Green Infrastructure Statement

The Gaer
Forden
Welshpool
Powys
SY21 8NR

Erection of an agricultural livestock building for calf housing and all associated works

D & S Gethin

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1. Policy Background

1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) supports a full planning application for the erection of an agricultural livestock building with the purpose of being used to house calves at The Gaer, Forden, Welshpool, SY21 8NR

1.2 This GIS aims to respond to the requirements of Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024). This states:

"6.2.11 The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes.

6.2.12 A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied.

6.2.13 There are multiple ways of incorporating green infrastructure, depending on the needs and opportunities a site presents, and the green infrastructure assessment should be referred to, as appropriate, in order to ascertain local priorities. Landscaping, green roofs, grass verges, sustainable drainage and gardens are examples of individual design measures that can have wider cumulative benefits, particularly in relation to biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems as well as in securing the other desired environmental qualities of places. Wider landscape measures, such as the creation of species rich meadows, woodlands and the improvement of linkages between areas of biodiversity value should be considered for larger scale development. In most cases the green infrastructure statement should highlight any baseline data considered and surveys and assessments undertaken, including but not limited to, habitats and species surveys, arboricultural surveys and assessments, sustainable drainage statements, landscape and ecological management plans, open space assessments and green space provision and active travel links".

1.3 The 'step-wise approach', as outlined below, demonstrates the sequential approach that has been adopted as part of the proposed development to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimised, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for. In addition, enhancement has been secured by delivering a net biodiversity benefit on-site, over and above that required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact.

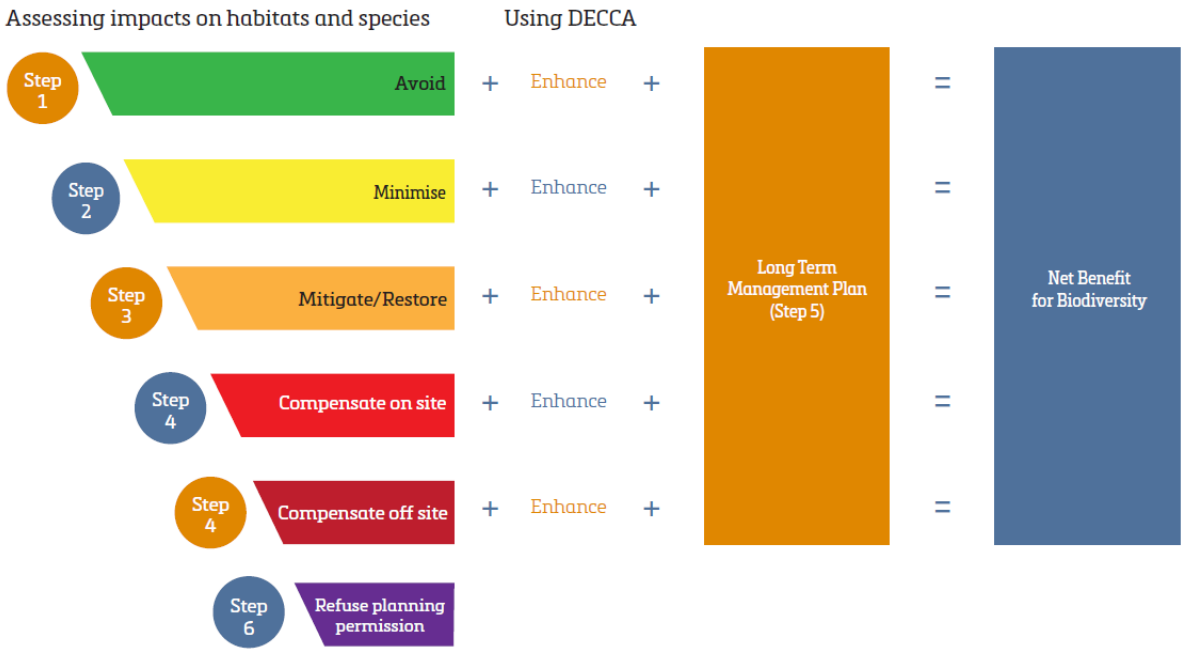

Figure 1: A summary of the step-wise approach taken from Chapter 6 of PPW (Ed. 12, 2024)

2. The Proposed Development

2.1 The proposed development comprises the erection of an agricultural building, which will be used to house youngstock at the Gaer. The building would form a standalone unit, specifically designed for accommodating calves, and would have a floor area of approximately 1828 sq. metres, with an additional roof overhang of 119 sq. metres. The site of the building is on an area of mainly modified grassland field with a small part being hard standing, and is adjacent to the established farmyard.

3. Green Infrastructure Baseline

3.1 As noted, the application site relates to an existing area of grassland and hard standing located north of the existing farm complex, some of the area has been recently excavated and is formed of crushed stone. The site itself is therefore considered to have very low ecological value at present.

3.2 The proposed development would be a new standalone building and given the design, age and use of existing buildings, it is not considered any would be suitable for use by roosting bats or nesting birds. Therefore, it is considered unlikely to hold any biodiversity of interest at present.

3.3 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report for the site, undertaken by Arbor Vitae Environment Ltd, is being submitted to support the application. The application site is not located within or near to any statutory or non-statutory designated ecological sites, and therefore the proposed development does not have any potential to cause an impact upon protected sites.

4. The Green Infrastructure Strategy

4.1 The approach to the design of the proposed building is fully outlined within the accompanying Planning Statement. The submitted design arrived at is a result of thought being given to the environmental effects of the proposed development.

4.2 It is proposed that compensation and enhancement will be provided in the form of native tree planting on the northeast side of the building which will connect to the existing hedgerow. Additionally, two Woodcrete bat boxes and one Woodcrete bird box be erected on the south-western (side) elevation of the proposed building. The proposed ecological mitigation features are shown on the submitted Biodiversity Enhancement Plan, an extract of which is below:

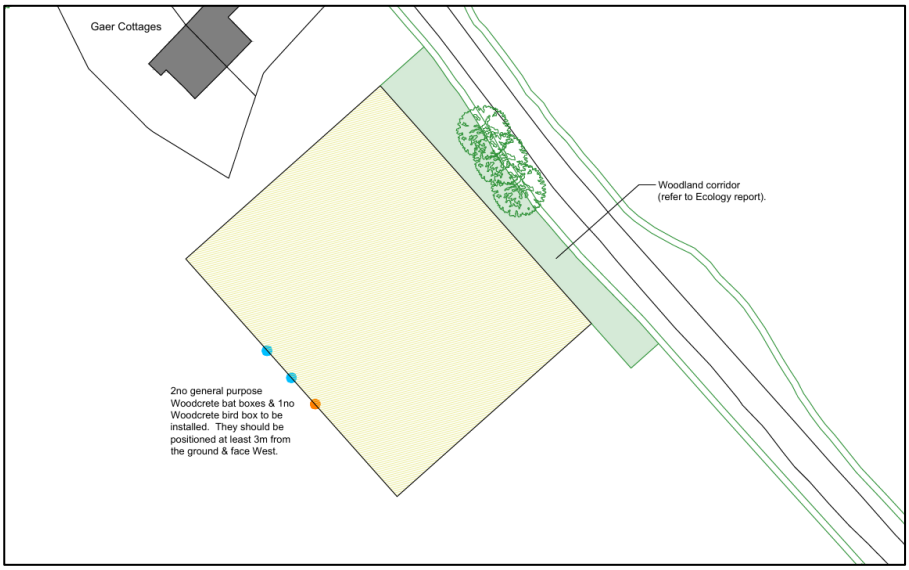

Figure 2: Location of NBB

4.3 The step-wise approach has been followed as impacts upon habitats and species would be avoided through the siting and design of the proposal. The development would also not prejudice connectivity between nearby habitat for protected species and wider biodiversity.

4.4 Off-site ecological mitigation will not be required as there will not be any impact upon protected species on the site.

4.5 The Applicant will ensure the long-term management and maintenance of the proposed trees bird and bat boxes to ensure they are kept in a suitable condition by using information outlines in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

5. Conclusion

5.1 It is clear the proposed development would not cause any impacts upon existing green infrastructure, biodiversity, ecosystem resilience or protected species. The proposal has fully followed the step-wise approach as prescribed by Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales, and the development would provide a net benefit for biodiversity which is commensurate to the scale of the proposals.