

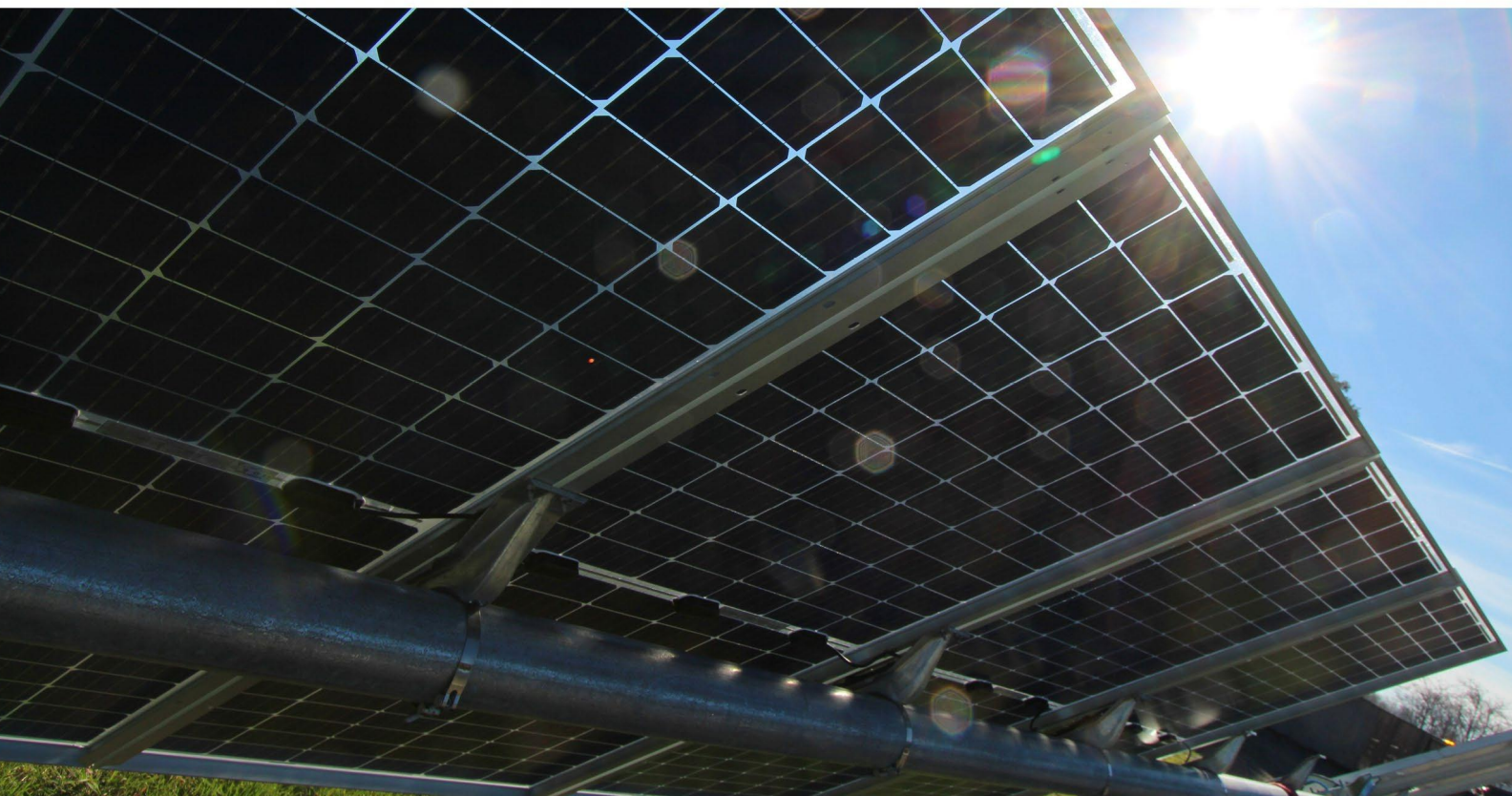


## **LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**

GUNTHORPE ROAD SOLAR FARM AND BATTERY STORAGE FACILITY

LAND SOUTH OF GUNTHORPE ROAD, WALPOLE MARSH, WISBECH,  
NEAR PE14 7JH

FEBRUARY 2022





# Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

Land South of Gunthorpe Road, Walpole Marsh, Wisbech

Presented to **Walpole Green Limited**

Issued: February 2022

Delta-Simons Project No. 21-0256.01



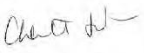
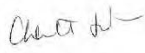
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## Report Details

|                      |                                                                                                       |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Client               | Walpole Green Limited                                                                                 |
| Report Title         | Landscape and Ecological Management Plan                                                              |
| Site Address         | Land South of Gunthorpe Road, Walpole Marsh, Wisbech                                                  |
| Project No.          | 21-0256.01                                                                                            |
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## Quality Assurance

| Issue No. | Status | Issue Date                           | Comments | Author                                                                            | Technical Review                                                                    | Authorised                                                                          |
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| 3         | Final  | 14 <sup>th</sup><br>February<br>2022 |          |  |  |  |
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# 1.0 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Survey

Delta-Simons Environmental Consultants Ltd was instructed by Walpole Green Limited (“the Applicant”) to prepare a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for the proposed installation and operation of a grid connected solar farm and battery storage facility (“the Proposed Development”) at land south of Gunthorpe Road, Walpole Marsh (hereafter referred to as the “Site”).

The LEMP has been written based upon information provided by the Applicant, the results and recommendations reported within the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) (Delta-Simons, June 2021), the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment prepared for the Site, and also the Flood Risk Assessment and Outline Surface Water Drainage Strategy. The LEMP has also been produced with reference to BRE National Solar Centre Biodiversity Guidance for Solar Developments (see References, Appendix A).

The measures proposed will ensure that overall, there is a net gain in the biodiversity value of the Site in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Paragraph 170, 2019). The NPPF advises that *“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the local environment by (d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures...”*

The aims of the LEMP are to:

- ▲ Provide enhancement measures to increase the biodiversity value of the Site;
- ▲ Retain and enhance the amenity of the existing public rights of way running through the Site;
- ▲ To screen elements of the Proposed Development from key receptor locations through appropriate landscaping;
- ▲ To reflect existing landscape elements and character in areas of the wider Site, which would not be subject to built development; and
- ▲ Provide a management and monitoring plan in order to enhance and maintain the ecological value of the Site following the construction of the development.

Furthermore, the enhancement measures proposed are in accordance with the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) through the planting of new hedgerows and measures to enhance the Site for barn owl *Tyto alba*, tree sparrow *Passer montanus*, invertebrates and bat species.

This Report considers the main development Site. The habitats along the cable route will either be reinstated, or form part of the proposed habitat creation works associated with an existing planning consent for a separate renewable energy generating station (planning reference 20/01508/FM), such that the cable route is not considered further within this Report.

## 1.2 Site Description

The Site is centred at Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference TF 47224 17587, to the east of Walpole Marsh. The Site covers an area of approximately 78.64 hectares (ha) and comprises predominantly arable. A predominately dry ditch characterises the south-eastern Site boundary, bordered by a row of semi-mature trees and species-poor grassland. The eastern extent of the ditch supported limited standing water.

The Site lies within a rural landscape with the majority of habitats in the vicinity of the Site being arable. Land to the south of the Site, associated with the aforementioned planning consent, is proposed for the creation of pasture beneath solar panels, and the inclusion of additional hedgerow, scrub and wildflower planting. To the west of the Site is a managed grassland embankment that leads to the River Nene approximately 30 m from the Site boundary. The hamlet of Walpole Marsh with associated residential properties lies to the east.

### 1.3 Proposed Development

The Site is proposed for the installation and operation of a grid connected solar farm and battery storage facility which would supply renewable energy to the National Grid. Solar arrays are to be a tracking system. Security fencing around the solar arrays is to be a height of 2.1 m, comprising wooden deer fence poles with gates. The battery storage facility comprises 24 containers, each measuring 12.2 m x 2.4 m and a height of 2.9 m. The point of connection is the sub-station off Walpole Bank to the south-east of the Site, following the route of existing roads and entering an arable field before connecting to the north-west of the sub-station. The proposed development layout is shown within the Application pack.

## 2.0 Summary of Baseline Data

### 2.1 Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)

To inform this LEMP the EclA prepared for the Site by Delta-Simons, was reviewed. The key findings are summarised below:

The results of the desk search indicate that there are three international statutory designations within 10 km of the Site boundary: The Wash Ramsar, Special Protection Area (SPA) and The Wash and Norfolk Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC), all 8.5 km north-east of the Site. There are no national statutory designated sites within 2 km of the Site boundary. The Site falls within an Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) associated with the international designated sites, as well as Islington Heronry Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) approximately 8 km east of the Site for which the Local Planning Authority (LPA) must consult Natural England for certain types of development. As the development type does not fall within any of these risk criteria, the IRZs are not considered a constraint to the development proposals.

Five non-statutory designated sites were identified within 2 km of the Site centre, the closest of which is the River Nene County Wildlife Site (CWS), situated approximately 50 m to the north-west of the Site. With the application of environmental best practice measures during the construction phase of works, the proposed development is not anticipated to result in any significant adverse impacts to the designated sites.

The Site is dominated by arable with limited species-poor grassland margins, and a tree lined drainage ditch defining the south-eastern Site boundary. A bare ground track provided access from the south-east of the Site. A derelict agricultural building was present within the central northern area of the Site adjacent to Public Right of Way (PRoW) FP1.

The Site offers opportunities for nesting birds, predominately associated with the trees at the south-eastern Site boundary, which are to be retained. Although the arable was not considered ideal for ground nesting bird species due to the agricultural management followed, and the extensive electricity pylons and overhead wires, which may provide perches for predators and subsequently deter nesting, there is a limited risk they may occur within crops, away from overhead cables and pylons. No evidence of barn owl activity was recorded in the on-Site building, however, they are known to occur in the local area and are anticipated to forage within the field margins at the Site. Mitigation measures will be applied during any Site clearance works to ensure no nesting birds are impacted by the development and the proposals will include a variety of measures to enhance the Site for both foraging and nesting species known to occur in the local area. A particular focus will be on Local BAP species including barn owl and tree sparrow.

A number of trees at the south-eastern Site boundary provide potential bat roost features, with the associated tree line providing a potential foraging and commuting corridor. The proposed development is not anticipated to have any adverse impacts on bats, and the proposals have the potential to enhance both roosting and foraging opportunities for this species group.

Evidence of badger activity was recorded at the south-eastern Site boundary and, therefore, the development has been designed to include a buffer zone between the setts and the proposed construction works, and appropriate mitigation measures will be applied during the construction phase of works to ensure that the setts are not harmed nor disturbed, and badgers do not become trapped in any excavations. Landscaping at the Site has the potential to enhance foraging opportunities for this species.

From the baseline information and a review of the Norfolk BAP, the following key habitats and faunal species are, therefore, targeted within the landscape design, enhancement measures and management plan:

- ▲ Grassland;
- ▲ Hedgerow;
- ▲ Barn owl;
- ▲ Tree Sparrow;
- ▲ Bats;

- ▲ Badgers; and
- ▲ Invertebrates.

## 2.2 Landscape Visual Impact Assessment

To inform this LEMP the LVIA prepared for the Site by LandscapeVisual Ltd, was reviewed. The key findings are summarised below.

The Proposed Development is well located. The nearby substation, overhead power lines and steel-lattice pylons lend a semi-industrialised character to the intensively farmed landscape in the immediate vicinity of the Site. The wider study area also contains a number of industrial landscape features, including structures relating to energy generation. The distinctly-flat, low-lying topography combines with local landcover patterns around settlements and roads to limit or screen all distant views and most middle-distance views towards the Site. The design of the scheme has also incorporated various landscape measures to reduce landscape and visual effects. These include a hedgerow along the northern and north-western boundary; infill tree and shrub planting on the south-eastern boundary, which is consistent with existing features present in the landscape; and establishing wildflower meadow areas to the south-eastern edge of the Site, with other ecological measures throughout.

The majority of landscape and visual effects would arise within the immediate landscape setting of the Site up to ca. 0.5 km distance. Limited effects would occur between ca. 0.5 km and 1 km from the Site, with effects reducing with distance from the Site.

The landscape mitigation proposed (**Figure 10**) and its ongoing management, would help to integrate the solar development into the surrounding landscape and reduce views to the Proposed Development on completion. The effectiveness of the mitigation would improve as the proposed vegetation matures. In the medium-to-long-term, the proposed planting would improve the integration of the Proposed Development into the landscape and further reduce the impact on views. The landscape mitigation proposals would also increasingly screen local views towards the Walpole Bank Substation and cumulative schemes, including in particular the consented Walpole Bank Solar Farm (WBSF).

The significance of direct landscape effects arising from the Proposed Development would be **moderate to minor adverse**.

The significance of indirect landscape effects on the surrounding landscape would be **minor adverse** on completion and **negligible** in the medium-to-long-term.

The main visual effects would arise for users of PROWs which cross the Site or run along or near to its boundaries or along the River Nene's flood embankments.

Effects of up to **major adverse** significance would arise for users Walpole St Peter Footpath 1, which runs through the Site, due to the near proximity of views to the Proposed Development. Fieldwork undertaken in May 2021 indicates that this path is not frequently used.

Effects of up to **major-to-moderate adverse** significance would arise for users of paths beyond the Site, including Walpole Bridleway 2 and Footpath 9, and Sutton Bridge Bridleway 6/3. In the long-term, visual effects on users of the routes on the River Nene flood embankments (Footpath 9 and Bridleway 6/3) are not possible to mitigate, due to the elevated nature of the routes. Note, however, that from these elevated routes, views to the wider landscape beyond the solar array would be retained, with the Proposed Development occupying the low foreground of views in one direction only. Effects on users of Bridleway 2 would reduce in the medium-to-long term as the proposed vegetation on the south-eastern boundary matures.

In the surrounding landscape, the Proposed Development would extend the semi-industrialised, rural character already seen in near and middle-distance views. This would be a moderate change from the existing situation. The Proposed Development provides a balance between the addition of new low-lying built PV elements, with some improvements to the landcover pattern on the Site boundaries.

Cumulative effects with three other nearby energy infrastructure projects have been considered. The cumulative landscape effects on the host LCA would be **moderate-to-minor adverse**. The cumulative visual effects relating

to the four schemes assessed would be noticeable but less than significant: overall effects would be **minor adverse**.

The LVIA assessment concludes that, while some effects would be noticeable in the immediate vicinity of the Site, there is capacity for the landscape to accommodate the Proposed Development without causing landscape or visual harm to the wider surrounding area either as an individual scheme or cumulatively with other similar developments. The landscape and visual effects as assessed would be limited in scale and extent and some effects would reduce over time as the proposed mitigation planting matures. The effects would be wholly reversible with the removal of the Proposed Development and the reinstatement of present land management after 35 years.

## 3.0 Landscape Enhancements and Management

The landscaping scheme (prepared by Landscape Visual) and proposed management has been developed in order to enhance the biodiversity of the Site and to provide a range of resources for locally occurring wildlife. The proposals aim to protect, enhance and strengthen the field boundary features, enhance the biodiversity of land beneath the solar arrays whilst maintaining its agricultural use for low intensity sheep grazing and provide additional resources for notable local fauna. Implementation of the landscaping scheme should be completed by a competent contractor. A maintenance and management programme to cover the first 10 years after development is included as Appendix B, and 35-year management programme is included as Appendix C. Landscape features are shown in Drawing 1.

### 3.1 Pasture

#### 3.1.1 Existing Ecological Feature

Existing grassland at the Site is limited to species-poor field margins, with the majority of the Site comprising arable land.

#### 3.1.2 Influencing Factors for Management

It is proposed to utilise the grassland at the Site for sheep grazing post-development with a focus on low intensity, seasonal grazing to promote biodiversity.

#### 3.1.3 Objectives

Pasture primarily for grazing by livestock will be established beneath the solar arrays at the Site. This will comprise a mix of fine grasses, with additional red clover *Trifolium pratense*, which is particularly attractive to bumblebees.

The objectives for the pasture grassland at the Site are to:

- ▲ Ensure satisfactory establishment of grass sward; and
- ▲ Maintain healthy and biodiverse sward, managed appropriately to maximise its function and use.

#### 3.1.4 Implementation

Pasture will be established across the Site beneath the solar arrays. An appropriate seed mix will be applied, which is appropriate to the soil type and conditions (Emorsgate EG27 species old fashioned grazing mixture, or similar approved). The mix will include both fine grasses and meadow flowers including red clover, which are shade tolerant due to the presence of the solar arrays.

#### Planting

Ground preparation should follow the supplier's instructions with the removal of weeds, rubbish and stones of over 20 mm diameter. The seed will be sown following development activities during times of sufficient warmth and moisture, ideally in late spring or early autumn.

#### Management

Establishment of the grassland will follow manufacturer's instructions, however, once established, low intensity grazing of sheep is proposed for the Site. This will include seasonal grazing at low stocking densities to promote biodiversity whilst allowing the Site to remain agriculturally productive.

Pasture may require reseeding to maintain both its agricultural and biodiversity value.

#### 3.1.5 Monitoring and Remediation

Monitoring will be undertaken as part of general Site maintenance. If germination of individual wildflowers or grassland species is poor, this will be reviewed and re-seeded as appropriate.

## 3.2 Species-Rich Grassland

### 3.2.1 Existing Ecological Feature

Existing grassland at the Site is limited to species-poor field margins, with the majority of the Site comprising arable land.

### 3.2.2 Influencing Factors for Management

Wildflower grassland is proposed within areas at the boundaries of the Site, outside the security fencing. Appropriate management will enhance biodiversity at the Site.

### 3.2.3 Objectives

The objectives for the species-rich grassland at the Site are to:

- ▲ Ensure satisfactory establishment of grass sward; and
- ▲ Maintain healthy and biodiverse sward, cut appropriate to its function and use.

### 3.2.4 Implementation

A species mix of Emorsgate EM3 Special General Purpose Meadow Mixture and Emorsgate EM10 Tussock Mixture, or similar approved products, which contain a variety of grasses and wildflowers suitable for a range of soil types are to be sown.

#### Planting

Ground preparation should follow the supplier's instructions with the removal of weeds, rubbish and stones of over 20 mm diameter. The seed will be sown following development activities during times of sufficient warmth and moisture, ideally in late spring or early autumn and following manufacturers advised sowing rates.

#### Management

In the first year, wildflower grassland sown in autumn are to be cut in late March/early April when the sward has reached 100-150 mm, and reduced to 50-70 mm. Those sown in spring are to be cut to 50-70 mm, six weeks after sowing, with further cuts if the sward reaches 100-150 mm. A final cut is to be made in September. All arisings are to be removed.

After the first year, wildflower grassland is to be cut to 50-70 mm in March/April and again in September/October with a scythe or petrol strimmer. Arisings are to be left in-situ to dry and shed seed for 3-7 days then raked.

### 3.2.5 Monitoring and Remediation

Monitoring will be undertaken as part of general Site maintenance. If germination of individual wildflowers or grassland species is poor, this will be reviewed and re-seeded as appropriate in the next available planting season.

## 3.3 Native Hedgerow

### 3.3.1 Existing Ecological Feature

The Site does not currently support any hedgerow habitat, however, a network of hedgerows is present within the surrounding agricultural landscape.

### 3.3.2 Influencing Factors for Management

Appropriate management of the new hedgerows proposed has the potential to promote biodiversity, and increase connectivity across the Site and within the wider landscape context. The management strategy will maintain the existing local landscape character, enhance biodiversity, and provide a visual screen for the development, whilst not impeding the development function by creating excessive shading.

### 3.3.3 Objectives

The objective for the hedgerow habitat at the Site post-development is to increase the extent and density of hedgerow vegetation, and to enhance connectivity across the Site through appropriate management. Management objectives for the hedgerow habitat are to:

- ▲ Maintain and enhance, where appropriate, the existing hedgerow through appropriate management;
- ▲ Ensure satisfactory establishment and growth of new native planting; and
- ▲ Traditionally manage hedgerows in a healthy and attractive condition to retain and develop its structure and biodiversity value.

### 3.3.4 Implementation

Hedgerow planting will be undertaken at the Site to create new habitat and to strengthen existing hedgerows, creating intact linear corridors across the Site.

Native species-rich hedgerow will be planted along the northern edge of the Site. A range of native hedgerow species are to be incorporated which will enhance the ecological value of the Site and provide increased foraging opportunities and connectivity for invertebrates, birds and mammals.

New native hedgerow planting will comprise the following species:

- ▲ Alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus* 10%;
- ▲ Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* 30%;
- ▲ Dog Rose *Rosa canina* 5%;
- ▲ Field Maple *Acer campestre* 5%;
- ▲ Hazel *Corylus avellana* 10%;
- ▲ Holly *Ilex aquifolium* 10%;
- ▲ Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* 20%; and
- ▲ Crab apple *Malus sylvestris* 10%.

#### Planting

Prior to planting, the ground will be prepared such that the plants can grow successfully. The soil should have a good tilth (particle size, moisture content, degree of aeration, rate of water infiltration, and drainage) so that the roots can establish. Planting will not be undertaken if the ground is suffering from hard frost or is heavily water logged, however, planting should be undertaken during the late autumn and winter months when the whips are dormant, in the next available planting season following completion of the development.

Newly planted stock will be protected from grazing mammals, such as rabbits. Individual plants will be protected by plastic shelter guards or mesh guards. Protective or supporting structures will be removed as soon as possible to avoid dependence on support.

Hedgerows are to be planted in double staggered rows creating wide corridors and providing more shelter and habitat.

#### Management

The new planting will be maintained weed free by hand pulling or use of an appropriate herbicide during the growing season (March – October, inclusive) for the first three years to discourage competition for resources and ensure strong growth. After this time ground flora will be left to recolonise to create additional habitat at the base of the hedgerow.

Light, regular, trimming of the hedgerow in its early years will encourage dense, bushy growth, therefore, newly planted hedgerow plants will be cut back annually in September for the first five years at which time the hedgerow is anticipated to be approaching its desired height of approximately 4 m. Established hedgerows will

receive less frequent management, being cut only once every two years, or when growth requires to maintain the desired dimensions, and on rotation such that not all the hedgerow at the Site is cut in the same year. This allows continuous provision of ideal nesting habitat as well as supporting the production of nuts and berries for foraging fauna. Once the hedgerows have reached the desired height, they will be topped in order to maintain their structure. The 'A-shaped' structure with its wide base is of benefit to wildlife, providing greater shelter and commuting corridors.

New plants will be watered to field capacity if plants start to wilt during periods of low rainfall.

### 3.3.5 Monitoring and Remediation

Monitoring will be undertaken as part of general Site maintenance. Any plants that die in the first five years will be replaced with the same species in the next available planting season to prevent gaps developing.

## 3.4 New and Existing Trees

### 3.4.1 Existing Ecological Feature

A row of semi-mature poplar *Populus tremula* and goat willow *Salix caprea* bordered the ditch adjacent to the south-eastern Site boundary.

### 3.4.2 Influencing Factors for Management

Trees must be managed to maintain their health and amenity value as well as to contribute to the ecological value of the Site. Dead wood should be retained, where possible, for its biodiversity value, however, safety is paramount.

### 3.4.3 Objectives

The management objectives for the existing trees at the Site are to:

- ▲ Ensure satisfactory establishment and growth of new planting;
- ▲ Maintain trees in a healthy and attractive condition, to retain their contribution to the landscape structure, biodiversity, food source to wildlife, and amenity value in accordance with BS3998:2010; and
- ▲ Retain dead wood at the Site for biodiversity value.

### 3.4.4 Implementation

New tree planting will be undertaken along the south-eastern Site boundary to gap up the existing tree line between pylons (lower growing shrub planting is proposed beneath the pylons).

Species are to be native and include:

- ▲ Alder *Alnus glutinosa*;
- ▲ White willow *Salix alba*;
- ▲ White poplar *Populus albs*;
- ▲ Small leaved lime *Tilia cordata*.

### Planting

Prior to planting, the ground will be prepared such that the plants can grow successfully. The soil should have a good tilth (particle size, moisture content, degree of aeration, rate of water infiltration, and drainage) so that the roots can establish. Planting will not be undertaken if the ground is suffering from hard frost or is heavily water logged, however, planting should be undertaken during the late autumn and winter months when the trees are dormant, in the next available planting season following completion of the development.

Newly planted stock will be protected from grazing mammals, such as rabbits. Individual plants will be protected by plastic shelter guards or mesh guards, where appropriate. Protective or supporting structures will be removed as soon as possible to avoid dependence on support.

## Management

Newly planted trees will be watered during periods of low rainfall if they show signs of drought stress.

Dead wood and suckers are to be removed as required to ensure development of a main leader and to ensure statutory clearance from roads and footpaths is maintained, however, where possible dead wood should be retained for its biodiversity value.

### 3.4.5 Monitoring and Remediation

Trees are to be inspected annually by a qualified arboriculturalist for disease, damage and potential problems. Remedial work is to be carried out as required to meet the objectives set out above and in accordance with BS3998:2010.

## 3.5 Native Scrub Planting

### 3.5.1 Existing Ecological Feature

There is currently no notable scrub vegetation at the Site.

### 3.5.2 Influencing Factors for Management

New scrub planting will be undertaken along the south-eastern Site boundary to gap up the existing tree line and maintained to promote biodiversity, whilst being managed appropriately in order to avoid conflicts with the existing pylons and powerlines.

### 3.5.3 Objectives

The objective for scrub planting at the Site post-development is to contribute to species diversity, to enhance connectivity through appropriate design and management and to create structural diversity within the Site. Management objectives for shrub planting are to:

- ▲ Ensure satisfactory establishment and growth of new planting; and
- ▲ Maintain planting in a healthy and attractive condition, to retain their contribution to the landscape structure, biodiversity, food source to wildlife, and amenity value.

### 3.5.4 Implementation

Scrub planting will be undertaken along the south-eastern Site boundary to gap up the existing tree line beneath pylons.

Species are to be native, providing a source of nectar and/ or berries for invertebrates, birds and badgers, to include:

- ▲ Common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*;
- ▲ Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*;
- ▲ Goat willow *Salix caprea*; and
- ▲ Elder *Sambucus nigra*.

## Planting

Prior to planting, the ground will be prepared such that the plants can grow successfully. The soil should have a good tilth (particle size, moisture content, degree of aeration, rate of water infiltration, and drainage) so that the roots can establish. Planting will not be undertaken if the ground is suffering from hard frost or is heavily waterlogged.

Newly planted stock will be protected from grazing mammals, such as rabbits. Individual plants will be protected by plastic shelter guards or mesh guards, where appropriate. Protective or supporting structures will be removed as soon as possible to avoid dependence on support.

## Management

Shrubs will be watered during periods of low rainfall if they show signs of drought stress.

General pruning will be completed as necessary to remove damaged vegetation, but will be limited to the minimum necessary to maintain the natural shape of the plant. Selective thinning of vegetation will be completed to allow best establishment and to maintain species distribution. Any required management is to be undertaken outside the nesting bird season.

### **3.5.5 Monitoring and Remediation**

Monitoring will be undertaken as part of general Site maintenance in September each year. Any plants that die in the first five years will be replaced with the same species in the next available planting season.

## 4.0 Species Specific Enhancements

### 4.1 Nesting Birds

To further enhance the ecological value of the Site, and to provide additional nesting opportunities for birds, a variety of bird boxes will be placed at suitable locations around the Site. These will be suitable to accommodate a range of species known to occur in the local area, and particularly those most likely to be attracted to the Site which are subject to Local BAPs. Bird boxes, therefore, will include:

- ▲ A barn owl *Tyto alba* nest box; and
- ▲ Five tree sparrow *Passer montanus* nest boxes.

The barn owl nest box is to be installed on a suitable tree within the existing tree line at the south-eastern Site boundary. The box will be mounted at least 3 m above ground level, and so that it is accessible to barn owl. The box should be positioned so that the main entrance hole is obvious to the owl, is not screened by branches or leaves and preferably faces away from the prevailing wind and rain, i.e. avoiding the west or south-west. Pre-made boxes can be purchased from reputable wildlife product retailers, or alternatively the boxes can be made to the specifications given by the Barn Owl Trust ([www.barnowltrust.org.uk](http://www.barnowltrust.org.uk)). The Barn Owl Trust indicate that the boxes should be made from rot-resistant or Tanalith E treated sheet material (tanalised softwood ply or FSC Approved hardwood ply). The top of the owl box should be covered with heavy duty roofing felt. The minimum dimensions of the boxes should be 43 cm (d) x 73 cm (w) x 72 cm (h), with an entrance hole 13 cm x 13 cm. Appropriate actions to treat the wood and waterproof any joints should be taken to ensure the longevity of the boxes.

Tree sparrow boxes are to be placed in groups of two/ three to provide opportunity for a nesting colony. Boxes should be placed at a variety of heights (minimum 2 m) such that they are not disturbed by predators or humans and avoiding a southerly aspect. These are proposed on existing trees along the south-eastern Site boundary.

The proposed locations of the bird boxes are shown in Drawing 1.

Nest boxes are to be checked annually between November and February, inclusive, and any repairs or modifications undertaken.

### 4.2 Bats

To enhance the ecological value of the Site and provide roosting opportunities for bats following the proposed development, a variety of bat roosting features will be incorporated at suitable locations around the Site. These will be suitable to accommodate a range of species known to occur in the local area and will, therefore, include 10 bat boxes (Vivara Pro Woodstone box, or similar approved product).

The bat boxes are to be installed on existing trees along the south-eastern Site boundary. Bat boxes should face a southerly direction and be installed at a height of at least 3 m. The proposed locations of the bat boxes are shown in Drawing 1.

Landscape planting across the Site will incorporate native species, or those of known value to wildlife, to encourage pollinating insects and subsequently a food source for bats.

### 4.3 Invertebrates

The introduction of wildflower grassland at the Site will provide valuable nectar sources for invertebrates, and the inclusion of clover within the grazing pasture will benefit bees.

### 4.4 Boundary Fencing Permeable to Wildlife

Boundary fences can present barriers to wildlife movement. As such fences will incorporate mammal gates placed at intervals along the fence lines to allow wildlife, such as badgers, to pass safely through them.

## 4.5 Habitat Piles

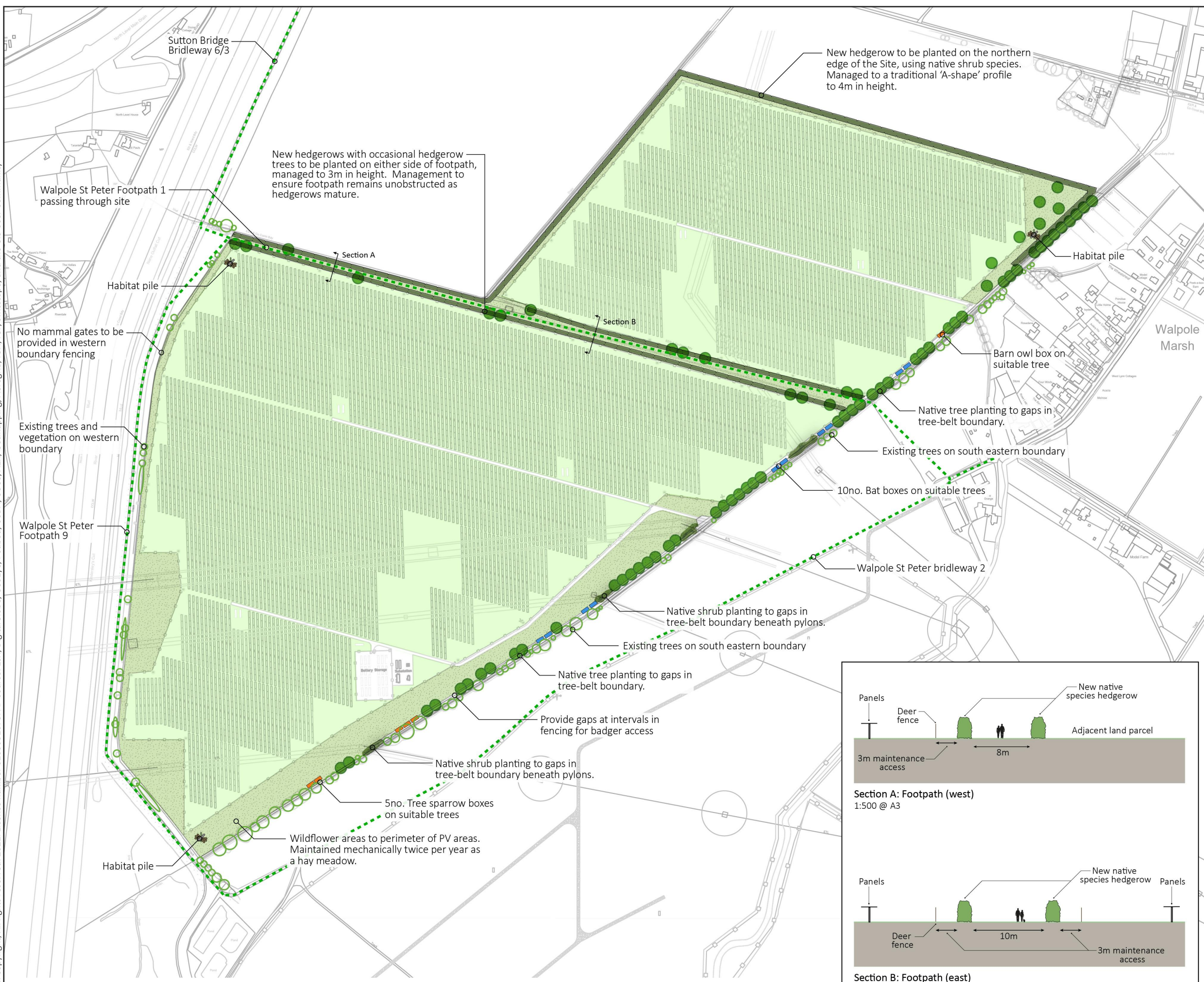
Three habitat piles will be created using brash and grass arisings resulting from general Site maintenance. These will be placed within boundary areas with connectivity to the network of drains, hedgerows and off-Site habitat, and within areas of the Site least likely to be disturbed by human interference. The location of the proposed habitat piles are shown in Drawing 1.

## 5.0 Disclaimer

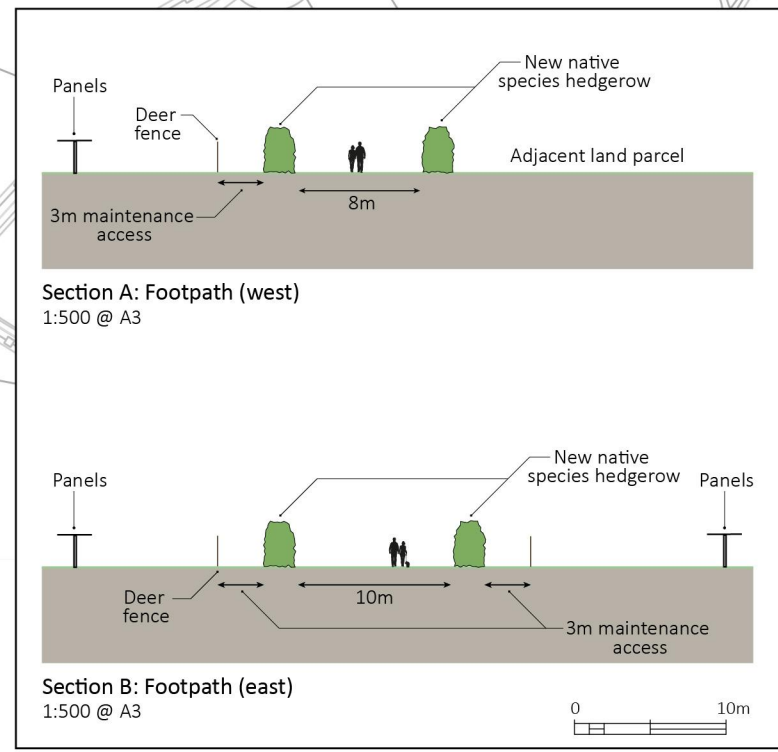
The recommendations contained in this Report represent Delta-Simons' professional opinions, based upon the information referred to in Section 1.0 of this Report, exercising the duty of care required of an experienced Ecology Consultant.

This Report was prepared by Delta-Simons for the sole and exclusive use of the Client and for the specific purpose for which Delta-Simons was instructed as defined in Section 1.0 of this Report. Nothing contained in this Report shall be construed to give any rights or benefits to anyone other than the Client and Delta-Simons, and all duties and responsibilities undertaken are for the sole and exclusive benefit of the Client and not for the benefit of any other party. In particular, Delta-Simons does not intend, without its written consent, for this Report to be disseminated to anyone other than the Client or to be used or relied upon by anyone other than the Client. Use of the Report by any other person is unauthorised and such use is at the sole risk of the user. Anyone using or relying upon this Report, other than the Client, agrees by virtue of its use to indemnify and hold harmless Delta-Simons from and against all claims, losses and damages (of whatsoever nature and howsoever or whensoever arising), arising out of or resulting from the performance of the work by the Consultant.

## Drawing 1 – Landscape and Ecological Enhancement Plan



- Existing trees and vegetation retained
- Proposed planting to south eastern boundary with native trees
- Proposed planting to south eastern boundary with native shrubs beneath pylons
- Proposed native species hedging
- Proposed species-rich wildflower grassland
- Proposed grazed meadow grassland below panels
- Public rights of way adjoining or passing through the site
- Habitat pile
- Bat boxes
- Bird boxes for sparrows and owls



| Revision | Date     | Notes                                                            |
|----------|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A        | 22/06/21 | Existing vegetation on W boundary added and N hedgerow extended. |
| B        | 09/08/21 | Layout and landscaping amendments to E corner.                   |
| C        | 30/09/21 | Amendments to EA comments.                                       |
| D        | 06/12/21 | Amendment to footpath screening following LPA comments.          |
| E        | 07/12/21 | Section amendments.                                              |

Project: Gunthorpe Road

Title: Landscape and Ecological Enhancement Plan

Date: 22 June 2021

Ref: 1284/10

Scale: 1:5000 @ A3



## Appendix A – References

## References

BRE (2014) Biodiversity Guidance for Solar Developments. Eds G E Parker and L Greene

BS 3998:2010 Tree work. Recommendations

BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for Planning and Development

Royal Horticultural Society Perfect for Pollinators Garden Plants. Available at [www.rhs.org.uk/perfectforpollinators](http://www.rhs.org.uk/perfectforpollinators)

## Appendix B – Management and Monitoring Programme

## Management and Monitoring Programme

| Habitat/Feature        | Objective                                                                         | Proposed Management                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Proposed Monitoring                                        | Performance Indicators                                         |                                                           | Remedial Actions                                                                                         |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                        |                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                            | Poor                                                           | Good                                                      |                                                                                                          |
| Pasture                | Ensure satisfactory establishment of grass sward                                  | Low intensity grazing of sheep                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Monitor successful establishment of grassland mix          | Poor establishment of sward structure and species distribution | Healthy sward and good species distribution and diversity | Re-seed as appropriate in the next available planting season.<br><br>Adjust sheep grazing stock density. |
|                        | Maintain healthy and biodiverse sward, managed appropriate to it function and use |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                            |                                                                |                                                           |                                                                                                          |
| Species Rich Grassland | Ensure satisfactory establishment of grass sward                                  | Plant appropriate grass mix in autumn or spring                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Monitor successful establishment of individual wildflowers | Poor establishment of sward structure and species distribution | Healthy sward and good species distribution and diversity | Re-seed as appropriate in the next available planting season.                                            |
|                        |                                                                                   | In the first year wildflower meadows sown in autumn are to be cut in late March/early April when the sward has reached 100-150 mm, and reduced to 50-70 mm. Those sown in spring are to be cut to 50-70 mm, six weeks after sowing, with further cuts if the sward reaches 100-150 mm. A final cut is to be made in September. All arisings are to be removed |                                                            |                                                                |                                                           |                                                                                                          |
|                        | Maintain healthy and biodiverse sward, cut appropriate to it function and use     | After the first year, wildflower grassland is to be cut to 50-70 mm in March/April and again in September/October with a scythe or petrol strimmer. Cuttings are to be left in-situ to dry and shed seed for 3-7 days then raked.                                                                                                                             |                                                            | Poor sward structure, species distribution and diversity       | Healthy sward and good species distribution and diversity | Review cutting regime and increase/decrease as appropriate                                               |

| Habitat/Feature        | Objective                                                                                                                                                         | Proposed Management                                                                                                  | Proposed Monitoring                                                                                        | Performance Indicators                        |                                                | Remedial Actions                                                                                                        |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                            | Poor                                          | Good                                           |                                                                                                                         |
| Native hedgerow        | Ensure satisfactory establishment and growth of new native planting.<br>Desired height 4 m                                                                        | Plant species listed in Section 3.3.4. Protect with appropriate guards                                               | Monitor successful establishment of individual plants                                                      | Poor growth of individual plants              | Healthy plants forming intact hedgerow         | Replace any plants that die within the first five years with the same species                                           |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                   | Manage weed growth around newly planted hedgerow by hand pulling or chemical means for first three years             | Monitor growth of competitive weeds around individual hedgerow plants                                      | Excessive weed growth competing for resources | Lack of weed growth around new hedgerow plants | Review intensity of weed treatment. Increase/decrease as appropriate                                                    |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                   | Water plants if start to wilt during periods of low rainfall                                                         | Monitor health of individual plants                                                                        | Wilting plants with poor growth               | Healthy plants with expected growth rate       | Review frequency of watering                                                                                            |
|                        | Traditionally manage hedgerows in a healthy and attractive condition to retain and develop structure and biodiversity value                                       | Manage new hedgerows through cutting annually for the first three years. Then reduced to every 2-3 years on rotation | Monitor growth rate and health of individual shrubs                                                        | Poor growth and structure                     | Desired structure and height established       | Review frequency and method of cutting. Re-plant any gaps that establish due to poor specimens                          |
| New and Existing Trees | To ensure satisfactory establishment and growth of new planting                                                                                                   | Plant species listed in Section 3.4.4. Protect with appropriate guards<br>Water if showing signs of drought stress   | Trees to be inspected annually for the successful establishment and health of individual plants            | Poor growth of individual plants              | Healthy plants with good habitat structure     | Replace any plants that die within the first five years with the same species                                           |
|                        | Maintain in a healthy and attractive condition, to retain their contribution to the landscape structure, biodiversity, food source to wildlife, and amenity value | Manage trees following the advice of a qualified arboriculturist                                                     | Trees to be inspected annually by a qualified arboriculturalist for disease, damage and potential problems | Tree in poor health or damaged                | Tree in good health with no damage             | Remedial work is to be carried out as required to meet the objectives set out above and in accordance with BS3998:2010. |

| Habitat/Feature       | Objective                                                                                                                                                                  | Proposed Management                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Proposed Monitoring                                                                      | Performance Indicators                               |                                                        | Remedial Actions                                                                                                                      |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                       |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                          | Poor                                                 | Good                                                   |                                                                                                                                       |
|                       | Retain dead wood at the Site for biodiversity value.                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Monitor presence of dead wood and associated health of the tree                          | Tree in poor health<br>No dead wood for biodiversity | Tree in good health<br>Some dead wood for biodiversity | Review frequency of monitoring and management practices.                                                                              |
| Native Scrub Planting | Ensure satisfactory establishment and growth of new planting.                                                                                                              | Plant species listed in Section 3.5.4. Protect with appropriate guards                                                                                                                                                                        | Monitor successful establishment of individual plants                                    | Poor growth of individual plants                     | Healthy plants forming intact hedgerow                 | Replace any native plants that die within the first five years, ornamental species within the first three years with the same species |
|                       |                                                                                                                                                                            | Pernicious weeds spot treated three times a year for the first three years, then as required                                                                                                                                                  | Monitor growth of competitive weeds around individual hedgerow plants                    | Excessive weed growth competing for resources        | Lack of weed growth around new hedgerow plants         | Review intensity of weed treatment. Increase/decrease as appropriate                                                                  |
|                       |                                                                                                                                                                            | Water new shrubs if they show signs of drought stress                                                                                                                                                                                         | Monitor health of individual plants                                                      | Wilting plants with poor growth                      | Healthy plants with expected growth rate               | Review frequency of watering.                                                                                                         |
|                       | Maintain planting in a healthy and attractive condition, to retain their contribution to the landscape structure, biodiversity, food source to wildlife, and amenity value | Use of stakes, ties and guards are to be checked                                                                                                                                                                                              | Monitor efficiency of stakes, ties and guards during each visit for the first four years | Poorly supported or damaged plants                   | Well established plants                                | Stakes, guards and ties adjusted or replaced as necessary to prevent damage. Removed after four years                                 |
|                       |                                                                                                                                                                            | General pruning completed as necessary to remove damaged vegetation. Limited to maintain the natural shape of the plant. Selective thinning of vegetation will be completed to allow best establishment and to maintain species distribution. | Monitor health and distribution of individual plants                                     | Poor growth and structure                            | Desired structure and distribution                     | Review frequency and method of cutting. Re-plant any gaps that establish due to poor specimens                                        |
|                       |                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                          |                                                      |                                                        |                                                                                                                                       |

| Habitat/Feature               | Objective                                                                           | Proposed Management     | Proposed Monitoring                             | Performance Indicators                         |                                             | Remedial Actions                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                               |                                                                                     |                         |                                                 | Poor                                           | Good                                        |                                                                                                                        |
| Bird Nest Boxes and Bat Boxes | Create additional habitat for nesting birds and roosting bats                       | Install bird/ bat boxes | Annual monitoring of boxes for damage in winter | Damaged boxes / boxes not utilised by wildlife | Intact boxes used by intended species       | Repair / modify where required<br><br>(monitoring and maintenance of bat and barn owl box may require licenced person) |
| Habitat Piles                 | Create additional habitat for invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles and small mammals | Create habitat piles    | Monitor for structural damage                   | Poor quality/damaged habitats                  | Good structure and suitability for wildlife | Repair/ add additional material resulting from general Site maintenance                                                |

## Appendix C – 35 Year Management Programme

## 35 Year Management Programme

| Pasture                | Year 1                                                                                                                                           | Year 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Year 3 | Year 4                                                                        | Year 5 | Years 6-35                                                                    |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                        | Establish as per manufacturer's instructions                                                                                                     | Seasonal grazing at low stocking densities to promote biodiversity whilst allowing the Site to remain agriculturally productive.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |        |                                                                               |        |                                                                               |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |        | Review sward structure and diversity and re-sow every 3-5 years (if required) |        | Review sward structure and diversity and re-sow every 3-5 years (if required) |
| Species Rich Grassland | Year 1                                                                                                                                           | Year 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Year 3 | Year 4                                                                        | Year 5 | Years 6-35                                                                    |
|                        | Autumn sown meadows cut in late March/ early April when the sward has reached 100 – 150 mm, reduce to 50-70 mm. Remove arisings                  | Cut back to 50 -70 mm in March/April and after flowering in September/October with a scythe or petrol strimmer. Leave cuttings to dry and shed seed for 3 -7 days then rake. Any areas which fail to germinate during the first year to be re-sown during the next available season. Where pernicious weeds are a problem, spot treat with an appropriate herbicide and remove plants once they have died down |        |                                                                               |        |                                                                               |
|                        | Spring sown meadows cut 6 weeks after sowing, to 50-70 mm. Further cuts if the sward reaches 100-150 mm. Final cut in September. Reduce arisings |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |        |                                                                               |        |                                                                               |

| Hedgerows and Trees | Year 1                                                                                                                                                                     | Year 2 | Year 3                                   | Year 4                                                       | Year 5 | Years 6-35 |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------|------------|
| New Native Hedges   | Hand pulling of weeds or use of appropriate herbicide April – October, inclusive                                                                                           |        |                                          |                                                              |        |            |
|                     | Trim annually in September to maintain desired shape/dimensions                                                                                                            |        |                                          | Trim to desired height and width every 2-3 years on rotation |        |            |
|                     | Water to field capacity if plants start to wilt during periods of low rainfall                                                                                             |        |                                          |                                                              |        |            |
|                     | Inspect hedges in September and replace any dead plants in the next available season                                                                                       |        |                                          |                                                              |        |            |
| New Trees           | Water between April and September as necessary                                                                                                                             |        | Water if showing signs of drought stress |                                                              |        |            |
|                     | Inspect trees annually in September and replace dead trees in the next available planting season                                                                           |        |                                          |                                                              |        |            |
|                     | Annual inspection for disease, damage and potential problems – remedial work to be carried out as required in accordance with BS3998:2010                                  |        |                                          |                                                              |        |            |
|                     | Check stakes, ties and guards monthly from March to October, inclusive and after frosts or high winds, and adjust or replace as necessary                                  |        |                                          | Remove stakes and ties if trees are self-supporting          |        |            |
|                     | Remove dead wood, where necessary, and suckers as required                                                                                                                 |        |                                          |                                                              |        |            |
| Existing Trees      | Annual inspection by a qualified arboriculturalist for disease, damage and potential problems – remedial work to be carried out as required in accordance with BS3998:2010 |        |                                          |                                                              |        |            |

| Native Scrub Planting | Year 1                                                                                                                                      | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5                                       | Years 6-35 |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|----------------------------------------------|------------|
|                       | Inspect annually in September and replace dead plants in the next available planting season                                                 |        |        |        |                                              |            |
|                       | During each visit check and replace any missing shelters and re-secure as necessary                                                         |        |        |        | Remove shelters once plants have established |            |
|                       | Carry out general pruning to remove dead or damaged vegetation, but limit to the minimum necessary to retain the natural shape of the plant |        |        |        |                                              |            |
|                       | Selectively thin vegetation to allow best establishment and species distribution                                                            |        |        |        |                                              |            |
|                       | Water to field capacity during periods of low rainfall if plants show signs of drought stress                                               |        |        |        |                                              |            |

| Species Enhancements | Year 1                                                                                                                                                                                            | Year 2 | Year 3 | Year 4 | Year 5 | Years 6-35 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|------------|
|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |        |        |        |        |            |
| Bird Nest Boxes      | Checked annually between November and February, inclusive, and any repairs of modifications undertaken. Relocate bird boxes to a different area of the Site in Year 6 if showing no signs of use. |        |        |        |        |            |
|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |        |        |        |        |            |
| Bat Boxes            | Checked annually for signs of damage in winter and a licenced bat ecologist consulted for advice.                                                                                                 |        |        |        |        |            |
|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |        |        |        |        |            |
| Insect Boxes         | Checked as part of general Site maintenance and repairs undertaken                                                                                                                                |        |        |        |        |            |
|                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |        |        |        |        |            |
| Habitat Piles        | Checked as part of general Site maintenance and repairs undertaken. Additional material added regularly from hedgerow and grassland management                                                    |        |        |        |        |            |