

ELEMENTS
ENERGY

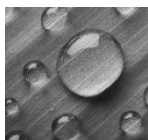
Cilybebyll Biomass

Green Infrastructure Statement and Biodiversity Enhancement Statement

Full name	<i>Adam Cropper</i>
Company name (if applicable)	<i>Elements Energy Ltd</i>
Date form completed	<i>27/10/25</i>
Address of application site	<i>Plas Farm, Cilybebyll, Pontardawe, Neath, SA8 3JQ</i>
Description of proposal	<i>Installation of 150kW Containerised Biomass Boiler</i>
Description of surrounding land use.	<i>Agricultural land used for grazing animals. In part footprint of non-native Rhododendron</i>
Planning reference (if you have one)	<i>P2025/0671</i>

Existing Green Infrastructure (GI) on site:

	All existing GI on site	Has this GI already been removed?	Will this GI need to be removed?
Boundary edge between proposed cabin and existing yard	<i>Dead Horse chestnut tree</i>	<i>YES</i>	<i>N/A as already removed but would have needed removing, pulled down due to safety considerations entering storm season</i>
Boundary edge between proposed cabin and existing yard	<i>small tree and minor shrub growth along fence line</i>	<i>Yes</i>	



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Rear end of biomass cabin footprint	Non native Rhododendrum	NO	YES (note this is a positive as invasive)
Footprint of Biomass cabin	Improved Grassland	NO	YES

Describe what has been/will be done to avoid any impacts as far as possible

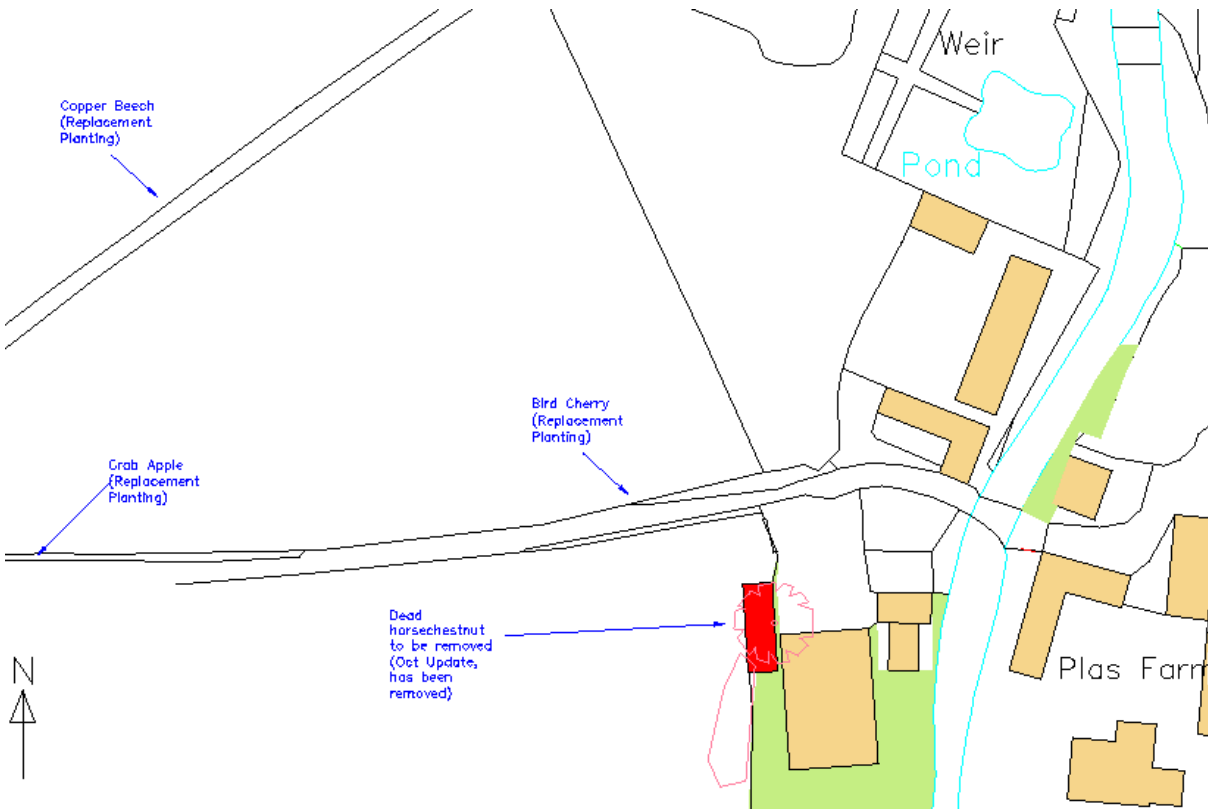
New containorised cabin is small in footprint and clad in timber. Rhodedendrum is being removed as is a non native invasive plant that spreads over time.

Describe what will be done to mitigate (minimise) any impacts

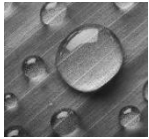
Works will be contained to prevent damage to established trees and wildlife habitats.

Describe what will be done to compensate for (replace) any losses

Three new trees are replacement planted to account for the dead horse chestnut removed from site. These 3 trees will be planted along the driveways, in the locations of trees that have blown down. The trees blew down during Storm Darragh in 2024 each tree to be planted is the same species as what fell during Darragh. This is to keep the historic continuity of the sites history and the locations are suitable for these species.

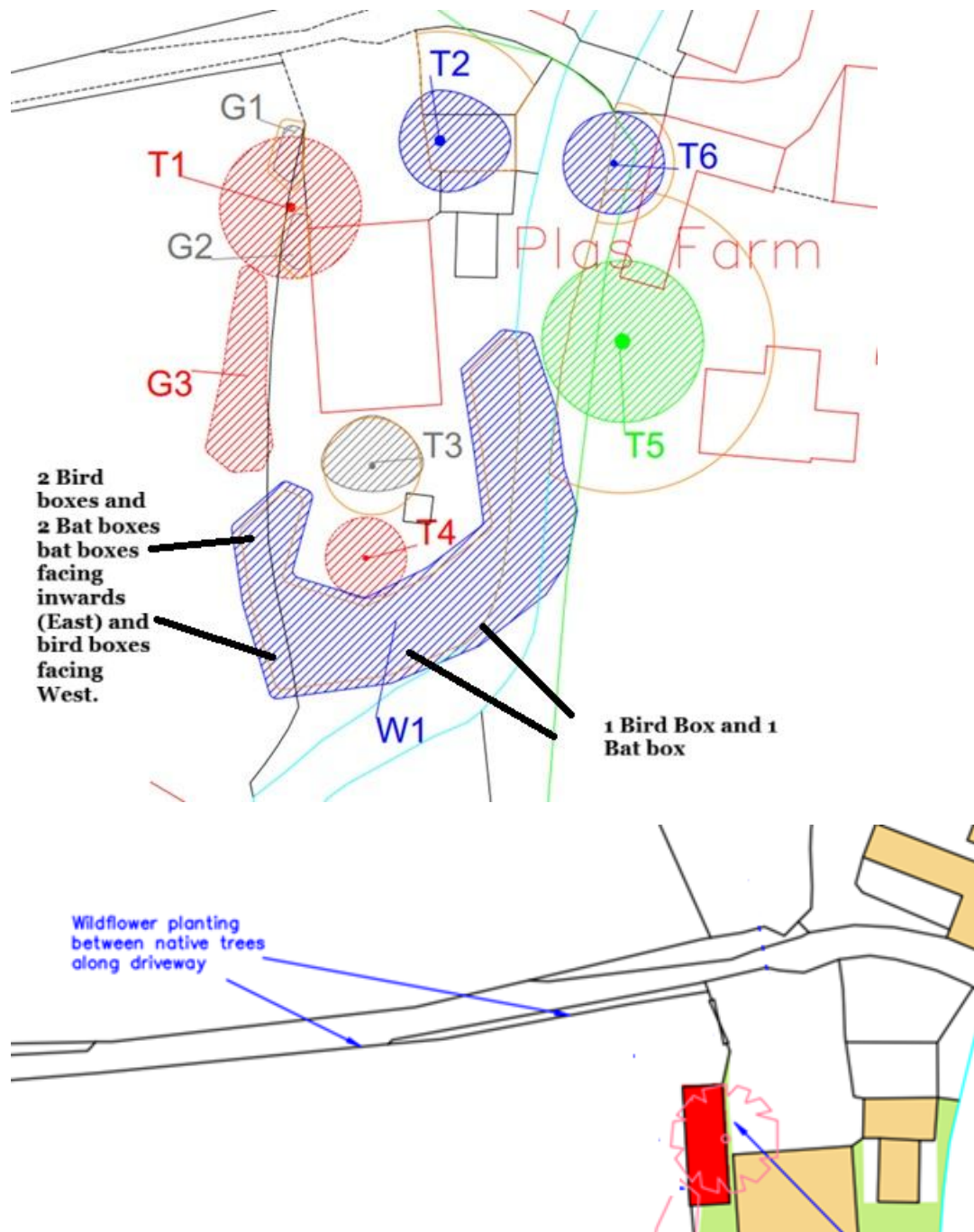


What features are being implemented to enhance Green Infrastructure?

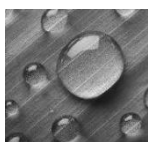


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Bird and bat boxes are being installed within woodland to the South of the site, between biomass cabin and hydro powerhouse. 3 bird boxes and 3 bat boxes in total. Wildflower meadow flower planting in between existing native trees along driveway.



How will the new planting/habitat creation works be implemented, managed and/or maintained? N.B. full details may need to be supplied as a separate landscaping scheme.



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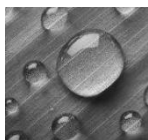
Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species. New tree plantings will be protected to prevent destruction by animals.

Biodiversity Enhancements

Use the table below to describe biodiversity enhancements which will be included. Note that GI enhancements should also provide a net benefit for biodiversity, but additional measures that aren't

strictly GI (such as bat and bird boxes) are also encouraged.

Biodiversity Enhancement	Yes, we will provide this	Location	Info (e.g. type of bird box)
Bat box	Yes	Patch of woodland to the south of biomass/agricultural barn	<i>NHBS Elisa wall mounting bat box</i>
Bird box	Yes	Patch of woodland to the south of biomass/agricultural barn	<i>RSPB sparrow terrace box RSPB Apex bird box</i>
Hedgehog hole	No		
Hedgehog nest box	No		
Area of wildflower planting	Yes	Along driveway approaching site	native wildflower seeds
Wildlife pond	No	(note already one on site)	
Plant a new native hedgerow, or remove existing low value hedgerow and replace with a native hedgerow	No		
Insect box	No		
Bee mound	No		



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New native planting	<i>Yes (replacing felled dead Horse Chestnut U1)</i>		<i>3 new trees are same species as the trees that have blown down in their locations, so one Crab Apple, one Copper Beech and one Bird Cherry.</i>
Other (please state):			

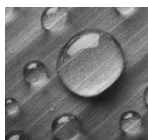
Conclusion

Based on the information provided above, this development will result in a Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Net Benefit upon completion.

Further Update October 2025

Tree T1 (category U) identified in the tree survey (BS5837 Tree Survey and Categorisation at Plass Farm Biomass Tree Check 2025) has been felled due to being dead standing and a safety hazard and risk to the nearby agricultural barn, cottage and parking area entering the storm season meant it was to come down without delay. Details below:





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T1 was categorised as Category U under BS 5837:2012, being in a condition unsuitable for safe long-term retention. The tree posed an immediate health and safety risk, located directly beside the existing boiler shed and fuel storage compound, which forms part of the established HGV delivery and service area for the biomass installation. Several large limbs had already begun to fail, and the root plate had started to heave, as shown in the attached photographs. The tree ultimately came down with minimal force when pulled, confirming the extent of root failure. Our tree surveyor was surprised that it had stayed upright as the Ivy clad into the upper crown gave it unusually high wind sail area for a dead tree. This contributed to his belief that coming into storm season meant that failure of this tree was imminent. (southwesterly winds would have eventually pushed it straight onto the driveway)

A photograph taken in January 2025 also shows branches overhanging and resting directly above the boiler roof, flue and oil-tank compound, creating a clear fire and safety hazard. Given this instability and proximity to both utilities and fuel infrastructure, the tree could not be safely retained.

Following advice from our arboricultural consultant, Ben Clark (TechArborA, TreeCheck Arboriculture Ltd.), and after notifying the Council's Tree Officer, the tree was removed on safety grounds earlier this week to eliminate the risk of collapse causing injury or damage.

Prior to removal, the arboricultural consultant inspected the tree itself and did not note any features within the tree structure such as cavities or cracks that had a particularly high potential for bat habitat that would have lead him to advise ecological evaluation of the tree.

This finding is consistent with previous professional bat surveys undertaken at Plas Farm between 2012 and 2022 (Just Mammals LLP 2015; EWS Ecology 2022), all of which recorded roosting activity confined to buildings and no evidence of bats roosting within farmyard trees.

To ensure a positive ecological outcome and compliance with Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12), we will provide replacement planting of at least three native broadleaf trees within the vicinity of the site. This is documented within the above Green Infrastructure Statement accompanying the application to demonstrate a net biodiversity gain above the current baseline, in accordance with PPW 12 and Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

More broadly, the Plas Cilybebyll Estate is implementing an extensive biodiversity enhancement programme, including native woodland creation, pollinator meadow establishment, and restoration of historic landscape features to support eco-tourism and long-term ecological recovery. The proposed replacement planting forms part of this continuing commitment.