

Green Infrastructure Statement

Land at Springhill Farm
Selattyn
Oswestry
SY10 7NZ

Outline application for the construction of a Rural Enterprise Dwelling, detached garage and all associated works (all matters reserved)

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1. Policy Background

1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) supports an Outline planning application for the construction of a Rural Enterprise Dwelling, detached garage and all associated works at Land at Land at Springhill Farm, Selattyn, Oswestry, SY10 7NZ ("the Application Site").

1.2 This GIS aims to respond to the requirements of Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024). This states:

"6.2.11 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.

6.2.12 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.

6.2.13 There are multiple ways of incorporating green infrastructure, depending on the needs and opportunities a site presents, and the green infrastructure assessment should be referred to, as appropriate, in order to ascertain local priorities. Landscaping, green roofs, grass verges, sustainable drainage and gardens are examples of individual design measures that can have wider cumulative benefits, particularly in relation to biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems as well as in securing the other desired environmental qualities of places. Wider landscape measures, such as the creation of species rich meadows, woodlands and the improvement of linkages between areas of biodiversity value should be considered for larger scale development. In most cases the green infrastructure statement should highlight any baseline data considered and surveys and assessments undertaken, including but not limited to, habitats and species surveys, arboricultural surveys and assessments, sustainable drainage statements, landscape and ecological management plans, open space assessments and green space provision and active travel links".

1.3 The 'step-wise approach', as outlined below, demonstrates the sequential approach that has been adopted as part of the proposed development 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 minimised, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for. In addition, enhancement has been secured by delivering a net biodiversity benefit on-site, over and above that required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact.

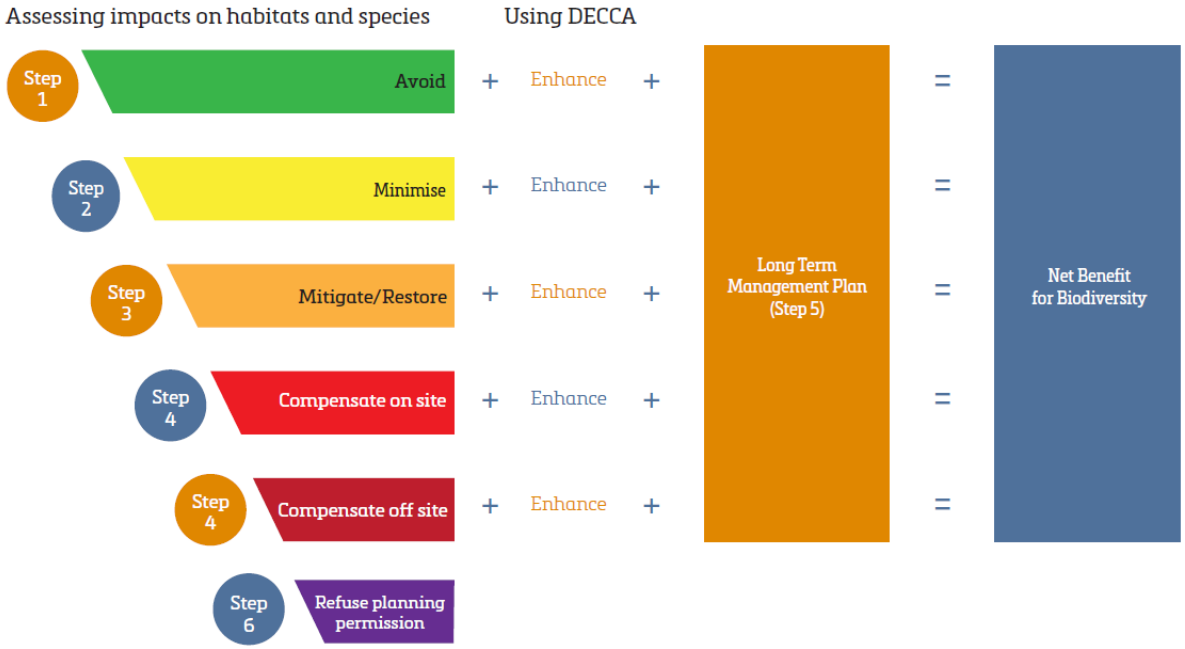


Figure 1: A summary of the step-wise approach taken from Chapter 6 of PPW (Ed. 12, 2024)

2. The Proposed Development

2.1 The application seeks outline planning permission (with all matters reserved for future consideration) for the construction of an additional dwelling house on-site at Springhill Farm. The development will comprise the erection of a dwelling house, a detached garage, the creation of a new residential curtilage, the installation of a package treatment plant and all associated works. As noted from the submitted drawings, the proposed dwelling will be sited immediately adjacent to the existing farm and stables complex at Springhill Farm, and also in close proximity to the exiting dwelling house.

2.2 Importantly, the siting of the proposed dwelling will be within sight and sound of the farm and stables complex; allowing the occupier (rural worker) to be readily available on-site to respond to any unexpected and out-of-hours situation on-site.

2.3 The proposed development is shown indicatively on Drawing No: 77427 / RJC / 003 REV E. As shown on the plan, the site can be developed appropriately without causing any adverse visual impacts upon the character of the area.

2.4 A dedicated driveway parking/turning area is proposed on-site to serve cars/vehicles on-site, whilst a new package treatment plant and drainage field is proposed to appropriately deal with the foul water flows from both the proposed dwelling house and the existing farmhouse – with the current dwelling's existing septic tank to be decommissioned.

3. Green Infrastructure Baseline

3.1 The application site comprises an area of mixed 'scrub' and hardstanding and is of no overall ecological value.

3.2 Indeed, the application is accompanied by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) undertaken by Arbor Vitae, which confirms that the proposed development will impact upon approximately 150m2 of patchy ruderal vegetation, which the report confirms is of negligible ecological value.

3.3 The following is taken from the submitted PEA, describing the on-site habitats as they currently exist:

"The main habitat on site is best described under ephemeral/short perennial: short, patchy plant associations typical of derelict urban sites... shallow stony soil. The vegetation typically lacks a clear dominant species but consists of a mixture of low-growing plants.

Species recorded on site include: creeping buttercup, broad leaved dock, common nettle, creeping thistle, ribwort plantain. There some intermittent patches of annual meadow grass. The area is grazed by chickens and goats. Bare earth and rubble are visible throughout the site.

Land to the north of the site is dominated by large steel framed buildings, an existing residential property and several converted barns.

There is a dis-used dog kennel and field shelter located in the northern portion of the proposed site. Both structures are single storey with block work walls. The kennels are covered with transparent corrugated sheets and the field shelter has a corrugated tin roof. Both structures are partly open at the elevations and are supported by concrete pads.

A bare earth track runs along the north-east boundary of the plot and an existing concrete yard dominates the land to the north-west.

A remnant defunct hedge runs along the south-west boundary of the proposed plot. Individual elder and hawthorn shrubs are present, in poor condition, with large gaps present within the length and from the base".

3.4 Whilst the submitted PEA was completed in April 2023, it is confirmed that the conditions on-site remain unchanged, and as such there is no reason to suggest the report's conclusions have changed.

3.5 Given the above description of the application site's existing state, it can be concluded the site's green infrastructure baseline is currently low; with it having no special habitats or features which mean it is likely to host or be used by any protected or priority species.

3.6 In addition, the application site is not located within or near to any statutory or non-statutory designated ecological sites, and therefore the proposed development does not have any potential to cause an impact upon protected sites.

4. The Green Infrastructure Strategy

4.1 The approach to the design and siting of the proposed dwelling has fully taken into account potential environmental and green infrastructure impacts. Every effort has been taken during the design process to minimise and avoid impacts upon existing green infrastructure on the site.

4.2 It is proposed, as per Paragraph 6.1 of the submitted PEA and Drawing No: 77427 / RJC / 003, that a new native species hedgerow is planted around the perimeter of the application site. Species to be planted and form part of the hedgerow include hawthorn, hazel, field maple, oak, holly, elder and wild privet.

4.3 In addition, the following measures will also be adopted as part of the proposed development:

- Two Woodcrete general purpose bat boxes, suitable for crevice-dwelling species will be installed into mature trees within the mixed plantation woodland to the north of the site. No lighting should be installed in the vicinity of the boxes. They will be at least 3m from the ground and face south or south west.

- Two Woodcrete open-fronted nest boxes will be installed into nearby mature trees.

4.4 The above measures would provide a substantial net benefit for biodiversity (NBB) effect over and above the site's green infrastructure baseline.

4.5 The step-wise approach has been followed as impacts upon habitats and species would be avoided through the siting and design of the proposal. The development would also not prejudice connectivity between nearby habitat for protected species and wider biodiversity.

4.6 Off-site ecological mitigation will not be required as there will not be any impacts upon protected species on the site.

4.7 As the application is submitted in Outline form (with matters relating to landscaping and layout being reserved for future consideration, it is considered a condition could be attached to the granting of Outline planning permission to secure the submission of a detailed NBB Scheme as part of a future reserved matters application.

5. Conclusion

5.1 It is clear the proposed development would not cause any impacts upon existing green infrastructure, biodiversity, ecosystem resilience or protected species. The proposal has fully followed the step-wise approach as prescribed by Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales, and the development would provide a net benefit for biodiversity which is commensurate to the scale of the proposals.