

Carmarthen West

Green Infrastructure Statement

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theurbanists

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1. Introduction and Background

This Green Infrastructure (GI) Statement is prepared by The Urbanists Ltd, on behalf of Lovell Homes and Carmarthenshire County Council. It accompanies the detailed planning application for 84 residential units at Carmarthen West.

Following updates to Chapter 6 (Biodiversity) of Planning Policy Wales in 2024, GI Statements are a requirement for all planning applications in Wales. The purpose of a GI Statement ('the Statement') is to demonstrate how GI (including 'blue' infrastructure if relevant) has been incorporated adequately in a planning proposal. It is expected that this will illustrate that the proposal is compliant with specific processes and outcomes required by Planning Policy Wales Edition 12. In doing so, it will be supportive of other legislation and national policy.

The Statement is informed by other reports, statements, and plans which accompany this planning application, including:

- Ecological Appraisal;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Arboricultural Impact Assessments;
- Proposed Landscape Plan;
- Site Investigation Reports; and
- Drainage Strategy.

The Statement should therefore be read in conjunction with these documents.

2. Policy and Legislative Context

This section sets out the key legislative, planning policy, and other guidance that inform the requirements and the approach to Green Infrastructure Statements.

2.1. Legislation

Environment (Wales) Act 2016

The act introduced an enhanced duty for public authorities in the exercise of their functions - the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (referred to as the section 6 duty). Section 6 sets out the biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty of all public authorities in Wales, to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in their functions, and so promote resilience of ecosystems. Section 7 (Part 1) species and habitats of 'principal importance' for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, and which Welsh Ministers must encourage others to do.

2.2. National and Local Policy

Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the principal planning policy document of the Welsh Government and informs all planning decisions. The current version (PPW 12) explains that a proportionate GI Statement should be submitted with all planning applications and explains the general standards that any statement should seek to meet.

PPW explains that GI comprises the:

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

“...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, ponds, natural green spaces, 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” (par.6.2.1).

It further advises that:

“proposals should be informed by the priorities identified in green infrastructure assessments and locally based planning guidance” (par.6.2.5).

The specific PPW requirements are aimed at ensuring applicants provide adequate information in their planning proposals. They are part of a larger movement in valuing the environment, and help ensure that Local Planning Authorities can comply with their Legislative duties surrounding the environment and sustainable development. The PPW requirements are that the Statement must:

- Identify landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic and cultural features in which green infrastructure plays a part and are already being safeguarded (**The Baseline**);
- Demonstrate that the proposal produces a **Net Benefit for Biodiversity (NBB)**;
- Demonstrate production of an Ecosystem Resilience (ER) enhancement, as part of this NBB;
- Illustrate how the **‘Step-wise approach’** has been applied, to demonstrate the achievement of the previous NBB and ER;

This Step-wise approach sets out the procedure of:

1. Initially, following the ‘Mitigation hierarchy’ stages during the design process, to sequentially: **avoid, minimise, mitigate/restore** impact to habitats and/or species, **compensate on-site** for their loss, and as a last resort, **compensate off-site** for their loss;
2. At each of these stages, a proportional habitat and/or species (as relevant) enhancement must be proposed that adequately demonstrates that enhancement by its DECC[A] attributes; and
3. A long-term management strategy is additionally required, which would ensure those measures proposed are deliverable (how?), and how they aim to result in the level of Net Benefit for Biodiversity (NBB) and ER attributes that are described (what?), as well as any resultant ES benefits gained.

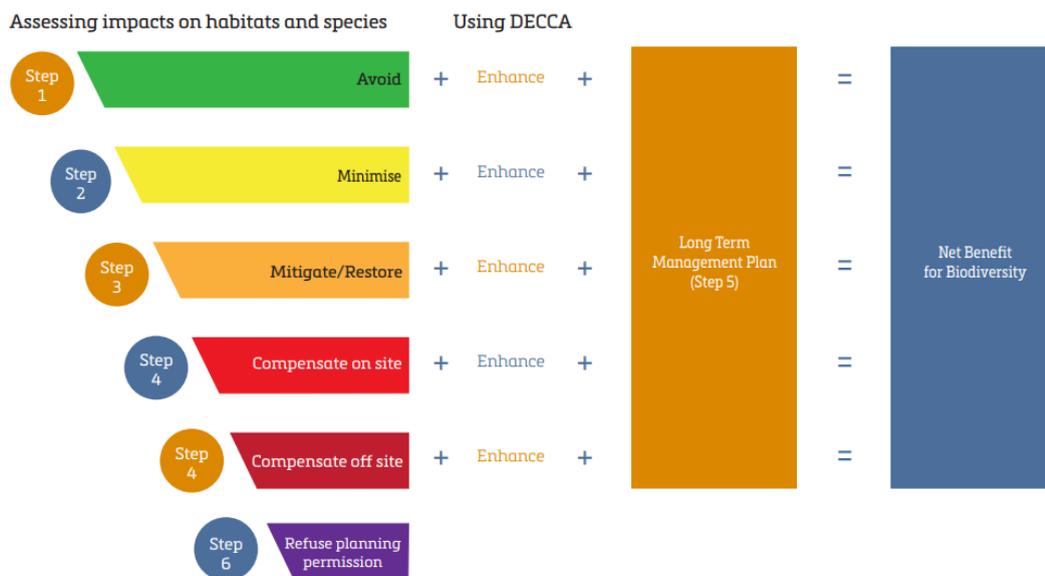


Figure 1: Step-wise Approach (PPW)

As per Point 2 above, the DECCA framework must be used. The ‘DECCA’ framework (see Figure 2 below) sets out 5 key considerations of habitats and species which lead to Ecosystem Resilience (ER). The first four are the attributes of ‘Diversity’, ‘Extent’, ‘Condition’, and ‘Connectivity’ of species (genetics and populations) and/or habitats. There is also the fifth combined aspect of ‘Adaptability, recovery and resistance’, which is an emergent aspect from the other four attributes combined, and which together (**D.E.C.C. & A.**) help us to understand the level of ER provided.

Finally, PPW12 states that **Building with Nature Standards** represent good practice and are an effective prompt for developers to improve the quality of schemes and demonstrate sustainable management of natural resources. It advises using the standards in a way that is proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development, with accreditation encouraged but not mandatory.

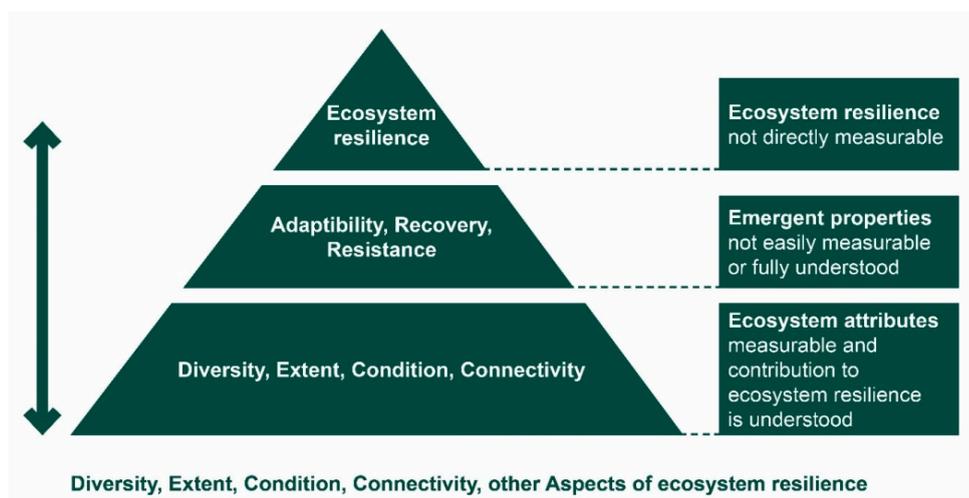


Figure 2: Ecosystem Resilience and the DECCA Framework (Natural Resources Wales)

Technical Advice Note 5 - Nature Conservation and Planning (1996)

PPW is supported by a number of Technical Advice Notes. TAN5 provides national guidance on how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. The guidance indicates that biodiversity conservation and enhancement are an integral part of planning for sustainable development. The guidance advocates a collaborative approach where LPAs, developers, and key stakeholders in conservation should work together to deliver sustainable development.

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 was adopted in February 2021 as the national development framework (NDF) setting the direction of development in Wales to 2040. The NDF provides a strategy to address key national priorities through the planning system, including developing a vibrant economy, developing strong ecosystems, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, and improving the health and well-being of communities; it forms part of the Development Plan.

Policy 9 of FW focuses on 'Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure' and sets out that planning authorities should identify areas of importance and opportunities for Green Infrastructure, for safeguarding and enhancement.

Of particular relevance to GI Statements, it also sets out that:

“In all cases, action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity (to provide a net benefit), the resilience of ecosystems and green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals through innovative, nature-based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment.”

2.3. Local Policy

Local Development Plan

The current Local Development Plan is the Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2006-2021, although this is presently being updated. On the 10th June 2024, the Council submitted the Deposit version of the Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP). Adoption of the RLDP is now expected in 2026, but both versions of the Development Plan currently have material weight when considering development proposals. The policies relevant to Green Infrastructure are as follows:

Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2006-2021

- SP1: Sustainable Places and Spaces
- SP2: Climate Change
- SP14: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment
- EQ4: Biodiversity
- EQ5: Corridors, Networks and Features of Distinctiveness
- EP3: Sustainable Drainage

Revised Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan (2018-2033)

- SP12: Placemaking and Sustainable Places
- SP14: Maintaining and Enhancing the Natural Environment
- SP16: Climate Change
- PSD1: Effective Design Solutions: Sustainability and Placemaking
- PSD2: Masterplanning Principles - Creating Sustainable Neighbourhoods
- PSD3: Green and Blue Infrastructure Network
- PSD4: Green and Blue Infrastructure - Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows
- NE2: Biodiversity
- NE3: Corridors, Networks, and Features of Distinctiveness

The policy requirements and weight attributed to the existing and emerging LDPs are more fully assessed in the accompanying Planning Statement. In terms of green infrastructure specifically, the current LDP includes strategic policies such as SP1, SP2, and SP14, which generally refer to protecting biodiversity as well as integrating nature conservation and climate response measures into new development, with SP14 seeking to protect designated and other important sites in relation to nature conservation. EQ4 and EQ5 only permit adverse impacts upon biodiversity where this can be mitigated, and encourage appropriate management of corridors, networks, and features of distinctiveness. Finally, EP3 requires the incorporation of SuDS, although the policy does not specifically reference integration with green infrastructure. The emerging LDP goes further than the current plan with an increased number of policies referencing green infrastructure and biodiversity. It retains strategic policies that give an overarching need to mitigate climate change and integrate green infrastructure into development, such as SP12, SP14, and SP16, with the former seeking to achieve a net benefit in biodiversity. This is backed up by policies NE2 and NE3, which seek to mitigate any adverse impacts upon biodiversity and ecological corridors, networks, and features of distinctiveness. The emerging LDP includes placemaking policies such as PSD1 and PSD2, which require development proposals to reflect local context, include quality landscape proposals, integrate green and blue infrastructure assets, including SuDS, and protect wildlife interests through a resilient network of green and blue infrastructure. Further, policies PSD3 and PSD4 specifically refer to green and blue infrastructure and seek to retain and enhance existing, provide effective management, and deliver a net gain in biodiversity.

In summary, both the current and emerging LDPs seek to avoid harm to designated sites and protect biodiversity through the provision of green infrastructure. However, the emerging LDP goes further with specific green and blue infrastructure policies and more of an emphasis on biodiversity net gain, ecosystem resilience, and longer-term management.

Supplementary Planning Guidance

The current Carmarthenshire Local Development Plan 2006-2021 is supported by a suite of Supplementary Planning Guidance documents. In terms of green infrastructure, the Nature Conservation and Biodiversity SPG is the most pertinent. The SPG highlights the designated sites within the Council area, gives advice for completing ecological surveys, and sets out good practice standards for incorporating green infrastructure into development.

3. Site Baselines

This section sets out a summary of the existing conditions of the development site and wider relevant context, based on survey efforts and desk study. This regards habitats and species, Ecological and GI features, and their varying values. It also considers other information available and summarises their influence on the design.

3.1. Site Context

The proposed development site is located on the western edge of Carmarthen along the western boundary of Fford Pendre. It comprises approximately 3.6 ha of greenfield land, which is classified as Grade 3a agricultural land. It has no mapped flood risk from rivers or sea, and very low levels of surface water flood risk as per Figure 3 below.

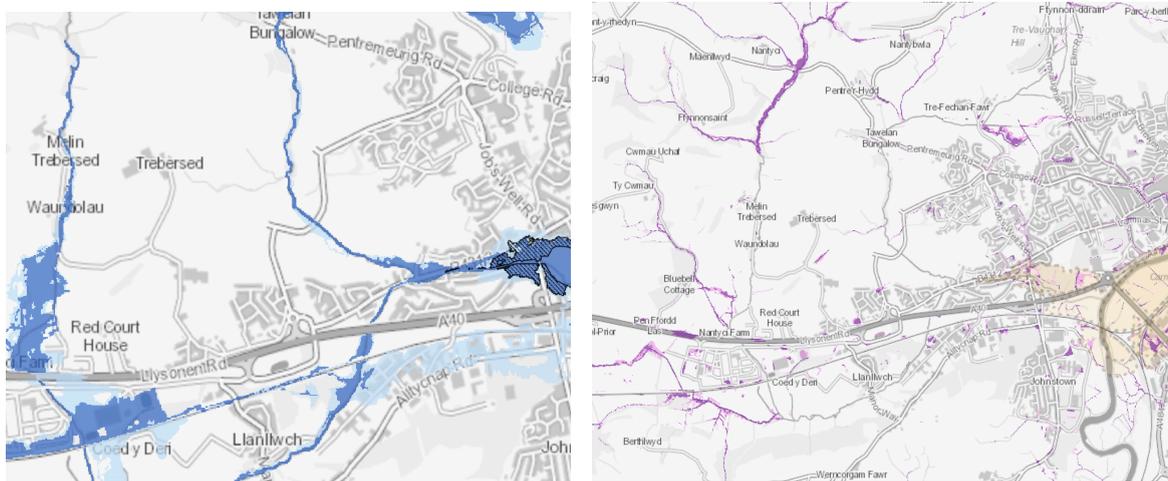


Figure 3: Flood map for Planning (Rivers and Sea - left) & (Surface Water and Small Watercourses - right).

The site is bounded by hedgerows along the western and southern boundaries, as well as some existing trees. The northern boundary also includes hedgerows and vegetation, but there is a break. Finally, the eastern boundary is more open, albeit there are some small areas of scrub and immature trees, and an existing swale running along the boundary. The site itself is largely made up of species-poor improved grassland and species-poor scrub towards the boundaries - the ecological appraisal confirms that their loss would not be significant. There is Himalayan balsam within the site towards the north-western corner. Himalayan balsam is a non-native invasive species, so its removal presents significant opportunities for enhancement.

Much of the land surrounding the site is also designated for development, with early phases already being delivered to the south and north. Whilst land to the west of the site is not allocated, a large agricultural plant somewhat dominates the landscape character in this area.

No part of the site is covered by any statutory designations. There are, however, two internationally important designations within 2km of the site, these being the River Tywi and Carmarthen Bay Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). In terms of nationally important sites, the River Tywi is also designated as an SSSI, and Cors Goch, Llanllwch NNR, approximately 1.6km to the south west, is also a SSSI. There are no locally designated sites within 2km of the site, and the nearest area of ancient woodland is some 660m to the east of the site. The site context and nearby designations have been highly considered as part of the proposals, with a coordinated approach taken with the LPA and consultant ecologists.

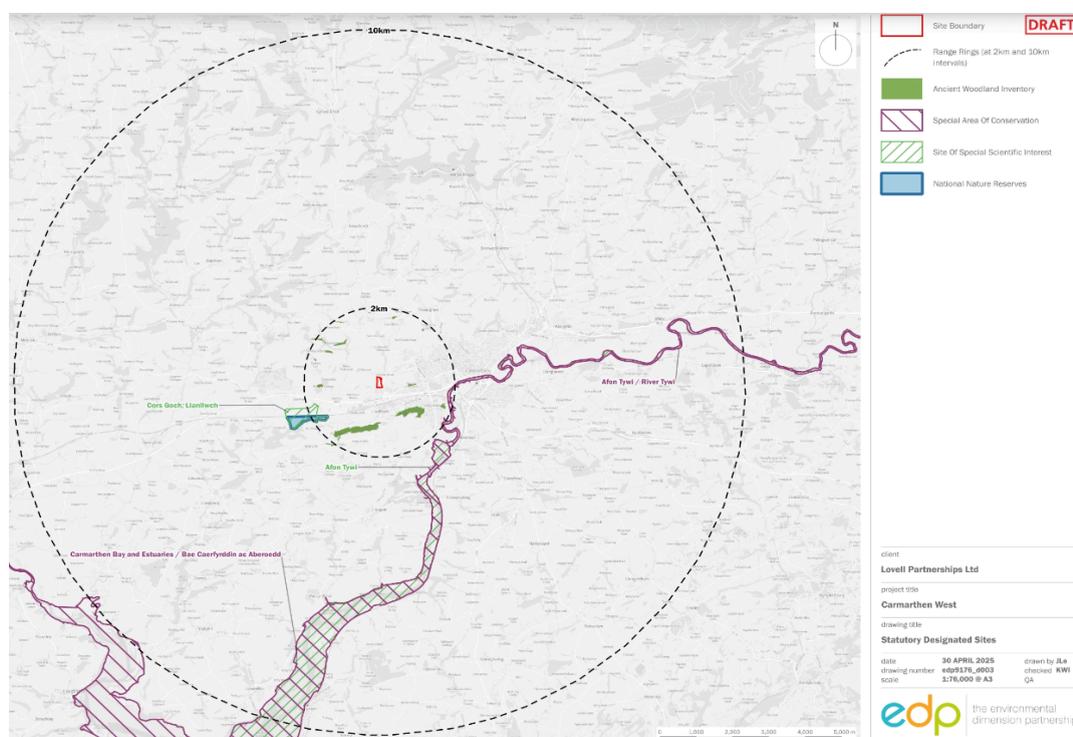


Figure 4: Statutory Designated Sites (EDP).

3.2. Ecological Baseline Summary

Accompanying ecological surveys and assessments have considered the proposed development site's existing ecological context and the potential for supporting any protected or otherwise important species.

In terms of habitats, hedgerows are of local ecological importance, and the western and southern boundary hedges have been defined as 'native hedgerows'. There is a shorter

section of intact hedgerow on the eastern boundary, as well as some younger hedgerows. In addition, the ecological appraisals have found several areas of dense scrub associated with the site boundaries. Whilst the scrub can act as shelter for some species, it is given negligible importance. The site itself is dominated by agricultural land, which has been classified as improved grassland subject to regular management. Given the managed nature of the improved grassland, it is given limited ecological value, with the ecological appraisal noting poor floristic diversity. There are records of rare/scarce plant species within 2km of the site, with bluebell being recorded on the site, and potential for northern yellowcress.

Whilst desktop studies found evidence of bird species in the locality, the species were those that would not normally breed within habitats present on the application site. The ecological appraisal, therefore, finds that breeding birds are not a significant constraint of the site. However, there may be an opportunity for enhancement.

In terms of bats, the broadleaved trees within the boundaries may offer some roosting potential for bats, whilst the dense scrub provides a potential foraging resource. The linear hedgerows allow the dispersal of bat populations between the site and the wider landscape. Surveys have found evidence of bats on the site, the primary species being common and soprano pipistrelles. Overall bat activity levels have been classified as moderate, with the majority of activity occurring towards the southern site boundary.

Whilst there are no records of dormice within 2km of the site, there are known records in the wider landscape, and there is moderate suitability for dormice on the site. There are records of otters and water voles in relative proximity to the site; however, the on-site habitat is not suitable for these species. Similarly, ecological appraisals conclude that there is unlikely to be any greater crested newt population on site; however, there is a reasonable likelihood of other common amphibians being present.

Ecological investigations have also concluded that there is a reasonable likelihood of common reptiles being present on the site, given the suitable habitat and reptile records in the area. Similarly, the habitat is likely to be suitable for invertebrates, with the appraisal identifying the habitat for both reptiles and invertebrates as having site-level importance.

Finally, there are records of badger within 2km of the site, and a survey identified a single mammal hole along the southern boundary - this was the only evidence of badger on site, with camera surveys not returning any results, and overall badger is given site-level

importance in the ecological appraisal. The site habitat is suitable for foraging for other mammals such as polecat, hedgehog, and hare.



Figure 5: Improved grassland (left) makes up the majority of the site, with dense scrub (right) towards the boundary (EDP).

3.3. Landscape GI Baseline Summary

The site is located on the Western edge of Carmarthen, and whilst it comprises agricultural land, it is very well related to the built development in the main town, which forms part of the wider landscape character. Being part of a site allocated for development, the site sits in a changing landscape with development already coming forward immediately to the south and north. Similarly, the completion of a new road to enable development across the allocation provides connection to key employment sites and major highways, but has also altered the landscape character of the area, reducing the more rural character that would have been evident to a greater extent historically.

Whilst land to the west of the site does not form part of the development allocation and retains more of an agricultural character, this does include some larger-scale agricultural buildings, such as the substantial agricultural plant. Further to the west, there are more agricultural and commercial sites and a significant solar farm.



Figure 6: Existing residential development and the large agricultural plant.

As referenced above, the landscape character of the site itself is an agricultural field comprising improved grassland. There is denser planting on the boundaries, including hedgerows, trees, and scrub. The southern boundary, in particular, benefits from more mature existing landscaping.

Overall, distant views of the site are in conjunction with the built form of the existing town to the east and large-scale agriculture and other commercial development to the south. The more immediate landscape character is becoming less rural as a result of part of the development allocation already being built out, whilst the site itself comprises agricultural land with little vegetation other than on the boundaries.

3.4. Arboriculture GI Baseline Summary

As above, the site is principally made up of agricultural land / improved grassland. As such, the presence of trees is limited to the site boundaries, and there is a significant opportunity for arboricultural enhancement on the site itself.

An arboricultural assessment has been undertaken, with the vast majority of trees or groups of trees being categorised as Category U or C - these being trees that cannot realistically be retained or of low quality with relatively low life expectancies. Category A trees are those of the highest quality with the longest life expectancies, but no trees or groups of trees on the site were classified as Category A. Six trees were categorised as Category B, meaning they are of moderate quality and have a life expectancy of at least 20 years. The Category B trees are principally the oak trees on the southern boundary, except for a sycamore tree towards the north west. As above, some of the broad-leaved trees have roosting potential for bats.

In short, tree cover is limited to the site boundaries, with the highest quality trees being located on the southern boundary. This limited baseline gives a significant opportunity to enhance green infrastructure as part of the proposed development.

3.5. SuDS GI Baseline Summary

As the site is undeveloped agricultural land, the formal management of water within the site is limited to natural run-off and infiltration, with no formal SuDS currently present. Wet ditches make up small parts of the western and southern boundary hedgerows. There is a further ditch to the east, but this is newly created in association with a newly planted hedge and is understood to be dry. Owing to the topography of the site, the southern ditch receives water run-off from the agricultural land, and it comprises a relatively shallow watercourse with moderate flow and a channel substrate dominated by gravel and occasional leaf litter.

Overall, formal SuDS do not contribute to the site's green infrastructure, and there is therefore a significant opportunity for betterment through the proposed development.

4. Green Infrastructure Compliance Assessment

This section will demonstrate how the proposed development has followed the step-wise approach and provides a net gain in biodiversity. It will use the DECCA Framework as well as demonstrate compliance with Building With Nature Standards.

4.1. Step-Wise Approach summary

The following is a summary of how the step-wise approach has been carried out as part of the proposed development schemes design, including its implementation.

Step	Development Measures
Avoidance	<p>Notwithstanding the relatively low ecological baseline of the site itself, the design process has sought to avoid or minimise habitat and green infrastructure loss as far as possible. The most biodiverse area of the site is the southern boundary, with the proposed landscape scheme seeking to retain hedgerows and the Category B oak trees in this area. In addition, the Category B sycamore tree to the north west is also to be retained. No built development is proposed within the root protection areas to ensure any adverse impacts are avoided. Notably, one of the trees to be retained supports a potential bat roosting feature.</p> <p>In addition, the ecological appraisal recommends the retention of 482sqm of native hedgerow along the site boundaries as well as the 70m of more recently planted hedgerows towards the eastern boundaries. Overall, impacts upon the most species rich habitat on site will be avoided through the design.</p>
Minimisation	<p>As above, the scheme has sought to avoid and minimise habitat and green infrastructure loss from the outset. The avoidance measures discussed above will minimise the impacts on the site as a whole. In addition, a number of sensitive working measures are proposed to minimise impacts. These include the control of working hours,</p>

Step	Development Measures
	<p>minimising noise and vibration, dust suppression, and a sensitive lighting scheme. The ecological appraisal recommends the fencing off of exclusion zones in order to further protect green infrastructure. Finally, pre-work checks and informed timings of construction will also minimise any adverse impacts.</p> <p>Much of the above can be secured from a Construction Environmental Management Plan which can also secure appropriate pollution control measures in order to protect water quality at the River Twyi SAC/SSSI. The use of SuDS to manage water run-off will further minimise any impacts by ensuring water quality is improved or maintained prior to discharge.</p>
Mitigation / Replacement	<p>Whilst the design seeks to avoid and minimise habitat or green infrastructure loss, some mitigation measures are also recommended to ensure net benefits. Proposed mitigation measures include significant on-site tree planting with approximately 145 new trees proposed throughout the scheme, significant areas of proposed hedgerow and other planting such as an integrated SuDS feature towards the southern boundary. The boundaries are strengthened through hedge planting with the interrogated SuDS feature also enhancing the more biodiverse area to the south. A mix of planting throughout the site, not just towards the boundaries, will enhance diversity and connectivity to create a more species-rich site. Bat and bird boxes are recommended as well as reptile and amphibian hibernacula and an invertebrate refuge. Alongside the creation of new habitats, existing habitats will be maintained and the non-native species removed to further mitigate impacts and ultimately enhance the green infrastructure of the site. Subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment, further mitigation can be provided for any potential impacts to the River Twyi.</p>
Compensation on / off site	Given the relatively low baseline of the site, the design approach

Step	Development Measures
	<p>which has sought to avoid and minimise impacts as well as the suite of proposed mitigation measures, it is not expected that compensation measures will be required. However, this is subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment in relation to the River Twyi. It is expected that any impacts could be mitigated through the scheme but compensation could be provided if necessary.</p>

Net Benefit of Biodiversity

Using the DECCA framework, measures that have been proposed to ensure a net benefit in biodiversity are outlined in the table below. It is considered that the net benefits set out here also demonstrate ecosystem resilience.

DECCA	Assessment
Diversity	<p>The more habitat-rich areas of the existing site are largely limited to the hedgerows on the site boundaries, particularly the southern boundary. The introduction of a more diverse planting scheme, including native hedgerows, tree planting, shrub mix, ornamental planting, and an integrated SuDS feature, will significantly enhance the diversity of the site's habitat and biodiversity. This diversity can be further enhanced through the removal of the invasive non-native species to give other species a better opportunity to succeed on the site. The baseline reports found that there were several species recorded in the vicinity of the site, but no evidence of species on the site itself. As such, the mitigation and enhancement measures proposed are considered to have significant potential to diversify the site's biodiversity.</p>
Extent	<p>As above, the more species-rich areas of the site, as it exists, are located towards the boundaries. As such, the introduction of planting throughout the site has the potential to significantly improve the extent of the habitat on-site. Any tree loss will be replaced at the</p>

	<p>required 3:1 ratio. New habitats such as the integrated SuDS feature, the proposed reptile and amphibian hibernacula, and the proposed invertebrate refuge also give great opportunity to improve the extent of biodiversity on-site.</p>
Condition	<p>The current site is an agricultural field with habitats that are unmanaged and uncontrolled. The approval of planning permission and associated conditions will give opportunities to control the condition of the proposed green infrastructure, where this is not currently possible. The suite of mitigation measures and increased planting are expected to improve the overall condition of the site, as will the removal of non-native invasive species.</p>
Connectivity	<p>It is considered that connectivity can be greatly improved through the proposals. The proposed landscaping plan includes a mix of planting throughout the site, whereas presently the highest quality habitat is contained within the boundaries. The proposal will therefore result in increased opportunities for species to pass through the site and beyond. Several species records were noted in proximity to the site, with little evidence of species on the site itself, so it is considered that this could be greatly improved through the proposed scheme, which offers much improved connectivity. Similarly, there are a number of designated sites in relative proximity to the site that could benefit from the on-site improvements proposed.</p>
Adaptability	<p>Overall, it has been demonstrated that the proposals will result in a net benefit in biodiversity through the sensitive design approach and suite of mitigation measures proposed. This will improve the diversity, extent, condition, and connectivity of on-site habitat and ultimately make the site more adaptable and resilient.</p>

Long-term Management Summary

The long-term management of these enhancements are set out below, further demonstrating ecosystem resilience. For further detail in terms of the long term management of these features, please refer to the accompanying LEMP document.

Feature	Management
Tree planting	<p>The care and pruning of trees as required, with the replacement of specimens that fail to become established, or which already exist and are prominent or important to ecology in the site, and die.</p> <p>To ensure no disturbance or harm to nesting birds, all works are to take place outside the bird nesting season, or under suitable ecological supervision, and where it is established that no active nests are present.</p> <p>To ensure no disturbance or harm to bats - all works to take place only on limbs or trees without suitable features for roosting bats. Where these are present or potentially present, suitable ecological advice should be sought before any works.</p>
Retained and proposed hedgerows	<p>With regard to the new or existing planting, to secure the establishment and health of new species for the first 5 years.</p> <p>Thereafter, the pruning of the hedgerow as required, outside bird nesting season. Ideally, the periodic laying of hedgerow, or otherwise dead-hedging any removed material, to create a variable structure.</p>
Ornamental planting	<p>Annual removal of dead vegetation as necessary, and selective removal or other management (e.g. aggressive pruning, selective use of systemic herbicide) of any species which become overdominant or spreading.</p>

Bat and Bird Boxes	Boxes will need to be replaced or maintained with similar and suitable replacements as soon as necessary.
Reptile and amphibian hibernaculum	Will need to be monitored, maintained and replaced with a suitable replacement if necessary.
Invertebrate refuge	Will need to be monitored, maintained and replaced with a suitable replacement if necessary.
SuDS	The application is supported by a Drainage Strategy and detailed SuDS drawings. There will be a need to check and maintain pipework, paving, cellular storage, rain gardens and filters drains at regular intervals to ensure the SuDS remains fully operational for its lifetime.

4.2. Building with Nature Standards

The table below sets out how the proposed development will comply with Building with Nature Standards.

Standard	Assessment	Outcome
Core Standards		
Standard 1 Optimises Multifunctionality and Connectivity	Multifunctionality has been extensively considered in this scheme. This has included an integration of naturalistic and human elements where possible. The benefits to site and local area connectivity for nature are significant, while the connectivity benefits for people have also been enhanced through the provision of amenity spaces and integrated biodiversity habitats such as the SuDS feature and significant level of proposed tree planting.	A well-connected landscape for people and protected species through the provision of tree-lined thoroughfares and native planting throughout. The enhancement of landscape features, as well as the incorporation of the new planting, creates a better connected space.

Standard	Assessment	Outcome
Standard 2 Positively Responds to the Climate Emergency	The proposed GI enhances the baseline condition through new and wider habitat creation. This includes native species renowned for their high carbon capture properties such as oak trees and species with other benefits such as Male Fern as part of the rain garden mix. The proposed mix of native species is also considered to benefit connectivity as referenced above as well as noise reduction.	A more diverse and varied landscape compared with existing and which has aspirations for longevity. The proposed scheme incorporates SuDS to assist with water runoff capture and pollution prevention.
Standard 3 Maximises Environmental Net Gains	The diverse and varied landscape proposal has been influenced by existing features of value to maximise environmental benefits through retaining existing features such as native hedgerow and higher quality trees.	New planting and mitigation measures are expected to offset any habitat removal necessitated by the development, as well as any other potential adverse impacts. Other improvements as a result of the development include the removal of non-native species.
Standard 4 Champions a Context Driven Approach	The proposed GI approach has been influenced by the existing context from the outset, including the higher category trees to the south and more species-rich areas, while the new planting will set a high standard for GI in future development in the wider locality.	The proposed development has sensitively responded to the constraints and opportunities for tree and habitat value within and adjacent to the site.

Standard	Assessment	Outcome
Standard 5 Creates Distinctive Places	The consideration of GI enhancement has been central to the design process. The overall approach of hard and soft landscape, combined with materials and boundary treatment, contributes to creating a unique and attractive yet functional place. A key feature of this are the proposed open spaces towards the northern and southern boundaries.	The proposal increases and enhances landscape connectivity in the locality, bringing vitality to the site and wider area.
Standard 6 Secures Effective Place-keeping	The scheme landscape design aims to minimise the need for intervention in terms of management and maintenance with a long term strategy approach set out within this Statement. A LEMP has also been submitted as part of the application submission.	The use of native species results in management requiring minimal intervention and thus allowing native species to flourish. The LPA may choose to implement conditions, such as for Construction Management Plans and landscaping management, to further control and ensure the long-term management of the scheme where necessary.
Wellbeing Standards		
Standard 7 Brings Nature Closer to People	The proposed landscape design enriches the site by using integrated planting throughout, such as tree-lined	The proposed dwellings are integrated with green infrastructure in addition to broader

Standard	Assessment	Outcome
	streets and integrated drainage proposals.	habitat creation closer to the boundaries, so users of the site will be brought closer to nature.
Standard 8 Supports Equitable and Inclusive Places	The site is an agricultural field, although public rights of way are retained. The proposed Public Open Space has been designed for equitable and inclusive use.	Prospective occupants of the scheme will benefit from integrated green infrastructure and accessibility measures that will meet national building control standards. Other individuals will benefit from the retention of public rights of way.
Water Standards		
Standard 9 Delivers Climate Resilient Water Management	The proposed development will improve the management of surface water through the proposed SuDS measures.	SuDS includes the creation and inclusion of planted rain gardens to allow for improved water quality management and ecological resilience.
Standard 10 Brings Water Closer to People	The SuDS features will be viewable at areas within the site, comprising part of the overall green infrastructure. Proposed SuDS include rain gardens, swales and attenuation basins.	The creation and inclusion of integrated SuDS allows for the new incorporation of visibly enhanced landscape features into the site.
Wildlife Standards		

Standard	Assessment	Outcome
Standard 11 Delivers Wildlife Enhancement	The scheme has followed the mitigation hierarchy approach to habitat and species protection and creation. Protected and/or notable species will be protected during the works through precautionary working methods, and where impacts are unavoidable, both mitigation and enhancement measures in line with legislative and policy requirements will be delivered.	A number of habitat and species-based enhancements have been included within the proposals. All habitats and mitigation measures will be maintained; this can be secured through planning conditions where necessary.
Standard 12 Underpins Nature's Recovery	High-value trees will be retained, and higher-value existing habitats will be protected during the construction and operational phases of the development. Enhancements are proposed to further contribute to nature recovery.	New planting across the site will enhance the connectivity between on-site habitats, as well as enhance the resilience of existing off-site habitats. This will contribute to meeting wider nature recovery goals.

4.3. Compliance with Policy

Given the findings set out in the above tables, it has been demonstrated that national planning policy, which requires adherence to the step-wise approach, DECCA framework, and demonstrating a net gain in biodiversity, has been complied with.

In doing so, it has been demonstrated that designated sites and biodiversity will be protected through the provision of green infrastructure in accordance with local strategic policies in both the current and emerging Local Development Plan. The emerging LDP has a greater emphasis on green infrastructure and seeks integrated green and blue infrastructure, retention and enhancement of existing features, and the provision of a biodiversity net gain. It

is also considered that the above tables have demonstrated compliance with these more specific emerging policies principally through the integrated SuDS features, habitat enhancement to the southern boundary, and an enhanced landscaping scheme. **Overall, both the current and emerging LDPs are considered to be satisfied.**

5. Conclusion

This GI Statement is considered to be proportionate to the scale and type of development proposed. It has outlined the green infrastructure baselines for the site and followed the Step-wise Approach and DECCA Framework in order to ultimately demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. It has also demonstrated compliance with the Building with Nature Standards.

Overall, the development is considered to be appropriate in GI terms and complies with both the requirements of PPW and local policies.