

**Taddington Valley Woodland Management Plan consultation draft
Summary of Consultation Comments and Proposed Amendments**

Respondent	Summary of Comments	Response to feedback	Proposed Amendment
1.	Difficult to make specific comments on. I've written to TMBC on a number of occasions about this area but have been palmed off to KCC.	Comments noted.	No amendment required
	I have been using the footpath through Taddington Valley for many years and have seen it slowly deteriorate into a muddy mess. Of late, it has come to my attention that the condition of the path has significantly deteriorated even further, posing numerous hazards to pedestrians (especially those with mobility challenges) and cyclist.	See detail comments and responses below.	See below
	<p>Some of the key issues (4) that require urgent attention:</p> <p>i) Potholes and Uneven Surfaces: The footpath is riddled with potholes and uneven surfaces some of which are almost 12 inches in depth. This make it treacherous for pedestrians, especially during adverse weather conditions or darker periods where the path is not well lit.</p>	<p>Comments noted and already addressed in Objectives 9, 10 and 15. Any concerns that are reported to us are investigated and replies sent.</p> <p>The streetlights on this site are the responsibility of Kent County Council, and faults/ issues should be reported directly to them.</p>	Already included – no amendment required
	ii) Overgrown Vegetation: There is an alarming amount of overgrown vegetation, obstructing the path and limiting visibility. This poses a safety risk to those using the footpath.	<p>Comments noted and already addressed in Objective 2.</p> <p>The areas within this site are monitored and action will be taken as needed.</p>	

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	<p>iii) Inconsistent Maintenance: It appears that the idea of maintenance, is too tickle vegetation, rather than actually cut it back! A substantial cut back would be far more cost effective than a weekly tickle.</p> <p>iv) I understand that budgetary constraints may affect the ability to maintain all areas equally, but it is essential that all residents and visitors to our community have access to safe and well-maintained public infrastructure, not just those in the areas closest to the Borough Council offices.</p>	<p>Comments noted and already addressed in Objectives 1 and 2</p> <p>The plan will give a greater focus to this site.</p> <p>As above</p>	
2	<p>Management Strategy - My house has a section of Taddington Woods next to it, the whole 3 years I have lived here it has never been looked after. The hedges are overgrown and untidy, its full of weeds and thorn bushes. It would be great if this is improved with plants and trees that will attract bee's and butterflies but will also improve the appearance within our road.</p> <p>I use the woods nearly every day to walk my dog, it will be great to see it looked after more and see more flowers etc throughout the year other than the bluebells.</p>	<p>Comments noted and addressed in Objectives 2, 3 and 13</p> <p>The woodland is being managed as a natural area, it is to be expected that there will always be some growth of natural vegetation (brambles) and we will continue to listen to residents' views and cut back selective areas each year.</p>	Already included – no amendment required
3	This hopefully will help the people who use the woods for walking, whether that be with their dogs or for exercise etc..	Comment noted	No amendment required

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4	Objective 10. Improving paths. The pathways have been destroyed and eroded by heavy rainfall which has washed away most pathways. The path becomes particularly muddy and waterlogged at the bottom of the steps leading down from Victoria Road (where the signpost is) as, being in a valley, all water runs to this point. It is very slippery and dangerous after heavy rainfall here. Reconstruction of these paths would be for the better.	Comments noted and addressed in Objectives 10, 13 and 15.	Already included – no amendment required
5	I am in agreement with the plan the woods have been neglected, you can see that coppicing is needed in the denser areas as nothing is growing. I enjoy walks into the woods so would want to still enjoy this certainly when the seasons change and the bluebells come!	Comments noted.	No amendment required
	Additionally, from a resident view whose garden backs onto the wood, I have been requesting the trees behind me be maintained as they encroach into my garden and due to the size of the branches we are not able to cut these without a professional due to the size and having to go outside of our boundary into a slope so a health and safety issue. Also, we would not want to damage the trees. This is having a negative impact on my back garden.	Comments noted. Issues relating to trees should be reported to the Councils Leisure department, at present we carry out inspections and prioritise tree safety work.	
	I have never seen this area maintained since moving to the property in 2007. I enjoy walks into the woods so would want to still enjoy this certainly when the seasons change and the bluebells come!	Comment noted.	

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6	Have you taken into consideration of the residents that back onto the wood's, I have lived here for 48 years and have had lot's of promises regarding tree management abutting our property to cut back the trees an give our gardens a chance to prosper, since we have lived here the trees have grown 20 feet or more taking all the light from our garden and we would like it back please.	See Objective 2. Section 5.8 The main focus for this plan is woodland management and this over time should start to address some of the issues with overhanging trees and light as these trees are coppiced opening the woodland up and allowing more light through the tree canopies.	No amendment required
7	Having lived next to the woodland for many years I have watched it's steady decline. The current footpaths have deep ruts caused by erosion.	Comments noted and already addressed in Objectives 2, and 15.	Already included – no amendment required
	The present access points do nothing to stop motorcycles damaging the grass areas and cyclists who ride amongst the trees.	Comment noted and already addressed Objective 8.	
	The current policy seems to be reactive to storm damage and very little is done to look after the trees proactively	Comment noted and already addressed in Objectives 2 and 14. At present we focus on tree safety. The new management plan for this site proposes a more proactive woodland management.	
	The vehicles used to empty the bins damage the grassed areas.	Comment noted and already addressed in Objectives 10 and 13	

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		Consideration is being given to opportunities to reduce the impact of vehicles travelling through the site.	
	I will be interested to see if anything happens, but I won't hold my breath.	Comment noted.	
8	I like what you are doing with the trees & woodland. But not sure you will stop the motorbikes as the ones I see over in the woods are pit bikes & electric scooters & are light & very easy to pick up & lift over barriers All the best in what you are planning on doing & good luck	Comments noted.	No amendment required.
9	With the challenge of Britain becoming carbon neutral by 2050. I would consider the Valley as an asset, therefore it should be maintained as such. The woodland Management plan covers a number of years of specific coppicing / Pollarding procedures, if these are not rigorously kept too the project may fail, with a knock on effect of not helping biodiversity, wasting of tax payer's money and will not be appreciated by the general public. The budget for this project should be ring fenced for the full duration.	Comments noted - Council budgets are agreed and approved on an annual basis.	No amendment required
10	I am a regular dog walker to these woods using the entrance at the end of Chestnut Avenue. This entrance could do with having the brambles cut back and some steps put in (either concrete or wood) as it is very steep and slippery. If those could also lead down to the valley from that point it would be useful. At present there are no other steps that end only a very steep slope, but multiple set of steps at the other end and the other side.	Comments noted and addressed in Objectives 8, 10 and 15. This particular entrance leads to unmade paths there are more accessible entrances with a hard surface sloping path nearby. A site Access Audit will be undertaken in due course.	Already included – no amendment required

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	<p>Whilst walking in the wood there are a lot of trees in desperate need of having the ivy and other climbing plants that's are choking them removed. We try to remove smaller bit when we can but there is so much, some are as thick as small trees themselves.</p>	<p>Comment noted and addressed in Objectives 1,3, 5, 14.</p> <p>Ivy can be a useful habit providing food and shelter for many species. We may however need to remove some ivy to aid tree safety inspections.</p>	
	<p>The park is also blighted by idiots on quad bikes or dirt bikes who tear up and down the valley, ripping up the grass and scaring the dogs. (Some are actually considerate of the dogs but a lot aren't). So some type of way of preventing access would be great</p>	<p>Comment noted and addressed in Objective 8 and 15 and Section 5.8.</p>	
	<p>Other than that it's a nice place to walk, sit on the benches and listen to the birds. Thank you.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>	
11	<p>It does say about reducing antisocial behaviour and motor bikes, not how this will be tackled. Improvements to entrances and exits important for stopping the bikes.</p>	<p>Comment noted and addressed in Objectives 8, 13 and 15 and section 5.8.</p> <p>The plan sets out our objective and under Anti-social behaviour in Section 5.8 gives some possible options to tackle this issue but these options need further development with partners and costing.</p>	<p>Already included – no amendment required</p>

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	Entrance in Chestnut Avenue is very rusty and is not stable, it has been covered with duct tape as sharp and dangerous.	The post has now been repaired.	
	There is a burnout motorbike at the bottom of the Marston Close entrance which need removing.	<p>Comment noted and addressed in Objective 8.</p> <p>The burnt-out motorbike was reported to the Police after being reported stolen. It has now been removed in liaison with the Community Safety Partnership.</p>	
12	<p>The document seems to be a well thought, through and well-prepared plan for the coming years which will hopefully benefit everyone and everything.</p> <p>Although I am against the felling of any tree, I recognise the benefits of managed and considerate coppicing, which if applied correctly will be advantageous.</p>	Comment noted	
	<p>The only comment of note I have to make is that the valley falls across two local authority boundaries (TMBC & Medway) and that the plan seemed to be prepared solely for TMBC (?).</p> <p>If this is the case, wouldn't a joint plan be more beneficial?</p>	<p>This is acknowledged in Section 4.1 and shown on Map 2. TMBC own all the land and are therefore responsible for all of management decisions.</p> <p>Various departments in Medway Council were consulted on the plan and will need to be a partner and this has been indicated in the relevant objectives.</p>	Amend plan section 4.1 to make our ownership responsibilities clearer.

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13	This appears to be exactly what is needed, the trees have long been due some attention. In particular ones between Papion Grove and Hurst Hill show signs of dead limbs, rampant ivy growing on some.	Comment noted.	Already included – no amendment required
	The paths in particular are very worn out and	Comment noted and addressed in Objective 10.	
	no cutting back of brambles is carried out for long periods of time.	Comment noted and addressed in Objectives 2 and 9.	
14	No mention of ownership but I understand that at least the section within T & M is owned by the council. Do you own the Medway Council section.?	See 12 above.	Under 4.2 in the first table, notes - add reference to the planning policy designation details for this public open space.
	What is the long-term future for the wood will either council want to build houses or roads through the site in the next 30 years,	The plan covers our proposed long-term future of the site. The area has several official designations and is designated as Public Open Space, Tree Preservation Orders covering a large percentage of the site.	
	Basically a good plan. But here is no mention of Foxes or how you intend to manage them. Foxes can be a nuisance in adjacent gardens, and are very destructive to other wildlife. Nor is there any indication that you have contacted the Kent Biological Records centre for information for what has been recorded. Just relying on what looks like one visit.	The plan follows a standard plan format from Forestry Commission. (We do already hold some biological data about this site from surveys but acknowledge that baseline surveys will be needed.) There is no reason in law to control foxes as they are native wildlife.	

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	This lovely piece of woodland should primarily be managed for its use by local residents with nature conservation as an important but secondary objective. Use by children, making camps etc should be encouraged.	Comment noted.	
15	Need to stop scramble bikes and quad bikes	Comment noted and addressed in Objectives 8, 13 and 15	Already included – no amendment required
16	Long overdue, thanks for getting it going.	Comment noted	No amendment required
17	<p>Re Taddington Valleys woodland management plan.</p> <p>I'm sorry but this is ecological vandalism. I despair that our councillors are even contemplating doing this to our trees and woodland. Do you not realise how much this world needs trees to help it survive? We are on the cusp and it will only get worse if this trend is not stopped.</p> <p>This beautiful ancient woodland is a joy to see through the seasons. We have a good variety of birds, owls, bats and foxes, which we will lose if you destroy their habitat. We will lose the beautiful carpet of bluebells in the spring, if you cut the undergrowth back. By letting more light in all you will get is brambles and weeds.</p> <p>I agree that the trees do need some maintenance to remove dead and dying wood and branches for the public's safety but that is all. The work on the trees that you are planning is</p>	<p>Comment noted. The plan aims to improved site bio-diversity and introduce a proactive management of the site, including the traditional method of coppicing, for the benefit of wildlife and local residents. The plan will also need approval of the Forestry Commission before adoption.</p> <p>Coppicing can rejuvenate a tree and allow it to live for many years it also encourages the growth of woodland flowers allowing light to the woodland floor. This will provide food for insects which in turn provide food for other animals such as birds and bats. Wildlife that</p>	

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	<p>far reaching and the trees will take some 20/30 years to recover if they survive it. Squirrels damage the trees by stripping the bark, you could control their numbers on a yearly basis to limit this damage.</p>	<p>benefits from coppicing includes flowers like orchids, dog violets, Bluebells, saint john’s wort, foxgloves, butterflies and moths, bumblebees, dragonflies, slow worms and main different species of birds including other small mammals such as dormice.</p>	
	<p>Large trees take up a lot of water, small trees do not. The excess water will drain down to the bottom and create a quagmire. The anti-social bikers will have a wonderful time charging around in the extra space but we will not; the noise they create for hours on end will be relentless and be a danger for anyone walking down there.</p>	<p>Objectives 8 and 11. Soil erosion 5.6</p> <p>The site is already the lowest point and water will naturally always drain towards the valley bottom and be wet there. The amount of run off will be reduced if there is less compaction and more of a vegetation layer to capture rainfall, there is little at present because this is shaded out by large trees. The established tree roots of the coppiced tree will not change. Coppicing trees, rather than replanting, can make regrowth quicker as felled trees have already developed root systems. Young regrowth will have far more leaves and so take up more water to regrow.</p>	<p>In Section 5 risk matrix add</p>

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		Addressing the anti-social behaviour issues is covered in the plan.	a new table Threat: loss of trees, coppice stools collapsing due to declining condition; Likelihood of presence: high; Impact: high; Response: coppice rotations introduced to extend the life of trees coppiced in past and reduce the weight on the stump
	Leaves on trees help to absorb the traffic fumes that we get from the Walderslade Woods road and the M2 motorway. They help clear the air for people and children with lung conditions. They help shield us from some of the traffic noise, which now lasts for approximately 20 hours a day and is getting worse every year as more and more vehicles are using these roads.	We are aware of the benefits of trees, but there are also sound reasons why these woodland areas need intervention. Coppicing is a way of extending the life of old trees, that have been coppiced in the past, otherwise they will continue to decline and are likely to collapse under their own weight. Not all of the woodland is being coppiced in the same year. The properties around this woodland are as close as 300 metres from roads and a motorway so it is unlikely that rotational coppicing, will have much impact on noise or fumes.	

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	<p>Perhaps you would like to give us a grant to replace our double glazing with triple glazing as compensation? I doubt that very much. We moved here 30 years ago because we loved the area and you will now ruin it with your plans. I have no doubt that they are cast in stone and however much we condemn them nothing will stop it. We the residents pay our Council Tax to you but our well being accounts for nothing; As ever, we in Walderslade are the poor relations with little or no investment in this area.</p>	<p>These issues are outside the scope of this consultation.</p>	
	<p>This is a cut price destruction of a popular and important amenity and should be abandoned forthwith.</p>	<p>The Council is proposing taking a proactive and positive approach to woodland management which has been called for by many residents and addresses a number of other issues.</p>	
18	<p>Taddington Wood is currently a marvellous woodland resource. It offers an amenity to those interested in enjoying a local woodland setting and seeing wildlife, as well as getting exercise through walking. Many local residents use this area every day to exercise their dogs.</p>	<p>Comment noted</p>	<p>Already included – no amendment required</p>

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	<p>TMBC wish to carry out widespread coppicing and pollarding in this area. My contention is that they will turn this beautiful area into a wilderness filled with multi- stemmed shrubs for many years to come. Coppicing has its place to generate timber for woodworking projects but will do nothing to enhance the joys of this wonderful local amenity. As the activity involves cutting down trees to stimulate new growth, areas of coppice are not desirable from an aesthetic and recreational point of view.</p>	<p>The proposed proactive approach to woodland management aims to increase the benefits of the site for be wildlife and local residents.</p>	
	<p>Sadly, it has, over the years, attracted an antisocial element that mainly wish to use their motorcycles for riding around in this area. They make undue noise, cause danger to those that wish to enjoy the facilities in a more peaceful manner and riders have been threatening when approached. I have lived on the edge of this woodland area for many years and am only too well aware that the Police are not interested in doing anything to counter antisocial activity in this area. Given that the number of crimes solved by Kent Police is "unacceptably low", according to the HMIC, it is not at all surprising. As the area is still prone to antisocial behaviour suggests that TMBC does little to combat it, as well. Improving accessibility simply aggravates the situation, encouraging more motorcyclists to move in.</p>	<p>Comments noted and addressed in Objectives 8 and 15.</p> <p>The Council will continue to work with both the Police and the Council's CSU to tackle antisocial behaviour at the site.</p> <p>.</p>	

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	Cutting trees down close to ground level will create racetracks for motor cycles in some areas. Leaving dead tree trunks will create obstacle courses, ideal for motor cyclists to use, as well. For those of us living on the edge of these woods, cutting trees down close to the end of our gardens will create a racetrack around the area exactly where we wish to discourage antisocial motorcycling.	Comments noted and will need to be considered in the implementation of Objectives 3 and 11.	
	The traffic noise from the M2 motorway and Walderslade Woods is considerable all of the time. The trees in the woodland help to moderate that noise and alleviate some of the airborne pollution. Removing those trees will make living on the edge of the woodland entirely less desirable. Will TMBC be making offers of compensation, if this resource is removed?	Coppicing will be undertaken over a long-term, phased basis. The Council does not believe any compensation will be due to residents for the implementation of this woodland management plan	
	It is suggested that this will herald an improvement in wildlife habitat. It is true that felling all these wonderful trees, may well improve the area for the rat population and insects. However, it will do very little for the bats, birds, squirrels and foxes that already populate these woods.	Comments noted and addressed in Objectives 3,4, 5, 11 and 12 Coppicing has been shown to have positive benefits for wildlife and wildflowers.	

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	<p>I have lived here for many years on the edge of the Tonbridge and Malling area. I have seen how little investment has been made in this area by TMBC. I doubt that this would even be contemplated if the woodland were in Tonbridge or its environs. It seems to me that this is land management on the cheap and takes no account of the local population.</p>	<p>The plans aims to improve the site for wildlife and the local residents. Rather than being a cheap option the plan will see additional investment in the site.</p>	
	<p>I agree with Councillor Keers that Taddington Valley is a valued asset for this community, however, I really don't understand how he can suggest that this will improve the site for local residents. I have seen areas of land in Lidsing that have been coppiced and the result has been to produce a quagmire.</p>	<p>See comment above.</p>	
	<p>In conclusion, I hope that my views and those of my neighbours around this woodland will be taken fully into account. However, this proposal will also affect people in a much wider area that use this resource and I hope that their views have been or will be canvassed.</p>	<p>Comment noted. The public consultation was open to all and note just local residents.</p>	
	<p>In an area where trees are protected by tree preservation orders, this is a nonsense. I trust that TMBC will reconsider and abandon this project forthwith.</p>	<p>Comment noted. All comments will be shared as part of the approval process.</p>	
19	<p>We've lived right next to Taddington Woods for >25 years. Throughout that time, management of the woods has always felt as if it is run on a shoestring and only urgent/dangerous issues have been addressed. When the housing was originally built in the 1980's, the woodland and housing was balanced, but over the</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>	<p>Already included – no amendment required</p>

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	<p>years, the scale and height of the trees has come to dominate.</p> <p>This plan is welcome, as the woodland needs to be actively and sympathetically managed and the quality of the flora improved. The woodland is an excellent and well used resource and we should cherish it.</p>		
	<p>A couple of comments (4)</p> <p>i) Some work seems to have already commenced under Felling License Application 23/03236, where a number of dead and dangerous trees have been identified and some already felled.</p>	<p>These tree works will have been carried out after routine health and safety tree inspections which carry out on regular basis.</p>	
	<p>ii) It is disappointing to see that no work seems to have been identified where trees overhang neighbouring properties - you only need to look at the number of planning applications residents have had to apply for over the years to see that this is a continual problem for residents bordering the woods. We should not have to bear the cost of maintaining trees that are the responsibility of the council, or put up with the damage they cause when they fall or shed branches or allow squirrels to access properties.</p>	<p>Comment noted and addressed in Objective 2.</p>	
	<p>iii) I would hope that we end up with something similar to Walderslade Woodlands Group, where local community can get involved in caring for and managing the woodland.</p>	<p>Comment noted and addressed in Objectives 1 6, and 7.</p>	
	<p>iv) It was difficult to determine the exact scale of the work proposed - it looked to be 25% felled and 75% thinned, but that unsustainably large trees bordering properties would be left as is - I think the plan should include measures to either reduce the encroachment or fell overly dominant trees.</p>	<p>The main focus for this plan is woodland management and this over time should start to address some of the issues with overhanging trees. We are not willing to fell, healthy trees to remove them or to carry out non-essential formative canopy pruning as our budgets and</p>	

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		policies do not allow for this and it is not considered good tree management practice.	
20	<p>The anti-social behaviour in the area (motorbikes, quad bikes) must be dealt with as a priority, these will significantly hinder regeneration efforts and undermine all of the other efforts. Entrances need to be made more secure.</p> <p>If there was a “friends of Taddington Wood” Facebook or society to arrange volunteer support, I expect there would be a reasonable update. Why not create a volunteer schedule for key dates in the forest diary, get the local people involved, there are hundreds of people that use the forest and many would be happy to provide occasional assistance</p>	<p>Comment noted</p> <p>Comment noted and addressed in Objectives 1, 2, 7 and 9.</p>	Already included – no amendment required