

# Green Infrastructure Statement

For

## Proposed Residential Development, Former Hoover Site, Merthyr

Prepared By



On Behalf of

**Walters Land Ltd**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION & PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 To meet the challenges laid down by the Global Biodiversity Framework agreed at COP15, and to fulfil the Section 6 duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in Wales, Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales was amended in October 2023, to require all new developments to include a GI Statement. The main changes to the policy, and the purpose of a GI Statement were summarised by the Minister for Climate Change as follows:
- 1.2 **Green Infrastructure** - stronger emphasis on taking a proactive approach to green infrastructure covering cross boundary considerations, identifying key outputs of GI assessments, the submission of proportionate GI statements with planning applications and signposting Building with Nature standards.
- 1.3 **Net Benefit for Biodiversity and the Step-wise Approach** - further clarity was provided on securing net benefit for biodiversity through the application of the step-wise approach, including the acknowledgement of off-site compensation measures as a last resort, and, the need to consider enhancement and long-term management at each step. The GI statement is a means of demonstrating the stepwise approach.
- 1.4 **Protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest** - strengthened approach to the protection of SSSIs, with increased clarity on the position for site management and exemptions for minor development necessary to maintain a 'living landscape'. Other development is considered unacceptable as a matter of principle. Exceptionally, a planned approach may be appropriate where necessary safeguards can be secured through a development plan.
- 1.5 **Trees and Woodlands** - closer alignment with the stepwise approach, along with promoting new planting as part of development based on securing the right tree in the right place

1.6 The design for the For Former Hoover Factory development has used a holistic approach, incorporating ecological enhancements where possible. The design was informed by the updated National Planning Policy for Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales and Policy SW6 (Hoover Strategic Regeneration Area) of the Merthyr Tydfil Replacement Local Development Plan 2016 – 2031.

1.7 Specifically, the development proposals and landscape philosophy follow the Stepwise Approach set out in paragraph 6.4.21 of PPW:

**Avoid** – The initial layout of the site was designed to avoid damage to existing GI assets wherever possible (refer to page 3 for details).

**Minimise** – The site layout was then developed and refined further, to minimise habitat loss, avoiding root protection areas and prioritising space for any GI assets.

**Mitigate** – To mitigate impacts upon existing GI, a tree survey and ecological assessment were undertaken to record and evaluate existing site GI.

**Compensate** – While specific compensation measures for GI losses are not required, extensive landscape enhancements to improve biodiversity and landscape value have been incorporated into the design proposals (refer to page 4 for details).

1.8 With regards to site specific GI, Policy SW6 - Hoover Strategic Regeneration Area of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan states that the proposed regeneration of the Hoover site will:

***Establish a green perimeter and create a strong central green core for the HSRA.***

***Provide a range of open spaces of sufficient quantity and quality, for play and***

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*recreation (including areas of natural play), and where viable, incorporate the retention and management of existing green infrastructure. Reflect the site heritage in the open spaces.*

*Promote new planting throughout the development using distinctive formal and informal planting to support character areas.*

*Establish a green buffer around the existing railway line that has ecological benefit and creates a positive interface between the railway corridor and residential uses.*

*Incorporate the River Taff as a distinctive feature and use the river corridor as a green spine that filters into the development, opening up the riverside and creating an accessible and pedestrian-friendly movement corridor along it.*

*Bring the River setting 'into' the site through incorporating water features / SuDS / watercourses in the public realm.*

*Develop green infrastructure that has the potential to add value and sense of place to the future development.*

*Develop a landscape-led approach that contributes to the sense of place".*

## PREVIOUS STUDIES

- 1.9 A preliminary ecological survey produced by Sylvan Ecology in 2024  
Document ref -K001 - PEA Report-V1.2
- 1.10 A pre-development tree survey & assessment produced by Treescene in 2024.

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## 2.0 THE SITE

2.1 The site is the former Hoover factory off Merthyr Road. The 13-hectare site predominantly comprises disused industrial units with associated hard standing. There is a large area of amenity grassland in the form of a cricket pitch at the southern end of the site.



Image 1 – Avenue trees on Merthyr Road

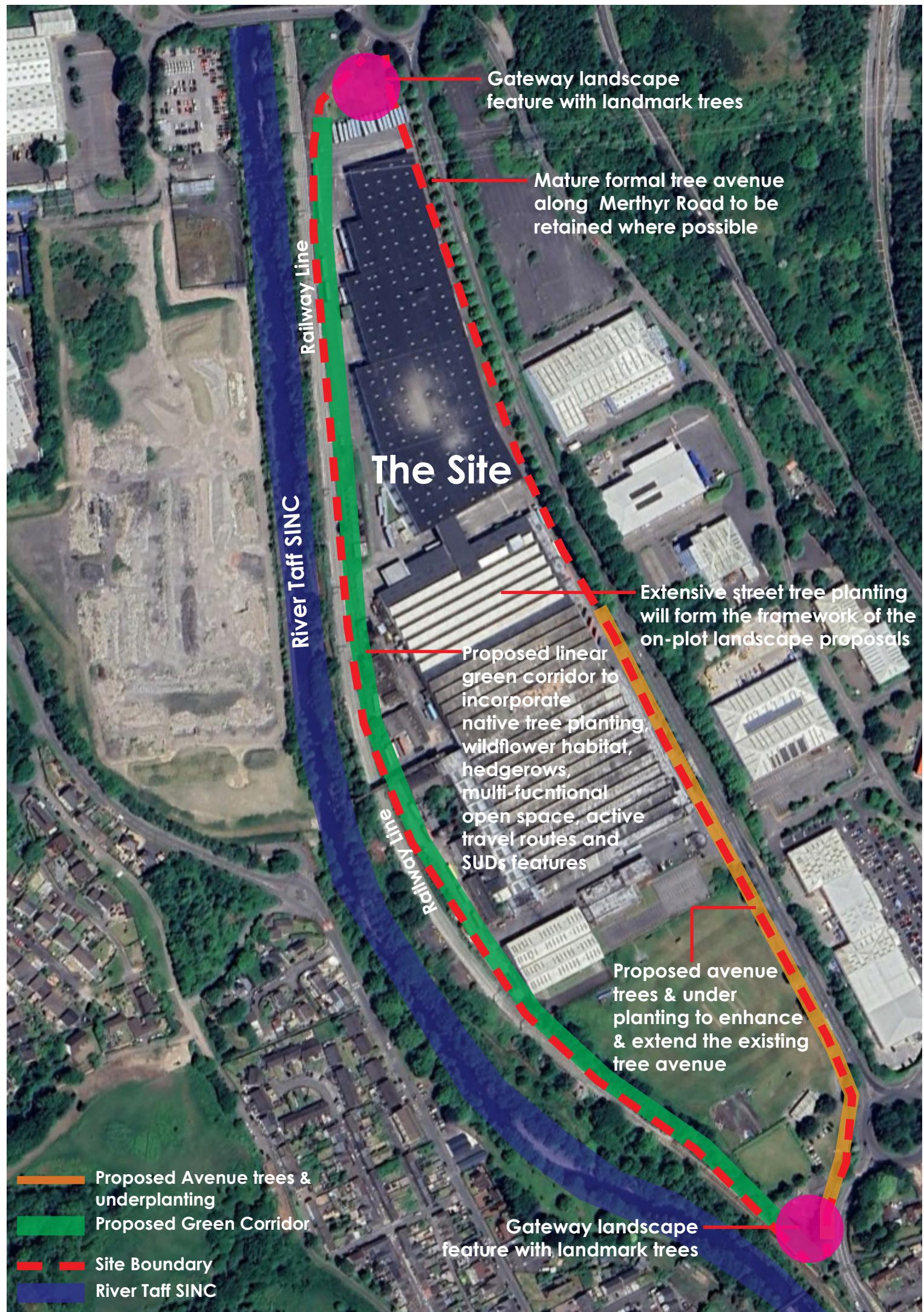
2.2 The primary GI assets are located on the site boundaries in the form of linear woodland groups, small pockets of dense scrub and a formal avenue of mature trees on Merthyr Road.



Image 2 – Linear woodland group in south west corner

2.3 The site is defined by existing industrial estate roads to the north, Merthyr Road to the east, The Pentrebach Roundabout and A4054 to the south and the railway line which runs along the western boundary, immediately adjacent to the site. These surrounding paved roads and railway line limited opportunities to connect into the wider GI network.

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### 3.0 EXISTING LANDSCAPE DESIGNATIONS

- 3.1 The Afon Taf SINC is located approximately 50 metres to the west, and is separated from the site by the existing railway line.
- 3.2 The Pentrebach Fields SINC is located approximately 450 metres to the east, and is separated from the site by existing built development and the A4060.
- 3.3 The Cwm Glo a Glyndyrys SSSI is located approximately 550 metres to the north west, and is separated from the site by the railway line, existing built development and the A470.
- 3.4 The Abercanaid Fields SINC is located approximately 280 metres to the south west and is separated from the site by the railway line and existing built development.
- 3.5 With regards to SINC's, Policy EnW3 - Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves and Priority Habitats and Species, of the Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council Replacement Local Development Plan states that:

*"Development proposals likely to have an adverse impact on Regionally Important Geological Sites, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Local Nature Reserves, or Priority Habitats and Species will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:*

- 1. The need for the development clearly outweighs the conservation value of the site;*
- 2. Adverse impacts on nature conservation features or geological features can be avoided;*

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- 3. Appropriate and proportionate mitigation and compensation measures can be provided; and*
- 4. The development maintains and where possible enhances biodiversity and geodiversity interests".*

- 3.6 The Afon Taf SINC is the only designated landscape within close proximity to the site. However, as the site is separated from this SINC by the existing railway line, the proposed development would not have a direct adverse impact upon the SINC.
- 3.7 To avoid any potential adverse impact from light pollution, the lighting strategy for the development will be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK.

## 4.0 EXISTING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

### Existing Trees

4.1 Existing trees are located along the boundaries of the site. There is a formal avenue of reasonable quality Sycamore along Merthyr Road. The linear woodland group located in the south west corner comprises Ash, Silver Birch, Willow, Poplar and Sycamore. The understorey comprises Bramble, Nettle, Cleavers, Ivy, Hazel and Hawthorn.

### Existing Hedgerows

4.2 None Present

### Green Corridors

4.3 There are two fragmented green corridors on the eastern and western boundary.

4.4 Links to the wider GI network from these corridors are limited by the adjacent roads and railway line. There is some GI connectivity for bats and birds from the western boundary woodland to the Afon Taff SINC.

### Stepping Stones

4.5 Fragmented GI stepping stones comprising roundabout islands and short green corridors adjacent to highways.

### **Amenity Grass Areas**

- 4.6 Small areas of improved grassland are located at the site entrance and on the southern boundaries of the southernmost buildings.
- 4.7 A large area of improved grassland in the form of a cricket pitch is located in the southern section of the site.

### **Soils**

- 4.8 The site predominantly comprises hard standing and buildings in these locations, available soil resources are likely to be limited.
- 4.9 The southern section of the site (approximately 2 hectares) comprises improved grassland and the topsoil and subsoil in this location should be available for reuse subject to approval from a suitably qualified soil scientist.

### **Scrub**

- 4.10 There are several pockets of dense scrub scattered across the site. Species include buddleia, bramble, square-stalked willowherb, rosebay willowherb, ribwort plantain, broad-leaved dock, cleavers, nettle, creeping buttercup, coralberry, dandelion species., perennial ryegrass, hogweed, ivy, white clover, common field speedwell, germander speedwell, cock's-foot, ash saplings, bird's-foot-trefoil, hawthorn, foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), thistle species, vetch species, dog rose, white clover, buddleia, bramble, square-stalked willowherb, rosebay willowherb, common field speedwell, germander speedwell, ribwort plantain, broad-leaved dock, cleavers, creeping buttercup, dandelion species, nettle, sycamore saplings and mullein,

### **Introduced Shrubs**

4.11 Small areas of shrub planting are located in the southern section of the site associated with the cricket club and bowling green. Species include cherry laurel, snowberry Wilson's honeysuckle, shasta daisy, montbretia, pine and sycamore.

### **Public Open Space**

4.12 None present

### **SUDS**

4.13 None present

### **Rain Gardens**

4.14 None present

### **Ponds**

4.15 None present

### **Green Roofs**

4.16 None Present

### **Dormouse**

4.17 There is no suitable Dormouse habitat on site.

### **Reptiles**

4.18 There is no suitable reptile habitat on site.

## **5.0 GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE LOSSES**

- 5.1 The improved grassland in the southern section of the site, associated with the cricket and bowling grounds will be removed.
- 5.2 The scattered pockets of dense scrub will be removed.

## 6.0 PROPOSED GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

6.1 Green Infrastructure enhancements and open space provision are central to the regeneration of the Hoover site. New GI assets will include the following:

- A green perimeter to the site including new trees and understorey planting.
- Multifunctional open spaces of sufficient quantity and quality across the site, for play and recreation (including areas of natural play).
- New planting throughout the development using distinctive formal and informal planting to support character areas. Planting will include native trees, hedgerows, shrubs and perennials and wildflower meadow habitat.
- Extensive street tree planting to form a robust framework for the on plot soft landscape proposals
- A linear green corridor on the western boundary to incorporate native tree planting, wildflower habitat, hedgerows, multi-functional open space, active travel routes and SUDs features, that has ecological benefit and creates a positive interface between the railway corridor and residential uses.
- SUDs features across the site that will be experienced by residents on a daily basis. The prominent treatment of water at surface level, directly outside homes, maximises legibility of the wider drainage system, enables residents to follow and understand the stages of water treatment across the site. The visibility of water as it travels through the landscape, and the personal-scale ecosystems created will provide a

resource for local environmental education and opportunities for social cohesion.

## 7.0 SUMMARY

- 7.1 The primary GI assets are the existing trees and woodland on the peripheries of the site. These assets will be retained where possible, protected and enhanced with new planting.
- 7.2 There will be no adverse impacts upon adjacent designated landscape.
- 7.3 A mixture of multifunctional public open space, native tree, hedgerow, wildflower habitat, bio-retention features and on-plot soft landscape will significantly enhance the ecological value of the site and deliver bio-diversity net gain for the development.