

# St Helens

## Forest Plan

### 2017 to 2027



## Certificate of Approval for Tree Felling

*This is to certify that tree felling under*

**Forest Plan ref.  
FDP St Helens**

*has been approved by the Forestry Commission as  
being in accordance with Government policy for  
the sound management of a renewable resource.*

*This certificate is valid only for the  
period of the felling approval.*

Signed .....  
Forestry Commission Officer

Date ..... 07 / 07 / 2017 .....

W/1001.d01 - December 1998

### Summary

The St Helens Forest Plan (FP) summaries proposals by the Forestry Commission for the management of six woodlands, Sutton Manor (62ha), Wheatacre (22ha), Whiston Wood (20ha), Brickfield & Red Quarry (12ha), Maypole (13ha) and Upper Moss Side (73ha) which lie in The Mersey and Bold Forest Park, Merseyside. The plan area of 226.8ha lies 11km east of Liverpool and 4km south of St Helens with easy access from the M62.

The St Helens woodlands are all new woodlands planted since 2000 and are largely dominated by mixed broadleaved woodlands with small areas of evergreen conifers planted on ex-agricultural and mineral sites. The management plans objectives will be to grow commercial crops on a sustainable basis, diversify the forest structure through thinning and new planting, increase the number of Trees of Special interest and deadwood habitats, improve the value of the woodlands for butterflies and maintain the public access facilities.

The principal ecological interest in the plan are the emerging woodland habitats, open habitats and fauna associated with it. The FP will help to develop a more diverse woodland structure through active forest management. This will be achieved specifically through the retention of some strands of trees in perpetuity, the development of mixed open stands along water courses, introduction of evergreen conifers to create mixed broadleaved / conifer woodlands and increased length of woodland edge habitat.

The woodlands currently provide a valuable resource for local communities for quiet recreational activities and with the enhance views of the 'Dream' as the forest mature will attract visitors from wider afield long into the future.

**Central Forest District - St Helens Forest Plan (FP)**
**Maps**
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The Forestry Commission would like to express its thanks to St Helens Council for permission to use their images of the Dream.

## 1. What are Forest Plans?

Forest Plans are produced by us, the Forestry Commission (FC), as a means of communicating our management intentions to a range of stakeholders. They aim to fulfil a number of objectives:

- To provide descriptions of our woodlands to show what they are like now.
- To explain the process we go through in deciding what is best for the woodlands' long-term future.
- To show what we intend the woodlands to look like in the future.

To detail our management proposals, for the first ten years so we can seek approval from the statutory regulators.

Our aim is to produce a plan that meets your needs for the woodland; meets the needs of the plants and animals that live there and meets our needs as managers.

This plan does not set out the detailed yearly management operations for each small piece of a wood, known as a coupe\*. It is not possible to say which year a particular operation will take place, but we can say in which five-year period it should happen.

All tree felling in the UK is regulated and a licence is required before trees can be felled; the scale of tree felling in Central England Forest District, which this plan forms part of, is such that the Forest Plan is the best mechanism for applying for this licence. Responsibility for checking that the plan meets all the relevant standards and statutes lies with another part of the FC (Forest Services). If all the criteria are met, full approval is given for the management operations in the first ten years (2017 - 2027) and outline approval for the medium term vision (2027 - 2067). The plan will be reviewed after the first five years (2022) to assess if the objectives are being achieved.

We use some technical words and phrases in the text because they best describe what we are doing. There is a glossary at the back of the plan (Appendix II) with some commonly used technical forestry terms and abbreviations. These technical words are identified throughout the plan with an \*.

## A Application for Forest Plan Approval

### i Plan Area Identification:

Forest District:	Central Forest District	
Beat:	Delamere	
Name:	St Helens Forest Plan	
Nearest Town:	St Helen	
OS Grid Reference:	Sutton Manor	SJ 5210 9080
	Wheatacre	SJ 5506 9293
	Whiston	SJ 4787 9101
	Brickfield & Red Quarry	SJ 5140 9168
	Maypole	SJ 5401 9178
	Upper Moss Side	SJ 5601 8523

Local Planning Authority

### ii Designations:

*Secondary Woodland\*, Mersey Forest, Bold Forest Park and lies in the Mersey Valley Profile No.60 and across the southern edge of the Lancashire Coal Measures Profile No.56 natural areas\*.*

### iii Date of Commencement of Plan

As soon as possible once approved.

Area (ha)	Conifers	Broadleaves
Felling	0.5	0
Restocking	19.3	0
Felling Operations	0	0

*NB - All above figure's refer to the gross area and excludes thinning operations that*



Total clear fell area 0 ha

Forest Plan maps are attached

**The Dream**

I apply for Forest Plan approval for the area described above and in the enclosed Forest Plan.

I undertake to obtain any permission necessary for the implementation of the approved plan.

Signed *Indira Lawrence* Approved *R. Vicker*

FDM

District *Central FD* Conservancy *NW & WM Area*

Date *10.3.17* Date *07 / 07 / 2017*

**1. Introduction**

The St Helen's Forest Plan (FP) comprises of 6 new woodlands that lie within 10km of Liverpool, Warrington and St Helens and attract large numbers of visitors on a daily basis. These new community woodlands which were planted in 2000/6 form part of Bold Forest which is central to the Mersey Forest. Upper Moss Side (73ha) lies on the south side of the Mersey and Sutton Manor (62ha), Wheatacre (22ha), Whiston Wood (20ha), Maypole (13ha), Brickfields and Red Brick(12ha) all lie on the north side close to the M62. The woodlands comprise of a tapestry of conifers and broadleaves interspaced by a variety of grassland and wetland habitats. Each of the woodlands has a good network of surfaced paths providing good safe access all year round.

Sutton Manor is the most prominent site and was planted on the old colliery site that once employed over 1,400 people and was the largest pit in the Lancashire coal fields with shafts that descended 2,343ft underground. The local community has strong links with the woodland and has been closely involved in its design and development which includes a prominent sculpture called the Dream. The 'Dream' a 20m high attracts thousands of visitors to the site each year and has made Sutton Manor a landmark site.

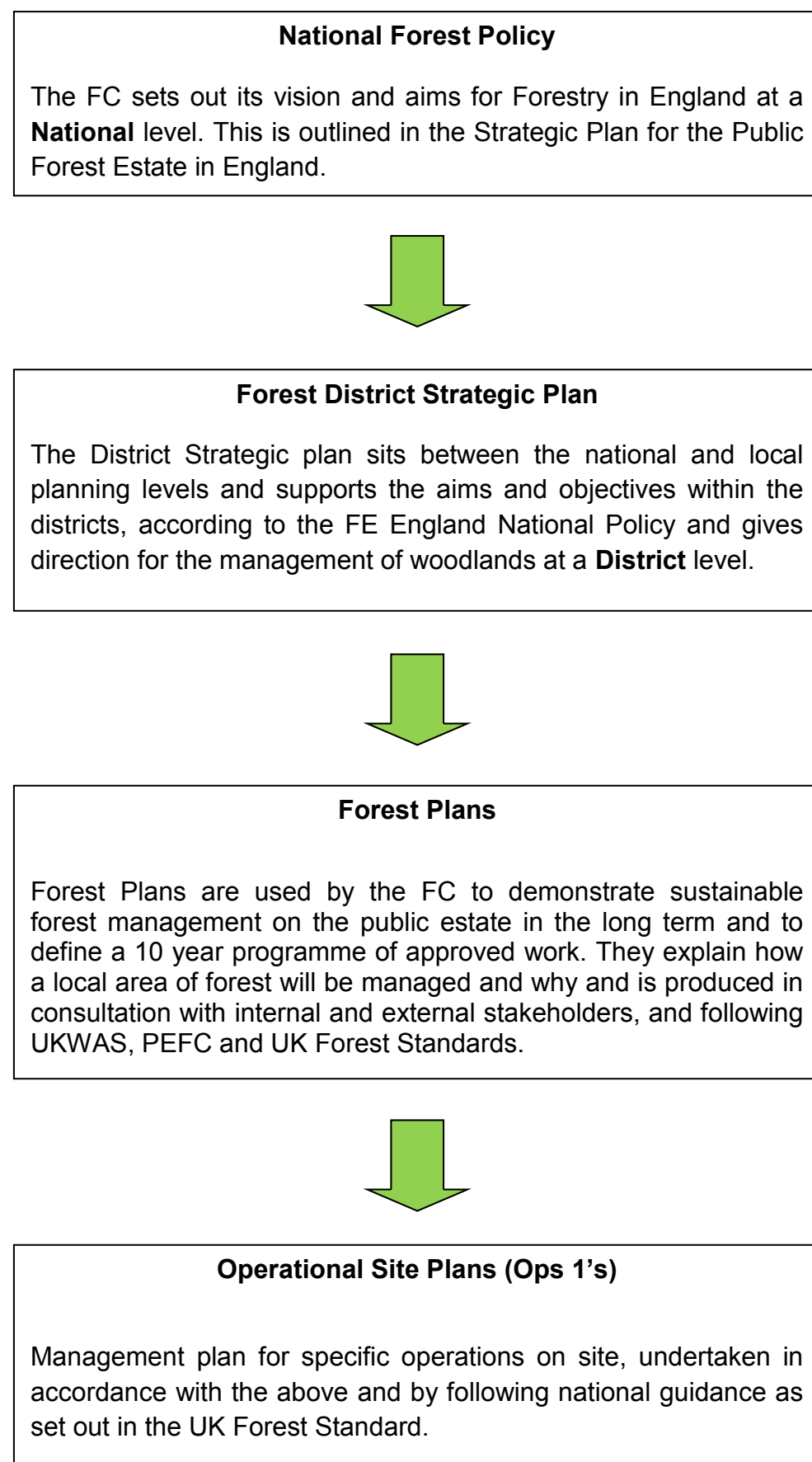


There is a wisdom in our bones,  
in our aching backs and blistered feet.  
We blink the dust from our eyes,  
every time we awake and because we remember we remain

*Poetry written by local schoolchildren working with writer Collette Hughes*

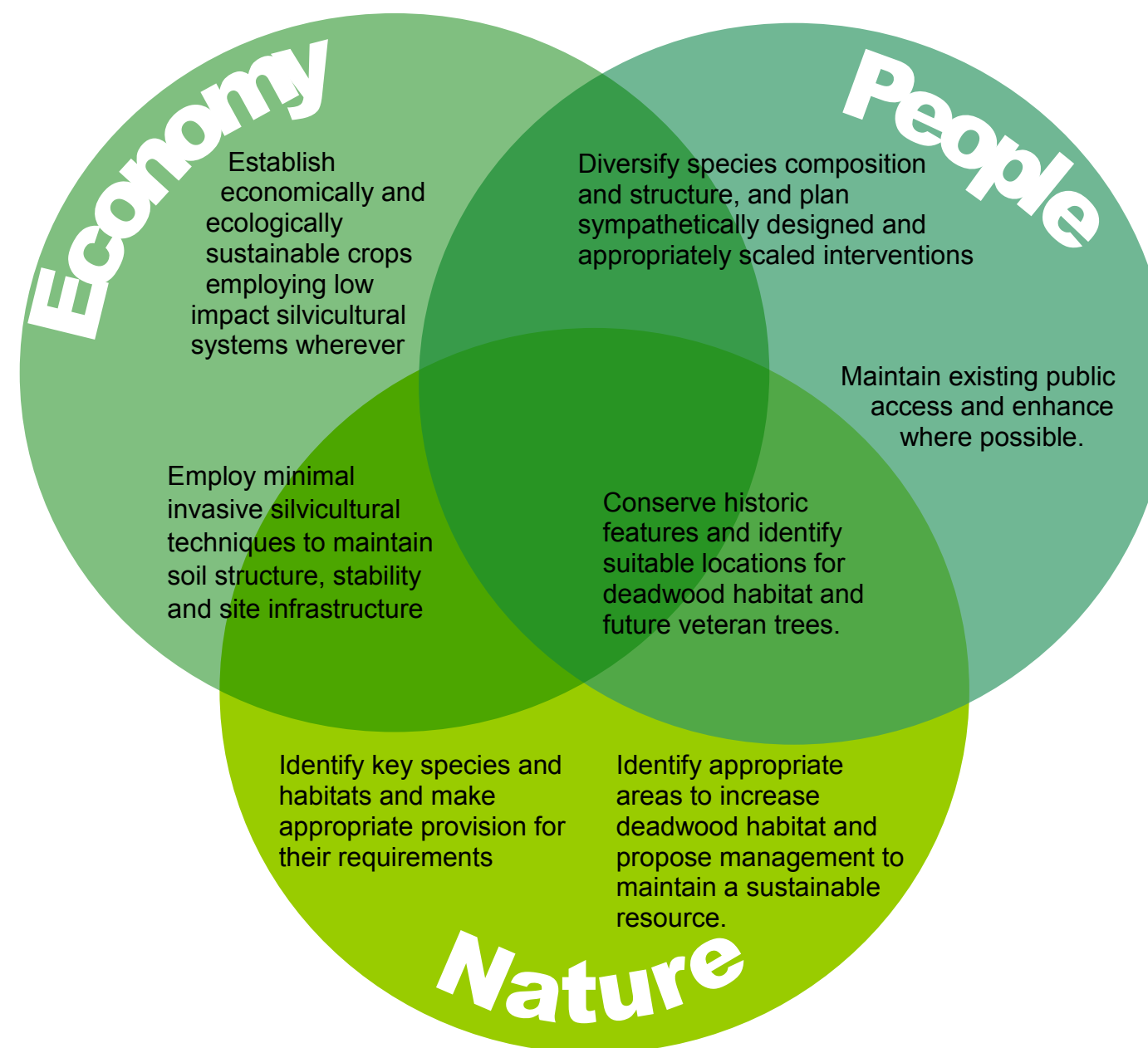
This FP is guided and directed by a number of policies and strategies - the main documents are summarised in Fig.1. Delivering this plan will require the Forestry Commission (FC) to be responsive to shifts in our operating environment and increasingly flexible in our approach, and to sustain this responsiveness over decades to come.

**Fig 1. Forestry Commission England's Planning Strategy**



## 2. Management Objectives

Protecting and Expanding England's Forests and Woodlands and Increasing their Value to Society and the Environment



*NB—Management objectives arise from the Terms of Reference (Appendix I) written at the outset of each plan by the senior district management staff, beat team and planners.*

### 2.1 Woodland Management

The six woodland sites are all very young woodland and have only just become fully established. During the design plan approval period (10years) no major felling operations will take place but all stands will be thinned for the first time. The thinning operations will be

aimed at respacing the dense stands of trees providing room for the remaining trees to mature into. The cutting operations will be carried out at varying intensities based on the species present and to diversify the structure within and between stands.

Some stands are poorly stocked and additional planting will take place to increase the stocking density and allow opportunity to diversify the species mixtures. The introduction of new species will help mitigate against the impact of climate change, pests and diseases and allow mixed broadleaf and conifer stands to develop.

Some additional planting will take place to increase the size of some stands with the key areas being in Sutton Manor and Whiston Wood. Natural regeneration has taken place on many sites and this will be managed to form part of the current rotation and diversify crops and stand structure. Any new planting will try to increase structural diversity, colour and texture by planting a mixture of species in blocks so that they create strong focal points.

## 2.2 Social

All of the woodlands covered by the St Helens FP are managed by the Forestry Commission with the emphasis on creating a safe welcoming environment to be enjoyed by local families and visitors to the area. Each woodland has a network of surfaced paths that provide safe easy access throughout the year and form part of a much wider network of waymarked paths that run through the Bold Forest Park. On site interpretation, seating, artwork and view points have been created and attract a wide range of user groups. Sutton Manor is the key landmark with the 20 meter high 'Dream' sculpture made from English concrete and Spanish dolomite marble. It's white to replicate light and to contrast the darkness of the mine and coal that lies beneath. It's seen by over 200,000 people each day traveling on the M62 and has become a positive symbol for the area.



## 2.3 Economic

Due to the small scale of the woodland and high amenity and landscape value of the sites the scale of forestry operations need careful planning to ensure they can be carried out sustainably. Initially with the crops all being of such a young age there will be limited revenue opportunities from timber sales but as the crops mature and with careful management and planning the woodlands will generate value timber resources long into the future. There is no revenue currently generated from recreation but the Forestry Commission will look for opportunities to work with other organisations and user groups to deliver a wider range of education and recreation services that may in the future generate income and employment in the local area.

## 2.4 Environmental

The new young woodlands have a wide variety of habitats that now support a growing number of species. The mixed broadleaved and conifer woodland provides shelter and nesting sites while the variety of grassland habitats provide feeding and breeding sites. There is a good network of wetland habitats on each site that provides additional niche habitats for the wide range of species associated with aquatic habitats and the distribution of these through the design plan area adds to the woodlands biodiversity.

The design of each woodland provides a nice mosaic of habitats and despite being busy sites attracting many visitors there are still areas left undisturbed for wildlife. The Forestry Commission has provided some artificial nest boxes in the young woodlands as natural nest sites are limited. With the planned forestry operation that will begin over the next 10 years in the existing stands the woodland structure will be diversified further and increase the diversity of habitat available to wildlife. Some timber residues will be left on site to provide valuable deadwood habitat which is so important to invertebrates and the primary link in the food chain which is missing from many new woodland sites.

The varied grass cutting programme will continue leaving some areas to develop in to a mature herbaceous layer while others are maintained as short cut grassland. Some additional small scale tree planting will take place adjacent to the existing woodland areas

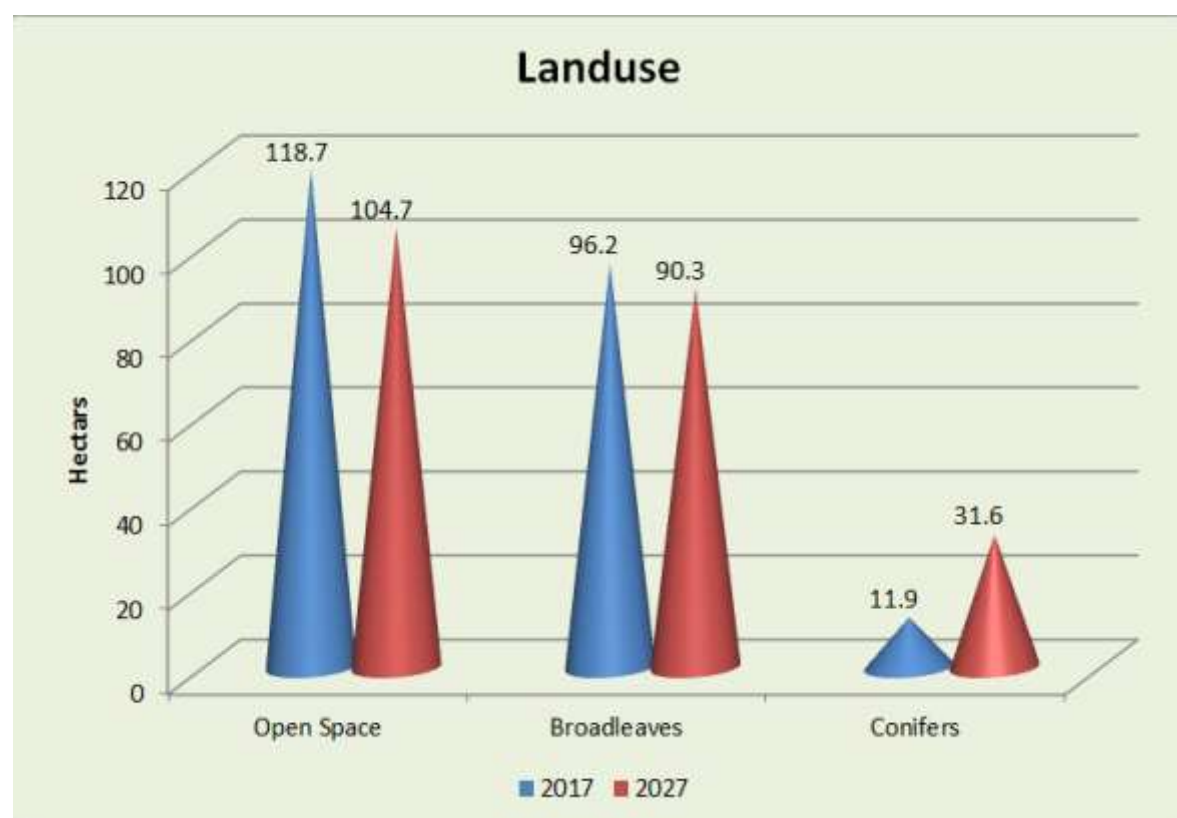


and these will be designed to diversify the species, make the woodlands more resilient to the impacts of climate change, pest and disease and provide additional cover for wildlife.

## 2.5 Proposed Habitat

The new young woodland composition will not change greatly during the plan approval period as no major harvesting will take place. Through the diversification of species, replacement of diseased trees and some new planting the area of woodland cover will increase slightly and open space be reduced. The new planting will comprise largely of evergreen conifers and this will be the only measurable change in the design plan area over the next 10 year period, see figure.2. The woodlands have now become well established and will over the life of the plan begin to develop into mixed stands of varying species, size and structure.

**Figure.2 Current and Future Landuse 2017 to 2027**



The FP's woodlands play a significant role in helping make the Public Forest Estate more accessible to the public due to their close proximity to urban areas, easy access, links to the

Bold Forest Park, on site interpretation, furniture and art. Table 1 shows how the woodlands contribute to the whole of the Central Districts compliance against UKWAS, PEFC and UK Forest Standards. No natural reserves will be designated in this FP due to the small size and urban setting of the woodlands. As the woodlands develop areas will be retained beyond the economic age as long term retentions that will provide Trees of Special Interest (TSI), deadwood habitat and available and a more diverse habitat for wildlife. The future sustainable management proposal will enhance the woodlands in their local landscape setting and provide robust links with neighbouring field boundaries and adjacent woodland cover.

**Table 1.** St Helen's Forest Plan Contribution towards the Central District Commitments to UWAS and UKFS

	Forest Plan Area	Forest Plan Percentage	Forest District Area	Forest District Percentage
Total Area	226.8	100	28,121	0.8
Total Wooded Area	108.1	47.6	23,820	0.4
Open Habitat (>10%)	118.7	52.4	3,492	3.4
Natural Reserves - Plantation (1%)	0	0	171	0
Natural Reserves - Semi Natural (5%)	0	0	342	0
Longterm Retentions & Low Impact Silvicultural Systems (>1%)	108.1	47.6	14,609	0.7
Area of Conservation Value (>15%) including designations, PAWS, AW, ASNW, NR, LTR and LISS	108.1	47.6	15,122	0.7

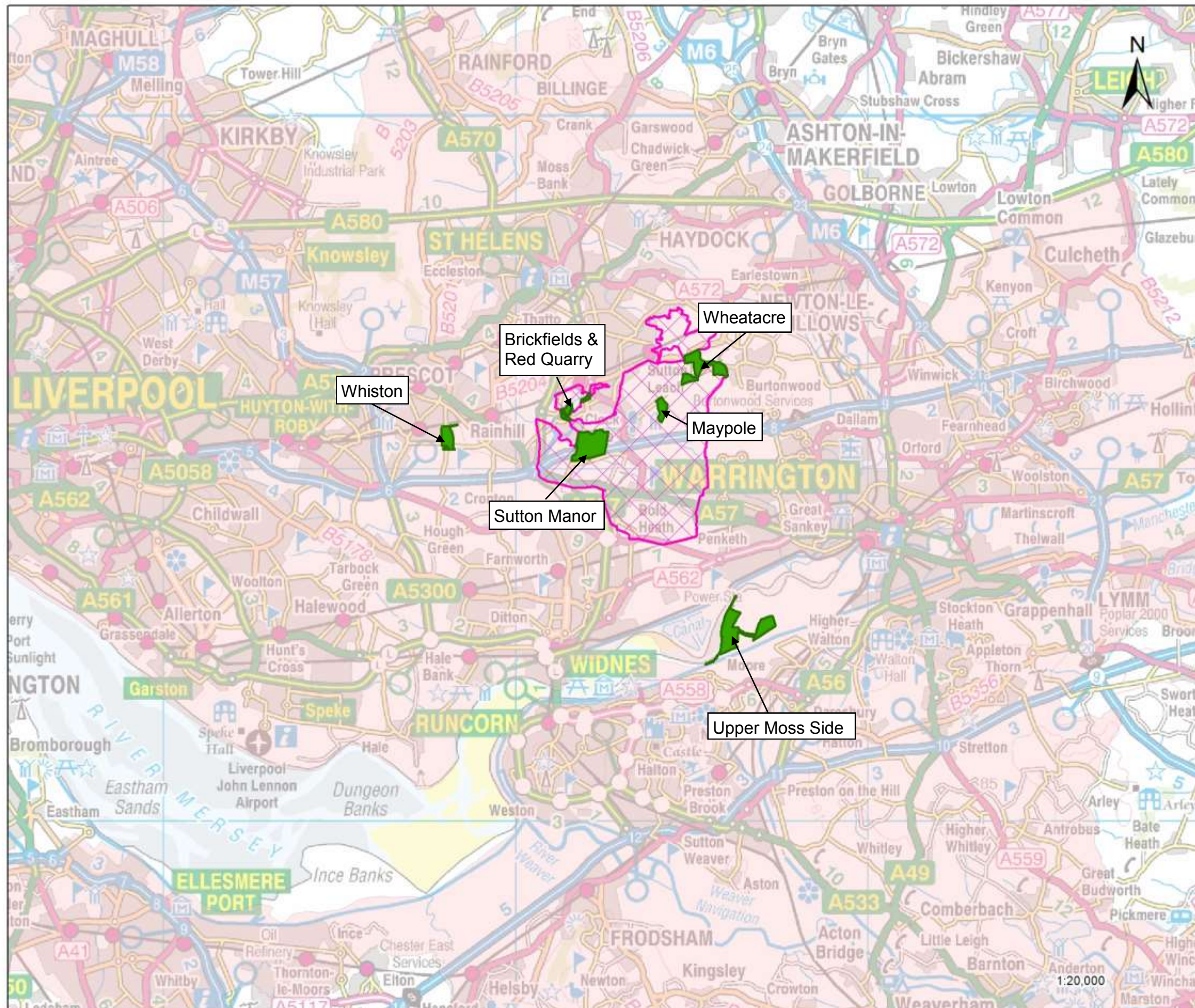


National Strategy	District Strategy	Forest Plan Objective	Monitoring
<b>Economy:</b>  1) Maintain the land within our stewardship under UKWAS certification, 2) Improve the economic resilience of our woods and forests, 3) Encourage and support business activity on and around the Estate.	1) Adapting our management practices to suit the character and requirements of local woodlands whilst satisfying national standards and business requirements. 2) We will use the opportunity presented by additional, unscheduled clear felling as a result of disease control to accelerate the diversification of both conifer and broadleaf species appropriate to each local area and site type, and in some areas trialling species which may not have been previously planted in forest conditions, using a range of silvicultural systems.	1) Establish economically and ecologically sustainable crops employing low impact silvicultural systems wherever possible. Establish an appropriate balance between open space and woodland.	This will be reviewed every 5 years as part of the FP review process and any changes recorded in the sub compartment data base. Once the crops start to produce commercial timber, production forecasts will be run to quantify the resources available and ensure longterm sustainable forest management. Production forecasts will be run annually and data form part of the Central Districts business plan.
<b>Environment, Nature and History:</b>  1) Improve the resilience of the natural environment of the Estate under our Stewardship, 2) Realise the potential of the Public Forest Estate for nature and wildlife, 3) Maintain and improve the cultural and heritage value of the Estate.	1) Adapting more sensitive timber harvesting arrangements and adopting recent FC guidance on forest operations to reduce the impact of forest operations on soils and ground vegetation on sensitive sites. 2) Contributing to and undertaking control programmes to limit the impact of deer and other species on woodland habitats in order to reduce the adverse impacts of grazing and disturbance to native habitats and their flora and Fauna 3) Where possible, work with interested parties to explore ways to maintain or improve features of cultural or heritage value to the local community.	1) Employ minimal invasive silvicultural techniques to maintain soil structure, stability and site infrastructure. 2) Identify existing locations of TSIs and demonstrate appropriate management to recruit future veteran trees. 3) Identify appropriate areas to increase deadwood habitat and propose management to maintain a sustainable resource. 4) Identify key species and habitats and make appropriate provision for their requirements. Demonstrate appropriate management to enhance and maintain the ecological value of the non-designated priority habitats.	1) Silvicultural systems are shown in the forest plan and will be reviewed prior to any operations taking place and maintain soil stability. 2) Character trees (TSI) and deadwood habitats will be identified and recorded on the conservation layer of ensure they are retained in perpetuity. 3) Grassland and wetland habitats will be managed sympathetically through a varied cutting programme to create a diverse habitat that provides a wide variety of secondary woodland habitats for the local fauna. The above will be monitored by the beat team and recorded in the operational plans with any major changes being recorded at the 5year design plan review.
<b>People:</b>  1) Encourage communities to become involved in the Estate, its management and direction, 2) Provide high quality woodland-based recreational opportunities for people and business, 3) Enable everyone, everywhere to connect with the nations' trees and forests so that they understand their importance and act positively to safeguard forests for the future.	1) Provide safe and accessible woodlands. 2) Offering opportunities for quiet recreation and adventurous activities, to enable people to experience the potential health and wellbeing benefits. 3) Developing partnership with private businesses and public bodies to expand and improve recreational opportunities across the estate. 4) Creating a wide variety of opportunities for schools, groups, families and individuals to engage with and learn about trees and forests in accordance with the National and District Strategies. 5) Encouraging third party environmental educators and other partners to offer learning opportunities on the public forest estate	Diversify species composition and structure, and plan sympathetically designed and appropriately scaled interventions to improve and maintain the visual integration of the forest into the wider landscape. Maintain existing public access and enhance where possible.	As part of the design plan review process the visual impact of harvesting operations on landscape will be made and the viewpoints and vistas assessed to ensure their design is still appropriate. Any changes will be recorded in the revised plan. Public access and facilities will be monitored and maintained by the beat team on a regular basis throughout the year.

**3. Consultees**


<i>The consultation undertaken in the preparation of this plan has been wide ranging and extensive. Full documentation including letters, notes of conversations etc. are held at our District Offices.</i>				
Consultee	Date Contacted	Date Response Received	Issues Raised	Forest District Response to Issues
Member of the public—regular site user	Via website	5/2/17	Concerned over the intention to manage for commercial crops and large scale felling. Wants to see more veteran tree, concerned over intensive grass cutting patterns, want to see more native trees planted as apposed to conifers.	The only clearfells will be small scale around the Dream all other areas will be managed as continuous cover forestry. To ensure these woodlands are free to access and provide easy access for all is very expensive so its essential that timber residues are fully utilised to ensure the woodlands can be managed sustainably today and into the future. The woodlands will be allowed to develop into mature high forest which will create a more ecologically rich environment that we hope will support a wide variety of species. Comments regarding grass cutting will be passed to the local authority and beat forester how manage the annual mowing programme.
Member of the public—regular site user	Via website	19/2/17	Dense woodlands need managing, fire damage, anti social behaviour and litter, concerns over forestry operations and their impact on birds	The FC will ensure that the timing and scale of planned operations will minimise the impact on the local wildlife and in subsequent years provide the greatest benefit. Our vision for these woodlands is for them to develop over time into mature high forest with a good range of age class, structural diversity and understory. The FC will work with the local authority who deals with litter to try and address where possible the antisocial behaviour and its impact on the woodlands.
As part of the local consultation 15 stakeholders were contacted, notices placed on site, copies of the plan placed In St Helens and Chester Lane libraries and on the FC website. Comments received and the Forestry Commission's responses will be recorded above.				





**Central Forest District**

**Location Map**

 Forestry Commission Woodlands

 Bold Forest Park

 The Mersey Forest

  
**Forestry Commission**  
England

1:100,000

Scale at A3



Forestry Commission  
woodlands in Great  
Britain are certified to  
FSC standards



PEFC  
Certified  
Forest Management

© Crown copyright and database right 2017 Ordnance Survey 10001242  
Declaration by FC as an Operator: All timber arising from the Forest  
Enterprise estate represents a negligible risk under EU Timber Regulation.

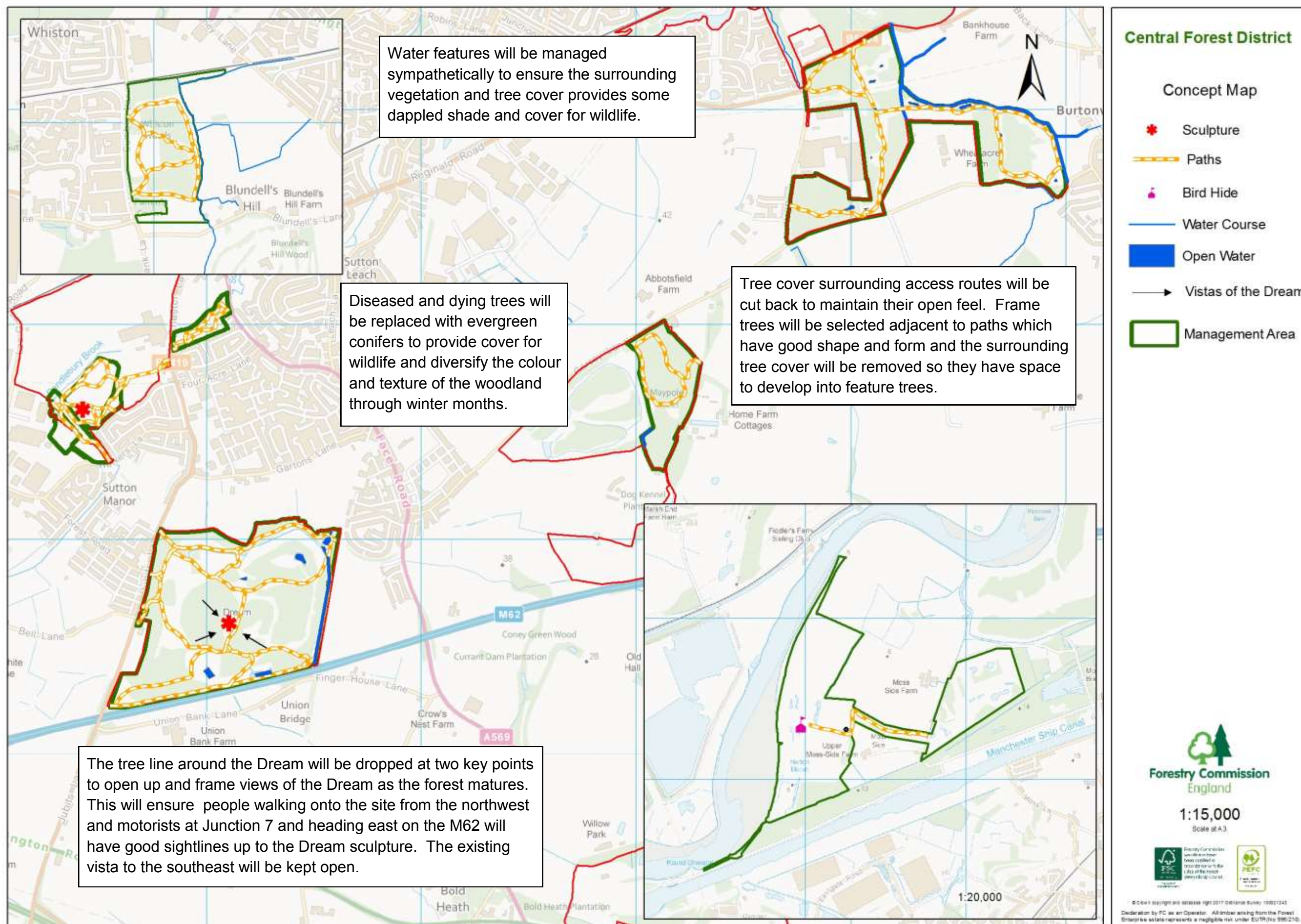




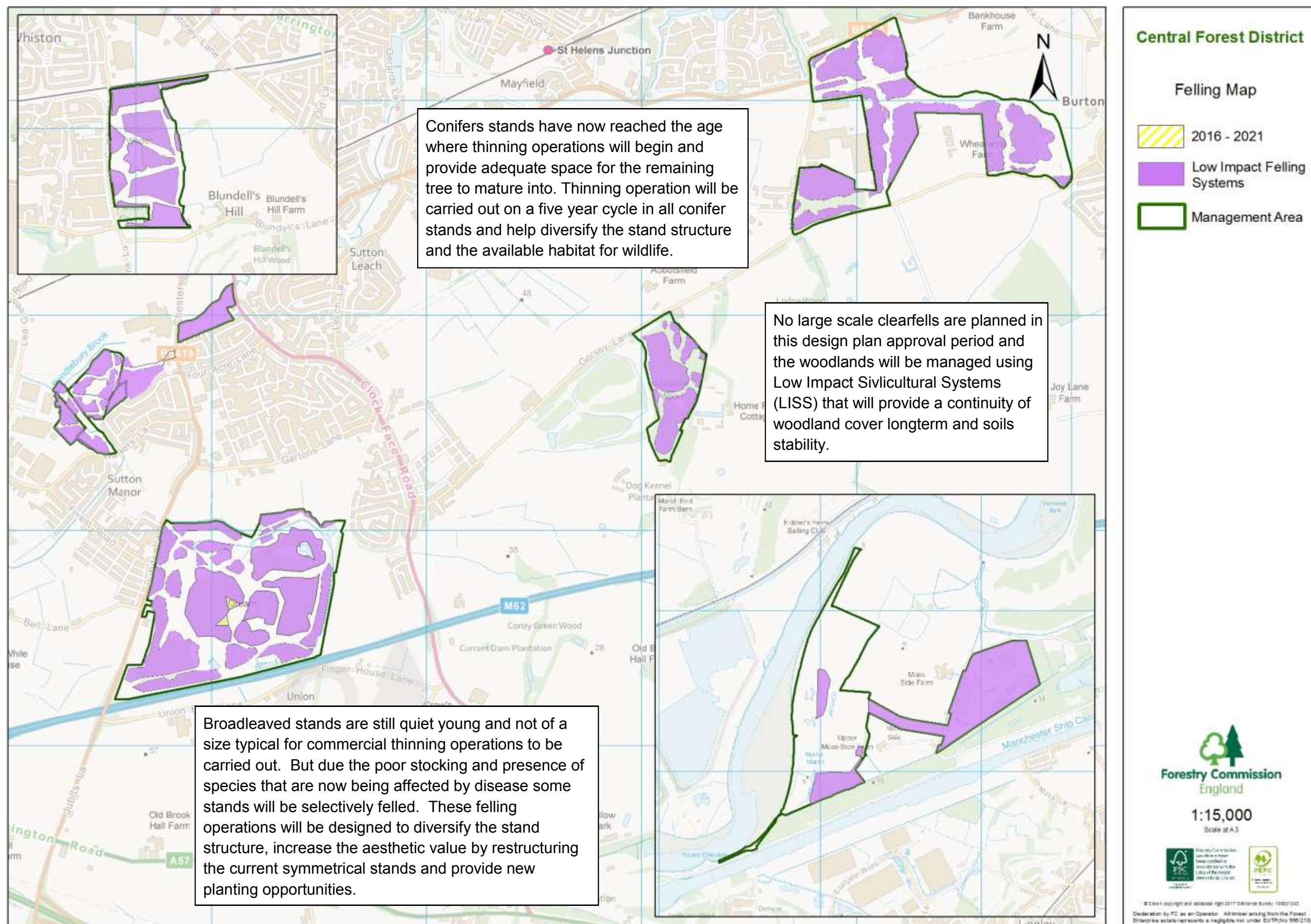




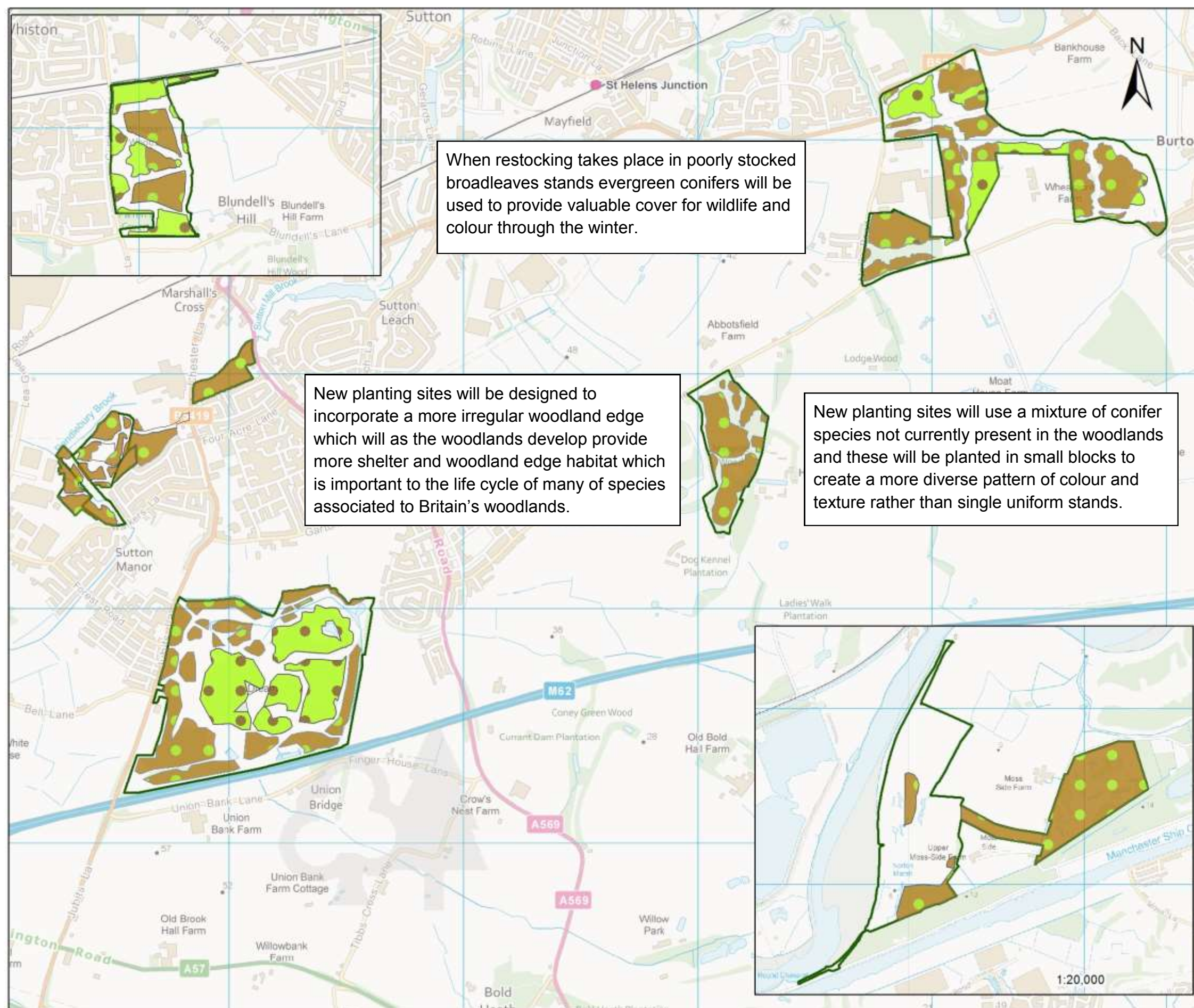












### Central Forest District

#### Proposed Landuse

-  Conifers with some broadleaves
-  Broadleaves with some conifers
-  Management Area



1:15,000  
Scale at A3



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Declaration by FC as an Operator: All timber arising from the Forest Enterprise estate represents a negligible risk under EU TR 95/240



## Appendix I

### Terms of Reference for St Helens Forest Plan

	Important Themes	Particular Issues to be addressed
<b>Economy</b>	Timber Production	Establish economically and ecologically sustainable crops employing low impact silvicultural systems wherever possible. Establish an appropriate balance between open space and woodland.
<b>Environment</b>	Soil conservation	Employ minimal invasive silvicultural techniques to maintain soil structure, stability and site infrastructure
	Trees of Special Interest and Deadwood	Identify existing locations of TSIs and demonstrate appropriate management to both maintain the current resource and to recruit future veteran replacements. Identify appropriate areas to increase deadwood habitat and propose management to maintain a sustainable resource.
	Species and habitats	Identify key species and sites and make appropriate provision for their requirements. Demonstrate appropriate management to enhance and maintain the ecological value of the non-designated priority habitats.
<b>People</b>	Landscape	Diversify species composition and structure, and plan sympathetically designed and appropriately scaled interventions to improve and maintain the visual integration of the forest into the wider landscape.
	Informal Public Access	Maintain existing public access and enhance where possible.

## Appendix II

### Glossary

#### Biological Diversity

The richness and variety of wildlife and habitats.

#### Canopy

The mass of foliage and branches formed collectively by the crowns of trees.

#### Clearfell System

The removal of all trees in one operation >0.5ha.

#### Coupes

Areas of forest that have been or will be managed together.

#### Ecosystems

An ecosystem includes all of the living things (plants, animals and organisms) in a given area, interacting with each other, and also with their non-living environments (weather, earth, sun, soil, climate).

#### England Forestry Strategy (now England's Trees Woodlands and Forests)

Describes how the Government will deliver its forestry policies in England and sets out the Government's priorities for the next five to ten years.

#### Forestry and Water guidelines 5<sup>th</sup> edition 2011

Forests and Water is one of a series of seven guidelines that support the United Kingdom Forestry Standard (UKFS). The UKFS and guidelines outline the context for forestry in the UK, set out the approach of the UK government to sustainable forest management, define standards and requirements, and provide a basis for regulation and monitoring including national and international reporting.

#### Forestry Commission Guidelines

Outline the principles and standards of good management practices in forests and woodlands for landowners, land managers and their advisors.

#### Forest Plan (FP)

An approved plan that outlines felling operation over a 10 year period, outlining proposals over the next 50 years. The FP's are reviewed every 5 years and redrawn and approved every 10 years.

#### Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

An internationally recognised body made up of non-government organisations promoting sustainable forest management to the forest industry and consumers.

#### Historic Environment

These are the physical remains of every period of human development from 450,000 years ago and include earthworks, buried remains, structures and buildings.



**Landscape Character**

England is renowned for its rich, diverse and beautiful landscapes which have their own distinct local character. These have been shaped over many thousands of years by natural influences such as soil and landform and by generations of human activity.

**Long Term Retention**

Trees that are being retained beyond their normal economic / commercial age.

**Low Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS)**

Describes a number of felling systems (shelterwood, group felling, selection systems) which avoid large scale felling coupes and the forest canopy is maintained at one or more levels.

**Natural Character Areas (NCAs)**

England is divided into 159 distinct natural areas. Each is defined by a unique combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and cultural and economic activity.

**Natural regeneration**

The growth of trees from seed found in the soil or cast from adjacent trees and shrubs.

**Operational Plans (Ops1)**

Detailed site plans that are prepared in advance of all major forest operations and identify site constraints, opportunities and areas requiring special treatment or protection.

**Origin**

The geographic locality within the natural range of a species where the parent seed source or its wild ancestors grew.

**Provenance**

The geographic locality of a stand of trees from where the seed was collected.

**Public Rights of Way (PROW)**

Access routes open to the public through legal designation.

**Restocking**

The re-establishment of trees where felling has taken place. Restocking may be achieved through natural regeneration but as a term, it is more usually associated with replanting.

**Ride**

Forestry term for unsurfaced roads, paths and tracks within a woodland.

**Scheduled Monuments**

Nationally important archaeological sites which are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979.

**Secondary Woodland**

Woodlands that have been established on land that was formally used as pasture, meadows, arable, quarries etc and has not continually been wooded

**Selective Felling**

Where individual trees of varying sizes are selected and removed from a stand. The whole stand is worked and its aim is to maintain full stocking of all tree sizes and ages, from seedlings to mature trees, in any one area.

**Silvicultural Systems**

Techniques of managing a forest through a variety of cutting / felling patterns and time scale.

**Sub-compartments**

Areas of forest comprising a more or less homogeneous crop in terms of age, species composition and condition. Their boundaries may change as the forest develops after felling and restocking.

**Strategic Plan**

Serves as a guide to the management of woodlands within Central England Forest District. It divides the district into zones for the purpose of management and ensures that forestry activities reflect the local ecological, social and cultural individuality of woodland. Strategic objectives for each zone are presented within the context of the Government's strategic priorities for forestry in England (e.g. forestry for rural development; forestry for economic regeneration; forestry for recreation, access and tourism and forestry for the environment and conservation).

**Thinning**

The removal of a proportion of the trees in a sub-compartment to improve the quality of the remaining trees, accelerate individual tree growth and provide income.

**UK Forestry Standard (UKFS)**

Outlines the Government's criteria and standards for the sustainable management of forests in the UK.

**UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS)**

A voluntary scheme for the independent assessment of forest management in the UK. The Scheme has been developed by a partnership of forestry and environmental organisations in response to the growing consumer demand for timber products from sustainably managed forests. It has been designed to ensure that it reflects the requirements of both the Government's UK Forestry Standard - and through this the guidelines adopted by European Forestry Ministers at Helsinki in 1993 - and the Forest Stewardship Council's (FSC's) GB Standard.

**Trees of special interest (TSI)**

A tree that is of interest biologically, aesthetically or culturally because of its age, or a tree that is in the ancient stage of its life, or a tree that is old relative to others of the same species.

**Yield Class**

Yield class is a measure of the growth rate of a tree crop and is the maximum average rate of volume increment (increase) that a particular crop can achieve. For example, a crop capable of a maximum annual increment of 14 m<sup>3</sup> per hectare has a yield class of 14.