#### FOI Request - Tree Planting Data - 101003372489

# MILLBUIES COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2023 to 2033



## 1. Details

Management Plan Details				
Management Plan Name:	Millbuies country Park			
Business Reference Number:	Applied for Main Location Code: Applied for			
Grid Reference: (e.g. NH 234 567)	NJ 239 566	Nearest town or locality:	ELGIN	
Local Authority:		The Moray Council		
Management Plan area (hectares):		54.4		

Owner's Details  If owned by a business, the details must be for that business. Please note: We do not accept applications 'care of'.						
Title:			Forename:			
Surname:						
Organisation:	The Moray Council		Position:	Climate Change strategy officer		
Primary Contact Number:			Alternative Number:	Contact		
Email:						
Address:	High	Stree	et, ELGIN			
Postcode:	IV30	1BX		Country:	Scotland	, UK

Agent's Details You must submit a mandate with the application if it includes thinning. A template can be found on our website						
Title:		Forename:				
Surname:						
Organisation:	Bowlts ( Surveyo	Chartered ors	Position:	Senior Fo	orest Manger	
Primary Contact Number:			Alternative Number:	Contact		
Email:						
Address:	Barnhill, Pluscarden, ELGIN, Moray					
Postcode:	IV30 8T	Z	Country:	UK		



Access Consent – Complete if applying for thinning				
You are not obliged to give us consent to enter your land, however if we are denied access to your land, and cannot carry out an assessment because of this, we may reject your application. This consent is for access to assess this application as well as monitor compliance with any subsequent approval, where applicable.				
Do you give consent for Scottish Forestry to access your property?	⊠ YES	□ NO		

Town and Country Planning – Complete if applying for thinning				
Are any of the trees to be felled subject to a Tree Preservation Order?	☐ YES	⊠ NO		
If YES please provide details:				
Are any of the trees to be felled within a Conservation Area?	☐ YES	⊠ NO		
If YES please provide details:				

#### Declarations - Complete if applying for thinning

# I hereby apply for a permission to fell the trees described in this application and I certify that:

- I am the landowner or an occupier of the land with written permission of the landowner;
- Where the landowner is a business, I am authorised to sign legal contracts on behalf of that business:
- If I am an acting on behalf of the landowner or occupier, I have been mandated to do so:
- Any necessary consents from any other person(s) if required, have been obtained;
- I have made the necessary checks with the local planning authorities regarding Tree Preservation Orders and Conservation Areas;
- I have notified all stakeholders that may be affected by the felling in this application and sought their views prior to submitting this application;
- I hereby acknowledge that Scottish Ministers may process any of my personal data contained in or relating to this application in accordance with the terms of <u>Scottish</u> Forestry's <u>Privacy Notice</u>;
- I have read and understand this application fully and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the information given in this application is complete, true, and accurate.
- I accept that any false or misleading information provided in this application constitutes an offence and may result in any felling permission based on this application being revoked at any time.

[This application may only be signed by the owner of the land or the occupier of that land where they have written permission to do so. For land owned by a business it must be signed by someone with the authority to sign legal contracts on behalf of that business. If you are an agent signing this on behalf of the aforementioned you must append a copy of your mandate.]

Signed:	Print:	Date:
	(agent)	31st March 2023

Approval - to be completed by Scottish Forestry staff:					
Management Plan Reference Number:					
Plan Period: (ten years) (day/month/year)	From:	To:			
Operations Manager Signature:		Approval Date: (dd/mm/yyyy)			



## 2. Woodland Description

Millbuies Country Park comprises 54.4 Ha of mixed lying to the west of Fogwatt midway between Elgin and Rothes and is access from the A 941 trunk road. The site is owned and managed by the Moray Council and is managed for outdoor recreation, health and well-being as a community asset. Millbuies was designated as a Country Park by Moray Council in 1976.

It is serviced by a public car park and contains waymarked walks. Of the whole site 46.30 hectares are woodland, 3 hectares is the Loch and the remainder are open space, paths and car parks.

The main tree species are commercial conifer, mainly Scots pine with areas of Sitka spruce, Norway spruce, Grand fir and larch

Millbuies is very much part of the local community spaces, enjoyed by families the year round, however the park has become tired over the years and is very much part of enhancing and improving that community experience, whilst also improving the biodiversity.

#### 2.1 Maps required

Provide maps to support your plan, as outlined in the guidance note. Please list all of the maps that you are including with your management plan.

List of maps:
Map 1 Location
Map 2 Stock Map
Map 3 Designations and Constraints
Map 4 Current Species
Map 5 Age Class of Woodland Trees
Map 6 Design Concept
Map 7 Heritage Features
Map 8 Public Access
Map 9 Management Zones
Map 10 Utilities and Services
Map 11 Thinning & Felling Plan
Map 12 Future Species Plan
Map 13 Work Programme & Grant Opportunities
Map 14 Thinning Plan



#### 2.2 History of management

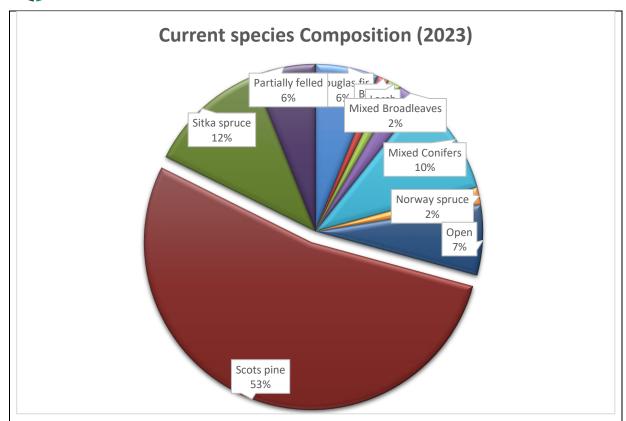
Millbuies woodland park was gifted to the City of Elgin by Boyd Anderson Esq in 1956. Some of the trees within the site pre-date 1956 although most were planted from the 1960's onwards. Millbuies was designated as Woodland Park by Moray Council in 1976. The site extends to 46 hectares of which 40 hectares are woodland. 3 hectares is the Loch and the remainder are open space, paths and car parks.

The loch here was originally formed by damming local streams to provide a fishing loch. As shown on the maps below - the loch did not appear on OS data until the 1900's

The main tree species are commercial conifer, mainly Scots pine with areas of Sitka spruce, Norway spruce, Grand fir and larch. Some timber felling has occurred, several felling licences have been issued in 2006, 2008 and 2015, which has allowed thinning of Scots pine and clearfell of Sitka spruce.

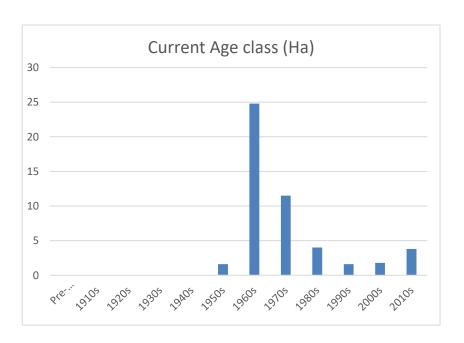
#### 2.3 Species and age

Species	Area(ha)	%
Douglas fir	3.3	6
Beech	0.6	1
Larch	0.7	1
Mixed Broadleaves	1.2	2
Mixed Conifers	5.5	10
Norway spruce	0.9	2
Open	3.7	6
Scots pine	28.9	54
Sitka spruce	6.3	12
Partially felled	3.3	6
Total	54.4	100



#### Age Class

Age	Area
class	(Ha)
Pre-	
1900	0
1910s	0
1920s	0
1930s	0
1940s	0
1950s	1.6
1960s	24.8
1970s	11.5
1980s	4.0
1990s	1.6
2000s	1.8
2010s	3.8





#### 2.4 Constraints and Designations

Millbuies was designated as a Country Park by Moray Council in 1976. It is a well-used and highly valued public facility.

<u>Scaat Craig Geological SSSI</u> runs along the western edge of the woodland. Scaat Craig SSSI encompasses a 700m stretch of the Longmorn Burn. Exposures of loosely consolidated sediments of sandstone and conglomerate along the streambanks have yielded a rich and unusual fossil fauna of well-preserved bone fragments, teeth and fish scales. The single interest of this SSSI is Silurian - Devonian Chordata – fossil bearing sediments found in exposures along the banks of the Longmorn Burn.

There are a number of mature specimen trees through the site, many pre-date the gifting of the land in 1956. Some specimen trees have small information boards detailing the tree species and natural range. In recent years exotic tree species such Leylandii and Grand fir have been planted randomly within the site by members of the public, some are planted as memorial trees.

The burn and lochs run through the centre of the site. These are vulnerable water features and potential receptors for sedimentation arising from management activities uphill.



#### 2.5 Public access

Millbuies Country Park is a highly-valued recreational facility for local people and from those coming further afield such as Elgin.

The facility is served by a well-maintained free car park with forest walks extending to just over 7Km (7,054m). Of this 2,872m are designated as core path; a further 4,182m forms part of the wider forest path network. Much of this is way-marked with various items of recreational infrastructure such as litter bins, benches and information boards. In the summer, there is a coffee franchise which operates from the car park.

As well as the car park entrance, the footpaths tie into local communities including those of Fogwatt and Whitewreath.

#### 2.6 Woodland Protection

Plant Health (including tree health and invasive or noxious plants)

Typical of a designed landscape Millbuies Country Park has a wide range of exotic species and has the usual abundance of *Rhododendron ponticum*. This is scattered throughout the woodlands but is nowhere dominant or widespread.

#### Deer, Livestock and other mammals

Roe deer at present within Millbuies Wood and the presence of Roe deer is currently impacting on tree regeneration and will also impact on future woodland management.

Roe deer are part of a natural woodland ecosystem, they are browsers which means they don't eat large volume of grass but choose wild flowers, young trees, brambles, etc. On the north side of the loch the Roe deer population is reasonably low due to control within the neighbouring Greenhead Wood. The browsing impact on natural regeneration on the north side of the loch is low. On the south side the woodland a group of six Roe deer were observed several times, and the browsing impact on regeneration is high.

Control of the Roe deer population by culling will be un-popular among the regular users of the park. We have taken into account the high Roe deer population when forecasting restocking costs and have included an annual beat up tree planting operation in order to maintain tree stocking densities.

#### **Grey Squirrels**

There are no known colonies of grey squirrels. Red squirrels are likely present.

#### Water & Soil (soil erosion, acidification of water, pollution etc.)

The site has a cool, sheltered and moist climate.



There are a wide range of soil types, including immature soils and alluvial soils in the valley bottom. Beyond the valley slopes there are drifts derived from sandstones of Upper Old Red Sandstone and Permo-Trias ages. Some slopes hold fragile soils and care will be required when working with heavy machinery.

Water acidification is not generally an issue. There are some modest areas of conifers close to burns, but these are in the process of being removed and replaced with a diverse mixture of broadleaved species.

#### Environment (flooding, wind damage, fire, invasive species etc.)

The site is largely sheltered with a DAMS score of 10. Windblow is rare, but crop can become unstable in an unseasonal wind or storm. The age class is diverse and fire is unlikely to be a major issue.

#### Climate Change Resilience (provenance, lack of diversity, uniform structure)

The woods are currently diverse and rich with a variety of species both native and exotic. These include native trees such as beech, Scots pine, birch, alder and willow, alongside naturalised neophytes such as Sitka spruce, Norway spruce, larch, sycamore and beech.

Structures are relatively diverse across the board although localised stands tend to be typically even, particularly among the conifer stands of the late 1950s.

Overall, the site has a good range of species and diverse provenances.

## 3. Vision and Objectives

Tell us how you intend to manage the woodland in the long term and your goals for its development.

#### 3.1 Vision

Describe your long-term vision for the woodland(s).

The vision for the landscape of Millbuies is to develop a proactive approach to woodland and tree management as assets that provide a strong visual context to the recreational use of the site. These elements of history and management have also resulted in a landscape of high biodiversity interest, rich in woodland and related habitats. These values will be managed for current and future generations.

The overarching aim will be to conserve, manage and enhance key features of the landscape, building on its informal styles. In turn this will further the management objectives of the NTS, enhance biodiversity and improve the experience of visitors.



This will be achieved using a management zoning technique in which the specific attributes of each landscape type will be used as the guiding principles for enacting management.

#### 3.2 Management objectives

Give your objectives of management and also how you will manage the woodland sustainably. Your objectives should be specific and you should also be able to measure their outcomes.

No.	Objectives (including environmental, economic and social considerations)
1	The maintenance of high quality woodland experience for visitors.
2	Enhancement of biodiversity.
3	The diversification of woodland trees and move toward native composition.
4	Conservation of existing specimen trees as part of the designed landscape.
5	A shift toward Low Impact Silvicultural Systems where practicable.
6	The creation of a diverse woodland able to adapt to changing climate.

## 4. Stakeholder Engagement

Please provide details on the stakeholder engagement you have undertaken, this must include contact with adjacent properties and potentially affected neighbours depending on the work you intend on carrying out in the woodland (e.g. thinning) and the constraints or designations that have been identified.

Consultancy (responsible for the reservoir) -	
Access Officer (in Jacks' team)	
Countryside Officer (the ranger in James' team)	
Estates Surveyor (lease of buildings etc)	
Planning Officer (trees)	

Consultees linking to the community:

Community Council Liaison Officer <a href="mailto:communitycouncil@moray.gov.uk">community Council Liaison Officer <a href="mailto:communitycouncil@moray.gov.uk">communitycouncil@moray.gov.uk</a></a>
Community Support Unit <a href="mailto:csu@moray.gov.uk">csu@moray.gov.uk</a>



	Heldon and Laich Community Council chair and vice-chair
	Elgin Councillors (manage the Common Good Fund):
	contact committee.services@moray.gov.uk neighbour
	ampaigns@sepa.org.uk e_grampian@nature.scot
CSU@	@moray.gov.uk

Individual/ Organisation	Date contacted	Date feedback received	Response	Action
Heldon Community Council	22/2/23	NA	None	
(Moray Council)	22/2/23	22/2/23	Clarification on route of core path.	Correction to map
NatureScot	22/2/23	27/03/23	Note from on Scaat Craig to keep exposures clear if possible.  Would encourage the Moray Council to maintain the footpaths alongside the Longmorn Burn to allow access to the SSSI.	Update plan, corrections to map.
SEPA	22/2/23	2/3/23	General non- specific response	None, measures

				already identified as part of the standard UKFS guidelines.
Neighbours				
	22/2/23	01/03/23	Welcomed the approach.	None
road engineer	22/2/23	22/03/23	Discussion around use of the consultation route and issues at the Fogwatt entrance. Agreed to use the Fogwatt entrance for small quantities only and in consultation with roads engineer.	Update plan.

## 5. Analysis and Management Strategy

Analyse the information from the previous sections and identify how to make best use of your woodland and its resources to achieve your objectives.

#### 5.1 Constraints and Opportunities

Using the table below analyse any issues raised or relevant features within your woodland and record the constraints and opportunities.

Feature/Issue	Constraint	Opportunity
Timber harvesting	There are a number of mature stands of conifer that have been many with the view of providing a financial income to the estate. These are now reaching maturity, but harvesting is limited by lack of modern harvesting infrastructure.	There is an opportunity derive revenue from some of the more mature stands. Some have been felled in recent years and restocked, or being allowed to regenerate naturally.
Haulage	Road past Fogwatt is a consultation route. Limited access to this side of the wood.	Opportunity work with Moray Council roads engineer to harvest small quantities of thinnings through this entrance. Up to ten loads per operation. Should be sufficient for thinnings.



Continuous cover Management	Older crops of some commercial conifers such as spruce may not be suitable for conversion to continuous cover management. This may be because of instability as they get older, butt rot, or previous management.	We thinned stands of conifers such as Douglas fir and larch may be suitable for continuous cover management or long-term retentions. Many younger stands of beech and other broadleaves could be actively management as long term features.
Visitors and recreation	Moderate, but regular visitor numbers around the site throughout the summer period are a constraint on some forms of management activity.	Opportunity to enhance the quality of the experience for tourists and local visitors through proactive management. Carry out majority of the thinning work out of season when visitor activity is low.  Opportunity to apply for rural woods management payments under the SMF
Veteran and feature trees.	Management constraints due to health and safety of visitors.	funding stream.  Opportunity to show off trees to their best advantage by making features of the historic landscape. Take the opportunity to halo around older trees and veterans as part of thinning operations.
Area of maturing conifer plantations	Some stands of mature spruce look out of the place in the local context. These sometimes have windblow or excessively shade other features.	Opportunity to remove some of these and replace with something more in keeping with the character of the landscape.  Some stands of mixed conifers could be managed towards long term retention to remove the smaller trees and develop feature trees of the remainder.
Undermanaged stands	Some stands of un- managed broadleaves across the estate have been dark and overgrown.	Opportunity to reinstate thinning operations using firewood contracts in key area.  Opportunity to reinstate some of the grounds through removal of the



		understorey and haloing around veterans.
Views and vistas	Vistas are a key feature of the designed landscape but have become overgrown or occluded in places.	Opportunity to re-assert the visual characteristics of the designed parts of the landscape through proactive management.
Protected species	The major protected species present are likely to be red squirrels and bat species. Red squirrels are likely present in mature conifers and bats in the veteran trees.	Red squirrels are likely to benefit from positive management and retention of mature Scots pine and conifer trees.  Bats will benefit from positive management around the veteran trees, particularly from haloing operations.

Additional detail: Agreed haulage strategy with \_\_\_\_\_, roads engineer. Majority of haulage to the south and avoiding Fogwatt. Small quantities to come through the Fogwatt loading bay and turn left on egress.

### 5.2 Management Strategy

Following your analysis, provide a broad statement describing your management strategy. Consider all aspects (economics, access, biodiversity, landscape) and pay particular attention to your silvicultural strategy for meeting your management objectives.

The management strategy will be to identify and conserve the key elements of the woodland landscape with a view to maintaining the high quality of outdoor recreational experience for visitors.

Mature stands will be identified and managed as long-term retentions or are suitable for conversion to Low Impact Silvicultural Systems. Appropriate management prescriptions shall be put in place for these.

For stands that are mature and not suitable for conversion to the above categories, these shall be assigned a felling period and will be clear-felled on a staged basis. The aim will be to remove these stands sensitively while minimising the impact on the public use of the site.

Replacement species for this will be of native origin. There will be an emphasis on the use of natural regeneration where possible and non-native species will be incorporated into the composition as a mechanism for diversification.



## 6. Management Proposals

Tell us the management operations you intend to carry out over the next 10 years to help meet your management objectives for the woodland. The submission of this plan will be considered as an application for permission to thin the woodland over the 10-year plan period, subject to the completion of Table 1 and the submission of appropriate maps. If you intend to carry out other types of felling (e.g. clear felling) you must apply for that permission separately.

#### 6.1 Silvicultural Practice

Outline silvicultural practice and management prescriptions. Include any past management practice that is relevant and the strategies to address the issues identified in section 5.

The overarching management strategy will be to create a series of management types (working circles) that will be used to determine how individual stands shall be managed to achieve positive outcomes in line with the overarching objectives for the site. A part of the management of the landscape will be to mediate between these elements ensuring that the critical features of the landscape are conserved.

Most of the commercial woodlands date from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onward. Virtually all stands of relevant age have been thinned and there is evidence of a history of continuity and sound silvicultural practice across both conifers and broadleaves.

It is the long-term policy of the owners to move away from the use of clearfell systems toward lower impact management. However, given the age and structure of the woodlands, this may not be achievable in the short term. Of the plantations established in the 1950s some are suitable for conversion to mixed age and continuous cover (potentially Scots pine, larch, Douglas fir, broadleaves), while others area not (Norway spruce, Sitka spruce). Of the former, some of these stands are exhibiting signs of natural regeneration of mixed species, while others do not. The absence or presence of regeneration is largely due to combination of site type and history of management.

In order to determine a cohesive strategy for transition, and recognising the complexity of this site in terms of visitor management, a series of management categories have been devised to assist with future planning. These are a follows.

#### **Low Impact Silvicultural Systems - Ornamental woodlands**

This relates to those areas within close proximity to the loch and include many older ornamental trees. Management decisions will largely be at the scale of an individual or small group of trees. Aesthetics and tree conservation will be the primary objective, although these areas often have a high conservation value, particularly where there are older specimens along drives and avenues.



#### **Continuous Cover Forestry**

These are areas of mature conifers and broadleaves that are largely even-aged, but are currently exhibiting signs of natural regeneration of desirable successor species. In some cases this will be the same as the overstorey, but in most cases will be a mixture. Over the period of this plan, these areas will be thinned or selectively felled in order to release the natural regeneration and develop a mixed age structure. Judgements on levels of thinning intensity shall be made at the time of the operation but will generally be in the region of 25-50% of the overstorey and focussing primarily on the recruitment of advanced regeneration.

#### **Long term Retentions**

These areas contain both conifers and broadleaves, largely of even age, but are not yet showing major signs of natural regeneration. They will largely comprise stable species that may grow on to biological maturity and are less prone to wind throw. Thinning will continue on a regular basis with an intensity that will allow for canopy closure within ten years. In time, natural regeneration may occur. In which case these stands may be moved to the CCF category for more intensive management when the plan is reviewed. This is entirely possible within the ten year life span of this plan and these areas will be included in any monitoring schemes afforded by grant funded opportunities.

Some younger crops have been identified as LTR only to indicate that the decision to fell or diversify will be made at some far off point in the future.

#### <u>Clearfell</u>

This is deemed to be a relatively short-term management category. It identifies those stands that are mature but are unsuitable for conversion to mixed age structure or for retention due to potential instability issues. Some of these stands have already blown, particularly those containing Sitka and Norway spruce. Some other species are included, but their inclusion is more related to historic management.

#### 6.1 Thinning Prescription

If you are applying for thinning, you must provide a map as per Appendix 2 of the Forest Plan Applicant's Guidance. The map must show all areas proposed for thinning. Provide any further details required here in reference to your map(s).

Individual thinning operations will be tailored to the specific circumstances and in which they have been identified above. For example, where avenues are identified, veteran and feature trees will be haloed in order to achieve the desired aesthetic effect. When thinning operations are carried out around the pond, the trees will be thinned heavily in order to allow more light into the pond, while individual trees will be retained to create dappled shade.



Ride-sides will be opened up through thinning where this is deemed appropriate.

Most conifer stands have been thinned to, or near to, marginal intensity. In the younger plantation there are opportunities for initial thinning, both in conifers and broadleaves. Some will be approaching the age of first thinning during the approval period of this plan. The plan in these cases will be to create a rack and matrix system in the first thinning and create the infrastructure to carry out further thinning works in the future.



#### **Table 1 - Thinning**

This table shows the total management plan area as well as the thinning compartments proposed for management. The felling site/compartment in this table must be shown as the same on the thinning map(s). Please select method of displaying thinning regime:

□ Pre/Post stocking density □ Pre/Post basal area □ Volume to be removed										
Total Plan Area:	54.4	ectares								
Thinning Compartment	Area (ha)	%	Species to be felled (one per row)	Age (Years)	Marking of Trees	No of Trees	Volume Ha (m³)	Total	Thinning Density (per ha)  Pre Post Total	Pre Post Total
1a	9.9	25	SP	56	None	596	45	447		
2a	2.4	25	SP	61	None	143	45	107		
2b	0.1	25	HL	61	None	8	45	6		
2b	2.4	25	SP	61	None	143	45	107		
2c	1.5	25	SP	61	None	91	45	68		
2e	0.3	25	MC	21	None	20	45	15		
3b	1.6	25	MC	61	None	94	45	70		
3c	1.4	25	SP	51	None	82	45	62		
3d	1.1	25	SP	56	None	64	45	48		
3e	0.9	25	SP	61	None	52	45	39		
3h	0.7	25	MC	73	None	44	45	33		
3i	0.7	25	MC	73	None	43	45	32		



30	0.2	25	MB	73	None	13	45	10	
3p	0.1	25	HL	8	None	4	45	3	
4a	0.5	25	SP	43	None	32	45	24	
4a	2.0	25	SS	41	None	122	45	92	
4e	0.5	25	BE	41	None	27	45	20	
4f	0.2	25	NS	61	None	14	45	10	
4g	0.2	25	BE	41	None	9	45	7	
4	0.2	25	SS	43	None	9	45	7	
5a	5.8	25	SP	51	None	349	45	261	
5b	4.0	25	SP	61	None	238	45	178	
5c	1.5	25	DF	51	None	91	45	68	
5d	1.3	25	SP	56	None	80	45	60	
5f	0.5	25	SP	61	None	32	45	24	
				Total trees to					
	40.0			be		2401	Total	1800	
Total Area				Removed					



# Appendix 1 Specific Work programme and proposals for funding – see Map 12 Based on current grant system. This ends in December 2023 and is currently under review.

Map ref	Cpt	Name	Work proposed (See Map 12)	unit	Proposed Year	Approx. Cost	Potential grant income	Funding stream
		Restocking felled areas.	Restock felled areas combination of site native broadleaves and Scots pine in appropriate locations to develop a more naturalistic and informal woodland setting. Natural regeneration to be recruited where possible and complemented with typical policy plantation species such as common lime, sweet chestnut and beech.	Per Ha	2024-2032	TBC	Standard restocking @ £550/ Ha. 3.8 Ha = £2,000 approx.	WIG.
		Public Access – Rural Woods*	Maintain footpath and carpark network. Carry out monitoring for health and safety. Maintain litterfree environment and remove any encroaching or potentially hazardous trees.  250 m of path equates to 1Ha. 7,054m = 28.2 Ha = £2,820 pa for five years. Total =£14,100			Internal cost	Up to £2,800 per annum for five years	SF- Sustainable Management of Forests



