

Integrating Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Enhancement in development.

Good Practice Guide for
Green Infrastructure Statements
for householder developments

2025



Context

In 2024 the Welsh Government updated the Planning Policy Wales.

Its aim is to make sure the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales.

Part 6 of the policy says every new building project needs to send in a Green Infrastructure Statement. It has guidance on Green Infrastructure (GI) and how to achieve a net benefit for biodiversity.

This guidance tells you more about green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement design. It also sets out the Step-wise Approach.



Conwy County Borough Council wants to:

1. Protect, enhance, create and restore habitats to create a resilient wildlife and biodiversity network
2. Enable a thriving blue environment
3. Promote sustainable growth and economic development through GI
4. Encourage, enable and promote healthy lifestyles and enhance wellbeing
5. Improve connectivity



i Green infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. Green infrastructure is made up of parts that can work at different sizes or scales:

- **Landscape scale** — can include entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways and mountain ranges.
- **Local scale** — can include parks, fields, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens.
- **Smaller scale** — can include individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls.

i A net benefit for biodiversity means that any development should leave ecosystems and biodiversity in a much better state than before. This is done by securing immediate and long-term, measurable and demonstrable benefit, mainly on or preferably right next to the site.

Introduction



When is a Green Infrastructure Statement needed?

A Green Infrastructure Statement should:

- be submitted with all planning applications,
- be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed
- describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal.

It should be submitted with all outline, householder, and full planning applications.

If you want pre-application advice, we suggest sending us a draft of your Green Infrastructure Statement too.

Who should write it?

Someone with an overview of the whole project should fill out the Green Infrastructure Statement – this could be the applicant, agent or architect.

Preliminary site and ecological surveys and analyses should be used to inform the design and layout which can be discussed at pre-application stage. This way, officers can give advice and the design can be amended before an application is submitted.

When should it be written?

The Green Infrastructure Statement should be created in the early stages of a development to make sure a design idea meets the policy and goals of green infrastructure.

Ideally, preliminary site surveys and analyses should be used to guide the design and layout that is sent in at the pre-application stage. This way, officers can give advice before an application is sent in.

What should be in a Green Infrastructure Statement?

The Green Infrastructure Statement is an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question. It must be used for demonstrating how the Step-wise Approach has been followed.

What is the Step-wise Approach?

Green infrastructure statements must show how decisions on design, siting, scale, density and other plans have thought about protecting biodiversity and used that to give the best outcomes.

The Step-wise approach helps planning focus on impact.



Avoiding impact

Are there ways to keep and improve existing habitats and species. There will be the need to demonstrate that reasonable alternatives which would result in less harm, no harm or benefit have been considered and can't be achieved.



Minimising impact

When location and siting options have been exhausted, there will be a requirement to minimise any impacts. This can be achieved by maintaining as much habitat as possible, retaining existing features and using innovative solutions to minimise damage.



Mitigating impact

Steps should be taken to reduce any loss and damage. Mitigation measures should be like for like in the case of priority habitats and species.



Compensate for impact

If there is damage or loss, compensation must be provided. This can include finding ways to create or restore a habitat.



Approach for Householder developments

Householder developments e.g. garages, annexes, conversions, smaller alterations change of use, roof alterations.

For a minor development, the statement can be a short description of how green infrastructure and biodiversity will be enhanced by proposals.

Proposals must be supported with a short Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Statement that includes:

- simple specifications including the numbers, locations and timeframe for implementation of biodiversity enhancement
- any wider green infrastructure measures set out in submitted plans.

E.g. Include a site analysis that identifies any key features for retention and enhancement, any potential impact that the plan has, how impact can be limited or avoided, and opportunities including ponds, tree planting, bird and bat boxes, permeable paving, green roofs on bin stores and sheds, bee bricks, pollinator planting etc.

See examples on the next page







Lighting

Two of the biggest dangers to biodiversity are habitat loss and fragmentation. Artificial Light at Night (ALAN) makes it harder for native species to move around because it creates barrier effects.

A Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity statement, appropriate surveys, site analysis and design should identify key ecological features and areas to be maintained free of artificial light spill.

Lighting schemes should be justified with clear purpose and benefit, adhere to dark sky design lighting principals light target areas only with warm spectrum colours <2700K, avoid sky glow with zero upspill, no glare and where possible or appropriate control use with timers and/or movement sensors.

Full cut-off units should be used, illuminating the task area with no spill. A diversity of suitable options can be used including Solar 'bat hat', stud lighting, and bollards. Properties with elevations facing dark corridors, or habitats supporting light sensitive species could incorporate VLT glazing, electric blinds and smart glass. Any security lights should be fully shielded.

All roof sky lights and windows will need to have blinds or shutters on that can be closed when dark to prevent light from spilling out. Alternatively smart glass could be used on any skylights, roof lights or windows.

See the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT), Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) and Dark Skies national guidance for further information.







Thanks for reading

To find out more and get the **Green Infrastructure Statement form** for householder developments, go to:

conwy.gov.uk/en/Resident/Planning-Building-Control-and-Conservation/Planning-Building-Control-Conservation.aspx



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd.