Woodland Management Plan

|  |
| --- |
| To be completed by the plan author: |
| Woodland or Property name | Horner Wood |
| Woodland Management Plan case reference |  |
| **The landowner agrees this plan as a statement of intent for the woodland** | **Yes** |
| Plan author name | Matt Taylor |

|  |
| --- |
| For FC Use only: |
| **Plan Period** *(dd/mm/yyyy - Ten years)* | **Approval Date:** | **1/1/2023** | **Approved until:** | **31/12/2032** |
| **Five Year Review Date** | **31/12/2027** |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Revision No.** | **Date** | **Status (draft/final)** | **Reason for Revision** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Template user support:**

The functionality in this version of the management plan template has been downgraded to ensure compatibility with Word 2003. This document is not protected and as such rows can be added & deleted or copied and pasted from tables where needed.

UK Forestry Standard management planning criteria

Approval of this plan will be considered against the following UKFS criteria.

Prior to submission review your plan against the criteria using the check list below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **UKFS management plan criteria** | **Minimum approval requirements** | **Author check 🗹** |
| 1 | **Plan Objectives:**Forest management plans should state the objectives of management and set out how an appropriate balance between social, economic, and environmental objectives will be achieved. | * Management plan objectives are stated.
* Consideration is given to environmental, economic and social objectives relevant to the vision for the woodland.
 | Yes |
| 2 | **Forest context and important features in management strategy:**Forest management plans should address the forest context and the forest potential and demonstrate how the relevant interests and issues have been considered and addressed. | Management intentions communicated in ***Sect. 6*** of the management plan are in line with stated objective(s) ***Sect. 2***. Management intentions should take account of:* Relevant features and issues identified within the woodland survey (***Sect. 4***)
* Any potential threats to and opportunities for the woodland, as identified under woodland protection (***Sect. 5***).
* Relevant comments received from stakeholder engagement and documented in ***Sect. 7***.
 | Yes |
| 3 | **Identification of designations within and surrounding the site:**For designated areas, e.g. National Parks or SSSI, particular account should be taken of landscape and other sensitivities in the design of forests and forest infrastructure. | * Survey information (***Sect. 4***) identifies any designations that impact on woodland management.
* Management intentions (***Sect. 6***) have taken account of any designations.
 | Yes |
| 4 | **Felling and restocking to improve forest structure and diversity:**When planning felling and restocking, the design of existing forests should be re-assessed and any necessary changes made so that they meet UKFS requirements.Forests should be designed to achieve a diverse structure of habitat, species and ages of trees, appropriate to the scale and context.Forests characterised by a lack of diversity, due to extensive areas of even-aged trees, should be progressively restructured to achieve age class range. | * Felling and restocking proposals are consistent with UKFS design principles (for example scale and adjacency).
* Current diversity (structure, species, age structure) of the woodland has been identified through the survey (***Sect. 4***).
* Management intentions aim to improve / maintain current diversity (structure, species, and ages of trees).
 | Yes |
| 5 | **Consultation:**Consultation on forest management plans and proposals should be carried out according to forestry authority procedures and, where required, the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. | * Stakeholder engagement is in line with current FC guidance and recorded in ***Sect. 7***. The minimum requirement is for statutory consultation to take place, and this will be carried out by the Forestry Commission.
* Plan authors undertake stakeholder engagement (ref FC Ops Note 35) relevant to the context and setting of the woodland.
 | Yes |
| 6 | **Plan Update and Review:**Management of the forest should conform to the plan, and the plan should be updated to ensure it is current and relevant. | * A 5 year review period is stated on the 1st page of the plan.
* ***Sect. 8*** is completed with 1 indicator of success per management objective.
 | Yes |

Section 1: Property Details

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Woodland Property Name | Horner Wood |
| Name | Robert Manicom | Owner  | National Trust |
| Email | Robert.Manicom@nationaltrust.org.uk | Contact Number | 01643 863906 |
| Agent Name  | Matt Taylor |
| Email | forestandland@gmail.com | Contact Number | 07814 571174 |
| County | Somerset | Local Authority | Somerset |
| Grid Reference | SS890440 | Single Business Identifier  | 106327021 |
| What is the total area of this woodland management plan? (In hectares) | 354.57 |
| You have included an Inventory and Plan of Operations with this woodland management plan? | Yes |
| You have listed the maps associated with this woodland management plan? | 1. Compartments and Woodland Type
2. Activity and Work Phase
3. Long Term Activity
4. Ancient Woodlands and Veteran Trees
5. Statutory Designations
6. Sensitivities and Issues
 |
| Do you intend to use the information within this woodland management plan and associated Inventory and Plan of Operations to apply for the following? | Felling Licence  | Yes |
| Thinning Licence  | Yes |
| You declare that there is management control of the woodland detailed within the woodland management plan? | Yes |  |
| You agree to make the woodland management plan publicly available? | Yes |  |

Section 2: Vision and Objectives

2.1 Vision

|  |
| --- |
| The National Trust is committed to managing our woodland estate in conformance with the requirements of the UKWAS standard and we intend to protect and maintain the woodlands and their ecological integrity in the long term. We aim to protect those things that make our land special, as well as making sure it is economically viable. As a minimum, our land should be classified as being in good condition (through our Land Condition Assessments). And then we want to nurture our land to be brilliant, using our six functions of land as our guide. Ideally, we will be making improvements across all functions, avoiding situations in which success in one land function compromises the minimum standards in another.**The six functions of land – Our Vision***Healthy-* Healthy and robust soils, water, carbon, ecological processes - with properly functioning fundamental processes. We work beyond our boundaries and with partners*Rich in wildlife* **–** Our habitats are ‘better, bigger, and more joined up’ creating the right conditions for wildlife to flourish, ensuring their future survival*Beautiful*- We understand what is unique, distinctive and cherished about our land (its ‘Spirit of Place’), and protect and enhance these qualities*Enjoyable* – Our land is accessible and welcoming. We encourage a whole range of visitors and local people to enjoy our land by creating facilities, interpretation, and events*Rich in culture* **–** We recognise and protect our land’s cultural significance where it reveals layers of the past, or where it is an important setting for contemporary life*Productive* - Our land continues to provide for us because it’s managed in a way that’s sustainable***Our 50 Year Vision for Horner Wood.***Horner Wood is now a dynamic self-sustaining broadleaf high forest. A flourishing ecosystem now free to expand blurring the transition into surrounding habitats and providing a future for species such a tree lungwort and pied flycatcher. Storm events, natural tree senescence and targeted interventions have created canopy gaps and the woodland is naturally regenerating, with sufficient seedlings and saplings to sustain long term woodland cover and carbon storage.  Deer and grey squirrel numbers are carefully managed to ensure a mix of healthy young and old trees. Locally native and naturalised trees of all ages make up the canopy and shrub layer and there is an abundance of fallen deadwood providing homes for invertebrates, fungi and other woodland species. The woodland no longer contains any rhododendron or other invasive alien species with a diverse woody species composition maximising resistance to pests, diseases and a changing climate. Horner’s ancient trees are known and valued for their cultural significance as well as their wildlife value. A sensitive management programme has been put in place to sustain them and is now providing excellent habitat for flourishing lichen and deadwood invertebrate communities. The diversity of veteran tree features including damaged trees support healthy populations of rare bat species including Barbastelle and Bechstein’s bat and healthy woodland bird populations that are expanding their ranges into neighbouring woods on the Estate and beyond.  The young areas of wood pasture, well-lit woodland margins and glade network created since the 2010s, have developed into high quality habitat into which species such as Heath Fritillary have now colonised.  Following the successful delivery of catchment and wetland focussed projects, beavers have now re-colonised Horner Wood transforming the wooded valleys by re-wetting and re-connecting the river to the floodplain creating expansive areas of wet and flooded woodland. Providing benefit for biodiversity but also contributing to the reduction in flood risk in the villages downstream and boosting carbon storage. There is periodic light grazing through the woodland by sheep, cattle, ponies and deer which helps maintain open glades and a varied ground and field layer but is not preventing tree regeneration.  The wider woodland network on the Holnicote Estate is being managed to both provide wood fuel and timber products for local use and the open habitats, rides and diverse structure complements the woodland within the NNR:  these woodlands now support populations of nightjar and heath fritillary that have expanded from the NNR. Horner Wood is widely recognised as an exemplar nature destination where people can immerse themselves in a vibrant, temperate rainforest governed by natural processes that has become a model for managing for nature and the ‘go to’ reference and aspiration for woodland managers. |

2.2 Management Objectives

| **No.** | **Objectives**  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Increase opportunities for our local wildlife and safeguard the woodland features that sustain the key species and assemblages found within, or associated with, the priority woodland habitats. |
| 2 | Slow the flow of water across our land, improve water quality and protect soils |
| 3 | Reduce our carbon footprint |
| 4 | Maintain the site’s visual amenity and give our visitors a great experience |
| 5 | Protect and enhance the site’s cultural heritage |
| 6 | Contribute to the local economy |
| 7 | Protect the health and safety of our visitors, staff and contractors |

Section 3: Plan Review – Achievements

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Objectives** | **Achievement** |
| 1. Increase opportunities for our local wildlife and safeguard the woodland features that sustain the key species and assemblages found within, or associated with, the priority woodland habitats.
 |  |
| 1. Slow the flow of water across our land and improve water quality and protect soils
 |  |
| 1. Reduce our carbon footprint
 |  |
| 1. Maintain the site’s visual amenity and give our visitors a great experience.
 |  |
| 1. Protect and enhance the site’s cultural heritage.
 |  |
| 1. Contribute to the local economy
 |  |
| 1. To protect health and safety of visitors, staff and contractors
 |  |

Section 4: Woodland Survey

4.1 Description

|  |
| --- |
| Dunkery and Horner Wood NNR comprise 355ha of the National Trust’s Holnicote Estate in Somerset. The NNR lies on the north eastern edge of Exmoor, and is included within the boundaries of Exmoor National Park. The town of Minehead lies 7 km to the east and the village of Porlock 4 km to the west. The nearest villages are Horner and Luccombe both accessed via minor roads from the A39 and Wheddon Cross to the south. The site is managed by the National Trust from the Holnicote Estate Office near Selworthy. The Countryside Team headed up by the Countryside Manager has principal responsibility for the site with ultimate responsibility resting with the GeneralManager. The direction of the NNR is influenced by the wider properties evolving approach to catchment management and the Riverlands project. Work programmes are prepared by the Area Ranger, Woods & Access who is also responsible for ensuring all the consents and grants are in place. The Countryside Team are supported by the National Trust’s internal consultancy including on site Rural Surveying team and regional and national specialists.Recent management interventions have focussed on the lichen priority zone in Horner Combe through the riparian woodland on the valley floor and has consisted of targeted removal of holly, understorey shrubs and ivy which are either reducing light levels or in physical competition with lichens or existing or potential lichen trees. Following recommendations in the Lichen Survey of Western Combes (Sanderson 2013). Lichen Condition Assessment (Sanderson 2009) and the Veteran tree surveys (Smith 2003 & 2010).Alongside this there has been a wider approach to the reduction of holly understorey in areas of the wood where it had become particularly dense and was compromising conditions of lichens and/or effecting veteran trees. To date this work had been undertaken on the lower slopes of Cloutsham Ball in the Cabinet Walk/East Water confluence area with targeted holly removal beginning just above Tuckers Path. Beech control has been ongoing for many years throughout the wood to increase light levels and control spread through the woodland. A significant area of felling (3ha) took place in 2014 in Stoke Combe which has radically altered the composition and conditions in that area. Much of this work was funded through the Building Resilience in SW Woodlands HLF project lead by Plantlife (ended in 2022) and EWGS (2014-2019).  |

4.2 Information

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Feature** | **Within Woodland** | **Cpts** | **Adjacent to Woodland(s)** | **Map No** |
| **Biodiversity****-** **Designations** |
| Site of Special Scientific Interest | Yes | All | Yes | Whole site is covered so Map not appropriate – See Magic Map for detail and context in wider landscape |
| Special Area of Conservation  | Yes | All | Yes | Whole site is covered so Map not appropriate – See Magic Map for detail and context in wider landscape |
| Tree Preservation Order | No |  | No |  |
| Conservation Area | No |  | No |  |
| Special Protection Area | No |  | No |  |
| Ramsar Site | No | - | No |  |
| National Nature Reserve | Yes | All | Yes | Whole site is covered so Map not appropriate – See Magic Map for detail and context in wider landscape |
| Local Nature Reserve | No | - | No |  |
| Other (please Specify):       | No |  | No |  |
| **Notes** | **SSSI** The bulk of the site sits in the North Exmoor SSSI - HORNER WOOD, Unit 001 classified as being in unfavourable recovering condition. The last condition assessment of this site was undertaken in 2010 and the findings were as follows: *The unit favourable except in Block 4 for Regeneration because of the presence of very little regeneration of native canopy trees within areas heavily deer grazed. Lichen assemblage: was assessed by Sanderson 2009 as Unfavourable Declining from undergrazing with too little stock grazing leading to shrubs too dense on floodplains locally. Woodland Birds feature assessed at SSSI level: favourable. Otter feature: favourable assessment at SSSI level as evidence of presence in last 5 years. Bat (both species) feature: insufficient survey work to assess adequately but indications are the species are not meeting the FCT baselines but as indirect attributes (woodland feature condition) are meeting thresholds as they affect bats, the feature is judged Unfavourable Recovering. Regeneration is addressed at a wider scale by the agreement of a new Horner Wood Management Plan and the lichen condition by a specific targeted programme of works and by measures to encourage grazing around the fringes of the wood. This unit is given an overall condition assessment of Unfavourable Recovering.***Compartment 5** sits in SSSI unit 13 and **Compartment 9** sits in SSSI units 97, 3, and 12 classified as favourable designated for their open habitat types. The assessment for unit 97 describes  *A small area of beech has potential to limit high known lichen interest and ideally requires management***NNR**The whole site sits in the Dunkery and Horner Wood NNR**SAC**The whole site sits in the Quantock and Exmoor Oakwoods SAC. Small edges of compartment 13 to the north and compartment 9 to the south overlap into the Exmoor Heath SAC. |

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Feature** | **Within Woodland(s)** | **Cpts** | **Map No** | **Notes** |
| **Biodiversity -** **European Protected Species** |
| Bat  | Species (if known)  | Yes | All |  | Horner Wood supports almost all species of bat found in the UK either providing roosting and breeding opportunities or habitat for bats foraging from the wider Estate. Species include Daubenton’s *Myotis daubentonii*, Long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Natterer’s *Myotis nattereri*, Greater horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* and Lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*. The presence of nationally rare Barbastelle bat *Barbastellus barbastellus* was discovered during surveys carried out in 1999 (Billington 2000). Bechstein’s Bat *Myotis Bechsteinii* has been recorded at West Luccombe in 1999 but has not been recorded on the Estate since. Bradshaw (2016) undertook a detailed assessment of known bat information to this date.All works will follow EPS operational requirements. This plan will see the retention and creation of deadwood and snags, as well as opening areas of the woodland and improving biodiversity increasing the habitat for bat roosting and foraging.  |
| Dormouse | Yes |  |  | Dormice have been identified at the site |
| Great Crested Newt | No |  |  |  |
| Otter | Yes |  |  | Otter are present at the site |
| Sand Lizard | No |  |  |  |
| Smooth Snake | No |  |  |  |
| Natterjack Toad | No |  |  |  |
| **Biodiversity –** **Priority Species** |
| Schedule 1 Birds | Species:  | Yes |  |  | The woodland and lowland heathland breeding bird assemblage is a feature of the SSSI notification and there has been over 79 recorded species on the site including several species listed as birds of conservation concern (Boyce & Freshney 2014). The woodland community contains species typical of western oakwoods, including regionally important populations of red listed Wood warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, Pied flycatcher *Ficedula hypoleuca*, Lesser-spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopus minor* and Grey wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* and Amber listed Redstart *Phoenicurus phoenicurus* |
| Mammals (Red Squirrel, Water Vole, Pine Marten etc) | No |  |  | The wider Estate hosts a nationally important herd of Red Deer estimated at approximately 15% ofthe Exmoor population at any one time (Teverson 1995). The herd is monitored annually inFebruary by a count co-ordinated by the NT Deer Manager. Occasional Roe deer *Capreolus capreolus*are seen in the woodland and Fox *Vulpes vulpes*, Grey squirrel *Sciurus caroliniensis* and Rabbit*Oryctolagus cuniculus* are also present.Other mammals noted on site include Woodmouse *Apodemus sylvatica*, Field Vole *Microtus agrestis*, Bank Vole *Clethrionomys**glareolus*, Stoat Mustela erminea, Weasel *mustela nivalis* and American Mink *Neovison vison* |
| Reptiles (grass snake, adder, common lizard etc) | Yes |  |  | The moorland areas and open woodland supports adder *Viperus bera*, Grass snake *Natrix natrix*, slow worm *Anguis fragilis*. Common Lizard has been identified in areas of open woodland |
| Plants | Yes |  |  | Horner wood is particularly important for its bryophyte population. Bryophytes were recorded in the 1978 Exmoor Woodland Survey, simply as a species list for each compartment. A full survey of Horner Wood was completed in 1994 (Giddens 1994). A total of 50 species of moss were recorded and 13 liverworts.In 1994 an additional survey was conducted by the Exmoor Natural History Society to produce a standard flora check-list for the woods (Giddens 1994). Three species were described as notable; Meadow saxifrage Saxifraga granulata, which grows in the main valley bottom on the river banks, Nationally scarce Cornish moneywort *Sipthorpia europaea*, which grows in small quantities in damp areas also in the valley bottom, and hay scented buckler fern *Drypotreis aemula*. This latter fern grows abundantly in local sites in the wood including Horner Wood (Cpt.2), Cloutsham Ball, Horner Side and the main valley bottom. Tunbridge filmy fern *Hymenophyllum tunbrigense* has been recorded in the wood in the past but not in 1994. |
| Fungi/Lichens | Yes |  |  | Horner Wood has been well studied and is considered of national importance. Within the woodland there are two major lichen associations which are well represented these being *Lobarion* and *Lecanactidetum premnae*. Boththese communities are indicative of ancient woodland and the species comprising thesecommunities indicate the long, continued presence of woodland cover i.e. *Nephroma laevigatum,**Peltigera collina, Peltigrea horizontalis, Sticta limbata, Sticta sylvatica, Thelotrema lepadinum,**Cresponea premnea Biatorina atropurpurpurea* and all four *Lobarion* species found in Britain. The*Lobarion* communities predominantly favour old growth trees in the woodland valley bottoms andold pollards with the *Lecanactidetum premnae* community favouring the drier well-lit parts of treesfurther up the wooded slopes (Sanderson 2012).The richest communities are found in the valley bottoms. These areas are humid and sheltered from drying winds, however the high canopy and the abundance of glades allows light airy conditions. The highforest on the alluvial floor of the valleys has also been relatively untouched by management, and individual ancient trees have provided a strong element of continuity. Lastly the fertility of the soils offers a wider choice of tree species; lichens are found on field maple, holly and hazel as well as the more obvious oak and ash. The management prescriptions identified in the plan of operations reflect a recent survey and report by Plantlife which focusses on the impact of ash dieback on the lichen population. This plan’s aim is to maintain optimum conditions for the lichen population. Horner woods have been well studied for fungi although formal surveys have not been carried out since Ted Green’s study in 1993 (Green 1993). Horner boasts a total of 440 recorded species and the fungal flora is characteristic of South West Atlantic ancient managed oak-hazel woodland.  |
| Invertebrates (butterflies, moths, beetles etc) | Yes |  |  | The known invertebrate fauna here is incredibly rich. The site is considered nationally important for butterflies supporting 20 species and regionally important for moths with over 106 species on record. Within the woodland good populations of Silver washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia* and Dark Green Fritillary *Argynnis aglaja* can be found. Nationally notable moths recorded in Horner Woods include bilberry pug moth *Pasiphila debiliata*, beech-green carpet *Colostygia olivata*, bleached pug *Eupithecia pallidata*, square spotted clay *Xestia rhomboidea* and the locally distributed beautiful snout moth *Hypena crassalis* (Foster et al. 2015).The Nationally scarce jersey tiger moth *Euphlagia quadripunctaria* was recorded in Halse Come during 2012.The beetle fauna is also regarded as of national importance for it’s deadwood fauna (Foster et al. 2015) with the old growth trees in Horner woods providing a key habitat. There have been over 215 species of Coleoptera recorded including 20 currently classified as Nationally Notable/Scarce species with a further 7 classified as Nationally Notable/Scarce until recently one of these being the stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* (also a priority species (Duff 1994; Alexander 1995).The 2015 NT biological survey also identified three deadwood associated species new to Somerset (*Dorcatoma chyrsyomelina, Quedius truncicola* and *Euglenes oculatus*) and a few only recorded on a few occasions (darkling beetle *Pseudocistela ceramboides* and fungus beetle *Triphyllus bicolor*). The most recent survey written in 2019 reports at least 111 species of saproxylic invertebrate; of which 25 have conservation status, as Red List or Nationally Scarce; 13 of these appear to be species previously overlooked by surveys in the NNR (5 beetles and 8 Diptera).The rarest species found appear to be the Near Threatened species of fungus gnat *Acnemia amoena* and the Nationally Rare cranefly *Rhipidia uniseriata*, both previously unknown in the NNR. |
| Amphibians (pool frog, common toad) | Yes |  |  | The wetter areas of the reserve such asmoorland flushes and temporary pools in the woodland valley bottoms provide habitat for palmate newt *Triturus helveticus*, common frog *Rana temporaria* and common toad *Bufo bufo*. |
| Other (please Specify):  | Yes/No |  |  |  |
| **Historic Environment** |
| Scheduled Monuments | Yes |  | 5  | Horner Packhorse Bridge is a scheduled monument and provides access into compartment 1 from Horner village  |
| Unscheduled Monuments | Yes |  |  | There are 413 archaeological features identified on the National Trust’s Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Record (HBSMR) either in, or associated with, the plan area. The oldest features on the Estate can be dated to the Mesolithic (8000-4000 BC) period. These flint finds are in the form of small blades and microliths are most probably associated with hunting. They have been recorded from the Robin and Joaney How area and also close toAldermans Barrow. Neolithic (4000-2350 BC) period finds of note include a stone head axe find close to Dunster path above Wychanger combe. |
| Registered Parks and Gardens | No |  |   |  |
| Boundaries and Veteran Trees | Yes |  | 4 | The wood is significant for it’s veteran trees and the species these support. The plan facilitates the protection and maintenance of these trees and their associated communities. Veteran tree surveys were undertaken in 2003 and 2010 together surveying the whole of Horner Wood locating and detailing ancient, veteran and notable trees plus giving recommendations for further management at whole site and individual tree level. The report highlights the rich resource of ancient trees and associated biodiversity within the woodland and the super-abundance of niches favoured by specialised associates of old growth habitats. Between the two reports 1749 ancient or veteran trees have been identified, these are predominantly lapsed pollards, old coppice stools, old coppards (trees cut between the height of a coppice and that of a pollard) and maidens. Limited work to follow up these recommendations has been undertaken to date. Some of the key threats to veteran trees are consistent with those affecting lichen communities. |
| Listed Buildings | No |  | 5  | Horner Packhorse Bridge (also a scheduled monument) is a Grade II listed structure |
| Other (please Specify):  | No |  |  |  |
| **Landscape** |
| National Character Area (please Specify): 145 Exmoor |
| National Park | Yes |  |  | Exmoor |
| Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty | No |  |  |  |
| Other (please Specify):  | No |  |  |  |
|  |
| CROW Access | Yes |  | 6  | Southern and eastern half of compartment 9 and part of compartment 10 |
| Public Rights of Way (any) | Yes |  |  | Throughout woodlands |
| Other Access Provision | Yes |  |  | Permissive rights of way, carparks, picnic areas, toilets. H&S works result in occasional temporary route closure. |
| Public Involvement | Yes |  |  | Volunteer staff |
| Visitor Information | Yes |  |  | Interpretation panels, website |
| Public Recreation Facilities | Yes |  |  | Various |
| Provision of Learning Opportunities | Yes |  |  | Educational opportunities are facilitated by the local NT team. |
| Anti-social Behaviour | No |  |  |  |
| **Water** |
| Watercourses | Yes |  | 6  | See section 5.6 |
| Lakes | No |  |  |  |
| Ponds | No |  |  |  |
| Other (please Specify):  | No |  |  |  |

4.3 Habitat Types

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Feature** | **Within Woodland(s)** | **Cpts** | **Map No** | **Notes** |
| **Woodland Habitat Types** |
| Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland  | Yes | All except 1 and 13 | 4  | Ancient woodlands will be managed under the UKFS principles of good woodland management for their specific habitat type.  |
| Planted Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) | No | ,  |  |  |
| Semi-natural features in PAWS | No |  |  |  |
| Lowland beech and yew woodland | No |  |  |  |
| Lowland mixed deciduous woodland | No |  |  |  |
| Upland mixed ash woods | No |  |  |  |
| Upland Oakwood | Yes |  |  | The majority of the site (with the minor exceptions below) can be considered as sitting within this priority habitat type.  |
| Wet woodland | Yes |  |  | The valley bottoms which see intermittent flooding contain pockets of wet woodland.  |
| Wood-pasture and parkland | Yes |  |  | Areas of open ground and woodland edges meet the criteria for inclusion into this habitat type.  |
| Other (please Specify):  | No |  |  |  |
|  |
| Blanket bog | No |  |  |  |
| Fenland | No |  |  |  |
| Lowland calcareous grassland | No |  |  |  |
| Lowland dry acid grassland | No |  |  |  |
| Lowland heath land | No |  |  |  |
| Lowland meadows | No |  |  |  |
| Lowland raised bog | No |  |  |  |
| Rush pasture | No |  |  |  |
| Reed bed | No |  |  |  |
| Wood pasture | Yes |  |  | See above |
| Upland hay meadows | No |  |  |  |
| Upland heath land | No |  |  |  |
| Unimproved grassland | No |  |  |  |
| Peat lands | No |  |  |  |
| Wetland habitats | No |  |  |  |
| Other (please Specify):  | No |  |  |  |

4.4 Structure and activity data

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Area and Structure |  |  | Growth |  |  | Harvesting (tonnes) |  | Activity (ha) |
| Total area (Hectares) | 354.57 |  |  | Annual Increment (tonnes) | 1384 |  |  | 10 Year harvest  | 2380 |  | Coppicing | 64.73 |
| Of which is Open Ground | 8.69 |  |  | Mean Weighted Yield Class | 4 |  |  | Phase 1 | 615 |  | Selective Felling to create open ground | 7.5 |
| Conifer woodland  | 0 |  |  |  |  |  |  | Phase 2 | 930 |  | Thinning | 175.75 |
| Woodland with mixed native and non-native Broadleaved trees | 7.5 |  |  |  |  |  |  | Phases 1 and 2 | 835 |  | Clear Fell | 0 |
| Woodland with mixed native and non-native Broadleaved and Coniferous trees | 26.49 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | No Felling | 97.90 + 8.69 open ground |
| Native Woodland | 311.89 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Section 5: Woodland Protection

5.1 Risk Matrix

The matrix below provides a system for scoring risk. The matrix also indicates the advised level of action to take to help manage the threat.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Impact** | High | Plan for Action | Action | Action |
| Medium | Monitor | Plan for Action | Action |
| Low | Monitor | Monitor | Plan for Action |
|   |  | Low | Medium | High |
|   |  | **Likelihood of Presence** |

5.2 Plant Health

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat  | Chalara dieback of ash (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | High: There are confirmed cases of Ash dieback from this area every year for the past three years |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | High: Ash present across the site and a key component of natural regeneration in many woodlands.  |
| Response (inc. protection measures) | Manage in line with current National Trust ADB guidance. Remain vigilant for symptoms during tree safety surveys. Follow up-to-date best practice guidance from Forestry Commission on biosecurity in woodlands. Consider alternative species with a similar ecological niche and benefits when restocking- Refer to Impacts of Ash Dieback*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (Chalara) on priority lichens andPotential mitigation options. First published September 2022. Natural England Research Report NECR428 |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat  | Oak Decline (Acute and Chronic) |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | Medium: This disease has been found nearby in the Quantock Hills, however Forest Research identify this site as being at low predisposition probability.  |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | High: Oak form a significant part of our woodlands, and sit at the heart of the National Trust illustrated by its use in our logo. The impact of this disease would have a significant effect on the delivery of our objectives towards enhancement of biodiversity and the maintenance of the spirit of place.  |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Monitor for presence of disease via FC guidelines during tree safety surveys. Follow up-to-date best practice guidance from Forestry Commission on biosecurity in woodlands where appropriate.  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat  | Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | Low: OPM is largely contained within the M25, however it is spreading from where it is currently established, in most of Greater London and in some surrounding counties in South East England.  |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | High: The threat to staff and visitors is greater than the threat to the oak trees themselves. This pest has the potential to significantly disrupt the visitor experience and cause ecosystem disruption. |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Follow the Forestry Commission advice of ‘Spot it, avoid it, report it’. Should any outbreaks occur, an evidence based response plan would be implemented in collaboration with national staff.  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat  | Sweet Chestnut Blight |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | Medium: This disease is common across the UK but this species does not form a significant component of the woodlands here.  |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | Medium: Sweet Chestnut does not forms a significant component of the woodland resource at this property |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Remain vigilant for symptoms during tree safety surveys. Follow up-to-date best practice guidance from Forestry Commission on biosecurity in woodlands.  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat  | Other tree pests and diseases |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | Medium: There are many other tree and woodland pests and diseases in the UK that threaten the delivery of our objectives.  |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | High |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Remain educated about current and new UK threats, be vigilant for symptoms during tree safety surveys. Follow up-to-date best practice guidance from Forestry Commission on biosecurity in woodlands.  |

5.3 Deer

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Species - Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | High: Staff report issues with deer browsing across the site |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | High: Natural regeneration and coppice regrowth is currently restricted in part due to deer browsing. |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Protect coppice stools and young trees with shelters or tree guards. Follow local deer management plan. Deer and Wildlife Rangers in post for Holnicote estate from Summer 2023 to monitor and manage deer pressure in line with the Deer Management Plan. |

5.4 Grey Squirrels

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | High: Grey squirrels are present. |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | Medium: Grey squirrels are having a negative impact on woodland ecosystems |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Manage grey squirrel population through most efficient and appropriate means where appropriate. Deer and Wildlife Rangers in post for Holnicote estate from Summer 2023 to monitor and manage squirrel pressure. |

5.5 Livestock and Other Mammals

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat (Sheep, Horse, Rabbit etc) | Livestock |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | High: Adjacent fields are grazed by tenant farmers. Horner Wood is surrounded by grazed moorland and the woodland boundary is not fenced.  |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | High: Natural regeneration and coppice regrowth could be restricted by livestock grazing/browsing if numbers become to great. |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Encourage take-up of agri-environment schemes to manage stock numbers grazing in the woodland. Grazing in Horner is valuable to maintain the woodlands key habitat and species features.  |

5.6 Water & Soil

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat (Soil Erosion, Acidification of Water, Pollution incidents etc) | Sediment pollution of waterways during operations |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | Medium |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | High |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Undertake good brash management during operations, check brash is being used appropriately during operational monitoring. Stop work if adverse weather occurs. Install appropriate drainage and water management systems where deemed necessary. Monitor tracks and extraction routes for damage and rutting. Repair and halt use if necessary.  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat (Soil Erosion, Acidification of Water, Pollution incidents etc) | Operational chemical or oil spillages |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | High: Fuel, pesticides, nutrient run-off from adjacent farmland. |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | Low: Only small amounts of these pollutants are used. |
| Response (inc protection measures) | All chemical use will follow best practice guidance.COSHH assessments are written and followed for the use of fuel and pesticides.All chainsaw work is carried out using biodegradable chain oil.The use of pesticides is avoided where possible in line with the National Trust UKWAS pesticides policy . |

5.7 Environmental

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat (Pollution, Fire, Flood, Wind, Invasive Species, etc) | Operational chemical or oil spillages |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | High: Fuel, pesticides, nutrient run-off from adjacent farmland. |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | Low: Only small amounts of these pollutants are used. |
| Response (inc protection measures) | All chemical use will follow best practice guidance.COSHH assessments are written and followed for the use of fuel and pesticides.All chainsaw work is carried out using biodegradable chain oil.The use of pesticides is avoided where possible. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat  | Invasive species |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | High: *Rhododendron ponticum* has been identified on the site but is under active control. Turkey oak and Bracken also have the capacity to become invasive and should be managed accordingly. |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | High: Invasive species have the potential to become a vector for disease, can disrupts ecosystems, and can have a negative impact on soils and water. |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Undertake programme of invasive species reduction. Monitor and record any newly identified invasive species outbreaks in line with Horner Wood NNR plan .  |

5.8 Social

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat  | Wildfire |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | High |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | Low |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Fire risk management plan for moorland has been developed. NT staff to remain vigilant during dry periods through regular patrols and increased communications to the public.  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat  | Litter/ Fly tipping |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | Medium |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | Low |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Remove litter. Report to local authority. Monitor key hotspots. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat  | Damage to historic environment |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | High |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | Low |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Follow internal guidance around planning, consultation, pre-operational checks, and operational delivery as well as following any site specific advice from Historic England or Local Authority archaeologists.  |

5.9 Economic

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat  | Negative disruption to timber value, budget availability, or agri-environment funding.  |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | Low |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | Low |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Seek a range of funding mechanisms |

5.10 Climate Change Resilience

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Threat (Uniform Structure, Provenance, Lack of Diversity etc) | Uniform structure |
| Likelihood of presence (high/medium/low) | Medium: Presence of deer and stock combined with closed canopy woodland resulting largely from historic woodland management has limited tree regeneration in recent decades within the woodland. Therefore there are areas where the woodland age structure is relatively uniform in several compartments.  |
| Impact (high/medium/low) | High: A uniform woodland structure leaves a wood vulnerable to disease or catastrophic storm events resulting in wholesale loss of habitat. Uniform structure also results in a reduction in diversity of woodland flora, invertebrates and fewer feeding areas for birds and bats. |
| Response (inc protection measures) | Woodland mosaic, age and vertical structure are important in future planning. See comments on deer and stock at sections 5.3 and 5.5.Thinning will allow light to the forest floor encouraging regeneration of native tree species. Future regeneration plans will incorporate open glades, scalloped woodland edges and rides to provide better mosaic and vertical structure.Standing and fallen deadwood will be encouraged and veteran trees given space to thrive and seed. |

Section 6: Management Strategy

This section requires a statement of intent, setting out how you intend to achieve your management objectives and manage important features identified within the previous sections of the plan. A detailed work programme by sub-compartment can be added to the Plan of Operations.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Management Objective / Feature** | **Management Intention** |
| 1. Increase opportunities for our local wildlife
 | a) Increase light levels to the forest floor through thinning and selective felling. This is essential if we are to see the regeneration of new native trees to improve woodland structure and species diversity.b) Recruitment through natural regeneration will be the favoured approach to restocking only planting trees where regeneration does not occur naturally.c) Create deadwood, both standing and fallen. Deadwood is a key component of our woodland ecosystems, providing habitat for a host of species, from fungi, to beetles, to birds.d) Progressively work towards the removal of invasive species.e) Halo release of veteran trees |
| 1. Slow the flow of water across our land, improve water quality and protect soils
 | e) Increase the roughness and porosity of the soil through promoting natural regeneration of trees and wild plants and flowers (see 1 and 2 above).f) Continue to remove invasive species that suppress native vegetation leaving winter soils exposed and unsupported by perennial root systems. Removing these species will reduce soil erosion and landslips.g) Opportunities to adopt a site specific NFM approach should be taken wherever they will be effective and appropriate. Including embracing future colonisation by beaver. |
| 1. Reduce our carbon footprint
 | h) Produce heat and electricity through sustainable sources. Such as heating generated from firewood sourced on site as a by-product of conservation work.i) Undertake woodland management that promotes the growth of new trees and protects soils from erosion by maintaining woodland light levels at a point at which new trees and plants can grow.j) Conduct surveys across the Trust to increase knowledge of soil carbon stores and soil health. |
| 1. Maintain the site’s visual amenity and give our visitors a great experience
 | k) Plan work to ensure spirit of place is maintained or enhanced in the long term and in line with the overarching Holnicote Estate nature vision. Thinning and felling will allow new trees to grow, ensuring continuity of afforestation in to the future. l) Ensure people are able to use public rights of way and access land uninterrupted wherever it is safe to do so. We will consider providing opportunities for additional access where it is requested and it does not represent a conflict with our other activities and objectives. |
| 1. Protect and enhance the site’s cultural heritage
 | m) Work with National Trust archaeologist and partners to identify areas of cultural and historical significance. Significant features will be identified on the ground and protected from disturbance during operations. |
| 1. Contribute to the local economy
 | n) Employing staff and contractors from the local area where possible.o) Where timber or other forest products cannot be used within the estate, priority will be given to local markets where they exist. |
| 1. Protect the health and safety of our visitors, staff and contractors
 | p) Follow National Trust Health and Safety procedures |

Section 7: Stakeholder Engagement

There can be a requirement on both the FC and the owner to undertake consultation/engagement. Please refer to Operations Note 35 for further information. Use this section to identify people or organisations with an interest in your woodland and also to record any engagement that you have undertaken, relative to activities identified within the plan.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Work Proposal** | **Individual/ Organisation** | **Date Contacted** | **Date feedback received** | **Response** | **Action** |
| Felling/Thinning | Historic England | 12/4/23 | None received |  |  |
| Felling/Thinning | Natural England | 12/4/23 | 21/4/21 | The plan is dealing with the underlying issues why the site at present is in unfavourable recovering condition, in particular proposed works around clearing Holly and scrub where it is affecting important trees.Ash dieback is going to have a detrimental issue with the continual management of the lichen species and the bats and to a certain degree the Otter. Good to see haloing being proposed for the veteran trees and hopefully the continuation of lichen translocation from Ash to other areas where they need to be felled for public safety. I would also hope that on felling for Ash dieback that also the continuation of leaving monolith trunks where possible. It does also provide opportunities as highlighted in the plan for retaining open spaces for wildlife.Natural England support this plan as it deals with the issues set out in the SSSI condition assessment | None required |
| Felling/Thinning | Internal Staff and Volunteers | 12/4/23 | None received |  |  |
| Felling/Thinning | ENPA | 12/4/23 | None received |  |  |
| Felling/Thinning | Plantlife | 12/4/23 | None received |  |  |
| Felling/Thinning | Visitors and Local People | 12/4/23 | 2 positive comments received | General comments of support | None required |

Section 8: Monitoring

Indicators of progress/success should be defined for each management objective and then checked at regular intervals. Other management activities could also be considered within this monitoring section. The data collected will help to evaluate progress.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Management Objective/ Activities** | **Indicator of Progress/ Success** | **Method of Assessment** | **Frequency of Assessment** | **Responsibility** | **Assessment Results** |
| 1. Increase opportunities for our local wildlife
 | Having a management plan which identifies the special features of the site, informed by a baseline biological survey and SSSI condition assessments. The survey output is translated into management plan actions which aim to maintain or enhance the special features.Delivery of management plan actions.Special features surveys undertaken at plan review find that their condition has been maintained or enhanced. | Management Plan reviewEcological surveys | 5 yearly10 Yearly | Site ManagerSite Manager |  |
| 1. Slow the flow of water across our land, improve water quality and protect soils
 | Management plans consider natural flood management (NFM) and raw water quality protection.Increased number and scale of NFM features across our properties in line with our Riverlands project Successful partnership working with external organisations towards delivery of NFM and raw water quality improvements.Following best practice guidance in the use of chemicals, the management of roads and drainage and the delivery of operations within our woodlands.Increased knowledge of soil carbon stores and soil health across the Trust. Soil condition is maintained or enhanced. | Management Plan reviewStakeholder consultationOperational monitoring records | 5 Yearly10 YearlyOngoing | Site Manager |  |
| 1. Reduce our carbon footprint
 | Woodland management plans which include work that meets this objective.Delivery of work items within the management plan.Woodland structure surveys and timber volume assessments at plan renewal show maintenance or enhancement.Increased knowledge of soil carbon stores and soil health across the Trust Soil condition is maintained or enhanced. | Management Plan review | 10 Yearly |  |  |
| 1. Maintain the site’s visual amenity and give our visitors a great experience
 | Management plan operations support this objective. Effective stakeholder consultation at plan renewal stage. | Management Plan reviewStakeholder consultation | 10 Yearly10 Yearly | Site Manager |  |
| 1. Protect and enhance the site’s cultural heritage
 | Management plan identifies appropriate prescriptions for features of cultural significance.Operational monitoring includes measures to protect, and where appropriate, enhance cultural features. No negative feedback from stakeholder consultation at plan renewal | Management Plan reviewOperational monitoring recordsStakeholder consultation  | 10 YearlyOngoing10 Yearly | Site Manager |  |
| 1. Contribute to the local economy
 | Harvesting records and contractor use records show engagement with, and contribution to the local economy. | Harvesting recordsContractor use records | AnnualAnnual | Site Manager |  |
| 1. Protect the health and safety of our visitors, staff and contractors
 | Health and safety surveys are undertaken and any remedial works identified are actioned in a timely manner. Appropriate operational monitoring records are collected and retainedOperational management ensures appropriate training, competence certification, and insurance records are in place. | Tree safety surveysOperational monitoring records | AnnualOngoing | Site Manager |  |

**UK Forestry Standard woodland plan assessment**

**For FC office use and approval only:**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **UKFS management plan criteria** | **Minimum approval requirements** | **Achieved** | **Review notes** |
| **Plan Objectives:**Forest management plans should state the objectives of management and set out how an appropriate balance between social, economic, environmental objectives will be achieved. | * Management plan objectives are stated.
* Consideration is given to environmental, economic and social objectives relevant to the vision for the woodland.
 | **Yes/No** |  |
| **Forest context and important features in management strategy:**Forest management plans should address the forest context and the forest potential and demonstrate how the relevant interests and issues have been considered and addressed. | Management intentions communicated in ***Sect.6*** of the management plan are in line with stated objective(s) in ***Sect. 2***. Management intentions should take account of:* Relevant features and issues identified in the woodland survey (***Sect. 4***).
* Any potential threats to and opportunities for the woodland, as identified under woodland protection (***Sect. 5***).
* Relevant comments received from stakeholder engagement are documented in ***Sect. 7***.
 | **Yes/No** |  |
| **Identification of designations within and surrounding the woodland site:**For designated areas, e.g. National Parks or SSSI, particular account is taken of landscape and other sensitivities in the design of forests and forest infrastructure. | * Survey information (***Sect. 4***) identifies any designations that impact on woodland management.
* Management intentions (***Sect. 6***) have taken account of any designations.
 | **Yes/No** |  |
| **Felling and restocking to improve forest structure and diversity:**When planning felling and restocking, the design of existing forests should be re-assessed and any necessary changes made to meet UKFS requirements.Forests should be designed to achieve a diverse structure of habitat, species and age range of trees, appropriate to the scale and context.Forests characterised by a lack of diversity, due to extensive areas of even-aged trees, should be progressively restructured to achieve age class range. | * Felling and restocking proposals are consistent with UKFS design principles (for example scale and adjacency).
* Current diversity (structure, species, age structure) of the woodland has been identified through the survey (***Sect. 4***).
* Management intentions aim to improve / maintain current diversity (structure, species, and ages of trees).
 | **Yes/No** |  |
| **Consultation:**Consultation on forest management plans and proposals should be carried out according to forestry authority procedures and, where required, the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) Regulations. | * Stakeholder consultation is in line with current FC guidance, and recorded in ***Sect. 7***. The minimum requirement is for statutory consultation to take place, and this will be carried out by the Forestry Commission.
* Plan authors undertake stakeholder engagement (ref FC Ops Note 35) relevant to the context and setting of the woodland.
 | **Yes/No** |  |
| **Plan update and review:**Management of the forest should conform to the plan, and the plan should be updated to ensure it is current and relevant. | * A 5 year review period is stated on the 1st page of the plan
* ***Sect. 8*** is completed with 1 indicator of success identified per management objective
 | **Yes/No** |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Approved in Principle***This means the FC is happy with your plan; it meets UKFS requirements.*1. *You can use it to support a CS-HT or other grant application.*
2. ***You do not yet have a licence to undertake any tree felling in the plan.***
 | **Name (WO or FM):** | **Date:** |
| **Approved***This means FC is happy with your plan; it meets UKFS requirements, and we have also approved a felling licence for any tree felling in the plan (where required).* | **Name (AO, WO or FM):** | **Date:** |