



# **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT**

**QUEENS COURT FLATS, VICTORIA ROAD, ABERAVON, SA12 6AU**

**PROPOSED JULIET BALCONIES, REPLACEMENT FENESTRATION, EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION & RENDER**

**OCTOBER 2024**

**OUR REF: 24/968**

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## **CONTENTS**

|                                               |   |
|-----------------------------------------------|---|
| Foreword                                      | 2 |
| Introduction                                  | 3 |
| Biodiversity & Development                    | 4 |
| Green Infrastructure Strategy                 | 5 |
| Proportionality                               | 6 |
| Undertaking a Green Infrastructure Assessment | 7 |
| Proposed Ecology Enhancement Measures         | 8 |
| Conclusion                                    | 9 |
| NRW Emergency Contact Details                 | 9 |

## **FOREWORD**

### **Site Address:**

Queens Coirt  
Victoria Road  
Aberavon  
SA12 6AU

### **Grid Reference:**

SS749892  
EASTING: 274902 / NORTHING: 189239

### **Listing / Designations:**

The property/site is not a Listed Building nor located within a Conservation Area.

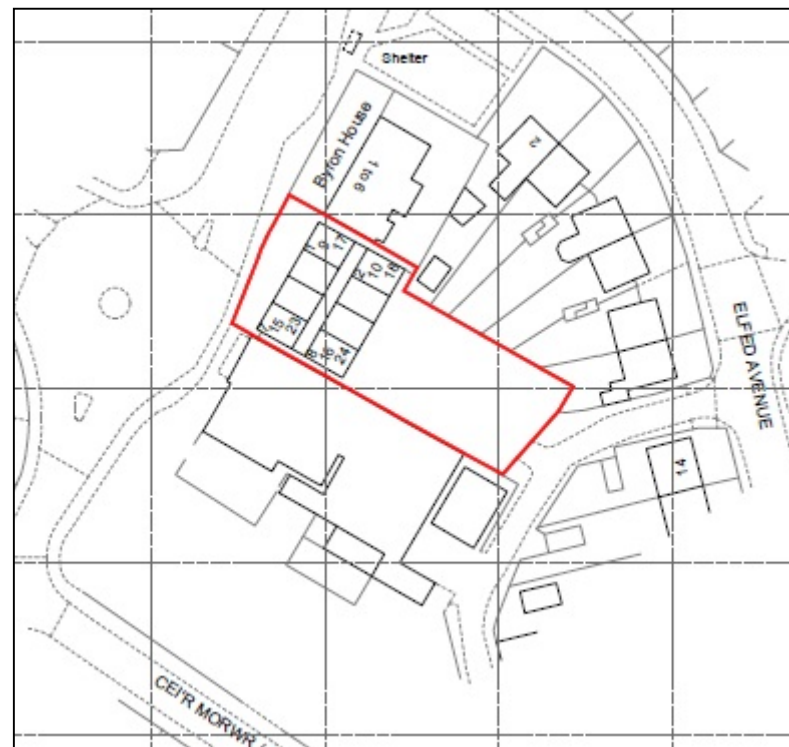
### **Application:**

This document has been produced on behalf of the applicant, Lifestyle Dimensions Ltd., to support a planning application to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to install Juliet balconies, new windows/doors, external wall insulation and external render to the existing flats building.

It is to be read in conjunction with the associated information and drawings pertaining to the scheme, as submitted as part of the formal planning application.

### **Ownership:**

The property is owned by the applicants, Lifestyle Dimensions Ltd and six other individual owners.



## **INTRODUCTION**

In the interests of biodiversity and to provide a net benefit to biodiversity in accordance with Policy 9 of Future Wales: The National Plan 2040, it is intended to provide ecological enhancing features as part of the development proposals.

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on public bodies to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions, and in so doing, to promote the resilience of ecosystems.

This document has also been produced in reference to the recently published updated Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales which sets out the policies to support 'Distinctive and Natural Places'.

*6.0.1 The Distinctive and Natural Places theme of planning policy topics covers historic environment, landscape, biodiversity and habitats, coastal characteristics, air quality, soundscape, water services, flooding and other environmental (surface and sub-surface) risks.*

The proposed scheme provides a number of Green Infrastructure enhancement opportunities as described in the following sections. The report will provide a brief summary of the design proposals, in relation to the Green Infrastructure, as described in the associated planning submission.

In respect of the current Local Development Plan for the area, the current adopted Development Plan covering the area is the Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP), adopted January 2016, which requires through LDP Policy EN 6 – '*Important Biodiversity and Geodiversity Sites*' that Development proposals that would affect Regionally Important Geodiversity Sites (RIGS), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINCs), sites meeting SINC criteria or sites supporting Local Biodiversity will only be permitted where they conserve and where possible enhance the natural heritage importance of the site.

## **BIODIVERSITY AND DEVELOPMENT**

The councils LDP Policy and subsequent additional documents will seek to ensure that development within the Neath Port Talbot County Borough area maintains and enhances the County's biodiversity and delivers long term ecosystem resilience. This aim is in line with the Council's enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duties under Part 1, Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 (hereafter 'the S6 duty') and the Resilient Wales Goal of the Well Being of Future Generations (WBFG) Act 2015.

The document provides guidance to augment LDP Policy KP16, and provide clarity on the interpretation of those policies, in order to ensure development within Cardiff maintains and enhances the County's biodiversity and delivers long term ecosystem resilience. This aligns with the Council's duties under s6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Resilient Wales Goal of the Well Being of Future Generations Act 2015, and is consistent with National Development Plan (Future Wales) Policy.

### **The S6 duty**

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets out the requirement for the sustainable management of natural resources. It includes (Part 1 section 6) a new Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty (strengthening the NERC Act duty). The duty requires that public authorities, including local councils;

*'...must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems.'*

## **GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY**

Planning Policy Wales - Chapter 6: 6.2.1 *Green infrastructure is 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.... at a local scale, it might comprise parks, fields, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens. At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks.*

Central principles to a successful development advocate a design strategy which integrates and prioritises the natural environment, as the enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure have direct benefits and impact on the residents. Including helping to enhance health and wellbeing, building a sense of community through improved amenity spaces and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

This approach addresses the key goals identified in The Well-being of Future Generations Act and goals for Wales and have informed the design development of the proposal.



The Well-being of Future Generations Wheel -  
Identifying the seven goals identified by the Welsh Government

## **PROPORTIONALITY**

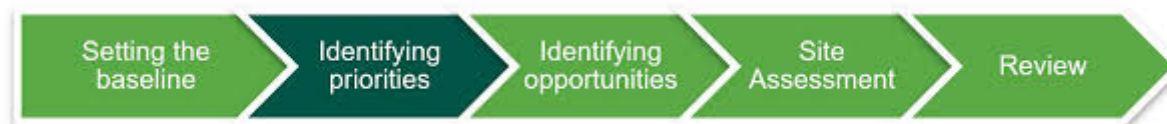
The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, Green Infrastructure assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development.

Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that comments and advice provided in relation to a specific planning application are also proportionate.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken as part of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) or other similar ecology surveys, may in some cases be all that is necessary.

It is believed that the proposed enhancements are proportionate to size of the project, which is a minor householder domestic dormer extension. The ecological enhancements proposed require minimal / no maintenance and overall, there is a net benefit to diversity as a result of the development and ecological enhancements.

## **UNDERTAKING A GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSESSMENT**



### **Step 1: Setting the baseline**

What green infrastructure already exists in the area? Where are the key ecological assets and ecological networks? What condition are these in and what are the main threats these are under?

### **Step 2: Identifying priorities**

What are the main socio-economic and environmental risks and challenges that need to be addressed in the area and to what extent can this be done through green infrastructure?

### **Step 3: Identifying opportunities**

At a strategic level, where are the best places to address the risks and challenges identified under step 2? What would that look like in practice? For example, could these challenges be addressed by improving existing green infrastructure, or is there a need to create new green infrastructure?

### **Step 4: Green infrastructure at a site level**

Building on the evidence gathered during steps 1-3, what important green infrastructure assets can be found on proposed development sites? What are the main threats and challenges this green infrastructure is exposed to? What opportunities are there to maintain and improve this green infrastructure as part of the development process?

### **Step 5: Review of the Green Infrastructure Assessment**

Is the Green Infrastructure Assessment helping to deliver the desired results? If not, should the Green Infrastructure Assessment be reviewed?

## **PROPOSED ECOLOGY ENHANCEMENT MEASURES**

### **Provision of Sparrow Nest Boxes**

#### **Vivara Pro WoodStone House Sparrow Nest Box**

House sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) are sociable opportunists that survive in most UK habitats, from towns and cities to farmland and countryside. Substantial declines in both urban and rural populations (estimated 71% decrease between 1977 and 2008) have led to concerns for this species.

This House Sparrow Nest Box is manufactured from WoodStone - a mix of concrete and FSC wood fibres. This material is strong and highly insulating which helps to provide a thermally stable environment within the box. It also protects against damage from predators such as cats, woodpeckers and squirrels. It is available with one or two breeding chambers, which can be particularly suitable for house sparrows as they prefer to nest in colonies.

The House Sparrow Nest Box can be integrated into the masonry of a new house or fixed onto an external wall using strong screws and wall plugs (not included). If possible, it should be positioned near to vegetation and at a minimum of 2m above ground.

Double Chamber:

- \* Weight: 7.5kg
- \* Dimensions: Depth 16cm x Height 29cm x Width 21cm
- \* Number of chambers: 2



Therefore two sparrow nesting boxes as shown opposite will be placed under the eaves on the south-western side of the building as shown on the application drawings.

### **Implementation timetable**

It is intended to install the proposed nesting boxes during the construction phase of the project to take advantage of on-site scaffolding and it is intended that it will be completely installed prior to completion of the construction phase.

The features will therefore be fully installed prior to the first beneficial use of the building following construction work and will be retained in perpetuity, being replaced as required if they become damaged or weathered.

### **CONCLUSION**

The importance of integrating green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancement into new development proposals from the earliest design stages is recognised and this statement has set out the benefits of the proposed scheme for both residents and the natural environment.

The considered ecological enhancement proposals have identified and utilised existing features of the site, new opportunities at a scale commensurate with the proposed development. The proposals integrate simple rainwater attenuation and incorporate bird boxes to benefit the local bird population at a scale that matches and is proportional to the development at hand. These enhancement proposals not only mitigate environmental impacts but elevate biodiversity and enhance the overall amenity value of the site.

It is believed that the scheme balances a sensitive architectural proposal with proportional green infrastructure that supports improved connection between people and nature, providing a positive impact on the overall community's well-being and ensuring a sustainable and enriching environment for the future.

It is considered that the proposed scheme complies with the updated Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales which sets out the Policy for biodiversity and nature.

### **NRW EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS**

Call NRW directly on: **0300 065 3000** 24-hours a day