



**Land Off Traston Road,
Newport**

Green Infrastructure Statement

November 2024

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Land Off Traston Road, Newport, NP19 4PW Green Infrastructure Statement				
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background to Green Infrastructure

Planning Policy Wales defines green infrastructure as:

"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 the landscape scale green infrastructure can comprise entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways and mountain ranges. 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 networks¹."

There has recently been an update regarding the National Planning Policy for Chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales version 11. In addition, Planning Policy Wales version 12 was published in February 2024. A green infrastructure statement must now be submitted with all planning applications. It must describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the development proposals.

1.2 Green Infrastructure Assessment

The aim of a Green Infrastructure Assessment (GIA) is to ensure that all elements of GI are coordinated from the outset, so that biodiversity, trees, soils, landscaping, SuDS, amenity, access, recreation and climate change mitigation and adaptation are integrated into a scheme which delivers multiple benefits. Ideally a GIA should be a strategy which informs the design and layout of a scheme, rather than retrospectively explaining how it might work.

This document serves as a Green Infrastructure Statement (GIS). The purpose of a GIS is to outline how GI has been incorporated into the development design and to demonstrate the positive multifunctional outcomes appropriate to the site, showing how the stepwise approach (see Appendix 2) has been applied to prioritise avoidance, minimisation, and compensation of potential impacts. This ensures the development achieves net biodiversity benefit through the enhancement of biodiversity and sustainability.

1.3 Background to Proposed Development

The proposed development involves the construction of commercial-scale battery storage units with associated infrastructure, soft landscaping, and drainage. The site is located south of Traston Road², approximately 2.8km south-east of Newport city centre and 500m south-west of the River Usk.

The site comprises primarily hardstanding and bare ground with negligible ecological value, bordered by industrial development to the north, east, and west. A strip of ruderal vegetation is present along the south-eastern boundary, and two trees (a black poplar (*Populus nigra*) and a white willow (*Salix alba*)), with the canopy of another willow encroaching the site, are found on the northern boundary.

¹https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c45e569c3c16a9eac56d244/t/6565ccf1517d747aa68af45c/1701170419121/Briefing_Paper_BwN_and_Planning_Policy_in_Wales_v1.0.pdf

² Grid reference ST 33103 85660

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A planning application has been submitted under reference 23/1023³.

1.4 Green Infrastructure Proposed on Site

The development and associated landscaping proposals are included within Appendix 1. The proposed development incorporates green infrastructure through the creation of a 71m native species-rich hedgerow in the south of the site, adjacent to the battery storage area. The hedgerow will consist of a mix of native species, including blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), and dog rose (*Rosa canina*). This planting will contribute to the ecological and functional value of the site, enhancing biodiversity and providing ecosystem services.

The hedgerow will compensate for the loss of three trees (a black poplar and two white willows) that will be removed during development. Although the site is to be enclosed by a palisade fence and the hedgerow will not connect directly to existing green corridors, it will create a self-contained habitat feature that supports wildlife associated with the surrounding area, such as grassland and scrub. Birds, invertebrates, and small mammals that frequent these habitats will benefit from the additional foraging, nesting, and sheltering opportunities provided by the hedgerow.

The native shrub species will provide a range of benefits for local wildlife. For example, blackthorn provides early spring blossoms that are a vital nectar source for pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and hoverflies, and supports these species when other floral resources are scarce. The dense and thorny structure of blackthorn also provides excellent nesting and protective cover for birds like wrens (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) and blackbirds (*Turdus merula*), while its fruit will offer a food supply for small mammals, including wood mice as well as overwintering birds. Likewise, hazel will create an important foraging source for wildlife such as small mammals through its production of nuts. Other species, such as dogwood and dog rose, will contribute to the structural diversity of the hedgerow, as flowers produced will attract pollinators and berries provide a valuable food resource for a wide range of species.

Beyond its direct benefits to biodiversity, the hedgerow will provide wider ecosystem services, for example its roots will improve soil stability, and shrubs will enhance air quality through carbon sequestration. The dense planting will help reduce surface water runoff and contribute to local flood mitigation. Over time, the hedgerow will integrate with the site's surroundings, complementing the nearby scrub and grassland areas and increasing the overall ecological functionality of the site.

³<https://publicaccess.newport.gov.uk/onlineapplications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=summary&keyVal=S42NKELCLR800>

2 Building with Nature Standards Framework

The development has also met several of the green infrastructure standards as outlined in the Building with Nature Standards Framework⁴. The Building with Nature Standards Framework involves twelve Standards, arranged across four groups. There are six Core Standards and three themes, Wellbeing, Water and Wildlife, containing two Standards in each. The six Core Standards create a solid foundation for the delivery of high-quality green infrastructure through design, planning and development.

2.1 Core Standards

The core standards are detailed below: together with details of how they are being met on site.

Standard 1: Optimise Multifunctionality and Connectivity – The green infrastructure incorporated within the new development proposals optimises multifunctionality and connectivity by incorporating a 71m native species hedgerow in the south of the site. The hedgerow will complement the adjacent grassland and scrub habitats, enhancing resources for pollinators, birds, and small mammals that may disperse onto site for foraging, refugia or nesting.

Standard 2: Positively Responds to the Climate Emergency – The green infrastructure is designed to be climate resilient by incorporating mitigation and adaptations that respond to the impacts of climate change. This is achieved through the inclusion of a native species hedgerow, which provides natural carbon capture and supports climate regulation. The hedgerow will improve air quality, reduce surface water run-off, and enhance soil stability, therefore contributing to flood mitigation and ecosystem resilience.

Standard 3: Maximises Environmental Net Gain – The green infrastructure is designed to actively mitigate any unavoidable harmful environmental impacts of development on soil and air quality and to minimise light and noise pollution. The inclusion of a new native species hedgerow will mitigate the loss of the three trees, enhance soil stability through its roots and reduce erosion, supporting overall soil health. The hedgerow will also improve air quality through carbon sequestration and act as a natural buffer to dampen noise.

Standard 4: Champions a Context-Driven Approach - Not considered relevant for this site. We are not aware of any stakeholder feedback informing the green infrastructure layout, features and design.

Standard 5: Creates Distinctive Places – The green infrastructure is integral to the project and is designed to reinforce local distinctiveness and/or create a distinctive sense of place. Currently, the site has limited habitats and low ecological value due to comprising majority hardstanding. The inclusion of a native species hedgerow will introduce structured planting, changing the site into a more ecologically valuable and visually appealing space. This enhancement reinforces local distinctiveness by incorporating native species, and provides a functional habitat feature that complements the wider landscape.

Standard 6: Secures Effective Place-keeping - Not considered relevant for this site as it is not known what kind of governance structure will be adopted for future management of the green infrastructure.

⁴https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c45e569c3c16a9eac56d244/t/6351513d1afee236d4cf6ce8/1666273600232/Building_with_Nature_Standards_Framework_2.0_Oct22_Download_Version.pdf

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Standard 7: Brings Nature Closer to People - Although not accessible to the public, the proposed native hedgerow enhances local biodiversity and ecological value, indirectly benefiting the surrounding community by supporting pollinators, improving air quality, and promoting wildlife in the area.

Standard 8: Supports Equitable and Inclusive Places – This standard is not directly applicable to the proposed development, as the site is not designed for public access or recreational use.

Standard 9: Delivers Climate Resilient Water Management – The new proposed development does not incorporate any above ground features to manage flood risk, maintain the natural water cycle and improve the quality within the boundary of the project. Incorporating nature-based solutions, such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) or above-ground features that mimic natural hydrology, would enhance the site's resilience to extreme weather events, reduce reliance on grey infrastructure, and introduce additional habitat diversity, delivering multiple ecological and functional benefits.

Standard 10: Brings Water Closer to People – The development proposals does not include any additional blue infrastructure design due to the absence of waterbodies within the site boundary; therefore this principle cannot be met. However, the site may benefit from such features whereby consideration could be given to incorporating elements like a constructed pond or rainwater harvesting systems to enhance water management and environmental sustainability.

Standard 11: Delivers Wildlife Enhancement – The green infrastructure delivers long-term and climate resilient benefits for native through the inclusion of a native hedgerow in the south of the site, replacing the ecological function of the three trees planned for removal, and providing new habitats for local wildlife. The native species selected, such as blackthorn, hazel and holly, will support a range of pollinators, birds, small mammals and other species, delivering positive outcomes for wildlife within and beyond the site boundary throughout the lifespan of the development.

Standard 12: Underpins Nature's Recovery – The proposed native hedgerow will enhance local biodiversity by creating a stepping-stone habitat that complements the existing scrub and grassland habitats to the west and south of the site. While the site is in a primarily industrial area, the hedgerow will strengthen ecological connectivity within the local landscape, supporting pollinators, birds, and small mammals, contributing to nature's recovery in the area.

2.2 Summary of Development and How it Meets the Core Standards

Overall, the development meets the majority of the core standards within the Building with Nature Standards Framework.

2.3 Summary of How Stepwise Approach has been followed

The table below sets out the stepwise approach taken in assessing impacts of a development on habitats and the species.

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	Steps	Assessment	Enhancement	Long term Maintenance	Net Benefits
1	Avoid	Site selection avoids high-value habitats; area mainly bare ground and hardstanding with negligible ecological value. Avoidance and retention of ruderal strip adjacent to south-eastern fence line.	No enhancements required in areas of negligible value.	N/A	Avoidance of impact to high value habitats.
2	Minimise	Minimal disturbance to adjacent grassland, scrub and ruderal vegetation adjacent to site boundary.	Hedgerow proposed to buffer site and enhance connectivity.	Low maintenance native planting supports resilience.	Reduced impact on nearby habitats; hedgerow minimises edge effects.
3	Mitigation/restore	Removal of three trees assessed as unavoidable due to site constraints.	71m native hedgerow provides habitat and wildlife resources as mitigation.	Establishment phase monitored to ensure success.	Mitigation offsets tree loss and provides foraging and nesting opportunities.
4	Compensation on site	Hedgerow compensates for loss of three trees and complements existing adjacent habitats.	Native species planting delivers net biodiversity benefits.	Native hedgerow requires minimal management once established.	Compensation provides a locally significant enhancement within the industrially dominated landscape.
5	Compensation off site	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

2.4 Summary of Development and How it Results in Net Biodiversity Benefits

Overall, the proposal will result in an ecological enhancement and biodiversity net gain for biodiversity as a result of the development. This will be undertaken by integrating such green infrastructure into the development proposals. The development will protect and enhance the ecosystems within and adjacent to the site, ensuring that they continue to support diverse habitats and species, allowing them to adapt to change. The plans will also enhance the green infrastructure on site in a way that increases resilience to the changing climate and provide protection for people and places.

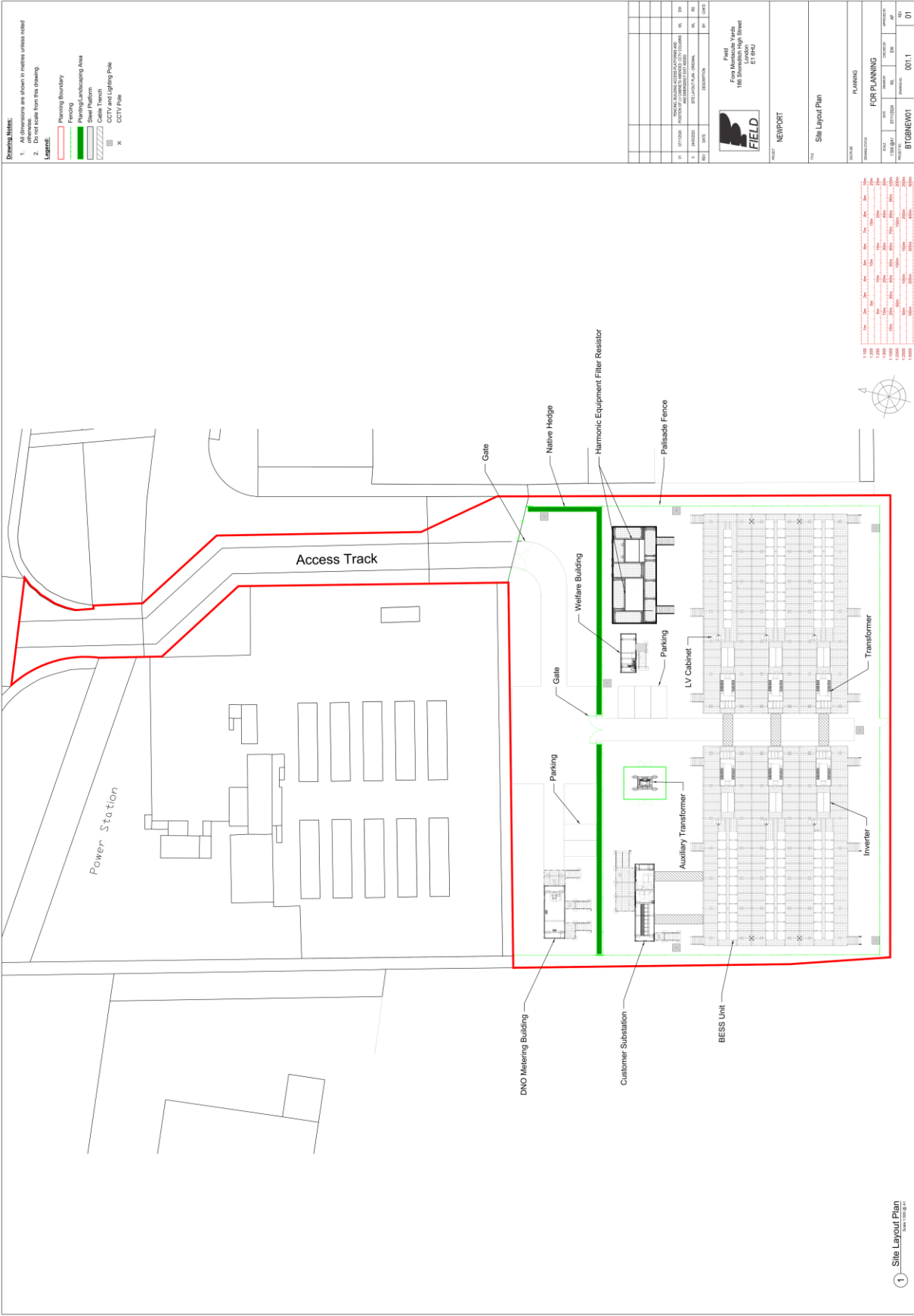
3 References

Building with Nature (2023) *Delivering High Quality Green Infrastructure In Wales*. Available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c45e569c3c16a9eac56d244/t/6565ccf1517d747aa68af45c/1701170419121/Briefing_Paper_BwN_and_Planning_Policy_in_Wales_v1.0.pdf

Building with Nature Standards Framework (2023) Available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c45e569c3c16a9eac56d244/t/6351513d1afee236d4cf6ce8/1666273600232/Building_with_Nature_Standards_Framework_2.0_Oct22_Download_Version.pdf

Planning Policy Wales (2024) Available online at https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-02/planning-policy-wales-edition-12_1.pdf

Appendix 1: Proposed Landscaping Plan



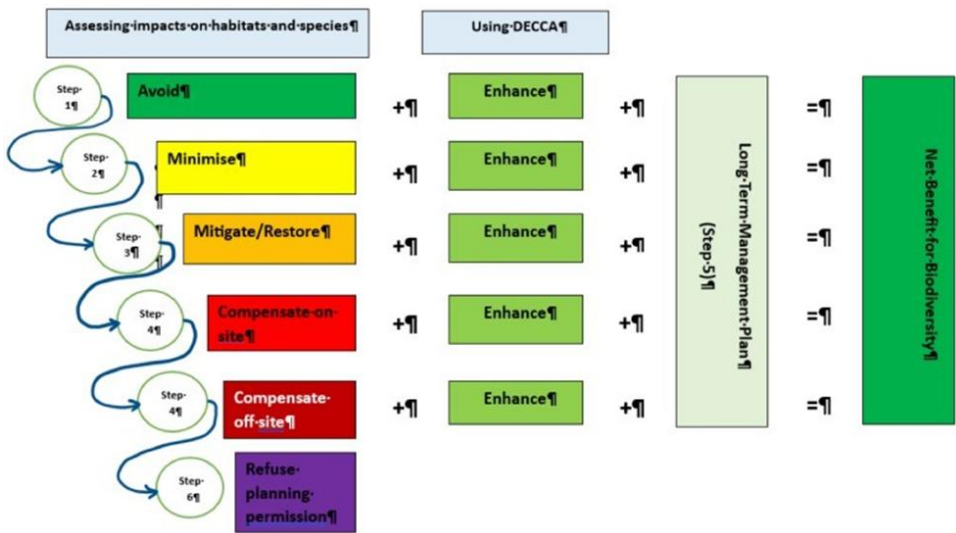
Appendix 2: Background to Requirements for Green Infrastructure Statements

On 11th October 2023¹ the Welsh Government issued updated National Planning Policy for chapter 6 of Planning Policy Wales. This was followed by the publication of Planning Policy Wales version 12 in February 2024

The updated policy guidance recognises the value of green infrastructure within the built environment. In order to facilitate a quality built environment enhanced by integrated green infrastructure all planning applications must now include a green infrastructure statement.

“6.2.6 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 and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.21) has been applied.”

Figure 1 below sets out the summary of the stepwise approach as set out in the Annex to the published advice.



Appendix 3: Hedgerow Planting

Staggered Planting

Hedgerows planted in a double staggered row tend to be better for wildlife as they are wider and provide more shelter and habitat. The rows should be spaced 0.2m intervals in two rows 0.3m apart. Planting will be staggered so that a plant in the second row is mid-way between plants in the first row. This would give about approximately 10 plants per running metre of (double) hedge-line.

Timing of Planting

Planting should be undertaken at the outset of works, or as early as possible.

Hedging plants are usually supplied bare-rooted. This restricts the planting season to the winter months, when the roots are dormant.

Ground Preparation

The ground should be prepared thoroughly in advance with planting undertaken into bare soil. Planted trees will be fitted with shrub guards.

Shrub and Tree Guards

If rabbits occur in the area all plants should be protected. If individual protection is considered the most appropriate option 400mm high plastic spiral rabbit guards should be used for the hedge plants.

Recommended Species

The following woody species should be planted using the frequency and number of plants specified.

Species	% Frequency
Common hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>)	40%
Hazel (<i>Corylus avellana</i>)	20%
Blackthorn (<i>Prunus spinosa</i>)	10%
Holly (<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>)	10%
Field Maple (<i>Acer campestre</i>)	10%
Dogwood (<i>Cornus sanguineus</i>)	5%
Guelder rose (<i>Viburnum opulus</i>)	3%
Silver birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>)	2%

Maintenance During First Five Years

Light regular trimming of the hedgerows is recommended in the early years to encourage dense, bushy growth which is favourable to wildlife.

Some weed control may be needed in the first two to three years. The most common ways of controlling weeds are mulches, herbicides and cutting. A mulch is a layer of material laid over the surface of the ground to suppress weed growth and retain moisture.

During establishment the planting should be regularly monitored for issues and regularly watered. Monitoring and watering (if required) will be undertaken on a fortnightly basis during the growing season in the first year following establishment, and thereafter a minimum of 2 times per annum in the growing season, for the first five years after planting. In addition, periods of prolonged dry weather and/or apparent wilting of leaf growth will initiate additional irrigation of all mitigation vegetation.

Management from Years Six Onwards

Once established (i.e after year 6 onwards) the hedgerow should be cut every 3 years. Cutting should be undertaken during October to March and outside of the bird nesting season.

At year seven, consideration should be given to hedge-laying to encourage thick future growth.