

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)	
LOWER WYE GORGE 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 whole SSSI is a component site of the SAC	

Version control information		
Status of this Version (Draft, Consultation Draft, Final)		Final
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Quality assurance information		
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	 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	W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> (W8b <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> , W8d <i>Hedera helix</i> & W8e <i>Geranium robertianum</i> sub-communities)	Species-rich area of limestone gorge semi-natural woodland containing many stand types, some of which are very localised	*	*							
	W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> (W12a <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> & W12c <i>Taxus baccata</i> sub-communities)	At notification, this site was designated based on the Bolt Survey 1979/80, using Peterken stand-types. These have been transposed to the NVC types shown left.	*								
	W10 <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> (W10a typical sub-community)		*								

BAP Broad Habitat type / Geological Site Type	Specific designated features	Explanatory description of the feature for clarification	SSSI notified interest	SAC qualify	SPA qualifying interest features dependency on specific habitats			Ramsar criteria applicable to specific habitats			
	W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>-<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>-<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> <i>Tilio-Acerion</i> forests of slopes, screes and ravine <i>Asperulo-Fagetum</i> beech forests <i>Taxus baccata</i> woods of the British Isles	The selection and designation of the SAC in 2000 was undertaken against the Corine types shown left.	*	* * *							
Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew woodland	Lesser Catmint <i>Clinopodium</i> (<i>Calamintha</i>) <i>nepeta</i>, Narrow-leaved Bitter-cress <i>Cardamine</i> <i>impatiens</i>, Fingered Sedge <i>Carex</i> <i>digitata</i>, Soft-leaved Sedge <i>Carex</i> <i>montana</i>, Narrow-leaved Helleborine <i>Cephalanthera</i> <i>longifolia</i>, Stinking Hellebore <i>Helleborus</i> <i>foetidus</i>,	Vascular Plant assemblage score 360 Variety of plant species associated with woodland and open space	*								

BAP Broad Habitat type / Geological Site Type	Specific designated features	Explanatory description of the feature for clarification	SSSI notified interest	SAC qualifyi	SPA qualifying interest features dependency on specific habitats			Ramsar criteria applicable to specific habitats			
	a Whitebeam <i>Sorbus porrigentiformis</i> , Rock Whitebeam <i>Sorbus rupicola</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 W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>-<i>Acer campestre</i>-<i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>-<i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W10 <i>Quercus robur</i>-<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>-<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>-<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>-<i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Total SSSI area = 29.2ha on citation	No loss of ancient semi-natural stands. At least current area of recent semi-natural stands maintained, although their location may alter.	No record of extent of open space, namely disused railway line and old quarries or extent of salt-marsh at base of woodland

Audit Trail

Rationale for habitat extent attribute

(Include methods of estimation (measures), and the approximate degree of change which these are capable of detecting).

The extent of open space mentioned in Comments above needs to be estimated at the next assessment in order to quantify this important component of site quality.

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

Area given on ENSIS from GIS (11 July 1996) is 66.66ha. This would appear to be the sum of the area for both units (39.88ha and 26.78ha). There is such a huge discrepancy with the area on the citation and this needs to be resolved.

Other Notes

The Criteria sheet lists a rich variety of Peterken stand types;

- 1Aa calcareous ash-wych elm-southern variant
- 2C Dry ash-maple
- 3B Southern calcareous hazel-ash
- 4C Maple-ash-lime-western variant
- 7Ab Valley alder wood on neutral/alkaline soils
- 8Ea Sessile oak-ash-beech-acid variant
- 8Eb Sessile oak-ash-beech-calcareous variant
- 8Ca Calcareous Pedunculate oak-ash-beech-dry lime-wych elm variant

Using the current NVC classification, these are broadly equivalent to W7, W8, W10 and W12 woodlands. Apart from W7, these have been confirmed in a Woodland NVC survey in 1998.

As the River Wye is tidal up to and beyond Lancaut, this is also one of the few sites in Britain where a natural transition between saltmarsh and valley woodland occurs (albeit over a short distance).

Table 3a Site specific Habitat condition objectives

To maintain the Broadleaved, Mixed and Yew woodland at Lower Wye Gorge 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)
The woodland SSSI is split into 2 units along the eastern bank of the lower section of the River Wye. Unit 1 (northern section) comprising Danehill (Dennelhill) Wood and Ban-y-gor Wood. Unit 2 (southern section) comprising Lancut Wood and Chapelhouse Wood. Most of the site supports mature semi-natural woodland. However, some open areas do occur most notably the steep cliffs of Ban-y-gor Rocks and the old railway cutting in Danehill. Various old quarries also exist, one of which (Woodcroft Quarry) was in use until recently and is now stone rubble and scree becoming invaded by scrub and secondary woodland but also having important rare plants of open conditions.

Site-specific standards defining favourable condition
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Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>- <i>Acer campestre</i>- <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>- <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W10 <i>Quercus robur</i>- <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>- <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>- <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>- <i>Lysimachia nemorum</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. No reduction in the number of veteran trees.	Different targets may be appropriate, depending on the woodland type (see text). Stand loss due to natural processes e.g. in minimum intervention stands 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.	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
			No loss of open space	20% canopy cover is conventionally taken as the lower limit for an area to be considered as woodland. Targets for extent may be modified where a target has been set to increase the extent of other habitat features on the site at the expense of woodland Maintain extent of open space and limestone cliff – to be measured on site visit	
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W10 <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Structure and Natural processes: canopy and understorey	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects. Age/size class variation within and between stands; presence of open space and old trees; dead wood lying on the ground; standing dead trees	Understorey (2-5m) present over at least 20% of total stand area. Canopy cover present over 30-90% of stand area. At least three age classes spread across the average life expectancy of the commonest trees. Understorey (2-5m) present over at least 40% of total stand area.	Different woodland types will differ in their expected cover in different layers e.g. in beech or oak woods the shrub layer is often sparse. This should be reflected in the tailoring of these targets to particular sites. In coppiced stands a lower canopy cover (of standards) can be accepted. Currently the target of three age classes should be assisted by at least 5% of the total woodland being minimum intervention area. Parts of Ban-y-gor Wood are considered to be relatively	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
				undisturbed woodland and may be appropriate for this area. Much of the rest of woodland is now relict coppice becoming high forest. It is not known if the aim is to reinstate coppicing management and, if so, if targets should be adjusted accordingly. W10/W12 areas – The understorey may range from virtually non-existent to impenetrable Holly/Yew. If understorey is very dense it may be affecting the ground flora or lichen growth on the lower trunks of trees. W8 areas – ground flora may appear sparse in places late in season where colonies of Allium have died back. Ground flora is generally very sparse under Beech stands, particularly on acid sites or where there is a well-developed understorey. W12c Yew areas – The ground flora and shrub layer are frequently totally absent over most of the stand, so no target is set for them.	

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>- <i>Acer campestre</i>- <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>- <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W10 <i>Quercus robur</i>- <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>- <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>- <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>- <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Structure and natural processes: dead wood	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects.	A minimum of 3 fallen lying trees >20 cm diameter per ha and 4 trees per ha allowed to die standing.	More detailed targets for deadwood may be appropriate where this is an important element of the woodland (see section 5.9). Note however that assessment of dead wood targets may be difficult to carry out and caution should be exercised in judging condition for this element. As much of the woodland is thought to be relict coppice, there is unlikely to be significant deadwood invertebrate interest. Ideally some 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) – minimum intervention area.	
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>- <i>Acer campestre</i>- <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>- <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W10 <i>Quercus robur</i>- <i>Pteridium aquilinum</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. Minimum levels of particular native tree/shrub species (where important and appropriate – see text)	In sites where there might be uncertainty as to what counts as site-native or as acceptable naturalised species this must be made clear (e.g. the position of Sycamore). Where cover in any one layer is less than 100% then the 95% target applies to the area	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>			Death, destruction or 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. Beech and Hornbeam both considered native to the Wye valley and SE Wales, and on the western edge of their range. In several locations, especially some open areas and along boundaries with gardens, there has been invasion by non-native species – most notably Cotoneaster and Buddleia spp. Sycamore also thought to be a problem and it has been suggested that a new target be set for specific areas of unit 2. Maintain current diversity of stand types allowing for	actually covered by that layer. Factors leading to the death or replacement of woodland species could include pollution or new diseases. Damage to species by non-native species that does not lead to their death is not necessarily unacceptable. Excessive browsing or grazing, even by native ungulates, may be undesirable if it causes shifts in the composition/ structure of the stand. A small Larch plantation is known to occur at the top of the cliff in the south-east corner of Chapelhouse Wood. The woodlands of the lower Wye valley form one of the most	

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
			some local changes. Presence of following uncommon rare tree species: Whitebeam spp. <i>Sorbus aria</i>, <i>S. porrigentiformis</i> and <i>S. rupicola</i>, Large-leaved Lime <i>Tilia platyphyllos</i>, Wild Service tree <i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	important areas for woodland conservation in Britain for the abundance of ASNW and rich diversity of stand types. The lower Wye valley is an important area for endemic Whitebeam species and hybrids which are generally rare and endangered. The location of these species has not been mapped.	
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>- <i>Acer campestre</i>- <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i>- <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W10 <i>Quercus robur</i>- <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>- <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>- <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>- <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Indicators of local distinctiveness 1) NVC ground flora 2) specific vascular plants	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects, or as appropriate to feature.	80% of ground flora cover referable to relevant NVC community (mostly W8/W10/W12 communities) Target(s) also to be set to maintain distinctive elements at current extent/levels and/or in current locations, e.g. to maintain important microhabitats (other than dead wood), patches of associated habitats,		Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
			transitions between habitats, or existing populations of locally notable species (other than trees/shrubs). Notifiable plant species (covered in Table 3b) include: Lesser Catmint <i>Clinopodium (Calamintha) nepeta</i>, Fingered Sedge <i>Carex digitata</i>, Soft-leaved Sedge <i>Carex montana</i>, Narrow-leaved Helleborine <i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>, Narrow-leaved Bitter-cress <i>Cardamine impatiens</i>, Stinking Hellebore <i>Helleborus foetidus</i>, Other rare and uncommon plant species include: White Helleborine <i>Cephalanthera damasonium</i> (Vulnerable), Bird's-nest Orchid <i>Neottia nidus-avis</i> (Near Threatened),		

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
			Green Hellebore <i>Helleborus viridus</i> , Wild Madder <i>Rubia peregrina</i> , Columbine <i>Aquilegia vulgaris</i> , Bloody Cranes-bill <i>Geranium sanguineum</i> Mountain Melick <i>Melica nutans</i>		
W8 <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Acer campestre</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W12 <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> W10 <i>Quercus robur</i> - <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> - <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i>	Regeneration potential	Assess by field survey using structured walk and/or transects in spring or summer. Successful establishment of young stems in gaps or on the edge of a stand.	Signs of seedlings growing through to saplings to young trees at sufficient density to maintain canopy density over a 10 yr period (or equivalent regrowth from coppice stumps). In open spaces, seedlings are present and at least 20% of saplings getting away. In coppice coupes of less than 5 yrs old, at least 75% of the stools to have recent annual growth of >2m. No browsing damage of more than 25% of sapling	A proportion of gaps at any one time may develop into 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. In coppice most of the regeneration will be as stump regrowth. The minimum level of regeneration to be acceptable from a nature conservation viewpoint is likely to be much less than that needed where wood production is also an objective. Regeneration, where it does	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
			and young growth. No more than 20% of areas regenerated by planting. All planting material of locally native stock. No new planting in sites where it has not occurred in the last 15 years.	occur under the prevailing dense canopy, tends to be Ash with some Beech and Yew. This may lead to a change in stand type locally in the short term.	

Audit Trail
Rationale for limiting standards to specified parts of the site
Rationale for site-specific targets (including any variations from generic guidance)
The old quarries, with open rock and scree, support scrub and open communities. It has been suggested that provision be made in the targets in order to maintain these areas of diversity, eg. set a target for the quarry areas permitting more Sycamore and also more open space. It is also important to establish the location of the rare plant species (especially those on quarry faces and rims) as climbing is authorised on parts of the site.
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

In addition to vascular plant species mentioned in the citation and on the criteria sheet, several other ones have been recorded on the site and are mentioned in files and on a Site Objective Statement – RDB Nationally Rare Whitebeams *Sorbus eminens* and *S. minima*, and Nationally Scarce Green-flowered Helleborine *Epicactis phyllanthes* and Near Threatened Yellow Bird's-nest *Monotropa hypopitys*.

Bryophyte survey has indicated that there is moderate interest on the site, especially in Ban-y-Gor Wood.

Breeding birds include Herring Gull (an uncommon inland site), Peregrine and Raven.

The criteria sheet also refers to the site being “one of the few sites in Britain where natural transitions between saltmarsh and valley woodland are found. Few details are available on file but it is likely to be habitat which requires little or no intervention.

Table 3b Site specific Habitat condition objectives

To maintain the Vascular Plant Assemblage at Lower Wye Gorge 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)
The occurrence of the woodland species included in this assemblage is poorly recorded and requires updating through re-evaluation of existing data and re-survey. However, as they could occur throughout the woodland areas, targets should apply across the whole site. The limestone species listed are largely restricted to limestone cliff and refugia areas.

Site-specific standards defining favourable condition
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Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
Vascular plant species within woodland (including rides & glades) Lesser Calamint <i>Clinopodium nepeta</i> , Narrow-leaved Bitter-cress <i>Cardamine impatiens</i> , Stinking Hellebore <i>Helleborus foetidus</i> , Narrow-leaved Helleborine <i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i> &	Presence or absence of woodland species	Identification of the species	Species should be present	If all other targets are met but the species cannot be found then the feature should be referred to the Country Agency botanical specialists.	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
Vascular plant species of limestone rocks, pavement and cliffs - including range of rare <i>Sorbus</i> sp. and hybrids <i>Sorbus porrigentiformis</i> and <i>S. rupicola</i> , Soft-leaved Sedge <i>Carex montana</i> , Fingered Sedge <i>C. digitata</i>					
Vascular plant species within woodland (including rides & glades) Vascular plant species of limestone rocks, pavement and cliffs	Population size of woodland species	Count of functional individuals	At least a minimum viable population sizes present No decline of more than 10% in overall number <u>or</u> No decline greater than one population size category	The species in this suite are commonly found scattered throughout a site, or occur in clumps, stands or colonies. These may vary in their overall distribution within a site as suitable conditions occur i.e. open patches for germination and establishment of young plants. Unless there are fewer than 100 individuals (when an individual count is generally possible) on the site, counts of clumps, stands or colonies should be made or assessed in the	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
				categories (101-300; 301-1 000; 1 001-3 000; 3 001-10 000; more than 10 000).	
Vascular plant species within woodland (including rides & glades) Vascular plant species of limestone rocks, pavement and cliffs	Successful regeneration of woodland species	Identification of the species; Count of individuals	Presence of range of young and old plants; At least a minimum number/proportion of young plants or seedlings or full seed heads or flowers	This is important for understanding the viability of a population, but may be difficult to assess for some species. See sect. 5.8 of guidance for details. Some of the species require light and or disturbance for success and may be adversely affected by excessive deer or other stock grazing	Yes
Vascular plant species within woodland (including rides & glades) Vascular plant species of limestone rocks, pavement and cliffs	Population size: number of limestone species	Count of functional individuals	No decline of more than 10% in overall number	All the Sorbus species will be identifiable as individual trees or saplings, whilst the other species in this suite grow in clumps or groups. Where there are fewer than 100 individuals a full count should be made. Larger populations, clumps or groups should be	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
				assessed in the categories 101-300, 301-1 000, 1 001-3 000, 3 001-10 000, more than 10 000.	
Vascular plant species within woodland (including rides & glades) Vascular plant species of limestone rocks, pavement and cliffs	Successful regeneration of limestone species	Visual assessment	At least 10% of the total population producing fruits, spores or seeds	In most cases it will be possible to establish whether regenerative material is produced even if plants are viewed through binoculars.	Yes
Vascular plant species within woodland (including rides & glades) Vascular plant species of limestone rocks, pavement and cliffs	Niche availability of limestone species	Mapping (either area or length)	No net loss of area of grassland, pavement or length of cliff	Baseline extent of available niche may need to be determined by a specialist. Such situations tend to require little or no management, although some may be prone to invasion by alien species, especially shrubs. Maintaining the open area may involve some direct intervention (e.g. scrub control) or even the use of controlled browsing livestock (but see below).	Yes

Criteria feature	Attribute term in guidance	Measure	Site-specific Targets	Comments	Use for Condition Assessment?
Vascular plant species within woodland (including rides & glades) Vascular plant species of limestone rocks, pavement and cliffs	Negative indicators: physical damage to limestone species	Visual assessment	Signs of stock grazing no more than occasional	None of the species here are particularly tolerant of continuous grazing and many are highly intolerant. There should be no more than light grazing pressure and minimal levels of ground disturbance especially during the spring and early summer months. Some browsing animals may assist in the control of invasive woody species but care should be taken in their use, especially in the spring and early summer.	Yes

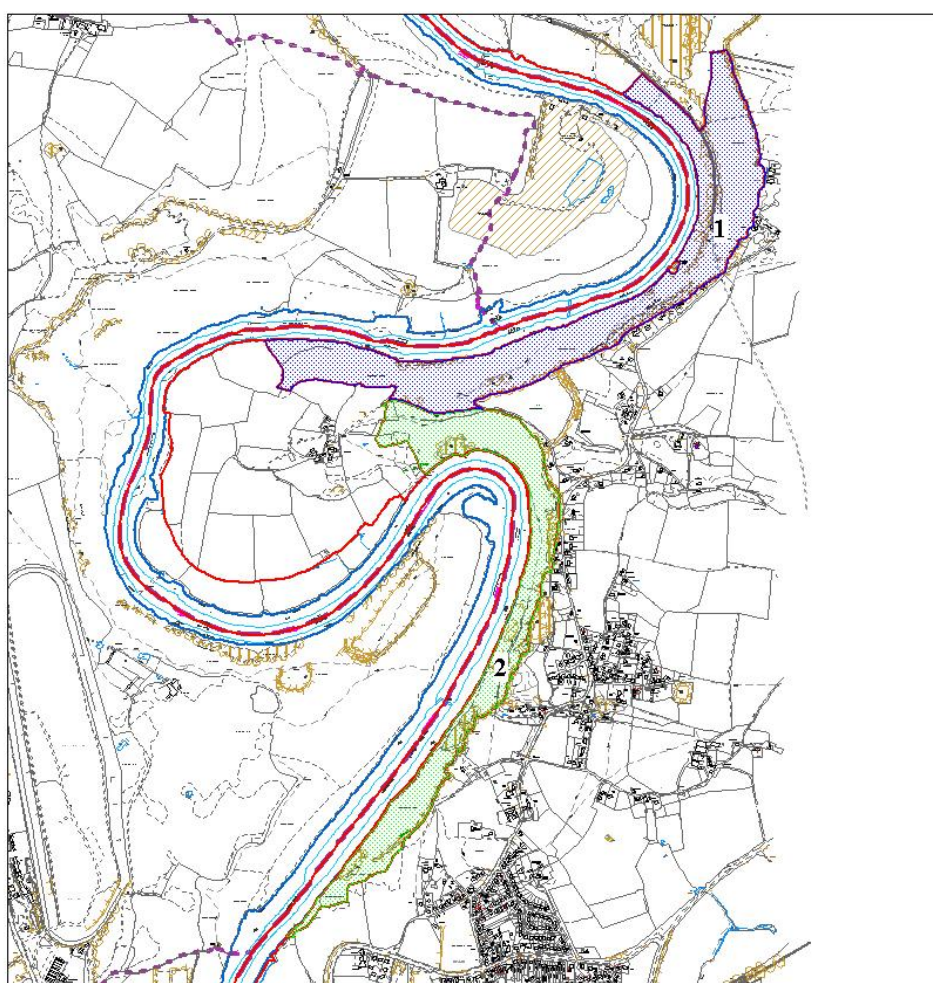
Audit Trail
Rationale for limiting standards to specified parts of the site
Rationale for site-specific targets (including any variations from generic guidance)
Rationale for selection of measures of condition (features and attributes for use in condition assessment)
(The selected vegetation attributes are those considered to most economically define favourable condition at this site for the broad habitat type and any dependent designated species).

Other Notes			
Lesser Catmint <i>Clinopodium (Calamintha) nepeta</i>	Vulnerable Nationally Scarce	Narrow-leaved Helleborine <i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>	Vulnerable Nationally Scarce
Narrow-leaved Bitter-cress <i>Cardamine impatiens</i>	Near Threatened Nationally Scarce	Stinking Hellebore <i>Helleborus foetidus</i>	Nationally Scarce
Fingered Sedge <i>Carex digitata</i>	Nationally Scarce	a Whitebeam <i>Sorbus porrigentiiformis</i>	Nationally Scarce
Soft-leaved Sedge <i>Carex Montana</i>	Nationally Scarce	Rock Whitebeam <i>Sorbus rupicola</i>	Nationally Scarce
The current status of many of the plants for which the site is notified and other additional rare plants mentioned on the criteria sheet is unknown. Distribution/location and abundance are all poorly recorded.			

Annex 1 Map(s) of key areas for monitoring

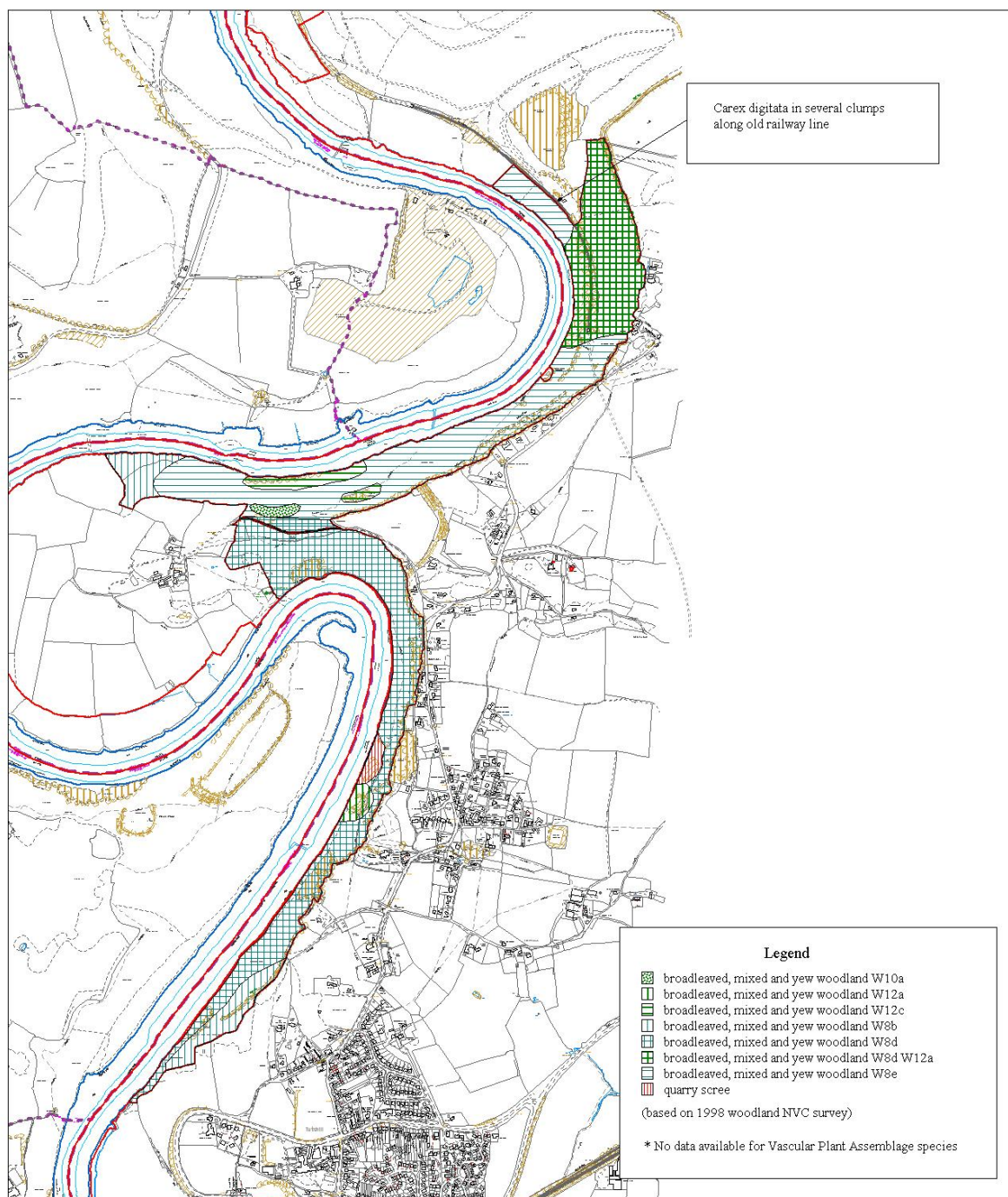
LOWER WYE GORGE SSSI
Unit boundaries

Scale: 1:20,000



LOWER WYE GORGE SSSI
Special Interest features map *

Scale: 1:12,500



Annex 2 Location of features by unit

Features	units	1	2
W8		x	x
W10		x	x
W12		x	x
W7		?	?
Vascular plant assemblage		N/A	N/A