

Blackdown Hills Forest Plan

2018 - 2028

West England Forest District



The mark of
responsible forestry

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



Declaration by FC as an Operator.

All timber arising from the Forest Enterprise estate
represents a negligible risk under EUTR (No 995/210)

Ben Robinson
FCE File Ref: OP10/62

OLD Ref: PE41, PE47, PE50, PE50/1, PE56, PE57

Application for Forest Plan Approval

Forest District:	West England FD	
Woodland or property name	Neroche, Otterford, Huntsham, Sheldon, Blackborough, South Cleave, Strete Raleigh	
Nearest town, village or locality:	Staple Fitzpaine	
OS Grid reference:	Smokey Bottom Lodge	ST 2593 1911
Local Authority District/Unitary Authority:	Taunton Deane—Buckland, Neroche & Otterford Mid Devon—Blackborough, Culm Davy & Huntsham East Devon—Sheldon, South Cleave and Strete Raleigh	
Plan Area:	1228ha	
Conifer Felling:	63.7ha	
Broadleaved Felling:	4.5ha	

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

Signed 
Forest Management Director

Date 14/5/2018

Signed 
Area Director

Date of approval... 02/10/18

Date approval ends... 02/10/28



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



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About

The Blackdown Hills Forest Plan area, totalling 1230ha, is made up of numerous forest blocks with a confluence around the complex of woodlands at Neroche. A large majority of the Plan area lies within the Blackdown Hills AONB.

The forests managed as part of the public forest estate stretch across Devon and Somerset from Tiverton in the west and then a cluster of woodlands within close proximity to the town of Taunton. The Plan area is made up of numerous woodland blocks within the catchment of the Rivers Exe and Culm.

The public forest here is a mixture of ancient and secondary woodland having been planted with conifer to address the national timber shortage of the early Twentieth Century. The area has recently gone through significant transformation with considerable areas of pasture and heathland restoration completed in the last ten years. The Plan area is still important in producing quality timber primarily with beech and spruce with areas of remnant ancient semi-natural woodland and wood pasture remaining and restore. Most of the areas are actively managed to provide timber for local and national businesses, and to improve the quality of the remaining tree crop.

The Plan area is rich for ecology with five SSSI and one SAC designations highlighting the high ecological value of the Forest Plan area. The approved management of these sites will be integrated into the Forest Plan to aid and coordinate management. The woodland types include NVC W8 Priority Lowland Mixed Deciduous (ash/birch) Woodland as well as other Priority Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland types which are all important habitat flora and fauna species such as dormice, raptor and lepidoptera.

The vast majority of the Plan area is freehold, with open access permitted. The exception being Priors Park, Buckland, Huntsham and Otterford which are limited to de facto access due to it being leased from another landowner. Neroche is the main focus of informal recreational activity and is particularly nice place to picnic, walk or run given its close proximity to the town of Taunton, good path network and fine views over Taunton Vale.

Objectives

The core aim of the Plan is to deliver the 50 Year Vision by producing woodlands with increased conservation, recreation and landscape benefits whilst maintaining a viable timber output. The long term aim of management is to continue to sustainably produce timber whilst providing a forest rich in wildlife, attractive to people and increasingly resilient to climate, pests and diseases.

The social, economic and environmental objectives of management are:

- Protect and enhance woodland and open habitats and their associated species
 - The restoration and management of the Sites of Special Scientific Interest
 - To protect and enhance areas of Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and restore areas of PAWs in line with 'Keepers of Time'.
- Deliver well-designed forests that both protect and enhance the internal and external landscape in keeping with the AONB and local landscape character.
- The continued production of sustainable and marketable woodland products.
- To conserve, maintain and enhance cultural and heritage assets.
- The provision and maintenance of recreation facilities.

Summary

The current plan outlines management proposals including felling and restocking over several decades, with felling licence approval for operations up until 2028.

Crops in more exposed positions where soils are thin will continue to be managed primarily for conifer timber production under a clearfell and restock scheme. Crops in less exposed positions will be managed to continuous cover forestry prescriptions so as to create a diverse and resilient forest structure.

A comprehensive review of forest and recent heathland and wood pasture creation has meant that an additional 9.5ha of open space will be restored in the next 10 years within wooded heath and wood pasture areas. Restocking design in specific places will look to enhance the heathland connectivity and butterfly habitat.

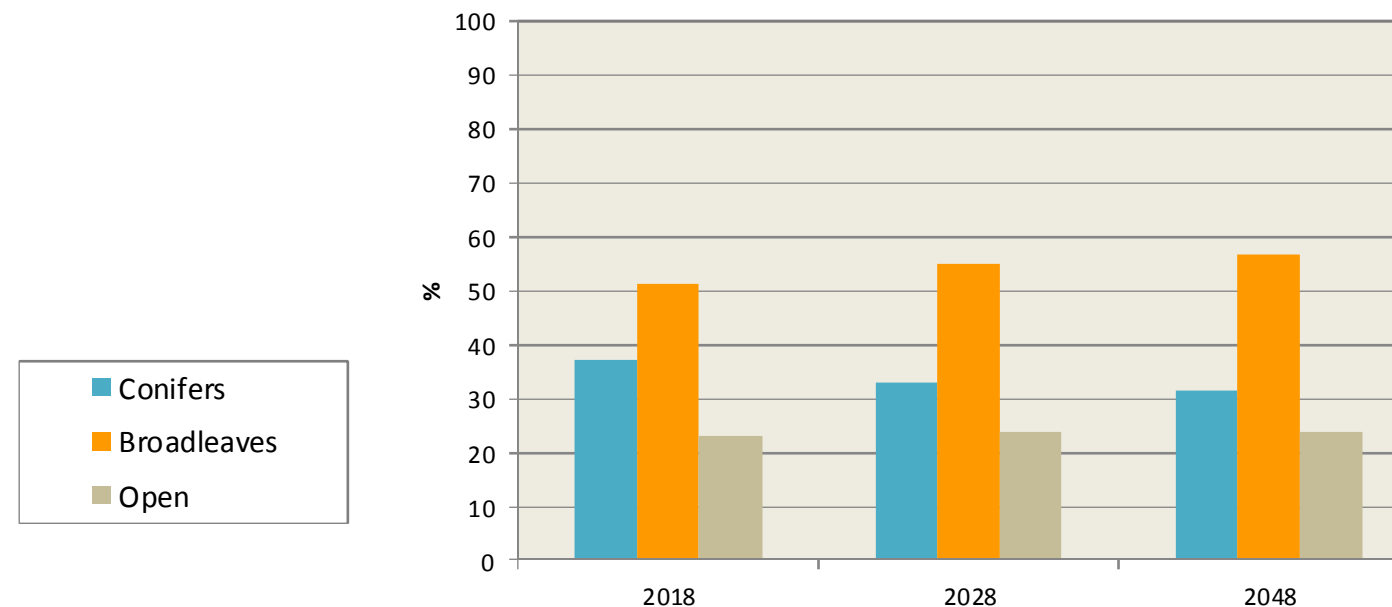
The Plan makes provision to ensure proposals are in keeping with the surrounding densely-wooded, steep scarp sloped landscape. Implementation and maintenance of an environmental corridor system will continue to increase diversity of habitat and internal landscaping.

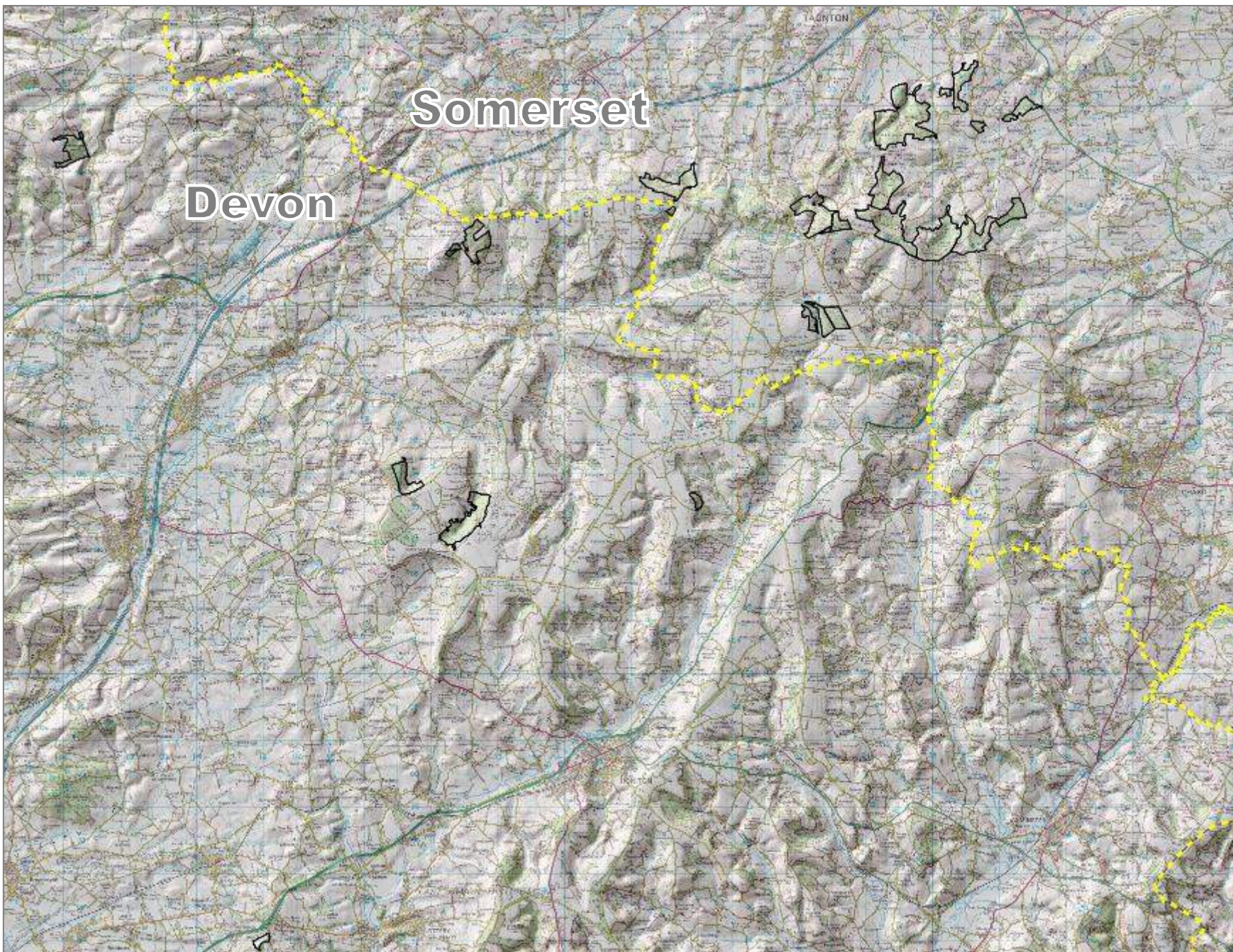
The planned areas of clearfelling, restocking and permanent open space creation during the ten years to 2028 are summarised in the chart below.

In addition to these defined operations, ongoing thinning and selective felling of both conifers and broadleaves will be carried out in the plan area at five to ten year intervals.

HECTARES	Conifers	Broadleaves	Open space
Clearfelling	63.7	4.5	-
Restocking/Regeneration	49.9	18.3	-

The proportions of conifer and broadleaved woodland and open space at the beginning of the plan period are shown in the bar chart. The increase in native broadleaves within the plan period and over time is indicated in the middle and right hand columns of the chart.





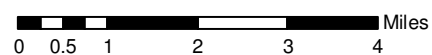
Location

The Blackdown Hills Forest Plan area lies across the border of Devon and Somerset with a cluster of woodlands within close proximity to the town of Taunton. The Plan area is made up of numerous woodland blocks within the catchment of the Rivers Exe and Culm.

A large majority of the Plan area lies within the Blackdown Hills AONB and the many of the woodlands are significant features in the landscape which can be seen from considerable distances. The densely-wooded, steep scarp slopes with both ancient oak woodland and conifer plantations which extend onto the ridges collectively create perceptions of tranquillity.

The majority of the land is at 150-275 metres above sea level and is undulating to steep in places. The climate is warm and fairly moist with an average annual rainfall of 800–1100mm, a soil moisture deficit of around 140mm, and an accumulated temperature over 5°C of 1800°C.

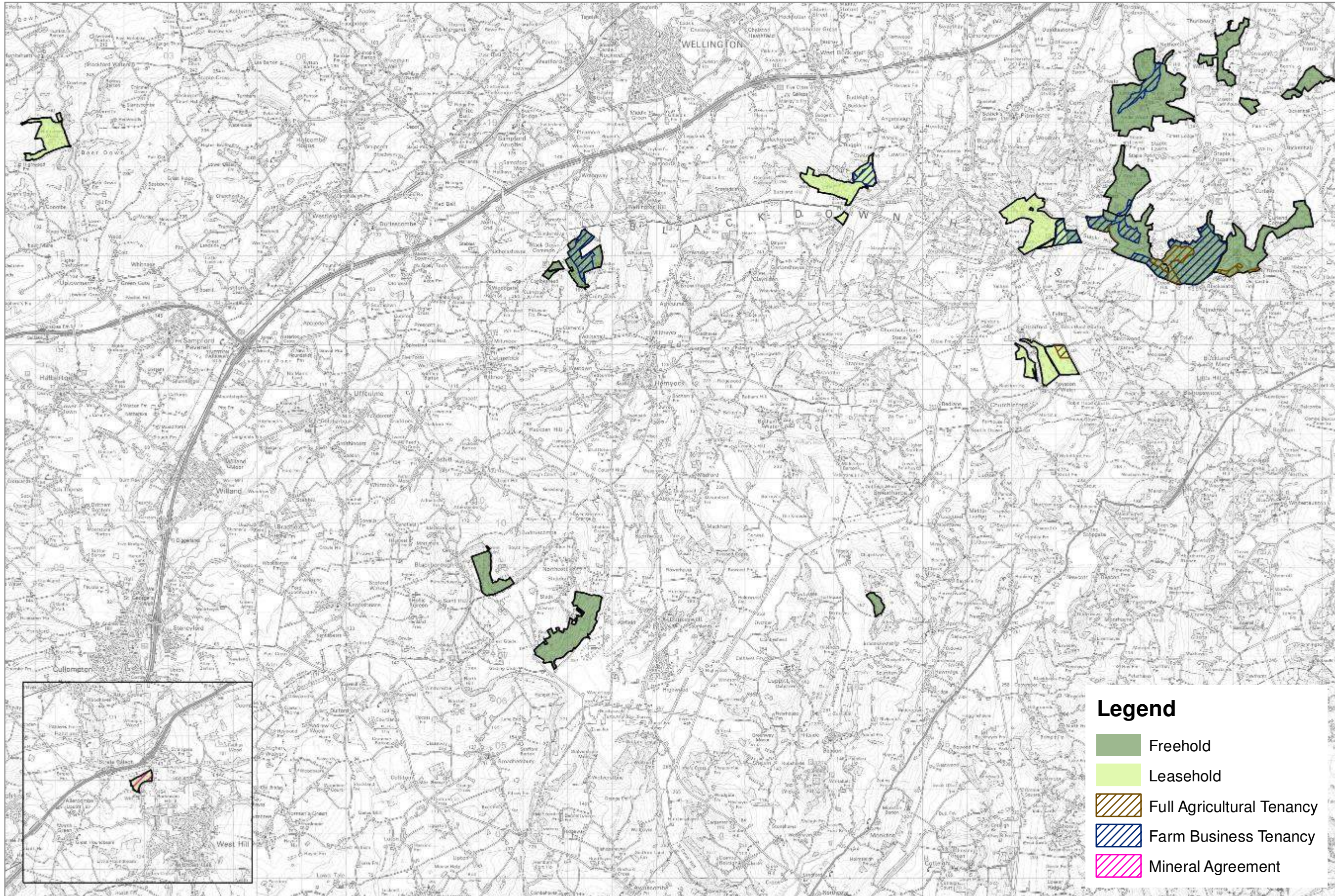
The soils are primarily medium to poor and fresh typical brown earths and surface water gleys with underlay of shallow rock or sand.



	Area (ha)	Percentage (%)
Bickenhall	29	2.4
Blackborough	40	3.3
Buckland	73	5.9
Castle Neroche	111	9.0
Culm Davy	63	5.1
Huntsham	48	3.9
Otterford	72	5.9
Priors Park	103	8.4
Sheldon	97	7.9
South Cleave	10	0.8
Staple Common	123	10.0
Staple Hill	113	9.2
Staple Park	73	5.9
Strete Raleigh	11	0.9
Thurlbear	59	4.8
Wych Lodge	203	16.5
TOTAL	1228	100

Tenure and Agreements

The recent acquisition of the freehold of Neroche in 2017 means that only Priors Park, Buckland, Huntsham and Otterford are now held through leases (totalling 309ha – 25%). A number of management agreements are in place. In particular a full agricultural tenancy on the improved open pasture, farm business tenancies on the restored areas of pasture and heathland, Somerset Wildlife Trust’s management of Thurlbear SSSI and a mineral extraction and backfill agreement for Strete Raleigh.



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Ordnance Survey [100021242]

A 50 Year Vision



The Vision for the future of the Plan area is bold but in keeping with the Forestry Commission's key strategic goals and the local and national value which is placed on the area. Set against the backdrop of the National Character Area whereby *densely-wooded, steep scarp slopes with both ancient oak woodland, carpeted in bluebells and primroses, and conifer plantations which extend onto the ridges*, this Vision looks to achieve an area which is a haven for wildlife, fun and commerce. A element of the Landscape Character Area (Devon County Council, 2008) is to *manage conifer plantations for sustainable timber production, recreation and wildlife, creating new green links to surrounding semi-natural habitats* whilst making a *plan for long-term restoration of the more prominent conifer plantations and shelterbelts to semi-natural habitats ... including re-creation of heathland on the plateau and broadleaved woodland on steep scarp slopes*. In 50 years time this Plan will look to have delivered a rich mosaic of robust habitats which supports a multitude of rare and common flora and fauna species as well as contributing to a low-carbon economy.

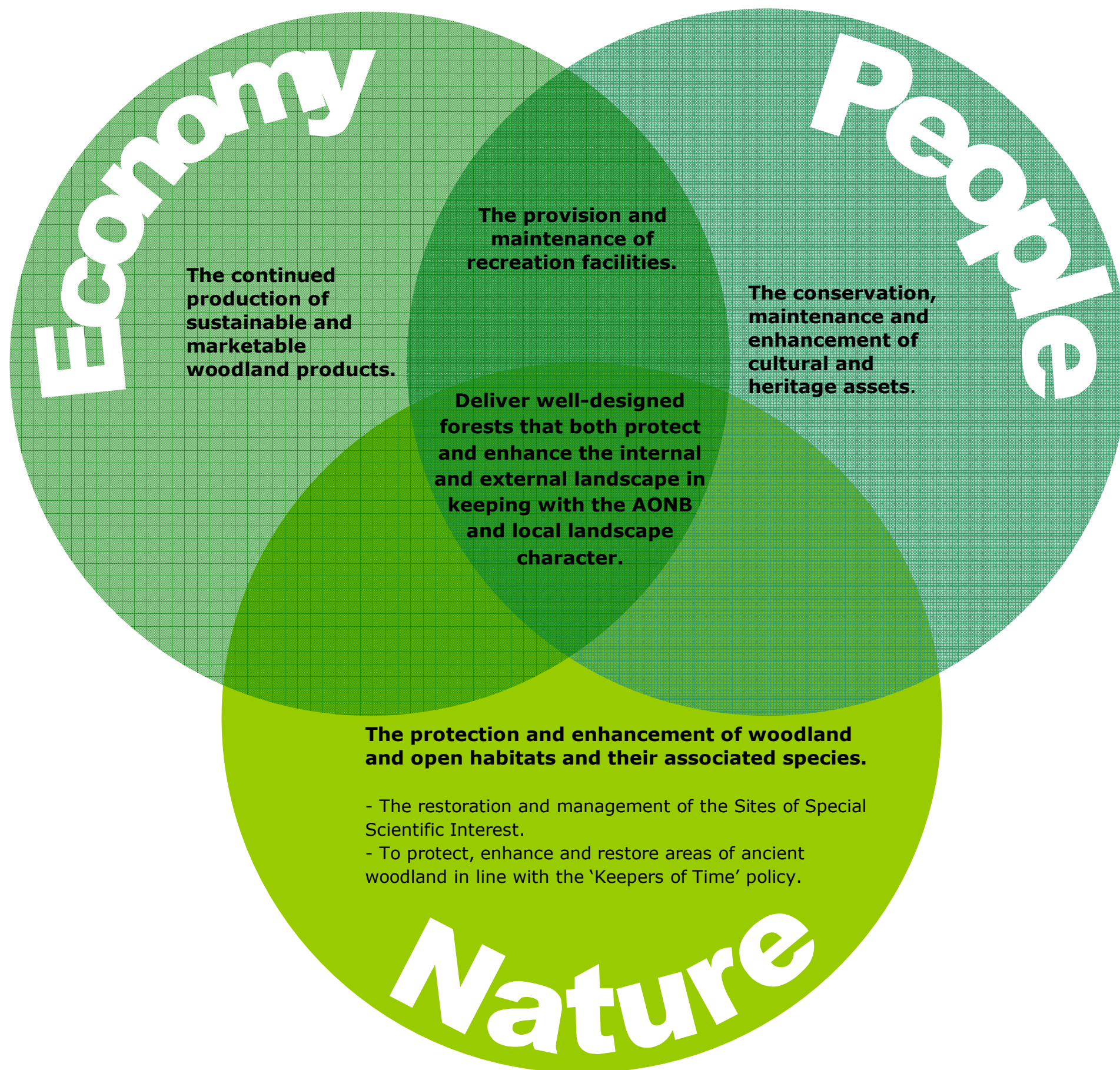
The conifer dominated forest will predominantly be managed through continuous cover forest and low impact silvicultural systems contributing to a vibrant woodland economy. Building on the significant amounts of work already carried out by the HLF project much of the woodland will be restored overtime to native woodland to better reflect the historical cultural landscape. Rare and protected species, such a nightjar, hobby and bats will continue to call the forest home. The forest will also be a popular and safe place to come exercise, learn and relax in a resilient natural environment. The trees will be valued not only for their ecological and social value but also as a timber product, water regulation and for carbon sequestration which as climate change takes effect will be of increasing importance. A diverse structure of young, thicket and maturing crops across the area will provide suitable continuous habitat over time.

Significant areas of restored wood and open pasture as well as remnant and newly created wet and dry heathland will be a haven for a multitude of associated species such as Dartford warbler and Duke of Burgundy and maybe in time, Marsh Fritillary butterflies. These will be bigger, better consolidated and more connected to enhance ecological value and aid effective management. The considerable rides and roadside network will be wider than currently and support common and protected butterflies and other rotational scrub loving species. These areas will also be invaluable to the enjoyment of the area for people, creating windows into the wider forest and out into the landscape.

Ancient and native woodland, a key part of the Landscape Character, will feature more significantly in the area's makeup. Areas will be restored to oak dominated forest cover gradually to support the rare and protected flora and fauna species which populate these habitats. In addition to these, areas of conifer dominated forest managed through continuous cover forest techniques or clearfell/restock will become a home for numerous conifer and edge loving species such as butterflies, bats, nightjar and raptor. Broadleaf woodland will grow in size and improve in condition as restoration to native cover takes affect in certain areas. Managed more sensitively but still with productivity in mind through thinning or coppicing, these more secluded areas will become a haven for a multitude of micro habitats, species and ecosystem functioning. Veteran, mature and future significant trees will be retained and allowed to breakdown providing deadwood habitat and nutrient cycling. Everything from rare dormice and butterflies to lichens will enhance the contribution to ecology, cultural heritage and social value and to the wider landscape. Riparian areas will be enhanced through broadleaf intrusion and opened up to dappled shade to become invaluable to the quality and storage of water that passes through.

The 50 Year Vision outlined in this Plan will be delivered in part over the next 10 years through the Objectives outlined on pages 9 and 10 with the proposal and prescriptions following.





Management Objectives

WEST ENGLAND FOREST DISTRICT

PROTECTING AND EXPANDING ENGLANDS FORESTS AND WOODLANDS AND INCREASING THEIR VALUE TO SOCIETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

The objectives of this Plan will, in part, deliver the *West England Forest District Strategic Plan (2013a)* and the national *Strategic Plan for the Public Forest Estate in England (2013b)*.

Sustainable management of the woodland will be to the standards required to maintain FSC and PEFC accreditation and therefore must deliver economic, environmental and social objectives.

The meeting and monitoring of these objectives is outlined on the following page.



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



Declaration by FC as an Operator.

All timber arising from the Forest Enterprise estate represents a negligible risk under EUTR (No 995/210)



District Strategy

Economy

Maintain the land within our stewardship under FSC/PEFC certification.

Improve the economic resilience of our woods and forests.

Encourage and support business activity on the Estate

Nature

Improve the resilience of the natural environment of the Estate under our stewardship.

Realise the potential of the Public Forest Estate for nature and wildlife.

Maintain and improve the cultural and heritage value of the Estate.

People

Maintain existing established consultation panels and engage with other consultative bodies such as National Park Authorities and AONBs.

Provide high quality woodland based recreational opportunities for people and business focusing on the 3 principle Forest Centres.

Forest Plan Objective

Meeting Objective

Monitoring

The continued production of sustainable and marketable woodland products.

The majority of the Plan area will remain productive through thinning yield.

Some clearfell timber production of mature crops will occur, majority from the conifers.

Comparison of total production forecast yield 26,000m³ (2018-2022) and 55,500m³ (2018-2028) with actual production at the Forest Plan (FP) five and ten-year review.

The protection and enhancement of woodland and open habitats and their associated species.

- The restoration and management of the Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- To protect, enhance and restore areas of ancient woodland in line with the 'Keepers of Time' policy.

Appropriate reinstatement works will be carried out once operations have been concluded.

Protection and enhancement of water supplies and soil quality through sensitive implementation of operations and improved restocking practices.

Restoration of ancient woodland through a gradual thinning process

Management of SSSI's in line with specific management plans towards and maintained 'favourable condition'.

Operational site planning of harvesting and restocking operations will help monitor the effect of management.

Ongoing monitoring of soil and water quality pre and post harvesting with input from outside stakeholders.

Analysis of naturalness scores at Review stage

Through correspondence with Natural England at regular interval — SSSI condition is monitored by NE

Measured at Review stage through analysis of ongoing surveys and records.

The provision and maintenance of recreation facilities.

Visitor numbers will be maintained.

Road and ride corridor and car park aesthetics enhanced and maintained.

Felling together with a delayed restock program will continue to diversify stand and age structure.

Viewpoints enhanced and maintained at time of intervention, where possible.

Visitor feedback comments, to be included in Review where appropriate.

Deliver well-designed forests that both protect and enhance the internal and external landscape in keeping with the AONB and local landscape character.

Implementation of proposals will soften and better integrate the woodland with the surrounding landscape

Fixed point photography analysis at Forest Plan review stage

The conservation, maintenance and enhancement of cultural and heritage assets .

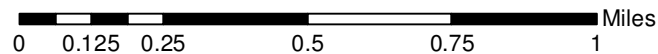
Protect and enhance scheduled and unscheduled sites at the time of intervention.

Operational site planning of harvesting and restocking operations will help monitor the effect of management.



Designations

Blackdown Hills AONB - has a suite of special qualities that together make it unique and outstanding, underpinning its designation as a nationally important protected landscape. Special qualities may be considered as specific components of 'Natural Beauty', distilling out the key attributes that combine to form the natural beauty of the AONB. These are the special qualities we need to conserve and enhance for the future and they should be considered in all decisions affecting the AONB.



Thurlbear SSSI - is a species-rich woodland, formerly managed in a traditional coppice-with-standards system and situated on soils derived from Rhaetic shales and limestones. The recorded history of the site, its Medieval embankments and the presence of several plants normally confined to primary woods, all suggest that Thurlbear is of considerable antiquity. This is leased to and managed by Somerset Wildlife Trust.

Prior's Park and Adcombe Wood SSSI - have excellent examples of several of the broadleaved semi-natural woodland types associated with the Blackdown Hills. Additional interest lies in the occurrence of several areas of unimproved marshy grassland.

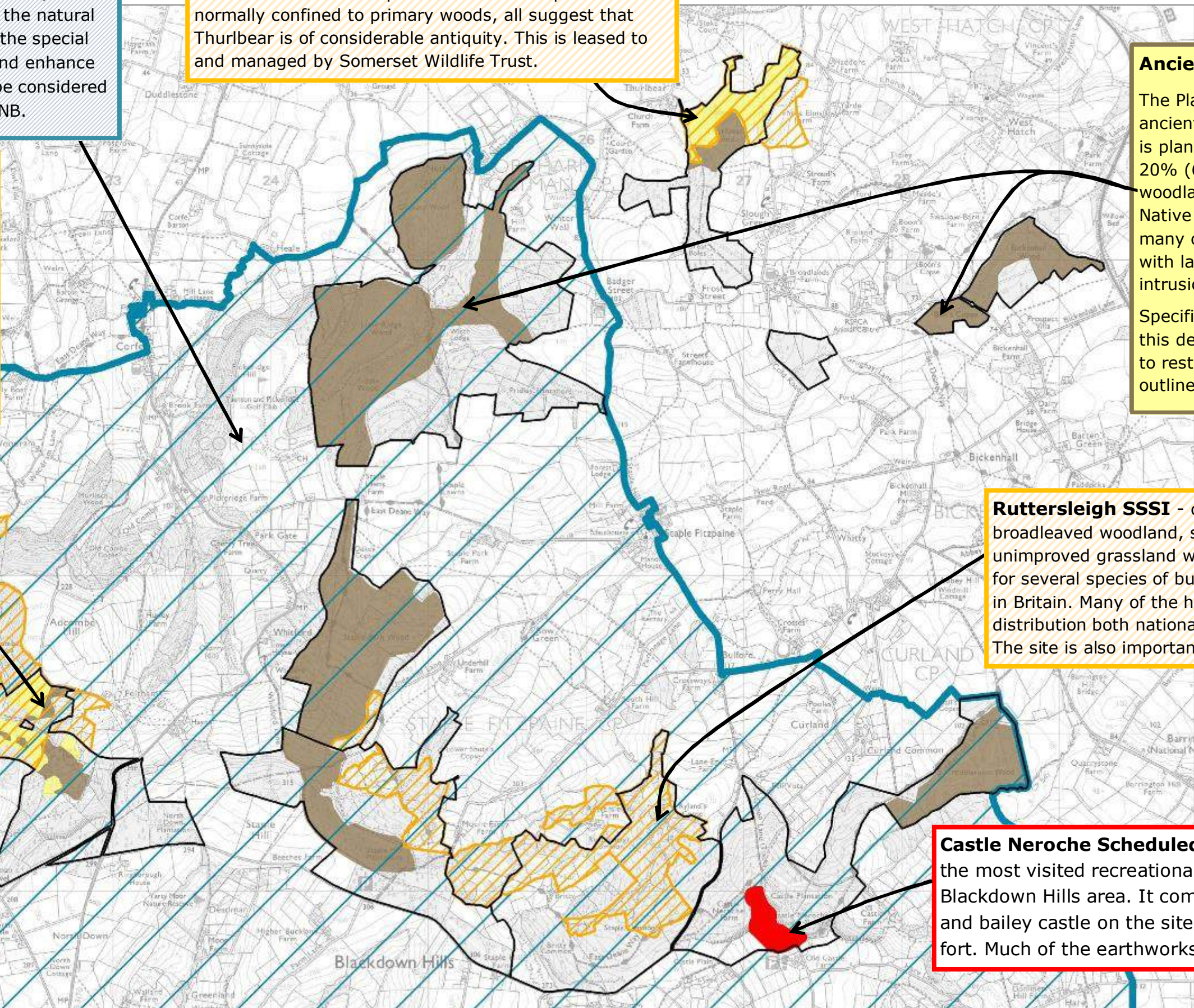
Ancient Woodland
The Plan area includes 347ha of ancient woodland, 298 ha of which is plantation on ancient woodland. 20% (66ha) of this ancient woodland is pure conifer (<20% Native component), which means many of these crops are mixed with large amounts of broadleaf intrusion.
Specific management in light of this designation and the objective to restore to native cover is outlined on pages 20-21.

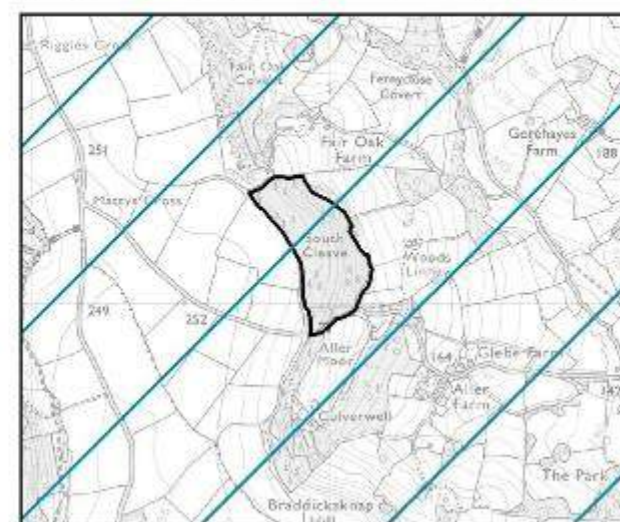
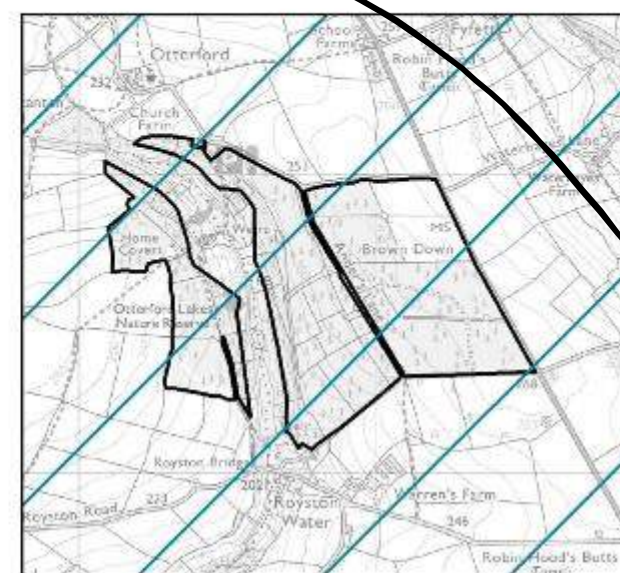
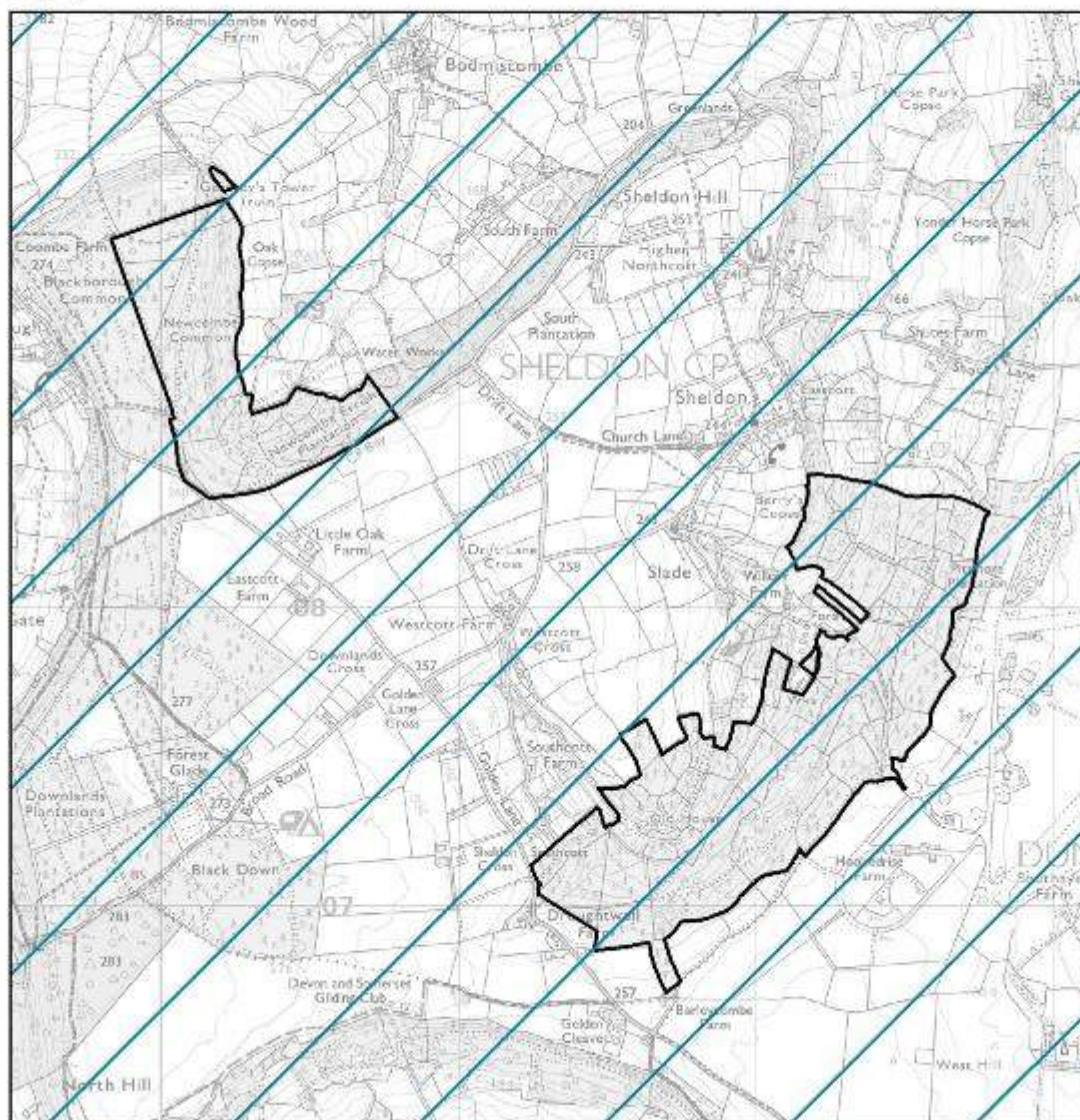
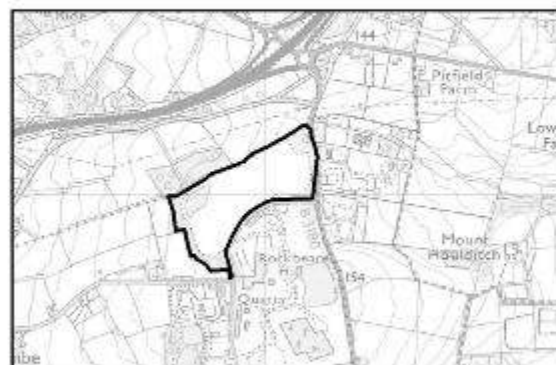
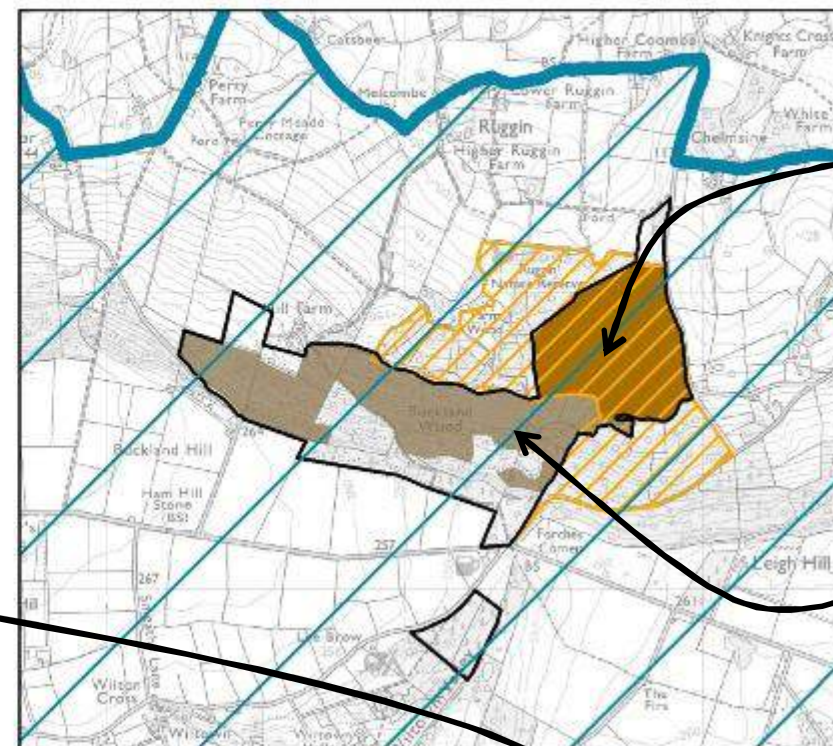
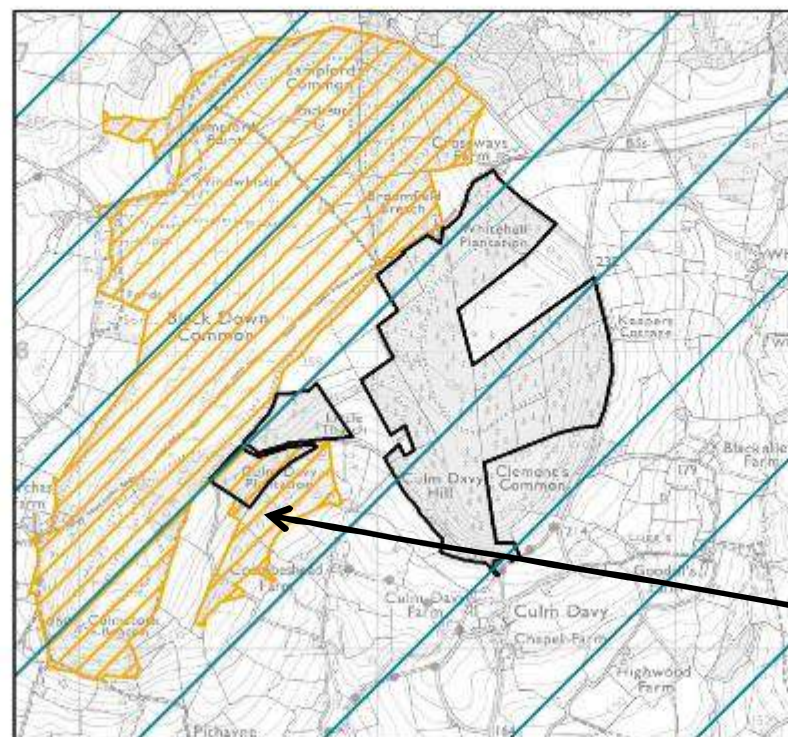
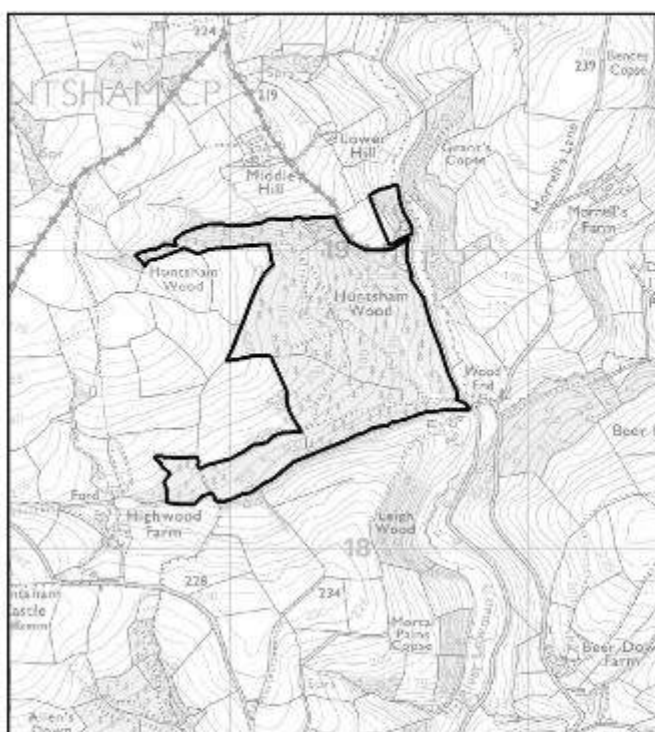
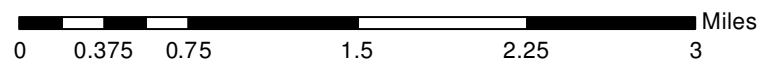
Ruttersleigh SSSI - comprises a mosaic of broadleaved woodland, scrub, bracken, mires and unimproved grassland which provides the habitat for several species of butterfly which are now scarce in Britain. Many of the habitats have a restricted distribution both nationally and in the South West. The site is also important for its lichens.

Castle Neroche Scheduled Monument—is one of the most visited recreational sites in the northern Blackdown Hills area. It comprises a Norman motte and bailey castle on the site of an earlier Iron Age hill-fort. Much of the earthworks are still clearly visible.

Legend

- Special Area for Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Scheduled Monument
- Blackdown Hills AONB
- Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
- Plantation on Ancient Woodland





Quants SSSI and SAC - includes unimproved neutral grassland, ancient woodland, secondary woodland, and small areas of heathland and fen. A number of plants and lichens with a local distribution in Somerset are present and the site also supports an outstanding invertebrate fauna.

Ancient Woodland
 The Plan area includes 347ha of ancient woodland, 298 ha of which is plantation on ancient woodland. 20% (66ha) of this ancient woodland is pure conifer (<20% Native component), which means many of these crops are mixed with large amounts of broadleaf intrusion.
 Specific management in light of this designation and the objective to restore to native cover is outlined on pages 20-21.

Blackdown and Sampford SSSI - has the finest and most extensive surviving examples of the heathland, carr woodland and marshy grassland habitats that have developed on the acidic soils overlying the Greensand and Keuper Marls of the Blackdown Hills.

Blackdown Hills AONB - has a suite of special qualities that together make it unique and outstanding, underpinning its designation as a nationally important protected landscape. Special qualities may be considered as specific components of 'Natural Beauty', distilling out the key attributes that combine to form the natural beauty of the AONB. These are the special qualities we need to conserve and enhance for the future and they should be considered in all decisions affecting the AONB.













- Legend**
- Special Area for Conservation
 - Site of Special Scientific Interest
 - Scheduled Monument
 - Blackdown Hills AONB
 - Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
 - Plantation on Ancient Woodland

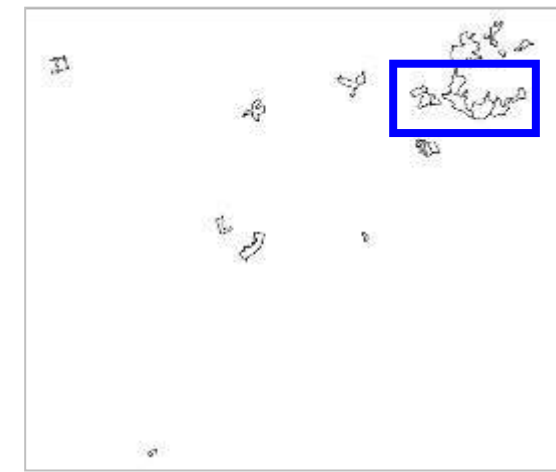
Analysis & Concept

Priors Park, Staple Park, Edge & Common and Castle Neroche

The Neroche complex is situated on the edge of the Blackdown escarpment and is a collection of ecologically diverse, economically productive and culturally significant woodlands 5 kilometres south of Taunton. This rich historic landscape was an ancient hunting forest and as a result contain a large proportion of oak dominated Lowland Mixed Deciduous Forest and large amount of historic wood pasture. The woodlands also contain a large number of significant and veteran trees. The main objective within the ancient woodland areas is restoration to native species cover and the associated ecosystem functioning in an economically efficient way; that is through the tackling of immediate threats and then gradual removal of non-native trees in favour of native species. In other areas the continued production and diversification of timber species will be pursued whilst maintaining a woodland valued for biodiversity, recreation and amenity. This is with the exception of the heathland and pasture which were restored as part of the Neroche Scheme.

Legend

-  Ruttersleigh SSSI & Prior's Park and Adcombe Wood SSSI
-  Castle Neroche Scheduled Monuments
-  Ancient woodland
-  Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
-  Tree of Special Interest
-  Heathland
-  Wooded Heath
-  Wood Pasture
-  Grazing Units (FBT)
-  Primary River
-  Secondary River
-  Tertiary River



Analysis: Prior's Park and Adcombe Wood SSSI have excellent examples of several of the broadleaved semi-natural woodland types associated with the Blackdown Hills. Additional interest lies in the occurrence of several areas of unimproved marshy grassland.

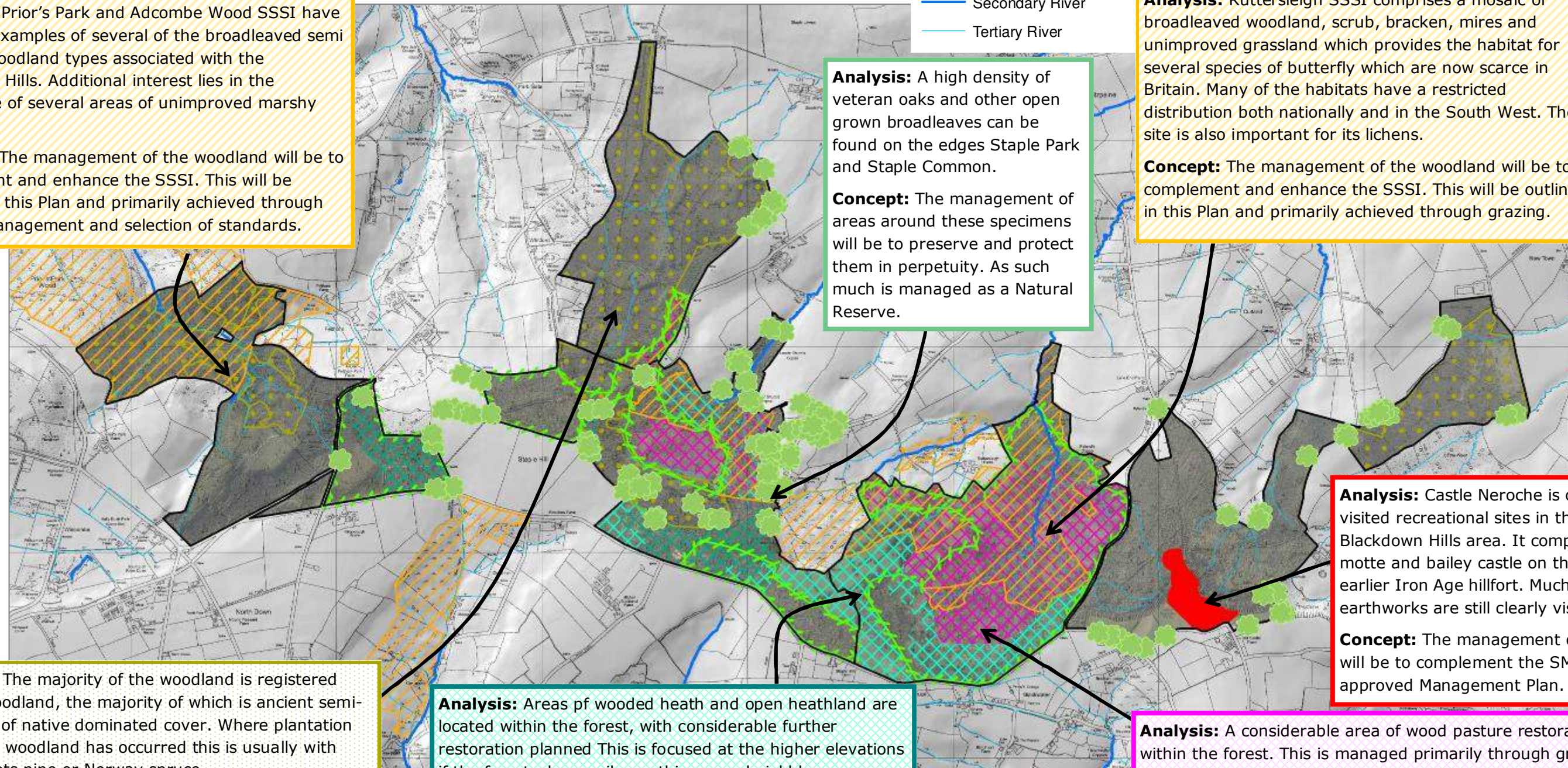
Concept: The management of the woodland will be to complement and enhance the SSSI. This will be outlined in this Plan and primarily achieved through coppice management and selection of standards.

Analysis: A high density of veteran oaks and other open grown broadleaves can be found on the edges Staple Park and Staple Common.

Concept: The management of areas around these specimens will be to preserve and protect them in perpetuity. As such much is managed as a Natural Reserve.

Analysis: Ruttersleigh SSSI comprises a mosaic of broadleaved woodland, scrub, bracken, mires and unimproved grassland which provides the habitat for several species of butterfly which are now scarce in Britain. Many of the habitats have a restricted distribution both nationally and in the South West. The site is also important for its lichens.

Concept: The management of the woodland will be to complement and enhance the SSSI. This will be outlined in this Plan and primarily achieved through grazing.



Analysis: The majority of the woodland is registered ancient woodland, the majority of which is ancient semi-natural or of native dominated cover. Where plantation on ancient woodland has occurred this is usually with beech, Scots pine or Norway spruce.

Concept: A restoration plan whereby threats are addressed and then native features are developed and enhanced will ensure that quality, multi-beneficial habitat restoration of native woodland occurs where necessary.

Analysis: Areas of wooded heath and open heathland are located within the forest, with considerable further restoration planned. This is focused at the higher elevations if the forest where soils are thinner and yield lower.

Concept: An appraisal of these future plans is needed in light of Open Habitats Policy and resource constraints.

Analysis: Castle Neroche is one of the most visited recreational sites in the northern Blackdown Hills area. It comprises a Norman motte and bailey castle on the site of an earlier Iron Age hillfort. Much of the earthworks are still clearly visible.

Concept: The management of the woodland will be to complement the SM and its approved Management Plan.

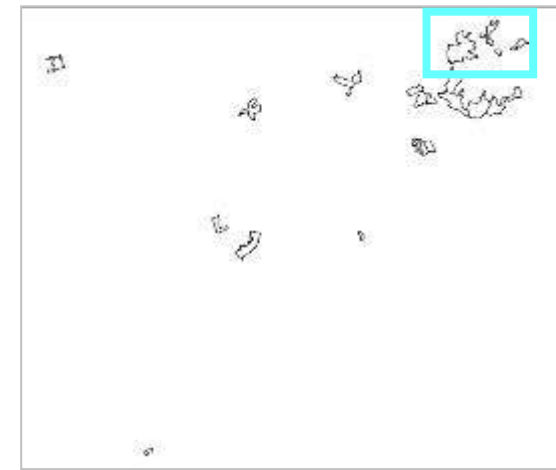
Analysis: A considerable area of wood pasture restoration is located within the forest. This is managed primarily through grazing under a larger Farm Business Tenancy (see green outline) with supplementary mechanical cutting.

Concept: The condition of the units is adequate, however a method of management outside of grazing will need to be proposed in the event that this method of pasture management is no longer available.

Analysis & Concept

Wych Lodge, Thurlbear and Bickenhall

Located to the north of the Neroche complex these stand alone woodlands are ecologically diverse, economically productive and culturally significant. These rich historic woodlands contain a large proportion of oak dominated Lowland Mixed Deciduous Forest with ash as a sub-species, as such it is considered to be National Vegetation Classification type W8. The woodlands also contain a large number of significant and veteran trees. The main objective within the ancient woodland areas is restoration to native species cover and the associated ecosystem functioning in an economically efficient way; that is through the tackling of immediate threats and then gradual removal of non-native trees in favour of native species. In other areas the continued production and diversification of timber species will be pursued whilst maintaining a woodland valued for biodiversity, recreation and amenity.



Analysis: Thurlbear SSSI is a species-rich woodland, formerly managed in a traditional coppice-with-standards system and situated on soils derived from Rhaetic shales and limestones. The recorded history of the site, its Medieval embankments and the presence of several plants normally confined to primary woods, all suggest that Thurlbear is of considerable antiquity.

Concept: The management of the woodland will be to complement and enhance the SSSI. This is led by Somerset Wildlife Trust and will primarily be achieved through coppice management and selection of standards.

Analysis: Young Wood is home to the Neroche Woodlanders, a legacy project from the Neroche Scheme which encourages community engagement with the woodland.

Concept: The management of this area will be sympathetic to needs of the Project.

Analysis: 12ha of wood pasture restoration is located within the forest. This is managed primarily through grazing under a larger Farm Business Tenancy (see green outline) with supplementary mechanical cutting.

Concept: The condition of the unit is good, however a method of management outside of grazing will need to be proposed in the event that this method of pasture management is longer available.

Analysis: The majority of the woodland is registered ancient woodland, the majority of which is ancient semi-natural or of native dominated cover. Where plantation on ancient woodland has occurred this is usually with beech, Scots pine or Norway spruce.

Concept: A management plan whereby threats are addressed and then native features are developed and enhanced will ensure that quality, multi-beneficial habitat restoration of native woodland occurs, see page 20.

Analysis: A dormouse stronghold is known in the north of Wych Lodge.

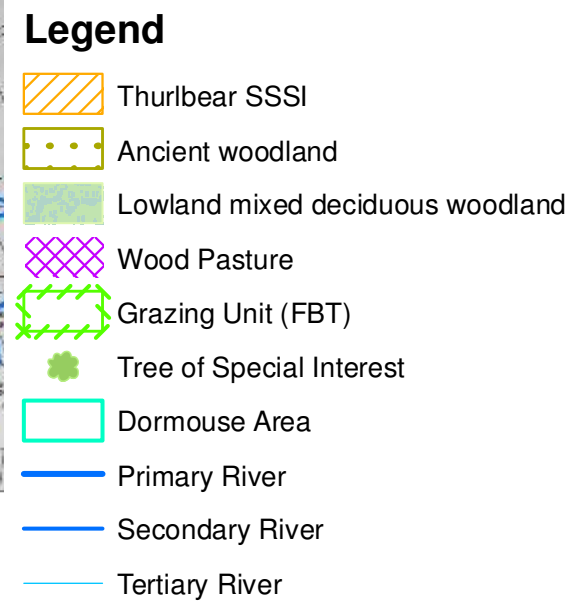
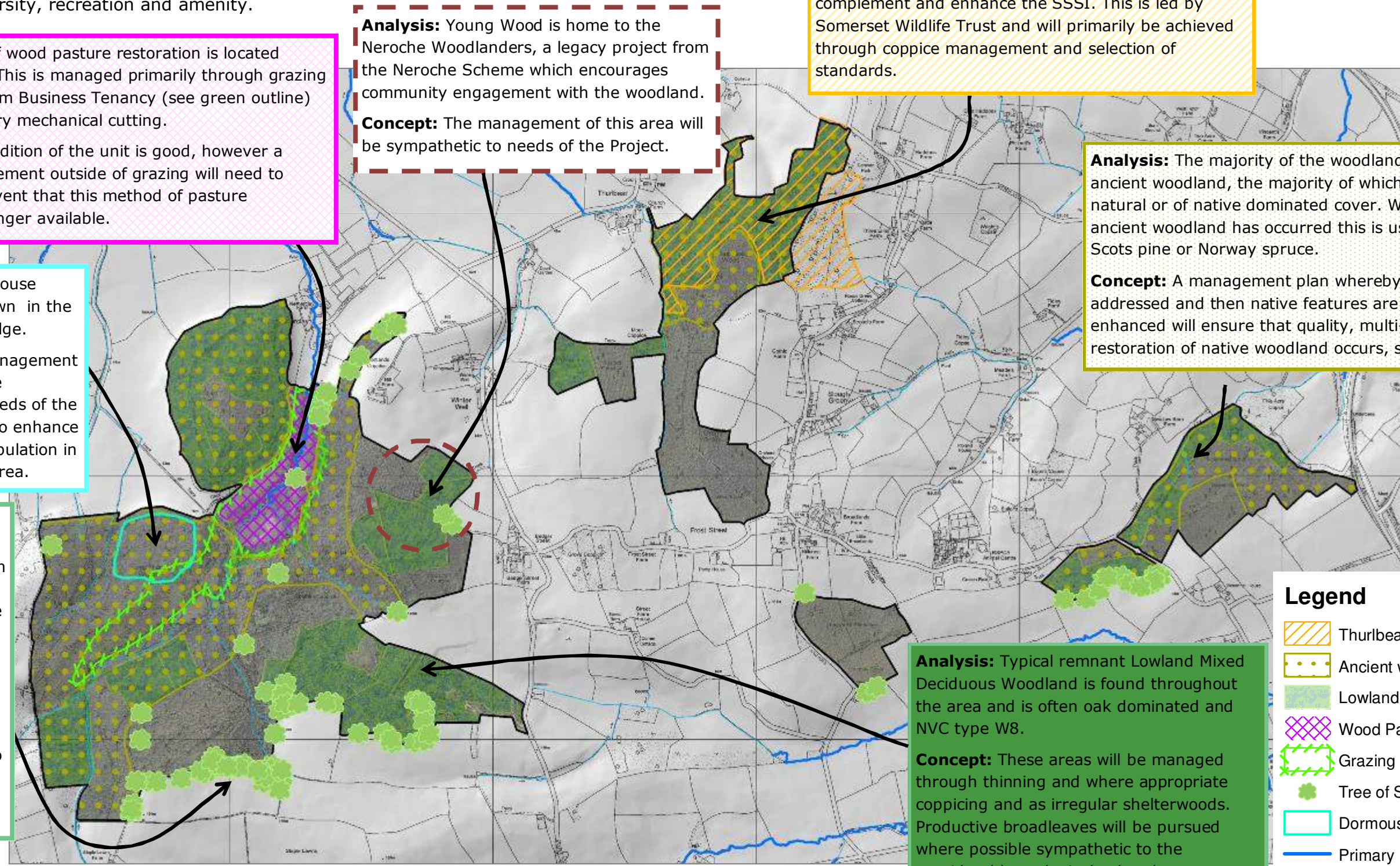
Concept: The management of this area will be sympathetic to needs of the species and look to enhance and further its population in the surrounding area.

Analysis: A high density of veteran oaks and other open grown broadleaves can be found on the edges Wych Lodge and Bickenhall.

Concept: The management of areas around these specimens will be to preserve and protect them in perpetuity.

Analysis: Typical remnant Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland is found throughout the area and is often oak dominated and NVC type W8.

Concept: These areas will be managed through thinning and where appropriate coppicing and as irregular shelterwoods. Productive broadleaves will be pursued where possible sympathetic to the considerable ecological value these woodlands play in the landscape.



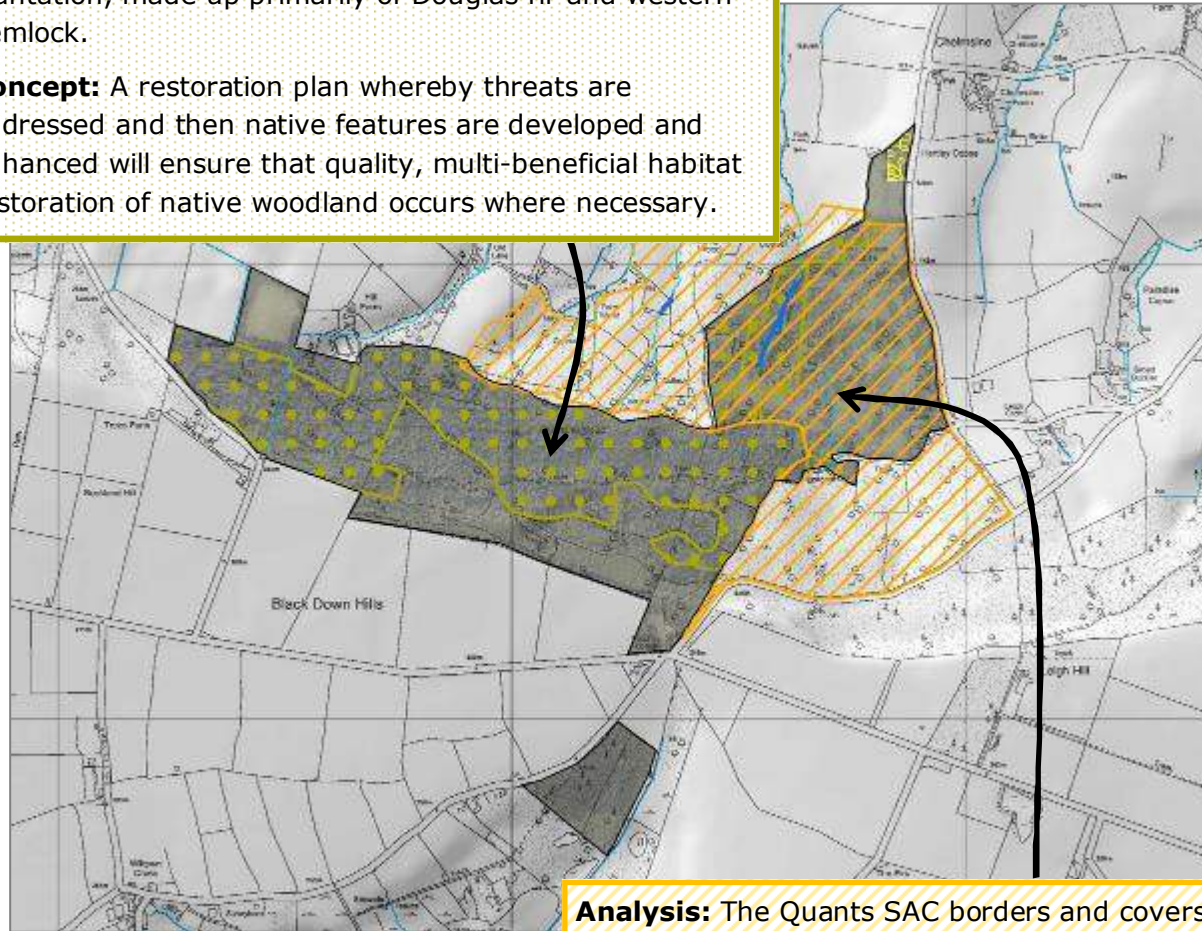
Analysis & Concept

Buckland

This 73 hectare woodland is situated on the edge of the Blackdown escarpment 3 kilometres south of Wellington. Large areas to the north and lower reaches of the woodland are registered ancient woodland on poor ground water gleys. The majority of the site is coniferised with Quants SSSI. The main objective within the woodland will be of ancient woodland restoration utilising continuous cover forestry principles where possible, sympathetic to the ecological (i.e. Quants SAC) and cultural assets of the woodland and surrounding landscape.

Analysis: Well over half of the woodland is registered ancient woodland, the majority of which is conifer plantation, made up primarily of Douglas fir and western hemlock.

Concept: A restoration plan whereby threats are addressed and then native features are developed and enhanced will ensure that quality, multi-beneficial habitat restoration of native woodland occurs where necessary.

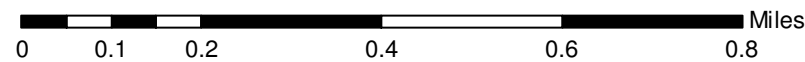


Analysis: The Quants SAC borders and covers a significant area to the north of the woodland. This designation includes unimproved neutral grassland, ancient woodland, secondary woodland, and small areas of heathland and fen. A number of plants and lichens with a local distribution in Somerset are present and the site also supports outstanding Lepidoptera.

Concept: The management of the woodland will be to complement and enhance the SSSI. This will be outlined in this Plan and primarily achieved through grazing.

Legend

- Quants SSSI
- Ancient woodland
- Primary River
- Secondary River
- Tertiary River

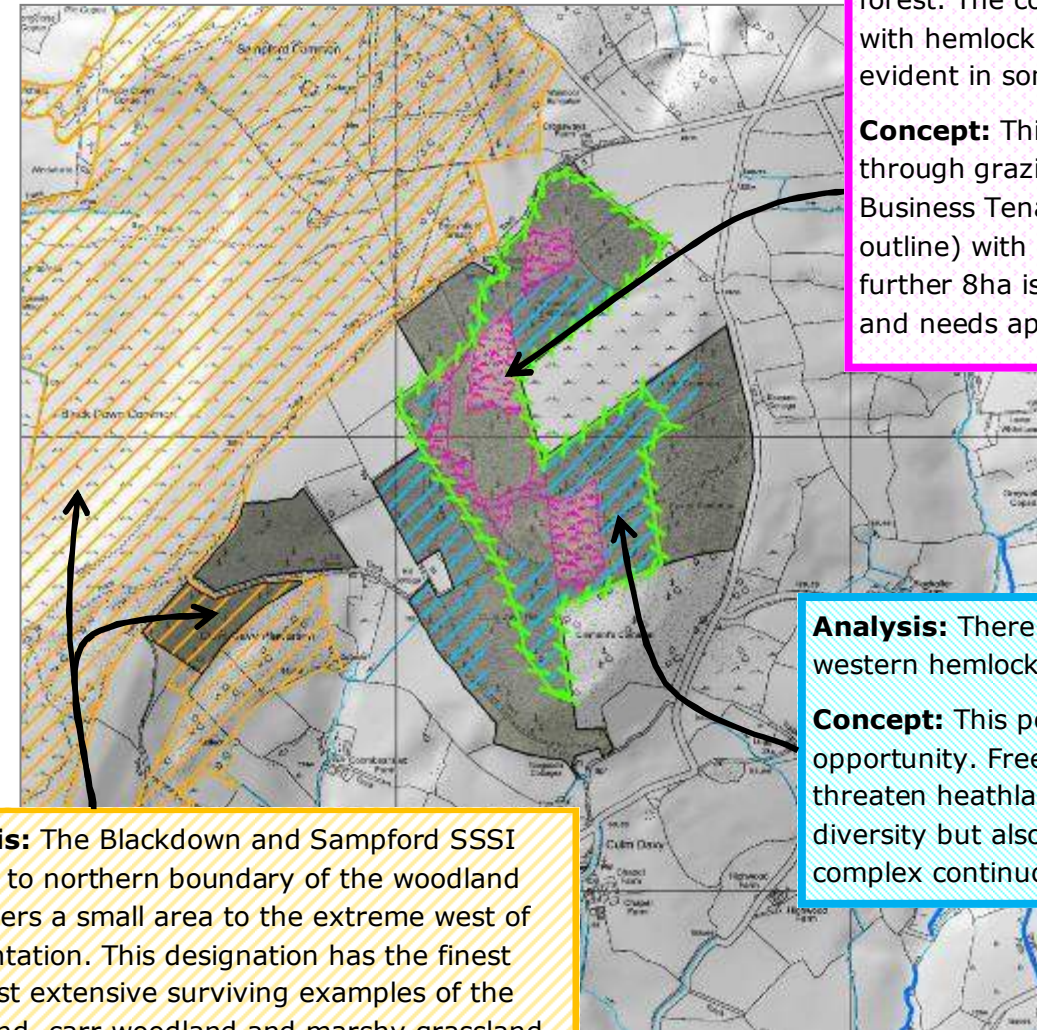


Culm Davy

This geometric, conifer dominated plantation is located on top of an elevation and borders a grazed common, indicative of the site's condition before afforestation, which is a designated SSSI. As a 63 hectare block is relatively close proximity to Wellington and Hemyock, the woodland is a popular walking destination. The soils are poor, wet and gleyed limiting species choice. However the main objective within the plantation will be of productive conifer forestry. This is with the exception of the lowland heathland (7ha) which was restored in 2009 and managed for heathland species, particular Lepidoptera. A further 8 hectares of lowland heathland and 23 hectares of wooded heath restoration is planned.

Analysis: 7ha of lowland heathland restoration is located with the forest. The condition of this varies with hemlock and birch regeneration evident in some areas.

Concept: This is managed primarily through grazing under a Farm Business Tenancy (see green outline) with mechanical cutting. A further 8ha is due in coming years and needs appraising.



Analysis: There is a high proportion of western hemlock within the plantation.

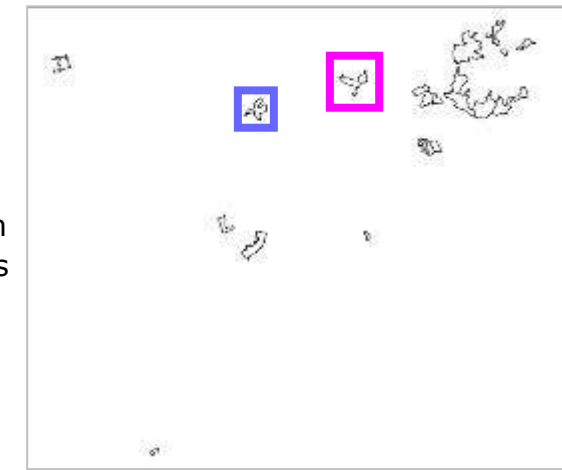
Concept: This poses a risk and an opportunity. Freely seeding hemlock can threaten heathland creation and woodland diversity but also can create a dynamic, complex continuous cover system.

Analysis: The Blackdown and Sampford SSSI borders to northern boundary of the woodland and covers a small area to the extreme west of the plantation. This designation has the finest and most extensive surviving examples of the heathland, carr woodland and marshy grassland habitats that have developed on the acidic soils overlying the Greensand and Keuper Marls of the Blackdown Hills.

Concept: The management of the woodland will be to complement the SSSI. This will through a transition to native woodland overtime.

Legend

- Blackdown & Sampford Commons SSSI
- Western hemlock
- Restored heathland
- Grazing Unit (FBT)
- Primary River
- Secondary River
- Tertiary River



Analysis & Concept







Sheldon Blackborough

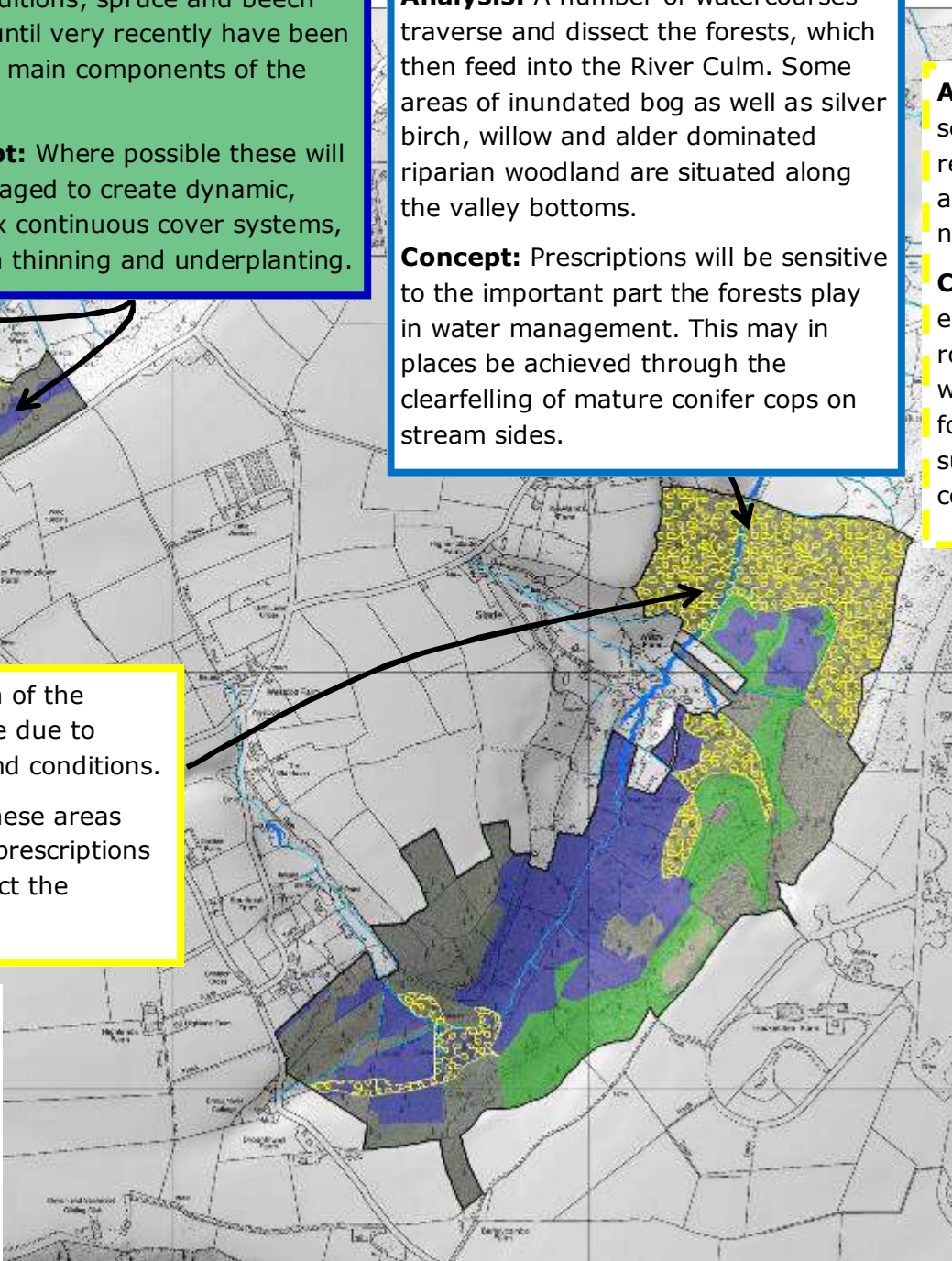
These two secondary woodland blocks of 40ha and 97ha respectively sit elevated within an intimate wooded landscape 8 kilometres east of Cullumpton. Large areas of the woodlands sit on the edge and at the bottom of wet valleys and as such regulate a significant amount of water. The soils are acidic and often gleyed and support a number of marsh and bog areas with associated lichens and bryophytes. Where appropriate the main objective will be of robust productive conifer forestry, sympathetic to the ecological and cultural assets of the woodland and surrounding landscape. However where inundation and thus access is an issue, water retention and regulation and the associated ecologically will be a primary objective.

Analysis: Give the poor and wet soil conditions, spruce and beech are or until very recently have been the two main components of the blocks.
Concept: Where possible these will be managed to create dynamic, complex continuous cover systems, through thinning and underplanting.

Analysis: A number of watercourses traverse and dissect the forests, which then feed into the River Culm. Some areas of inundated bog as well as silver birch, willow and alder dominated riparian woodland are situated along the valley bottoms.
Concept: Prescriptions will be sensitive to the important part the forests play in water management. This may in places be achieved through the clearfelling of mature conifer cops on stream sides.

Analysis: A large proportion of the woodland area is inaccessible due to access constraints and ground conditions.
Concept: A re-appraisal of these areas will be conducted to ensure prescriptions are fit for purpose and protect the features of the woodland.

- Legend**
-  Minimum Intervention
 -  Spruces
 -  Beech
 -  Primary River
 -  Secondary River
 -  Tertiary River



Otterford






This geometric, conifer dominated plantation is located across a plateau in the east and into the valley of the River Otter and Otterhead Lakes towards the west. This 72 hectare block is dissected by a public road and the River Otter. The land adjoining is owned by Wessex Water and managed as a Local Nature Reserve with a Forest Schools and fishing license. The adjoining area also includes some lost gardens, Victorian designed landscape such a a lime avenue and surviving garden plants. The soils are poor, wet and gleyed in the east limiting species choice however deeper and richer brown earths are located in the west. The main objective for the plantation will be of productive conifer forestry sympathetic to the ecological and cultural assets of the woodland and surrounding landscape.

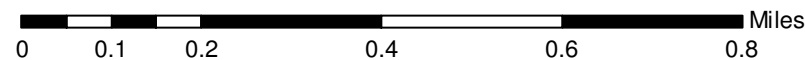
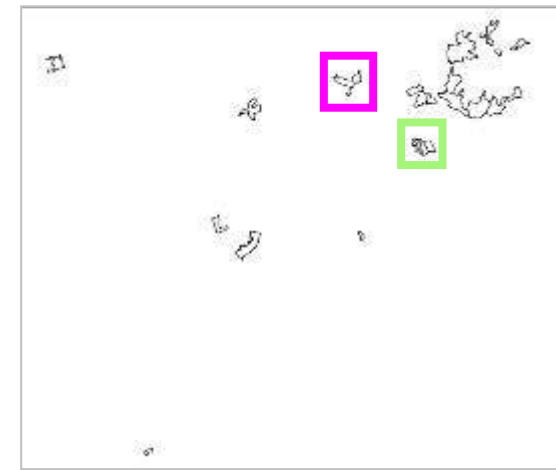
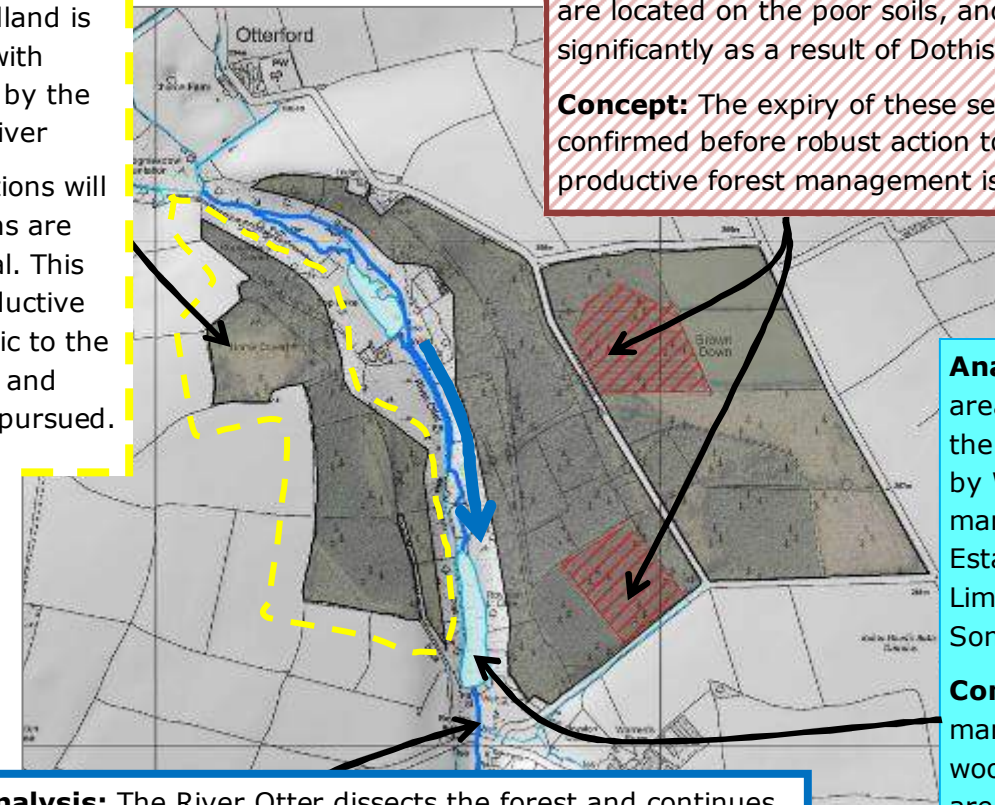
Analysis: The western section of the woodland is relatively isolated with access constrained by the need to cross the river
Concept: Prescriptions will ensure interventions are robust and effectual. This will mean that productive forestry sympathetic to the surrounding assets and constraints can be pursued.

Analysis: A number of Lodgepole pine seed stands are located on the poor soils, and are suffering significantly as a result of Dothistroma Needle Blight.
Concept: The expiry of these seed stands will be confirmed before robust action to reassert productive forest management is taken.

Analysis: The lakes and areas directly adjacent to the River are still retained by Wessex Water and managed by Otterhead Estate Trust Company Limited with input from Somerset Wildlife Trust.
Concept: The management of the woodland close to these areas will be to complement the Lakes and Nature Reserve.

Analysis: The River Otter dissects the forest and continues down to Honiton and Sidmouth before flowing into the English Channel.
Concept: Prescriptions will be sensitive to the important part the forests play in water management. This may in places be achieved through the clearfelling of mature conifer crops on stream sides.

- Legend**
-  Seed Orchard
 -  Otterhead Lakes
 -  Primary River
 -  Secondary River
 -  Tertiary River



Analysis & Concept

Huntsham

This isolated, 48 hectare secondary woodland site is 5 kilometres north east of Tiverton. Large areas to the east of the woodland are mature Douglas fir on deep and rich brown earth. Wetter, more acidic, gleyed soils to the west of the woodland support a mixture of Sitka spruce and significant broadleaf intrusion. The main objective within the woodland will be of productive conifer forestry, utilising continuous cover forestry principles where possible, sympathetic to the ecological and cultural assets of the woodland and surrounding landscape.

Analysis: Significant areas of mature Douglas fir, planted in 1959 are found throughout woodland.

Concept: Where possible, and in light of heavy deer browsing pressure a targeted and robust approach to continuous cover forestry and clearfell restock will be taken to pursue efficient conifer timber production.

Analysis: Areas of mature healthy Japanese and European larch are found along the road side, as well as juvenile ash which is showing signs symptomatic of *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*.







Concept: A plan whereby threats are addressed and robust features are developed and enhanced will ensure that quality, multi-beneficial woodland continues.

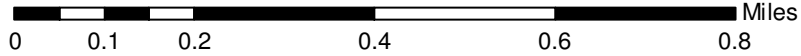
Analysis: A number of watercourses traverse the forest, which feed into the River Lowman which then feeds into the River Exe at Tiverton. Some areas of birch, hazel, willow and ash dominated riparian woodland are situated along the stream sides.

Concept: Prescriptions will be sensitive to the important part the forests play in water management. This will be through targeted removal of some overly shade bearing conifers and management towards 50% open 50% dappled shade, provided by regenerated broadleaves. This may in places be achieved through the clearfelling of mature conifer cops on stream sides.

Analysis: This area is soft and wet with significant complexities and gullies in places. Birch and hazel intrusion is prolific here.

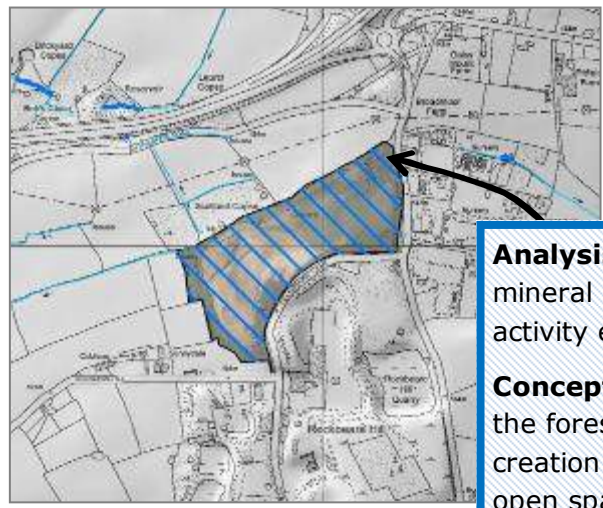
Concept: A sympathetic approach will be taken here to protect soil and enable water regulation whilst maintaining productive output.





- Legend**
-  Plant health risk
 -  Mature D. fir
 -  Wet area
 -  Primary River
 -  Secondary River
 -  Tertiary River



Strete Raleigh

Also known as Marsh Broadmoor, this small (10ha) isolated, site is situated between West Hill and Rockbeare 10 kilometres east of Exeter. The entirety of the site has been used as a mineral extraction quarry since, on lease to Aggregate Industries. With extraction ceased the site has since been used as an infill site for inert material from surrounding developments. This activity too is now drawing to a close with the site due to be capped in the coming years. As part of the agreement, and in line with a planning application trees will be replanted on the site to create a pleasant amenity broadleaved woodland.



- Legend**
-  Aggregate Industries lease
 -  Primary River
 -  Secondary River
 -  Tertiary River

Analysis: The entirety of the area is leased and used for mineral purposes. The use of this site will change once this activity ends in the near future.

Concept: Prescriptions will be sensitive to the important part the forests play in the landscape. This will be through the creation of amenity woodland, with considerable allowance for open space and permissive access paths.

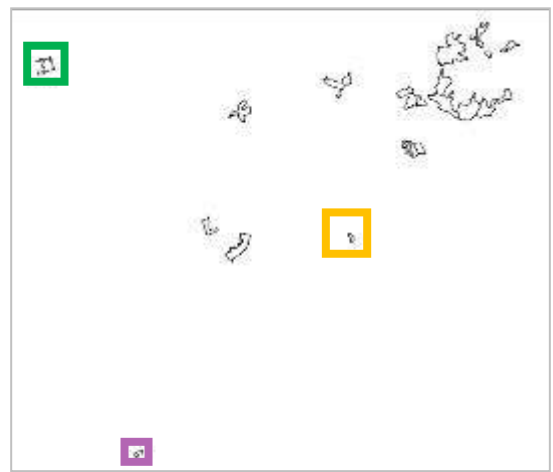
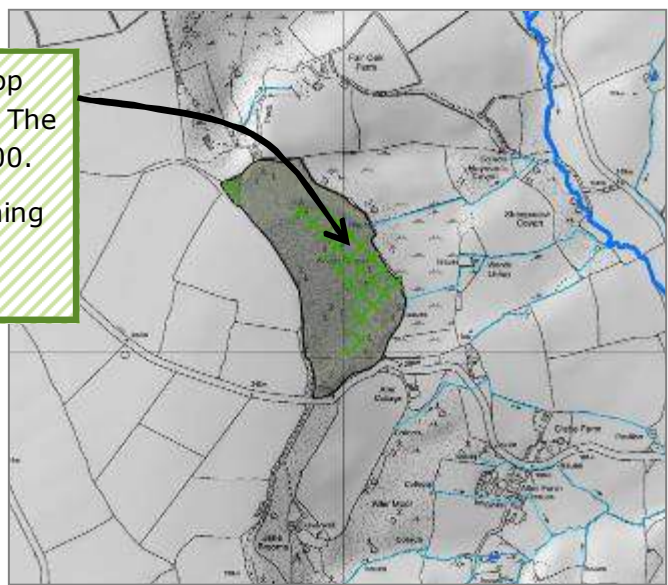
South Cleave

This small and secluded 10 hectare woodland is situated between Uptottery and Dunkerswell. The woodland is made up of over 70% Douglas fir of varying ages, on deep and rich brown earth. The site is slightly sloping towards a southerly aspect and sits within an intimate valleyed and wooded landscape. The main objective within the woodland will be of productive conifer forestry, utilising continuous cover forestry principles where possible, sympathetic to the ecological and cultural assets of the woodland and surrounding landscape.

Analysis: Two discrete areas of mature Douglas fir crop remain (planted 1960) as overstorey and seed source. The remainder of the area is made up of planting since 2000.

Concept: Despite a small critical viable areas for thinning a continuous cover forestry approach will be taken to pursue efficient conifer timber production.

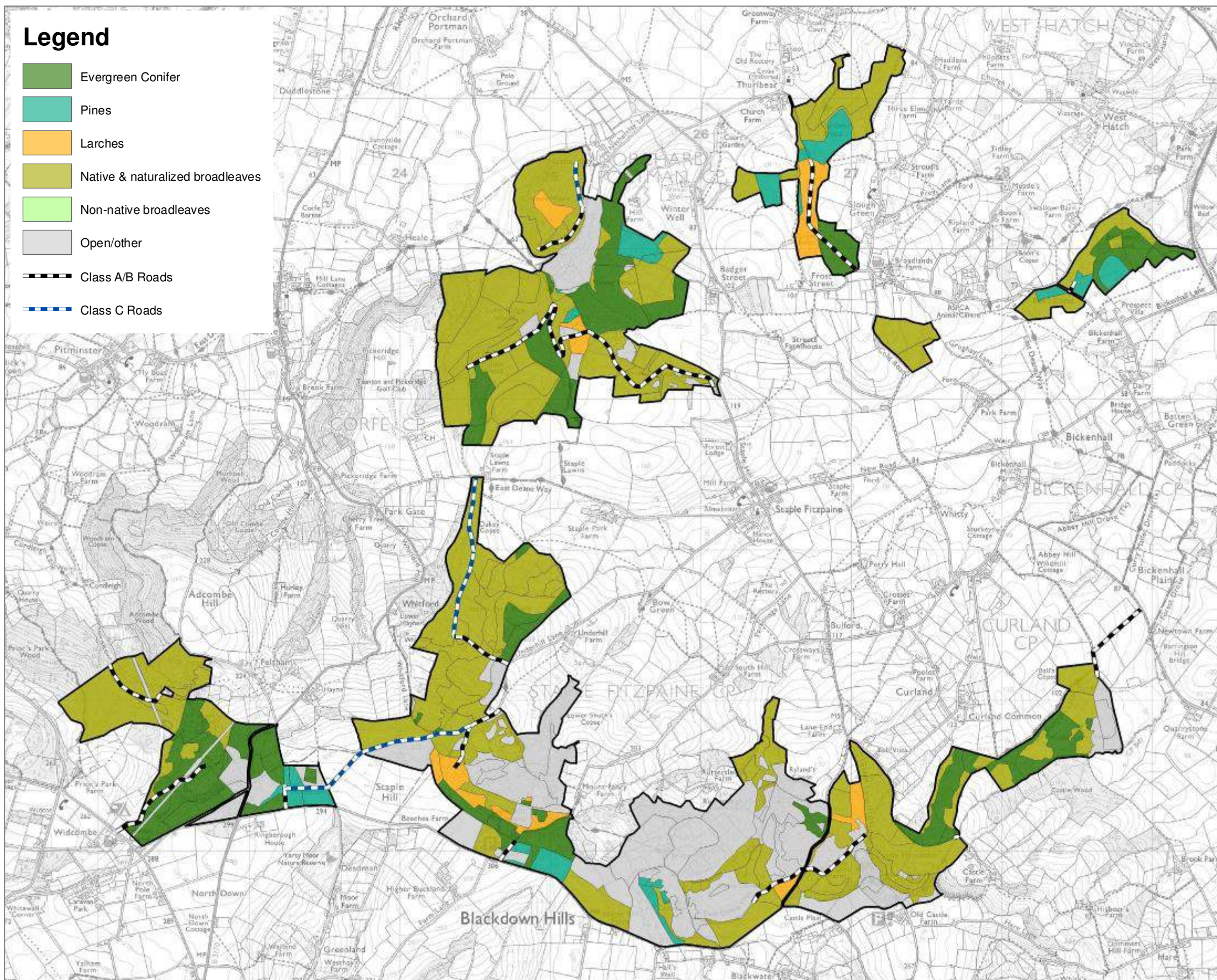
- Legend**
-  Mature D. fir





Legend

- Evergreen Conifer
- Pines
- Larches
- Native & naturalized broadleaves
- Non-native broadleaves
- Open/other
- Class A/B Roads
- Class C Roads

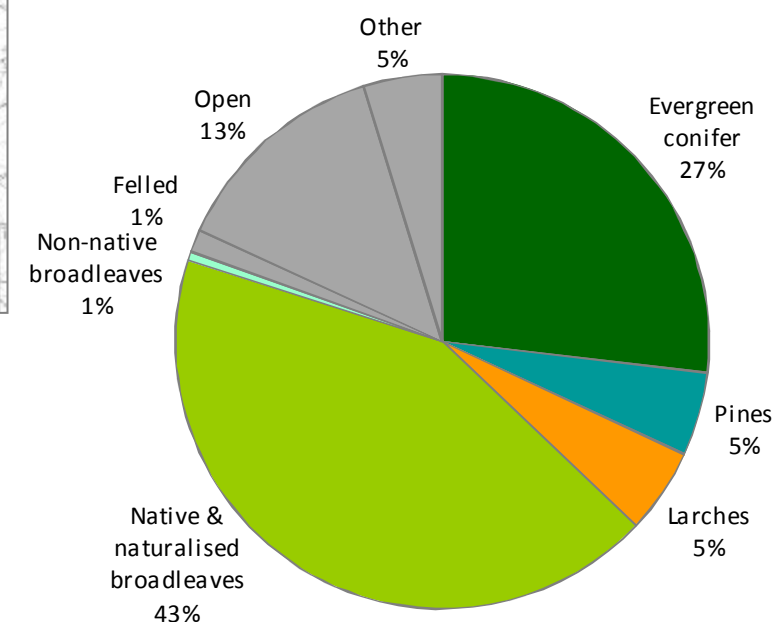


Woodland Composition

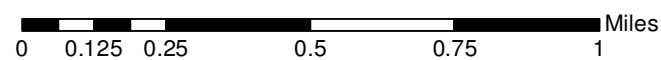
The Plan area is broadleaf dominated with some ancient semi-natural and conifer plantation. The vast majority of broadleaf components are made up of quality sessile, pedunculated and hybrid oak (147ha) with ash (119ha) and beech (129ha) the major supplementary species. Birch, alder and willow are evident as pioneer species within discrete parts of the Plan area. The broadleaf components comprise a mixture of ancient semi-natural oak, ash and beech assemblages and younger plantings and regeneration. The thinning of conifer crops has ensured that understorey development is beginning to establish, which in time will deliver a more structurally diverse woodland composition.

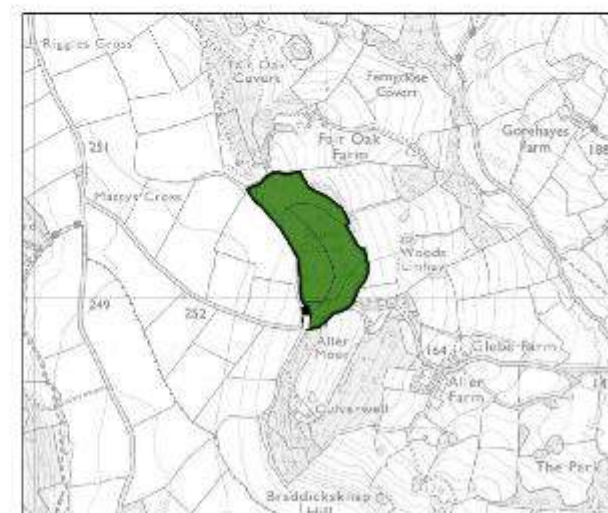
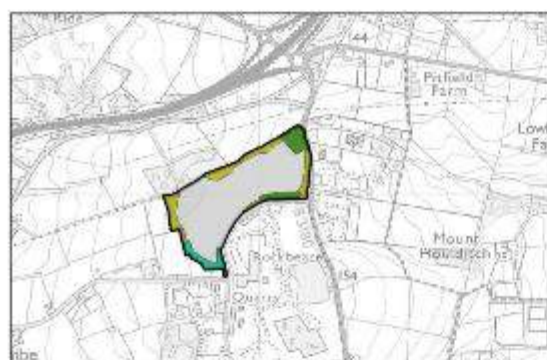
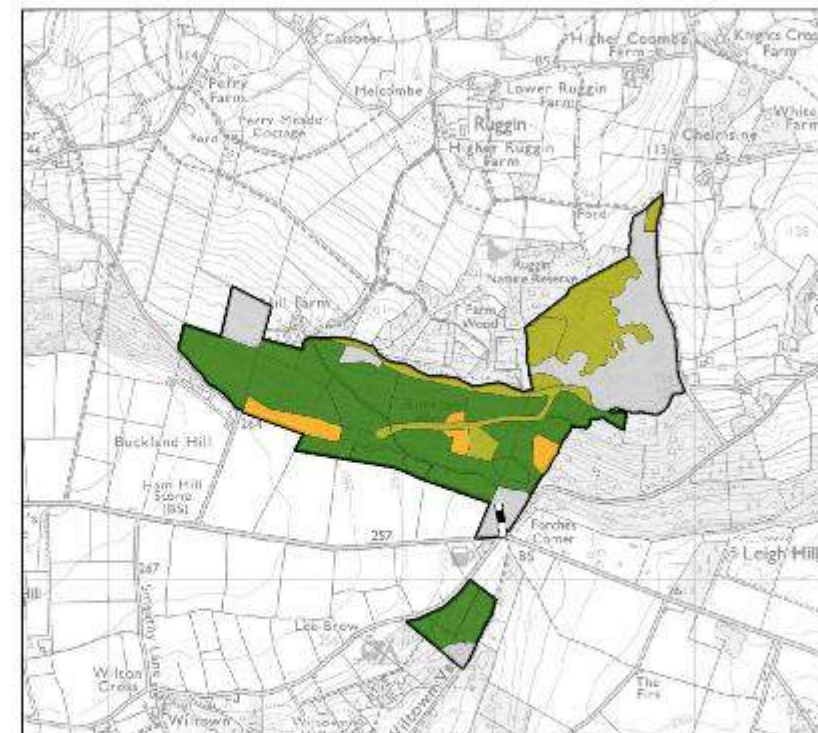
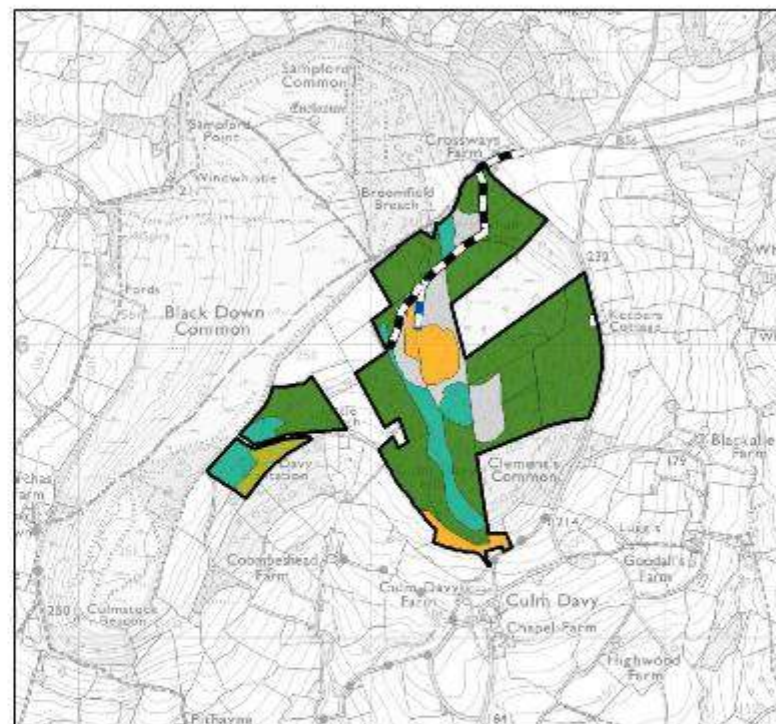
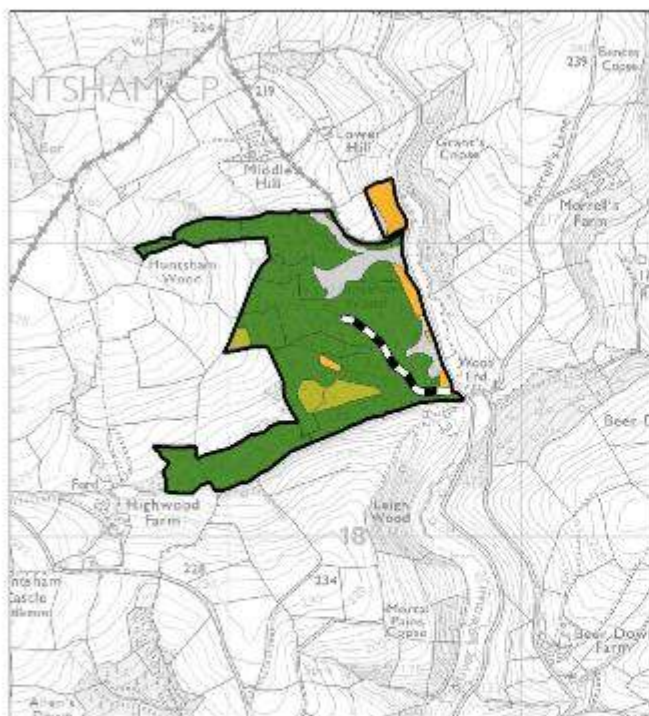
The majority of the conifer components are made up of Sitka spruce (95ha) and Douglas fir (90ha) with Norway spruce having been much more prevalent before significant clearing in the last decade reduced the areas to 64ha. The majority of stands are even aged with a significant amount of broadleaf intrusion and understorey development.

Open space makes up a considerable proportion of the Plan area, much of this was created in the last 10 years within the Neroche area and surrounding woodlands. The majority of this is restored wood pasture and wet heathland, much of which is grazed.



Note: Beech, sycamore and sweet chestnut are considered to be not within their native range but are considered to be 'naturalised'



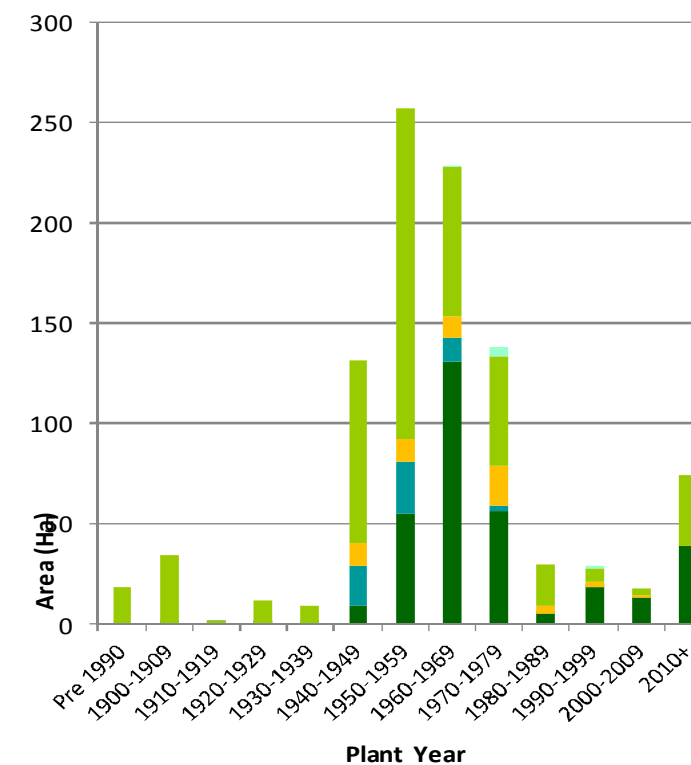


The majority of broadleaved stands are even aged with understory development evident but not always establishing as a secondary crop. Where broadleaf features within conifer crops these have been favoured and halo thinned where appropriate to assist crown development. Broadleaf crops also vary in age with significant planting and regeneration establishment occurring in the early 1900s.

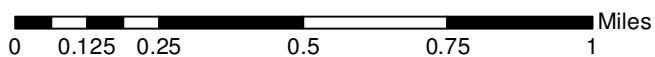
The age of conifer crops is well spread with considerable levels of planting having occurred in the 1950s and 1960s.

Legend

- Evergreen Conifer
- Pines
- Larches
- Native & naturalized broadleaves
- Non-native broadleaves
- Open/other
- Class A/B Roads
- Class C Roads



Note: Beech, sycamore and sweet chestnut are considered to be not within their native range but are considered to be 'naturalised'





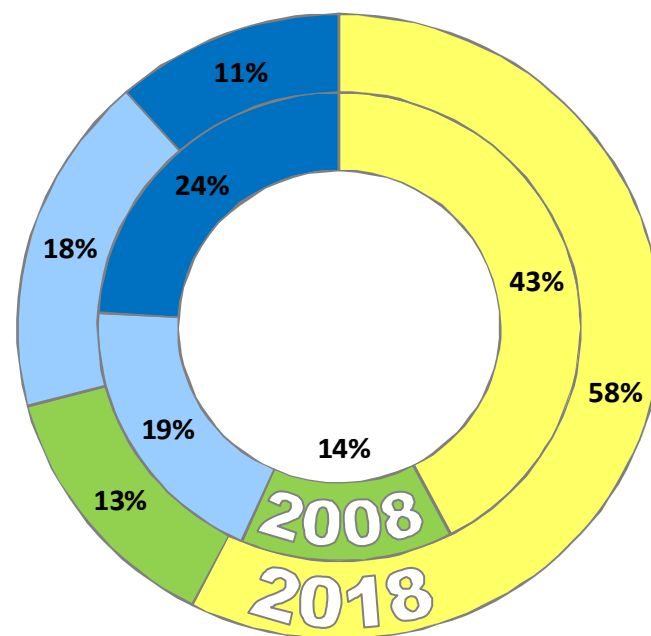
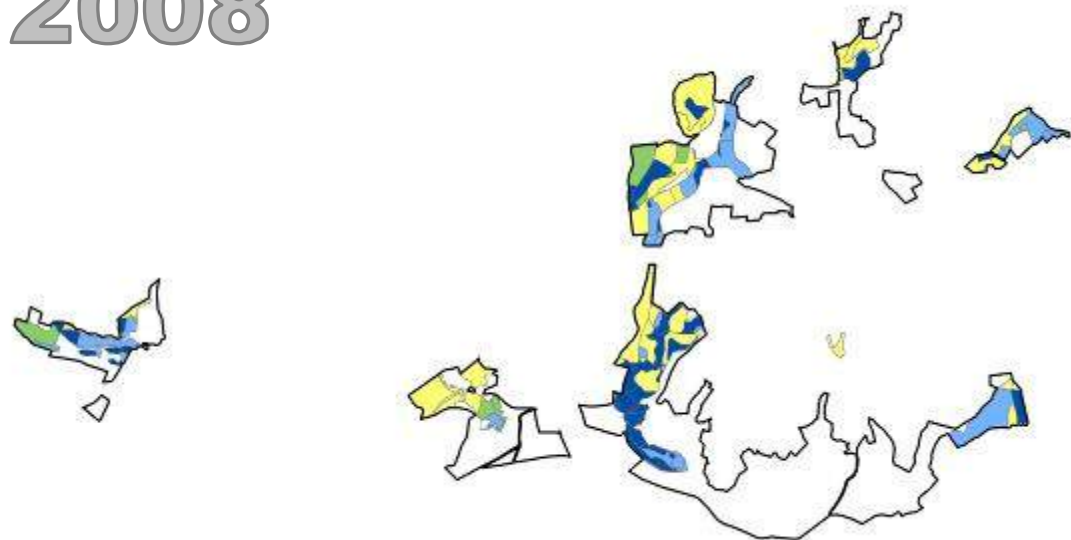
Class 4 - Plantation Woodland
(< 20% site native species)

Class 3 - Plantation Woodland
(20 - 50% site native species)

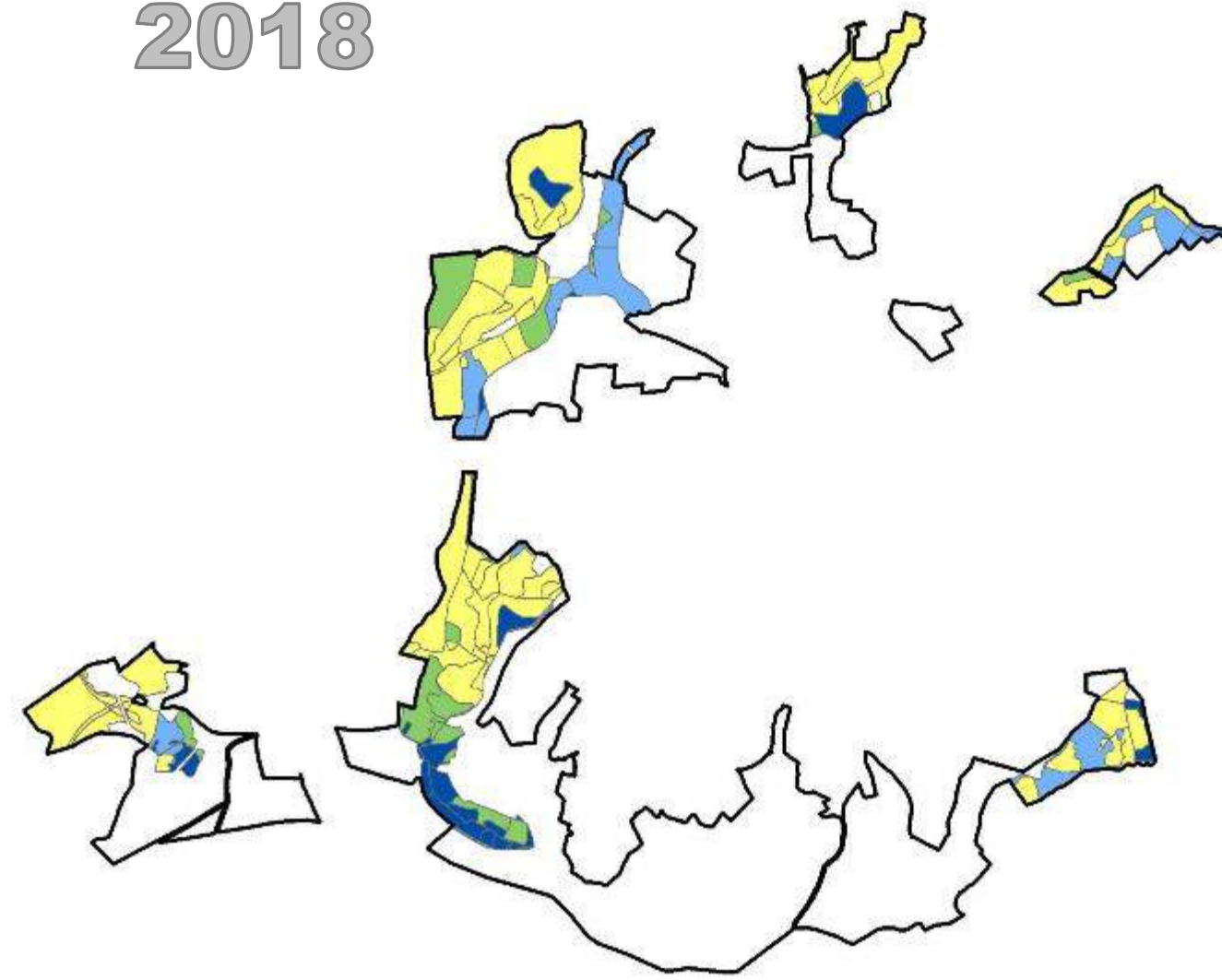
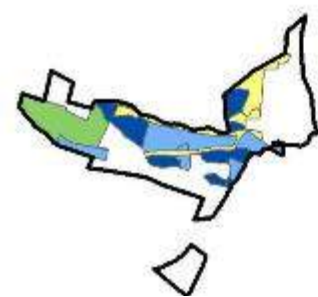
Class 2 - Plantation Woodland
(50 - 80% site native species)

Class 1 - Semi-Natural Woodland
(> 80% site native species)

2008

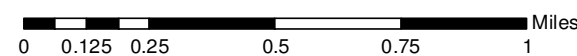


2018



Legend

- Class 1 - > 80% Site Native Species
- Class 2 - 50-80% Site Native Species
- Class 3 - 20-50% Site Native Species
- Class 4 - <20% Site Native Species



Naturalness on Ancient Woodland

Naturalness is the measure to show the percentage of site native tree species in a given area. This measure is used to record and monitor the condition and restoration of Ancient Woodland Sites previously planted with non-native species. For this reason secondary woodland sites have been omitted from this chapter.

Classes 2, 3 and 4 are classified as Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS). Areas of Semi-Natural Woodland (Class 1 - > 80% site native species) are mostly found towards the bottom of valleys, in wetter riparian areas where the soils are richer.

The transformation of Classes 2, 3 and 4 AWS towards Class 1 is a key objective of this Plan and is in line with the Forestry Commission England, *Keepers of Time* Policy (Forestry Commission, 2005).

These maps and chart show the transition in naturalness across the ancient woodland in the Plan Area between 2008 and 2018.



PAWS Management

Restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) has already begun and this continued restoration is going to take a considerable amount of time and resource.

Therefore a proactive yet realistic approach will be used to transform these sites over a period of time.

The aim of the transitional period to woodland containing 80% or more of native species should be to achieve:

- a varied age structure with varying ratios of high canopy, secondary canopy and understory throughout.
- transition that ensures a minimum future content of 3 native species, with 4 to 5 species being the preferable target.
- a minimal reliance on monocultures especially of birch, ash, hazel or oak. In practice this may involve either underplanting or group felling and planting within existing mid rotation broadleaf crops.
- restoration of beech and sweet chestnut stands will not be prioritised as these species are considered to be naturalised and offer greater broadleaf diversity and therefore resilience.
- If adequate regeneration is not evident in the 'Transition' and 'Preparation' zones after 10 years a reappraisal of the prescription will be needed.

Transition Zone

The indicative proportion of native tree species is 50% or more of the crop. Removal of remaining conifer will be achieved through repeated thinning operations.

The establishment period to predominantly native woodland within this category is anticipated to be 20 – 30 years but is dependant on successful regeneration and establishment although maybe sooner depending on the level of conifer needing to be removed. Scattered individual conifers or small groups may remain.

Preparation Zone

Areas within this category contain less than 50% of native tree species but have a proportion greater than 20% of the crop and the area neighbours an area of significant native species cover which can be utilised as a seed source. Enhancement of native content will continue through thinning of the conifer content.

These areas will be thinned heavily to release ancient woodland remnants and features and to encourage natural regeneration and intrusion in to the non-native crop.

The anticipated time scale for establishment of predominantly native species is expected be around 50 – 60 years or so, but could be as long as 70 - 80 depending on success of establishing the future crop.

Non-native Zone

The proportion of native tree species within a management area is less than 20% of the crop.

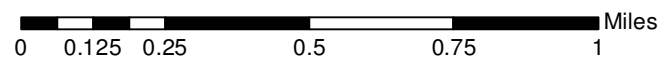
Thinning in both these sub-categories should encourage crown development of broadleaf components. Progress will be monitored and crops moved into the Preparation zone depending on development of stand structure and the response of natural regeneration.

Clearfell Zone

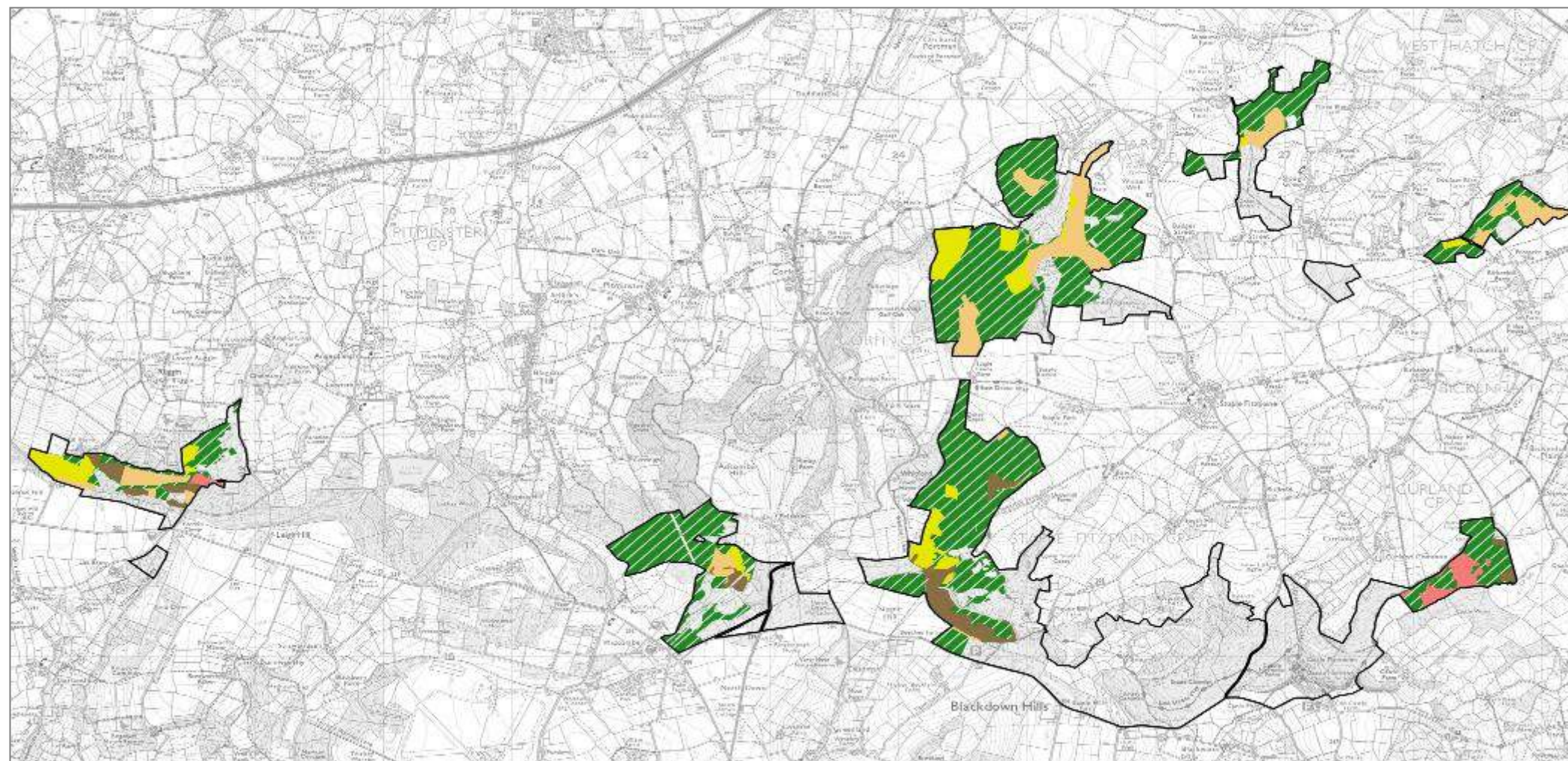
Two clearfells will be used to convert PAWS. This is felling of Western hemlock and wind vulnerable Norway spruce is required to ensure the integrity of the coupe which is predominantly secondary woodland. This will be restocked with site suitable native species

Legend

- Building Block (native seed source)
- Transition Zone
- Preparation Zone
- Non-native Zone
- Clearfell



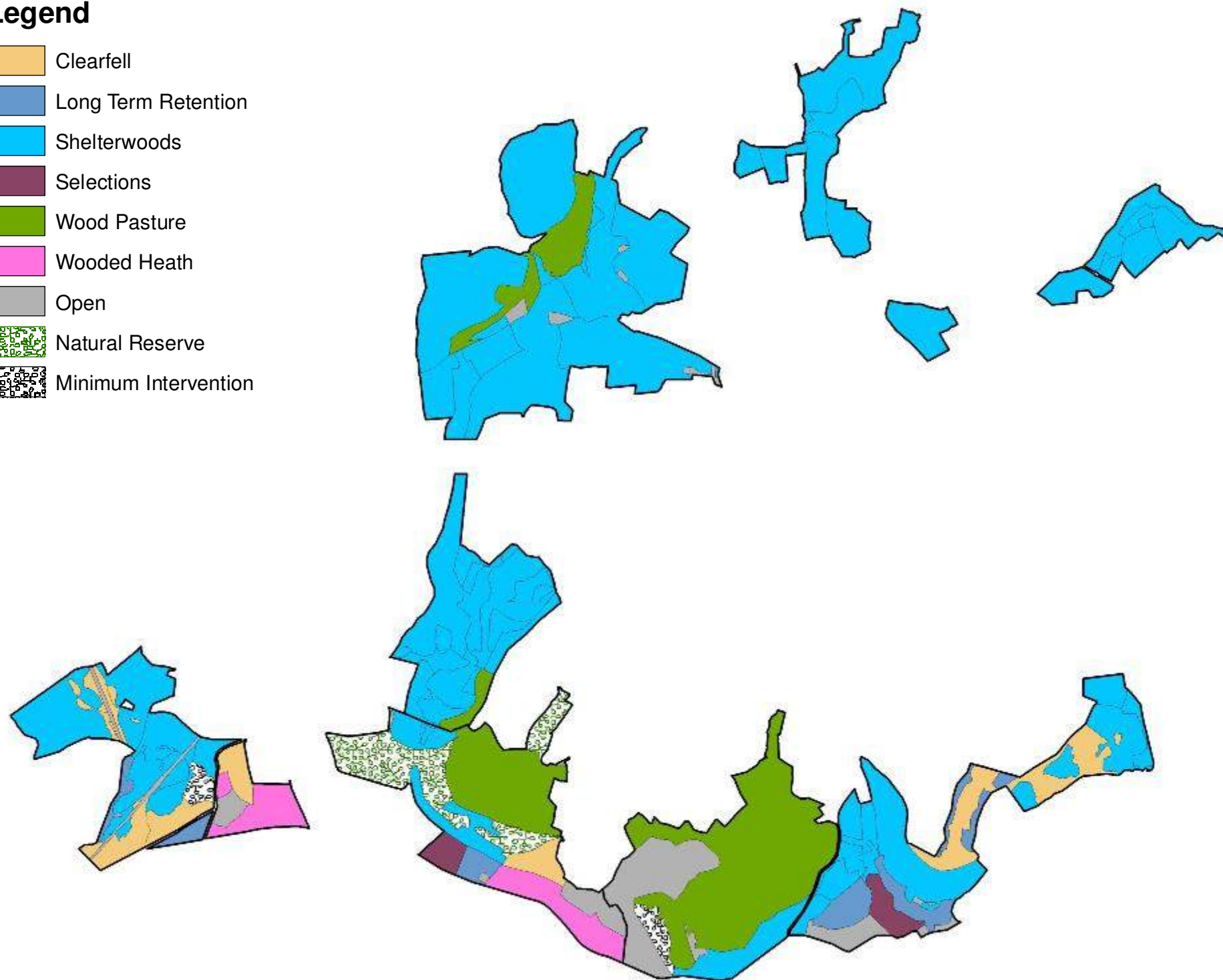
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Ordnance Survey [100021242]





Legend

- Clearfell
- Long Term Retention
- Shelterwoods
- Selections
- Wood Pasture
- Wooded Heath
- Open
- Natural Reserve
- Minimum Intervention



Silviculture

Clearfell coupes will simply be managed through clearcutting (of over 0.25ha) and restocked either through natural regeneration, replanting or a combination.

Long term retentions are in place where the landscape value of the woodland is key.

Minimum Interventions are predominantly inaccessible or ecologically valuable areas where intervention will only occur to protect and ensure the future succession of key habitats and species.

Open space is managed to ensure forest cover does not exceed 2m in height, a tolerance of 20% forest cover will be accepted on some lower priority sites.

Uniform shelterwoods are predominately broadleaved dominated and ASNW sites which will be managed using seeding fellings with possible under planting of site suitable species to control light levels and develop good timber quality. Small coppice coupes of less than 0.25ha may be used to inject diversity into the broadleaf woodland

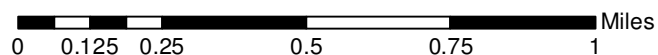
Irregular shelterwoods will look to develop a complex CCF structure through the identification and thinning towards quality final crop trees for the future.

Group shelterwoods are used on windfirm, accessible crops to proactively diversify the woodland structure and composition, possibly through the use of enrichment replanting.

Coppicing of hazel, oak and sweet chestnut stands will be used in discrete riparian areas and areas historically managed as coppice. Standards will be retained where deemed as appropriate future crop trees.

Wooded Heath will be managed as transient heathland by creating dynamic habitats of patchy open space, conifer high forest and regenerating scrub. These areas will continue to be thinned heavily to reduce the density of conifer cover and to achieve a scattered distribution of widely space trees. In doing so the remaining trees will provide shade and cover for ground flora and fauna to thrive whilst suppressing weed growth. This will deliver ecosystem functioning for a wide array of species. These areas will continue to be grazed and mechanically maintained at the time of programmed operations.

Wood Pasture is a distinctive woodland type within Neroche characterised by open grown and usually old broadleaved trees in a habitat which will be kept open by grazing. It is not a plant community in its own right but a woodland structure type whose open characteristics have been determined by a history of grazing management. These areas will continue to be thinned to reduce remaining conifer cover as well as grazed and maintained through mechanical weeding. This will deliver ecosystem functioning for a wide array of flora and fauna species.





Thinning

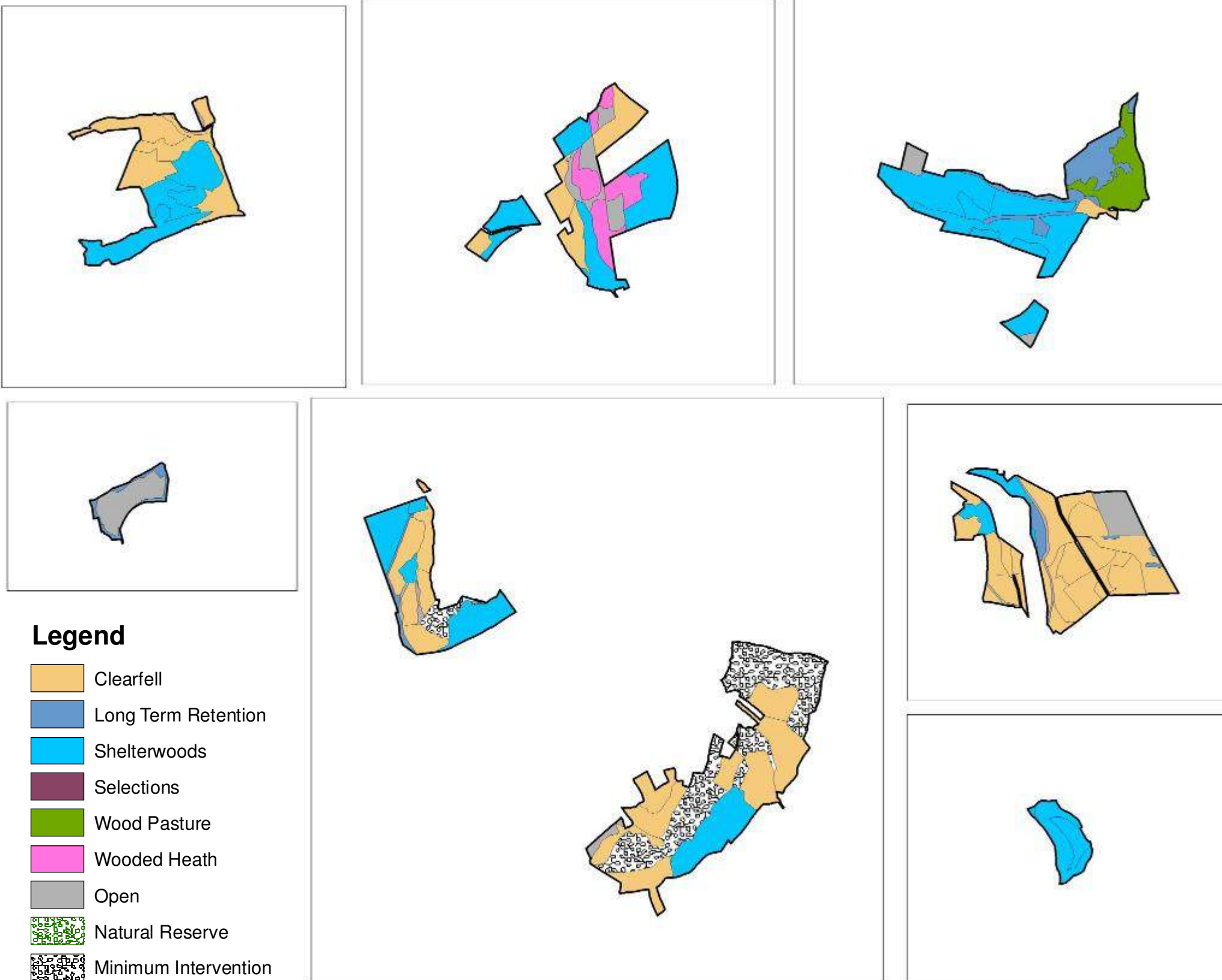
Areas will be assessed and approved for thinning on a site-by-site basis by the local Beat Team. As attempts to improve the structural diversity of the crops are made, initiation of thinning may be made early (uneconomic) or later to address windfirm concerns. The intention to intervene every 5 years as well as on multiple occasions may not be appropriate and therefore will be administered in an adaptive approach by the Beat team.

Conifer Thinning

Areas of conifer are assessed for thinning every 5 years with the targeted removal of larch species a key objective. Other factors such as the quantity, condition, age and distribution of any broadleaf content, will also help decide if an area of conifer is to be thinned or not, with light levels, existing ground vegetation and any evidence of natural regeneration also impacting on how many trees are marked for removal.

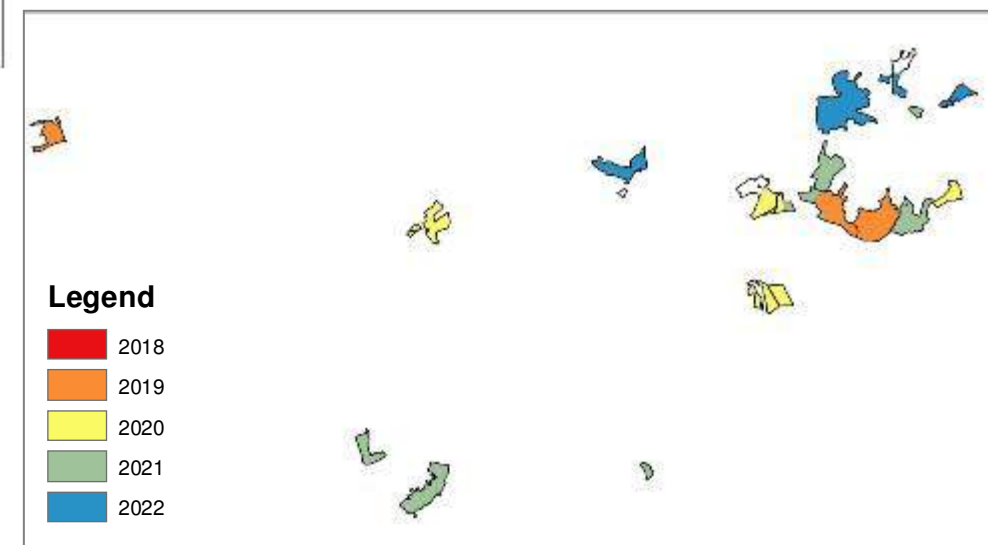
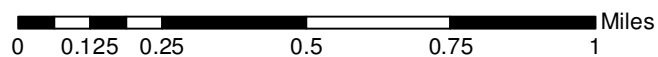
Broadleaf Thinning

Broadleaf high forest will be assessed for thinning every 10 years with a visual inspection of the stand. Thinning will allow sub-dominant broadleaves sufficient light and space to mature or will release existing advanced regeneration. Younger patches of regeneration can be thinned to favour site native species with trees of good form and vigour being retained. Where broadleaves consist primarily of a single species, it may be possible to enlarge natural gaps through irregular thinning rather than create new gaps through group felling, however, in all cases the size of gap will be dependent on slope, aspect and site fertility and must not be detrimental to crop stability.



Legend

- Clearfell
- Long Term Retention
- Shelterwoods
- Selections
- Wood Pasture
- Wooded Heath
- Open
- Natural Reserve
- Minimum Intervention



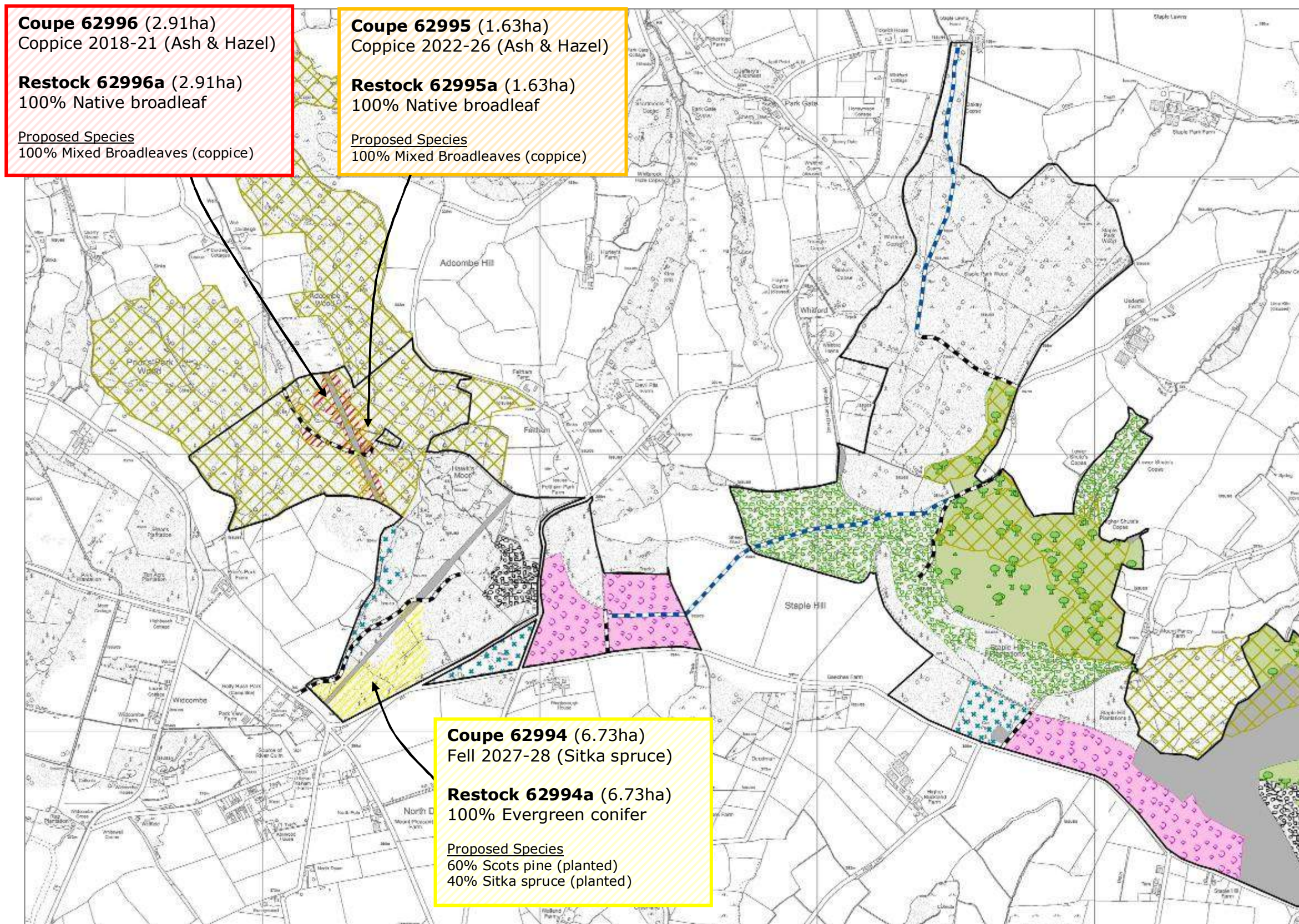
Legend

- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022

Felling and Restocking

2018 - 2028

Priors Park, Staple Park and Staple Hill



Coupe 62996 (2.91ha)
Coppice 2018-21 (Ash & Hazel)

Restock 62996a (2.91ha)
100% Native broadleaf

Proposed Species
100% Mixed Broadleaves (coppice)

Coupe 62995 (1.63ha)
Coppice 2022-26 (Ash & Hazel)

Restock 62995a (1.63ha)
100% Native broadleaf

Proposed Species
100% Mixed Broadleaves (coppice)

Coupe 62994 (6.73ha)
Fell 2027-28 (Sitka spruce)

Restock 62994a (6.73ha)
100% Evergreen conifer

Proposed Species
60% Scots pine (planted)
40% Sitka spruce (planted)

Legend

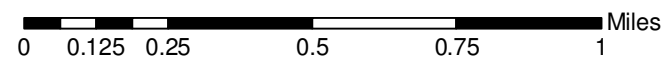
- SSSI
- Fell 2018 - 2021
- Fell 2022 - 2026
- Fell 2027 - 2028
- Coppice
- Wood Pasture
- Wooded Heath
- Retentions
- Minimum Intervention
- Natural Reserve
- Open

Detailed coupe prescriptions as a result of felling and restocking 2018-28 are outlined on pages 45-46.

NB. Whilst 'Restock Proportion' is often prescribed at 100% Evergreen Conifer the use of suitable broadleaves to build in resilience and utilise site conditions is anticipated and in places is proposed.

Declaration by FC as an Operator.

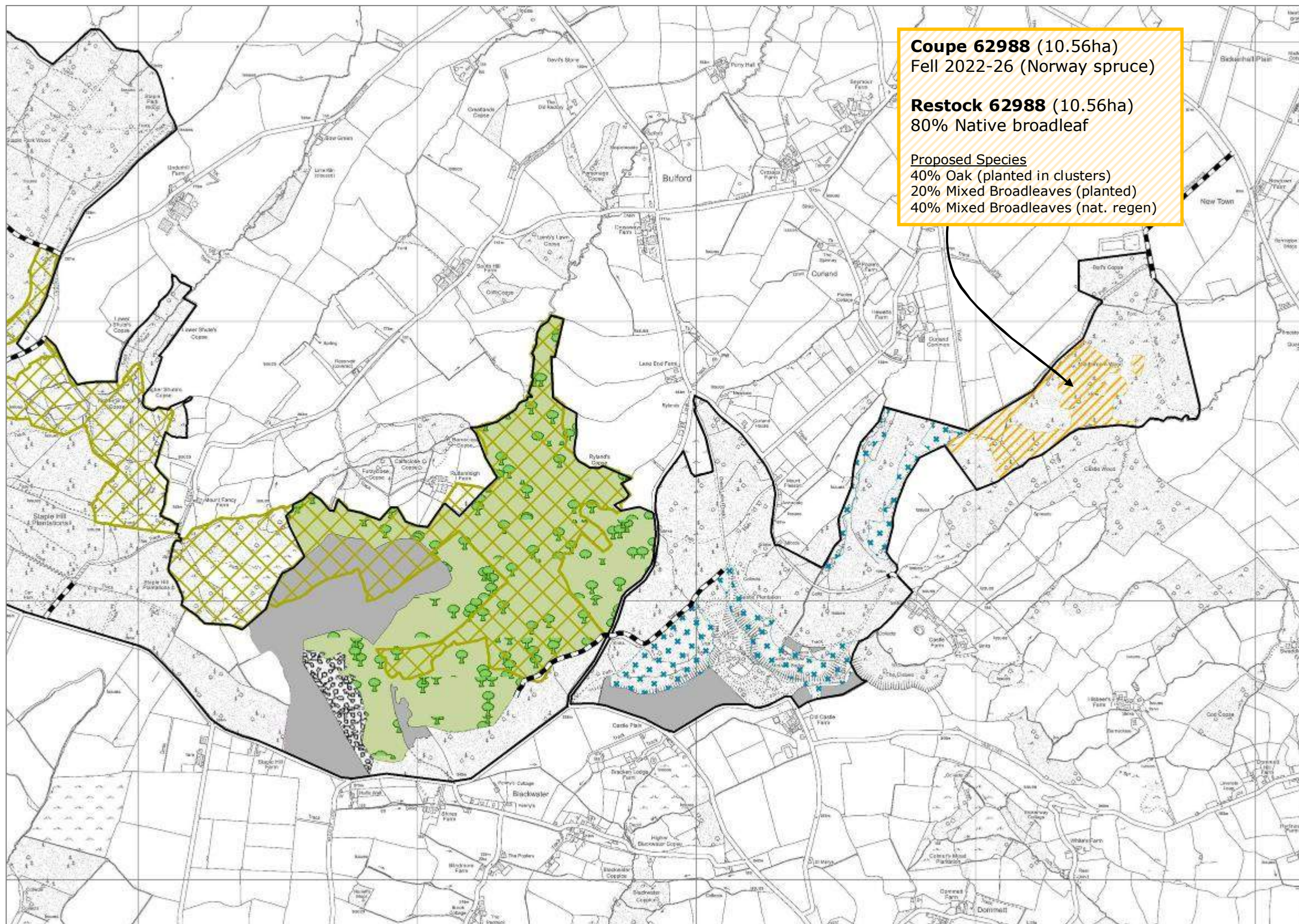
All timber arising from the Forest Enterprise estate represents a negligible risk under EUTR (No 995/210)



Felling and Restocking

2018 - 2028

Castle Neroche and Staple Common



Coupe 62988 (10.56ha)
 Fell 2022-26 (Norway spruce)
Restock 62988 (10.56ha)
 80% Native broadleaf
Proposed Species
 40% Oak (planted in clusters)
 20% Mixed Broadleaves (planted)
 40% Mixed Broadleaves (nat. regen)

Legend

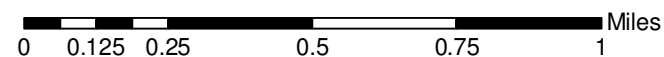
- SSSI
- Fell 2018 - 2021
- Fell 2022 - 2026
- Fell 2027 - 2028
- Coppice
- Wood Pasture
- Wooded Heath
- Retentions
- Minimum Intervention
- Natural Reserve
- Open

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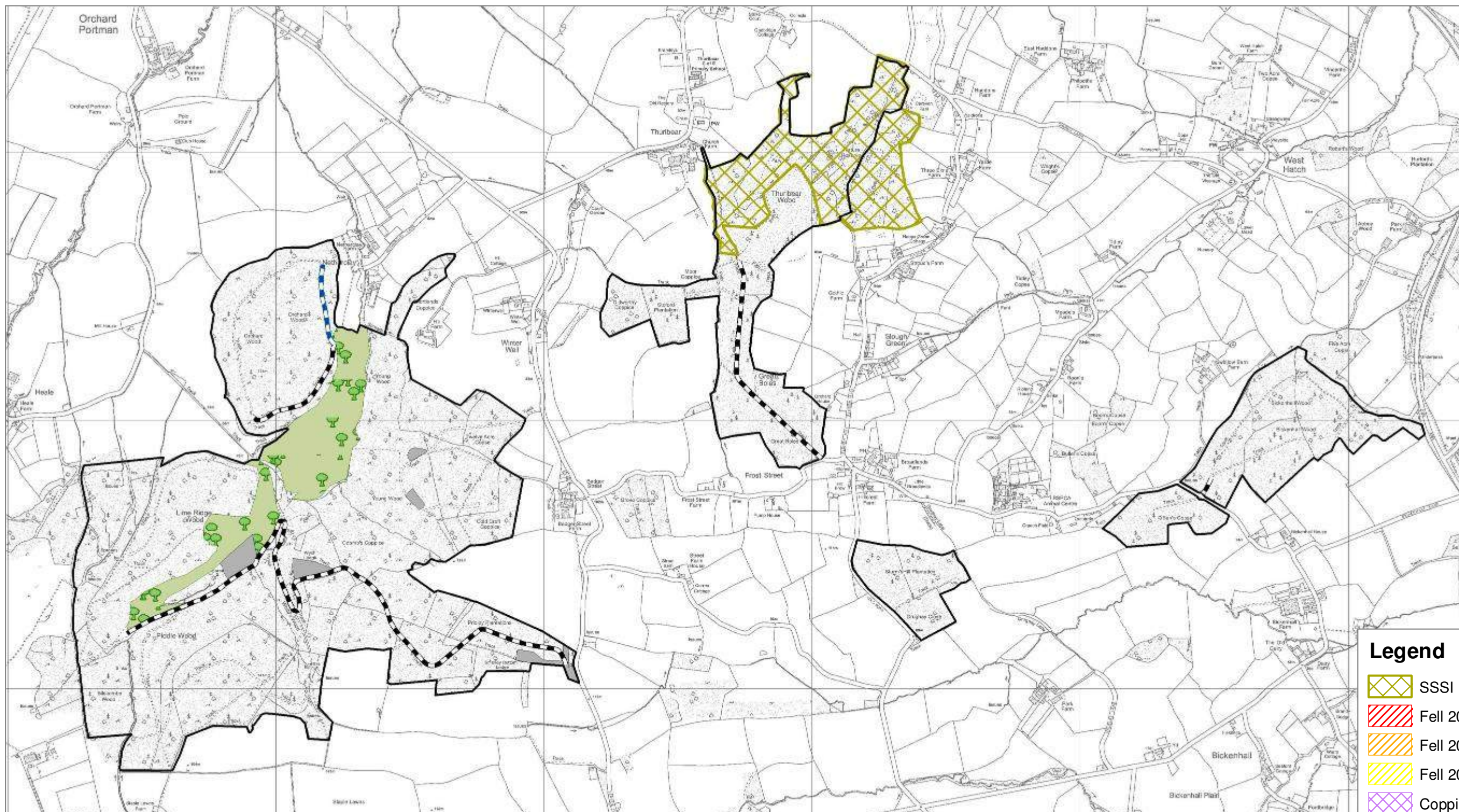


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 Ordnance Survey [100021242]

Felling and Restocking

2018 - 2028

Wych Lodge, Thurlbear and Bickenhall

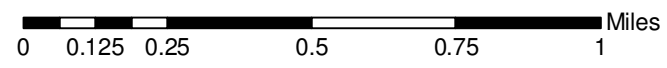


Legend

- SSSI
- Fell 2018 - 2021
- Fell 2022 - 2026
- Fell 2027 - 2028
- Coppice
- Wood Pasture
- Wooded Heath
- Retentions
- Minimum Intervention
- Natural Reserve
- Open

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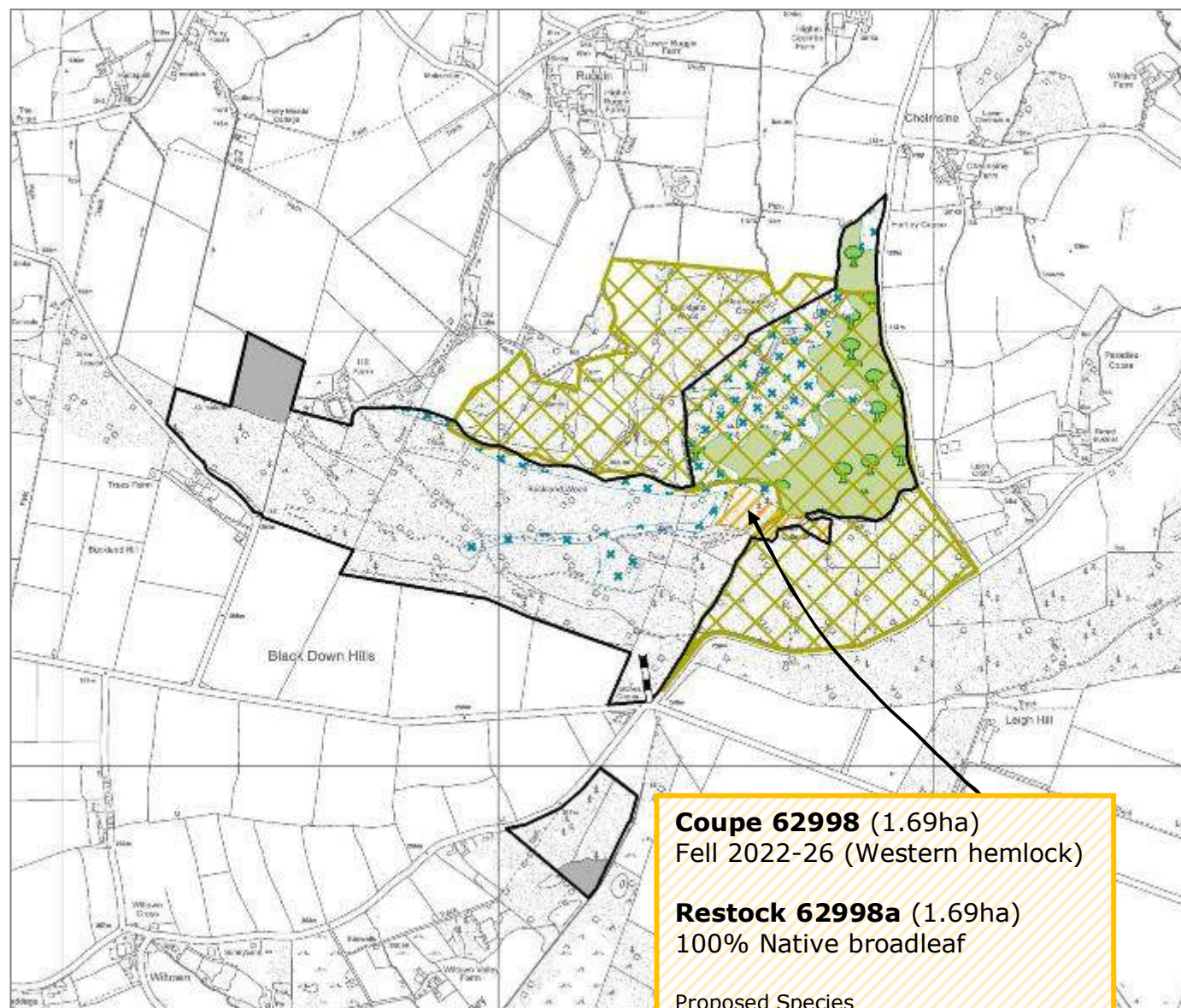


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Felling and Restocking 2018 - 2028 Culm Davy

Buckland

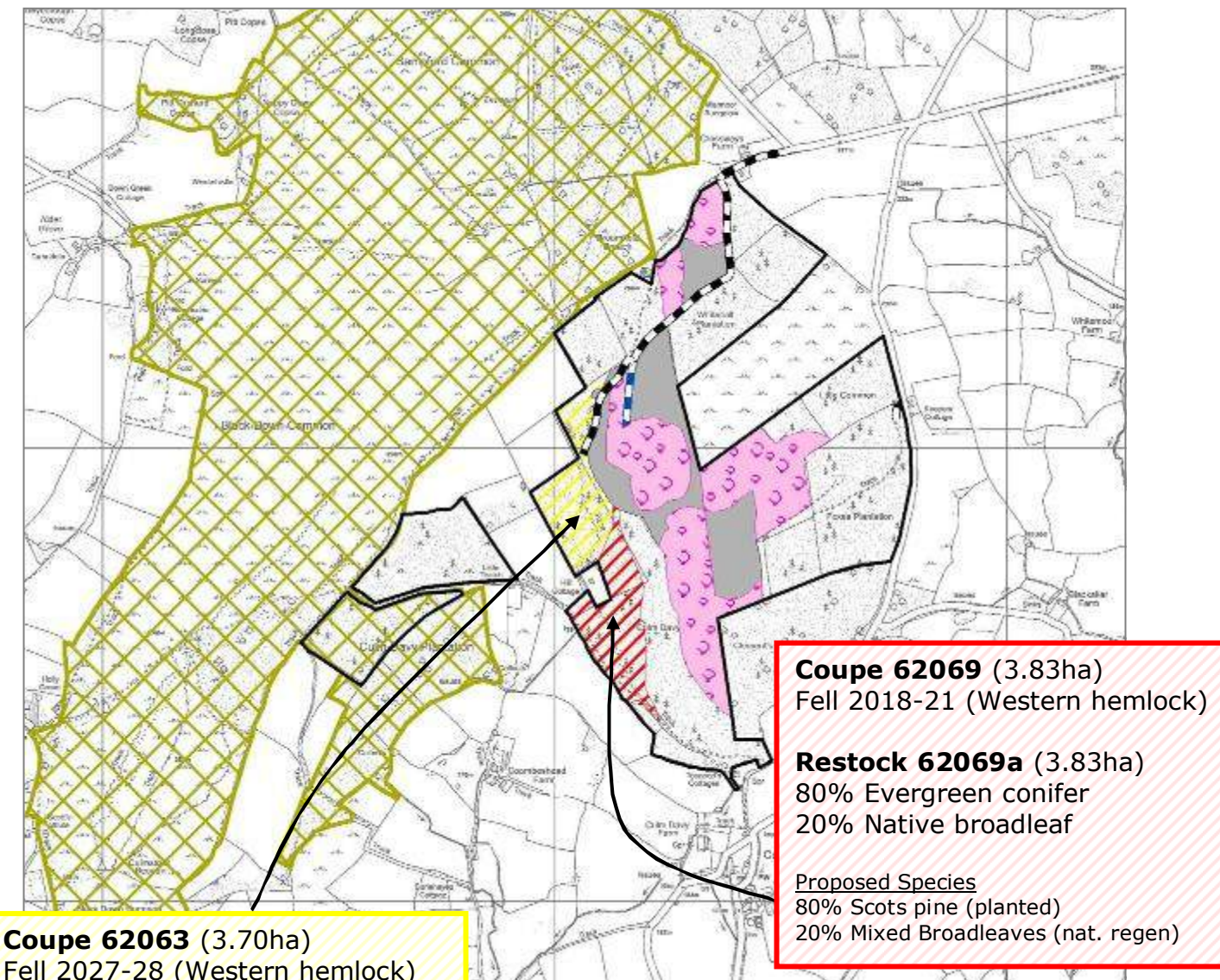
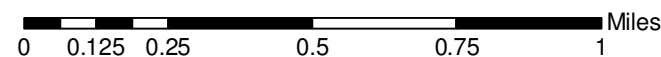


Detailed coupe prescriptions as a result of felling and restocking 2018-28 are outlined on pages 45-46.

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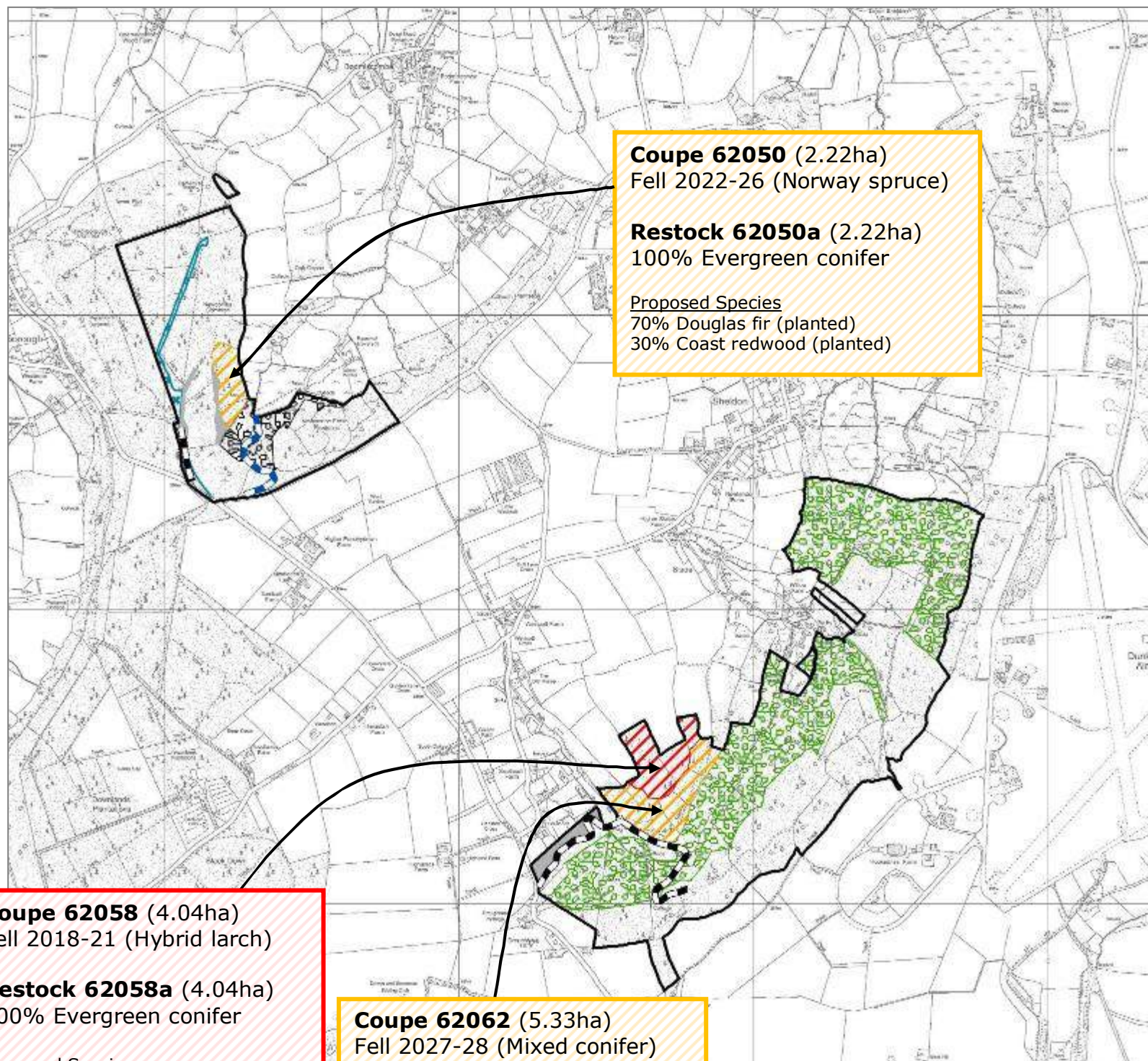


Legend

- SSSI
- Fell 2018 - 2021
- Fell 2022 - 2026
- Fell 2027 - 2028
- Coppice
- Wood Pasture
- Wooded Heath
- Retentions
- Minimum Intervention
- Natural Reserve
- Open

Felling and Restocking

2018 - 2028
Otterford



Coupe 62050 (2.22ha)
Fell 2022-26 (Norway spruce)

Restock 62050a (2.22ha)
100% Evergreen conifer

Proposed Species
70% Douglas fir (planted)
30% Coast redwood (planted)

Coupe 62058 (4.04ha)
Fell 2018-21 (Hybrid larch)

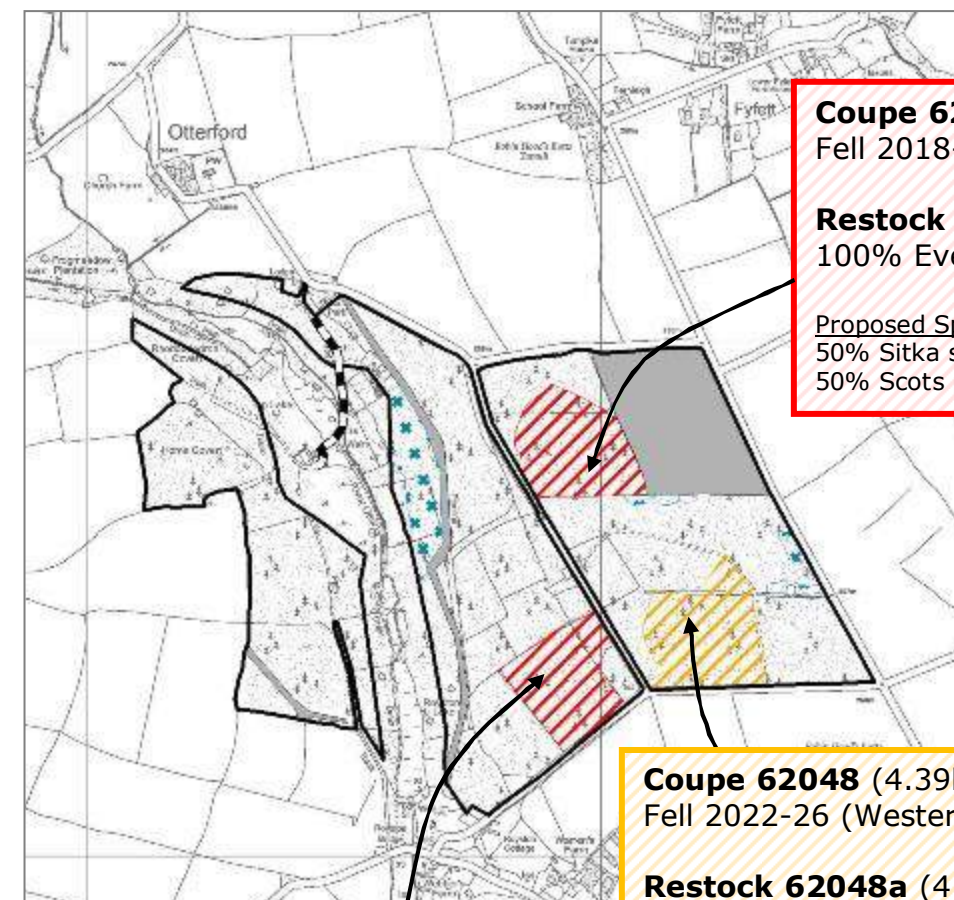
Restock 62058a (4.04ha)
100% Evergreen conifer

Proposed Species
90% Scots pine (planted)
10% Beech (planted)

Coupe 62062 (5.33ha)
Fell 2027-28 (Mixed conifer)

Restock 62062a (5.33ha)
100% Evergreen conifer

Proposed Species
50% Sitka spruce (planted)
50% Noble fir (planted)



Coupe 62171 (4.07ha)
Fell 2018-21 (Lodgepole pine)

Restock 62171a (4.07ha)
100% Evergreen conifer

Proposed Species
50% Sitka spruce (planted)
50% Scots pine (planted)

Coupe 62048 (4.39ha)
Fell 2022-26 (Western hemlock)

Restock 62048a (4.39ha)
100% Evergreen conifer

Proposed Species
80% Scots pine (planted)
20% Hornbeam

Coupe 62999 (3.16ha)
Fell 2018-21 (Lodgepole pine)

Restock 62999a (3.16ha)
100% Evergreen conifer

Proposed Species
80% Sitka spruce (planted)
20% Aspen (planted)

Legend

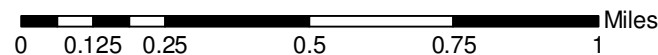
- SSSI
- Fell 2018 - 2021
- Fell 2022 - 2026
- Fell 2027 - 2028
- Coppice
- Wood Pasture
- Wooded Heath
- Retentions
- Minimum Intervention
- Natural Reserve
- Open

Detailed coupe prescriptions as a result of felling and restocking 2018 -28 are outlined on pages 45-46.

NB. Whilst 'Restock Proportion' is often prescribed at 100% Evergreen Conifer the use of suitable broad-leaves to build in resilience and utilise site conditions is anticipated and in places is proposed.

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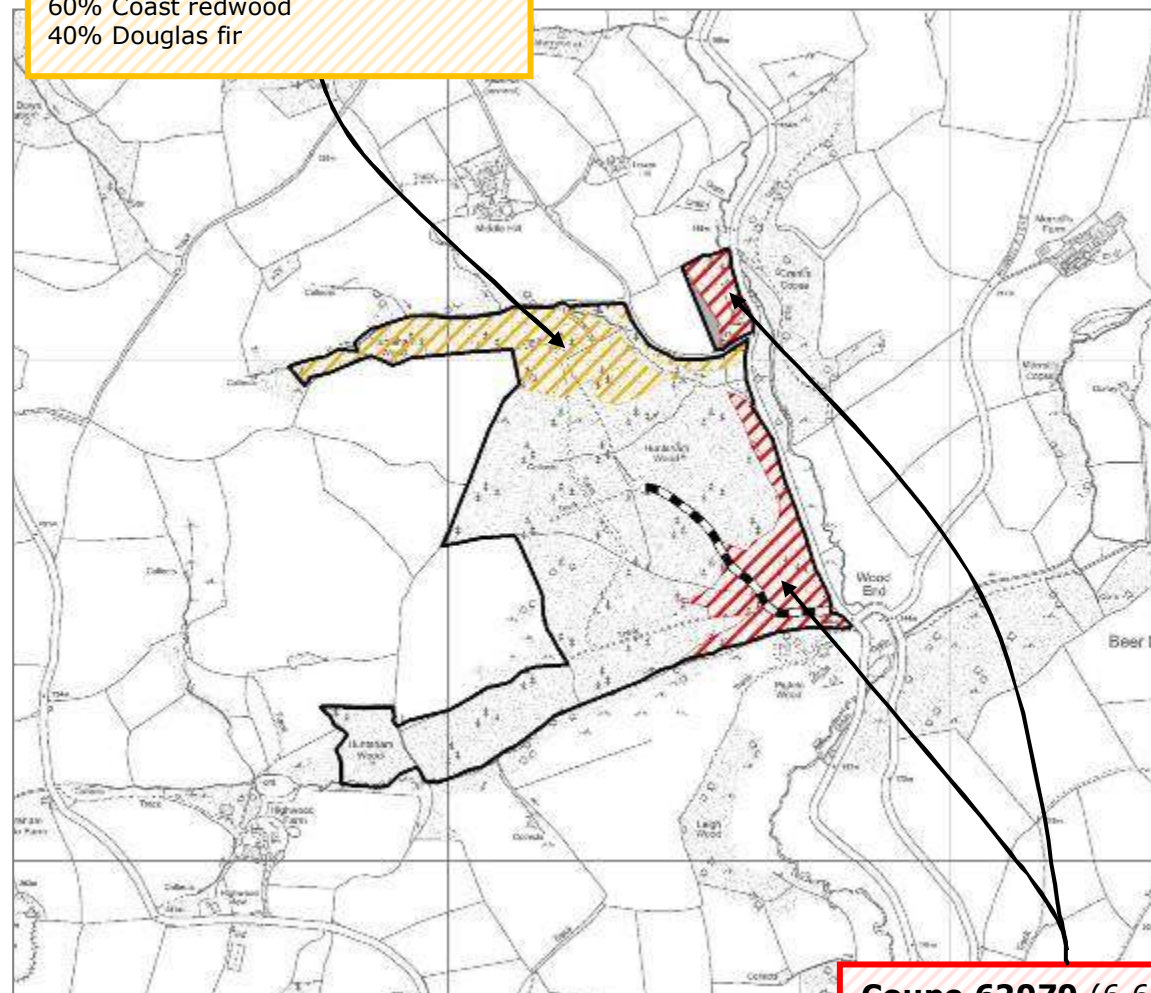
Huntsham

Felling and Restocking
2018 - 2028
South Cleave

Coupe 62005 (7.29ha)
Fell 2022-26 (Douglas fir)

Restock 62005a (7.29ha)
100% Evergreen conifer

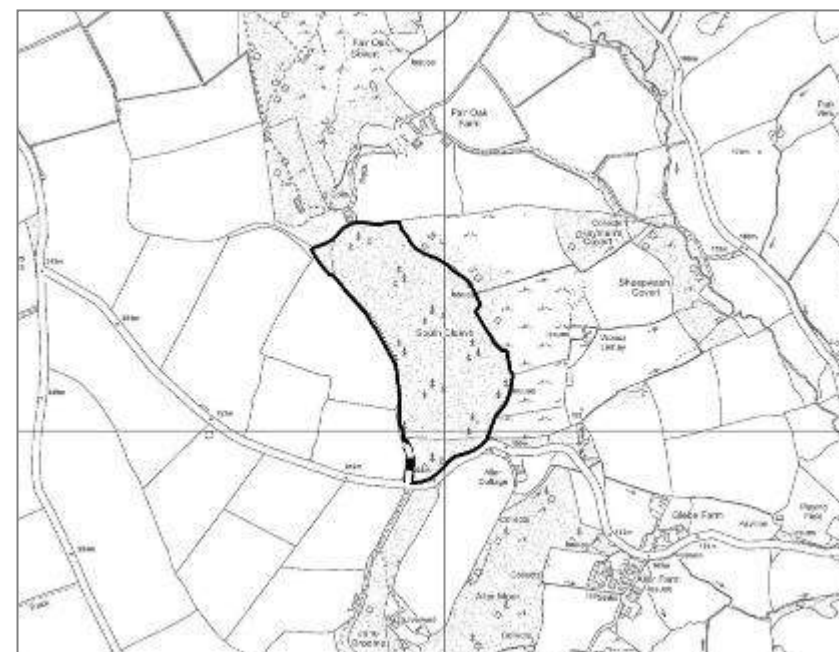
Proposed Species
60% Coast redwood
40% Douglas fir



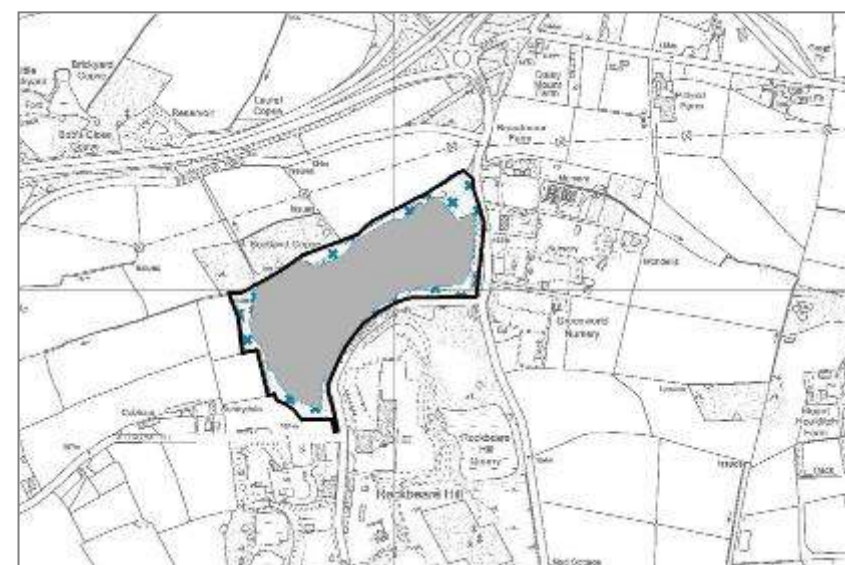
Coupe 62070 (6.67ha)
Fell 2018-21 (Douglas fir)

Restock 62070a (6.67ha)
100% Evergreen conifer

Proposed Species
70% Douglas fir
30% Black walnut



Strete Raleigh



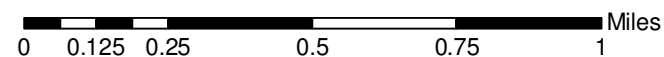
- Legend**
- SSSI
 - Fell 2018 - 2021
 - Fell 2022 - 2026
 - Fell 2027 - 2028
 - Coppice
 - Wood Pasture
 - Wooded Heath
 - Retentions
 - Minimum Intervention
 - Natural Reserve
 - Open

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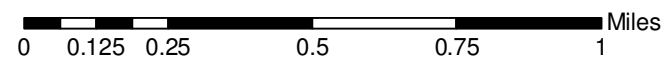
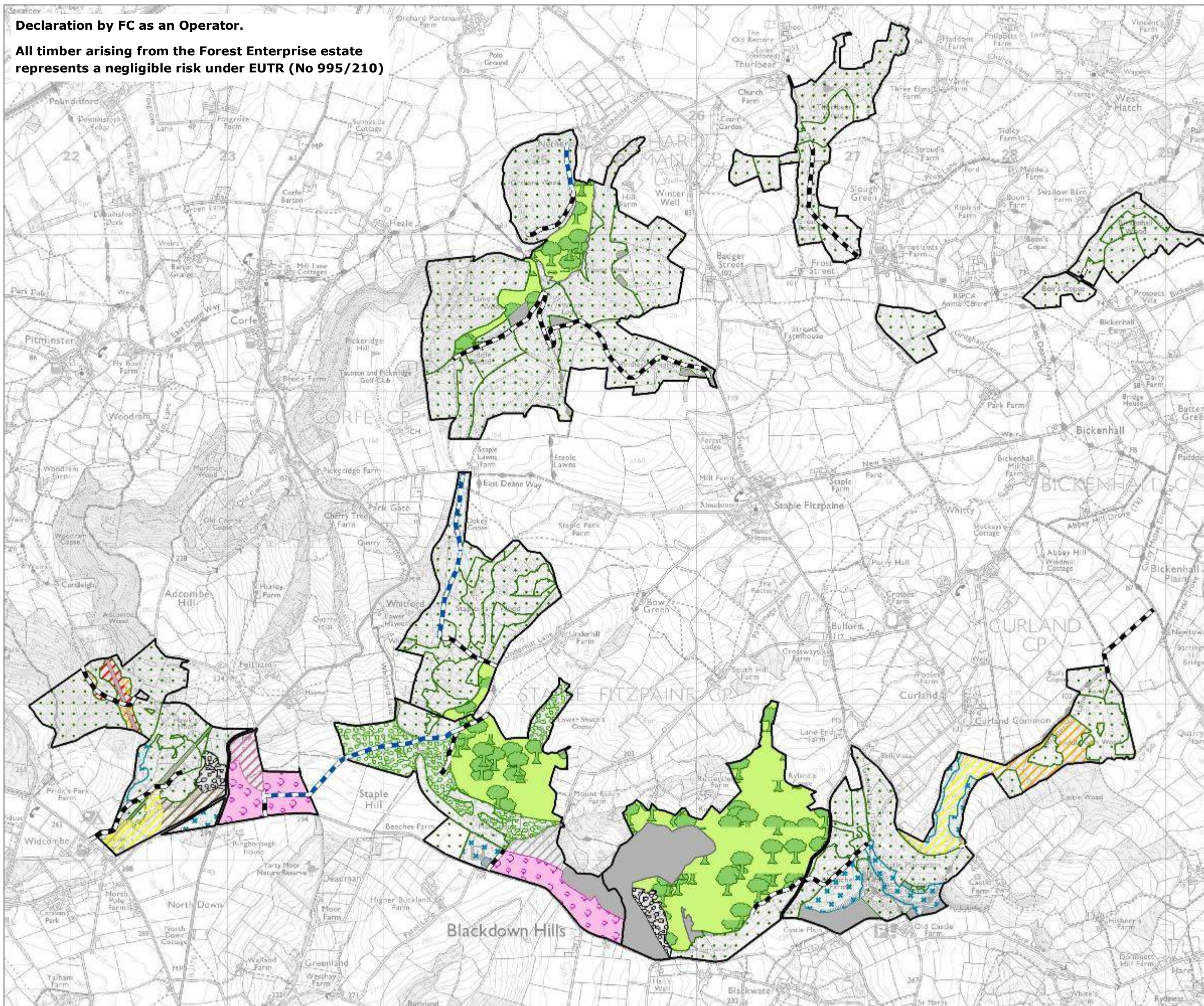
Management Prescriptions

2018 - 2048

An outline of the intended management prescriptions for the Plan area for the next 30 years, including silvicultural, felling and open proposals.

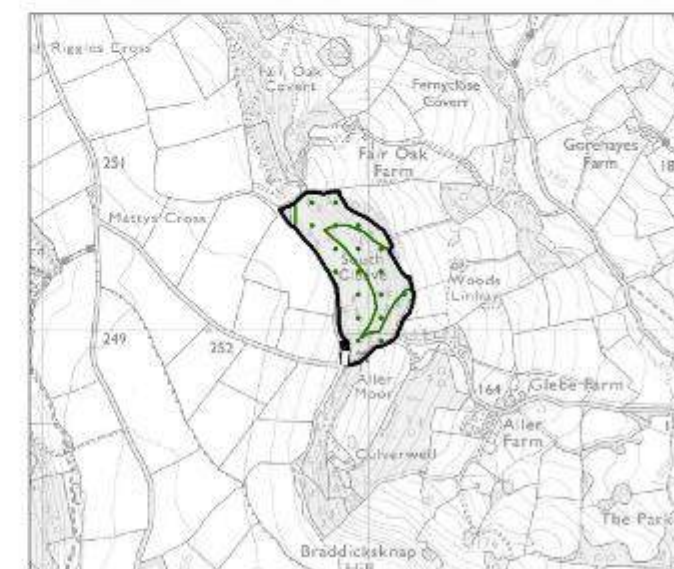
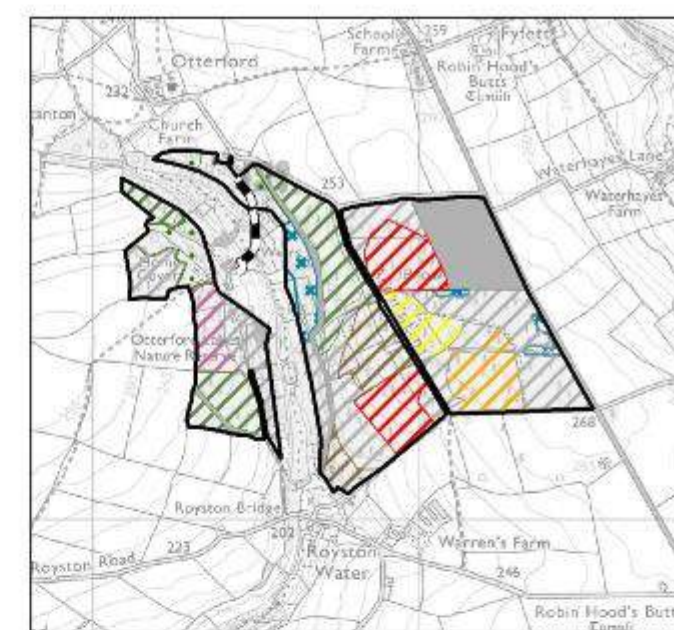
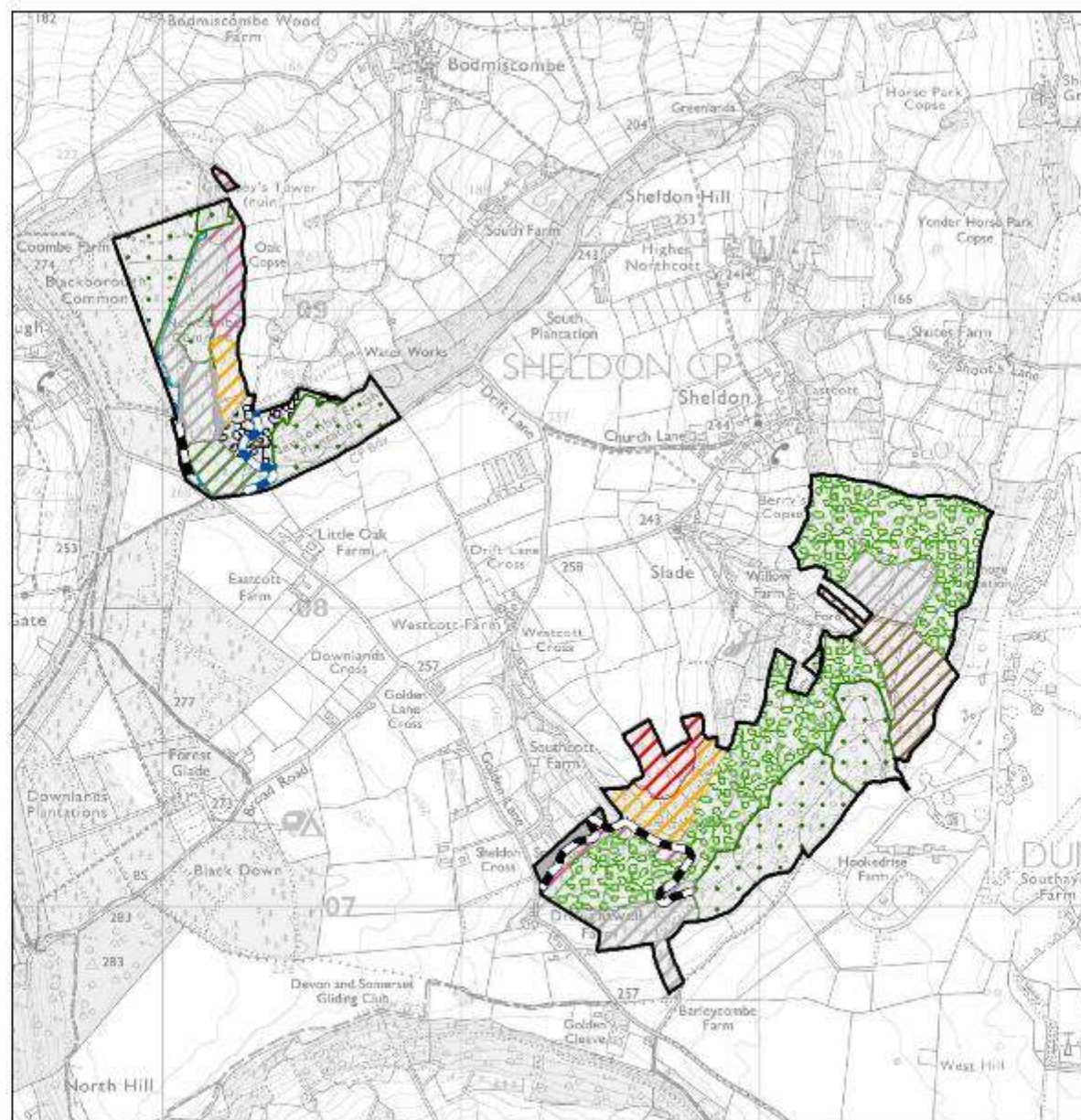
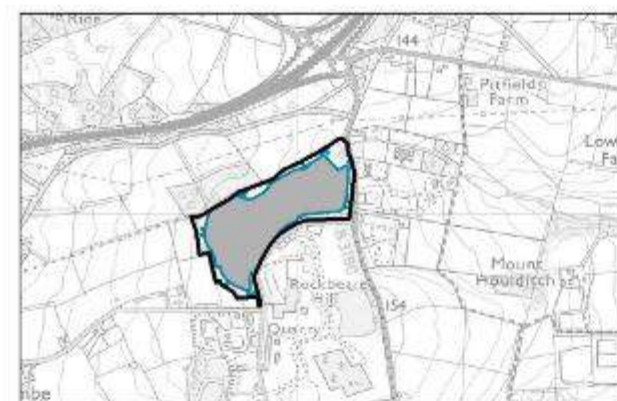
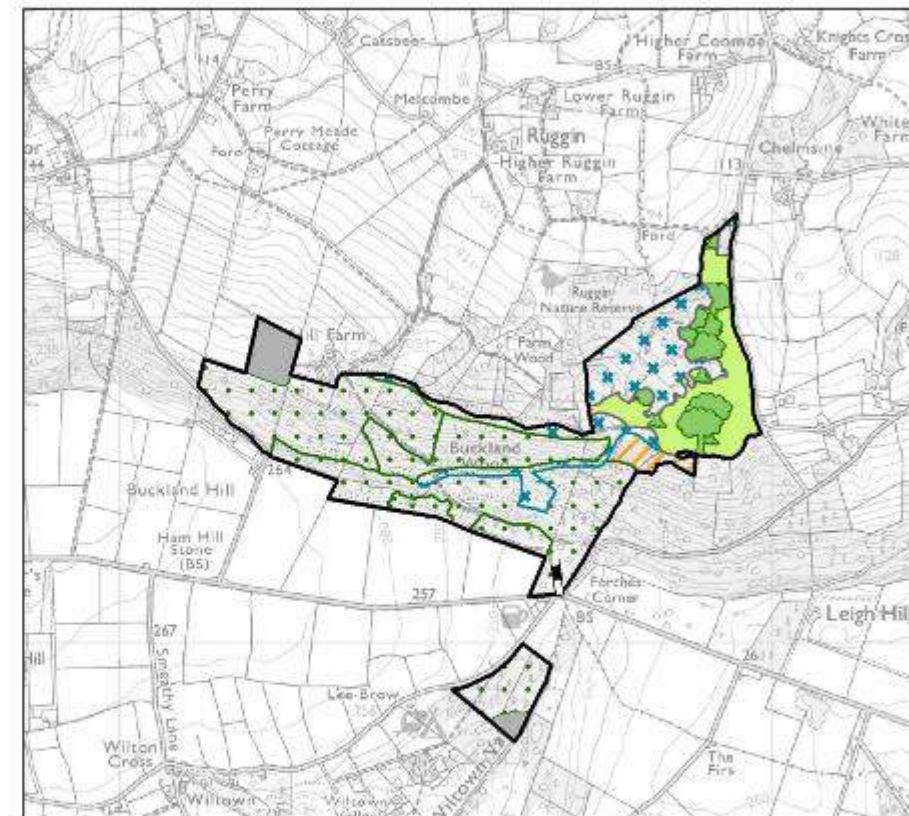
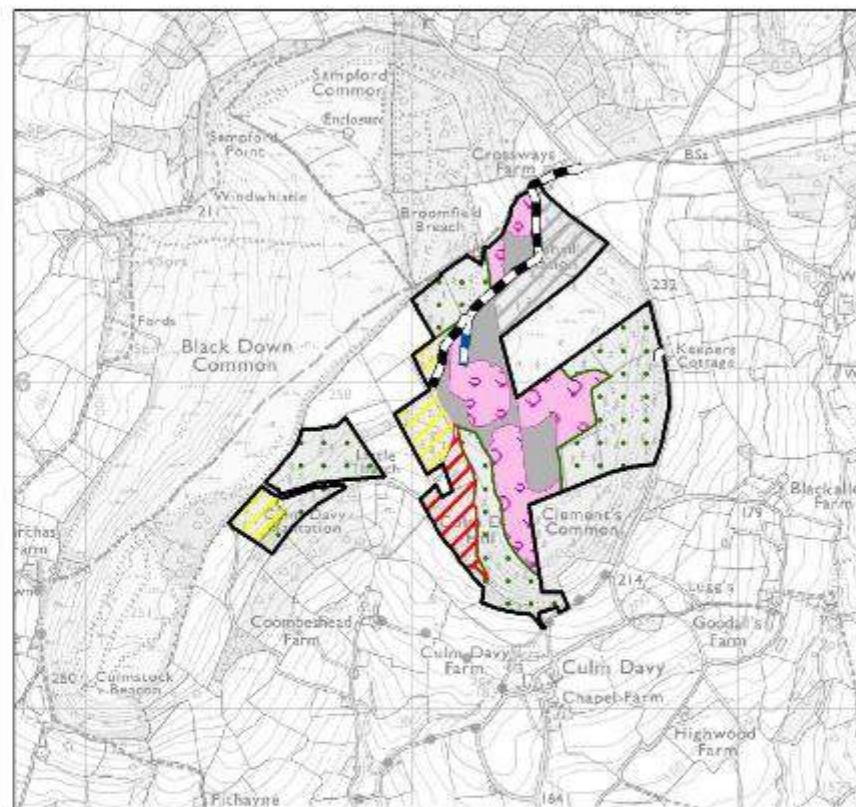
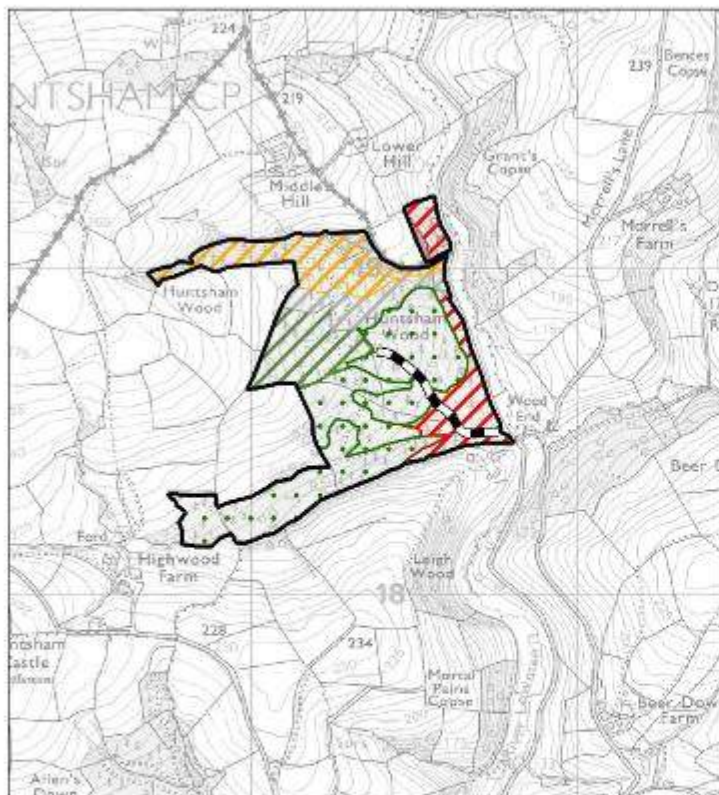
Legend

- Alternatives to Clearfell
- Fell 2017 - 2021
- Fell 2022 - 2026
- Fell 2027 - 2031
- Fell 2032 - 2036
- Fell 2037 - 2041
- Fell 2042 - 2046
- Fell post 2046
- Coppice
- Wood Pasture
- Wooded Heath
- Retentions
- Minimum Intervention
- Natural Reserve
- Open
- Class A/B Roads
- Class C Roads





Management Prescriptions 2018 - 2048

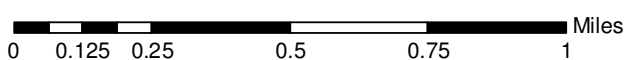


Legend

- Alternatives to Clearfell
- Fell 2017 - 2021
- Fell 2022 - 2026
- Fell 2027 - 2031
- Fell 2032 - 2036
- Fell 2037 - 2041
- Fell 2042 - 2046
- Fell post 2046
- Coppice
- Wood Pasture
- Wooded Heath
- Retentions
- Minimum Intervention
- Natural Reserve
- Open
- Class A/B Roads
- Class C Roads

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Declaration by FC as an Operator.

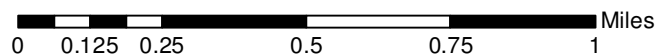
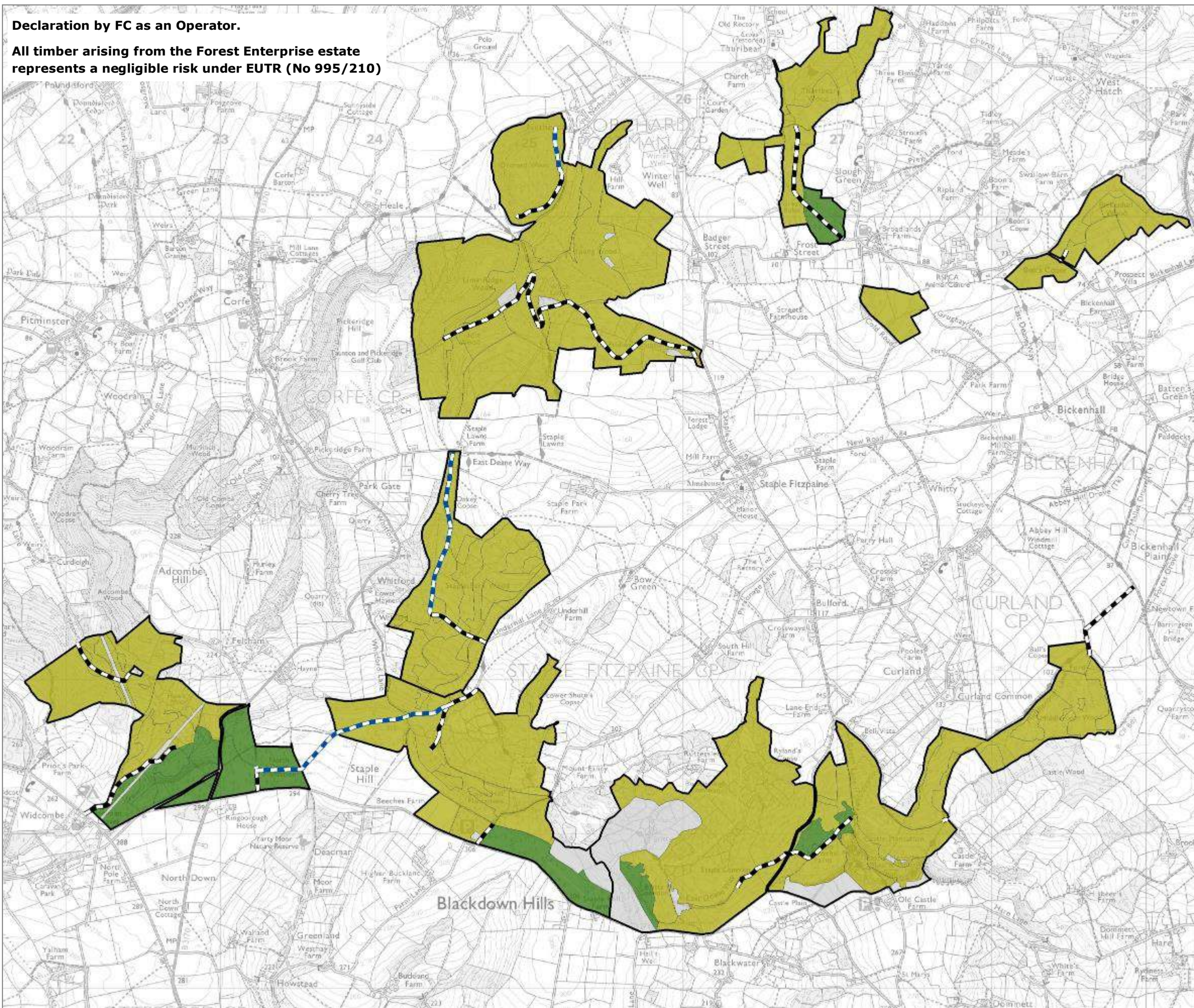
All timber arising from the Forest Enterprise estate represents a negligible risk under EUTR (No 995/210)

Restock Prescriptions

An outline of the intended restocking prescriptions through planting or natural regeneration for the next rotation, following the removal of the current stock.

Legend

-  Conifer dominated cover
-  Broadleaf dominated cover
-  Open/other

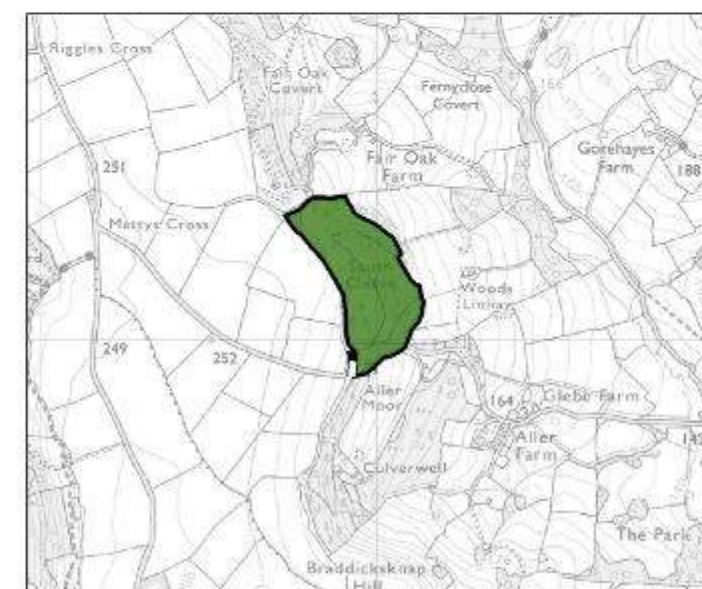
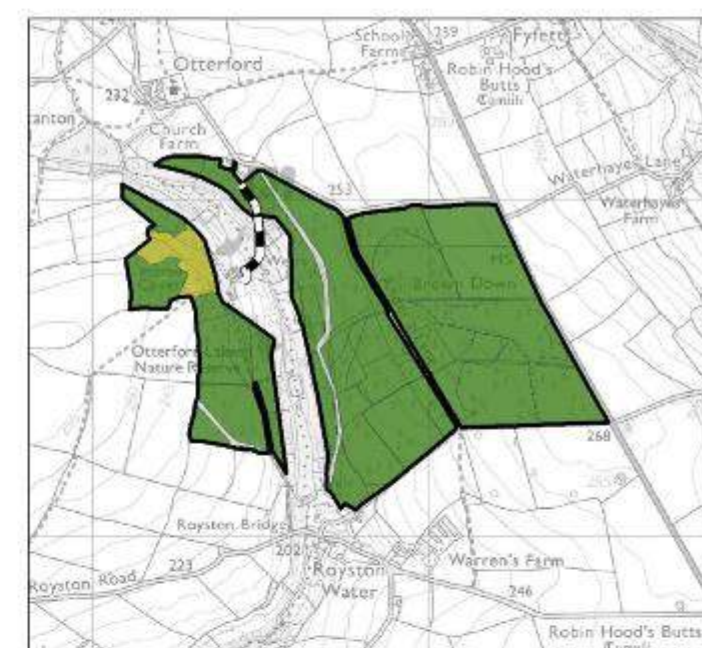
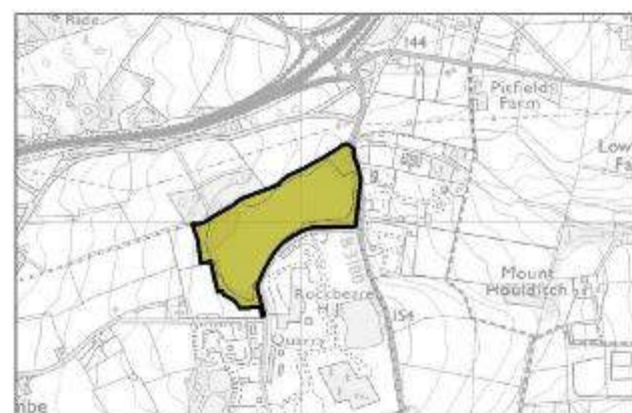
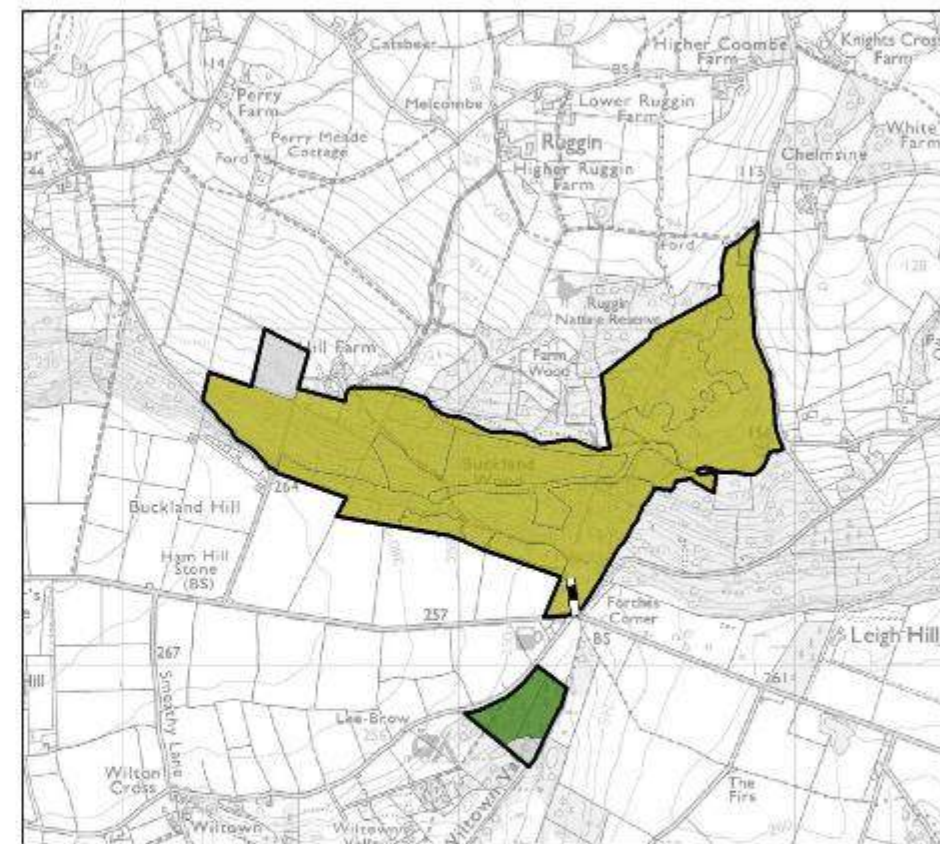
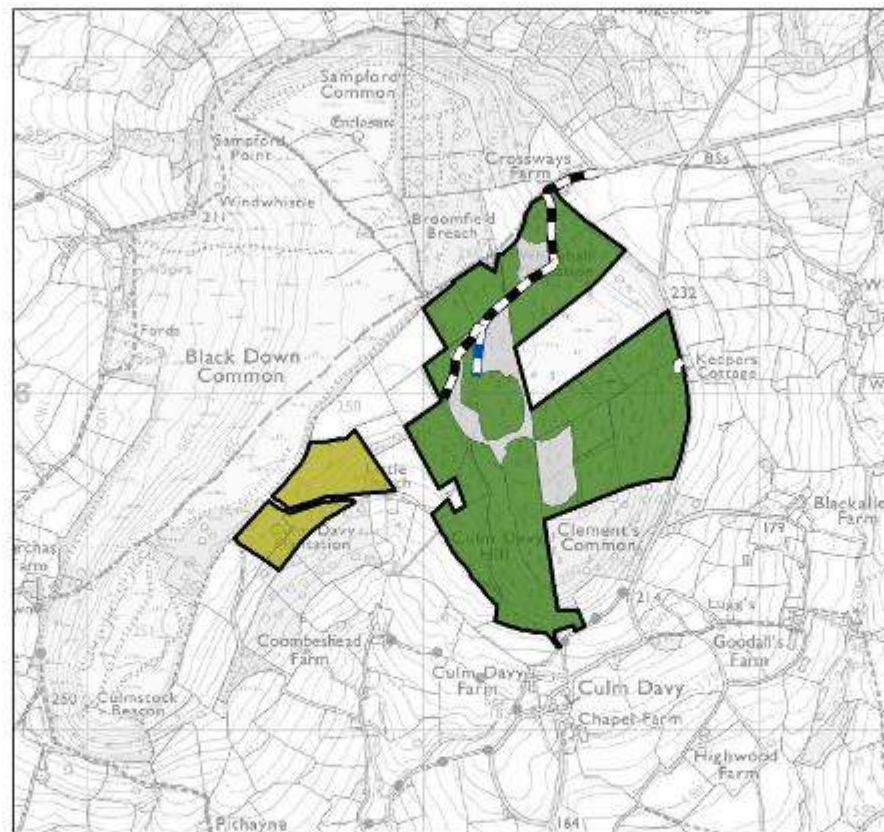
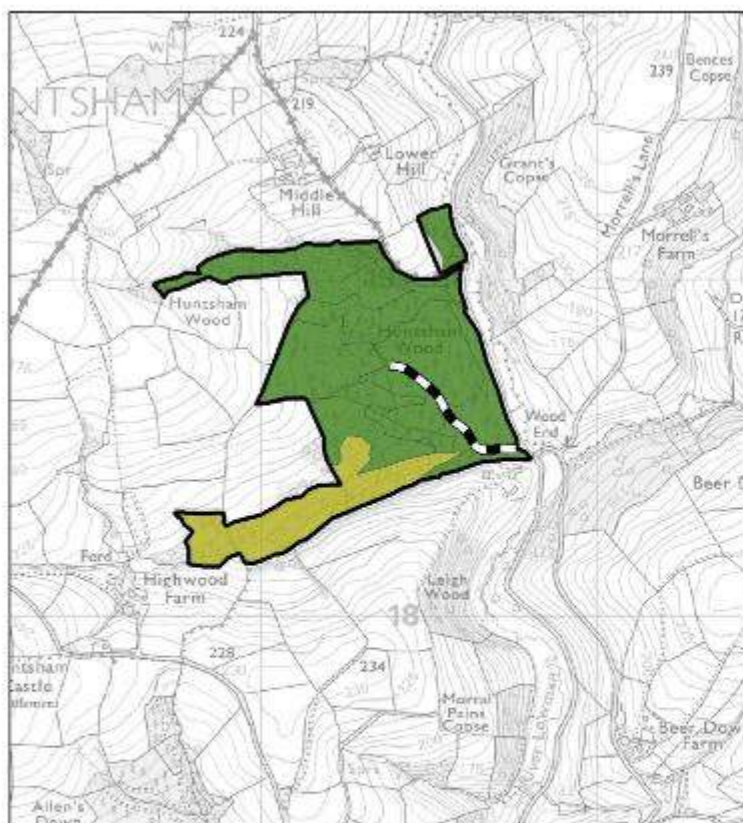




Restock Prescriptions

Legend

- Conifer dominated cover
- Broadleaf dominated cover
- Open/other



Declaration by FC as an Operator.

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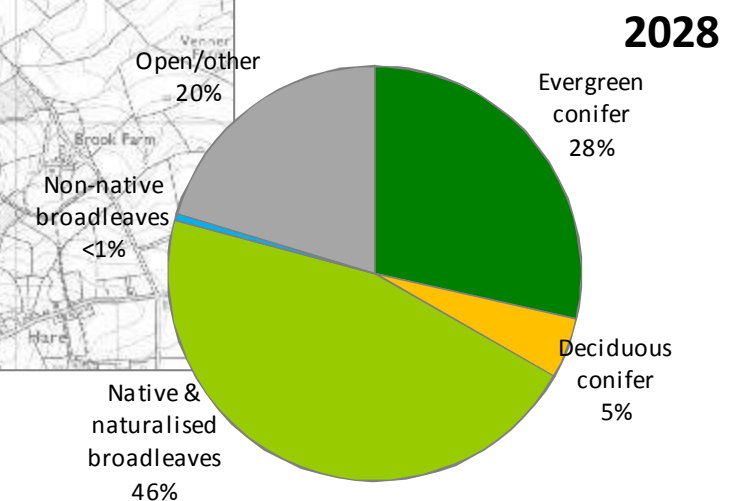
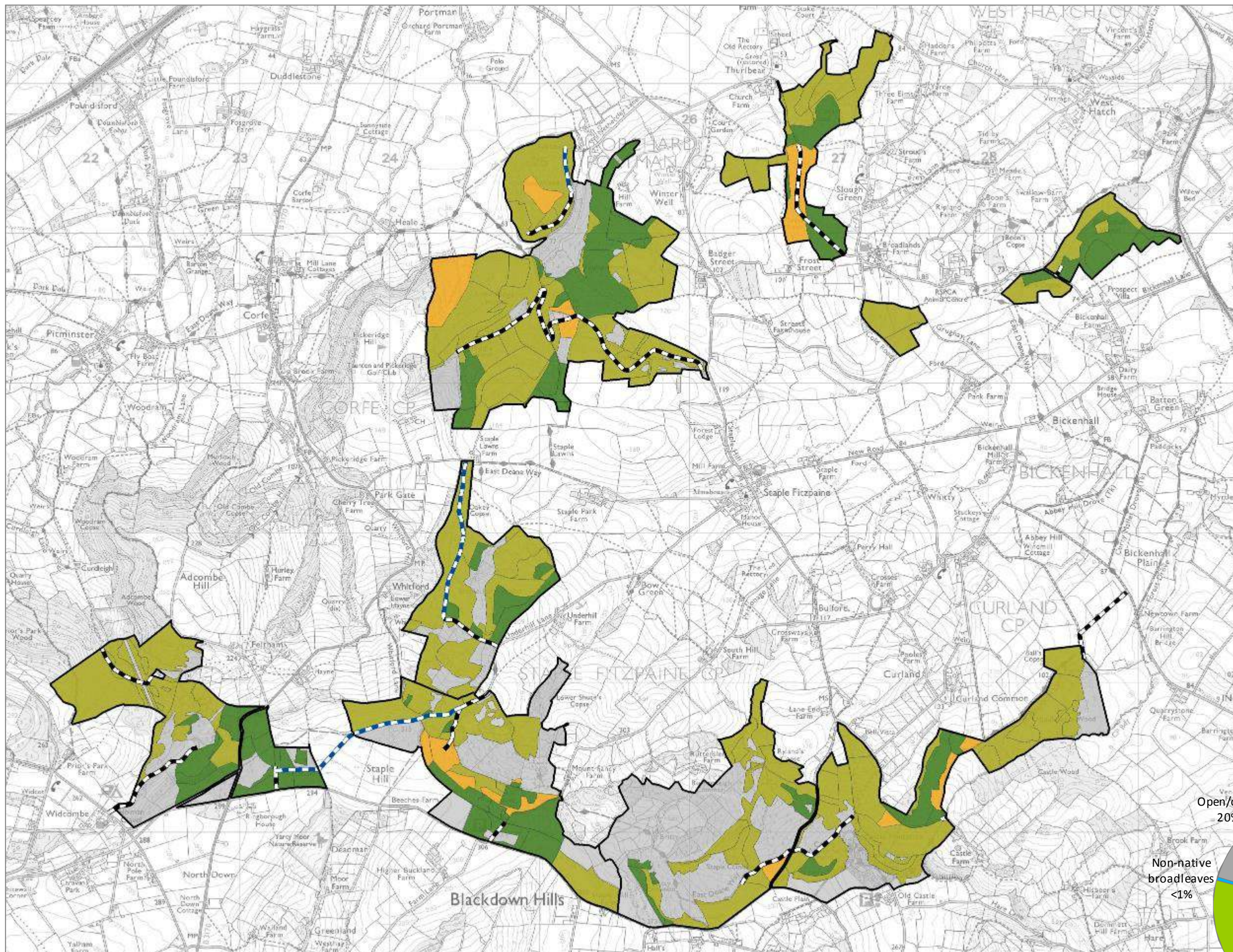


Indicative Future Species 2028

The projections made are indicative of species composition in ten years time. They do not constitute a guarantee and merely act as an indicator of how the vision for the Plan area will be delivered over time.

Legend

- Evergreen Conifer
- Deciduous Conifer
- Native & naturalized broadleaves
- Non-native broadleaves
- Open/other

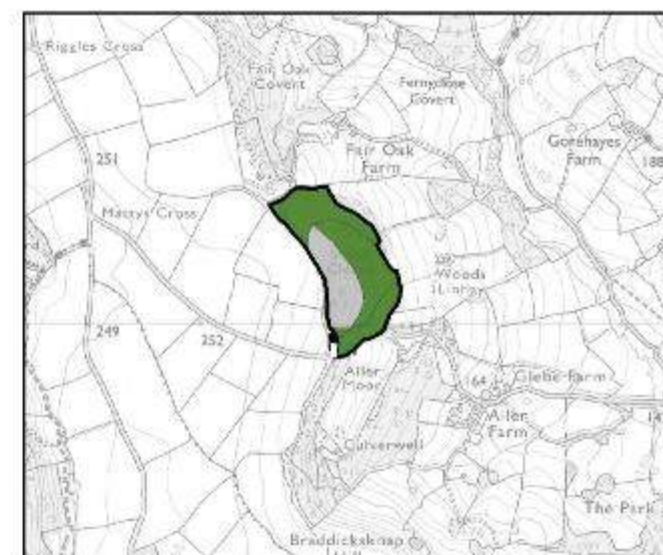
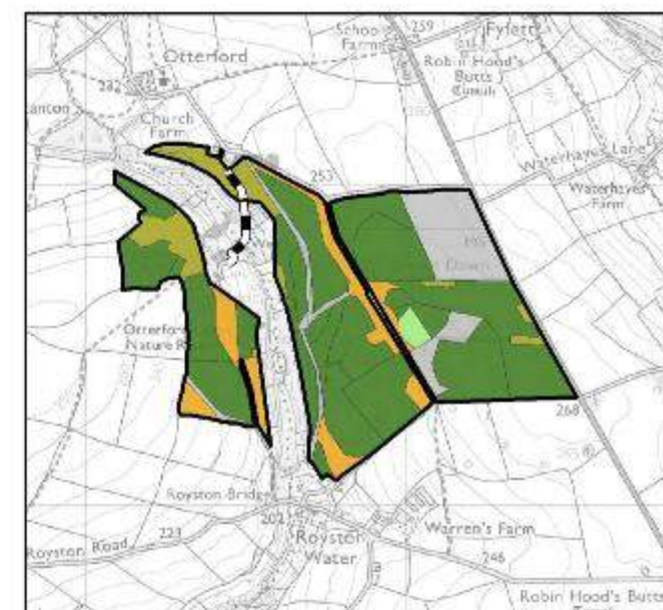
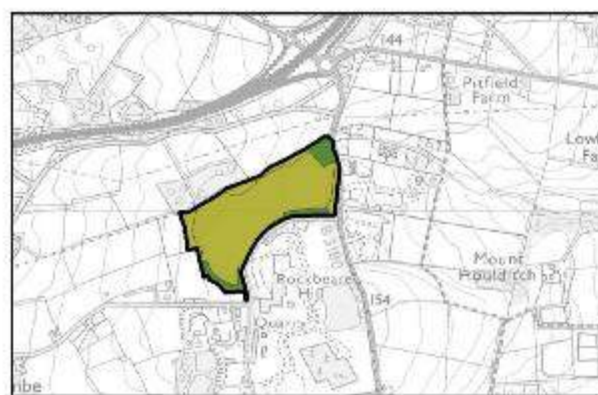
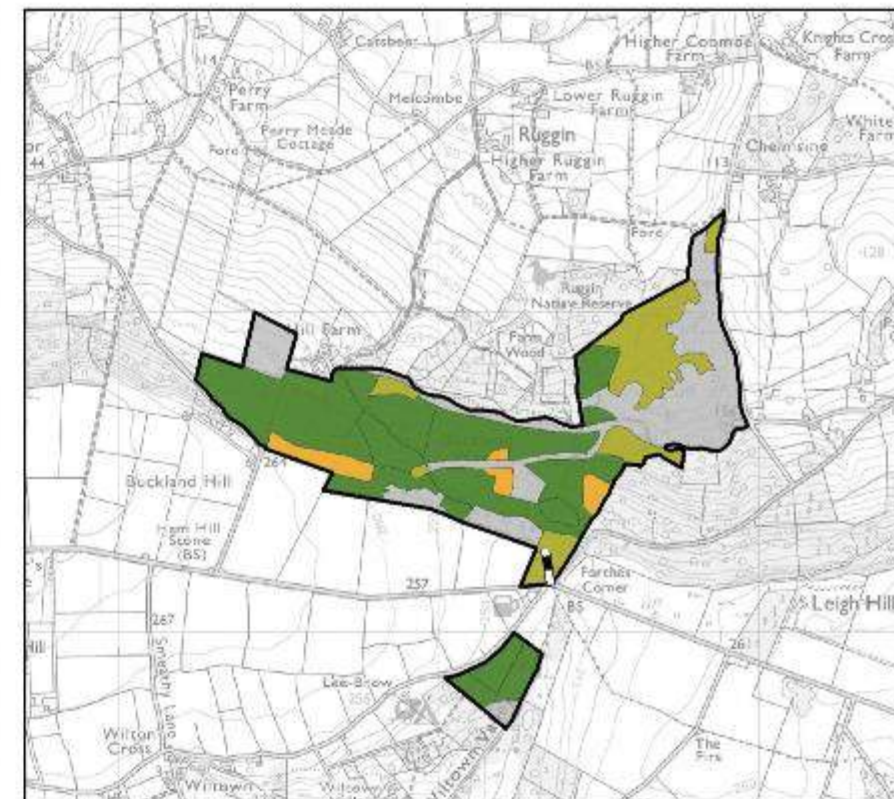




Indicative Future Species 2028

Legend

- Evergreen Conifer
- Deciduous Conifer
- Native & naturalized broadleaves
- Non-native broadleaves
- Open/other



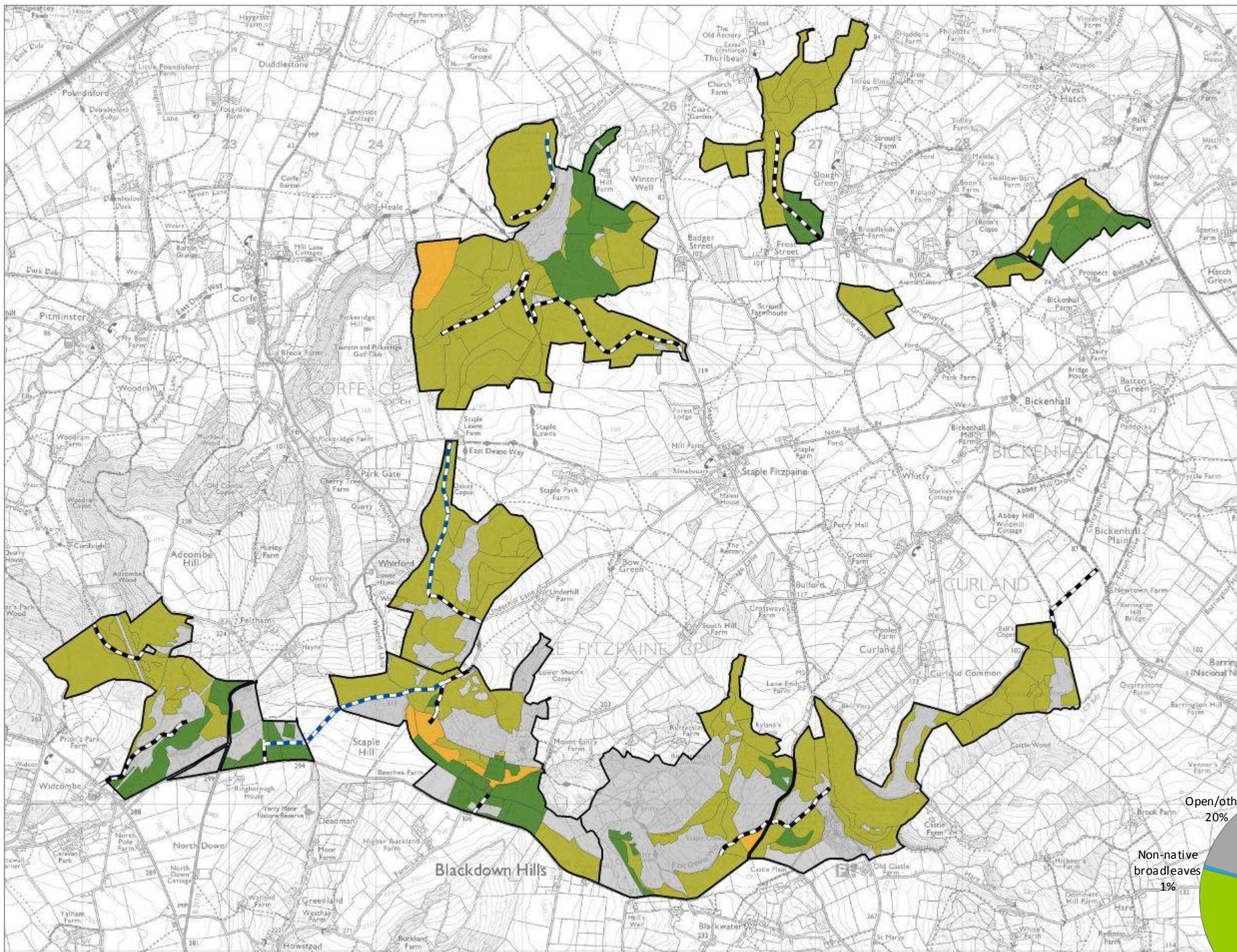


Indicative Future Species 2048

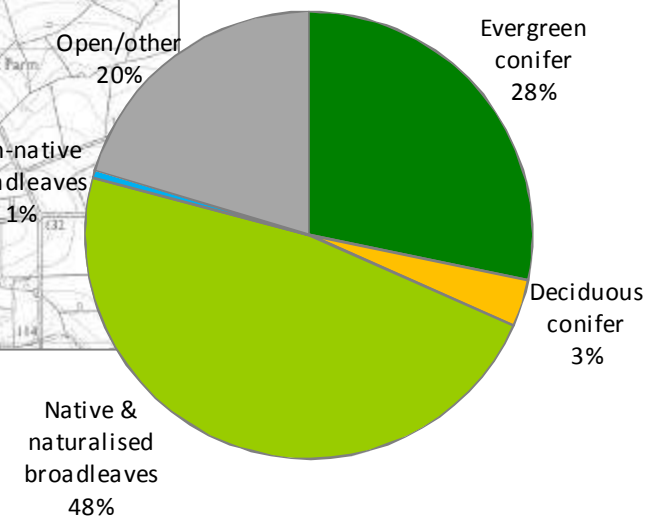
The projections made are indicative of species composition in thirty years time. They do not constitute a guarantee and merely act as an indicator of how the vision for the Plan area will be delivered over time.

Legend

- Evergreen Conifer
- Deciduous Conifer
- Native & naturalised broadleaves
- Non-native broadleaves
- Open/other



2048

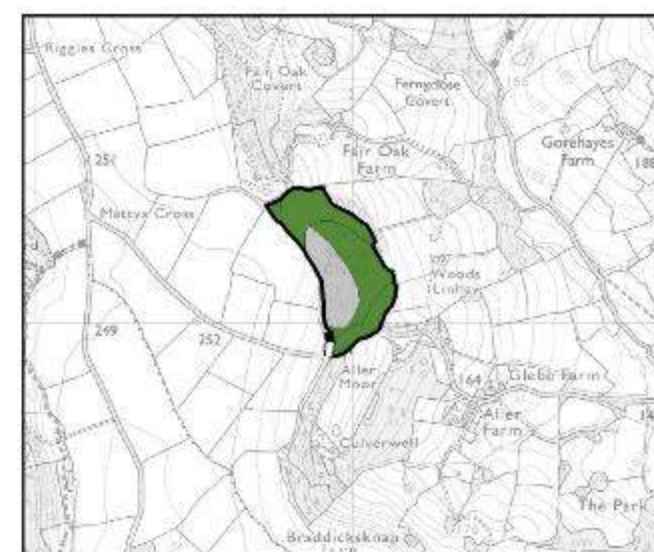
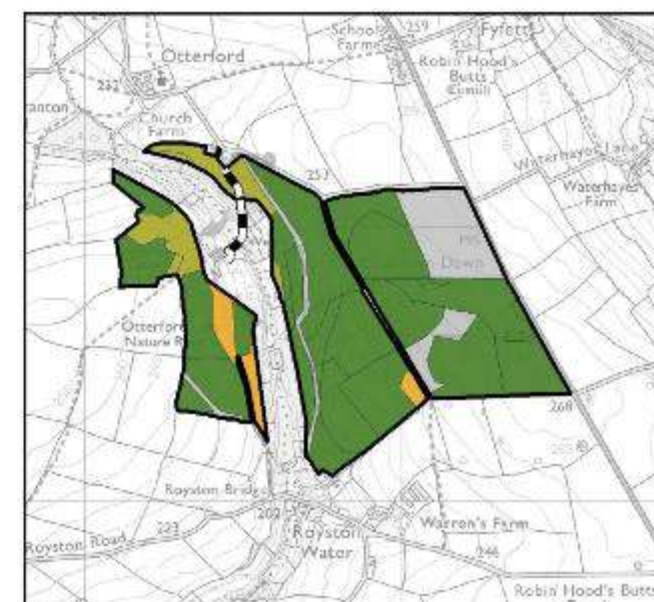
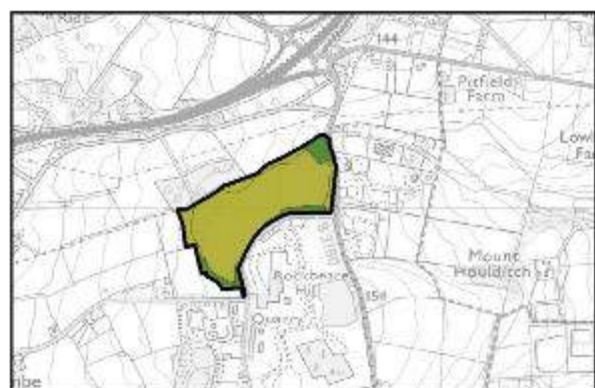
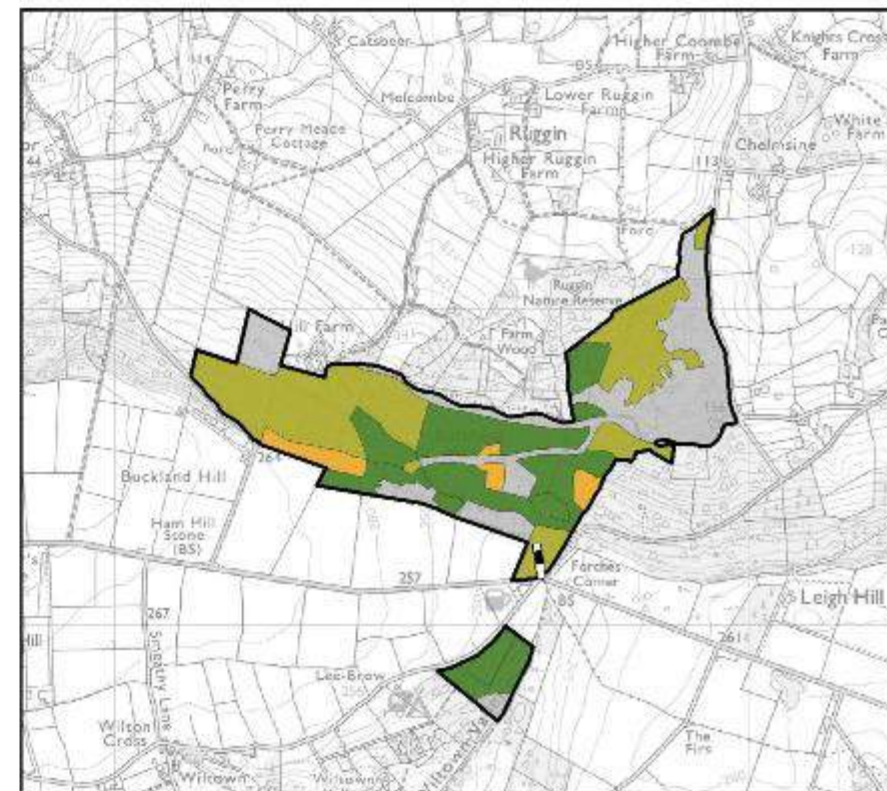
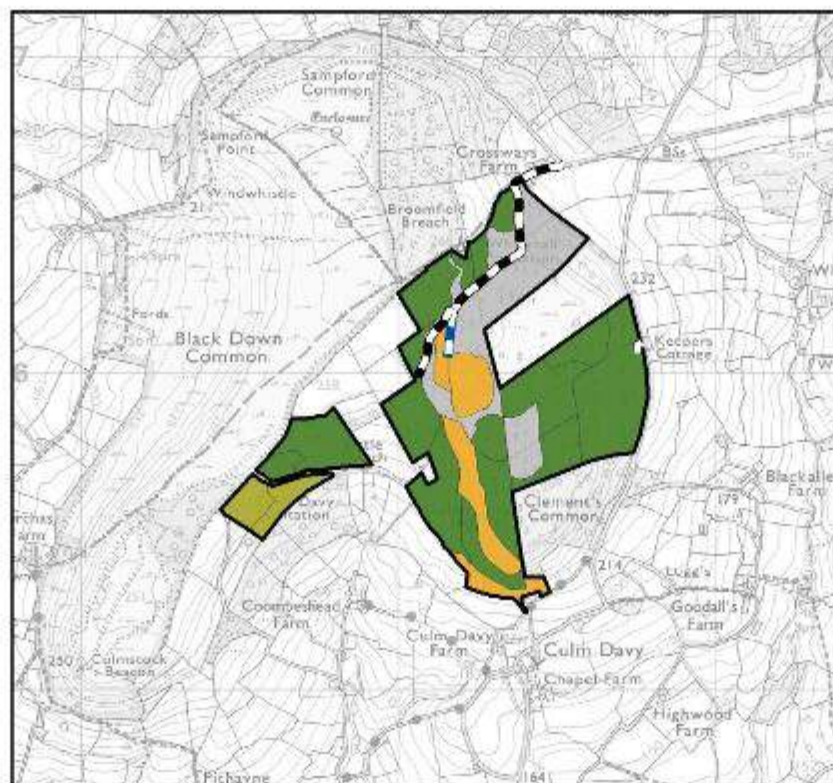
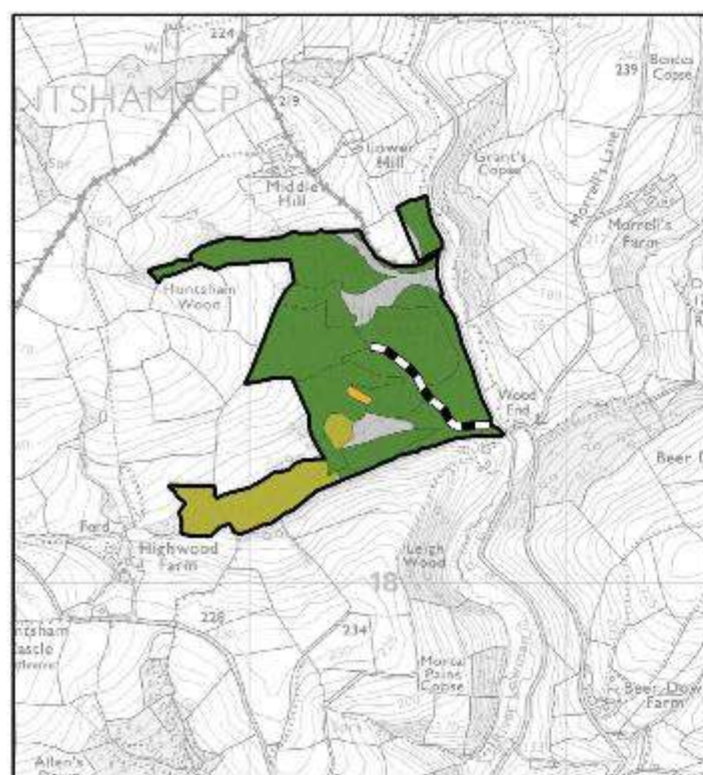




Indicative Future Species 2048

Legend

- Evergreen Conifer
- Deciduous Conifer
- Native & naturalized broadleaves
- Non-native broadleaves
- Open/other





Conservation - Habitats

Wood Pasture

Grazed pasture under woodland cover is important in the cultural landscape of the area. Remnant areas and those which have been extensively restored in recent years span across the Blackdown Hills ridge. Woodland cover will fluctuate according to grazing pressure, seeding propensity and other management but cover will be native broadleaf dominated. This will be to create a habitat rich in grasses, scrub and high forest suitable for a wide range of flora and fauna species to flourish. Restoration will continue primarily through the method of grazing with cattle, however if this method of management becomes no longer available a review of prescriptions may be required.

Wooded Heath

Wooded heath will be created and maintained as areas of transient heathland, creating dynamic habitats of patchy open space and regenerating scrub. This will deliver ecosystem functioning for a wide array of species. Woodland cover will fluctuate according to grazing pressure, seeding propensity and other management but cover will be conifer dominated. This will be to create a habitat rich in grasses, scrub and high forest suitable for a wide range of flora and fauna species to flourish. Restoration will continue primarily through the method of grazing with cattle, however if this method of management becomes no longer available a review of prescriptions may be required.

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

A number of areas of remnant lowland mixed deciduous woodland are found across the Plan area. These are predominantly made up of Sessile and pedunculated oak, ash, birch and beech. Some evidence of coppicing of hazel exists and looks to reassert. Management of these areas will be sensitive to ensure the quality is maintained in perpetuity. Thinning will be reviewed on a ten yearly cycle with the aim of enhancing and improving the condition of the habitat. Removal of invasive or un-suitable species, such as laurel, rhododendron or Western hemlock will ensure that this habitat is maintained and used as a building block for future native broadleaf restoration.

Wet Woodland Habitats

Numerous stream sides and wet areas are found at the bottom of hollows and small valleys within the Plan area and are valued as bogs, mires and wet woodland. These will remain predominantly willow and alder dominated broadleaf woodland. The majority of these sites will be managed at the time of intervention (if at all) to aid the recruitment of suitable wet woodland species such as alder, willow and birch encouraged as well as patchy open space to create dappled shade and light penetration. This will be achieved with the consideration of fauna and flora, such as rare lichen which flourish in these rich habitats

Corridor Habitats

Road and rides sides will conform to the prescriptions outlined in the District document, *Design and Management of Environmental Corridors*. The road and ride network within the Plan area will be utilised to extend and connect ride side habitats and transient open spaces, this will be achieved through targeted widening and unstocking of edges to some coupes following felling operations to create a mixed transient open and scrubby habitat for a multitude of species. In practice this means that regenerating vegetation on road sides will be regularly cut where access is easiest to create a dynamic edge habitat which the likes of Lepidoptera, insects and small birds choose to inhabit. Whilst wetter and often remote rides which are not used for deer control will be allowed to regenerate to provide habitat and linkage for a variety of species.

Deadwood

Mature established broadleaved trees with their moss and fauna will be retained as much as possible, and allowed to develop in senescent habitats. A variety of deadwood will be retained according to the level of ecological value and in line with Guidance (Humphrey & Bailey, 2012). Retaining decaying snags and logs as well as senescent trees throughout the forest will create suitable deadwood habitat for numerous associated species including raptor, smaller birds and an array of insects.



Typical restored wood pasture within Neroche, 2017



Trees of significance - are found throughout the Plan area but particularly around Neroche. These will be retained for perpetuity. The majority of these trees are oak but also beech, sycamore and field maple can be found, most of which are within Piddle Wood. When crops are thinned crowns will be released slowly to minimise the impact of sudden exposure to desiccating winds and sun scorch. Management will be in line with FC Guidance (Ops No. 31).



Conservation - Features

The Forest Plan area is used by an array of common and rare flora and fauna some of which are highlighted below. On the other hand some non-native flora and grazing fauna species can have a detrimental impact on the forest and its features if their numbers are too high. Species such as rhododendron, wild deer and squirrel will all be managed in line with District Strategy to ensure that their pressure does not have a negative impact on the condition of habitats and crops.

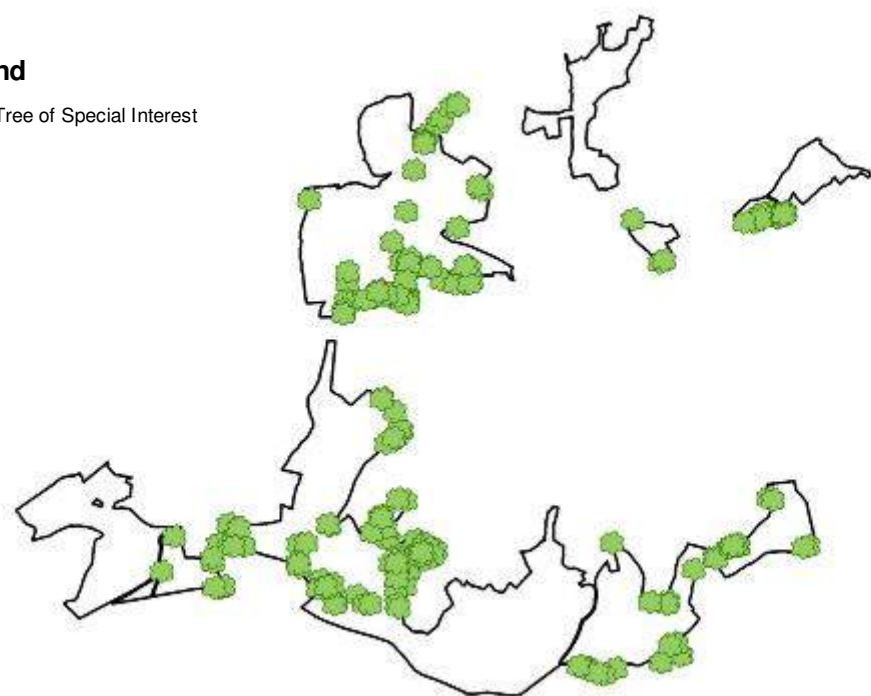
The introduction of new palatable tree species, in the bid to diversify the forest structure means that deer and small mammal impact will need to be taken into account. It is likely that protection and control will need to be increased and strategically targeted. This could include fencing, planting design and new deer glades which could be created following felling.

Lepidoptera — in particular Wood White, Brown Hairstreak, Duke of Burgundy and Silver-Washed Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary are becoming increasingly rare in the UK and have all been recorded in the Plan area in recent years. The Blackdown Hills escarpment used to be home to a vibrant population of the Marsh Fritillary (pictured) however these have not been recorded in the local landscape for a number of years. Favouring warm sheltered areas with sparse vegetation including ride sides, woodland clearings and abandoned quarries, these species will benefit from the clearfelling programme as well as the environmental corridor work proposed in this Plan.



Legend

Tree of Special Interest



Raptor - are known to nest and hunt within the forest areas. Many of the species choose to rest in high well branched conifer trees and then feed over open ground, making the forests ideal raptor habitat in an otherwise varied landscape. The management of appropriate large or potentially large trees for long retentions will ensure that habitat provision is maintained.

Unscheduled Monuments - are found across the Plan area, demonstrating its rich cultural significance. Staple Hill includes Britty Farm which was once a thriving smallholding, comprising a series of small fields cut out of the expanse of unenclosed heath. Quants also contains the remains of Farm Wood Bungalow, a smallholding abandoned early in the C20th and the remains of an unfinished reservoir.

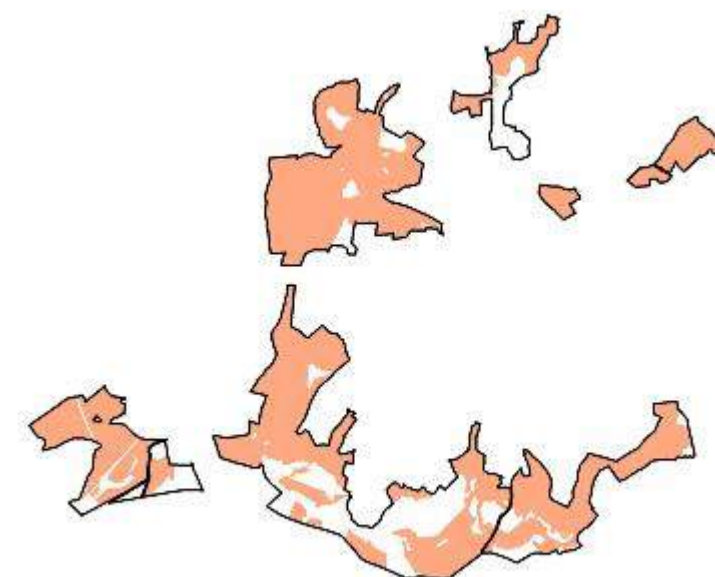
During the C13th there were two deer parks in Staple Fitzpaine; Staple Park and a smaller one at Park Farm. By 1583 the smaller park had vanished leaving Staple Park which was sold to Hugh Portman in 1595. The Portman's were keen huntsmen - they added a pale to the park boundary and in 1690 a lodge and kennels were built.

These features and the internal surrounding landscape needs to be preserved, and enhanced where possible, to retain and develop the Plan Area's cultural heritage. All unscheduled monuments will be identified and treated sympathetically at the time of operation in consultation with the county archaeology team.

Dormouse suitable habitat is found throughout the Plan area but particularly around Neroche and this species is known to be inhabiting the woodlands. This European Protected Species requires pinch points across corridors to allow habitat connectivity between broadleaved woodland, particularly in stands with a high hazel component. The increase in coppicing in hazel dominated stands will significantly enhance habitat quality with prescriptions outlined in the Environmental Corridors document also ensuring appropriate habitat provision and management will be in line with Best Practice Guidance (FC & NE, 2007).

Legend

Suitable Habitat





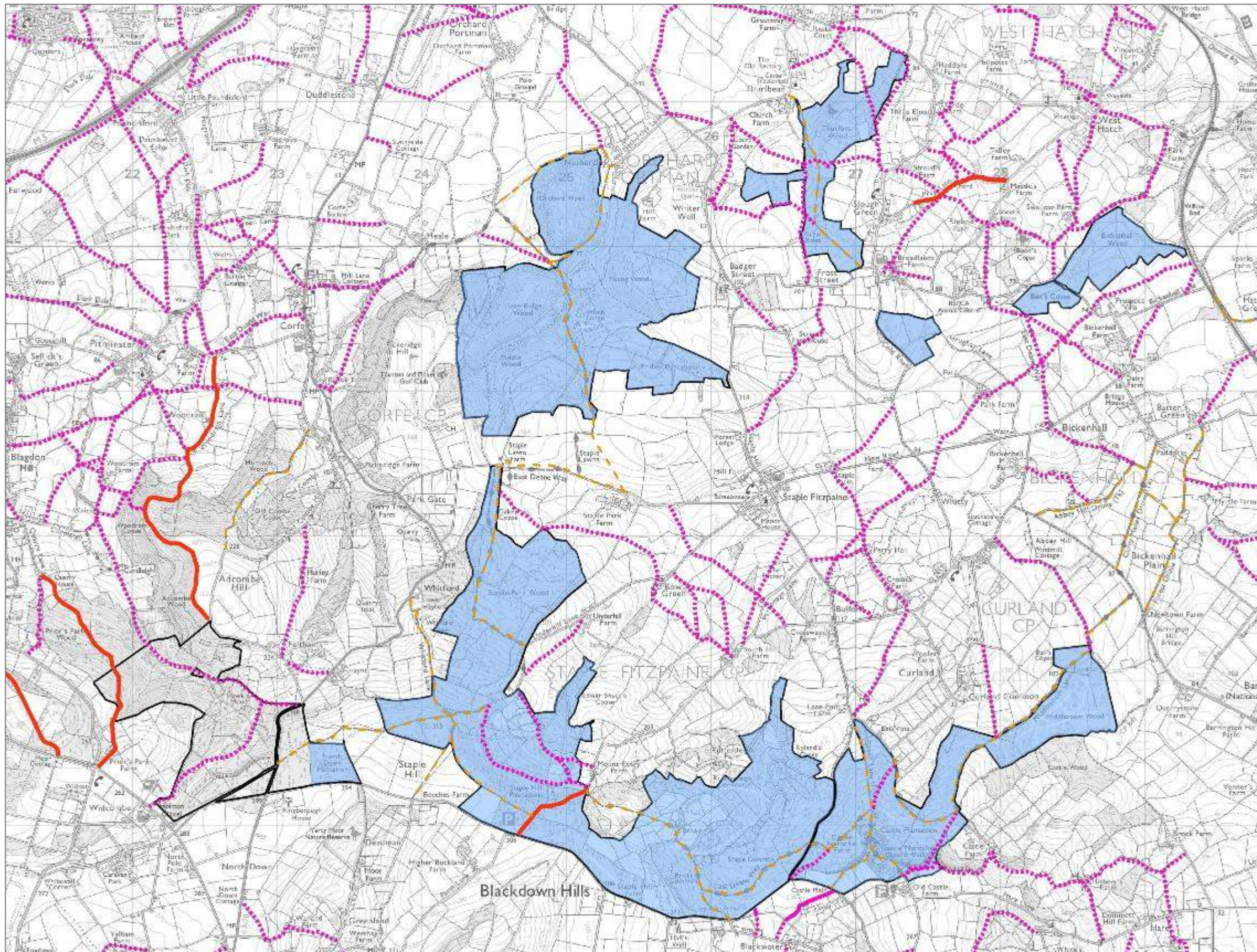
Recreation and Access

Blackdown Hills Forest Plan area experiences a high level of low-key recreational usage. The majority of the Plan area is permitted open access, with the exception of Priors Park, Buckland, Huntsham and Otterford which are de facto access due to the nature of the landholding.

The use of the Plan area by local individuals as well as numerous visitors and tourists demonstrates the value of the forests to the local community, these features will be maintained in balance with ecological value.

Two maintained car parks are found at Neroche and a number of Public Rights of Way in the form of footpaths and bridleways traverse the Plan area and connect with the surrounding landscape. Many of these Rights of Way are designated and/or signposted.

Numerous one-off and annual permissions are granted throughout the Plan area for recreational purposes. These include educational visits and community events.

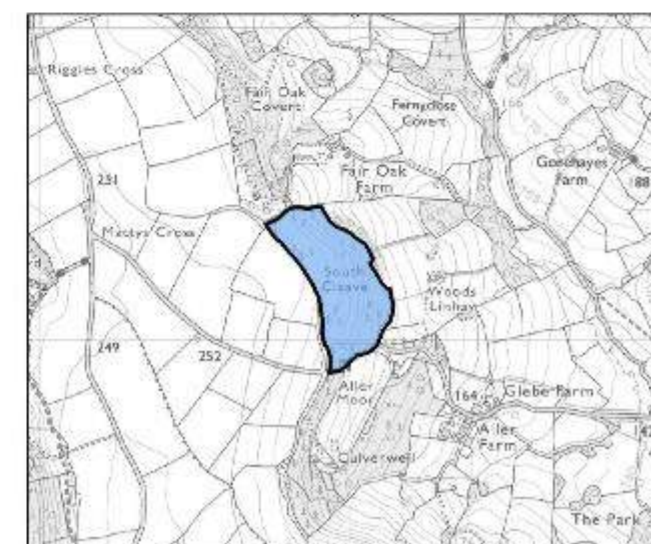
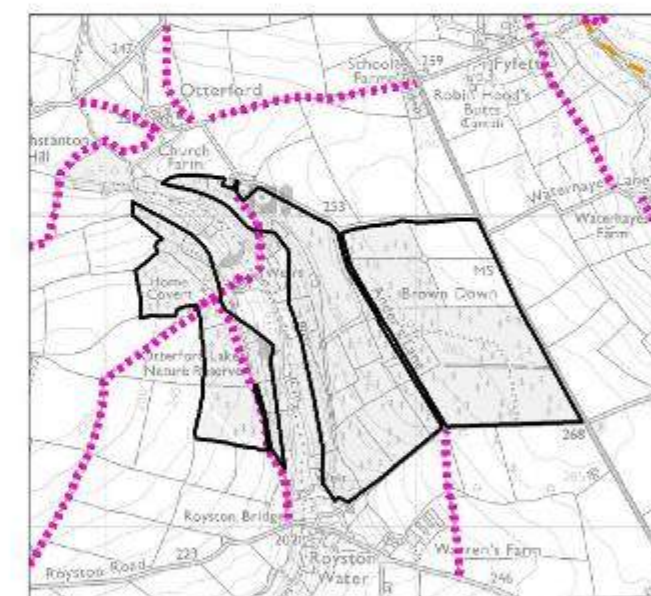
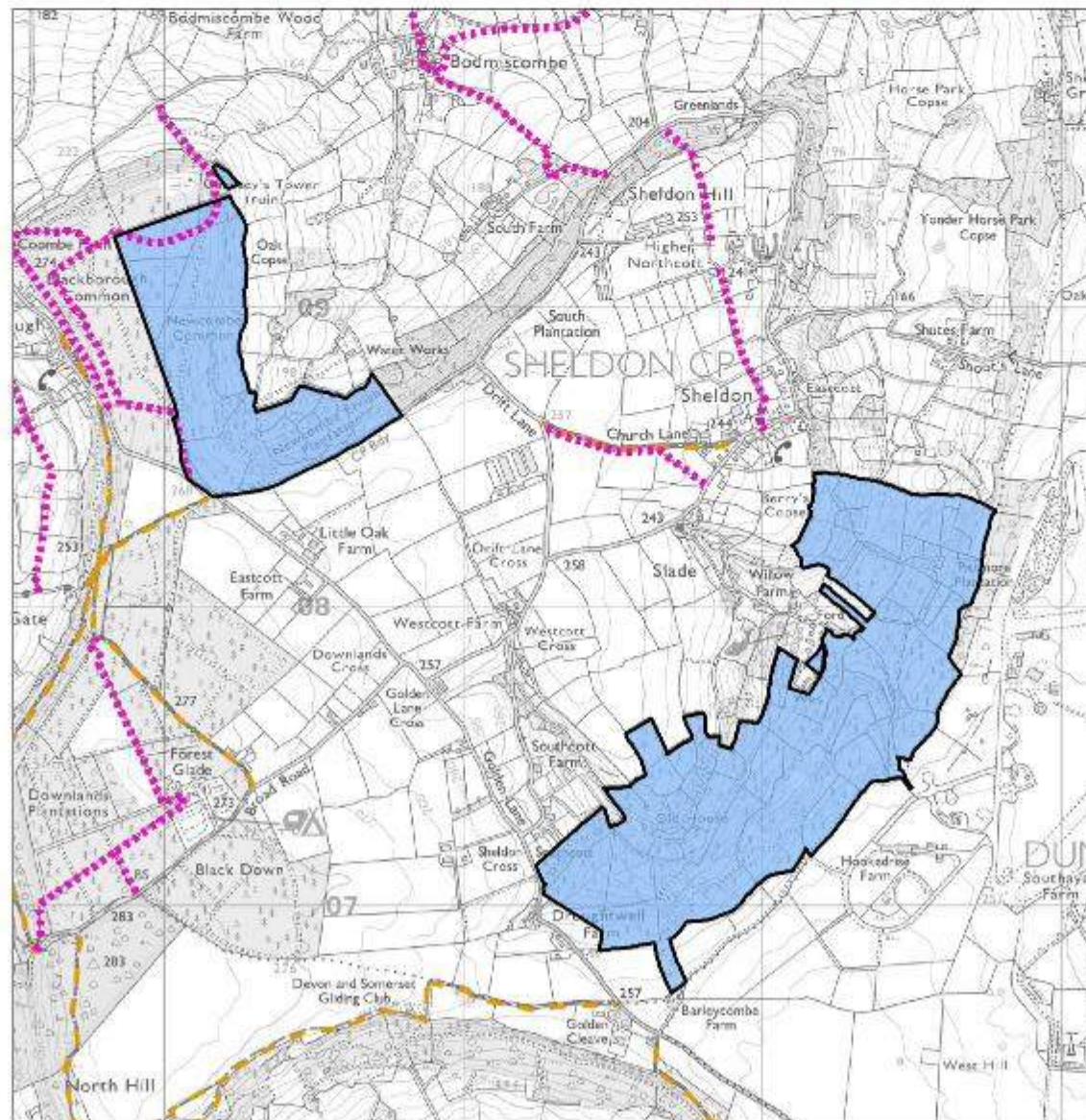
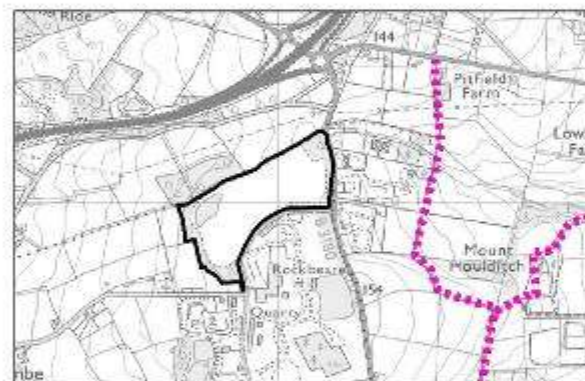
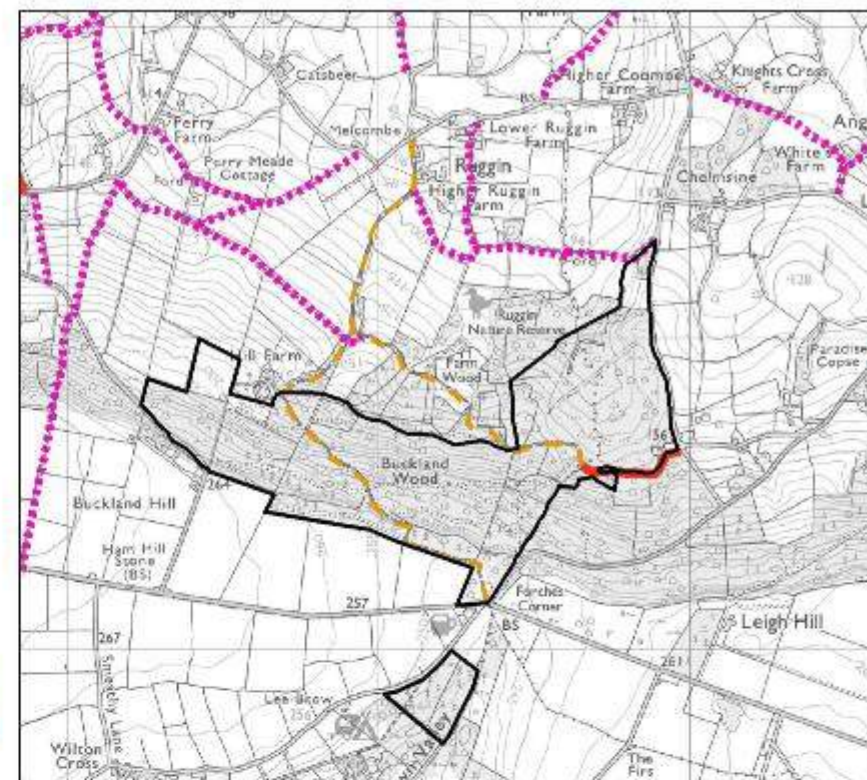
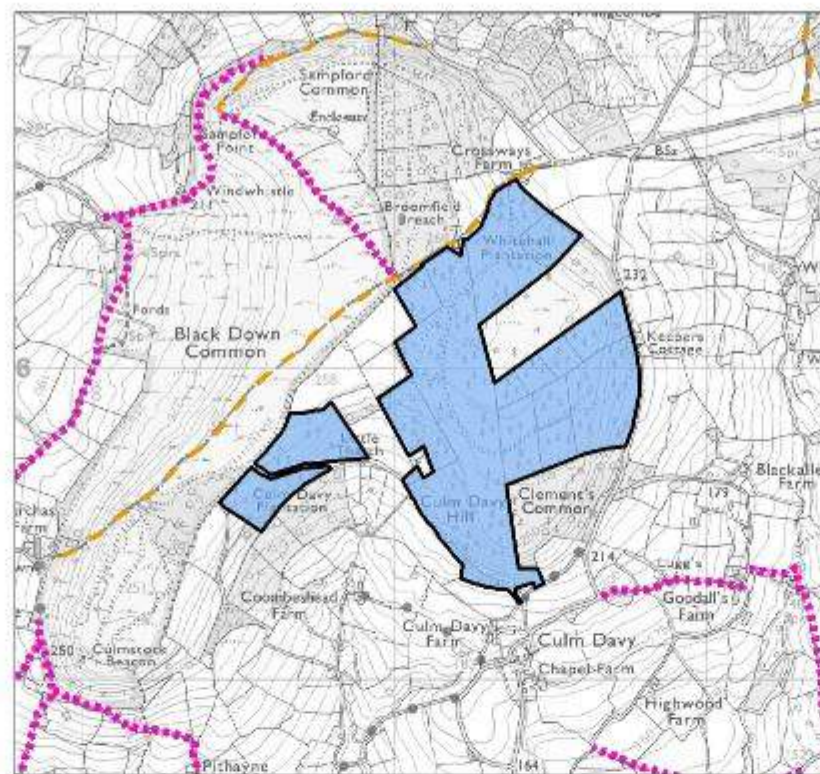
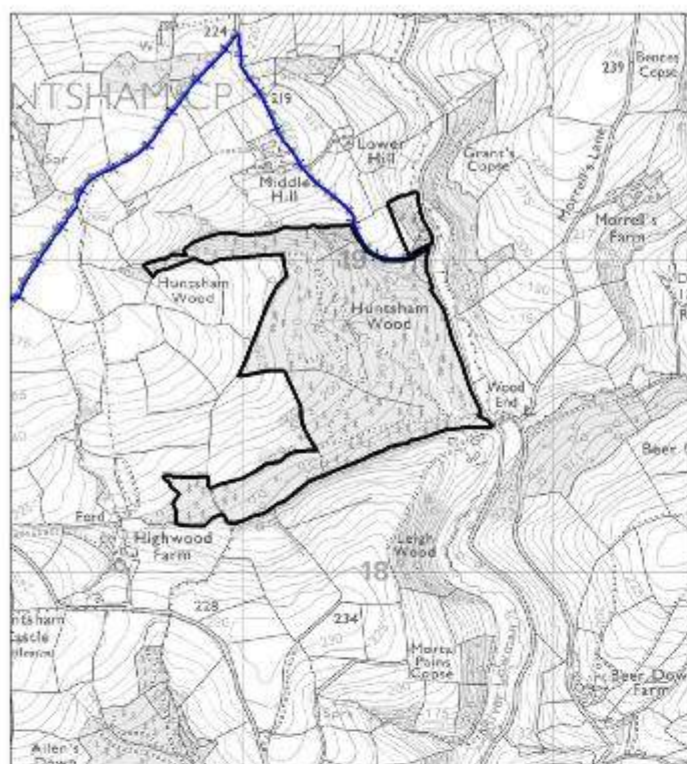


Legend

- ⋯ Footpath
- - - Bridleway
- Byway
- Restricted Byway
- Open Access



Recreation and Access



Legend

- ⋯ Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway
- Restricted Byway
- Open Access