



Forestry England

Growing the nation's forests

A proposed new woodland at Hoarthorns, Gloucestershire

Forestry England are planting new woodlands to expand the nation's forests

We are working on designs for a new woodland at Hoarthorns, near Edge End, Gloucestershire, approximately 2 miles northeast of Coleford. We would like your comments on our initial proposals. Your feedback will inform our final designs for the woodland.

Working with public and private landowners, we're choosing the right places for woodlands to grow and flourish, carefully planting a mix of tree species to be resilient in our changing climate.

Every new woodland will have public access so you can explore and enjoy them to support your health and wellbeing.

They will be valuable places for wildlife, often linking other woods and hedgerows to provide green corridors for wildlife to move and thrive across the landscape.

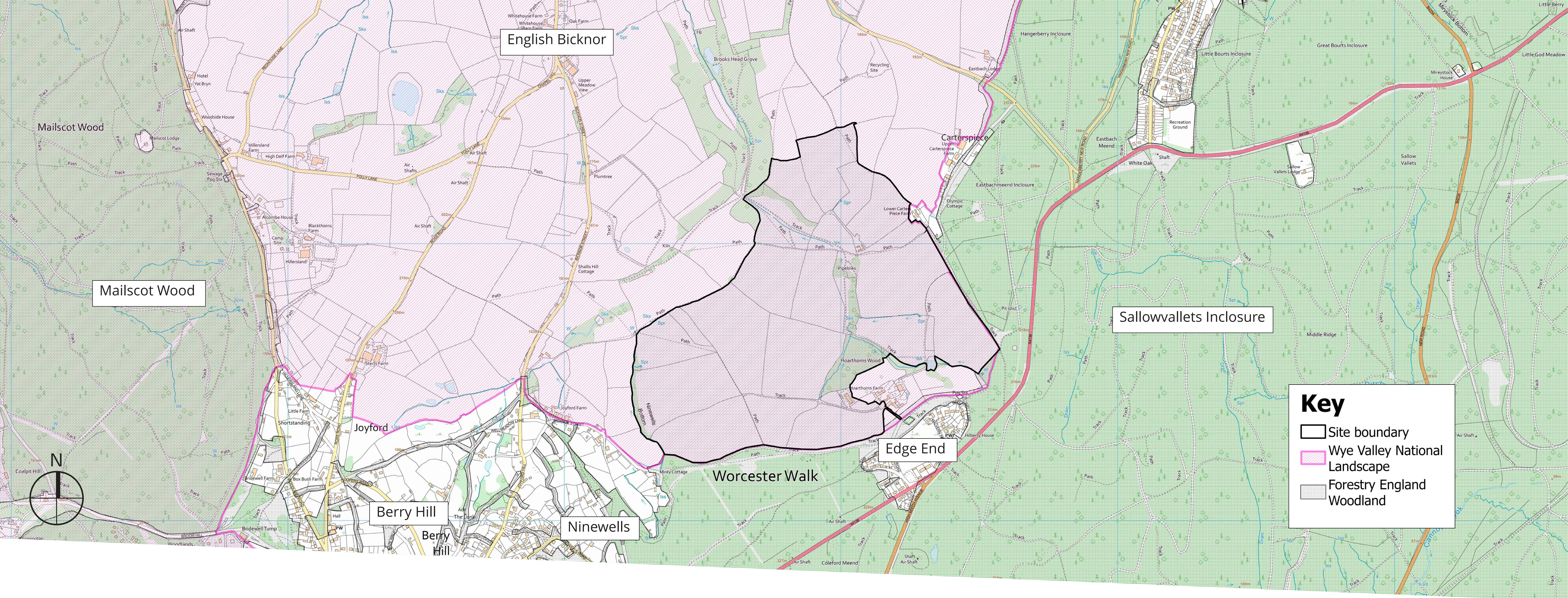
In time, each new woodland will provide sustainable timber, contributing to the rural economy. And they'll have wider environmental benefits including absorbing carbon, improving soil health and air quality, and water management.

Forestry England is creating these woodlands through the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) Nature for Climate Fund.

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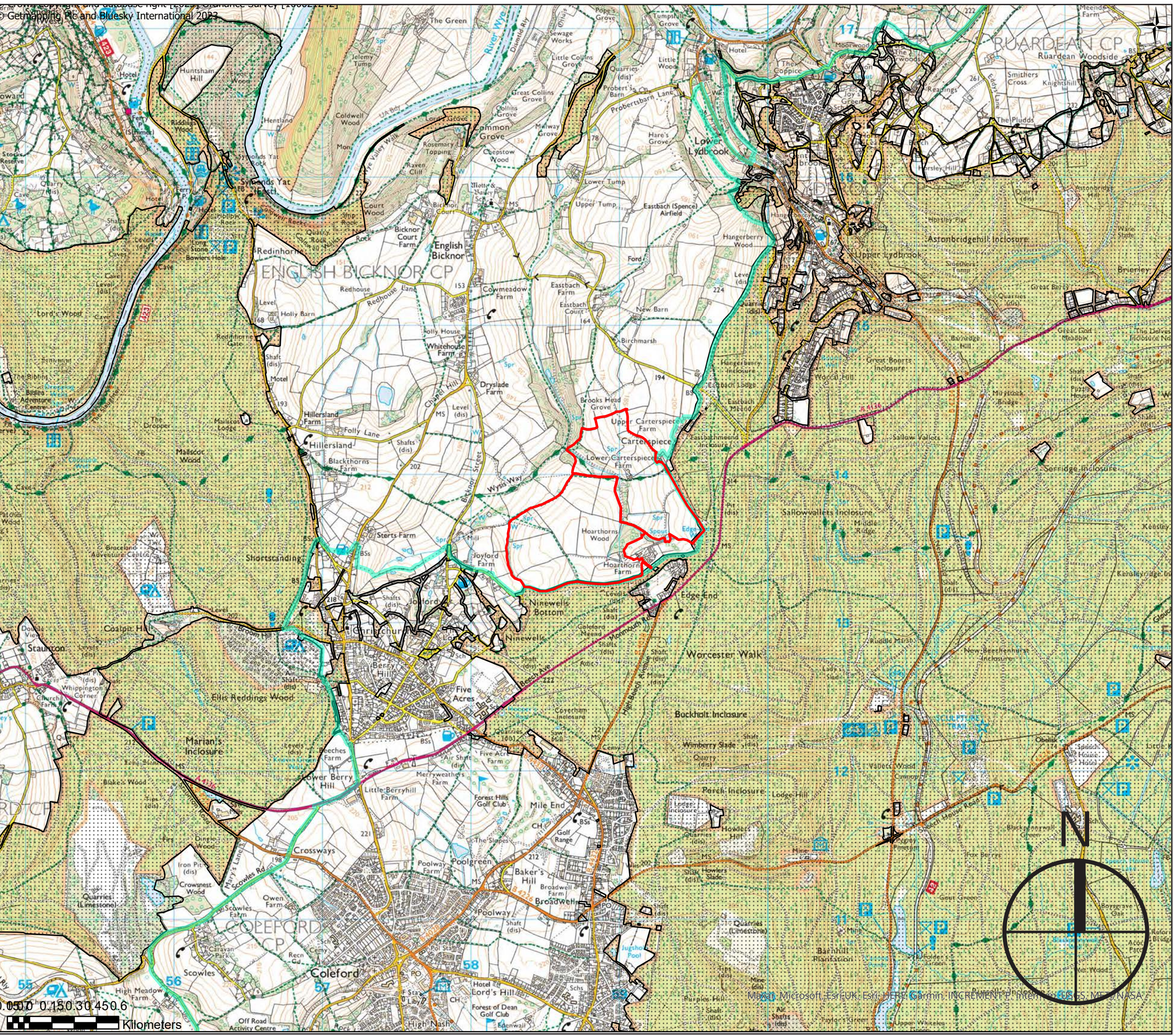
Site location & context

The proposed new woodland is located within the Forest of Dean west of Edge End and north east of Berry Hill with English Bicknor to the north.

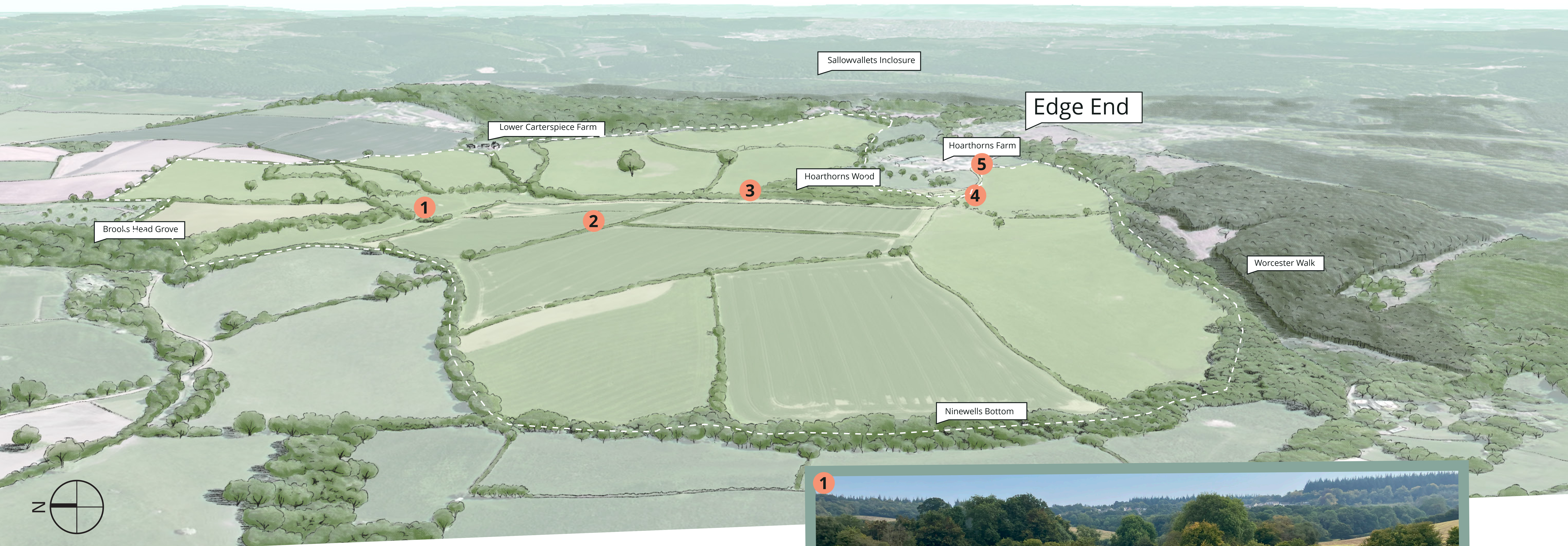
The site is in a largely pastoral landscape surrounded to the south and east by the Forest of Dean and is wholly within the Wye Valley National Landscape.

The site for the new woodland lies within Natural England’s National Character Area (NCA) ‘105 Forest of Dean and Lower Wye’, a well wooded, undulating plateau of ridges and valleys sitting over shallow Coal Measures, contained by an outer rim of more open landscape and with the River Wye cutting dramatic gorges with steep, wooded slopes to the west of the site.

The NCA features rich wildlife habitats including grassland, heathland, traditional orchards and woodland; nationally important assemblages of woodland birds and butterflies; internationally important woodland, river and bat sites; and a range of other rare flora and fauna.



Site Location 1:24,000
© Crown copyright and database right [2024] Ordnance Survey [100021242]
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The existing site

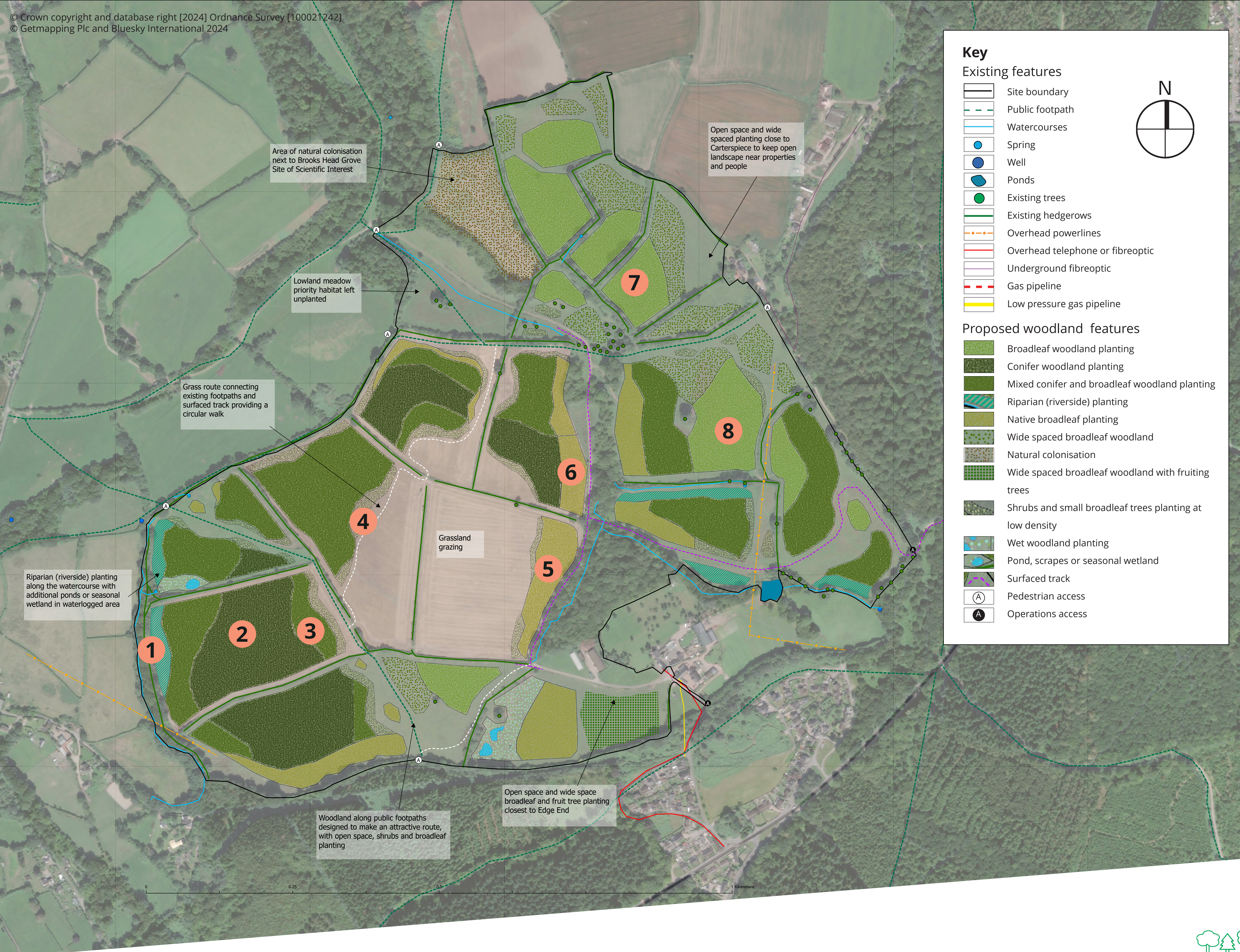
The western and central part of the site is mostly arable land rising from the watercourse to a plateau where there are far reaching views from west to north east. Mature native hedgerows enclose medium to large sized fields. The hedgerows are fragmented in parts. Residential properties and areas of settlement can be seen on all sides

In the east, the site is mostly pastoral stretching along the south boundary eastwards to Edge End then northwards to Carterspiece. This landscape slopes away from the densely wooded parts of the Forest of Dean, and often far reaching views out to the landscape of the Wye Valley can be seen. Mature native hedgerows enclose small to meduim sized fields. There are mature parkland trees along the far eastern boundary of this area.

At the centre of the site is a narrow valley grazed by farm animals. Its wooded boundaries create a strong sense of enclosure and a strong sense of place, often framing views to the landscape beyond.



Photos: 1. View south east towards Edge End from within the valley. 2. View north west from the plateau. 3. View north from Hoarthorns Wood. 4. View south into waterlogged field. 5. View west along Hoarthorns Farm track.



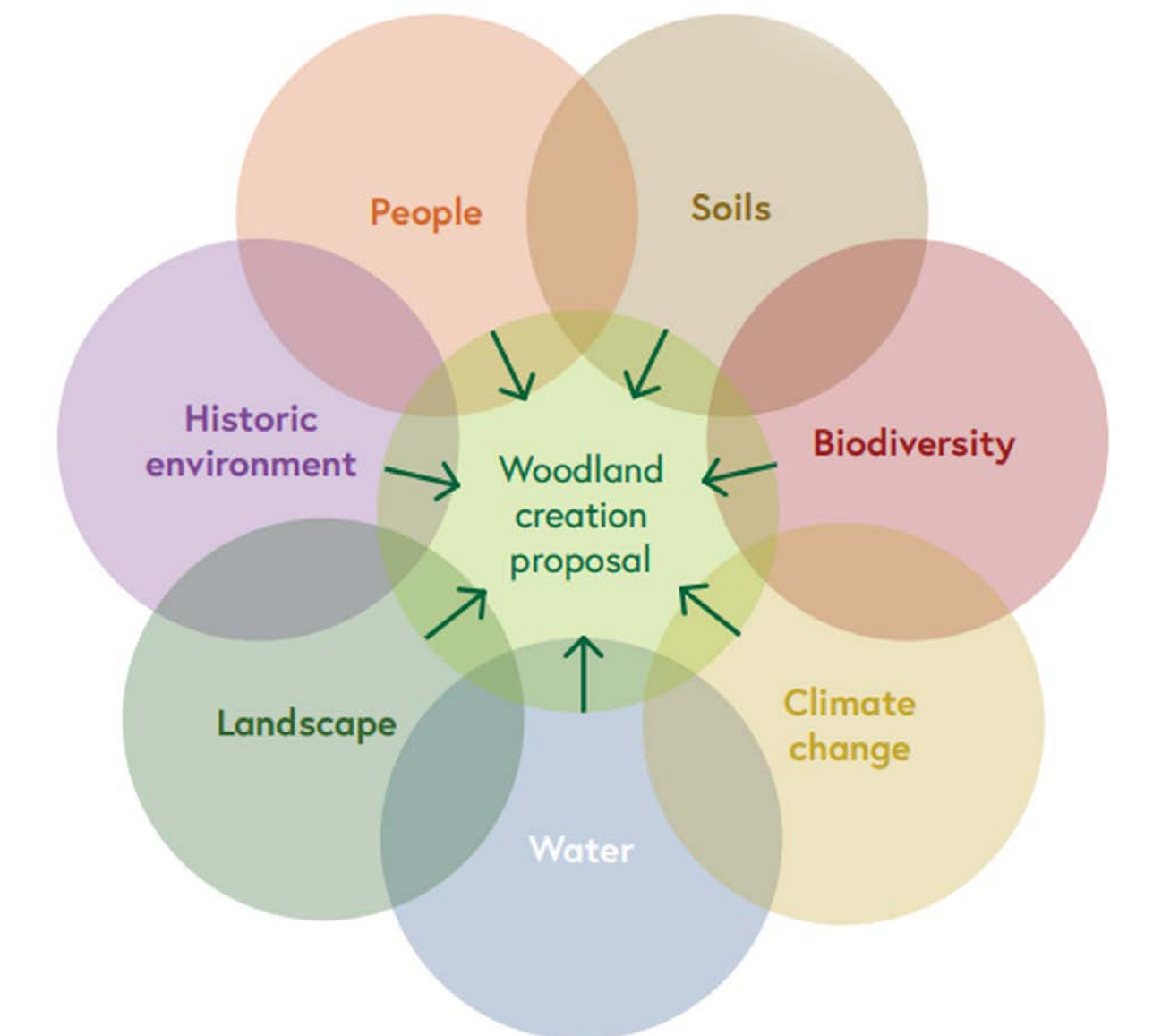
Draft design

How we design new woodland

We are designing the new woodland to benefit people, the economy, wildlife and the wider landscape. Our design meets the UK Forestry Standard, which takes into account the following elements (Forestry Commission, 2021):

Detailed desktop surveys, site surveys and analysis will inform our design. This includes:

- Preliminary ecological appraisal
- Historic environment records
- Geophysical surveys
- Landscape and visual appraisal
- Local environment records
- Soil mapping
- Ecological site classification
- Utilities searches
- Responses to initial consultation



Objectives for the new woodland



Create a mixed resilient woodland: plant a mix of trees to create species and structural diversity and to produce a lasting supply of certified sustainable timber.



Improve woodland connectivity and enhance existing ancient woodland: link adjacent ancient woodlands to improve habitat connectivity. Preserve hedges and create open spaces and areas to regrow naturally (natural regeneration) within the woodland for wildlife to thrive.



Sequester atmospheric carbon: help meet government net zero emissions goals by planting and managing woodland that will thrive in future climates and store carbon.



Public access for health and wellbeing: provide low-key recreation opportunities by improving access to the countryside for local residents and visitors.

Tree species we could plant



Aspen in mixes with alder, willow, hawthorn and alder buckthorn



Douglas fir in mixes with western red cedar, sitka spruce, coast redwood and big leaf maple



Scots pine in mixes with sessile oak and wild cherry



Shrubs including **dogwood**, rowan, blackthorn, hawthorn and alder buckthorn



Alder in mixes with pedunculate oak, hornbeam, wild cherry and aspen



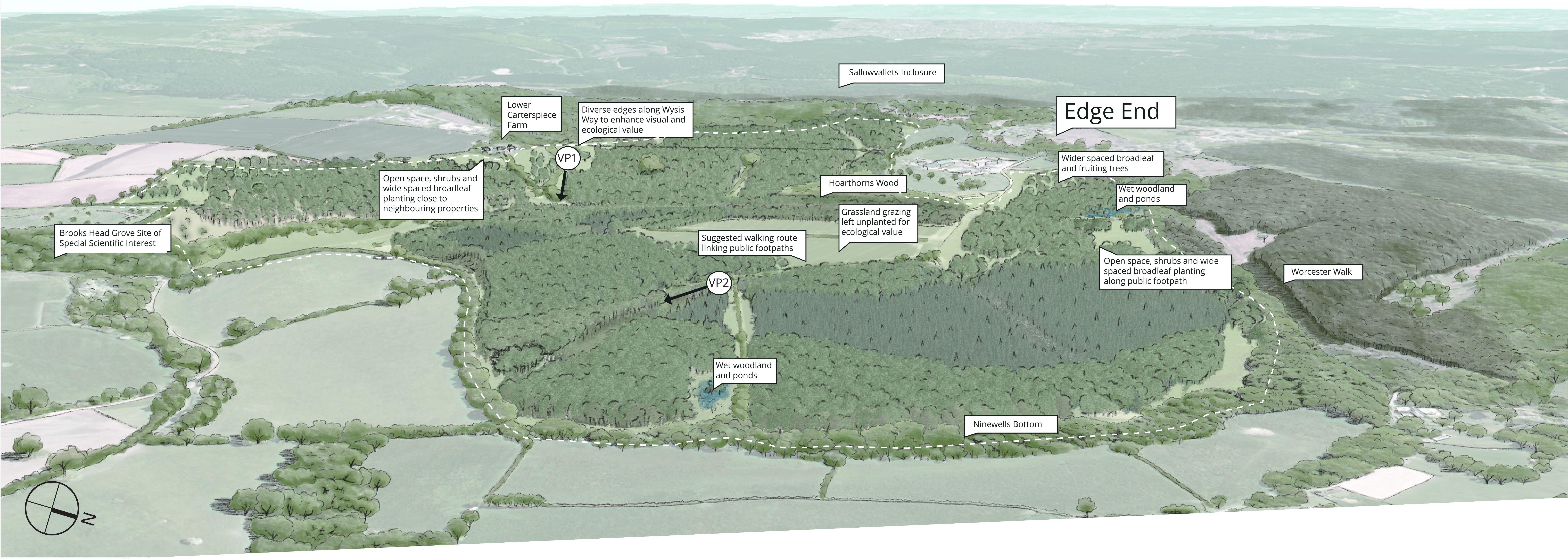
Pedunculate oak in mixes with small leaved lime, hawthorn and hazel



Small leaved lime in mixes with sessile oak, Italian alder, wild cherry, wild service tree and Serbian spruce



Red oak in mixes with rauli beech and Italian alder



How the new woodland could look

Our initial designs include proposals to:

- Add visual diversity in the landscape by planting a mix of conifer, broadleaf and conifer/broadleaf mixes as well as native trees and shrub mixes.
- Protect the Site of Special Scientific Interest and ancient semi-natural woodland with open areas for natural regeneration and native broadleaf buffers.
- Use the new woodland to frame views of the surrounding landscape and make the walk along the Wysis Way and public footpaths more enjoyable
- Keep the views from properties at Carterspiece and Edge End by leaving open spaces near property boundaries and planting shrubs and trees more sparsely.
- Add wet woodland planting, ponds, fruiting trees and riverside (riparian) planting to create a woodland that is visually appealing and ecologically diverse.
- Create open corridors by leaving space around hedgerows, streams , ditches, powerlines and pipelines. Plant shrubs in key areas along these open spaces at the edges of the woodland to benefit wildlife.

Artist's impressions:

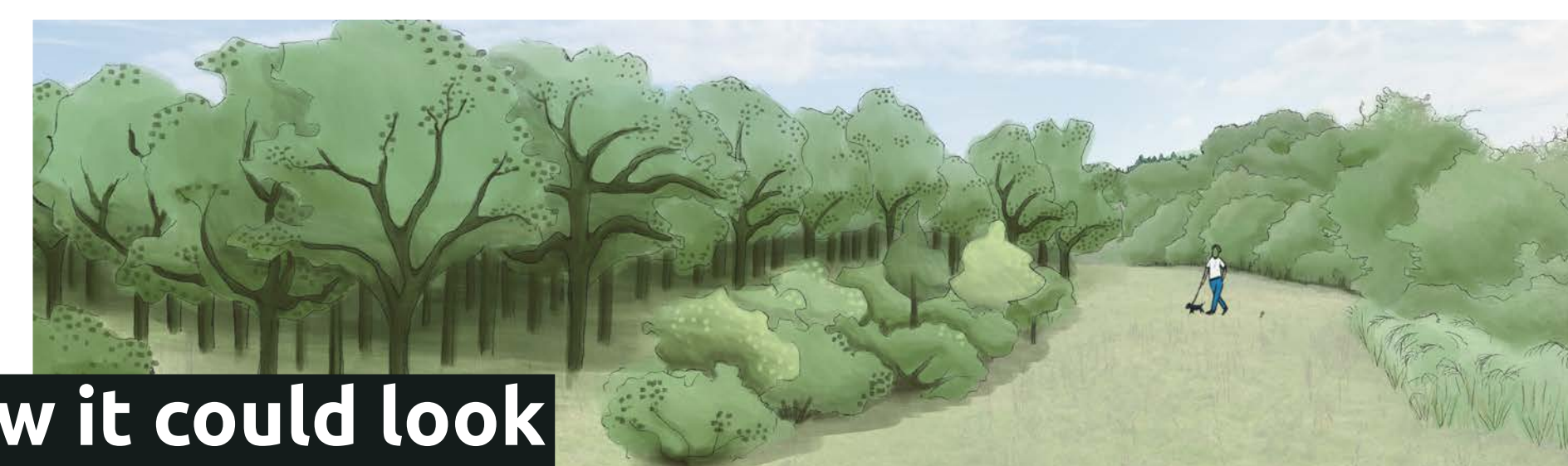
Wysis Way at viewpoint 1
How it looks now



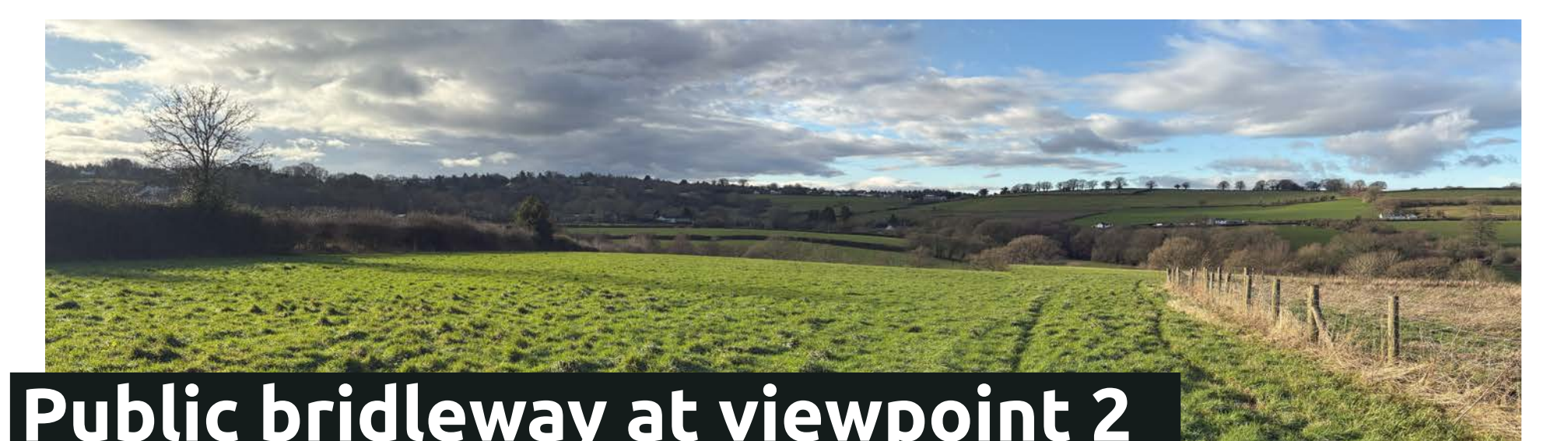
How it could look in 10 years



How it could look in 25 years



Public bridleway at viewpoint 2
How it looks now

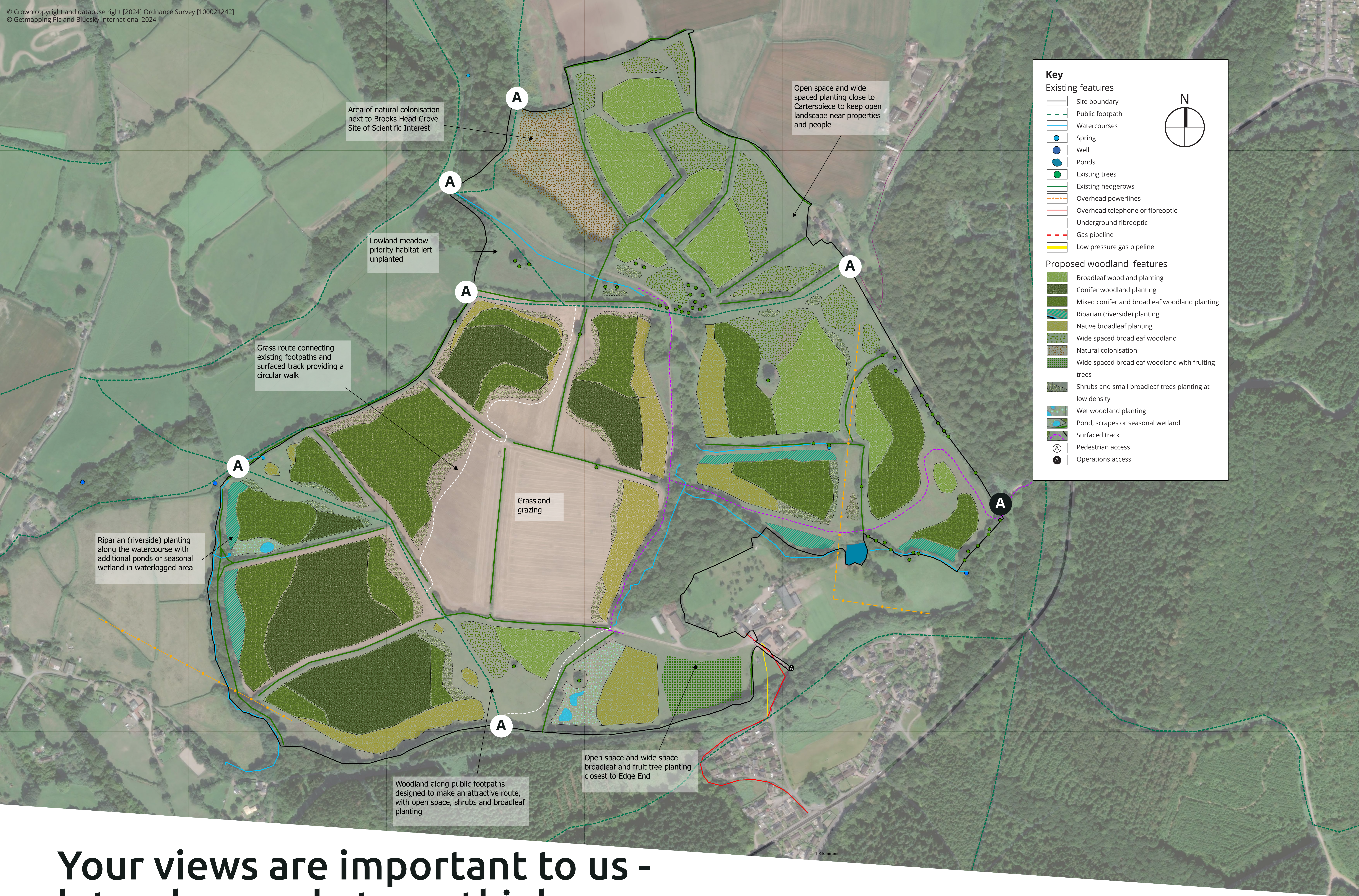


How it could look in 10 years



How it could look in 25 years





Your views are important to us -
let us know what you think



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Responding to this consultation

We encourage you to submit your response online. You can view our plans and submit your views by completing the online feedback form at:

- <https://consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/hoarthornsw>
- If you are unable to do this, you can respond via email at woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk

All views should be received by midnight on Sunday 1st June

What's next ?

- Review of consultation feedback and additional surveys
- Further design work to refine our proposals
- Application to the Forestry Commission for permission to create the new woodland
- Initial planting (Winter 2025/26)

**Scan the QR code
to find out more:**

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Forestry England

A new woodland at Hoarthorns - our response to key themes from early engagement

We invited local people to share their initial views about our plans to create a new woodland on land at Hoarthorns Farm in the Forest of Dean. Here are our responses to the key themes and questions people raised.

Users of the new woodland and public access

The new woodland at Hoarthorns will be open to the public and provide a quiet space for local people to enjoy. Once we have finished creating the woodland we will dedicate it under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act so people can explore the site.

Pedestrians will be able to visit the new woodland via the network of existing public rights of way, including the Wysis Way, a 55-mile public footpath that crosses distinctive areas of the Forest of Dean, Severn Vale and the Cotswolds. These paths, a network of new unsurfaced grass routes and new or upgraded operational forest tracks will give access for woodland maintenance and for people to explore the new woodland. There are no plans to include new surfaced trails, cycling or horse riding specific infrastructure.

Visitors will be welcome to walk their dogs in the new woodland, but we have no plans to fence around the whole woodland or include waste bins. We expect all dog owners to be responsible and to keep their pets under control in all the forests and woodland we care for following our forest dog code¹.

Forestry England works with many community groups that help manage our woodlands. Volunteers are critical in the work we do, and we can achieve a lot more with their help. There may be opportunities to get involved with a community planting day when we begin planting the new woodland for local people to join in creating this special place.

Parking and traffic

The woodland will be open to the public and can be easily visited on foot on the existing public footpaths and forest tracks from the surrounding area. We have no plans to include visitor or other recreational facilities and therefore our proposal does not include additional public parking. We want to avoid a significant increase to car traffic on local roads. To manage the new woodland, we will need road access for our forestry vehicles, and we plan to use existing entrances off the A4136. We will upgrade and create new forest tracks within the woodland and will consider barriers to discourage unauthorised access and antisocial behaviour.

Design, landscape and views

The new mixed woodland will improve the landscape by increasing biodiversity and enhancing the natural environment. We have done surveys to tell us more about the plants, wildlife and archaeology at Hoarthorns. These surveys, along with a landscape and visual appraisal have guided our draft designs.

Our design carefully considers the views to and from the site. The woodland has been

designed sensitively along existing footpaths, including the Wysis Way, where we have included open space, low density broadleaf planting and native shrubs to provide an attractive walking route. Our proposals include a large area of open space that we propose to manage as meadow habitat for grazing. Areas near powerlines and underground services, will also be kept as open spaces, opening views. These areas will have a natural shape, often with groups of shrubs along their edges to blend in with the surroundings.

To the north and east the proposals include more open space, an area of natural colonisation, wider spaced tree planting, shrubs and broadleaf trees to create an attractive and natural looking edge to the woodland that gently blends into the wider landscape. We have left open spaces where there are heritage features below ground, as recommended by heritage experts. The design includes new grass routes, linking public footpaths and open spaces. Existing hedgerows will be kept, creating diverse habitats for wildlife and connectivity beyond the woodland, and to benefit biodiversity, such as butterflies and birds.

We have carefully considered how close the new woodland will be to our new neighbours and we will leave open space and plant groups of shrubs and trees at wider spacing at the edges of the woodland near neighbouring properties and close to Edge End. Planting native broadleaf trees on the edges of existing woodland, and including fruiting trees and areas of wet woodland with ponds, will support a wide range of wildlife, including varied species of birds, mammals, insects and fungi, all of which thrive in the diverse environment created by these trees.

The trees we will plant

We are using years of experience and the latest scientific evidence to plan in detail the trees we will plant at the new woodland. Our surveys help us to choose the trees most suitable for the site now and as the climate changes. Our professional foresters carefully choose what trees to plant and where to plant them. They understand the local soil, how quickly the trees will grow, and the important habitats, species and geographical features nearby. We also consider tree pests and diseases and future climate conditions to keep woods as healthy as possible.

The species chosen will be a mix of broadleaf and conifer, often planted together in mixtures, with groups of shrub species along edges to increase the variety and provide seasonal colour and texture. Species have been chosen to produce a future source of sustainable timber. This supply of homegrown wood products will support the wider British timber and forestry industry, helping to reduce the demand for imports from other countries.

The species at Hoarthorns might include hazel, wild cherry, small leaved lime, pedunculate oak, guelder rose, dogwood, aspen, alder, rowan and willow. Conifers

may include Douglas fir, Scots pine and Serbian spruce. The existing hedgerows will be preserved and we will also include an area of fruiting trees.

Establishing and managing the new woodland

We aim to plant the new woodland in winter 25/26. Maintenance in the first five years will be especially important to ensure the woodland's long-term success. The woodland will be managed by the Forestry England team and our local contractors.

We will develop a Forest Plan to make sure that future timber production is sustainable. As part of our ongoing management of the woodland, we will begin to remove some trees after about 20-25 years -this will provide a sustainable supply of timber and help the woodland to thrive for many years to come.

We do not intend to fence the boundary of the new woodland at Hoarthorns, we will use deer fencing to protect larger blocks of new planting and tree tubes in smaller areas. Fencing and tree tubes would be removed and where possible recycled after the trees become established.

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¹ <https://www.forestryengland.uk/dog-code>



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Protecting the new woodland from deer and feral wild boar

The Forest of Dean is home to a variety of deer species, these include Fallow, Roe, and Muntjac. It is also home to the largest population of wild boar in the UK. With no natural predators, high levels of reproduction and ideal habitat for food and shelter populations of deer and boar could continue to grow until the population density reaches a level whereby the population starts to self-regulate through limited food resources.

Without intervention and protection browsing can damage young trees, plants and wildlife habitats. In the short-term, this can kill some trees and plant species and in the longer-term, it can reduce the resilience of the new woodland to climate change, reduce plant and animal diversity and lower the carbon captured from the atmosphere.

To keep healthy and sustainable populations Forestry England's management is to step into the absent role of the natural predator through population management control.

Our highly skilled wildlife rangers safely and humanely control deer and boar populations in our woodlands, working to the highest standards whilst undertaking other vital conservation works to protect and increase the numbers of other threatened species. More information about how Forestry England manage deer can be found [here](#).¹ More information about how Forestry England manage wild boar can be found [here](#):²

Any landowner may choose to protect their land from deer or feral wild boar by maintaining and strengthening their boundaries, the Deer initiative provides best practice guidance for fencing standards.

Why are you planting agricultural land?

The new woodland will capture carbon, restore and connect habitats, enhance biodiversity, and supply sustainable homegrown timber as well as a wonderful space for people to enjoy.

The site has been carefully and individually assessed so it is suitable for woodland creation and sensitive to the local landscape. This assessment considers the existing land use, and we target lower-quality or less productive land to create new woodlands.

Forestry England understands concerns around food security and keeping the best land in agricultural production. Our woodland creation programme seeks to avoid the most productive land (grades 1 & 2). Most of the land at Hoarthorns is graded at 3 with a small section at the centre of the site that is currently used for crops is a grade 2. Our

designs will retain this agricultural land with the intention to include grazing. Forestry England's role is to manage and expand the nation's forests to ensure they are healthy and sustainable and benefit wildlife, people and the economy.

Timber is a crucial material for the UK's green economy helping a move away from higher-emission materials like steel, concrete, aluminium and bricks. It is renewable, sustainable, and has a lower carbon footprint, making it essential for environmentally friendly construction and manufacturing practices. Currently the UK imports over 80% of its [timber](#)³.

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¹ <https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/managing-deer-the-nations-forests>
² <https://www.forestryengland.uk/article/more-information-about-wild-boar>
³ [Forestry Facts and Figures 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)