

Green Infrastructure Statement

For

Proposed Residential Development, Hillcrest

Prepared By



On Behalf of

Merthyr Housing Association

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(Updated November 2025)

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INTRODUCTION

The design for the Hillcrest development has used a holistic approach, incorporating biodiversity enhancements and retaining existing GI wherever possible. The design was informed by the updated National Planning Policy for Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales.

Specifically, the development proposals and landscape philosophy follow the Stepwise Approach set out in paragraph 6.4.21 as follows:

Avoid - avoid damage to biodiversity in its widest sense (i.e. the variety of species and habitats and their abundance) and ecosystem functioning.

Minimise - applicants, in discussion with planning authorities, must seek to minimise the initial impact on biodiversity and ecosystems by:

ensuring that retained habitats continue to be well connected to adjacent habitats to provide connectivity for key species and ensuring that the favourable conservation status of local species populations is maintained

retaining existing features, develop a management plan for their future care

using proven innovative/creative solutions (where required) to minimise damage and maintain existing biodiversity features and ecosystems in tandem with robust monitoring and rectification strategies.

Mitigate - Where, after measures to minimise impact, biodiversity and ecosystems could still be damaged, or lost through residual impacts, the proposed development should mitigate that damage. Mitigation measures must be put in place to limit the negative effects of a development.

Compensate - where like for like mitigation measures are not possible, particularly in respect of restoration measures, it may be necessary to consider on site compensation measures.

The layout of the site has been carefully developed by Pentan Architects, in consultation with Treescene Arboricultural Consultants, Ecological Services Ltd and Tirlun Design Associates to **avoid** damage to biodiversity wherever possible. (refer to page 3 for details). The development location and orientation were largely dictated by the significant topographical constraints presented by the site.

Following production of arboricultural and ecological surveys, the site layout was then developed and refined further, to **minimise** habitat loss and retain additional existing trees. (Refer to landscape specification & management plan for long-term management details)

While existing trees are to be retained and protected where possible, some trees will require removal to accommodate development. Also, due to the nature and extent of the development, it will not be possible to **mitigate** damage to a portion of the existing semi-improved grassland, as it will be removed to accommodate the proposals.

To **compensate** for these losses, detailed soft landscape proposals have been produced for the site. (refer to page 4 for details).

PREVIOUS STUDIES

This document is to be read in conjunction with the following drawings and documents

1. Hayden Terrace, Merthyr Tydfil. Ecological Impact Assessment report, Version V3.0, prepared by Ecological Services Ltd. Dated: November 2025.
2. Hayden Terrace, Merthyr Tydfil. Reptile Survey Report, Version V1.0, prepared by Ecological Services Ltd. Dated: 18th May 2022.

3. Hillcrest/Hadyn Terrace, Merthyr Tydfil. Tree Survey, prepared by Treescene (Arboricultural Consultants). Dated: 30th September 2024.
4. Hillcrest/Hadyn Terrace, Merthyr Tydfil. Tree Constraints Plan, prepared by Treescene (Arboricultural Consultants). Date received: 18/08/2025.
5. Proposed Residential Development, Hillcrest. Landscape Specification & Management Plan prepared by TDA on behalf of Merthyr Housing Association. Dated: November 2025.
6. Hillcrest. Detailed Soft Landscape Proposals. Drawing number: TDA.3019.02 prepared by TDA on behalf of Merthyr Housing Association. Dated: November 2025.

THE SITE

The development site comprises a sloped area of semi-improved grassland with scattered trees and large patches of tall ruderal vegetation. A hard surfaced parking area is located in the south west corner. The site is surrounded by roads and residential properties on all sides and there are no significant links to the wider GI network.



Image 1 – View looking East from Hillcrest



Image 2 – View looking South East from Mitchell Crescent



Play area &
sports pitches

Haydn Terrace

Retained Landscape
within developer's
ownership

The Development site

Mitchell Close

Hillcrest

Small, close mown
incidental open spaces,
predominantly on street
corners, are present
across the wider
residential estate

Incidental open space
comprising a mix of
close mown & rough
grassland

EXISTING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

Existing Trees

18 no. trees and 13 no. tree groups tree groups primarily in the eastern section of the site. One tree (T13) is categorised as B – Moderate Quality & Value. The remaining trees are all assessed as either C - Low Quality & Value or Category U (Unsuitable for Retention).

Existing Hedgerows

There are no existing hedgerows on site

Green Corridors

There are no significant green corridors on site and, due to the surrounding roads and houses, no significant connectivity with other vegetated habitat in the local area or the wider GI network.

Stepping Stones

GI stepping stones form a patchwork of small incidental open spaces around the site and across the wider residential development. These generally low ecological value areas predominantly comprise close mown amenity grassland.

Soils

The site comprises significant areas of open green space, currently occupied by semi-improved grassland. Pending soil testing, it is likely that there are sufficient soil resources within the site for future landscape purposes.

Public Open Space

The entire site is currently open to public use

Grassland

Almost all of the 1.2-hectare site comprises semi-improved grassland. Species include Birds foot trefoil, Bluebell sp., Broad leaved dock, Brown knapweed, Caraway, Cleavers, Cock's-foot, Common bent, Common cats-ear, Common chickweed, Common mouse-ear, Common ragwort, Common sedge, Common sorrel, Common vetch, Creeping buttercup, Creeping cinquefoil, Creeping thistle, Cuckoo flower, Daisy, Dandelion, possible Devil's-bit scabious, Dove's-foot crane's-bill, Fescue sp., Field wood rush, Germander speedwell, Greater plantain, Hedge bindweed, Hogweed, Lesser trefoil, Mare's-tail, Meadow buttercup, Meadow foxtail, Mouse-ear-hawkweed, Red Clover, Ribwort plantain, Rosebay willowherb, Smooth meadow-grass, Soapwort, Sweet vernal-grass, Wild carrot and Yorkshire fog.

Tall Ruderal Vegetation

Growing in patches across the site. Species include Bracken, Bramble, Caraway, Common nettle, Common ragwort, Meadow foxtail and Rosebay willowherb

Scrub

Patches of Gorse and bramble scrub are located on the boundaries and in the centre of the site.

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE LOSSES

8 no. individual trees and 6 no. tree groups will be removed to accommodate the development. Two of these trees (T22 & T23) and two of the tree groups (G26 & G30) were assessed as Category U, and are unsuitable for retention regardless of the development proposed. The remaining trees (T14, T16, T18, T19, T20 & T31) and tree groups (G16, G17, G24 & G25) are all Category C – Low quality & Value.

The area of existing grassland and vegetation that will be removed to accommodate the proposed development is illustrated in Image 3 below.



**Total red line site ownership
area as shown = 21959.4m²**
Image 3 – Development Area



**Area of retained habitat
= 7,666m²**

PROPOSED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposed Native Trees – 18 no. new native trees are proposed on the northern and eastern edges of the development.

Proposed Orchard Trees – 9 no. new orchard trees of local provenance located in the north west corner of the development.

Proposed Street Trees – 21 new trees within the development including avenue street trees SUDs tolerant trees and landmark species.

Proposed Hedgerows – 270 linear metres of new species rich hedgerow wraps around the northern and eastern boundaries

Proposed Wildflower Habitat – 1,484 square metres of hedgerow, wetland and meadow wildflower areas across the development.

Proposed On-plot planting and SUDs features – A diverse mix of native shrub, grass, ferns and perennial species spread across the development.

Proposed Reptile Hibernacula - Located within the retained grassland and designed in consultation with the project ecologist

SUMMARY

Planning Policy Wales instructs planning authorities to take account of and promote the resilience of ecosystems, in particular the five attributes of ecosystem resilience (DECCA):

DIVERSITY - can the proposals deliver a more diverse habitat and species assemblages.

EXTENT - can the proposals help to maintain or increase the extent of habitat or species assemblages.

CONDITION - can the proposals help to maintain or increase the conditions of habitats and species range within a site or local area.

CONNECTIVITY - can the proposals deliver opportunities to connect ecological networks within the local or regional area.

ASPECTS OF ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE - (adaptability, recovery and resistance): ecosystem resilience is a product of the above four attributes. Adaptability, recovery and resistance to/from a disturbance are defining features of ecosystem resilience.

The proposed GI detailed in this statement will provide a more **diverse** habitat structure within the development site. New native planting helps to improve the condition of habitats within the site boundary.

While the proposed development will reduce the total amount of existing green space overall, the proposed native trees, hedgerow and wildflower meadow will increase the **extent** of ecologically valuable habitats on site.

The existing retained grassland will be subject to a management regime, as set out in the landscape specification and management plan produced by TDA. The long-term management of the grassland will significantly improve its **condition** and ecological value in the long-term.

Due to the surrounding built development, the site is cut off from the wider GI network. There is no significant **connectivity** with other vegetated habitat in the local area.

The inclusion of new habitats, bird and bat boxes and reptile hibernacula, the planting of new native trees, species rich native hedgerows, wildflower meadow and on-plot native shrub, grass, fern and perennial planting, significantly improves the **resilience** of the existing ecosystem.