

Preliminary Tree Survey.

Bassetlaw Local Plan, Former Bevercotes Colliery.

Tree Survey Dates: 15th & 22th October 2019

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Tree Survey Scope: To assess on the ground, the proposed area for housing potential offered for approximately 1500 dwellings.

Report Scope: A single sheet, brief, outline to determine;

- If access from the public highway would be constrained.
- Future management requirements/implications.
- Potential for mitigation (if necessary).

Supporting Documents: Maps from Bassetlaw District Council.

Tree Preservation Order (TPO) B000253 from Bassetlaw District Council.

SUMMARY: There are major tree constraints, such that the proposal is non-viable.

- Three existing access points to the proposed site from the public highway.
- Large woodland TPO in place over much of the proposed site. This would require extensive applications and permission for any tree work before, and after, any development could take place. This is in addition to needing a Felling License obtained from the Forestry Commission. Requiring a Woodland Management Plan to be submitted and approved prior.
- Varying or revoking the TPO would facilitate the proposal, if considered a viable option to do so. However, a woodland TPO protects all trees present of any size and any trees that grow within it from the date of serving onwards. This would require a large replanting and aftercare scheme to be undertaken in mitigation if permissions allowed.

Findings: Access is very good to the North and West of the site, as to be expected from a former colliery, and capable of accommodating heavy traffic. There is also a private access road from Bevercotes village to the South. This is lined with an avenue of very large, tall, historic and overmature lime tree pollards outside the boundary leading up to the proposed site. There are more recently planted rows of early mature lime and beech within the site. The lime pollards each have numerous veteran features and are a highly valuable resource in terms of biodiversity and their contribution to the broader ecology of the area. Consequently potential for bat habitat amongst these trees is very high. However, they are in need of remedial work to prevent them falling apart, risking damaging or losing such valuable habitat. As tree risk management is principally target lead, currently they present less of a risk to people than if road used increased in proportion to service in excess of several hundred dwellings.

By contrast, the age and quality of the trees on the proposal site are either; early maturing mixed woodland in approaching need of future management. Or young secondary woodland, the progeny of the various early successional species that have exploited the space and light presented since the colliery closed and the use of land changed. Hundreds, if not thousands, of silver birch trees germinated on the thin layers of leaf detritus that has quickly formed soil enough on the ex-colliery tarmac surfaces for them to balance upright on and grow. Afforded protection under the Woodland TPO status these would be unrealistic to safely retain. They have high potential to prematurely topple in winds, due to insufficient root anchorage.

There are linear plantings of Lombardy poplars and leylandii conifers in places where previously rapid screening was desired, as well as car parks demarcated by rows of tall pine trees. Individually and as separate groups these would not place high on any lists of trees to serve with a TPO, however these are protected within the various groups of the Woodland TPO it would appear. They have reached a size where regular inspection would be required if the land around them increased in use, with potential for removal and or remedial works becoming necessary. The TPO regulations bestow a duty of replanting, however with sufficient justification it is possible a change of species and slight change in location may be achieved.

The Forestry Commission was established in 1919 to manage the UK's available standing timber resource for times of crisis. They strictly control felling licences and impose restocking conditions. There are certain exceptions for removing very small numbers of trees. This is to ensure woodland cover is maintained.

There may be room for a significant number of dwellings on areas outside the Woodland TPO and on areas without trees on. However this would be unlikely to meet the number of proposed dwellings as the restrictions imposed by the TPO and the Forestry Commission requirements would become disproportionate for the gains.