

Definitions of Favourable Condition for designated features of interest



These definitions relate to all designated features on the SSSI, whether designated as SSSI, SPA, SAC or Ramsar features.

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Name of Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	
THE HUDNALLS SSSI	
Names of designated international sites	
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	WYE VALLEY WOODLANDS
Special Protection Area (SPA)	N/A
Ramsar	N/A
Relationship between site designations	
The Hudnalls SSSI is a component site of the Wye Valley Woodlands SAC	

Version control information		
Status of this Version (Draft, Consultation Draft, Final)		Final
Prepared by		Alan Foulds
Date of this version		5 December 2013
Date of generic guidance on favourable condition used		Assembly spreadsheet v5 2008
Other notes/version history		Consultation draft Susie Smith 6 March 2009. QA check Peter Holmes 13 March 2009.
Quality assurance information		
Checked by	Name Peter Holmes	Date 3 January 2014
	 Signature	

Definitions of Favourable Condition: notes for users

Definitions of Favourable Condition

The definitions comprise one or more condition definitions for the special interest features at this site. These are subject to periodic review and may be updated to reflect new information or knowledge. They will be used by Natural England to determine if a site is in a favourable condition. The standards for favourable condition have been developed and are applied throughout the UK.

Standards for favourable condition are defined with particular reference to the specific designated features listed in Table 1, and are based on a selected set of attributes for features which most effectively define favourable condition as set out in Tables 2, 2a and 3. When an SSSI's features meet these attributes, then they are said to be in 'favourable condition'.

Explanatory text for Tables 2 and 3

Tables 2, 2a and 3 set out the measures of condition which we will use to provide evidence to support our assessment of whether features are in favourable condition. They have been tailored by local staff to reflect the particular characteristics and site-specific circumstances of individual sites. Quality Assurance has ensured that such site-specific tailoring remains within a nationally consistent set of standards. The tables include an audit trail to provide a summary of the reasoning behind any site-specific targets etc. In some cases the requirements of features or designations may conflict; the detailed basis for any reconciliation of conflicts on this site may be recorded elsewhere.

Use under the Habitats Regulations

The Definitions of Favourable Condition (DFCs) are used to periodically measure and assess the condition of both notified SSSI features and designated European Site features.

Where SSSIs also form part of a European Site (such as a SAC or SPA), a separate document containing specific European Site Conservation Objectives will have been prepared. These objectives are those referred to in the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the "Habitats Regulations") and the Habitats Directive 1992. They are for use when either the appropriate nature conservation body or a competent authority is required to make an 'appropriate assessment' of the likely effects of a proposed plan or project on the integrity of a European Site under the relevant parts of the respective legislation. The European Site Conservation Objectives are available at www.naturalengland.org.uk.

The concepts of 'site integrity' and 'favourable condition' are similar and the assessment of a feature's condition will measure attributes that also represent aspects of a site's ecological integrity. However, the periodic determination of a feature's condition is separate from a judgement about the effect upon a site's overall integrity. This is because the DFCs do not represent a comprehensive or definitive list of all of the elements that might contribute to site integrity, merely those that are most appropriate to monitor in order to rapidly determine the present condition of a feature. The full range of factors that are components of a site's integrity, and which may need to be considered by an appropriate assessment, will be specified in the European Site Conservation Objectives. Some of the information contained within the DFCs may however contribute to such assessments.

Table 1 Individual designated interest features

BAP Broad Habitat type / Geological Site Type	Specific designated features	Explanatory description of the feature for clarification	SSSI notified interest features	SAC qualifying interest features	SPA qualifying interest features dependency on specific habitats			Ramsar criteria applicable to specific habitats			
					Annex 1 species	Migratory species	Waterfowl assemblage	1a Wetland characteristics	2a Hosting rare species &c	3a 20000 waterfowl	3c 1% of population
Broadleaved, mixed and Yew woodland	W10 <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>	A variety of rock and soil types, together with a complex management history, has resulted in one of the most diverse areas of ancient semi-natural woodland in the Wye Valley. At least 11 different stand-types have been identified along with a correspondingly varied ground flora.	*	*							
	W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>		*	*							
	W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>		*	*							
	W16 <i>Quercus spp.</i> - <i>Betula spp.</i> - <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>		*	*							
	W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>		*	*							

NB. Features where asterisks are in brackets (*) indicate habitats which are not notified for specific habitat interest (under the relevant designation) but because they support notified species.

Table 2 Habitat extent objectives

Extent - Dynamic balance	To maintain the designated features in favourable condition, which is defined in part in relation to a balance of habitat extents (extent attribute). Favourable condition is defined at this site in terms of the following site-specific standards.
	On this site favourable condition requires the maintenance of the extent of each habitat type (either designated habitat or habitat supporting designated species). Maintenance implies restoration if evidence from condition assessment suggests a reduction in extent.

Habitat Feature (BAP Broad Habitat level, or more detailed level if applicable)	Estimated extent (ha) and date of data source/estimate	Site Specific Target range and Measures	Comments
Broadleaved, mixed and Yew woodland	94.4ha. (from SSSI designation 1983)	Excludes permanent grassland areas	

Audit Trail
Rationale for habitat extent attribute (Include methods of estimation (measures), and the approximate degree of change which these are capable of detecting).
Rationale for site-specific targets (including any variations from generic guidance)
Other Notes
Extent on ENSIS (derived from GIS 1996) is 99ha. The difference between the two figures needs to be resolved on the next ISA visit.

Table 3 Site specific Habitat condition objectives

To maintain the Broadleaved, mixed and Yew woodland at The Hudnalls SSSI in favourable condition, with particular reference to relevant specific designated interest features. Favourable condition is defined at this site in terms of the following site-specific standards:
Site-specific details of any geographical variation or limitations (where the favourable condition standards apply)
Units 1 and 2 are situated on very steep banks and this means that there is very little chance for trees to survive to be veterans.

Site-specific standards defining favourable condition

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
W10 <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W16 <i>Quercus spp.</i> - <i>Betula</i> <i>spp.</i> - <i>Deschampsia</i> <i>flexuosa</i> W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Habitat extent	Field survey and/or aerial photography, in relation to baseline map	No loss of ancient semi-natural stands. At least current area of recent semi-natural stands maintained, although their location may alter. No loss of ancient woodland.	Stand loss due to natural processes e.g. in the minimum intervention stand in unit 1 may be acceptable. Stand destruction may occur if the understorey and ground flora are irretrievably damaged even if the canopy remains intact. As a guideline, loss can be defined as at least 0.5 ha or 0.5% of the stand area, whichever is the smaller. 20% canopy cover is conventionally taken as the lower limit for an area to be considered as woodland.	Yes
W10 <i>Quercus robur</i> -	Structure and	Assess by field survey	Understorey (2-5m)	It is acceptable if stands within	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W16 <i>Quercus spp.</i> - <i>Betula</i> <i>spp.</i> - <i>Deschampsia</i> <i>flexuosa</i> W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Natural processes	using structured walk and/or transects	present over at least 20% of total stand area). Canopy cover present over 30-90 % of stand area except in coppice stands where it should not exceed 30%. At least three age classes spread across the average life expectancy of the commonest trees. Unit 3 should contain areas of relatively undisturbed mature/old growth stands or a scatter of large trees allowed to grow to over-maturity/death on site. (e.g. a minimum of 10% of the woodland or 5-10 trees per ha). A minimum of 3 fallen lying trees >20 cm diameter per ha and 4 trees per ha allowed to die standing.	unit 1 do not meet the woodland structure site specific targets as some areas are a single age-class and it will take time for an age-structure to develop.	
W10 <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> -	Composition	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects	At least 95% of cover in any one layer of site-native or acceptable naturalised species. Death, destruction or	Sycamore & Laurel are not acceptable naturalised species in this site.	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
<i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W16 <i>Quercus spp.</i> - <i>Betula spp.</i> - <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i> W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>			replacement of native woodland species through effects of introduced fauna or other external unnatural factors not more than 10% by number or area in a five year period.		
W10 <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W16 <i>Quercus spp.</i> - <i>Betula spp.</i> - <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i> W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>	Indicators of local distinctiveness	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects.	80% cover of ground flora referable to relevant NVC community.	This attribute is intended to cover any site-specific aspects of this habitat feature (forming part of the reason for notification) which are not covered adequately by the previous attributes, or by separate guidance (e.g. notified species features). For notable species it is not intended to set a target for detailed species monitoring, but rather to provide a rapid indication of presence/ absence and/or approximate extent, allowing for natural fluctuations in population size.	Yes
W10 <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> -	Regeneration potential	Assess by field survey using structured walk	Signs of seedlings growing through to	A proportion of gaps at any one time may develop into	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W14 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W16 <i>Quercus spp.</i> - <i>Betula spp.</i> - <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i> W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i>		and/or transects	saplings to young trees at sufficient density to maintain canopy density over a 20 year period and within 10 year period for coppice.	permanent open space; equally some current permanent open space/glades may in time regenerate to closed canopy. Regeneration may often occur on the edges of woods rather than in gaps within it.	

Audit Trail

Rationale for limiting standards to specified parts of the site

Rationale for site-specific targets (including any variations from generic guidance)

The management objectives for the NNR, which makes up most of unit 1, is as non-intervention woodland, with the exception of removing any invasive non-native species, such as Sycamore and Laurel. As large parts of the stand are a single age-class, the targets on structure and open space may not be achieved in the short-term, but this should not be a reason for the site not being in favourable condition.

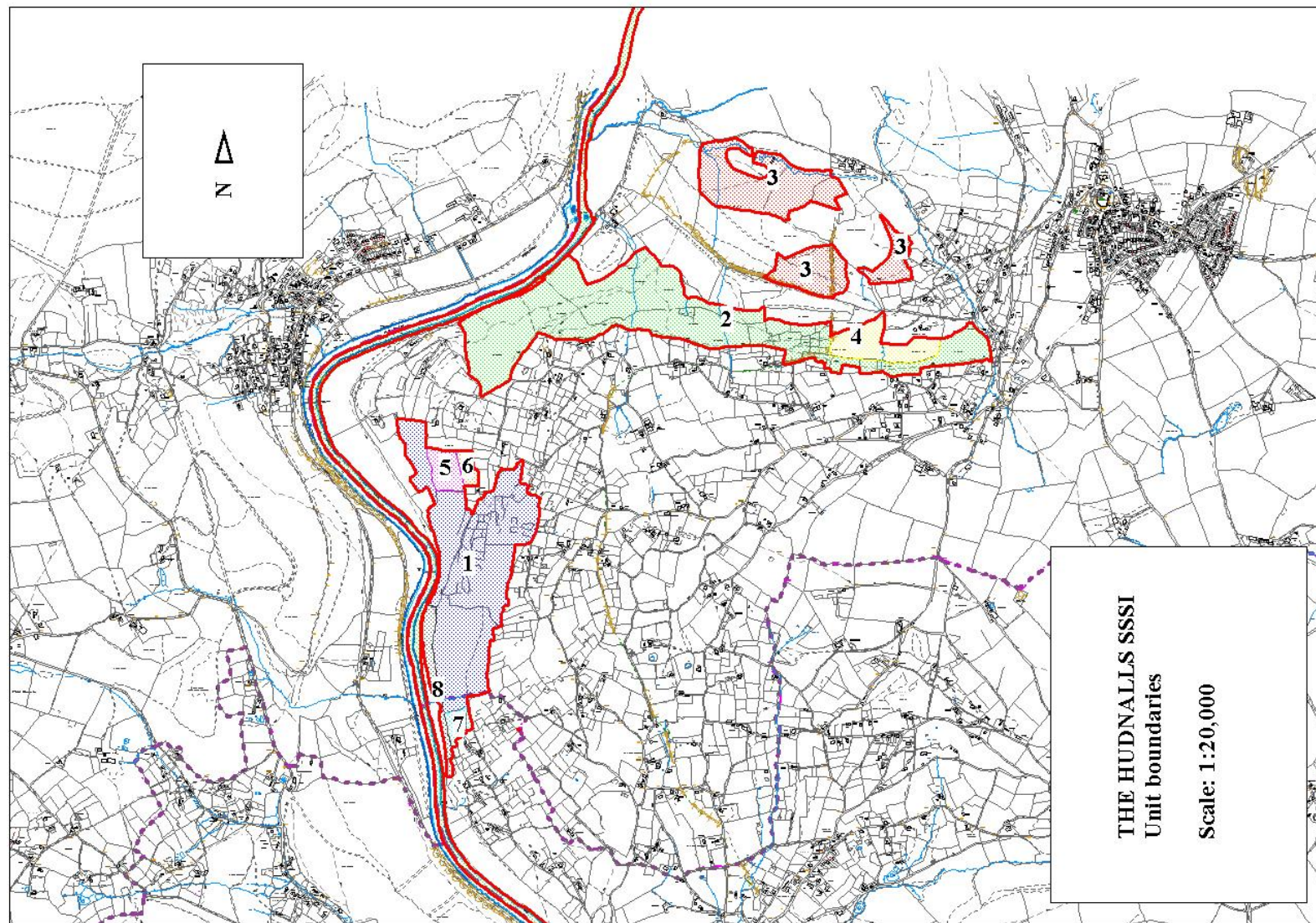
In unit 3, there are no veteran trees due to previous management as coppice. However, unlike in units 1 & 2, the topography does not preclude their presence at some time in the future. The lack of veteran trees in unit 3 would not cause the woodland to fail the condition assessment as long as there is evidence that some trees are being maintained to develop eventually into veterans.

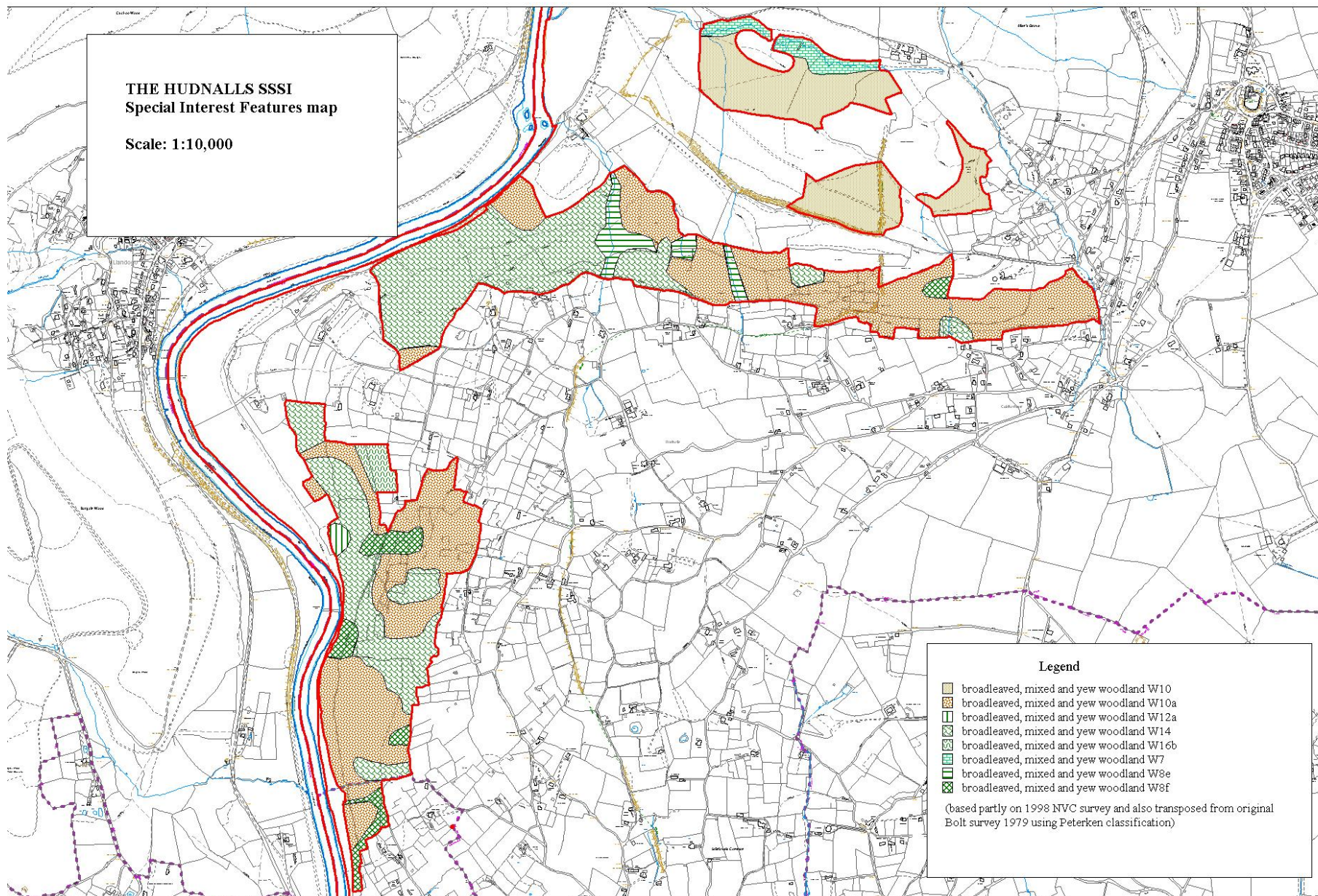
Rationale for selection of measures of condition (features and attributes for use in condition assessment)

(The selected vegetation attributes are those considered to most economically define favourable condition at this site for the broad habitat type and any dependent designated species).

Other Notes
Some units, mostly based on individual ownership, due to their small size cannot be expected to achieve all above targets but should contribute to the whole of the site.

Annex 1 Maps of key areas for monitoring





Annex 2 Location of features by unit

Features	units	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
W10		x	x	x	x	x		x	x
W8		x	x		x			x	
W12		x	x		x	x			
W16							x		
(W7)				(x)					

Notified features also include W14 woodland but this is not shown on the NVC map above. Also W7 is mapped in unit 3, although not a notified feature.