

West Wood

Location

West Wood is situated approximately 2.5 miles west of Winchester and about a mile south west of Sparsholt.

Tenure

Forestry Commission is the freehold owner of the western part of West Wood. The eastern part is managed by Forestry Commission under a leasehold agreement.

Landscape

West Wood is a 251 hectare woodland lying within a gently undulating landscape dominated by arable farmland. It is of significant scale for a woodland in this locality and is contiguous to woodland within the Crab Wood Nature Reserve, which increases the total size of the woodland block to around 320 hectares. Internally, there are some individual and groups of trees, both broadleaved and coniferous, which offer a significant landscape value.

Current Woodland Structure

Approximately 22% of the woodland area (~55ha) is classified as ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) with around 60% (151ha) classified as plantation on an ancient woodland site (PAWS). Although mostly PAWS, the woodland consists of predominantly native or honorary-native species, with Beech, Sycamore and Ash accounting for over 70% of total area. Eight conifer species account for a total of 25% of the woodland area. Western Red Cedar is the dominant conifer with Norway Spruce, Douglas Fir, remnant Corsican Pine and Larch also present.

The age class of canopy trees ranges from 0 to over 100 years old but is heavily weighted to trees aged 51–60 years old.

There is a good proportion of open space.

Biodiversity and Conservation

Areas of ancient woodland and associated features are the main points of nature conservation interest within West Wood.

The woodland has been designated as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) by Hampshire County Council due to the ancient woodland status.

There are no statutory conservation designations on this site but the Crab Wood SSSI does border to the east. Crab Wood is broadleaved, mixed and Yew woodland, last cited as being in 'favourable' condition. This woodland is contiguous with West Wood.

Recently recorded conservation interest within the woodland include several butterflies; rare mammals and veteran trees. Monitoring will be ongoing, particularly at the operational stage.

During management interventions, opportunities for ride widening and 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.

A proportion of the woodland is managed as permanent open space. This area is approximately 1.6 hectares in addition to the ride network and the transitional open habitats created by recent management.

People

West Wood is used for recreation all year round by many local people for an array of activities including running and walking and horse riding on the bridleway network. Natural play such as den building has also increased in recent years.

Being adjacent to Farley Mount Country Park, visitor numbers to the woodland block have steadily increased over the last few years.

Most of the woodland is dedicated for open access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). The leasehold area is not but is managed ???

Open junctions, wide rides and clear paths enhance the experience of a walk around West Wood. During management interventions opportunities to enhance the visual impact of rides and individual trees will be taken by selecting trees for retention based on character as well as ride widening.

Historical Environment

There are several recorded historical features within West Wood including the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the site of the Sparsholt Roman Villa. Other unscheduled features include boundary stones and wood banks.

Continued monitoring during the operational management of the woodland will take place in line with best practice guidelines.

Soils

The soils of West Wood are characterised as Calcareous and Brown Earth.

Calcareous soils are generally gleys (characterised by permanent or seasonal waterlogging) with a pH greater than 7.

Brown Earths are free draining with good aeration with organic matter well incorporated into the mineral soil. (Kennedy, 2002)

Water

Drains are the only water flows through West Wood. Opportunities for enhancement of such habitats will be identified during operational planning and acted upon as resources allow.

Tree Diseases and Pests

The main diseases of concern currently are *Chalara Fraxinea* (Ash Dieback), *Dothistroma* (red band) Needle Blight on Corsican Pine, and *Phytophthora ramorum* on Larch. Ash and Corsican Pine are present, along with a small amount of larch. These species are limited within West Wood and so pose little threat to the woodland as a whole.

There are no records of invasive non-native plant species within West Wood, but

continued monitoring will take place to ensure that those species which pose a threat to native flora do not become established.

Timber Production

Over the last 5 years, through the natural growth of the trees, West Wood has produced an increase in standing timber volume of approximately 1820m³ per year¹ or an approximate total of 9100m³. During this time, timber harvesting has removed approximately 2120m³. This is around 23% of the total growth increment over the past 5 years.

Within West Wood, sustainable timber harvesting helps to deliver the objectives of this Forest Plan by: creating space within the woodland for young trees to flourish, thus encouraging genetic diversity and longevity of the woodland; generating dynamic transitional habitats which are vital for local wildlife; creating dynamic internal landscapes which increase the interest and experience for local users; delivering a sustainable timber resource to local timber markets and supporting employment across a number of sectors.



West Wood Location



Key

West Wood Management Area

Date: 06/05/2014

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West Wood

Aerial



Key

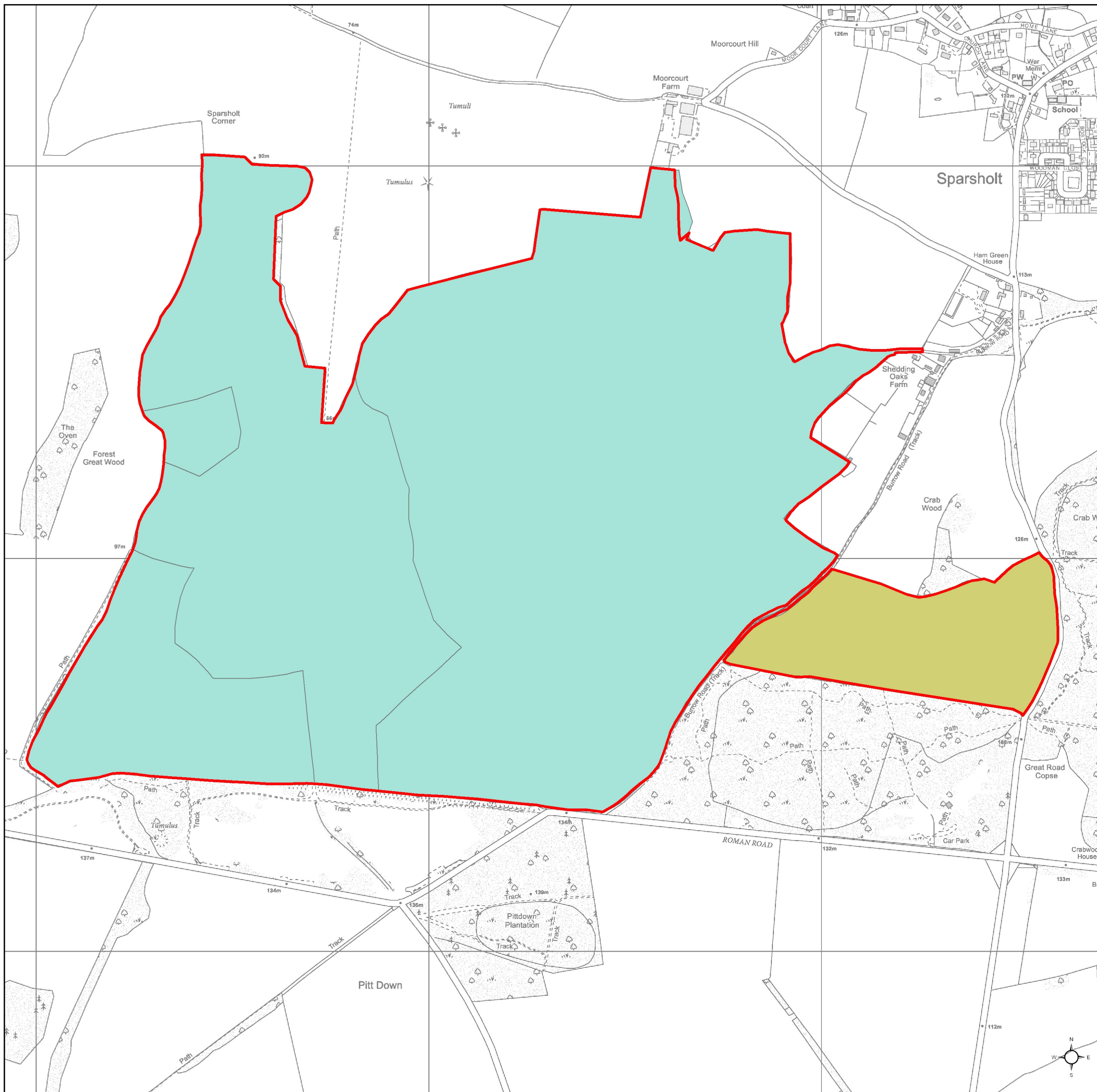
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West Wood

Legal Status



Key

- Freehold
- Leasehold
- West Wood Management Area

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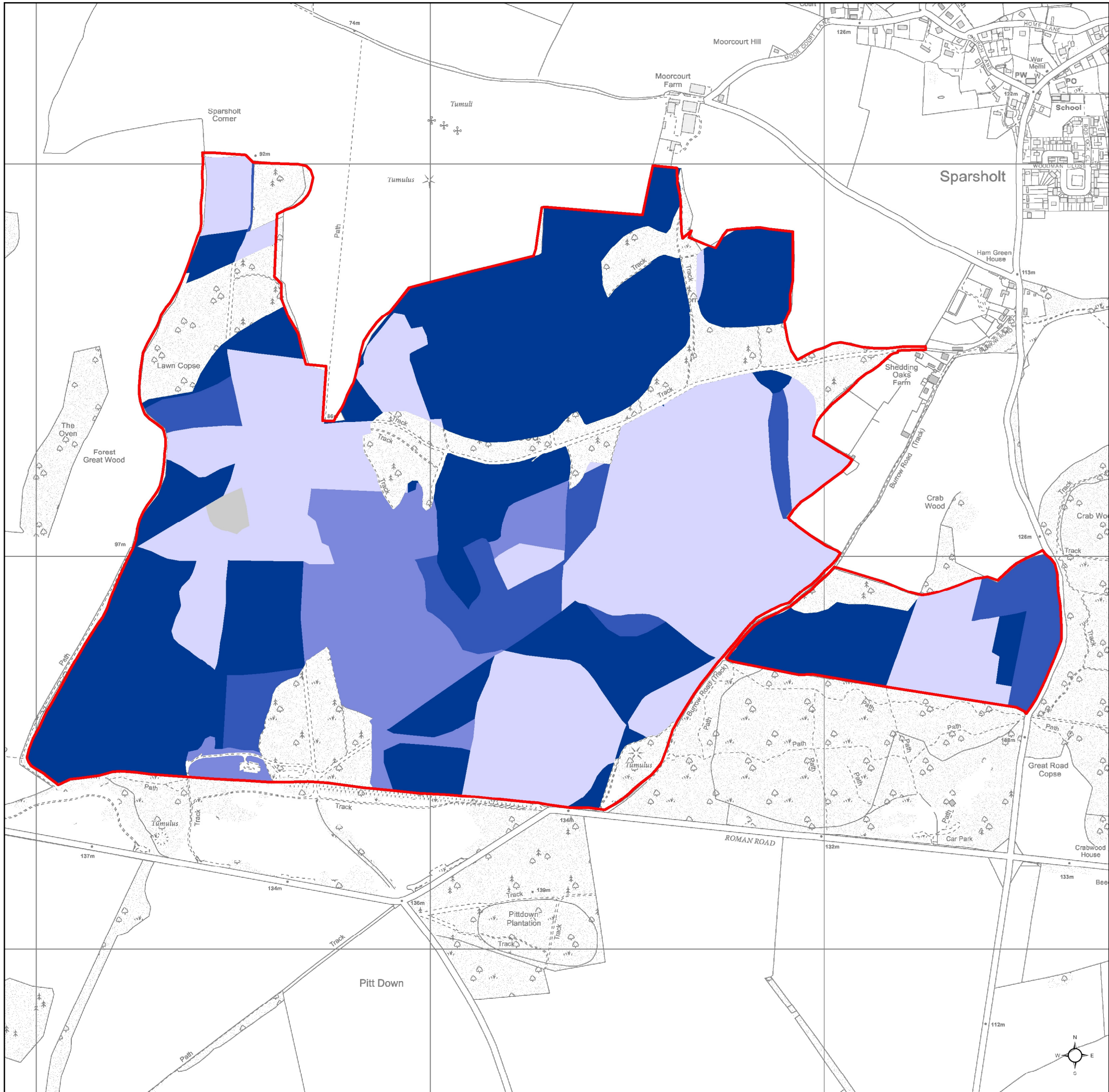
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PEFC
Forest Stewardship
Council



West Wood

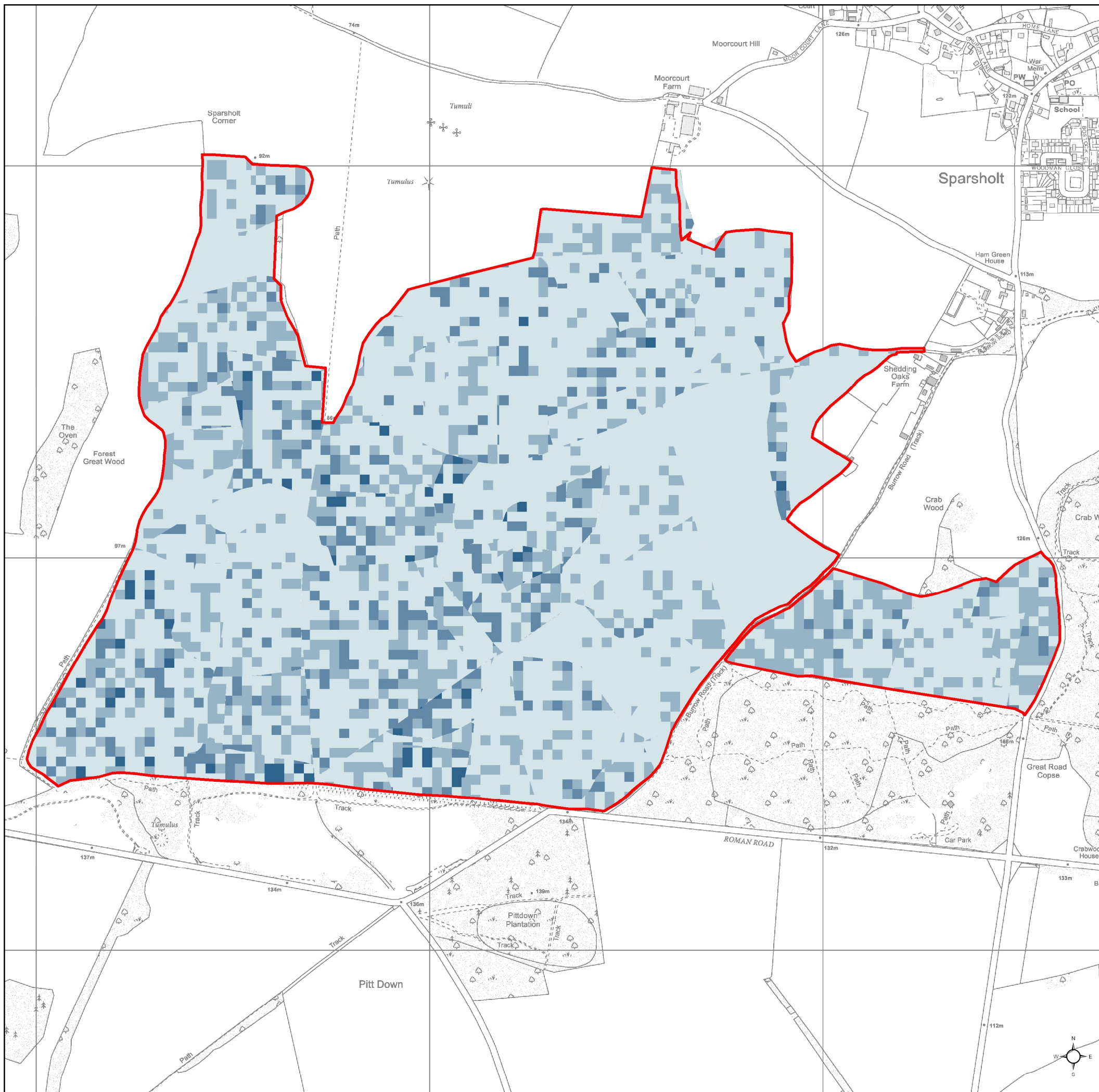
Ancient Woodland Semi-Natural Scoring



Key

Ancient Woodland Areas

- 1 - Over 80% native
- 2 - Between 50% and 80% native
- 3 - Between 20% and 50% native
- 4 - Less than 20% native
- Currently open or un-established woodland
- West Wood Management Area



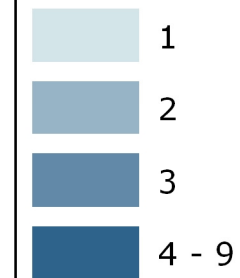
West Wood

Indicative Species Diversity



Key

Number of components within canopy (including open space)



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West Wood

Indicative Age Diversity



Key

Gaps illustrate indicative or actual open space

- Over 100 years old
- 81 - 100 years old
- 61 - 80 years old
- 41 - 60 years old
- 21 - 40 years old
- 1 - 20 years old

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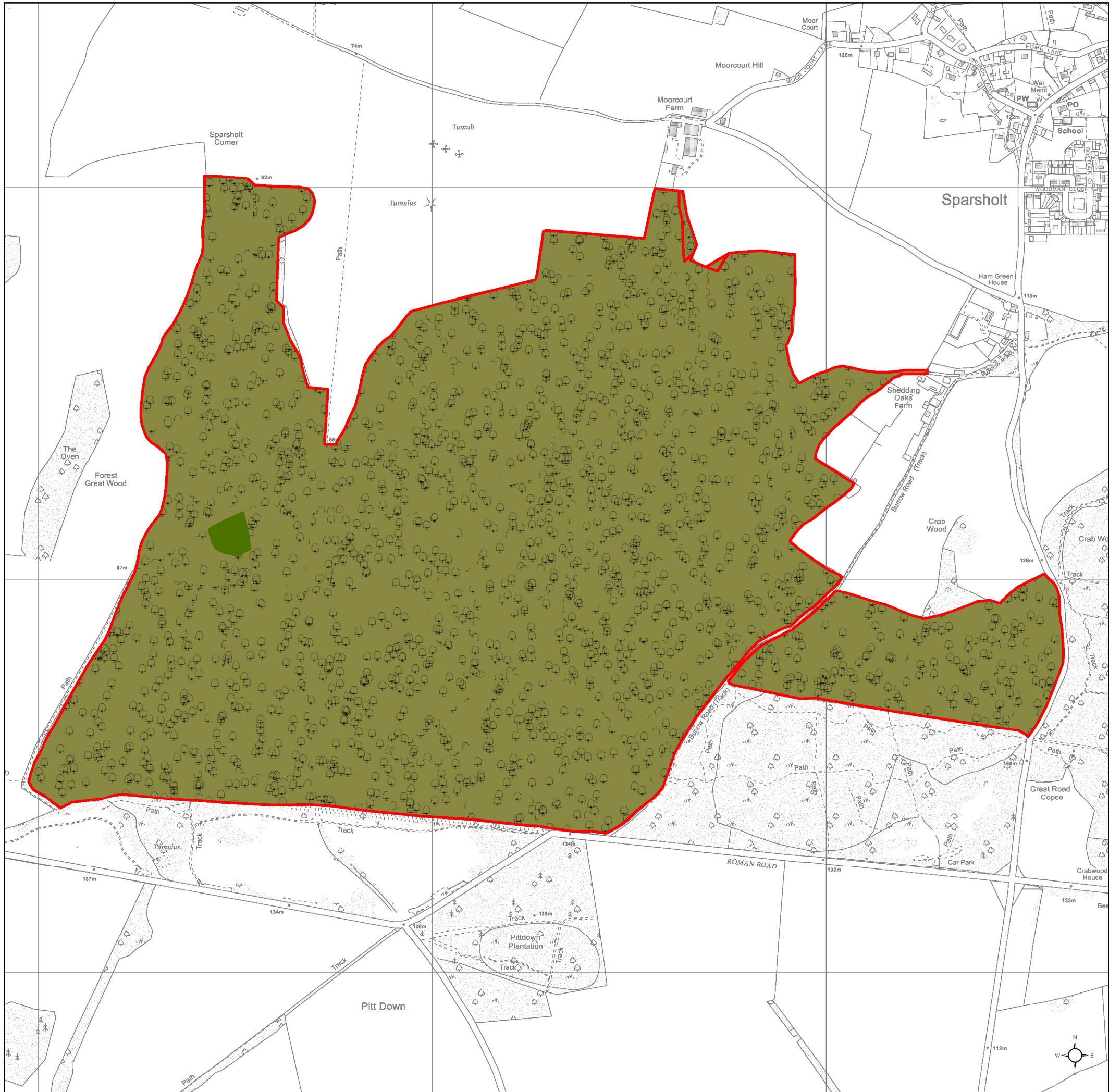
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West Wood

Long Term Vision



Key

-  Predominantly (>80%) native and honourary-native broadleaved woodland
-  Open Space
-  Hampshire Downs Management Area

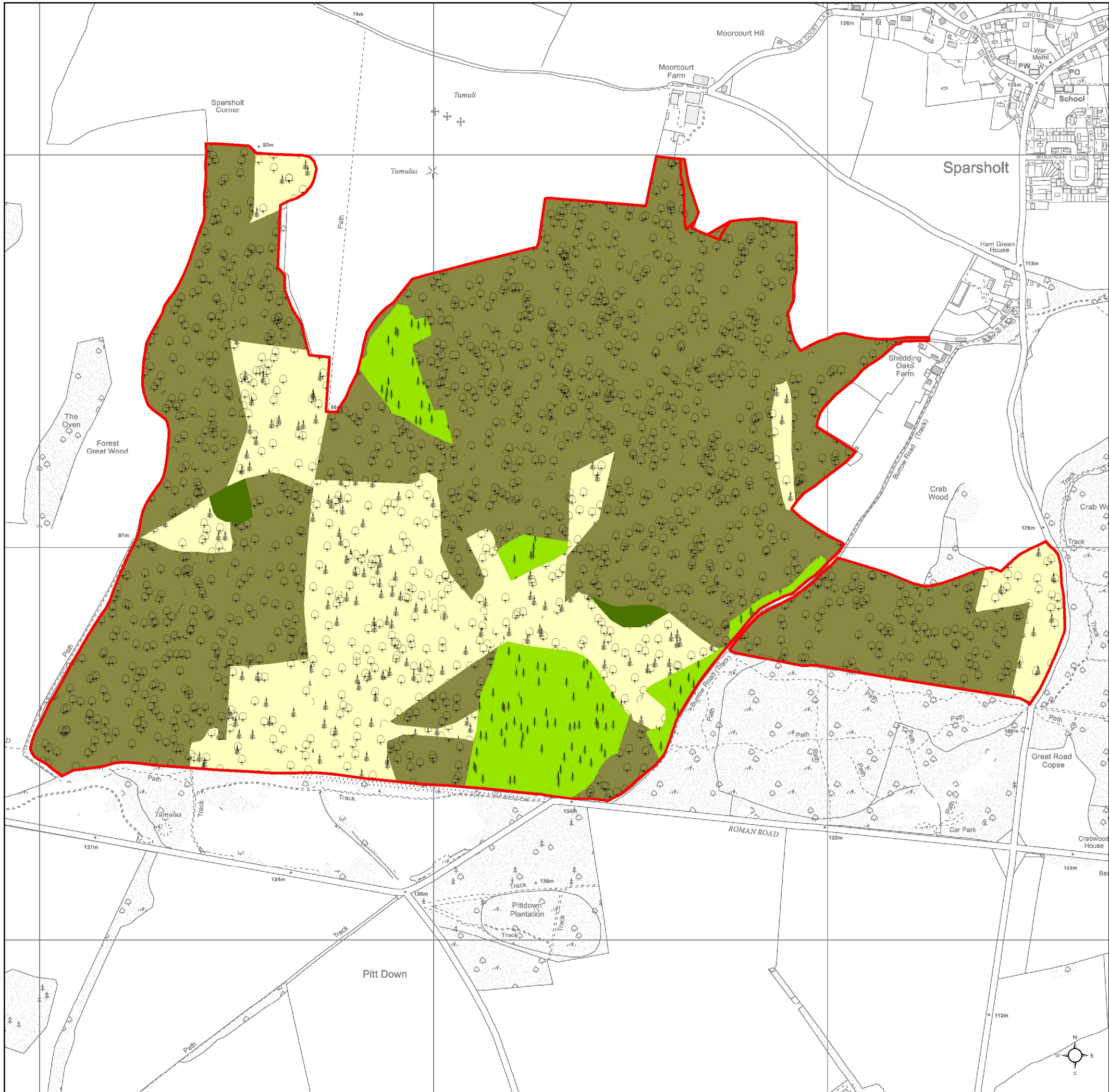
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West Wood

Current Structure



Key

-  Predominantly (>80%) native and honorary-native broadleaved woodland
-  Mixed Woodland. No species type (broadleaf or conifer) represents more than 80% of the canopy
-  Conifer Woodland. Predominantly (>80%) conifer species
-  Open Space
-  Hampshire Downs Management Area

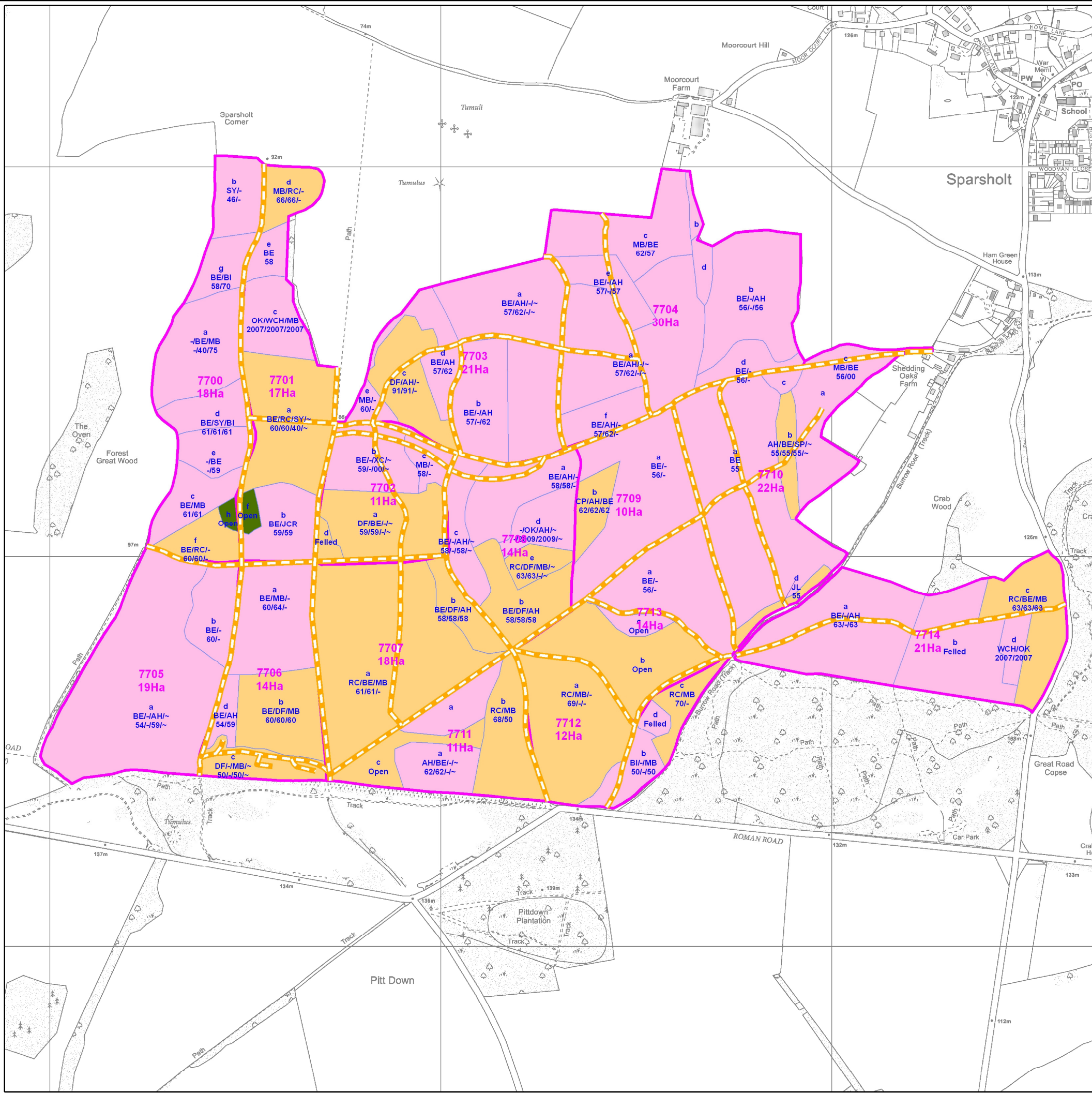
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West Wood Habitat Restoration & Felling



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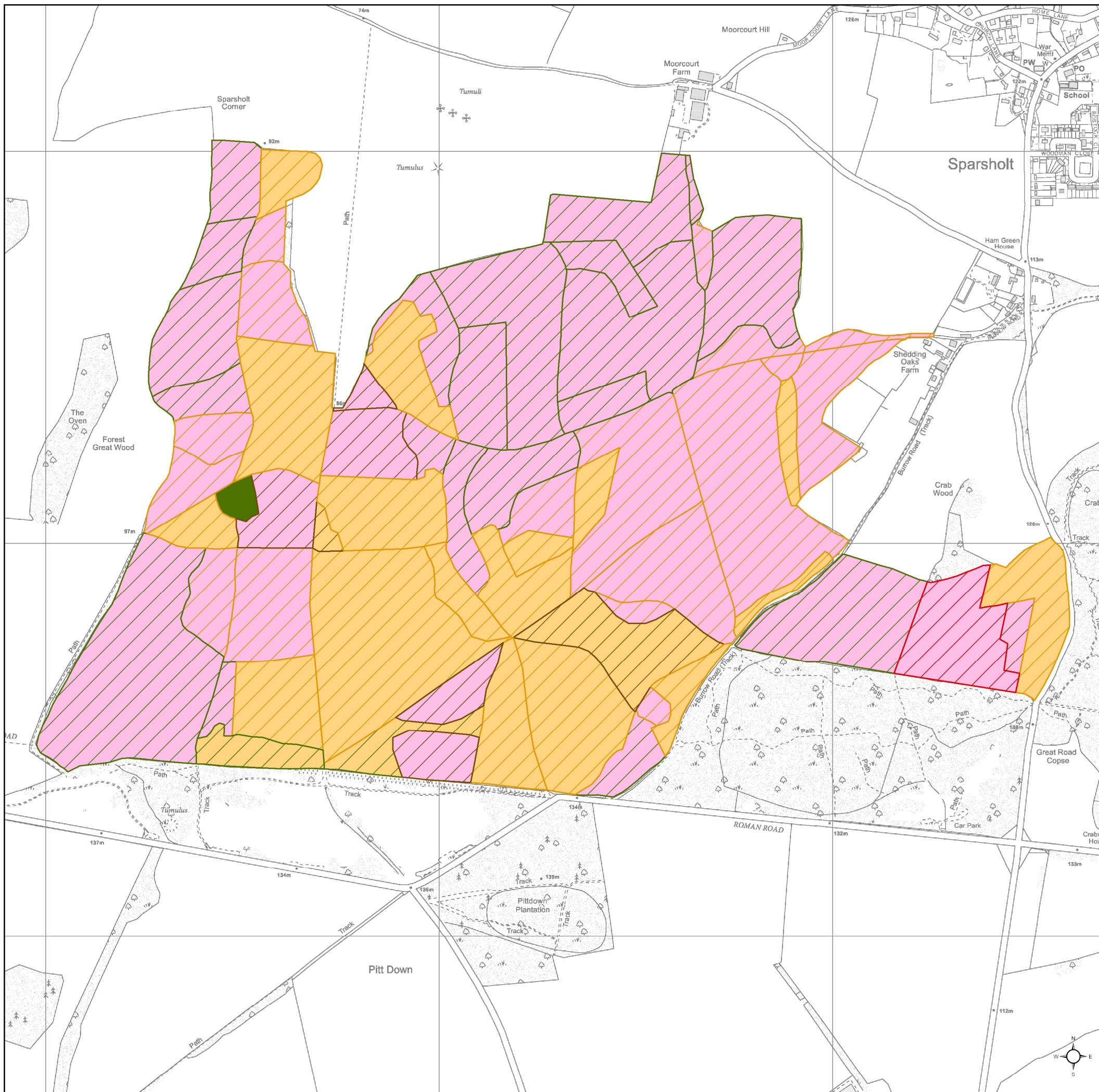
- Native Broadleaved Woodland Management.
Manage under an appropriate shelterwood system, favouring best native tree and focussing on the production of quality timber.
- Native Woodland Restoration.
Manage under an appropriate shelterwood system. Favour best native tree, focussing on the production of quality timber and the gradual reduction of non-native species to 20% of the canopy or less.
- Open
- Road/Ride Edge Management.
Enhance the woodland edge, developing a scalloped and graded structure in accordance with best practice guidelines.
- Compartments
- Sub-Compartments

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West Wood

Predicted Timeline for Intended Future Habitats



Key

Establish next generation of desired habitat by:

-  2050
-  2100
-  2150
-  2200

 Hampshire Downs Management Area

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