

3.12 Vegetation 1



- 3.12.1 This Component covers vegetation outside of Operational Limits. Vegetation within Operational Limits is covered by Section 3.7, Lineside Slopes.
- 3.12.2 Vegetation refers to a range of planted and sown material ranging from woodland to grassland and including coppice, scrub, and hedgerow planting. The scale of planting varies too from extensive woodland planting and grassland repair to smaller interventions such as gapping up of existing hedgerows.
- 3.12.3 This component offers possibly the greatest means of accelerating the integration of the line with the Chilterns landscape.

Relevant HS2 documents

- HS2 landscape design approach
- Lawn, meadow and wetland plant procurement strategy

- 3.12.4 Other best practice guidance will also be relevant

Issues and Opportunities

Issues

- 3.12.5 Potential issues include:
 - Inappropriate planting (out of keeping with local landscape character)
 - Planting that struggles to establish (not suited to local conditions or poorly executed)
 - Inappropriate/ inadequate management
 - Fails to deliver expected mitigation

Opportunities

- 3.12.6 New planting represents a significant opportunity to improve the local environment particularly in terms of its landscape, visual and ecological attributes. This opportunity relates both to mitigation specifically attached to HS2 and to the wider landscape and cultural context. It is at a hitherto unprecedented scale.

Aims & Detailed Design Principles (DDP)

- 3.12.7 Effective integration will be seamless and undifferentiated from the character of its immediate context. The following six aims shall guide the design and delivery of all planting and seeding outside Operational Limits.
 1. **Delivers Mitigation:** the principal purpose of most of HS2’s scheme at Royal Assent landscape proposals is the delivery of mitigation. Designers must reference the Environmental Statement and other relevant documents to inform themselves of the purpose behind the proposed mitigation. This should include any specifics related, for instance, to replacement of lost features (such as woodland), screening to reduce visual intrusion, ecological connectivity, or simply repair following construction access. Landscape proposals must deliver this mitigation.
 2. **Land ownership:** Land to be retained by HS2 will require appropriate subsequent land management, the limitations of which should feed back into the design proposals. Where landscape works are on another landowner’s property, their intended use of the land and their agreement to the proposals is needed, as is the responsibility for its subsequent management.
 3. **Chilterns Sensitive:** the whole driving force behind this document rests on a recognition of the need to react to the Chilterns’ distinct landscape character. Vegetation is a central part of that character. Landscape proposals must reflect and reinforce the local landscape character and landscape types in which they are located.

Designs should flex to respond to these different character types whether on the plateau, valley sides, valley floor or out on The Vale.
 4. **Super local response:** designs must also be informed by their immediate context. This will maximise integration at the most local level. Information should be gathered by observation in the field, and by contact with the landowner, local Wildlife Trust, Chiltern Conservation Board or local authority landscape officer. Note that local conditions are likely to change partly as a result of HS2 with obvious parts of the immediate context not only radically

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changed through construction of the line, but also through indirect changes such as to soils, drainage and micro-climate. Consider areas left unplanted to enable natural regeneration.

A successful scheme will knit seamlessly with the adjacent retained planting.

5. **Effective establishment:** quick and certain establishment of the new landscape proposals is important, although this should not result in a more conservative “everywhere” approach which places certainty of establishment above planting mixes and ultimate diversity of species. HS2 and best practice guidance/ specification/ methods should be varied to suit local conditions. Cultivation and protection of young plants against unwanted grazing will require special attention. Woodland may require nurse crops. Protection against weeds and the difficulty of watering will both require technical solutions. Contact with local foresters may be useful to understand local solutions.



Beech Woodland

6. **Local provenance and enhanced biodiversity:** the HS2 document on plant procurement applies. This should guide the use of material of local provenance and its production. This should extend to the use of donor match seed for the creation of chalk grassland on areas of repair such as at Bacombe Lane or on Wendover Link. In all planting schemes consider means of increasing biodiversity through the choice of species and mixes.

DDP: Beech woodland

- 3.12.8 Beech woodland and Holloways are two of the prime special characteristics of the Chilterns. Beech woodland is generally considered to be under threat from a combination of climate change, disease and damage by deer, grey squirrel and glis glis. HS2 and its extensive woodland creation programme represents a major opportunity to address this decline. Woodland planting on the plateau should include a proportion of beech. In places beech and holly woodland should be considered (such as an extension to Jenkins Wood, Sheet 33 Ch47,500 in Section 4). A decision will be required on the benefits of using locally sourced stock or beech sourced from warmer climates. Only *Fagus sylvatica* shall be used.

Contractor outputs for review

- 3.12.9 The contractor shall provide the following as a minimum to demonstrate how they have applied the DDP and for review by the local authority planning team:
 - **Landscape proposals** (planting/ soiling/ fencing plans; planting schedules with full details of species, specification, size, density and mixes; full specification)
 - **Management Plan including objectives**, detailed management regimes and those responsible for their execution
 - **Landscape Supporting Statement** including a landscape strategy; details as to how each of the above six Aims are to be met by the proposals; and any specific method statements for implementation