

Green Infrastructure Statement – Castle Farm, Bishton, Newport, NP18 2DZ

1. Introduction

This Green Infrastructure (GI) Statement accompanies the planning application for the proposed development of two extensions to an existing agricultural building upon agricultural yard at Castle Farm. Its purpose is to detail the measures by which green infrastructure will be incorporated into the scheme, in accordance with Planning Policy Wales and particularly following the step-wise approach set out in paragraph 6.4.15, as well as the landscape and development design principles prescribed under local policy guidance.

These main principles include;

- 1) AVOID - Consider options to avoid any potential harm to an ecological feature
- 2) MITIGATE - If negative effects are unavoidable, measures should be implemented to minimise and reduce potential effects
- 3) COMPENSATE - If negative effects are still likely to be experienced, despite measures to reduce impacts being implemented, appropriate compensatory measures should be provided
- 4) ENHANCEMENT - Works should always seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity to help meet the section 7 & 6 requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

2. Site Context and Existing Green Infrastructure

The site is located on the outskirts of Bishton, to the south of Langstone, within a predominantly rural setting. The surrounding land is characterised by agricultural use, with fields extending to the north, south and west. To the east, the site adjoins the existing agricultural complex, including farm buildings, yard areas and the farmhouse. Beyond this, the linear settlement pattern of Bishton is situated to the south-east.

The wider landscape is principally agricultural in character, comprising a mosaic of pastoral fields enclosed by mature native hedgerows and scattered trees. Occasional small deciduous woodland copses are present throughout the surrounding area, contributing to local habitat connectivity and landscape structure. The agricultural character continues across the wider area, with more extensive woodland blocks located to the north towards Underwood and the railway corridor forming a feature within the landscape to the south.

The application site extends to approximately 445.74m² and currently forms part of the existing agricultural yard, being used for the storage of machinery, fodder, bedding and other agricultural materials. As an area of established hardstanding, the site itself contains no existing Green Infrastructure features.

Existing Green Infrastructure is located immediately adjacent to the site boundaries and comprises mature native hedgerows to the north and east, together with areas of ruderal vegetation along the western boundary. These features provide habitat connectivity within the local landscape and contribute positively to the wider green infrastructure network.

The habitats surrounding the site are considered to be of local ecological value and will be retained as part of the proposed development. No vegetation clearance or habitat loss is required to facilitate the proposal, and the development will be contained entirely within the existing yard area. Consequently, the proposal is not expected to result in any adverse effects on existing Green Infrastructure assets. While the immediate application site offers limited ecological value owing to its hardstanding nature, the principal Green Infrastructure resource is retained within the surrounding hedgerows, vegetation and wider agricultural landscape.

3. Proposed Green Infrastructure Measures

The development proposal incorporates the following Green Infrastructure measures:

3.1 Biodiversity and Landscape Integration

- **Retention of Existing Vegetation:** Mature hedgerows adjacent to the site boundary will be retained. This will provide continuity in the local green network and maintain habitats for local wildlife.
- **Biodiversity Enhancements:**

The development incorporates a number of biodiversity enhancement features designed to increase the ecological value of the site. Whilst the proposal does not result in the loss of existing vegetation or Green Infrastructure assets and therefore does not require compensatory planting, biodiversity enhancements have been incorporated as part of the development in accordance with current planning policy objectives.

These measures include the installation of a Vivara Pro External Barn Owl Nest Box, which will be mounted on the northern elevation of the proposed extension with the entrance orientated towards the adjoining agricultural land to maximise foraging and nesting opportunities. In addition, an Improved Roost-Maternity Bat Box will be provided. This three-crevice box is specifically designed to accommodate roosting and maternity groups of crevice-dwelling bat species.

The proposed biodiversity enhancements are considered proportionate to the scale and nature of the development and will provide a measurable ecological benefit. Further details are contained within the accompanying Planning Statement.

4. Conclusion

The proposed development is located entirely within an existing agricultural yard and does not result in the loss, fragmentation or deterioration of any existing Green Infrastructure assets. The site itself comprises hardstanding used for agricultural storage purposes and is of limited ecological value. Existing Green Infrastructure features, including mature native hedgerows and areas of ruderal vegetation adjacent to the site boundaries, will be retained and remain unaffected by the proposal.

The development has been designed to avoid adverse impacts on the surrounding Green Infrastructure network and will maintain existing habitat connectivity within the wider agricultural landscape. Whilst compensatory planting is not required due to the absence of vegetation or habitat loss, the scheme incorporates proportionate biodiversity enhancement measures, including the provision of dedicated barn owl and bat roosting features. These measures will provide opportunities for protected species and contribute towards achieving a biodiversity enhancement in accordance with current Welsh planning policy.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal appropriately responds to the site's existing Green Infrastructure context, safeguards surrounding ecological assets, and delivers suitable biodiversity enhancements proportionate to the scale and nature of the development.