

Warren Woodland Escarpment

Date (from/to)	2013 – 2023 (reviewed in 2018)
Date of last review [UKWAS 2.1.3]	Not applicable
Owner/tenant	Reading Borough Council
Agent/contact	Giles Sutton
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 (see map 1)

Nearest town, village or feature	Caversham
Grid reference	470280, 174990
Total area (ha)	2.0

1.2 Description of the woodland(s) in the landscape

The Warren Woodland Escarpment is a steep chalk escarpment sloping down from Caversham Heights to The Warren, a residential road adjacent to the River Thames. It is a prominent landscape feature from south of the Thames. The slope is densely wooded, dominated by native broadleaved species, and has a relatively diverse woodland structure (due to the steep slope trees often fall or need to be removed, thereby opening up the canopy).

Only a proportion of the escarpment is covered by this management plan as the rest is in private ownership.

Woodland Management Plan

1.3 History of Management

Management has been undertaken to prevent trees falling into The Warren. This appears to have been the only management at the site.

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)	Entire site	X	
Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)			
Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)			
TPO / Conservation Area (CA)			
Details The Warren Woodland Escarpment is a Local Nature Reserve and a Local Wildlife Site (through the Local Development Framework) and is afforded some protection from the adverse impacts of development through planning policy.			
Rare and important species	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Red Data Book or BAP species			
Rare, threatened, EPS or SAP species			
Details			

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Habitats	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW)			
Other semi-natural woodland		X	X
Plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)			
Semi-natural features in PAWS			
Woodland margins and hedges			
Veteran and other notable trees			
Breeding sites			
Habitats of notable species			
Unimproved grasslands			
Rides and open ground			
Valuable wildlife communities			
Feeding area			
Lowland heath			
Peatlands			
Others			
Water	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Watercourses	1		X
Lakes			
Ponds			
Wetland habitats			
Details: The River Thames lies within 50m to the south of the site			
Landscape	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Landscape designated areas			
Landscape features			
Rock exposures			
Historic landscapes			
Areas of the woodland prominent from roads		X	
Areas of the woodland prominent from settlements		X	
Details: The Warren Woodland escarpment is prominent from Reading, particularly the meadow south of the River Thames and is an important landscape feature adjacent to the Warren, a residential road adjacent to the south of the site.			

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Cultural features	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Public rights of way	1	X	
Prominent viewing points			
Existing permissive footpaths			
Proposed permissive footpaths			
Areas managed with traditional management systems			
<p>Details</p> <p>The woodland is owned by the council and is accessible by the public at all times, however due to the steep nature of the site it is rarely used by the public. A non-statutory footpath runs through the woodland from The Warren to Wychcotes and St Peters Avenue. This is stepped and is maintained by the council.</p>			
Archaeological Features	Map No.	In Woodland	Adjacent to woodland
Scheduled monument			
Historical feature (Inc. designed landscapes, registered parks and gardens)			
Other			
<p>Details:</p> <p>There no known archaeological features of note within the woodland</p>			

2.2 Woodland resource characteristics

Amenity and Landscape

The woodland is a significant landscape feature and is an important backdrop to the River Thames and for people walking and cycling between Caversham and Mapledurham.

Biodiversity

The woodland is an important wildlife corridor along the Thames Escarpment

Timber and firewood

There is very little timber of value in the woodland

2.3 Site description

Steep densely wooded site. Mainly native broadleaved species, with a good understorey in places. Trees tend to be tall and leggy and the canopy is dominated by sycamore, ash and oak. The western sub compartment has a greater proportion of yew and as such has a limited understorey in places. The eastern section has a relatively dense understorey with a variety of species including elm, dogwood, and privet.

The woodland tends to self thin as trees on the bank often fall due to the thin soil and slope which has advantages for woodland structure and biodiversity. Due to the steep banks there has been little active management in the past. Trees have been felled as and when they become dangerous.

2.4 Significant hazards, constraints and threats

Hazards

- The main hazard on the site is trees falling down the bank onto the Warren, a residential road, to the south.

Threats

- No major long term threats to the woodland have been identified. Species and structural diversity is reasonable. No invasive species have been noted on the site.

Constraints

Vehicular access: steep slopes make vehicular access to the woodland impossible.

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Vehicles need to be left on The Warren.

Public use of the woodland: areas where trees are being felled will need to be cordoned off.

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 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

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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

A minimal intervention woodland of significant landscape and ecological value allowed to persist as it has in the past with works being undertaken for safety and access purposes only.

3.2 Management Objectives

- 1 – Maintain the sites landscape and ecological value
- 2 – Ensure that the site is safe for people using The Warren and the footpath through the site
- 3 – Maintain the non-statutory footpath (and steps) through the site

3.3 Strategy

The strategy for the site is to monitor trees and manage any that pose an unacceptable risk to the safety of users of The Warren or the footpath that traverses the site. This will ensure the continuity of a diverse woodland structure. The footpath traversing the eastern compartment will be monitored and managed as required.

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 with trees thinned and selectively felled in line with the objectives in this management plan.

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4.1.2 Phased felling and restructuring of plantations

Not applicable

4.1.3 Establishment, restocking and regeneration

There are no plans to re-stock the woodland by planting but natural regeneration will occur

4.2 New planting

No new planting will occur over the period of this plan.

4.3 Other operations

None planned

4.4 Protection and maintenance

4.4.1 Pest and disease management

None planned

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, however there is no history of serious fires in this wood.

Bottles, broken glass, illegal fly tipping etc. can all add to the risk that a fire can be started accidentally. Litter will be removed regularly.

The fire brigade can access the woodland along The Warren and suggested fire rendezvous points are shown on Map 1.

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4.4.3 Waste disposal and pollution

Litter is not a major problem in the woodland and regular litter picks will be undertaken.

4.4.4 Protection from unauthorised activities

Unauthorised activities have not historically been a major issue in this woodland.

4.4.5 Protection of other identified services and values

Regular safety inspection of trees will be undertaken by the council, remedial action will be undertaken as required.

4.5 Game management

Not applicable

4.6 Protecting and enhancing landscape, biodiversity and special features

4.6.1 Management of designated areas

The Warren Woodland Escarpment is designated as a Local Wildlife Sites. Implementation of this management plan will also ensure that one of the indicators used by the 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 increased.

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

Implementation of the management plan will maintain the site's biodiversity value

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

Not applicable

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

No sites of archaeological interest or cultural value have been identified.

4.7.2 Public access and impacts on local people

Where tree felling or woodland 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.

Woodland Management Plan

6 Monitoring plan summary

Objective number, issue or UKWAS Requirement	Indicator	Method of assessment	Monitoring period	Responsibility	How will information be used
1	Quality of woodland	Visual	5 years	Parks supervisor	To inform an update of this management plan
2	Tree safety	Visual	Annual or as agreed with the tree officer	Tree officer	To reduce the risk of death, injury or damage to property due to trees falling onto The Warren
3	Footpath usability and safety	Visual	Ongoing	Parks supervisor	To inform works to the steps/ footpath.

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
All	Ongoing safety inspection of trees with remedial action where required.	X	X
Eastern compartment	Footpath/ step inspection and maintenance as required and if funds are available	X	X

Woodland Management Plan

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
All	2.0	Mixed broadleaved			Ongoing safety inspection of trees with remedial action where required	X	X	X	X	X
Easter compartment	2.0	Mixed broadleaved			Footpath/ step inspection and maintenance as required and is funds are available	X	X	X	X	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 and manage these works will be applied for through the EWGS Woodland Management Grant (WMG) and Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG).

There is no anticipated income through timber or firewood sales at this site and the council is planning to undertake the majority of works using EWGS monies but if timber can be marketed it will.

The council is proposing to apply for a woodland management grant (WMG) at £30 per hectare, a total of £60 per annum for the area covered by this management plan. In addition the an application may be made for a woodland improvement grant to replace the steps on the footpath across the woodland if the Forestry Commission indicates that funds would be available

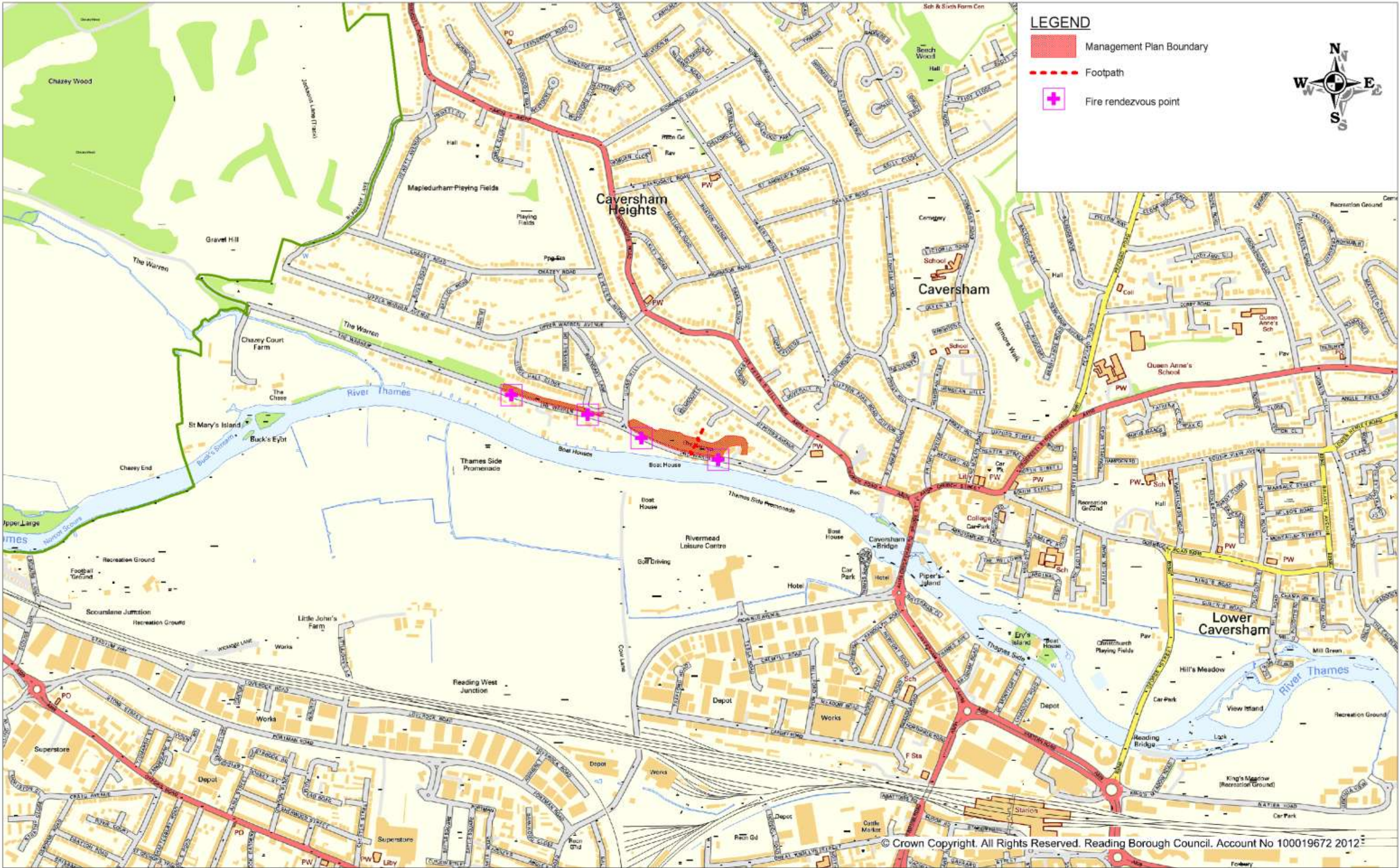
9 Maps

Map no./Title	Description
1	Location and key features
2	Geology

10 Thinning, felling and restocking proposals

10.1 Table A – not required for this application

10.2 Table B – not required for this application (no felling is proposed)



TITLE
WARREN WOODLAND ESCARPMENT
MAP 1 - LOCATION AND KEY FEATURES

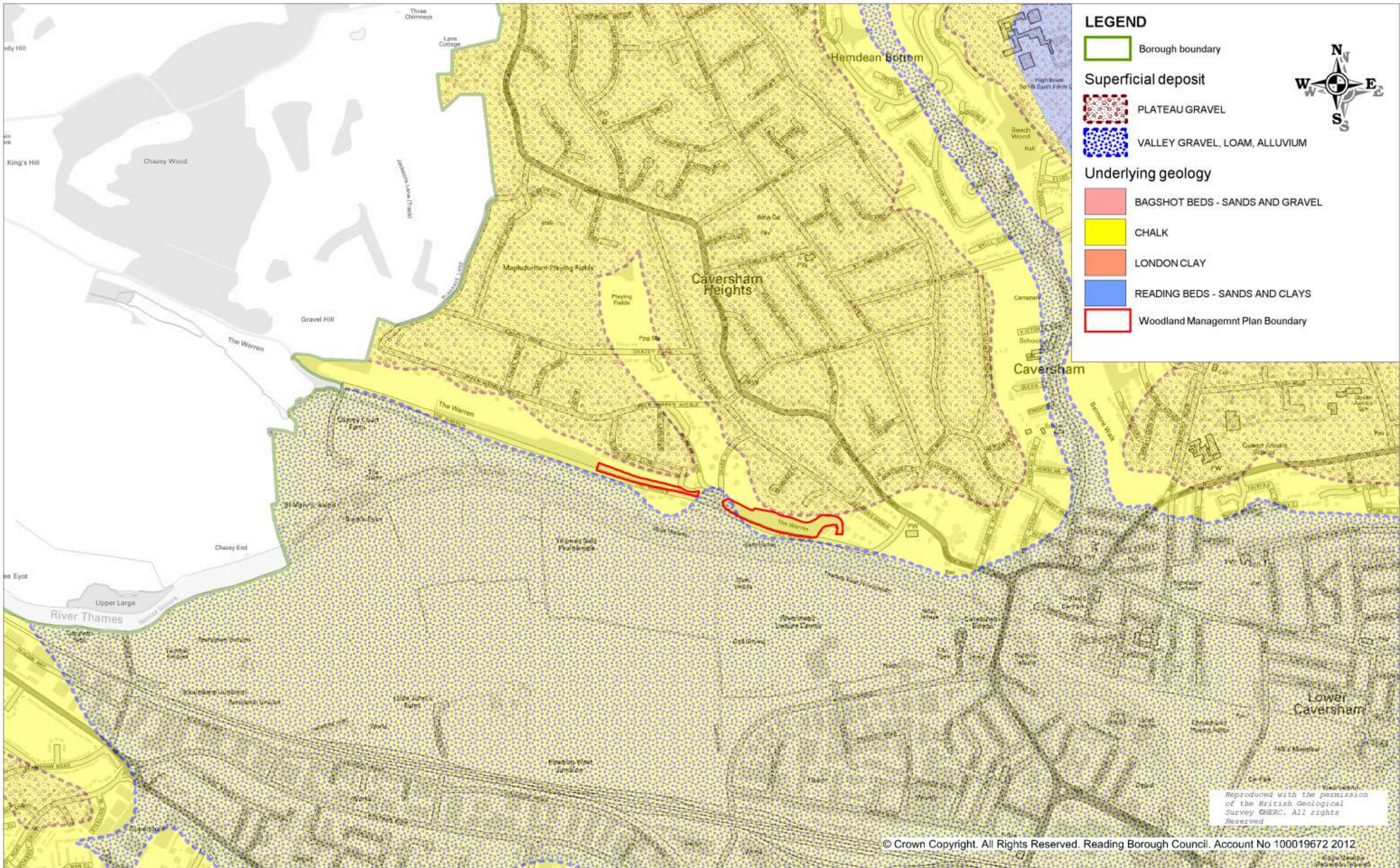
DRG NO 01

DATE 15th May 2012

DRAWN BY Giles Sutton

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TITLE **WARREN WOODLAND ESCARPMENT WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN
FIGURE 2 - GEOLOGY**

DRG NO	DATE 18th May 2012
DRAWN BY GS	SCALE 1:10000

