

Green Infrastructure Statement

Central Garage
King Street
Acrefair
Wrexham
LL14 3RH

Change of use of bus depot to mixed class B1/B2 (car repairs and welding) and all associated works

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1. Policy Background

1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) supports a full planning application for the change of use of a former bus depot into a mixed B1/B2 use class premises for car repairs and welding at Central Garage, King Street, Acrefair, LL14 3RH ("the Application Site").

1.2 The proposed development will provide a small-scale economic re-use of the application site and a number of existing industrial/commercial buildings within a site which would have otherwise become derelict following the cessation of its previous use as a bus/coach depot a number of years ago. The primary driver behind the planning application's submission is therefore economic development and regeneration – a key aim of both Wrexham County Borough Council and the Welsh Government.

1.3 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".

1.4 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.

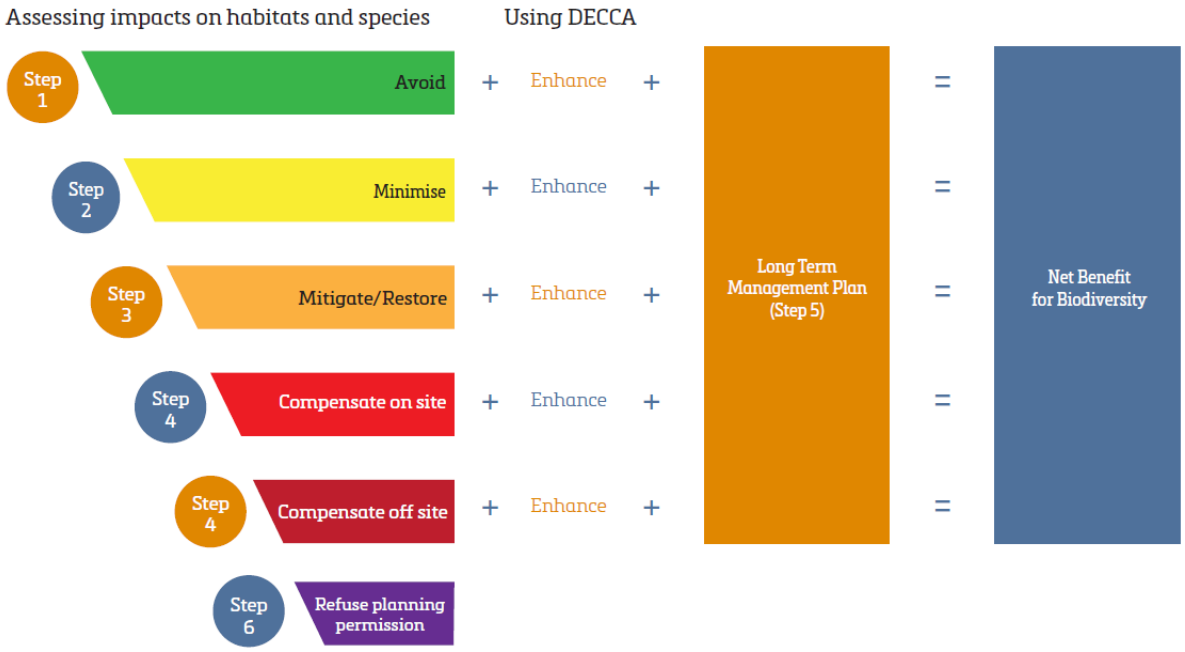


Figure 1: A summary of the step-wise approach taken from Chapter 6 of PPW (Ed. 12, 2024)

2. The Proposed Development

2.1 As noted, full planning permission is sought for the change of use of the existing site from a former bus maintenance depot to a mixed-use premises for car repairs and welding (B1/B2 use).

2.2 Building 1 is currently a two-storey industrial/commercial building which is finished externally with breeze blocks and a grey fibre cement sheet roof. It has several large door openings within its principal (southern elevation) which faces onto

the yard which also forms part of the site. Building 1 lies adjacent to the application site's northern boundary.

2.3 Building 2 lies approximately 11m south of Building 1 and is currently finished externally with red facing brickwork. It has a grey box profile cladding sheet roof and contains window and door openings within its northern and eastern elevations.

2.4 Externally, a relatively large yard exists which forms part of the application site. The entirety of the external yard area is laid with existing concrete hardstanding.

2.5 Limited physical changes are proposed to the site as part of the proposed development. Indeed, proposed changes are largely limited to some minor changes to windows and doors within the external façades of the existing buildings. One of the larger physical changes proposed is the installation of a new external ramp/staircase on the eastern elevation of Building 1, to facilitate access to a first-floor mezzanine level internally.

2.6 There are no existing trees or hedgerows on the application site, and as such none will be lost as part of the proposals.

3. Green Infrastructure Baseline

3.1 The application site is currently 100% sealed with concrete hardstanding and buildings – there is no unvegetated land on-site at present.

3.2 As noted, there are no existing trees or hedgerows on the site.

3.3 There are also no existing green infrastructure features on-site such as green roofs.

3.4 Furthermore, none of the existing buildings on-site have the potential to be in use by any protected or priority species, given their age, use and design.

3.5 Given the above, the application site has a very low green infrastructure baseline currently; with no existing green infrastructure features and no opportunities for protected species to be present.

3.6 The development will not result in the loss or destruction of any existing on-site trees or hedgerows.

3.7 Therefore, it is considered the application site is devoid of any notable green infrastructure at present.

3.8 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 in this case.

4. The Green Infrastructure Strategy

4.1 As noted above, limited new physical development is proposed as part of the planning application in this case – with the application primarily relating to a change of use of the existing buildings and yard.

4.2 Drawing Number: 81008 / GH / 004 (Biodiversity Enhancement Plan) accompanies this Green Infrastructure Statement and details the Applicant's net biodiversity benefit proposals as part of the planning application. These comprise the erection of the following on the western elevation of Building 1:

- 1x Large Multi Chamber WoodStone Bat Box
- 1x 1FQ Schwegler Bat Roost
- 1x Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Bird Nest Box

4.3 All will be sited between 2.5 – 3m above ground-level on the building.

4.4 Given the fact the application site is devoid of any notable green infrastructure at present, the proposed NBB measures as outlined above, would provide a significant 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 The proposal would also achieve an overall net benefit for biodiversity on the holding over and above the existing green infrastructure baseline.

4.8 The Applicant will ensure the long-term management and maintenance of the proposed bird and bat boxes to ensure they are kept in a useable condition.

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.