



# **EAST ANGLIA FOREST DISTRICT**

## **DUNWICH FOREST DESIGN PLAN**

Plan Area - 512 hectares

Date: January 2007

## **CONTENTS**

## **PAGE**

1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.	ORIGINAL FDP – ASSESSMENT	3 - 4
3.	DESIGN BRIEF	4 - 5
4.	SPECIES AND VOLUME DISTRIBUTION	5 - 6
5.	PLAN APPRAISAL	7
6.	APPROVAL	8

APPENDIX I – Tolerance Table

APPENDIX II – Blythe to Alde Landscape Partnership

Vision Statement

APPENDIX III – Environmental Statement

## 1. Introduction

### **Description**

The plan covers 512 hectares of lowland pine forest. The plan area is adjacent to the villages of Dunwich and Westleton and is within the Suffolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Minor roads and tracks divide the area.

The plan area is almost surrounded by land of high conservation value including Westleton Heath National Nature Reserve, Suffolk Coast NNR, Dingle Marshes nature reserve and Dunwich Heath.

Around 67% of the area is planted with Pine trees and other conifers with the balance made up of broadleaved trees and open space.

## 2. Original FDP Assessment

The FDP process has changed in a number of ways since the original plan was drafted five years ago and this is reflected in the new areas that the FDP needs to address. These new areas are listed below with a description of their potential impact;

**The UK Forest Standard** – This is a Forestry Commission document that sets the standard that both public and private owners should meet to demonstrate good forest practice. One of the main impacts of the standard on this plan is the requirement to have at least a 7 year gap between adjacent felling coupes. The issue of “adjacency” of coupes appears in most of the woods within the plan area.

**The UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)** – The Forestry Commission has received accreditation under this standard so that it can sell its timber to customers under the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) logo. This standard is very rigorous and covers a wide range of issues that affect the way the forest is managed. The main effect of the UKWAS on this plan is the requirement for the new FDP to meet certain minimum design thresholds including the amount of open space that is created during the life of the plan and the area managed as natural reserves.

**East Anglia Forest District Strategic Plan** – This plan was recently revised by the forest district to show how it will deal with strategic issues and how it will carry forward some of the objectives of the East of England Regional Woodland Strategy. There are two strategic objectives that will affect this FDP these are:

“En 1.2) Develop and implement various grazing projects across the Breckland and Sandlings” this objective includes a target/success measure to “Integrated management of Dunwich Forest with surrounding areas”.

and

“En 2.3iv) To maintain and enhance habitats and species in accordance with the relevant Habitat Action Plans, Species Action Plans and other locally important habitats and species”.

The objectives are self-explanatory, the main habitats that are of interest within the plan area are heathland and wet woodland and the main species of interest are Nightingale, Woodlark, Nightjar, Firecrest, Dartford warbler and Silver-studded blue butterfly

### **3. Design Brief**

The National Trust, English Nature, RSPB, SWT, Suffolk Coast and Heaths Project and Forest Enterprise have formed the Blyth to Alde Landscape Partnership. This Partnership owns or manages some 3500ha of land in the immediate plan area. The aims of this partnership are to manage their holdings in a co-ordinated way to achieve the optimum management for biodiversity, social and economic benefits. The Partnership's Vision and Prospectus are attached (Appendix III).

The aims of the brief are set below under three broad headings, which relate to the structure of the Forestry Commission's English Forestry Strategy. There are several different strands running through this plan and the aim is to encompass them all within this revision.

#### **Economic Issues**

- Income is not the main driver in this proposed plan but efforts should be made to maximise the return on the available resources during conversion to a broadleaf woodland and heathland mix.
- The proposed silvicultural system is one of steady clearfell of the proposed heathland areas over the next 30 years and non-standard thinning of the current pine crops to favour broadleaf over the life of the conifer plantation woodlands.
- Management of the heathland areas needs to be carried out in the most cost-effective manner and extensive grazing in co-operation with adjacent landowners is the preferred route.

#### **Social Issues**

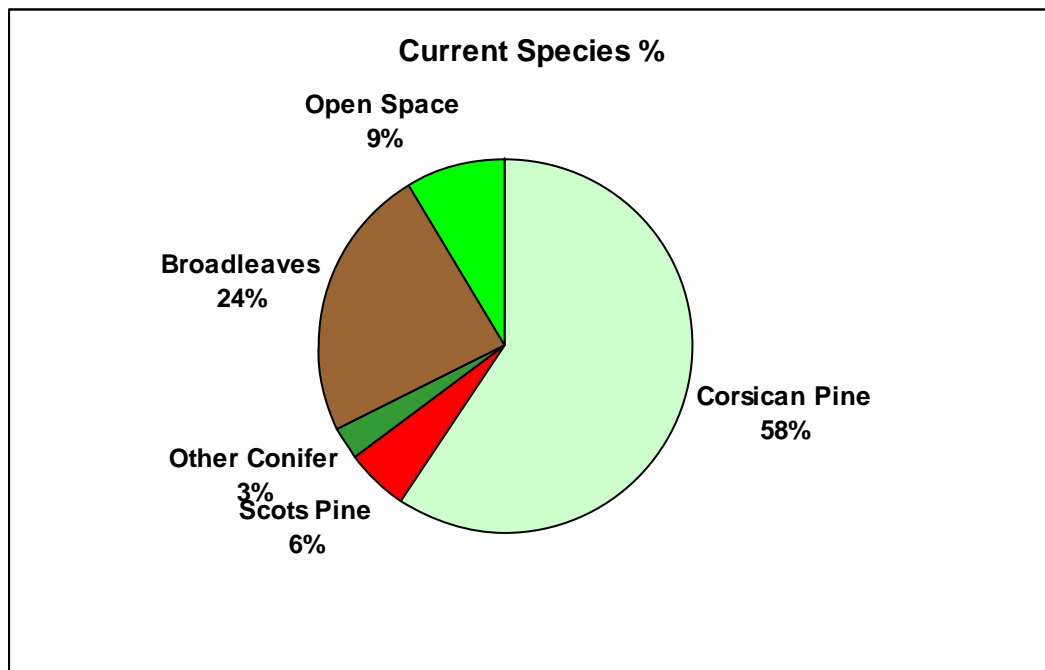
- There is a dense network of footpaths through the forest and the surrounding area, which allows people to have relatively free access to roam – this freedom needs to be maintained.

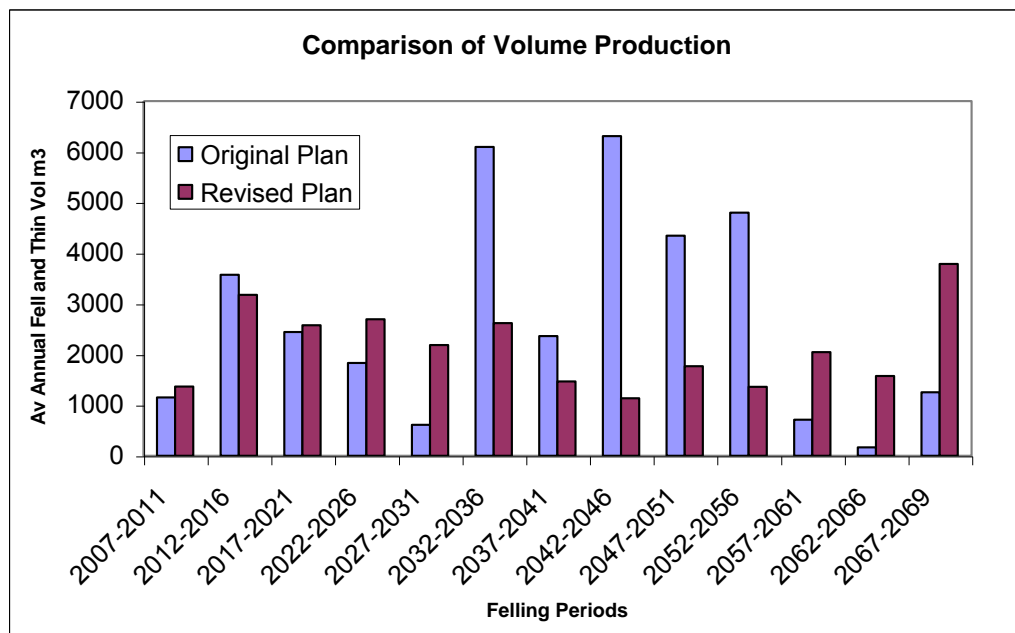
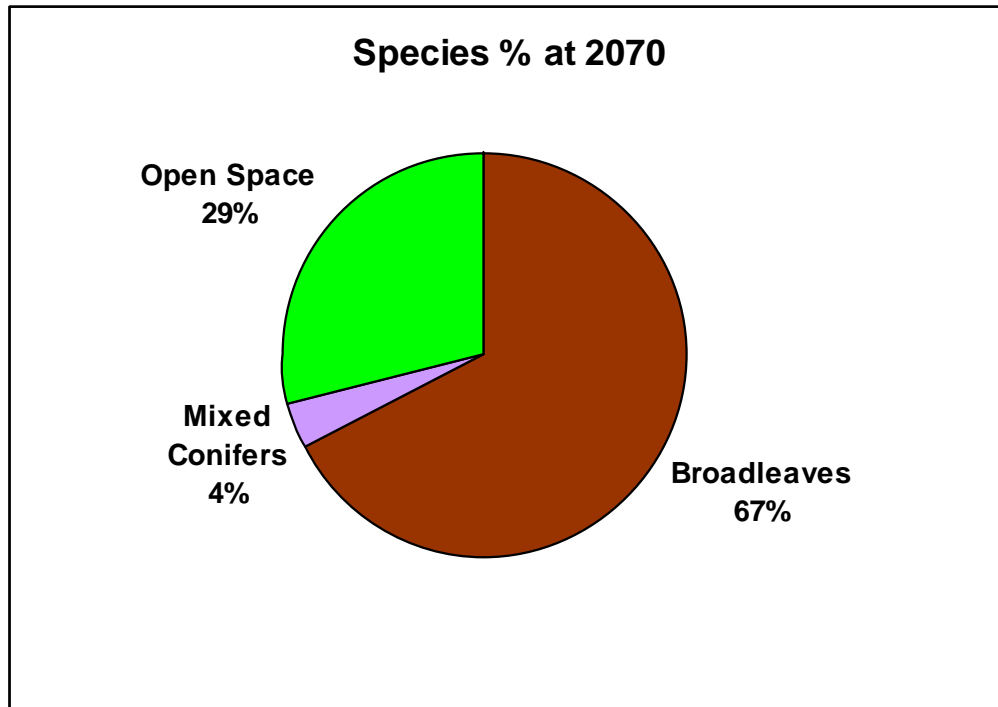
- The Forest area is seen as one landscape unit, which is attractive to visitors and is capable of absorbing large numbers of people with a wide range of interests e.g. walkers, cyclists, horse riders.
- Management of conversion from conifer plantation to a mix of broadleaf woodland and heath needs to be done in a manner that maintains the 'forest' landscape during conversion.

### **Environmental Issues**

- Integration of the Dunwich Forest into the wider landscape in line with the Blyth to Alde Landscape Partnership objectives.
- The plan should be viewed in a wider context and in relation to the previous land use, soils and the current land habitat and management of adjacent areas.
- Improvement of biodiversity by the creation of additional areas of mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland and lowland heath habitats. This is likely to favour species such as Nightingale, Woodlark, Nightjar, Firecrest, Dartford warbler and Silver-studded blue butterfly.

#### **4. SPECIES AND VOLUME DISTRIBUTION**





## **5. PLAN APPRAISAL**

The appraisal of the plan is measured against the design brief above, this has three separate sections and the appraisal relates to these sections:

### **Economic Issues**

Analysis of the management map shows that all but two of the areas that are going to be converted to heathland will be felled within fourteen years of their optimum fell year. The non-standard thinning that will be carried out in the continuous cover areas will help to smooth the supply of timber over time. The last chart in Section 4 above shows the improvement in timber supply from the revised plan when compared to the original FDP.

### **Social Issues**

The issues raised in this section have all been met within the revised plan i.e. access will be maintained, including the heathland areas and forest cover is maintained on over 70% of the plan area.

### **Environmental Issues**

All these issues have been tested as the plan was subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, which concluded that the plan does not have a significant impact on the environment. The environmental statement from the EIA report is reproduced in Appendix III.

## 6. APPROVAL

Forest Enterprise has revised this forest design plan and seeks approval from the Forestry Commission for the clearfelling of 55 hectares (subject to appropriate assessment) and the selective felling of 75 ha within 375ha for the period 1/4/2007 to 31/3/2017 as shown on the enclosed plans.

Maps included with this document are as follows –

Survey Analysis

Design Concept

FellingMap

Restocking Map

Signed: ..... Approved:.....  
Forest District Manager Conservator

Date: ..... Date: .....



## Appendix I

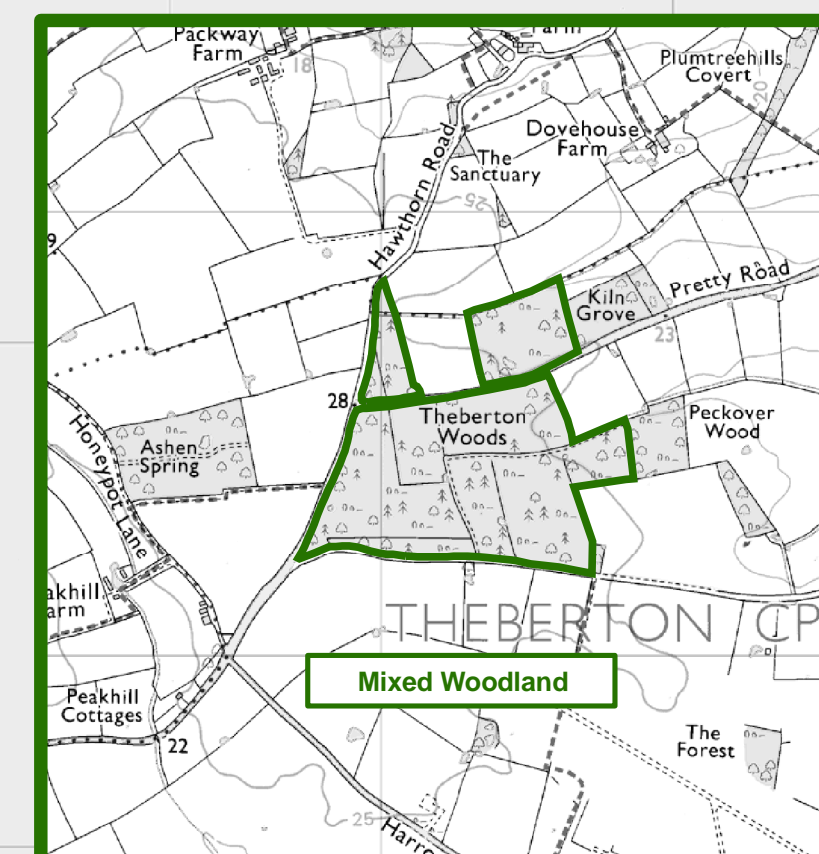
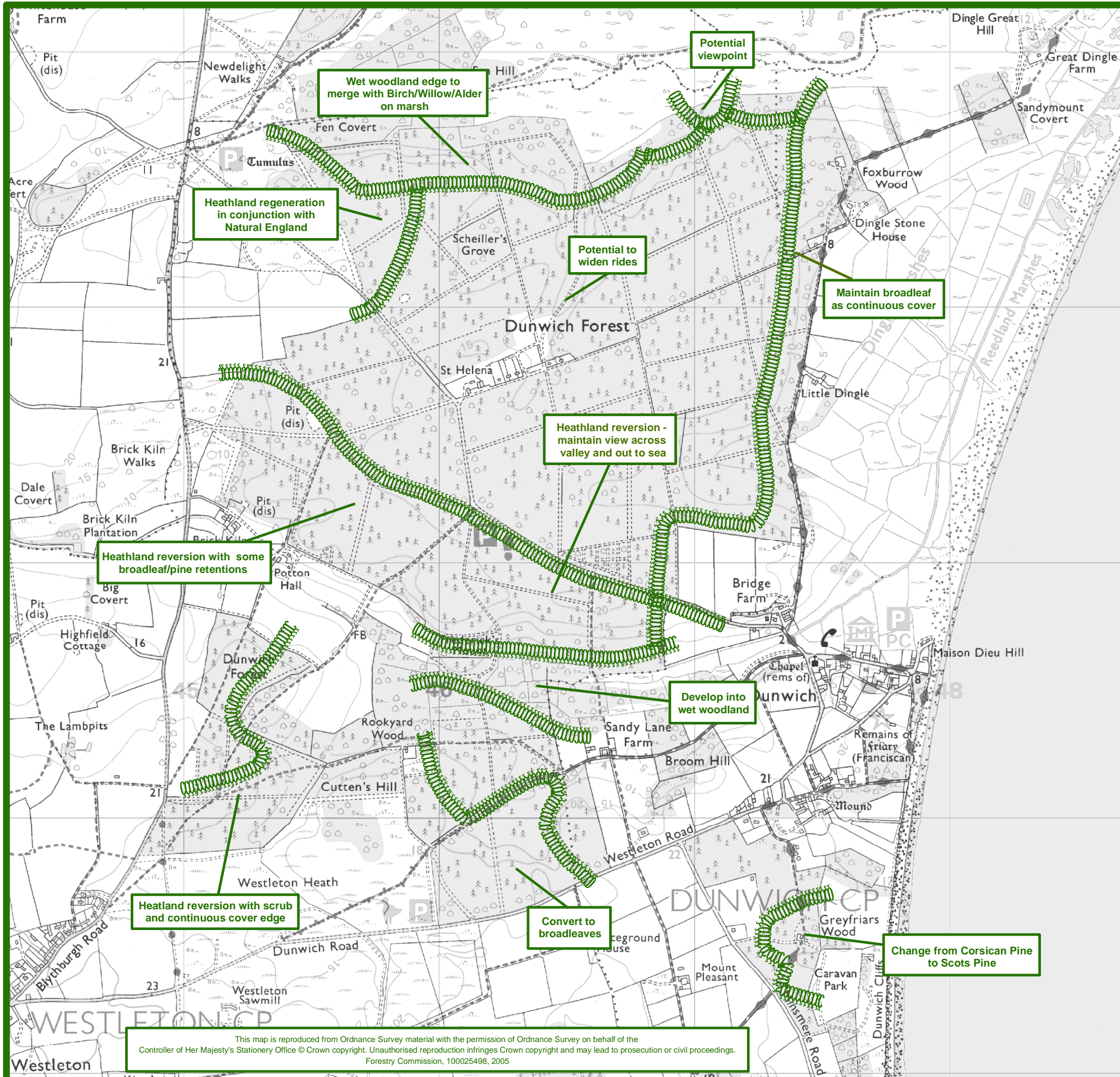
### Tolerance Table

	<b>Adjustment to felling coupe boundaries</b>	<b>Timing of Restocking</b>	<b>Changes to species</b>	<b>Windthrow clearance</b>
<b>FC Approval normally not required</b>	0.5 ha or 5% of coupe	Up to 3 planting seasons after felling	Change within species group e.g. evergreen conifers; broadleaves	Up to 2ha
<b>Approval by exchange of letters and map</b>	0.5ha to 2ha or 10% of coupe	Up to 4 planting seasons after felling	Change from other conifers to Corsican Pine	> 2ha to 5ha
<b>Approval by formal plan amendment</b>	> 2ha or >10% of coupe	Over 4 planting seasons after felling	Change from broadleaves to conifers	> 5ha



Forestry Commission  
England

East Anglia Forest District  
**DUNWICH FDP - DESIGN CONCEPT**  
Scale: 1:15,000  
Date: JANUARY 2007

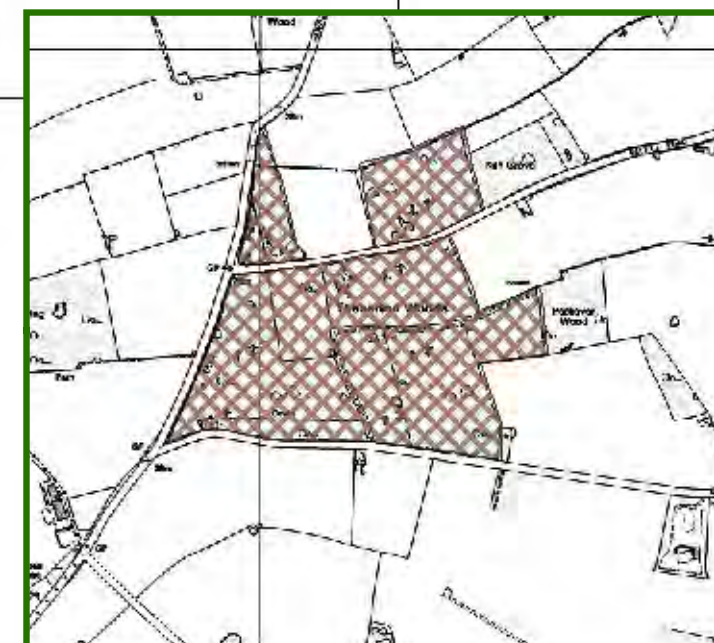
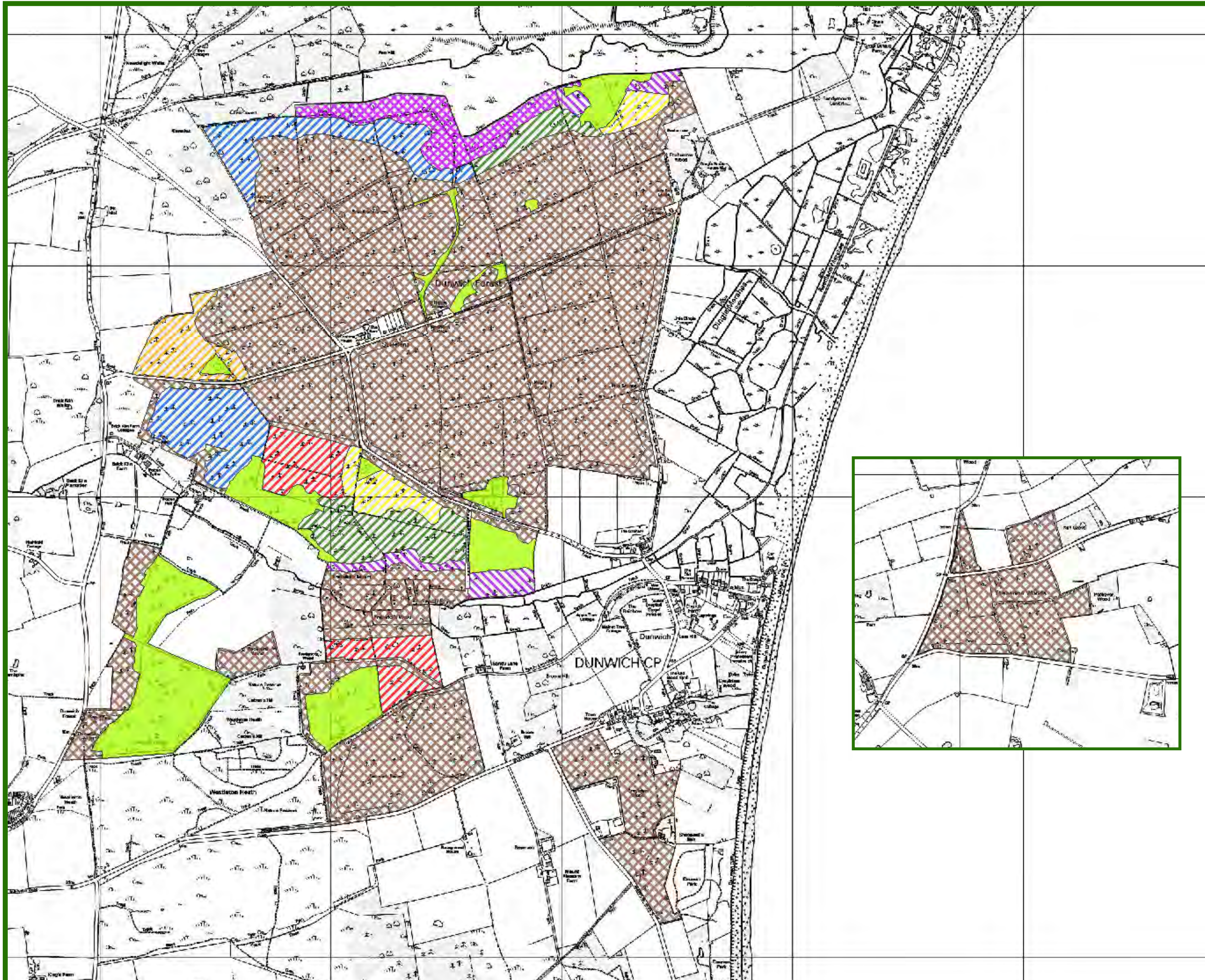
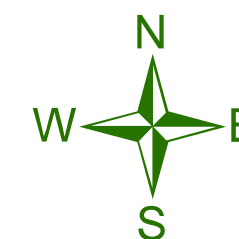


This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Forestry Commission, 100025498, 2005







### Legend

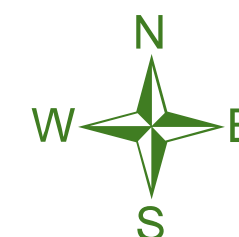
-  Clearfell 2012-2016
-  Clearfell 2017-2021
-  Clearfell 2022-2026
-  Clearfell 2027-2031
-  Clearfell 2032-2036
-  Clearfell 2037-2041
-  Clearfell 2042-2046
-  Clearfell 2047-2051
-  Clearfell 2052-2056
-  Clearfell 2057-2061
-  Clearfell 2062-2066
-  Clearfell 2067-2071
-  CCF - Conifer
-  CCF - Broadleaves
-  Coppice
-  PAWS Reversion
-  Minimum Intervention
-  Natural Reserve
-  Open/Other



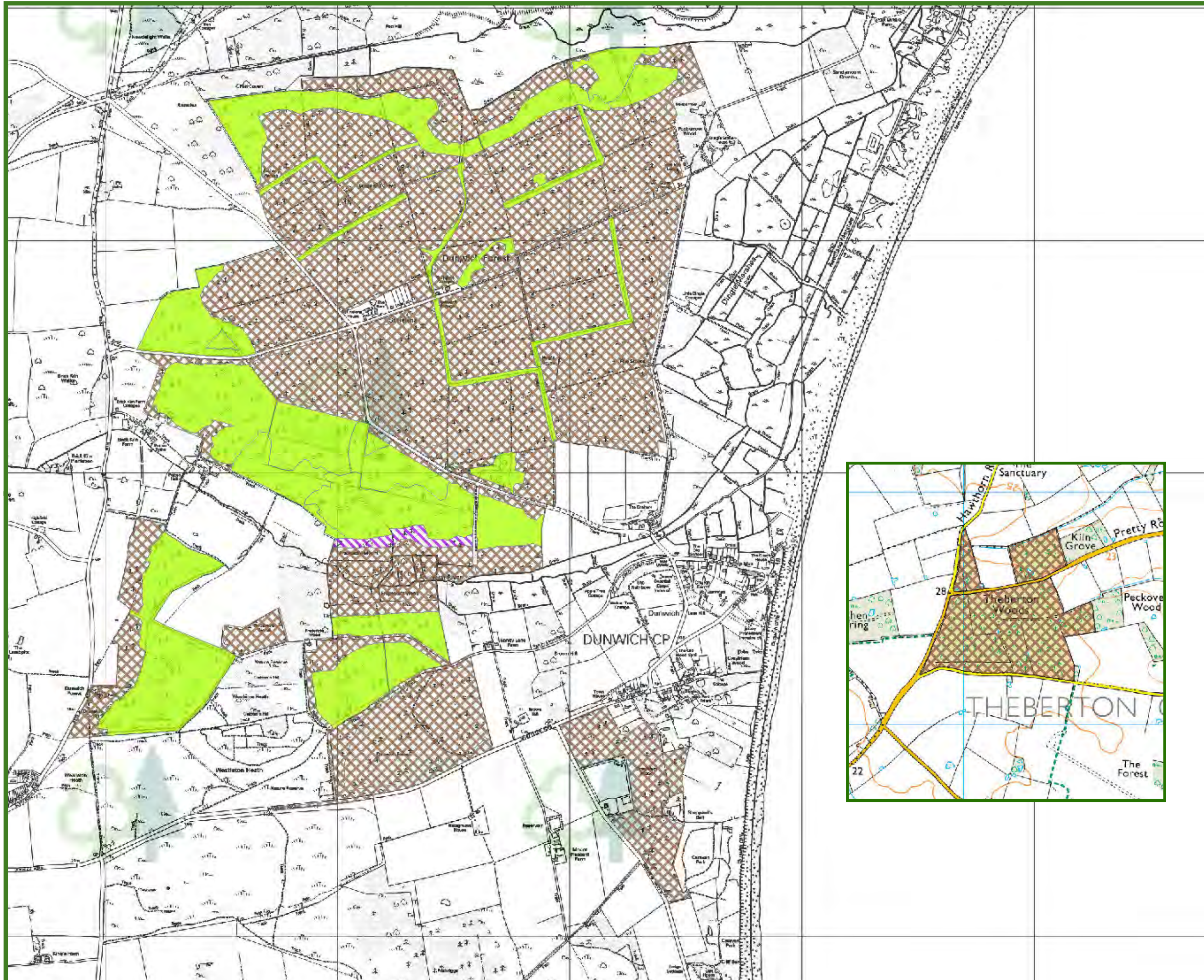


### Legend

-  Conifer
-  Larch
-  Broadleaves
-  Permanent Open Space
-  Temporary Open Space



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.  
Forestry Commission, 100025498, 2006





## **APPENDIX II**

### **The Blyth to Alde Landscape Partnership**

#### **Vision Statement**

The Blyth to Alde landscape partnership vision will encourage a re-emergence of the natural landscape between the two estuaries creating a large sustainable area of unique beauty whose evolution whilst founded on the past will be of benefit to both people and wildlife in the future.

The current partners already manage over 3400ha of the land between the Blyth and Alde Estuaries.

The objectives of the partnership are:

- To explore the practicalities of providing a large area where landscape and wildlife can be sustainably managed and be adaptable to changes in the environment and landuse
- To involve local communities and agencies
- To improve access and develop links to the local economy
- To establish a beacon site to inspire others

## PROSPECTUS

**‘To encourage a re-emergence of the natural landscape, creating a large, sustainable area of unique natural beauty whose evolution will benefit both people and wildlife.’**

The Blyth to Alde Landscape Partnership’s vision area lies within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Large parts of this area are already designated for their international and national wildlife interest and contain a diversity of habitats, including reedbed, heathland, coastal grazing marsh and broad-leaved woodland. These habitats support a significant number of threatened species such as Bittern, Nightingale, Woodlark, Silver-studded blue butterfly and Sea Pea.

- Over 4 million people a year are estimated to visit the Coast and Heath area contributing around £160million to the local economy. Whilst recognising that this income is important to the area’s economic prosperity, it must also be recognised that in encouraging access, tourism needs to be managed in a sensitive and sustainable way. The plan should be viewed in a wider context and in relation to the previous land use, soils and the current land habitat and management of adjacent areas.

Forestry Commission, English Nature, RSPB, National Trust and Suffolk Wildlife Trust individually manage over 3400ha of land between the Blyth and Alde estuaries from Hen Reedbed in the north to Hazelwood Marshes in the south.

In addition to these holdings, there are large areas that are managed with access and wildlife as key objectives. These include areas of land in agricultural environment and woodland grant schemes.

The objective is for the partners to increasingly work together and with other landowners to manage an extensive area for the benefit of landscape, wildlife, people and the local economy.

### **People:**

- To improve opportunities for people to explore and enjoy the area, its unique landscape and wildlife under planned management of access and recreational facilities in keeping with the environment.
- To work in partnership with local communities to accommodate visitor pressures and to ensure that the nature conservation management and recreational facilities complement and support the wishes of the people.
- To safeguard a landscape that inspires all those who come into contact with it.

**Wildlife:**

- Through restoration and re-creation, support the development of a network of habitats that are more natural in their landscape setting, less constrained by artificial barriers and adaptable to changes to climate and sea levels.
- To secure the future of our rarer species and allow the diversity of less threatened flora and fauna to flourish in a more natural landscape.
- To influence the future of land not currently under conservation management so that it becomes more wildlife friendly.
- To ensure that throughout the Partnership area as a whole the changes in management continue to deliver or enhance the favourable conservation status of the key habitats and species
- To explore the drivers for adopting a landscape scale approach and undertake analysis of the effects of various management options on key species

**Landscape:**

- To allow the development of a landscape that, whilst reflecting thousands of years of human activity, can be sustained into the future and meet changing demands.
- To remove barriers wherever possible, so that people and grazing animals can move more freely.
- To create a more natural landscape where habitats can blend into one another and sharp boundaries are blurred.

**Economics:**

- To ensure that the landscape and wildlife that underpins much of the local economy is strengthened and sustained into the future
- To develop new ways of working by sharing resources and promoting an ethos of co-ordinated delivery and coherent management
- To enable cost-effective delivery of conservation and public access

4<sup>th</sup> May 2004

## **APPENDIX III**

### **Environmental Statement**

#### **Non-Technical Summary**

Forest Enterprise is required to produce an Environmental Statement by the Forestry Commission, to assess the possible environmental effects of the Dunwich Forest Design Plan.

Dunwich Forest covers 514 hectares of land on the eastern edge of Suffolk close to the North Sea coast. The forest is within the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and is surrounded by marshland, farmland and heathland.

The Dunwich Forest Design Plan is a long-term plan that shows how, over the next 30 years, Forest Enterprise wants to change the existing forest from conifer plantation to a mixture of broadleaved woodland and heathland. In the first 5 years, Forest Enterprise wants to fell 36.7 hectares of conifers and revert the area back to heathland. As these areas are not being re-planted this is termed deforestation, which is one of the operations that is not permitted (on more than 0.5 hectares) within an AONB without an approved Environmental Statement.

The Environmental Statement that Forest Enterprise is presenting in this document gives the following information.

- A detailed description of the forest design plan
- The key issues that need to be addressed
- An assessment of the impact of those issues on the environment
- Actions required mitigating any negative effect.

Four key issues were identified during the scoping exercise for this Environmental Impact Assessment. These were archaeology, landscape, soil disturbance and the treatment of sites after felling. A subsequent site meeting with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Officer lead to archaeology being “scoped out” on the basis that there are no archaeological features to be taken into consideration.

The key issue with the landscape is not the high visual impact of tree felling, as this is already in an existing plan and would happen anyway. It is the less intrusive visual effect of not replanting the felled area afterwards that has to be assessed. The assessment is based on a comparison between the long-term visualisation for the area and the landscape character description for the Suffolk Coasts and Heaths.



The assessment of soil disturbance has been carried out using the DEFRA guide on controlling soil erosion. This assessment gives an indication of the risk of soil erosion and soil runoff depending on soil type and the gradient of the slope.

There are several possible treatments that could take place on the sites after tree felling has taken place. These treatments are described along with an assessment of their likely impact.

## Conclusion

The table below summarises the predicted effects of the Dunwich Forest Design Plan on the surrounding environment. All the predicted effects are of minor significance.

Effect	Time-scale	Rationale	Significance
Not replanting areas after they are felled. Changing habitat from woodland to heathland	Long-term	The conversion of these areas to heathland will enhance the landscape around Dunwich Forest by increasing the visual diversity and variety of habitats.	Minor positive significance
Soil erosion and runoff from recently felled areas	Short-term	There is a high risk of soil erosion on one site but this will not have an adverse effect on the surrounding land should it happen.	Minor negative significance
Brash raking branches into low piles	Mid-term	The branches have to be cleared to allow grazing. The low piles and rows will be visible in the landscape until they rot down and are covered with vegetation	Minor negative significance
Temporary electric fencing around felled areas	Short-term	It is essential that grazing starts as soon after felling as possible. Temporary electric fencing is the quickest way to achieve this in the short term until larger less intrusive fences are in place.	Minor negative significance