

Green Infrastructure Assessment & Ecological Enhancement

Land at Seaway Parade

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Port Talbot

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Background

On 11th October 2023¹ the Welsh Government issued updated National Planning Policy for chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales.

The updated policy guidance recognises the value of green infrastructure within the built environment. In order to facilitate a quality built environment enhanced by integrated green infrastructure all planning applications must now include a green infrastructure statement.

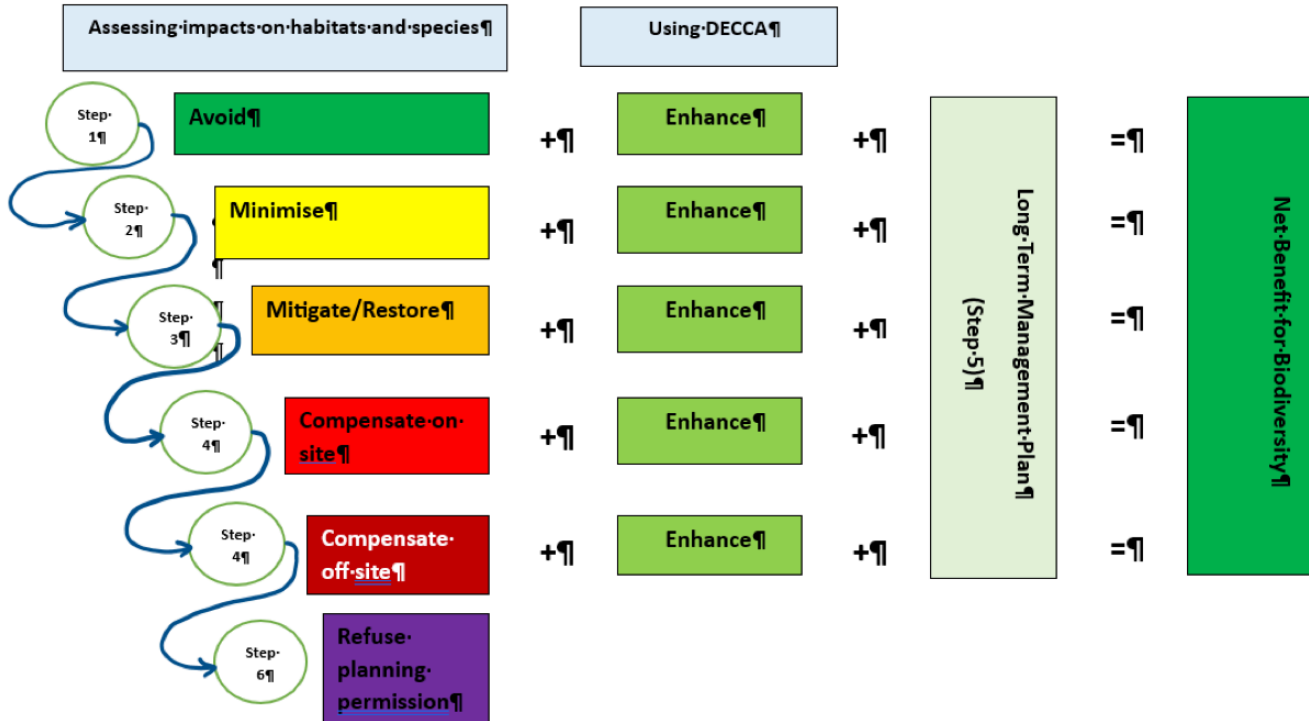
“6.2.6 A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be 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 6.4.21) has been applied.”

Figure 1 below sets out the summary of the stepwise approach as set out in the Annex² to the published advice

¹ <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-10/addressing-the-nature-emergency-through-the-planning-system.pdf>

² <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2023-10/annex-addressing-the-nature-emergency-through-the-planning-system.pdf>

Figure 1



Proposal

The proposal is for the retention of a 2.4m high fence

The Site

The application site is a large open area used for storage. There are no ecological features within the development.

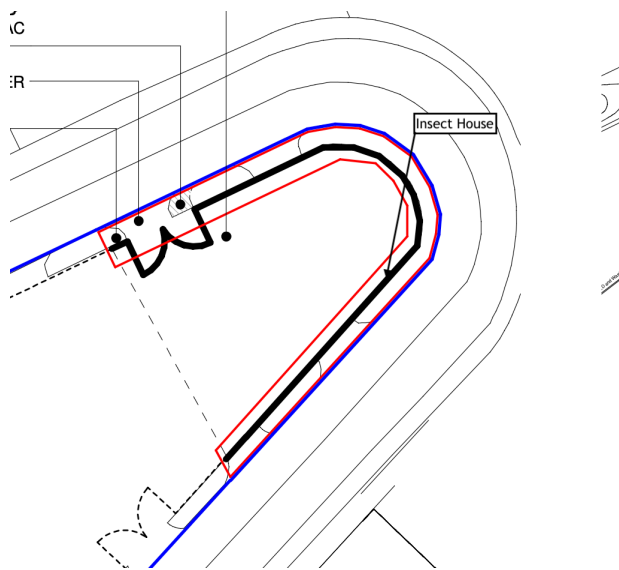
Proposed Enhancement

It is accepted that Future Wales now requires ecological enhancement however, it is submitted that any ecological enhancement must be proportional to the development proposed.

Given the scale of the proposal it is considered that the provision of an insect/bee house within the site will provide adequate ecological enhancement. Details of the location and type of box set out below **Figure 2 and Figure 3**

Location of Insect house

Figure 2



House Specifications

An insect house, sometimes referred to as an insect hotel, is an artificial nesting structure that provides shelter for beneficial insects like gentle solitary pollinators and predatory insects. The houses can be made up of several different types of materials and chambers like hollow bamboo tubes, pre-drilled wood blocks and shutter chambers or screen chambers that can be filled with pinecones, bark, twigs or dead leaves.

Figure 3 (Woodside Wooden Insect/ Bee House)³



Location

Place the insect house as close as possible to the area that you want the insects' help pollinating and protecting. You may also place the house where you have already noticed the desired insects' activity. A flower bed, garden, blossoming trees, bushes or stumps are good locations.

The insects prefer a warm, dry place protected from the wind and rain with exposure to plenty of sunlight. Morning sun is important; it gets the insects warmed up and out earlier each day and helps with an earlier hatch for the bees in the spring. Be sure that the front of the house is facing away from the typical incoming rain patterns in your area.

The house should be mounted at about eye level on a secure fence or arbor post to keep it from moving around too much when windy. It's important that it be placed in a location where it will not be bumped or disturbed, so it's recommended to avoid high traffic areas in the yard or garden.

³ https://www.woodsideproducts.co.uk/99785-woodside-wooden-insectbee-house.html?utm_source=google_shopping&gclid=CjwKCAjwo9unBhBTEiwAipC11_J1VmMzAxCFJB_7nycP_YYb0DSKBc9IWwLRMccBLr0k5e0PRHr8KR0Co7UQAvD_BwE

Implementation

- Insect House - Within one month of the grant of consent

GIA Assessment

	Steps	Assessment	Enhancement	Long Term Maintenance	Net Benefits
1.	Avoid	The application is for the retention of a metal fence. There are no ecological features within the site The proposal avoids damage to any biodiversity and as such accords with the <i>stepwise</i> approach set out in the published advice.	Insect house provided	Annual Cleaning as set out above	Yes
2.	Minimise	Na	Na	Na	Na
3.	Mitigate/restore	Na	Na	Na	Na
4.	Compensate on site	Na	Na	Na	Na
5.	Compensate offsite	Na	Na	Na	Na

Conclusion

Applying the step-by-step approach, the assessment indicates that:

- The development avoids any damage to biodiversity
- The proposal provides an ecological enhancement proportionate to the scale of the development.
- The proposed ecological enhancement will be maintained
- There is a net benefit to biodiversity as a result of the development.