

New Forest Inclosures

New Forest District • Inclosure Forest Design Plans • Phase C



Introduction

1. Introduction

The process of enclosing open land for timber production in the New Forest began in the early 1700s, and subsequently became legalised by the New Forest Acts of 1877 and 1949. Today, the total New Forest Inclosure area extends to some 8,500 hectares. The Inclosures were initially established to provide a timber resource but the Forestry Commission now seeks a change in emphasis so that these areas will provide a much wider range of benefits to society. The Management Plan for the Inclosures aims to achieve a sensitive integration of these benefits through consultation and co-operation with stakeholders.

The New Forest Inclosures Forest Design Plans have been compiled within the context of the England Forestry Strategy and the South East England Regional Forestry Framework entitled "Seeing the Wood for the Trees". These documents provide the broad policy framework within which local policy, The New Forest Strategy and the Ministers Mandate can be interpreted.

The Minister's Mandate for the New Forest (1999-2008) commits the Forestry Commission to produce a Management Plan for the New Forest Crown Lands. One component of the Management Plan is a Plan for the New Forest Inclosures. The Inclosures have been divided into 20 separate units with the management objectives of each presented as individual Forest Design Plans (FDP). The FDP units have been grouped into 4 phases to spread preparation and consultation. This document is the submission for formal approval of the third phase FDP's, known as Phase C. It includes the following 5 FDP units and these are shown on the location map:

Godshill Inclosure
Latchmore Brook Inclosures
Dockens Water Inclosures
Ironshill Walk Inclosures
Kings Copse Inclosure

These plans represent the first five-year review of inclosure Forest Design Plans that were originally consulted upon and approved during 2001. The revised FDP's have been prepared following review of the original plans by the FDP forum and FC staff and have incorporated policy contained in "Keepers of Time", A statement of policy for England's ancient and native woodland.

2. Consultation

The revised FDP's have emerged from an extensive consultation exercise. Early draft revision proposals were presented and discussed with a group of representatives from statutory organisations and local groups with a particular interest in the New Forest. This group is known as the Forest Design Plan Forum and the members involved are listed in Appendix 1. Proposals agreed with the Forum were then presented for public consultation. A series of public meetings and guided walks were used to explain the proposals, and opportunities were taken to obtain both written and verbal feedback. This feedback was analysed and the Forum

considered appropriate amendments to the FDP's before this final submission. A full record of issues raised through consultation with the FDP forum and through public consultation is available to view at Queens House.

3. Policy Guidelines

The Government's forestry policy document, "A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests" envisions woodlands providing bio-diversity to enhance the environment; public access and recreation; and local employment as well as support to industries using wood products. The Strategy encourages the building of working partnerships and public support so that the quality of these benefits may be maximised through well-managed woodlands.

Since the Inclosure FDP's were originally approved in 2001, a regional Forestry Framework for South East England, entitled "Seeing the Wood for the Trees" has been developed to identify regional priorities arising out of the England Forestry Strategy. The key objectives contained in the framework are neatly summarised in the tree diagram opposite.

In considering detailed plans, the FDP Forum is guided by national and regional forestry policies and national guidance governing the special environmental status of the Forest as well as the specific management objectives set in the Minister's Mandate. The overall aim of the plans is to achieve an appropriate balance between conservation, recreation and a working forest environment.



Diagram from "Seeing the Wood for the Trees" (2004)

The Minister's Mandate emphasises that the Management Plan must be consistent with the needs of the Special Area of Conservation Management Plan and the Strategy for the New Forest prepared by the New Forest Committee.

The Minister's Mandate sets the following priorities for management objectives of the Crown Lands:

- a) The principal objective of management will be conservation of the natural and cultural heritage
- b) Secondly, to engage the community through greater public participation in decision making, promotion of rural development opportunities, provision of access and recreation opportunities and increasing public awareness and understanding
- c) Thirdly, to manage FC operations efficiently and generate appropriate levels of income from timber and other uses of the Crown Lands consistent and compatible with the first two objectives.

The Minister's Mandate also provides the more specific principles of management for the Inclosures:

- A significant proportion of woodlands in the Inclosures will be modified to restore pasture woodlands, heathlands, valley mires and Ancient and Semi-Natural woodland where these are appropriate. A consequence of the modification will be that the present overall balance between broadleaves and conifers will be changed in favour of broadleaves. The pace of this modification will depend on markets, availability of resources and a desire to avoid unnecessary premature felling of existing growing trees, the removal of which will be necessary for restoration of habitats.
- No broadleaved woodland will be regenerated with conifers.
- The regeneration of broadleaved areas will be managed with an emphasis on conservation of nature and amenity. For Oaks, Beech and Sweet Chestnut, stand rotations will be at least 200 years with cleared patches for regeneration thereafter not exceeding one acre.

The Forestry Commission is committed to the sustainable management of its woodlands and all FC woodlands are assessed against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS) by an independent auditor. As a result, Forestry Commission woodlands now carry the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) stamp of approval. The New Forest Inclosure FDPs have been developed to be compliant with the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (second edition).

4. Strategic 100 year indicative strategy

Before priorities for habitat restoration and management were prepared for individual FDPs, it was necessary to set a wider context of objectives across the whole New Forest.

An indicative strategy map for 100 years was developed in full consultation with the FDP forum which allocated woodland blocks to broad preferences for habitat types of heathland, pasture woodland or managed woodland (Indicative Strategy Map). This strategy guided proposals for individual FDPs which were then shaped in detail by analysis of the current site and woodland characteristics. Potential links with areas of existing ecological value and importance, both within and adjacent to the Inclosures, was also considered.

5. Forest Design Plan Objectives for the New Forest Inclosures

The Forest Design Plan objectives have been developed with reference to national, regional and local policy and in consultation with the Forest Design Plan Forum. A table entitled meeting objectives is included as appendix 3. The table sets out the key methods of monitoring against each of the objectives.

1. To sustain and protect existing habitats of nature conservation interest by:

- Maintaining designated habitats in improving or favourable condition.
- Restoring native broadleaf woodland where appropriate.
- Developing a network of habitat links to reduce the vulnerability of fragmented sites.
- Increasing the length of edge habitat by ride edge and streamside enhancement and by developing a mosaic of woodland types and open space.
- Providing a proportion of successional temporary open space suitable for key bird species.
- Protecting veteran trees and retaining standing or fallen deadwood.

2. To develop woodlands that are more attractive and are sympathetic to their landscape context by:

- Increasing the diversity of age structure through phased felling and regeneration or replanting shaped in a way that is consistent with the scale and topography of the landform.
- Encouraging natural regeneration of existing conifer species or broadleaves native to the site type where appropriate.
- Encouraging the transformation of pure conifer plantations to mixed conifer and broadleaf woodlands by accepting natural regeneration of native broadleaves.
- Retaining some areas beyond their usual felling age to become large, old trees.
- Introducing a network of permanent and temporary open space that enhances the visual diversity of the woodlands.
- Maintaining a continuous cover of woodlands where it forms a prominent and sympathetic part of the landscape and especially where it screens urban features.

3. To develop woodlands that provide opportunities for public enjoyment, aiming to divert pressure away from more sensitive habitats by:

- Maintaining a network of accessible ride and track links.
- Developing a variety of age/habitat types and open space, particularly along key access routes.
- Providing information about alternative routes for public access when inclosures are being worked.

4. To provide a regular supply of quality timber to support local employment and local timber processing industries by:

- Growing quality timber that is fit for purpose so far as this is consistent with FDP objectives 1,2 & 3 in stands where the long term management objectives will result in the sustained production of timber.
- Providing customers with long term forecasts of timber production to enable businesses to plan their timber requirements in line with the available supply.
- Giving local companies the opportunity to purchase timber through open competitive sales each year whilst providing a number of medium and long term contracts that offer customers and contractors stability and continuity of supply.

5. To protect all ancient monuments and any other features of cultural heritage by:

- Preparing and implementing an agreed management plan for all Scheduled Ancient Monuments.
- Maintaining a record of all known non scheduled archaeological features and seeking advice regarding their protection and enhancement prior to work when appropriate.

6. To achieve the Minister's Mandate objectives through consultation with local communities and representatives of organisations involved with nature conservation, public recreation and the timber industry by:

- Drawing together a forum of representatives to discuss and develop draft Forest Design Plan proposals.
- Presenting draft Forest Design Plan proposals to local communities using techniques designed to aid understanding and maximise feedback from participants.
- Maintaining a record of issues raised during consultation and of responses as draft Forest Design Plans are developed.

6. Design Concept Plan

The Design Concept Maps set out the long term vision for the woodlands and other habitats consistent with the objectives above. It also depicts other issues relevant to the plan such as the location of local conservation sites and archaeological features. It sets no fixed time-scales for how quickly the habitat transformations depicted in the plan may be achieved. The maps are annotated to describe issues on the site.

7. Felling and Habitat Restoration Plan

The Felling and Habitat Restoration Maps set out the timing and shape of individual felling areas that will either be replanted or restored to important non-woodland habitats. It also identifies areas not to be clearfelled, but managed using natural regeneration. Approval is sought for the first two phases of felling (Green areas 2007-2011 and Brown areas 2012-2016).

Tolerance thresholds for adjustments to felling coupe boundaries, timing of restocking, change of species, windblow clearance and changes to road lines will be as per those recorded in Forestry Commission Grants and Licences Memorandum 6 Appendix 3. (See Appendix 4)

8. Long Term Structure (20 years) Plan

The Long Term Structure map shows the proposed replanting pattern and woodland structure at the end of the plan period (20 Years) At this map scale (1:10000), it is difficult to show detail of small scale unplanted areas or retentions. A detailed restocking plan will be produced as part of an operational site assessment for each area nearer to the time of implementation. Some small groups or individual character trees may be retained at the time of felling,

especially if they add to the amenity of the woodland or contribute to nature conservation objectives.

9. Generic Management Prescriptions

A table containing generic management prescriptions has been developed in consultation with the Forest Design Plan forum. This table outlines the broad generic prescriptions which will be applied to convert current woodland types to the main Design Concept categories. The table can be found at Appendix 1.

10. Habitat Structure Charts

Each plan is supported by charts showing estimates of how management proposals contained within the Forest Design Plans may affect the habitat structure of the inclosures over time.

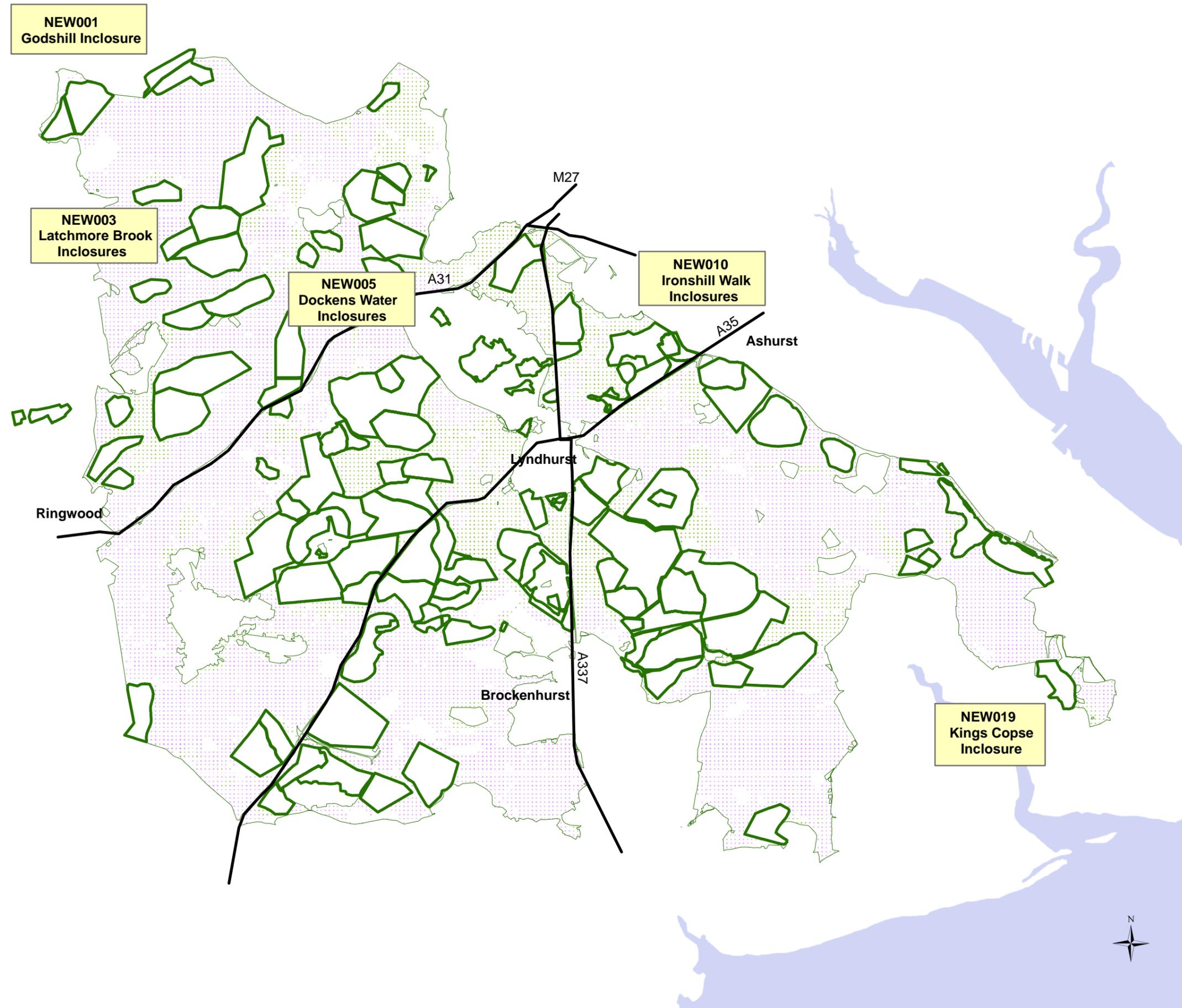
11. Fencing/Grazing plan

Plans showing current fencing/grazing structure (2007) and proposed fencing/grazing structure at 20 years (2027) have been developed for the New Forest Inclosures in consultation with the Forest Design Plan forum.

The fencing/grazing plan has been developed to support the broad objectives of the 100 year strategy and detailed Forest Design Plans.

Location Map

Location of New Forest Inclosure
Forest Design Plan Units
Phase C



Legend

-  Phase C Forest Design Plan Units
-  Ancient and Ornamental woodland
-  Open Forest Heathland
-  Inclosure Boundary
-  Crown Land

Produced by Planning Team New FD
Date 12/7/2007

Scale: 1:100,000

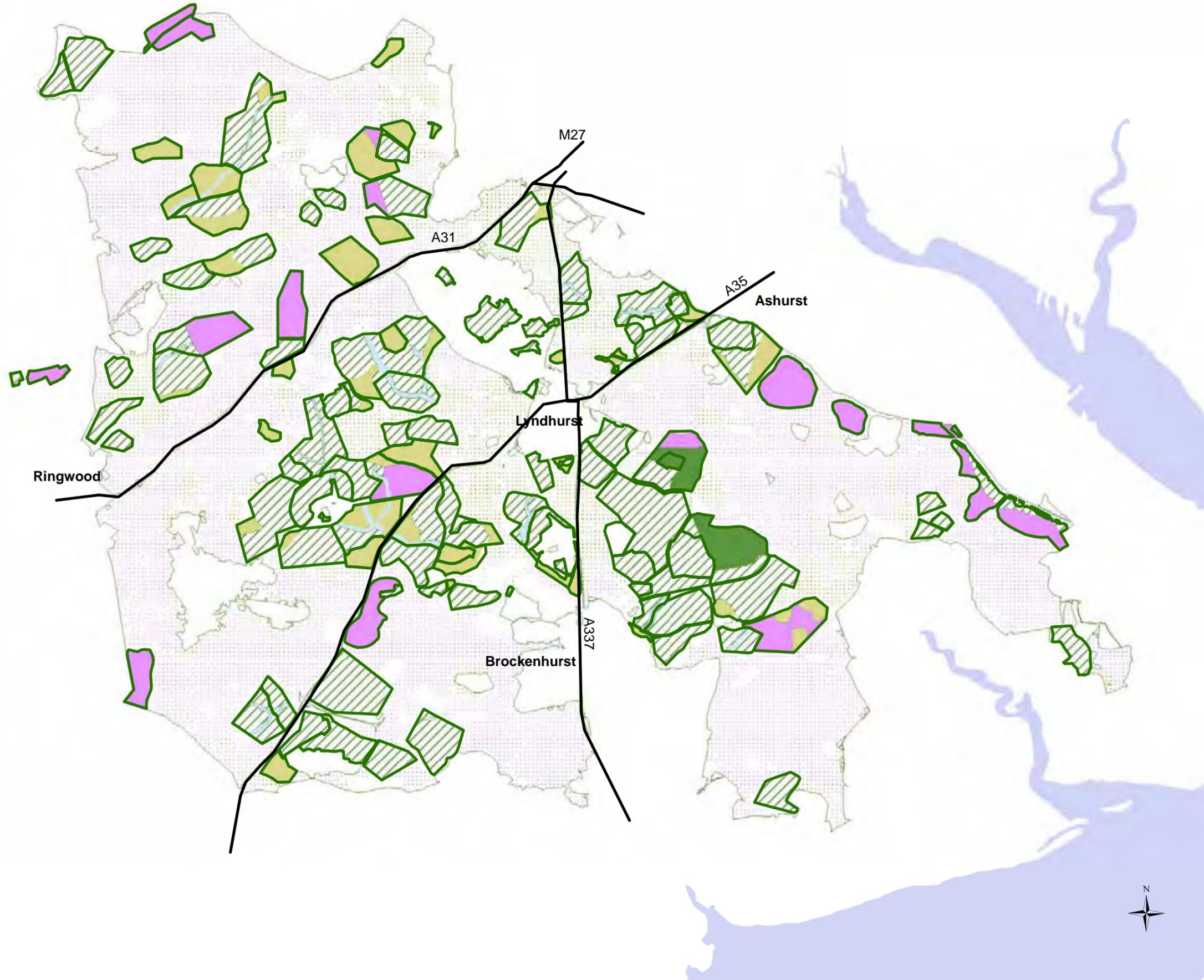
© This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Forestry Commission. 100025498

Indicative Strategy

A 100 year indicative strategy for the New Forest Inclosures

Legend

-  Heathland and open forest habitats
-  Managed woodland
-  Natural or near natural woodland
-  Pasture woodland and associated habitats
-  Key river and stream corridors through inclosures
-  Ancient and Ornamental woodland
-  Open Forest Heathland
-  Inclosure Boundary
-  Crown Land



Produced by Planning Team New FD
Date 12/7/2007

Scale: 1:100,000

© This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Forestry Commission. 100025498