



Green Infrastructure Statement



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SECTION 1

Introduction



1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This report has been prepared by CarneySweeney on behalf of the applicant, The British Land Company PLC. It sets out the proposed Green Infrastructure (GI) enhancements for the development at Cyfarthfa Retail Park, Swansea Road, Merthyr Tydfil, herein referred to as 'the Site'. The proposals are for *"Erection of drive-thru restaurant (Class A3) with associated parking, servicing, landscaping and engineering works"*.

1.2 Purpose, Legislation and Planning Policy

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this Green Infrastructure (GI) statement is to provide an overview of the existing green infrastructure within the application site. The statement also details potential development impacts (in absence of mitigation) and proposed GI enhancements.
- 1.2.2 The definition of Green Infrastructure in Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) is as follows:

"Green infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. Component elements of green infrastructure can function at different scales and some components, such as trees and woodland, are often universally present and function at all levels. At the landscape scale green infrastructure can comprise entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways peatlands and mountain ranges or be connected networks of mosaic habitats, including grasslands. At a local scale, it might comprise parks, fields, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens or may be designed or managed features such as sustainable drainage systems. At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks".

- 1.2.3 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 provides a context for the delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure. Its provision can make a significant contribution to the sustainable management of natural resources. Green infrastructure is capable of providing several functions at the same time and as a result offers multiple benefits, for social, economic and cultural as well as environmental resilience and respond to challenges presented by the climate emergency.
- 1.2.4 A Step-Wise Approach is required to be demonstrated in the Green Infrastructure Statement to assess impacts on habitats and species, as set out in Figure 12 of Planning Policy Wales 12 (PPW12) and shown overleaf. These steps will indicate how Net-Benefit-for-Biodiversity is achieved.



1.2.5 The statement has been produced in accordance with requirements outlined in Chapter 6 of PPW 12, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Green Infrastructure (GI):** stronger emphasis on taking a proactive approach to GI, covering cross boundary considerations, with the submission of a proportionate GI statement with planning applications.
- **Net Benefit for Biodiversity and the Step-wise Approach:** further clarity is 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 use of the GI statement as a means of demonstrating the stepwise approach is made explicit.
- **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. It also specifies that where trees are lost to facilitate development *“Replacement planting shall be at a ratio equivalent to the quality, environmental and ecological importance of the tree(s) lost and this must preferably be onsite, or immediately adjacent to the site, and at a minimum of at least 3 trees of a similar type and compensatory size plated for every 1 lost”*.

1.2.6 As stated with para 6.2.12 of PPW 12, a green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. These are to be *“proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach has been applied”*.



SECTION 2

Site Baseline and Development Impacts



2.0 Site Baseline and Development Impacts

2.1 Site Baseline

- 2.1.1 The application site consists of an existing hard-standing car parking area for the retail park, and an area of amenity landscaping. There are 5no. trees within the red line boundary of the site; 2no. trees are to be retained in situ and 3no. existing trees are proposed to be relocated as they would otherwise be removed as part of the drive-thru development proposals. The trees within the application site and surrounding the site have no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), and/or Ancient Woodland is not present on or adjacent to the Site. The site is within the Cyfarthfa Park Conservation Area.
- 2.1.2 The application site is not subject to any nature, biodiversity, or other environmental protection designations such as National Nature Reserves (NNR), Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Special Landscape Area (SLA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI). The nearest statutory designation is Cwm Glo a Glyndryys SSSI which is located approximately 700m to the south of the application site.

2.2 Development Impacts

- 2.2.1 The proposals are for the “*Erection of drive-thru restaurant (Class A3) with associated parking, servicing, landscaping and engineering works*”. The drive-thru restaurant and associated works will primarily be built on existing hard standing land but will require the removal of 136.9sqm of existing amenity soft landscaping. The proposals will also involve the relocation of 3 no. existing trees within site.
- 2.2.2 The proposed green infrastructure comprises the provision of 125.2 sqm of new landscaping comprising low level mixed native species shrubs within the retail park, the relocation of the 3no. existing trees, and the installation of 2no. bird boxes. It should be noted that the proposed development will not result in the loss of any trees.

Net Benefit for Biodiversity and the Step-wise Approach

- 2.2.3 The Proposed Development seeks to follow the Stepwise Approach as detailed within Chapter 6 of PPW12, by implementing the following:
1. **Avoid:** The proposed development footprint lies within an area of previously developed land. Whilst the impact on the existing soft landscaping area is unavoidable, overall there will be no loss of high-quality arboricultural features on site. As previously outlined, the 3 no. existing trees which will be impacted by the development will be relocated within the site.
 2. **Minimise:** by minimising impacts on any existing green infrastructure.



3. **Mitigate:** by relocating the existing trees affected by the development, proposing new low level mixed native species shrubs planting within the retail park and the installation of 2 no. bird boxes.
 4. **Compensation:** by relocating 3no. trees, proposing 125.2 sqm of new low level mixed native species shrubs planting as well as the installation of 2no. bird boxes.
- 2.2.4 The proposed ecological enhancements fit with the DECCA (Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity and Aspects of ecosystem resilience) Framework by:
1. *Increasing diversity within the local ecosystem*
 2. *Increasing the extent/scale of ecosystems*
 3. *Improving the condition of the ecosystem*
 4. *Improving connections within and between ecosystems*
 5. *Improving ecosystem resilience and adaptability to future pressures*
- 2.2.5 It is therefore considered that the Step-Wise Approach has been followed. Furthermore, there will be a net benefit for biodiversity within the application site through the installation of 2 no. bird boxes on the site.



SECTION 3

Conclusion



3.0 Conclusion

3.1 Conclusion

- 3.1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement, prepared by CarneySweeney on behalf of British Land Company PLC addresses the proposed drive-thru restaurant with associated parking, servicing, landscaping and engineering works at Cyfarthfa Retail Park, Swansea Road, Merthyr Tydfil.
- 3.1.2 The site baseline assessment confirms that the application is within a conservation area and comprises of an existing hard-standing car parking area and soft landscaping area with no Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), or Ancient Woodland present on or adjacent to the site. The site is not subject to any statutory nature, biodiversity, or environmental protection designations.
- 3.1.3 In accordance with the requirements of Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales 12, which mandates a proactive approach to Green Infrastructure and securing a net benefit for biodiversity, the proposed development implements specific Green Infrastructure enhancements. The primary measures outlined are the relocation of 3no. existing trees, 125.2 sqm of low level mixed native species shrubs, and the installation of 2no. bird boxes.
- 3.1.4 These proposals demonstrate adherence to the Step-Wise Approach, as detailed in PPW 12, by actively avoiding impacts on existing green infrastructure. The ecological enhancements are also aligned with the DECCA (Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity and Aspects of ecosystem resilience) Framework, aiming to increase diversity and extent, improve the condition of the local ecosystem, and enhance connections and resilience within and between ecosystems.
- 3.1.5 Therefore, it is concluded that the proposed development, incorporating the specified green infrastructure measures, will deliver a net benefit for biodiversity within the ownership boundary, without negatively impacting existing green infrastructure.