

CAREDIG
1-12 TRAHERNE COURT

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE & BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT STATEMENT (V2)

Introduction

This Statement has been prepared in support of a planning application by Caredig for the installation of External Wall Insulation (EWI) and associated works at the above properties.

Context

Since November 2023, Welsh Government has required that all planning applications be supported by a Green Infrastructure Statement ("GIS").

Chapter 6, Paragraph 6.2.1 of Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, February 2024) describes Green Infrastructure as:

"...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, 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."

Paragraph 6.2.4 outlines that the planning system must maximise its contribution to the protection and provision of green infrastructure assets and networks as part of meeting society's wider social and economic objectives and the needs of local communities.

Local authorities are required to prepare a Green Infrastructure Assessment ("GIA") as a resource for biodiversity, ecosystem resilience and ecosystem service provision.

In terms of applications for new development, Paragraph 6.2.11 states:

"The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes. "

It continues at 6.2.12:

*“ 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.** (Our emphasis). 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.”*

Examples of how GI may be incorporated are given in Paragraph 6.2.13:

“There are multiple ways of incorporating green infrastructure, depending on the needs and opportunities a site presents, and the green infrastructure assessment should be referred to, as appropriate, in order to ascertain local priorities. Landscaping, green roofs, grass verges, sustainable drainage and gardens are examples of individual design measures that can have wider cumulative benefits, particularly in relation to biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems as well as in securing the other desired environmental qualities of places.”

Neath Port Talbot CBC has not to-date prepared a GIA.

Assessment

Planning Policy Wales requires that all proposals are assessed against the Step-Wise Approach. Figure 12 summarises it as follows:



The application proposal does not propose new built development but alters existing blocks of flats.

The site is not immediately situated in a location of any recognised biodiversity or landscape value and the proposal will not affect any interests of biodiversity value.

Within the context of the above, the proposal will not of itself result in any material change to biodiversity value or resilience. As such, the proposal complies with Stage 1 of the Step-Wise Approach.

The next step is to consider the potential for biodiversity enhancement.

Absent a GIA for this locality, the risks to biodiversity resilience are not documented.

Insofar as the site does not include any structures, the opportunity for enhancement is limited to the provision of bat and bird boxes on the gable ends of the proposed buildings and the provision of hedging

To enhance the site for bats, two bat boxes (one Schwegler 2F and one Schwegler 2FN or similar bat boxes) will be installed on the southeast elevations of Numbers 1-4 and 5-8 respectively, facing southwards at a height of 3-5m above ground level close to the roof apex.



Single bird boxes will be sited at a similar height on the northwest elevation of blocks 1-4 and 8-12.

Conclusions

This Statement has demonstrated that the applicant has considered the effect of this proposal on biodiversity and green infrastructure and proposed a proportionate response which will deliver a net biodiversity benefit, in line with national and local planning policy.