North Wood

(Plan period – 2025 to 2030)

WOODLAND
TRUST

Management Plan Content Page

Introduction to the Woodland Trust Estate

The Woodland Trust owns and cares for well over 1,250 sites covering almost 30,000 hectares (ha) across the UK. This includes more than 4,000ha of ancient semi-natural woodland and almost 4,000ha of non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites and we have created over 5,000ha of new native woodland. We also manage other valuable habitats such as flower-rich grasslands, heaths, ponds/lakes and moorland.

Our Vision is:

"A UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife."

To realise all the environmental, social and economic benefits woods and trees bring to society, we:

- **Create Woodland** – championing the need to hugely increase the UK's native woodland and trees.
- **Protect Woodland** – fighting to defend native woodland, especially irreplaceable ancient woodland and veteran trees; there should be no loss of ancient woodland
- **Restore Woodland** – ensuring the sensitive restoration of all damaged ancient woodland and the re-creation of native wooded landscapes.

Management of the Woodland Trust Estate

All our sites have a management plan which is freely accessible via our website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

Our woods are managed to the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) and are certified with the Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) under licence FSC-C009406 and through independent audit.

The following principles provide an overarching framework to guide the management of all our sites but we recognise that all woods are different and that their management also needs to reflect their local landscape, history and where appropriate support local projects and initiatives.

1. Our woods are managed to maintain their intrinsic key features of value and to reflect those of the surrounding landscape. We intervene in our woods when there is evidence that it is necessary to maintain or improve biodiversity, safety and to further the development of more resilient woods and landscapes.

2. We establish new native woodland for all the positive reasons set out in our Conservation Principles, preferably using natural regeneration but often by planting trees, particularly when there are opportunities for involving people.

3. We provide free public access to woods for quiet, informal recreation and our woods are managed to make them accessible, welcoming and safe. Where possible, we pro-actively engage with people to help them appreciate the value of woods and trees.

4. The long term vision for all our ancient woodland sites is to restore them to predominantly native species composition and semi-natural structure, a vision that equally applies to our secondary woods.

5. Existing semi-natural open ground and freshwater habitats are restored and maintained wherever their management can be sustained and new open ground habitats created where appropriate.

6. The natural and cultural heritage value of sites is taken into account in our management and in particular, our ancient trees are retained for as long as possible.

7. Land and woods can generate income both from the sustainable harvesting of wood products and the delivery of other services. We therefore consider the appropriateness of opportunities to generate income from our Estate to help support our aims.

8. We work with neighbours, local people, organisations and other stakeholders in developing the management of our woods. We recognise the benefits of local community woodland ownership and management. Where appropriate we encourage our woods to be used for local woodland, conservation, education and access initiatives.

9. We use and offer the Estate where appropriate, for the purpose of demonstration, evidence gathering and research associated with the conservation, recreational and sustainable management of woodlands. We maintain a network of sites for long-term monitoring and trials leading to reductions in plastics and pesticides.

10. Any activities we undertake are in line with our wider Conservation Principles, conform to sustainable forest management practices, are appropriate for the site and balanced with our primary objectives of enhancing the biodiversity and recreational value of our woods and the wider landscapes.

The Public Management Plan

This public management plan describes the site and sets out the long term aims for our management and lists the Key Features which drive our management actions. The Key Features are specific to this site – their significance is outlined together with our long, 50 years and beyond, and our short, the next 5 years, term objectives for the management and enhancement of these features. The short term objectives are complemented by an outline Work Programme for the period of this management plan aimed at delivering our management aims.

Detailed compartment descriptions are listed in the appendices which include any major management constraints and designations. Any legally confidential or sensitive species information about this site is not included in this version of the plan.

There is a formal review of this plan every 5 years and we continually monitor our sites to assess the success of our management, therefore this printed version may quickly become out of date, particularly in relation to the planned work programme.

Please either consult The Woodland Trust website

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

or contact the Woodland Trust

scotland@woodlandtrust.org.uk

to confirm details of the current management programme.

A short glossary of technical terms can be found at the end of the plan.

Location and Access

Location maps and directions for how to find and access our woods, including this site, can be found by using the following link to the Woodland Trust web-site which contains information on accessible woodlands across the UK

https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/find-woods/

In Scotland access to our sites is in accordance with the Land Reform Act (of Scotland) 2003 and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

In England, Wales and NI, with the exception of designated Public Rights of Ways, all routes across our sites are permissive in nature and where we have specific access provision for horse riders and/or cyclists this will be noted in the management plan.

The Management Plan

1. SITE DETAILS

North Wood

Location:	Livingston Grid reference: NT030702 OS 1:50,000 Sheet No. 65
Area:	35.23 hectares (87.06 acres)
External Designations:	Area of Landscape Value
Internal Designations:	Tree For All Site, Welcoming Sites Programme

2. SITE DESCRIPTION

North Wood is situated between, the A89 to the north and the M8 to the south. This site is an important part of the boundary infrastructure of Livingston, providing separation and screening between Livingston and Dechmont village as well as absorbing sound from the surrounding transport routes.

Altitude around the site varies between 135m above sea level in the east, to 180m a.s.l. in the south-west and the aspect generally faces north. The MLURI climate map identifies the area as fairly warm moist lowland and foothill, being moderately exposed with moderate winters. The geology of the area is sedimentary sandstones/ limestones/ shale of the Carboniferous-Dinatian period, and a fault line runs through the eastern corner of the wood. The soils are derived from a glacial till of carboniferous sedimentary sandstones and shale and are generally Rowanhill association brown forest soils with gleying, some gleys are non-calcareous or humic. Rowanhill association soils are characterised by slowly permeable clayey horizons at varying depths between 40 and 80cm.

North Wood was once part of the former Dechmont estate, at which time woodland only existed at the extreme western end of the site as part of the shelterbelt system that extends into the Deans area of Livingston. This part of the wood was associated with the North Lodge of Dechmont House (since demolished) and estate. Little is known about the specific history of North Wood yet physical remains of drystone dykes and hedgebanks suggest an agricultural past. The 1856 OS Map illustrated that the area to the south of the A89 was dominated by open ground, mainly farmland and scrub.

Approximately 33ha of the 35.23ha site is currently (2025) woodland, largely due to the Livingston Development Corporation (LDC) which owned and planted the site from 1962-1996. The M8 Motorway was constructed in the 1970s and it is believed that woodland was planted along this strip at this time for screening. Under the management by the LDC the woodland was expanded over to the east of the site and thus many of the trees in this area are around 60 years old (as of 2025). Throughout the wood, planting has been mainly of single species blocks, most of around 1-2 ha. Species included Sitka spruce, Norway spruce, Scots pine, lodgepole pine, larch, sycamore, beech, grey alder and ash. The overall mix of species was roughly equal portions of conifers and broadleaves with very few areas of mixed species.

Some areas of conifer planting suffered badly from windblow resulting in large areas being felled in 2001. These areas were replanted with a mix of native broadleaves and Scots pine. Since acquisition in 1996, the Woodland Trust has been gradually working towards transitioning the woodland to a native broadleaf-majority throughout the woodland. Thinning has been carried out throughout to promote stronger growing trees and improve diversity within the single species blocks.

Areas with dense conifer stands have limited natural regeneration and ground flora. However, following thinning operations, light levels reaching the woodland floor has encouraged some natural regeneration to appear, rowan and ash becoming particularly well established in the understorey. In clear-felled areas vegetation is dominated by brambles, rosebay willow herb, bracken and ferns.

In addition to the woodland cover, the site encompasses an area of semi-improved grassland of over 2ha. There are several rides throughout the site and two cleared wayleaves beneath power lines running through the wood. Gorse

is present in these areas providing essential habitat for birds and nectar sources for invertebrates. A small redundant fire pond is also present within the eastern part of the wood, with a narrow border of emergent vegetation. Other small areas hold water and much of the remaining open grassland is often very marshy.

Considering the combination of semi-improved ground (possibly historic pasture), and remnants of hedgerows and boundary walls within a mixed woodland of a shelter belt formation, North Wood is quite representative of the lowland plateaux region of the Lothians.

North Wood offers excellent opportunities for recreation either on foot or by bike. There are approximately 3.8km of maintained footpaths throughout the site, consisting of both mown grass paths and areas that have a firm surface. Although the main path is a linear route through the centre of the site, there are opportunities to use mown paths for small loops within the site boundary. Whilst the central linear route from east to west is flat, the site gradually slopes from south to north. Thus, the small circular routes available on site do include some areas where the gradient becomes steeper.

The tarmac tracks that dissect the site north-south at either end of the woodland link to wider networks through Livingston's adjacent woodlands, including Deans Wood to the southwest. This connectivity increases the overall recreational value of the site as well as providing essential wildlife corridors in an urban setting.

Despite its urban location, wildlife can be spotted throughout North Wood including buzzards, song thrush, chaffinches, heron, grey squirrels, roe deer and hare which all travel through the wood. Although roe deer are known to be present, browsing levels are low due to disturbance from visitors and the surrounding busy roads. The wood is of importance for local biodiversity due to its size and the variety of woodland habitats that are now present, as different stages of the wood develop from open ground to scrub, pole stage and mature woodland.

Amenity value is at times reduced by accumulation of litter and fly-tipping as well as occasional fires. The car park area was closed in 2005 due to constant problems with fly tipping. Although there is currently relatively little deliberate vandalism, illegal access by motorbikes continues.

Towards the centre of the site there is a disused quarry which is fenced off for public safety. The woodland in this area has regenerated over time and is now well established above and below the quarry line. To the south of the quarry there is the water treatment plant which lies outside the Woodland Trust boundary and is managed by Scottish Water.

Management access to the site can be obtained from a number of gates along the northern boundary off the A89. Internally, routes have historically followed rides however, during thinning operations in 2014, additional routes have been created for shorter loops.

3. LONG TERM POLICY

North Wood will be managed in line with the Woodland Trust's objectives of improving and enhancing biodiversity, encouraging public access and enhancing people's enjoyment of woodlands. It will be managed as a sustainable natural resource to safeguard its public amenity and biodiversity value.

The long-term vision is to maintain and enhance the woodland areas using continuous cover silviculture, where possible. The woodland will consist of predominantly mixed broadleaves of a mainly native character, with a proportion of Scots pine throughout.

Non-native conifers and heavily shading broadleaves such as beech and sycamore, will be accepted although the intention will be to increase the proportion of mixed native species. Existing mature feature trees will be retained where safe to do so.

Large scale felling intervention will be utilised where windblow or the potential for windblow makes this unavoidable. Elsewhere small-scale thinning and group felling will be undertaken to diversify the canopy's age structure. This will also help to promote natural regeneration and improve light levels for ground flora. Where natural regeneration is not establishing or the species diversity is poor, additional planting of native species will be undertaken. Standing and fallen dead wood will be retained where it is safe to do so.

Improving and enhancing biodiversity within this site will also be achieved by control and removal of invasive non-native species, where it is realistic and practical to do so. For this site the focus will be on eradicating Japanese knotweed and Rhododendron ponticum. The effectiveness of control measures and impact on the recovery of native flora will be reviewed and monitored.

The site will also continue to encompass small areas of open ground habitat with the majority of semi-improved grassland in sub-compartment 1h being retained for this purpose (sub compartment map provided as Appendix 1. of this management plan for reference).

The path network and access facilities will be maintained and upgraded to suit local demand (WT Grade A - high usage) with consideration to the development of West Lothian's Core Path network and further development around Livingston that is likely to impact on levels of use on all paths throughout the site.

Due to the woods location within the central belt and close proximity to large populations, the intention is to use the woods to improve and raise awareness, through education, of the biodiversity, recreation and health benefits woodlands provide.

4. KEY FEATURES

4.1 f1 Connecting People with woods & trees

Description

North Wood is a very well-used woodland located to the north of Livingston. With a population of over 57,000 (according to 2018 census), the woodland is a significant asset for Livingston, providing a valuable outdoor resource for the thriving local population in a highly urbanised area. The level of public use is defined as WT Access Category A (High usage) as it is estimated that a minimum of 20 people use the wood daily. This is a popular woodland walk especially for dog walkers and runners and is well used by cyclists.

North Wood is easily accessible for visitors. There are nine main public access points around the wood identified with ladder boards, wooden signs or welcome posts installed in 2020. This site has good links to the public transport links as there are multiple bus stops located near to the entrances to the woodland on its northern boundary with the A89 including Bents Cottages, Bangour Farm Road End and Bangour Hospital Main Gate. The closest train station to the site is Uphall Train Station which is approximately 1.7 miles- there is a walkable route along the Railway South core path from the train station, running parallel to the railway line, cutting across Dechmont Law park and into the southeastern entrance of the site. Livingston North railway station is also located within 1.5 miles (approximately 35-minute walk).

Internally, there is a network of approximately 3.8km of maintained paths running the length of the wood, roughly half of which are surfaced with either stone or red blaes material. The main path is linear running through the centre of the site from east to west. This path is largely flat but can be muddy in damp weather. Along the centre track there are 4 benches, to allow for rest stops and quiet reflection. There are also mown paths to the north that allow for small loops throughout the woodland which provide more variety of routes. One of these looped sections of the path towards the northern boundary includes an entrance with approximately 8 steps and crosses a deep drainage ditch with a wide bridge that was recently replaced in 2020.

To the west and east of the site the paths of North Wood meet tarmac tracks that lead visitors from the A89 over the M8. These routes link directly onto the Greenway Network within Livingston giving access to long distance routes throughout the region. This includes Dechmont Law which is one of the largest green spaces in Livingston. To the southwest the Nell path links North Wood to another Woodland Trust site known as Deans Wood that is located south of the M8 providing more opportunity for an extended woodland walk.

The site is also an important component of the Dechmont Trail Race Festival which is organised by the Lothian Running Club who run the activities each summer attracting over 300 participants each year. The longer 10k and 6.5k races include the central track of North Wood.

The industrial history of West Lothian centres around the mining for oil-shale which was significant industry in Livingston until the 1930s, especially for the Deans and Pumpherston Areas. Environmental surveys commissioned by the Livingston Development Corporation (1995), noted the presence of abandoned pit shafts towards the east of the site near Dechmont roundabout. Whilst these are no longer visible, the disused quarry is a visible feature of North Wood (compartment 1f) which has been fenced off for public safety. This is the only area of the site that is not open for public access. Other previous human activity on site is evidenced via numerous low drystone dykes, presumably

erected as former boundaries.

Since the Woodland Trust's acquisition of North Wood, replanting efforts have included volunteer groups, community tree planting sessions and planting with corporate partners such as Nationwide and Premier Paper in 2015-2016. A further 800 trees were planted in this area by Volunteers from the Scottish Police Muslim Association (SPMA) in 2023.

Over the last 5 years, Woodland Trust volunteers and corporate volunteers from People's Postcode Lottery have been removing the plastic tubes from the trees that are now well established. These tubes are then being reused for new planting on site. This includes areas where ash trees had to be felled for safety and were replanted with the community in 2022 and volunteers in 2023 and 2024.

Other previous community engagement included the Branching Out West Lothian (BOWL) project which ran from 2007-2009. Collaboration with NatureScot, Forward Scotland and West Lothian Council, this project, funded by the National Lottery Heritage fund, enabled children and teachers from local schools to learn about woodlands, biodiversity and improve access in West Lothian sites. The project involved 46 schools across the county and enabled over 1,000 children to plant trees. During this project, the schools created a replica of the 'Hollywood' sign - which spelt out North Wood in large wooden letters. Located in compartment 1g, this sign and was visible from A89. Due to natural regeneration and the establishment of the planting conducted during the project the letters are no longer visible from the road or paths.

The nearest school to the woodland is Dechmont Infant School located approximately 5 minutes' walk away (0.2miles from the nearest entrance into the site). However, this school has been closed since June 2024. There are three schools within 30-minute walk away to the south-western entrance of North Wood- Meldrum Primary School is a 15-minute walk (0.6miles), Deans Community High School is just over a 20-minute walk (0.9miles) and Carmondean Primary School is approximately 30-minutes' walk (1.2miles). A new primary school and associated early years centre is planned to be included within the Bangour village development (located to the north of the site) with an estimated completion of within the next 5 years (by 2030).

Considering the increasing local population, these woodland compartments are significant assets for Livingston, providing a valuable outdoor resource for the thriving local population in a highly urbanised area. As of 2025, the nearest areas with Tree Equity Scores to North Wood are located to the ear and west of the site. The areas are present as 'Moderate' priority for increase tree canopy. This status will be due to the existing good access to trees and woodlands within the community for health, climatic and economic benefits. However, it should be noted that there is significant housing development being undertaken and planned to the north of the site. Therefore, the local population will increase significantly, and these areas will also need to be assessed for Tree Equity. This may change the overall priority for tree planting in the local area in the near future.

As of 2025, there are 15 Volunteer Woodland Wardens that cover West Lothian including one that is specifically dedicated to this site. Volunteer Wardens conduct regular patrols, litter picking and providing reports of any issues in the area. A Woodland Working Group (WWG) was also set up for the Woodland Trust sites in West Lothian during late 2019. The aim of this group is to conduct practical conservation tasks across the 16 Woodland Trust sites in the area. North Wood provides various opportunities for future volunteer tasks across the site.

Locally a group known as 'West Lothian Litter Pickers' has been created by enthusiastic volunteers. Although this is an independently managed group, the members do cover many of the Woodland Trust sites in Livingston, including North Wood, and elsewhere in West Lothian. Their work helps to keep the sites clear of rubbish as well as encouraging community engagement for the sites and reporting any issues of concern.

There is no on-site car park, though on-street parking is available in the nearby resident area of Dechmont. Parking for events can be available through request from West Lothian Council for approximately 15 cars on a tarmac surface to the east of the site. Access through a padlocked vehicle barrier from the northern side of the site just off the A89 is required to access this area.

Anti-social behaviour is an issue on this site as there have been numerous incidents previously of fire, motorbike use and illegal felling in the area.

Significance

Woodland of this size and composition is a rare feature in the urban landscape around Livingston and therefore the site provides a chance to promote access to a safe, natural environment close to where people live.

North Wood is a popular local wood accessible to a large demographic of people and easily reached with or without transport.

It is walked regularly by local dog walkers and commuters and forms an essential part of the local access network, providing varied and alternative routes to pavements, as well as linking to longer distance routes.

The local community value the trees as a noise and sight barrier to the M8 and the wood provides a much-needed natural space for relaxation and recreation in an urban area.

A reported sighting of a UFO in 1979 in Dechmont Law is of local cultural significance.

Opportunities & Constraints

Constraints

The existence of historic built structures including the drystone dykes in compartments 1g and 1h and old quarry in compartment 1f need to be considered and protected during operations on site.

Linear nature of site constrains potential for large circular routes within the site.

No formal car parking can cause problems with neighbours due to visitors parking on the local roads. This can be difficult for public events on the site.

The noise from the M8 and A89 can detract from the wood's tranquillity.

A main cycle route runs on a tarmac surface parallel to A89, thus promoting people to walk/cycle along this route rather than through the woodland.

Opportunities
To further develop access facilities within the site such as benches, responding reactively to user demand.

Multiple areas of the path are suffering from poor drainage and other areas have become narrow over time. Opportunity to upgrade the paths to provide a consistent surface and width across the whole site to improve access for buggy/wheelchair-friendly use.

Tree planting opportunities with local community and partners following felling operations.

Small scale events with local schools and community groups to further promote and use the woodland as an educational resource.

Opportunity to develop the volunteer group to become more self-led.

Proximity to other Woodland Trust sites close by allows for potential to group works (such as path upgrades) together to be more efficient and cost effective.

Opportunities to contribute to the West Lothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2025-2035) priorities including, but not limited to; A29- provide engagement opportunities such as events, volunteering, training etc., A30- form working relations with schools and educational establishments provide more formal opportunities for connecting with nature, learning and skills development and A80- Promote woody habitats through publicity and creating opportunities for community engagement

Factors Causing Change

Continuous litter and fly tipping detract from the natural beauty of this site and fires could cause long-term environmental damage.

New housing development underway at Bangour Village will increase use of the site, resulting in greater pressure on paths and consequently additional maintenance requirements. The recent installation (2024) of a new roundabout and pelican crossing on the A89 are also likely to alter the usage of some entrances on the northern boundary.

New cycleway running along the A89 may increase bike usage on site. While the Trust encourages responsible cycling as per the Scottish Outdoor Access Code, increased use could result in some conflicts between cyclists and walkers on narrow paths, as well as greater erosion on softer paths.

Grasses have grown over the edges of surfaced path causing them to narrow over time. Furthermore, misuse by unauthorised motorbikes and ATVs contributing to increased degradation of path surfaces.

Anti-sociable behaviour such as fires and motor-bike use are damaging infrastructure such as benches, paths and the natural environment as well as presenting a safety hazard to visitors. Additionally, fly tipping and litter are also regular occurrences on site and are detrimental to the natural beauty of this woodland and can be hazardous to visitors and wildlife. Previous incidents of fires and vandalism also discourages investment in installation of structures such as sculptures or signage.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

There will be a well-maintained network of paths and rides with a variety of aspects allowing safe access across the site. The site should be accessible, safe and welcoming with management of infrastructure and signage. It will also act as a sound barrier to the busy M8 and A89.

Litter and fly-tipping will be removed as far as resources allow, to maintain the natural appearance of the wood and discouraging further abuse of the woodland.

The site should be well used, appreciated and respected by the local community. It should be known for its wildlife interest, varied landscape and habitats.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

During this plan period, the short-term objective is to continue to provide public access at North Wood which is safe and enjoyable. Access provision for this site will be in keeping with WT access category A (high usage). This will be achieved by:

1) The site will be kept in a safe and welcoming condition through site maintenance:
a) Path cuts and entrance maintenance (three times annually)
b) Vegetation cutbacks from path to allow lines of sight where possible and appropriate (as required)
c) Litter and fly tip uplift (as required)
d) Regular site safety inspections (tree safety, footbridges, steps, benches, fencing) (as per site risk assessment)

2) Improving visitor access by upgrading infrastructure:
a) Replace the steps located in northeastern entrance to compartment 1g (2028)
b) Paths- Scrape back and resurface the linear route through the site- approximately 3km of path covering sub-compartments c, d, e, g, i, j, k including appropriate drainage (following harvesting, expected 2027/2028)
c) establish mown path through open ground for interaction withing the grassland habitat areas for education and recreation purposes (2027/2028)
d) Installation of 4 site welcome/orientation boards with maps once the path upgrades are completed onsite and in the wider path network (before the end of the plan period)

3) Providing and developing more opportunities for community engagement and upskilling in conservation and traditional management activities:
a) Run Woodland Working Group and third party practical task days on site including:
i) Removing of redundant tree tubes on established planted trees in compartment 1a, 1b, 1i and 1j (annually)
ii) Hazel coppicing on 5-10 year rotations in sections next to paths in compartments 1a (2026/2031/2036) and 1e (2028/2033/2038)
iii) Scything open ground areas in compartments 1h and 1g (2027 onwards)
b) Recruitment of Woodland Working Group Leader volunteer to enable the Livingston group to run more efficiently and frequently (before the end of the plan period)
c) Contact the new local Primary School once it is established in Bangour Village and discuss involvement in site activities such as recreation of the 'North Wood' sign (before the end of the plan period)

4.2 f2 Secondary Woodland

Description
Covering approximately 33ha, the woodland at North Wood appears to increase in age from east to west. The majority of the canopy cover was planted in the 1960s as part of the LDC's land management for sheltering neighbouring residential areas. It continues to function as a significant feature in the local landscape providing screening between the motorway and Livingston and Dechmont village. The most mature specimens were part of the former Dechmont estate and are thought to date back to the mid-19th century. This is supported by the presence of multiple narrow strips illustrated running north to south in the site area on the 1856 OS Map. Typically, woodland that was present on OS maps from the 1860s is identified Long Established Woodland of Plantation Origin (LEPO- 2a). Whilst these strips at North Wood are not official designated as LEPO, it is possible that these areas were omitted from the Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) mapping due to their small size. This areas have some of the oldest trees on site- mostly oak and occasional beech. Although not necessarily ancient, these trees are of a significant age and diameter, often with features that support varied biodiversity such as cracks and cavities. Throughout the wood, planting has been mainly in single species blocks of around 1-2ha with very few areas of intimately mixed species. The overall mix of species contains approximately equal proportions of broadleaves and conifers, though this is changing as conifers are gradually replaced with native broadleaves. There is a significant variety of species present including: sessile oak, pedunculate oak, ash, wild cherry, rowan, silver birch, downy birch, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple, holly, elder, willow, dog rose, dogwood, alder, aspen, sycamore, beech, hornbeam, lime, elm, Sitka spruce, Norway spruce, larch, lodgepole pine and Scots pine. This suggests that the soils and landscape of North Wood can support each of these species which provides more flexibility when considering suitable species for restocking following felling works. However, areas of dense conifers, beech and sycamore restrict light levels and suppress natural regeneration. Restructuring of the block-design has gradually altered the overall woodland composition since the acquisition of this site in 1996. Areas of sub-compartments a, i and k were clear felled in 1999-2000 and replanted with mixed native species, now well established. Significant tree felling operations occurred in 2014. This included the removal of conifer blocks in compartments 1a, 1b and conifer strips within close proximity to power lines in compartments 1d and 1e. Restocking of the felled areas occurred in 2015. These areas have become well established and now redundant tubes are being removed and reused elsewhere on site for new planting. Hazel planted within compartment 1e has become well established to the point where it requires coppicing along the path edges. Last cut in 2020, this may become a suitable regular volunteer task for the WWG in future years to maintain access through coppicing. Largely mono-species blocks remain in sub compartments 1e and 1j which still require significant restructuring to allow for a more species-rich woodland. Likewise, other sub compartments such as c, k and i are not necessarily dominated by non-native conifers but they still lack variety in species and age structure and would benefit from thinning works.

In 2022, blocks of ash were felled in compartments 1d (approximately 266 trees) and 1k (approximately 80 trees) due to extensive decline from Ash Die Back (ADB), also referred to as Chalara. These areas have been restocked with mixed native broadleaves after the felling work. This has improved diversity within this area to support the natural regeneration that is currently dominated by ash and beech here. There are individual mature ash trees that remain throughout North Wood which continue to be assessed each summer and removed on a case-by-case basis if deemed necessary for safety reasons.

More recently, in early 2025, During storm Eowyn in January 2025, North Wood sustained damage to conifer blocks on the northern boundary of the site in close proximity to powerlines (compartment 1k). Scottish Power organised for the removal of the dangerous trees closest to the powerlines by mid-May 2025. Works are still required throughout compartment 1kl to remove the remaining conifers which have become unstable and more vulnerable to further windblow.

Other pests and diseases have also been identified within the site vicinity including Phytophthora ramorum which was confirmed on the M8 slip road woodland block managed by Amey. A Scottish Health Plant Notice (SHPN) was served, meaning that the infected larch had to be felled by February 2018. North Wood was within the 250m buffer zone but did not have to undertake any felling as no larch was present within the buffer zone.

Whilst there are still large areas of North Wood requiring significant restructuring, an approach of minimum intervention will be used for compartment 1f. As a now disused quarry, the woodland in this area is mostly natural regeneration rather than former plantation. Considering this and its lack of access, it likely to be left undisturbed for the foreseeable future other than for health and safety work.

Invasive species of Rhododendron ponticum and Japanese knotweed were also identified in the western side of North Wood and mapped in 2020. The former was particularly dense within compartment 1l with a few isolated pockets also found in compartment 1k. Japanese knotweed has been found in the northwestern tip of the site and also present and spreading outside of the Woodland Trust boundary on neighbouring land. These species were casting shade under areas of native woodland compromising the ability for ground flora to grow and for natural regeneration of native tree species. Treatment began in 2021 with herbicide stem injection being utilised for the Japanese knotweed and a mixed approach of digging out and drilling and filling with herbicide on the rhododendron ponticum. As of 2025, both species have been significantly suppressed and will continue to be monitored with any regrowth being treated to prevent reinfestation.

Dead wood habitat is minimal with only a few standing trees and large fallen trunks typically of mature relic beech to the west or windblow conifers. There is a small block of standing dead ash to the north of the site which has been retained as it is out of falling distance from paths or surrounding infrastructure. Where felled material is left on site to decay for wildlife, timber is left in large sections to avoid fire lighting on site.

Areas previously clear felled often result in coarse vegetation such as brambles and raspberry becoming dominant due to sudden increase in light levels. Although the presence of this coarse vegetation helps to protect new trees from browsing, the high density of these species also restricts floral diversity. Consequently, the dominant botanical species across the woodland include brambles, rosebay willow herb, wild raspberry, ferns such as broad buckler, nettles and

occasional tormentil and honeysuckle.

There are minimal species records for this site. Nevertheless, buzzards, chaffinches, grey squirrels, roe deer, hare, and song thrush have been seen in the area.

There is a small group of roe deer (approximately 3 individuals) regularly using North Wood and browsing is evident. Trials on protection of the restocking have been conducted on the site. This has included reusing redundant tree tubes in compartment 1a, 1b, 1i and 1j which were removed by with volunteers. Non-plastic tree tubes have also been trialled. Some areas have been left without protection for comparison. Beyond browsing pressure, high numbers of deer within an urban setting can be problematic for public safety. NatureScot's 'Deer Vehicle Collison Analysis 2019-2021' report identified the M8 North and West of Livingston Interchange as an area for review. In 2024, North Wood was identified by Nature Scot as a High-Risk Area for Deer Vehicle Collisions and meetings have been conducted on site between Woodland Trust and NatureScot regarding this matter. As of 2025, Woodland Trust is awaiting a follow-up report from NatureScot following further surveys and wider discussions with other landowners in the local area.

Significance

North Wood is important locally providing variety within the wider landscape and is included within the Bathgate Hills and River Avon Valley Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). This designation illustrates the sites' significance as an important feature of the local landscape.

The site provides screening between the M8 motorway to the south and housing developments to the north. It forms the northern edge of Livingston, separating Dechmont village from the larger town.

The woodland is important for local biodiversity as a refuge from the built-up urban area and surrounding infrastructure.

This is the largest Woodland Trust site in Livingston and has potential for significant improvement through restructuring.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

To further increase biodiversity through continued thinning operations to establish a mixed aged, mixed species, predominantly native broadleaved woodland, more resilient to exposure and climate change.

Contributing to the West Lothian Biodiversity Action Plan (2025-2035) goals including, but not limited to; A66- Restructure existing non-native woodland through restocking, A68- Join up woodland fragments and improve connectivity between woodland habitats....including hedgerows, riparian woodland, scrub and habitat mosaics, A80- Promote woody habitats through publicity and creating opportunities for community engagement and A81- Promote the use of trees in urban areas to enhance biodiversity, connect habitats, manage water and reduce heat.

Proximity to other Woodland Trust sites close by allows for potential to group works (such as felling) together to be more efficient and cost effective.

Opportunity to train volunteers in traditional conservation techniques such as hazel coppicing for compartments 1a and 1e in particular- this will boost the resilience of the species, extend the lifespan and contribute to biodiversity as well as maintaining access throughout these compartments.

Now the Rhododendron ponticum has been largely removed from compartment 1l, there is space to conduct enrichment planting, to help native species outcompete the heavily shading beech present.

Considering the presence of ADB and planning felling, there is the opportunity to retain deadwood in some areas to increase this habitat across the site.

Constraints

The presence of multiple footpaths as well as proximity to roads and pavements restricts scope for retaining windblow and standing deadwood in some areas.

Presence of power line way-leaves across the site restricts suitable planting areas for large species such as oak. However, the presence of these services also ensures areas are left open to allow for more of a mixed habitat on site, supporting more biodiversity.

Squirrel damage and deer browsing are threats to young regeneration and planting on site. Whilst the urban location causes disturbance for these species and helps to limit impact in some areas, the urban locale also restricts the suitability and efficiency of possible control methods. With this in mind, no management of these species will be undertaken in this plan period and further investment will be required to replace browsed or damaged trees.

Due to the urban location of North Wood, within close proximity to multiple small woodland areas in Livingston, invasive species and diseases present elsewhere in Livingston are likely to be aided by people, spreading seeds or spores in soil on their footwear.

Proximity to the M8 requires a buffer zone to be maintained particularly towards the southeast where planting of larger species such as oak should not be planted close to the boundary in order to avoid future conflict as trees develop.

Factors Causing Change

Deer browsing, squirrel and rabbit damage are all present and may contribute to suppressing natural regeneration and continued healthy growth of established trees. Historically (during 2006-2008) browsing by rabbits was a particular issue for restocked areas. More recently (2025), the resident roe deer population (approximately 3 individuals) is a more significant concern for browsing pressure.

The continued development of the A89, M8 and surrounding housing will encourage an increased use of the area and subsequently impact on local air quality and tree health.

Phytophthora ramorum is likely to continue to spread in the area. This could impact areas of the site that contain larch such as compartment 1e.

Phytophthora cambivora has also been recorded on another Woodland Trust Livingston site (Dedridge Wood, compartment 42a). Although has not been detected as yet, this disease could also spread to North Wood and would be a particular concern for the mature beech and oak.

The large mature beech trees which are such a feature in the West Lothian landscape tend to be of a similar age and are now subject to ongoing senescence. They are becoming increasingly vulnerable to storm damage and disease which is becoming a challenge to deal with in terms of tree safety and also maintenance of the treed landscape. This is expected to become more of an issue in coming years which would particularly impact on compartment 1l as this area encompasses the majority of mature beech at North Wood.

Ash Die Back (ADB) is present on site and throughout Livingston. This disease has already had a significant impact on the composition of this woodland. It has also contributed to an increase the volume of standing deadwood in areas where it is suitable to retain declining individuals (i.e. away from roads and footpaths). Areas that needed significant felling of ash due to safety (1k and 1d) have been replanted with mixed native species. These areas should continue to be monitored to determine if any further planting is required. Due to the prevalence of ADB, ash will also not be included within restocking. Therefore, the density of ash on the site overall is likely to decline in the long term.

Any significant felling, such as safety works for ADB, will result in exposure for remaining woodland blocks and could result in a loss of canopy cover in some areas if numerous trees become uprooted. Furthermore, most of the spruce and larch planted as part of LDC landscaping is reaching its terminal height at which it is vulnerable to windblow. Any felling works should be planned with a conscious consideration of mitigating this issue where possible.

Rhododendron ponticum and Japanese Knotweed have been mapped on site in 2020 and are also present on neighbouring land outside of the Woodland Trust boundary. If this is not removed invasive species could continue to spread at the detriment of natural regeneration, woodland specialist flora and overall biodiversity across the site. Leaving any amount of the species within proximity to the site could result in re-infestation of this invasive species in the long-term.

Wind throw is common on this site due to the exposure from open transport links located to the north and the south. It is also exacerbated by the presence of highly susceptible young trees and low-rooted species such as lodge pole pine which lack the stability of mature broadleaves. This issue reduces the ability for trees to reach maturity as well as causing a health and safety risk.

Long term Objective (50 years+)

To create and maintain a diverse, mixed age and mixed species woodland habitat in perpetuity. As the historical management of monoculture block planting has resulted in a lack of age diversity across the site, thinning and planting regimes must be conscious to not further exacerbate this problem. Mature specimens should be left to decline, and operations should be gradual where possible and appropriate to allow for more age complexity throughout the

woodland. Species composition will be mostly native, although a proportion of beech and conifers will be accepted. Improved diversity in the canopy structure should help towards supporting a variety of ground flora communities.

The woodland composition will be dominated by native species across all compartments and biodiversity will be safeguarded by controlling the spread of invasive non-native invasive species where practical.

Once planted trees are well established the tree shelters and vole guards will be removed.

Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

The focus of the STOs for North Wood will be to improve biodiversity and resilience through the following objectives:

1) Improve awareness and recording of species presence on site and wider area:
a) Commission ecological surveys across the site identify sensitive areas/species requiring additional mitigation for site works (prior to path or significant felling works commencing)
b) Identify and map any ancient or veteran trees present on site for protection and appropriate consideration during operations (before the end of the plan period)

2) Restructuring areas for pro-active safety and enhanced biodiversity on site:
a) Gradual ash removal across each compartment in response to ADB (as required following tree safety inspections, where it is a hazard to paths)
b) Improve light conditions to enable recovery of regeneration and ground flora currently under dense conifer/beech canopy, subject to obtaining felling licenses:
i) Clear fell of conifers including; Norway spruce in compartment 1k (approximately 110 trees) Sitka spruce in compartment 1j (approximately 1000 trees), lodgepole pine in compartment 1j (approximately 380 trees) (2025/2026):
ii) Thinning of beech in compartment 1k (approximately 30% thin of total of the named species present in an area of 3.40ha) & compartment 1e (approximately 25% thin of total beech in an area of 0.51ha) (2025/2026)

2) Optimise on potential areas for restructuring by adding species diversity and age complexity:
a) Standing dead trees to be left where it is safe and appropriate to do so- away from boundaries and paths (as appropriate)
b) Conduct enrichment planting where there is currently a single species dominant in the natural regeneration (i.e. beech) and/or where rhododendron has been removed:
i) the northeastern area of compartment 1g to help stabilise the bank and provide diversity other than ash (approximately. 100 trees)
ii) Compartment 1l where Rhododendron ponticum has been removed to ensure a mix of native species dominants in the area over excessive beech and conifers approximately 150 trees (by end of plan period)
c) Restock felled areas with native broadleaves and Scots pine as per approved felling license conditions. Planting in boundary areas (near powerlines, paths and roads) will be dominated with small trees and shrubs (including species such as hazel, hawthorn, elder, holly, bird cherry, birch and rowan). Scots pine can be planted out with falling distance of these areas – total of approximately 3000 trees (following the completion of the felling works)
d) Trail different methods of protection including reusing plastic tree shelters already present on site

(approximately 1,000), use of non-plastic tree tubes, high density planting, use brash for dead hedge corrals, fence small enclosures using chestnut paling

3) Ensure the establishment of planted areas:

a) Monitor natural regeneration and vitality of restocking and effectiveness of non-plastic protection methods (annually between felling completion and the end of the plan period)

b) Weed planted trees using herbicide spot spray (annually)

c) replacing any dead planted trees to ensure fulfilment of felling license conditions for compartments 1d, 1k, 1j and 1e (for minimum of 3 years following restocking)

d) Conduct herbivore impact assessment (HIA Lite method) to track the impact of deer browsing (2026 onwards)

i) Review updated report from NatureScot regarding DVCs and additional surveys in the local area (when available- expected 2025)

ii) Discuss areas of non-native species and deer and grey squirrel management with neighbouring landowners within Livingston and Broxburn, including West Lothian Council, to explore possibilities for a collaborative approach concerning monitoring and control of these species (ongoing)

4) Monitor the presence of invasive species and work towards their eradication on site:

a) Rhododendron removal in compartments 1l and 1k (small patches of regrowth scattered across 1.3ha area), digging out from the root where possible (i.e. due to size and distance from surrounding trees and sensitive flora) or by cutting and treating larger stumps with herbicide during winter (annually)

b) Japanese knotweed control in 1l through herbicide stem injection where possible (maximum 20 larger stems) and herbicide spot treatment for smaller regrowth from (conducted during July-September annually)

4.3 f3 Semi Natural Open Ground Habitat

Description

As of 2021, the open space across the whole site stood at approximately 9.64ha equivalent to 27.4% of the site's full size. This includes areas that have been previously felled and areas that have been left open for wayleaves and footpaths. Due to restocking, particularly to the east of the site, this figure will reduce over time as these trees become established. Nevertheless, a large proportion of the open space is located towards the centre of the site in compartments 1h and 1g (approximately 2.47ha). Large rides across the site have been left more open to accommodate the clearance space required for the power lines above. Whilst the percentage of the open space to the east of the site may fluctuate due to felling and restocking, sections of the west are likely to be retained as open semi-improved grassland due to numerous wayleaves present in this area.

As part of the Woodland Trust 'Trees For All' campaign, approximately, 3 hectares was planted between 2005-2009 with local primary schools. This has established pockets of trees and scrub interspersed throughout compartment 1g with a mix of species including ash, rowan downy birch, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple, holly, elder, willow, dogwood and Scots pine. Ground flora The open grassland of compartments 1g and 1h is dominated by grasses with thistles, rushes and nettles. Gorse also abundant and spreading at the east end by the water treatment works. as well as juncus in the wetter areas.

There are multiple small areas of water present on site including drainage ditches and a small redundant fire pond in compartment 1d. These small pockets of wetland habitat allow for floral and invertebrate diversity.

As part of reinstatement works following emergency gas operations in early 2021, wildflower seeds were sown in compartment 1b next to the tarmac track towards the east of the site.

These open areas contribute to the variety of habitats available on the site and will attract different species that require higher light levels than those that thrive in shaded areas under the tree canopy. Open ground is also essential foraging spaces for wildlife and provide habitat for species that require higher light-levels.

Significance

North Wood is important locally providing variety within the wider landscape and is included within the Bathgate Hills and River Avon Valley Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). This designation illustrates the sites' significance within the local landscape and the open ground is a visible feature of this site.

Open space and glades in the wood are important habitats, providing structural diversity and corresponding biodiversity, particularly for invertebrates. North Wood is the largest Woodland Trust site in Livingston and has the most areas of open ground that could benefit from significant improvement.

Opportunities & Constraints

Opportunities

To further increase biodiversity through varied open ground habitats, more resilient to exposure and climate change. For example, introducing mixed native flora species could be considered to improve diversity. Additional to the ecological benefit, the establishment of a variety of plant life will increase local amenity and encourage the community to value the area.

A mown path will enable more public access through this area, which will also help to reduce browsing pressure by deer and rabbits.

There is the opportunity to trial techniques on this site for enrichment planting of additional native ancient woodland species of ground flora that have minimal chance of arriving naturally.

Establishment of a hedge along the northern boundary will provide better connectivity for wildlife and a buffer that can help to absorb noise and pollutants from the road.

Opportunity to contribute to the West Lothian Local Biodiversity Action Plan (2025-2035) goals including but not limited to; A52- Partnership working to increase the area of man0made species-rich grassland created and managed by 10ha by 2035, A56- landowners/managers to assess condition of existing grasslands, A57- Landowners/managers to employ sustainable management practices to improve condition from baseline levels for grasslands, A68- Join up woodland fragments and improve connectivity between woodland habitats....including hedgerows, riparian woodland, scrub and habitat mosaics

opportunity to create/restore an important habitat in an increasingly developed area where large areas of species rich grasslands and scrub are often being lost through housing development.

opportunity to set up volunteer monitoring of key species on site such as botanical or invertebrate surveys

Constraints

Located under powerlines may result in the area being occasionally used by machinery for maintenance of the line which could cause ground compaction and disturbance in some areas.

Factors Causing Change

Deer browsing, squirrel and rabbit are all present and may contribute to potentially suppressing healthy growth of any hedge trees planted.

The continued development of the A89, M8 and surrounding housing will encourage an increased use of the area and subsequently impact on local air quality and tree health.

Natural regeneration from surrounding woodland and planting may encroach into the open space areas

Long term Objective (50 years+)

There will be a diversity of semi-natural non-woodland habitats across the site, providing both an interesting amenity landscape and a high biodiversity potential. Improvements should help towards support a variety of ground flora communities.

The system will be dynamic, with woodland cover and open ground being allowed to expand and contract over time in response to natural processes, providing that the overall value of the Key Features is maintained. Whilst woodland cover is expected to gradually expand in the long term through natural regeneration, at least 10% of the site is to be retained as open ground.

Species composition will be dominated by native species across all compartments and biodiversity will be safeguarded by controlling the spread of invasive non-native invasive species where practical.

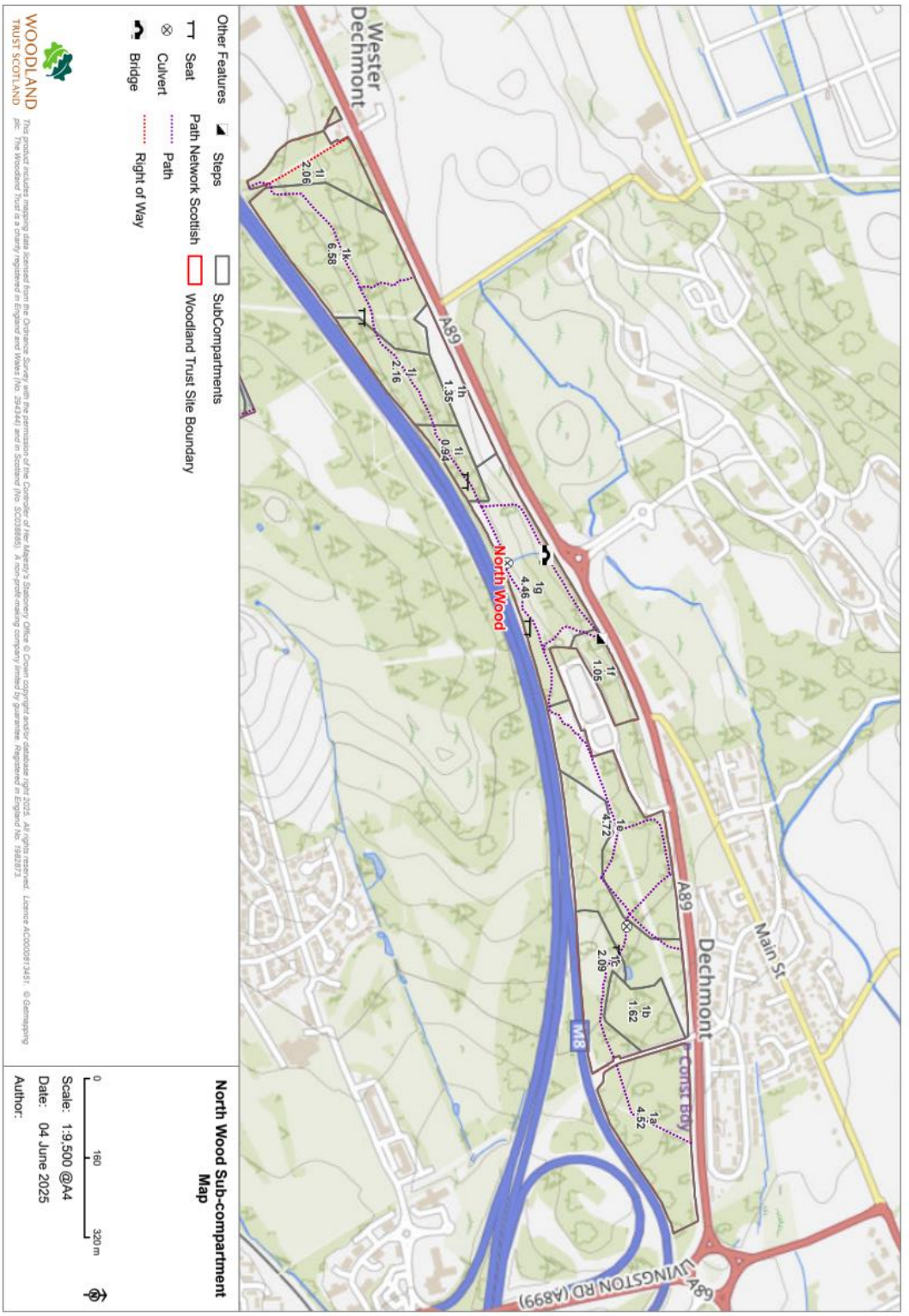
Short term management Objectives for the plan period (5 years)

The focus of the STOs for North Wood will be to improve biodiversity and resilience of non-woodland habitats through the following objectives:

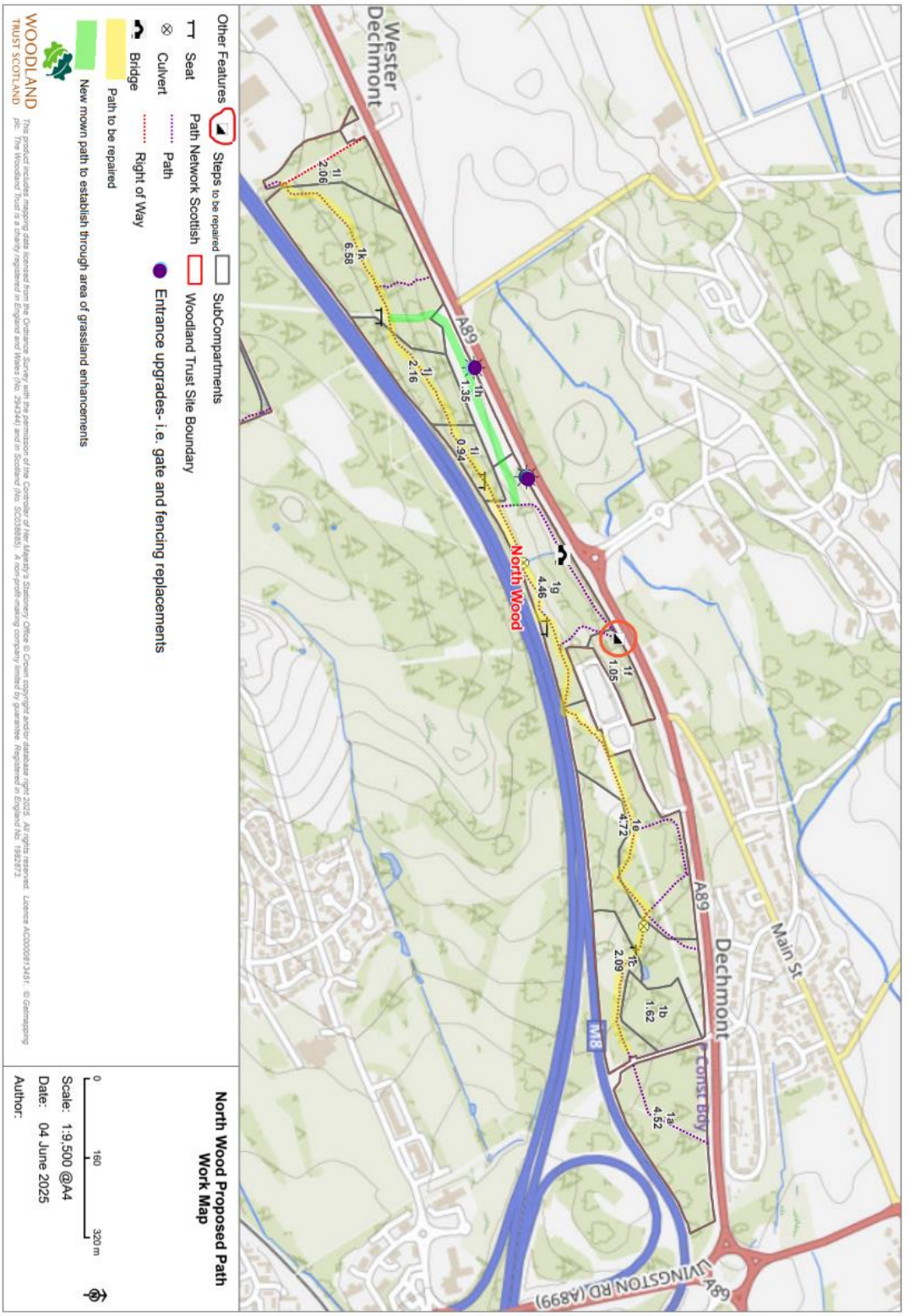
1) Maintain and develop biodiversity by:
a) Commissioning an ecological surveys to assess ground flora across the site in order to identify areas of high biodiversity/ key species and identify areas and/or specific species which may benefit from enrichment planting (2025)
b) Following the survey recommendations, prepare ground (possibly through scarifying or removal or topsoil) to encourage natural regeneration of more varied botanical species and utilise translocation of plug plants and additional sowing of Scottish-sourced and grown seed where enrichment planting is required (2026)
d) Mow wild flower glades once after flowering and continue to remove arisings to reduce soil nutrients (approximately 1ha annually)
e) Trial the use of scythes in selected areas (2027 onwards)
f) Monitor open ground for natural regeneration and vitality of and enrichment planting (annually 2026 onwards)

2) Improve habitat connectivity through:
a) hedge creation along northern boundary including hawthorn, holly, hazel, crab apple and dog rose (approximately 2000 trees over 330 linear meters) (2026/2027)
b) Install suitable protection for the hedgerow trees by using a double fence of rabbit netting (as soon as is practical following planting)
c) Assess establishment annually and replace trees where required (2028 onwards)

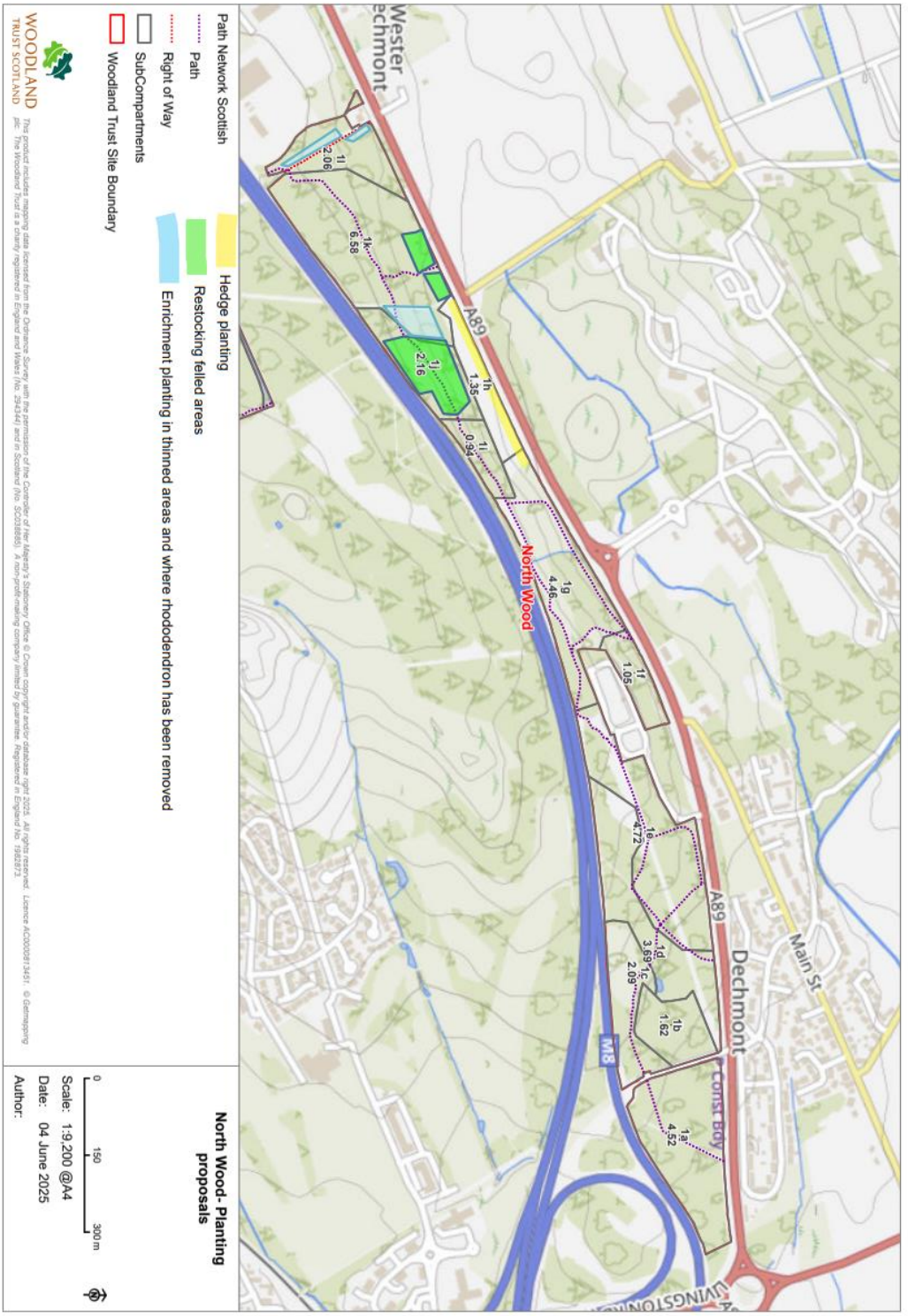
APPENDIX 1 : COMPARTMENT MAP



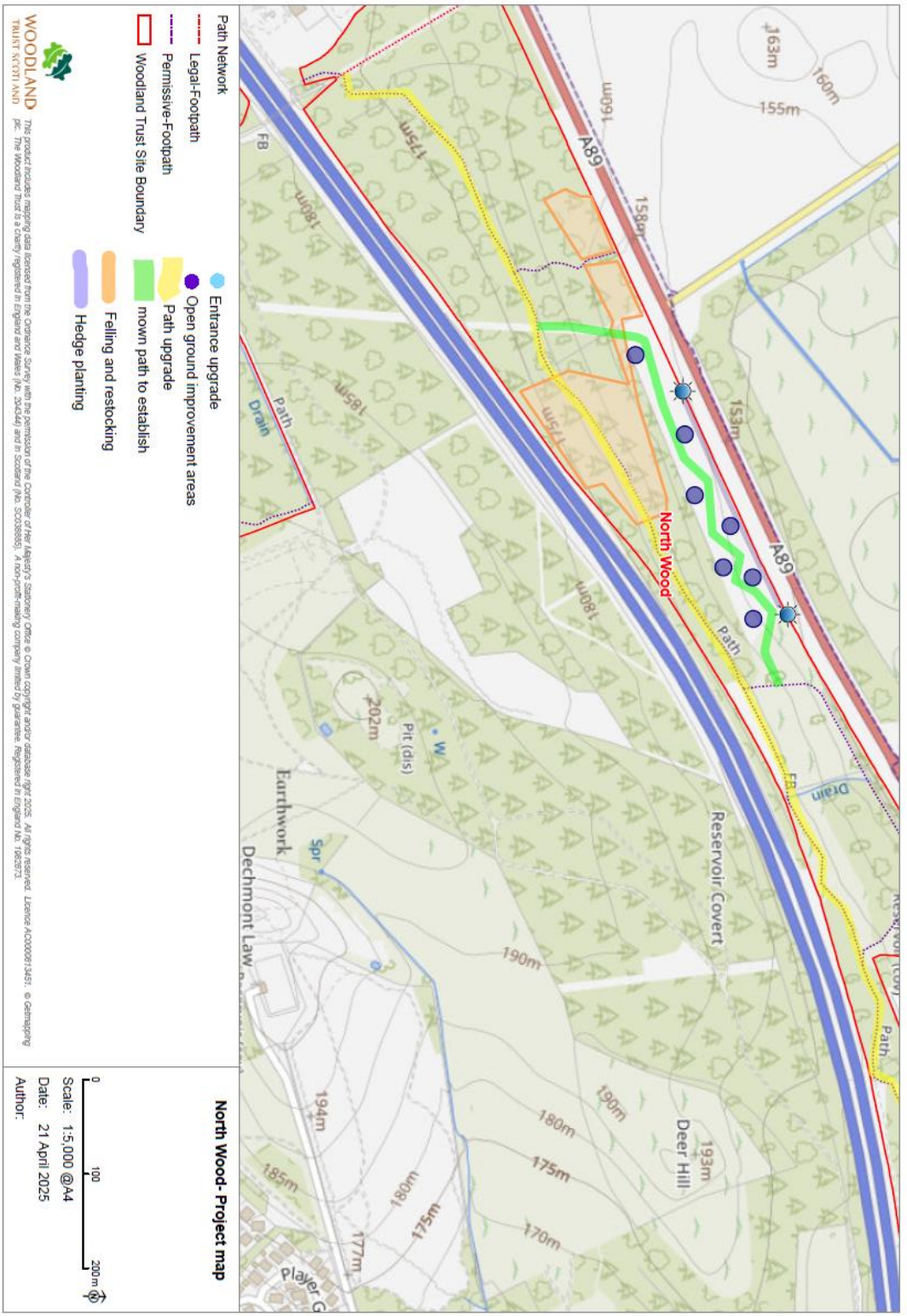
APPENDIX 2 : PROPOSED PATH WORKS MAP



APPENDIX 3 : PROPOSED TREE WORKS MAP- FELLING AND PLANTING



APPENDIX 4 : PROPOSED WORKS IN OPEN GROUND MAP-



APPENDIX 5 : HARVESTING TABLE (20 YEARS)

Compartment	Operation Type	Work Area (ha)	Forecast Year	Estimated Total Volume (m3)
1k	Clear Fell- (restructure of Norway spruce next to powerlines)	0.39	2025	210
1k	Thinning (beech)	0.51	2025	45
1j	Clear Fell- (restructure Sitka spruce, Scots pine and lodgepole pine beside motorway and paths)	1.25	2025	1100
1a	Hazel coppicing	0.15	2026	4
1e	Hazel coppicing	0.1	2028	4
1a	Thinning (Scots pine, sycamore, beech)	4.52	2031	190
1c	Thinning (Scots pine, Norway spruce, Sitka spruce, sycamore)	2.09	2031	100
1e	Clear fell (roadside larch, Sitka spruce, lodgepole pine next to M8/path/powerline)	1.25	2031	300
1a	Hazel coppicing	0.15	2031	4
1e	Hazel coppicing	0.1	2033	4
1a	Hazel coppicing	0.15	2036	4
1e	Hazel coppicing	0.1	2038	4
1d	Thin (beech, sycamore, grey alder)	3.69	2040	250
1k	Thinning (beech, Sitka spruce, sycamore and Scots pine)	6.58	2040	200
1i	Thinning (sycamore and Sitka spruce)	0.94	2040	200
1a	Thinning (Scots pine, sycamore, beech)	4.52	2041	190
1c	Thinning (Scots pine, Norway spruce, Sitka spruce, sycamore)	2.09	2041	100
1e	Clear fell (roadside larch, Sitka spruce, lodgepole pine next to M8/path/powerline)	1.25	2041	300
1a	Hazel coppicing	0.15	2041	4
1e	Hazel coppicing	0.1	2043	4

APPENDIX 6 : COMPARTMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
1a	4.52	Mixed native broadleaves	1970	Wood establishment	Services & wayleaves, Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site,	Area of Landscape Value
The southwest of this compartment was clear felled in 1999/2000 and replanted with mixed broadleaves and Scots pine in 2001. This area is now well-established with species including sessile oak, ash, silver birch, Scots pine, wild cherry, hazel and hawthorn. The western boundary of this compartment includes multiple mature beech trees, and a stand of mature, thinned Scots pine. The northern boundary of this compartment borders the A89. Previously this area was dominated by Sitka spruce, Norway spruce and sycamore. Felling works in 2015/2016 opened up this woodland from the north side and were planted with mixed native broadleaf species in 2015/2016. Strips of mature Sitka and Norway spruce remain bordering main roads to the east and south with woodland to the west. Sycamore remains the dominant species naturally regenerating with hawthorn, beech, elder, ash and rowan also present. A band of semi mature sycamore with occasional beech to the west of path as well as to the south with the narrow strip along the southern boundary of compartment one with the slip road off the M8. Ground flora of soft grasses, broad buckler fern, brambles and rosebay willowherb were light allows. Honeysuckle is also present in some areas. Deadwood levels are adequate throughout made up of branch wood from previous felling works and occasional deadwood in the crowns of older trees and windblown sycamore. There is approximately 1km of soft mown footpath running through this compartment with an open entrance to the south west and a fenced entrance with a squeeze gap to the north.						
1b	1.6	Mixed native broadleaves	2016	Wood establishment	Services & wayleaves	Area of Landscape Value
Upon acquisition, this area was occupied by stands of Sitka and Norway spruce, with occasional lodgepole and Scots pine. These stands had tall drawn stems with small crowns following a prolonged period before being thinned. New native broadleaf planting occurred 2015/2016 following clear fell operation. Tree species now (2025) present in the area includes aspen, rowan, silver birch, Scots pine, crab apple, holly, oak, bird cherry and hazel. Non-native conifer regeneration is also present in this area. Ground flora consists mainly of brambles, wild raspberry, rosebay willow herb and broad buckler fern. Occasional deadwood throughout following previous felling works.						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
A gas pipeline runs underground along the eastern edge of this compartment. This area was dug up during emergency works in early 2021 and reseeded with mixed grass and native wildflowers. As of 2025, this area is dominated by grasses.						
1c	1.78	Scots pine	1970	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves	Area of Landscape Value
The east of this compartment is dominated by stands of mature thinned Scots pine. Moving west, Norway spruce becomes more dominant with occasional lodgepole pine, Sitka spruce, sycamore and hornbeam. Understorey in most of these stands in good with occasional rowan, birch, sycamore and hawthorn. Ground flora includes, ferns and rosebay willow herb with abundant bramble throughout. There are some fire damaged trees, especially in the eastern most stand. The start of the linear footpath route begins in this compartment and there is a bench present within this compartment.						
1d	4.66	Ash	1970	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves	Area of Landscape Value
Upon acquisition, this area was comprised of numerous single species blocks of planting containing sycamore, ash and alder. To the south towards the M8 there is a border of mature conifers and moving north there are rows of beech. In 2020 the ash suffered significantly from ADB which was felled for safety in 2022. This allowed for the introduction of more diverse and mixed planting including downy birch, rowan, alder, bird cherry and crab apple. Tree regeneration is also present in the understorey including ash, sycamore, beech, and elder. Ground flora includes bramble, soft grasses, dog rose, wild raspberry and rosebay willow herb. Deadwood in the area has increased following the felling operations with piles of ash branches scattered throughout. There is a small pond within the sub-compartment, towards the eastern end of the main block located away from the path. A picnic bench also located beside the path within this sub compartment. This compartment is also bisected by a wayleave running east/west occupied by a SPEN overhead lines, leaving area of open ground.						
1e	4.07	Mixed conifers	1970	Wood establishment	Services & wayleaves	

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
						Area of Landscape Value
Mixed stands of Lodgepole pine, larch, Sitka spruce and Scots pine. Mixed broadleaves planted in 2002 comprising of ash, sessile oak, Scots pine, rowan, aspen, hawthorn and hazel to replace a stand of larch and lodgepole pine windblow cleared in 2001 - a few of these remain along the northern boundary. Whilst areas under dense Sitka spruce remain bare, elsewhere ground flora consists of abundant bramble, elder and honeysuckle and occasional hawthorn, holly, alder and regeneration of ash and sycamore. Soft grasses, with ferns and rosebay willow herb. Deadwood is present throughout the compartment from previous felling operations as well as windblow and declining ash. The water treatment facility is situated to the northwest of this compartment outside of the Woodland Trust boundary.						
1f	0.99	Mixed native broadleaves	1970	High forest	Services & wayleaves, very steep slope/cliff/quarry/mine shaft/sink holes etc, No/poor vehicular access within the site	Area of Landscape Value
This compartment includes the disused quarry that is fenced off to the east and the west for public safety. There are no footpaths or entrances to this compartment. The water treatment facility is situated immediately to the south of this compartment outside of the Woodland Trust boundary. Species present include Scots pine, beech, hazel, elm, birch, ash, hawthorn, larch, holly, sycamore, with gorse present in the understorey. Good levels of standing and fallen deadwood throughout.						
1g	4.25	Mixed native broadleaves	2009	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Area of Landscape Value
Originally part of the semi-improved grazing field, 3ha has now been planted between 2005-2009 under the Tree for All campaign with a mix of Sessile oak, ash, wild cherry, rowan downy birch, hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple, holly, elder, willow, dogwood and Scots pine. SPEN conduct vegetation removal in proximity to the overhead powerlines. Ground flora dominated by grasses with thistles, rushes and nettles. Gorse also abundant and spreading at the east end by the water treatment works.						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
Wayleaves for two water pipes and two overhead powerlines also run through the compartment. The footpaths within this compartment are unsurfaced and uneven in some places and include a wide bridge and steps to the north. The former 'North Wood' letters were installed within the west of this compartment. This compartment occasionally suffers from anti-social behaviour with fires in the scrub and open ground areas. To the south of this compartment there is a surfaced path. Following an informal, unsurfaced path from this track up a hill, closer the southern boundary of this compartment, there is a bench has been installed on the hilltop (2023) with views northward towards the Bangour village (former hospital) area. An unsurfaced path also links from the main track southwards to the entrance with steps next to the A89. This mown path travels westwards and includes crossing a large sleeper bridge. A drystone dyke also borders the deep drainage ditch that runs south to north through the centre of the site.						
1h	1.54	Open ground	1970	Non-wood habitat	Services & wayleaves, Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site,	Area of Landscape Value
Semi improved grassland with juncus, thistles and nettles with wetter pockets particularly to the west. There are two wayleaves for water pipeline and overhead power lines that run through the compartment restricting the options for additional planting in this area. This is the only large area of open ground habitat in this woodland site. There are no footpaths through this compartment.						
1i	1.25	Sycamore	1970	High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site,	Area of Landscape Value
Good levels of deadwood throughout made up of partially mulched material following clear fell in 1999/2000. Occasional windblow is also present. The current composition is dominated by Sycamore with high densities of beech to the south. Mixed broadleaves (sessile oak, ash, silver birch, wild cherry, hazel and hawthorn) and Scots pine were planted in 2001. However, these species are confined to the northern western edge bordering compartment 1h and have not become established throughout the rest of 1i. Due to threat of rabbit browsing, trees were planted in tubes which require removal as the trees have become established. The regeneration is dominated by sycamore with occasional Sitka spruce, elder and holly and individual conifers present in the understorey. Ground flora of soft grasses, dominated by brambles, ferns and mosses. There is also small pool of water just north of the path towards the centre of this compartment which may be fed from drain water off the motorway.						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
The path throughout this compartment is a hard surface that would benefit from the installation of cross drains in some areas. There is also a bench positioned on the higher ground to the south of the main track towards the east of the compartment.						
1j	1.99	Mixed conifers	2016	Wood establishment	Services & wayleaves, Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site,	Area of Landscape Value
To the south of this compartment there are stands of semi-mature Scots pine and poor semi mature lodgepole pine, thinned in 2006. Moving northwards, the canopy composition is dominated by mature Norway and Sitka spruce, thinned in 2004. Native species can be found following along the northern boundary of this compartment with a mature hedgerow of hawthorn located to the east of the drystone dyke. Additional mixed broadleaves including sessile oak, ash, silver birch, hazel and Scots pine were also planted in this area during 2001. The tubes for these trees now require removal before the end of the plan period. Regeneration includes beech, sycamore, elder, rowan and ash. Heavy shading caused by dense non-native conifer canopies has resulted in limited ground flora of mosses and ferns. Deadwood includes standing and fallen deadwood as well as windblow and branch wood left following previous thinning.						
1k	6.86	Beech	1970	High forest	Services & wayleaves, Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site,	Area of Landscape Value
There is access to this compartment from the A89 with an entrance to the north including timber fencing and ladder board. There is a wide soft surface track that mown and leads from this entrance uphill to meet with the main linear path. There is room for two parked cars between this fencing and the pavement. The number of different species present within this compartment is deceptive as the planting from the 1970s has resulted in multiple mono-species blocks rather than a significant mix. To the north there are some remnants of the mature hawthorn hedgerow in front of a strip of Norway spruce with blocks of beech, Scots pine and sycamore moving to the south. This was previously groups of ash- however this was felled due to ADB in 2022. This area has since been planted with mixed native species (2023). The southern boundary next to the M8 was replanted in 2001 with native mixed broadleaves; ash, sessile oak, rowan, aspen, hawthorn, hazel Scots pine. This was to replace the stand of mature Sitka and Norway spruce that was felled in 2000 to allow for restructuring. Dominant regenerating species are beech, sycamore and ash with occasional elder, holly, elm, rowan and goat willow also present in the understorey. Rhododendron ponticum present in small pockets to the south. Ground flora						

Cpt No.	Area (ha)	Main Species	Year	Management Regime	Major Management Constraints	Designations
of raspberry, patchy soft grasses, ferns and tormentil with mosses and lichen also present. Good levels of fallen deadwood, mainly remnants from early thinning operations, ash clear fell and standing dead and some recent windblow. To the east of this compartment a drystone dyke runs north from the path down to meet the boundary with compartments 1h and 1j. Beech is the dominant species east of the dyke with minimal understorey beneath and instances of wind blow present. A strip of open ground runs from the southwest corner of compartment 1h continuing southwest to the west edge of 1j. A picnic bench is located beside the path within this open corridor.						
1l	1.73	Mixed broadleaves		High forest	Housing/infrastructure, structures & water features on or adjacent to site, Services & wayleaves, People issues (+tve & -tve)	Area of Landscape Value
There are two entrances to this compartment identified with ladder boards either side of a tarmac track with streetlights that runs through the centre of this compartment from north to south following the Nell path network into Deans wood south of the M8. There has been issues with unauthorised vehicle access into this area for timber theft previously. Access is managed to the north of this compartment with a located metal vehicle barrier and timber fencing with a pedestrian gap to allow for appropriate visitor access. Stand of mature broadleaves, dominated by sycamore, beech, ash, pedunculate oak, particularly to the west with occasional lime and horse chestnut to the northeast. Other species present include such as holly, hazel, rowan, ash, birch, Scots pine and hawthorn. The understorey previously included frequent rhododendron ponticum either side of the tarmac track and Japanese knotweed was also identified in the far northwest of this compartment. Work to eradicate these invasives has been undertaken since 2021 and monitored annually for regrowth. Ground flora of soft grasses, nettles and ferns as well as ivy present in the southwestern corner. Good level of fallen deadwood with occasional dead wood in the canopy.						

GLOSSARY

Ancient Woodland
Ancient woods are defined as those where there has been continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD. In Scotland ancient woods are defined strictly as sites shown as semi-natural woodland on the 'Roy' maps (a military survey carried out in 1750 AD, which is the best source of historical map evidence) and as woodland all subsequent maps. However, they have been combined with long-established woods of semi-natural origin (originating from between 1750 and 1860) into a single category of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland to take account of uncertainties in their identification. Ancient woods include Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland and plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (see below). May support many species that are only found in ancient woodland.

Ancient Semi - Natural Woodland
Stands in ancient woods defined as those consisting predominantly of native trees and shrubs that have not obviously been planted, which have arisen from natural regeneration or coppice regrowth.

Ancient Woodland Site
Stands in ancient woods that have been converted to plantations, of coniferous, broadleaved or mixed species, usually for timber production, including plantations of native species planted so closely together that any semi-natural elements of the understorey have been suppressed.

Beating Up
Replacing any newly planted trees that have died in the first few years after planting.

Broadleaf
A tree having broad leaves (such as oak) rather than needles found on conifers (such as Scots pine).

Canopy
The uppermost layer of vegetation in a woodland, or the upper foliage and branches of an individual tree.

Clearfell
Felling of all trees within a defined area.

Compartment
Permanent management division of a woodland, usually defined on site by permanent features such as roads. See Sub-compartments.

Conifer
A tree having needles, rather than broadleaves, and typically bearing cones.

Continuous Cover forestry
A term used for managing woods to ensure that there are groups or individual trees of different ages scattered over the whole wood and that some mature tree cover is always maintained. Management is by repeated thinning and no large areas are ever completely felled all at once.

Coppice
Trees which are cut back to ground levels at regular intervals (3-25 years).

Exotic (non-native) Species
Species originating from other countries (or other parts of the UK) that have been introduced by humans, deliberately or accidentally.

Field Layer
Layer of small, non-woody herbaceous plants such as bluebells.

Group Fell
The felling of a small group of trees, often to promote natural regeneration or allow planting.

Long Term Retention
Discrete groups of trees (or in some cases single trees) that are retained significantly past their economic felling age. Operations may still be carried out within them and thinning is often necessary to maintain stability.

Minimum Intervention
Areas where no operations (such as thinning) will take place other than to protect public safety or possibly to control invasive exotic species.

Mixed Woodland
Woodland made up of broadleaved and coniferous trees.

National vegetation classification (NVC)
A classification scheme that allows an area of vegetation to be assigned to the standardised type that best matches the combination of plant species that it contains. All woodlands in the UK can be described as being one of 18 main woodland types (W1 - W18), which principally reflect soil and climatic conditions. For example, Upland Oakwoods are type W11, and normally occur on well drained infertile soils in the cooler and wetter north and west of Britain. Each main type can be subdivided into numerous subtypes. Most real woods contain more than one type or sub-type and inevitably some woods are intermediate in character and can't be properly described by any sub type.

Native Species
Species that arrived in Britain without human assistance.

Natural Regeneration
Naturally grown trees from seeds falling from mature trees. Also regeneration from coppicing and suckering.

Origin & Provenance
The provenance of a tree or seed is the place where seed was collected to grow the tree or plant. The origin is the geographical location within the natural range of a species from where seeds/tree originally derives. Thus an acorn collected from a Turkey oak in Edinburgh would have an Edinburgh provenance and a southern European origin.

Re-Stocking
Re-planting an area of woodland, after it has been felled.

Shrub Layer
Formed by woody plants 1-10m tall.

Silviculture

The growing and care of trees in woodlands.

Stand
Trees of one type or species, grouped together within a woodland.

Sub-Compartment
Temporary management division of a compartment, which may change between management plan periods.

Thinning
The felling of a proportion of individual trees within a given area. The remaining trees grow to fill in the space created.

Tubex or Grow or Tuley Tubes
Tubes placed over newly planted trees or natural regeneration that promote growth and provide protection from animals such as rabbits and deer.

Weeding
The control of vegetation immediately around newly planted trees or natural regeneration to promote tree growth until they become established.

Windblow/Windthrow
Trees or groups of trees blown over (usually uprooted) by strong winds and gales.

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