



Subject	1&2 Brynseion Cottages, Merthyr Tydfil	Date	04/11/25
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BE Ecological Ltd visited 1&2 Brynseion Cottages to undertake a brief walk over of the site for planning permission to install parking and improve access.

The area where the parking will be situated comprises of a stone wall and early successional vegetation such as dock, thistle, bramble, grasses, ivy, nettle and rosebay willowherb. It is possible that small numbers of reptiles may be present within this area, however, these are likely to be limited to small numbers of slow worm or common lizard should any be present. Some vegetation has been removed from the top of the wall as part of ongoing activities within the garden. There is evidence of some tree removal, it is unclear whether this is due to the planning application. There are hedgerows bounding the site, however, all of these will be retained.

Enhancements will need to be included within the design and GI statement (found below). A native wildflower garden will need to be implemented within the site as compensation/enhancement for reptiles and insects.

An Elisa bat box will be attached to the eastern gable <https://www.nhbs.com/elisa-bat-box>. The box will be erected no less than 3m in height.

The following bird box will be attached to the western gable of the site https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-woodstone-house-sparrow-nest-box?bkfno=238831&ca_id=1495&adlocale=uk&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23069538718&gbraid=0AAAAAD1BbhiFJixgGr0wPUnnWwCdPFcZ&gclid=Cj0KCQIA5abIBhCaARIsAM3-zFVEX3I_ZYV2pzHN_h6H1a3v3

TECHNICAL NOTE

[4WNS5HQLZXgj1rfxNEH-5yzWxf4I_EaAoFzEALw_wcB](#) . The box will be erected no less than 3m in height.

AI clearance will be undertaken in line with the method statement contained herein

If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact us

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APPENDIX A- Method Statements

Reptiles and birds

1. All clearance will be supervised by a suitably experienced ecologist until such time as the ecologist states that direct supervision is not necessary.
2. The ecologist will be on call for the duration of clearance works.
3. All above ground vegetation and brash removal will preferentially be undertaken during the winter months i.e. between November and February inclusive. If this is not possible, all areas to be cleared must be subject of a finger-tip search by an ecologist immediately prior to and during any clearance work;
4. Should evidence of breeding birds, in particularly nests, be recorded, no clearance may be undertaken within 5m of any nest site until such time as the nest is vacated naturally.
5. No spraying of vegetation to be carried out. Vegetation will be maintained close to ground using repeated cutting only. 1x Habitat pile will be added to an area on site remaining unaffected by the development. Materials already onsite (e.g., brash, logs) will be used to create the habitat pile.
6. Woody vegetation will be cleared (ONLY IF NECESSARY) to ground level using a chainsaw with all arisings stacked in unaffected areas NOT on areas of tall vegetation (over 300mm). Where necessary, stumps and roots will only be removed by machine (under ecological supervision) once the above ground clearance is complete.
7. All woody vegetation will be checked by the ecologist prior to cutting for the presence of bird nests.
8. Vegetation will be cut in three phases. The first phase will reduce the vegetation height to 150mm; the second will reduce it to ≈50mm; the third phase will reduce the height to as close to ground level as possible. All cuts will have a period of 24 hours between each cut. Vegetation will be raked and removed off site to ensure no additional habitat is added.
9. All vegetation cutting will be directional. This ensures that any animals present will be pushed from the site into retained land
10. After clearance, if the vegetation is allowed to regrow above 150mm high, it will be cut and raked as described above.
11. Where hibernaculum potential is identified by the supervising ecologist, all ground breaking including brash, log piles, stumps and root removal) will only be cleared during the

active season (March-October) while day time temperatures are consistently over 12°C for a period of at least seven days prior as otherwise hibernating reptiles may be killed or injured as a result of inconsistent (low) temperatures (during the day and night) and/or low prey availability. Potential hibernacula will only be dismantled by hand unless the supervising ecologist gives the approval for machine dismantling.

12. 1 If a bird's nest is observed on the site, the ecologist will assess it to determine whether or not it is active, the species concerned, the lifecycle state of any occupants and provide advice on next steps.

13. If reptiles are observed within the clearance area during the works, a decision on how to deal with them will be made on site in light of the conditions on site at the time and the state of the animals themselves. There are two options for dealing with them:

It may be possible to leave the animals alone to find their own way into cover, depending on where they are seen, what they are doing and their apparent activity levels; or

14. Should conditions allow, capture and translocate the animals to a safe area within retained land

ASSESSMENT AGAINST POLICY -PLANNING POLICY WALES: STEPWISE APPROACH AND GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

On the 11th October 2023, ahead of PPW12 being published, the new Chapter 6 came into force with immediate effect. Net benefit must be secured via planning applications using the step-wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures and the need to consider enhancement and long- term management. Green Infrastructure Statements will be used to demonstrate the step wise approach. The following information will be used in order to show compliance with policy.

The Environment (Wales) Act, the Well-Being of Future Generations Act and the Chief Planner's letter frame biodiversity with respect to its contribution to achieving ecosystem resilience. Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has developed a framework for evaluating ecosystem resilience based on five attributes and properties specified in the Environment (Wales) Act. This is referred to as DECCA: Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity and Aspects of ecosystem resilience. The attributes provide a framework for considering the state of ecosystem resilience in Wales and can be applied across different habitats and land uses and for a range of different scales. NRW works to the definition of ecosystem resilience published in its State of Natural Resources Report in 2020, which is: "An environment that can respond to pressures by resisting, recovering or adapting to change; and is able to continue to provide natural resources and benefits to people."¹⁶ When assessing planning applications, Planning Policy Wales instructs planning authorities to take account of and promote the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the five attributes of ecosystem resilience. The DECCA attributes are explained further in NRW's Terrestrial and freshwater Resilient Ecological Networks: a guide for practitioners in Wales¹⁷ , but as a broad summary, the definitions are as follows:

- 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.

1.0 Background to the site

The site refers to a full planning application for parking and improved access at Brynseion Cottages.

2.0 Existing Green Infrastructure

There is very little green infrastructure within the site boundary other than early successional vegetation, bramble and non-natives

Direct habitat loss implications within the development site can be limited if compensatory planting can be incorporated within the site plans.

The following relevant enhancement measures are recommended and have been incorporated into the proposals:

- integrated bird and bat boxes into the building providing additional habitat for species
- use of native species within the soft landscaping works
- suitable long-term management of soft landscaping to ensure spaces are useful to wildlife

3.0 Step wise approach

Step 1- Avoidance- Impacts cannot be avoided on all existing habitats due to the size of the development.

Step 2- Minimise- Impacts have been minimised by mitigating lighting.

Step 3- Mitigate/Restore- Mitigation will be via appropriate method statements to ensure no harm to protected species Any site lighting will conform to the following guidance to prevent any indirect impacts on foraging bats
<https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidancenote-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/> .

Step 4- Compensation on site- Wildflower meadows will be planted within the landscaped areas of the site. A wildflower meadow will be planted within the rear garden to compensate for the loss of reptile and invertebrate habitat. The wildflower areas will be seeded with Emorsgate EM2

<https://wildseed.co.uk/mixtures/view/4/specialgeneral-purpose-meadow-mixture>. Enhancement will then include maintenance and management of this area to benefit both reptiles and invertebrates.

4.0 MANAGEMENT OF HABITATS

EM2

Description This meadow mixture contains species that are characteristic of traditional meadows across a wide range of soil types. This mixture is compliant with the following Environmental Stewardship options: • Sustainable Farming Incentive (SFI): IPM2 Flower-rich grass margins, blocks, or in-field strips • Countryside Stewardship (CSS): AB8: Flower-rich margins and plots

Ground Preparation

Endeavour to select ground that is not highly fertile and does not have a problem with perennial weeds. Good preparation is essential to success so aim to control weeds and produce a good quality seed bed before sowing. To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds using repeated cultivation. Then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to produce a medium tilth, and roll, or tread, to produce a firm surface. Sowing Seed is best sown in the autumn or spring but can be sown at other times of the year if there is sufficient warmth and moisture. The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or broadcast by hand. To get an even distribution and avoid running out divide the seed into two or more parts and sow in overlapping sections. Do not incorporate or cover the seed, but firm in with a roll, or by treading, to give good soil/seed contact.

First Year Management

Most of the sown meadow species are perennial and are slow to establish. Soon after sowing there will be a flush of annual weeds, arising from the soil seed bank. These weeds can look unsightly, but they will offer shelter to the sown seedlings, are great for bugs, and they will die before the year is out. So resist cutting the annual weeds until mid to late summer, especially if the mixture contains Yellow Rattle, or has been sown with a nurse of cornfield annuals. Then cut, remove and compost. Early August is a good time. This will reveal the young meadow, which can then be kept short by grazing or mowing through to the end of March of the following year. Dig out any residual perennial weeds such as docks.

Management Once Established

In the second and subsequent years EM2 sowings can be managed in a number of ways which, in association with soil fertility, will determine the character of the grassland. The best results are usually obtained by traditional meadow management based around a main summer hay cut in combination with autumn and possibly spring mowing or grazing. Meadow grassland is not cut or grazed from spring through to late July/August to give the sown species an opportunity to flower. After flowering in July or August take a 'hay cut': cut back with a scythe, petrol strimmer or tractor mower to c 50mm. Leave the 'hay' to dry and shed seed for 1-7 days then remove

from site. Mow or graze the re-growth through to late autumn/winter to c 50mm and again in spring if needed.

It appears that two trees may have been removed to facilitate the development. Six new trees will need to be planted within the site to compensate for the loss. Three blackthorn and three hazel will be planted along the eastern boundary of the site.

5.0 ENHANCEMENT USING THE DECCA FRAMEWORK

To build resilient ecological networks the following enhancements are proposed:

bird boxes 1no Enhancement
bat boxes 1no Enhancement

Boxes will be integrated into the new building. Please see associated technical note and site plans.

6.0 Monitoring

Monitoring of habitats species at the Site shall be undertaken to ensure their continued value during the operation of the Development. At the end of year 5 an ecological audit of habitats shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist to ensure that those habitats which have been retained and created are meeting the standard they should be. The general condition monitoring should be undertaken in the form of an annual review. As part of the annual review a letter report should be produced. As a minimum, this should summarise those key management works which have been undertaken during that period, together with an assessment against those aims and objectives and management specification. Any observations with regard to general habitat condition, including deterioration of habitats should be noted, together with any recommendations for any remedial measures if required. The council and ecologist should be notified of any recommended remedial measures so that these can be agreed and implemented at the earliest opportunity and ensure that targeted habitat conditions would still be met.

The proposed scheme acknowledges the requirement to achieve a Net Benefit for Biodiversity and from the beginning this has been built into the planning of the project. It is recognised that the footprint of the scheme has likely removed an area of scrub. The applicant aims to deliver biodiversity enhancements at the local scale by offering the enhancements stated above on the site. The site will be subject to enhancements along with long term appropriate management. As result of the ecological measures within this report, it is expected that there will be a demonstrable net benefit for biodiversity. The habitats to be impacted have been identified as being of relatively low value. All habitats will be retained/created/enhanced on site.

The proposals meet the recent changes to Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales 12 February 2024 which requires a proactive approach to green infrastructure conservation, restoration and enhancement and the securing of a net benefit for biodiversity through use of the step-wise approach and DECCA framework to provide mitigation and enhancement in addition to a commitment for long-term management of the biodiversity resource.

The wildlife boxes and wildflower area will be retained and managed for at least 25 years. Any breakages/deterioration of boxes will require replacement of said boxes. The client must ensure that the wildflower area is maintained and managed as per this GI statement. The client and any successor in title will be responsible for the funding and maintenance of the boxes and wildflower areas.

Site photographs

