

Our Ref: 25.233
Date: 25 September 2025

Green Infrastructure Statement

**Full planning application for the installation of roof top solar panels and associated works
Blocks 6 and 7, Royal Gwent Hospital, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP20 4EF and NP20 2UB1
Planning Portal ref. PP-14325006**

Proposed Development

It is proposed to install an array of solar PV panels on the roofs of blocks 6 and 7 of the Royal Gwent Hospital. As demonstrated within the accompanying plans, the panels shall be configured across the wings of Block 6 and on the gable roof section of Block 7.

Site Description and Surrounding Context

The site comprises blocks 6 and 7 of the Royal Gwent Hospital, which are located to the north of the main hospital building. Block 6 comprises a singular T-shaped building, with a central rectangular corridor and two perpendicular wings. It is approximately centred on grid coordinates E: 330910, N: 1874047. Block 7 is approximately centred on grid coordinates 330892, N: 187378, and is primarily rectangular in shape, with a slight protrusion to the south. As illustrated in figure 1, the site solely contains the built pair of blocks.



Figure 1: Site Location

The Royal Gwent Hospital (as a whole) is owned and managed by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. It is a District General Hospital which provides a comprehensive range of hospital services for inpatients, day cases and outpatients. Therefore, the immediate surrounding context is medical in nature. Whilst outside of the site boundary, a number of trees and areas of hedgerow and amenity grass land are situated in near proximity to the blocks.

Beyond the ownership boundary, the prevailing local context is largely residential, with dwellinghouses found along Dewsland Park Road to the north, Cardiff Road to the east and Friars Road to the West. In addition, Belle Vue Park is located to the south. Further medical institutions are also found nearby, with the Friars Clinical Education Centre situated immediately to the north west of the site, and St Woolos Hospital found approximately 200m to the west.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Paragraph 6.21 of Planning Policy Wales defines green infrastructure as *“the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. Component elements of green infrastructure can function at different scales and some components, such as trees and woodland, are often universally present and function at all levels. At the landscape scale green infrastructure can comprise entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways, peatlands and mountain ranges or be connected networks of mosaic habitats, including grasslands. At a local scale, it might comprise parks, fields, ponds, natural green spaces, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens or may be designed or managed features such as sustainable drainage systems. At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks.”*

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016, provides a context for the delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure. Its protection and provision can make a significant contribution to the sustainable management of natural resources, and in particular to protecting, maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in terms of the diversity within and connections between ecosystems and the extent and condition of these ecosystems, so that they are better able to resist, recover from and adapt to pressures. This means that the development of green infrastructure is an important way for local authorities to deliver their Section 6 duty under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

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.

The DECCA Framework and Net Benefits for Biodiversity

The DECCA framework is used for evaluating ecosystem resilience based on five attributes and properties specified in the Environment (Wales) Act. These are: Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity and Aspects of ecosystem resilience. A summary of the definitions is described below:

- 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.

Paragraph 6.4.11 of Planning Policy Wales states that “*planning authorities must follow a step-wise approach 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 minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for. Enhancement must be secured by delivering a biodiversity benefit primarily on site or immediately adjacent to the site, over and above that required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact.*”

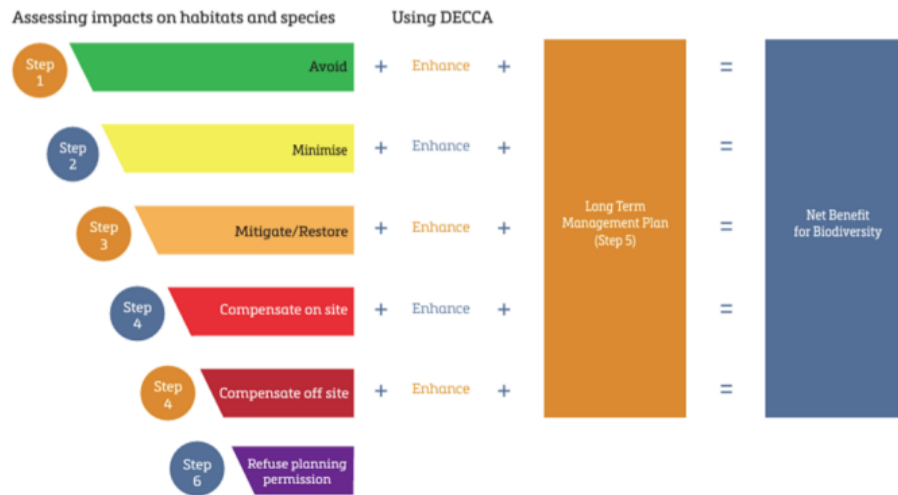


Figure 1: Summary of the Step-Wise Approach

Paragraph 6.2.12 of Planning Policy Wales states that “*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.*”

Development Impacts

The proposed scheme will not have any impact on any of the existing green infrastructure, as the development is solely concentrated within the confines of the building’s rooftops. This siting avoids encroachment into any existing green areas and is considered to be an efficient use of underutilised built space. As such, the development accords with step 1 (avoid) of the step-wise approach, as detailed within Planning Policy Wales.

Conclusion

The proposed development aligns with step 1 (avoid) of the step-wise approach detailed within paragraph 6.4.11 of Planning Policy Wales, as there will be no significant detrimental impact on any of the existing green infrastructure. This is achieved by virtue of the nature of the development, which makes efficient use of existing built land and avoids any encroachment into established green infrastructure. Whilst no new green features are introduced, the development indirectly contributes to ecosystem resilience by reducing the hospital’s operational carbon footprint and supporting long-term environmental sustainability.