



Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough Management Strategy and Action Plan

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1 INTRODUCTION

Background

- 1.1 In the early 1970's the then North West Water Authority asked the constituent Local Authorities to help them formulate a comprehensive Management Plan for the Macclesfield Forest area. The Study Area was extended to Wildboarclough and the Tegg's Nose locality because both areas were popular with visitors, and experienced similar pressures. The Management Plan was approved by the partners and published in 1979.
- 1.2 An Officer Working Group has continued to meet involving representatives of United Utilities, Macclesfield Borough Council, Cheshire County Council, the Peak District National Park Authority and other agencies.
- 1.3 Action and achievements co-ordinated by the Joint Officer Working Group to date include

1.3.1. Macclesfield Forest

- * 2 car parks and 3 lay-bys have been created along with deterrents to parking such as roadside mounding to help control indiscriminate and unsightly parking. Trentabank Reservoir lay-by, where 2 spaces are reserved for disabled people, gives good views of the heronry.
- * At Trentabank car park a Ranger Briefing Centre, Toilets and Information Point have been provided. The car park has been resurfaced and rationalised to maximise parking spaces (approx. 50), and to include 3 spaces reserved for disabled people close to the facilities. On busy days, an overflow car park is available at United Utilities' Forestry depot nearby.
- * Footpaths and bridleways have been improved and extra way-marked concession routes provided for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and disabled people. A path overlooking Trentabank Reservoir for use by disabled people was designed with help and suggestions from a local disabled group. Improvements to the gradients, surfacing, signing and seating have been made recently.
- * An area surrounding Trentabank Reservoir, which includes a heronry, is licensed to the Cheshire Wildlife Trust for management as a nature reserve.
- * United Utilities have created an arboretum opposite Trentabank car park; all the trees have been planted by local school children.
- * At Trentabank the Rangers have created an environmental education area suitable for children between the ages of 3-11. A "hands-on" approach is used rather than the written word and all activities are linked to the National Curriculum. The area contains a pond, bird hide, habitat piles, bat and bird boxes. Trees have been planted by visitors annually to help to increase the diversity of trees and habitats.

- * The Forest is used by orienteering groups for training and events.
- * The Ranger Service in the area, based at Trentabank, is jointly funded by the Peak National Park and United Utilities.
- * A Visitor Guide is available, funded by the Peak National Park, United Utilities, Macclesfield Borough Council and Cheshire County Council. This is only distributed within the area to avoid publicity which might attract more visitors than the area can sustain.
- * In the Forest, United Utilities have moved away from a clear fell and restocking policy towards one of continuous cover, with a greater concern for environmental and recreational benefits of forestry rather than just economic benefits. This is reflected in their current Woodland Grant Scheme which is agreed with the Forestry Authority in consultation with the Peak District National Park Authority, Cheshire County Council and Macclesfield Borough Council. In 1996 North West Water was awarded the Forestry Authority's Centre of Excellence award for improving the quality of the landscape, creating benefits for wildlife, providing access for people and growing timber in environmentally sound ways.
- * The path through Macclesfield Forest and across moorland to the top of Shutlingsloe had become badly eroded. This has been repaired and upgraded, using local gritstone slabs for the most sensitive sections, with financial assistance from the Countryside Agency, the Peak District National Park Authority, Cheshire County Council and Macclesfield Borough Council. Further erosion problems are currently being addressed on the eastern footpath to the summit of Shutlingsloe.

1.3.2 Wildboarclough

- * The Peak District National Park Authority has created 3 small car parks and 2 lay-bys. These informal sites were developed in accordance with the management plan, which includes minimal signing, no information boards or litter bins and environmental improvements such as wall building and tree planting.
- * Vicarage Quarry car park has a small field opposite traditionally used for picnicking. To safeguard this use the Peak National Park bought this land when it was sold in 1996. A space has been reserved for disabled people in the car park.
- * Clough House car park has 2 spaces reserved for disabled people.
- * Nab Quarry car park also has an informal picnic area in the woods opposite.
- * Footpath signing and waymarking has been carried out to improve opportunities for visitors and reduce problems of trespass.

- * Following a freak flood in the area all the Management Plan agencies worked with local landowners to make good the damage in a sensitive manner.

- 1.4 During 2002, the Officer Working Group agreed to update and roll forward the Management Plan to reflect current circumstances. Informal consultation had already taken place with some users and landowners, the local community through the Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough Parish Meeting and Sutton Parish Council.

Consultation

- 1.5 A draft Management Strategy and Action Plan was published for formal consultation purposes at the same time as separate but related consultation on a Quiet Lanes proposal for the area. It has been amended in the light of consultation responses and will then be subject to formal approval by the partner agencies.

Aims

- 1.6 The overall objective remains to provide management arrangements for conservation of the environmental qualities of an area where demands of differing land uses and interests overlap. These are chiefly water catchment and treatment, forestry, agriculture, access, recreation and nature conservation.

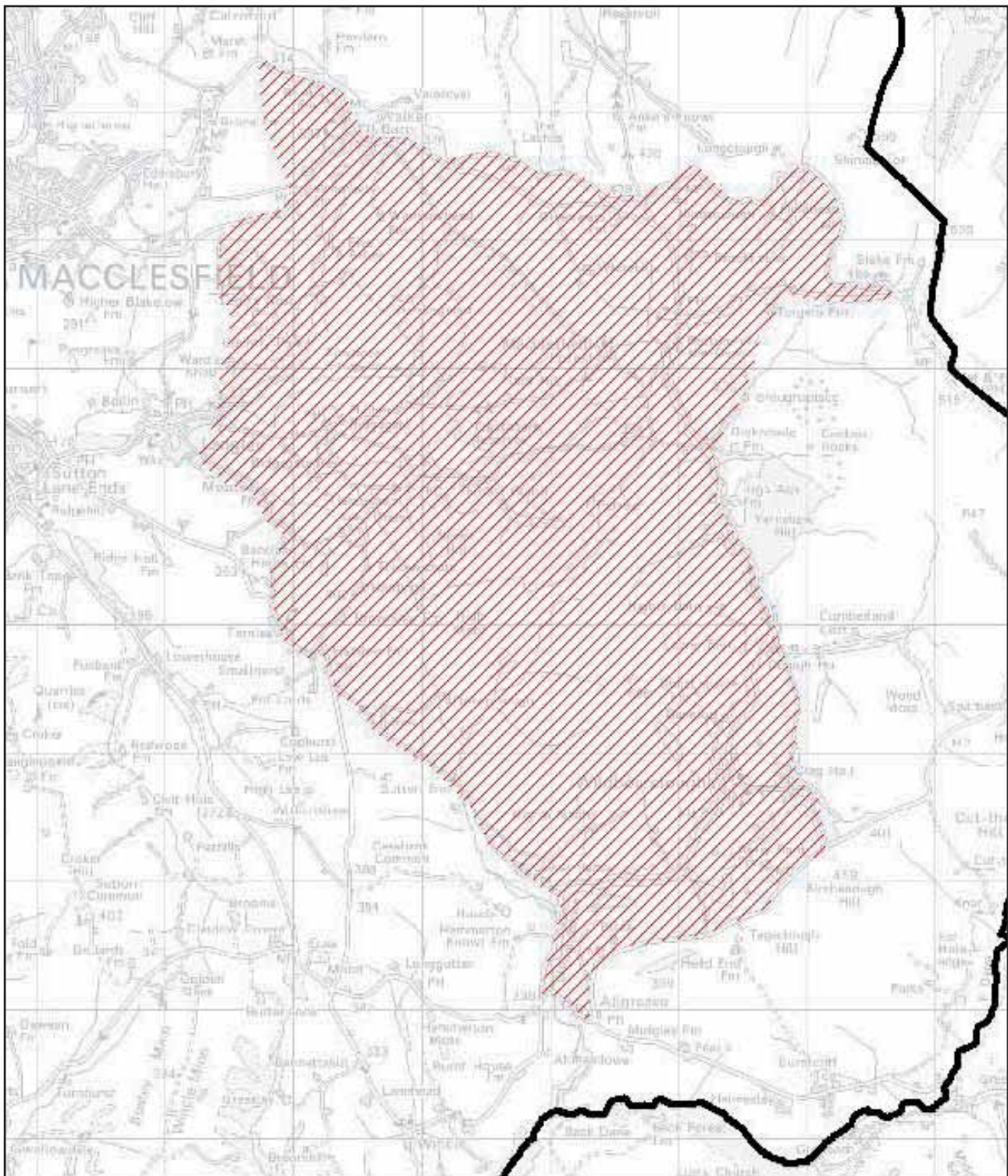
Content

- 1.7 In the 1970's the Management Plan was accompanied by a separate Report of Survey presenting and analysing information about landscape character, land use and management, the road and footpath network, flora and fauna, recreation activity and visitor characteristics. No separate Report of Survey has been prepared to accompany the current strategy. Rangers now operate in the Plan area. Their experience and observation has been used to inform the strategy. The Action Plan accompanying this strategy indicates where further survey work will be needed.
- 1.8 The strategy is concerned essentially with the management of land, water, nature conservation, recreation and traffic. It will be used to guide decision making and investment in the area.
- 1.9 The nature of the subject, the procedure for approval and implementation made it an unsuitable subject for inclusion in Local Plans under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Acts. However, its policies and proposals have been drawn up in the light of the Cheshire County Council and Peak District National Park Authority Structure Plans and Peak National Park and Macclesfield Borough Local Plans. Once the nature of the "Local Development Framework" is clearer, consideration will be given as to how the Management Plan may fit into it.

Implementation, Monitoring and Review

- 1.10 When implemented, each of the strategy's proposals will have direct and indirect effects on land uses in the area. These changes should be seen against the overall objective. The Working Group will monitor the Study Area, report back to the partner agencies on any significant changes in activity, and any need for amendments to the policies and proposals in this strategy.

Study Area



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2 THE STUDY AREA - POSITION STATEMENT

2.1 This Study Area lies on the western fringe of the Peak National Park, close to Macclesfield. It lies within Macclesfield Borough and Cheshire County; about two-thirds of the area lie within the Peak District National Park. The landscape consists of an attractive mix of moorland, farmland, forestry plantations and four reservoirs. The area is crossed by narrow roads, footpaths and bridleways (both rights of way and concessionary); the Gritstone Trail passes through the area. Tegg's Nose Country Park, owned and managed by Cheshire County Council, lies within the Study Area.

2.2 Macclesfield Forest Woodlands

2.2.1 Situated 3 miles east of Macclesfield and extending to approximately 400 hectares, they form the bulk of the catchment area and United Utilities ownership associated with Trentabank and Ridgeway Reservoirs. The main tree species are Japanese Larch and Sitka Spruce. Oak, Sycamore, Corsican Pine, Lodgepole Pine, Scots Pine, Norway Spruce and Beech play a minor role. Contained in one block they are divided by two minor public roads.

2.2.2 The forest is currently under a Woodland Grant Scheme Management Plan agreed with the Forestry Commission. This will run until 31 March 2006. The majority of Macclesfield Forest was planted between 1930 and 1950, and is therefore composed largely of trees of an even age. Visually, many of the woodland areas do not complement the geography of the surrounding land.

2.2.3 Through thinning, selective felling and clear felling where necessary, United Utilities are gradually improving the vegetation structure, visual amenity and recreational value of the forest. Areas of highest amenity value are already recognized and designated as a Special Management Area.

2.2.4 Trees are allowed to mature and die and broadleaved areas expanded to become more visually dominant. Selective felling, thinning and localized re-stocking with broadleaves as opportunity arises continue to play an important part in improving the general amenity of the Forest.

2.2.5 The former practice of clear felling large areas of mature woodland has been discontinued and replaced with a policy of continuous cover management

2.2.6 The Forest presently contains 23% broadleaved species. Re-stocking concentrates on expanding existing areas of broadleaves to more natural shapes and connecting groups of broadleaves as a permanent landscape framework.

2.2.7 Public use of the forest is encouraged and expanded. The facilities currently available are maintained and recreation facilities added as opportunity arises.

2.2.8 The Special Management Areas include a number of areas and locations which have current value and potential as wildlife habitat. The Cheshire Wildlife Trust lease of the heronry and Trentabank margins has been renewed. The heronry itself will over time become dominated by broadleaves as the larch are selectively removed. The first phase of this felling has been completed and underplanted with mixed broadleaves.

2.2.9 Macclesfield Forest is the largest Site of Biological Importance (SBI) in the Borough of Macclesfield, at 401 hectares. It is of Grade A status, and is an assemblage of coniferous plantation woodland, open water, acidic unimproved upland grassland, mixed and broad-leaved semi-natural woodland. It is of particular local interest for ornithological value including a heronry, whilst Ridgeway and Trentabank Reservoirs are important for waders and wildfowl.

2.3 The Royal Forest of Macclesfield

2.3.1 The area now popularly referred to as Macclesfield Forest is the last sizeable remnant of what was once the Royal Forest of Macclesfield. In its heyday, the Royal Forest covered an area from the foothills of the Pennines to the east of Macclesfield roughly south from Poynton to the Staffordshire Moorland, and east into High Peak towards Whaley Bridge. Today, “forest” conjures up images of densely planted trees covering vast areas, but in Mediaeval times, great forests such as Macclesfield Forest, were a magnificent mix of woods, heaths, moorlands, wetlands and farmland with hamlets, villages and small towns where people lived and worked.

2.3.2 As a contribution to its general policy to increase woodland cover from 4% to be more in line with the national average of nearer 10% Macclesfield Borough Council is seeking to recreate, in part, the Royal Forest, in partnership with others especially the County Council, United Utilities, the Peak District National Park Authority and the Forestry Commission. Among its aims are:

- Protect and enhance special areas of high quality landscape and historic interest.
- Protect and enhance existing areas of nature conservation importance and create new habitats for wildlife.
- Increase opportunities for recreation, access and enjoyment of the countryside.
- Establish a sustainable supply of timber and wood products.
- Provide better opportunities for outdoor education.

Some direct funding is available, subject to budget provision, from the partners through grant aid to local landowners.

2.4 The Historic Environment

2.4.1 A range of historic environment features – archaeological sites, monuments, buildings, settlements and landscapes – exists within the study area. The planning authorities, Cheshire County Council, Macclesfield Borough Council and the Peak District National Park Authority, are responsible for their sustainable management, by recording, researching, safeguarding and enhancing these features.

2.4.2 There are a number of Scheduled Monuments (SMs) within the study area, which are recognised as being of national importance and afforded statutory protection. English Heritage, the body responsible for SMs, seeks to protect ancient monuments through partnership with owners, farmers and local authorities by providing advice and financial assistance for their conservation.

- 2.4.3 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are afforded special protection by the planning authorities. For the former, Listed Building Consent must be obtained before any alterations or change of use can occur, including the setting of the building. This is designed to preserve or enhance the special features of the listed building.
- 2.4.4 Conservation Area status is designated to groups of buildings and their associated lanes, paths, trees and open spaces in places of special architectural or historic interest. Within the study area there is one Conservation Area at Forest Chapel. In Conservation Areas, planning control measures help to protect and enhance the buildings and their setting. The National Park Authority makes grants available for work to repair and renovate traditional buildings; to prune, fell (when unavoidable) and plant trees and to carry out a wide variety of environmental improvements.
- 2.4.5 Cheshire County Council maintains a Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) of all recorded historic environment features, whether legally protected or not. The SMR is referred to when an application for any form of development is made, whether building, woodland or agricultural. Development plan policies (Structure and Local Plans) are applied by all authorities to protect historic environment features and their setting. Where development that affects an historic environment feature is permitted, measures will be sought to safeguard, enhance and record the features ahead of development.
- 2.4.6 No comprehensive audit of the historic environment component of the study area has ever been made. It would be desirable therefore to carry out a complete audit of the historic environment within the study area to inform and guide future action and ensure sustainable management of the historic environment.

2.5 Overall Transport Approach

- 2.5.1 Cheshire County Council's approach to transport issues is set out in the County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) – 2001/02 to 2005/06. The principal objectives are:
- to promote accessibility;
 - to improve travel safety and security;
 - to promote integration of all forms of transport;
 - to contribute to the development of an efficient and stable economy; and
 - to protect and enhance the environment.

With the exception of some key strategic issues and certain county-wide approaches, many of the objective are delivered through locally focused budgets (LTP Area Programmes) and local management control:(with highway regulatory measures approved through Local Joint Highways Committees).

- 2.5.2 The previous Management Plan was generated through detailed consultation and study processes initiated in the 1970s. Limitations in resources have meant that such an approach in respect of transport issues is not currently possible and transport issues must be addressed through the interpretation of County policies, the development of specific 'themed' approaches and a response to critical issues prioritised within other local demands.

- 2.5.3 Linking with the five overarching transport objectives set out above, the County Council has a number of general 'themed' approaches. Some of these approaches are designed to deliver the objectives that are appropriate to the Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough area.. These include management measures and measures focused on specific transport modes, such as pedestrian and cycle routes.
- 2.5.4 A specific and most appropriate initiative is the development of a 'Quiet Lanes' network in the area. 'Quiet Lanes' are largely rural roads where the aim is to preserve the character of the lanes and encourage walkers, horse riders and cyclists to "Share with Care". The County Council commissioned consultants to produce proposals on how such a network of lanes could be introduced in the Macclesfield Forest area. A draft network has been the subject of consultation with residents and users of the area – and is being progressed.
- 2.5.5 Over the next few years a network of largely car-free 'off-road' routes between town and country will be developed by the County Council and its partners for leisure and for travelling to work, school and shopping. These 'Greenways' will often be existing public rights of way or green lanes. The applicability of this type of proposal will be examined in the Macclesfield Forest area, in particular potential links with the Quiet Lanes initiative.
- 2.6 Ranger Services**
- 2.6.1 There are two separate Ranger Services operating in the Study Area. The Peak District National Park Authority's Ranger Service covers the area within the Forest inside and outside the National Park. Cheshire Countryside Ranger Service operates throughout the whole area including Tegg's Nose Country Park and the Gritstone Trail, but generally leaves the Forest to the National Park rangers.
- 2.6.2 There are two Peak National Park rangers based at Trentabank in Macclesfield Forest, one full-time and one half-time. These posts are joint funded by the National Park and United Utilities. They are assisted by part-time and volunteer rangers. They carry out a variety of tasks including patrolling, conservation and footpath work, environmental education, guided walks and events, visitor management, and provision of leaflets and information at the centre when it is open.
- 2.6.3 Two Cheshire County Council rangers are based at Tegg's Nose Country Park. They are responsible for the management and maintenance of the country park and the running of the visitor services and information centre on the site. Additionally they undertake management of the Gritstone Trail and liaise with rights of way officers on access matters throughout the area.
- 2.6.4 United Utilities' Wildlife Warden manages the red deer in Macclesfield Forest, liaising with National Park and Cheshire Countryside rangers.
- 2.6.6 A variety of leaflets are available at Tegg's Nose and Trentabank. The two main ones cover Tegg's Nose Country Park and Macclesfield Forest, currently with very different styles and no reference to each other or the wider area.
- 2.6.7 The Rangers organise guided walks and activities, particularly aimed at families and children. These include such activities as egg painting and rolling at Easter;

instruction in making bird, bat and hedgehog boxes; tree planting and dressing, and a Forest Fun Day.

- 2.6.8 There is an Environmental Education Area for 3-11 year olds at Trentabank, where children can study the life of a forest, including pond life. A bird hide and bird feeders allow the study of birds; bird and bat nesting boxes have been provided. The trail through the education area is accessible to children with disabilities.

2.7 **Motor Sports Activities**

There are four unsealed roads in the study area – Hacked Way, Charity Lane, from Forest Chapel to the Stanley Arms and from Allgreave to the Wildboardclough road. Their use will continue to be monitored and a code of behaviour drawn up. Hacked Way is due to be improved in the near future.

2.8 **Sailing and Boating**

It is not thought the four reservoirs offer any potential for boating use due to their small size and existing uses (angling on Teggsnose, Bottoms and Ridgeway, nature conservation at Trentabank).

2.9 **Angling**

There are a number of fishing clubs using some of the reservoirs for fishing. Coarse fishing is carried out on Teggsnose (Waltonians Fishing Club) and Bottoms (Prince Albert Fishing Club). Macclesfield and District Fly Fishing Club have the fishing rights on Ridgeway Reservoir, where a limited number of day tickets are available. Macclesfield and District Fly Fishing Club have game fishing rights to the small reservoir behind the Mill in the Clough, and exclusive rights to fish in Clough Brook between Dry Knowle Bridge and Owler's Bridge.

Trentabank Reservoir is managed exclusively for nature conservation so no fishing is allowed.

2.10 **Accommodation**

There is a shortage of all forms of accommodation in the study area due to the lack of settlements. Ideally, low-key accommodation would be provided to encourage staying visitors. This is likely to be in the form of pub, farmhouse or bed and breakfast accommodation, or camping in the Wildboardclough area. The narrow and steep roads prevent the area being used by caravanners and there is a presumption against caravan sites on landscape grounds.

2.11 **Information and Interpretation**

Existing provision consists of a visitor centre and guided trails at Tegg's Nose and an Information room with wall-mounted displays (open when Rangers present) at Trentabank, with information panels outside. There are other panels at Standing Stone Car Park and close to Trentabank Reservoir (for nature and wildlife interpretation). An interpretation panel is to be erected in the Arboretum at Trentabank.

3 **MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

3.1 The principles of the original management plan are still relevant –

- to conserve and enhance the outstanding qualities of the area
- to provide for water supply, forestry, farming, nature and wildlife conservation, game management and recreation interests in a balanced way
- to safeguard local residents and land use interests and subject to none of the above being harmed,
- to increase visitors' enjoyment and understanding of the area.

3.2 Two new agenda items are now considered – sustainability and social inclusion. Within the context of Recreation, the main change to the Management Plan is greater emphasis on the provision and promotion of sustainable means of access to Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough. This includes good quality footpaths and bridleways leading into the area, especially from Macclesfield, as well as improved public transport. Wherever possible the aim will be "access for all".

3.3 A third agenda item is the inclusion of greater community involvement, to include views on facilities available in Langley and Wildboarclough as well as recreation issues within the open country. Community involvement will extend to Macclesfield and surrounding towns and villages.

3.4 "Filtered" recreation use of the area will be encouraged, with greater emphasis placed on Tegg's Nose Country Park as a starting point for recreation activities. This will help prevent congestion of the narrow roads in the Forest. The introduction of pay-and-display parking charges at Trentabank might assist this as current payment at Tegg's Nose may encourage people to drive further into the area. A Local Interpretation Plan is required to consider existing information provision and provide the visitor with an overview of the whole area and what it has to offer.

3.5 The original management plan suggested that the scale of recreation use should be maintained at the "existing level". There have been recent traffic counts in the Forest as part of the Quiet Lane consultation. Vehicular traffic through the Clough has actually decreased over the years, and the current level does not generally create a problem although many car parks are full at peak times. It is desirable to carry out a visitor survey to assess current level of use, the aspirations of visitors, to highlight any conflicts or issues, and assess means of access/likelihood of switch to more sustainable transport options if available.

3.6 **Recreation Zoning**

3.6.1 Within the National Park the principle of Recreation Zoning is employed to accommodate different types of recreational use depending on the landscape character and quality. The Peak National Park Structure Plan (1994) revised the earlier five recreation zones into a Natural Zone and three Recreation Zones to guide recreation and tourism development to the most appropriate area. These were endorsed in the deposit Local Plan (1997) and mapped at 1:50,000.

3.6.2 Within the Natural Zone, the wilder more remote areas of the National Park with limited evidence of human activity, there is a general presumption against any

development. Zone 1 allows for small scale, low-key recreation and tourism development, Zone 2 for modest scale development and Zone 3 might accommodate development associated with the higher intensities of recreation use.

- 3.6.3 These zones have been applied as a broad guide across the Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough study area including parts of Cheshire outside the National Park. Within the zones present the following principles apply:

Natural Zone – areas with particular qualities of wilderness and remoteness such as Shutlingsloe and Piggford Moor. Low intensities of recreational use will be accommodated, mainly relating to active pursuits with access normally on foot eg. walking, nature study, climbing and shooting, activities that depend on the outstanding qualities of the land.

Zone 1 – informal, low-impact, active recreation uses acceptable with careful management, such as hostels, farmhouse accommodation, walking, cycling and riding routes.

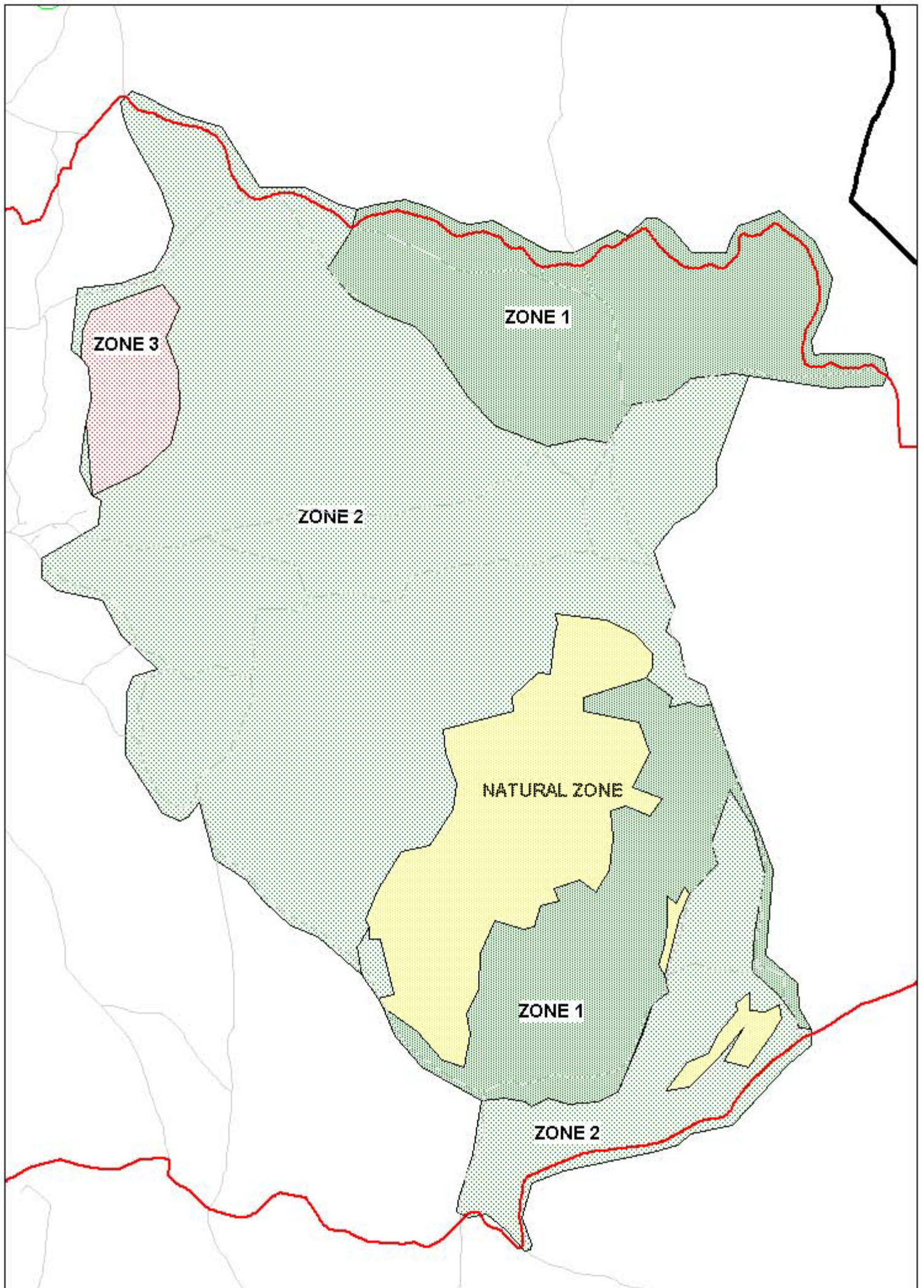
Zone 2 – informal recreation uses acceptable with careful management, such as small car parks, picnic sites, facilities linked to walking, cycling and riding.

Zone 3 – development associated with the more intensive levels of recreation use, including the larger car parks, information provision and visitor facilities such as Tegg's Nose Country Park and Trentabank.

- 3.6.4 However these zones will only be used as a basis for management decisions and in all cases, conservation interests will take precedence if recreational uses cause irreconcilable conflict.

3.7 **Recreation Objectives**

- 3.7.1 To work in partnership to pursue an integrated approach towards recreation which is sustainable and socially inclusive.
- 3.7.2 To extend, improve and manage access to open country (including new areas as a result of the CROW Act), public rights of way and other paths and trails.
- 3.7.3 To support the development of community recreation activities and facilities for the benefit of local people and visitors.
- 3.7.4 To ensure that recreation activities which are dependent on the special qualities of Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough are accommodated without conflict with each other and that they are compatible with the strategy.
- 3.7.5 To maintain, improve and extend where appropriate the recreation facilities provided or jointly managed by Cheshire County Council, Macclesfield Borough Council, the Peak District National Park Authority, United Utilities and other partners and landowners in a sustainable manner. Encourage other public and private sector providers to set good standards.
- 3.7.6 To promote awareness of recreation opportunities within the study area and respect for its special qualities.



3.8 **Parking Facilities**

- 3.8.1 It is generally accepted that current car use of the study area is accommodated satisfactorily most of the time, but that significant increase would be unacceptable. The potential of parking areas has been maximized with the provision of Trentabank (about 50 spaces) and Standing Stone car parks, a number of informal car parks and lay-bys in the Clough and an overflow car park provided at the Forest Office close to Trentabank at the busiest times.
- 3.8.2 The greatest capacity for parking is on the western edge of the study area at Tegg's Nose Country Park (84 cars on the main car park with an overflow area for 15 vehicles). Car park charging was introduced here in 1998 and has generally proved acceptable to visitors with few problems of anti-social parking. Information on the area should promote Tegg's Nose as a gateway to Macclesfield Forest, with routes identified for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders. These routes should be promoted in a better way. The introduction of parking charges at Trentabank might encourage people to park at the first available car park (Tegg's Nose) rather than drive further into the Forest. The reason for payment should be explained to visitors, and parking charges used to maintain the public facilities in the area. The impact on roadside parking would be monitored.

3.9 **Car Park Principles**

- 3.9.1 Informal surfacing will be used where possible, with tarmac surfacing for areas of high usage, lay-bys and disabled parking spaces where appropriate.
- 3.9.2 Parking spaces will be allocated for disabled people close to any facilities, views or suitable paths.
- 3.9.3 Car Park signs will be kept to a minimum consistent with highway safety. In the Clough, the preference will be for wooden routed signs.
- 3.9.4 Litter bins and dog-waste bins are provided at Tegg's Nose. Consideration will be given to provision of dog-waste bins at other sites.
- 3.9.5 Toilet facilities are currently provided at Tegg's Nose and Trentabank car parks.
- 3.9.6 There is limited coach parking in the Forest with some provision at Tegg's Nose car park and Ridgegate lay-by. Horse-box parking is currently the same as for coaches, but better provision is required due to the difficulties of side-loading horse-boxes adjacent to the road. Road user safety will be an important consideration.
- 3.9.7 Minor improvements and refinements should be carried out at existing parking sites, including provision of reserved parking spaces for disabled people after a full audit of sites.
- 3.9.8 Tegg's Nose provides cycle racks. Consideration will be given to the provision of cycle racks and horse-hitching rails at other sites following consultation with users.

3.10 **Public Toilets**

Macclesfield Forest is reasonably well served by toilets at Tegg's Nose and Trentabank, both of which contain facilities suitable for use by disabled people. The local community do not consider that the lack of public toilets in the Clough is a problem.

3.11 **Picnicking**

Picnic tables are provided at Trentabank Car Park, Tegg's Nose Country Park, Standing Stone and Clough House Car Parks. The small field opposite Vicarage Quarry Car Park is now owned by the Peak National Park Authority and used for informal picnicking (no picnic tables are provided but one memorial seat has been provided close to the roadside wall). There is informal use of the woodland opposite Nabb Quarry.

It is not considered that further picnic sites are required. Where picnic tables are provided, one accessible to disabled people will be included where possible.

3.12 **Catering Arrangements**

Existing provision includes the following:

- Leather Smithy
- Refreshment concession at Trentabank
- Tegg's Nose has an ice-cream van refreshment concession
- Brookside café, Wildboardclough
- Stanley Arms, Bottom-of-the-Oven
- Crag Inn, Wildboardclough
- Peak View Restaurant, A537
- Blaze Farm has a tea-room, ice-creams and a farm trail
- Langley has two pubs
- Rose and Crown, Wildboardclough

Investigation is needed into opening hours and accessibility to disabled people.

3.13 **Access Arrangements and Routes**

3.13.1 There are two main aspects of access to be considered – access to the plan area and access provision and issues within the plan area. Whilst concerns over traffic management were at the forefront of the original plan this has been largely addressed within the forest through measures to control roadside parking and car parking provision. In Wildboardclough there appears to have been a reduction in traffic and consequent congestion although the evidence is anecdotal. There is some local concern about seasonal traffic in connection with Christmas tree sales.

3.13.2 The current circumstances are such that the strategy should address the issues of sustainable means of access to the area and the provision of good quality routes within. There has been a significant change in demand for recreational facilities for walking, riding and cycling, the latter two having grown well beyond what was once envisaged. Recreational motor vehicle use also requires consideration.

3.14 **Access Objectives**

- Manage traffic to minimise effects on the local community and environment.
- To develop and promote access to the plan area from the adjacent towns and villages by public transport and other sustainable means.
- To improve, extend and manage access to open country, public rights of way and other routes and trails.

3.15 **Proposed Actions**

- Access development and improvements to be undertaken to provide for the widest possible range of abilities subject to prevailing local conditions and topography.
- To promote a programme of research and investigation into un recorded routes and routes which may carry higher rights than currently recorded in conjunction with the Countryside Agency's "Lost Ways" project. This will ensure that opportunities and routes for cyclists and equestrians are maximised.
- To explore traffic management options to handle seasonal traffic.

3.16 **Access to the Area**

3.16.1 The road network comprises narrow routes leading from the A roads outside the area. There is a weekday Arriva school service in Wildboarclough. There is a regular service (not Sundays) from Macclesfield to Langley Village run by Arriva and the Trent/Bowers operated Macclesfield to Buxton bus calls at Walker Barn with a few journeys via Tegg's Nose Country Park.

3.16.2 Rights of way access for walkers is good although there are stretches of narrow road that have to be negotiated when approaching from Langley. The Gritstone Trail, which is promoted as a walking route from Disley to Kidsgrove, passes through the area between Tegg's Nose and Sutton.

3.16.3 There is limited road/quiet road access for riders and cyclists, particularly the routes starting at Tegg's Nose Country Park. The Cheshire Cycleway runs through Wildboarclough.

3.17 **Proposed Actions**

- Use of public transport to the area should be actively encouraged and links made to existing initiatives. The Gritstone Rambler bus service now introduced and routed to Wildboarclough and possibly Trentabank and the eastern side of the plan area should be promoted accordingly. Tegg's Nose should be actively promoted as an access point for the area.
- Consideration should be given to extending the Macclesfield-Langley bus service into the forest at suitable times/days.

- Through and circular bus ticketing arrangements should be encouraged and promoted although the difficulties within an unregulated system are recognised.
- The existing rights of way will be considered to develop a promoted route to the area from Macclesfield.
- New links should be developed to improve on existing routes and to allow use by riders and cyclists where possible and appropriate.

3.18 **Access within the Area**

- 3.18.1 All rights of way in the area are unobstructed and available for use. There is an extensive network of public footpaths supplemented by permissive routes within Macclesfield Forest. One route is promoted within the popular publication 'Walker's Cheshire'. Within Macclesfield Forest the United Utilities forestry operations are undertaken without affecting public rights of way.
- 3.18.2 There is only one bridleway and four unsealed roads which allow riding and cycling along with a number of permissive routes which allow riding and cycling within Macclesfield Forest. One unsealed road is subject to a traffic restriction order which bans motor vehicles except for access.
- 3.18.3 There have been no problems encountered with motor vehicle use of the unsealed roads although unlawful motorcycling has been encountered on some footpaths and the bridleway. Conflict between users is a regular problem and the main concerns are excessive speed and the danger of collisions. Separation of users is not physically or economically feasible and the issues will have to be addressed through persuasion, co-operation and design of routes where possible.
- 3.18.4 The sealed road network within and around the plan area has been approved for the introduction of "Quiet Lanes" under the Local Transport Plan. The concept of shared use between motor vehicles and walkers, cyclists and horse riders is being promoted by the Countryside Agency for introduction on lightly trafficked local minor roads in rural areas or urban fringes. Use of the road network for local residents and business will not be impeded.
- 3.18.5 Mountain bike riding is increasing in the area and the promoted route 'Riding the Ridges' starting from Tegg's Nose is extremely popular. Demand continues to grow for further promoted routes where cyclists know they are allowed to ride. There is a huge demand for safe off road cycling for families/less experienced riders.
- 3.18.6 Safe links for horse riders between different parts of Macclesfield Forest are required and this has been raised by local users. Riding Links to Tegg's Nose also need examination. There is also a lack of places where horseboxes can be safely parked and unloaded.
- 3.18.7 The definition of access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 is likely to result in significant areas of Piggford Moor and around Shutlingsloe becoming open to public access on foot. The Peak National Park is the Access Authority responsible for administering the issues relating to the management of this land for public access. The popular and useful permissive route across High

Moor established under the Countryside Stewardship scheme has now been closed by the landowner.

3.19 **Proposed Actions**

- A review to be undertaken of access provision across the plan area to identify links and improvements to the network necessary to meet demand and improve safety. Particular attention to be paid to linking existing horse routes and creating circular routes for riders.
- Development of a Quiet Lanes project incorporating the plan area.
- Consideration to be given to the development of family and experienced user cycle routes. These to be promoted for this purpose to reduce conflicts.
- Accessibility for all issues to be considered in all future access works planning to provide for the widest range of abilities as is reasonably possible.
- Seek to establish a (permissive or public right of way) footpath link between Macclesfield Forest and the Oakenclough footpath.
- Promote some permissive routes in Macclesfield Forest for particular user groups to reduce conflicts.
- Promote codes of conduct for users to reduce conflicts.
- Design of routes and infrastructure to include consideration of features to reduce speed of users.
- Consideration to be given to dedication of more permissive routes within Macclesfield Forest as public rights of way.
- Tegg's Nose to be promoted as a starting point for riding. A suitable location for horse box parking and unloading to be sought within Macclesfield Forest and Wildboarclough, subject to road safety considerations.
- Develop a series of leaflets to promote the routes for the various user groups. Promotion of Tegg's Nose within the area. Promote a Forest to Tegg's Nose visitor flow, as well as the Tegg's Nose to Forest flow.

3.20 **Information and Interpretation**

- 3.20.1 There has been a general presumption against publicising the area, with any leaflets produced only being available within the area for visitors. This is due to the difficult access and limited carrying capacity, particularly for those arriving by car. However a more socially inclusive stance might be considered appropriate now, linking the whole study area to its wider catchment (particularly Macclesfield) in a sustainable way. This would include further investigation into public transport options and promotion of routes into the area on foot, cycle or horseback.

3.20.2 A Local Interpretive Plan for the whole area would be timely, to review existing provision and update with appropriate and co-ordinated information. There is a general lack of visitor orientation provision within the area which should be addressed. More information about care of the landscape and sustainable use of it would be key messages. All information provision should consider the needs of all visitors and be socially inclusive.

3.21 **Macclesfield Forest Woodlands**

3.21.1 The Forest will continue to be managed to take account of objectives relating to forestry, ecology, landscape and recreational use.

3.21.2 Trees will be allowed to mature and die and broadleaved areas will be expanded to become more visually dominant. Selective felling; thinning and localized re-stocking with broadleaves as opportunity arises will continue to play an important part in improving the general amenity of the Forest. Re-stocking will concentrate on expanding existing areas of broadleaves to more natural shapes and connecting groups of broadleaves as a permanent landscape framework. Underplanting with shade tolerant woody shrubs will take place to improve general woodland structure.

3.21.3 Species of trees and shrubs will be selected to suit the location and function of the site within the forest. Large areas of new broadleaves are planned to be dominated by Oak and associated species. Existing Beech and Sycamore areas will be retained with appropriate selective thinning and felling to break visual uniformity and will also be appropriately supplemented with additional planting underneath and at the edges.

3.21.4 In order to achieve a smooth transition between the forest and surrounding land, a number of changes will be made to forest edges, in order to achieve greater visual diversity. The percentage of broadleaved trees and shrubs will be increased and management will aim to produce unevenness of age, density, height and width of groups. Selective felling and re-planting will be designed to retain or include open spaces e.g. — ponds, marshes, streamsides, viewing areas, deer lawns and rides. Felling, retention and re-stocking along roadsides will be designed to create sequences of varied spaces and views and at the same time seek opportunity to improve habitat diversity.

3.21.5 Conservation development of streams and the increased percentage of broadleaves throughout the forest will create more variety of habitats, which will create potential for increased variety and populations of wildlife.

3.21.6 A small red deer herd is to be retained and managed. Two large areas of the forest will be quieter than other parts of the forest. Deer will find seclusion here. Other parts of the forest will be specifically maintained as deer lawn, partly in order to allow accurate counts of the deer population.

3.21.7 It is anticipated that the general value of the forest to wildlife will increase over time due to the rolling forestry program re-creating transient habitats and diversifying the age and structure of the forest. Continued liaison within United Utilities Southern Area Team will result in specific areas being developed as “habitat” rather than coniferous forest.

- 3.21.8 All woodland operations will be undertaken in strict accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act and other Wildlife legislation. General woodland operations will take place at times of the year when there will be least disturbance to resident wildlife. Where necessary, the Woodland Officer will liaise with conservation groups, where specific areas are of particular concern.
- 3.21.9 A network of streams flow through and form an important character element of the Forest. Many of the routes created by the streams provide opportunities for habitat diversification and also act as recognizable landscape features with significant importance in long distance views of the Forest.
- 3.21.10 The topography of the valleys provides varied opportunity for future management. Selected flatter, open broad bottomed valleys will be left open, with little tree cover and deliberately restricted drainage. Steeper sided valleys perhaps retained as dark dingles.
- 3.21.11 A primary objective of stream management will be suppressing encroachment of coniferous species to reduce water acidification and to allow more light to reach valley bottoms.
- 3.21.12 The more prominent valleys have been taken as one of the physical cornerstones for the development of interconnected broadleaved woodland. Since many rights of way follow valleys, the amenity value of these routes will be significantly enhanced.
- 3.21.13 Grey squirrel and other vermin will continue to be controlled mainly through live trapping and shooting. Badger setts, bird boxes and birds of prey will continue to be monitored.
- 3.21.14 General forestry maintenance will be carried out to keep all crops in good condition. The management guidelines principles as set out in the Forestry Commissions publications for nature conservation, archaeology, water landscape and recreation will be followed.
- 3.21.15 Public use of the forest will continue to be encouraged and expanded where possible. The facilities currently available will be maintained and recreation facilities added as opportunity arise.
- 3.21.16 Subject to agreements with the land owner and English Nature (EN), Trentabank Reservoir offers potential for designation as a Local Nature Reserve. This may bring with it financial support from EN and would of necessity mean regular involvement with the public and/or voluntary groups.
- 3.21.17 Cheshire Fire Service is updating its operational response for the Study Area in consultation with United Utilities and other partners.

Accommodation

- 3.22 A full audit of accommodation is needed to assess the current situation. The following provide limited holiday accommodation-
- Youth Hostels outside the study area at Gradbach and Meerbrook
 - Blaze Farm close to the A54 has a small camping barn and holiday cottage

- Camping and caravans at Torgate Farm
- Campsite close to the A54 above the Clough
- Highlow Farm holiday cottages
- Berrybank Farm

Crime reduction

3.2.3 The Study Area is the subject of vandalism and car crime. It will be important to work with Cheshire Police and other partners in the Crime Reduction Partnership to reduce the level of crime in the area.

ACTION PLAN (FEBRUARY 2004 VERSION)

<u>Ref</u>	Action	Lead Agency (see Key)	Partners (see Key)	Priority (H/L/M)	Year	Milestones	Resources	Indicators	Outcome
<u>1</u>	Visitor Monitoring	CCC	PP MBC UU	H	2005	2003 Traffic Survey	Quiet Lanes	Speed of traffic User satisfaction	Quiet Lanes implementation
<u>2</u>	Audit of the Historic Environment	MBC	PP CCC	L	2005	2004 Agree methodology	MBC Revenue	Number of buildings at risk and archaeological features Species	Action Plan
<u>3</u>	Audit of the Natural Environment	PP	MBC CWT	M	2005	June 2004 Agree methodology/ Identify resources	Not known	Species	Action Plan
<u>4</u>	Interpretation/Strategy/Signage	PP	MBC CCC UU	H	2004	March 2004 Agree resources	Joint	Visitor satisfaction	Effective attractive signs
<u>5</u>	Quiet Lanes	CCC	MBC PP UU	H	2004	2003 Consultation 2004 Implementation	Quiet Lanes	User satisfaction	Shared use of lanes
<u>6</u>	New routes to the Study Area	CCC	-	M	2005	2004 Agree resources	CCC Capital	Number of effective routes	Improved access
<u>7</u>	New recreation routes within the Study Area including access for people with disabilities	UU	CCC PP	M	2004	March 2004 Agree methodology	UU Capital	Number of extra routes	Improved access
<u>8</u>	Public Transport Access	CCC	PP	M	2004	2003 Gritstone Trailbus 2004 Renewal	CCC Revenue/ Government Grants	% Public Transport	Improved access
<u>9</u>	Horse Routes	UU	CCC PP	H	2004	2003 Consult users	UU Capital	Number of extra routes	Improved access

<u>Ref</u>	Action	Lead Agency (see Key)	Partners (see Key)	Priority (H/L/M)	Year	Milestones	Resources	Indicators	Outcome
<u>10</u>	Horse Box parking/ Cycle racks	UU	CCC	M	2005	2004 Consult users	UU Capital	Number of spaces	Safe horsebox parking
<u>11</u>	Car Parking charges	PP	MBC UU CCC	L	2006	2004 Agree objectives	PP Revenue	Parking incidents	Parking control
<u>12</u>	Forest Design Plan	UU	MBC UU CCC	H	2005/6	2005 Project Plan	UU Revenue	FA funding	Landscape improvement
<u>13</u>	Rights of Way Dedication	UU	CCC PP	L	2005	2004 Agree resources	UU Revenue	FA funding	Management objectives
<u>14</u>	Local Nature Reserve Issues/Conservation	CWT	MBC PP UU EN	H	2004	2003 Licence renewal	MBC Revenue	Number of species	Increased biodiversity
<u>15</u>	Sustainable Promotion	PP	MBC UU PP	H	2004	2003 Consultation	Joint	% local users	Local usage
<u>16</u>	Trading Concessions	PP	UU CCC	H	2003	Concession renewal	PP revenue	Visitor satisfaction	Visitor satisfaction/support local economy
<u>17</u>	Dog Bins	UU	MBC	H	2004	Implementation Plan	UU Revenue	Number of bins	Safe environment
<u>18</u>	Crime Prevention	MBC	Police PP UU CCC	H	2004	2004 Publicity	MBC/UU Revenue	Crime levels	Reduced crime
<u>19</u>	Fire Service Operational Response Plan	Fire	Police UU CCC PP	H	2004	2004 Draft	Fire Service	Fire response	Fire safety
<u>20</u>	Car Park Surfacing	UU	PP MBC CCC	M	2005	2004-Cost estimates	UU PP	Maintenance expenditure	Safety

Key:

CCC = Cheshire County Council

MBC = Macclesfield Borough Council

CWT = Cheshire Wildlife Trust

PP = Peak District National Park Authority

UU = United Utilities