

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

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Scottish Lowlands Forest District

**Woodgreen**

Land Management Plan

Approval date: \*\*\*

Plan Reference No: \*\*\*\*

Plan Approval Date: \*\*\*\*\*

Plan Expiry Date: \*\*\*\*\*

We manage Scotland's National Forest Estate to the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Standard – the standard endorsed in the UK by the international Forest Stewardship Council® and the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification. We are independently audited.

Our land management plans bring together key information, enable us to evaluate options and plan responsibly for the future. We welcome comments on these plans at any time.



The mark of responsible forestry





# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

CSM 6 Appendix 4

## FOREST ENTERPRISE - Application for Approval of Woodland Creation

### 1. Forest Enterprise – Property

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Forest District:                            | Scottish Lowlands Forest District |
| Woodland or property name:                  | Woodgreen                         |
| Nearest town, village or locality:          | Kilwinning                        |
| OS Grid reference:                          | NS 306 447                        |
| Local Authority district/unitary Authority: | North Ayrshire Council            |

### 2. Proposed areas to nearest tenth of a hectare

|                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
|                      |      |
| New Planting         | 17.5 |
| Natural Colonisation | -    |
| Open Ground          | 13.3 |
| Total                | 30.8 |

### 3. Special areas and protected land

| Designation | Area Name or Number | Comments |
|-------------|---------------------|----------|
| n/a         | n/a                 | n/a      |

### 4. Proposal details of woodland creation

| Area Name or number | Gross Area (Ha) | P Year  | Spp                | Area (Ha) | Open Ground (Ha) | Comments                |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------|--------------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1a                  | 2.3             | 2019/20 | POK                | 2.1       | 0.2              | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 1b                  | 1.6             | 2019/20 | SYC                | 1.4       | 0.2              | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 1c                  | 1.5             | 2019/20 | SYC                | 1.4       | 0.1              | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 1d                  | 0.8             | 2019/20 | WCH                | 0.7       | 0.1              | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 1e                  | 0.6             | 2019/20 | WCH                | 0.5       | 0.1              | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 1f                  | 0.5             | 2019/20 | ASP                | 0.5       | -                | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 1g                  | 0.5             | 2019/20 | ASP                | 0.5       | -                | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 1h                  | 0.3             | 2019/20 | DBI                | 0.3       | -                | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 1i                  | 0.3             | 2019/20 | POK                | 0.3       | -                | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 1j                  | 0.2             | 2019/20 | ROW                | 0.2       | -                | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 1m                  | 0.1             | 2019/20 | WCH                | 0.1       | -                | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 2a                  | 2.2             | 2019/20 | 60% POK<br>40% SOK | 2.0       | 0.2              | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 2b                  | 0.4             | 2019/20 | CAR                | 0.4       | -                | Lowland mixed broadleaf |

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

|    |     |         |                               |     |     |                         |
|----|-----|---------|-------------------------------|-----|-----|-------------------------|
| 2c | 0.3 | 2019/20 | ASP                           | 0.2 | 0.1 | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 2d | 0.2 | 2019/20 | WCH                           | 0.2 | -   | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 3a | 2.0 | 2019/20 | CAR                           | 1.8 | 0.2 | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 3b | 0.9 | 2019/20 | ASP                           | 0.8 | 0.1 | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 3c | 0.7 | 2019/20 | POK                           | 0.6 | 0.1 | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
| 3d | 0.3 | 2019/20 | CAR                           | 0.3 | -   | Lowland mixed broadleaf |
|    |     |         |                               |     |     |                         |
| 1n | 0.1 | 2019/20 | 60% GWL<br>40% ASP            | 0.1 | -   | Native wet woodland     |
| 1o | 0.1 | 2019/20 | 60% GWL<br>40% ASP            | 0.1 | -   | Native wet woodland     |
| 3e | 0.3 | 2019/20 | 40% GWL<br>30% DBI<br>30% CAR | 0.3 | -   | Native wet woodland     |
|    |     |         |                               |     |     |                         |
| 1k | 0.2 | 2019/20 | 40% HAW<br>30% PSP<br>30%GRS  | 0.2 | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 1l | 0.2 | 2019/20 | WEM                           | 0.2 | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 1p | 0.1 | 2019/20 | PSP                           | 0.1 | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 1q | 0.1 | 2019/20 | ELD                           | 0.1 | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 1r | 0.1 | 2019/20 | HAZ                           | 0.1 | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 1s | 0.1 | 2019/20 | HAZ                           | 0.1 | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 1t | 0.1 | 2019/20 | 50% HAW<br>50% PSP            | 0.1 | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 1u | 0   | 2019/20 | PSP                           | 0   | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 1v | 0   | 2019/20 | GRS                           | 0   | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 1x | 0   | 2019/20 | GRS                           | 0   | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 1y | 0   | 2019/20 | 50% HAW<br>50% PSP            | 0   | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 2e | 0.2 | 2019/20 | HAZ                           | 0.2 | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 2f | 0.1 | 2019/20 | 50% HAW<br>50% PSP            | 0.1 | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 2g | 0   | 2019/20 | WEM                           | 0   | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 2h | 0   | 2019/20 | 50% HAW<br>50% PSP            | 0   | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 2i | 0   | 2019/20 | ROW                           | 0   | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 3f | 0.1 | 2019/20 | 50% WEM<br>50% HAW            | 0.1 | -   | Low growing shrub       |
| 3g | 0   | 2019/20 | GRS                           | 0   | -   | Low growing shrub       |

**Complete this form to find out if you need consent, from the Forestry Commission (under the EIA Regulations 1999), to carry out your proposed work.**

| <b>Section 1 Proposed work</b>   |       |                  |  |               |               |       |            |
|--|-------|------------------|--|---------------|---------------|-------|------------|
| Please put a cross in the box to indicate the type of work you are proposing to carry out. Give the area in hectares and where appropriate the percentage of conifers and broadleaves. |       |                  |  |               |               |       |            |
| Proposed work  | cross | Area in hectares | % Conifer  | % broadleaves | Proposed work | cross | Area in ha |
| Afforestation  | X     | 17.5             |  | 100           | Forest roads  |       |            |
| Deforestation  |       |                  |  |               | Forest quarry |       |            |
| Location and District  |       |                  | Woodgreen, Nr. Kilwinning North Ayrshire – Scottish Lowlands Forest District |               |               |       |            |

**Please attach map(s) showing the boundary of the proposed work and also give details of the operations.**

| <b>Section 2 Property details</b> |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|
| Property Name                     | Woodgreen      |
| Grid Reference (e.g. AB 123/789)  | NS 306 447     |
| Local Authority                   | North Ayrshire |
| Nearest Town                      | Kilwinning     |

| <b>Section 3 Applicant's category (please put a cross in one box)</b> |                        |  |                     |   |
|---|------------------------|--|---------------------|---|
| PE  | Personal occupier      |  | PU Public ownership | X |
| BU  | Business occupier      |  | OT Other            |   |
| VO  | Voluntary organisation |  | CT Crofting tenant  |   |

| <b>Section 4 Applicant's type (please put a cross in one box)</b> |        |  |          |   |
|---|--------|--|----------|---|
| LS  | Lessee |  | OW Owner | X |
| TE  | Tenant |  | TR Trust |   |

| Section 5 your agent or woodland manager's details |  |          |          |                                  |       |
|--|--|----------|----------|----------------------------------|-------|
| Title  | Mr   | Initials | R        | Surname                          | Clamp |
| Organisation                                       | Forestry Commission Scotland – Scottish Lowlands Forest District |          |          |                                  |       |
| Address  | Five Sisters House   |          |          |                                  |       |
| Five Sisters Business Park                         |  |          |          |                                  |       |
| West Calder  |  |          | Postcode | EH55 8PN                         |       |
| Tel No   | 0300 067 6725  |          | Mobile   | 07801 213 304                    |       |
| Fax  | -  |          | e-mail   | robert.clamp@forestry.gsi.gov.uk |       |
| Is this the address for correspondence?            | yes  | X        | No       |                                  |       |

| Section 6 Applicant's details           |  |          |          |                                    |        |
|---|--|----------|----------|------------------------------------|--------|
| Title                                   | Mr   | Initials | S        | Surname                            | Towers |
| Organisation                            | Forestry Commission Scotland – Scottish Lowlands Forest District |          |          |                                    |        |
| Address                                 | Five Sisters House   |          |          |                                    |        |
| Five Sisters Business Park              |  |          |          |                                    |        |
| West Calder                             |  |          | Postcode | EH55 8PN                           |        |
| Tel No                                  | 0300 067 6765  |          | Mobile   | 07867 353 108                      |        |
| Fax                                     | -  |          | e-mail   | stewart.towers@forestry.gsi.gov.uk |        |
| Is this the address for correspondence? | yes  | X        | No       |                                    |        |

| Section 7 Sensitive Areas: Give the area of the proposal that is covered by any of the following designations |                  |
|---|------------------|
| Sensitive Area as listed in "Schedule 2" of the 1999 EIA Regulations Area (ha)                                | Area in hectares |
| a. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) or Proposed Sites of Special Scientific Interest (PSSSI)       | N/A              |
| b. SSSI's with a Nature Conservation Order (Section 29 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981)              | N/A              |
| c. National Park (NP)   | N/A              |



|  |     |
|--|-----|
| d. The Broads  | N/A |
| e. World Heritage Site   | N/A |
| f. Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM)  | N/A |
| g. an area designated as National Scenic Area  | N/A |
| h. Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)   | N/A |
| i. "Natura 2000" site - ( <i>European network of special areas of conservation and special protection areas under the Wild Birds Directive</i> ) | N/A |

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

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## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Summary of Proposals .....                             | 10 |
| 1.0 Introduction: .....                                | 11 |
| 1.1 Setting and context .....                          | 11 |
| 1.2 History of the site .....                          | 11 |
| 2.0 Analysis of previous plan .....                    | 11 |
| 3.0 Background information .....                       | 11 |
| 3.1 Physical site factors .....                        | 11 |
| 3.1.1 Geology, Soils and landform .....                | 11 |
| 3.1.2 Climate .....                                    | 12 |
| 3.1.3 Exposure (DAMS) .....                            | 12 |
| 3.1.4 Hydrology .....                                  | 13 |
| 3.2 The existing site .....                            | 13 |
| 3.2.1 Existing tree/shrub cover .....                  | 13 |
| 3.2.2 Access .....                                     | 13 |
| 3.2.3 LISS potential .....                             | 13 |
| 3.2.4 Potential markets .....                          | 13 |
| 3.2.5 Pathogens .....                                  | 13 |
| 3.3 Landscape and land use .....                       | 14 |
| 3.3.1 Landscape character and value .....              | 14 |
| 3.3.2 Visibility .....                                 | 15 |
| 3.3.3 Neighbouring land use .....                      | 15 |
| 3.4 Biodiversity .....                                 | 15 |
| 3.4.1 Priority Habitat Types & Important Species ..... | 15 |
| 3.5 Heritage .....                                     | 16 |
| 3.6 Community & Recreation .....                       | 16 |
| 3.6.1 Community .....                                  | 16 |
| 3.6.2 Recreation .....                                 | 17 |
| 4.0 Analysis and Concept .....                         | 17 |
| 5.0 Management Plan Proposals .....                    | 23 |
| 5.1 Woodland Creation .....                            | 23 |
| 5.1.1 Planting prescriptions .....                     | 23 |
| 5.1.1.1 Lowland mixed deciduous woodland .....         | 24 |
| 5.1.1.2 Native wet woodland .....                      | 25 |
| 5.1.1.3 Low growing woody shrub .....                  | 25 |
| 5.1.2 Ground preparation .....                         | 26 |
| 5.1.3 Protection from browsing .....                   | 26 |
| 5.2 Woodland Management .....                          | 26 |
| 5.2.1 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland .....           | 26 |
| 5.2.2 Native Wet Woodland .....                        | 27 |
| 5.2.3 Low growing shrubs .....                         | 28 |



# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

---

|  |    |
|--|----|
| 5.2.4 Open Land .....                                  | 28 |
| 5.2.5 Hydrology .....                                  | 28 |
| 5.3 Biodiversity & Heritage .....                      | 28 |
| 5.3.1 Priority Habitat Types & Important Species ..... | 28 |
| 5.3.2 Invasive Non-Native Species .....                | 29 |
| 5.3.3 Deadwood .....                                   | 30 |
| 5.3.4 Wildlife Management .....                        | 30 |
| 5.3.5 Heritage .....                                   | 30 |
| 5.4 Community & Recreation .....                       | 31 |
| 5.4.1 Community .....                                  | 31 |
| 5.4.2 Recreation .....                                 | 31 |
| 5.5 Access .....                                       | 31 |
| 5.5.1 Visitor .....                                    | 31 |
| 5.5.2 Management .....                                 | 32 |
| 5.6 Critical Success Factors.....                      | 32 |

## Appendices:

- Appendix I: Consultation Record
- Appendix II: General Management & Potential Projects Table
- Appendix III: Tolerance Table
- Appendix IV: Management Plan Brief
- Appendix V: Objective Appraisal, Monitoring & Evaluation
- Appendix VI: Maps
- Appendix VII: Related Documents
- Appendix VIII: NVC Survey

## Version History

| Version | Date       | Comments                                |
|---------|------------|---|
| 1.0     | 16.06.2016 | Initial draft                           |
| 1.1     | 05.07.2016 | Changes made based on district feedback |
|         |            |   |
|         |            |   |

## Summary of Proposals

This land management plan sets out a series of proposals to be undertaken or explored by Scottish Lowlands Forest District in order to achieve the objectives set out within the management brief for Woodgreen.

This plan will create new broadleaved woodland in keeping with the surrounding landscape which will enhance the biodiversity potential of the site whilst retaining features such as hedgerows and important views particularly towards Kilwinning, Ailsa Craig and Arran. This plan also sets out a vision for the site as an amenity asset for the neighbouring community at Kilwinning promoting increased educational and recreational use of the site.

## 1.0 Introduction:

### 1.1 Setting and context

Woodgreen is currently agricultural land, used for grazing, situated to the north east of Kilwinning in the local authority of North Ayrshire (OS Grid Ref: NS 306 447). Ranging between 9m and 43m above sea level the site covers an area of approximately 31 Hectares. The site is divided into two separate areas by Blair Road with the western portion banking the River Garnock and the Rough Burn running along this sections northern edge. A dismantled railway line and associated viaduct runs to the south of the western section of the site with the line cutting through the middle of the eastern section. The viaduct and rail line to the south of the western area are part of a national cycle route and local authority core path which continue north on to Blair Road. This site is remote from other district blocks however presents an opportunity to increase the presence and promote the work of FES in this part of the district (see **Map 1 – Location** and **Map 2 – Context**).

Table 1 Current land usage

| Land use              | Area (ha)   | %age        |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Agriculture (grazing) | 30.8        | 100         |
|                       |             |             |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>30.8</b> | <b>100%</b> |

### 1.2 History of the site

The site's main land use over the last 150 years at least has been as agricultural land for grazing incorporating some hedgerow planting and stock fencing to delineate field boundaries and provide the stock contained within some cover from the elements. There has not been a history of woodland.

## 2.0 Analysis of previous plan

There was no previous plan.

## 3.0 Background information

### 3.1 Physical site factors

#### 3.1.1 Geology, Soils and landform

According to British Geological Society data the underlying geology of the site consists predominantly of Limestone Coal Formation and a very small patch of

Kilbirnie Mudstone Member consisting of mostly dark grey mudstone with ironstone, sporadic shelly marine bands, and also siltstone, medium-grained rooty grey sandstone and coal. Overlying the bedrock, the superficial geology has been influenced by glaciation i.e. Devensian Till as well as by rivers i.e. Alluvium deposits of clay, sand, silt and gravel. This underlying parent material has resulted in the soils on site being predominantly typical surface water gley (FC Category7) on the more elevated ground with brown surface water gley (FC Category 7b) by the side of the river (see **Map 3a – Soils**).

Soil Moisture Regime provides an indication of the moisture and oxygen availability within the soil, both of which are essential for root growth. The site is **moist** implying reasonable aeration and water availability permitting good rooting depth.

Soil Nutrient Regime is a measure of both the availability of soil nutrients for plant growth, and the acidity of the soil (which impacts on the solubility and hence availability for uptake of most nutrients). The site has a **medium level of nutrient availability** (within the very poor to very rich range) allowing a fairly wide range of species options for the site.

Based on the James Hutton Institute Land Capability for Forestry classification the majority of the site is classed as '*F3: Land with good flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops*' and '*F4: Land with moderate flexibility for the growth and management of tree crops*'

### 3.1.2 Climate

The site falls within the **Warm, Moist** climatic zone with Accumulated Temperature (day-degrees above 5 °C, a measure of growing season length) 1381 (1200 representing the dividing point between Cool & Warm) and Moisture Deficit 132 (90 representing the dividing point between Wet & Moist).

### 3.1.3 Exposure (DAMS)

Detailed Aspect Method Scoring (DAMS) is a measure of windiness of a site using the angle to the horizon in the eight compass points, weighted towards the prevailing wind direction. Scores range from 0-24: The higher the score the greater the exposure, with scores below 13 regarded as sheltered and above 22 as too high for commercial forestry. **DAMS** are mostly **moderately exposed 13** with some **sheltered 12** pockets by the river and burn (13-15 = moderately exposed, 16-17 = highly exposed), with scores generally increasing with elevation (see **Map 3b – Climate**).

## 3.1.4 Hydrology

The site banks the River Garnock Water to the west and the Rough Burn to the north west which itself feeds into the Garnock. A drainage ditch running north from the centre of the western portion of the site to the Rough Burn has been created to reduce waterlogging from hollows within that area. The Rough Burn is already heavily wooded with hawthorn scrub along its edge with the site as is the River Glazert on the opposite bank in particular but also along the site edge with various species present. To the south of the eastern portion of the site in a low lying hollow the ground becomes wetter with *Juncus effuses* widespread.

## 3.2 The existing site

### 3.2.1 Existing tree/shrub cover

At present the only trees within the site are the perhaps several dozen found along the very edge of the bank on the River Garnock and along the bank of the Rough Burn. Other than that there are the hawthorns which constitute the hedgerows used as field boundaries within and bordering the site.

### 3.2.2 Access

There are presently no formal access points to the site. The eastern section of the site is currently served by two agricultural gates off Blair road just to the north and south of the road bridge. The western section is also served by a similar gate off Blair Road 50 yards north of the road bridge. A remnant agricultural gate linking directly to Woodgreen Farmhouse still exists with another under the viaduct by the river bank. None of the existing farm access points would be suitable for forestry access due to restricted sightlines along the public road from their locations.

### 3.2.3 LISS potential

Woodgreen should be suitable to future low impact systems as it is a relatively stable site with the potential for higher amenity and recreational usage.

### 3.2.4 Potential markets

Future thinnings from within the broadleaves would provide for the firewood market and potentially for more niche local hardwood saw-millers. Access for timber transportation is currently limited due to the lack of suitable access.

### 3.2.5 Pathogens

In recent years there has been a well-documented outbreak of *Chalara fraxinea* affecting ash. As such there is a presumption against planting ash.

## 3.3 Landscape and land use

### 3.3.1 Landscape character and value

Woodgreen lies within a relatively diverse irregular landscape due to the nature of its urban fringe setting and surrounding matrix of rolling agricultural land divided by rivers, burns, hedgerows, shelterbelts and other small woodland. The site is narrowly perceived on the small scale from Kilwinning to the south-west due to limited views and the topography of the site. The site is also viewed at the small scale from several surrounding rural residences to the south east but again topography limits what these properties see of the site as a whole.

According to Scottish Natural Heritage's Landscape Character Assessment of Ayrshire, most of the western section of the site they've categorised as Lowland River Valleys with the remaining small area of the west and all of the eastern section falling within their Ayrshire Lowland category. Relevant extracts from the Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment are listed below.

Figure 1 – Landscape character extract

#### **Lowland River Valleys**

##### **Forces for change**

**Woodland:** in the otherwise predominantly un-wooded landscapes of the Ayrshire lowland, the woodlands found along the steep valley slopes represent an important landscape resource. While many are semi-native in origin management should seek to ensure their continued health and survival, Coniferous woodland should generally be avoided in the landscape type.

**Recreation:** the valleys represent a potential recreation resource of some importance, and could provide attractive pedestrian and cycle routes through the Ayrshire landscape, linking many sites of interest, It is important that the creation of such routes should be designed to minimise any landscape impacts.

##### **Management and Planning Guidelines**

###### ***Forestry and Woodland***

- encourage small scale woodland planting on steep valley slopes.
- consider opportunities for new woodland planting in terms of:
  - the overall balance of woodland and open space.

- the relative importance of different areas of existing woodland (e.g. commercial plantation versus policy woodland) and how this would be influenced by an increase in woodland cover.
- the importance of key views and features within the landscape.

## **Ayrshire Lowlands**

### **Management and Planning Guidelines**

#### ***Forestry and Woodland***

- examine the potential to create an integrated pattern of new small woodlands and woodland belts in the most open areas.
- Encourage the establishment of new riparian woodlands along minor watercourses (which are otherwise unobtrusive)
- consider opportunities for new woodland planting in terms of:
  - the overall balance of woodland and open space.
  - the importance of key views and features within the landscape.

### 3.3.2 Visibility

The site is visible from the Garnock Viaduct and from the edge of Kilwinning but topography limits what can be seen of the site as a whole from these locations. Wider views of the site can be glimpsed from Blair road which bisects the site but as this is a narrow rural road with hedgerows along the route, these views are fleeting. Several rural properties to the south east have views of the site but again these are partial due to the topography of the land.

### 3.3.3 Neighbouring land use

The predominant neighbouring land use to the west, north, east and south-east is of similar lowland agricultural farmland. In addition to that to the south-west there is an urban residential land use.

## 3.4 Biodiversity

### 3.4.1 Priority Habitat Types & Important Species

A desk based survey based on the Ayrshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan didn't identify the site as being significant for any of the habitats or species identified within. A walkover survey for European protected and priority species didn't provide any sightings or sites of any UKBAP or LBAP species. A further walkover survey by the district Environment Forester did suggest various potential priority habitats which were further investigated by way of a commissioned Vegetation Survey carried out by Ben Averis which identified an

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

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area of lowland meadow and another small area of lowland fen priority habitat (see **Appendix VIII – NVC Survey**).

## 3.5 Heritage

Following FES Historic Environment Planning Guidance, this Land Management Plan describes and considers the conservation and management of the historic environment. The plan includes details of all relevant the most significant undesignated features i.e. the dismantled railway line and associated infrastructure. Important historic environment features are surveyed, recorded, mapped and monitored to ensure and demonstrate Forestry Commission Scotland compliance with the UK Forestry Standard. This plan describes the actions appropriate to the protection of significant known historic environment features.

A desk-based and a basic walkover archaeological survey were undertaken and have been incorporated into the Forester GIS Heritage Module Geodatabase. This ensures that undiscovered historic environment features have been mapped and recorded prior to forestry establishment and management operations - and will ensure the continued comprehensive protection of the known archaeological resource. No further archaeological surveys are necessary (as per the UKFS Forests and historic environment guidance (2011) - Guidance note for FD Environment Leads and Planners) as the site has been previously improved and has had the same land use for well over a century.

A desk based survey coupled with a walkover survey didn't identify any significant archaeological features other than the dismantled railway line.

## 3.6 Community & Recreation

### 3.6.1 Community

The site is situated next to Kilwinning with four primary schools (Corsehill, Abbey, Blacklands & St Winning's ) and one secondary school (Kilwinning Academy) within 1 mile; and Kilwinning Community Nursery, St Michael's Academy a further three primary schools (Pennyburn, St Luke's & Whitehirst Park) within 2 miles. There are several active local community groups and a community council for the area. As the whole site falls within 1 kilometre of Kilwinning (with a population of greater than 2000 people), it qualifies for the Woodlands In And Around Towns (WIAT) programme. This programme aims to improve the quality of life in towns and cities and as such the woodland will be designed and managed to develop opportunities for improved social, economic and environmental benefits.



## 3.6.2 Recreation

The site is currently not widely used for recreation as it is fenced off and under a grazing lease. The only regular recreational user group known of are the Kilwinning Eglinton Angling Club who occasionally fish from our eastern bank of the River Garnock.

## 4.0 Analysis and Concept

Using survey work and research, a broad range of factors were acknowledged and considered to recognise the site's key features (see **Map 4a – Survey & Key Features**) which, informed by the objectives set out in the management plan brief (see **Appendix IV**) were used to identify the opportunities and constraints which exist within the management plan area and from there develop an initial concept (see **Table 2 Analysis and Initial Concept Development** below). This initial concept was then used to produce a concept map (see **Map 4c - Concept**) which summarised the initial main aspirations and intentions for the management plan. This management concept formed the main basis for the public consultations held in March 2016.

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

Table 2 - Analysis and Initial Concept Development

| Strategic Priority | Survey   | Opportunities   | Constraints   | Concept  |
|--------------------|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Accessible</b>  |  |   |   |  |
|                    | The Sustrans cycle way runs along southern edge of western area over a stone viaduct which was also part of the former railway line. | The close proximity of the Sustrans link provides the opportunity to encourage users of the route to visit the site. Rides between planted areas could serve as an informal path network with the potential to be upgraded to formal paths in future. | Potential anti-social use of the site.  | Carefully designed planting shapes will create a network of rides which will facilitate and encourage informal recreational access by the local community with the possibility to upgrade these to formal paths in future. |
|                    | Twin line 132kV overhead power supply runs only just over the north east tip.  | The unplanted safety buffers along power lines could provide opportunities to plant lower growing species for habitat and visual diversity.   | Power lines are linear features which, without good use of design, could detract from surrounding natural shapes being created. | Appropriate buffers to protect utilities will be established and these will be judiciously lined with low growing shrub species to soften hard crop edges as well as in places functioning as informal recreation routes.  |
|                    | A sewage pipe runs along the lower ground on the eastern bank of the Garnock River with inspection hatches along its length.         | The unplanted safety buffers along the utility line along the river back provides an opportunity to incorporate this area of the site into a wider informal recreational path network allowing visitors to enjoy the riverbank.                       | This area of the site is prone to flooding in periods of high river water levels.   | Appropriate buffers to protect utilities will be established where in places will also function as informal recreation routes.   |
| <b>Cared for</b>   |  |   |   |  |

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

|  |  |   |   |  |
|--|--|---|---|--|
|  | The site was formerly agricultural ground used primarily for grazing with an internal matrix of linear field boundaries made up of drainage ditches, stock-fencing and hawthorn hedgerows.   | Use the local topography to guide the position and shape of planted areas so they fit well within the wider landscape whilst retaining existing habitat and heritage features within them.                  | Transforming the site from a patchwork of grazing fields to diverse woodland will alter the landscape which may be opposed by the agricultural community and others who prefer the present layout and land-use. | Planting areas will be designed to fit well within the wider landscape and retain features of habitat and heritage interest.   |
|  | The site is only really viewed from along the cycle path, glimpsed views from the minor public road (Blair Rd) which bisects the site and from the track on the western bank of the river Garnock and from the rear of houses on Northacre & from Ardoch Farm. | Although views of the site are relatively limited consideration should be taken for what views there are of the site and the planting design should work to minimise any negative impact on existing views. | Potential opposition from those who would prefer to retain the site in its current format with no loss of views.  | Planted areas will be designed so as to minimise the impact on views both of the site and the wider surrounds both from within and around the site.  |
|  | Excellent views from higher ground of Ailsa Craig, Goatfell on Arran and the tower of Kilwinning Abbey   | Judicious use of design can be used to help retain and/or frame various views currently available within the site.  | Retaining a number of views reduces the net plantable area where trees may otherwise have trees on them.  | Planted areas will be designed so as to retain and/or frame various views currently available within the site using low growing species of woody shrubs where appropriate so views remain uninterrupted and diversity is enhanced. |
|  | Area to south east of site is predominantly Juncus.  | Wetter areas offer an opportunity to plant site suitable species such as willows, alders & downy birch.   |   |  |

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

|                   |  |  |   |   |
|-------------------|--|--|---|---|
|                   | The site has areas of priority lowland meadow and improved grassland habitat.  | Retain areas of priority habitat e.g. NVC type MG5 (Crested dog's tail-Common Knapweed meadow) to provide enhanced diversity within the site.                      | Retaining grassland reduces the plantable area within the site and may in the future divert resources into maintaining these habitats | Retain the priority meadow habitat (NVC type MG5) along the western slope running along the river bank to preserve this habitat and enhance the biodiversity of the site as well as providing visual interest in the summer months. |
|                   | Japanese knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Himalayan balsam have all been found along the banks of the Garnock River.  | Any non-native invasive species affecting the site should be eradicated which could mean working in partnership with others to prevent any spread of such species. |   | Any non-native invasive species on site will be eradicated and where areas exist out-with our ownership which risk spreading to our site we will explore available options to manage these too.                                     |
| <b>Healthy</b>    |  |  |   |   |
|                   | Mature tree species line the western bank out-with our ownership, these include Beech, Ash & Sycamore. Examples of willow, sycamore, ash, elm, hawthorn and alder found along Garnock River. A mix of hawthorn, willow and sycamore run up Rough Burn. | The surrounding species mix gives an indication of which species grow well in the area influencing species choice.   |   | By referencing the health and vigour of surrounding species as well as using Ecological Site Classification broadleaved species appropriate to the site will be planted to be managed, predominantly, as a productive crop.         |
| <b>Productive</b> |  |  |   |   |

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

|                              |   |  |  |   |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
|                              | Soils are predominantly gleyed with better alluvial soils along the River Garnock flood plain. The site is relatively sheltered.  | The sheltered nature of the site coupled with the relatively fertile soils provide an opportunity to plant a wide range of species which can be used to create a visually, and texturally diverse woodland capable of producing good quality hard wood timber. | Although much of the site is suitable for productive commercial conifer the surrounding landscape suggests that this would not be in keeping with the surrounding landscape character and planting as much of the site with productive broadleaves would be more appropriate. To establish broadleaves and softer conifer species protection from browsing will be necessary either from deer fencing or protective tubes. | Site conditions are suitable to allow the majority of the site to be planted with productive broadleaves. Various species are site suited so the most appropriate species will be used to develop and crop which will be productive, healthy and adapted to predicted climate change. The crop will likely require appropriate protection from browsing damage. |
|                              | 3 farm gates access site from the public road, 2 to the east and 1 to the west, poor sight lines mean that none of these are suitable for timber access.  | The existing former farm accesses will be useful for initial establishment access however poor lines of sight mean a new access point suitable for timber traffic and forest machinery would eventually be necessary.  | Ideal access points along Blair Rd are extremely limited due to traffic considerations such as suitable lines of sight.  | The planting layout will allow a designed ride to be upgraded in future to a forest road for both operational access and timber haulage.  |
| <b>Productive/Accessible</b> |   |  |  |   |
|                              | A dismantled rail line runs under the weight restricted road bridge on Blair Rd. SLFD don't own the section under the road which is currently sectioned of by steel palisade fencing but do have a right of | The dismantled rail line could provide a link between both sections of the site. Creating an access suitable for forest machinery and for recreational use would be necessary to effectively manage the site.  | If this direct access between the sites is lost then effective management of the western section would be seriously compromised.   | The link between the 2 sections of the site under the road along the dismantled road will be re-established to facilitate future operational management as well as recreational use.  |

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

|                  |  |  |  |   |
|------------------|--|--|--|---|
|                  | access. Just to the west of the bridge over the dismantled rail line is a wetland habitat which has developed in the hollow dug out to create the Sustrans cycle path. |  |  |   |
| <b>Treasured</b> |  |  |  |   |
|                  | The site is within a few hundred metres of the northern edge of Kilwinning with residential streets and footpaths linking to the Sustrans link.                        | Proximity to Kilwinning provides an opportunity to engage with the local community to promote interest in the site and encourage use of and involvement in it in future. | Potential anti-social use of the site. | A new woodland close to a large population designed with the community in mind will provide a pleasant recreational green space to enjoy the benefits of the natural environment and encourage woodland engagement and education. |

## 5.0 Management Plan Proposals

The proposals detailed below describe the rational and methodologies to be employed in order to achieve the objectives set out in **Appendix IV**. Some of what is proposed for Woodgreen will be dependent on various factors such as the availability of suitable funding, consultation with neighbours/community etc. Such proposals constitute possible future projects for FES to be delivered in partnership/agreement with others. **Appendix II – Management Table** highlights which aspects of the management of the site fall under our 'general management functions' and which might constitute a 'potential future project'.

The proposals for this site have been produced based on sound silvicultural and environmental principles and follow the requirements, guidelines and recommendations set out within the UK Forestry Standard, the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme, FC Bulletin 124 Ecological Site Classification for Forestry and FC Bulletin 62 Silviculture of Broadleaved Woodland, FC Bulletin 115 Alternative Silvicultural Systems and the current FC edition of Forest and Water Guidelines.

### 5.1 Woodland Creation

The proposed woodland will function to produce productive hardwood timber and provide general amenity and biodiversity value. It is the intention to manage the woodland considerate of all these aspects.

#### 5.1.1 Planting prescriptions

The proposed woodland will be made up of distinct woodland categories:

- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Native wet woodland
- Low growing woody shrub

The indicative species, areas, densities and spacing for each category are listed in the following sub-sections (see **Map 5a – Planting Design & Species**).

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

## 5.1.1.1 Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Table 3 - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland planting breakdown

| Planting area ref | Species                                  | Area (ha)   | Stems/Ha | Spacing (m) |
|-------------------|--|-------------|----------|-------------|
| 1a                | Pendunculate oak                         | 2.3         | 5100     | 1.6 x 1.2   |
| 1b                | Sycamore                                 | 1.6         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
| 1c                | Sycamore                                 | 1.5         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
| 1d                | Wild cherry                              | 0.8         | 500      | 4.5 x 4.5   |
| 1e                | Wild cherry                              | 0.6         | 500      | 4.5 x 4.5   |
| 1f                | Aspen                                    | 0.5         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
| 1g                | Aspen                                    | 0.5         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
| 1h                | Downy birch                              | 0.3         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
| 1i                | Pendunculate oak                         | 0.3         | 5100     | 1.6 x 1.2   |
| 1j                | Rowan                                    | 0.2         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
| 1m                | Wild cherry                              | 0.1         | 500      | 4.5 x 4.5   |
| 2a                | 60% Pendunculate oak,<br>40% Sessile oak | 2.2         | 5100     | 1.6 x 1.2   |
| 2b                | Common alder                             | 0.4         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
| 2c                | Aspen                                    | 0.3         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
| 2d                | Wild cherry                              | 0.2         | 500      | 4.5 x 4.5   |
| 3a                | Common alder                             | 2.0         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
| 3b                | Aspen                                    | 0.9         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
| 3c                | Pendunculate oak                         | 0.7         | 5100     | 1.6 x 1.2   |
| 3d                | Common alder                             | 0.3         | 3000     | 1.6 x 2.1   |
|                   |  |             |          |             |
|                   | <b>Total</b>                             | <b>15.7</b> |          |             |



# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

## 5.1.1.2 Native wet woodland

Table 4 – Native wet woodland planting breakdown

| Planting area ref | Species  | Area (ha)  | Stems/Ha | Spacing (m) |
|-------------------|--|------------|----------|-------------|
| 1n                | 60% Goat willow,<br>40% Aspen                            | 0.1        | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1o                | 60% Goat willow,<br>40% Aspen                            | 0.1        | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 3e                | 40% Goat willow,<br>30% Downy birch,<br>30% Common alder | 0.3        | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
|                   | <b>Total</b>   | <b>0.5</b> |          |             |

## 5.1.1.3 Low growing woody shrub

Table 5 – Low growing woody shrub planting breakdown

| Planting area ref | Species  | Area (ha) | Stems/Ha | Spacing (m) |
|-------------------|--|-----------|----------|-------------|
| 1k                | 40% Hawthorn,<br>30% Blackthorn,<br>30% Guelder rose | 0.2       | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1l                | Wych elm   | 0.2       | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1p                | Blackthorn   | 0.1       | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1q                | Elder  | 0.1       | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1r                | Hazel  | 0.1       | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1s                | Hazel  | 0.1       | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1t                | 50% Hawthorn,<br>50% Blackthorn                      | 0.1       | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1u                | Blackthorn   | 0         | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1v                | Guelder rose   | 0         | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1x                | Guelder rose   | 0         | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 1y                | 50% Hawthorn,<br>50% Blackthorn                      | 0         | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 2e                | Hazel  | 0.2       | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |
| 2f                | 50% Hawthorn,<br>50% Blackthorn                      | 0.1       | 1100     | 3.0 x 3.0   |

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

|    |   |            |      |           |
|----|---|------------|------|-----------|
| 2g | Wych elm                                | 0          | 1100 | 3.0 x 3.0 |
| 2h | 50% Hawthorn,<br>50% Blackthorn         | 0          | 1100 | 3.0 x 3.0 |
| 2i | Rowan                                   | 0          | 1100 | 3.0 x 3.0 |
| 3f | 50% Wych elm,<br>50% Hawthorn,<br>Elder | 0.1        | 1100 | 3.0 x 3.0 |
| 3g | Guelder rose                            | 0          | 1100 | 3.0 x 3.0 |
|    |   |            |      |           |
|    | <b>Total</b>                            | <b>1.3</b> |      |           |

## 5.1.2 Ground preparation

Deep forestry ploughing will not be permitted as a method of ground preparation to avoid sediment run-off and erosion. Shallow agricultural ploughing should not be used on slopes over 9%. Site sensitive ground preparation methods (e.g. hand-screefing, continuous mounding) on slopes over 9%, will be adopted.

With regards drainage, if it is necessary, appropriate methods will be employed in accordance the current edition of the Forests and Water Guidelines but no drainage methods will be employed in areas of native wet woodland as these species depend on moist or waterlogged soils.

## 5.1.3 Protection from browsing

The site is currently under grazing and stock fenced and therefore when the stock is taken off there will be a vacuum which is expected to be filled by the surrounding roe deer population. In order to safeguard the establishing trees it is expected that the crop will need to be fenced to exclude the deer and/or protected with tree guards. In addition, with the existing vegetation no longer grazed, cover for voles may be increased and therefore vole guards may be required to further protect the seedlings.

## 5.2 Woodland Management

The management of the three distinct woodland categories will have their own distinct management prescriptions.

### 5.2.1 Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

#### **Long term silvicultural aims**

The long term objective for this productive crop is to produce quality timber.

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

Suggested species specific objectives are provided in **table 6** below:

Table 6 – Long term species specific objectives

| Species  | Objective  |
|--|--|
| Pendunculate oak, Beech, Sycamore                | Produce quality timber with 6m clean bole and 60cm dbh |
| Aspen, Downy birch, Grey alder, Red Alder, Rowan | Produce quality timber with 6m clean bole and 40cm dbh |
| Wild cherry                                      | Produce quality timber with 6m clean bole and 50cm dbh |

These objectives are only suggestions at this stage as more precise goals cannot be determined until the crop has developed. As the various species approach their first thinnings, a determination should be made on whether to delay thinnings to achieve greater clean bole length and what the target final girth (diameter at breast height, DBH) should be.

To achieve these aims various interventions will be necessary during the rotation of each species such as leader forming, pruning, re-spacing and thinning. The establishment prescriptions such as densities and spacing have been suggested in order to encourage good vigour, form and self-pruning where applicable to facilitate the trees achieving their intended objectives.

Under-planting oak stands will be necessary after approximately two thinnings (~50 years) to manage light levels and prevent undesirable epicormic side branching which could devalue the future timber. Appropriate shade tolerant species such as beech, sycamore, hornbeam, elm & hazel should be considered as future understory species.

It is suggested that this crop could be suitable for an Alternative to Clearfell (ATC) system of management such as Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) or Low Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS). A decision on future silvicultural systems will be made in future management plans however it is suggested that a group or seed tree system may be appropriate for light demanders and a group or single tree system appropriate for more shade tolerant species.

## 5.2.2 Native Wet Woodland

Areas of native wet woodland once established will have minimal management intervention other than for any tree safety issues that may arise. Natural processes should be allowed to shape these stands enhancing biodiversity.

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

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## 5.2.3 Low growing shrubs

Areas of low growing shrubs will be planted to achieve multiple purposes. Judicious positioning of low growing species will allow views from elevated positions to be retained; planting of species which produce berries, seeds and flowers will provide a potential benefit to the local community. Providing cover for various forms of wildlife should enhance biodiversity whilst reducing the area which, if left open, has the potential to go rank once it is no longer grazed. Planting areas should allow suitable gaps between groups in order to facilitate any future management that may be required. Once established the woody shrub species will be observed annually during the growing season and should any particular shrubs become overgrown or too tall any necessary management regime will be created and implemented.

## 5.2.4 Open Land

This will consist of designed gaps between planting to retain important views and facilitate recreational access through the site. Selected rides will be mown to encourage and promote recreational use. Other open areas will not be formally managed as open habitat but overtime may develop interesting woodland edge habitat.

## 5.2.5 Hydrology

Operations and planting on the site will adhere to the guidance in the latest version of the Forest and Water Guidelines.

## 5.3 Biodiversity & Heritage

### 5.3.1 Priority Habitat Types & Important Species

The lowland meadow UKBAP priority habitat will not be formally managed as it is an isolated patch with no wider context or links but rather it shall not be planted and be allowed to develop naturally after over a century of grazing. The meadow should continue to provide both important habitat for invertebrates and pollinators and seasonal colour and diversity. The meadow will be observed during the first 5 years of this plan and should any cut and lift management regime be deemed appropriate it will be decided on at the mid-term review.

The very small area of lowland fen is located in the hollow created by the excavation carried out to produce the rise in landform required to raise the Sustrans cycle path to Blair Road. As such the fen obstructs the access between both portions of the site, under Blair Road, which will be necessary to manage the site. The hollow, therefore, will require material to backfill it to create a hard-standing to allow movement of forest machinery and facilitate recreational access to both sides of the site without the potential hazard of

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

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crossing Blair Road. The outcome of this work will be the loss of the fen habitat. There is no other economically viable means of avoiding this, however, the fen is a very small, isolated example of this widespread and common habitat type, with no wider context and was the result of chance as the conditions which made its development possible were created artificially when creating the Sustrans link.

No important species have been identified during the surveying for this plan, however should any species be discovered in future then the appropriate conservation will be applied as per the relevant FCS Policy and Guidance.

## 5.3.2 Invasive Non-Native Species

Below are the various methodologies to be employed for the respective INNS found within our management area in accordance with the District Invasive Non-Native Species Plan 2014-2019.

**Giant Hogweed** (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) - The local FC Beat team should dig up or spray to remove, to eradicate this species.

**Himalayan balsam** (*Impatiens glandulifera*) – Control is being carried out by hand pulling seedlings. However, larger patches are difficult to manage by hand-pulling as there are many small seedlings among other vegetation, and there is a large amount of material to remove from site. Therefore, large patches are to be sprayed off with Glyphosate and in the following years volunteers/staff can hand pull or spray for up to 3 years.

**Japanese knotweed** (*Fallopia japonica*) - An eradication programme is in place on SLFD sites. Control is initially carried out using stem injection of Glyphosate and then a follow up foliar spray or stem inject the next year. Initial results are very encouraging, with only a few small stems showing the year after stem injection.

The next stage will be to recover the habitats and to prevent re-establishment. At present it is planned to rake up and burn remaining material after the follow up spray and to reseed or plant the ground.

Control will follow the guidance in SEPA Technical Guidance Note: On-site management of Japanese Knotweed and associated contaminated soils.

**Grey squirrel** (*Sciurus carolinensis*) – Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) aren't found in this area so therefore greys are not deemed a threat to this species here and therefore this is not a driver for controlling them. However as the woodland is being managed for productive broadleaves future damage to the crop is a possibility. Susceptible species such as oak, sycamore and beech will

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

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be monitored for squirrel damage and should damage be observed appropriate control may be implemented.

The plant based invasive species noted above have been described out with our management area and therefore we will look to work with partners such as Ayrshire Rivers Trust to mitigate against the potential re-infestation of these species (see **Appendix II**).

### 5.3.3 Deadwood

It is the district policy to contribute around 20m<sup>3</sup>/ha of deadwood averaged across the whole woodland area in each forest block. This aspiration is dependent on the site type and long term objectives. As Woodgreen is a woodland creation site the deadwood potential is low therefore during the life of this plan the hedgerows and any veterans will be retained.

This approach will be weighed against the health and safety implications in regard to any priority visitor zoning areas detailed within the FC Practice Guide Managing Deadwood in Forests & Woodlands and appropriate steps should be taken to balance the approach above with public safety.

### 5.3.4 Wildlife Management

As there is no woodland to protect as yet and the site is currently grazed there has been no need to manage the site for deer. As suggested previously, to protect the establishing crop, fencing and/or tree guarding are most likely to be the methodologies employed. Once the crop has established and fencing/tree guards are removed future plans will detail the deer management prescription for the site. Further details on our deer management can be found within the Scottish Lowlands Forest District Deer Management Strategy (in conjunction with the Deer Overview Map).

### 5.3.5 Heritage

In general, all significant archaeological sites will be protected and managed following Forests and historic environment guidelines (2011), the FCS policy document Scotland's Woodlands and the Historic Environment (2008) and the supporting FES Historic Environment Planning Guidelines (available from the FCS Archaeologist). Access roads and fence lines will be surveyed by Forest District staff prior to any work being undertaken in order to ensure that upstanding historic environment features can be marked and avoided. At planting work prescriptions remove relevant historic environment features from ground disturbing operations and planting. Opportunities to enhance the setting of important sites are considered on a case-by-case basis (such as the views to and from a significant designated site).

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

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As described in section 3.5 the only heritage feature within the site is the former railway line and associated underpasses. The local authority is responsible for maintaining the underpass beneath the public road running over the former rail line but FES has responsibility for the pedestrian underpass to the east which links the two eastern sections of the site. This plan doesn't propose to plant within a 5 metre buffer either side of the former rail line. The plan does propose a future forest road which would finish at the rail line allowing vehicles to turn. Part of the former rail line hard standing under the public road which was excavated to create the Sustrans route we propose to reinstate to enable operational and recreational access between the west and east of the site.

## 5.4 Community & Recreation

FES district staff will liaise with the local community to promote and encourage future use of the wood and Community Rangers will continue to seek opportunities to develop new and forge existing links with schools, community and user groups to increase awareness and future enjoyment of the wood.

### 5.4.1 Community

Our communities' team will work to establish new and forge existing relations with various user groups e.g. wildlife, rambling, school and nursery groups etc. to encourage use of the site. We are also open to ideas from the community or particular user groups with suggestions to improve the site as it develops.

### 5.4.2 Recreation

As the site is still currently used for grazing there is little history of recreation within the site other than fishing from the banks of the River Garnock. It is hoped that this situation will change as the woodland establishes and our communities' team begin to promote the woodland within the local community. It is expected that initially various woodland rides will provide routes of varying distance for visitors to enjoy which in time may be improved upon to create a more formal path network which will broaden the suitability of the site to a other users. It is possible that in future, seating and picnic benches may be installed on the site if there is demand and funding to do so.

## 5.5 Access

### 5.5.1 Visitor

It is envisaged that future visitor access will be via the Garnock Viaduct Core path/Sustrans link. It is expected that access to the western portion of the site will be situated off the path where the path and the site are level with each

# Woodgreen Land Management Plan 2016-2026

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other approx. 50 yards west the public road. It is expected that access to the eastern portion of the site will be available from the western portion under the road bridge and also via an access gate from the public road. As mentioned above access will be provided initially via mown woodland rides but it is hoped that in future these may be upgraded to more formal paths (see **Map 5b – Future Operational & Recreation Access**).

## 5.5.2 Management

For future management, the site will benefit from an access to Blair Road which is suitable in terms of lines of safe site when entering and leaving the public road. This is thought to be possible from the bottom south-west corner of the eastern portion of the site. In order to facilitate movement of machinery and produce between both sections of the site it will be necessary to re-establish can access route under the road bridge which will mean backfilling the hollow created to raise the Sustrans link to the public road. The hard standing area under the bridge will allow produce from the west to be carried to the east for haulage. It is expected that creation of both the road and the access within the site will take place either during the life of this plan or the next but it will be necessary to have both in place before any initial thinnings are required(see **Map 5b – Future Operational & Recreation Access**).

## 5.6 Critical Success Factors

The success of this plan will be based on whether the objectives set out in the Management Plan Brief (see **Appendix IV**) are achieved. The table which forms **Appendix V** details how each objective will be appraised, where and when each objective will be monitored; by who and where it will be recorded. This will enable an evaluation of success as part of the mid and end of plan reviews.