

Landscape Specification & Management Plan

For

Proposed Residential Development, Hillcrest

Prepared By



On Behalf of

Merthyr Housing Association

May 2025
(Updated December 2025)

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This document is to be read in conjunction with the following:

1. Hayden Terrace, Merthyr Tydfil. Ecological Impact Assessment report, Version V2.0, prepared by Ecological Services Ltd. Dated: June 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. Green Infrastructure Statement prepared by TDA on behalf of Merthyr Housing Association. Dated: May 2025.
6. Hillcrest. Detailed Soft Landscape Proposals. Drawing number: TDA.3019.02 prepared by TDA on behalf of Merthyr Housing Association. Dated: November 2025.

PROGRAMME

All soft landscape works shall be implemented during the first planting season post practical completion to ensure that a net benefit for biodiversity will be achieved within as short a time as possible. The specific timing and duration of construction activities and conservation measures are to be confirmed to the local authority, by the main contractor, prior to commencement.

Landscape works to be implemented in a single phase.

All bare-root stock is to be planted between November and March while trees are still dormant.

Containerised stock can be planted at any time of year but not during very cold or wet weather when the ground is likely to freeze or become waterlogged.

SOFT LANDSCAPE SPECIFICATION

Generally

All works shall be carried out in accordance with BS4428:1989, Code for General Landscape Operations.

Clearance

Any significant clearance of vegetation shall take place between September and March so as to avoid the bird nesting season.

Soil

Soil resources are easily damaged by being stripped or moved when wet. Consequently, all topsoil should be stripped when dry (in the summer months) for re-use in landscape areas.

Stripped soils to be stored in bunds no more than 2 m high and kept grassed and free from construction traffic until required for reuse.

Soil Profiles

Shrub Planting - 300mm site won topsoil over 300mm insitu subsoil.

Tree Planting - 300 mm site won topsoil over 600mm insitu subsoil.

Rain Garden Planting - 300mm Freeland Bioretention topsoil over 300mm Freeland Bioretention subsoil (or similar approved)

Wildflower Seeding - 300mm insitu subsoil only.

Existing topsoil on site should be checked by a suitably qualified soil scientist and reconditioned where necessary. Enrich Topsoil backfill with slow-release fertilizer.

Everris Enmag CRF, or similar approved should be applied at a rate of 70g/m² and to a depth of 200mm.

Spread subsoil should be loosened/ripped after replacement to remove compaction and maximise aeration and drainage. De-compaction to be performed with a tined ripper pulled by an earth-mover or excavator, undertaken when soils are sufficiently dry to be friable.

Any imported soil is to be approved for use by a suitably qualified soil Scientist.

Fallow Cultivation

The contractor shall by cultivation or other approved means allow for suppressing all weed growth on all areas which lie fallow whilst awaiting suitable weather or the right season for planting or seeding.

Cultivation

On newly topsoiled areas or on undisturbed areas where depth of not less than 300mm of topsoil exists after clearing all vegetation, beds shall be dug by hand or cultivated by machine to a minimum depth of 300mm breaking down all lumps and leaving the surface level with a medium tilth. All weeds and debris shall be collected and removed from site. No cultivation is to take place within the root protection areas of retained trees.

Nursery Stock

Where possible all native species planting stock shall be primarily sourced from nurseries providing stock derived from local seed sources. In the eventuality of insufficient availability, stock derived from seed sourced from Forestry Commission UK seed provenance zone 303 in accordance with the Forest Reproductive Material Regulations (2002) shall be used. Where plants from this zone aren't available

materials from an adjacent zone shall be sourced. All native species planting stock shall be of British provenance.

All stock must comply with BS3936 (Nursery Stock).

- Top growth shall be typical of the variety and well branched, except for varieties normally grown with a single stem.
- Roots shall be in balance with the size of plant and sufficiently fibrous and developed.
- All containers must be weed free.
- All plants must be fully hardened off prior to planting where protective growing techniques have been used.

All root-balled and containerised tree stock to be supplied in accordance with BS:8545:2014.

Season

All trees, shrubs and ground cover plants shall be planted during suitable weather between October and April. However, containerised material may be planted between May and October. Planting of bare root stock shall be undertaken between November and March while plants are still dormant. Planting shall not be carried out when the ground is waterlogged, frozen or snow covered.

Planting Trees

Preparation of trees for planting: remove any ropes, wrappings, tree frames, etc., where used for protection of tree in transit and temporary storage. Remove any dead, diseased or broken branches. Shorten any unusually long branches by one third.

Tree pits must be no deeper than the root-ball so that the top surface of the root-ball aligns with the soil surface, with mulch placed above, not so that mulch aligns with the soil surface. The width of the planting hole opening should be twice root-ball diameter with gently sloping, scarified sides, with an undisturbed base.

Tree pits to be backfilled with subsoil below 300mm. The final top 300mm to be backfilled with topsoil. Backfill under and around rootballs in 150-250mm layers firmly consolidated to eliminate air pockets. Make allowance for settlement in the thickness of the final layer which should not be consolidated.

Watering: water whole area of the tree pits thoroughly upon completion of backfilling but delay watering if there is risk of frost within 24 hours.

Mulch should be applied to 2m² where practicable, but tapered towards the base of the stem, so that the root-ball surface receives a thin (1 inch) covering of mulch. Mulch must be maintained for at least three years post planting and be a chipped hardwood bark to Landscape Institute specifications.

Planting shrubs (open ground and containerised)

All plants shall be planted at the same depth as previously grown; care being taken to avoid damaging the root system. Sufficient soil shall be taken out of the planting station to enable the roots to be fully spread, packing them round with fine soil before firmly heeling in. The roots of balled trees or shrubs shall not be disturbed during planting.

Shrub planting pits to be 150mm wider than root spread.

Mulching

On completion of planting the shrub beds shall be mulched with 50mm depth of ornamental bark mulch. Mulch shall only be applied when the soil is moist.

Wildflower Seeding

Emorsgate EM1:

Ground Preparation

Endeavour to select ground that is not highly fertile and does not have a problem with perennial weeds. Good preparation is essential to success so aim to control weeds and produce a good quality seed bed before sowing.

To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds using repeated cultivation. Then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to produce a medium tilth, and roll, or tread, to produce a firm surface.

Sowing

Seed is best sown in the autumn or spring but can be sown at other times of the year if there is sufficient warmth and moisture. The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or broadcast by hand. To get an even distribution and avoid running out divide the seed into two or more parts and sow in overlapping sections. Do not incorporate or cover the seed but firm in with a roll, or by treading, to give good soil/seed contact.

Emorsgate EM8:

Ground Preparation

Endeavour to select ground that is not highly fertile and does not have a problem with perennial weeds. Good preparation is essential to success so aim to control weeds and produce a good quality seed bed before sowing.

To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds using repeated cultivation. Then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to produce a medium tilth, and roll, or tread, to produce a firm surface.

Sowing

Sowings on ground prone to winter flooding are safest either in the early autumn or in spring once the land has drained. Most plants need time to grow mature enough to withstand flooding.

The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or broadcast by hand. To get an even distribution and avoid running out, divide the seed into two or more parts and sow in overlapping sections. Do not incorporate or cover the seed but firm in with a roll, or by treading, to give good soil/seed contact.

Emorsgate EH1:

Ground Preparation

Endeavour to select ground that is not highly fertile and does not have a problem with perennial weeds. Good preparation is essential to success so aim to control weeds and produce a good seed bed before sowing. Overgrown hedgerows which have been recently cut back or laid sometimes offer up a strip of open bare ground ready for seeding.

To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds using repeated cultivation. Cultivation close to established trees and shrubs can be damaging to their root systems so take care not to dig too deep, keeping disturbance to the minimum required to expose fresh soil.

Sowing

Seed is best sown in the autumn or spring but can be sown at other times of the year if there is sufficient warmth and moisture. The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or broadcast by hand. To get an even distribution and avoid running out, divide the seed into two or more parts and sow in overlapping sections. Do not incorporate or cover the seed but firm in with a roll, or by treading, to give good soil/seed contact.

Emorsgate EL1:

Ground Preparation

Endeavour to select ground that is not highly fertile and does not have a problem with perennial weeds. Good preparation is essential to success so aim to control weeds and produce a good quality seed bed before sowing.

To prepare a seed bed first remove weeds using repeated cultivation. Then plough or dig to bury the surface vegetation, harrow or rake to produce a medium tilth, and roll or tread to produce a level firm surface.

Sowing

Seed is best sown in the autumn or spring but can be sown at other times of the year if there is sufficient warmth and moisture. The seed must be surface sown and can be applied by machine or broadcast by hand. To get an even distribution and avoid running out, divide the seed into two or more parts and sow in overlapping sections.

Do not incorporate or cover the seed, but firm in with a roll, or by treading, to give good soil/seed contact.

Native Hedgerow Planting

All planting stock shall be to British Standard 3936:1992. All existing grass and other vegetation to a width of 1m along the line of the hedgerow shall be removed by cutting of all surface vegetation and scraping back/scarifying of turf.

Hedgerow planting to be set out in double staggered rows 300mm apart with plants at 450mm centers.

In locations where a depth of suitable rooting material (topsoil and subsoil) is present to a minimum overall depth of 600mm plants are to be implemented as follows:

- Notch planted or planted into 400 x 400 x 400mm depth pits in a 600mm width strip of cultivated existing ground. Slow release fertilizer shall be incorporated.

In locations where a depth of suitable rooting material (topsoil and subsoil) is NOT present plants are to be implemented as follows:

- plant into a 400 x 400 x 400mm depth pit in a low hedge bank formed from topsoil to BS:3882 over a 600mm width strip of cultivated existing ground to make up an overall minimum depth of 600mm. Slow-release fertilizer shall be incorporated.

OR

- Planted into a 400 x 400 x 400mm depth pit into a 600mm width excavated trench providing an overall 600mm depth of suitable rooting material of which minimum 400mm depth shall be pre-mixed 80% topsoil/20% compost mixture. Topsoil shall be to BS:3882 consisting of suitable material excavated on site, or imported material if not available.

Planting pits to be backfilled with material excavated from strip/trench. Where additional topsoil is available on site a low hedge bank shall be formed to maximize suitable rooting material. A biodegradable mulch mat roll of 1m width shall be pegged along the length of the hedge. Plants shall be planted through the mulch mat. A layer of 75mm depth medium grade bark mulch shall be applied over the mat.

Protective measures:

Rabbit guards: Proprietary plastic mesh guards to be fixed to individual 25mm square section wooden stakes to be installed around each hedge plant to prevent damage by rabbits and other rodents.

LANDSCAPE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Management Plan Objectives

The objective of the management plan is to ensure that measures to protect and enhance both natural and created habitats and their associated species in the long term, while ensuring that due consideration is given to the needs of public health and safety. The main aims of the plan are:

- 1) To maintain and where possible enhance the ecological value of the habitats present
- 2) To encourage the successful establishment of newly created habitats
- 3) To provide a management framework for the long-term management of the site ensuring the protection and enhancement of valuable ecological features

Management Responsibilities

This document is intended to be used as the management plan for the site in perpetuity.

Following the implementation of the landscape proposals, the management of landscape areas at the site will be undertaken by a suitably qualified contractor to be appointed by the site operator. The contractor will be expected to make site visits, spread throughout the year to suit the season. All Management will be undertaken in accordance with the specification contained herein.

Funding Mechanism

The site will be operated and maintained by Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association. Maintenance will be paid for via service charges. Refer to Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association for further details

Landscape Management Specification

All planted areas are to be maintained in a weed free condition and any newly planted trees or shrubs which die, or are destroyed, within 5 years of practical completion shall be replaced in the appropriate season with plants of the same species.

The contractor shall eradicate weed growth within planted and seeded areas by manual or mechanical. The use of herbicide is not permitted.

Existing Trees

Existing trees to be assessed once annually by a suitably qualified arboricultural consultant. Resulting works are to be undertaken in the best interest of the tree and its long-term quality and value.

Existing Grassland

The existing grassland is to be maintained with minimal intervention. The long-term goals of management are to improve biodiversity and landscape value.

Grassland to be cut once annually in late July -August in a mosaic pattern with 70% of the grassland to be cut in any given year. All arisings to be removed from site.

The remaining 30% to be left uncut. Each year the location of the uncut area is to be rotated. Varying the location annually to avoid repeated disturbance of the same ground.

Invasive scrub to be removed by hand on a 3-year cycle. Only remove scrub that threatens grassland extent; retain the majority for shelter and diversity.

Scrub to be removed between November and February to avoid potential disturbance to breeding birds.

Grassland management and creation of hibernacula, to create more suitable habitat for reptiles must be undertaken prior to implementation of the RMS.

Newly Planted Trees

All root-balled and containerised tree planting aftercare must be in accordance with BS:8545:2014. Any necessary formative pruning to tree planting must be carried out in accordance with BS: 3998:2010

Check stakes and ties and adjust to allow for growth and movement and replace any broken or defective items. Stakes and ties for tree planting must be removed after no more than three growing seasons. Any sockets at base of tree stems caused by movements to be filled with fine soil.

Any dead twigs or water shoots occurring on the clear stems of newly planted trees shall be removed and disposed of by the contractor.

Minor settlement of newly planted tree pits to be made good by topping up with fine topsoil to grade in with surrounding levels.

For 24 months following practical completion all trees are to be watered at least 5 times during the growing season commencing in May, and thereafter as appropriate, to thoroughly wet the tree pits throughout their full depth. In the third and subsequent years trees should be watered during extended dry periods only (March through to October).

Newly Planted Shrubs

Shrub bed areas shall be maintained as bare earth and kept free from weed growth, litter and rubbish at all times. Any shrubs overhanging pedestrian routes or adjacent grassed areas are to be pruned back during the appropriate season and arisings removed from site.

Pruning of ornamental shrubs should be done to encourage healthy and bushy growth and promote desirable ornamental features, e.g. flowers, fruit, autumn colour, stem colour.

All shrub beds to be treated with a slow-release fertilizer, as chosen by the landscape maintenance contractor, in March or April. Treatment to be undertaken on an annual basis as per the manufacturer's instructions.

Mulch to be maintained at a 50mm thickness. Any weeds growing on, or within, the mulch to be removed by hand weeding and taken off site.

Wildflower Areas

Emorsgate EM1:

First Year Management

Most of the sown meadow species are perennial and are slow to establish. Soon after sowing there will be a flush of annual weeds, arising from the soil seed bank. These weeds can look unsightly, but they will offer shelter to the sown seedlings, are great for bugs, and they will die before the year is out. So resist cutting the annual weeds until mid to late summer, especially if the mixture contains Yellow Rattle, or has been sown with a nurse of cornfield annuals. Then cut, remove and compost. Early August is a good time. This will reveal the young meadow, which can then be kept short by grazing or mowing through to the end of March of the following year. Dig out any residual perennial weeds such as docks.

Management Once Established

In the second and subsequent years EM1 sowings can be managed in a number of ways which, in association with soil fertility, will determine the character of the grassland. The best results are usually obtained by traditional meadow management based around a main summer hay cut in combination with autumn and possibly spring mowing or grazing.

Meadow grassland is not cut or grazed from spring through to late July/August to give the sown species an opportunity to flower.

After flowering in July or August take a 'hay cut': cut back with a scythe, petrol trimmer or tractor mower to c 50mm. Leave the 'hay' to dry and shed seed for 1-7 days then remove from site. Mow or graze the re-growth through to late autumn/winter to c 50mm and again in spring if needed.

Emorsgate EM8:

First Year Management

Most of the sown meadow species are perennial and are slow to establish. Soon after sowing there will be a flush of annual weeds, arising from the soil seed bank. These weeds can look unsightly, but they will offer shelter to the sown seedlings, are great for bugs, and they will die before the year is out. So resist cutting the annual weeds until mid to late summer, especially if the mixture contains Yellow Rattle, or has been sown with a nurse of cornfield annuals. Then cut, remove and compost the cuttings. This will reveal the young meadow, which can then be kept short by grazing or mowing through to the end of March of the following year. Dig out any residual perennial weeds such as docks.

Management Once Established

In the second and subsequent years EM8 sowings can be managed in a number of ways which, in association with soil fertility, will determine the character of the grassland. The best results are usually obtained by traditional meadow management based around a main summer hay cut in combination with autumn and possibly spring mowing or grazing.

Meadow grassland is not cut or grazed from spring through to July/August to give the sown species an opportunity to flower. After flowering in July or August take a 'hay cut' : cut back with a scythe, trimmer or tractor mower to c 50mm. Leave the 'hay' to dry and shed seed for 1-7 days then remove from site. Mow or graze the re-growth through to late autumn/winter to c 50mm and again in spring if needed.

Emorsgate EH1:

First Year Management

Most of the sown meadow species are perennial and are slow to establish. Soon after sowing there will be a flush of annual weeds, arising from the soil seed bank. These weeds can look unsightly, but they will offer shelter to the sown seedlings, are great for bugs, and they will die before the year is out. So resist cutting the annual weeds until mid to late summer, especially if the mixture contains Yellow Rattle, or has been sown with a nurse of cornfield annuals. Then cut, remove and compost. Early August is a good time. This will reveal the young meadow, which can then be kept short by grazing or mowing through to the end of March of the following year. Dig out any residual perennial weeds such as docks.

Management Once Established

Hedgerows, woodland edges, rides, glades and other semi-shaded communities usually sit on the boundary between one habitat type (eg open grassland) and another (eg closed tree canopy). The management requirements of established

hedgerow mixtures can be tailored to light levels and to fit in with adjacent vegetation types.

Zoned management of hedgerow margins frequently produces the best diversity of habitat structure: areas closest to the hedge or woodland boundary and those which are more shaded are left uncut in most years. Areas that are further from the margin and more open can be managed as grassland habitat. For example in a 6 metre sown margin the 2-3 metres against the boundary could be left uncut, the next 3-4 metres cut once or twice a year.

Hedgerow vegetation that is not mown or grazed each year will become rough and “tussocky” in character. It can form useful refuge habitat on corners and margins of a site. To control scrub and bramble development these tussocky areas may need cutting every 2-3 years between October and February. For wildlife this cutting is best done on a rotational basis so that no more than half the area is cut in any one year leaving part as a undisturbed refuge. Hedgerows and margins that are cut regularly can be managed as grassland.

Emorsgate EL1:

First Year Management

The wild flower and grass species in this mix are perennial; they will be slow to germinate and grow and will not usually flower in their first growing season. There will often be a flush of annual weeds from the soil in the first growing season. This annual weed growth is easily controlled by repeated mowing.

Mow newly sown flowering lawns regularly (every 7 -10 days during growing season) throughout the first year of establishment. Cut to a height of 40-60mm, removing cuttings if dense. This will gradually develop a good sward structure, help maintain balance between faster growing grasses and slower developing wild flowers, and control annual weeds. Dig out any residual perennial weeds such as docks.

Management

Once Established

Mow regularly as a lawn but not too short (25-40mm). To permit flowering, mowing can be relaxed from May. Cut again when the sward gets untidy (after 4-8 weeks). Mowing may be suspended earlier in the year to allow cowslips to flower. Heavy quantities of cuttings should be collected and removed from site.

Hedgerow Planting

Once established, native hedgerows to be cut once every two years, outside of the bird nesting season, to maintain a height of 1.8 metres.

Bio-Retention Areas

Rain gardens to be kept free of litter and dead leaves. Particular attention to be paid to gullies to ensure they do not become blocked.

Aquilegia vulgaris: Cut back after flowering

Carex pseudocyperus: Cut back in the autumn as the foliage fades

Dryopteris affinis: Dead or damaged fronds may be removed as necessary

Deschampsia cespitosa: Cut back old stems to the ground in early spring before growth resumes

Eupatorium cannabinum: Cut back spent flowers at the end of the flowering season

Geranium pratense: Remove flowered stems and old leaves to encourage the production of fresh leaves and flowers

Helleborus foetidus: Remove faded or damaged foliage as the flowers appear

Lythrum salicaria: Deadhead after flowering to prevent self-seeding

Persicaria bistorta 'Superba': Deadhead faded spikes.

Monitoring

Trees

The existing and proposed trees are to be surveyed every two years by a suitably qualified arboricultural contractor. Any required works are to be undertaken in the interests of the trees continuing health and arboricultural value. Local authority to be notified of any proposed tree works.

Grassland

Existing and proposed grassland to be surveyed every two years by a suitably qualified ecologist. The purpose of the survey will be to ensure that the grassland areas are in good health and that biodiversity is maximised. Local authority to be notified of any proposed remedial work, deemed necessary by the ecologist.

Bird boxes, bat boxes and hibernacula.

Proposed bird boxes, bat boxes and hibernacula to be inspected once annually by a suitably qualified ecologist, to ensure that they are functioning correctly. Local authority to be notified of any proposed remedial work, deemed necessary by the ecologist.

Long-Term Reporting

A suitably qualified landscape architect will be required to collate information from the surveys and inspections described above. and produce a subsequent report. The report will set out how management objectives are being met. In the event that

objectives are not being met, the report will set out remedial actions for approval.
The report will be issued every 2 years to the local authority.