

North Wessex Downs AONB

Woodland Strategy

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September 2005**

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Glossary

SINC – Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, SNCI – Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. These are sites designated by Wildlife Trusts and are collectively known as County Wildlife Sites (CWS). The designation is not a statutory one and the degree of protection afforded is not as great as the next higher level of designation SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Importance). In general this report describes these sites as CWS.

Yield – an expression of the relative productivity of woodland areas. Yield is usually expressed in classes (whole even numbers from 4 to 30) but can also be determined very accurately for different areas. The yield is an estimate of the number of cubic metres of timber per hectare that an area will produce on average per year over the life of the timber crop.

Mixed Woodland – A combination of broadleaved and coniferous species where each category occupies at least 20% of the canopy.

Coppice – crops of marketable broadleaved species that have at least two stems per stool and are either being worked or are capable of being worked on rotation. With the exception of hazel coppice more than half the stems should be capable of producing 1 metre lengths of timber of good form.

Coppice with Standards – Two-storey stands where the overstorey consists of at least 25 stems per hectare that are older than the understorey of worked coppice by at least one coppice rotation.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In May 2004 the Management Plan for the North Wessex Downs (NWD) Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) was launched. The plan contains many objectives of general relevance to woodlands but three, numbers 13 and 22 and 28 are of particular relevance to this study. The three objectives are:

- Objective 13: To protect, appropriately manage and re-link existing semi-natural ancient woodlands, achieving significant expansion in the Landscape Character Types where woodland is a characteristic feature;
- Objective 22: To promote sustainable and viable agriculture and woodland management that contributes positively to the environment of the North Wessex Downs

and, relating to the issue of biofuels;

- Objective 28: To maximise the production of sustainable energy from land uses traditional to the North Wessex Downs (e.g. management of the existing woodland resource) in preference to uncharacteristic land uses.

- 1.2 The Action Plan that was part of the overall Management Plan contained Action 18 – *Preparation of a semi-natural woodland and hedgerow strategy for the North Wessex Downs identifying management needs and potential opportunities for expansion and linkage focussed on areas where woodland is a key characteristic – Wooded Plateau and Lowland Mosaic Landscape Character Types – using English Nature's (EN) Natural Area Profile work in combination with local BAP Habitat Action Plans.*

- 1.3 By summer 2005 this action item had become the terms of reference for the production of a Woodland Strategy for the North Wessex Downs AONB as follows:

- To undertake a desk study of the extent and character of existing woodland within the AONB but particularly within Downland with Woodland, Woodland Plateau and Lowland Mosaic landscape character areas.
- To assess the contribution that woodlands make to the cultural, biological and landscape character of the different areas of the AONB.
- To assess the condition of the existing woodland resource and the nature and type of any management.
- To identify any gaps in the current level of knowledge and advise on how any shortcomings may be overcome.
- To identify, at a strategic level, the needs and priorities for woodland management.
- To identify where an expansion of the woodland area will best meet the multifaceted objectives of the AONB management plan.
- To prepare interim notes recording progress and a final Woodland Strategy Report.

- 1.4 It will be clear from the terms of reference that no new fieldwork was to be undertaken as part of the study. Rather the study will rely on existing plans and reports, the knowledge of the officers of the AONB, local authorities and other organisations who comprise the project steering group and selected consultations with various individuals, groups and organisations.
- 1.5 This report is presented in six sections. Chapter two presents the latest available information describing the extent and nature of the woodland resource, both for the AONB as a whole and for the individual landscape character types. Chapter three presents a brief summary (fuller details are presented in appendix 2) of the various plans and reports on various elements of the landscape and wildlife within the AONB as well as a review of the wider policy framework relating to woodlands. Chapter four discusses the various issues raised during the consultation process, the policy review and the data relating to the woodland resource. Chapter five outlines the strategic objectives for the AONB with regard to woodlands and chapter six presents an action plan for the delivery of the objectives. Finally chapter seven presents the first iteration of the opportunities plan which seeks to identify those areas where new woodland would most meet the objectives of the AONB.

2. The Existing Woodland Resource

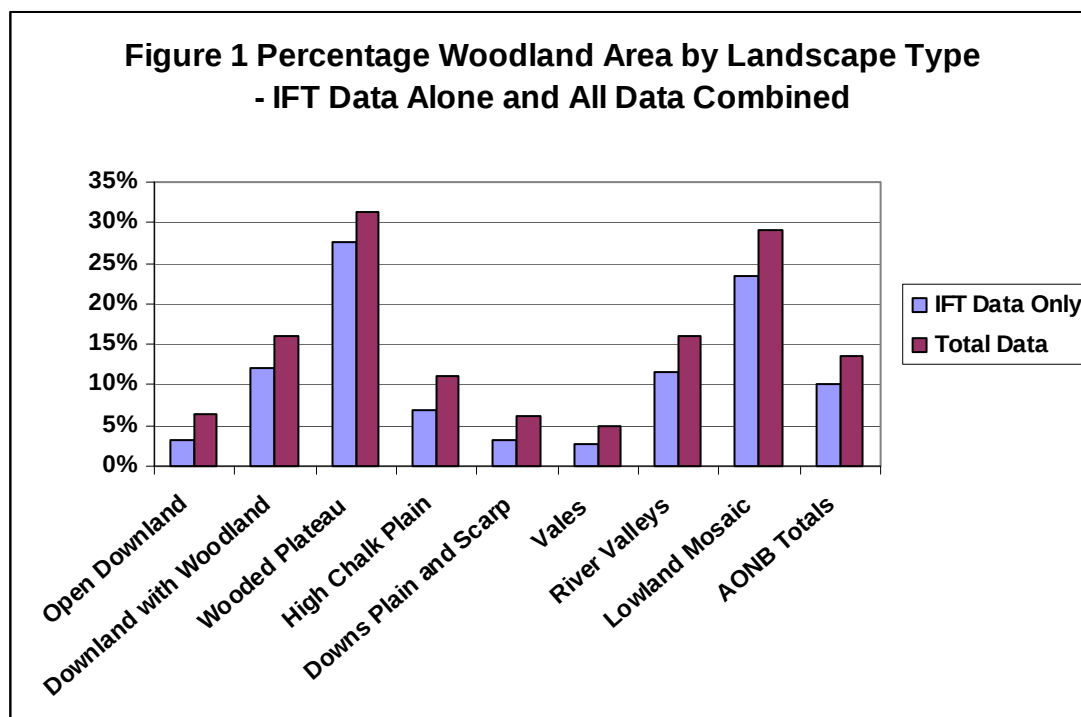
The Area of Woodland

- 2.1 Table 1 indicates the area of woodland by landscape type within the AONB according to the Forestry Commission Inventory of Forests and Trees (IFT). This indicates a very variable level of woodland cover across the AONB from 2.6% to 27.7% and an overall average cover of 10.0% - some 1.5% above the national average. All of the tables in this section have been abbreviated to show information for landscape type only. Fuller versions of some of the tables and the tables used to produce the Figures, including additional information as well as details for all of the landscape character areas, are presented in Appendix 1.

Table 1. Woodland Area by Landscape Type - IFT

Landscape Type	Area (Ha)	Area of Woodland (Ha)	Percentage of Woodland
Open Downland	40494	1348	3.3%
Downland with Woodland	51382	6192	12.1%
Wooded Plateau	11090	3073	27.7%
High Chalk Plain	2206	153	6.9%
Downs Plain and Scarp	22646	748	3.3%
Vales	18655	479	2.6%
River Valleys	6542	751	11.5%
Lowland Mosaic	19085	4491	23.5%
AONB Totals	172100	17235	10.0%

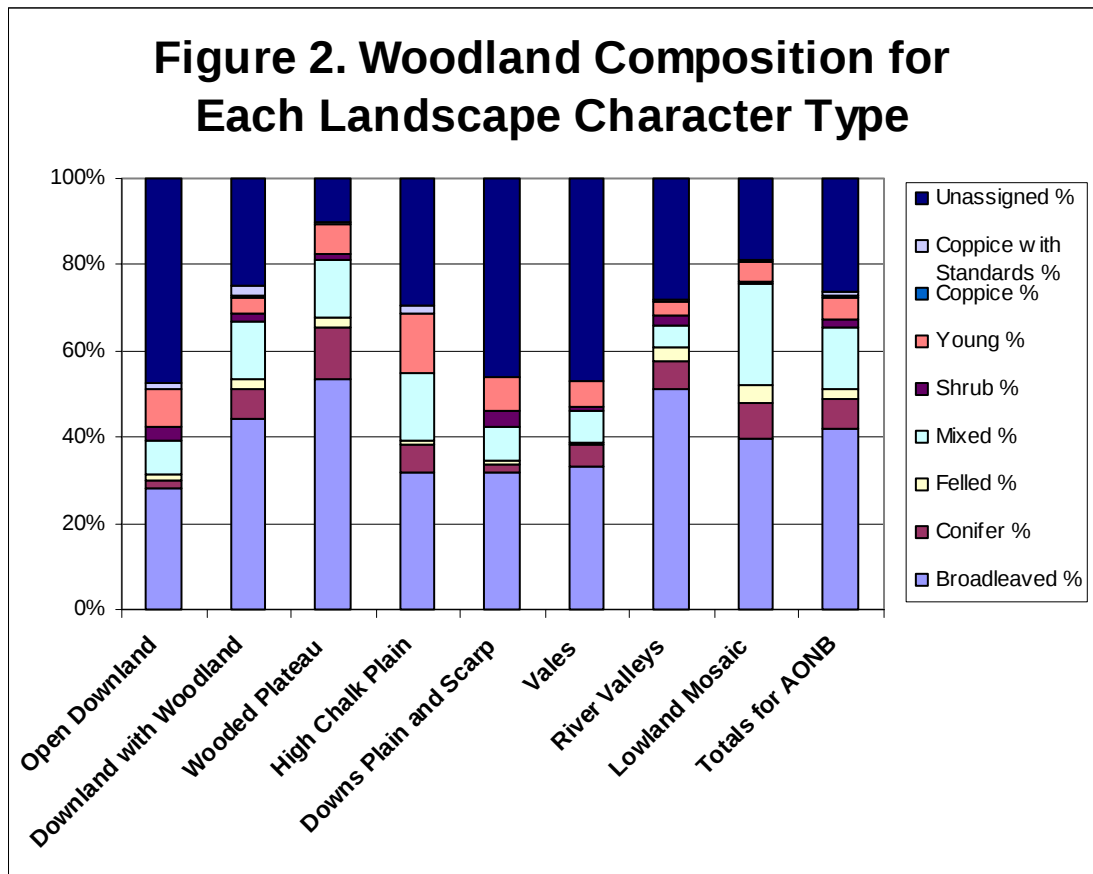
- 2.2 When the landscape exercise was being undertaken (see Section 7) an examination of the plans for each landscape character area consistently revealed woodlands that were not shown as IFT recorded woodlands. In almost every instance the 'missing' woodlands were small, typically being long and narrow in shape. It was clearly evident from the exercise that the IFT data were providing a significant underestimate of both the number of woodland and the extent of woodland cover.
- 2.3 There are two main problems associated with the IFT data; firstly the census does not include woodlands smaller than 2.0 hectares and; secondly the census data is now some nine years out of date and will not include new woodlands planted since 1996. In an effort to gain a more correct picture of the total woodland resource of the AONB further data sources were used. The Forestry Commission also produce a data set of Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) woodlands and interrogation of these data increased the overall woodland area by some 1345 hectares. Next a dataset containing details of all of the Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) prepared by English Nature was interrogated. This added a further 452 hectares. Finally the MasterMap dataset was interrogated. This dataset contains a large variety of land use types assigned from aerial photography with a percentage of ground truthing. The total additional woodland area added by MasterMap was some 4270 hectares. The results are shown in Figure 1 and in Table 2 (see Appendix 1) together with a comparison of the woodland areas and percentage woodland cover for each Landscape Character Type.



- 2.4 The apparent change in woodland cover is significant. Compared with the results from the IFT data alone the area of woodland cover has increased by 6076 hectares and the percentage woodland cover from 10.0% to 13.5%. It is believed that the results in Figure 1 and Table 2 present the most reliable view of woodland cover within the AONB indicating that there is 35% more woodland in the AONB than was originally thought to be the case from the IFT data. In most of the less well wooded landscape character areas the percentage woodland cover has almost doubled indicating the presence of a large number of small woodlands in these character areas. The location of all woodland within the AONB and the landscape character areas are shown on Plan 1.

Woodland Composition

- 2.5 Only the IFT database provides any indication regarding the different types of woodland. Given the significant underestimate of woodland area produced by the IFT and the large numbers of small woodlands not included the analysis of the IFT data must be regarded with caution. Figure 2 and Table 3 in Appendix 1 present information regarding the breakdown of woodland by different types.
- 2.6 As can be seen from Figure 2 by far the greatest proportion of AONB woodland is broadleaved with less than 10% being pure conifer. It is also worth noting that, despite the significant attention often devoted to the problems associated with coppice management, the combined total area for coppice and coppice with standards only amounts to 1.7% of the woodland area. Only in two landscape character types does the percentage of woodland cover devoted to some form of coppice reach 2.5%. Feedback from Forestry Officers however has indicated that there may be more coppice than indicated by the IFT data, both stored coppice and coppice within the unassigned category.



Size Distribution of Woodlands and Woodland Density

- 2.7 Figures 3 and 4 and Table 4 (see appendix 1) have been prepared from the new data (previously only IFT data contained any breakdown of woodland with regard to size). The results are startling with regard to the very large number of small woods less than 2.0 hectares in size. As the average woodland size in the 0.1 to 2.0 hectares category is only 0.5 hectares this would seem to indicate that many more than 50% of the almost 7,500 woodlands in this size category are less than 0.5 hectares.
- 2.8 The distribution of woodland size is obviously skewed towards the smaller woods. However, the degree of skew is quite startling: 81% of the number of woods are less than 2.0 hectares but represent only 12.9% of the woodland area; 91% of the number of woods are less than 5 hectares but represent only 25.0% of the woodland area. Overall the average size of a woodland within the AONB is only 2.5 hectares.
- 2.9 Comparison of the new data with the IFT data indicates the scale of additional small and very small woodlands not included in the IFT. The IFT data indicates a total of around 1540 separate woodland areas compared with the 9179 separate woodlands when all woodland data sources are included.

Figure 3. Distribution of Woodland Blocks by Landscape Character Type

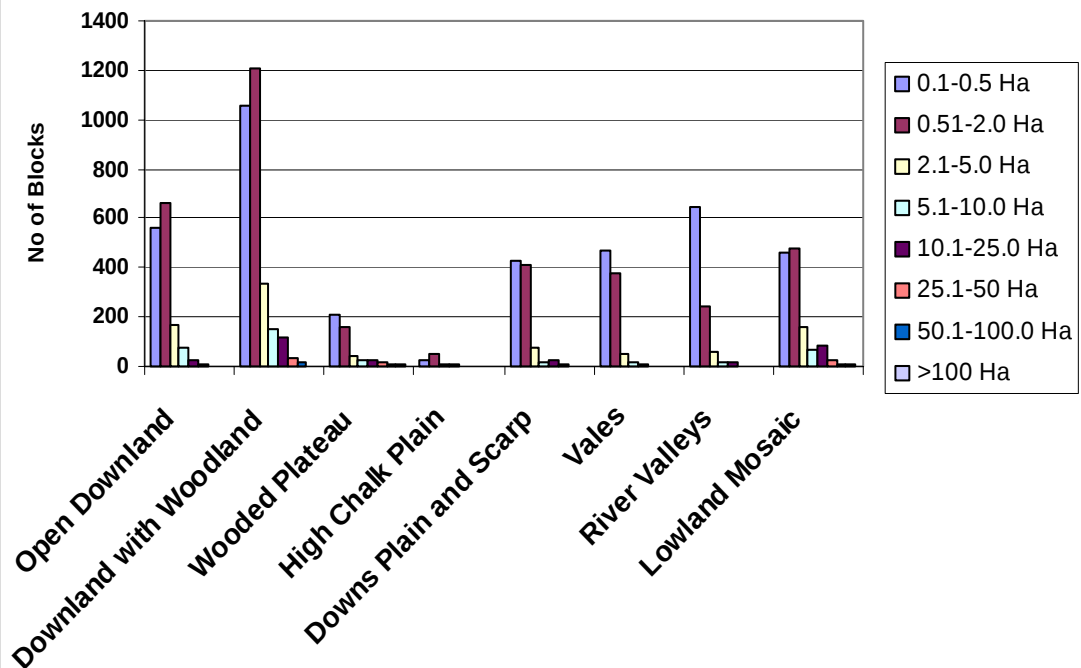
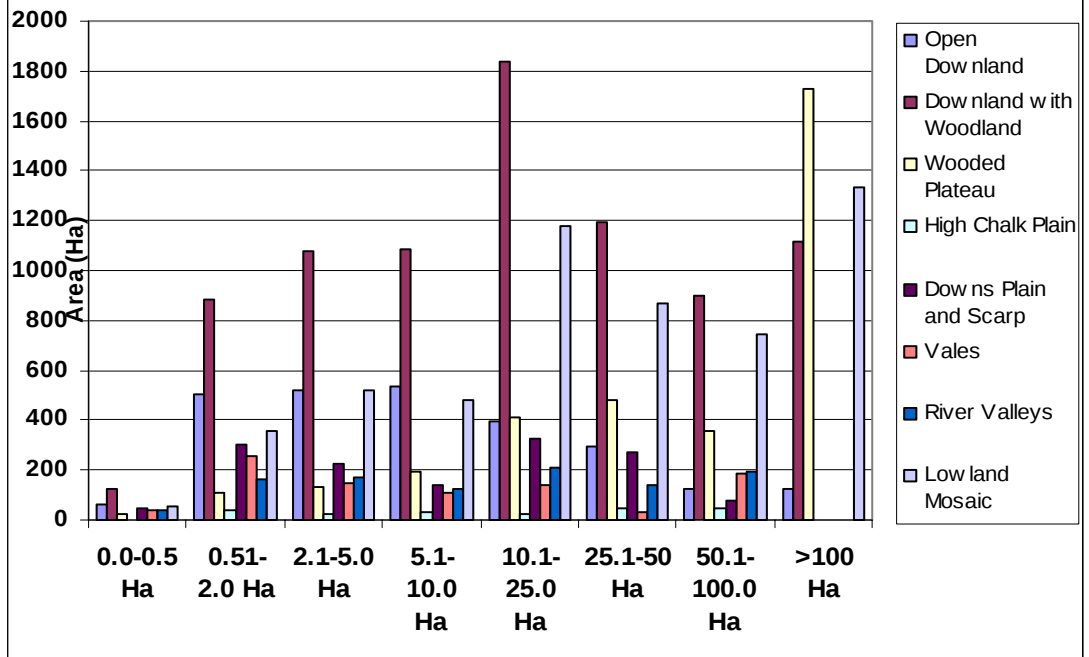


Figure 4. Distribution of Woodland by Block Size and Area for Each Landscape Character Type



- 2.10 Analysis of the data for block size distribution provides a factual demonstration of already perceived differences in the role of woodland in the different landscape character types. Table 5 and Figures 5 and 6 show the variation in density of woodland blocks per hectare according to the different landscape character types. For comparative purposes the percentage of woodland cover for each landscape character type has also been included and then the two sets of figures ranked from 1 to 8. Most landscape character types have approximately the same rank under the two categories but the Wooded Plateau, Vales and River Valleys exhibit markedly different ranks. Thus the Wooded Plateau ranks first in terms of woodland cover but only fifth in terms of density of woodland blocks indicating that this is an area of fewer but much larger woodlands. Conversely, the River Valleys and Vales are ranked fourth and eighth respectively in terms of woodland cover but first and fourth in terms of density of woodland blocks. This indicates that the River Valleys and Vales landscape character types have a larger number of smaller than average woodlands.

Table 5 Woodland Density and Percentage Woodland Cover by Landscape Type

Landscape Type	Area (Ha)	No Woodland Blocks	Blocks per 100 hectares	Rank	% Woodland Cover	Rank
Open Downland	40494	1499	3.7	7	6.3%	6
Downland with Woodland	51382	2934	5.7	3	16.0%	3
Wooded Plateau	11090	483	4.4	5	31.4%	1
High Chalk Plain	2206	96	4.4	5	11.2%	5
Downs Plain and Scarp	22646	959	4.2	6	6.1%	7
Vales	18655	923	4.9	4	4.9%	8
River Valley	6542	989	15.2	1	15.9%	4
Lowland Mosaic	19085	1296	6.8	2	29.1%	2
Total for AONB	172100	9179	5.3		13.5%	

Woodland Ownership

- 2.11 Apart from the areas owned by the major governmental and institutional organisations little is known about woodland ownership. The total area of woodland within the AONB, owned or managed by the Forestry Commission is 2712 hectares or 11.6% of the total area of woodland. The major area of woodland managed under licence by the FC is Savernake Forest in the landscape character type known as Wooded Plateau. The location and identity of those estates that own the larger areas of woodland, including most of the larger woodland blocks is known as is the location of Woodland Trust and National Trust holdings within the AONB. The Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre hold ownership details of between 35% and

Figure 5. No Woodland Blocks

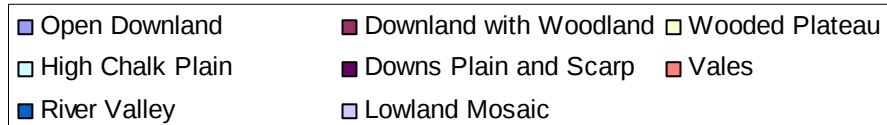
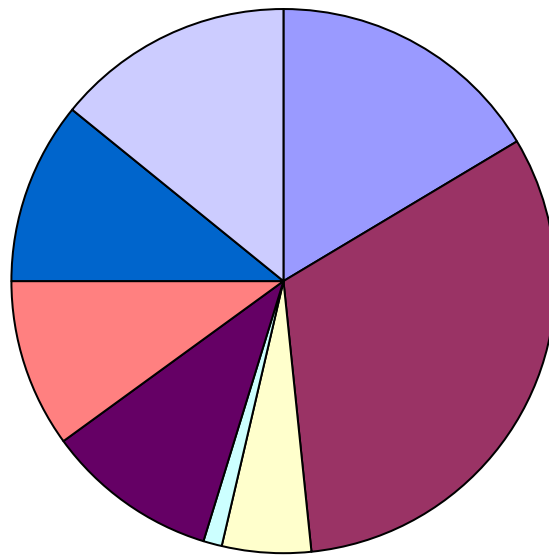
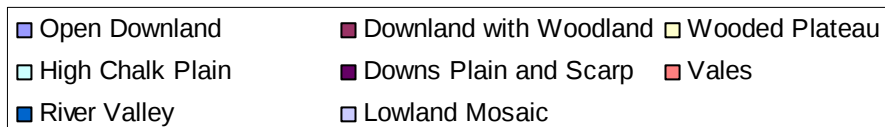
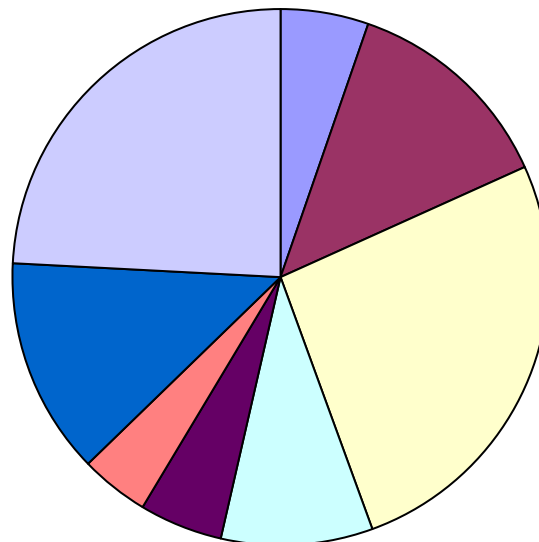


Figure 6. Percentage Woodland Cover

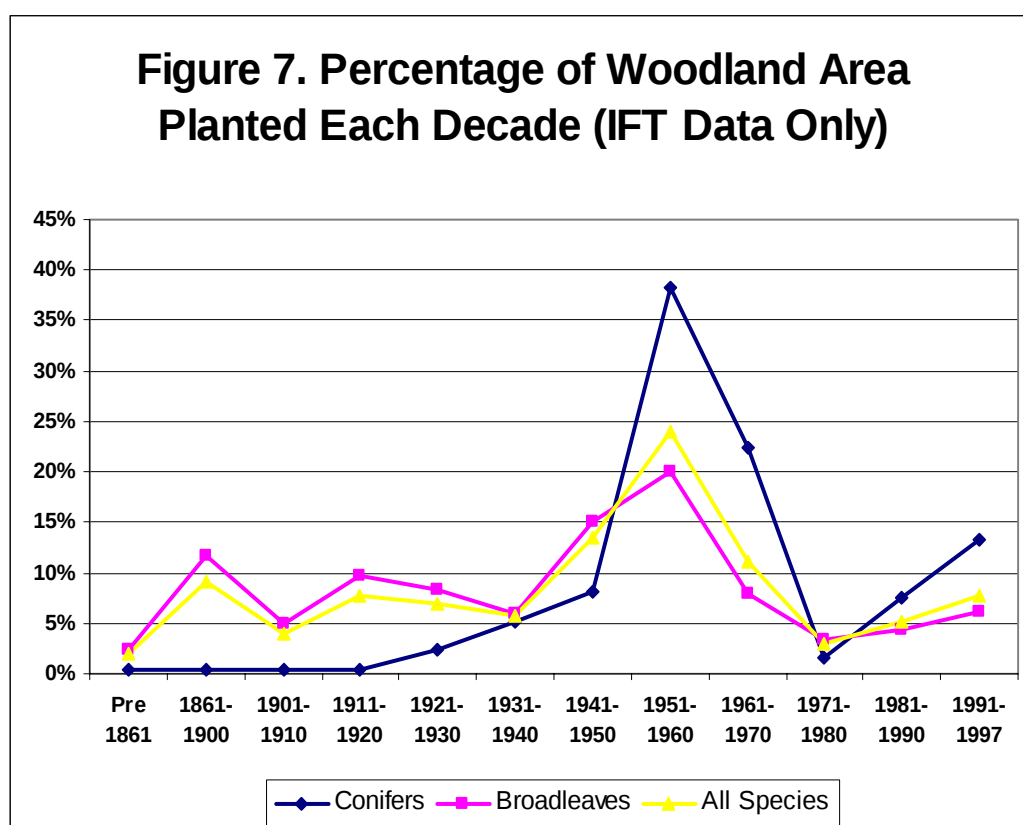


40% of the ASNW sites in Basingstoke and Deane Borough and Test Valley District.

- 2.12 Based on the 1996 IFT data it would appear that the FC has a higher percentage of conifers (16%) than private owners (6.7%) but that all coppice and coppice with standards woods are owned by the private sector. Privately owned woods contain more mixed stands (18.4%) than FC woods (10.7%) and more open space (19.0% compared to 6.5%).

Species and Age Class Distribution

- 2.13 In FC woodlands Norway Spruce, Scots Pine and Larch are the dominant conifer species whilst the private sector favours Douglas Fir before any of these species. There is little difference between the FC and the private sector with regard to broadleaved species. Oak, Beech, Ash and Birch account for around 65% in both cases. The major difference is that the FC grow more Beech and less Ash than the private sector.
- 2.14 Figure 7 and Table 6 (see Appendix 1) show the age class distribution for conifers and broadleaves and for both species combined.



- 2.15 Figure 7 shows quite clearly the upsurge in planting after the Second World War and the great uncertainty faced by forestry in the 1970's. These two deviations apart the age class distribution is relatively 'normal' i.e. evenly distributed. The extensive coniferous plantings between 1951 and 1970 will now be approaching maturity and the opportunity will be present to either continue with conifers or to replant these areas with native broadleaved species.

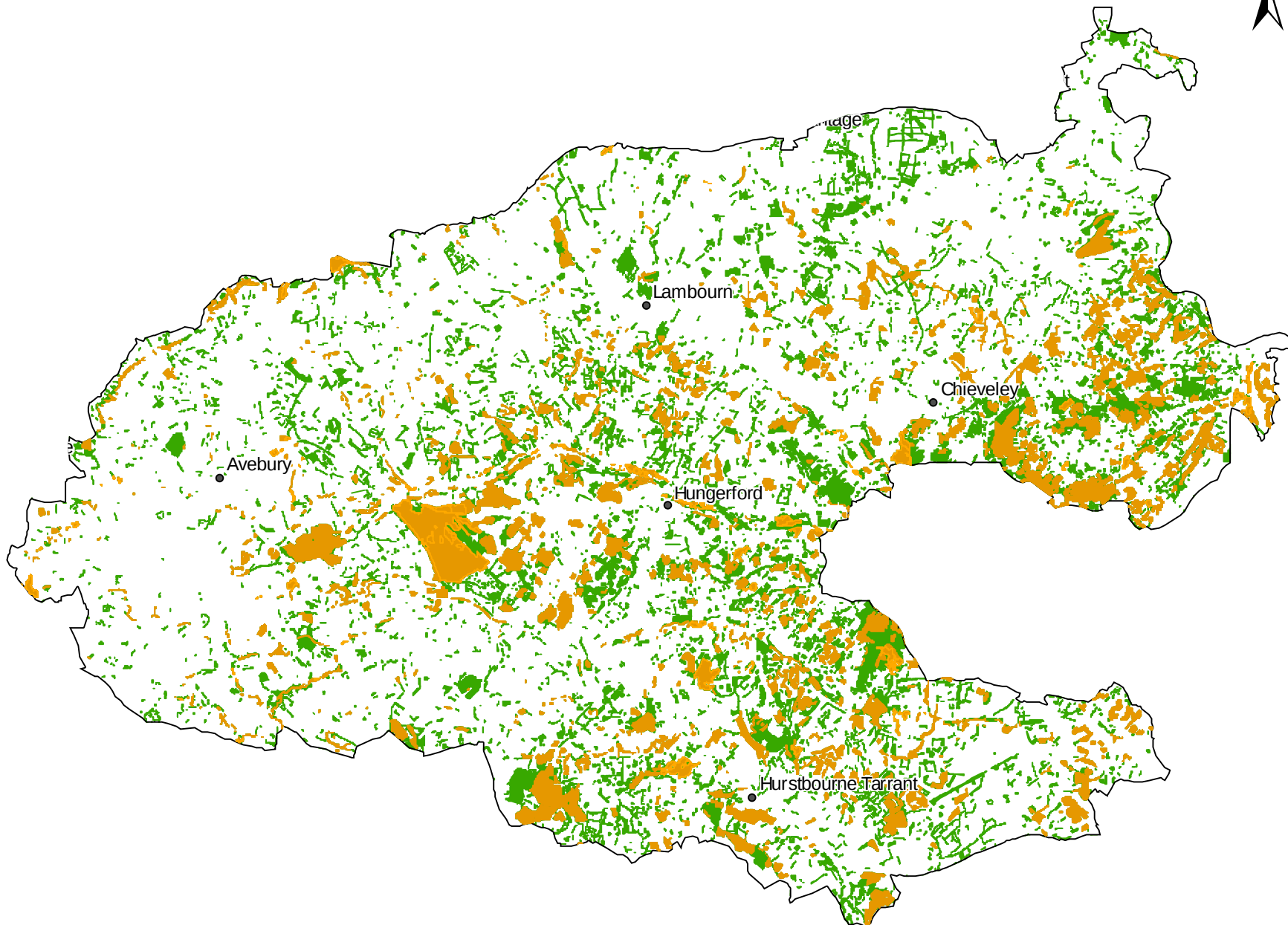
Wildlife Designations of Woodland and Ancient Semi Natural Woodland

- 2.16 Table 7 (see also Appendix 1) and Plan 2 show the various nature conservation designations applied to woodlands in the different landscape character types. Overall, just over 45% of the woodland area has some form of wildlife designation. Less than 0.1% of the woodland area is designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR), 0.5% is designated as a Special Area for Conservation (SAC), 7.5% is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and 42.3% is designated as County Wildlife Sites (CWS) or Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Woodlands on the Wooded Plateau character type are the most highly protected with the Vales landscape character type having the smallest percentage of designated woodlands.

Table 7 Nature Conservation Designation by Landscape Type

	Type of Designation									
	NNR's		SAC's		SSSI's		SINC's		All Designations	
Landscape Character Type	Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area	Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area	Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area	Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area	Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area
Open Downland	5	0.20%	2	0.10%	72	2.80%	643	25.10%	655	25.50%
Downland with Woodland	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	265	3.20%	3579	43.50%	3843	46.80%
Wooded Plateau	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	910	26.60%	2450	71.60%	2456	71.80%
High Chalk Plain	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	76	35.00%	76	35.00%
Downs Plain and Scarp	0	0.00%	43	3.10%	122	8.80%	279	20.10%	337	24.30%
Vales	0	0.00%	7	0.70%	7	0.80%	203	22.40%	209	23.10%
River Valleys	0	0.00%	67	6.40%	122	11.70%	301	28.90%	400	38.40%
Lowland Mosaic	0	0.00%	1	0.10%	240	4.30%	2326	41.90%	2556	46.30%
Totals for AONB	5	0.10%	120	0.50%	1738	7.50%	9857	42.30%	10542	45.20%

- 2.17 There are a total of 395 hectares within the AONB designated as an NNR of which woodland is 5 hectares. 28.6% of the 419 hectares of SAC's are woodland and 51.7% of the 3360 hectares of SSSI. Finally, woodland accounts for 65.8% of the 14975 hectares of SINC within the AONB. Overall some 64.6% of the total area of land covered by a nature conservation designation within the AONB is woodland.
- 2.18 Ancient Semi Natural Woodland forms a significant proportion of the woodland resource of the AONB. Overall the 8646 hectares of ASNW represents some 37.1% of the total area of woodland. Only four landscape character areas have no ASNW: Hendred Plain, Wanborough Vale, Thames Floodplain – Streatley & Basildon and Lambourn Valley. Conversely, Ewhurst Park has over 60% of its woodland designated as ASNW with over 50% recorded in Savernake Forest and Hannington Downs and over 40% in Brightwalton Downs, Lambourn Wooded Downs, Clyffe Pypard - Badbury Wooded Scarp and Hermitage Lowlands and Heath. Figures 8 and 9 and Table 8 (see appendix 1) show the distribution of both the area and number



All AONB Woodland & Woodland with Designations

-  AONB Boundary
-  Towns
-  Designated Woodland
-  Other Woodland

0 2.5 5 10 15 20
Kilometres

Plan 2 Nature Conservation Designations

Date: 01/09/05
Scale: 1:290,000 @ A4
Drawn By: KH



of blocks of ASNW for each of the landscape character types. It should be noted that the inventory of ASNW prepared by English Nature is still provisional and does not relate to woodlands less than 2.0 hectares in size. Given that the IFT produces an underestimate of total woodland area the overall percentage of ASNW may well rise above 37.1% if many of the woodlands less than 2.0 hectares are found to be ASNW.

Figure 8. No of ASNW Woodlands for Each Landscape Character Type

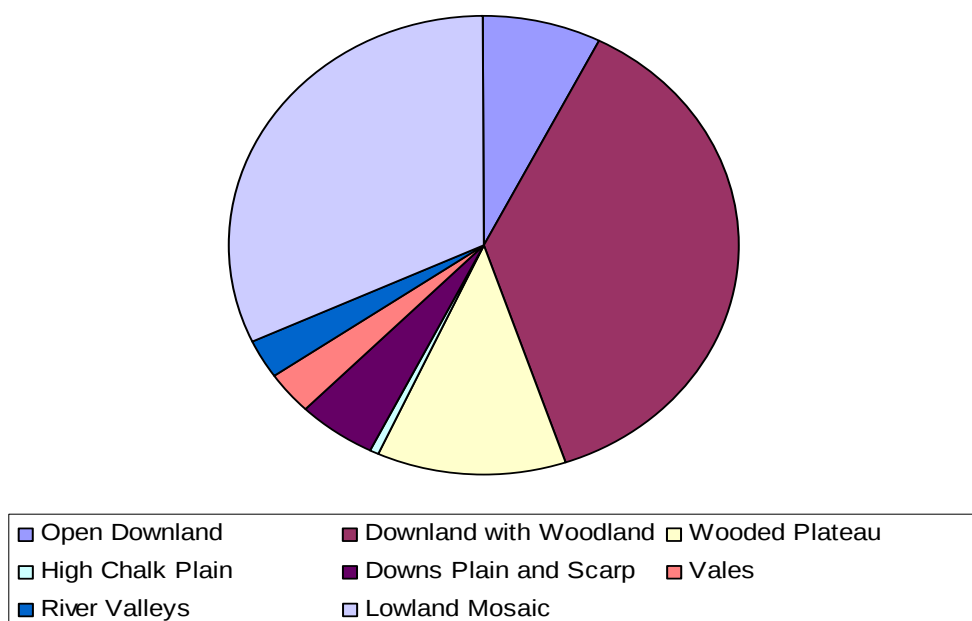
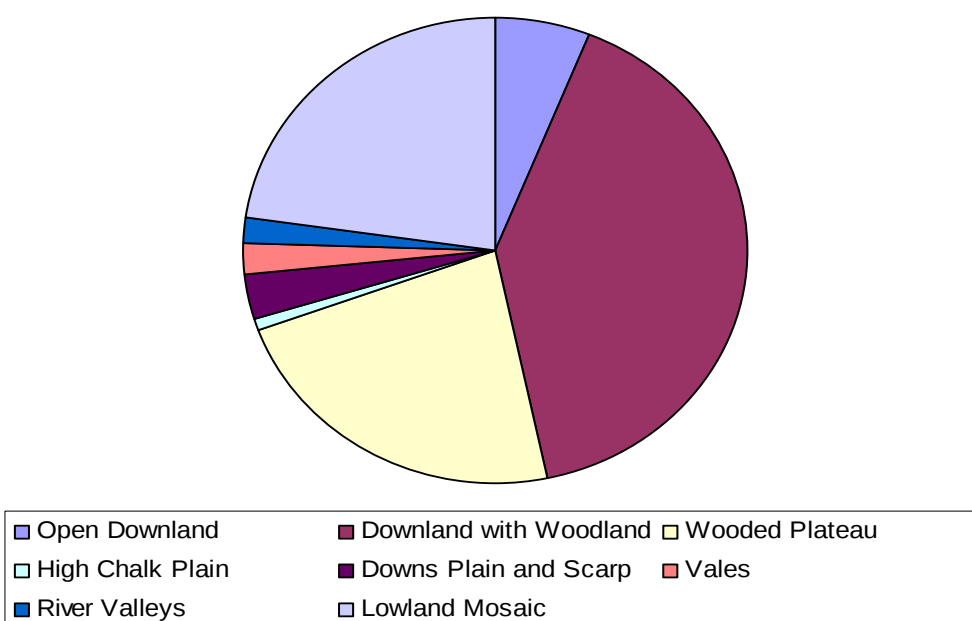


Figure 9. Area (Ha) of ASNW for Each Landscape Character Type



Woodland Management

- 2.19 Little is known regarding the amount of woodland within the AONB receiving management, the objectives of any management being undertaken and the quality of management being practiced. Some information is available relating to ASNW and CWS woodlands in Hampshire but was not available in time for inclusion in this study.
- 2.20 A national resurvey (after 30 years) of a representative sample of 103 woodlands has recently been carried out on behalf of English Nature¹. This found that although the broad structure and composition of the woodlands had not particularly altered during that period, there had been a marked decrease in the richness of woodland ground flora, particularly woodland specialists. It showed a decrease in small woody stems and regeneration, and an increase in the basal area of woody species. The proportion of open habitat had declined and soil pH had increased. These findings may also mean that the woodlands are not being as intensively managed as hitherto and are thus regenerating into open areas and becoming too shady for the survival of woodland regeneration and some species. Whilst there were a variety of factors producing these changes, including the type of management, species abundance and distribution seemed to correlate with climate change, leading to the conclusion that larger and more interconnected areas of habitat were required.
- 2.21 In an attempt to gain some more detailed, local understanding the steering group, comprising Forestry Commission and Local Authority woodland and conservation officers, were asked, from their knowledge of woodlands in their areas, to indicate on a plan of woodlands those which were under some form of active management. The result is Plan 3 which indicates that some 10,230 hectares or 44% of the woodland area is currently being managed.
- 2.22 In the absence of hard data, we can only rely on the experience of those involved in the management of woodlands across the area. Based on discussions with the steering group, woodland owners and contractors there was general agreement regarding the condition of the existing woodlands. The overall conclusions can be summarised as:
- by and large smaller woodlands receive less management than larger ones and many woodland areas are effectively unmanaged;
 - even on large wooded estates the poor economics means that the level of woodland management (in particular thinning broadleaved woodlands) is significantly less than the desirable level;
 - the lack of management is leading to a relatively even aged high forest with a consequent perceived reduction in biodiversity value;
 - the focus of the old Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) was to create new woodlands whilst many owners considered that more grant support should be available to support uneconomic management of existing woodlands;
 - sporting use of woodlands is a major reason for many landowners to undertake management activities;
 - the battle to control the squirrel population has been, or is being, lost;

¹ Kirby K.J et al (2005) Long term ecological change in British woodland (1971-2001) English Nature Research Report 653 July 2005

- deer numbers are continuing to rise and are inhibiting the natural regeneration of some woodland areas. Deer Management Groups are helpful but are insufficient on their own to control deer numbers.

Woodland Access

- 2.23 Plan 4 shows those areas of woodland within which there is a public footpath or bridleway or to which there is general or partial access. In general woodlands with open or partial access are owned by either the Forestry Commission, the Woodland Trust or the National Trust. Table 9 shows the relative areas of woodlands with different kinds of access for each landscape character type (see also appendix 1). As can be seen from Table 9 a surprising 69% of the woodland area has a public right of way (PROW) either running through the woodland or along one edge of the woodland. Only in the Downs Plains and Scarp and the River Valleys character types does the figure fall below 50% and in the wooded plateau and high chalk plain over 80% of the woodland area has PROW access. The figures, as would be expected, fall dramatically for open access to woodland. Only in the wooded plateau, where there is permissive access to the large Savernake forest, does the figure rise above 10%. Indeed two landscape character types have no open access woodland and overall, even with the large area of Savernake, the total area of open access woodland is only 14% of the total woodland area. In addition to woodland there are other greenspace areas within the AONB to which there is access. There are 100 hectares of National Trust land, 1189 hectares of open access land and 694 hectares of registered commons. i.e. woodland provides around 61% of all accessible greenspace.

Table 9 Woodland Access – Public Rights of Way and Open Access

Landscape Character Type	Woodland Area (ha)	Woodland Area with PROW Access (ha)	% of Total Woodland Area	Area of Woodland with some type of Open Access (ha)	% of Total Woodland Area
Open Downland	2568	1411	55%	157	6%
Downland with Woodland	8223	4997	61%	700	9%
Wooded Plateau	3424	2926	85%	2075	61%
High Chalk Plain	217	180	83%	0	0%
Downs Plain and Scarp	1387	495	36%	0	0%
Vales	905	479	53%	5	0%
River Valleys	1041	507	49%	39	4%
Lowland Mosaic	5546	3456	69%	172	3%
Grand Total	23310	14450	69%	3148	14%

The Characteristics of Woodland in each Landscape Character Area

- 2.24 The above plans and tables (particularly those in appendix 1) provide detailed information about each landscape character area. The following paragraphs seek to summarise the details for each area in the form of a thumbnail description.

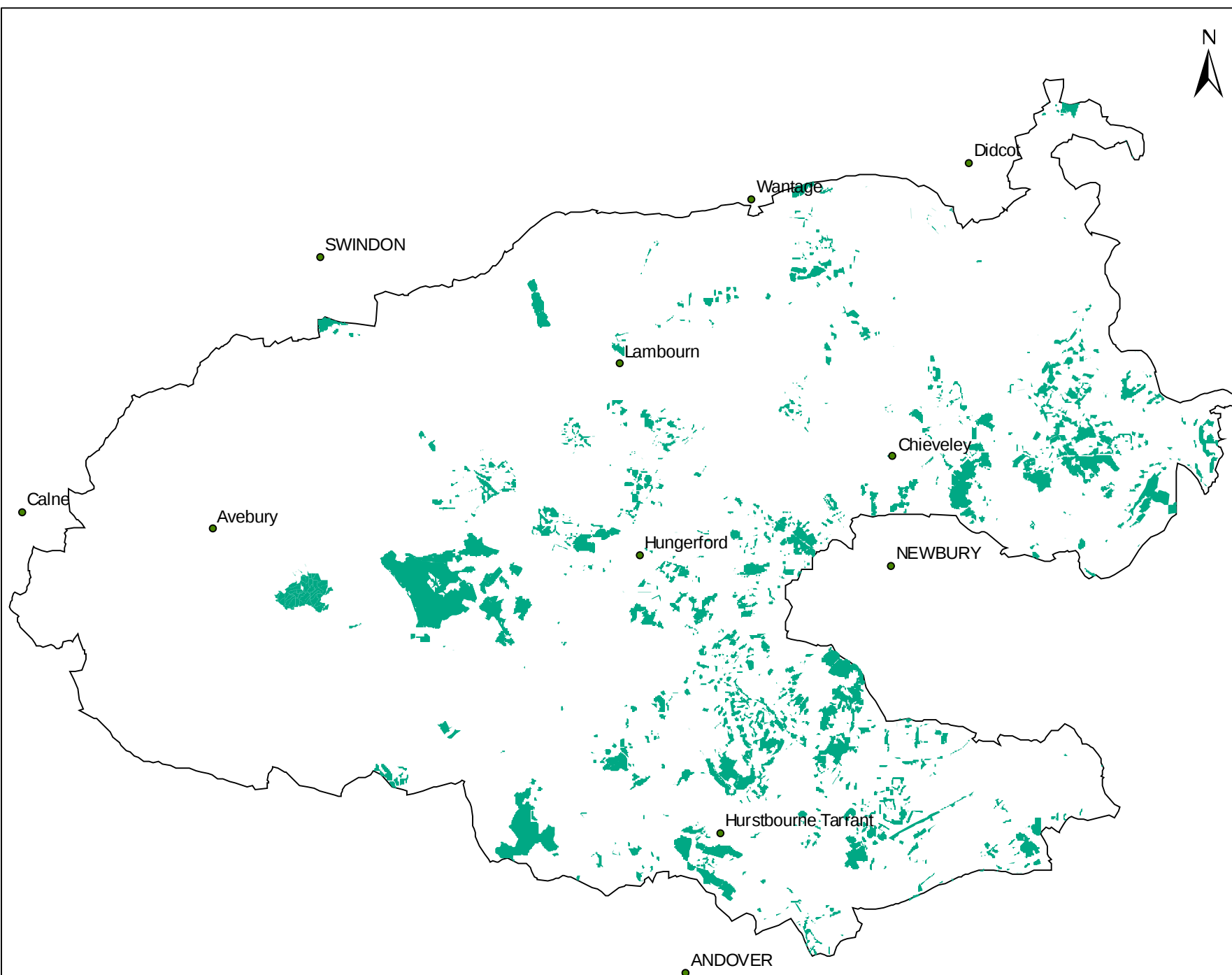


AONB Woodland Under Management

-  AONB Boundary
-  Towns
-  Managed Woodland

Plan 3 AONB Woodland Under Management

Date: 01/09/05
Scale: 1:290,000
Drawn By: KH





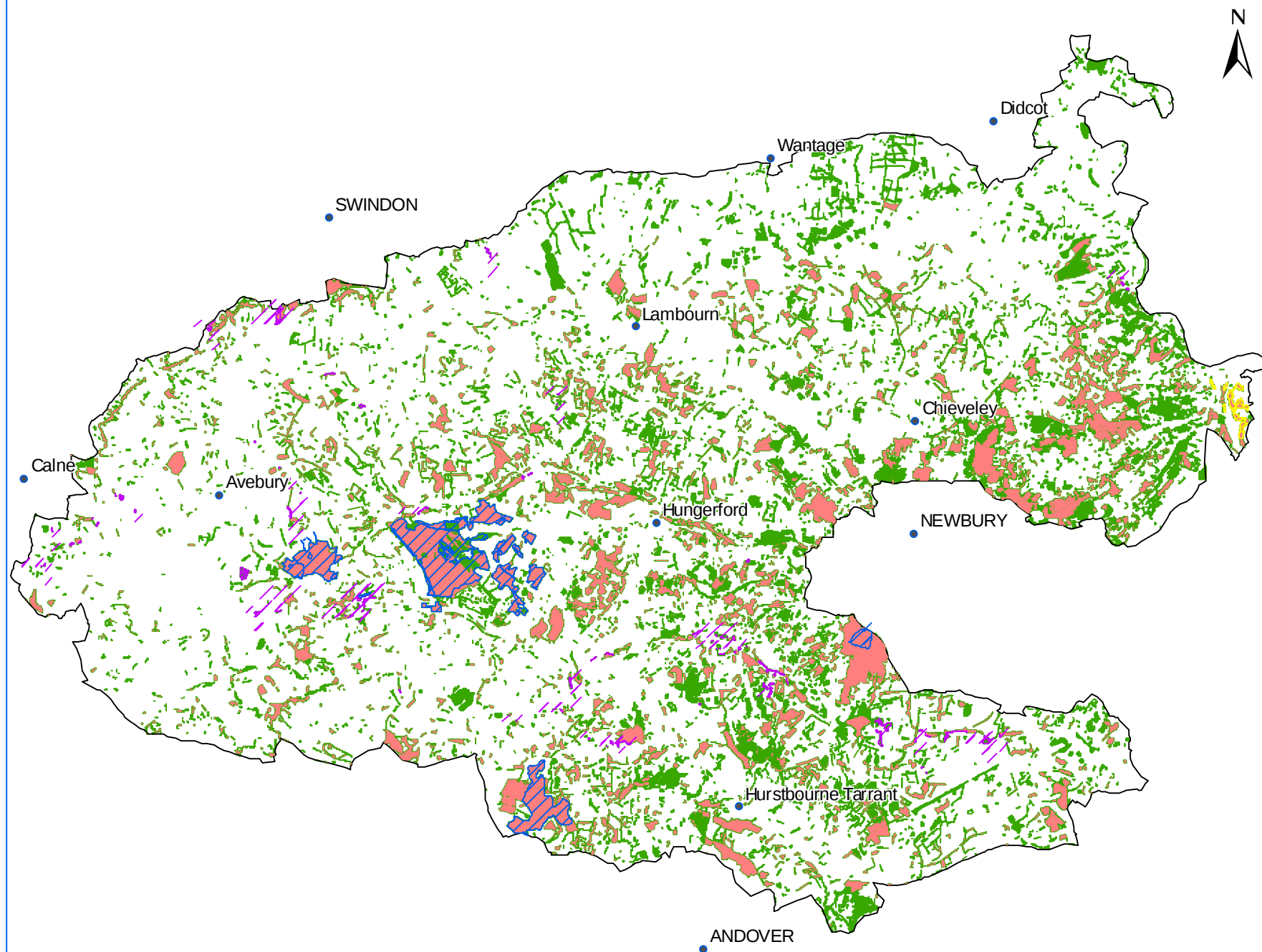
Accessible Woodland

-  AONB Boundary
-  Towns
-  Woodland with PROW
-  Other Woodland
- Access**
-  Unrestricted access
-  Access constrained

Note:
PROW data was not available for
Oxfordshire

Plan 4 Accessible Woodland

Date: 01/09/05
Scale: 1:250,000
Drawn By: KH



0 2.5 5 10 15 20
Kilometres

Open Downland Landscape Character Type

2.25 Marlborough Downs

This landscape character area has 7.7% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 50 hectares. There are 655 blocks of woodland at a density of 4.7 blocks per 100 hectares and 82% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 24.2% of the woodlands are designated and there are 282 hectares of ASNW representing 26.6 % of the total area of woodlands.

2.26 Lambourn Downs

This landscape character area has 6.3% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 68 hectares. There are 326 blocks of woodland at a density of 2.9 blocks per 100 hectares and 74% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 13.8% of the woodlands are designated and there are 99 hectares of ASNW representing 14.0% of the total area of woodlands.

2.27 Horton Downs

This landscape character area has 3.2% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 29 hectares. There are 242 blocks of woodland at a density of 3.4 blocks per 100 hectares and 89% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 43.1% of the woodlands are designated and there are 23 hectares of ASNW representing 10.2 % of the total area of woodlands.

2.28 Blewbury Downs

This landscape character area has 7.0% woodland cover with the largest woodland being 127 hectares. There are 276 blocks of woodland at a density of 3.4 blocks per 100 hectares and 81% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 35.6% of the woodlands are designated and there are 121 hectares of ASNW representing 21.2% of the total area of woodlands.

Downland with Woodland Landscape Character Type

2.29 Brightwalton Downs

This landscape character area has 10.3% woodland cover with the largest woodland being 102 hectares. There are 413 blocks of woodland at a density of 4.3 blocks per 100 hectares and 78% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 45.6% of the woodlands are designated and there are 496 hectares of ASNW representing 49.6% of the total area of woodlands.

2.30 Ashampstead Downs

This landscape character area has 25.3% woodland cover with the largest woodland being 169 hectares. There are 337 blocks of woodland at a density of 6.7 blocks per 100 hectares and 72% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 52.0% of the woodlands are designated and there are 415 hectares of ASNW representing 33.0% of the total area of woodlands.

2.31 Lambourn Wooded Downs

This landscape character area has 14.9% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 50 hectares. There are 401 blocks of woodland at a density of 6.9 blocks per 100 hectares and 77% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 40.9% of the woodlands are designated and there are 399 hectares of ASNW representing 46.1% of the total area of woodlands.

- 2.32 **Walbury Hill/Watership Down Scarp**
This landscape character area has 16.9% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 67 hectares. There are 303 blocks of woodland at a density of 8.2 blocks per 100 hectares and 80% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 38.7% of the woodlands are designated and there are 85 hectares of ASNW representing 13.8% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.33 **Chute Forest/Facombe**
This landscape character area has 21.0% woodland cover with five woodlands larger than 100 hectares. There are 846 blocks of woodland at a density of 5.6 blocks per 100 hectares and 79% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 47.0% of the woodlands are designated and there are 1466 hectares of ASNW representing 46.1% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.34 **Litchfield Downs**
This landscape character area has 10.1% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 50 hectares. There are 450 blocks of woodland at a density of 5.1 blocks per 100 hectares and 78% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 45.2% of the woodlands are designated and there are 396 hectares of ASNW representing 44.3% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.35 **Hannington Downs**
This landscape character area has 12.3% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 50 hectares. There are 184 blocks of woodland at a density of 5.6 blocks per 100 hectares and 73% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 59.6% of the woodlands are designated and there are 234 hectares of ASNW representing 57.4% of the total area of woodlands.

Wooded Plateau Landscape Character Type

- 2.36 **Savernake Forest**
This landscape character area has 31.4% woodland cover with numerous large blocks well in excess of 100 hectares. There are 483 blocks of woodland at a density of 4.4 blocks per 100 hectares and 76% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 71.8% of the woodlands are designated and there are 1978 hectares of ASNW representing 57.8% of the total area of woodlands.

High Chalk Plain Landscape Character Type

- 2.37 **Salisbury Plain**
This landscape character area has 11.2% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 50 hectares. There are 96 blocks of woodland at a density of 4.4 blocks per 100 hectares and 82% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 35.0% of the woodlands are designated and there are 66 hectares of ASNW representing 30.4% of the total area of woodlands.

Downs Plain and Scarp Landscape Character Type

- 2.38 **Avebury Plain**
This landscape character area has 3.7% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 75 hectares. There are 227 blocks of woodland at a density of 3.4 blocks per 100 hectares and 93% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. Only 9.0% of the woodlands are designated and there are 23 hectares of ASNW representing 9.9% of the total area of woodlands.

- 2.39 Chiseldon - Wanborough Plain
This landscape character area has 5.8% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 50 hectares. There are 132 blocks of woodland at a density of 3.1 blocks per 100 hectares and 90% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 44.5% of the woodlands are designated and there are 44 hectares of ASNW representing 21.1% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.40 Hendred Plain
This landscape character area has 6.9% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 50 hectares. There are 186 blocks of woodland at a density of 4.4 blocks per 100 hectares and 88% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. Only 1.0% of the woodlands are designated and there is no ASNW within the landscape character area.
- 2.41 Moreton Plain
This landscape character area has 4.1% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 42 hectares. There are 97 blocks of woodland at a density of 2.9 blocks per 100 hectares and 85% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 32.3% of the woodlands are designated and there are 44 hectares of ASNW representing 33.1% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.42 Clyffe Pypard - Badbury Wooded Scarp
This landscape character area has 28.4% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 46 hectares. There are 185 blocks of woodland at a density of 15.4 blocks per 100 hectares and 80% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 51.6% of the woodlands are designated and there are 147 hectares of ASNW representing 46.2% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.43 Liddington - Letcombe Open Scarp
This landscape character area has 6.4% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 25 hectares. There are 132 blocks of woodland at a density of 4.3 blocks per 100 hectares and 83% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. Only 6.7% of the woodlands are designated and there are 8 hectares of ASNW representing 4.1% of the total area of woodlands.

Vales Landscape Character Type

- 2.44 Vale of Pewsey
This landscape character area has 4.7% woodland cover with three woodlands between 50 and 100 hectares. There are 753 blocks of woodland at a density of 4.8 blocks per 100 hectares and 92% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 27.1% of the woodlands are designated and there are 169 hectares of ASNW representing 23.8% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.45 Shalbourne Vale
This landscape character area has 7.1% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 30 hectares. There are 77 blocks of woodland at a density of 5.1 blocks per 100 hectares and 87% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. Only 9.0% of the woodlands are designated and there are 15 hectares of ASNW representing 15.0% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.46 Wanborough Vale
This landscape character area has 4.5% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 3 hectares. There are 13 blocks of woodland at a density of 5.0 blocks per 100 hectares and 92% of the woodlands are less than 2.0

hectares. None of the woodlands are designated and there is no ASNW within the landscape character area.

2.47 Thames Floodplain – Benson

This landscape character area has 9.3% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 5 hectares. There are 30 blocks of woodland at a density of 18.8 blocks per 100 hectares and 93% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 31.3% of the woodlands are designated and there are 2 hectares of ASNW representing 12.5% of the total area of woodlands.

2.48 Thames Floodplain – Moreton

This landscape character area has 4.9% woodland cover with one large woodland of 23 hectares. There are 15 blocks of woodland at a density of 2.5 blocks per 100 hectares and 87% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. None of the woodlands are designated and there is no ASNW within the landscape character area.

2.49 Thames Floodplain - Streatley and Basildon

This landscape character area has 10.1% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 16 hectares. There are 35 blocks of woodland at a density of 8.5 blocks per 100 hectares and 91% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. None of the woodlands are designated and there is no ASNW within the landscape character area.

River Valley Landscape Character Type

2.50 Kennet Valley

This landscape character area has 17.8% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 58 hectares. There are 525 blocks of woodland at a density of 15.9 blocks per 100 hectares and 90% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 32.3% of the woodlands are designated and there are 35 hectares of ASNW representing 6.6% of the total area of woodlands.

2.51 Lambourn Valley

This landscape character area has 15.3% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 11 hectares. There are 228 blocks of woodland at a density of 15.9 blocks per 100 hectares and 90% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. Only 9.1% of the woodlands are designated and there are 35 hectares of ASNW representing 6.6% of the total area of woodlands.

2.52 Bourne Valley

This landscape character area has 18.8% woodland cover with two woodlands between 50 and 100 hectares. There are 100 blocks of woodland at a density of 6.3 blocks per 100 hectares and 82% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 48.7% of the woodlands are designated and there are 55 hectares of ASNW representing 18.0% of the total area of woodlands.

2.53 Pang Valley

This landscape character area has 10.5% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 25 hectares. There are 95 blocks of woodland at a density of 7.9 blocks per 100 hectares and 82% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 52.3% of the woodlands are designated and there are 48 hectares of ASNW representing 37.5% of the total area of woodlands.

Lowland Mosaic Landscape Character Type

- 2.54 **Hermitage Lowlands and Heath**
This landscape character area is the third most wooded with 34.7% woodland cover and with 30 blocks of woodland over 25 hectares and 4 blocks over 100 hectares. There are 576 blocks of woodland at a density of 6.7 blocks per 100 hectares and 68% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 57.1% of the woodlands are designated and there are 1263 hectares of ASNW representing 41.9% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.55 **Winterbourne Farmland**
This landscape character area has 10.1% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 36 hectares. There are 98 blocks of woodland at a density of 7.1 blocks per 100 hectares and 88% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 26.1% of the woodlands are designated and there are 27 hectares of ASNW representing 19.0% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.56 **Wickham Wooded Heath**
This landscape character area is the most heavily wooded within the AONB with 51.9% woodland cover but with only 3 woodlands over 25 hectares and only one large woodland of 180 hectares. There are 42 blocks of woodland at a density of 6.4 blocks per 100 hectares and 81% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. Only 3.2% of the woodlands are designated and there are 45 hectares of ASNW representing 13.2% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.57 **Highclere Lowlands and Heath**
This landscape character area is the second most wooded with 35.0% woodland cover with 9 woodlands larger than 25 hectares and 2 large woodlands well in excess of 100 hectares. There are 345 blocks of woodland at a density of 7.4 blocks per 100 hectares and 72% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 38.6% of the woodlands are designated and there are 492 hectares of ASNW representing 30.1% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.58 **Hungerford Farmland**
This landscape character area has only 9.6% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 25 hectares. There are 161 blocks of woodland at a density of 5.0 blocks per 100 hectares and 81% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 42.7% of the woodlands are designated and there are 80 hectares of ASNW representing 26.1% of the total area of woodlands.
- 2.59 **Ewhurst Park**
This landscape character area has 18.3% woodland cover with no woodlands larger than 10 hectares. There are 74 blocks of woodland at a density of 12.6 blocks per 100 hectares and 78% of the woodlands are less than 2.0 hectares. 70.1% of the woodlands are designated (the highest proportion of any landscape character area) and there are 68 hectares of ASNW representing 63.6% of the total area of woodlands (again the highest proportion of any landscape character area).

Landscape Value of Woodlands

- 2.60 **At the end of a forum of AONB stakeholders, held in Hungerford on November 16th 2004, participants were asked to score a series of landscape characteristics according to how highly they valued them. The participants**

were divided into a series of workshop groups and given a selection of different sectors of the landscape character types to assess. The following paragraphs attempt to summarise the results of this exercise as they relate to woodland issues.

Open Downland North East (Lambourn and Blewbury Downs)

- 2.61 The beech clumps crowning the summits were highly valued. However, the attitudes to linear hangers on the scarp were evenly spread and over 65% of responses to occasional linear shelterbelts were neutral or negative.

Open Downland North West (Marlborough Downs)

- 2.62 Again the beech clumps on the summits were very highly valued and the overall response to occasional wooded areas was positive. However, as with the north east area, the responses to occasional linear shelterbelts were almost 40% negative and 15% neutral.

Open Downland South West (Horton Downs)

- 2.63 In this area the responses to both the occasional wooded areas and linear shelterbelts were both positive in overall terms. Just under 20% were neutral and just under 30% were negative about the shelterbelts whilst just over 30% were neutral and under 10% were negative about the wooded areas.

Downland with Woodland North East (Brightwalton, Ahshampstead and Lambourn Wooded Downs)

- 2.64 In this area the mature hedgerows and mosaic of woodland cover plus the ancient and semi natural woodlands were very highly valued. The views on the hangers along steep slopes were evenly spread though overall more were positive than negative. Overall the views on shelterbelts were positive though over 50% of respondents were neutral. Finally the sheltered enclosed woodland areas contrasting with open, remote summits were highly valued.

Downland with Woodland South East (Walbury Hill – Watership Downs Scarp, Chute Forest – Faccombe, Litchfield and Hannington Downs)

- 2.65 In this area the mature hedgerows and mosaic of woodland cover plus the ancient and semi natural woodlands and the hangers along steep slopes were all highly valued. Overall the views on shelterbelts were marginally positive though over 65% of respondents were neutral or negative. Finally the sheltered enclosed woodland areas contrasting with open, remote summits were highly valued.

Wooded Plateau South West (Savernake Forest)

- 2.66 All attitudes to woodland in this area were highly positive including the extensive and continuous woodland cover, the woodland/farmland mosaic, the beech and oak plantations of Savernake forest and the woodland/farmland mosaic around Savernake.

High Chalk Plain South West (Salisbury Plain)

- 2.67 The occasional woodlands and scrub areas were highly valued.

Downs Plain North East (Hendred and Moreton Plains)

- 2.68 The hilltop wooded clumps were highly valued. However attitudes to shelterbelts and plantation woodlands were nowhere near so positive. Almost 65% of respondents were neutral or negative regarding the shelterbelts and almost 80% were either negative or neutral regarding the plantations with over 40% being negative.

Downs Plain North West (Avebury and Chisledon – Wanborough Plains)

- 2.69 The small copses and shelterbelts in the north of the area were regarded positively as was the bleak open landscape.

Scarp North East (Liddington – Letcombe Open Scarp)

- 2.70 The western scarp with its extensively wooded, linear hanger woods was highly regarded as was the wooded skyline.

Scarp North West (Clyffe Pypard – Badbury Wooded Scarp)

- 2.71 Attitudes to the mosaic of pasture, woodland and parkland was generally positive but over 50% were either neutral or negative. However, attitudes to the western scarp with its extensively wooded, linear hanger woods were very positive.

Vales South East (Shalbourne Vale)

- 2.72 Almost 80% of respondents were neutral or negative (over 40%) regarding the sparse woodland cover of this area. The copses at Ham divided attitudes with 40% positive, 40% neutral and 20% negative. The fact that the landscape was enclosed by a steep wooded scarp to the south was very highly valued.

Vales South West (Vale of Pewsey)

- 2.73 The riparian woodlands were very highly valued as was the varied pattern of hedgerows and woodland.

River Valleys North East (Lambourn and Pang Valleys)

- 2.74 The wooded valley slopes, the wet woodlands, the riparian woodlands and the willow pollards were all highly valued elements of this area. Only the lines of poplars along ditches split opinions with almost 40% being neutral, almost 40% positive and just over 20% being negative.

River Valleys North West (Kennet Valley)

- 2.75 Attitudes in this area contrasted to those for River Valleys North East. The wet woodlands were still highly valued. However, over 40% were negative about the riparian woodlands and a further 25% were neutral with a very similar response for the lines of poplars along ditches. Similarly the willow pollards only attracted around 30% of positive responses with 35% being neutral and 35% being negative.

River Valleys South East (Part of Kennet Valley and Bourne Valley)

- 2.76 The linear beech plantations on slopes, the wet woodlands, the riparian woodlands and the willow pollards were all highly valued elements of this area. Attitudes to the lines of poplars along ditches were markedly negative with only 25% of respondents being neutral or positive.

Lowland Mosaic North East (Hermitage Wooded Commons, Winterbourne Farmland, Wickham Wooded Heath and Hungerford Farmland)

- 2.77 The extensive woodlands and pasture were very highly valued. However, the coniferous shelterbelts were only regarded positively by 10% of respondents with 15% being neutral and 75% being negative.

Lowland Mosaic South East (Hungerford Farmland, Highclere Lowlands and Haeth and Ewhurst Parklands)

- 2.78 Again the extensive woodlands and pasture were highly regarded. Again the attitudes to the coniferous shelterbelts were negative with no positive responses, 25% being neutral and 75% being negative.

3. Policy Review

3.1 In order to set the strategy for the woodlands of the AONB in context a series of other strategies, plans and reports were reviewed. The main conclusions and policies contained in these plans are reproduced in appendix 2. The reports consulted were:

- National Strategies
 - England Forestry Strategy
- Regional Strategies
 - North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan
 - A Forestry and Woodlands Framework for South East England
 - Consultation Draft - South West Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework
 - English Nature - Berkshire and Marlborough Downs – Natural Area Profile
 - Woodland HAP for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire
- County Strategies and Reports
 - The Hampshire Landscape
 - Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)
 - Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire
 - Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan
- District Strategies and Reports
 - Kennet Landscape Conservation and Woodland Strategy
 - Swindon Borough Landscape Character Areas
 - Test Valley Landscape Character assessment
 - Draft Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan
 - Local BAP for the Test Valley
- Local Strategies and Reports
 - Avebury WHS Management Plan

3.2 From the review of the documents identified in paragraph 3.1 a number of common themes, issues and policies emerge; these are summarised in the following paragraphs.

3.3 At the national level forest policy has now completely moved from a priority of growing trees for the timber produced to creating and managing woodlands for multi purpose objectives including biodiversity, environmental benefits including climate change, cultural and historic interest, public access, restoration of derelict land and tourism and recreation. Whilst the contribution of timber to the economy is recognised as still being important, the presumption to maximise timber production is no longer an element of national forest policy.

3.4 The national policies are in the process of being reflected in the new Regional Forestry Frameworks. The framework for the south east has already been prepared and the framework for the south west is available in draft form with the final document to be released in the summer of 2005. Both frameworks highlight the contribution that woodlands can make to sustainable development and in delivering benefits of many different kinds to

both rural and urban areas. Both frameworks emphasise the role of woodland in contributing to economic development, to enhancing the environment and biodiversity and the general 'quality of life'. Equally both frameworks recognise the multiplicity of uses that woodland can accommodate. However, whilst the economic contribution of woodlands is recognised at the policy level the new grants schemes would appear to focus on realising the non-timber benefits of woodlands such as biodiversity and public access. This is not to say that timber production is neglected but that it has clearly been demoted in priority.

- 3.5 In addition the South West Framework identified two cross-cutting themes:
 - Communicating the benefits of the regions woods and forests to a range of audiences
 - The need for a shared approach across the public and private sectors
- 3.6 At the regional level the policies become more detailed and specific. Thus the high biodiversity value of woodland is recognised, as is the need to identify and protect the more important habitats. Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) have specifically targeted the creation of lowland beech and yew woods, wood pasture and parkland, wet woodland and lowland mixed broadleaved woodland types as well as the better protection of existing ASNW. Equally the potential role of woodlands to produce woodfuel is being increasingly recognised. Damage by the high deer population is a specific problem with the need to control numbers articulated. The wider benefits to mental and physical well being of time spent in a woodland environment are becoming better understood. Accordingly policies now place great store on the localised provision of access to woodland by communities as well as the role that woods and forests have to play in the recreation and tourism industries.
- 3.7 More local policies seek to maintain woodland areas but are also generally in favour of the creation of more woodland, provided this is done in a manner that fits with the landscape character of an area. However, it is fair to say that the emphasis is very much on improving the management of the existing woodland resource, and thereby its value for a range of management objectives, rather than the creation of new woodland for its own sake.
- 3.8 A common theme of most documents, despite the presence of objectives, targets and milestones for measuring achievement, is an absence of concrete proposals for the delivery of plans or any indication of how they will be funded.
- 3.9 The main source of grant aid for woodland creation and management – the Forestry Commission's Woodland Grant Scheme has been withdrawn and the details of the new replacement scheme – the England Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) have recently been announced. The EWGS places increased emphasis on management and management planning. It targets new planting towards locations near people, into areas where there will be benefits for landscape, access, recreation and sport, for biodiversity – particularly where new planting can buffer and link important woodland habitats and other natural areas, and to regenerate former industrial land. Further details of the woodland management and improvement grants will follow in autumn 2005.

4. The Issues Relating to Woodland in the AONB

- 4.1 The consultation process, the policy review and the data relating to the woodlands within the AONB revealed a number of issues relating to the management of the woodland resource of the AONB. Each of these issues is discussed in the following paragraphs.

The Market for Timber and Wood Products

- 4.2 Many members of the steering group and consultees have mentioned the problems associated with managing the existing woodlands. Woodland management is not a major problem if the owner has quality hardwoods or softwoods to sell. However, based on discussions with woodland managers, the timber quality of a lot of the woodland area within the AONB is not high, many of the woodlands are extremely small making the economics of forestry operations even more problematic and a number of the woodlands now grow crops for which there is no longer a viable market. This is a problem endemic to woodlands across the United Kingdom and is not confined to the AONB.
- 4.3 Discussions with local woodland managers have revealed some of the problems faced in trying to market timber. Small woodlands are generally seen as a lost cause on any commercial basis. In the words of one manager *'small woods require expenditure – not investment (there is no hope of any return). The motivation of the owner either for amenity, shooting or other benefits may or may not trigger the required expenditure'*. Typical problems include:
- selling softwood thinnings for pulp usually involves a loss of around £5 per ton;
 - it may just be possible to break even on a thinning for firewood;
 - certification under the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Scheme is considered to be a significant hurdle with added costs and very little financial return – only two instances were quoted of a premium on the timber price for certificated timber;
 - the price offered for timber from power stations for co-firing does not make the operation economic.

Even if the timber can be sold, the potential problems do not end there. Many of the contractors in the area have not recruited new people and any that become chain saw proficient often leave for a better paid career in arboriculture. As a result a number of the firms have contracted in size and some very expensive machinery is now seriously underworked. As a result the remaining contractors depend on the economy of scale and like to work the larger blocks and contracts rather than the small woodlands.

- 4.4 The relatively static value of timber over the last fifteen years has lead many owners to do little other than essential thinning causing them to 'wait until things improve'. It may be a long wait. Woodland owners and their managers have been very creative in exploiting whatever markets may exist. Indeed, one manager spoke of the ash and oak timber from a woodland operation going to seven different markets: two lots were sold for firewood, one lot went to Ireland to be made into Hurley sticks, one to Pakistan for cricket stump manufacture, one lot of oak went for cleaving, one to the sawmill to produce beams and the remainder went for pulp. However, the

creativity seems to stop at the development of traditional markets. If someone wants timber then there is a ready queue of innovative producers ready to sell, but in terms of adding value and looking creatively at completely new markets for timber or substituting timber into other markets little appears to have been done. Those in the profession tend to adopt either a wait until things improve outlook or hope that a 'magic bullet' type solution will emerge. The owners consulted were united in the view that the establishment of some form of marketing co-operative would not be of any assistance as they were all very content by the service offered by their current managers.

- 4.5 The reality is that there is unlikely to be either a return to high timber prices for the foreseeable future and that any solution will be a number of small initiatives rather than a single 'big idea'. One recent big idea has been the use of wood as a fuel in line with government initiatives to meet the Kyoto targets for emissions of greenhouse gases under the 'renewables' programme. There is almost certainly a role for energy production in helping to manage small woodlands and this is covered below.

Wood for Fuel

- 4.6 As part of the Government's Renewable Energy programme significant interest is being shown in the growing of specific crops for burning in new, customised power stations. These power stations can vary in size from between 1 and 40 mega Watts and are typically fired by either short rotation coppice or miscanthus – a type of elephant grass. Government grants are available towards the establishment costs of these crops. The better sites for the production of energy crops are typically found on the wetter, western side of the country but parts of the AONB may well be suitable. It is perhaps significant that, to date, the major initiatives in the south west for biomass based energy generation has focussed on power plants based on miscanthus rather than either timber from existing woodlands or short rotation coppice. It may well be the case that the government grants for biomass energy generation is stimulating the growth of energy crops at the expense of utilising timber from existing woodlands. Two existing local power stations at Didcot and Slough are taking wood chips for burning in their co-firing programmes. The current price paid (around £19 per ton delivered to Slough) for the woodchips barely covers the costs involved with chipping and delivery. At these sorts of rates sourcing woodchips from the existing woodlands of the AONB is unlikely to be an economic proposition. One of the main problems is the high transport costs involved in delivering the woodchip to the power station.
- 4.7 However, there are a number of examples of where woodlands have been used to provide the raw material for heating or Combined Heating and Power (CHP) for estates. West Dean College in Sussex is a well known example that has been in operation for at least twenty years. The simple idea is that branch wood, uneconomic thinnings etc. are chipped and burnt on an estate in a system that either provides localised heating, hot water or both. It is essential that neither the raw material nor the resultant heat or hot water have to be transported far or the economic benefits decline rapidly. The system is ideally suited to owners or organisations with a ready supply of wood close at hand and a number of buildings or large house potentially in commercial use. There is scope for the adoption of schemes of this kind throughout the AONB. In discussions with larger woodland owners there was a wish expressed to see local examples of where schemes of this type had been installed and

where the capital and running costs were clear for all to see as well as the consequent reductions in energy bills. It is suggested that the AONB either identify existing local schemes and hold discussions with the owners with a view to using their installation to demonstrate the benefits to a wider audience, or seek to attract a scheme into the AONB where it can perform a similar function.

Access to Woodland

- 4.8 It is generally agreed that woodlands have a role to play in providing public benefits for access, recreation and in promoting health and the quality of life. The Great Western Community Forest Partnership (GWCF) considers this to be a key role for woodlands in their area. This perceived role of woodlands is reflected in national and regional policy which directs public monies increasingly towards the achievement of wider public benefits. There are a number of open space studies that have been undertaken but little information exists on an AONB scale about the extent to which woodlands offer these wider benefits. Landscape character will to some extent influence the role that woodland can play in offering access across the AONB. In the open downlands, the attraction is to that sense of openness and woodland is likely to play a minor part in the visitor's experience of the area. A further point relates to the quality of woodland access – a pole stage sitka spruce plantation offers a very different experience to a mature native broadleaved woodland.
- 4.9 The landowners consulted during the preparation of the strategy recognised their responsibilities with respect to existing access rights but highlighted some of the problems associated with misuse of access rights, including conflicts with sporting interests, vandalism and fly tipping. These conflicts were felt to be particularly acute in the urban fringe areas but were not confined to these areas.
- 4.10 Apart from data printed on Ordnance Survey Maps there is little information available to the general public highlighting accessible woodlands – either open access areas or woodlands with a public right of way running through or adjacent to the woodland.
- 4.11 In general terms it can be concluded that little is currently known regarding access to woodlands – except where open access woodlands and woodlands with a public right of way are located. There is a need to refine this information so that consideration can be given to:
- Publicising those woodland areas to which there is access
 - Determining those parts of the AONB which are deficient in woodland access areas
 - Identifying woodland to which there is the potential to negotiate access
 - Identifying the quality of access provision on offer

Collating Woodland Management Data

- 4.12 There was little information available regarding any details of the condition of the woodland resource or with regard to particular woodlands (see section 2). Perhaps of greatest concern was the apparent lack of a standardised method of recording biological information with regard to woodlands that are County

Wildlife Sites (CWS). The recent research reported in paragraph 2.22 would seem to indicate that there are significant changes occurring in woodlands and it is particularly important that all available resources are utilised to record these changes. A standard form for assessing and recording the condition of SSSI does exist. Perhaps a way forward would be to use the existing SSSI form (or a simplified version of the form) and ensure that this form is uniformly used for all CWS within the AONB.

Biodiversity Value of Woodland

- 4.13 Analysis of the woodland data has indicated that 37% of the woodland within the AONB is Ancient Semi Natural Woodland. In addition 8.0% of the woodland area is nationally designated because of its wildlife value with a further 37.2% being designated as County Wildlife Sites. The woodlands within the Savernake Forest and Ewhurst Park landscape character areas would appear to be the most valued for wildlife with over 70% designated and around 60% of the woodland being ASNW. Other landscape character areas with high concentrations of designated woodlands and a high percentage of ASNW are:

- Pang Valley
- Hermitage Lowlands and Heath
- Clyffe Pypard - Badbury Wooded Scarp
- Hannington Downs
- Ashampstead Downs

Key BAP priority species rely on woodland environments in this area and it must be a priority for the AONB to ensure management of these woodlands for biodiversity and to maintain the natural beauty of the AONB.

- 4.14 Research work is currently being undertaken to try to identify strategic, landscape scale priority areas for management for biodiversity such as work by Patrick McKernan examining the needs of priority BAP species. The South West Wildlife Trusts have launched a major Rebuilding Biodiversity Project that identifies core habitat areas, including woodland habitats – priority areas for management and targeted, landscape scale expansion. The objectives are to manage, restore and, via linkages between the woodlands, expand on those concentrations to achieve ecologically viable units. Within the AONB a core area of woodland in the south west has so far been identified as a potential area for the focus of management to improve biodiversity. Whilst there are a plethora of BAPs and HAPs together with action plans and milestones it will still require significant effort and the support of the AONB to ensure that these plans are actually delivered on the ground.

The Nature and Distribution of the Woodland Resource

- 4.15 The analysis of the existing woodland resource revealed two major pieces of information: the area of woodland is significantly greater than was originally thought and the number of small and very small woodlands is very large. Table 10 summarises the nature of the AONB woodland resource.
- 4.16 In general terms the larger woodlands are likely to be of more significance with regard to their recreation and biodiversity potential as well as being a significant presence in the landscape. Conversely the smaller woodlands, and in particular the large number of very small woods, are likely to make less contribution to biodiversity and recreation, but their general presence in such large numbers is likely to make a significant landscape contribution.

Table 10 Size and Numbers of Woods

	No of woods	% of total No of Woods	Area of Woods	% of Total Area of Woods
Woodlands < 5 hectares	8342	91%	5820	25%
Woodland > 5 hectares	837	9%	17479	75%
Woodlands < 2 hectares	7455	81%	7455	32%
Woodlands > 2 hectares	1724	19%	15844	68%

In practical terms it is obvious that the greatest impact in terms of time and financial resources is likely to be realised by focussing on the smaller number of larger woodlands. However, can the large number of small woodlands be completely ignored? With the present level of information about the woodland resource it is impossible to provide sensible advice on the needs of the small and very small woods. It may well be the case that the large majority of these woods, by virtue of their size and location, are already close to maximising their biodiversity potential. In addition their perpetuation as landscape features is possibly reasonably well secured as most are regenerating naturally, if somewhat sporadically. Minimal management intervention, whilst not ideal, may well be the most sensible and pragmatic policy to adopt. Natural processes or health and safety issues will precipitate periodic tree removals and allow natural regeneration and little else may actually be required. However, because of their size it should be noted that very small woodlands are particularly susceptible to external factors such as drift and run off from adjacent agricultural land. Small woodlands are also likely to be most vulnerable to changes resulting from climate change. This fact has implications for both the management of the woodland as well as the surrounding area.

Maturing Coniferous Woodlands

- 4.17 According to the results of the 1996 IFT survey there are 1376 hectares of conifers and a further 2888 hectares of mixed woodlands. Based on the IFT species composition analysis there are a total of 2929 hectares of conifers within the AONB or 17.5% of the total area of woodland covered by the survey. The pure conifer woodlands are split 32% to the Forestry Commission and 68% to the private sector. The mixed woodlands are split 10% to the FC and 90% to the private sector. Further analysis of the IFT results indicates that just over 60% of the total area of conifers within the AONB was planted between 1951 and 1970. These woodlands are now between 35 and 55 years old and, over the next 20 years will be largely felled and regenerated. It is also likely that a significant proportion of the coniferous areas will be Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) and support will be available for the restoration of these sites through the new EWGS grants. Given the significant differences in policy objectives since these woodlands were planted a major opportunity for change is presented when they are regenerated.

The Availability of Suitably Skilled Labour

- 4.18 A recurring theme during consultation was the perceived lack of trained people willing and technically qualified to undertake woodland work. Whilst, in reality, no one could identify any piece of work that they wished to undertake that had been cancelled due to lack of contractors there was considerable evidence of a gradually ageing workforce and an absence of new entrants. The larger contractors are now reliant on a much more peripatetic workforce who travel from considerable distances to undertake woodland work within the AONB. Several people mentioned the trend for qualified young workers to abandon forestry for urban arboriculture where the work is considered to be less arduous and the financial rewards higher. It was considered that, despite relatively high demand for training in woodland management the increasingly higher costs of accommodation and insurance and the fairly modest returns were preventing new entrants to the forestry industry. Once again this is a more general problem and is not specific to the AONB. Nevertheless, the AONB already has policies within the Management Plan supporting the provision of affordable housing for key workers in the land based sectors. There are already close links between the academic and training institutions within the AONB and these should be maintained.

Deer and Squirrels

- 4.19 Many of the people and documents consulted made mention of the problems of high deer numbers. Regeneration of freshly cut coppice is threatened by deer pressure as is natural regeneration in all woodland areas. Establishment costs for new woodlands are greatly increased by the need to construct deer fences. Deer are considered by many to be one of the major threats to woodlands within the AONB. Defra produced an Action Plan in 1994 for the sustainable management of wild deer populations in England. This included amendments to the legislation, provision of advice and training and marketing support. Under the Deer Initiative (DI) plans are also in the process of being developed to bring deer numbers under control. Deer Management Groups already exist, under the guidance of the DI in the Pang Valley, in Hampshire and on Salisbury Plain and the DI has produced a template for the preparation of deer management plans.
- 4.20 A Workshop held in December 2004 in Marlborough looked at the issues of deer and cattle in woods. The workshop recognised the problems associated with high numbers of deer and indicated that only by a co-operative approach would solutions be found. The Deer Management groups in the south of Wiltshire and on the Ministry of Defence land have demonstrated how this approach can work. Future joint work by the Deer Initiative and the Wiltshire Grazing Animal Programme will provide more opportunities to share best practice in this part of the AONB
- 4.21 In common with most parts of the country squirrels are a major pest in woodlands within the AONB. As with deer the problem will only be solved by co-operation between landowners.

Locating and Replanting 'Historic' Woodland

- 4.22 During the discussions on defining the priority areas for the establishment of any new woodlands it was considered that the historic landscape was an important factor in determining where woodlands were or were not appropriate. Accordingly the topic was included in the list of factors

considered important when locating new woodland and efforts were made to establish just what land had previously been wooded. To date data have been obtained from an examination of the Ancient Woodland Inventory plan that indicates woodland cleared since the production of the first series Ordnance Survey maps i.e. between 1902 and 1938. However, much older maps exist and it should be possible to construct a reasonably accurate plan indicating the history of woodland creation and removal. An Historic Land Classification (HLC) is currently being progressed and the location of 'historic' woodland will be produced as part of this study. This information, when available should be used to refine the woodland opportunities plan.

Inappropriately Located Woodlands

- 4.23 A recurring theme during the landscape meeting to discuss priorities for locating new woodland was the feeling that in certain areas within the AONB, *"there were some woodlands that did not necessarily respect the underlying landscape character of the area nor did they strengthen that character and the priority in these areas might be to try to modify these woodlands and ensure that owners had access to good quality landscape advice on the location and design of new woodlands"* It was the considered view that many of these woodlands were relatively small and scattered in nature and were almost certainly established for game shooting reasons. The results of a recent workshop exercise entitled 'Valuing the Landscape' (see section 2) support this view with a generally ambivalent attitude towards shelterbelts in some of the less well wooded landscape character types. There is a general feeling that little can be done to 'correct' these historic faults and that energy should be focussed on ensuring that future woodlands did not repeat these 'mistakes'. Perhaps, it was felt, when part or all of the woodland was to be harvested the best opportunities would be presented for altering either the species, the shape or even the location of the woodland. However, this is a long time to live with the existing situation (it is a well known saying amongst foresters that they have to live with their mistakes all of their lives) and perhaps improvements can be made in the interim.

New Woodland Owners

- 4.24 Owning a woodland is an expanding hobby and this interest has lead to an increase in the value of smaller woodlands but few new owners wish to undertake management or understand the problems that a lack of management can create. Several woodland projects, such as the Oxfordshire Woodland Project and fora such as Wiltshire Woodland Forum exist in the counties within the AONB aimed at raising woodland management issues. In addition the AONB is planning to hold a new local forum/landowner networking meeting in the Basingstoke and Deane area – a part of the AONB with a high concentration of woodlands.

Sources of Advice

- 4.25 There are numerous minor sources of grant aid (apart from the Forestry Commission) and many individuals and organisations that provide both paid and unpaid advice to woodland owners. The Forestry Commission, county and district councils, trusts and charities and private companies all provide some form of woodland advice and this plethora of sources can be confusing – particularly to those new to woodland management who are not familiar with the 'system'. The Woodland HAP for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and

Oxfordshire is intended to become a 'one stop shop' for woodland advice. The launch of the new EWGS should create new interest in woodland activity.

Sporting Use of Woodlands

- 4.26 The interest of landowners in the sporting use of their woodlands for shooting is a major motivating factor for much woodland management. The desire for shooting coverts is also a significant factor behind the creation of many new small woodlands. It must be recognised that any ban on game shooting would have a significant impact on woodlands within the AONB. In many woods designed primarily for shooting the opportunity exists to increase the 'other' benefits from these typically small woodlands

Sustainable Development

- 4.27 Given that around 90% of the wood and wood based products used within the United Kingdom are imported, the opportunity for home grown timber to contribute to more sustainable development would appear to be significant. However, the disappearance of many local niche markets, the relatively poor quality of the timber in many of the woodlands (particularly the small woodlands), the relative lack of economies of scale and the very competitive pricing of foreign timber all combine to diminish many opportunities. Nonetheless, significant opportunities still remain but they will all require significant effort to be realised. The potential for renewable energy is discussed elsewhere and the increasing requirement for local authorities and government agencies to purchase locally sourced products will assist forestry. The greatest contributions to sustainable development from the woodland resource of the AONB are likely to be realised by small scale schemes operated at the local level.

Climate Change

- 4.28 Whilst the fact of climate change is now generally accepted (with one or two notable exceptions!) the actual nature of the change is still subject to different projections. The most likely scenario would appear to be warmer weather all year with wetter winters, drier summers and more extremes of weather. The implications of these potential changes are explored in general terms in the AONB Management Plan. With regard to trees there are potentially two areas of significance. Firstly some species are growing towards the edge of their geographical limit. Changes to the climate may cause the gradual migration of these species and the introduction of new species. However the rate at which change may occur is likely to mean that human intervention may be required to assist with the migration. Secondly, it is likely that fragmented habitats will be more vulnerable to climate change. Accordingly it is the larger woodland blocks that are liable to be the most valuable and least susceptible to change with regard to safeguarding the biodiversity of the AONB.

Co-ordination of Forestry Issues

- 4.29 The AONB is located in two government regions and hence can be subject to different approaches across the policy and strategy frameworks. There are also two Forestry Commission Conservancies with slightly different priorities

and funding opportunities. This location across the two regions can make a co-ordinated approach difficult to achieve.

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands Smaller than 2.0 Hectares

- 4.30 Almost 3000 hectares of the AONB woodland resource is found in woodlands smaller than 2.0 hectares. The existing inventory of ASNW does not consider woodlands smaller than 2.0 hectares. Accordingly, it is possible that a significant number of woodlands less than 2.0 hectares in size are, in fact, ASNW. As linkage of important biodiversity habitats is important as well as general improvement of the biodiversity of woodlands it is important to know the full extent of ASNW within the AONB.

Archaeological Sites in Woodland

- 4.31 Many woodlands have a high archaeological potential that is poorly reflected in the present records. Canopy cover and undergrowth, as well as restricted access has meant that there are often few archaeological sites recorded within woodland. At the same time woodland has acted as a refuge from the destructive arable processes and where archaeological sites survive they can be in a remarkable condition. Many are nationally important and are designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs). Woodland has high archaeological potential for as yet unrecorded sites of importance. These might be sites and earthworks relating to past land use or settlement, or may be related to past woodland management.
- 4.32 Archaeological sites in woodland can be adversely affected by forestry operations and understanding the location, character, extent and importance of archaeological sites, and the potential impact of forestry operations is important part of ensuring the sustainable management of those sites. The sites may also play a valuable role in access, recreation, education and local tourism. Woodland management plans should address historic environment issues, and at times this may imply the need for some original field survey.

The Place of Woodlands in the Historic Environment

- 4.33 Woodlands have an historic environment role, as woodlands in the landscape informing the historic landscape; for the archaeological sites within them, and as access/recreation opportunities related to the historic environment. There is a need to ensure management plans address known archaeological sites, and their appropriate management, possibly from time to time recognising a need for some original archaeological survey, and from time to time considering the opportunities of archaeological sites in some woodlands for access, education, recreation and local tourism.

5. Strategic Objectives

5.1 Based on the policy context and the discussion of the issues facing the woodland resource of the AONB the following list of objectives can be formulated:

- The main focus of human and financial resources will be directed towards the existing woodland resource rather than the establishment of new woodland areas.
- The AONB will seek to influence the location of any new woodland to those areas where they will best meet the objectives of this strategy in accordance with the Woodland Constraints and Opportunities Plan.
- Except where woodlands are inappropriately located in the landscape (see paragraph 4.20) there will be a general presumption in favour of retaining all existing areas of woodland. In particular all woodlands designated for their nature conservation interest and all ASNW will be particularly valued and efforts made to improve their management, to buffer them with additional woodland and wherever possible to seek to link them together.
- The AONB will work to encourage the inclusion of relevant elements of this strategy and the Forestry Commission Regional Frameworks into the policy and strategy frameworks of our partners.
- The AONB will support the accreditation of woodlands under the United Kingdom Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS)
- The AONB will work with its partners to encourage management of existing woodlands and will focus on:
 - The key concentrations of woodland areas as identified in section 2 where those woodlands make significant contribution to landscape character and where there is a high proportion of ASNW and wildlife designated sites etc.

Within these areas we will encourage

- Controlling deer and squirrel numbers
 - Improving biodiversity within individual woodlands
 - Linking together areas of importance for wildlife, particularly where this will meet other objectives
 - Protecting archaeological sites
 - Improving their appearance in the landscape
 - Replacement of maturing conifers, particularly PAWS, with species more appropriate for biodiversity and to the landscape.
 - Within the floodplain and valley landscapes, the management and protection of wet (floodplain) woodlands
-
- The AONB will seek to inform and assist with the knowledge base regarding AONB woodlands by:
 - Initiating and supporting research into improving the biodiversity and landscape values of woodlands established primarily for shooting cover

- Initiating and supporting research into possible innovative and alternative uses for woodlands and their produce
- Monitoring the interest in establishing specific 'energy crops'
- Initiating and supporting research into the use of woodland produce in local energy schemes
- Supporting the preparation and distribution of information regarding the creation of community woodlands
- Preparing more detailed information regarding the location of woodlands with regard to their proximity to people and the nature and location of woodlands to which there is either open access or access via public rights of way
- Identify more clearly where there is a lack of access to woodland or where woodland access is poor
- Promoting the role of woodlands in providing opportunities for access and recreation
- Supporting the negotiation of access agreements to selected woodlands
- Work with local access forums and other partners using community woodlands, Section 106 agreements, access agreements and information regarding woodland access to ensure that woodland plays a positive role in access and recreation in the AONB
- Supporting, where appropriate, initiatives for woodland survey for or to include archaeological sites
- Initiating and supporting research into the possible issues faced by small and very small woodlands
- Identifying maturing coniferous woodlands with a view to working with woodland owners to encourage selected replacement with broadleaves
- Co-ordinating the various sources of advice to ensure delivery of the woodland strategy

6. Action Plan

The Market for Timber

- 6.1 The old saying about 'not seeing the wood for the trees' may be very apt with regard to the market for timber. Foresters, woodland owners and advisors are all very close to the problem of declining and disappearing markets and it is an issue many will have been dealing with for all of their professional lives. Perhaps a fresh view and perspective might throw new light onto an old problem. The work done to produce this strategy has generated a wealth of information about the quantity and location of woodlands within the AONB. Some limited information has also been obtained about the quality of some of the woodland and from the IFT census some details regarding the types of woodland. Given some heroic assumptions it would even be possible to indicate an annual increment, allowable annual cut and standing volume of the woodland resource of the AONB (see Appendix 3). It is suggested that a one or half day 'Blue Sky Thinking' workshop is held. Selected landowners and forestry professionals would make a short presentation on the nature of the woodland resource and the problems experienced in managing and selling timber. Then it would be the turn of the other invitees from widely different professions and who would have experience of many different situations to try and bring some fresh thinking and ideas to the problem.

Wood for Fuel

- 6.2 Quite apart from the potential of specifically grown crops to generate renewable energy the AONB team and its partners should be working to realise the potential of existing woodlands to generate wood fuel. This should take the form of:
- influencing national policy by highlighting the potential of existing woodlands to generate woodfuel;
 - undertaking more detailed assessments of local potential;
 - encouraging local initiatives and companies such as Thames Valley Energy, South East Wood Fuels and South West Wood Fuels;
 - encouraging small scale community-based schemes;
 - encouraging the establishment of a local wood fuel project for demonstration within the AONB;
 - encouraging local authority schemes for public buildings and housing schemes;
 - encouraging development of local supply chains;
 - raising awareness, ownership and understanding of renewable energy (including the grant aid that may be available).

Should significant interest in growing energy crops, either short rotation coppice or Miscanthus grass, within the AONB become manifest it is suggested that the preparation of a 'constraints and opportunities plan' for energy crops is prepared in a similar manner to the plan presented for new woodland as part of this strategy.

Access to Woodland

- 6.3 There are two main issues relating to woodland access. The first relates to obtaining accurate information about woodland access and those areas of the AONB for which there is a deficiency. As part of the Opportunities Plan a

modified version of the Deprived Access Areas exercise being undertaken by Patrick McKernan, the Woodland Officer to the South East England AONB's, has been used. It is considered essential that the full application of McKernan's approach is applied to the whole of the AONB and the resultant information is used to refine the opportunities plan. This will be helpful in indicating where there is a shortage of public access to green space and, by the inclusion of this factor within the model, will indicate where new woodland can be planted to help alleviate the deprivation.

- 6.4 The second access issue relates to how the information regarding woodland access can be used to improve the situation within the AONB. A number of initiatives are possible. Firstly there exist a number of woodlands to which there is currently either open access or access through the woodlands via public rights of way. It is suggested that the AONB team would work with existing access management partners in producing information relating to woodland access and making this information widely available to the public to ensure that there is greater awareness of the current opportunities for using woodlands for access and recreation.
- 6.5 Once areas of access deficiency are more precisely located and understood then a range of options exist to try and improve the situation. In some cases the provision of access to woodland can solve the deficiency – in other areas other types of open access land are more appropriate. It would appear that the situation around Swindon will be helped by a series of Section 106 agreements with developers that will see significant new woodlands and areas of open space included within, or adjacent to, new developments. This has been greatly helped by the fact that much of the land in question is owned by the local authority. In addition the Great Western Community Forest is active around Swindon with a remit to increase the area of woodland accessible to the public.
- 6.6 Newbury has significant areas of woodland near to the town but only relatively limited areas with public access. Didcot has little adjacent woodland and a planned major expansion of the town. Marlborough is the only major settlement within the AONB and it has Savernake and West Woods on its doorstep; both have some access rights and wide ranging permissive access. However, many of the smaller towns and villages have little adjacent woodland.
- 6.7 As the AONB team has no powers to enter into access agreements with landowners it should encourage the AONB Partnership, particularly the local authorities, to negotiate with selected landowners. Equally the AONB team can encourage the AONB partnership, particularly the local authorities to use section 106 agreements associated with new developments to achieve public access to woodlands. The AONB team can assist the process significantly by both identifying where the access deficiency is located and then identifying woodlands in a suitable location to meet the need. In all of this process woodland access should be considered alongside access to all Greenspace and as part of an initiative to improve general access to the countryside.
- 6.8 A further initiative relates to ensuring that information and support is available to local communities who may be interested in acquiring existing woodland or acquiring land to plant a new woodland specifically for their communities. This would not be an innovative venture as there are numerous examples, for instance in the Great Western Community Forest, where communities have

created local 'community woodlands'. In the first instance the AONB could establish whether there are existing information packs supplied by any of the AONB partners. If there are no current packs then the AONB team should work with their partner organisations such as the Great Western Community Forest and the local authorities to develop and circulate information packs for local communities identifying how they can acquire land and plant it as a 'community woodland'. Whilst the planning 'hope' value of land on the edges of settlements may make land hard to acquire in some circumstances, there will be a number of locations where land can be acquired, or even received as a gift, and a new woodland with public access established. It is worth noting that providing better public access to woodlands is one of the key objectives of both the South West and the South East Regional Woodland and Forestry Frameworks.

Biodiversity

- 6.9 The work to identify key 'core areas' will continue and, when published, should be incorporated into the strategy. In the absence of the results of this detailed work, there was general agreement that priority should be given to management of existing woodlands of known biological value. It was also agreed that there were also significant benefits in some areas of reducing isolation and fragmentation and in trying to buffer woodlands or link woodland areas together. These linkages could be achieved either by planting new woodlands or by other habitats. The objective is to achieve a robust framework or mosaic of habitats capable of supporting viable populations of key species.
- 6.10 Given the fact that resources are limited there needs to be some method of targeting available resources to those areas where the greatest impact can be realised. This can be achieved simply by identifying ASNW, woodlands designated as either SSSI or CWS and those woodlands that support priority species as the target areas. This is generally the approach adopted by HAPS. However, there may also be merit in looking beyond the individual woodlands and adopting a more landscape scale approach. This might highlight areas where there are particular concentrations of such woodland, perhaps in combination with other semi-natural habitats where not only management of existing woodlands can be targeted but also some expansion of the woodland area.
- 6.11 These areas could then be overlain with other objectives such as:
- strengthening landscape character
 - adding to a concentration of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
 - adding to a concentration of existing high value sites
 - replacing 'lost' woodland
- to determine areas where there is real multiple benefit to management. It has not been part of this strategy to identify areas of this type. However, as the work to identify 'core areas' is completed and the Historic Landscape Classification data becomes available it will be clearly possible to identify target areas based on the above criteria. It is suggested that key stakeholders work together to identify a target area and, provided landowner participation can be agreed, the area is used to explore ways in which biodiversity can be improved. Once a plan can be agreed this should be implemented and the site used as a demonstration model to convince other landowners of the benefits of a similar approach.

Collating Woodland Management Data

- 6.12 The AONB has a potential role to play in encouraging the agencies responsible for monitoring the condition of SSSI and CWS to use a standard format to record information, and ensuring that the data recorded will provide information on the condition of the woodland in a manner that will allow subsequent analysis. It is suggested that the AONB team take the lead in organising a meeting between the Forestry Commission, DEFRA, the relevant county wildlife trusts, the biological records centres, the relevant county council ecologists and English Nature to progress this issue within the North Wessex Downs. Existing data and the results of current FC research will need to be incorporated.

The Nature and Distribution of the Woodland Resource

- 6.13 There is little factual information regarding the nature and condition of the small and very small woodlands. It may well be the case that this part of the woodland resource is, in fact, self sustaining and requires little, if any, management intervention. Equally it may be the case that these very small woodlands are a declining resource both in scale and condition. It is suggested that a small but statistically valid sample survey is made of woodland less than 2.0 hectares with a view to determining what management inputs, if any, would benefit these woods and how any management activity can best be stimulated and supported. Significant assistance for woodland management should be available under the new system of grants for agricultural land, particularly for protection and enhancement of the woodland edge and the protection of in field trees. The AONB team, working with other advisors must ensure that landowners know how to access cost effective advice on management of these small woodlands.
- 6.14 Whilst the small and very small woodlands are important landscape features the greatest recreational and biodiversity assets are typically found in the larger woodland blocks. 52% of the woodland area of the AONB is found in woodlands blocks larger than 10 hectares and there are only 441 woodlands in the AONB of this size. The landscape character areas where woodlands larger than 10 hectares comprise more than 50 % of the woodland area are:
- Blewbury Downs
 - Brightwalton Downs
 - Ashampstead Downs
 - Chute Forest/Facombe
 - Savernake Forest
 - Salisbury Plain
 - Chiseldon - Wanborough Plain
 - Hendred Plain
 - Clyffe Pypard - Badbury Wooded Scarp
 - Thames Floodplain - Moreton
 - Thames Floodplain - Streatley and Basildon
 - Bourne Valley
 - Hermitage Lowlands and Heath
 - Winterbourne Farmland
 - Wickham Wooded Heath
 - Highclere Lowlands and Heath
 - Hungerford Farmland

6.15 Only three landscape character types have more than 50% of their woodland cover comprised of woodlands larger than 10 hectares as follows:

- Wooded Plateau 87%
- Lowland Mosaic 75%
- High Chalk Plain 56%

6.16 Initial contacts have already been made with many of the owners of the larger woodlands in the process of developing this strategy and it is suggested the AONB builds on these relationships in key areas, ensuring that these owners understand how they can maximise the benefits of their woodlands, and in doing so, where possible contribute to AONB objectives.

Maturing Coniferous Woodlands

6.17 The GIS data can be used to identify the locations of these specific woodland areas, how many of them are Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), and how many are located adjacent to existing ASNW or other sites of high biodiversity value. It is suggested that the woodlands areas that would most benefit from a change from conifer to native broadleaved species are identified. This information, once prepared by the AONB, would be provided to the existing woodland advisors who would be encouraged to provide specific advice to the woodland owners concerned.

Climate Change

6.18 Current and recent research suggests that small habitat areas will be more liable to the impacts of climate change. This supports the case for de-fragmentation of woodland and other habitats and for the development of landscape scale approaches to management and planting. The AONB will highlight and apply the findings of the work of the Northmoor Trust and others undertaking locally based research into the causes and effects of climate change. The AONB will ensure that the AONB Partnership provide the correct advice on climate change to woodland owners and others based on the most recent research and thinking.

Deer

6.19 Whilst not many woodlands on the south of England have become certified under UKWAS, for those that are, there is a requirement to prepare and implement a deer management plan. The Forestry Stewardship Council can assist by not only requiring the preparation and implementation of deer management plans as part of UKWAS accreditation but also refusing or withdrawing accreditation when deer management plans are not met. The AONB will seek to raise awareness of the issues involved with the ever increasing deer population and will work with new and existing Deer Management Groups to encourage better management of wild deer populations and better local marketing and availability of venison.

Inappropriately Located Woodlands

6.20 It is suggested that the AONB talks to some of the landowners with 'inappropriately located' woodlands with a view to undertaking a case study on one farm or estate to see if the situation can be improved in the short

term. This exercise may involve organisations and individuals such as the Game Conservancy, the Forestry Commission, a landscape architect, an archaeologist, the AONB and the landowner. Discussions would centre around the multipurpose function of the woodlands including shooting, landscape and biodiversity. Possible changes may include the premature removal or relocation of some existing woodlands, linking other woodlands together and altering the shape of some woodlands by either tree removal or additional planting. If the project is successful then the farm or estate could act as a demonstration model for others.

Sources of Advice

- 6.21 It is suggested that shortly after the launch of the EWGS the AONB convenes a meeting of the organisations providing woodland advice within the AONB in order to ensure that the available resources are used to best effect and that duplication of effort is avoided.

Sustainable Development

- 6.22 The AONB team should take the lead in engaging its various partners and stakeholders in projects which develop the role of woodland in contributing to sustainable development.

Co-ordination of Forestry Issues

- 6.23 It is recommended that the AONB develops a forestry accord with the Forestry Commission and the Forestry Enterprise to ensure a co-ordinated approach across the AONB.

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands Smaller than 2.0 Hectares

- 6.24 The AONB should either encourage English Nature to review the ASNW county inventories for the area of the AONB to include woodlands smaller than 2.0 hectares or, in conjunction with the AONB partners, commission the survey work itself. The field work accompanying such a review should also incorporate a condition assessment of the woodlands

Archaeological Sites in Woodland and The Place of Woodlands in the Historic Environment

- 6.25 The AONB partnership should take steps to ensure that there is good access to available archaeological data. Those responsible for reviewing management plans submitted for grant aid should ensure that archaeological and historic environment issues are included within the plan. In some areas there may be a need for additional survey or audit work – either as a stand alone operation or within surveys carried out for other reasons. Finally there is a need to consider opportunities of access for recreation , education, local tourism reasons relating to the historic environment.

7. Location of New Woodland

Introduction

- 7.1 This strategy has principally focussed on the collection of information about the existing woodland resource, understanding the issues faced by those managing the existing woodlands and seeking to develop policies and actions that will improve the quality of the existing woodlands. This focus on the existing woodlands is in line with national, regional and local policies where the emphasis has switched from creating new woodlands towards the management of existing woodlands in order to realise a multiplicity of objectives. However, whilst the focus is on the existing woodland resource this does not mean that individuals and organisations will not continue to seek to create new woodlands. It is important for the strategy to address this issue and to devise a methodology that will allow the AONB to determine the locations where new woodlands will best meet the objectives of the AONB.
- 7.2 Based on previous projects undertaken by the South West Forest with regard to locating new woodland and by Cornwall County Council with regard to the optimum location for energy crops a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) approach has been adopted. The process described in the following paragraphs is intended to provide a strategic overview with regard to the optimum general locations for new woodlands. It is recognised that there is no substitute for a detailed case by case examination of individual sites. The siting and design of any new woodlands will need to reflect the criteria established in the individual landscape character assessments for each landscape character area.
- 7.3 Experience from the projects in Cornwall and Devon indicated that it would be better to adopt a methodology that first identified those areas where there would be a presumption against planting new woodlands before moving on to determine where the new woodlands could best be planted to best effect within the remaining area. Accordingly a two-stage process has been adopted. First the areas where there would be a presumption against new woodlands will be identified - a 'Constraints Plan'. Secondly, the remaining areas will be assessed and prioritised with regard to the location of new woodlands via the preparation of an 'Opportunities Plan'.
- 7.4 During consultation the Forestry Commission indicated that, whilst they supported the approach of 'constraining' areas, the FC would still have to consider every grant aid application regardless of where it was located. However, the FC did also indicate that the location of an application within a 'constrained' area would be likely to influence the FC response to the application. The plan will seek to show where, if planting was to occur, it would be meeting AONB objectives to maximum effect. This is not to preclude planting elsewhere and application for grant aid would still be examined on its merits regardless of where it was located. The plan will hopefully provide better information to people about the priorities that the AONB partnership have with regard to the creation of new woodlands.
- 7.5 Under the previous WGS a system of regional scoring of applications was instigated with grant aid being conditional upon achieving a certain score. Under the old WGS applications would struggle in some areas of the AONB to gain enough points to even qualify for grant aid. Three points were available for 'meeting the AONB objectives' so the presence of a strategy with



Constrained Area

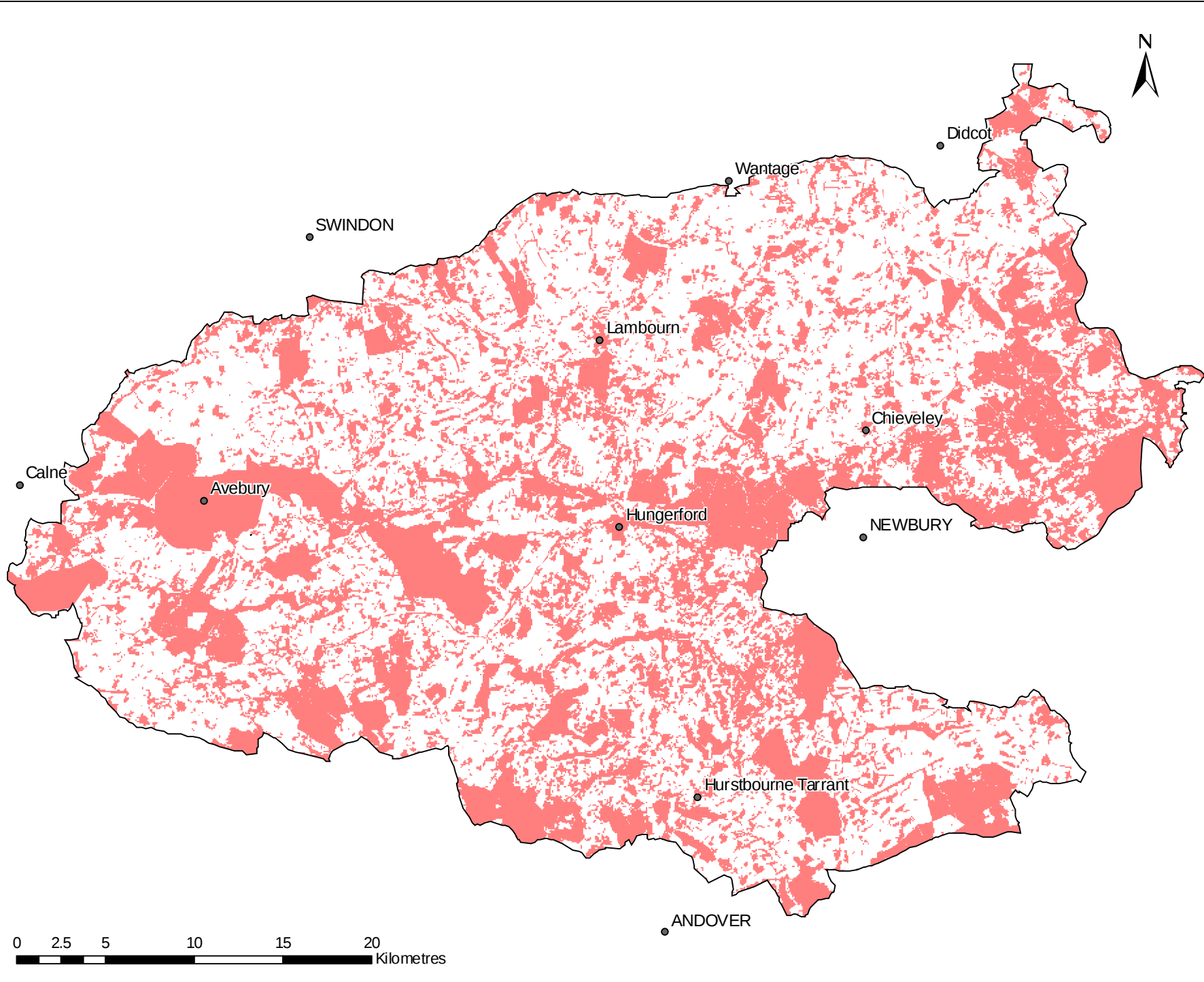
-  AONB
-  Towns
-  Constraint Layer

**Plan 5
Constrained Area**

Date: 01/09/05
Scale: 1:250,000
Drawn By: KH



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clear objectives and targets for different parts of the AONB would be a significant step forward in helping the FC to assess new WGS applications.

- 7.6 The GIS was built using ESRI ArcGIS 9 software. The data comprising the opportunity and constraints models was derived from existing data sets obtained from a variety of sources and scales. These datasets were imported into the GIS as vector shapefiles and also contained attribute data about the features within each dataset. Metadata is attached to the shapefiles and provides the user with information about each dataset including the scale and date of capture, original source and limitations. The spatial modelling for the Opportunity Model was undertaken using the ESRI extension Spatial Analyst.

The Constraints Plan

- 7.7 Based on the consultation meetings, discussions with various experts and meetings of the Project Steering Group a series of constraints were identified representing existing land uses or environmental conditions where there were recognised constraints to the planting of new woodlands.

- Urban land
- Existing Woodland – as defined by datasets showing Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS 3), Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW), the Forestry Commission Inventory of Forests and Trees (IFT)
- Semi natural habitats including wetland, heathland and unimproved grassland
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and County Wildlife Sites (CWS)
- Countryside Stewardship sites not classified as hedgerows, built, parkland or historic, boundaries, access, linear, educational or null
- Battlefields
- World Heritage Sites
- Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)
- Historic Parks and Gardens

- 7.8 Obviously a number of these areas would overlap with each other. The result of the exercise was the preparation of the Constraints Plan shown in Plan 5.

- 7.9 The constraints exercise essentially identified arable and improved grassland areas within the AONB that did not contain any of the factors listed in paragraph 7.6. The result of the constraints exercise was to identify some 38% of the AONB where the planting of new woodlands would be constrained for any one or a combination of reasons. The distribution of the constrained area by Landscape Character Type is illustrated in Table 10 and Plan 5.

The Opportunities Plan

Introduction

- 7.10 Having decided via the constraints mapping process where new woodlands were likely to be inappropriate, the next task was to identify within the 'unconstrained area', where new woodlands would make the greatest contribution towards delivering the objectives of the AONB.

- 7.11 At the time of preparing this strategy a major review of the FC England Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) is being undertaken. As grants towards planting new woodlands are one of the major stimulus for landowners to plant new woodland, the opportunity to influence the allocation of grant aid within the AONB under the new EWGS is to be welcomed.
- 7.12 Whilst many of the factors considered important when deciding where to locate new woodland are well represented by GIS held data, landscape is a factor remarkably well served with descriptive information but remarkably free from quantifiable data. Obviously, by its designation as such the AONB only contains landscapes of considerable beauty. Some method of determining which landscape areas would benefit most from additional woodland needed to be devised. Once again this was a problem that had been faced in developing an 'opportunities plan' for new woodland in the South West Forest and in deciding the optimal location for 'energy crops' in Cornwall. A similar approach was adopted for the AONB.

Landscape Character

- 7.13 The landscape character assessment of the AONB was used as the basis for analysing the existing and potential contribution that woodland made to landscape character. This was supplemented by more detailed information on the nature and extent of woodland, block size etc in each character area prepared from the database associated with the GIS
- 7.14 The next stage was to hold a workshop meeting to assess where new woodlands would make the greatest contribution towards meeting the landscape objectives of the AONB. The landscape character assessment and the detailed woodland statistics for each landscape character area were then used by the workshop participants to identify those areas where new woodland could make most impact upon strengthening landscape character and those areas where it would not. They were also asked to indicate the nature and size of any new woodlands that may be introduced and the relative priority of each character area for adding new woodlands.
- 7.15 It was recognised that it was rather difficult to separate out the impact of new woodland on landscape character alone as landscape character is, to some extent, the sum of all parts. It was agreed by all participants that the general guiding principle would be that any new woodland planting would normally be utilised to reinforce the existing character rather than to change it. The results of the seminar deliberations for each landscape character area are presented in Appendix 4.
- 7.16 It was considered that the presence or absence of conifers in any proposed new woodland was not an issue to be guided at the landscape character level. Rather this was a decision that should be taken on a site by site basis. Similarly the issue of Christmas tree plantations was also felt to be more appropriately considered on a site by site basis rather than at the landscape character level.

Table 10. Areas and Percentage of Constrained Land by Landscape Character Area

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Area	Area (Ha)	Constraint Area (Ha)	Percentage Constrained
Open Downland	Marlborough Downs	13886	5102	36.7
	Lambourn Downs	11293	3050	27.0
	Horton Downs	7079	3607	51.0
	Blewbury Downs	8236	1966	23.9
Totals		40494	13275	33.9
Downland with Woodland	Brightwalton Downs	9650	2634	27.3
	Ashampstead Downs	4988	937	18.8
	Lambourn Wooded Downs	5834	2320	39.8
	Walbury Hill/Watership Down Scarp	3662	1552	42.4
	Chute Forest/Facombe	15122	7259	48.0
	Litchfield Downs	8798	3473	39.5
	Hannington Downs	3328	1317	39.6
Totals		51382	19493	37.9
Wooded Plateau	Savernake Forest	11090	5478	49.4
High Chalk Plain	Salisbury Plain	2206	1221	55.3
Downs Plain and Scarp	Avebury Plain	6581	2922	44.4
	Chiseldon - Wanborough Plain	4250	1479	34.8
	Hendred Plain	4239	823	19.4
	Moreton Plain	3290	1008	30.6
	Clyffe Pypard - Badbury Wooded Scarp	1229	611	49.6
	Liddington - Letcombe Open Scarp	3057	1094	35.8
Totals		22646	7936	35.0
Vales	Vale of Pewsey	15772	5469	34.7
	Shalbourne Vale	1451	442	30.4
	Wanborough Vale	256	49	19.2
	Thames Floodplain - Benson	164	43	25.9
	Thames Floodplain - Moreton	604	284	47.0
	Thames Floodplain - Streatley and Basildon	408	78	19.1
Totals		18655	6364	34.1
River Valley	Kennet Valley	3262	2215	67.9
	Lambourn Valley	483	290	60.1
	Bourne Valley	1593	742	46.6
	Pang Valley	1204	162	13.4
Totals		6542	3408	52.1
Lowland Mosaic	Hermitage Lowlands and Heath	8562	1300	15.2
	Winterbourne Farmland	1383	744	53.8
	Wickham Wooded Heath	658	588	89.4
	Hungerford Farmland	3216	2802	87.1
	Highclere Lowlands and Heath	4678	1729	37.0
	Ewhurst Park	588	218	37.1
Totals		19085	7380	38.7
AONB Total		172100	65005	37.8

Methodology

7.17 With the landscape information now in place a second workshop was held with members of the AONB partnership to determine the list and relative importance of the various factors to be considered when locating new woodlands. The first task was to develop a long list of factors considered to be important with regard to new woodland delivering the key objectives of the AONB. The initial list was as follows:

- Landscape;
- Biodiversity;
- Economic development;
- Agricultural land classification;
- Recreation;
- Yield;
- Heritage;
- Archaeology;
- Water;
- Soils;
- Social/access;
- Existing Woodland;
- Sporting.

7.18 Following a discussion a number of factors were eliminated as indicated in the following paragraphs. Details of this process can be found in Appendix 5.

7.19 At the end of this stage of the discussion five factors remained as follows:

- landscape;
- biodiversity;
- yield;
- historic Landscape;
- social/access.

7.20 The five categories were ranked in order of their importance in the location of new woodlands in the AONB. A second exercise established the relevant importance of each factor in a 'pair wise' comparison. A 'pair wise' comparison reviews, in turn, each factor with the one immediately below it in ranking. An assessment is made of each pair with regard to how much more important the higher ranked factor is compared to the one below it. Firstly the top ranked factor is assessed against the second ranked factor and then the second ranked factor is assessed against the third ranked factor and so on. An overall weighting was derived by this method as follows:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------|
| ▪ Landscape; | x 1 |
| ▪ Biodiversity; | x 1 |
| ▪ Social/access; | x 1.2 |
| ▪ Historic Landscape; | x 1.5 |
| ▪ Yield. | x 2.5 |

7.21 First equal were landscape and biodiversity which were 20% more important than social/access issues which was 25% more important than historic landscape. Historic landscape was 67% more important than yield. Yield was initially considered to be much less important and was weighted 5.3 times less important than historic landscape. After consideration it was felt that this would make some sites that were suitable on all other grounds, but

were on the poorest sites with regard to timber yield, unsuitable for new planting. Accordingly the weighting factor was reduced to prevent this happening.

- 7.22 Next datasets for which data were available for the whole AONB were identified as being representative of each of the categories.
- 7.23 Within each category, a score of between 3 and 9 was assigned to the criteria. Low scores indicate high opportunity and high scores indicate low opportunity for new woodland planting. Where a number of datasets are combined the cumulative score would still be in the range of 3 to 9. Access proved the exception to this rule – see paragraph 7.27.

Landscape

- 7.24 The priority of each landscape character for the introduction of new woodlands was used to determine the scores awarded. The scores are as follows:
- | | |
|--------------|-----------|
| ▪ Priority 1 | Score = 3 |
| ▪ Priority 2 | Score = 5 |
| ▪ Priority 3 | Score = 6 |
| ▪ Priority 4 | Score = 7 |
| ▪ Priority 5 | Score = 9 |

Biodiversity

- 7.25 Two factors were considered important with regard to additional woodland and improving biodiversity. Most importantly was the desire to connect or link together areas of existing woodland. Accordingly areas of land between woodlands less than 100 metres apart were scored as 1. Areas between woodlands between 100 metres and 250 metres apart scored 2 and all areas between woodlands greater than 250 metres apart scored 4. The second factor was a desire to see additional planting acting as a buffer around existing high biodiversity woodland. Accordingly areas within 50 metres of any woodland that is ASNW, or designated as a SSSI or a SINCE is scored 2. Areas within 50 metres of all other woodlands are scored 3 and areas of land further than 50 metres from the boundary of any woodland are scored 5. The two sets of scores are added together providing a combined range of scores from between 3 and 9. Concerns have been expressed that in achieving linkages habitats with existing biodiversity value may be targeted for planting. In fact all of these areas will have been removed from consideration by the constraints exercise.

Social/Access

- 7.26 Again two factors were considered important with regard to woodland access: the size of the population in a settlement and the proximity of woodland of different sizes with access to the settlement. The demand side (or size of population) was assessed as 1 point if the settlement contained more than 10,000 people, 2 points if the size was between 2500 and 10000 people and 3 points if the settlement contained less than 2500 people. On the supply side each settlement was assessed in turn in concentric zones 300m, 2000m, 5000m, and 10000m from the settlement edge. If within 300 metres there was a woodland with public access (open access or a public right of way within or alongside the woodland) of at least 2.0 hectares then the zone score

1.5; if there was no woodland then the zone scored 0.5. The same scores will be assigned if there is or is not a 20 hectare woodland within 2000 metres, a 100 hectare woodland within 5000m and a 100 hectare woodland within 10000m. The two scores are added together and will create a range of scores from between 3 (highly desirable for new woodland for access) and 9 (no need for new woodland for access). Unfortunately the GIS process was unable to cope with this approach due to significant overlaps between the zones around the settlements. It will, however, be possible to undertake separate access evaluations for each community within the AONB.

- 7.27 Until the individual settlement evaluations are completed, or the McKernan Deprived Access Areas exercise is completed for the AONB, a scoring system based solely on accessible greenspace has been used. All woodlands and other greenspace to which there is either open or partial access or woodlands which have a Public Right of Way running through or alongside them have been identified. These areas were categorised into different sizes – 2 to 20 hectares; 20 to 100 Hectares; 100 to 500 Hectares and over 500 hectares. For all areas in the 2 to 20 hectare class a buffer zone of 300 metres was created. All areas within the buffer zone scored 1 and all areas outside of a buffer zone scored 3. For the 20 to 100 hectare woodlands a buffer of 2000 metres was created. Again all areas within the buffer scored 1 and all areas outside scored 3. For the 100 to 500 hectare areas a buffer of 5000 metres was created and the same scoring system applied. Finally a 10000 metre buffer around areas in excess of 500 hectares was created and the same scoring system applied. Finally all four layers were added together to provide a composite access score of between 4 and 12. The fact that the scores for access range between 4 and 12 rather than 3 and 9 means that the overall effect of access will have been slightly reduced. As the effect was likely to be fairly small it was not considered necessary to try and compensate in this iteration of the model as the approach and data are likely to change when the next iteration of the model is produced.

Historic Lands cape

- 7.28 Areas shown as woodlands on the 1902 series plans, but which are no longer woodlands, will score 3. All other areas will score 9. This scoring system will be revised when the results of the Historic Landscape Classification are available.

Yield

- 7.29 The Forestry Commission Research Branch Yield Class Model for Sycamore was used to indicate the relative potential for tree growth. The meeting considered that ash would be a better species than sycamore. However, discussions with the staff of the FC Northern Research Station who have developed and produce the models indicated that sycamore would be a better species. The yield class model is based on the Ecological Site Classification system and indicated a range of yields for sycamore across the AONB from 3.20 to 8.48. The variation in yield was divided into seven classes and scored as follows:

Yield class	7.8 – 8.5	= 3
Yield class	7.1 – 7.7	= 4
Yield class	6.2 - 7.0	= 5
Yield class	5.6 – 6.2	= 6

Yield class	4.8 – 5.5	= 7
Yield class	3.6 – 4.7	= 8
Yield class	3.2 – 3.5	= 9

Weighting Process

- 7.30 A grid was then prepared for each of the seven categories by converting the GIS vector data into grids using the Spatial Analyst extension in the GIS. Grids are pixel-based layers based on the scores applied to each category. The grid size used in the models was 50 metres resulting in pixels of 50m x 50m each with a score for every layer. These separate opportunity grid layers (Plans 6 - 10) were then added together to produce a combined but, at this stage, unweighted opportunity model displayed in Plan 11.
- 7.31 The opportunity model sums together the values from each grid to produce a single combined layer. The pixel values in this layer will therefore be the sum of all the underlying layers. The combined model can be used to analyse and visualise how the different categories interact.
- 7.32 The different categories or layers within the model can now be weighted, according to the scores in paragraph 7.20, to reflect the different significance of one category over another. The Opportunities Plan is the accurate summation of the individual weighted layers as calculated by the 50 metre by 50 metre grids used in the GIS. The graph in Figure 10 was prepared to show the distribution of scores for each 50 metre square grid and the average score was also calculated.
- 7.33 Based on the average scores for each 50m by 50m grid the scores were divided into 5 categories and the Opportunities Plan produced showing the area in each category. This plan is shown in Plan 12.

Summary

- 7.34 The results of this exercise must be treated with caution. The whole thrust of this woodland strategy is to concentrate efforts on improving the quality of the existing woodlands rather than focus on creating large areas of new woodlands. However, new woodlands will continue to be planted and the Opportunities Plan provides a 'first stab' at where new woodlands would provide the greatest benefits towards meeting the objectives of the AONB. Undoubtedly the process, factors and weighting will be improved as new data and ideas emerge. At the present time and based on this exercise it would appear that new woodlands within the AONB would best be located in The Downs Plains and Scarp, Downland with Woodland and the south west part of the Vales Landscape Character types.

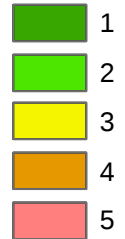


Landscape

AONB

Towns

Landscape Scores



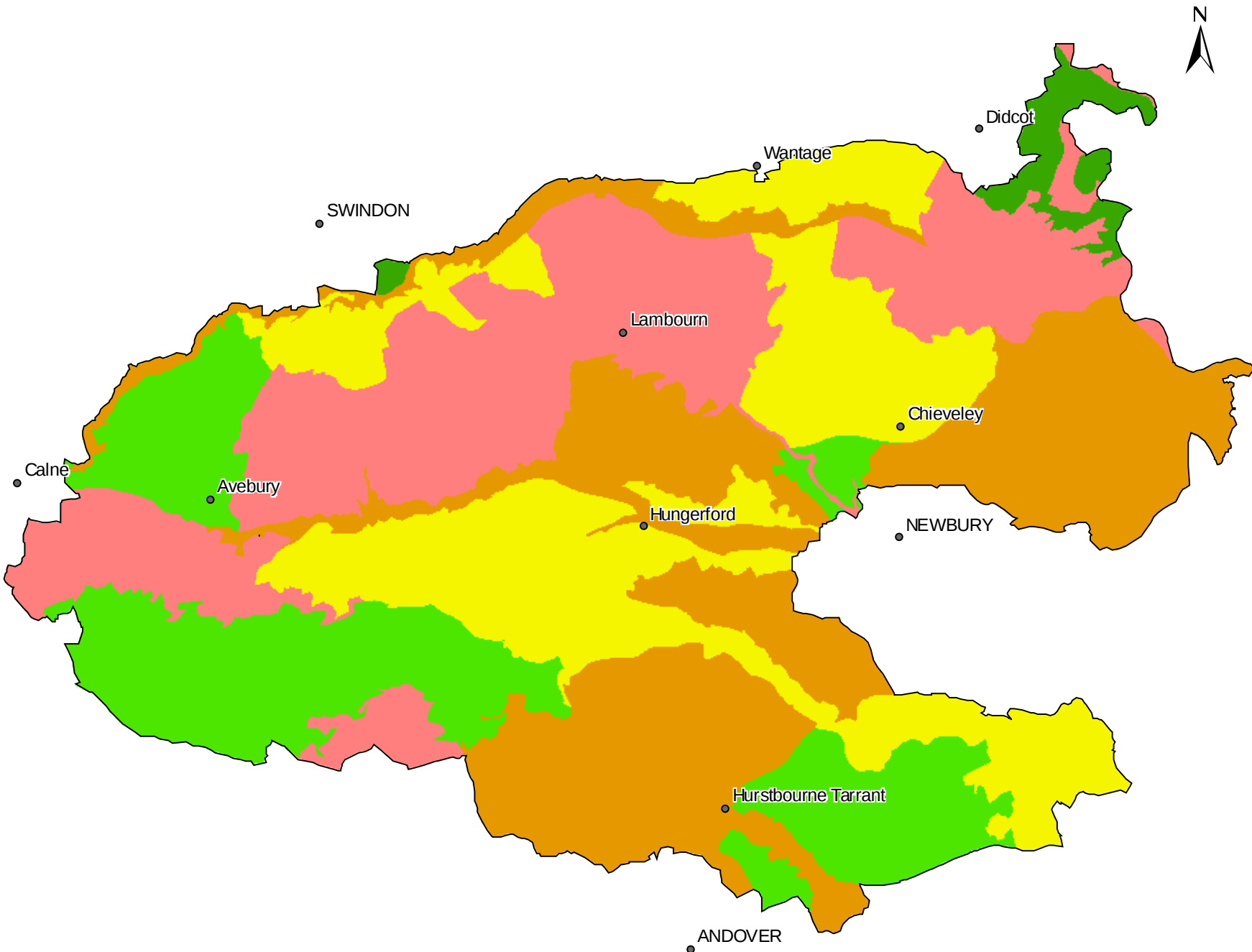
Reduced opportunities for woodland planting

Plan 6 Landscape

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Scale: 1:250,000
Drawn By: KH



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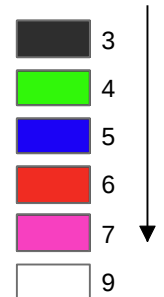




Biodiversity & Connectivity

- AONB
- Towns

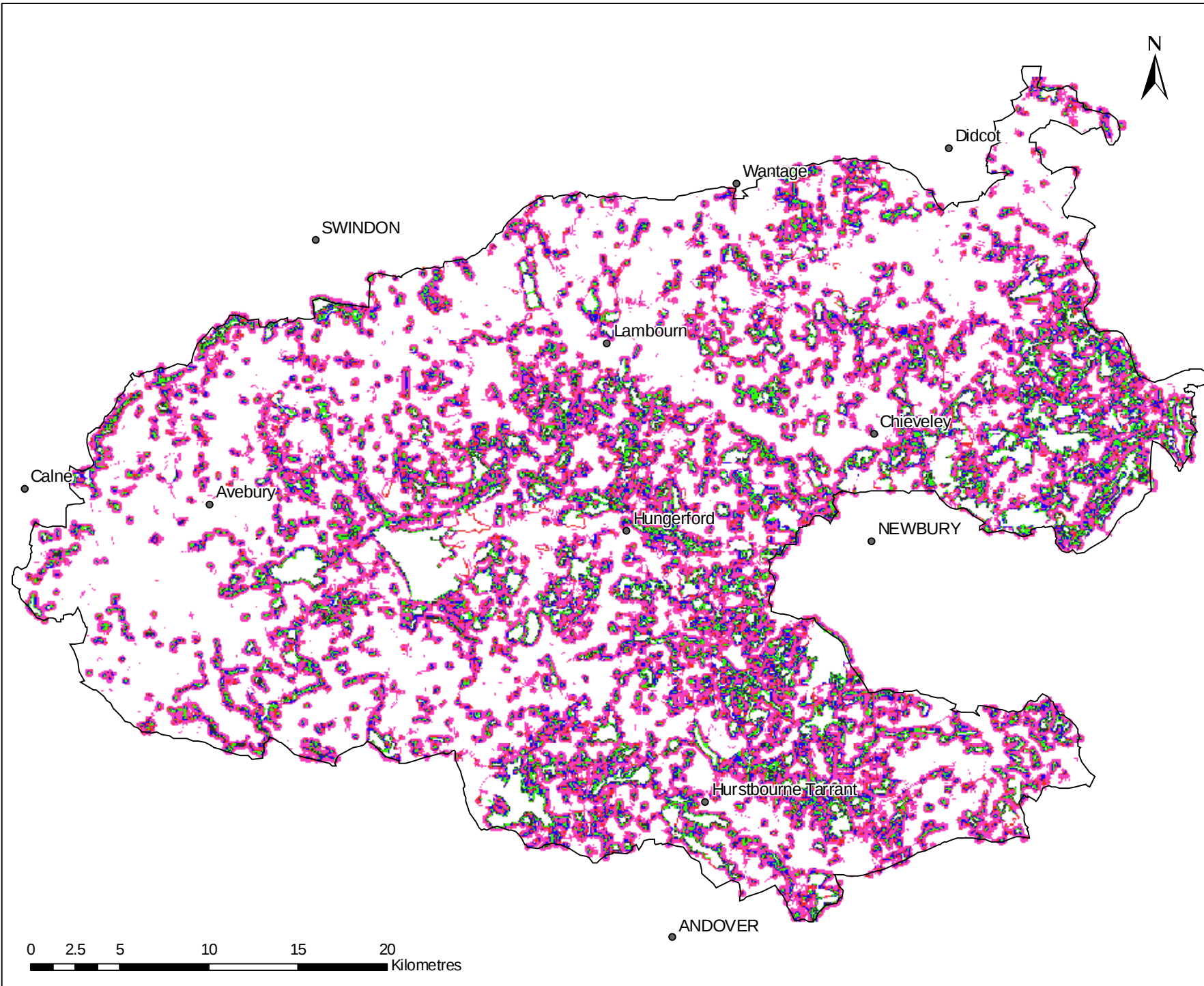
Biodiversity & Connectivity Scores



Reduced opportunities for woodland planting

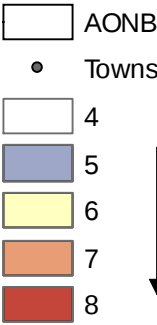
Plan 7 Biodiversity & Connectivity

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Access



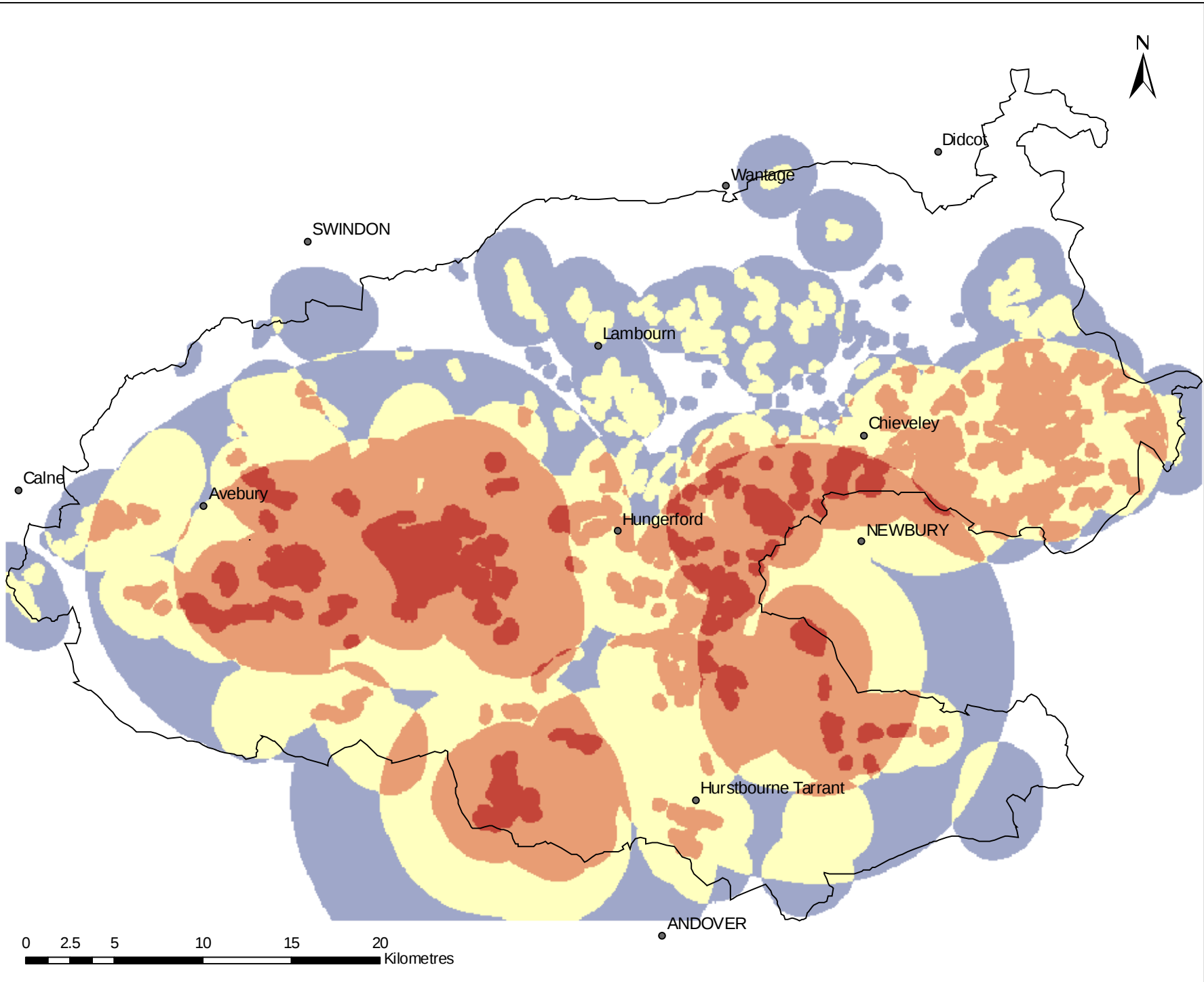
Reduced opportunities
for woodland planting

Plan 8
Access

Date: 01/09/05
Scale: 1:250,000
Drawn By: KH



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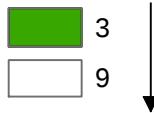




Historic Landscape

-  AONB
-  Towns

Historic Landscape Scores



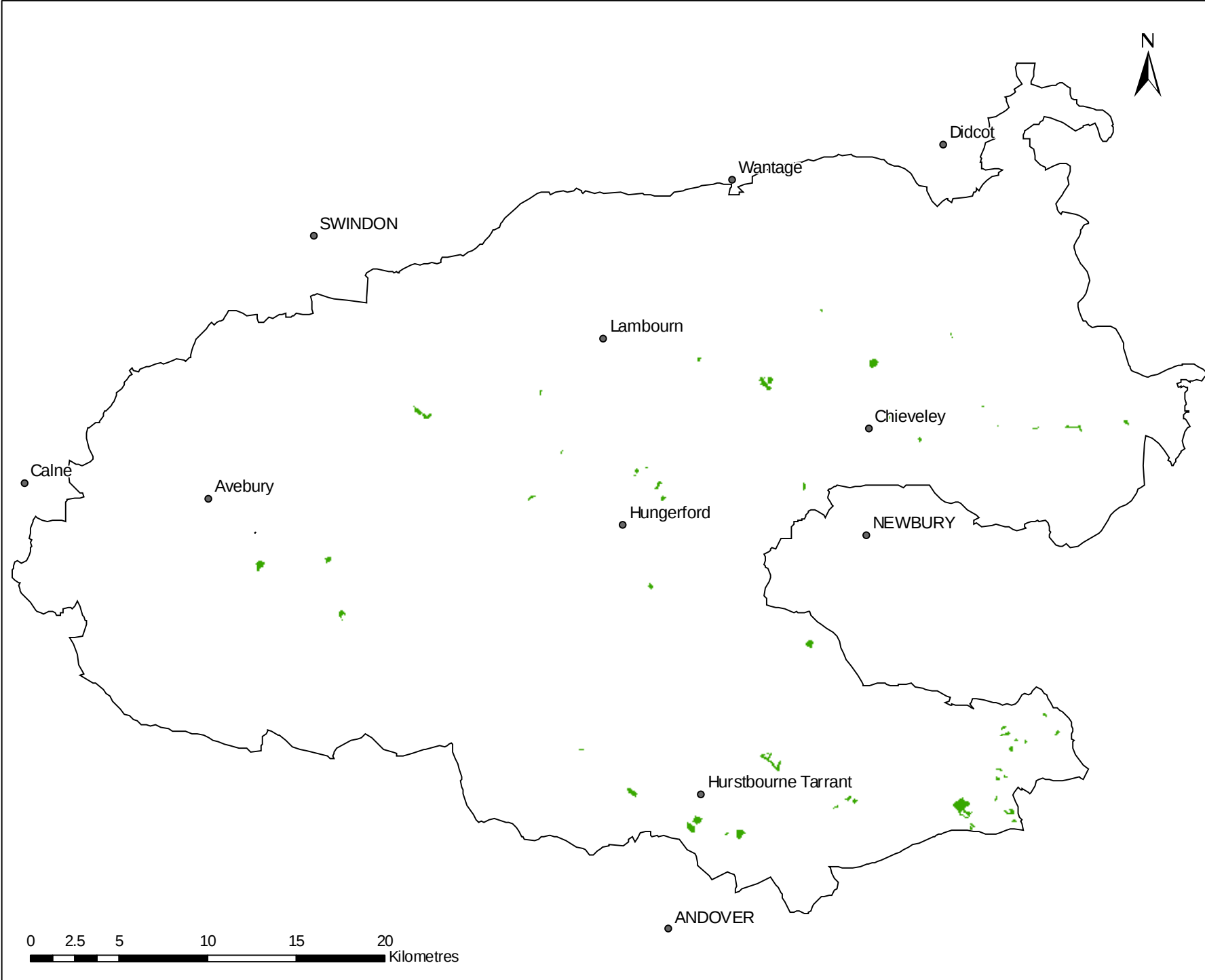
Reduced opportunities for woodland planting

**Plan 9
Historic Landscape**

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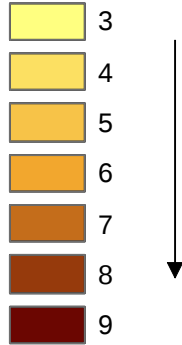




Yield

-  AONB
-  Towns

Yield Scores



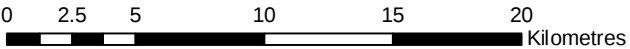
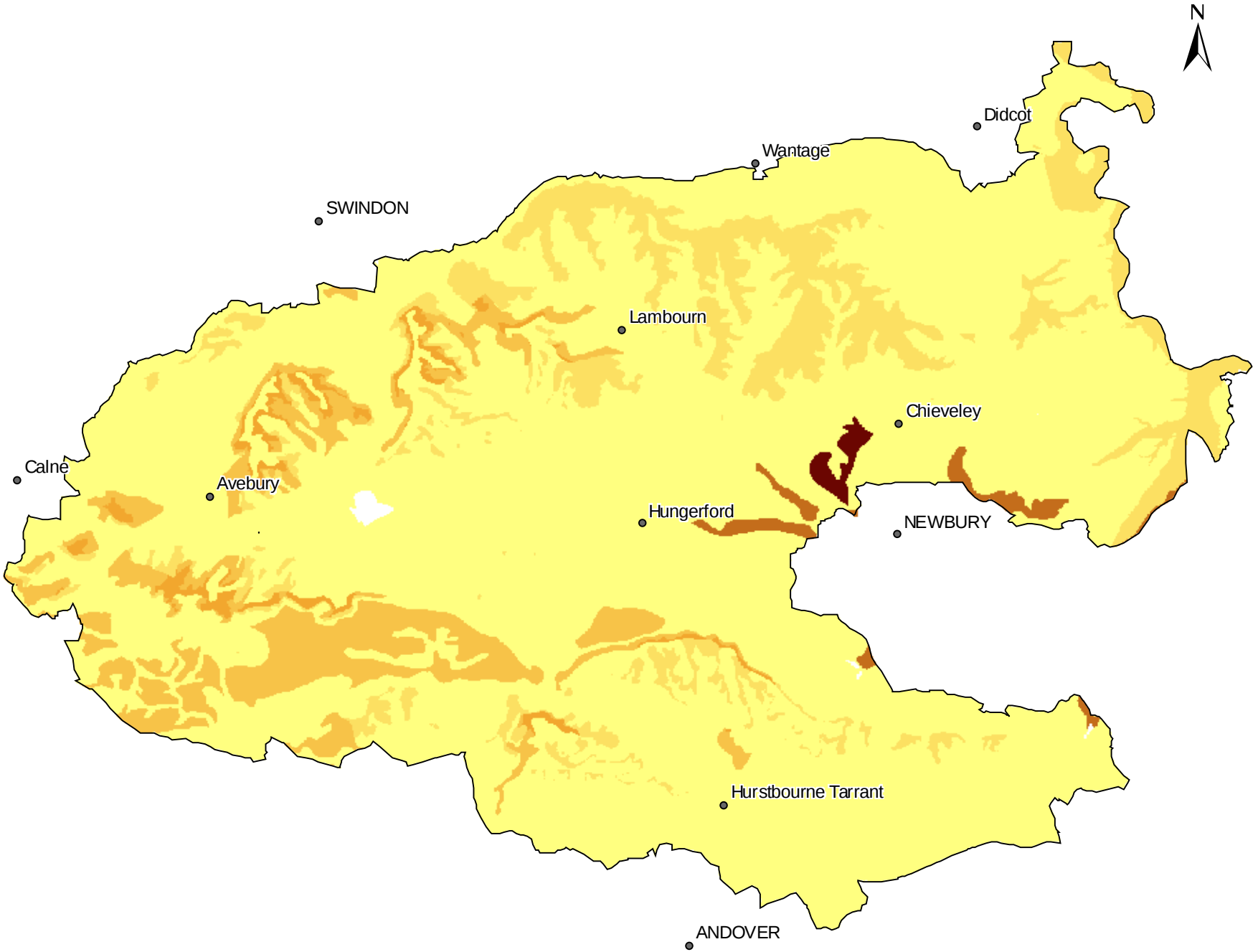
Reduced opportunities for woodland planting

Plan 10 Yield

Date: 01/09/05
Scale: 1:250,000
Drawn By: KH



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Unweighted Model

□ AONB

● Towns

Scores

16 - 26

27 - 28

29 - 30

31 - 32

33 - 40

↓

Constraint Layer

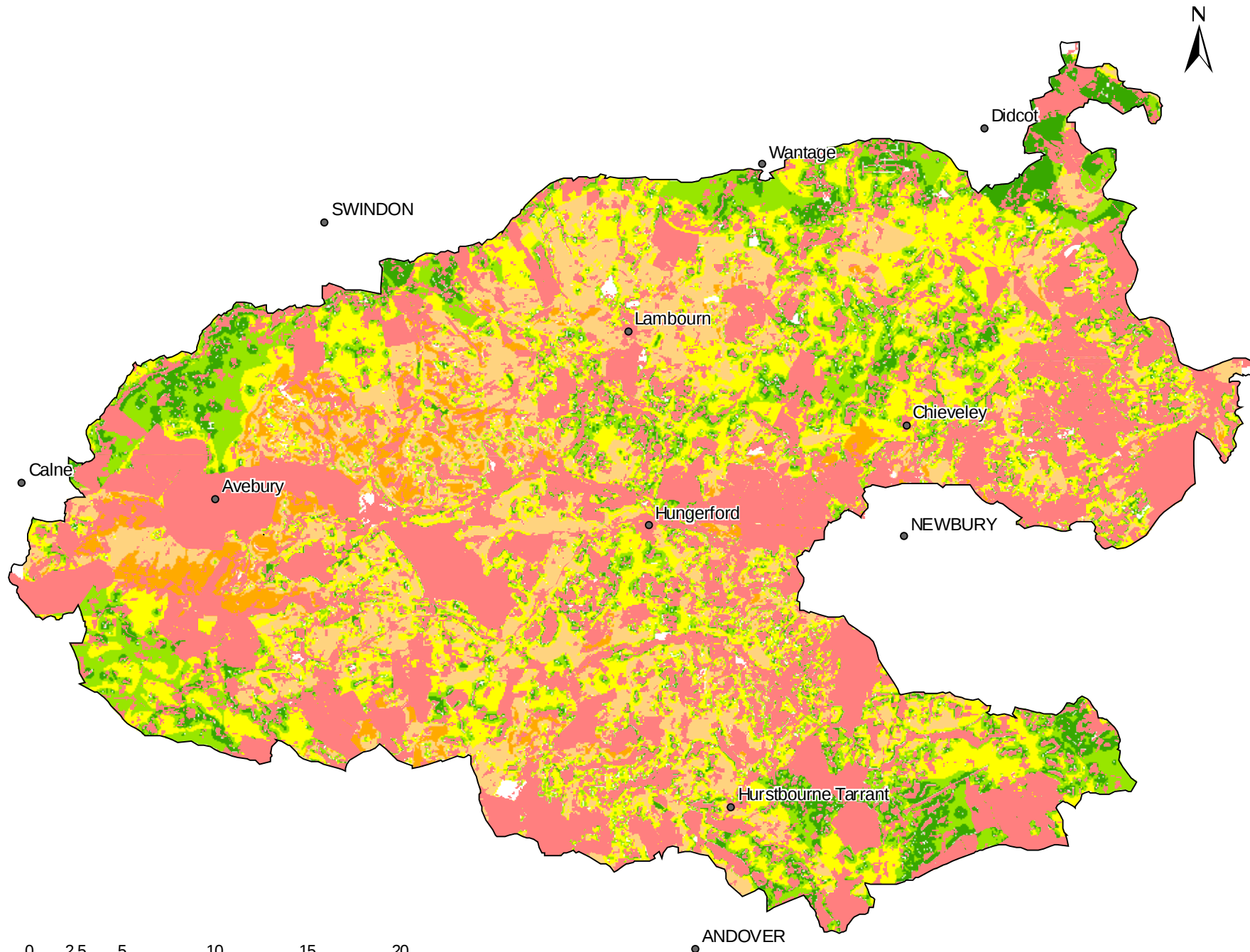
Reduced opportunities
for woodland planting

Plan 11 Unweighted Opportunities

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Scale: 1:250,000
Drawn By: KH



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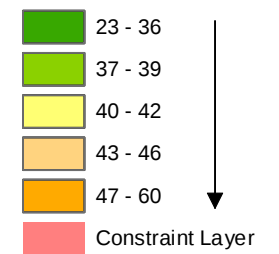


Weighted Model

- AONB
- Towns

Weighted Model

Scores



Plan 12 Weighted Opportunities

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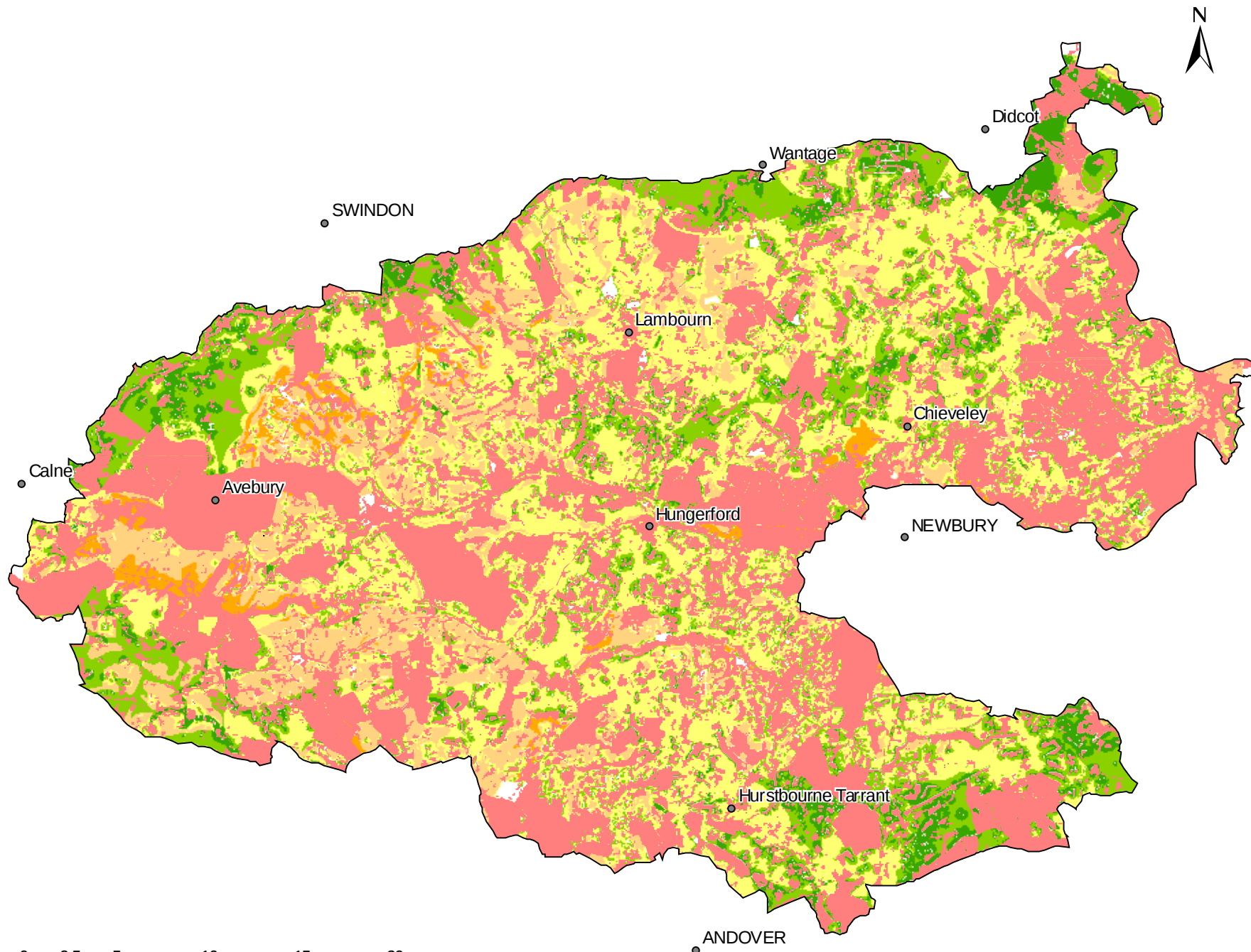
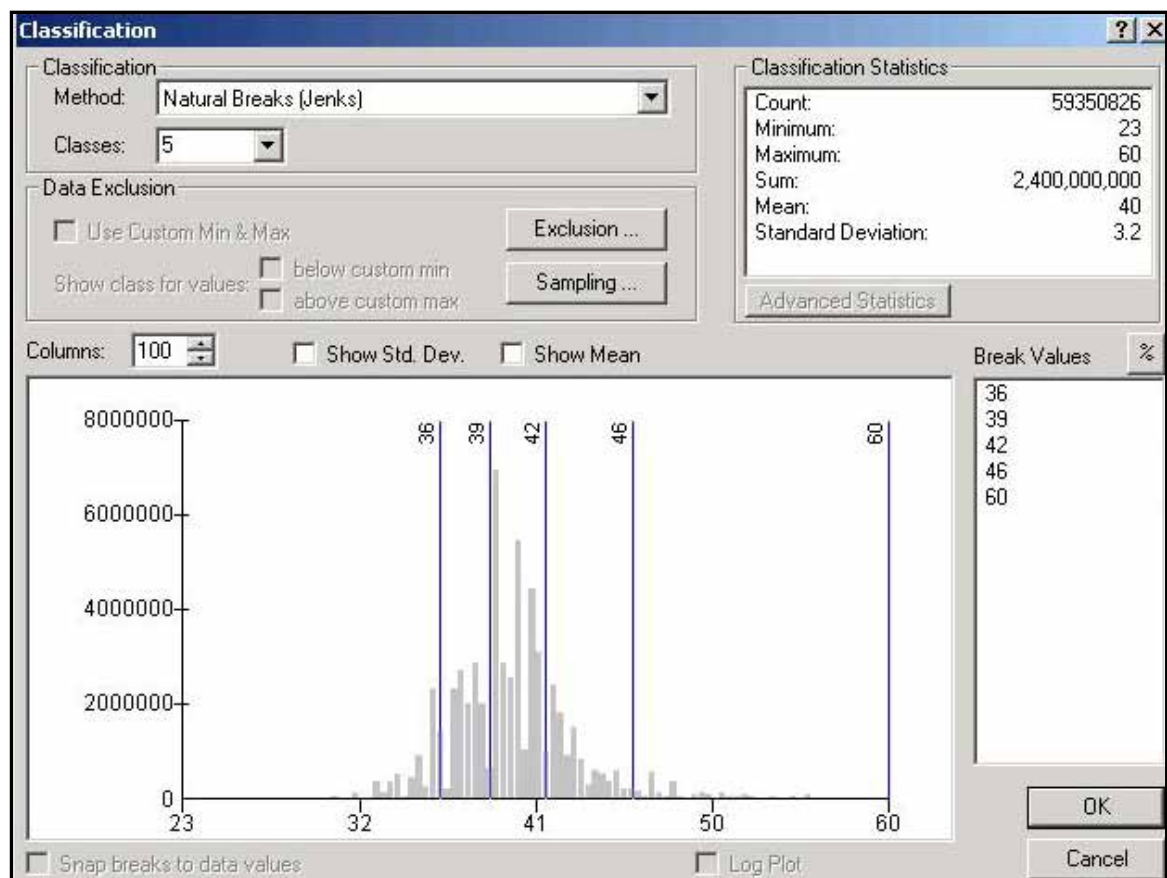


Figure 10. Distribution of scores



8. Conclusions

- 8.1 This strategy consolidates all of the currently available information regarding the woodland resources of the AONB. The area of woodland is larger than was originally thought and there is now a much better knowledge of the distribution of woodlands by size across the different landscape character types and areas. Information has also been provided regarding the nature conservation importance of the woodlands and those woodlands to which there is some form of access have also been identified.
- 8.2 The main area where there is a lack of information relates to the condition of the woodlands and the nature and extent of management. Recent research would seem to indicate that the intensity of management is falling with a consequent change to the biological make up of woodlands. Woodlands appear to be ageing and becoming more densely shaded with a consequent reduction in the amount of open areas and natural regeneration within the woodland.
- 8.3 There are a multitude of policy documents at national through to local levels covering woodlands. Of possibly greatest immediate consequence is the recent launching of the new England Woodland Grant Scheme which sees a marked shift in emphasis from woodland creation towards the management of the existing woodland resource.
- 8.4 The issues faced by the woodlands within the AONB are many but few are particular to the region – the problems faced are common to most areas of the country. The depressed price for timber, the small and scattered nature of the woodland resource and the general poor quality of much of the timber means that, apart from a small number of owners who manage most of the larger woodland blocks, there is little financial incentive for woodland work. Even the owners of the larger woodland areas are undertaking some operations at a financial loss.
- 8.5 Despite the problems faced by the woodlands they remain a major resource of the AONB. They contribute to the economy of the area, they are invaluable components of the landscape, they represent a major element of the nature conservation assets of the AONB and provide a significant area of public access to the countryside. This strategy has attempted to bring together information regarding this resource, identify some of the major issues faced and to provide guidance on how these issues may best be tackled.

Appendix 1. Detailed Tables

Table 2. Woodland Area by Landscape Character Type IFT, Ancient Woodlands, WGS and Master Map					
Landscape Character Type	Area (ha)	IFT Woodland (Ha)	IFT Data % Woodland	Total Woodland (Ha)	Total Data % Woodland
Open Downland	40494	1348	3.30%	2568	6.30%
Downland with Woodland	51382	6192	12.10%	8223	16.00%
Wooded Plateau	11090	3073	27.70%	3424	31.40%
High Chalk Plain	2206	153	6.90%	217	11.20%
Downs Plain and Scarp	22646	748	3.30%	1387	6.10%
Vales	18655	479	2.60%	905	4.90%
River Valleys	6542	751	11.50%	1041	15.90%
Lowland Mosaic	19085	4491	23.50%	5546	29.10%
AONB Totals	172100	17235	10.00%	23310	13.50%

Table 3. Woodland Composition for Each Landscape Character Type

			Broadleaved		Coniferous		Felled		Mixed		Shrub		Young		Coppice		Coppice with Standards		Unassigned		Total	
Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Area	Area (Ha)	Ha	%	Ha	%	Ha	%	Ha	%	Ha	%	Ha	%	Ha	%	Ha	%	Ha	%	Ha	%
Open Downland	Marlborough Downs	13886	267	1.9%	35	0.3%	10	0.1%	101	0.7%	11	0.1%	113	0.8%	3	0.0%	10	0.1%	512	3.7%	1063	7.7%
	Lambourn Downs	11293	174	1.5%	9	0.1%	8	0.1%	34	0.3%	8	0.1%	52	0.5%	0	0.0%	20	0.2%	402	3.6%	708	6.3%
	Horton Downs	7079	100	1.4%	0	0.0%	6	0.1%	3	0.0%	14	0.2%	3	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	99	1.4%	225	3.2%
	Blewbury Downs	8236	180	2.2%	4	0.1%	6	0.1%	63	0.8%	50	0.6%	60	0.7%	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	207	2.5%	573	7.0%
Totals		40494	722	1.8%	49	0.1%	30	0.1%	201	0.5%	83	0.2%	228	0.6%	5	0.0%	31	0.1%	1220	3.0%	2568	6.3%
Downland with Woodland	Brightwalton Downs	9650	278	2.9%	76	0.8%	23	0.2%	153	1.6%	10	0.1%	19	0.2%	26	0.3%	127	1.3%	282	2.9%	994	10.3%
	Ashampstead Downs	4988	586	11.7%	99	2.0%	52	1.1%	269	5.4%	8	0.2%	54	1.1%	9	0.2%	5	0.1%	177	3.5%	1260	25.3%
	Lambourn Wooded Downs	5834	366	6.3%	48	0.8%	6	0.1%	97	1.7%	2	0.0%	41	0.7%	2	0.0%	29	0.5%	274	4.7%	867	14.9%
	Walbury Hill/Watership Down Scarp	3662	237	6.5%	34	0.9%	21	0.6%	41	1.1%	66	1.8%	44	1.2%	4	0.1%	0	0.0%	169	4.6%	618	16.9%
	Chute Forest/Facombe	15122	1579	10.4%	188	1.2%	34	0.2%	422	2.8%	75	0.5%	75	0.5%	8	0.1%	30	0.2%	770	5.1%	3182	21.0%
	Litchfield Downs	8798	395	4.5%	60	0.7%	24	0.3%	88	1.0%	3	0.0%	47	0.5%	4	0.0%	6	0.1%	266	3.0%	893	10.1%
	Hannington Downs	3328	205	6.2%	56	1.7%	2	0.1%	31	0.9%	1	0.0%	16	0.5%	0	0.0%	5	0.1%	93	2.8%	410	12.3%
Totals		51382	3647	7.1%	563	1.1%	163	0.3%	1102	2.1%	166	0.3%	297	0.6%	53	0.1%	201	0.4%	2031	4.0%	8223	16.0%
Wooded Plateau	Savernake Forest	11090	1826	16.5%	418	3.8%	83	0.7%	449	4.0%	47	0.4%	240	2.2%	4	0.0%	6	0.1%	351	3.7%	3424	31.4%
High Chalk Plain	Salisbury Plain	2206	69	3.1%	14	0.7%	2	0.1%	34	1.5%	0	0.0%	30	1.3%	0	0.0%	4	0.2%	64	4.3%	217	11.2%
Downs Plain and Scarp	Avebury Plain	6581	25	0.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	0.1%	2	0.0%	5	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	195	3.1%	233	3.7%
	Chiseldon - Wanborough Plain	4250	71	1.7%	8	0.2%	5	0.1%	1	0.0%	22	0.5%	5	0.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	97	3.2%	209	5.8%
	Hendred Plain	4239	67	1.6%	6	0.2%	2	0.1%	30	0.7%	3	0.1%	54	1.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	137	3.1%	300	6.9%
	Moreton Plain	3290	50	1.5%	5	0.2%	0	0.0%	15	0.5%	5	0.2%	4	0.1%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	52	1.6%	133	4.1%
	Clyffe Pypard - Badbury Wooded Scarp	1229	171	13.9%	5	0.4%	2	0.2%	26	2.1%	14	1.2%	9	0.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	90	9.9%	318	28.4%
	Liddington - Letcombe Open Scarp	3057	54	1.8%	0	0.0%	4	0.1%	31	1.0%	4	0.1%	33	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	68	2.3%	194	6.4%
Totals		22646	438	1.9%	25	0.1%	14	0.1%	109	0.5%	50	0.2%	110	0.5%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	639	2.8%	1387	6.1%
Vales	Vale of Pewsey	15772	274	1.7%	40	0.3%	3	0.0%	56	0.4%	1	0.0%	29	0.2%	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	306	2.1%	709	4.7%
	Shalbourne Vale	1451	19	1.3%	2	0.1%	2	0.1%	2	0.2%	0	0.0%	8	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	68	4.9%	101	7.1%
	Wanborough Vale	256	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	4.5%	8	4.5%
	Thames Floodplain - Benson	164	6	3.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	1.7%	0	0.0%	3	1.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	2.5%	15	9.3%
	Thames Floodplain - Moreton	604	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	26	4.3%	30	4.9%
	Thames Floodplain - Streatley and Basildon	408	2	0.5%	2	0.6%	1	0.1%	2	0.5%	5	1.3%	15	3.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	14	3.2%	42	10.1%
Totals		18655	301	1.6%	44	0.2%	5	0.0%	66	0.4%	7	0.0%	54	0.3%	1	0.0%	1	0.0%	426	2.3%	905	4.9%
River Valley	Kennet Valley	3262	295	9.2%	19	0.6%	10	0.3%	28	0.9%	21	0.6%	10	0.3%	2	0.1%	3	0.1%	141	5.7%	530	17.8%
	Lambourn Valley	483	27	5.6%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	2	0.5%	5	0.9%	5	1.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	37	6.9%	77	15.3%
	Bourne Valley	1593	137	8.6%	44	2.8%	24	1.5%	14	0.9%	0	0.0%	10	0.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	76	4.3%	306	18.8%
	Pang Valley	1204	75	6.2%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	7	0.6%	0	0.0%	7	0.6%	0	0.0%	2	0.2%	36	2.9%	128	10.5%
Totals		6542	534	8.2%	64	1.0%	36	0.6%	52	0.8%	25	0.4%	32	0.5%	2	0.0%	5	0.1%	290	4.4%	1041	15.9%
Lowland Mosaic	Hermitage Lowlands and Heath	8562	1274	14.9%	224	2.6%	83	1.0%	707	8.3%	26	0.3%	109	1.3%	3	0.0%	3	0.0%	587	6.3%	3015	34.7%
	Winterbourne Farmland	1383	43	3.1%	3	0.2%	0	0.0%	36	2.6%	4	0.3%	6	0.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	50	3.5%	142	10.1%
	Wickham Wooded Heath	658	63	9.6%	60	9.2%	72	10.9%	88	13.4%	3	0.5%	22	3.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	31	5.0%	340	51.9%
	Highclere Lowlands and Heath	4678	623	13.3%	161	3.4%	52	1.1%	415	8.9%	9	0.2%	84	1.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	289	6.3%	1633	35.0%
	Hungerford Farmland	3216	122	3.8%	25	0.8%	6	0.2%	40	1.2%	4	0.1%	23	0.7%	1	0.0%	7	0.2%	80	2.5%	307	9.6%
	Ewhurst Park	588	71	12.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.2%	13	2.2%	0	0.0%	5	0.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	18	3.1%	108	18.3%
Totals		19085	2197	11.5%	473	2.5%	214	1.1%	1299	6.8%	46	0.2%	250	1.3%	4	0.0%	9	0.0%	1055	5.5%	5546	29.1%
Grand Total		172100	9734	5.7%	1650	1.0%	547	0.3%	3311	1.9%	424	0.2%	1241	0.7%	70	0.0%	257	0.1%	6076	3.5%	23310	13.5%

Table 4. Distribution of Woodland Blocks by Landscape Character Type

			Size of Individual Woodland Blocks																																		
			0.0-0.25ha				0.26-2ha				2.1-5ha				5.1-10ha				10.1-25ha				25.1-50ha				50.1-100ha				>100ha				All Blocks		
Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Area	Area (Ha)	No.	Ha	Av.	No.	Ha	Av.	No.	Ha	Av.	No.	Ha	Av.	No.	Ha	Av.	No.	Ha	Av.	No.	Ha	Av.	No.	Ha	Av.	No.	Ha	Av.	No.	Ha	Av.					
Open Downland	Marlborough Downs	13886	227	28	0.1	313	237	0.8	65	215	3.3	35	244	7.0	9	143	15.9	6	194	32.3	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	655	1061	1.6					
	Lambourn Downs	11293	107	14	0.1	135	103	0.8	50	147	2.9	24	165	6.9	7	136	19.4	2	74	37.0	1	68	68.0	0	0	0.0	326	707	2.2								
	Horton Downs	7079	130	10	0.1	86	65	0.8	15	46	3.1	9	62	6.9	1	14	14.0	1	29	29.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	242	226	0.9								
	Blewbury Downs	8236	95	13	0.1	129	98	0.8	35	110	3.1	9	61	6.8	6	106	17.7	0	0	0.0	1	55	55.0	1	127	127.0	276	570	2.1								
Total		40494	559	65	0.1	663	503	0.8	165	518	3.1	77	532	6.9	23	399	17.3	9	297	33.0	2	123	61.5	1	127	127	1499	2564	1.7								
Downland with Woodland	Brightwalton Downs	9650	130	18	0.1	191	139	0.7	47	151	3.2	24	175	7.3	17	318	18.7	3	91	30.3	0	0	0.0	1	102	102.0	413	994	2.4								
	Ashampstead Downs	4988	123	18	0.1	121	82	0.7	47	153	3.3	17	119	7.0	19	294	15.5	5	177	35.4	4	248	62.0	1	169	169.0	337	1260	3.7								
	Lambourn Wooded Downs	5834	147	16	0.1	162	116	0.7	44	146	3.3	26	183	7.0	15	208	13.9	7	197	28.1	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	401	866	2.2								
	Walbury Hill/Watership Down Scarp	3662	109	9	0.1	132	100	0.8	30	96	3.2	18	132	7.3	11	155	14.1	2	58	29.0	1	67	67.0	0	0	0.0	303	617	2.0								
	Chute Forest/Facombe	15122	330	33	0.1	335	254	0.8	87	286	3.3	37	258	7.0	32	527	16.5	12	392	32.7	8	588	73.5	5	845	169.0	846	3183	3.8								
	Litchfield Downs	8798	137	19	0.1	216	154	0.7	54	163	3.0	19	131	6.9	19	267	14.1	5	160	32.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	450	894	2.0								
	Hannington Downs	3328	80	8	0.1	54	41	0.8	29	86	3.0	12	88	7.3	6	71	11.8	3	115	38.3	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	184	409	2.2								
	Total		51382	1056	121	0.1	1211	886	0.7	338	1081	3.2	153	1086	7.1	119	1840	15.5	37	1190	32.2	13	903	69.5	4	1116	279.0	2934	8223	2.8							
Wooded Plateau	Savernake Forest	11090	207	23	0.1	160	108	0.7	40	130	3.3	28	190	6.8	25	408	16.3	13	477	36.7	5	360	72.0	5	1727	345.4	483	3423	7.1								
High Chalk Plain	Salisbury Plain	2206	29	3	0.1	50	36	0.7	8	26	3.3	5	31	6.2	2	25	12.5	1	46	46.0	1	50	50.0	0	0	0.0	96	217	2.3								
Downs Plain and Scarp	Avebury Plain	6581	104	14	0.1	108	80	0.7	11	31	2.8	1	6	6.0	2	27	13.5	0	0	0.0	1	75	75.0	0	0	0.0	227	233	1.0								
	Chiseldon - Wanborough Plain	4250	66	8	0.1	53	43	0.8	7	20	2.9	2	15	7.5	1	12	12.0	3	110	36.7	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	132	208	1.6								
	Hendred Plain	4239	78	11	0.1	85	53	0.6	10	33	3.3	5	38	7.6	6	86	14.3	2	77	38.5	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	186	298	1.6								
	Moreton Plain	3290	37	4	0.1	45	34	0.8	12	35	2.9	1	8	8.0	1	10	10.0	1	42	42.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	97	133	1.4								
	Clyffe Pypard - Badbury Wooded Scarp	1229	98	6	0.1	50	42	0.8	22	67	3.0	6	43	7.2	8	114	14.3	1	46	46.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	185	318	1.7								
	Liddington - Letcombe Open Scarp	3057	43	4	0.1	67	51	0.8	13	39	3.0	4	27	6.8	5	74	14.8	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	132	195	1.5								
Total		22646	426	47	0.1	408	303	0.7	75	225	3.0	19	137	7.2	23	323	14.0	7	275	39.3	1	75	75.0	0	0	0	959	1385	1.4								
Vales	Vale of Pewsey	15772	403	35	0.1	291	193	0.7	37	119	3.2	12	86	7.2	7	88	12.6	0	0	0.0	3	188	62.7	0	0	0.0	753	709	0.9								
	Shalbourne Vale	1451	23	3	0.1	44	35	0.8	7	18	2.6	2	15	7.5	0	0	0.0	1	30	30.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	77	101	1.3								
	Wanborough Vale	256	3	0	0.1	9	5	0.6	1	3	3.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	13	8	0.6								
	Thames Floodplain - Benson	164	22	1	0.1	6	6	1.0	1	3	3.0	1	5	5.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	30	15	0.5								
	Thames Floodplain - Moreton	604	9	1	0.1	4	2	0.5	1	3	3.0	0	0	0.0	1	23	23.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	15	29	1.9								
	Thames Floodplain - Streatley and Basildon	408	10	1	0.1	22	12	0.5	1	2	2.0	0	0	0.0	2	26	13.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	35	41	1.2								
Total		18655	470	41	0.1	376	253	0.7	48	148	3.1	15	106	7.1	10	137	13.7	1	30	30.0	3	188	63	0	0	0	923	903	1.0								
River Valley	Kenet Valley	3262	334	20	0.1	140	93	0.7	31	95	3.1	10	71	7.1	6	92	15.3	3	100	33.3	1	58	58.0	0	0	0.0	525	529	1.0								
	Lambourn Valley	483	228	7	0.1	33	24	0.7	4	14	3.5	3	20	6.7	1	11	11.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	269	76	0.3								
	Bourne Valley	1593	37	4	0.1	45	28	0.6	9	32	3.6	4	24	6.0	2	41	20.5	1	41	41.0	2	137	0.0	0	0	0.0	100	307	3.1								
	Pang Valley	1204	49	5	0.1	29	17	0.6	11	32	2.9	2	12	6.0	4	62	15.5	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	95	128	1.3								
	Total		6542	648	36	0.1	247	162	0.7	55	173	3.1	19	127	6.7	13	206	15.8	4	141	35.3	3	195	65.0	0	0	0	989	1040	1.1							
Lowland Mosaic	Hermitage Lowlands and Heath	8562	176	23	0.1	213	160	0.8	81	266	3.3	41	280	6.8	35	537	15.3	18	611	33.9	8	550	68.8	4	589	147.3	576	3016	5.2								
	Winterbourne Farmland	1383	45	5	0.1	41	30	0.7	7	24	3.4	1	6	6.0	3	40	13.3	1	36	36.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	98	141	1.4								
	Wickham Wooded Heath	658	12	1	0.1	22	19	0.9	2	5	2.5	2	13	6.5	1	13	13.0	1	42	42.0	1	66	0.0	1	180	180.0	42	339	8.1								
	Highclere Lowlands and Heath	4678	134	14	0.1	114	79	0.7	44	142	3.2	14	105	7.5	30	439	14.6	5	157	31.4	2	129	64.5	2	568	284.0	345	1633	4.7								
	Hungerford Farmland	3216	63	10	0.2	67	48	0.7	16	56	3.5	4	27	6.8	10	141	14.1	1	25	25.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	161	307	1.9								
	Ewhurst Park	588	35	2	0.1	23	18	0.8	8	30	3.8	7	48	6.9	1	10	10.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	74	108	1.5								
Total		19085	465	55	0.1	480	354	0.7	158	523	3.3	69	479	6.9	80	1180	14.8	26	871	33.5	11	745	67.7	7	1337	191.0	1296	5544	4.3								
Grand Total		172100	3860	391	0.1	3595	2605	0.7	887	2824	3.2	385	2688	7.0	295	4518	15.3	98	3327	33.9	39	2639	67.7	17	4307	253.4	9179	23299	2.5								

Table 6 Age Class Distribution in 1996 (IFT Data only)												
	Planting Decade											
	Pre 1861	1861-1900	1901-1910	1911-1920	1921-1930	1931-1940	1941-1950	1951-1960	1961-1970	1971-1980	1981-1990	1991-1997
Conifers	0.40%	0.40%	0.30%	0.40%	2.30%	5.10%	8.20%	38.20%	22.50%	1.50%	7.60%	13.20%
Broadleaves	2.40%	11.70%	4.90%	9.80%	8.30%	6.00%	15.00%	20.00%	8.00%	3.30%	4.40%	6.20%
All Species	1.90%	9.20%	3.90%	7.70%	7.00%	5.80%	13.50%	24.00%	11.20%	2.90%	5.10%	7.70%

Table 7. Nature Conservation Designation by Landscape Type

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Area	Woodland Area (Ha)	NNR's		SAC's		SSSI's		SINC's		All Designations		ASNW	
			Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area	Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area	Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area	Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area	Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area	Area (Ha)	% Woodland Area
Open Downland	Marlborough Downs	1062	5	0.5%		0.0%	14	1.3%	257	24.2%	257	24.2%	282	26.6%
	Lambourn Downs	708		0.0%		0.0%	2	0.3%	96	13.6%	98	13.8%	99	14.0%
	Horton Downs	225		0.0%	2	0.9%	46	20.4%	97	43.1%	97	43.1%	23	10.2%
	Blewbury Downs	571		0.0%		0.0%	10	1.8%	193	33.8%	203	35.6%	121	21.2%
	Total	2566	5	0.2%	2	0.1%	72	2.8%	643	25.1%	655	25.5%	525	20.5%
Downland with Woodland	Brightwalton Downs	994		0.0%		0.0%	16	1.6%	437	44.0%	453	45.6%	496	49.9%
	Ashampstead Downs	1259		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	655	52.0%	655	52.0%	415	33.0%
	Lambourn Wooded Downs	866		0.0%		0.0%	1	0.1%	354	40.9%	354	40.9%	399	46.1%
	Walbury Hill/Watership Down Scarp	617		0.0%		0.0%	34	5.5%	205	33.2%	239	38.7%	85	13.8%
	Chute Forest/Facombe	3182		0.0%		0.0%	214	6.7%	1281	40.3%	1495	47.0%	1466	46.1%
	Litchfield Downs	893		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	404	45.2%	404	45.2%	396	44.3%
	Hannington Downs	408		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	243	59.6%	243	59.6%	234	57.4%
	Total	8219	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	265	3.2%	3579	43.5%	3843	46.8%	3491	42.5%
Wooded Plateau	Savernake Forest	3422		0.0%		0.0%	910	26.6%	2450	71.6%	2456	71.8%	1978	57.8%
High Chalk Plain	Salisbury Plain	217		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	76	35.0%	76	35.0%	66	30.4%
Downs Plain and Scarp	Avebury Plain	233		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	21	9.0%	21	9.0%	23	9.9%
	Chiseldon - Wanborough Plain	209		0.0%		0.0%	8	3.8%	88	42.1%	93	44.5%	44	21.1%
	Hendred Plain	299		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	3	1.0%	3	1.0%	0	0.0%
	Moreton Plain	133		0.0%	43	32.3%	43	32.3%	0	0.0%	43	32.3%	44	33.1%
	Clyffe Pypard - Badbury Wooded Scarp	318		0.0%		0.0%	61	19.2%	164	51.6%	164	51.6%	147	46.2%
	Liddington - Letcombe Open Scarp	194		0.0%		0.0%	10	5.2%	3	1.5%	13	6.7%	8	4.1%
	Total	1386	0	0.0%	43	3.1%	122	8.8%	279	20.1%	337	24.3%	266	19.2%
Vales	Vale of Pewsey	711		0.0%	3	0.4%	4	0.6%	193	27.1%	195	27.4%	169	23.8%
	Shalbourne Vale	100		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	9	9.0%	9	9.0%	15	15.0%
	Wanborough Vale	8		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
	Thames Floodplain - Benson	16		0.0%	4	22.7%	3	18.8%	1	6.3%	5	31.3%	2	12.5%
	Thames Floodplain - Moreton	29		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	3.4%
	Thames Floodplain - Streatley & Basildon	41		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total		905	0	0.0%	7	0.7%	7	0.8%	203	22.4%	209	23.1%	187	20.7%
River Valley	Kennet Valley	530		0.0%	60	11.3%	86	16.2%	108	20.4%	171	32.3%	35	6.6%
	Lambourn Valley	77		0.0%	7	9.1%	6	7.8%	7	9.1%	13	16.9%	0	0.0%
	Bourne Valley	306		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	149	48.7%	149	48.7%	55	18.0%
	Pang Valley	128		0.0%		0.0%	30	23.4%	37	28.9%	67	52.3%	48	37.5%
Total		1041	0	0.0%	67	6.4%	122	11.7%	301	28.9%	400	38.4%	138	13.3%
Lowland Mosaic	Hermitage Lowlands and Heath	3016		0.0%		0.0%	137	4.5%	1586	52.6%	1723	57.1%	1263	41.9%
	Winterbourne Farmland	142		0.0%	1	0.7%	2	1.4%	35	24.6%	37	26.1%	27	19.0%
	Wickham Wooded Heath	340		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	11	3.2%	11	3.2%	45	13.2%
	Highclere Lowlands and Heath	1633		0.0%		0.0%	86	5.3%	544	33.3%	630	38.6%	492	30.1%
	Hungerford Farmland	307		0.0%		0.0%	15	4.9%	75	24.4%	131	42.7%	80	26.1%
	Ewhurst Park	107		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	75	70.1%	75	70.1%	68	63.6%
Total		5545	0	0.0%	1	0.0%	240	4.3%	2326	41.9%	2607	47.0%	1975	35.6%
Grand Total		23301	5	0.0%	120	0.5%	1738	7.5%	9857	42.3%	10583	45.4%	8626	37.0%

Table 8. Distribution of ASNW by Blocks and Area for Each Landscape Type

			ASNW			ASNW Replanted			Total ASNW		
Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Area	Area (Ha)	No	Area (Ha)	Av. Size (Ha)	No	Area (Ha)	Av. Size (Ha)	No	Area (Ha)	Av. Size (Ha)
Open Downland	Marlborough Downs	13886	89	179	2.0	53	104	2.0	142	283	2.0
	Lambourn Downs	11293	47	94	2.0	9	5	0.6	56	99	1.8
	Horton Downs	7079	8	23	2.8	0	0	0.0	8	23	2.8
	Blebury Downs	8236	25	102	4.1	9	19	2.1	34	122	3.6
Total		40494	169	398	2.4	71	128	1.8	240	526	2.2
Downland with Woodland	Brightwalton Downs	9650	158	364	2.3	86	134	1.6	244	497	2.0
	Ashampstead Downs	4988	95	304	3.2	78	112	1.4	173	416	2.4
	Lambourn Wooded Downs	5834	160	354	2.2	43	46	1.1	203	400	2.0
	Walbury Hill/Watership Down Scarp	3662	50	70	1.4	20	15	0.8	70	85	1.2
	Chute Forest/Facombe	15122	155	532	3.4	96	938	9.8	251	1470	5.9
	Litchfield Downs	8798	122	346	2.8	49	51	1.0	171	397	2.3
	Hannington Downs	3328	70	173	2.5	27	62	2.3	97	235	2.4
Total		51382	810	2142	2.6	399	1357	3.4	1209	3500	2.9
Wooded Plateau	Savernake Forest	11090	180	512	2.8	207	1471	7.1	387	1983	5.1
High Chalk Plain	Salisbury Plain	2206	5	34	6.8	10	33	3.3	15	67	4.4
Downs Plain and Scarp	Avebury Plain	6581	26	17	0.7	10	6	0.6	36	23	0.7
	Chiseldon - Wanborough Plain	4250	16	44	2.7	8	1	0.1	24	44	1.9
	Hendred Plain	4239	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
	Moreton Plain	3290	8	15	1.8	13	29	2.2	21	43	2.1
	Clyffe Pypard - Badbury Wooded Scarp	1229	56	116	2.1	22	31	1.4	78	147	1.9
	Liddington - Letcombe Open Scarp	3057	4	8	2.0	0	0	0.0	4	8	2.0
Total	Totals	22646	110	200	1.8	53	67	1.3	163	266	1.6
Vales	Vale of Pewsey	15772	24	68	2.8	38	101	2.7	62	169	2.7
	Shalbourne Vale	1451	11	9	0.9	8	5	0.7	19	15	0.8
	Wanborough Vale	256	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
	Thames Floodplain - Benson	164	1	0	0.0	7	2	0.4	8	2	0.3
	Thames Floodplain - Moreton	604	6	1	0.1	4	0	0.0	10	1	0.1
	Thames Floodplain - Streatley and Basildon	408	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
Total	Totals	18655	42	78	1.9	57	109	1.9	99	187	1.9
River Valley	Kennet Valley	3262	13	5	0.4	14	30	2.1	27	35	1.3
	Lambourn Valley	483	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0.0
	Bourne Valley	1593	20	29	1.4	19	26	1.4	39	55	1.4
	Pang Valley	1204	18	37	2.1	9	11	1.2	27	48	1.8
Total	Totals	6542	51	71	1.4	42	67	1.6	93	138	1.5
Lowland Mosaic	Hermitage Lowlands and Heath	8562	333	690	2.1	238	576	2.4	571	1266	2.2
	Winterbourne Farmland	1383	28	26	0.9	4	1	0.3	32	27	0.8
	Wickham Wooded Heath	658	16	20	1.3	26	25	0.9	42	45	1.1
	Highclere Lowlands and Heath	4678	171	330	1.9	102	164	1.6	273	493	1.8
	Hungerford Farmland	3216	45	55	1.2	29	25	0.9	74	80	1.1
	Ewhurst Park	588	29	64	2.2	8	4	0.5	37	68	1.8
Total	Totals	19085	622	1184	1.9	407	795	2.0	1029	1979	1.9
Grand Total		172100	1989	4620	2.3	1246	4026	3.2	3235	8646	2.7

Table 9. Woodland Access - Public Rights of Way and Open Access

Landscape Character Type	Landscape Character Area	Woodland Area	Woodland Area with PROW Access	% of Total Woodland Area	Area of Woodland with some type of Open Access	% of Total Woodland Area
Open Downland	Marlborough Downs	1063	728	69%	0	0%
	Lambourn Downs	708	404	57%	0	0%
	Horton Downs	225	122	54%	147	65%
	Blewbury Downs	573	157	27%	10	2%
Total		2568	1411	55%	157	6%
Downland with Woodland	Brightwalton Downs	994	467	47%	0	0%
	Ashmapstead Downs	1260	686	54%	0	0%
	Lambourn Wooded Downs	867	589	68%	0	0%
	Walbury Hill - Watership Down Scarp	618	348	56%	132	21%
	Chute Forest - Faccombe	3182	2202	69%	568	18%
	Litchfield Downs	893	461	52%	0	0%
	Hannington Downs	410	244	60%	0	0%
Total		8223	4997	61%	700	9%
Wooded Plateau	Savernake Forest	3424	2926	85%	2075	61%
High Chalk Plain	Salisbury Plain	217	180	83%	0	0%
Downs Plain and Scarp	Avebury Plain	233	231	99%	0	0%
	Chiseldon - Wanborough Plain	209	51	25%	0	0%
	Hendred Plain	300	0	0%	0	0%
	Moreton Plain	133	2	1%	0	0%
	Clyffe Pypard - Badbury Wooded Scarp	318	180	57%	0	0%
	Liddington - Letcombe Open Scarp	194	30	15%	0	0%
Total		1387	495	36%	0	0%
Vales	Vale of Pewsey	709	450	63%	3	0%
	Shalbourne Vale	101	28	28%	1	1%
	Wanborough Vale	8	0	3%	0	0%
	Thames Floodplain - Benson	15	0	0%	0	0%
	Thames Floodplain - Moreton	30	0	0%	0	0%
	Thames Floodplain - Streatley and Basildon	42	1	2%	0	0%
Total		905	479	53%	5	0%
River Valleys	Kennet Valley	530	317	60%	29	5%
	Lambourn Valley	77	35	45%	0	0%
	Bourne Valley	306	100	33%	0	0%
	Pang Valley	128	55	43%	10	8%
Total		1041	507	49%	39	4%
Lowland Mosaic	Hermitage Wooded Commons	3015	1859	62%	86	3%
	Winterbourne Farmland	142	72	51%	0	0%
	Wickham Wooded Heath	340	244	72%	0	0%
	Highclere Lowlands and Heath	1633	1125	69%	86	5%
	Hungerford Farmland	307	123	40%	0	0%
	Ewhurst Parklands	108	33	31%	0	0%
Total		5546	3456	69%	172	3%
Grand Total		23310	14450	69%	3148	14%

Appendix 2. Summaries of Plans and Reports Relating to the Landscape, Biodiversity and Habitats within the AONB.

1. National Strategies

England Forestry Strategy

Forestry policy has two main aims:

- the sustainable management of our existing woods and forests; and
- a continued steady expansion of our woodland area to provide more benefits for society and our environment.

The Strategy is based on four key programmes. These reflect wider policy objectives and build on the earlier consultation exercise. The integrated approach being promoted means that many of the proposed actions can contribute to more than one programme. The four programmes are not intended to be mutually exclusive.

Forestry for Rural Development covers forestry's role in the wider countryside, including its contribution to the rural economy and timber and marketing opportunities. There is a focus both on the role of new woodlands and on how existing woodlands can be managed to deliver more benefits to local economies, by creating jobs both upstream and downstream of the forest industry.

Forestry for Economic Regeneration outlines opportunities for woodlands to play a positive role in strategic land-use planning. These include restoring former industrial land and creating a green setting for future urban and urban fringe development.

Forestry for Recreation, Access and Tourism describes what can be done to promote more and better quality public access to woodlands. The programme also includes opportunities for ensuring that woods and forests continue to be used for a wide range of recreational pursuits as well as complementing and supporting the tourist industry.

Forestry for the Environment and Conservation embraces the role that woodlands can play in conserving and enhancing the character of our environment and our cultural heritage, and in delivering the Government's nature conservation, biodiversity and climate change objectives. It also considers the impact that woodland creation and management may have on other environmental resources and other land uses.

The actions set out under each of the four programmes cover the short to medium term. In time they will need to be revised. The Government will take advice from the Forestry Forum on the delivery of these programmes and on changes that might be required.

As the Strategy is implemented the Government wants to see:

- an increase in the role of forestry in the rural economy;
- an increase in the areas of woodland created on derelict and former industrial land as well as a reduction in the cost of creating this woodland;
- an increase in the area of woodlands available for access;

- an increase in the area of semi-natural and native woodland together with a reduction in the fragmentation of ancient semi-natural woodland;
- an increase in the resources available for forestry and woodland through new partnerships between the public, private and voluntary sectors;
- an increase in integrated action across Government to implement the Strategy;
- an increase in people's involvement with England's woods and forests and a better understanding of the benefits which they bring.

2. Regional Strategies

North Wessex Downs AONB Management Plan

The management plan contains 51 separate objectives many of which in general terms relate to forestry and woodlands. Five objectives are of direct relevance to this strategy:

Objective 13. To protect and appropriately manage existing ancient semi-natural woodland sites and achieve linkage and very significant expansion of these sites in areas where woodland is a characteristic feature.

Objective 21. To focus on community led bottom up renewable energy initiatives serving the needs of the locality first.

Objective 22. To maximise the production of sustainable energy from land uses traditional to the North Wessex Downs (e.g. management of the existing woodland resource) in preference to uncharacteristic land uses.

Objective 24. To identify and reduce the outputs of major greenhouse gases in the North Wessex Downs (e.g. carbon dioxide and ammonia) and maximise carbon sequestration through appropriate land use and management.

Objective 25. To promote sustainable and viable agriculture and woodland management that contributes positively to the environment of the North Wessex Downs.

A Forestry and Woodlands Framework for South East England

The framework has a vision:

"We want our woods to make an increasing contribution to the sustainable development of the South East region, in both rural and urban areas"

This vision would see:

- Better places for people to live
- Enhanced environment and biodiversity
- A stronger contribution to the economy
- A secure future for our woodland resources

Under these four themes the Framework is organised into 12 outcomes and 37 outputs as follows:

Theme 1: Better places for people to live

Trees and woodlands supporting the development of sustainable communities

- Increasing recognition of the role of new and existing trees and woodlands in shaping and enhancing the region's landscape.
- Increasing recognition of the value and opportunities that new and existing trees and woodlands offer to individual communities.

- Trees and woodlands being used as part of multi-functional green space in areas of development.
- Appropriate safeguards for existing trees and woodlands in and around areas of development.

More people's health and wellbeing improved through visiting woodlands

- More people encouraged to visit and enjoy woodlands.
- Adequate provision of accessible woodland across the region, as judged by Woods for People standards and taking account of existing Public Rights of Way and other countryside access.
- Removal of perceived 'barriers' to the use of woodlands, e.g. provision of higher quality facilities in appropriate areas.

Greater use being made of trees and woodlands for community

- Projects already using woodlands in support of communities being given adequate support.
- The value of woodlands as settings for projects and activities promoted.

Theme 2: Enhanced environment and biodiversity

Woodlands enhancing and protecting the region's environment, together with safeguards for the heritage features within them

- Trees and woodlands playing a greater role in strategies for adaptation to environmental change, such as in water resource management and air and noise pollution reduction.
- Increasing recognition of the heritage and archaeological values of woodland and greater awareness of woodland management guidelines aimed at protecting these features.

Woodland habitats and species being maintained or brought into good ecological condition

- Greater recognition of the importance of ancient woodland.
- An understanding among regional and local decision-makers of the benefits that active woodland management brings to biodiversity, with this being reflected widely in supportive policies and programmes.
- All widespread threats to woodland biodiversity (identified in the text) addressed.
- Appropriate support provided to help improve ecological condition in priority woodland sites and landscapes, and in the woods that provide habitats for priority species (as defined in the UK and local BAPs).
- A strategic approach to the conservation and restoration of priority non-woodland habitats where removing or reducing woodland cover would result in a net gain for biodiversity.

Theme 3: A stronger contribution to the economy

The economic value of woodland products to the region being increased

- Support for business innovation and entrepreneurship in the woodland sector and the added-value processing and marketing of local woodland products.
- Promotion of, and support for, existing markets for woodland products and measures to expand these.
- Promotion of an appropriate range of local woodland products among purchasers and specifiers such as the public sector, big businesses and architects, with information on suppliers readily available.
- The market and the supply chain for wood as a source of renewable energy in the region developed.

Woodlands playing a greater role in attracting tourism, inward investment and other economic activity

- Wider recognition of the benefits to inward investment and the economy brought by the high quality wooded environment of the South East.
- Investment in woodland-based visitor attractions in association with tourism hubs.
- Investigation of the potential for visitor payback schemes to support woodland management in areas where the high quality wooded environment is making a particular contribution to the success of local tourism initiatives.

Theme 4: A secure future for our woodland resources

Woodlands and trees, especially ancient woodlands and veteran trees, protected from loss

- Good guidance to decision-makers on priorities for conserving trees and woodlands in their part of region.
- Protection (a strong presumption against any loss) of ancient woodlands and veteran trees in planning guidance and development strategies.

Integrated, strategic planning of woodland management

- More woodlands being managed as part of landscape-scale co-operative management programmes.
- More woodlands being covered by long-term management plans.

The skills base needed to manage our woodlands

- The needs of the woodland workforce recognised and catered for within existing learning, skills and knowledge programmes, and information on those schemes which are available disseminated widely within the sector.
- Specific schemes (such as a Modern Apprenticeship Scheme) developed to address gaps in skills among the woodland workforce.

Increasing public awareness about woodlands and their management

- Measures in place to raise awareness within the region of the benefits of woodland management.
- Measures in place to put woodland owners not currently managing their woods in touch with sources of woodland management information, advice and support.

The financial viability of woodland management secured

- More woodland management being certified against internationally recognised standards such as the UK Woodland Assurance Standard.
- Better co-operation and communication established between the various parts of the woodland sector and customers to ensure that the sector can take advantage of opportunities.
- The needs of the woodland sector recognised within the wide range of diversification and other support schemes which might help support financial viability, and such schemes widely promoted within the woodland sector.
- Agri-environment schemes targeted to support the outcomes of the forestry and woodlands framework.
- Public woodland estates managed to deliver the outcomes of the forestry and woodlands framework.

South West Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework

The framework has three themes each with its own issues:

- Livelihoods (Jobs and Business)
 - Wood industry and markets

- Land use change
 - Tourism
- Liveability (Quality of Life)
 - Sustainable communities
 - Regeneration
 - Rural issues
 - Education, learning and connection with nature
- Environment
 - Biodiversity
 - Renewable energy
 - Historic environment
 - Landscape
 - Climate change

In addition two cross-cutting themes were identified:

- Communicating the benefits of the regions woods and forests to a range of audiences
- The need for a shared approach across the public and private sectors

The framework also identifies 13 Key Outcomes that it wishes to see:

- An increase in the volume of wood and wood products consumed and sourced from within the region.
- An increased contribution of woodfuel to renewable energy in the South West measured by installed capacity.
- An increasing contribution of woods and forests to leisure and tourism as part of the South West Environmental Economy.
- Better knowledge and skill at all levels in the sector.
- A better integrated sector, championing itself at the regional level and working more effectively together.
- New and existing woodland increasingly incorporated as a key component of 'green infrastructure' in and around communities.
- Increasing use of accessible woodland by people for enjoyment, health and learning.
- Woods and forests meeting the needs of people from across the region and from all parts of society.
- Woodlands and forestry increasingly recognised for contributing to biodiversity.
- Woodlands and forestry helping to reduce the effects of climate change.
- Woodlands and forestry increasingly recognised for and contributing to landscape quality, cultural and archaeological heritage.
- A greater understanding of the role, importance and numerous benefits of woods and forests in the region.
- A shared approach across public and Non Government Organisations sector's investment in the South West's woods and forests.

English Nature - Berkshire and Marlborough Downs – Natural Area Profile

Key issues of concern regarding nature conservation and broadleaved woodland are:

- Neglect – lack of management leading to overstood coppice and uniform habitat
- Conversion of semi natural woodlands to uniform plantations of conifer and broadleaved
- Restoration of semi natural structure and character
- Deer populations at excessively high levels

- Intensive pheasant rearing operations causing changes to ground flora
- Decline in key species and extinction
- Lack of markets for coppice products

The priority objectives for broadleaved woodland are:

- Maintain and enhance the current extent of broadleaved woodland of nature conservation importance
- Restore derelict coppice woodlands to rejuvenate and provide a full range of coppice cycle habitats in a range of woodlands to provide favourable conditions for the recovery of rare species
- Seek opportunities to extend woodland habitats onto adjoining excess low biodiversity arable land through natural regeneration at the woodland edge. Maximise edge habitats.
- Extensify pheasant rearing operations
- Control deer populations to a level compatible with coppice production

The key issues for Wood Pasture are:

- Replacement of wood pasture system with conifer and broadleaved plantations. The habitat is now sub-optimal for many species dependent on more open conditions
- Serious age gap in the age range of trees (c50 to 200 years). When the ancient trees eventually succumb there will be a gap with no suitable habitat for many specialist plants and animals.

The key objectives for Wood Pasture are:

- Re-instate wood pasture management by restoring grazing to suitable areas of forest
- Diversify plantation age structure by prematurely ageing younger trees through pollarding and allow a percentage of younger trees to grow on to reach full maturity
- Continue process of thinning plantations and scrub management to open up habitats especially in the vicinity of ancient trees.

Woodland HAP for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

The five target woodland habitats are:

- Lowland Beech and Yew woods
- Wood pasture and parkland
- Veteran trees and deadwood
- Wet woodland
- Lowland mixed broadleaved woodland

The Hap identifies ten factors affecting woodland habitat in the three counties as follows:

- Lack of function and neglect
- Pest damage particularly from deer and squirrels
- Inappropriate management such as the removal of old large trees and uncontrolled grazing
- Inappropriate recreation use/pressures
- Lack of public awareness
- Dumping especially in urban fringe areas
- Removal of dead wood in the cause of tidiness and safety
- Improved policy co-ordination to prevent new woodlands being established on land with competing biodiversity interest

- Climate change and local provenance
- Land drainage for agricultural improvement has resulted in the drying out of previously wet floodplain woodlands

The core objectives of the HAP are as follows:

- Prevent any further loss and degradation of ancient woodland.
- Maximise the biodiversity potential of woodlands, giving equal consideration to the sustainable management of other habitats within woodland.
- Extend public knowledge, awareness and appreciation of woodland habitat & management.

3. County Strategies and Reports

The Hampshire Landscape

Hampshire Downs Character Area

Numerous but often unmanaged ASNW and ancient hedgerows provide significant biodiversity value throughout the area

North Hampshire Lowland and Heath Character Area

Generally low-lying gently undulating small scale landscape with numerous ancient woodlands and hedgerows which create a strong sense of enclosure; mainly grazing land on heavy soils, with arable crops on areas of higher or better drained ground; also heathland, or woodlands and plantations on former heathland, on more acid soils associated with gravel outcrops or, towards the east, more extensive gravel plateau

Issues

New woodland planting or extension to existing woodlands, often grant aided, particularly of small woods and copses in field corners or on steep slopes is now common throughout Hampshire. Many woodland initiatives are successfully restoring ancient woodlands which have been neglected for many years.

Although many ASNW in Hampshire remain unmanaged, the marketing of timber and other produce, as demonstrated by the Wessex Coppice Group, has contributed significantly towards the successful management of many ancient woods in the county.

Other woodland issues in Hampshire include:

- The low proportion of broadleaf trees in some ageing coniferous plantations, and the introduction in the past of conifers into some ancient woodlands affecting both their appearance and their wildlife value;
- The appearance and condition of many unmanaged and leggy shelter belts containing over mature conifers and a limited range of indigenous tree and shrub species.
- In the urban fringe the condition, lack of management, appearance and overall quality of the landscape including features such as woodlands, trees and hedgerows or the absence of such features

Within the character areas in the NWD AONB the specific issues can be summarised as:

- Lack of appropriate management of ASNW including hazel coppice
- High proportions of conifers in ASNW on alkaline soils

- Lack of management of over mature mainly coniferous shelter belts
- Loss of broadleaf woodlands
- The locations and tree species of new woodlands

The specific guidelines for future action include:

- Encouraging the appropriate management of existing woodlands and the restoration of ASNW and the traditional management of hazel coppice

In particular

- Increase the proportions of locally indigenous species of broadleaf trees by planting or preferably natural regeneration
- Reducing the proportions of conifers particularly in ASNW and on alkaline soils
- Increasing the proportions of broadleaf trees within ageing conifer plantations
- Restore over mature or leggy shelter belts by planting locally indigenous species and removing over mature conifers
- Encourage and promote the adoption of woodland management plans
- Encourage greater participation in woodland grant aid schemes
- Encourage greater provision of training/job creation for woodland management skills
- Encourage and promote greater interest and involvement of local communities and individuals
- Encourage the creation of new multi purpose indigenous broadleaf woodlands on lower grades of agricultural land and particularly where they extend and re-connect links between existing fragmented or isolated woodlands or hedgerows
- Encourage new woodlands to provide additional screening to large buildings
- Encourage new woodlands to provide opportunities for public access close to existing urban areas

Oxfordshire Wildlife and Landscape Study (OWLS)

The map is divided into 6 biobands dependent on the variation and importance of habitats within a landscape character area.

Around 50% of the area within the AONB is in the low/low medium/medium categories with the other 50% being in the medium/high category.

Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire

Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland

The overall aim of this Plan is to protect and enhance the biodiversity of ancient semi-natural woodland in Hampshire. This broad aim translates into the specific objectives set out below. Where feasible, objectives have been allocated targets against which achievement can be measured: for example, total areas to be restored or dates for completion.

- No further loss or degradation of ASNW:
 - Ensure no further removal or conversion of ASNW
 - Prevent degradation of ASNW by damaging management operations and other influences
- Increase the extent of ASNW and reverse the effects of isolation and fragmentation:

- Restore ASNW on ancient woodland sites giving priority to linking valuable isolated fragments – 1,000 ha to be restored by 2010
- Reverse the deleterious effects of isolation and fragmentation of ASNW by creating and managing links between woods
- Improve the quality of ASNW habitat:
 - Ensure more widespread favourable management of ASNW, including increasing the area of restored and in-cycle coppice from 2000 ha to 3000 ha by 2010
- Ensure the requirements of all Priority Species associated with ASNW are met
- Improve knowledge of ASNW and associated species in Hampshire through survey, research and monitoring
- Communicate with, and provide information to, statutory and voluntary organisations, the forestry industry, landowners, community groups and the public

Wood Pasture and Parkland

The overall aim of this Plan is to protect and enhance the biodiversity of wood pasture and parkland in Hampshire. This broad aim translates into the specific objectives set out below. Where feasible, objectives have been allocated targets against which achievement can be measured: for example, total areas to be restored or dates for completion.

- Ensure no further loss or degradation of the wood pasture resource.
- Achieve favourable management in all working wood pastures and parks through direct and indirect support to landowners, managers and commoners.
- Reinstate all relic, or sub-optimally managed wood pastures and parks, to sustainable management regimes, initially (first five years) concentrating on sites supporting ancient trees with their associated species.
- Ensure requirements of all priority species found in wood pasture are met.
- Improve knowledge of distribution and status of wood pasture through survey, research and monitoring.
- Promote the importance of wood pasture for biodiversity across different sectors, and ensure good communication links are developed and maintained.

Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan

The Wiltshire Biodiversity Action Plan contains separate action plans for woodland and for Wood-pasture, Parkland and Ancient Trees.

Woodland Action Plan.

The key objectives of the plan are to:

- Prevent any further losses of ancient woodland.
- Promote appropriate management of existing ancient woodlands.
- Restore ancient woodlands which have been planted with or colonised by non-native species, where appropriate.

- Increase the area of native woodland in Wiltshire in areas without existing wildlife interest. Target links between existing woodlands or other semi-natural habitats.
- Encourage the planting of woodlands where this enhances biodiversity and does not conflict with existing wildlife, landscape and archaeological interests.
- Retain and manage ancient trees and deadwood habitat *in situ* in woodland sites and identify replacement specimens in the vicinity of existing veterans.
- Continue to research and monitor woodland habitats and species, their distribution and management to add to our knowledge and understanding.
- Provide opportunities for education, access and awareness-raising initiatives in appropriate woodland sites.

Wood-Pasture, Parkland and Ancient Trees Action Plan

The key objectives of the plan are to:

- Establish the current extent of wood-pasture, parkland and ancient trees in Wiltshire.
- Protect and maintain the present extent of wood-pasture, parkland and ancient trees in a favourable condition, focusing on the conservation of ancient or veteran trees wherever they occur.
- Bring derelict wood-pasture, parkland and ancient trees into a favourable ecological condition.
- Initiate the creation and expansion of wood-pasture, parkland and ancient tree replacements in suitable areas.
- Promote and raise awareness of the biodiversity importance of wood-pasture, parkland and ancient trees.

4. District Strategies and Reports

Kennett Landscape Conservation Strategy

- Committed to an increase in woodland cover.
- Important to protect wide open spaces and long distant views – therefore the woodland strategy is to be based on the 11 landscape character areas.
- Uses are shooting, timber production, troop training. These uses recognise landscape and wildlife values.
- Where possible access on foot should be promoted.
- Management by traditional techniques – replant using native broadleaved species.
- Restoration of PAWS and protection of wood pasture and veteran trees a priority.
- Conifers acceptable as a nurse and in areas where forestry is a significant part of the local economy.

Detailed proposals are included for each of the 11 landscape character areas

Swindon Borough Landscape Character Areas

Development proposals should include:

Vale of White Horse

Additional tree planting to create blocks of woodland
Plant to reinforce hedgerows to compensate for trees lost to DED

Wroughton Vale

Tree planting in lines, woodlands or hedgerows

Scarp

Integrate into slope by maintaining the wooded appearance and careful new planting

Downs Plains

Shelterbelts based on existing field patterns rather than clumps

High Downs

Planting that reflects the existing pattern of woodland

Test Valley Landscape Character assessment

Rushmore Wooded Downs

Issue is lack of appropriate management and absence of coppice management
Conserve and enhance the sense of intimate seclusion

Facombe Wooded Downs

Issue is lack of appropriate management and absence of coppice management
Conserve and enhance the wooded slopes and the farmland mosaic

Linkenholt Downs

Issue is lack of appropriate management and absence of coppice management
Enhance the woodland and hedgerow structure

Tangley and Doles Wood

Issue is lack of appropriate management and absence of coppice management
Conserve and enhance the quiet rural character and distinctive variety

North Andover Plateau

Issue is lack of appropriate management and absence of coppice management
Conserve and enhance the varied landscape structure and rural tranquillity

Draft Swindon Biodiversity Action Plan

The plan includes sections on woodlands, scrub and veteran trees and parkland habitat. Of most relevance is the woodland action plan which includes the following objectives:

- Ensure urban expansion and regeneration seeks to enhance the viability of existing woodlands
- Significantly expand the woodland resource within the borough through new planting with a focus on expansion and linkage of existing woodlands
- Increase the area of woodland under sustainable management
- Realise the opportunities for the creation of new woodland through natural succession
- Promote and realise the woodland resources for lifelong learning
- To promote sustainability/lifestyle choices that can have a beneficial effect on the habitat or associated species

- Protect, maintain and enhance species specific to the habitat (and not noted elsewhere)
- To actively involve individuals, local communities, landowners and businesses wherever possible to enhance wildlife.

Local BAP for the Test Valley

- The BAP identifies loss of traditional woodland management for the part of the borough lying within the NWD AONB.
- Specifically the BAP identifies opportunities to secure management of Faccombe Wood and increase the area under favourable woodland management.
- In addition there is an opportunity to restore the woodland of Blagdon Copse thereby creating a key core area for biodiversity comprising this copse and Doles Wood, Rag and Long Copse and Hurstbourne Tarrant Down.

5. Local Strategies and Reports

Avebury WHS Management Plan

There should be no further planting or grant aid for planting within the WHS until an overall strategy has been agreed. The strategy would need to follow archaeological advice and the Forestry Commissions lowland Landscape Design Guidelines as applied to each detailed landscape character area.

Planting on barrows is a very distinctive feature but the trees will need to be removed at one time before they become unstable and cause damage to the monuments. In the meantime the trees should be managed so as to reduce the risk of windthrow and damage by tree roots. When the trees do need to be removed – some of them in the near future – then they should be replaced to maintain the landscape character but on archaeologically sterile land.

Appendix 3. An Approximation of the Standing Volume and Annual Increment of the Woodland Resource of the North Wessex Downs AONB

This exercise is nothing more than an 'Aunt Sally' to stimulate others to refine the estimates and assumptions made with a view to producing a reasonable estimate of the standing volume and annual increment of the woodland resource of the AONB.

The IFT data provides an estimate of the total woodland area of 17614 hectares. Of this figure some 1650 hectares or roughly 10% is planted with conifers and a further 3320 hectares is mixed. If it is presumed that the area of mixed woodland is split 50:50 conifers to broadleaved this would indicate a total coniferous area of 3310 hectares or some 18.8% of the IFT area of woodland.

The total area of woodland is now known to be 23939 hectares, with the additional area made up largely of woodlands less than 2.0 hectares in size. It is highly likely that the large majority of these additional woodlands are broadleaved in content. Overall it would seem reasonable to assume a split between conifers and broadleaves as 15% conifers and 85% broadleaves. This would produce a total of 3590 hectares of conifer and 20350 hectares of broadleaves.

The age class distribution of the conifers is distinctly uneven with peaks in the 1950's and 1960's – over 60% of the woods date from this period. If an average yield class of 11 is assumed (the actual figure may well be 13 or more but given the older age of the crop it is likely that annual increment is now starting to decline in many stands) then the annual increment is likely to be in the order of 40,000 cubic metres of conifers. If an average rotation length of 60 is assumed then if the age classes were evenly distributed the average age would be 30 years. However, as indicated from the planting dates the average age is probably closer to 40 years. At this age the average standing volume per hectare is likely to be around 220 cubic metres giving an overall standing volume of 800,000 cubic metres.

The assumptions for broadleaves require even greater acts of faith! From the ecological site classification we know that the mean potential yield class for sycamore over the entire area of the AONB is 7.23. Whilst there was also a post war planting boom for broadleaves the age class distribution is much more evenly spread than was the case for conifers. Given that much of the woodland resource is probably understocked and comprised of species much less productive than sycamore an average yield class of 5 is considered far more appropriate (an argument could be made that the figure of 7.23 is more applicable as the sycamore estimate was for all of the land in the AONB whilst actual tree planting tends to be on the land more suited to growing trees). At an assumed yield class of 5 the annual increment of broadleaves is around 100,000 cubic metres.

If an average rotation length of 150 years is assumed and an even spread of age classes at an average age of 75 years the standing volume per hectare is likely to be around 240 cubic metres giving an overall standing volume of just under 5,000,000 cubic metres.

Taken together the annual increment can be estimated at 140,000 cubic metres and the standing volume at around 5,800,000 cubic metres. Given the greatly reduced level of cutting in recent years due to depressed timber process it is likely that the annual increment is not being cut. Some of this uncut annual increment will have accrued to the standing volume but some will have been lost due to too many trees competing for resources.

These figures are nothing more than a simple approach to producing an estimate of increment and standing volume. These figures may be wildly incorrect but even if the actual figures are only half the above estimate there is still a significant sustainable resource capable of being harvested.

Appendix 4. Notes of the Meeting to Assess the Priorities for New Woodland Creation by Landscape Character Area

The main objective of this meeting was to assess the comparative priority for creating new woodland each landscape character area of the AONB. To assist the process information was supplied with regard to the extent and nature of the existing woodland cover. In addition extensive use was made of the Landscape Character assessment of the AONB and the local knowledge of the participants at the meeting. These notes were taken at the meeting and are a summary of the views of the participants. The five separate 'Priorities' are as follows:

- Priority 1 Woodland here would make the greatest contribution to improving landscape quality. These areas would benefit most from the introduction of new woodland
- Priority 2. New woodlands would add to the landscape in these areas
- Priority 3. In general existing woodland cover was considered appropriate in these areas but perhaps more woodland would be appropriate in one part of the part of the area
- Priority 4. Typically these areas have a low priority for the introduction of new woodlands. Any new woodlands are usually considered appropriate for reasons other than landscape improvement such as linking together existing woodland areas
- Priority 5. These areas have the lowest priority for new woodlands

Marlborough Downs.

Priority 5

No increase in woodland cover is considered appropriate. However, in the longer term it would be desirable to reshape or remove some of the more inappropriately located woods in the upland part of the character area, with any new woods being located towards the south east on the south facing valley sides of the River Kennet. Ideally new woods would link together existing woods and existing semi natural habitats.

Lambourn Downs

Priority 5

The woodlands contribute to a 'bitty' feel to the landscape though this was considered to be characteristic of the area.

Horton Downs

Priority 5

There is very limited scope for expansion of the existing woodland cover. However, there is some scope for removal of some poorly shaped shelter/shooting blocks.

Blewbury Downs

Priority 5

In this area there was general feeling that the priority should be very much focussed on management of the existing woods rather than creating new woods. Overall no increase in woodland cover is considered appropriate.

Brightwalton Downs

Priority 3

This area has a good network of Ancient Semi Natural Woodlands. There is some scope to reshape some of the linear features to 'fit' the landscape better. The area greatly needs new hedgerow trees. A very modest increase in woodland cover was considered appropriate.

Ashampstead Downs

Priority 4

This is an extremely well wooded landscape. There are some opportunities to link together the existing woods and semi natural habitats with biodiversity gains. The main focus however should be on management of the existing woodlands. Overall a small increase in woodland cover was considered appropriate.

Lambourn Wooded Downs

Priority 4

There appears to be very limited scope for new woodlands in the centre of the area but some scope for new woods in the valleys to the north and south of the character area. A very modest increase in woodland cover was considered appropriate.

Walbury Hill/Watership Down Scarp

Priority 3

The woods in the area are dominated by the Highclere Estate and 'hanging' woods on the scarp. There is scope for some new hanging woods at the west end of the scarp and in the flatter arable farmland to the north of the scarp. Overall a small increase in woodland cover was considered appropriate.

Chute Forest/Facombe

Priority 4

The woodland is fairly restricted by the topography of the character area. There is some scope to link together and increase the size of the existing woodlands. Overall a small increase in woodland cover was considered appropriate.

Litchfield Downs

Priority 2

There is some scope to increase the size and link together existing woodlands. There is considered to be the potential for a very significant increase in the woodland area.

Hannington Downs

Priority 3

There is some scope to increase the size and link together existing woodlands. Overall a moderate increase in woodland cover was considered appropriate.

Savernake Forest

Priority 3

The character of the area means that it would be capable of accommodating one or two more large blocks of woodland. Ideal locations were considered to be located between Savernake Forest and Westwood and/or an amalgamation/linkage of the large number of existing blocks in the south east of the area. Overall the woodland area could increase significantly.

Salisbury Plain

Priority 5

No new woodlands were considered to be appropriate but there is some scope for a small addition to Everleigh Woods.

Avebury Plain

Priority 2

Where the existing field boundaries and trees give localised enclosure there is considered to be significant scope for new woodlands – particularly towards the western side of the area. Overall the woodland cover could rise to around 5%.

Chiseldon/Wanborough Plain

Priority 3

There was considered scope for new woodland planting associated with the Great West Forest area – principally in the area to the west of Chiseldon both on the slope and on top of the scarp. Overall this could lead to a doubling of the woodland area.

Hendred Plain

Priority 3

The main area of the Lockinge estate was considered to already be well wooded and any scope for new woodlands was felt to be in the west of the area, to the south of Wantage and around the AEA establishment at Harwell. Significant planting in these two areas could lead to an overall increase in woodland cover.

Moreton Plain

Priority 1

There was considered to be considerable potential for new woodlands given the ever expanding nature of Didcot. The main potential area for new woodland is to the east of Didcot between Didcot and the Moretons.

Clyffe Pypard/Badbury Wooded Scarp

Priority 4

There is some scope for new woodlands in the south and west of the area depending on the presence of existing semi natural habitats. Overall a small increase in woodland cover was considered appropriate.

Liddington-Letcombe Open Scarp

Priority 4

There is very limited scope or requirement for new woodland. The views to the north from the Ridgeway and the high concentrations of archaeological features mean there would be many constraints to any possible expansion of the woodland area.

Vale of Pewsey

Priority 2

Existing woodlands are concentrated in the central part of the character area associated with the large estates around Pewsey. There is some scope for new woodlands associated with the transport routes and settlements and for new riparian woods. All new woodlands would be relatively small scaled and would build on the existing hedgerow pattern. Overall this could lead to a doubling of the woodland area.

Shalbourne Vale

Priority 3

There is some scope for new woodlands associated with the transport routes and settlements and for new riparian woods. All new woodlands would be relatively small scaled and would build on the existing hedgerow pattern. Overall this could lead to a doubling of the woodland area.

Wanborough Vale

Priority 1

This area has lost much of its original character due to the presence of Swindon. As part of the GWCF it has the potential to become both a 'Gateway' location to both the AONB and to Swindon. There was considered to be considerable scope for new woodland.

Thames Floodplain – Benson

Priority 5

It was considered that the existing floodplain character of the area should be maintained. No increase in woodland cover is considered appropriate.

Thames Floodplain – Moreton

Priority 5

This very low lying and flat area was not considered suitable for new woodlands. No increase in woodland cover is considered appropriate.

Thames Floodplain – Streatley and Basildon

Priority 5

The unwooded floodplain was considered to provide visual contrast to the highly wooded valley sides. No increase in woodland cover is considered appropriate.

Kennet Valley

Priority 4

Woodlands in winterborne valleys were more prominent in the lower reaches where water flow was likely to be more consistent throughout the year. This was considered to be a natural feature of this type of valley and the scope for new woodland was considered to be limited and confined to the lower reaches.

Lambourn Valley

Priority 5

Woodlands in winterborne valleys were more prominent in the lower reaches where water flow was likely to be more consistent throughout the year. This was considered to be a natural feature of this type of valley and the scope for new woodland was considered to be limited and confined to the lower reaches.

Bourne Valley

Priority 4

Woodlands in winterborne valleys were more prominent in the lower reaches where water flow was likely to be more consistent throughout the year. This was considered to be a natural feature of this type of valley and the scope for new woodland was considered to be limited and confined to the lower reaches.

Pang Valley

Priority 4

Woodlands in winterborne valleys were more prominent in the lower reaches where water flow was likely to be more consistent throughout the year. This was considered to be a natural feature of this type of valley and the scope for new woodland was considered to be limited and confined to the lower reaches.

Hermitage Lowlands and Heath

Priority 4

Any significant increase in woodland cover was considered likely to threaten the existing landscape mosaic. Some woodland may well be lost to heathland creation.

Winterbourne Farmland

Priority 2

Some scope exists to link the existing limited woodland cover to the more wooded character areas located on either side. Overall a significant increase in the area of existing woodland was considered appropriate.

Wickham Wooded Heath

Priority 4

This area is extremely well wooded. There is some scope to increase the size and link together existing woodlands. The overall increase in the woodland area would be very small.

Hungerford Farmland

Priority 3

Whilst there is some scope to plant new woods to link the valley bottoms to the more wooded uplands there is a need to keep the valley sides less

wooded than the upland parts of the character area. Overall there is scope for a moderate increase the level of woodland cover.

Highclere Lowlands and Heath

Priority 4

There is some scope to increase the size and link together existing woodlands leading to a very modest increase in woodland cover.

Ewhurst Park

Priority 3

There is some scope to increase the size and link together existing woodlands leading to a moderate increase in woodland cover.

Appendix 5. Notes of the Discussions Leading to the Elimination of Factors for the New Woodland Opportunities Plan

Recreation. It was felt that creating new woodlands specifically for recreation activities was not really a priority of the AONB. However, access to woodlands was considered important and became a separate factor.

Water. Discussions with the Environment Agency have revealed that the planting of new woodlands within the AONB is unlikely to have any significant impact on the water availability within any catchment. However, it was noticed in the landscape meeting that, in winter borne valleys the woodlands were not really a feature of the landscape until lower down the valleys where water flow was more likely to occur on a year round basis. It was considered that the introduction of new woodlands into these types of river valleys should not be encouraged in the upper reaches.

It is worthy of mention that one of the key objectives of the Draft Woodland HAP for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire is the creation of new areas of wet woodland. The lower reaches of the winter borne valleys may represent prime target areas for the creation of new wet woodlands. Further investigations are required to determine whether the areas are suitable for wet woodland creation and whether this can be achieved without jeopardising any existing wildlife habitats.

Soils. The nature and the quality of the soil is one of the factors used in assigning Agricultural Land Classification (ALC). As the ALC was included as a factor in the initial list it was considered that to include soil would be something of a duplication of the factor.

Sporting. The remit of the AONB includes the support of initiatives which support the rural economy. Whilst sporting interests are a relatively important contribution to the rural economy it was considered that the creation of small woodlands for sporting purposes was much more relevant at a local scale and not at a landscape scale.

The two factors of Economic Development and Existing Woodland aroused considerable debate but both were carried forward to the next round of discussions. At the end of the initial discussions a revised list of factors remained:

- Landscape;
- Biodiversity;
- Economic development;
- Agricultural land classification;
- Yield;
- Heritage;
- Archaeology;
- Social/access;
- Existing Woodland;

Considerable discussion ensued and more factors were eliminated as indicated in the following paragraphs.

Economic Development. Given that it is extremely difficult to generate economic activity from existing woodland it was felt that the creation of new woodland was not really justifiable on the grounds of economic development. It was recognised that woodlands can play an important role in urban regeneration but this is not really an issue within the AONB.

Agricultural Land Classification. The quality of land removed from agriculture was not considered to be really important. The better quality land was considered likely to remain in agriculture and the removal of the lower grades to woodland would not be influenced by their relative agricultural quality.

Existing Woodland. The important factor here was considered to be the creation of linkages between existing woodland areas and between existing areas of Semi Natural Habitat. These linkages were already accounted for in the Biodiversity factor.

In addition Heritage was changed in name to Historic Landscape.

Each of the remaining factors was now considered in more detail and with regard to data that would be available for the whole AONB that could represent the factor in the 'opportunities' planning exercise.

At the **landscape** meeting the priority of each landscape character area for new woodland planting was assessed on a five point scale. In landscape terms certain character areas were considered to have greater scope for additional woodland than other areas.

The discussion on **Biodiversity** focused upon protection and enhancement of existing important areas, creation of ecologically viable and sustainable areas of semi-natural habitat and about linkages. Thus any new woodland that would create a buffer around existing ASNW was considered to be positive. Equally any new planting that would link together existing semi natural habitats was also considered positive. Finally the work undertaken by The Wildlife Trusts in the South West has sought to identify 'Core Habitat Areas'. If these areas can be consolidated or expanded by new woodland planting then this would be a positive contribution to biodiversity. Subsequent discussions have indicated that it will not yet be possible to incorporate the core habitat areas at this stage as the assessment has not been extended into the SE region.

Yield was almost eliminated as, most interestingly, the foresters all seemed to agree that few new woodlands were planted for timber production purposes as markets for timber were poor. In the event yield survived as woodlands were considered a long term initiative and that markets may be very different by the time of eventual harvest, but it became apparent that it would have a low weighting. It was agreed that the Ecological Site Classification for Sycamore would provide a reasonable indicator of the relative productivity of the different parts of the AONB.

Historic Landscape was considered to be very important but the data to really identify where new woodland would help to restore historic landscapes are not yet available. These data will become available in 2006 on completion of the Historic Landscape Characterisation for the AONB and can then be incorporated into the model. In the meantime it was considered that,

in general, any planting that created woodland on land that was woodland on the first series of Ordnance Survey maps would be positive.

There was considerable discussion about how to incorporate **archaeology**. Whilst Wiltshire County Council had prepared a map of their part of the AONB divided into two zones – more and less sensitive to tree planting – similar plans were unavailable for the other counties. Whilst it was agreed that plans could, and should, be prepared for the remaining counties the debate centred on whether or not tree planting could do anything positive for archaeology. At the end of a long discussion it was concluded that:

- tree planting was almost, without exception, potentially harmful to both known and unknown archaeology;
- the potential impact of new tree planting on archaeology is something that *a/ways* has to be determined on a site by site basis;
- it would be very useful to know which parts of the AONB were likely to be more or less sensitive from an archaeological viewpoint to new tree planting;
- archaeology would **not** be a factor in determining the best location for new tree planting but that the information regarding sensitivity would be recorded and included within the strategy. This is presented as Plan XX.

Social/Access was seen as key to gaining new woodlands in close proximity to existing settlements. The scoring proposal devised at an earlier meeting was presented and accepted (see Table 10). It was agreed however that there was a need to apply the latest FC research to identify Woodland Access Deprivation and to then apply the results to update the Opportunities Plan.

Table 10. Proposed Access Scoring Scheme

Distance from settlement	Up to 1000 people	1000 – 2500 people	>2500 people
<1000m	5	4	3
1001 – 2000m	6	5	4
2001 - 3000m	8	7	5
>3000m	9	9	8