

Green Infrastructure Statement

Proposal: By Material Evolution Ltd for the erection of three external silos, an external weighbridge and installation of processing plant within an existing industrial building.

Location: CCP Building Products Ltd, Llay Road, Llay, Wrexham L12 0TL

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement sets out how the proposal will meet the requirement to enhance green infrastructure to benefit the local area. The Planning Statement submitted with the application sets out the details of the proposal and refers to the relevant planning policies and how the proposal is in accordance with these policies. In particular the consideration of Local Development Plan (LDP) Policy SP19 that seeks to protect, conserve and enhance natural heritage networks and states development will be required to maintain the extent, quality and connectivity of multifunctional green infrastructure on or near a site.
- 1.2 A Preliminary Ecology Assessment (PEA) is submitted that provides a detailed evaluation and assessment relating to nature conservation including habitats, flora and fauna. The PEA concludes that there would be no adverse impacts on nature conservation. Section 4 of the PEA identifies existing (valued) ecological resources/ biodiversity and explains how these features will be maintained/ protected wherever possible. Sub-section 4.3 proposes measures to achieve net benefit for biodiversity and confirms how these measures might be secured and provides the information for this Green Infrastructure Statement.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Minister for Climate Change, in their letter to Chief Planning Officers dated 11th October 2023 highlighted the essential role that the planning system must play in meeting the challenges laid down by the Global Biodiversity Framework agreed at COP15, the Biodiversity Deep Dive recommendations developed in response to this and in continuing to fulfil the Section 6 duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in Wales. In advance of an updated Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Chapter 6 of PPW11 has been amended with regards to green infrastructure, net benefit for biodiversity, the protection afforded to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and trees and woodlands.
- 2.2 Welsh Government recently made changes to Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 to address the nature emergency by publishing a revised Chapter 6 'Distinctive and Natural Placemaking and Well-Being'. The policy changes came into immediate affect and impacts on all planning applications. The main policy changes relate to:
 - Green Infrastructure
 - Net Benefit for Biodiversity and the Step Wise Approach
 - Protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest
 - Trees and Woodlands

- 2.3 One key change is the requirement for all planning applications to be submitted with a 'Green Infrastructure Statement' (para 6.2.5). A 'Green Infrastructure Statement' is now required with all new applications and should describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. The statement should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development.
- 2.4 Chapter 6 states that it is important that biodiversity and resilience considerations are taken into account when proposing or considering development proposals. All reasonable steps must be taken to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems and these should be balanced with the wider economic and social needs of business and local communities.
- 2.5 Use of the mitigation hierarchy is emphasised: 'Planning authorities must follow a stepwise approach to maintain and enhance biodiversity and build resilient ecological networks by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for; enhancement must be secured wherever possible'.

3.0 Enhancement Measures: Net Benefit for Biodiversity (NBB)

- 3.1 The revised Chapter 6 advises that a Green Infrastructure Statement and net benefit for biodiversity should be proportionate to the extent and impact of development. The proposed development would be undertaken in an existing area of hard-standing which is unvegetated. No trees or landscaping would be removed as a result of the development. The ecological assessment has been carried out for a wide area and concluded that no statutory or non-statutory designated sites would be directly impacted by the proposed development. Furthermore, there would be no significant adverse impacts on any other species of conservation interest.
- 3.2 The ecological survey of the site has highlighted recommendations for the installation of six bird nest boxes suitable for starlings. It is proposed that the nest boxes be sited out of reach, 3 metres above the ground facing north through east to southeast, avoiding prevailing winds and direct sunlight where possible. Ideally, they will be located in small groups and installed either by, or under the direction of, a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure correct installation.
- 3.3 The adjacent wooded embankment is outside the application site and not within the control or ownership of the applicant or CPP. This and the fact that the majority of the site is hard surfaced and used for industrial activities means that there is little scope for additional tree planting. However, there are opportunities to enhance some areas within the site alongside the embankment. Please refer to the extract below taken from the PEA that show areas referred to as target notes 8, 8b and 16.



- 3.4 It is proposed that enhancements can take place (Target Notes 8/ 8b and 16) to remove scrub/ young trees from the slope on the northern boundary to open up existing patches of species-rich grassland. This work will be undertaken in the autumn/ winter and outside the bird nesting season. Where secondary woodland has established and no grassland flora remains beneath these trees, this habitat will be retained. Scrub/ young tree removal will only target areas where a grassland sward remains or is likely to develop following scrub removal. This work would be overseen by a suitably qualified ecologist.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 The ecological survey carried out on the site and wider area as set out in the PEA has considered the green infrastructure network and informed the enhancements to the site as set out above, resulting in net benefits for biodiversity. It is considered that the proposal proportionally meets the identified requirements in its consideration of ecological and biodiversity issues. The proposal is considered to be in accordance with Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales and LDP policy SP19.