NET BIODIVERSITY BENEFIT SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT

IN SUPPRT OF APPLICATION: P/2024/1348

FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURAL SLURRY STORE WITH ASSOCIATED RECEPTION PIT AND SEPARATOR

Prepared on behalf of:

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1. Context and The Site

This statement provides a comment on the Net Biodiversity Benefit that will occur as a result of the development in accordance with planning ref: P/2024/1348 at Borras Head Farm. The development will see the erection of a slurry store to ensure the farm is compliant with The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021. This statement gives specific consideration to a scheme of hedgerow restoration and planting and should be read in conjunction with the Green Infrastructure Statement.

2. Planning Policy Context

Under 6.2.7 of Planning Policy Wales, protection, retention and restoration, creation and connection of green features is considered to deliver the most significant benefits. This scheme proposes the protection, management and restoration of the existing hedgerows, in addition to the creation of new hedgerows, connecting existing wildlife corridors.

3. Hedgerow Restoration Plan

Hedgerows serve a number of functions including providing shelter, enhancing the landscape and acting as a vital habitat for birds, insects and small mammals. It is therefore important to ensure they are well maintained and restored where necessary.

The majority of the land parcels on the holding have existing mature hedgerow boundaries. There are some lengths of existing hedgerows with gaps. The existing hedgerows comprise of species including Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Holly. These resilient species are common throughout the region and provide a range of habitats for insects and birds.

The existing hedgerows will be managed in accordance with the People's Trust for Endangered Species 'Hedgerow Management Cycle' (see Appendix 1) to fill existing gaps and promote density.

4. Hedgerow Planting Plan

The planting of 650m of new hedgerow is proposed along existing field boundaries where no hedgerow is currently located (see Appendix 2). This will contribute to green infrastructure networks which is supported under 6.2.1 of Planning Policy Wales. The planting of new hedgerows will enhance landscape features, improve biodiversity, sequester carbon and provide habitat for pollinator insect species. The applicant will also look to plant gaps within existing hedgerows. The planting of new hedgerow lengths and filling gaps will link habitat and provide valuable wildlife corridors.

The new planting will consist of native species and co-exist with the existing green infrastructure on the site. The new hedgerows will be fenced off to prevent cattle eating and damaging the hedgerows to allow for proper establishment. This provides a further net biodiversity benefit to the site.

5. Species Selection

The hedgerows will be planted with resilient native species which are common in the surrounding areas:

- Hawthorn: This species will provide a thick wildlife corridor. The flowers and berries produced will be a good source of nutrition for nesting birds and insects.

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- Blackthorn: This densely branched shrub is particularly suited to hedging. The berries produced from late August to October provide food for insects such as black and brown hairstreak butterflies and moths as well as bees and other pollinators. The thorny cover provides a habitat for nesting and roosting birds and small mammals.

- Holly: This species' woody growth provides cover for roosting birds and invertebrates. The flowers provide a nectar source for insects and its berries provide a food source for birds between September and March.

Overall, the establishment of these hedgerow trees will increase the food, cover and nesting sites available for wildlife.

6. Planting

The new hedgerows will be planted as bare-root stock between late Autumn and late Winter. The hedge plants will be purchased as whips (approximately 60cm in height) and planted when soil conditions are optimal and other species are dormant to allow trees to establish a network of feeder roots before spring. There will be double-staggered rows with 6 trees planted to every metre.

7. Monitoring and Maintenance

Double fencing will be erected to protect the young hedge plants from browsing and grazing animals. Hedgerows will be managed with varying heights to ensure there is habitat for birds and animals that like to feed and nest closer to and further away from the ground. Plants will be managed to produce berries and have good structure, ensuring nesting sites for birds.

To ensure a good structure of the newly planted hedges and ensure that there are berries produced in the plants after 2 years, the hedges will be:

- cut in increments, by increasing the height and width of each cut by at least 10cm
- cut every other year and rotationally
- trimmed in late winter, to allow birds to feed on berries over the winter

The existing hedgerows are flailed and managed during the autumn and winter. Particular care will be taken to avoid damage to the young plants of the new hedgerow lengths.

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8. Conclusion – Biodiversity and Environmental Enhancement

Hedgerows are an important habitat and source of resources for birds, insects and small mammals in their own right. New hedgerows linking to existing ones or habitats such as woodland, such as the 650m of new hedgerow to be planted here, are particularly valuable as they act as wildlife corridors. The restoration of existing and creation of new hedgerows as part of this development will therefore increase the biodiversity of the holding. This, in conjunction with the erection of bat and bird boxes as detailed in the Green Infrastructure Statement, will lead to a Net Biodiversity Benefit on the site.

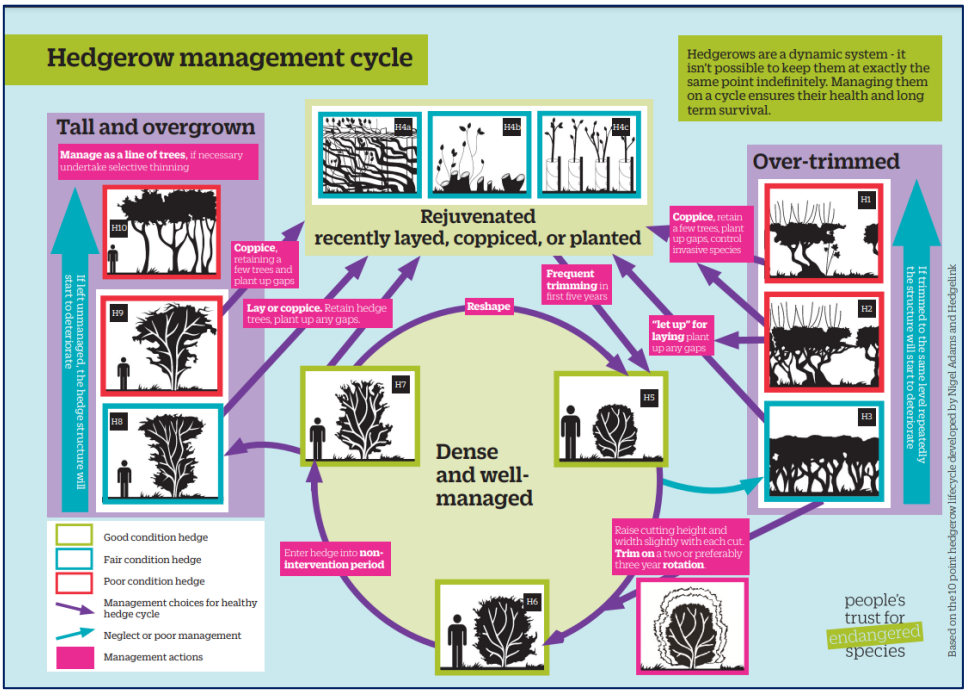
The applicant is committed to sustainable land management and enhancement of the local environment. The actions contained within this Biodiversity Benefit Statement demonstrate long-term managed enhancement of the local natural environment.

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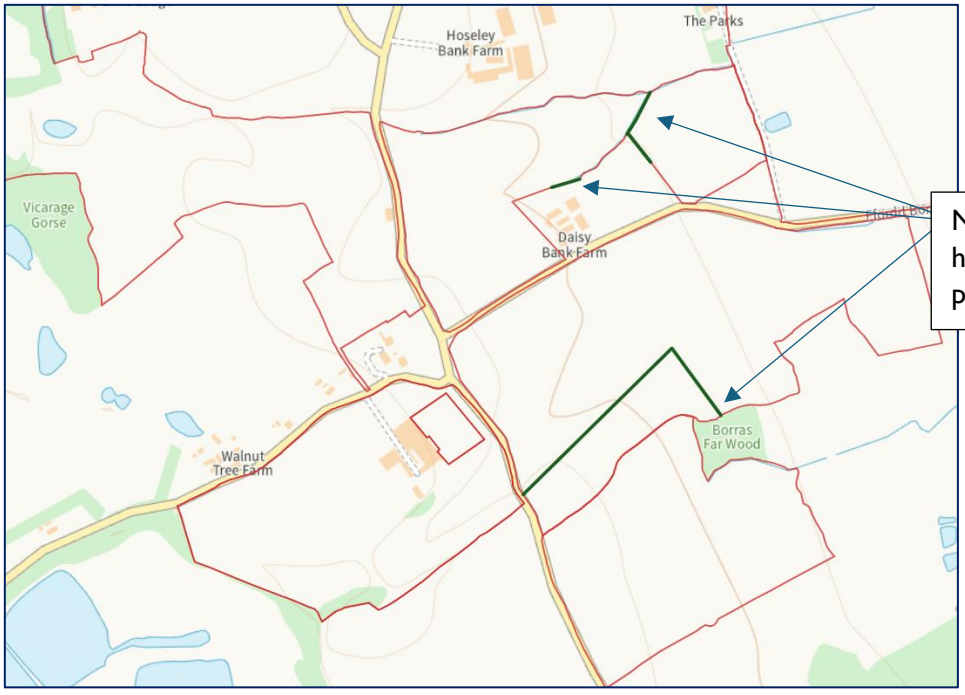
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Appendix 1: Hedgerow Management Cycle



Appendix 2: Scheme of Hedgerow Planting



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