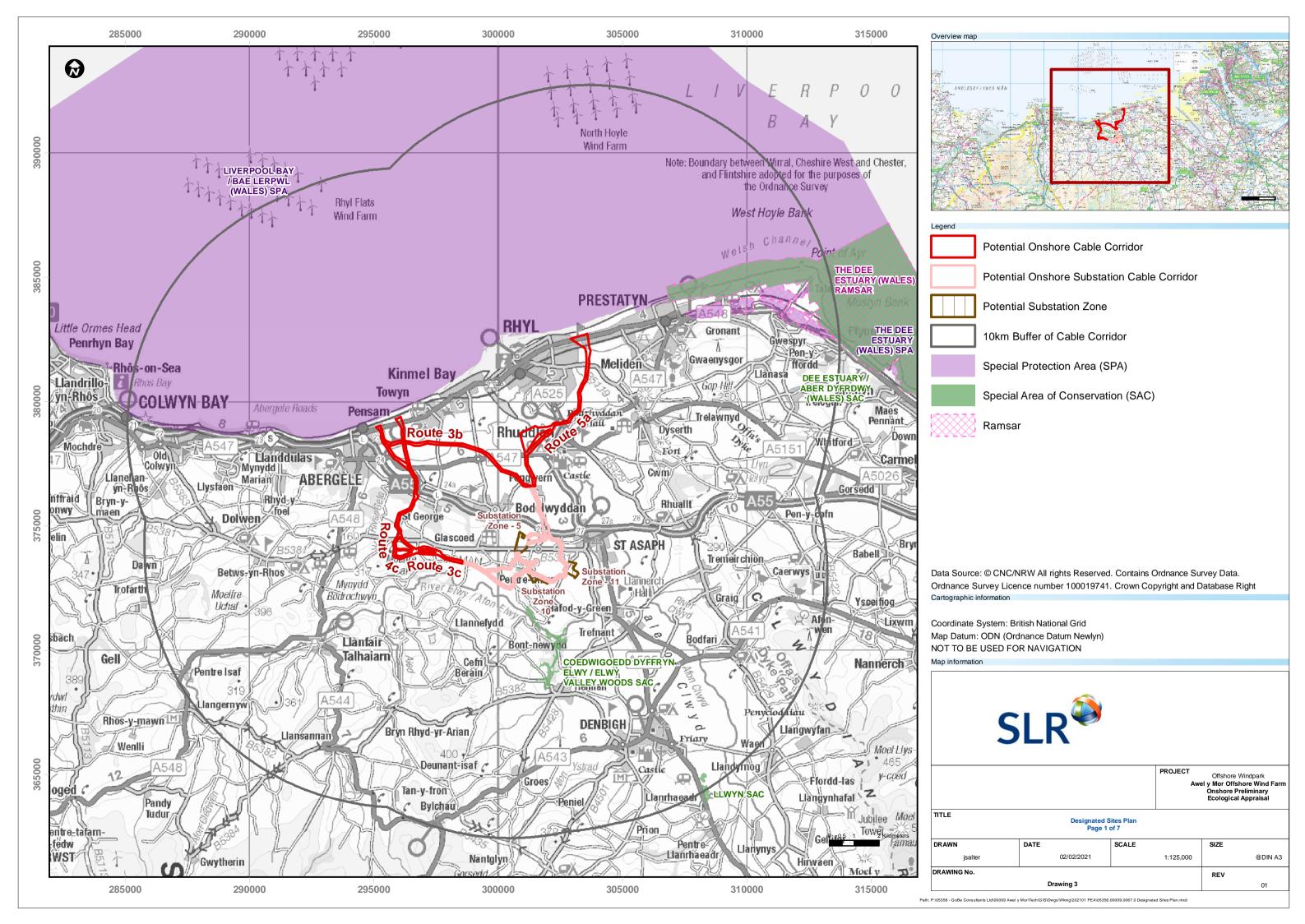


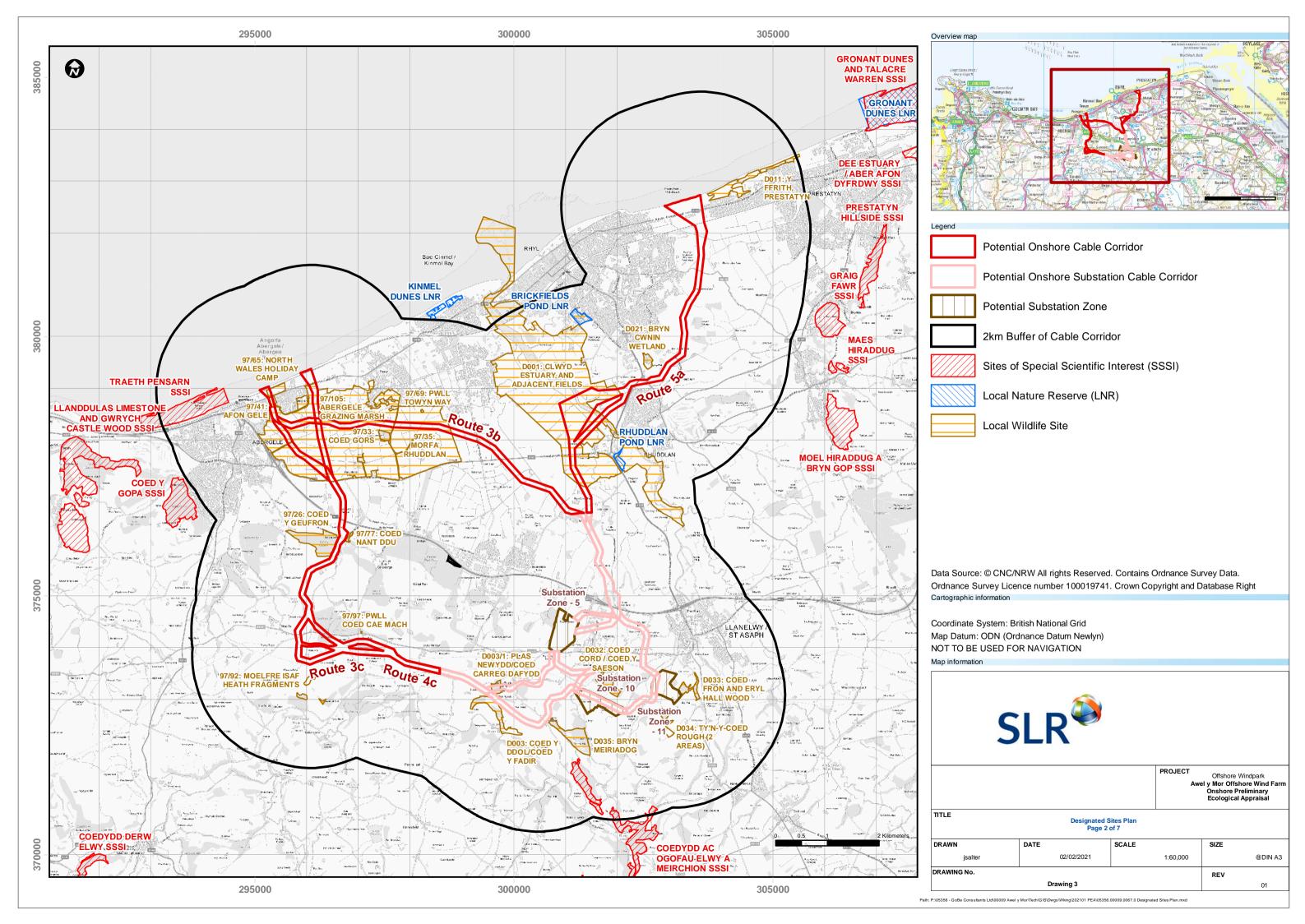


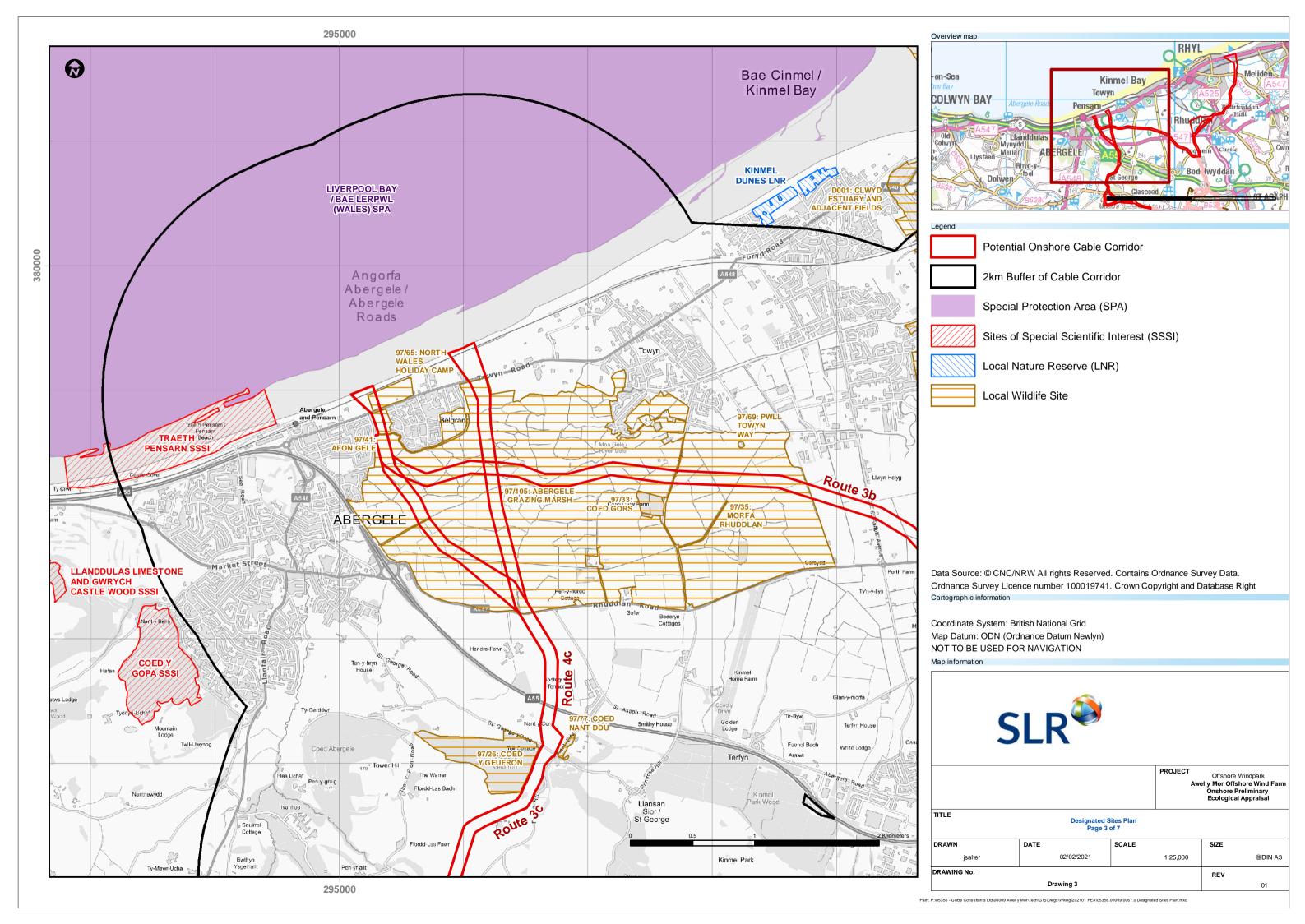


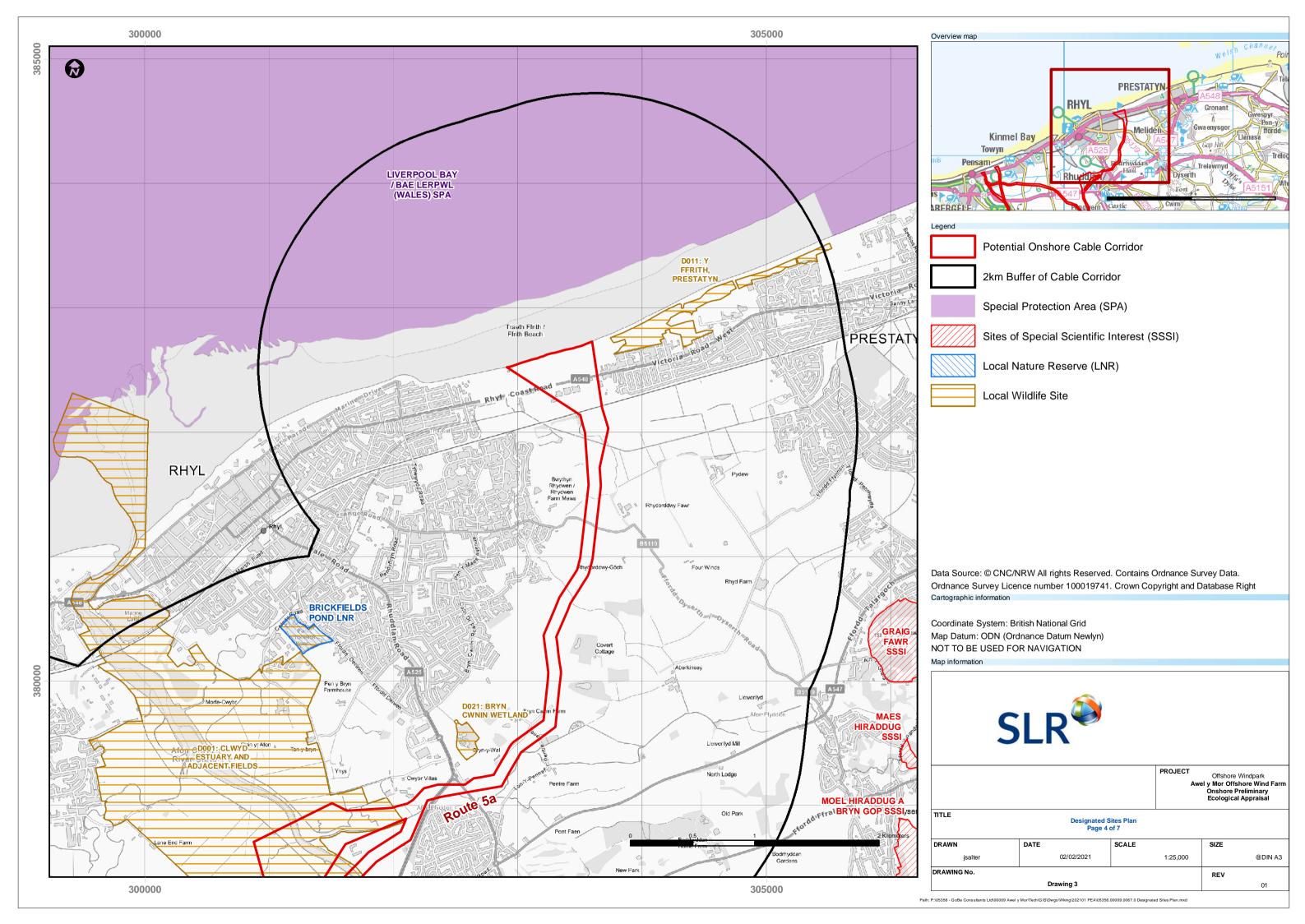
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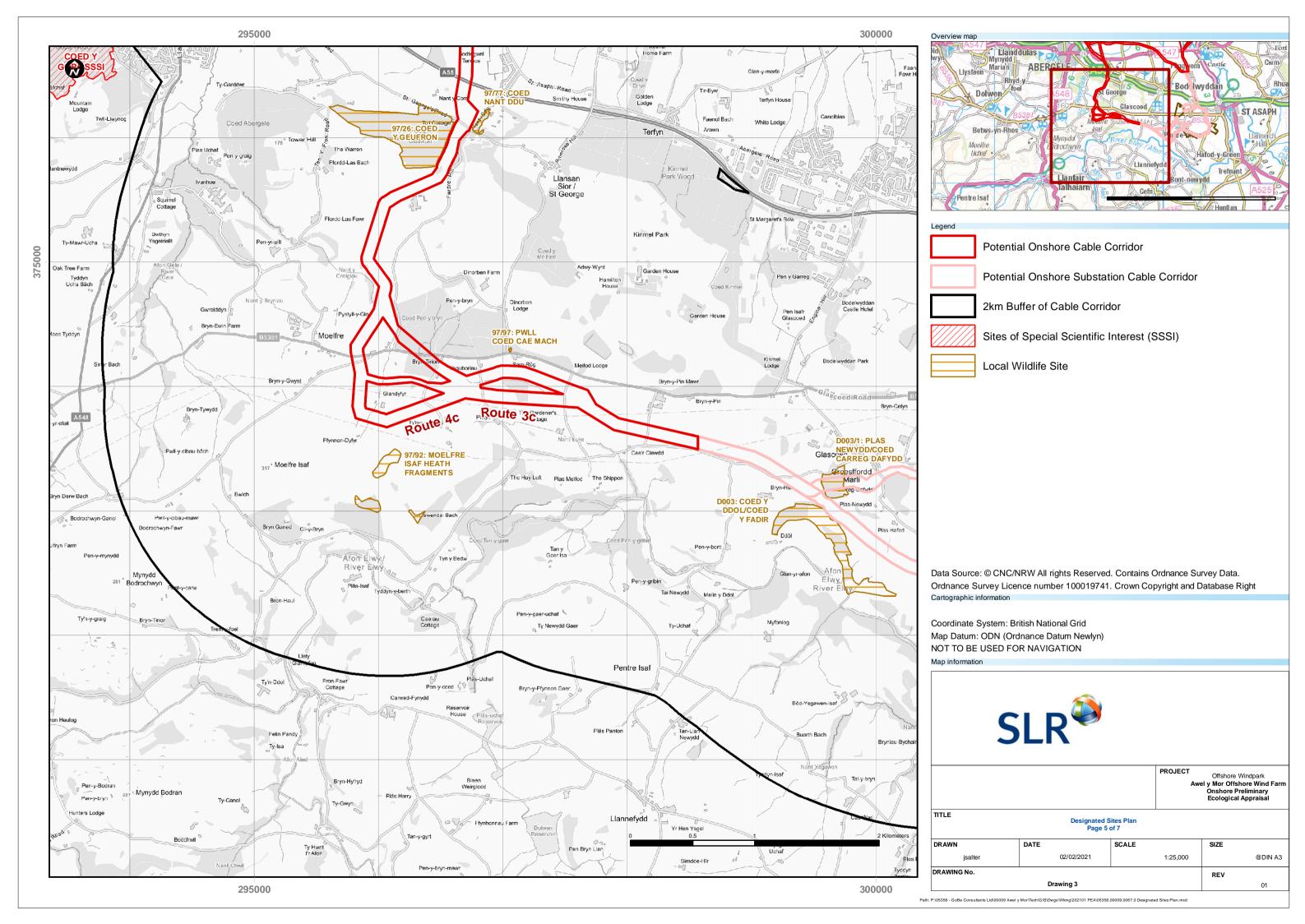
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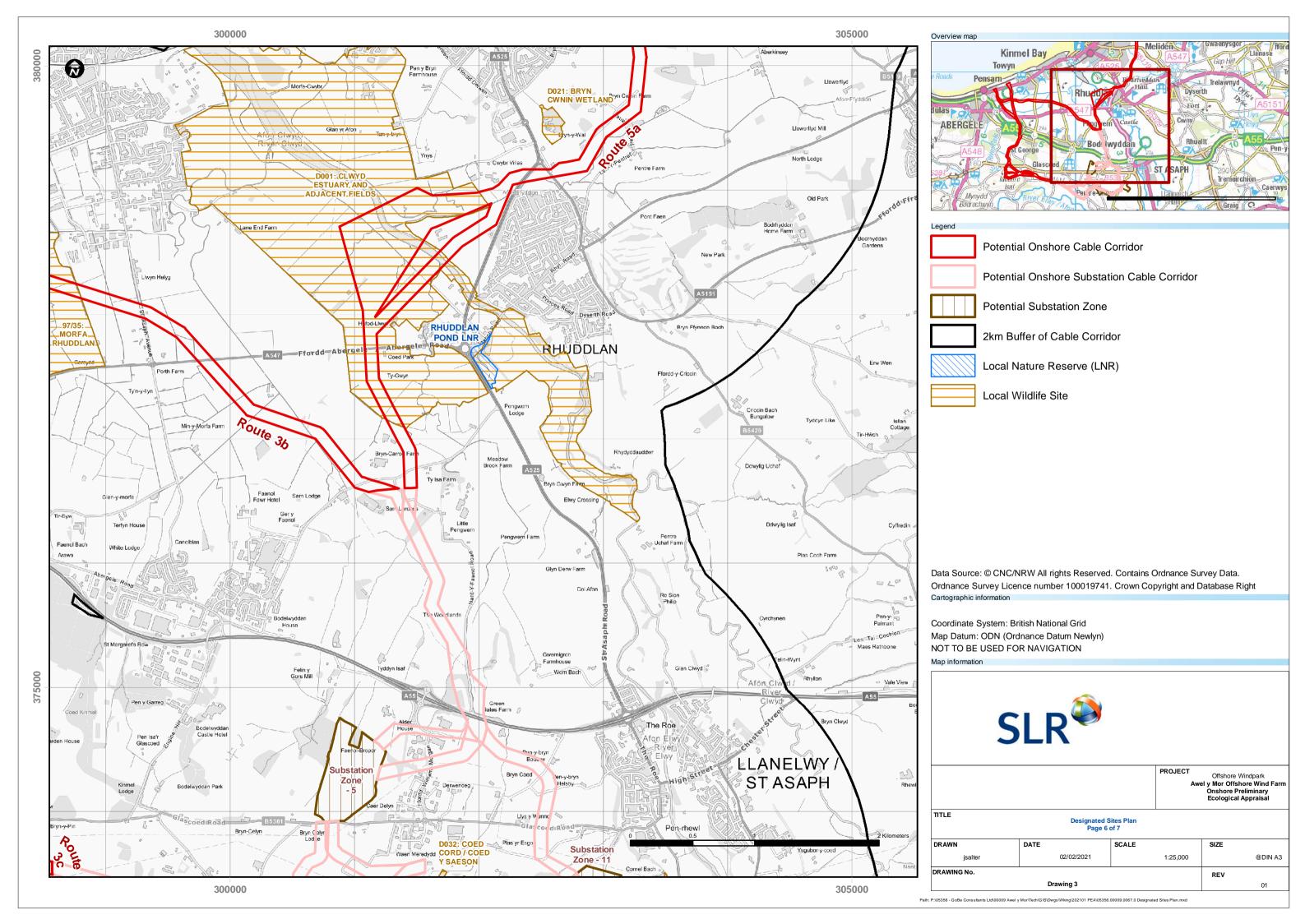


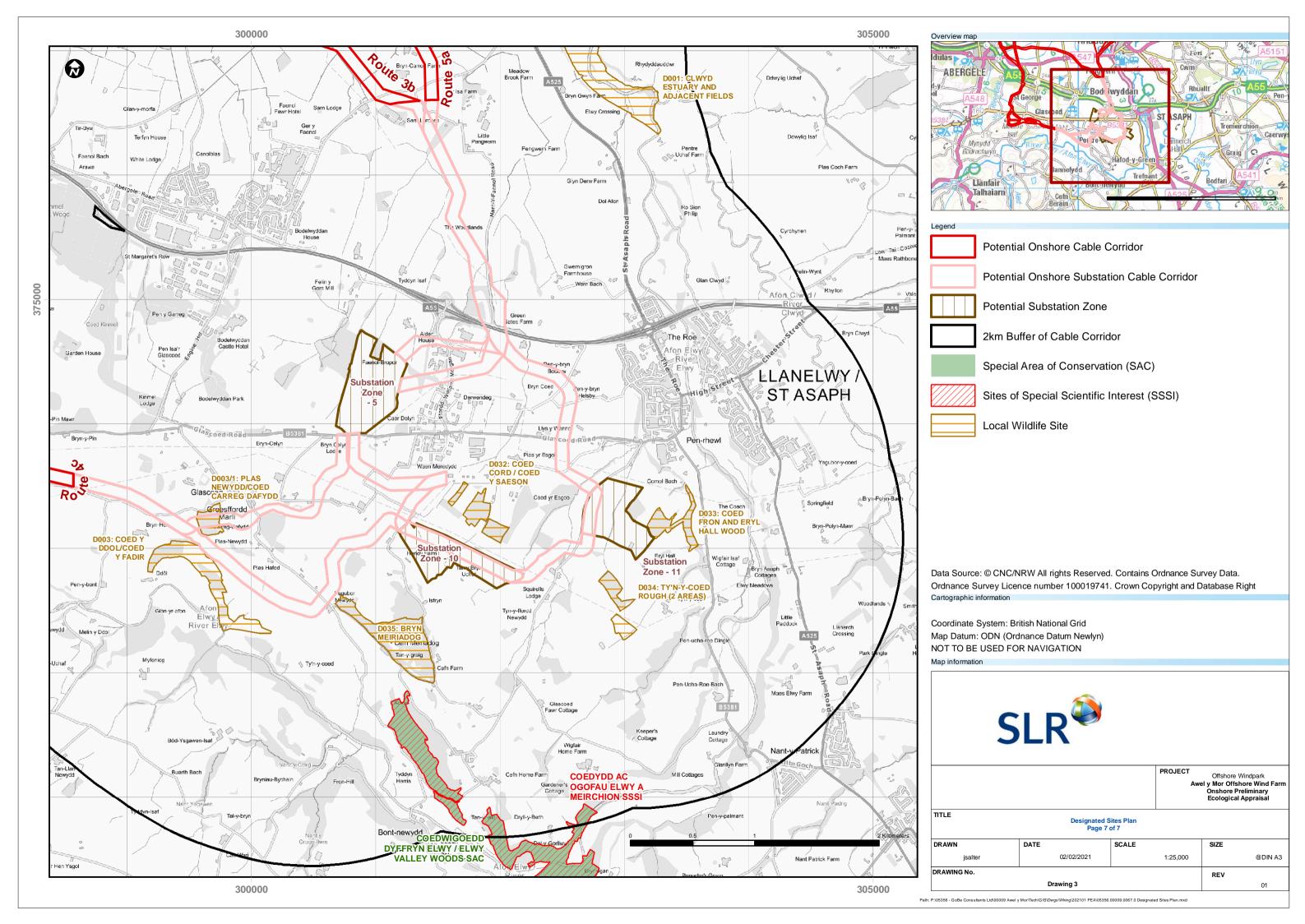






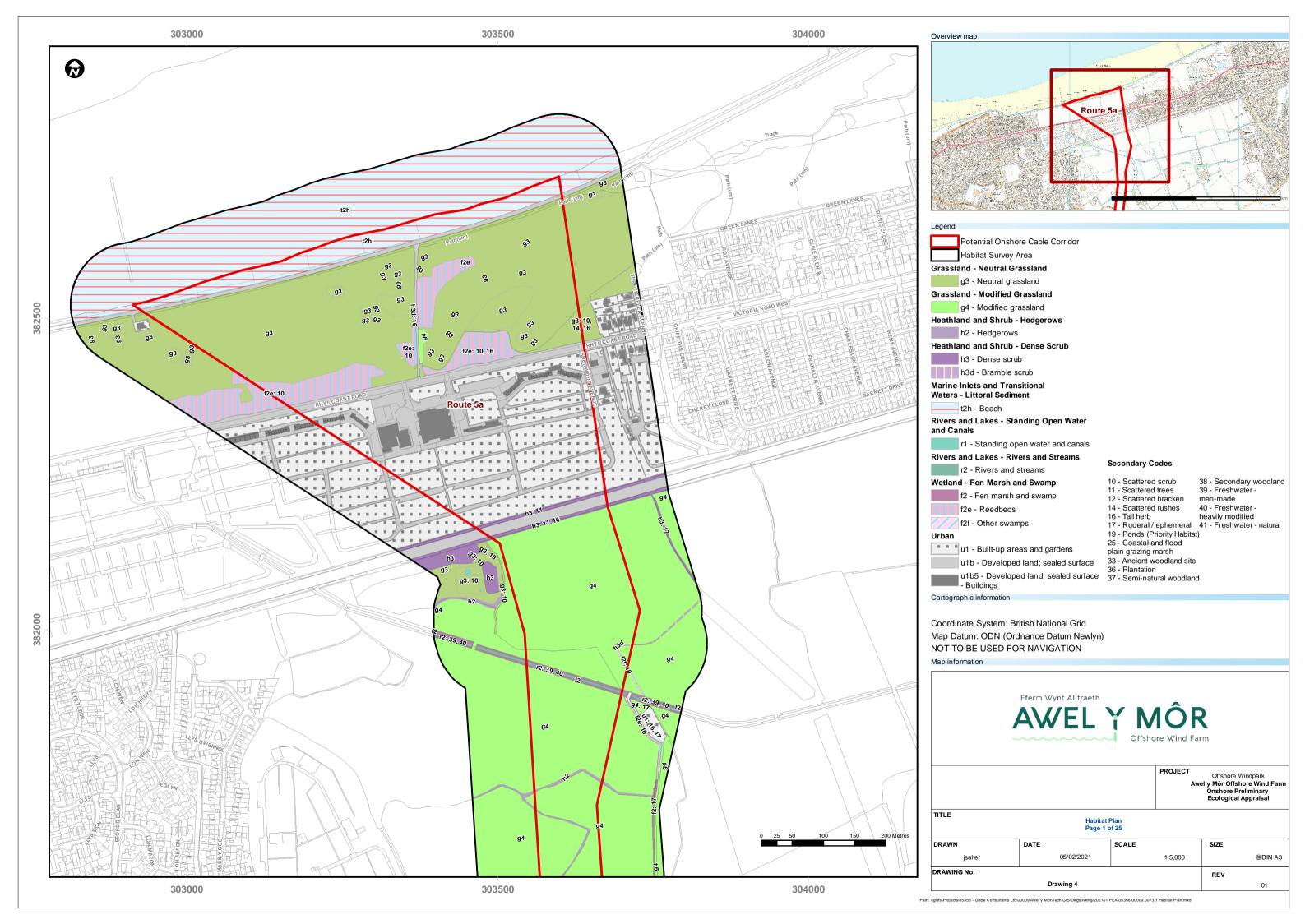


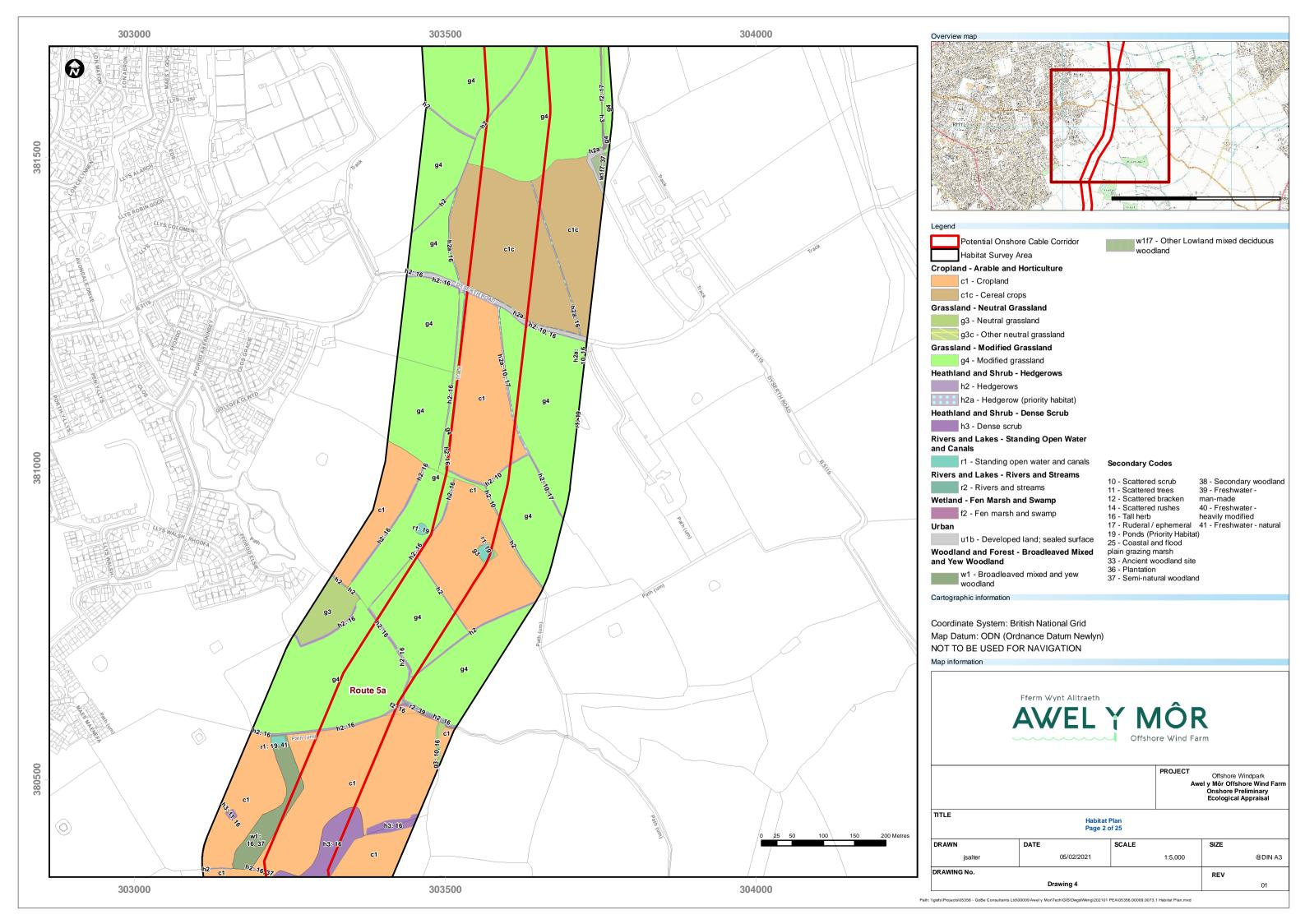


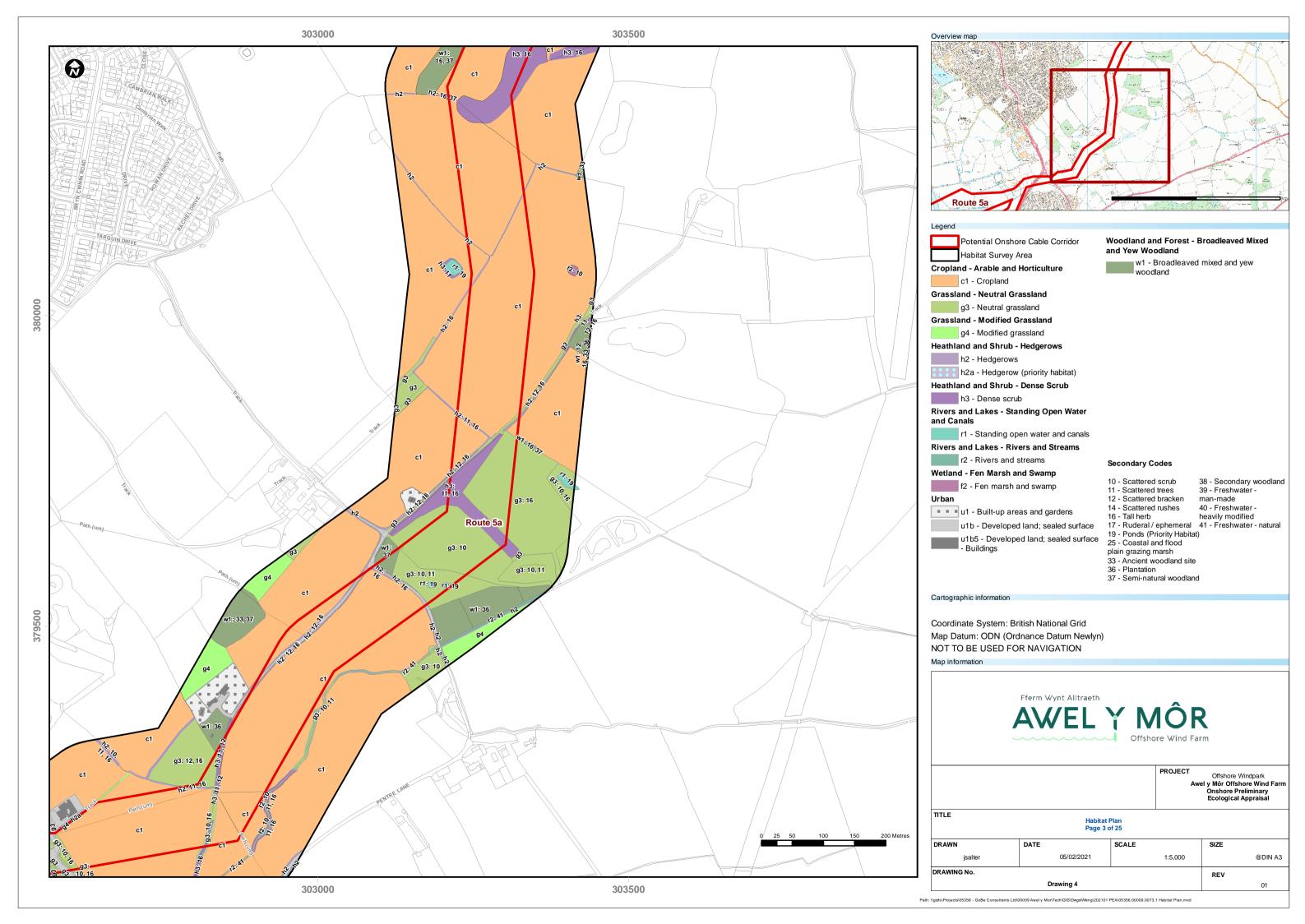


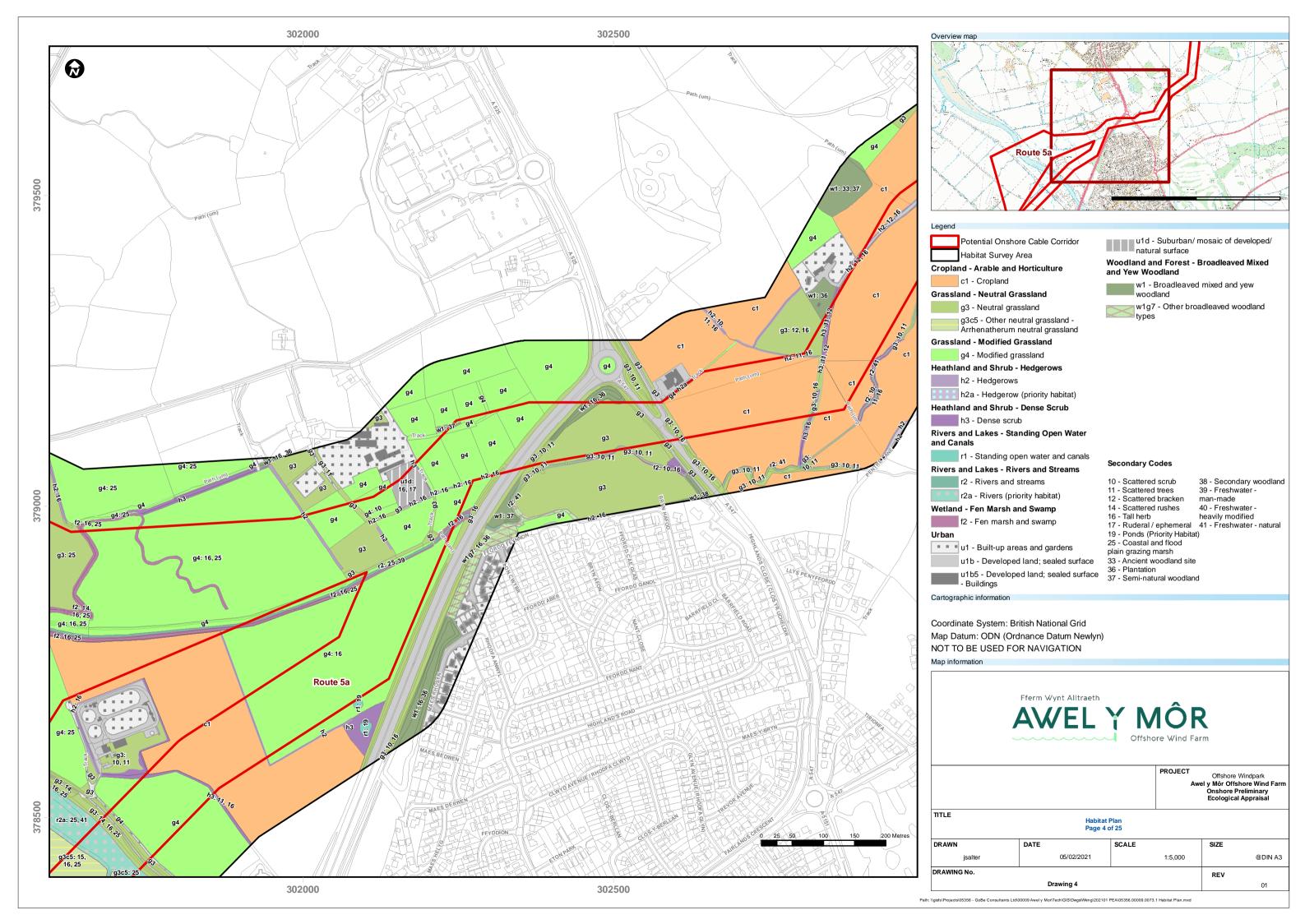
DRAWING 4

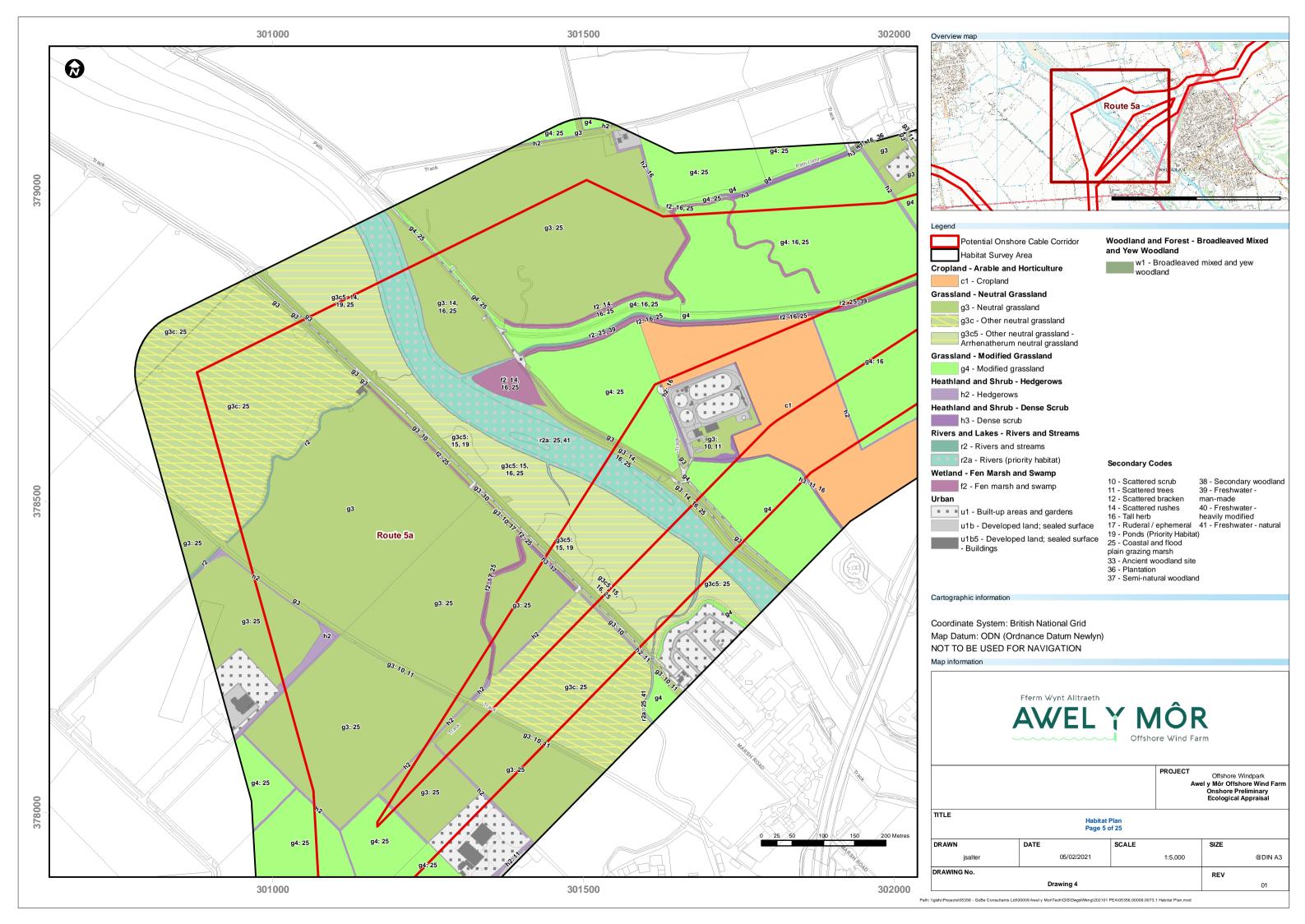
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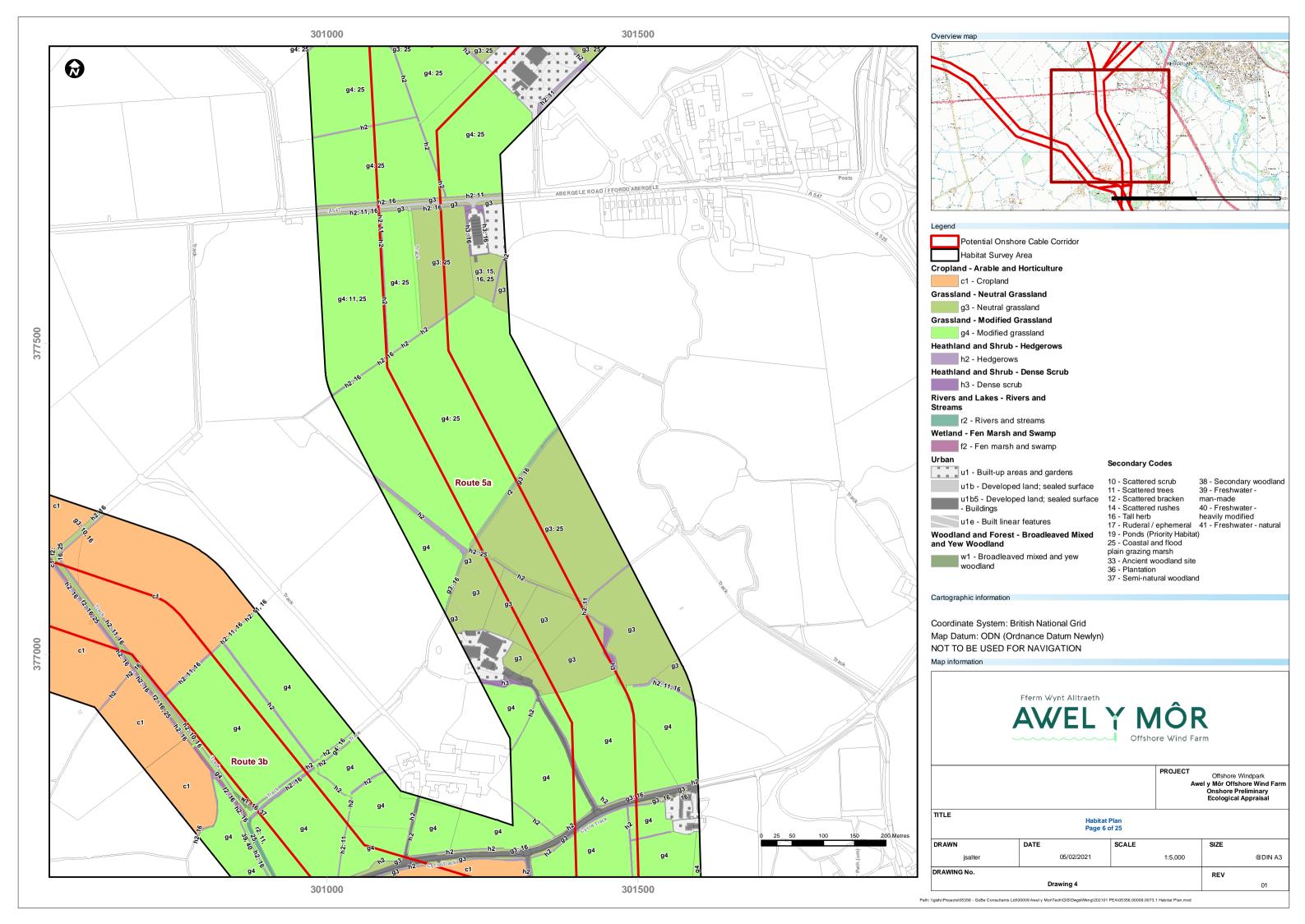


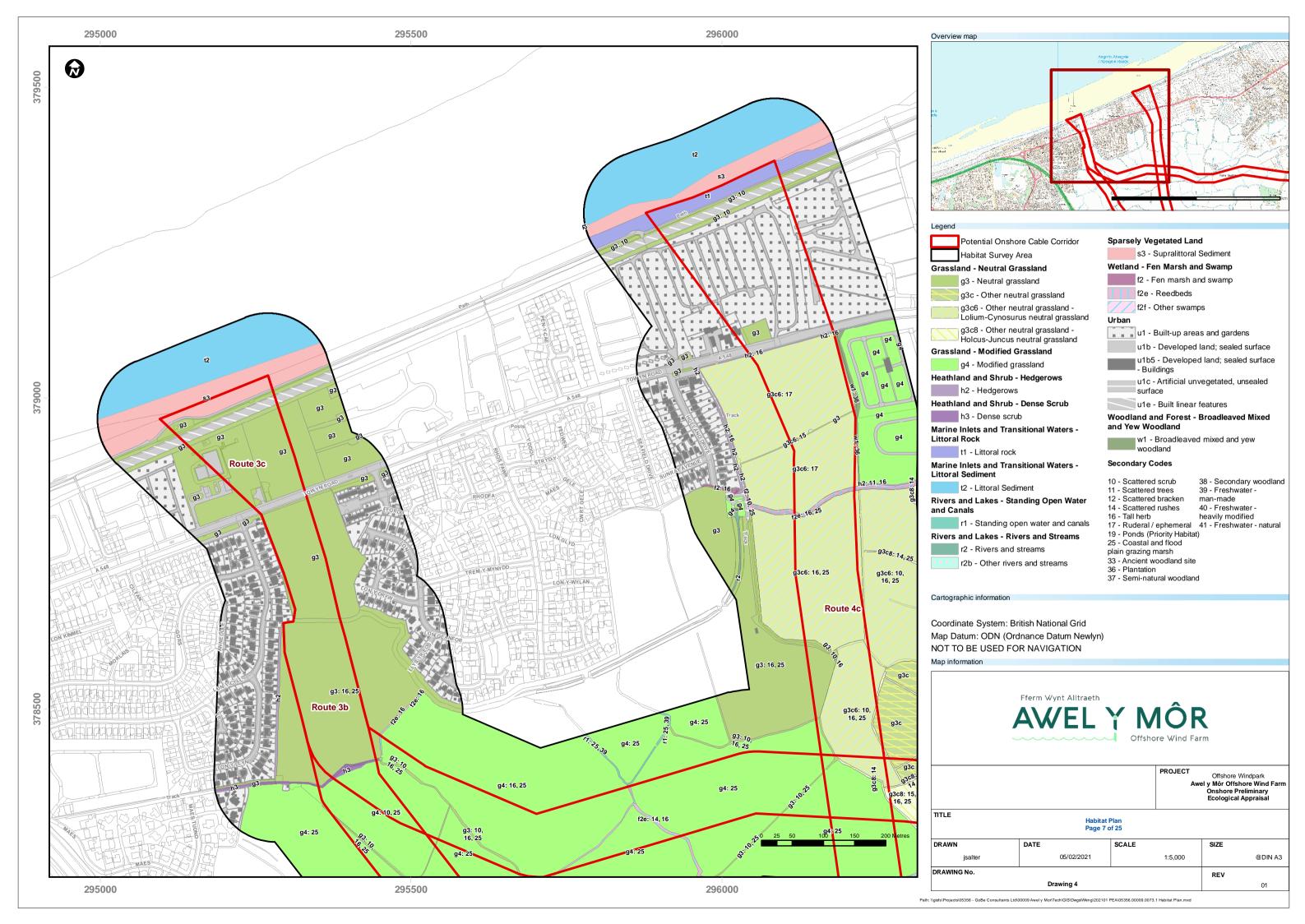


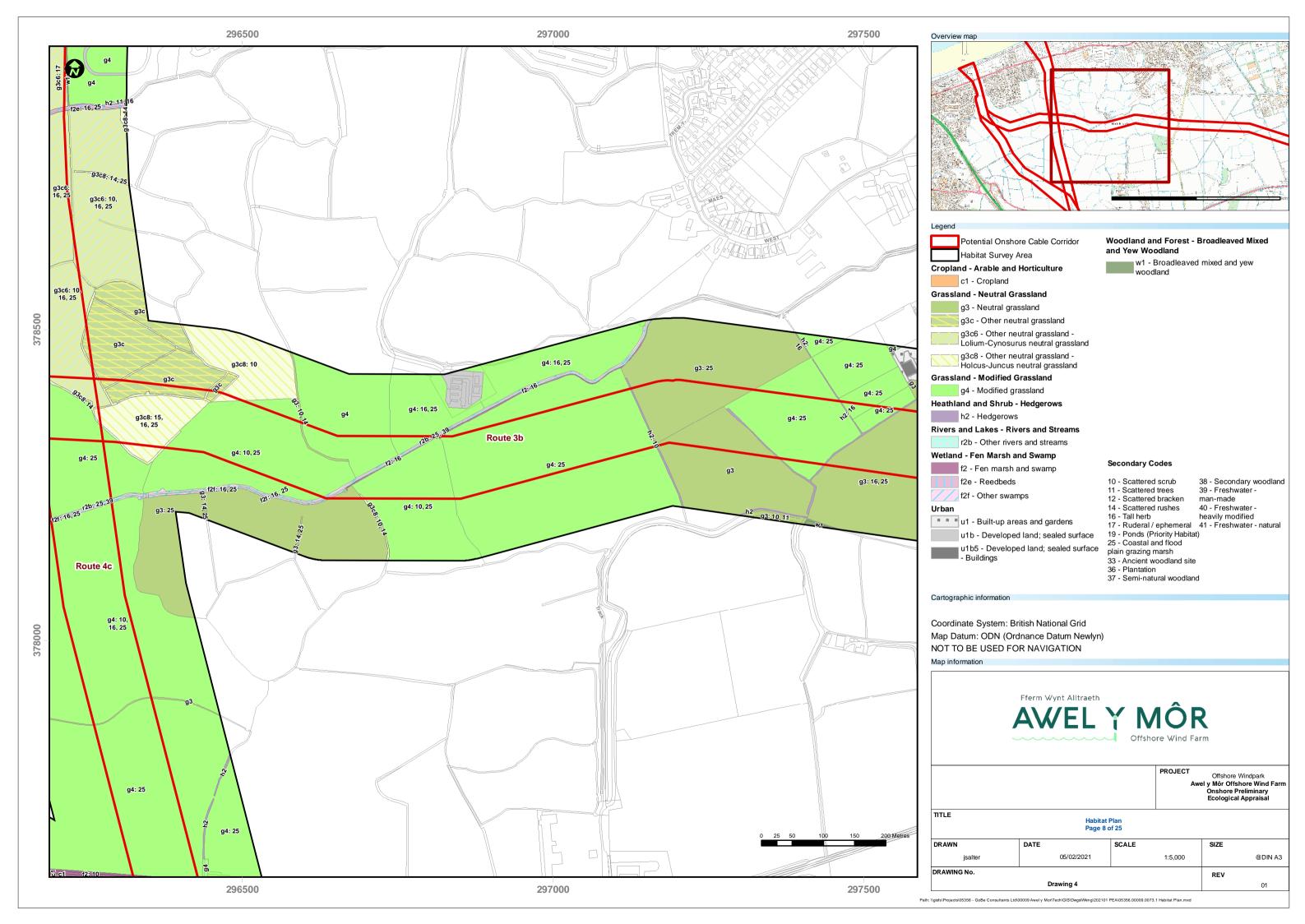


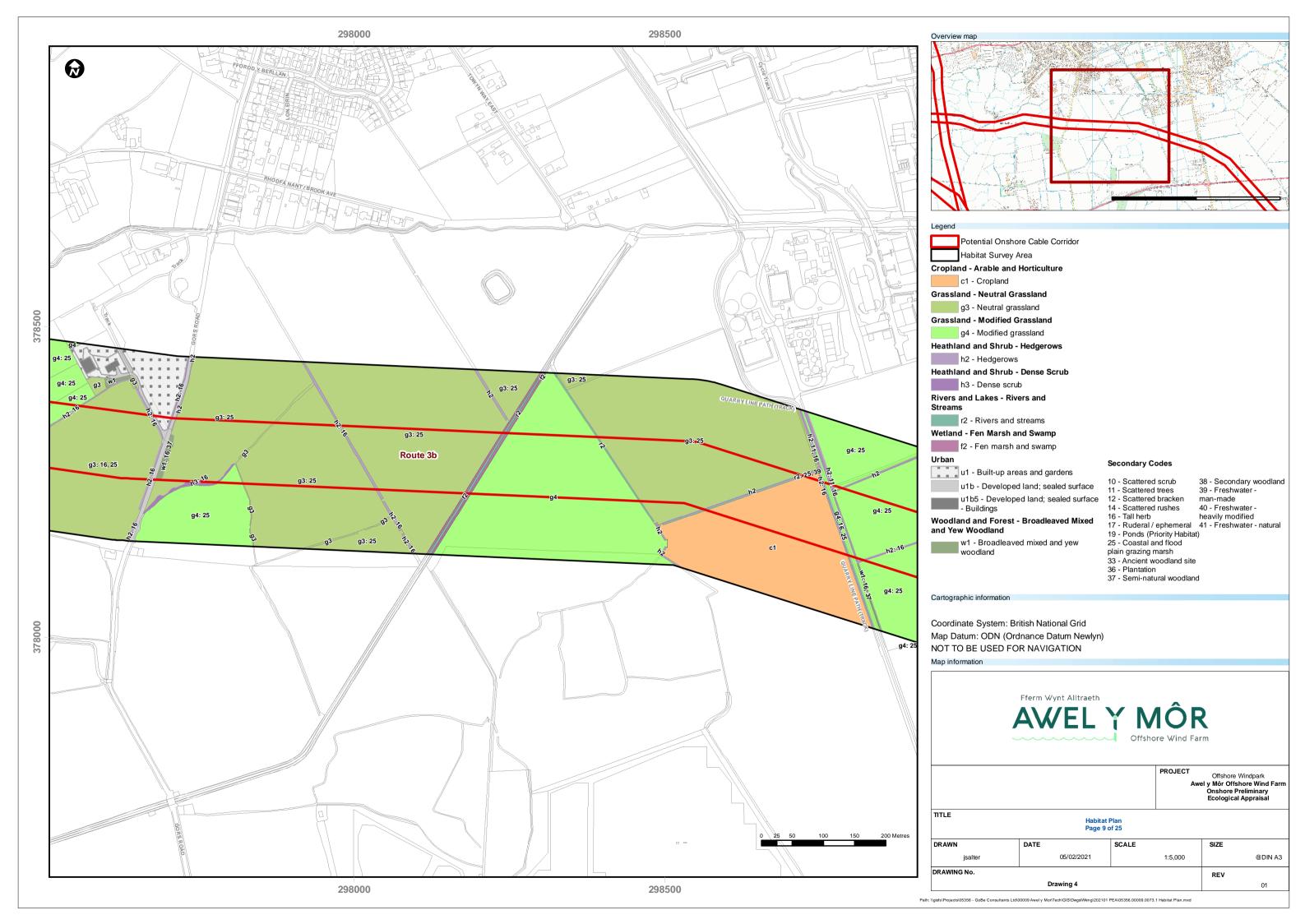


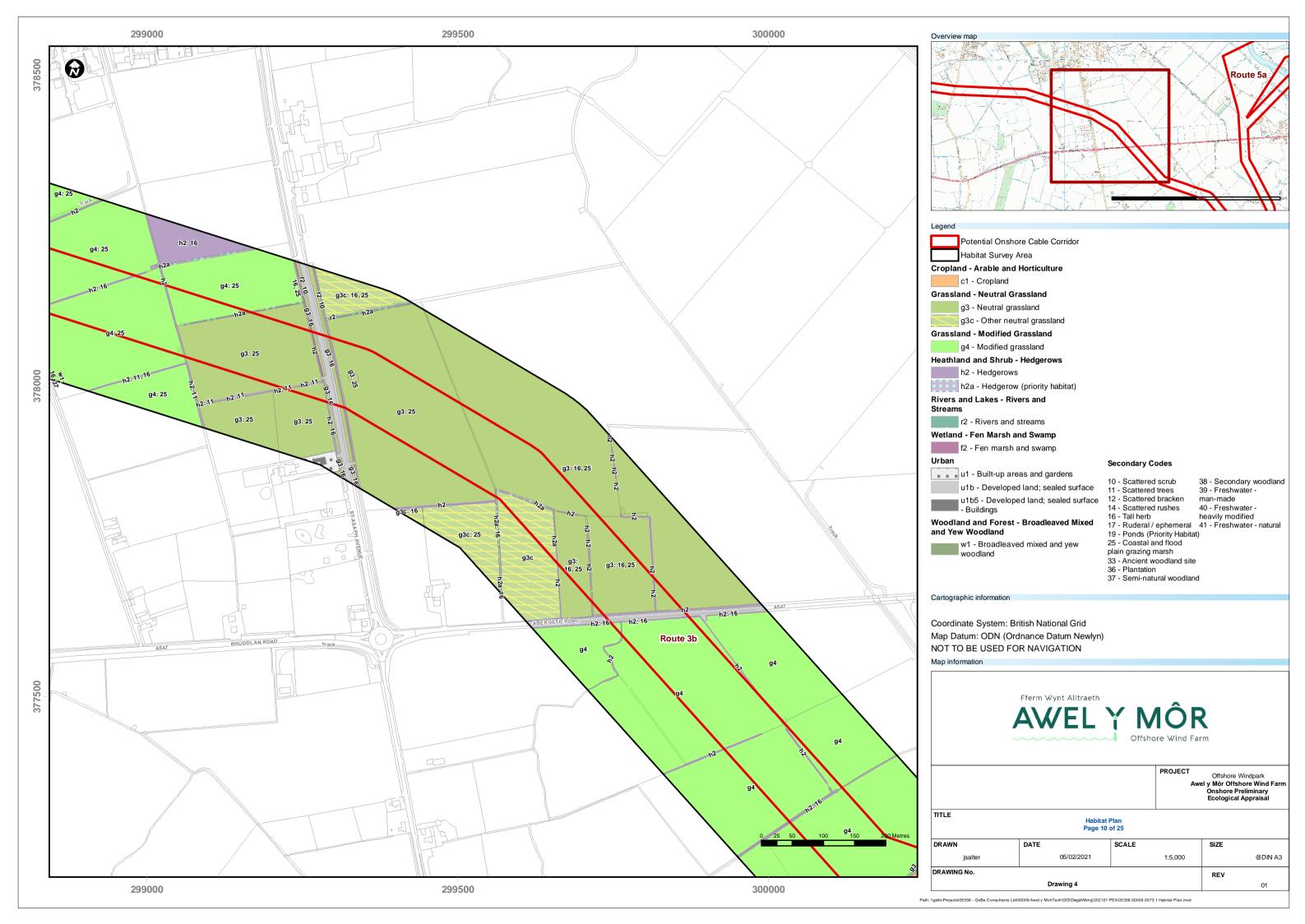




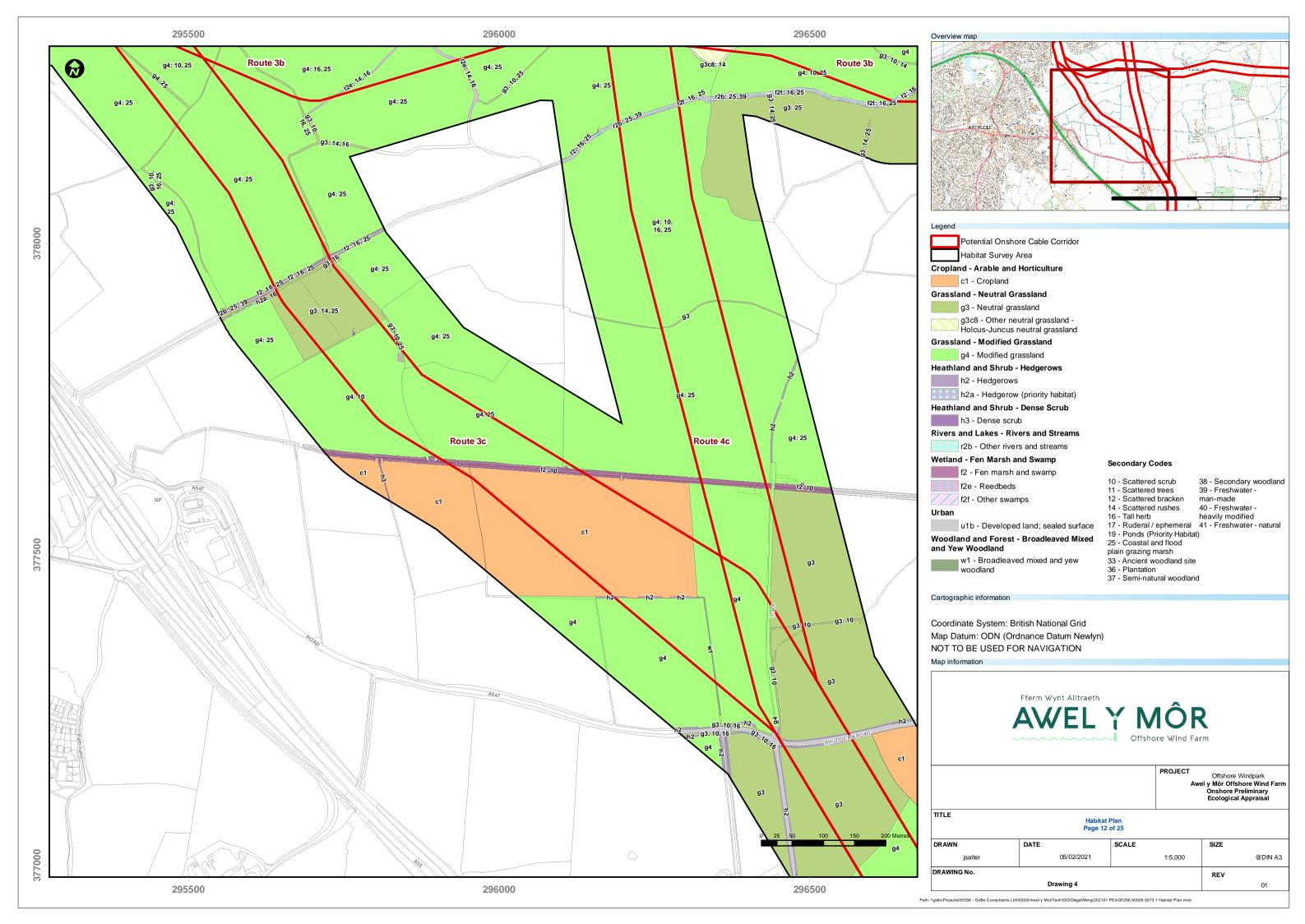




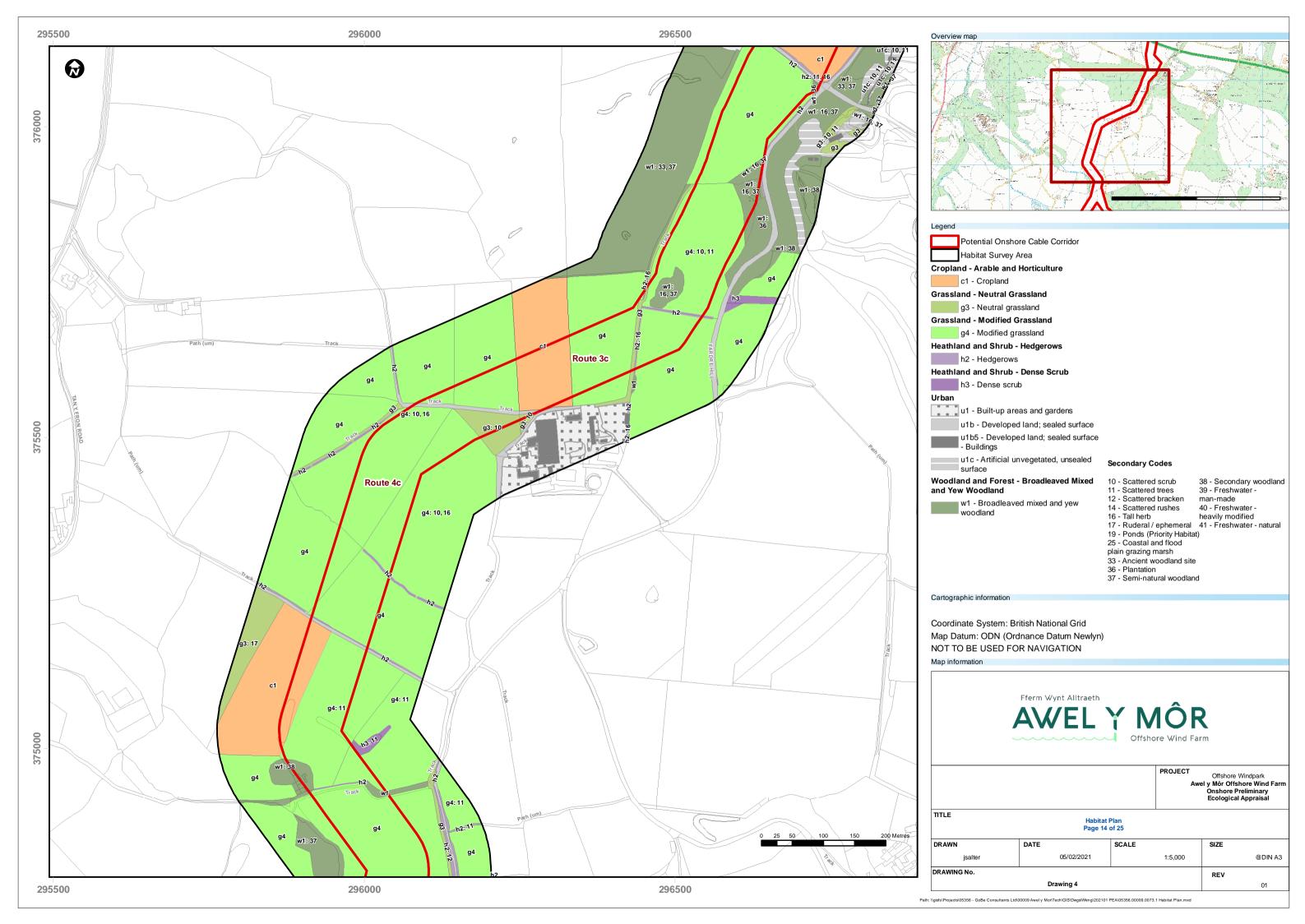


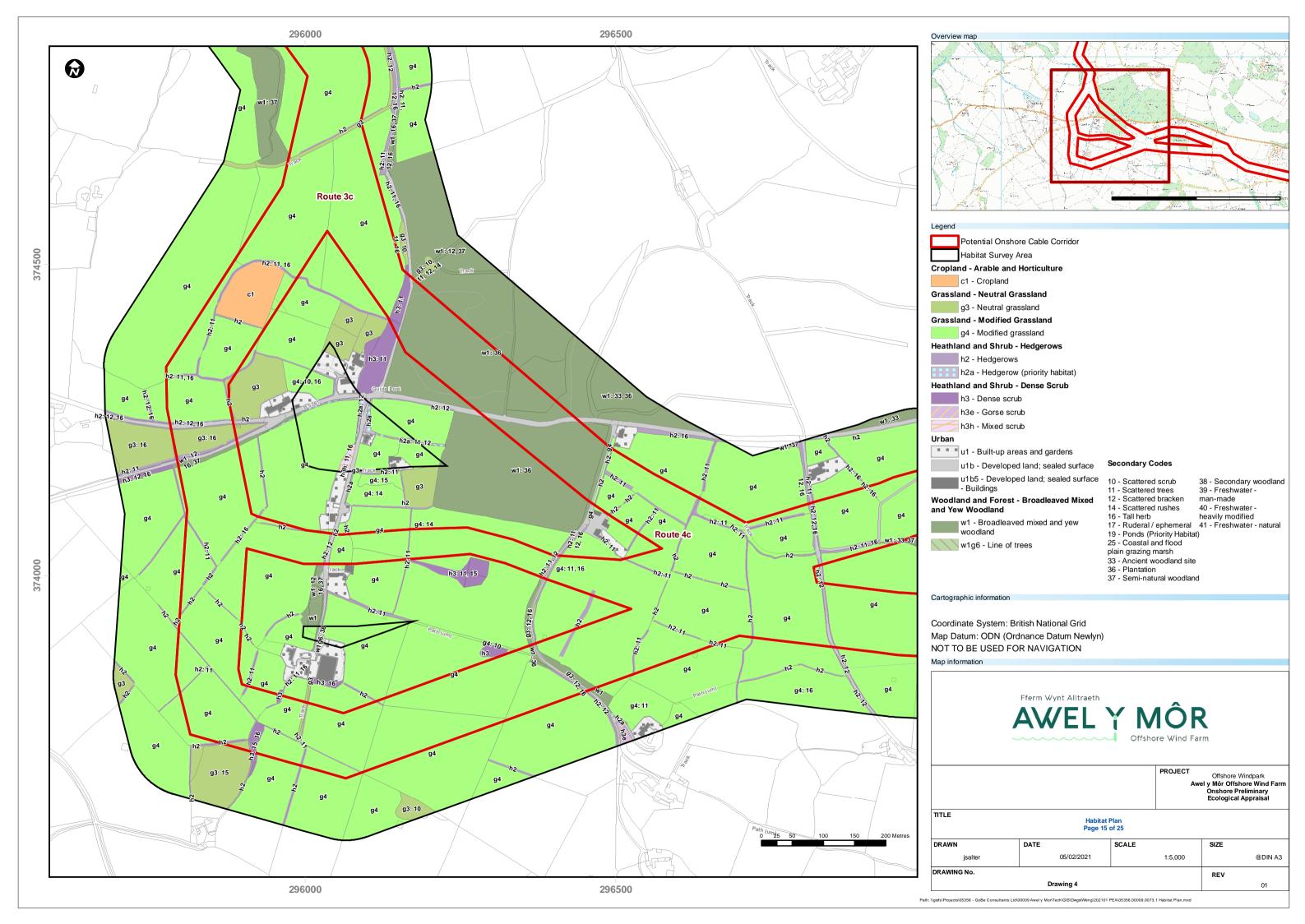


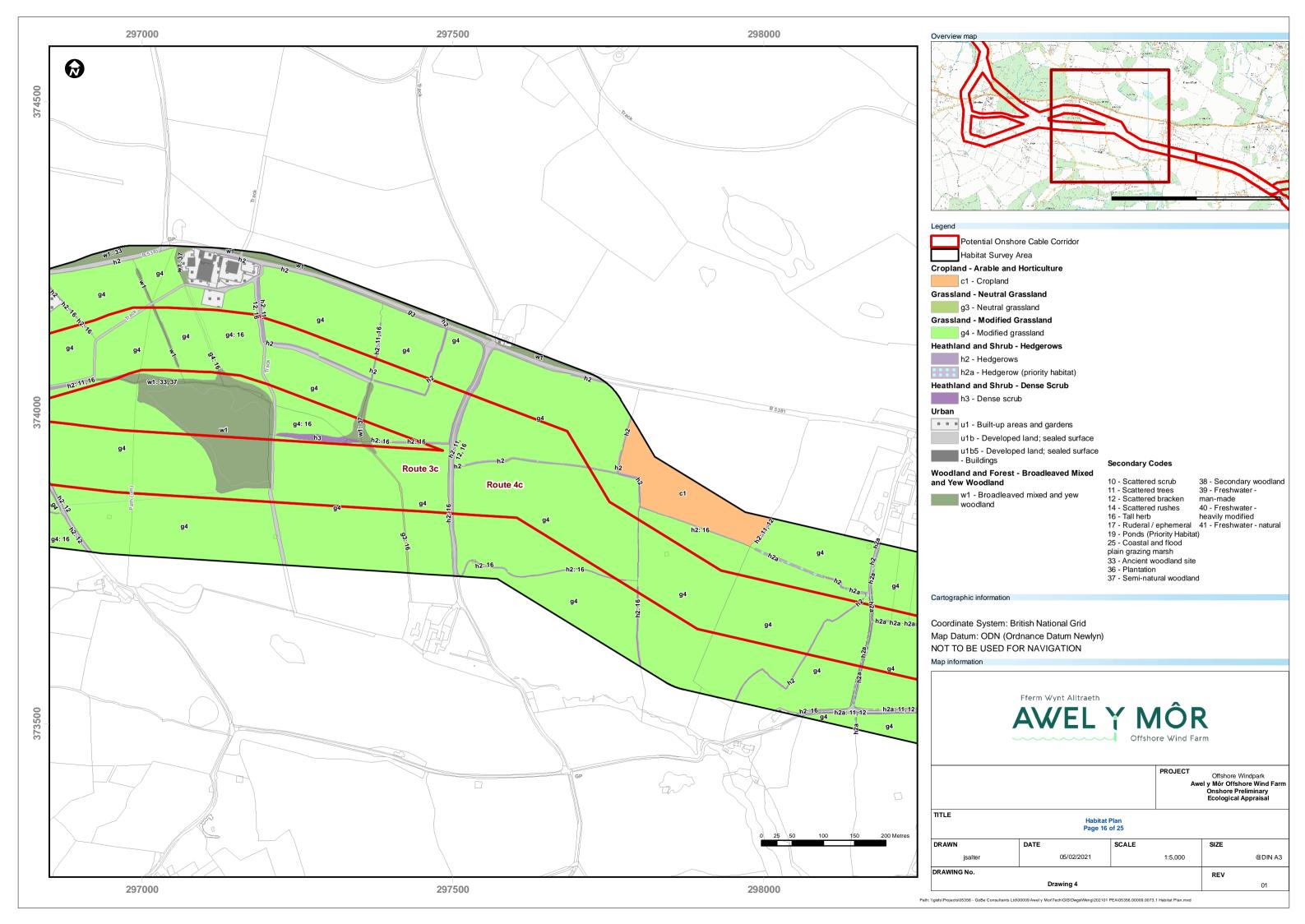


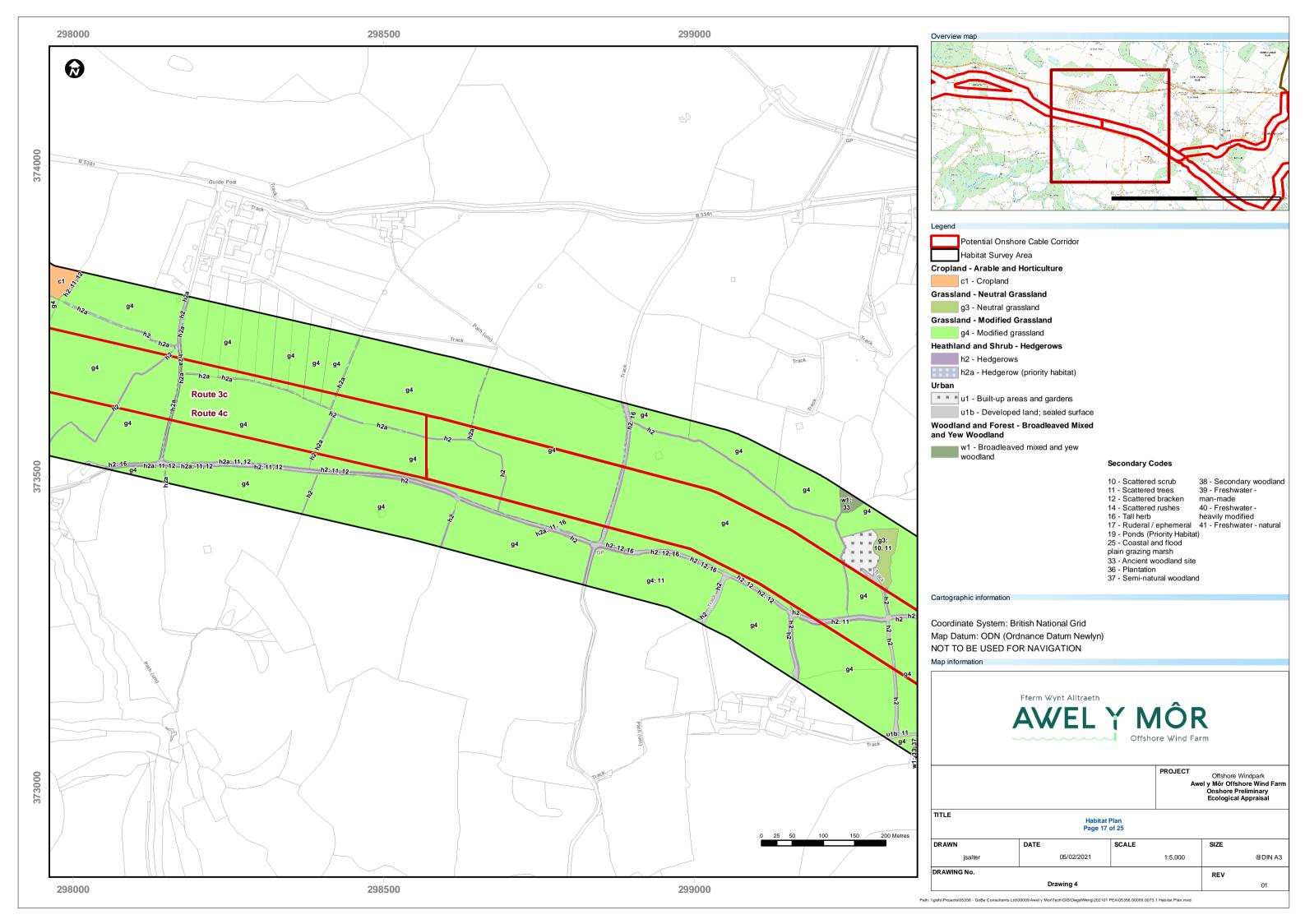


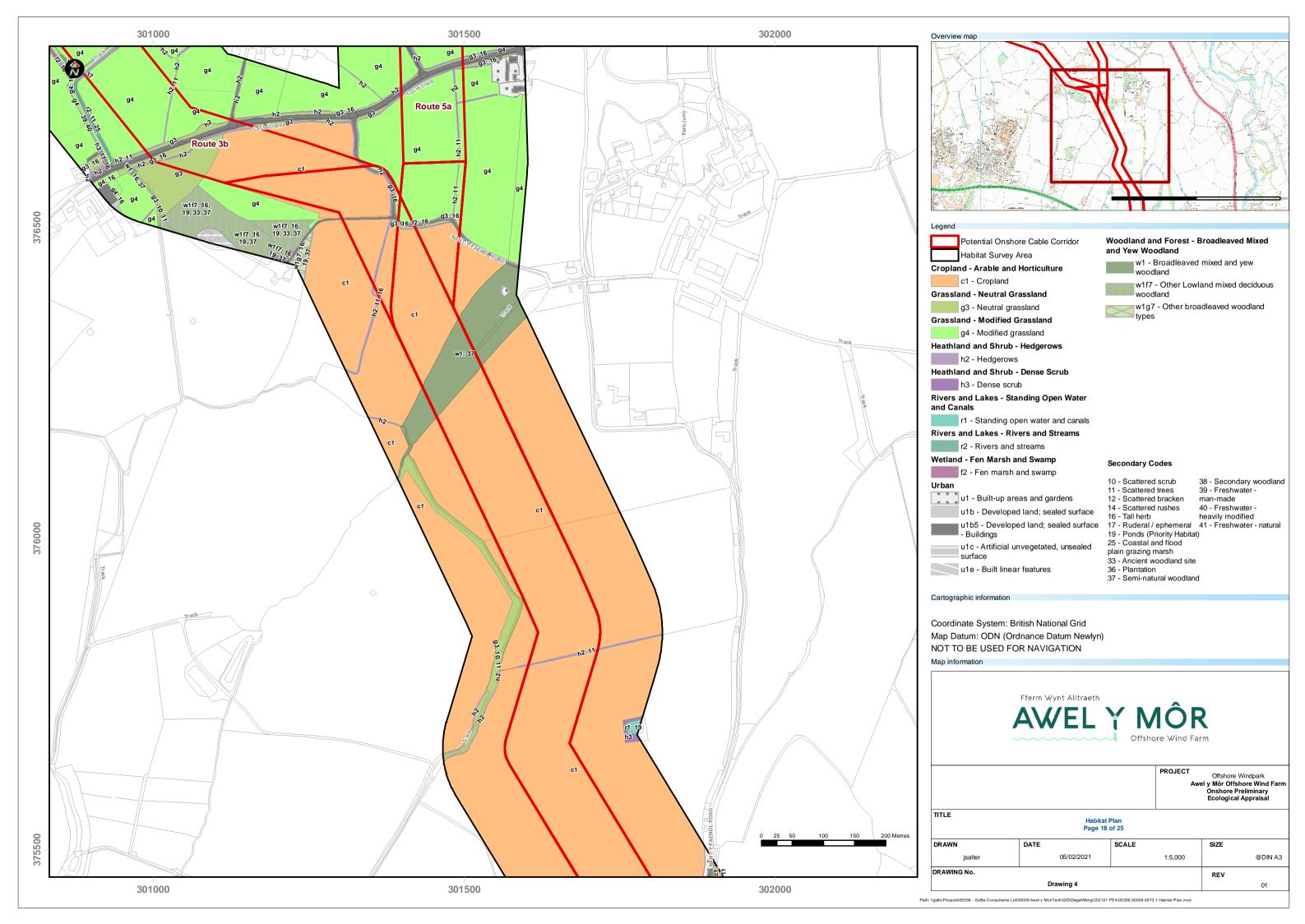


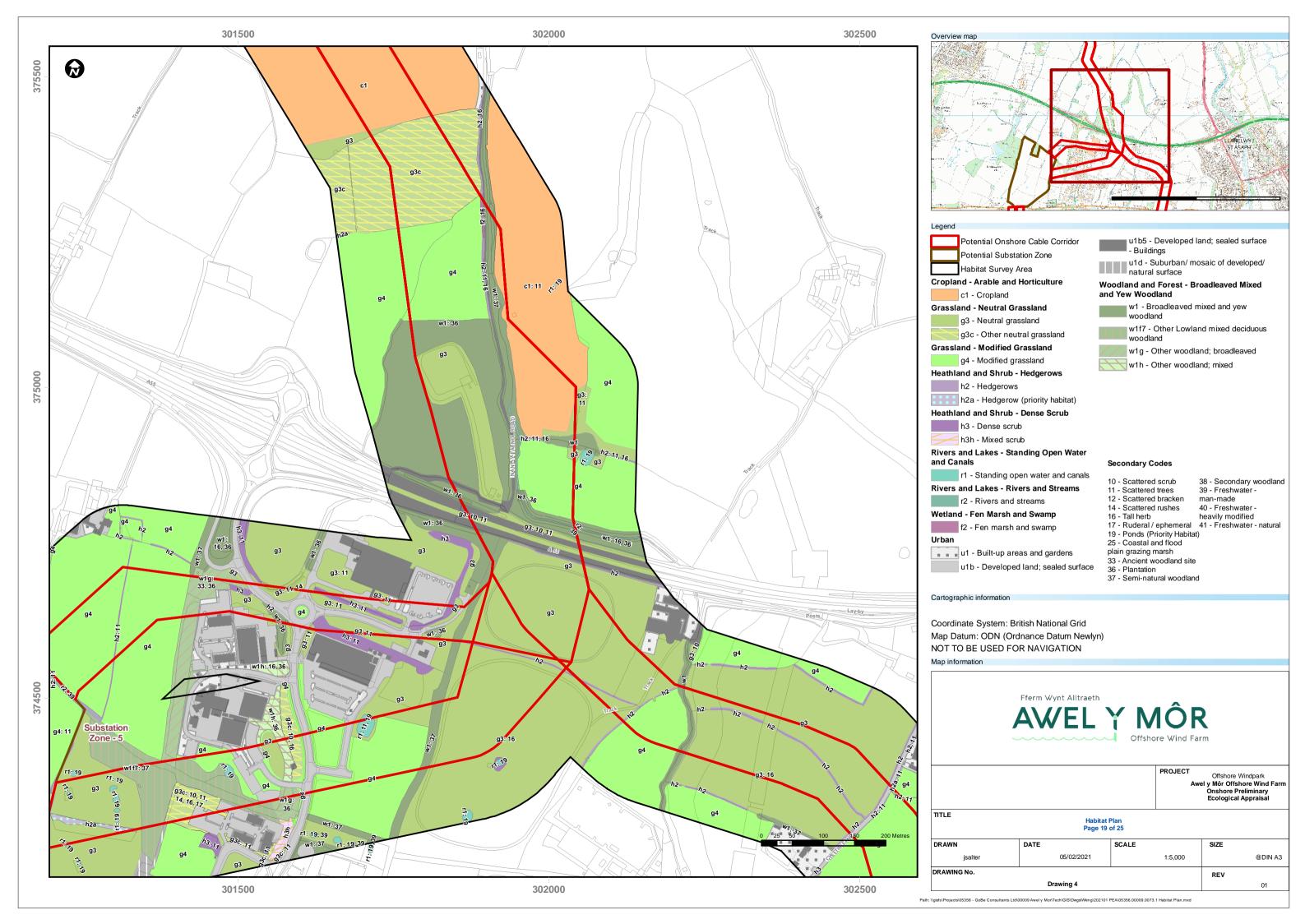


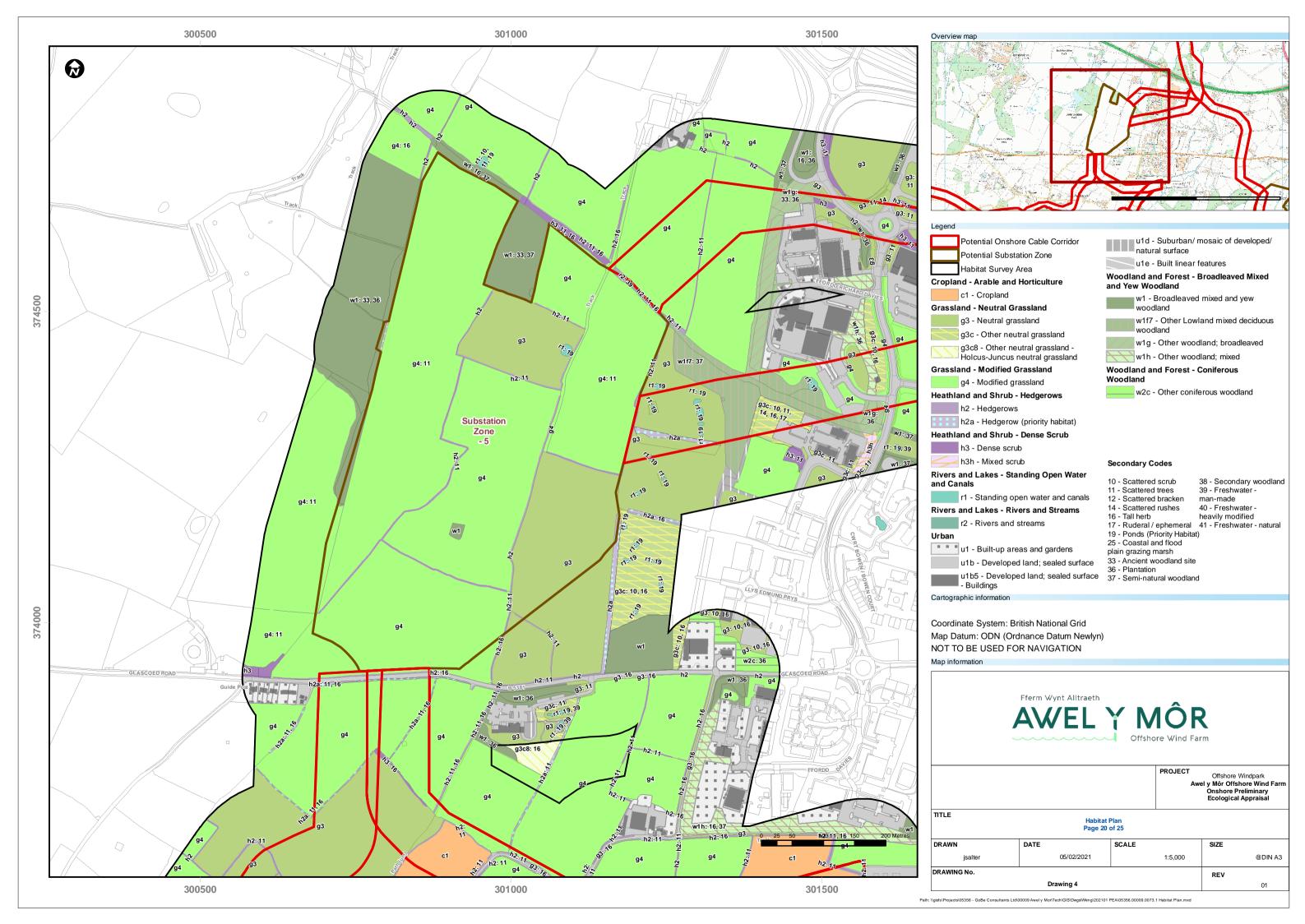


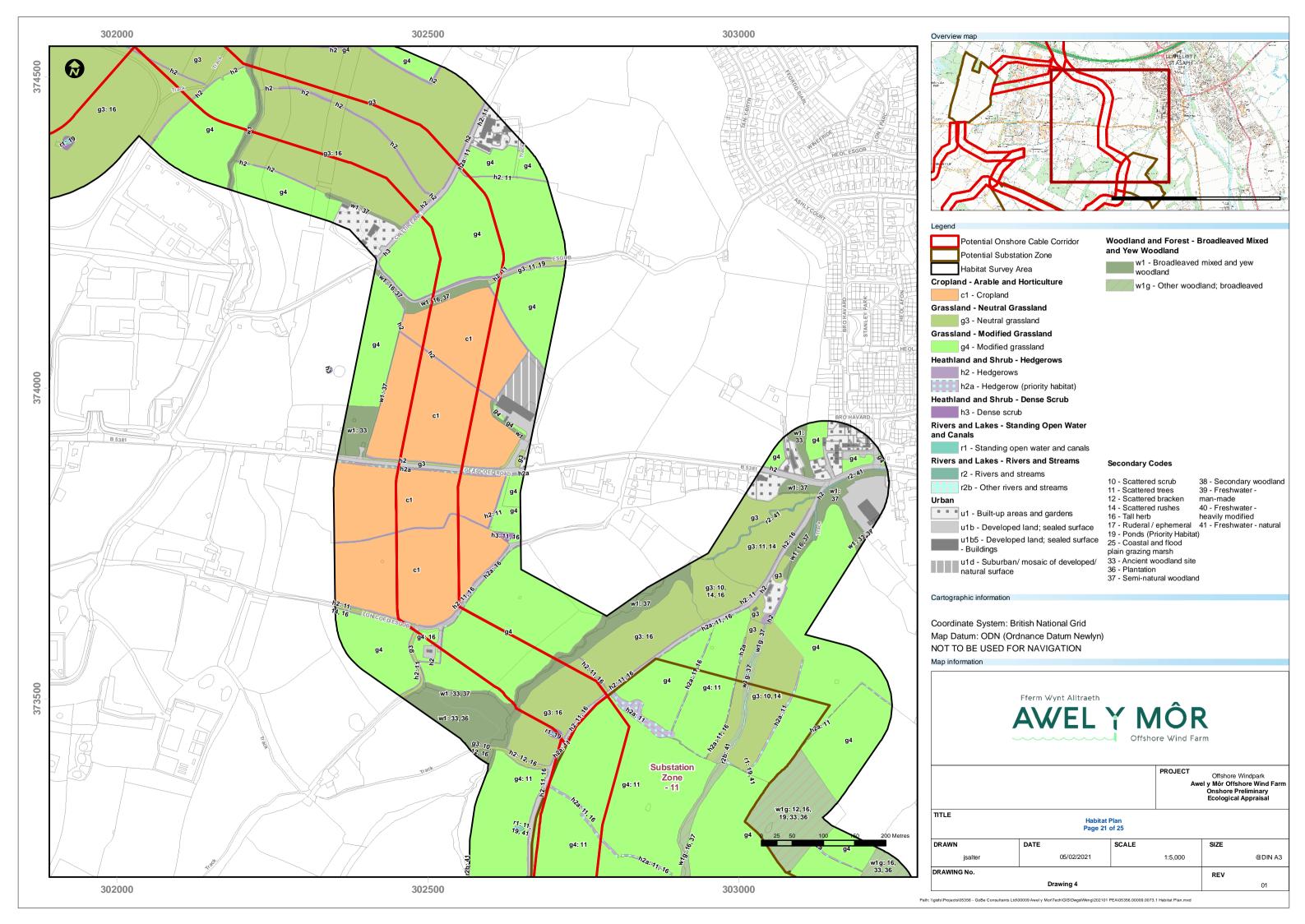


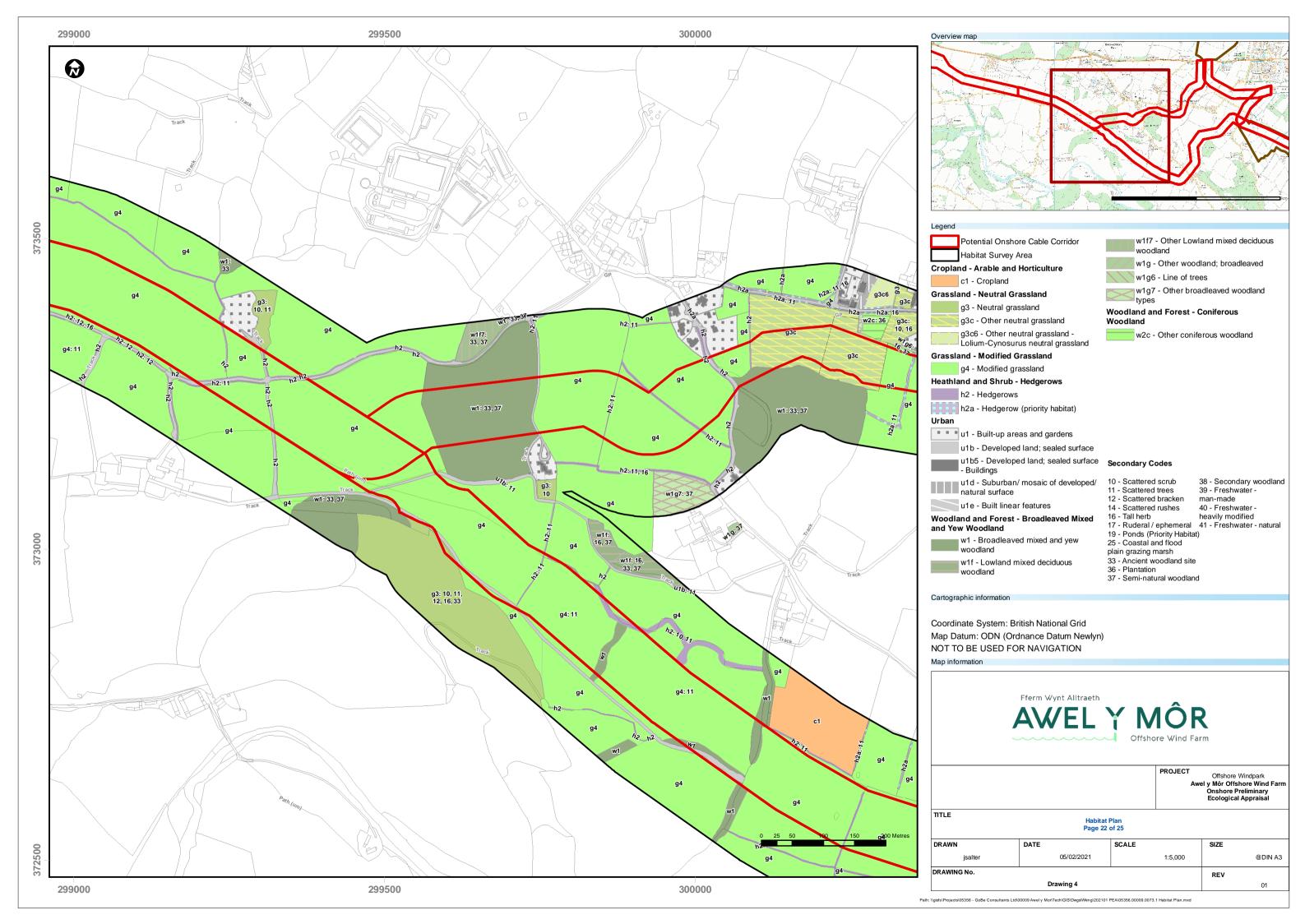


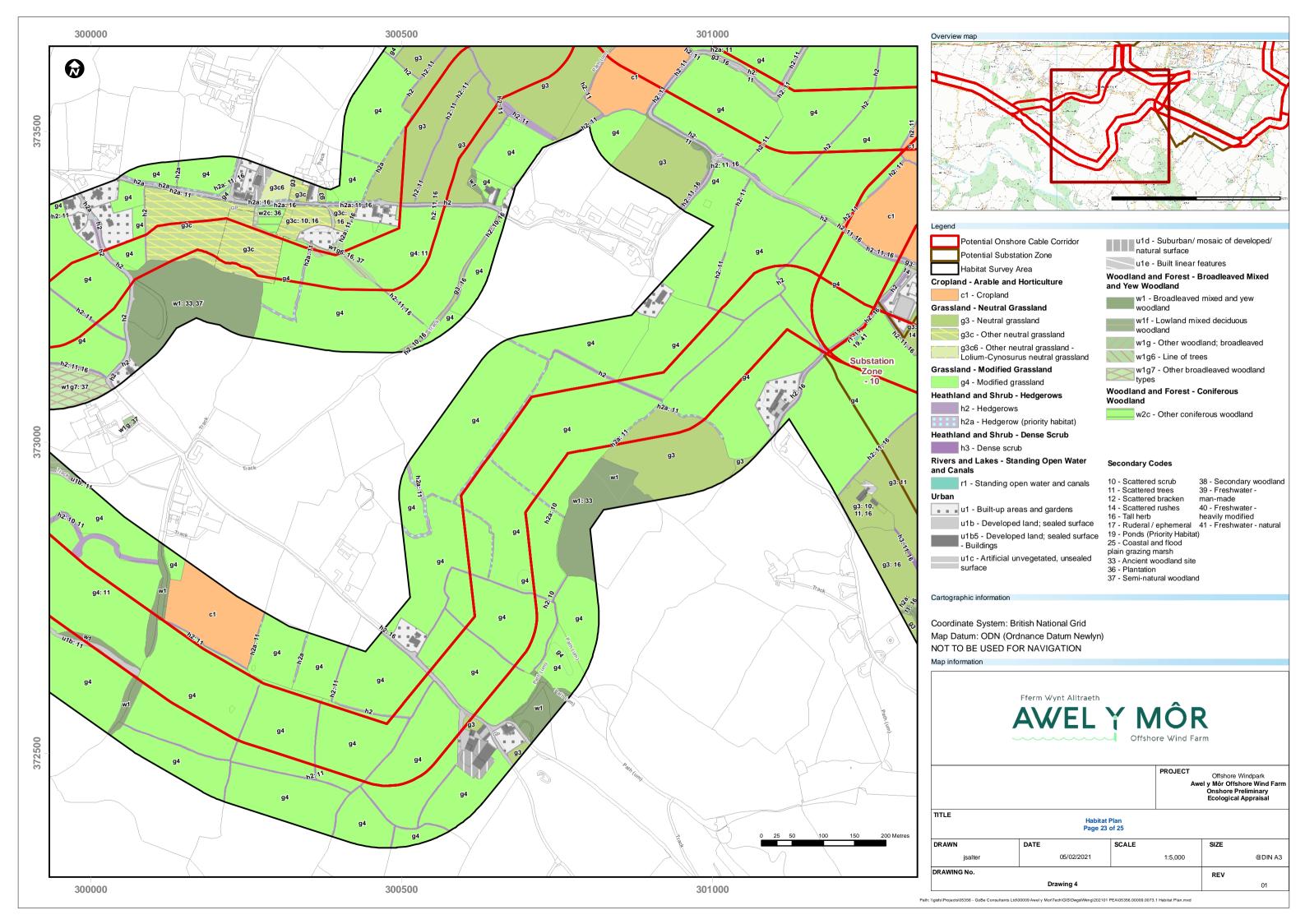


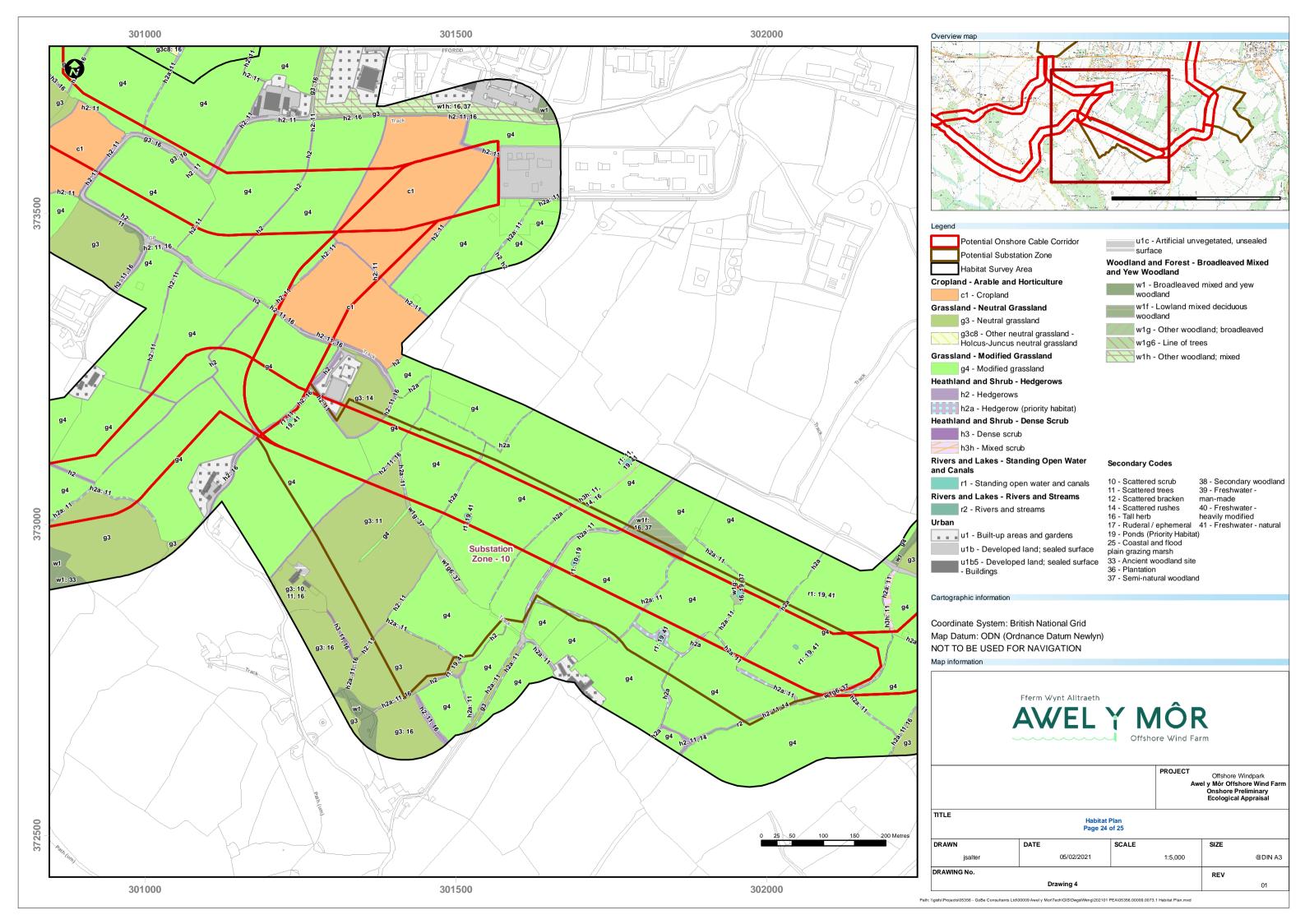


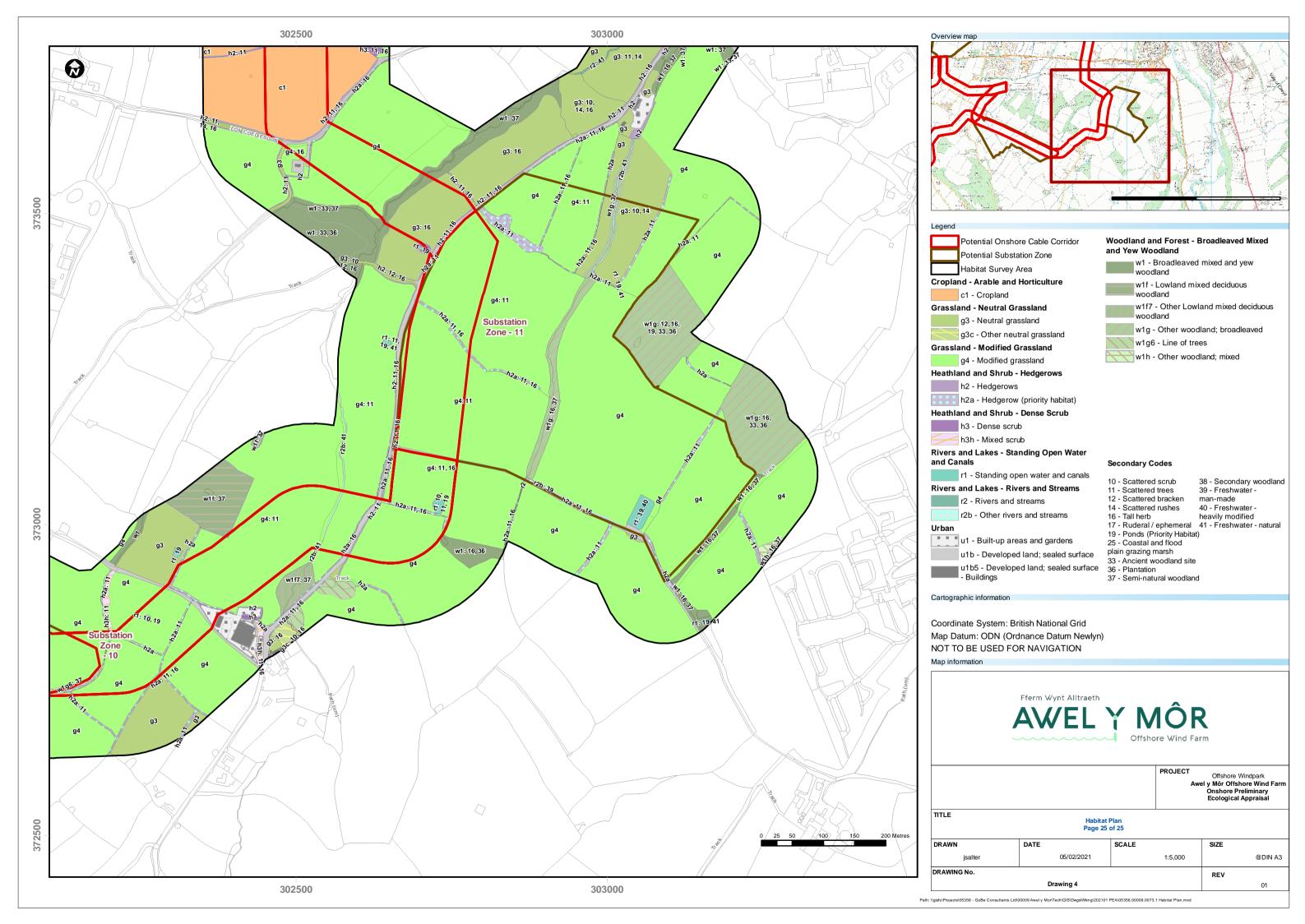








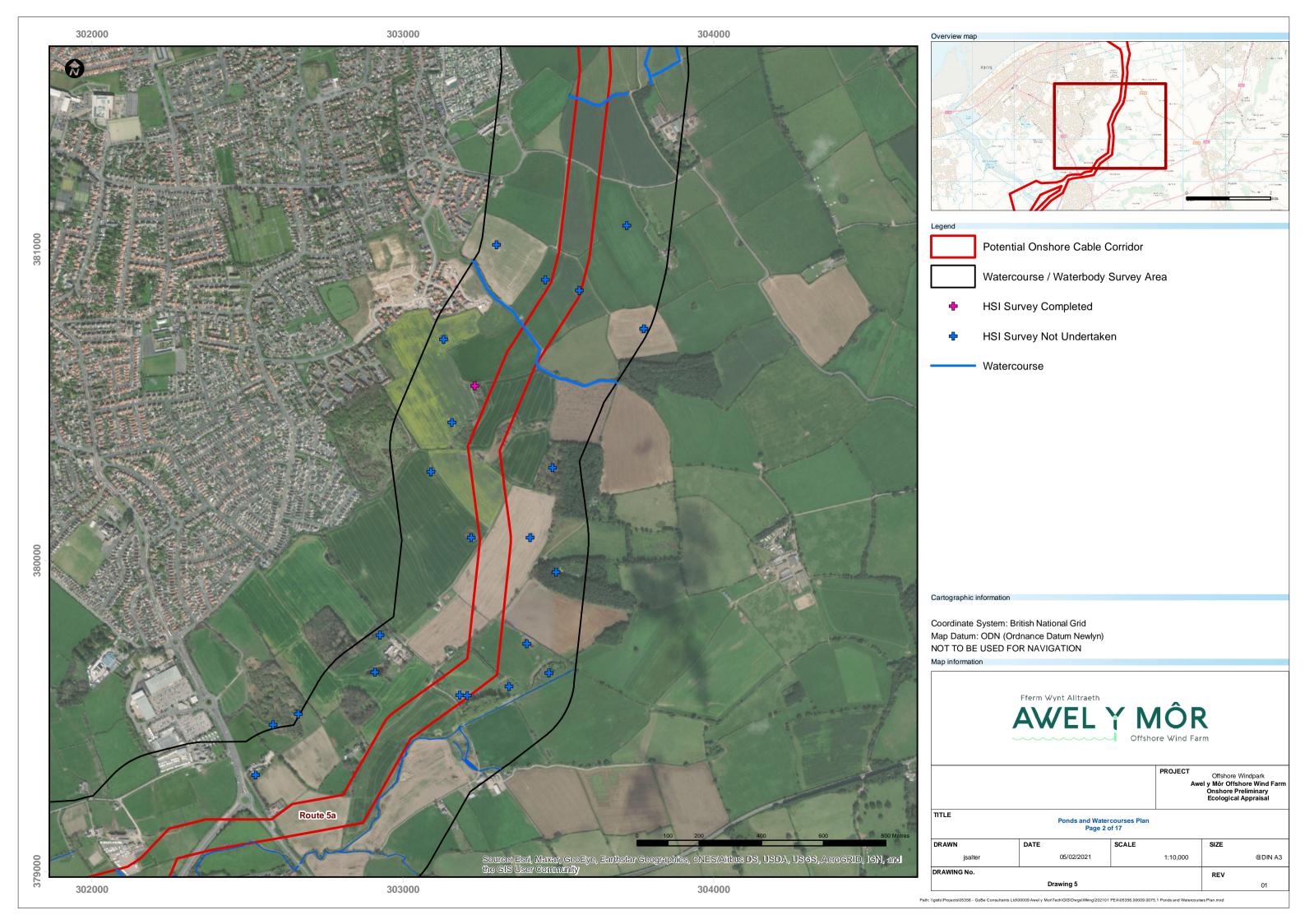


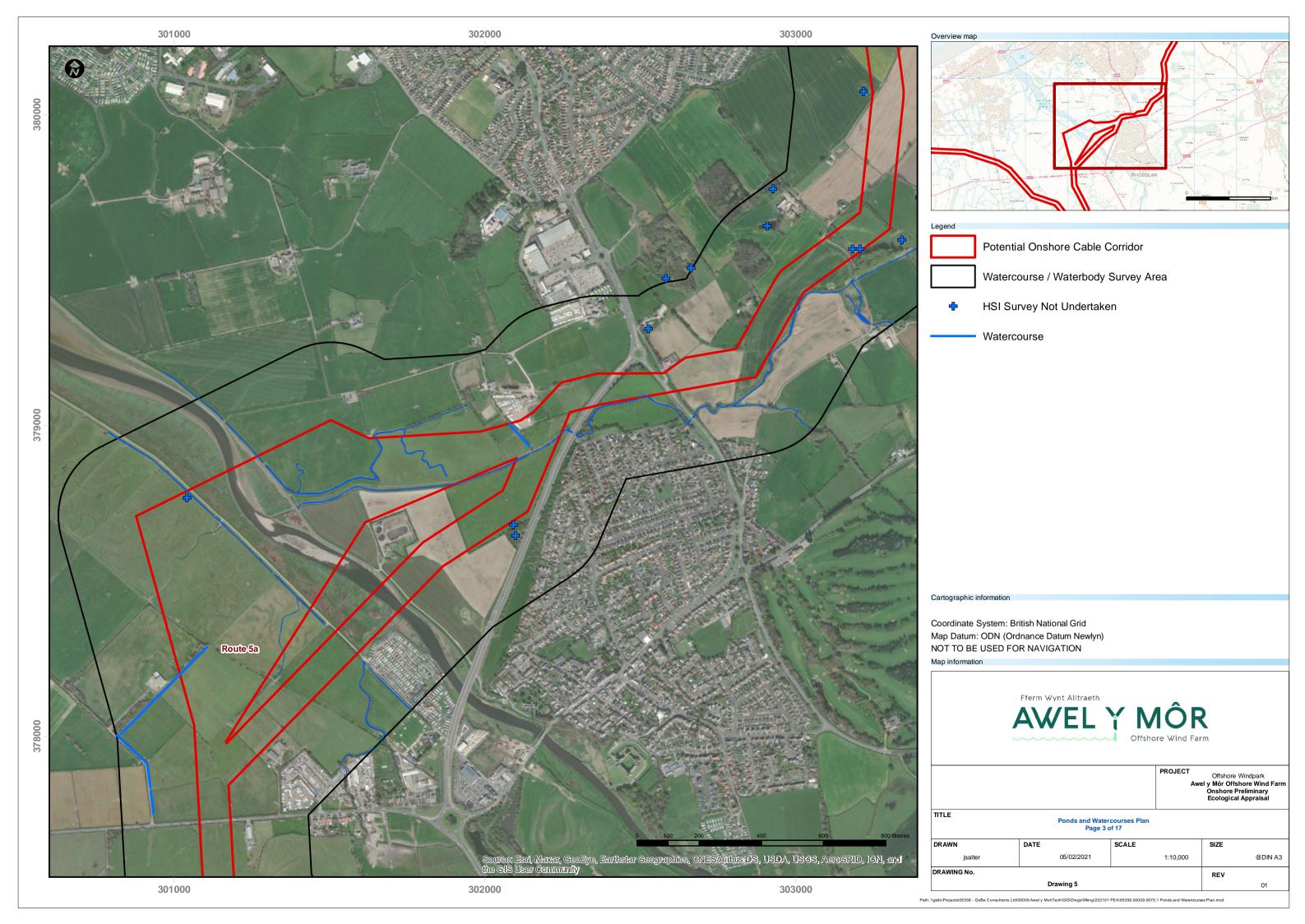


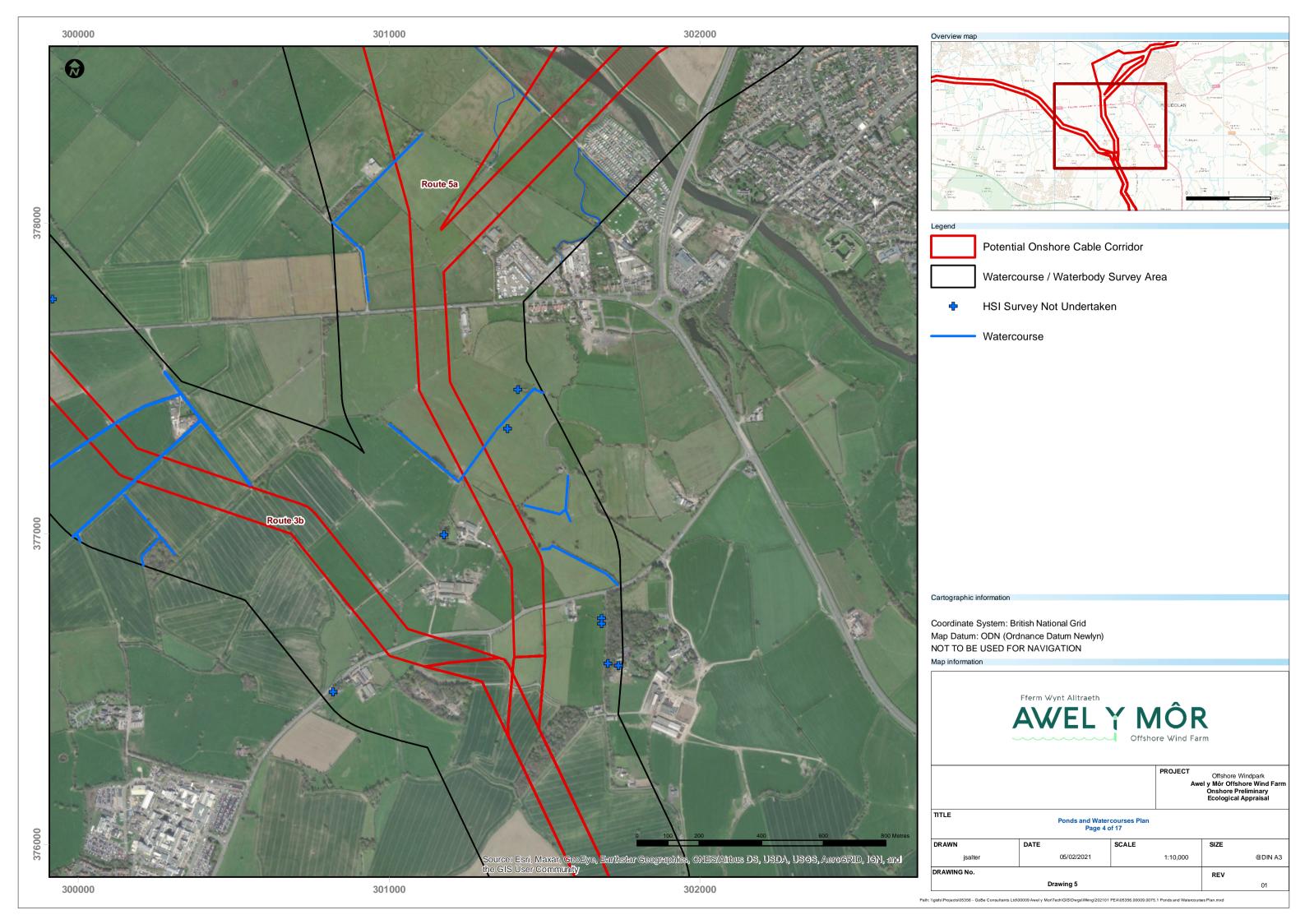
DRAWING 5

Ponds and Watercourses Plan

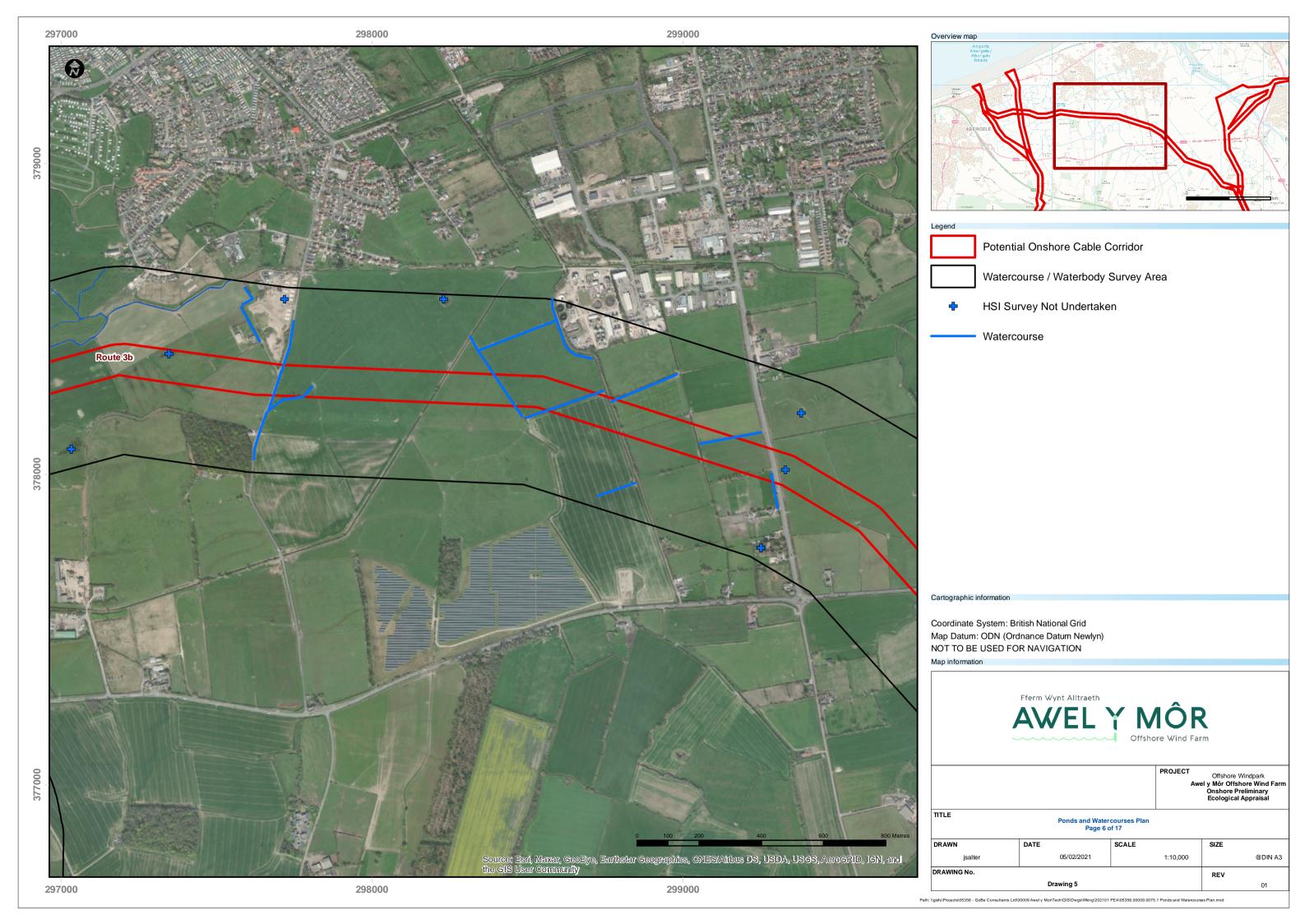


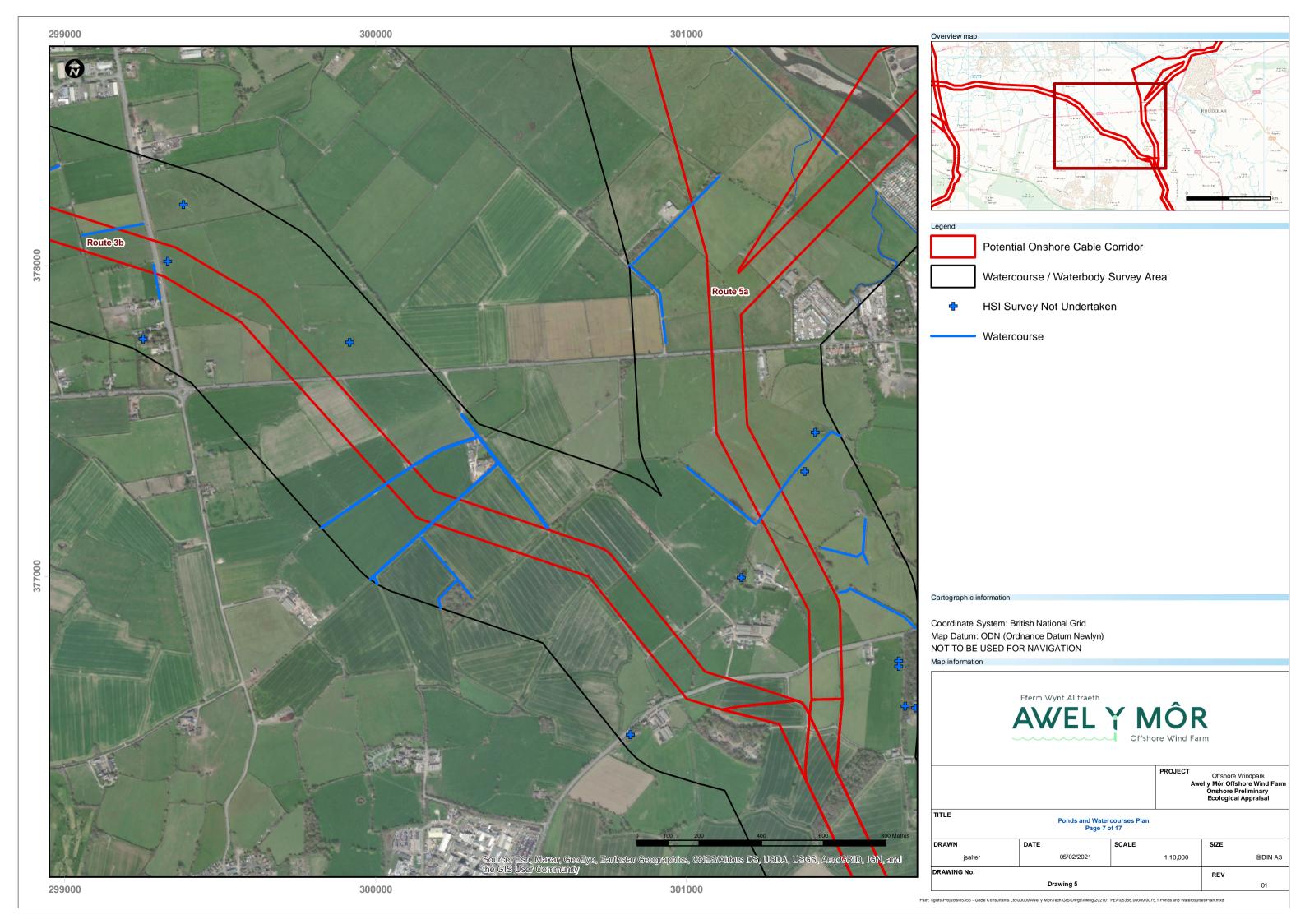


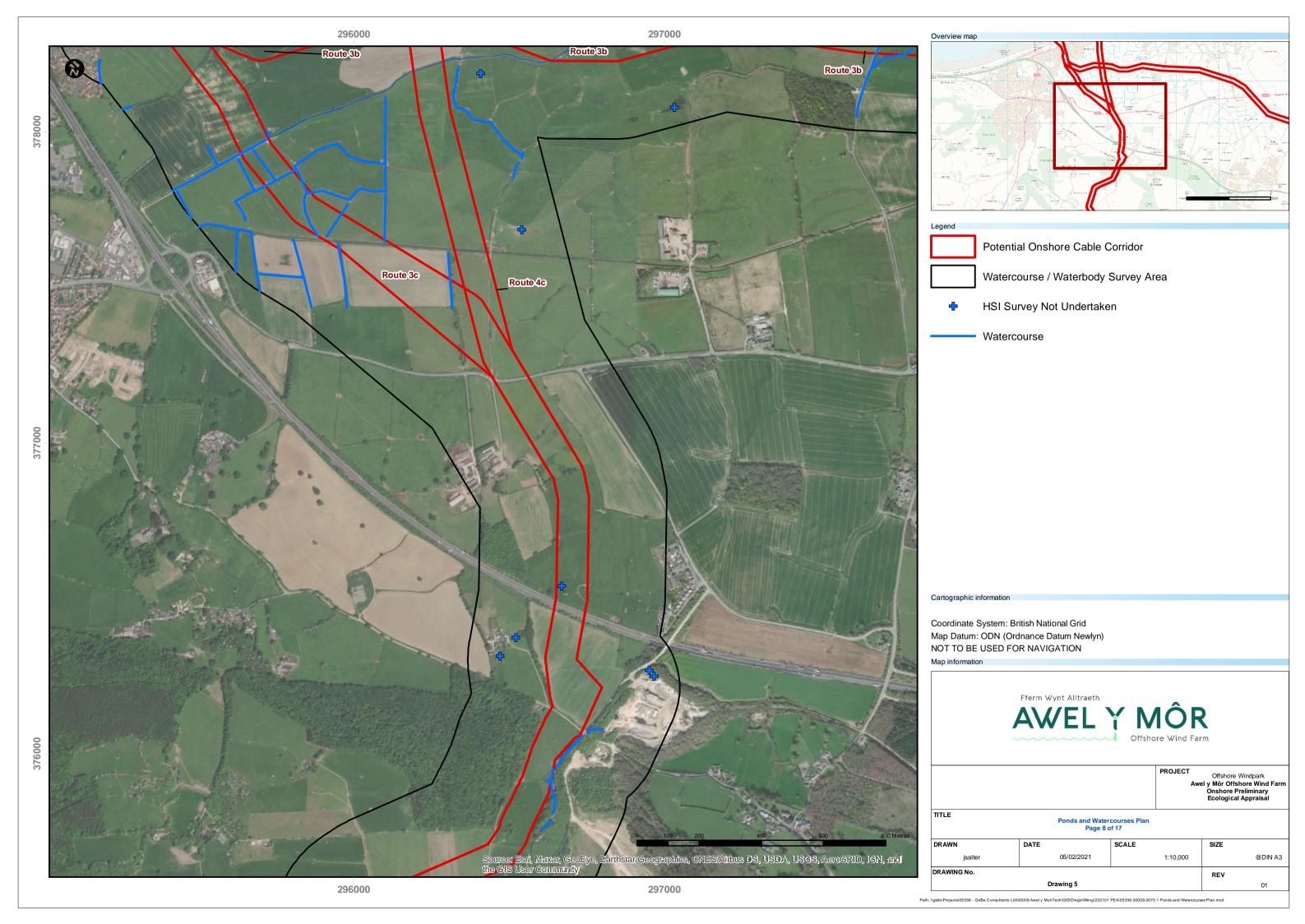


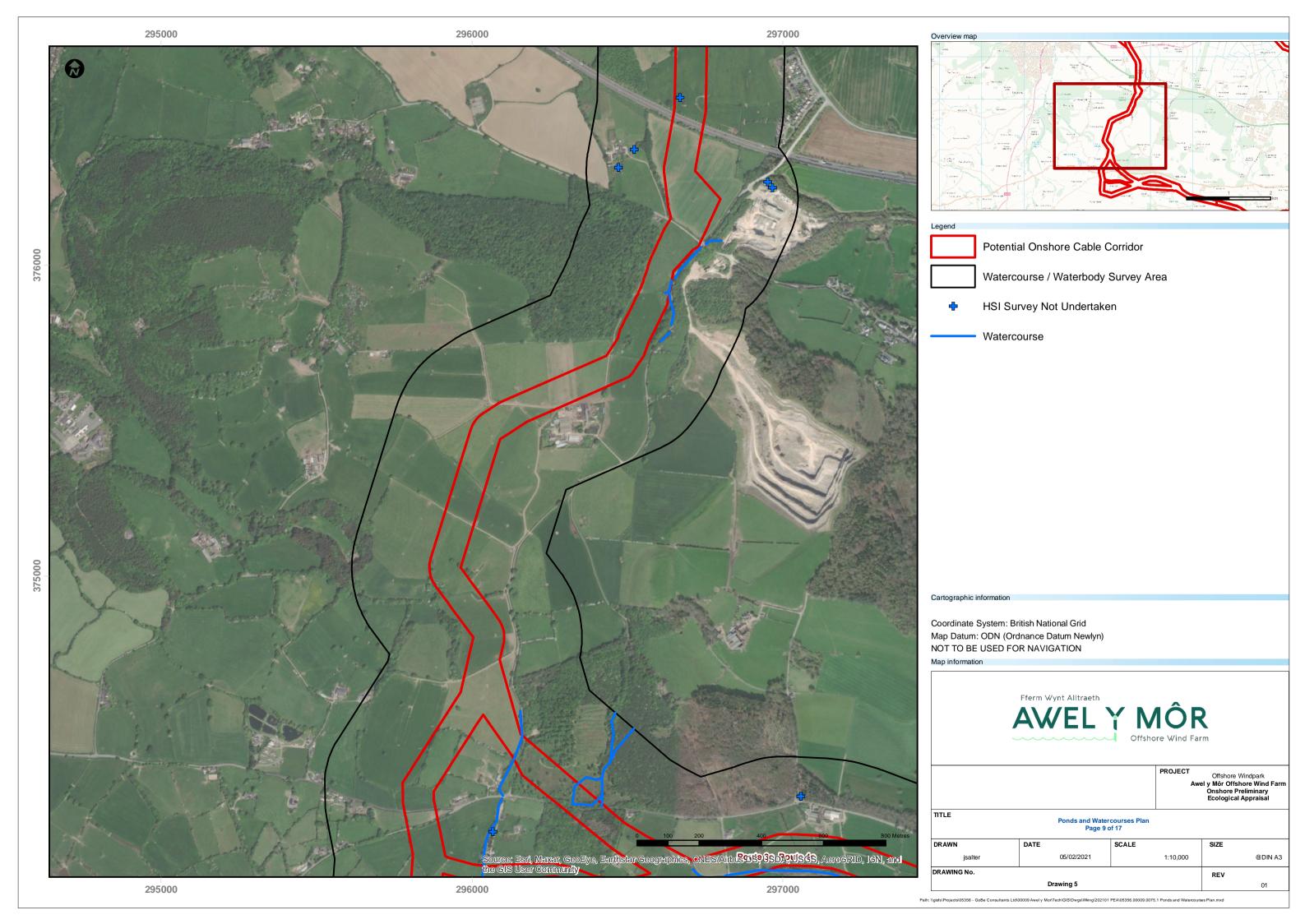


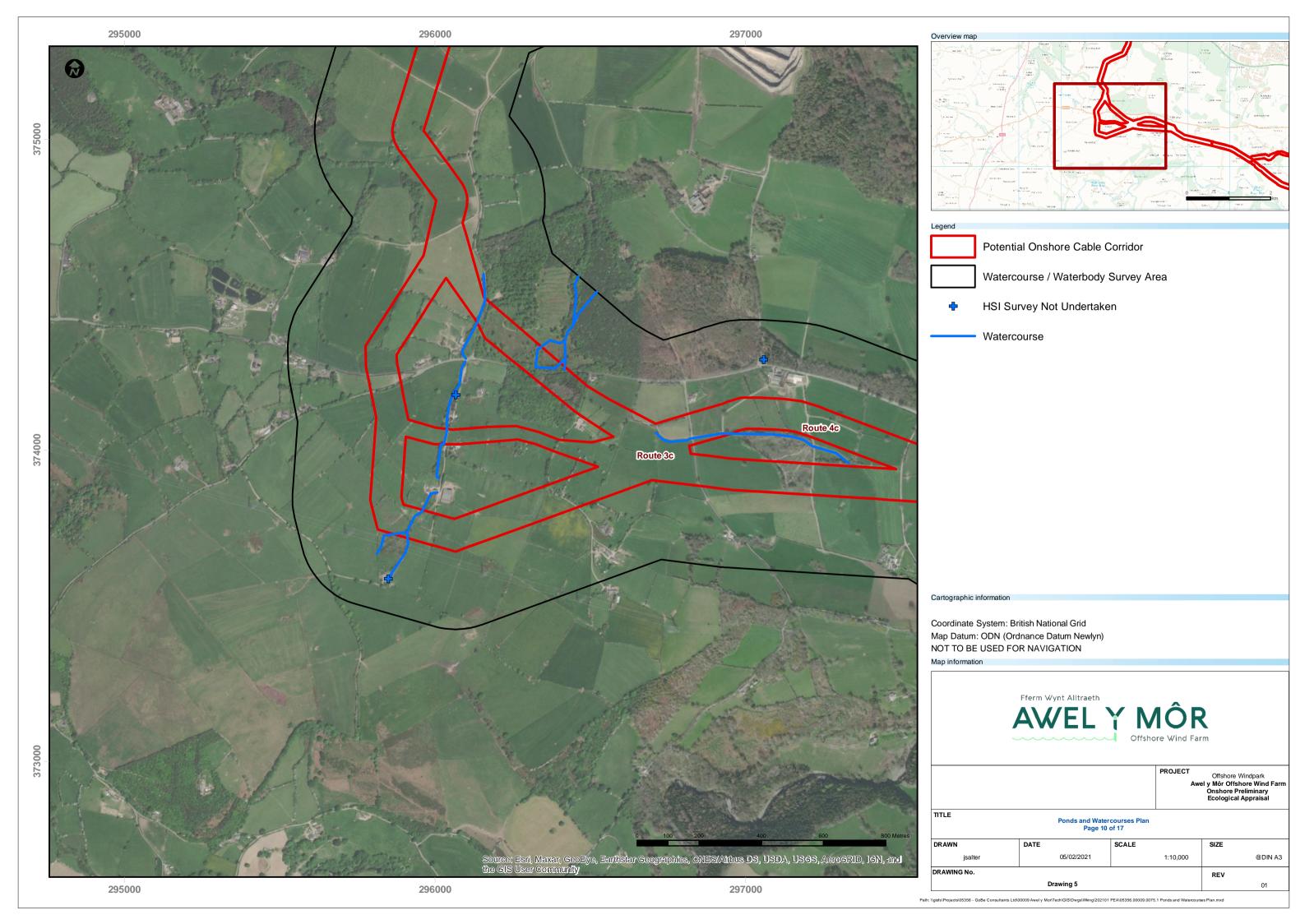


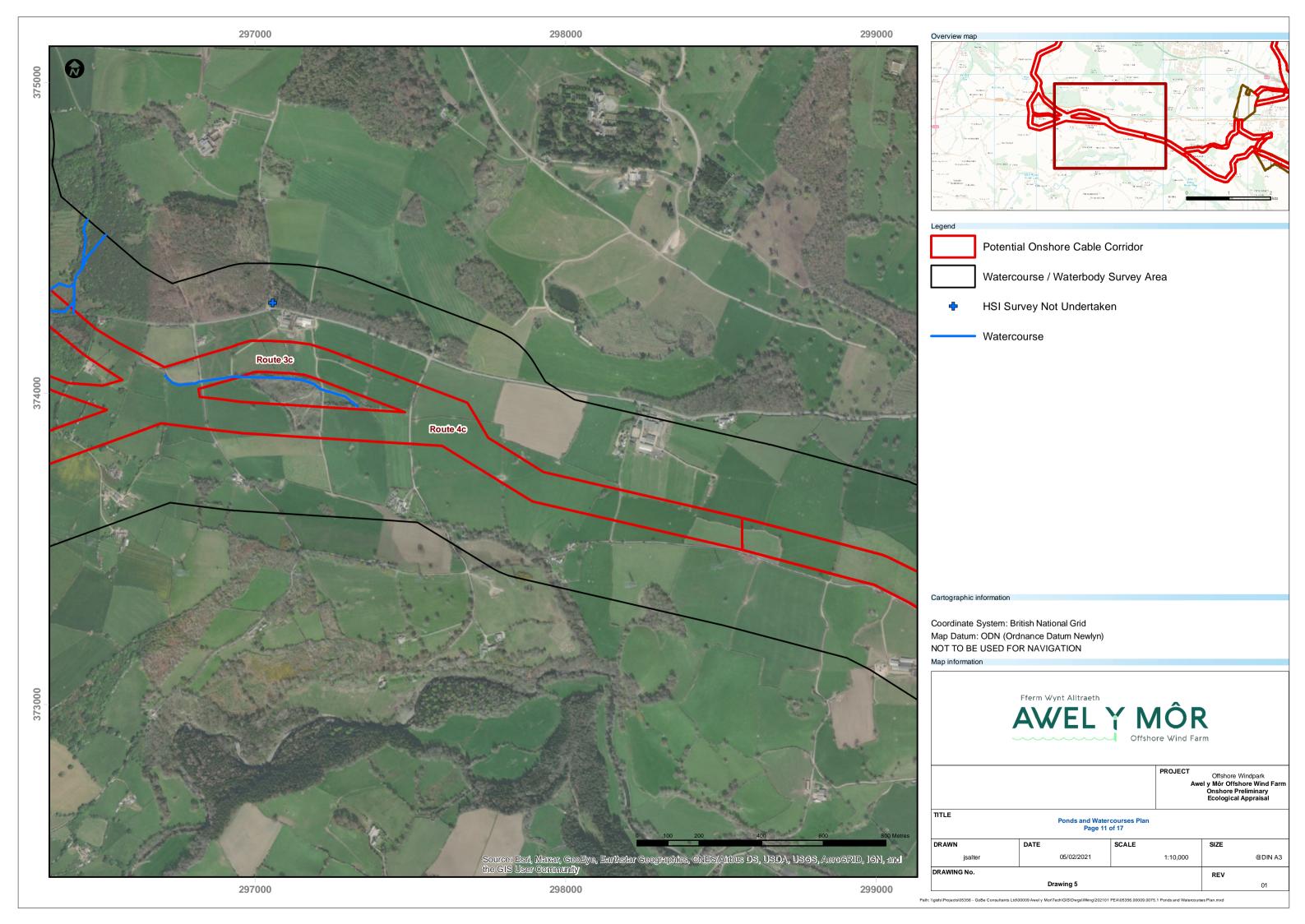


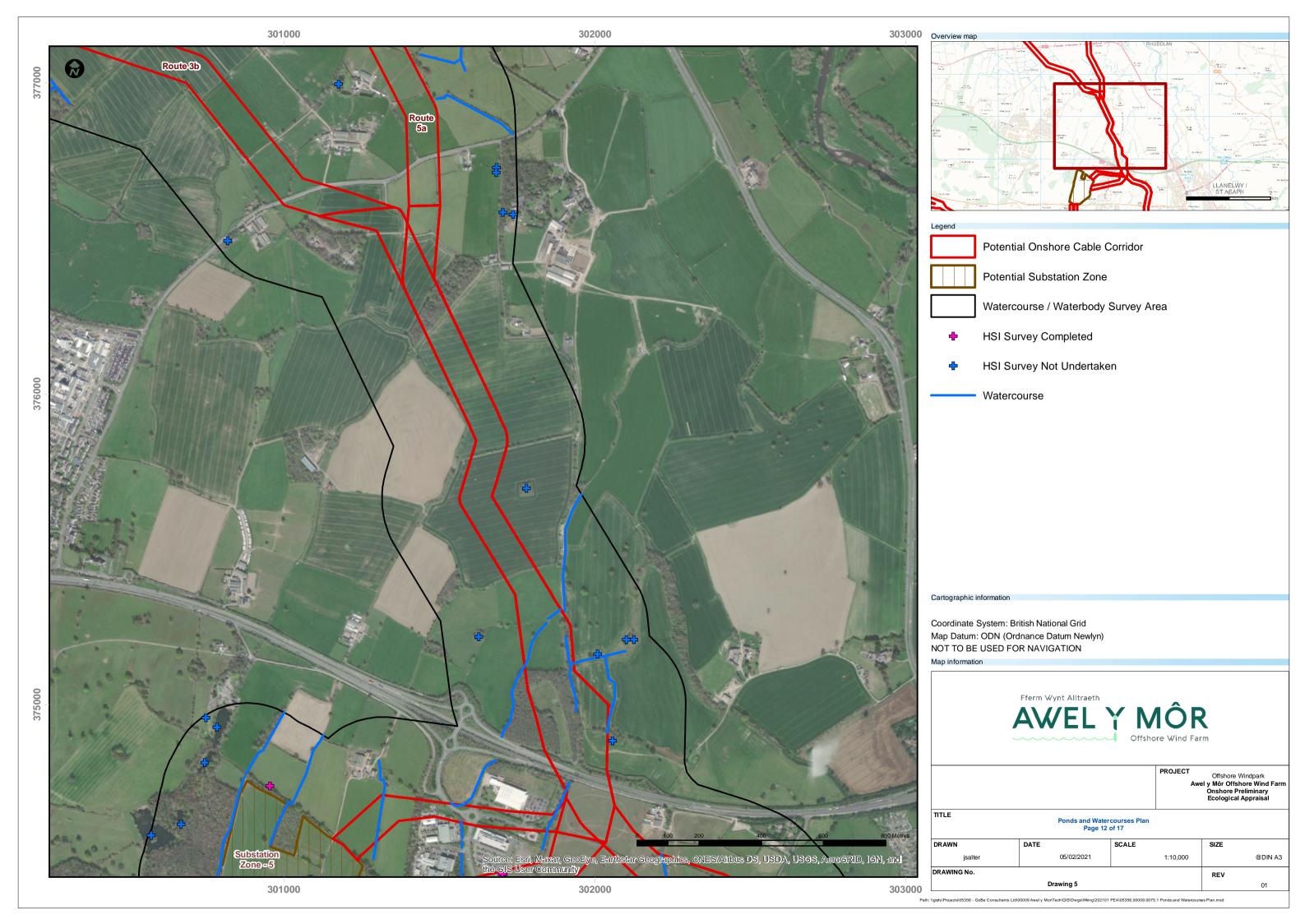


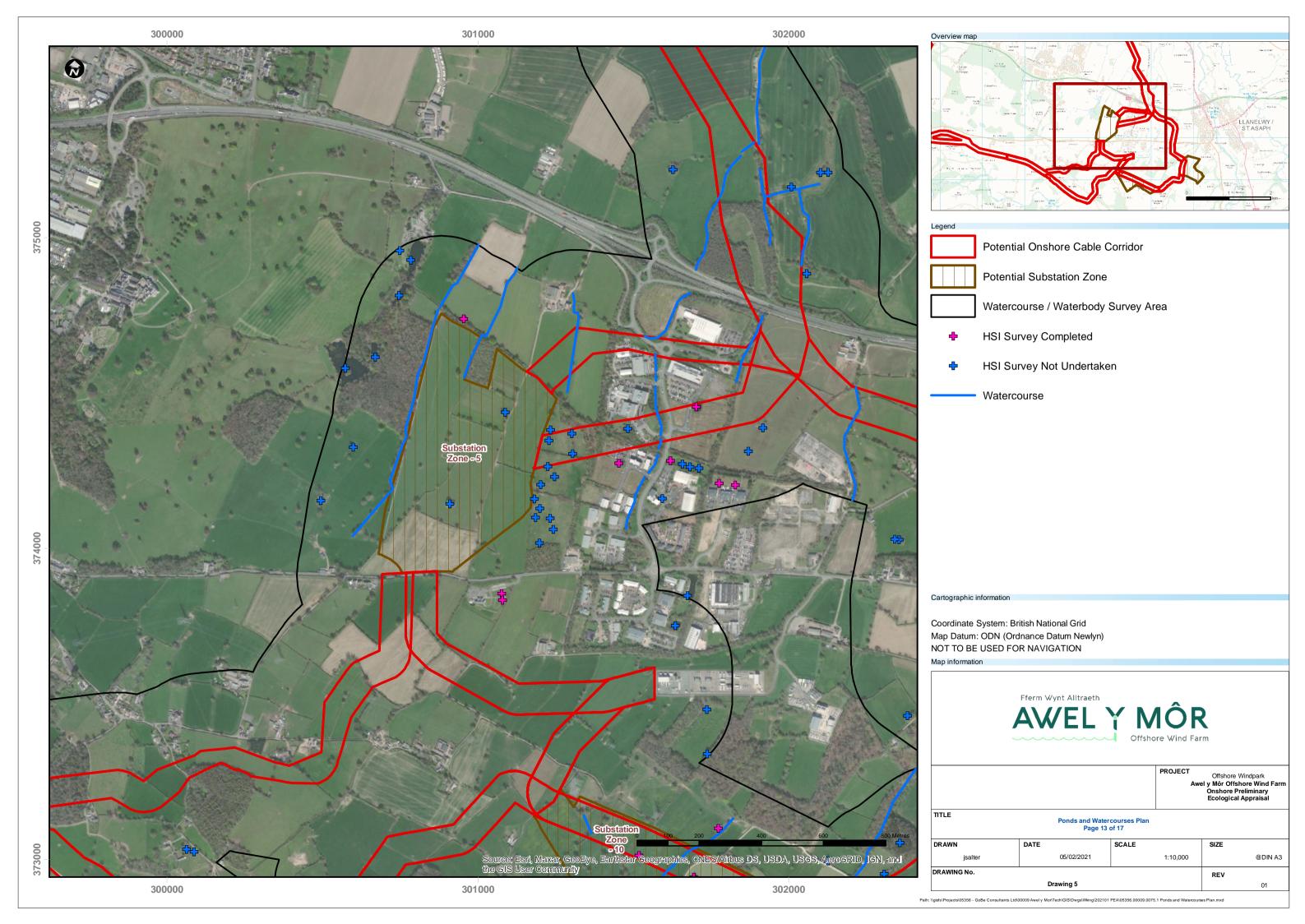


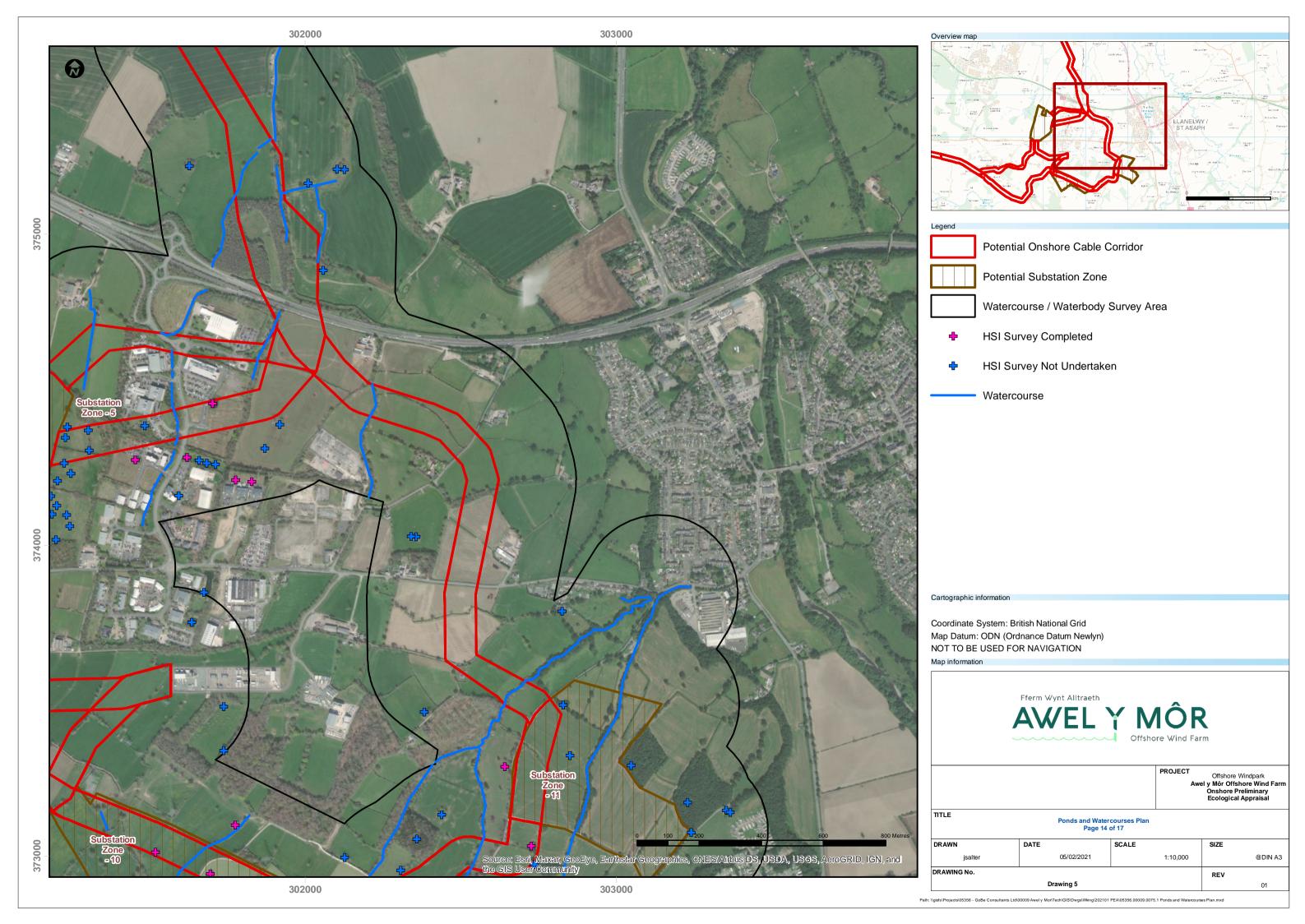


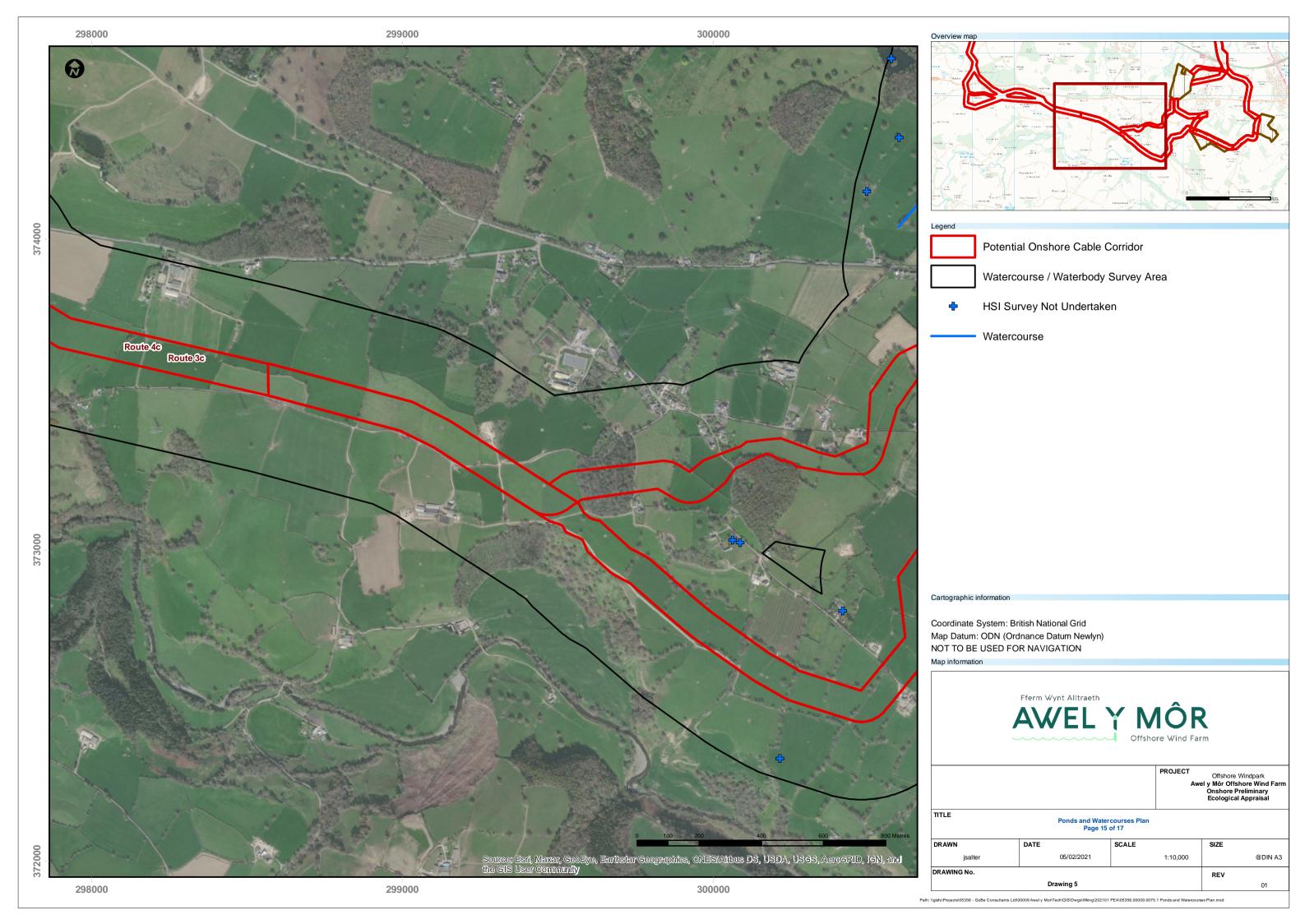


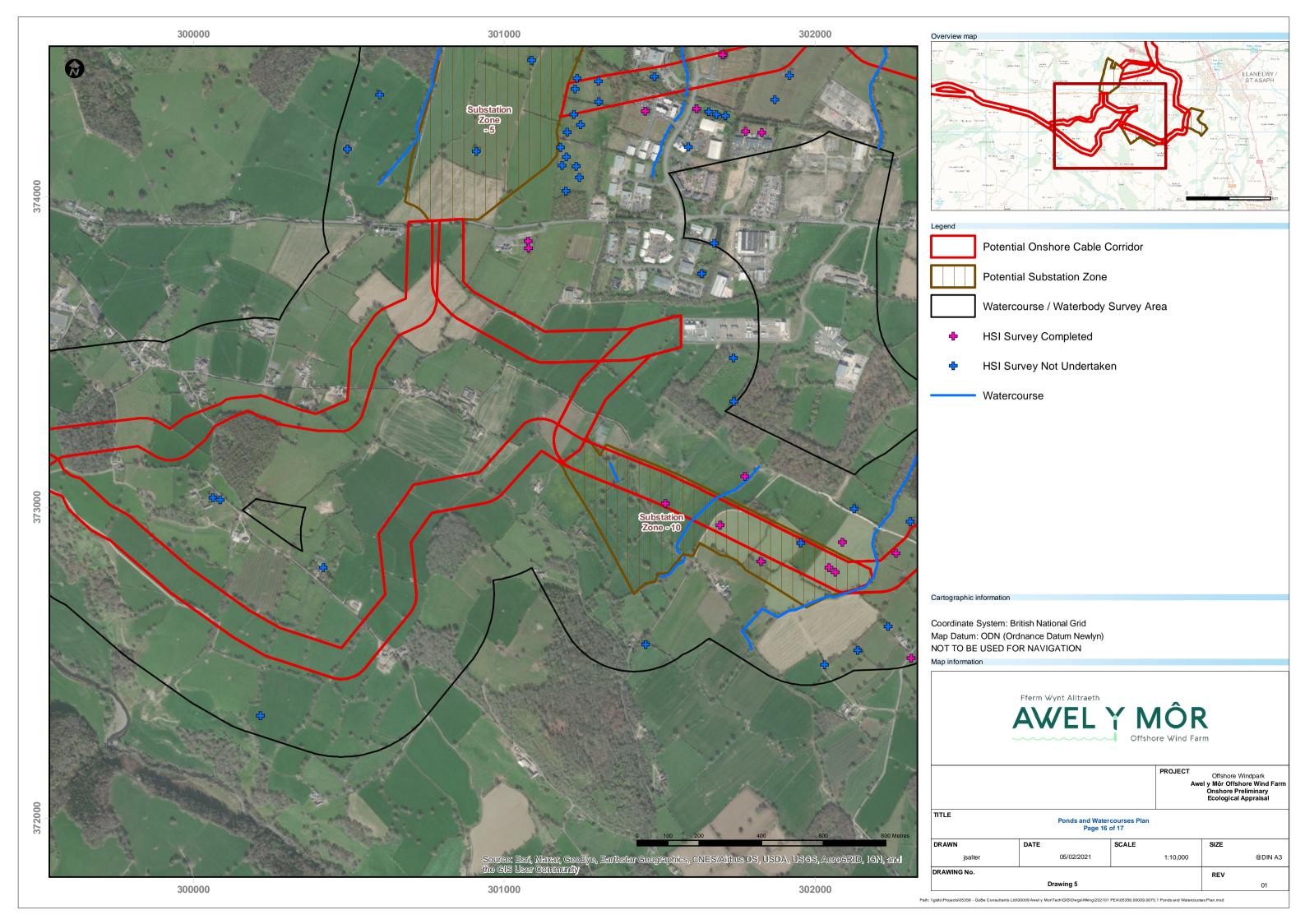


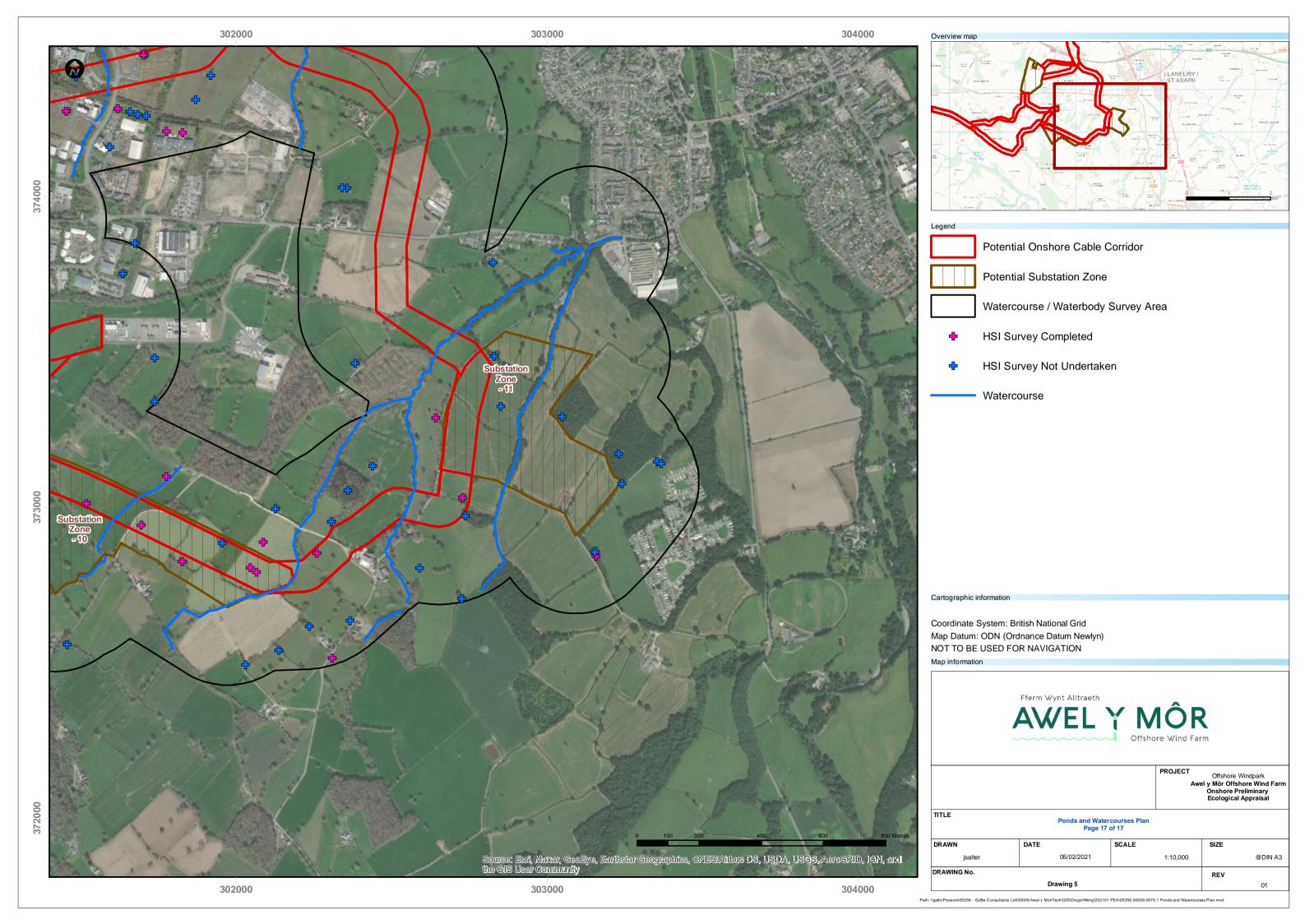






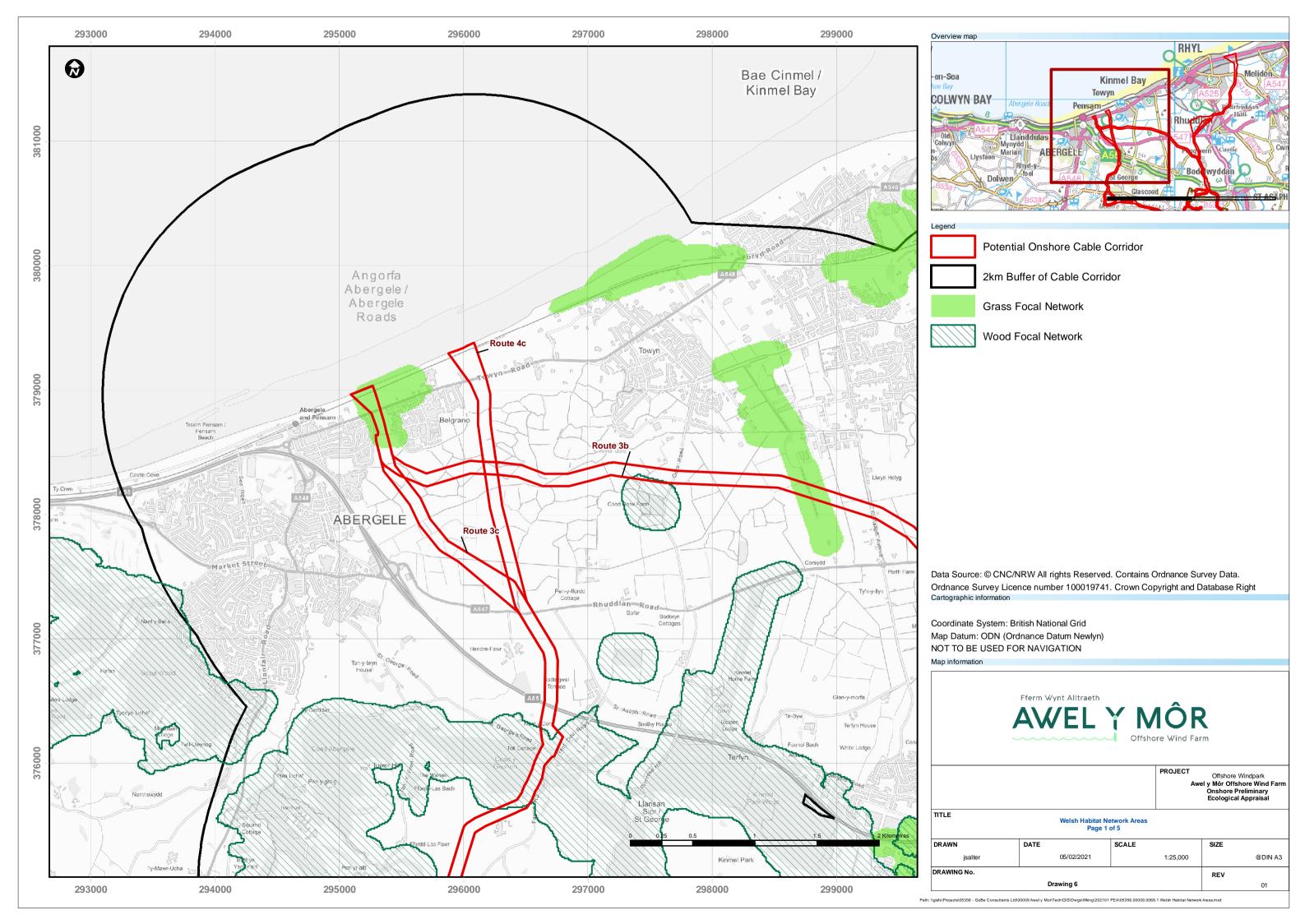


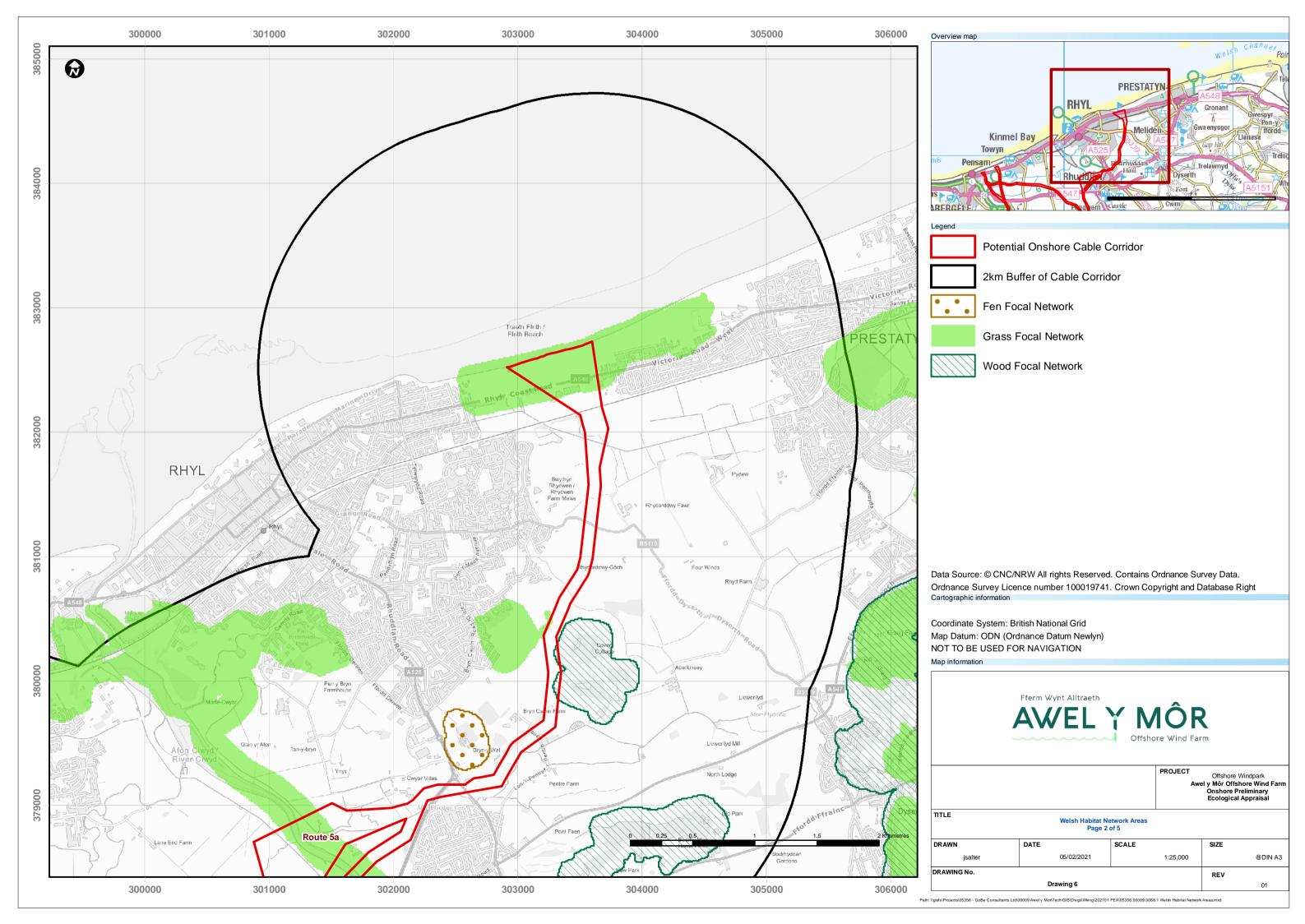


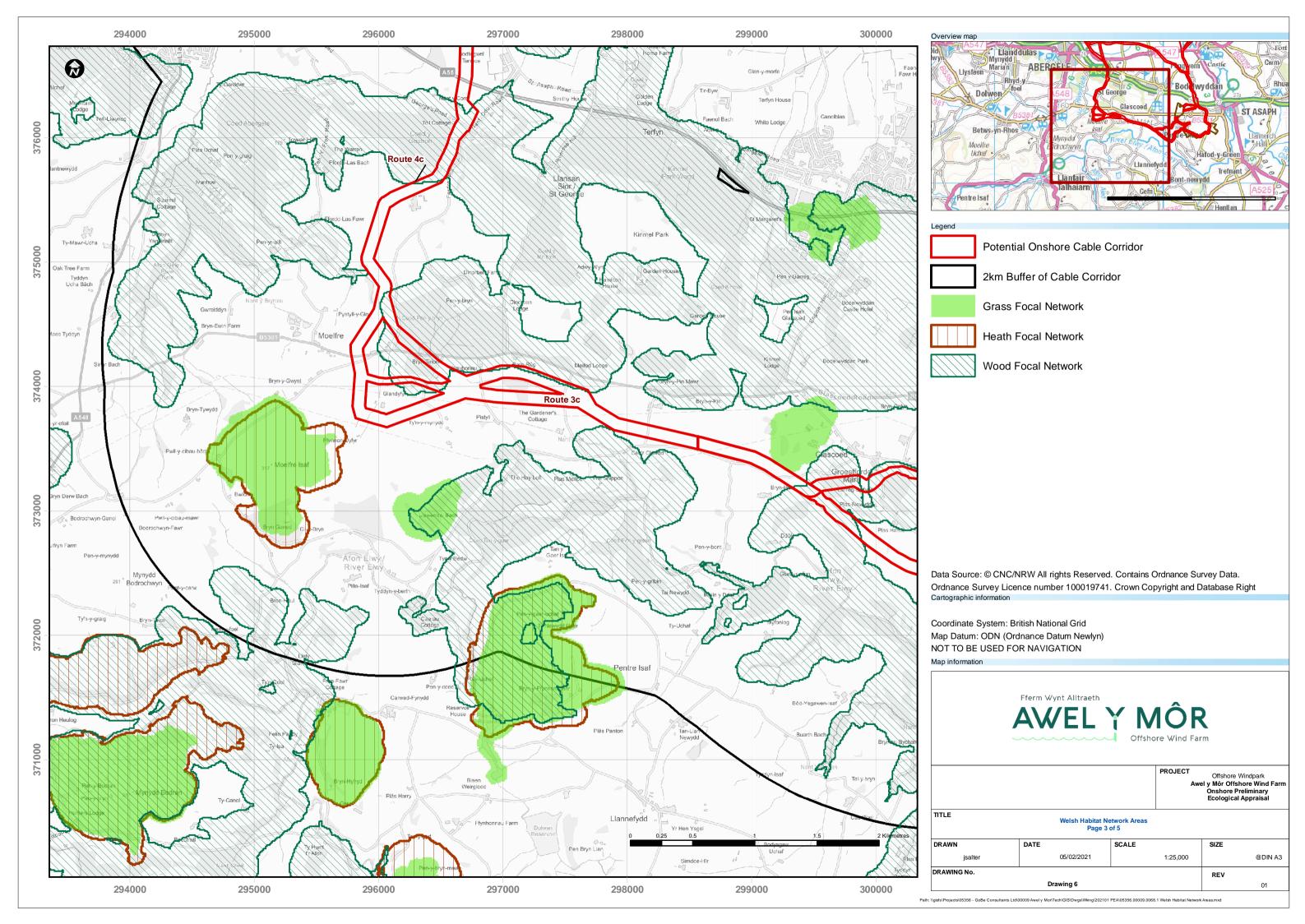


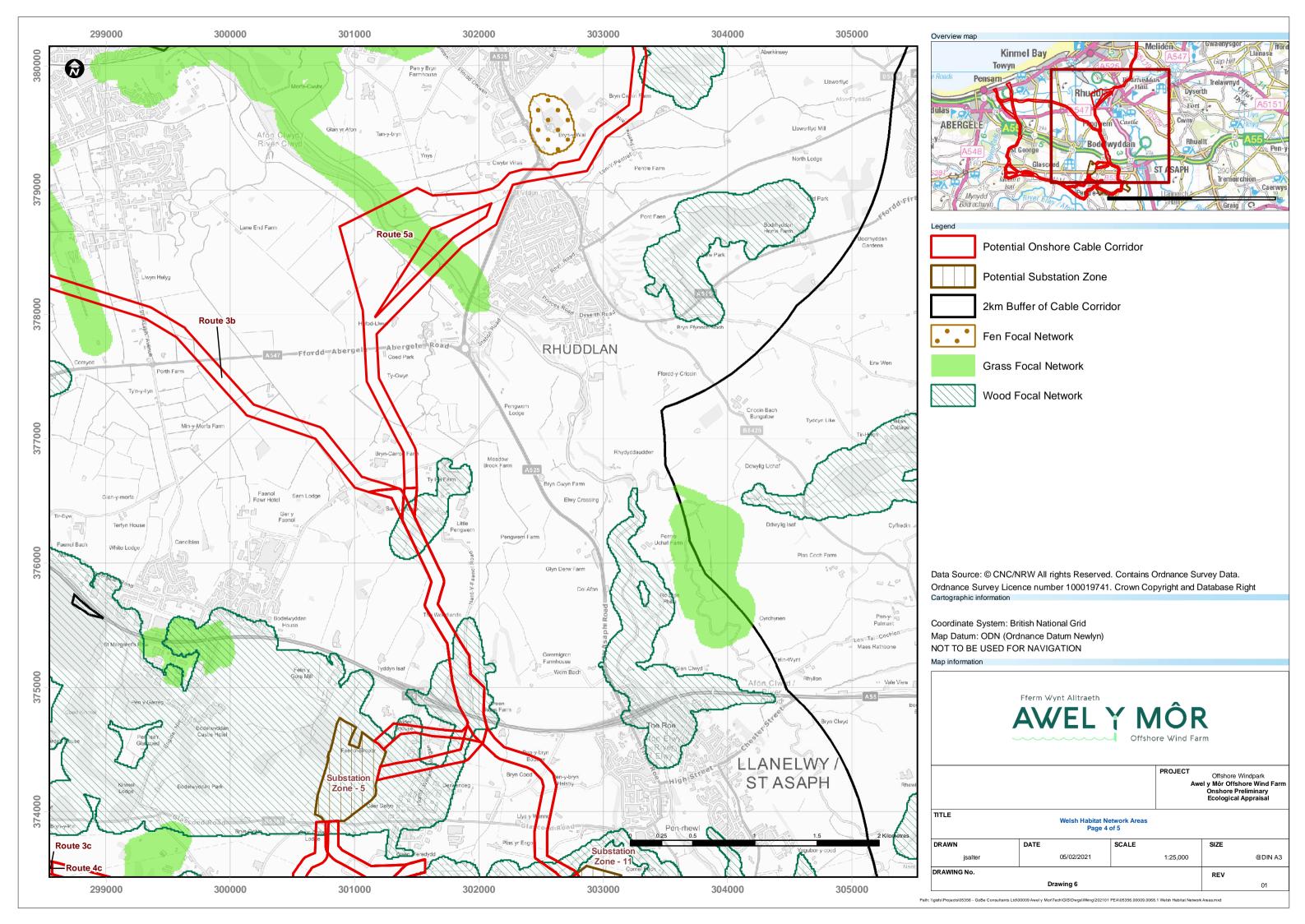
DRAWING 6

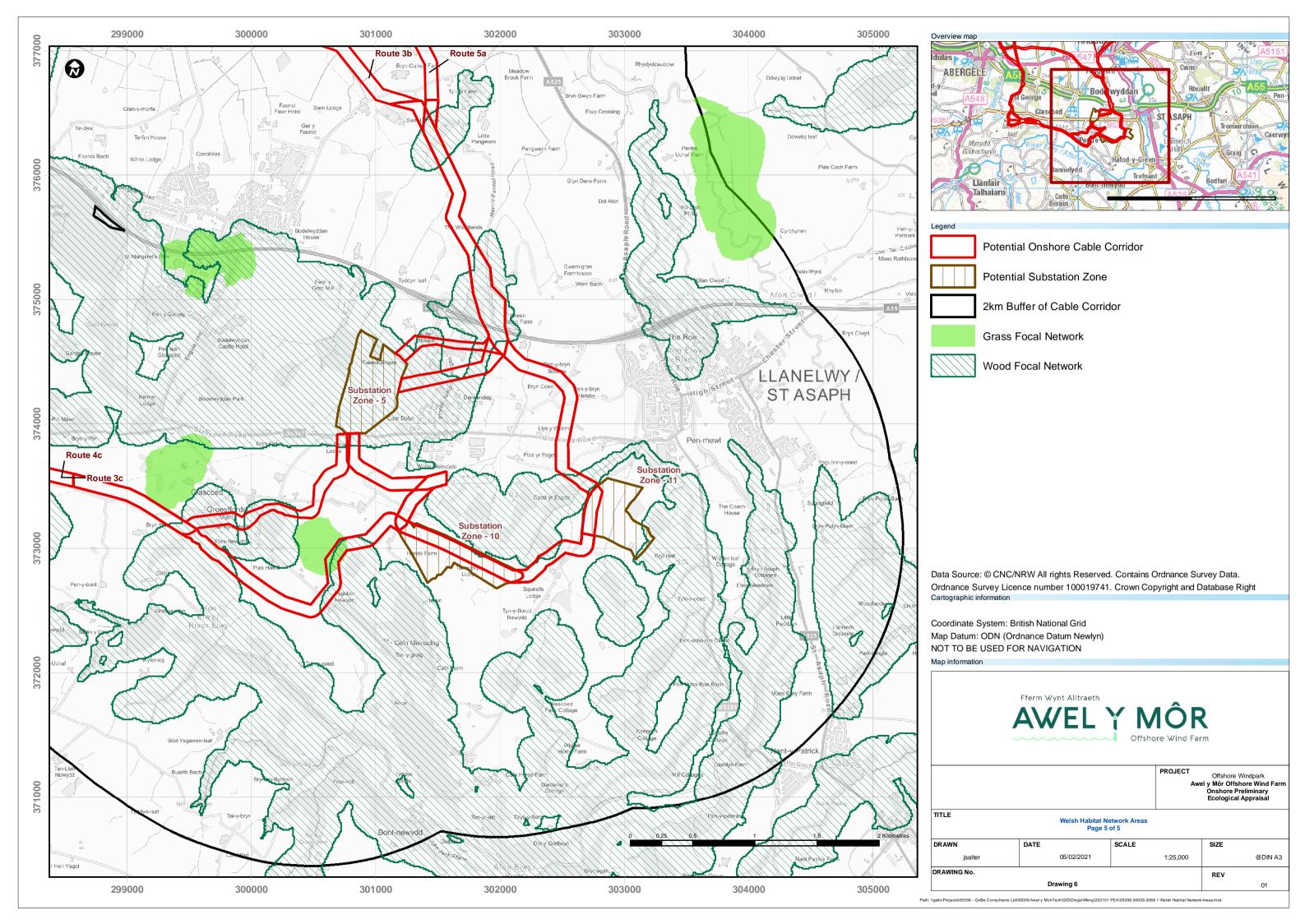
Welsh Habitat Network Areas





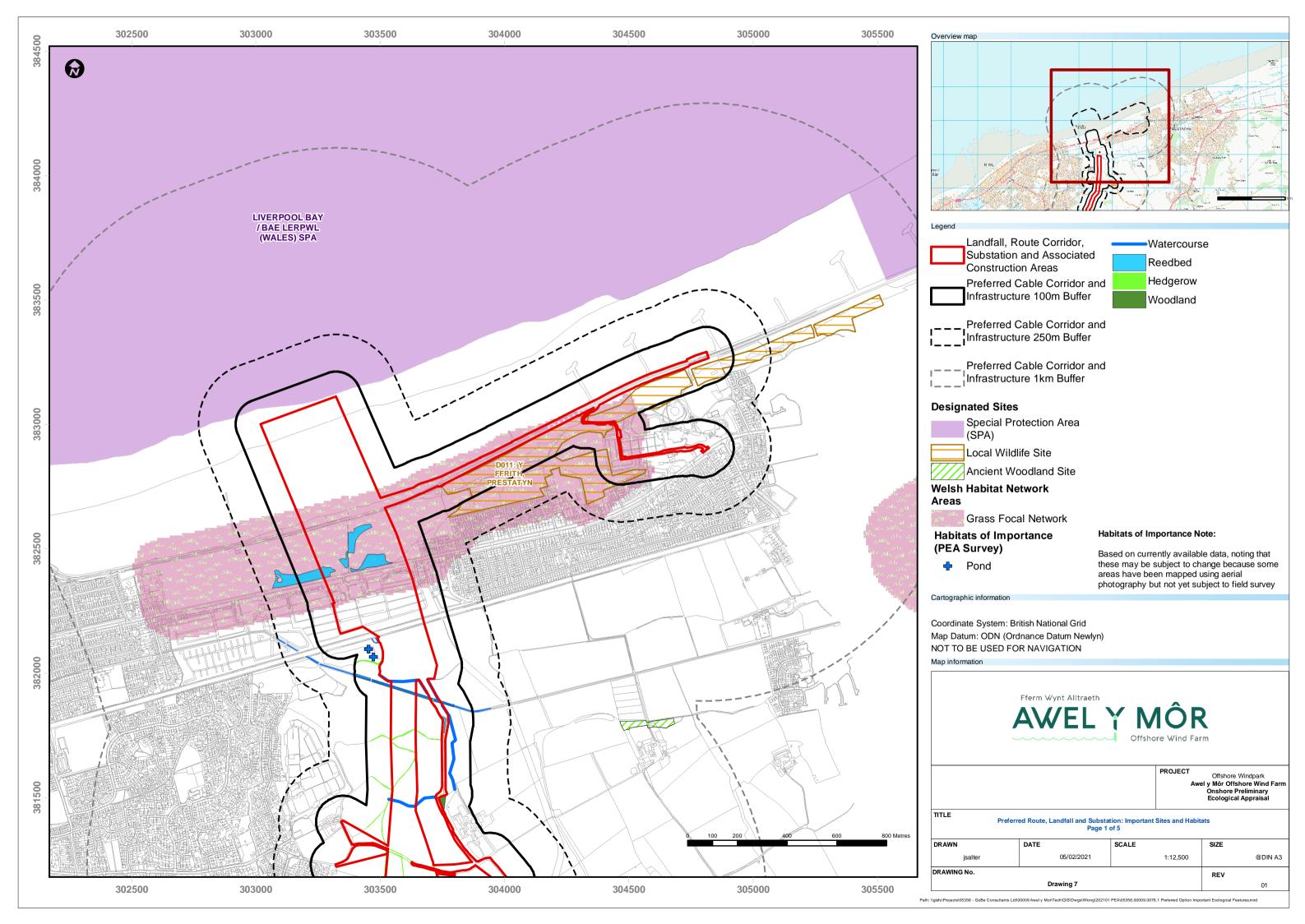


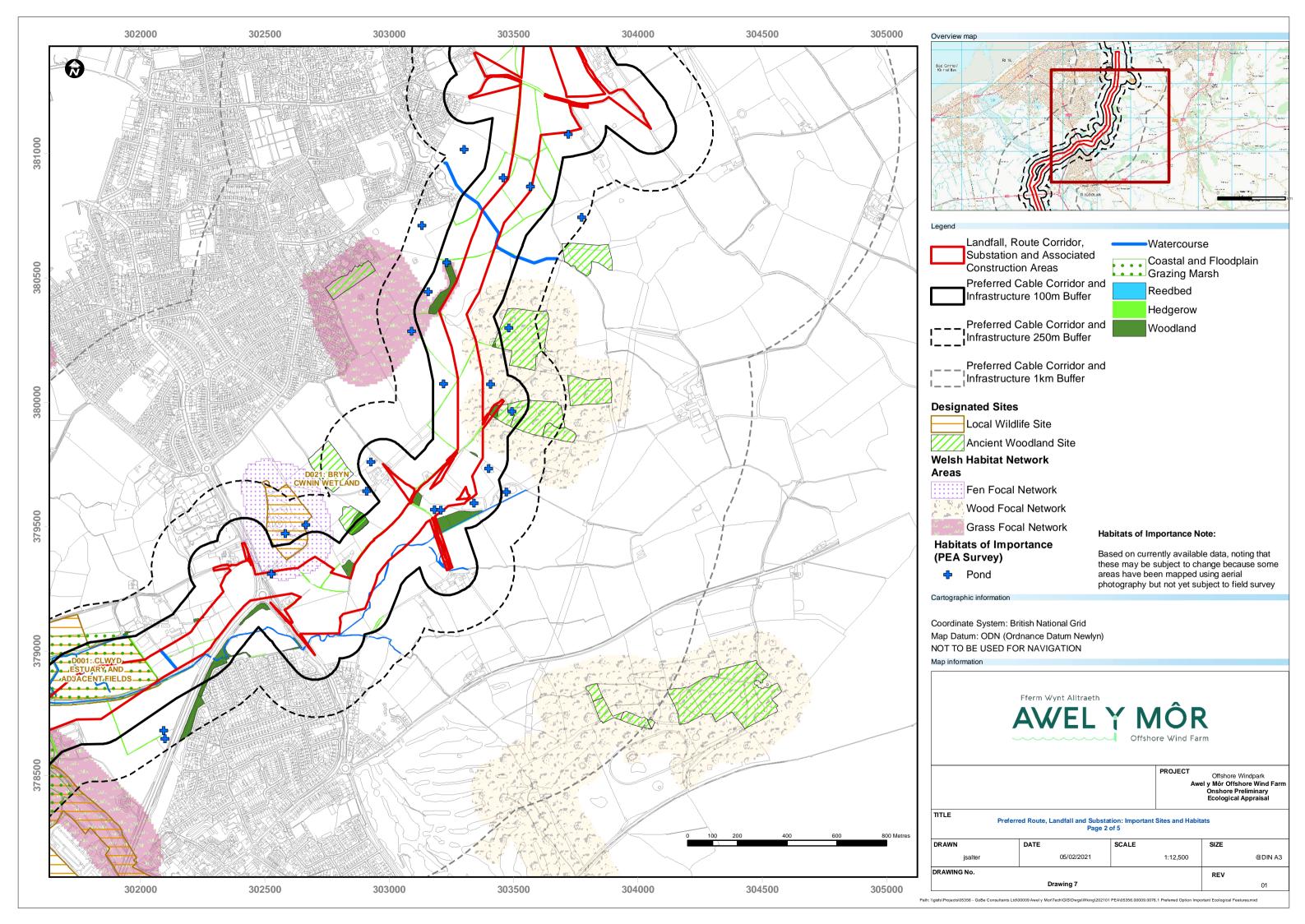


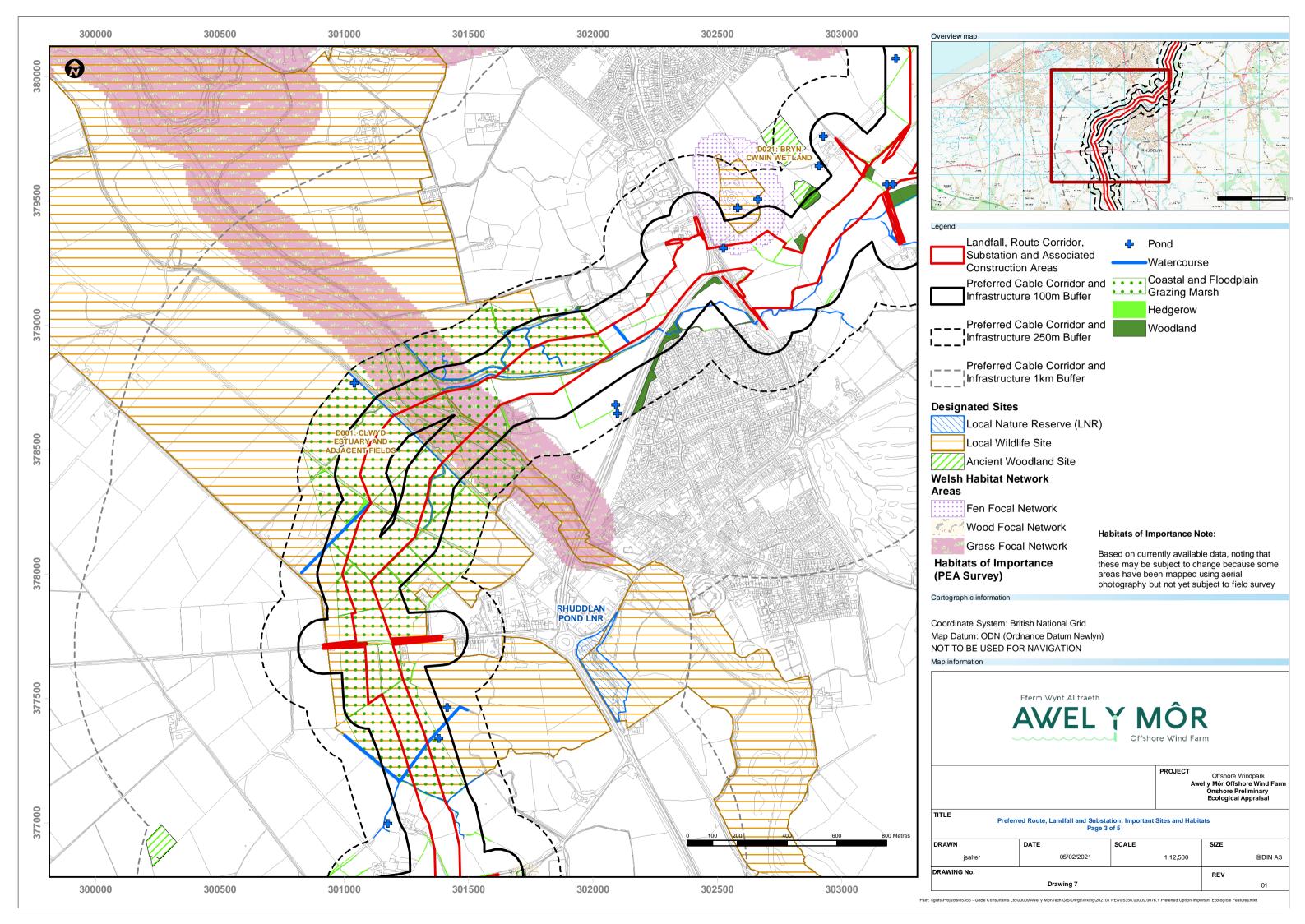


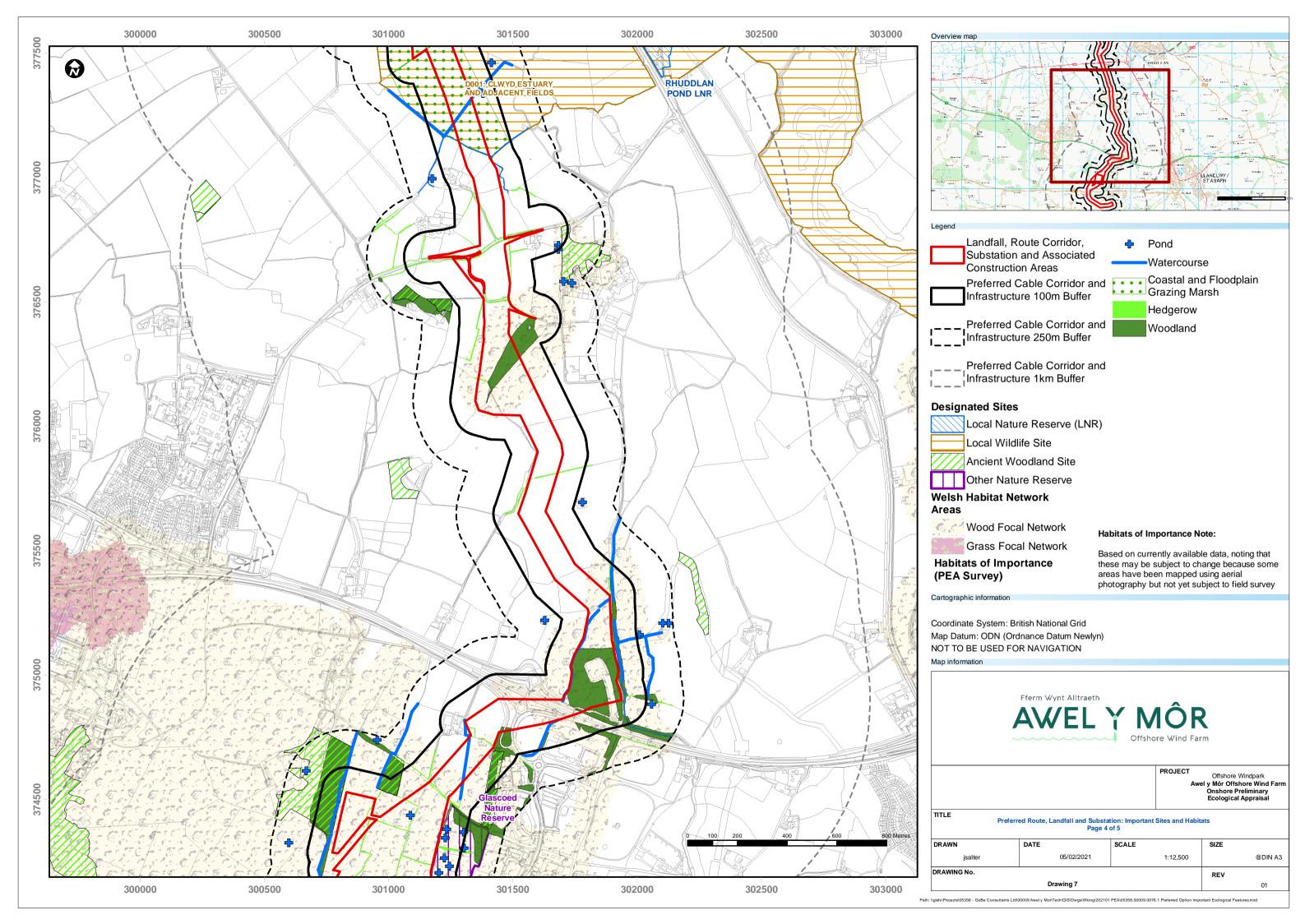
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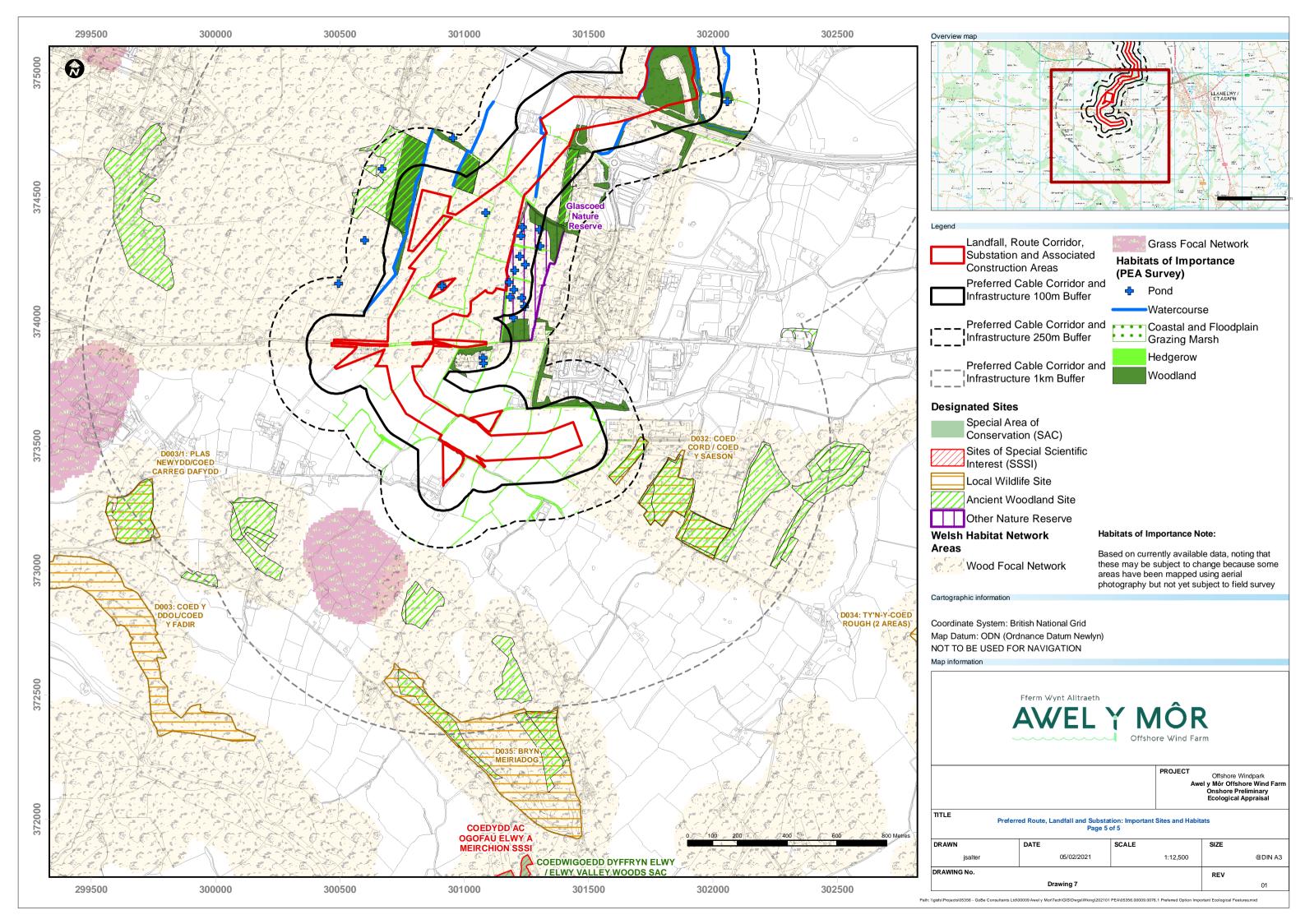
Preferred Cable Route, Landfall and Substation: Important Sites and Habitats





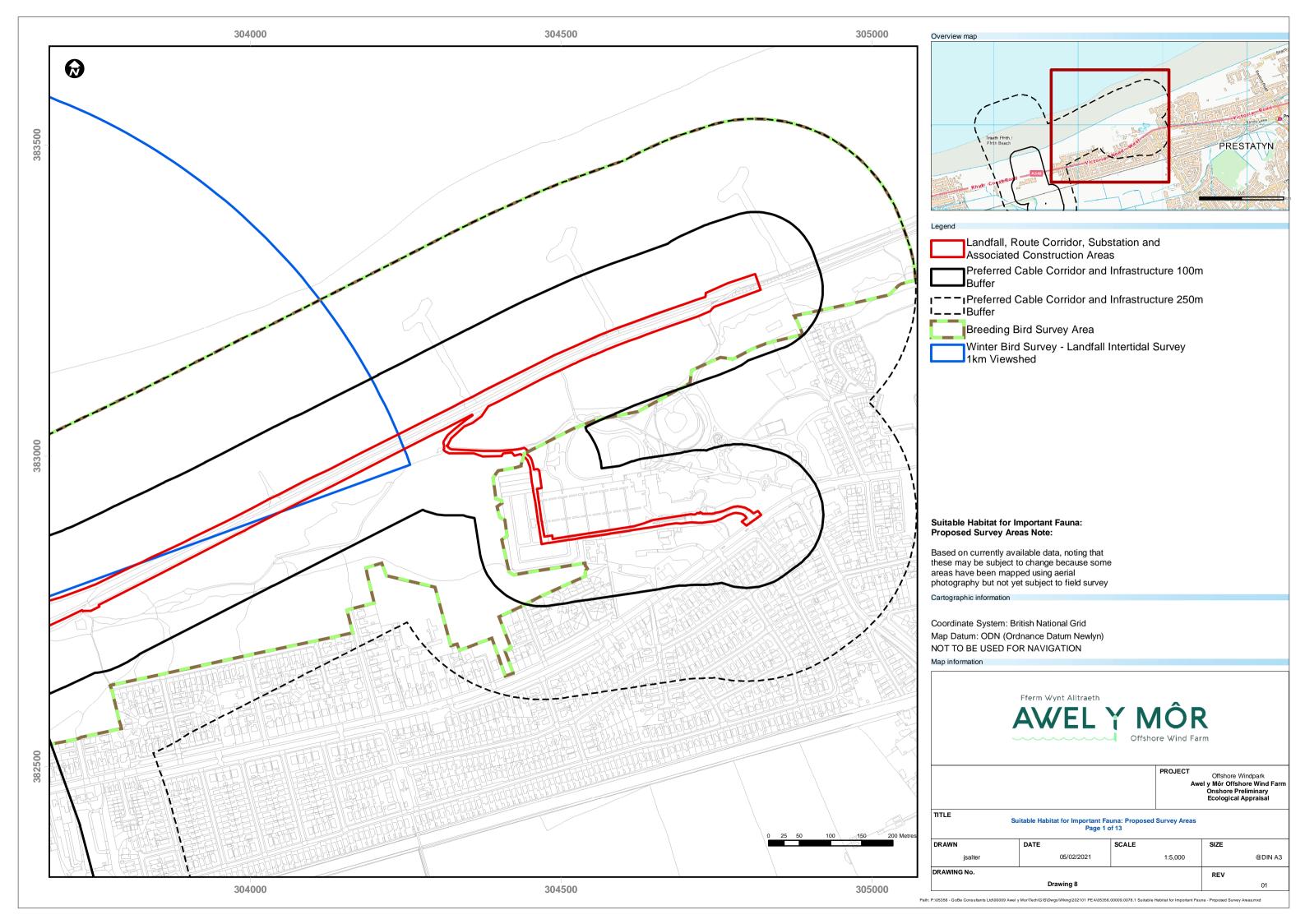


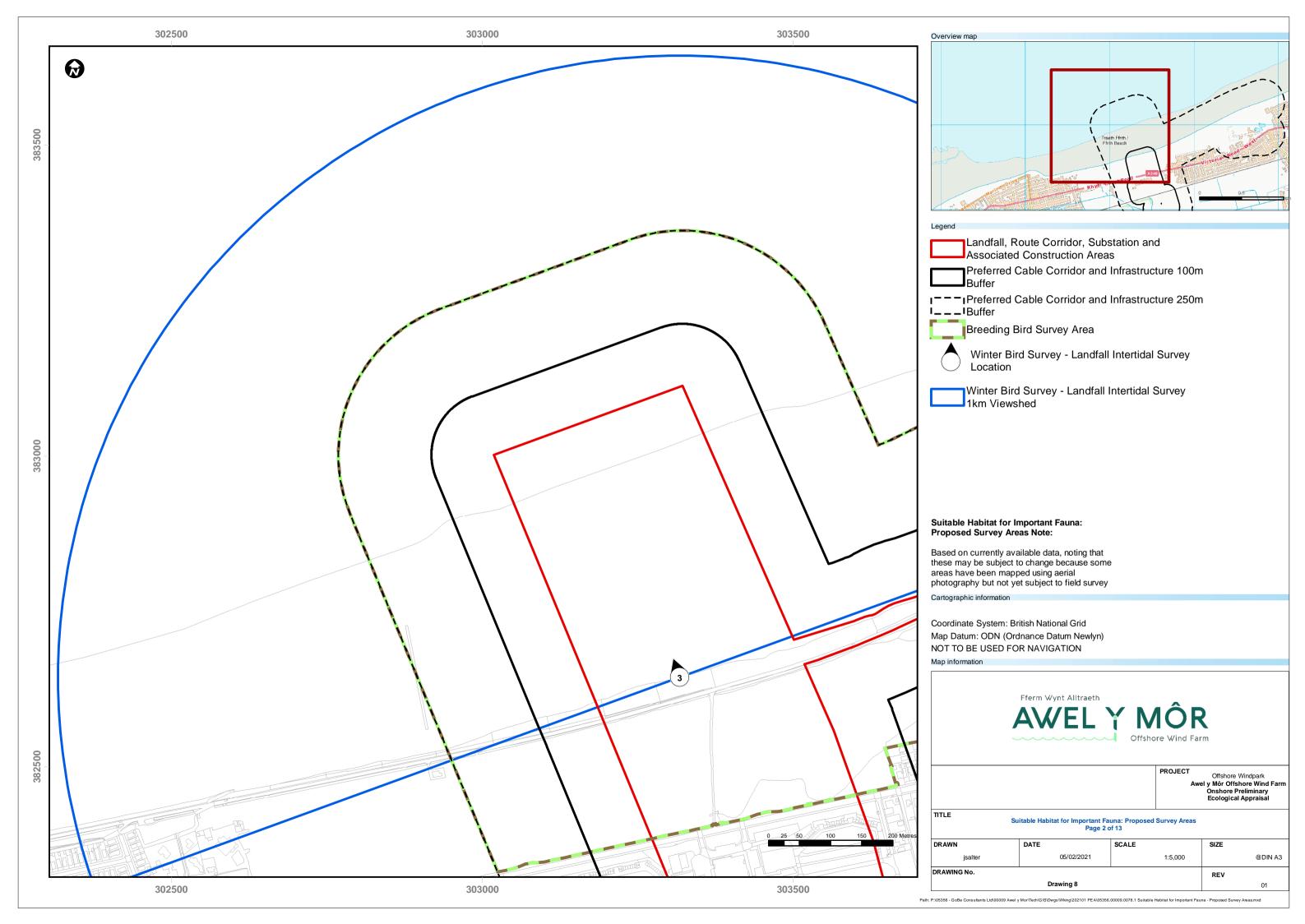


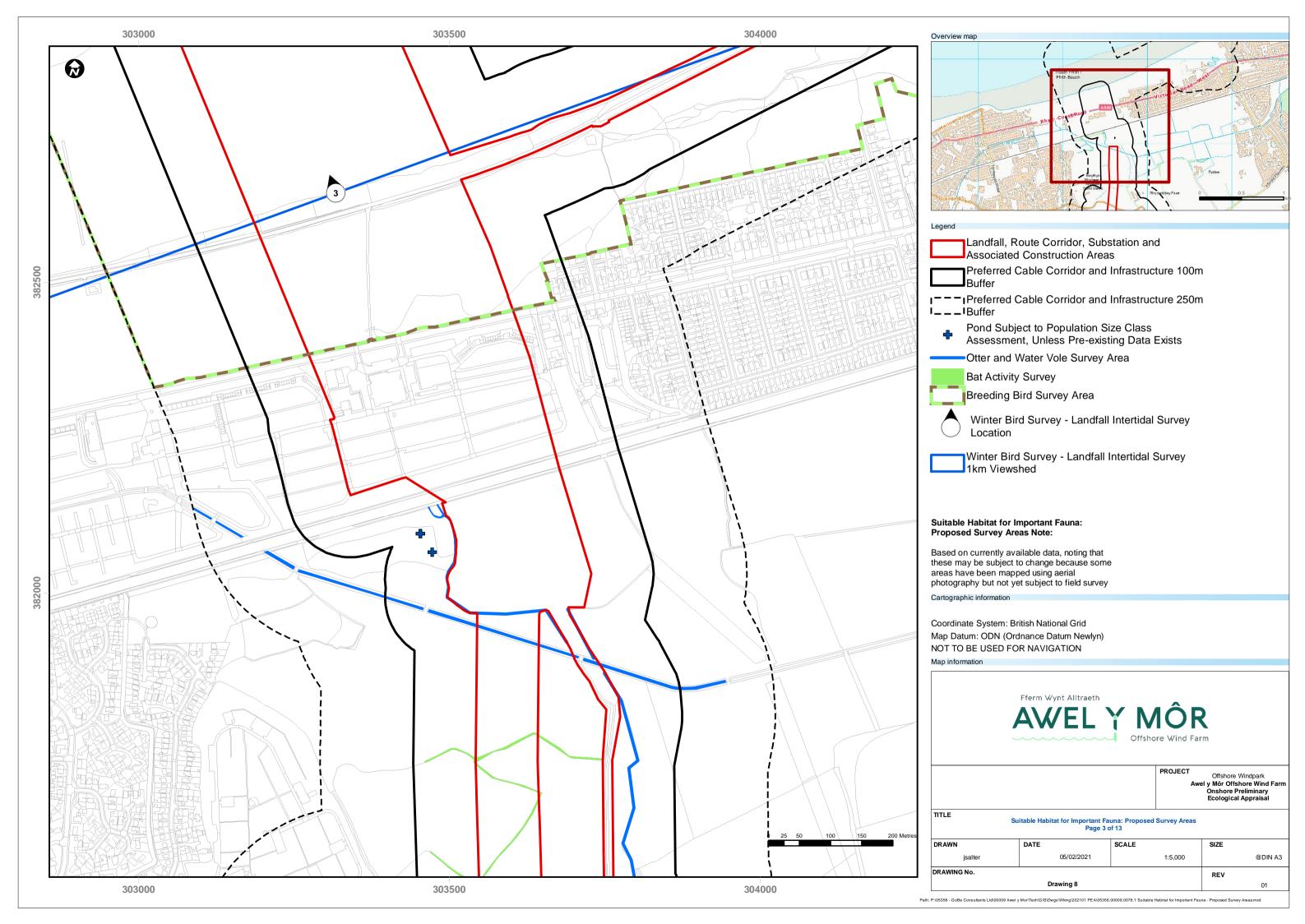


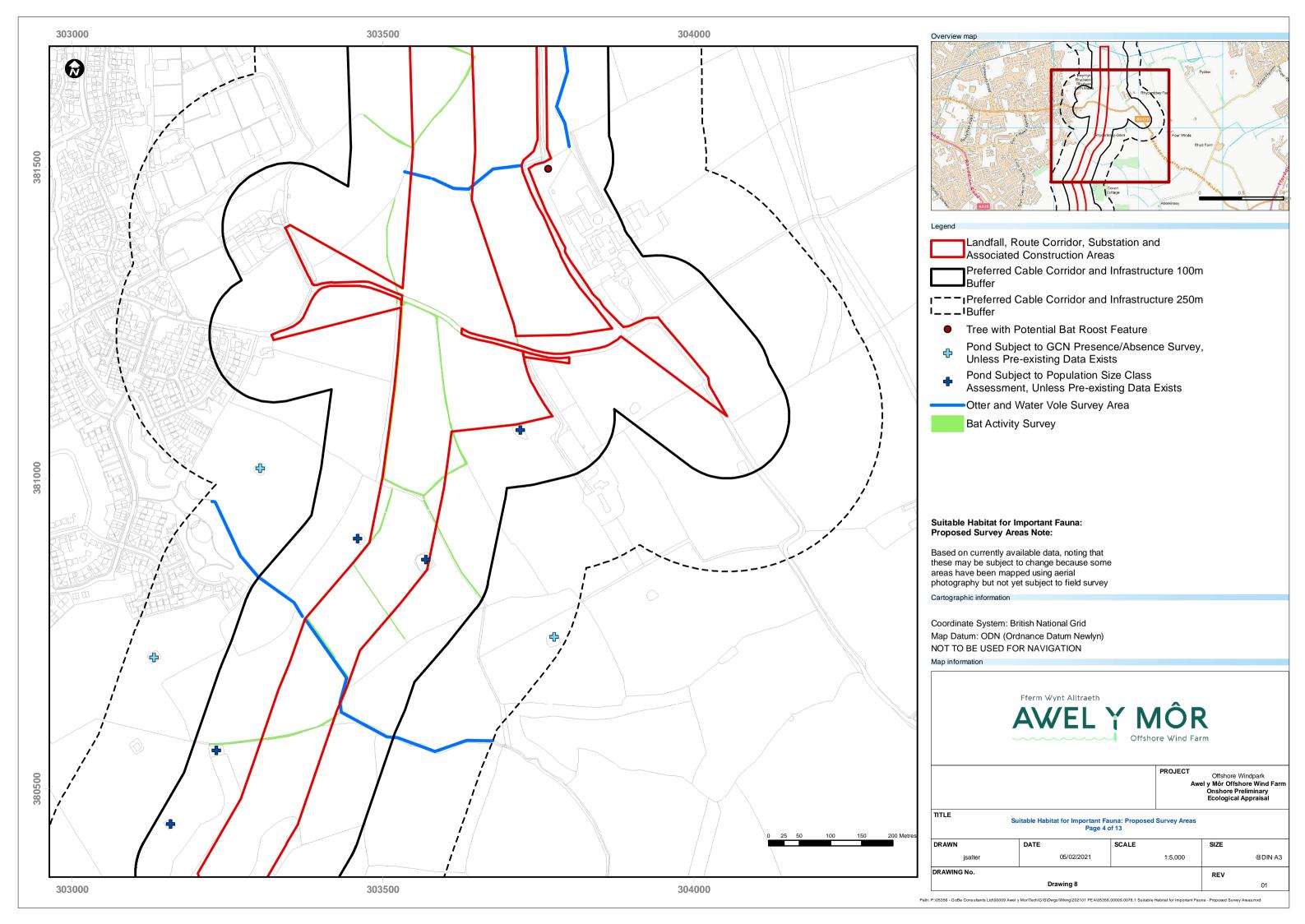
DRAWING 8

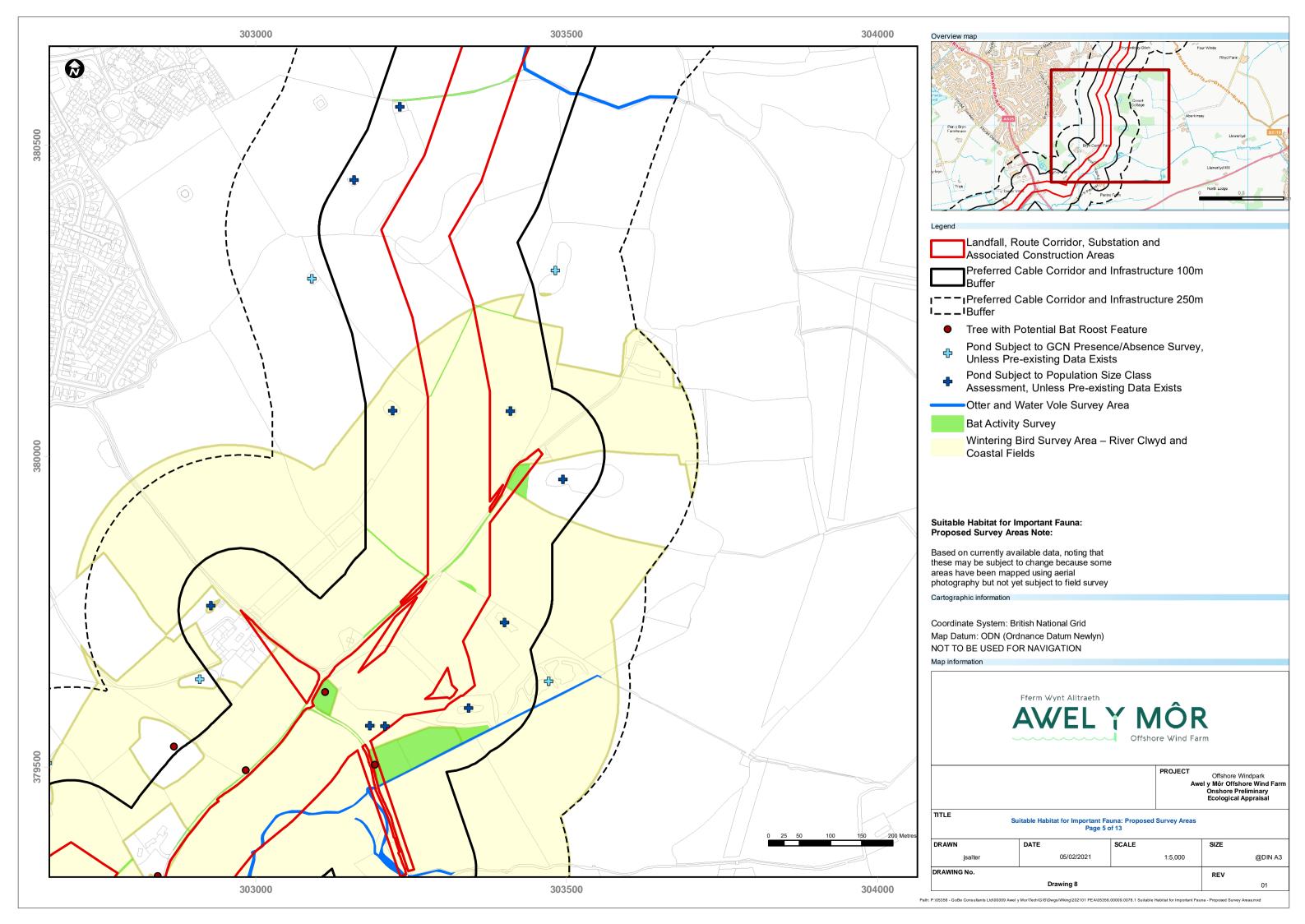
Suitable Habitat for Important Fauna: Proposed Survey Areas

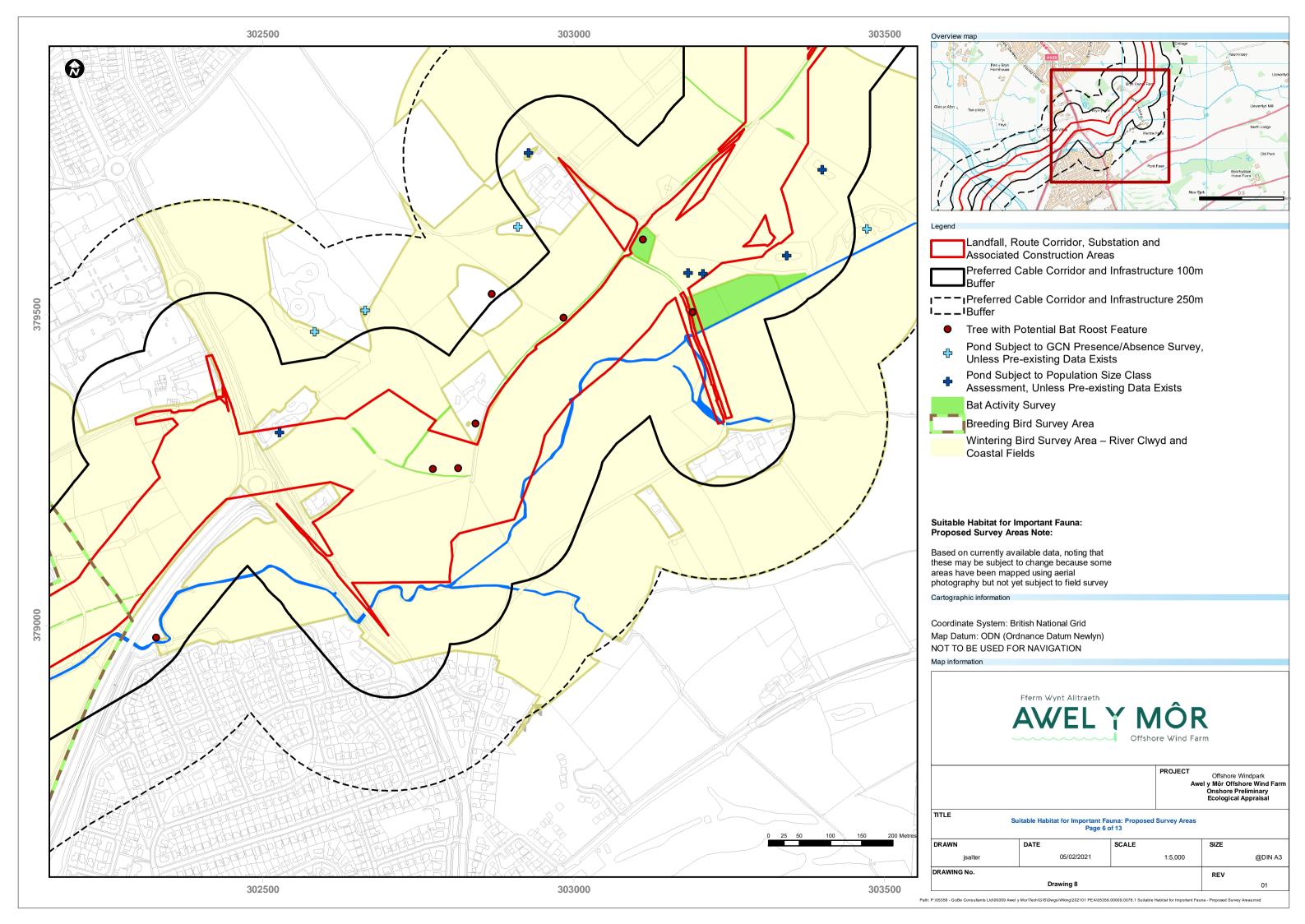


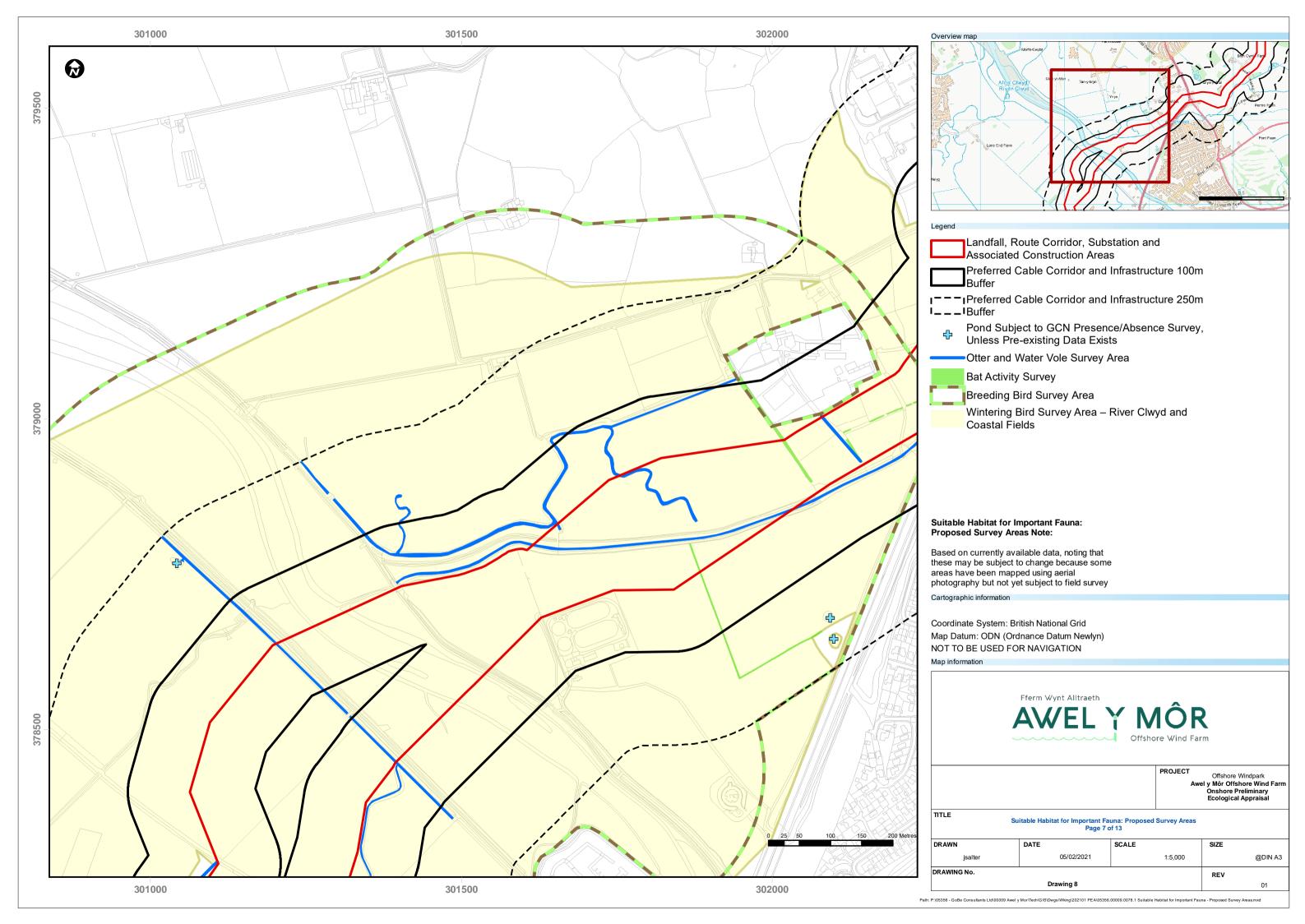


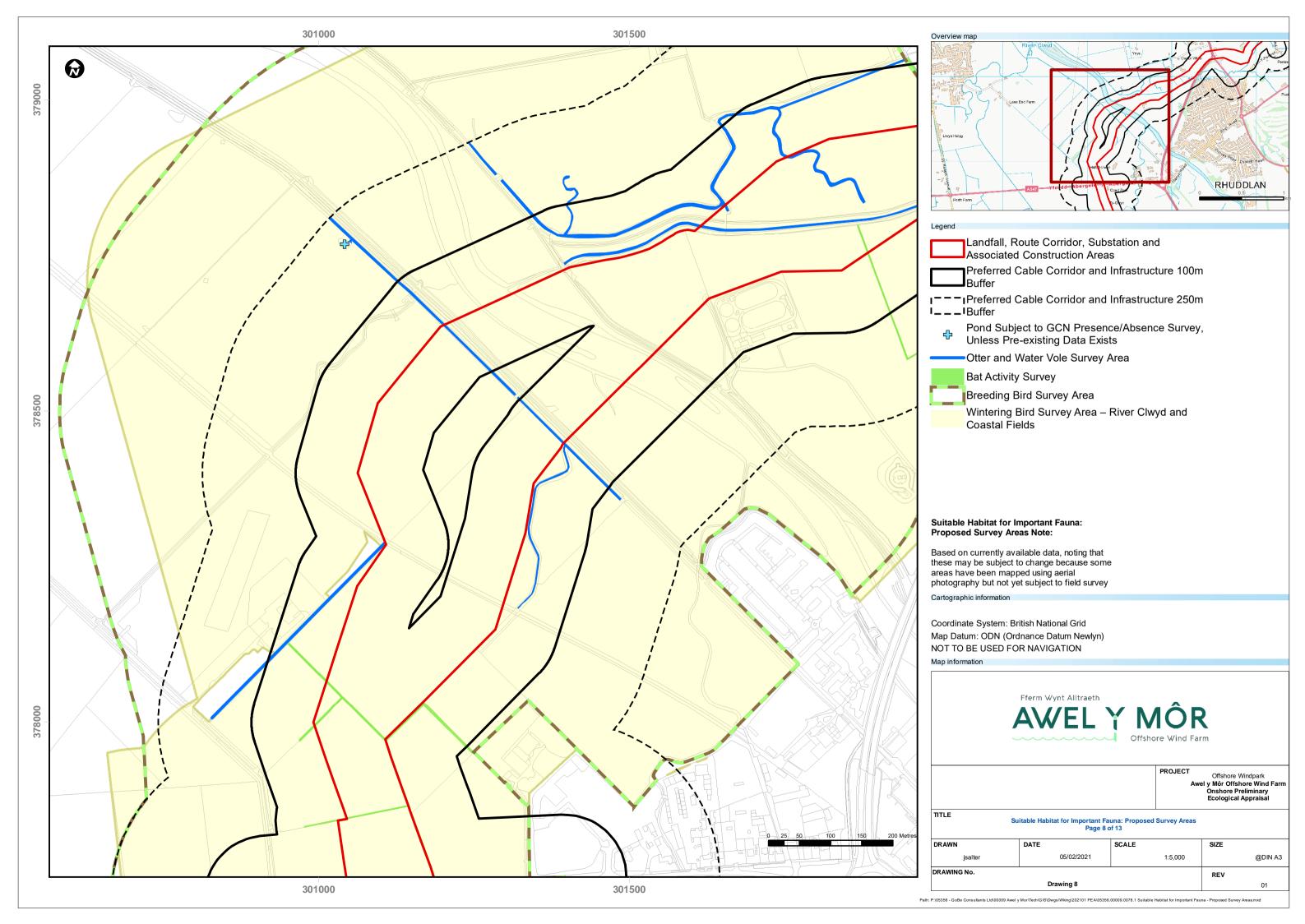


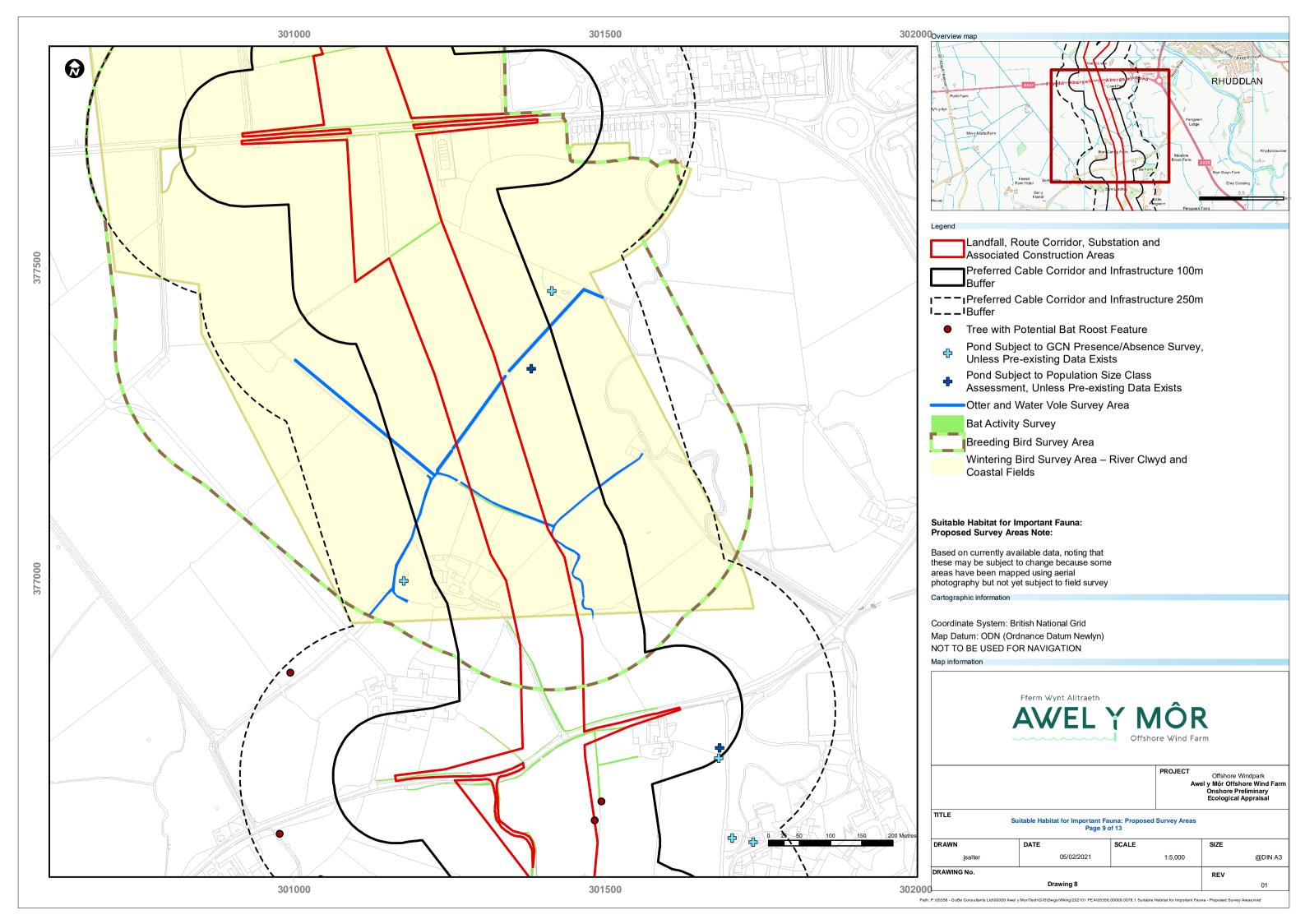


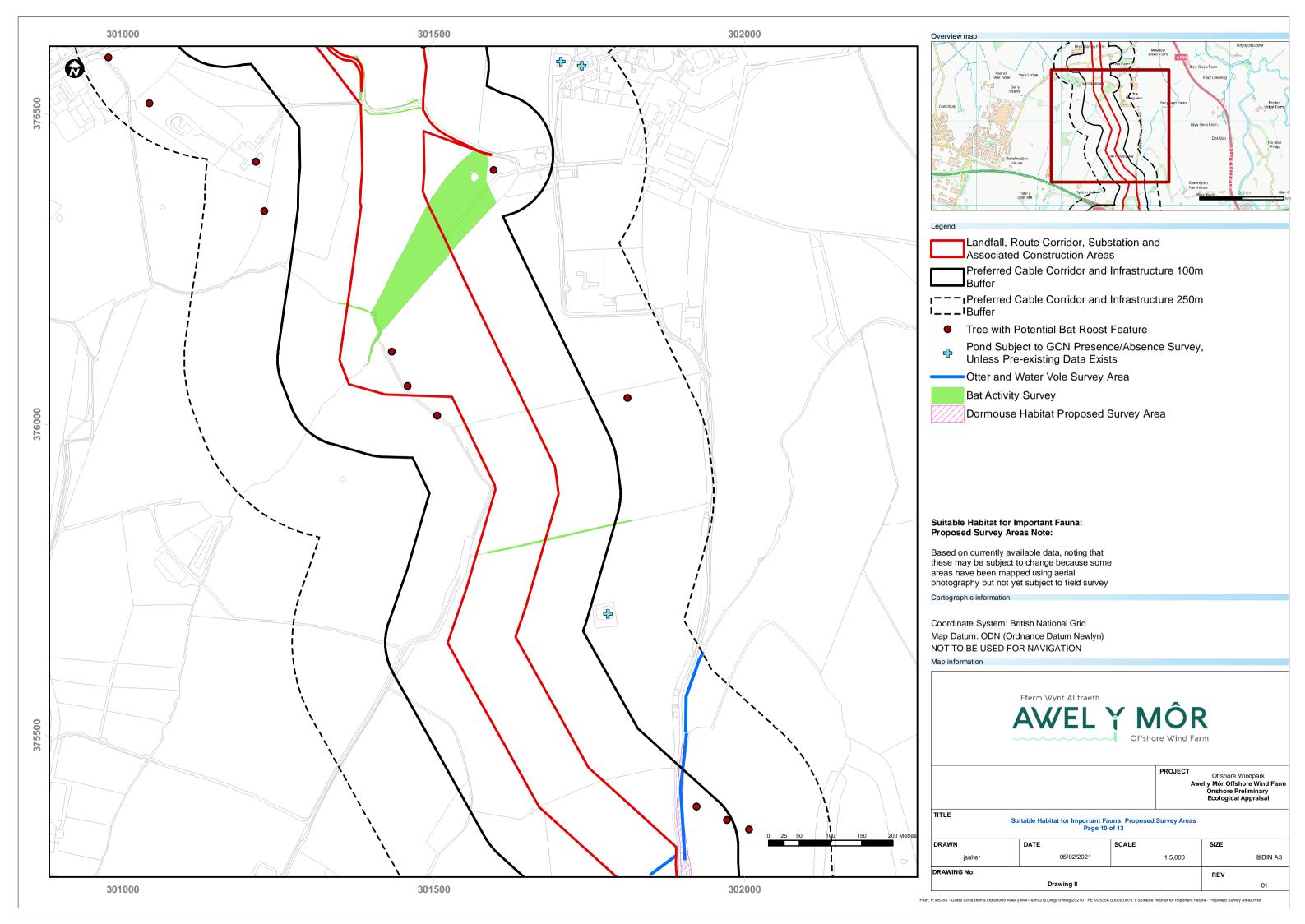


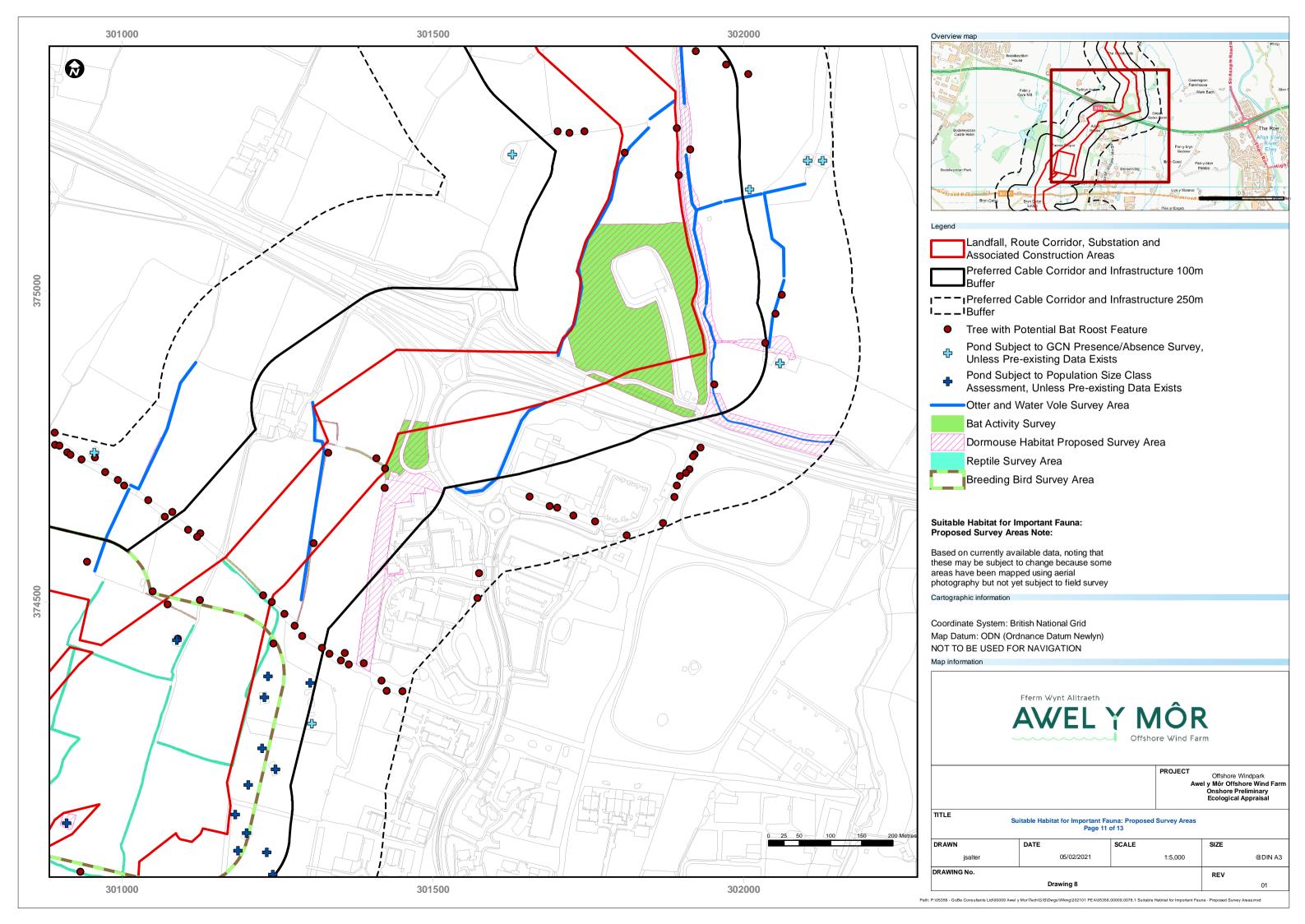


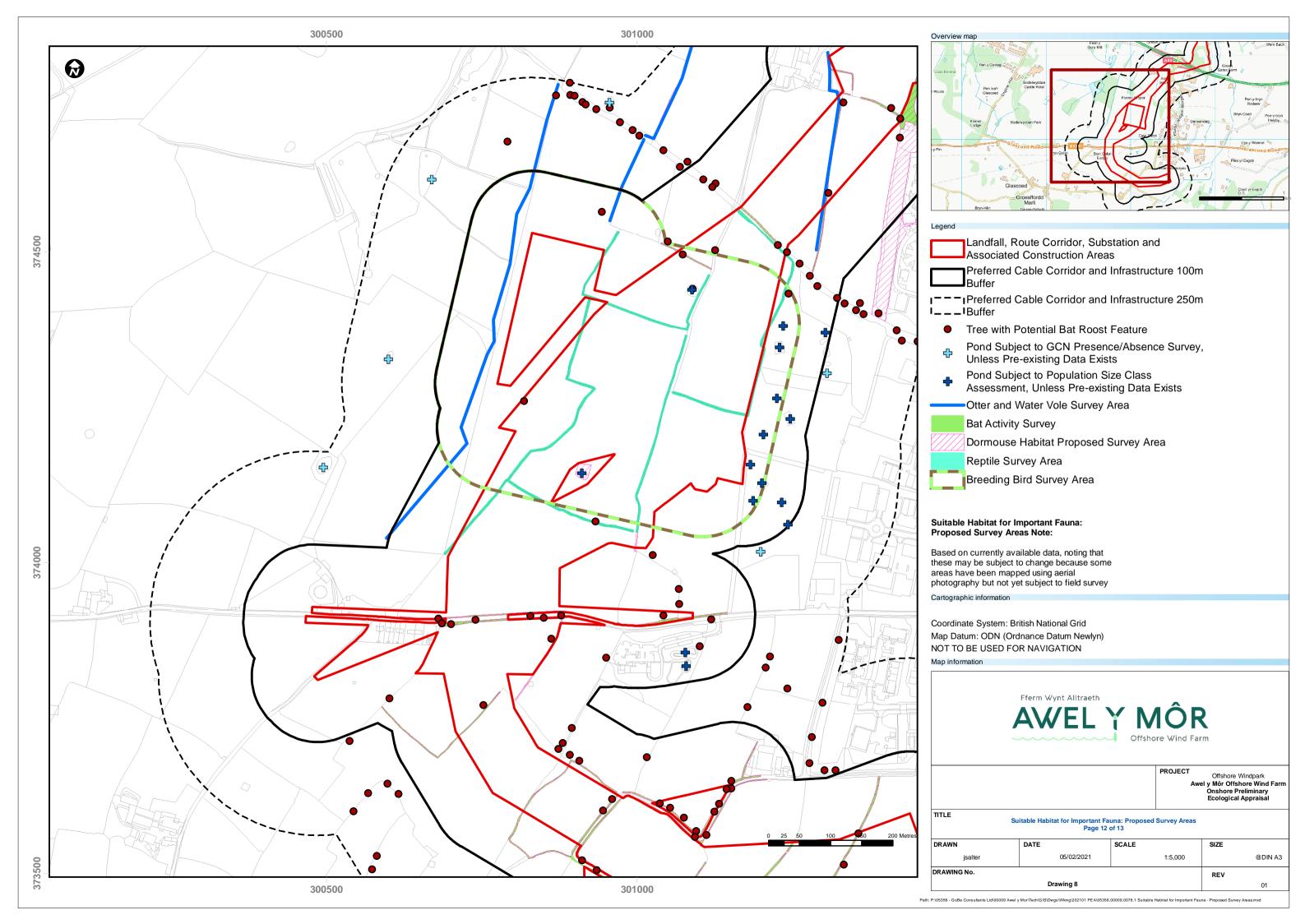


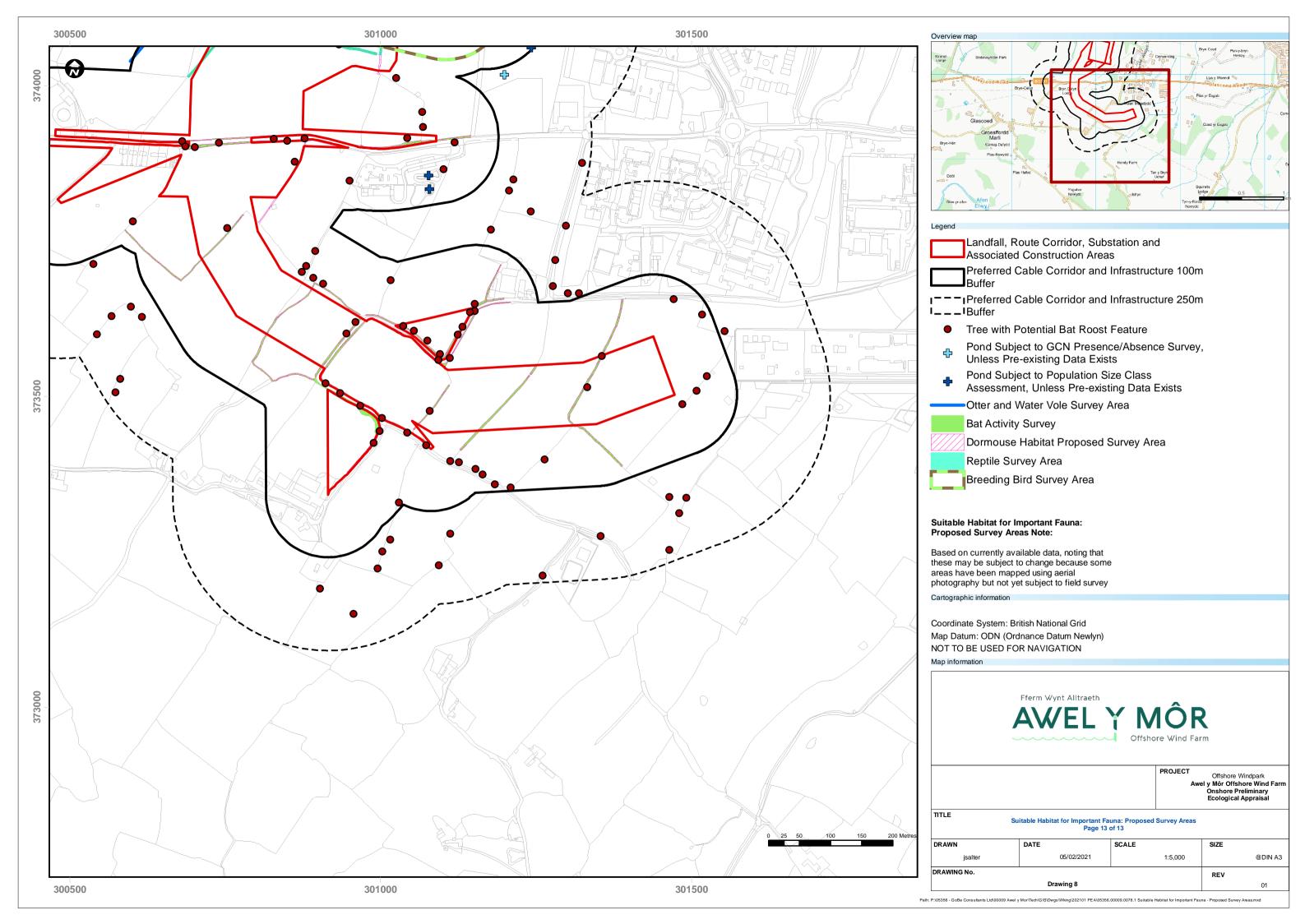












APPENDIX A

List of Local Wildlife Sites

| Site Name | Distance from | Distance from preferred |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| | corridors/substations/ | corridor/substation/ landfall |
| 97/65: North Wales Holiday Camp | landfalls (m) 0 | (m) 5467 |
| 97/41: Afon Gele | 0 | 4980 |
| 97/35: Morfa Rhuddlan | 0 | 1926 |
| 97/105: Abergele grazing marsh | 0 | 3160 |
| D001: Clwyd Estuary and Adjacent fields | 0 | 0 |
| D003: Coed y Ddol/Coed y Fadir | 0 | 1199 |
| D003/1: Plas Newydd/Coed Carreg Dafydd | 0 | 859 |
| D033: Coed Fron and Eryl Hall Wood | 0 | 1738 |
| 97/26: Coed y Geufron | 12 | 4419 |
| 97/77: Coed Nant Ddu | 16 | 4209 |
| D035: Bryn Meiriadog | 36 | 740 |
| 97/33: Coed Gors | 92 | 3323 |
| D032: Coed Cord / Coed y Saeson | 103 | 163 |
| 97/97: Pwll Coed Cae Mach | 109 | 3420 |
| D011: Y Ffrith, Prestatyn | 146 | 0 |
| D021: Bryn Cwnin Wetland | 162 | 39 |
| 97/92: Moelfre Isaf heath fragments | 187 | 4186 |
| D034: Ty'n-y-Coed Rough (2 areas) | 206 | 1523 |
| 97/69: Pwll Towyn Way | 208 | 2619 |
| 97/34: Coed Y Waen | 283 | 2619 |
| 97/28: Coed Parc y Meirch / Coed Ty Croes | 294 | 3499 |
| 97/91: Moelfre Isaf Heath | 326 | 4902 |
| 97/85: Pwll Fardre | 332 | 4205 |
| 97/96: Pwll Coed Pen y Bryn | 345 | 3863 |
| 97/95: Tan y mynydd | 354 | 5040 |
| 97/70: Berthglyd Pond | 357 | 5597 |
| 97/99: Pwll Rookery | 416 | 2441 |
| 97/42: Fferam Ffordd Las Bach | 433 | 5155 |
| 97/31: Coed Bodtegwal | 441 | 3567 |
| 97/76: The Warren | 451 | 5014 |
| D040: Glascoed (2 areas) | 452 | 1498 |
| 97/102: Coed Wig | 506 | 1637 |
| 97/29: Dinorben Lodge Quarry | 508 | 3438 |
| 97/101: Coed Pen-y-bryn | 530 | 2684 |
| 97/73: Pwll Ffordd St Asaph | 573 | 3771 |
| 97/83: St Georges Well | 606 | 5001 |
| 97/113: Pensarn Reedbed | 661 | 6468 |
| 97/32: Coed Meibion | 683 | 3020 |
| 97/80: Coed Parc Kinmel | 744 | 2689 |
| 97/17: Pentre Mawr Park Pools & Reedbed | 803 | 6431 |

| Site Name | Distance from corridors/substations/landfalls (m) | Distance from preferred corridor/substation/ landfall (m) | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 97/67: Afon Clwyd Saltmarsh | 806 | 1097 | |
| SJ07/6: Pwllau Graig | 817 | 1780 | |
| 97/100: Coed Bron Haul | 823 | 3367 | |
| 97/24: Ffordd Las | 854 | 5425 | |
| D041: Coed yr Accar (2 areas) | 938 | 1621 | |
| SJ07/1: Coed Nant-y-graig | 939 | 1911 | |
| 97/72: Pwll Bodoryn Fawr | 991 | 3247 | |
| 97/84: Pwll Tan-y-bryn | 1048 | 5681 | |
| 97/113a: Abergele Hospital Grounds | 1078 | 5810 | |
| 97/82: Pwll St Georges Well | 1084 | 3222 | |
| 97/66: Remo Avenue | 1166 | 3644 | |
| D031: Mount Road Churchyard, St Asaph | 1187 | 1810 | |
| 97/75: Pwll Llwyni Lodge | 1211 | 3148 | |
| D037: Coed Kendrick | 1247 | 2237 | |
| 97/53: Bryn Plas Uchaf | 1287 | 6015 | |
| 97/81: Pwll Parc Kimmel 1288 | | 3071 | |
| 97/74: Plas Kimmel | 1289 | 3041 | |
| D002: Coed Pen y Garreg | 1306 | 1352 | |
| 97/88: Mynydd y Gaer | 1333 | 3332 | |
| 97/19: Coed Ysgerirallt | 1364 | 6095 | |
| 97/16: Siror Hir Dingles | 1392 | 6101 | |
| 97/59: Afon Gele Grassland | 1578 | 6279 | |
| D036: Chapel Wood/Coed Mawr | 1609 | 2753 | |
| 97/94: Coed PlasUchaf | 1617 | 4032 | |
| 97/40: Hen Wrych Pond | 1652 | 7264 | |
| D022: Vale Of Clwyd Grassland | d Grassland 1703 1806 | | |
| Extra11: Mynydd y Gaer Grassland | 1800 | 3559 | |
| 97/110: Abergele Golf Course 1 | 1850 | 7287 | |
| D018: Pwll y Bont | D018: Pwll y Bont 1883 1448 | | |
| 97/13: Coed y Gopa Extension | 1969 | 6698 | |

APPENDIX B

List of Protected or Notable Plant Species Recorded within the Study Area

| Species Name (Latin) | Species Name (English) | Sch8 | S7 | RDB (Wales) | RDB (UK) |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| Hyacinthoides non-scripta | Bluebell | Х | | | |
| Veronica spicata | Spiked Speedwell | Х | | | |
| Juniperus communis | Common juniper | | Х | | |
| Centaurea cyanus | Cornflower | | Х | | |
| Carex divisa | Divided Sedge | | Х | | |
| Ophrys insectifera | Fly Orchid | | Х | | |
| Entosthodon pulchellus | Pretty Cord-moss | | Х | | |
| Fumaria purpuria | Purple ramping fumitory | | Х | | |
| Hordeum Marinum | Sea barley | | Х | | |
| Silene gallica | Small-flowered catchfly | | Х | | |
| Oenanthe fistulosa | Tubular Water-dropwort | | Х | | |
| Carex divisa | Divided Sedge | | | Х | Х |
| Cerastium pumilum | Dwarf Mouse-ear | | | Х | Х |
| Euphorbia exigua | Dwarf Spurge | | | Х | Х |
| Minuartia verna | Spring Sandwort | | | Х | Х |
| Papaver argemone | Prickly Poppy | | | Х | Х |
| Potentilla argentea | Hoary Cinquefoil | | | Х | Х |
| Silene gallica | Small-flowered Catchfly | | | Х | Х |
| Silene nutans | Nottingham Catchfly | | | Х | Х |
| Aphanorrhegma patens | Spreading Earth-moss | | | Х | |
| Brachythecium glareosum | Streaky Feather-moss | | | Х | |
| Bryum argenteum | Silver-moss | | | Х | |
| Bryum donianum | Don's Thread-moss | | | Х | |
| Bryum violaceum | Pill Bryum | | | Х | |
| Butomus umbellatus | Flowering-rush | | | Х | |
| Carex pseudocyperus | Cyperus Sedge | | | Х | |
| Centaurea cyanus | Cornflower | | | Х | |
| Dicranum bonjeanii | Crisped Fork-moss | | | Х | |
| Encalypta vulgaris | Common Extinguisher-moss | | | X | |
| Entosthodon pulchellus | Pretty Cord-moss | | | X | |
| Fumaria purpurea | Purple Ramping-fumitory | | | Х | |
| Grimmia orbicularis | Round-fruited Grimmia | | | Х | |
| Hippuris vulgaris | Mare's-tail | | | X | |
| Hordelymus europaeus | Wood Barley | | | Х | |
| Hygroamblystegium fluviatile | Brook-side Feather-moss | | | Х | |
| Kindbergia praelonga | Common Feather-moss | | | Х | |
| Leiocolea badensis | Scarce Notchwort | | | Х | |
| Marchesinia mackaii | MacKay's Pouncewort | | | Х | |
| Marrubium vulgare | White Horehound | | | Х | |
| Mnium marginatum var. | Mnium marginatum var | | | X | |

| Species Name (Latin) | Species Name (English) | Sch8 | S7 | RDB (Wales) | RDB (UK) |
|---|--------------------------|------|-----------|----------------|-------------|
| marginatum | marginatum | | | | |
| Ophrys insectifera | Fly Orchid | | | Х | |
| Oxyrrhynchium schleicheri | Twist-tip Feather-moss | | | Х | |
| Plagiochila britannica | British Featherwort | | | Х | |
| Porella platyphylla | Wall Scalewort | | | Х | |
| Rumex crispus subsp. uliginosus | Curled Dock | | | Х | |
| Rumex pulcher | Fiddle Dock | | | Х | |
| Ruscus aculeatus | Butcher's-broom | | | Х | |
| Sagittaria sagittifolia | Arrowhead | | | Х | |
| Scabiosa columbaria | Small Scabious | | | Х | |
| Schistidium rivulare | River Grimmia | | | Х | |
| Sesleria caerulea | Blue Moor-grass | | | Х | |
| Sinapis arvensis | Charlock | | | Х | |
| Sorbus rupicola | Rock Whitebeam | | | Х | |
| Syntrichia ruralis var. ruraliformis | Sand-hill Screw-moss | | | Х | |
| Thamnobryum alopecurum | Fox-tail Feather-moss | | | Х | |
| Tortula lanceola | Lance-leaved Pottia | | | Х | |
| Anacamptis morio | Green-winged Orchid | | | | Χ |
| Buxus sempervirens | Вох | | | | Χ |
| Centunculus minimus | Chaffweed | | | | Χ |
| Chenopodium bonus-henricus | Good-King-Henry | | | | Χ |
| Cynoglossum officinale | Hound's-tongue | | | | Х |
| Glebionis segetum | Corn Marigold | | | | Χ |
| Hordeum marinum | Sea Barley | | | | Χ |
| Hyoscyamus niger | Henbane | | | | Χ |
| Hypericum montanum | Pale St John's-wort | | | | Х |
| Oenanthe fistulosa | Tubular Water-dropwort | | | | Х |
| Ophrys insectifera | Fly Orchid | | | | X |
| Platanthera chlorantha | Greater Butterfly-orchid | | | | X |
| Spiranthes spiralis | Autumn Lady's-tresses | | | | Х |
| Viola canina | Heath Dog-violet | | | | Х |
| Wahlenbergia hederacea | Ivy-leaved Bellflower | | | | Х |

APPENDIX C

List of Protected or Notable Invertebrate Species Recorded within the Study Area

| Species name (Latin) | Species name (English) | S7 | Sch5 | RDB (UK) |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|------|----------|
| Boloria euphrosyne | Pearl-bordered Fritillary | Х | Х | |
| Satyrium w-album | White-letter Hairstreak | Х | Х | |
| Boloria selene | Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary | Х | | Х |
| Coenonympha pamphilus | Small Heath | Х | | Х |
| Lasiommata megera | Wall | Х | | Х |
| Hipparchia semele | Grayling | Х | | Х |
| Cirrhia gilvago | Dusky-lemon Sallow | Х | | |
| Diloba caeruleocephala | Figure of Eight | Х | | |
| Ennomos erosaria | September Thorn | Х | | |
| Tholera decimalis | Feathered Gothic | Х | | |
| Timandra comae | Blood-vein | Х | | |
| Xylena exsoleta | Sword-grass | Х | | |
| Caradrina morpheus | Mottled Rustic | Х | | |
| Ceramica pisi | Broom Moth | Х | | |
| Cirrhia icteritia | Sallow | Х | | |
| Diarsia rubi | Small Square-spot | Х | | |
| Ecliptopera silaceata | Small Phoenix | Х | | |
| Ennomos fuscantaria | Dusky Thorn | Х | | |
| Ennomos quercinaria | August Thorn | Х | | |
| Euxoa tritici | White-line Dart | Х | | |
| Hepialus humuli | Ghost Moth | Х | | |
| Hoplodrina blanda | Rustic | Х | | |
| Hydraecia micacea | Rosy Rustic | Х | | |
| Lycia hirtaria | Brindled Beauty | Х | | |
| Melanchra persicariae | Dot Moth | Х | | |
| Orthosia gracilis | Powdered Quaker | Х | | |
| Rhizedra lutosa | Large Wainscot | Х | | |
| Scotopteryx chenopodiata | Shaded Broad-bar | Х | | |
| Spilosoma lubricipeda | White Ermine | Х | | |
| Spilosoma lutea | Buff Ermine | Х | | |
| Stilbia anomala | Anomalous | Х | | |
| Tholera cespitis | Hedge Rustic | Х | | |
| Tyria jacobaeae | Cinnabar | Х | | |
| Watsonalla binaria | Oak Hook-tip | Х | | |
| Acronicta psi | Grey Dagger | Х | | |
| Agrochola litura | Brown-spot Pinion | Х | | |
| Agrochola lychnidis | Beaded Chestnut | Х | | |
| Allophyes oxyacanthae | Green-brindled Crescent | Х | | |
| Amphipyra tragopoginis | Mouse Moth | Х | | |
| Arctia caja | Garden Tiger | Х | | |
| Asteroscopus sphinx | Sprawler | Х | | |
| Atethmia centrago | Centre-barred Sallow | Х | | |

APPENDIX D

List of Protected or Notable Bird Species Recorded within the Study Area

| Protection Status | Species |
|--|--|
| Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 1 (42 species) | Goshawk Accipiter gentilis, Kingfisher Alcedo atthis, Garganey Anas querquedula, Scaup Aythya marila, Purple Sandpiper Calidris maritima, Ruff Calidris pugnax, Cetti's Warbler Cettia cetti, Marsh Harrier Circus aeruginosus, Peregrine Falco peregrinus, Hobby Falco subbuteo, Great Northern Diver Gavia immer, Whimbrel Numenius phaeopus, Greenshank Tringa nebularia, Green Sandpiper Tringa ochropus, Little Ringed Plover Charadrius dubius, Black Tern Chlidonias niger, Long-tailed Duck Clangula hyemalis, Whooper Swan Cygnus cygnus, Merlin Falco columbarius, Brambling Fringilla montifringilla, Red-throated Diver Gavia stellata, Little Gull Hydrocoloeus minutus, Mediterranean Gull Larus melanocephalus, Black-tailed Godwit Limosa limosa, Common Crossbill Loxia curvirostra, Velvet Scoter Melanitta fusca, Common Scoter Melanitta nigra, Red Kite Milvus milvus, Leach's Petrel Oceanodroma leucorhoa, Osprey Pandion haliaetus, Black Redstart Phoenicurus ochruros, Spoonbill Platalea leucorodia, Snow Bunting Plectrophenax nivalis, Chough Pyrrhocorax pyrrhocorax, Firecrest Regulus ignicapilla, Roseate Tern Sterna dougallii, Little Tern Sternula albifrons, Redwing Turdus iliacus, Fieldfare Turdus pilaris, Barn Owl Tyto alba, Hoopoe Upupa epops, and Indet. Diver |
| Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (Section 7) (37 species) | Lesser Redpoll Acanthis cabaret, Skylark Alauda arvensis, Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose Anser albifrons subsp. Flavirostris, White-fronted Goose Anser albifrons, Tree Pipit Anthus trivialis, Ringed Plover Charadrius hiaticula, Black-headed Gull Chroicocephalus ridibundus, Hen Harrier Circus cyaneus, Cuckoo Cuculus canorus, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker Dendrocopos minor, Yellowhammer Emberiza citrinella, Reed Bunting Emberiza schoeniclus, Kestrel Falco tinnunculus, Herring Gull Larus argentatus, Bar-tailed Godwit Limosa lapponica, Linnet Linaria cannabina, Twite Linaria flavirostris, Grasshopper Warbler Locustella naevia, Common Scoter Melanitta nigra, Yellow Wagtail Motacilla flava, Spotted Flycatcher Muscicapa striata, Curlew Numenius arquata, House Sparrow Passer domesticus, Tree Sparrow Passer montanus, Grey Partridge Perdix perdix, Golden Plover Pluvialis apricaria, Willow Tit Poecile montana, Marsh Tit Poecile palustris, Dunnock Prunella modularis, Chough, Bullfinch Pyrrhula pyrrhula, Roseate Tern, Turtle Dove Streptopelia turtur, Starling Sturnus vulgaris, Song Thrush Turdus philomelos, Ring Ouzel Turdus torquatus, and Lapwing Vanellus vanellus |
| EU Birds Directive Annexe 1 (30 species) | Kingfisher, Greenland Greater White-fronted Goose, Short-eared Owl Asio flammeus, Barnacle Goose Branta leucopsis, Ruff, Black Tern, Marsh Harrier, Hen Harrier, Whooper Swan, Little Egret Egretta garzetta, Merlin, Peregrine, Black-throated Diver Gavia arctica, Great Northern Diver, Red-throated Diver, Storm Petrel Hydrobates pelagicus, Little Gull, Mediterranean Gull, Bar-tailed Godwit, Red Kite, Leach's Petrel, Osprey, Spoonbill, Golden Plover, Chough, Roseate Tern, Common Tern Sterna hirundo, Arctic Tern Sterna paradisaea, Sandwich Tern Sterna sandvicensis, and Little Tern |
| Red List (44 species) | Lesser Redpoll, Skylark, White-fronted Goose, Tree Pipit, Pochard Aythya ferina, Scaup, Ruff, Ringed Plover, Marsh Harrier, Long-tailed Duck Clangula hyemalis, Cuckoo, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Yellowhammer, Merlin, Herring Gull, Blacktailed Godwit, Linnet, Twite, Grasshopper Warbler, Velvet Scoter, Common Scoter, |

| Protection Status | Species |
|----------------------------|---|
| | Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i> , Yellow Wagtail, Spotted Flycatcher, Curlew, Whimbrel, House Sparrow, Tree Sparrow, Grey Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i> , Shag <i>Phalacrocorax aristotelis</i> , Black Redstart, Willow Tit, Marsh Tit, Whinchat <i>Saxicola rubetra</i> , Woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i> , Arctic Skua <i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i> , Roseate Tern, Turtle Dove, Starling, Redwing, Song Thrush, Fieldfare, Ring Ouzel, and Lapwing |
| Amber List (65 species) | Common Sandpiper Actitis hypoleucos, Razorbill Alca torda, Kingfisher, Pintail Anas acuta, Shoveler Anas clypeata, Teal Anas crecca, Wigeon Anas penelope, Mallard Anas platyrhynchos, Garganey, Gadwall Anas strepera, Greylag Goose Anser anser, Meadow Pipit Anthus pratensis, Swift Apus apus, Turnstone Arenaria interpres, Shorteared Owl, Light-bellied Brent Goose Branta bernicla subsp. Hrota, Brent Goose Branta bernicla, Barnacle Goose, Goldeneye Bucephala clangula, Sanderling Calidris alba, Dunlin Calidris alpina subsp. Alpina, Dunlin Calidris alpina, Knot Calidris canutus, Curlew Sandpiper Calidris ferrugineal Purple Sandpiper, Black-headed Gull, Dipper Cinclus cinclus, Marsh Harrier, Whooper Swan, Mute Swan Cygnus olor, House Martin Delichon urbicum subsp. Urbicum, House Martin Delichon urbicum, Reed Bunting, Kestrel, Snipe Gallinago gallinago, Black-throated Diver, Great Northern Diver, Oystercatcher Haematopus ostralegus, Storm Petrel Hydrobates pelagicus, Common Gull Larus canus, Lesser Black-backed Gull Larus fuscus, Great Black-backed Gull Larus marinus, Mediterranean Gull, Bar-tailed Godwit, Gannet Morus bassanus, Leach's Petrel, Osprey, Redstart Phoenicurus phoenicurus, Willow Warbler Phylloscopus trochilus, Spoonbill, Grey Plover Pluvialis squatarola, Dunnock Prunella modularis, Manx Shearwater Puffinus puffinus, Bullfinch, Common Tern, Arctic Tern, Sandwich Tern, Little Tern, Tawny Owl Strix aluco, Shelduck Tadorna tadorna, Spotted Redshank Tringa erythropus, Greenshank Tringa nebularia, Green Sandpiper, Redshank Tringa totanus, and Guillemot Uria aalge. |

EUROPEAN OFFICES

United Kingdom

AYLESBURY

T: +44 (0)1844 337380 T: +44 (0)203 6915810

LONDON

BELFAST

MAIDSTONE T: +44 (0)1622 609242 belfast@slrconsulting.com

BRADFORD-ON-AVON

MANCHESTER (Denton) T: +44 (0)161 5498410 T: +44 (0)1225 309400

BRISTOL

MANCHESTER (Media City) T: +44 (0)117 9064280 T: +44 (0)161 8727564

CARDIFF

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE T: +44 (0)2920 491010 T: +44 (0)191 2611966

CHELMSFORD

NOTTINGHAM T: +44 (0)1245 392170 T: +44 (0)115 9647280

EDINBURGH

SHEFFIELD T: +44 (0)131 3356830 T: +44 (0)114 2455153

EXETER

SHREWSBURY T: +44 (0)1392 490152 T: +44 (0)1743 239250

GLASGOW

T: +44 (0)141 3535037 T: +44 (0)1786 239900

GUILDFORD

T: +44 (0)1483 889800 T: +44 (0)1905 751310

Ireland

France

STIRLING

WORCESTER

DUBLIN

T: +353 (0)1 296 4667

GRENOBLE

T: +33 (0)4 76 70 93 41





RWE Renewables UK Swindon Limited

Windmill Hill Business Park Whitehill Way Swindon Wiltshire SN5 6PB T +44 (0)8456 720 090

www.rwe.com

Registered office: RWE Renewables UK Swindon Limited Windmill Hill Business Park Whitehill Way Swindon