Green Infrastructure Statement

Units 1 and 2, Kays and Kears Industrial Estate

1. Introduction

On 7 February 2024, Welsh Government published the revised Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12. PPW 12 included revisions to Chapter 6 (Biodiversity), one of these key changes being the recommendation for a Green Infrastructure Statement to be submitted with all planning applications.

Paragraph 6.2.12 states that '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 stepwise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied.'

The purpose of this Green Infrastructure Statement is to explain how green infrastructure has been considered within the Application Site, defined as the red line boundary of the planning application.

This Statement supports a planning application for a modest operational development at Units 1 and 2, Kays and Kears Industrial Estate. It has been prepared with regard to Torfaen County Borough Council's Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance and related biodiversity and ecosystem resilience requirements.

The Statement is proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposal. The development comprises two Legio block bays, roof, noise barrier, storage containers and a welfare cabin, all located on an existing hardstanding car park area associated with a former plastics recycling site. No extension into surrounding vegetated land is proposed.

2. Site Context and Existing Green Infrastructure

The Application Site forms part of an established industrial estate and comprises existing industrial units with associated surfaced operational and parking areas. The proposed works are located within an existing hardstanding car park area that has previously supported industrial and recycling-related activity. No statutory designated sites are located within the Application Site.

The wider site includes treelines and vegetated areas to the rear and east. These provide the main existing green infrastructure value, including visual screening, habitat connectivity and local biodiversity value. The proposed development has been positioned well within these treelines and away from vegetated boundaries.

As the works are confined to existing hardstanding, the baseline green infrastructure value of the development area is limited. No known wildlife corridors, informal green routes, watercourses, hedgerows, trees, woodland, grassland or other green infrastructure assets are proposed to be removed or directly affected.

3. Description of the Proposed Development

The proposal comprises the installation of Legio blocks to form two storage bays within the existing car park area. The bays will temporarily accommodate separately collected glass, mixed paper and cardboard delivered by recycling vehicles. Materials will be held for a short period before being loaded onto a larger vehicle for bulking and onward transportation to processing facilities.

A welfare cabin is also proposed to support site operations. The development is small in scale, operational in nature and reversible, with no requirement for significant groundworks, vegetation clearance or permanent alteration to the surrounding green infrastructure network.

4. Green Infrastructure Approach and Step-wise Consideration

The design follows the principle of avoiding harm to existing green infrastructure. The bays, containers and welfare cabin have been located on existing hardstanding rather than within or next to vegetated land. This avoids the removal of trees, hedgerows, scrub, grassland or other habitat features and protects the treelines to the rear and east of the site.

The proposal maintains the existing green infrastructure network by retaining boundary vegetation and avoiding encroachment into areas that may provide ecological connectivity. Its location within an established industrial setting also limits any additional fragmentation of habitats or green corridors.

Any potential effects are expected to be limited to installation-stage disturbance and operational housekeeping. These can be managed through site control, good working practices and ongoing maintenance.

5. Potential Impacts and Avoidance Measures

Impacts on green infrastructure are expected to be minimal because the works are located entirely on existing hardstanding. The proposal does not require the loss of trees, vegetation, open space, public rights of way, water features or identified habitat corridors.

- The siting of the bays and welfare cabin avoids surrounding treelines and vegetated boundaries.
- No vegetation clearance is proposed as part of the development.
- The existing hardstanding will be used to avoid additional land take and ground disturbance.
- The temporary storage of recyclable materials will be managed within defined bays to prevent spread beyond the operational area.
- Materials will be held for short periods only before bulking and onward transportation.
- Good housekeeping measures will be maintained to avoid windblown material, litter or adverse effects on adjoining vegetated areas.

6. Drainage and Spillage Management

The bays will be located on existing hardstanding and managed so that deposited materials remain within the defined operational area. As the materials comprise dry recyclable paper, glass and cardboard, the risk of liquid pollution is low. Routine housekeeping and inspections will be maintained to prevent litter, debris or contaminants entering surface water drainage systems or adjoining vegetated areas.

Any spillages, including fuel, oil or hydraulic fluid from vehicles or plant, will be dealt with promptly using spill control materials kept on site. Staff will report spillages immediately, isolate the affected area where safe, and prevent material entering drainage gullies or nearby green infrastructure. Waste from spill response activity will be collected and disposed of through an appropriate waste route.

7. Green Infrastructure Enhancement and Management

Although the proposal is small in scale and avoids direct impacts on green infrastructure, proportionate enhancement opportunities will be considered through the wider site development, which will be subject to a separate planning application. This may include native planting in suitable non-operational margins, bird or bat boxes on appropriate retained structures or trees, and continued protection of existing trees and boundary vegetation during installation works. Any measures will be proportionate and will avoid conflict with safe vehicle movements and recycling operations.

In the interim, a pollinator planter will be placed adjacent to the welfare cabin as a proportionate enhancement.

8. Conclusion

The proposed development has been designed to minimise impacts on green infrastructure by using an existing hardstanding car park area within an established industrial site. It avoids the loss of trees, vegetation, habitat features and known wildlife routes, and remains well within the treelines to the rear and east of the site.

The proposal is therefore considered to maintain the existing green infrastructure network and accord with the principles of Torfaen County Borough Council's Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance. It is proportionate, contained and located to avoid adverse effects on surrounding green infrastructure, with scope for modest enhancement and careful operational management where practicable.