PENYRENGLYN LANDSLIDE RISK MANAGEMENT WORKS

Design and Access Statement

Project no. 4021526

Prepared for:

Natural Resources Wales

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P01	Andrew Burwood	Myles Harding	Jon Goodrick	Alex Humphreys	09/09/2025	S3

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1. Summary of the proposed development

1.1 Location

The Penyrenglyn Landslide Risk Management Works (the 'proposed development') is located on the southwestern slopes of Mynydd Ynysfeio along the eastern side of the Rhondda Fawr Valley. The development site ('the site') is centred at National Grid reference SS 94874 98109 (nearest postcode CF42 5HA), directly north of Penyrenglyn situated between the village of Treherbert to the west and the town of Treorchy to the east (Figure 1).

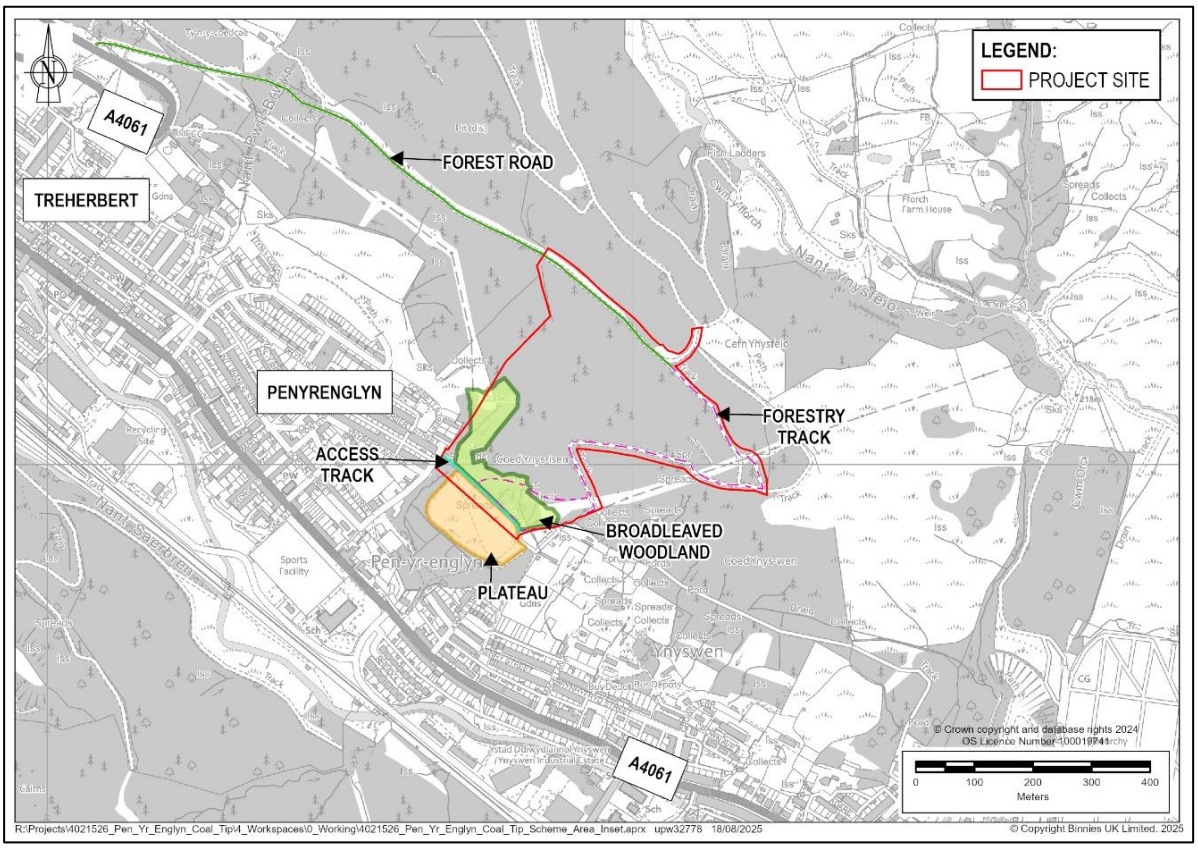

Figure 1 – Site Location Plan

1.2 Type and scale of development

The proposed development is to install drainage works at the former Ynysfeio Colliery spoil tip, also referred to as Penyrenglyn tip, located on the valley slopes above Penyrenglyn.

The site covers approximately 12.6 ha. This Design and Access Statement (DAS) accompanies an application for full planning approval.

2. Development brief

2.1 Background

Inspection of the Penyrenglyn tip in February 2020 revealed evidence of slippage, movement and tilting areas of conifer trees due to pore-water build up, highlighting the need for stabilisation works in this area. As such, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) identified the

Penyrenglyn tip as a high-risk liability and – without further intervention – several nearby residential properties, business and infrastructure could be adversely affected due to tip movement or failure, including the Penyrenglyn Primary School, the A4061 highway and recreational users of the nearby land.

Further background details are provided in the Planning Statement that accompanies the planning application.

2.2 Purpose

The purpose of the proposed development is to manage landslip risk to an acceptable level by installing positive drainage systems that will reduce infiltration into the tip material.

A key criterion for the drainage system is that it must not cause an increase in downstream flood risk. This means that with the drainage system in place, water discharge rates from Penyrenglyn tip to downstream watercourses and drains need to replicate the current day scenario.

3. Existing site and context

3.1 Site description

The site comprises valley slopes on which coal spoil had been placed, and part of a raised plateau at the base of the slopes which was created as part of previous coal mining remediation works.

The hillside in the north of the site is crossed by Ynysfeio Forest Road which leaves the A4061 at Treherbert and extends up the south-western side of Mynydd Ynysfeio, crossing the ridge and onto the upper slopes of the neighbouring valley of Nant Ynysfeio. Several other tracks exist on the slopes in the site, either created by NRW for forestry operations or for previous mining activities.

The steep slopes below the forest road were previously part of a conifer plantation (Ystrad Ffernol coupe) which was clear-felled in winter 2023-24. The clear-felled area is being allowed to regenerate naturally and currently is transitioning into tall ruderal habitats with patches of self-seeded broadleaved trees. In the medium term it will likely develop into a scrub mosaic.

There is an area of broadleaved wet woodland on the lower slopes above the plateau (see Figure 1). An existing watercourse flows through the west of the woodland and continues past the west side of the plateau. There is a drainage ditch along the base of the slopes, between the woodland and the plateau, which discharges to existing watercourses to the west and east. The plateau itself is covered by grassland habitats with some scrub which comprise Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land (OMHPDL). The OMHDPL and the broadleaved wet woodland qualify as Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI).

There is a track along the northern edge of the plateau, accessed from the west from Herbert Street, and series of informal paths around the edges of and across the plateau. These informal paths and the forestry tracks within the site are publicly accessible but are not Public Rights of Way (PRoW). The plateau can also be accessed via paths from residential areas to the south. The track along the northern edge of the plateau can accommodate vehicles but is gated to prevent unwanted vehicle access. It can be used to access the allotments to the east of the site.

The Incline Haulage Systems Scheduled Monument is located approximately 60m northeast of the site boundary, comprising the remains of an incline drumhouse dating to the late 19th century. The route of the associated incline haulage tramway passes through the site with some tramway earthwork features visible at the top of the slopes.

3.2 Site context

South and west of site is the community of Penyrenglyn, part of a ribbon of development along the Rhondda Fawr Valley. East of the site is a further area of recently felled plantation, extending down the slopes towards Treorchy. Northwest of the site is an extensive area of forestry plantation that extends across the Mynydd Ynysfeio slopes. North of the site is the ridge of the valley slopes, with open habitats continuing along the ridge to the northwest and east, and areas of regenerating woodland on the north facing slopes of the Nant Ynysfeio valley on the other side of the ridge. On a wider scale, mosaic habitats that have developed on coal spoil on valley slopes are a characteristic habitat of valley hills within the Rhondda Fawr Valley.

Designations relevant to the site comprise:

- The northern part of the site is located within the Mynydd Ystradffernol Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).
- There is an area of Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) partly located inside the southeastern edge of the site.
- Parts of the landscape immediately surrounding the site are defined as Special Landscape Areas (SLAs) (Cwm Orci SLA) within the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan (LDP).
- The site is within the Rhondda Registered Historic Landscape, which was defined principally for its industrial characteristics.
- The site is within the Rhondda Fawr: Enclosed Valley Sides 'historic landscape character (HLCA 029).

Full details of the landscape, ecological, and heritage baselines including photographic records are provided in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal, Ecology Report, Project Environmental Report and Green Infrastructure Statement which accompany the planning application. The environmental context is illustrated on the Environmental Constraints and Opportunities Plan provided within Appendix D of the Project Environmental Report.

4. Design development

4.1 Drainage design approach

The drainage design philosophy was to manage surface water by utilising natural processes and features present within the existing catchment for the Penyrenglyn tip. This entailed strategically aligning water management approaches and techniques with the natural contours of the landscape, where water naturally flows. This also avoids transfer of water between catchments, which could otherwise contribute to increased flood risk to existing assets.

When developing the drainage solution, the drainage design focussed on locating drainage elements adjacent to existing infrastructure and utilising existing drainage and topographic

features wherever possible to avoid the need for additional infrastructure. This includes gaining the most benefit possible from forest road and forest track drainage and connecting new drainage features into existing watercourse/drains. Design options were assessed in an iterative process informed by hydraulic modelling to develop a drainage system that will improve slope stability whilst not causing an increase in existing discharge rates from the site to downstream watercourses.

The proposed drainage strategy has been developed using a 30% uplift to rainfall intensities to account for climate change. This allowance is considered appropriate for managing future flood risk at the site and represents a value midway between the central and upper estimates provided in Welsh Government guidance. This approach has been adopted to ensure a robust management of climate change impacts, particularly given the sensitive nature of the coal tip. Further details about the drainage design approach are provided in the Drainage Strategy Report that accompanies the planning application.

When developing the drainage layout, the stepwise approach to avoid damage to existing green infrastructure, as set out in Planning Policy Wales 12, was followed. Full details of how this approach was applied are set out in the Green Infrastructure Statement.

4.2 Consultation

Full details of the consultation that has been carried out, and design responses to that consultation, are provided in the Planning Statement and Project Environmental Report which accompany the planning application. The following were consulted during the design process:

- Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) Senior Planning Officer: pre-application advice May 2023, follow up correspondence October 2024.
- Cadw: October 2023.
- NRW technical officers: October 2023.
- RCTCBC Ecologist: October 2023, March and August 2025.
- Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Approval Body (SAB): pre-application advice July 2023 and August 2025.
- Mining Remediation Authority: planning pre-application May 2023, follow up meeting May 2025.
- South Wales Fire and Rescue Service: May 2025.

The key design outcomes of those consultations are:

- The route of former incline haulage tramway associated with the Incline Haulage Systems Scheduled Monument has been recorded by Heneb, and the proposed drainage assets avoid the areas of retained earthworks.
- The following ecology design principles have been incorporated into the design: providing the conditions to allow natural regeneration of working areas as opposed to seeding (to minimise risks of introducing unwanted species or variants); allowing natural succession on the deforested slopes with periodic control of conifer regrowth

and periodic control of some scrub during drainage asset maintenance to maintain habitat diversity; providing replacement woodland planting east of the existing woodland and not on the slopes, using species that are native to Rhondda Fawr Valley.

- The drainage design includes Green SuDS elements, and no impermeable areas are being created apart from aspects of the proposed drainage infrastructure (e.g. impermeable liners within track filter drains). Hydraulic modelling has shown that inclusion of a water storage tank within the drainage system mitigates any flood risk impacts to downstream watercourses, maintaining existing discharge rates from the site.

- A Coal Mining Risk Assessment was undertaken and has informed the locations of drainage infrastructure, and there has been subsequent liaison with the Mining Remediation Authority about managing safety risks during construction.

- A low fuel zone either side of the existing forestry track to help manage wildfire risk, and a vehicle gate across the existing forestry track to help control unwanted vehicle access, have been incorporated into the design based on consultation with the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service who identified existing concerns about wildfire risk and antisocial behaviour in the area.

5. Proposed development

5.1 Overview

The proposed works are illustrated on the Environmental Masterplan, Long Section and Cross Section that accompany the planning application. The works comprise:

- Repositioning one culvert beneath the forest road at the top (north) of the slopes to better manage natural catchment flows on the eastern side of the project site.

- Installation of 81 subsurface drains (perforated pipes installed into the slope, each with a stone headwall) each with a maximum length of 25m into the coal spoil.

- New 3m wide, 95m long stoned access track to provide access to subsurface drain headwalls in the west of the site.

- Installation of three new blockstone cascades totalling 320m in length (115m, 100m and 105m.

- Installation of three new impermeable drainage ditches totalling 190m in length (80m, 80m and 30m) connecting to the new blockstone cascades.

- Installation of six impermeable gravel (lateral) drains totalling 280m in length (60m, 55m, 45m, 50m, 35m, 35m) connecting into new blockstone cascades and existing watercourse.

- Improving the surface of 420m of forestry track and provision of a bund of 0.3m height on the downslope side of the forestry track; the bund will clearly demarcate the forestry track edge on the steep slopes.

- Installation of 445m of filter drains adjacent to forestry tracks, including silt traps along the drains. Filter drains will be sub-surface, topsoiled and seeded.
- Installation of one culvert to connect an impermeable ditch, the top of the southeastern blockstone cascade and forestry track filter drain.
- Installation of a 270m^3 below ground water storage tank along the north west edge of the plateau, partially beneath the plateau access track, to control discharge from the filter drains to downstream watercourses.
- Installation of a below ground pipeline, concrete-bag headwall and apron to connect the below ground water storage tank to an existing watercourse.
- Installation of three cross channels along the middle section existing forestry track to promote natural catchment flow on the eastern side of the project site where it is not on coal tip material and to reduce track erosion.
- Installation of three culverts beneath the lower section of existing forestry track: one culvert to connect the forestry track filter drain with an existing drainage ditch; two culverts to allow some water collected by the forestry track filter drain to be released to flow overland into existing broadleaved wet woodland on the lower slopes.
- Coppicing a 6m wide corridor along the existing watercourse through the woodland and removal of flow obstructions.
- Replacement of one culvert which conveys the existing watercourse beneath the plateau access track.
- Installation of one culvert to connect the new forestry track filter drain with the eastern end of the existing drainage ditch
- Thinning of vegetation and removal of silt and flow obstructions from existing drainage watercourse (ditches) at the toe of the slopes.
- Installation of a vehicle gate across the forestry track to reduce the risk of unwanted access and associated antisocial behaviour; pedestrian access will be maintained.
- Clearance of brash and cutting back vegetation from an approximately 2.4m wide area either side of the forestry track to provide multiple benefits including a fire break and habitat diversity.
- Compensatory broadleaved wet woodland planting, to replace losses to drainage infrastructure and access routes, within an area of the recently felled plantation woodland that extends east from the existing band of broadleaved woodland.

5.2 Consideration of good design objectives

(a) Character

Amount, scale, and layout

The drainage system comprises a variety of drainage asset types across the 12.6ha site. The amounts and sizes for each type are described in section 5.1 and illustrated on the

Environmental Masterplan. The amount, scale and layout of the assets are largely dictated by the amount and types of drainage needed to stabilise the coal spoil, the volume and flow rates of water that the drainage system will need to accommodate, the need to avoid increasing downstream flood risk, and existing topography. Drainage assets also need to be located away from former mine shafts and be able to be constructed and maintained safely. Further details about the drainage design approach are provided in the Drainage Strategy Report that accompanies the planning application.

The amount of compensatory planting for areas of broadleaved wet woodland that will be lost to the footprint of new drainage assets and access tracks is driven by the requirements of Planning Policy Wales, as set out in the Green Infrastructure Statement. Providing compensatory woodland extending east from the existing band along the lower slopes is in keeping with a characteristic of the Rhondda Fawr Valley of broadleaved woodland, often self-seeded, providing a transition between the steeper hillside slopes and the more developed areas along the valley bottom.

Landscape and Materials

The site sits within a landscape of previously felled plantation woodland on valley slopes, in different stages of regeneration, and existing plantation woodland. The management approach to allow natural regeneration of the recently felled plantation with periodic control of conifer regrowth and scrub (see section 5.2(c), habitats) is in keeping with this local context and with the wider context of mosaic habitats on coal spoil on valley slopes in the Rhondda Fawr Valley. The drainage features will not alter this overall character. The design decisions to locate lateral drainage channels and impermeable ditches along existing contours, locate blockstone cascades down existing gulley features, maximise use of drainage along the existing forestry track, use vegetated ditches, and use natural stone for the blockstone cascades and subsurface drain headwalls will help integrate the drainage system into the landscape.

The Rhondda Registered Historic Landscape description notes that a key feature of the existing landscape character is the anthropogenic modification to the landscape in the form of colliery and industrial development. The design seeks to retain intervisibility with the historic former tramway within the site by avoiding screening of this feature and avoiding damage. The new drainage elements, the need for which is born from instability of the former colliery spoil tip, are in themselves inherently linked to the site's colliery past.

Further details about consideration of landscape character and materials are provided in the Landscape and Visual Appraisal that accompanies the planning application.

Heritage

The proposed development does not affect the Incline Haulage Systems Scheduled Monument which is more visible in the landscape since the forestry plantation was felled. The new drainage assets will not require any works to the retained (non-designated) incline haul tramway earthworks at the top of the slopes and no new assets will cross the route of the former tramway.

(b) Access, movement and community safety

The existing pedestrian access to and along the forestry tracks within the site, and to the informal paths across the plateau, will be retained. Pedestrian access will be provided around the new vehicle gate across the forestry track. The project proposals include levelling existing forestry tracks within the site and surfacing them with crushed stone. These tracks are currently

heavily rutted from past forestry activity, and levelling and surfacing these will make them more accessible for users. However, the steep nature of the site inherently limits accessibility. Further details about access and amenity are provided in the Green Infrastructure Statement, with information about access during construction provided in the Planning Statement.

(c) Environmental sustainability

Habitats

Full details of how biodiversity will be improved and managed in the long term are provided in the Green Infrastructure Statement. Measures include: removing stands of invasive non-native species from the broadleaved wet woodland; periodic control of conifer regrowth and periodic control of some scrub during drainage asset maintenance to maintain habitat diversity on the regenerating slopes; keeping vegetation cut short in approximately 2.4m zones either side of the forestry track to maintain sward diversity; coppicing one third of existing willow trees in the broadleaved wet woodland to create age and structural diversity; planting the compensatory woodland to be of greater diversity than woodland removed; and, placement of deadwood from trees that are removed or coppiced during construction within the existing and compensatory woodland.

The design includes two culverts beneath the lower section of the existing forestry track to allow some water collected by the forestry track filter drain to be released to flow overland into the existing broadleaved wet woodland on the lower slopes.

The likelihood and potential intensity of fires will increase as the climate becomes warmer and drier. Keeping vegetation cut short either side of the forestry track provides a fuel break to help reduce the likelihood and severity of fires as a result of climate change.

Water management

The drainage design uses green SuDS features on the slopes and has been designed not to cause an increase in downstream flood risk, with the below ground water storage tank controlling discharge from the filter drains to downstream watercourses. The design includes gravel filled filter drains to trap sediment. Ditches will be vegetated, which will slow flow velocity allowing sediment and heavy metals to settle out. These measures will reduce sediment and associated nutrient and pollution loading in the existing watercourse, the ditch at the toe of the slopes and downstream watercourses.

The design process examined whether the need for blockstone cascades – which convey water down slopes in straight lines via a series of steps - could be avoided. However, due to the steepness of the site and the need to manage flow velocities, cascades had to be retained. The complexities of constructing and maintaining drainage on steep slopes of coal spoil material also means that sinuosity could not be incorporated into the cascades or track drainage. Further details about the water management approach as part of the drainage design are provided in the Drainage Strategy Report that accompanies the planning application.

Resource use and waste management

The drainage design approach to reuse existing infrastructure as much as possible reduced the need for additional infrastructure, reducing the resource needs and carbon cost of the project. The blockstone cascades and subsurface drain headwall designs use natural stone and not concrete. The drainage system is designed to operate passively with no energy inputs required.

As set out in the Project Environmental Report, the primary source of waste will be material excavated to make space for the below ground tank. That material will be removed from site, but with topsoil retained for reinstatement. Arisings from excavations for the blockstone cascades, impermeable ditches and gravel filter drains will be reused within the project where it is safe to do so without increasing slippage risk. Material that cannot be reused will be removed from site.

(d) Community safety

The proposed development is directly necessary for ensuring the safety of communities by addressing an identified risk associated with tip instability.

The open nature of the track and informal paths on the plateau will be retained. Incorporating a fire beak onto the design and long-term management, and the inclusion of a new vehicle gate across the existing forestry track, was done following consultation with the South Wales Fire and Rescue Service who identified existing concerns about wildfire risk and antisocial behaviour in the area.

5.3 Consideration of Local Development Plan

Relevant key planning policy has been considered throughout the design process and environmental assessment to ensure that the proposed development is in keeping with and will not work against policy goals. The relevant planning considerations have been grouped into key topic areas within Table 2 and relevant corresponding policies from the Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Development Plan (2006-2021) have been referenced.

Table 2 Assessment of Proposed Development against Planning Policy

Topic Area	Assessment against Planning Policy
Principle of Development	- The proposed development contributes to the **Resilient Wales well-being goal** by contributing towards ensuring the local community's health, wellbeing and safety is protected in the long term as storms and adverse weather associated with climate change become more frequent. - The proposed development is directly necessary for ensuring the safety of communities by addressing an identified risk associated with tip instability. **LDP Policy CS 10**: 'Minerals' also refers to the need to 'Ensure that appropriate restoration and aftercare measures are incorporated' associated with mineral supply.' By stabilising the spoil tip and providing enhancements to the area, the proposed development directly contributes to this policy. - The proposed development is in accordance with **LDP Policy AW 8**: 'Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment'. Although the northern part of the site is located outside of the settlement boundary and within a SINC, the proposed works have been designed to ensure that there would be no unacceptable impact on features of importance

Topic Area	Assessment against Planning Policy
	to landscape and nature conservation through landscape and ecological mitigation as required by **LDP Policy AW 8**. - Whilst the site is not identified as a land reclamation scheme in line with **LDP Policy NSA 27**: 'Land Reclamation Schemes', the policy acknowledges that a number of sites within the Northern Strategy Area require treatment to ensure the long-term stability of the land and decontamination due to RCTCBC's industrial history. - It is not considered that the proposed development should be opposed based on the **LDP AW 10 Policy** 'environmental protection and public health' as environmental constraints and potential impacts have been identified and mitigation has been set out to ensure that there are no significant impacts to the surrounding environment or communities.
Sustainability and Climate Change	- Whilst there is no LDP policy dedicated to sustainability or climate change, the LDP Vision states it will provide a land use framework that seeks to develop and protect the County Borough for future generations so that 'physical and natural resources are protected' and 'the challenges or climate change are met'. The development would directly contribute towards this vision through ensuring the local communities of Penyrenglyn, Treherbert and Treorchy are protected and more resilient towards the impacts of climate change and increased adverse weather. - **Future Wales** states that changes in the climate and weather patterns will have a significant impact on well-being on both current and future generations. Increased temperatures and extreme weather events caused by climate change will put additional pressure on ecosystems, infrastructure and the built environment. Welsh Government's **Natural Resources Policy** (NPR) outlines the need for climate change adaption and mitigation and social, economic, and ecological resilience. The proposed development would provide climate-resilient infrastructure to the area through improving the sites drainage system, controlling flows using nature-based solutions and providing ecological enhancements. As a result of the works, the spoil tip will be more resilient to increased rainfall and storm events which will protect communities.
Flood Risk and Drainage	- **LDP Policy AW 6**: 'Design and Placemaking' supports development proposals with design that promotes good water management, sustainable urban drainage, and porous paving. - The proposed development will not increase the impermeable area and therefore seeks to maintain existing discharge rates. Hydraulic modelling has demonstrated that post development discharge rates, as a result of implementing green drainage solutions, will not be increased and therefore there should be no impact to existing surface water flood risk at the site.

Topic Area	Assessment against Planning Policy
	- The proposed development includes elements of sustainable drainage design which improve the surface and subsurface drainage associated with the spoil tip to reduce risk of ground water related instability issues. - A Drainage Strategy Summary Report has been prepared to support this planning statement, demonstrating that the design provides efficiencies by working with natural processes and topography, as well as enhancing existing forest engineering infrastructure. The report outlines that the design is in compliance with the Sustainable Drainage Systems Standards for Wales.
Design and Visual Impact	- **LDP Policy AW 6**: 'Design and Placemaking' supports development proposals of a high standard of design, which reinforces attractive qualities and local distinctiveness. It also supports design that promotes water management, including sustainable urban drainage. - The purpose of the proposed development is to improve the site's drainage system and substantially reduce ground water buildup through the use of surface and subsurface drainage measures. The design promotes good water management which has been designed to be appropriate for the site in line with **Policy AW 6** using the Sustainable Drainage Systems Standards for Wales. - To minimise visual intrusion, the proposed development uses grass-lined or sub-surface drains and ditches where possible, and natural stone will be used for blockstone cascades and headwalls for the subsurface drains. The stone features may appear stark when first placed but will naturally become dull over time and integrate into the mosaic habitat landscape that will develop over time on the recently felled woodland areas. The use of blockstone material for cascades, although a new feature at a site-based level, has been selected to be consistent with material use within the surrounding landscape. - A Landscape and Visual Appraisal has been prepared to accompany this planning statement to identify and describe the effects on landscape character and visual amenity. An Environmental Masterplan and Green Infrastructure Statement have been prepared which highlight the approach to landscape within the design. The approach taken is considered to be in line with the **LPD Policy AW 5** 'new development' 1) – Amenity.
Landscape and Trees	- **LDP Policy AW 6**: 'Design and Placemaking' supports development proposals where landscaping and planting are integral to the development and enhance the site and the wider context, and where the design protects and enhances the landscape and biodiversity. - The proposed development has been designed to enable the development of mosaic habitat on coal spoil across the area of recently felled plantation woodland, a notable habitat type within the landscape of the Rhondda Cynon Taf.

Topic Area	Assessment against Planning Policy
	- Some vegetation clearance will be required to enable the proposed drainage works; however, vegetation clearance needs have been minimised to working areas along the drainage alignments and do not require larger areas to be cleared. - The proposed development will incorporate replacement tree planting and habitat enhancements, as outlined in the supporting Green Infrastructure Statement and Environmental Masterplan drawing. Woodland removed to facilitate the works will be replanted at a scale equivalent to that removed, in accordance with PPW12, but will be of greater diversity and use only locally native species to ensure the site's biodiversity is enhanced, in line with **LDP Policy AW 8**: 'Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment'. - Whilst tree planting is required by planning policy to mitigate direct tree loss from the proposed development, additional tree planting has not been recommended due to a focus on 'natural regeneration' for the development site, in line with RCTBC's Tree and Woodland Strategy and the Woodlands Ecosystem Profile of the South Central Area. No planting within the Plantation Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) area of the site is proposed, although replacement tree planting will link an existing woodland to the PAWS area, providing habitat connectivity. - The Landscape and Visual Assessment confirms there will be no negative impacts to the Cwm Orci or Northern Cwm & Slopes Special Landscape Areas, in accordance with LDP Policy NSA 25 - Special Landscape Areas.
Natural Environment	- The proposed development will include works within the Mynydd Ystradffernol Site of Important Nature Conservation (SINC) (RCTLDP reference AW 8.26). **LDP Policy AW 8**: 'Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment', permits development in SINCs provided that it is directly necessary for the positive management of the site or where the development would not unacceptably impact the features of the site for which it has been designated. Through mitigation planting and additional habitat creation opportunities, the site's biodiversity would be enhanced, in line with **Policy 9** of Future Wales: 'Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure' and **Section 6 of PPW** which require Net Benefit for Biodiversity. - The provision of Net Benefit for Biodiversity is detailed within the supporting Green Infrastructure Statement. This sets out how a net benefit will be achieved though the implementation of green infrastructure and biodiversity enhancements. - An Ecology Report has been produced to support the planning application and identifies mitigation requirements and enhancement opportunities and for the proposed development. Mitigation requirements and enhancements are also discussed within the Green Infrastructure Statement, Environmental Constraints and Opportunities Plan, and Environmental Masterplan. Through these measures, the proposed development will ensure the site's ecological network is

Topic Area	Assessment against Planning Policy
	protected in line with the requirements of **LDP Policy AW 8**: 'Protection and Enhancement of the Natural Environment'.
Archaeology and Cultural Heritage	- **LDP Policy CS 1**: 'Development in the North' encourages development to protect the cultural identity of the Northern Strategy Area. The proposed development aims to protect historic built heritage and the natural environment in support of this policy. - **LDP Policy AW 6**: 'Design and Placemaking' supports development proposals that reflect and enhance the cultural heritage of Rhondda Cynon Taf. - **LDP Policy AW 7: '**Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment' states that development proposals which impact upon sites of historical merit and sites of archaeological importance will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the site. - The proposed development will not affect the Incline Haulage Systems Scheduled Monument and has been designed to avoid impacting the heritage value of the incline tramway haulage route which runs down the hillside. - Due to the site's location within The Rhondda Registered Historic Landscape, and its location in proximity to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, a desk based Archaeological Assessment was undertaken during the previous phase of the development (Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust, 2022; provided with the planning application). An archaeological survey report of the Incline Haulage Tramway was carried out in 2024 (HENEB, 2024; provided with the planning application). The Assessment and recent survey report confirm that no adverse changes to the setting of historic assets are predicted to arise from the proposed works, in fact, the clearance of non-native trees should improve visibility of the industrial heritage within and adjacent the site.
Access	- The development site is a public open space and currently used on an informal basis by walkers and mountain bikers. The proposed works would not adversely affect this existing use and are therefore in compliance with **LDP Policy AW 7**: 'Protection and Enhancement of the Built Environment'.