Report: Dyfed steel, Dafen green infrastructure statement

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1 Introduction

1.1 Terms of reference

1.1.1 This document provides a Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) in support of the proposed industrial building at Dyfed steels, Dafen. The statement has been produced with reference to Planning Policy Wales (PPW). Section 6.2 sets out that green infrastructure should be given early consideration in development proposals and that a GIS should be prepared that is proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed.

1.1.2 In line with PPW this GIS aims to describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal and be effective in providing positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site.

1.1.3 The document should be read in conjunction with the associated documents and drawings.

1.2 The site

1.2.1 The site is located within Dafen, a village 2.0km east of Llanelli and is accessed via Dafen road. Immediately to the south, east and west of the site are existing industrial and employment areas. The wider Dyfed steel site lies to the north of the proposed site location.

1.2.2 Proposals include the development of a new industrial building with associated infrastructure and landscape works.

1.3 Document structure

1.3.1.1 The document is set out in the following sections:

- Section 1: Introduction;
- Section 2: Green infrastructure baseline;
- Section 3: Green infrastructure Strategy;
- Section 4: Net benefit for biodiversity;
- Section 5: Conclusions.

2 Green infrastructure baseline

2.1.1.1 The submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) confirms that the majority of the application site is dominated by a hard aggregate storage yard with sparse tall ruderal vegetation to the north and west, whilst a small raised plateau of disturbed land was located to the south and east of site that possessed a mosaic of neutral grassland, tall ruderal habitat and scrub that surrounded a prefabricated building. The footprint was

surrounded by the wider site to the north and west, whilst the A4138 and associated scrub/ treeline was located to the south and east.

2.1.1.2 Overall, the stone aggregate yard was considered to be of negligible ecological interest. The grassland, tall ruderal and scrub were considered to be limited botanical diversity due to the recent colonising of the plateau after scrub clearance, whilst the resilience of these habitats is considered to be short term with the presence Japanese Knotweed colonising the grassland on the plateau. The plateau habitats were considered to be of ecological importance on a local context and potentially utilised by nesting birds (scrub), foraging and commuting mammals and small numbers of amphibians.

2.1.1.3 The PEA noted that the small amounts of scrub located around the offsite prefabricate building was the only habitat considered to be suitable nesting habitat for birds and any clearance should be conducted outside of the bird nesting season or preceded by a visual check for nesting birds.

3 Green infrastructure strategy

3.1.1 Utilising the baseline information, a green infrastructure strategy has been developed. This has been informed by the 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 minimised, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for.*"

3.1.2 In addition, a soft landscape design has been prepared to ensure a number of enhancements are integrated into the development and where possible a net benefit for biodiversity is provided.

3.1.3 Table 1.1 sets out the stages considered as part of the step-wise approach and the associated actions integrated into the proposed development.

Table 1.1: Step-wise approach

Steps	Aim	Action
Avoid	Avoidance of any adverse impacts on habitats and/ or species as a direct or indirect result of the development.	The main element of the development footprint sits within the central area of the site which is identified as being of low ecological value.
Minimise	Minimise as far as practically the severity of any impacts.	Existing trees and scrub area along the eastern part of the site to be retained where possible to contribute to the

		ecological value.
Mitigate	Mitigate for losses as a direct result of the development.	Meadow grass has been proposed within soft landscape design to mitigate for any losses as a result of the development.
Compensation (on or off site)	Provision of alternative habitats. Proposed tree planting at a ratio equivalent to the quality, environmental and ecological importance of the trees lost (min. 3 trees for every 1 lost).	Mitigation commensurate with the losses anticipated from the development are proposed and no compensation for biodiversity impacts are included.

4 Net benefit for biodiversity

4.1.1 PPW states the planning system must ensure development results in a net benefit for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience to enhance well-being. Furthermore, it defines a net benefit as development leaving *"biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in a significantly better state than before, through securing immediate and long term, measurable and demonstrable benefit, primarily on or immediately adjacent to the site."*

4.1.2 In line with PPW the development seeks to provide a net benefit for biodiversity. These are provided through a number of enhancements that aim to align with the DECCA framework including:

- Diversity – enhancing diversity by providing a new meadow grass area;
- Extent – retention of the existing tree and scrub along the eastern boundary to maintain semi-natural habitat areas and linkages;
- Condition – improving the condition of the site with the implementation of a long-term management and maintenance plan;
- Connectivity – retaining a habitat corridor along the eastern boundary of the site that links between habitats and improves connections; and
- Aspects of resilience – integration of elements within the scheme to improve adaptability and resilience to future pressures. This includes retention of tree planting to help with cooling, shading and carbon storage, vegetation cover to

reduce water runoff, along with a range of varied size/ scales of habitats to contribute to ecological value and resilience.

5 Conclusions

5.1.1 Overall, the stone aggregate yard was considered to be of negligible ecological interest and the grassland, tall ruderal and scrub were considered to be limited botanical diversity. The plateau habitats were considered to be of ecological importance on a local context and potentially utilised by nesting birds (scrub), foraging and commuting mammals and small numbers of amphibians.

5.1.2 A number of potential impacts on site have been avoided due to the arrangement of the development. In addition, existing trees and scrub are to be retained on site where possible to contribute to the overall ecological value.

5.1.3 The retention of a habitat corridor along the eastern boundary will enhance the connectivity within the site and to the wider landscape.

5.1.4 A range of planting proposals have been included within the development with the aim of mitigating any losses as a result of the development, diversify the existing ecosystem, and provide a net benefit for biodiversity.