

Gwynfaen 2

FINAL DRAFT

Green Infrastructure Statement

Prepared by: The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd

On behalf of: Pobl Group

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APPENDICES

Appendix EDP 1 Landscape General Arrangement Plan (edp7068_d022f 08 October 2024 WBe/HMc)

Section 1 Introduction

- 1.1 This Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS) has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership Ltd (EDP) in respect of Gwynfaen 2 (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). Specifically, this GIS considers the effects of the proposals and their potential effects on green infrastructure and biodiversity.
- 1.2 EDP is a multi-disciplinary environmental consultancy with specialists in the areas of landscape, biodiversity, arboriculture, heritage and urban design. This mix of skill sets and extensive experience in the development sector in Wales, from their base in Cardiff, makes EDP perfectly positioned to provide the assessment of effects on GI, which Planning Policy Wales (PPW) seeks.
- 1.3 This GIS is part of a suite of documents accompanying a full planning application for the proposed development, the Illustrative Layout of which is contained as **Appendix EDP 1**. The proposed development is for the construction of 50 dwellings. The proposals comprise 100% 'social rented' dwellings, constituting affordable housing as defined by Technical Advice Note 2: Planning and Affordable Housing (June 2006)¹.
- 1.4 The development is being designed to cater for a specific housing need that has been identified by Swansea City Council (SCC). The scheme will include local areas of play, adjacent open space and attenuation features to meet the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Approval Body (SAB) requirements.
- 1.5 PPW defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as:

"...the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places".

1.6 PPW edition 12, published in February 2024, requires that all planning applications are supported with a GI Statement. Paragraph 6.2.12 states:

"A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied".

¹ https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-09/tan2-planning-affordable-housing.pdf

1.7 At 6.4.12, PPW further states:

"Having worked iteratively, in line with Figure 12, through the stages of the step wise approach below, and providing evidence in the Green Infrastructure Statement that the step wise approach has been followed, a scheme of enhancements must be provided to ensure a net benefit for biodiversity.

Where biodiversity enhancement proportionate to the scale and nature of the development is not proposed as part of an application, significant weight will be given to its absence, and unless other significant material considerations indicate otherwise, it will be necessary to refuse permission".

- 1.8 With this in mind, this report seeks to:
 - Summarise the baseline position in respect of the Site. This will reflect the GI assets present, their condition and their functionality in respect of Ecosystem Services;
 - Summarise the baseline position in terms of the wider connectivity of the Site within the local/regional GI network and identify any specific or key roles which it fulfils in this regard;
 - Describe the proposed development and any new GI to be integrated within it;
 - Identify the effects of the development on GI assets and functionality and utilise the Step-Wise approach to consider how mitigation has been applied and a net benefit for biodiversity achieved; and
 - Summarise the overall effect on GI.

Section 2 Baseline Green Infrastructure

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CONTEXT

- 2.1 The Site lies on hinterland located east of the Loughor Estuary. The Site comprises one agricultural field parcel, which measures c.3.64 hectares (ha) in area and it is irregular in shape. In the immediate site context, the Site edge abuts the existing, western settlement edge of Penyrheol, which is a conurbation of Gorseinon. The site lies north-east of the Gwynfaen Farm complex itself and is accessible via Brynafon Road. With the exception of the south-eastern corner, existing vegetation borders the majority of the Site's edges. A track and a network of ditches loosely follow the alignment of the vegetated site boundaries on three sides.
- 2.2 The Site is located on a westerly facing land parcel, and levels continue to fall gently west towards to the lowest contours found in the study area, on the estuary. The highest contours on the Site are found on the eastern edge at around 31m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), these fall gently and consistently towards the western edge to lows of 15m aOD. The field parcel adjacent to the east of the site is for the consented residential development referred to as Gwynfaen phase I.
- 2.3 The estuary is bordered by gently rising hinterland to the east and west, and the settlement pattern is similarly concentrated in the east and the west. As the Site is bordered by new development to the east (known as Gwynfaen I) and existing development to the south and south-east, it bears a partial connection to the settlement edge.
- 2.4 Two Public Right of Way (PRoW) routes align the Site boundaries. PRoW LC96 follows the alignment of Brynafon Road and runs along the southern site boundary. PRoW LC18 wraps around the Site from the south-west to the northern corner. Neither of these routes contain any connection with the Site and are lined with intervening scrub, trees and hedgerows of varying condition. The routes form part of a wider general north-east to south-west network, present in the sloping aspect of the estuary's western sloping landform.

ECOLOGICAL FINDINGS

2.5 Hawkswood Ecology have undertaken surveys and an appraisal of the Site. The findings below summarise the ecological position with regards to habitat and species.

Habitat

2.6 The Site itself is predominantly composed of agriculturally modified grassland, which has been poorly managed in recent years and primarily grazed by sheep and ponies. This has led to a shift towards species-poor marshy grassland, where grasses like perennial ryegrass and Yorkshire fog, along with rushes such as soft, compact, and jointed rush, have become dominant. Sedge species are also present, with glaucous sedge being prevalent in areas previously disturbed by drainage; oval and hairy sedge, both common and colonizing species, are frequently found throughout. Broad-leaved herbs are generally scarce, with lesser spearwort and marsh ragwort being among the most common. Other species associated with wetter ground, such as common fleabane and common marsh bedstraw, occur occasionally.

2.7 The grassland remains heavily modified and, although transitioning to marshy grassland, it is species-poor and might be more accurately described as species-poor wet neutral grassland. The Site is bordered by hedgerows that are mostly intact and continuous. These hedgerows are unmanaged, with the northern, western, and southern boundaries primarily consisting of mature trees and overgrown shrubs. These areas hold the most ecological interest, as common breeding birds were observed throughout the survey period.

Bats

- 2.8 Bat activity on the Site has been relatively low, with only four species positively identified so far. In passive detector surveys, the most commonly recorded species is the common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), which is active throughout the night. Soprano pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) are recorded less frequently but also occur throughout the night. Myotis bats, with sonograms most resembling those of the whiskered bat, are regularly detected along the northern boundary, usually after midnight. Noctule bats were infrequently recorded passing overhead.
- 2.9 Transect surveys yielded similar results to the passive detectors. Bats were observed foraging along the northern and southern boundaries, with occasional passes along the eastern hedgerow (adjacent to Phase 1). Foraging in open areas is rare, typically occurring late in the surveys when it's darker, likely to avoid predation. The only species recorded in the open field was the common pipistrelle. The wooded north-eastern corner may be of value to bats, as activity in this area seemed to increase in June. Bats were seen commuting along both the northern and southern boundaries from the west, where Gwynfaen Farm is located. Additionally, in May, bats, mostly soprano pipistrelles, were observed entering the Site from the housing on Brynafon Road to the south, although only in small numbers.
- 2.10 With ongoing surveys, the current findings indicate that the Site is not heavily used by large numbers of bats. The recorded passes correspond to sound recordings, and at no point were more than two bats observed simultaneously. With passive detectors, it's impossible to determine how many bats are present, as each recording represents a single pass, which could either be multiple visits by a single bat or a few passes by several bats. However, transect surveys suggest the former, indicating a low number of bats using the Site.

Birds

2.11 An assessment of bird breeding habitat and its value during different seasons was conducted, with incidental bird sightings recorded throughout the season. The Site is potentially significant for birds, as it is located just 110 meters from the Bury Inlet RAMSAR Site, an internationally important wetland, particularly for wading birds. However, several factors reduce the Site's value for estuarine birds: its agriculturally modified state, its enclosed nature (as many estuarine birds require large sightlines), and high levels of local disturbance from nearby housing and construction activities. During the survey period, no birds typically associated with estuarine environments were observed on the Site, even during a spring high tide.

2.12 Concerns about artificial light intrusion from the Site during construction and operation can be effectively managed, and this will be addressed in the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). The Site is currently bordered by two footpaths that run along its western boundary, with Gwynfaen Farm located between the Site and the protected area. It is anticipated that any increased public disturbance will be minimal and will have no impact on the RAMSAR site.

Reptiles

2.13 The reptile survey conducted was a presence-absence survey, aimed at determining whether a species is present on the Site rather than estimating population size. However, by using a large number of mats over an extended period, some cautious assessment of population size can be made. In this case, only five records were documented during the survey, with three likely being the same individual in one location. All recorded reptiles were female slow worms, all adults, with one younger female and two older ones. Given the number of mats placed on the Site and the small number of animals observed, it can be inferred that the slow worm population on the Site is likely low. No other reptile species or amphibians were noted during the survey.

Section 3 The Proposed Development

- 3.1 The proposed development is contained as **Appendix EDP 1**. It consists of 50 entirely affordable, low carbon dwellings, including associated infrastructure such as adoptable highways and shared surfaces.
- 3.2 As well as the 'hard' elements of the scheme, it also proposes a range of green corridor/buffer areas containing attenuation features, rain gardens, public open space, an orchard, community growing areas to the north-east and formal play spaces. Front of plot planting aims to soften the street level appearance of the development whilst contributing to the proposed GI functionality of the Site. The DAS, supporting this development provides full details of the development proposals.
- 3.3 The scheme includes succession planting which has been incorporated into the existing vegetated edge. The boundary will benefit from gapping up as well as maintenance to enhance the GI on site, and in the local area.
- 3.4 The proposals aim to connect the development to the existing rights of way, ensuring greater connectivity is achieved.

Section 4 Development Effects

- 4.1 PPW edition 12 requires a Step-Wise approach to be taken to the mitigation of effects on biodiversity. This entails mitigation measures being employed in the following order:
 - 1. Avoid development should seek to avoid valuable habitats and species wherever possible;
 - 2. Minimise where complete avoidance isn't possible, development should seek to minimise the effects on identified habitats and species;
 - 3. Mitigate where impacts on biodiversity remain after step 1 and 2, mitigation should be provided to balance the harm and provide an overall biodiversity benefit;
 - 4. Compensate where adequate mitigation cannot be provided on Site, it may be possible to offset this as compensatory measures offsite. This should preferably be immediately adjacent; and
 - 5. Long Term Management all GI, retained and proposed, needs to be subject to long term management to ensure its value is delivered and maintained.
- 4.2 Each of these steps is considered under the following sub-headings, summarising the measures incorporated within the proposals.

AVOID

- 4.3 Measures included within the proposals (contained within detailed drawing pack) include:
 - i. The retention of the vast majority (c.780m) of boundary vegetation around the perimeter of the site, including hedgerows and trees, with buffers between retained features and built development;
 - ii. The retention and protection of wet grassland to the west of the site boundary. This includes the enhancement and reinforcement with tree and shrub planting, as well as providing calculated flood and runoff alleviation through the creation of attenuation features;
 - iii. The retention and enhancement of the north-south green infrastructure corridor at the heart of the Site, to encourage habitat opportunities and visual amenity to the variety of site users; and
 - iv. Utilisation of good working practices, ecological supervision and Heras fencing barriers to protect retained features during construction.

MINIMISE

- 4.4 The following measures are included within the phase specific mitigation package set out in the CEMP to minimise the effects of the scheme on the baseline ecological position of the Site:
 - i. Minimise pre-construction and construction impacts on habitats and species through implementation of the requirements of the approved CEMP throughout the construction period;
 - ii. Minimising the spillage of artificial lighting on retained and new roosting, foraging and commuting/dispersal habitats for wildlife through a sensitive lighting strategy;
 - iii. Sensitive clearance of habitats to be removed during appropriate seasons to avoid further impacts on protected species and other wildlife therein; and
 - iv. Pre-commencement Checks for Protected species prior to construction related activities including, badger, otter, nesting birds and bats.

MITIGATE

- 4.5 Mitigation measures, where impacts cannot be avoided or minimisation results in residual effects, include:
 - Creation of suitably designed sustainable drainage features as part of a sustainable drainage strategy to increase aquatic habitat provision within the Site, in addition to ensuring the adequate management of surface water run-off whilst minimising significant impacts to site hydrology;
 - ii. The additional planting of hedgerows, trees and shrubs across the Site to enhance ecological connectivity and further strengthen green infrastructure across the wider development;
 - iii. Enhancement of existing and creation of new sustainable drainage features as part of the new drainage scheme for the development, combined with long-term management of the western watercourse; and
 - iv. The inclusion of habitat features and specific management to enhance the Site for nesting birds, roosting bats, reptiles, amphibians and notable mammal species.

COMPENSATE

- 4.6 The proposed development seeks to adequately compensate for anticipated losses, through the delivery of the following measures, which include:
 - New planting of woodland, trees, shrub and scrub where appropriate, to include a diversity of native species of local provenance designed to create natural woodland edges, shrubby glades and dense and well-connected hedgerows considered

favourable to wildlife, with species chosen to maximise structural and species diversity, fruiting/flowering potential and seasonal availability;

- Identification of areas of woodland, hedgerow, tree and scrub habitat to be targeted for appropriate management and maintenance over the long term so as to maximise the longevity and carrying capacity of the habitat resource; and
- Monitoring and assessment of habitat quality and/or monitoring of species associated with target habitats.

ENHANCEMENT

- 4.7 As well as the above measures regarding habitat provision, the scheme includes further enhancements to the GI baseline with regards to people and placemaking. The following elements form part of the emerging proposals;
 - <u>Interactive Rain Gardens and Attenuation Basins</u> feature strongly, providing an additional 'play' element to the masterplan;
 - <u>Community 'Kitchen Gardens'</u> provide a growing facility for future residents to engage with the surrounding landscape and green infrastructure;
 - <u>Community Orchard</u> provides the public with opportunities to harvest locally grown fruit and again engage with the landscape resource;
 - <u>Mown Areas of Amenity Grass</u> provide informal 'kickabout' spaces as well as retained tussock grassland spaces;
 - <u>Areas of Landform Mounding</u> offer variety, visual interest and additional natural play features within the landscape;
 - <u>A Local Area of Play (LAP)</u> is proposed within the central green corridor, offering a play space for future users; and
 - <u>Connection to existing PRoW routes</u> to provide residents with access to the wider countryside, amenity and recreational value of the surrounding landscape.

LONG TERM MANAGEMENT

- 4.8 The CEMP provides detailed mitigation and management proposals for the construction and establishment phases of the development proposals.
- 4.9 A Landscape Management Plan (LMP), to be delivered at the discharge of conditions phase will outline the ongoing management and monitoring prescriptions for the Site, for a minimum period of 25-years.
- 4.10 This comprehensive approach is considered to fully meet the requirements of Step 5 of the Step-Wise approach.

4.11 Overall, those habitat retention, enhancement and creation measures described above will ensure extent, diversity and connectivity of those most valued habitat features on-site are maintained whilst continuing to provide suitable habitat for a range of protected and notable species, necessary to maintain viable populations resilient to future change. More broadly, such measures will also ensure the protection and continued delivery of ecosystem service benefits on-site, particularly in respect of those regulating (e.g. carbon storage, climate regulation, air purification and water management), supporting (e.g. pollination, soil formation and decomposition) and cultural (e.g. health and well-being,) service benefits.

Section 5 Summary and Conclusions

- 5.1 This GI Statement seeks to fulfil the requirements of PPW, insofar as it provides the required description of how the Step-Wise approach has been followed.
- 5.2 While the requirement for GI Statements is new, the Step-Wise approach is not it has underpinned ecological assessment and mitigation proposals for many years, and it is therefore not a surprise that the proposals are identified as clearly following the appropriate approach.
- 5.3 This GI Statement has sought to avoid repeating the detail and clarity which is provided through the ecological reports undertaken by Hawkeswood Ecology including the CEMP.
- 5.4 The measures described within this GIS are considered to effectively mitigate the scheme and will bring a host of public and wildlife benefits to the site and its future users.

Appendix EDP 1 Landscape General Arrangement Plan (edp7068_d022f 08 October 2024 WBe/HMc)





	Application Boundary
	Proposed Native Hedgerow Planting Topsoil Depth: 450mm Mulch: 75mm Depth Bark Mulch
	Proposed Amenity Grass Product: TBC or Similar Approved Supplier Rolawn Topsoil Depth: 150mm
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	Proposed Species-Rich Meadow Grass Product: EM1 Basic General Purpose Meadow Mixture Supplier: Emorsgate Seeds Sowing rate: 4g/m ² Topsoil Depth: 150mm
+ ' + ' + ' + ' + ' - + + + + + + + - + + + + + + + + - + + + +	Proposed Wildflower Grassland (TO ATTENUATION BASE) Product: EG8 Meadow Grass Supplier: Emorsgate Seeds Sowing rate: 4g/m ² Topsoil Depth: 150mm
	Proposed Grassland (TO ATTENUATION BANKS) Product: EM8 Meadow Mix for Wetlands Supplier: Emorsgate Seeds Sowing rate: 4g/m ²
	Proposed Ornamental Shrub Planting Topsoil Depth: 450mm Mulch: 75mm Depth Bark Mulch
	Proposed Native Shrub Planting Tospoil Depth: 450mm Mulch: Jute/Hessian Mulch Matts Density 4-6 per sqm
	Proposed Structural Shrub Planting Tospoil Depth: 450mm Mulch: Jute/Hessian Mulch Matts Density 4-6 per sqm
	Proposed Marginal/Aquatic Planting
	Proposed Rain Garden Planting
	Existing Species-poor Marshy Grassland To be enhanced.
	Proposed Block Paving To Shared Streets & Traffic Calming Areas
	Proposed Safety Surfacing Safety Matta Play Safety Tiles with Wear Tolerant Seed Mix
	Proposed Safety Surfacing Tiger Turf (or similar approved)
	Proposed Reinforced Grass
	Proposed Tarmac Surfacing
	Proposed Flag Paving To Front Gardens and Access Footpaths
	Proposed Balustrade 1100mm High Timber
••-•-	Proposed Knee Rail Min 500mm High
	Proposed Fence Timber closeboard fence
	Proposed Retaining Wall Details TBC/Refer to Engineer's drawings for details
	Proposed Hoggin Path 2m wide with timber edge
	Proposed Earth Mounding To be formed with smooth flowing curves, with max 1:3 gradient to sides
	Seat/Bench
	Picnic Bench
	Concrete Ring Raised Planters
	Indicative Below Ground Services Zone Refer to Consultant's drawings for details
	Play Space Buffer Zone 20m buffer zone to LAP
	Proposed Retaining Wall Details TBC/Refer to Engineer's drawings for details

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Gwynfaen 2

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