

25/11/2016

Our Ref: 5171.01.002

Your Ref: LI16-029

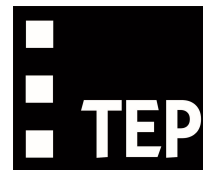
**Liz Seal** is dealing with this matter

Direct Dial: **01925 844 020**

email: [lizseal@tep.uk.com](mailto:lizseal@tep.uk.com)

Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service  
1st Floor Merton House,  
Stanley Road  
Bootle,  
Merseyside,  
L20 3DL

For the Attention of: Rachael Rhodes



Genesis Centre,  
Birchwood Science Park,  
Warrington  
WA3 7BH

T: 01925 844004  
F: 01925 844002  
E: [tep@tep.uk.com](mailto:tep@tep.uk.com)  
W: [www.tep.uk.com](http://www.tep.uk.com)

Other offices  
Cornwall  
Gateshead  
London  
Market Harborough

Dear Rachael,

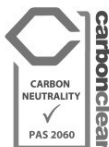
## LAND AT WOOLTON ROAD, ALLERTON – ADDITIONAL ECOLOGY INFORMATION

Further to your comments and requests for further information regarding the ecology element of the Woolton Road Project, this letter and attached documents provide:

- Clarification on the tree works required to facilitate development.
- A draft indicative planting strategy and habitat management prescriptions.
- Draft quantities for habitat losses and gains.
- Identification of likely residual impacts and associated confirmation of the commitment to a financial contribution for off-site biodiversity off setting.

This information should be considered within the context of the planning application, in that it is an Outline application seeking the principal of residential development (160no dwellings) with specific details only on the location of site access. It provides sufficient information to demonstrate that residential development on this site satisfies relevant wildlife legislation and policies.

The information in this letter is provided on the understanding that a detailed site layout will form part of any future Reserved Matters application and at that stage the habitat losses and gains can be recalculated. It is anticipated that any Reserved Matters application will be undertaken in consultation with MEAS to ensure appropriate levels of onsite and offsite mitigation is maintained. This would include further details on habitat creation (including provision of shelter/nesting/roosting provision), drafting of a full management plan and agreement on the commuted sum for biodiversity offsetting.



Gold

Directors  
Ian Grimshaw  
BA(Hons) MA(LM) MSc CMLI MRTPI

Francis Hesketh  
BSc(Hons) CMLI MICFor CEnv MIEEM

Cath Neve  
BSc(Hons) MA(LM) CMLI

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PLANNING DESIGN ENVIRONMENT

## **Trees with bat roosting potential**

Following further consultation with the Arboricultural consultant, we can confirm that of the trees identified as having bat roosting potential and requiring arboricultural works, only one tree T124 requires felling to facilitate development of the site. The Arboricultural recommendations for felling or pruning for all the other trees listed in the ecological assessment relate to health and safety measures (7no trees) or management to ensure longevity of the trees (4no trees). Tree management works relating to health and safety are the responsibility of the current landowner who is using the information to manage their tree stock with consideration of risk to public who access the site or use public land adjacent to the site. The best practice recommendations to ensure tree longevity are also not required to facilitate development. The current landowner may or may not incorporate these measures into their site management. These types of measures would be included in the long term ecological management plan for the site to ensure positive management of the woodland habitats for biodiversity but are not required to facilitate the development.

Tree T124 is a sweet chestnut that was initially identified during a ground based inspection as having Low bat roosting potential. An aerial inspection of this tree was undertaken on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2016 (supervised by licensed bat consultant Marjorie Nadouce). The aerial inspection identified several woodpecker holes in the trunk at approximately 10m above ground. All holes were found to be shallow, some with water pooled at the base. A squirrel dray was also identified. No staining, droppings or any other evidence of bats was identified in any of the holes, the tree's location is also fairly cluttered by surrounding trees which can discourage bat roosting.

The tree remains as having Low bat roosting potential. In line with Bat Conservation Trust 2016 guidance, no further surveys are required, instead a supervised soft fell will be undertaken when the tree is removed.

## **Habitat loss**

The majority of the site 'Land Within Allerton Green Wedge ptLWS' will remain unaffected by the proposed development. However, the development falls within part of this designation. Land Within Allerton Green Wedge ptLWS covers an area of approximately 49.80ha. The proposed development site is approximately 13.58ha.

Using the illustrative masterplan TEP has calculated the expected habitat losses and gains from the proposed development. Please note that as an Outline application the masterplan is indicative, however the developer is committed to ensuring adequate biodiversity mitigation and the following information provides the basis on which detailed proposals will be secured at Reserved Matters.

The three housing parcels with associated roads and private gardens will result in a loss of approximately 7.3ha of habitat. The remaining 6.28ha of habitat within the proposed development site will be retained and enhanced. This represents a loss of 7.7% of the total Allerton Green Wedge ptLWS.

Of the 7.3ha of habitat lost, approximately 0.03ha comprises woodland habitat in which individual trees will be removed for access roads into the development. Approximately 6.78ha of grassland habitat, 0.25ha of scrub habitat and 0.24ha of tall ruderal herb vegetation.

The 6.28ha of retained and enhanced habitats comprises 2.25ha of retained woodland habitat, 2.49ha of enhanced grassland habitat and 1.54ha of enhanced scrub habitat. A precautionary worst case scenario assumes all bramble and raspberry scrub is lost, but this habitat will be replaced along the woodland edge with a mix of species (including berry producing species) such as hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, guelder rose, dog rose, dog wood and holly to form an eco-tone habitat that will be valuable to birds, insects and small mammals. This habitat will also protect the existing woodland by creating a natural barrier, discouraging people from entering the retained habitat. The outline masterplan identifies at least 0.33ha of scrub habitat will be planted. Other options for mitigating residential impact on the woodland include a 5m buffer zone and the provision of high quality open space within the site. These approaches in combination with the proposals to manage the woodland habitats to increase biodiversity value are expected to compensate any small scale disturbance from new residents.

The calculated 6.28ha of retained and enhanced habitats is underestimated, it excludes private gardens and street landscaping as it is not possible at the outline stage to calculate meaningful figures for these green areas. The masterplan for the outline application illustrates a scheme comprised of low density housing set within large private gardens, combined with street landscaping. These habitats will also contribute to the biodiversity value of the site.

Direct loss of 6.78ha of grassland habitat will be mitigated by providing higher quality grassland habitat with greater botanical diversity. Current proposals indicate approximately 1.33ha of species-rich native wildflower meadow will be planted in retained areas.

It is recognised that the site falls within Land Within Allerton Green Wedge ptLWS. Despite the greatest value habitats being retained and others being enhanced and managed favourably for wildlife, there remains a net loss of grassland and scrub habitats. Furthermore, while the enhancement of the open space areas and the creation of large private gardens is likely to increase opportunities for several bird species, the site is likely to reduce in value for birds of prey (barn owl and kestrel). In recognition of these losses, the developer is committed to making a financial contribution to off-site mitigation. The details of which can be agreed at Reserved Matters stage when it will be possible to calculate accurate habitat losses and gains to determine the commuted sum required for offsetting.

### **Habitat creation, enhancement and management prescriptions**

The attached Indicative Planting Strategy plan (Ref: IN4729.018A) illustrates the habitat creation and enhancement provision that the developer is committing to and sets the foundation for detailed landscaping proposals, planting plans and management plan documents that will be delivered at reserved matters stage and designed in consultation with MEAS. Also attached (Ref: 5171.01.003) are the broad management prescriptions for each of the habitats provided in the Planting Strategy plan, again these will be developed into a full management plan in consultation with MEAS during the reserved matters application to ensure it reflects the final landscape strategy.

This letter and the attached documents provide MEAS with the additional information requested prior to determination to give MEAS confidence that the 'ecological integrity' of the Green Wedge (as set out in policy OE3) will be maintained. Specifically that it:

*'OE3 ii ...retains existing vegetation and special site features where appropriate, and provides and maintains a high standard of landscaping'*

*OE3 iii....enhance tree cover by the retention of existing trees and replacement of older trees where necessary'*

It also confirms that there are no outstanding issues relating to legally protected species (notably bats). Should any clarification be required please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully



Elizabeth Seal  
Associate Director - Ecology  
TEP

Enc: IN4729.018A: Woolton Road, Allerton – Indicative Planting Strategy

Enc: 5171.01.003: Woolton Road, Allerton – Management Prescriptions





5m buffer maintained between tree canopy and housing, gardens, roads and utilities.

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A	Amendments to labels / annotations	LG	EJS	28/11/16
Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



**THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**  
Genesis Centre, Birchwood Science Park, Warrington WA3 7BH  
Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

Project  
Woolton Road, Liverpool

Title  
Indicative Planting Strategy

Drawing Number  
IN4729.018A

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
WYC	JTS	JTS	N/A @ A3	23/11/2016



## Land at Woolton Road, Allerton

### Habitat Management Prescriptions

This document accompanies the Planting Strategy plan (Ref: IN4729.018) for the outline planning application for Land at Woolton Road, Allerton. It sets out the broad principles for management of the key habitats identified in the Planting Strategy and will form the basis of the long term ecological management plan which will be detailed as part of the reserved matters application following detailed design of the site proposals which will include a detailed landscape plan and consultation with MEAS.

#### Woodland Edge Planting

- Within the first three to five years of establishment, a mulch composted wood chip or bark mulch will be laid around the base of all young plants to suppress weed growth and will be maintained to a depth of 65mm.
- Pruning of shrubs will be undertaken to clear deadwood, promote healthy growth and produce desired growth of flowers, fruit, foliage or winter colour as appropriate. Dead, broken, damaged, diseased branches will be removed. Pruning will also include for clearing out crossing branches and branches growing toward the middle of the plant. Pruning will be carried out between December and February.
- Any plants subject to vandalism or storm damage should be pruned straight away.
- Any damaged, failing or dead shrubs will be replaced within the first five years. Deciduous species will be replaced when dormant in early November to late March.
- Weed control will include spot treatment using selective herbicide of noxious weeds such as docks, thistles, nettles, ragwort and willowherb.
- In the long term, consideration will be given to active management, e.g. cyclical thinning and coppicing to create greater structural diversity.

#### *Constraints*

- Any works required will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, between September and February. Should any works be required within the bird nesting season (March to August) an assessment will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist before any works commence.

## Native Tree Planting, Avenue of Parkland Trees and Specimen Tree Planting

- Where trees are staked, the stakes and ties will be checked monthly and it is anticipated that they will need adjusting at least twice annually. Any broken or damaged stakes will be replaced and ties re-fixed at a slightly lower position, allowing for growth since planting.
- Remove stakes as necessary, when the tree is suitably established, approximately in year 3.
- Newly planted trees will require re-firming as required during the first three years.
- To reduce excessive competition, a weed free area will be retained around any trees less than 3m in height and will be maintained to a diameter of 0.5m around the base of the trees using glyphosate spray twice a year.
- Young trees will require formative pruning to maintain a desirable shape as well as to maintain health and vigour.
- Once trees attain a height of 3m, the maintenance of a weed free base and formative pruning can be discontinued. However, crown pruning is desirable.
- Any dead or severely damaged trees will be felled and replaced accordingly in the first five years. Deciduous species will be replaced when dormant in early November to late March.

### *Inspections:*

- An assessment of the condition and structure of trees (young woodlands and structure planting areas) will be carried out annually to determine the requirements for thinning, beating up, hazard tree works, formative pruning and addressing branch/stem breakages.

## Native Hedgerows

### *Establishment of Proposed Hedgerows*

- Management operations during the establishment phase (until branches of adjacent plants fully merge together) will comprise of weed control, watering (if required) and formative 'facing up' of the hedgerow to establish dense branch growth. New planting will be re-firmed as required.
- During the first five years of establishment, between April and October monthly inspections of hedgerow will be undertaken and weeds will be removed by hand weeding and if necessary herbicide (glyphosate) spot application. Any plant failures will be replaced. Deciduous species will be replaced when dormant in early November to late March. Conifers and evergreen species will be replaced in September/ October or April/ May.

### *General*

- The first cut to newly planted hedgerows is recommended within years 2 to 3 (dependant on growth), and will consist of 'facing up' either side of the hedge. All hedge cuts must be undertaken using appropriate hand or power tools. Mechanical methods of management, where appropriate, will be used in favour of machinery.
- The hedge will be cut in an 'A' shape to maintain a wide base for bird nesting and roosting. The 'A' shape profile of the hedge should be maintained annually by cutting the current season's growth.
- If possible only one side will be cut annually. Cutting every 2 years rather than annually will create a bushier hedge for wildlife nesting/refuge and allows for berry production in the alternate years.
- Hedgerows can be cut between September and February to avoid bird nesting season. The later hedges are cut the bigger the advantage they provide to foraging wildlife from providing berries and fruits.
- Additional hedgerow cutting may be required from a health and safety perspective should there be a good growing season (although this is unlikely within the first few years of establishment of new hedgerows, but this will be monitored).

### *Constraints*

- Any hedgerow management will be carried out outside of the bird nesting season (between March and August). Should any works be required within the bird nesting season an assessment will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist before any works commence.



### Amenity Grassland

- During the first three years some areas of amenity grassland may require cultivating and re-seeding.
- Grass cutting will be undertaken fortnightly (16 cuts a year), during the growing season. The grass will be kept as medium 'walk on' length of 35-50 mm. This length is suitable for most recreational grassland.
- Weed control will include spot treatment using selective herbicide of noxious weeds such as docks, thistles, nettles, ragwort and willowherb.

### Species-rich Wildflower Meadow

- Routine management will include cutting the wildflower sward annually to a height of 150mm (approx.) in late September once seed heads have dropped. Arisings should be left in situ for 24 hours to allow flower seed to disperse and then raked off.
- The cutting of all grass areas is to be carried out with particular care, using 'trimmers' fitted with guards so as to protect adjacent shrubs and trees from damage. All cuttings must be removed from these areas in order to prevent nutrient enrichment and retain the desired species composition, but can be stacked within suitable woodland areas to provide additional habitat. Arisings will be lightly raked off, with great care being taken to avoid disturbance to wildlife or damaging refugia hidden in the grass and removed from site.
- Outside high use amenity areas, grass cutting will be avoided between mid-March and August to prevent risk of disturbance to nesting birds. Should any works be required within the bird nesting season an assessment will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist before any works commence.
- Weed control will include spot treatment using selective herbicide of noxious weeds to reduce collateral damage of non-target habitats.

#### *Constraints*

- Fertiliser is not to be applied to any of the meadow areas in order to conserve the development of a diverse sward. The species mix may need review after the first complete flowering season to ensure no one species is becoming dominant. Where grass is growing excessively within areas of wildflowers, yellow rattle will be sown in autumn to inhibit grass growth giving less aggressive species a chance to colonise.

## Wetland Meadow

- Routine management will include cutting the grass to a height of 100mm (approx.). In order to minimise disturbance to terrestrial habitat it is recommended that areas are cut in sections (e.g. one third of the grassland area) on a weekly rotation to ensure areas of uncut vegetation are retained as refuge for amphibians and small mammals.
- The cutting of all grass areas is to be carried out using manual methods with particular care, using 'strimmers' fitted with guards so as to protect obstacles from damage. The necessary health and safety precautions must be undertaken when cutting grass on steep slopes (e.g. steep banks on the grass swale). All cuttings must be removed from these areas in order to prevent nutrient enrichment and retain the desired species composition, but can be stacked within suitable woodland areas to provide additional habitat. Arisings will be lightly raked off, with great care being taken to avoid disturbance to amphibians or damaging refugia hidden in the grass.
- Noxious weeds such as docks, thistles, nettles, ragwort and willowherb will be controlled by hand pulling, or spot treatment of glyphosate.

### *Constraints*

- Grass cutting will be avoided between mid-March and August to prevent risk of disturbance to nesting birds. Should any works be required within the bird nesting season an assessment will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist before any works commence.

### Attenuation Pond

- The slopes and bottom of the basin will be cut monthly to 50mm in the growing season with arisings removed from the Site. Grass cutting will not be carried out when the bottom of the basin is wet.
- Any scrub species which emerge will be removed annually with arisings removed from the Site.
- Silt which has accumulated at the bottom of the basin will be removed every five years.
- If infiltration basin include: The base of the infiltration basin will be scarified and spiked every five years (to be timed with silt removal).

#### *Constraints*

- If required, herbicide treatment of weeds will be limited to a controlled treatment of glyphosate which will require prior approval by the Environment Agency where within close proximity to waterbodies.

#### *Inspection*

- A monthly inspection will be undertaken of the control structure to and from the attenuation pond.
- An annual inspection of the attenuation pond will be undertaken to assess bank stability, water quality, coverage of aquatic/marginal vegetation and drainage.

### Aquatic Planting

- The management of marginal vegetation should ensure that these areas retain their aesthetic function within the landscape, whilst also enhancing species diversity and valuable wildlife habitats. Maintenance of marginal vegetation will therefore include cutting back invasive species (particularly Reed, Bulrush and Reed Sweet Grass) to prevent them from encroaching upon areas of open water and regular removal of dead vegetation and litter, which leads to reed beds drying out and loss of habitat through natural succession.
- Vegetation will be trimmed back (to 150mm). Vegetation will be removed annually to retain between 60% and 30% of open water. Approximately 25-30% of wetland vegetation will be removed each year with arisings removed from the Site.
- It is important that cutting does not take place over the entire area, and should therefore be cut in alternate sections on annual rotation leaving uncut areas as refuge for wildlife.