Forestry England

Delamere Forest Plan

2026 - 2036



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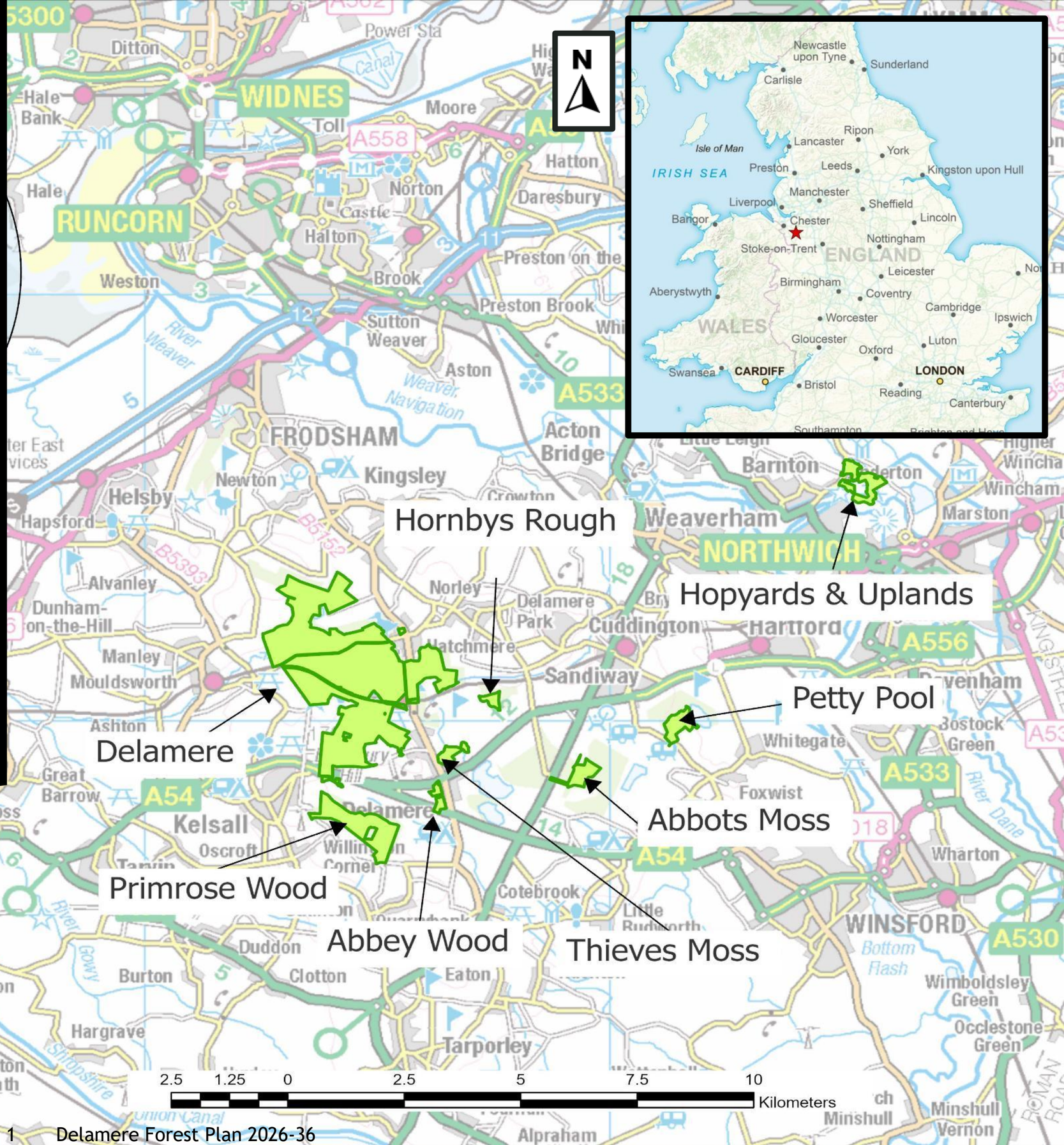
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Summary

The Delamere Forest Plan area covers 1,034 hectares and lies approximately 12 km east of Chester, within the Mersey Forest. At the heart of the plan area is Delamere Forest itself (753 ha), the largest continuous block of woodland in the region. It includes areas of the medieval hunting forest, historically known as Old Pool, along with a distinctive network of meres and mosses. These wetland habitats are internationally recognised for their ecological value and have been designated as SSSI, SAC, and Ramsar sites due to their unique biodiversity and environmental importance.

Delamere Forest Plan includes nine main woodland areas which comprise of Delamere Forest, Primrose Wood, Abbey Wood, Thieves Moss, Hornbys Rough, Petty Pool, Abbots Moss, Hopyards and Uplands. Within the plan area there are 807 hectares of woodland, 161 hectares of open space including meres and mosses, 26 hectares of recreation facilities and 39 hectares of agricultural land.





What is a Forest Plan

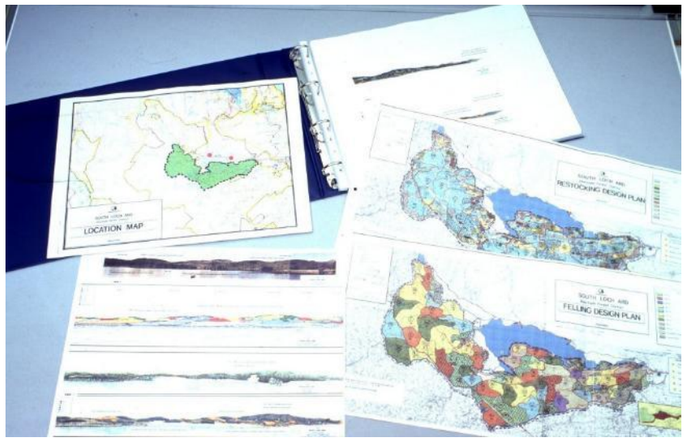
Forest Plans are produced by us, Forestry England, as a means of communicating our management intentions to a range of stakeholders. They aim to fulfil a number of objectives:

· To provide descriptions of our woodlands to show what they are like now.

· To show what we intend the woodlands to look like in the future.

· To detail our management proposals (felling and restocking) for the next ten years so we can seek approval from the statutory regulators.

· To evidence that our proposals are economically, environmentally and socially sustainable in accordance with the UK Woodland Assurance Standard, supporting FSC & PEFC certification of our forest management and timber products.



All tree felling in the UK is regulated and permission is required before trees can be felled. The scale of tree felling in Central England Forest District is such that the FP is the best mechanism for applying for this. Responsibility for checking that the Plan meets all the relevant standards and statutes lies with the Forestry Commission. If all the criteria are met, full approval is given for the management operations in the first 10 years and outline approval for the medium-term vision (10 years to 50 years).

Terms of Reference (page 12) set out our management objectives for the plan area, how these relate to district and national policies, and how these will be monitored.

A Forest Plan is a ‘felling and restocking’ plan and is written at a landscape scale. It does not set out the detailed yearly management operations for each small piece of a wood, known as a coupe*. It is not possible to say in which year a particular operation will take place, but we can say in which five-year period it should happen. Before felling and restocking operations are undertaken, Operational Plans* are written by the Beat Forester. These detail the site-specific features that need taking into account when undertaking operations.

This forest plan does not deal with the management of recreation, ecological or archaeological features. Planning for these elements follows a different management cycle and process.

We use some technical words and phrases in the text because they best describe what we are doing. These are identified throughout the plan with an asterisk * and their meaning is shown in a glossary.



Blakemere

Application for Forest Plan Approval

Forest District:	Central Forest District
Beat:	Delamere
Name:	Delamere Forest Plan
Nearest Town:	Chester
OS Grid Reference:	SJ 5474 7041
Local Planning Authority:	East Cheshire Council

Designations:

Secondary Woodlands, Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (ASNW), Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWs), Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Ramsar sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and lies within the National Character Area (NCA) 61 – Shropshire, Cheshire & Staffordshire Plain and NCA 62 – Cheshire Sandstone Ridge, Cheshire & Warrington Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Summary of Harvesting Operations for the 10-year Forest Plan period:

In addition to the planned clearfell operations 400 ha will be managed as Lower Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS). This will be done by removing no more than 40% of the stems within any single management unit/compartment over the plan period. LISS operations will help to encourage initial seeding, provide sufficient light to boost growth of understorey and ground flora, allow adequate space for the development of crowns and stem form, for quality timber and accelerate individual tree growth. This operation will also be supported, where needed, by supplementary planting to increase species diversity.



Log stack awaiting collection

Table.1 Proposed felling and restocking summary for the 10-year FP period

	Conifers	Broadleaves	Total area
Clearfell	112ha	22ha	134ha
Restocking / Natural regeneration	110ha	24ha	134ha
Regeneration Felling (LISS)	Up to 80ha	Up to 40ha	Up to 120ha



This mixed stand of trees reflects the ecological diversity of the forest, providing visitors with varied scenery as they follow the paths that weave through the woodland.

Analysis

Delamere Forest is the largest wooded area in Cheshire and remains a vital asset for the local economy, supporting employment through sustainable timber production and a growing leisure and tourism sector. As visitor numbers continue to increase, the forest provides an essential space for education, recreation and connection with nature.

Access to natural environments like Delamere plays an important role in supporting mental health and wellbeing, offering opportunities for physical activity, relaxation and time away from urban environments. This rising demand highlights the need for a balanced approach to forest management.

The new Forest Plan sets out a long-term vision that supports public access while strengthening forest resilience, enhancing biodiversity and ensuring the sustainable delivery of timber, landscape and recreational benefits for future generations.



Economy

The impact of pests and diseases on the forest has led to a significant increase in the range of tree species planted over the past 10 years. Dothistroma Needle Blight (DNB) continues to affect both Corsican pine (CP) and Scots pine (SP), reducing productivity and timber yields. The impact on CP is greater than on SP, and the early removal of CP before it reaches its economic rotation length will continue. SP is less susceptible to DNB and will be retained where possible to maintain a good proportion of high forest structure for wildlife, people and timber. Over the last decade, larch has also been removed due to high risk of Phytophthora ramorum infection, leaving only a small percentage remaining. In response to these pressures, 60 tree species are now present across the woodlands—26 conifer species and 34 broadleaved species. Table 1 provides a breakdown of species groups by area, with pines still dominating the woodland composition.

Grey squirrel damage has become increasingly severe over the past decade, particularly in broadleaved stands between 10 and 25 years old, where bark stripping is now widespread. In Delamere Forest the issue has also expanded into conifer crops. Weymouth pine has suffered extensive ring-barking, leading to crown breakage and major structural failure, while larch and broadleaved species show significant vertical bark stripping that weakens stems and exposes trees to secondary pests and diseases. This damage lowers timber quality, reduces crop resilience and, in the worst-affected young stands, has made normal management—such as first thinning—no longer viable. Several areas have become unproductive and now require clearfelling and replanting, representing a setback for both economic and ecological objectives.

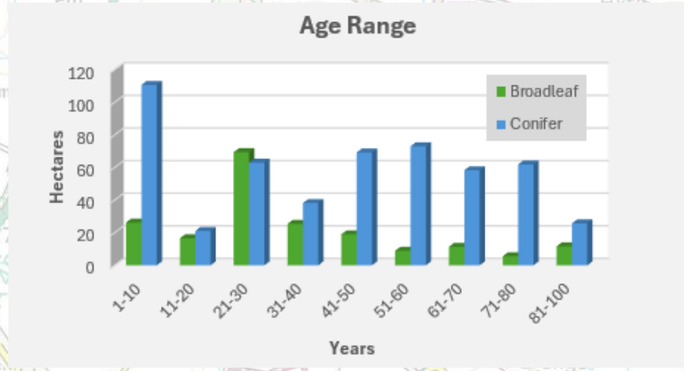
Table.2 **2026 Species in Delamere Forest Plan**

Species group	ha
Pines	394.7
Birch	94.57
Douglas fir	51.93
Oaks	46.83
Larches	42.38
Spruces	34.66
Other broadleaves	33.88
Ash	18.7
Cypress	15
Chestnuts	13.98
Beech	11.33
Firs	9.2
Alders	6.16
Other conifers	5.81
Maple	3.86
Sorbus	3.33
Cherry	2.9
Hornbeam	2.62
Hemlock	1.43
Hazel	1.12
Willows	0.54
Nothofagus	0.21
Elm	0.14

The coloured squares on the map represent the proportion of each species in mixed stands rather than the precise location of each species within the forest.

Ash and larch are the primary species for early removal followed by Corsican pine crops under 40 years with low yields due to DNB*.





1 0.5 0 1 2 3 4 Kilometers

Central Forest District

Current Species

- Oaks
- Ash
- Other broadleaves
- Beech
- Firs & Spruces
- Pines
- Other conifers
- Larches
- Open/other
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:30,000

Forestry England

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Nature

Delamere Forest contains a wide range of habitats that support a diverse array of flora and fauna. Among the most significant features are the Delamere meres and mosses, which form a mosaic of wetlands, fringing heathland and woodland. This combination of habitats provides important conditions for both locally and nationally rare species of aquatic plants, as well as a rich invertebrate assemblage. The area supports a variety of damselflies and dragonflies, including the nationally rare white faced darter Leucorrhinia dubia, as well as a high diversity of beetles, spiders and other invertebrates—several of which are also nationally rare. Due to their sensitivity and ecological importance, a number of areas have been designated as SSSI, SAC and Ramsar sites. These designations ensure long term protection for some of the most delicate and endangered ecosystems in the region.



White-faced darter - *Leucorrhinia dubia*

Deadwood and Trees of Special Interest (TSI) are currently scarce across the woodland and are most frequently found near the boundaries. Individual trees or small groups with notable character, identified during management operations, will be retained where safe to do so. This approach will help recruit future TSI, increase deadwood availability and enhance overall habitat diversity within the woodland.

The main soil types are podzols, surface water gleys and brown earths with some gleying, which vary in drainage and influence the species and habitats that can thrive across the forest. Rainfall is relatively low (887mm annually) but the soil types will help retain moisture.



Deadwood habitats are a vital component of a healthy woodland ecosystem.

People

The woodlands are freehold and are designated as Open Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW). This provides year-round informal public access on foot.



Delamere visitor centre

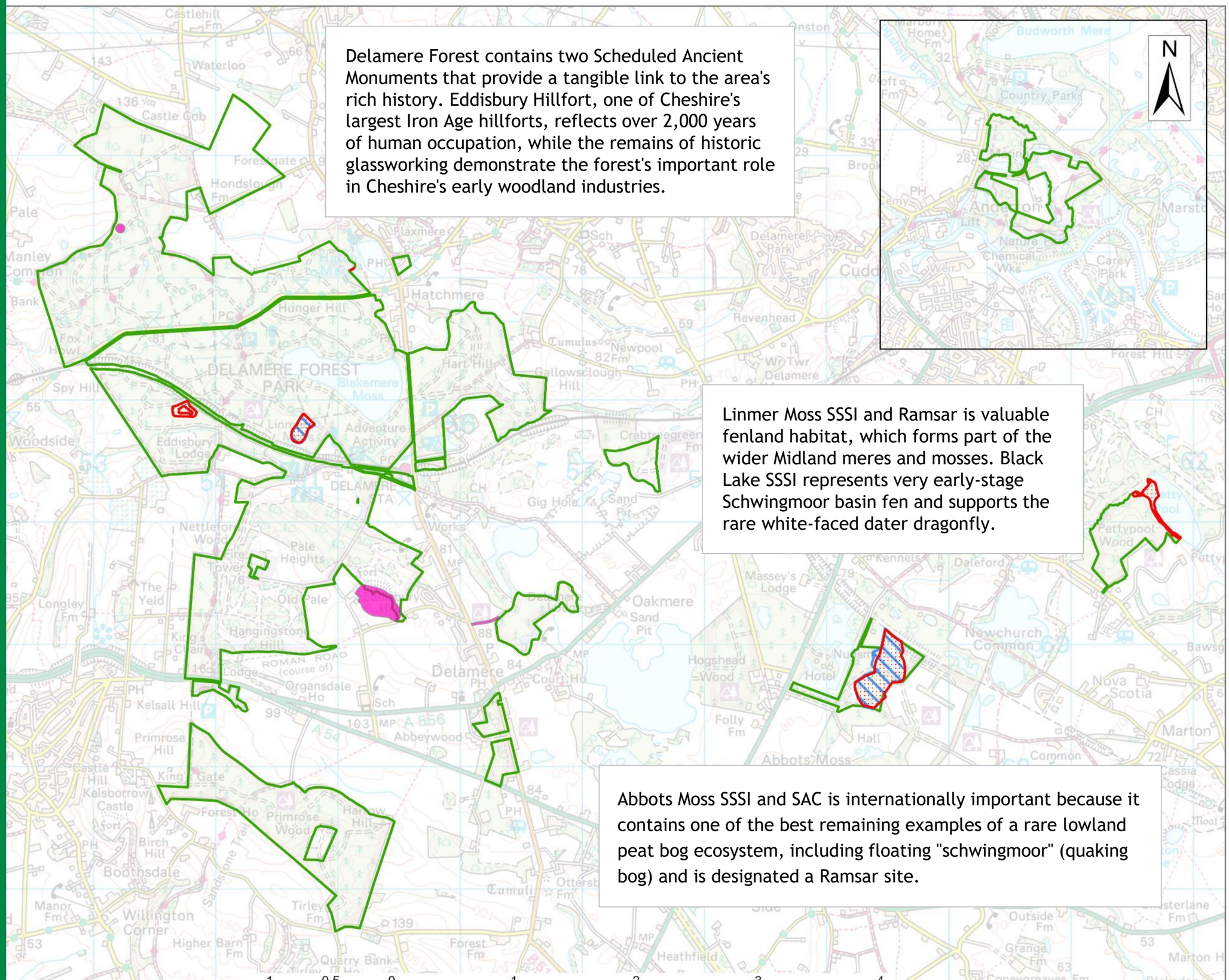
Delamere Forest attracts over 750,000 visitors annually, generating more than £2 million for the local economy through tourism and leisure. Visitors can also stay overnight in Forest Holidays cabins, encouraging longer visits and deeper engagement with the forest. Delamere offers a diverse recreation experience, including waymarked trails for walkers, runners, horse riders and cyclists, alongside bike hire, children's play areas, Go Ape, music events and education programmes. The visitor centre serves as the primary gateway to the forest. Delamere plays a key role as a regional destination for outdoor recreation, wellbeing and nature-based tourism within Forestry England's Central District.

Delamere Forest contains two SAM: historic glassmaking remains and Eddisbury Hill Fort. Any new discoveries will also be recorded. Management decisions are made in consultation with Historic England and the Archaeology Team at East Cheshire Council to ensure appropriate conservation of cultural assets. The SAM's are managed in accordance with a conservation plan agreed with Historic England. All known historic and cultural features are recorded to ensure forestry operations are carried out sensitively, protecting their significance.

Delamere Forest contains two Scheduled Ancient Monuments that provide a tangible link to the area's rich history. Eddisbury Hillfort, one of Cheshire's largest Iron Age hillforts, reflects over 2,000 years of human occupation, while the remains of historic glassworking demonstrate the forest's important role in Cheshire's early woodland industries.

Linmer Moss SSSI and Ramsar is valuable fenland habitat, which forms part of the wider Midland meres and mosses. Black Lake SSSI represents very early-stage Schwingmoor basin fen and supports the rare white-faced dater dragonfly.

Abbots Moss SSSI and SAC is internationally important because it contains one of the best remaining examples of a rare lowland peat bog ecosystem, including floating "schwingmoor" (quaking bog) and is designated a Ramsar site.



Central Forest District

Designation areas

- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Ramsar sites
- Scheduled Monuments
- Management boundary

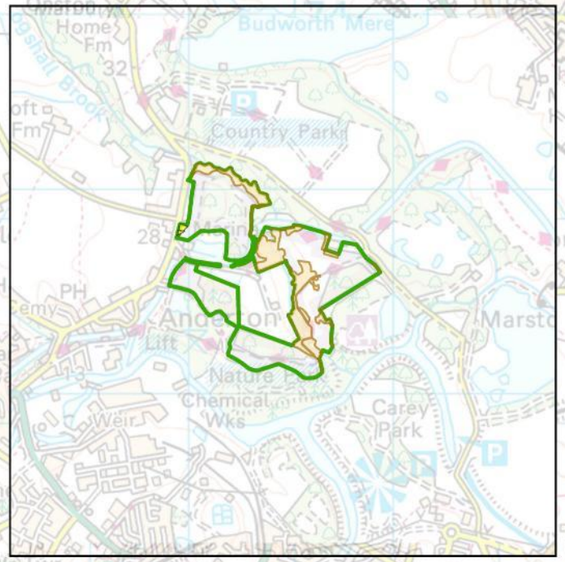
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Delamere Forest and the surrounding outlying woodlands contain a rich collection of TSI, many of which have developed into veteran specimens. These include a diverse range of species, such as oak, horse chestnut, sweet chestnut, pine, alder, hornbeam, elm, beech, birch and crab apple.



This Forest Plan has used the existing Ancient Woodland Inventory to determine the extent of ancient woodland, whilst the Revised Ancient Woodland Inventory is being completed and incorporated.

The Priority Habitats Inventory (PHI) is Natural England's national dataset which maps habitats of principal importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Compiled from multiple datasets and through remote interpretation, it identifies the most likely main habitat present. Where these habitats occur on the ground, opportunities will be taken to conserve and enhance them.

N

1 0.5 0 1 2 3 4 Kilometers

Central Forest District

High conservation value area

- Mosses & Meres work program
- Ancient semi natural woodland & PAWS*
- Tree of Special Interest (TSI)

Priority Habitats

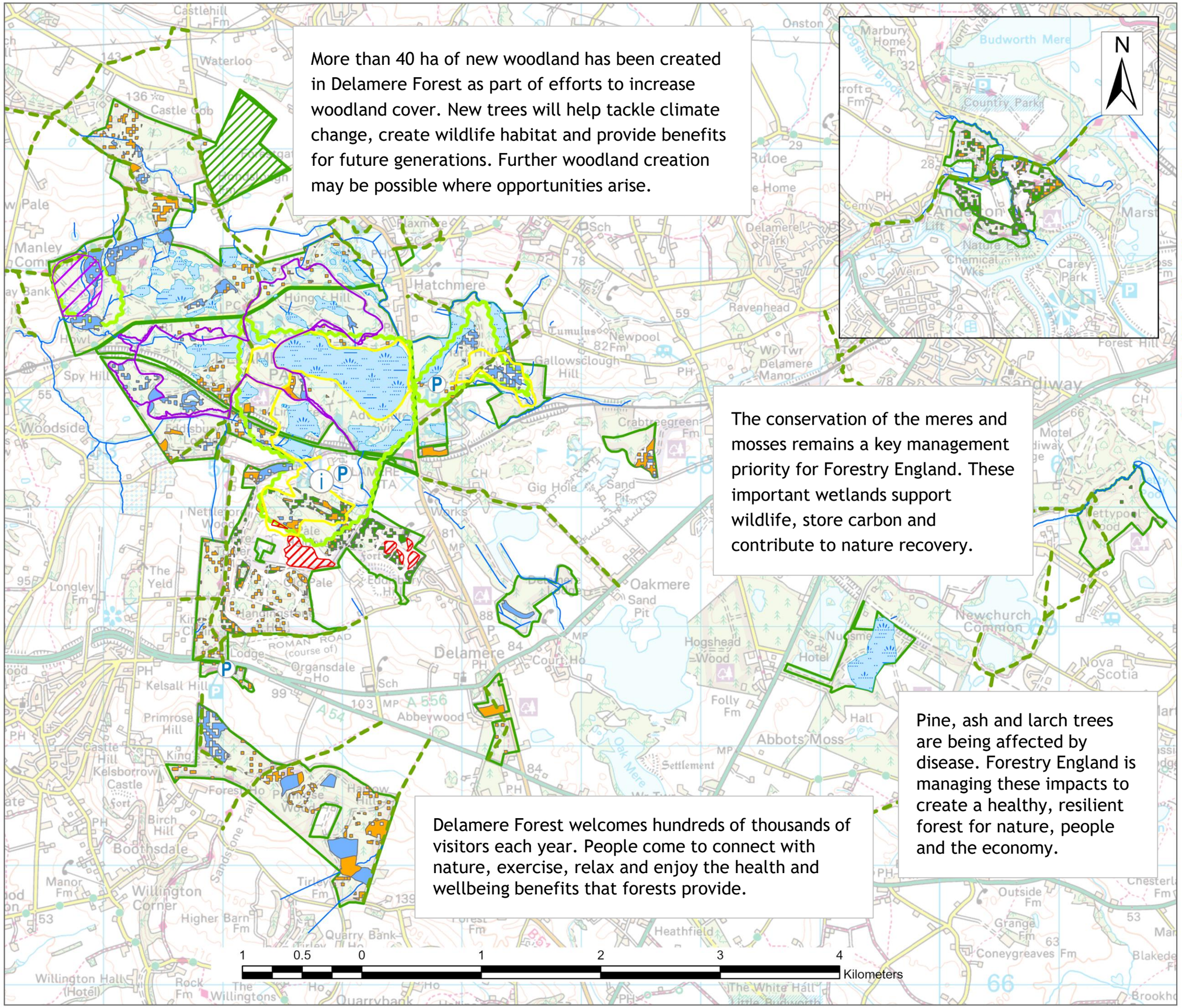
- Deciduous woodland
- Lowland fens
- Lowland heathland
- Traditional orchard
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:30,000

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Central Forest District

Survey Data

- Primary recreation zone
- Corsican pine
- Ash
- Larch
- Mosses & Mere move tree line back
- New woodland creation
- Opportunity for woodland expansion
- Visitor Centre
- Car Park
- Watercourse
- Public Rights of Way
- Downhill mountain bike area
- Cycling routes
- Walking routes
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:30,000

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Low water levels were recorded at Blakemere in autumn 2025, following an extended period of lower-than-average rainfall and higher-than-average temperatures. These conditions reflect the increasing influence of climate change on the hydrology of the Delamere landscape.

Objectives and Vision

This section of the FP sets out the multiple objectives for Delamere Forest Plan.

It explains how these objectives align with the District Strategy and outlines how progress will be monitored, as detailed in the Terms of Reference overleaf.

The accompanying synopsis and concept maps that follow present the key elements and influencing factors in a spatial context. They also include commentary on how these considerations have shaped and informed the development of the FP.



Forestry England's mandate is to protect and expand England's forests and woodlands and increase their value to society and the environment. Our mission is to connect everyone with the nation's forests by creating and caring for our forests for people to enjoy, wildlife to flourish and businesses to grow.

Across the Delamare Woods we aim to achieve the following management objectives:



Terms of Reference

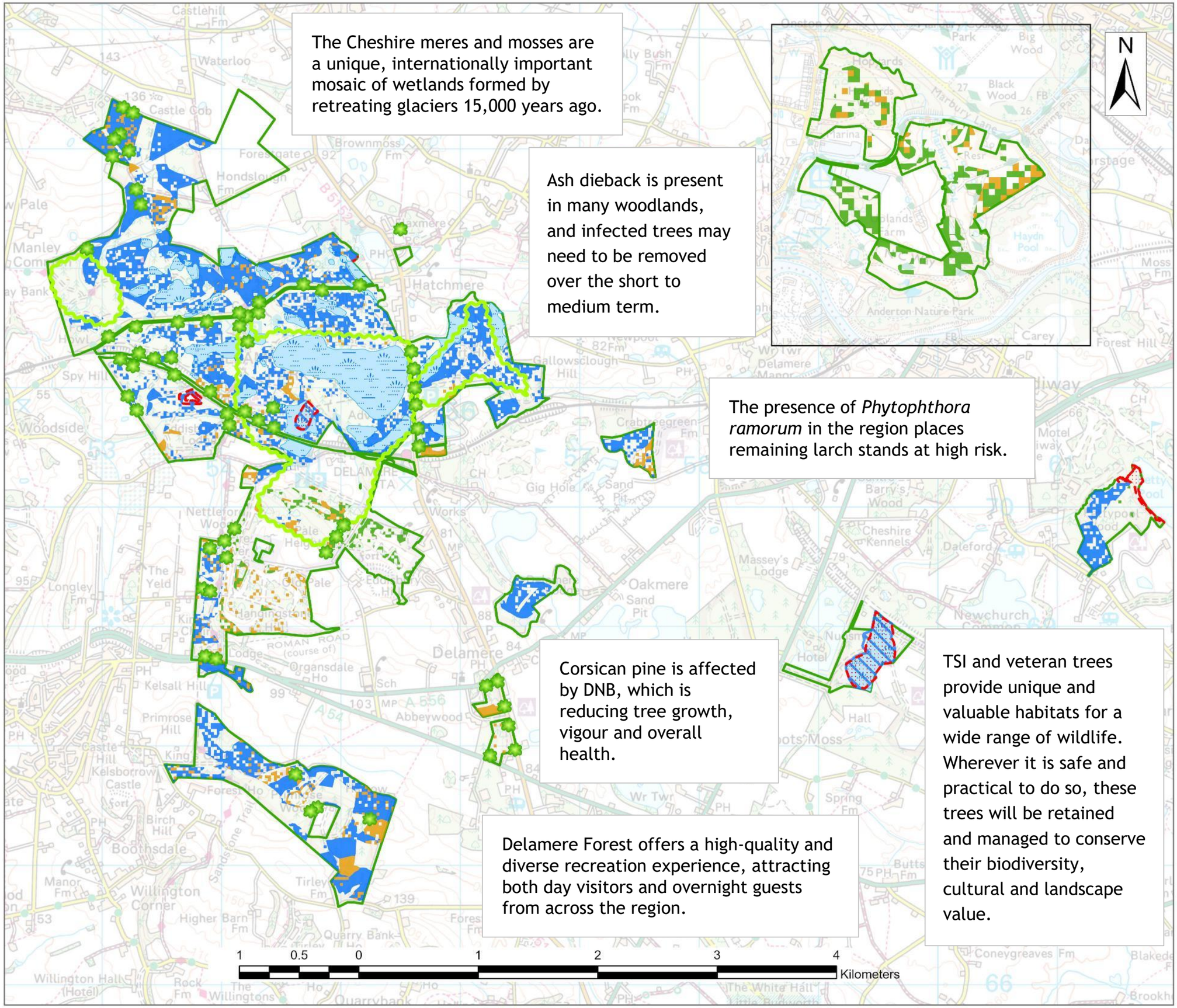
Forestry England purpose: To secure and grow the economic, social and natural capital value of the nation's forests.			
Delamere Forest Plan Vision: To continue to balance sustainable timber production with the provision of informal recreation opportunities. Increase forest resilience to climate change, pest and diseases by diversifying species and age structure. Enhance biodiversity by increasing structural diversity, protecting and restoring priority habitats and associated species.			
Growing the Future Strategic Goal	District Strategy	Forest Plan Objective	Monitoring
For the Climate	· Tailor forest management to the unique character and conditions of each woodland, ensuring expert, evidence-based stewardship that meets national standards and supports a sustainable forestry sector, including providing sustainably produced timber and forest products. · Diversify woodlands by introducing a wider range of suitable conifer and broadleaf species, trialling new species where appropriate, and adopting flexible silvicultural systems. · Increase species and age diversity in new and restocked areas to strengthen resilience to climate change, pests and diseases, helping forests adapt to future environmental pressures. · Maintain healthy, productive forests that store carbon effectively, contributing to long-term climate action.	a) Continue to grow commercial timber using a variety of species that will be more resilient to the impacts of climate change, pests and diseases to maximise yields. b) Ensure stands are more structurally diverse, actively managing the woodland to promote age and species-diversity. c) Look for opportunities to expand woodland cover and to ensure newly created woodland becomes economically viable, increasing sustainable timber production. d) Support recreation and leisure businesses based on site and locally.	a) Forestry operations and restocking will be recorded in the Forestry England sub-compartment database and monitored at 5-year mid-term review and 10-year renewal. b) Monitor as part of the 10-year forest plan renewal. c) Monitored as part of the operational planning process. d) No monitoring required.

Terms of Reference

Forestry England purpose: To secure and grow the economic, social and natural capital value of the nation's forests.			
Delamere Forest Plan Vision: To continue to balance sustainable timber production with the provision of informal recreation opportunities. Increase forest resilience to climate change, pest and diseases by diversifying species and age structure. Enhance biodiversity by increasing structural diversity, protecting and restoring priority habitats and associated species.			
Growing the Future Strategic Goal	District Strategy	Forest Plan Objective	Monitoring
For Wildlife	· Use appropriate harvesting methods, following current Forestry England guidance, to minimise impacts on soils, ground vegetation and fragile ecosystems. · Continue targeted programmes to manage deer and other browsing pressures, enabling vulnerable flora, fauna and natural regeneration to thrive. · Enhance ecological conditions by creating more varied habitats, including increased deadwood to support specialist species. · Restore and reconnect priority habitats to help reverse biodiversity decline and strengthen woodland resilience. · Work collaboratively with local communities, conservation bodies and other partners to protect and enhance biodiversity, cultural heritage and the unique character of each forest. · Build strong partnerships to maximise collective impact and ensure forests and landscapes continue to support healthy, resilient ecosystems for the future.	a) Manage lowland wetland habitats to ensure designated SSSI,SAC and Ramsar sites reach and can be kept in favourable condition. Manage surrounding woodland habitats sensitively to reduce any impact on aquatic flora and fauna. b) Restore ancient woodland sites, identify key species and habitats including EPS* and make appropriate provision for their requirements. Maintain the ecological value of the priority habitats. c) Manage and increase the area of woodland edge habitats for the benefits of flora and fauna through ride widening operations. d) Identify existing locations of TSI and demonstrate appropriate management to recruit future veteran trees and increase the volume and distribution of deadwood.	a) Monitored as part of the operational planning and as part of the RAMSAR management plan reviews. b) Monitored as part of the operational planning process and recorded in the sub-compartment database. c) Monitored as part of the operational planning process and recorded on the Forestry England subcompartment database. d) Existing and future TSI to be recorded on the conservation database, reviewed as part of operational planning process and at the 10-year forest plan renewal.

Table of objectives

Forestry England purpose:	To secure and grow the economic, social and natural capital value of the nation's forests.		
Delamere Forest Plan Vision:	To continue to balance sustainable timber production with the provision of informal recreation opportunities. Increase forest resilience to climate change, pest and diseases by diversifying species and age structure. Enhance biodiversity by increasing structural diversity, protecting and restoring priority habitats and associated species.		
Growing the Future Strategic Goal	District Strategy	Forest Plan Objective	Monitoring
For People	· Ensure woodlands remain welcoming and accessible, providing inclusive spaces for people of all ages and abilities to connect with nature. · Improve accessibility and maintain high standards of visitor safety to support physical, mental and social wellbeing. · Offer a varied recreational experience, from peaceful, nature-rich areas to more adventurous activities, catering to a wide range of interests. · Expand opportunities for outdoor learning, community involvement and citizen-science activities, creating meaningful experiences for schools, families and individuals. · Support external environmental educators and partner organisations to broaden learning opportunities across the public forest estate and deepen understanding of forests, sustainable land management and climate-nature challenges. · Strengthen partnerships with local communities, businesses, public bodies and stakeholders to co-create recreational and educational opportunities that enrich the estate and support wider social and economic wellbeing. · Maintain strong collaborative relationships to ensure forests remain vibrant, valued places that bring people and nature together while delivering lasting regional benefits.	a) Promote Delamere Forest Centre as a key gateway site from which an extensive network of promoted trails for walkers, horse riders, and mountain bikers originates. b) Continue to improve both internal and external landscapes through the diversification of woodland structure and through interventions which are sympathetically designed and appropriately scaled. c) Conserve features of cultural significance, including SAMs* at Glaziers Hollow and Eddisbury Hill Fort. d) Promote the Active Forests Programme aimed at creating a sporting habit for life for visitors through communication, partnership and engagement.	a) No monitoring required. b) Review as part of the forest plan review/renewal. c) Monitored as part of the operational planning process. d) Monitored as part of Forestry England national active forests programme.



Central Forest District

Synopsis

- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Ramsar sites
- Tree of Special Interest (TSI)
- Recreation zone
- Corsican pine
- Ash
- Larch
- Mosses & Mere move tree line back
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:30,000

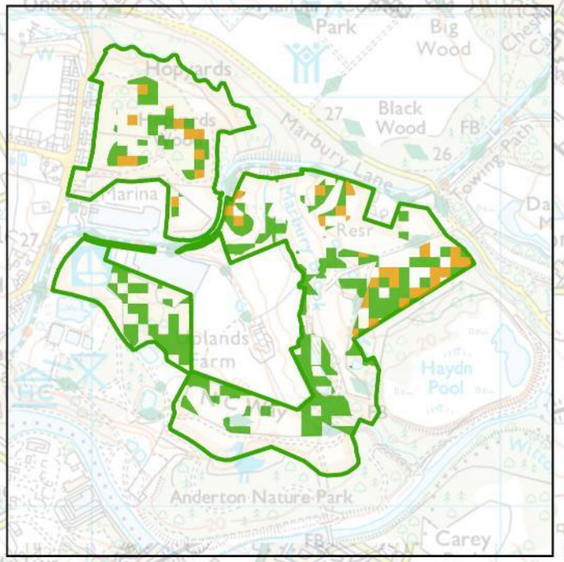
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Forestry England will continue to work with Natural England and other partners to achieve and maintain favourable condition across designated sites, mosses and meres.

Ash removal will be phased, prioritising areas near public spaces and well-used routes. Where safe, larger trees will be retained as deadwood habitat.



Larch will be gradually removed from mixed stands. Pure stands of larch will be closely monitored to enable early detection of infection and facilitate timely removal where necessary, helping to reduce the risk of further spread.

The shape, scale and timing of felling operations around the recreation hub will be carefully planned to ensure they are compatible with the recreational facilities on offer.

TSI and deadwood habitats will be retained wherever possible. Individual trees or small groups with notable character, will be recruited to become future TSI and increase deadwood habitat.

The Corsican pine stands most severely affected by DNB have already been removed. More mature stands that are infected with DNB but continue to retain sufficient needle growth will be removed gradually through a phased programme of felling. This approach will help to maintain landscape character and ecological value while facilitating the long-term transition to more resilient woodland stands.

N

1 0.5 0 1 2 3 4 Kilometers

Central Forest District

Concept

- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Ramsar sites
- Tree of Special Interest (TSI)
- Recreation zone
- Corsican pine
- Ash
- Larch
- Mosses & Mere move tree line back
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:30,000

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Harvesting Operations

One of Forestry England's management objective within Delamere Forest is to sustainably produce quality conifer and hardwood timber while safeguarding key environmental, recreational, and landscape features. Over the past decade, operational practices have been adapted to address the declining health of Corsican pine stands infected with DNB. In many cases, stands have required removal significantly ahead of their intended economic rotation. In retained young Corsican pine crops (20-30 years), strip-felling has been implemented to facilitate the phased removal of diseased trees while maintaining a degree of canopy continuity. This approach mitigates soil exposure, preserves local microclimatic conditions, and supports ecological function. It also provides sheltered microsites for the successful establishment of replacement species with greater shade-bearing attributes but a lower tolerance to exposure.



Planting within strip fells.

Strip felling interventions have increased species and structural diversity, enhancing long-term stand resilience to pests, pathogens, and projected climate change impacts.

Strip-felling will continue where trees retain viable foliage and can sustain growth, while severely affected compartments will be clearfelled. In mature Corsican pine and Scots pine stands, DNB impact remains moderate, and these crops are expected to continue on their conventional commercial rotations. Alongside this, LISS (small coupe felling <2 ha) will be employed in selected conifer and broadleaf areas to promote structural diversity and mixed-species composition. In addition to the aforementioned felling programme, thinning assessments will be made every 5 years and thinning operations planned accordingly. Managing stand density and light availability through thinning is essential for each tree's crown and root system to develop fully, helping ensure the trees remain stable in the wind as they mature. Thinning operations are also an important source of timber and timber revenue.

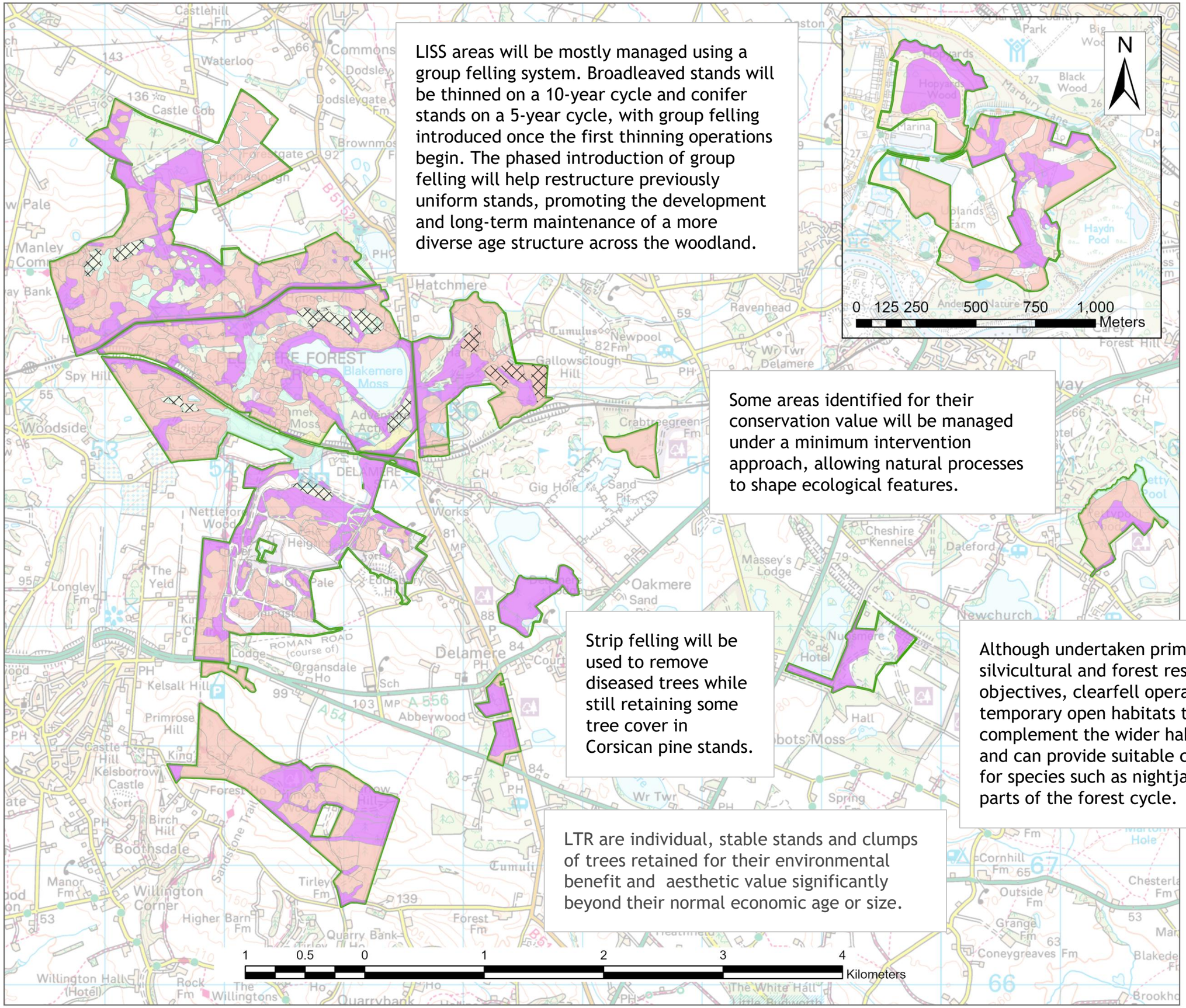
Clearfell and restocking remain essential silvicultural systems at Delamere, covering 435 ha within the Forest Plan. Coupe design, including size, shape, timing, and orientation—has been developed to reflect local landscape character and enhance both internal and external forest views. Small-scale clearfells in young larch stands on Old Pale have facilitated early establishment of alternative conifer species, reducing the risk of enforced sanitation felling should *Phytophthora ramorum* be discovered. All scheduled felling sites will be assessed to determine the most appropriate species for future climate scenarios while maintaining broad species diversity. Over the next 50 years, Delamere is expected to transition monoculture crops toward a predominantly coniferous forest with an increasing proportion of mixed conifer/broadleaf stands.



Harvesting timber that has reached the end of the crop's economic rotation.

Petty Pool is an ancient woodland site and the current conifer stands will be progressively restored to broadleaves, favouring native species in line with long-term land-use objectives. As the newly planted species may be more palatable to browsing mammals, additional protection may be required. A combination of deer and grey squirrel management, together with targeted fencing, may be considered to ensure successful establishment.

A total of 281 ha (24% of the Forest Plan area) will continue to be managed as open space, nursery, water, recreation, and built infrastructure. Periodic cutting of open habitats and woodland edges will maintain structural diversity and create the microclimatic variation required to support and maintain Delamere's biodiversity and recreational value.



Central Forest District

Silvicultural Systems

- Clearfell
- Lower Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS)
- Minimum intervention
- Long Term Retention
- Other/Open land
- Strip felling
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:30,000

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Intended Land use

Delamere Forest: Vision and Management Overview

Delamere Forest will continue to be dominated by productive mixed conifer woodland, interspersed with broadleaved corridors. These corridors will link the mosses and meres, strengthen ecological connectivity while maintaining a sustainable supply of timber.



Mature pine stand

Building a Resilient Future Forest

To improve long-term resilience to pests, diseases, and climate change, Forestry England will increase species diversity during restocking where appropriate.

This forms part of Forestry England's portfolio approach to restocking, which includes:

- Using a wider range of tree species
- Harnessing natural regeneration where suitable
- Planting stock of local provenance, or from locations two to five degrees south where possible, to better reflect future climate conditions.

Over the next 50 years, the forest structure will gradually diversify so that no single species dominates, with an increase in mixed stands across the landscape.

Where conifers will be managed under LISS, strategically located broadleaved woodland belts will be used as natural firebreaks within large conifer blocks, helping to limit wildfire spread and reduce its impact on the wider plantation.

Open Habitats and Woodland Edges

The detailed management of open habitats, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), and water bodies is not covered in this forest plan and will continue to be overseen by Forestry England's local staff and environment team.

Forestry England will continue to work towards maintaining the SSSI in favourable condition and will manage open habitats and woodland edges sensitively to support and enhance nature conservation interests.

Species Selection and Evidence-Based Decision-Making

Forestry England will continue working with Forest Research to monitor forest health and guide species selection. Tools such as the Ecological Site Classification (ESC) help identify which tree species are most likely to thrive under local soil and climate conditions. In this area, ESC suggests that soil nutrient availability may increasingly limit tree growth for some species.

ESC assessment indicates that pine species are the most suitable for meeting long-term timber production and ecological objectives under the projected regional climate conditions towards the end of the 21st century. In contrast, larch and a number of fir species are predicted to become increasingly unsuitable as a result of anticipated climate change impacts, particularly in relation to temperature and moisture stress.

Table.3 ESC Report 2060-2080 CRP4.5 (2.4 °C rise in temperature)

	Broadleaves	Conifers
Brown earth with some gleying	Hornbeam	Macedonian pine
	Common walnut	Oriental spruce
	Wild service tree	Monterey/Radiata pine
	Willow	Maritime pine
	Italian alder	Scots pine
	Red oak	Lodgepole pine
	Black walnut	Serbian spruce
	Black poplar	
	Pedunculate oak	
	Common alder	

	Broadleaves	Conifers
Podzol Surface water gley	Hornbeam	Maritime pine
	Italian alder	Monterey/Radiata pine
	Wild service tree	Macedonian pine
	Red oak	Scots pine
	Rowan	
	Pedunculate oak	

By combining scientific evidence with local knowledge, Forestry England staff will select tree species that are best suited to the growing conditions to establish woodlands that are healthy, productive and resilient to future challenges.

Clearfell operations planned over the next ten years will focus on the removal of poorly stocked and diseased Corsican pine stands, as well as mature stands where the crop has reached its economic rotation length and timber yields are declining.

The size, shape, and distribution of clearfell coupes have been carefully designed to diversify age structure in areas currently dominated by high forest, particularly around sites of nature conservation interest. This approach will help to create areas of transitional open space and pull the tree line back from sensitive habitats, supporting greater structural and ecological diversity.

The trees that reside within the leased land are not managed by Forestry England and are excluded from this forest plan.

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

0.3 0.15 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Kilometers

N

Central Forest District

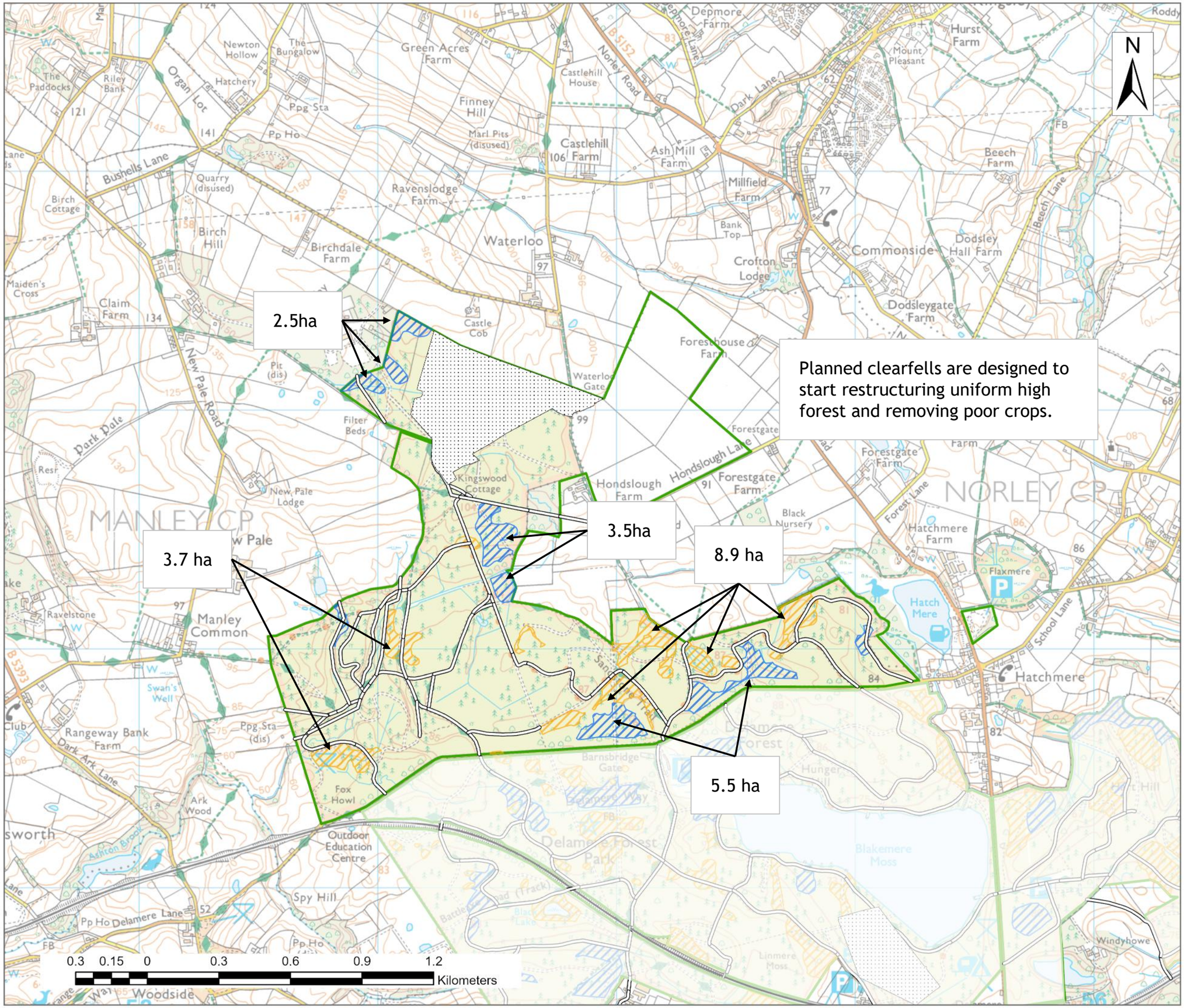
Felling Period
- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Fell 2037-2041
- Fell 2042-2046
- Fell 2047-2051
- Fell 2052 & beyond
- Low Impact Silvicultural System (LISS)
- Open habitats
- Long Term Retention (LTR)
- Leased land
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:15,000

Forestry England

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Central Forest District

Approved Felling for 10 years

- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:15,000

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Small-scale clearfell coupes have been planned around the main recreation routes, visitor facilities, and Blakemere to help restructure areas of woodland currently dominated by single-species pine planted in the 1970s.

The small, interlocking coupe design will create varied light conditions within the woodland, open up views along key routes, and provide suitable conditions for natural regeneration and ground flora to establish. The resulting pattern of small canopy gaps will contribute to a more varied woodland structure and a gradual transition between closed high forest and more open woodland habitats.

The use of LISS around Blakemere will allow Forestry England to manage the density and extent of woodland cover in a sensitive and controlled way. Careful silvicultural management is therefore essential to structure woodland cover in a way that benefits wildlife, maintains and creates views across the mere, and provides areas of shade for both wildlife and visitors using the circular path.

0.3 0.15 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Kilometers

Central Forest District

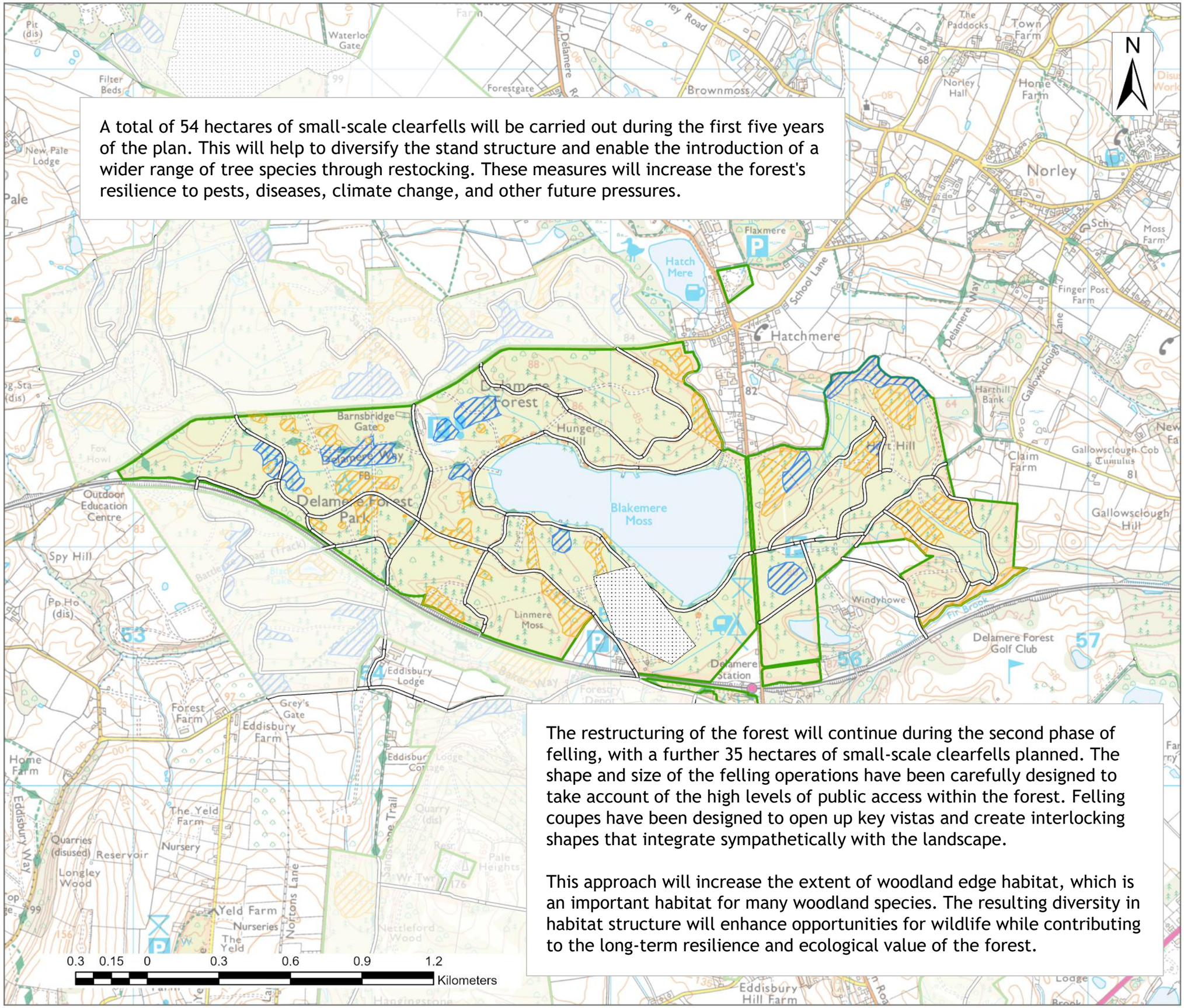
Felling Period
- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Fell 2037-2041
- Fell 2042-2046
- Fell 2047-2051
- Fell 2052 & beyond
- Low Impact Silvicultural System (LISS)
- Open habitats
- Long Term Retention (LTR)
- Leased land
- Management boundary

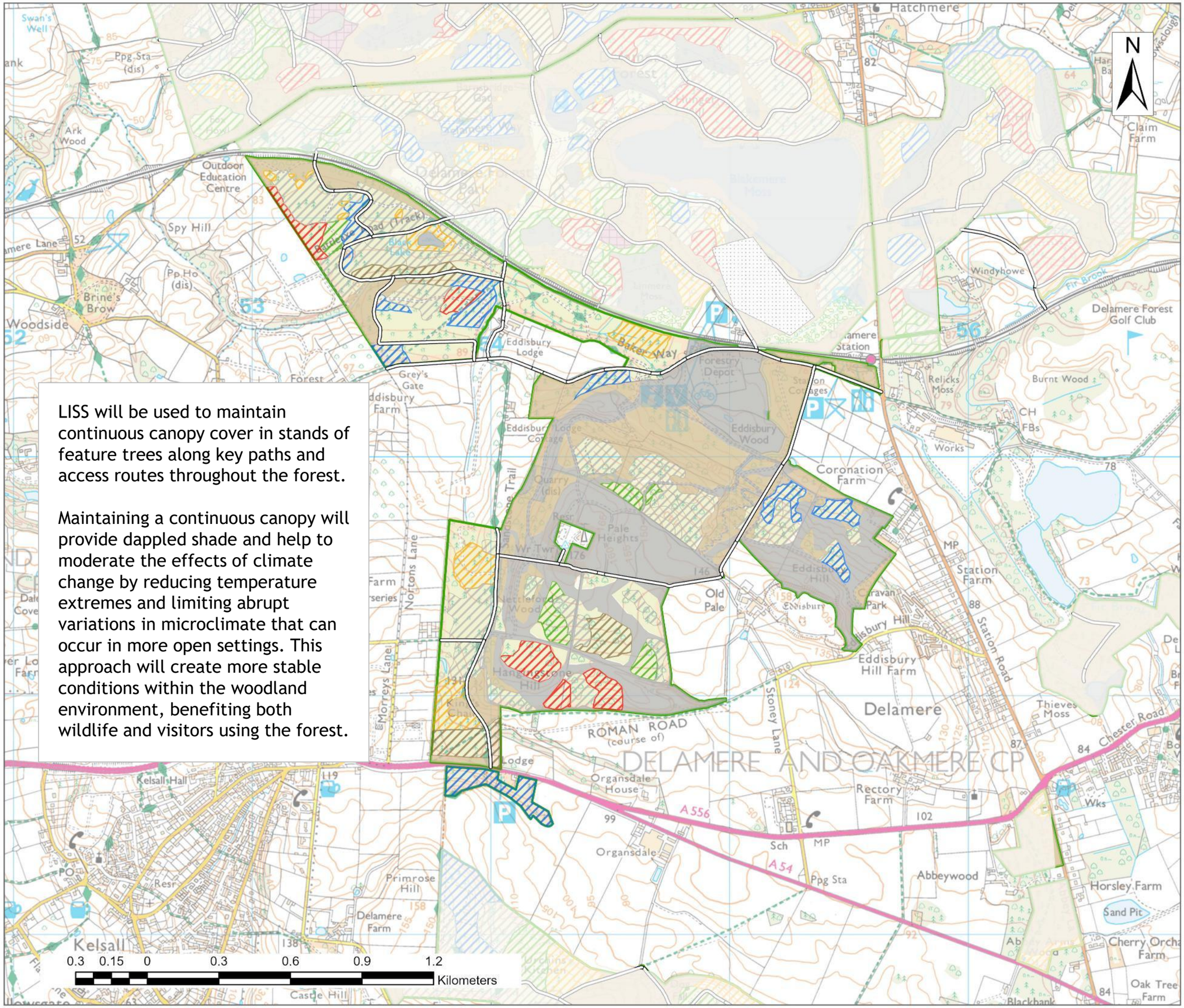
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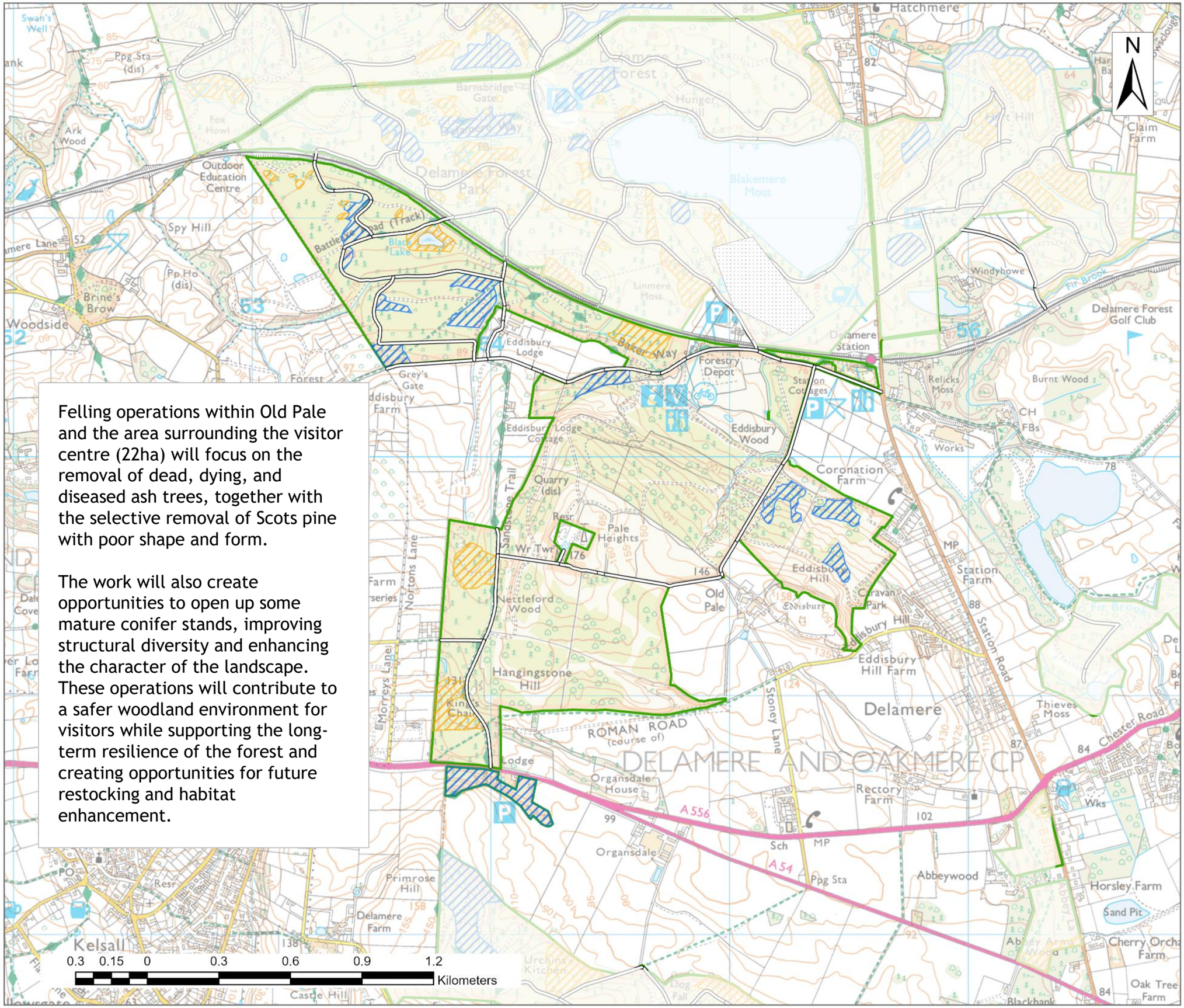
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A total of 54 hectares of small-scale clearfells will be carried out during the first five years of the plan. This will help to diversify the stand structure and enable the introduction of a wider range of tree species through restocking. These measures will increase the forest's resilience to pests, diseases, climate change, and other future pressures.
The restructuring of the forest will continue during the second phase of felling, with a further 35 hectares of small-scale clearfells planned. The shape and size of the felling operations have been carefully designed to take account of the high levels of public access within the forest. Felling coupes have been designed to open up key vistas and create interlocking shapes that integrate sympathetically with the landscape.
This approach will increase the extent of woodland edge habitat, which is an important habitat for many woodland species. The resulting diversity in habitat structure will enhance opportunities for wildlife while contributing to the long-term resilience and ecological value of the forest.
N
Central Forest District
Approved Felling for 10 years
Forest Roads
Fell 2027-2031
Fell 2032-2036
Management boundary
0.3 0.15 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2
Kilometers
Scale: 1:15,000
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Central Forest District
Felling Period
Forest Roads
Fell 2027-2031
Fell 2032-2036
Fell 2037-2041
Fell 2042-2046
Fell 2047-2051
Fell 2052 & beyond
Low Impact Silvicultural System (LISS)
Open habitats
Long Term Retention (LTR)
Management boundary
N
LISS will be used to maintain continuous canopy cover in stands of feature trees along key paths and access routes throughout the forest.
Maintaining a continuous canopy will provide dappled shade and help to moderate the effects of climate change by reducing temperature extremes and limiting abrupt variations in microclimate that can occur in more open settings. This approach will create more stable conditions within the woodland environment, benefiting both wildlife and visitors using the forest.
DELAMERE AND OAKMERE CP
0.3 0.15 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2
Kilometers
Scale: 1:15,000
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Felling operations within Old Pale and the area surrounding the visitor centre (22ha) will focus on the removal of dead, dying, and diseased ash trees, together with the selective removal of Scots pine with poor shape and form.

The work will also create opportunities to open up some mature conifer stands, improving structural diversity and enhancing the character of the landscape. These operations will contribute to a safer woodland environment for visitors while supporting the long-term resilience of the forest and creating opportunities for future restocking and habitat enhancement.

Central Forest District

Approved Felling for 10 years

- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:15,000

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Felling operations in Abbey Wood and in and around the public car park on the A556 with the primary focus on health and safety grounds. The stands have reached maturity and are predominantly single storey, lacking structural diversity. As a result, they are more susceptible to windblow, particularly when adjacent stands are thinned or felled.

Proactive felling will reduce the risk of windthrow impacting public access areas and infrastructure and allow these areas to be restructured as part of longer-term woodland management objectives.

The clearfell operations planned in Primrose Wood will focus on the removal of recent windblow areas that have been left understocked. These interventions will also release an established understory of fir that has developed beneath the pine canopy within one stand. In addition, two stands of young pine and larch will be felled due to extensive squirrel damage. Repeated bark stripping has resulted in significant mortality, snapped leaders, and poor stem form, meaning the remaining trees are unlikely to reach economic or biological maturity.

0.3 0.15 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Kilometers

Central Forest District

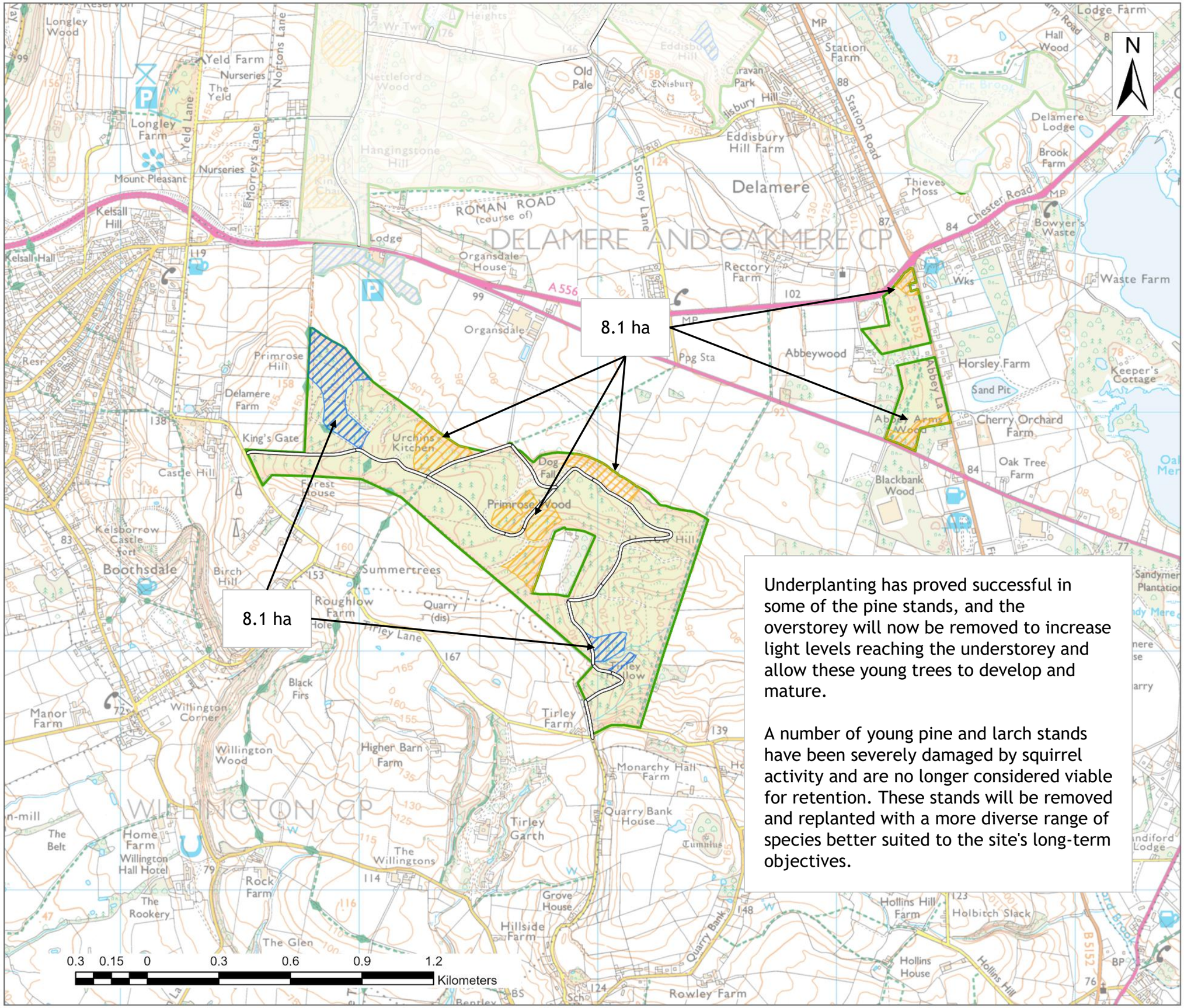
Felling Period
- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Fell 2037-2041
- Fell 2042-2046
- Fell 2047-2051
- Fell 2052 & beyond
- Low Impact Silvicultural System (LISS)
- Open habitats
- Long Term Retention (LTR)
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:15,000

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Underplanting has proved successful in some of the pine stands, and the overstorey will now be removed to increase light levels reaching the understorey and allow these young trees to develop and mature.

A number of young pine and larch stands have been severely damaged by squirrel activity and are no longer considered viable for retention. These stands will be removed and replanted with a more diverse range of species better suited to the site's long-term objectives.

Central Forest District

Approved Felling for 10 years

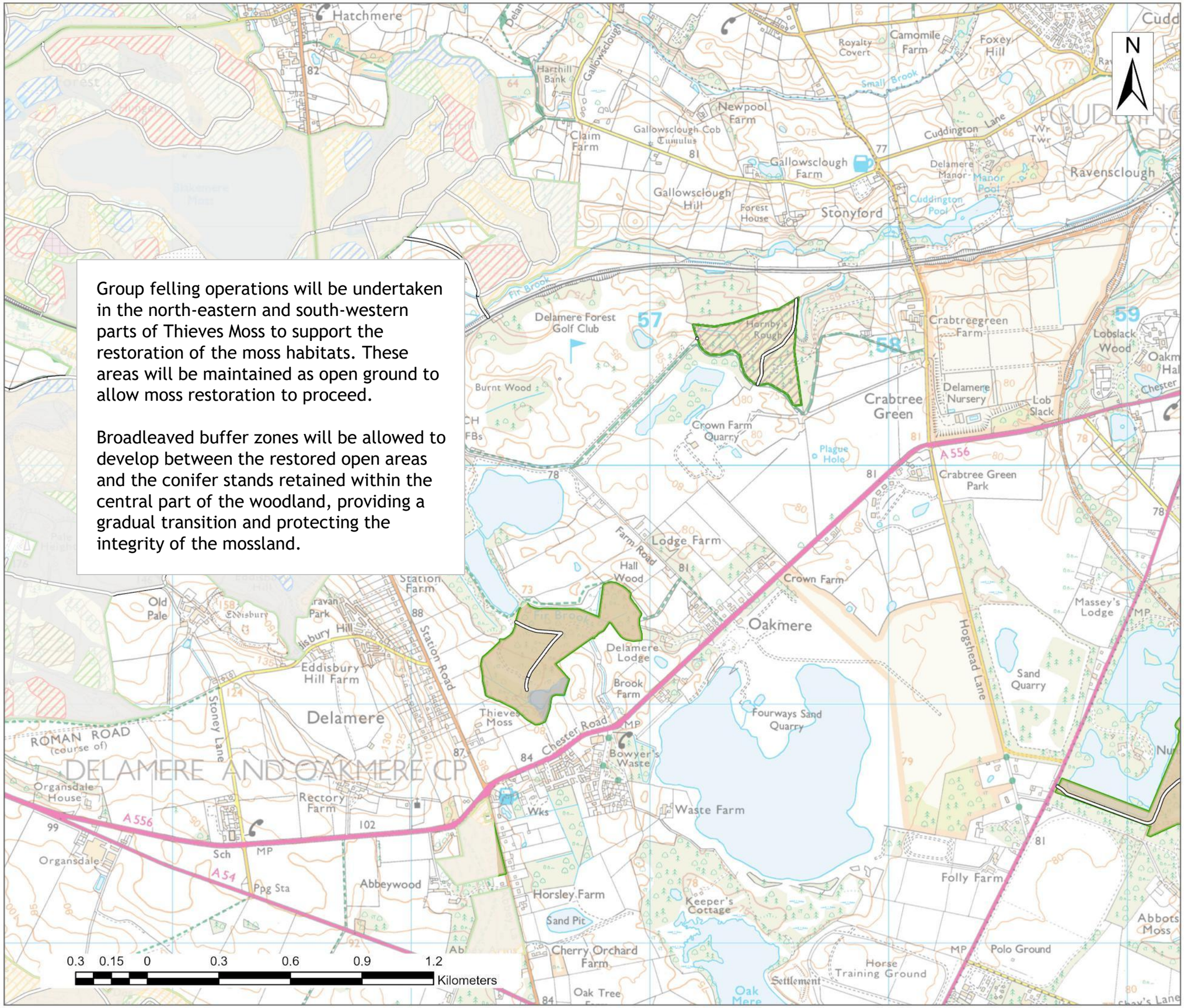
- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:15,000

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Central Forest District

Felling Period

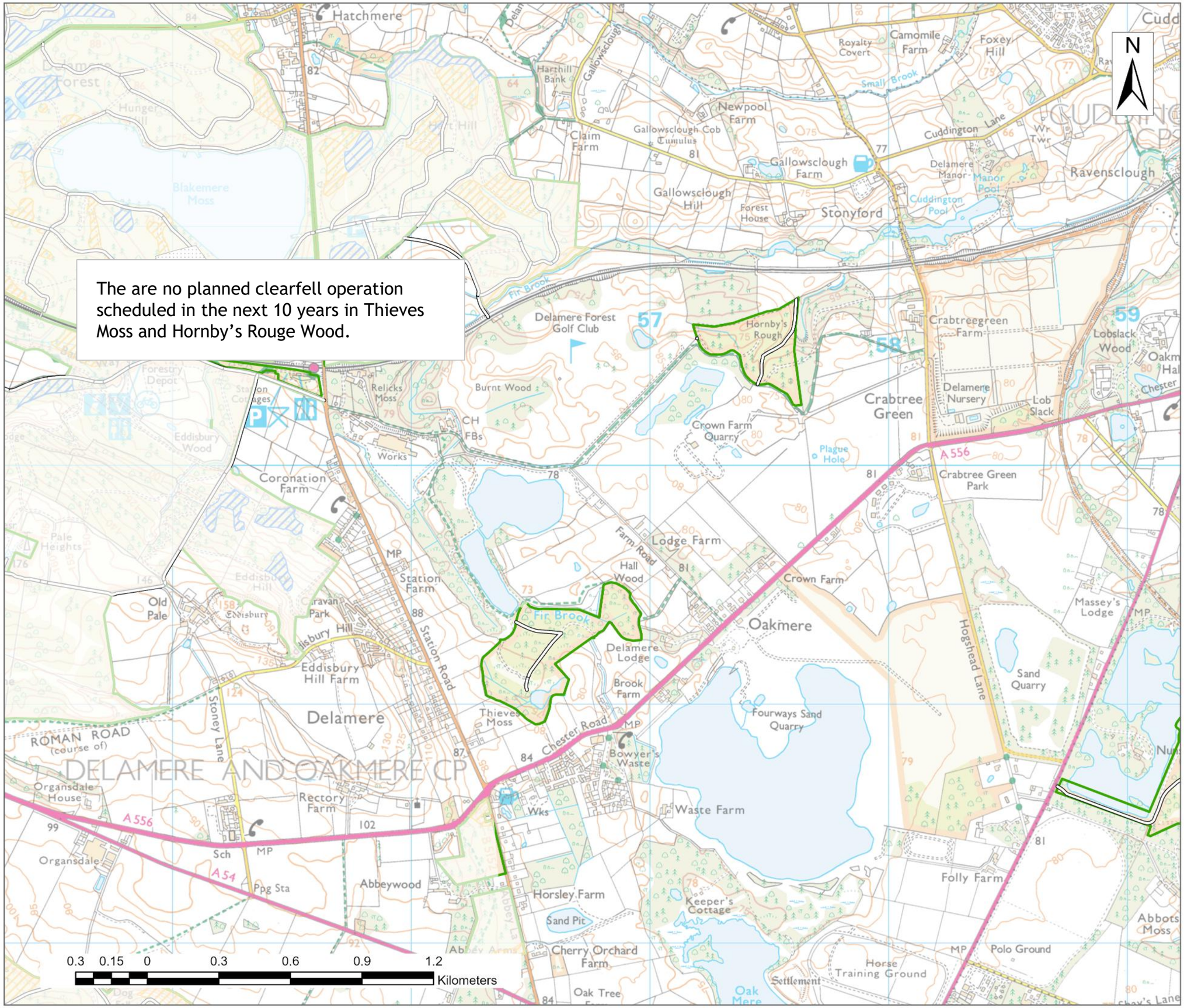
- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Fell 2037-2041
- Fell 2042-2046
- Fell 2047-2051
- Fell 2052 & beyond
- Low Impact Silvicultural System (LISS)
- Open habitats
- Long Term Retention (LTR)
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:15,000

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Central Forest District

Approved Felling for 10 years

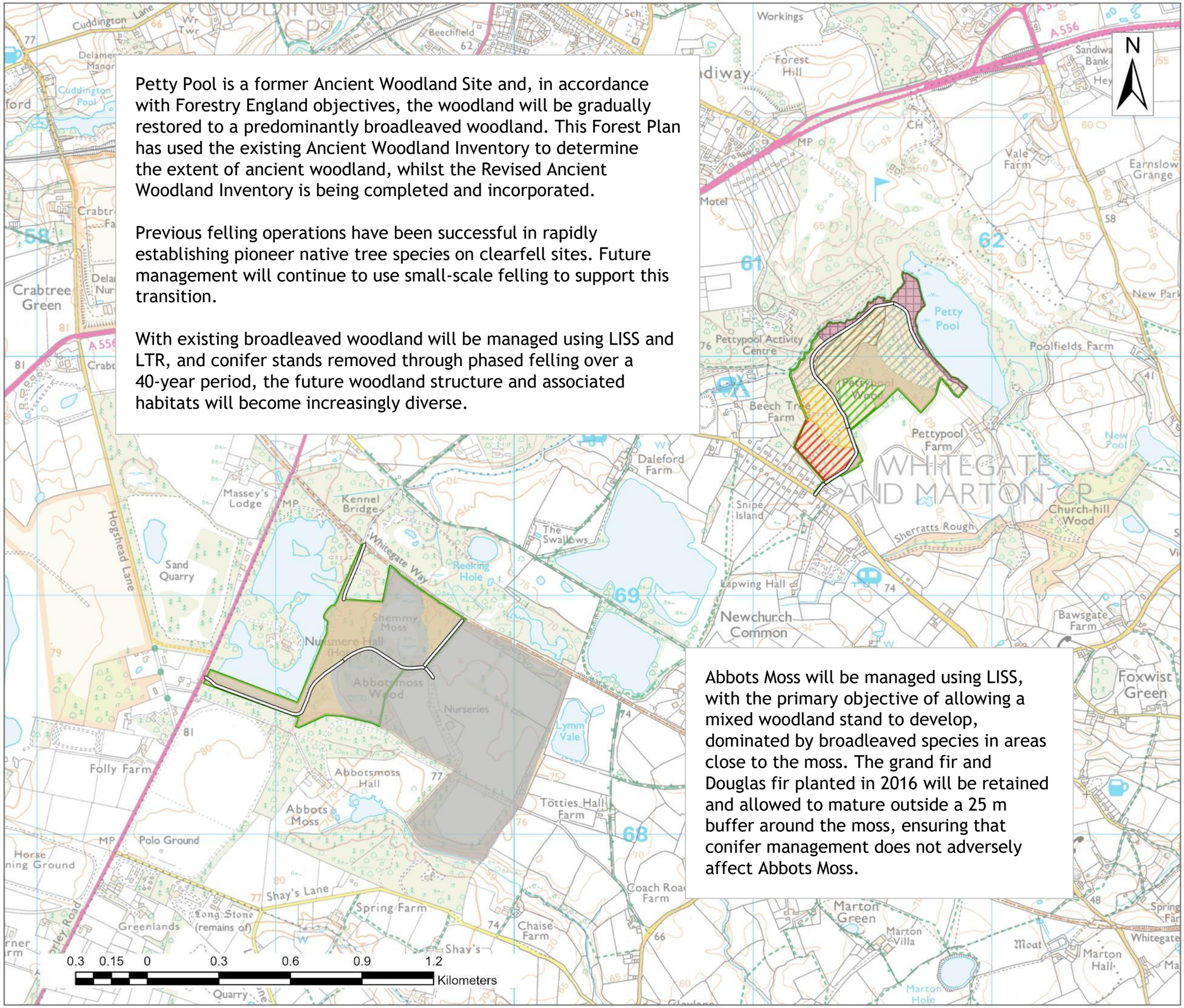
- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:15,000

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Petty Pool is a former Ancient Woodland Site and, in accordance with Forestry England objectives, the woodland will be gradually restored to a predominantly broadleaved woodland. This Forest Plan has used the existing Ancient Woodland Inventory to determine the extent of ancient woodland, whilst the Revised Ancient Woodland Inventory is being completed and incorporated.
Previous felling operations have been successful in rapidly establishing pioneer native tree species on clearfell sites. Future management will continue to use small-scale felling to support this transition.
With existing broadleaved woodland will be managed using LISS and LTR, and conifer stands removed through phased felling over a 40-year period, the future woodland structure and associated habitats will become increasingly diverse.
Abbots Moss will be managed using LISS, with the primary objective of allowing a mixed woodland stand to develop, dominated by broadleaved species in areas close to the moss. The grand fir and Douglas fir planted in 2016 will be retained and allowed to mature outside a 25 m buffer around the moss, ensuring that conifer management does not adversely affect Abbots Moss.
N
Central Forest District
Felling Period
Forest Roads
Fell 2027-2031
Fell 2032-2036
Fell 2037-2041
Fell 2042-2046
Fell 2047-2051
Fell 2052 & beyond
Low Impact Silvicultural System (LISS)
Open habitats
Long Term Retention (LTR)
Management boundary
Petty Pool
Abbots Moss
WHITEGATE AND MARTON CP
0.3 0.15 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2
Kilometers
Scale: 1:15,000
Forestry England
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As part of the Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) restoration programme, a 3-hectare clearfell is planned within the mature pine stand at Petty Pool.The clearfell operation will create the conditions required to restore a more diverse woodland structure and support the establishment of species more closely aligned with the site's ancient woodland characteristics

N

0.3 0.15 0 0.3 0.6 0.9 1.2 Kilometers

Central Forest District

Approved Felling for 10 years

- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:15,000

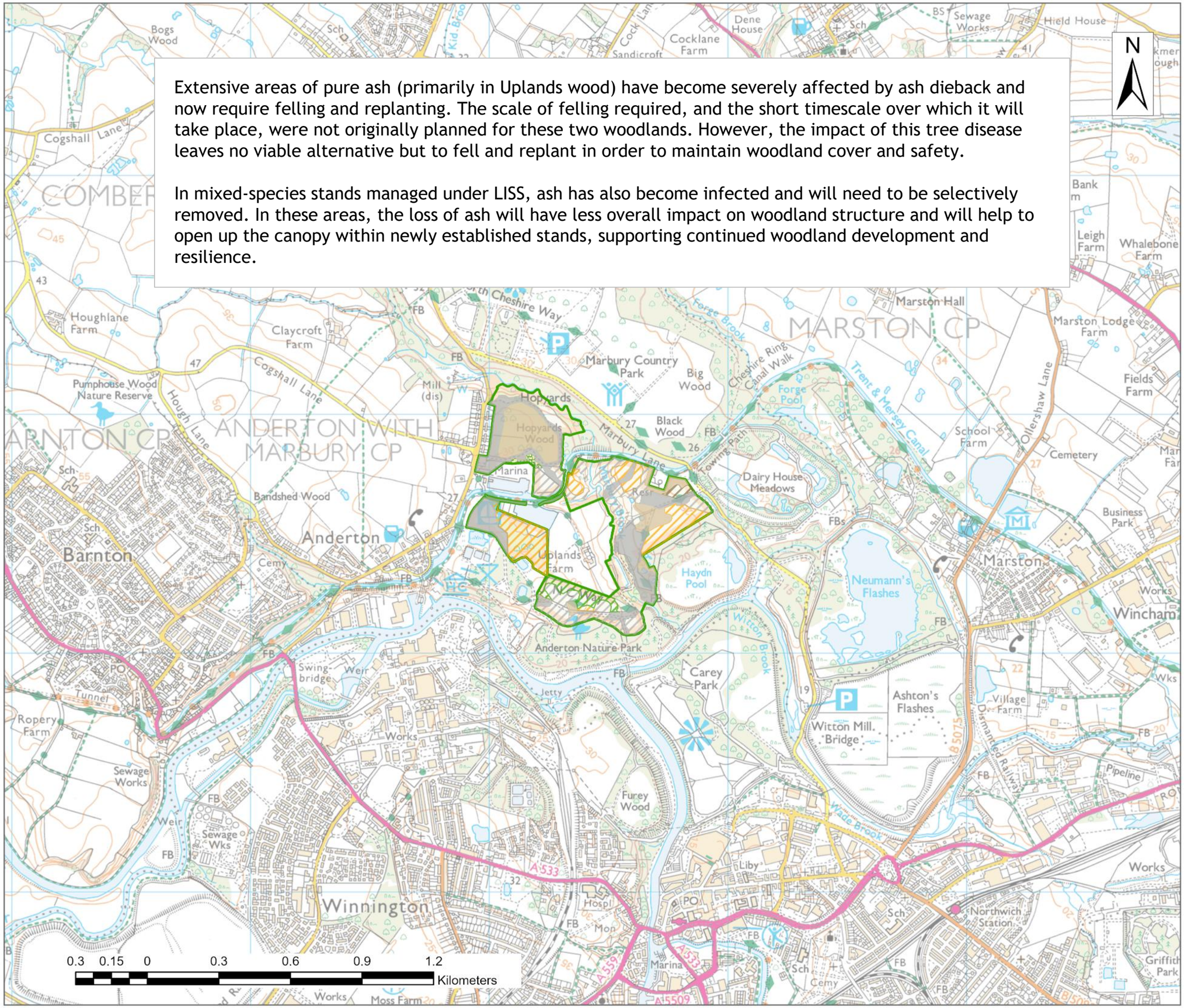
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Extensive areas of pure ash (primarily in Uplands wood) have become severely affected by ash dieback and now require felling and replanting. The scale of felling required, and the short timescale over which it will take place, were not originally planned for these two woodlands. However, the impact of this tree disease leaves no viable alternative but to fell and replant in order to maintain woodland cover and safety.

In mixed-species stands managed under LISS, ash has also become infected and will need to be selectively removed. In these areas, the loss of ash will have less overall impact on woodland structure and will help to open up the canopy within newly established stands, supporting continued woodland development and resilience.



Central Forest District

Felling Period

- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Fell 2037-2041
- Fell 2042-2046
- Fell 2047-2051
- Fell 2052 & beyond
- Low Impact Silvicultural System (LISS)
- Open habitats
- Long Term Retention (LTR)
- Management boundary

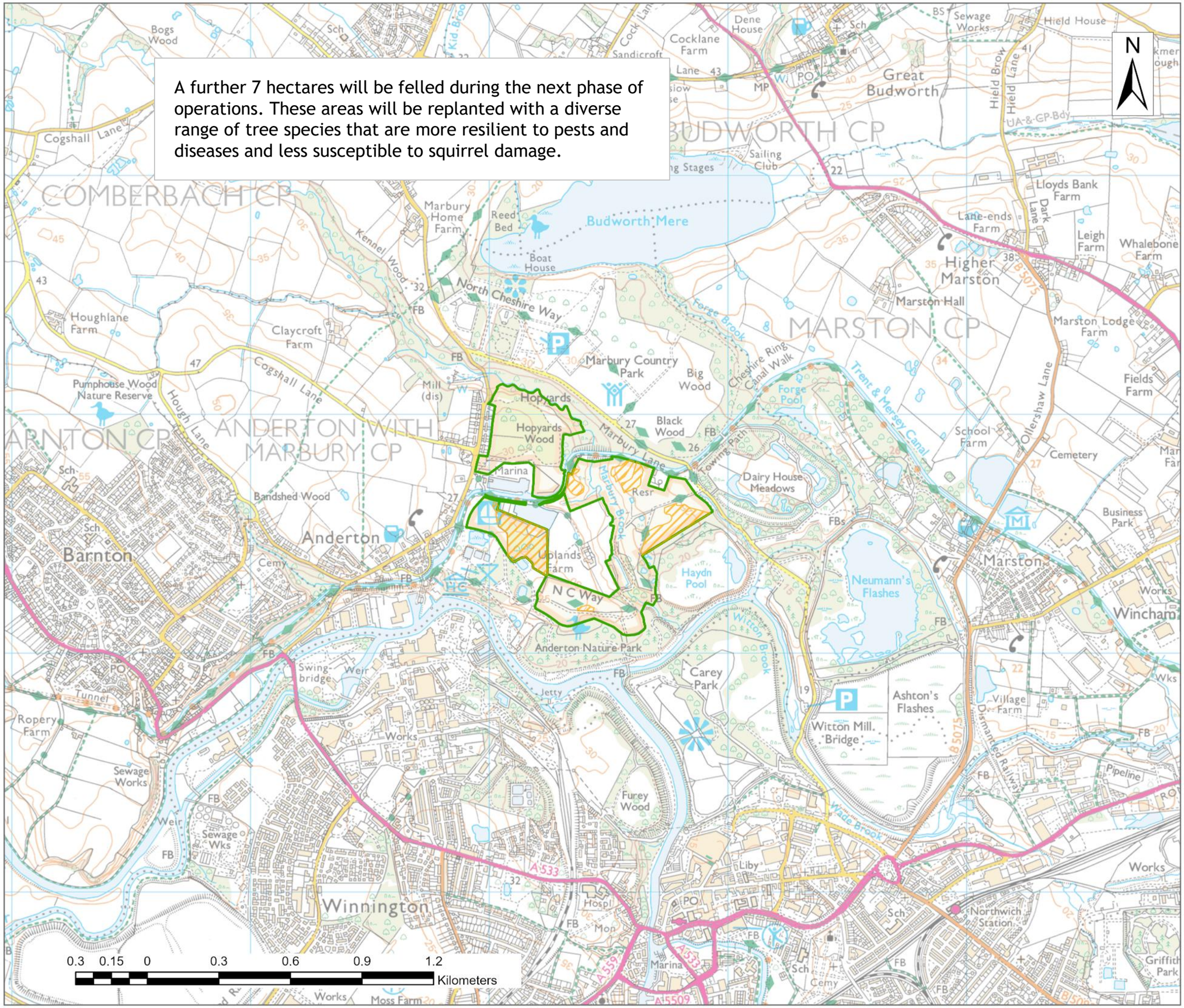
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A further 7 hectares will be felled during the next phase of operations. These areas will be replanted with a diverse range of tree species that are more resilient to pests and diseases and less susceptible to squirrel damage.



Central Forest District

Approved Felling for 10 years

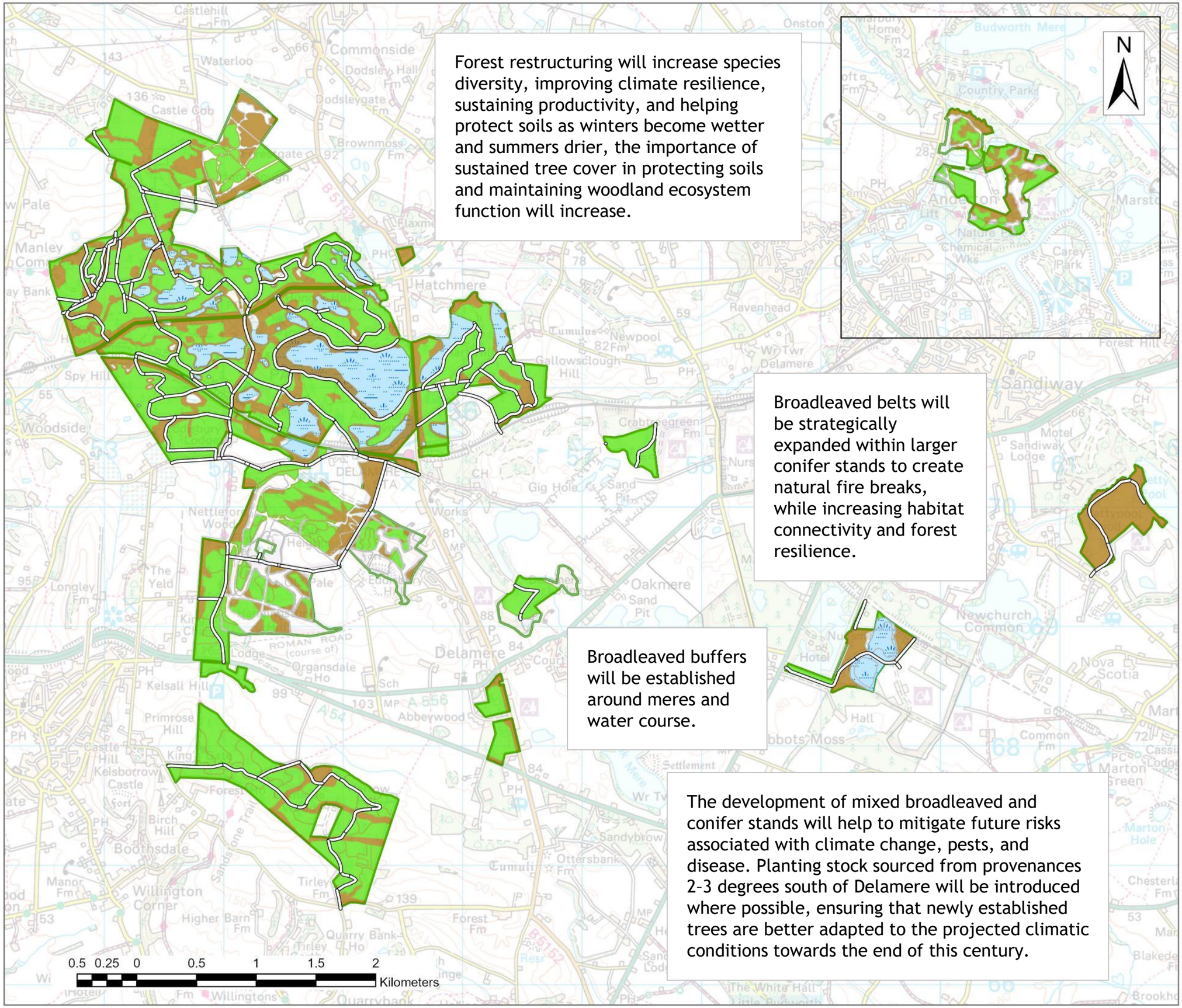
- Forest Roads
- Fell 2027-2031
- Fell 2032-2036
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:15,000

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Central Forest District

Intended landuse

- Forest roads
- Conifers with some broadleaves
- Broadleaves with some conifers
- Mosses and Meres
- Open Habitats
- Management boundary

Scale: 1:30,000

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Glossary

Acute Oak Decline
Acute oak decline is a complex syndrome in which several damaging agents interact and cause a serious decline in tree condition and can kill oak trees within four to six years of the onset of symptoms. The agents can be abiotic or biotic; the latter often include insects and fungi which are not capable of invading healthy trees but which can be very destructive to stressed oaks. Symptoms include characteristic weeping cankers/lesions in the bark.

Ancient Woodland
Areas of semi-natural native woodland that have had continuous woodland cover since at least 1600. They are particularly rich in biodiversity and this is often notable in their characteristic ground flora.

Ash Dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*)
Ash dieback (also known as Chalara ash dieback) is a highly destructive fungus killing native ash trees across the UK. Young and coppiced trees will die quickly once infected, more mature ash may survive for a number of years once infected. Causes the timber to lose strength, become brittle and trees to start dropping limbs.

Aspect
The direction a slope faces. This can have a strong influence on the microclimate, ground vegetation, soils and hydrology.

Canopy
The mass of foliage and branches formed collectively by the crowns of trees. The shade it casts has a strong influence on the plants, trees and shrubs beneath it.

Carr Woodland
A wet woodland area, usually dominated by willow, birch and alder species.

Chronic Oak Decline
Chronic oak decline is a complex disorder of oak trees which several damaging agents interact either simultaneously or sequentially to bring about a serious, long-term decline in tree health and condition. It differs from acute oak decline (above), which causes a much faster, and usually fatal, decline in tree health.

Clearfelling
Cutting down of an area of woodland (if it is within a larger area of woodland, it is typically a felling greater than 0.25 ha). A scatter or small clumps of trees may be left standing within the felled area.

Climax Species: Tree species that will eventually dominate the forest canopy, maximising their exposure to sunlight and out-competing other species.

Coppice: Coppicing is a Lower Impact Silvicultural System (LISS) based on regeneration by regrowth from cut stumps (coppice stools). The same stool is used through several cycles of cutting and regrowth. Coppice can also refer to an area of woodland in which the trees or shrubs are periodically cut back to ground level to stimulate growth and provide wood products. 'Coppice with standards' refers to coppice with a scatter of trees grown on a long rotation to produce larger-sized timber and to regenerate new seedlings to replace worn out stools.

Coupes: Areas of forest that have been or will be managed together.

Dothistroma Needle Blight (DNB): DNB is a fungal disease affecting mainly pine species. The fungus affects the needles of the infected tree, which are eventually shed. This can continue year on year and gradually weaken the tree, significantly reducing timber yields. It can also eventually lead to mortality.

Ecological Site Classification (ESC): ESC is an online tool developed by Forest Research to help a forester choose tree species that are suited to a specific site. It models how well each species is likely to grow using information on climate and soil properties. It can also be used to forecast how climate change may impact suitability.

Ecosystem: An ecosystem is an interconnected network formed of all the living things in a given area (plants, animals and organisms) and their interactions with each other and their non-living environments (eg: weather, earth, sun, soil & climate).

Forestry England: Forestry England is the executive agency of the Forestry Commission that is responsible for managing the Nation's Forests in England.

Forests and Water Guidelines: One of seven sets of guidelines that support the United Kingdom Forestry Standard (UKFS). The UKFS and guidelines outline the context for forestry in the UK; set out the UK Government's approach to sustainable forest management; define standards and requirements; and provide a basis for regulation and monitoring, including national and international reporting.

Glossary continued

Forest Plan (FP): An FP is primarily a landscape-scale felling and restocking plan. It provides a holistic, long-term approach to planning and forest design, detailing felling operations over a 10 year period for the purposes of licencing felling and outlining proposals over the next 50 years. FPs are reviewed every 5 years and redrawn and approved every 10 years.

Group Selection: A method of managing irregular stands in which regeneration is achieved by felling trees in small groups. Group selection involves felling groups of trees (generally <0.25 ha per group)

Historic Environment: The physical remains of every period of human development starting from 450,000 years ago and including earthworks, buried remains, structures and buildings.

***Ips typographus* (larger eight-toothed European spruce bark beetle):** Although the beetle prefers stressed or weakened trees, under the right environmental conditions its numbers can increase enough to result in attacks on healthy trees. If left uncontrolled, the beetle could cause significant damage to the United Kingdom's spruce-based forestry and timber industries.

Landscape Character: England is renowned for its rich, diverse and beautiful landscapes which have their own distinct local characters. These have been shaped over many thousands of years by natural influences such as soil and landform and by generations of human activity.

Long Term Retention: Individual, stable stands and clumps of trees retained for environmental benefit significantly beyond their normal economic age or size.

Lower Impact Silvicultural Systems (LISS): Silvicultural systems including group selection, shelterwood or under-planting, small coupe felling, coppice or coppice with standards, minimum intervention and single tree selection systems which are suitable for windfirm conifer woodlands and most broadleaved woodlands.

Minimum Intervention: Management with no systematic felling or planting of trees. Operations normally permitted are fencing, control of invasive non-native plant species and vertebrate pests, maintenance of paths and rides and safety work. Management only involves the basic inputs required to protect the woodland from external forces or ensure succession of key habitats and species.

The Nation's Forests: The woodlands managed by Forestry England. These include both freehold and leasehold land. (Previously referred to as the Public Forest Estate.)

National Character Area (NCA): Broad divisions of landscape form the basic units of cohesive countryside character, on which strategies for both ecological and landscape issues can be based. There are 159 Character Areas, each of which is distinctive with a unique 'sense of place'.

National Nature Reserve (NNR): NNRs were established to protect some of our most important habitats, species and geology, and to provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research. Most NNRs offer opportunities to the public to experience wildlife first hand and learn more about nature conservation.

Native: Native tree species colonised Britain without human assistance at the end of the last ice age, before the English Channel cut Britain off from mainland Europe.

Naturaised: Naturalised trees have colonised Britain since the land divide with mainland Europe and are growing and reproducing successfully within their natural climatic range without human intervention.

Natural Regeneration: The growth of new trees from seed found in the soil or cast from adjacent trees. Regeneration only occurs where suitable seed sources and conditions are present.

Natural Reserve: Natural Reserves are areas which are predominantly wooded, usually mature and intended to reach biological maturity. They are permanently identified and in locations which are of particularly high wild-life interest or potential. They are managed by minimum intervention unless alternative interventions have higher conservation or biodiversity value.

Near Native/Honorary Native: In a changing climate many tree species native to continental Europe will spread north. These species are classified as 'honorary/near-native': a species previously considered to be non-native, but whose climate envelope will expand over England as a result of climate change.

Nest Planting: Trees planted in small groups which are distributed across the restock site with remaining unplanted areas left to naturally regenerate. A useful way to introduce new species or provenances to a site.

Glossary continued

Notifiable Disease: Some tree pests and diseases are notifiable, which means that, in England, they must be reported to the Forestry Commission or Animal & Plant Health Agency. Notifiable tree pests and diseases are typically those with the potential to cause greatest damage to our trees, woods and forests.

Open Grown Trees: Trees that have been given space to develop a large crown and natural shape. In comparison trees planted closely in a plantation managed for timber or biomass tend to have a more uniform shape.

Open Space: Areas within a forest without trees, such as glades, stream sides, grass or heathland, water bodies, rocky areas, roads and rides.

Operational Plans: Detailed site plans prepared in advance of all major forest operations providing guidance to Forestry England staff and contractors. They identify site constraints, opportunities and areas requiring special treatment or protection.

Phytophthora* ramorum** and ***P.pluvialis P.ramorum is a very destructive pathogen affecting over 150 plant species, particularly larch trees. Some broadleaved plants (e.g. sweet chestnut and rhododendron) can also host P.ramorum. P.pluvialis was first recorded in the UK in 2021 and affects a range of species including Douglas fir and western hemlock.

Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS): Ancient Woodland areas where semi-natural woodland has been cleared and replaced by plantation, often including non-native species. PAWS sites can include both broadleaved and conifer woods and often retain remnant ancient woodland features like species-rich ground flora or undisturbed soils. Also known as Ancient Replanted Woodland.

Pollarding: A form of pruning where the upper branches of a tree are removed, promoting a dense head of foliage and branches. Cutting is usually around 2.4 metres above ground – the height that wild animals or domesticated stock could reach. Traditionally, trees were pollarded for fodder or for wood. Fodder pollards are generally pruned every two to six years, wood pollards at longer intervals, usually of eight to 15 years, to produce upright poles for eg: fence rails and posts.

Production Forecast: The projected volume of biomass that the forest will produce each year. Calculations are based on species, age, net area and yield class.

Public Rights of Way (PROW): Access routes open to the public through legal designation. These include footpaths, by-ways and bridleways.

Respacing: Thinning of dense natural regeneration at a young age (generally when trees are 2-5m tall) to produce a more consistent crop, focus available resources on the remaining trees and promote good development.

Secondary Woodland: Woodland that has been established on land formerly used for another purpose (E.g. as pasture, arable fields, quarries, etc.). Unlike ancient woodland it has not been continuously wooded in the past.

Seed Trees: Trees with good shape and growth rates chosen to produce seed for restocking. Seed trees need to be of an age and size where they produce fertile seeds in large quantities.

Selective Felling (Regeneration Felling): Where individual trees of varying sizes are selected and removed from a stand. The whole stand is worked and the aim is to maintain full stocking of all tree sizes and ages, from seedlings to mature trees, in any one area.

Shade tolerant species: Trees that have adapted to lower light levels and will regenerate and establish freely under the shade of the surrounding tree canopy, as opposed to light demanding species which require full sun/high light levels to establish and grow.

Silvicultural Systems: Silviculture is the process of tending, harvesting and regenerating a forest. Different patterns of felling and regeneration form distinct ‘silvicultural systems’. Different systems may be suitable for different management objectives (E.g. conservation in an ancient woodland vs timber production in a conifer plantation).

Small Coupe Felling: A small-scale clearfelling system. The system is imprecisely defined but coupes are typically up to 2 ha in extent, with the larger coupes elongated in shape so the edge effect is still high.

Glossary continued

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Special Area of Conservation (SAC): SACs are protected areas in the UK designated under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in England and Wales. These areas form an internationally important network of high-quality conservation sites that make a significant contribution to conserving Annex I and Annex II habitats and species.

Special Protection Area (SPA): SPAs are protected areas selected to protect one or more rare, threatened or vulnerable bird species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive, or specific regularly occurring migratory species. They form an internationally important network of high-quality conservation sites that make a significant contribution to conserving important habitats and species.

Strategic Plan: Forestry England's guide to the management of woodland in Central England Forest District. It divides the district into zones for the purpose of management and ensures forestry activities reflect the local ecological, social and cultural individuality of each woodland.

Strip Felling: Strip felling involves removal of some trees in rows, leaving strips of mature trees in place rather than clearfelling a crop in one operation. This creates space between remaining trees suitable for planting new trees (especially species that require sheltered growing conditions) and maintains woodland cover while new trees are established. The width of strips may vary and multiple strips are removed from one stand at a time.

Sub-compartments: Areas of forest that form a homogeneous crop in terms of age, species composition and condition. They may be split across several locations and their boundaries may change as the forest develops after felling and restocking.

UK Forestry Standard (UKFS): Outlines the Government's criteria and standards for forests in the UK.

Understorey Woodland Species: Minor tree species that live under top canopy trees or are 'pioneer' species that arrive in clearings before climax species become established. Once the overstorey is established understorey species are more common on woodland edges and clearings where light levels are higher.

Wood Pasture: Areas of historical, cultural and ecological interest, where grazing may be/have been used in combination with a proportion of open tree canopy cover

Yield Class: Yield class is a measure of the growth rate of a tree crop on a given site. It describes the maximum average volume increase that a particular crop can achieve on 1 ha of land each year. For example, a crop capable of a maximum annual growth of 14 m3 per hectare has a yield class of 14. Yield Class varies depending on factors including the species, how it is managed and local site conditions. Sustainable management of forests in the UK.

Contact information

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