Whiteley Pastures
**Location**
Whiteley Pastures totals some 200 hectares in area lying immediately north of the town of Whiteley in southern Hampshire.

**Tenure**
The Forestry Commission owns the freehold of the areas it manages within Whiteley Pastures.

**Landscape**
Whiteley Pastures provides a natural backdrop to the surrounding developments including the Whiteley Shopping Village, Solent business Park and residential areas.

In terms of size, the woodland block (which includes the neighbouring woodland known as Botley Woods, currently managed by Hampshire County Council) is significant within the local landscape, with only West Walk, 4 kilometres to the north east of comparable scale.

**Current Woodland Structure**
Approximately 43% of the woodland area (~87ha) is classified as ancient semi-natural woodland and around 21% of the woodland area (~42ha) is classified as plantation on an ancient woodland site. The woodland is dominated by native and honorary native broadleaves, which account for around 70% of the area. Oak is the most abundant species, covering around 35% of the area.

There is a good proportion of historic coppice habitat within the woodland. It is planned to continue a rotational coppice with standards system which was reinitiated in 2009 within these area.

Norway Spruce and Lodgepole Pine make up the majority of the conifer component of the woodland which accounts for around 30% of the woodland.

The age class of canopy trees ranges from 0 to over 100 years old years old. However, over 60% of the area falls within the 51—60 years old age class. This highlights the need for increased species diversity.

There is also a good proportion of open space, around 6% of the area in addition to the wide edges to the road and ride network.

**Biodiversity and Conservation**
Most of the woodland is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The citation from 1986 describes the reasons for designation as the importance of the rich insect population, particularly moths and butterflies, dependent on woodland clearings and herb-rich ride sides. The remnant semi-natural deciduous woodland also benefits these populations.

A SSSI Management Plan is in place which provides further detail about how we plan to implement the direction set within this Forest Plan. This will always be referred to when planning operational work within the woodland.

Areas of Ancient Woodland and associated features are key points of conservation interest within the woodland. Their considered restoration will enhance the important habitats and will look to improve the condition of the SSSI.

There are a number of areas which are characteristic of wet woodland. These areas are important within the wider landscape by providing ‘stepping stones’ to other similar habitats in the locality.

The variety of broadleaved and coniferous woodland, added to open space along the ride and road network through the woodland gives rise to suitable habitats for invertebrates and in turn woodland birds. Small and medium mammals including bats have been recorded in recent years as well as important reptiles.

During management interventions, opportunities for ride widening and habitat enhancement will be taken to increase the ecotone of the woodland and provide connecting habitats for invertebrates and other associated species such as woodland birds, particularly nightingale.

Decisions about where such enhancement work will take place will be made at the operational stage of management.

**People**
Whiteley Pastures is dedicated for open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000), allowing open public access.

Despite being so close to a highly populous urban area, the woodland is not heavily used by members of the public. However, potential future increases in development around the woodland will likely create a proportionate increase in recreational activities if they go ahead. Such an increase must be managed carefully to ensure the habitats within the woodland are protected.

Open junctions, wide rides and clear paths enhance the experience of a walk around Whiteley Pastures. During management interventions opportunities to enhance the visual impact of rides and individual trees will also be taken by selecting trees for retention based on character.

**Historic Environment**
There is evidence of a historical drove or road running through the woodland. Continued monitoring will take place to ensure that any additional relevant finds are recorded and fed into operational planning in line with statutory responsibilities and best practice guidelines.

**Soils**
Whiteley Pastures lies in the Hampshire basin on a low plateau above the river Itchen. The underlying geology is of sand and gleys at higher elevations, part of the Bracklesham beds, with Bagshot sands at lower elevations in the southern part of the wood.
**Water**

There are a number of streams flowing through Whiteley Pastures. All of which eventually flow into the either the River Itchen or the River Meon.

There are also numerous ponds that have been created in recent years.

Management practices within the woodland can have an impact on downstream temperatures and water quality.

**Tree Diseases and Pests**

The main diseases of concern in the local area at the present time are *Chalara Fraxinea* (Ash Dieback), *Dothistroma* (red band) Needle Blight on Corsican Pine, and *Phytophthora ramorum* on Larch. These species are limited within Whiteley Pastures, so the risk they pose is minimal.

However, there is quite a heavy reliance on oak. With one species accounting for around 35% of the woodland cover, should a prolific oak pathogen arise, it could pose a significant risk to the structure of the woodland. This highlights the need for increased species diversity within the woodland.

Within the wet woodland areas, Alder is a key species. These areas will be monitored for *Phytopthora alni* to ensure appropriate action is taken should this threat arise.

There are no records of invasive non-native plant species within Whiteley Pastures, but continued monitoring will take place to ensure that those species which pose a threat to native flora do not become established.
Woodlands of the Forest of Bere Forest Plan — Whiteley Pastures

SSSI Condition Assessment 03/2014

Key
Dotley Woods and Everitts Coppice SSSI Unit

- Unit 1
- Unit 2
- Unit 3
- Unit 4
- Unit 5

Whiteley Pastures Management Area
Whitley Pastures

Indicative Age Diversity

Key
- Over 100 Years Old
- 81 - 100 Years Old
- 61 - 80 Years Old
- 41 - 60 Years Old
- 21 - 40 Years Old
- 1 - 20 Years Old
- Whiteley Pastures Management Area

Gaps illustrate indicative or actual open space

Date: 01/04/2014

© Crown copyright and database right [2014]
Ordnance Survey
10021242
Whiteley Pastures
Long Term Vision

Key
- Predominantly (>80%) native and honourary-native broadleaved woodland
- Native broadleaved rotational coppice with standards
- Mixed Woodland. No species type (broadleaf or conifer) represents more than 80% of the canopy
- Wet woodland and riverine habitat
- Open Space
- Whiteley Pastures Management Area

Date: 21/05/2014
© Crown copyright and database right [2014]
Ordnance Survey
[10U21242]
The main watercourse provides excellent connectivity between with surrounding habitats. This corridor will be maintained and enhanced during the Plan period.

Areas of ancient woodland with a mixed species structure will be managed to restore native woodland through thinning and the use of a shelterwood system.

Recently coppiced areas are regenerating well and will require cleaning out of other species (birch in this case) over time to promote the desired hazel coppice habitat. A more extensive, rotational coppice system is proposed.

Ponds created in recent years provide valuable habitat for reptiles and amphibians. These will be enhanced by suitable thinning of the surrounding trees during operations.
Whitely Pastures

Predicted Timeline for Intended Future Habitats

Key

Establish next generation of desired habitat by:

- 2050
- 2100
- 2150
- 2200
- Open
- Bere_Management_Area

Date: 10/04/2014

© Crown copyright and database right [2014] Ordnance Survey [100021242]