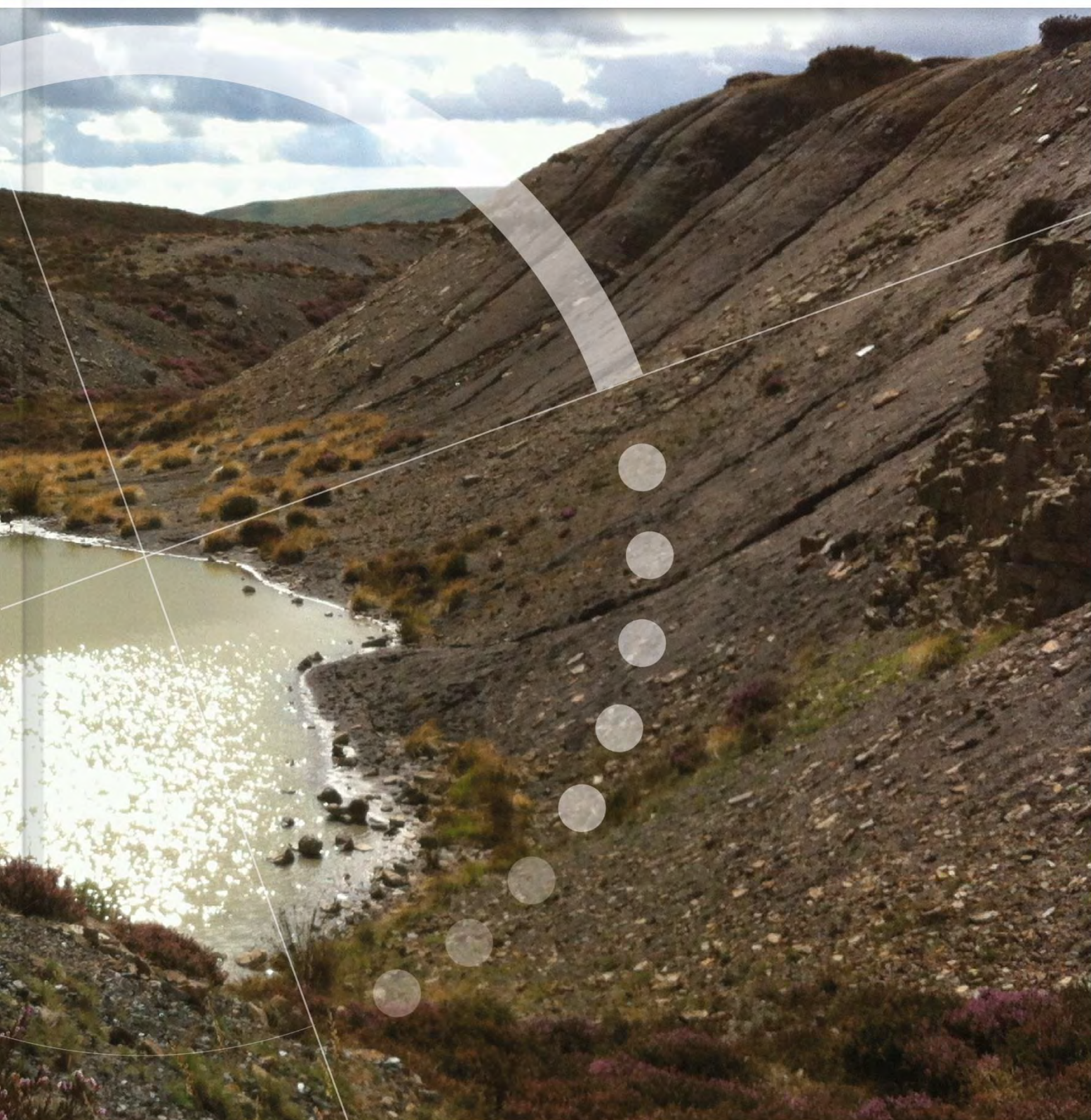


# **MYNYDD MAEN AMALGAMATED COMMONERS ASSOCIATION**

COMMONS INNOVATION PROJECT

## COMMONS INNOVATION PLAN

MARCH 2019



TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL



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Mynydd Maen Amalgamated Commoners Association*March 2019*

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The final revision will be deemed as accepted by the client if no comments are received within two weeks of issue.

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## APPENDIX A

## APPENDIX B

## 1 Introduction

### 1.1 Background

TACP (UK) Ltd has been commissioned to update, develop and add detail to the landscape management proposals contained within the Natural Resources Management Plan (NRMP) for SE Wales, 2015 resulting in the production of a fully costed Mynydd Maen Commons Innovation Plan.

The study area CL25 covers Mynydd Maen & Mynydd Llwyd Common which incorporates CL26 Edlogan Common, CL27 Magna Porta Common and CL28 Mynydd Henllys Common. This area, covering approximately 1000ha will collectively be referred to as Mynydd Maen Commons. It is located to the north of Newport in South-east Wales near to the towns of Cwmbran, Pontypool and Risca and lies with both Caerphilly and Torfaen County Boroughs. Its outline is the first mountain ridge that visitors see as they enter Wales over the Severn Bridge, where its western tip is dominated by the distinctive shape of Mynydd Twmbarlwm, a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

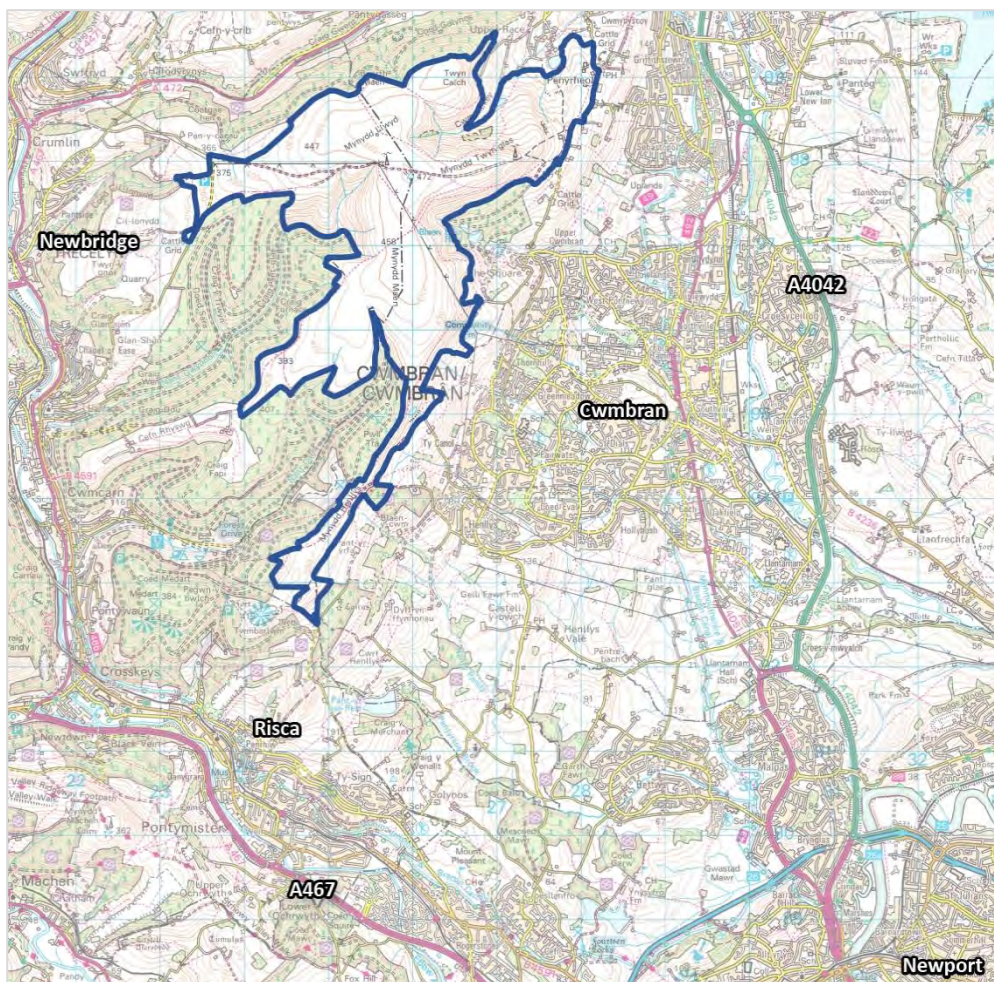


Fig 1.1 Mynydd Maen Commons Location Plan

The NRMP for SE Wales 2015 can be referenced here:

<http://www.visitblanavon.co.uk/en/Publications/WorldHeritageSite/LookingAfterBlaenavon/SE-Wales-Uplands-Natural-Resources-Management-Plan-Part-1.pdf>

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## 1.2 Commons Innovation Plan

The objectives of this project are to:

1. Update, develop and add detail to the proposals for the study area contained within the Natural Resources Management Plan for SE Wales (NRMP), resulting in the production of a fully costed Mynydd Maen Commons Innovation Plan.
2. Develop a programme of commons-based rural craft demonstration and training days (three demonstration/training days). Both elements of work will involve close consultation and work with commoners and volunteers. TACP supported the delivery of rural skills events in close collaboration with Commoners and Torfaen's Rural Development Land Management Officer.

This report covers the outputs for objective 1. Building on the NRMP, TACP has worked closely with Mynydd Maen Commons Association and Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC) to create a suite of management plans, including costed and integrated area-specific proposals to cover the following:

- Bracken control
- Restoration and Management of Heathland
- Control of Feral Trees
- Boundary Repair and Restoration
- Pond Creation and Restoration
- Bog Restoration
- Farm Diversification: Sustainable Tourism and Recreation
- Farm Diversification: Local Produce and Crafts
- Farm Diversification: Hub
- Farm Diversification: Commons Signage and Interpretation
- Farm Diversification: Renewable Energy
- Landscape Crime

These management plans are supported an Action Plan contained in Appendix A, and a Training Plan contained in Appendix B.

The recommendations outlined in the management plans build upon what the Commoners and local landowners are currently doing and help implement their aspirations to create a more sustainable approach to commoning and land management.

The Plan offers an approach that supports Welsh Government policy towards sustainable development in particular relating to:

- The use of the commons for recreation provides the opportunities to meet the goals of the Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (2015) in particular the goals for a healthier and more resilient Wales.
- The targets of the Environment (Wales) Act (2016) including the biodiversity requirement imposed upon local authorities (Schedule 6)

The outcomes will contribute to other policy initiatives. In providing a local framework for supporting the development of the Valleys Regional Park. It will provide an exemplar project with outputs meeting concerns with commons management across the region and pointing commoners and others to a way forward for the longer term benefits of the common's ecology.

In addition, the Welsh Government has identified strategies to address the changes relating to Brexit which are supported by this plan. These include a long-term, natural resources and viable landscapes scheme for all Wales A flexible, locally-tailored approach, developed with farmers, foresters and other stakeholders, giving space for private funding as well as public. This will be achieved by up-skilling, developing collaborative capacity, improving efficiency, farm and community-level coping strategies, environment-proofing of changes Increase agri-food sector and community resilience through more active long-term partnership between Welsh Government and commercial / social actors in food, public services and financial sectors More partnership working between government and industry, government and communities, and key sectors

### 1.3 Commons legislation

The laws and rights of common land are quite complex and three major pieces of legislation have helped to clarify the situation. The [Commons Registration Act 1965](#) required common land and the rights to use it be registered; the registers are held and maintained by Unitary Authorities in Wales. The [Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000](#) gave the public the [Freedom to roam](#) freely on all registered common land in England and Wales. The [Commons Act 2006](#) provided improved provisions for maintaining common land registers as well as:

- Protecting common land from development;
- Allowing more sustainable management of common land;
- Improving protection of common land from neglect and abuse; and
- Modernising registration of common land and greens so that all have the same protection.

Consent is required for restricted works on registered common land, such as those which:

- Prevent or impede access to, or over, the land;
- Include erecting fencing, constructing buildings, digging ditches, etc.; and
- Resurfacing of land with tarmac and similar materials.

### 1.4 Implementation of the Commons Innovation Plan

This plan specifically aims to steer and encourage the sustainable management of Mynydd Maen and adjacent commons but will rely on the partnership support of others.

The implementation of the Commons Innovation Plan will require time and co-ordination in terms of preparing and managing funding applications, liaison with local authorities, Welsh Government and other stakeholders, support and information dissemination to the Commoners and landowners.

The Plan refers to a Commons Officer who is considered to be a paid officer whose role is to support the implementation of the Plan and other similar work on commons within SE Wales primarily through providing capacity and administration, developing funding bids, co-ordinating volunteers and sharing

best practice between commons throughout SE Wales and further afield. This role is not identified as part of the action plan as it was identified as part of the management structure proposed as part of the delivery of the NRMP. This is currently being provided by Torfaen County Borough Council officers but this may not be sustainable at the level required in the longer term.

There are wider aspirations to create a learning hub to reach out to others, raising awareness of innovative ways to manage common land differently and promoting rural craft, thereby creating new educational opportunities for local schools and promoting best practice amongst commoners, landowners and interested individuals in South-east Wales and beyond.

## 2 Review of the Natural Resource Management Plan For SE Wales, 2016

### 2.1 Introduction

This review provides an overview of the Natural Resource Management Plan for SE Wales, 2015 (NRMP) and extracts the specific information required to provide relevant background and focus to the development of the Commons Innovation Plan.

The NRMP is a 10 year plan based on the management of natural resources: land, flora and fauna, soil and water of the upland commons (land over 200m altitude) in South East Wales. It presented a review of the resources and ecosystems services of the area. An ecosystems approach for management and utilisation of the upland commons provided a strategy for integrated management of land, water and living resources promoting conservation and sustainable use. The NRMP was prepared in 2015 as part of the Eastern Valleys Upland Project funded through the Welsh Government's Nature Fund. It recognised that people and their livelihoods rely on the health and productivity of the landscape, and their actions as stewards of the land play a critical role in maintaining this. A key consideration of the plan was therefore how management affects the quality of life for both present and future generations thus encompassing the needs of those who manage and make their living from the land.

The study area forms part of the South Wales Coalfield encompassing parts of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire and Torfaen. Part of the north-eastern area falls within the Brecon Beacons National Park. The area of upland above 200 m is 380 km<sup>2</sup> within the wider study area of 529 km<sup>2</sup>. There are 16 main upland commons, with a range of grazing management regimes.

A general review of Welsh Government agricultural data showed a trend towards fewer farms, less full time and more part time labour, a significant reduction in sheep numbers and more modest reduction in beef cattle, and an overall reduction in grazing pressure. Farm Business Income trends for hill farms show a decrease of more than 50% over five years. Many farm businesses are financially vulnerable with a reliance on environmental scheme payments and other sources of income to support profitability, and uncertain prospects in terms of future income.

The farms around the commons are varied in both size and type and comprise mainly sheep and beef enterprises. Sheep are mainly grazed on the commons and if cattle are grazed they usually comprise less than one third of the livestock units. Smaller commons tend to have a mix of farm types with more part time operations, while the larger commons tend to support larger full time farms. A variety of land management tasks are carried out on the commons, with widespread participation in Glastir Commons and Glastir Advanced. The interviews carried out to inform the NRMP indicated that grazing is in decline on most commons, and there is concern amongst commoners regarding the future of commoning, with few young farmers taking up the practice.

The biggest farming issues on the commons are related to landscape crime such as illegal off-roading, boundary vandalism, fly tipping and arson, with fly grazing and stock theft being cited as problems in some areas. These strongly influence the commoners' decisions about grazing and managing the commons.

The range of ecosystem services provided by the upland commons is varied and appropriate management can enhance their provision. With the increased winter rainfall predictions for climate change, storing more water in the uplands would have significant benefits through enhanced regulation of water flow and flood prevention lower down the catchments, provision of adequate drinking water resources for drier summers, and improvements of water quality. Similarly, the uplands

provide an opportunity for capturing and storing carbon in both vegetation and peat. Natural fluxes of energy harvesting (renewable energy) could have significant potential for expansion in the future. The uplands are a valuable facility for recreation, and there are many economic and social benefits of having a healthy population able to exercise in the countryside.

The NRMP includes a portfolio of 23 action plans to achieve a number of goals, such as restoring wetlands, enhancing ecosystem services and supporting sustainable tourism development. The potential costs and sources of funding to deliver these proposals were also considered.

## 2.2 Ecosystems Services

Ecosystems services are grouped into four main categories:

- **Provisioning Services** - these are products obtained from the ecosystem, such as food, fibre, water, fuel and biochemical and medicines, which are of direct benefit to people;
- **Regulating Services** – these are the benefits obtained from regulation of ecosystem processes such as water quantity regulation (e.g. flooding), water quality regulation, hazard regulation (e.g. erosion control) and pollination;
- **Cultural Services** – these are the non-material benefits obtained from ecosystems such as recreation and tourism, natural settings (e.g. landscapes), historic and cultural heritage providing benefits to the wider social and cultural needs of society; and
- **Supporting Services** such as water and nutrient cycling, soil formation and plant growth, which are essential to the functioning of ecosystems and so support all other services.

### 2.2.1 Provisioning services:

#### Food and wild collected food

The less intensively managed areas in the South-east Wales Uplands primarily provide food through the widespread grazing for stock such as sheep and cattle on heathland, acid grassland, and improved and semi-improved grassland. Food production is a key ecosystem service and contributes overall to food security for the UK.

Ecosystems can provide biomass which can be used in several forms such as for fuel, compost and animal bedding.

#### Fuel (biomass)

Fuel may be in the form of wood, peat or biomass. The limited extent of upland woodland within Mynydd Maen Commons means there is little or no local utilisation of wood for fuel. Use of peat as a fuel has long since ceased in South Wales, and the remaining significant peat bogs are few and protected. Potential fuel crops from the uplands include bracken and heather

Dead bracken has been widely proposed as a biofuel and several pilot projects are under way (e.g. Brackenburn in the Mendips/Somerset - <http://www.brackenburn.co.uk/resources>). Harvesting of bracken for fuel requires areas of relatively dense bracken on accessible ground. They are typically harvested on two successive seasons and then left fallow for a season or more. Use of bracken can

provide local income and improve habitats by reducing its dominance and allowing increased in diversity of other species.

### **Fibre**

Provisioning of fibre and often takes the form of softwood fibres from coniferous forests for making paper or timber. As there is no forestry associated with the Mynydd Maen Commons this is not considered further in the Commons Innovation Plan.

### **Natural fluxes of energy**

This includes the potential for renewable energy provision but must be considered in relation to the landscape setting, biodiversity and the location of existing facilities.

### **Water**

Ecosystems, such as woodlands, wetlands and grasslands, are the driving force behind the global water cycle; all fresh water ultimately depends on the healthy functioning of ecosystems. The benefits ecosystems offer as regulating services to mitigate water shortages and floods are outlined further below.

#### **2.2.2 Regulating services:**

### **Pollination**

In South-east Wales, plants are generally pollinated by the wind or by insects, and bees, both wild and kept, are important pollinators. Natural habitats can support a wide range of wild pollinators, but it is important to have a range of pollination sources throughout the year to support their food requirements. Whilst Mynydd Maen Commons provides good pollination opportunities through parts of the year it is limited and could be improved both by careful enhancement of existing habitats and greater connectivity to the gardens in settlements that surround the Commons to Cwmbran, Risca, Newbridge and Crumlin.

### **Climate regulation (global) through soil carbon storage and vegetation carbon storage**

Sequestering and storing greenhouse gases are significant contributors to controlling climate change. The Commons can do this through storing carbon dioxide in the vegetation, the greater the standing biomass the more storage is achieved, and therefore woodland has high potential for carbon storage but heather and bracken have a moderate potential whereas grasslands have low potential. Carbon is also stored in the soil. Active peat bogs are particularly important for carbon sequestration whereas degraded and drying out bogs have the potential to release carbon dioxide through the decomposition of organic matter. The bog area within Mynydd Maen Commons therefore has the greatest potential for carbon sequestration although other soils, especially peat based, also have potential.

### **Water regulation**

The uplands have a relatively high rainfall of about 600 mm and 240 wet days a year which results in significant runoff. If more water can be retained in the uplands for longer, this can decrease the risk of flooding in lower areas and it can help to regulate water supply through direct supply to reservoirs or through recharging of aquifers.

Possible mechanisms for retaining more water on the Commons include:

- Blocking old drainage systems across peaty soils to retain water longer within the habitat;
- Creating small buffer reservoirs or ponds along water courses to hold up flow until each reaches capacity, there is little opportunity for this in the north east sector of the Commons;
- Increasing the organic content of soils through build-up of humus and organic matter, thus water is held and retained more in the soils; and
- Increasing the amount of woodland, which intercepts more water than habitats such as grasslands. The potential for this would be limited on the Commons and much resource is required to remove feral conifer trees, however there are opportunities for expanding the area of beech woodland to the north of the Commons and developing further connectivity along the eastern edge.

### **Water quality regulation**

Habitats, soils and rocks have different qualities in relation to their ability to purify water. Mynydd Maen has limited potential to purification although the adjacent woodlands and to a lesser extent the bracken covered slopes will reduce runoff.

### **Hazard regulation - erosion control**

Ecosystems provide erosion control through the effects of plants binding together the topsoil with their roots. This helps to maintain soil fertility and productivity, and well as reducing the sediment loadings and consequent reduction in water quality in water courses. Area of dense surface vegetation will generally provide greater erosion control.

Manmade causes of erosion on the Commons include vegetation disturbance by off-road vehicles, fire, over-grazing, trampling by people especially on wet paths and potentially agricultural activities such as ploughing.

#### **2.2.3 Cultural services:**

### **Natural settings – landscapes**

This service predominantly relates to views which may be long or short distance and considers the totality of the combined elements of topography, habitats and man integrating to give a sense of place. In terms of Mynydd Maen Commons this will be more obvious in terms of tourism and recreation, see below.

### **Tourism**

Ecosystems and biodiversity can play an important role for different kinds of tourism which in turn provide local economic benefits. Cultural and eco-tourism can also educate people about the importance of biological diversity. The Commons provide open areas for some tourism activities such as hang gliding and paragliding. The habitats of the Commons themselves can offer tourism potential to naturalists wishing to visit them but they are not currently widely regarded for their wildlife

### **Recreation**

Walking, cycling and playing sports in the open air in rural green space is good for physical exercise and relaxation. The contribution that green spaces make in maintaining mental and physical health is widely acknowledged, though difficult to quantify. The Common has considerable recreational potential especially to the surrounding communities.

## 2.2.4 Summary of Ecosystems Services on Mynydd Maen Commons

Ecosystems services are an important mechanism for valuing the wider benefits that the Commons can provide. They identify opportunities for management and associated economic development which will create greater sustainability of the Commons and the people that live in and around it.

The NRMP also identified key risks for ecosystems services. Of particular relevance to the Commons are the following:

**Table 2.1: Ecosystem Services Value and Climate Change Predictions on Mynydd Maen Commons**

(Based on the NRMP 2015).

Ecosystem services	Value	Climate Change Predictions	Notes
Food and wild collected food	Little potential	Food provision may increase with warmer climate allowing higher forage production with consequent increased stock productivity and lower losses during winter. Increased risk of pests and diseases affecting livestock.	Increased stocking rates likely to reduce quality and extent of heathland vegetation. Wild collected food is likely to change little.
Fuel	Medium value for biomass from heather and bracken	Increased temperatures may result in increased growth and biomass in the uplands, especially of trees and bracken.	Also depends on changes in management. Harvesting increased bracken cover could provide income from biomass fuel production.
Natural fluxes of energy	Wind turbines are approved and constructed in other Commons but no known applications on Mynydd Maen. Potential for micro generation	A changing climate may alter provision of renewable energy through changed fluxes. Drier summers may result in more summer sunshine for photoelectric energy generation but wetter winter may result in lower winter provision.	Detailed forecasts for sunshine and wind will be necessary to develop proposals.
Water regulation	Medium potential due to limited water courses within the Commons	Reductions in river flows and water availability during the summer may affect water supplies. Increases in rainfall in winter may result in increased flooding.	May be mitigated by storage of water in restored bog habitats on the Commons.
Pollination	Medium potential due to opportunities in adjacent gardens and connectivity with other commons and green space	Warmer climates may result in increased pollinator populations but this is likely to be limited on the Commons.	Opportunities for small businesses in terms of bee keeping and honey production will also help focus on the pollinator resource
Climate regulation (global)	Topsoil carbon storage potential is high due to the bog whereas vegetation carbon storage is mainly medium and	Summer drying out of bogs and other habitats could lead to oxidation of peat and loss of soil carbon storage.	Increasing water retention could maintain wetter bogs with increased carbon storage capacity.

Ecosystem services	Value	Climate Change Predictions	Notes
	higher in adjacent forestry		
Water purification	Medium due to the bog and opportunities for storing water	Lower purification may result from increased rainfall and flows in winter with more sediment. Provision of cleaner water from water movement through vegetation and soils may be reduced if summer rainfall reduced.	May be mitigated by storage of water in restored bog habitats.
Hazard regulation – erosion control	High potential from heathland and bracken binding soil but it is linked to grazing capacities	Possible increases in soil erosion during storms in drier summers as vegetation is affected by drought, possible increases in fire frequencies from dry vegetation with associated erosion, and potentially from increased erosion of paths and track from increased use for recreation and tourism.	May be partially mitigated by storage of water in the Commons resulting in wetter habitats with maintained growth.
Tourism	Limited potential but could work with other operators in the area	Increases in tourist numbers with a longer tourist season.	Could bring local economic benefits.
Recreation	Medium potential – build upon the existing recreational uses of hiking, dog walking, cycling etc	Warmer climate may result in increased recreation opportunities in summer with longer season but wetter winter climate may reduce winter recreation, so increased seasonal differences.	Could be enhanced through increased accessibility.

## 2.3 Priority Habitats and Species

### 2.3.1 Habitats

A number of habitats and species were considered as ‘Priority’ for their high ecological value and/or association. The priority habitats include: upland calcareous grassland; upland heathland; bog; flush and spring; marsh/marshy grassland; and standing water and running water.

Of these upland heathland and bog are particularly relevant to Mynydd Maen Commons. Heathland connectivity is important with the potential to connect the heathland on Mynydd Maen with Twmbarlwm.

### 2.3.2 Species

Five species were considered as priority for their nature conservation value and association with upland habitats. The NRMP aimed to enhance the ecological value of the landscape for these priority species, namely:

- Red Grouse;
- Northern Lapwing;
- Brown Hare;
- Silurian Moth; and

- 
- Marsh Fritillary.

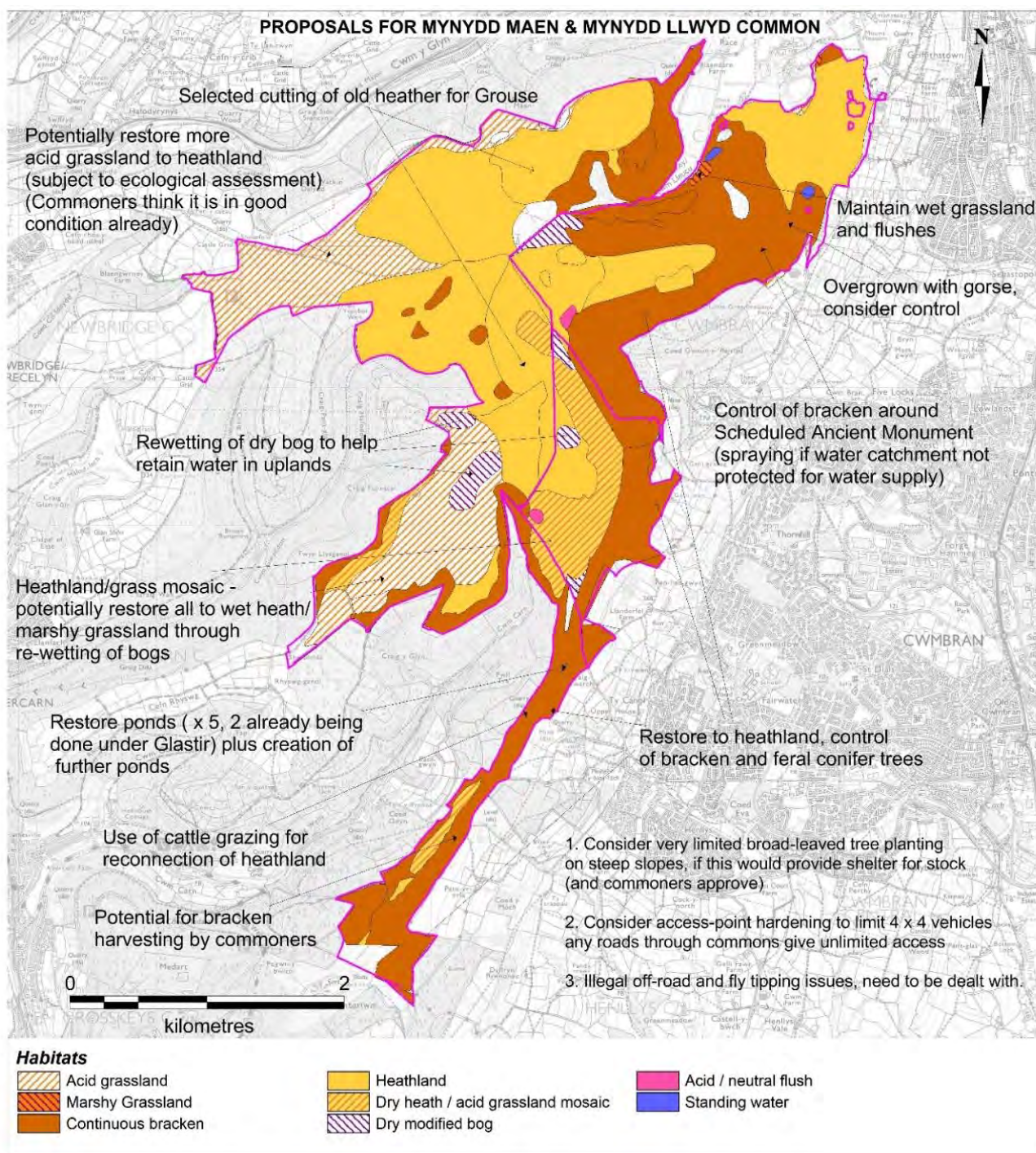
Of these, red grouse is the main species found on the Mynydd Maen Commons with lapwing recorded in the north.

## 2.4 Management Strategy and Proposals

The NRMP developed five priority themes which included:

- Economic Land Management and Conserving the Commons (ELM)
- Ecological Land Management and Wildlife Conservation (ECO)
- Ecosystem Services Enhancement (ESE)
- Community Engagement and Sustainable Use of Uplands (CES)
- Monitoring

Management plans were produced to help achieve the aims of these themes which were outlined in Table 8 of the NRMP: *Summary of the Main Management Proposals for Opportunities to Enhance the Uplands of South-east Wales*. The management proposals relevant to Mynydd Maen Commons are referred to in the management proposals contained in Section 5 of this Plan and take forward the proposals identified for Mynydd Maen and associated Commons as shown on Fig 2.1



**Fig 2.1 Proposals for Mynydd Maen and Surrounding Commons taken from the NRMP 2015**

In addition, eight major opportunities were identified in the NRMP to effectively manage natural resources within the study area for future generations. The management proposals build upon and develop these themes. The opportunities comprise the following:

- 1 Heathland management and restoration;
- 2 Retention of water in the uplands;

- 3 Encouraging cattle grazing;
- 4 Encouraging the continuation of commoning;
- 5 Addressing landscape crime;
- 6 Use for renewable energy;
- 7 Encouraging recreation and tourism; and
- 8 Community engagement.

## 2.5 Mechanisms for taking the uplands management plan forward

Critical to the implementation of any complex, long term and diverse plan is the management or implementation structure that can obtain, manage and co-ordinate both the funding and onsite activities. The NRMP proposed one small over-seeing executive body such as the South-east Wales Directors of Environment and Regeneration (SEWDER) group. This would act through a broad 'Valley Commons Association', which would employ Commons NRMP Officers, a Volunteer Coordinator and an Education Officer to provide central commitment and coordination. Individual Commons Associations would retain control of their own budgets and responsibilities. These are outlined below:

### 2.5.1 South-east Wales Directors of Environment and Regeneration (SEWDER)

It recommended that an appropriate strategic, cross-border group which could be the South-east Wales Directors of Environment and Regeneration (SEWDER) group. SEWDER reports to the South-east Wales Chief Executives and Managing Directors Group and the Welsh Local Government Association South-east Wales Regional Partnership Board, and has developed a Regional Strategic Framework endorsed by the Leaders of all ten unitary authorities which identifies the key strategic priorities to ensure growth and prosperity for the region as physical connectivity, business and growth, and people and skills. SEWDER has established several thematic groups that are identifying opportunities for collaborative project development across the region.

### 2.5.2 Creation of Valleys Commoners Association

The usual funding arrangements for corporate bodies are through formal Commons Associations in Wales, but there are examples of wider groups covering more than one common, such as the Gower Commoners' Association or the Forgotten Landscape Project model of a constituted Commons Management Group. To aid SEWDER deliver through the commons, it is proposed that the South Wales Valleys area (possibly including Commons in Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC, Merthyr CBC etc.) should form a local 'Valleys Commoners Association' to act as an umbrella organisation for the individual Commons Associations. This would enable the delivery through direct applications for funding, derive economies of scale, share best practice, loan/hire equipment and stock, and to market produce. Each individual Commons Association would retain control over its own finances. The decision whether to join a Valleys Commoners Association would be down to the individual commons associations.

A Valleys Commoners Association would enable paid staff (the equivalent of the Glastir-funded 'Commons Development Officers') to include Commons NRMP/Development Officers and other staff to be directly employed to implement the NRMP and assist with tasks such as burning for conservation management, coordinating with police for control of off-road vehicles, fencing boundaries and repairing walls, Glastir applications, organizing volunteers, etc. This builds upon the evidence of Commons Development Officers which have proved a successful means of delivering agri-environment schemes in Wales.

## 3 Audit of Current Management and Activities on Mynydd Maen Commons

### 3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the current situation and management. Details of activities has been based on information provided by the Commoners Association, TCBC, consultation with individuals and statutory bodies undertaken during the Plan preparation and desk top research.

The figures contained within the NRMP were based on outdated NRW Phase 1 Habitat data. Where appropriate this information has been updated through a review of OS data, Aerial imagery, information provided by the Commoners Association and site survey.

Mynydd Maen Commons lie to the south west of the SE Wales Commons, straddling Torfaen and Caerphilly County Boroughs. It covers an area of approximately 1000ha. and is designated as Urban Common which gives the public the right to use the moor for 'quiet enjoyment and recreation' although it is also crossed by a number of Public Rights of way. The whole area is lies above 200m above sea level (asl) with the central core of the Commons reaching 440m asl. The Commons are underlain by the South Wales upper coal measures formation which comprises mudstone, siltstone, sandstone, coal, ironstone and ferricrete with middle coal measures featuring to the east.

### 3.2 Designated Sites

There are no nationally or internationally ecologically designated sites within the Commons. However, the whole area of the upland commons have been designated as a Site of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC) by the Torfaen and Caerphilly Local Authorities: Mynydd Maen, East of Newbridge SINC on the western (Caerphilly) half of the commons and four smaller SINCs on the eastern (Torfaen) side of the common: Mynydd Maen and Mynydd Llwyd Common, Edlogan Common, Magna Porta Common and Mynydd Henllys Common.

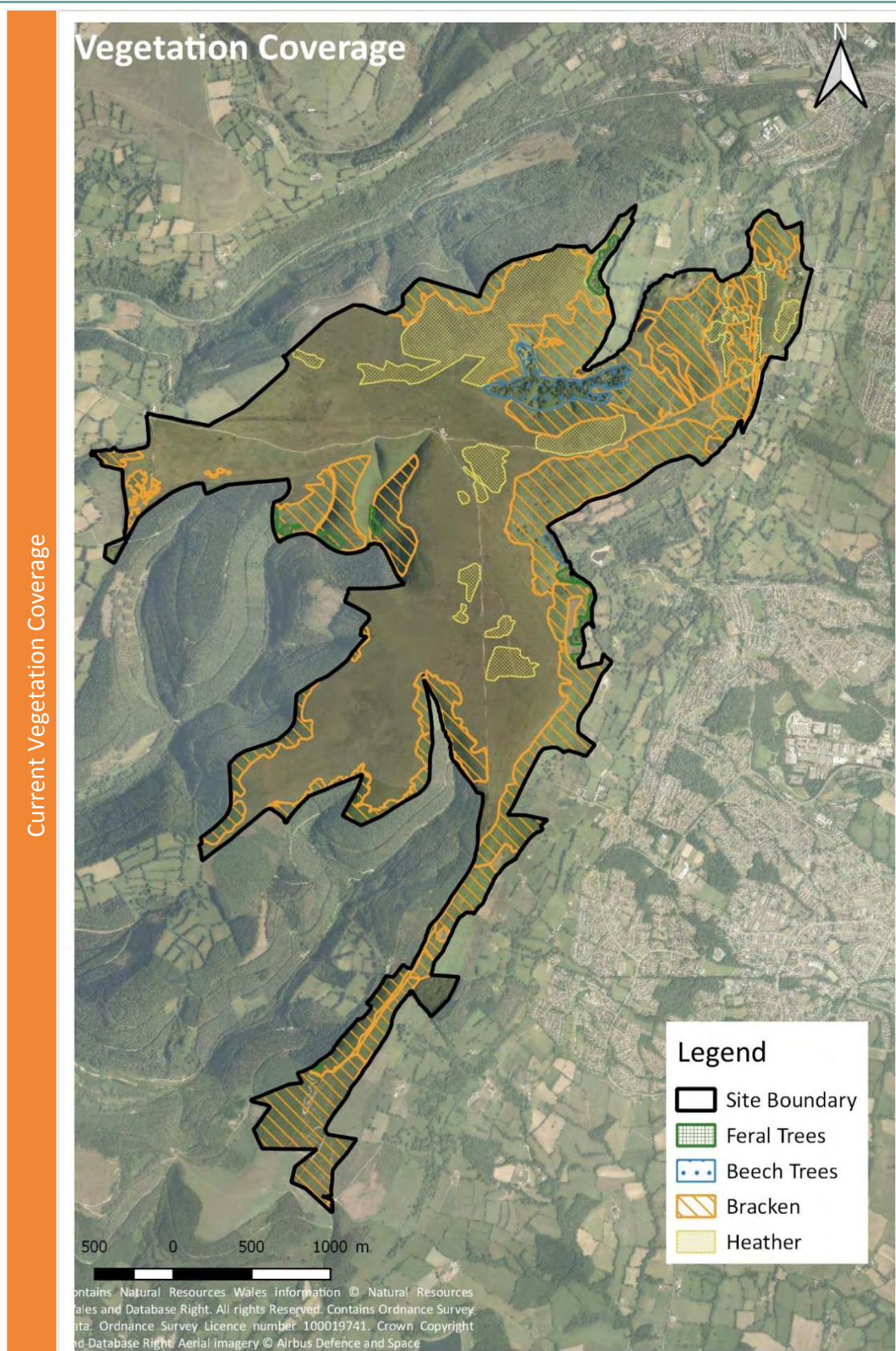
Although located outside the study area, Henllys Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 1.5km to the south-east. Discussions with Gwent Wildlife Trust and NRW who currently manage the site may influence how water resources are managed in the south-east of the Commons. There may be opportunities to positively influence the habitat condition of Henllys Bog while work is carried out to enhance the water environment on the Commons.

The historic context of the commons are important with the Bronze Age migration of local tribes from the Gwent levels to the uplands of Mynydd y Grug, Mynydd Machen and Twmbarlwm on Mynydd Maen to the significant settlement at Cwmcarn and led to a later Iron Age (900-55 BC) hill fort to be constructed by the Silures on Twmbarlwm which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument located to the north west of the commons.

There are a number of listed structures in Upper Cwmbran adjacent to Mountain road at Capel-Ilwyd and Glyn Bran Farm.

### 3.3 Existing vegetation

The Commons are known to contain a wide variety of habitats which were mapped in the Phase 1 Habitat Survey of Wales and included in the NRMP, 2015. These have been updated through the use of recent aerial photography, information from the Commoners Association and with site specific data (refer to [figure 3.1](#)). A list of the habitats recorded within the Commons is provided in Table 3.1.



**Fig 3.1 Vegetation Coverage**

**Table 3.1: The current extent of habitats on the Commons**

Habitat	Total Area (Hectares)
<i>Bracken</i>	396
<i>Upland Heathland</i>	379
<i>Dry Heath/Acid Grassland Mosaic</i>	73
<i>Unimproved Acid Grassland</i>	163
<i>Standing Water</i>	1
<i>Peat Bog</i>	2
<i>Flush and Spring</i>	2

### 3.3.1 Bracken

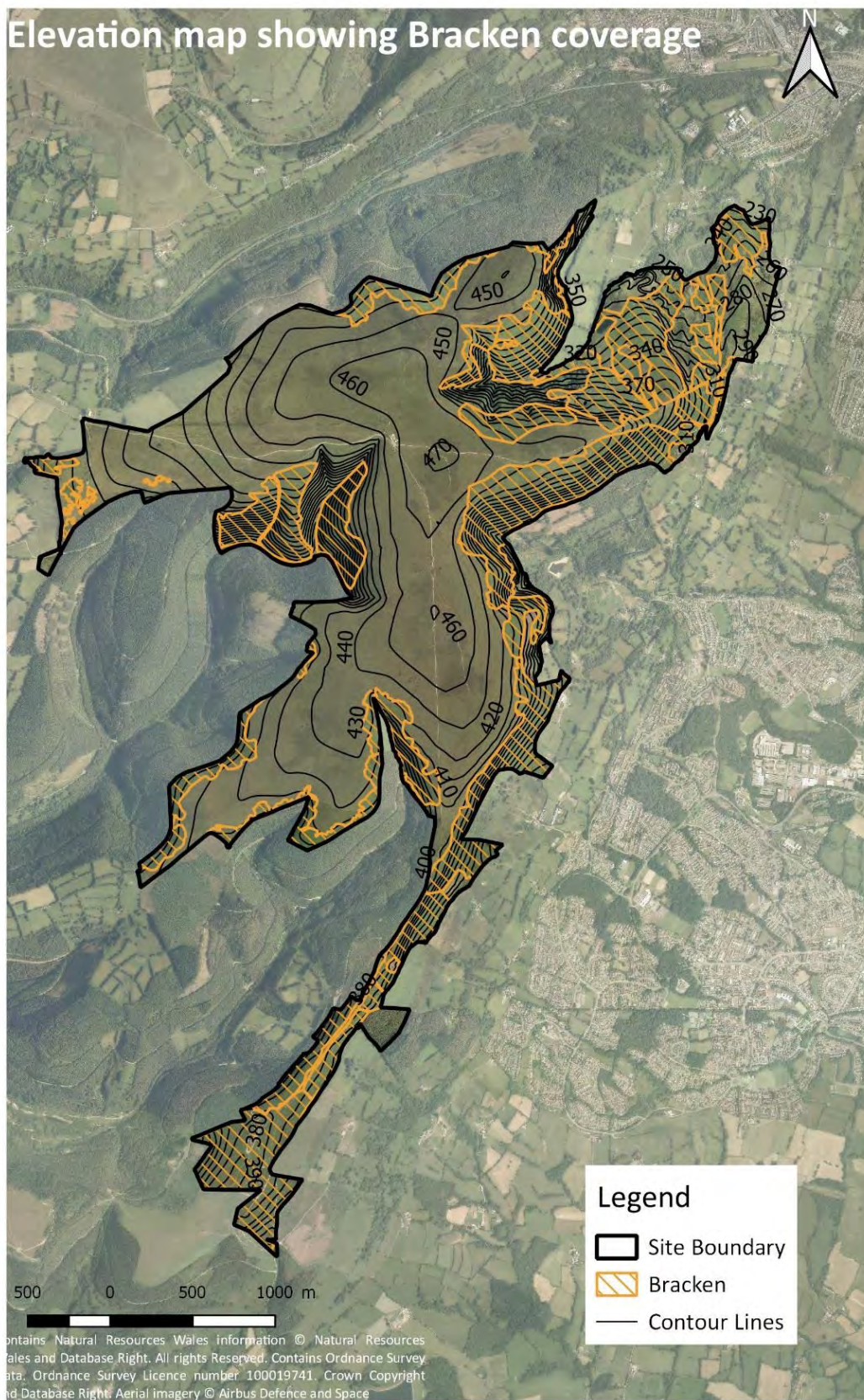
Much of the Commons is dominated by bracken, especially on steeper slopes which are inaccessible for machinery, as shown on [Fig. 3.2](#) below. Bracken can form dense, single-species stands or more open stands over acid grassland which may be more useful for grazing. Cattle may graze bracken and open the sward to reach grass between, whilst sheep do not graze bracken and concentrate on the grass between. However, care must be taken as young fronds can kill cattle.

Dense bracken is generally considered to be of low value, both in terms of wildlife and agricultural productivity, but in some cases, it can provide important ecosystem services, such as erosion control, particularly on steep slopes and provision of fibre. It is still being used for animal bedding on Mynydd Maen, and in recent years it is also being used as a fuel.

The quantity of bracken is generally accepted to have increased over the last 50 years, mainly due to a decline in cattle grazing and a warmer climate which means that frosts and sub-zero temperatures are not as effective at killing the underground rhizomes which has previously resulted in natural control. This increase has led to a decline in agricultural productivity of affected areas of the commons.

Mynydd Maen Commons Association have been managing areas of encroachment by bracken predominantly through chemical and mechanical means. They have achieved significant reductions in recent years, although it is recognised that the situation could be further improved.

Elevation map showing Bracken coverage



**Fig 3.2 Elevation map showing Bracken coverage**

### 3.3.2 Upland heathland

Upland heathland comprises areas of both dry and wet dwarf shrub heath.

Dry dwarf shrub heath is defined as vegetation with more than 25% cover of dwarf shrubs such as heather, bell heather, whimberry and western gorse on land above 200m altitude. Dry dwarf shrub heathlands typically have a high cover of heather and bell heather. Areas of wet dwarf shrub heath comprises of species such as cross-leaved heath, purple moor-grass and sphagnum moss.



Within the study area dry dwarf shrub heath and wet dwarf shrub heath often form mosaics with acid grassland, and where this occurs they are considered under separate habitat categories: dry heath/acid grassland mosaic and wet heath/acid grassland mosaic.

This habitat type has a high ecological value, it is linked to EU Annex I habitats, and supports a number of species important to the wider area. Its main ecosystem service provisions are food, potentially fuel, climate regulation through vegetation carbon storage, pollinator resources, regulating water and water quality, and erosion control.

On the Commons much of the existing heather is over mature of limited value, has been over grazed or outcompeted by bracken. Mynydd Maen Commons Association have made considerable progress in managing heathland to improve its condition across the Commons although more needs to be done for restoration and connectivity.

### 3.3.3 Upland acid grassland

Unimproved acid grassland occurs on soils of pH less than 5.5 and is generally species-poor, characterised by species such as wavy hair-grass, matt-grass, heath rush, heath bedstraw and sheep's sorrel. It often forms mosaics with upland heathland or blanket bog but must have less than 25% dwarf shrub cover to be classified as acid grassland. Upland acid grassland is often formed by the over-grazing of upland heath.

Within the Commons, there is an extensive area of upland acid grassland on the western side of the commons and occurs elsewhere in mosaics with dry heath and bracken.

### 3.3.4 Woodland and feral trees

To the south and west, the Commons are flanked with coniferous plantation woodland which was planted in large blocks on a range of former upland heathland and grassland sites and is currently managed by NRW.

Feral conifers from these forestry areas are encroaching from adjacent land which is an ongoing problem on the Commons. However, due to larch tree disease, *Phytophthora*, Cwmcarn Forest is gradually being reduced in size and replanted with native broadleaved woodland species.



There is also a small area of beech woodland in the northern part of the Mynydd Maen Commons, near to the Scheduled Ancient Monument. This woodland does not appear on the CCW Phase 1 habitat mapping but is important in the context of the Commons. This is a valuable habitat within the Commons and should be extended to provide shelter and greater woodland connectivity.

Woodland habitats provide important provisioning ecosystem services such as production of fuel, fibre and building materials, regulating services such as water, air and soil regulation, climate regulation, and cultural services such as natural settings, accessible green space, recreation and tourism.

### 3.3.5 Bog



Bog is a wetland that accumulates peat formed from the partially decayed remains of plant material, mostly sphagnum mosses. This habitat is of high conservation value, linked to several EU Habitats Directive Annex I habitat types. It also supports a range of species of conservation significance, notably red grouse, one of the Priority Species of the Uplands NRMP.

Much of the Welsh Uplands were once covered in bog, but changing land use practices have led to bog becoming damaged, fragmented and much reduced in size. Mynydd Maen has several remaining small patches of bog, but these are quite dry, with an absence of the sphagnum mosses

required to keep it functioning as a bog.

Within South-east Wales this habitat is very rare, and given its high ecological value, limited extent and its links to EU Annex I habitats, degraded bog within Mynydd Maen should be considered as a high importance and high priority for conservation and restoration. In addition to its ecological value, bog provides important ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, regulation of water supply and improvement of water quality.

A concern has been raised that there has been drying out of the bog following the laying of a gas main which is approximately 500mm below the surface. This should be explored in more detail.

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### 3.3.6 Flush and spring

Flushes and springs are ground-water fed mires, with or without shallow peat. They typically have a high sphagnum and moss component, lack dominant grasses or rushes, and tend to occur in small localised patches associated with water seepage, often forming mosaics with other vegetation. They can be quite species-rich.

Within Mynydd Maen Commons, this habitat usually exists in small isolated patches within other habitats.

This habitat type is of high ecological value, is limited in extent and is important for its ecosystem services functions of regulating water supply and improving water quality. Areas of flush and spring should therefore be targeted for conservation within the Commons.

### 3.3.7 Standing Water

Standing water comprises scrapes, ponds, reservoirs, lakes and drainage ditches.

Within the Commons, there are some natural ponds and pools, ponds created in association with past industrial activities, and several ponds created and restored over recent years by Mynydd Maen Commons Association, mainly for the provision of drinking water for livestock.

The network of standing water across the commons is important for amphibian which use the ponds to breed, and birds such as northern lapwing and red grouse that require small pools and scrapes, where aquatic invertebrates can make up the main food source for their young.

Standing water is important due to its nature conservation value, its value in water quality regulation, and for water supply for humans, livestock and wild animals. Standing water within the commons should therefore be targeted for conservation within the Commons.

### 3.3.8 Running water

This category includes the small mountain streams that occur within the Commons (these are not shown on the habitat map for the study area as no mapping data were available for small streams).

This habitat type is of high ecological value, supporting a range of aquatic and semi-aquatic species, and it influences the healthy functioning of ecosystems. It also provides important ecosystem services such as provision of freshwater for humans, livestock and wild animals and regulating water flow between the uplands and the lowlands. One species that depends on good water quality is the white-clawed crayfish, which has been recorded in watercourses to the east of Mynydd Maen Commons at lower altitudes.

NRW has recently promoted the importance of upland headwaters in their overall catchment management plans. Economically and socially, the advantages of sustainable management of freshwater ecosystem services in uplands to communities has not properly been assessed or recognised, but should be an important consideration when planning green infrastructure.

### 3.3.9 Rock and scree

Rock and scree are present locally on the valley sides and tops. There may be natural cliffs and rock outcrops on the valley sides, of acidic coal measures or of carboniferous limestone, or both may be exposed through quarrying, as in the limestone quarries above Henllys and Cwmynyscoy. Other exposed rock areas may be artificial in origin, for example quarries, which were once widespread within the area and many of which remain. Rocks and scree can develop valuable moss, lichen and fern communities, providing nesting sites for birds such as whinchat and peregrine.

## 3.4 Priority Species within the Study Area

The NRMP, 2015 identified five species as priorities for conservation of which there are biodiversity records held by the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC) for red grouse and lapwing on the Commons.

### 3.4.1 Red grouse

Red grouse has very specific habitat requirements, needing a mosaic of heather at different ages throughout its life. For nesting, it requires dense, mature heather which provides good cover, adjacent to areas of younger heather, wet flushes and pools which provide feeding habitat for young. The adult red grouse's diet varies considerably throughout the year, with bilberry and cottongrass the favoured food plants in the spring, and fresh heather shoots important in the summer months. Red grouse chicks rely on insect prey, in addition to plant food items such as heather shoots, moss and flowers.

The decline in popularity of grouse shooting, decline in quality of moorland habitat, changing farming practices such as increased sheep grazing on uplands and potentially disease and predation has led to a dramatic decrease in red grouse numbers.

### 3.4.2 Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*)

This species has undergone a decline in recent years, mainly due to changing agricultural practices; whilst farms once comprised mixtures of grazing, fodder and other arable land, providing the structural diversity that benefits lapwing, the intensification and specialisation of agriculture means that structural diversity has been reduced. Agri-environmental schemes to benefit the species have only been partially successful (Smart *et al.* 2013). Disturbance, mainly from dog-walking and the use of off-road vehicles, is also known to be a significant threat to lapwing within the study area. Predation, mainly by foxes and carrion crows is another factor in the decline of lapwing.

### 3.4.3 Other species

Another species of conservation importance in the area is white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*). Although there is no evidence white-clawed crayfish are present within the Commons, there are known isolated populations in tributaries east of the Commons in Henllys, Fairwater and South Sebastopol that receive calcium-rich waters originating from the carboniferous limestone escarpment that runs in a south-west to north-east direction along the Commons.

Management of the water environment therefore is one of the most essential elements of this part of the plan. Work that improves water quality and ecological status of tributaries originating from the commons will help achieve Water Framework Directive (WFD) aims and objectives in the catchment, which will also benefit nearby fisheries, and species such as brown trout, salmon and European eel.

Other species of conservation importance in the study area include bats, dormouse, badgers, otters, reptiles, peregrine falcon, barn owl and grassland fungi

### 3.5 Agriculture

A general review of Welsh Government agricultural data for the area showed a trend towards fewer farms, less full time and more part time labour, and reductions in sheep and cattle numbers and overall grazing pressure. Farm Business Income trends for hill farms show a significant decrease over the past seven years, particularly for hill cattle and sheep farms. Many farm businesses are financially vulnerable with a reliance on environmental scheme payments and other sources of income to support profitability, and uncertain prospects in terms of future income over the next 5-10 years, particularly given the lack of clarity regarding post-Brexit policies, schemes and trading arrangements.

Interviews with representatives of the Mynydd Maen Commons Association ascertained existing management practices and issues and informed the development of management proposals. There are currently only seven or eight farmers on the Commons which has reduced with reduced stocking rates. The farms around the commons are varied in both size and type and comprise mainly sheep and beef enterprises. Sheep are mainly grazed on the Commons with some cattle, although for Mynydd Maen and adjacent Commons, cattle comprise around 22% of the livestock units, based on Cumulus Consultants interviews in 2015.



Mynydd Maen has a mix of farm types with more part time operations and only supports a few full time farms. A variety of land management tasks are carried out on the commons, with participation in Glastir Commons and Glastir Advanced. Grazing has declined over recent years mainly due to the requirements of Glastir funding. There were approximately 14000 sheep on the commons but in 2018 there were approximately 1800. Numbers of cattle have declined and there were approximately 65 adult cattle in 2018. Horses were an important component of the

grazing matrix on the commons in the past but there are currently no horses on the commons which has resulted from the zero horse policy introduced to stop the dumping of horses. It is believed that carrying capacities, which would ensure good management on the commons are in the order of 150 cattle and 4000 sheep. This equates to a stocking rate of around 0.35 Livestock Unit / hectare across the commons, broadly in line with recommended Glastir stocking rates for upland heathland and upland acid grassland on commons. <https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-01/glastir-commons-2014-explanatory-booklet.pdf>

The main tool for improving management of the Commons for biodiversity and ecosystem services is through economically viable adjustments of grazing, principally by restoring a significant traditional cattle grazing component. Ultimately, the decision of which stock to use is down to the individual graziers in light of economics and practicalities. Glastir is currently the only realistic agri-environmental option available but will require revising to suit upland farms in the study area.

Increasing cattle numbers grazing the commons in areas of bracken management will help return the land lost to viable grazing habitat in a much speedier timescale. It will also have an economic benefit

for the commoners which are involved so could lead to a more sustainable approach. The Commons Association also aspires to regulate grazing in line with creating larger areas of wildflowers for pollination. Presently, the grazing regime does not tie in to these timescales appropriately.

Some of these issues are partly due to the strict guidelines that must be followed within the Glastir Commons payment scheme. As a result, there is concern regarding the future of commoning, with few young farmers taking up the practice.

### 3.6 Recreation

The uplands offer many opportunities for recreation and the economic health and wellbeing benefits of using the countryside for exercise, recreation and learning are well known. The Commons and surrounding areas are already used for formal and informal recreational activities.

#### 3.6.1 Formal recreational activities

**Cwmcarn Forest Drive** is an important recreation hub which lies to the west of the Commons and utilises the adjacent forestry. It is an important node for Torfaen and has been identified as a hub for the Valleys Regional Park. It comprises a scenic, forested valley offering, a range of walks and hiking trails, mountain biking, fishing and adventure trails together with a camp site, visitor centre and café.

**Sirhowy Country park** comprises woodland & meadow area with flat walking/cycling paths along an old rail line & some steeper trails and lies to the south of the B4521.

**Twmbarlwm Society** is a membership organisation focussed on the Twmbarlwm Scheduled Ancient Monument but have an active volunteer group who meet monthly to litter pick and carry out repairs to the fencing, hedges and entrances. They hold a number of activities throughout the year which are promoted through their website <http://www.twmbarlwm.co.uk/>

**Whysom's Wharf Camping & Caravan Site and Tearooms** are located to the south of the Commons in Risca.

**Greenmeadow Community Farm** is located in Cwmbran to the east of the Commons. Set in over 120 acres, we have a wide range of pedigree and rare breed animals which you can come and meet up close. Daily activities include milking demonstrations and tractor and trailer rides with additional activities during school holidays and seasonal events throughout the year.

**Blaen Bran Community Woodland** is a privately owned area of 100 acres of woodland above Upper Cwmbran which is run and maintained by the Blaen Bran Community Woodland trust in accordance with a long term lease. It backs onto Mynydd Maen Commons which allows it to be part of walking trails linking to Twmbarlwm Mountain, Cwmcarn Forest Drive and across to Pontymoile. The woodland is managed by a small group of unpaid volunteers who run events and activities.

### 3.7 Landscape Crime

Landscape crime has been the biggest farming issue on the Commons for several decades and it relates to landscape crime such as illegal off-roading, damage to tracks, boundary vandalism, fly tipping and arson, with fly grazing and stock theft also being cited as problems encountered. The creation of more pull-ins and lay-bys along Mountain Road and other routes adjacent to the Commons, has also meant the area of viable grazing land has been reduced over time. These strongly influence the commoners' decisions about grazing and managing the commons. Work has been done on the Commons to try and combat these issues but more is needed.

The Commoners and local land owners have notified the police and offenders have been stopped. They come from places such as Bristol, Swindon and Birmingham and often state that they did not know it was illegal to off-road in these areas.

A major barrier to any development of tourism or increased recreation is the problem of landscape crime and antisocial behaviour, which in part is derived from the perceived lack of value of the uplands to the general population. If landscape crime is not effectively addressed, there may be little incentive to implement long-term management proposals and tourism opportunities as the benefits will be limited and not self sustaining. Education is needed to inform the local population of the value of the upland commons and to respect them.



## 4 Commoners Consultation

The development of the Plan has been carried out in close consultation with the Commoners Association. This has included meetings with representatives of the Commons and Commoners Association, workshops, consultation with individual landowners and stakeholders. Telephone interviews were held in June 2018 with active commoners and landowners to gauge interest, support and ideas. It was noted that some of the landowners were not available for telephone interview and did not return the questionnaire. A summary of the consultation is provided below:

### **The following key issues were identified from questionnaires:**

#### **Existing skills**

- Commoners are an ageing population
- Farming and maintenance on the commons is predominantly being carried out by older people
- Key skills being lost as commoners are getting older and they are not passing skills onto the youth as they had previously
- Concern that children of commoners are leaving the area to become professions or get jobs where there is a guaranteed level of quality of life and wellbeing, as well as security over a longer period.
- Commoners Rights are passed down in the family so plans to inspire younger people to become farmers must look attractive for them to choose to do it as a career.

#### **Grazing**

- Stocking rates had to be reduced to obtain Glastir
- Cattle has died from grazing on bracken which led to bracken poisoning
- Issues with pedigree cattle on the commons so were removed

#### **Abuse of the common**

- Education about the commons has been missed for many years by local schools and colleges and its value is not appreciated which has led to its abuse.
- Motorbikes and offroading are an increasing problem on the common.

#### **Planning**

- Longer term (30 year) planning is necessary – there has been a reliance of 5 year plans which do not allow time for actions to be properly implemented
- Dry stone walls were the full length of the commons once and there are still remnants of it now (Cwmbran to Pontypool). There is the need for about 2000m of restoration / new dry stone walling around the commons but this would take years and cost thousands to reinstate.

### **The following opportunities were identified:**

- The Mynydd Maen Commons Association committee is committed and represents the views of the commoners. The committee should be used as a conduit for actions and ideas.
- Bird watching (through RSPB) is very popular and respects the countryside – these are the type of people they want to encourage to use the commons
- Requests to improve the commons for bird watching – there was a bird hide on the common which was damaged / vandalised which could be restored
- Concern raised that the focus tends to be on grazing but the commons can provide much more but information and proposals are required.

- Sheep and cattle grazing should remain as the foundation of the management of the commons to livestock and wildlife management but it was acknowledged that diversification was required
- There is support from Pontypool Park Estate and Councils in gorse management and maintaining car parking areas, but they also need to be more focused on land management, recreation and tourism.
- There is wide support for tourism in terms of camping and glamping and it has been talked about a lot in the past. However, the infrastructure is not there. There is no mains water supply. Water is currently made available through rainwater harvesting and wells. Electricity supply would also be needed. The area would need to be upgraded to support such a business venture.
- Support for the idea of a rural crafts and skills centre to promote common land practices and education for schools and colleges.
- The Commoners Association was considered to be an important organisation for the management and longevity of the commons
- Support for collaborate business enterprise to increase hospitality and business opportunities
- The Commons Association should work closely with the RSPB / Gwent Wildlife Trust in whatever they do regarding habitat management / restoration and enhancing tourism and recreation. They potentially could offer huge support.
- Heritage / historic sites are important elements of the commons and could be of greater value for local schools and colleges.
- Need better interpretation for educational reasons.
- Potential for providing hospitality for school groups so young people and families can stay in the area while they learn about the commons and how to look after them.
- Leaflets would be helpful on the historic, ecological value of the commons and the do's and don'ts in terms of off-roading, motorbiking, fire lighting, barbeques etc.
- Support for an education centre for schools and colleges to learn about common land management and promotion of rural crafts and skills
- 4x4 vehicles have become less of a problem in recent years due to the target hardening in the area by placing block-stone to restrict access.
- Bracken management in recent years has been effective providing more grazing land
- Cattle numbers should be increased to provide better management
- Controlled increase of horses on the commons should be considered
- Need for recruitment of new commoners
- General support for reinforcing the sustainability of upland farming in general
- Payments for ecosystem services is one area where longer term security for commoners, contractors, contract managers and farmers could be met.

## 5 Management Proposals

### 5.1 Overview of Management Plans

This Commons Innovation Plan proposes a 5-year programme for the Mynydd Maen Commons Association, in partnership with the local councils, local landowners and community groups, to continue building on the work they have been carrying out. It aims to promote and build capacity in the rural skills necessary to implement sustainable management of the commons to enhance natural resources, develop skills and increase resilience into the future.

This section includes a series of management plans. Each management plan identifies opportunities and makes recommendations for management to ensure that the commons continue to be used sustainably, create greater biodiversity connectivity and ecosystem services. The plans include a portfolio of projects designed to achieve a number of goals, such as managing and restoring heathland, peat bog and other wetlands, enhancing ecosystem services, supporting sustainable tourism development and sharing this information with other commoners in other areas to promote this vital part of our green infrastructure. These management plans have been developed in consultation with members of the Mynydd Maen Commons Association, other stakeholders and relevant organisations, and are based on their experience of costing and delivering similar projects in the past, such as those for Glastir.

The potential costs of delivering the proposals are considered within the Action Plan (refer to [Appendix A](#)) and potential funding source(s) are identified, together with factors such as timescales, delivery roles and responsibilities.

Individual projects will require more detailed consultation and development for implementation. They focus mainly on the interests and aspirations of Mynydd Maen Commoners Association in continuing sustainable habitat management to enhance ecosystem services on Mynydd Maen, promoting traditional rural skills and crafts and raising the profile of commoning in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

### 5.2 Training

Training is essential to developing and passing on relevant land management skills which are being lost in the area. These include basic farm skills and traditional skills such as dry stone walling, hedge laying etc. There are also opportunities for building upon the local crafts skills training currently being carried out to cover for example creating Christmas wreaths, willow and hazel animals, chairs and furniture, materials such as wattles, fenceposts etc.


Some of the Commoners are qualified as trainers in the Hill Farm training programme which has been developed to support hill farmers and also educate relevant stakeholders and interested parties in the management and importance of hill farming activities. The Hill Farming Training Scheme could be a vehicle through which local specialists could deliver training and education.

It is also recommended that links are developed with Coleg Gwent to deliver training courses and relevant qualifications.

Refer to Training Plan in [Appendix B](#).

### 5.3 Bracken Control (ELM1)

NRMP Management Objective: Economic Land Management and Conserving the Commons

Introduction	 <p>The Commons contain approximately 396 ha of bracken. Bracken is an invasive weed which, in the absence of appropriate control and management, can spread rapidly, smothering more sensitive habitats such as heather moorland and reducing the quality of grazing habitat. It can also have a negative impact on priority species especially red grouse.</p> <p>Ingestion of young bracken fronds by cattle over several weeks can lead to toxicity resulting in acute disease and death. Bracken poisoning is less common during the autumn when bracken is woody and less palatable.</p> <p>There are opportunities to re-use the products of bracken control both locally and for economic return. Bracken can be harvested for bedding for animals, bracken-manure waste as fertiliser and commercial compost from mixing bracken with soil, manure and/or wool.</p>
Aims and Objectives	<p>To control the spread of bracken to achieve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Regeneration and improvement of heathland and grassland and associated species particularly red grouse, skylark and lapwing</li> <li>■ Improved landscape permeability and connectivity of priority habitats</li> <li>■ Reduced incidence of Louping Ill in sheep/red grouse due to reduced tick habitat</li> <li>■ Cattle re-introduced to inaccessible areas to reduce reliance on physical/mechanical/chemical control and enhanced economic viability of the Commons</li> <li>■ Commoners gain the skills, knowledge and accreditation to play a part in future bracken management and contract work, shepherding and other activities</li> <li>■ Income generation and re-use of bracken products which may also encourage younger commoners develop economic enterprises</li> </ul>
Current Management	<p>The Commoners manage bracken by both mechanical and chemical methods: mowing on the flatter areas and spraying on the steep areas as shown on Fig 5.2.1.</p> <p>Management is mainly by mechanical and chemical means due to the reduced livestock rates on the commons caused from changes in farming practices because of Common Agricultural Policy reform, loss of headage payments, reduced prices, agri-environment scheme agreements and uncertainty surrounding Brexit.</p> <p>Bracken is used on an ad-hoc basis within the Commons and harvested more formally by individual farmers for bedding for animals on Mynydd y Lan Common.</p>

# Risk Appraisal

Bracken management is a long term activity. Where areas have been cleared it is important to continue management which can be done effectively through grazing, particularly by cattle. Otherwise, the bracken will regenerate and money, time and effort will be wasted. Reduced stocking rates required through funding streams such as Glastir result in the added costs of chemical or mechanical management.

Whilst aerial spraying of herbicide is the optimal management approach for areas of steep topography, this method is very costly and can have negative environmental effects, so its long-term use is unsustainable.

Care must be taken to ensure weather conditions are appropriate and that areas are targeted and not carried out near waterbodies such as ponds, streams, or wetland areas where pollution and reduced water quality could occur.

# Management Proposals for Bracken

There are 8 areas for proposed management within the Commons as shown on Fig 5.2.2 – 5.2.12 below. These areas are outlined individually with the priorities for management. They build upon and reinforce the current activities carried out by the Commoners.

Firstly a programme of bracken management should be developed. The extent of the proposed areas and the timings will depend upon the availability of funding, manpower and machinery as appropriate. Additional areas can be added if resources allow. The Commoners Association aim to control the bracken across the Commons with targets of: 80ha / yr flailed or mowed; 20ha/yr with herbicide applied by hand/boom sprayer; 200ha/yr aerial application over the plan period. In each area, mechanical or chemical treatment should be followed up by cattle grazing as a long-term management measure.

Proposed areas and priorities agreed with the Commoners:

Management Areas	Priority Area	Area (Ha)
1	2	13
2	1	34.3
	2	16.4
3	2	65.96
4a and 4b	1	121.9
4c	1	11.3
5	3	28.7
6	3	32.87
7	2	30.4
8	3	14.35

The time of year most suitable for carrying out bracken management (June to August) coincides with bird nesting season. It will therefore be necessary to have a qualified consultant or volunteer on site immediately prior to management to check for the

presence of birds or reptiles in these areas. The programme may need to be modified if birds are present. Reptiles should be translocated if necessary.

It is recommended that the bracken areas are walked through June /early July to assess any change in bracken cover and establish the presence of breeding birds and protected species. This is an ideal opportunity to train commoners/volunteers in identifying ecological and other constraints to bracken control. This should form part of a monitoring programme.

Cattle stocking densities should be agreed, in consultation with relevant commoners, prior to the chemical/mechanical management, to ensure that the control is sustainable and heathland / grassland recovery follows mechanical/chemical control.

Areas treated for bracken will be subject to grazing in the following year, and in subsequent years until heathland habitat/grazing area is restored. Where grazing is not an option due to stocking rates, livestock availability or topography, control by chemical or mechanical means should be considered.

#### **Uses for bracken cuttings**

Bracken arisings have a number of potential uses which could provide an additional income to the Commoners or reduce external management inputs. These options include fertiliser, weed control, animal bedding, insect repellent, seed treatment, antifungal agent and bio fuel. The following options could be considered:

##### **Compost:**

- Cuttings can be composted down and used as a mulch to protect tender plants and suppress weeds. Currently sold as 'peat free' compost and produced by the Lake District National Park as an income stream.
- A more sustainable alternative to compost with peat and could be marketed with 'eco-labelling'.
- When composted with cattle or horse manure it can be used as a potash-rich soil conditioner.

##### **Bio-fuel**

- Bracken has been used as a bio-fuel in the form of 'Brackettes'.
- It burns hotter than oak, drier, produces less smoke and reduces reliance on wood for fuel.
- Ash produced from burning is a good fertiliser, high in Potassium with a high pH.

##### **Animal Bedding:**

- Bracken has traditionally been used for animal bedding as a cheaper alternative to straw, especially where it needs to be cut anyway.
- There may be some issues with toxicity if cattle eat it, but should not be an issue if bracken is harvested in autumn and allowed to completely die back before being used.
- Soiled bracken bedding can then be used as fertiliser.

## AMP

### Associated Management Plans

- Heather management
- Control of feral trees

## Relevant Guidance

### Relevant Guidance

A range of composts have been produced by different interests e.g.

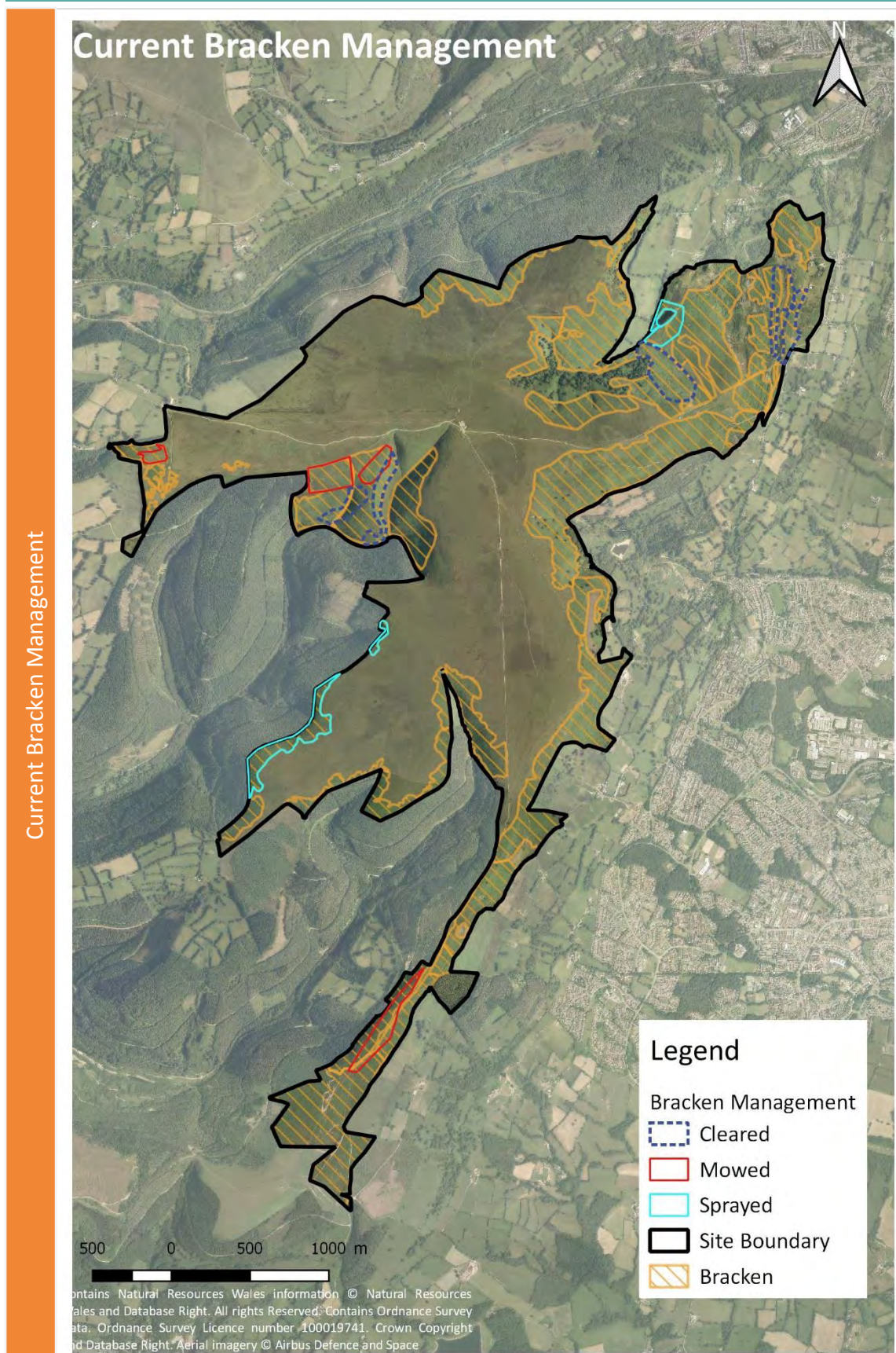
Lakeland Gold: [www.dalefootcomposts.co.uk](http://www.dalefootcomposts.co.uk)

Brackenburn: <http://www.brackenburn.co.uk/resources>

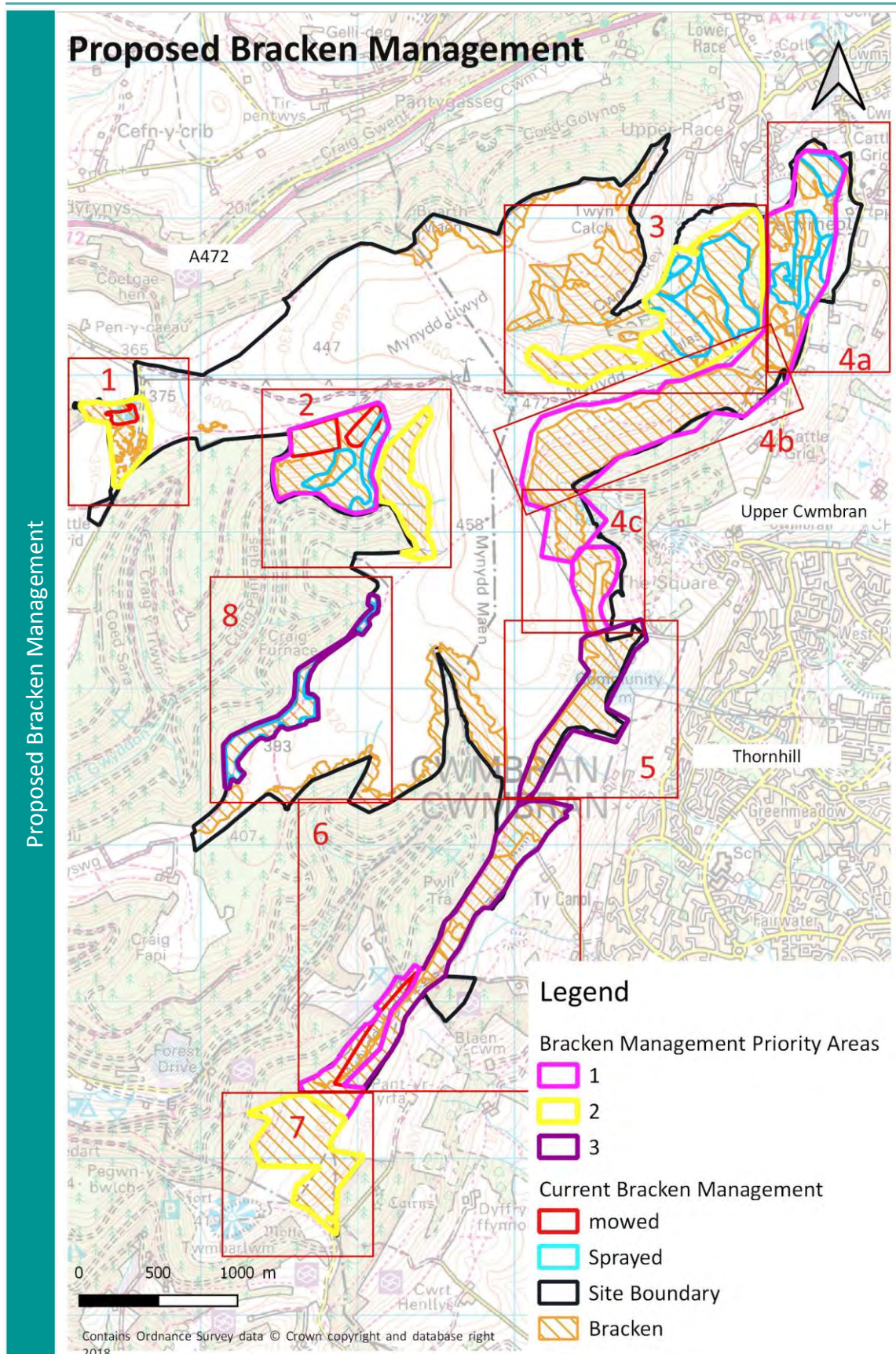
Gower Commons bracken compost: [www.gowercommons.org.uk](http://www.gowercommons.org.uk)

Composted New Forest bracken products: [www.macpennys.co.uk](http://www.macpennys.co.uk)

Mendips bracken compost and soil conditioner: <http://www.fountaintimber.co.uk/>.



**Fig 5.2.1 Areas of Current Bracken Management**



**Fig 5.2.2 Proposed Bracken Management**

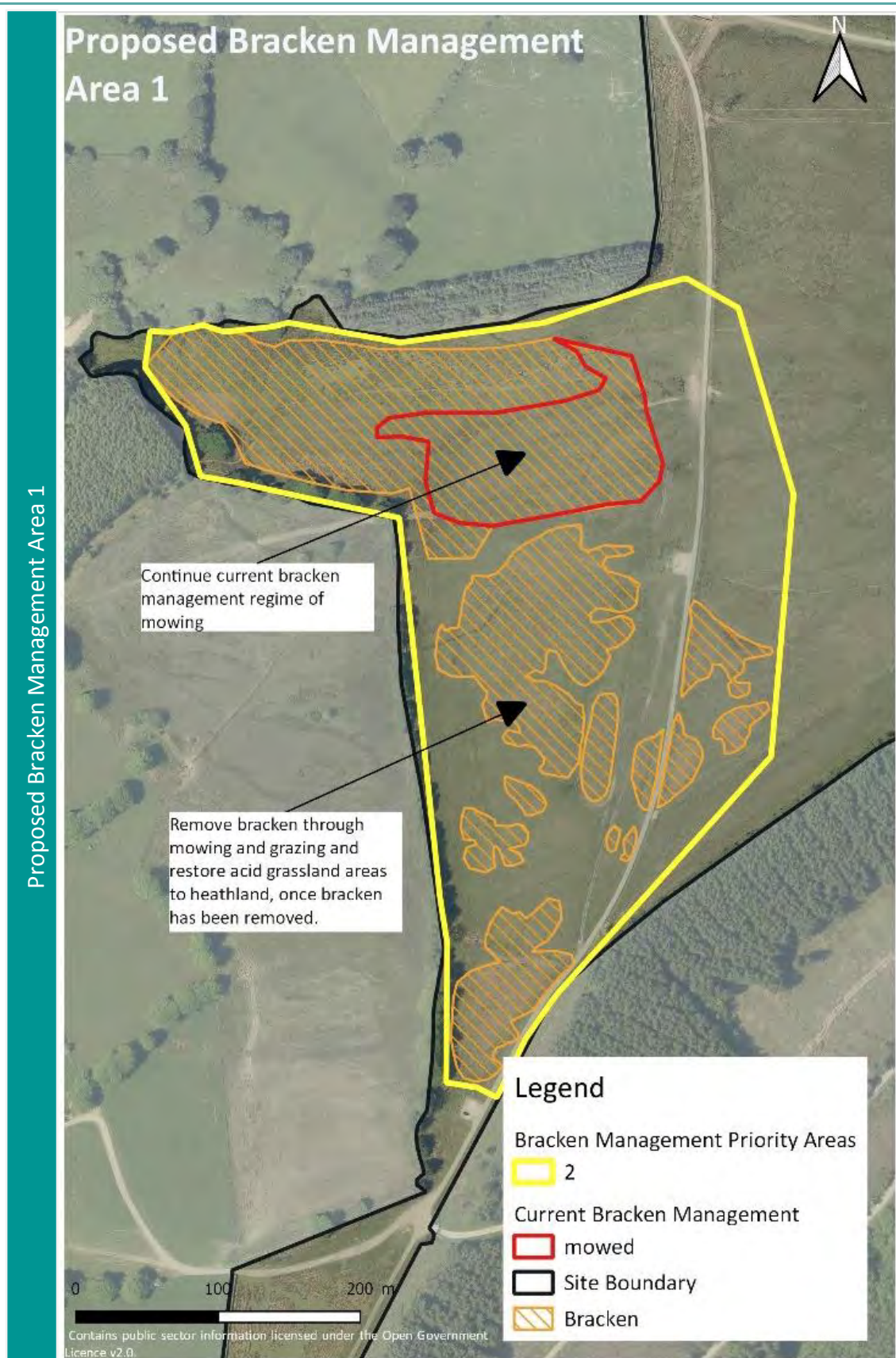


Fig 5.2.3 Proposed Bracken Management Area 1

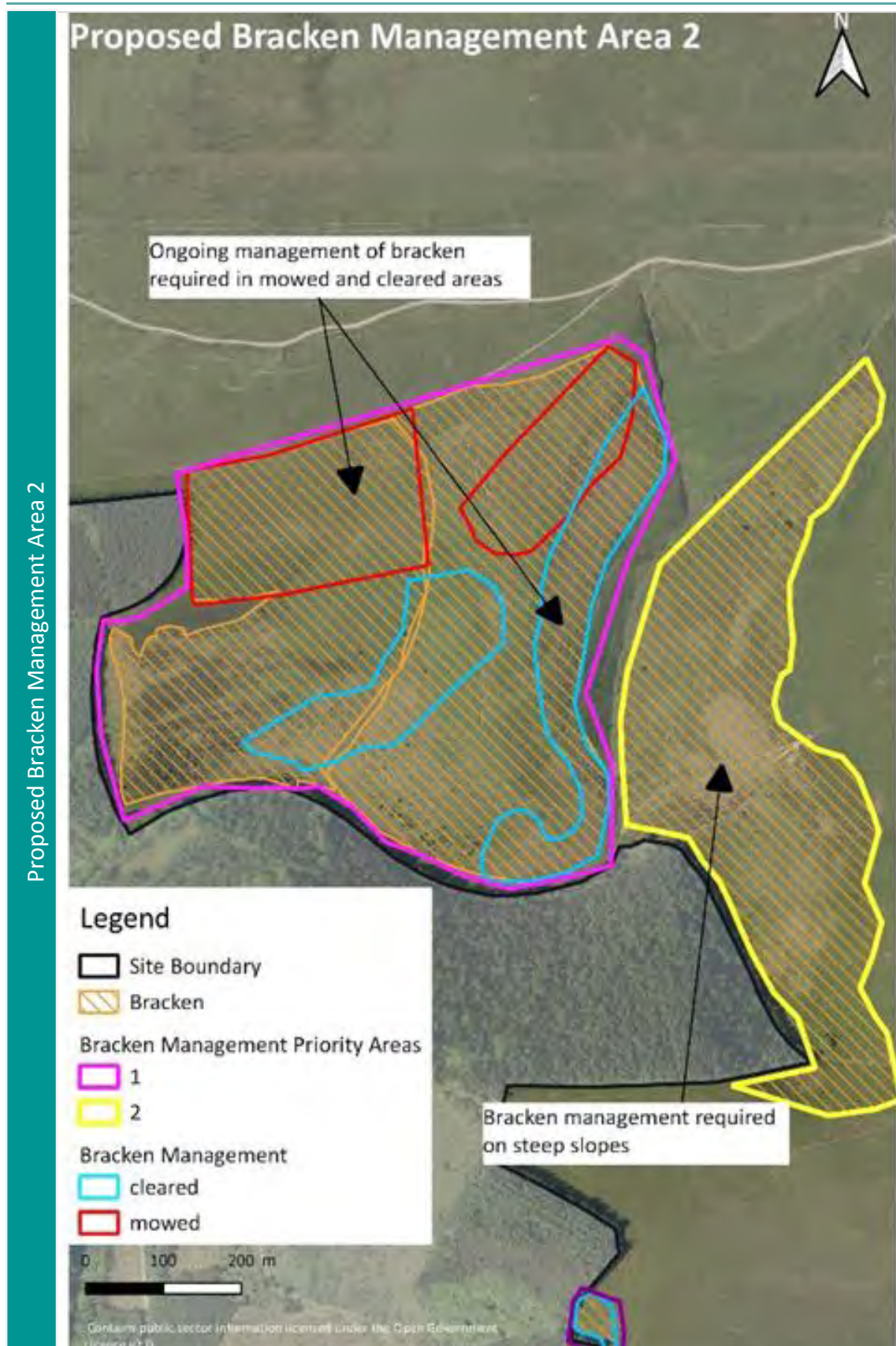


Fig 5.2.4 Proposed Bracken Management Area 2

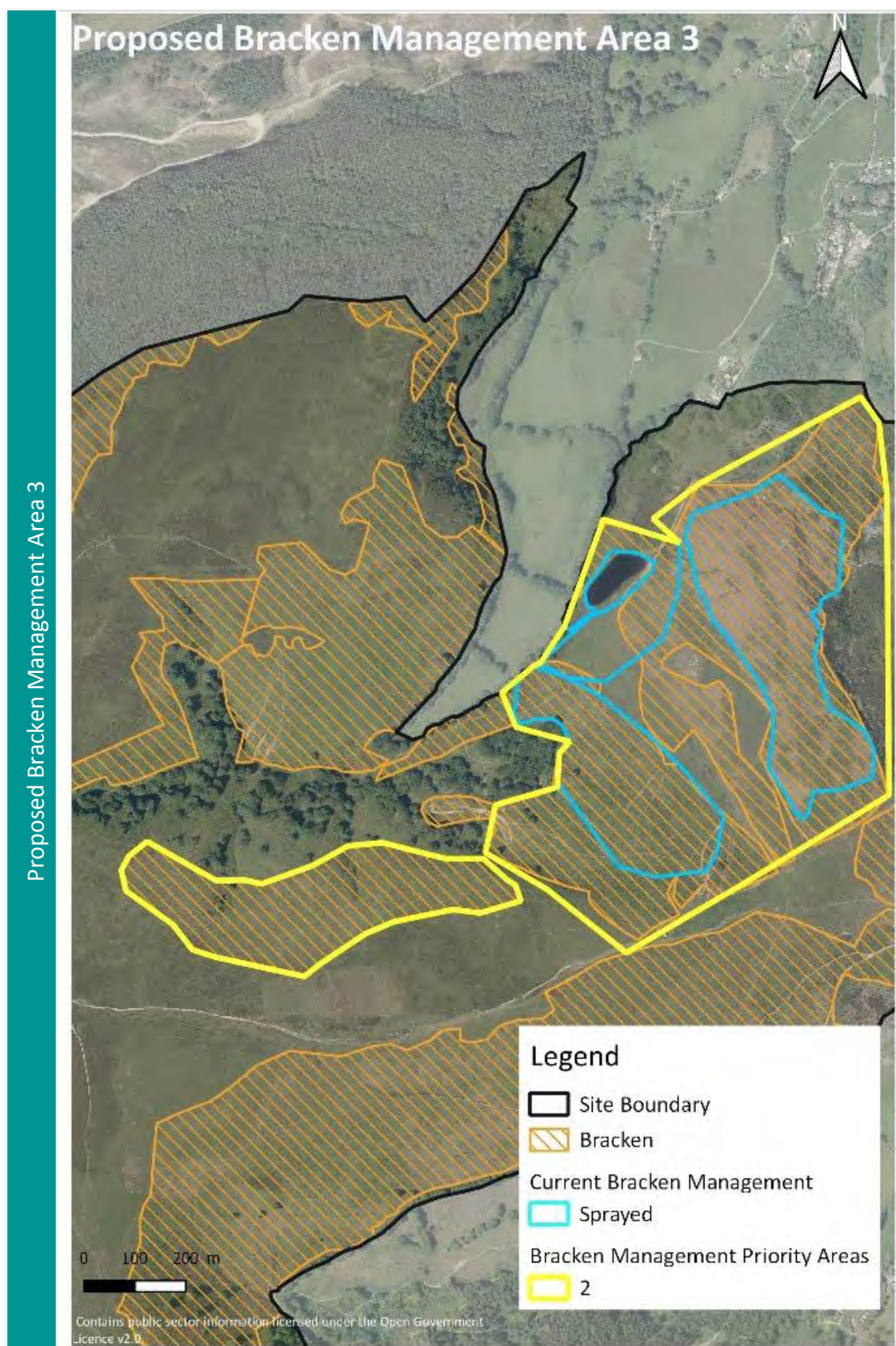
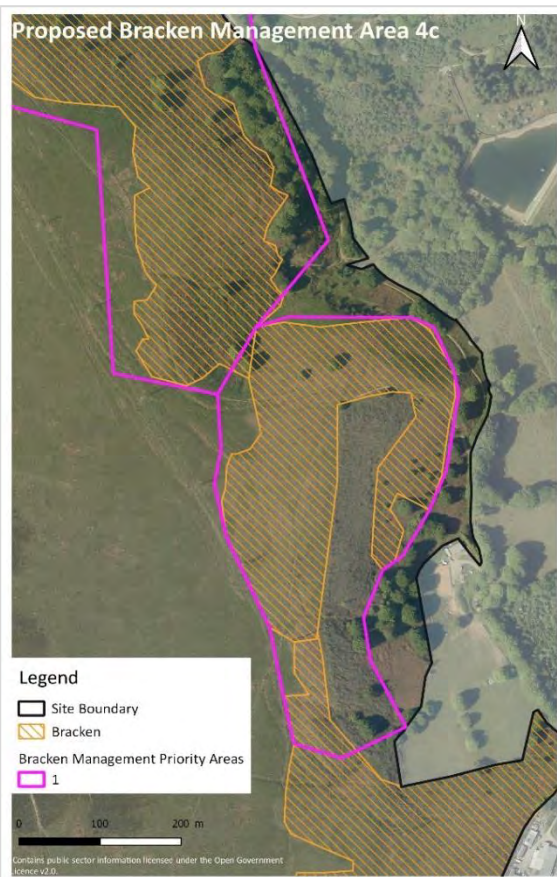
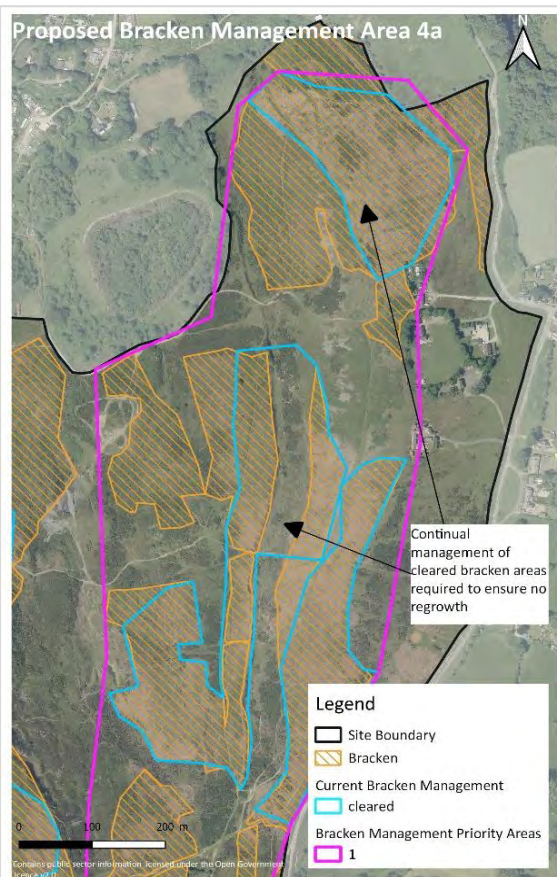
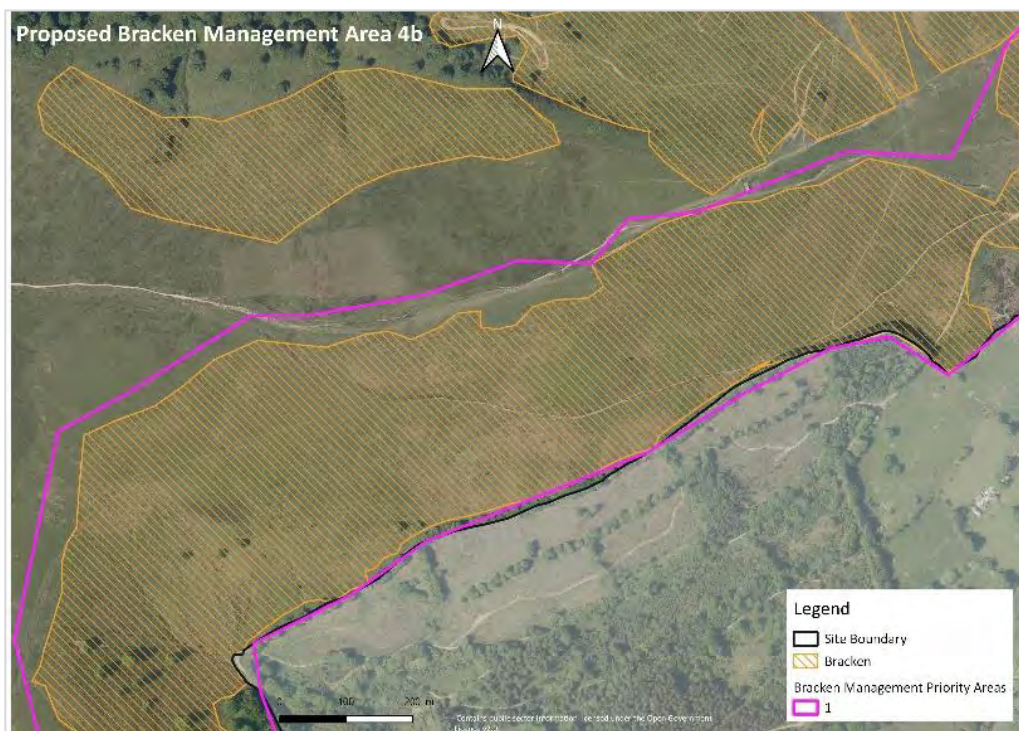


Fig 5.2.5 Proposed Bracken Management Area 3



**Fig 5.2.6 Proposed Bracken Management Area 4a Fig 5.2.7 Proposed Bracken Management Area 4c**



**Fig 5.2.8 Proposed Bracken Management Area 4b**

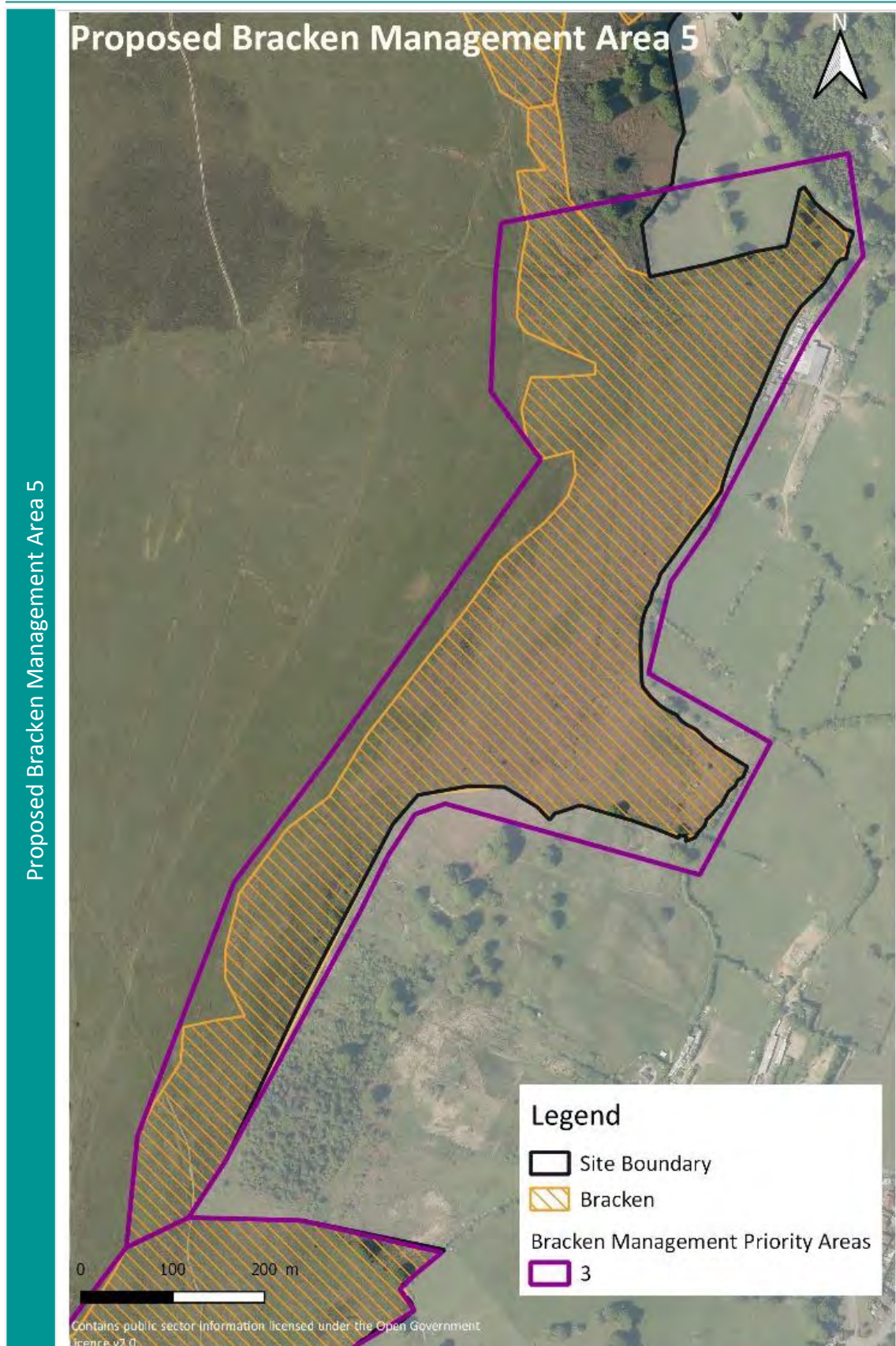
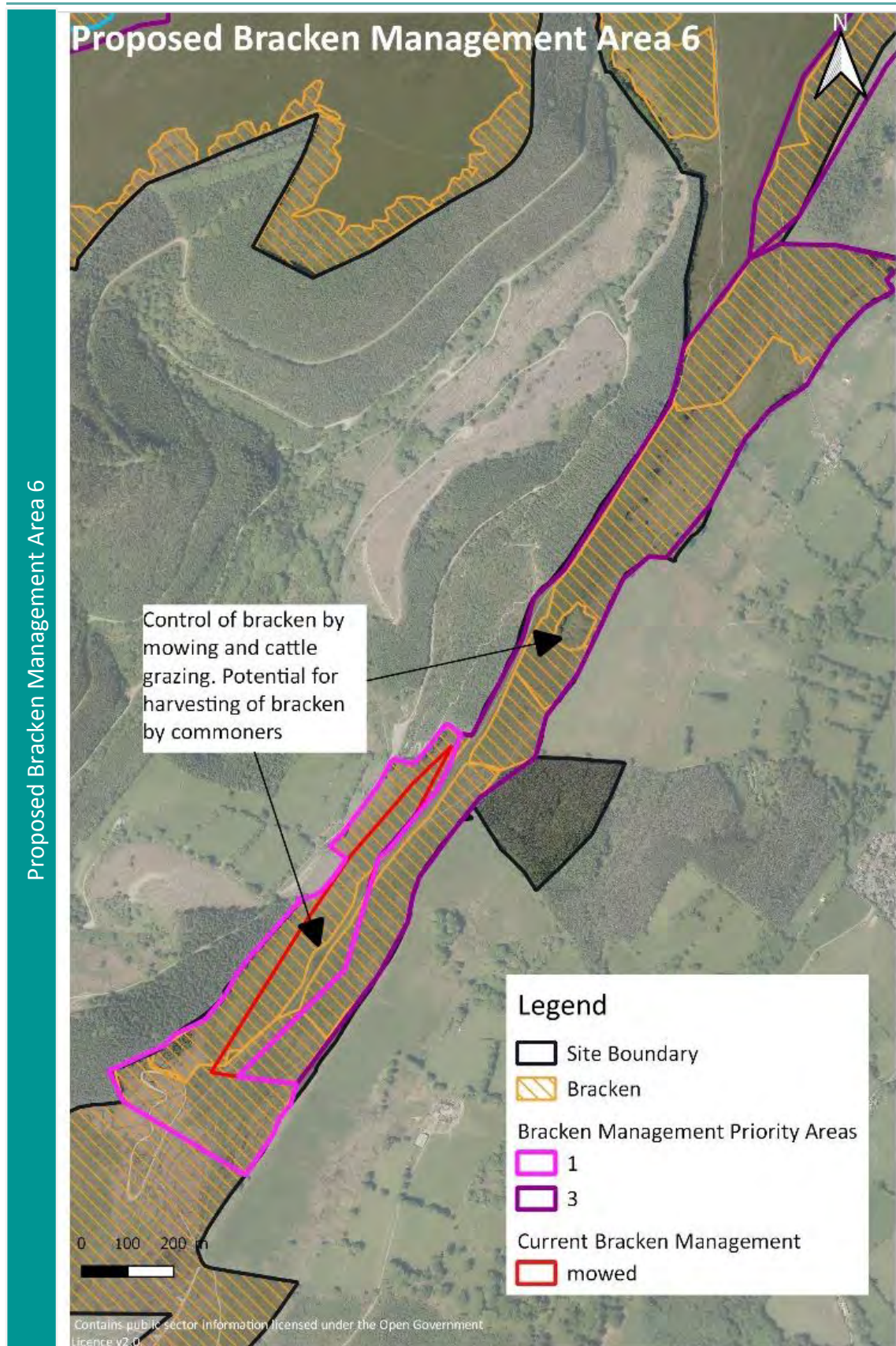
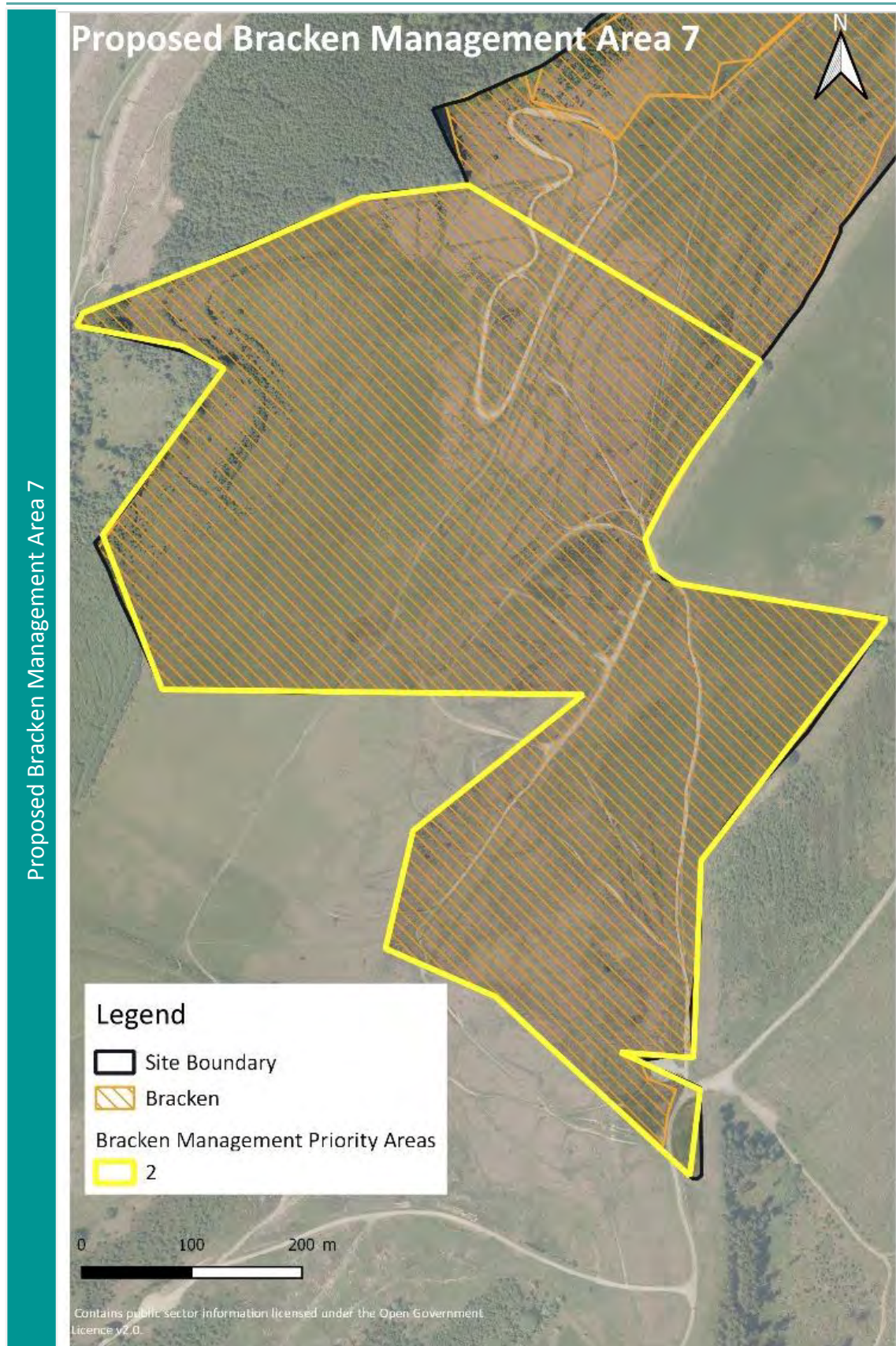


Fig 5.2.9 Proposed Bracken Management Area 5



**Fig 5.2.10 Proposed Bracken Management Area 6**



**Fig 5.2.11 Proposed Bracken Management Area 7**

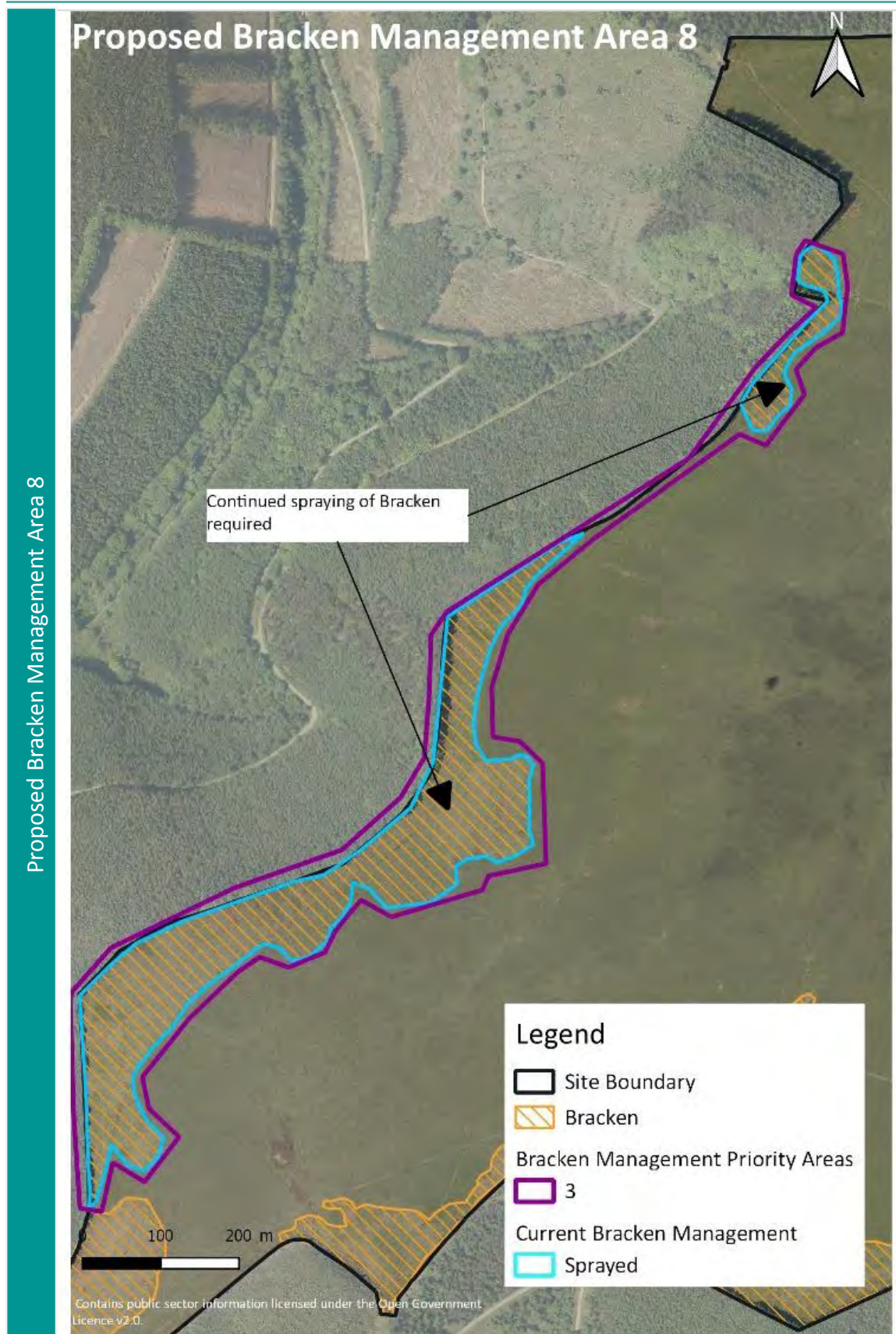


Fig 5.2.12 Proposed Bracken Management Area 8

## 5.4 Restoration and management of upland heathland (ECO 3)

NRMP Management Objective: Ecological Land Management and Wildlife Conservation

### Introduction



Heathland is a habitat of high ecological value which was once abundant in the wider landscape but is now in decline and is often in poor condition where it is still present. For this reason, it is afforded a high level of protection and is targeted for conservation and restoration under EU and National legislation and policy

Heathland on the Commons has reduced in extent and quality over the years, mainly due to changes in

land management such as a change from cattle to sheep grazing. Where it occurs, it is often in poor condition; a with over-mature 'leggy' heather dominating the habitat. Heathland within the commons currently provides a good resource for wildlife but improving its condition and increasing its cover would greatly enhance the biodiversity value of the Commons.

### Aims and Objectives

To restore heathland habitats to achieve the following:

- Improved current condition of heathland, making it more structurally diverse and suitable to support a range of species such as red grouse, lapwing and skylark, throughout all stages of their life cycles.
- Increased extent of heathland and greater connectivity between habitats
- Increased areas for livestock grazing to be used as part of ongoing management
- Change of livestock, with greater emphasis on cattle rather than sheep grazing
- Commoners given the skills, knowledge and accreditation to play a part in future heather management and contract work
- Increase economic viability of the Commons

### Current Management

The main areas of heather within Mynydd Maen are shown on the figure 5.3.1. The figure also shows the main areas of existing and proposed heather management.

The emphasis of existing heather management has been through the Glastir programme which funded a 3-year programme of heather management. Approximately 40 ha a year over the past 3 years (120ha in total) have been mechanically cut/mowed. Consideration was given to baling but none was done under the programme, although it would have been valuable in the restoration of heather on the Commons.

## Risk Appraisal

Heather management is a long-term activity. If it is not continued, the existing heather will become over-mature and will lose its value for livestock and wildlife, or areas will be colonised by invasive species such as bracken or feral trees, wasting time and effort.

Ongoing management can be done effectively through the implementation of an appropriate grazing regime, with an emphasis on cattle rather sheep grazing. External forces, such as funding issues and EU policy, have resulted in changes to stocking densities and livestock types, leading to a reliance on mechanical methods of management, which are costly and time consuming.

Heathland has increased fire risk compared to acid grassland, so could add to fire risk; fire breaks may help to manage these risks.

## Management Proposals for Heather

There are 6 areas proposed for heathland management within the Commons, as shown on figures 5.3.1-5.3.6. These areas are outlined individually together with the priority for management between 1-3. They have been identified to continue and reinforce the current control of bracken and restoration of heathland being carried out by the Commoners.

The proposed management areas are shown on the following plans and the areas are:

Management Area	Priority Area	Area (Ha)
1	3	58.47
2	2	35.54
3	1	66.12
4	2	74.77
5	3	11.16
6	3	45.08

This management plan relates to:

- Areas where there is existing heather which is over-mature and needs to be reinvigorated
- Areas of heather restoration, where coverage is currently limited, where bracken has encroached and is being managed through the bracken management plan or where it has been overgrazed
- Where appropriate heather should be managed for fire breaks in liaison with the fire service

A key factor in heathland restoration is correct stock rates. Overgrazing leads to a degradation of the heather resource but under-grazing will cause the heather plants to become straggly, over-mature and allow encroachment of invasive species.

#### Areas of over-mature heather:

- Where existing heather is over-mature, it needs to be managed through grazing or mechanical topping. Where grazing is not possible due to limits in stocking rates, it is recommended that mechanical topping is used.

- Continue and reinforce the current management through mowing on a 2-3 year cycle or annual grazing and monitor its effectiveness.
- Identify over-mature stands of heather and cut in patchwork mosaic of blocks c. 100m x 30m, managing a target total of 100 ha of existing heather per year.
- Where there is limited heather, scrape off soil to expose any seeds within the soil profile and lay heather brash collected in adjacent areas to provide a seed source.

**Heather restoration:**

- Target for restoring heathland from acid grassland / bracken is 20ha per year through the plan period.
- For heather restoration, the optimum starting vegetation is where dwarf shrubs still occur (but form less than 25% of the canopy), or acid grassland/heathland mosaics.
- In areas which have recently been heathland, it is likely that there is still an effective seed bank in the soil therefore disturbance of the soil or scraping off the topsoil could expose the seed bank. These areas should not be grazed until heather has established.
- For areas with very little seed bank, heather should be planted at 4 plants per square metre to provide good heather cover within five years. Planting of lower dwarf shrub frequencies will work but will take longer.
- For areas with no heather seed bank, spreading seed or heather cuttings/brash collected through the management of other areas in early autumn may be required. Machinery may need to be purchased or leased for seed collection.
- Sheep and cattle stocking densities will need be agreed for areas that are currently under- or over-grazed, to allow for the recovery and enhancement.

This management plan should be read in conjunction with the control of bracken as the key areas proposed for bracken management relate to the areas for heather restoration.

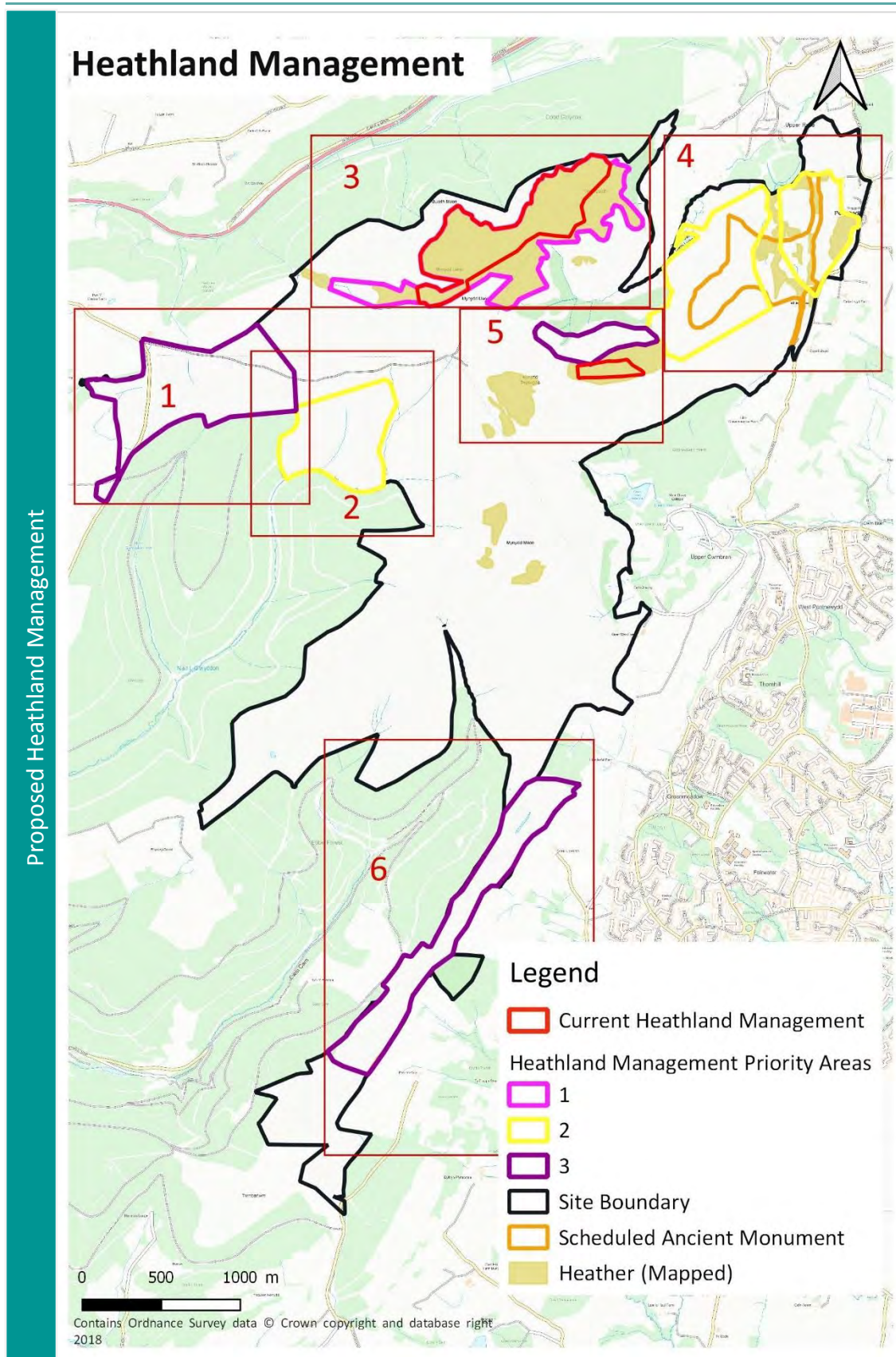
It is recommended that this plan is supported by training in heathland management and restoration which could be carried out through onsite management.

**Uses for heather:**

Baling should be considered if economically viable.

- Bales of cut heather could be used for heather restoration both on the Commons and elsewhere
- Heather dams or grip blocks can be used to slow the flow of water downstream, create wetland habitat and to trap sediment
- For areas of wet heathland and bog which have been drained, the drains can be blocked using heather bales which will also aid soil carbon storage.

AMP	<div data-bbox="325 271 1362 304">Associated Management Plans</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="325 327 608 360">■ Control of bracken</li><li data-bbox="325 376 635 409">■ Control of feral trees</li><li data-bbox="325 425 571 459">■ Bog restoration</li></ul>
R.G	<div data-bbox="325 548 1362 582">Relevant Guidance</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="325 600 1362 633">■ <a href="http://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/sites/default/files/Heather_Dams_AW.pdf">http://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/sites/default/files/Heather_Dams_AW.pdf</a></li></ul>



**Fig 5.3.1 Proposed Heathland Management Areas**

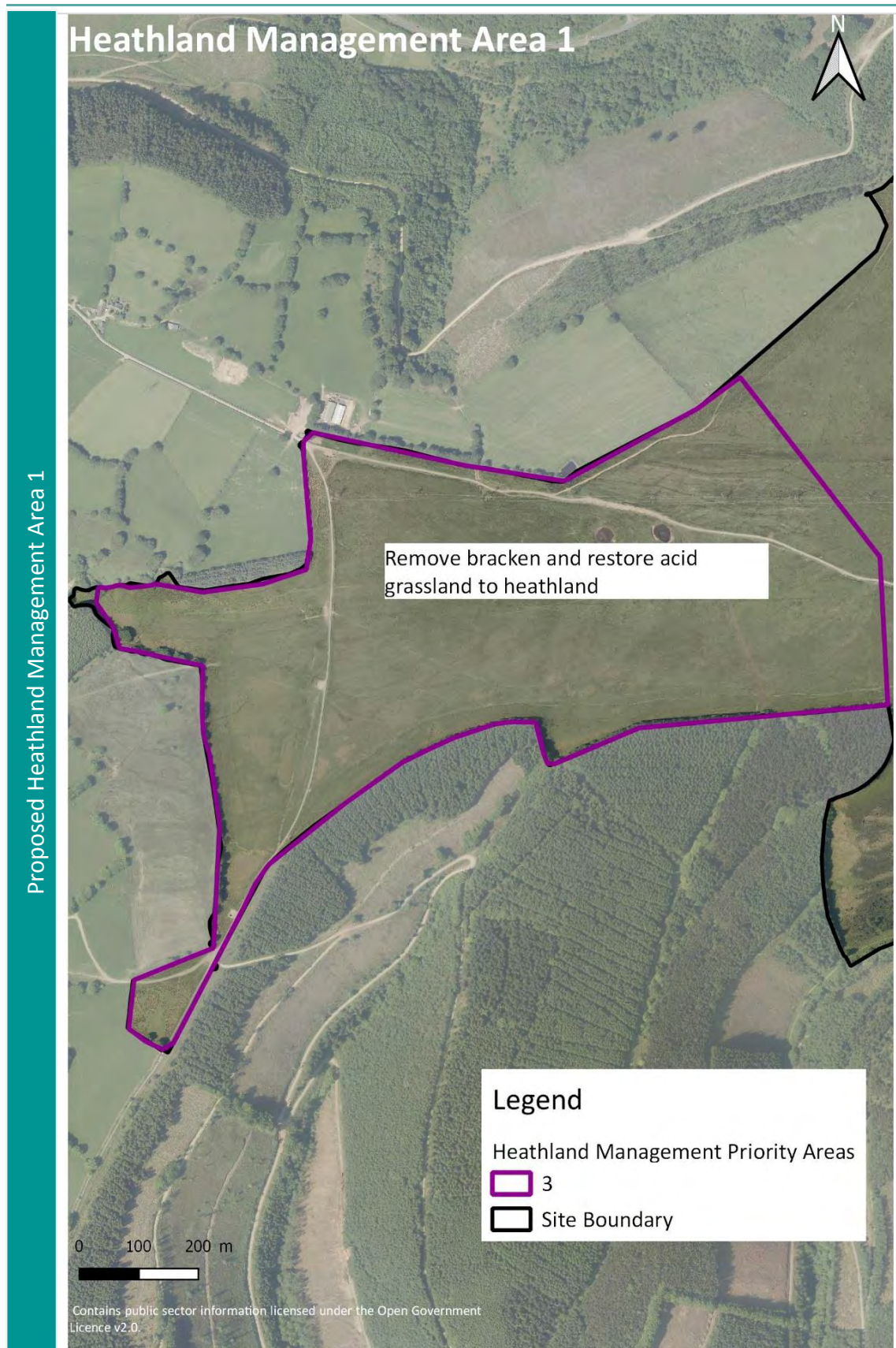


Fig 5.3.2 Proposed Heathland Management Area 1

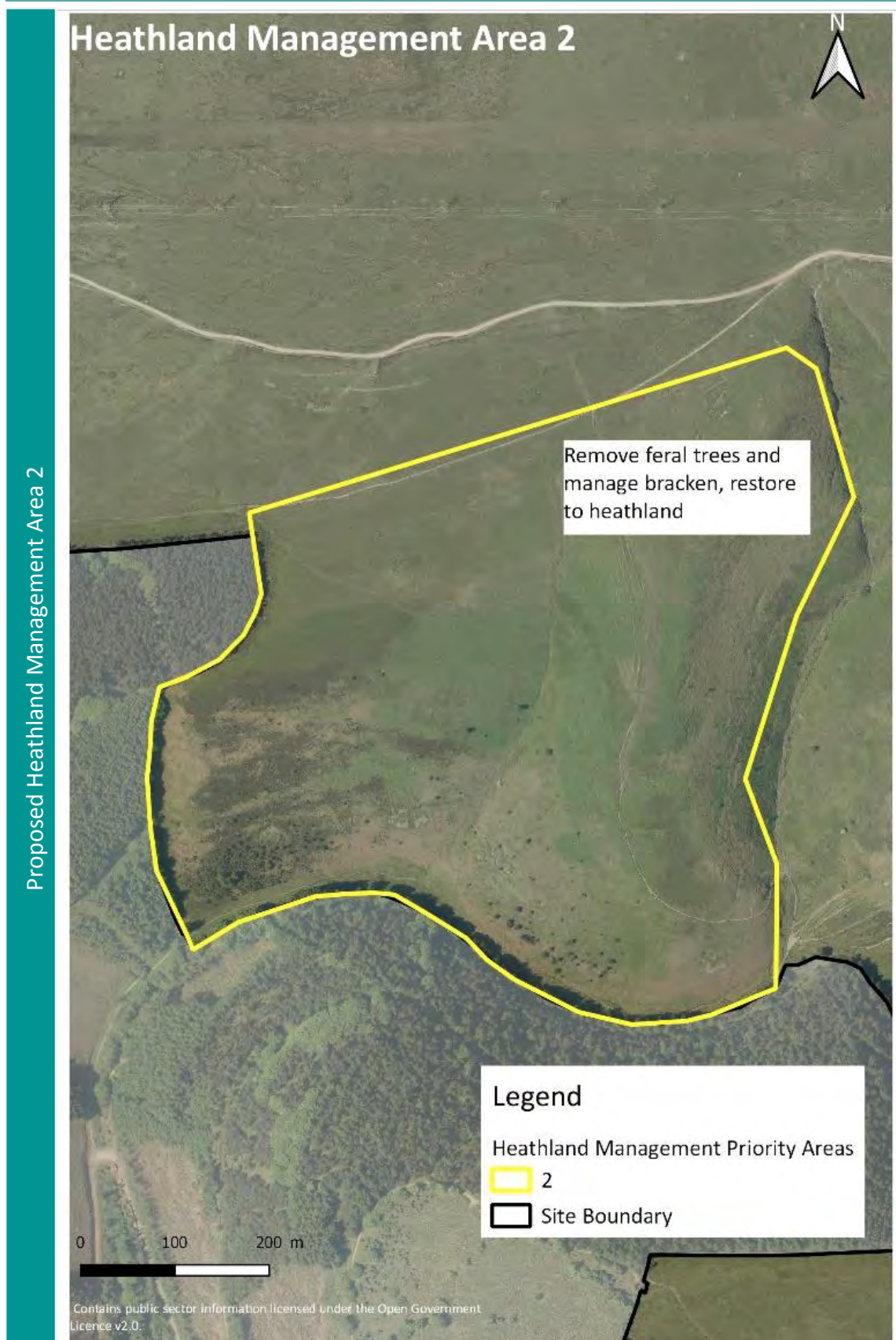
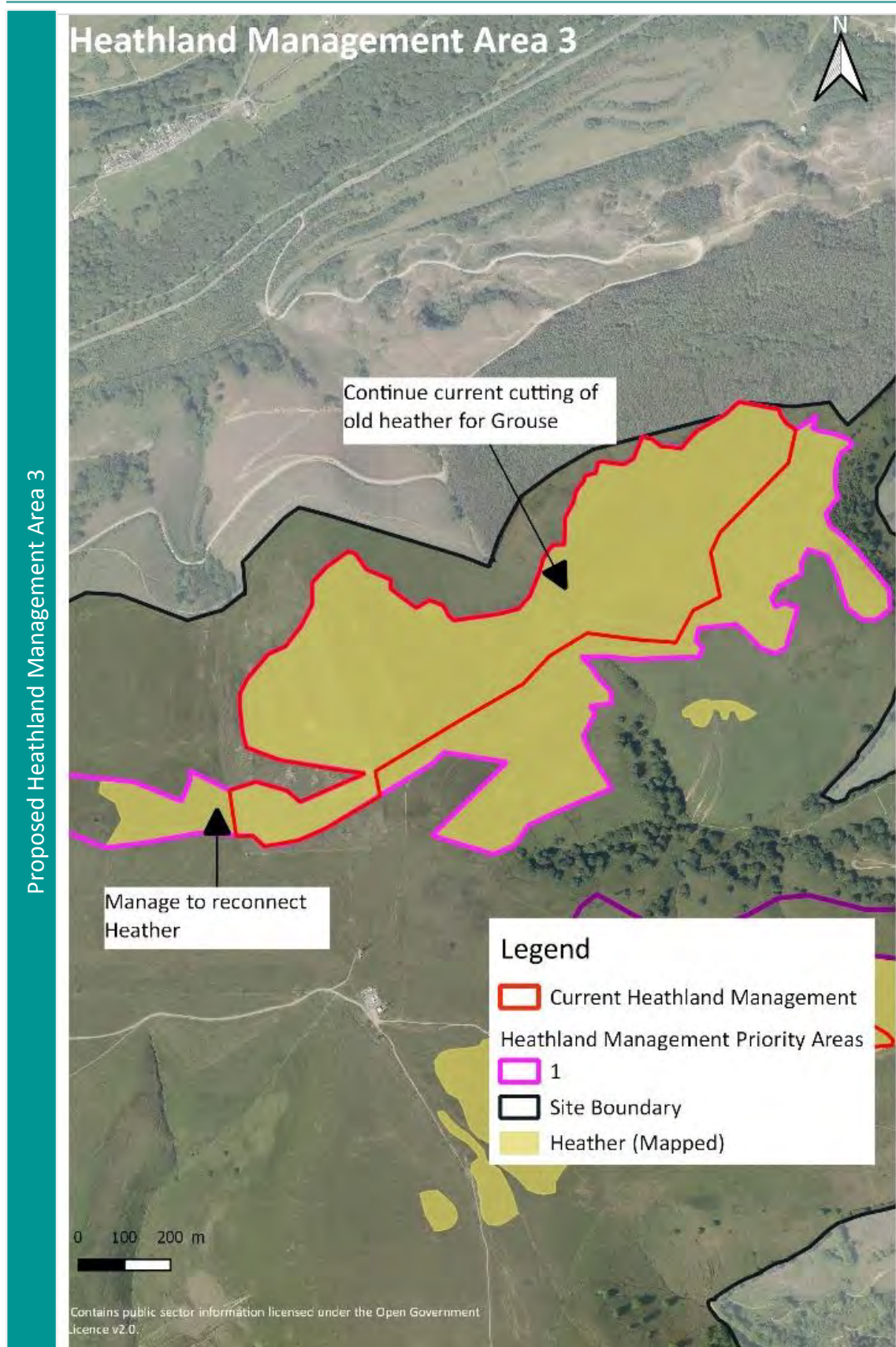


Fig 5.3.3 Proposed Heathland Management Area 2



**Fig 5.3.4 Proposed Heathland Management Area 3**

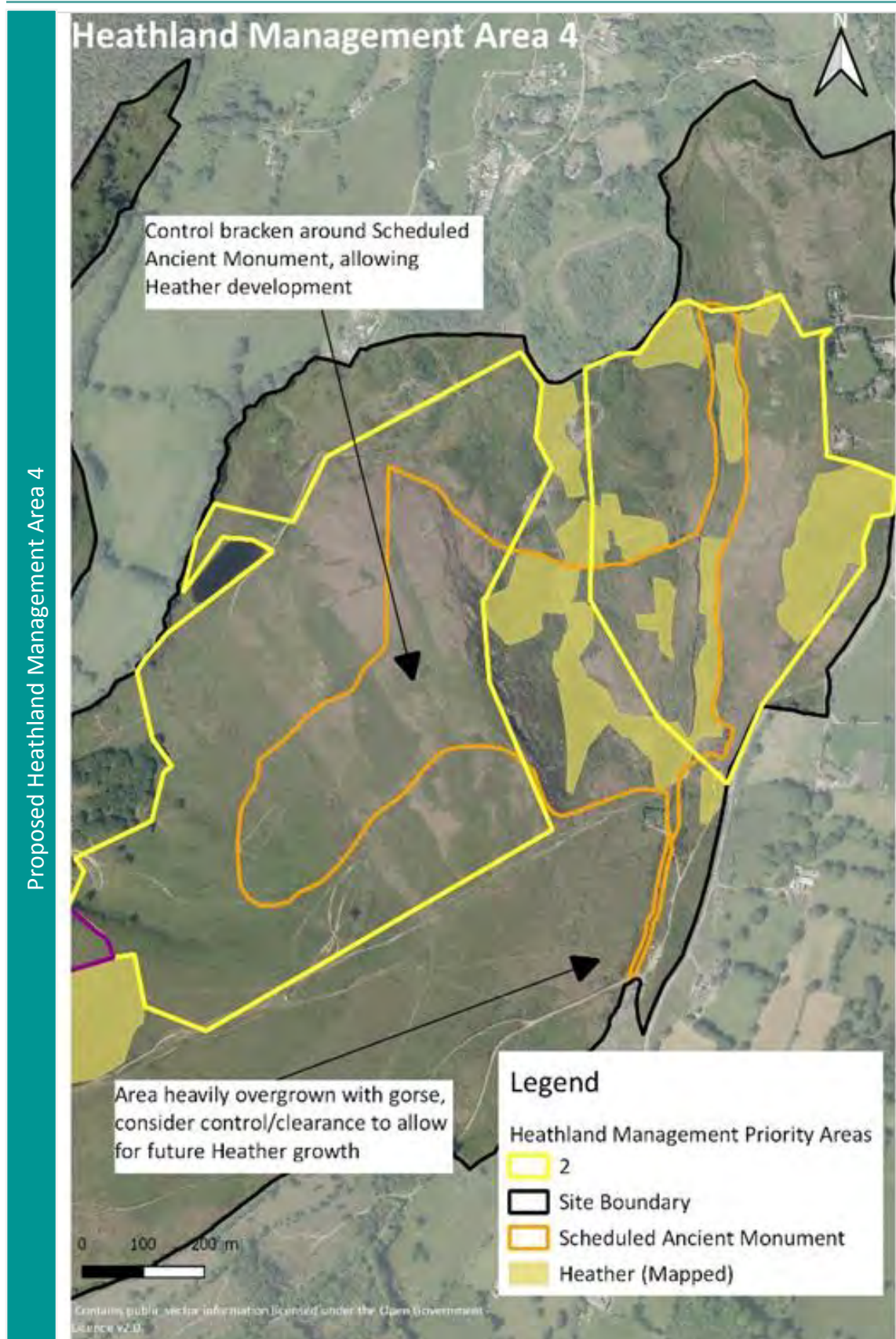


Fig 5.3.5 Proposed Heathland Management Area 4

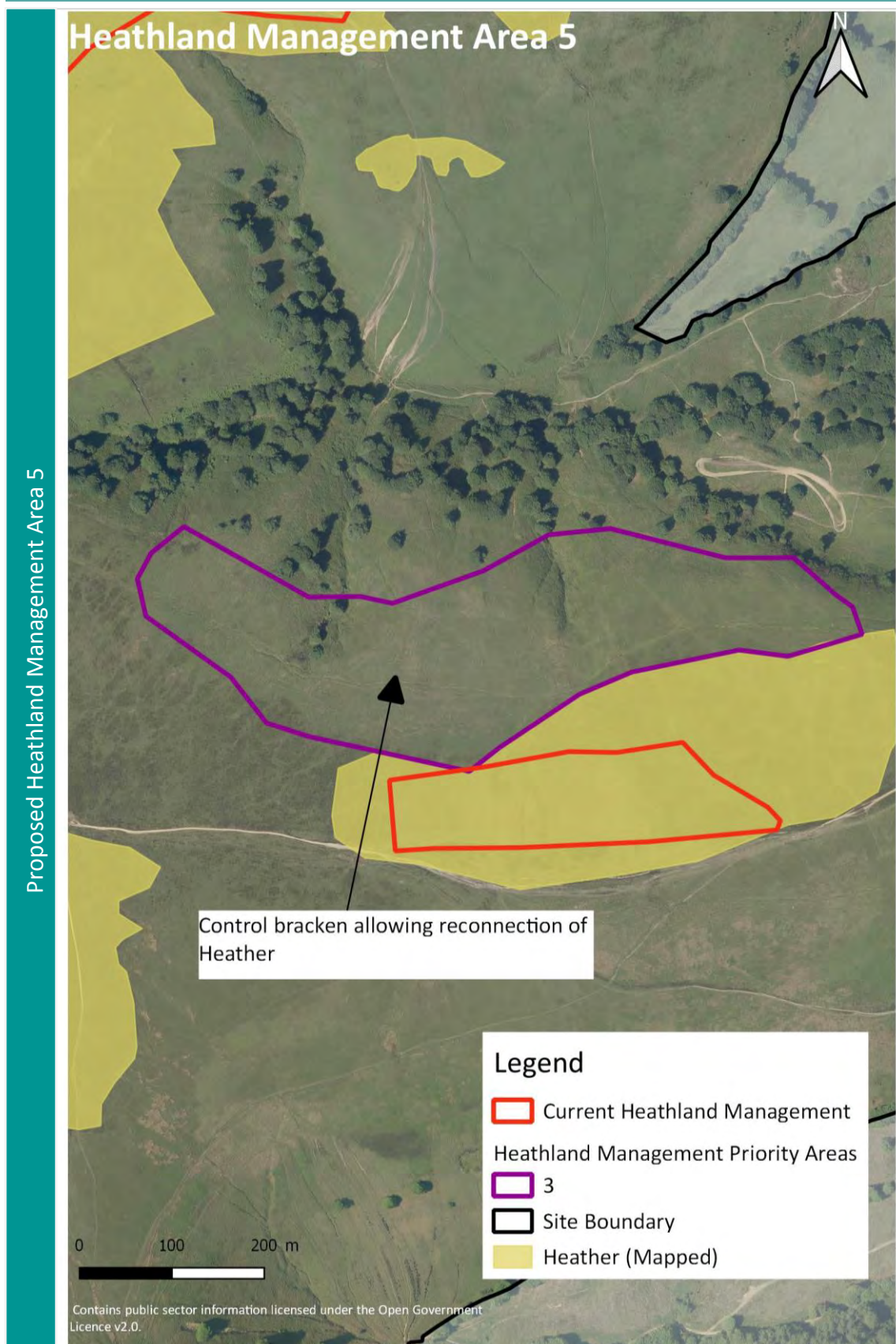
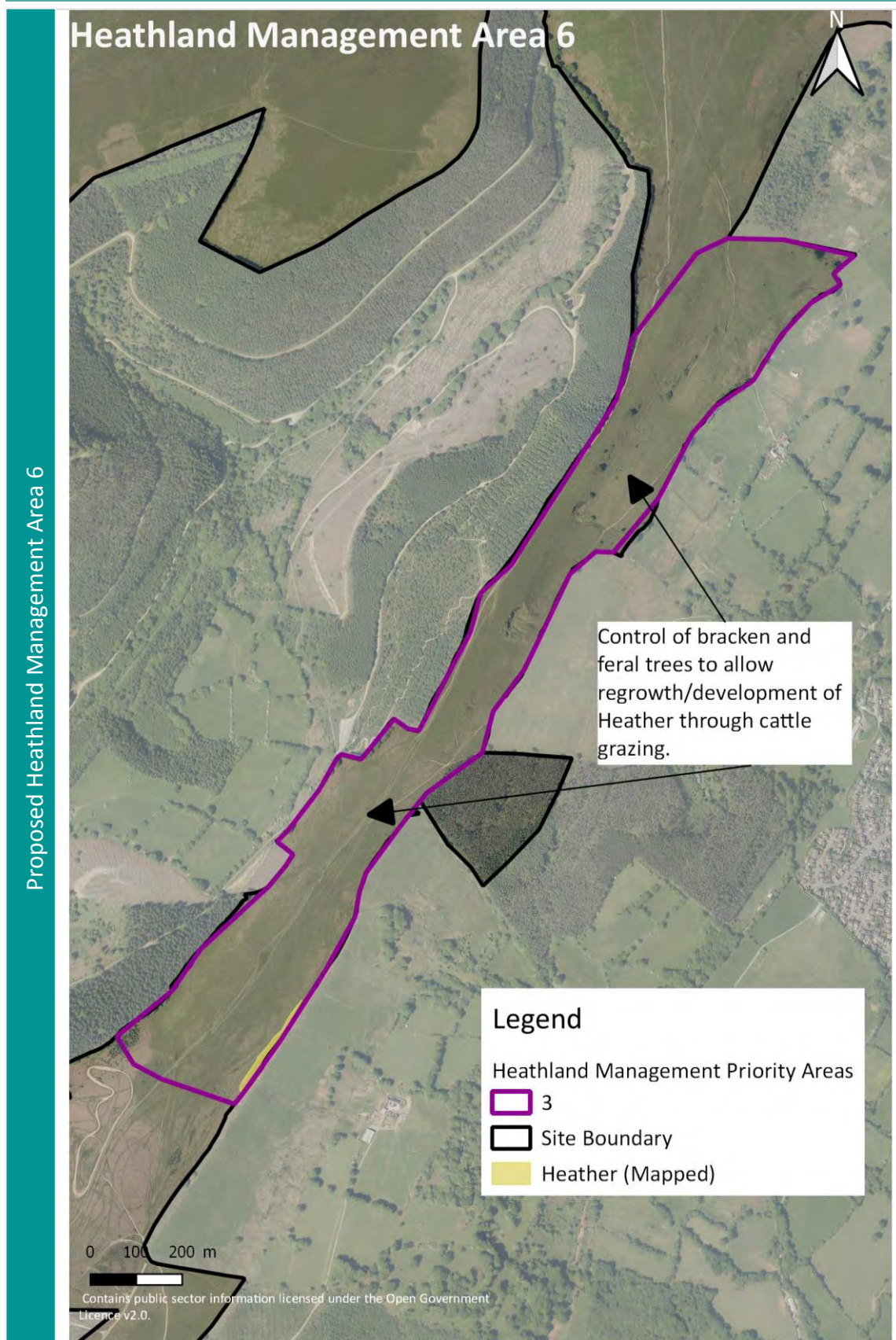


Fig 5.3.6 Proposed Heathland Management Area 5



**Fig 5.3.7 Proposed Heathland Management Area 6**

## 5.5 Control of Feral Trees (ELM2)

NRMP Management Objective: Economic Land Management and Conserving the Commons

### Introduction



Whilst bracken is the most widespread problem species on the commons, feral conifers are another, encroaching onto the Commons from adjacent forestry, with the resultant loss of grazing land.

In the absence of appropriate control and management, conifers will spread rapidly, smothering more sensitive habitats such as heathland and reducing the quality of grazing.

Conifer control is being carried out on Mynydd Maen Commons and is a good activity for young people, local farmers and volunteers, as it requires limited skills and can be carried out depending on resource available.

### Aims and Objectives

To control and eradicate feral trees, aiming to achieve the following:

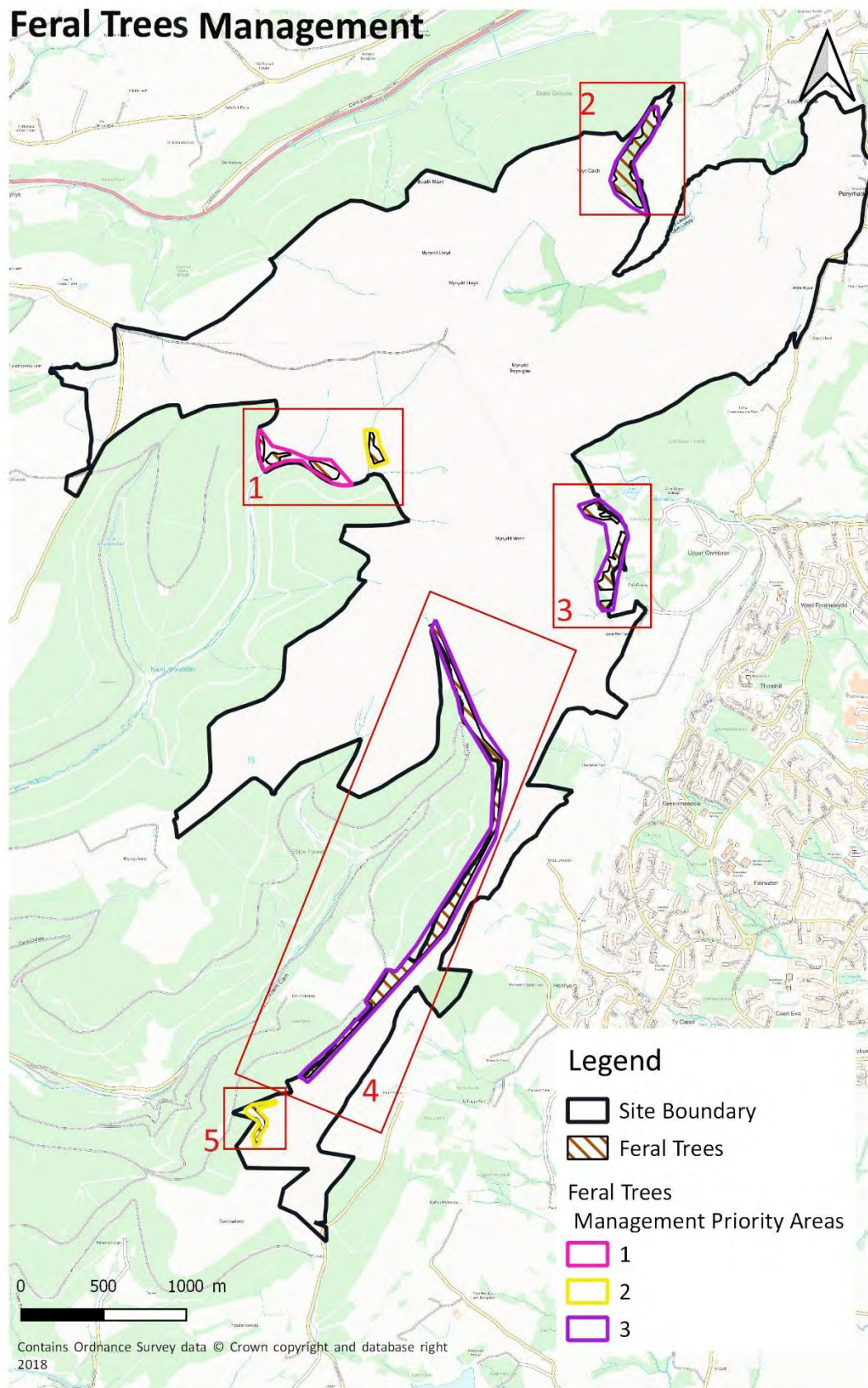
- Restoration of heathland and grassland habitats
- Improved landscape permeability and connectivity of priority habitats
- Increased populations of species associated with heathland and grassland habitats, particularly red grouse, skylark and lapwing
- Improved grazing conditions
- Use of stock as part of ongoing management
- Commoners and volunteers gain the skills and work to improve the Commons

### C.M

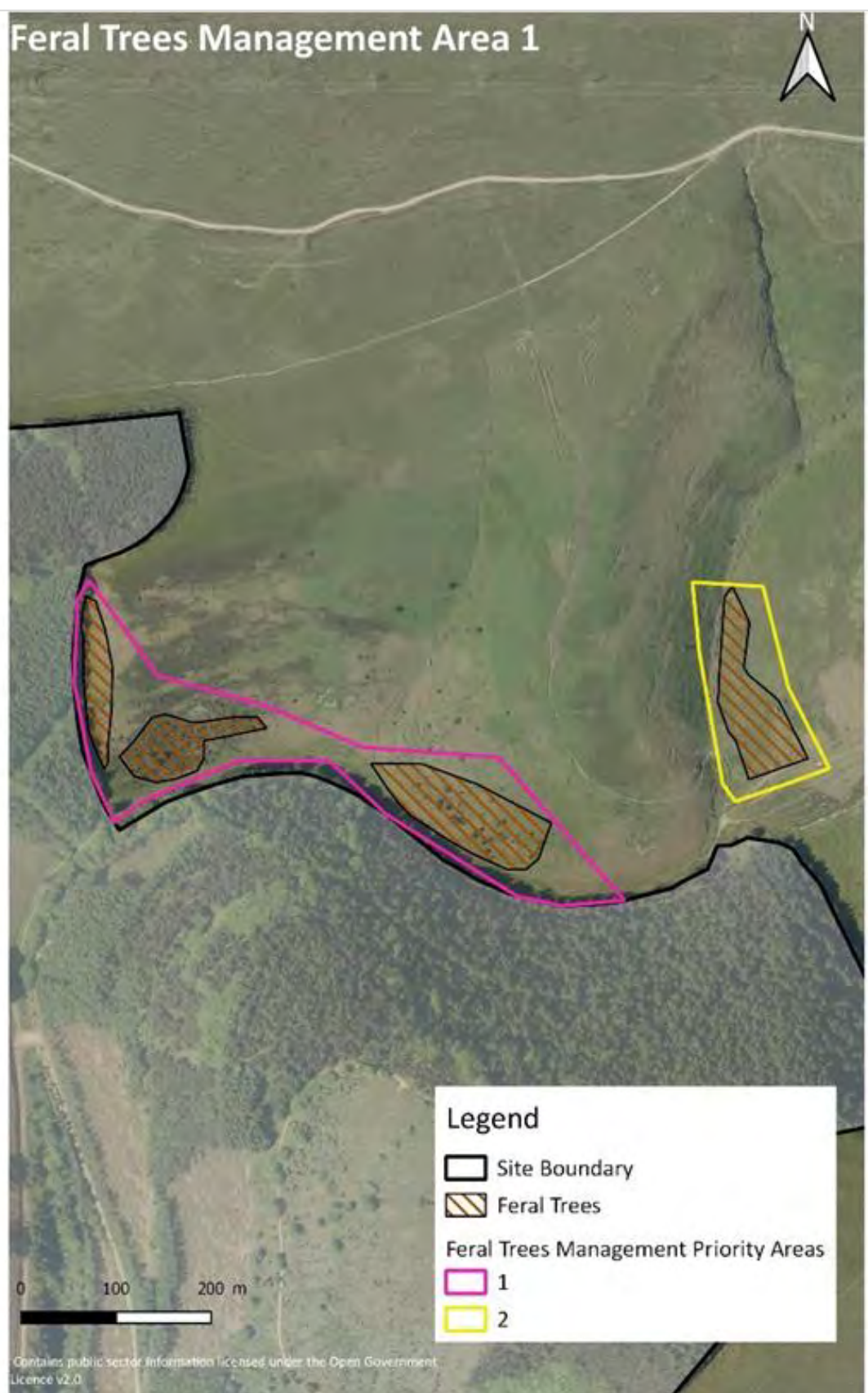
#### Current Management

Very little management of feral trees is currently being carried out by the Commoners, mainly due to funding issues. A mangling machine would help remove the trees effectively but clearly this would be costly and not covered by Glastir.

Risk Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where areas have been cleared it is important to continue management which can be done effectively through grazing, particularly by cattle.</li> <li>Reduced stocking rates required through funding streams such as Glastir result in under capacity to effectively maintain these areas, resulting in added costs of mechanical management.</li> <li>Control measures for most invasive plants, e.g. cutting and burning, have some inherent health and safety risks. These risks will be minimised through appropriate training and the use of suitable personal protective equipment (PPE).</li> <li>It is recommended that felling is carried out outside of the bird nesting season February – August. However as these are generally young trees the likelihood of bird nesting is limited. If work is undertaken during the bird nesting season it is recommended that trees are checked for nesting birds within 48 hours of felling</li> </ul>
Management Proposals for Feral Trees	<p>There are 5 areas for proposed management within the Commons as shown on Figures 5.4.1-5.4.6 below. These areas have been identified to continue and reinforce the current activities carried out by the Commoners, create connectivity between areas of heathland and grassland to improve the biodiversity of the overall Commons.</p> <p>The main methods of control include mangling and chain saws. It is recommended that a mangling machine is used to action this management plan effectively and efficiently. Consideration should be given to sharing machinery with the local Authorities and / or other Commons. Young trees &lt;5ft can be pulled or cut down without the need for a chain saw.</p> <p>It is proposed that up to 100 self-seeded conifers (&gt;5ft) be removed per year. Each tree will be felled from the base. All branches with cones/seeds should be removed from the site and deposited within the conifer plantation. Where brash has no cones or seeds it can be retained onsite. Uses for materials could include firewood, crafts or mulching to improve the organic matter within soils in or adjacent to the Commons. Alternatively, the material could be left in-situ as habitat piles.</p> <p>Volunteers could be used to assist in controlling these trees, as long as they are organised and directed by a qualified person. This could be done through the Hill Farming training scheme.</p> <p>Once feral trees have been removed, ongoing maintenance, ideally by livestock but also by mowing, will be required to ensure that seedlings do not establish.</p> <p>It is recommended that consultation continues with Natural Resources Wales, who are responsible for the management of the plantations that surround the Commons.</p>
AMP	<p><b>Associated Management Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bracken control</li> <li>Restoration of heather</li> </ul>



**Fig 5.4.1 Proposed Areas of Feral Trees Management**



**Fig 5.4.2 Proposed Feral Trees Management Area 1**

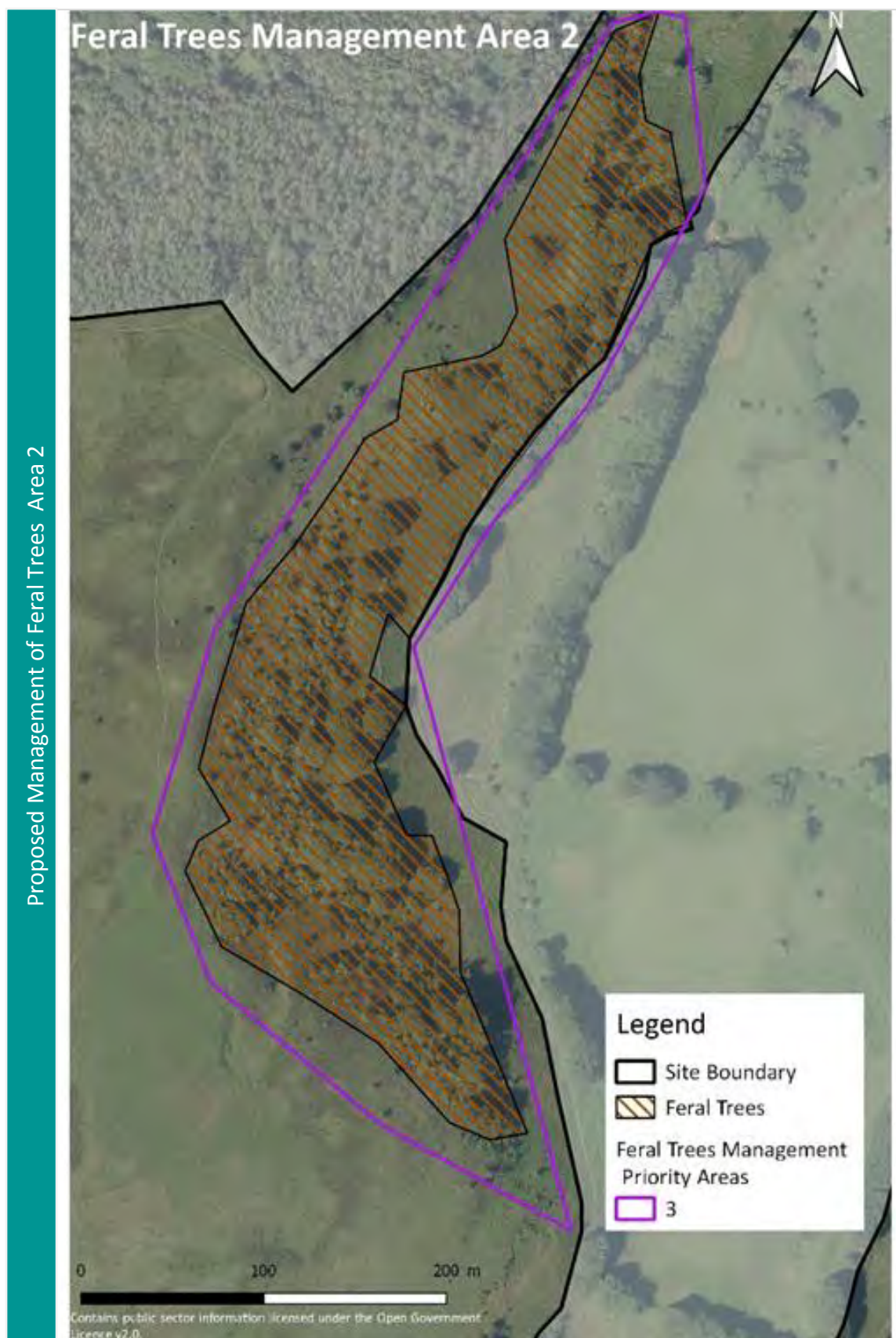


Fig 5.4.3 Proposed Feral Trees Management Area 2

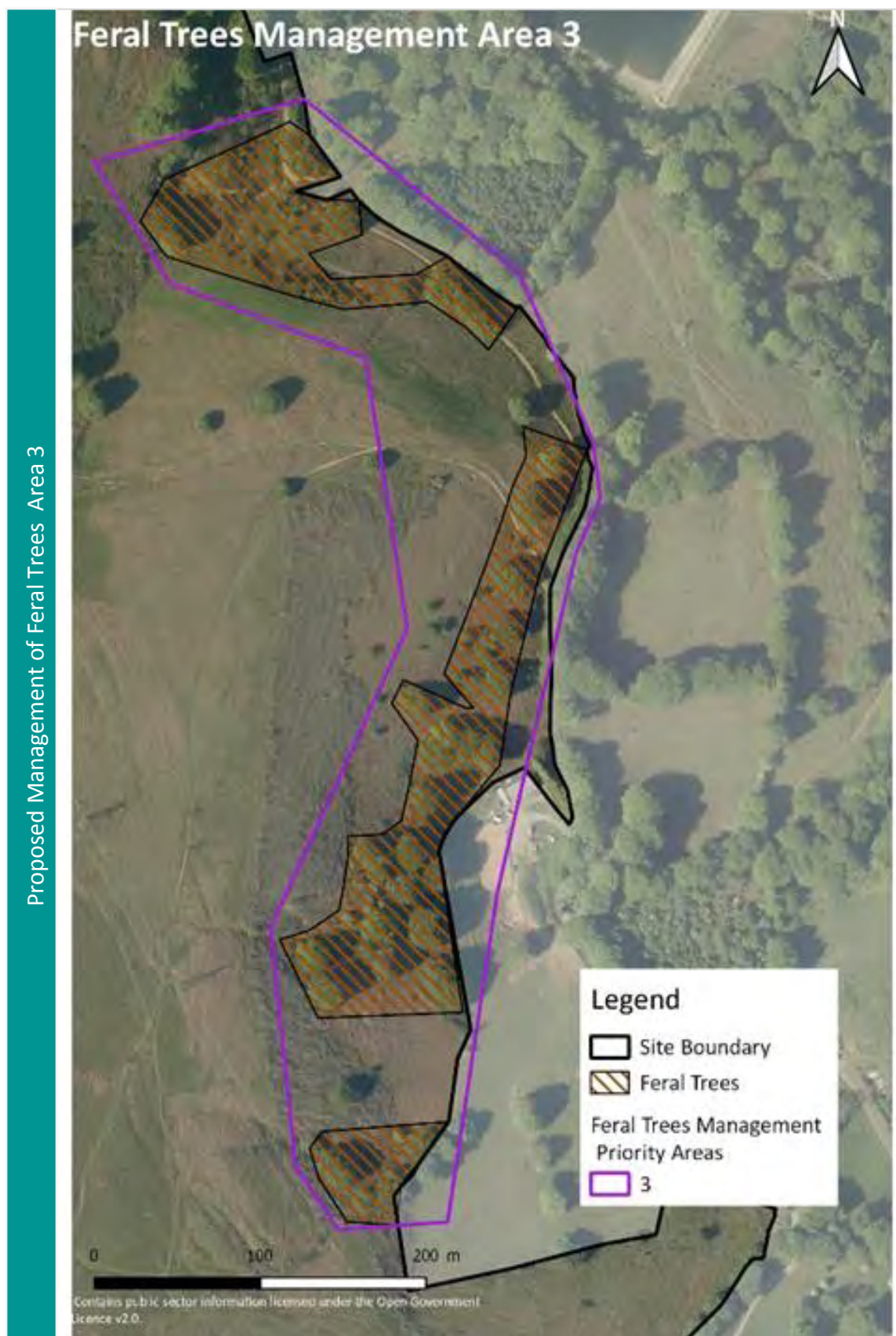


Fig 5.4.4 Proposed Feral Trees Management Area 3

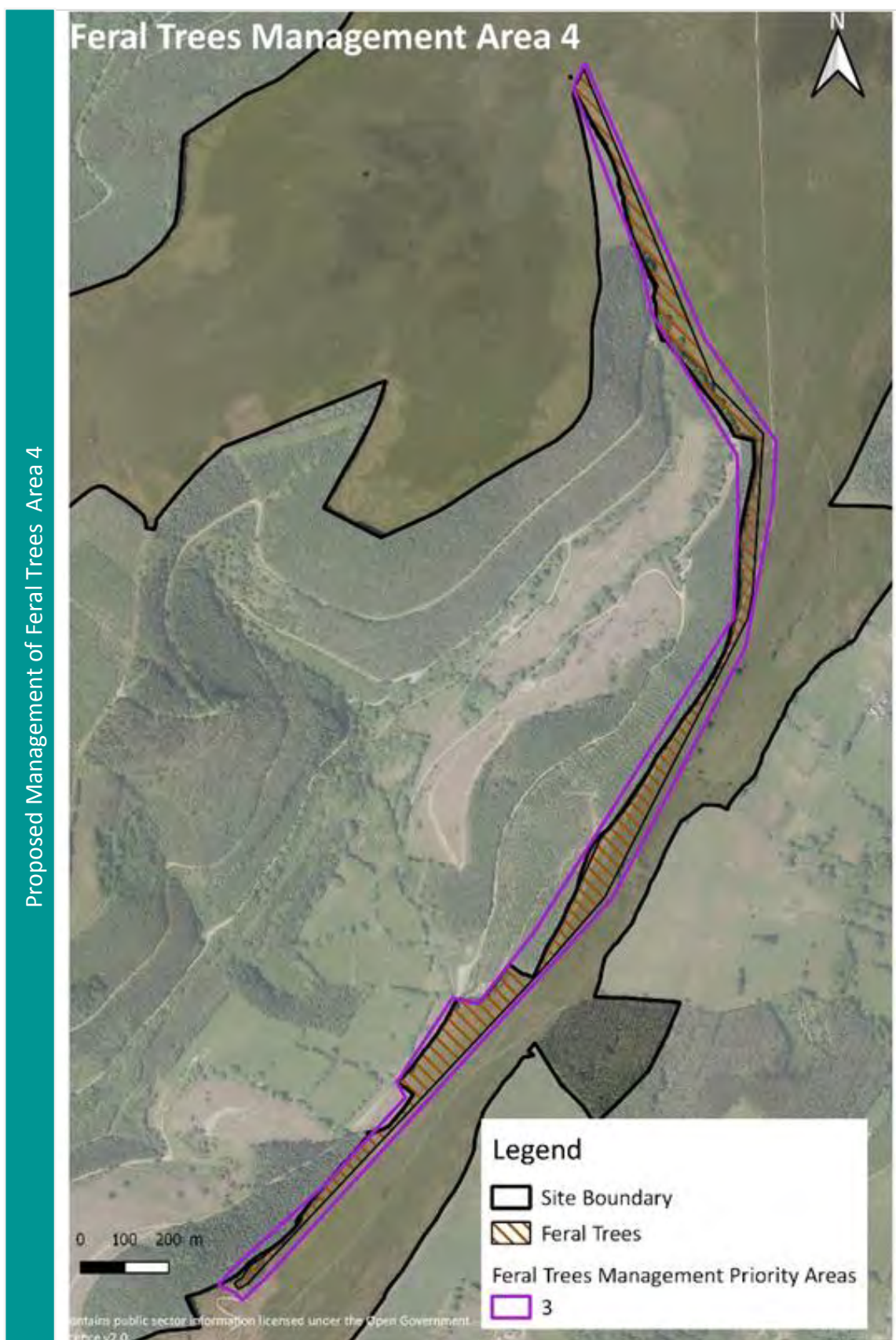
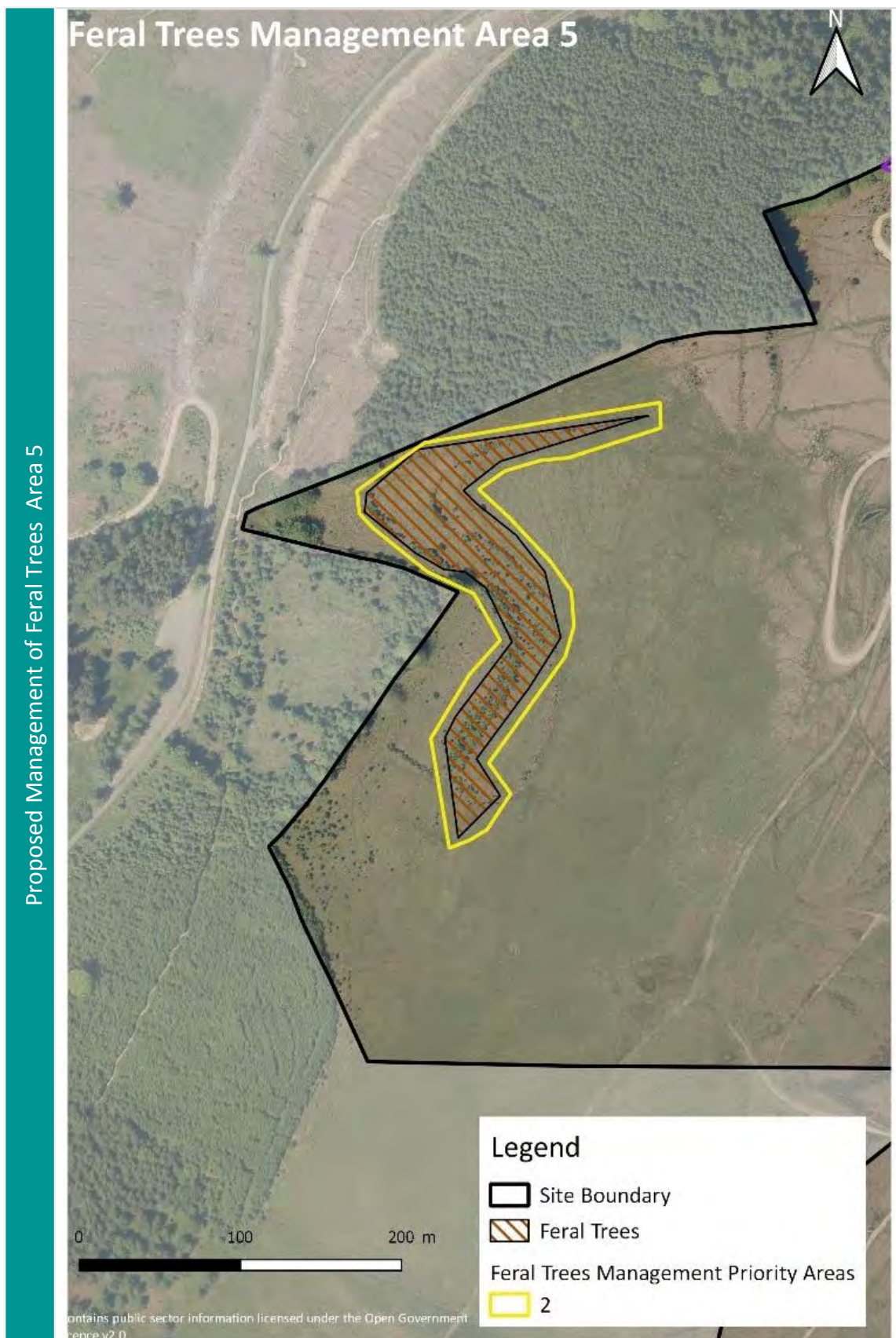


Fig 5.4.5 Proposed Feral Trees Management Area 4



**Fig 5.4.6 Proposed Feral Trees Management Area 5**

## 5.6 Boundary repair and restoration (ELM3)

NRMP Management Objective: Economic Land Management and Conserving the Commons

### Introduction



The boundaries on the Commons were originally demarcated by stone walls, but recently many of these have fallen into disrepair and are no longer stock-proof. The lack of stock-proof boundaries makes the reintroduction of livestock difficult.

Boundary features are important in terms management such as control of bracken and livestock diversification and the control of landscape crime.

Dry stone walls provide a good habitat for wildlife especially reptiles, wild bees and invertebrates.

Weaknesses in boundary features can encourage the illegal use of off-roading vehicles, which is a problem on the Commons. Additionally, there is concern about the condition of fencing between common land and forestry land, and whether NRW would continue to maintain these fences. Maintenance of boundary fences and walls on the Commons is the responsibility of adjacent land owners (not the commoners who graze the commons).

Boundary management is particularly relevant for encouraging interest by the general public and local volunteers. Potential for partnering with Groundwork Wales and other organisations that focus on rural skills development.

### Aims

The aims of boundary repairs and restoration action plan are to achieve the following:

- Restoration of dry stone walls along the boundaries to allow controlled grazing on heathland, grassland and bracken
- Enhanced aesthetic and ecological value of the landscape by restoring traditional boundary features
- Antisocial behaviour such as the use of off-roading vehicles made more difficult
- Other boundaries secured through the use of post and wire fencing or restoration of hedges where appropriate
- Volunteers trained in traditional skills such as dry stone walling and hedge laying

## Current Management

The study area has been surveyed to assess the condition of boundary features. This was carried out by the Commoners and they have prepared a dry-stone walling plan for the next 5 years.

Priority areas have been selected for dry-stone wall building/repair/restoration based on the results of surveys, targeting key areas for conserving or restoring heathland, controlling bracken and discouraging the use of off-roading vehicles.

## Risk Appraisal

- There is a significant risk that repaired boundaries may be vandalised, particularly in areas with known off-road vehicle problems.
- Potential for health and safety issues during restoration works, especially if volunteers are doing the work or they are being used for training days. They should be carried out under the supervision of experienced personnel.

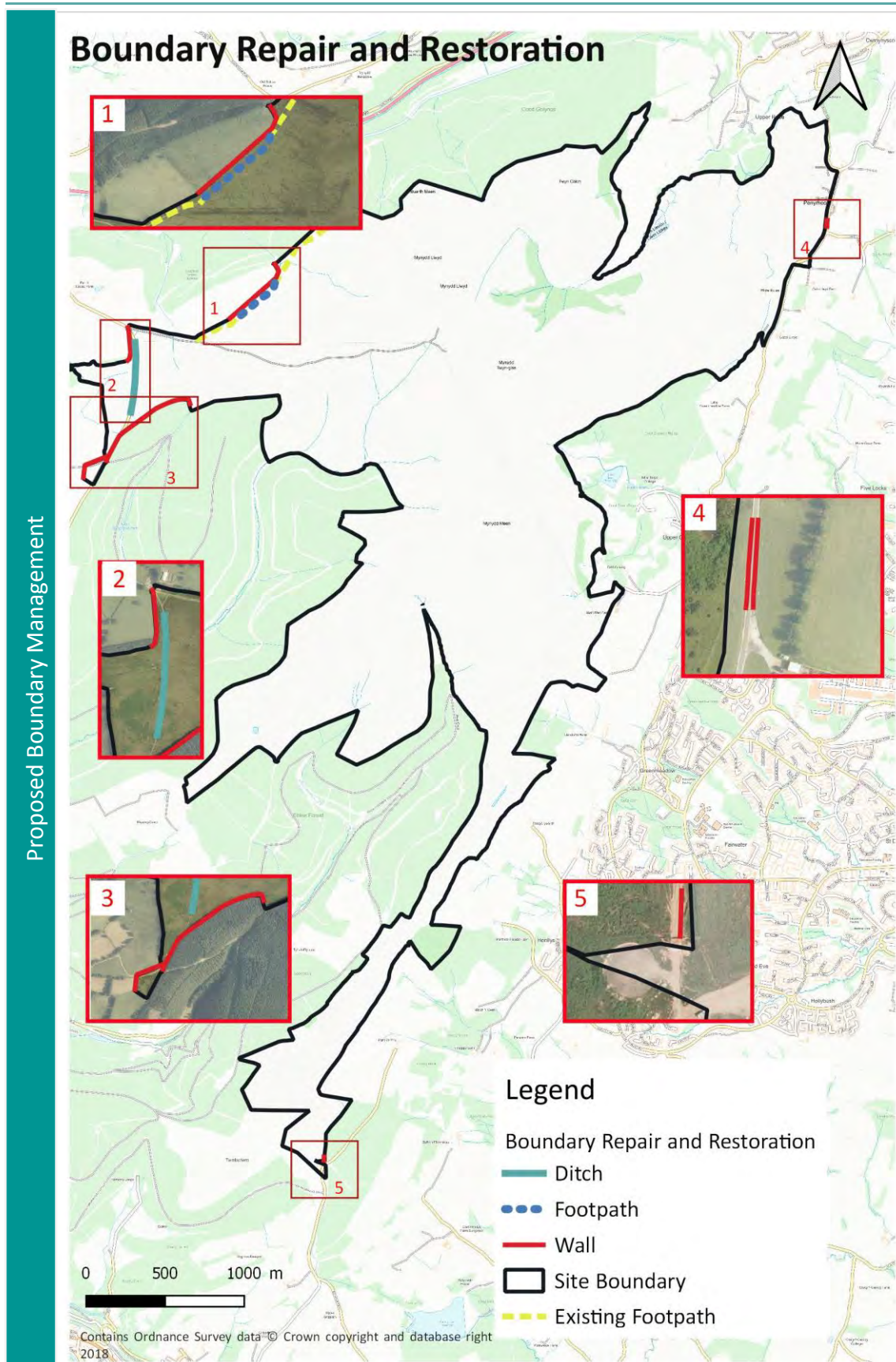
## Management Proposals for Boundaries

There are 5 areas for proposed boundary management within the Commons which include repair and extension to dry stone walls, repair and improvement of footpaths and ditches. Refer to Fig 5.5.1 below.

Restoring boundaries will improve the general condition of the commons and make it more viable.

- The Commoners Association aim to restore at least 100 metres of dry stone wall per year along the Commons boundaries.
- Where stone walls are in reasonable condition or most of the stone is still in situ, these should be restored. This may be used as a training exercise for commoners and volunteers who want to learn this traditional skill.
- Where boundary walls are in very poor repair or very few stones remain, boundaries should be made temporarily secure using post and wire fencing.
- Where boundaries are hedges, these should be assessed for condition and managed appropriately. New tree planting using native stock is recommended.
- In some areas, ditch repair is required to reduce issues of erosion.
- Organised working parties and volunteer groups could be encouraged to help undertake this management and gain new skills whilst working outside.
- Training opportunities should be identified to train young commoners and local interested parties in traditional skills – refer to the management plan for sustainable tourism

AMP	<p><b>Associated Management Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Heather management</li> <li>■ Control of feral trees</li> <li>■ Farm diversification – sustainable tourism and recreation</li> </ul>
R.G	<p><b>Relevant Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Groundwork Wales - <a href="https://www.groundwork.org.uk/sites/wales">https://www.groundwork.org.uk/sites/wales</a></li> <li>■ Prince's Trust - <a href="https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/">https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/</a></li> <li>■ Farming Connect - <a href="https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/">https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/</a></li> </ul>



**Fig 5.5.1 Proposed Boundary Management Areas**

## 5.7 Pond Creation and Restoration (EC07)

NRMP Management Objective: Economic Land Management and Conserving the Commons

### Introduction



Ponds are defined as a body of water between 1 m<sup>2</sup> and 2 ha which holds water for four months of the year or more.

Ponds have significant benefits on the Commons for wildlife by providing aquatic habitat and providing water sources for livestock and wildlife, whilst

also enhancing ecosystem services in terms of water retention in the uplands.

Construction of ponds on common land may require consent and there are potential public health and safety considerations with large water bodies.

### Aims and Objectives

The main aim for pond creation and restoration is to achieve the following:

- Increased freshwater biodiversity across the Commons
- Retention of more water within the Commons
- Provision of more drinking sites for livestock
- Resources to help alleviate flood risk in lowland areas

### C.M

#### Current Management

Two ponds have been restored under Glastir on Mynydd Maen Commons. New ponds have been dug by the Commoners primarily as watering points for livestock. NRW paid for restoring one pond to the east of the Commons (shown as 1 on Fig 5.6.1). This is a sluice pond which is hundreds of years old but CADW have objected to works on it and this still required negotiation.

### Risk Appraisal

- Pond creation may require consent from NRW or the local authorities
- Wet areas are reported to attract 4x4 vehicle users
- Co-ordination and dissemination of management information is important for maximizing the biodiversity potential of pond creation.

Management Proposals for Pond Creation	<p>The Commoners have identified a number of ponds that require restoration and extension as well as areas where ponds should be created, refer to figure 5.6.1.</p> <p>Ponds should be created as shown on Figure 5.6.1 with associated scrapes for livestock watering and also to enhance biodiversity, especially connectivity for Great Crested Newt and other aquatic species. It is recommended that techniques outlined in “Freshwater Habitats Trust” Pond Creation Toolkit or the Froglife Advice Sheet ‘Just Add Water’ (2014) are followed.</p> <p>It would be beneficial to have sloped and undulating edges to the pond, to create a range of topography suitable for a variety of species.</p> <p>Ongoing management around ponds is required. Scrub needs to be cleared to leave as much of the ponds open and unshaded as possible.</p> <p>Restore in-filled or overgrown ponds; the best practice method is to scrape out the sediment from most of the pond leaving some as a reservoir for wildlife and place the silt carefully so as not to runoff into the pond or water courses or affect adjacent important habitat.</p> <p>Where the geology and soils are suitable, it is recommended that small shallow scrapes and temporary ponds are created as well as larger ponds.</p>
AMP	<p><b>Associated Management Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bog Restoration</li> <li>■ Heathland management</li> </ul>
R.G	<p><b>Relevant Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Freshwater Habitats Trust” Pond Creation Toolkit. <a href="https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/">https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/</a></li> <li>■ Froglife Advice Sheet ‘Just Add Water’ (2014) <a href="https://www.froglife.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/JAW2014-for-printing-HLF1.pdf">https://www.froglife.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/JAW2014-for-printing-HLF1.pdf</a></li> </ul>

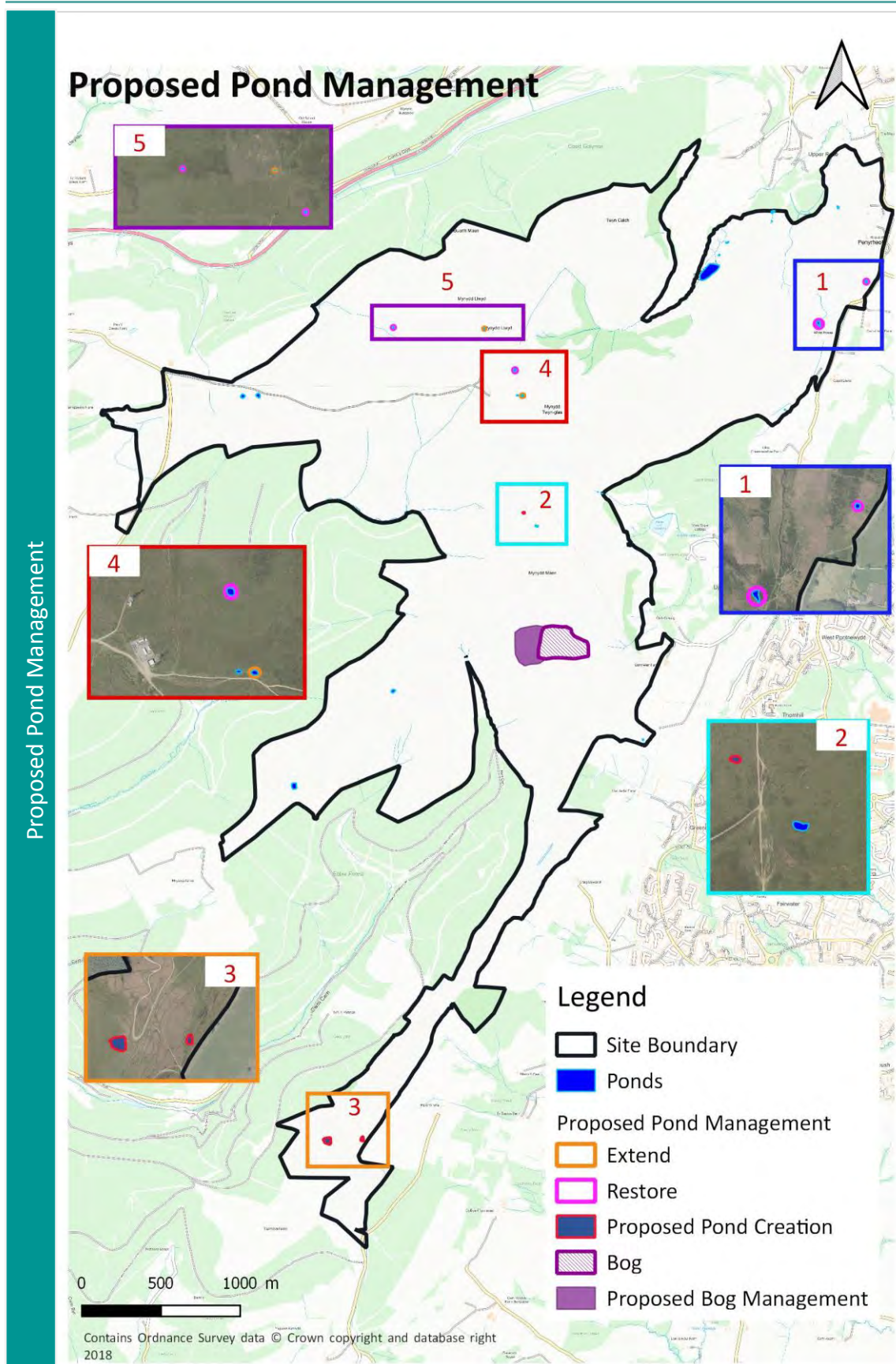


Fig 5.6.1 Proposed Pond Management Areas

## 5.8 Bog Restoration (ECO1)

NRMP Management Objective: Economic Land Management and Conserving the Commons

### Introduction



Mynydd Maen has several small patches of bog, but these are quite dry, with an absence of the sphagnum mosses required to keep it functioning as a bog. Changes to hydrological regimes are the main cause of bog degradation, caused by drainage, past peat cutting, development and potentially the installation of a gas main, off-road vehicles and artificially steep surface gradients which promote

water loss. Lack of (or unsuitable) grazing management is a further key issue. This can cause changes to the hydrology, vegetation, and physical structure of the bog, leading to desiccation, oxidation and loss of species or changes in the balance of the species composition. In contrast to active raised bogs, peat is not currently forming in degraded bog.

Peat bogs provide important ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration and flood alleviation, which is an important environmental reason for restoring them. Marshy grassland and wet heath may also occur over peaty soils up to 0.5 m deep (0.5 m is the dividing line for classification as peat bogs) and these may also be important for storing carbon and retaining water in the uplands.

### Aims and Objectives

The main aims for restoring bog on Mynydd Maen are to achieve the following:

- Re-wetting and restoration of the main peat bog on the commons and the extension under the road
- Enhance the biodiversity value of peat bog as a habitat in its own right and for species such as red grouse, lapwing, and skylark
- Climate change regulation through carbon accumulation and storage and reversing the oxidization and release of carbon from dry degrading peat
- Water regulation through slowing of runoff and storage of rainfall
- Potential for provision of summer water for livestock
- Increase fire resilience on the Commons

### C.M

#### Current Management

There is currently one main bog in Mynydd Maen which is currently not active and is partially dried up. The bog is split by the key road that links the north to the south of the commons.

### Risk Appraisal

- Effective peatland management for biodiversity requires a good understanding of existing environmental and hydrological conditions
- Bog bursts may occur on steeper slopes
- Bogs can be a danger to the public and suitable precautions must be taken.
- Potential wet areas can attract 4x4 vehicle users which will cause greater damage to the bog and surrounding habitats
- Restored bog may not always revert to their natural state and so expectations need to be managed
- Management requires long-term commitment and can be costly
- Works in streams may result in increased sediment loads downstream, hence appropriate working practices need to be in place to minimise the risk.
- Natural Resources Wales and the relevant risk management authority must be notified if building a structure that acts as an obstruction to a watercourse.

### Management Proposals for Peat Bog

**The following measures may be considered for bog restoration within Mynydd Maen, but it is important to note that bog restoration should be carried out carefully under the advice of ecologists/hydrologists with expertise in peatland ecology/hydrology.**

Firstly, to re-wet and restore the bog it will be necessary to re-instate the track which has sunken in certain locations through vehicle use. This is making drivers veer off-road into adjacent bog habitat causing physical damage, as well as changing the hydrology. The track should be elevated above the bog if water levels are to be raised, and physical barriers put in place to restrict vehicle access to restoration areas. Flooding already occurs along the track as water from the bog escapes, so another option is to bund either side of the track. Restoration of the hydrological regimes will enable recovery of the degraded bog and the development of natural hydrological gradients and habitat zones. This will also improve the long-term resilience of the peat bodies to climate change and reduce carbon emissions, thus protecting the peat carbon store.

- Wales Wetlands Ecosystem Group (Wales Biodiversity Partnership) have expressed an interest in working in partnership with community groups on bog restoration projects. It is recommended that the Commons Association engage with this group to develop a strategy for bog restoration.
- It is recommended that 10 drainage channels within the bog and mire restoration zone are blocked per year which will raise the water tables in the peat. Management will be monitored closely using photographic evidence.
- Target area for degraded bog restoration is 10 ha per year with a five-year target of 50ha.
- There are several methods used to block drainage channels depending on their size using stone dams, heather bales or timber planks.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In badly degraded bog with cracked, shrunken peat, the process may first involve blocking the main channels and then second, as the bog becomes wetter with time and the shrunken peat re-wets, blocking the smaller channels.</li> <li>■ Where natural drainage patterns occur in sink holes, these should be maintained. To stabilise bare peat, spread heather cuttings / brash to protect the peat and provide a source of seeds.</li> <li>■ Select 2 relatively small patches of bare peat per year and apply lime to reduce acidity and monitor effectiveness in terms of species regeneration, including sphagnum.</li> <li>■ Spread local grass seed and fertiliser that will form an initial crop of grass.</li> <li>■ To enable recovery of sphagnum moss, the peat will be assessed for acidity and suitability of liming and/or fertilising the peat to kick-start recolonization. Restoration methods using tissue culture of sphagnum and spreading in gel beads on degraded peat are being trialled in the Peak District and may be applicable to parts of the study area.</li> <li>■ Develop an education project and raise awareness about the value of bogs and mires for wildlife and ecosystem services.</li> <li>■ Best results for returning peatland biodiversity will occur where the hydrology can be controlled over a wide area in order to achieve well-functioning bogs.</li> <li>■ Restore all vehicle tracks with local aggregate and review the design of the track through the bog. Options for the track include the creation of a passing bay to avoid needing to go off-road; a floating bridge over the bog, or the track could be fenced or block-stoned through the bog to reduce the need and curb off-roading in this area completely. All vehicles must strictly stay to the track.</li> <li>■ To enable longer term management, training will be required in management and restoration to enable contract work. Co-ordination and dissemination of management information is important for maximizing the biodiversity potential of peatland management.</li> </ul> <p>Management for other benefits (e.g. carbon sequestration) if undertaken correctly could promote typical peatland species and bring assemblage-level benefits at least in the long-term. The conservation of some species, though, may require further actions within and beyond peatland sites.</p>
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AMP	<p><b>Associated Management Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Heather management</li> <li>■ Control of feral trees</li> </ul>
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## Relevant Guidance

Relevant guidance on bog restoration includes the following:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d9jCiPW3ZSU>

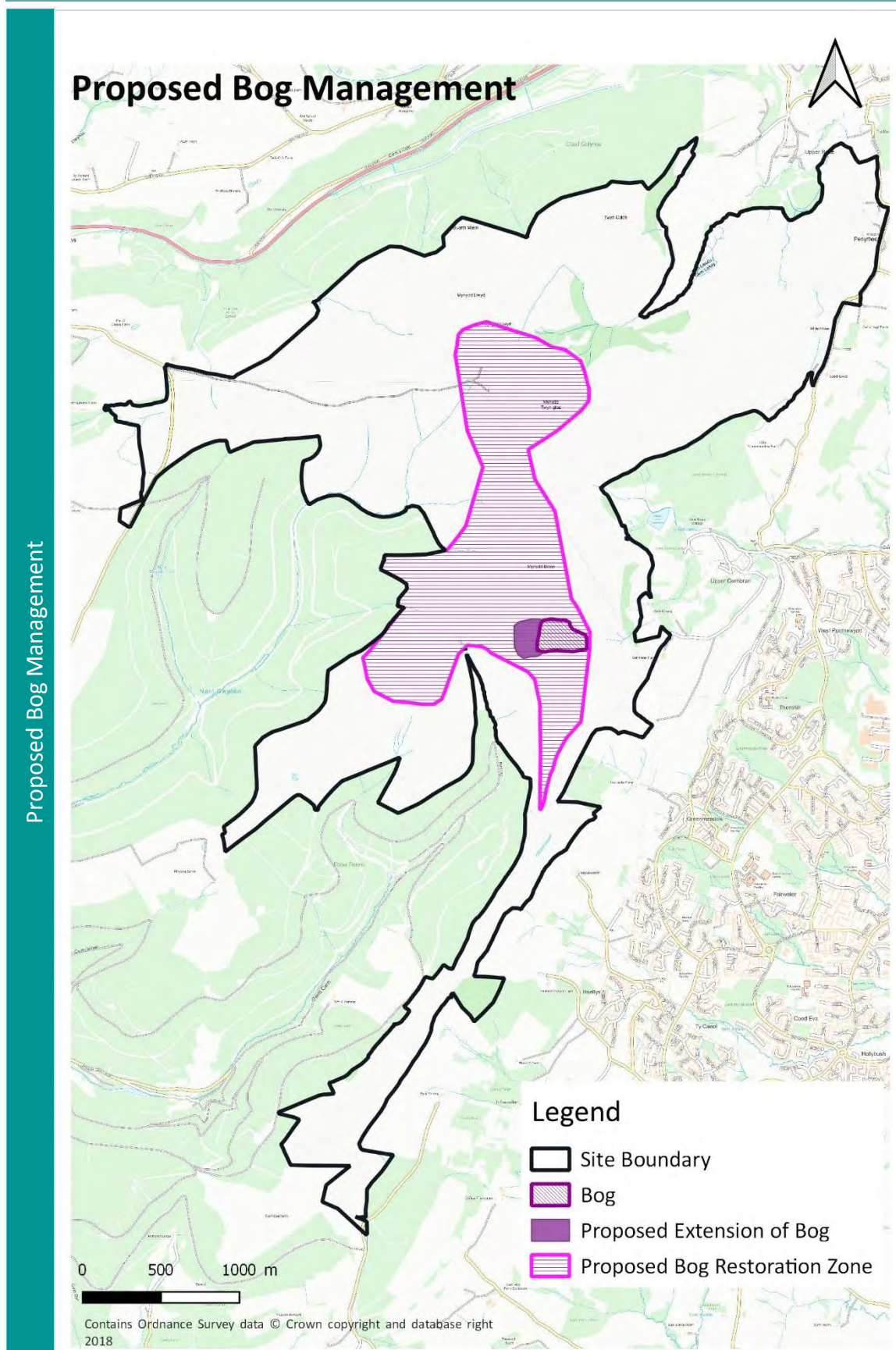
<http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/peatlands>

<http://adlib.eversite.co.uk/adlib/defra/content.aspx?id=000IL3890W.189EHRN2B1CZV4>

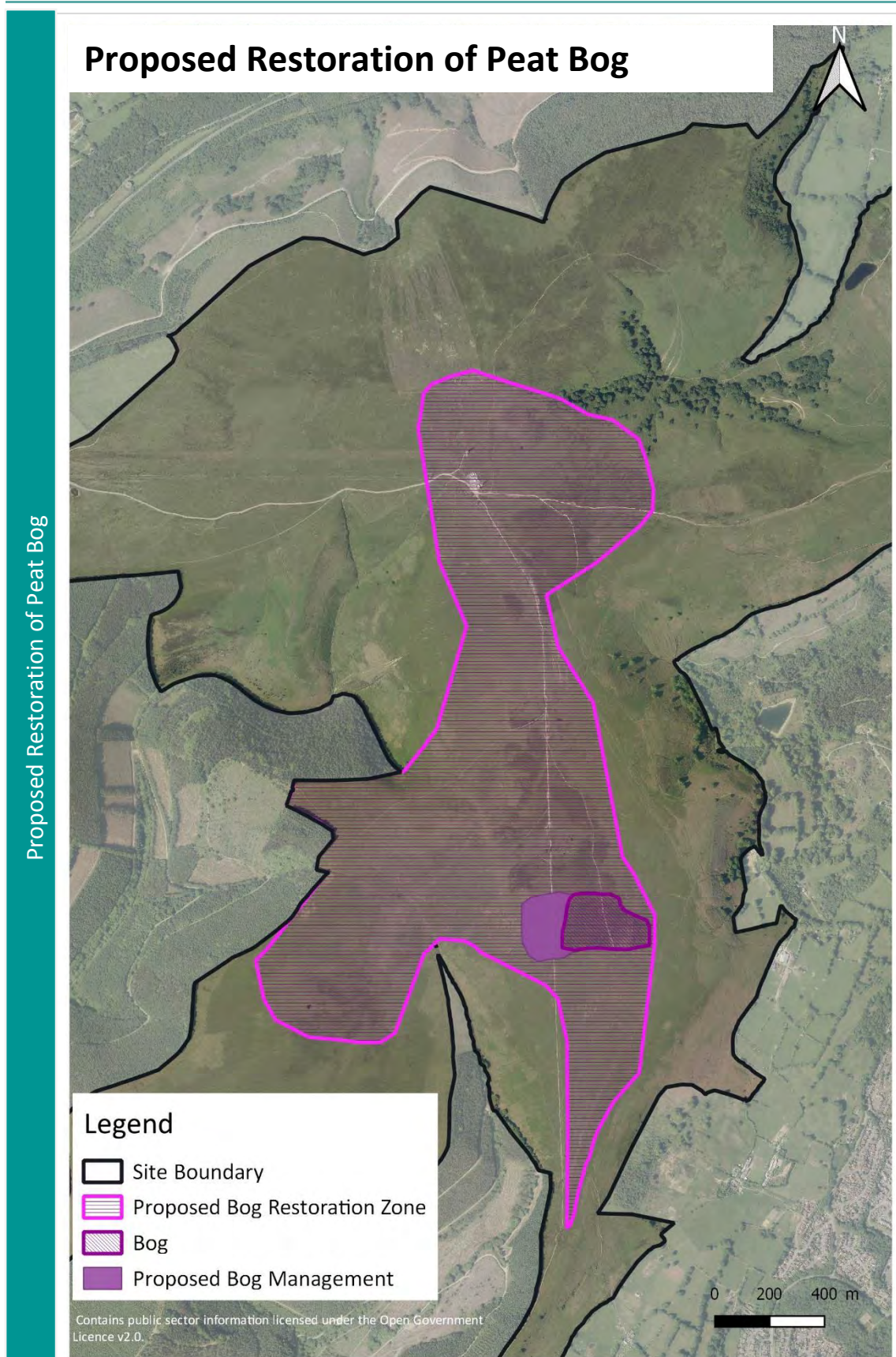
[https://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/gripblocking\\_england\\_tcm9-207527.pdf](https://www.rspb.org.uk/Images/gripblocking_england_tcm9-207527.pdf)

<https://freshwaterhabitats.org.uk/projects/million-ponds/pond-creation-toolkit/>

[https://theconversation.com/carbon-farming-how-agriculture-can-both-feed-people-and-fight-climate-change-111593?utm\\_medium=amptwitter&utm\\_source=twitter](https://theconversation.com/carbon-farming-how-agriculture-can-both-feed-people-and-fight-climate-change-111593?utm_medium=amptwitter&utm_source=twitter)



**Fig 5.7.1 Proposed Bog Management Areas**



**Fig 5.7.2 Proposed Restoration of Peat Bog**

## 5.9 Farm Diversification – Sustainable Tourism and Recreation (CES4)

NRMP Management Objective: Community Engagement and Sustainable Use of Uplands

Introduction	<p>The Commons are already widely used for recreation and appreciated by many of the local population for walking, picnicking, cycling and dog-walking.</p> <p>Increasing recreational use of the Commons could help local ownership of the area and the understanding of its value both to generate income in the local area and also as an important resource for the health and wellbeing of future generations. It is recommended that a programme of volunteering is developed to support and deliver this plan.</p> <p>However, the use of the Commons by members of the public can cause conflict with the habitat management. One of the main sources of conflict is the illegal use of motorised vehicles, which churn up the ground, create noise and air pollution which discourages families and informal recreational users and cause disturbance to livestock, habitats and wildlife. Dogs off the lease can cause issues of sheep worrying. In addition to the positive use of the Commons by the general public there is also anti-social behaviour to include littering and drug use. Broken bottles and other litter can cause fires, especially when the bracken is very dry, and impact livestock and wildlife. Therefore it is important that the public are managed and there are adequate controls in place to ensure that tourism adds value and does not detract from the beauty or working practices of the Commons.</p> <p>Any proposals for such development must be seen within the wider tourism networks such as the Monmouthshire &amp; Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle initiative and the emerging Valleys Regional Park as well as the regional geographical context of the competing Brecon Beacons National Park, The Wye Valley AONB, the Glamorgan coast and the South Wales countryside and cities.</p>
Aims and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To encourage sustainable recreation and tourism in the area and use of Mynydd Maen by the local and wider community, including local schools, to benefit the local economy and to promote healthy lifestyles. This must be balanced with managing disturbance to wildlife and agriculture</li> <li>■ Opportunities for additional income streams for Commoners and the retention of young people within the local area even with no specific interest in farming</li> <li>■ To encourage greater understanding and appreciation of the natural environment and wildlife and to ensure adequate protection of vulnerable sites and species</li> <li>■ To provide opportunities for all those using the area for recreation to become more involved in managing activities themselves, thereby taking greater ownership of the Commons</li> <li>■ To engender a greater sense of pride of place in local communities and users which may lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour such as off-roading and fly-tipping</li> <li>■ To ensure information is widely provided and available to a wide audience</li> <li>■ To develop a greater network of local activities and businesses and link into the Monmouthshire &amp; Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle and the wider Valleys Regional Park network with associated access to resources.</li> </ul>

## Current Activities

The main recreational activities on the Commons focus on dog walking, informal walks and picnicking. There is evidence of illegal off-roading, littering and drug abuse.

There are currently few formal activities within the Commons which include fell running and orienteering weekends and occasional guided walks, there are also regular outings with the Ramblers and walking groups who help maintain kissing gates and styles. Specific walks include the Commons such as the circular walk “In the Footsteps of Pilgrims” which is a circular walk around Cwmbran and Mynydd Maen covering links with the ancient past.

There are 3 stables for livery around the Commons and some horse trekking in the area. There is a “no animals” policy on the Commons during the winter months.

Other activities in the local area include:

- Blaenavon Industrial landscape walks – a series of walks with leaflets that also tie in with local wildlife and history.
- Cwm Carn forest campsite – including pod glamping, also caravan and camping site.
- Cwm Carn forest mountain biking routes, visitor centre, craft and nature events throughout the year, gift shop with local produce, café, education/conference room, walks from the visitors centre, fishing through membership of angling association.
- South East Wales Hang gliding and paragliding club is one of the biggest and longest established clubs in the UK. They use sites at Cwmbran, Fairwater and Cwmbran (Mountain Air) to the east and on Mynydd Machen to the south. The club provides a variety of support to local organisations and raises money for the Welsh Air Ambulance, manages approximately 1000 acres of the SSSI on the Blorenge and organises litter picking events on the local hills.
- Gelligravog farm house bed and breakfast– upper Cwmbran on the side of Mynydd Maen.
- Annual Torfaen food and drink festival, Blaenavon world heritage site have held a vintage festival in the past.
- Lost farmsteads survey of Twmbarlwn and Mynydd Maen

## Risk Appraisal

- Lack of co-ordination and direction – it is recommended that this is provided by an external body such as a Commons Officer to support the Commoners develop and deliver an effective programme reflecting ongoing best practice
- Changes to funding regimes and the short term nature of funding which affect potential programme viability.
- Need for effective internet, 4G coverage and other technology

Increasing the recreational use of the Commons could enhance the value of Mynydd Maen to the local community, schools and visitors to the area and promote the sustainable use of the Commons in a manner that does not conflict with grazing. This could result in greater surveillance and ownership by a wider range of people and increased economic potential for the surrounding area. It is therefore recommended that a recreational delivery plan is developed.

There are four main elements to this plan:

- Prepare plan or strategy
- Public consultation and stakeholder engagement
- Information/Advertising
- Provision and Enhancement of Facilities, Amenities and Infrastructure

A number of activities are proposed for consideration as outlined below. These should be detailed and prioritised and to be effective it is important that paid support is provided to the Commoners through a Commons Officer or through the local authority or other body. To deliver a coherent plan will take time, commitment and resources. It is possible for activities to be carried out in an ad-hoc, low key manner with low resource input but this will result in limited income and could create an additional cost burden to the Commoners in terms of preparation, guiding, clearing up etc. Trial activities could be carried out obtain feedback.

- The development of a Walks and Events Programme for year-round use and which would focus upon the assets of the Commons. The programme could be developed in conjunction with other organisations in the area such as the Twmbarlwm Society, Cwmcarn Forest Park and local activity clubs such as running or triathlon clubs, Hang gliding South Wales etc.

A programme of events could include:

- Guided walks and talks to cover:
  - Heritage walks (all year)
  - Foraging for wild food (summer/autumn)
  - Fungal forays (autumn)
  - Bird watching (spring/summer)
  - Botanical Themes (spring/summer)
  - Tidy Wales days (all year)
  - Dark Skies Nights (at relevant times throughout the year)
  - Pony trekking under licence (April – end November)
- Countryside skills and land management skills training and competitions such as drystone walling, hedge layering, hurdle making. There is some training currently being undertaken on a limited scale but it could be developed into a more defined programme with regular events. This could also be tied into a programme of boundary upgrading and could be supported and/or delivered in association with organisations such as Groundwork Wales.
- Activities to supplement those offered within the locality such as Cwmcarn Forest Park and the SE Wales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club. This could add

value to these activities and encourage a wider audience and/or longer time spent within the area. For example, activities on the Commons for members of the family not interested or able to hang glide, local food outlets, local products etc.

- Regular organised runs which could be led by specific running, triathlon or orienteering clubs. Leaders could be supported to develop different routes for different times of the year or abilities etc
- Park run or similar organised running/walking events for all the family. They could include a 1k, 3k and/or 5k route which could be run or walked by different members of family/activity groups with refreshments and medals on completion. These tend to be more effective when they are held regularly for example monthly so people can include them in their activity programme.
- Cross country runs could be developed with local schools/clubs or through Welsh Athletics who have a calendar of cross country runs throughout the winter months.
- There are opportunities for a range of training and education for local schools and groups to include countryside code training; outdoor skills training for Scout and Guides groups; volunteering, training and walks for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme amongst others.
- Away days and management training are becoming integrated into the diaries of many corporate organisations. The Commons could provide a range of opportunities for outdoor activities on its own or in combination with other local facilities such as the SE Wales Hang Gliding and Paragliding Club, drone specialists etc. This should also be considered in association with a potential hub for the Commons.
- Waymarked self-guided trails for people to do in their own time. It is recommended that there are a series of trails of varying lengths and difficulties that could complement and be promoted through the Caerphilly Links and Loops programme. Good quality car park areas and information panels, clearly sign-posted routes with maintained boundaries such as dry-stone walls, fencing, styles and gates and cleared verges and path margins provide better walking experiences encouraging enhanced use. It also reduces erosion on wet paths and damage to habitats. The siting of such facilities must be assessed for its appropriateness, bearing in mind the needs of commoners and the potential for misuse (e.g. fly-tipping, motorised vehicles).
- One off festival – combining food, drink and music. This will require improvements to be made across the Commons but could be considered as a longer term opportunity. Torfaen has a food and drink festival held in the Cwmbran centre, consideration could be given to extending or relocating this to include outdoor stalls and to include music and camping. The Big Cheese Caerphilly is a good example, although this also ties in with the history of the

castle. There could be a potential to incorporate it into a wider dark skies theme or support the Brecon Beacons dark skies activities. This will require considerable planning, clarity of theme, access, parking, refreshments, toilets (rule of thumb is 1 toilet to 50 people) and marketing.

- Promotion is essential to optimise the uptake for any recreational or other activities on the Commons. Walks and events can be promoted through websites, mobile apps, twitter and other social media such as Torfaen and Caerphilly Councils, local activities groups and facilities. More traditional types of promotion would include leaflets located in visitor centres, cafes and restaurants and hotels. Outlets include facilities located within the immediate area of Torfaen, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire but also in other key visitor hubs in the region such as Cardiff, Newport, Abergavenny and across the English border. The information could also include other opportunities afforded in the area such as walks and things to see of interest such as ancient monuments, habitats, wildlife as well as the landscape and places to go (e.g. local places to eat) for people who do not want to join formal activities.
- The strategy should learn from and fit into existing initiatives especially the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle which provides an established framework for its preparation and implementation. This would provide a local, established network which would be included within the Valleys Regional Park development.

An important component of developing the Commons is the co-ordination of an effective volunteering programme. It is recommended that a volunteer programme is prepared for the recruitment, training and organisation of volunteers who might be involved in carry out land management activities, conservation work and marketing.

## AMP

### Associated Management Plans

- Boundary repair and restoration
- The hub

## Relevant Guidance

<http://www.polar10.com/loopsandlinks/> Loops and Links: A Complete Trail Guide to Mountain Biking, Horse Riding and Walking in the Merthyr and Rhondda Cynon Valleys

<https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/Related-Documents/Countryside/Torfaen-Walks/In-the-Footsteps-of-Pilgrims.pdf> Pilgrim's walk

<http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/loopsandlinks/english/info.html> Loops and Links: for Caerphilly

<http://www.gelligravog.co.uk/#dummy> Gelligravog bed and breakfast

<http://your.caerphilly.gov.uk/cwmcarnforest/content/welcome> Cwmcarn forest park

<https://bigcheesecaerphilly.co.uk/the> The Big Cheese festival  
<http://www.assembly.wales/cy/bus-home/archive-business/bus-second-assembly/2-cwls/cwls-policy-reviews/cwls-policy-arts/cwls-arts-respondents/Pages/cwls-arts-herian.aspx>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/306027642860294/> The Lost farmsteads of Twmbarlwm and Mynydd Maen

## 5.10 Farm Diversification – Local Produce and Crafts (ELM5)

NRMP Management Objective: Economic Land Management and Conserving the Commons

### Introduction

Farms around Mynydd Maen Commons are varied in both size and activities and this is reflected in their management patterns and activities. Currently farm businesses are dominated by sheep and/or beef enterprises. Farm incomes are under pressure and there is a high dependency on Welsh Government farm scheme payments, which have an uncertain future. There are increasingly more opportunities in rural areas for working from home and developing home industries. However, this has identified potential shortfall in support facilities.



There are opportunities for farm diversification in terms of livestock diversification, local products and crafts.

### Livestock diversification

Changes in farming practices, constraints of agri-environment schemes, poor prices and uncertainty within the political climate have resulted in a reduction in stock numbers on the Commons. The lack of large animals such as cattle has contributed to the spread of bracken at the expense of heathland and grassland for grazing. Farming enterprises can be complemented with on-farm diversification (as well as off-farm diversification/employment).

### Farm Products

There are a number of local farms which provide useful models for diversification. Examples include Green Meadow Community Farm in Cwmbran which sells rare breed pork products, free range chicken eggs and sheep fleeces and Glenside Honey Farm, Pontypool Hallets Cider on Blaengawney Farm on Mynydd Maen which sell directly from the farm. Other examples include Wern Ganol at Nelson which sells seasonal vegetables and also has a bakery and Berry Hill Farmshop at Newport. As well as selling directly from the farm there are a number of farmers markets in the area including Abergavenny, Caerphilly, Newport – Belle Vue Park and Usk. In addition there are a wide range of local craft outlets. The monthly craft and food market at Llanyrafon Manor in Cwmbran also offers an outlet for sales.

### Rural Crafts

Rural crafts have always formed part of the fabric of life on and around farms and rural areas in general. They offer an opportunity to use one's interests for both enjoyment and enhancing income. They allow people to work from home and structure their working day to fit around other demands. There is potential for a range of craft production in and around the Commons, these could be small scale, art-based products included painting, knitted goods and sewing through to more practical outputs including saddlery, farriery, architectural ironwork, drystone walling, hedge laying, hedge laying, coppicing and basket weaving. Gray Glass at Pontypool includes innovative upcycling of recycled glass bottles to create dishes for food. This opportunity is dependent upon the skills, interests and aspirations of individuals. Some may wish to carry on a purely recreational basis, others will use the opportunity to complement farm/household incomes.

## Aims and Objectives

- Greater diversity of income streams for upland farmers and local residents to create greater economic security and resilience
- To improve the condition of heathland and grassland habitats on the Common sustainably by developing suitable stocking rates
- To determine the viability and potential for a market for value added food products from local farms
- Encourage more young farmers coming into the sector as potential new sources of income make the practice more attractive
- Greater co-operation between graziers in individual commons and between different commons throughout South East Wales and beyond
- To determine the viability of establishing a commoner's groups (eg crafts) to optimise marketing and funding to the benefit of the group.
- To identify the sources of help, assistance and training as required

## Current Activities

### Local Produce:

The principal enterprises on farms on/around the Commons are hill/upland sheep and beef production. Sheep enterprises typically comprise South Wales Mountain (Glamorgan) breeding flocks, producing lambs for finishing, stores or replacements. Cattle enterprises typically comprise Welsh Black suckler cow herds producing calves for finishing, stores or replacements. Some will seek to add value through processing and sales of meat direct to consumers.

Other products from the land include fibre in the form of wool from sheep production, and bracken and timber/firewood (naturally regenerated and/or planted). There are a number of local farms which provide useful models for diversification. A minority will be involved with the production and sale of local foods such as pork, eggs and honey.

### Crafts:

There are some craft workshops currently being carried out on and around the Commons. These include workshops on 'crafting walking sticks', 'gate and hurdle making', 'An extra pair of hands', 'heather besom (broom) making'. These workshops are led by Les Murphy, a Commoner and active member of the Commoners Association.

Within Torfaen the recently restored Llanyrafon Manor and Llantarnam Grange are well established craft centres and galleries catering for local people. The former operates a popular monthly free entry craft market which acts as a showcase for local food producers and crafts. In addition, there are a range of seasonal events such as at Christmas. There would be scope for development of craft products from farmers on the commons where the interest exists using these sales points.

(see Relevant Guidance for a list of people selling at the Llanyrafon Manor market)

In addition, there are established farmers markets at Abergavenny, Chepstow, Caerphilly, Usk and Newport (Belle Vue Park)

## Risk Appraisal

Lack of interest amongst food producers/commoners. If a co-operative approach was adopted there is the need for strong leadership to take matters further.

The development of a niche market and branding scheme is a long term and ambitious goal and would require an enthusiastic, enterprising individual or group to take the lead on such a scheme.

There is the potential for added bureaucracy in obtaining licences and hygiene certificates for the sale of food based products.

No viable market for produce.

Competition with exiting traders/craft businesses

New businesses may need to confirm with health and safety legislation, hold limited liability and other insurances and be registered for VAT

To be effective local enterprises will rely on good phone network coverage and internet speeds.

## Proposals for Local Produce and Crafts

### Livestock diversification

It is generally considered that the stocking rates should be increased to help manage the heather and bracken more sustainably and reduce the reliance on mechanical and chemical method of control. A review of stocking rates should be carried out to determine the optimal stocking rates for cattle and sheep and options for introducing other livestock into the Commons.

Uptake and delivery by the Commoners is fundamental to the Plan. It will essential to work closely with the Commoners to develop approaches which are practical and deliverable based on experience. This will also help ensure that changes in stocking rates and associated changes in grazing livestock enterprises and management are as economically advantageous as possible. A detailed business plan for this will be required and consideration should be given to the support of an agricultural advisor to support enterprise development.

### Local Products

Detailed consideration must be given to assisting producers in planning, financing and marketing the business in its developmental phase and directing them to advice organisations, such as Business Wales.

As part of the business planning process the following should be considered:

- Establish a group to discuss potential diversification options across the Commons and wider area as appropriate.
- Agree and set up sub-groups focused on key opportunities such as local meat marketing and sales, associated farm products and Payments for Ecosystem Services.

- Prioritise ideas/enterprises to be researched and commission relevant market research.

Agree way forward, develop business plan to develop collaborative ventures. Some diversification will lend itself to development by individuals as opposed to groups of commoners.

- Assess the viability and merit of establishing a group to market local produce with support from TCBC and CCBC
- Work with Welsh Government's Valleys Regional Park team to ensure a synergy of approach to marketing and branding through the Regional Park

The business plan should consider the type and location of outlet(s) to include local farmers markets, farm shops, local butchers, supermarkets etc and the establishment of one or more centralised outlet (such as a local farm shop) for sales.

In the longer term marketing of local meat through the development of an 'eco-labelling' scheme could be considered especially in co-operation with other commoners and farmers. Opportunities may exist for learning from the work done with the Commoners as part of the Forgotten Landscapes Projects at Blaenavon World Heritage Site.

Consideration should be given to other types of local products and the potential for changes to habitats or management methods such as the provision of improved pollen and nectar sources and breeding habitat for pollinators to develop a local honey producing industry.

Marketing of by-products of management can be considered as a separate enterprise at least initially as opportunities for use are established e.g. heather brash for reseedling in landscaping schemes, on road schemes or other developments, bracken products such as fuel blocks). Refer to management plans for bracken and heather.

### **Crafts:**

Start up of small scale art and craft businesses can be cheaper and quicker to establish than farming enterprises. It is recommended that research is carried out to identify what activities are currently being undertaken and how these could benefit from joint marketing and promotion.

Consideration should be given to the requirements for changes in habitats or management techniques to support potential craft industries such as wood turning, willow crafts, wool production etc.

The preparation of a business plan for the development and marketing of crafts should be considered if there is adequate interest within the commons and local farmers. This could form a component of the local produce business plan or a stand alone document to kickstart individual activities. Consideration should be given to risk assessments, insurances, location and numbers of participants.

	<p>The plan should consider outlets and marketing both separately and in collaboration with the local produce.</p> <p>Establish the training required and work with providers to meet demands – this could include basic business skills, first aid, hygiene and food sciences etc. Refer to Training Plan <a href="#">Appendix B</a></p> <p>Any new enterprise will need to be aware of the requirements of Sale of Goods Act and Trades Description Act, licences and hygiene certificates and may need to register with HMRC for tax purposes as appropriate.</p>
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AMP	<p><b>Associated Management Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bracken management</li> <li>Heathland management</li> </ul>
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Relevant Guidance	<p><a href="https://businesswales.gov.wales/">https://businesswales.gov.wales/</a> - Welsh Government – Business Wales</p> <p><a href="https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/">https://www.princes-trust.org.uk/</a> - Prince's Trust</p> <p><a href="https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/">https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/</a> - Farming Connect</p> <p><a href="https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-01/glastir-commons-2014-explanatory-booklet.pdf">https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-01/glastir-commons-2014-explanatory-booklet.pdf</a> - Glastir</p> <p><a href="https://www.sheepwoolinsulation.com/">https://www.sheepwoolinsulation.com/</a> - sheep wool insulation</p> <p><a href="https://actonscott.com/historic-working-farm/courses">https://actonscott.com/historic-working-farm/courses</a> - craft courses</p> <p><a href="https://www.dalefootcomposts.co.uk/products/lakeland-gold-compost.p.aspx">https://www.dalefootcomposts.co.uk/products/lakeland-gold-compost.p.aspx</a> - compost</p> <p><a href="https://www.facebook.com/BrackenburnUK/">https://www.facebook.com/BrackenburnUK/</a> - brackettes</p> <p>Walks, Talks and Craft activities by Les Murphy, Commoner</p> <p>Local area crafts/produce – Llanyrafon Manor Rural Food and Craft Market:</p> <p><a href="#">Beechtree Bees</a> - Local honey</p> <p><a href="#">CaribSwede Vegan Bakery Company</a></p> <p><a href="#">Ennirocraft</a> - Up-cycled crafts and gifts, teddies to adopt</p> <p><a href="#">Field Bar</a> - Flavoured gins</p> <p><a href="#">GUY Hottie</a> - Chilli jams and sauces</p> <p><a href="#">Handcrafted &amp; Homemade Cakes</a> - Salted caramel sauce and brownies</p> <p><a href="#">Joles Gourmet</a> - Homemade sausage rolls, amazing muffins</p> <p><a href="#">Miles Better Baking</a> - Fresh off the griddle welsh cakes</p> <p><a href="#">My Pet Treats</a> - Handmade treats for 4 legged friends (plus GF)</p> <p><a href="#">NakedSister</a> - Massage bars, natural skincare</p> <p><a href="#">North Star Designs</a> - Personalised engravings, pet portraits on slate</p> <p><a href="#">Sweet Remedies Ltd</a> - personalised sweet treats</p> <p><a href="#">The Cheesecake Hideaway</a></p> <p><a href="#">The Crafty Piglet</a> - Handmade gifts and treats for home</p> <p><a href="#">The Little Welsh Chocolate Company</a></p> <p>David Mills - Eggs, Pickles, Fresh Veg</p> <p><a href="#">Essjay Jewellery</a> - Handmade silver jewellery</p>
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## 5.11 Farm Diversification – Hub (ELM5)

NRMP Management Objective: Economic Land Management and Conserving the Commons

### Introduction

A visitor's hub could provide a range of benefits for Mynydd Maen Commons. It would be a focal point for the commoners and visitors to the commons which would provide information about the area, activities, farming and local wildlife. A hub exists at Cwmcarn forest in the form of a visitors centre which is located alongside a car park and the main gateway into the forest. The centre has been very successful at attracting



tourists and provides a spacious information area, rooms for education, conference and craft days, a gift shop and a café. This has been identified for funding through the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle. There is also a hub at 14 Locks south of Risca which is a draw for tourists and visitors and provides refreshments and information.

The hub could be a converted or enhanced barn or farm building or a stand alone new structure. It could showcase green building techniques and renewable or energy saving design.

Options could include the following:

- Green roof – contributes to insulation of building
- Green walls – contributes to insulation of building, climbing plants create a living cladding system or in containers that are attached to the wall. Species: Heuchara, Valerian, Euphorbia, Ajuga and Geranium.
- Run off renewable energy (bracken could be used as biofuel), solar panels;
- Build with natural or recycled materials;
- Using recycled rainwater – rainwater collection/greywater plumbing, Sustainable Drainage Systems SUD's;
- Natural insulation perhaps sourced from the Commons – sheep's wool;
- Using LED lighting to save on power;
- Solar hot water;
- Pre-fabricated eco building

Consideration should also be given to existing examples such as Lammas Ecovillage: which is a collective of eco-small holdings centred around a central sustainable hub, based in Pembrokeshire. Lammas supports a range of educational and recreational activities. Built from scratch using local materials that were as far as possible recycled or natural, it was built by residents, local tradesman and volunteers. The timber frame of Douglas fir, turf roof, straw bale insulation, heating is supplied by a combination of hydro power, passive solar gain and biomass. The building is entirely off-grid and run on renewables.

Aims and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To determine the viability of providing a visitor's hub on Mynydd Maen common that could provide an outlet for sale of local products, participation in rural crafts, all weather venue for education and training, meeting place and café</li> <li>■ Increased appropriate use of the Commons by the local community and visitors</li> <li>■ Greater sense of pride of place, which would hopefully lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour such as off-roading and fly-tipping.</li> </ul>
C.M	<p><b>Current Management</b></p> <p>There are currently no community/visitor's buildings within or along the boundary of Mynydd Maen commons, although a network of paths for walkers does exist. There is also a local B&amp;B located at Gelligravog farmhouse on the boundary of the commons. The closest hub type building is located at Cwmcarn forest. Craft workshops are held from local farm buildings.</p>
Risk Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Difficulty attracting tourists when it is so close to Cwmcarn which is a greater attraction;</li> <li>■ Commoners may not be interested in selling produce via a farm shop or outlet;</li> <li>■ Commoners may not have time/commitment for providing rural crafts/activities to make it viable;</li> <li>■ Overall cost of building, running and maintaining the hub may be too great to sustain long term.</li> </ul>
Proposals for Hub	<p>Currently, the commons have no central focal point to attract tourists, hold workshops or showcase the Commons.</p> <p>It is recommended that a study is undertaken to determine the potential and options for creating a hub for the Commons. The study should include research on the type and quantity of activities; size, scale and requirements; income generation opportunities; and methods of management and upkeep.</p> <p>There is also the need for some sort of space if produce from the commons are to be sold or rural crafts taught. The room for conferences and learning provided at Cwmcarn hosts many different events which provide benefits for the local community as well as tourists. A similar space at Mynydd Maen would be highly beneficial to the local community of Cwmbran if managed effectively.</p> <p>Clearly it is essential to determine the use, accessibility and viability of such a building/hub. Potentially uses could include opportunities for preparation and sale of rural crafts, training and education programmes, outlet for local products.</p> <p>Potential for a bunk house or camping facilities associated with it.</p>

AMP	<p><b>Associated Management Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Farm Diversification – Sustainable Tourism and Recreation</li> <li>■ Farm Diversification – Local Produce and Crafts</li> </ul>
Relevant Guidance	<p>Galligravog bed and breakfast: <a href="http://www.gelligravog.co.uk/#dummy">http://www.gelligravog.co.uk/#dummy</a>  Cwmcarn forest park: <a href="http://your.caerphilly.gov.uk/cwmcarnforest/content/welcome">http://your.caerphilly.gov.uk/cwmcarnforest/content/welcome</a>  Big cheese Caerphilly: <a href="https://bigcheese caerphilly.co.uk/">https://bigcheese caerphilly.co.uk/</a>  Lammas Eco Village: <a href="http://lammas.org.uk/en/ecovillage/hub/">http://lammas.org.uk/en/ecovillage/hub/</a></p> <p>Rotunda buildings: <a href="https://rotunda.co.uk/">https://rotunda.co.uk/</a>  Green units: <a href="https://www.greenunit.co.uk/">https://www.greenunit.co.uk/</a>  Ecofab buildings: <a href="https://www.eco-fab.co.uk/http://environmentcentre.org.uk/">https://www.eco-fab.co.uk/http://environmentcentre.org.uk/</a></p>

## 5.12 Farm Diversification – Commons Signage and Interpretation (CES4)

NRMP Management Objective: Community Engagement and Sustainable Use of Uplands

### Introduction

The Commons offer a range of outdoor activities which give the user opportunities to meet the Welsh Government “well-being” objective which is a core element of the Welsh Government’s policy with regard to sustainable development. Good information is important in encouraging tourism and recreation on the Commons and active participation in helping keep the Commons tidy and safe. It can provide valuable education on the history value and biodiversity features of the area.



In addition, it is important that recreational users are able to orientate themselves both to enjoy the Commons and their surroundings and to find their way off the Commons in poor conditions. However, signage and interpretation should not detract from the very character and qualities that users have come to the area to enjoy.

An effective signage and interpretation strategy should consider a range of types and platforms to include wayfaring, information/interpretation boards and mobile apps.

Access, signage and interpretation are included in the Mynydd Maen/Twmbarlwm links work packages in the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle project which cover both the Caerphilly area (work package 7) and the Torfaen area (work package 11). These packages build upon the Twmbarlwm & Mynydd Maen Scoping Study prepared by Haire Landscape Consultants Ltd, 2013. The work packages aim to deliver “improving positive use and access to the area, therefore minimising negative behaviours and delivering a complete visitor experience and increase dwell time and spend”.

Improved signage and interpretation will help form an important local recreational network which will support the wider objectives of the Valleys Regional Park.

### Aims and Objectives

- Enhance the experience of the user through clear guidance, signage and interpretation.
- Contribute to the safe use of the uplands recognising the risks of exposure to poor weather conditions.
- Underpin the development of the commons for recreation/tourism and sense of place
- Establish a model for application to the wider commons areas in south east Wales.
- Discourage rural crime

C.M	<p><b>Current Management</b></p> <p>There is currently a footpath network of varying quality across the Commons following desire lines and ridgelines. Although there is a right to roam across the Commons it is of benefit to keep users to these paths. It helps to reduce impact on the nature conservation aspects it also keeps people away from the animals.</p>
Risk Appraisal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value of good signage and interpretation is not properly recognised and the opportunities on offer are not taken up</li> <li>Signs and interpretation is not maintained and vandalised looking unsightly and less attractive to visitors.</li> </ul>
Proposals for Commons Signage and Interpretation	<p>The Monmouthshire &amp; Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle will provide funding for the development of improved access, signage and interpretation for the Commons. It will include the creation of a rationalised network of dedicated routes across the Commons for use by mountain bikers and walkers/ramblers. The proposals reflect the outcome of a public consultation exercise and will carry out enhancements to form an obvious route to established, improved car parks to the historic landscape at Twmbarlwm. It is important that these proposals are developed in a style and form that can be replicated in the future. In developing the proposals for these work packages and other signage and interpretation the following should be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Utilise technology to provide information, such as apps for mobile phones to inform visitors planning trips to and using the Commons.</li> <li>Ensure signage and implementation proposals reflect the character and features of the Commons - avoid too urban an approach.</li> <li>Work with Welsh Government's Valleys Regional Park team to ensure a synergy of approach to signage and branding through the Regional Park.</li> </ul>
AMP	<p><b>Associated Management Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Farm diversification – Local Produce and Crafts</li> <li>Landscape crime</li> </ul>
R.G	<p><b>Relevant Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><a href="http://moderngov.torfaen.gov.uk/documents/s34470/Appendix%20%20-%20Mon%20Brecon%20Canal%20Adventure%20Triangle%20Work%20Packages%20Summary%20July%2018.pdf">http://moderngov.torfaen.gov.uk/documents/s34470/Appendix%20%20-%20Mon%20Brecon%20Canal%20Adventure%20Triangle%20Work%20Packages%20Summary%20July%2018.pdf</a></li> </ul>

### 5.13 Farm Diversification – Renewable Energy (ELM5)

NRMP Management Objective: Economic Land Management and Conserving the Commons

#### Introduction



Despite changes to the funding and energy tariff regimes which come into force on 31st March 2019 renewable energy provides a positive way of diversifying farm business and income. There are a number of generating methods available to the consumer. In terms of the Commons, micro generating systems are the most appropriate

means of achieving these benefits. The most popular are solar energy and micro-wind schemes. Solar systems include photovoltaic cells which ensure energy is produced without the need of direct sunlight. Micro-water systems are also used although it requires greater control of the base energy source -water to ensure generation which is not appropriate to this area. Heat pumps and biomass also warrant consideration as each has its own merits. It must be noted that these options are essentially private developments and therefore will be subject to planning control. As a result the character and quality of the surrounding area which will have an influence as to their successful implementation.

It is equally important to consider the whole topic in respect of cost savings and benefit to the farm business. As important to looking at reducing energy costs through using renewables is improving energy savings, such as insulation, use of low energy fires and tools, proper window installation should be considered. A useful source of information is the Energy Savings Trust and it is considered to look at the options available through energy management before commencing generation.

#### Aims and Objectives

The aims for renewable energy on the Common are:-

- to assist farmers into examining the potential benefits of using renewable energy, in particular the cost and savings aspects
- to Review the types of regeneration available
- to help to meet Welsh Government targets with regards to climate change
- to help establish energy resilience.
- To reduce carbon footprints for individual farms and commons as a whole

#### C.M

##### Current Management

There are solar farms to the south of the Commons and wind turbines on the surrounding hills that there is no formal renewable energy generation on the Commons.

## Risk Appraisal

- With changes in Government policy and the reduction of lead-in tariffs, renewable energy generation is not as profitable as it was and space on grid can be difficult and can be costly if it is far from the source
- Wind power can have negative impacts on bats and birds
- Objections to renewable energy installations by third parties on grounds of visual impact and/or noise which may affect chances of planning consent.

## Proposals for Renewable Energy

The initial task would be to see whether there was interest amongst commoners for a unified approach to energy generation, use and implementation of energy saving technology as this could offer economies of scale. If there is interest then a renewables strategy should be developed for the Commons which may be applicable to other groups of commoners/landowner within the region and beyond. Opportunities for storing energy should be considered as part of this strategy.

Small scale renewable energy on the Commons could provide long term (25 years) ongoing funds for management and maintenance operations. For example there is potential for 2 turbines offering in the order of £5 000 per year for 25 years, although this would require planning permission. There is also potential for solar panels on south facing slopes to the east side of the Commons as long as the panels are high enough for the sheep to graze below them. There is a farm internet box and the Commoners could benefit from having repeaters that would also provide rental income.

A sector of energy use that should also be considered is that associated with farm vehicles which tend to be diesel powered. As a source of energy diesel fuel is gradually being withdrawn as a primary source for vehicle use. Given that, consideration must be given to biofuels, in particular those used in cooking oils as they require no alterations to engines for their use. In the longer term electric and hybrid vehicle types should be considered. Pilot projects for innovation in farm machinery and sharing of vehicles/machinery should be considered.

Whilst there may be limited opportunity or appetite for large scale wind or solar farms in and around the commons there is the potential for cost effective micro generation. Solar panes can be readily accommodated on the roofs of buildings and wind turbines can be attached to buildings and also on free standing poles. It will be important to check with the local authority to determine if constraints such as listed buildings exist or whether planning permission is required.

Hydro power generation is unlikely to be appropriate for the Commons, however it should not be ruled out of consideration for bigger areas of the commons where the required head waters can be found.

AMP	<p><b>Associated Management Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Farm Diversification – Sustainable Tourism and Recreation</li> <li>■ Farm Diversification – Local Produce and Crafts</li> <li>■ Farm Diversification – Hub</li> </ul>
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R.G	<p><b>Relevant Guidance</b></p> <p>WG “Generating your own energy- A planning guide for householders, communities and businesses” <a href="http://www.planning.gov.uk/planning">www.planning.gov.uk/planning</a></p> <p><a href="https://theconversation.com/carbon-farming-how-agriculture-can-both-feed-people-and-fight-climate-change-111593?utm_medium=amptwitter&amp;utm_source=twitter">https://theconversation.com/carbon-farming-how-agriculture-can-both-feed-people-and-fight-climate-change-111593?utm_medium=amptwitter&amp;utm_source=twitter</a></p> <p>Energy saving trust <a href="https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/innovation">https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency/innovation</a></p>
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## 5.14 Landscape Crime (CES1)

NRMP Management Objective: Community Engagement and Sustainable Use of Uplands

### Introduction

Landscape crime is a general term for a variety of issues that occur on common land including: illegal off-roading, damage to walking tracks, boundary vandalism, fly-tipping, arson, fly-grazing and stock theft. These issues can cause problems for local farmers when grazing land is degraded, contaminated or burnt and stock is lost. It can also be a problem for wildlife habitats with illegal off-roading destroying or reducing high-quality habitats and arson potentially destroying them altogether



Landscape crime is one of the biggest farming issues on Mynydd Maen Commons and has been for several decades. It includes a variety of activities ranging from bothersome to illegal with fly-tipping and illegal off-roading being the most frequently encountered problems.

### Aims and Objectives

To reduce the instances of illegal off-roading and fly-tipping to:

- Prevent damage to important habitats and therefore, increase species diversity and numbers
- Prevent visual damage to the landscape
- Prevent impacts to livestock which can result in their premature death and increased stress leading to miscarriage during pregnancy.
- Prevent risk to livelihoods which may result from livestock deaths and stress.

### Current Situation

There are specific areas where fly tipping is a problem mainly around the entrances to the Commons, although TCBC does remove fly tipping when informed. Illegal off roading to include motor bikes, quad bikes and to a lesser extent 4 x 4s is increasing across the Commons especially to the south and a large area through the beech trees and around the Scheduled Ancient Monument. This causes air and noise pollution reducing the enjoyment for other recreational users of the Commons. It compacts the soil, affects the biodiversity by trampling plants, causing deep ruts and erosion. In addition, littering is an issue especially around the car parks and along the main walking routes. This includes dog bags, glass, plastics and drugs. Broken glass is a danger to wildlife and people and can cause fires on the Commons. There is a countryside crime squad but they take time to respond and are often too busy.

## Risk Appraisal

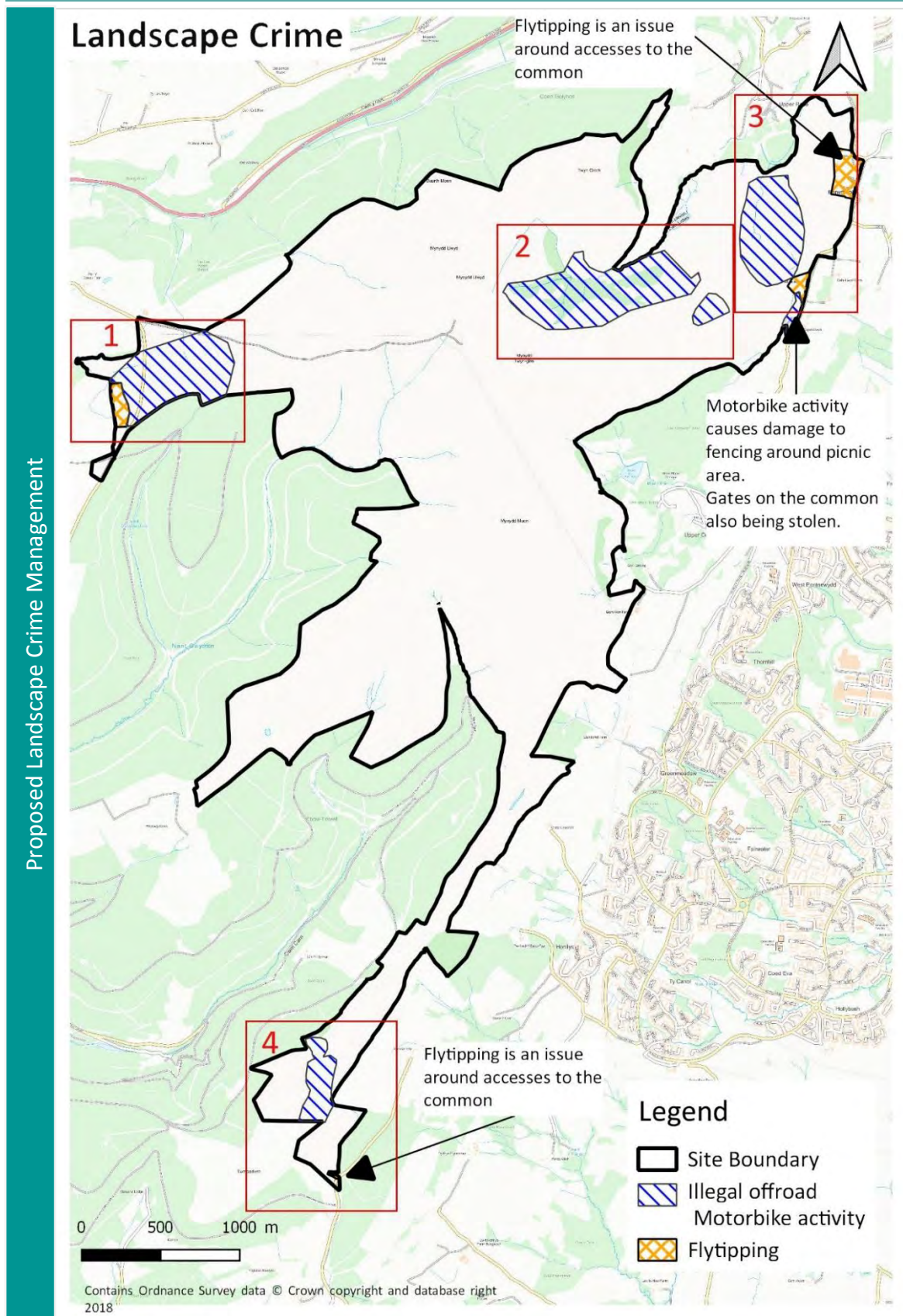
- Reducing landscape crime is difficult, time consuming, long term and it can be very expensive.
- It requires buy-in from local authorities, the police, Visit Wales and regulating authorities
- A holistic and integrated approach is required otherwise the problem is just moved to somewhere else in the uplands.
- Design and detailing of measures are important to encourage adherence and reduce opportunities for vandalism.

## Management proposals for Landscape Crime

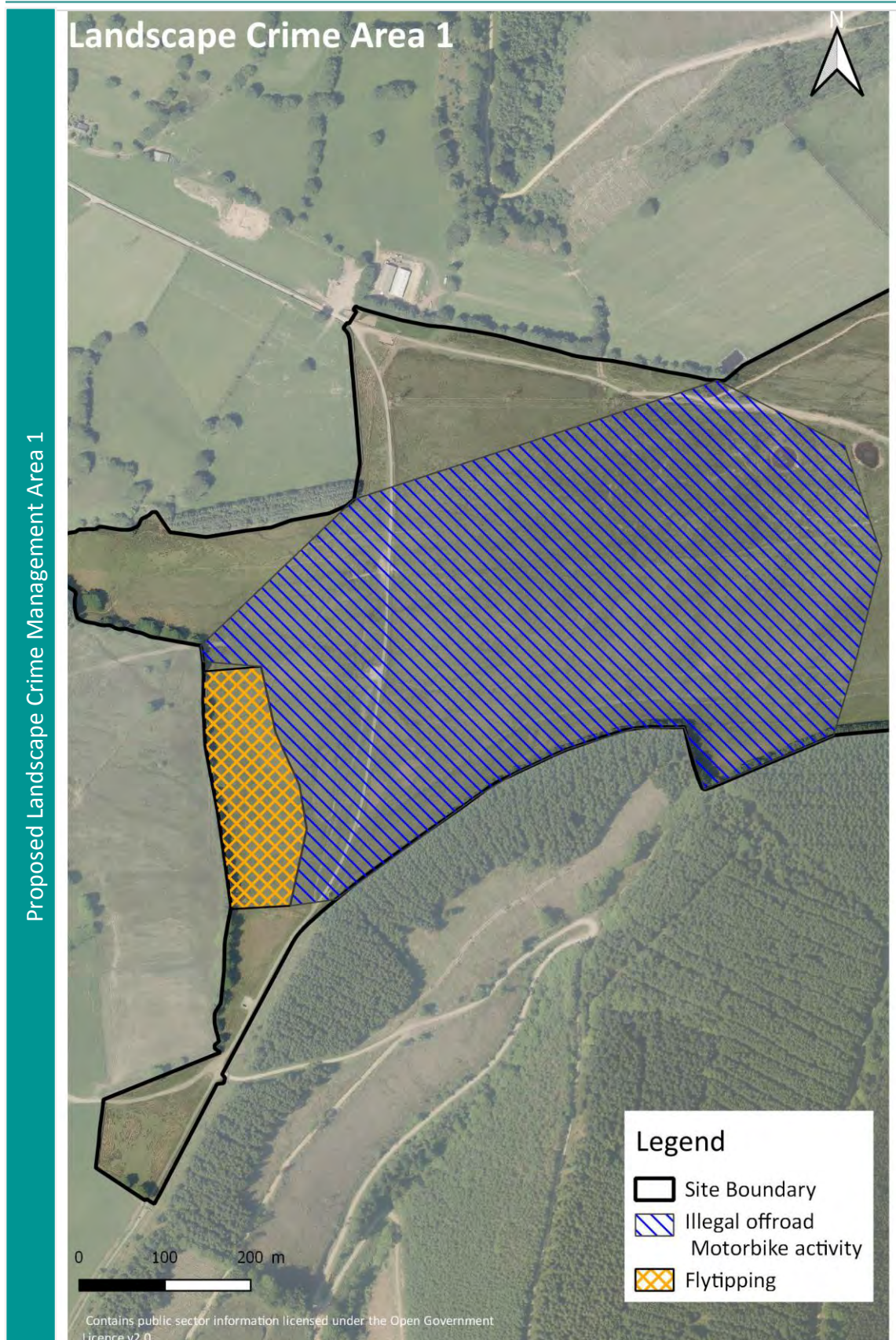
There is a range of different approaches to tackling landscape crime on the Commons. The Commoners have identified four areas for priority works as shown on figure 5.13.1. Measures include reactive measures to improve surveillance and working with the police to achieve prosecutions and more proactive measures such as media campaigns and landscape crime policing. Measures include the following:

- **Signage:** Increase signage relating to the impacts of illegal off-roading, fly tipping, arson, lettering etc – with a focus on impacts to wildlife, landscape, livestock and livelihoods and include details of fines/punishment.
- **Boundary improvements:** Improve boundaries and install motorbike-resistant gates at access points. These do not need to be hard boundaries such as fences and walls but could include the strategic placement of large rocks and posts as currently used in places along Mountain Road. The main areas of fly tipping are around the accesses to the Commons where the road is not fenced and access is at-grade and easy. Fencing the road to deter illegal off-roading and fly-tipping would prevent livestock roaming freely and negatively impact the landscape.
- Where possible ensure **gates** are locked with robust locks - consider the use of combination locks that the emergency services are able to access easily.
- Install cameras at access points to known hotspots and consider the use of **surveillance** with drones.
- **Education/social media campaigns** -This can be done through schools, Council and community group websites, local groups such as Friends of Mynydd Maen, the Twmbarlwn Society, twitter, facebook, Instagram and other social media. This could form part of a wider campaign to encourage volunteering and greater ownership of the Commons by local people
- There are nearby properties which could be approached to develop a **landscape crime watch group** - Close ties with the police would need to be developed - this approach would benefit from CCTV at known hotspots and the use of drones.
- Work with local authorities to **review formal provision** and costs of waste disposal to determine whether this is deterring individuals and leading to fly-tipping and whether more investment is needed for formal provision in order to deter fly-tipping and reduce the costs of dealing with the problem.
- The exploration of alternative provision for bike tracks and relevant facilities.

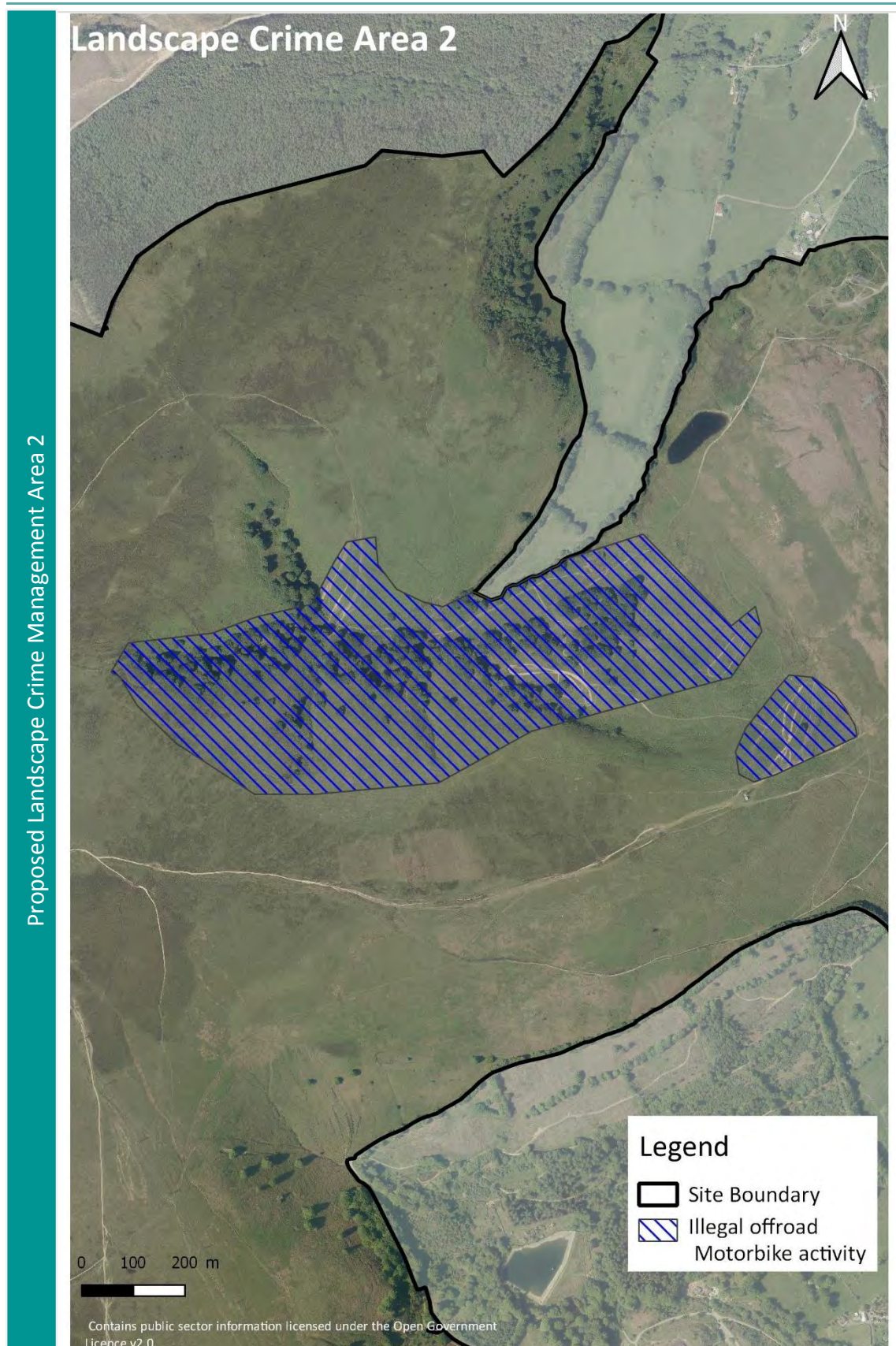
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Policing</b> – potentially by a wildlife or landscape crime officer, or developing a Commons Watch Scheme with support from the police, NRW and the local authorities. Consideration should also be given by the police for greater community empowerment against landscape crime.</li> </ul> <p>A key area to focus on is the identification of perpetrators and where they are coming from as this will affect the measures adopted to tackle the problem. For example, local perpetrators can be reminded of the value of the landscape to both them and their ancestors, whereas perpetrators who have travelled from further distances to use the area for illegal off-roading will not respond to this approach - they will require an approach which relies more on prosecution and fines.</p> <p>Longer-term solutions include changes in local and especially national level policy to give extra powers to local authorities (e.g. to investigate fly-tipping, not just clear it up) and working with the manufacturers/suppliers predominately of white goods, to enhance the policing of fly-tipping and encourage the lawful disposal of them. A 10 years funding cycle is a more realistic timeframe for results.</p> <p>The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations (2013) could be reviewed to see if additional emphasis can be placed on the manufacturer/supplier to dispose of end-of-life goods and better measures should be developed to trace owners of fly-tipped goods (e.g. registration at time of purchase using serial numbers etc.)</p>
AMP	<p><b>Associated Management Plans</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Boundary Repair and Restoration</li> <li>■ Farm Diversification - Sustainable Tourism and Recreation</li> </ul>
R.G	<p><b>Relevant Guidance</b></p> <p>National Fly-Tipping Prevention Group  Fly-tipping Action Wales  Wales Arson Reduction Strategy 2012-2015  Treadlightly! UK</p>



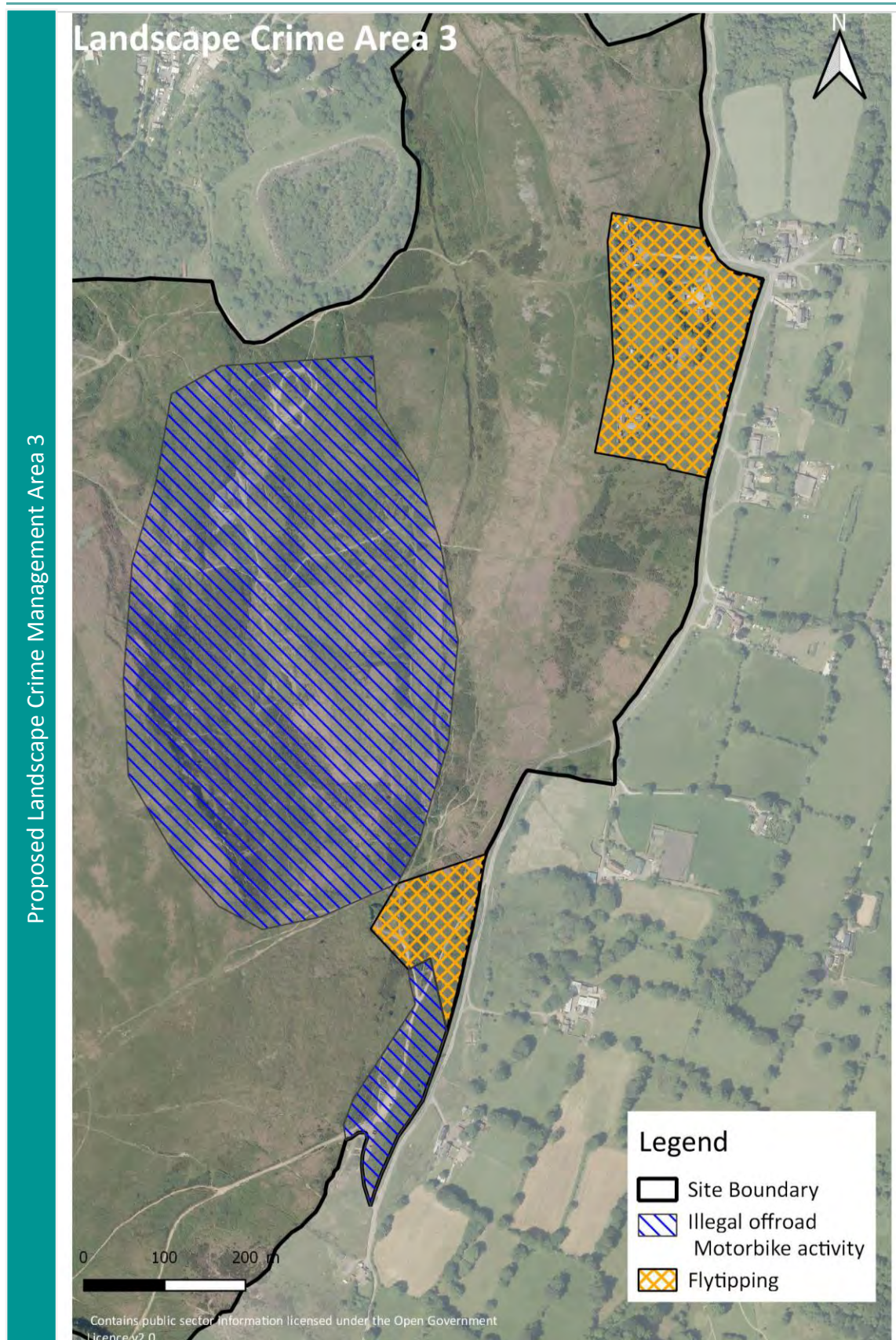
**Fig 5.13.1 Proposed Landscape Crime Management**



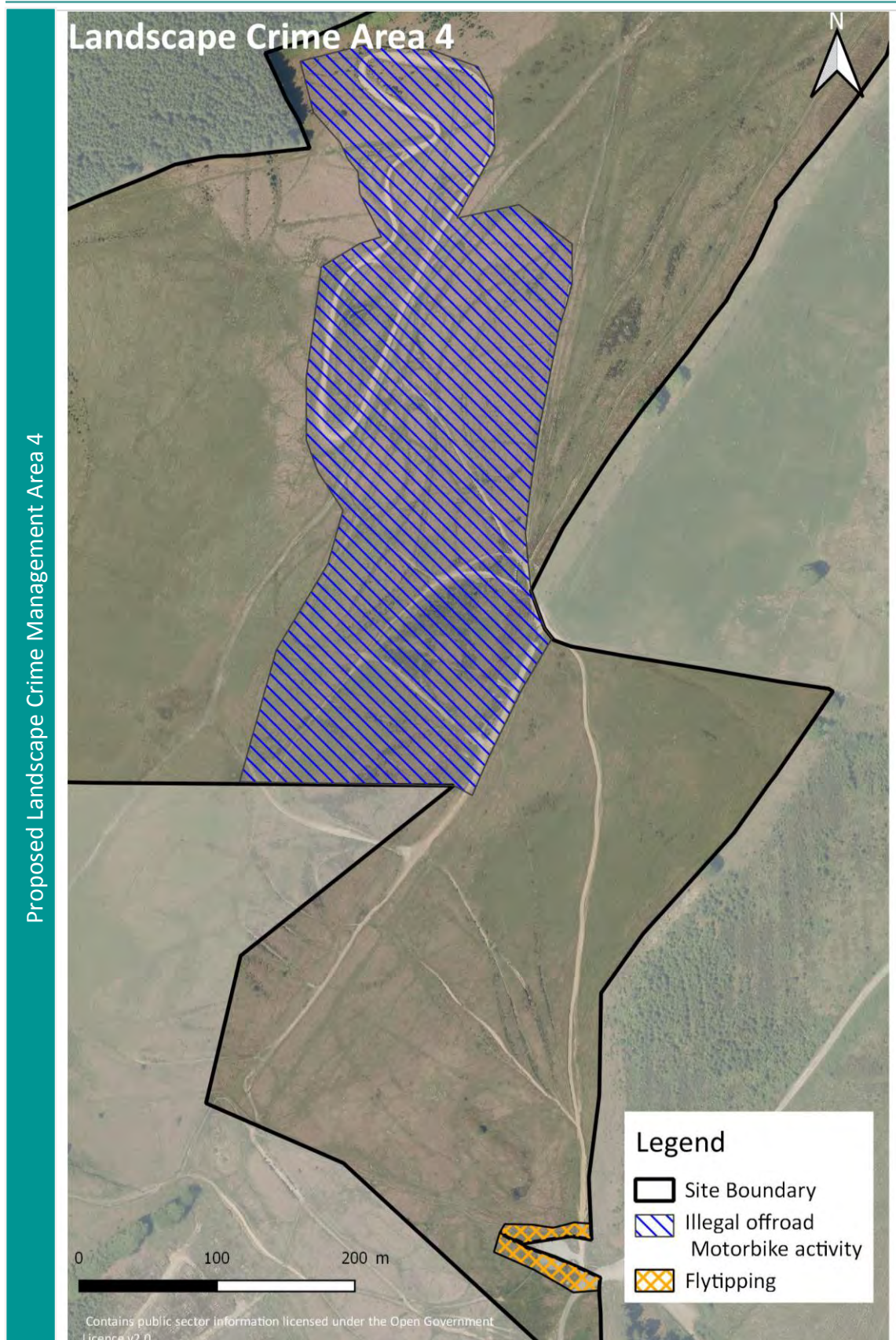
**Fig 5.13.2 Proposed Landscape Crime Management Area 1**



**Fig 5.13.3 Proposed Landscape Crime Management Area 2**



**Fig 5.13.4 Proposed Landscape Crime Management Area 3**



**Fig 5.13.5 Proposed Landscape Crime Management Area 4**

APPENDIX A

MYNYDD MAEN COMMONS INNOVATION PROJECT

ACTION PLAN

## 1.0 Action Plan

### 1.1 Introduction

The following action plan outlines the actions identified in the management plans together with timescales for implementation, potential funding opportunities,

### 1.2 Costs

Costs associated with the actions and priorities are estimated within the Action Plan. These are based on the costs outlined below which have been taken from Glastir or similar funding proposals, costs provided by the Commoners Association or those taken from general industry standards. However, it is essential that the commoners are paid market rates for this management as a way of ensuring the ongoing livelihoods of the existing commoners and the common itself. Concerns have been raised regarding the viability of the current Glastir payments to cover the management costs.

**Table 1.1: Action Plan Activity Costs**

Activity	Unit cost
Bracken Mowing (TCBC have provided a sprayer for £600)	£65/ha
Herbicide Application by hand or boom sprayer	£300/ha
Aerial Application of Herbicide	£260 / ha
Baling heather	£30 / bale
Flailing heather	£90/ha
Heather restoration	£120/ha
Removal of feral trees	£5/tree
Planting of whips	£5/whip
Hedgelaying	£20/lm

Ditch blocking – with stone dams/bales etc <0.5m wide	£20-£60 per dam
Ditch blocking – with stone dams/bales etc <1m wide	£40-£120 per dam
Ditch blocking – with stone dams/bales etc <2m wide	£80-£280 per dam
Rebuilding or building new dry stone walls	£180/m
Paths (Type 1 material and dust binder) Taken from the Adventure Triangle Work Packages	£35.00 per square metre

### 1.3 Delivery, Roles and Responsibilities

Delivery roles and key partners are identified within the Action Plan for each activity and priority. The key delivery bodies would involve the following:

- **Commoners Association** – the commoners are critical to the delivery of the plan. It is anticipated that they would carry out and / or lead many of the projects themselves which will provide income generation, encourage young farmers and long term sustainability of the Commons. They would also manage any contractors and specialists required
- **Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC)/Caerphilly County Borough Council (CCBC)** – potential source of funding, project management and co-ordination, ensuring connectivity and continuity of activities in and between the commons and other land management projects
- **Natural Resources Wales** – potential source of funding, project management, ensuring continuity of activities in and between commons and other land management and developing, collating and sharing best practice throughout Wales
- **Commons Officer** – as proposed in the NRMP an overseeing organisation is recommended to support the current work of the Commoners Associations and help in obtaining and managing funding, developing and managing volunteers, training, researching new opportunities, monitoring the effectiveness of management practices, encouraging interest from new commoners, sharing best practice between the commons and other areas of Wales. This organisation would be instrumental in the long term effectiveness, vitality and economic viability of the commons. The overseeing organisation would have a range of paid officers to support the commoners and land owners and provide a resource to implement the NRMP. Even if the overseeing organisation is not set up during the Commons Innovation Plan period it is recommended that a dedicated Commons Officer is available to work with TCBC and CCBC to implement the Plan
- **Contractors** – specialist contractors especially relating to aerial spraying and provision of specialist expertise and equipment
- **Volunteers** – volunteers are essential to delivery of management in the commons, they can help with a range of activities whilst gaining skills and experience. Volunteers could include local specialist groups such as RSPB, wildlife trust, bat or similar species groups, individuals, organised corporate activity days, training opportunities through organisations such as Groundwork Wales etc.

## 1.5 Funding Opportunities

Funding opportunities are identified within the Action Plan for each activity and priority. Key funding opportunities for this work are many and varied but often will require time and expertise to complete funding applications and management. These are usually associated with specific outcomes and are time limited. Key funding opportunities include the following:

■ **Welsh Government Rural Communities Rural Development Fund 2014-2020** has multiple funding streams including:

- Sustainable management scheme
- Glastir
- Young People in Agriculture
- LEADER

The main funding stream currently available to the Commoners is delivered through Glastir. Key elements of this funding relate to habitat management options for heathland, grassland and woodland. In addition to management there are capital works available in Glastir Advanced, which are available for specific objectives. The types of Capital Works include:

- boundary works such as fencing or stone wall restoration – intended to control stock grazing or to enhance landscape features
- installing culverts intended to reduce soil erosion, or enable water management
- vegetation management such as rhododendron control or heather restoration – intended to increase biodiversity
- improve public access e.g. gates and stiles
- works to improve historic features or structures.

The following funding initiatives are also available through the Glastir programme:

- Glastir Small Grants (Carbon) 2019 (opens November 2019 – closes December 2019)
- Glastir Small Grants (Landscape and Pollinators) (opens April 2019 – closes May 2019)
- Glastir Small Grants (Water) (currently closed)
- Glastir Woodland Creation (currently closed)
- Glastir Woodland Restoration (currently closed)

The current programme for Glastir will end in 2020 when it will be reorganised.

■ **Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle work packages 7 AND 11**

The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Adventure Triangle aims to develop outdoor recreation and leisure activities along the canal in Torfaen and Caerphilly. The budget of £4.6 million to be delivered by 2020 includes contributions from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Welsh Government.

The project has identified Cwmcarn as a hub site and this will form the focus of managed trails from Twmbarlwm and the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. Further routes are proposed across the Common to form a rationalised network of dedicated routes for mountain bikers, riders and ramblers. A car park is proposed in the north-west corner of the common to encourage people to use this area. The main packages of relevance for the Commons Innovation Plan are:

- Work package 7: Mynydd Maen /Twmbarlwm links (Caerphilly area)  
Estimated cost - £200,750
- Work package 11: Mynydd Maen /Twmbarlwm links (Torfaen area)  
Estimated cost - £132,073

- **LIFE Programme** – includes the European funded Natural Capital Financing Facility (NCFF). The NCFF supports projects addressing biodiversity, ecosystems services and climate adaptation. Projects are typically between €5 million and €15 million public and private entities, including public authorities, land owners and businesses are eligible to apply.
- **Torfaen Development Fund** – a fund that covers rural development throughout Torfaen.
- **Sustainable Management Scheme** -key part of Rural Development Programme and compliments Glastir programme.
- **Big Lottery** – this is one of the main funding sources for lottery projects in Wales and offers funding from £300-£10000 to support people and communities but is awarded to voluntary and community organisations. They can fund equipment, one off events, small capita projects, staff costs, training costs, transport, utilities/running costs and volunteer expenses.
- **Enabling Natural Resources and Well-being in Wales** – a new funding scheme to support implementation of the Natural Resources Policy, focussing on supporting cross sector collaborative projects. Whilst the deadline for submission was December 2018 it is anticipated that Torfaen and Caerphilly CBC will have submitted relevant projects to draw down from these funds.
- **Coalfields Regeneration Trust Wales** – the Coalfields Community Grants Programme in Wales can award grants from £500 - £7 000. The programme is for community and voluntary organisations that can clearly demonstrate that a grant will impact positively on people living in the former Coalfield communities of Wales. Grants will be awarded for projects that can be completed within 12 months and can identify clear positive and measurable outcomes. It may be necessary to join up with other projects that fit within the CRT funding area.

- **Volunteering Wales Grants** – Volunteering Wales Grants is a scheme funded by the Welsh Government to promote and improve volunteering in Wales. Grants will be allocated to projects that can demonstrate that they are able to make a contribution to delivering the Welsh Government's strategy, Prosperity for All, which describes a long-term aim to build a Wales that is prosperous and secure, healthy and active, ambitious and learning, and united and connected. This grant has opportunities for project funding of up to £20,000 for activity between April 2019 - March 2020.
  - **Valleys Regional Park** is a Welsh Government initiative focused on raising the quality of life for communities within the former South Wales coalfield. Extending from Carmarthenshire in the west to Monmouthshire in the east it contains over 1 million people. The concept behind the Park is to use the underlying quality of the environment to improve the social and economic climate. A dedicated team within the Welsh Government has begun to progress work. A number of dedicated gateway hubs which act as entrance points into the Park have been identified and the Cwmcarn Forest Centre is one of the gateways. In addition, the team is sourcing funding from the current round of Rural Development Plan funds. This will become an increasingly important funding source for projects such as the Commons Innovation Plan.
  - **Banc** – Development Bank of Wales offers loans up to £50k for start up costs, purchasing property and machinery
  - **Business Wales** - through their “finance locator” system can direct people to the appropriate loan or grant
- In addition to the above there are other sources of funding for projects identified in the plan. Many of these are outlined in the Natural Resources Wales Funding Update which outlines key funding sources from charities, Trusts and Foundations; Central Government and European Funding, Lottery Funding and also crowdfunding and online fundraising:

<https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/687476/november-2018-nrw-english.pdf?mode=pad&rnd=131877033750000000>

<https://beta.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-01/glastir-advanced-2018-rules-booklet-1.pdf>

<https://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/environment-grants/green-infrastructure-capital-grant/?lang=en>

Ref		Description	Year	Area/ quantity	Budget cost	Delivery Agent	Potential Funding Source	Comments
ACTION PLAN – BRACKEN CONTROL (ELM1)								
BC1	Bracken control	Bracken control through bruising or mowing Approx. 80 ha / year	Throughout plan period	400ha	Approx. £65/ha using tractor mounted rollers/cutters.  Total: £26 000	Commoners, landowners with support from Commons Officer, TBCBC, CCBC	Glastir Rural Development Fund	Continue current activities
BC2		Bracken control by aerial spraying where topography is too steep for mechanical control Approx. 200ha over plan period	Throughout plan period	200ha	£260/ha  Total: £52 000	Commoners, landowners with support from Commons Officer, TBCBC, CCBC, External contractor	Glastir Rural Development Fund	Continue current activities
BC3		Herbicide Application by hand or boom sprayer in hard to reach locations Approx. 20ha/yr	Throughout plan period	100ha	£300/ha  Total: £30 000	Commoners, landowners with support from Commons Officer, TBCBC, CCBC, external contractor	Glastir Rural Development Fund	Continue current activities
BC4		Assessment of stocking rates required to maintain areas of treated bracken	Year 1 and reviewed throughout plan period		Support may be required by external specialist  Budget: £8 000	Commoners, Commons Association, Commons Officer with support from TCBC, CCBC, external consultant as required	Glastir Rural Development Fund	This is essential to effective sustainable management. costs of increasing stocking numbers are not included in this Action Plan.
BC5		Create database of local farmers/contractors who can	Year 1 and reviewed		No budget allocated	Commons Officer, Commoners,		For training refer to Training Plan

	Bracken control	carry out bracken control – identify any specific requirements and training	throughout plan period			Commoners Association, volunteers, external consultant		
BC6		Review options for economic uses of bracken products	Year 1-2		Costs associated with research, site visits etc  Budget: £4 000	Commons Officer, Commoners, Commoners Association, volunteers	NRW Rural Development Fund TCBC	
BC7		If appropriate prepare business / marketing plan for products	Year 3-5		TBC	Commons Officer, local produce working group with support from TCBC, CCBC, external consultants	Rural Development Programme Farming Connect	Refer to Local Produce and Crafts Business Plan XX
BC8		Training in bracken management, cutting methods and developing products for reuse	Throughout plan period		TBC depending quantity and type of training required	Commoners, Commons Association, volunteers, local contractors	NRW Rural Development Fund TCBC CCBC	Refer to Training Plan
BC9		Monitoring - Take before and after photographs of restoration and management zones for monitoring purposes.	Throughout plan period		To be carried out by Commoners/ volunteers No budget allocated	Commons Officer, Commons Association, volunteers		

#### ACTION PLAN – HEATHLAND MANAGEMENT (ECO3)

HM1	Heathland management	Prepare plan for heather management to include areas for restoration/management of over mature stands and fire breaks	Year 1		Budget for Study £8 000	Commons Officer, Commons Association, with support from TCBC, Gwent Wildlife Trust, NRW	Glastir Rural Development Fund TCBC CCBC NRW	
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HM2	Heathland management	Restore 20 ha of heathland from acid grassland and bracken areas per year through the plan period. Total: 100ha	Throughout plan period	100ha	£120/ha  Total: £12 000	Commons Officer, Commons Association, with support from TCBC, Gwent Wildlife Trust, NRW	Glastir Rural Development	
HM3		Identify over-mature stands of heather and cut in patchwork mosaic of blocks c. 100m x 30m, managing a total of 100 ha of existing heather per year. Total: 500ha	Throughout plan period	500ha	£65/ha  Total: £32 500	Commons Association, Commoners	Glastir Rural Development	
HM4		Collect and bale heather brash to be used in restoration areas or to block grips or for sale etc. 40ha per year Total: 200ha	Throughout plan period	200ha	£30/ha  Total: £6 000	Commons Association, Commoners	Glastir Rural Development Farming Connect	
HM5		Training in heathland management, cutting methods and restoration	Throughout plan period		TBC depending quantity and type of training required	Commoners, Commons Association, volunteers, local contractors	NRW Rural Development Fund TCBC CCBC	Refer to Training Plan
HM6		Monitoring - Take before and after photographs of restoration and management zones for monitoring purposes.	Throughout plan period		To be carried out by Commoners/ volunteers No budget allocated	Commons Officer, Commons Association, volunteers		
HM7		Develop Red Grouse Conservation Plan to further support heathland restoration and management	Year 3		Budget for Study  Budget: £6 000	Commons Officer, Commons Association, volunteers with support from Gwent Wildlife Trust, external consultant	Glastir Rural Development Farming Connect NRW	

HM8	Heathland management	Monitoring – prepare programme for citizen science to gather records of species such as red grouse	Year 3		Programme to be developed by Commons Officer with voluntary inputs from others. No budget allocated	Commons Officer, volunteers with support from TCBC, NRW, Gwent Wildlife Trust	NRW Rural Development Fund TCBC	
HM9		Implement citizen science monitoring programme for red grouse and other species as appropriate	Years 4-5		TBC depending on type and detail of monitoring programme	Commons Officer, volunteers with support from TCBC, NRW, Gwent Wildlife Trust	NRW Rural Development Fund TCBC	

ACTION PLAN – CONTROL OF FERAL TREES (ELM2)								
FT1	Control of feral trees	Fell 100 feral trees of >5 ft (1.5m) per year Total: 500 trees	Throughout plan period	500	£5/tree Total: £2500	Commoners with support from Commons Officer and external contractors if required	Glastir Rural Development	Once removed ongoing management by mechanical methods or grazing will be required.
FT2		Pull or cut 100 feral conifers <5 ft (1.5m) Total: 500 trees	Throughout plan period	500	£2.50/tree Total £1250	Commoners, volunteers, Commons Officer and external contractors if required	Glastir Rural Development	Once removed ongoing management by mechanical methods or grazing will be required.
FT3		Monitoring - Take before and after photographs of target zones for monitoring purposes	Throughout plan period		To be carried out by Commoners/ volunteers No budget allocated	Commons Officer, Commons Association, volunteers		

ACTION PLAN – BOUNDARY REPAIRS (ELM3)								
BR1	Boundary repairs	Aim to create 100m of new / restored dry-stone wall each year Total: 500m	Throughout plan period	500m	£180/m  £90 000	Commoners with support from Commons Officer, volunteers, TCBC, CCBC, Drystone Walling Association (Welsh section) and adjacent landowners	Wales Nature Fund Other WG funding streams Glastir	
BR2		Organise a training programme for commoners and volunteers in dry stone walling techniques	Throughout plan period		TBC depending quantity and type of training required	Commons Officer, Commoners, volunteers, with support from TCBC, CCBC, Drystone Walling Association (Welsh section) and / or Groundwork Wales	TCBC CCBC Drystone Walling Association (Welsh section) Groundwork Wales	Refer to Training Plan. Training could be carried out as workshops, capacity building days and could be used to complete sections of walling required for the Commons
BR3		Repair and surfacing of footpaths as required. Priority identified by Commoners Association to north west of the Commons. Length: 375lm	Years 1/2	375lm	£35/m <sup>2</sup>  Total: £18 750	Commoners with support from Commons Officer, volunteers	Rural Development Plan TCBC CCBC Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle	This could form part of the footpath upgrades provided through the Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle project
BR4		Restoration of ditches. Priority identified by Commoners Association to north west of the Commons. Length: 460m	Years 1/2	460m	£40/m  Total: £18 400	Commoners with support from Commons Officer, volunteers	Rural Development Plan TCBC CCBC	
BR5		Where boundary walls are in very poor repair or very few stones remain, boundaries may need to be made temporarily secure using post and wire fencing.	Throughout plan period		£5.50/lm	Commoners	Glastir Rural Development Plan TCBC	This should be considered as a temporary measure prior to the walling being restored as part

								of a wider programme for the Commons
BR6	Boundary repairs	Where hedges form boundaries, these should be assessed for condition and managed appropriately. If new planting is required native stock is recommended.	Throughout plan period as required		£5/transplant	Commons Association, Commons Officer, volunteers		Planting could be carried out by volunteers under the supervision of the Commons Officer.
BR7		Where hedges are well established consideration should be given to hedge laying	Throughout plan period as required		£12/lm  Budget: as required	Commons Association, Commons Officer, Volunteers		Hedge laying could be carried out as a training exercise by Groundwork Wales, British Trust for Conservation Volunteers or under the Hill Farming Training Programme

ACTION PLAN – POND CREATION AND RESTORATION (EC07)								
PC1	Pond creation and restoration	Commons Association have identified 5 ponds to be created. Review this over the plan period.	Throughout plan period	5 ponds	£1200 per new pond (based on JCB costs)  Total: £6 000	Commoners, Commons Officer, Volunteers with support from external consultants if required	Glastir Rural Development Fund TCBC	
PC2		Restore and extend ponds as required	Throughout plan period	4 known to date	£800 per existing pond Total: £3 200	Commoners, Commons Officer, Volunteers	Glastir Rural Development Fund TCBC	
PC3		Survey existing pond vegetation to identify areas that have been poached by livestock. Use hazel hurdles to reduce grazing pressure in sensitive areas.	Throughout plan period		£10/lm	Commons Officer, Commoners, Volunteers	Glastir Rural Development Fund TCBC	Hurdles can be created from vegetation clearance carried out on the Commons

ACTION PLAN – BOG RESTORATION (ECO1)								
BR1	Bog Restoration	Reinstate the track and provide culverts to extend the bog to the west of the track	Year 1/2		Capital works Total: £5000	Commons Officer, Commoners with support from TCBC	Wales Nature Fund Rural Development Plan Glastir Wales Wetland Ecosystem Group	
BR2		Survey and develop a plan for extending the area of bog restoration to include hydrological modelling	Year 2		Budget for study: £12 000	Commons Officer, Commoners with support from TCBC, NRW Wales Wetland Ecosystems Group and external consultant	Wales Nature Fund Rural Development Plan Glastir Wales Wetland Ecosystem Group	Wales Wetland Ecosystems Group (Wales Biodiversity Partnership) have shown interest in working with community groups on bog restoration projects
BR3		Deliver the plan for restoration. This could include ditch blocking; lime application; introduction of sphagnum species.	Years 3-5	10ha restoration /yr	TBC  Guide Budget: £60 000	Commons Officer, Commoners with support from TCBC, NRW and Wales Wetland Ecosystems Group	Wales Nature Fund Rural Development Plan Glastir Wales Wetland Ecosystem Group	
BR4		Develop education programme on the value of bogs	Years 2/3		This depends on the type of programme developed. No budget allocation	Commons Officer, Commoners with support from TCBC, NRW and Wales Wetland Ecosystems Group	Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle Wales Nature Fund Rural Development Plan	
BR5		Training of commoners and volunteers in bogs management, associated wildlife and monitoring	Years 3-5		TBC depending quantity and type of training required	Commons Officer, Commoners with support from TCBC, NRW and Wales Wetland Ecosystems Group		Refer to Training Plan

ACTION PLAN – FARM DIVERSIFICATION: SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND RECREATION (CES4)								
ST1	Sustainable tourism and recreation	Develop a Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Plan/Strategy to include public consultation and stakeholder engagement	Years 1/2	Throughout the Commons	Prepare plan/strategy  Budget: £25 000	Commons Officer, Commoners with support from TCBC, CCBC, external consultants	Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle Wales Nature Fund Rural Development Plan Heritage Lottery Funding	
ST2		Implementation of Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Plan/Strategy	Years 3-5	Throughout the Commons	TBC  Guide Budget: £200 000	Commons Officer, Commoners with support from TCBC, CCBC, external consultants	Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle Wales Nature Fund Rural Development Plan Heritage Lottery Funding	This will depend upon the outcomes of the Plan/Strategy above
ST3		Develop programme of walks and events prior to outcomes of Plan/Strategy to include publicity, costs of venue/materials/leaders	Years 1/2	8 events per year	Guide Budget to provide materials etc:  £4 000	Commons Officer, Commoners with support from TCBC, CCBC	Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle Wales Nature Fund Rural Development Plan Business Wales Farming Connect	This will provide evidence for the development of the Plan/Strategy. It is intended that over time this programme will be self-sustaining. Local guides could be paid through Hill Farming Training Scheme
ST4		Review of options for off roading provision – to provide a resource and reduce illegal off-roading				Commons Officer, Commoners Association with support from local landowners, TCBC, CCBC, police service	Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle Wales Nature Fund Rural Development Plan Business Wales Farming Connect	This is a wider issue and should be considered on a regional SE Wales basis

**ACTION PLAN – FARM DIVERSIFICATION: LOCAL PRODUCE AND CRAFTS (ELM5)**

LP1	Local produce and crafts	Detailed review of stocking rates to determine optimal stocking rates and options for introducing other livestock into the Commons	Year 1		Prepare plan/strategy Budget: £8 000	Commons Officer, Commoners with support from TCBC, CCBC, external consultants	Rural Development Programme Farming Connect Food Business Investment Scheme TCBC Co-operation and Supply Chain Development Scheme	Support could be provided from Farming Connect advice and support and grants from the Food Business Investment Scheme and the Co-operation and Supply Chain Development Scheme
		Establish local group to focus on developing and marketing local produce. This may include sub groups to focus on farm products and arts and crafts	Year 1			Commons Officer, Commons Association, Commoners, local interested parties/landowners with support from TCBC and CCBC		It is anticipated that the Commons Officer will encourage participation and meetings will be held voluntarily in local properties at least in the initial stages of its development
		Develop business plan for developing and marketing local produce	Year 3		Prepare business plan  Budget: £20 000	Commons Officer, local produce working group (identified above) with support from TCBC, CCBC, external consultants	Rural Development Programme Farming Connect TCBC Business Wales	This should include a business plan and marketing plan. Ideally this would be for local produce to include farms products and arts and crafts
		Commence implementation of Business Plan	Year 4-5		TBC	Commons Officer, local produce working group (identified above), local food distributors and outlets with support from TCBC, CCBC, external consultants	Rural Development Programme Farming Connect TCBC Business Wales Private investment Crowd funding Partnership funding	This will depend upon the outcomes of the business plan however if there are delays in preparing the plan then support should continue to develop capacity and outlets on a smaller scale

LP5	Local produce and crafts	Start up of small businesses for arts and crafts	Years 2-5		Budget: £40 000	Commons Officer, local produce working group (identified above), with support from TCBC, CCBC, external consultants	Rural Development Programme TCBC, CCBC Business Wales Private investment Crowd funding Partnership funding	It is recommended that support is provided to small craft industries early in the plan period which will form part of the wider local produce business plan.
LP6		Develop training programme for commoners, local people and volunteers in technical and business elements of starting and developing small businesses and outlets	Years 2-5		TBC depending quantity and type of training required	Commoners, volunteers, local producers with support from Commons Officer, TCBC, CCBC		Refer to Training Plan

#### ACTION PLAN – FARM DIVERSIFICATION: HUB (ELM5)

HU1	Hub	Study to review options and opportunities for creating a hub on the Commons	Year 2/3		Prepare study  Budget: £20 000	Commons Officer, local produce working group, with support from TCBC, CCBC, external consultants	Rural Development Programme TCBC, CCBC Business Wales Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle	
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#### ACTION PLAN – FARM DIVERSIFICATION: COMMONS SIGNAGE AND INTERPRETATION (CES4)

SI1	Signage and interpretation	Develop proposals for signage and interpretation	Years 1-2		This should be developed with proposals for Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle No budget allocated	Commons Officer, local produce working group, TCBC, CCBC	Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle Rural Development Programme Valleys Regional Park TCBC CCBC	Liaison should be carried out with Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle and Valleys Regional Park to create coherent and locally appropriate proposals. Consideration should also be given to
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								branding and local produce.
SI2	Signage and interpretation	Implement proposals for signage and interpretation	Years 2-5		TBC following development of proposals		Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle Rural Development Programme Valleys Regional Park TCBC CCBC	This should be implemented in association with proposals for Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle

#### ACTION PLAN – FARM DIVERSIFICATION: RENEWABLE ENERGY (ELM5)

RE1	Renewable energy	Review options and interest for renewable energy amongst Commoners and landowners	Year 2-3		Initial review to be carried out by Commons Officer with Commoners and local interested parties No budget allocated	Commons Officer, Commoners Association, local landowners, TCBC, CCBC	Energy Saving Trust TCBC NRW	
RE2		Develop proposals for implementation	Years 3-5		TBC following review of options	Commons Officer, Commoners Association, local landowners, TCBC, CCBC	Energy Saving Trust	See also proposals for the Hub

#### ACTION PLAN – LANDSCAPE CRIME (CES1)

LC1	Landscape Crime	Develop and implement signage	Throughout the plan period as required		TBC depending on type and number	Commons Officer, Commoners Association, with support from local landowners, TCBC, CCBC, fire service		This should be considered in association with implementation of signage
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LC2	Landscape Crime	Boundary improvements	Throughout the plan period as required		See boundary repairs above	Commons Officer, Commoners Association, with support from local landowners, TCBC, CCBC, fire service		This should be considered in association with boundary repairs
LC3		Install surveillance	Throughout the plan period as required		TBC depending on type and extent	Commons Officer, Commoners Association with support from local landowners, TCBC, CCBC, fire/police service	TCBC CCBC	
LC4		Education/social media campaign	Throughout the plan period as required			Commons Officer, Commoners Association with support from local landowners, TCBC, CCBC, fire/police service	TCBC CCBC Mon and Brec Canal Adventure Triangle	This should be considered as part of wider marketing and publicity. Consideration should be given to relevant websites, facebook pages, Societies and organisations
LC5		Consider establishment of landscape crime watch group	Year 3-5		Volunteers supported by Commons Officer and Commons Association	Commons Officer, Commoners Association with support from local landowners, TCBC, CCBC, fire/police service		
LC6		Review formal provision of waste disposal and costs and determine options to reduce the cause of fly tipping	Year 2		This could be carried out by Commons Officer, Commons Association.	Commons Officer, Commoners Association with support from local landowners, TCBC, CCBC, police service		

APPENDIX B

MYNYDD MAEN COMMONS INNOVATION PROJECT

TRAINING PLAN

Management Proposed	Skills required	Training	Training providers / Collaborators	Accreditations / Qualifications / Knowledge
<b>Bracken control</b>	<p>The preferred methods of controlling bracken on the commons include tractor flail mowing and use of livestock; and chemical methods, i.e. herbicide application.</p> <p>Skills include: grazing and grazing systems, animal health, welfare and behaviour, the key legislation, the role and responsibilities of a keeper, health &amp; safety and risk assessments, livestock handling, marketing and diversification.</p>	<p>Basic Tractor Training Course:</p> <p>LANTRA Tractor Training Course for 13-15 Year Olds</p> <p>GAP (Grazing Animals Partnership): Conservation Grazing in Practice</p> <p>Simply The Best training in beef and sheep systems, marketing and diversification</p> <p>Pest and Disease Courses: PA1 Safe Use of Pesticides Course (1-day)</p> <p>PA2 Technical Award in Boom Sprayer – Hydraulic Nozzle (1-day)</p> <p>PA6A Handheld Applicators Course</p> <p>Wales Hill Farming Training Scheme</p>	<p>Greenway Training, Thickthorn Farm, Lyneham, SN15 4DY. 07464 482862 <a href="mailto:info@greenwaytraining.co.uk">info@greenwaytraining.co.uk</a> <a href="http://greenwaytraining.co.uk/">http://greenwaytraining.co.uk/</a></p> <p>Parkhill training and assessment Tel: 01509 815 534 Email: <a href="mailto:info@parkhilltraining.co.uk">info@parkhilltraining.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.parkhilltraining.co.uk/trainingandassessments/rural-craft-courses/">http://www.parkhilltraining.co.uk/trainingandassessments/rural-craft-courses/</a></p> <p>mwmac Ltd, Coed Pwllacca Brynwern Builth Wells, Powys LD2 3SE T: 01597 433117 E: <a href="mailto:enquiries@mwmac.co.uk">enquiries@mwmac.co.uk</a> <a href="https://www.mwmac.co.uk/training.html">https://www.mwmac.co.uk/training.html</a></p> <p>Simply The Best Training <a href="https://simplythebestnews.wordpress.com/">https://simplythebestnews.wordpress.com/</a></p> <p>Foundation for Common Land (FCL) <a href="http://www.foundationforcommonland.org.uk/hill-farming-training-for-conservation-professionals">http://www.foundationforcommonland.org.uk/hill-farming-training-for-conservation-professionals</a> <a href="http://www.foundationforcommonland.org.uk/commons/associations/wales">http://www.foundationforcommonland.org.uk/commons/associations/wales</a> NFU Cymru: <a href="https://www.nfu-cymru.org.uk/assets/13871">https://www.nfu-cymru.org.uk/assets/13871</a></p> <p>Lynher Training. <a href="http://lynhertraining.com/">http://lynhertraining.com/</a> Tel: 01822 832902. e-mail: <a href="mailto:admin@lynher.com">admin@lynher.com</a> <a href="http://lynhertraining.com">http://lynhertraining.com</a></p>	<p>Lantra Awards Technical Award in Tractor Driving</p> <p>PA1 – Technical Award in Safe Use of Pesticides</p> <p>PA2 – Technical Award in Boom Sprayer – Hydraulic Nozzle</p> <p>PA6A – Technical Award in Hand Held Applicators</p>

Management Proposed	Skills required	Training	Training providers / Collaborators	Accreditations / Qualifications / Knowledge
Restoration and management of upland heath	Restoration of dry poor acid grassland and bracken habitats by vegetation stripping down to bare soil, spreading heather brash / seed and healing in.	<p>Tractor flail mowing</p> <p>Basic Tractor Training Course</p> <p>Mini excavator training</p> <p>On-site heather management and restoration demonstration</p>	<p>Greenway Training, Thickthorn Farm, Lyneham, SN15 4DY. 07464 482862 <a href="mailto:info@greenwaytraining.co.uk">info@greenwaytraining.co.uk</a> <a href="http://greenwaytraining.co.uk/">http://greenwaytraining.co.uk/</a></p> <p>Parkhill training and assessment Tel: 01509 815 534 Email: <a href="mailto:info@parkhilltraining.co.uk">info@parkhilltraining.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.parkhilltraining.co.uk/trainingandassessments/rural-craft-courses/">http://www.parkhilltraining.co.uk/trainingandassessments/rural-craft-courses/</a></p> <p>mwmac Ltd Coed Pwllacca, Brynwern Builth Wells, Powys LD2 3SE <a href="https://www.mwmac.co.uk/training.html">https://www.mwmac.co.uk/training.html</a> T: 01597 433117 E: <a href="mailto:enquiries@mwmac.co.uk">enquiries@mwmac.co.uk</a></p> <p>Support and bespoke training from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Brecon Beacons National Park Wardens</li> <li>- NRW</li> <li>- RSPB</li> <li>- Gwent Wildlife Trust</li> <li>- RSPB</li> <li>- Gwent Wildlife Trust</li> </ul>	<p>NPORS/CSCS operator card.</p> <p>Knowledge and on the job experience</p>
Control of feral trees	Felling and removal of feral trees in particular conifers, encroaching onto common land from adjacent forestry. The preferred method is by chainsaw. Material will be	LANTRA Chainsaw Cross Cutting & Maintenance Refresher Course	<p>Greenway Training, Thickthorn Farm, Lyneham, SN15 4DY. 07464 482862 <a href="mailto:info@greenwaytraining.co.uk">info@greenwaytraining.co.uk</a></p>	Lantra Level 2 Award in Chainsaw Maintenance and Cross-Cutting (QCF)

Management Proposed	Skills required	Training	Training providers / Collaborators	Accreditations / Qualifications / Knowledge
		<p>Chainsaw Maintenance and Crosscutting Course</p> <p>Felling and Processing Trees Course</p> <p>Brushcutters and Trimmers Course</p> <p>Neath Port Talbot College Level 2 Award in Felling and Processing Trees up to 380mm, apprentices and other specialist courses</p>	<p>Parkhill training and assessment Tel: 01509 815 534 Email: <a href="mailto:info@parkhilltraining.co.uk">info@parkhilltraining.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.parkhilltraining.co.uk/trainingandassessments/rural-craft-courses/">http://www.parkhilltraining.co.uk/trainingandassessments/rural-craft-courses/</a></p> <p>mwmac Ltd, Coed Pwllacca Brynwern Builth Wells Powys LD2 3SE T: 01597 433117 E: <a href="mailto:enquiries@mwmac.co.uk">enquiries@mwmac.co.uk</a> <a href="https://www.mwmac.co.uk/training.html">https://www.mwmac.co.uk/training.html</a></p> <p>Neath Port Talbot College: <a href="https://www.nptcgroup.ac.uk/schools/catering-hospitality-and-agriculture/">https://www.nptcgroup.ac.uk/schools/catering-hospitality-and-agriculture/</a> Coleg Gwent: <a href="https://www.coleggwent.ac.uk/">https://www.coleggwent.ac.uk/</a></p>	<p>NPTC Awards Level 2 Award in Felling and Processing Trees up to 380mm</p> <p>Lantra Awards Technical Award in Brushcutters/Trimmers – Maintenance and Operation</p>
<b>Restoration of bogs</b>	<p>Creating suitable conditions for their recovery from degraded raised bog</p> <p>Installation and repair of bunds, damming of drainage features and restoration of marginal ditches</p> <p>Restoration of the hydrological regimes to enable the recovery of active raised bogs and the development of natural hydrological gradients and habitat zones.</p>	<p>Mini excavator training</p> <p>On-site peat bog restoration demonstration</p>	<p>Advisory role/specialist guidance to contractors undertaking restoration works from organisations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wildfowl and Wetland Trust</li> <li>- NRW</li> <li>- Gwent Wildlife Trust</li> <li>- Bespoke land management training through BBNP, Gwent Wildlife Trust</li> </ul>	<p>Knowledge/skills development</p>

Management Proposed	Skills required	Training	Training providers / Collaborators	Accreditations / Qualifications / Knowledge
<b>Boundary repair and restoration</b>	<p>Dry stone walling techniques.</p> <p>Where stone walls are in reasonable condition or most of the stone is still in situ, these should be restored by skilled workers.</p> <p>Where boundary walls are in very poor repair or very few stones remain, boundaries should be made temporarily secure using post and wire fencing.</p> <p>Where boundaries are hedges, these should be assessed for condition and managed appropriately. New tree planting using native stock is recommended. Train commoners and volunteers in hedge laying and maintenance.</p>	<p>Dry-stone walling</p> <p>Stock-proof fencing</p> <p>Hedge laying, planting and maintenance</p> <p>Level 2 Fencing Apprenticeship Framework</p>	<p>Dry-stone Walling Association – Welsh Branch Brian Lock 24 Cottrell Street Aberfan, Merthyr Tydfil, CF48 4QU Tel: 07966 761172 E-mail: <a href="mailto:brianlock19@aol.com">brianlock19@aol.com</a></p> <p>Greenway Training, Thickthorn Farm, Lyneham, SN15 4DY. Tel. 07464 482862 <a href="mailto:info@greenwaytraining.co.uk">info@greenwaytraining.co.uk</a> <a href="https://www.humblebynature.com/course-categories/">https://www.humblebynature.com/course-categories/</a></p> <p>Parkhill training and assessment Tel: 01509 815 534 Email: <a href="mailto:info@parkhilltraining.co.uk">info@parkhilltraining.co.uk</a> <a href="http://www.parkhilltraining.co.uk/trainingandassessments/rural-craft-courses/">http://www.parkhilltraining.co.uk/trainingandassessments/rural-craft-courses/</a></p> <p>mwmac Ltd, Coed Pwllacca Brynwern Builth Wells Powys LD2 3SE T: 01597 433117 E: <a href="mailto:enquiries@mwmac.co.uk">enquiries@mwmac.co.uk</a> <a href="https://www.mwmac.co.uk/training.html">https://www.mwmac.co.uk/training.html</a></p> <p>Local Authority Countryside Wardens</p>	<p>The DSWA Craftsman Certification Scheme, nationally recognised qualifications in dry stone walling at Levels 1 (Initial), 2 (Intermediate) and 3 (Advanced).</p> <p>Lantra Awards Level 2 Certificate in Principles of Fencing</p> <p>Lantra Awards Technical Award Hedgerow Planting and Management</p>
<b>Farm Diversification Sustainable tourism and recreation</b>	<p>Knowledge in how to enhance sustainable tourism and recreation opportunities</p>	<p>Welsh Government - Sustainable tourism - A framework for Wales guidance document (2007)</p>	<p><a href="https://businesswales.gov.wales/dmwales/sustainable-tourism/sustainability-toolkit-overview">https://businesswales.gov.wales/dmwales/sustainable-tourism/sustainability-toolkit-overview</a></p> <p><a href="https://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/070901-sustainable-tourism-en.pdf">https://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/070901-sustainable-tourism-en.pdf</a></p>	<p>Knowledge</p>

Management Proposed	Skills required	Training	Training providers / Collaborators	Accreditations / Qualifications / Knowledge
		<p>Business Wales/WG - Created a sustainable tourism toolkit</p> <p>The Glamping Association</p> <p>Coleg Gwent - tailormade courses</p>	<p><a href="https://www.glampingassociation.co.uk/">https://www.glampingassociation.co.uk/</a></p> <p>Coleg Gwent: <a href="https://www.coleggwent.ac.uk/">https://www.coleggwent.ac.uk/</a></p>	
<b>Farm Diversification - Tourism and recreation, Local produce and crafts</b>	This plan includes processing, marketing and sale of meat and other livestock products; preparation and sale of crafts and other farm products. It also includes general food hygiene and preparation skills.	<p>Farming Connect farm diversification and marketing workshops.</p> <p>Simply The Best training in marketing and diversification</p> <p>How to become involved in Payment for Ecosystem Services Scheme</p> <p>Hill Farming Training</p> <p>Courses for food hygiene and preparation skills.</p> <p>Coleg Gwent- day courses covering 3 levels of skill and competency</p>	<p>Welsh Government / NRW <a href="https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/">https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/</a> <a href="https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/face-face-training">https://businesswales.gov.wales/farmingconnect/face-face-training</a> <a href="https://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/141013-farm-diversification-in-powys-en.pdf">https://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/141013-farm-diversification-in-powys-en.pdf</a></p> <p>Other courses available through FE Sector, locally Coleg Gwent offer fixed courses and can produce targeted courses. <a href="https://www.coleggwent.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=2165#.VhY7PfIVhBc">https://www.coleggwent.ac.uk/index.php?option=com_content&amp;view=article&amp;id=2165#.VhY7PfIVhBc</a></p> <p>NFU Cymru: <a href="https://www.nfu-cymru.org.uk/assets/13871">https://www.nfu-cymru.org.uk/assets/13871</a></p> <p>Foundation for Common Land (FCL) <a href="https://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/payments-for-ecosystems-projects/?lang=en">https://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/payments-for-ecosystems-projects/?lang=en</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200920/pb13932-pes-bestpractice-20130522.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/200920/pb13932-pes-bestpractice-20130522.pdf</a></p>	<p>Knowledge</p> <p>Quality assured certificate, accreditation by the CPD Certification Service</p>

Management Proposed	Skills required	Training	Training providers / Collaborators	Accreditations / Qualifications / Knowledge
		<p>High Speed Training – online courses</p> <p>Level 2 “Food Hygiene and safety (c2 hrs duration)</p> <p>Level 3 “Supervising food safety in Catering” (8-10 hours duration)</p>	<p><a href="https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/available-courses/food-hygiene.aspx">https://www.highspeedtraining.co.uk/available-courses/food-hygiene.aspx</a></p> <p>From: Lynher Training. <a href="http://lynhertraining.com/">http://lynhertraining.com/</a>  Tel: 01822 832902. Fax: 01822 832902.  e-mail: <a href="mailto:admin@lynher.com">admin@lynher.com</a></p>	
Conservation volunteering	<b>Contribute</b> to environmental management activities. Supports efforts made by statutory agencies. Includes training to enable works to be safely carried out.	Caerphilly CBC and Torfaen CBC.	Torfaen and Caerphilly support a range of volunteer groups. Torfaen countryside volunteers have a particular focus on the commons. The potential to focus their efforts on the commons should be built into their work programme as required. Other groups within the Torfaen and Caerphilly have the potential for development/ transference of skills which could be used on the commons. These include: Blaenavon World Heritage Environment Group, Caerphilly Woodlands Trust, Henllys Local Nature Reserve Group and Coed Craig Ruperra Volunteers.	Knowledge and basic skill base.