

LAND AT SUGAR BROOK DRIVE

OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. Water Courses/ water bodies

- 1.1. Although water bodies and watercourses form significant features within the fabric of the site the diversity in their form and function will require variation in some aspects of their management. Within water bodies, reed beds, wetlands and ditches the maintenance of open water channels and provision of dense stands of reeds and wet grasslands are important for both ecological and hydrological purposes, in that they support a diverse and healthy population of small mammals, amphibians, insects and waterfowl.
- 1.2. The management of the network of water bodies will focus on both the nature conservation potential of its component features, but also on ensuring the unimpeded flow of water through the site. Essentially a balance has to be achieved between –
 - ensuring public safety by maintaining water-flow through the sites, which necessitates cutting back bankside vegetation, removal of debris, reeds, other emergents and silt; and
 - promoting biodiversity by maintaining suitable habitats.
- 1.3. In the areas of open water it is important for both wildlife and hydrological purposes that water-flow is maintained throughout all components of the network, including ditches, ponds and reed beds. Regular inspections are recommended to ensure that the main open water channels are maintained. Periodic excavation of accumulating silt may be required, which will need to be undertaken with minimal interference to marginal and bankside vegetation.
- 1.4. All reed beds will need to be monitored to prevent bull rushes and reeds invading the water bodies. Removal may need to be on an annual basis, but monitoring and assessment will determine this. Every five years approximately, the reed beds will need to be dredged to remove silt. Any maintenance should be carried out between September and February and the material should be used or disposed of sensitively on site.
- 1.5. There must be regular inspections of grills and culverts on all water bodies, to ensure debris is not obstructing the flow of water. The management of marginal vegetation should ensure that water bodies retain their function, whilst also enhancing species diversity and value of wildlife habitats. Maintenance of marginal vegetation alongside watercourses 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.

2 Ditch and Adjacent Grassland Habitat under Ecological Management

- 2.1 The grassland habitat on the upper banks of and either side of the drainage ditch (see Figure 1) will be maintained by cutting twice a year using a hay meadow cut, comprising one cut in late-June to early-August and one cut in the either the spring or autumn (weather permitting). The arisings will be removed offsite or to a suitable area away from the ditch for onsite composting. Removal will avoid the risk of blocking up the ditch and culvert and will reduce additional nutrient input to the grassland.
- 2.2 A 0.5m wide strip at the edges of surfaced pathway that bisect the grassland habitat will be regularly cut on an amenity cut regime to maintain a tidy and attractive appearance.
- 2.3 Grassland maintenance within the channel of the ditch will take consideration of potential presence of water voles, and will comprise strimming up to half of the inner-bank vegetation each year with small petrol appliances. The area strimmed will be alternated over successive years to avoid complete cutting in any one year. The strimming will be carried out in directional movement to ensure any wildlife is displaced into suitable uncut habitat. All arisings will be raked up and removed from the ditch to prevent blocking any burrows and reduce siltation of the ditch. Operations inside the channel of the ditch will carried out in early autumn (September/October).
- 2.4 Bramble scrub will be periodically cut back from inside the channel of the ditch and from the banks of the ditch to avoid excessive overshadowing, accumulation of leaf litter and to prevent encroachment of the grassland habitat. Scrub does not need to be eradicated completely, as it provides additional structure to the habitat. The banks of the ditch will be maintained to have approximately 10% bramble scrub cover.
- 2.5 No grass cutting or scrub control will be carried out on the inner banks or within 2m of the top of the banks of the Sugar Brook to maintain a natural riparian habitat and to prevent impacts on water vole. Removal of arisings following cutting of the grassland beyond this area will prevent blocking of any distant water vole burrows or air vent holes.

Native Hedgerow

- 2.6 The replacement native hedgerow will be comprised of a mix of hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* (40%), guelder rose *Viburnum opulus* (20%), wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare* (20%) and hazel *Corylus avellana* (20%).
- 2.7 The native hedgerow will be managed to encourage dense growth, whilst allowing flowering and fruiting of shrub species to provide a resource for wildlife such as pollinating insects and foraging birds, by cutting only a third of the hedge in any one year. The cut section will be rotated to allow each section two years growth and flowering/fruiting to take place.

3 Roads, paths and hard standing

- 3.1 The site includes a network of roads, footpaths and tracks which facilitate access for pedestrians, cyclists and maintenance vehicles.
- 3.2 All roads access tracks and paths will be maintained to minimise dilapidation, kept clear of encroaching vegetation and the subsequent threat of hazards. In general all adjacent trees, scrub and shrubs will be maintained to create a 2m clear zone either side of the paths.
- 3.3 Repairs will be carried out as quickly as possible to ensure that there is no further degradation of these paths and tracks.
- 3.4 All hard landscape elements will be inspected on a monthly basis and minor repairs carried out as necessary. Any item considered to be unsafe will be removed or made safe and replaced as soon as possible.
- 3.5 Fencing located around site perimeters will be regularly inspected and repaired promptly to prevent access from unauthorised users.
- 3.6 All elements including fencing, furniture, gates, access barriers and hard surfaces will be inspected on a monthly basis and minor repairs carried out as necessary. Any item considered to be unsafe will be removed or made safe and replaced as soon as possible.

4 Amenity Grassland

- 4.1 Amenity grassland is required to provide opportunities for informal recreation and to maintain appropriate access along footpaths for all users and is located primarily around site entrances and along the perimeters of some footpaths and tracks.
- 4.2 Grass cuts will be undertaken as required to facilitate recreation and to maintain a neat and tidy appearance on a regular basis throughout the growing season. Weed control will be limited to spot application of translocated herbicide to control perennial weeds such as docks, thistles, nettles, ragwort and willowherb.

5 Cleansing

- 5.1 A general litter pick of all visible soft and hard landscape areas will be carried out frequently, at least weekly by maintenance staff with a major scavenge of the entire site every year. Particular attention will be made to site entrances and other vulnerable areas. It is important to ensure that litter and other extraneous material is swiftly removed from all areas of formal public access. The annual scavenge should be carried out in January or February when litter and debris is most visible. Ponds, watercourses, wetlands, ditches and pipes are to be cleaned as part of this routine scavenge.
- 5.2 Fly tipping may occur from time to time. This will be removed within 48 hours after it appears especially around access points as debris could

compromise habitats and water quality as well as the visual appearance of the site.

- 5.3 It is inevitable that over time, some acts of vandalism will take place. Any damage will be replaced or cleaned quickly as experience has shown that damage left untreated will tend to encourage more damage. If items are vandalised repeatedly an assessment will need to be made regarding their replacement.

6 Security

- 6.1 During the daytime security will largely rely on encouraging as many people as possible to use the site on a legitimate basis. The licensee will need to develop links to key partners including the local police and LCC Neighbourhood Management staff to ensure that there is a system in place to deal with emergencies.
- 6.2 Relationships should be built with the Police and Probation Service and local Youth Services and youth clubs to engage young people in constructive ways in the site, to engender a sense of local ownership and pride in the site.

7 Health and safety

- 7.1 The licensee will undertake a Health and Safety Risk Assessment. This will identify key hazards, associated risks and probability of them occurring, and mitigation measures. This will set out clear areas of responsibility, both during the construction phase and afterwards. The licensee will take on general responsibility for Health and Safety under normal occupier's liability.
- 7.2 The site will be managed to comply with all relevant health and safety legislation, approved codes of practice (ACOPs) and Health and Safety Executive guidance. The Licensee will be responsible for ensuring that risk assessments are undertaken for the site as required under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and ACOP (L21), and for monitoring and reviewing the effectiveness of control measures implemented as a result of the risk assessment to ensure their effectiveness.
- 7.3 A Health and Safety Policy Statement and Arrangements for Significant Risks and responsibilities will be produced and adopted. The following health and safety management tools will also be prepared and managed and regularly assessed:

- Risk Assessments
- Accidents and Reporting

- Hazardous Substances
- Slips Trips and Falls
- Use of Equipment and Machinery
- Dealing with the Public
- Use of Contractors
- Fire
- Vehicles on site – visitors, staff and subcontractors/commissions
- Working at Height
- Other Emergencies
- Presence of Water Hazards
- Dealing with wild animals – squirrels, foxes, pigeons and seagulls

7.4 The Licensee will be responsible for ensuring that accidents and incidents which occur on the site are reported to the relevant enforcing authority as required by the Reporting of Injuries, Disease and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995. The Licensee must also notify the licensor in the event of accidents or incidents on site requiring notification to the enforcing authorities.