

Arthur Newbery and McIlroy Park

Date (from/to)	2013 – 2023 (reviewed in 2018)
Date of last review [UKWAS 2.1.3]	
Owner/tenant	Reading Borough Council
Agent/contact	Giles Sutton /Dave Booth
Signed declaration of tenure rights and agreements to public availability of the plan [UKWAS 1.1.3/1.1.5/2.1.2]	

1 Background information

1.1 Location

Nearest town, village or feature	Tilehurst
Grid reference	467700, 174350
Total area (ha)	11.8

1.2 Description of the woodland(s) in the landscape

Arthur Newbery Park and McIlroy Park are two large open spaces in Tilehurst. Neither park is entirely wooded; Arthur Newbery has a small woodland at the centre of the site and some mature tree planting around the periphery, McIlroy Park is mainly woodland with a large acid grassland field that slopes to the north-west. Both parks are prominent landscape features, in particular McIlroy Park which is on the ridge up from the River Thames.

1.3 History of Management

The grassland areas in both parks are under a Higher Level Stewardship with options to manage the woodland edges. There has been some removal of holly and small scale coppicing at McIlroy Park in recent years.

2 Woodland Information

2.1 Areas and features

Designated Areas	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Special areas for conservation (SACs)			
Special Protection Areas (SPAs)			
Ramsar Sites (see note on Guidance)			
National Nature Reserves (NNRs)			
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)			
Other designations (e.g. National Park (NP) / World Heritage Site)			
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)			
Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)	X	X	
TPO / Conservation Area (CA)			
<p>Details: McIlroy Park is designated as a Local Wildlife Site (through the Local Development Framework) and is afforded some protection from the adverse impacts of development through planning policy. It is also designated as a Local Nature Reserve. For the purposes of these designations the woodland has been split into two areas, McIlroy Park and Round Copse. Round Copse is a small woodland, 1.6 hectares in size, that abuts, and is contiguous with, McIlroy Park. In the title of this management plan no distinction has been made between the two named wildlife sites.</p> <p>McIlroys Park also forms part of the West Reading Woodland's Biodiversity Opportunity Area. The implementation of this Management Plan, and the council's Higher Level Stewardship Agreement for the grassland on the site, will help ensure that Biodiversity Opportunity Area is enhanced for wildlife.</p>			
Rare and important species	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Red Data Book or BAP species		X	X
Rare, threatened, EPS or SAP species		X	X
<p>Details: The following rare/ notable species have been observed within or adjacent to the sites (based on records held by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre):</p> <p>Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>)</p> <p>Cat-mint (<i>Nepeta cataria</i>)</p> <p>Cinnabar (<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>)</p> <p>Common Kestrel (<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>)</p> <p>Common Starling (<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>)</p> <p>Common Whitethroat (<i>Sylvia communis</i>)</p> <p>Corn Marigold (<i>Glebionis segetum</i>)</p> <p>Fieldfare (<i>Turdus pilaris</i>)</p> <p>Green Woodpecker (<i>Picus viridis</i>)</p>			

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Hedge Accentor (*Prunella modularis*)
 House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*)
 Mistle Thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*)
 Red Kite (*Milvus milvus*)
 Red-tailed Carder Bee (*Bombus (Thoracombus) ruderarius*)
 Redwing (*Turdus iliacus*)
 Shaded Broad-bar (*Scotopteryx chenopodiata*)
 Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*)
 Willow Warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*)

Habitats	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)	3	X	
Other semi-natural woodland	3	X	
Plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)			
Semi-natural features in PAWS			
Woodland margins and hedges	3		X
Veteran and other notable trees			
Breeding sites			
Habitats of notable species			
Unimproved grasslands	3		X
Rides and open ground			
Valuable wildlife communities			
Feeding area			
Lowland heath			
Peatlands			
Others			
Details: See map 3 for location of habitats			

Water	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Watercourses			
Lakes			
Ponds			
Wetland habitats			
Details: There are no watercourses or waterbodies within or adjacent to the woodland			
Landscape	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Landscape designated areas			
Landscape features			
Rock exposures			

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Historic landscapes			
Areas of the woodland prominent from roads	1	X	
Areas of the woodland prominent from settlements	1	X	
Details: Both parks are prominent landscape features. McIlroy Park is prominent from the south along the Oxford Road, and from the Norcot and Pottery Roads to the north and the west.			
Cultural features	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Public rights of way	1	X	
Prominent viewing points	1		X
Existing permissive footpaths			
Proposed permissive footpaths			
Areas managed with traditional management systems			
Details: Both sites are owned by Reading Borough Council and are accessible by the public at all times. Both sites are located on hills and have prominent views across the River Thames and Reading			
Archaeological Features	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Scheduled monument			
Historical feature (Inc. designed landscapes, registered parks and gardens)			
Other	4	X	
Details: Two ancient tracks known as "Gypsy Lane" and "Romany Lane" run through the site and there are old chalk pits in the west woodland area. A possible Saxon mound is at the entrance from Weald Way.			

2.2 Woodland resource characteristics

Amenity

Both parks are of significant amenity value and are well used by the public who have permanent access to them. They have a well-developed network of paths and rides which are used for travel and for recreation and have good views across the River Thames.

Biodiversity

McIlroy Park (including Round Copse) is designated as a Local Wildlife Site and a Local Nature Reserve (for the purposes of the designation the two sites have been separated). The woodland conforms to the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat, Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, and the northern part of the site, known as Kentwood Grove (3.6 ha.), is listed on Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory. Nine Ancient Woodland Indicator species (field maple, holly, wild cherry, creeping soft-grass, wood melick, wood millet, hairy wood-rush, bluebells, three-nerved sandwort) were found on the site during a botanical survey in 2008. The grassland on the plateaux at the top of the site (north of the woodland, see map 2) is relatively species rich and is managed under a Higher Level Stewardship Agreement.

The woodland in Arthur Newbery Park is a smaller component of the park. There are mature stands of planted beech and London Plane and there is a small patch of Mixed Deciduous Woodland within the centre of the park.

Timber and firewood

Very little tree removal is planned and the timber in the woodland is likely to be of limited monetary value.

2.3 Site description

McIlroy Park is located on a steep hill north of Norcot Road and comprises a large species rich grassland field (which is located on the plateaux of the hill and slopes away to the east), and a large block of mixed deciduous woodland. The woodland is located on the western, southern and northern flanks of the hill and the geology is a mixture of Reading Beds (sands and clays) on the top of the hill, with chalk further down the slope to the north and west, and plateaux gravel to the east (see map 2 for geology and topography).

There are two ancient sunken paths that pass through the woodland, Gypsy Lane and Romany Way. Gypsy Lane passes down the hill northwest through the woodland, Romany Way passes up from Pottery Road to the south through the woodland and then east down to Norcot Road and onto the modern Romany Lane (a residential road). Gypsy lane is un-surfaced and is surrounded by an unmade bank with mature, almost veteran, beech trees on either side. Romany Way has been surfaced with tarmac. In addition to these two paths there are a series of less formal woodland paths.

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The majority of the McIlroy woodland is dominated by oak, with occasional beech and ash standards most closely conforming to NVC classification W8 (Ash – Field Maple-Dogs Mercury) to the north and W10 (Oak - Bracken - Bramble) to the south. There are some stands of outgrown hazel coppice in Round Copse and in Kentwood Grove. Other broadleaf species include birch, rowan, sycamore and elm (particularly on the edge of the woodland). Sycamore is starting to dominate some areas, particularly in Kentwood Grove and holly is also a significant issue and is starting to dominate the understorey in several places.

The woodland edge habitat adjacent to the main field is relatively diverse and is a good example of this habitat type. On the well-drained lower southern and western banks adjacent to Norcot Road and Pottery Road are some relatively extensive areas of species rich grassland which are now starting to develop into scrub and are uncommon in such an urban area (some elements are of NVC category MG5 and possibly MG5c sub-community)..

In contrast much of the woodland at Arthur Newbery Park is mature landscape planting, particularly around the edge of the park. The main area of semi natural woodland is on the slope adjacent to the playground in the centre of the park.

2.4 Significant hazards, constraints and threats

Threats

The main threat to the woodlands is the lack of understorey management which if not dealt with will result in dark and dank woodland, dominated by holly and sycamore, with little wildlife and amenity value. There are opportunities to improve the paths on western slopes and within Kentwood Grove and this will enhance the site's amenity value.

Constraints

No significant timber extraction is proposed and as such for the purposes of this plan there should be no access constraints (it is possible to get a tractor to the top of the hill at McIlroys Park along Romany Way).

As with all old woodland sites there is a risk that bats may be present within mature trees and badgers are known to inhabit the woodland. As such operations will need to be assessed in order to ensure that these protected species are not harmed.

The approach to the protection of bat roosts will be as follows:

- Trees to be felled will be checked from ground level, using binoculars if appropriate, for features potentially suitable for use by roosting bats and categorised according to the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Survey Guidelines.
- Category 1* Trees (that is trees with multiple, highly suitable features capable of supporting larger roosts) and Category 1 Trees (that is trees with definite bat potential, supporting fewer suitable features than category 1* trees or with potential for use by

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single bats) will be retained unless it is unsafe to do so.

- If trees cannot be retained further inspections (e.g. if they represent a significant hazard to the public), comprising either climbing inspections and or emergence or dawn surveys will be undertaken and as a last resort the relevant licence from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation will be obtained (NB it is not anticipated that this step will be necessary as the majority of Category 1 and 1* trees will be retained.)
- Care will be taken when felling Category 2 trees (that is Trees with no obvious potential, although the tree is of a size and age whereby features may not be visible from ground level; or trees that support some features which may have limited potential to support bats) will be felled with care and if at any point bats or signs of bats are found works will stop until expert ecological advice has been obtained and if necessary the relevant licences obtained.

The above approach will ensure that individual bats are not harmed, that their conservation status is not affected, and that legislation is complied with.

The approach to badgers will be as follows:

- Prior to commencement of felling works all areas will be checked for badger setts.
- If a badger sett is present works adjacent to the sett will not occur unless expert ecological advice has been sought and it has been confirmed that works are unlikely to result in disturbance to the sett
- If it is concluded that works might disturb the sett then if at all possible trees will not be removed.
- If disturbance cannot be avoided (e.g. if trees to be felled represent a significant hazard to the public) the relevant licence will be obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation

The above approach will ensure that individual badgers are not harmed and that legislation is complied with.

Notable and veteran trees will be identified on site and will not be felled unless it cannot be avoided (e.g. if they represent a significant hazard to the public). Where appropriate thinning and felling operations will aim to free up notable and veteran trees by for example creating a halo around them aiming to increase their longevity.

3 Long term vision, management objectives and strategy

3.1 Long term vision

Two parks with significant biodiversity value, positively managed for people and wildlife, with woodlands with good structural and species diversity and a well maintained network of paths and rides.

3.2 Management Objectives

1. To control holly
2. To control sycamore
3. To restore areas of hazel coppice
4. To improve and maintain the rides and paths (only if funding becomes available)
5. To enhance the woodland edge habitats
6. To manage the grassland areas for wild flowers

3.3 Strategy

Map 4 shows the location of management prescriptions and the years that they will be undertaken.

Objective 1 – control holly

The holly will be felled in blocks. Not all works will be undertaken in the first year. Stumps will be treated to stop regrowth

Objective 2 – control sycamore

Sycamore in the south west corner of Kentwood Grove will be selectively felled to stop over-dominance by this species

Objective 3 – restoration of hazel coppice

In year 2 of this plan some of the taller trees over the hazel coppice will be felled and the underlying derelict hazel will be coppiced. Re-growth will be monitored and if successful consideration will be given to restoring hazel coppice in Kentwood Grove

Objective 4 –rides and paths

Undertake ride improvement and resurfacing works in line with Forestry Commission specifications as shown on Map 5. These works will only be undertaken in funding becomes available.

Objective 5 – woodland edge

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A proportion of the woodland edge habitat will be flailed each year to ensure that scrub does not dominate and that trees do not establish.

Objective 6 – grassland areas

Scrub will be cleared from the grassland on the banks of Round Copse. These areas will thereafter be cut or strimmed annually in late summer/ autumn with the arisings removed to keep fertility low.

4 Management prescriptions/operations

4.1 Silvicultural systems

4.1.1 Harvesting

Continuous Cover Forestry. The woodland is to be managed as low intervention forest, no significant tree removal is planned

4.1.2 Phased felling and restructuring of plantations

Not applicable

4.1.3 Establishment, restocking and regeneration

Woodland will be left to regenerate naturally. If natural regeneration does not occur re-planting will be considered when this management plan is reviewed.

4.2 New planting

Woodland will be left to regenerate naturally. If natural regeneration does not occur re-planting will be considered when this management plan is reviewed.

4.3 Other operations

None planned

4.4 Protection and maintenance

4.4.1 Pest and disease management

There is no planned pest and disease management except management of ash dieback in line with emerging national guidance. Coppice regeneration will be monitored and if deer browsing appears to be a problem protection measures (brash piling or fencing) may be implemented.

4.4.2 Fire plan

In general this wood represents a low fire risk, and as with most broadleaved woodlands arson is the most likely cause of fire. Bottles, broken glass, illegal fly tipping etc. can all add to the risk that a fire can be started accidentally. Fire rendezvous points are shown on Map 1.

4.4.3 Waste disposal and pollution

Regular litter picks will be undertaken.

4.4.4 Protection from unauthorised activities

Managed in line with council policy

4.4.5 Protection of other identified services and values

Not applicable

4.5 Game management

None planned

4.6 Protecting and enhancing landscape, biodiversity and special features

4.6.1 Management of designated areas

A major objective of this woodland management plan is to enhance the woodland for biodiversity. This will contribute to Local, Regional and National Biodiversity Action Plan targets.

Implementation of this management plan will also ensure that one of the indicators used by the

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council to measure its performance, that is the proportion of Local Wildlife Sites under positive conservation management, known as Single Data List 160, will be improved.

4.6.2 Measures to enhance biodiversity and other special features [UKWAS 2.1.1/6.1.1]

Implementation of the management plan will enhance the site for biodiversity

4.6.3 Special measures for ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and semi-natural woodland (SNW)

Implementation of this woodland management plan will help ensure the longevity of the ancient woodland compartment (Kentwood Grove)

4.6.4 Special measures for plantation on ancient woodland site (PAWS)

Not applicable

4.6.5 Measures to mitigate impacts on landscape and neighbouring land [UKWAS 3.1.2]

The woodland will be managed as continuous cover forestry and as such there should be no significant noticeable impact on the landscape.

4.7 Management of social and cultural values

4.7.1 Archaeology and sites of cultural interest

There are no plans to undertake works (such as significant felling works) that could be potentially damaging to the sunken lanes or other archaeological features. If any such works are required advice will be sought from the County Archaeological Service at Reading Museum.

4.7.2 Public access and impacts on local people

There is full public access to the woodland. Where work could represent a safety risk, signs will be erected and access prohibited during works.

5 Consultation

A series of public consultation events were held over the summer of 2013 and modifications to the plans were made. For more information on the consultation and the changes that were made please contact the council.

6 Monitoring plan summary

Objective number, issue or UKWAS Requirement	Indicator	Method of assessment	Monitoring period	Responsibility	How will information be used
1	Holly regrowth	Site walkover	Annual	Park supervisor	To decide which areas to control holy
2	Hazel regrowth	Site walkover	Annual	Park supervisor	To decide whether re-coppicing has been successful and if so to consider the reintroduction of coppicing elsewhere
3	Sycamore regrowth	Site walkover	Annual	Park supervisor	To inform future woodland management plans
4	State of rides and paths	Site walkover	Twice yearly	Park supervisor	To identify problem areas and remediate paths as appropriate
5	Woodland edge	Site walkover	Annual after hay cut	Park supervisor / contractor	To decide which areas of woodland edge need cutting
6	Floral composition	Botanical survey of Local Wildlife Site	5 yearly	Ecologist	To monitor the success of the grass cutting regime

7 Work programmes

7.1 Outline long-term work programme (2018 - 2033)

(Use this table to outline medium to long term areas of work)

Cpt. Ref or Name	Activity	Year (<i>tick</i>)	
		6-10	11-20
1,2,5,6	Holly control		X
All	Ongoing ride management	X	X
1, 6	Coppicing of hazel (if coppice regeneration during years 1 – 5 is successful)	X	X
All	Woodland edge management	X	X
1,2	Grassland management	X	X

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7.2 Short-term work programme (2013 - 2018)

(Use this table to collect basic inventory data for the woodland areas you propose to work during the next 5 years)

Cpt. Ref / Name	Area (ha)	Main Species	P. Year	Yield Class	Activity	Year				
						1	2	3	4	5
1,2,5,6	2.2ha	Holly	NA	NA	Control holly and treat stumps (see map 4)	X	X	X	X	X
1,2	0.4	Hawthorn	NA	NA	Clear scrub from grassland areas	X	X			
1,2	0.4		NA	NA	Cut grass or strim and collect arisings	X	X	X	X	X
1	0.2	Oak, Hazel	NA	NA	Fell some larger standard trees and re-coppice derelict hazel		X			
6	0.1	Sycamore	NA	NA	Selectively fell sycamore		X			

8 Costing Operations

The strategy for Reading's woodlands is to use volunteers, council staff and contractors to undertake management tasks throughout the woodland, following the detailed prescriptions given in table 7.2.

Money to fund other works will be applied for through the EWGS Woodland Management Grant (WMG) and Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) with any outstanding costs paid for through income from the sale of timber in the Councils Woodland estate.

9 Maps

Map no./Title	Description
1	Location and fire rendezvous points
2	Geology and topography
3	Compartments and broad habitat types
4	Woodland prescriptions
5	Prescriptions for paths and rides

10 Thinning, felling and restocking proposals

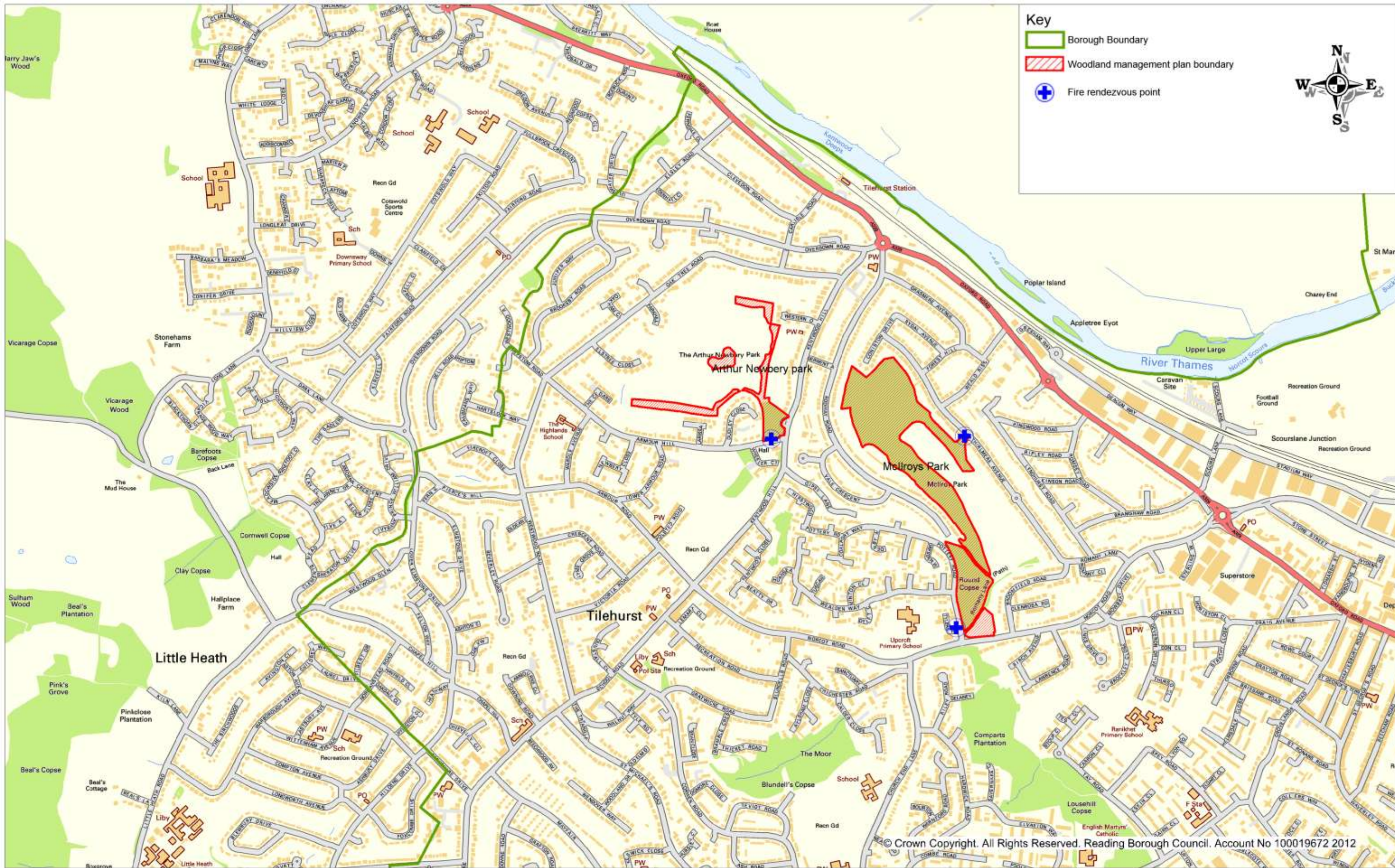
10.1 Table A is not applicable to this management plan and has been excluded

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10.2 Table B

4. Cpt. / Sub Cpt.	5. Area (ha)	6. % area to be worked	7. Type of felling	8. % of felled area comprising:		9. Felling licence type	10. Change in woodland type		11. Preferred claim year	13. Restock mixture		14. % Estab. by natural regen	Standard proposals	12. Notes / Details
				BL	CON		From	To		Species	%			
1,2,5, 6	9.5	30	T	BL	BL	C	Nat	Nat	NA		0	100%		Holly control and sycamore removal
1	1.6	15	FC	BL	BL	C	Nat	Nat	NA		0	100%		Coppice restoration
1,2	2.1	20	CCF	BL	BL	C	Nat	Nat	NA		0	100%		Scrub clearance adjacent to woodland edge

Appendix 1 – Maps



TITLE
MCILROY PARK AND ARTHUR NEWBERY WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
MAP 1 - LOCATION AND FIRE RENDEZVOUS POINTS

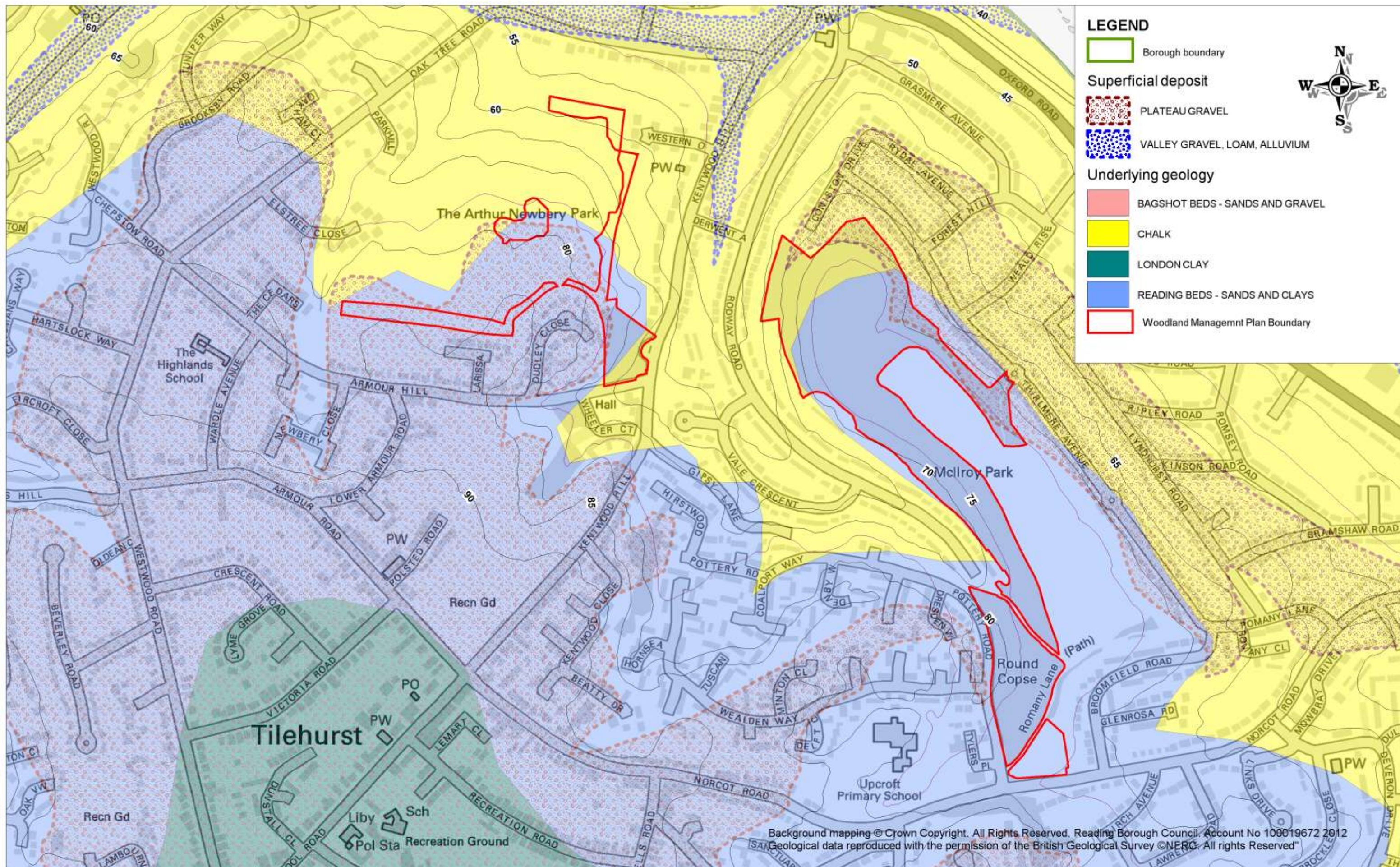
DRG NO 01

DATE 23rd August 2012

DRAWN BY Giles Sutton

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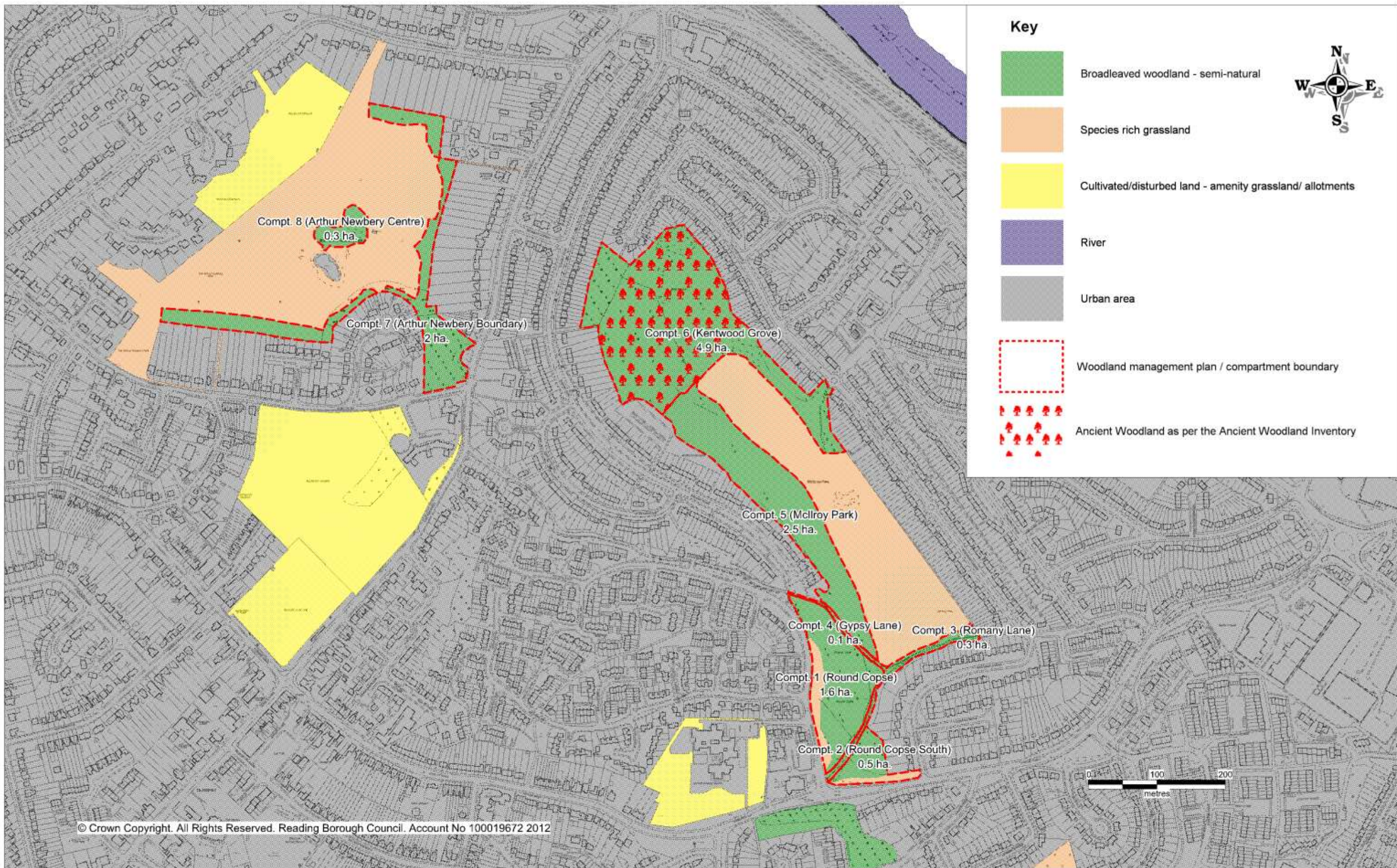
MCILROYS PARK AND ARTHUR NEWBERY WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
 FIGURE 2 - GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

DRG NO

DATE 23rd August 2012

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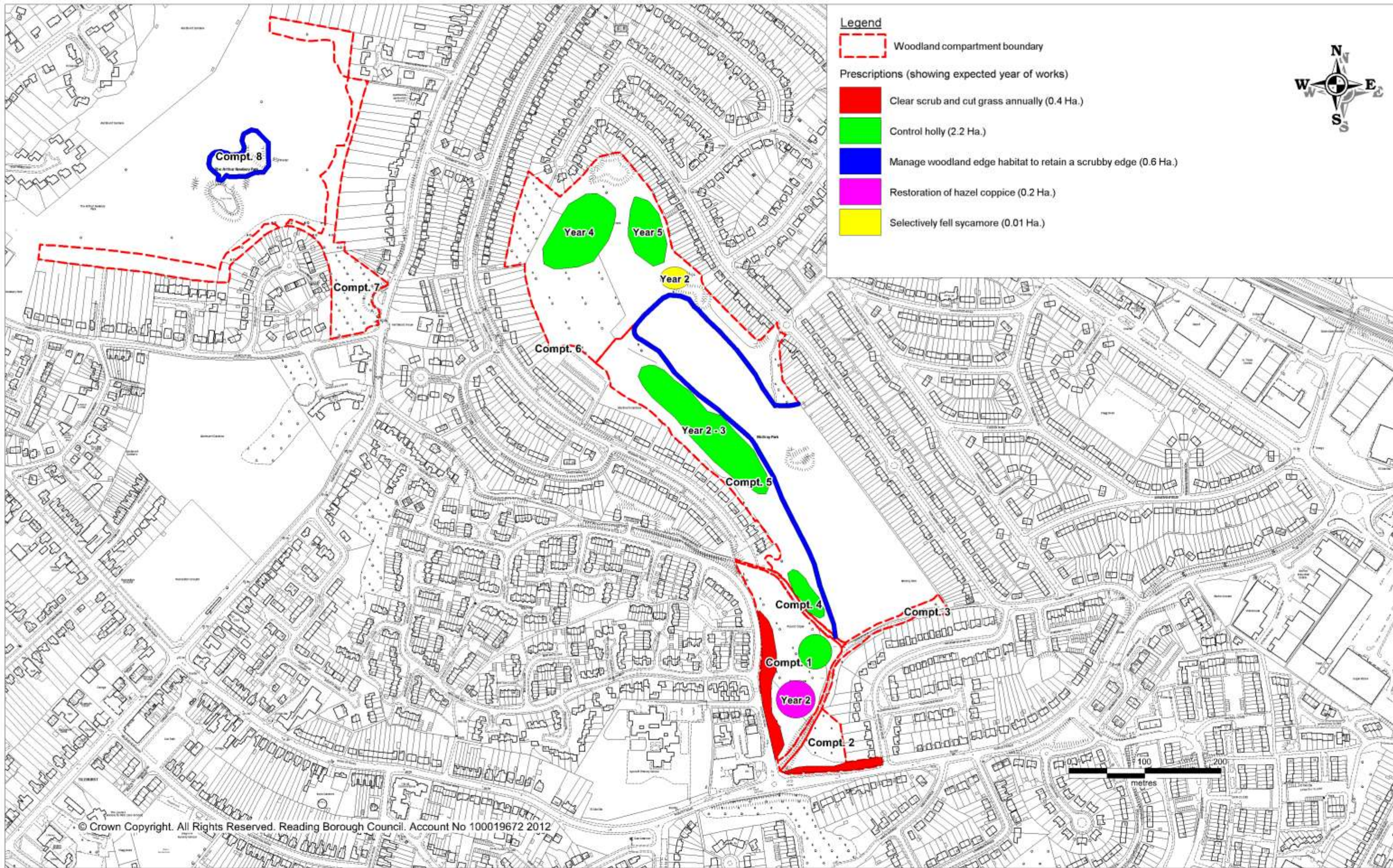
MCILROY PARK AND ARTHUR NEWBERY WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
MAP 3 - COMPARTMENTS AND BROAD HABITAT TYPES

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DATE 23rd August 2012

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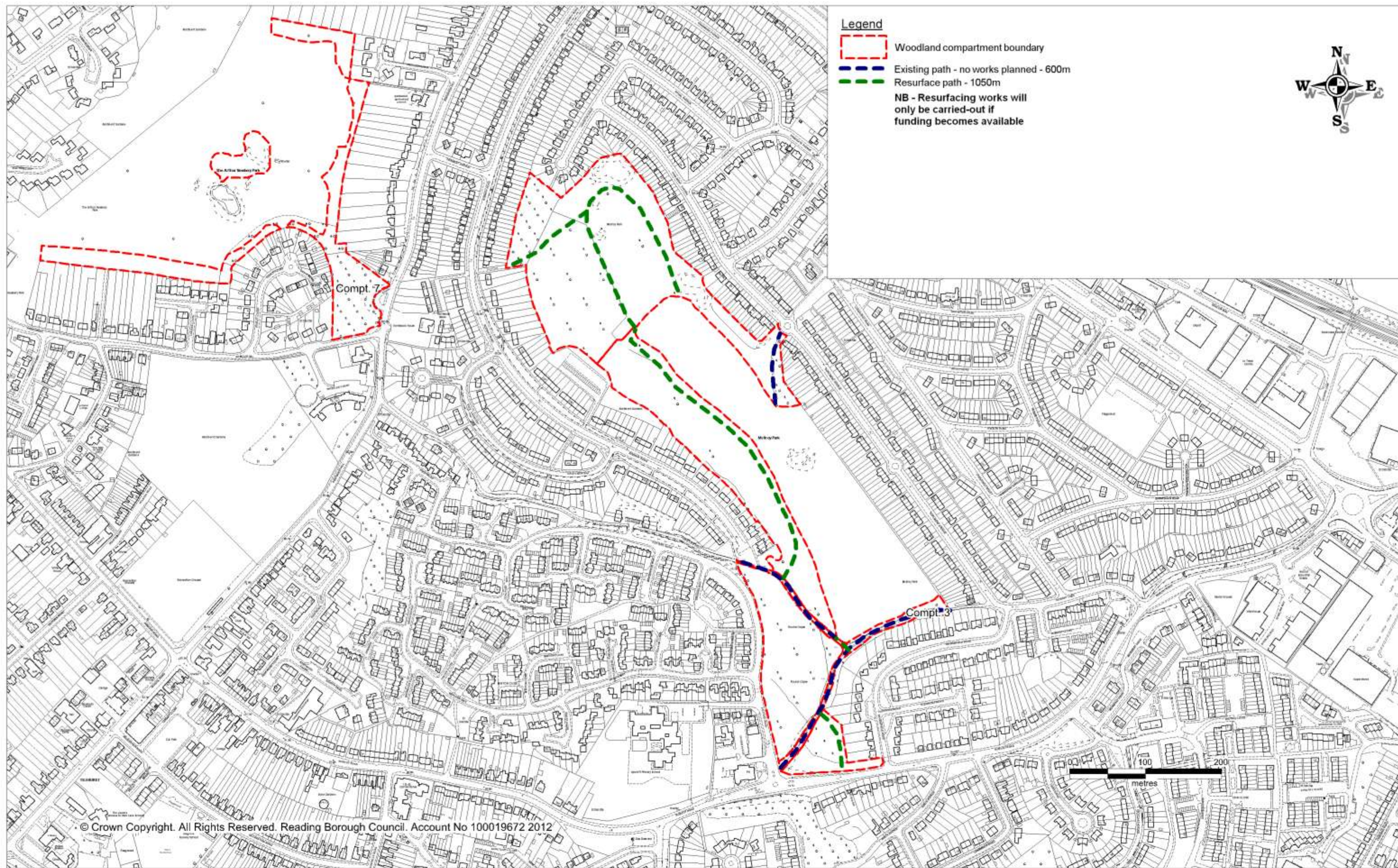
MCILROY PARK AND ARTHUR NEWBERY WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
MAP 4 - WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

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DATE 7th December 2012

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TITLE

MCILROY PARK AND ARTHUR NEWBERY WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
MAP 5 - PRESCRIPTIONS FOR PATHS AND RIDES

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