

Princess Royal Theatre and Civic Square

Green Infrastructure Statement

21/10/24



theurbanists

Prepared by: The Urbanists Ltd

Address: The Urbanists, The Creative Quarter, 8A Morgan Arcade, Cardiff, CF10 1AF

On behalf of: Morgan Sindall Construction, for Neath Port Talbot Council

Email: Planning[@theurbanists.net](mailto:Planning@theurbanists.net)

Website: www.theurbanists.net

Issue date	21/10/24
Status	Final
Revision	-
Author	AT
Checked by	LH
Reference	2264-URB-XX-XX-RP-PL-XX-001

All plans within this document are reproduced from Ordnance Survey with permission of the controller of His Majesty's Stationery Office (C) Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution/ civil proceedings. Licence No 100054593.

Contents

1. Introduction and Background	1
2. Policy and Legislative Context	2
2.1. Legislation	2
2.2. National and Local Policy	3
2.3. Frameworks, Approaches, and Best Practice Guidance	8
3. Site Baselines	12
3.1. Local GI Policy and Guidance	12
3.2. Ecological Summary	13
3.3. Landscape GI Summary	13
3.4. Arboricultural GI Summary	14
4. Proposed Scheme of Development	14
4.1. Mitigation Hierarchy	15
4.2. Enhancements	15
4.3. Long-Term Management Plan	17
4.4. Ecosystem Services	18
5. Assessment	19
5.1. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan and SPG	19
5.2. Legislative and policy consideration	20
6. Conclusion	20

1. Introduction and Background

This Green Infrastructure (GI) Statement is prepared by The Urbanists Ltd for Morgan Sindall Construction, on behalf of Neath Port Talbot Council. It accompanies the full planning application for the proposed development comprising an extension to the existing theatre and further public realm improvements.

The purpose of a GI Statement ('the Statement') is to demonstrate how GI has been incorporated within the proposed development to provide; a positive multi-functional outcome which is appropriate to the site in question, and must also demonstrate how the Step-wise approach has been applied.

This demonstration of the above outcomes, their appropriateness, and adherence to required processes, means that this statement will illustrate how GI has been effectively considered throughout the design of the scheme. This consideration, and statement to provide evidence of it, will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed, as required.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 provides the key legislative and national planning policy context for GI Statements. Local planning policy and guidance from Neath Port Talbot Council provides no specific GI Assessment but does provide additional policy context and some reference resources to be considered and/or complied with.

The key outcomes of the GI considerations are to be reviewed with regard to three main areas of concern, relating to the ecosystem concepts of: biodiversity value, ecosystem resilience, and ecosystem services.

As PPW Edition 12 sets out:

"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."

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

- Noise Assessment
- Energy/ Sustainability Statement
- Phase 1 Site Investigation
- Phase 2 Site Investigation Report
- Archaeology Desktop Report
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
- Bat Surveys
- Flood Consequences Assessment
- Tree Survey, Arboricultural Impact Assessment & Tree Protection Plan

2. Policy and Legislative Context

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

2.1. Legislation

2.1.1. 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

2.2.1. Planning Policy Wales, Edition 12

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is the principal planning policy document of the Welsh Government and informs all planning decisions and appeals. The current version of which is PPW Edition 12.

Chapter 6 of PPW 12 explains that a GI Statement should be submitted with all planning applications, and also explains the general standards that any statement should seek to meet.

It 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).

It also sets out how proposed development should be assessed within, or potentially impacting upon, designated sites, including non-statutory designated sites. It introduces the ‘Step-wise approach’ which is expected to be applied to such consideration and

therefore should be evidenced in any GI statement. This approach regards the resilience of ecosystems (ER) and therefore their ability to continue to deliver value from GI, when under pressure or differing demand.

It explains that, in terms of protection for non-statutory designated sites, which includes Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SINCs), development can be appropriate where adherence to the Step-wise approach is demonstrated (including a net benefit for biodiversity) and there is no reduction in overall conservation value of the designated area or feature.

The PPW Chapter 6 update also covers trees, woodland, and hedgerows, and sets out the expectations to retain and protect such assets, where they are capable of making a significant contribution to an area. Where loss occurs, replacement will be required in line with the standards and ratios set out, and any permanent removal is only appropriate where there would be significant and clearly defined public benefit. Compensatory planting is required to be proportionate to the proposed loss as identified through an assessment of green infrastructure value by way of three specific aspects of biodiversity, landscape (amenity) and carbon capture values.

2.2.2. Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

Future Wales (FW) - 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 wellbeing of communities.

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.

Given that Future Wales strategy and national priorities can be in part addressed through Green Infrastructure, any GI Statement would be expected to align with those and support the delivery of it, where possible.

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

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 is 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.

2.2.4. Neath Port Talbot Adopted Local Development Plan 2011-2026 - Adopted January 2016

Local policies further set out how the national policy and legislative materials considerations should be interpreted and applied in a local context, and are also a material consideration in any planning application decision.

Policy SP1 - Climate Change

Sets out how development will be managed to address the causes and consequences of climate change, including through managing the pattern of development to promote sustainable travel patterns, reduce dependence on the car, and minimise flood risk and the fragmentation of habitats.

SP2 - Health

Seeks to improve health outcomes through a range of measures, including the co-location of jobs and facilities, and the provision of employment opportunities.

SC1 - Settlement Limits

Governs the type of development that can take place within and outside of settlement limits.

SP5 - Development in the Coastal Corridor Strategy Area

Outlines the growth strategy for the Coastal Corridor, including the promotion of mixed-use regeneration in Port Talbot.

OS2 - Protection of Existing Open Space

Seeks the protection of existing open space.

R2 - Proposals within Retail Centres

Permits proposals for retail, and community and leisure uses in retail centres, provided that they integrate with and strengthen the layout, retail character and pedestrian flows of the centre; do not prejudice the use of the upper floors; and maintain a vibrant and attractive street frontage. Ground floor uses other than retail (Use Class A1) will only be permitted where they are for financial and professional services (A2), or food and drink (A3) uses.

EN7 - Important Natural Features

Seeks to manage the impact of development on important natural features such as trees and watercourses, with adverse impacts only permitted where full account has been taken of the features and tier value, retention and protection sought and where loss is unavoidable, mitigation measures put in place.

SP16 - Environmental Protection and EN8: Pollution and Land Stability

Seek the protection and where feasible improvement of air, water and ground quality, with proposals likely to have an unacceptable impact on health, biodiversity or local amenity not permitted.

W3 - Waste Management in New Development

Seeks provision for the design, layout, storage and management of waste generated by new development.

TR2 - Design and Access of New Development

Sets out that development will only be permitted where the use of the highway network is not compromised, appropriate levels of parking and cycling facilities are provided,

safe access and servicing is maintained and development is accessible by a range of means.

SP21 - Built Environment and Historic Heritage

Seeks the conservation and enhancement of built environment heritage through encouraging high quality design, safeguarding features of historic and cultural importance.

BE1 - Design

Sets out a series of design criteria proposals are expected to follow, relating to contextual design, materials, safety, integrated transport, efficient use of resources, limiting run-off and inclusive access.

M1 - Development in Mineral Safeguarding Areas

Proposals within Mineral Safeguarding Areas will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that: the mineral is no longer of any value, it can be extracted satisfactorily prior to the development taking place, there is an overriding need for the development, or the scale and location of the development would have no significant impact on the resource.

2.2.5. Neath Port Talbot Council Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance - Biodiversity and Geodiversity

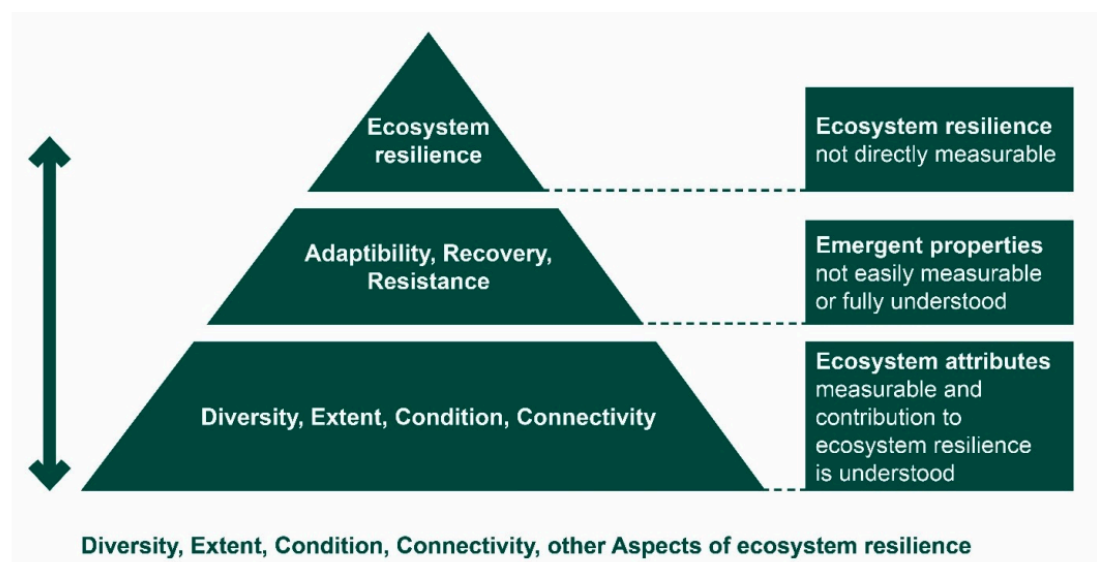
This SPG provides information and guidance setting out the expectations on all development proposals to protect, conserve, enhance and manage important habitats, species and sites of geological interest. Within the document is a clear introduction and background on relevant biodiversity and geodiversity commitments, setting the baseline to which planning applications are considered. Within the SPG is a section on Green Infrastructure stating that geodiversity features are considered 'green infrastructure assets' that otherwise would need to be hard engineered, enhancing the GI opportunities this site has for the development proposal.

2.3. Frameworks, Approaches, and Best Practice Guidance

2.3.1. DECCA Framework and Ecosystem Resilience

This DECCA framework (see Figure 3 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 combined property resulting from the other four attributes (see Figure 3 below), and which together decide the level of ecosystem resilience..

Figure 3: Extract from Natural Resource Wales - *Ecosystem Resilience in a Nutshell 1: What is ecosystem resilience?*¹



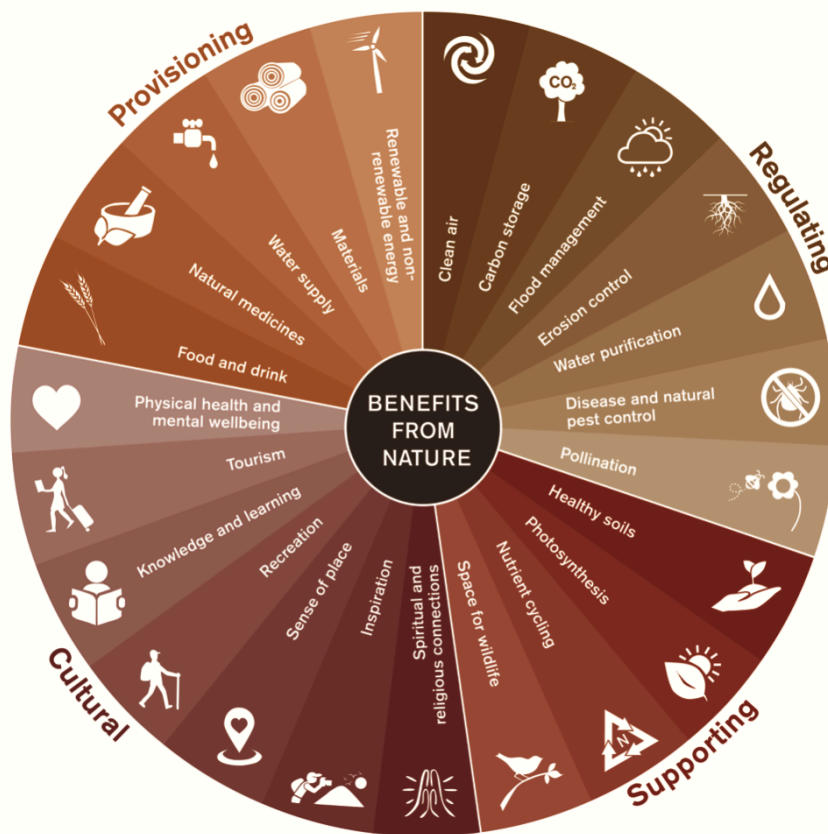
ER is not itself directly measurable because of the extremely large number of influencing factors. The DECCA framework is a useful 'proxy method' of feasible and viable assessment of ER, using just a few measurable attributes, to enable us to approximately consider it more easily in practice.

¹<https://cdn.cyfoethnaturiol.cymru/media/696279/ecosystem-resilience-in-a-nutshell-1-what-is-ecosystem-resilience.pdf>

2.3.2. Ecosystem Services Framework

Ecosystem Services (ES) are a framework which can be utilised as an effective means by which to understand the flow of benefits from Green Infrastructure to people, society and the economy. It can be used to understand and directly consider what forms of GI are valuable to people and communities. These services add a further layer to the understanding of the multi-functionality of GI, beyond Biodiversity benefits and Ecosystem Resilience functions. ES is therefore a more optional consideration when deciding how to maximise benefits beyond the required benefits and enhancements required by PPW.

We experience ES as Cultural, Regulating, Provisioning, and Supporting services; as a common, and widely accepted, standard of division (see Figure 4 below). Cultural services are non-material benefits to society that help deliver cultural advancement. Regulating services are those that help moderate natural phenomena to the benefit of people. Provisioning services are those that deliver a material benefit to people, via the extraction of resources. Finally, Supporting services are those that ensure the continued production and maintenance of those other services; these can be thought of as those services which deliver ER.

Figure 4: Ecosystem Services (source: Nature Scot)

2.3.3. Biodiversity, Ecosystem Resilience, and Ecosystem Services

As the Natural Resource Wales 'State of Natural Resources Report (SoNRR)'² sets out, ER is important for the sustainability of ES. Both concepts are inherently linked to the structure of an ecosystem (its Processes and resultant Functions), with ER being an important emergent property of an ecosystem's structure, and ES being a resultant (beneficial) outcome.

Ecosystems are fundamentally formed of biotic (animals and plants, etc.) and abiotic components (soil, rock, rivers, climate, etc.). Both of these influence the processes and functions, and these in turn influence resultant ER and realised ES benefits.

Biodiversity, as a manifestation of biotic components of an ecosystem, is largely more at risk of development impacts, than the abiotic components (although these are

² <https://naturalresources.wales/media/679405/chapter-4-resilience-final-for-publication.pdf>

sometimes important). This is why a Net Benefit for Biodiversity is so important to achieve.

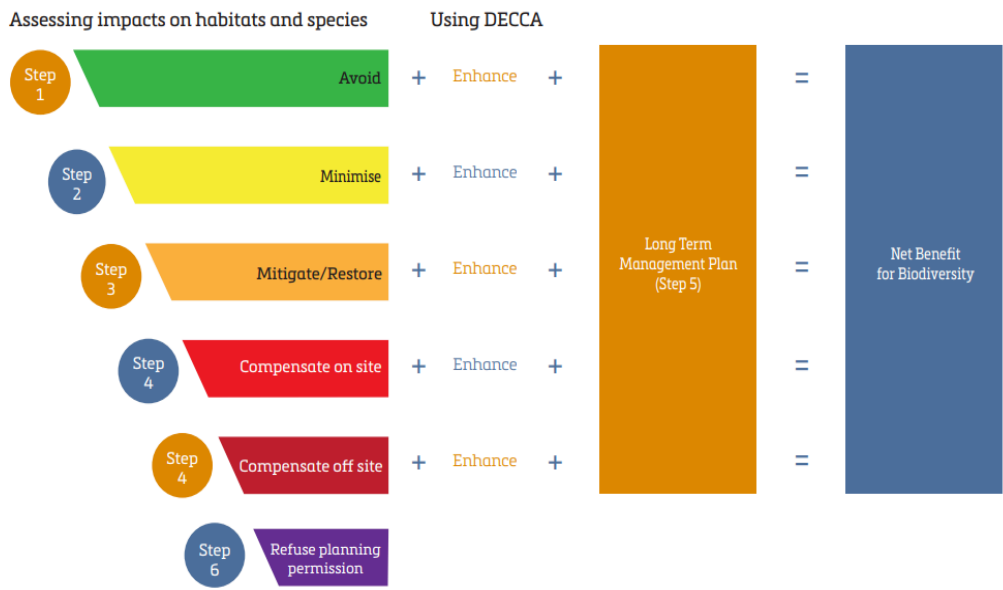
Under the Environment (Wales) Act, public bodies should seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems. Multifunctional GI is set out as a means to maximise benefits from those aims, and therefore ES becomes important. By the Planning Policy Wales Ed. 12 Chapter 6 content, the specifics of a GI approach are further prescribed, and the components of a nature-based approach are established.

2.3.4. Step-wise approach

PPW 12 Chapter 6 requires the Step-wise approach to be demonstrated within proposed development designs. This approach sets out the procedure of initially following the 'Mitigation hierarchy' stages, to sequentially (as required): avoid, minimise, or mitigate/restore impact to habitats and species, or compensate on-site and as a last resort compensate off-site. At each of these stages, as relevant, proportional enhancement should be proposed that demonstrates the DECC[A] attributes. A long-term management strategy is additionally required, that would ensure those measures proposed are deliverable; and would actually result in the level of Net Benefit for Biodiversity (NBB), and ER attributes, proposed; and any resultant ES benefits gained.

Should the Mitigation hierarchy not be possible to follow (i.e. no stages of the hierarchy are possible) then planning permission should be refused. Should suitable enhancements relative to each stage of the hierarchy, and/or no suitable long-term management plan possible, then a NBB is unlikely to be possible, and planning permission is again likely to be refused.

Figure 5: Step-Wise Approach - Extract from PPW Chapter 6.



3. Site Baselines

This baseline consideration sets out in summary the existing conditions of the proposed development site, and wider context, with regard to habitats and/or species, GI features, and various initial GI values. It also considers informative documents and other information and summarises their influence on the design and overall consideration in later sections of this statement.

3.1. Local GI Policy and Guidance

Local Policy and Guidance sets out the site as an area of opportunity for enhancing habitat connectivity given this, the proposed design would be considered highly desirable in the context of planning policy and national guidance. The regeneration of the Princess Royal Theatre and Civic Square would bring much needed revitalisation to Port Talbot town centre. The location and features of the development would represent the efficient use of land and the proposed design will deliver a high-quality development that demonstrates placemaking in practice and delivers sustainable outcomes.

3.2. Ecological Summary

The existing site comprises amenity spaces, parking areas, and part of the local civic centre building which includes the Princess Royal Theatre. As such, there is limited ecological value, with only minimal potential habitat that could support wildlife.

Mainly the amenity spaces include areas of closely mown amenity grassland areas, and amenity planting within raised and non-raised beds. While those amenity areas may provide some opportunities for invertebrates and species that forage on them, the large areas of inverting hardstanding and the human activity present precludes the regular presence of most wildlife. The building itself may provide some opportunities for birds which could roost on areas of the roof, although none have been noted. The same is true of roosting bats which were not found by surveys of the building. The site does lay nearby adjacent to the river Afan, which increases its potential to be used by wildlife utilising that river corridor, but it is not considered this connection is significant. Specific bat surveys support the conclusion that the site is not of any significance, being used by few bats for occasional foraging only. Trees present may offer some roosting potential for birds, but little value otherwise, due to their isolation, as well as existing lighting and noise impacts.

3.3. Landscape GI Summary

The site supports some green spaces, and adjacent seating is well utilised by people visiting or working in the area, albeit in limited amounts of time and not consistently. The green aspects of the site are currently limited, and largely present in discrete blocks often comprising raised planters, or small patches of closely mown amenity grassland. The surrounding environments do have some similar green elements, mostly comprising amenity grassland areas and amenity trees, between hardstanding. Overall the site does not create usable green spaces, with those present mainly being experienced by those walking across hardstanding areas and routes, between green spaces. Trees present do produce some shade, and help create some height to greenery, also softening the appearance of adjacent buildings, but are limited in number. The ecosystem service values of the green spaces are generally very limited,

associated with some regulation of rainfall, and production of some limited cultural services the spaces provide by greening an otherwise hard landscape.

3.4. Arboricultural GI Summary

The area of civic square does include a number of trees which perform some minimal ecological function, but slightly more ecosystem services through their provision of shade. The effect of this is mainly at the edges of the square, and doesn't provide significant benefits. The arboricultural value of trees, in accordance with BS 5837:2012, is generally low Category C value, with some Category B and A trees present also.

4. Proposed Scheme of Development

The proposals will see a combination of public realm enhancements and architectural interventions to upgrade this site, including:

- Landscaping works to the civic square, comprising resurfacing, extensive landscape planting and re-profiling that creates play and relaxation features, sustainable urban drainage features, enhanced water feature to create interactive play, new amphitheatre for cultural events and activities, active travel infrastructure and space for new 'pop up' commercial uses.
- Extensions to the Theatre and Civic Centre, to provide a rejuvenated and modernised theatre performance space, enhanced contemporary elevations and new gateway entrance into the theatre.

The potential for impacts as well as contributions to the betterment of Green Infrastructure have been considered throughout the design development, and these are further explained below.

4.1. Mitigation Hierarchy

The proposed development has had consideration of the Mitigation hierarchy throughout the design process, and additional consideration had to integrate wider GI benefits in the context of a theatre.

Avoidance	Given the limited areas of green space, but the comprehensive nature of the proposed redevelopment, avoidance of existing trees has been prioritised where possible, given the greater difficulty and time needed to replace their value.
Minimisation	Areas of green spaces to be lost have been balanced against the proposed areas, so that overall areas of green space losses are minimised in any one area of the civic square.
Mitigation	Where there are losses of existing green spaces, these are generally to be replaced by others nearby, and that replacement of a better quality. The layout forming both a mitigation to losses, but also a further enhancement (see ‘Enhancements’ below)
Compensation on / off site	While there is loss of almost all existing green space, as set out before, this area would be replaced. There would be a gain in quality of green space proposed, providing a benefit greater than required for compensation. The usability of this space, and so the ability to gain value for people will be enhanced, but this also alongside the wildlife friendly and climate resilient species proposed to compensate for losses of existing amenity vegetation. Tree planting proposed will more than offset that lost, with at least a ratio of 3:1 replacement planting.

4.2. Enhancements

The proposed development’s enhancements contributing to ecological resilience are reviewed here, by their aspect of the DECCA framework. These are considered with regard to the Mitigation hierarchy consideration of proposed development, as above, and targeting those same habitats and features. Overall the proposed development will affect some loss of amenity habitat, but provide replacement and an enhancement of ecosystem resilience value when considered as a whole.

Diversity	New types of habitat including green roof, raingarden areas, amenity planted beds, and other bulb planted areas will be provided in new locations within the civic square area, and retained amenity grass. This will comprise predominantly native species and some non-native species, and the same will be true for new tree planting. This will provide a range of new opportunities for species likely or potentially within the site, or surrounding area. The non-native species will help ensure that diversity for species but also consistent resilience to climate change is possible.
Extent	The extent of some grassland will be permanently lost, while a gain in the extent of tree cover will be gained. Other more diverse habitats will equally gain in areas, at the expense of less diverse grassland and amenity planted habitats. Overall, the extent of natural habitats will minorly reduce, but the extent of new good quality habitats will increase to produce a benefit.
Condition	By proposing a range of new diverse habitats, the condition of those areas will become improved for wildlife, and ecosystem functions. The condition of retained areas will also be minorly improved, by additional tree planting, or understorey planting of existing trees will help improve the layering of habitats, resulting in improved conditions overall.
Connectivity	The baseline of the site is that connectivity is generally low, and this will largely be unchanged by the proposal. The river adjacent does offer some connectivity potential to wider areas, but not coherently, and the site acts more an an stepping stone of green beyond the rivers banks on the way to other habitats.

4.3. Long-Term Management Plan

Given the baseline condition of the site, and enhancement provided overall, no management to improve existing habitat conditions is considered necessary, as a form of any Mitigation or enhancement. As such, management of proposed habitats is set out in brief in this section, to demonstrate the ability to achieve and maximise the benefits of new habitats, as set out above.

General management will be by way of the following measures:

Proposed Amenity Planting	Management as necessary, ideally to ensure a variety of species and structure. Replacement of any planting as necessary, to ensure good coverage and species diversity. This should not interfere with the function of those areas also acting as raingardens.
Proposed Green Roof	Annual cut after summer, and regular cuts as necessary over winter to reduce more vigorous species.
Proposed Raingarden Beds	Management as necessary to ensure a good diversity and condition, including the maintenance of habitat features to provide other drainage functions. This management supersedes other competing needs.
Bird / Bat Boxes	Annual winter cleaning (if required by box design) and repair / replacement, with regard also to any species which may be protected, and the need for an NRW bat or other licence.
'Bug Hotels' or similar	The annual inspection and repair as necessary.
Proposed Trees	Inspection and pruning as required to ensure good health, and the management of understorey near trunks by hand or left unmanaged to reduce risk of damage. This with regard to the nesting bird season, and any potential for trees to support roosting bats.

4.4. Ecosystem Services

The proposed development plan has set out a series of both ecologically beneficial, but also ecologically functional habitats, and these integrated suitably in the context of the school by providing opportunities for further multifunctionality. The following Ecosystem Services are a result of the proposed scheme, and illustrate an aspect of GI multifunctionality for the site:

Cultural	The new range of planting areas and features as habitats provide improved opportunities for school pupils to learn and play. The proposed landscaping also means that a significant greening of the site with new tree planting will help the school feel more integrated in surrounding nature environments; and associated wellbeing benefits of this.
Regulating	Rain-gardens will manage and filter rainfall from within the site. The minor loss of established trees will reduce some provision of regulating services (soil formation, carbon sequestration, rainfall interceptions and water attenuation, shade and other cooling effects etc.). New tree planting at the boundary of the site, and elsewhere, will further assist in attenuation and treatment of rainfall in the school grounds; as well as capture pollutants. The significant new tree planting will also improve sequestration and store more carbon in both tree masses and in soils, over a moderate time period. All vegetation, but particularly those that cast shade, will provide a further enhancement of climate change resilience, by their cooling effects.
Supporting	The areas of diverse new planting will assist in the formation of top soils in new areas or improved formation in existing areas, and help secure improved nutrient cycling within the site. All proposed landscaping and features for wildlife will provide a habitat benefit for fauna, above that existing baseline condition of the site.
Provisioning	N/A

5. Assessment

This GI Statement has set out a consideration of the site's baseline, how the potential impacts to adjacent areas have been avoided, minimised, mitigated or compensated for, and what enhancements are proposed. Together with management principles, It illustrates how a net benefit for biodiversity (NBB), with increases in ER within the site and wider area, would result from the proposed scheme's implementation. A resultant ES consideration has been carried out in tandem.

The proposed scheme is illustrated with regard to GI in the landscape plans accompanying the planning application, which show the large scale of new tree planting and other planting interventions and other minor changes / features proposed. This provides a comprehensive scheme of enhancement for GI, which suitably compensates for the type of any GI losses.

Given the proposed developments' alignment with national and local policy GI requirements, the proposed development also accords with the UN Global Biodiversity Framework (2022). It meets key target areas: especially relating to reducing threats to biodiversity; but also sustains use and benefits sharing (to meet people's needs), especially in an urban context; and utilises tools and solutions for implementation and mainstreaming an ecocentric approach to proposed development.

5.1. Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan and SPG

Regarding the priorities of the local policies and SPG, the focus on identifying, protecting, and appropriately enhancing Coastal Corridor Strategy Areas (Policy SP5) has been well considered.

Specific considerations of GI has also been had regarding other relevant local policy: outdoor recreation and public space (Policy CRF2), integration of existing GI assets and appropriate proposals within retail centres (Policy R2), the need to have a non-significant effect on any protected designated sites by protection of existing open space (Policy OS2).

As such the proposed GI scheme is considered to accord with the guidance set out within local policy and guidance, and is therefore appropriate.

5.2. Legislative and policy consideration

A suitable NBB, and ER enhancement, have been demonstrated through the application of the step-wise approach.

As part of a wider ES review of the proposed development during the design process, other multiple ES benefits have been ensured. Those ES benefits demonstrate effectively the multifunctionality of the proposed GI (as PPW requires).

A specific consideration has been given as part of the design process to Section 6 species and Section 7 habitats (of the Environment (Wales) Act) that are known to be or may be near the site, and which could have some association with the site and therefore proposed development.

The scheme is therefore evidenced as complying with not only the requirement of PPW Chapter 6 but also other PPW chapters and the FW national policy, Local Policy as well as relevant legislation regarding or associated with aspects of Green Infrastructure. The proposed development also accords with the statutory duties of a local planning authority, with regard to Environment (Wales) Act 2016. A planning decision can therefore be positively made with regard to these considerations.

6. Conclusion

This GI Statement is considered to be proportionate to the proposed development and the comprehensive scheme of overall enhancement which is proposed. The statement sets out the site's baseline, the predicted impacts from the proposal and how these are managed, and examines these via the mechanism of the step-wise approach, DECCA and ES frameworks. It also shows how the scheme complies with the relevant local policy and, of course, PPW Ed. 12. The scheme is considered to be an appropriate design, regarding GI, in the context of the site and wider area of Outline development and nearby/adjacent habitats of importance, and wider GI networks.