

Witley Forest Plan

South England Forest District

Woodlands Included Within This Forest Plan

Blackhangar

Boundless Copse

Frillinghurst Wood

Halnacker

Holmens Grove

Hurthill Copse

Pond Copse

Stroud Wood

Date of Commencement of Plan: **2018**
Approval Period: **2018 to 2028 (10 Years)**

Summary of Activity within Approval Period:

A separate felling license provides approval for standard silvicultural thinning across the South Forest District estate as a whole.

Forestry Activity	Area (ha)
Low impact silvicultural system	171.8
Coppice	16.6
Permanent Open Space Management	1.4
Clearfell	22.4
Wet Woodland/Minimum Intervention	10.7
TOTAL MAPPED AREA	222.9

FOREST ENTERPRISE Application for Forest Plan Approvals

Forest District: **South England Forest District**

FC Geographic Block No: **89**

Forest Plan Name: Witley Forest Plan

FE Plan Reference Number: **304/89/18-19**

Nearest town or village: Haslemere

OS Grid Reference: **SU91013564**

Local Authority: Surrey County Council - Waverley District Council

I apply for Forest Plan approval for the property described above and in the enclosed Forest Plan.
I undertake to obtain any permissions necessary for the implementation of the approved Plan.

Signed:

Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor, South England FD

Date:

Approved:

Forest Services Area Director

Date:

Introduction

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Forest Planning

Forest Plans define the long term vision for a woodland or a collection of woodlands, usually looking 50 to 100 years ahead. It sets objectives and illustrates how management will move towards achieving this vision over the initial 10 to 30 years.

This plan represents the first major review of the Witley Forest Plan that was originally consulted upon and approved in 1999. The revised Forest Plan has been prepared following a review of the original plan undertaken by the Forestry Commission staff, and in consultation with stakeholders. It has incorporated developments in policy and local initiatives that have occurred in the intervening years.

Consultation and Approval Process

At key points throughout the Forest planning process, we seek the views of external stakeholders, including local communities and organisations involved with nature conservation, public recreation and the timber industry. Through this consultation process we can ensure that an appropriate balance of objectives is achieved. Details of the consultation strategy for this forest plan can be found in Appendix B.

Approval of the Forest Plan is granted by the regulatory arm of the forestry commission, known as Forest Services. This regulatory approval is usually valid for 10 years and grants a 10 year felling licence.

The approved plan will be reviewed at year 5 to ensure proposals are still relevant, suitable and in line with current policy and guidance. This will also be

Objectives for the Witley Forest Blocks

- Maintain and increase the native composition of ancient semi-natural woodland.
- Initiate restoration of planted ancient woodland sites to native and honorary native woodland.
- Take opportunities to increase the nature conservation value of existing habitats
- Provide, maintain and enhance where appropriate the recreational environments of the woodland.
- Maintain and increase the species and age diversity of the woodland.
- Control invasive plant species and reduce their impact across the sites.
- Provide a regular supply of quality timber to support local employment and local timber processing industries.

Location

The Witley Forest Blocks lie approximately 3km north east of the village of Haslemere in the county of Surrey.

Landscape

The Witley blocks cover an area of 221.6 hectares and are an important part of the surrounding landscape which occurs as a mosaic of woodland, agricultural fields, horse pasture and wooded heaths. The blocks are positioned over the Greensand Hills in the West and Low Weald to the East giving rise to a varied topography. The Forestry Commission managed blocks sitting within this intimate landscape are well connected to adjoining private woodlands & hedgerows (which in effect form an extension of the woodland environment) providing an important contribution to ecological connectivity in this part of South West Surrey. The Witley blocks occur at the Western edge of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The London to Portsmouth railway line bisects the complex running North-South through the landscape.

Rainfall is low with average annual figures between 750 and 850mm per annum. Altitude ranges from 75 to 215 metres above sea level and there are localised steep slopes and valleys.

The forest falls within South England Forest District and is managed by Forest Enterprise, an agency of the Forestry Commission.

Tenure

The Forestry Commission is the freehold owner of all the woodlands.

Current Woodland Structure

The range of soils is very much reflected in the diversity of the existing tree species and there is a significant broadleaf component throughout the blocks including Birch, Oak, Sweet Chestnut, Ash and other mixed broadleaves.

Conifer species present include Corsican Pine, Norway Spruce, Western Hemlock, and Douglas Fir.

The recorded age class of canopy trees range from 50 plus years to new plantings less than 10 years of age. The data shows that approximately 48% of the blocks are made up of 30 and 50 year old trees. However a large proportion of the trees are missing their planting year (12%) so it is not possible to give an accurate portrayal of the age makeup of the blocks. Storms during 1987 and 1990 make account for this as significant parts of the area was windblown and was either planted or allowed to regenerate naturally. There are no over mature stands, however there are small groups of isolated broadleaf's which date back to the last century. These are largely concentrated along boundary banks, and add considerable character to the woodland.

The introduction of continuous cover management systems aims to develop a much more varied age structure and more resilient woodlands in the long term. Across areas with lighter canopy cover, some significant natural regeneration of multiple species already occurs although this is mixed throughout the blocks. Depending on specific stands, supplemental planting may be used.

179.4 ha of the woodland is classified as Ancient Woodland which is 80.4 % of the total area, this in turn heavily influences the direction of future management. This can be broken down further to include,

- Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland which comprises a total of 4.4 hectares and makes up 1.9 % of the blocks.
- Plantation on Ancient woodland which comprises a total of 176.4 hectares and makes up 79.1% of the blocks.

Silvicultural Systems

The forest plan favours the use of continuous cover forestry systems. This 'close to nature' approach has been deemed appropriate because of the presence of significant semi natural woodland across the forest blocks and the freely regenerating nature of the understory. Management will look to transform, where appropriate, even aged plantations to an irregular forest structure over the long term. These lower impact systems aim to provide a balance of objectives: a sustainable timber resource as well as safeguarding important habitats and improving the **woodland's** resilience into the future. For more specific prescriptions please see the felling table and habitat restoration maps.

Open Space

Open space is an important feature of a forested environment and this plan revision aims to provide a minimum of 10% in the woodlands at any one time. Due to the nature of the harvesting operations, this will be primarily (though not exclusively) rotational in nature and consisting in many cases of areas between 0.25—2ha in size depending on targeted species to regenerate. In addition to this, large areas of the woodlands will have permanent areas created through a managed ride and road network. Specific prescriptions will be determined at the operational stage of management and could include a scalloped and graded structure providing pinch points, box junctions, forest glades etc. for a variety of key flora and fauna. These will also serve to improve the connectivity throughout the forest blocks. Sizeable pockets of permanent open **habitat in Holmen's Grove and Stroud Wood connected** to the aforementioned ride and road side margins will support a meadow type vegetation with a fringing and scattered scrub component.

Veteran Trees and Deadwood

Veteran trees are special components of a forested environment. The United Kingdom Forestry Standard (UKFS) classifies a veteran tree as a tree of considerable age that is of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of its age, size or condition, including the presence of deadwood micro-habitats. Management interventions will aim to retain a proportion of existing standing veteran trees where appropriate and efforts will be made to select potential candidates to eventually take their place when they collapse. A special consideration will be given to areas of high ecological value where a sensible number of standing and fallen deadwood would be left to help create linkages where appropriate.

The use of continuous cover silvicultural systems further advocates the retention of a proportion of trees beyond the rotation length and specific prescriptions in the felling table imply an interconnecting area of old growth woodland creation. The presence of a wide range of woodland bat species, fungi and lichens associated with older woodland and stag beetle in this landscape reinforces the importance of a high regard for the veteran tree, dead and decaying wood resource.

Biodiversity and Conservation

The Witley blocks are spread across a transition between the Wealden Greensand in the west and Low Weald in the east being positioned amidst an intricate mix of fields, streams and hedgerows. This configuration gives rise to a well-connected landscape which supports a wide range of protected and priority species. These include woodland bats, scrub dependent woodland birds, birds of prey, ground nesting birds, dormice, threatened butterflies & moths, amphibians and reptiles. The local topography, geology and hydrology supports a diverse ground flora including a variety of ancient woodland indicator plants which supports the long-established presence of woodland at this locality.

There are no statutory nature conservation designations within the Witley blocks but the complex occurs in close proximity to internationally and nationally important protected areas. The Witley blocks do however fall within two Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) which form part of a countywide network of **priority areas for ecological restoration. Holmen's Grove, Stroud Wood, Frillinghurst and Halnaker** form part of the Low Weald BOA and Blackhanger, Boundless Copse and Hurthill fall within the Devils Punch Bowl and Hindhead Heaths BOA. **'Habitats of Principal Importance for Conservation' in this area include heathland, acid grassland, mixed deciduous woodland**, meadows, ponds and wet woodland. Working at a landscape scale the forest plan will help contribute to conserving and enhancing biodiversity through sympathetic management of existing priority habitats within the BOA network with associated benefits for priority species. Identified priority species (of relevance to the Witley blocks) to be targeted for action within the respective BOAs include Adder, Lesser **spotted woodpecker, Marsh tit, Nightjar, Woodlark, Grayling, Wood white, Bechstein's bat, Polecat and White-clawed** crayfish. In addition much of the complex has been selected as a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) owing to its County level importance for wildlife.

During this plan period, forest management aims to maintain and increase the native composition of the woodlands and initiate the restoration of Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) by reducing the non-native components using low-impact silvicultural systems. Some blocks have impeded drainage due to the underlying clay soils and this gives rise to wet woodland and its characteristic ground flora. There are also a number of streams running through the area, some of which are shaded by both broadleaf and conifer species. Forest Operations will seek to restore and where feasible expand wet woodland and enhance stream corridors by maintaining a variety of conditions from minimum intervention through to wet scrub and temporary open space.

The Witley complex supports a significant amount of coppice dominated by Sweet chestnut. This resource will be managed under an appropriate rotation and to the benefit of a diverse wildlife assemblage including scrub dependent woodland birds, woodland bats, dormice and warmth loving invertebrates all benefiting from the different stages of coppice regeneration. The locally extensive areas of scrub spread across the complex provide similar benefits to the wildlife species associated with maturing coppice and operational planning prior to an intervention will aim to identify opportunities to conserve and enhance this habitat where appropriate. Heathland vegetation occurs on the more acidic sandy soils along road and ride sides and within open spaces. During harvesting interventions opportunities will be taken to maintain and enhance this local but important feature where appropriate.

The Witley blocks comprise a functional outlier of Chiddingfold Forest located a few kilometres to the east. Chiddingfold Forest and the easternmost woods of the Witley Blocks (**Stroud Wood, Holmen's Grove and Frillinghurst**) **form part of a focal landscape for lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) as identified** by Butterfly Conservation. The Wood white butterfly (*Leptidea sinapis*) is a priority butterfly species in this focal landscape. During management interventions opportunities will be sought to improve habitat for this and other priority lepidoptera species, mainly via the enhancement and maintenance of open space alongside the ride and road network.

People

A network of countryside Rights of Way run through the blocks as well as a range of informal footpaths. Future forest management will be planned to minimise disruption to these routes. Recreation is evidenced by local walkers, horse-riding and mountain biking which is popular throughout the area.

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 widening rides.

Historic Environment

In the woodlands historic features include, brick kilns, clay pits, a pond bay and leat as well as a WWII aircraft crash site. These are all currently unscheduled. As with all FC sites continued monitoring will take place to ensure that anything relevant found in the future is recorded and fed into operational planning in line with statutory responsibilities and best practice guidelines.

Soils

The forest lies across transitional soil types with typical higher podzols at higher elevations to the east. The two soil types mix to create a rich and diverse ground flora ranging from dry heathland species, on the greensands, to ancient and wet woodland plant associations on the Weald Clays.

Water

Water is an important feature in a forested environment. All forest management operations follow the guidance set out in the UKFS regarding good practice when working with water-bodies. These deal with issues such as acidification, sediment delivery and nutrient enrichment. Water bodies are mapped within the forest plan as a reference to inform operational planning. Significant parts of the woodlands are criss-crossed by a network of permanent and seasonal streams together with forest drains and a scattering of important wildlife ponds.

Tree Diseases and Pests

The main diseases of concern currently are Dothistroma Needle Blight (*Dothistroma septosporum*) on Corsican Pine (*Pinus Nigra*), Phytophthora ramorum (*Larix* species) and *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (Ash Dieback). Corsican Pine is a significant component and larch is present. However by actively managing the woodland and increasing the species diversity the threats posed by pests & pathogens can be mitigated against.

R. ponticum (Rhododendron) , *Impatiens glandulifera* (Himalayan balsam) and *Bambusoideae* (Bamboo) are present in the landscape and continued monitoring does take place to ensure that species posing a threat to native flora do not become established.

Guidance and action plans regarding plant health are constantly evolving to adapt to plant health threats. The sudden emergence of a disease can result in the need to fell a coupe earlier than planned or alter restocking plans. We will continue to monitor for disease as required and take appropriate action. Any changes to the forest design plan will be notified or agreed with Forest Services in accordance with the relevant guidance.

Deer species found in the woodlands will be managed in accordance with the South England Forest District Deer Management Strategy and in the wider landscape through partnership work with relevant agencies such as the Deer Initiative.

Climate Change

Climate change represents one of the greatest long-term challenges facing the world today. Conventional forest management systems have developed in a climate that has undergone fluctuations but remained relatively stable since the end of the last ice age (around 10,000 years ago). However, the average global temperature is now rising and there is evidence that rainfall patterns are changing. There is also likely to be an increase in the incidence of extreme weather and the frequency and severity of summer drought.

This is likely to represent the greatest threat to woodlands from climate change in the UK over the coming decades. UK forest management needs to respond to these threats in two principal ways: through mitigation, ensuring management is sustainable and adaptation. This includes species and age diversification as well as an increase in management intensity.

Wildfire Resilience

Reducing the incidence and impact of wildfires in forests and woodlands through good management planning is important for sustainable forest management and to protect the provision of forest ecosystem goods and services.

This plan will aim to build on the wildfire resilience already present in the woodland by acting on the following points

- Managing the vegetation to maintain a network of fire breaks, reducing fuel across an entire site especially along roads and rides.
- A wide of use of continuous cover forestry to create a diverse woodland structure.
- Where appropriate fragment high risk species and habitats into smaller areas to reduce the risk of fire spread.
- Restore, maintain, enhance and increase broadleaved native woodland particularly around high risk areas.
- When restocking sites use appropriate species relative to the forests wildfire risk.

These management principles will be implemented during the operational stage of planning and are intended as a guide only.

A site specific wildfire risk assessment for all the woodlands can be found in the appendices and should be should used in conjunction with a wildfire management plan.

Forest Plan Maps

When consulting on the maps, please refer to the glossary for further detail about the prescriptions.

Aerial

Shows the location of the woodlands in the wider landscape using aerial photography.

Indicative Age Diversity

Shows the planting year and age of the trees in the woodland.

Species Diversity

Gives an indicative illustration of the number of species within the woodlands (includes open space). However it should be noted that the data only accounts for trees in the canopy and should only be taken as a general overview of the number of different species present within a sub-compartment.

Ancient Woodland

Shows which areas are categorised as ancient woodland. In the United Kingdom, an ancient woodland is a woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (or 1750 in Scotland). Before those dates, planting of new woodland was uncommon, so a wood present in 1600 was likely to have developed naturally.

Current Structure

An overview of the current habitat types existing in the woodlands.

Medium Term Vision

Illustrates the proposed medium term structure of the woodlands and other habitats consistent with the Forest Plan objectives. While there is no fixed time scale for the habitat transformations depicted, an indicative term of around 20 years is assumed.

Long Term Vision

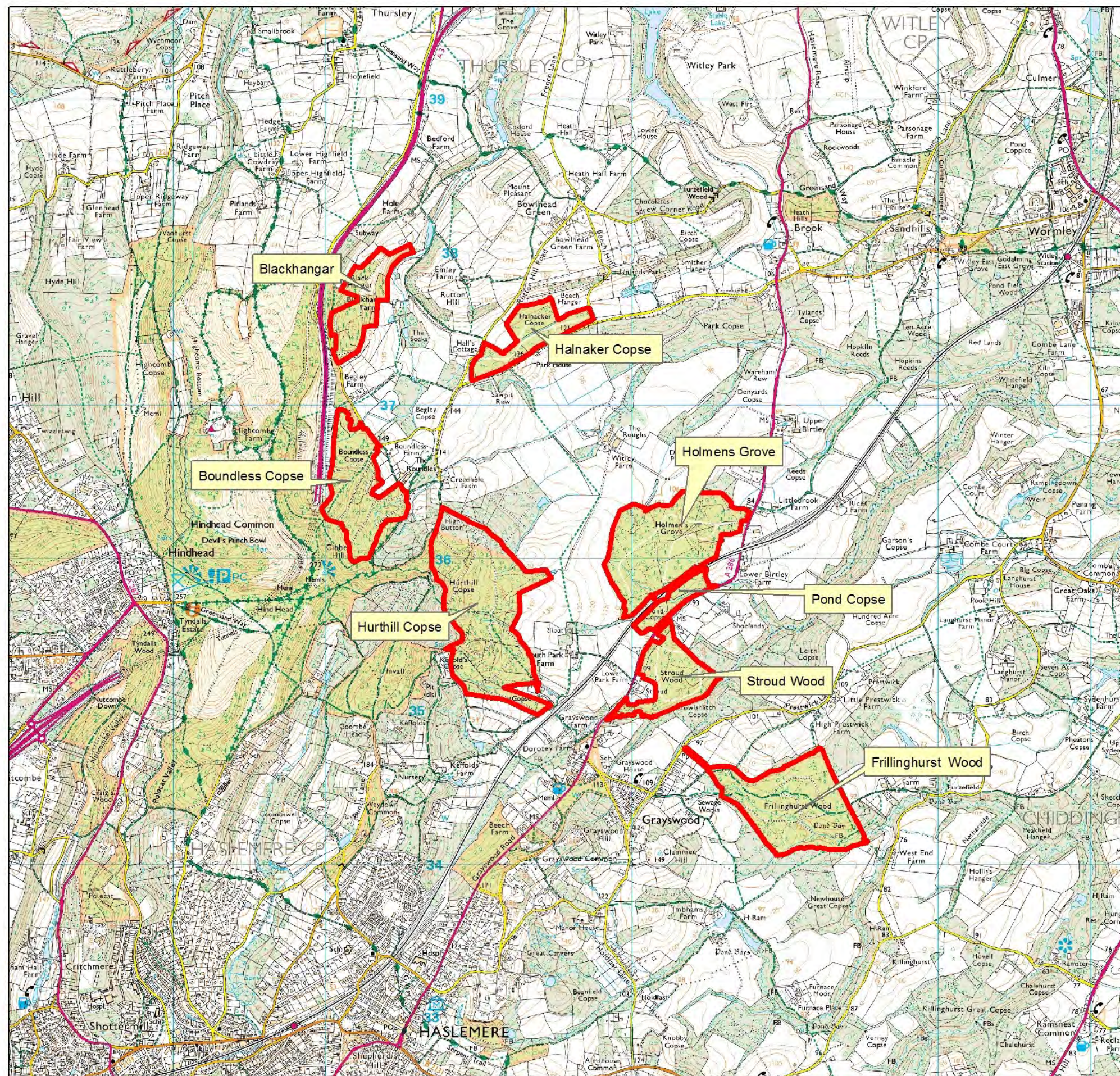
Illustrates the proposed long term structure of the woodlands and other habitats consistent with the Forest Plan objectives. While there is no fixed time scale for the habitat transformations depicted, an indicative term of around 100 years is assumed.

Habitat Restoration and Felling

Shows the management proposals in the shorter term, 10 to 30 years. These proposals are the initial stepping stones towards achieving the long term vision.

Fire Risk Map

Shows the current fire ratings for the woodlands as well as the existing fire break network and water sources.



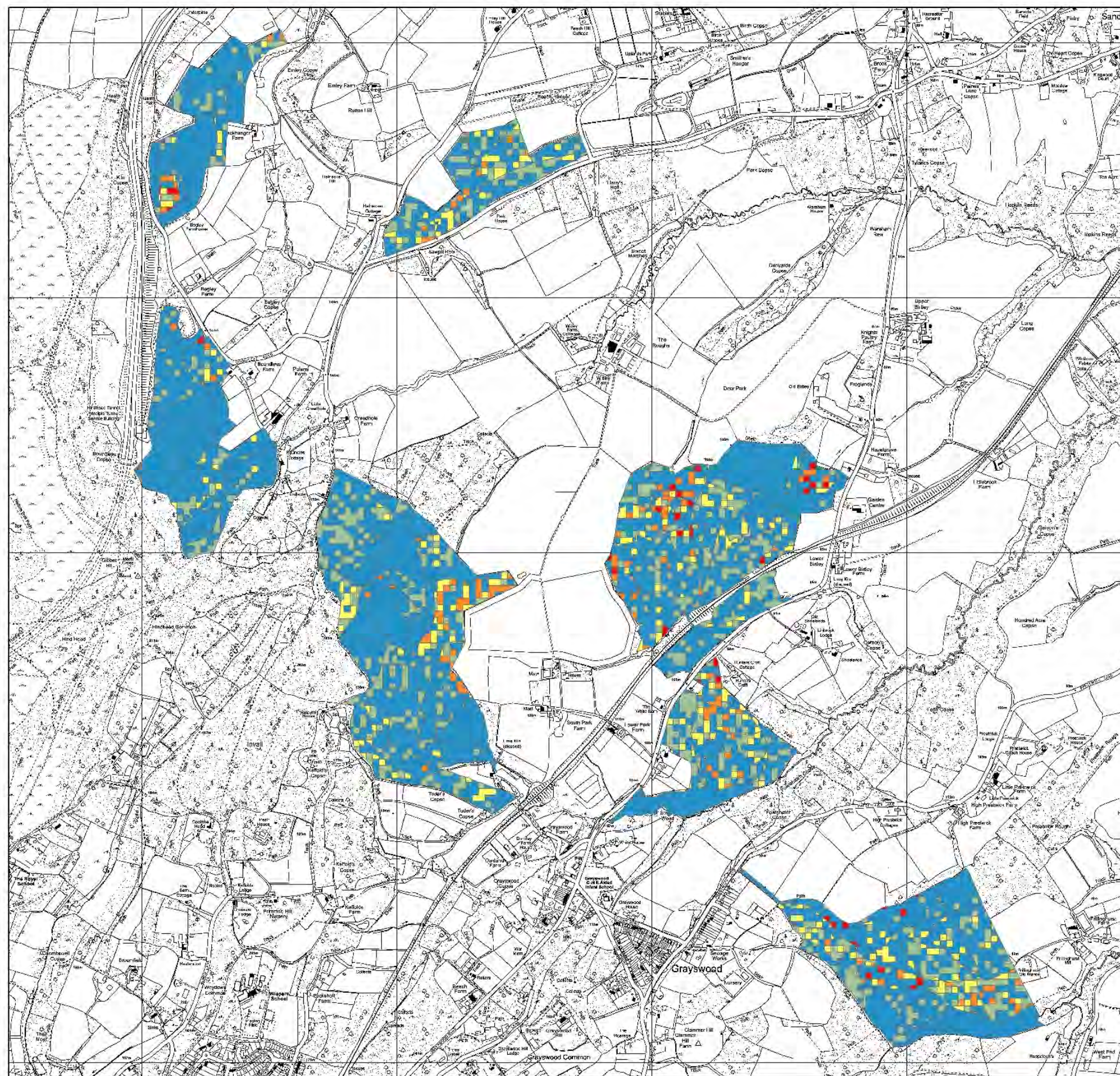
Witley Forest Blocks Location

 FC Management Area



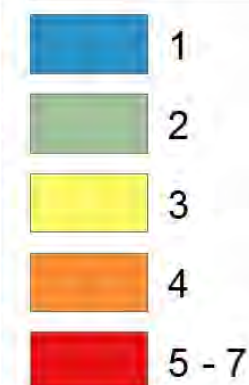
Witley Forest Blocks Location

 FC Management Area



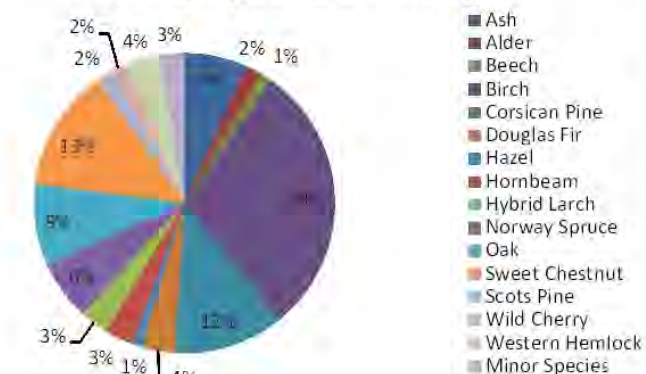
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Witley Forest Blocks Species Diversity



Shows the number of species with the canopy (including open space) and should be treated as indicative only. For more detail please see the statistics section.

Witley Species Diversity



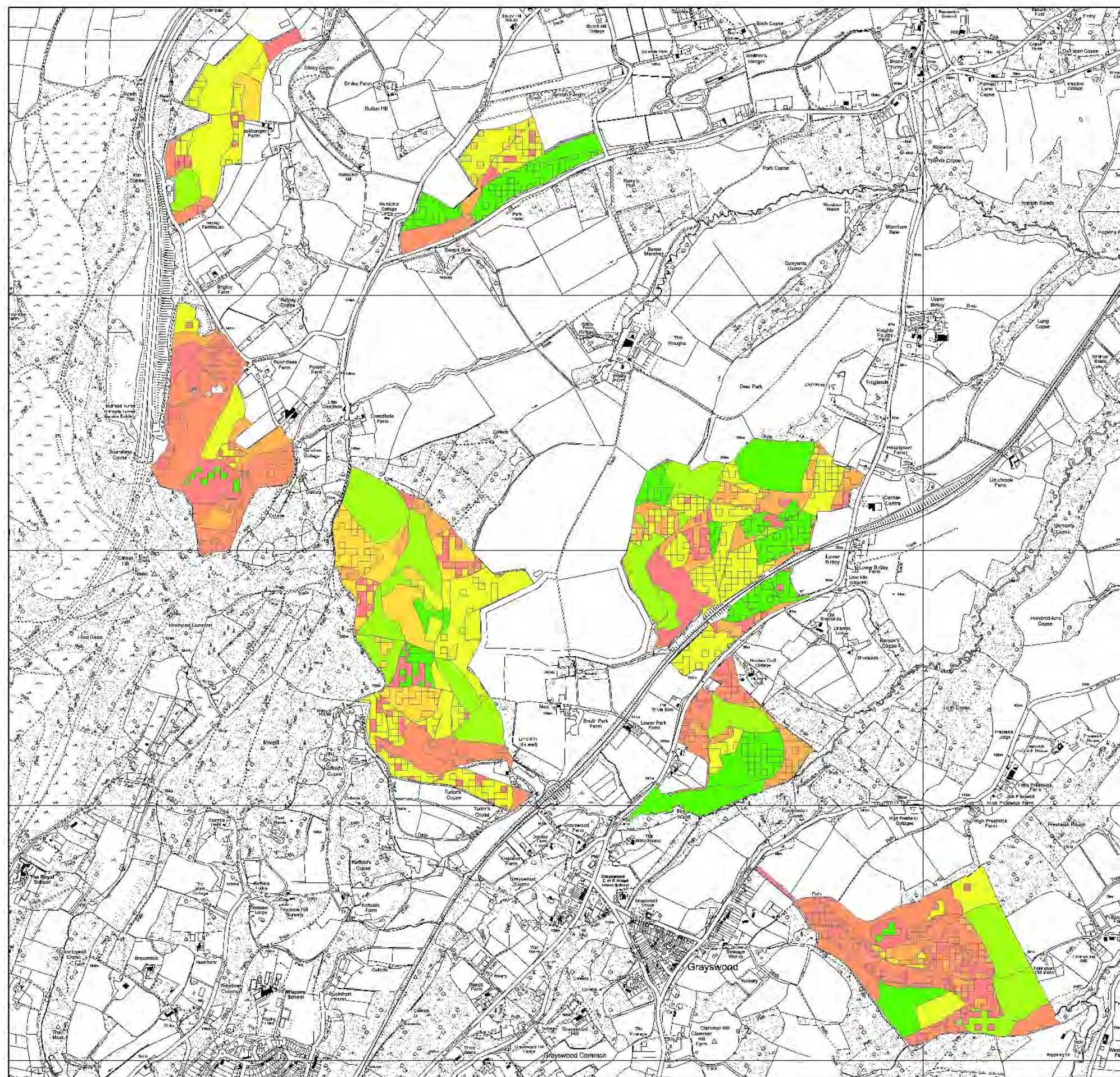
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Witley Forest Blocks Age Diversity

Planting Years

- No Data Available
- Pre 1959
- 1960 - 1968
- 1969 - 1987
- 1988 - 1996
- 1997 - 2006
- 2007 - 2016

Gaps illustrate open space, areas covered by recent natural regeneration, non woodland areas or missing data.



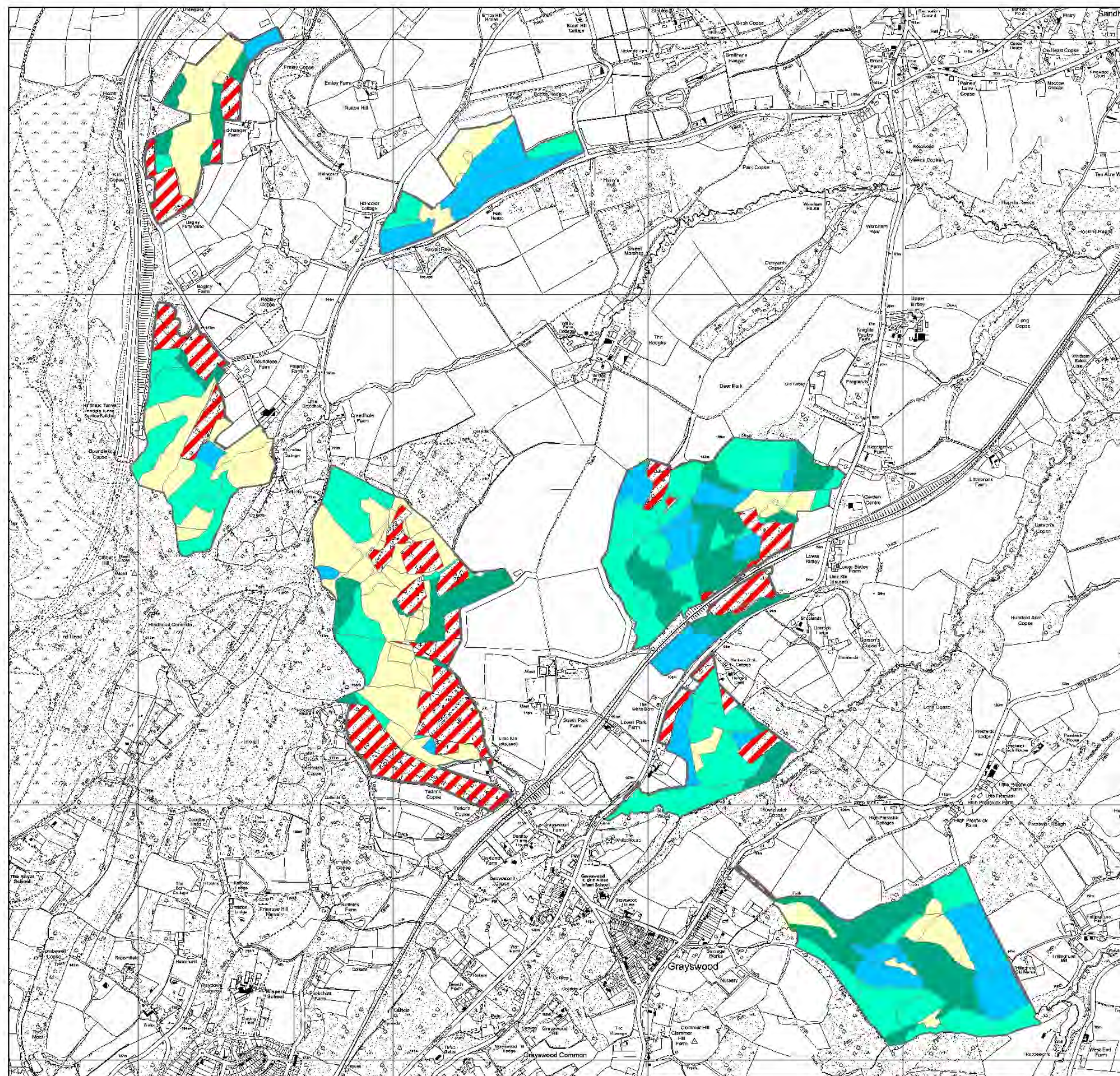
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Witley Ancient Woodland & Semi Natural Scoring

-  1 Over 80% native
-  2 Between 50% and 80% native.
-  3 Between 20% and 50% native
-  4 Less than 20% native
-  0 Currently open or unestablished woodland
-  Not Ancient Woodland

Map shows areas of ancient woodland and the proportion of native species present.



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Blackhanger, Halnacker and Boundless Copse Current Structure

- Native and Honourary Broadleaf
- Conifer
- Open Habitat
- Mixed Woodland
- Ponds



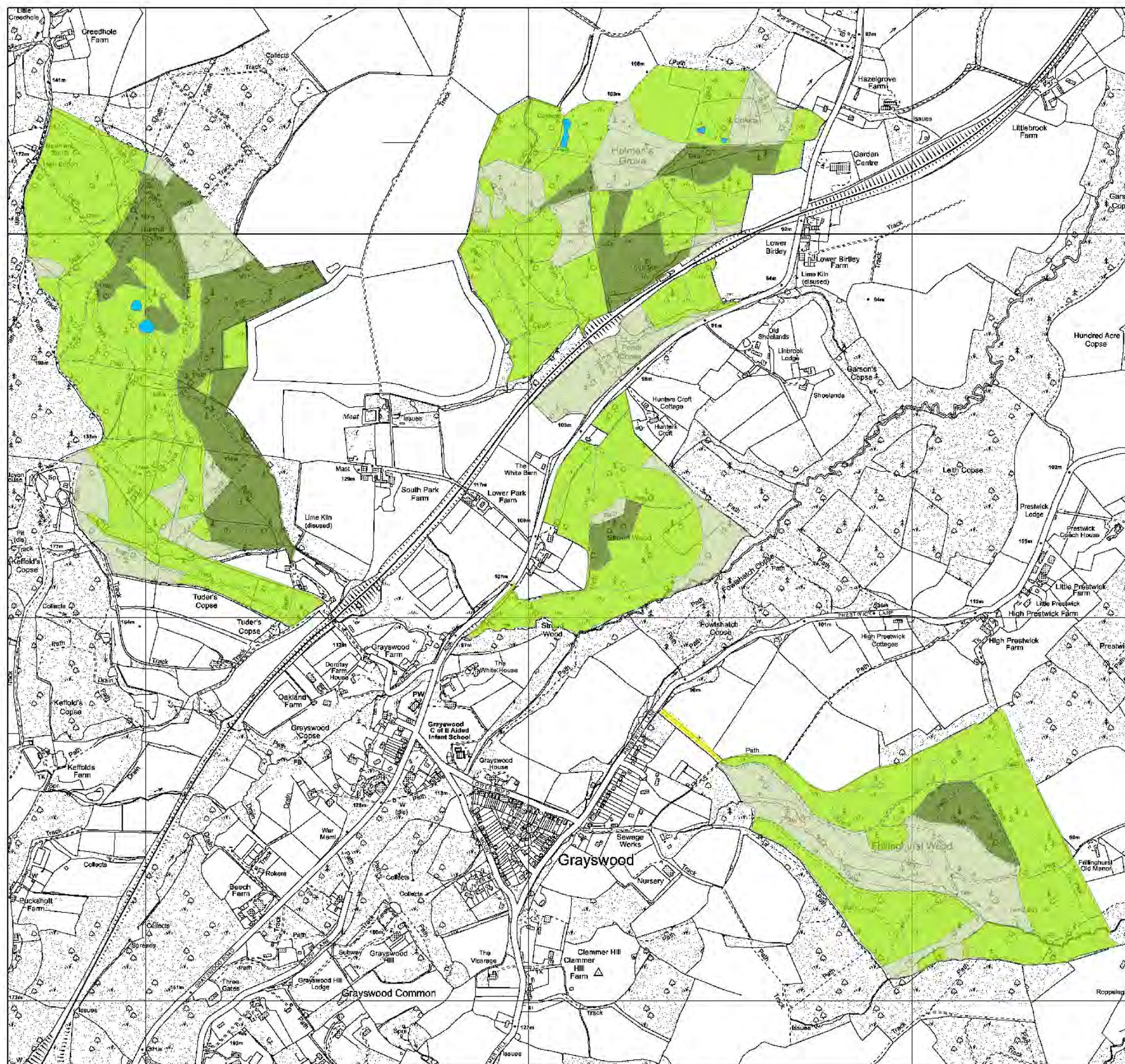
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South England Forest District

Hurthill Copse, Holmen's Grove & Frillinghurst Wood Current Structure

- Native and Honourary Broadleaf
- Conifer
- Open Habitat
- Mixed Woodland
- Ponds



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South England Forest District


Halnacker, Blackhanger & Boundless Copse Long Term Vision

--- Road/Ride Edge Management

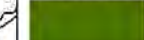
Open ride and road network, connecting habitats and woodland for enhanced biodiversity.

 Native Broadleaf Woodland Management


Native Broadleaf Woodland. Predominately (<80%) native or honourary native species.

 Mixed Woodland Management

Woodland consisting of a mixture of native and non native species, neither of which dominates more than 80% of the canopy.

 Coniferous Woodland Management


Coniferous Woodland, predominantly (<80%) non native conifer.

 Coppice/Coppice with Standards

Woodland coppiced under a suitable rotation and to benefit biodiversity and to take opportunities to supply niche markets.

 Wet Woodland

Wet woodland and riverine habitat.

 Manage as Open Habitat

 Ponds



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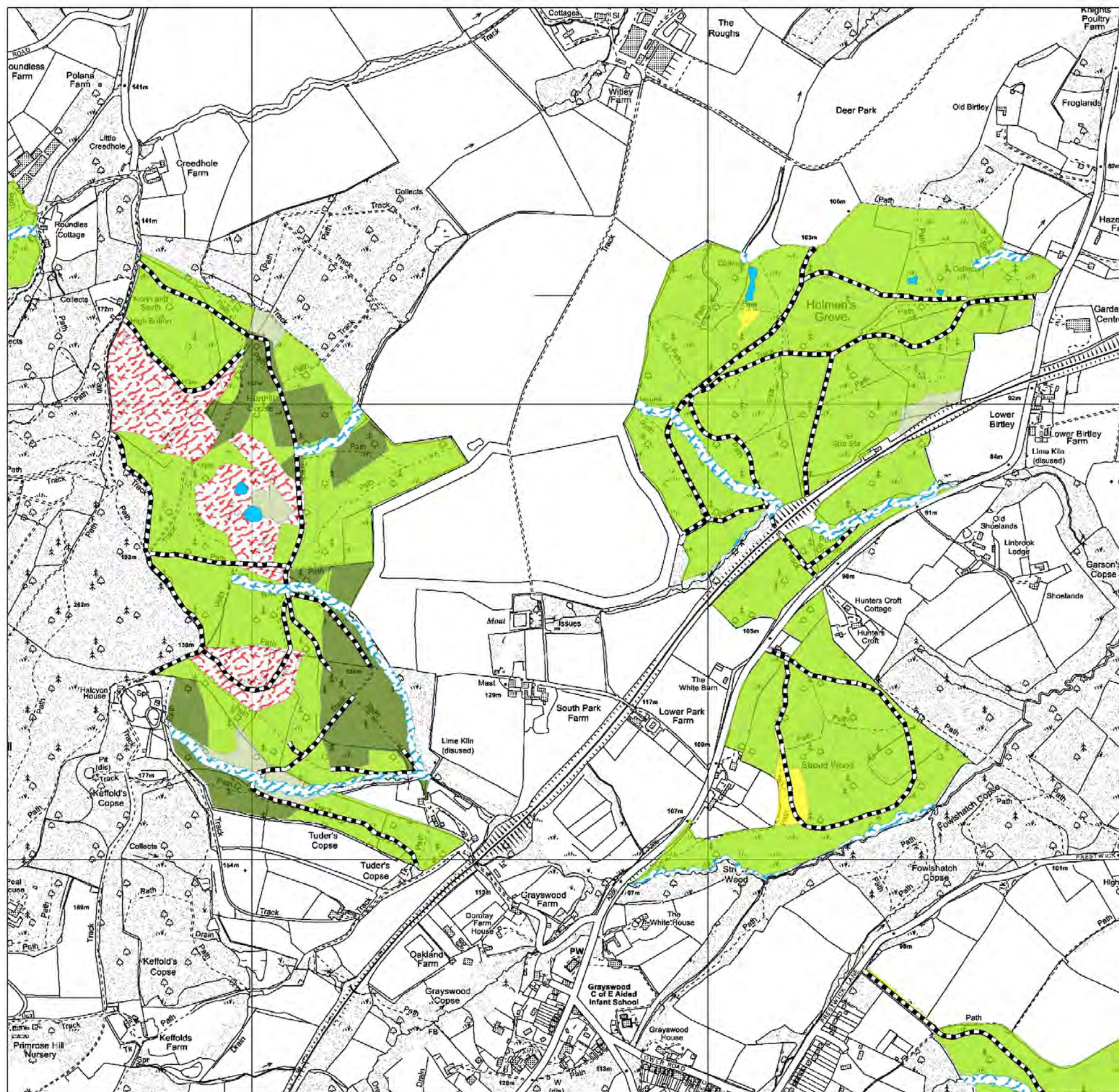
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South England Forest District


Hurthill Copse & Holmen's Grove Long Term Vision

--- Road/Ride Edge Management


Open ride and road network, connecting habitats and woodland for enhanced biodiversity.

 Native Broadleaf Woodland Management


Native Broadleaf Woodland. Predominantly (<80%) native or honorary native species.

 Mixed Woodland Management

Woodland consisting of a mixture of native and non native species, neither of which dominates more than 80% of the canopy.

 Coniferous Woodland Management

Coniferous Woodland, predominantly (<80%) non native conifer.

 Coppice/Coppice with Standards

Woodland coppiced under a suitable rotation and to benefit biodiversity and to take opportunities to supply niche markets.

 Wet Woodland

Wet woodland and riverine habitat.

 Manage as Open Habitat

 Ponds



Forestry Commission
woodlands have
been certified in
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Stewardship Council

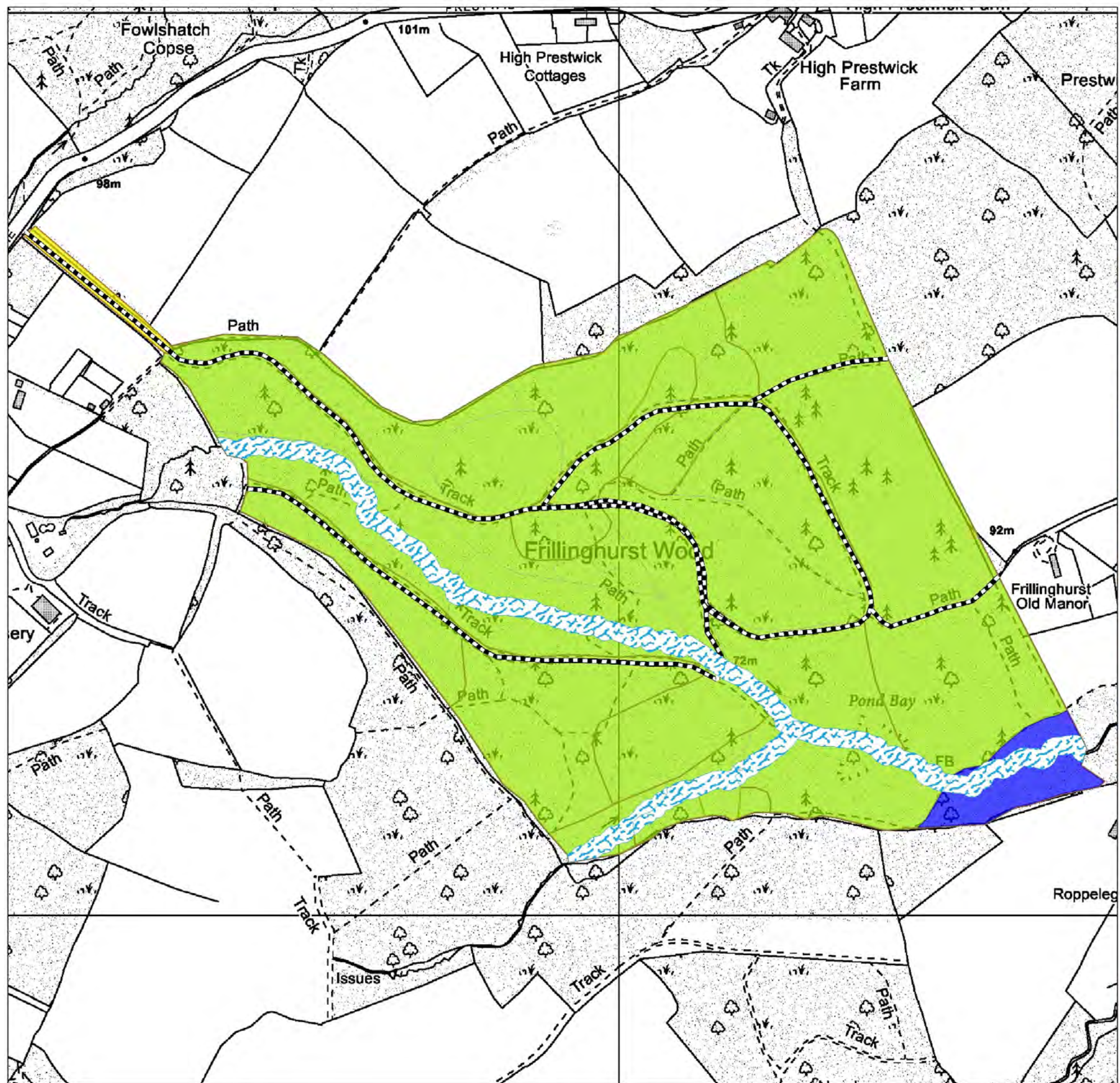


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South England Forest District

Frillinghurst Wood Long Term Vision

-  Road/Ride Edge Management
Open ride and road network, connecting habitats and woodland for enhanced biodiversity.
-  Native Broadleaf Woodland Management
Native Broadleaf Woodland. Predominately (<80%) native or honorary native species.
-  Mixed Woodland Management
Woodland consisting of a mixture of native and non native species, neither of which dominates more than 80% of the canopy.
-  Coniferous Woodland Management
Coniferous Woodland, predominantly (<80%) non native conifer.
-  Coppice/Coppice with Standards
Woodland coppiced under a suitable rotation and to benefit biodiversity and to take opportunities to supply niche markets.
-  Old Growth Woodland
Mature Native Broadleaf Woodland. Predominately (<80%) native or honorary native species.
-  Wet Woodland
Wet woodland and riverine habitat.
-  Manage as Open Habitat
-  Ponds



Forestry Commission
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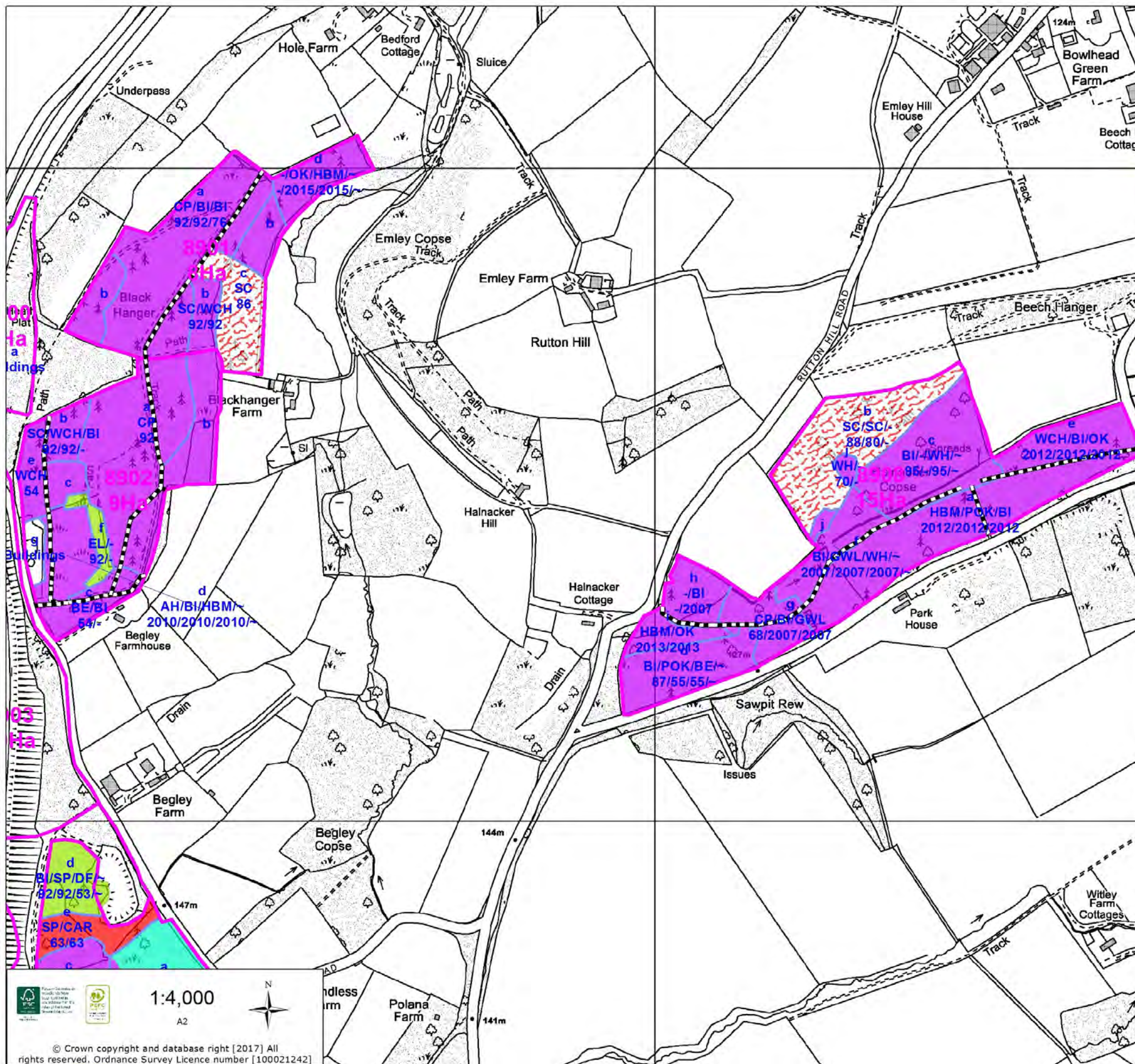
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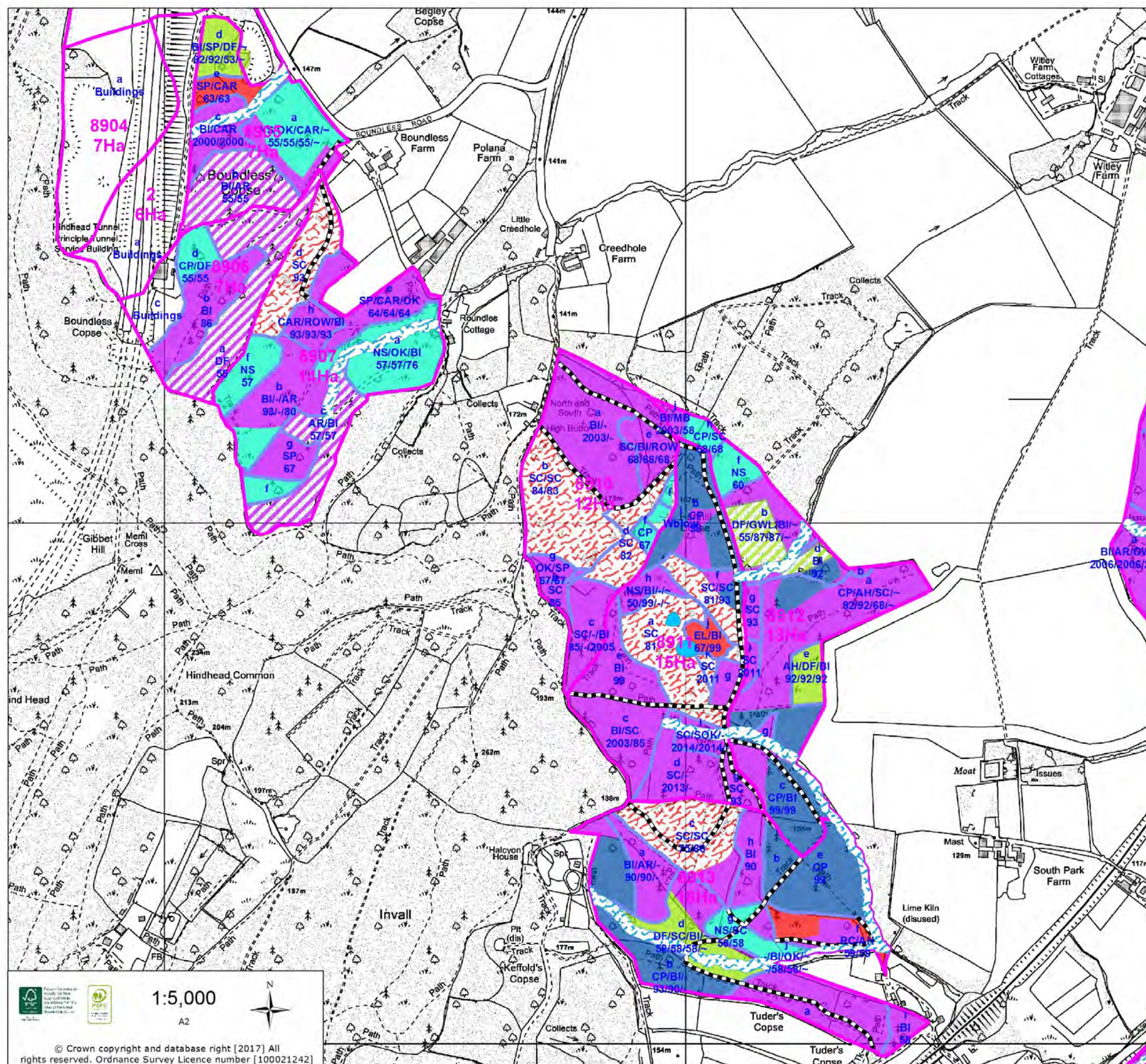


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Black Hanger & Halknacker Habitat Restoration and Felling

- Broadleaf Continuous Cover**
Transform towards a continuous cover system using a combination of thinning and selective felling with an end goal of transforming the stand under final crop principles. Focus on good form, stand stability and structural diversity. In PAWS areas reduce the non native components to 20% minimum.
- Coppice/Coppice with Standards**
Coppice in an appropriate rotation to benefit biodiversity while taking market opportunities to utilise products.
- Coniferous Continuous Cover**
Transform towards a continuous cover system using a combination of thinning and selective felling. Focus on good form, stand stability and structural diversity.
- Road/Ride Edge Management**
Enhance the woodland edge developing a scalloped and graded structure in accordance with best practice guidelines.
- Manage as Open Habitat**
- Sub-Compartments**
- Ponds**
- Compartments**



South England Forest District

Boundless Copse & Hurthill Habitat Restoration and Felling



Native Broadleaf Transformation

Transform towards a continuous cover system using a combination of thinning and selective felling with an end goal of transforming the stand under final crop principles. Focus on good form, stand stability and structural diversity.



Conifer Selection

Transform towards a continuous cover system using a combination of thinning and selective felling with an end goal of managing the stand as a selection system. Focus on good form, stand stability and structural diversity.



Native Woodland Regeneration

Regenerate woodland under a CCF system. Focus on good form, stand stability and structural diversity. Implement regeneration felling's following principles in the threshold table. Consider under planting where desirable species are not present.



Coppice/Coppice with Standards

Coppice in an appropriate rotation to benefit biodiversity while taking market opportunities to utilise products.



Coniferous Woodland Regeneration

Regenerate coniferous woodland using group fells and single tree selection. Focus on good form, stand stability and structural diversity.



Wet Woodland Management

Minimum intervention area, allowing natural processes to occur.



Road/Ride Edge Management

Enhance the woodland edge developing a scalloped and graded structure in accordance with best practice guidelines.



Clearfell 2018-2023



Clearfell 2027-2031



Clearfell Beyond 2046



Ponds

Silvicultural thinning until clearfell then restock with mixture of coniferous species



Manage as Open Habitat



Sub-Compartments



Compartments



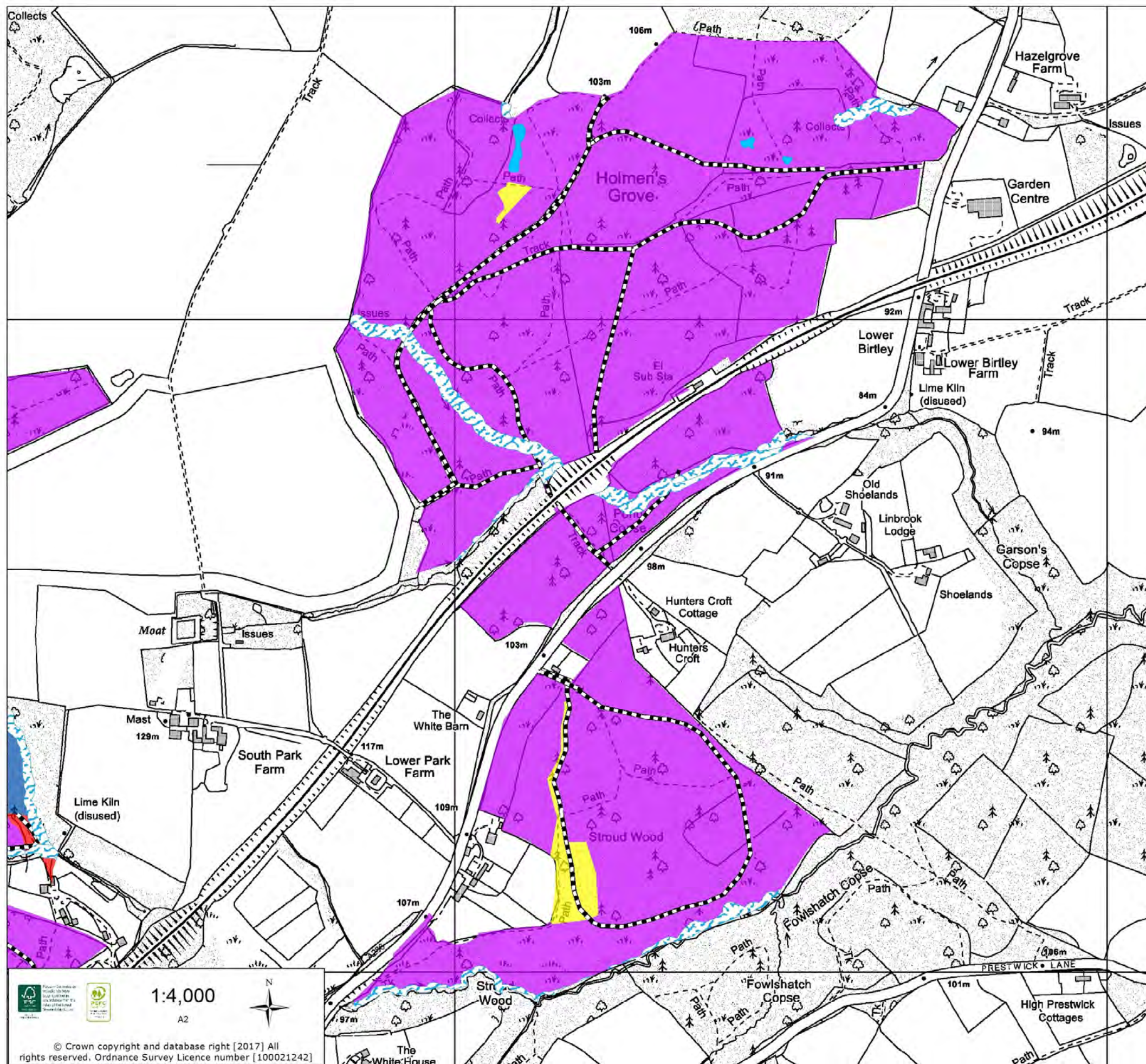
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Declaration by FC as an Operator. All timber arising from the Forest Enterprise estate represents a negligible risk under EUTR (No 995/210)



Holmen's Grove, Pond Copse & Stroud Wood Habitat Restoration and Felling

- Native Broadleaf Transformation**
Transform towards a continuous cover system using a combination of thinning and selective felling with an end goal of transforming the stand under final crop principles. Focus on good form, stand stability and structural diversity. In PAWS areas reduce the non native components to 20% minimum.
- Wet Woodland Management**
Minimum intervention area, allowing natural processes to occur.
- Road/Ride Edge Management**
Enhance the woodland edge developing a scalloped and graded structure in accordance with best practice guidelines.
- Manage as Open Habitat**
- Ponds**
- Sub-Compartments**
- Compartments**

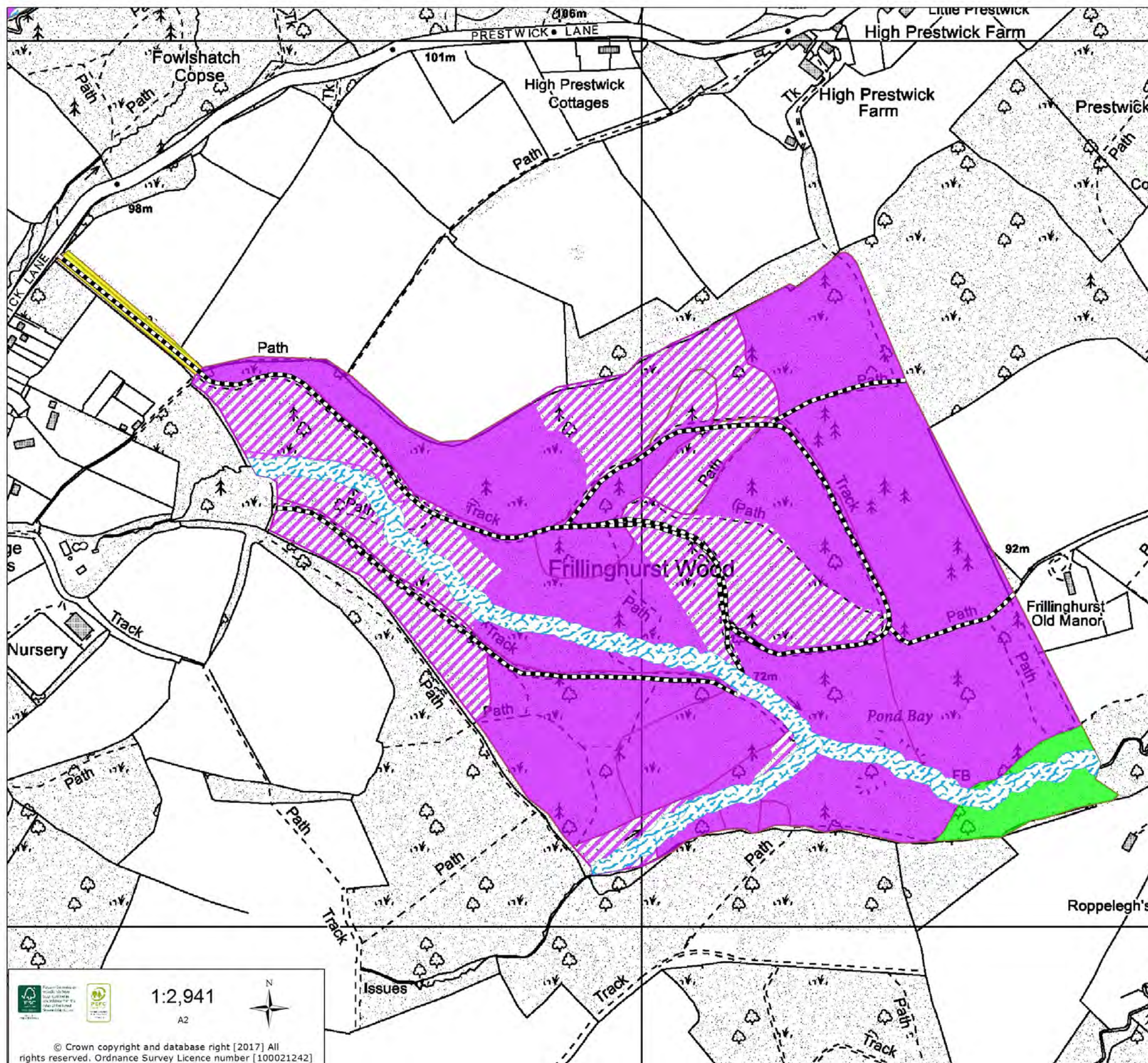


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Declaration by FC as an Operator: All timber arising from the Forest Enterprise estate represents a negligible risk under EUTR (No 995/210)



South England Forest District

Frillinghurst Wood Habitat & Felling



Native Broadleaf Transformation

Transform towards a continuous cover system using a combination of thinning and selective felling with an end goal of transforming the stand under final crop principles. Focus on good form, stand stability and structural diversity. In PAWS areas reduce the non native components to 20% minimum.



Native Woodland Regeneration

Regenerate woodland under a CCF system. Focus on good form, stand stability and structural diversity. Implement regeneration felling's following principles in the threshold table. Consider under planting where desirable species are not present.



Old Growth Woodland

Minimum intervention area allowing natural processes to occur.



Wet Woodland Management

Minimum intervention area, allowing natural processes to occur.



Road/Ride Edge Management

Enhance the woodland edge developing a scalloped and graded structure in accordance with best practice guidelines.



Manage as Open Habitat



Sub-Compartments



Ponds



Compartments



1:2,941

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Felling Coupe Thresholds

A regeneration period should be adopted that is appropriate to site and species.

An indicative regeneration period is suggested as 20-30 years for conifer species & 50 years for broadleaf species.

Individual felling coupes should be planned to provide a connecting network of old growth woodland throughout the blocks where appropriate.

Native Woodland Regeneration

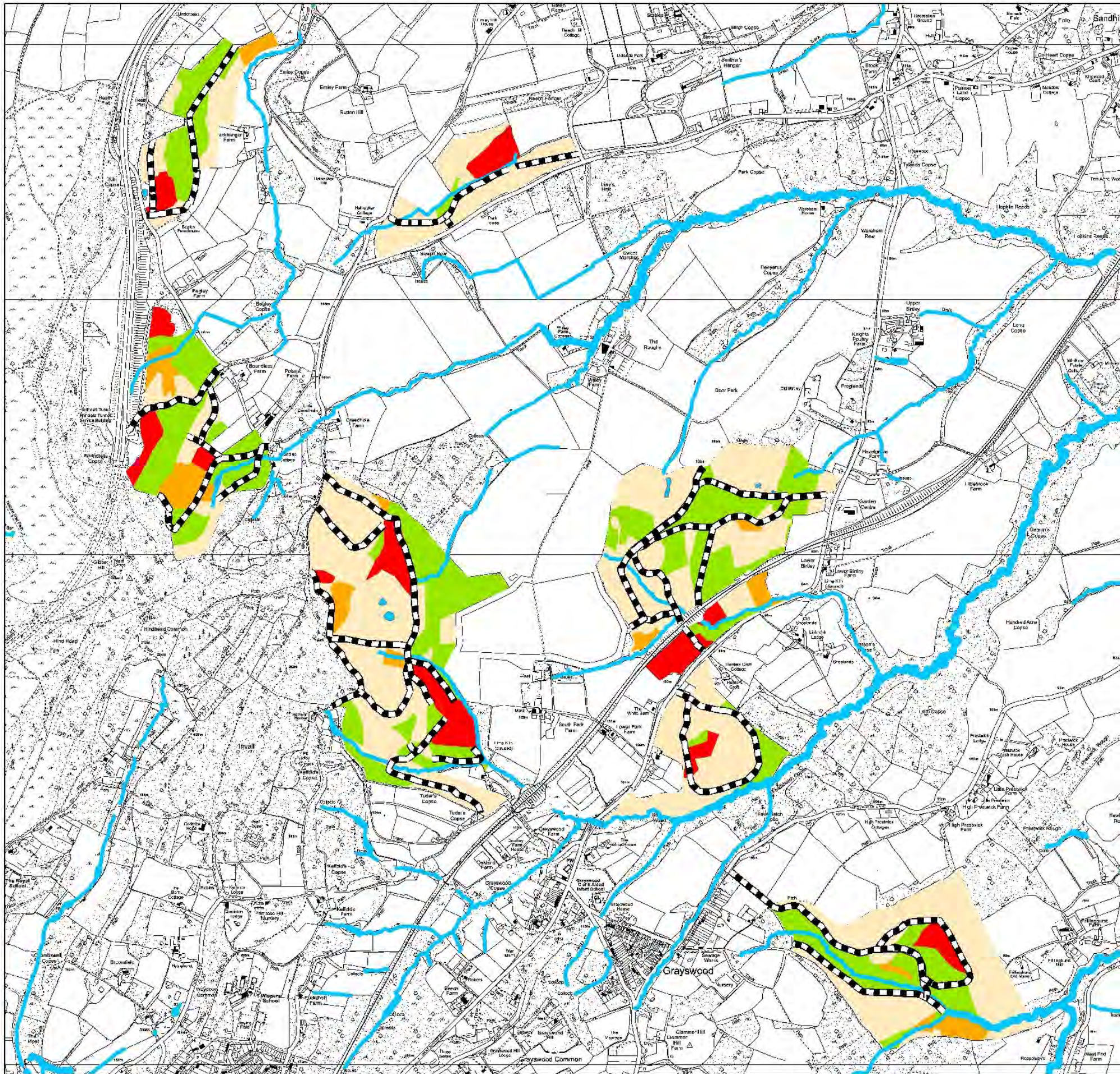
Coupes up to 2ha in size and non-adjacent

PAWS Regeneration

Coupes up to 2ha in size and non-adjacent







Mixed Woodland Regeneration

Coupes up to 2ha in size and non-adjacent



South England Forest District

Witley Forest Blocks Fire Risk Map

-  High Risk Un-thinned Conifer
-  Medium Risk Felled and Restock Areas
-  Low Risk Post Thin Conifer
-  Water Sources
-  Low Risk Broadleaf & Non-Forest Areas
-  Firebreak Network

Existing fire breaks utilising the road and ride network.



Forestry Commission
woodland photo
been verified in
accordance with the
rules of the Forest
Stewardship Council.



1:15,000
at A3



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Witley Species Diversity

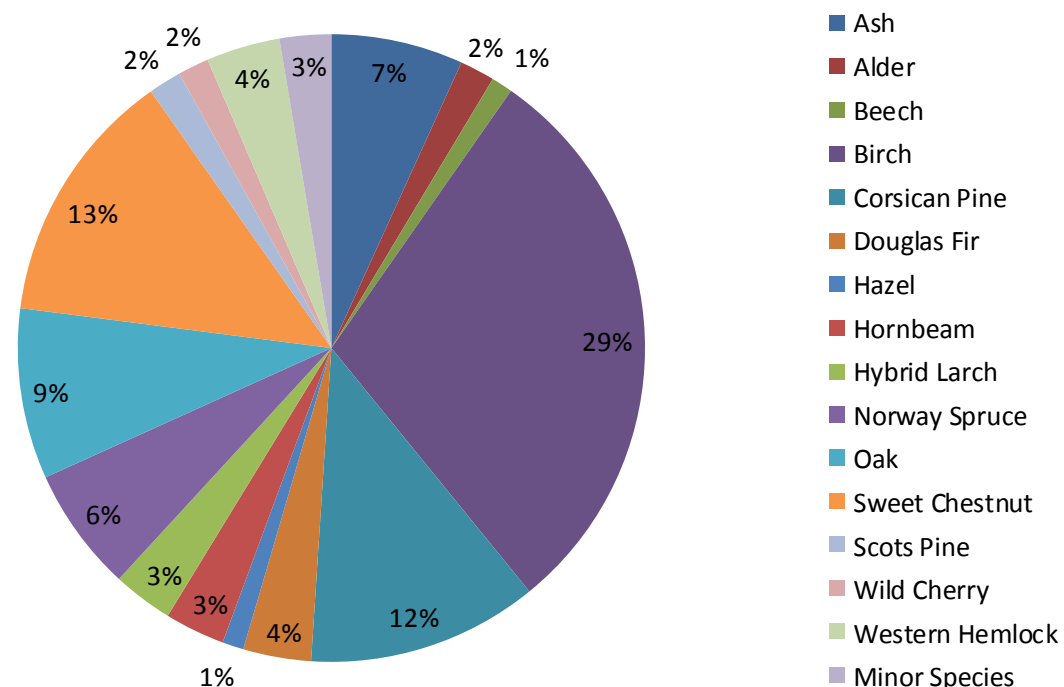


Chart shows the woodland structure broken down into the individual tree species. Only species which make up more than 1% of the total area are represented.

Age Diversity

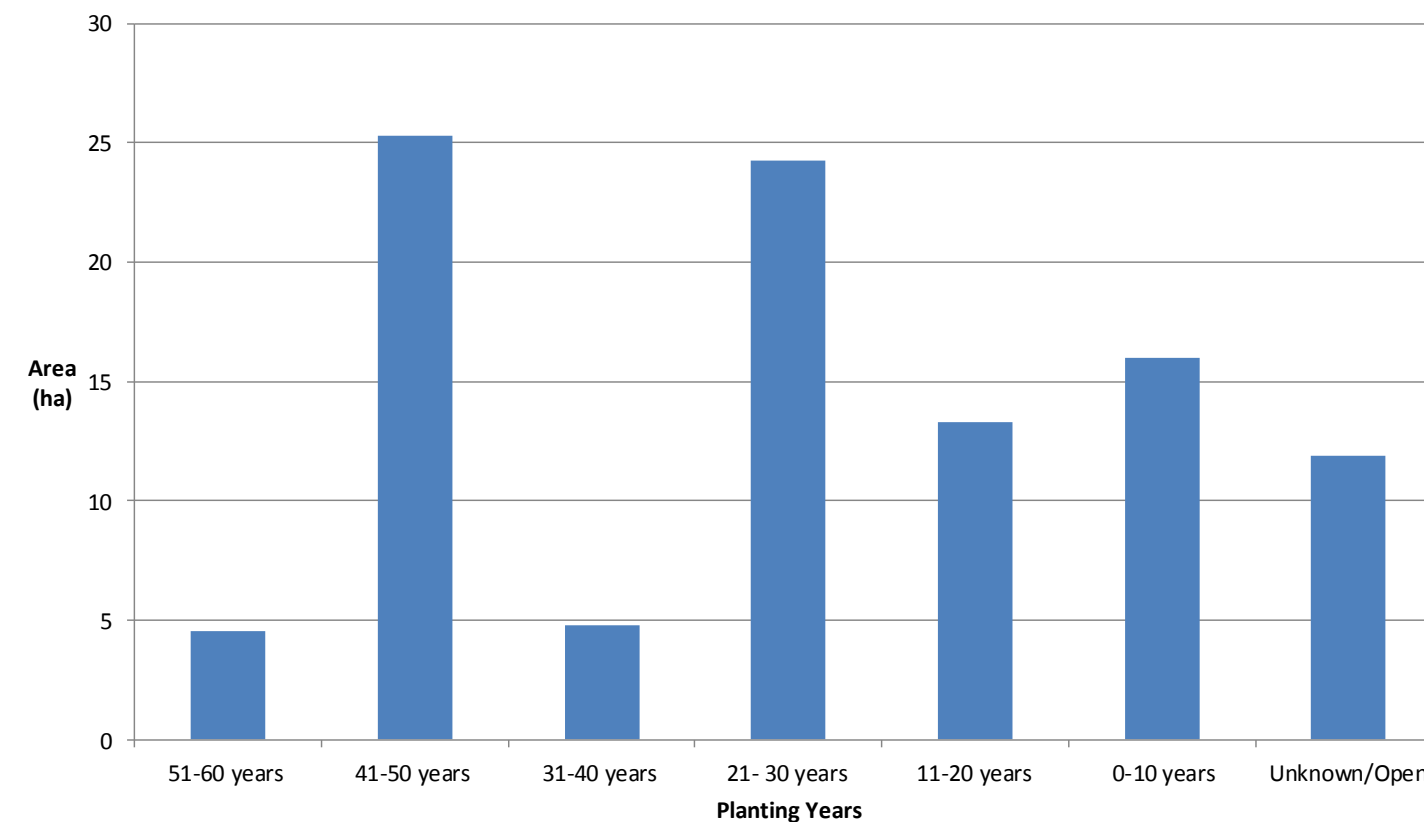


Chart shows the age structure of the woodland broken down into planting years.

Witley Block Semi Natural Scoring

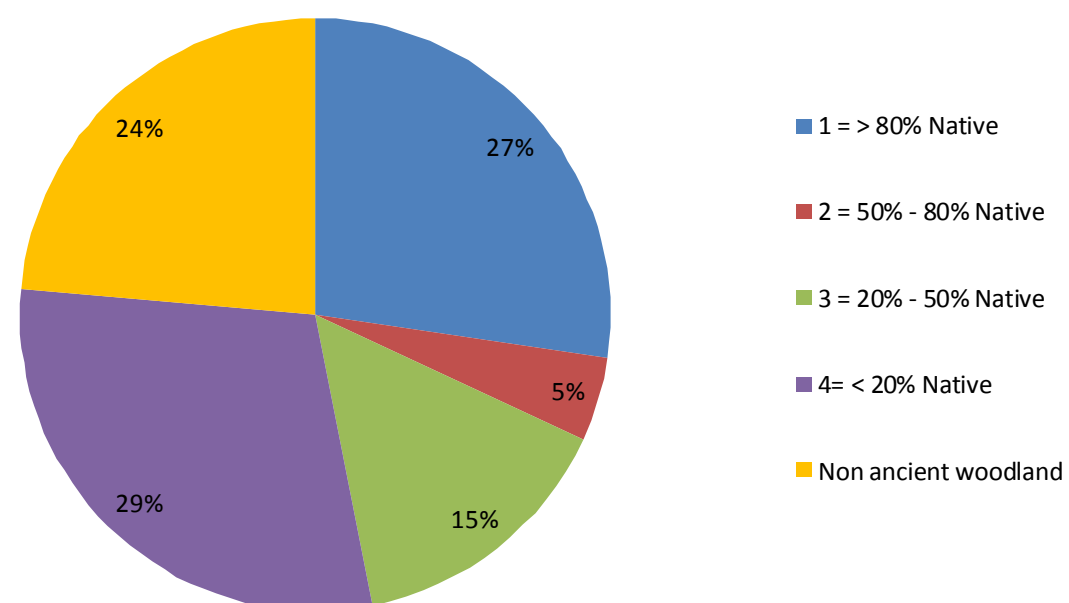


Chart shows a break down of the ancient woodland areas in the wood and the % of native species present.

Current Structure

■ Broadleaf ■ Conifer ■ Mixed ■ Open Space

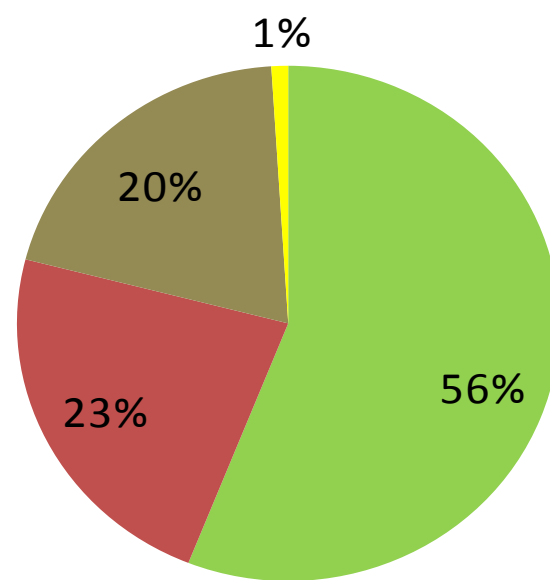


Chart shows the current indicative structure of the wood in broad habitat types.

Long Term vision

■ Broadleaf ■ Conifer ■ Mixed ■ Open Space

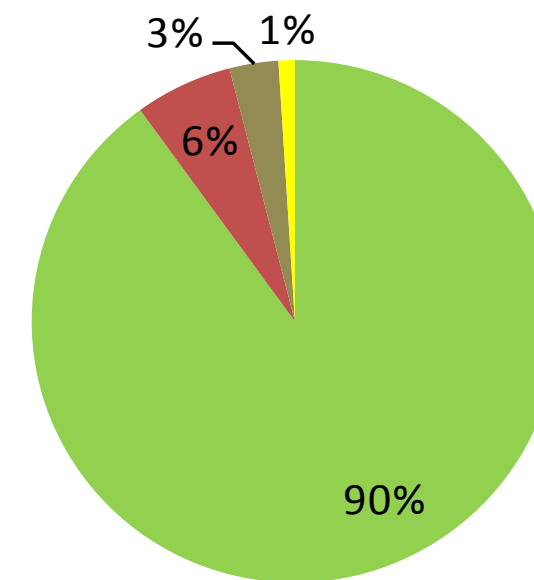


Chart shows the indicative long term vision for the wood in broad habitat types.

Average Production Forecast

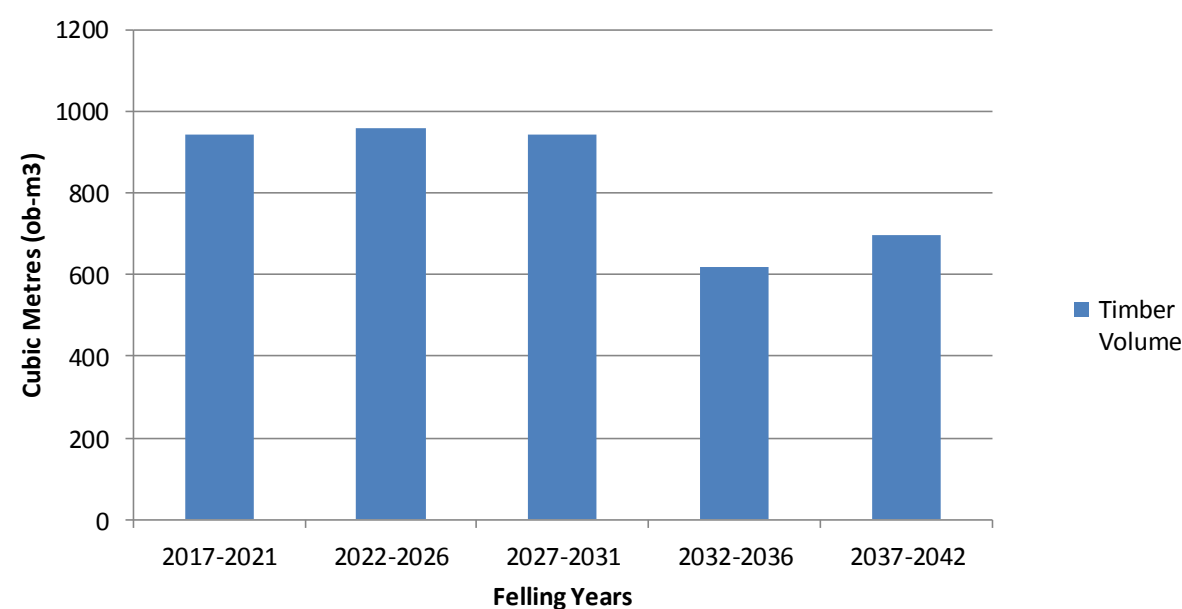


Chart shows the average production forecast for the plan period and beyond. **Ensure correction factor is included**

A wildfire risk assessment is an evaluation of the likelihood of a wildfire occurring and the severity of damage it might cause if it does occur.

Forest/woodland name; The Witley Block					
What are the Fire Hazards?	Who/what might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to manage the risk?	Initial Risk Rating	What else do you need to do?	Revised risk rating
Large blocks of coniferous woodland.	General Public and emergency services.	Long term plan to diversify the make up of the blocks, creating mixed species woodlands and restoring appropriate areas back to native woodland.	Medium	Evaluate high risk compartments and consider ways of speeding up the change of species makeup. Evaluate fuel loading during regular intervals.	
Fires spreading from the road network adjacent to the blocks.	General Public and emergency services.	The majority of the road network is either bordered by open space or low risk broad-leaved woodland.	low	Increase vegetation management to reduce fire risk. A verge clear of vegetation should be 3.5m either side of access routes.	
Fires spreading from residential properties adjacent to the blocks	General Public and emergency services.	The majority of residential properties are bordered by open space or low risk broad-leaved woodland.	low	Actively engage with owners about the risks of fire to both the PFE and their property to create an awareness of fire safety.	
Fires spreading from power-lines and underground utilities (gas pipes).	General Public and emergency services.	Any powerlines that go through woodland blocks already have a mandatory exclusion zone, free of high risk vegetation.	low	Conduct ad-hock checks on the state of wayleave vegetation, contacting the relevant utility companies when appropriate.	

Objective	Proposed Actions to Meet Objective	Ref	Output year 10	Monitoring	Indicators of Success
Maintain and increase the native composition of ancient semi-natural woodland.	Invasive and non native species will be monitored and managed accordingly to ensure the quality of ASNW is not degraded.	1a 1b	Maintained percentage of native tree species within ancient woodland sites Any invasive or non-native plant species found In ASNW are recorded and managed accordingly with a presumption of eradication.	Semi-Natural scoring via sub compartment database at years 5 and 10 Recording during Operational site assessments with appropriate action taken.	Ancient semi-natural woodland areas will show a maintained semi-natural score of '1' at years 5 and 10 No recorded invasive or non-native species present within ASNW.
Initiate restoration of planted ancient woodland sites to native and honorary native woodland.	Managing PAWS area under a shelter wood system, favouring the retention of native broadleaves will help to reduce the non native component of these areas.	2	Increased percentage of native tree species within ancient woodland sites.	Semi natural scoring via sub compartment database at years 5 and 10.	Plantation on ancient woodland areas will show an increasingly native semi natural score at years 5 and 10.
Take opportunities to increase the nature conservation value of existing habitats.	Implementation of the accompanying SSSI plan as agreed with Natural England. During management interventions, opportunities for corridor widening and wider habitat enhancement will be taken in line with the SSSI management plan to increase the structural diversity of woodland edges and provide connecting habitats for key species to disperse.	3	Opportunities are identified at Operational Site assessment (OSA) stage, acted upon and recorded within this plan. Achieve and maintain favourable condition in all SSSI units.	OSA checks at implementation stage. Natural England rolling condition assessments	A record of identification of opportunities, assessment of feasibility and fulfilment if appropriate. Natural England's favourable condition table scoring and comments

Provide, maintain and enhance where possible the recreational experience of the woodland.	Look at increasing the accessibility of footpath and trails in the woodlands with a process of vegetation management around key areas. Safety checks of car parks and trails continued as per OGB 1 and 42.	4	Opportunities are identified at Operational Site assessment (OSA) stage, acted upon and recorded within this plan.	OSA checks at implementation stage. A record of identification of opportunities, assessment of feasibility and fulfilment if appropriate.	A record of identification of opportunities, assessment of feasibility and fulfilment if appropriate.
Maintain and increase the species and age diversity of the woodland.	Managing non ancient woodland areas as mixed woodland allows the woodland to support a greater species diversity. This will benefit disease and climate resistance as well as adding to the aesthetic variation. The development of natural regeneration at various stages, will break up the currently rigid age structure	5a 5b 5c	Maintained number of tree species. Increased age diversity. Evidence of natural regeneration occurring.	Query sub compartment data base at year 5 and 10. Query sub compartment data base at year 5 and 10. Query sales and recording package at year 5 and year 10.	At least the same number of different tree species present at year 10 Improved age diversity at year 10 Increased successful establishment of natural regeneration.
Control invasive plant species and reduce their impact across the sites.	Conduct regular monitoring of invasive plant species, reacting appropriately when threats are identified.	6	Opportunities are identified at Operational Site assessment (OSA) stage, acted upon and recorded within this plan.	OSA checks at implementation stage.	A record of identification of opportunities, assessment of feasibility and fulfilment if appropriate.
Provide a regular supply of quality timber to support local employment and local timber processing industries.	Regular management will provide a sustainable supply of wood products to the industry.	7	Wood products supplied sustainably to industry in line with the production forecast.	Query sales recording package at year 5 and year 10.	Wood products supplied to the timber industry in line with production forecast whilst fulfilling other objectives.

Ref	Comments year 5	Success?	Comments year 10	Success?
1a				
1b				
2				
3				

Ref	Comments year 5	Success?	Comments year 10	Success?
4				
5a				
5b				
5c				

Ref	Comments year 5	Success?	Comments year 10	Success?
6				
7				

	Forest Plan Area	Forest Plan Percentage	Forest District Area	Forest District Percentage of Habitat/management type
Total Area	221.6	0%	46106ha	0.004%
Total Wooded Area	221.2	99%	26076ha	0.008%
Natural Reserves Plantation (1%)	0	0%	285.57ha	0%
Natural Reserves Semi Natural	0	0%	2958.7ha	0%
Long Term Retentions and Low Impact Silvicultural Systems	198.7	89%	21264ha	0.009%
Area of conservation value (>15%) including designations, PAWS,AW, ASNW,NR, LTR and LISS	198.7	89%	26403.5	0.009%

Ancient Woodland

A classification for woodland which has been in continuous existence from before AD 1600 in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and from 1750 in Scotland.

Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

The trees and other plant species within an ancient woodland site appear to have arisen naturally rather than having been planted and are predominately (>80%) native to the site and surrounding area.

Biodiversity

Life in all its diversity spanning genetic, species, populations, habitats and ecosystems.

Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA)

Mapped ecological restoration zones which cover large areas enabling a landscape-scale approach to nature conservation. Some ten BOAs have been identified on the Isle of Wight. It is intended that this network will help to expand, buffer and connect key sites for wildlife.

Clear-fell

Cutting down an area of woodland typically greater than 0.25 hectares.

Compartments/Sub Compartments

Sections of woodland used to delineate and plan management.

Local Wildlife Sites or Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SNCIs)

Local Wildlife Sites are non-statutory sites which are valuable for wildlife. They have substantive nature conservation value and their continued presence makes a significant contribution to maintenance of biodiversity. They may also have an important role in contributing to public enjoyment and understanding of nature. DEFRA guidance is that they should encompass all areas of substantive value, including both the most important and the most distinctive species, habitats, geological and geomorphological features within a national, regional and local context.

Mixed Woodland

Woodland consisting of a fairly even mixture of broadleaf and conifer species.

Native (and honorary-native)

The trees making up the woodland are part of England's natural (or naturalised) flora. Determined by whether the trees colonised Britain without the assistance of humans since the last ice age (or in the case of 'honorary' native were brought here by people but have naturalised in historic times) ; and whether they would naturally be found in the part if England.

Native Woodland

Woodland predominately made up of tree species that would naturally be found on that site.

Natural Reserve

A protected area of importance for wildlife, flora, fauna or features of geological or other special interest managed under a system of minimum intervention.

Natural Regeneration

The process of allowing a cleared area of woodland to regenerate naturally by the germination and development of seeds found within the soil on site. These may be still require some protection from overbearing plant species and mammal browsing . Some enrichment planting may also be necessary or desirable in areas where natural regeneration is showing limited success or in order to diversify the species range of the woodland.

Natural regeneration

The process of allowing a cleared area of woodland to regenerate naturally by the germination and development of seeds found within the soil on site. These may be still require some protection from overbearing plant species and mammal browsing . Some enrichment planting may also be necessary or desirable in areas where natural regeneration is showing limited success or in order to diversify the species range of the woodland.

Open Habitat

An area of ground that will have tree cover <5% and support a range of site suitable species.

Plantation on an ancient woodland site (PAWS)

The trees within an ancient woodland site appear to have been planted. These species may or may not be native to the site and surrounding area.

Road/ride edge management

A network of internal road and ride margins that will be managed in a sympathetic way to increase the structural diversity of the woodland and provide connecting habitats for wildlife.

Shelter Wood System

Woodland management system whereby the forest canopy is maintained at one or more levels without clear felling, generally being no single interruption of tree cover of more than 0.25 hectares with a maximum of 2 interruptions of this size per hectare.

Selection System

Low impact woodland management whereby tree's are removed individually or in small groups without clearfelling.

Yield Class

The maximum average rate of volume increment which a particular stand can achieve per hectare.

This Forest Plan has been influenced by various key policy statements and guidance documents as listed below.

Government Forestry and Woodlands Policy Statement—January 2013

This document sets the direction of travel for forestry policy within England and is the reference point around which main aims and objectives of forestry and woodland management are designed.

The statement sets out the following key objectives, in priority order:

Protecting the nations trees, woodlands and forests from increasing threats such as pests, diseases and climate change.

Improving their resilience to these threats and their contribution to economic growth, peoples lives and nature.

Expanding them to increase further their economic, social and environmental value.

Strategic plan for the public forest estate in England

This plan sets out the direction and goals for the public forest estate in England and indicates the actions we will be taking to achieve these between now and 2020. Our ambitions are long term and we will use a normal cycle of review over 5 years to embed these in local forest plans and ways of operating.

Our mission for the estate.

To work with others to keep the Pubic Forest Estate as a special place for wildlife, people to enjoy and businesses to thrive—and achieve this by adopting a strategy that integrates all the three drivers of sustainable land management; economy, people and nature.

Our Vision and Overall Goal

“To secure and grow the economic, social and natural capital value of the public forest estate for the people of England”

South District Forest Strategic Plan

The strategic management plan is a Forest Enterprise District Level document that informs local Forestry Commission Staff about the management direction of the Public Forest Estate and the associated policies. The Forest Plans are a key mechanism for delivering policies on the ground.

Open Habitat Policy, 2010

This is Government policy on how to decide when to convert woodland to open habitat in England.

United Kingdom Forestry Standard

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) is the reference standard for sustainable forest management in the UK. The UKFS, supported by its series of guidelines, outlines the context for forestry in the UK, sets out the approach of the UK government to sustainable forest management, defines standards and requirements, and provides a basis for regulation and monitoring.

UK woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)

An independent certification standard for verifying sustainable management in the United Kingdom.

Keepers of Time

This policy statement celebrates the importance of our native and ancient woodland and sets out a basis on which to achieve the following vision.

“Ancient woodlands, veteran trees and other native woodlands are adequately protected, sustainably managed in a wider landscape context, and are providing a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits”

Managing ancient and native woodland in England: Practice Guide

This practice guide has been produced to help practitioners translate what measures and practical action can be taken to protect and enhance our ancient and native woodlands and guides implementation of the approaches to management and restoration trialled in woods around the country.

Managing deadwood in forests and woodland 2012

A practice guide encouraging owners and managers to develop a strategic approach to deadwood with an emphasis on working with natural processes.

Choosing stand management methods for restoring planted ancient woodland sites, 2013.

A practice guide showing different silvicultural methods for restoring planted ancient woodland sites.



Stage 1

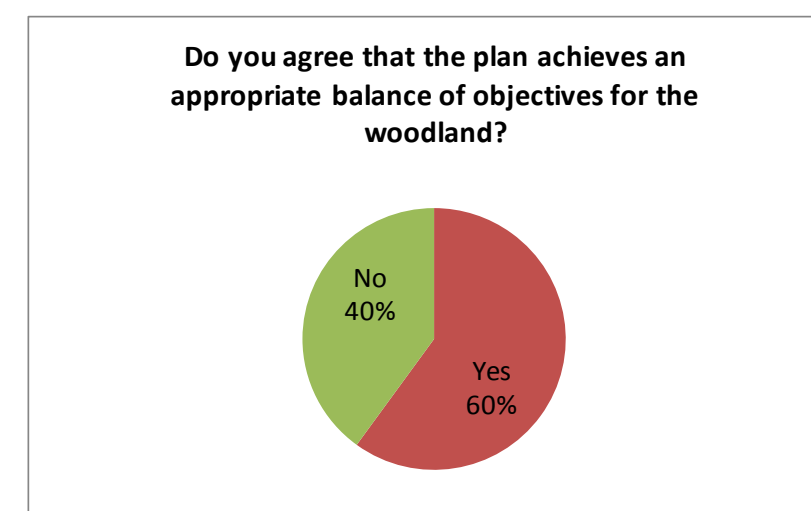
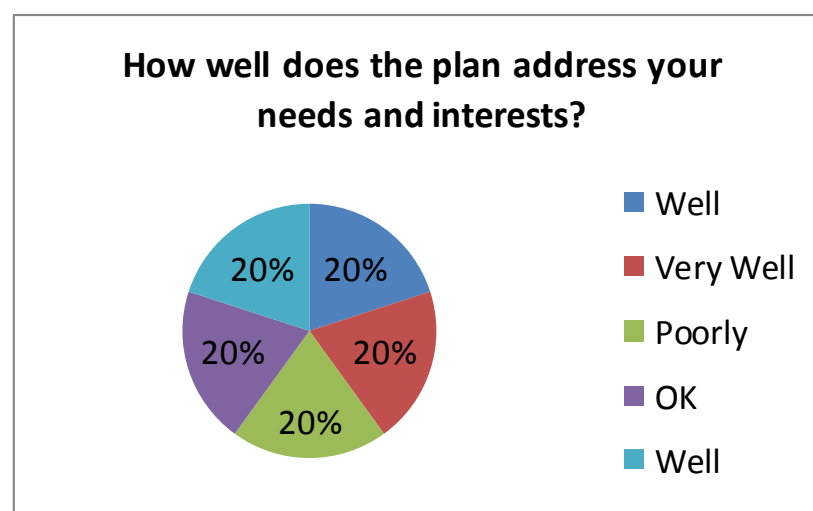
- Internal review of the previous forest plan
- Policy review and broad discussions.

Consultees

Environment Agency | Butterfly Conservation | RSPB | Natural England | Surrey County Council | Waverley District Council | Surrey Hills AONB | Chiddingfold Parish Council | Elstead and Thursley Parish Council | Witley Parish Council | Woodland Trust | Surrey Wildlife Trust | National Trust | Surrey Bat Group | Surrey Bird Group | Ancient Tree Forum | Botanical Society of the British Isles | British Dragonfly Society | British Mycological society | Buglife | Bumblebee Conservation Trust | Freshwater Habitats Trust | Plantlife | The Deer Initiative | BSW Timber Group | Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust | Hampshire Ornithological Society | Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre | Hampshire Gardens Trust |

Consultation Results

5 people responded to the online consultation which asked them a range of questions, 2 of are displayed figuratively below.



FC Statement following consultation.

Thankyou for taking the time to take part in the consultation. We have taken on board your comments and suggestions and will be incorporating aspects in- to operational planning decisions in the future. No major changes to the document have been deemed necessary.

Consultation Responses**Environment Agency**

It would be nice to see some reference to how woodland management could help achieve natural flood risk management aims where there are watercourses running through them. Upper catchment attenuation in woodland through, for example, installation of woody dams and deflectors can contribute to reducing flood risk for communities downstream. For further information on natural flood risk management, please see the recently published evidence base here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-with-natural-processes-to-reduce-flood-risk>

It would also be good to see how locations of woodland management match up with the river catchment restoration project aims of the Catchment Partnerships. Catchment Partnerships are groups of interdisciplinary organisations and community members who come together to create projects to better their river and local environment. These were set up by government under the Catchment Based Approach Initiative. You can find out more about the work of the Catchment Partnerships, including contact details on the CaBa website here : <https://www.catchmentbasedapproach.org/>

Butterfly Conservation

Summary of priority butterflies and moths to be sent separately. Specifically we have concerns regarding the low levels of open space within these woods and mechanism for maintaining a mosaic of open space.

Witley Parish Council

We very much welcome the stated aim to provide, maintain and enhance the recreational experience of the woodland but, at the moment, we see little sign that the commission is making any effort to encourage or inform the public about their work or to make the woodlands attractive and welcoming places. The entrances on the A286 to Holmen's Grove and Stroud Wood give no indication that these are areas that the public can even enter. We should like to see some modest parking provision, information boards and woodland trails incorporated into the long term plans to fulfill this stated aim.

RSPB

The RSPB welcomes the Biodiversity and Conservation section of the Witley Forest Plan especially the acknowledgement that it acts as a functional outlier of Chiddingfold Forest and is, therefore, important for Lepidoptera. We welcome the acknowledgement that it is also important for ground nesting birds, birds of prey and scrub dependent woodland birds, However we would note that it is also important, and has potential to become more so, for canopy species (such as lesser spotted woodpecker) and birds of more open woodland habitat (such as spotted flycatcher). These species should also be considered in the future management.

Of the scrub species, nightingale is a species of particular concern and has been recently recorded from both Holmens Grove and Frillinhurst Wood. It requires very dense, thick scrub (for example of blackthorn which will also benefit sloe carpet moths) with a fringe of vegetation. It is vital to create more habitat of this type as the older scrub goes up to ensure nightingale populations are retained.

The Objective "Maintain and increase species and age diversity" is given but both the "outputs" and "indicators of success" columns only talk of maintaining current diversity. We feel that the plan needs to reflect greater ambition as set out in the objectives. Diversity of species, including flora and scrub species, and of age structure are crucial for increasing biodiversity.

We welcome the commitment to increasing the quantity of deadwood within Witley Forest as this is crucial to a healthy, functioning woodland eco-system. We would like to see this extended to include all areas of the wood, including but not limited to those of high conservation value. This would increase the biodiversity value of the wood rather than just maintain it. Deadwood should include standing deadwood, fallen deadwood and dead snags in living trees, all composed of a wide diversity of species. Standing dead trunks are particularly important for lesser spotted woodpecker, which are specifically mentioned in the Biodiversity and Conservation section.

We strongly support the objective to initiate restoration of PAWS.

To assist in commenting on the Witley Forest Plan it would also have been useful to have seen the SSSI plan as part of the documentation.

FC Statement following consultation

Published on the consultation website; *Thankyou for taking the time to take part in the consultation. We have taken on board your comments and suggestions and will be incorporating aspects into operational planning decisions in the future. No major changes to the document have been deemed necessary.*

Forestry Commission (Forest Services and Forest Enterprise) should agree baseline tolerance thresholds for operations in each District beyond which exchange of letter/map or formal amendment is required. Unless otherwise specified or agreed by the Forestry Commission, amendment will be by formal revision of the plan.

	Adjustment to felling coupe boundaries (1)	Timing of Re-stocking	Changes to species	Windthrow clearance (2)	Changes to road lines (3)
FC Approval normally not required	0.5 ha or 5% of coupe - whichever is less	Up to 2 planting seasons after felling	Change within species group e.g. evergreen conifers; broadleaves	Up to 0.5ha	
Approval by exchange of letters and map	0.5ha to 2ha or 10% of coupe - whichever is less			0.5ha to 2ha - if mainly wind-blown trees > 2ha to 5ha in areas of low sensitivity	Additional felling of trees not agreed in plan Departures of >60m in either direction from centre line of road
Approval by formal plan amendment	> 2ha or 10% of coupe	Over 2 planting seasons after felling	Change from specified native species Change between species groups	> 5ha	As above, depending on sensitivity

Notes on Tolerance Table

1. There are circumstances in which changes - of less than 0.5 ha for example - could have a dramatic visual effect. The above model does require a sensible approach to be taken by Forest Enterprise in notifying Forestry Commission when such cases arise. Local staff need to be sensitive to issues which may influence the situation (bearing in mind that small adjustments to felling coupes will not appear on the Public Register).
2. It is important that Forest Enterprise keep the FC informed about windblow clearance, which can be problematic in cases of public complaint, and in FC compliance monitoring. In some cases a modification of the proposals for the remaining area of the Plan may need to be submitted and approved. Clearance of blow should not require approval but will be needed for related standing trees.
3. It is recognised that roading proposals as marked on Road Plans are necessarily somewhat indicative, in that actual roading operations require to take account of features not always apparent at the time of roadline planning. Accordingly some leeway is acceptable to account for this.

Date of Commencement of Plan: **2018**

Approval Period: **2018 to 2028 (10 Years)**

Summary of Activity within Approval Period:

A separate felling license provides approval for standard silvicultural thinning across the South Forest District estate as a whole.

Forestry Activity	Area (ha)
Low impact silvicultural system	171.8
Coppice	16.6
Permanent Open Space Management	1.4
Clearfell	22.4
Wet Woodland/Minimum Intervention	10.7
TOTAL MAPPED AREA	222.9

FOREST ENTERPRISE Application for Forest Plan Approvals

Forest District: **South England Forest District**

FC Geographic Block No: **89**

Forest Plan Name: **Witley Forest Plan**

FE Plan Reference Number: **304/89/18-19**

Nearest town or village: **Haslemere**

OS Grid Reference: **SU91013564**

Local Authority: **Surrey County Council - Waverley District Council**

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

I undertake to obtain any permissions necessary for the implementation of the approved Plan.

Signed:



Bruce Rothnie, Deputy Surveyor, South England FD

Date:

Approved:



for Forest Services Area Director

Date: 19 April 2018