



Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)

Land west of Shoreham Road, Small Dole

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing and whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated only dominant species maybe recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Wates to complete a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) for the proposed development of Shoreham Road, Small Dole, West Sussex BN5 9YH hereafter referred to as the 'site' (Figure 1 – red line). The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment 2025 should be read in conjunction with the HMMP.



Figure 1: Site application boundary (red line).

- 1.2 The biodiversity management and monitoring plan is based on the proposed habitats detailed in the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment (Figure 2).



Figure 2: BNG Habitat Creation.

2.0 HABITAT MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING PLAN

Non-technical summary

- 2.1 The HMMP sets out the habitat creation, management and monitoring for the site. The HMMP will ensure that the biodiversity net gain (Figure 3) is achieved.

Roles and responsibilities

- 2.2 The owner of the site will be responsible for the habitat creation, management and monitoring.

Monitoring

- 2.3 A monitoring report will be submitted to the council during years 5, 10 and 30. The monitoring report will be completed by the owners of the site. Each report will detail the habitat type and the current condition. If habitats are not in the correct type or condition,

the report will detail how ongoing management will ensure the type or condition is achieved.

Habitats and condition targets

2.4 Table 1 presents a summary of what will be delivered based on the biodiversity metric. These habitat condition targets form the basis of what the management plan is setting out to achieve throughout a period of 30 years. Vegetated garden has a default condition (Condition Assessment N/A), as such no detailed management strategy is provided although management will ensure they meet the UKHab definitions.

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	4.52
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.31
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	18.36%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	10.62%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Figure 3: Headline results.

2.5 A summary of the management to achieve these target conditions is detailed for each habitat in Tables 2-13, with a collated table of management prescriptions in appendix 1.

Table 1 – Target Habitat Conditions

Target Habitat Type	Retained, Enhanced or Created	Targeted Condition	Years to Targeted Condition	Condition Assessment Targets
Allotments	Created	Poor	1	None required. Created and maintained in a healthy state
Modified grassland	Created	Poor	1	None required. Created and maintained in a healthy state
Ponds (non-priority habitat)	Created	Moderate	3	Passes condition criteria A, C, E, F, G & H
Other neutral grassland	Created	Poor	2	None required. Created and maintained in a healthy state
Mixed scrub	Created	Moderate	5	Passes condition criteria A, B, C
Traditional orchards	Created	Moderate	20	Passes condition criteria B, C, D, E, F, & H
Urban tree	Created	Poor	10	None required. Created and maintained in a healthy state
Wet Ditch	Created	Moderate	5	Passes criteria B, C, D, E, G, H
Lowland Mixed Deciduous woodland	Enhanced	Moderate	0	Increase categories H and L by 1 level.
Other neutral grassland	Enhanced	Moderate	1	Condition Criteria A, B & C
Other neutral grassland	Enhanced	Good	1	Condition Criteria A, B, C, D & E

3.0 MIXED SCRUB

- 3.1 The UKHab definition for broad (h) heathland and shrub habitat is “*Vegetation with a >25% cover of dwarf shrub species that are <1.5 m high or woody species ≤5 m high*” and to ensure mixed scrub habitat is created, the UKHab definition and species mix have been detailed below.

Definition

- 3.2 Dense scrub comprising a mixture of native species without a single species dominant or stands with a dominant species not listed in h3a-hsk.
- 3.3 The aim for the management of retained and enhanced mixed scrub habitats is to maintain a condition assessment score of **Moderate** within 30 years. To do this, at least three of the following must be met:
- Ensure at least 80% of the scrub is native and there are at least three native woody species with no single species comprising more than 75% of the cover.
 - Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (ancient or veteran) shrubs are all present.
 - There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and species indicative of sub-optimal conditions make up less than 5% of ground cover.
 - The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or tall forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.
 - There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.

Ground Preparation

- 3.4 Based on the existing habitat, ground preparation will be subject to soil inversion. Fertile topsoil is buried, and infertile subsoil is brought to the surface, resulting in a significant reduction in nutrient levels at the soil surface for at least five years.

Planting

- 3.5 Planting will utilise whips. Whips are susceptible to browsing pressure and damage from voles, rabbits, grey squirrels and deer. A combination of deer culling, tree shelters, tree tubes and/or fencing will be undertaken to protect scrub from browsing pressure and ensure successful initiation. New whips will be watered for the first two weeks to ensure establishment.

Initial Management

- 3.6 Unwanted plants (such as bramble) should be selectively removed from the scrub.

Ongoing Management

- 3.7 The section of the scrub will be allowed to develop a graded edge against adjoining grassland habitat to form additional ecological niches for a wide variety of wildlife. As such, management will include a two-year cutting cycle, with light trimming on the scrub edge to prevent meaningful encroachment. Cutting will be undertaken to encourage a good structure and will avoid the nesting bird season (March – September, inclusive) or immediately follow a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- 3.8 The scrub may need to be coppiced to improve the structure. The scrub will be managed to be approximately 4-5m in height and after five years the scrub planting will be subject to management, including selective thinning to create open space within the scrub to allow natural regeneration. See Table 2 for the full management schedule.

Table 2: Mixed Scrub Management

Task	Management Objective / Performance Standard	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11-30
Water native scrub as required to ensure satisfactory establishment, and for a period of not less than two years after planting. Frequency: as required to maintain healthy plant growth.	Habitat representative of UKHab type. There are at least three native woody species with no single species comprising more than 75% of the cover (except common juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i> , sea buckthorn <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> or box <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> , which can be up to 100% cover).	✓		
Scrub planting should be inspected every 3 months to ensure that scrub plants are healthy, not diseased, damaged, or dead. Formative pruning as required. Dead or unhealthy shrubs should be removed on inspection and replaced with the same species and size as required to achieve the desired visual effect. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of inspections: 3 monthly • Frequency of remedial work: immediately as required. • Frequency of seasonal remedial pruning works: Pruning at the end of plant flowering seasons (spring to autumn) as required 	To ensure sustained shrub growth To conserve the 'layered effect' of vegetation in the local landscape	✓		
Any species which die, become diseased or seriously defected within the first 5 years should be replaced like for like in the first available planting season. Tree replacement should be undertaken as required in early spring or late autumn.	Establishment of the habitat	✓		

Task	Management Objective / Performance Standard	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11 -30
Yearly pruning should be conducted between January and March based on findings of inspections. Formative pruning as required. Emergency pruning should be conducted immediately when a critical fault is noticed.	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	✓	✓	✓
Sensitive facing up of the edge of the scrub by trimming back the edge nearest the grassland to prevent encroachment. This should be carried out sensitively every two years.	Developing the edges of the scrub and grassland			
Invasive and non-native species to be removed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of weed removal: fortnightly from spring to autumn and then monthly during the winter months; • Frequency of debris removal: bimonthly • Frequency of mulch replenishing: every 6 months 	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and undesirable species make up less than 5% of ground cover.	✓	✓	✓

Remedial Actions

3.9 Should the scrub monitoring indicate that the condition score is declining, arboricultural specialist advice will be sought, and appropriate actions taken to re-establish the scrub conditions as per the bullet points above. Supplementary planting of native woody species will be carried out if the coppicing/thinning management regime is not sufficient to allow natural regeneration.

4.0 NEUTRAL GRASSLAND

4.1 To ensure neutral grassland is created and maintained appropriately, the UKHab definition and species mix have been detailed below.

Definition

4.2 The UKHab definition for neutral grassland (g3c) is a grassland that supports over 20% broadleaved herbs and sedges, over 8 species per m², >1 grassland species that is not generally sown for intensive agricultural production, and the cover of rye grasses and white clover would be less than 30%.

- 4.3 The aim for the management of the new grassland habitats is to a condition assessment scores of **Moderate and Good** within 30 years. To do this, the following must be met:
- Ensure at over 8 species per m²
 - Sward height variable with 20% of the sward less than 7cm and 20% or more greater than 7cm creating microclimates;
 - Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens
 - **For good condition areas:** Cover of bracken less than 20% and bramble scrub less than 5%
 - **For good condition areas:** Combined cover of species indicative of sub-optimal condition³ and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of the total area.

Ground Preparation

- 4.4 Based on the existing habitat, ground preparation will be subject to soil inversion. Fertile topsoil is buried, and infertile subsoil is brought to the surface, resulting in a significant reduction in nutrient levels at the soil surface for at least five years.

Planting

- 4.5 The ground will be prepared before the new turf is laid. Turf will be laid in the Autumn or Spring. Regular watering is required to ensure the grassland is established. If seeded, the seeding will be undertaken in the spring or autumn.

Initial Management

- 4.6 During the 1st year of establishment meadow grassland will be cut twice in each growing month to maintain a balance between the faster growing species and flowers. The grassland will be mown to a height of 40-60mm with arisings cleared from the site.
- 4.7 In following seasons prior to cutting all areas shall be cleared of litter and debris in accordance with the section detailed above. To maintain diversity, all meadow grass areas will be cut annually in late July to end of August following flowering (the summer hay cut). An autumn cut will be carried out in November to leave the grass short over the

winter period (cut to 40-75mm). If required a spring cut should be carried out prior to the end of May to remove the first flush of grass (cut to 40-75mm). All arisings should be left in situ for 48 to 72 hours prior to removal.

- 4.8 The diversity of the grassland should be subject to on-going monitoring to ensure maximum ecological benefit. The monitoring of the grassland will be undertaken by the management company and should include a review of a suitably qualified ecologist against the baseline and the aspired condition. Monitoring by an ecologist should occur in years 1,2,5,10,15,20,25 and 30.
- 4.9 No selective herbicides will be used within these grassland areas. Instead, pernicious weeds (for example, dock and thistle) will be removed by hand, or burnt. All arisings should be left in situ for 48 to 72 hours prior to removal. Any litter will be removed prior to each cut, and leaves will be raked off grass prior to autumn cuts.

Table 3: Wildflower Grass Management

Task	Management Objective / Performance Standard	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11-30
<p>Year 1: scarify in autumn and sow suitable native wildflower mix.</p> <p>Cut to a height of 50 – 75 mm four times during the first year to encourage wildflower root development. All arising should be removed.</p> <p>Repeat as required for 3 to 5 years to establish wildflower content. Spot treat or hand-pull undesirable weed species. Minimise chemical use.</p>	<p>To achieve sward establishment to 95% cover</p> <p>To achieve floristically diverse sward content, providing colour and seasonal variety for visitors and habitat for insects and birds. Control invasive weed species (by cutting prior to seed set)</p>	✓	✓	
<p>Post establishment: The wildflower meadow should be cut once per year to between 40 and 70mm (late August/ September for summer flowering meadow or July for spring flowering). However, subject to the results of monitoring, an additional cut in late March may be carried out, especially in the first few years following establishment. This measure would help control the vigour of the sward, especially of the bulkier grasses, and would encourage greater species richness. All arisings should be left in situ for 48 to 72 hours prior to removal. Minimise chemical use.</p>	<p>To ensure floristically diverse sward content and control invasive weed species</p>	✓	✓	✓

Task	Management Objective / Performance Standard	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11-30
Monitoring every 5 years by a suitably qualified person to review the grassland condition. This will then review management techniques.	To monitor floristically diverse sward	✓	✓	✓

Remedial Actions

- 4.10 Should the grassland monitoring indicate that the condition score is not reaching requirement, weeds will be targeted and cleared from the habitat, and channels of bare ground created for additional supplementary seeding using the mixes above. The above management plan should then be followed from the beginning to allow re-establishment. If these actions are not sufficient, specialist advice will be sought

5.0 WET DITCH

Definition

- 5.1 The UKHab definition for ditch is an artificial standing-water or dry ditch linear feature that is <5 m wide and that is ≥ 20 times longer than its width.
- 5.2 The aim for the management of the new ditch is to a condition assessment score of **Moderate** within 30 years. To do this, at least six of the following must be met:
- The ditch is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution.
 - A range of emergent, submerged and floating leaved plants are present. As a guide >10 species of emergent, floating or submerged plants in a 20 m ditch length;
 - There is less than 10% cover of filamentous algae and/or duckweed *Lemna spp.* (these are signs of eutrophication).
 - A fringe of aquatic marginal vegetation is present along more than 75% of the ditch.
 - Physical damage is evident along less than 5% of the ditch, with examples of damage including: excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, or any other damaging management activities.
 - Sufficient water levels are maintained; as a guide a minimum summer depth of approximately 50 cm in minor ditches and 1 m in main drains.
 - Less than 10% of the ditch is heavily shaded.

- There is an absence of non-native plant and animal species

Creation

- 5.3 The ditch will be excavated with a sinuous alignment to replicate natural watercourse form and maximise marginal habitat. The cross-section will include shallow-sloped banks (ideally 1:3 or shallower) and a variety of depths to encourage ecological diversity. Where feasible, the base will be uneven to create microhabitats and encourage water retention. Works will avoid the bird nesting season (March–August) and be timed during dry periods to reduce ground disturbance. Any spoil will be reused sensitively on site to create contour features or buffer strips.

Planting

- 5.4 Where natural colonisation is expected to be slow or the ditch is isolated, targeted planting will be undertaken. Native species such as *Juncus spp.*, *Carex spp.*, *Mentha aquatica*, and *Veronica beccabunga* may be introduced as plugs or from donor sites, ensuring local provenance. Planting will focus on key marginal areas and will avoid dense coverage to allow natural succession. No invasive or non-native species will be introduced, and some areas will be left unplanted to monitor natural colonisation. Planting will be adapted based on observed hydrology and soil moisture conditions.

Initial Management

- 5.5 During the first year, regular monitoring will be carried out to assess establishment, erosion, and water flow. Any failed plantings will be replaced in the first growing season, and blockages will be cleared to maintain intended hydrological function. If erosion or bank instability is observed, corrective measures such as coir rolls may be used to stabilise the banks. Temporary fencing may be installed where there is risk of poaching by livestock or disturbance. Invasive species such as Himalayan balsam will be removed if observed.

Ongoing Management

- 5.6 Long-term management will involve rotational vegetation cutting, typically removing one-third of the ditch length in any given year to maintain a variety of successional stages and avoid wholesale habitat loss. Cuttings will be removed to prevent nutrient build-up. Management will be scheduled for late summer or early autumn, avoiding the peak

breeding season for amphibians and nesting birds. Ditch flow will be maintained through periodic blockage removal, and sediment levels will be monitored. Desilting will be undertaken only when necessary (e.g. every 10+ years) and always in sections to protect aquatic life. Monitoring will also include vegetation assessments and, where appropriate, checks for water vole or amphibian presence.

Table 4: Ditch management

Task	Management Objective / Performance Standard	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11-30
Excavate ditch profile with a meandering plan where possible, including a range of marginal depths and gently sloping banks (1:3 or shallower). Ensure appropriate connection to existing hydrology and avoid excessive straightening.	To create a stable ditch profile with naturalistic form, encouraging a mosaic of wetland habitats.	✓		
Introduce native wetland plants (e.g., sedges, rushes) as plugs or donor turfs where natural colonisation is limited. Avoid planting the entire length to allow natural succession.	To establish diverse, native marginal vegetation for habitat structure and erosion control.	✓		
Monthly checks during the first year for erosion, vegetation failures, or invasive species. Replant or stabilise as necessary. Monitor water flow and remove blockages that cause scouring.	To ensure successful establishment of native flora and stable bank structure.	✓		
Rotational management of vegetation (cutting no more than one-third in any given year, ideally autumn). Maintain flow by clearing blockages, but retain sections of vegetation for wildlife. Monitor silt and desilt selectively every 10+ years if needed.	To maintain water flow, prevent succession to scrub, and retain high ecological value	✓	✓	✓

Remedial Actions

5.7 If monitoring identifies poor vegetation establishment, erosion, excessive sedimentation, or altered hydrology (e.g. drying out or persistent flooding), targeted remedial actions will be implemented. These may include infill planting with native species, re-grading of eroded banks, or the installation of flow control structures such as leaky dams or silt traps. In cases of persistent invasive species recurrence, enhanced biosecurity measures and repeat control interventions will be adopted. Where hydrological function is compromised, hydrological connectivity or flow inputs may be adjusted in consultation with a

hydrologist. All remedial works will aim to restore ecological function with minimal disruption to existing biodiversity

6.0 ORCHARD

6.1 To ensure traditional orchard is created and maintained appropriately, the UKHab definition and species mix have been detailed below.

Definition

6.2 An open-grown fruit trees within herbaceous vegetation. The defining feature is habitat structure, rather than vegetation type, topography or soils. Traditional orchards are open-grown trees set in herbaceous vegetation, with species composition of the trees being primarily in the Rosaceae family. The minimum number of trees is 5.

6.3 The aim for the management of the new grassland habitats is to achieve a condition assessment score of **Moderate** within 30 years. To do this, at least four of the following must be met:

- Less than 5% of fruit trees are smothered by scrub. Small patches of dense scrub and or scattered scrub growing between trees can be beneficial to biodiversity, however these occupy less than 10% of ground cover.
- There is evidence of formative and or restorative pruning to maintain longevity of trees.
- At least 95% of the trees are free from damage caused by humans or animals, for example browsing, bark stripping or rubbing on non-adjusted ties.
- Grassland is not overgrazed, poaching is not evident around the trees, with no more than 10% of trees poached under the canopy.
- Species richness of the grassland is equivalent to a medium, high, or very high distinctiveness grassland.
- There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species² (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA³) and species indicative of sub-optimal condition⁴ make up less than 10% of ground cover.

Planting

- 6.4 A species-rich grassland mixture should be sown following the guidelines of the supplier; however, this would be approximately 4g / M2. Seeds should be scattered and not drilled like a crop, and this scattering of the seed follows a more natural process.
- 6.5 The fruit trees should be planted within the grassland. Planting will utilise saplings to ensure condition assessment scores are met.
- 6.6 Saplings are susceptible to browsing pressure and damage from voles, rabbits, grey squirrels and deer. A combination of deer culling, tree shelters, tree tubes and/or fencing will be undertaken to protect trees from browsing pressure and ensure successful initiation.
- 6.7 New saplings will be watered for the first two weeks to ensure establishment.

Initial Management

- 6.8 During the 1st year of establishment, meadow grassland will be cut twice in each growing month to maintain a balance between the faster-growing species and flowers. The grassland will be mown to a height of 40-60mm with arisings cleared from the site. The grassland will be managed as per neutral grassland habitat management. The individual fruit trees will be managed as individual trees – see below.
- 6.9 The diversity of the grassland should be subject to ongoing monitoring to ensure maximum ecological benefit. The health of the fruit trees will be managed to maximise their benefit. The monitoring of the grassland will be undertaken by the management company and should include a review by a suitably qualified ecologist against the baseline and the aspired condition. Monitoring by an ecologist should occur in years 1,2,5,10,15,20,25, and 30.

Table 5: Orchard management actions and prescribed works schedule.

Task	Management Objective / Performance Standard	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11 - 30
<p>The surrounding grassland should be planted with an Emorsgate EL2 General Purpose Meadow Mix, or similar, as agreed with the council ecologist. This should be done in autumn or spring.</p> <p>Water trees and scrub as required to ensure satisfactory establishment, and for a period of no less than two years after planting. Frequency: as required to maintain healthy plant growth.</p>	<p>Species richness of the grassland is equivalent to a medium, high, or very high distinctiveness grassland.</p> <p>To ensure sustained tree and shrub growth</p> <p>To conserve the 'layered effect' of vegetation in the local landscape</p>	✓		
<p>Trees should be inspected every 3 months for the first two years of the plan to ensure that trees are healthy, not diseased, damaged, or dead. Inspection to identify any dead limbs or other parts of a tree that may cause harm to the tree or a member of the public.</p>	<p>At least 95% of the trees are free from damage caused by humans or animals, for example browsing, bark stripping or rubbing on non-adjusted ties.</p>	✓		
<p>Establishment maintenance for new trees (maintenance of tree stakes, ties, guys and guards). Once established any guards and stakes should be removed and taken off-site and disposed of responsibly. Tree guards will be biodegradable.</p>	<p>Establishment of trees</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>Any species which die, become diseased or seriously defected within the first 5 years should be replaced like for like in the first available planting season. Tree replacement should be undertaken as required in early spring or late autumn.</p>	<p>Establishment of habitat</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>Yearly pruning should be conducted between January and March based on findings of inspections. Formative pruning as required. Emergency pruning should be conducted immediately when a critical fault is noticed.</p>	<p>There is evidence of formative and or restorative pruning to maintain longevity of trees.</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>Mow the 'orchard' area (i.e. around the fruit trees) fully in March/April, then leave the grass to grow long to protect the fruit trees until they are ripe or have been picked in October. Arisings to be removed following cut</p>	<p>Species richness of the grassland is equivalent to a medium, high, or very high distinctiveness grassland.</p>	✓	✓	✓
<p>Monitor the orchard area during summer and mow nettle and bramble patches selectively as needed – in blocks rather than as a single whole.</p>	<p>Less than 5% of fruit trees are smothered by scrub. Small patches of dense scrub and scattered scrub growing between trees can be beneficial to biodiversity, however</p>	✓	✓	✓

Task	Management Objective / Performance Standard	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11 - 30
	these occupy less than 10% of ground cover.			

Remedial Actions

- 6.10 Should the tree monitoring indicate that their condition is declining, arboriculture specialist advice will be sought, and appropriate actions taken to re-establish the tree conditions. The grassland monitoring indicate that the condition score is not reaching requirement, weeds will be targeted and cleared from the habitat, and channels of bare ground created for additional supplementary seeding using the mixes above. The above management plan should then be followed from the beginning to allow re-establishment. If these actions are not sufficient, specialist advice will be sought

7.0 INDIVIDUAL/URBAN TREES

- 7.1 The urban trees need to achieve at least a **poor** condition within 30 years. Therefore, whilst meeting individual condition criteria is not necessary, the trees need to be kept and managed in a healthy condition. The following management practices will ensure this.

Planting

- 7.2 Planting will utilise saplings to ensure condition assessment scores are met.
- 7.3 Saplings are susceptible to browsing pressure and damage from voles, rabbits, grey squirrels and deer. A combination of deer culling, tree shelters, tree tubes and/or fencing will be undertaken to protect trees from browsing pressure and ensure successful initiation.
- 7.4 New saplings will be watered for the first two weeks to ensure establishment.

Initial Management - Vegetation Control

- 7.5 This involves measures such as watering, weeding around the base, bark mulching, tree guard checks, and replacement planting for failed specimens.
- 7.6 Tree growth may be suppressed by other plants competing for moisture, nutrients and light. The vegetation surrounding a tree can also affect the likelihood of damage by small

mammals, as dense grass provides ideal cover for voles which can ‘ring-bark’ and kill young trees.

7.7 High light levels favour competitive plants, such as tall, dense grasses and bracken, and their control will be necessary. Vegetation control encourages stronger growth of trees and shrubs, and their more rapid and reliable establishment. Vegetation control may be required for first two years.

7.8 Mowing or strimming around trees prevents tall, dense vegetation from collapsing onto, and crushing, small saplings especially, when wet. Forestry practice often encourages mowing of grass areas between ‘weeded’ patches to reduce seeding into the weed-free areas. Mowing, however, can result in dominance of grasses which compete with trees, and it can cause ground compaction and direct damage to young stems. Mowing or strimming should be used only where there is a high risk of tall vegetation collapsing onto young trees.

Mulching

7.9 Mulching offers an effective alternative to herbicide treatment. There are a variety of organic and synthetic sheet mats as well as biodegradable materials that can be spread on the ground, providing options for different site conditions and budgets. Biodegradable materials include straw, bark, wood chip, wool fleece and paper slurry. Mulches need to be in place for at least three years (initial applications may need topping up) and cover a circular area with a diameter of at least 1.2 metres around each tree.

Ongoing Management

7.10 Trees should be managed sensitively as far as possible and so allowed to approach their natural expected canopy. Although it is accepted that additional pruning may be required for safety. Additional protective measures structures may be required if monitoring reveals vandalism and herbicide are impacting any of the trees. Replacement trees will be planted 1:1 in the case that any of them fail. See Table 7 for the full management schedule.

Table 6: Individual Tree Management

Task	Management Objective / Condition Assessment Criteria	Installation	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11-30
Planted trees should be a native species and one which is known for rapid growth. Suitable species include:	Ensures the trees are native and therefore of maximum ecological value and meet the required assessment criteria. Fast growing species are required to ensure they will grow to a suitable size within the required 30-year timeframe.	✓			
Trees planted should be a minimum of 12-14cm in girth (heavy standard).	A suitable size will be needed to ensure the trees will grow to a suitable size within the required 30-year timeframe.	✓			
Trees should be planted in areas where their canopies can over sail some form of vegetative groundcover.	Ensures the tree is planted in a suitably vegetated area to maximize ecological value and fulfil the condition.	✓			
Establishment maintenance for new trees (maintenance of tree stakes, ties, guys and guards). Once established any guards and stakes should be removed and taken off-site and disposed of responsibly. Tree guards will be biodegradable.	To successfully establish trees and maintain general tree health, thus working towards target size.		✓		
Water trees as required to ensure satisfactory establishment, and for a period of not less than two years after planting. Frequency: as required to maintain healthy plant growth.	To maintain general tree health and maintain growth towards target size.		✓	✓	✓
Trees should be inspected every 3 months for the first two years of the plan to ensure that trees are healthy, not diseased, damaged, or dead. Inspection to identify any dead limbs or other parts of a tree that may cause harm to the tree or a member of the public. Limit pruning exclusively to those limbs which may otherwise fall and cause injury etc.	To maintain general tree health and maintain growth towards target size. Limits the risk to public health posed by falling deadwood etc. Limits human impacts to the tree to only those necessary for human health and ensures it maintains at least 75% natural growth form.		✓	✓	✓
Any species which die, become diseased or seriously defected within	To ensure trees are consistently present where planned, maximizing		✓	✓	✓

<p>the first 5 years should be replaced like for like in the first available planting season. Tree replacement should be undertaken as required in early spring or late autumn.</p>	<p>their ability to be present and provide ecological and amenity value.</p>				
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Remedial Actions

7.11 Should the tree monitoring indicate that their condition is declining, arboriculture specialist advice will be sought, and appropriate actions taken to re-establish the tree conditions as per the bullet points above. Supplementary planting of trees will be carried out if the management regime is not sufficient to allow natural regeneration.

8.0 POND

Definition

8.1 A standing waterbody that is <2ha and does not meet the criteria for a priority habitat pond.

8.2 The aim for the management of the new pond is to achieve a condition assessment score of **Moderate** within 30 years. To do this, at least six of the following must be met:

- The pond is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution. Turbidity is acceptable if the pond is grazed by livestock.
- There is semi-natural habitat (moderate distinctiveness or above) complete surrounding the pond, for at least 10 m from the pond edge for its entire perimeter.
- Less than 10% of the water surface is covered with duckweed *Lemna spp.* or filamentous algae.
- The pond is not artificially connected to other waterbodies, such as agricultural ditches or artificial pipework.
- Pond water levels can fluctuate naturally throughout the year. No obvious artificial dams, pumps or pipework.
- There is an absence of listed non-native plant and animal species.
- The pond is not artificially stocked with fish. If the pond naturally contains fish, it is a native fish assemblage at low densities.
- Emergent, submerged or floating plants (excluding duckweed)⁴ cover at least 50% of the pond area which is less than 3m deep.

- The pond surface is no more than 50% shaded by adjacent trees and scrub.

Creation

- 8.3 The pond will be created through excavation to an appropriate depth profile, incorporating a variety of marginal shelves and deeper zones to support a diversity of aquatic life. The design will include gently sloping margins (1:5 or shallower) to facilitate colonisation by marginal plants and access for wildlife. Clay or other impermeable substrate will be used to retain water if required. Construction will ideally occur outside the bird nesting season (March–August) and during drier months to minimise disturbance and compaction. Spoil will be reused on-site where possible, to create contouring or bunds to enhance habitat structure.

Planting

- 8.4 Planting will aim to establish a structurally diverse community of native aquatic and marginal vegetation. A mix of pre-established plug plants and harvested donor material from local, ecologically similar sources will be introduced to accelerate colonisation. Species will be chosen based on the local vegetative communities, water depth, and ecological function, ensuring a balance of emergent, floating-leaved, and submerged species. Bare-root planting will be spaced to allow for natural spread and minimise competition. No non-native or invasive species will be introduced. Some areas will be left unplanted to allow for natural colonisation.

Initial Management - Vegetation Control

- 8.5 During the first year following creation, management will focus on supporting successful establishment. This includes regular checks for erosion, sedimentation, or invasive species incursion. Water levels will be monitored to ensure hydrological stability. Any plant failures will be replaced as needed. Temporary fencing may be installed to prevent trampling or disturbance by livestock or visitors while vegetation establishes. Debris and litter will be removed to maintain water quality and appearance.

Ongoing Management

- 8.6 Annual monitoring and light-touch management will be undertaken to ensure the pond continues to support a diverse aquatic ecosystem. Marginal vegetation will be selectively

cut or thinned on rotation (typically every 2–3 years) to prevent dominance by aggressive species and to maintain open water. Invasive non-native species will be removed promptly. Silt accumulation will be monitored and managed as needed on a decadal basis. Monitoring will include assessments of vegetation composition, water quality, and fauna such as amphibians and invertebrates, with adaptive management implemented based on findings.

8.7 The attenuation swale will be managed in accordance with CIRIA SUDs Manual C753. At each maintenance visit the Contractor will inspect the SUDS facility and remove any branches and leaf debris and/or any other object that are likely to restrict water flow/capacity. All areas will be inspected and cleared of litter and other debris in accordance with the details set out above. The Contractor will inspect all outfall features, check grilles (if present), and remove any obstructions. Excess silt is to be removed from the base of facilities to maintain volume capacity and safeguard functionality of the balancing ponds themselves as necessary. See Table 7 for the full management schedule.

Table 7: New Pond Management

Task	Management Objective / Performance Standard	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11-30
Excavation of pond basin, creation of marginal shelves, and installation of any required liners or bunds. Spoil to be re-used on-site where possible. Works to avoid bird nesting season.	To establish a hydrologically stable pond with varied depth profiles and structural habitat diversity	✓		
Native plug planting and/or use of local donor material. Selection based on local NVC and hydrology. Avoid introduction of invasive species. Some areas to be left to colonise naturally.	To initiate development of a diverse aquatic flora suited to local conditions and pond zones	✓		

Task	Management Objective / Performance Standard	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11-30
Monthly visual inspections during first year for erosion, invasive species, and vegetation establishment. Replant failed areas. Install temporary fencing if needed.	To support successful establishment of vegetation and stable physical structure	✓		
Annual inspections. Rotational management of marginal vegetation (every 2–3 years). Removal of invasive species. Monitor silt and desilt as required (typically every 10+ years). Maintain water quality.	To maintain ecological function, biodiversity, and structural diversity of pond and margins	✓	✓	✓

9.0 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Definition

- 9.1 Includes woodland growing on the full range of soil conditions, from very acidic to base-rich. It occurs largely within enclosed landscapes, usually on sites with well-defined boundaries, at relatively low altitudes, although altitude is not a defining feature.

Enhancements

- 9.2 Enhancement works will focus on improving structural and habitat diversity within the existing woodland. Selective removal of dead or dying trees posing safety risks will be carried out, while retaining suitable standing deadwood where safe to do so. Felled timber will be reused on site to create log piles, deadwood habitat stacks, or windrows to support invertebrates, fungi, and small mammals. Works will avoid the main bird nesting season (March–August) unless trees present an urgent safety concern and have been surveyed for active nests or roosts. No planting is proposed as part of the initial enhancement phase.

Initial Management

- 9.3 Initial work will involve removing a limited number of unsafe or strategically selected dead trees and redistributing brush and timber to form deadwood habitat features. All works will be carried out by competent arboricultural contractors. Where applicable, low-

lying bramble or other competitive undergrowth will be retained to provide cover and ground structure. Public access routes will be checked and cleared where needed for safety.

Ongoing Management

- 9.4 The woodland will be maintained in a stable, low-intervention condition. Annual checks will ensure deadwood features remain intact and safe, especially along paths or accessible areas. Management will focus on retaining fallen and standing deadwood and avoiding unnecessary clearance. Invasive species (e.g. *Rhododendron ponticum* or *Himalayan balsam*) will be controlled if observed. Tree regeneration and habitat condition will be reviewed every 5 years to inform adaptive management.

Table 8: Woodland Management

Task	Management Objective / Performance Standard	Years 1-5	Years 5-10	Years 11-30
Selective removal of unsafe/target dead trees – Remove only where required for safety or to create deadwood. Retain standing deadwood where safe.	Maintain woodland structure while enhancing deadwood habitat features	✓	✓ (if required)	✓ (if required)
Creation of deadwood features – Redistribute timber/brush as log piles, windrows or habitat stacks within woodland	Support invertebrates, fungi, and small mammals through structural diversity	✓	✓	✓
Monitoring of deadwood and regeneration – Annual visual checks and periodic habitat review every 5 years	Maintain woodland in stable condition with appropriate deadwood volume	✓	✓	✓
Invasive species control – Remove any invasive non-native plants if identified (e.g. <i>Rhododendron</i> , <i>balsam</i>)	Prevent deterioration of native woodland condition	✓	✓	✓
Remedial planting (if needed) – Enrichment with native understorey shrubs only if natural regeneration fails	Ensure continuity of woodland habitat condition	✓ (if required)	✓ (if required)	✓ (if required)

Remedial actions

- 9.5 If regeneration fails, invasive species spread, or deadwood levels decline, targeted remedial action will be undertaken. This may include light thinning to encourage regeneration, supplementary deadwood creation, or enrichment planting with native woodland shrubs. Public safety concerns will be addressed promptly, while aiming to retain as much ecological deadwood as possible.

Table 8 Management and condition targets – Mixed scrub (moderate)

Mixed scrub Condition Assessment Criteria		Targeted	Creation/Enhancement Approach	Management Approach
A	<p>The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type – the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species, <p>No single species comprising more than 75% of the cover (except hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i>, common juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i>, sea buckthorn <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> or box <i>Buxus sempervirens</i>, which can be up to 100% cover).</p>	Yes	All scrub planting will incorporate seven different native species, planted at 1.5m intervals.	Until establishment scrub will be watered as required to ensure success.
B	Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran) shrubs are all present.	Yes	n/a	Every 10 years 30% of the scrub area will be coppiced to ground level to allow opportunities for new seedlings to emerge and create a variety of age classes in the long term.
C	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and species indicative of suboptimal condition make up less than 5% of ground cover.	Yes	Prior to planting the area will be stripped of existing vegetation and a mulch applied around the whips to suppress weed growth.	Undesirable species will be controlled as required to ensure they do not exceed 5% of ground cover. Herbicides should be avoided as a treatment however.
D	The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	No	n/a	n/a
E	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	No	n/a	n/a

Condition Assessment Result	
Good	Passes 5 of 5 criteria
Moderate	Passes 3 or 4 of 5 criteria
Poor	Passes 2 or fewer criteria

Table 9. Management and condition targets –Urban trees (poor)

Urban trees Condition Assessment Criteria		Targeted	Creation/Enhancement Approach	Management Approach
A	The tree is a native species (or more than 70% within the block are native species).	No	n/a	n/a
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	No	n/a	n/a
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	No	n/a	n/a
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	No	n/a	n/a
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	n/a	n/a
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	No	n/a	n/a

Condition Assessment Result	
Good	Passes 5 or 6 criteria
Moderate	Passes 3 or 4 criteria
Poor	Passes 2 or fewer criteria

Table 10. Management and condition targets – Other neutral grassland (moderate - good)

Other neutral grassland Condition Assessment Criteria		Targeted	Creation/ enhancement Approach	Management Approach
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type. Note – this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Yes	Graze/cut existing grass to ground level (and remove cuttings) in autumn. Scarify the ground and seed with EM2 seedmix at 4g/m ² And gently roll the area.	Starting the following March cut to c.30mm and collect and remove cuttings. Repeat this process in August, September and October. On all subsequent years the sward will be cut to c.30mm once a month in March, May August, September, and October. Ensuring a core flowering period of April to end of July.
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20 per cent is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Yes	n/a	In addition to the above management, at least 20% of the area will continue to be cut on a monthly basis throughout May, June and July, in the form of pathways or verges. be cut. Outside of these months, a buffer of at least 20% of the total grassland area along the edge scrub/woodland habitats surrounding the grassland will be left unmown.
C	Cover of bare ground between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.	Yes	n/a	After each spring cut, the ground will be scarified to ensure between 1 and 5% of the area comprises bare ground.
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble) less than 5%.	Yes (For 'good' condition areas)	n/a	The management described for A&B will ensure bracken and scrub remain below these thresholds.
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	Yes (For 'good' condition areas)	n/a	The above management will help suppress certain undesirable species.
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m ² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type.	No	n/a	n/a

Condition Assessment Result	
Good	Passes 5 of 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and F

Moderate	Passes 3 or 3 of 6 criteria, including essential criterion A
Poor	Passes 0, 1, 2, criteria of 6

Table 11. Management and condition targets – Pond (Moderate)

Ponds Condition Assessment Criteria		Targeted	Creation Approach	Management Approach
A	The pond is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution. Turbidity is acceptable if the pond is grazed by livestock.	Yes	Natural buffer zones and directing inflows through vegetated margins. No artificial drainage or nutrient inputs will be connected. The base and banks will be made from clean subsoil or low-nutrient substrates to reduce the risk of eutrophication	Water quality will be monitored visually and, if required, with spot testing for nutrient levels or turbidity. If turbidity rises due to sediment input or disturbance, silt traps, buffer planting, or bank stabilisation will be implemented to restore clear conditions.
B	There is semi-natural habitat (moderate distinctiveness or above) complete surrounding the pond, for at least 10 m from the pond edge for its entire perimeter	No	n/a	n/a
C	Less than 10% of the water surface is covered with duckweed Lemna spp. or filamentous algae	Yes	Constructed using low-nutrient soils and filled naturally (e.g. rainwater or unpolluted surface water) to reduce nutrient enrichment that favours duckweed and algae. A variety of depths and good edge planting will encourage a stable plant community, outcompeting nuisance species	Pond will be checked seasonally for excessive duckweed or algal growth. If coverage exceeds 10%, manual removal will be carried out alongside identification and control of nutrient sources (e.g. runoff or decaying organic matter). Long-term nutrient input will be minimised through regular maintenance of buffer zones.
D	The pond is not artificially connected to other waterbodies, such as agricultural ditches or artificial pipework	No	n/a	n/a
E	Pond water levels can fluctuate naturally throughout the year. No obvious artificial dams, pumps or pipework	Yes	Pond will be constructed without engineered water-level control structures. Its basin will be designed to allow natural inflow from rainfall and groundwater and to tolerate seasonal drying in shallow areas. No pumps, dams, or piped inputs/outputs will be included	Natural hydrology will be maintained by avoiding artificial interventions. Water level fluctuation will be accepted as part of a healthy pond dynamic, with no attempt to top up or drain the pond unless needed for safety or invasive species control. Encroachment by surrounding vegetation will be monitored to ensure it doesn't overly restrict inflow.

F	There is an absence of listed non-native plant and animal species	Yes	Only native species of local provenance will be used in any planting. Donor material, if used, will come from nearby ponds confirmed to be free of invasive species	Regular checks will be made for invasive non-native species such as <i>Crassula helmsii</i> , <i>Elodea spp.</i> , or non-native fish. If detected, rapid response measures will be taken, such as manual removal or specialist eradication methods. Access signage and public engagement will discourage intentional introductions
G	The pond is not artificially stocked with fish. If the pond naturally contains fish, it is a native fish assemblage at low densities	Yes	The pond will not be connected to stocked fisheries or watercourses that might introduce fish. No stocking will occur. If colonisation by native fish happens naturally via seasonal flooding or wildlife vectors, it will be accepted provided densities remain low	Fish populations will be monitored periodically (e.g. visual checks or netting if needed). If non-native or high-density populations establish, mitigation such as partial drawdown or trapping may be used to reduce numbers.
H	Emergent, submerged or floating plants (excluding duckweed) cover at least 50% of the pond area which is less than 3m deep	Yes	The pond will be shaped with extensive shallow margins and shelves to promote rapid colonisation by aquatic plants. Planting with native species (e.g. <i>Potamogeton</i> , <i>Myriophyllum</i> , <i>Sparganium</i>) may be used to accelerate establishment in zones under 3 m depth. Some areas will be left unplanted for natural succession	Vegetation coverage will be monitored annually. If plant cover falls below 50% in shallow zones, supplementary planting may be undertaken with native species. Management will avoid over-clearance; any vegetation removal will be rotational and selective to maintain coverage and structural diversity.
I	The pond surface is no more than 50% shaded by adjacent trees and scrub	No	n/a	n/a

Condition Assessment Result	
Good	Passes 7 of 7 criteria for woodland ponds or 9 of 9 for non-woodland ponds
Moderate	Passes 5 or 6 of 7 criteria for woodland ponds or 6 - 8 of 9 for non-woodland ponds
Poor	Passes <5 of 7 criteria for woodland ponds or <6 of 7 for non-woodland ponds

Table 12. Management and condition targets – Traditional Orchard (moderate)

Other neutral grassland Condition Assessment Criteria		Targeted	Creation/ enhancement Approach	Management Approach
A	Presence of ancient ¹ and / or veteran ² trees. NB - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition.	No	n/a	n/
B	Presence of deadwood in or on trees, or on the ground: at least 20% of mature trees have deadwood associated with them. Some examples of deadwood are: standing, attached and fallen trees or limbs; dead stems; branches and branch stubs greater than 10 cm diameter; and internal cavities. The types and distribution of deadwood provide a range of habitats suitable to support a wide assemblage of saproxylic invertebrates. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition.	Yes	Utilise native deadwood from native trees within the local area	n/a
C	Less than 5% of fruit trees are smothered by scrub. Small patches of dense scrub and or scattered scrub growing between trees can be beneficial to biodiversity, however these occupy less than 10% of ground cover.	Yes	Native scrub edges and pockets of bramble allowed	Scrub will be managed to ensure that this is 10% ground cover
D	There is evidence of formative and or restorative pruning to maintain longevity of trees.	Yes	Monitoring of tree health	The management will ensure no impact on the trees form
E	At least 95% of the trees are free from damage caused by humans or animals, for example browsing, bark stripping or rubbing on non-adjusted ties.	Yes	Monitoring of tree health	The trees heath will be monitored for health.
F	Grassland is not overgrazed, poaching is not evident around the trees, with no more than 10% of trees poached under the canopy.	Yes	No grazing	No grazing grassland management through mowing
G	Species richness of the grassland is equivalent to a medium, high, or very high distinctiveness grassland.	No	n/a	n/a
H	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ² (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ³) and species indicative of sub-optimal condition ⁴ make up less than 10% of ground cover.	Yes	Monitoring of grassland condition	Management through mowing and monitoring of the grassland. Mowing regimes and hand weeding if required

Condition Assessment Result	
Good	Passes 6, 7 or 8 of 8 criteria, including essential criteria A and B
Moderate	Passes 4 or 5 of 8 criteria; OR Passes 6 or 7 of 8 criteria, but fails an essential criterion
Poor	Passes 3 or fewer criteria

Table 13. Management and condition targets – Wet Ditch (moderate)

Ditch Condition Assessment Criteria		Targeted	Creation/Enhancement Approach	Management Approach
A	The ditch is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution	No	n/a	n/a
B	A range of emergent, submerged and floating leaved plants are present. As a guide >10 species of emergent, floating or submerged plants in a 20 m ditch length.	Yes	The ditch will be designed with a varied profile, including gently sloping margins and a range of water depths to support multiple aquatic plant niches. Where appropriate, native species (e.g. <i>Sparganium</i> , <i>Potamogeton</i> , <i>Myriophyllum</i> , <i>Ranunculus</i>) will be introduced through plug planting or donor material from nearby wetlands to accelerate species diversity.	Aquatic vegetation will be monitored during the growing season to track species richness. If fewer than 10 species are present in any 20 m stretch after establishment, supplementary planting may be undertaken. Over dominant species will be thinned selectively to prevent monocultures and allow less competitive species to persist.
C	There is less than 10% cover of filamentous algae and/or duckweed <i>Lemna</i> spp. (these are signs of eutrophication)..	Yes	The ditch will be constructed using low-nutrient substrates and designed to intercept only clean water sources (e.g. surface runoff from grassland or woodland). Buffer zones will be created on either side to filter nutrients before they reach the watercourse	Regular inspections will be carried out during spring and summer to check for excessive algae or duckweed. If cover exceeds 10%, manual removal and investigation of nutrient sources (e.g. runoff, decaying vegetation) will be implemented. Buffer strips will be maintained to continue nutrient interception
D	A fringe of aquatic marginal vegetation is present along more than 75% of the ditch.	Yes	The ditch profile will include shallow, gently sloping margins to encourage the establishment of marginal vegetation. Edge planting with native emergent species (e.g. <i>Typha</i> , <i>Iris</i> , <i>Carex</i> , <i>Juncus</i>) may be used to initiate colonisation where natural regeneration is slow	Marginal vegetation cover will be checked annually, and areas of bare edge will be planted if needed to achieve >75% continuity. Vegetation will be cut on rotation, ensuring not all margins are cleared in a single season. Damage to marginal plants from trampling or erosion will be repaired using coir matting or replanting

E	Physical damage is evident along less than 5% of the ditch, with examples of damage including: excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, or any other damaging management activities.	Yes	Fencing or bankside access controls will be installed where necessary to prevent excessive livestock poaching or machinery access. Construction works will be carried out with lightweight, low-impact equipment to minimise compaction and bank damage	The ditch will be inspected for physical damage during routine checks. If poaching, rutting, or erosion is identified over >5% of the ditch length, remedial measures such as fencing, stabilisation with vegetation, or diversion of traffic will be implemented. Bank repairs will use natural materials to preserve habitat quality
F	Sufficient water levels are maintained; as a guide a minimum summer depth of approximately 50 cm in minor ditches and 1 m in main drains	No	n/a	n/a
G	Less than 10% of the ditch is heavily shaded	Yes	The ditch will be aligned to receive adequate sunlight and will be sited away from dense woodland or overhanging hedgerows. Existing mature trees will be retained selectively to avoid excessive shading, with a target of open canopy along the majority of the length	Tree and shrub growth will be monitored and managed through periodic coppicing or selective thinning. If more than 10% of the ditch becomes heavily shaded, targeted vegetation clearance will be undertaken to restore light levels and support aquatic plant growth
H	There is an absence of non-native plant and animal species	Yes	The ditch will be planted only with native species of verified local provenance. Material from other sites will be checked to ensure it is free of invasive plants or invertebrates. There will be no connection to ornamental ponds or stocked waterbodies	Non-native species will be checked for annually. If invasive species (e.g. <i>Crassula helmsii</i> , <i>Elodea spp.</i>) are detected, appropriate control measures will be implemented based on severity, using manual or specialist methods. Early intervention will prioritise rapid containment and ecological restoration

Condition Assessment Result

Good	Passes 5 of 5 criteria
Moderate	Passes 3 or 4 of 5 criteria
Poor	Passes 2 or fewer criteria

Table 14. Management and condition targets – Woodland (moderate)

Woodland Condition Assessment Criteria		Baseline Score	Enhanced ?	Creation/Enhancement Approach	Management Approach
A	Age distribution of trees	2	No	n/a	n/a
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	1	No	n/a	n/a
C	Invasive plant species	3	No	n/a	n/a
D	Number of native tree species	3	No	n/a	n/a
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	3	No	n/a	n/a
F	Open space within woodland	2	No	n/a	n/a
G	Woodland regeneration	2	No	n/a	n/a
H	Tree health	1	Yes	Tree health will be improved through targeted thinning to reduce competition, promote vigour, and improve canopy condition. Poorly performing or stressed individuals will be removed where appropriate, and ground compaction will be minimised during all interventions. Infill planting with native species better suited to site conditions may be undertaken to increase stand resilience and diversity	Tree condition will be reviewed annually, with visual surveys for dieback, pest activity, and mortality. If signs of decline persist, interventions such as pest control, selective thinning, or improved drainage may be implemented. The aim will be to reduce visible mortality and dieback to below 10% and to prevent the establishment of high-risk pests or diseases through early detection and response
I	Vegetation and ground flora	1	No	n/a	n/a

J	Woodland vertical structure	2	No	n/a	n/a
K	Veteran trees	1	No	n/a	n/a
L	Amount of deadwood	2	Yes	Selective creation of deadwood features will be carried out across the woodland to increase structural and habitat diversity. This will include ring-barking or topping a small number of non-hazardous trees to form standing deadwood, retaining fallen limbs and trunks in situ, and preserving existing stumps and cavity-bearing stems. Deadwood features will be distributed across the site to ensure at least 50% of sample plots contain visible deadwood elements	Deadwood will be retained wherever safe, with minimal intervention unless removal is required for safety. Future woodland operations will aim to avoid disturbing or removing fallen or standing deadwood. Ongoing monitoring will track distribution, and additional deadwood creation will be undertaken if required to maintain or exceed the 50% plot target
M	Woodland disturbance	1	No		

Condition Assessment Result

Good	Total score >32 (33 to 39)
Moderate	Total score 26 to 32
Poor	Total score <26 (13 to 25)

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Date 24/07/2025