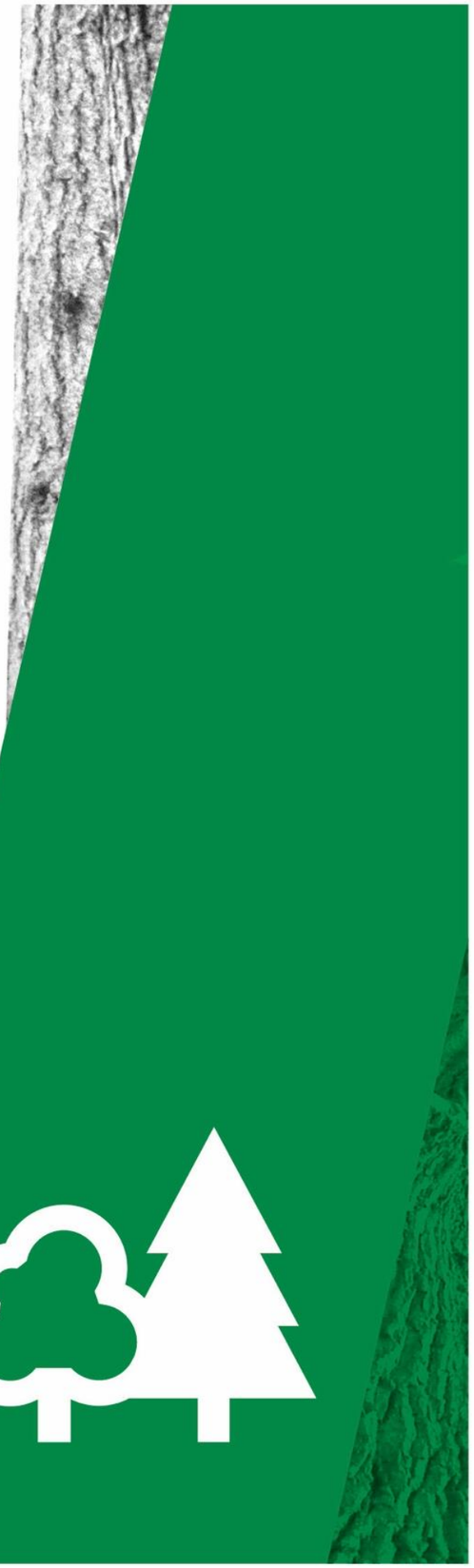
Forestry England

West Woods & Collingbourne Forest Plan



2024 - 2034

West England Forest District

FE Reference: OP10/54

Forestry England forests and woodlands have been certified in accordance with the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS)

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PEFC PEFC/16-40-1001 Promoting Sustainable Forest Management www.pefc.co.uk

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Application for Forest Plan Approval

Forest District:	West England Forest District
Woodland or property name:	West Woods Collingbourne Wood
Nearest town, village or locality:	Lockeridge / Marlborough (West Woods) Ludgershall (Collingbourne)
OS Grid reference:	West Woods - SU 1656 6675 Collingbourne - SU 2699 5461
Local Authority:	Preshute Parish Council (West Woods) Kennet Valley Parish Council (West Woods) Collingbourne Ducis Parish Council (Collingbourne) Collingbourne Kingston Parish Council (Collingbourne)

Plan area:	892.3 ha
Conifer felling:	17.5 ha
Broadleaf felling:	0 ha **Note:** small (≤0.25ha) group fells are to be integrated into thinning operations, with no more than 30% of stand volume being removed per intervention

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1) I apply for Forest Plan approval for the property described on this page 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 FE 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 .....

Signed .....
Area Director

Date of approval .....

Date approval ends .....

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Forestry England

We are Forestry England

We are the country's largest land manager, caring for the nation's forests for people, nature, and the economy. The foundation of our organisation is our world-class sustainable management of the nation's forests.

Our vision **for wildlife**: The nation's forests provide the most valuable places for wildlife to thrive and expand in England.

Our vision **for people**: The nation's forests are a living treasure for all, deeply connected to people's lives improving the health and wellbeing of the nation.

Our vision **for the climate**: The nation's forests are resilient to climate change, increasing their value for communities by producing high-quality, sustainable timber and absorbing carbon emissions.

Read more about our Growing the Future plan here, or search online for "Growing the Future".

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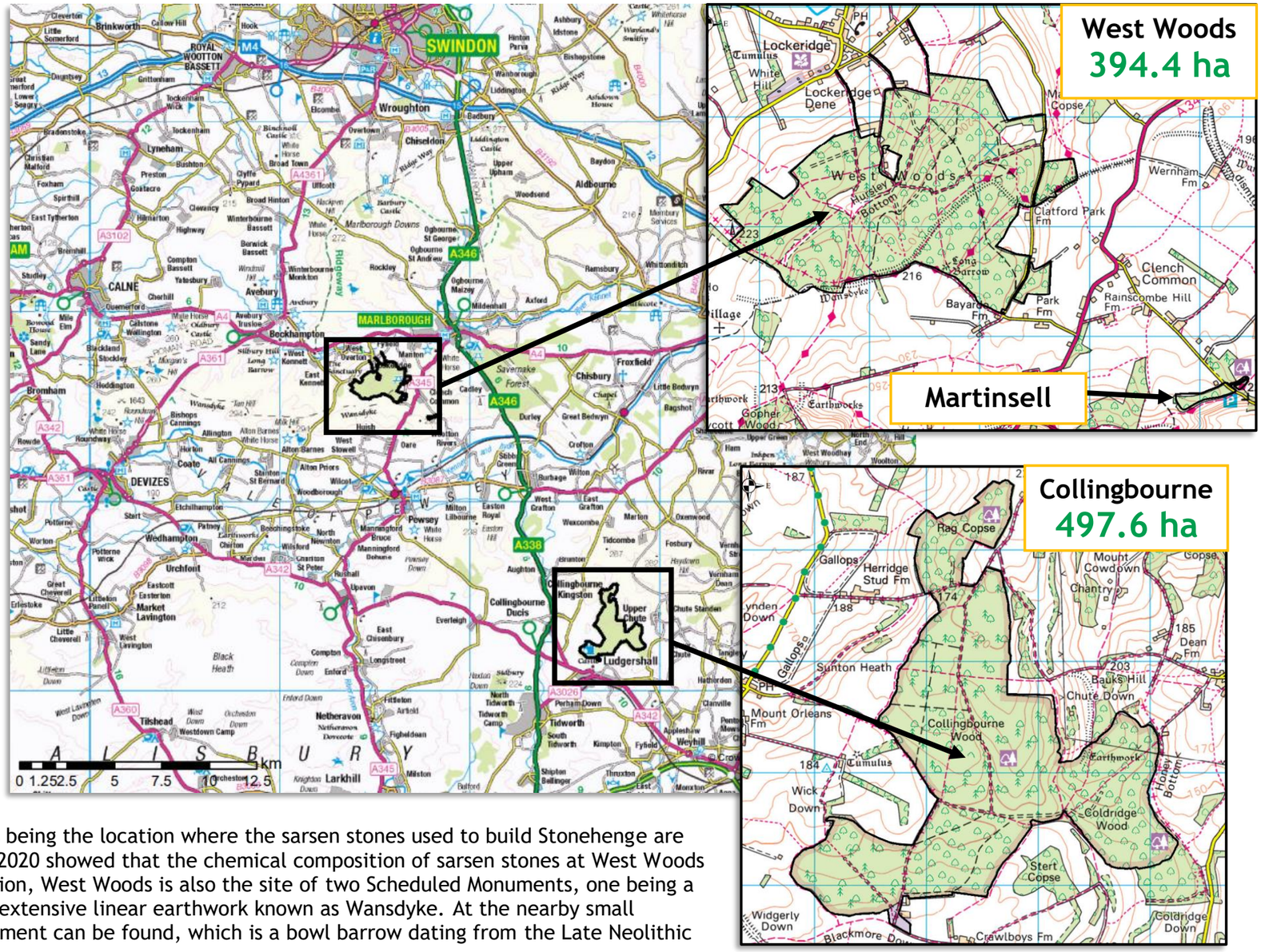
Introduction

West Woods and Collingbourne Wood are located in the county of Wiltshire, with West Woods situated approximately 2 miles from the town of Marlborough, and Collingbourne less than a mile from the town of Ludgershall. Covering a combined area of 892ha, the woodlands are similar in structure and composition. Both are predominately composed of broadleaf species, and largely dominated by plantations of 1930s – 1960s beech, with small pockets of evergreen conifers found sporadically throughout. As a result of the extensive beech canopy found at both woodlands, an impressive display of bluebells can be seen in the spring, with West Woods in particular being regionally well-known in regard to its bluebell display, attracting many visitors every spring.

The vast majority of the plan area is classed as ancient woodland. As beech is considered a native species here, these woodlands score highly in regard to naturalness. However, this is slightly misleading as it does not acknowledge the uniform, monoculture-like nature of the beech stands which have been intentionally planted as such, with many sub-compartments being composed of 100% beech.

Of the whole plan area, only the 5.8ha isolated compartment near Martinsell Hill is leased land (from the Savernake Estate), with the rest of the plan area being publicly owned. Currently, broadleaves make up 88% of the plan area and conifers 9%, with the remaining 3% being open, agricultural land or car park areas. Topographically, the two woodlands range from approximately 120m to 220m above sea level, and contain numerous undulations and a number of steep slopes and banks (particularly at West Woods). Soils across the plan area are largely derived from chalk, which has an impact on the tree species that are able to establish and flourish.



The formal recreation offer across this plan area is minimal, consisting of two small car parks at West Woods, one waymarked walking trail at West Woods, Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and informal footpaths within both woodlands, as well as land dedicated as open access under The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) at West Woods. There are no conservation designations at either woodland, however there is abundant ecological interest at both, including recorded observations of badgers, dormice, and Schedule 1 birds. There are also numerous features of heritage interest across both woodlands. West Woods is nationally notable as being the location where the sarsen stones used to build Stonehenge are now known to have originated from. Research published in 2020 showed that the chemical composition of sarsen stones at West Woods matches that of the stones comprising Stonehenge. In addition, West Woods is also the site of two Scheduled Monuments, one being a Neolithic long barrow, and the other being a stretch of the extensive linear earthwork known as Wansdyke. At the nearby small compartment known as Martinsell, another Scheduled Monument can be found, which is a bowl barrow dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age.

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Forest Plan Objectives

Forestry England's Vision	Forest Plan Objective	Actions We'll Take	Monitoring Achievement
For people **The nation's forests are a living treasure for all, deeply connected to people's lives, improving the health and wellbeing of the nation.**	❖ To deliver woodlands with social amenity value.	• We will implement Low Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS), working towards a more diverse stand structure which will increase the aesthetic value of the woodlands for visitors. • We will preserve key bluebell areas close to popular walking routes, ensuring continued enjoyment for visitors	➢ Analysis of planned felling completion at the five- and ten-year Forest Plan reviews.
	❖ To conserve, maintain and enhance cultural and heritage assets.	• Through following the actions outlined in the associated Scheduled Monument management plans, we will maintain and enhance the Wansdyke, Long Barrow and Bowl Barrow Scheduled Monuments.	➢ Regular reviews of Scheduled Monument condition by the beat team, and a formal review of each Scheduled Monument management plan to be carried out at their half-way point.
	❖ Deliver well-designed forests that both protect and enhance the internal and external landscape, in keeping with the local landscape character.	• We will carefully assess planned felling to ensure that the resulting loss of trees does not negatively impact internal or external views of the woodlands for visitors.	➢ Monitor any landscape impact resulting from scheduled felling at Forest Plan review stage.
For wildlife **The nation's forests provide the most valuable places for wildlife to thrive and expand in England.**	❖ The diversification of woodland species and structure for greater ecological and economic resilience	• Through carefully planned small group felling and subsequent natural regeneration, we will create pockets of variable stand structure in both woodlands. • If diversification of species composition within stands is not achieved through natural regeneration alone, future opportunities for enrichment planting will be taken.	➢ Sub-Compartment database records will be assessed at Forest Plan review stage, with ground surveys completed.
	❖ Protect and enhance woodland and open habitats and their associated species.	• We will take opportunities to increase and enhance areas of open space in both woodlands. For example, ride-widening will be carried out at the same time as other forestry operations when opportunities arise.	➢ Ride widening completion to be analysed at Forest Plan review stage.
For the climate **The nation's forests are resilient to climate change, increasing their value for communities by producing high-quality sustainable timber, and absorbing carbon emissions.**	❖ The continued production of sustainable and marketable woodland products.	• We will produce sustainable timber through thinning on a regular cycle, and through carrying out clearfelling operations and small group fells.	➢ Comparison of the production forecast yield (approximately 9900m^3 (2024 – 2029) and 15,330m^3 (2024 – 2034)) to actual production at the five- and ten-year Forest Plan reviews.

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Conservation & Ecology

Schedule 1 Birds

Both West Woods and Collingbourne provide valuable nesting habitat for numerous bird species, including Schedule 1 birds such as goshawk (pictured), red kite, and firecrest. At Collingbourne, stands of mature Scots pine have been purposefully retained due to their suitability as nesting sites, and raptor nest sites have also been recorded in larch and Norway spruce stands. Similarly, in West Woods, pockets of conifer found throughout the woodland break up the uniform beech canopy and provide different options for nesting habitat. Areas of Scots pine here will be retained into the future.

Dormice

The hazel dormouse is a European Protected Species which has declined significantly in both range and population over the last century. Both West Woods and Collingbourne have dormice monitoring schemes in place, managed by Wiltshire Mammal Group. A series of nesting boxes placed in set locations within the woodlands are used to monitor the local dormouse populations. The ride widening work planned within both woodlands will be beneficial for dormice, as they like to make use of new woody vegetation growth which arises following coppicing, ride widening and other woodland management practices.

Bluebells

This ancient woodland indicator species is found extensively throughout West Woods and Collingbourne, providing an obvious sign that there has been woodland present on these sites for hundreds of years. The annual springtime bluebell display is a feature of both woodlands, but in particular West Woods which receives a noticeable increase in visitors in the spring when the bluebells are on show. The extensive beech canopy at both woodlands with occasional pockets of sunlight provides favourable growing conditions for bluebells, and also prevents prolific bramble and bracken growth which would dominate the bluebells if allowed.

Ancient Woodland and Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)

Of West Woods and Collingbourne's total area, 88% is classed as either ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW), or plantation on ancient woodland sites (PAWS). Ancient woodland sites are those which have been wooded since 1600AD. The vast majority of ancient woodland area at West Woods and Collingbourne falls into the PAWS category, having been felled and restocked largely with beech plantations in the 1930s – 1960s. As well as bluebells, other ancient woodland indicators found here include herb-Paris and greater butterfly-orchids.

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Conservation & Ecology

Lepidoptera

With pockets of open space, ride sides, and areas of scrub and bracken, West Woods and Collingbourne Wood provide beneficial feeding and breeding opportunities for many invertebrates including various species of butterflies and moths. The Forest Plan area is known to contain favourable breeding habitat for species including brown hairstreak, broad-bordered bee hawk-moth, white admiral and purple emperor. At West Woods, there is a maintained open grassy area known as Hursley Bottom in the middle of the woodland, with patches of transitional scrub dotted throughout the open area. Directly adjacent to this area, there is now a wide ride which was created when diseased Corsican pine were felled during the previous Forest Plan period. The open ride sides are starting to develop into interesting and varied wildlife habitat, with an array of vegetation heights present, from grassy sward and bracken, through to low scrub and young naturally regenerated and planted broadleaf trees. With the mature conifer and broadleaved stands of trees either side of the ride, an interesting and sheltered area of habitat has been created which has the potential to develop into a valuable haven for wildlife. At the time of writing this Forest Plan, discussions are underway about the potential to create a cattle grazing unit within the wood which would incorporate Hursley Bottom, the open ride area, the mature stand of Douglas fir to the east of the ride, and another previously felled area which is largely now dominated by bracken. By introducing a large herbivore at a low density, this ecologically valuable area could be further enhanced through the grazing, browsing and vegetation disturbance behaviour of the cattle. Grazing cattle can create mosaics of different height vegetation, as well as areas of bare ground, resulting in a variety of habitats that can be utilised by a range of different species. If the grazing unit is not a viable option, then this area will be managed on a cutting regime, with different stretches of the open ride area being cut on each intervention to recreate the effect of grazing and disturbance and create a mosaic habitat. Species such as the white admiral butterfly (pictured) and broad-bordered bee hawk-moth utilise rides and clearings to feed on flowers found in these open habitats.

Woodland Flora and Creating Open Space

At both West Woods and Collingbourne Wood, there is an aim to continue ride widening work throughout this Forest Plan period. Not only is this beneficial for recreation and for future forestry operations as the extra sunlight dries out the surface of the rides, it also has numerous benefits for wildlife. Small mammals, woodland birds, and invertebrates, including butterflies and moths, benefit from the increased feeding opportunities and breeding habitat which results from increased sunlight reaching the ride sides, and new vegetation and scrub growth. Another group of species which benefit from ride widening work are woodland plants. With increased sunlight reaching the ride sides, floral diversity and abundance can increase, which has knock on beneficial impacts for various other species which utilise woodland flowers. In the south-west corner of Collingbourne, an area known as Heaven's Corner, a number of uncommon woodland floral species have been recorded in recent years, including herb-Paris, meadow saffron and greater butterfly-orchids (pictured). As well as ride widening, opportunities will be taken to open up box junctions where rides meet, by felling a small number of trees on each corner of the junction to create a larger open area. In West Woods, there are opportunities to do this where smaller rides meet the main forest road. The main forest road through West Woods has already had the ride sides pushed back in certain places in previous years, meaning there are areas of valuable scrub habitat developing, in differing stages of succession. During this plan period, this widening work along the main forest road will be continued, with opportunities taken to carry out work in combination with other existing planned forestry operations. By targeting different stretches of the road side during each intervention, the forest road will become to an even greater degree an invaluable wildlife corridor throughout the wood, with a mosaic of scrub and successional vegetation alongside it.

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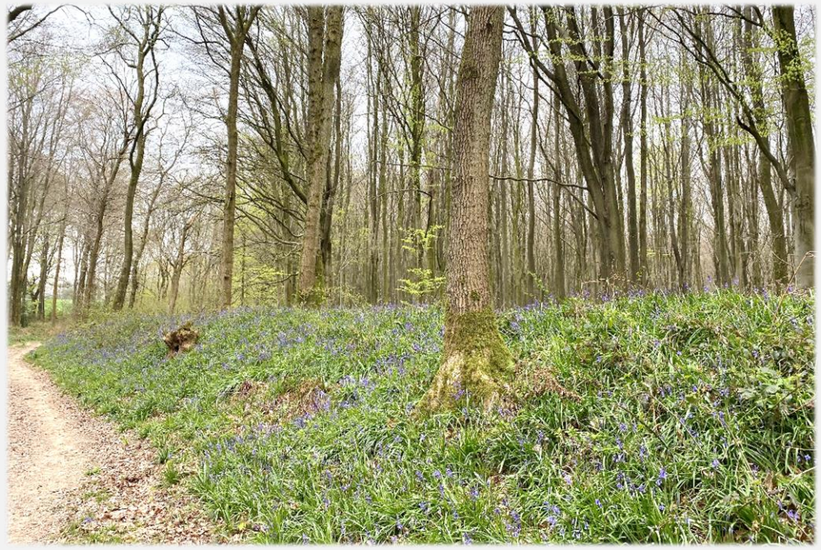
Heritage

Wansdyke – West Woods

The Wansdyke is a linear frontier earthwork dating from the late Roman or early medieval period, which stretches over 70km in total across Wessex. It consists of a ditch and embankment, and was thought to have been constructed to mark and possibly defend a significant border. West Woods contains a section of the Wansdyke approximately 3km in length, running east to west through the southern half of the woodland and forming part of the southern boundary of the wood. This stretch constitutes part of a Scheduled Monument, and as such it is managed under an associated management plan. Actions within the management plan to undertake in upcoming years include clearing broadleaf regeneration from the earthbank and ditch, removing any mature trees on the monument showing signs of decline, and ongoing bracken management.



A section of the Wansdyke, running through West Woods

Long Barrow – West Woods

Long Barrow is a Neolithic barrow mound located in Barrow Copse, West Woods. Measuring approximately 40m long and 27m wide, it is one of a significant concentration of monuments of this type in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset. The Long Barrow is a Scheduled Monument, and has an accompanying management plan. The management plan contains a number of key actions which will be carried out across several years, the most significant of which is the removal of all tree cover from the monument. Currently, there are mature trees and also young broadleaf regeneration growing on the monument, the roots of which could possibly damage any historic contents within the barrow, especially in the event of a tree blowing over and the root plate being ripped up. An area of open space around the monument will also be created, improving the visual impact of the monument.

Looking down from the top of the Long Barrow, West Woods

Bowl Barrow – Martinsell

The small compartment of woodland near Martinsell Hill, south-east of Culley's Farm Cottages, contains a bowl barrow dating to the late Neolithic to late Bronze Age. Bowl barrows are burial mounds, and this particular one was partly excavated in the mid-1980s. Fortunately, it remains largely intact. Measuring 12m in diameter, and standing to a height of 1m, it is encircled by a shallow ditch around all but the northern edge of the mound. The barrow is currently overgrown with brambles and bracken, and therefore a key action in the monument's management plan is to clear this vegetation from the scheduled area. Once cleared, a regular cutting regime will ensure vegetation does not overtake the monument again. Although the condition of the monument is currently stable, the bracken and bramble growth has the potential to compromise the monument's condition, and also severely affects its visual impact. Thinning operations taking place in the vicinity of the monument will be sensitively managed to ensure no damage to the monument occurs as a result of the work.

The bowl barrow at Martinsell. The red dashed line shows the approximate outline of the barrow beneath the brambles

Unscheduled Heritage Features

As well as the three Scheduled Monuments found within the West Woods and Collingbourne Forest Plan area, there is also a very high density of non-scheduled heritage features found within both woodlands, including medieval boundary banks and ditches, enclosures, field systems, and 20th century concrete structures. At Martinsell, the small satellite area of woodland southeast of West Woods, there is a bowl barrow, an enclosure, and undated earthworks. In recent years, an academic breakthrough has put West Woods on the map for archaeological reasons again. In 2020, new research pinpointed West Woods as the probable source of the giant sarsen stones which were used to construct Stonehenge in prehistoric times. The wide array of heritage features found at these sites demonstrates the rich history of human occupation and usage of these woodlands over thousands of years.

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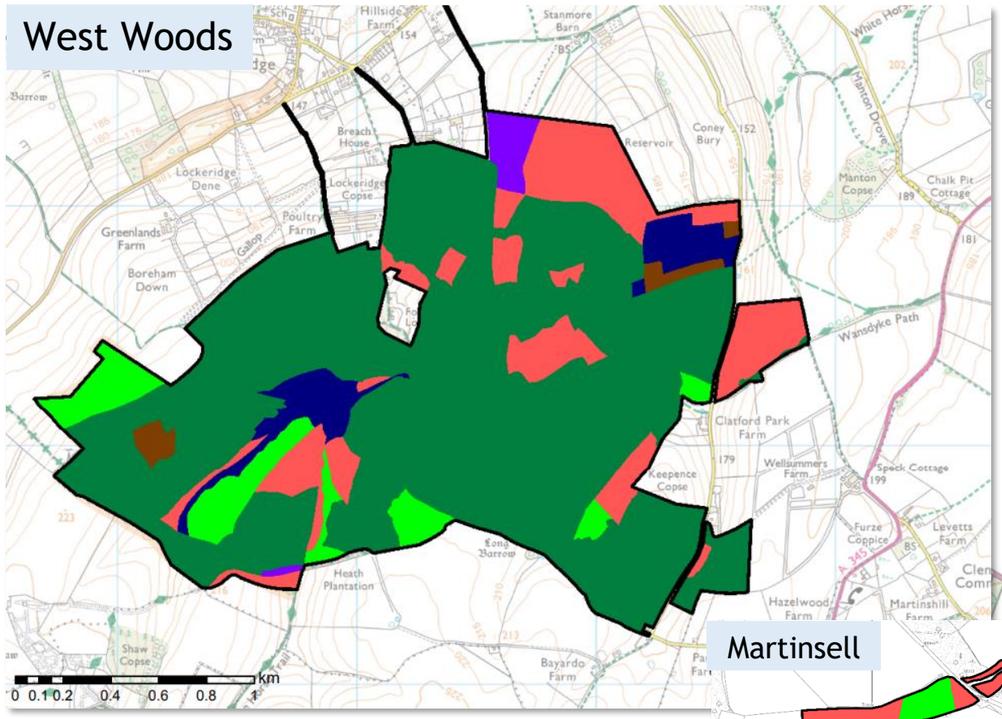
Current Species Composition



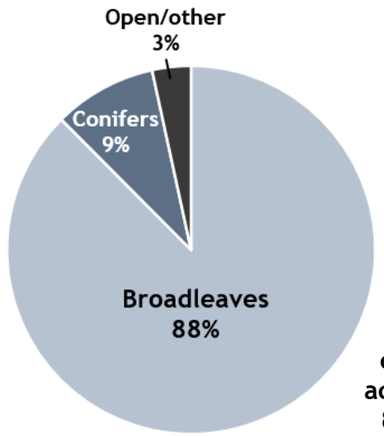
Legend

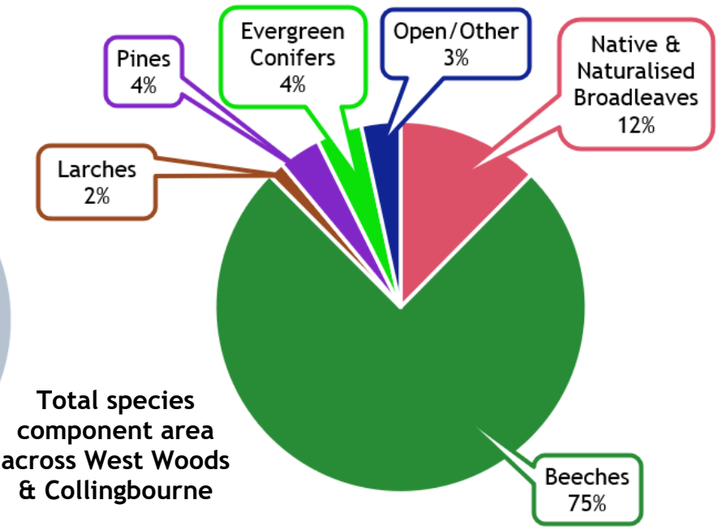
Largest Component Species

- Evergreen conifers
- Larches
- Beeches
- Pines
- Open/Other
- Native/naturalised broadleaves

Notes:

- Sycamore is not considered to be within its native range, but is considered to be ‘naturalised’
- Open/other includes car park/picnic areas, and agricultural land





Total species component area across West Woods & Collingbourne

The West Woods and Collingbourne Forest Plan area consists of a mix of broadleaf and conifer species, with broadleaves comprising 88% of the plan area. By far the most abundant broadleaf species is European beech, which covers 75% of the Forest Plan area, with a large number of sub-compartments within both woodlands being composed of entirely this species.

Scots pine is the most abundant conifer species, covering 3% of the Forest Plan area. Some conifer stands are providing valuable nesting habitat for Schedule 1 bird species, and will be retained into the future to ensure continuity of habitat provision. Other stands within both woodlands, including those composed of western red cedar, will be felled when the trees reach economic maturity, and the aim for these areas will be to return them to broadleaf cover given that the vast majority of the Forest Plan area is classed as plantation on ancient woodland sites (PAWS).

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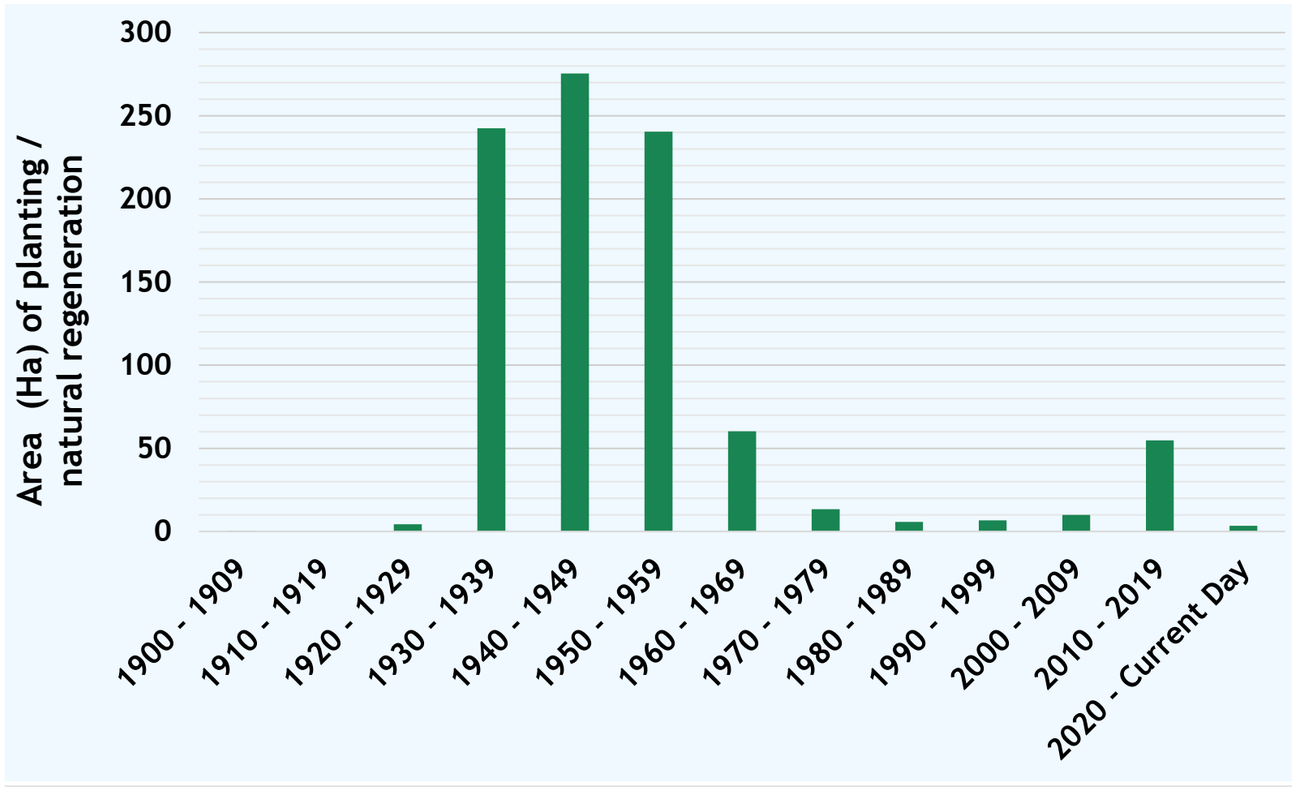
Structural Composition



Area (Ha) of planting or natural regeneration per decade in the West Woods and Collingbourne plan area

Japanese larch (right) at Collingbourne, planted in 1980, alongside beech (left) planted in 1942

Naturally regenerated sycamore understorey at West Woods, beneath an overstorey of mature sycamore and beech, both planted in 1935

As shown in the graph above, the majority of planting of trees in the Forest Plan area took place between the 1930s and the 1960s, which is when the majority of the beech and Scots pine stands were planted that can be seen in the woodlands today.

Currently, the beech stands in both woodlands are managed through thinning interventions only. Therefore, opportunities to plant, or for natural regeneration to occur have been limited to where stands of conifer have been clearfelled, or where thinning interventions have allowed light to reach the forest floor, facilitating natural regeneration which is largely composed of beech and sycamore. Moving forwards, the integration of small group fells into thinning operations within both woodlands will provide space and light for natural regeneration to occur more readily, and there may also be opportunities for supplementary planting of alternative species during the plan period.

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Ancient Woodland

Ancient woodland sites are classed as areas that have been continuously wooded since 1600AD, and can be further broken down into:

- **Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW)** - trees and other plant species appear to have established naturally rather than having been planted, and typically these sites will contain at least 80% site native species, or species native to the surrounding area
- **Plantation on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS)** - the original semi-natural woodland has been cleared and replaced with a plantation of either native or non-native species, resulting in a decline in ecological value

In the West Woods and Collingbourne Forest Plan area, 76% of West Woods (including Martinsell) and 97% of Collingbourne are classed as either ancient semi-natural woodland or PAWS. This equates to 88% of the total Forest Plan area. In areas of PAWS, conifers will continue to be removed over time when they reach the point of economic maturity, and they will be replaced by native broadleaves, either through natural regeneration or through targeted supplementary planting when opportunities arise. Our aim is to continuously progress towards an increasingly native canopy cover. Progress will be measured through the assessment of naturalness scores, which are a tool used to show the percentage of site native tree species in a particular area.

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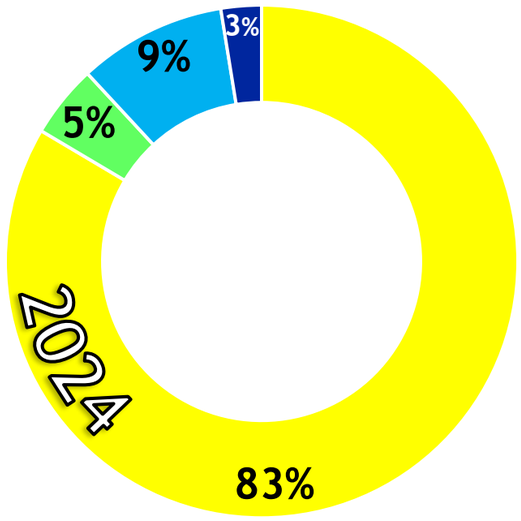
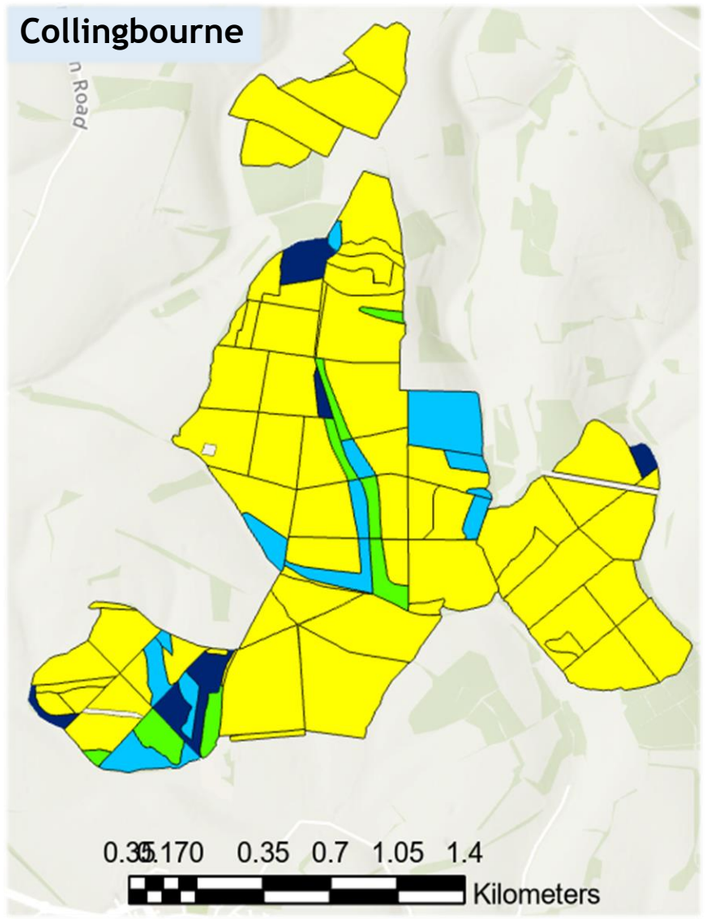
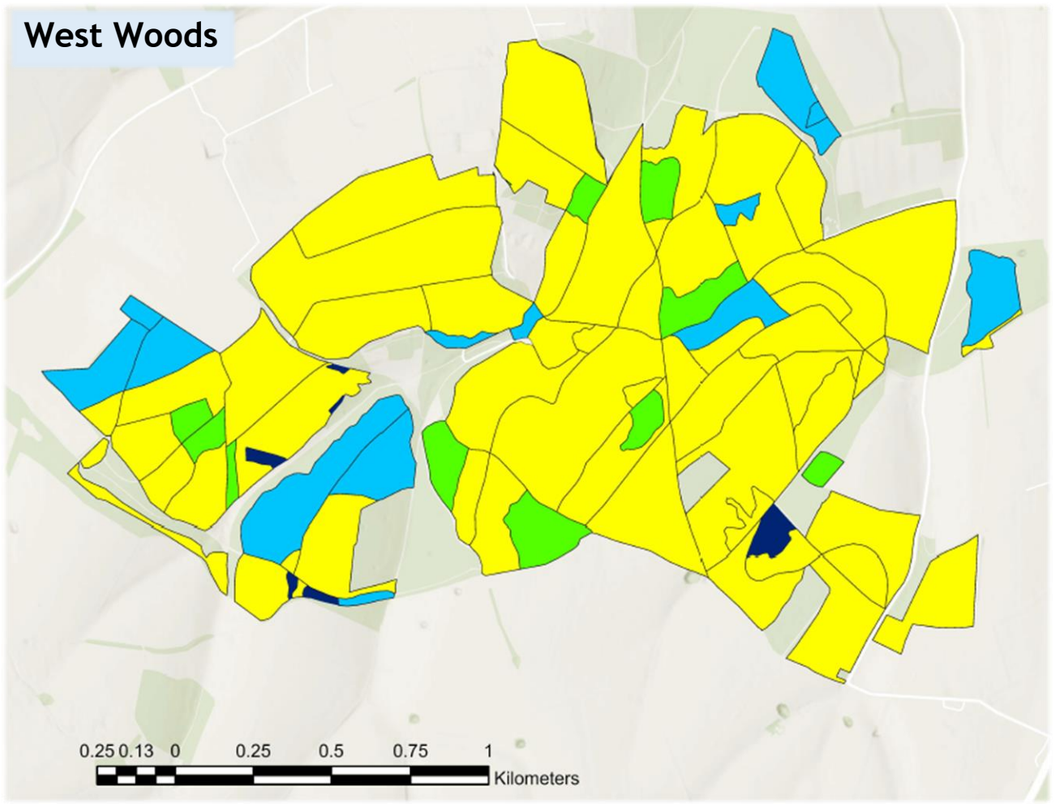
Naturalness on Ancient Woodland



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 scores are a measure used to show the percentage of site native tree species in a particular area. The maps on this page show the naturalness scores for the areas of ancient woodland in the West Woods and Collingbourne Forest Plan area. The small area of woodland at Martinsell contains no ancient woodland.

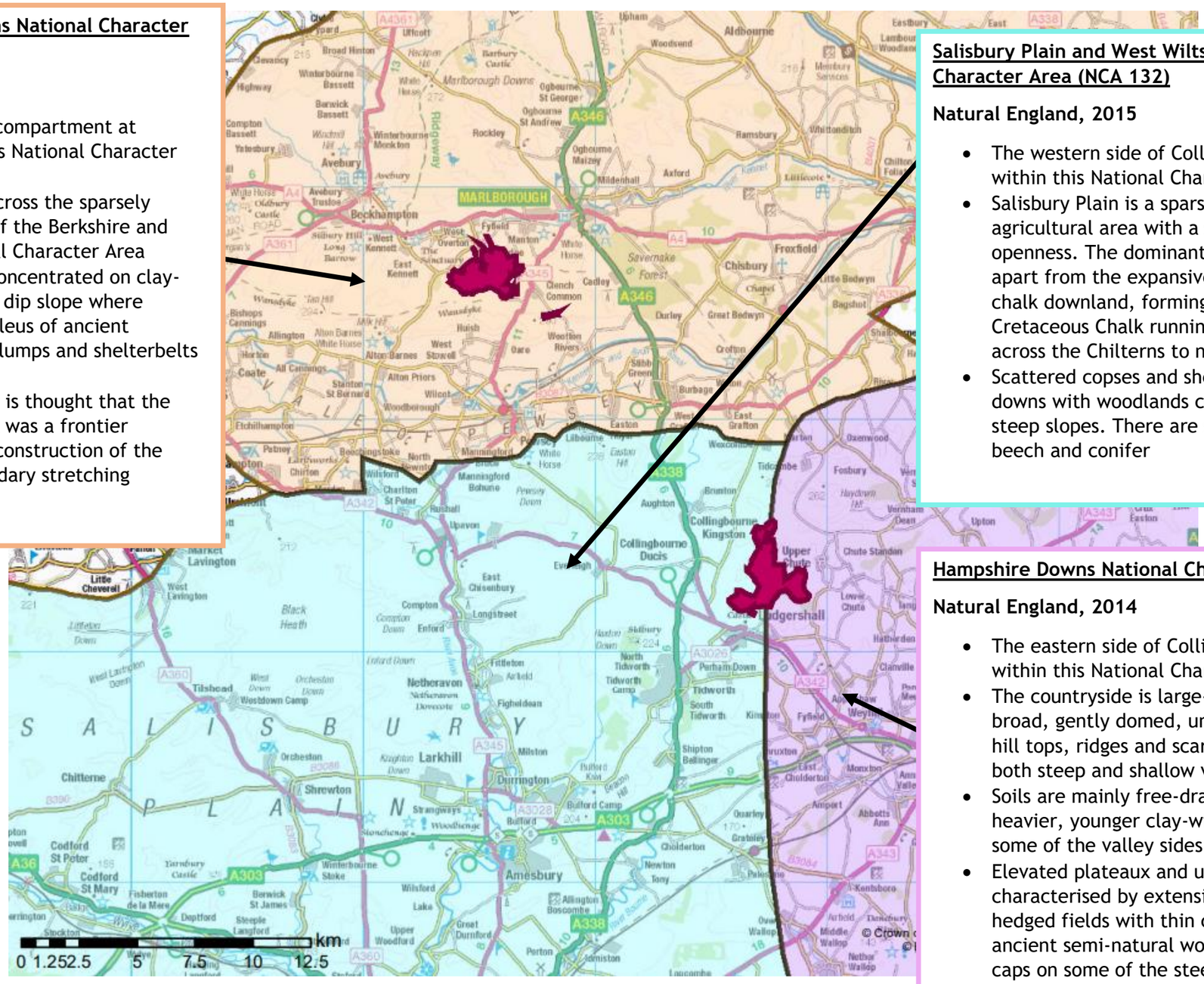
Class 1 indicates the highest level of nativeness, and class 4 the lowest. The measure of naturalness is used to monitor the condition of ancient semi-natural woodland, and scrutinise progress in the restoration of PAWS sites back to native broadleaf cover. With the majority of both West Woods and Collingbourne Wood being composed of largely beech and other broadleaves, both woodlands score well for naturalness, with semi-natural class 1 being the most abundant class, and only small, isolated areas falling into the lowest naturalness class. Planned clearfelling operations targeting non-native conifers in this Forest Plan period, and subsequent expected natural regeneration or planting of broadleaf species will help to restore areas of class 4, 3 and 2 back to class 1. Despite both woodlands scoring well for naturalness, one of our key aims for this Forest Plan period is to break up the uniform beech canopy and diversify the stand structure for the purpose of increasing forest resilience, value for wildlife, and visual diversity for visitors.

Landscape Character

Berkshire and Marlborough Downs National Character Area (NCA 116)

Natural England, 2015

- West Woods and the small compartment at Martinsell Hill sit within this National Character Area
- Vast arable fields stretch across the sparsely settled, rolling Chalk hills of the Berkshire and Marlborough Downs National Character Area
- Woodland and hedgerows concentrated on clay-with-flint soils of the lower dip slope where Savernake Forest is the nucleus of ancient woodland. Isolated beech clumps and shelterbelts stand out on the hills
- In the post-Roman period it is thought that the south-west part of the area was a frontier between tribal areas – the construction of the Wansdyke formed the boundary stretching westwards towards Bath



Legend

- West Woods & Collingbourne block area
- Berkshire and Marlborough Downs NCA
- Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs NCA
- Hampshire Downs NCA

Salisbury Plain and West Wiltshire Downs National Character Area (NCA 132)

Natural England, 2015

- The western side of Collingbourne Wood is located within this National Character Area
- Salisbury Plain is a sparsely settled, predominantly agricultural area with a strong sense of remoteness and openness. The dominant element in the landscape – apart from the expansive sky – is the gently rolling chalk downland, forming part of the sweep of Cretaceous Chalk running from the Dorset coast and across the Chilterns to north of the Wash
- Scattered copses and shelterbelts occur on the high downs with woodlands confined mainly to valleys and steep slopes. There are small hilltop woodlands of beech and conifer

Hampshire Downs National Character Area (NCA 130)

Natural England, 2014

- The eastern side of Collingbourne Wood is located within this National Character Area
- The countryside is large-scale, open and rolling, with broad, gently domed, undulating plateaux and distinct hill tops, ridges and scarps, which are dissected by both steep and shallow valleys
- Soils are mainly free-draining, thin chalky loams, with heavier, younger clay-with-flint soils on the caps and some of the valley sides
- Elevated plateaux and upper valley slopes are characterised by extensive open tracts of large, low-hedged fields with thin chalky soils, shelterbelts, and ancient semi-natural woodland blocks on clay-with flint caps on some of the steeper slopes

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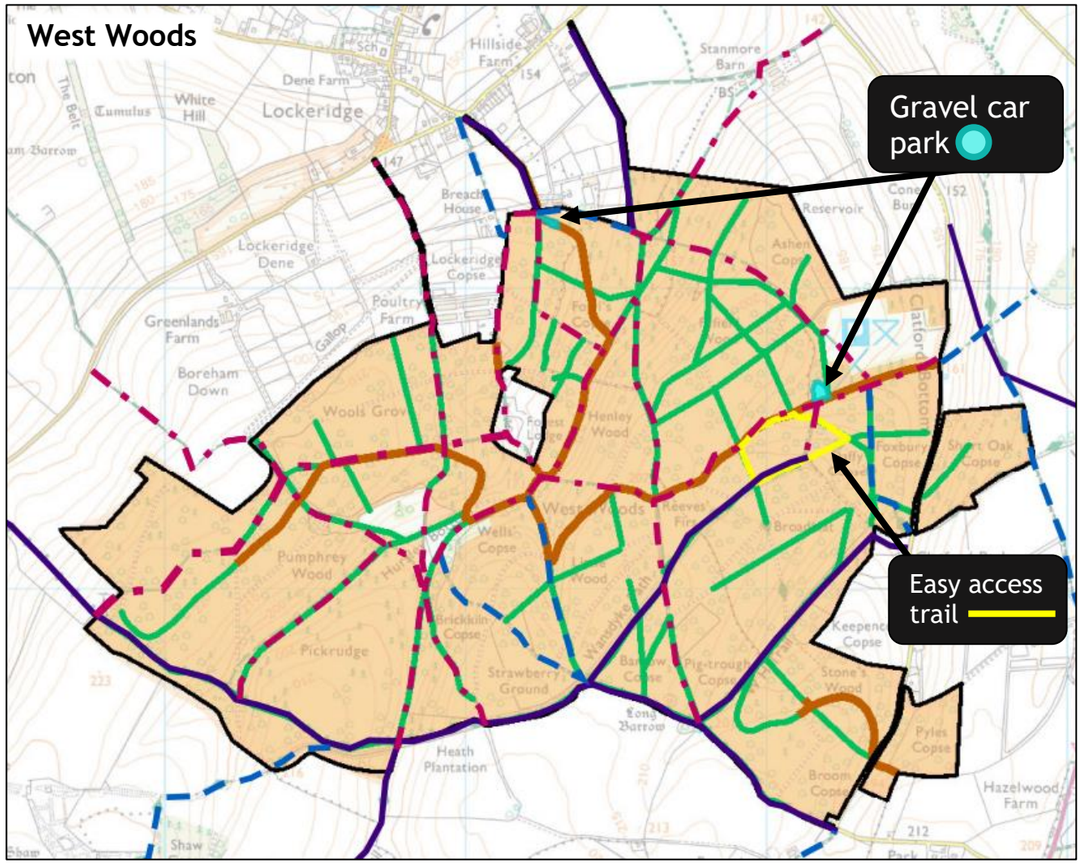
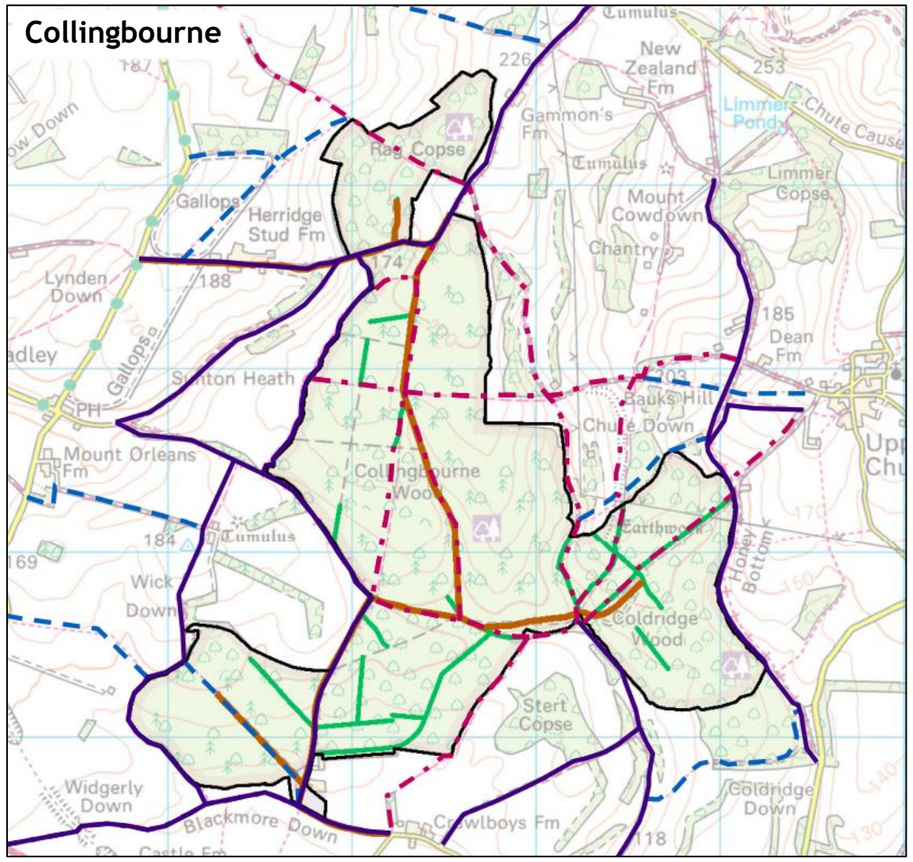
Recreation and Access





Bluebells alongside the easy access walking trail at West Woods

West Woods and Collingbourne Wood provide a valuable recreational and wellbeing facility for people in the local area. While Collingbourne has no formal parking areas, at West Woods there are two gravel car parking areas, providing convenient access into the woodland for visitors. Both woodlands contain numerous Public Rights of Way (PRoW), and West Woods is also almost entirely designated as open access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW). There are only two waymarked trails within these two woodlands, the first being the short (0.9km) easy access walking loop at West Woods, which starts a short distance from the main car park and takes in one of the most striking bluebell areas of the wood. The second is a section of the long-distance path known as the Wansdyke Path, which follows the linear Wansdyke monument through West Woods and beyond. At both woodlands, walkers, cyclists, and horse-riders can enjoy an extensive network of paths, bridleways, forest roads and rides. The annual springtime display of bluebells is a draw for visitors at both woodlands, but particularly West Woods which receives high numbers of visitors keen to observe and photograph this natural spectacle.

Legend

- CRoW designated land
- Forest road
- Ride

Public Rights of Way:

- Bridleway
- Footpath
- Byway

Analysis & Concept - **Collingbourne**

Analysis:

Two powerlines run through Collingbourne, necessitating the maintenance of open ground beneath.

Concept:

Whilst the northern powerline is above forest road, the grassy corridor beneath the southern line will continue to be maintained through mowing, and is an ecologically beneficial feature of the woodland due to its potential use as a corridor by wildlife.

Analysis:

Although not containing any Scheduled Monuments within the woodland, Collingbourne holds a number of unscheduled heritage features, including enclosures, a field system, and various banks and ditches.

Concept:

Care will be taken during forestry operations to protect these features, and contractors will be made aware of their presence.

Analysis:

These stands of mature conifer, including larch, Scots pine and Norway spruce are providing valuable nesting habitat for raptors, including goshawk, a Schedule 1 species.

Concept:

The Scots pine alongside the main forest road, and larch in the northern end of the wood will be retained into the future, to ensure they continue to provide habitat for wildlife and contribute to the aesthetic impact of this central woodland corridor. The Norway spruce in the south west of the wood will be felled at economic maturity, however retention areas around known nesting sites will be outlined to ensure they are protected from operations.

Analysis:

Stands of mature western red cedar are present on the eastern side of the woodland. This species is not particularly valuable for wildlife, and it produces seed prolifically.

Concept:

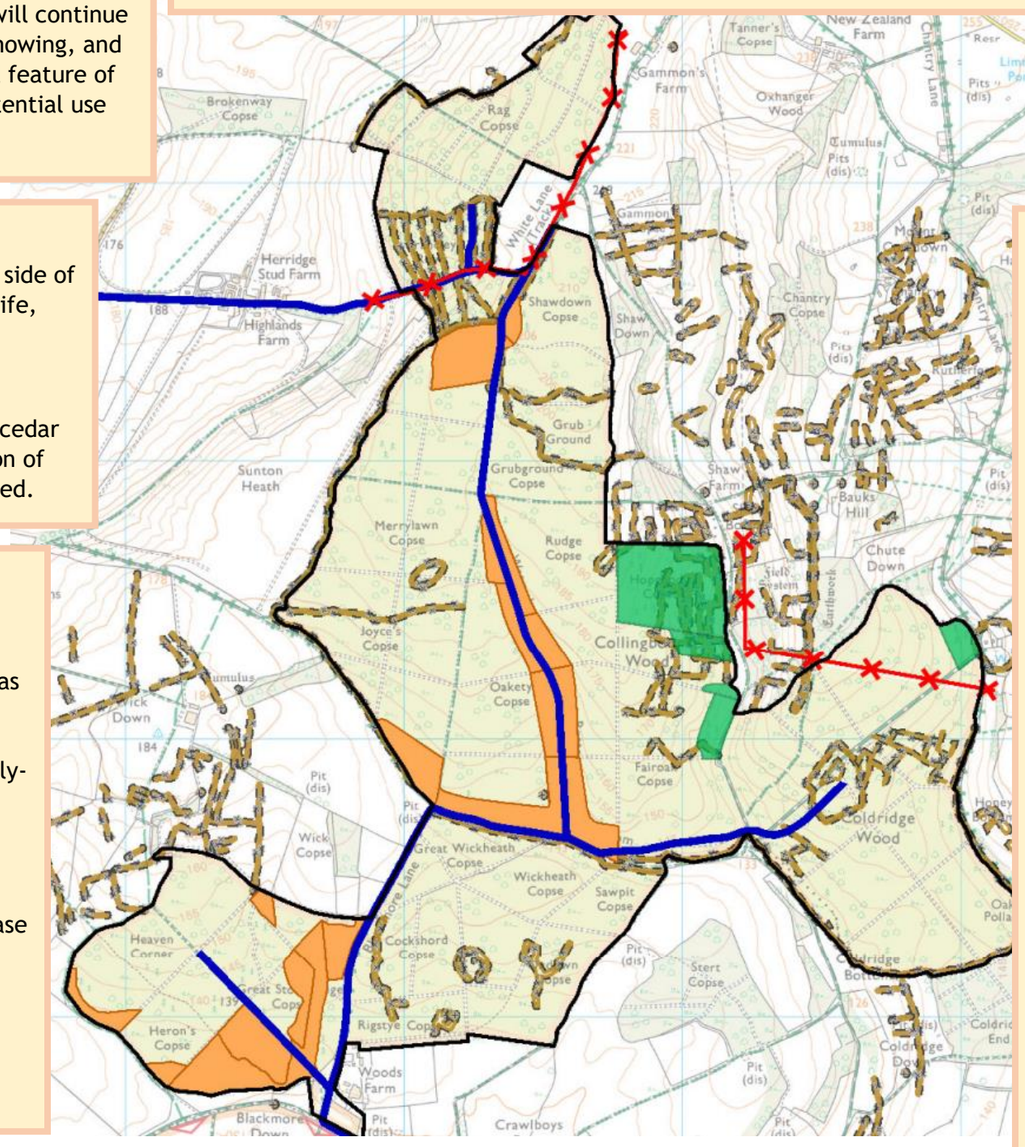
To contribute to the restoration of PAWS in this woodland, the cedar will be felled within this plan period, and if natural regeneration of the species is found to be arising abundantly, it will be controlled.

Analysis:

The forest roads within Collingbourne have the potential to be utilised as wildlife corridors for many species, including lepidoptera. In the south-west corner of Collingbourne, known as Heaven's Corner, there are numerous records of various woodland flora species alongside rides, including uncommon species such as herb-Paris, meadow saffron and greater butterfly-orchids.

Concept:

Proactive widening of road and ride-sides will be carried out in combination with planned forestry operations in order to increase the sunlight reaching the ride sides, therefore enhancing their wildlife value and encouraging floral abundance and diversity. Although opportunities to carry out this work will be taken throughout the whole wood, a particular focus will be given to the rides in Heaven's Corner where rides are currently quite enclosed with vegetation.



Analysis:

Collingbourne is largely dominated by uniform-aged beech planted between the 1930s and 1950s, with very little structural or species diversity, presenting adaptation and resilience concerns for the future.

Concept:

Throughout the woodland, areas of group beech felling will be carried out, with 30-50m gaps created. These resulting open areas will be allowed to naturally regenerate, with opportunities taken where possible to supplementary plant with desirable species later in the plan period. This will result in pockets of greater diversity, which will be beneficial for wildlife as well as ensuring we are increasing the resilience of the woodland to future challenges.

As Collingbourne has bluebells growing extensively throughout the wood, areas of particular abundance will be noted and avoided when deciding where to locate group fell operations.

Forestry England

Analysis & Concept – **West Woods**

Analysis:

Like Collingbourne, West Woods is home to extremely high numbers of unscheduled heritage features, including Medieval boundaries, banks and ditches. In recent years, it was discovered that the famous sarsen stones used to construct Stonehenge were sourced here.

Concept:

Care will be taken during forestry operations to protect these features, and contractors will be made aware of their presence.

Analysis:

At Hursley Bottom, felling of diseased conifers in recent years has created an open ride area which is showing promising development of varying vegetation heights, from grassy sward progressing through scrub up to the mature trees of the neighbouring stands.

Concept:

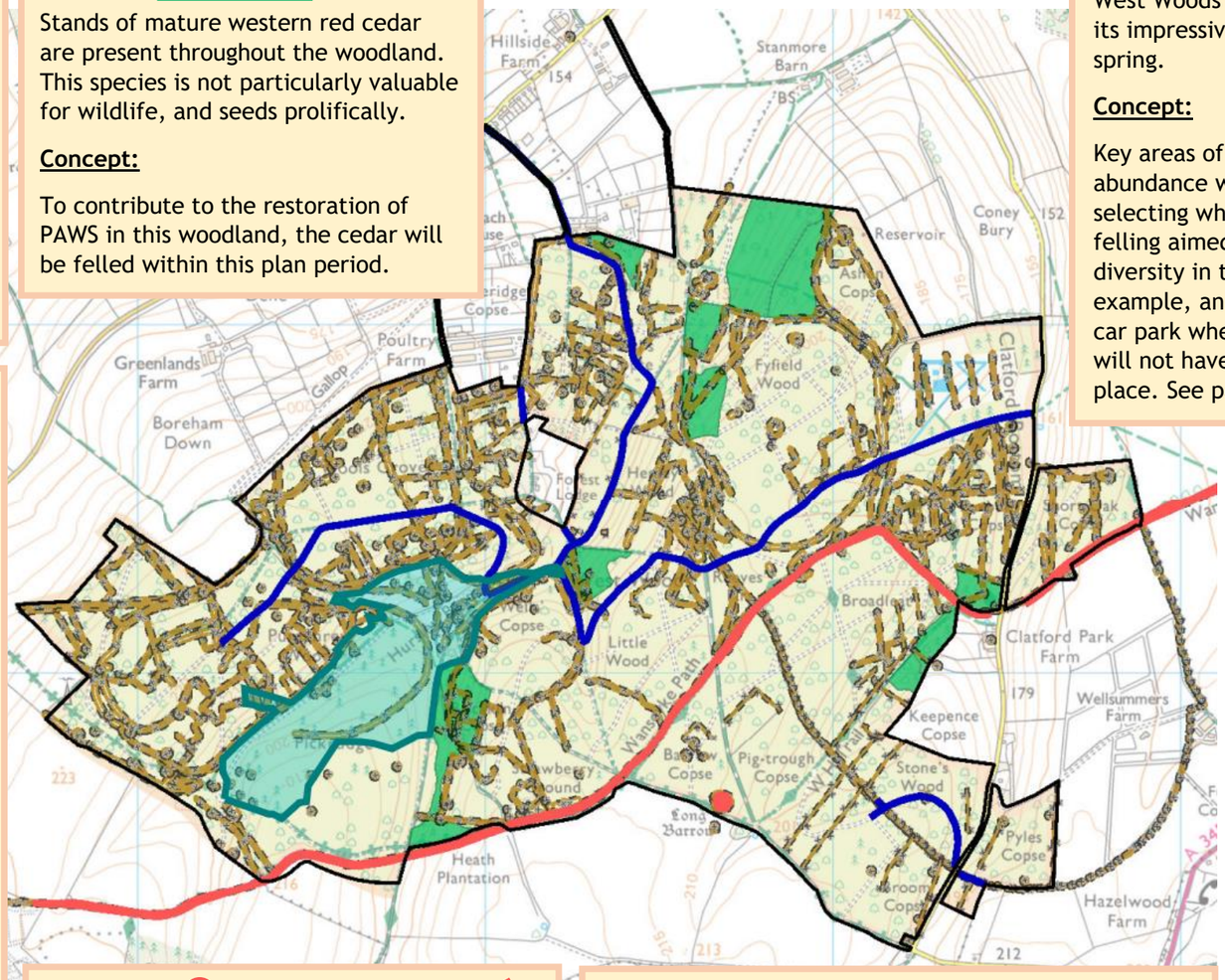
There is potential here for the introduction of a carefully managed grazing scheme, which could provide extensive ecological benefits for numerous invertebrates, particularly lepidoptera. The opportunity to pursue this idea will be explored with potential partner organisations over the first year of the plan period.

Analysis:

Stands of mature western red cedar are present throughout the woodland. This species is not particularly valuable for wildlife, and seeds prolifically.

Concept:

To contribute to the restoration of PAWS in this woodland, the cedar will be felled within this plan period.



Analysis:

West Woods is home to two Scheduled Monuments, a Long Barrow, and a section of the linear earthwork feature, Wansdyke.

Concept:

These two Scheduled Monuments will be managed under their own Scheduled Monument management plans, to ensure their condition is maintained and enhanced through restorative operations where possible.

Analysis:

The forest roads within West Woods have the potential to be utilised as wildlife corridors for many species, including lepidoptera.

Concept:

A cycle of vegetation clearance along defined stretches of the main forest road (running east-west) will be carried out in combination with planned forestry operations.

Analysis:

West Woods is locally well known for its impressive bluebell display each spring.

Concept:

Key areas of particular bluebell abundance will be avoided when selecting where to carry out group felling aimed at increasing structural diversity in the beech stands. For example, an area close to the main car park where bluebells are prolific will not have any group felling taking place. See page 18 for more details.

Analysis:

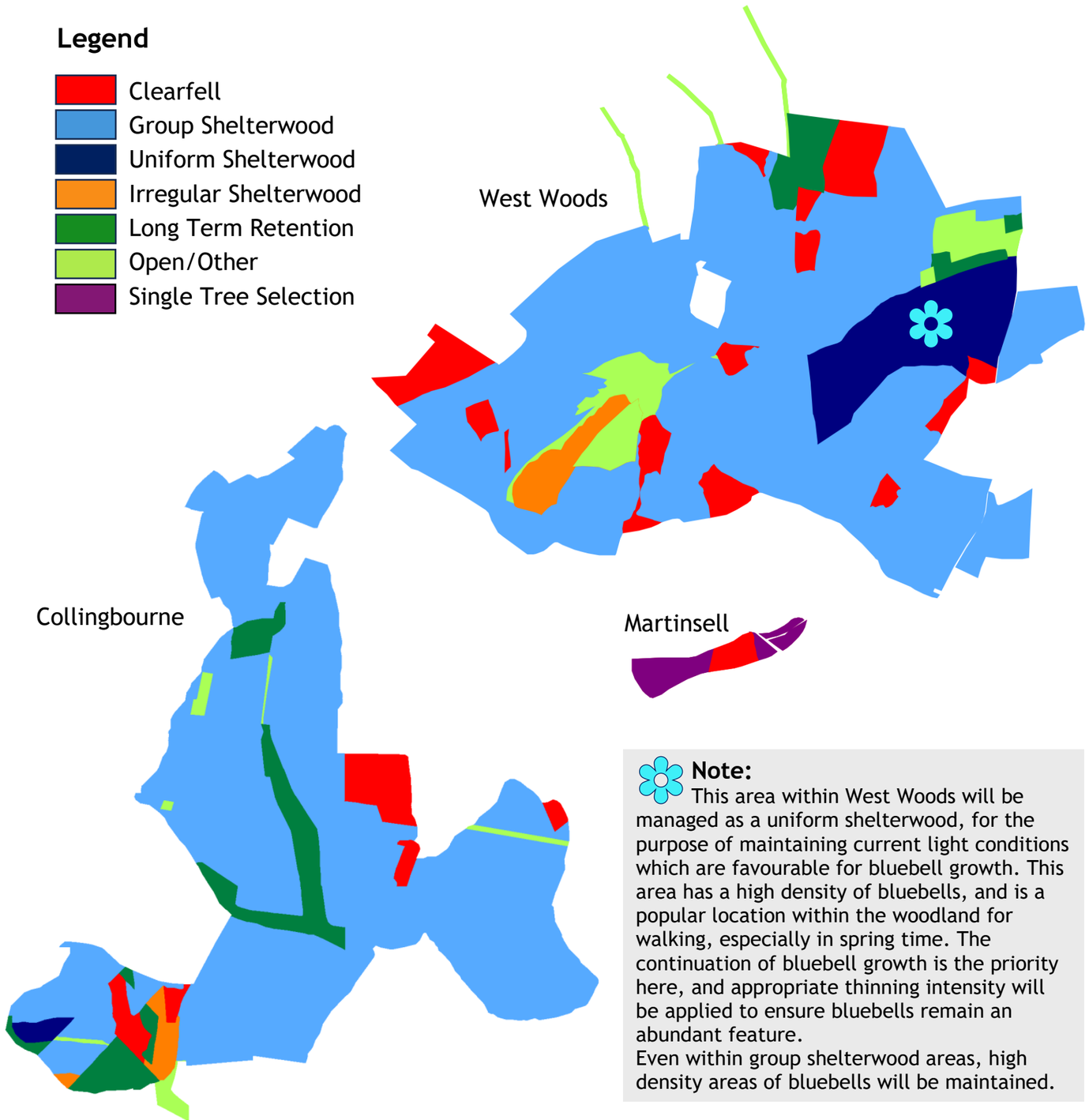
West Woods is a largely dominated by uniform-aged beech planted between the 1930s and 1950s, with very little structural or species diversity, presenting adaptation and resilience concerns for the future.

Concept:

Throughout the woodland, areas of group felling will be carried out, with 30-50m diameter groups of beech removed. The resulting open areas will be allowed to naturally regenerate with opportunities taken where possible to supplementary plant with desirable species later in the plan period. This will result in pockets of greater diversity, which will be beneficial for wildlife as well as ensuring we are increasing the resilience of the woodland to future challenges.

Forestry England

Silviculture



Note:
This area within West Woods will be managed as a uniform shelterwood, for the purpose of maintaining current light conditions which are favourable for bluebell growth. This area has a high density of bluebells, and is a popular location within the woodland for walking, especially in spring time. The continuation of bluebell growth is the priority here, and appropriate thinning intensity will be applied to ensure bluebells remain an abundant feature.
Even within group shelterwood areas, high density areas of bluebells will be maintained.

Clearfell coupes will be managed by cutting and removing all identified trees, and will be restocked with native broadleaves primarily via natural regeneration. The establishment of a diverse natural stand will take time, and natural regeneration will be assessed at the 5- and 10-year Forest Plan review stage, to determine whether any supplementary planting is required to increase stocking density and/or species diversity. In PAWS areas, clearfelling of conifers and natural regeneration of broadleaves will contribute to the restoration of PAWS woodland.

Group shelterwood fellings will be integrated into thinning operations to diversify woodland composition and structure. Small (≤0.25ha) fells will be undertaken, focussing on locations where there are mature trees or regenerated saplings of a species other than beech, for example oak. This is to provide the opportunity for natural regeneration of that species to succeed, to contribute to the diversification of the largely uniform beech-dominated canopy. The gaps created will be left to naturally regenerate, with any conifer regeneration being removed. Supplementary planting of desirable broadleaf species may be carried out later in the plan period where opportunities arise.

Uniform shelterwoods will be used in broadleaf stands, enabling an understorey of next generation trees to establish via natural regeneration beneath the canopy throughout the stand. This will be achieved through the application of appropriate thinning intensity to open up gaps uniformly across the stand for natural regeneration to utilise.

Irregular shelterwood management will help to move conifer-dominated stands in PAWS areas towards a broadleaf-dominated complex structure, through the targeted removal of conifers during thinning operations. Thinning the conifers at a higher intensity than the broadleaves will gradually contribute to transforming the stand composition and structure. Gaps created through heavier thinning will allow light to reach the forest floor, facilitating the establishment of natural regeneration.

Long term retention coupes contain conifer stands which are providing ecological benefit in terms of nesting sites for birds (particularly Schedule 1 species), or aesthetic/landscape value within the woodland. These stands will be retained into the future beyond the age they would typically be felled, due to these benefits that they are providing.

Single Tree Selection is used in mature broadleaf habitat with high ecological value where timber production is not the priority. Careful selection of individual trees for removal will enhance the conditions for valuable veteran trees.

Open space will be maintained as valuable habitat for wildlife, adding to the diversity of the overall woodland structure. A regular mowing regime is in place to ensure forest cover in open areas remains less than 2m in height.

Felling and Restocking 2024 – 2034: **West Woods**

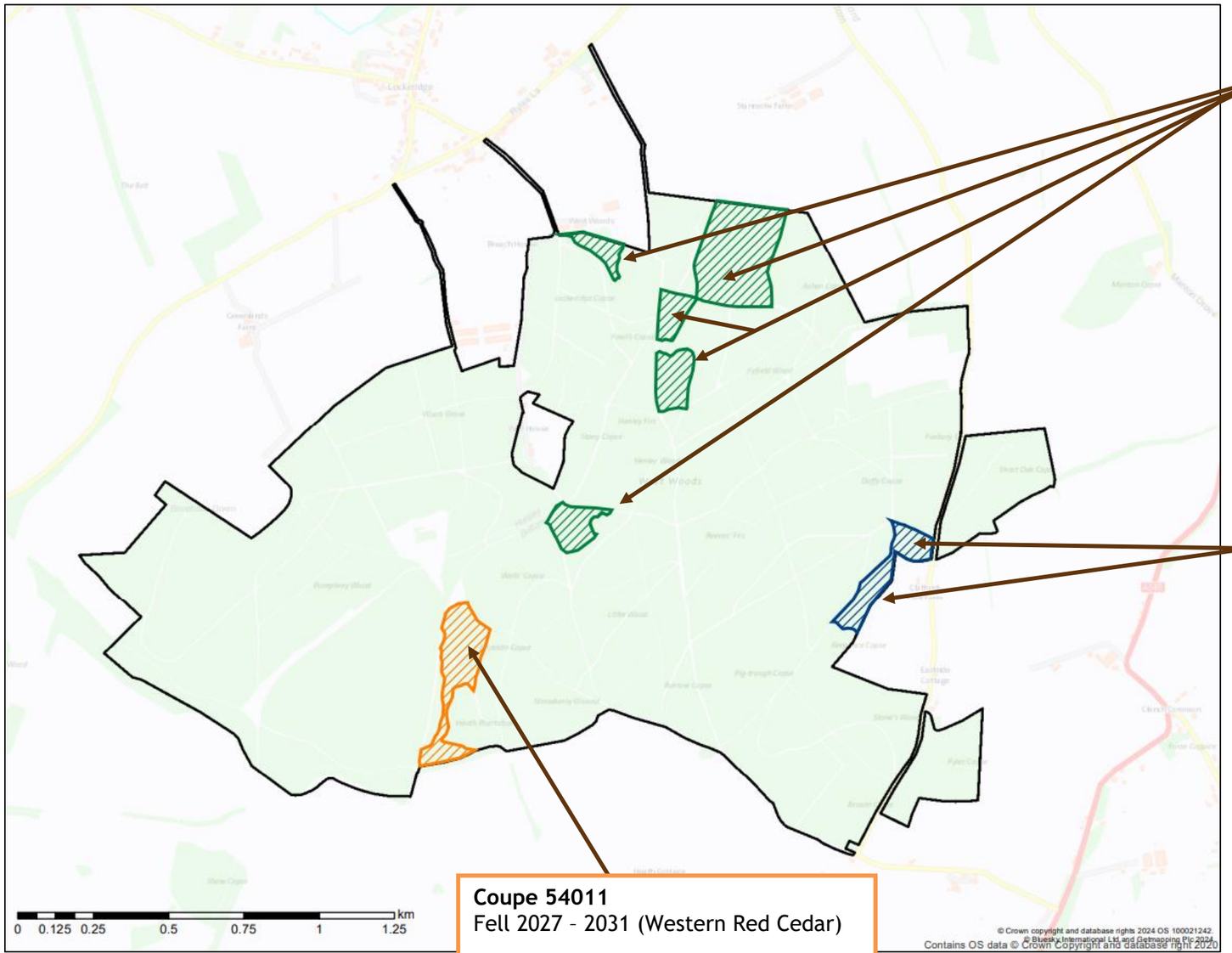
Legend

- Fell 2024 – 2026
- Fell 2027 – 2031
- Fell 2032 - 2034

Restocking

Restocking will primarily utilise natural regeneration. However, future supplementary planting of desirable broadleaf species will be considered if assessments of natural regeneration after a 5- and 10-year period show little regeneration has occurred, or there is a lack of species diversity within the regeneration. If any planting is proposed, the species selected will be carefully considered to take into account local soil conditions and the projected future temperature and moisture regime for this part of Wiltshire.

Open space will continue to be maintained and enhanced. The inclusion of pockets of open space within a woodland diversifies the range of habitats present for various species to thrive, and increases the area of ecotone (areas of transitional vegetation between two differing habitats) which again can be valuable niches for certain woodland species.



Coupe 54006
Fell 2024 – 2026 (Western Red Cedar)

Total coupe size: 14.83ha
Area to be felled: **5.15ha**

Retain broadleaves

Coupe 54044
Fell 2032 – 2034 (Western Red Cedar)

Total coupe size: 3.02ha
Area to be felled: **0.86ha**

Retain broadleaves

Coupe 54011
Fell 2027 – 2031 (Western Red Cedar)

Total coupe size: 4.66ha
Area to be felled: **1.37ha**

Retain broadleaves

All timber arising from the Forestry England estate represents a negligible risk under the Timber and Timber Products Placing on the Market Regulations (UKTR) and UK FLEGT Regulations

Forestry England

Felling and Restocking 2024 – 2034: **Collingbourne**

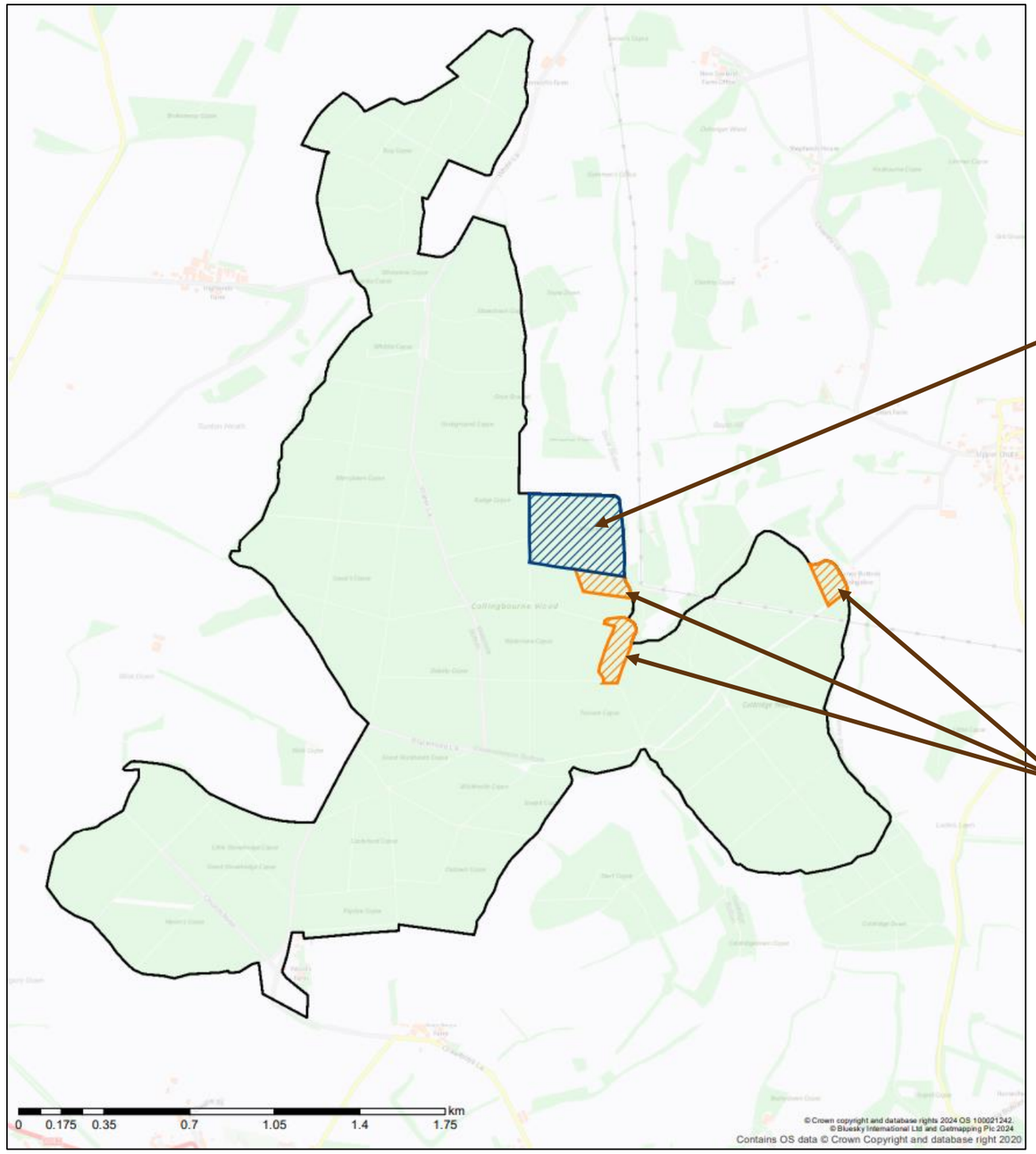
Legend

- Fell 2024 – 2026
- Fell 2027 – 2031
- Fell 2032 - 2034

Restocking

Restocking will primarily utilise natural regeneration. However, future supplementary planting of desirable broadleaf species will be considered if assessments of natural regeneration after a 5- and 10-year period show little regeneration has occurred, or there is a lack of species diversity within the regeneration. If any planting is proposed, the species selected will be carefully considered to take into account local soil conditions and the projected future temperature and moisture regime for this part of Wiltshire.

Open space will continue to be maintained and enhanced. The inclusion of pockets of open space within a woodland diversifies the range of habitats present for various species to thrive, and increases the area of ecotone (areas of transitional vegetation between two differing habitats) which again can be valuable niches for certain woodland species.



Coupe 54037
Fell 2032 – 2034 (Western Red Cedar)

Total coupe size: 11.74ha
Area to be felled: **6.1ha**

Retain broadleaves

Coupe 54036
Fell 2027 – 2031 (Western Red Cedar)

Total coupe size: 5.79ha
Area to be felled: **3.98ha**

Retain broadleaves

All timber arising from the Forestry England estate represents a negligible risk under the Timber and Timber Products Placing on the Market Regulations (UKTR) and UK FLEGT Regulations

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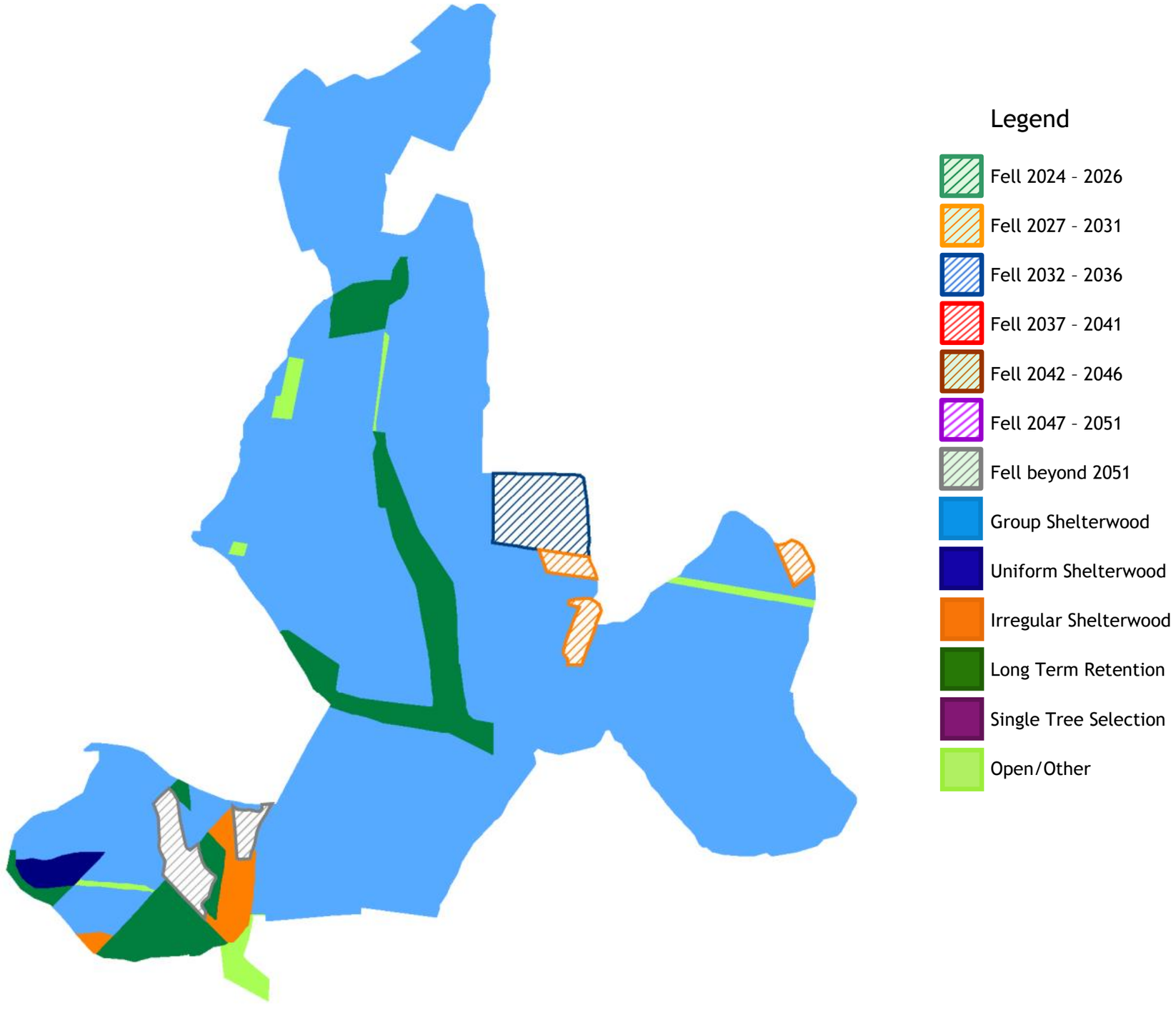
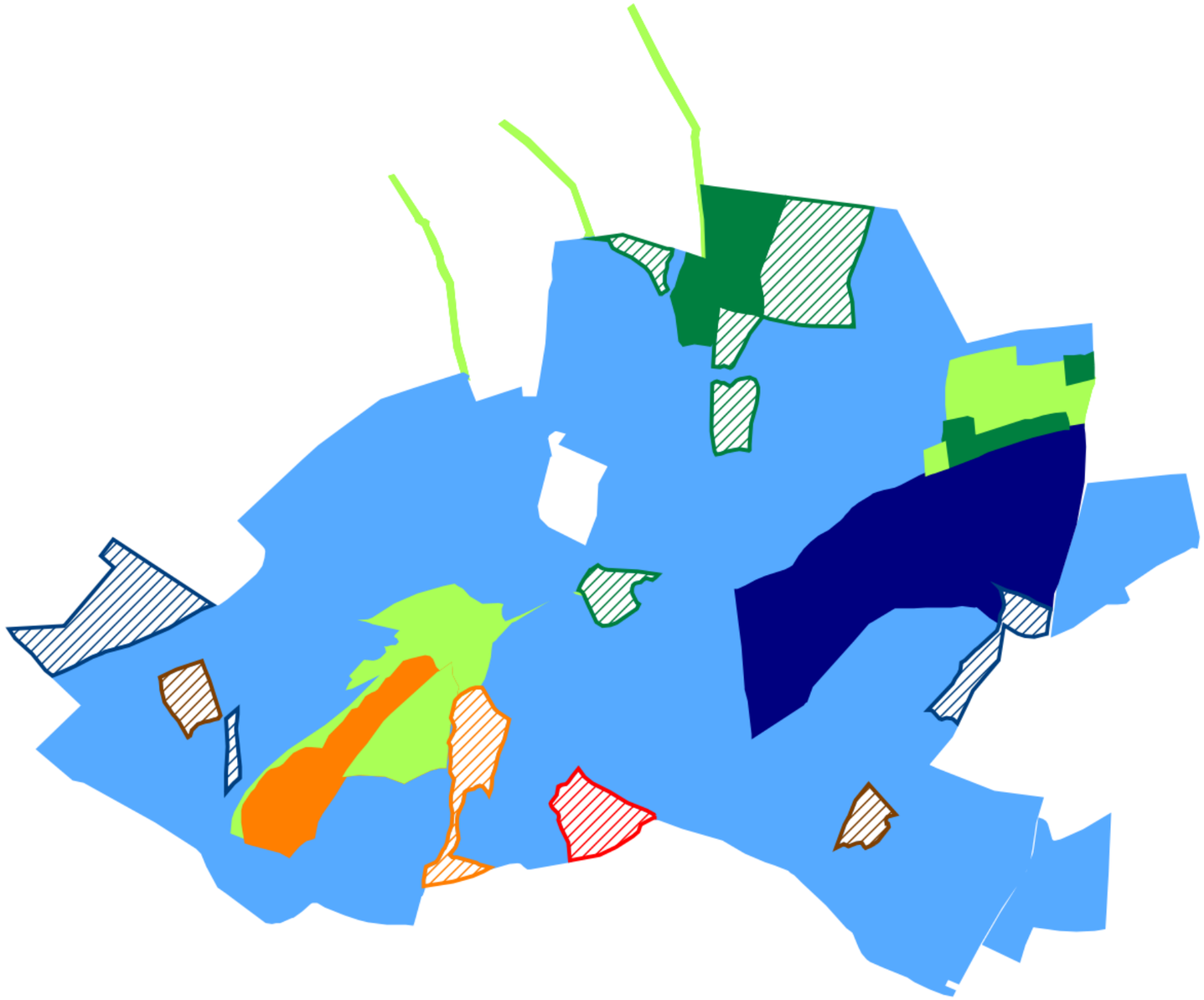
Management Prescriptions 2024 – 2051: Collingbourne



Forestry England

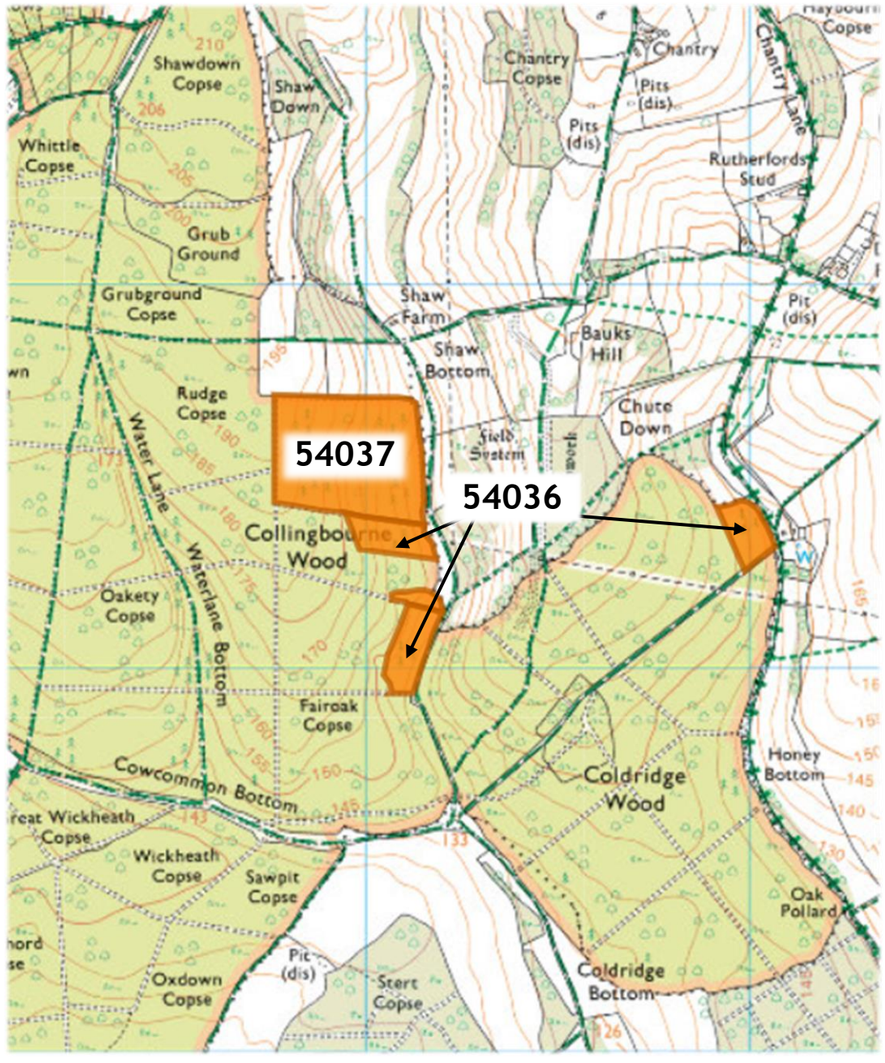
Management Prescriptions 2024 – 2051: West Woods & Martinsell



Landscape Analysis

Throughout this plan period, clearfelling operations will be carried out in both West Woods and Collingbourne Wood. In all of these operations, only conifer species will be clearfelled, and the broadleaves that are present will be retained. Clearfelling the conifers within these coupes, and subsequent expected regeneration with native broadleaves (and planting where necessary/possible) will help to restore areas of PAWS to native cover. The fact that all of the clearfell coupes are mixed stands, with broadleaves present as well as conifers, is beneficial from a landscape point of view. The retained broadleaves will help to minimise the visual impact of the conifer removal, especially given that a number of the clearfell coupes are located on the edges of the woodlands where they could feasibly impact the aesthetic composition of the external landscape. Another key point to note is that all of the clearfell coupes on an external woodland boundary are relatively small in size, which again will help to minimise their impact on the landscape once trees have been removed. The exception to this is coupe 54037, which is 11.74ha in total, though only 6.1ha of it (the conifer component) will be felled. An analysis of the potential landscape impact of felling this coupe can be seen below.

Above: Aerial photograph of coupe 54037, and part of coupe 54036. The yellow line provides an indication of the rough divide between the area dominated by beech (north and east of the line) and western red cedar (south and west of the line).



Although coupe 54037 is on the edge of Collingbourne Wood, the felling of the western red cedar within it is not expected to have a significant impact on the landscape.

Only the western red cedar component of the coupe will be felled, with the beech in the coupe being retained. The cedar currently makes up 52% of the coupe area, and it is largely clustered in the south and west of the coupe. This is shown in the aerial photograph on the far left, with the yellow line providing an indication of the rough divide between the area dominated by beech (north and east of the line) and western red cedar (south and west of the line). This is important from a landscape perspective, because the beech which remains in place after the cedar is felled will help to screen any views of bare ground. This is also the case for the section of coupe 54036 shown in the photograph.

As can be seen from the contour lines on the map to the left, only footpaths and a byway would have a downhill view towards coupe 54037. Therefore, visual impact is expected to be limited, especially given the screening effect of the beech trees as discussed above.

Broadleaf restocking of both coupes 54037 and 54036 will ensure a better integration with the existing landscape.

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Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Term	Abbreviation	Description
Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland	ASNW	An ancient woodland site, where trees and other plant species appear to have established naturally rather than having been planted. Predominantly these sites will contain at least 80% site native species or species native to the surrounding area.
Ancient Woodland Site	AWS	A site that has been wooded since 1600AD and is unlikely to have been converted to farmland in the last few centuries.
Clearfelling	CF or C/F	To cut and remove all trees from a certain area of woodland.
Coppicing		A traditional method of woodland management where trees are felled near their base to leave a stump (or "stool"). New shoots regrow from the stool, creating numerous thin stems or "poles". Areas of coppice are usually managed on a rotation system, so that each area gets cut on a regular cycle after a certain number of years. Traditionally woodlands were managed this way to produce a sustainable source of wood suitable for many uses (such as firewood, fencing and basket-making). Today, coppicing is mostly implemented for its ecological benefits as it provides a variety of habitats and periodically allows light to reach the woodland floor.
Coupe		Woodlands are divided up into delineated areas of management called coupes, which can be any size. The trees within each coupe are managed under particular prescriptions.
Crop		A stand of trees. Often associated with stands completely or partially managed for timber.
Forest Development Types	FDT	A management tool developed by Forest Research which helps to set the long-term vision for a stand and increase its future resilience. It provides guidance on various different species mixtures, the required site conditions for each mixture, and advice on management in order to achieve the desired stand transformation.
Group felling		This is where small areas of woodland are felled, and then either allowed to develop through the use of natural-regeneration or planted ("group planting"). These techniques can help to develop a diverse structure* within a wood over a given length of time. *Either in terms of age or the number of tree species present, since shelter and shade are provided by the remaining upper storey a larger number of tree species can be considered when deciding what to plant.
Hectare	Ha	Unit of area equating to 2.47 acres.
High forest		Stands of mature trees forming a closed canopy.
Irregular structure		When a stand contains trees of a variety of ages, meaning there is a diversity of tree sizes and forms and the canopy is not uniform.
Lepidoptera		An order of insects, including moths and butterflies.
Long term retention		When a stand of trees is retained in a woodland beyond their economic peak (the age/size when they would usually be felled for optimum financial return), for ecological, cultural or aesthetic reasons.
Low Impact Silvicultural Systems	LISS	Woodland management practices which result in a less severe impact on the woodland environment than a traditional clearfelling regime. LISS can help build structural diversity and resilience into a woodland, and can help to maintain the soil health and microclimate of the woodland. LISS management systems include single tree and group selection, shelterwood or under-planting, small coupe felling, coppicing and minimum intervention systems.
Minimum intervention		Areas of woodland where forestry operations rarely take place. This may be because these areas of woodland are difficult to access with machinery, too wet or boggy to safely carry out operations, or otherwise unsafe or impractical to regularly intervene. Or, it may be because the area has been designated as a Natural Reserve (see definition below).
National Character Area	NCA	There are 159 National Character Areas in England as defined by Natural England. They are natural areas not defined by administrative boundaries, that embody the landscape, ecology, geology and/or culture of that area.
Native/naturalised		The trees making up the woodland are part of England's natural, or naturalised flora. Determined by whether the trees colonised Britain without assistance from humans since the last ice age (or in the case of 'honorary natives' were brought here by people but have naturalised in historic times); and whether they would naturally be found in this part of England.
Naturalness		The measure to show the percentage of site-native tree species in a given area.
Natural Regeneration	Nat regen	When trees grow on a site as a result of natural seed fall, as opposed to having been planted by humans. Natural regeneration of desirable species is often encouraged and promoted through careful thinning of the surrounding woodland over a number of years. This provides more light and space in order to ensure the young trees can establish themselves into larger trees, eventually allowing them to be incorporated ('recruited') into the main crop for the next rotation at some point in the future.
Natural Reserve		Areas of woodland which are managed under a minimum intervention (see definition above) approach, specifically for ecological/wildlife benefit.

Open access land	CROW	Land designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act), which gives the public a right of access on foot to land mapped as "open country", and these areas are known as "open access land". This access can be used to walk, run, climb, sight-see and bird-watch.
Plant and Seed Supply	PSS	Forestry England's Plant and Seed Supply unit, who facilitate the supply of high-quality tree seedlings for planting on Forestry England sites
Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site	PAWS	Areas of ancient woodland where the original semi-natural woodland has been cleared and replaced with a plantation of either native or non-native species, resulting in a decline in ecological value. Many PAWS sites retain remnant ancient features.
Pollarding		A method of pruning in which the upper branches of a tree are cut back to the trunk, which controls the height of the main stem and encourages the growth of a dense head of branches.
Public Right of Way	PROW	A linear route over land which the public have a right to pass over at all times. There are four types of Public Right of Way, which are footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways, and byways open to all traffic.
Ride		A track through a woodland/forest.
Rotation		Generally a commercial term used to describe the length of time an area of trees is growing for, from the time of planting to the time of felling. For broadleaves, a rotation is generally a lot longer than that of conifer species and can broadly speaking be anywhere between 80 years to 3-400 years, as opposed to conifer crops whose rotation is generally shorter but can vary from 20-25 years to 120 years plus. Coppiced broadleaves are an exception, as rotation length can vary from 5 years up to 30 years plus, depending on management objectives. "First rotation" would refer to an area of wood planted on open ground not previously wooded. And so "second rotation" is where woodland has been cleared and replanted.
Scheduled Monument	SM	A nationally important heritage site which has been selected by Historic England for protection.
Scrub		Vegetation dominated by low woody plants such as shrubs and bushes, which can be a successional/transitionary habitat between open or grassy habitat and woodland. Examples of scrub species include blackthorn, hawthorn, alder and gorse.
Secondary woodland		Woodland located on a site which has not been continuously wooded throughout history (unlike ancient woodland).
Selection system		A silvicultural system where single trees or small groups are felled with the aim of achieving and maintaining an uneven age structure within the woodland. Trees of all age classes and sizes may be selected for removal, and continuous canopy cover is maintained.
Shelterwood		A management system that is applicable to conifer or broadleaf trees, where the tree canopy is maintained at one or more levels without the need to clearfell the whole site. Felling generally occurs in small groups, whose size, shape and spatial distribution will vary depending on site conditions. By removing mature trees in this way, a new stand of trees is able to develop underneath the remaining mature trees. The gaps where groups have been removed are then either allowed to develop and establish via natural regeneration, are planted, or are established using a mixture of both techniques. This known as a "group shelterwood system".
Silviculture		A term coined during late 19th century from the Latin *silva* meaning 'wood' and the French *culture* meaning 'cultivation' and so Silviculture is the art and science of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, and quality of forest vegetation to achieve a full range of objectives.
Site of Special Scientific Interest	SSSI	Land that has been designated for protection by Natural England due to features of special interest such as wildlife, geology or landform. Achieving "favourable" condition is the goal for all SSSIs, which means the habitats or features within are being managed appropriately and as a result are in a healthy state.
Stand		A group or area of trees that are more or less homogeneous with regard to species composition, density, size, and sometimes habitat.
Thinning		Selective removal of trees from a wooded area, giving the remaining trees more space to grow into larger trees.
Tree of Special Interest	TSI	An outstanding tree that is of particular note and interest for one of many reasons, including its age, size, form, cultural or historic significance.
Underplanting		When shade-tolerant tree species are planted beneath an existing mature woodland canopy, for the purpose of diversifying the stand structure and facilitating the growth of the next generation of trees which will eventually replace the current canopy trees.
Understorey		A layer of tree or shrub vegetation beneath the forest canopy.
Veteran tree		A tree of particular interest due to its significant age, size, history, and because it has characteristics which make it aesthetically, ecologically or culturally valuable. Although such trees may not be old enough to be classed as ancient, they have some "ancient" features that are valuable to wildlife such as deadwood, decay, hollows or fungi, and may have acquired these features through physical damage or stress.
Windblow		When trees are uprooted as a result of wind.
Windfirm		When trees are not at a high risk of windblow because they are securely rooted and are able to withstand strong winds.
Wood pasture		Sometimes also referred to as parkland. Areas of open grazed pasture characterised by the presence of mature trees, which are either spaced sporadically, in groups, or form a fairly uniform canopy cover. Wood pastures are often the result of long-established grazing regimes and can be historically significant.

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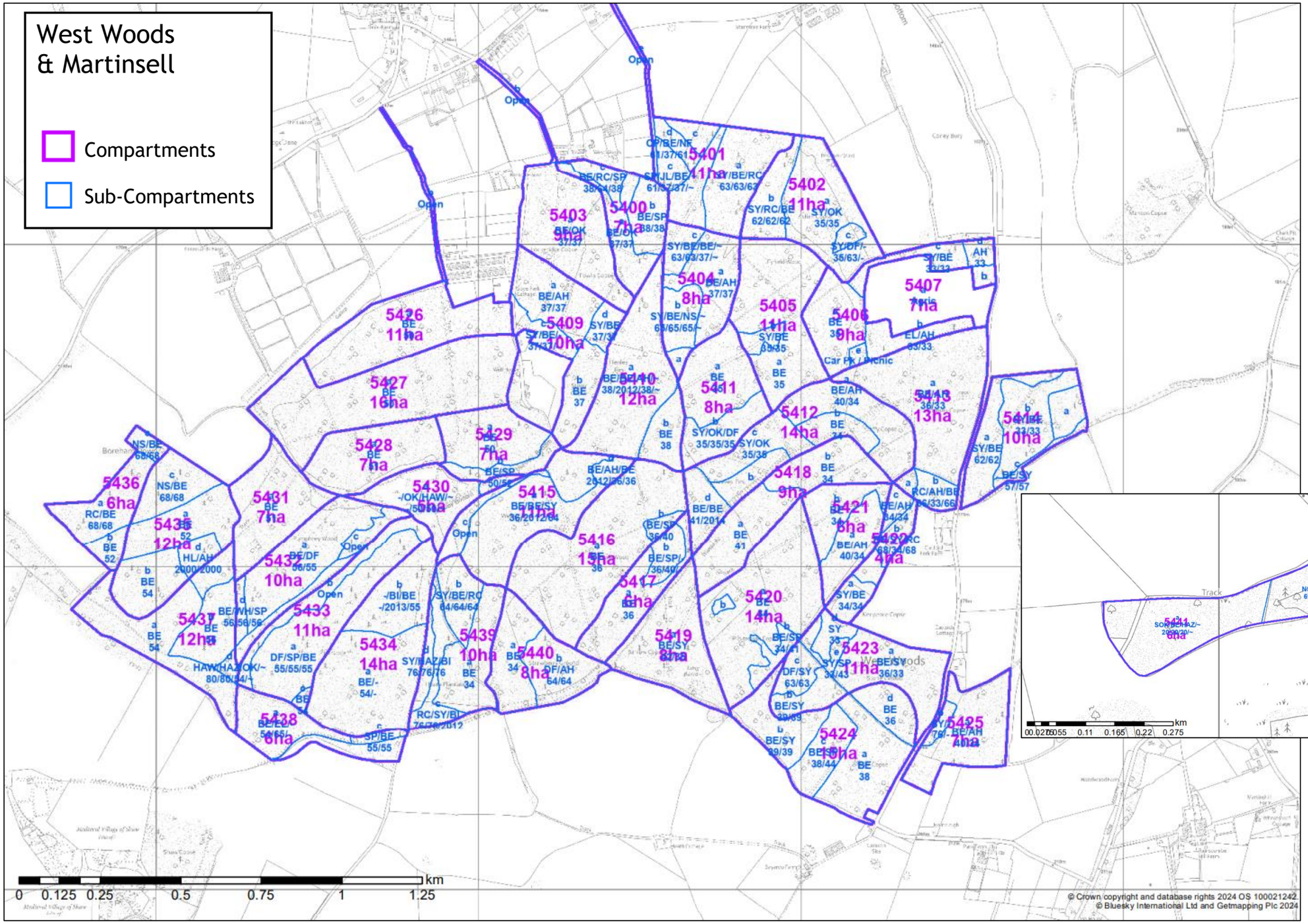
Appendix 2: **Stock Data** May 2024



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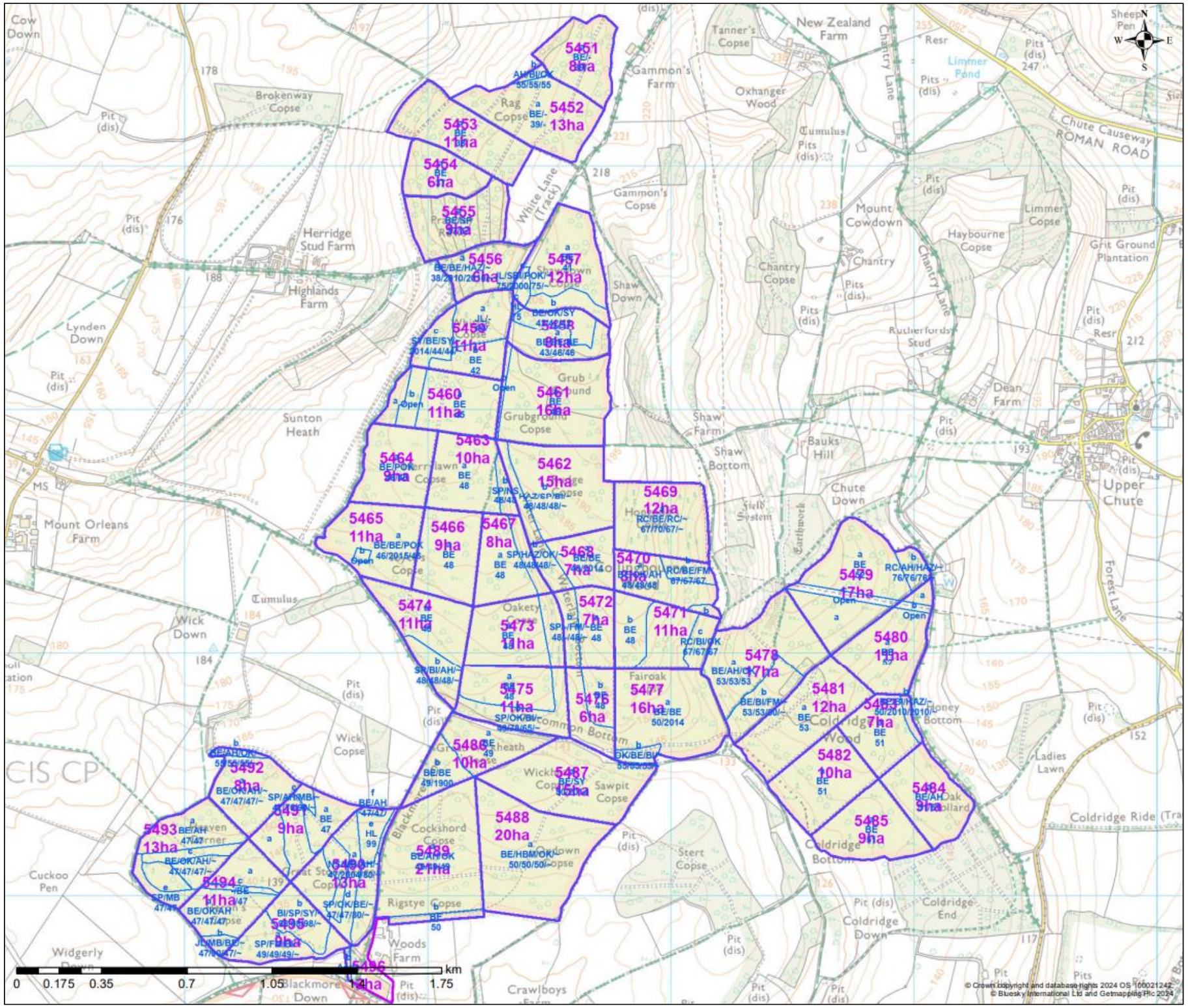
Collingbourne Wood

- Compartments
- Sub-Compartments



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Appendix 3: Consultation Record

To be completed following consultation