Biodiversity Statement for planning application P/2025/0345

Background Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC) has given planning consent (Ref. P/2024/1195) for the change of use of land to equestrian and erection of stable and storage container on land adjacent to Tanyfron Road, Wrexham, LL11 5SA. The site sits to the south of Tanyfron road.

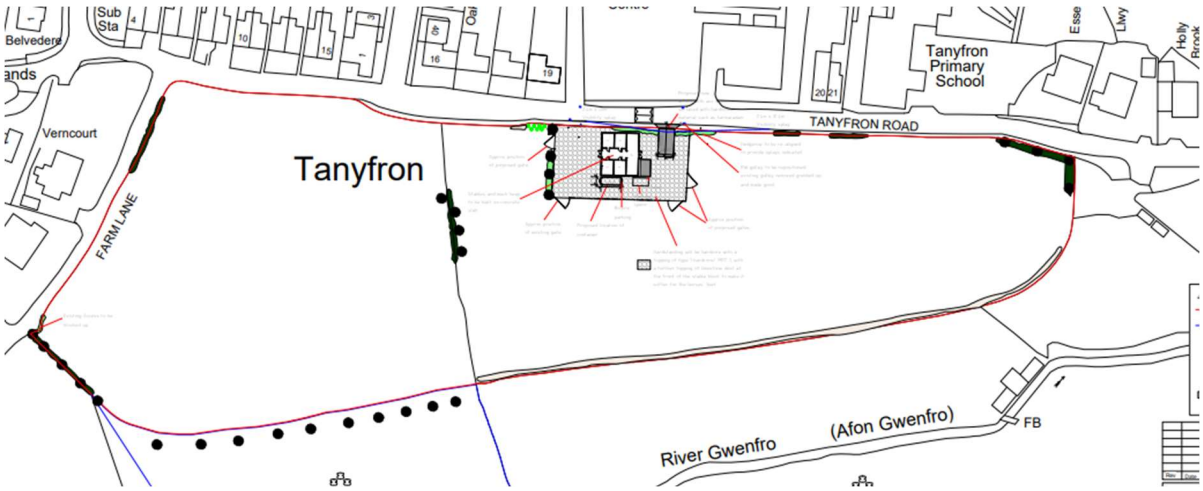
Condition 4 of the consent is as follows:

No part of the development shall commence until a plan to provide net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) i.e. a better outcome than if the site was left undeveloped has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The measures shall be implemented in full, prior to first occupation/use of the development, and thereafter maintained for the lifetime of the development.

This Statement (along with the Landscaping plan) seeks to provide the information required to discharge this condition. The site has been left for some time with no intervention, it has previously been used for cutting of hay and grazing of cattle and sheep, however this has not happened for some time before the land was purchased in October 2023. It comprises of an area of grassland and is surrounded by hedges.

Demonstration of how net benefit for biodiversity (and ecosystem resilience) will be secured and maintained.

The existing site is bounded on all sides by interrupted hedging; this current hedging is a mix of Hawthorne and holly. The main site area (pictured below) is hedged to the north boundary of the site and laid to grassland, which is made up of mixed meadow grasses. There are a small number of trees in the hedge line, but these are approximately 20 meters from the proposed development and will not be affected. The grassland has little ecological benefit, however the hedge would have an ecological benefit offering shelter and habitats for birds and small mammals.



Construction of the new Stables/ creation of hardstanding and removal of a small section of hedge can be categorised as a small/ low impact proposal. Development of this site would not result in a significant impact on any valued ecological resource at this location

NBB has been defined as 'the concept that development should leave biodiversity and ecosystems in a better state than before, through securing long term, measurable and demonstrable benefit

The following enhancement measures are proposed in answer to the above:

- 120 meters of native hedging has already been planted on site and 25 Rowan trees
- 7 miniature fruit trees (mix of apple/pear and plum)
- 5 additional Rowen trees to be planted.
- 35 meters of hornbeam/holly hedging to be planted
- 200 meters of dead hedging to be sited along the southern boundary.
- 4 swift and swallow boxes and 4 starling boxes
- 1 low level automatic water feeder for mammals
- 2 owl boxes
- 1 Bat box
- 6 willow trees

NBB provision 'should be proportional to the extent and impact of development' (CIEEM 2022). The proposed enhancements will therefore target a priority species known to be present in the area as well as increasing the general biodiversity value of the site. Biodiversity Enhancement

Management

The new and planned hedging is a mix of Rowan trees, field maple, hazel, hawthorn, dog rose and hornbeam hedging plants all recommended by the Wildlife trust as horse safe.

The 120 meters of hedging and trees we have already planted was in the bare root form and was purchased via the Wildlife trust. All further hedging will also be purchased as bare root plants from either the Wildlife trust or locally sourced (from within a 50-mile radius). The Hornbeam hedging which will be used to backfill the driveway spay, will be purchased as established plants of around 1 meter high and locally sourced (again from within a 50-mile radius). Shaded or boggy areas will be avoided for planting locations. Weeds and grass will be removed within 1m of the planting plots and cut back regularly to make sure they don't overrun the new plants; mulching will be provided around the new plants to slow the development of further grass and weeds.

- **Tree Protection** Wild animals such as rabbits and hare can cause damage to young trees and hedging plants. Tree guards and hedging stakes are protecting the new Rowan and Field Maple trees we have already planted and any new trees we plant will also be protected in this way. Once the trees are more established the stakes will be changed to more robust 1.20m tree stakes, and larger tree guards will be used. The hedging we have already

planted are protected by spiral hedge guards and hedging stakes which will stay in place until they are established. Further hedge planting will also be protected in this way.

- We have also electric fenced around any new hedging to protect the new plants from the horses. This is something which will also be done with any further planting.

Example of the spiral guards we have used:



Below.

Picture of the hedging we have already planted, these are examples of where we have used the new hedging plants to fill in the gaps in the existing hedge. These were planted in December 2024.





Failure replacements.

- All hedging plants and trees within the guards will be managed by hand, particularly whilst the trees are young and being established and if there is evidence of swamping, or plants failing they will be replaced. This will include, for example, removal of the failing plants, re-digging and preparation of a tree pit. If trees need replacing the replacement tree will not be planted in the exact position of the old ones. This is due to risk of the ground being impoverished or infected with disease by the remaining roots being retained in the ground. Trees will be planted 1m from the original planting pit if replanted within 10 years. Dead trees will be removed mechanically using a tractor to remove the roots, or taken down by chain saw in sections, new trees will be planted in spring (March) or autumn (November) to replace those lost.
- The planting pit will be dug sufficiently to accommodate the root system of the tree without the roosts being curled.
- The hole will be lightly forked to loosen any compaction.
- Compost will be incorporated into the hole
- The tree root will be treated with mycorrhizal fungi to assist with root growth.
- The pit will be back filled with compost and soil
- The tree will be staked and protected with a guard
- A 1m area around the tree will be mulched with straw or composted green waste to reduce weed competition and maintain moisture.

Protected Species and Habitats:

The site possesses some ecological constraints due to the steepness of the site. There are some more boggy areas to the bottom of the site which will be address by planting of 6 willow tree which will provide shade for the horses and also dry the land up.

The development of the site will not directly affect biodiversity as there will be no habitat lost, fragmentation or pollution caused by the development of the site.

The develop of the site should have little indirect impact on the biodiversity as there will be minimal increase in traffic, there will be one car going to the site twice a day morning and evening (avoiding school opening and closing times) this will be to check and care for the horses. There will be no impact on noise as there is nothing on site that would create any noise.

Mitigation:

The development itself will have a low impact on habitats as there is only a small section of hedging being removed (4.8 meters) However, this will be balanced by the 120 meters of hedging that's has already been planted, with another 15 meters of hedging being created by relocating hedging plants which have been removed and infilled with hornbeam hedging to create a boundary along the driveway into the stable yard. Additionally, there will be further hedging planted to the top edge of the stable yard, which will consist of around 20 meters of hornbeam hedging with around 5 Rowan trees.

There will also be expansive new habitats created on the site by using dead hedging to reinforce the boundary at the bottom of the site. This will create 200 meters of deadheading. Using surplus branches in this way is good for wildlife -

especially for small mammals and birds - because it gives them somewhere to shelter that is protected from predators and from the wind and rain. It's also good for insects.



This is a small section of dead hedge we completed to manage a gap in the current hedge line; we have now planted new hedging in front of this gap to help establish a continuous hedge.



Enhancement:

To enhance the site there has already been planting of native species of hedges and trees. This included Rowan trees, field maple, hazel, hawthorn, and dog rose hedging plants, all beneficial to wildlife and recommended by the Wildlife trust.

Further native hedging to be planted will include hornbeam, which will keep its leaves all year round, providing shelter, roosting, nesting and foraging opportunities

for birds and small mammals. We also intend to plan further Rowan trees as part of hedge, Rowan trees which are beneficial to the caterpillars of the apple fruit moth. The flowers provide pollen and nectar for bees and other pollinating insects, while the berries are a rich source of autumn food for birds, especially the blackbird, mistle thrush, redstart, redwing, song thrush, fieldfare, and waxwing.

Further planting of pockets of willow to help dry out wet areas of the land and to further boost biodiversity, the willow will also provide food for caterpillars and act as an early source of nectar for bees.

The stables themselves will also incorporate four swift and swallow boxes, and four starling boxes. With additional owl boxes in the woodland at the bottom of the field.

Ongoing plans include a low-level automatic water feeder for small mammals and birds to drink from. We have plans to work with a local animal rescue once construction is completed to be a release site for rehabilitated hedgehogs.

In answer to the hedging we need to remove to provide access, where possible we hope to relocate rather than destroy the hedging and any plants which we can be removed with the root ball will be relocated along the driveway entrance to provide natural screening for the stables, this will be back filled with additional hedging plants as required using hornbeam, hawthorn, hazel and field maple.

We plan to work to keep the land in keeping with the greenbelt status by planting native trees to the top of the stable yard area. Our plan is to plant a mixture of Rowan trees and Hornbeam hedging. We plan to plant approx. five Rowan and trees in total, and around forty hornbeams to form a hedge along the upper boundary of the stable yard. This will improve the biodiversity of the area and to make a pleasant view for the neighbours. This will also provide a wind block for the stables.

Bats

There are unlikely to be any loss or damage of roosts based on the proposed site plans, as there are no areas of roosting value on site or within its boundaries that have been noted.

Enhancements we propose that provision be made for roosting opportunities for bats with the erection of at least one woodcrete bat box roosts in the field boundary trees. The box will be erected at a height of 3-4 m and in a southerly, westerly or easterly facing direction.

Example woodcrete bat box:



Monitoring:

Failing boxes or enhancements will be replaced at our cost if deterioration or damage is noted within five years post-development.

Other Mammals

There is unlikely to be any negative impact on terrestrial mammals. The landscaping outlined in the proposed site plan will represent a huge enhancement for terrestrial mammals.

Enhancements - Ongoing plans include a low-level automatic water feeder for small mammals and birds to drink from. We have plans to work with a local animal rescue once construction is completed to be a release site for rehabilitated hedgehogs.

Birds

Impacts Work at this site will include planting new fruiting trees and gapping up the hedgerow on site boundaries. These will provide a significant enhancement for nesting birds. The existing nesting potential in hedgerows will be reduced by 4.5 meters of existing hedge being removed,

Enhancements - where possible the hedging plants removed for the gateway will be relocated along the driveway spay and backfilled with additional hornbeam hedging. Additionally, to compensate for this 120 meters of new hedging has already been planted with further planting schemes planned as detailed below.

- 7 miniature fruit trees (mix of apple/pear and plum)
- 5 addition Rowen trees to be planted.
- 35 meters of hornbeam/holly hedging to be planted
- 200 meters of dead hedging to be sited along the southern boundary.

We propose that bird boxes are erected around the site to provide an enhancement for passerine birds, and we feel a selection of the following would be appropriate.

- 2 owl boxes

- 4 swift and swallow terrace boxes
- 4 starling boxes





Owl boxes will be placed in locations that provide a safe, accessible, and suitable nesting environment. We propose they are placed on a mature tree or the side of the building, facing east or northeast to avoid prevailing winds, and with a clear flight path to the entrance and will be placed at least 3 meters above ground.

Swift terraces will be placed under eaves or overhangs of the stable building, at least 5 meters (16 feet) above ground. They will be located on walls that face northeast, or somewhere in between to avoid direct sunlight and avoiding placing them above stable doors or entrance.

Starling nest boxes will be placed in locations to encourage use and ensure the birds' safety. The boxes will be mounted on the stable walls, under the eaves and in a sheltered spot, at least 3 meters (10 feet) high.

Monitoring Failing boxes or enhancements will be replaced by us if deterioration or damage is noted within five years post-development.

Amphibians

Impacts –There is no still water or ponds within 2km of the site. There is a stream which is found in a southerly direction which is located approximately 93 meters away from the proposed site. It is unlikely there will be any negative impact on amphibians. The landscaping outlined in the proposed site plan will represent a huge enhancement if there are any amphibians in the area.

In summery

This report focussed on the potential habitats or protected species to be damaged or destroyed as part of this development. The site is a small part of a larger modified grassland field of low botanical interest. No signs of protected species have been found on site. There are opportunities to enhance the area by providing roosting for bats and nesting birds by including artificial roost and nest boxes on site postdevelopment. The new orchard planting will provide a general habitat enhancement which will also provide foraging features for many species in the vicinity.

The Northwest of the site is to be enhanced with a small orchard, with 7 miniature fruit trees and a floral understorey

The Southwest with be formalised by 20 meters of hornbeam hedging with around 5 Rowan trees at the top of the stable yard.

To the southernly boarder we will be creating 200 meters of dead hedging. Also, to the Southerly boarder there will be 6 willow trees planted.

To the North there will be the removal of approximately 4.8 meters of existing hedging, however 15 meters of hedging will be created by relocating hedging plants which have been removed and infilled with hornbeam hedging to create a boundary along the driveway into the stable yard.

There has already been 120 meters of hedging, and 25 Rowan trees planted across the site to fill in gaps in the existing hedging and to create a new hedge along the westerly boarder in an adjacent field.

It is our opinion that the above demonstrates the Biodiversity Net Gain for this project, it is felt the development can proceed without the loss of habitat of significant value, and without the loss of the favourable conservation status of any protected species.

Amanda Frankland