Green Infrastructure Statement

Land at Gaerfechan
Cerrigydrudion
Corwen
LL21 0RS

Construction of a Cubicle Building, Access Track and all associated works

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1. Policy Background

1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) supports a full planning application for the construction of a new cubicle building, access track and all associated works at Land at Gaerfechan, Cerrigydrudion, Corwen, LL21 0RS.

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.

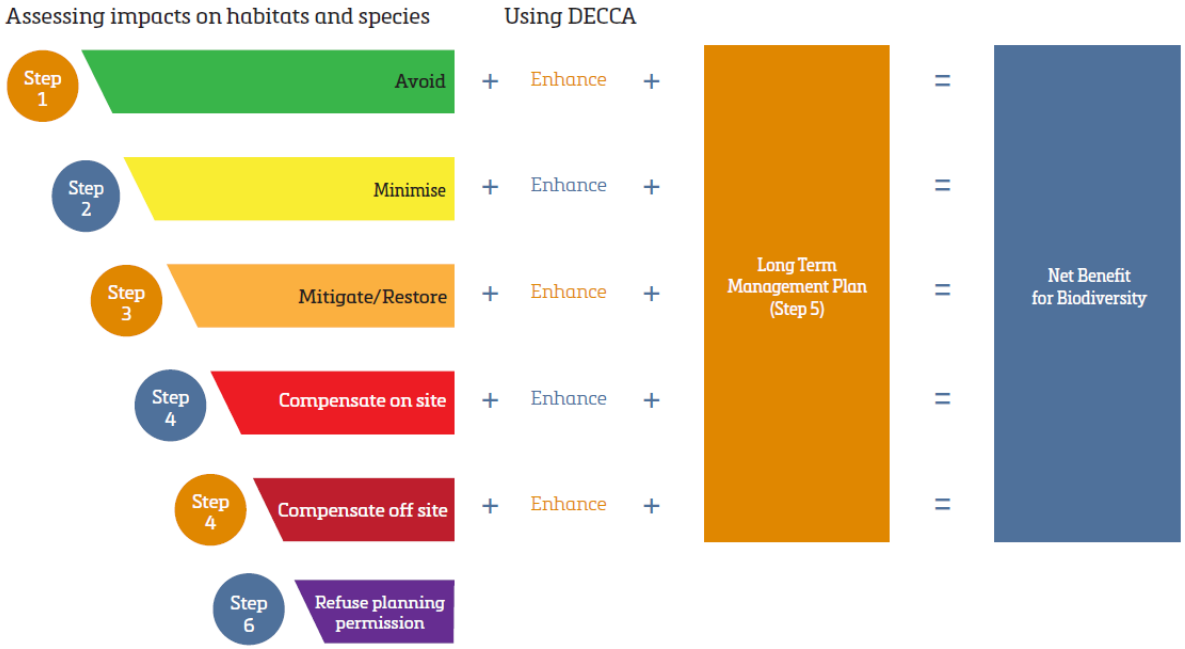

Figure 1: A summary of the step-wise approach taken from Chapter 6 of PPW (Ed. 12, 2024)

2. The Proposed Development

2.1 The application seeks full planning permission for the construction of an agricultural building to be used for cubicle housing as part of the existing dairy enterprise at Gaerfechan. The application also seeks consent for supporting infrastructure, to include a new stone access track between the new building and the main farm complex to the east, as well as an underground dirty water/slurry connection between the proposed cubicle building and the slurry store granted planning permission under planning application reference: 0/52209.

2.2 The proposed building will measure 29.8m in width and 68.6m in length. It will measure 4.8m to the eaves and 7.4m to the ridgeline. Internally it will contain two separate cubicle areas, with a feed passage down the building's centre. It's internal floor area, including the feed passage, will be approximately 2044m2. There will be four doors within each end elevation.

2.3 The proposed external materials will comprise concrete mass lower walls, with a mixture of timber Yorkshire boarding and 'juniper green' box profile cladding above. The roof will be finished with grey fibre cement sheeting.

2.4 The building will sit atop a concrete apron which will extend 5m around the perimeter of the building so as to ensure suitable access around the building for cows, machinery, vehicles and workers during all periods of the year.

2.5 A new underground dirty water/slurry connection is to be made to the adjacent slurry store which has already been granted planning permission. This will ensure a direct connection between the proposed cubicle building and the purpose-built slurry store. The proposed building and underground connection will be constructed in accordance with SSAFO Regulations and The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations (2021). The underground connection will be capable of lasting at least 20 years without maintenance.

2.6 A new 3m wide stone access track, linking the proposed cubicle building with the main farm complex at Gaerfechan, will also be constructed. At present there is no farm track linking the main farm complex with its 'satellite' complex, and as such the proposed track will ensure access can be provided across the land during all periods of the year, whilst also reducing farm traffic levels along the A5 by providing a direct route without needing to access the public highway network.

2.7 As already noted, the proposed building is designed to provide modern and fit-for-purpose cubicle housing for the farm's dairy herd. The farm's existing cubicle sheds at the main farm complex are becoming increasingly outdated and the proposed building will provide a purpose-built modern structure which will provide enhanced levels of animal welfare for the dairy herd. Given that the proposal will be a replacement of the farm's existing cubicle buildings, with the aim being to increase animal welfare standards, it is important to note that stock numbers on the holding will not change or increase as a consequence of the proposed development.

3. Green Infrastructure Baseline

3.1 At present, the application site comprises an area of improved agricultural grazing land. Owing to its improved nature and intensive agricultural use, the site is considered to be of low ecological value and is unlikely to host any protected or priority species. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) accompanies the planning application, which provides a comprehensive assessment of the potential ecological impacts of the proposals.

3.2 Therefore, it is considered the application site is devoid of any 'green infrastructure' at present, is of low ecological value and has little potential to be in use by any protected or priority species.

3.3 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 adverse impact upon protected sites.

4. The Green Infrastructure Strategy

4.1 The approach to the design of the proposed development is fully outlined within the accompanying Planning, Design & Access Statement. The submitted design has been arrived at following thought being given to the environmental effects of the proposals.

4.2 Firstly, as noted above, the application site has a low green infrastructure baseline at present and as such, no large-scale impacts upon green infrastructure are anticipated.

4.3 Dwg No: 79954 / RJC / 004 (NBB Plan) and Part 6.3 of the submitted PEA outline the NBB and green infrastructure strategy as part of the proposed development. The proposed strategy principally comprises:

- New area of native species trees and copse planting (measuring approximately 500m2) on land to the south of the proposed development (on land under the ownership of the Applicant). Full details of planting numbers, species, specifications, timings and aftercare measures are contained within Dwg No: 79954 / RJC / 004.
- Erection of 1x Woodcrete 28mm nest box on the east-facing side of the existing sheep shed on-site.
- Erection of 2x Woodcrete bat boxes on the west-facing side of the proposed building away from the main entrance. The boxes will be at least 3m from ground level.

4.4 The proposed measures, above, will provide a substantial NBB effect, taking into account the application site's low green infrastructure baseline.

4.5 Therefore, whilst the incorporation of new green infrastructure into the proposed development itself is very difficult and would be impractical noting its functional design and agricultural use, the proposals nevertheless include substantial NBB measures in order for biodiversity and green infrastructure to be enhanced within the site and its surroundings.

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

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

4.8 The proposals would also achieve an overall net benefit for biodiversity on the holding over and above the baseline.

4.9 The Applicant will ensure the long-term management and maintenance of the proposed bird and bat boxes to ensure they are kept in a useable condition.

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.