

# LYDFORD

## Forest Design Plan

### 2011-2021



Forestry Commission  
woodlands have been  
certified in accordance  
with the rules of the Forest  
Stewardship Council.

SGS-FM/COC-0356

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**FORESTRY COMMISSION - Application for Forest Design Plan Approval**

Forest District: PENINSULA

Woodland or property name: Lydford, Brentor and Burleydown

Nearest town, village or locality: Lydford

OS Grid reference: SX 499 851

Local Authority district/unitary Authority: West Devon Borough Council

1. I apply for Forest Design Plan approval for the property described above and in the enclosed Forest Design Plan.
2. I confirm that the scoping, carried out and documented in the Consultation Record attached, incorporated those stakeholders which the FC agreed must be included. Where it has not been possible to resolve specific issues associated with the plan to the satisfaction of consultees, this is highlighted in the Consultation Record.
3. I confirm that the proposals contained in this plan comply with the UK Forestry Standard.
4. I undertake to obtain any permissions necessary for the implementation of the approved Plan.

Signed  ..... Signed .....  
 PP Forest Management Director (For) Regional Director

District PENINSULA ..... Region .....

Date 13/10/2011 ..... Date of Approval .....

Date approval ends: .....

(ha)	Conifers	Broadleaves	Open Space
Existing felled areas (due to Pr)	33.9	0.0	
Felling	0.4	0.4	
Restocking	8.8	22.9	3.0
Managed under continuous cover (AW & PAWS)	0.0	91.4	

Other woodland (non PAWS) 110.3 hectares  
 Total plan area 236.4 hectares

## Policy & context

This plan has been prepared in order to achieve, and where possible, exceed the standards set out in the government's sustainable forestry policy – the major national Policies and Strategies we work within are outlined in Appendix 3.

The Forestry Commission is independently assessed and certified as being managed to internationally agreed standards of sustainable forest management. These standards are set out in the UK Woodland Assurance Standard, and gaining approval for this Plan forms part of the ongoing commitment we have under this Standard to maintain long term management plans for all our woodland blocks.

FC Peninsula has adopted a stakeholder endorsed, locally relevant interpretation of national and regional forestry policy, described in its 'Peninsula Forest District Strategic Plan' 2004 – 2014' which sets the direction we want to take the FC's public forest estate in Peninsula. This document highlights the changing role of forests in the 21st century and emphasises the desire to provide forests that people enjoy visiting to play and learn, that provide the best possible landscape, and are havens to wildlife. These public benefits are applied within the limits of resource availability, including timber production, which plays an important role in supporting the local economy.

### **Phytophthora ramorum within our forests**

This forest design plan is being produced because the disease *Phytophthora ramorum* has had a major impact on this woodland. This has resulted in 66 hectares of premature clearance of Larch trees as part of the national drive to limit the spread of this disease.

Because of this premature clearance, the existing forest design plan has now become obsolete – we can no longer consider the clearfell and replanting options we originally proposed, as the original context for their implementation has now become obsolete.

Consequently, the bulk of this new plan is concerned with how we intend to deal with the large amounts of cleared areas we are now left with – it is therefore more of a replanting plan than anything else but will also include any clearfell areas we still consider to be appropriate (possibly for landscape improvement reasons or to continue changing species).

It will also show our longer term management intentions for areas marked as 'continuous cover' where we do not intend to clearfell areas of trees but rather intend to manage them in a more naturalistic way to preserve and enhance semi – natural features such as ground flora.

### **Management Objectives**

Our aim within Peninsula for the medium to long term is to change the basis of how we manage some of the estate from a continual round of clearfelling and replanting to one of growing larger trees, past economic maturity, and encouraging natural regeneration wherever possible and practical. This in turn will lead to more interesting, diverse and stable forest areas. Not everywhere will be appropriate for this type of adaptive management, and clearfell areas will continue to give large benefits for wildlife and landscape in appropriate places.

### **Consultation**

Has been carried out with identified stakeholders as shown in the consultation record at appendix 3.

Our method of identifying consultees is based upon the three major sensitivities of any particular woodland: landscape, recreation and environment, coupled with the level of change we anticipate being caused by the renewed Plan.

### **Broadleaved Policy**

The total overall broadleaved area in this plan will be maintained or increase. Individual areas of broadleaves may be replaced with conifer in order to improve the landscape or nature conservation value of the woods. Veteran trees and areas of Ancient and Semi- Natural Woodland will not be converted to conifer. Our policy is to provide at least 5% native broadleaf within our woods but some woods, especially on high moors, may not be suitable for this and emphasis will be placed on providing more open space instead in these circumstances.

### **Implementation**

Before any forestry operation is carried out in this plan area a documented Operational Site Assessment is carried out on the individual site. This ensures that the operations will be carried out as holistically and in as integrated a manner as possible, so as not, for example, to damage archaeological features or rare species or habitats unacceptably, and that the detail of the work is consistent with statutory requirements of safety and environmental protection.

## Protected Species and habitats

The Forestry Commission works within good practice guidelines for European Protected Species (EPS). These guidelines are agreed between FC and Natural England to protect both individuals of a species and the habitat that they occupy. If it proves impossible to carry out operations without breaching good practice guidelines, then a licence to carry out such operations will be sought.

In general, the Operational Site Assessment is the point at which requirements will be considered on a site that is known to harbour EPS, but all known potential EPS habitats will be mapped at the Forest Design Plan level so that felling proposals can take account of good practice guidelines at the design stage.

## Cultural Heritage

### Scheduled Monuments

All Scheduled Monuments are subject to a separate Management Plan, agreed with English Heritage (EH)

At Forest Design Plan (FDP) level Scheduled Monuments will simply be mapped on the Heritage map layer.

Consultation with either EH or Local Authority or National Park Heritage Departments on any potentially damaging operations to Scheduled Monuments will take place at the Operational Site Assessment Stage

### Other Heritage Features

All other heritage features are subject to an agreement with Local Authority or National Park Historic Environment Record (HER) Services. Heritage features will be identified by an HER reference number and placed into one of the following three works categories:

**1. Plan Period Agreement (PPA)** – Heritage features that Forestry Commission (FC) agree to carry out specified protective management works on within the approval period of the Plan. These will most often be on unscheduled heritage features of high (national) or medium (regional) importance. Detailed descriptions of the works will be contained in the Heritage Feature Record Sheet (HFRS) under individual heritage features. Typical works may involve protection e.g. 'identify and avoid/buffer' during operations or simple positive management tasks such as regular scrub clearance

**2. Aspirational Works (ASP)** – Heritage features that would benefit from specified works, but which are noted in the HFRS as 'aspirational'. These may include archaeological survey (including LiDAR) where more information is required, or more complex positive management works, such as consolidation of ruined buildings. Such works may need extra funding that is not present at the time of the FDP approval. These will mostly involve unscheduled heritage features/areas of high importance

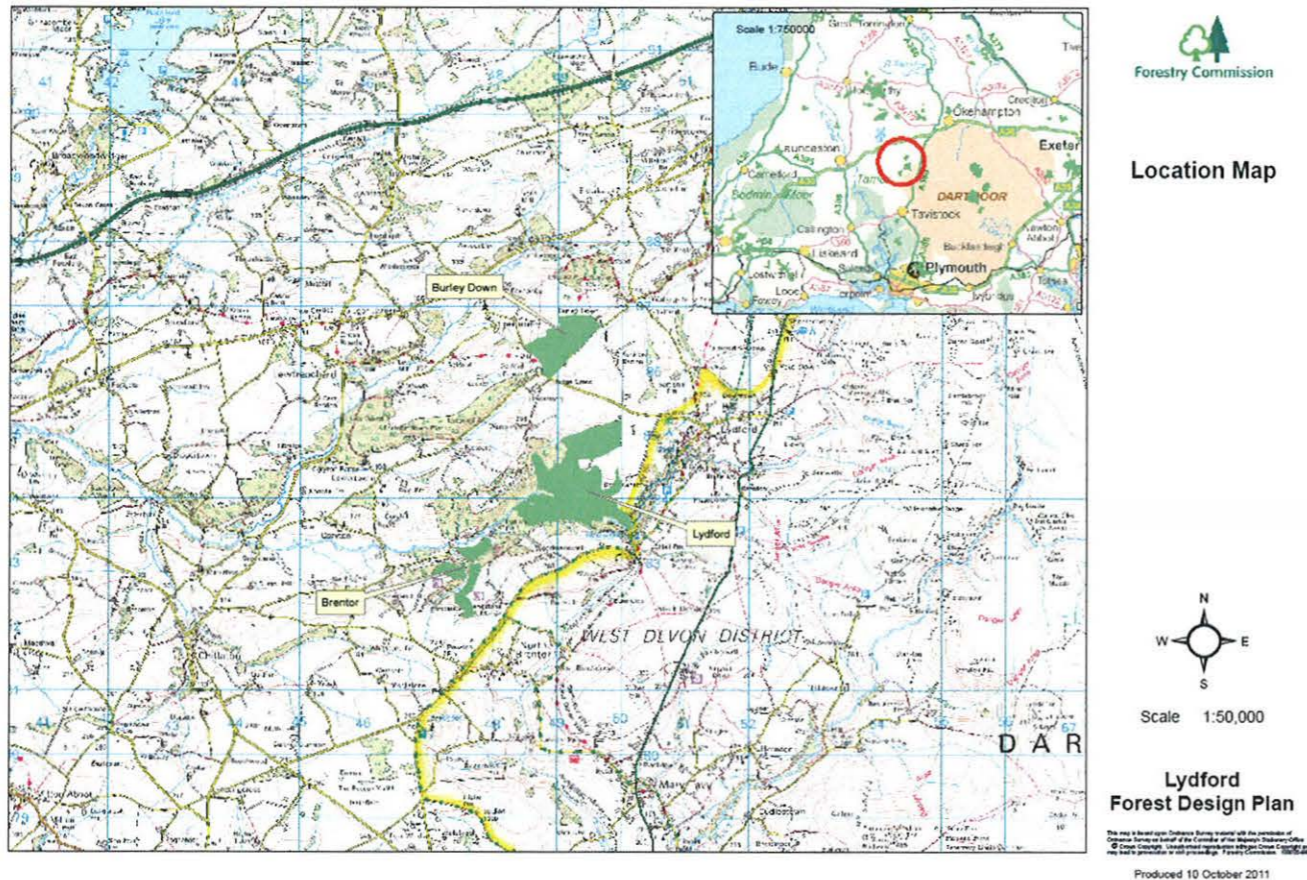
**3. Generic Guidance (GEN)** – Heritage features which are more common, including hedgebanks, disused quarries or sunken lanes. Some may have HER refs, but most will not. The Forestry Commission (FC) will work to both the FC Forests and Archaeology Guidelines (1995) and the Generic Guidance agreed with HER Services in order to provide protection for GEN features during operations

Only PPA and ASP features will be mapped on the FDP Heritage map layer. Some GEN features have HER refs and will also be mapped but will not require detailed works. All Heritage Features will be identified on the Heritage Feature Record Sheet (HFRS)

## Location

The woodlands incorporated in this plan lie to the north of Tavistock and to the east of Dartmoor National Park and the A386 Okehampton to Tavistock road. The woods lie within the parishes of Lydford and Brentor.

## Location Map



## General description

The plan covers three woodland blocks known as Lydford, Burleydown and Brentor, totalling 235 ha, of which 141 ha are classified as Plantation on Ancient Woodland sites (PAWS). All the woodlands are owned by the Forestry Commission and dedicated for public access under the Countryside and Right of Ways (CROW) act.

The woodlands were purchased by the Forestry Commission in the 1920s, they were originally cleared and planted with conifer, however small remnants of the original oakwood remain.

Over the past twelve months the Larch in Lydford woodlands have been infected with *Phytophthora ramorum* and as such have been subject to a felling order from Plant Health Service. This has meant the wholesale removal of all

Larch within the woods. In total over 46 hectares of young (under 25 years old) and 19 hectares (over 25 years old) Larch has been felled, some of this as clearfell (33.9ha) and the rest as thinning. This clearfelling represents over 14% of the total woodland area and this plan gives details of how this will be restocked and managed into the future.

## Landscape Context

The woodlands in this plan lay on the boundary of two areas as stated in the Countryside agency list of Character Areas, namely Dartmoor (151) and South Devon (150). The whole plan area is adjacent to the western edge of Dartmoor National Park.

The woodlands contain features of both areas, the relevant aspects are:

1. Around the moorland core is a gentler landscape of small irregular pasture fields with dry stone walls and banks, cut by large terraced wooded valleys which shelter farmsteads and hamlets. The valleys have steep-sided fast flowing streams and a network of sunken lanes. The Lydford and Brentor blocks are steep valley sites sitting astride the River Lyd whereas Burleydown is positioned on a hill top north of Lydford.
2. Granite and slate in cottages, farmhouses, villages, abandoned mine buildings and walls unifies the landscape.
3. Mining industry has made a strong impact on the landscape, with dramatically sited spoil heaps and ruins.
4. Sunken lanes link numerous farmsteads and hamlets, with cob, slate and thatched buildings.
5. Wildflower rich often treeless Devon banks.

The Lydford Woodlands for the most part sit very well in the landscape and over the past centuries have been moulded by man to form a diverse structure that not only enhances that landscape but forms a very integral part of the landscape itself. Over the years mans influence has been present and Lydford has formed a large part of how the local landscape has been built, much of the landscape owes its history to the mining industry which Lydford forms a large part of, and this is evident throughout the Lydford and Brentor woods. Old mine workings with sunken lanes to access the mines are present in a number of places. Burley Down is a different but equally important wood and although predominantly a conifer plantation also sits well in the landscape, plans to

increase areas of heathland to join up with existing areas of poor grassland / heathland will further increase the landscape value of the woodland.

In conclusion we deem there to be no outstanding or significant external landscape issues that need addressing in this plan' or similar.

### **Environmental Factors**

Due to the mixed variety of habitats and species within the Lydford Woodlands the conservation value is generally good. Ongoing and future works aim to enhance this value over the whole woodland, not least by a very gradual and non-intrusive reversion to a more native tree species balance over the areas designated as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWs). Further work will be carried out along and within the river corridors, the areas of open space, and the environmental corridors which will enhance work that has already been completed alongside forest roads, rides and watercourses.

Lydford contains a very large and diverse array of flora and fauna including some nationally and internationally scarce species. Much work has been done to increase the habitat for these species in order to help increase populations. Lydford forms a protected safe haven and excellent habitat for a range of Raptors. In consultation with local Raptor experts future planned work within Lydford will further enhance this habitat. There are several European Protected Species (EPS) including Otters and Dormice in Lydford Woods and planned work along streamsides and the increased amount of native broadleaves will increase the value of the habitat for these species. A pond in the centre of the wood also forms a good wildlife habitat and haven for many species and it is the intention to ensure this pond is not lost to silting, where possible the value of the pond for wildlife will be increased. Lydford also contains a Heronry and Raven nest sites and these will be protected with the retention of areas of woodland where the nest sites are present. Brentor woods contain an area of Natural Reserve and this will be managed as minimum intervention in order to allow the wood to maintain its unique value. The river Lyd that runs through the centre of the wood forms a large part of the woodlands diversity and gives a different habitat structure. The current disease control fellings that have taken place have given good opportunities to further increase the diversity of the landscape directly adjacent to the stream. This will increase the potential for Otter breeding and increase the potential for other aquatic and water dependant species such as fish, dragonflies and kingfishers.

A major project in partnership with Butterfly Conservation has resulted in a nationally important site being developed; this site contains three different species of Fritillary butterfly alongside populations of other butterflies. The site will

be further developed by the increase and maintenance of open space and dappled shade.

In liaison with Butterfly Conservation potential new habitats that should link to existing populations have been identified, these are along south facing edges of recent clearfells. These sites will be managed as open space in order to help increase the spread of the current populations of the three Fritillary Butterflies.

An area of heathland restoration already completed in Burleydown will be extended to provide a greater habitat that will in time join with the adjacent poor grassland area to the north of the woodland.

On the whole the Lydford Woodland blocks form a diverse mosaic of dynamic habitats that will only be enhanced by the work that will be carried out over the period of this plan.

All work that is to be carried out in the woodlands will be subject to an 'Operational Site Assessment' prior to commencement.

For more details of proposed environmental work see appendix 7

### **Heritage Features**

There are three Scheduled Monuments (SM) within the design plan area as described on the Heritage Feature sheet attached (appendix 6) and shown on the attached Heritage Features Map. All three sites are subject to a current SM plan agreed with English Heritage. Also shown on the Heritage Features sheet are further features identified in consultation with Devon County Council Archaeological department. All these features will be taken into consideration when compiling an Operational Site Assessment prior to any works being carried out.

### **Recreation**

The recreational use of these woodlands is not high at present due to their remote location and restricted access. The woods are mostly used by local people for dog walking and occasional visitors passing through on PRoW's from the National Trust property at Lydford Gorge.

However the Lydford block has been used by several organised educational events in recent years in partnership with the National Trust, Dartmoor National Park and other organisations. It is planned to continue with this type of partnership event where possible to promote and utilise the conservation and heritage works being carried out in the wood.

Generally the plan will increase the recreational value of the woodlands by the use of open space and environmental corridors to promote a more diverse and inviting landscape.

The car park and picnic area at the entrance to the wood will be managed to increase its value and attractiveness to visitors, this will be done by the selective felling of individual trees in order to create a more inviting place to visit. There are however no plans to increase the size or type of recreational use of the woodland, this is mainly due to the restricted access which the Forestry Commission shares with other local landowners.

### **Design Concept**

The core aim of the plan is to produce woodlands with increased conservation and landscape benefits whilst still producing a viable timber output, this will be achieved by;

The areas identified as Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) will be encouraged to regenerate naturally using an irregular shelterwood silvicultural system and managed as mixed woodland whilst maximising the timber potential with the aim of gradual return to native woodland.

The areas of Larch on PAWS that have been recently clearfelled due to the presence of *Phytophthora ramorum* will be converted to native broadleaves. Some of these areas will be earmarked for succession habitat whilst others will be restocked with native broadleaves in order to produce better quality hardwood timber.

The areas identified as non PAWS will continue to be managed primarily for conifer timber production under a clearfell and restock scheme. Implementation and maintenance of an environmental corridor system will continue to increase diversity of habitat and internal landscaping.





Forestry Commission

# LYDFORD FOREST DESIGN PLAN CONCEPT MAP

- Management Area
- Forest Road
- Public Rights of Way**
  - Bridleway
  - PRow
  - BOAT
  - RUPP
- Archaeology**
  - Scheduled Monument
  - Unscheduled Monument

Lydford Woods - the majority of the woodlands that make up Lydford Woods are Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and as such will be managed to encourage native tree species.

Lydford woods are already important for wildlife and heritage and this will continue to be an important part of the management of the woodland blocks.

**Appraisal**

Large areas of semi-mature native broadleaves.

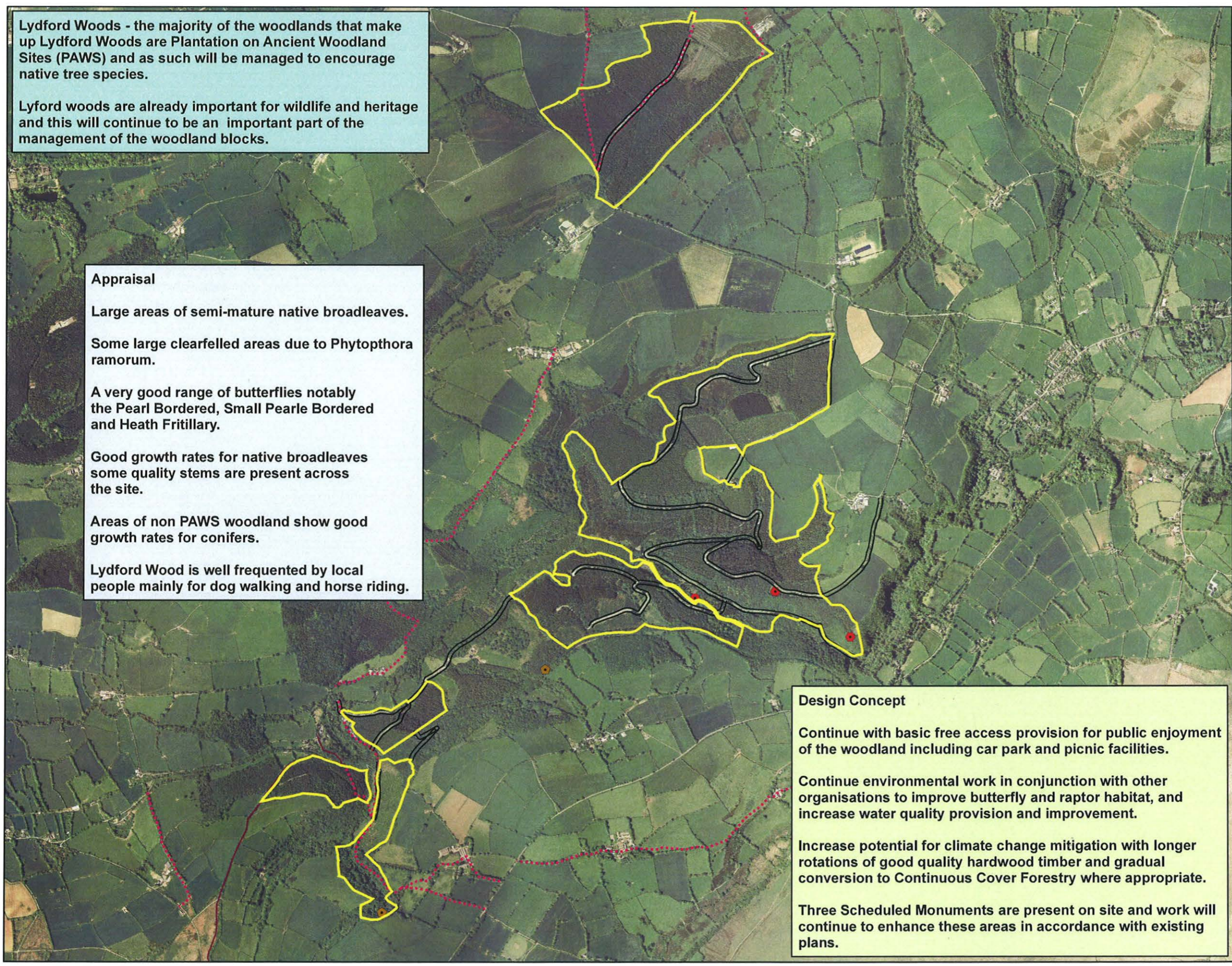
Some large clearfelled areas due to *Phytophthora ramorum*.

A very good range of butterflies notably the Pearl Bordered, Small Pearle Bordered and Heath Fritillary.

Good growth rates for native broadleaves some quality stems are present across the site.

Areas of non PAWS woodland show good growth rates for conifers.

Lydford Wood is well frequented by local people mainly for dog walking and horse riding.



**Design Concept**

Continue with basic free access provision for public enjoyment of the woodland including car park and picnic facilities.

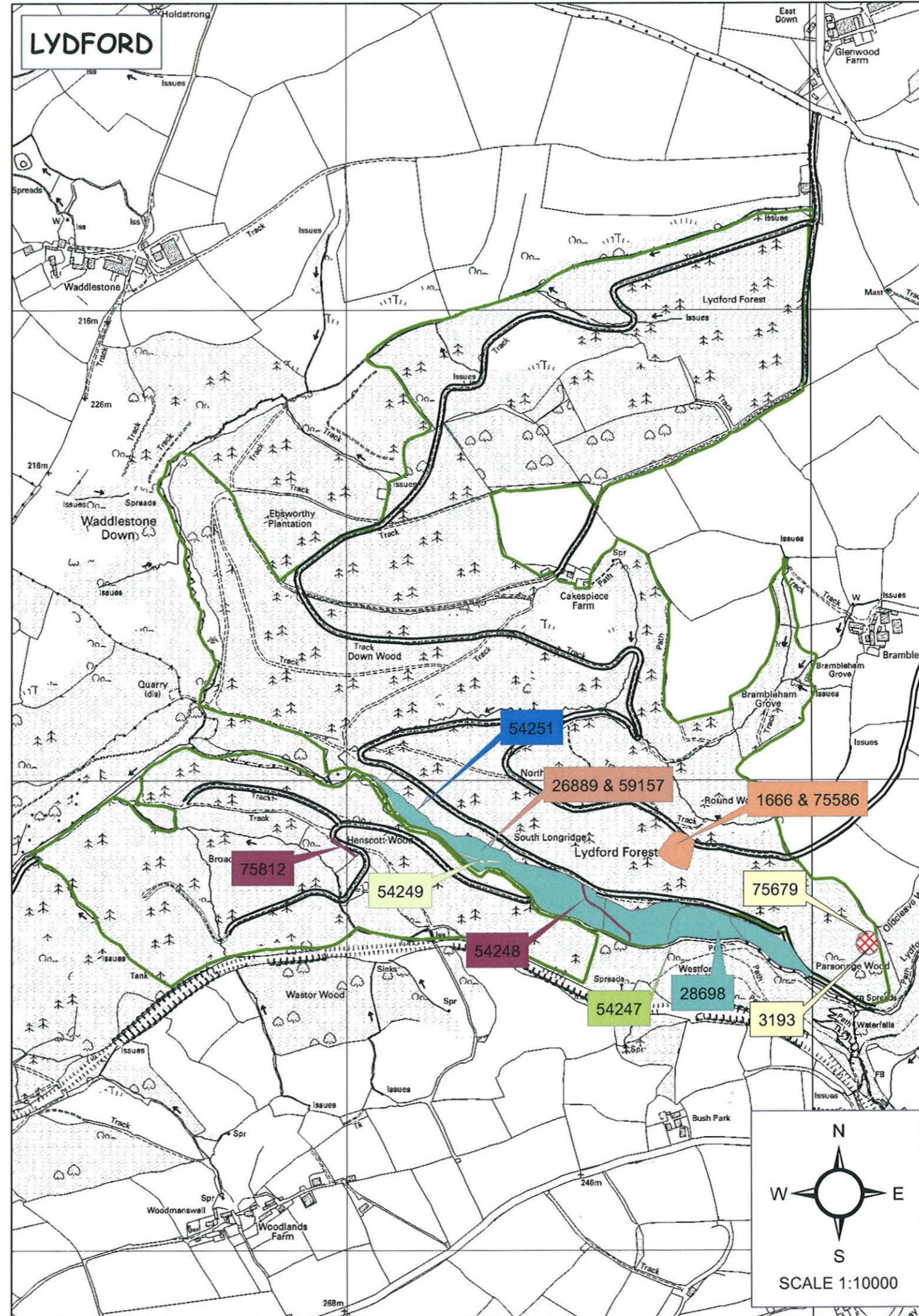
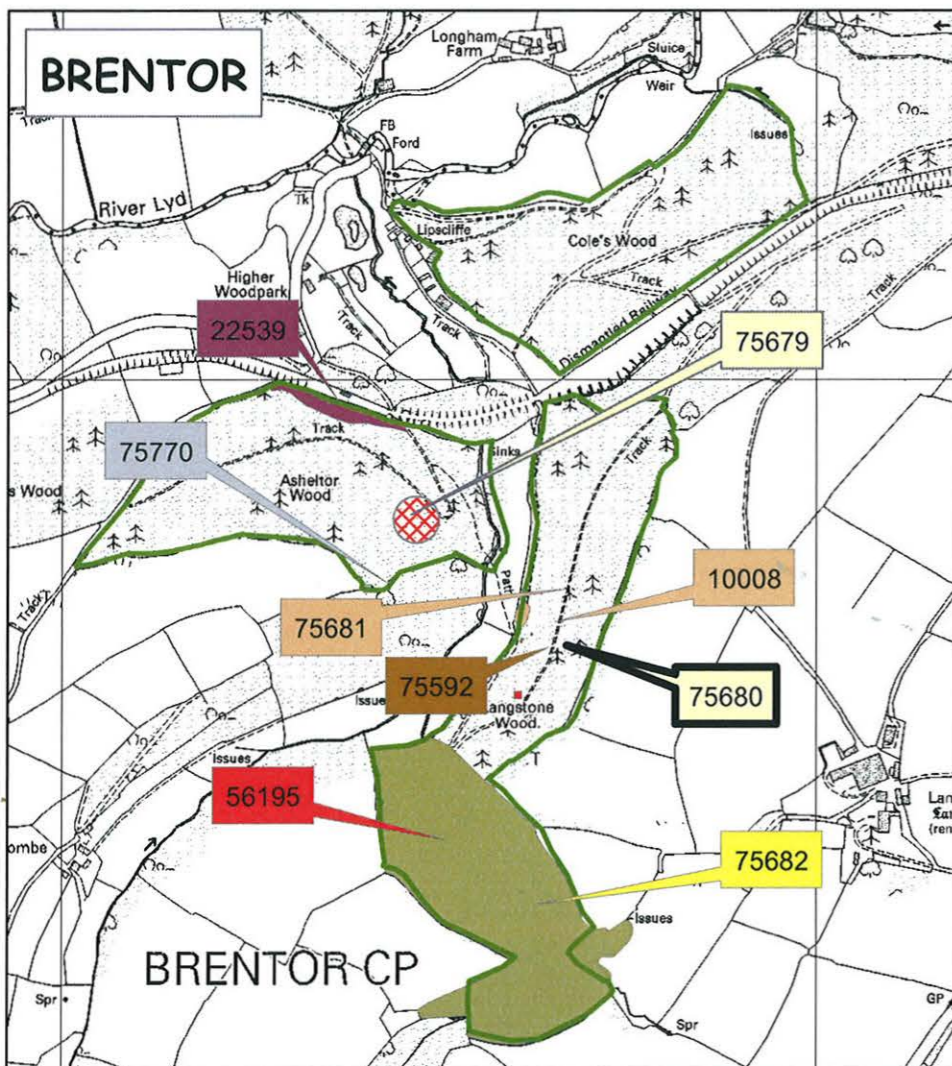
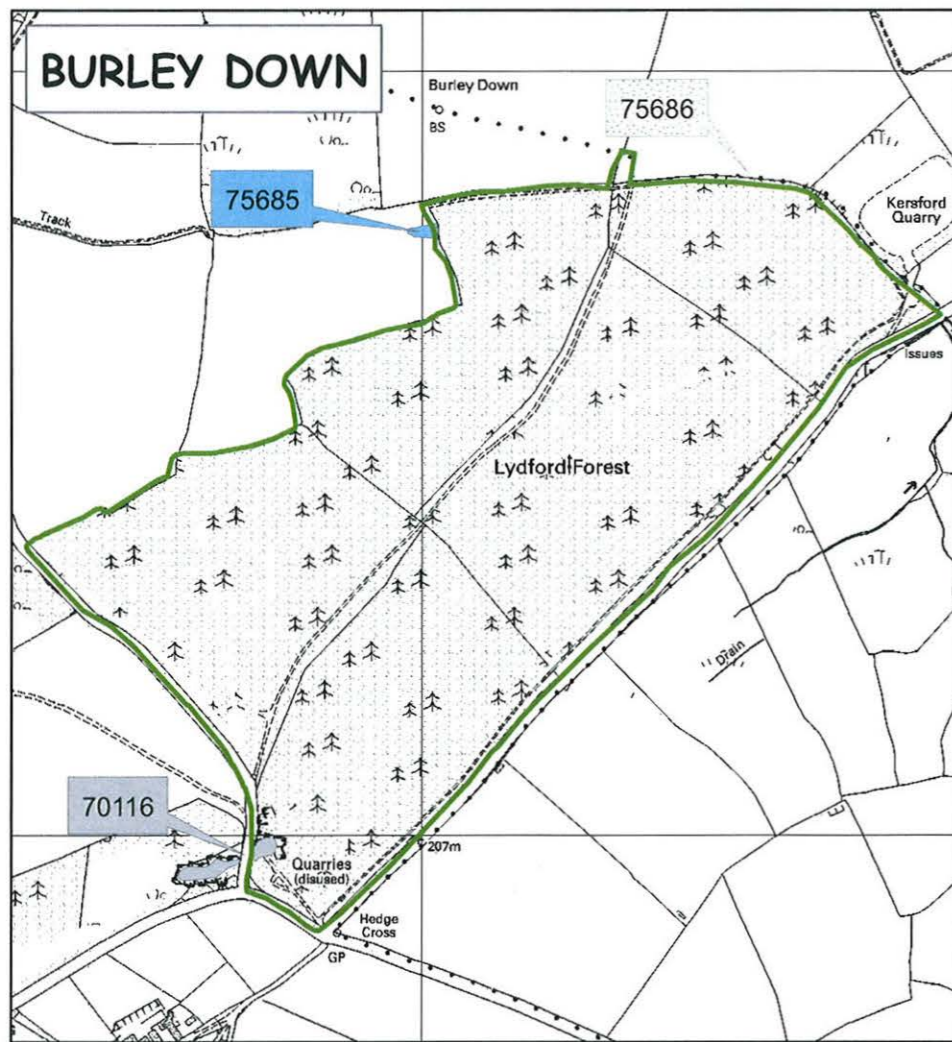
Continue environmental work in conjunction with other organisations to improve butterfly and raptor habitat, and increase water quality provision and improvement.

Increase potential for climate change mitigation with longer rotations of good quality hardwood timber and gradual conversion to Continuous Cover Forestry where appropriate.

Three Scheduled Monuments are present on site and work will continue to enhance these areas in accordance with existing plans.

Scale 1:19,000

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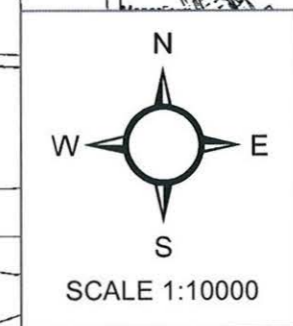
### Cultural Heritage Features

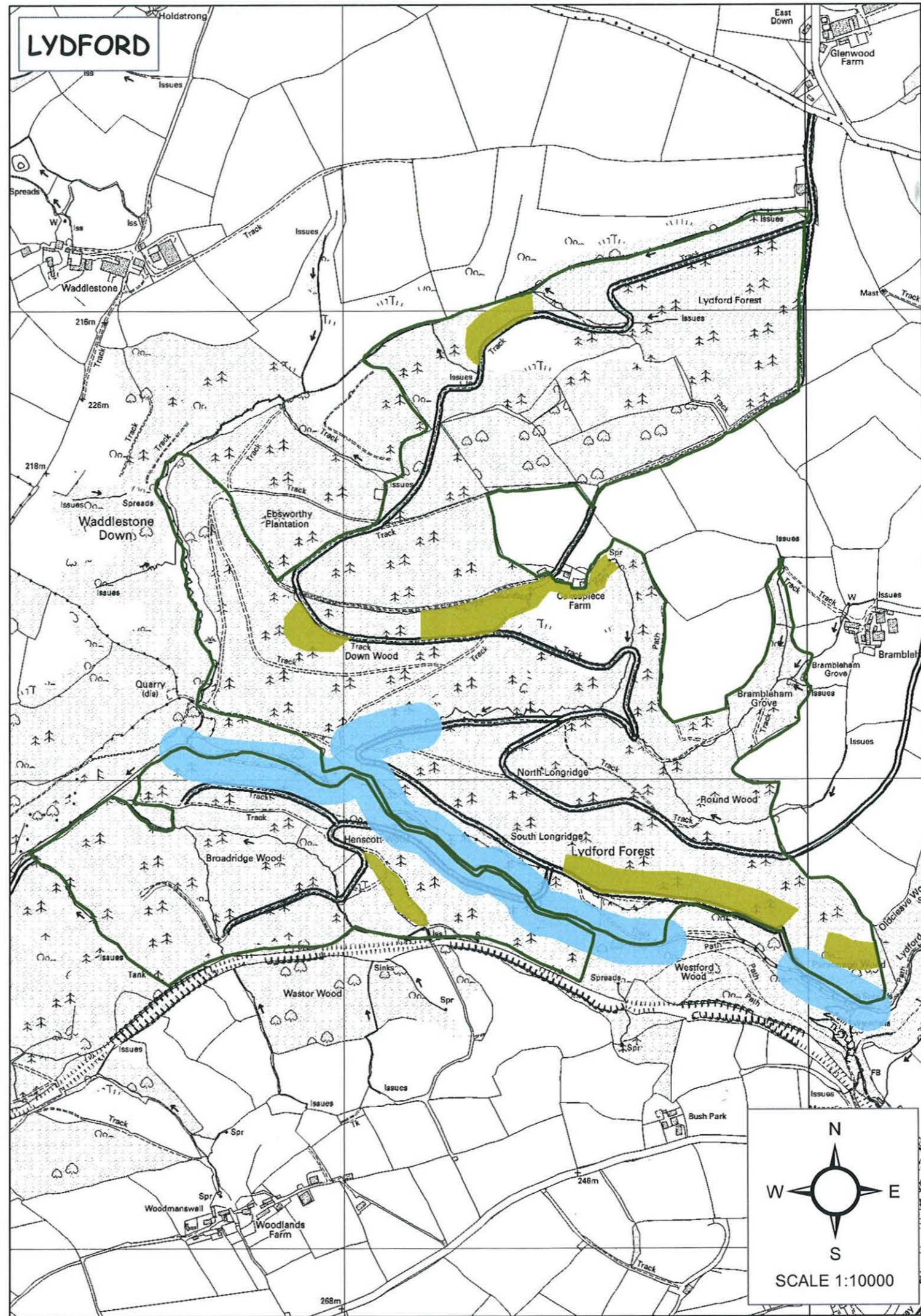
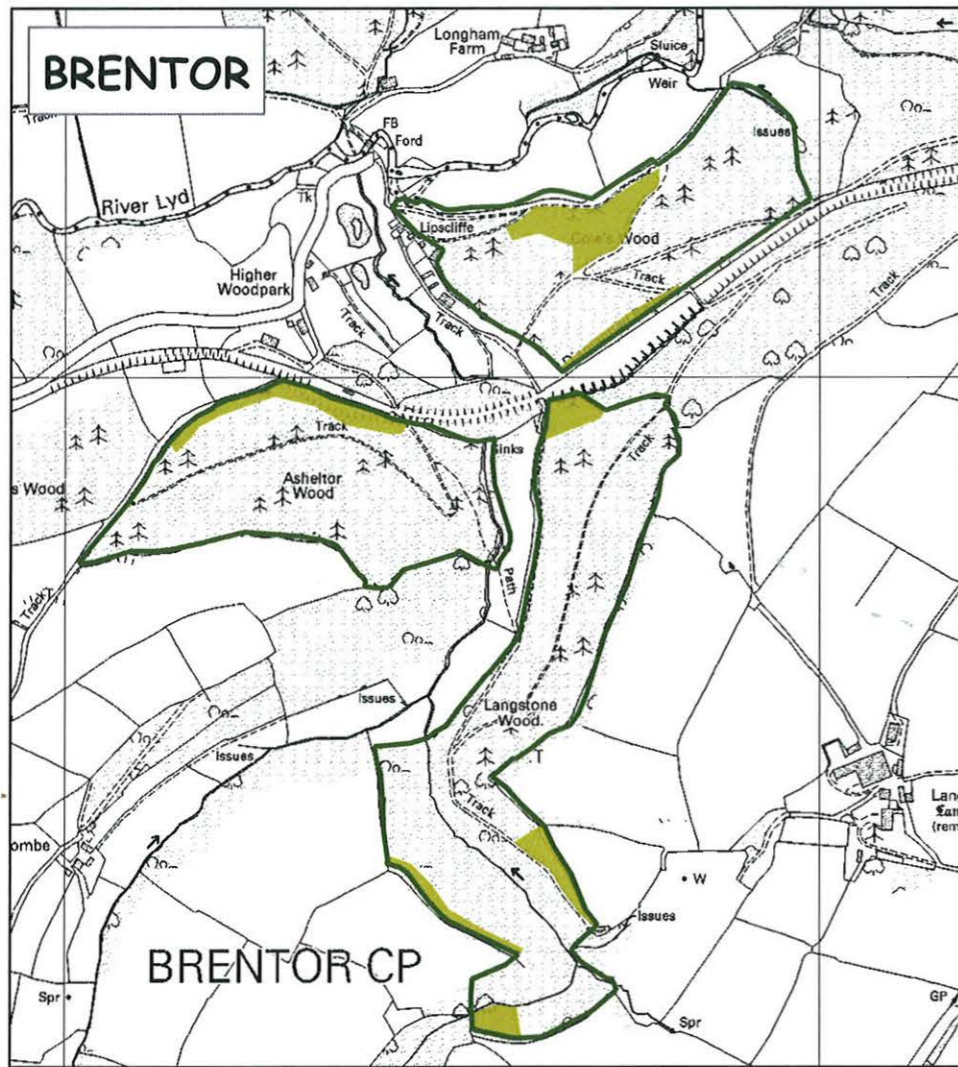
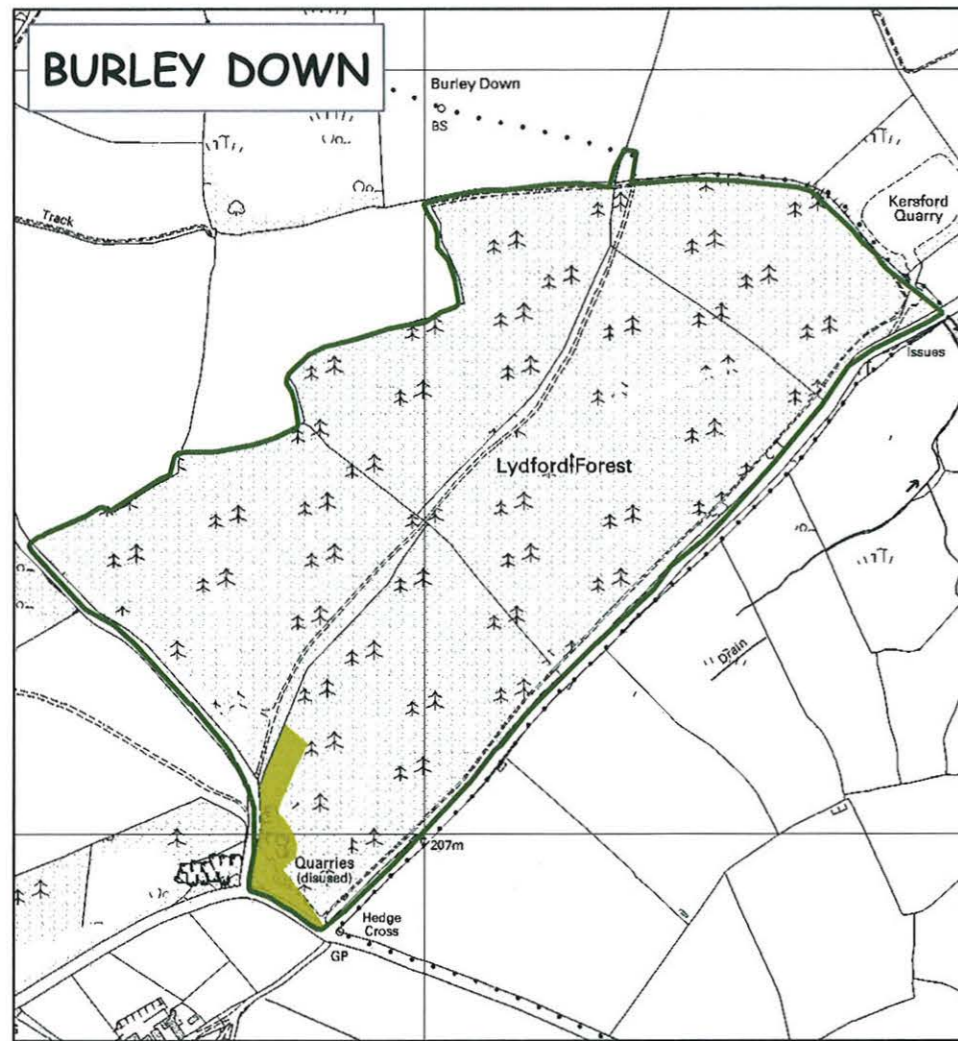
- Artefact Scatter
- Bank(Earthwork)
- Boundary Stone
- Building
- Enclosure
- Engine House
- Field Boundary
- Gully
- Hillfort/Settlement
- Pond
- Powder Magazine
- Quarry
- Spoil Heap
- Trackway
- Streamwork/ Boundary Bank

Refer to Appendix 6 for key to features

## Lydford Forest Design Plan

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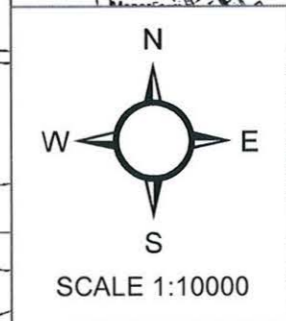
**European Protected Species Favourable Habitats**



Otter



Hazel



**Lydford Forest Design Plan**

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