

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

Number 35 LettyHarri, Velidre, Port Talbot



TPS Planning + Architecture

INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared to support a householder planning application at 35 Letty Harri, Port Talbot, on behalf of Mr. David. The development comprises a detached double garage.

The objective of this document is to demonstrate how the proposed development will maintain, enhance, and contribute to the network of green corridors and infrastructure to support biodiversity, ensuring connectivity with the wider ecosystem. This statement has been written in accordance with the relevant planning policies.

EXISTING SITE

The development site is a residential property located in a residential area of Port Talbot. The dwelling occupies an elevated position above the existing highway, Letty Harri. The majority of the area where the development is to take place consists of hardstanding, including driveways, retaining walls, and footpaths. There is a small garden area at the front; however, it is limited in size and accounts for only about 5 square metres.

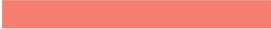
The site is located in the Velindre area, to the north of Port Talbot, and lies within the settlement boundary. It is situated just off Letty Harri and the A4107 Afan Valley Road. As the crow flies, the site is relatively close to the elevated M4 corridor that runs through Port Talbot.

To the east of the site is open countryside, leading into the forested slopes of Lletty Harri, which rise steeply to the mountain top and associated ridgeline of Mynydd Emroch. While not immediately adjacent to the site, the forest and mountainside are part of a designated Special Landscape Area.

To the west lies Velindre, a small village within the wider Port Talbot area. This area is largely urban and comprises mainly residential properties. However, the River Afan runs through the area, providing a significant green corridor within the built-up environment.

EXISTING SURROUNDING GI NETWORK



KEY	
DEVELOPMENT SITE	
SLA	
TREE BELTS	    
WIDER GI AREA	    

Existing Special Landscape Area of Letty Harri Forest and Mountain slopes. High biodiversity potential.

Existing Green Infrastructure of the River Afan green corridor. High biodiversity potential.

Existing Green Infrastructure - green corridor to the immediate west of the development site.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Planning Policy Wales defines Green Infrastructure (herein referred to as 'GI') as the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers, and lakes that intersperse and connect places. The components of green infrastructure can function at different scales, and some elements, such as trees and woodland are often universally present and functional at all levels.

The *Environment (Wales) Act 2016* provides a legal context for the delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure in Wales. The protection and provision of GI can make a significant contribution to the sustainable management of natural resources, particularly in protecting, maintaining, and enhancing on-site biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems. This includes both the diversity within the site and the connectivity between surrounding ecosystems, so they are better able to resist, recover from, and adapt to external pressures.

The built environment should be enhanced through the integration of green infrastructure into development, achieved through appropriate site selection and creative design. With careful planning and design, guided by a suitable level of assessment, GI can deliver biodiversity benefits, support ecosystem services, help resolve potential conflicts in land use, and contribute to improved health and well-being outcomes.

Given that the proposed development is very small in scale and constitutes a household residential project, biodiversity enhancements should be proportionate. As such, any enhancements should focus on reinforcing and supporting local biodiversity opportunities.

Currently, the site contains very limited GI, due to the nature of the land use, the small front garden, and the steep gradient. However, beyond the site boundaries, the wider GI network is made up of interconnected corridors and green belts within the local area. These are illustrated on the **Existing Surrounding GI Network** plan.

The proposed new GI measures for this development aim to utilise existing nearby features to connect the site with the broader ecological network. This will be achieved through the introduction of enhanced landscaping and a series of GI links throughout the site and along its boundaries.

PROPOSED BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENTS:

The following biodiversity enhancements are proposed for this small scale development.

- Bird box to north facing elevation of garage to enable maximum shelter from prevailing weather and winds.
- Bee Box to be located within the existing garden area to attract pollinators.



DECCA FRAMEWORK

When assessing planning applications, Planning Policy Wales instructs planning authorities to take account of and promote the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the five attributes of ecosystem resilience. The DECCA attributes are explained further in NRW's Terrestrial and freshwater Resilient Ecological Networks: a guide for practitioners in Wales, but as a broad summary, the definitions are as follows:

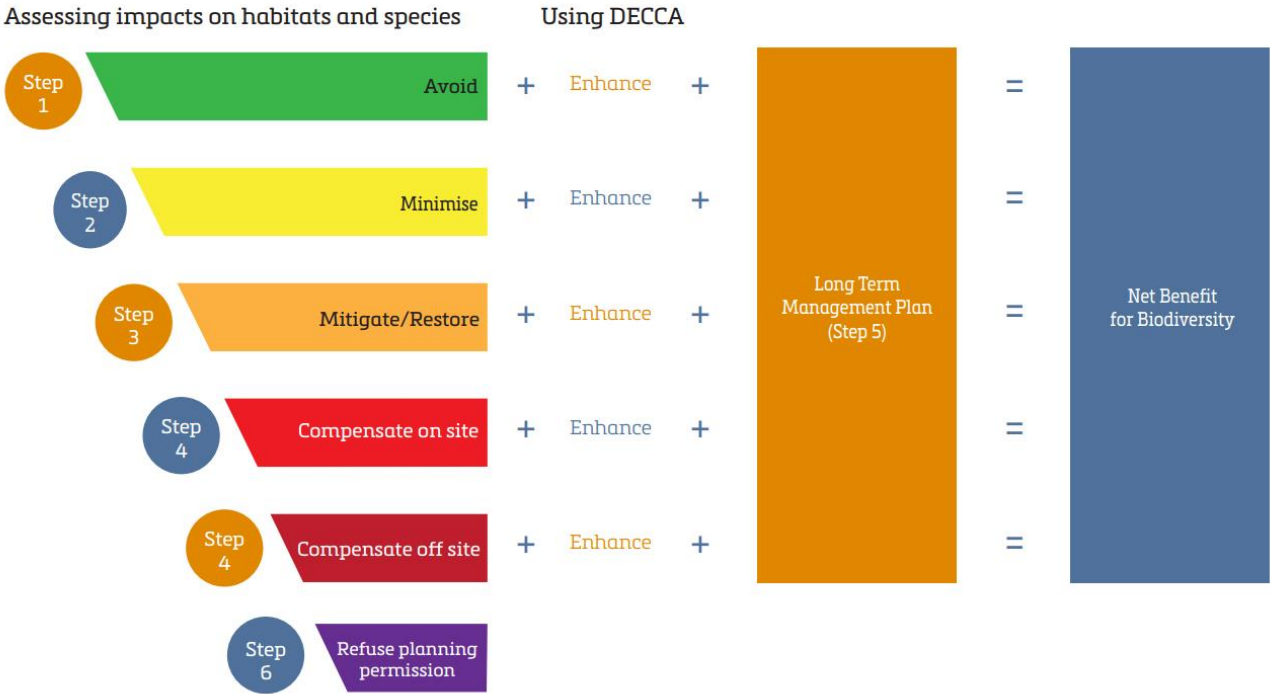
- Diversity: maintaining and enhancing diversity at every scale, including genetic, structural, habitat and between-habitat levels. This supports the complexity of ecosystem functions and interactions that deliver services and benefits.

- **Extent:** incorporating measures which maintain and increase the area of semi-natural habitat/features and linkages between habitats. In general, smaller ecosystems have reduced capacity to adapt, recover or resist disturbance.
- **Condition:** The condition of an ecosystem is affected by multiple and complex pressures acting both as short term and longer term types of disturbance. Both direct and wider impacts should be considered, for example avoiding or mitigating pressures such as climate change, pollution, invasive species, land management neglect etc.
- **Connectivity:** This refers to the links between and within habitats, which may take the form of physical corridors, stepping stones in the landscape, or patches of the same or related vegetation types that together create a network that enables the flow or movement of genes, species and natural resources. Developments should take opportunities to develop functional habitat and ecological networks within and between ecosystems, building on existing connectivity.
- **Aspects of ecosystem resilience (adaptability, recovery and resistance):** ecosystem resilience is a product of the above four attributes. Adaptability, recovery and resistance to/from a disturbance are defining features of ecosystem resilience.

DEMONSTRATING NET BENEFITS FOR BIODIVERSITY

The overall strategy is one of minimise and enhance. As detailed in the proposed enhancements, the biodiversity enhancement will assist the local resilient ecological network within the local community along Letty Harri and the nearby green corridors. The biodiversity enhancements described above, achieve NBB by following the Step-Wise Approach of firstly avoiding, then minimising, mitigating/restoring and as a last resort compensating for, adverse impacts on the environment in a development.

Figure 12: Summary of the Step-Wise Approach



Using the step-wise approach we can demonstrate that there is a small net benefit for biodiversity incorporated within the proposed development. This is because the strategy builds upon a very low baseline assessment, in that the existing GI is very low and as such the development will have very little impact on local biodiversity and as such there will be a minimal loss. This is therefore in accordance with Step 2 of the step wise approach.

This minimal impact on habitat and species in addition to the proposed biodiversity framework in accordance with the DECCA Framework clearly results in a Net Benefit for Biodiversity.

CONCLUSION

The existing site has been assessed and no important existing biodiversity features have been identified due to the nature of the site.

The impact of the new proposed development will be minimal due to the nature of the existing and proposed land use and its built form of driveway, pathways and retaining walls.

The provision of a bird and bat box on the proposed development will assist the local green infrastructure through providing shelter for pollinators which in turn will help the local green infrastructure.