

HYDRO ALUMINIUM DEESIDE, BRIDGE ROAD, WREXHAM, LL13 9PS

GCN METHOD STATEMENT & BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS

1.1 Introduction

Hydro Aluminium Deeside are proposing to site a prefabricated building at their existing site on Bridge Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate (WIE). WIE is ecologically sensitive due to the presence of a significant population of great crested newts (GCN). Pre-application advice received from Wrexham County Borough Council states:

“Wrexham Industrial Estate is an ecologically sensitive area, in particular due to populations of Great Crested Newts (GCN) and you are referred to LPGN29.

The proposed site is situated within an established industrial premises and on land that is mostly hard surfaced already. This being the case I am minded to conclude that the proposals would not result in the loss of habitat for GCN. Nevertheless, the potential for GCN to be present within the site, cannot be discounted. A formal planning application should therefore be accompanied by a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for GCN.

Paragraph 6.4.5 of Planning Policy Wales 11 requires development to provide net benefit to biodiversity. The proposals will therefore need to include provisions that demonstrate that this requirement is met.”

This document presents a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for GCN and a proposal for achieving net benefit to biodiversity as a result of the proposed scheme.

This document will be submitted as part of the planning application and will be implemented in full if permission is granted.

1.2 GCN Method Statement

The footprint of the proposed building is set within the existing operational area of the Hydro Aluminium site (see the site plan in Appendix A). The footprint is not suitable to support GCN as there is little semi-natural habitat present and primarily just hard-standing used as a temporary storage area and surrounded by existing buildings (see photographs below). The tarmacked roads and operational areas surrounding the site create a significant barrier to GCN dispersal from nearby off-site semi-natural habitats.

Most of the proposed works are located within the footprint of the existing hard-standing, with a small area (1m x 10m) of amenity grassland also lying within the building footprint. The proposed building is a two storey unit with showers, toilets and changing facilities on the ground floor and offices on the first floor, with a separate stair-pod. No significant groundworks are required.

Construction vehicles and personnel will enter the site through the existing road network and site entrance off Bridge Road. The installation works will commence as soon as practicable and will be undertaken over a period of approximately 1 month.



Given the unsuitability of the site for GCN, there is no requirement for GCN exclusion fencing due to the very low likelihood of causing harm / injury to or killing of GCN. However, works should be undertaken following a scheme of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs). There is no restriction on implementing these measures or the timing of construction work to ensure the protection of GCN.

Scheme of GCN Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs)

The low risk of disturbing or harming GCN during the construction works at the Hydro Aluminium site will be mitigated through the implementation of the following RAMs:

- Clearance of ground vegetation, detritus and any other potentially suitable refugia for GCN (such as at the edges of the site, around mounds, piles of logs, brash, bricks and stones and in rough grassland) will be undertaken prior to any construction works.
- Any clearance works described above will be undertaken with care and by hand by a suitably experienced contractor.
- If any GCN are encountered, works in the area of the discovery should cease immediately and an experienced ecologist called for advice. The tree-lined ditch corridor to the rear (west) of the site would be suitable as a receptor site for any GCN found during the works.
- During construction works;
 - all materials will be stored off-ground on stillages or pallets.
 - all rubble/spoil/earth arising from works will be skipped or removed from site on a daily basis.
 - any excavations left overnight will either be back-filled and compacted or else covered by plastic sheeting and secured by plywood batons (or similar) to prevent GCN from gaining access.
 - pre-start checks of the working area will be undertaken each morning, looking for any GCN.
 - all site workers will be made aware of the potential presence of GCN and an identified sheet will be kept on site in case any of these animals are encountered.

The above RAMs have been designed such that the site can be carefully cleared without harming GCN and that subsequently the site is kept tidy and unsuitable for these species to utilise, so that they do not take refuge within the working area.

Provided this scheme of RAMs is followed in full, the risk of encountering, disturbing or harming GCN is considered to be very low.

It is noted that if any GCN are encountered, then works in the area of the finding will cease until the risk posed to protected species is re-assessed by a suitably experienced ecologist. If the risk posed is considered to be significant, then a license *may* be required in order for works to recommence.

1.3

Net Benefit for Biodiversity (NBB)

As noted above, the site is comprised primarily of hard-standing, with a small area of amenity grassland. The area is set within the operational aluminium recycling site and as such is subject to frequent disturbance, with the site access road immediately adjacent to this area. The main office building also abuts the proposed building footprint. As a result, the existing red-line application site is assessed to be of Negligible Ecological Value.

Net Benefit for Biodiversity (NBB) is the approach taken in Wales to deliver an overall improvement in biodiversity through new developments. The NBB approach puts the emphasis on proactive consideration of biodiversity and wider ecosystem benefits within a local context, early in the design process. The aim is that the planning system will encourage early discussions with planning teams to design developments on a case-by-case basis that positively impact ecosystem resilience.

Given the current negligible ecological value of the site, a modest scheme of biodiversity enhancements is proposed which is proportionate to the scope of the proposed scheme. The following measures are proposed:

- Install 2 x bat boxes on suitable trees in suitable habitat within the wider Hydro Aluminium site boundary.
- Install 2 x bird nest boxes on suitable trees in suitable habitat within the wider Hydro Aluminium site boundary.

The proposed locations of these boxes are shown below. It is proposed that the Eco Bat Box and the Vivara Pro Seville Box (28mm and 32mm) are installed.



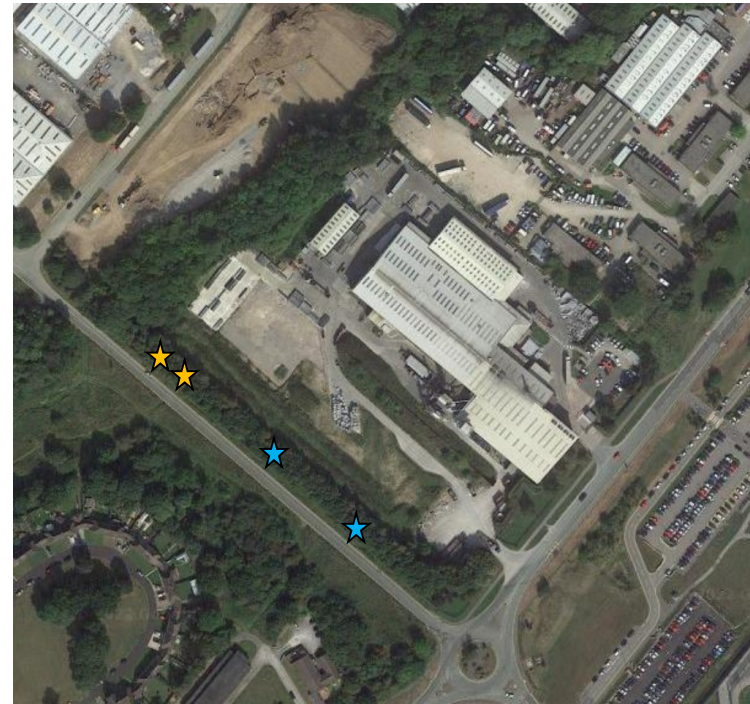
Vivara Pro Seville Box



Eco Bat Box



Mixed tree line on existing earth bank



Indicative locations of bird (blue) and bat (orange) boxes

APPENDIX A

Site Location Plan

Hydro Aluminium Deeside Ltd, Bridge Road, Wrexham Industrial Estate, Wrexham, LL13 9PS

