

Sutton Heath



Management Plan 2016 – 2026

An Introduction to Sutton Heath 1

Introduction..... 1
Statutory obligation..... 1
The Sutton Heath vision..... 1

The Need for Management 2 - 4

The Sutton Heath management plan..... 2
What is a site management plan?..... 2
Why does heathland matter?..... 3
For the ecologically minded..... 3
Legal duty to manage..... 4

The Sutton Heath Landscape 5 - 7

The changing landscape of Sutton Heath..... 5
The physical features of Sutton Heath..... 6
Recreation site map of Sutton Heath facilities..... 6
Flora and fauna..... 7
Geology..... 7
Heathland..... 7
Woodland..... 7
Archaeology..... 7

Why People Value Sutton Heath 8 - 9

Where are we now..... 9

The Sutton Heath Management Plan 10 - 13

Site map of what's being proposed..... 10
Management objectives..... 11
Management assessment..... 11
Impact assessment..... 11
Management constraints..... 12
Monitoring..... 13

Action Plan 14 - 30

Compartment map..... 14
Whole site..... 15
South car park..... 16
Compartments A&B..... 17
Compartment C..... 18
Compartment D..... 19
Compartment E..... 20
Compartment F..... 21
Compartment G..... 22
Compartment H..... 23
Compartment I..... 24
Compartments J&K..... 25
Compartments L&M..... 26
Compartment N..... 27
Compartment O..... 28
Compartments P&Q..... 29
Compartment R..... 30

Glossary 31

Introduction

Sutton Heath is one of a number of open spaces within the Suffolk Coastal District. The site lies 4.5 km (3 miles) to the east of Woodbridge between the B1083 and road from Woodbridge to Hollesley.

Sutton Heath is part of the Sutton and Hollesley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that covers 483.26 hectares. Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC) own two areas within this SSSI, Sutton Heath which covers 65.5 hectares and Upper Hollesley that covers 11.79 hectares. The Council has a legal responsibility to manage both sites according to Natural England's guidelines and this Management Plan outlines the work that will be carried out at Sutton Heath.



Statutory Obligations

As a landowner and as a local authority SCDC have a number of legal obligations to uphold at Sutton Heath. Some of the Acts that have to be considered when determining the site's management plan include:

Wildlife:

- [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#)
- [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#)

Landscape:

- [National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949](#)

Access:

- [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#)
- [Health and Safety at Work Act](#)

The Sutton Heath Vision

That Sutton Heath continues to be protected both as an internationally important site for heathland and a community woodland environment maintained for informal recreation.



The Sutton Heath Management Plan

This document is split into two parts, an informal introduction explaining the background to this plan and its purpose in more general terms and a formal working management plan which sets out the work to be carried out over the next decade.

To skip to the detail of this Management Plan, go to page 10.



What is a Site Management Plan?

A site management plan is a formal document that sets out what is known about a site; in this case Sutton Heath; what is important about it (including both the legal designations and obligations and the interests of users and neighbours), and what the sites' management objectives should be. It also includes detail of how and when objectives should be met and the mechanisms in place for monitoring progress and plan reviews to ensure the management plan remains up to date and relevant throughout its duration.

A management plan has several functions.

- It acts as a compact record of the site, so that it is easy to find details like access rights, legal obligations and agreements, or the areas of particular compartments.
- It helps to plan budgets and work programmes.
- On a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (like Sutton Heath) a management plan, once approved by Natural England, is formal consent for a work programme enabling organisations to carry out works without seeking permission for each individual operation.



Management plans can be outward looking, a way of letting other interested parties such as users and Parish Councils know what has been decided and why. As a publically accessible site, this plan needs to be available within the public domain and can therefore be found on Suffolk Coastal District Council's (SCDC) website ([Heathland Management at Sutton Heath](#)).



Why does heathland matter?

An ancient habitat with its roots in the Mesolithic (the stone age hunter gather period after the end of the last Ice Age, some 10,000 years ago), the area of heathland in Britain has been declining since the end of the middle ages.

Traditionally heathlands were where the poorest in society scratched out a living. Activities such as grazing, mainly by sheep, and cottagers collecting wood and gorse for fuel, bracken (for animal bedding), and sometimes turf and sand or gravel for building kept the landscape largely open. Traditional heathlands would have had significant areas of bare ground which helped allow a wide range of specialist wildlife to thrive.

On-going management also maintained heathland as a cultural landscape; its importance is reflected in literature (e.g. Hardy's *Return of the Native*) and social history (e.g. George Ewart Evans' *Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay*, an oral history of Blaxhall).

As the rural economy changed and agriculture became more commercial, heathland was some of the first marginal land to feel the effects. Large areas were converted to other land uses, especially pine plantations. Irrigation allowed what had once been waste land to become valuable farmland, particularly for high value crops like vegetables and turf. Built developments such as the WWII airfields and modern housing have further reduced the area of England's surviving heathland.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century 80% of the UK's heathland, about a quarter of a million hectares (600,000 acres), has been lost, mostly to agriculture and afforestation. Nearly a fifth of that loss has been since the 1960s. Today what heathland remains is mostly on designated sites. Lack of management, by Common Rights holders or landowners, is now the heathlands greatest threat.

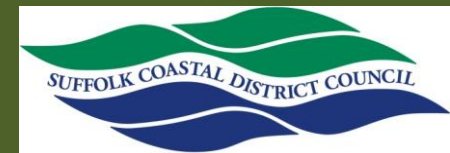
Despite the enormous scale of loss surviving heathland is still an important part of what makes the landscape and wildlife in Suffolk Coastal so distinctive.

For the ecologically minded

Heathland is sometimes described as a man-made habitat. However this isn't an accurate description, it's a "semi natural habitat", just like nearly all other habitats in the UK. This means that it has certainly been modified and maintained by human activity over the centuries but it still retains a rich diversity of wildlife whose origins lie in a truly natural, wild past. Managing a heathland is no different to managing bluebell coppice woodland, a hay meadow or chalk downlands. All are habitats which without management would lose their rare and distinctive species and become secondary (new) woodland of lesser wildlife value.

Heathland has been around in one form or another, for thousands of years. After the end of the Ice Age there were wild cattle, wild boar, red and roe deer, beavers and possibly elk (moose) too which grazed, browsed and generally kept some areas open in the mainly forested landscape. Our ancestors no doubt assisted this process by clearing and burning areas for hunting. Since then domestic livestock, and human activities, have taken over the ecological roles that these wild animals once filled. In the absence of human intervention the land would need to be maintained by large wild animals, without this the change to the lands management would become 'unnatural' and suffer adversely as a result.

In contrast to heathland, secondary (new) woodland is very common in Suffolk and across the UK. Whether it has been created deliberately, as a plantation, or grown up on abandoned ground, it mainly supports widespread and common species. New woodland certainly isn't without value, but both heathland and woodland are necessary to maintain the diverse landscape that is so characteristic of Suffolk Coastal.



Legal Duty to Manage

As landowner and as a Local Authority SCDC have a number of legal duties to uphold at Sutton Heath, these include:

Wildlife;

The lowland heathland habitat at Sutton Heath was identified as a priority in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, which was prepared for the UK Government following the signing of the Convention on Biological Diversity that took place at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992.

The Council has a statutory duty under the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#) to have regard for biodiversity as part of its policy and decision making.

Sutton and Hollesley is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#). In 2008 Sutton Heath was also designated under the Habitats Directive as part of the Sandlings Special Protection Area. The designation reflects its European importance for two species of endangered breeding birds, the Woodlark and the Nightjar.

As a result of these designations Natural England, and through them the Council as landowner, have a legal obligation to ensure that the site is in, or is recovering toward, favorable condition as defined by Natural England. This means SCDC have a legal obligation to ensure the site is in an ecological condition which can maintain the designated wildlife long term.

Landscape;

Alongside the wildlife designations, Sutton Heath is also part of the Suffolk Coast & Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

AONBs are protected landscapes of national significance, designated under the [National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949](#) and with the same landscape status as National Parks. The Suffolk Coast & Heaths AONB is looked after by a partnership of organisations all helping to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. Suffolk Coastal District Council is part of this AONB Partnership, and has a statutory duty (along with all the other relevant authorities including Parish Councils) to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB when exercising or performing any functions affecting land in the AONB. Given the landscape importance of heathlands in general, and Sutton Heath in particular, this gives the Council an added obligation to find a solution that conserves the heathlands special landscape qualities.

Access;

The sites are crossed by several public rights of way and are designated as open access land under the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#). This means that SCDC has a duty to keep the rights of way clear and cannot impose any general restriction on visitors accessing the sites by foot.

In line with SCDC's overall vision to "maintain and sustainably improve the quality of life for everybody growing up, living in, working in and visiting the area" management of this site also meets the priorities within [SCDC's Leisure Strategy](#) and plays an important role in promoting SCDC's commitment to provide communities access to open spaces, helping to improve peoples fitness, health and wellbeing.



The Changing Landscape of Sutton Heath

Sutton Heath was designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest in 1955 because of its heathland habitat. At that time, although there were some established woodlands, the majority of the site and adjacent land was open heathland as clearly demonstrated in the below aerial photograph of Sutton Heath taken in 1945. The photograph shows the pine belt and oak and chestnut copse just to the west of the ancient monument (at the bottom of the photo) and another area of woodland just to the north east of the ancient monument, can be clearly seen. The Hollesley Road runs from the top left off to the bottom right of the photograph. The crisscross of what appear to be paths are in fact WWII anti-glider ditches, some of which are still visible on the ground today.



When the rabbit population was decimated by myxomatosis in the mid-1950s, the effects of their grazing was lost, tree seedlings soon established themselves and large areas of Sutton Heath became wooded. By the early 1980's when the District Council owned 65 hectares of land, now known as Sutton Heath, 55% of the site was woodland, as opposed to approximately 20% of the site shown in the 1945 photograph when it was designated an SSSI.

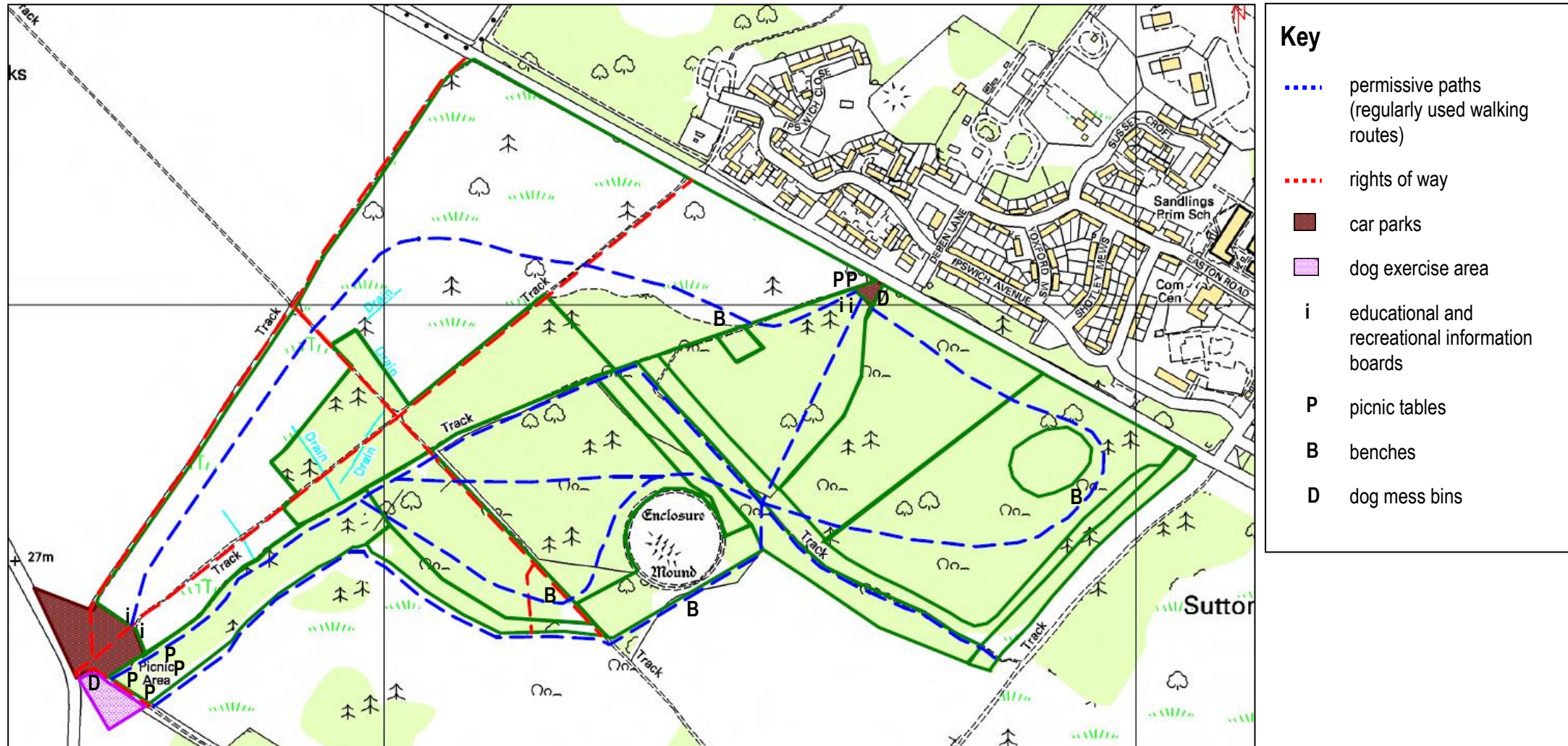
The below aerial photograph of Sutton Heath shows the site as it is now (2016).



The Physical Features of Sutton Heath

Recreation

A bird's eye view of Sutton Heath conceals the many facilities the site has to offer. Over the years Sutton Heath's popularity has changed the ground level landscape and this has helped to evolve a variety of walking routes from a network of informal paths. The most popular routes are marked out on the below map. The map also highlights the location of commonly used facilities.



Flora & Fauna

The flora of the site is typical of a lowland heath with colonising woodland. Some 70 species of vascular plants have been recorded on the site to date (See Appendix 1). There are four principal vegetation types namely:-

- Heathland (Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat)
- Woodland (plantation and secondary woodland, consisting mainly of sweet chestnut, oak, birch & pine).
- Acid Grassland (Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat)
- Bracken

The area dominated by bracken has been reduced in the last 15 years and the area of heathland and acid grassland has increased as a consequence.

The site is currently composed of (2016):

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---------|
| • Existing and restored heath | 34.5 ha | (52%) |
| • Post 1955 woodland | 14ha | (21%) |
| • Established woodland (pre 1955) | 17 ha | (26.5%) |
| • South car park | 1 ha | (0.5%) |

Both the pre 1955 woodland and south car park areas are classified as 'Fabric' by Natural England. This means the areas are not included within Natural England's calculations when they decide how much woodland on an SSSI needs to be restored back to heath in order to classify the site as 'in favourable condition'.

Normally the amount of tree cover would be calculated individually for each land owner site, however in this case Natural England agreed to assess tree cover across the whole SSSI site and Sutton Heath's neighbouring land owner agreed to take on further felling responsibilities to reduce the Council's obligations at Sutton Heath.

To restore the Sutton Heath site to favourable condition Natural England require the sites tree cover to amount to 15% or less. Removing the site areas classed as 'Fabric' from the equation generates a figure of 4 hectares. This is the area of woodland that will be restored to heathland gradually over the course of this 10 year Management Plan.

A full list of the flora and fauna species recorded at the Sutton Heath site is available for public viewing at the [Suffolk Biological Records Centre](#).

Geology

The site lies on a deposit of glacial sands and gravels overlying earlier deposits of crags and London Clay.

The sands and gravels were deposited c.12,000 years ago towards the end of the last ice age and have been subsequently leached of nutrients giving rise to a dry, acidic soil known as a "podsol".

Heathland

In 1955 when Sutton Heath was designated a SSSI the majority of the area was made up of heathland. Today much of this heath has reverted to woodland. Some areas have been restored to heath in recent years and now give a flavour of the communities of plants found here in the past.

Seasonal grazing by domestic livestock takes place at Sutton Heath and is an essential part of keeping the heathland in good condition preventing it from reverting back to woodland. Grazing is undoubtedly the best management option for heathland areas because it creates a varied structure of vegetation that mechanical methods of management, such as mowing, can't replicate. It is also more sustainable: cheaper in the long run, and less polluting.

Woodland

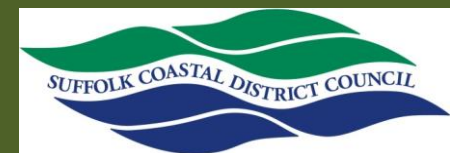
The wooded areas of Sutton Heath are highly valued by the local community. SCDC feel it is important to manage these areas properly to ensure the Sutton Heath community has a sheltered area to recreate and the sites biodiversity has a place to flourish.

SCDC takes guidance from the Forestry Commission (FC) when setting actions for woodland management within this management plan. This helps to ensure best practice is being considered when managing the woodland for years to come. Further information on woodland management by the FC can be found here: www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/so-you-own-a-woodland.pdf

Archeology

There are 3 ancient monument sites situated on the Sutton Heath site the Pillow mound, Shepherd's cottage garden, Longbarrow with circular bank.

SCDC have a duty to ensure these sites are reasonably protected from excessive deterioration caused by animal and plant growth. To do this rangers use Suffolk County Council's [Historical Environment Record](#) to understand the monuments qualities and respond accordingly. As a result of this actions have been added to this Management Plan to ensure the risk of damage to the monuments is appropriately mitigated.



Why People Value Sutton Heath



Sutton Heath is highly valued by its visitors. Many of whom come to walk their dogs, picnic in the summer, ramble along a network of paths and simply enjoy the peaceful landscape. They value the diversity of the landscape – the open expanses of heathland, the sheltered woodland areas and the diverse wildlife. The woodland provides year round shelter and absorbs quite a few visitors at any one time, ensuring the sense of a peaceful, safe and uncrowded environment is maintained.

It is estimated that 75,000 day visitors come to Sutton Heath every year. The majority of visitors come from the local area. Residents from nearby Sutton Heath and the army base generally walk to the site but the majority drive, often on a daily basis, from the nearest large settlements of Melton and Woodbridge, some 4 or 5 miles away. Regular visitors come to walk their dogs and they are glad to have the opportunity to let their dogs off the lead, happy to pass the time of day with people they have come to know and enjoy a safe and pleasant walk at all times of the year. On an ordinary day you may also find horse riders, cyclists, runners and bird watchers all enjoying the opportunities for recreation that the site offer. Aside from the large number of local people visiting the site, Sutton Heath also sees visitors from further afield who have come to the Suffolk Coastal area specifically for the walks, wildlife and countryside opportunities.

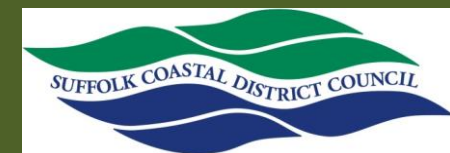
Sutton Heath is used more formally by school groups, the military for fitness training and groups organising orienteering events, sponsored walks or organised wildlife walks and talks that help to educate and engage people with the site's natural environment. The site's rangers also run a volunteer group that offers opportunities for local communities to give back to the site, and others, helping maintain their unique features. Information about how to become a volunteer or to find more about what they do can be found here: [Footprint Volunteer Group](#).

Sutton Heath's on site facilities include; 2 car parks, a variety of walking routes created by the network of informal paths, 4 educational and recreational information points, 6 picnic tables and 4 well used benches - all of which will be reviewed as part of this plan. The on-site dog exercise facility and 2 dog mess bins will also be reviewed as part of this plan.

There are several public rights of way that run through Sutton Heath and the land is designated as open access under the [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#). Legal obligations associated with the site require positive management and conservation. As the Sutton Heath area of the Sutton and Hollesley SSSI receives the majority of visitors it alleviates visitor pressures on other areas of the SSSI, where more sensitive conservation work can take place. It is considered that with careful management and cooperation of site visitors these, at times, conflicting site objectives can be managed to ensure that people can enjoy the site without detracting from its natural character.

In the past Sutton Heath was an essential part of village life, providing fuel and grazing for livestock. It still supports the local economy and may even, in the future, once more find a market for its natural resources.

Sutton Heath visitors have helped shape this Management Plan by providing feedback on how they use the site and what qualities they most enjoy. The plan seeks to reflect their views and sets out to balance the enjoyment of visitors with the legal obligations of managing a sensitive and special area.



Where we are now?

In 2010/11 SCDC started to carry out routine heathland restoration works at Sutton Heath, these works included felling a large area of woodland over a period of time to restore the site back to its original heathland designation. This clearance work provoked a strong adverse public reaction and the Sutton Heath community expressed concerns for the loss of the diverse landscape of woodland that they go to Sutton Heath to enjoy. The majority of public disquiet focused on proposals for further tree clearance, however fear of further restrictions on dog walking that could be put in place to allow more grazing or to protect the sites wildlife, was also seen as a problem.

As a result in the summer of 2012 a campaigning user group was formed to oppose the Management Plan. In response all works on the site ceased at Sutton Heath and neighboring SCDC owned site Upper Hollesley and a local Councillor set up the Sutton Heath Advisory Panel (SHAP) with representatives of local Parish Councils and other interested parties, including the campaigning user group. The panel was charged with understanding all elements of the issue, aiming to improve communication between the parties and seeking a compromise solution.

Since 2012 SHAP has met several times and clarified some important legal details of SCDC's position with Natural England. The Council has negotiated a flexible solution with Natural England which will help address the needs and concerns of users of the heath whilst continuing to recognise the Council's legal and moral obligations to conserve such an important area for wildlife.

This Management Plan is the result of these negotiations and is based on the understanding that the bulk of the visitor pressure takes place at Sutton Heath. This will be of benefit as it will allow quieter sections of the SSSI to be retained and conserved. An agreement has been reached to reduce the obligation for tree clearance at Sutton Heath and to increase the restoration of SSSI heathland to be carried out by a neighboring landowner.

Works will begin on both Sutton Heath and Upper Hollesley sites in 2016. This Management Plan outlines the works to be carried out over the next 10 years, for a copy of the Upper Hollesley Management Plan which outlines work being carried out alongside Sutton Heath please contact Suffolk Coastal District Council.

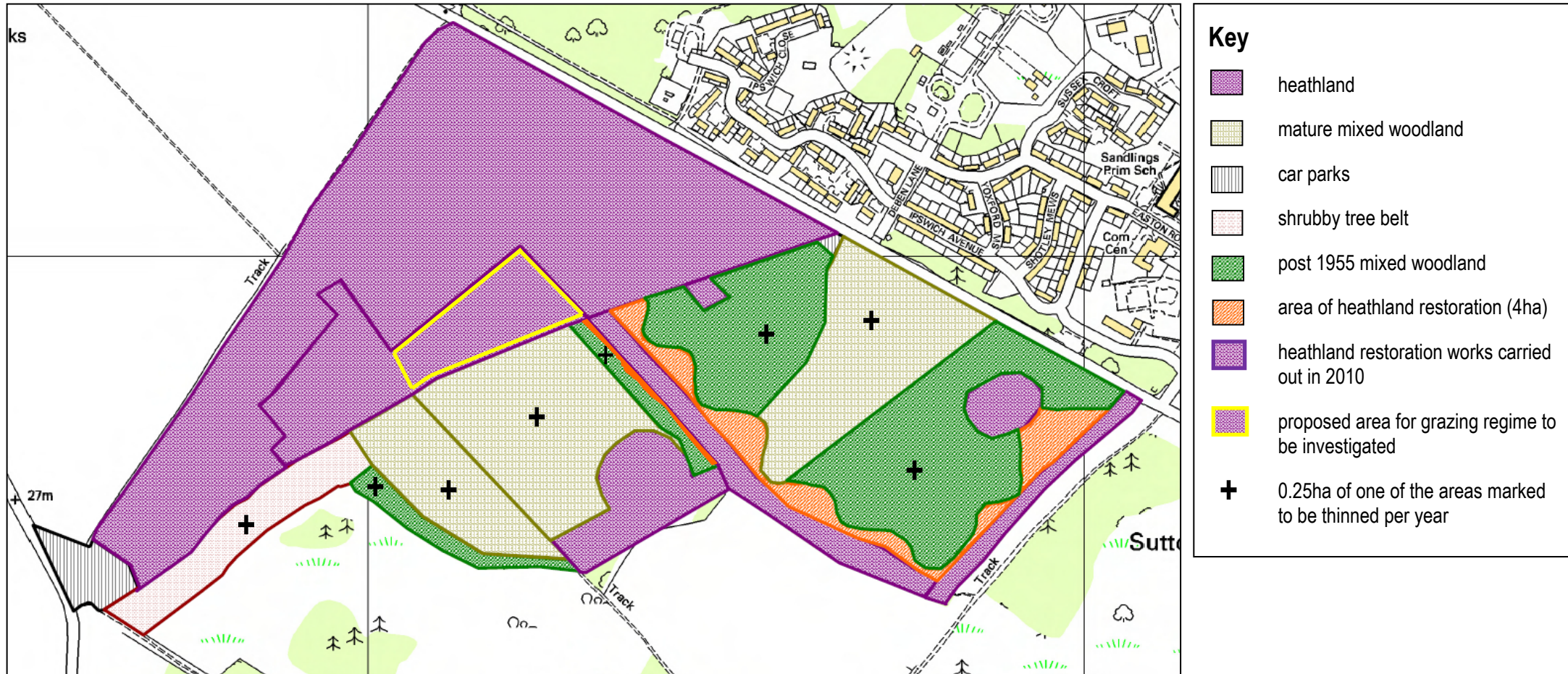


What's Being Proposed?

While the plan for Sutton Heath proposes the removal of fewer trees than the previous plan, some heathland restoration is still needed to link areas of open habitat together, creating a wildlife corridor between woodland spaces. The areas of tree clearance will be carefully selected to ensure that the sheltered wooded paths, valued most by recreational users, are not significantly affected.

In 2009 SCDC intended to restore 33 hectares of Sutton Heath back to heathland from the existing woodland. 4.5 hectares were restored during 2010. Since then SCDC has taken note of the views of visitors to the heath and this Management Plan sets out to ensure the site remains valued for recreational use whilst continuing to meet its statutory requirements. The amount of heathland restoration proposed in this plan is the minimum amount required by Natural England in order to meet SCDC's legal obligations and restore the site back to Natural England's favorable condition category.

The below map provides a visual understanding of the proposed works outlined within the Management Plan's action plan.



Management plan objectives

The objectives within this Management Plan enable SCDC:-

- To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.
- To accommodate the recreational needs of a growing population by reviewing facilities and appropriately responding to visitor requirements.
- To mitigate visitor pressures on the whole SSSI site by offering a wide variety of users (including dog walkers, picnickers, ramblers, older people enjoying the countryside etc.) an area suitable for informal recreation.
- To maximise opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the qualities and interests of the site whilst monitoring any adverse effects that take place.
- To provide educational groups with a place to observe the geological, natural or historical features of the site and to encourage or facilitate educational sessions such as school trips or guided walks on less sensitive areas of the heathland.
- To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Management Assessment

Conservation management will be directed towards the management of existing and recently restored areas of heathland and the ongoing maintenance of the heathland will be carried out using a sheep grazing regime. Within the wooded areas management will include thinning, coppicing, creating woodland layers, protecting existing veteran trees and selecting future standards to create increased pockets of flora while retaining the sense of a woodland environment that visitors to the site enjoy. This balanced maintenance regime will help to strategically restore the heathland and provide an area of attractive woodland for the recreational purposes of users.

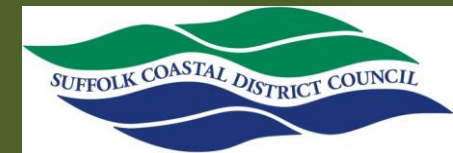
Whilst accepting Sutton Heath helps alleviate visitor pressures on the rest of the SSSI site, careful balanced management of the sites recreational use will continue to minimise the impact on the sites more sensitive wildlife and plant species. Recreational management of the site will focus mainly on the maintenance of car parks, footpaths and picnic areas and providing visitors with information and guidance that encourages safe and responsible use of the area. This approach alongside the provision of important seasonal information such as, ground nesting birds breeding seasons, grazing regime rotas and placement of picnic tables, benches and dog mess bins, looks to mitigate the impact visitors can have on a SSSI site such as Sutton Heath.

Impact Assessment

Sutton Heath as it is known today is the consequence of centuries of active management in a relatively stable environment, the future climate of this environment is uncertain. Current predictions suggest that tree species such as oak may decline in health whilst others, such as rowan may fare better. The result of this over many years may be a more scrubby and open woodland with lower tree canopies.

Heathland communities, today dominated by ericaceous species like heather, are also predicted to change to a more grass dominated community.

Trying to ensure Sutton Heath is robust when facing these changes will be a challenge, especially when the future climate is unknown. Increasing structural diversity (achieved through grazing), monitoring changes in tree heath and vegetation and working to reduce the fragmentation of habitat locally are aspects being considered when attempting to mitigate these impacts.



Management Constraints

The current economic constraints on Local Government funding may impact the timing of various projects within this Management Plan. Every effort will be made to ensure actions are adhered to within their allocated timeframes however this plan is a working document and annual reviews will enable SCDC to effectively report on progress and provide realistic changes to schedules as and when funding is available.

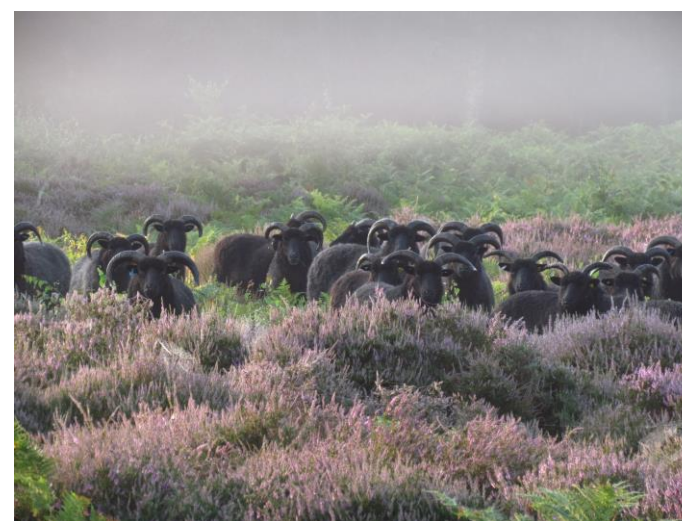
Suffolk Coastal Norse (SCN) undertakes the countryside service on behalf of SCDC and the Management Plan clearly defines the habitat management and site maintenance roles of both SCN and SCDC. Any provision of visitor facilities located on the Sutton Heath site over and above those listed in this plan may require agreement and possibly funding by SCDC.

SCDC and SCN review and agree any changes to this Management Plan annually, this ensures communication between the partnership is retained and works carried out at Sutton Heath are directed by SCDC.

The SCN countryside team is relatively small and as the service covers the whole of the district it is expected that the works listed in this Management Plan will take place at Sutton Heath gradually. Contractors and volunteer groups will be utilised as necessary, ensuring that the work programme continues to meet the Management Plans' objectives. SCN will continue to supervise volunteer groups appropriately when works are carried out at Sutton Heath.

Despite limited resource, the SCN countryside service will continue to provide and supervise educational events and activities, as time and work constraints allow.

The financial support provided by Natural England's Higher Level Stewardship Scheme (HLS) is vital in enabling the programme of habitat maintenance and site management to both heathland and woodland. This scheme comes to an end in 2019. Researching other available schemes has been accounted for in the action plan to ensure financial support does not become a barrier to continued maintenance of the heathland and woodland areas of Sutton Heath throughout the length of the plan.



Monitoring

As the team undertaking the majority of work at Sutton Heath is relatively small and it is accepted this action plan will be undertaken gradually the Management Plan flexibility has been designed into the work programme. SCDC and SCN will review relevant progress at scheduled monthly and quarterly partnership meetings. Major progress and programme slippage will be recorded at these meetings and if appropriate, the Management Plan will be reviewed and amended annually following SCDC's bi-annual partner performance reviews where decisions to change work programmes take place, these bi-annual reviews take place in March and September.

A communication mechanism will be introduced via the Sutton Heath Advisory Panel to ensure the Sutton Heath community are updated annually with progress and any changes that have been made to the Management Plan throughout the year.

SCDC will monitor the success of Sutton Heath's Management Plan using the targets set out by Natural England's HLS scheme, these are known as 'indicators of success' and are listed below categorised by site description:

Areas being restored to heathland;

- By year 5 cover of dwarf shrubs should be between 10% and 90%.
- By year 10 cover of dwarf shrubs should be between 25% and 95% (at least 2 species)
- By year 10 there should be at least 10% cover of pioneer stage heather
- By year 10 cover of bare ground should be between 1% and 10%
- By year 5 at least 2 desirable wildflower species should be occasional e.g. heath bedstraw, sheep's sorrel.
- By year 10 cover of briophytes and lichens should be at least 10%
- All SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition as determined by Natural England

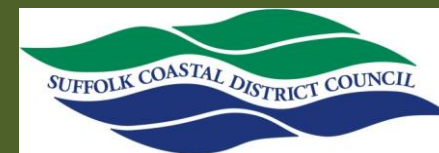
Maintenance of existing heathland;

- Cover of dwarf shrubs at least 2 species should be between 25% and 95%.
- There should be a wide range of age classes of heather present. This should include between 10% and 15% cover of pioneer stage, between 25% and 40% cover of building stage, between 25% and 40% cover of mature stage and between 10% and 30% cover of degenerate stage and no more than 10% cover of dead heather.
- At least 2 desirable wildflower species such as heath bedstraw, field woodrush, buckshorn plantain, sheep's sorrel and wood sage should be occasional.
- Cover of bare ground should be between 15 and 10%
- Cover of common gorse should be between 2% and 5%
- Cover of bryophytes and lichens should be at least 10%
- Protect the archaeological / historic features on the site as described above and in the case of the Scheduled Monument to the satisfaction of English heritage.
- All SSSI land should be in favourable or recovering condition

Established woodland areas (map area G):

- Tree species (oak, sweet chestnut, birch, pine) should be present and irregularly spaced with an overall canopy of no more than 50% of the area
- Coppice should be recorded between 10% and 100% of the area
- By year 10 two desirable woodland birds should be present e.g. Nightingale, Willow Warbler, Redstart
- By year 10 bracken should occur in several places of the area but its population should not be overly large
- Open ground should cover 10% and 30% of the area

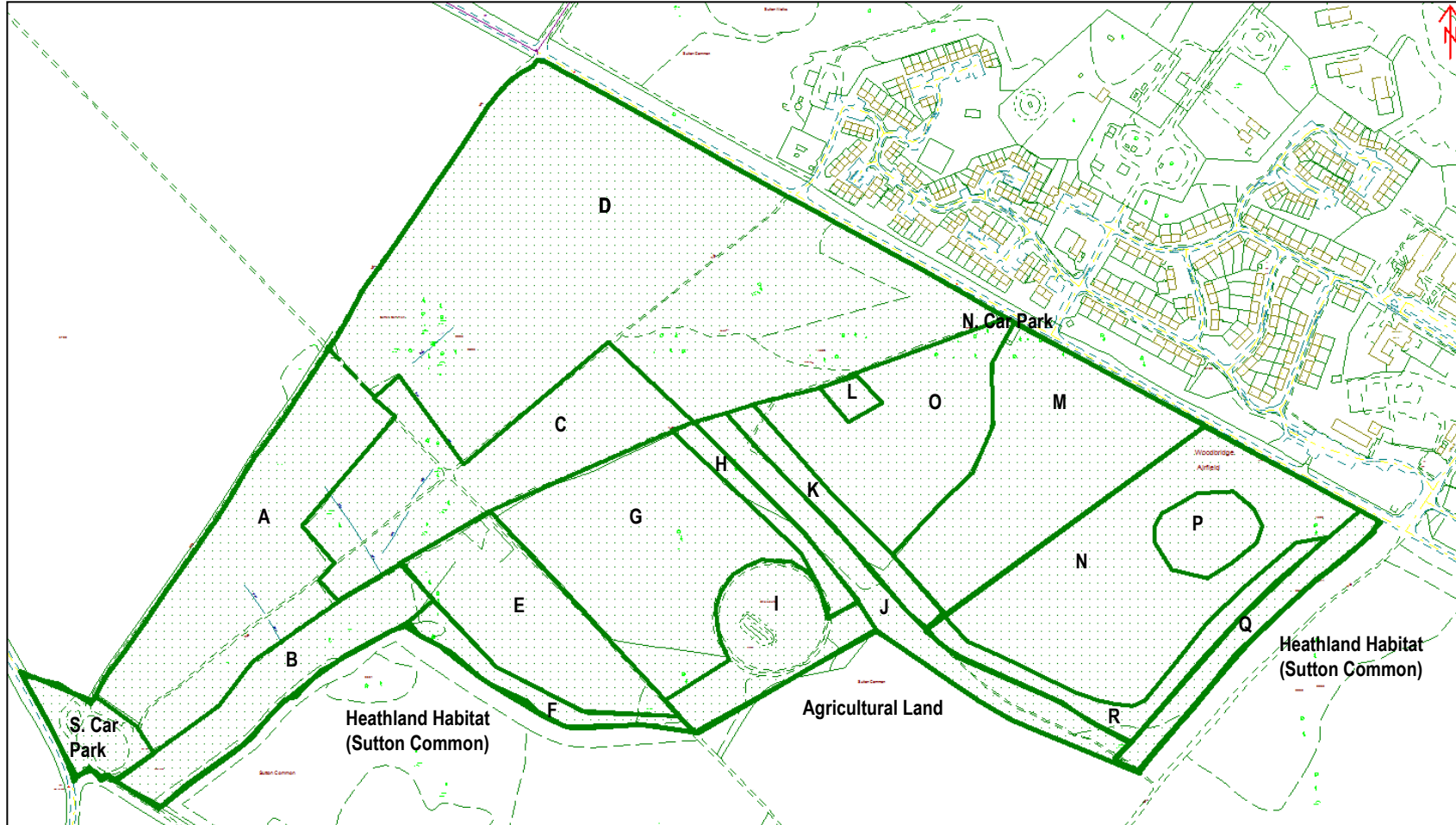
Alongside working to Natural England's targets, nesting activity of certain species of heathland birds (Nightjar, Woodlark, Stonechat, Dartford Warbler etc.) at Sutton Heath is continually monitored. Any data recorded is sent to RSPB to be included within the annual '[Sandlings Breeding Birds](#)' survey.



Action Plan

The Management Plan's objectives will be fulfilled through a rolling programme of management tailored to fit the available resources.

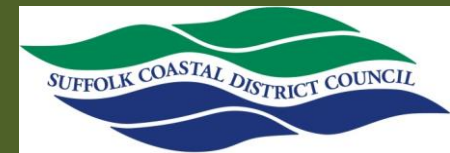
The Management Plan's action plan refers to specific site areas within Sutton Heath. To clearly understand which actions refer to which site areas, Sutton Heath has been split into sections using reference numbers that can also be found within the action plan, as shown on the below compartment map:



Key

The acronyms used in the following action plan include:

- NE: Natural England
- SCN : Suffolk Coastal Norse
- Vols: Volunteers
- HLS : Higher Level Stewardship
- HER : Historical Environmental Record
- SWT : Suffolk Wildlife Trust
- SCC : Suffolk County Council



Map Area: Whole Site

Area Size: 65.5 hectares

Management Objectives

To accommodate the recreational needs of a growing population by reviewing facilities and appropriately responding to visitor requirements.

To mitigate visitor pressures on the rest of the wider SSSI site by offering a wide variety of users an area suitable for informal recreation.

To maximise opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the qualities and interests of the site whilst monitoring any adverse affects that take place.

To provide educational groups with a place to observe the geological, natural or historical features of the site and to encourage or facilitate educational sessions such as school trips or guided walks on less sensitive areas of the heathland.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Carry out annual tree safety survey and bi-annual site safety audits.	Annual	SCN	Low
Where practical offer the community a programme of guided walks and or talks.	Annual	SCN	Low
Monitor and log the number of volunteers and volunteer hours carried out on site maintenance and conservation projects with the aim to support 500 volunteer hours annually.	Annual	SCN	Low
Where practical work with schools to offer a programme of educational site visits.	Annual	SCN	Low
Maintain the network of public and permissive paths	Annual	SCN	Low
Review, provide and maintain educational and recreational signage for visitors	Annual	SCN	Low
Apply for relevant felling licences.	1, 5	SCN	Low
Research and re-apply for HLS or other relevant funding scheme.	3	SCN	Low
Research and apply for funding schemes available to assist with relevant site and habitat maintenance projects.	Annual	SCN	Low
Carry out a review of the Management Plan.	5	SCN	Low
Carry out an accurate count of annual visitor numbers to guide access and facility strategies.	1, 6	SCN	Low
Carry out a visitor satisfaction survey to establish views on facilities, access and more specifically the number and placement of dog mess bins, picnic areas and benches.	2, 6	SCN	Low
Carry out a review of the number and position and quality of picnic areas.	2	SCN	Low
Carry out a review of the number and position and quality of benches and seating areas.	2	SCN	Low
Ensure rangers and volunteer groups working at Sutton Heath are accessible, approachable and provide positive and informative messages to visitors as well as, where appropriate, challenge the misuse of the site.	Annual	SCDC / SCN	Low

Map Area: South Car Park

Area Size: 1 hectare

Area Description

The car park is a combination of areas of hard stand, areas of acid grassland an area of planted trees that act as a road screen and an area of heather with invasive scrub.

Most of the car park is defined from the natural areas by bollards, protecting the natural sward from erosion. Three byways pass through the car park.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To accommodate the recreational needs of a growing population by reviewing facilities and appropriately responding to visitor requirements.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Retain a scatter of oak trees, of differing ages, selected for their habitat and landscape quality and thin the scrub and bracken from heather stand to provide light for flora development.	1	SCN/Vols	Low
Resurface car park.	1, 5	Con	Medium
Maintain area free from litter.	Annual	SCN	Low
Provide and maintain picnic tables.	Annual	SCN	Low
Carry out a review of the number and position of dog bins.	2	SCN	Low
Work with the AONB and Broxstead Estate to investigate the possibility of re-fencing the dog exercise area outside of the Sutton Heath boundary, offering a safe environment for visitors of Sutton Heath to exercise their dogs off lead.	1	Con	Medium

Map Area: A**Area Size:** 5.8 hectares**Area Description**

An area of established heathland consisting of a large swathe of acid grassland and areas of heather with scattered trees.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To maximise opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the qualities and interests of the site whilst monitoring any adverse affects that take place.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Periodical clearance of invasive scrub as required.	Annual	SCN / Vols	Low
Treat bracken by spraying and cutting as required.	Annual	Con / SCN	Medium
Survey and monitor population levels of key species and vegetation levels as per HLS 'Indicators of Success'.	Annual	SCN / Vols / NE	Low

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Maintain the belt of existing pine trees.	Annual	SCN	Low
Carry out annual tree safety survey and bi-annual safety audits re: veteran pine trees.	Annual	SCN	Low
Thin any invading/competing scrub to enable the growth of veteran and next generation trees within the tree belt.	0.25ha annually rotating between 7 map areas (One map area per year)	SCN	Low

Map Area: B**Area Size:** 2 hectares**Area Description**

A belt of mature and developing pine trees with acid grassland, bracken and bramble understory.

It is likely this area is part of an old pine belt/hedge. The remaining mature pines are an important landscape feature and wildlife habitat.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to



Map Area: C

Area Size: 4.5 hectares

Area Description

In line with the previous HLS Management Plan this areas tree cover was drastically thinned in February 2010 to restore the area back to heathland. The trees that were removed established themselves after the 1950's, post myxomatosis outbreak.

The area is now in recovery with heather and acid grassland plants re-establishing themselves. Bracken, bramble, pine and birch seedlings also grow and compete on this land.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To maximise opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the qualities and interests of the site whilst monitoring any adverse affects that take place.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
SCN to investigate the potential of extending the fencing in this area by a minimum of 600m or a maximum of 750m, enclosing the NW section and increasing the sites sheep grazing regime in order to restore heathland to this open area of land whilst maintaining current public rights of way and permissive paths.	2	SCN / SCDC	Low
Periodical clearance of invasive scrub as required.	Annual	SCN / Vols	Low
Treat bracken by spraying and cutting as required.	Annual	Con / SCN	Medium
Survey and monitor population levels of key species and vegetation levels as per HLS 'Indicators of Success'	Annual	SCN / Vols / NE	Low



Map Area: D

Area Size: 17.8 hectares

Area Description

An area of established heathland consisting of varying aged heather, some acid grassland, bare areas and some gorse and scattered trees.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To maximise opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the qualities and interests of the site whilst monitoring any adverse affects that take place.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Periodical clearance of invasive scrub as required.	Annual	SCN / Vols	Low
Treat bracken by spraying and cutting as required.	Annual	Con / SCN	Medium
Periodically graze the area with livestock and maintain the stock fence.	Annual (Spring/Summer)	SWT	Medium
Manage the surroundings of the archaeological 'Pillow mound' as per the specifications recorded on the HER .	Annual	SCN / SCC	Low
Survey and monitor population levels of key species and vegetation levels as per HLS 'Indicators of Success'.	Annual	SCN / NE	Low



Map Area: E

Area Size: 3.2 hectares

Area Description

An area of woodland that was thinned of many of its post myxomatosis trees as part of the previous HLS heathland restoration programme. In this plan the area will continue to be managed as woodland.

The area consists of mature oaks, sweet chestnuts, birch and pine with some areas of very dense young birch scrub and denser younger pine trees.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To maximise opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the qualities and interests of the site whilst monitoring any adverse affects that take place.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k- >8k, Low>2k)
Protect and nurture next generation oak or sweet chestnut seedlings/saplings.	Annual	SCN / Vols	Low
Thin out the dense areas of birch and pine scrub regeneration, whilst being careful to retain the shelter and sense of woodland environment that is valued by the users of the site, in order to allow light to the woodland floor nurturing ground flora development.	1, 2, 3	SCN / Vols	Low
Select the next generation of trees when strategically thinning dense areas retaining well placed healthy trees of all ages, enhancing the environment by providing a valuable habitat for wildlife and an area of interesting character trees.	Annual	SCN / Vols	Low
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning to aid the growth of existing, older character trees and future selected trees of all ages. This process provides light to the woodland floor and promotes the development of ground flora. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	0.25ha annually rotating between 7 map areas (One map area per year)	SCN / Vols	Low
Retain/manage 'open' areas, where heather is dominant, by removing tree seedlings.	Annual	SCN / Vols	Low
Carry out annual tree safety survey and bi-annual safety audits.	Annual	SCN	Low
Manage the surroundings of the archaeological 'post-medieval/modern settlement (Shepherd's cottage garden)' as per the specifications recorded on the HER .	Annual	SCN	Low



Map Area: F

Area Size: 0.6 hectares

Area Description

An area of mostly post myxomatosis secondary woodland dominated by pines with some deciduous trees and heather in places.

The trees create a hard woodland edge adjacent to the southern heathland habitat area of Sutton Common.

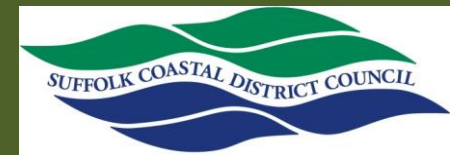
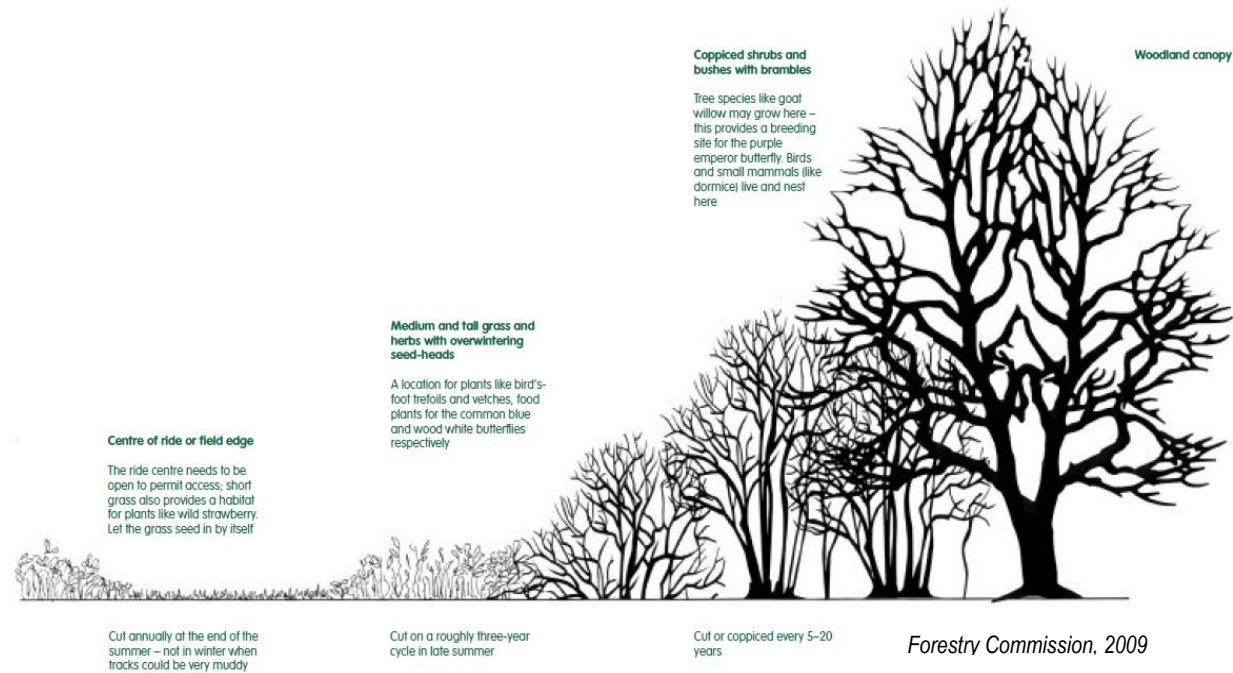
Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To maximise opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the qualities and interests of the site whilst monitoring any adverse affects that take place.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning to create softer, scalloped, and graded woodland edges providing light for the ground flora to develop. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	0.25ha annually rotating between 7 map areas (One map area per year)	SCN / Vols	Low
Carry out annual tree safety survey and bi-annual safety audits.	Annual	SCN	Low



Map Area: G

Area Size: 5.4 hectares

Area Description

A compartment of established woodland with some old oak and sweet chestnut standards covering approximately 60% of the area.

The remaining 40% consists of establishing, dense, secondary woodland made up of post Myxomatosis trees (pine, birch, oak and sweet chestnut) and re-generating sweet chestnut coppice stools.

Management Objectives

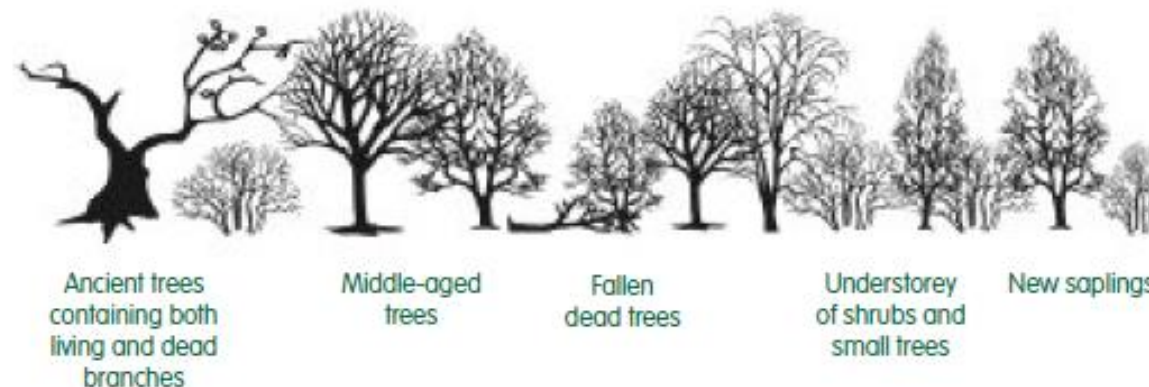
To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To maximise opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the qualities and interests of the site whilst monitoring any adverse affects that take place.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning to create softer, scalloped, and graded woodland edges providing light for the ground flora to develop. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	0.25ha annually rotating between 7 map areas (One map area per year)	SCN / Vols	Low
Survey and monitor population levels of key species as per HLS 'Indicators of Success'.	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	SCN / Vols	Low
Carry out annual tree safety survey.	Annual	SCN	Low

Uneven-aged woodland – many wildlife habitats because of high diversity



Many people think that woods are better left untouched, and that a wood left to nature becomes a haven for wildlife. But there are lots of simple things that you can do to make it a better place to visit, to attract more wildlife and to contribute to its upkeep. *Forestry Commission, 2009.*



Map Area: H

Area Size: 0.5 hectares

Area Description

An area of mostly post myxomatosis secondary woodland, dominated by pines, some deciduous trees and heather in places.

The trees form a hard woodland edge against the heathland habitat of map area J.

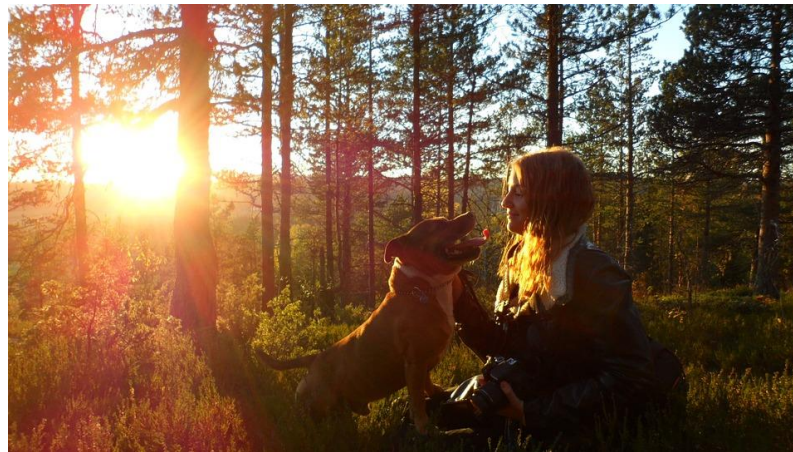
Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To maximise opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the qualities and interests of the site whilst monitoring any adverse affects that take place.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning of trees and scrub to create a scalloped woodland edge whilst providing light for heathland flora to expand. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	0.25ha annually rotating between 7 map areas (One map area per year)	Con	High
Clear scrub re-growth from restored heathland areas.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	SCN / Vols	Low
Carry out annual tree safety survey.	Annual	SCN	Low



Map Area: I

Area Size: 2.2 hectares

Area Description

An area of heathland with acid grass and heather and scattered trees in the most part, but some areas of denser trees.

This compartment contains one of Sutton Heath's two scheduled ancient monuments.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To maximise opportunities for visitors to enjoy and appreciate the qualities and interests of the site whilst monitoring any adverse affects that take place.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Periodically clear invasive scrub as required.	Annual	SCN / Vols	High
Treat bracken by spraying and cutting as required.	Annual	Con / SCN	Medium
Periodically graze the area with livestock and maintain the stock fence.	Annual (Spring / Summer)	SWT	Medium
Manage the surroundings of the archaeological 'Longbarrow and circular bank' as per the specifications recorded on the HER .	Annual	SCN / SCC	Low
Survey and monitor population levels of key species and vegetation levels as per HLS 'Indicators of Success'.	Annual	SCN / NE	Low



Map Area: J**Area Size:** 1.8 hectares**Area Description**

An open area of low ground flora (essentially heathland plants) that were swiped regularly due to the overhead power cables (now removed).

It has evolved into and been managed as a firebreak.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Maintain low sward (grass) by bi-annual cutting or chemical treatment of scrub re-growth.	2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Con	Low
Scallop and widen the main ride to create a less formal, irregularly shaped wildlife corridor that connects map area D to Sutton Common.	Annual	SCN / Vols	Low

Map Area: K**Area Size:** 1.2 hectares**Area Description**

An area of mostly post myxomatosis secondary woodland dominated by pines with some deciduous trees and heather in places.

The trees form a hard woodland edge against the heathland habitat of map area J.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning of trees to create a scalloped woodland edge whilst providing light for the heathland flora to expand. This will create a corridor for wildlife between heathland areas. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	1, 2	Con	High
Clear scrub re-growth from restored heathland areas.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	SCN / Vols	Low
Carry out an annual tree safety survey.	Annual	SCN	Low
Consider additional seating in this compartment as part of the review of benches and seating areas recorded on the "whole site" map area table.	2	SCN	Low



Map Area: L**Area Size:** 0.25 hectares**Area Description**

A woodland clearing created by natural causes in the 1990s (wind blow and then fire), which has re-established with heathland flora and seedling trees.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning of scrub to create a scalloped edge and generate light for the heathland understorey to develop. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	1, 2	Con	High
Remove any invading scrub.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	SCN / Vols	Low

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning to aid the growth of existing, older character trees and future selected trees of all ages. This process provides light to the woodland floor and promotes the development of ground flora. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	0.25ha annually rotating between 7 map areas (One map area per year)	SCN	Low
Carry out annual tree safety survey.	Annual	SCN	Low
Retain a 30 meter strip of untouched roadside trees, only cutting trees declared dangerous in the annual tree safety survey.	Annual	SCN	Low

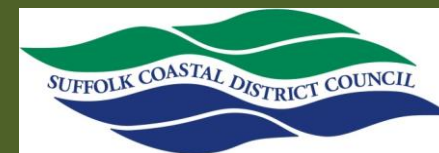
Map Area: M**Area Size:** 5.5 hectares**Area Description**

An area of established woodland with a mixture of tree species of varying age and species.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.



Map Area: N

Area Size: 6.8 hectares

Area Description

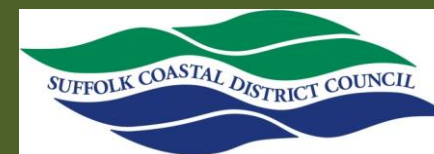
An area of mostly post myxomatosis secondary woodland dominated by pines and birch trees and younger rowan saplings.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning of younger trees to create woodland glades and provide light for ground flora. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	0.25ha annually rotating between 7 map areas (One map area per year)	SCN / Vols	Low
Thin trees to the east of the area along the eastern boundary of map area P to restore heathland ground flora and create a wildlife corridor that connects map area P to Sutton Common.	2, 3	Con	High
Clear scrub re-growth from restored heathland areas.	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	SCN / Vols	Low
Carry out annual tree safety survey.	Annual	SCN	Low
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning of trees to create a scalloped woodland edge whilst providing light for the heathland flora to expand. This will create a corridor for wildlife between heathland areas. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	1,2	Con	High



Map Area: O**Area Size:** 3.85 hectares**Area Description**

An area mostly dominated by post myxomatosis pine trees of even age, giving the appearance of a planted commercial forest.

The western corner has an area of some younger deciduous trees, these are overcrowded.

The north car park and picnic site can be found within the northern area of this map area.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To accommodate the recreational needs of a growing population by reviewing facilities and appropriately responding to visitor requirements.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning of pine trees in the western corner of the area to assist with the development of the more established deciduous character trees and generate light to the understory supporting ground flora development. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	0.25ha annually rotating between 7 map areas (One map area per year)	SCN	Low
Re-surface car park.	1, 5	Con	Medium
Maintain the area free from litter.	Annual	SCN	Low
Provide and maintain picnic tables.	Annual	SCN	Low
Carry out a review of the number and position of dog bins.	2	SCN	Low
Carry out annual tree safety survey.	annual	SCN	Low

Map Area: P**Area Size:** 1 hectare**Area Description**

A clearing that was created within the secondary woodland in the mid-1980s and recovered as heathland habitat. Now a good stand of heather, with some invasive pine and birch scrub

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Manage invasive birch and pine scrub as and when required.	Annual	SCN / Vols	Low

Map Area: Q**Area Size:** 1.1 hectares**Area Description**

An area of low mown heather which acts as a firebreak between Sutton Common and Sutton Heath.

This is not part of SCDC's freehold land.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Maintain low sward (grass) by bi-annual cutting or chemical treatment of scrub re-growth.	2, 4, 6, 8, 10	Con	Low



Map Area: R

Area Size: 1 hectare

Area Description

An area of mostly post myxomatosis secondary woodland with pines and deciduous trees with heather in places.

The trees form a hard woodland edge against the heathland habitat of map areas J, Q and Sutton Common.

Management Objectives

To conserve and where applicable enhance the nature conservation and landscape value of the site.

To meet the nature conservation, landscape, access, health and safety (of visitors, volunteers, contractors, and staff), and historic environment legal obligations that the Council is duty bound to uphold.

Action	Year	Resource	Budget (High<8k, Medium<2k->8k, Low>2k)
Carry out strategic silvicultural thinning of trees to create a scalloped woodland edge whilst providing light for the heathland flora to expand. This will create a corridor for wildlife between heathland areas. Selected trees will be left to grow on to their full potential retaining the sense of the woodland environment that is valued by the public whilst maintaining a light and welcoming environment for plants and wildlife to flourish.	1, 2	Con	High
Clear scrub re-growth from restored heathland areas.	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	SCN / Vols	Low
Carry out an annual tree safety survey and bi-annual safety audits.	Annual	SCN	Low



Glossary of terms

Coppice: a tree or block of trees cut once or more, close to ground level to obtain wood from the branches. The stump then regrows and will need cutting again. Sweet Chestnut's typical cycle is 10-15 years.

Deciduous trees: trees or shrubs that lose their leaves each autumn.

Fauna: simply put this means wildlife, in this instance the animals that live at Sutton Heath.

Flora: simply put this means plants, in this instance the plants that live at Sutton Heath.

Heathland: an area of vegetation characterised by dwarf woody shrubs, particularly heathers, and acid grassland on impoverished soils that is the result of thousands of years of exploitation by humans.

Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) Scheme: grant aid to deliver significant environmental benefits in high priority situations and areas.

Favourable condition: a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) that meets with Natural England's conservation objectives.

Low sward: an expanse of land covered in grass.

Myxomatosis: a highly infectious and usually fatal viral disease of rabbits, causing swelling of the mucous membranes and inflammation and discharge around the eyes.

Scrub: vegetation consisting chiefly of shrubs and small trees.

Secondary woodland: woodland that has grown up on previously open land such as heathland or farmland; it lacks overall diversity of ancient woodland.

Silvicultural thinning: making space around the individual trees that are being encouraged to grow, by removing or coppicing competing less desirable trees.

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): designation giving legal protection in order to conserve the best of the UK's wildlife and geological heritage

Special Protection Area: an internationally important area for nature conservation, protected under UK and EU law.

Thinning: the selective removal of trees, primarily undertaken to improve the growth rate or health of the remaining trees.

Understory: an underlying layer of vegetation specifically the vegetative layer and especially the trees and shrubs between the forest canopy and the ground cover.

Wildlife Corridor: a link of wildlife habitat, generally native vegetation, which joins two or more larger areas of similar wildlife habitat. Corridors are critical for the maintenance of ecological processes including allowing for the movement of animals and the continuation of viable populations.

Woodland glades: an open area within a woodland.

