

Green Infrastructure Statement

CP Hire, Kenfig Industrial Estate, Margam,
Port Talbot SA13 2PE

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1. Introduction

Overview & Legislative Requirement

This Green Infrastructure Statement has been prepared to accompany and support an application seeking planning permission for the retention of the portal-framed building, to be used as a workshop and storage facility in connection with the site's existing plant hire operations at Kenfig Industrial Estate.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (Edition 12, February 2024) requires that all planning applications are accompanied by a Green Infrastructure Statement that is proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal.

Purpose & Statement Structure

The purpose of this statement is to provide an overview of the existing habitats on the site and their condition; potential development impacts (in absence of mitigation) and proposed biodiversity enhancements. The remainder of the statement is, therefore, structured as follows:

- **Section 2** provides an explanation of the context of the application;
- **Section 3** sets out the policy context relevant to the proposals;
- **Section 4** justifies the extent of green infrastructure proposed; and
- **Section 5** provides an overview and concludes this statement.

2. The Site

Site Address

CP Hire, Kenfig Industrial Estate, Margam, Port Talbot SA13 2PE

Site Location

Fig.1 Site Location Plan



Fig.2 Aerial Photograph



Site Description

The site comprises a recently constructed portal-framed building, operating as a workshop and storage facility in connection with the existing plant hire operations of CP Hire GBNI Ltd.

Trees and shrubs are present along the south-western and north-eastern boundaries of the site. The vegetation along the north-eastern boundary is located within the site, whilst vegetation along the south-western boundary is situated immediately adjacent to the site boundary. To the south-east and north, are similar portal-framed buildings in employment-related use.

The site is located towards the western border of Kenfig Industrial Estate, which is designated as an Existing Employment Area within the Council's adopted Local Development Plan (LDP).

The wider surrounding area is predominantly characterised by employment uses consistent with the industrial estate.

3. Planning Policy Context

Future Wales (The National Plan)

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (February 2021) sets the direction for development across Wales to 2040. It constitutes a national development plan with a strategy for addressing key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, and improving the health and well-being of communities. Decarbonisation, health, prosperity and the Welsh language are common threads underpinning all Future Wales policies.

Policy 9 (Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure) seeks to ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure as part of development proposals. The policy states “...the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:

	▪ <i>identify areas which should be safeguarded and created as ecological networks for their importance for adaptation to climate change, for habitat protection, restoration or creation, to protect species, or which provide key ecosystems services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and</i> ▪ <i>identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being.</i> <i>Planning authorities should include these areas and/or opportunities in their development plan strategies and policies in order to promote and safeguard the functions and opportunities they provide. In all cases, action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity (to provide a net benefit), the resilience of ecosystems and green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals through innovative, nature-based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment."</i>
Planning Policy Wales	The Welsh Government issued an update to Chapter 6 of PPW on 11 October 2023 covering green infrastructure, net benefit for biodiversity, the protection afforded to Sites of Special Scientific Interest and trees and woodlands. These changes were published in an annex to Chapter 6 and have been included in a consolidated version of PPW (Edition 12). Planning Policy Wales 12 sets out a range of policies to maintain and enhance biodiversity, promote the resilience of ecosystems, including the stepwise approach, and to maximise the provision of green infrastructure. Paragraph 6.2.12 of PPW states that a Green Infrastructure Statement is 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 of PPW) has been applied. Step 1 (Avoid) – The primary focus of planning authorities is to prevent harm to biodiversity and ecosystem functioning by considering a wide range of species and habitats. They must ensure that any potential environmental damage is minimised by thoroughly evaluating alternative sites and design options that would cause less harm or provide benefits. Step 2 (Minimise) – When all possible options for avoiding harm to biodiversity have been explored, applicants must collaborate with planning authorities to minimise the initial impact on biodiversity and ecosystems. Step 3 (Mitigate) – When efforts to minimise the impact on biodiversity and ecosystems have been exhausted and there's still potential for damage or loss, the proposed development must include mitigation measures. These measures should limit the negative effects of the development by repairing damaged habitats and species disturbances, aiming to restore beyond a like-for-like level considering disturbance and recovery time. The goal is to enhance ecosystem resilience both on the site and, where feasible, in the surrounding area. Step 4 (Compensation) – When all the steps above have been exhausted, and where modifications, alternative sites, conditions or obligations are not sufficient to secure biodiversity outcomes further on-site/immediately proximate, as a last resort off-site compensation for unavoidable damage must be provided.
The Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015)	The Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) aims to promote the well-being of both current and future generations. It represents a shift towards a more sustainable and long-term approach to governance, focusing on economic, social, environmental, and cultural well-being.

	The Act requires public bodies in Wales to consider the impact of their decisions on these well-being goals and to work towards achieving them. It establishes a set of well-being objectives, such as a prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, and a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. The Act encourages collaboration between public bodies, communities, and stakeholders to ensure effective green infrastructure provision. This collaborative approach fosters innovation, knowledge sharing, and community engagement in designing and implementing green projects that benefit both current and future generations.
Environment Wales Act (2016)	This legislation is intended to work alongside the Well-being of Future Generations Act. It includes a new biodiversity duty to reverse the decline of biodiversity and to secure long-term resilience. Section 6 states <i>"A public authority must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity... and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems"</i>. In relation to resilience of ecosystems, the following should be taken into account: a) diversity between and within ecosystems; b) the connections between and within ecosystems; c) the scale of ecosystems; d) the condition of ecosystems (including their structure and functioning); e) the adaptability of ecosystems.
Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan	At the local level, the Neath Port Talbot Local Development Plan (LDP), which was adopted in January 2016, comprises land allocations as well as specific 'land use' policies against which all planning applications are considered. In particular, Policy SP 15 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity) seeks to protect, enhance, conserve and manage the important habitats, species and sites of geological interests. While development is supported, proposals must demonstrate how green infrastructure has been incorporated and should avoid overall loss; where loss is unavoidable, appropriate compensation will be required. The policy recognises a wide range of natural heritage assets as contributing to the county's character and sense of place, including woodland and forest, costal beaches, moors and upland heaths and river estuaries.
Supplementary Planning Guidance	The Council adopted a Biodiversity and Geodiversity Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in May 2018. This document sets out the approach to the consideration of green infrastructure in relation to new developments. It provides further guidance to Policy SP 15 (Biodiversity and Geodiversity).

4. Green Infrastructure Strategy

Existing Assets	The Applicant acknowledges that Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets out that planning authorities must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity in the exercise of their functions and, in so doing, promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. This means the proposed development should not cause any significant loss of habitats or populations of species, locally or nationally and ideally should provide a net benefit for biodiversity. The application site forms part of an established industrial operation and the building subject to this application has already been constructed, with permission sought for its retention. Owing to the industrial character of the site and the surrounding estate, existing green infrastructure
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	within the site is limited. The wider context is similarly constrained, comprising predominantly hardstanding and operational industrial land enclosed by security fencing. The principal existing green infrastructure features associated with the site and its immediate surroundings are as follows: ▪ The site is predominantly comprised of a stone-surfaced yard area, with a small area of shrubs and trees situated to the north-east. ▪ Areas of shrubs and trees are also present adjacent to the south-western boundary of the site. The green infrastructure elements are described briefly below, identifying and accessing existing or potentially important elements. It summarises the Stepwise approach Step A – Identify and Assess. <u>Ecology</u> Given that the site mostly comprises a stone-surfaced yard area, with a small area of vegetation, it is not considered that the site offers any potential for protected or priority species or habitats. <u>Trees</u> A small number of trees are present within the north-eastern area of the site, with additional trees located adjacent to the south-western site boundary. <u>Drainage</u> The site is not identified as being at risk of flooding from Rivers and Sea or Surface Water and Small Watercourses on the Flood Map for Planning. The site will also be subject to a separate SABs application.
Green Infrastructure Enhancement and Mitigation Measures	In accordance with national and local planning policy, a proportionate Stepwise Approach to Green Infrastructure has been applied, having regard to the scale, nature and context of the development, as set out within Planning Policy Wales (Edition 12, Chapter 6). Step A has been addressed through the identification and assessment of the site's existing Green Infrastructure assets. Given that the building has already been constructed within an established industrial setting, opportunities to avoid impacts, provide mitigation, or deliver significant green infrastructure enhancements are inherently limited. Nevertheless, the proposal seeks to provide proportionate biodiversity enhancement measures where practicable. In this regard, the applicant proposes the installation of bird and bat boxes on the building to provide additional nesting and roosting opportunities for wildlife.
5. Summary	
	This Green Infrastructure Statement has been prepared to accompany and support a planning application for the retention of the portal-framed building, to be used as a workshop and storage facility in connection with the site's existing plant hire operations at Kenfig Industrial Estate. The proposals include opportunities for green infrastructure measures that are appropriate to the site in question, proportionate to the development proposed and have been identified in accordance with Planning Policy Wales's step wise approach (outlined at Paragraph 6.4.15 of Planning Policy Wales).