3.8 Site 8. Scotch Hill Woodland, Taverham

Photographs

Key Facts

3.8.1 Size of the Site: 1.66ha

3.8.2 Habitats present: **Other woodland; mixed**

3.8.3 Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas, County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Roadside Nature Reserves, Priority Habitats, Statutory Designated Sites present on site? **Strategic Area. Area that Could become of Particular Importance for Biodiversity in LNRS. Tree Preservation Order (woodland Order). Priority Habitat woodland.**

3.8.4 Recommended habitat measures in LNRS: **restore and enhance existing deciduous and coniferous woodlands.**

Baseline Habitat Description and BNG Calculation

3.8.5 The Site comprises a public woodland surrounded by residential housing. The woodland slopes down from north to south and is mixed coniferous and deciduous with approximately 25% Norway spruce *Picea abies*, many of which are in decline and along the northern boundary of the western 'leg' of the woodland.

3.8.6 There were some notable large mature oaks which were older than the other woodland trees with two such individuals noted in the western leg of the woodland. The majority of the woodland dates to approximately the mid to late 1800s[11].

3.8.7 In addition to the Norway spruce, the canopy layer includes frequent oak, occasional sweet chestnut, sycamore and silver birch and rare aspen *Populus tremula*. The understory was comprised of a wide variety of both native and non-native shrubs. Natives included frequent holly and hazel, occasional field maple, hawthorn, rowan and silver birch and rare yew and wild cherry. Non-natives included cotoneaster, Lawson cypress *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*, and Norway maple. Invasive cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* was also present.

3.8.8 The field layer was dense in the western 'leg' of the woodland but sparse in the remaining areas of woodland due to dense holly stands and high recreational usage in some parts. Variegated yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon argentatum,* an invasive species and listed under Schedule 9 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) was present in several patches in the western 'leg' of the Site.

3.8.9 The woodland was assessed to be in **moderate condition** overall and had the potential to achieve good condition over time or potentially be upgraded to a high distinctiveness lowland mixed deciduous woodland if the proportion of Norway spruce is reduced.

3.8.10 In total, the habitats on Site represent **13.31 Habitat Units** as shown in Table 13 below.

Table 13. Baseline BNG Calculation for Habitats

Habitat	Area (hectares)	Ecological Distinctiveness	Condition	Habitat Units (HU)
Other woodland; mixed	1.66	Medium	Moderate	13.31
Total	**1.66**			**13.31**

3.8.11 A map of the baseline habitats is provided in Figure 8, Appendix 1.

Proposed Biodiversity Enhancements

- Reduce proportion of Norway spruce to less than 20% cover by implementing a species specific felling regime;
- Remove non-native and invasive cherry laurel and variegated yellow archangel;
- Thin out dense holly stands;
- Encourage regeneration of native tree species;
- Create new log piles; and

[11] Norwich Fringe Project. (Draft Version July 2016). Scotch Hill – 10 Year Management Plan 2016-2026.

- Install five bird boxes and five bat boxes.

Specification of Management Actions

3.8.12 Proposed biodiversity enhancements are shown on Figure 8, Appendix 2.

Norway Spruce:

- To achieve lowland mixed deciduous woodland UKHab classification, the canopy cover of Norway spruce within the woodland needs to be less than 20%. A gradual phased felling programme will therefore be implemented to reduce the proportion of Norway spruce and seek to encourage natural regeneration of native broadleaved species. Felling should target dead/dying spruce first and deadwood can be used to create log piles elsewhere in the woodland. A 30% thin of the spruce can be undertaken in year one followed by a further 20% being removed in year five. Tree felling will likely require a **felling licence** from the Forestry Commission and/or TPO approval. Tree felling will take place during September-mid February to avoid the bird nesting season.

Invasive Species:

- A small number of cherry laurel shrubs were observed in the woodland. These will be removed using a chainsaw/hand held saw and poisoning the stump to prevent regeneration. Non-native variegated yellow archangel patches in the western 'leg' of the woodland will also be removed by targeted herbicide applications. Checks for three years following removal/herbicide application will be undertaken to check and treat any regrowth.

Holly:

- Thin dense holly stands by selectively removing 50% of individual hollies to allow more light penetration to the field layer and encourage ground flora. Holly removal will take place during September-mid February to avoid the bird nesting season.
- Protect new native broadleaf regeneration from browsing with brash/dead hedging/removed holly surrounding saplings.

Woodpiles:

- Create 10 new woodpiles within the woodland. Each woodpile should be a minimum of 2m length x 2m width x 1m height and located in both cool shaded areas in the woodland and at the woodland edge to create a variety of microclimates. A variety of large, medium and small diameter logs in the pile should be used as well as bark, dead leaves and twigs to create a 'holey' but closely interwoven structure that can be left in perpetuity to rot down.

Bird and bat boxes:

- Five bird boxes and five bat boxes will be installed on suitable trees as per the guidance in Appendix 3.

Five Year Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

3.8.13 Following the management specification and guidance above, the Table below provides the timing of management actions over 5 years.

Habitat	Management Action and Timing				
	2025/2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Other woodland; mixed	Selectively fell 30% of Norway spruce in woodland. Remove non-native cherry laurel and variegated yellow archangel. Create 5 new woodpiles.	Inspect cherry laurel and variegated yellow archangel and remedy any regrowth. Thin dense holly stands.	Inspect cherry laurel and variegated yellow archangel and remedy any regrowth.	Inspect cherry laurel and variegated yellow archangel and remedy any regrowth. Thin dense holly stands.	Selectively fell 20% of Norway spruce in woodland. Create 5 new woodpiles.
Bird and bat boxes	Install 5 bird boxes and 5 bat boxes on trees.	Check bird and bat boxes remain securely fixed.	Check bird and bat boxes remain securely fixed.	Check bird and bat boxes remain securely fixed.	Check bird and bat boxes remain securely fixed.

Annual Monitoring Checklist

3.8.14 The checklist below is devised as a quick annual check to be carried out and completed by the responsible Community Asset Manager to ensure that the recommended enhancements measures above have taken place. The items in the checklist below have been replicated in a separate Annual Monitoring excel spreadsheet for ease of completion.

Annual Monitoring Checklist for Scotch Hill Wood, Taverham

Habitat	Management Action	Tick relevant column if completed				
		2025/2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Other woodland; mixed	Norway spruce removal undertaken in 2025/26 and 2030?					
	Dense holly areas thinned?					
	Invasive species removed and monitored?					
	Woodpiles created, minimum 10?					
Bird and bat boxes	Installed?					
	Annually checked to make sure still safely secured to tree?					

Post-enhancement BNG Calculation and Map

3.8.17 The proposed enhancements will produce a BNG uplift of **21.07%** in Habitat Units over **10+ years**. This is solely derived from the woodland enhancement measures and changing of the woodland habitat from mixed coniferous and deciduous woodland to Priority Habitat lowland mixed deciduous woodland.