



**Land off Beech Drive,
Thornton**

DRAFT

**Biodiversity and
Woodland
Management Plan**

Prepared by:
**The Environmental Dimension
Partnership Ltd**

On behalf of:
**Barwood Homes Limited & J H
Hallam & Son Limited**

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Plan EDP 1: Woodland Management Plan
(edp6140_d012b 22 June 2021 TC/LT)

Section 1

Introduction, Purpose and Context

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Biodiversity and Woodland Management Plan has been prepared by The Environmental Dimension Partnership (EDP) on behalf of Barwood Homes Limited & J H Hallam & Son Limited (hereafter referred to as ‘the Applicant’) in relation to the residential development at Land off Beech Drive, Thornton (hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’).

CONTEXT

- 1.2 The Site is centred approximately at Ordnance Survey Grid Reference (OSGR) SK 4641 0771. The local planning authority is Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. The Site measures 3 hectares (ha) and is located south-east of Beech Drive, Thornton. It comprises two hay meadow fields separated by a narrow belt of recently planted broad-leaved woodland, with perimeter fencing, hedgerow, scattered scrub and tall ruderal habitats.
- 1.3 The proposed development is for up to 49 residential dwellings with associated open space, landscaping, amenity space, car and cycle parking and other associated works. The scheme was granted planning permission on 22 May 2020 (application ref: 20/00511/FUL).

PURPOSE

- 1.4 This report has been written to discharge Condition 13 in relation to the appeal decision (Appeal Ref: APP/K2420/W/21/3285060 attached to the above planning permission. This condition is worded as follows:

“Condition 13

No part of the development hereby permitted shall be occupied until a Biodiversity & Woodland Management Plan, in line with the approved edp6140_r006b-Heads of Terms for Woodland Management Plan dated 22/06/2021, and a scheme for the protection of retained trees (the tree protection plan) and the appropriate working methods (the arboricultural method statement) in accordance with paragraphs 5.5 and 6.1 of British Standard BS 5837: Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction - Recommendations (or in an equivalent British Standard if replaced) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The scheme for the protection of the retained trees shall be carried out as approved.

In this condition “retained tree” means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars.”

- 1.5 This document sets out parameters for the long-term management and maintenance of the onsite woodland covering approximately c.0.3 hectares (ha) and located immediately to the east of the proposed development. This document should be read in conjunction with Head

of Terms for Woodland Management Plan (edp6140_r006b) and Arboricultural Impact Assessment (edp6140_r002).

MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1.6 The responsibility for carrying out the functions of this management plan will vary throughout the duration of the management period as follows:
- Construction Works Phase: All management and maintenance works of all features of landscape, ecological and arboricultural importance are the responsibility of the Developer, and are to be continued through to practical completion. This includes the protection of existing ecological and arboricultural interest features being retained; and
 - Long-term Management Post-adoption: The responsibility for the management and maintenance works of all features and species of ecological importance post-adoption should be the responsibility of either the Developer or appointed management company.
- 1.7 Landscape and arboricultural management and maintenance responsibilities should be undertaken by an appointed management company or an independent landscape management and maintenance company.
- 1.8 All works to the woodland are to be led by an Arboricultural Association (AA) approved arboricultural contractor or professional arboriculturalist and overseen by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 1.9 The management scheme detailed within this management plan will cover the provision, management, inspection, maintenance, repair and replacement as necessary, taking into account factors including landscape, ecological, arboricultural, social, wildlife and amenity use for the land.

Section 2

Baseline Conditions

2.1 This section sets out the current character of the woodland, which has been assessed through ecological and arboricultural surveys undertaken within and around the woodland by EDP in 2020 and 2022, namely:

- BS 5837:2012 compliant Tree Survey, January 2020;
- Extended Phase 1 Ecological Survey, April 2020; and
- Update ecological walkover survey 15 February 2023.

WOODLAND CHARACTER

2.2 The woodland comprises a c.8-12m wide belt of plantation broad-leaved woodland planted at 2-3m centres cutting north-south through the western half of the Site. Species present within the woodland include hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), hazel (*Corylus avellane*), apple (*Malus x domestica*), oak (*Quercus* sp.), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), elm (*Ulmus procera*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*).

2.3 Due to the age of the plantation, there is no understorey and limited interest in terms of ground flora which is dominated by a rough grassland sward. The woodland has received little to no investment or pro-active management since it was planted. The woodland is currently situated within private farmland and is not publicly accessible and as such there are no signs of recreational pressure on this habitat.

WILDLIFE INTEREST

2.4 Owing to its lack of maturity, the woodland habitat is considered to be of Site level intrinsic ecological value, providing limited opportunities for nesting birds and foraging bats. The lack of understorey reduces the potential of this habitat to support amphibians, reptiles or small mammals such as hedgehog, however with investment and proactive management the woodland could provide opportunities for these species as well as improved opportunities for nesting birds.

2.5 Due to its age the woodland has limited value in its current state and supports a narrow range of wildlife species. However, there is significant scope to increase the value of the woodland as a feature in its own right and in terms of its wildlife interest.

Section 3

Woodland Management Plan

OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 A number of key objectives for the onsite woodland were established within the Heads of Terms for a Woodland Management Plan (edp6140_r006) submitted alongside the original application. These objectives are as follows:
- Objective 1: Encourage the Continued Growth and Establishment of the Broadleaved Woodland;
 - Objective 2: Promote a More Diverse Age-class and Physical Structure Within the Woodland;
 - Objective 3: Create Additional Habitats to Benefit Locally Occurring Species of Wildlife;
 - Objective 4: Ensure Safe and Viable Retention of the Existing and Proposed Tree Stock to Maintain Public Safety;
 - Objective 5: Ensure that any Woodland Management Works are Undertaken to Suitably High Standards; and
 - Objective 6: Ensure the Site Wide Landscape Strategy accords with the Requirements of the National Forest Guidelines.
- 3.2 These objectives will be met through adoption of the management and maintenance measures detailed within this plan.
- 3.3 All works within this management plan to be undertaken by an appropriately qualified contractor and work will be monitored before, during and post completion to ensure standards are maintained.
- 3.4 Where appropriate, ecological and arboricultural supervision will be in place during the work. A Work Programme has been attached as **Appendix EDP 1** in order to document, in detail, the woodland management operations required.

MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS YEARS 1-5

Thinning

- 3.5 The woodland would benefit from the undertaking of a selective thinning program. The aim of this program is to actively select and promote the development of succession trees through the selective thinning and phased removal of trees of low quality and poor form. Additionally, the program will seek to promote the diversification and enhancement of ground flora through the creation of clearings and glades to allow light to the woodland floor.

- 3.6 Thinning of plantation woodland should be undertaken gradually, removing a few trees every 5-10 years to reduce competition between the standards, to improve the structure, diversity, appearance and/or habitat and biodiversity value.
- 3.7 Felled trees should be retained as deadwood within the woodland for ecological benefit to increase habitats for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. The retention of deadwood provides an abundance of valuable habitat, and the cosmetic cleansing of this resource should be avoided. Retention, and conversely removal, should be proportionate and informed by a risk management process. Opportunities for the retention of standing deadwood within the compartments should be exploited.
- 3.8 Where larger, more mature stems are to be removed, further into the thinning regime, consideration should be given to the undertaking of monolithing, fracture pruning and ring barking (where appropriate) to retain these trees as standing deadwood within the structure of the woodland.

Coppicing

- 3.9 Coppicing can be used in the place of thinning to create a diverse woodland structure, to reduce shade allowing more light into the woodland floor and to establish a mosaic of tree growth across the woodland.
- 3.10 Coppicing can be used on most native trees though species which are more commonly coppiced and which should be targeted in this management plan include elm and hazel. The first coppice should be completed on trees of around 5-6 years old and completed between late September and early March whilst the trees are dormant.
- 3.11 Removed growth should be piled over and around the coppice stool to protect new growth from browsing mammals.

Ecotone Creation

- 3.12 Selective removal of trees during the thinning process and coppicing will aim to create a scalloped edge along the western side of the woodland to encourage natural succession of an ecotone from rough grassland and scrub through to the existing woodland. Mowing of this area can be controlled through the installation of fencing as required to encourage regrowth.

Pruning

- 3.13 Pruning should be carried out to any excess growth encroaching onto grassed areas, paths, visibility splays and light columns. This should be undertaken once a year, or as required if causing a problem.
- 3.14 Non-native invasive species, should they occur, will be removed using appropriate methods and all arisings will be removed from the woodland.

Removal of Tree guards

- 3.15 The condition of all stakes, ties and tree guards should be checked by the Developer/management company and all broken items should be replaced, and items regularly adjusted to accommodate plant growth and prevent rubbing.
- 3.16 Where tree guards are no longer required these should be removed and disposed of appropriately.

ONGOING MANAGEMENT YEARS 5-10 YEARS

- 3.17 Annual monitoring throughout the construction phase of the development works is essential to ensure that the aims of this Woodland Management Plan are being achieved, with all necessary remedial action undertaken. Monitoring should be completed by a qualified arborist to assess tree conditions for safety and to ascertain whether any maintenance operations are required to achieve and continue to adhere to the management objectives.
- 3.18 Monitoring shall be utilized to inform and revise where necessary those management prescriptions and principles proposed going forward, particularly where identified objectives are not met.
- 3.19 As part of the monitoring and review process, interim management measures will be expanded to provide structured guidance on the following key areas which sit outside the focus of this plan, including: woodland change monitoring; species succession planning and restocking; and future coppicing and thinning regimes.
- 3.20 The continued growth and establishment of the maturing stands of broadleaved woodland will be encouraged through appropriate management. Canopy and understorey connectivity will be maintained and enhanced in areas where it is currently sparse, whilst maintaining good light levels reaching the woodland floor and structural diversity and the diversity of ground flora will be encouraged.

Replanting Strategy

- 3.21 At the intervals set out in **Appendix EDP 1**, the woodland will be surveyed for required actions i.e. tree pruning, coppicing and the felling of fallen trees to form habitat piles. All trees that require replacement will be replaced with like for like species, to maintain, as close as practicable, the current species mix. If a pest or disease should make selection inappropriate i.e. the presence of Ash Die Back, then the National Vegetation classification (NVC)¹ shall be used to guide species selection along with identifying other successful species that are present on-site prior to replanting. This will ensure a sympathetic continuation of amenity and ecological value of the woodland, implementing species with similar beneficial attributes to continue and enhance the longevity of the woodland.

¹ Joint Nature Conservation Committee Monkstone House City Road Peterborough PE1 1JY UK ISBN 1 86107 554 5 © JNCC 2004 First edition 2001 Revised reprint 2004
<https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/673dc337-e58f-4f6b-ac7b-717001983c2e/JNCC-NVC-FieldGuideWoodland-2004.pdf>

- 3.22 When coppicing is undertaken, poor quality coppice stools should be identified and replaced with same species whips, where appropriate, so as to continue the available habitat for resident wildlife at a minimum spacing of 2m where ground conditions allow. Mechanical stump removal and soil reinstatement would be inappropriate in this setting so spacings shall also be dictated by available planting sites within the field layer, this shall also increase age class diversity further promoting the amenity and ecological benefits from the woodland.
- 3.23 Trees should be planted within the winter months when the ground is frost-free and at suitable time to avoid competitive exclusion by rapid growing species. All products to support growth of trees should be supplied and fitted in accordance with the manufacturers guidelines and whips protected using transparent spiral tree guards and shrub shelters.
- 3.24 Trenches and pits dug for new tree and shrub planting across the Site and within gaps of retained trees should be dug by hand only, following current best practice. Protection methods must not impede natural movement of trees or restrict growth.
- 3.25 All plants are to be planted in accordance with *BS 8545:2014 Trees: from nursery to independence in the landscape - Recommendations*. A mycorrhizal inoculant to replace naturally occurring fungi in soil is to be applied to roots of bare plants before planting and backfilling to stimulate plant growth and accelerate root development. Prior to planting, ensure ground is well-broken and free draining using an auger. Soil ameliorants/conditioners to BSI PAS 100 – Compost Specification. Use a slow release fertilizer (e.g. Scotts UK Professional 'Enmag', or similar) at a rate of 70g/m² for shrub planting, and up to 140g/m² for tree planting.

Section 4

Management Plan Review

- 4.1 Given the dynamic nature of habitats and their ability to change over time, it is both inappropriate and impractical to set out a fixed and prescriptive set of management tasks to be implemented 'regardless of progress'. A key element of the plan is flexibility. Therefore, during the course of the operation of this management plan, the plan shall be monitored to establish any changes in site conditions and report these back to the client/local authority. Minor management variations in response to site conditions can be accommodated, but any major changes will necessitate a review of the scope of operations to be discussed and, if necessary, agreed in writing with the LPA.
- 4.2 The provisions and responsibilities for the plan will be reviewed on an annual basis during the first five years (known as the establishment period), by those responsible for the provision of landscape management and maintenance. It is proposed that a full review of this management plan will be made every five years thereafter to take into account the monitoring exercises and allow the management approach to be refined. However, the recommendations for management discussed below shall be broadly adopted during the management regime of years 6 to 10 and included within an updated plan if required.

Section 5

Protected Species

- 5.1 This section summarises relevant protected species legislation which will need to be considered during the implementation of the management actions proposed. Where there is any doubt, a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted for detailed and case-specific advice.

BIRDS

- 5.2 All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with certain species afforded additional protection measures. In addition, certain conservation concern species are listed as UK BAP priority species.
- 5.3 Preliminary guidance: any removal or disturbance of potential bird nesting habitat (such as trees, scrub, bramble or dense ivy) should either be undertaken between September and February inclusive or following inspection for active nests by a suitably qualified ecologist.

BATS

- 5.4 All species of British bat are listed as a European Protected Species (EPS) on Schedule 2 of the Conservation Regulations (Annex IV (a) to the Habitats Directive). This affords bats and their roosts strict protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). Additional protection for bats is also afforded under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- 5.5 Preliminary guidance: advice from a suitably qualified ecologist should be sought before the felling of, or removal of limbs from trees containing potential bat roosting features including, but not limited to, Loose/peeling/fissured bark, natural holes e.g. rot holes and holes from fallen limbs, woodpecker holes, cracks/splits or hollow tree trunks/limbs and thick-stemmed ivy.

BADGER

- 5.6 Badgers and their setts receive protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which protects badgers from deliberate harm and injury.
- 5.7 Preliminary guidance: woodland management actions are very unlikely to infringe the legal protection afforded to badgers. However, if a suspected sett is present, care should be taken not to disturb the sett or obstruct any sett entrances during vegetation removal (i.e. avoid using heavy machinery and do not leave logs/brush over entrance holes). An ecologist should be contacted if works are likely to disturb a sett or its immediate surroundings.

Appendix EDP 1

Work Programme for Woodland Management Operations

Table EDP A1.1: Optimal Timings to Undertake Tasks Anticipated in Relation to the Woodland Management

Task	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Vegetation clearance including tree thinning and coppicing trees ²												
Pruning												
Tree stump removal ³												
Installation of tree protection fencing												
New planting (shrubs and trees)												
Creation of log piles												
Replacement/Removal of Tree Guards												

Table EDP A1.2: Schedule of Works for Monitoring and Maintenance of Woodland

Task	Frequency	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inspection of woodland shrubs and trees	Annually												
Pruning, coppicing and thinning	Annually (as required)												
Replacement planting	Every two years as required												
Review of management plan	Every five years												

² Outside of bird nesting season unless vegetation is inspected by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) immediately prior to clearance and no active bird nests present.

³ Assuming hibernating habitats exist for reptiles and amphibians, and these cannot be reasonably hand searched to confirm likely absence prior to removal.

Plans

Plan EDP 1: Woodland Management Plan
(edp6140_d012b 22 June 2021 TC/LT)



-  Site Boundary
-  Extent of Existing Woodland
-  Proposed Woodland Removal
-  Proposed Planting of Mixed Broadleaf Species (to include understorey planting)

client			
Barwood Homes Limited & J H Hallam & Son Limited			
project title			
Land off Beech Drive, Thornton			
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