

Partneriaeth Tirwedd y
Gwastadeddau Byw

Living Levels Landscape Partnership

Gemma Bodé
Assistant Chief Executive
Gwent Wildlife Trust



Supported by
The National Lottery[®]
through the Heritage Lottery Fund

Cefnogwyd gan
Y Loteri Genedlaethol
trwy Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri

Our Partnership

- Led by RSPB
- 12 partners
- 7 Core Partners
- Steering group
- Project Board
- Success relies on community participation



sir fynyv



Our landscape partnership scheme

- Awarded £2.8m grant from HLF in November 2015
- £4m programme over 3.5 years – 25 projects
- Aim: Sustainable future for the Gwent Levels
- Two stage process
 - Development phase
 - Delivery phase

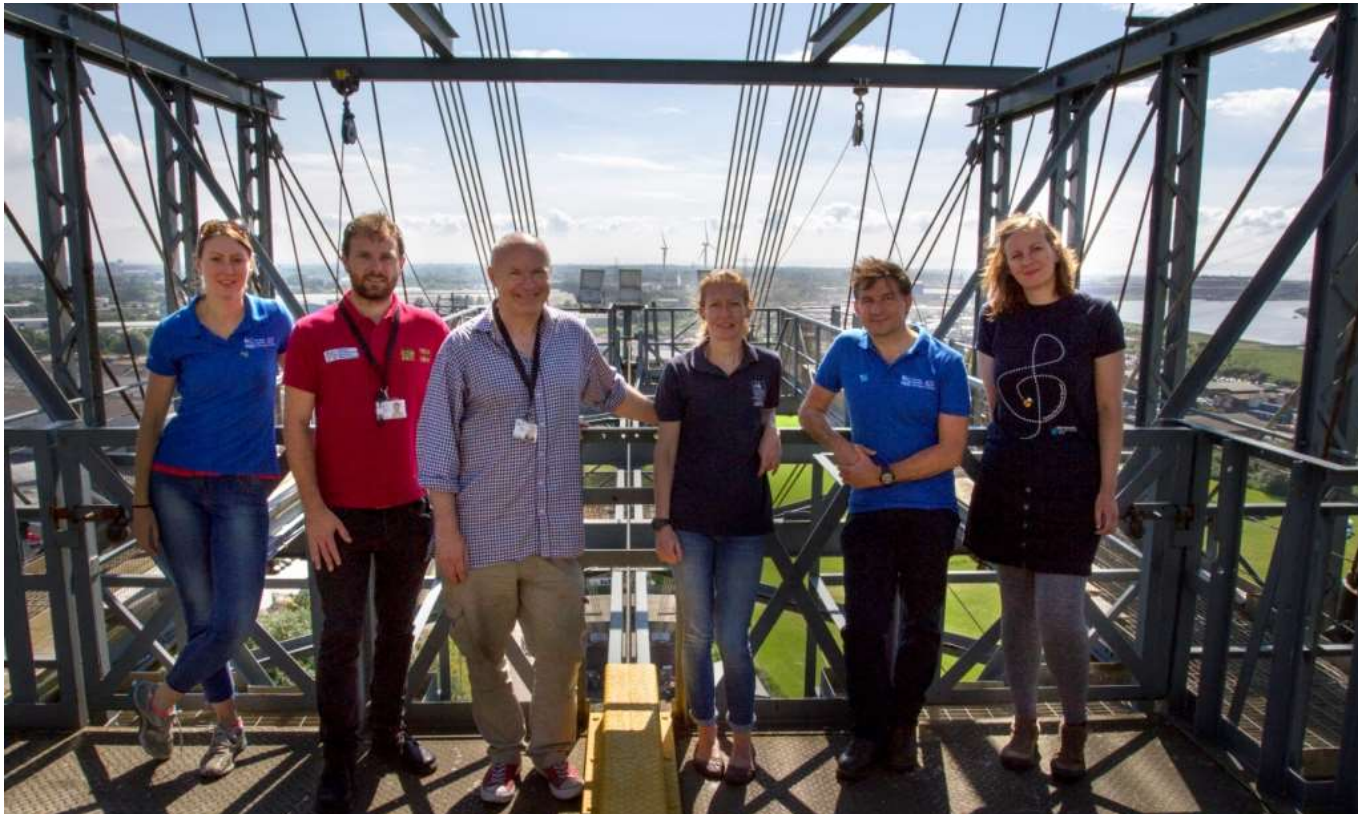


The Living Levels Team

Alison Boyes - Living levels Development Manager

Gavin Jones - Community Engagement Officer

Sian Hawkins - Finance administrator





Two- stage process

Development Phase (Dec 2015 - August 2017)

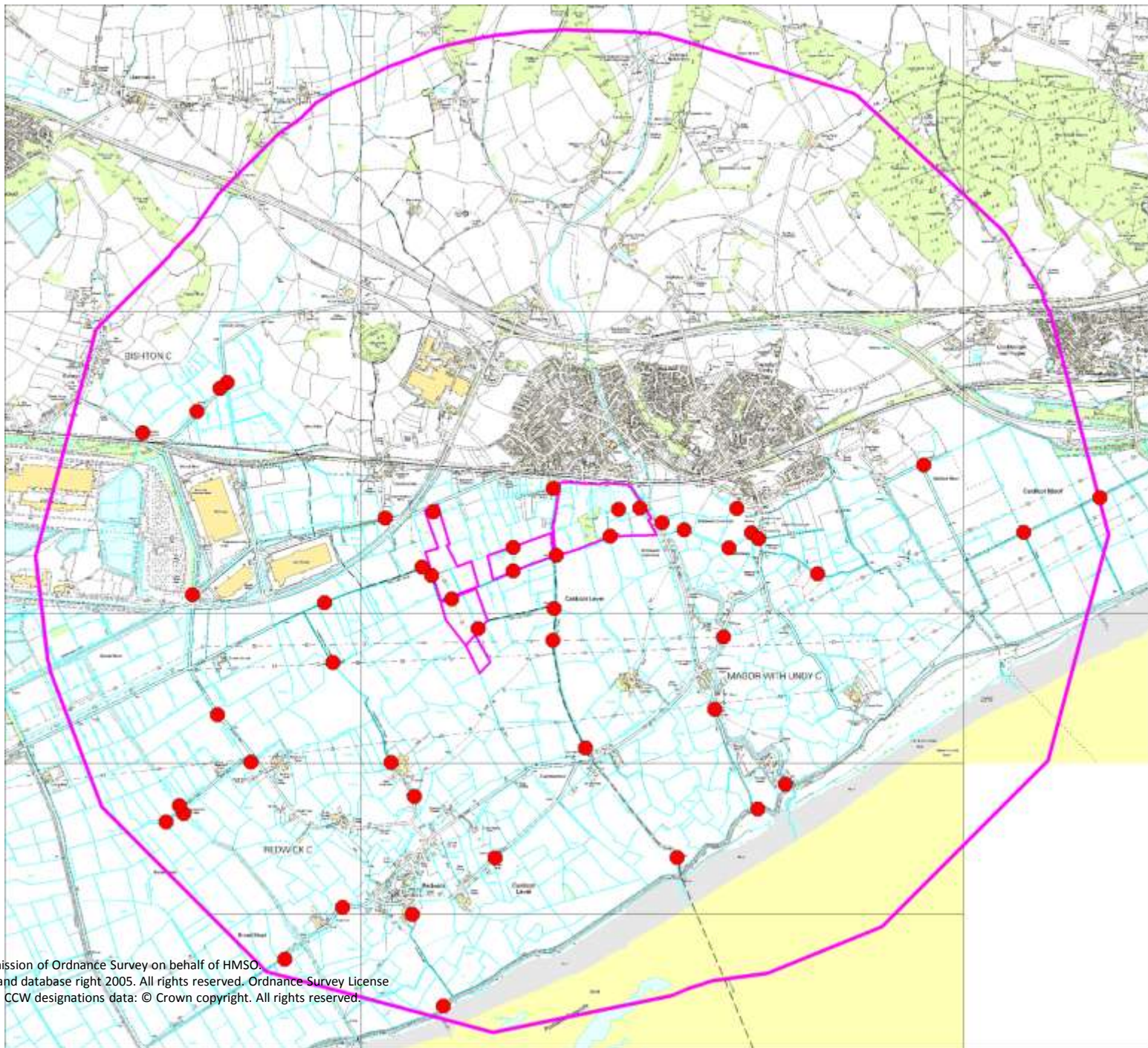
1. Set up an office and team
2. Commission GI and Destination Management studies
3. Developing our projects & strategies
4. Community engagement
5. Submit Landscape Conservation Action Plan to HLF in August 2017

Delivery Phase (Jan/Feb 2018 - June 2021)

1. Project implementation
2. Monitoring and evaluation
3. Legacy planning

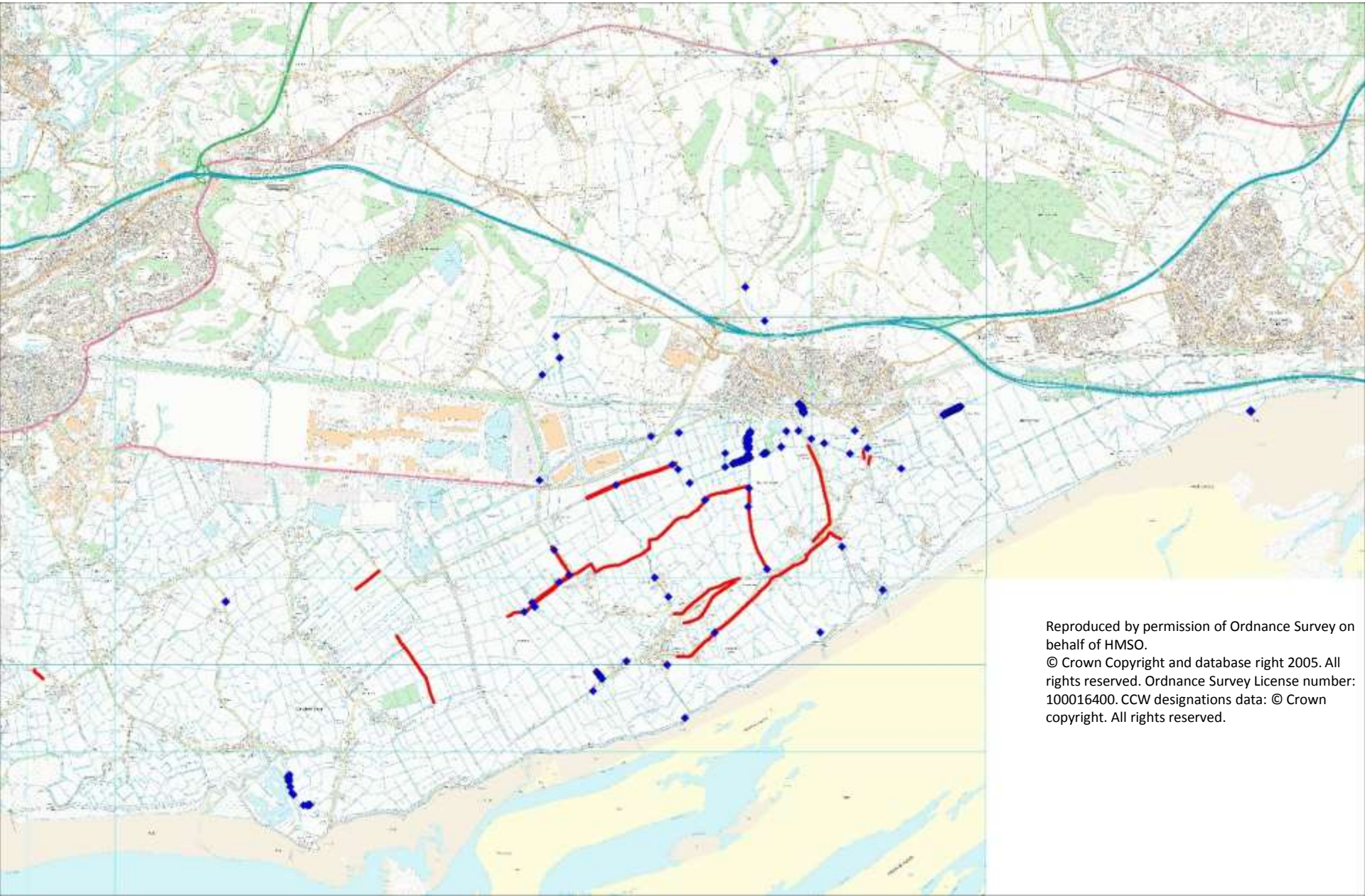
Gwent Levels Water vole re-introduction





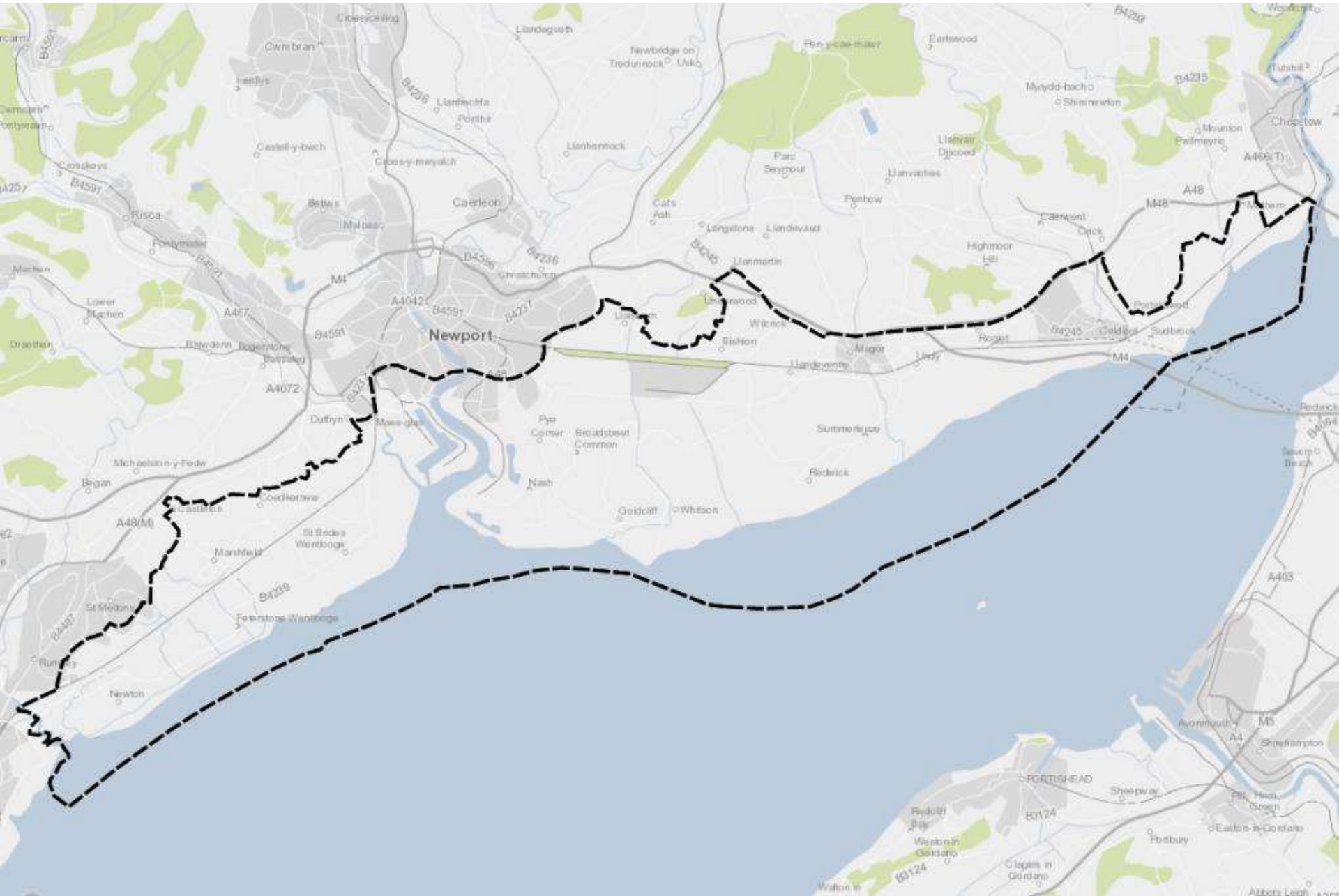
Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO.
© Crown Copyright and database right 2005. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey License
number: 100016400. CCW designations data: © Crown copyright. All rights reserved.

Recent Water Vole records Winter 2016

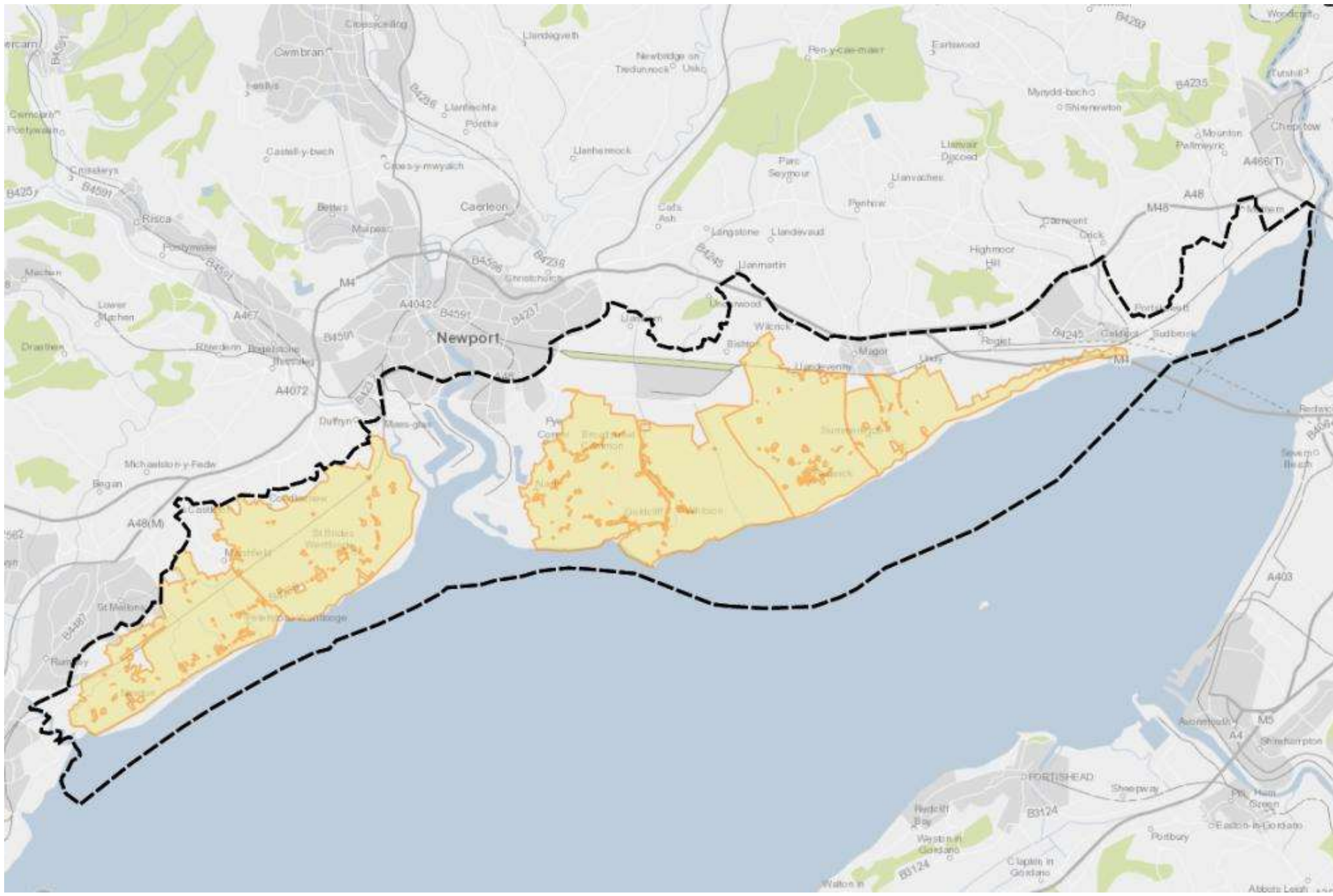


Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of HMSO.
© Crown Copyright and database right 2005. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey License number: 100016400. CCW designations data: © Crown copyright. All rights reserved.

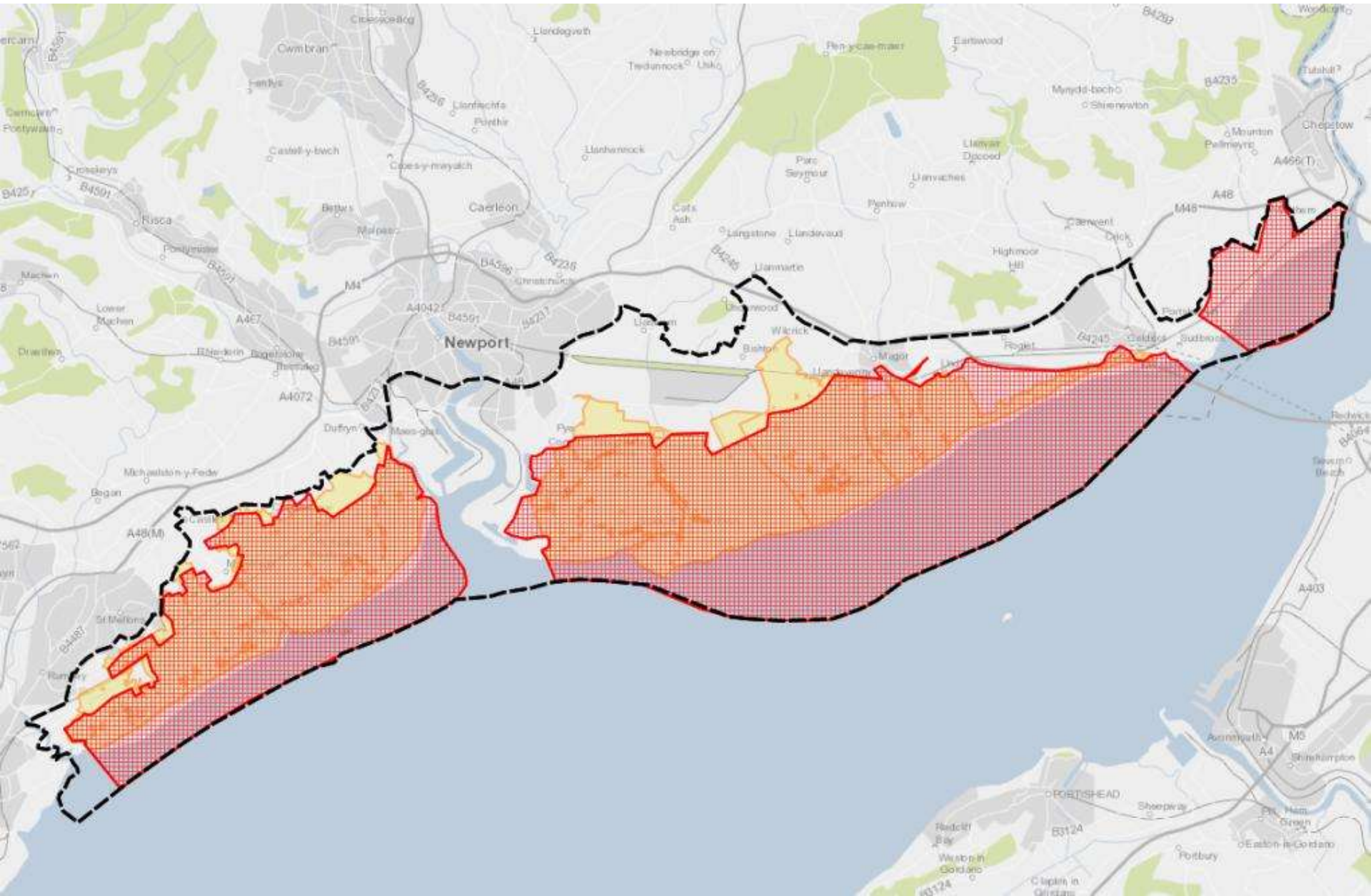
Living Levels Landscape Partnership area



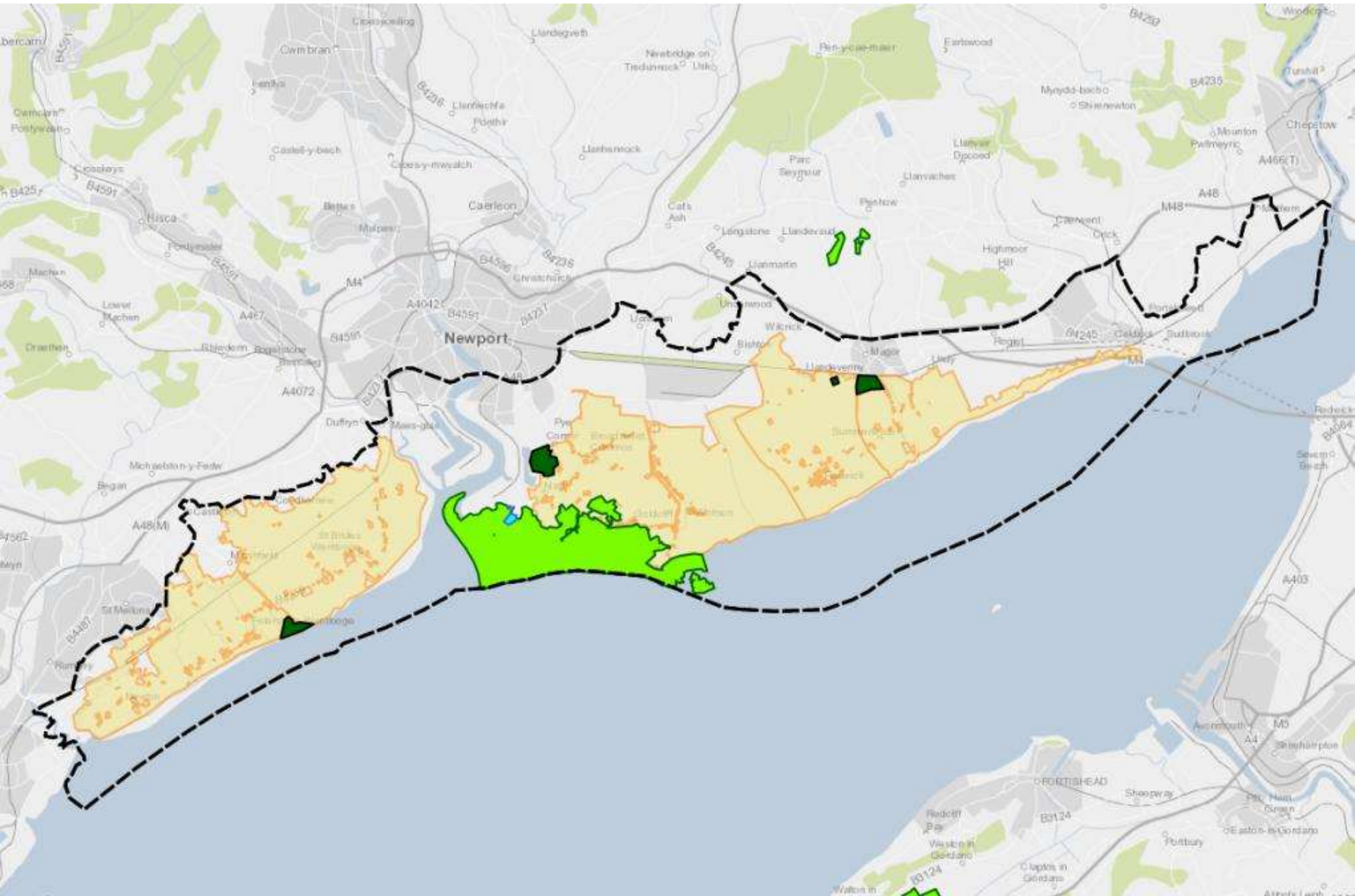
Gwent Levels SSSI series



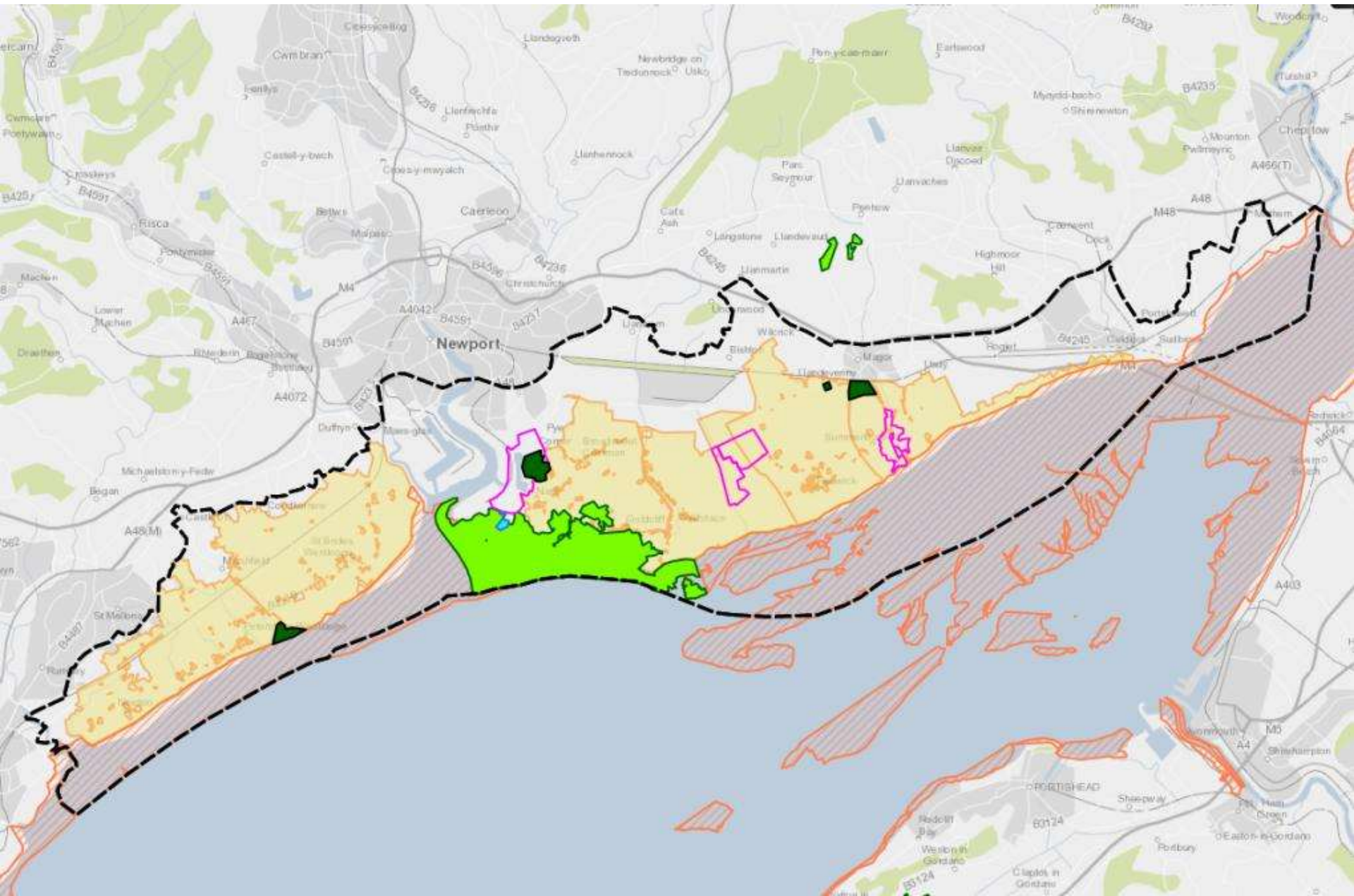
Historic Landscape



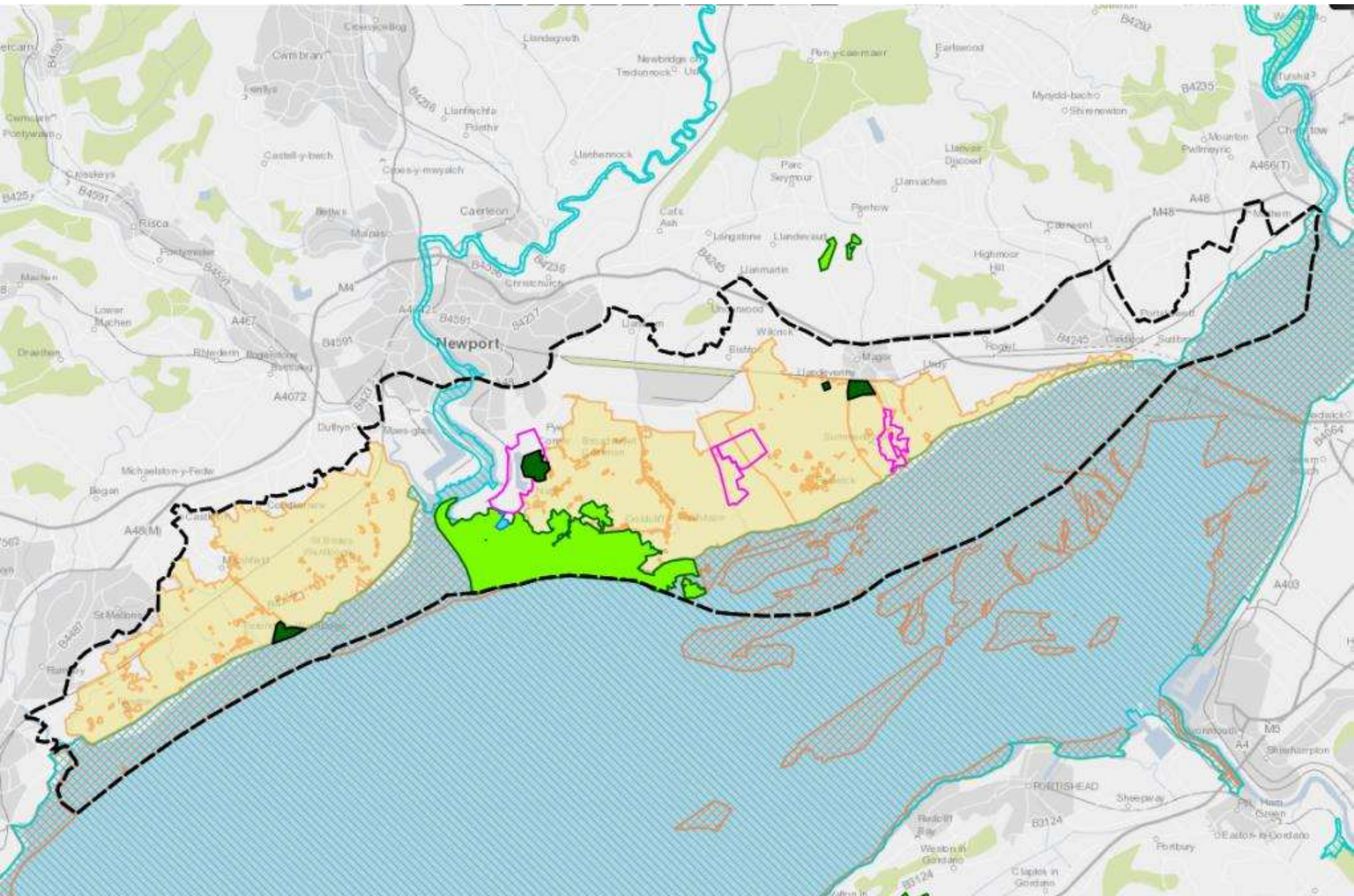
Nature Reserves



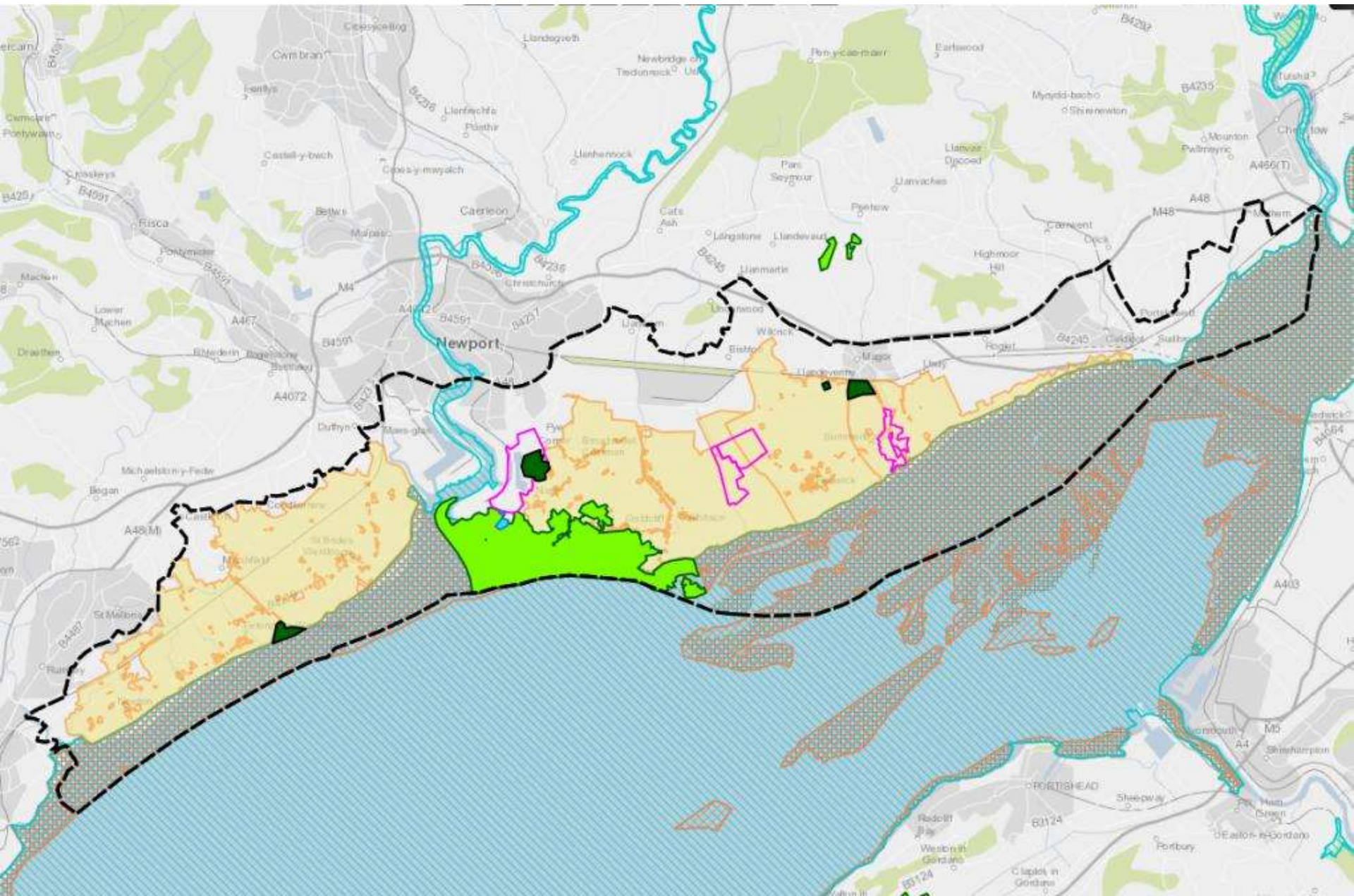
Special Protection Area



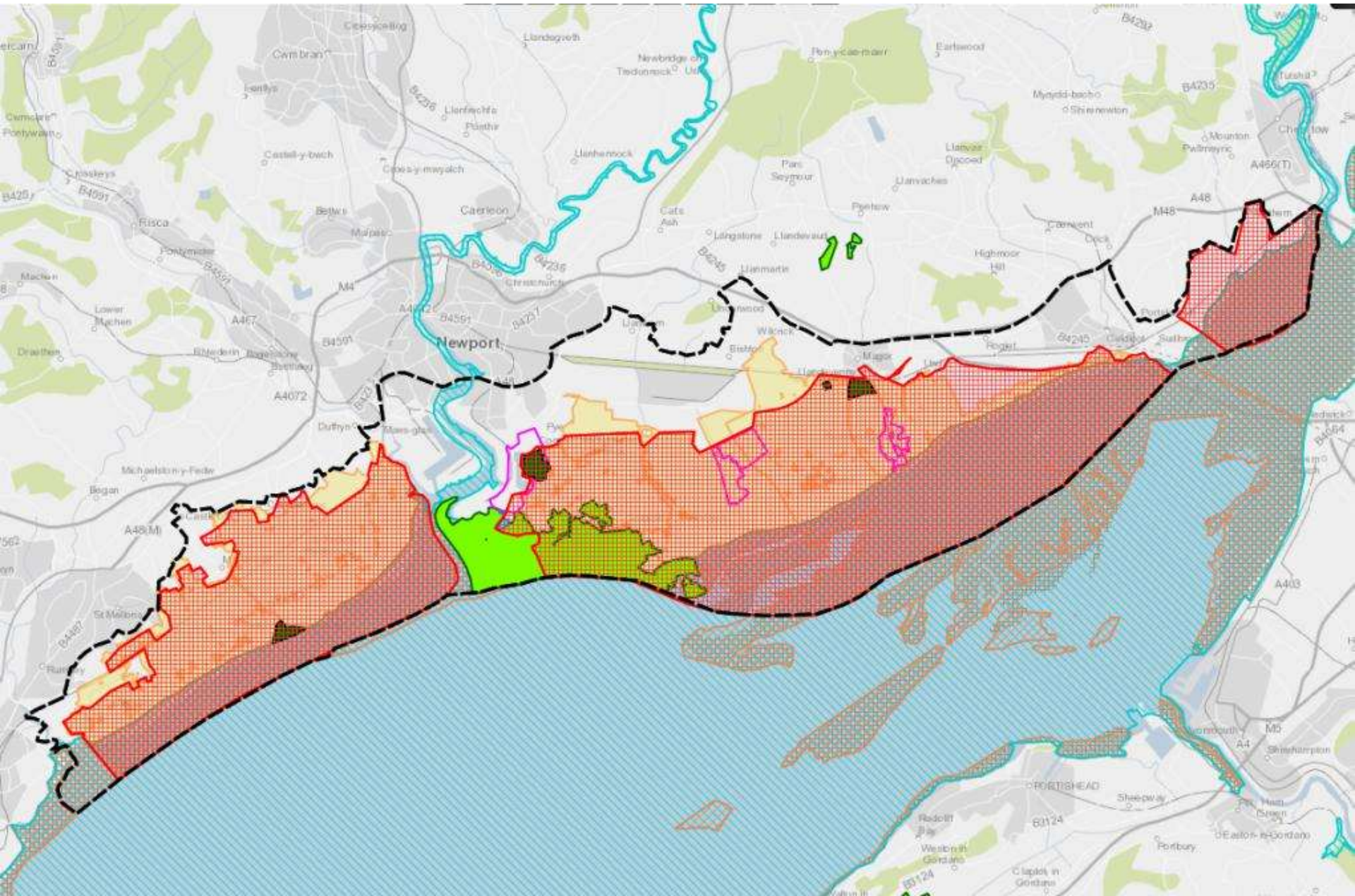
Special Areas of Conservation



Ramsar Internationally Important Wetland

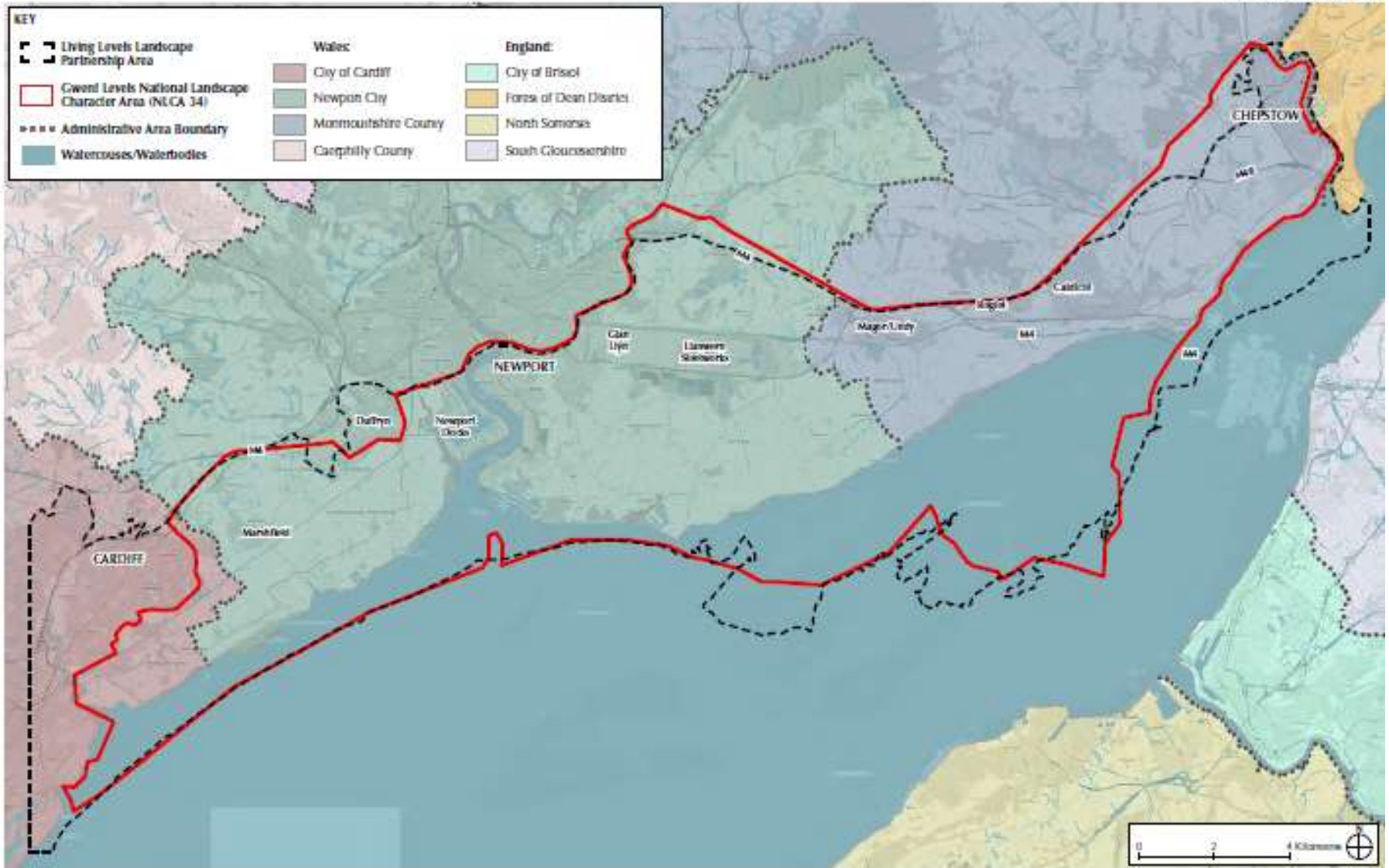


Highly Designated

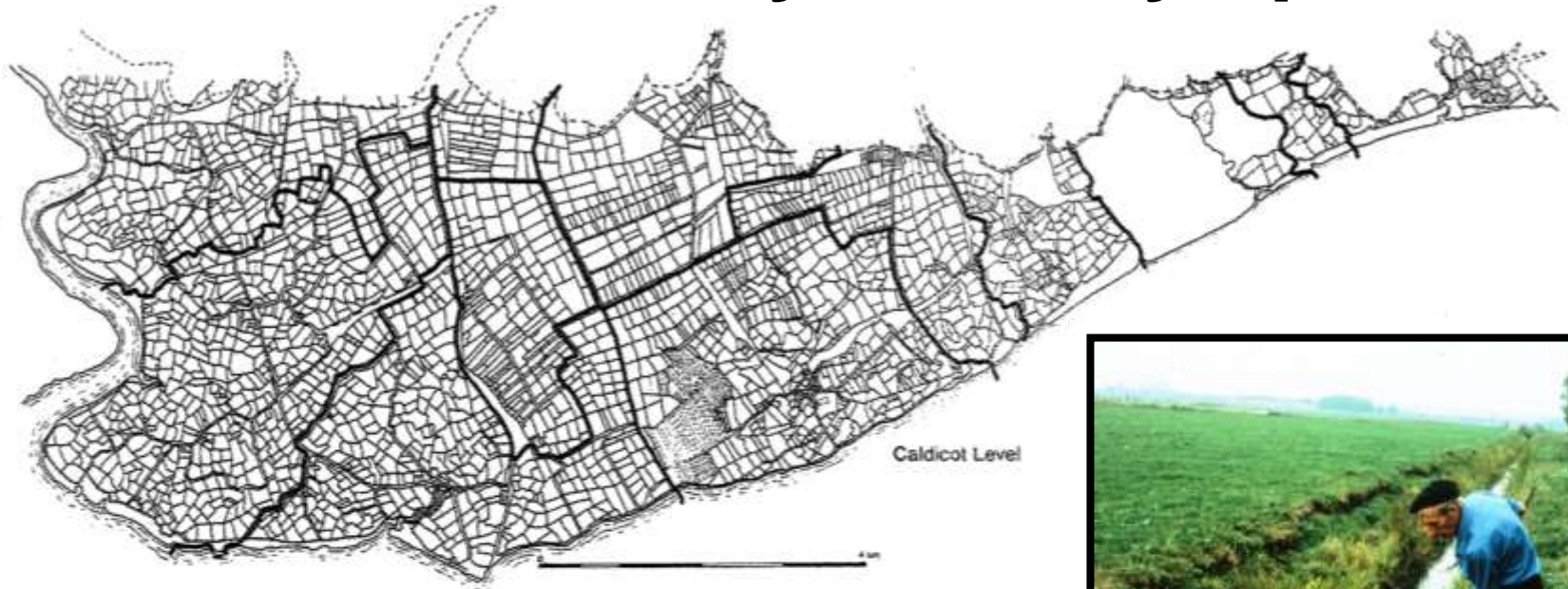


Landscape area: The Gwent Levels

Figure 1.1 Study Area



Gwent levels - why are they special?





Natural Heritage

- World's smallest flowering plant – rootless duckweed *Wolffia arrhiza*
- Water vole - most threatened mammal
- Shrill carder bee – few surviving populations in the UK
- UK's largest water beetle – great silver diving beetle and King diving beetle
- 8 terrestrial SSSI, SPAs, SACs, Ramsar
- 57% of UK wetlands have disappeared in last 50 years

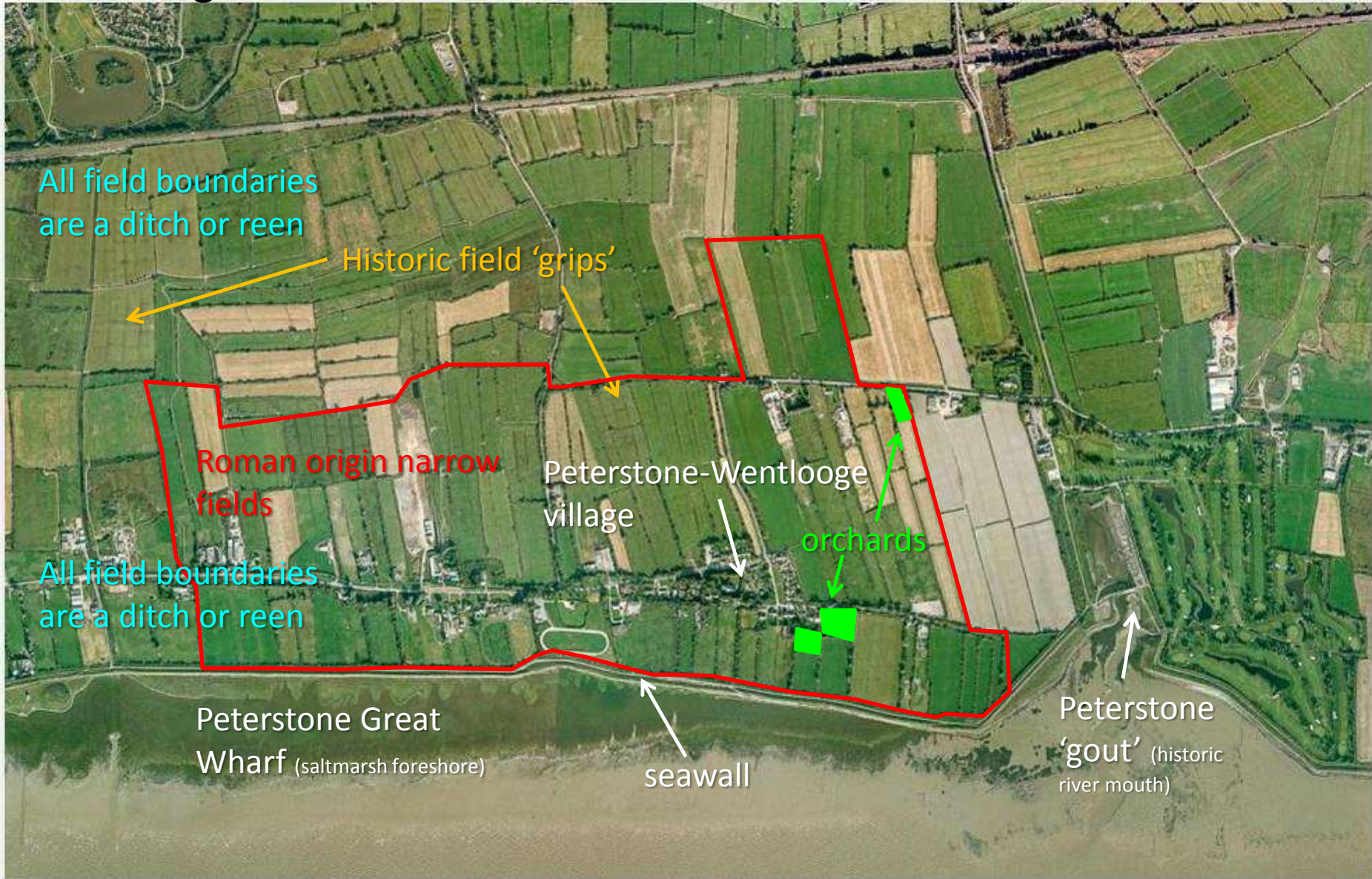
Unparalleled insight to the past



- most exciting archaeological finds in Wales over past 25 years
- Global influence on archaeological techniques
- Defining historic landscape characterisation for the world



Wentlooge Level



Key threats

- **Lack of strong positive identity**
 - Inappropriate development
 - Missed opportunities for investment
 - Little interpretation on Wales Coastal path
- **Disconnection**
 - Lack of understanding and appreciation
 - Negative impacts; flytipping
- **Unfavourable condition**
 - SSSI failing
 - Unique biodiversity threatened



1607 WOODCUT. "THE GREAT FLOOD"



Key opportunities

- Huge potential to act as a '**Green Lung**' for large latent population on the doorstep
- Opportunity to **add value** to existing investments and infrastructure, e.g. **WCP**
 - *Green Infrastructure strategy for the whole area*
 - *Destination Management strategy for the whole area*
- **Health and wellbeing** benefits
- Spike in investment from HLF an **enduring partnership** for the area





Broad aims of the Living Levels Partnership

1. Seek out and tell the history and stories of the Gwent Levels in fun and imaginative ways
2. Restore, enhance and celebrate the natural heritage of the Levels
3. Improve connectivity of the landscape to enhance community and visitor experiences and develop the Gwent Levels as a Destination
4. Provide skills, training and learning opportunities for a wide audience
5. To unite the community – its residents and business – around a sustainable vision for the future of the Gwent Levels



Community engagement



The story so far...



“What do the Gwent Levels mean to me?”

8 *'Loving your Levels'* Pop-Ins from Peterstone to Caldicot



"My home and a place to explore"

14 Heritage groups, projects and institutions



“An amazing, unique area combining historic remains and distinctive wildlife. It’s so different from the rest of Gwent...”

14 media opportunities



“A special and mysterious landscape”

16 'Pop-Ups' and 'Piggy-backs'



“A ‘world apart’ from my usual urban environment; like being in another country”

16 Community and Town Councils



“What we have on the Levels is unique and its stories need to be spread as widely as possible. Those of us living on the Levels whose families, like my own, go back generations, learnt of its history from our parents. Incomers and visitors need to be educated in its history which many know little of.”

35 (other) community groups and organisations



“A wilder place of nature and diversity which I can be part of - a refuge from city life “

480 followers



"The Gwent Levels is where I can find myself!"

800 Gwent Girl Guides:

“I pledge to help the Shrill Carder Bee...”



“I promise to help the bees and to tell my sister to not kill them”

1029 individuals 'face to face' so far...



“I’d never heard of the Gwent Levels until now. But after hearing about it, I want to learn more! “

Project planning: 25 projects in three themes



Theme 1. Conserving and restoring

- Restoration of key habitats to restore landscape character (and improve SSSI condition)
- Orchard restoration & community orchards planting
- Pollinating the Levels
- Combating threats – INNS and Flytipping
- Policies for the future – PES pilots and demonstration farms



Theme 2. Access and Interpretation

- Development of visitor and community hubs to improve orientation and information at key arrival and starting points in to the Levels
- Walking/ cycling routes linking out and joining up hubs, WCP, attractions – guided walks and family activities to promote active lifestyles
- Tide markers/‘People of the landscape’ sculptural trail
- Seasonal Events including the levels at night; murmurations, apple blossom time, spring high
- Built heritage -exhibitions and events
- Destination marketing; incl. Highways and community signage

Seasonal and 'alternative' events



Suggested Major Hubs

- Chepstow
- Caldicot Castle
- Magor & Magor Marsh
- Retail Park
- Wetlands Centre
- Transporter Bridge
- Tredegar House
- Lighthouse Inn (Lamby Way)
- Cardiff Bay



'People in the Landscape' Sculpture Trail



Theme 3. Skills and learning

- Training package to:
 - improve and enhance land management
 - market area as a visitor destination
 - empower communities to care for GL heritage
- Schools programme (KS2&3);
- Student internships and work experience package
- Engaging 'harder to reach communities' through art and events

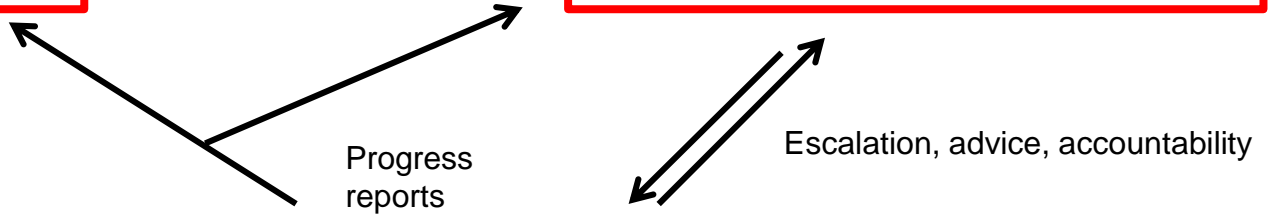
Fundraising

An additional £550k funding is still needed to maximise the HLF investment

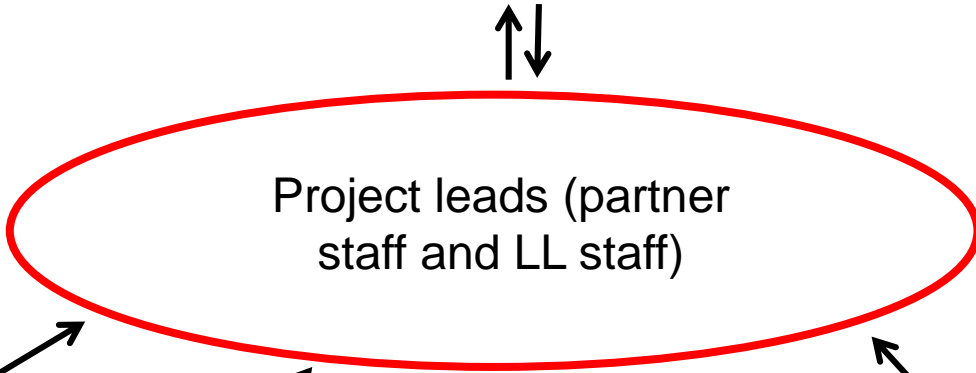
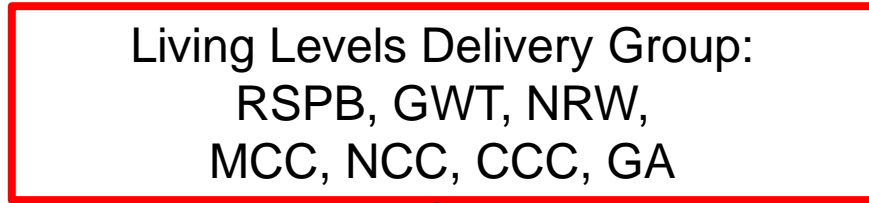
In pipeline

- **Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (Visit Wales, Revenue)**
 - **Content:** 2018 year of the Sea events and community engagement projects
 - **Lead organisation:** NCC, **Ask:** £150k
 - **Deadline:** October 2017
- **Sustainable Management Scheme (RDP, revenue)**
 - **Content:** Demonstration farming and Ecosystem Services projects
 - **Lead organisation:** RSPB, **Ask:** £400k (match for LP £120k)
 - **Deadline:** September 2017

Governance



Monitor progress against plan; risk and quality management



Responsible for outputs; Highlight and budget reports

Community →

Stakeholders →

Staff from Partners →

Farmers and Landowners →

Businesses →

Diolch!

 yn rhoi cartref i fyd natur giving nature a home

 Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales

 monmouthshire *sir fynyv*

 buglife Cymru

 YNURWCH A'R WOODAD **sustrans** JOIN THE MOVEMENT

 Ymddiriedolaeth Genedlaethol National Trust



 Newport CITY COUNCIL CYNGOR DINAS Casnewydd

 THE wildlife TRUSTS YMDIRIEDOLAETHAU natur GWENT

 CARDIFF CAERDYDD

 Cardiff Story Museum Amgueddfa Stori Caerdydd

 Bumblebee Conservation Trust

 Archifau Gwent Archives

 Supported by **The National Lottery**® through the Heritage Lottery Fund

Cefnogwyd gan **Y Loteri Genedlaethol** trwy Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri