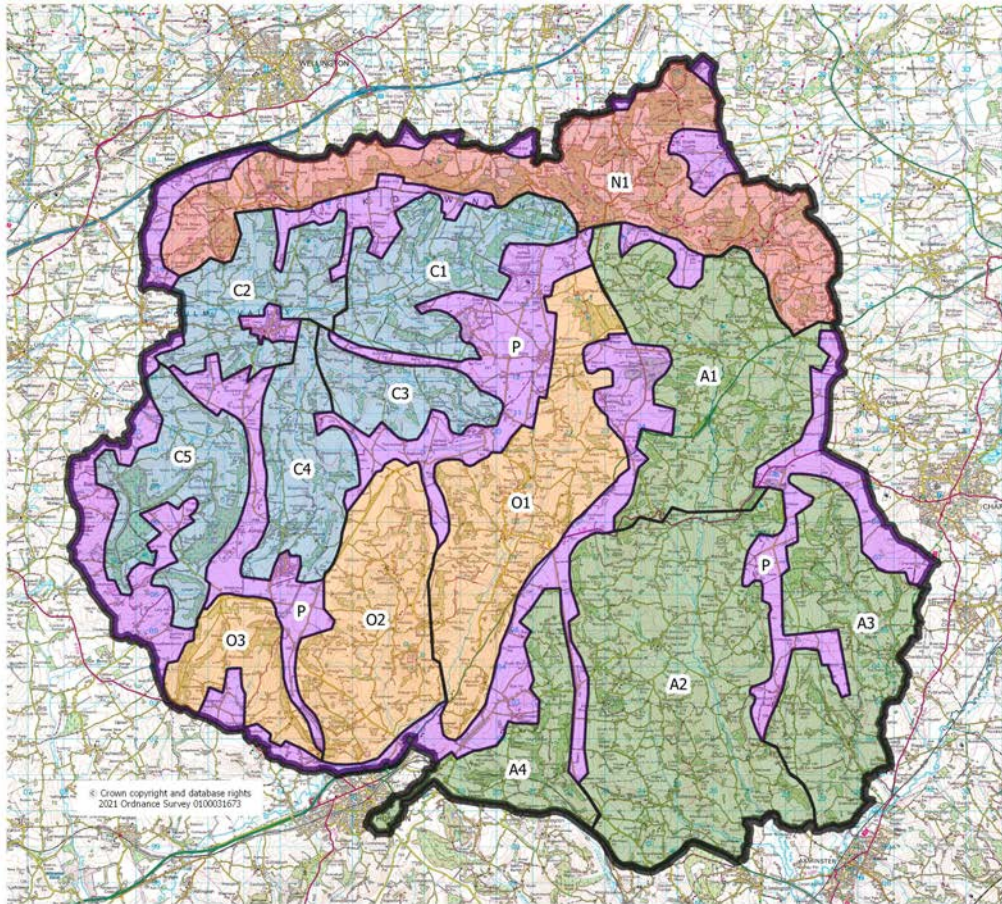


BLACKDOWN HILLS AONB

NATURE RECOVERY PLAN

NATURE RECOVERY AREAS: DEFINITION AND DELIVERY PLAN



Compiled by Gavin Saunders with James Maben for BHAONB

September 2021

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1. CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

- 1.1 This document is intended to serve as a **delivery plan** element of the wider **Blackdown Hills Nature Recovery Plan**. It follows on from part 1 of the Nature Recovery Area (NRA) identification process (Saunders & Maben May 2021), which in turn built on the Blackdown Hills State of Nature report (Geckoella June 2021), and Nature Recovery Visualisations (Phil Collins April 2021).
- 1.2 The NRAs described here are intended to provide a blueprint to target investment through FiPL (Farming in Protected Landscapes) and other mechanisms over the coming years.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 The 14 Nature Recovery Areas (NRAs) identified in this report deliberately **cover the entire AONB**. This all-encompassing approach has been taken in order to create a **holistic agenda** for nature recovery, recognising the importance of measures which can be taken across the farmed and forested landscape.
- 2.2 All 14 NRAs include land where **priority actions** can and should be pursued to enable the recovery of habitats, species and ecosystem functions across the AONB landscape. 13 are based on **river catchment and sub-catchment boundaries**, excluding most of the flat plateau lands. These NRAs generally represent ancient countryside on the valley sides and floodplains, with thick hedges and relatively small field sizes. The 14th NRA covers the remaining **high plateau land**, together with some of the lower peripheral land around the boundaries of the AONB. These areas are largely agriculturally improved, with larger, late-enclosure field patterns.
- 2.3 The suites of **nature recovery actions** identified for these NRAs vary in their emphasis, from a focus on conserving and expanding existing habitat for biodiversity, to a consideration of opportunities for regenerative farming practices for soil conservation and hydrological management.

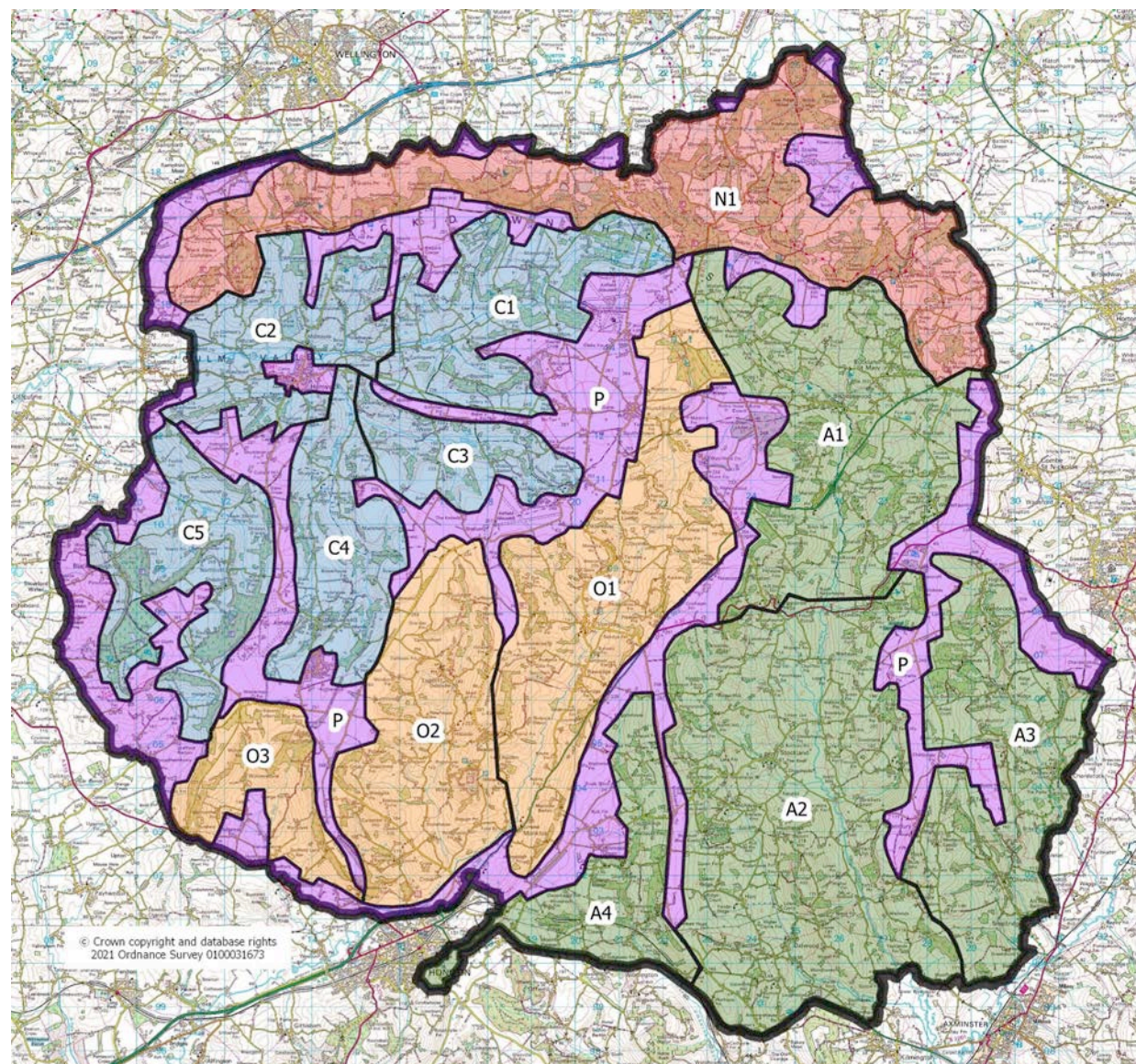
3. TOWARDS 30 BY 30

- 3.1 For the AONB and its partners to maximise the contribution of the Blackdown Hills AONB to the achievement of national 25 Year Environment Plan targets, including the objective of increasing the percentage of land managed for nature to 30% by 2030, it is necessary to have a good assessment of the current extent of such management in 2021.
- 3.2 All extant or recently-expired HLS, ELS+HLS, and CS agreements together account for 19.49% of the AONB land surface (7213ha out of 37,000ha). It can be assumed that almost all SSSI land is within these figures as most SSSIs are in agreements. If all other land being actively 'managed for nature' (private nature reserves, smallholdings outside agreements, sympathetically managed woodlands, a proportion of the FC estate - ie. broadleaved woodland subject to FSC overall management principles, and land going into CS this year) is included, the figure of 19.49% might be expected to rise to perhaps 22%.
- 3.3 Clearly it is arguable whether all land in CS/ES agreements can be said to be 'managed for nature', but it is the best proxy we can use. Thus on these figures, to achieve 30% by 2030, an *additional* 8% of the land surface of the AONB (2960 ha) would need to be brought into 'management for nature'.

4. FURTHER WORK

- 4.1 This plan should be regarded as a **live document**, subject to on-going discussion and refinement, so that it can capture all relevant activity and maintain a wide sense of shared objectives. The authors recognise that the process to date has only reached out to a relatively small circle of expertise and knowledge, and it is hoped that the breadth of involvement can be extended over the coming months.

5. NATURE RECOVERY AREAS – OVERVIEW

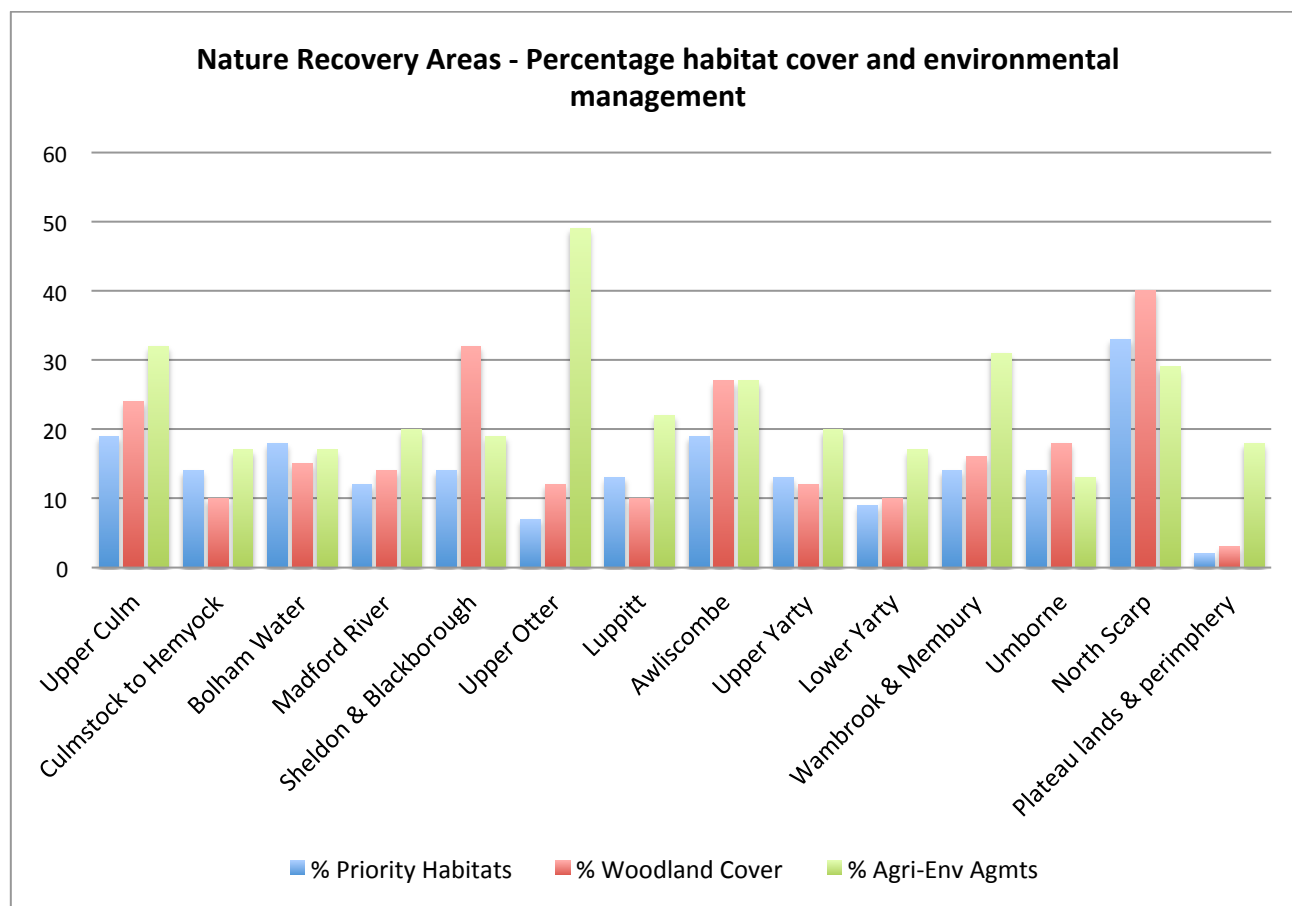


C1	Upper Culm	From Culmhead west to Ringdown and south to Biscoombe and Stapley, including valley spurs up to the source of the Culm
C2	Culmstock to Hemyock	The Culm valley from Rosemary Lane, through Hemyock and down to Culmstock village, including the Culm Davy and Ashculm spurs
C3	Bolham Water	The Bolham River valley from Southey & Gotleigh Moor SSSI west to Lemons Hill and the junction with the Madford River
C4	Madford River	The Madford River valley from Dunkeswell in the south to the confluence with the Culm in the north
C5	Sheldon & Blackborough	West-facing scarp from Sheldon and Blackborough in the south to Hackpen Hill in the north, including some forested plateau land
O1	Upper Otter	Upper Otter valley from the headwaters at Otterhead south to Upottery
O2	Luppitt	River Love valley from Hense Moor in the north, through Luppitt to Combe Raleigh in the south, including Dumpdon and Hartridge
O3	Awliscombe	River Wolf valley from Wolford and Hembury to Awliscombe village
A1	Upper Yarty	Yarty valley from the headwaters at Yarty Moor and Blackwater, south through Bishopswood and Buckland St Mary to Long Lye by the A303
A2	Lower Yarty	Valleys of Rivers Yarty and Corry from Yarcombe in the north to Dalwood in the south
A3	Wambrook & Membury	East side of Kit Brook valleys from Chard and Cotley in the north to Beckford Bridge and Chardstock in the south
A4	Umborne	Valley of River Umborne from the A30 to the A35
N1	North Scarp	Whole scarp face from Culmstock Beacon in the west to Castle Neroche, and Wych Lodge including the east-facing slopes around Dommett Wood
P1	Plateau lands & periphery	Generally agriculturally-improved land across the flat plateau lands and on parts of the periphery of the AONB

6. SUMMARY STATISTICS FOR NATURE RECOVERY AREAS

		Area /ha	Priority Habitats		Woodland		Agri-Env Agreements		
			Total cover /ha	% cover	Total cover/ ha	% cover	ES+HLS agmts /ha	CS agmts /ha	CS+ES agmts /%
C1	Upper Culm	1676	326	19	405	24	293	243	32
C2	Culmstock to Hemyock	1398	201	14	139	10	97	139	17
C3	Bolham Water	833	154	18	122	15	52	88	17
C4	Madford River	1303	156	12	189	14	111	157	20
C5	Sheldon & Blackborough	1617	221	14	510	32	74	228	19
O1	Upper Otter	2957	220	7	352	12	636	810	49
O2	Luppitt	2293	289	13	235	10	216	285	22
O3	Awliscombe	932	181	19	253	27	54	194	27
A1	Upper Yarty	3063	404	13	392	12	277	348	20
A2	Lower Yarty	4849	453	9	466	10	104	718	17
A3	Wambrook & Membury	2392	343	14	379	16	450	283	31
A4	Umborne	1212	164	14	221	18	67	91	13
N1	North Scarp	3995	1300	33	1614	40	962	215	29
P1	Plateau lands & periphery	8310	173	2	275	3	483	1003	18
OVERALL – WHOLE AONB		36,830	4585	12.4	5552	15.1	3876	4802	23.6

NB: There is an overlap between Priority Habitat and Woodland cover



7. KEY SPECIES RECORDS IN NATURE RECOVERY AREAS

The Nature Recovery Area Statements in the following pages refer to the presence of Champion Species in each, based on current records held by DBRC and SERC. The list of 20 Champion Species was derived in the Blackdown Hills State of Nature report (Geckoella June 2021), based on three criteria: species of conservation concern, indicators of healthy habitats, and ‘charismatic’ species.

VERTEBRATES	INVERTEBRATES	HIGHER PLANTS
Greater Horseshoe Bat	Brown hairstreak	Great Sundew
Lesser Horseshoe Bat	Marsh Fritillary	Green-winged Orchid
Bechstein’s Bat	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Lesser Butterfly Orchid
Dormouse	Double-line Moth	Early Marsh Orchid
Brown Hare	Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth	Dioecious Sedge
Nightjar		
Curlew		
Dartford Warbler		
Adder		
White-clawed Crayfish		

A small number of additional key species records are referred to based on recommendations made by Dr David Allen.

8. ISSUES COMMON TO ALL NATURE RECOVERY AREAS

7.1 The following measures are a high priority in all NRAs:

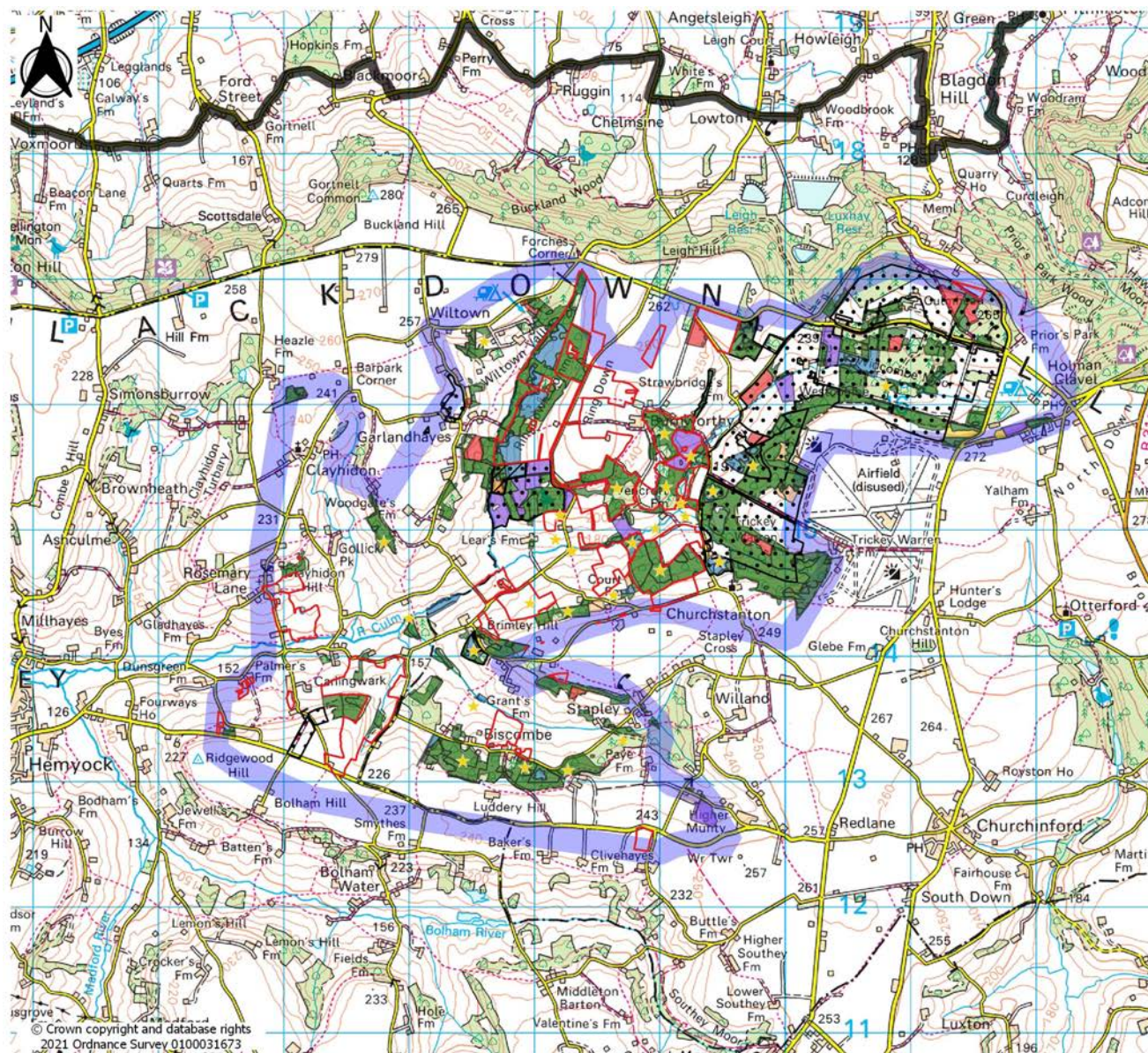
- 7.1.1 Measures to slow the flow of flood waters off the land (and to reduce the effects of drought), by making the land surface ‘rougher’ through Nature Based Solutions including tree planting, natural regeneration, leaky dams, additional water storage, hedgerow restoration, improvement of soil infiltration.
- 7.1.2 Measures to conserve soil and enhance soil quality, and prevent the loss of sediment and phosphates to watercourses, by reducing soil compaction, preventing soil erosion, and increasing soil organic carbon.
- 7.1.3 Conservation of existing springline mire (along the greensand-clay boundary), wet and dry heath, and species-rich grassland, and prevention of loss of these habitats to scrub invasion, drainage, cultivation, inorganic fertiliser or herbicide application.
- 7.1.4 Retention of long-standing permanent pasture, because of its high soil carbon content, undisturbed soil profiles, and botanical, fungal and invertebrate communities.
- 7.1.5 Retention and restoration of hedgerows through appropriate fencing and cutting regimes.
- 7.1.6 Restoration or creation of new wildlife habitats such as ponds and wetlands, mires, species-rich grassland, hedgerows and broadleaved woodland.
- 7.1.7 Measures to improve public understanding of farming and the environment in the Blackdown Hills, and community involvement in countryside management.

7.2 These issues are developed and augmented individually in each NRA Statement.

9. NATURE RECOVERY AREA STATEMENTS

- 8.1 In the following pages, each Statement comprises the following sections:
- 8.1.1 **Headline statistics** – Overview of percentage cover of priority habitats, woodland, and current or recently-lapsed agri-environment agreements.
 - 8.1.2 **Landscape overview** – Broad description of the landscape and its key settlements and features.
 - 8.1.3 **Key habitats and features** – Summary of ecological and historic environment interest.
 - 8.1.4 **Champion Species** – presence/absence based on State of Nature definition, plus other notables
 - 8.1.5 **Pattern of land use and ownership** – Broad overview of ownership structure and main farming and forestry activity.
 - 8.1.6 **Current activity** – Summary of known environmental and associated activity.
 - 8.1.7 **Needs/issues** – Major known environmental concerns and priorities.
 - 8.1.8 **Opportunities** – Current picture of known opportunities for action.
- 8.2 The boundaries of the NRAs are deliberately shown with ‘fuzzy’ lines as they are intended to be indicative zones rather than detailed delineations.
- 8.3 The mapped distribution of priority habitats and agri-environment schemes can be seen in the Appendices, along with the overall maps of geology, landscape character, river catchments and land ownership.

C1 UPPER CULM



LEGEND - C1 NRA

- BH AONB Boundary
- ★ County/Local Wildlife Site
- C1_Upper Culm
- Countryside Stewardship
- Env Stewardship
- SSSI

Priority Habitat

- Deciduous woodland
- Traditional orchard
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland fens
- Lowland meadows
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Purple moor grass and rush pastures

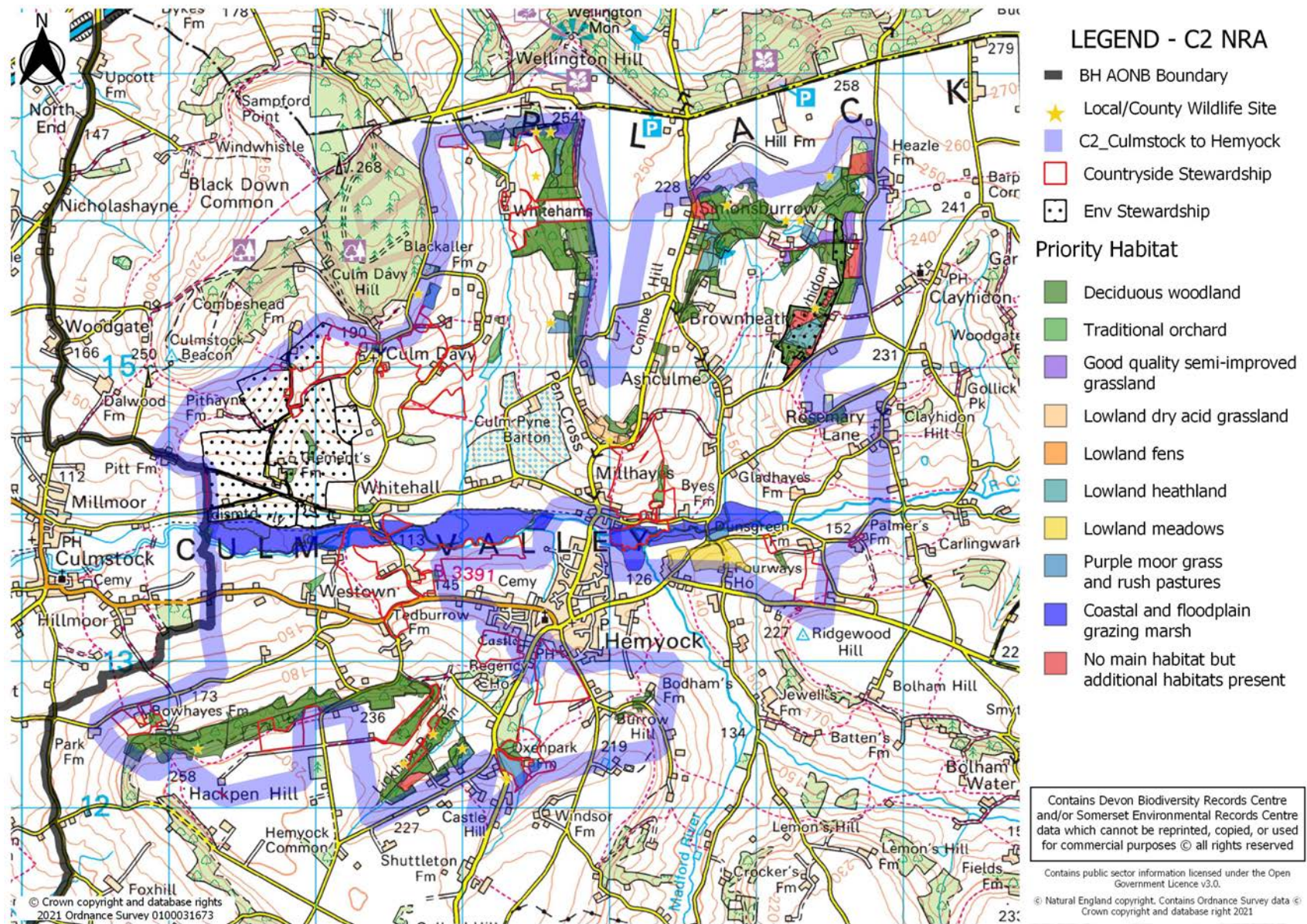
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Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From Culmhead west to Ringdown and Clayhidon, and south to Biscombe and Stapley. • Valleyhead landscape with a relatively high density of woodland and generally small field size with thick, ancient hedges. • At the higher, east end of the area, the River Culm rises around Widcombe and Culmhead, and runs across the Westcombe estate, down between Burnworthy and Trickey Warren, into Clayhidon. • Three small valley streams run into the Culm: the Ringdown stream, rising at the top of the Wiltown valley at Forches Corner; the Biscombe stream rising at Munty, Churchstanton; and the stream running down from Clayhidon village.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A concentration of springline mire and wet heath around the greensand/clay boundary, especially around Culmhead, Burnworthy, Churchstanton, Trickey Warren, the Stapley and Ringdown valleys. Good examples at Ringdown SSSI and Brimley Mire nature reserves, Newtons and Westcombe. • Much of the former springline mire has degraded to scrub or secondary wet woodland, with substantial areas around Stapley and the upper Wiltown valley. • Extensive areas of ancient and secondary broadleaved woodland, with small areas of coniferous plantation, eg. in the Stapley valley, Westcombe. • A high concentration of County Wildlife Sites. • A dense network of ancient hedgerows. • Remnant neutral and acid grassland, floodplain and riparian habitats. • Substantial area of semi-improved rush pasture and neutral grassland which has great value as connecting habitat and undisturbed soil profiles in permanent pasture.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for: Dormouse, Nightjar, Adder, Brown hairstreak, Marsh Fritillary (probably now gone), Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Double Line Moth, Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth, Early Marsh Orchid, and Dioecious Sedge in its only Blackdowns location at Ringdown Common.
Pattern of land use and ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The area contains some large estates, alongside smaller farms and smallholdings • There is a relatively high uptake of agri-environment schemes • The lower parts of the area are predominantly livestock pasture. • Several commercial shoots. • One commercial firewood producer.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting the Culm is offering Nature Based Solutions capital payments for measures which address flood and drought tolerance. • Several landowners towards the top of the valley are active members of the BH FF. • Exemplar management of springline mire by SWT at Ringdown and Brimley Mire, currently subject to Challenge funding.

Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A continuing priority zone for interventions to achieve flood alleviation and water storage through NBS. • Many springline mire sites still subject to neglect and with scope for substantial restoration and enhancement for biodiversity and ecosystem function. • Pig farming on plateau and valley side land, in Stapley, Biscombe and Ringdown, is an issue for soil erosion and loss, and slurry run-off. • Protecting and enhancing the riparian corridor especially in the headwaters, and addressing the ease of fish migration within these corridors in particular for migratory fish. Some of the headwater streams can make good spawning sites so protecting these and ensuring the route to them is accessible by removing of fish barriers, is important.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very connected landscape lending itself to joined-up landscape-scale activity. • CtC NBS capital funding and landowners participation in Blueprint visioning exercise • FiPL funding for mire restoration etc. • EWCO for riparian or plateau woodland establishment. • Several large estates offering potential consistent management over large areas.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the River Culm, and improve soil structure and infiltration (guided by the modeling carried out for the Connecting the Culm project) • Interventions which conserve springline mire and associated priority habitats in the Churchstanton/Stapley, Ringdown, Biscombe and Clayhidon valley heads. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

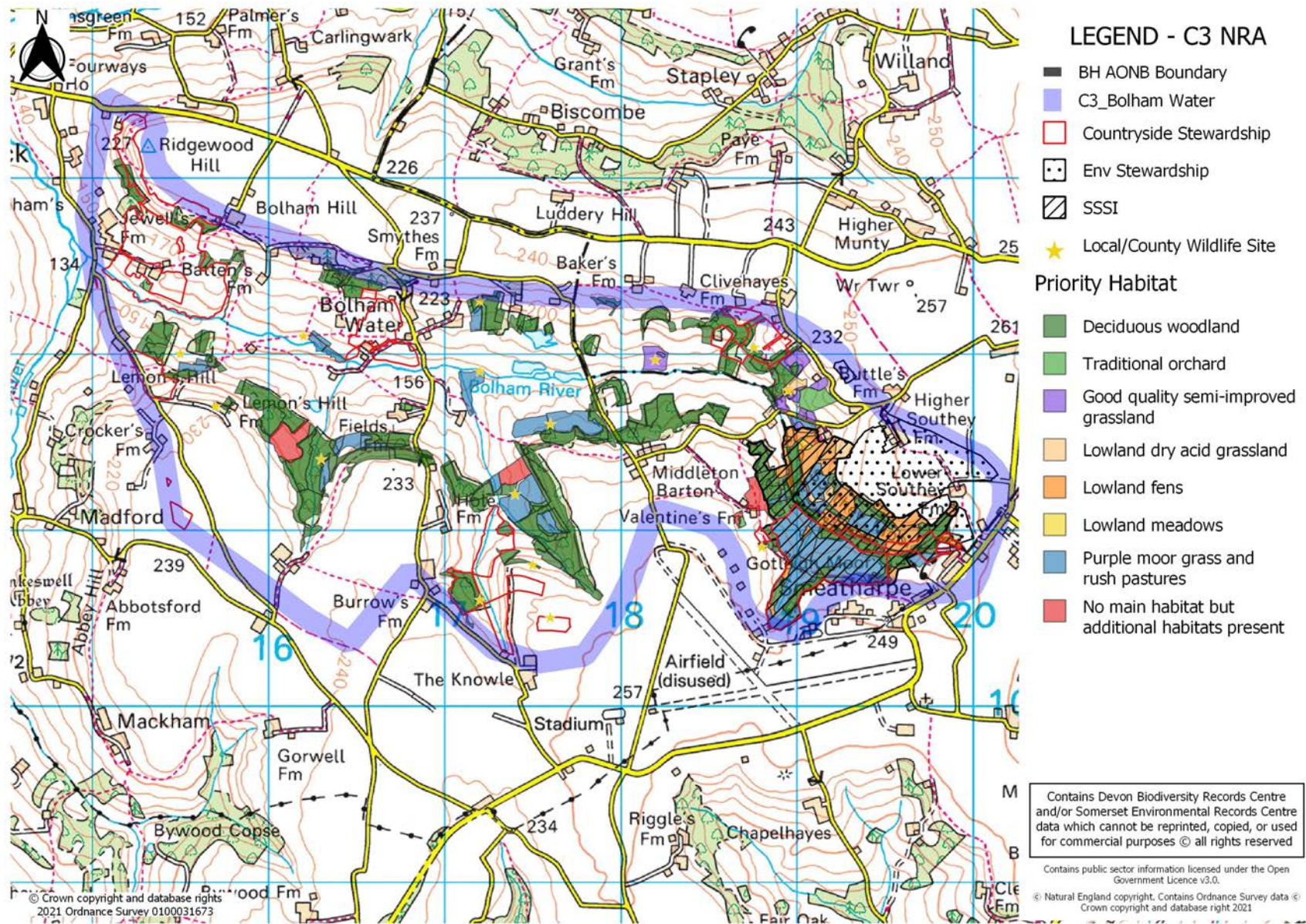
C2 CULMSTOCK TO HEMYOCK



Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The widening Culm valley from Rosemary Lane, through Hemyock and down to Culmstock village. • Two small valleys running south into the main valley, from the north scarp: the Ashculm valley from Simonsburrow, and the Culm Davy valley from below Wellington Monument. • A pattern of generally small fields on the upper slopes and larger fields on the lower valley bottom.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a string of springline mire sites around the sides of the Culm Davy and Ashculm valleys, notably Ashculm Turbary, Clayhidon Turbary, Culm Davy and Whitehams, on the greensand boundary, some managed and some neglected with mostly scrub and secondary woodland. • Some remnants of wetland and marshy grassland on low floodplain areas east of Hemyock. • Some areas of semi-improved rush pasture and neutral grassland which has great value as connecting habitat and undisturbed soil profiles in permanent pasture. • Relatively thinly wooded, except for tops of northern valleys. • The sinuous river channel is notably active across parts of the wide floodplain of the Culm below Hemyock. • There are substantial areas of semi-improved rush pasture, neutral and acid grassland which has great value as connecting habitat and undisturbed soil profiles in permanent pasture.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Dormouse, Adder, White-clawed Crayfish, Brown hairstreak, Lesser Butterfly Orchid and Early Marsh Orchid. Clayhidon Turbary has Broad-leaved Cottongrass.
Pattern of land use and ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly beef and sheep and some dairy pasture. Small amount of arable, mostly maize. • One large area of apple orchard. • Mostly medium-sized family farms. • Significant areas used for equines. • Built-up settlements of Hemyock and Culmstock. • Community-owned land at Ashculm Turbary (Hemyock parish), Clayhidon Turbary (Clayhidon parish), Hillmoor (Culmstock parish)
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting the Culm is offering Nature Based Solutions capital payments for measures which address flood and drought tolerance, plus wider community planning process towards a Blueprint for land use • Little Breach BC reserve at Culm Davy.

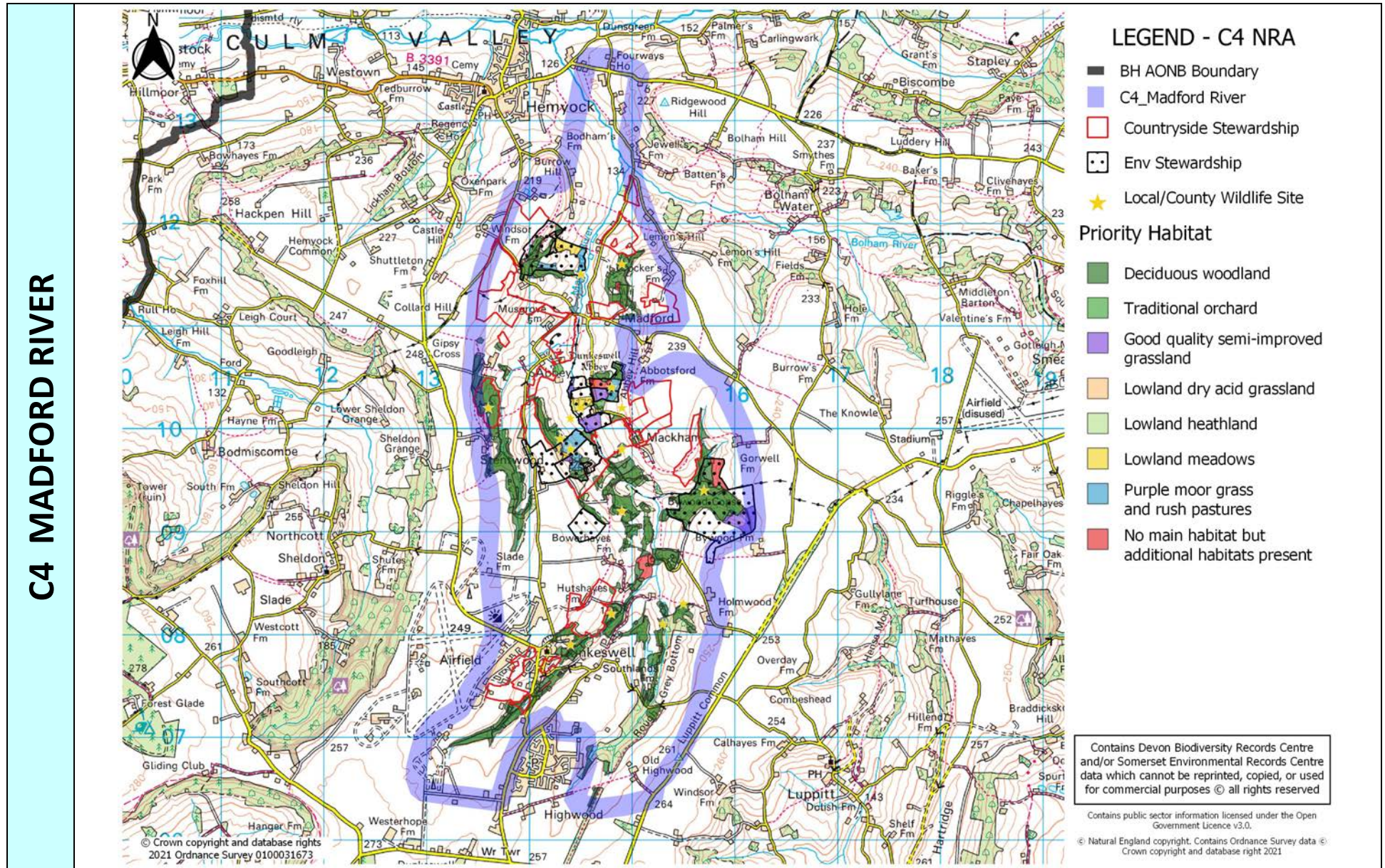
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant impacts from land use on south-facing valley side for peak flows in Culm tributaries and main river. • A continuing priority zone for interventions to achieve flood alleviation and water storage through NBS. • Many springline mire sites still subject to neglect and with scope for substantial restoration and enhancement for biodiversity and ecosystem function. • Some under-recording of habitat likely.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CtC NBS capital funding and landowners participation in Blueprint visioning exercise • FiPL funding for mire restoration etc. • EWCO for riparian or plateau woodland establishment. • Scope for community support and volunteering from residents of Hemyock.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the River Culm, and improve soil structure and infiltration (guided by the modeling carried out for the Connecting the Culm project). • Interventions which conserve springline mire and associated priority habitats in the Culm Davy, Ashculm and Hackpen valley heads. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

C3 BOLHAM VALLEY



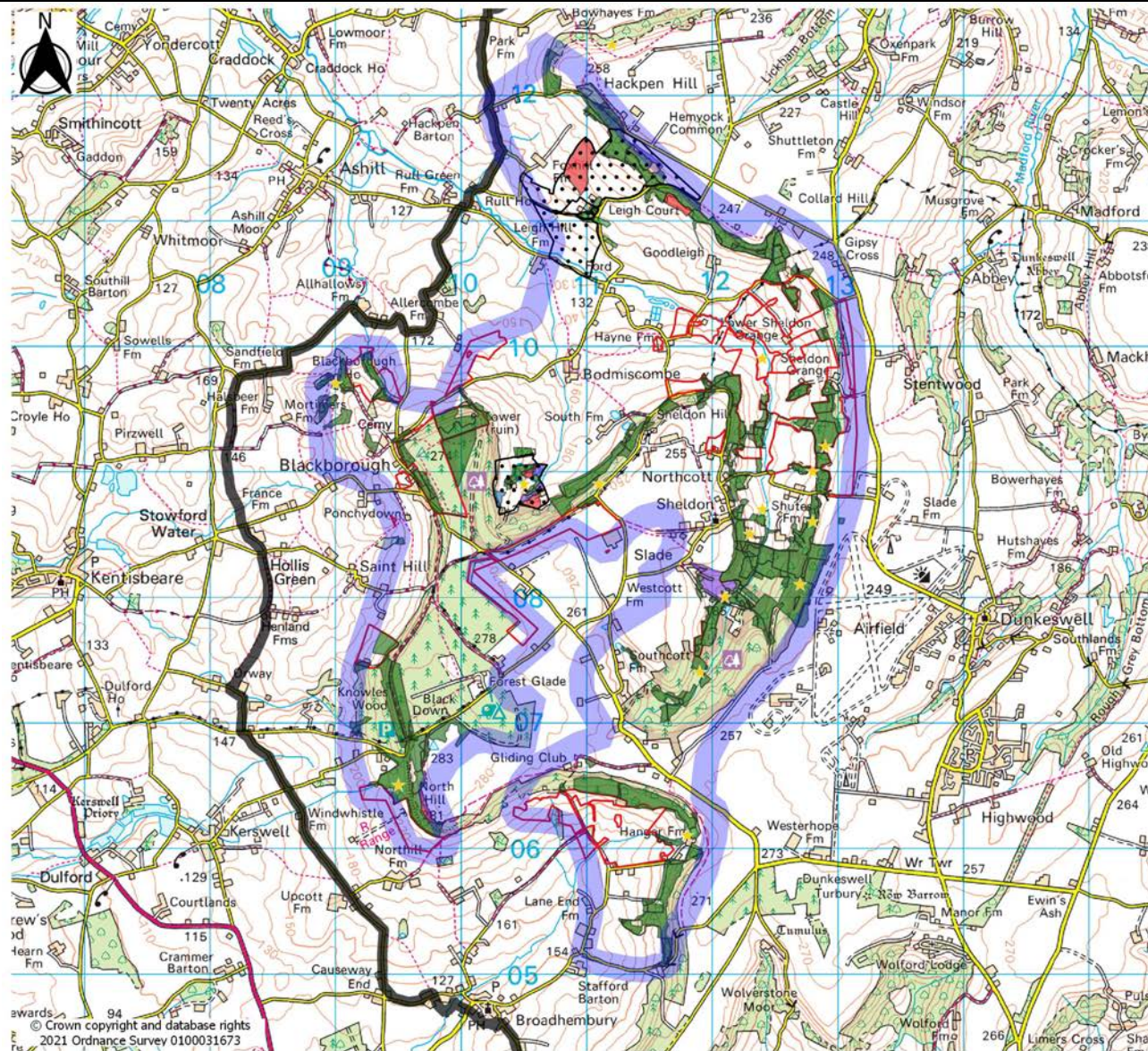
Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Bolham River valley from Smeatharpe village and airfield, through Southey & Gtleigh Moor SSSI, west to Lemons Hill and the junction with the Madford River, incorporating the small south-facing valley spur at Hole. • A relatively remote valley without a through-road, with generally small fields and dense hedges, and many areas of rough wet land.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southey & Gtleigh Moors SSSI, representing one of the largest complexes of springline mire and wet heath on the Blackdown Hills. • Significant springline mire sites at Middleton Barton, Hole Moor and Lemons Hill. • The valley supports the only extant population of Marsh Fritillary remaining on the Blackdown Hills. • Significant areas of secondary or ancient woodland on steep slopes in valley spurs on south side of area. • Remnant neutral and acid grassland, floodplain and riparian habitats. • Substantial area of semi-improved rush pasture and neutral grassland which has great value as connecting habitat and undisturbed soil profiles in permanent pasture.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Brown hare, Marsh Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Double-line Moth, Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth, Green-winged Orchid and Early Marsh Orchid • Gtleigh Moor supports an important population of Lesser Butterfly Orchid, and a remnant stand of Fir Clubmoss
Pattern of land use and ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly family farms used for beef and sheep grazing • Several non-farming landowners with areas of rougher land, most subject to conservation grazing. • Community-owned land at Hartsmoor lakes (Clayhidon parish)
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitated dialogue between all owners of Southey & Gtleigh Moors SSSI took place through FF in 2019. Management of SSSI is appropriate with most of site in favourable or unfavourable-recovering condition. • Connecting the Culm is offering Nature Based Solutions capital payments for measures which address flood and drought tolerance, plus wider community planning process towards a Blueprint for land use. • BC volunteers have maintained contact with the owner of the Marsh Fritillary site.
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Marsh Fritillary colony needs to be secured (not currently in an agreement) and buffered through sympathetic management of surrounding land. • There is a relative paucity of current CSS or ES agreements, and a number of remnant springline mire sites with associated habitat which lie outside of any agreement or advisory support. • Some under-recording of habitat likely. • Significant water quality issues from livestock and slurry management.

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to build out from the good dialogue between owners in the SSSI at the head of the valley, to encompass a wider community of shared interest. • Opportunity to ensure the secure management of the existing Marsh Fritillary site and enable this population to spread. • Potential value in a Farmer Ambassador role in this valley to aid engagement. • Significant potential for E.L.M in the coming years.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the Bolham River, and improve soil structure and infiltration (guided by the modeling carried out for the Connecting the Culm project). • Interventions which conserve springline mire and associated priority habitats from Southeigh and Gotleigh Moors, westwards along both side of the valley. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.



Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Madford River valley from Dunkeswell in the south to the confluence with the Culm in the north. • Steep-sided, relatively densely wooded landscape with extensive areas of rough, wet land.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive areas of springline mire, neutral grassland, fen and floodplain/riparian habitats, from Hurst in the north, through Madford, Mackham and Park, to Bywood and Rough Grey Bottom. • Important historic site at Dunkeswell Abbey • Remnant neutral and acid grassland, floodplain and riparian habitats. • Substantial area of semi-improved rush pasture and neutral grassland which has great value as connecting habitat and undisturbed soil profiles in permanent pasture.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Dormouse, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Double-line Moth.
Pattern of land use & ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally small farms based on beef and sheep, some dairying. • Built-up areas of old and new Dunkeswell.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting the Culm is offering Nature Based Solutions capital payments for measures which address flood and drought tolerance, plus wider community planning process towards a Blueprint for land use. • Several landowners predominantly focused on conservation management.
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some under-recording of habitat likely. • Some high-value mire habitat (eg, around Mackham) requires substantial capital intervention to reverse loss to secondary woodland.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential value in a Farmer Ambassador role in this valley to aid engagement. • Significant potential for E.L.M in the coming years, especially through combined approaches by adjacent landowners.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the Madford River, and improve soil structure and infiltration (guided by the modeling carried out for the Connecting the Culm project). • Interventions which conserve springline mire and associated priority habitats, from Rough Grey Bottom northwards through Mackham to Madford. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

C5 SHELDON AND BLACKBOROUGH



LEGEND - C5 NRA

- BH AONB Boundary
- C5_Sheldon & Blackborough
- Countryside Stewardship
- Env Stewardship
- ★ Local/County Wildlife Site

Priority Habitat

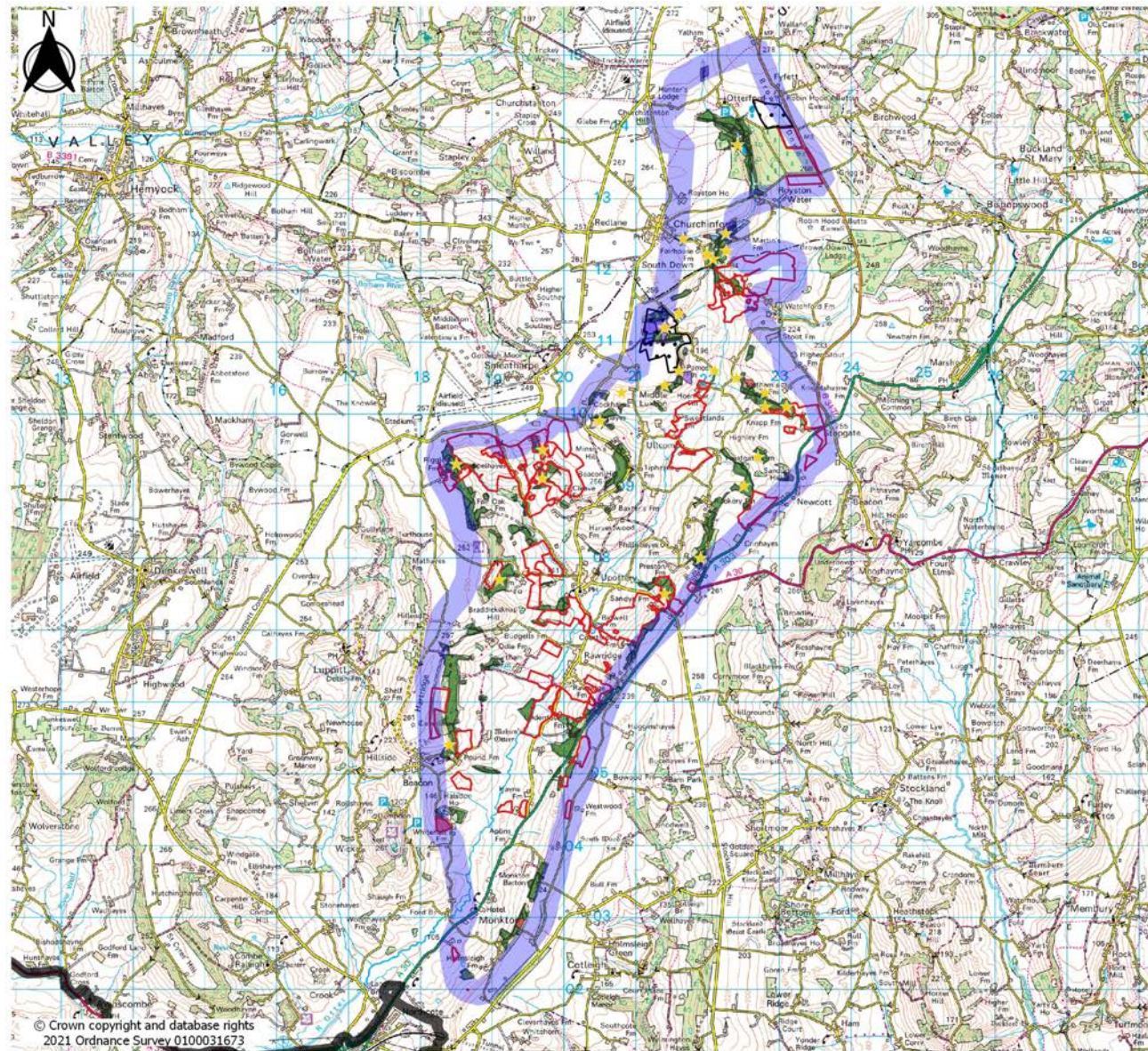
- Deciduous woodland
- Traditional orchard
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland heathland
- Purple moor grass and rush pastures
- No main habitat but additional habitats present

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Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • West-facing scarp slopes from Sheldon and Blackborough in the south to Hackpen Hill in the north. • Substantial areas of plantation and semi-natural woodland across southern half of area.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remnant springline mire along greensand boundary, with extensive associated secondary woodland. • Remnant neutral and acid grassland, floodplain and riparian habitats. • Substantial area of semi-improved rush pasture and neutral grassland which has great value as connecting habitat and undisturbed soil profiles in permanent pasture.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Dormouse, Brown Hairstreak and Double-line Moth.
Pattern of land use & ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive Forestry England ownership across Sheldon and Blackborough • Generally small or medium-sized livestock farms • Significant areas used for equines.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forestry management and quiet recreation (Sheldon and Blackborough) • Moderately high coverage of CSS/ES agreements • Connecting the Culm is offering Nature Based Solutions capital payments for measures which address flood and drought tolerance, plus wider community planning process towards a Blueprint for land use.
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some under-recording of habitat likely • Much of the former springline mire habitat has been lost to secondary woodland, with the latter forming an almost continuous wooded strip along the springline zone.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for landscape-scale action within FE estate.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the Sheldon Stream and Tale, and improve soil structure and infiltration (guided by the modeling carried out for the Connecting the Culm project). • Interventions which conserve springline mire and associated priority habitats, especially along the Hackpen valley side, and below Sheldon and Blackborough. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridors. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

O1 UPPER OTTER



LEGEND - O1 NRA

- BH AONB Boundary
- O1_Upper Otter
- Countryside Stewardship
- Env Stewardship
- ★ Local/County Wildlife Site

Priority Habitat

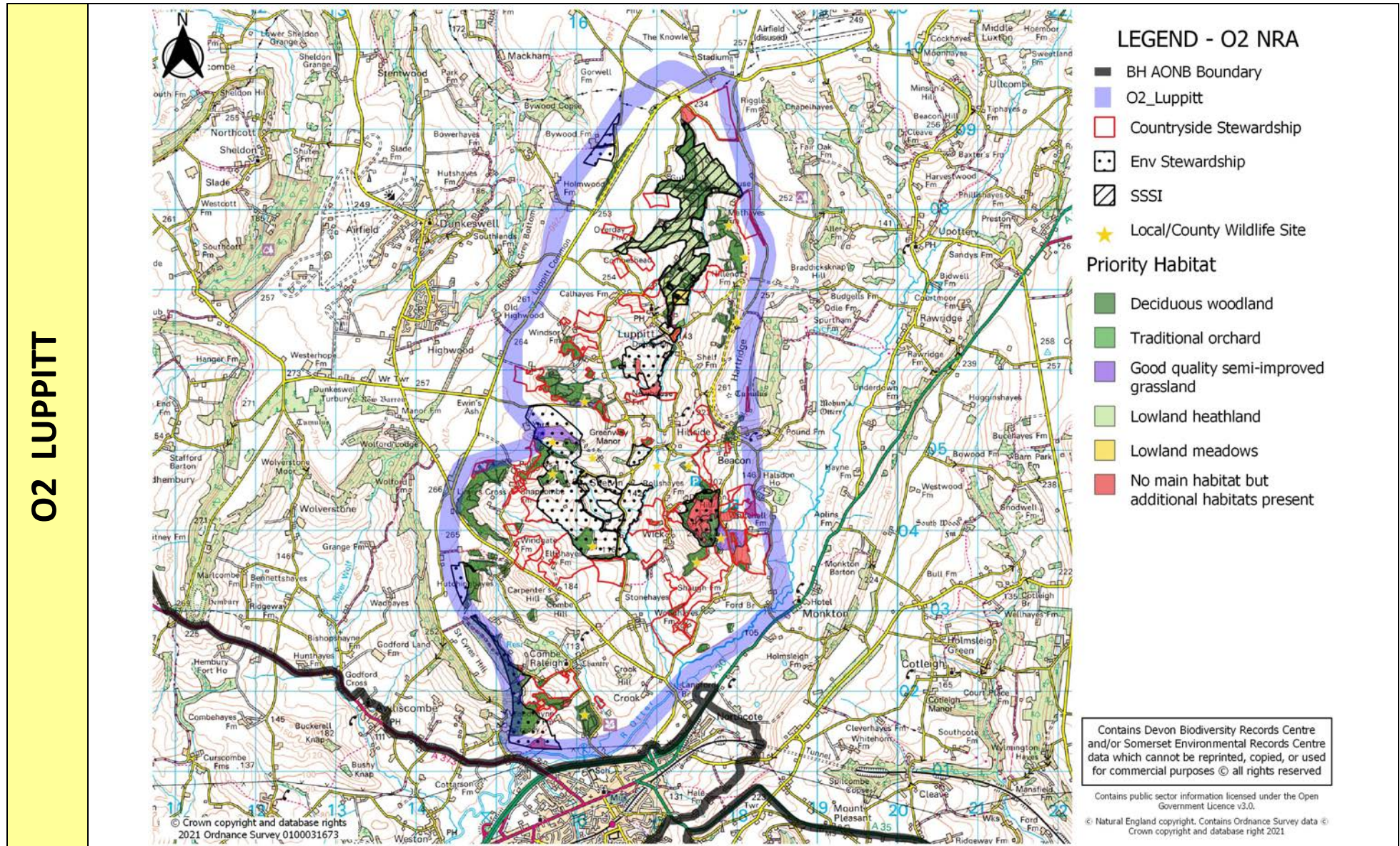
- Deciduous woodland
- Traditional orchard
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland heathland
- Lowland meadows
- Purple moor grass and rush pastures
- No main habitat but additional habitats present

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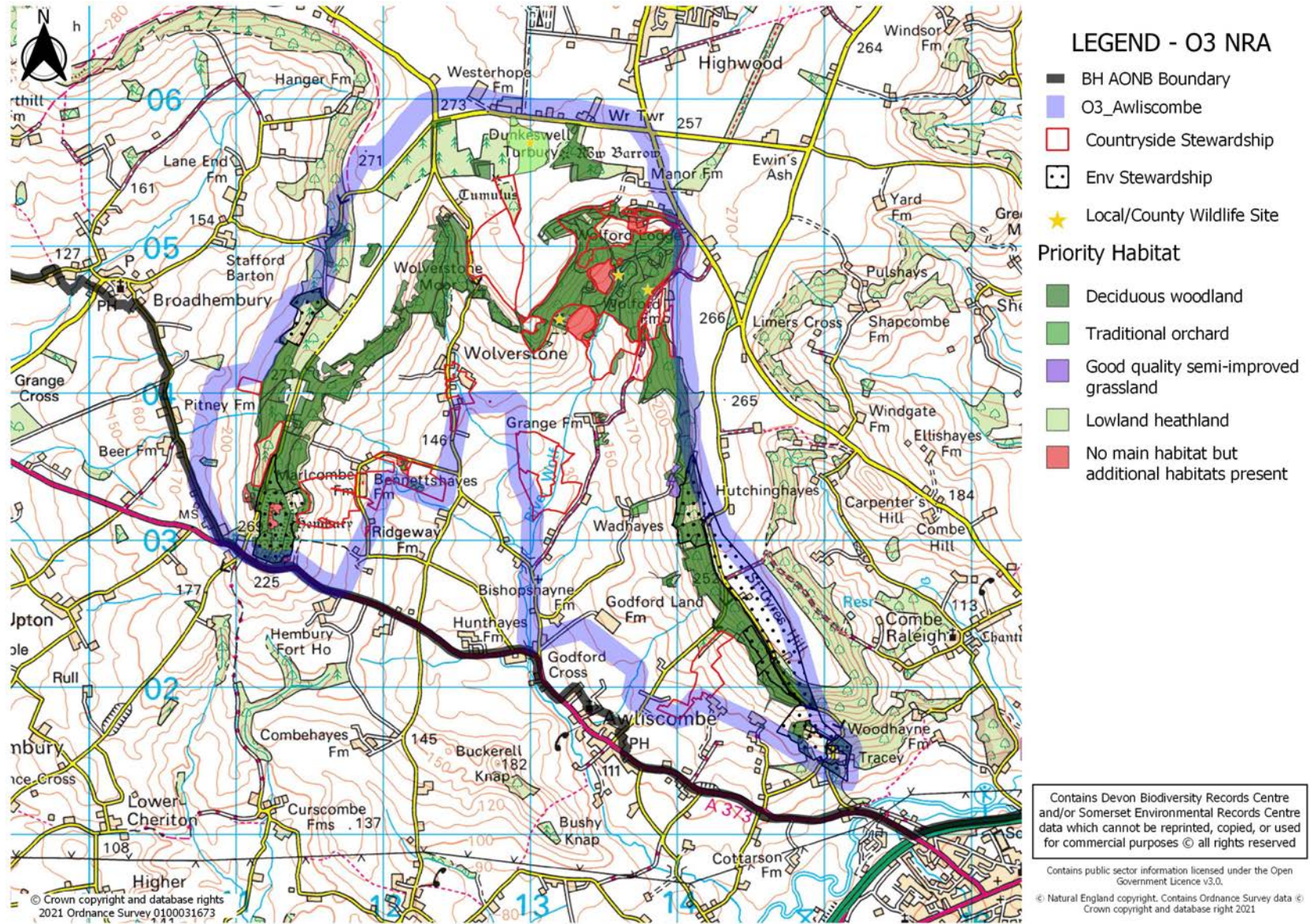
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Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upper Otter valley from the headwaters at Otterhead south past Churchinford, through Upottery and Rawridge to Monkton, including the valley spur up to Riggles Farm. • Generally a landscape of steep valley sides with small fields and thick hedges, with larger fields on the more fertile valley floor.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial number of generally small springline mire sites along the both sides of the valley at the base of the greensand. • Historic landscape of Otterhead Lakes, medieval village at Morwood. • Expanding population of reintroduced beavers. • Remnant neutral and acid grassland, floodplain and riparian habitats. • Substantial area of semi-improved rush pasture and neutral grassland which has great value as connecting habitat and undisturbed soil profiles in permanent pasture.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Dormouse, Adder, Brown Hairstreak, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Lesser Butterfly Orchid. Beavers are present.
Pattern of land use & ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally small to medium sized beef, sheep or dairy farms. • Small amount of arable.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E.L.M Test & Trial farmer cluster around Upottery including Farmer Ambassador. • CSF / Upstream Thinking advisory and funding support. • Advisory presence by DWT associated with beavers.
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good number of farmers in this area have not engaged with agri-environment schemes to date, though they probably have enough qualifying features to apply. • Adapting to beaver presence • Important bat populations rely on grazed pasture (with access to dung of cattle free from wormers) and habitat corridors.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on dialogue with T&T farmer cluster to support this group into the future, and encourage coordinated activity eg. on hedge management. • Opportunities for riparian habitat restoration and connection, in context of adaptation to beaver presence. • One cluster member has applied to take part in SFI pilot.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the River Otter, and improve water quality, soil structure and infiltration. • Interventions which conserve springline mire, unimproved neutral grassland and associated priority habitats, especially on the valley sides between Churchinford and Upottery. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

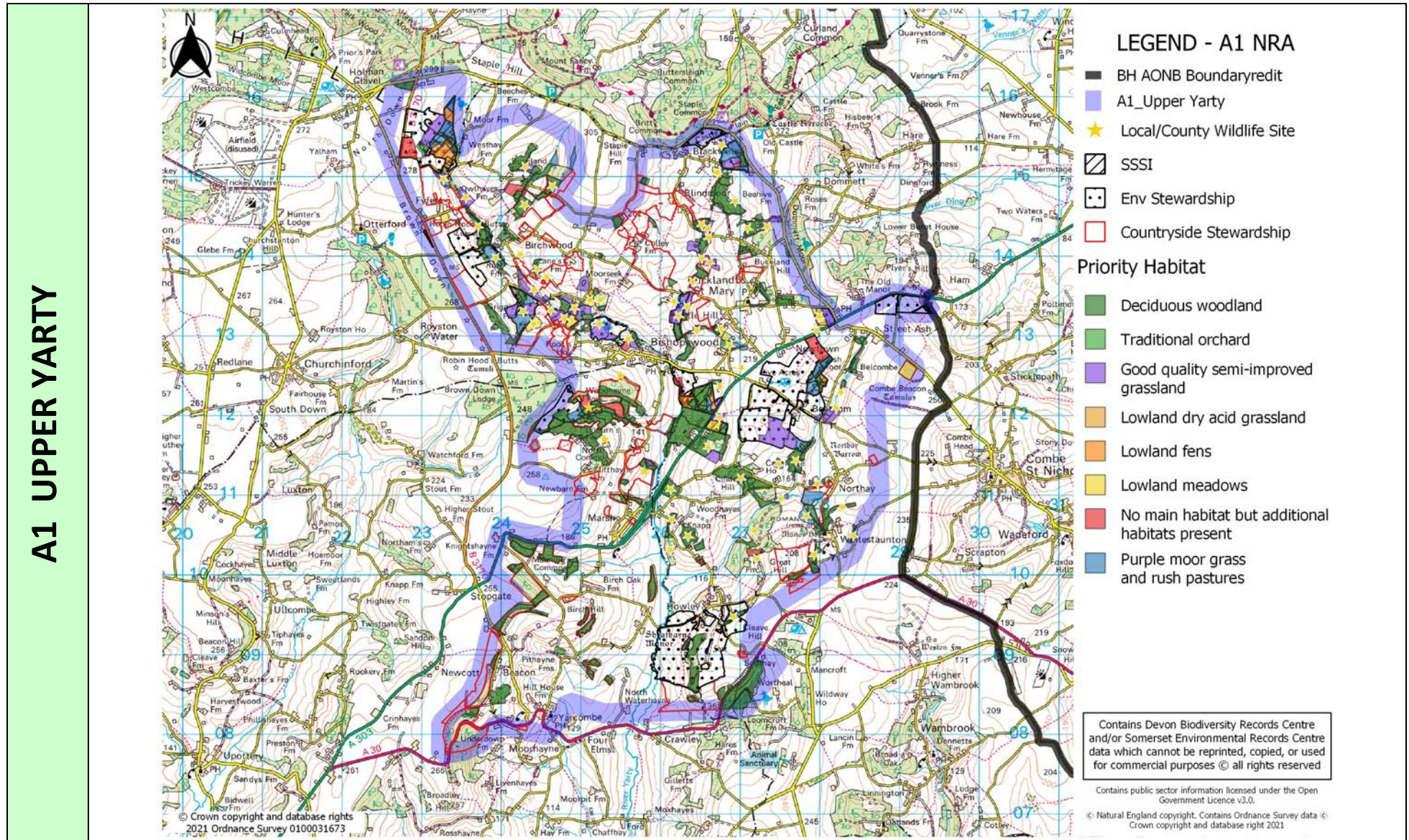


Landscape overview	Valley of the River Love from the head of Hense Moor in the north (near Jack's House), through Luppitt village and Hartridge to Combe Raleigh in the south, including Dumpdon Hill.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hense Moor SSSI contains large areas of springline mire, lowland wet heath, neutral grassland (Hense Moor Meadow SSSI) and riparian habitats. • Hartridge is a long expanse of former heathland and rough grassland, now substantially covered with bracken. • Dumpdon Hill has a large Neolithic hillfort with associated neutral and acid grassland habitats. • Greenway Manor includes a variety of habitats including woodland, mire and neutral/ acid grassland • Shelvin, Little Shelvin and associated farms down to Woodhayes contain good examples of all habitats.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Dormouse, Brown Hare. • Hense Moor has Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, plus large population of Great Sundew, and Greater Broomrape, Lesser Butterfly Orchid and Early Marsh Orchid. • The River Love has records for Alternate-leaved Golden Saxifrage and Hybrid Water Avens. • Beavers are present.
Pattern of land use & ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hense Moor is common land, managed by the Luppitt Commoners Association. • Dumpdon belongs to the National Trust. • There is a network of small to medium family farms, smallholdings and one larger estate.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative management of Hense Moor SSSI over recent years, led by Commoners Association. • Upstream Thinking CSF work on Otter catchment. • Beavers on the River Love and associated advisory support from DWT.
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring continuing dialogue and collaboration between landowners • Adapting to beaver presence • Important bat populations rely on grazed pasture (with access to dung of cattle free from wormers) and habitat corridors.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good degree of dialogue on environmental management amongst landowners, with useful activity through Parish Plan etc in recent years. • Opportunities for riparian habitat restoration and connection, in context of adaptation to beaver presence. • Significant potential for E.L.M in the coming years. • Upstream Thinking.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the River Love, and improve water quality, soil structure and infiltration. • Interventions which conserve springline mire, unimproved neutral grassland and associated priority habitats, from Hense Moor southwards. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

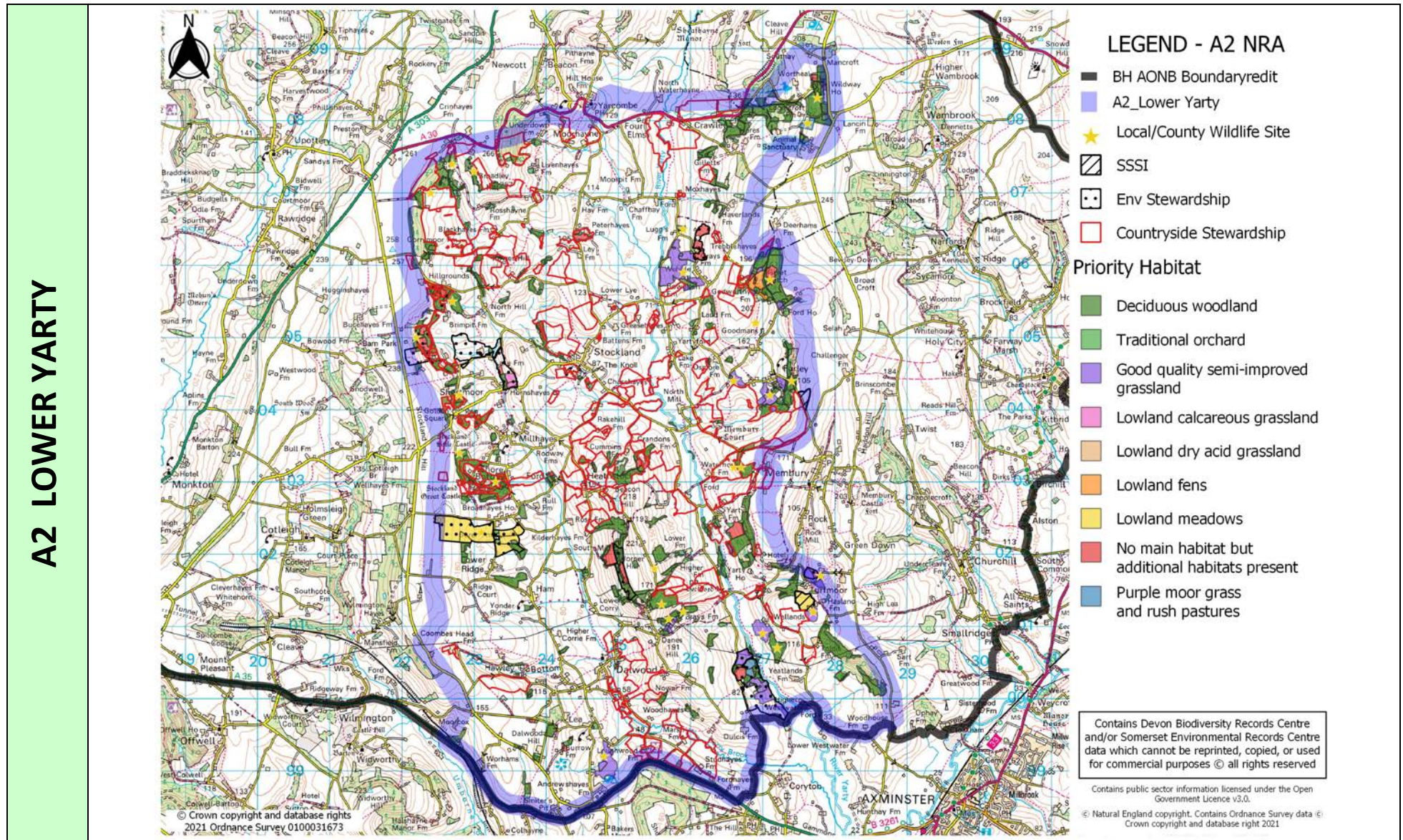
O3 AWLISCOMBE



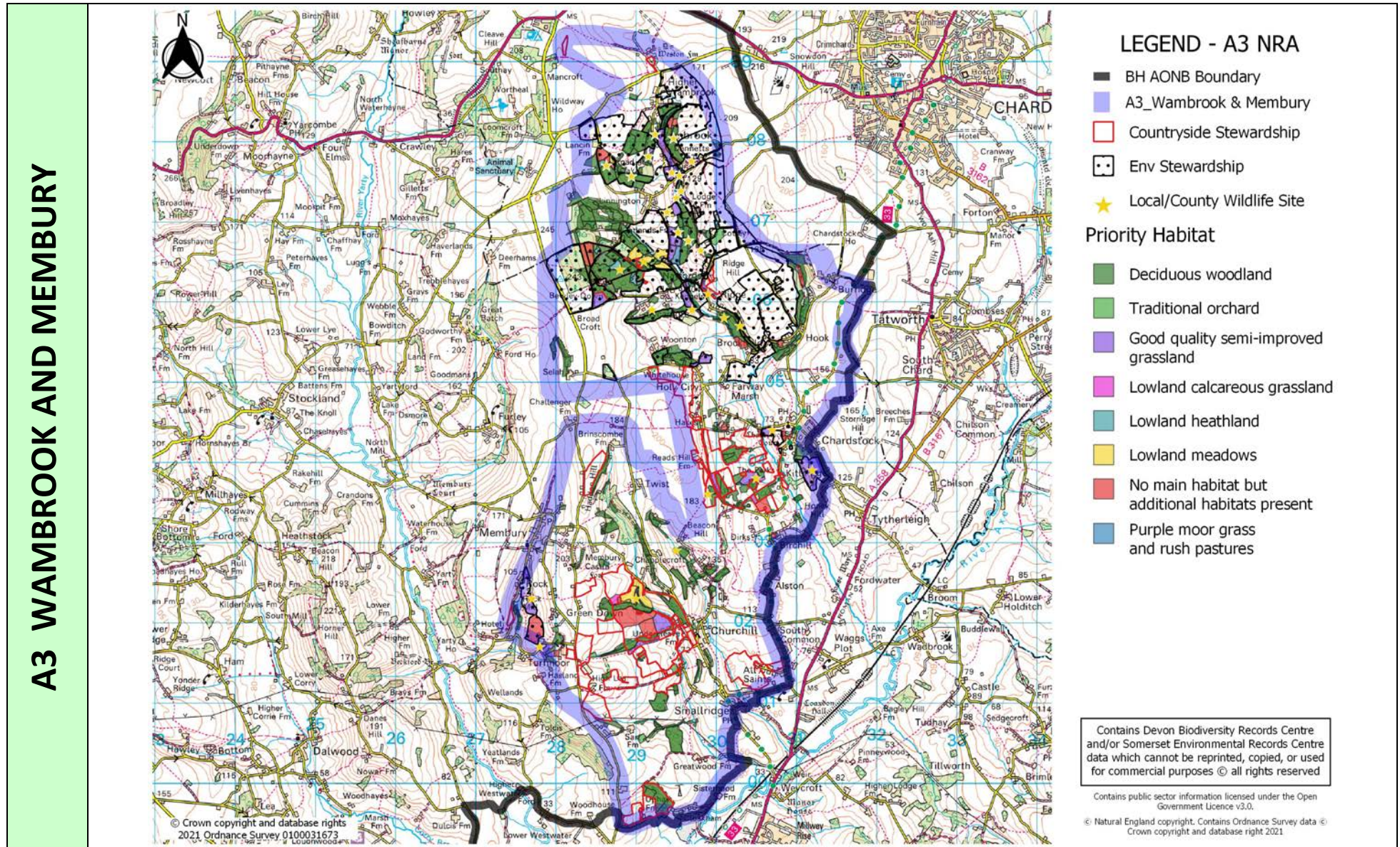
Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valley of the River Wolf from Woford and Hembury to Awliscombe village. • Steep greensand scarp slope around Wolverstone, with substantial wooded areas, running down to rich marl pastures below.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial areas of ancient semi-natural woodland at Woford Lodge, St Cyres Hill, Tracey Estate and Hembury hill, with much secondary woodland on Wolverstone Moor. • Springline mire with associated rush pasture and rich neutral grassland at Old Woford and parts of Wolverstone Moor. • Dunkeswell Turbary – degraded former wet heathland. • Riparian habitats, including beaver presence • Hembury hillfort • Parkland landscape at Tracey Estate
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bat.
Pattern of land use & ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top of valley and woodland slopes in several private ownerships and some small estates, all with strong environmental interests. Some timber and firewood processing. • Some smaller woodland ownerships on St Cyres Hill • Family dairy and beef farms lower into valley
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good management of mire and old pasture etc at Old Woford • Scrub clearance on Hembury Hillfort • Woodland management at Woford Lodge and Tracey. • Beavers on the River Wolf and associated advisory support from DWT
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mire habitat succumbing to neglect in Wolverstone area • Minimal riparian habitat in mid section of Wolf • Adapting to beaver presence
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for riparian habitat restoration and connection, in context of adaptation to beaver presence. • Potential value in a Farmer Ambassador role in this valley to aid engagement. • Upstream Thinking/CSF
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the River Wolf, and improve water quality, soil structure and infiltration. • Interventions which conserve springline mire, wet heath, unimproved neutral grassland ancient semi-natural woodland and associated priority habitats, in the upper parts of the Woford and Wolverstone valleys. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.



Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The top of the Yarty valley from the river's source at Yarty Moor (Deadman) SSSI, down through the steep valley of Birchwood and Bishopswood, moderately well-wooded, and including the spur from Blackwater across to Buckland St Mary, down to the A303 corridor. South of the A303, from Marsh and Long Lye, across the hills and combes of Northay and Howley, to Yarcombe.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some large and important springline mires at Yarty Moor, Long Lye and Freshmoor SSIs, plus a good number of other non-designated examples eg. at Blackwater and Fyfett. Good neutral grassland and rush pasture habitats at Bishopswood Meadows SSSI, with similar habitats at Long Lye and neighbouring ground. Heavily hedged landscape with frequent small woodlands. Larger woodlands including Bickham Wood nature reserve. Bronze Age tumuli at Robin Hood's Butts on Brown Down Substantial area of semi-improved rush pasture and neutral grassland which has value as connecting habitat with undisturbed soil profiles in permanent pasture.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current LRC records for Dormouse, Brown Hare, Adder, Brown Hairstreak, Marsh Fritillary (probably no longer present), Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth and Early Marsh Orchid. Other non-designated neutral/calcareous meadow sites, eg. Street Ash and Long Lye, have remnant Green-winged Orchid colonies.
Pattern of land use & ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mostly small farms, some tenanted land. More dairying towards south of area, more beef and sheep towards north. Several nature reserves.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SWT nature reserves – Yarty Moor, Bishopswood Meadows, Jan Hobbs, Bickham Wood. A substantial number of landowners interested and active in environmental management, including tenants. CSF/EA advisory provision over several years. Emerging Triple Axe plan. Some members of E.L.M Test & Trial farmer cluster
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triple Axe has identified need for improved riparian management, reduction or more careful siting of maize cultivation, plus other soil conservation interventions, improved slurry storage, and restoration of natural river flow and cessation of gravel extraction. Remaining locations for rare flora such as green winged orchid need highlighting with their owners and protecting.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Triple Axe, in conjunction with continued CSF delivery Potential value in continuing the Farmer Ambassador role in this valley to expand engagement
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the River Yarty, and improve water quality, soil structure and infiltration. Interventions which conserve springline mire, wet heath, unimproved neutral grassland, ancient semi-natural woodland and associated priority habitats, in the valleys around Birchwood/Bishopswood, Buckland St Mary and Marsh. Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

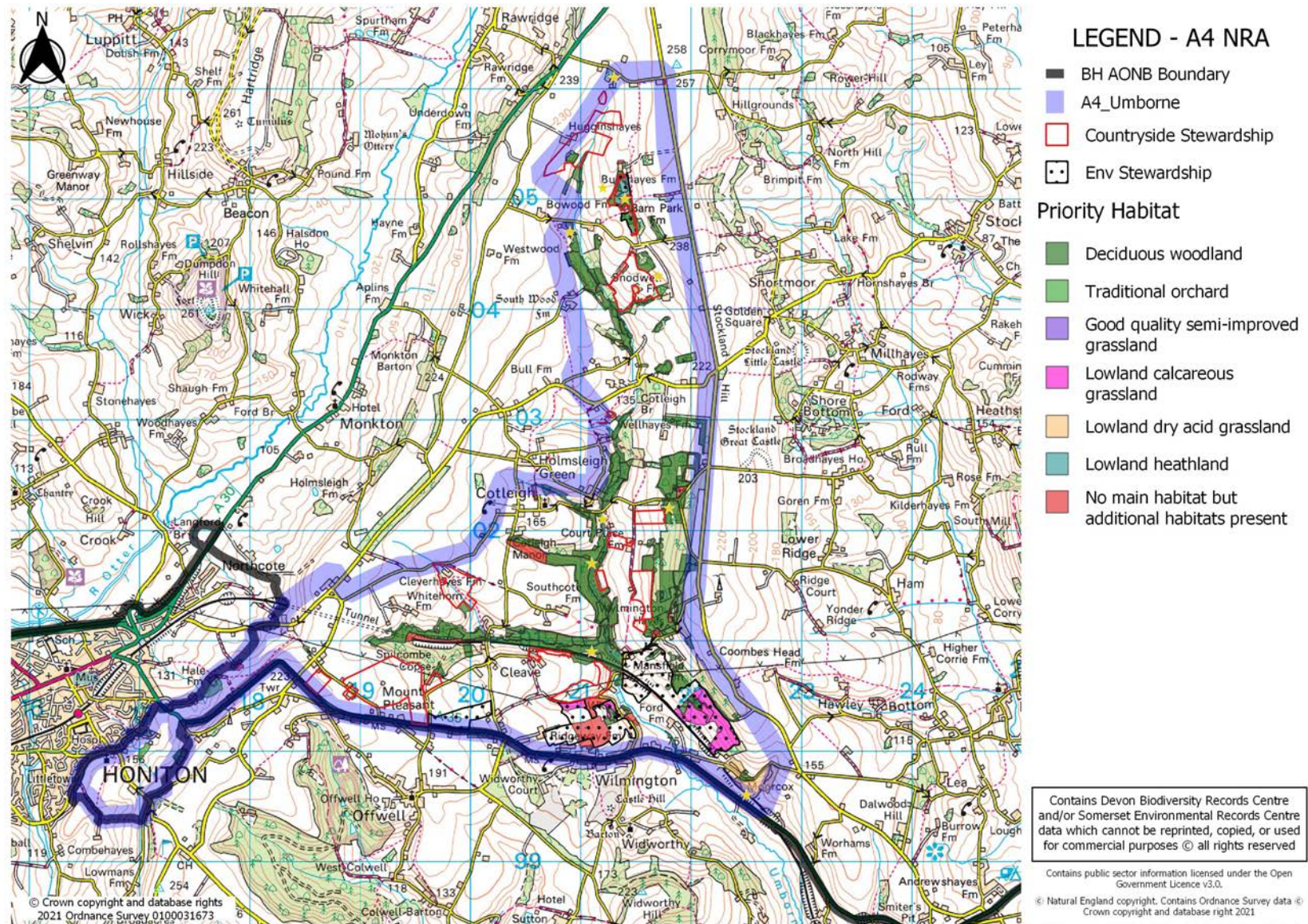


Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Yarty valley running south from Yarcombe village, to Stockland and on to Dalwood, including Horner Hill and the valley of the River Corry. • A pastoral landscape of relatively large fields with few woodlands in the north, becoming smaller fields around Stockland and Dalwood. • The wide floodplain of the Yarty contains the relatively open river channel. • The western greensand slopes above Stockland are more wooded with a wide springline zone.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substantial areas of springline mire amongst lowland wet and dry heath, with associated secondary wet woodland, notably on the Stockland Turbaries (Quantock, Shore Bottom, Horner Hill). • Exemplar neutral grassland meadows at Goren Farm, with good smaller examples of neutral/acid grassland eg. at Great Batch, Horner Hill. • Some small ancient woodlands on steeper slopes • Riparian habitats along the Yarty, Corry and feeder streams. • Stockland Great and Little Castle earthworks.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for Greater Horseshoe Bat, Bechstein's Bat, Dormouse, Brown hare, Brown Hairstreak, Green-winged Orchid and Early Marsh Orchid. Lesser Teazel on Yarty.
Pattern of land use & ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the north and east of the area the predominant land use is dairy farming, sometimes intensive, with associated fodder cropping. • To the south and west there is more beef and sheep.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stockland PC's management of the Turbaries. • Goren Farm – wildflower seed harvesting and open days. • CSF/EA advisory provision over several years • Blackdown Hills E.L.M T&T work with larger dairy farms around Yarcombe and Membury. • East Devon E.L.M T&T work with small farmer cluster in Umborne valley. • Emerging Triple Axe plan.
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triple Axe has identified need for improved riparian management, reduction or more careful siting of maize cultivation, pig production, plus other soil conservation interventions, improved slurry storage, and restoration of natural river flow. • Need to build on EDAONB work to support small landowners into CSS / E.L.M agreements through group applications and collaboration. • Important bat populations rely on grazed pasture (with access to dung of cattle free from wormers) and habitat corridors.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triple Axe partnership activity, in conjunction with continued CSF delivery. • Further use of Goren Farm for demonstration/good practice.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the River Yarty, and improve water quality, soil structure and infiltration. • Interventions which conserve unimproved neutral or acid grassland, ancient semi-natural woodland and associated priority habitats, on either side of the valley but especially west of Stockland and around Horner Hill. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.



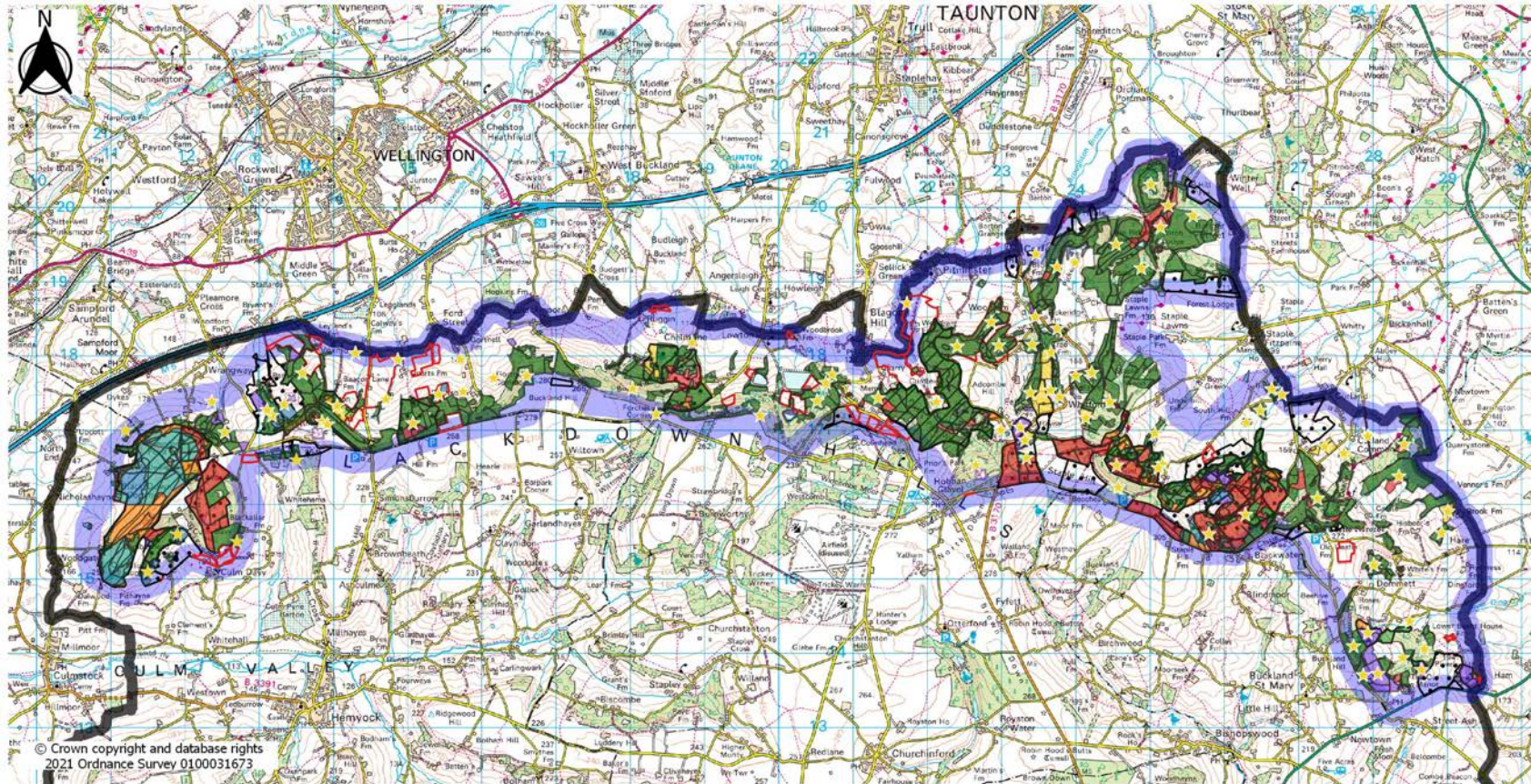
Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The East side of the lower Yarty and Kit Brook valleys from Wambrook in the north, down across Holy City, Smallridge and Membury to Beckford Bridge and Chardstock in the south. Including the large and relatively well-wooded expanse of the Cotley Estate and the wooded sides of Haddon Hill.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Springline mire, ancient and wet secondary woodland and neutral grassland within the Cotley Estate. Frequent remnant calcareous grassland on the Lias limestone to the south, notably Denningsdown and Smallridge. Frequent small ancient woodlands. Floodplain and riparian habitats on Kit Brook. Tudor barn at Cotley, historic parkland at Great Batch, Tolcis, Membury Court; Membury Castle.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current LRC records for Bechsteins, Greater Horseshoe, Lesser Horseshoe and Grey Long-eared Bat, Dormouse, Brown hare, Marsh Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Double-line Moth, Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth, Green-winged Orchid and Early Marsh Orchid. Herb Paris and Greater Butterfly Orchid on the limestone. Alternate-leaved Golden Saxifrage on River Kit. Green Winged Orchid at Quarry Fields SSSI.
Pattern of land use & ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large estate at Cotley. Pattern of small to moderate-sized beef and sheep and some dairy farms to south. Rough shooting and equestrian.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSF/EA regulatory visits and advice. Substantial habitat restoration and wider estate management on Cotley Estate, including hedge management and new woodland plantings. Blackdown Hills E.L.M T&T cluster members
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Soil loss and sediment/phosphate levels in main river and tributaries, largely due to overstocking on some dairy units, poor slurry management, poor maize growing practice, winter working of land, plus some issues from domestic sewage management. Water quality of River Axe downstream, and condition of River Axe SSSS/SAC: Triple Axe has identified need for improved riparian management, reduction or more careful siting of maize cultivation, other soil conservation interventions, reduction in herd size on overstocked land, improved slurry storage, and restoration of natural river flow. Important bat populations rely on grazed pasture (with access to dung of cattle free from wormers) and habitat corridors.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership approach under Triple Axe banner, involving EA, AONB, NE, NFU, FWAG and other partners. Continued enlightened estate management at Cotley. Continued CSF engagement.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the River Kit and Axe, and improve water quality, soil structure and infiltration. Interventions which conserve springline mire, wet heath, unimproved neutral or calcareous grassland, ancient semi-natural woodland and associated priority habitats, in the Cotleigh area and around Membury and Smallridge. Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

A4 UMBORNE



Landscape overview	Valley of River Umborne from Stockland Hill across to Cotleigh and south to Wilmington, plus the spur of Honiton Hill.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small remnant springline mire sites to north (Bucehayes), • Some neutral/ calcareous grassland sites and semi-improved grassland. • Substantial areas of woodland around Cotleigh and Wilmington • Riparian habitats on Umborne.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bat, Dormouse. • Bechstein's Bat also believed to be present. • Monkshood is recorded.
Pattern of land use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly small beef and sheep farms, some small estates.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Devon E.L.M T&T work with cluster of small farms. • Emerging Triple Axe plan
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triple Axe has identified need for improved riparian management, reduction or more careful siting of maize cultivation, plus other soil conservation interventions, improved slurry storage, and restoration of natural river flow. • Need to build on EDAONB work to support small landowners into CSS / E.L.M agreements through group applications and collaboration • Important bat populations rely on grazed pasture (with access to dung of cattle free from wormers) and habitat corridors.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Triple Axe partnership activity, in conjunction with continued CSF delivery. • Connection between BH and ED AONB activity in Umborne valley
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the River Umborne, and improve water quality, soil structure and infiltration. • Interventions which conserve springline mire, wet heath, unimproved neutral or calcareous grassland, ancient semi-natural woodland and associated priority habitats. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along the river corridor. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

N1 NORTH SCARP



LEGEND - N1 NRA

- BH AONB Boundary
- N1 Northern Scarp
- Countryside Stewardship
- Env Stewardship
- SSSI
- ★ Local/County Wildlife Site

Priority Habitat

- Deciduous woodland
- Traditional orchard
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland dry acid grassland

- Lowland fens
- Lowland heathland
- Lowland meadows
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Purple moor grass and rush pastures

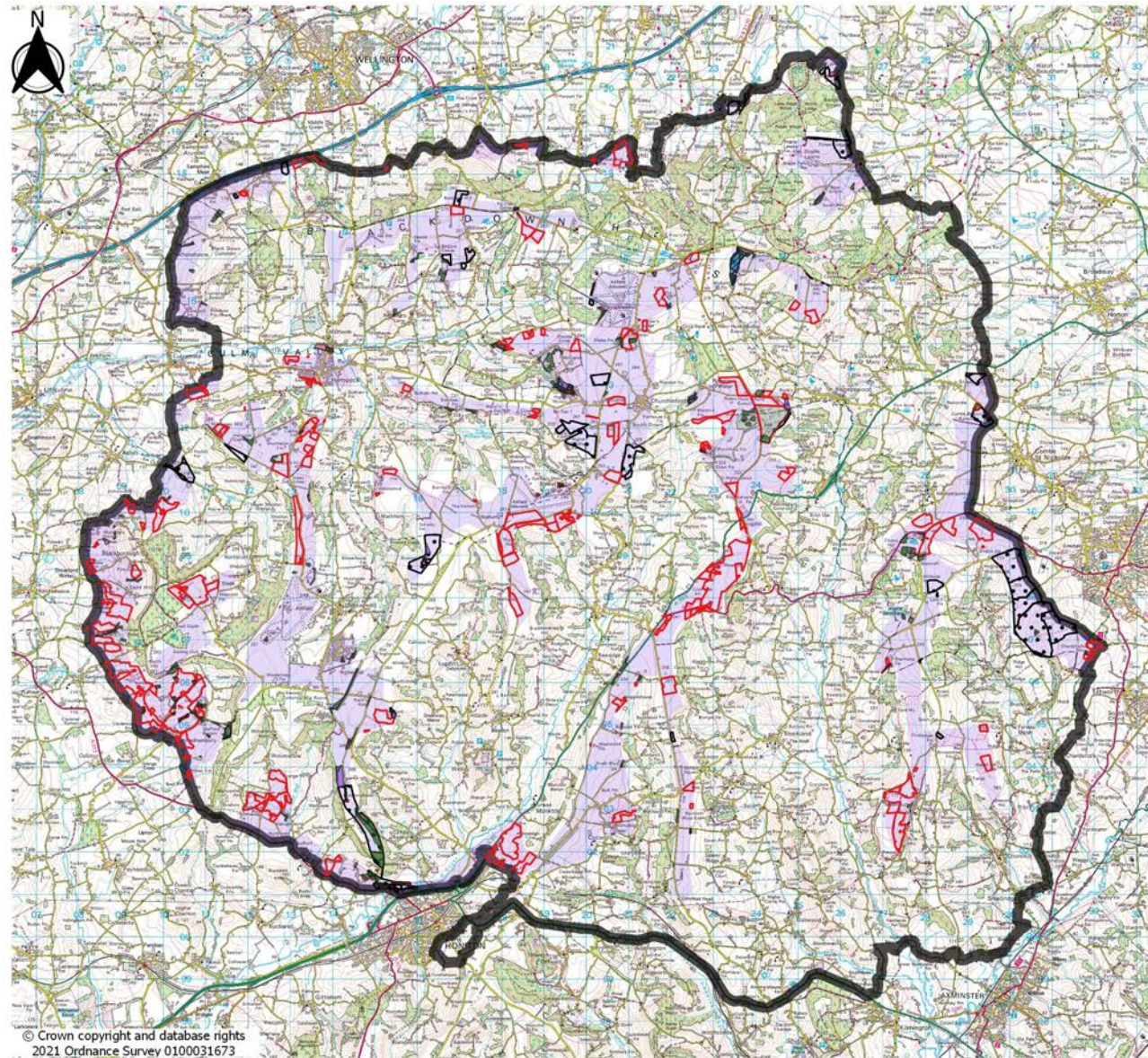
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Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A steep, geologically complex scarp face of greensand slumps and faces below the clay plateau, above marl clays with limestone outcrops. • From Culmstock Beacon and Blackdown & Sampford Common in the west, across Culm Davy to Wellington Monument, Quarts Moor and Gortnell Common. • Continuing along the north-facing scarp from Buckland Wood to Leigh Hill, Priors Park, Staple Hill and Castle Neroche, north across Staple Park and Wych Lodge to the edge of the Neroche Forest near Taunton Racecourse, and including the east-facing slopes around Dommett Wood and Hare Lane, down to Eagle Cross.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largest expanse of lowland heath in the AONB (Blackdown & Sampford Common SSSI), with a fringe of springline mire. Smaller heathland areas at Gortnell and North Down. • Plantation conifer woodland at Culm Davy partially restored to open heath • Ancient woodland across part of northern scarp around Monument and Park Farm • String of springline mire sites from Wellington Castlefields to Quants, to Leigh Hill, and further to east at Britty SSSI and below Dommett. • Calcareous grassland at Adcombe Wood, Quants, around Corfe (Devil's Pit, Feltham), Mount Fancy and Wych Lodge. • Substantial area of semi-improved rush pasture and neutral grassland which has great value as connecting habitat and undisturbed soil profiles in permanent pasture. • Calcareous and acidic ancient woodland on clays at Park Farm, Monument, Quarts Moor, Buckland Wood, Adcombe and Priors Park, Staple Hill, Staple Park, Piddle Wood, Orchard Hill, Young Wood, Ruttersleigh, Castle Neroche, Middleroom and Dommett Wood. • Priors Park/Adcombe Wood SSSI is the largest ancient semi-natural woodland in the AONB. Adcombe is Woodland Trust owned. • Neroche Forest including Ruttersleigh and Mount Fancy SSSI, Quants SSSI/SAC, Piddle Oaks, Young Wood/Wych Lodge, Castle Neroche. Forest contains network of 220ha of restored open habitats. • Concentration of veteran trees (including ancient oak pollards, and some black poplar), across the area from around Park Farm, through Pitminster and Corfe. Concentration of Wild Service Tree across parts of the scarp. • SWT reserves at Castlefields, Quants, Ruggin and Dommett. • Castle Neroche hillfort SAM, Orchard Hill hillfort, tumuli on Sampford Common, Culmstock Beacon hut, medieval deer park remains at Staple Park, and remnants of medieval Neroche Forest which extended further to the east.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current LRC records for Greater and Lesser Horseshoe Bat (at Mount Fancy), Bechstein's Bat (at Quants/Ruggin), Dormouse, Nightjar, Curlew and Dartford Warbler (both at Blackdown Common, current status unclear), Adder, Brown Hairstreak, Marsh Fritillary (at Quants - no longer present), Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (Mount Fancy), Double-line Moth, Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth, Great Sundew, Green-winged Orchid, Lesser Butterfly Orchid, Early Marsh Orchid • Great Crested Newts at Blackdown Common. • Duke of Burgundy recently at Quants and Wych Lodge but no longer recorded. Wood White formerly at Ruttersleigh but no longer recorded. • Herb Paris, Greater Butterfly Orchid, Birds Next Orchid on limestone. Very large population of Early Marsh Orchid on mire slopes at Blackdown and Sampford Moor (over 6000 spikes counted in 2018).

Pattern of land use & ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large public forest estate. • Several smaller estates such as Leigh Hill. • Common land at Blackdown and Sampford Common (part owned by Culmstock PC), Gortnell Common. • National Trust, Woodland Trust and Butterfly Conservation ownerships. • Former Crown-owned tenant farms around Staple Fitzpaine, now sold to larger farming enterprises or tenant-acquired. • Some smaller farms and medium-sized estates.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landscape-scale restoration by FE of connected open space across Neroche Forest through Neroche Project and subsequent leasing to BHT and HLS agreements, with longhorn grazing and mechanical management. • Conservation management at Adcombe, Quarts, Blackdown Common. • Neroche Woodlanders at Young Wood – nature-based wellbeing and training centre • Arable margins and pollinator habitat at Staple Farm.
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of key butterfly populations in recent years – Marsh Fritillary, Wood White, Duke of Burgundy, despite suitable habitat remaining. Possible scope for reintroductions. • Some springline mire sites still subject to neglect • Impacts of high visitor numbers on ground nesting birds on Blackdown & Sampford Common. • Impact of recreational pressure from expanding development around Taunton, Wellington and Junction 27. • Bat populations probably under recorded.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential expansion and further rewilding of Neroche Forest beyond existing CSS agreements, possibly via E.L.M Landscape Recovery. • Involvement of volunteers and audiences from Taunton, via Neroche Woodlanders, and availability of Young Wood site and Park Farm Bothy as bases for ecological and rural skills training.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the Tone and Fivehead River streams, and improve water quality, soil structure and infiltration. • Interventions which conserve springline mire, wet and dry heath, unimproved neutral and calcareous grassland, ancient semi-natural woodland and associated priority habitats, especially around Blackdown Common/Monument, Buckland Wood, Adcombe, Neroche, Wych Lodge and Dommett. • Interventions which create more natural, woody vegetation along stream corridors. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

P - PLATEAU LANDS AND PERIPHERY



LEGEND - Plateau

- BH AONB Boundary
- Countryside Stewardship
- Environmental Stewardship
- Plateau
- SSSI

Priority Habitat

- Deciduous woodland
- Traditional orchard
- Good quality semi-improved grassland
- Lowland heathland
- Lowland meadows
- Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland fens
- Purple moor grass and rush pastures
- No main habitat but additional habitats present

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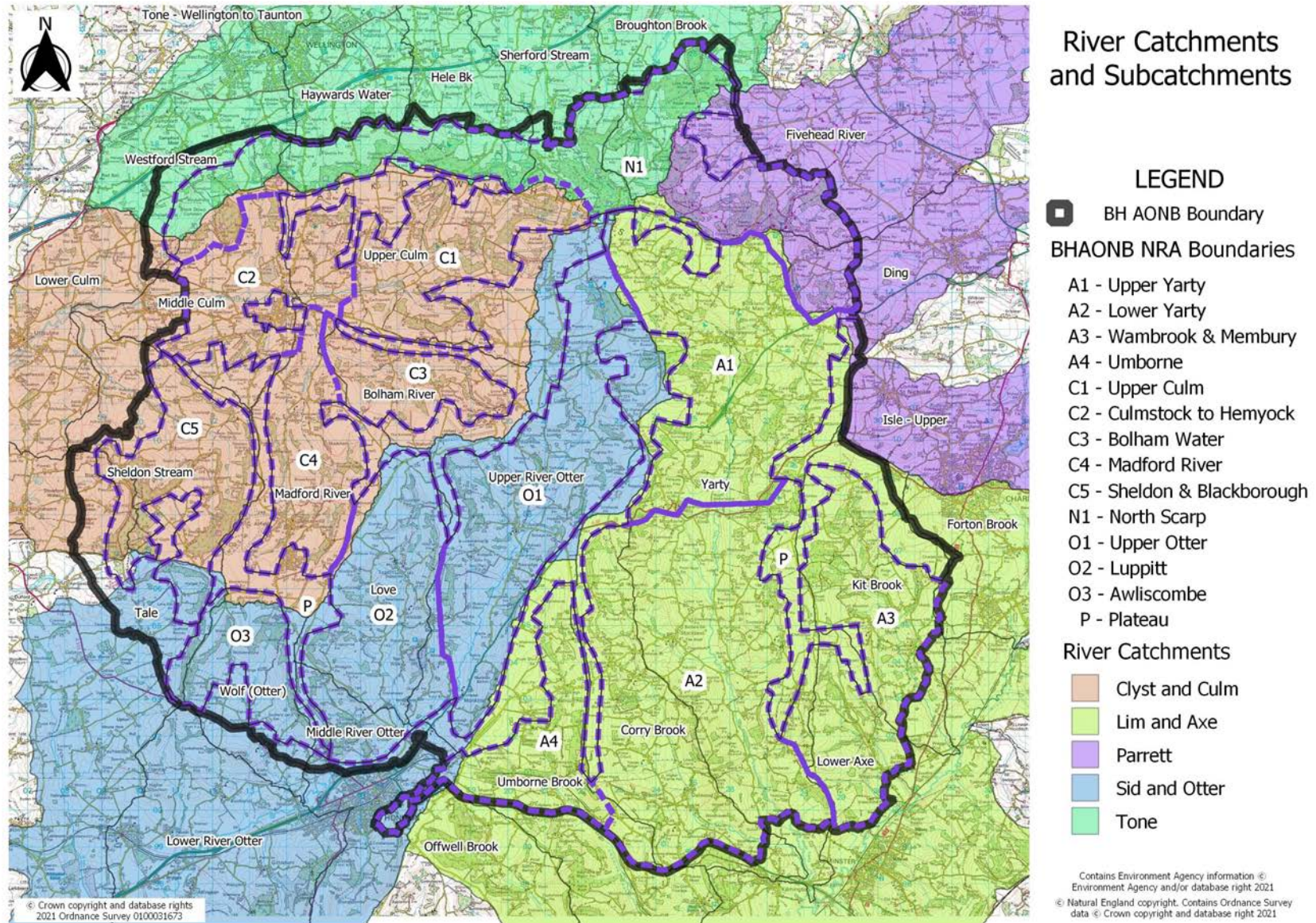
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Landscape overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally open, flat landscape of large fields with straight hedgerows, occupying the level clay plateau tops at the centre of the hills, and the tops of the spurs running southwards. • The major blocks of land are the north plateau from Leigh Hill to Simonsburrow; the Churchinford plateau, from Staple Hill across to Trickey Warren and south to Smeatharpe airfield and Hartridge; the Dunkeswell plateau from Hackpen to Awliscombe; the Stockland Hill plateau from Brown Down to Monkton; and the Chard plateau from Street Ash to Whitestaunton and south to Membury.
Key habitats & features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remnant heathland sites at Hemyock and Shuttleton Commons. • Important 20th Century historic sites at Culmhead, Smeatharpe and Dunkeswell airfields. • Plateau Bronze Age features on Brown Down. • Beech avenues and hedgelines, and scattered veteran oaks and ashes. • Historic settlement pattern around Churchinford.
Champion species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small overwintering or itinerant flocks of Golden Plover and Lapwing, plus larger flocks of Fieldfare, Brambling etc. Skylark locally frequent. Brown Hares.
Pattern of land use & ownership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mostly improved grazing pasture or arable. Some plantation woodlands. • Many farms with land on the plateau have boundaries extending down the valley sides alongside.
Current activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some small examples of regenerative pasturing techniques (herbal leys and mob grazing) are emerging in places on this land. • Some new woodland plantings taking place.
Needs/ issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil condition, notably compaction, is a major issue for the capacity of the plateau clays to allow rainwater ingress to recharge the aquifer. • Continuing loss of permanent pasture to short term leys and maize growing.
Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further woodland planting. • Move to lower-intensity permanent pasture with better soil husbandry, and better management of arable land through eg. undersowing of maize and avoidance of winter working of soils.
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions which slow the flow of water off the land into the river valleys, and improve soil structure and infiltration. • Interventions which conserve, buffer or extend remnant priority habitats. • Interventions which improve hedge structure and condition.

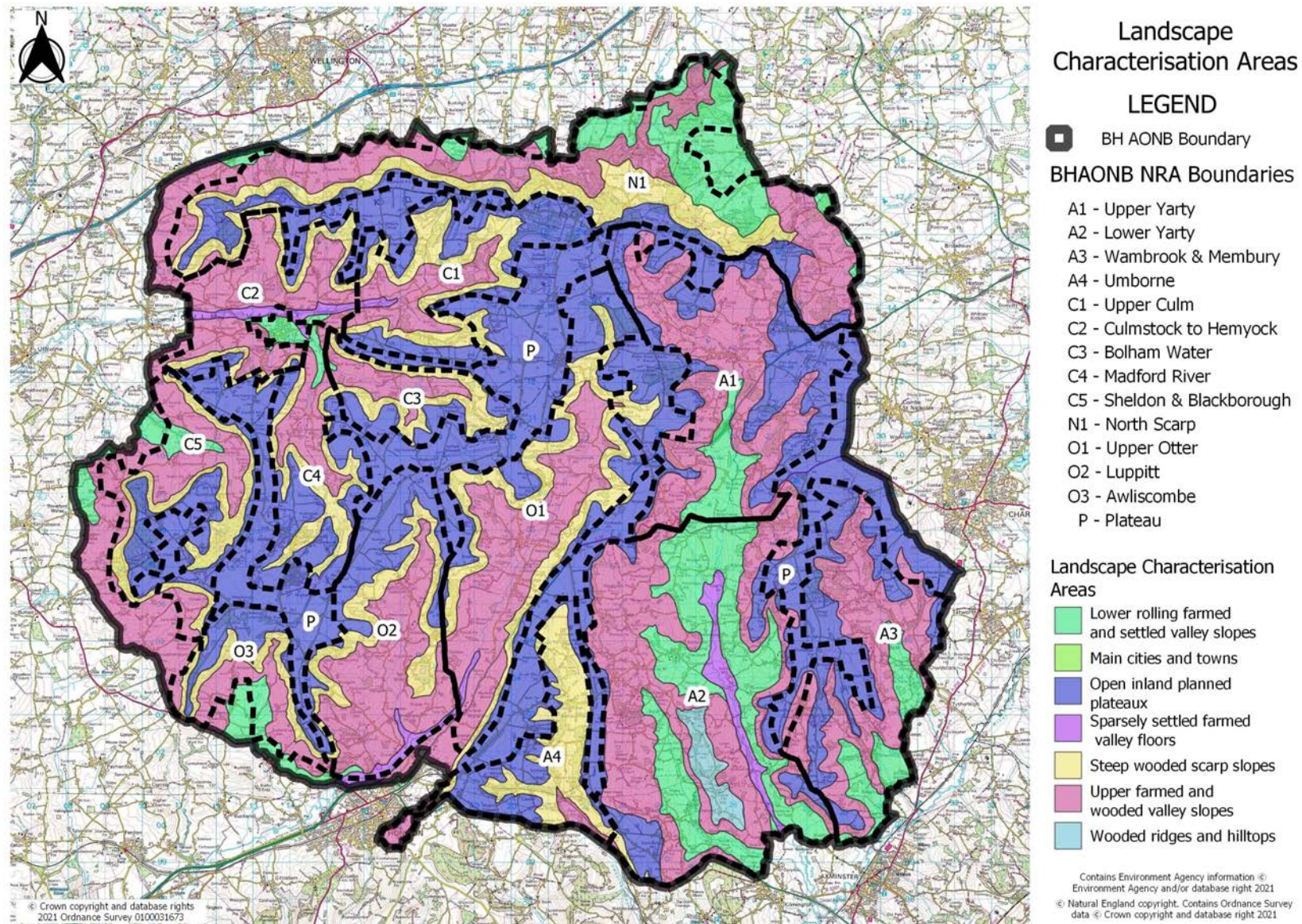
APPENDIX

NATURE RECOVERY AREAS IN RELATION TO KEY DATASETS

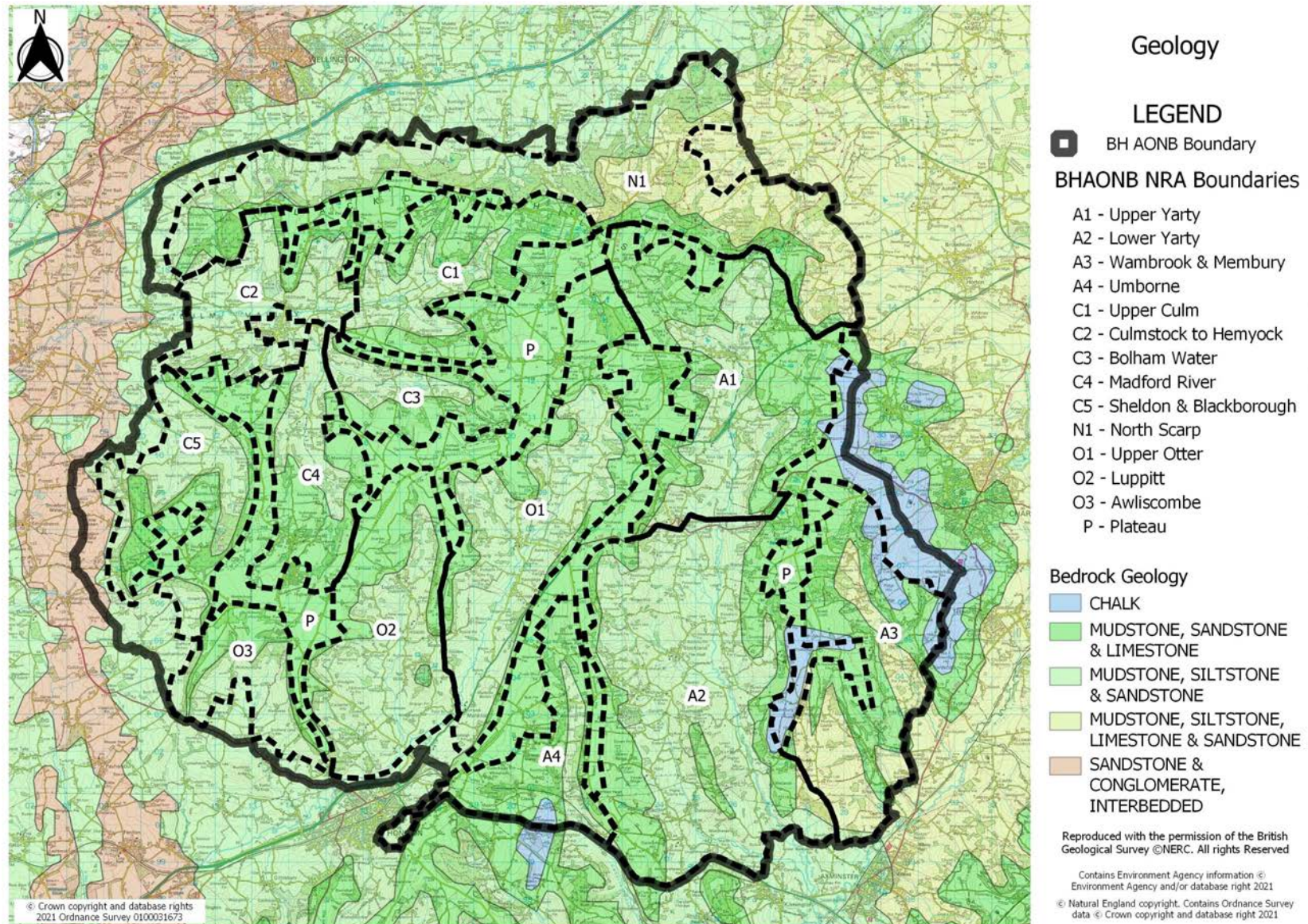
A: RIVER CATCHMENTS AND SUB-CATCHMENTS



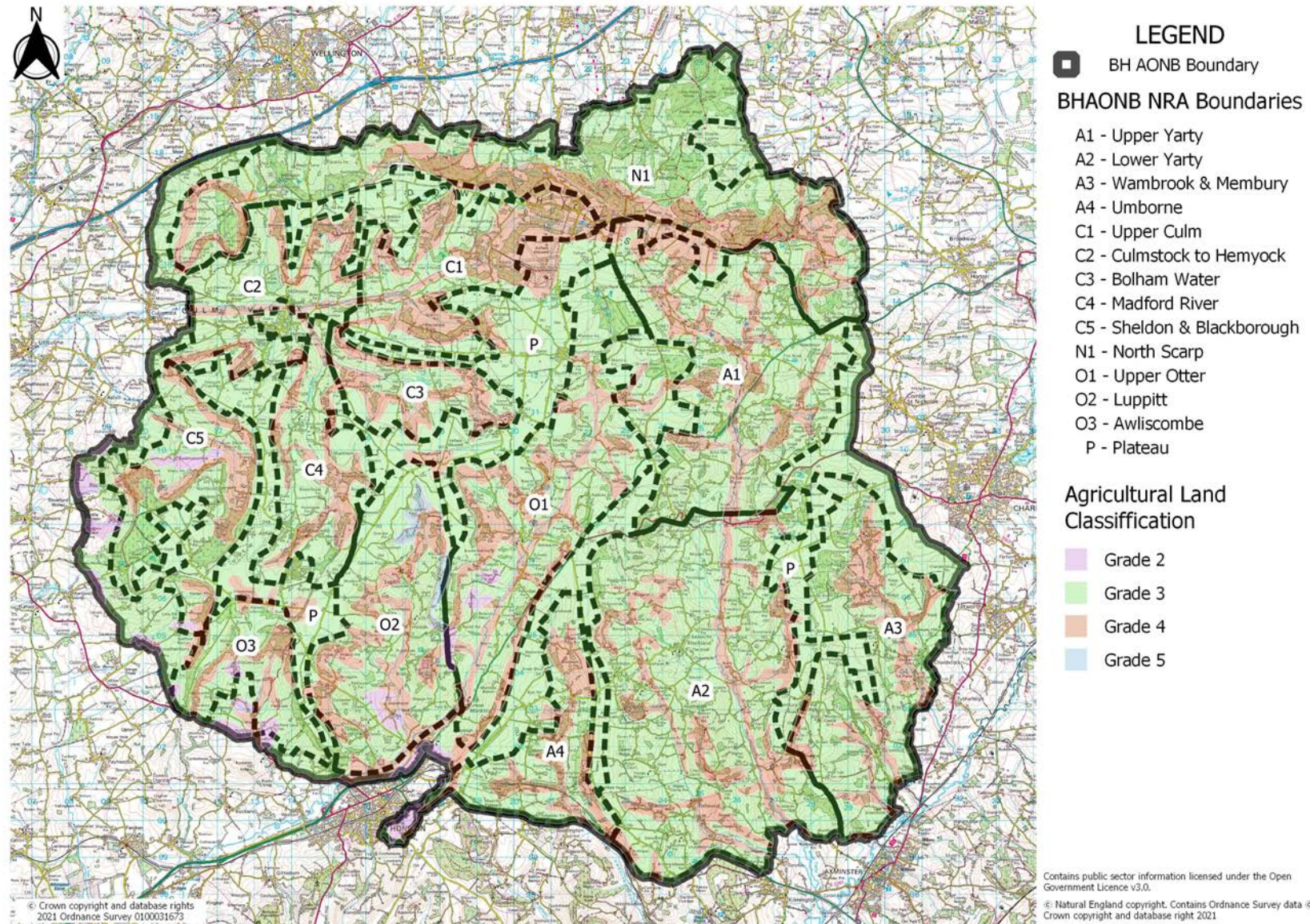
B: LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION AREAS



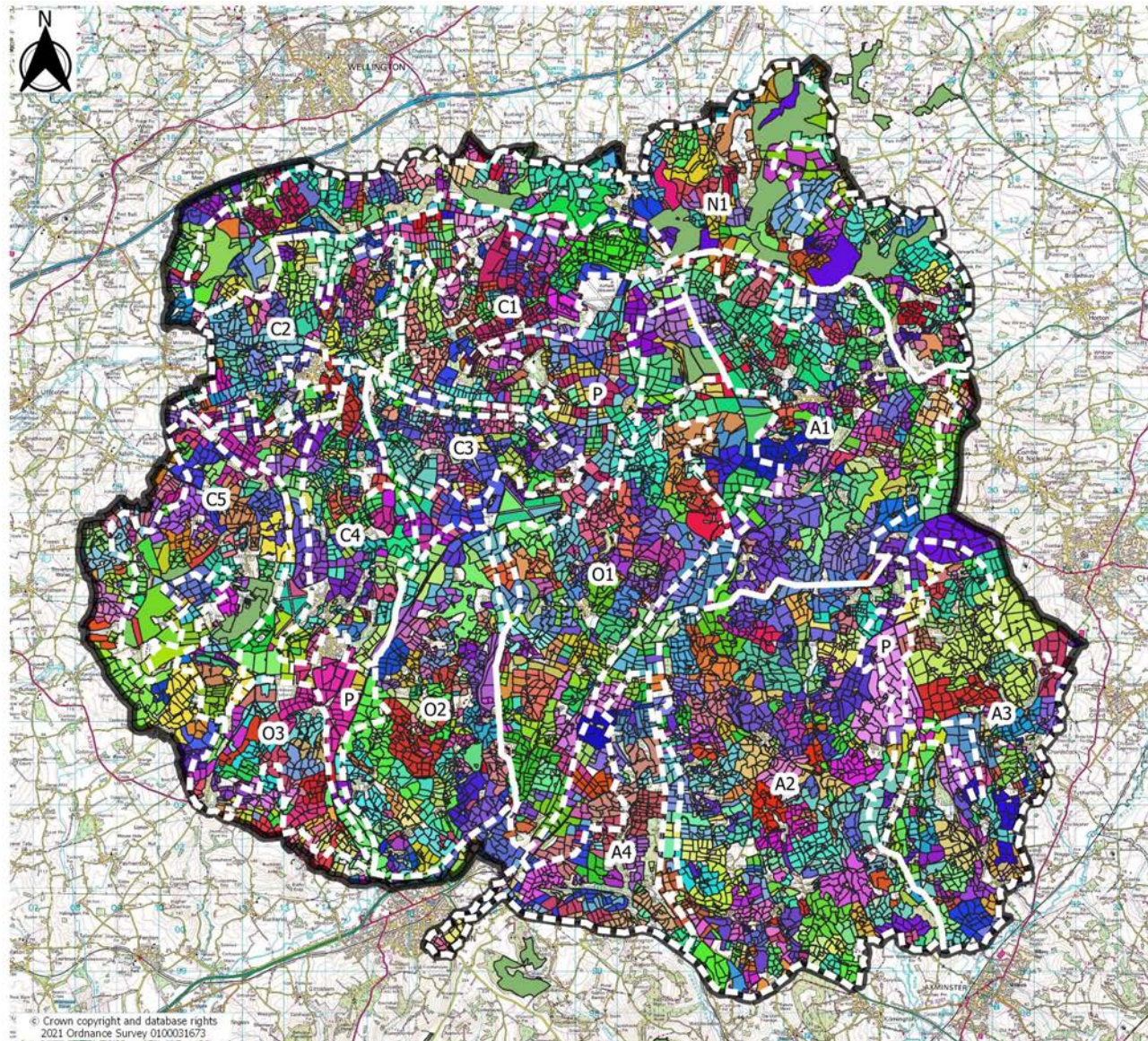
C: GEOLOGY



D: AGRICULTURAL LAND CLASSIFICATION



F: LAND HOLDINGS



Landownership

LEGEND

BH AONB Boundary

BHAONB NRA Boundaries

- A1 - Upper Yarty
- A2 - Lower Yarty
- A3 - Wambrook & Membury
- A4 - Umborne
- C1 - Upper Culm
- C2 - Culmstock to Hemyock
- C3 - Bolham Water
- C4 - Madford River
- C5 - Sheldon & Blackborough
- N1 - North Scarp
- O1 - Upper Otter
- O2 - Luppitt
- O3 - Awliscombe
- P - Plateau

Forestry England Land

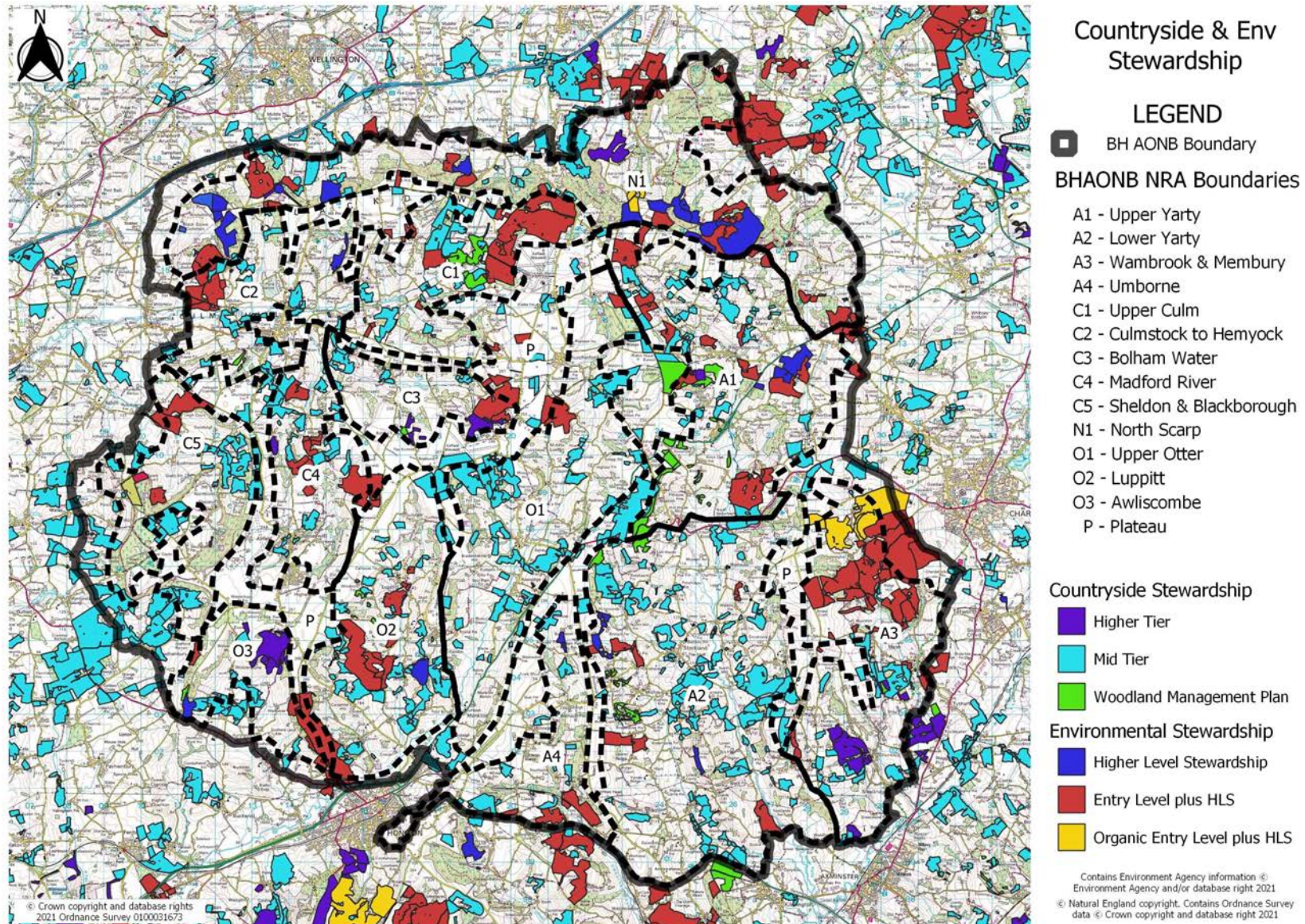
National Trust Land

Private Landownership

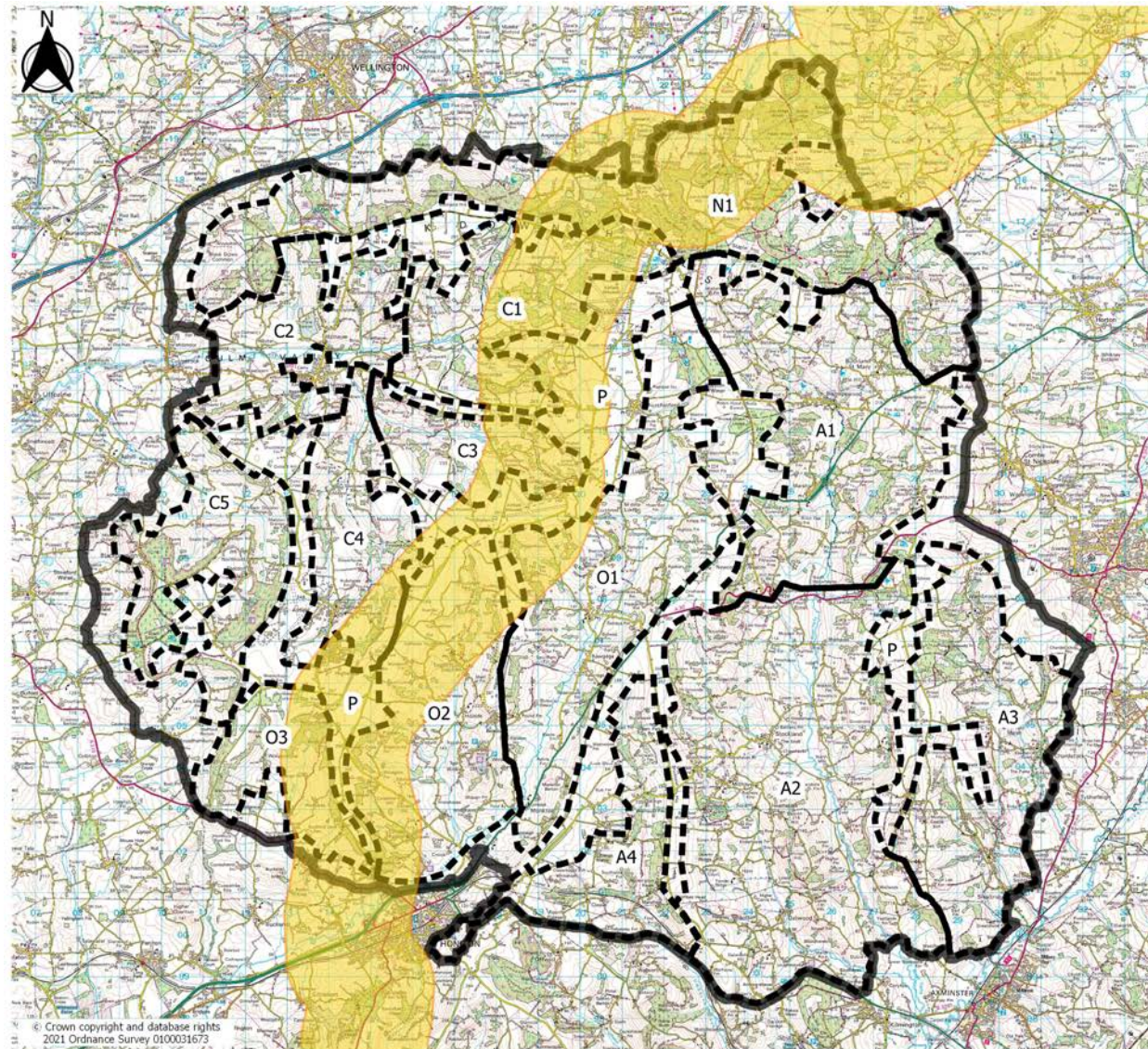
Devon = 1017
Somerset = 172

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G: AGRI-ENVIRONMENT AGREEMENTS



H: BUGLIFE B-LINES NETWORK



Buglife B-Lines Network

LEGEND

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Buglife B-Lines
UK Network

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