



## MAES MERDDYN, BRYNSIENCYN: GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STATEMENT

**A report for: Williams Homes Bala Ltd.**

**Report Reference: EE.4343b.24.TY**

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09/05/2024	Tim Yardley	Dr Katy Read CEcol MCIEEM CEnv DipSM	1	

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## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 Project Introduction

- 1.1.1 Enfys Ecology Limited were commissioned by Williams Homes Bala Ltd. to provide a Green Infrastructure Statement for a proposed development at Maes Merddyn, known as 'Land off the A4080' in Brynsiencyn, Anglesey.
- 1.1.2 The proposed development comprises an estate of 28 dwellings, including 19 affordable units, including houses and apartments of various sizes, together with associated works and landscaping. This scheme is being developed in partnership with Clwyd Alyn, who (if the scheme is approved) would take on the housing scheme at the end of the development. It will be for entirely affordable housing which will be owned and managed by Clwyd Alyn. This approach would ensure their long-term affordability for the occupiers and that they provide a resource for the community for decades to come.
- 1.1.3 This Green Infrastructure statement has been produced by Enfys Ecology using information provided by the wider project team. The statement draws together information from the different technical disciplines to consider the biodiversity, blue infrastructure, access and health & wellbeing arrangements as part of the proposed development as these are all important elements when considering a cohesive green infrastructure provision.

### 1.2 Green Infrastructure – National Policy

- 1.2.1 Green infrastructure (GI) is defined in Planning Policy for Wales (PPW) Edition 12 as *“the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places”*. Green infrastructure can function at a range of different scales, from entire ecosystems to street trees and is capable of providing several functions at the same time and as a result offers multiple benefits, for social, economic and cultural as well as environmental resilience.
- 1.2.2 PPW 12 requires local authorities to produce Green Infrastructure Assessments which should be used to develop a robust approach to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, increasing ecosystem resilience and the multiple benefits obtained from nature, and should identify key strategic opportunities where the protection, retention, restoration, creation and connection of green features and functions would deliver the most significant benefits.
- 1.2.3 For development projects, PPW 12 confirms 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”*. The green infrastructure statement must also be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (PPW12, paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied.
- 1.2.4 Development proposals should take green infrastructure (GI) into consideration in order to avoid negative impacts on habitats and species, and seek ways to maintain and enhance

biodiversity. Impacts on habitats and species should be treated in a step-wise manner (PPW 12, paragraph 6.4.15), by seeking to:

- **Avoid** damage to biodiversity in its widest sense by maintaining the largest possible area of existing habitat supporting biodiversity and functioning ecosystems, particularly Section 7 habitats and species where present, through careful development design and consideration of long-term maintenance and management and ensuring that retained habitats continue to be well connected to adjacent habitats to provide connectivity for key species.
- **Mitigate or restore** by identifying measures to address the specific negative effects by repairing damaged habitats and disturbed species. The measures should seek to restore in excess of like for like, accounting for disturbance and time lags for the recovery of habitat and species, and in every case, mitigation or restoration measures should seek to build ecosystem resilience within the site and where possible the wider area.
- As a last resort off-site **compensation** for unavoidable damage must be provided. This must be of significant magnitude to fully compensate for any loss.
- All development must **deliver a net benefit** for biodiversity and ecosystem resilience from the baseline state (proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed).

1.2.5 Green infrastructure provides not only biodiversity benefits, but is also capable of providing several functions at the same time and as a result offers multiple benefits, for social, economic and cultural as well as environmental resilience. 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 (PPW 12, paragraph 6.2.3).

### 1.3 Green Infrastructure – Local Policy

1.3.1 The Isle of Anglesey County Council and Gwynedd Council decided to prepare a Joint Local Development Plan (JLDP) for Anglesey and Gwynedd Planning Authority areas. The Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development was formally adopted on 31 July 2017 and the majority of decisions on planning applications in the two Planning Authority areas will be based on the contents of the Plan. The Plan sets out the strategy and aims for development and land use in the area covered by the Anglesey and Gwynedd Planning Authorities and includes policies to implement the strategy and aims over a period of 15 years (2011 to 2026). The Plan includes a Vision and Objectives for the Plan, a Strategy and a series of Strategic and Detailed Policies and provides a monitoring framework.

1.3.2 Following a decision by Cyngor Gwynedd and the Isle of Anglesey County Council to cease the joint working agreement on Planning Policy matters on 31 March 2023, (and Gwynedd establishing its own Planning Policy Service) the Anglesey and Gwynedd Joint Local Development Plan continues to provide the local policy framework for decisions on planning applications, until separate Local Development Plans are adopted.

- 1.3.3 The LDP includes a schedule of the key matters that the plan aims to tackle of which one is specifically relevant to biodiversity – *“KI 28. Need to protect and whenever possible, improve the natural environment, habitats and species of the area”*. Strategic Objective SO17, under Theme 5: Protect and enhance the natural and built environment states the following *“SO17 Protect, enhance and manage the natural and heritage assets of the Plan area, including its natural resources, wildlife habitats, and its landscape character and historic environment”*.
- 1.3.4 Chapter 6 of the LPD sets out the policies in relation to the natural and built environment. Strategic policy PS19: Conserving and Where Appropriate Enhancing the Natural Environment, details the Council’s requirements to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the Plan area’s distinctive natural environment. The policy sets out the natural environment considerations taken into account when determining a planning application which include protection of designated sites, and protection and enhancement, where possible, for networks of natural habitats, green and blue infrastructure and protected species and specifically, protection, retention and enhancement of trees, hedgerows or woodland of ecological (or other) value.
- 1.3.5 Strategic policy PCYFF 4: Design and Landscaping identifies that the design of new development will play an important role in maintaining the Plan area’s high quality environment. The Plan states that development needs to be carefully planned to ensure that valuable features and characteristics are protected and enhanced and suggests that good design helps to provide a sense of place, creates or reinforces local distinctiveness, promotes community cohesiveness and social well being, all of which are important considerations for green infrastructure. Policy PCYFF 4 details the requirements of a landscape scheme illustrating the importance of the scheme in protecting and enhancing green and blue infrastructure features on site and linking to the wider countryside.
- 1.3.6 Policy AMG 5: Local Biodiversity Conservation aims to ensure protection and improvements to local biodiversity, in particular, protecting those species and habitats that have been identified within the Gwynedd and Anglesey Local Biodiversity Action Plans. The policy sets out the need for avoiding significant harmful impacts and consider the opportunities to create, improve and manage wildlife habitats, corridors stepping stones, trees, hedges and watercourses.
- 1.3.7 Policy AMG 6: Protecting Sites of Regional or Local Importance sets out the policy requirements if a project will impact on regional or locally designated sites, identifying the requirement to evidence that there is an overriding reason for the impact and that there are no other suitable sites for the development. The explanatory text states that *“Where it can be proven that there is an overriding social/environmental and/or economic need for the development and where it can be proved that there is no other suitable site for the development, it must be ensured that there are appropriate mitigation measures are in place, for example, offsetting”*.
- 1.3.8 Together with the Council’s decision to adopt the Joint Local Development Plan it was decided that the Supplementary Planning Guidance which had been adopted to support the previous Unitary Development Plan should remain, where appropriate, as material planning consideration in determining planning applications, until they are replaced by a new SPG or

withdrawn. The following Supplementary Planning Guidance are of relevance to green infrastructure when deciding on planning applications in the Gwynedd Local Planning Authority Area.

- 1.3.9 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Landscape Character (2009) aims to assist in the interpretation and application of national and local policies concerned with the protection and enhancement of landscape character and in doing so it will provide detailed guidance to members of the public, developers, planning officers and the Council's planning committees on planning issues relating to the landscape. Whilst the SPG is generally 'landscape' focussed, this includes connecting wildlife features, green corridors and the wider habitats within an area, and as such is considered to be relevant to green infrastructure.
- 1.3.10 Supplementary Planning Guidance: Open Spaces in New Development (2019) aims to improve the quality of new developments and facilitate a consistent and transparent way of making decisions. The guidance sets out the need to consider green corridors as part of an Open Space Assessment and provides information on existing open spaces, including informal recreation spaces associated with the main residential areas. Conwy County Borough Council are currently working on a Replacement Local Development Plan, which is proposed to be produced in draft for consultation in 2024.

## **1.4 Supporting Documents**

- 1.4.1 Table 1.1 below shows the site-specific surveys and supporting documents which have been used to inform this statement.

**TABLE 1.1: PROJECT INFORMATION SOURCES**

Information	Organisation	Reference and Date
Proposed Site Layout	Saer Architects	MMB-SAL-01-ZZ-DR-A-0004 P14 (2024)
Design and Access Statement	Saer Architects	MMB-SAL-XX-XX-RP-A-001 (2024)
Landscape General Arrangements	Land Studio	400-LST-XX-XX-DR-L-0002 (09/04/2024)
Planting Plan	Land studio	400-LST-XX-XX-DR-L-0301 (22/04/2024)
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal	Enfys Ecology	Tucker, H. (2024) <i>Maes Merddyn. Brynsiencyn; Preliminary Ecological Appraisal</i> . Enfys Ecology Ltd. A report under contract to Williams Homes Bala Ltd.
Arboricultural Planning Assessment	West Coast Arboriculture and Land Planning Ltd.	WAL_24_030_P01 Fairly, S. (2024) Maes Merddyn, Brynsiencyn-Proposed Residential Development: Arboricultural Planning Assessment (BS5837:2012)
Tree Plans	West Coast Arboriculture and Land Planning Ltd.	WAL_24_030_P01 Tree Plans, Rev D. Maes Merddyn, Brynsiencyn
Initial Drainage Strategy	Datrys	'Maes Merddyn, Brynsiencyn, Initial Drainage strategy'. (2004). A report under contract to Williams Homes Bala Ltd.
Proposed Drainage Scheme Proposed Soakaway Zoning & Calculations	Datrys	24041/SK501P02 24041/SK550P01 (2024)
Drainage Scheme Initial	Saer Architects	MMB-SAL-01-ZZ-DR-A-0004 2024
Scheme Highway Alignments	Datrys	24041/SK401 (11/03/2024)



## 2.0 Baseline Connectivity

### 2.1 Ecological Connectivity and Context

- 2.1.1 The ecological baseline for the site has been determined by Enfys Ecology, who carried out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site (Tucker, 2024). The site is divided into two broad areas; the southern and western area comprised an open area of semi-improved grassland, mixed with areas of tall ruderal vegetation including nettles, umbellifers and rosebay willowherb, while the northern and eastern third contained mostly dense blackthorn scrub, up to 3 metres tall, backed by a small mixed woodland formed of very large mature broadleaved trees and Leyland cypress.



**FIGURE 2.2. SITE LOCATION - THE APPROXIMATE BOUNDARY IS SHOWN IN RED**  
BACKGROUND IMAGE © GOOGLE MAPS 2024

- 2.1.2 The site is located on the north-west of Brynsiencyn, southern Anglesey, and bordered to the south-east, west and south-west by developed land and the A4080 road, while to the north-east and north-west are grazed pasture fields. The surrounding area is dominated by short improved grassland pasture; the only similar habitats to the site in the vicinity are some small wooded areas and wider hedgerows particularly to the north and east. The site has limited connectivity to these habitats via two closely flailed hedgerows to the north and east, and is generally rather isolated by short grassland with limited wildlife potential. To the north-west are very large fields with few hedgerows.





**FIGURE 2.1: APPROXIMATE SITE LOCATION (RED OUTLINE) WITHIN THE WIDER LANDSCAPE**  
*BACKGROUND IMAGE © GOOGLE MAPS 2024*

- 2.1.3 There are no statutory or non-statutory protected sites within 1km of the proposed development.
- 2.1.4 No evidence of protected species was observed on the site during the ecological survey visits; but the site contains suitable habitat for several such species:
- The scrub and trees in particular provide opportunities for birds to forage, seek shelter, and build nests. The species observed or likely to be present on the site are widespread and have other suitable habitat in the vicinity.
  - The site has suitable habitat for badger foraging, but they are not likely to be resident on site and no setts were recorded.
  - The site has suitable habitat for reptiles throughout the more open southern and western part of the site. It was considered unlikely that reptiles are present however, because the site is relatively isolated from any other suitable habitat, and because it appears to have only been potential reptile habitat for a relatively short time, being a short pasture field as recently as 2018.
  - Similarly, the site has good foraging habitat for amphibians, and it is likely that common amphibians use the site, although they will not breed on site due to the lack of open water. The specially protected Great Crested Newt (GCN) is not considered likely to be on site for the same reasons as reptiles, however as there are ponds within 500m, and GCN are found in southern Anglesey, the presence of this species cannot be ruled out.

- Hedgehogs are likely to use the site.
- The site is unlikely to support other protected species; it is too small and isolated from other woodland to support red squirrels, there are no waterbodies / watercourses to support otter or water vole.

2.1.5 The site also provides foraging and commuting opportunities for local bat populations. Potential roosting opportunities were identified on the site in several of the large mature trees surrounding the site, but these will not be directly impacted by the works. Roosts may also be present in nearby buildings.

2.1.6 The site also provides suitable habitat for invertebrates and small mammals. No rare or scarce species (or notable habitats that may support specific species) were observed during the ecology surveys and it is expected that any species present are widespread and have other suitable habitat in the vicinity.

2.1.7 The Arboricultural Assessment identifies several trees within the site that are recommended for removal due to their poor arboricultural condition, or must be removed because they will be under the development footprint. All other trees will be retained, and the report includes recommendations for maintaining and protecting the retained trees, including fencing root zones and periodic inspection. All trees with potential bat features will be retained, the Leyland cypress (and other non-native trees) will be removed.

## 2.2 Blue Infrastructure Connectivity and Context

2.2.1 Information regarding the existing hydrological connections at the site was provided by Datrys, civil and structural engineering consultants. The site currently has no fixed drainage, surface or subsurface. There is no foul sewer network, the nearest is a sewer lying in 3rd party land to the west. There are highway gullies in the A4080 which are assumed to connect to a highway drain. There are only very small areas of impermeable surfaces and so the majority of rainfall onto the site soaks directly into the surface, excess runoff drains naturally to the northwest following the gentle slope of the site.

2.2.2 There is no open water or any watercourses within the site or immediate vicinity.

## 2.3 Access Connectivity and Context

2.3.1 Information regarding the existing access arrangements for the site (footpath) was provided by Saer Architects in the Design and Access Statement, and from review of Ordnance Survey mapping.

2.3.2 A public footpath runs inside part of the north-western boundary of the site. The path enters the site at the extreme northern corner (SH 48006 67351), via a stile built into the boundary wall. It then runs inside the site for approximately 60 metres, before exiting to the west approximately halfway down the north-western boundary via another stile (at SH 47961 67319). At the time of the ecology survey the southern end of path was becoming

inaccessible due to the dense scrub, the canopy of which is was closing over the path, requiring pedestrians to almost bend double or crawl to pass through.

- 2.3.3 There is currently no public access to the rest of the site, which is privately owned. There is no boundary preventing access between the site and the road and driveway to the south.

## **2.4 Health and Wellbeing Context**

- 2.4.1 The site currently has no public access save for the footpath in the north-west, and so has limited current value for public health and wellbeing through provision of walking opportunities. The footpath is likely to be used by hikers, dog walkers, joggers (and potentially other forms of outdoor recreation), except that it was at the time of survey, poorly maintained and so partly impassable. The site currently has limited visual appeal to the general public, appearing as a typical “wasteground” of mixed scrub, leylandii and tall vegetation from the road, but is better viewed from the footpath, which passes under several large mature trees.
- 2.4.2 The village of Brynsiencyn and local area have several facilities including a central playing space, pub, school and post office, none of which currently make use of or are impacted by this site.

### 3.0 Green Infrastructure Proposals

#### 3.1 Biodiversity Proposals

- 3.1.1 The proposed works involve the construction of a small housing estate, comprising of entirely affordable housing, with associated re-levelling, clearance and landscaping. No designated ecological sites will be impacted by these works.
- 3.1.2 The proposal will result in the loss of an area of dense blackthorn scrub, open grassland and ruderal vegetation typical of an unmanaged former pasture in the mid stages of seral succession, following the removal of grazing or any other active constraints on the vegetation. This will be replaced with a carefully designed program of planting and habitat creation as detailed in the site landscape plan, by landstudio. This plan was designed in cooperation with the project ecologists from early in the design process.
- 3.1.3 The most valuable habitats within the area are the large mature trees and the area of dense scrub, which in the absence of management would eventually secede into broadleaved woodland. Woodland habitats are relatively scarce on Anglesey, one of the least wooded parts of the UK. Therefore the scheme seeks to mitigate for the loss of this tall vegetation area by the planting of trees to create an arc of native tree woodland around the north, east, and west of the site. This will be a valuable habitat in its own right, and will incorporate existing valuable features of the site (mature trees and some scrub) while increasing the currently low diversity of the trees on site. The ground flora will also be enhanced by sowing woodland wildflowers.
- 3.1.4 The proposed trees will provide shelter for the site, while providing a consistent flight line for bat species, bird habitat, and will also incorporate clearings containing drainage soakaways and play areas which will break up the canopy and provide woodland edges and habitat heterogeneity for invertebrate species. The habitat creation areas have been positioned to both retain existing trees but also to align with the hedgerows to the north and east which provide the best element of the site's limited ecological connectivity to other habitats, and so have connectivity to other small areas of woodland to the north of the site.
- 3.1.5 The scheme also includes outdoor play spaces for children within the estate, and a pathway through the trees (linking to the footpath) providing public access to a green space and green play space that did not previously exist.
- 3.1.6 For full details of the proposed scheme please refer to the Landscape General Arrangements plan.

#### *Avoidance*

- 3.1.7 The scheme will retain the large mature trees, and some of the scrub area, which were identified in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (hereafter; PEA) as the most valuable ecological features within the site. There will be no direct impacts to the large trees. Retention of some of the scrub area allows any species (particularly invertebrates) which

have colonised the blackthorn scrub since it developed to remain on site, and then expand into the newly created areas, however it was decided not to retain large areas of this habitat as it has very low diversity and so could benefit from enhancement.

- 3.1.8 The Arboricultural report details the trees that will be retained; some damaged or diseased trees will also need to be removed, as well as low value non-natives including the Leyland cypress, but any mature native trees that can be retained will be.

#### *Minimising Impacts*

- 3.1.9 Short grassland, tall willowherb and other ruderals, and scrub will be lost during the proposed development works; however, as these habitats are not particularly ecologically valuable and the species most likely to be utilising them are not uncommon in the area, there is not expected to be an overall loss of species or biodiversity in the region as a result. Some areas of scrub will be retained, but in general the scrub is almost entirely dominated by a single species and so enhancing this by additional native species is considered of greater benefit than keeping it in its present condition.
- 3.1.10 While the cypresses will be removed, the retention of the large trees and additional planting will maintain the existing tree line, minimising any disruption to flight lines for bats and shelter and windbreaking for the site to the south. The habitat connection between the hedgerows to the east and north will be maintained with minimal disruption.
- 3.1.11 The site's lighting will be designed to minimise any impact on bats (and other animals) using the area by restricting light spillage onto the woodland habitats, maintaining the woodland as a dark area. This should be set out in a lighting plan for the site which will show the lighting levels throughout the habitat areas.
- 3.1.12 The Arboricultural report and tree protection plan sets out methods which will be used to minimise any risk of impact to the trees, including fencing off root zones, and working methods, which will be followed at all times during the works.
- 3.1.13 Similarly, the PEA includes a series of Reasonable Avoidance Measures which will be followed at all times to minimise any impacts on wildlife which may be using the area (as well as comply with protected species legislation). Works are constrained by timings, any vegetation clearance for example must be carried out outside the bird nesting season, or specific surveys will be required in order to determine if nests are present, and no works will proceed until all chicks have fledged.
- 3.1.14 As a further precaution to minimise (or avoid if possible) any impacts to protected species, specific surveys will be carried out to check for the presence of reptiles and great crested newts. This is regarded as a precaution; the site has good reptile habitat and foraging (but not breeding) habitat for newts, but it is considered unlikely that either are present because there are no records in the vicinity, the site is very isolated from other areas of suitable habitat, and further has not been suitable for either species for very long (being a pasture field as recently as 2018), so it is unlikely either has had time to find it, even if present in the area. However as the presence of either cannot be completely ruled out, in order to

completely minimise any chance of impacting these species, precautionary surveys will be carried out. If animals are present, the clearings and SUDs drainage areas will provide compensatory habitat areas for them, although additional mitigation and habitat creation may also be required.

#### *Mitigation/Restoration*

- 3.1.15 Loss of the existing vegetation from much of the site area will be unavoidable, but these losses will be offset through the replanting of native tree species, woodland wildflowers and other measures. However this is best described as enhancement or compensation and is discussed below. The scheme does not contain much direct restoration or mitigation for the existing habitats as they are not considered particularly ecologically valuable and so enhancing retained areas and compensating for losses through creation of more valuable habitat is considered to provide more overall value than restoring the scrub or rough grassland. The site was until very recently a pasture field, and so all the habitat present is relatively new.
- 3.1.16 The Arboricultural Report contains details of some maintenance and restoration work which will be carried out on the retained trees, including removal of deadwood and crown lifting. All work must comply with the standards set out in BS 3998:2010 "Tree work. Recommendations."

#### *Compensation and Additional Enhancement*

- 3.1.17 Compensation for the biodiversity lost during the proposed works, and further biodiversity enhancement, has been incorporated into the design through the addition of a large area of vegetation planting across the western, northern, and eastern boundary of the site. This area will first be cleared of non-native leylandii, and then be planted up with native trees including birch, hazel, maples, willow, cherry and oak, to form a woodland area incorporating the existing mature trees. Native species hedgerow (primarily hawthorn) will also be created, and areas of the existing scrub will be retained. This will create a band of woodland habitat wrapping around the north of the site, preserving connectivity.
- 3.1.18 The habitat will be further enhanced by sowing a woodland meadow seed mix, which, with the opening out of the dense canopy will result in a much more diverse ground flora. Numerous SUDs drainage soakaways (see Section 3.2, below) will form clearings and open areas and will be sown with a wet tolerant plant mixture including hair grass, and provide a mixture of tussocky and lower growing plants. These more open areas will also be suitable for amphibians, and other small animals.
- 3.1.19 The proposals also include creation of a small orchard which will provide additional woodland habitat as well as windfall fruit which will provide foraging for badgers, as well as birds and other animals. The orchard will be sourced from local Welsh apple cultivars.
- 3.1.20 Additional native trees will be planted within the development itself as street trees, to further increase the vegetation cover of the site and provide additional habitats.



- 3.1.21 Further enhancements include hedgehog crossings in the surrounding walls and fences, and boxes, and additional nest boxes for both bats and birds will be installed as detailed in the PEA report, this should include swift boxes on the buildings to provide additional nesting opportunities for swifts, which are in decline across their range in the UK.

### **3.2 Blue Infrastructure Proposals**

- 3.2.1 The site landscaping includes creation of numerous small drainage soakaways incorporated into the woodland creation, which as well as providing habitats will provide attenuation for major runoff events without requiring additional input into the local brown/grey water systems. These areas will also provide green spaces for residents. This minimises the potential for overload of the systems, or subsequent flooding by including capacity for 1 in 100 year rainfall events PLUS projected climate effects on rainfall. Refer to the drainage scheme for full details.
- 3.2.2 The site will have a new sewerage system connecting to existing provision under the A4080 to the south.

### **3.3 Access Proposals**

- 3.3.1 The site landscaping includes creation of two outdoor play areas designed around 'natural play' with wooden equipment, logs, and without artificial surfacing. These are set in the tree planting area with a pathway between them and to the roads on the estate, and connecting to the existing footpath. This will provide a "wild" area for kids to play, well away from any roads and with excellent access to the natural environment, as well as a short walk in a natural environment for adult residents. In addition, the existing wider community will also be able to access this space.
- 3.3.2 The orchard will also be accessible to residents, being positioned on one of the paths, providing an additional recreation area and nature walk. There will also be numerous street trees, which will give the area a more natural feel.
- 3.3.3 The existing footpath will be maintained and restored, and slightly extended by connection to the new pathways which will be publicly accessible, unlike the existing site. Their design features no slopes or steps and the pathways are intended to be accessible to those with limited mobility.

### **3.4 Health and Wellbeing Proposals**

- 3.4.1 The scheme includes natural play spaces and a pathway through the woods which will be accessible to residents and the wider community and away from any roads, allowing children to use them safely, with all the benefits of outdoor time and active play.
- 3.4.2 Being in a natural environment and connection to nature is generally regarded as having significant benefits to wellbeing. The design of the habitat areas and their accessibility scheme is intended to facilitate this by providing easy access to relatively natural spaces in



the immediate vicinity, including the retained large trees, natural play spaces, paths, orchard and numerous street trees. While it is only a small area, this is, in proportion to the scheme and land available, considered to be a significant size providing a valuable contribution to the local community being widely available to all for outdoor access.

#### 4.0 Summary

- 4.1 The proposed scheme will result in the loss of some scrub, grassland and tall herb vegetation of relatively low ecological value. The primary value of the habitats are that they represent an area of scrub and trees in an area where this is relatively rare, rather than having a high diversity or high value of themselves. This will be compensated for by the creation of an area of native-species tree planting which will preserve a similar area of woodland and scrub vegetation, but of much greater diversity, both of trees and the enhanced ground flora. This will incorporate and retain the most valuable ecological features of the existing site, the large mature trees and some of the scrub, and enhance them. The new enhancements are aligned with the existing connectivity to the site to the north and east, and preserve ecosystem functions such as windbreak and flight lines with increased diversity. The scheme will result in the creation of an area of woodland in southern Anglesey, where woodland is relatively scarce.
- 4.2 New habitat for the site will also be created in the form of wet “rain gardens” around the soakaways, in the woodland clearings, and areas of more open woodland, resembling wood pasture, being sown with woodland wildflowers.
- 4.3 Further biodiversity enhancement will be provided through the installation of bat/bird boxes, hedgehog access and increased habitat heterogeneity for invertebrates throughout the site.
- 4.4 The scheme is designed to minimise additional load on the local grey water services through the use of extensive soakaways incorporated into the habitat creation. These are designed for once a century rainfall events with additional capacity built in for climate change impacts. There are no watercourses on site.
- 4.5 The scheme will increase public access to the area by creating a new pathway through the new woodland, with natural play spaces, which link up to the existing public footpath. The scheme will also result in clearing and reopening the existing footpath which is currently overgrown.
- 4.6 Access to the natural environment is widely understood to provide benefits to wellbeing and health; this scheme will provide easy access for residents and the wider community to a relatively natural habitat, including natural play spaces in a safe location away from roads. The area may be small but is a good size in proportion to the scheme, and access to such spaces will have benefits in increased public engagement with nature. The numerous street trees, orchard and other open areas also provide publicly accessible green space that does not currently exist.

- 4.7 Overall therefore, the scheme will result in the creation of a small but useful area of native tree cover in an area where this is rare, retaining the better features of the site including the large mature trees, some of the scrub, and an equivalent area of tall vegetation, but removing the non-native cypresses and low value habitats. The existing connectivity to small woodland to the north will be retained. Additional enhancements are provided through improvements to the ground flora and adding features such as bat and bird boxes. At the same time the scheme also provides increased public access to natural spaces, safe natural play areas and associated health and welfare benefits.