

APPENDIX 9.12

Addendum to Dormouse Strategy 2006

ISLAND FARM SPORTS VILLAGE, BRIDGEND, WALES
Environmental Statement



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1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Following dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) surveys and the production of a 'Dormouse Strategy' in 2004, ELMAW Consulting has undertaken dormouse monitoring surveys of the site known as Island Farm. ELMAW Consulting were initially contracted to undertake a series of ecological studies at Island Farm in early 2004, for the purposes of assessing the potential ecological impacts of a proposed development at the site.
- 1.1.2 The Island Farm site covers approximately 50 hectares divided into the 'brownfield' area in the north and farmland in the south. The brownfield area, owned by Bridgend County Borough Council covers 10 hectares, and is dominated by large areas of woodland and dense scrub thicket, with areas of grassland and hard-standing. The farmland covers approximately 40 hectares and comprises a number of arable fields separated by mature mixed-species hedgerows, which together with the scrub habitat within the brownfield area form a continuous area of habitat across the Island Farm site.
- 1.1.3 Based on previous surveys of the site in 2000 and 2001, dormice were considered to be present on the site, and a site assessment carried out by ELMAW Consulting in March 2004 concluded the scrub and woodlands within the brownfield area and the hedgerows within the farmland provided potentially suitable habitat for dormice. Dormice require dense scrub and woodland habitat with a range of tree and shrub species to provide food and shelter throughout the year, and the Island Farm site provided this habitat.
- 1.1.4 Consequently, a detailed dormouse survey of all suitable habitat within the site was undertaken between May and November 2004 (see Dormouse Strategy, Island Farm, Bridgend, ELMAW Consulting, 2004). The survey was undertaken in accordance with published guidelines (Chanin and Woods, 2003) and involved placing dormouse nesting tubes throughout the scrub, woodland and hedgerows of the site. The results of this survey found dormice to be present throughout the site, in both the brownfield area and the farmland hedgerows (see Drawing: Figure 1: Dormouse Survey Results, February 2005). It was concluded that, based on the dormouse nests found throughout the site and the suitability and management of the habitats within the respective areas of the site, that the brownfield site represented the core of the dormouse habitat within the Island Farm site. This assessment was based on the large number of suitable natural nest sites (in bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.) in the brownfield area, and the (largely) undisturbed and unmanaged dense scrub thicket habitat. The report also concluded that based on the diversity of tree and shrub species within the site, Island Farm provided good habitat for dormice. However the population was likely to be using habitat outside the site boundary due to the relatively small overall habitat area within the site.

1.2 Monitoring Methodology

- 1.2.1 Following the results of the initial surveys carried out in 2004, a monitoring programme was initiated in 2006 to monitor the distribution and presence of dormice within the Island Farm site. Methodology followed that described in 'Dormouse

Strategy, Island Farm, Bridgend'. Approximately 300 dormouse nest tubes were placed at 15-20 metre spacings in a linear grid pattern throughout suitable habitat. Tubes were placed in grids in the blocks of woodland and scrub in the brownfield site and in lines throughout the farm hedgerows. Tubes were securely attached to horizontal or slightly sloping branches away from footpaths in shrubs and trees with a dense canopy of branches.

- 1.2.2 Tubes were set in April 2006 and checked in July and November for the presence of dormice or dormice nests. All dormice or nests were recorded on maps of the site.
- 1.2.3 There is currently no methodology to extrapolate a population from nest tube data, and the survey is intended to indicate presence/likely absence and provide an indication of dormouse distribution throughout the site, not numbers of individuals.

1.3 Monitoring Survey Results

- 1.3.1 Dormice were found to be present throughout the site. The monitoring survey found dormouse nests within tubes in the northern part of the brownfield site and throughout the hedgerows of the farmland (see Drawing: Figure 1: Dormouse Monitoring Results, December 2006). A total of 9 dormouse nests were recorded within the nesting tubes, with three records in July and six records in November. One nest was found within the brownfield area, and eight were located within the farm hedgerows. The survey results do not indicate fewer dormice are using the brownfield area however, as the brownfield site continued to support large amounts of natural nesting habitat within the bramble and scrub and it is likely dormice are able to find an ample supply of natural nest sites in this part of the site. The higher number of nests located within the hedgerows is likely to reflect the limited natural nesting opportunities within this habitat. The distribution of recorded nests within the tubes indicates dormice continue to occupy and move throughout all suitable habitats within the Island Farm site.

1.4 Conclusion

- 1.4.1 Surveys carried out in 2000 and 2001 indicated dormice were present within the brownfield site. Subsequently, surveys carried out by ELMAW Consulting in 2004 found dormice to be present within both the brownfield area and the hedgerows of the neighbouring farmland (all part of the Island Farm site). As a result of the 2004 surveys it was concluded that dormice were extant throughout the Island Farm site. It was also concluded that although only 10 nests were located within the tubes, this did not indicate a low population or limited distribution, but indicated the habitats within the site provided ample natural nest sites within the trees, scrub and hedgerows.
- 1.4.2 The monitoring surveys carried out in 2006 found dormice continue to be present throughout the Island Farm site. The scrub and woodland habitats within both the brownfield area and the hedgerows within the farmland continue to provide good dormouse habitat and provide the diversity in tree and shrub species and habitat structure to enable the continued presence of this species throughout the site.

