

Green Infrastructure Statement

Fabian Way, Crymlyn Burrows, Skewen, Swansea SA1 8EN

1 Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT.....	4
3	SWANSEA UNIVERSITY GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY	9

This document has been prepared to show the Green Infrastructure implications of the proposed mobile phone mast development at Swansea University, Fabian Way, Crymlyn Burrows, Skewen, Swansea SA1 8EN.

The site is a University campus of mixed use type of buildings comprising, research, academic and residential. To the east of the campus lies Crymlyn Burrows Nature Reserve designated a SSSI which is under the ownership and management of Swansea University.

Development Proposals

[illegible]

:1: Proposed Development Elevation

2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The Welsh Government's Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 | February 2024 (see page 135 -139 available on this link: <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-07/planning-policy-wales-edition-12.pdf>, defines Green Infrastructure as:

6.2 Green Infrastructure

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 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.

6.2.2 The Environment (Wales) Act 2016, provides a context for the delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure. Its protection and provision can make a significant contribution to the sustainable management of natural resources, and in particular to protecting, maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in terms of the diversity within and connections between ecosystems and the extent and condition of these ecosystems, so that they are better able to resist, recover from and adapt to pressures. This means that the development of green infrastructure is an important way for local authorities to deliver their Section 6 duty¹.

6.2.3 Green infrastructure is capable of providing several functions at the same time and as a result offers multiple benefits, for social, economic and cultural as well as environmental resilience. The components of green infrastructure, by improving the resilience of ecosystems, can result in positive benefits to well-being including flood management, water purification, improved air quality, reduced noise pollution and local climate moderation, climate change mitigation and food production. These benefits are important in urban environments where they can facilitate health and well-being related benefits of open space, clean air and improved tranquillity, for example, as well as creating a sense of place and improved social cohesion. In addition, green infrastructure has a role in protecting local distinctiveness, providing economic benefits and social and community opportunities.

Taking a proactive approach to Green Infrastructure

6.2.4 Green infrastructure plays a fundamental role in shaping places and our sense of well-being, and is intrinsic to the quality of the spaces we live, work and play in. 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. Taking a proactive and spatial approach, which links to wider activity being taken by local authorities to protect and provide green infrastructure, will help

¹ Section 6 of the Environment Act 2016.

provide clarity around the contribution which the planning system Distinctive & Natural Places Planning Policy Wales | Edition 12 136 can make. This means considering how it complements existing and future maintenance and management regimes within urban areas and contributes towards wider land management activities in rural areas to aid nature recovery, and its underpinning natural resources². This will require effective joint working and collaboration across various sectors and activities, including administrative boundaries. Establishing arrangements to promote collaboration across local authority borders will be necessary, especially where the provision of off-site compensatory land to address biodiversity loss and provide enhancement will have the greatest benefit for biodiversity and resilient ecological networks.

Green Infrastructure Assessments

6.2.5 Planning authorities must, as part of adopting a strategic and proactive approach to green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecosystems resilience, produce up to date inventories and maps of existing green infrastructure and ecological assets and networks. Local authorities may already be undertaking such assessments and/or preparing such information to underpin local authority wide green infrastructure strategies and where this is the case planning authorities should both contribute to this process and use the inventories and mapping to underpin a spatial approach in their development plans. Green Infrastructure Assessments provide key evidence to support the preparation of development plans and where authorities are not already actively undertaking assessments, they should be undertaken as part of development plan preparation. Such Green Infrastructure Assessments should use existing datasets, and the best available information, to develop an integrated map-based evidence resource for biodiversity, ecosystem resilience and ecosystem service provision. Doing so will facilitate a proactive approach and enable contributions towards the well-being goals to be maximised.

6.2.6 Green Infrastructure Assessments should also draw from the evidence base provided by NRW's Area Statements and Nature Network Maps, Well-being Assessments and locally and regionally collected green infrastructure data and mapping already underpinning local authority approaches to green infrastructure. Its outcomes should be integrated into development plans to ensure the early and co-ordinated consideration of opportunities to inform the development, design and land related strategies of the development plan. The Green Infrastructure Assessment and outcomes should also be given early consideration in development proposals, and inform the design and implementation of projects.

6.2.7 Considering how significant benefits can be delivered through green infrastructure will be a key aim of the assessment and will require collaboration with other stakeholders, including those across administrative boundaries. Planning authorities should develop a multi-functional, coherent and spatial framework of green infrastructure to improve the overall well-being and health of communities and the environment. The assessment should be used to develop a robust approach to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, increasing ecosystem resilience and the multiple benefits obtained from nature, and should identify key strategic opportunities where the protection, retention, restoration, creation and connection of green features and functions would deliver the most significant benefits. Outputs from the green infrastructure assessment must address:

² Future Wales Policy 9.

- The identifying of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, and historic and cultural features in which green infrastructure plays a part, which are already being safeguarded as part of multi-functioning urban and rural landscapes;
- The nature emergency identifying and demonstrating how a net benefit for biodiversity will be secured and the attributes of ecosystem resilience enhanced, making the links to other land management activity, such as local nature recovery plans, and identifying land which may be required for the protection, retention and restoration and recovery of nature (and in providing a net benefit for biodiversity). This includes recognising the value of designated sites, and natural resources such as peatlands, as part of resilient ecological networks. In urban areas, the protection and provision of green infrastructure should be considered alongside the needs of wider maintenance regimes and any role development may have in making an effective contribution. The assessments may assist in identifying how the impact of INNS and the risk of introducing or spreading INNS will be managed;
- The reduction of pollution, as far as possible, by identifying green infrastructure/nature based solutions which form part of, or complement, wider activity at a catchment scale to address pollution and improve the restoration of riverine and other habitats;
- The climate emergency by ensuring the multi-functional benefits provided by trees and woodlands are identified; for example, by increasing tree canopy cover in urban areas to ensure shading against increased temperatures, and by requiring effective natural flood management and sustainable drainage schemes. Such measures may also help maintain good air quality and appropriate soundscapes;
- The health and well-being of communities by ensuring they have accessible natural green spaces of various sizes and scales within reasonable walking and cycling distances; and
- How the planning system should secure the implementation and management of green infrastructure, recognising its dynamic nature, over the long term.

6.2.8 The need for ecosystems, habitats and species to adapt to climate change and other pressures should be considered as part of the Green Infrastructure Assessment. This must include identifying ways to avoid or reverse the fragmentation of habitats, and to improve habitat connectivity where appropriate, through the promotion of wildlife corridors, protection of riverine corridors and identifying opportunities for land rehabilitation, reducing pollution, landscape management and habitat restoration, creation and nature recovery. The role of development as part of a spatial approach will be two fold. Planning authorities firstly must ensure that development avoids and then minimises impact on biodiversity and ecosystems and secondly that it provides opportunities for enhancement within areas identified as important for the ability of species to adapt and/or to move to more suitable habitats.

6.2.9 Planning authorities must encourage the appropriate management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna in order to complement and improve the ecological coherence of the National Site Network, formally known as the Natura 2000 network³ well as SSSIs and other statutory and non-statutory designated sites. The features concerned are those Distinctive & Natural Places Planning Policy Wales | Edition 12 138 which, because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as ‘stepping

³ Section 41 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/1012/contents/made

stones' or 'wildlife corridors', are essential for migration, dispersal or genetic exchange. The protection and creation of networks of statutory and non-statutory sites and of the landscape features which provide links from one habitat to another can make an important contribution to developing resilient ecological networks and securing a net benefit for biodiversity and in doing so improve the quality of the local place and its ability to adapt to climate change.

6.2.10 Green Infrastructure Assessments and their data and mapped outputs must be regularly reviewed to ensure that information on habitats, species and other green features and resources is kept up-to-date. This will ensure development management decisions are informed by appropriate spatial information about the potential effects of development on biodiversity and green infrastructure functions and help identify where different types of green infrastructure benefits/ ecosystems services can be secured. Planning authorities should use the best available data to establish and monitor a set of key indicators and incorporate these indicators into both their Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) and, where appropriate, into the appropriate Section 6 Plan and Report. Such indicators will be place-specific and may cover information on key species and habitats, opportunities for the protection, retention, restoration and recovery of nature (to secure a net benefit for biodiversity) and benefits/ecosystem services which contribute to the health and well-being of communities. The monitoring of the success and delivery of net benefits for biodiversity secured through conditions and obligations would usefully feed into this process in addition to any agreed management plan for the site. At the end of each reporting period planning authorities should use this data to indicate whether there has been a net benefit or loss of biodiversity; whether progress is being made on securing mitigation and enhancement measures; and they should use the trends identified to determine future priorities for planning and decision making, with the aim of furthering the goals of the Section 6 Duty.

Integrating Green Infrastructure and Development

6.2.11 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.

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. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question.

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. Wider landscape measures, such as the creation of species rich meadows, woodlands and the improvement of linkages between areas of biodiversity value should be considered for larger

scale development. In most cases the green infrastructure statement should highlight any baseline data considered and surveys and assessments undertaken, including but not limited to, habitats and species surveys, arboricultural surveys and assessments, sustainable drainage statements, landscape and ecological management plans, open space assessments and green space provision and active travel links.

6.2.14 Development proposals should be informed by the priorities identified in green infrastructure assessments and locally based planning guidance. The Building with Nature standards represent good practice and are an effective prompt for developers to improve the quality of their schemes and demonstrate the sustainable management of natural resources. Using these standards in a way which is proportionate to the nature and scale of the development proposed will be a useful way of ensuring appropriate consideration in circumstances where there is an absence of a green infrastructure assessment and planned approach or relevant local or Supplementary Planning Guidance. The standards are underpinned by an accreditation system and whenever possible, accreditation under these standards should be pursued.

3 Swansea University Green Infrastructure Strategy

Guided by our [Biodiversity Action Plan 2022-2025](#) we have embedded wildlife-friendly gardening techniques in the way we look after our grounds, protecting what is important and identifying suitable areas to create new habitats. Development of the University has to take nature into account, to deliver an overall increase in biodiversity. We were the first Bee Friendly University in Wales, both campuses have been awarded Green Flags and our Buzz across the Bay project has won the 2023 Chancellor's Award and is a finalist in the Green Gown Awards.

Adjacent to the Bay Campus is our very own nature reserve, Crymlyn Burrows. The dunes, saltmarsh and beach are protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. As well as providing a home for wildlife, Crymlyn Burrows and our campuses form important stepping stones for wildlife moving through Swansea and beyond, and we coordinate efforts with our local nature partnerships to strengthen the resilience of local ecosystems in this time of unprecedented environmental change.

The Bay Campus has a Biodiversity Action Plan, and this development would not result in the loss of any green space on the campus.

The Computational Foundry has existing swift and bat boxes, and a wetland conservation garden with bug hotel.

Kestrels (a priority conservation species in Wales) have nested on the building in the past and we recommend the installation of a kestrel box to encourage them in future.

We are managing extensive areas of the campus as wildflower meadow and have created further green infrastructure in the form of green walks, wildflower roofs and growing spaces for students and staff.

In addition we are managing the neighbouring: Crymlyn Burrows SSSI for nature conservation, with a focus on removal of invasive species and the restoration of dune habitat, and carry out monthly beach cleans.

View our [Crymlyn Burrows SSSI Management Plan 2018-2023](#).