

Green Infrastructure Assessment & Ecological Enhancement

**Derwen Plant,
Neath Abbey Wharf,
Neath Abbey,
Skewen,
Neath
SA10**

June 2026

PHONE

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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.

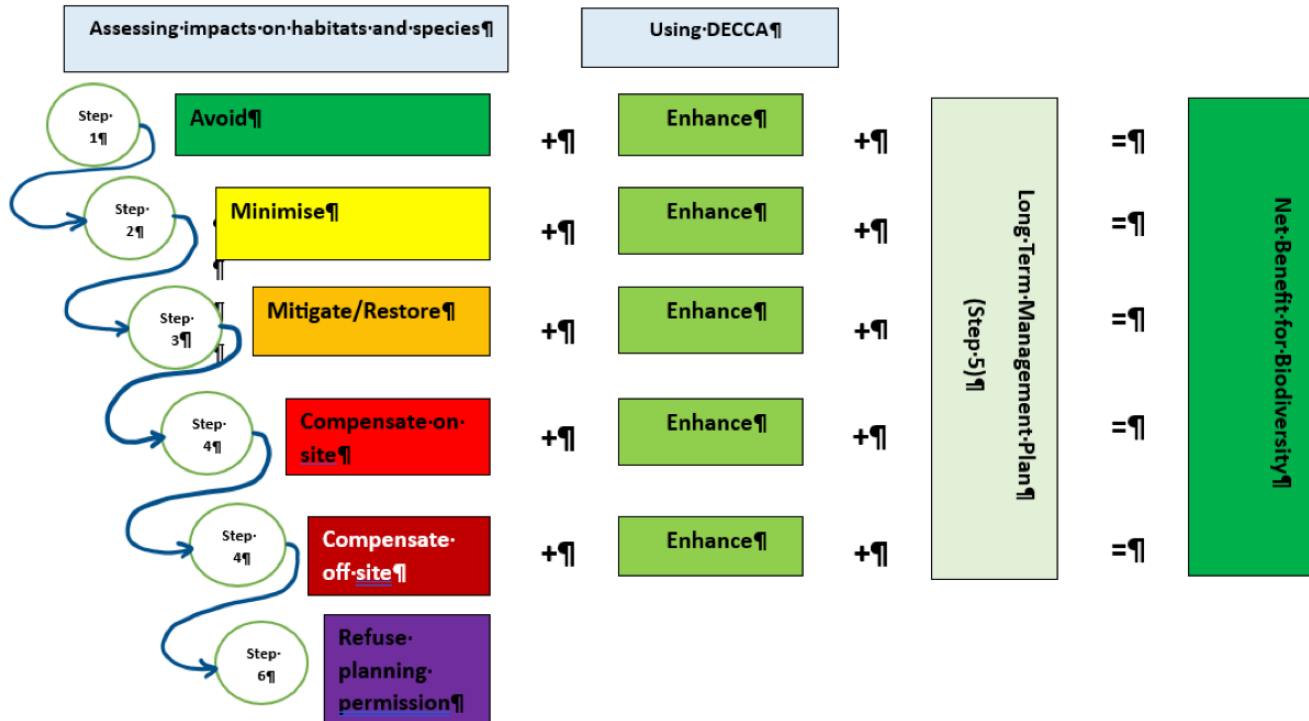
“6.2.6 A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be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

The Site

The application site is a large industrial site

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.

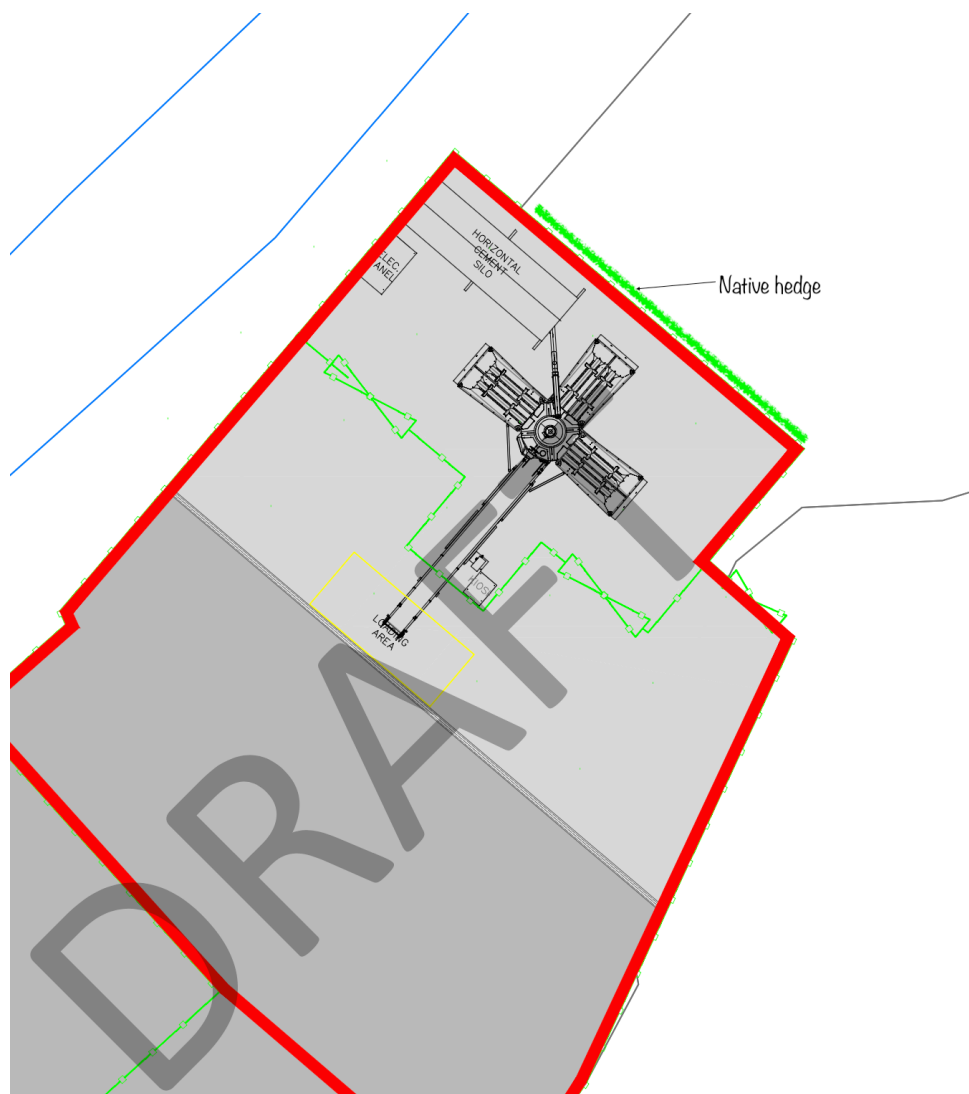
Given the scale of the proposal it is considered that the provision following will provide

adequate ecological enhancement.

21m of native hedge - (2 Rows of 600mm whips Hawthorne (*Crataegus monogyna*) 50%, Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) 20%, Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) 10%, Holly English (*Ilex aquifolium*) 10%, Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) 10%.)

Details of the location of the proposed enhancements are set out below

Figure 1



Implementation

- Hedge – Within the first planting season following the completion of the development

GIA Assessment

Table 1 below sets out the stepwise approach in assessing impacts of a development on habitats and the species

Table 1

	Steps	Assessment	Enhancement	Long Term Maintenance	Net Benefits
1.	Avoid	The proposed development is a mobile concrete manufacturing plant. There are no important ecological features within the construction area. The proposal minimises damage to any biodiversity and as such accords with the <i>stepwise</i> approach set out in the published advice.	10m of new native hedge	Annual cutting	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 maintenance free
- There is a net benefit to biodiversity as a result of the development.