

Green Infrastructure Statement

PROJECT TITLE: Outline Planning Permission with all matters reserved for construction of four new dwellings and associated works

SITE ADDRESS: Land Adjacent To 36 Hylton Terrace, Bedlinog, Treharris
CF46 6RG

PLANNING REF: P/24/0093

DATE: 29th August 2024

1. Introduction

1.1) The applicant is seeking planning consent to create four new residential dwellings within a parcel of land to the north east of Hylton Terrace, adjacent to Bedlinog Community Primary School, within Bedlinog (grid reference: SO 09148 01312). Ruby Housing (the applicant) intend to build, manage and rent the properties. The site encompasses a steeply sloping banking with an area of approximately 0.1 Ha. It is proposed to create four semi detached properties with parking and garden areas within the site boundary. The development site is considered to be infill development given the surrounding residential context.

1.2) An aerial image showing the development site within the context of the wider complex is provided in Appendix 1 at the end of this report.

1.3) Section 6.2 of Planning Policy Wales 2024 (12th Edition) requests that all Planning Authorities adopt a strategic and proactive approach to green infrastructure. Paragraph 6.2.12 advises that a green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. The approach to green infrastructure within planning applications needs to be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposals.

1.4) Paragraph 6.4.15 details a step-wise approach for the consideration of green infrastructure within development proposals. In summary this approach follows the below steps:

- **AVOID** - Consider options to avoid any potential harm to an ecological feature,
- **MITIGATE** - If negative effects are unavoidable, measures should be implemented to minimise and reduce potential effects,

- **COMPENSATE** - If negative effects are still likely to be experienced, despite measures to reduce impacts being implemented, appropriate compensatory measures should be implemented,
- **ENHANCEMENT** - Works should always seek to provide net benefits for biodiversity to help meet the section 7 & 6 requirements of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

1.5) The DECCA Framework helps to implement the Section 6 biodiversity duty of The Environment (Wales) Act 2016. In summary the DECCA Framework requests:

- **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.
- **ADAPTABILITY** - do the proposals help to provide measures which ensure ecological networks can adapt to external pressures.

2. Site Location

2.1) The development site is located on the western outskirts of the town of Bedlinog. The site is a parcel of land that slopes steeply upwards from Commercial Street. Commercial Street is located along the south west boundary of the site and the site rises up towards the north east where it meets a unnamed single lane. Immediately south east of the site is Bedlinog Community Primary School. North east of the site runs a tarmac, single lane road for Hylton Terrace houses and north west a number of terraced properties extend along Commercial Street.

2.2) Further south of the site lies woodland, scrub and open grassland and bracken. The Taff Bargoed is located approximately 90 m south of the site within the woodland area. The land then extends up over a valley hill towards a large area of woodland approximately 1.2 km away, near Merthyr Vale. Further east of the Primary School lies a small area of scrub and trees and a residential area along the B4255. Approximately 500 m east is the Nant Llwynog waterbody which connects to the Taff Bargoed further south. An area of tussocky grassland and bracken scrub lies north of the access lane for Hylton

Terrace. Where the mountain extends upwards Bedw Road leads further north to residential houses within Bedlinog. Grassland and a patchwork of fields extends onto the mountain. Hylton Terrace and Maes Y Bedw road runs west through the valley following the Taff Bargoed approximately 720 m away towards a lake approximately 0.4 Ha in area.

3. Existing Green Infrastructure

3.1) A walkover survey of the development site was conducted on the 7th March 2024 by Ecological Services Ltd. The survey visit found the site to contain a strip of semi improved grassland along the north east boundary of the site which grades into an area of tussocky semi improved grassland. The majority of the sites was considered to be bracken scrub with some scattered woody scrub. The remainder of the land to the south west is considered to be broadleaved woodland.

3.2) The proposed development site has habitat connectivity to the north and south. Whilst Commercial Street runs along the south western boundary of the site, immediately separating the development site from surrounding habitat, the riparian corridor of the Taff Bargoed is present approximately 90m away. An open expanse of scrub and grassland is present to the north east of the site which extends to the north and east.

3.3) The development aims to create the new dwellings along Commercial Road to the south West and retain the majority of the land to the north east outside of private plot boundaries. Approximately 37.5% of the site is proposed to be retained and allowed to establish into a natural habitat, ideally woodland or woody scrub. Approximately 16% of the retained habitat will likely be subject to temporary habitat loss and disturbance to enable the engineering required to build out the new houses. However, once construction is completed native habitat will be created in the remaining 53% of the site.

3.4) The proposed development will require replacement / compensation for the loss of approximately 445m² of broadleaved woodland and approximately 200m² of bracken and woody scrub. 465m² of the remaining habitat along the north eastern boundary of the site will be retained and used for green infrastructure and biodiversity compensation and enhancements. The retention and creation of woody habitat along the north and north eastern boundary of the site will retain and enhance this boundary feature. In total approximately 63% of the site will be retained or improved for biodiversity and green infrastructure purposes.

4. Proposed Green Infrastructure

4.1) 465m² of the remaining habitat along the north eastern boundary of the site will be retained but subject to some form of landscaping once construction works are completed.

The retained habitat will create a habitat corridor along the northern boundary of the site which will be outside of the the individual residential boundaries and can be managed in perpetuity by Ruby Housing.

4.2) Drawing AL(00)008 Proposed Green Infrastructure (Trees & Hedges) details the broad landscape proposals for the development. Given the outline nature of the planning application, a detailed landscape plan is not available at present. Drawing AL(00)008 indicates habitat connectivity will be created around the periphery of the site with planting to the north and south of the new houses.

4.3) Drawing AL(00)008 also indicates tree planting to the north east of the site. It is likely that a retaining wall of some design will be required between the new houses and retained land to the north and north east. The land beyond the retaining wall will still slope upwards and away from the houses. The retaining wall is expected to extend only part way into the site (see AL(00)003). Site cross section drawings already submitted to planning show the design intent here. The retained land will be subject to native planting to create higher quality habitat that currently present within the site boundary. Access for maintenance will be possible via the single lane access road that runs along the north east boundary of the site.

4.4) It is anticipated that ongoing management of the habitat corridor will be minimal to allow woodland and scrub habitats to establish. In the long term some tree pruning maybe required where vegetation establishes next to the retaining walls and houses. It is hoped that an ecotone edge could be established here with shrub and small trees present. The ecotone edge should be cut once every 2 years once the initial planting has established. The initial planting could take around 5 years to establish once planted, detailed advice from a landscape architect will be required on initial aftercare procedures.

4.5) The development proposals aim to maximise the green spaces created and retained as part of construction works while delivering a development scheme to provide housing for local people.

4.6) A green roof cannot be explored as solar panels are proposed to be installed along the roof of the building.

5. Biodiversity Enhancement Measures

5.1) A suite of biodiversity enhancement measures are also proposed for the development site. While these measures arent strictly green infrastructure features they help improve the overall biodiversity value of the development site.

5.2) Two Vivara Pro Woodstone House Sparrow Nest Boxes will be provided on the north west elevation of the building. The boxes will be installed at first floor height. The boxes

will be built into the block work walls. An ecologist will check the boxes once installed and provide written confirmation to the owner and Local Planning Authority that they have been installed correctly.

5.3) Three Ibstock Eco-habitat for Swift Boxes will be installed on the north west elevation of the building. The boxes will be installed at eaves level of the building at second floor height. The boxes will be built into the block work walls. An ecologist will check the boxes once installed and provide written confirmation to the owner and Local Planning Authority that they have been installed correctly.

5.4) Four Integrated Crevice Bat Boxes will be provided on the south east elevation of the building. The bat boxes will be installed as high as possible near to the roof line. The access gaps will be left unobstructed to ensure bat access. An ecologist will check the boxes once installed and provide written confirmation to the owner and Local Planning Authority that they have been installed correctly.

5.5) A reptile hibernacula can be created within the grounds of the development site using rubble and brash from on site clearance works. The hibernacula must at least measure 0.5m in depth, 2m wide and 2m long each. It will be made by creating layers of wood, brash, rubble and soil. The hibernacula will create a mound approximately 0.3m above ground level which will be covered over with soil and seeded using a native seed mix.

5.6) All fencing across the site must be hedgehog friendly in design. A friendly design is considered to allow passage of small animals across the site. Close board or mesh fencing should provide either a continuous gap between the bottom of the fence and ground of approximately 13cm or 13cm by 13cm gaps cut every 3m along fencing.

5.7) All soft landscaping within the habitat corridor to the north and north east of the site will use native species only. A species mix similar to the woody species already found on site must be used. Suggested species include hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple, rowan, native willow species such as goat willow, native honeysuckle and dog rose.

Best Wishes

Ash Harris
Director
Ecological Services Ltd

Signed: Ash Harris Date: August 2024

Bibliography

- *'Site Assessment Survey; Hylton Terrace, Bedlinog'* V3.0 dated 5th July 2024 by Ecological Services Ltd

Appendix 1 - Aerial Image of Development Site



Appendix 2 - Extract From Drawing AL(00)008 Proposed Green Infrastructure (Trees & Hedges)

