GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE AND NET BIODIVERSITY BENEFIT STATEMENT

APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Construction of New Storage Building

Lloyd Watson Haulage, Boundary Garage, Ellesmere Road, Bronington, Whitchurch, SY13 3HD



Applicant:

Lloyd Watson Haulage Ltd

February 2025

(Revision 1 – June 2025)

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1.0 Introduction and Planning Policy Context

1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement supports a full planning application for a new storage building at Lloyd Watson Haulage, Boundary Garage, Ellesmere Road, Bronington, Whitchurch, SY13 3HD.

1.2 On 18th October 2023, the Welsh Government updated national planning policy for inclusion in Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales with immediate effect. Full details were sent to all local planning authorities by way of a letter and annex entitled *"Addressing the nature emergency through the planning system: update to Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales".*

1.3 This states *"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 Annex adds that the green infrastructure statement *"must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach has been applied"* and then sets out detailed advice and guidance for applicants and local planning authorities on its application.

1.4 Whilst the requirement for a dedicated green infrastructure statement is new; and the step-wise approach provides a clear and consistent appraisal methodology, planning policy has for a long time considered material considerations matters such as biodiversity, trees, ecology, flooding, water management, air quality, pollution and effect on the natural environment.

1.5 All of these material considerations, where relevant to this planning application, have already been considered, with information provided on the drawings and planning statement. This document extracts them into a single place and applies the step-wise sequential approach to ensure that relevant aspects of green infrastructure are considered in a manner proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.

2.0 Definition of Green Infrastructure

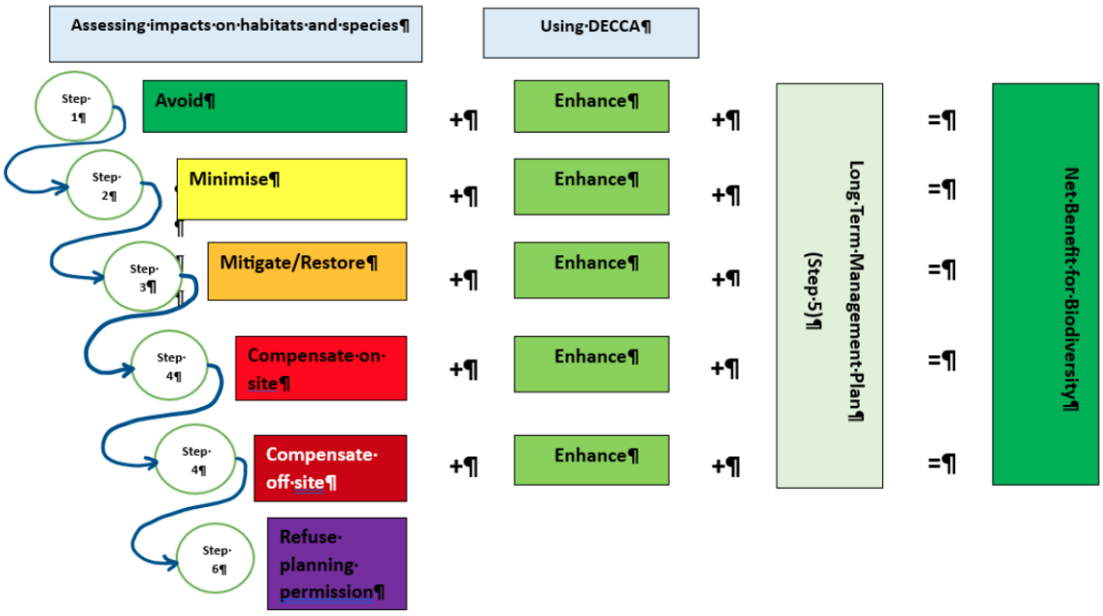
2.1 Planning Policy Wales 12, paragraph 6.2.1 states *"Green infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. Component elements of green infrastructure can function at different scales and some components, such as trees and woodland, are often universally present and function at all levels. At the landscape scale green infrastructure can comprise entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways, peatlands and mountain ranges or be connected networks of mosaic habitats, including grasslands. At a local scale, it might comprise parks, fields, ponds, natural green spaces, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens or may be designed or managed features such as sustainable drainage systems. At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks."*

2.2 Natural Resource Wales (NRW) defines Green Infrastructure as *"a term that's sometimes used to describe a wide range of natural and semi-natural features, spaces, rivers and lakes including parks, fields, allotments, hedgerows, roadside verges and gardens, not to mention entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways and mountain ranges."*

3.0 Step-Wise Approach

3.1 This approach, which this document follows, is summarised in the updated PPW guidance in the diagram (figure 1X) reproduced below.

Figure 1X: Summary of the Step-Wise Approach



3.2 <u>Assessment of Existing Green Infrastructure</u>

3.2.1 The proposed development is a new steel portal framed storage building with a footprint of 912 sq. m. to be constructed on part of the current hard-paved haulage yard area. The application site forms part of an established HGV haulage and distribution yard totalling 0.43 hectares and comprises concrete hardstanding. There are two existing storage and workshop buildings presently on site. Immediately to the east of the site is the applicant's family home.

3.2.2 The site is within the open countryside. To the north and west of the site, beyond extensive boundary hedges, trees and drainage ditches, is agricultural land. To the south of the site on the opposite side of the road there is a small cluster of houses with their boundaries approximately 100 metres from the

site access. The wider area is agricultural, but there are scattered houses, agricultural sheds and some commercial buildings.

3.2.3 The planning application is supported by an ecology report and an arboricultural impact assessment of the trees adjacent to the site. The ecology report concluded the site is not functionally linked with any national and international protected sites and there are no principal features of biodiversity interest within the portion of the site where it is proposed to construct the new storage building.

3.2.4 However, the report identified a number of ecological receptors immediately adjacent to the site and beyond the site boundary on neighbouring land. This provides habitat areas and movement corridors for wildlife, foraging material and nesting sites and may have suitability as functionally linked land for protected species.

3.2.5 Given the close proximity to the development site, all of the following has been identified as green infrastructure, and the impact of the development proposal has been assessed using the ‘step-wise’ approach.

- Mature trees located on neighbouring land to the north and west of the site;
- Mature hedgerows along the north, west and eastern site boundaries;
- Drainage ditch along the western boundary;
- Arable land surrounding the site.



Above: Primary green infrastructure receptors close to the site



Above: Proposed site location of new storage building

3.3 Assessment of the Impact of the Development Proposal

3.3.1 The likely impact of the proposal upon the existing green infrastructure features has been assessed in a sequential way with regard to the following steps in the step-wise approach:

Avoid **Minimise** **Mitigate** **Compensate**

3.3.2 The policy requires proposals to first avoid damage to green infrastructure. This development will not harm the green infrastructure. This has been achieved by fully understanding the green infrastructure features on and adjacent to the site and designing the proposal to avoid harm. For example commissioning the arboricultural impact assessment to identify tree root areas and canopies and positioning the building and foundations to avoid these.

3.3.3 Secondly, when all locational, siting and design options for avoiding damage to biodiversity have been exhausted, the policy requires proposals to minimise the initial impact on biodiversity and ecosystems. With regard to this development proposal, measures such as the careful operation of construction works to minimise noise and dust, can avoid, or in the worse case, minimise impact on green infrastructure receptors.

3.3.4 Thirdly, where, after measures to minimise impact, biodiversity and ecosystems could still be damaged, or lost through residual impacts, the proposed development should mitigate that damage. Finally, as a last resort, off-site compensation for unavoidable damage must be provided. With regard to this development proposal, it has been possible to avoid damage or loss of any green infrastructure, so no compensation is required. However, the landowner / applicant will implement biodiversity enhancements as recommended by the ecology report which will result in a net biodiversity gain over that which presently exists.

3.3.3 As assessment of the impacts of the proposed development has been undertaken using the ‘step wise’ approach and is shown in the table overleaf.

Impact Assessment of Development Proposal on Green Infrastructure using the Welsh Government's "Step Wise Approach"		
Avoid	**Minimise**	**Mitigate / Compensate**
The site is currently concrete hardstanding and compacted stone hardcore. There will be no loss of existing vegetation, grassland or habitat. To avoid any negative impacts on identified green infrastructure from construction activities, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be included with this application, setting out; what work will be done, details of the materials, machinery and equipment to be used; when (an indication of the time of year and how long work will take), how the work will be undertaken, if there will be any emissions (such as to water, air, disposal to land) and any transport requirements to the site; No artificial lighting to be installed adjacent to green infrastructure along the northern and western site boundary to maintain this area as a 'dark zone' to encourage wildlife; The use of the proposed development as a storage facility for storing inert palleted goods is unlikely to result in additional pollution, ground contamination, effluent discharge, noxious fumes etc. due to the nature of this use	Construction activities have the potential to cause a short-term impact on the natural environment. To minimise any negative impacts on identified green infrastructure from construction that cannot be avoided, a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be included with this application, setting out; what work will be done, details of the materials, machinery and equipment to be used; when (an indication of the time of year and how long work will take), how the work will be undertaken, if there will be any emissions (such as to water, air, disposal to land) and any transport requirements to the site; In less sensitive areas, not adjacent to green infrastructure new external lighting will be kept to a minimum and utilise shields in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust guidance, to minimise light spillage.	No compensation or mitigation is needed as there will be no loss of green infrastructure. The applicant will create a net biodiversity gain by fully implementing the following recommendations in the ecology report: • Planting up gaps in the boundary hedgerows using native species including hawthorne, holly, mountain ask and hornbeam, which will strengthen the habitat and attract birds and insect pollinators; • Incorporation of universal small bird / swift nesting boxes; • Creation of dead wood and stone piles along the along north and west site boundaries; • Creation of a new 4m deep planted shrubbery area on the applicant's land along the northern and western site boundaries.

2.0 Conclusion and Net Biodiversity Benefits

2.1 The assessment has identified no green infrastructure on the development site. However, there are trees, hedges and ditches adjacent to the site and arable land beyond the site boundary on neighbouring land. There will be no loss or damage to any of this green infrastructure arising from this development. However, it is important to avoid harm to adjacent off-site green infrastructure receptors from construction activities.

2.2 A key issue will be to ensure that construction activity does not disturb or disrupt the natural environment – particularly ensuring air quality and minimal disturbance to nearby vegetation, for example by controlling noise, dust and avoiding contamination. A Construction Environmental Management Plan is included as a supporting document.

2.3 Measures should be considered to result in a significant net gain in biodiversity. Surplus land located between the new building and the western and northern site boundaries has the potential for a new landscape planting scheme to promote biodiversity and strengthen the existing wildlife foraging and movement corridors.

2.4 Strengthening of the existing hedgerow planting along the western and northern boundaries is a ‘quick win’ and will result in a greater area of edges and habitats for wildlife. This will improve the resilience of the habitat within this area and provide protection from fragmentation and further damage. The wildlife connectivity to the open field area to the north and west of the site will be maintained, which will reduce habitat fragmentation and isolation of animal species.

2.5 We recommend that the following biodiversity enhancements form part of the planning application, together with a Construction Environmental Management Plan to mitigate short term negative impact of construction works on ecological receptors identified in Appendix 1.

- Planting up gaps in the boundary hedgerows using native species including hawthorne, holly, mountain ash and hornbeam, which will strengthen the habitat and attract birds and insect pollinators;

- No artificial lighting installed along the northern and western site boundary to maintain this area as a ‘dark zone’ to encourage wildlife;

- All other external lighting to be shielded and comply with Bat Conservation Trust guidelines;

- Incorporation of universal small bird / swift nesting boxes;

- Creation of dead wood and stone piles along the along north and west site boundaries;

- Creation of a new 4m deep planted shrubbery area on the applicant’s land along the northern and western site boundaries;

- Detailed Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) setting out details including; what work will be done, details of the materials, machinery and equipment to be used; noise and visual disturbance control measures; when (an indication of the time of year and how long work will take), how the work will be undertaken, if there will be any emissions (such as to water, air, disposal to land) and any transport requirements to the site.

- The working area, together with any storage areas, will be kept clear of debris, and any stored materials will be kept off the ground on pallets so as to prevent amphibians from seeking shelter or protection within them.

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