
Green Infrastructure Statement

**Land at The Coppice
Penrhos
Llanymynech
Powys
SY22 6QB**

**Proposed ground mounted solar
PV panels, substation and
all associated works**

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June 2026

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1. Policy Background

1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) supports a full planning application for the construction of ground mounted solar PV panels, substation and all associated works at Land at The Coppice, Penrhos, Llanymynech, Powys, SY22 6QB (“the Application Site”).

1.2 This GIS aims to respond to the requirements of Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, 2024). This states:

“6.2.11 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.

6.2.12 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.

6.2.13 There are multiple ways of incorporating green infrastructure, depending on the needs and opportunities a site presents, and the green infrastructure assessment should be referred to, as appropriate, in order to ascertain local priorities. Landscaping, green roofs, grass verges, sustainable drainage and gardens are examples of individual design measures that can have wider cumulative benefits, particularly in relation to biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems as well as in securing the other desired environmental qualities of places. Wider landscape measures, such as the creation of species rich meadows, woodlands and the improvement of linkages between areas of biodiversity value should be considered for larger scale development. In most cases the green infrastructure statement should highlight any baseline data considered and surveys and assessments undertaken, including but not limited to, habitats and species surveys, arboricultural surveys and assessments, sustainable drainage statements, landscape and ecological management plans, open space assessments and green space provision and active travel links”.

1.3 The ‘step-wise approach’, as outlined below, demonstrates the sequential approach that has been adopted as part of the proposed development 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. In addition, enhancement has been secured by delivering a net biodiversity benefit on-site, over and above that required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact.

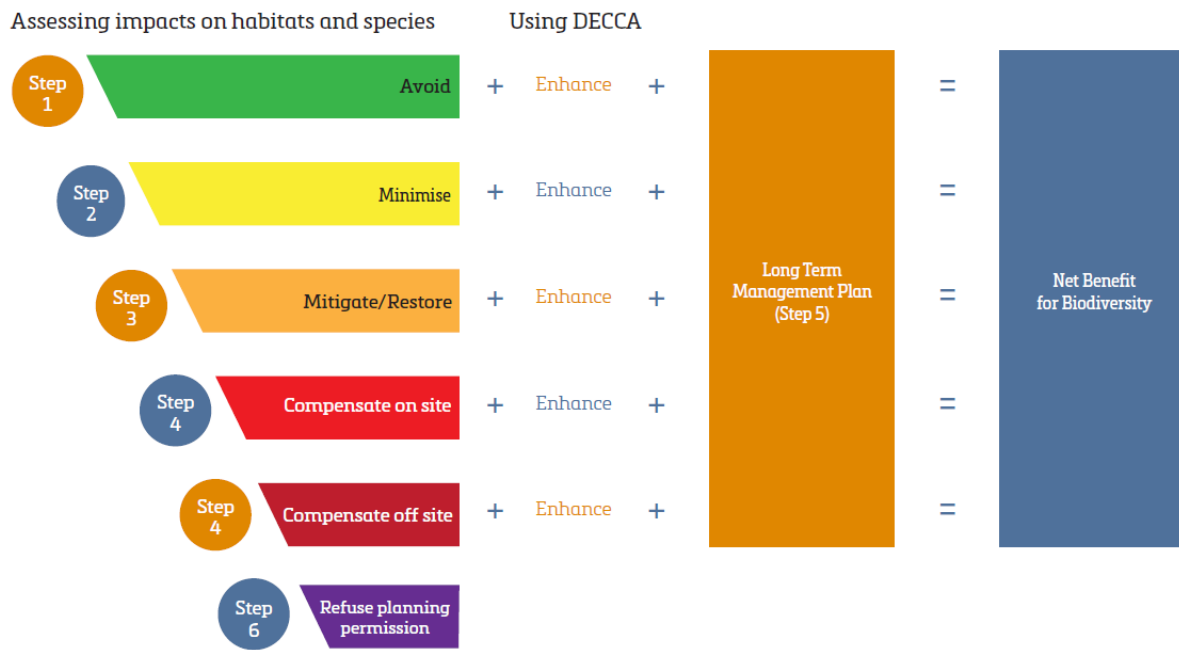


Figure 1: A summary of the step-wise approach taken from Chapter 6 of PPW (Ed. 12, 2024)

2. The Proposed Development

2.1 This application seeks full planning permission for the installation of a 1.148MW ground mounted solar array. The proposed development will include a ground mounted racking system which will be attached to the PV panels including a DNO substation, switch room, underground cabling and all ancillary works.

2.2 The development will be located on agricultural land forming part of the wider farm holding at The Coppice, Penrhos. The site has been selected due to its suitability for solar energy generation, proximity to existing grid infrastructure, its location within a less productive area of the farm, and its position adjacent to an existing solar installation.

2.3 The site is to be laid out as per the site block plan and will include the following elements:

- A 1.148MW solar photovoltaic array;

- Ground-mounted steel support frames and racking systems;
- An LV Switch Room and DNO Substation;
- Inverters and associated electrical equipment;
- Underground cabling connecting to the existing on-site export connection;
- Ancillary infrastructure required for the operation and maintenance of the development.

2.4 The solar panels will be mounted on metal support frames secured by shallow driven piles, minimising disturbance to the ground and allowing the site to be restored at the end of the operational life of the development.

2.5 The arrays will be arranged in south-facing rows to maximise solar gain and efficiency. The panels will have a minimum ground clearance of approximately 1 metre and a maximum height of approximately 3 metres above ground level.

2.6 Inverters will be mounted on the framework adjacent to the solar arrays. Electricity generated by the panels will be collected and transferred via underground cabling to the proposed substation and switchgear equipment before connecting to the existing export infrastructure.

2.7 The external transformer will be positioned on a concrete base within a secure fenced enclosure. An adjacent GRP kiosk will accommodate the switchgear and ancillary electrical equipment.

2.8 Electricity generated by the proposed solar array will be exported to the local electricity network via the existing grid connection infrastructure serving the adjacent approved solar development. Scottish Power Energy Networks (SPEN) has confirmed the availability of a grid connection for the development, and a connection agreement has been prepared to facilitate the export of electricity generated on site. The proposed connection will utilise underground cabling between the solar array and the point of connection, minimising visual impact and avoiding the need for significant additional infrastructure.

2.9 The total construction period is typically 6 weeks. The materials will be stored off site and will be transported at phased intervals during the construction period to control vehicle movements.

2.10 No permanent lighting is proposed as part of the development.

2.11 The application site was selected following consideration of a range of technical, operational and environmental factors. The chosen site benefits from:

- Good solar exposure with minimal overshadowing;
- Access to an existing grid connection;
- Suitable access for construction and maintenance;
- Existing boundary vegetation providing natural screening;

- The absence of statutory landscape, ecological, archaeological or heritage designations; and
- A location within a less productive area of the agricultural holding, adjacent to the existing solar arrays.

2.12 The development has been designed to allow the continuation of agricultural use through the establishment of wildflower and pollinator-rich grassland together with seasonal sheep grazing beneath and around the solar arrays.

3. Green Infrastructure Baseline

3.1 The application site comprises an area of improved agricultural grassland, which is noted to be of low ecological value. Indeed, the site is currently grazed intensively by the Applicant's livestock, which means the site is unlikely to be in use by any protected or priority species. There are also no known ponds within a 300m radius of the application site, meaning it is unlikely Great Crested Newts would be present in the area.

3.2 Thus, it is considered there is a low potential for any protected species to be impacted or effected by the proposed development in this case.

3.3 There are also no designated ecological sites within close proximity to the application site, meaning impacts upon protected sites are unlikely.

3.4 The development has been sensitively designed and sited to ensure no existing mature trees or hedgerows will need to be removed in order to facilitate the proposals on the site.

3.5 Therefore, it is considered the application site is devoid of any significant green infrastructure at present.

3.6 The application site is not located within or near to any statutory or non-statutory designated ecological sites, and therefore the proposed development does not have any potential to cause an impact upon protected sites.

4. The Green Infrastructure Strategy

4.1 The approach to the design of the proposed development is fully outlined within the accompanying Planning Statement. The submitted design has been arrived at following thought being given to the environmental effects of the proposed development.

4.2 The application proposes net-benefits for biodiversity in accordance with the requirements of Planning Policy Wales by way of the proposed erection of 2x Woodcrete bat boxes and 1x Woodcrete bird box on existing mature trees to the north of the application site, on land owned by the Applicant. Given the low

ecological baseline of the application site, it is considered the proposed NBB measures (as per Drawing No: 81777 / GH / 004) will result in an ecological enhancement on the site.

4.3 Given the fact the application site is devoid of any significant green infrastructure at present, the proposed NBB measures as outlined above, would provide a significant NBB effect over and above the green infrastructure baseline.

4.4 The step-wise approach has been followed as impacts upon habitats and species would be avoided through the siting and design of the proposal. The development would also not prejudice connectivity between nearby habitat for protected species and wider biodiversity.

4.5 Off-site ecological mitigation will not be required as there will not be any impacts upon protected species on the site.

4.6 The proposal would also achieve an overall net benefit for biodiversity on the holding over and above the baseline.

4.7 The Applicant will ensure the long-term management and maintenance of the proposed bird and bat boxes to ensure they are kept in a useable condition.

5. Conclusion

5.1 It is clear the proposed development would not cause any impacts upon existing green infrastructure, biodiversity, ecosystem resilience or protected species. The proposal has fully followed the step-wise approach as prescribed by Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales, and the development would provide a net benefit for biodiversity which is commensurate to the scale of the proposals.