

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 26/02/2024
REPORT OF ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	

Number: 3

Application No: C22/0953/17/LL

Registration Date: 06/02/2024

Application Type: Full

Community: Llandwrog

Ward: Groeslon

Intention: Demolition of dairy farm building and cattle shed, removal of two existing slurry tanks, erection of new livestock shed and milking parlour, construction of silage clamp and dry manure storage, internal entrance road together with associated works.

Location: Land near the College Farm, Glynllifon, Llandwrog, LL54 5DU

Summary of Recommendation: APPROVE WITH CONDITIONS

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1. Description:

1.1 The application submitted is for the demolition of the existing substandard agricultural sheds and structures and their replacement with a new livestock (dairy cattle) shed, a rotating milking parlour, indoor dry manure storage, an additional silage silo along with ancillary facilities comprising a dilution water basin, landscaping bank and associated works including a cattle walkway and the creation of hard surface areas within the existing agricultural holding together with supplementary agricultural structures such as water holding tanks and cattle feed bins to the south of the main cattle shed and milking parlour. The proposal can be divided into several elements as follows: -

- Demolition of the existing substandard construction which comprises the milking parlour, livestock shed, and two slurry towers.
- Erection of a building for a rotating cow milking parlour measuring 20.5m x 50m with a ridge height of 6.9m and eave height of 4m (1,000 m²). The milking parlour will be attached to the new cattle shed on the east side and will wrap in an “L” shape around the existing roundhouse cattle shed. Internally, the building will include an office, two tool and equipment rooms and a washroom. Externally, the building will be fabricated of steel corrugated profile roofing sheets; walls to comprise of Yorkshire boarding, steel profile covering, concrete panels; doors of timber to be confirmed and windows to be confirmed.
- Erection of a livestock building to house 224 dairy cows measuring 47.5m wide, 70.5m long with a ridge height of 9.1m (3,306 m²). Internally, the building will contain stalls for resting, an assembly area for cows before milking, concrete pathways for feeding together with an equipment room. The building will also include a planked floor allowing the cows’ manure and slurry to drop into an underground tank. Externally, the building will be fabricated of steel corrugated profile roofing sheets; walls to comprise of Yorkshire boarding, steel profile covering, concrete panels and natural stone cladding on the centre part of the front elevation; doors of timber to be confirmed and windows to be confirmed.
- Erection of an indoor dry manure storage area alongside the existing storage area. The building will measure 20m x 12m with a ridge height of 6.2m. Externally, the building will be fabricated of steel corrugated profile roofing sheets; walls to comprise of Yorkshire boarding, concrete panels along the bottom.
- Erection of a feed storage silo adjacent to the existing silage storage area.
- Location of a tank to capture water from the milking parlour and the water waste from the silage heaps
- Creation of a hard surface yard south of the dairy unit and north of the pig unit.
- Creation of two foul water pits (one on the east side of the site and another on the west side) which will be landscaped with wildflower wetland grass.
- Creation of an internal road network within the existing yard with a new cattle walkway to the north of the livestock shed and milking parlour.
- Creation of a 1m high bank/bund on an impermeable membrane to be planted with a native hedge to the west of the new dairy unit.
- Biodiversity improvements through provision of boxes for swallows, bats and sparrows.
- Use of the existing private road network within Glynllifon is proposed to serve the site.

1.2 The site is situated next to a number of existing agricultural buildings/structures in Glynllifon farm with the Pentref Addysg Glynllifon (PAG) (education centre) building located to the West of the dairy farm buildings. Forming the southern part of the site are a number of the traditional farm buildings, several of which are grade II listed buildings, with the grade I Listed Glynllifon Park and Historic Gardens situated to the South and East of the site. It is also noted that the Glynllifon Special Area of Conservation along with the Glynllifon Site of Special Scientific Interest adjoin the southern and eastern part of the site with the Afon Llifon Wildlife Site approximately 400m west of the site.

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1.3 To support the application the following documents were submitted:

- Design, Access and Planning Statement;
- Pre-Application Consultation Report;
- Heritage Impact Assessment;
- Arboriculture Report and Restrictions;
- Arboriculture Impact Assessment;
- Drainage Strategy;
- Archaeological Assessment; Trench testing
- Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- Landscape and Ecological Management Plan
- Ecological Survey Report;
- Bat Survey Report;
- Construction Details for the Livestock Shed and Dairy Parlour
- Water & Energy Conservation Statement;
- Construction environmental management plan.

1.4 It was confirmed that the applicant had undertaken a consultation prior to submitting the application in accordance with the requirements of Article 1 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (Wales) (Amendment) Act, 2016 as the proposal is a development defined as a major development. A Pre-Application Consultation (PAC) Report is included with the application to reflect this consultation.

1.5 The development is described as an agriculture and aquaculture development project under Schedule 2, Regulation 2(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (Wales) Regulations 2017 which requires the application to be screened. To this end, the application has been screened but taking into account its scale, nature plus mitigation measures, an Environmental Impact Assessment will not be needed with this current application.

2. Relevant Policies:

2.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and paragraph 2.1.2 of Planning Policy Wales emphasise that applications should be decided in accordance with the Development Plan, unless a material planning consideration indicates otherwise. Planning considerations include National Planning Policy, and the Local Development Plan.

2.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on the Council to take reasonable steps in the exercise of its functions to achieve the 7 well-being objectives within the Act. This report has been prepared taking into account the Council's duty and the 'sustainable development principle', as stated in the 2015 Act. In forming the recommendation, the Council has sought to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs.

2.3 **Gwynedd and Anglesey Joint Local Development Plan 2011-2026 (LDP) adopted 31 July 2017: -**

PCYFF 1 – development boundaries.

PCYFF 2 – development criteria

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PCYFF3 – design and place shaping.

PCYFF 4 – design and landscaping.

PCYFF 5 – carbon management.

PCYFF 6 – water conservation.

ISA 1 – infrastructure provision.

ISA 3 – further and higher education development.

PS 1 – Welsh language and culture.

PS 4 – sustainable transport, development and accessibility.

PS 5 – sustainable development.

PS 19 – conserving and where appropriate enhancing the natural environment.

PS 20 – preserving and where appropriate enhancing heritage assets.

TRA 2 – parking standards.

TRA 4 – managing transport impacts.

AMG 5 – local biodiversity conservation.

AT 1 – conservation areas, world heritage sites and registered historic landscapes, parks and gardens.

Supplementary Planning Guide: Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities.

Gwynedd Design Guide (2003).

2.4 **National Policies:**

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Planning Policy Wales (Issue 12 - February 2024)

TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities.

TAN 12: Design.

TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh language.

TAN 24: The Historic Environment.

3. **Relevant Planning History:**

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3.1 C07A/0729/17/YA - INSTALLATION OF UNDERGROUND SLURRY CHANNELS, INTAKE TANK AND SILAGE EFFLUENT TANK – Permission Granted with Conditions - 02-11-2007

C12/0459/17/LL - CONSTRUCTION OF NEW AGRICULTURAL BUILDING AND SILAGE CLAMPS – Permission Granted with Conditions - 13-09-2012

C13/0625/17/LL - ERECTION OF NEW PIG SHED AND NEW MACHINERY STORAGE AND ERECTION OF 4 SILOS – Permission Granted with Conditions - 16-08-2013

Since 2018 a number of planning applications have pertained to the original farm listed buildings in the western part of the site.

4. Consultations:

Community/Town Council: Support the application.

Transport Unit: I do not intend to give a recommendation as it is assumed that the proposed development would not adversely affect any road, or proposed road.

Natural Resources Wales: (Due to the number of responses and length of comments, only NRW’s final comments are shown, previous comments can be found on the Council’s website through the track and trace system.)

Comments 11/04/2024

We continue to have concerns about the application as submitted, however, we are satisfied that these concerns can be overcome by attaching the following conditions to any planning permission granted:
CONDITIONS 1-2: PROTECTED SITES

We also advise, based on the information submitted to date, that the documents set out below (Protected Sites section) should be included in the approved document plans and conditions on the determination notice. Without inclusion of these conditions and documents, we would object to this planning application:

Protected Sites

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

The proposal is located within 75m of Glynllifon SAC. We have concerns that a significant impact from the proposed development on Glynllifon SAC (designated feature: lesser horseshoe bat, *Rhinolophus hipposideros*) cannot be ruled out.

We note that the following documents are submitted in support of this application and these address many of our concerns identified in our previous response dated 03/08/2023 (ref: CAS-221751-Z9S1)

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- Proposed External Lighting (WSC-WSP-XX-XX-DR-E-63 0001KC T04 WSP). 12/09/2023
- Proposed Landscape Plan (WSC-GLH-00-XX-DR-L-0001A)WSP 18/05/2022
- Proposed Site Ecology Features (WSC WSP 00 ZZ DR A 900002) WSP 08/09/2022
- Bat Cavity Roosting (WSC WSP Z1 ZZ DR A 770001) WSP 30/03/2023
- Zone 1 Section A-A, F-F, G-G, H-H, and J-J (WSC WSP Z1 ZZ DR A 063001)WSP.25/07/2022
- Zone 1 Proposed GA Elevations Sheet 2 - East and West (WSC WSP Z1 ZZ DR A 062003 P02) 22/07/2022.
- Zone 1 Proposed Elevations (WSC WSP Z1 ZZ DR A 062001 P02) WSP 22/07/2022
- Proposed Sections - Welsh Sheep Centre (WSC WSP Z1 ZZ DR A 050009 P05) WSP.23/03/2022
- Proposed Elevations - Welsh Sheep Centre (WSC WSP Z1 ZZ DR A 050008 P06) WSP22/03/2022
- Zone 1 Sheep Farm Proposed Ecology Plan (WSC WSP Z1 00 DR A 061008) WSP .12/09/2022.
- Bat Loft Box Plan, Elevations and section (WSC WSP Z1 ZZ DR A 770002) WSP 18/09/2023

We welcome the proposed additional proposals, including:

- Incorporating a purpose-built bat loft suitable for Lesser Horseshoe Bats (LHB) in the larger building.
- Bat boxes and openings including bat cavity roosting boxes. These appear to be well planned and located.
- The exterior lighting is an improvement on the current situation and is welcomed. Downward-pointing 2700K exterior lights, activated by movement, will be a major improvement for bats and other wildlife. We note that all lighting at the College is being inspected and upgraded by the Dark Sky Project and welcome the College's co-operation in this project.
- Removal of non-native rhododendron and replanting with native, shade-tolerant species to replace the understorey, which will provide better habitat. Future increased thickness will increase LHB feeding and dispersal.

We recommend that the hedges be maintained 'above' 2m as the desired height. Ideally, at a height of 3m, and 3m width at the base, they will form sturdy, sheltered flight lines for bats. We also recommend that other hedgerows within the farm are allowed to grow to this size, to enhance the area for the benefit of bats.

We also recommend that suitable wetland tree species (e.g. alder and willow) be planted in the proposed wetland meadow. This would create a better and more suitable habitat for bats in the short term, and would be easier to manage in the long term.

In order to confirm the mitigation measures set out in the above information, we advise that the above reports must be included in the 'approved list of plans/documents' condition within the decision notice should permission for the project be granted.

However, we advise that long-term management of habitat features should also be ensured and we therefore advise that the conditions and obligations set out below

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be attached to any future planning permission for this development. Provided that the development is carried out in accordance with those conditions, and with the details described in the documents listed above, we do not consider that it will adversely affect the integrity of Glynllifon SAC

Conditions:

Condition 1: No development, including site clearance, will commence until the submission of a Long-Term Management Plan (for a duration of not less than 25 years). The Management Plan should include:

- Defined aims and objectives (including targets that can be used as key performance indicators for monitoring purposes);
- Habitat management and roost maintenance prescriptions;
- Details of the size and scheduling of any arboricultural work proposed, and how the natural range of LHBs should be maintained at all times.
- Details of site liaison, wardening, incident reports and response arrangements;
- Details of the skills and competencies required of those undertaking identified work (including building maintenance) or activities (including surveillance) including whether European Protected Species licences are required for the proposed activities;
- Introduction of a Post-Construction Monitoring and Record Dissemination Plan over a period of 25 years (minimum). This plan will include surveillance methodologies, timescales and reporting requirements. The approved monitoring plan will include monitoring artificial lighting during the construction and operational phases of the plan.
- Periodic review mechanism for the Management Plan.

Condition 2: No development, including site clearance, shall commence until the submission of an Ecological Compliance Assessment Plan (ECAP) to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority. Due to the importance of the site for bats, we advise that ECAPs be maintained by an external party.

The purpose of the ECAP is to implement all evidence-compliant ecological avoidance, mitigation and compensation work – either proposed or subject to the provisions of reserved matters conditions. The Audit will identify Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to be used for evidence assessment and compliance purposes. The approved plan will include a specific KPI in relation to lighting. We also advise that an evening inspection of the lights should be carried out after the construction work to ensure that lights are working as they should.

Planning Obligation:

We advise that any subsequent planning permission be subject to the requirement for an appropriate planning obligation (Unilateral undertaking/Section 106 Agreement) to ensure the long-term functionality of the site for bats in relation to defined “red” and “blue” land. The applicant may wish to amend the red line boundary to incorporate all proposed mitigation, which may obviate the need for a planning obligation.

The provisions of the scheme to include:

- a) Long-term dedication of red and blue land specifically identified for bat conservation purposes;

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- b) Long-term restrictions on the future use of identified land including the surrender of future development rights for land proposed for long-term bat conservation purposes;
- c) Review and update of the Management and Monitoring Plan every 6 years to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority in consultation with the SNCB.

As the competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), your authority must, before deciding to grant permission for a project that is likely to have a significant impact on the SAC/SPA/Ramsar site, either alone or in conjunction with other plans or projects, make an appropriate assessment of the project's implications for that site given its conservation objectives. You must consult NRW for the purposes of the assessment and address any comments we make within the reasonable time indicated. In the absence of that assessment, NRW cannot advise that the proposals would not result in an adverse impact on the SAC/SPA/Ramsar site.

Shadow HRA

We note that a 2023 Update to the Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) 2023 has been submitted for Glynllifon Welsh Sheep Centre and Dairy Development Projects. We note that it states:

“The Rural Economy Hub currently risks causing adverse effects alone and mitigation of the current proposals is unlikely to be sufficient, which is likely to preclude it from being permitted. It is also anticipated to take place at a later stage than these developments and is not yet permitted so where the proposals for that development indicate loss of woodland and hedgerows, this is not confirmed and is unlikely to be permitted and so is not a consideration for this in-combination assessment at this time.”

We agree that the proposal risks causing adverse effects alone and that the proposed mitigation is unlikely to be sufficient. We advise that as the Competent Authority, you consider whether the Rural Economy Hub constitutes a Scheme or Project under the 2017 Habitats Regulations (as amended) and whether its potential in-combination effects on Glynllifon SAC and the LHBs it sustains with the dairy development project proposal should be considered as part of your HRA.

We note the 5-year tree felling plan included in the Shadow HRA. We have concerns about the potential impact of this work. The shadow HRA indicates a significant area of woodland within the SAC to be worked within a period of five years. The information about tree felling and the impact from the tree works in this document is unclear. The LHB element of the SAC depends on allowing access to the woodland and hedgerows within the SAC, and to the wider environment, for foraging and commuting. Therefore, any reduction in these habitats will directly affect the LHBs. It is essential that the overall woodland (and hedgerows) are not reduced and that commuter routes are maintained at all times.

Five years is also too short a time to allow for sufficient regrowth before cutting additional sections. We note that section 8 of the shadow HRA states:

“The natural range of lesser horseshoe bats is unlikely to be reduced by these proposals once all mitigation measures are in place as planned, the planting is mature and the bats have had the opportunity to adapt to the new landscape and associated features (if indeed they can and do)”.

Please see the 3rd bullet point of the Long-Term Management Plan above. Any felling may require a felling permit and/or NRW consent.

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As the competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), your authority must, before deciding to grant permission for a project that is likely to have a significant impact on the SAC/SPA/Ramsar site, either alone or in conjunction with other plans or projects, make an appropriate assessment of the project's implications for that site given its conservation objectives. You must, for the purposes of the assessment, consult NRW and consider any comments we make within the reasonable time you indicate. In the absence of that assessment, NRW cannot advise that the proposals would not result in an adverse impact on the SAC/SPA/Ramsar site.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

In NRW's view, the proposals have the potential to affect Glynllifon SSSI. Should the aforementioned impact pathways for the SAC be adequately addressed, NRW believes that the characteristics of the SSSI will also be adequately protected. We would welcome an on-site meeting with the developer to discuss our concerns and also the long-term management of the SSSI and opportunities to work in partnership.

Protected Species

Bats

We note that the ecological Report submitted in support of the above application (Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) Report Glynllifon Welsh Sheep Centre. Capita. 15 July 2022) noted that bats are present at the application site (lesser horseshoe bats).

From the information submitted, we consider that the proposed development is likely to represent an increased risk for bats, as defined in our guidance document 'Natural Resources Wales Approach to Bats and Planning (2015)'.

Bats and their breeding and resting places are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Where bats are present and a development proposal is likely to contravene the legal protection which they have, the development can only proceed under a licence issued by Natural Resources Wales, having satisfied the three criteria set out in the Regulations (refer also to Paragraph 6.3.7 of Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning). Please note that for the purposes of providing advice during the planning application stage, our comments are limited to the criterion relating to "demonstrating no harm to maintaining the favourable conservation status of European protected species".

Please see our detailed comments above relating to protected sites.

As long as those measures described are implemented, we consider that the proposed development is unlikely to be detrimental to the restoration or maintenance of favourable conservation status for all local bat populations recorded in and around the application site.

Great Crested Newts

Section 4.6.12 of the PEA and PRA Report regarding the pond at the site says: *"The HSI results for the pond at TN3 are in the table below, indicating a 'good' scoring for potential to support great crested newt". It goes on to state: "An attempt to collect eDNA on 21 June 2022 was aborted as the pond had largely dried up with a thick layer of silt present (Photograph 45)."*

Great Crested Newts and their breeding sites and resting places are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

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The Pre-Application Consultation Report (October 2022; Cadnant Planning; ref: 2019.176_05) confirms: *“The ecological reports have been updated to confirm that the proposal does not propose to discharge into the pond, only into the rushes around it, therefore there would be no detrimental effect on GCNs.”*

Therefore, we have no representations to make in relation to this aspect as presented. You should consult us again if any survey carried out finds that Great Crested Newts are present on site, and further advice is required from us.

Otters and Water Voles

We agree with the conclusions in relation to these species. Natural Resources Wales would refer the local authority to the Chief Planning Officer’s letter of 1 March 2018, which advises local planning authorities to attach licence requirement information to all consents and notices where European protected species are likely to be present on site.

Barn Owls

We note that the revised plans show that the proposed Barn Owl box will now be mounted on a sturdy tree trunk at least 3m high, facing east, away from buildings and the prevailing winds. We welcome this, however we advise that any proposed Barn Owl provision should be as far away as possible from any planned bat access points, and not at a minimum of 3m away, as described. Keeping these 2 species separate is essential to avoid predation of the bats.

We are satisfied that the protected species survey has been carried out to an acceptable standard. Given the nature and scale of the development, we are in general agreement with the conclusions in the Report and agree that a survey for Barn Owls would need to be carried out before demolition of the existing sheds, to avoid adverse effects.

Foul Drainage

After considering the further details submitted, (Response to Natural Resources Wales Planning Consultation Feedback - Welsh Sheep Centre) we raise no further concerns regarding this matter. However, if a private drainage solution is to proceed, the Applicant will need to apply for an Environmental Permit from us. It is important to note that a grant of planning permission does not guarantee that a permit will be granted, should a proposal be deemed unacceptable (either because of environmental risk or because on further investigation, connection to the main sewerage system was deemed practicable). Therefore, the Applicant is advised to enter into pre-application discussions with our Licensing Team on 0300 065 3000, at the earliest opportunity, to try to ensure that there is no conflict between any planning permission granted and the permit requirements

Pollution Prevention

We note the CEMP submitted to support the application (Welsh Sheep Centre Construction Environmental Management Plan 38782 R1 Rev1. Atmos Consulting. January 2023). We advise that the CEMP is acceptable for the purpose of informing the planning decision-making process.

We also note that the CEMP is described as a live document that continues throughout the construction phase. Therefore, your authority may wish to request that the document be updated to also refer to the most recent plans and documents submitted and listed in the “approved documents” list in the Protected Sites section above, as the CEMP predates these documents.

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Agriculture

Drainage Plan

In our Statutory Pre-Application Consultation response, we noted that section 3.2.2 of the Proposed Drainage Strategy (July 2022; Capita) explains that a storage tank to collect dairy effluent would be used. We advised that the formal planning application should provide further clarification on the number of days of storage that would apply. We note that the Proposed Drainage Strategy (September 2022; Capita) 3.2.2 now states: *“The drainage connected by manholes discharge into a small holding tank for 2 weeks before being pumped and tankered away to be distributed across the local fields as specified by operators.”*

It was also noted that the sheep were to be located on hardcore rather than concrete. We advised that more details should be provided on how the sheds would be cleaned. Section 3.2.2 of the proposed Drainage Strategy now states: *“The milking ewes and lambs will be housed on straw bedding. The bedding will be collected as Farm Yard Manure and either stored under cover or taken directly to a temporary field site, in accordance with The Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021”*.

Any manure produced (stored and applied to land) should be managed in accordance with the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 and Code of Good Agricultural Practice guidance. Transition periods apply to manure management and further guidance can be found here: Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 Guidance for Farmers and Land Managers (gov.wales).

Groundwater

We refer the developer to ‘Approach to groundwater protection’ by the Environment Agency (2017) adopted by Natural Resources Wales. Specifically, the developer should be aware of the position statements in Section G “Discharge of liquid effluents into the ground” and H “Diffuse (rural) sources of pollution”

Ancient Woodlands

The application site is adjacent to a Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites. Please refer our advice to planning authorities considering proposals affecting ancient woodlands.

Comments 31/1/2024

Thank you for consulting Natural Resources Wales (NRW) on your Habitats Regulations Assessment for the above development, which we received on 19/01/2024. Our response should be taken as NRW’s formal representation, as the appropriate nature conservation body, to your appropriate assessment (Appropriate Assessment. Emily Meilleur. 17.01.2024) under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended. In consideration of the mitigation measures detailed, we agree with your conclusion that the development

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is unlikely to adversely affect the integrity of Glynllifon Special Area of Conservation.

Welsh Water: No response.

Public Protection Unit: Demolition and construction can cause a noise and dust problem for members of the Public and employees close to the site. Before work begins, a detailed plan to control dust, noise, vibration as a result of the demolition should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval in writing. The demolition should be carried out in agreement with the approved plan.

To protect the residents of the area, any demolition and construction work must take place between the hours of 09:00-18:00 Monday - Friday, 09:00-13:00 Saturdays, and not at all on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

During demolition and construction, the best practical methods should be used to reduce noise and vibration from the work with regard to the recommendations of 'BS5228: Control of Noise and Vibration on Construction and Open Sites'.

An asbestos assessment should be carried out prior to any demolition to establish if asbestos is present and to ensure that hazards of asbestos to the environment, land users and any residents are minimised and risks are managed.

Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service: Although archaeological records have been created of the standing stone located adjacent to the existing slurry store (western part of the site), it is considered that details of archaeological programme records will still need to be submitted for Local Planning Authority consent within 6 months of completion of the fieldwork by way of a planning condition.

CADW: Although the development does not involve additional improvements to the grade 1* listed building (*Fort Williamsburg*), taking into account the location and layout of the existing construction work together with the content of the Heritage Impact Assessment submitted with the application, CADW has no objection to the proposal. The additional landscaping included as part of the revised plans is welcomed.

Water and Environment Unit: Since 7th January 2019, sustainable drainage systems (SDS) have been required to manage surface water for all new developments of more than 1 house or where the building area with drainage implications is 100m² or more. Drainage systems must be designed and built in accordance with minimum standards for sustainable drainage published by Welsh Ministers.

These systems must be approved by Gwynedd Council in its role as the SDS Approval Body (SAB) before construction begins.

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Due to the size and nature of the development an application will need to be made to the SDS Approval Body for approval prior to the start of construction. The information provided suggests that the developer intends to use suitable sustainable measures to drain the site, but until an application is made to the SAB there is no assurance that the site plan would enable compliance with the full set of national SDS standards. Early consultation with the SAB is recommended.

Biodiversity Unit: **Comments 21/3/2023**

Thanks for the comments from NRW. I agree with the concerns and requirements NRW has identified, especially as the application is within Glynllifon SAC and is likely to affect bats requiring an assessment under the Habitats Regulations (HRA).

The applicant has not provided sufficient information for the HRA assessment. The applicant will therefore have to provide information for the HRA.

The application needs a plan to improve biodiversity. I recommend that it includes creating wildflower meadows, planting trees (parkland trees), planting hedgerows, planting woodland.

The application needs to provide the following:

1. a nature and wildlife enhancement scheme, shown on the plans.
2. Information for the HRA assessment
3. Manure plan – showing on which fields muck spreading will occur and how frequently and what amount volume of manure.

Comments 29/08/23

The applicant has provided updated information and plans:

- Glynllifon Welsh Sheep Centre and Dairy Development Projects Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) 2023 Update (June 2023 WPS)
- Landscaping Plan
- Applicants' response to NRW & ecology comments (16th June 2023)

Lesser Horseshoe Bat & Glynllifon QTS

Information to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required that includes in-combination impact from other proposals: Glynllifon Sheep Sheds C22/0952/17/LL, Glynllifon

Business Hub, Tree Felling Plan.

A Lesser Horseshoe Bat roost must be provided and hedgerows enhanced and additional hedges created.

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Illumination Plans & Lighting

I have concerns regarding the outside illumination and lighting plans which suggest that areas with illumination of less than 0.2 lux are dark; Clear Full Moon is between 1-0.25 lux and Moonlight/Cloudy Sky is 0.1 lux. I therefore recommend that illumination plans showing more gradations of lux levels are provided.

Detention Basins & grasslands mixes

The plans include two detention basins, the one on the east side will result in the partial loss of an orchard. The landscape plans include the planting of orchard trees, I would like to suggest that these trees are transplanted and another orchard is created. Plans show that detention plans will be seeded with wetland wildflower mix which I welcome.

Landscaping Plan

This plan shows a Species Rich Grassland Mix species list, however I am not sure where this will be used.

Hedges

The plans include a hedging around the site most of the site which I welcome, and this will replace the hedge that will be lost around the round house cow shed, this hedge was found to be used by Lesser Horseshoe Bats. However, it is important that hedges are as dense and wide as possible and planted as soon as possible to replace the hedge that would be lost.

Tree Felling Plan

The 5 year felling plan years shows considerable areas of trees will be felled, leading to the loss of wooded corridors which bats use as flight routes as they provide cover from predators and a foraging habitat. This will have a significant impact on bats for several years. Trees take many years to grow and therefore it will be over 15 years before the wooded corridors have regrown. I recommend that the tree felling plan proposed by the College be amended to smaller felling areas and replanting with a mixture of broadleaved trees and a variety of conifers species.

Manure Plan and Ammonia Impact Assessment

I recommend that the applicant provides the above and that the assessment includes the proposed sheep sheds and other livestock activities on the farm.

Biodiversity Enhancement

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I recommend that the proposal includes biodiversity enhancements such as hedgerow planting, hedgerow enhancement, planting parkland trees and managing grasslands with species rich wild flower meadows.

INNS

A plan for the control and eradication of non-native plants species e.g. Himalayan balsam and Rhododendron.

Summary

I object to this proposal until further information above is provided and the tree felling plan is amended.

Comments 17/1/2024

The following is an assessment under the Habitats Regulations. The applicant has provided documents to support this process:

- Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) 2023 Update by WPS
- Ecological Survey Report Proposed Coleg Glynllifon Dairy Development 21st October 2021 Cambrian Ecology
- Lesser Horseshoe Bat Monitoring Report Proposed Coleg Glynllifon Dairy Development 1st December 2022 Cambrian Ecology.

Habitat Regulations Assessment

Gwynedd Council as the competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), must before deciding to give consent for a project which is likely to have a significant effect on a QTS, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects, make an appropriate assessment of the implications of the project for that site in view of its conservation objectives.

Appropriate Assessment

Proposal

Planning application for the demolition of a number of existing agricultural buildings and the construction of a new dairy unit with a large underground slurry tank. The scheme also involves removal of hedgerows.

Location & Proximity to QTS

The application borders with, and slightly overlaps the Glynllifon SAC. Glynllifon Campus is an active sheep and dairy farm and an agricultural college where students are trained in agricultural skills including tree felling. Parts of the college grounds are also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), designated

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for its population of lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros* bats (an Annex II species).

Consideration of Alternatives

No alternatives to the Dairy Development Project were considered due to the need for its adjacency to the existing cow milking parlour.

Likely Significant Effect

The Dairy Development is likely to cause loss of lesser horseshoe bat flight line and loss of foraging habitats due to removal of hedging and external lighting.

Lesser Horseshoe Bats are sensitive to light, and will keep away from illuminated areas where they are vulnerable to predation. Illuminated areas can cause barriers to their flight paths while foraging or accessing their roost, this could eventually lead to abandonment of the roost.

There are no Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosting within the buildings of this proposed development.

Conservation Objectives of QTS

Glynllifon SAC is designated for its population of lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros* bats (Annex II species, which is the primary reason for the SAC designation). The estate includes three summer roost sites and two hibernation sites for the lesser horseshoe bat, comprising about 6% of the UK population. The main maternity roost is situated in the cellars of the Glynllifon mansion house, built during the 1830s. Within the estate, bats from the mansion forage in areas of plantation woodland along the River Llifon and on the southern side of the estate near to Plas Newydd. These areas also act as flight routes for bats going to other feeding areas outside the estate boundaries. A number of other bat species are found within the Glynllifon Estate. These include whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*, Natterer's bat *M. nattereri*, Daubenton's bat *M. daubentonii*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano *P. pygmaeus*, noctule bat *Nyctalus noctula* and the brown long eared bat *Plecotus auritus*.

The Glynllifon SAC also contains areas of woodland which is used by the bats as foraging areas as well as hedgerows and other linear features used as flight routes. The conservation objectives for the SAC are as follows:

- The natural range of lesser horseshoe bats will not be reduced, nor be likely to be reduced for the foreseeable future.
- There is, and will continue to be, sufficient habitat to maintain the lesser horseshoe bat population on a long-term basis.
- The three maternity roosts will continue to be occupied annually by lesser horseshoe bats and their babies:
 - I. Glynllifon Mansion (maternity and hibernation roost, Unit 16)
 - II. Pen y Bont (maternity roost, Unit 36)

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There will be a sufficiently large area of suitable habitat surrounding these roosts to support the bat population, including continuous networks of sheltered, broadleaved and coniferous woodland, tree lines and hedgerows connecting the various types of roosts with areas of insect rich grassland and open water. All factors affecting the achievement of these conditions are under control.

These conservation objectives as well as performance indicators and a core management plan for the site (albeit from 2008) can be viewed online on the Natural Resources Wales website. The performance indicators largely relate to the maternity and hibernation roosts themselves as well as maintaining woodlands and flight lines. It refers to 'good condition hedgerows' as being those more than 2m in height with no gaps over 5m in length.

Potential Impacts to Glynllifon SAC without mitigation

- Obstruction of bat flight paths & foraging habitat due to lighting
- Loss of bat flight paths & foraging habitat due to habitat destruction

These impacts could reduce functionality of the Glynllifon Lesser Horseshoe Bat population at Glynllifon.

The proposal will not result in the direct destruction of Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosts. Surveys of the area proposed for the Dairy Development by Cambrian Ecology did not record any lesser horseshoe bats roosting or foraging activity in the buildings proposed for removal. They did however record commuting or foraging lesser horseshoe bats on all static detectors deployed.

Different locations were used for the 2021 and 2022 static detector surveys with the majority of lesser horseshoe bat calls on the statics during the 2021 surveys on the southern boundary of the proposed scheme, along the woodland edge, and the majority during the 2022 surveys were on the north side of the hedgerow situated to the north of the existing dairy centre which connects directly to SAC woodland habitats. Significantly fewer calls were recorded on the south side of this, which is impacted by artificial lighting.

Mitigation

The proposal has incorporated mitigation to reduce the impact to Lesser Horseshoe Bats. Mitigation shown on the landscape plan for the development and has included:

- Planting new hedgerows as recommended in Figure 7 of the Cambrian Ecology Report (see below).
- Installing 2m high solid fencing on the side of the new hedges facing the proposed development, due to the fact the hedgerows will take several years to become viable flight paths for lesser horseshoe bats.
- Orchard planting to the southeast of the development connecting to existing woodland.
- Use of appropriate native species for planting along with tree guards

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- Dense hedgerow planting in a double staggered row, with six plants per m²
- Translocation of existing hedgerows (H2 and H3 references), and
- Standard tree planting in hedgerow gaps so the canopy will eventually connect the gaps.

The planting of new hedgerows and translocation of the existing hedgerow are designed to maintain connections around the perimeter of the Dairy Centre and connect back into the woodland south of the development that surrounds the Mansion House which supports lesser horseshoe roosts. A 1m high bund on which a hedgerow is to be planted is also incorporated to create a barrier to the woodland to the south and shielding of the Dairy Centre development from the woodland.

The lighting plans indicate the existing and predicted proposed lighting spillage which shows limited extents of light spill as well as showing the predicted 'dark zones' where light spill will be below 0.2 Lux. The lighting plans indicate motion sensor Type EX2 luminaires (2700k 'bat friendly' LEDs).

Assessment Alone with Mitigation

It is considered unlikely that this proposal will result in adverse effects on the integrity of the Glynllifon SAC alone, provided the impact avoidance and mitigation measures including post construction monitoring, management and remediation (if required) are fully implemented, and once the planting has become established. This proposal for Dairy Development has incorporated mitigation and will not have an adverse impact to the conservation features of the Glynllifon SAC.

In-combination Assessment

In combination effects are those effects that may arise from the development proposed in combination with other plans and projects proposed/consented but not yet built and operational (i.e. those developments that are separate from the baseline).

There are several other proposed planning developments and projects with the potential to affect the Lesser Horseshoe Population of the Glynllifon SAC, these are:

- Peblig Industrial Estate
- Glynllifon – Welsh Sheep Centre
- Rural Hub – pre-application
- Glynllifon – college commercial forestry and woodland management
- Ty'n Llan Llandwrog, restaurant extension
- There are numerous planning applications for barn conversions & house renovations which are associated with Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosts and habitats.

Peblig Industrial Estate is a current planning application, yet to be determined located along the River Seiont and is 6.5km from Glynllifon SAC. The site has

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many derelict industrial buildings, some of which have been found to be Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosts. The proposal is to demolish the buildings and build new buildings for business use. As this proposal would result in the destruction of a bat roost, it has included the building of a bat roost and enhancing the river corridor as mitigation. This proposal is yet to be determined.

The Glynllifon planning application for a Welsh Sheep Centre is surrounded by the Glynllifon SAC. This proposal will not directly destroy a Lesser Horseshoe Bat roost, it will result in the loss of a small amount of habitat, but the main concern is the lighting and illumination of the buildings. The proposed Welsh Sheep Centre development has incorporated mitigation which includes the provision of a bat loft suitable for Lesser Horseshoe Bats, hedgerow planting, tree planting and habitat enhancement and have ensured that lighting will not impact bats. This proposal has sufficiently mitigated impacts to the Glynllifon SAC. The planning application for the Welsh Sheep Centre is yet to be determined. The Rural Hub would result in removal of woodland within the SAC for an access road as well as development on an agricultural field adjacent to the SAC, involving loss and severance of hedgerows. Following advice at pre-application stage, this proposal is very unlikely to proceed in its current form.

Glynllifon Commercial Forest Felling & Woodland Management schemes: There currently is a proposed 5 year management plan for forest felling at Glynllifon which would reduce the wooded areas at Glynllifon significantly and cause the loss of bat flight paths and foraging areas and this would result in an adverse impact due to the loss of foraging areas and loss of connectivity of flight paths for lesser horseshoe bats to use and impact the functionality of the Glynllifon SAC. This tree felling scheme will not be licensed unless it ensures that there will be no adverse impact to the Glynllifon SAC.

Ty'n Llan is a permitted planning application which has incorporated mitigation and will enhance an existing lesser horseshoe bat roost and provided a hedgerow for foraging and habitat connectivity.

There are numerous planning applications for barn conversions & house renovations which are associated with Lesser Horseshoe Bat roosts and habitats. None of these will be permitted unless they ensure that bat roosts and their habitats will be enhanced. Most of these sites were structures which were derelict and collapsing, without renovation would result in the loss of the bat roost.

Conclusion of in-combination assessment

These plans and developments have incorporated mitigation to avoid any impacts to Lesser Horseshoe Bats. Therefore, they will not contribute any impact to the Glynllifon SAC. The Dairy Development Proposal in-combination with other plans and projects will not have an adverse impact on the conservation objective of the Glynllifon SAC.

Integrity Test & Conclusion of HRA

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The proposal Dairy Development at Glynllifon will not have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Glynllifon SAC.

NRW Consultation

As part of the HRA process Gwynedd Council must consult NRW. In a letter dated 20th December 2023 NRW state, that provided the development is carried out in accordance with their recommended conditions, they do not consider that it will adversely affect the integrity of the Glynllifon SAC.

Recommended Conditions to ensure that impacts to the Glynllifon SAC are avoided

1. Glynllifon College Commercial Forestry and Woodland Management schemes must be amended to be sensitive to the lesser horseshoe population and enhance the habitats for this species, by creating more wooded area. The plan must be extended for 25 years. This plan must be provided before any works take place for the construction of the Dairy Development.
2. Before any works takes place a Construction Environmental Management Plan must be provided. This should detail hedgerow translocation, tree planting.
3. Before construction commence, hedgerow planting and hedge translocation must take place and be completed the satisfaction of the LPA.
4. Construction and works must only take place in day light hours and no flood lighting is to be used during construction.
5. Once construction is complete an audit of the lighting must be carried out, with any remediation required implemented as soon as possible.
6. Monitoring of light levels must take place three times between April-September for the duration of the operation of the site. This report must be sent to the LPA each time monitoring is undertaken.
7. Bat monitoring of the site once it is operational.

Historic Gardens Trust for Wales: No response.

Public Consultation: Notice was given in the press and near the main entrance to Glynllifon and nearby residents were informed. The advertising period has already ended but no response has been received from the public following the statutory notification period.

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5. Assessment of the relevant planning considerations:

Principle of development

- 5.1 Policy PCYFF 1 of the LDP states that outside the development boundaries, proposals will be rejected unless they are in accordance with specific policies in the LDP or national planning policies or the proposal demonstrates that its location in the countryside is essential. The application relates to improving the facilities of the existing dairy farm at the Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai campus within Glynllifon Agricultural College and to this end, its location in the countryside is considered essential. It is also noted that it replaces an existing substandard construction on the application site.
- 5.2 Policy ISA 3 relates to further and higher education developments that support proposals for new facilities or extensions to existing buildings for academic or support purposes or for ancillary social, cultural or leisure activities at a further or higher education site subject to considerations of scale, location, design, amenity and transportation being acceptable. Priority should be given to re-using existing sites or buildings. Note, in addition, that the sequential test should be adopted when determining the location of proposals for further and higher education with priority given to sites which are located: - (i). Firstly, on existing further or higher education sites; or (ii). Secondly, on sites which have a close association with an existing campus.
- 5.3 The clarification to this particular policy states - *The University of Wales, Bangor, Coleg Llandrillo Menai and Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor have numerous and extensive educational facilities within the Plan area. They make a valuable contribution to the local economy by providing employment for local people, improving skills locally and through expenditure by students. The Council is committed to improving the standards and availability of further and higher education facilities in the Plan area. New developments and enhancements to existing facilities are considered necessary to support proposed growth.*
- 5.4 As alluded to above, the proposal is to build contemporary and modern facilities replacing existing substandard construction on the same site for the purpose of agricultural education while boosting the local economy. This innovative project will promote effectiveness, sustainability and excellent standards of animal welfare within the dairy sector while also demonstrating good practice on the sustainable management of water and waste including farm slurry within the Welsh dairy industry. The proposal would provide potential additional income for agricultural enterprises and for Coleg Glynllifon to play an important role in developing the dairy sector by developing a better understanding of the commercial opportunities. It should be noted that proposed new projects by Grŵp Llandrillo-Menai provide a range of modern facilities to help develop learning, enterprise, innovation, exchange of knowledge and the development of enterprises. To this end, therefore, the proposal is deemed to comply with the requirements of Policy ISA 3 of the LDP.
- 5.5 The document TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities states:- *Strong rural economies are essential to support sustainable and vibrant rural communities. A strong rural economy can also help promote social inclusion and provide the financial resources necessary to support local services and maintain attractive and diverse natural environments and landscapes.... Farm plans may usefully support applications relating to farm diversification proposals, although they should not be made a requirement of applicants. Such plans can demonstrate how the diversified activity fits into the wider farming picture, and set out its environmental consequence, highlighting how any significant adverse effects will be mitigated.* In this particular case, the current

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application was submitted in order to expand and meet the needs of the Agricultural College for the purpose of education and its important contribution to the local economy as stated above, and in consideration of this, it is believed that the proposal conforms to the objectives and aims of TAN 6. Although the application is considered acceptable on principle, however, other relevant policies within the LDP must also be complied with and these are discussed below.

Visual amenities

- 5.6 The application site is situated adjacent to the existing Glynllifon College farm buildings and forms part of Glynllifon Historic Park with original grade 2 listed farm buildings immediately to the South-west. A monument known as the Glynllifon Standing Stone is located on the western boundary of the site and is at present to the rear of the slurry store. To the west is Pentref Addysg Glynllifon (PAG) with a car park and internal road network located to the West. Bordering the site to the North and beyond is open agricultural/pasture land. In all four directions Glynllifon woodlands are located, with the woodland adjoining the site to the East and South, approximately 500m further to the North, while to the West the woodland is located behind Pentref Addysg Glynllifon. The proposal will involve demolishing the existing substandard construction and replacing it with sheds of larger scale including the erection of a bank on the western edges of the site with two foul water ponds (one on the east side of the site and another on the west side) which will be landscaped with wildflower wetland grass. The two sheds will be located adjacent to each other and to the north of the existing roundhouse cattle shed. The height of the sheds would range from 6.2m to 9.1m above ground level with a combined floor area of 4,546m² replacing substandard and smaller agricultural sheds and structures. In addition, the proposal will also involve locating a silage heap to the East of the new milking parlour and adjacent to the existing silage heaps.
- 5.7 The exterior elevations of the new sheds will be of traditional materials for this type of construction including a steel corrugated profile covering; Yorkshire boards, concrete panels and natural stone to be re-used from the existing constructions if possible; doors of timber to be confirmed and windows to be confirmed - materials that are non-reflective. Taking into account the location of the construction within and adjacent to existing farm buildings, along with an undertaking to carry out a landscaping plan along the western boundary of the site, together with the fabric and elevations of the construction, it is not believed that the proposal would have a significant material impact within the local landscape and having regard to these elements of the application, it is believed that the proposal is acceptable based on the requirements of Policies PCYFF 2, PCYFF 3, PCYFF 4 and PS 19 of the LDP.

General and residential amenities

- 5.8 The site is situated in the middle of Glynllifon Park with one residential dwelling within the site and two residential dwellings located approximately 30m to the east. Confirmation has been received that these three properties are within the ownership of the applicant with employees and the farm manager occupying these three residential units. The College Campus is located approximately 160m to the South; the Grand Lodge (the main entrance to the College) about 550m to the west is also owned by the applicant; Plas Newydd (including residential apartments) which lies beyond the College grounds along with Grafog to the east which is also beyond the College grounds. In consideration of the fact that this current proposal replaces existing agricultural structures on the site; the fact that the dwellings near the dairy farm are occupied by the farm workers, and the distance between the residential dwellings outside the site (taking into account the undulating topography of the landscape combined with established vegetation), mitigation actions

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to be undertaken by the applicant and the continuing educational needs on the site itself, it is not considered that the application, if granted, would undermine the residential or general amenities of local occupants on the basis of noise disturbance and other forms of pollution such as dust, fumes, litter, drainage and lighting. To this end, then, the proposal as submitted is deemed acceptable as it meets the requirements of Policy PCYFF 2 of the LDP regarding protecting the amenities of local property occupiers.

Transport and access issues

- 5.9 It is proposed to use the main College entrance off the A499 trunk road for light vehicles and the “new” underground entrance to the main entrance for heavy vehicles as well as the private internal road network to serve the new facilities subject to this application. Existing substandard buildings will be demolished to create a hard shoulder and create a parking and turning space for service vehicles/trucks. No additional parking spaces will be proposed as part of the application. The Transport Unit had no objection to the application and on the basis of the information that has been submitted, it is not considered that the proposal, if granted, would adversely disrupt road safety along the trunk road or the private road network within Glynllifon itself considering that the facility already exists on the application site and is located some distance away from the main entrance to the College itself. To this end, then, the proposal is deemed acceptable, meeting the requirements of Policies TRA 2 and TRA 4 of the LDP.

Biodiversity issues

- 5.10 The site is surrounded by the Glynllifon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) as well as the Glynllifon Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), with these designations existing along the site’s southern and eastern boundaries and also the area extending 100m west of the application site together with the Afon Llifon Wildlife Site (WS) approximately 400m south-west of the site. The SAC is a European site designation while the SSSI is the UK designated site designation and the WS designation is the local designation. Due to the importance of the statutory designations (the existence of a designated feature, the Lesser Horseshoe Bat), the applicant has submitted a number of ecological reports and assessments as noted in the first part of this report.
- 5.11 Nevertheless, in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, the Council is required to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) and Appropriate Assessment. Under the provisions of the regulations, the Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to consult Natural Resources Wales when undertaking an appropriate assessment for a new scheme or project, and is required to consider any representations made by NRW in order to demonstrate that this particular proposal, together with the cumulative and joint effect of allowing other developments within Glynllifon, would not undermine the SAC and SSSI designations. To this end, an assessment was undertaken by the Biodiversity Unit which noted that the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the Glynllifon Special Area of Conservation (SAC). In accordance with the requirements of the habitat regulations, Natural Resources Wales were consulted on the Biodiversity Unit’s HRA assessment and were also of the same opinion provided the development was carried out in accordance with the conditions recommended in their ecological reports.
- 5.12 It is also noted that Natural Resources Wales has made representations regarding other protected species and has raised concern of a potential impact of pollution hazards to the water environment that would arise from the proposed development and these comments are included in the above assessment. In response to these concerns the applicant’s agent has submitted details stating: -

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- Further details regarding light (internal and external) mitigation measures to safeguard protected species.
- A scheme to plant banks of trees to form continuous woodland zones and planting wildflower wetland grass in the two foul water basins
- Landscaping and Ecology Management Plan.
- Building Environment Management Plan (received on 21.12.23)

5.13 In response to the information submitted by the agent, NRW says that any concerns relating to protected species can be allayed by imposing conditions on the application when submitting a long-term management plan and Ecological compliance audit plan. These conditions then will manage and protect any protected species on site. In this regard, as well as receiving a favourable response from the Biodiversity Unit to the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA), it can be confirmed that the proposal complies with the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and that the proposal will not adversely affect the SAC or SPA. The proposal therefore complies with the requirements of Policies PS19 and AMG 4 of the LDP.

5.14 On the 7th of February 2024, the Welsh Government published an update to Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW), which covers green infrastructure, net benefit to biodiversity, the protection afforded to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and trees and woodlands. The amendments to PPW have been considered alongside the comments from the Biodiversity Unit and NRW but, in this case, they do not raise any new issues that have any significant influence on the decision and it is considered that the content of the ecological reports along with the ability to set conditions to ensure mitigation measures and biodiversity improvements ensure that the proposal meets the requirements of PPW.

Heritage Assets

5.15 The application site includes ten listed buildings. It is also close to other listed buildings, immediately adjacent to a scheduled ancient monument, partly within Glynllifon Conservation Area, within Glynllifon registered historic park and garden (Grade I), and partly within the area identified for the garden and historic grounds. A standing stone which is a scheduled ancient monument is immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the application site and dates back to the Bronze Age. A Heritage Impact Assessment has been received together with an Archaeological Assessment in support of the application. The Heritage Assessment concludes that this is the most suitable site for the new construction. The proposals will inevitably affect to some extent the character, appearance and layout of the park and the overall registered historic garden, but given the present agricultural landscape, and the presence of existing farm buildings and structures, it is not considered that they will have an impact on this area or the general registered area in terms of the character of the parkland or pleasure grounds.

5.16 Considering that the farm's agricultural structures have already been altered over time and that agricultural uses exist on the site, the proposal is not considered unacceptable. However, it may be necessary to undertake an archaeological watching brief considering its proximity to the standing stone itself. In response to the statutory consultation process, comments were received from Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service stating that a condition must be included within any planning permission regarding the need to submit details of archaeological programme records to be permitted by the Local Planning Authority within 6 months of completion of the fieldwork. CADW has no objection to the proposed development and, therefore, the proposal is considered acceptable based on the requirements of Policies PS 20 and AT 1 of the LDP.

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The Welsh language

- 5.17 In accordance with the Planning (Wales) Act 2015 it is incumbent in deciding on a planning application to give consideration to the Welsh language, as it relates to that application. This is further supported by para 3.28 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11, 2021) together with Technical Advice Note 20. The Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) ‘Maintaining and Creating Distinctive and Sustainable Communities’ (adopted July 2019) provides further guidance on how Welsh language considerations are expected to be incorporated into all relevant developments.
- 5.18 Certain types of developments require the proposal to include the submission of a Welsh Language Statement or Welsh Language Impact Assessment Report. The thresholds as to when such a Statement/Report is expected to be submitted are highlighted in Policy PS1 of the LDP together with Diagram 5 of the SPG. With regard to the types of developments involved, it is noted that an educational development as submitted here would not be subject to a language statement. Nevertheless, the applicant has submitted a statement that refers to the Welsh language by noting as follows: -
- Any sign erected would be bilingual.
 - The proposed creation of a National Sheep Centre here at Glynllifon, if allowed, would be a valuable asset to the agriculture industry (sheep and dairy industry) and to the future of the College.
 - A large part of the facility’s students would be local or from this part of north Wales and would be bilingual.

In this regard, then, the intention is deemed acceptable on the basis of the requirements of Policy PS 1, the relevant SPG together with the advice contained within TAN 20: Planning and the Welsh Language.

Sustainability issues

- 5.19 Policy PS 5 (Sustainable Developments) supports developments consistent with the principles of sustainable development, and where appropriate, developments should: *“Reduce the need to travel by private transport and encourage the opportunities for all users to travel when required as often as possible by means of alternative modes, placing particular emphasis on walking, cycling and using public transport in accordance with Strategic Policy PS 4”*.
- 5.20 LDP policies are seen as consistent with national planning policies in terms of how they approach the principles of sustainable development. Paragraph 3.39 of Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Issue 11, February 2021) states: *“In rural areas most new development should be located in settlements which have relatively good accessibility by non-car modes compared to the rural area as a whole. Development in these areas should embrace the national sustainable placemaking outcomes and offer good active travel connections to the centres of settlements to reduce the need to travel by car for local journeys.”*
- 5.21 This is supported by paragraph 3.11 of Technical Advice Note 18: Transport which states: *“Development in rural locations should embody sustainability principles, balancing the need to support the rural economy whilst maintaining and enhancing the environmental, social and cultural quality of rural areas. Most development should be located in places accessible by a range of travel modes.”*

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5.22 The applicant has submitted details stating the following information: -

- The College is accessible from the A.499 highway which connects the Caernarfon bypass with the Llyn Peninsula.
- There are bus stops near the main entrance to the College which are already used by students attending the educational facility.
- Students would continue to use the new facility as at present.

5.23 In addition to site accessibility, an Energy Conservation Statement was submitted to support the application which refers to an energy conservation strategy along with the adoption of low carbon modes and renewable energy sources as part of the construction of the proposed sheds. In this regard, then, the proposal is deemed acceptable based on the requirements of Policies PS5, PS 6 and PS 14 of the LDP as well as complying with the advice contained in the TAN 18 document and Planning Policy Wales, 2021.

Section 106 Agreement matters

5.24 The Pentref Addysg Glynllifon (PAG) building is located to the west of the site and under a S106 agreement to the planning permission granted to this building in 2010, within a specific area designated on the plan as part of the application for the Education Village, no new buildings or any extensions or alterations to buildings may be erected, and no mineral, mining or engineering work may be carried out. A piece of land that falls as part of the site of this application is also situated within an area that forms the S106 agreement for Pentref Addysg Glynllifon. It should be noted also that Natural Resources Wales' comments included a request for an undertaking as part of the S106 agreement to include certain areas within the scheme for bat conservation purposes. Discussions are ongoing regarding the terms of the S106 agreement, however, should the recommendation be to permit the proposal it would be possible to ensure that a condition be attached to the application to protect and create bat conservation areas. In this regard, it is considered that the proposal could be deemed acceptable in terms of the requirements of Policy PS2 of the LDP relating to infrastructure and developer contributions.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 Considering the above assessment in its entirety, it is deemed that the proposed erection of a livestock shed together with a milking parlour and ancillary facilities to include an additional silage heap and indoor dry manure storage, a landscaping bank, two dilution water basins together with associated works on this particular site within the Agricultural College holding would be a positive response to the need to upgrade and enhance existing facilities as proposed by the College. In assessing the application full consideration was given to the comments and responses received from the statutory consultants. Based on the above assessment, the intention is not considered to be contrary to local or national policies and there is no relevant planning issue that outweighs these policy considerations. Therefore the proposal is deemed to be acceptable subject to the inclusion of the following conditions.

7. Recommendation:

7.1 That the application be approved subject to the following conditions: -

PLANNING COMMITTEE	DATE: 26/02/2024
REPORT OF ASSISTANT HEAD OF DEPARTMENT	

1. 5 years.
2. In accordance with the documents and plans submitted as part of the application.
3. Submission of external elevation details.
4. Submission of asbestos details prior to demolition
5. Compliance with Part 5 (Interpretation and Advice) of the Ecological Impact Assessment document together with the Shadow Species Regulations Assessment and comments by the Biodiversity unit.
6. Completion of the landscaping plan within a specified period.
7. Compliance with the content of the Arboricultural Assessments.
8. The standard conditions of Gwynedd Archaeological Planning Service regarding submission of details of an archaeological recording programme initially, and following this, the submission of a detailed report of the archaeological work within 6 months of completing the archaeological work at the site.