

Landscape Management Plan

Development

Cowards Lane, Codicote, Hitchin, Hertfordshire, SG4 8UP

Date

20th February 2025

Introduction

This Landscape Management Plan is designed to provide information regarding the long term management and monitoring of the general amenity areas being retained or created on this development. This document compliments the information provided as part of the tender package including the Detailed Planting Plans and Proposed Layout.

The plan outlines the maintenance principles and objectives and gives a detailed programme for the maintenance of the areas for the lifespan of the development.

The plan covers all aspects of the soft landscaping within the managed amenity areas which are not being maintained by the individual plots.

The Landscape Management Plan is a live document and may therefore be subject to review based on the findings of monitoring of the success of initial management.

For Management & Maintenance of the private landscaped areas please refer to the individual plots, deeds of transfer title documents.

Objectives

The objectives for the maintenance plan are:

- To ensure the target habitat conditions are met
- To ensure the successful establishment and long-term health of all landscape elements for the benefits of the wider community.
- To allow the local authority satisfaction that the area will be managed appropriately.
- To ensure suitable horticultural and health & safety practices at all times.
- To ensure that methods employed enhance and encourage wildlife, wherever possible.
- To identify defects as soon as possible in order to minimise any damage and rectify at the earliest opportunity.

SERVICE LEVELS AGREEMENT

The Grounds Maintenance & Management teams will:

- Provide service to the development within this plan with two visits per month between March and October and one visit per month between the months of November and February.
- Ensure that all materials and workmanship is to be of a high standard in accordance with relevant good practice.
- Quarterly inspections of paved areas within the POS and report any defects.
- Ensure that critical catch-pits and tail-walls are inspected following heavy rainfall if deemed necessary following met office warnings and any silt or gravel buildup reported.
- Ensure that all work will be carried out by appropriately skilled and experienced operatives for the specific type of work, specifically where Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) is applicable.
- Ensure that work is only to be carried out while ground and weather conditions are suitable.
- Provide only machinery and tools suitable for site conditions and the work to be carried out are to be used. Hand tools should be used around trees and in confined areas.
- Ensure that soil, stones and other debris to be removed from hard surfaces and the area left in a clean and tidy condition after maintenance operations are complete.
- Ensure that litter is collected from all soft landscape areas and removed from site with it being recycled if possible.
- Undertake a pro-active approach to weed, pest and disease control with any required measures taken promptly. Any plant losses as a result of weed, pest or disease damage should be replaced as soon as possible.
- Ensure that chemicals are only to be used where specified and approved.
- Prune vegetation, as necessary to avoid obstruction of pedestrians or vehicles, security cameras, lighting or visibility-splays.

NEWLY PLANTED TREES

Maintenance objectives:

- Standard trees shall be encouraged to develop as upright, healthy individuals with well formed, balanced crowns. Side growth shall be removed and lower crown lifting undertaken to ensure minimum branch clearances above ground level of at least 2.5m.

Management requirements:

- The Grounds Maintenance Team shall check stakes and ties at each grass cutting visit, and adjusted/replaced as necessary.
- Maintain a 600mm diameter grass and weed-free area at the base of each tree within the POS areas, to be hand weeded.
- All stakes and ties shall be removed when appropriate.
- During years 1-5, any dead, dying, diseased or lost tree shall be replaced on a like-for like basis where appropriate.
- After year 5, any dead, dying, diseased or lost tree shall be replaced with a standard tree of the same species.
- Remove anything that is affixed to trees.
- Pruning should only be done when essential; trees should be allowed to grow organically. Use a clean cut to the main stem or to a sound, healthy, outwards-growing lateral while retaining the central leader to remove die back, straggling stems, overly robust shoots, suckers, epicormic growth, etc.
- Tree works to be undertaken by a qualified arboricultural contractor, in accordance with BS 3998:2010 when in its not bird nesting season.

ORNAMENTAL SHRUBS

Maintenance objectives:

- Ornamental shrubs shall be allowed an initial phase of total after-care in the establishment period to guarantee successful establishment.

Management requirements:

- The planting area will be kept clear of weeds and new weed growth will be properly removed, to be hand weeded.
- Removal of any damaged, diseased or dead specimens and the replacement of those shrubs of comparable size during the planting season.
- Removal of any litter from the planting area.
- Trim ornamental & herbaceous perennials to remove dead vegetation, being careful not to damage any newly emerging shoots, to prevent obstruction to paths, lighting and sight lines. Herbaceous perennials will be divided every third year.
- General pruning should maintain the health and longevity of plants according to their natural form, to encourage new growth and encourage flowers & fruit.

HEDGEROWS

Maintenance objectives:

- To provide dense, even and defensible boundaries.

Management requirements:

- Hedges shall be cut or trimmed as often as required to meet the performance standards according to their type and function. They shall cut outside of bird nesting season; November to January.
- Hedges shall be regularly maintained to ensure that they do not overhang the footpath, become an obstruction or restrict highway visibility.
- The Grounds Maintenance Team shall use appropriate equipment and machinery driven or operated in the appropriate manner for each task.
- The Grounds Maintenance Team shall ensure that machines and equipment do not damage hedge plants or mar the visual appearance of the hedge.
- The Grounds Maintenance Team shall immediately on completion, or at the end of each working day, clear all cuttings from the site.
- The crown of trees within hedges shall be lifted to a height above the top line of the hedge.
- Damaged, diseased, dead and missing plants that create gaps in the hedge lines shall be replaced with new plants.
- Hedge bases shall be maintained to prevent other weed growth invading the hedge line, to be hand weeded.
- Clear hedges and bases of litter once per month.

WOODLAND SCRUB

Maintenance objectives:

- To develop and maintain a healthy block of woodland scrub with a variety of heights, densities and wildlife benefits.

Management requirements:

- Any dead, dying, diseased or lost planting shall be replaced on a like-for like basis where appropriate.
- Encroachment outside of the designated planting zone shall be trimmed back or removed.
- Trimming to be done to maintain a neat appearance and encourage busy growth.

GRASSED AREAS – AMENITY GRASSLAND

Maintenance objectives:

- To provide an even and well-maintained appearance and to control weeds.

Management requirements:

- The Grounds Maintenance Team shall use appropriate equipment and machinery driven or operated in a manner appropriate to the task.
- Litter and other similar debris shall be collected immediately prior to cutting or treatment being undertaken, and removed off site.
- The Grounds Maintenance Team shall immediately on completion, or at the end of each working day, clear any cuttings, earth or other debris that lands on surrounding hard surfaces as a result of cutting or treatments to grass areas.
- Every care shall be taken when mowing around trees in grass areas. Where overhanging branches prevents the specified machinery being used grass shall be cut by other appropriate means.
- The Grounds Maintenance Team shall exercise every care in carrying out works around flat and protruding obstacles in grass areas. Heavy or vibrating machinery shall avoid driving over manhole and duct covers where possible.
- The Grounds Maintenance Team shall ensure that any arisings or residue from any activity involved in maintaining the grass areas do not enter any water course, drain or sewer.
- Grass shall generally be cut to a consistent height (20-40mm) over the specified area.
- Short amenity grassed areas shall be mown to maintain at a consistent height. The cutting season is to extend from the first week of March to the last week of October each year, at least every three weeks.
- Grass shall not be cut in adverse weather and ground conditions. Cutting shall only recommence when it is safe to do so without danger of damaging the sward, surface levels or contours of the ground.
- Where inclement weather conditions delay normal cutting programmes our maintenance contractor will be required to resume work as soon as practically possible and is required to restore works to the specified standard by regular, repeated cutting, as necessary.
- During prolonged dry weather when grass growth is minimal, ensure all bents, flowers and seed heads are removed by rotary mowers.
- Where damage has occurred to cut edges turf edges shall be repaired and then re-cut to original line. Beds and edge gaps shall not be significantly enlarged by edge cutting.
- Grass abutting existing and new hedges and other plant growth shall be trimmed level with the general sward level by strimming at every third cut.

GRASSED AREAS - WILDFLOWER GRASSLAND

Maintenance objectives:

- To ensure the creation of suitable conditions for the wildflower seeds to establish without being outcompeted by the grass nurse crop.
- To ensure the correct cutting regime is implemented depending on whether the sward is established in Autumn or Spring.

Management requirements:

Spring Establishment:

Year 1

- 1st cut to appropriate height approx 6 weeks after sowing if sufficient material has established 2nd cut to appropriate height (50-150mm) in May if required
- 3rd cut to appropriate height (50-150mm) in September/October
- All arisings shall be raked up and removed from site

Year 2 (where cutting is carried out)

- 1st cut March/April.
- Final cut end September/October.
- All arisings to be removed from site.

Autumn Establishment:

Year 1

- 1st cut to appropriate height (50-150mm) in March (if sufficient material).
- 2nd cut to appropriate height (50-150mm) in early May.
- 3rd cut to appropriate height (50-150mm) in September.
- All arisings shall be raked up and removed from site and disposed of in natural compost.

Year 2 (where cutting is carried out)

- 1st cut March/April.
- Final cut end September/October.

- Where grass areas abut planted areas, hard surfaces, boundary fences, walls, trees or other obstruction the grass shall be trimmed at every third cut.
- Edges to planting beds and paved areas shall be re-cut with a half-moon tool once, annually to maintain a defined line closely parallel to the edge of the surface.
- Where damage has occurred to cut edges turf edges shall be repaired and then re-cut to original line. Beds and edge gaps shall not be significantly enlarged by edge cutting.
- Grass abutting existing and new hedges and other plant growth shall be trimmed level with the general sward level by strimming at every third cut. Litter and debris shall be removed from hedge lines.
- Cutting in Autumn once grasses and flora has seeded. Removing all arisings from any grass maintenance operations from the grass surface and ensuring that clippings / grassy material do not enter the pond or the overflow channel. Leaving small piles of grass clippings on site in suitable locations within the grass areas to provide suitable habitat for insects and reptiles.

Remedial Works

- The Grounds Maintenance Team shall be responsible for remedial works on grassed areas within the contract boundary, disturbed by cultivations, planting or other operations carried out in the execution of their works.
- In Spring and Autumn, the Grounds Maintenance Team shall re-seed any areas which fail to germinate, with approved grass seed mix. Topsoil shall be cultivated and aerated by forking as necessary to tie in with adjacent levels to promote good sward establishment.
- Re-turfing of damaged or bare areas identified by the Grounds Maintenance Team shall comply with all good horticultural practice. The Grounds Maintenance Team shall remove or make up all areas to a level sufficient to take replacement turves. The base of the area will be lightly broken up and levelled prior to final placement of the turf.

AQUATIC PLANTING

Maintenance objectives:

- To ensure a sufficient maintenance regime to allow for the Aquatic Planting to establish as required.

Management requirements:

- Eradication of undesired weeds that have self-seeded.
- Selective thinning of self seeded species if becoming overly dominant.
- Removal of litter once per month.
- Any dead, dying, diseased or lost planting shall be replaced on a like-for like basis where appropriate.

FOOTPATHS

Maintenance objectives:

- To ensure that areas of hardstanding are free from defects in a clean, tidy and safe condition.
- To manage vegetation growth through preventative measures and routine maintenance and cleansing, weed removal shall be completed via hand weeding.

Management requirements:

- Remove litter, sand, soil, debris, leaf & blossom fall along with any grass cuttings from footpaths and areas of hardstanding within the public open space by means of thorough hand sweeping or using air blowers when conditions are appropriate, paying particular attention to areas where litter and other such debris may accumulate.
- Check footpaths and areas of hardstanding within the public open space during each maintenance visit and report any damage at the earliest opportunity.

EXISTING VEGETATION & TREES

Maintenance objectives:

- To develop, maintain and manage encroachment of the existing vegetation.
- To protect the wellbeing of existing trees and to ensure their continued contribution to the aesthetics and ecological benefit of the site.

Management requirements:

- Any works to existing trees should be undertaken by an experienced tree surgeons, where required. All work shall be undertaken at the appropriate time and checks shall be made with the consent of local planning authority.
- All work shall be carefully carried out to avoid damage to the trees being treated or neighbouring trees. No retained tree shall be used for anchorage or winching purposes.
- All existing trees shall be checked quarterly for signs of deterioration or distress and the appropriate actions undertaken where required.
- All diseased wood, prunings and rubbish should be removed from the site.
- Heavy branches shall be removed in sections and undercut to avoid tearing the bark, and thereafter lowered by slings. No branch stumps should be left and cuts should be sealed with fungicidal sealant. No cuts should be capable of holding water.
- An annual Tree Survey shall be undertaken by a qualified arborist, informing future works that are to be undertaken.
- Removal of litter once per month.

LITTER CLEARANCE

Maintenance objectives:

- To prevent the accumulation of litter within the open space areas, including the footpaths and areas of hardstanding and play areas.
- Maintenance teams are to be aware of the possibility of encountering contaminated sharps during litter collection & bag transportation – sharps bins to be provided to maintenance teams.

Management requirements:

- Litter within the open space areas shall be collected at each grass cutting visit and removed from site.
- Remove litter, sand, soil, debris, leaf & blossom fall along with any grass cuttings from all footpaths and areas of hardstanding with the public open space by means of thorough hand sweeping or using air blowers when conditions are appropriate, paying particular attention to areas where litter and other such debris may accumulate.
- Litter bins shall be emptied by removing the liner, bagging contents, restocking with new liners and re-securing the locking mechanism. Any overspill will be bagged and the bags tied at the neck and removed from site. This will be completed on a bi-monthly basis.
- Items of irregular litter/debris will be moved to the edge of any footpath, or public accessible location in a position where the least obstruction to pedestrians will be caused to await for collection and suitable disposal.
- The removal of litter/debris, dog faeces, fallen leaves etc. from the soft landscaped areas will be carried out at fortnightly intervals – additional visits to empty waste bins may be required depending on usage, this will be subject to continuous review and implementation as applicable.
- Extreme care will be taken to ensure that no damage to shrubs, trees, grassed areas or the like is caused through the removal of litter/debris.
- The management process of fly tipped waste shall commence no later than 48 hours after Trustgreen being notified / identified of the presence of such materials.
- All works will be carried out in accordance with Trustgreen own Health & Safety Policies and Safe Systems of Work procedures.

PLAY AREAS, PLAY EQUIPMENT

Maintenance objectives:

- To provide a clean, safe area for play.

Management requirements:

- During each maintenance visit the play area will be swept and cleared of all litter & debris, including broken glass and all will be removed from site 20 times per annum.
- Graffiti removal process will commence as soon as notified to Trustgreen. Method of removal will be determined depending on the surface and will be carried out in line with good practices.
- All items of play equipment will be inspected and maintained in accordance with ROSPA best practices, by our Operationally Qualified Estates Manager.
- An operational assessment of the play equipment will be undertaken each quarter with any with any defects or hazards considered dangerous to be dealt with immediately by immobilising the item and made safe until repaired or replaced.
- Annual inspections & risk assessment of the play area & play equipment will be undertaken by a ROSPA accredited inspector with a written report produced covering the condition and compliance with EN1176 of the equipment, surfacing and ancillary items.
- Refuse bins within the vicinity of the play area will be emptied during each visit, on 20 visits per annum.

STREET FURNITURE

Maintenance objectives:

- To enhance & maintain the amenity value of the development.

Management requirements, general:

- Inspect street furniture at each visit and maintain or repair in accordance with manufactures recommendations, taking out of commission dangerous or inoperable elements until repair works are complete.
- Graffiti removal process will commence as soon as notified / identified to Trustgreen. Method of removal to either be air abrasion or chemical poultice, depending on the surface and will be carried out in line with good practices.
- Stain removal to hard surfaces will be in accordance with BS7370-2
- Regular inspections of surface treatments for litter, debris and leaf removal and repair defects where necessary.

