1 Urban and community woodlands

1.1 A new small community woodland on the edge of an urban area

This example represents a typical area of semi-abandoned land in the urban fringe of an industrial town, where remnant agricultural land, disturbed land from mining and small patches of unmanaged scrub woodland form the basis for an area of community woodland. This kind of landscape and woodland project can be found all over the UK, although with different former industrial issues to be incorporated into the design. There are many nearby residents, the area is affected by service corridors, poor soils in parts and a lot of recreational pressure. The main objectives are to provide a recreational resource for the whole community, to improve the landscape and to enhance the biodiversity of the area. Educational benefits are also sought and the project should also help to strengthen the community (by building social capital through the process). The mainly flat topography means that the edges and internal spaces will be the main visual impacts and the woodland is able to screen out unsightly elements while maintaining views to key landmarks. The design of internal spaces is a key aspect of the design.

Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Indicator of objective being met</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landscape</td>
<td>To improve an unattractive derelict site and rehabilitate it</td>
<td>The landscape greens up and becomes an asset to the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>To improve the strength of the local community and to improve quality of life</td>
<td>Different groups of the local community are involved in all aspects of the process of planning, implementation and management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>To restore and improve the habitat and wildlife values of the site</td>
<td>A range of habitats are created and many species of wildlife colonise it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>To provide appropriate access for people, including for the management/maintenance of the site and emergency services</td>
<td>All areas of the site are confirmed accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>To provide a range of recreational activities suitable for the local community</td>
<td>A diverse group of local residents use the site frequently for recreation purposes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.1.2 Urban and community woodlands

Base – perspective

Base – plan
A new small community woodland on the edge of an urban area

1.1.3 Site boundary

Main entrance from public road
Views of industrial buildings
Patches of woodland and shrubs
Old gravel pit, steep slopes, 3 m water

Site survey

Location and viewpoint

London Road
Kitchener Terrace
Victoria Road

Works

Security fenced
Private land, remaining in agriculture

Area of housing – main source of users of new woodland
Old foundations
Tracks
Fly tipping
Heaps of subsoil and demolition rubble
3 m deep water
Steep slopes
Dangerous water
New fence needed

Heaps are steeply sloped and flat topped
Greenfields, undisturbed, fertile, free-draining soils
Area of demolished industry, partly covered in rubble, subsoil and some topsoil

DESIGN TECHNIQUES FOR FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANNING
Site analysis

- **Main entrance from public road.** Access to motor vehicles needs controlled.
- **Viewpoint on top of heap gives good overview but sides are steep.**
- **Flat area previously factories – typical brown-field with shallow core so not very suitable for trees.**
- **Old gravel pit provides water but it is steep-sided and deep – needs redesign if it’s to be used.**
- **Heaps of fill material – could be redesigned.**
- **Fly tipping a problem.**
- **Many residents nearby will be the main users.**
- **Foundation – difficult to grow anything.**
- **Factory area – unattractive and noisy, so screening would be useful.**
- **Houses get view over the road to the site.**

**Site boundary**

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FORESTRY COMMISSION PRACTICE GUIDE
The survey of the area includes many physical aspects due to the brownfield nature of much of the site, its limited accessibility and the few habitat elements remaining on the site. The constraints and opportunities analysis highlights the problems of the site, its inherent lack of soil and presence of debris and water as well as the positive aspect of there being nearby residents.

### Constraints and opportunities analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Constraint</th>
<th>Opportunity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soil depth and quality</td>
<td>Shallow areas and poor soils limit plantability</td>
<td>To use areas with shallow soils for open parts of the site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spoil heaps</td>
<td>Compacted and steep-sided, no soil on them</td>
<td>To reshape them and use them for active sports or viewing opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gravel pit</td>
<td>Deep water, dangerous steep sides, possibly polluted</td>
<td>To reshape the profile and make it safe as well as to ensure vegetation colonises it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old fields</td>
<td>Flat, full of weed seeds</td>
<td>Good soil and easier to establish woodland on them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential areas</td>
<td>Access from them is not very good</td>
<td>To make better access and to encourage residents to participate in the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing woodland</td>
<td>Not very big in area, isolated and unmanaged</td>
<td>Provides a nucleus of woodland on which to build</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual context</td>
<td>Many intrusive sights of industry and dereliction</td>
<td>To screen them and to create an attractive alternative internal landscape</td>
</tr>
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</table>

In this type of project a separate landscape character analysis is not relevant because a wholly new landscape will be created and there is nothing particularly significant in the surroundings which needs to be incorporated. Visual issues are identified in the site analysis from the single internal viewpoint. There is no need to do a landform analysis either as the landform will be altered.

From the objectives and the analyses a concept can be developed where a number of zones based on a combination of the balance of woodland to open ground and the appropriate mix of functions and accessibility are identified. These also make the best use of the terrain and the problems of soil and plantability. The design is then developed to show the layout, the paths and the different facilities in some detail, with a focus being on the internal design of spaces experienced from paths or viewpoints. The graphic presentation is also designed to ensure that local residents can understand it. The scale of 1:2000 allows for the details to be readable. The illustration from the single viewpoint also conveys the design effectively.
Constraints and opportunities analysis

Design strategy

Strategic zones

1. Parkland
This zone, being on difficult soils and closer to housing and the entrance, is suited to a more open character, with patches of trees, areas for sports, events and other activities needing space. It should be quiet normally but can be noisy when events are on.

2. Active landscape
This zone, being away from the residential area and with landform and water, offers the possibility of activities to give excitement, exercise and maybe noise too. Redesign of land and water is needed.

3. Woodland
This zone, being further away from residential areas and a good soil but with no interesting landform, is suitable for denser woodland with higher biodiversity value, some glades and paths and a wilder character. Quiet and a place where people can find more solitude.
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**Design Techniques for Forest Management Planning**

Sketch design – perspective

Sketch design – plan