

Mwyndy Light Industrial / Data Centre

Green Infrastructure Statement

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61334

February 2026



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CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	SITE DESCRIPTION	1
2.1	EXISTING FEATURES	1
2.2	HOW THE DEVELOPMENT AT MWYNDY FITS INTO WIDER LANDSCAPE	2
2.3	RELEVANT LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES	5
3.	GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY: THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT	8
4.	SURVEY FINDINGS AND PROTECTION IN PLACE: GI BASELINE	10
4.1	ECOLOGICAL SURVEYS	10
5.	MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES	14
	GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY	14
5.1	MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES	15
5.2	APPLICATION OF THE STEPWISE APPROACH	15
5.3	DECCA ASSESSMENT – SUPPORTING ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE	17
6.	BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES	20
6.1	ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS	20
6.2	SOCIAL BENEFITS	20
6.3	ECONOMIC BENEFITS	20
6.4	CONTRIBUTION TO ECOSYSTEM SERVICES	20
7.	MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT	22
7.1	MONITORING EFFECTIVENESS	22
7.2	LONG-TERM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES	22
7.3	PROGRAMME FOR IMPLEMENTATION	24
7.4	MANAGEMENT, AFTERCARE PERIOD, AND RESPONSIBILITY	24
8.	CONCLUSION	25
9.	REFERENCES	26
	APPENDICES	27
	DRAWING PROPOSALS	28
	SITE PHOTOGRAPHS	31
	FIGURES	
	Figure 1: Development connection to the wider landscape	3
	Figure 2: Proposed Development option: Light Industrial	9
	Figure 3: Proposed Development option: Data Centre	9
	Figure 4: Mwyndy Industrial Unit Landscape GA Plan	29
	Figure 5: Mwyndy Data Centre Landscape GA Plan	30

Tables

Table 1: Assets and Opportunities	14
Table 1: Mwyndy Development Enhancements (See Appendix B for mitigation drawings)	15
Table 2: Ecosystem Services	20
Table 3: Key Monitoring Categories	22
Table 4: Implementation Programme	24

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Description
BS	British Standards
GI	Green Infrastructure
HRA	Habitat Regulations Assessment
INNS	Invasive Non-Native Species
LDP	Local Development Plan
LVA	Landscape and Visual Appraisal
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Assessment
PPW	Planning Policy Wales
PRF	Potential Roosting Features
PRoW	Public Right of Way
RCT	Rhondda Cynon Taff
RPZ	Root Protection Zone
SINC	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation
SLL	Society of Light and Lighting
SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
SuDS	Sustainable Drainage Systems

1. INTRODUCTION

A Green Infrastructure (GI) Statement describes how the green infrastructure of a site (trees, hedges, and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)) has been incorporated into the development proposal for a new Light Industrial development or Data Centre in Mwyndy, Llantrisant, in the County Borough of Rhondda Cynon Taff, South Wales, hereinafter referred to as “the Proposed Development or Site”. OS Survey Grid reference ST 05455 82148.

A GI Statement is required on all developments following PPW12, and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6 duty to show that development has a net benefit to biodiversity and green infrastructure. This information is not appropriate to seek ‘retrospectively’ by way of a condition and must be provided as part of the planning application process. A GI Statement is to be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development, and in the case of minor development such as householder applications, PPW12 states that this should not be an onerous requirement for applicants.

Some Authorities may request that the GI Statement is accompanied by a Biodiversity Enhancement Scheme or similar evidence of biodiversity enhancement.

This statement has been prepared by TACP (UK) Ltd. It is a simple statement proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal.

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Existing Features

Mwyndy lies just to the north of Pontyclun and southwest of Llantrisant, within the county borough of Rhondda Cynon Taf in South Wales. The name Mwyndy comes from the Welsh for “ore house” or “mine house,” reflecting the area’s historical links to iron ore and lead mining.

It sits on the southern slopes below Llantrisant Hill, around 60–80 metres above sea level, giving gentle rolling terrain and views over the Ely Valley and toward the Vale of Glamorgan. The landscape is semi-rural, with a mix of small farms, hedgerow-lined fields, patches of woodland, and modern light industrial or business premises. The River Ely (Afon Elai) flows about a kilometre to the south, while smaller brooks cross the local farmland.

Mwyndy, Pont-y-Clun, is a semi-rural settlement on the edge of the Ely Valley, combining historic rural origins and industrial heritage with easy modern access via road and rail.

With a balance of countryside scenery with light commercial use and suburban influence. The area feels both tranquil and well-connected—a transitional landscape between urban South Wales and open rural Glamorgan.

The Site comprises of a series of ecologically significant features including broad leaved woodlands, hedgerows, scrub, grassland and open mosaic habitats which provide habitats for a variety of wildlife including bats, reptiles, amphibians and nesting birds, forming key ecological corridors.

The Site sits within 1.6km of the Llantrisant Common which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), comprising 113 ha of lowland setting with acidic marshy grassland, species-rich neutral grassland, dry acidic grassland, and flushes.

Coed-yr-Hendy & Mwyndy Special Landscape Area (SLA) is approximately 1km to the west / south west. The undeveloped areas of the southern bank of Afon Clun, ranging from Rhiwsareson to Coed-yr-Hendy, are designated as a SLA to protect the fine landscape quality of the area, specifically its woodlands and open spaces. The Afon Clun Valley and Rhiwsareson Hill are designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) which provide protections for local wildlife and habitats.

The site sits between Arthur Llewellyn Furniture retail business on the southern boundary, the Cefn y Parc cemetery and open agricultural fields to the west, Afon Clun directly to the north with the A473 north of the river. On the eastern boundary are mature hedgerows bordering agricultural fields.

Open grasslands and managed meadows support pollinators and small mammals, and water features ponds and seasonal wetland areas enhance aquatic biodiversity.

2.2 How the development at Mwyndy fits into wider landscape

The site at Mwyndy, Pont-y-Clun lies between Pontyclun and Llantrisant within the southern part of Rhondda Cynon Taf. It occupies gently undulating land on the lower slopes of the Ely Valley, framed by the A473 to the south and the A4119 to the west. The surrounding landscape represents a transitional area between the built-up edge of Pontyclun and the open countryside that rises towards Llantrisant Common. Land use is mixed, with light industrial and commercial premises at Mwyndy Cross and Miskin Manor forming a semi-rural employment cluster within an otherwise green and wooded setting.

The Site sits within 1km of the Coed-yr-Hendy and Mwyndy Special Landscape Area (SLA), which seeks to protect the wooded slopes, hedgerow patterns, and rural character that define the local landscape. It also lies within the Afon Clun Valley and Rhiwsareson Hill SINC, and located close to a number of other SINCS, including Ty Newydd Woods and Mwyndy Lake, and lies within the wider ecological network that links to the Llantrisant Common and Pastures SSSI to the north-east. These features form an established framework of green infrastructure that provides habitat connectivity, visual containment, and local amenity value.

A light-industrial or data-centre development at this location would extend an existing employment area rather than introduce new urban elements into open countryside. The surrounding topography and mature vegetation offer opportunities for natural screening, while the scale and character of existing built forms provide a context into which a sensitively designed scheme could be integrated. The key consideration is to retain and strengthen the established woodland and hedgerow structure around the site, maintaining the visual separation between developed plots and the wider rural landscape.

Through appropriate landscape planting, SuDS design, and biodiversity enhancements, the development can contribute positively to the local green infrastructure network. Tree and shrub planting along site boundaries, habitat corridors linking to adjacent SINCS, and the creation of ecological water features would help reinforce landscape character and deliver measurable biodiversity benefits. With these measures in place, the proposal would sit comfortably within the existing Mwyndy employment cluster while respecting the visual and ecological sensitivities of the surrounding Ely Valley landscape.

In accordance with Planning Policy Wales (PPW) - Chapter 6: *Distinctive and Natural Placemaking and Well-Being* - and RCT LDP Policy AW8 – Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment, the Proposed Development seeks to conserve and enhance the area’s natural assets as an integral part of its design. The scheme will protect existing woodland, hedgerows, and water features, ensuring that habitats of recognised importance, including nearby SINCs and the SLA, are not adversely affected. Where appropriate, new planting and ecological enhancement measures will be introduced to strengthen biodiversity resilience and contribute to the wider green infrastructure network. By embedding these principles into site planning, the proposal aligns with local and national objectives for sustainable development, delivering employment growth while maintaining and improving the ecological and visual quality of the Mwyndy and Ely Valley landscape.

Figure 1: Development connection to the wider landscape



North-South corridors: Hedgerows, shrubs and grasslands connect the Avon Clun to the north, whilst existing retained hedgerows and trees maintain a north-south corridor.

East-West links: There is an existing PRoW that crosses the site from west to east.



Source : Ordnance Survey (2023). OS Explorer Map. Scale 1:25,000. Crown Copyright and database right 2023.

Core habitat areas: Existing mature hedgerows are of high ecological value, feeding into the wider ecological network.

In alignment with Rhondda Cynon Taf Supplementary Planning Guidance: Design and Placemaking, the development contributes to the enhancement and protection of landscape and biodiversity, as mandated by the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The strategy emphasises the multi-functionality of green infrastructure assets, recognizing their role in delivering benefits such as sustainable food production, flood management, and providing access to nature .

Furthermore, the Rhondda Cynon Taf SPG: Design and Placemaking, specifically 6.1.12, underscores the importance of maintaining positive characteristics of the local landscape and vegetation immediately adjacent to the Site including the condition, scale, enclosure and important links to maintain green infrastructure and green corridors between new developments and surrounding local environment.

The Proposed Development seeks to achieve greater strategic and local impact via improved connectivity between local resources and local amenities whilst maintaining strong wildlife corridors, existing boundary vegetation and local green networks, thus promoting habitat networks and visual amenity within the local and wider area.

2.3 Relevant Local Planning Policies

2.3.1 Planning Policy Wales (PPW)

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) (published 2018) was updated in February 2024. PPW represents the overarching document for National Planning Policy in Wales and supports the Spatial Plan for Wales as set out in Future Wales: The National Plan 2040. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 influences the way we plan for new development; it demands that both development and use of land contribute to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

PPW supports the commitment as set out in the Well-being of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 for the achievement of sustainable development through appropriate planning. Identifying four overarching objectives – cultural, social, economic and environmental, to be pursued in mutually supportive ways through the planning system.

The Future Wales Outcomes of specific relevance in relation to sustainability, the natural environment, landscape and visual issues are,

9 ...in places that sustainably manage their natural resources and reduce pollution,

'The environmental, social and cultural value of our resources will be managed, maintained and enhanced, while economic benefits will be utilised sustainably and appropriately by promoting nature-based solutions and a circular economy.'

10 ...places with biodiverse, resilient and connected ecosystems.

'The planning system will ensure wildlife is able to thrive in healthy, diverse habitats, both in urban and rural areas, recognising and valuing the multiple benefits to people and nature.'

33 ...National Growth Area: Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys.

'Encourages sustainable employment development in accessible valley locations, subject to environmental safeguards.'

PPW (Edition 12) (February 2024) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government with the primary objective, *'...to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales as required by the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and other key legislation and resultant duties such as the Socio-economic Duty.'*

Of relevance in relation to landscape and visual issues are the environmental objectives as set out in Section 6: Distinctive and Natural Places, specifically looking at:

- Long term and chronic decline in biodiversity and habitat loss
- Adaptation to the effects of climate change
- Recognising and addressing the factors influencing landscape change

It recognises that, *'The special and unique characteristics and intrinsic qualities of the natural and built environment must be protected in their own right, for historic, scenic, aesthetic and nature conservation reasons. These give places their unique identity and distinctiveness and provide for cultural experiences and healthy lifestyles.'*

Section 6.1: Recognising the Special Characteristics of Places: The Historic Environment;

'...preserve the special interest of sites on the register of historic parks and gardens.'

Section 6.2: Green Infrastructure; notes that, '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.' and that, 'The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design.'

Section 6.3: Landscape; 'ensuring that the value of all landscapes for their distinctive character and special qualities is protected, and 'supports sustainable management of natural resources and integration of GI to create multifunctional landscapes'.

Section 6.4: Biodiversity and Ecological Networks; '...secure the maintenance and enhancement of ecosystem resilience and resilient ecological networks by improving diversity, extent, condition, and connectivity', and 'A proactive and creative approach towards facilitating the delivery of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience outcomes must be taken by all those participating in the planning process.'

These principles then form the basis for Regional Planning and Local planning and delivery in the form of Strategic Development Plans, and Local Development plans put in place by the relevant local authority and providing specific detail and implementation of policy in the proposed development's locality.

2.3.2 Regional Policy Context: Southeast Wales Area Statement (Natural Resources Wales, 2020)

This policy emphasises improving ecosystem resilience, particularly along the Ely Valley and Llantrisant–Pontyclun corridor, through woodland management, wetland restoration, and connectivity of SINCs.

2.3.3 Local Policy: Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Adopted Local Development Plan 2011-2021

The Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2021 was adopted on 2nd March 2011, to become the adopted development plan for the County Borough Council's administrative boundary, currently the Rhondda Cynon Taf Borough Council are revising the LDP to cover a period from 2022-2037 based upon the 2011-2021 Plan Brecon Beacons.

The Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council LDP Vision: Rhondda Cynon Taf will be a place where:

- (1) An area of sustainable, cohesive communities who are healthy, well connected and who have equal access to high quality homes, jobs, services and facilities.
- (2) An area more resilient and considerate to the challenges of climate change with protected and enhanced biodiversity and green spaces and a well-connected sustainable transport system.
- (3) An area with a diverse and healthy economy, supported by vibrant and viable town centres and a flourishing tourism sector. A RCT that celebrates its heritage and is resilient for the future.

Relevant key objectives:

Objective 9: Promote and enhance biodiversity

Relevant key policies:

- Policy SP1: Climate Change and Carbon Reduction
- Policy SP2: Placemaking and Sustainable Communities
- Policy SP4: Biodiversity and the Natural Environment
- Policy SP5: Green Infrastructure and Open Space

Relevant key policies (from The Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2021:

- Policy CS2: Development in the South
- Policy CS3: Strategic Sites
- Policy AW 5: New Development: Promotes high-quality, sustainable design, good site layout, and landscape integration.
- Policy AW6: Design and Placemaking: Requires development to make a positive contribution to its context and to integrate with green infrastructure and local biodiversity
- Policy AW8: Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment: The site lies close to a the *Coed-yr-Hendy and Mwyndy SLA*.
- Policy AW 10: Environmental Protection and Public Health: Requires developments to avoid adverse environmental effects such as noise, air, and light pollution.
- Policy SSA1: Development in the Principal Town of Pontypridd
- Policy SSA3: Development in the Principal Town of Llantrisant/ Talbot Green
- Policy SSA8: Mwyndy/ Talbot Green Area
- Policy SSA 23: Special Landscape Areas: Protects the character and scenic quality of designated landscapes, including *Coed-yr-Hendy and Mwyndy*.

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

- Natural Environment SPG (2011): Details protection of SINC, trees, hedgerows, and ecological corridors.
- Design and Placemaking SPG (2011): Emphasises landscape structure, sustainable drainage, and soft edges to built form.
- Sustainable Design SPG (2015): Encourages integrated GI, biodiversity enhancements, and SUDS.
- Special Landscape Areas SPG (2011): Defines key characteristics and sensitivities of *Coed-yr-Hendy & Mwyndy SLA*.

3. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY: THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Proposed Development in Mwyndy consists of two options of employment facilities.

Option 1: Erection of a 9,980sqm Class B1c light industrial building with associated access, parking, drainage, landscaping, services and utilities.

Figure 2: Option1- Light Industrial



Option 2: Erection of a 21,490sqm Class B8 data centre with associated access, parking, drainage, landscaping, services and utilities.

Figure 3: Option 2 - Data Centre



They have been designed to deliver sustainable economic growth while enhancing the ecological and environmental value of the site. The development will add to the existing commercial landscape, including the established furniture retailer, Arthur Llewellyn Jenkins, while prioritising the protection and enhancement of natural features.

All mature boundary hedgerows and existing trees will be retained, preserving their role as wildlife corridors and natural carbon sinks. In addition, a diverse mix of new native trees will be planted throughout the site to provide shading, improve air quality and create habitats that support biodiversity. One hedgerow running east to west across the site will be removed.

SuDS will be integrated to manage surface water sustainably, including attenuation ponds planted with seasonal grasses and pollinator-friendly wildflowers. These features will not only mitigate flood risk but also provide vibrant habitats for pollinators and other local wildlife, strengthening ecological connectivity across the site and surrounding area.

The Public Right of Way (PRoW) will be realigned to run alongside the development, dipping below the level of the access road to reduce visibility of the built structures. The slopes along the road will be planted with native clumps of trees, shrubs and grasses, creating a natural and visually appealing environment for users.

Lighting across the development should be carefully designed to minimise impacts on nocturnal wildlife, particularly bats. Directional, low-level lighting and shielding will be employed along boundaries and near retained hedgerows and trees to reduce light spill, ensuring that these important wildlife corridors remain functional.

4. SURVEY FINDINGS AND PROTECTION IN PLACE: GI BASELINE

4.1 Ecological surveys

4.1.1 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

Key aspects of the PEA include:

Purpose: The assessment supports proposals for two development options: a light industrial building or a data centre, both with associated infrastructure and landscaping. The primary objective of the report is to establish the existing ecological baseline, evaluate the Site's importance, and identify mitigation and enhancement measures to ensure the Proposed Development complies with national and local planning policies, specifically the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan.

Methodology: The assessment employed a combination of desk-based research and comprehensive field surveys conducted between October 2024 and late 2025.

- **Desk Study:** Data was sourced from SEWBRc, MAGIC, and DataMapWales to identify designated sites and protected species records.
- **Habitat Surveys:** The site was mapped using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) methodology, supplemented by a detailed National Vegetation Classification (NVC) survey of the grassland in August 2025.
- **Faunal Surveys:**
 - **Bats:** Included ground-level tree appraisals, three night-time bat walkover (NBW) surveys (spring, summer, and autumn 2025), and monthly remote static monitoring from April to October 2025.
 - **Reptiles:** Twelve presence/likely absence surveys using artificial refugia ("tins") were conducted between April and October 2025.
 - **Hazel Dormice:** A nest tube survey using 100 tubes was carried out over seven months to achieve a robust survey effort score.
 - **Other Species:** Specific surveys were also undertaken for Badgers (sett searches) and amphibians (review of off-site ponds and checks during reptile surveys).

Key Ecological Findings:

- **Designations:** The application site is situated within the Afon Clun Valley and Rhiwsaeson Hill Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). However, surveys confirmed the specific land parcel no longer supports the high-quality habitats for which the SINC was originally designated.
- **Habitats:** The site is dominated by agriculturally improved neutral grassland of low botanical diversity. The most valuable ecological features are the native hedgerows and a broadleaved woodland copse, which provide habitat connectivity and support Ancient Woodland Indicator species such as Bluebell and Sanicle.

- **Protected Species:**

- **Bats:** Moderate activity was recorded, primarily by Common and Soprano Pipistrelles (approx. 98% of registrations). Low numbers of light-sensitive species, including Lesser Horseshoe and Barbastelle, were also detected. One mature Ash tree (Tree BRP1) was identified as having potential roosting features.
- **Reptiles:** A 'Medium' population of Grass Snakes was confirmed on-site.
- **Badgers:** Evidence of foraging and two inactive/disused setts were identified.
- **Likely Absence:** Surveys concluded that Hazel Dormice and Great Crested Newts are likely absent from the site.

Recommendations:

The development follows a "Step-wise Approach" to ensure a Net Benefit for Biodiversity (NBB).

- **Habitat Retention:** The vast majority of existing hedgerows and mature trees must be fully retained and protected during construction using temporary fencing (e.g., Heras fencing).
- **New Habitat Creation:** The Landscape Design proposals propose planting species-rich meadow grassland, native scrub, and wetland habitats to enhance local biodiversity.
- **Species Safeguards:**
 - **Bats:** Implement a sensitive lighting strategy to maintain dark corridors for light-sensitive species and install ten durable bat boxes on mature trees.
 - **Reptiles:** Adopt a two-stage vegetation clearance under ecological supervision and install log/brush pile refugia.
 - **Badgers:** Conduct a pre-commencement sett check and implement site safety measures, such as providing escape ramps in open trenches.
 - **Birds:** Clear potential nesting habitat outside the breeding season (March to July) and install 20 nesting boxes, including specialized swift boxes on the new building

4.1.2 Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and Mitigation Strategy

The scope of the report aligns with the guidance set out in British Standard BS 5837:2012 (Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations).

Baseline Arboricultural Resource

The tree survey, undertaken in November 2025, recorded 158 arboricultural features across the Site, which comprises agricultural fields and seasonally wet scrubland.

Tree Quality Assessment Highlights:

- **High Quality (Category A):** Only one tree, an English oak (T103), was identified as high quality (Category A). This tree is mature, possesses substantial stature and crown spread, offers good visual amenity, and is of considerable arboricultural interest. It has an estimated remaining life expectancy of over 40 years.
- **Moderate Quality (Category B):** Ten trees, primarily English oak and sycamore, were categorized as moderate quality (Category B). These specimens have definable visual amenity value and the potential to mature into higher quality trees over time.
- **Low and Very-Low Quality (Category C and U):** The majority of features (66.5%) are low-quality (Category C), consisting of common native species likely established without formal maintenance. Importantly, 42 trees (26.5% of the features) were recorded as very-low quality (Category U) and unsuitable for long-term retention. Aside from two dying specimens, these are common ash trees infected with ash dieback disease (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*). Their anticipated retention span does not exceed ten years under current conditions, which poses a significant adverse impact on the overall quality of the baseline arboricultural resource.

The Proposed Development, which involves constructing a data centre or light industrial development, access roads, and attenuation ponds, was developed using a stepwise approach to avoid and minimise the requirement for tree removal.

Tree Removals

- The Proposed Development requires the removal of two low-quality hedges (H154 and H155), the partial removal of a third (H156), and the removal of one very-low quality tree (T1).
- These removals are necessary to provide site access and ensure the efficient use of land.
- The overall impact is considered adverse but negligible in scope because the loss involves only low and very-low quality features and equates to only 3.4% (870m²) of the total crown area across the Site (25,364m²).

Construction Impacts and T103 Protection

- The Proposed Development is generally situated away from retained trees.
- The primary impact relates to the high-quality English oak (T103), where proposals for an access road, manoeuvring area, and an attenuation pond will marginally encroach into its Root Protection Area (RPA). This encroachment is estimated at 82m², representing 11.6% of the tree's total 707m² RPA.
- The adverse effects of this encroachment are likely to be slight in scope and transitory in nature, as Tree T103 is in good condition, and sufficient undisturbed soil exists around the rest of the RPA to provide compensatory rooting volume.

- Should pruning be necessary for access, it will be minor and conducted in accordance with British Standard BS 3998:2010 (Tree work – recommendations).

Mitigation Planting

The Proposed Development has been designed to provide mitigation for necessary tree removals. This includes space allocated for mitigatory planting at a ratio of at least three new trees for each one that is lost (or an equivalence in canopy area). This approach aims to deliver long-term benefits regarding canopy area increase, species diversity, and visual/biodiversity value.

Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS)

The Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) describes the protective measures required during site clearance and construction, following BS 5837.

Key Protection Measures:

- Construction Exclusion Zone (CEZ): Robust tree protection fencing will be implemented outside the RPA of all retained trees (except T103, where the fencing will be positioned to allow the minimal required encroachment). The area behind the fencing is the CEZ, where all potentially damaging activities—including excavation, storage of materials/chemicals, and vehicular access—are prohibited.
- Phasing: Tree protection measures must be correctly phased: 1) Undertake tree removals; 2) Install tree protection fencing; 3) Site clearance and construction; 4) Remove protection once construction has ceased; 5) Soft landscaping and mitigatory tree planting.

Monitoring and Supervision: A suitably qualified and experienced Project Arboriculturist must be appointed. This individual is responsible for monitoring compliance, attending pre-commencement meetings, and advising on all ad-hoc arboricultural matters. The Project Arboriculturist will maintain a record of monitoring and provide this written record to Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council within five working days of the inspection.

5. MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Green Infrastructure (GI) is defined by the Town and Country Planning Association as follows: “Green infrastructure is a network of multi-functional green space and other green features, urban and rural, which can deliver quality of life and environmental benefits for communities.”

Key features: The key features of green infrastructure are that it is a network of integrated spaces and features, not just individual elements; and that it is 'multi-functional' – it provides multiple benefits simultaneously. These can be to:

- support people's mental and physical health
- encourage active travel
- cool urban areas during heat waves
- attract investment
- reduce water run-off during flash flooding
- carbon storage
- provide sustainable drainage

The extent to which Green Infrastructure provides these benefits depends on how it is designed and maintained, and the maturity and health of the elements (trees, planting, SuDS etc) that form it.

Table 1 lists assets within the Scheme and opportunities presented by the proposed development.

Table 1: Assets and Opportunities

Category	Existing Assets	Opportunities	Notes / Benefits
Habitats and Landscape	Landscape mix of woodland, hedgerows and grassland with natural wet areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include wildflower meadows / pollinator strips on slopes and surrounds • Attenuation pond for water storage & biodiversity 	Biodiversity uplift, flood management
Water & Drainage	Natural drainage areas on edges of the site, leading to Afon Clun (river)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • swales at car parks and along route • Constructed ponds /wetlands 	Stormwater control, water quality, amenity value
Recreation & Access	Existing PRoW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realign PRoW • Wetland / pond feature • Viewing deck and pathways over and around pond feature 	Staff wellness, access to PRoW
Heritage & Built Assets	N/A		
Connectivity & Corridors	Direct links to and from the A4119 and the A473;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pollinator planting on slopes 	biodiversity corridor

Category	Existing Assets	Opportunities	Notes / Benefits
Community & Governance	N/A		
Monitoring & Innovation	N/A (baseline habitats only)		

Timescales (for the Opportunities column above):

- Quick wins (0–12 months): pollinator strips, swales and ponds, invasive control
- Near-term (1–3 yrs): permeable surfacing, riparian buffer, tree canopy expansion
- Medium/long-term (3–10 yrs): habitat corridors, natural flood storage

5.1 Mitigation and enhancement measures

Building on the opportunities presented by the development of the Site, a number of enhancements have been incorporated into the Proposed Development, as summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Mwyndy Development Enhancements (See Appendix B for mitigation drawings)

Type	Location	Specifications
Planting Proposals	Within the development, where any lawn, shrubs, hedgerows and trees have been removed due to construction.	Any removed trees and hedgerows must be replaced at a 3:1 ratio. Lawn Additional attenuation pond planting to be included, consisting of pollinator wild flowers and grasses suitable for seasonally wet areas
New / Existing Trees	Within the development, following further arboricultural surveys.	Mature trees RPZ to be protected during construction, removed trees to be replaced at 3:1 ratio. Species list received from arboricultural survey.
Habitat connectivity / enhancement	Within the development, where any lawn, shrubs, hedgerows and trees have been removed due to construction.	Any trees, hedgerows, or shrubs that are removed will be replaced.
SuDS integration	Within the development, at the northern and western edges and along the hard surfacing on the east.	Attenuation pond for drainage to function as a wetland. Swales along the tarred areas to be included consisting pollinator wild flowers and grasses suitable for seasonally wet areas
Lighting	Within the development	Implement a sensitive lighting strategy to maintain dark corridors for light-sensitive species

5.2 Application of the Stepwise Approach

The project team has applied the Stepwise Approach to biodiversity in accordance with PPW and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This approach prioritises the avoidance of ecological harm, followed by minimisation, mitigation, and, where residual effects remain, compensation and enhancement to secure biodiversity benefits.

In accordance with PPW and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, the Proposed Development at Mwyndy adopts a Stepwise Approach to protect and enhance Green Infrastructure (GI) and biodiversity.

1. Avoidance

The primary goal of the strategy is to avoid ecological harm by retaining high-value natural assets within the site design.

- **Habitat Retention:** The vast majority of existing native hedgerows and mature trees are to be fully retained to preserve essential wildlife corridors and carbon sinks.
- **Protection of Woodland:** The onsite broadleaved woodland copse, which contains Ancient Woodland indicator species (Bluebell and Sanicle), will be protected through sensitive site design.
- **Strategic Siting:** The development footprint is intentionally located on agriculturally improved neutral grassland, which has been identified as having low botanical diversity and ecological value.
- **Arboricultural Safeguards:** The layout avoids major encroachment into the Root Protection Area (RPA) of the high-quality English Oak (T103).

2. Minimisation

Where impacts are unavoidable, measures are implemented to reduce their scope and intensity.

- **Limited Vegetation Loss:** Tree and hedge removals are restricted to narrow breaks required for access, totalling **only 3.4% of the site's overall crown area**.
- **Construction Safeguards:** A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) will be strictly followed, including the use of temporary protective fencing to create Construction Exclusion Zones (CEZ).
- **Sensitive Lighting Strategy:** To minimise disturbance to light-sensitive bat species (such as Lesser Horseshoe and Barbastelle), a strategy using directional, low-level LED lighting and shielding will be implemented to maintain dark corridors.

3. Mitigation

Mitigation measures address remaining impacts to safeguard protected species and maintain ecosystem function.

- **Replacement Planting:** Any necessary tree removals will be mitigated at a 3:1 replacement ratio (or canopy area equivalence) to ensure long-term resource continuity.
- **Species Safeguards:**
 - **Reptiles:** A two-stage vegetation clearance under ecological supervision will be used to allow Grass Snakes to disperse naturally into retained habitats.

- **Badgers/Birds:** Pre-commencement checks for active setts and nests will be conducted, with works timed to avoid the main breeding season.
- **Wildlife-Friendly Drainage:** Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) will incorporate amphibian ladders and wildlife kerbs to prevent the entrapment of small animals.

4. Compensation and Enhancement

The final step focuses on delivering a NBB by creating new habitats and improving local ecosystem resilience.

- **New Habitat Creation:** The strategy includes planting species-rich meadow grassland (using EM3 mix), native scrub, and wetland habitats within SuDS attenuation ponds (using EM8 mix).
- **Species-Specific Enhancements:**
 - Installation of ten durable bat boxes and twenty bird nesting boxes (including four specialized swift boxes on the new building).
 - Creation of refugia features, such as log and brush piles, for reptiles and invertebrates.
- **Connectivity and Social Value:** The realignment of the Public Right of Way (PRoW) with associated native planting provides enhanced visual amenity and access to nature for the community.
- **Invasive Species Management:** A programme to control and eradicate Himalayan Balsam will be implemented to allow native flora to thrive.

5.3 DECCA Assessment – Supporting Ecosystem Resilience

In accordance with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and PPW, this DECCA assessment evaluates the resilience of the ecosystem at Mwyndy by examining its Diversity, Extent, Condition, Connectivity, and Aspects of Resilience.

1. Diversity

The Site features a variety of habitats, though they are dominated by agriculturally improved neutral grassland of low botanical interest. The primary ecological diversity is found in the native hedgerows with mature trees, bramble scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, and a broadleaved woodland copse.

- **Faunal Diversity:** The site supports a 'Medium' population of Grass Snakes, a moderate level of bat activity (dominated by Common and Soprano Pipistrelles but including light-sensitive species like Lesser Horseshoe), and a typical assemblage of farmland and edge-nesting birds.
- **Floral Diversity:** While the grassland is species-poor, the woodland copse contains Ancient Woodland Indicator species such as Bluebell and Sanicle.

2. Extent

The Proposed Development is a Strategic Site for employment, comprising approximately 15 hectares.

- **Habitat Retention:** The design prioritises the retention of the most valuable natural assets. The vast majority of existing hedgerows and mature trees will be preserved, with only minor removals (narrow breaks for access) totalling approximately 3.4% of the site's overall crown area.
- **Habitat Creation:** The GI strategy includes the creation of new species-rich meadow grassland, native scrub, and wetland habitats within SuDS attenuation ponds, which will expand the extent of high-quality habitats compared to the current baseline.

3. Condition

There is a clear distinction between the condition of the internal fields and the boundary features:

- **Grassland:** The dominant habitat is in poor condition ecologically, described as "improved" due to modern farming techniques, such as the use of fertilisers and herbicides, which have reduced its botanical diversity.
- **Arboriculture:** One high-quality English Oak (T103) of significant stature was identified. However, the overall tree condition is affected by ash dieback, with 42 trees (26.5% of the surveyed features) recorded as very-low quality and unsuitable for long-term retention.
- **Management:** The site is currently impacted by Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS), specifically Himalayan Balsam, which outcompetes native flora.

4. Connectivity

The Site serves as a functional link within the wider local landscape:

- **SINC Integration:** The land is situated within the Afon Clun Valley and Rhiwsaeson Hill Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).
- **Wildlife Corridors:** The retained internal and boundary hedgerows provide essential ecological connectivity, facilitating the movement of bats, small mammals, and reptiles through the landscape.
- **GI Links:** The strategy maintains "dark corridors" for light-sensitive bat species and strengthens links to the Afon Clun River corridor to the north.

5. Aspects of Resilience

The Proposed Development implements the Step-wise Approach to deliver a NBB, thereby increasing the ecosystem's ability to persist and adapt.

- **Enhancement Measures:** Resilience is bolstered through the installation of ten bat boxes, twenty bird nesting boxes (including specialized swift boxes), and the creation of reptile refugia (log and brush piles).

- **Adaptive Management:** A programme to control and eradicate Himalayan Balsam will allow native species to recover.
- **Mitigation Planting:** Any unavoidable tree loss is mitigated at a 3:1 replacement ratio, ensuring the long-term sustainability of the canopy cover and structural diversity.
- **Hydrological Resilience:** The integration of SuDS (swales and attenuation basins) manages surface water while providing new, stable habitats for damp-meadow species and invertebrates.

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6. BENEFITS AND OUTCOMES

6.1 Environmental Benefits

- Native planting schemes will attract pollinators and provide support for local urban wildlife.
- Replacement planting in areas where hedgerows and trees have been removed, along new slopes and within the pond areas, will improve habitat connectivity and strengthen ecological networks within the site.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), delivered through swales alongside the hard areas and an attenuation pond, will help manage surface water runoff and encourage natural infiltration.

6.2 Social Benefits

- The viewing deck and pathway around the pond to promote staff wellness, contributing to improved health outcomes and potential reductions in healthcare.
- Greener surroundings and enhanced visual quality will create a more attractive environment, encouraging walking while supporting regular physical activity.

6.3 Economic Benefits

- Aesthetic and functional green spaces for staff enjoyment
- Reduced demand on stormwater infrastructure due to sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) decreases long-term public maintenance costs
- Employment opportunities

6.4 Contribution to Ecosystem Services

Table 3: Ecosystem Services

Building with Nature Standards / Themes	Principles	Alignment
Core Standards	<p>Optimises Multifunctionality and Connectivity</p> <p>Positively Responds to the Climate Emergency</p> <p>Maximises Environmental Net Gain</p> <p>Champions a Context Driven Approach</p>	<p>Native planting to replace any removed vegetation;</p> <p>Creation of swales and attenuation ponds and associated planting;</p> <p>Carbon sequestration through increased biomass contributes to climate change mitigation by reducing CO₂ levels.</p> <p>Replacing trees and hedgerows at a ratio of 3:1 to maintain the character and distinctiveness of the wider</p>

Building with Nature Standards / Themes	Principles	Alignment
	<p>Creates Distinctive Places</p> <p>Secures Effective Place-keeping</p>	<p>Rhonnda Cynon Taf Borough and immediate Mwyndy area.</p>
Wellbeing Standards	<p>Brings Nature Closer to People</p> <p>Supports Equitable and Inclusive Places</p>	<p>Accessible green space; Improved connectivity to connect residents of Mwyndy and the surrounding communities (Llantrisant, Pontypridd, and Pontyclun) to local facilities, services and employment hubs</p>
Water Standards	<p>Delivers Climate Resilient Water Management</p> <p>Brings Water Closer to People</p>	<p>New swales and attenuation ponds reduce flood risk and improve water quality;</p> <p>Native planting that supports and improves water quality.</p>
Wildlife Standards	<p>Delivers Wildlife Enhancement</p> <p>Underpins Nature's Recovery</p>	<p>Native planting and ecological corridors support pollinators wildlife;</p>

7. MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT

7.1 Monitoring Effectiveness

7.1.1 Objectives:

- Assess ecological, hydrological, and social performance of the GI.
- Identify maintenance needs early.
- Ensure design intent and biodiversity targets are met.

7.1.2 Key Monitoring Metrics:

Table 4: Key Monitoring Categories

Category	Categories / Indicators	Frequency	Reporting
Vegetation Health	% plant survival, canopy cover, species richness	Annual walkover (Sept / October)	Report with Photos
Water Management	Infiltration rate, runoff reduction, water quality (pH, suspended solids)	Twice annually (spring/autumn)	Report with water testing
Biodiversity	Presence of pollinators, bird usage, invertebrate diversity	Annually in summer	Report through ecological surveying and presence of pollinators during site visits
Public Use & Perception	Footfall counts, user satisfaction surveys	Annually	Users' satisfaction report collection
Climate Resilience	Drought/heat tolerance performance, storm impact	Post-extreme-weather events	

7.1.3 Data Collection Methods:

- On-site inspections by certified landscape/ecological specialists.
- Citizen science engagement (local volunteers record wildlife sightings).
- Sensors for soil moisture and water flow (optional for automation).

7.1.4 Reporting:

- Annual GI Performance Report.

Five-year review against baseline targets with recommendations.

7.2 Long-Term Management Strategies

7.2.1 Core Principles:

- Ongoing management and maintenance rather than a once-off 'install-and-forget' approach.

- Ongoing management adapted in response to observed results.
- Management practices to be reviewed and adapted based on performance monitoring and site observations.

7.2.2 Long-term stewardship aimed at maintaining high-quality landscape character and ecological function. Management Elements:

- **Maintenance Plan:**
A detailed planting schedule covering irrigation, pruning, weeding, litter removal, replacement planting, and inspection of sustainable drainage features.
- **Monitoring Plan:**
Regular assessment of planting performance, habitat conditions, and drainage functionality to inform adaptive planting.
- **Adaptive Planting:**
Introduce climate-resilient species if original palette underperforms due to changing site conditions.
- **Habitat Connectivity:**
Retention and enhancement of green links that contribute to wider ecological networks and wildlife movement.
- **Training and Handover:**
Comprehensive handover from landscape contractors to the appointed management company association, including care manuals, plant schedules, and maintenance specifications.

7.2.3 Stakeholder Involvement:

- Oversight and coordination led by the development management company management body.
- Opportunities for employee involvement through community planting days or local biodiversity initiatives.
- Engagement with local environmental groups or consultants for periodic ecological advice or biodiversity monitoring.
- Engagement with nearby schools/universities for biodiversity surveys.
- Partnerships with NGOs for specialist ecological input.

7.2.4 Funding Mechanisms for Sustainability

Short-Term (first 5 years)

- Maintenance covered within the capital project budget and/ or developer's defects liability period, including contractor-led care for the establishment phase (for first 60 months).

Long-Term (beyond 5 years)

- Funded through annual service charges or estate management fees collected from residents.
- Potential support through local partnership grants (e.g. biodiversity enhancement or community greening funds)
- Optional community-led fundraising or sponsorship initiatives to support ongoing ecological improvements.

7.3 Programme for Implementation

Table 5: Implementation Programme

Phase	Timeframe	Key Actions	Responsibility
Pre-Completion	Months -3 to 0	Install GI; establish plantings;	Contractor
Early Aftercare	Year 1–2	Intensive maintenance; quarterly monitoring	Contractor (under defects liability)
Handover	Month 24	Formal transfer of responsibility; training; handover of manuals	Contractor → Busine Association
Steady-State Maintenance	Year 3–5	Biannual monitoring; annual report; adaptive planting as required	Private
Long-Term Stewardship	Year 6+	Annual inspections; biodiversity surveys; funding reviews	Private (lead) + community/NGO partners
Major Review	Every 5 years	Comprehensive review; re-budgeting; strategy update	Private

7.4 Management, Aftercare Period, and Responsibility

- **Initial Aftercare Period:** 12 months (defects liability, contractor accountable for replacements and repairs).
- **Remainder of maintenance period:** Contractor responsible for ongoing maintenance
- **Transition Management:** Handover between contractor and private team before formal responsibility shift.
- **Long-Term Responsibility:** Private
- **Lead Authority:** Private
- **Technical Support:** Ecologists, horticulturists under private instruction.
- **Community Role:** Volunteer stewardship days, wildlife logging.
- **Accountability:** Annual GI report reviewed by a Green Infrastructure Steering Group (private and stakeholders).

8. CONCLUSION

- The Proposed Development demonstrates how strategic employment growth can be successfully integrated with environmental stewardship through a Green Infrastructure (GI) strategy. By strictly adhering to the stepwise approach, the scheme prioritises the avoidance of ecological harm through the retention of high-value natural assets, including the native hedgerows, mature trees, and the broadleaved woodland copse. While the site is a Strategic Site for employment, the project ensures a NBB by converting low-value agriculturally improved grassland into a diverse mosaic of species-rich meadows, native scrub, and wetland habitats.
- The integration of SuDS—including attenuation ponds and swales—effectively manages surface water while creating new, stable habitats that bolster local ecosystem resilience. Furthermore, the development provides measurable social and economic benefits by realigning the Public Right of Way (PRoW) to improve community access to nature and enhancing the visual quality of the landscape for staff and local residents.
- In conclusion, the proposal is fully aligned with PPW and the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan. Through comprehensive mitigation measures, such as a 3:1 tree replacement ratio and a sensitive lighting strategy, alongside a commitment to long-term monitoring and management, the Mwyndy development will deliver a sustainable facility that actively contributes to the recovery and resilience of the local natural environment.

9. REFERENCES

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3. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (March 2011) Local Development Plan (up to 2021)- current until replacement with 2022-2037 Local Development Plan.
4. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (March 2011) Supplementary Planning Guidance: Design and Placemaking
5. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (March 2011) Supplementary Planning Guidance: Designing Town Centres
6. Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (April 2024) Revised Local Development Plan 2022-2037 Preferred Strategy

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APPENDICES

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Appendix A
Drawing proposals

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Figure 4: Mwyndy Industrial Unit Landscape GA Plan

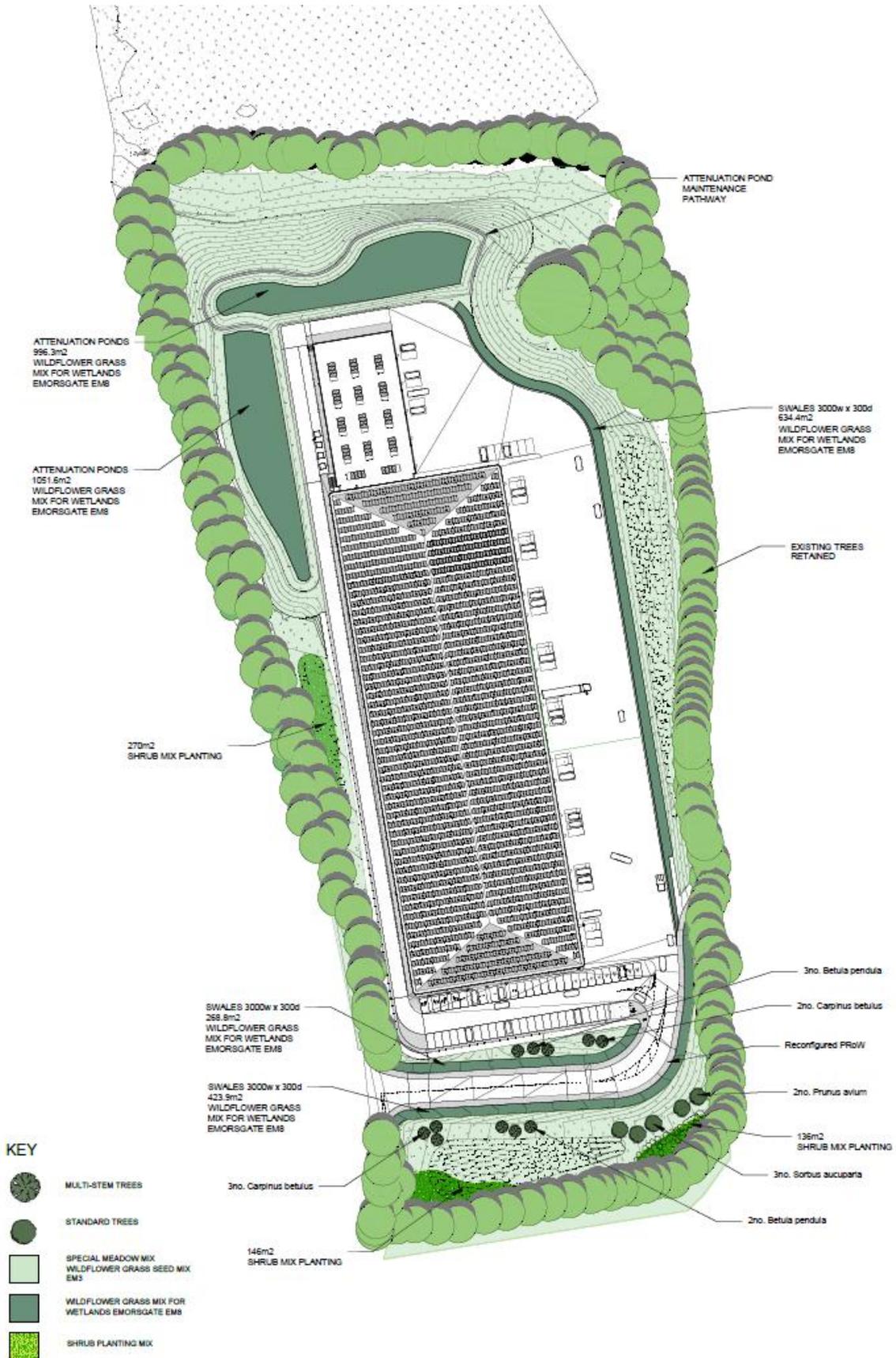
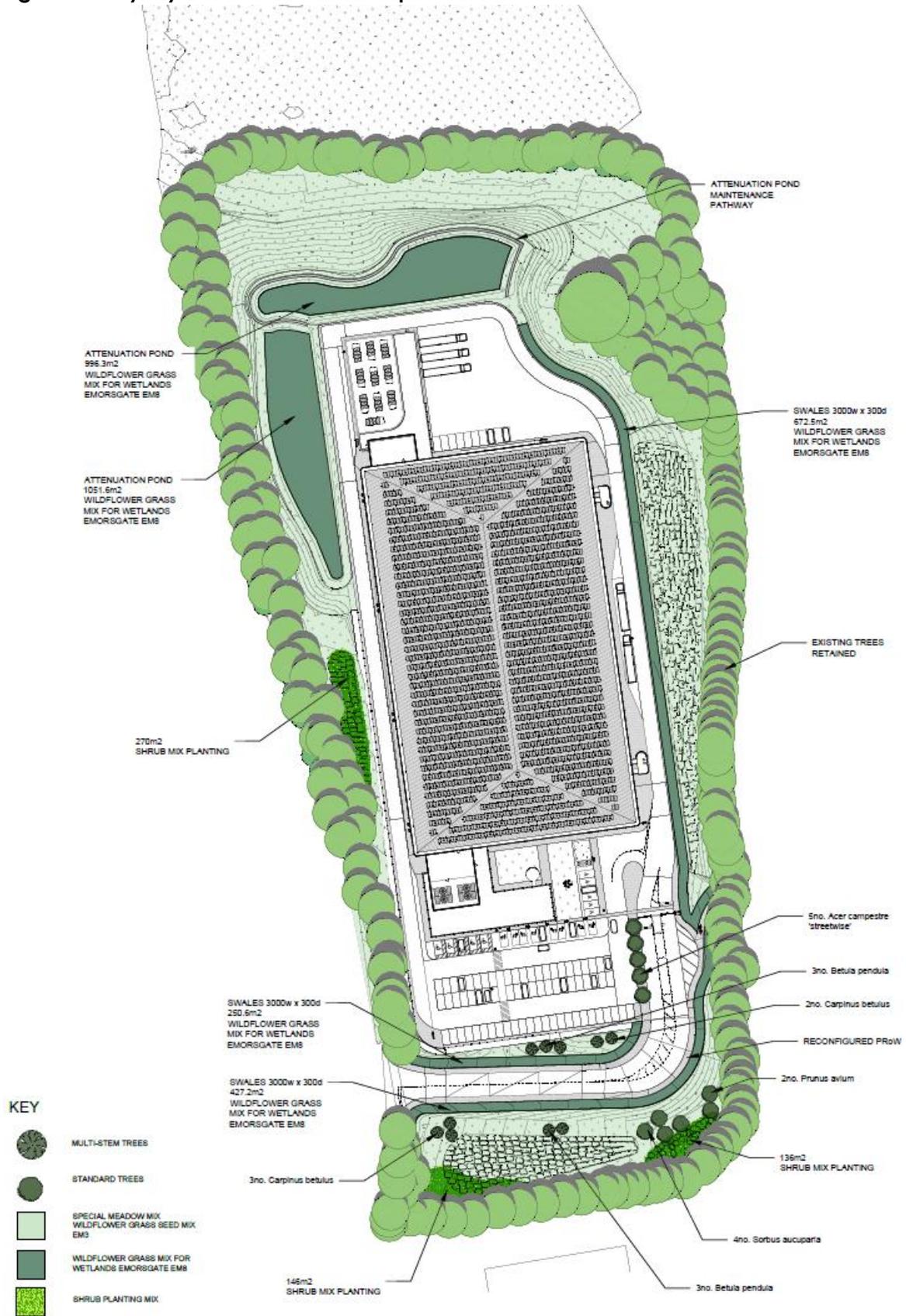


Figure 5: Mwyndy Data Centre Landscape GA Plan



Appendix B
Site Photographs

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View north



View across into wetland area



Photo of grasslands with invasive Himalyan balsam in the background



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