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Bishop's House, 17 Sontley Road, Wrexham

Green Infrastructure Statement

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Introduction

This Green Infrastructure Statement has been produced by Lawray Architects for The Diocese of Wrexham Council and provides a brief statement associated with the proposed development of the site at Bishop's House, Wrexham.

The proposed works are to install PV solar panels to the existing car port roof to the rear of the Grade II Listed Bishop's House.

Green infrastructure (GI) is defined in Planning Policy for Wales (PPW) Edition 12 as "*the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places*". Development proposals should take GI into consideration in order to avoid negative impacts on habitats and species, and seek ways to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 provides a context for the delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure. Its protection and provision can make a significant contribution to the sustainable management of natural resources, and in particular to protecting, maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in terms of the diversity within and connections between ecosystems and the extent and condition of these ecosystems, so that they are better able to resist, recover from and adapt to pressures. This means that the development of green infrastructure is an important way for local authorities to deliver their Section 6 duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

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.

The DECCA Framework and Net Benefits for Biodiversity

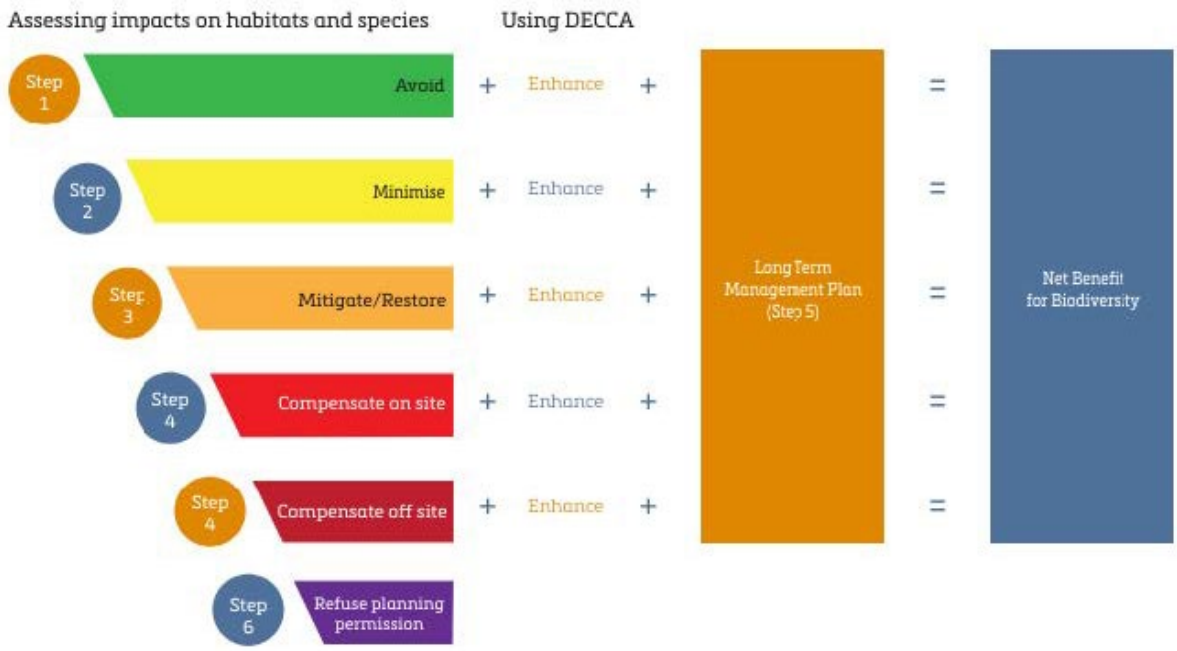
The DECCA framework is used for evaluating ecosystem resilience based on five attributes and properties specified in the Environment (Wales) Act. These are: Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity and Aspects of ecosystem resilience.
A summary of the definitions is described below:
• **Diversity:** maintaining and enhancing diversity at every scale, including genetic, structural, habitat and between-habitat levels. This supports the complexity of ecosystem functions and interactions that deliver services and benefits.
• **Extent:** incorporating measures which maintain and increase the area of semi-natural habitat/features and linkages between habitats. In general, smaller ecosystems have reduced capacity to adapt, recover or resist disturbance.
• **Condition:** The condition of an ecosystem is affected by multiple and complex pressures acting both as short term and longer term types of disturbance. Both direct and wider impacts should be considered, for example avoiding or mitigating pressures such as climate change, pollution, invasive species, land management neglect etc.
• **Connectivity:** This refers to the links between and within habitats, which may take the form of physical corridors, stepping stones in the landscape, or patches of the same or related vegetation types that together create a network that enables the flow or movement of genes, species and natural resources. Developments should take opportunities to develop functional habitat and ecological networks within and between ecosystems, building on existing connectivity.
• **Aspects** of ecosystem resilience (adaptability, recovery and resistance): ecosystem resilience is a product of the above four attributes. Adaptability, recovery and resistance to/from a disturbance are defining features of ecosystem resilience.

Step-wise Approach

Paragraph 6.4.11 of Planning Policy Wales states that *"planning authorities must follow a step-wise approach 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 minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for. Enhancement must be secured by delivering a biodiversity benefit primarily on site or immediately adjacent to the site, over and above that required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact."*

Impacts on habitats and species should be treated in a step-wise manner (PPW 12, paragraph 6.4.15), by seeking to:

- **Avoid** damage to biodiversity in its widest sense by maintaining the largest possible area of existing habitat supporting biodiversity and functioning ecosystems, particularly Section 7 habitats and species where present, through careful development design and consideration of long-term maintenance and management and ensuring that retained habitats continue to be well connected to adjacent habitats to provide connectivity for key species.
- **Mitigate** or **restore** by identifying measures to address the specific negative effects by repairing damaged habitats and disturbed species. The measures should seek to restore in excess of like for like, accounting for disturbance and time lags for the recovery of habitat and species, and in every case, mitigation or restoration measures should seek to build ecosystem resilience within the site and where possible the wider area.
- As a last resort off-site **compensation** for unavoidable damage must be provided. This must be of significant magnitude to fully compensate for any loss.
- All development must **deliver a net benefit** for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience from the baseline state (proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed).



Planning Policy Wales - Edition 12, p.148

Paragraph 6.2.12 of Planning Policy Wales states that *"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.*

Site Details

Bishops House and its associated office accommodation block currently act as both a dwelling for the Bishop of the Diocese of Wrexham, the office/ working environment and archive of the Diocesan curial staff.

The existing site and buildings are located to the south of Wrexham town centre, directly off Sontley Road, a minor route that heads to and from the town centre. The immediate surrounding area is semi-rural with small, scattered pockets of hedgerows and grassland with a national trust parkland at approximately 600m to the south.

There are no blue infrastructure resources (rivers, streams, ditches or other watercourses) within the site. As the site comprises a dwelling and office accommodation, there are current connections to the local foul and surface water systems. There is no public access or footpaths within the site.

Summary of Green Infrastructure Proposals

Potential biodiversity enhancements are included as follows, and to be included as part of the proposals:

- Provisions for bats
  Given the listed nature of the building additional habitat provision will not be possible without altering the external appearance of the building and will not be proposed as part of this scheme.

- Provision for nesting birds
  Given the listed nature of the building additional habitat provision will not be possible without altering the external appearance of the building and will not be proposed as part of this scheme.

Due to the scale of the works and the listed nature of the building, the biodiversity enhancement proposals are believed to be proportionate with the development. On this basis, it is considered that this application demonstrates compliance with PPW and follows the Step-Wise Approach.

Alice Jones

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