Guidance prepared for Planning Officers and Engineers in Carmarthenshire County Council

When translocating a hedge you are aiming to move and conserve the root stock from which the hedge will regenerate in its new position. The ability of this root stock to regrow far exceeds the growth of a young transplant in a new hedge bank. The operation is relatively quick with 60 - 70 m of hedge being moved in a day. Other than fencing, there are no maintenance requirements, unless this operation is carried out when it is unexpectedly dry in October or February/early March.

1. Translocation should only be carried out in the winter months when the plants are dormant and before the nesting season starts - October to February/early March inclusive, depending on the year, but avoiding frosty weather.

2. Be prepared to re-think your chosen method at any stage, for example, once you dig into a hedgebank it may be more or less sturdy than you thought.

3. Consider the features associated with the hedge at the outset, and decide how you will deal with these:
   banks  ditches and culverts
   stone walls   hedgerow trees - avoid working under these
   telegraph poles  gateways

4. Give consideration to the machinery you will require. A track vehicle with a large bucket has been used successfully with a JCB, and is preferable to a JCB on its own, particularly where ground conditions are wet. You will also need a spade for finishing off.

5. Cut back or coppice the hedge to a height of 30cms (1 foot), dispose of cut material unless a brash mat may be required to facilitate operations, e.g. in a very wet area.

6. Where there is a ditch re-route this, and ensure it works, before you start to move the hedge.

7. Prepare the site to which the hedge is being moved. If a hedgebank is being moved, strip off the vegetation and top soil. The top soil can be used for in filling once the hedge has been moved. If the hedge is situated on level land, remove the top soil and excavate a V-notch ditch into which the hedge can be placed, using the soil for infill. The surface onto which the hedge is being moved should be broken up to a depth of 150mm.

8. The hedge should be lifted in whole pieces of practical size according to the machinery available.

9. Plant roots should not be exposed. Where this does occur, they should be covered with top soil immediately.

10. Every effort should be made to avoid damaging the roots, particularly bruising them, as they are unlikely to recover. Move each section carefully ensuring that in its new position, the vegetation is covered in soil as it was in the original hedge, no higher nor no lower, and that it is upright.

11. The new bank should be profiled so as to be stable - a gradient as close as possible to the original is preferable. This can be done with a JCB

12. Plant up any gaps with transplants reflecting the mix of shrubs present in the hedge, using a double staggered row of plants 40 - 60 cms. in size, 350mm apart.

13. Water the hedgerow before and after moving if working in early autumn during a dry period for greater success, but avoid washing away any of the soil.

14. Consider the benefits of planting a number of hedgerow trees, take advice on the choice of species and size to plant.

15. Fence to exclude stock, positioning the fence a pace away from the base of the bank.

16. If there is concern regarding any of the above, seek further advice.