



Forestry England

Growing the nation's forests

A proposed new woodland near Delamere in Cheshire

We are planting new woodlands to expand the nation's forests we care for

We are working on designs for a new woodland in Cheshire, which will join on to Delamere Forest, and would like your comments and suggestions 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 to provide green corridors for wildlife to move and thrive across the landscape.

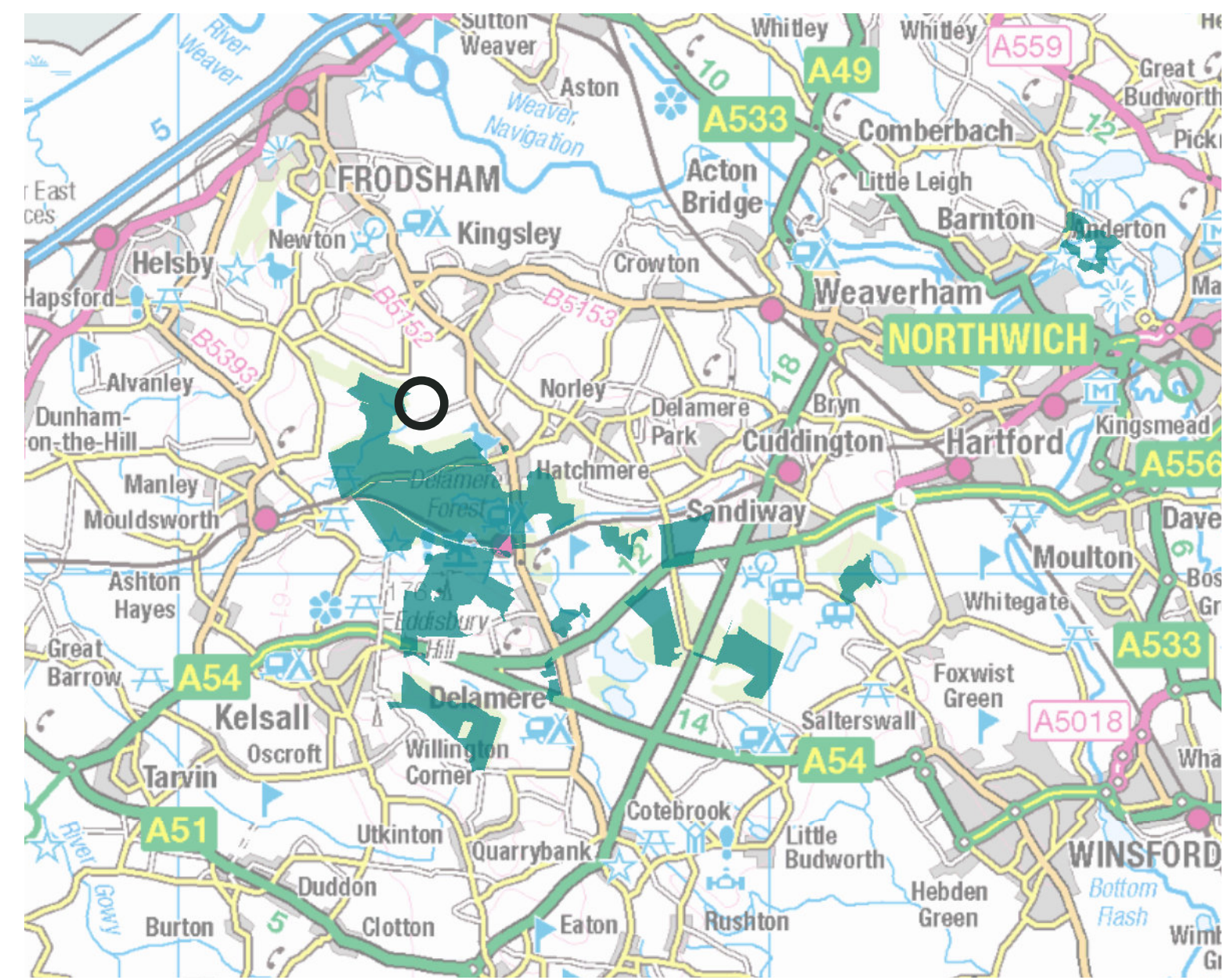
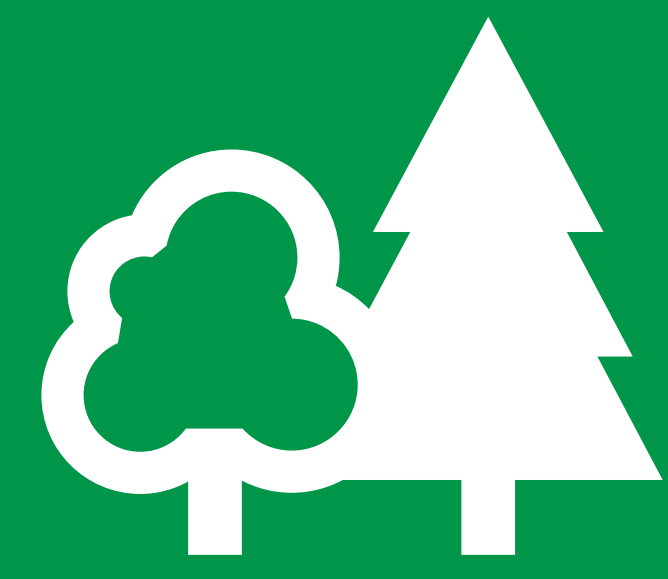
Our plans are part of the government's commitment to increasing tree planting rates across the UK to 30,000 hectares per year by the end of this parliament, supported by the Nature for Climate Fund. We aim to plant at least 2,000 hectares of new, high-quality, predominantly broadleaved woodlands across England.

In time, each new woodland will provide sustainable timber, contributing to a green economy. And they'll have wider environmental benefits including absorbing carbon, improving soil health and air quality, and combating flooding.

Scan the QR code to find out more:



forestryengland.uk

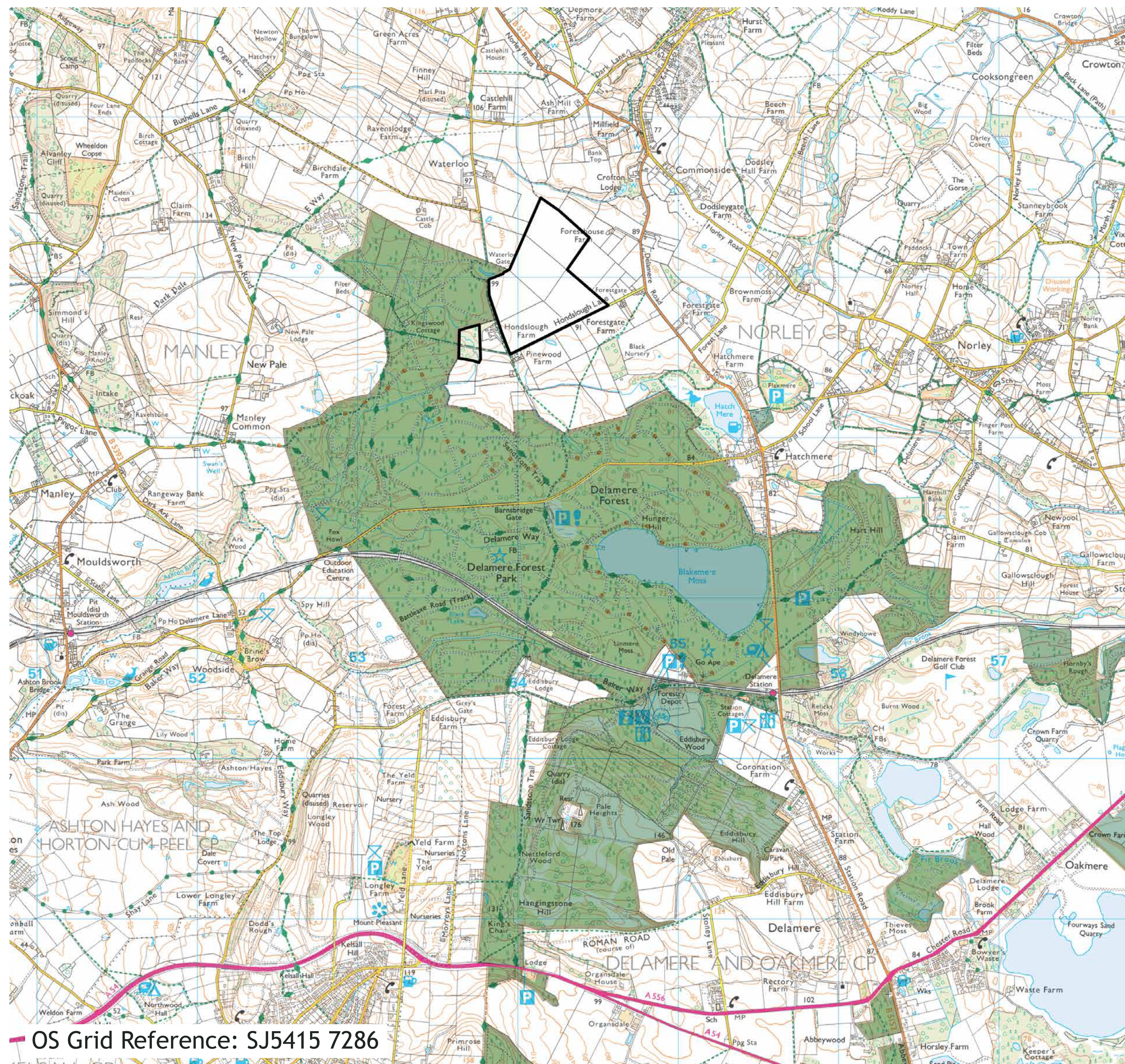


The proposed woodland creation site at HondsloUGH Farm is in Cheshire, between Northwich and Chester, next to the northeastern boundary of Delamere Forest. Forestry England is buying the land from Cheshire West and Chester Council and plan to create a thriving woodland.

The site is approximately 40 hectares of grade 3 agricultural land and will join on to Delamere Forest to become part of the area managed under Forestry England's *Delamere Forest Plan* - the sustainable management plan for the forest.

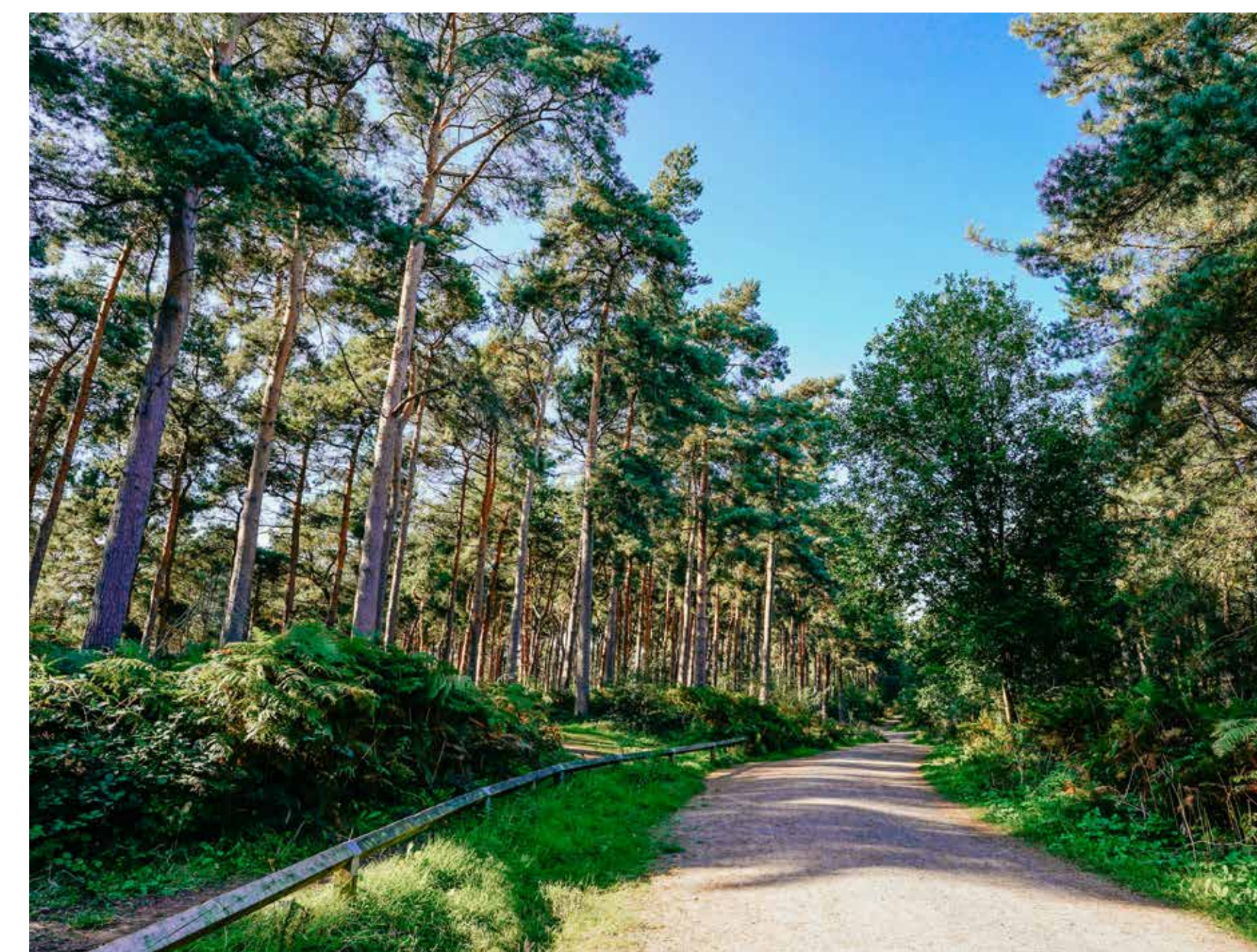


View north from Old Pale viewpoint, Delamere Forest. HondsloUGH Farm visible in distance.



OS Grid Reference: SJ5415 7286

Insets: woodland creation site boundary next to Delamere Forest



Walking and cycling trails in Delamere Forest

The site is in Natural England's National Character Area 62: Cheshire Sandstone Ridge. The sandstone ridge has outcrops rising over 100m above sea level and overlooks the surrounding Cheshire plain.

The large-scale landscape has a strong mosaic of woodland: areas of wet woodland, ancient woodland, some post-medieval conifer plantations and sustainably managed broadleaf and conifer plantations; along with small-scale agriculture: grassland, arable and pasture. The medieval Royal Forest of Delamere once covered a vast area of Cheshire.

The landscape also has areas of glacial meres and mosses, including a number which are part of the internationally important Northwest Midlands Meres and Mosses Ramsar site, including Oak Mere, Abbots Moss and Hatch Mere.

There are many historic features in the forest the most notable being Eddisbury Hill Fort which is an Iron Age Hill Fort built in 100-200BC and protected as an Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Over 750,000 people come to Delamere Forest every year to enjoy the beautiful woodland and wide variety of open spaces, wetland and grassland habitats that are linked by a good network of forest trails. The forest also produces around 6,000 cubic metres of sustainably grown timber each year, carefully managed alongside the recreation opportunities and biodiversity.



Blakemere Moss

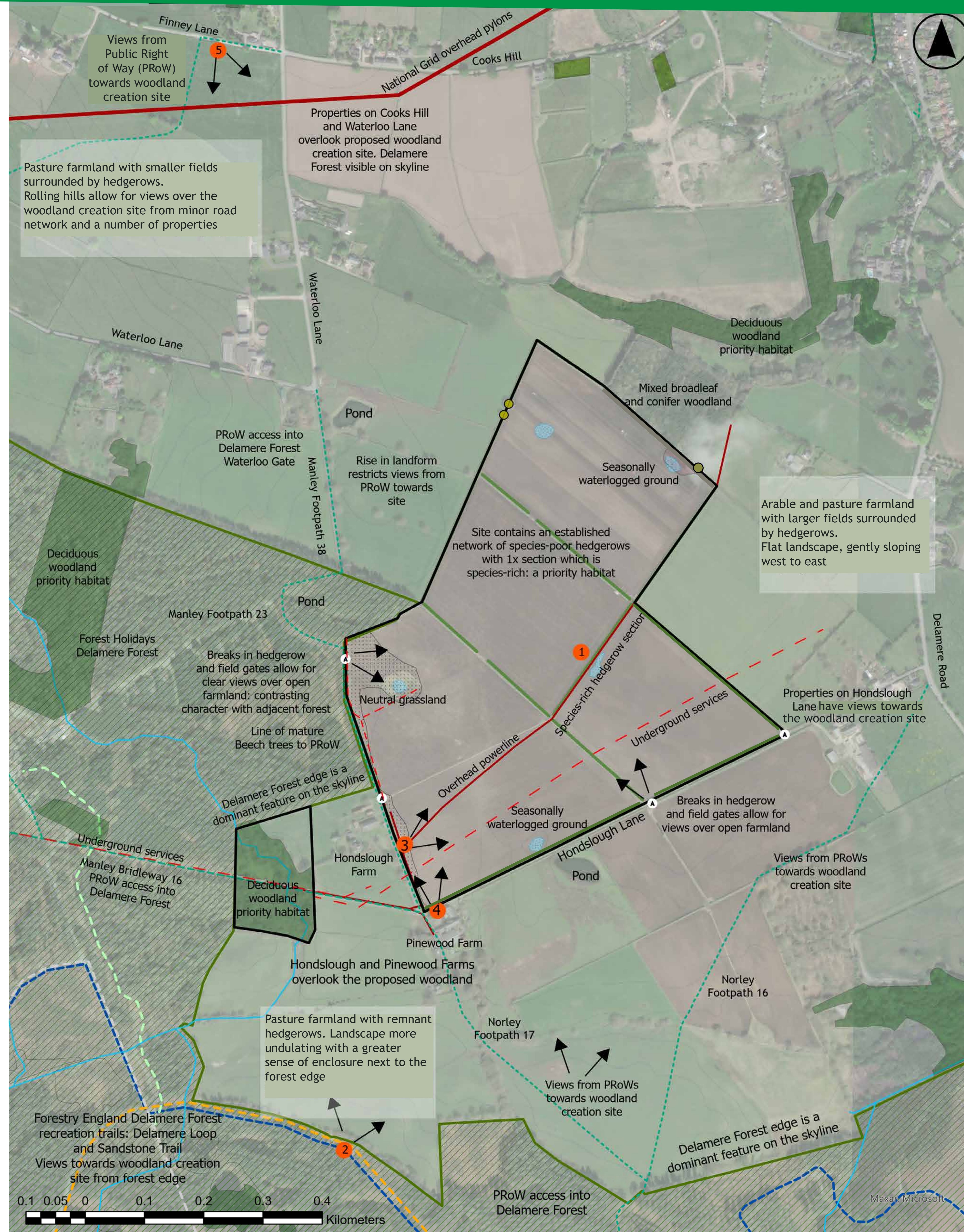


Photo viewpoint 1: View northwest from proposed woodland creation site, towards Delamere Forest and properties on Waterloo Lane and Finney Lane*



Photo viewpoint 2: View north towards Hondsloagh and Pinewood farms, from Sandstone Trail/Delamere Loop within Delamere Forest*



Photo viewpoint 3: View east from public footpath on western site boundary, towards properties on Hondsloagh Lane*



Photo viewpoint 4: View east from public footpath adjacent to Pinewood farm, Hondsloagh Lane*

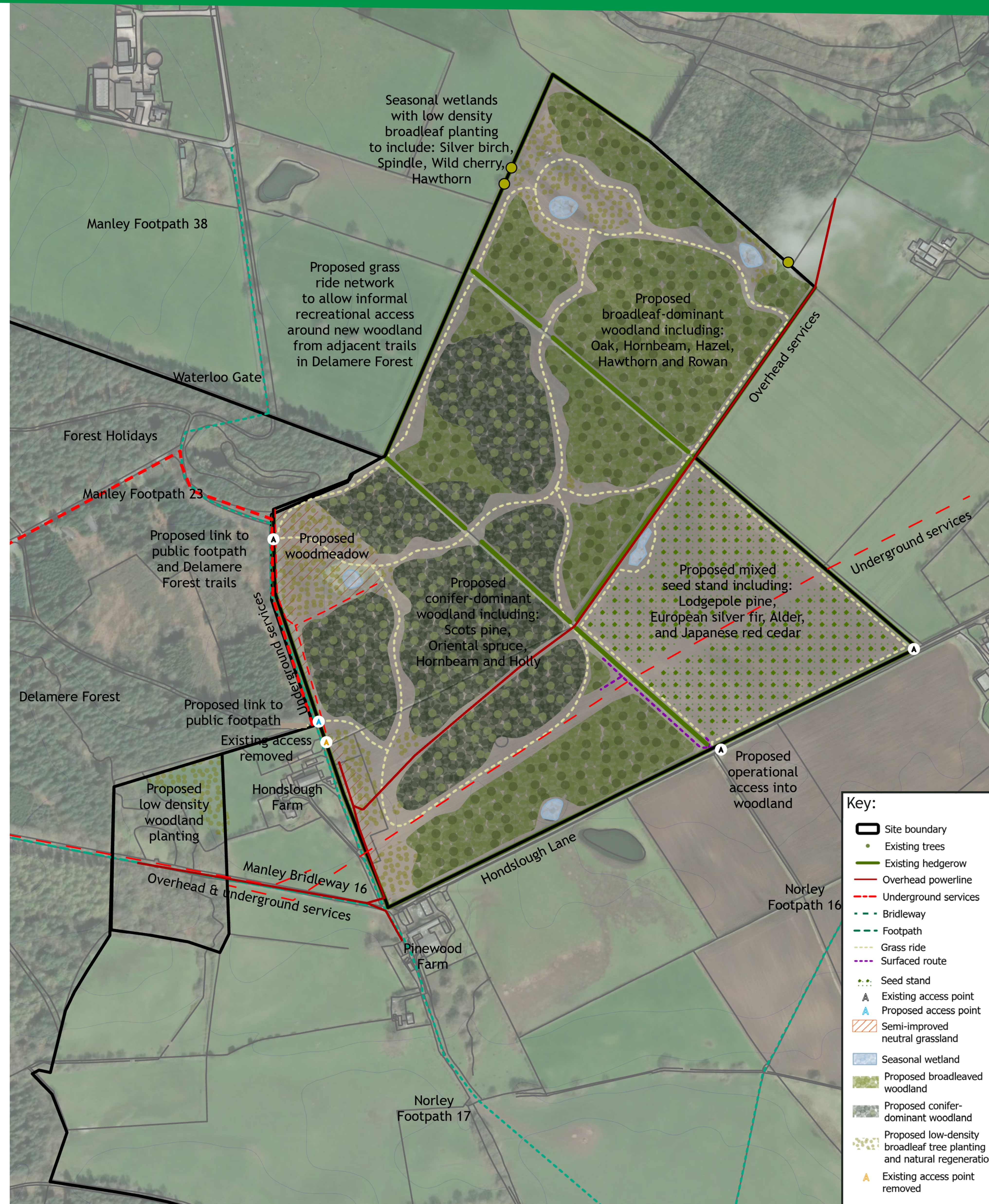


Photo viewpoint 5: View southeast towards proposed woodland creation site, from Finney Lane public right of way*

Key:

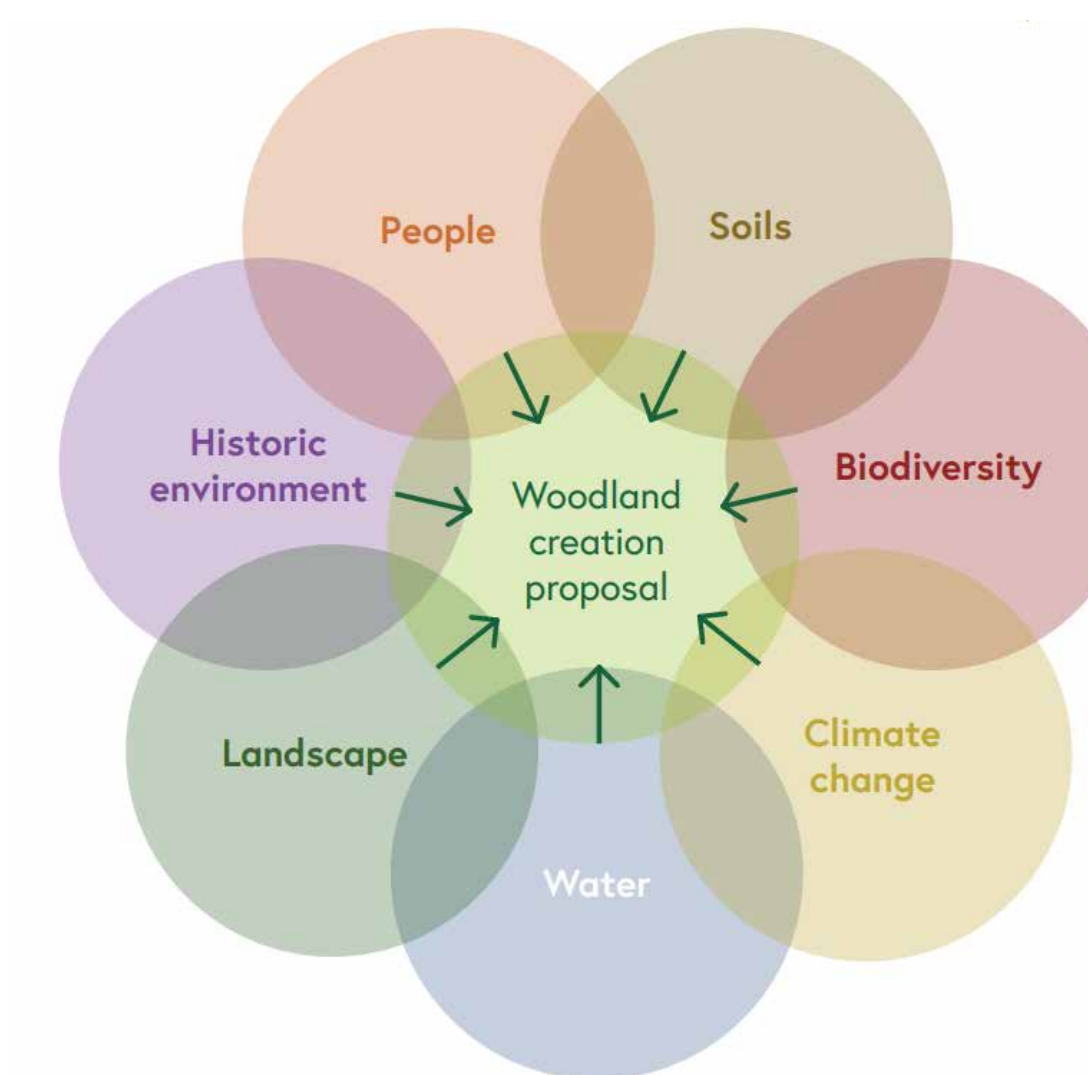
Forestry England landholding	Whitemoor trail	Deciduous woodland- Priority habitat
Site boundary	Delamere loop	Seasonally waterlogged ground
Existing trees	Forest Holidays trail	Photo viewpoints
Existing hedgerow	Sandstone trail	
Overhead powerline	Bridleway	
Underground services	Footpath	

*Dashed line indicates site boundary



How we design new woodlands

We are designing the new woodland with a natural capital approach, with benefits for people, wildlife and the wider landscape. Our designs meet the UK Forestry Standard, which takes into account the following elements (*Forestry Commission, 2021*):



Detailed desktop surveys, site surveys and analysis have informed our design, this research includes:

- Preliminary ecological appraisal
- Breeding bird survey
- Historic environment records
- Landscape appraisal
- Local environmental records
- Soil mapping
- Ecological site classification
- Climate matching tools
- Utilities searches

Objectives for the new woodland

- Public access for health and wellbeing:** add to the opportunities for quiet recreation at Delamere Forest.
- Thriving habitats for wildlife:** enhance existing habitats and create more habitats for wildlife, connecting into Delamere Forest woodland and wetland.
- Benefits for the wider landscape:** capturing carbon, helping mitigate soil erosion and flooding, and improving soil health and air quality.
- Future forest resources and resilience:** extend our productive woodland and create a seed stand to produce seed for future woodland creation.

Design principles

The design includes mixed broadleaved and conifer woodland, areas of open space, wide rides, shrubs, woodmeadow and seasonal wetlands to provide a rich mosaic of habitats, supporting a range of wildlife including birds, insects and amphibians.

The design takes into consideration the unique sense of place of the site. The scale of woodland blocks complements surrounding woodland and is appropriate for the scale of the landscape.

Tree species have been chosen to reflect possible climate changes, so that the woodland will survive in the warmer and drier climate, with greater resilience against new pests and diseases.

The grass ride network will connect with Delamere Forest to the west, giving visitors the opportunity to explore this new quieter forest landscape.

One area will be planted as a seed stand, an area managed to grow trees and collect their seeds which will supply Forestry England's nursery at Lobslack, close to Delamere.

Planting types

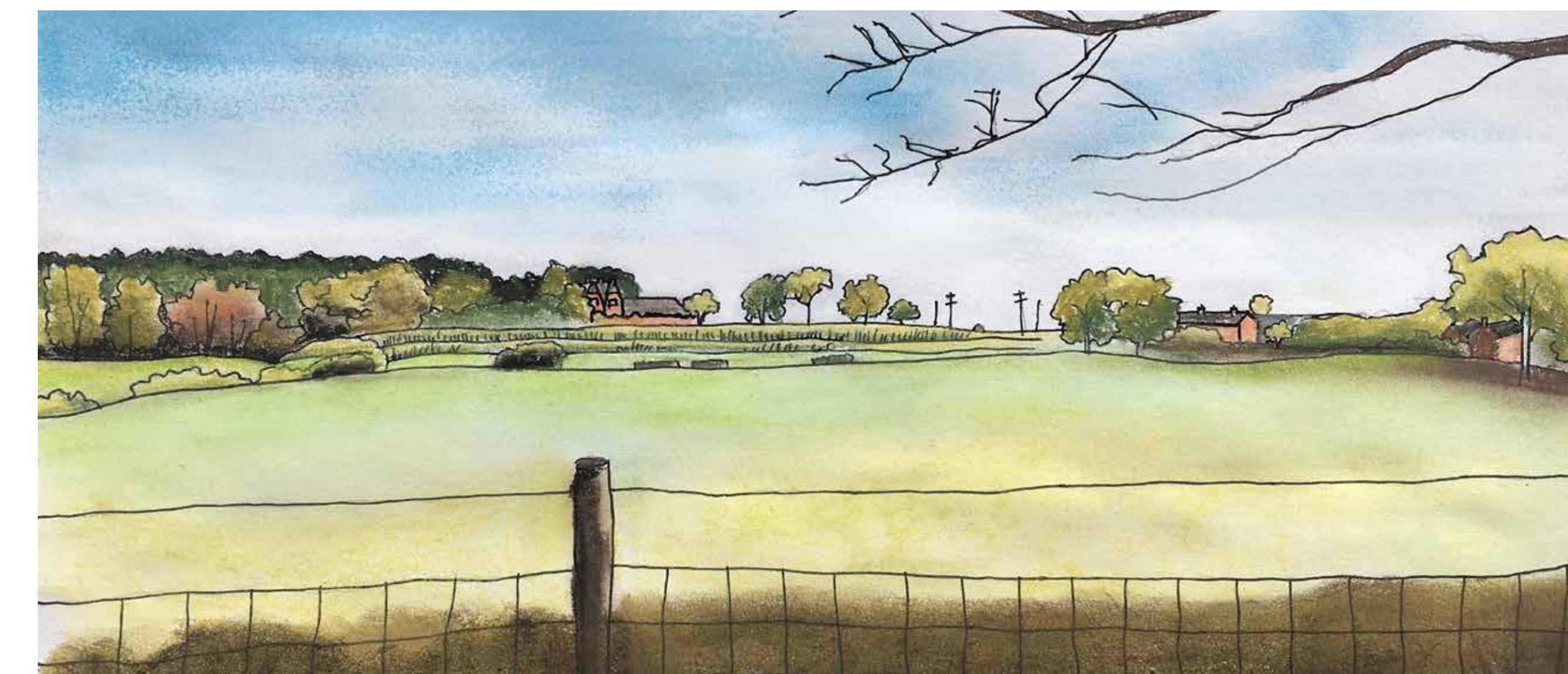




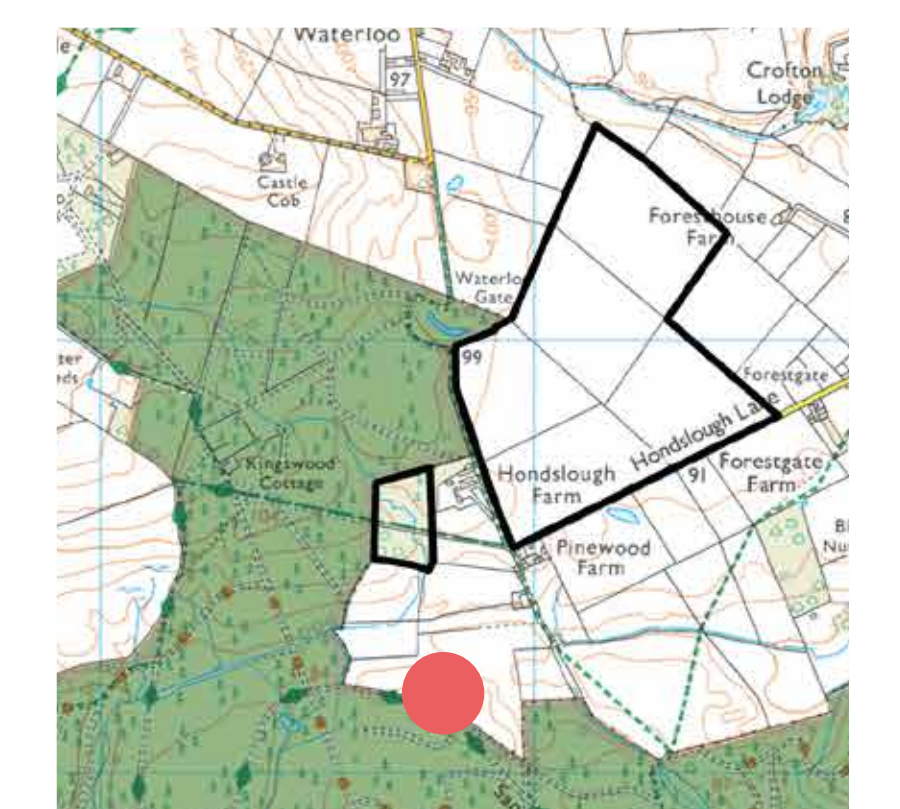
Existing landscape

The drone image (left) shows what the landscape looks like now with open arable and pasture farmland, next to Delamere Forest to the northwest, and smaller private woodland to the northeast. Hondslough and Pinewood farms are visible in the foreground.

The viewpoint illustrated below shows the existing scene from the Sandstone Trail in Delamere Forest. Hondslough and Pinewood farms are visible in the foreground, with Delamere Forest to the skyline in the west.



Viewpoint location: Sandstone Trail



What the new woodland might look like

The bird's-eye view (left) gives an idea of what the new woodland could look like. To the southwestern edge is low-density planting, next to Pinewood and Hondslough farmhouses. The conifer seed stand is visible to the east. The design includes mixed broadleaved and conifer woodland, areas of open space, wide rides, shrubs, wood meadow and seasonal wetlands to provide a rich mosaic of habitats, supporting a range of wildlife including birds, insects and amphibians.

The viewpoint illustrated below, from the Sandstone Trail, shows the change to the skyline, more than 20 years after planting. Low-density planting and broadleaved woodland is visible next to Hondslough and Pinewood farms.



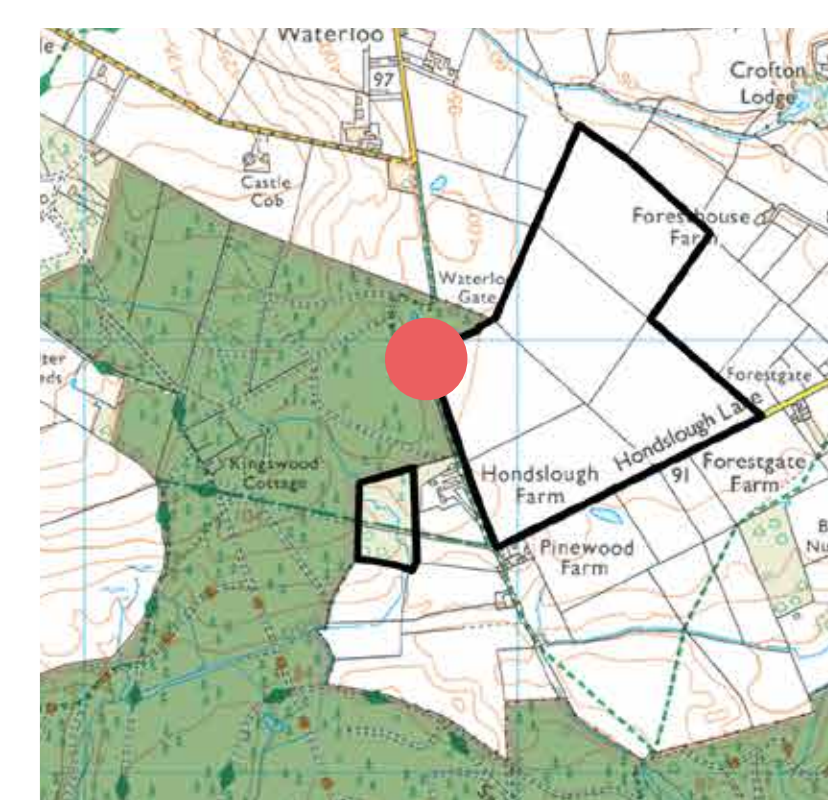


Existing landscape

The viewpoint above illustrates the view from Manley Footpath 23 which is between Delamere Forest and the proposed new woodland.

Today there is an open view across gently sloping arable farmland, with Delamere Forest and nearby privately-owned woodland on the skyline to the south and east.

Many of the field boundaries are hedgerows of varying condition. Hedgerows allow wildlife to move around more easily and provide food.



Viewpoint location:
where Manley
Footpath 23 meets
the new woodland



How the woodland might look soon after planting

This will become the main public access link between the new woodland and Delamere Forest, via Manley Footpath 23. You will be able to walk around the site using a network of wide grass rides.

We found an area of neutral grassland in our ecological survey which is important for wildlife so we will manage it as woodmeadow, with open glades, low-density planting and natural regeneration.

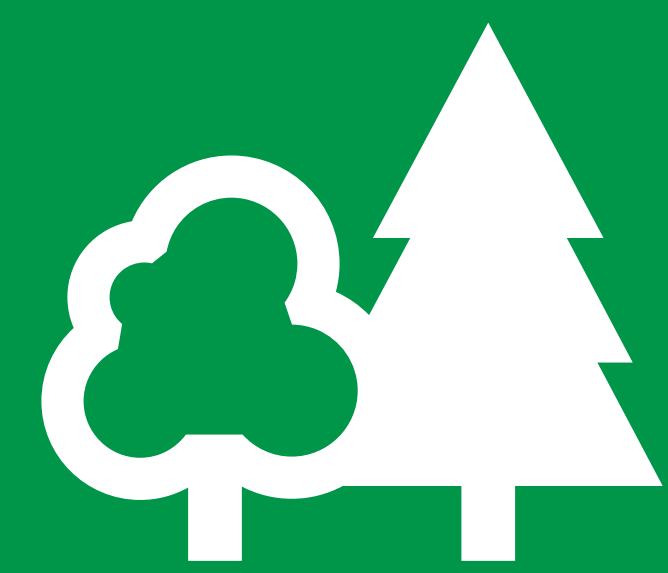
We will keep the hedgerows and have spaces between them and the new woodland planting, this will allow the hedges to flourish and benefit wildlife.



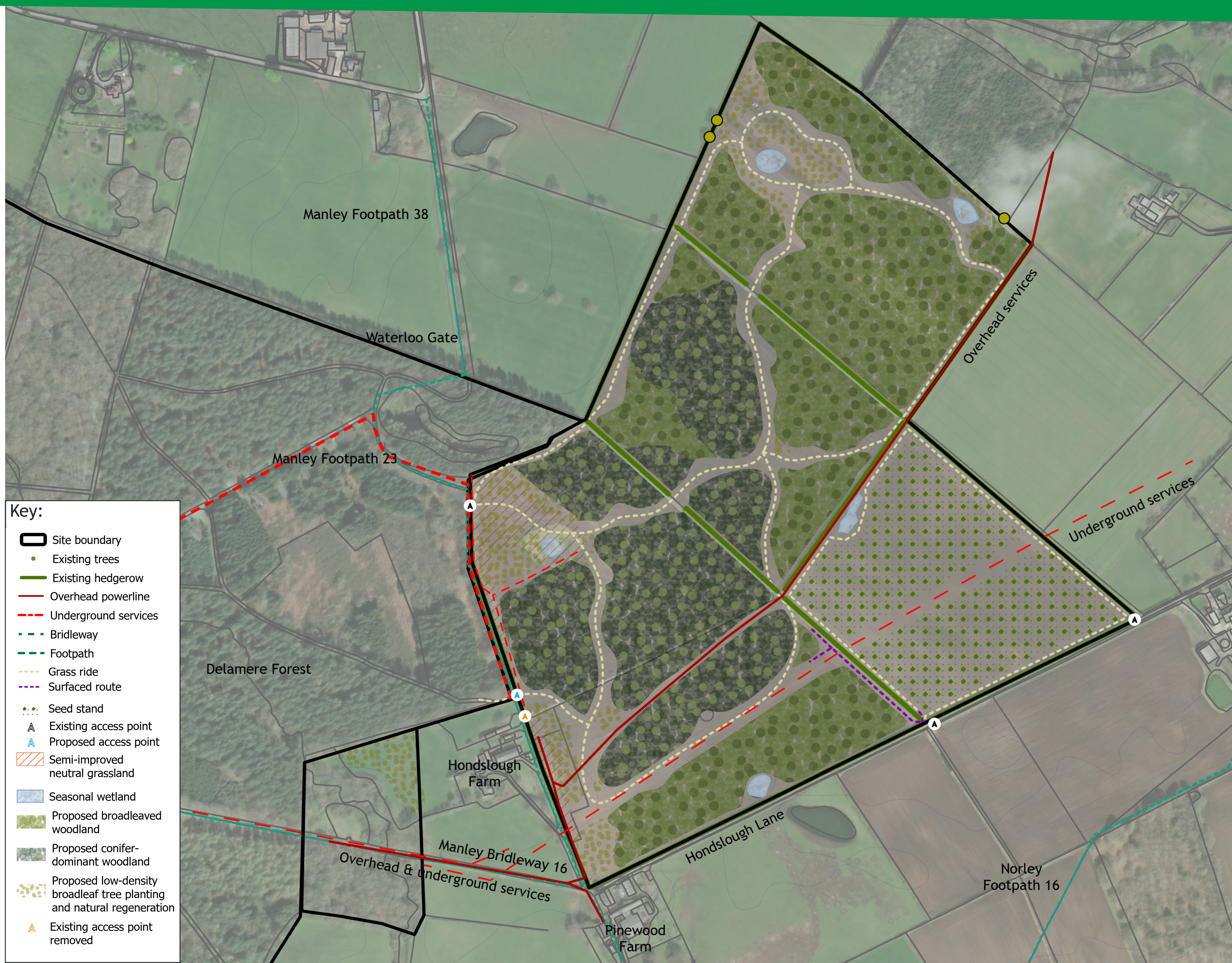
How the woodland might look when established

The open character of the site will change slowly over a long time. The glades of the woodmeadow will maintain a sense of openness, and a network of wide rides will allow you to see across the site.

The proposed woodland will become visible on the skyline. Mixes of conifer and broadleaved planting will create a resilient woodland which is diverse and more interesting to experience.



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





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Responding to this consultation

Please let us have your views by:

- Completing the online feedback form at:
consult.forestryengland.uk/forest-districts/hondslough-farm-delamere-forest-extension
- Emailing us at: woodland.creation@forestryengland.uk
- All views should be received by 11.59pm on 22nd October, 2023

What's next ?

- Review of consultation feedback
- Further design work to refine our proposals
- Application to the Forestry Commission for permission to create the new woodland
- Initial planting (Winter 2023)
- Final planting (Winter 2024)

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