GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

CONSTRUCTION OF AN INDUSTRIAL BUILDING (USE CLASS B2)

AMMAN VALLEY WELDERS , PARK HOWARD ROAD, CWMGORS, SA18 1PA

JUNE 2025
Amended July 2025

OUR REF: 22/884

69 Walter Road, Swansea. SA1 4QA
Tel: 01792 648380 - email: sgwplanning@aol.com

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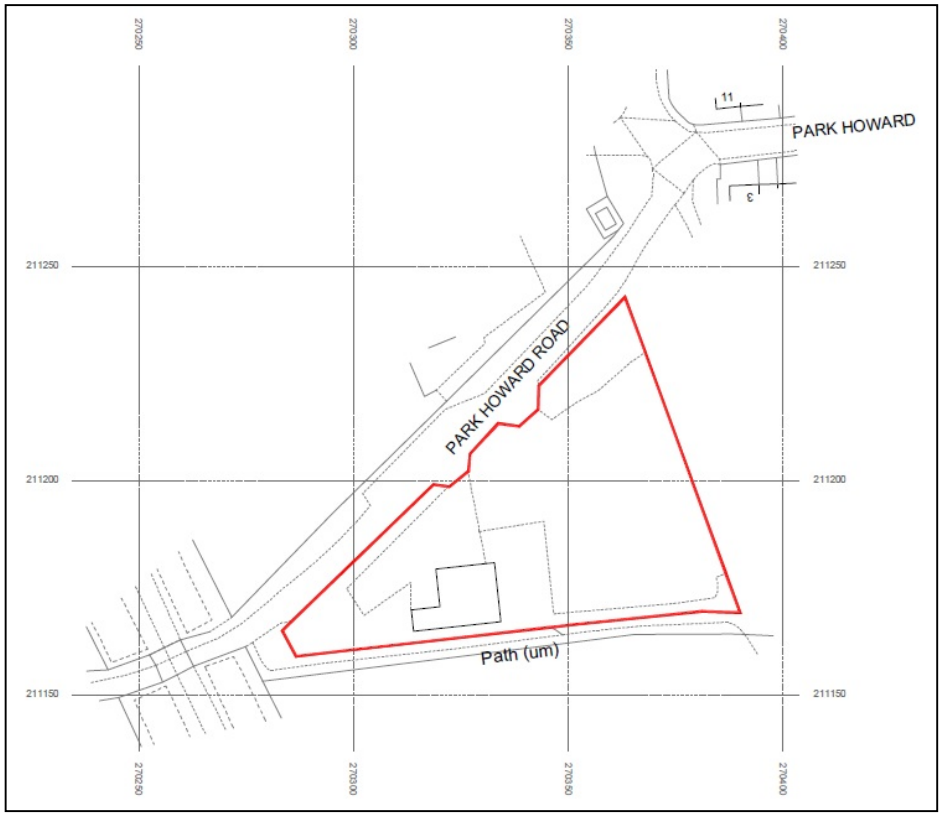
FOREWORD

Site Address:

Amman Valley Welders
Park Howard Road
Cwmgors
Neath Port Talbot
SA18 1PA



Grid Reference:

SN703111
EASTING: 270300 / NORTHING: 211173

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 applicants, Amman Valley Welders, to support a planning application to Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council to construct a new light industrial building at the site, subject of planning approval reference P2022/0926.

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, Amman Valley Welders.

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 and provide clarity on the interpretation of those policies, in order to ensure development within Neath Port Talbot 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

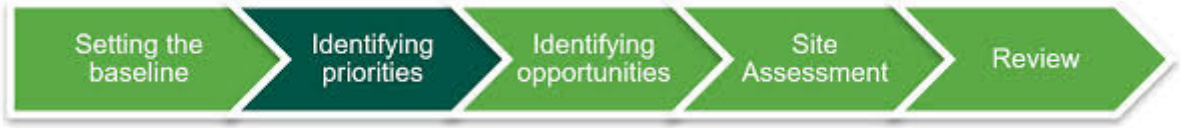
The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, Green Infrastructure assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development.

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 and 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. 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 gable side of the building and a further two on the south eastern elevation of the building.

Planting suitable trees and plants in the floodplain compensation area

It is intended to plant a range of trees and plants within the floodplain compensation area shown to provide both screening and water absorption in accordance with the table below, which also outlines the relevant maintenance plan:

Proposed Trees

It is intended to plant a number of trees along the north-western and western boundary to provide screening benefits and to add to the water absorption properties of the area as shown on the landscaping plan, these will include:

- Betula pendula - Silver Birch x 3 no.
- Sorbus aucuparia - Rowan x 2 no.

Proposed Plants

The table below shows the proposed plants to be planted within the highlighted flood zone shown on the drawings:

Species	Size	Density
Angelica sylvestris	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Athyrium filix femina	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Caltha palustris	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Carex acuta	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Dryopteris felix mas	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Filipendula ulmaria	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Geum rivale	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Juncus effusus	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Lythrum salicaria	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Mentha pulegium	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Osmunda regalis	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)
Persicaria bistorta	2 Lt	5 per square metre (27 no.)

Maintenance Schedule

The table below shows the typical general maintenance schedule to be followed following the first planting:

Maintenance Schedule	Required Action	Typical Frequency
Regular Maintenance	Remove litter and debris	Monthly, or as required
	Cut grasses to retain grass heights within specified design range	Monthly (during growing season), or as required
	Manage other vegetation and remove nuisance plants	Monthly at start, then as required
	Inspect inlets, outlets and outflows for blockages, and clear if required	Monthly
	Inspect infiltration surfaces for ponding, compaction, silt accumulation, record areas where water is ponding for >48 Hours	Monthly, or when required
	Inspect vegetation coverage	Monthly for 6 months, quarterly for 2 years, then half yearly
	Inspect inlets and facility surface for silt accumulation, establish appropriate silt removal frequencies	Half yearly
Occasional Maintenance	Reseed/plant areas of poor vegetation growth, alter plant types to better suit conditions, if required	As required or if bare soil is exposed over 10% or more of the swale treatment area
Remedial Actions	Repair erosion or other damage by re-turfing or reseeding	As required
	Re-level uneven surfaces and reinstate design levels	As required
	Scarify and spike topsoil layer to improve infiltration performance, break up silt deposits and prevent compaction of the soil surface	As required

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 planting of the trees and plants within the floodplain compensation area shown will take place in the first planting season following completion of the building and following the reduction of levels in the area.

The bird boxes will therefore be fully installed prior to the first beneficial use of the building following construction work with the planting being installed within the first available planting/growing season. Both features 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