

Appendix 2: Burnham Beeches (SSSI) Favourable Condition Table

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Operational feature	Criteria feature	Attribute	Measure	Target	Comments
Semi-natural woodland	Beech woods with <i>Ilex</i> and <i>Taxus</i> rich in epiphytes (W14 W15)	Area	Extent/location of stands	<p>No loss of ancient semi-natural stands</p> <p>At least 90% current area of recent semi-natural stands maintained, although their location may alter.</p> <p>At least the area of ancient woodland retained. Area and location of stands as on Ancient Woodland Inventory, Management Plan and Richard Collingridge 1999 survey.</p>	<p>Stand loss due to natural processes e.g. in minimum intervention stands may be acceptable.</p> <p>Stand destruction may occur if the understorey and ground flora are irretrievably damaged even if the canopy remains intact.</p> <p>Loss = 0.5 ha or 0.5% of stand area, whichever is smaller.</p> <p>20% canopy cover is conventionally taken as the lower limit for an area to be considered as woodland.</p> <p>Beech may not be abundant throughout the stand, particularly in regeneration patches, but this does not count as stand loss.</p> <p>Small scale reduction in extent to expand heath, acid grassland, mire & wetland communities by removal of young birch, beech & oak is acceptable.</p>
		Natural processes and structural development	Age/size class variation within and between stands; presence of open space and old trees; dead wood lying on the ground; standing dead trees	<p>At least the current level of structural diversity maintained (management plan and Collingridge survey).</p> <p>Understorey (2-5m) present over 10-80% total stand area (except in wood pasture).</p> <p>Ground flora present over at least 10% of area or current</p>	<p>Any changes leading to exceedance of these limits due to natural processes is acceptable.</p> <p>The understorey ranges from virtually non-existent to impenetrable holly. If the understorey is very dense it may be affecting ground flora or lichen growth on lower trunks of trees.</p> <p>Acid grassland is present beneath veteran</p>

				<p>extent in mature stands, whichever is greater.</p> <p>Canopy cover present over 30-90 % of stand area (except in wood pasture).</p> <p>Maintain age class structure as predominantly high forest with mixed age class range and with large number of veteran pollards and near-veterans.</p> <p>Regen. should be frequent throughout.</p> <p>A minimum of 3 fallen lying trees >20 cm diameter per ha and 4 trees per ha allowed to die standing.</p>	<p>pollards in the fenced woodpasture area.</p> <p>Assess by field survey.</p>
		Regeneration potential	<p>Successful establishment of young stems in gaps or on the edge of a stand</p>	<p>Signs of seedlings growing through to saplings to young trees at sufficient density to maintain canopy density over a 10 yr period.</p> <p>No planting.</p>	<p>A proportion of gaps at any one time may develop into permanent open space; equally some current permanent open space/glades may in time regenerate to closed canopy.</p> <p>The density of regeneration considered sufficient is clearly less in parkland sites than in high forest.</p> <p>The minimum level of regeneration to be acceptable from a nature conservation viewpoint is likely to be much less than that needed where wood production is also an objective.</p> <p>Assess this attribute in spring/summer.</p>
		Composition	<p>Cover of native versus non-native species (all layers)</p>	<p>At least current level (management plan and Collingridge survey) of site-native spp maintained.</p>	<p>Portman Burtley area has 30-40 yr old coniferous and mixed plantations.</p> <p>Where cover in any one layer is less than 100% then the 90% target applies to the</p>

			<p>Death, destruction or replacement of native woodland species through effects of non-native fauna or external unnatural factors</p>	<p>Programme of conversion of coniferous plantations to native broadleaf. At least 90% cover in any layer of site-native or acceptable naturalised spp. Beech present in mature canopy at at least 30% cover for feature on site as a whole. Death, destruction or replacement of native woodland species through effects of introduced fauna or other external unnatural factors not >10% by number or area in a 5 year period.</p>	<p>area actually covered by that layer. Factors leading to the death or replacement of woodland species could include pollution, eutrophication, new diseases. Damage to trees by squirrels that does not lead to their death or replacement by “non woodland” species is not necessarily unacceptable in nature conservation terms (though it affect other management aims). Excessive browsing/grazing by even native ungulates may be considered an unnatural external factor where it leads to undesirable shifts in the composition/structure of the stand, although this may be picked up by attributes 2 or 5 anyway. Assess this attribute by a walk through the site.</p>
		<p>Species, habitats, structures characteristic of the site.</p>	<p>Ground flora type</p> <p>Distinctive and desirable elements.</p> <p>Patches of associated habitats and transitions</p>	<p>60% of ground flora cover referable to relevant NVC community (W14, W15) (nb part of Portman Burtley mainly W16)</p> <p>Maintain population of <i>Zygodon forsteri</i> Maintain at least current number of juniper bushes. Maintain at least current number of veteran trees & ancient pollards, subject to natural change. Maintain adequate number of mature trees & standing dead</p>	<p>Changes leading to these targets not being met may be acceptable where this is due to natural processes.</p> <p>Details of these are in the management plan and Collingridge survey. Assessment to be by simple visual survey in first instance (methods being trialled this summer) with periodic specialist surveys as required.</p>

				trees to provide suitable conditions over a large proportion of the site to support saproxylic invertebrate and epiphyte assemblages. Maintain transitions to alder woodland, heath and mire.	
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