

Wellriggs Ecology

& Outdoor Learning Ltd.

Leac Na Ban

Biodiversity Statement



Prepared for Paula Hutchings & Terence Girling
by Wellriggs Ecology & Outdoor Learning Ltd.

November 2025

Document Information:

Date	Prepared by	Reviewed by	Remarks
28-11-25	CD	EP	~

Prepared for:	Paula Hutchings & Terence Girling
Title:	Leac Na Ban Biodiversity Statement
Version:	1.0
Date:	28-11-25
Notes:	

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Introduction

This Biodiversity Statement has been prepared for Paula Hutchings & Terence Girling (Clients) by Wellriggs Ecology in relation to the demolition of an existing dwellinghouse 'Leac Na Ban' and subsequent re-build of a new dwellinghouse at Tayvallich, Argyll and Bute, National Grid Reference NR 78645 91940.

This statement contains information regarding biodiversity enhancements that have been undertaken to date (in relation to the re-development), and further enhancements that will be incorporated during the construction phase of the build and thereafter.

Planning permission

The works at Leac Na Ban have been approved and granted full planning permission by Argyll and Bute local authority on 10 November 2025. The reference for the approval is: REFERENCE NUMBER: 25/00817/PP.

Planning Conditions

Condition 2 of the planning permission states:

'All of the hard and soft landscaping works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme during the first planting season following the commencement of the development, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Planning Authority.'

The biodiversity statement should refer to Developing with Nature guidance (Nature Scot) as appropriate.'

Condition 4 states:

'Notwithstanding the provisions of Condition 1, no development shall commence until a biodiversity statement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Planning Authority. The statement shall demonstrate how the proposal will contribute to conservation/restoration/enhancement of biodiversity, and how these benefits will be implemented and maintained for the lifetime of the development. All physical biodiversity enhancement measures (bird nesting boxes, 'swift bricks', wildlife ponds, bat and insect boxes, hedgehog homes etc) shall be implemented in full before the development hereby approved is first brought into use.'

All biodiversity enhancement measures consisting of new or enhanced planting shall be undertaken either in accordance with the approved scheme of implementation or within the next available planting season following the development first being brought into use. The biodiversity statement should refer to Developing with Nature guidance | NatureScot as appropriate.

Reason: To comply with the requirements of NPF4 Policy 3.'

And Condition 6 adds:

'Notwithstanding the provisions of condition 1, the removal of any vegetation or trees should be undertaken outside the nesting bird season (1st March-September 31st on any given year) or alternatively an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) should be appointed to oversee the works.'

Reason: To protect breeding birds in the interests of nature conservation'

Legislation

The fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4)

Scotland's fourth National Planning Framework (NPF4) is a long-term plan looking to 2045 that guides spatial development, sets out national planning policies, designates national developments and

highlights regional spatial priorities. It is part of the development plan and so influences planning decisions across Scotland.

NPF4 was adopted by the Scottish Ministers on 13 February 2023, following approval by the Scottish Parliament in January. This replaces National Planning Framework 3 and Scottish Planning Policy.

Policy 3 of NPF4 plays a critical role in ensuring that development will secure positive effects for biodiversity. It rebalances the planning system in favour of conserving, restoring and enhancing biodiversity and promotes nature-based solutions, benefiting people and nature.

Policy 4f highlights that development proposals that are likely to have an adverse effect on species protected by legislation will only be supported where the proposal meets the relevant statutory tests. If there is reasonable evidence to suggest that a protected species is present on a site or may be affected by a proposed development, steps must be taken to establish its presence. The level of protection required by legislation must be factored into the planning and design of development, and potential impacts must be fully considered prior to the determination of any application.

Measures should be proportionate to the nature and scale of development proposed.

With early consideration of the opportunities to provide for nature and appropriate siting and design, even the smallest of developments and sites will be able to support and provide benefits for biodiversity.

Biodiversity enhancements already undertaken

Since 2022 (and prior to the granting of current planning permission) the Clients have been enhancing the grounds on which the current dwelling house is located. To date, this has included:

- 20 acres of land surrounding property has been deer-fenced, with a cattle grid added at entrance;
- 1000 trees (native species) trees have been planted across the property including oak, silver and downy birch, rowan, grey willow, hawthorn, blackthorn, Scot's pine, bird cherry, wild cherry, aspen, juniper and hazel;
- A 5m pond has been established for local amphibians and other wildlife;
- An existing lochen has been subject to remediation work (which had filled with silt and grassed over) and has had native marginal plants established;
- A 7m pond has been established in the south field;
- A range of scrapes have been excavated adjacent to the lochen and lower part of north field;
- 28 bird nest boxes have been put up, suitable for a range of birds including tree creeper; spotted fly catcher; pied wagtail; pied fly catcher; robin; wren; redstart; coal tit; blue tit; great tit; nuthatch; barn owl; swallow and house Martin;
- 3 red squirrel nest boxes erected on mature trees within optimal habitat;
- 4 bat boxes (Kent design) erected within trees;
- Ongoing bracken and soft rush control;
- Conservation grazing by Highland cows has been ongoing; and
- Swift boxes have been placed on the outbuildings.

Bats and their roosts

Initial planning permission (23/02153/PP) granted for Leac Na Ban included the renovation of the existing building and not demolition. It was known that a bat roost of soprano pipistrelle bats

(*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) was present within the structure and therefore Wellriggs Ecology was appointed to undertake surveys, licence application and eventual exclusion of the bats from the roost site.

NatureScot issued a bat derogation licence (Licence no. 276798) on 30 October 2024 to allow the legal exclusion and destruction of a bat roost located at Leac Na Ban, located within the cladding of the southwest facing gable end. The licence was granted alongside supporting evidence and a species protection plan SPP produced by Wellriggs Ecology, titled, *Alterations and Extension to Dwellinghouse 'Leac Na Ban' at Tayvallich, Argyll and Bute, PA31 8PG Bat Assessment and Species Protection Plan October 2024*.

The exclusion of the bat roost was undertaken on 24 April 2025.

The bat SPP highlighted compensatory bat roost provision that was conditioned on the granted licence, specifically:

'The dwelling house sits with a group of buildings which share the same aspect as the known roost. It is proposed that an artificial bat box as suitable for a pipistrelle maternity roost will be installed on the gable end of an outbuilding, in the same aspect and approximate height as the currently known roost. Several additional bat boxes of the Kent design, as suitable for crevice roosting bats such as pipistrelle shall be erected on trees within 100 m of the currently known roost'.

Before the exclusion was undertaken a maternity bat box was erected on the gable end of one of the buildings, as required in the SPP.



Bat maternity box
with a southwest
facing aspect

The original bat roosting site was located within the wooden cladding of the gable end of the dwellinghouse. During the exclusion of the roost, panels of wood were removed, and these were then added to another of the outbuildings, creating yet another bat roost, with a like-for-like outlook in both materials and aspect. It is considered likely that the scent of the bat original bat roost on the wooden panels will enhance the likelihood of uptake by bats. The extra roost site is presented below:



Additional bat roost site using existing materials and positioned with the same aspect as the original roost

On top of this, an additional 4 Kent bat boxes have been placed on nearby mature trees.



Conclusion (bats)

The exclusion of the soprano pipistrelle bat roost has been carried out and the licence criteria satisfied with the implementation of compensation for the loss of a bat roost.

Further biodiversity enhancements

It must be emphasised that the Clients are keen environmentalists and advocates for re-wilding. The Clients are not going through the motions of enhancements because they have to; rather it is something they have already been undertaking at Leac Na Ban and will continue to do so for the future.

The following further enhancements are proposed for the development of the site with biodiversity at its core:

- An additional 4 Kent bat boxes placed on nearby mature trees;
- 3 house sparrow terraces to be incorporated into the new build;
- 2 house martin boxes to be incorporated into the new build; and
- An additional barn owl box in one of the adjacent barns.

This photograph presents the location of an existing barn owl box that was put into one of the outbuildings in 2024. This box has now successfully attracted a pair of barn owl that will hopefully breed in 2026. Further outbuildings with suitability are present on the greater site.



Barn owl box placed within rafters of a disused outbuilding

Timescales of implementation

The Kent bat boxes, sparrow boxes, house martin boxes and the barn owl box can be put into place during the construction phase (where appropriate) of the new build.

Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) provision (birds)

Habitat (trees and shrubs) providing suitability for nesting (breeding) birds is present around Leac Na Ban. During the nesting season, all species of birds are afforded general protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, therefore, any work that will impact on bird's nests or cause disturbance, should take place outwith the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive).

If work likely to affect active bird nests is programmed for during the nesting season, then the trees and grounds should be surveyed by a suitably qualified ecologist (ECoW) to carry out a nesting bird check to ensure works are legally compliant with respect to birds.

Conclusions

Condition 2:

No hard or soft landscaping is presented as being required during the development with regards to biodiversity enhancements.

Conditions 4 & 6:

It is considered that the presented biodiversity enhancements (previously undertaken, and to be incorporated within the redevelopment of the site as a new dwellinghouse) will satisfy the Conditions.