

Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Itchingfield

Introduction

This Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been prepared to accompany the proposed redevelopment at Mill Farm, Mill Lane, Itchingfield. The purpose of the plan is to establish the landscape management, habitat creation and ecological enhancement measures necessary to secure the biodiversity gains identified within the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

The objectives of the LEMP are to:

- Establish and maintain species-rich grassland habitat.
- Establish and maintain native hedgerow planting with hedgerow trees.
- Enhance ecological connectivity across the site.
- Deliver and maintain the biodiversity gains identified within the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.
- Ensure the long-term management of landscape features in a manner compatible with biodiversity enhancement.

Management Objectives

Species-Rich Grassland Enhancement Area

The existing modified grassland shall be enhanced from poor condition to moderate condition through the introduction of a suitable wildflower and meadow grass seed mix.

Objectives:

- Increase botanical diversity.
- Improve habitat value for pollinating insects.
- Provide foraging opportunities for birds and small mammals.
- Maintain an open grassland character.

Native Hedgerow Planting

New native hedgerow planting shall be established along the site boundaries as shown on the approved plans.

Objectives:

- Strengthen landscape screening.
- Enhance wildlife corridors.
- Provide nesting and foraging habitat.
- Increase structural diversity through the inclusion of hedgerow trees.

Planting Specification

Native Hedgerow Mix

The hedgerow shall comprise local appropriate native species including:

- *Corylus Avellana* (Hazel)
- *Cornus Sanguinea* (Dogwood)
- *Crataegus MonoGyna* (Quickthorn)
- *Prunus Spinosa* (Blackthorn)
- *Rosa Canina* (Dog Rose)

Planting shall be undertaken during the first available planting season following commencement of development (November-March).

Hedgerow Trees

Hedgerow trees shall comprise heavy standard specimens selected from:

- *Acer Campestre* (Field Maple)
- *Malus Sylvestris* (Crab Apple)

Trees shall be planted at irregular intervals within the hedgerow.

Grassland Establishment

The enhancement area shall be prepared by:

- Reducing existing nutrient levels where practicable.
- Harrowing or scarifying the surface.
- Overseeding with a native wildflower and meadow grass mixture suitable for clay soils within West Sussex.

No fertilisers shall be applied.

Five-Year Establishment Plan

Grassland

Years 1-5:

- Cut regularly during the growing season to control weeds.
- Remove all arisings.
- Replace failed establishment areas as required.

Following establishment:

- Remove all arisings within one week.
- Optional light autumn grazing or maintenance cut.

Hedgerows

Years 1-5:

- Water during prolonged dry periods.
- Replace any failures annually during the planting season.
- Maintain rabbit and deer protection where required.

Trees

Years 1-5:

- Water during dry periods.
- Inspect stakes and ties annually.
- Replace failures during the following planting season.

Long-Term Management

Grassland

- Annual hay cut in late summer.
- Remove all cuttings.
- No fertiliser application.
- No routine pesticide use.
- Retain occasional tussocky grass margins around boundaries where appropriate.

Hedgerows

- Trim on a 2 to 3-year rotational basis.
- Avoid cutting during the bird nesting season (March-August inclusive).
- Allow hedgerows to mature before routine trimming.
- Retain hedgerow trees throughout their lifespan.

Trees

- Replace trees lost within the first 10 years.

Monitoring

Monitoring shall be undertaken annually for the first 5 years following planting. Any failures or deficiencies identified shall be remedied.

Management Responsibilities

The owners of the dwellings shall be responsible for the ongoing monitoring and maintenance of the enhancements.