YORK COMMUNITY WOODLAND

Site Assessment & Design Concept

Iwan Downey
Iwan@cf-trust.org

Contents

Introduction

The Purpose of this Document

This document has two key objectives.

1. To summarise the initial site assessment undertaken to date.
2. To set out some initial design concepts to help inform and structure future engagement with the community and other stakeholders.

The site assessment has involved a number of key tasks including

- Site visits and surveys – e.g. Geophysical survey to assess the project area's historic environment potential
- Consultation of local and national records – e.g. North & East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC) records for the site and surrounding areas
- Review of local and national policies and strategies – e.g. City of York policy documents

It is anticipated that additional survey work will be required to complete the planning process, and the stakeholder engagement stage will be important in identifying these.

The design concepts put forward later in this document are aimed to provide an indication of a range of approaches to woodland creation/management. They are not intended to provide a limited choice of options but to be the base for a wide-ranging conversation to identify the range of features and benefits that can be achieved through this new community woodland for York.

York Community Woodland

In 2020 City of York Council (CYC) purchased a 70ha parcel of agricultural land to the west of the city. This added to their existing, adjacent land holdings including other agricultural land and the Harewood Whin Landfill site.

The main purpose of this land purchase was to create a significant new community woodland for the city delivering a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits.

This document sets out the initial findings of the survey work completed to date identifying the key site constraints & opportunities, and some high-level options to help inform the forthcoming stakeholder engagement.

It should be noted that the scale of this community woodland project means that it will be significant not just for the city of York, but also nationwide.

Brief Site Description

See Map 1

The project area is a low-lying flat area to the west of the city of York, between the villages of Rufforth and Knapton. The land under consideration as part of this project is approximately 76ha of agricultural (arable) land.

As identified in the *Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment* (September 2020) the only significantly change in the site since 1900 has been a gradual reduction from 30 to 11 fields, with the associated loss of hedgerows and trees.

Immediately to the west is the current Harewood Whin Landfill site. This may provide further community woodland opportunities in the future but will not be included as a detailed element of this site assessment and concept design process.

*Greater details are provided in the **Site Analysis** Section below.*

The White Rose Forest

See Map 7

CYC are signatories to the White Rose Forest (WRF), the community forest for West & North Yorkshire. The WRF is a joint venture of other 30 local authorities and other organisations with the primary aim of increasing tree canopy cover across the region. To increase the value of the woodlands created WRF has developed key programmes that prioritise key objectives, including.

- **Green Streets®** - aims to deliver tree planting in key urban areas/transport corridors to reduce pollution and increase carbon sequestration.
- **Landscapes for Water** – targeted at key catchments across Yorkshire, this programme aims to reduce flood risk, and improve water quality through carefully targeted and designed woodland.
- **Biodiversity Improvement** – every WRF project will aim to improve the biodiversity value of the land.

The WRF will work to support CYC in delivering this major project through its Deliver Pathway. This can include some or all of the following elements.

- **Planning & Design** – supporting a multi-disciplinary approach to designing new woodlands to maximise wider benefits to society. Ensuring we are planting the right trees in the right place.
- **Engagement with stakeholders** – supporting the engagement process to seek the advice and approval of a range of statutory and local stakeholders.
- **Forestry regulations** –working with the relevant authorities to gain any necessary permissions needed.
- **Funding** –working with the White Rose Funders Group to identify the funding option(s) that best suit the project's requirements.

- **Delivery** –working with the White Rose Forest partnership to source the resources needed to deliver the project on the ground. This can include working with local community and volunteer groups.
- **Future management & maintenance** –wherever possible seeking to create a further package of support and guidance to manage the woodland long-term.

Forestry Regulations

Woodland creation in England is subject to the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999.

Given the likely scale of the new woodland as part of this project, and that not all of the area is within the Forestry Commission's Low Risk Zone then it is expected that the project will be subject to the EIA Screening Process. This will require CYC *(with the support of WRF partnership) to submit a detailed assessment of the characteristics of the site/project and their impact on the environment.

For more information see **https://www.gov.uk/guidance/assess-environmental-impact-before-you-create-new-woodland**

The UK Forestry Standard

The UK Forestry Standard (UKFS) sets out the UK Governments' approach for how all woodlands should be created and managed. In terms of this proposed new community woodland some of the key aspects that should be considered as part of the design process are

- Forests and **woodlands are important visual elements in the landscape** that change over time.
- Very **often they are the dominant element in the landscape**, shaping and enclosing space, framing views and providing colour, texture and scale.
- They have great **potential to enhance and enrich the environment** and make a significant contribution to landscape quality.
- Forests and woodlands **provide a place for recreational activities** and can bring people closer to nature in both town and country.
- **Management activities provide a context for engaging local people**, which can help promote community cohesion and environmental awareness.

For more information see https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/687147/The_UK_Forestry_Standard.pdf

The Design Brief

CYC have, as part of this design concept stage identified a number of key objectives that any new community woodland will be required to deliver. The key targets are

- **Planting 50,000 trees by 2023** for carbon sequestration, as part of a wider commitment to reach net zero carbon by 2020
- New woodland amenity to **increase and enhance access to green space** in York
- **Enhanced health and wellbeing** outcomes for local residents and resultant savings for health budgets
- **Increase in biodiversity** and wildlife habitats
- **Enhancements to York active travel network**, including walking and cycling
- **Opportunities for green jobs, green** skills development and volunteering opportunities

Site Analysis

Background

In order to inform this initial Design Concept process a number of site surveys and desk searches have been undertaken. The outcome of this research is summarised in the section below and is aimed to identify the key features that should be taken into consideration.

City of York Policies & Strategies

In considering these options the following CYC policies have been considered and all Design Concepts will aim to deliver the key objectives of these policies.

- **CYC Green Infrastructure Strategy** – this project will deliver across many of these (highlighted in the Design Brief).
- **CYC Green Corridors** – key corridor links Knapton to the west/north of York (via Acomb). This project area will provide an opportunity to extend this corridor west of A1237 (see Image below).
- **Knapton Village Design Statement -** identifies value of open fields to bird populations such as lapwing, skylark etc.
- **Rufforth with Knapton Neighbourhood Plan –** seeks developments that conserve or enhance wildlife (see https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/2196/rufforth-with-knapton-adopted-neighbourhood-plan-december-2018 **).**
- **CYC Health and Wellbeing Strategy –** increasing opportunities for physical and mental wellbeing through access to green space and nature.
- **CYC Local Transport Plan** – Enhancing active travel such as walking and cycling and joining up the city's green corridors.
- **York Economic Strategy** – new opportunities for green jobs, green skills and volunteering.
- **Pollinator Strategy** - protect and increase the amount and quality of pollinator habitat and manage green space to provide greater benefits for pollinators.

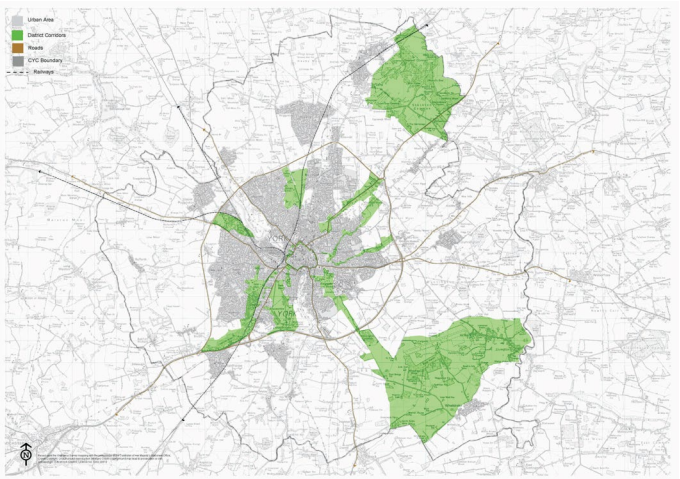


Figure 1 York Green Corridors

Community Engagement

These are some of the key the highlights of CYC's initial engagement with the community via social media. This short survey was designed to capture people's 'woodland memories' and what they enjoy about visiting woodland. It ran through December 2021 and 48 responses were received.

- **Favourite woods:** top picks include Skipwith Common, Moorlands and Hagg Wood
- **Why you like it:** Accessible/local, variety of trees and habitats, relaxing/peaceful, wild/natural.
- **Favourite woodland experiences**: Nature / walking / birdsong / wildlife / peace / green / beauty
- **What would you like to see on the new woodland site:** Good access incl. cycle links and walking, wildlife, native trees/plants, wild and natural.

White Rose Forest Priorities

In terms of the current key WRF priorities this proposed community woodland will

- Green Streets® - the eastern edge of the woodland (adjacent to the A1237) lies within this priority area.
- Landscapes for Water – a small area in the south west of the project area (close to the Foss) lies within this priority area.
- Biodiversity – the measure of this objective has not yet been set. However, woodland will be expected to have an increased biodiversity value when compared to arable land.

In addition, the other key output of this project will be its X-Factor! The scale of new woodland creation on this site is itself significant, in addition the hope is that the approach adopted here by CYC and WRF will provide inspiration and confidence to other organisations to create similar woodlands in the future.

Current Land Use

See Map 2

The parcels of land considered as part of this project are all currently in agricultural production as arable land.

There are field margins associated with the existing drains and an extensive, healthy hedgerow network, including a number of mature trees. None of the trees present (based on a brief visual inspection) a hazard on site – with limited arboricultural management needed to resolve some small damage to main branches of a small number of trees.

Soils & Water

See Map 3

The *Phase 1 Contaminated Land Assessment* (September 2020) identifies that there is no significant risk from contamination to impact on the proposed new community woodland.

The project area breaks down into 3 broad areas of soil type. Ranging from the wetter clays in the western portion to drier sands/gravels in the east. The land generally drains west towards the Foss.

The drier east, being closer to York and more easily accessible from Knapton and Poppleton would lend itself more to greater public access/usage. Whereas the wetter western areas could be more appropriate for a more informal public use.

In terms of woodland types the establishment of wet woodland habitats, including coppice could be focussed on the western areas, with the core lowland mixed broadleaved woodland focussed on the drier central/eastern areas.

However, before confirming the detail of appropriate tree species and extent of open space and recreational facilities, further analysis of the soils will be undertaken. With the current land use being arable farming, there will also need to be consideration made as to how the transition is made to the various land use options. For example there may be a requirement to sow ground covering vegetation to help consolidate the site and if required make the soil conditions better suited.

Biodiversity

See Map 2

As an intensively farmed parcel of land the only key biodiversity features identified to date are the existing hedgerows and mature trees (see *Current Land Use* above).

The aim will be to preserve all of this existing habitat within the new woodland design, and to allow sufficient space e.g. margins around hedgerows and buffers around trees for these features to develop further.

These margins will be significant and will also create the potential for a network of rich ground vegetation to be developed in the future.

An initial assessment of the data provided by North & East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC) has identified the following observations.

1. **No international, national or local designated sites** on or close to the project area.
2. **Only 3 records relate specifically* to the project area** itself.
    a. They are for 3 non-designated butterfly species.

3. **There are several records that relate to features close to the** site (in particular the neighbouring Harewood Whin site). These include.
    a. **Many bird species**, including those listed under the Bern convention – but no Red List species
    b. **Pipistrelle Bats** - Trees and woodland are important habitat features for common pipistrelles. Trees close to roosts provide cover as bats emerge. When foraging, they tend to follow woodland edges to aid navigation. Hunting often takes place close to rivers and other water features, as this is where the bat's insect prey is most abundant.
    c. **Water voles** on the Foss in Harewood Whin in terms of habitat they prefer soft, undisturbed earth banks which they can burrow into with wide margins. Current option to leave significant margin along open drains may be opportunity to extend habitat into Project Area.
    d. **Butterflies** (**including Red List species** e.g.
        i. White Letter Hairstreaks - prefers sheltered hedgerows and woodland rides where Elms (Ulmus spp.) grow**.**
        ii. Small Heath - occurs on grassland where there are fine grasses, especially in dry, well-drained situations where the sward is short and sparse. Typical habitats include; heathland, downland and coastal dunes, but it is also found on road verges, moorland and in woodland rides.
        iii. Wall - Habitats include forest edges and clearings, shrubby areas in ravines and river valleys and sparse woodlands**.**

** many of the locations provided are not fine-grained enough to link to the site e.g. 4-digit NGR or clearly outside the project area*

The above would suggest that the creation of a woodland with a significant ride/edge structure may not have a negative impact on these key species and could in fact create extensive new/improved habitat that could increase their range/numbers.

However, the scale and location of the new woodland will necessitate further consideration of these important factors. This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site will review existing data, identify any further survey work that may be required and provide recommendations for protecting and improving key features.

Historic Environment

See Map 4

There are no scheduled historic environment features record within the project area or close by.

However, based on soil types and records of local activity a geophysical survey was undertaken in December 2020 and January 2021 to identify any areas of potential archaeological interest.

The results have identified some areas of the site that may require further investigation. The results do not provide 'hard evidence' but suggest that there is enough there to warrant a closer look.

These areas are highlighted (with red stars) on Map 4 and include

- In the top north eastern corner of the site (the proposed entrance / wood meadow field). York Archaeological Trust are being consulted to see if this location can be trenched soon (March 2021), to provide a definitive view.
- Another area of interest is more towards the south east of the site. With the fields currently being farmed any further investigation will be programmed for later in 2021 so as not to disturb any crops.

Connections & Accessibility

See Map 5

The project area is well connected to the local villages and the west side of York via a range of access infrastructure. The key elements of this connectivity are

- Public Footpath - Knapton to Moor Lane/North Field Lane via Underpass and adjacent to project area)
- Bridleway - Moor Lane from North Field Lane to B1224 and adjacent to project area (see Figs 2 & 3 below).
- Cycle Path – Moor Lane to Rufforth
- Public Road – North Field Lane connects Moor Lane to Park & Ride site and Poppleton. Though there is no separate footpath for pedestrians along this route beyond the junction with Harwood Road (Northminster Business Park).
- Lay-by - on north side of B1224 allows access to Moor Lane.

Figure 2 Moor Lane on northern edge of project area

Figure 3 Well connected woodland

This range of access means that there is already in place good access to the site for many users (especially pedestrian and cyclists), without the need for any improvements to the access network. However, for those users unable to access from the nearby villages or the

Park & Ride car park, consideration may be given for limited vehicular access via North Field Lane to the north eastern corner of the project area.

There are some aspects of the site which currently provides limited access, including

- Cycle Route – connecting B1224 (near Low Fields Farm) to Knapton village does not provide a direct link to the project area.
- The area to the south of B1224 – this does not have any direct access other than the B1224. Given the road profile at this location car parking and pedestrians crossing the road should not be encouraged.
- The area close to Low Fields Farm – this does not have any direct access (from the south) other than the B1224. Given the road profile at this location car parking and pedestrians crossing the road should not be encouraged. Access will need to be through the project area from the north.

With the extinguishing of the Public Footpath - Knapton to Moor Lane over A1237 and across the project area, there is currently no formal/permissive access through the project area.

It should be noted that for potential users of the woodland not in the communities situated close to the project area, that consideration is required on how potential car use is limited or suitable parking provision is provided to minimise the impact on the local communities, in particular Knapton. Connected with this should be consideration of safe access routes e.g. off-road/non-traffic routes, pavements etc.

Whilst aiming to increase accessibility and usage of the project area, the risks of potential anti-social behaviour must be considered. Steps to reduce this could include

- Robust entry points that will allow pedestrians and cyclists to access the woodland but prevent cars and motorcycles.
- An attractive woodland with extensive walks and accessibility will attract many visitors that will naturally make the site less attractive to anyone intending to behave inappropriately.
- Potential facilities on site such as Forest School, tree nurseries will create a presence on site that will hopefully further deter un-welcome visitors.

Landscape

Being sited, on a flat low-lying site the impact of the site in landscape terms is limited. However, given the scale of the project it is important to consider the project in terms of the wider landscape context, including the existing landscape character of the project area and surrounding areas, and the impact a new large woodland will have on this landscape.

A locally significant document is the *York Landscape Appraisal Report* by ECUS. It was completed in 1996 so whilst this was some time ago it still has some relevance. The project area is located within landscape character Type 1 - Flat Open Arable Farmland. This is typical for the wider landscape character identified in the more recent, but larger scale *North Yorkshire and York Landscape Characterisation Project*. The project area (and most of the

York local authority area) sits within landscape character type 28 - Vale Farmland with Plantation Woodland and Heathland. Neither document specifically refers to the creation of new community woodlands but do refer to the opportunities to increase biodiversity and access into these landscape areas.

The site also lies in the Natural England Vale of York National Character Area (NCA28) – the summary of which is *Land use is predominantly agricultural, with large arable fields bounded by hedgerows of varying quality and some field boundary trees*. This would appear to accurately reflect this project area.

Figure 4 Typical Project Area Landscape View

One of the key opportunities identified in this NCA document is to encourage ***new riparian and flood plain woodland that can increase the natural storage of carbon****, reduce peak flow events and provide a potential future source of fuel, as well as enhance biodiversity and sense of place while retaining the value of grassland and wetland habitats.*

For more information see
http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/3488888?category=587130

Constraints

See Map 6

In addition to those features identified above the project are also has some limiting or constraining factors to be considered during the design process

- **Overhead Powerlines** – Predominantly located in the south and west, a series of powerlines cross the project area. Woodland Planting should aim to provide a buffer along their route in order to reduce future impact of the woodland on the line and site safety (see https://ukfisa.com/Safety/Safety-Library/fisa-804)
- **Low Fields Farm** – is the only property that will be adjacent to the project area. Therefore, any design process should engage with the occupier(s).

Opportunities

See Map 6

In addition to those features identified above the project are also opportunities to be considered during the design process

- **Existing Gates** – There are currently 12 gated entry points to the project area. Where appropriate these locations can be used as entry points into the new woodland. However, if not required the aim should be to replace them with a secure barrier e.g. fence/hedge to prevent inappropriate access to the woodland.
- **Harewood Whin Landfill Site** – is a significant parcel of land (also within CYC control). This land may eventually be considered as an extension to the community woodland at some stage in the future so factors such as landscape/access links etc should be considered.

Strengths & Issues

To summarise this section a brief assessment of the issues discussed and how they could impact on this proposed new woodland are

- **Policies, Strategies & Priorities** – Both within CYC and the WRF there are a number of key objectives that will be supported by a new community woodland including
    - Significantly increasing easily accessible public open space with the CYC boundaries
    - Strengthening the CYC response to climate change by
        - Sequestration of carbon
        - Reducing flood risk
        - Extending existing green corridors to improve biodiversity resilience
- **Biodiversity** – a new woodland has the potential to
    - Improve the existing habitat (hedgerows/mature trees) for many key species identified in or close to the project area.
    - Create new habitats including woodland rides to extend the habitat for the key species.
    - Impact on other species in particular wading birds
- **Historic Environment** – there is no definitive interest within the site
    - The project area does not contain any scheduled sites or features.
    - The geophysical survey has identified some areas of potential interest, further investigation may be considered.
- **Connections & Accessibility –** the project area is already well connected to the local public rights of way network. The opportunity exists to
    - extend this network significantly.
    - create a new area of accessible open space.
    - create a safe environment for all to enjoy.
- **Landscape** – the proposed new woodland will become a major component of the local landscape, which may have the potential to reduce the current open feel. However, this new woodland will also support the delivery of change that is encouraged in several relevant documents including increasing accessibility,

biodiversity, reduce flood risk and sequester carbon (all of which are highlighted above).

- **Constraints –** These will have an impact on either the area to be planted e.g. avoiding planting on wayleaves or the type of activity so as not to impact negatively on neighbouring properties.
- **Opportunities –** These currently are not expected to impact significantly on the woodland design, though they may affect which entry points are established and the precise location of routes through the project area e.g. to ensure that any access routes within a new woodland at Harewood Whin can be linked easily with the network delivered as part of this initial project.

Concept Designs

Design Assumptions

In developing the different Concept designs included in this document WRF have worked on the following assumptions

- **Existing living features to be retained** – all existing hedgerows and mature trees will be retained and incorporated within the woodland.
- **Field in NE corner to be a wildflower rich woodmeadow** – to form part of high profile, high quality main gateway to the woodland.
- **Existing open drains to be retained.**

High Level Concept

See Map 8

As set out in the map the High-Level Concept breaks the project area into 5 main zones. All 3 Design Concept Options will align with these zones.

- **Wet Woodland** – this is focussed on the wetter, heavier soils on the west, closer to the Foss.

Figure 5 Wet woodland

- **Mixed Broadleaved Woodland** – the soils become increasingly drier and lighter towards the east. This is where the core lowland mixed broadleaved woodland will be sited. This area is also where most of the recreation/access facilities will be based.

Figure 6 Lowland mixed broadleaved woodland

- **Operations Area** – there are two narrow fields with hedgerows, and an overhead powerline. With the provision of appropriate buffers this would limit the area of mature woodland that could develop. It is also close to Low Fields farm so basing an activity such as tree nursery/orchard could be suitable in this zone. An additional zone for non-woodland activity could be the area south of B1224, given its accessibility issues for the public.

Figure 7 Tree nursey and poly-tunnel

- **Conservation Area** – identified as the key gateway to the site, with access to North Field Lane, Moor Lane and the path to Knapton. Therefore, developing a high quality woodmeadow would provide the project with a grand entrance and a site of high biodiversity value.

Figure 8 A wildflower meadow

- **Main Gateway** – small zone near to entrance point could include infrastructure such a small parking area, threshold signage and interpretation plus a prominent feature e.g. artwork to create a real sense of place.

Figure 9 Artistic woodland entrance

Concept Options

At this stage 3 design concept options have been developed. They have been chosen to reflect a significant range of options, whilst still aiming to deliver on the criteria set out in the Design Brief.

They are intended to encourage debate and discussion on both the designs but also to review some of the criteria and assumptions that have informed their development to date. It is not proposed that stakeholders are asked to select which option they would prefer.

Summary Metrics

The table below provides a summary of the key metrics relevant to each of the 3 options proposed. For more details please refer to the relevant sections below and associated maps and table.

Metric	Option 1 The Carbon Woodland	Option 2 The Multi-purpose Woodland	Option 3 The Accessible Woodland
Gross Woodland Area (ha)	70.5	70.5	65.1
Nett Woodland Area (ha)	49.9	45.8	39.2
Nett Planting Area (ha)	48.1	40.4	31.4
Est. No. of Trees	100K	70K	50K
Length of accessible routes (km)	13.5	14.5	15.5

Option 1 The Carbon Woodland

See Map 9 & Table 1

This option is designed to optimise the amount of woodland that can be planted with the aim of sequestering carbon. This includes higher density planting densities to increase the rate and amount of carbon sequestration. Also to reduce the amount of open ground this is primarily limited to the wayleaves and buffers that will be required by all 3 designs.

The key metrics of this design to note are

Woodland Area

- **Wet Woodland** – will cover **18.2ha (26% of the woodland area).** As indicated in the High Level Concept (HLC) this will be focussed on the western blocks. Within the core planting areas a further 10% of open ground will be integrated.
- **Mixed Broadleaved Woodland** – will cover **31.7ha (45% of the total woodland area).** As indicated in the (HLC) this will be focussed on the central and eastern blocks. Within the core planting areas no further open ground will be integrated to maximise carbon sequestration.

  - **Nett Woodland Area** - will cover in total **49.9ha (71% of the woodland area).**
  - **Nett Planting Area** - will cover in total **48.1ha** with an average of a further 4% open ground integrated into the design.
- **Open Space** – the rides/buffer zones and wayleaves will cover **20.6ha (29% of the woodland area)**. This reflects the total length of key features e.g. hedges, drains and powerlines across the site.
- **Access/Events Space** – there is no specific provision in this HLC.
  - **Gross Woodland Area** - will cover in total **70.5ha.**

Figure 10 Woodland Ride (Open Space)

Non - woodland Area

- **Conservation Area** – will cover **2.4ha** as indicated in the High Level Concept (HLC) this will be focussed on the woodmeadow site in the NE corner of the site.
- **Alternative Operations Area** – will cover **2.6ha.** As indicated in the (HLC) this will be focussed on the southern area adjacent to Low Fields Farm. Site could be used for a small tree nursery and/or community orchard project.
- **Main Gateway** –will cover **0.3ha**. As indicated in the (HLC) this will be focussed on the NE corner.
- **Access/Events Space** – there is no specific provision in this HLC
  - **Total Project Area outside the woodland** - will cover in total **5.3ha**

Additional Notes

- **Trees planted** – estimate tree numbers to be approx. 100K trees.
- **Estimated Linear Access Routes**– by following the existing features the open ground will provide approx. 13.5km of accessible routes.

Option 2 The Multi-purpose Woodland

See Map 10 & Table 1

This option is designed to balance the benefits that the woodland can deliver whilst still looking to contribute effectively to the sequestering of carbon.

To increase the social benefits when compared to Option1 there are a new major ride to provide the route for a major connecting route through the woodland, plus the provision of a large open space within the woodland to host events and facilities such as playgrounds.

To increase the environmental benefits when compared to Option1 there are grater proportions of open ground to be integrated within the core woodland areas this will for example improve ground flora.

The key metrics of this design to note are

Woodland Area

- **Wet Woodland** – will cover **17.0ha (24% of the woodland area).** As indicated in the High Level Concept (HLC) this will be focussed on the western blocks. Within the core planting areas a further 15% of open ground will be integrated. To increase biodiversity potential, coppice management can be included as part of the wet woodland management options.
- **Mixed Broadleaved Woodland** – will cover **28.8ha (41% of the total woodland area).** As indicated in the (HLC) this will be focussed on the central and eastern blocks. Within the core planting areas a further 10% of open ground will be integrated to increase biodiversity potential.
    - **Nett Woodland Area** - will cover in total **45.8ha (65% of the woodland area).**
    - **Nett Planting Area** - will cover in total **40.4ha** with an average of a further 12% open ground integrated into the design.
- **Open Space** – the rides/buffer zones and wayleaves will cover **23.0ha (33% of the woodland area)**. This reflects the total length of key features e.g. hedges, drains and powerlines across the site, plus the key addition of a major ride to through the woodland from the cycle path in the west towards the path to Knapton..
- **Access/Events Space** – there is a proposed events area relatively close to the NE gateway that could be used to hold events or contain play areas etc. This will cover **1.7ha (2% of the woodland area)**.
    - **Gross Woodland Area** - will cover in total **70.5ha.**

Non - woodland Area

- **Conservation Area** – will cover **2.4ha** as indicated in the High Level Concept (HLC) this will be focussed on the woodmeadow site in the NE corner of the site.
- **Alternative Operations Area** – will cover **2.6ha.** As indicated in the (HLC) this will be focussed on the southern area adjacent to Low Fields Farm. Site could be used for a small tree nursery and/or community orchard project.
- **Main Gateway** –will cover **0.3ha**. As indicated in the (HLC) this will be focussed on the NE corner.
- **Access/Events Space** – there is no specific provision in this HLC
    - **Total Project Area outside the woodland** - will cover in total **5.3ha**

Figure 11 Woodland events space

Other Key Measures

- **Trees planted** – estimate tree numbers to be approx. 70K trees.
- **Estimated Linear Access Routes**– by following the existing features the open ground will provide approx. 14.5km of accessible routes. 1km more than Option 1.

Option 3 The Accessible Woodland

See Map 11 & Table 1

This option is designed to balance the benefits that the woodland can deliver whilst still looking to contribute effectively to the sequestering of carbon.

To increase the social benefits when compared to Option1 there are a new major ride to provide the route for a major connecting route through the woodland, plus the provision of a large open space within the woodland to host events and facilities such as playgrounds.

To increase the environmental benefits when compared to Option1 there are greater proportions of open ground to be integrated within the core woodland areas this will for example improve ground flora.

The key metrics of this design to note are

Woodland Area

- **Core Wet Woodland** – will cover **13.2ha (20% of the woodland area).** As indicated in the High Level Concept (HLC) this will be focussed on the western blocks. Within the core planting areas a further 20% of open ground will be integrated. To increase biodiversity potential, coppice management will be included as part of the wet woodland management options.
- **Core Mixed Broadleaved Woodland** – will cover **21.0ha (32% of the total woodland area).** As indicated in the (HLC) this will be focussed on the central and eastern blocks. Within the core planting areas a further 10% of open ground will be integrated to increase biodiversity potential.
- **Edge Woodland** – will cover **5.0ha (8% of the total woodland area).** As indicated in the (HLC) this will be focussed on the edges of the core woodland areas to run along rides and wayleaves. The stocking density will be lower and include a further 20% of open ground will be integrated. Both features along with species selected to provide food for insects/birds will combine to significantly increase biodiversity potential
    - **Nett Woodland Area** - will cover in total **39.2ha (60% of the woodland area).**

    - **Nett Planting Area** - will cover in total **31.4ha** taking into account the (on average) further 20% open ground integrated into the design.
- **Open Space** – the rides/buffer zones and wayleaves will cover **21.6ha (33% of the woodland area)**. This reflects the total length of key features e.g. hedges, drains and powerlines across the site, plus the addition of a major ride to through the woodland from the cycle path in the west towards the path to Knapton and a series of footpaths within some of the core woodland areas. This area could also be used to create key features such as ponds.
- **Access/Events Space** – there is the proposed events area relatively close to the NE gateway that could be used to hold events or contain play areas etc, plus a Forest School area and a Fitness circuit included. These will cover **4.3ha (7% of the woodland area)**.
    - **Total woodland area** - will cover in total **65.1ha.**
-

Figure 12 A Forest School and pond

Non - woodland Area

- **Conservation Area** – will cover **2.4ha** as indicated in the High Level Concept (HLC) this will be focussed on the woodmeadow site in the NE corner of the site.
- **Alternative Operations Area** – will cover **8.0ha.** As indicated in the (HLC) this will be focussed on the southern area adjacent to Low Fields Farm. Plus the land parcel south of the B1224 (which has limited access value). These sites could be used for a regionally significant tree nursery and/or community orchard project or forest skills centre.
- **Main Gateway** –will cover **0.3ha**. As indicated in the (HLC) this will be focussed on the NE corner.
- **Access/Events Space** – there is no specific provision in this HLC
    - **Total Project Area outside the woodland** - will cover in total **10.7ha**

Other Key Measures

- **Trees planted** – estimate tree numbers to be approx. 50K trees.
- **Estimated Linear Access Routes**– by following the existing features the open ground will provide approx. 15.5km of accessible routes. 1km more than Option 1.

Delivery of CYC Priorities

Set out below is brief analysis that demonstrates that the 3 options included in this document all meet both the key priorities CYC have set out in their design brief but also is in line with the initial feedback CYC's public engagement has identified.

- ***Planting 50,000 trees by 2023*** *for carbon sequestration, as part of a wider commitment to reach net zero carbon by 2020*.
    - All 3 options meet this target, though Option 3 only just makes this target. Options 1 and 2 exceed the target comfortably.
- *New woodland amenity to* ***increase and enhance access to green space*** *in York*
    - Even allowing for the removal of areas from the access provision i.e. operational areas (for Health & Safety reasons) and conservation areas (restrictions needed to offer protection) as a minimum these options will provide 65ha of accessible woodland and open ground with between 13.5km and 15.5km of linear routes accessible. This compares with the complete lack of available access across the project area currently.
- **Enhanced health and wellbeing** outcomes for local residents and resultant savings for health budgets
    - The increased accessibility above will help with delivery of this priority. In addition, the aim is to provide a quieter experience in the south/west parts of the project area which will help with the provision of a wider ranging experience offer.
- ***Increase in biodiversity*** *and wildlife habitats*.
    - The land use change from arable farming to native woodland plus the retention of the existing woodland and hedgerows (all with suitable buffers to reduce the pressures from agricultural activity on these key habitat features). The biodiversity of the project will be further increased by the creation of the woodmeadow conservation area, and for Option 3 the delivery of features such as ponds.
- ***Enhancements to York active travel network****, including walking and cycling*
    - The creation of numerous gateways and the extensive network of internal rides and paths ensure that the whole project area provides many opportunities for users to access the woodland. For Options 1 & 2 two significant routes have been identified that will provide key travel routes across the woodland linking Rufforth, the B1224, Knapton and Poppleton via the project area. To be sustainable for cycle users these routes should be appropriately surfaced.
- ***Opportunities for green jobs,*** *green skills development and volunteering opportunities*
    - The provision of between 2.6ha and 8.ha of operational areas within the project area provides an opportunity to develop activities to support not only this woodland but woodland projects across York and the wider WRF area. The options can include development of skills via a training hub, which can support volunteering activity, or the development of jobs/careers across the woodland sector. The creation of a large new woodland also provides

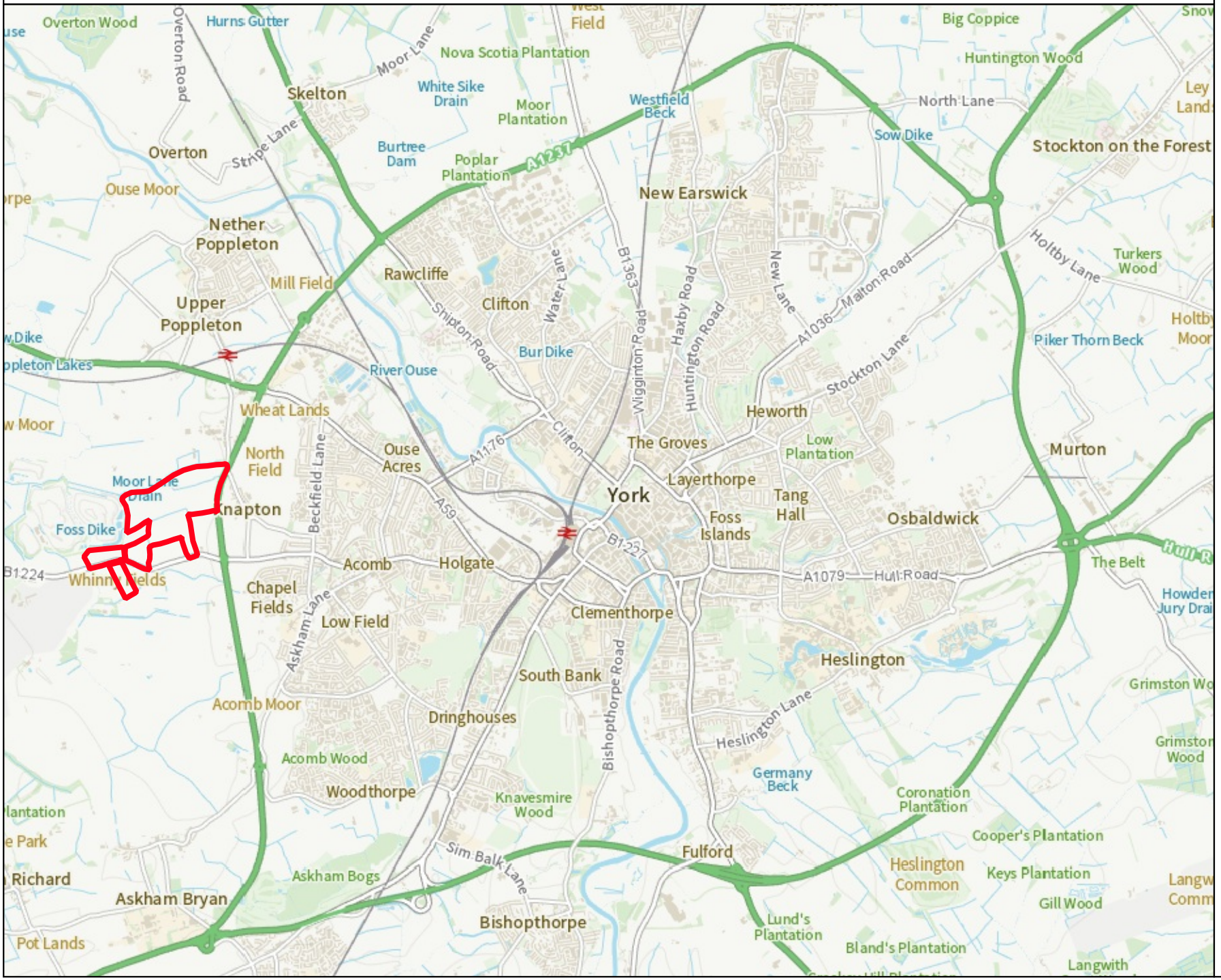
opportunities not just in practical woodland management e.g. coppicing, ride management etc but also conservation and recreation/leisure services.

Also to reflect on the in itial consultation feedback the proposed options will provide

- ***Favourite woods:*** *top picks include Skipwith Common, Moorlands and Hagg Wood*
    - The York Community Woodland will provide a site that will be comparable in size and nature with these local sites.
- ***Why you like it:*** *Accessible/local, variety of trees and habitats, relaxing/peaceful, wild/natural*
    - The York Community Woodland will provide all of these attributes whilst still providing for a more engaged/energetic woodland experience
- ***Favourite woodland experiences****: Nature / walking / birdsong / wildlife / peace / green / beauty*
    - See above
- ***What would you like to see on the new woodland site:*** *Good access incl. cycle links and walking, wildlife, native trees/plants, wild and natural*
    - See above

Figure 13 Bench for quiet contemplation

York Community Woodland: Map 1 - Site Location



WHITE ROSE FOREST

Legend

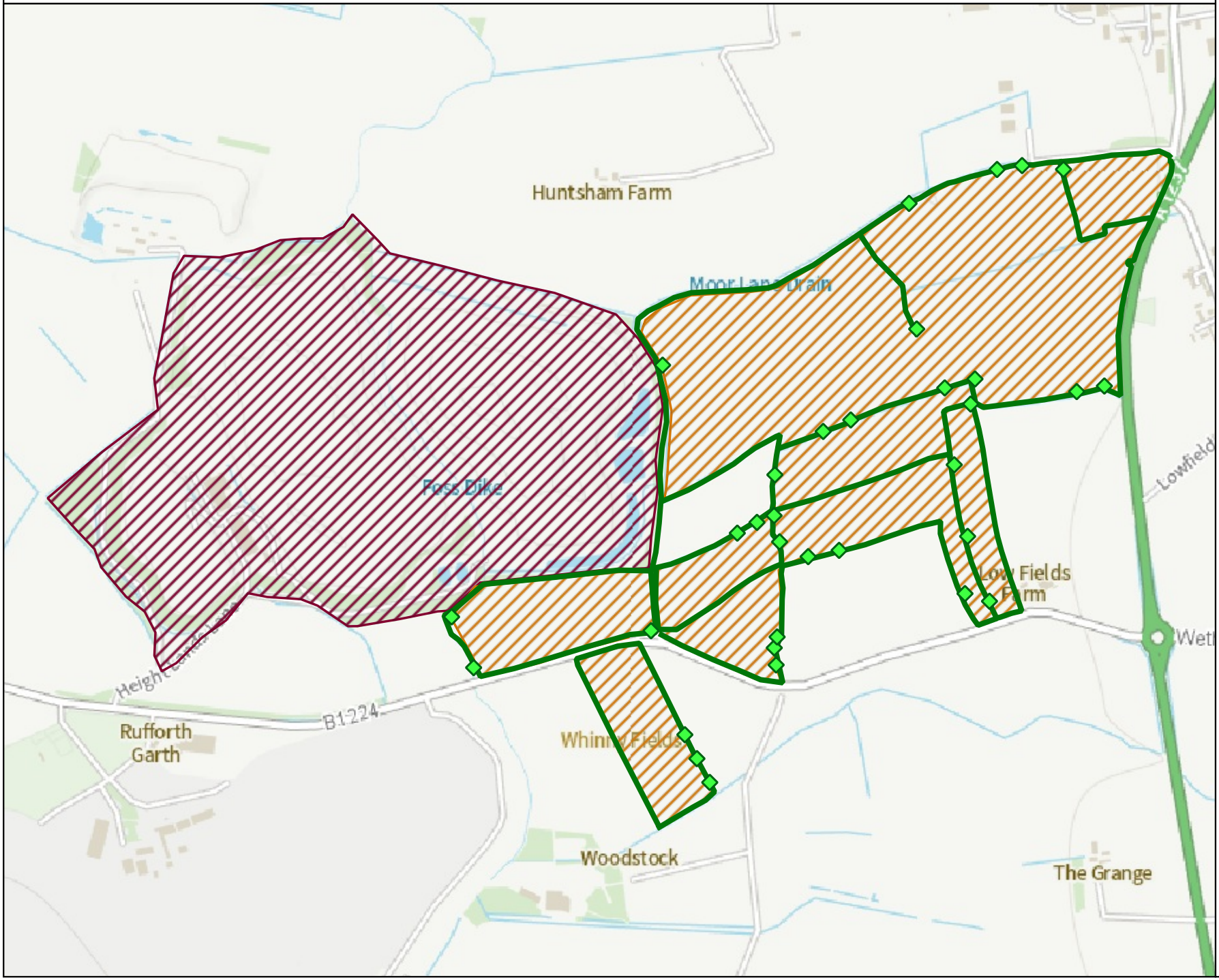
Project Area Boundary

Date: 19/01/2021

Scale: 1 - 55,000

Filename: 00005 1 York Site Plans - Site Location.qgz

York Community Woodland: Map 2 - Current Land Use



WHITE ROSE FOREST

Legend

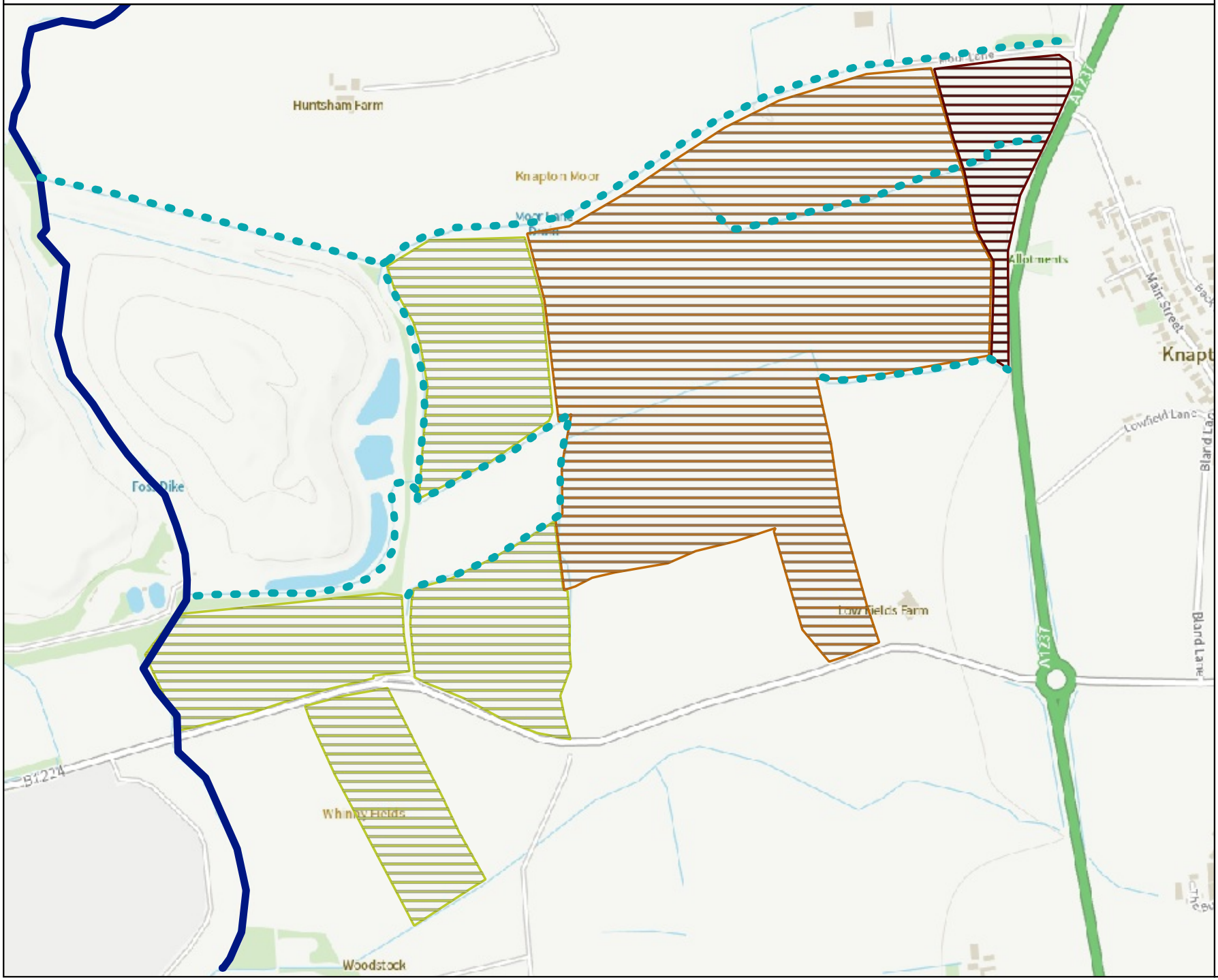
- Mature Trees
- Existing Hedgerows
- Agricultural/Arable
- Harewood Whin Landfill

Date: 19/01/2021

Scale: 1 - 11,000

Filename: 00005 2 York Site Plans - Current Land Use.qgz

York Community Woodland: Map 3 - Soils and Water



WHITE ROSE FOREST

Legend

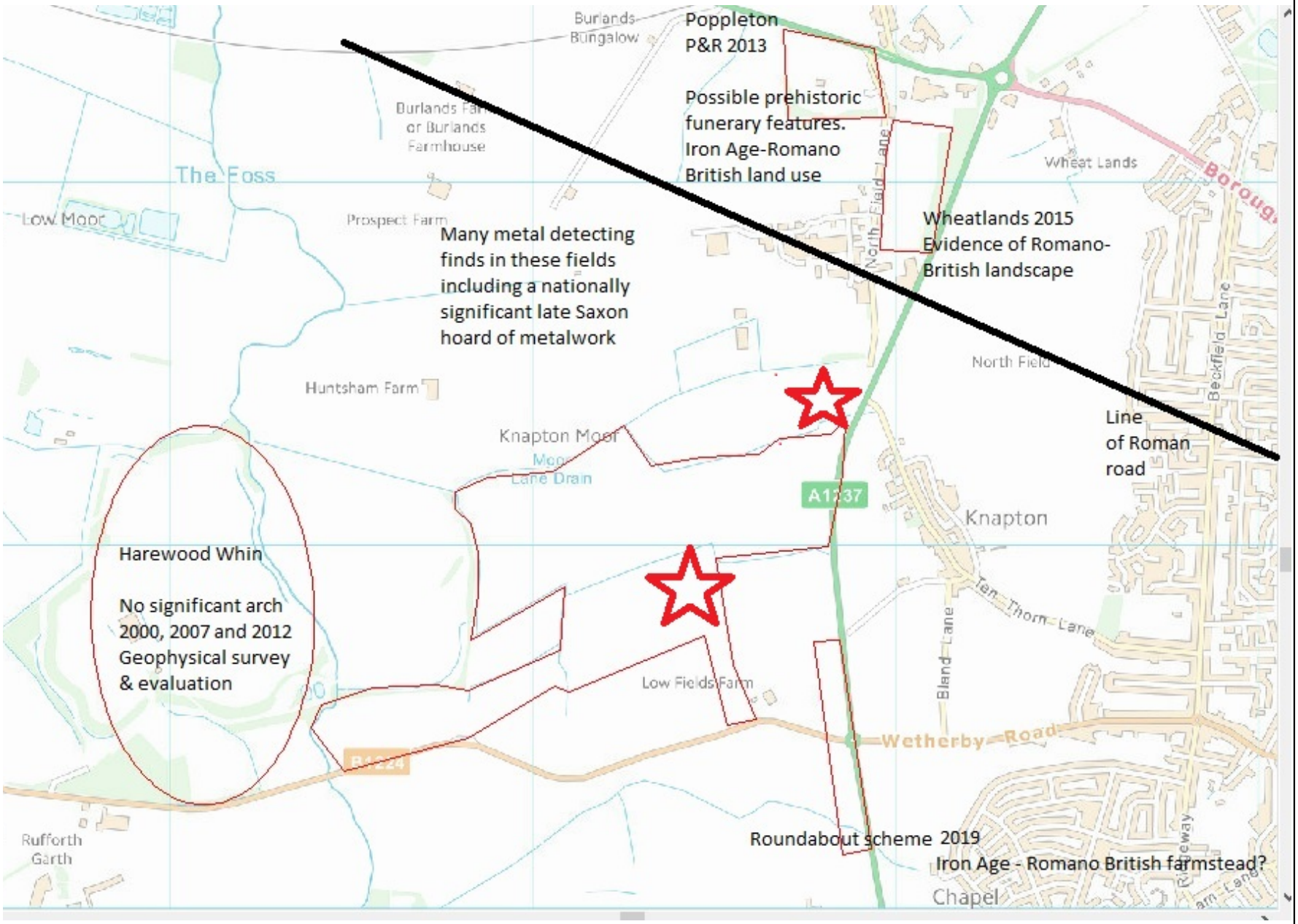
- Drains
- Watercourse
- Soils, Sand and Gravel
- Soils, Clay, Sand and Gravel
- Soils, Clay and Silt

Date: 19/01/2021

Scale: 1 - 8,500

Filename: 00005 3 York Site Plans - Soils and Water.qgz

York Community Woodland: Map 4 - Historic Environment

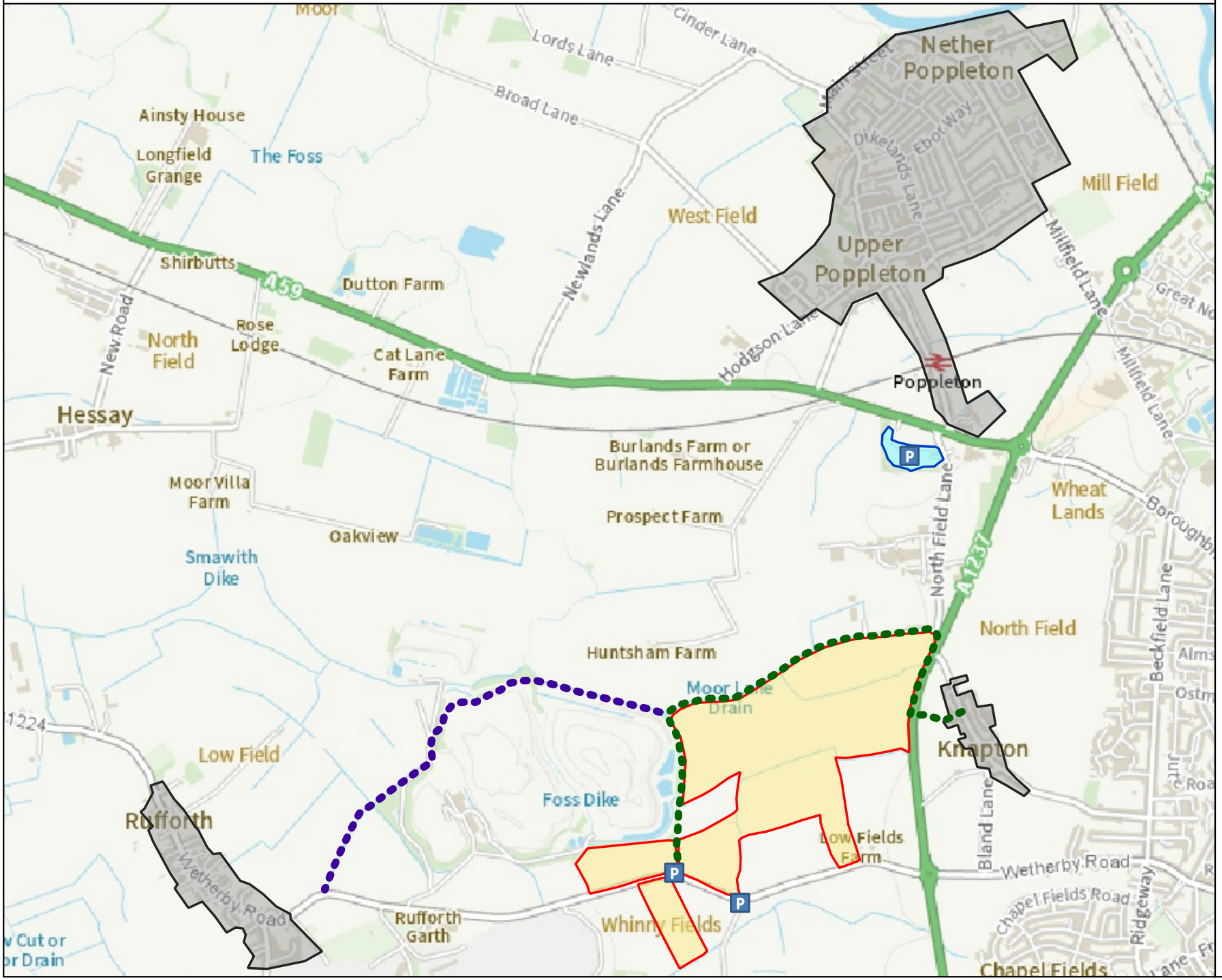


WHITE ROSE FOREST

Date: 26/02/2021

Scale: Not to scale

York Community Woodland: Map 5 - Connections & Accessibility



WHITE ROSE FOREST

Legend

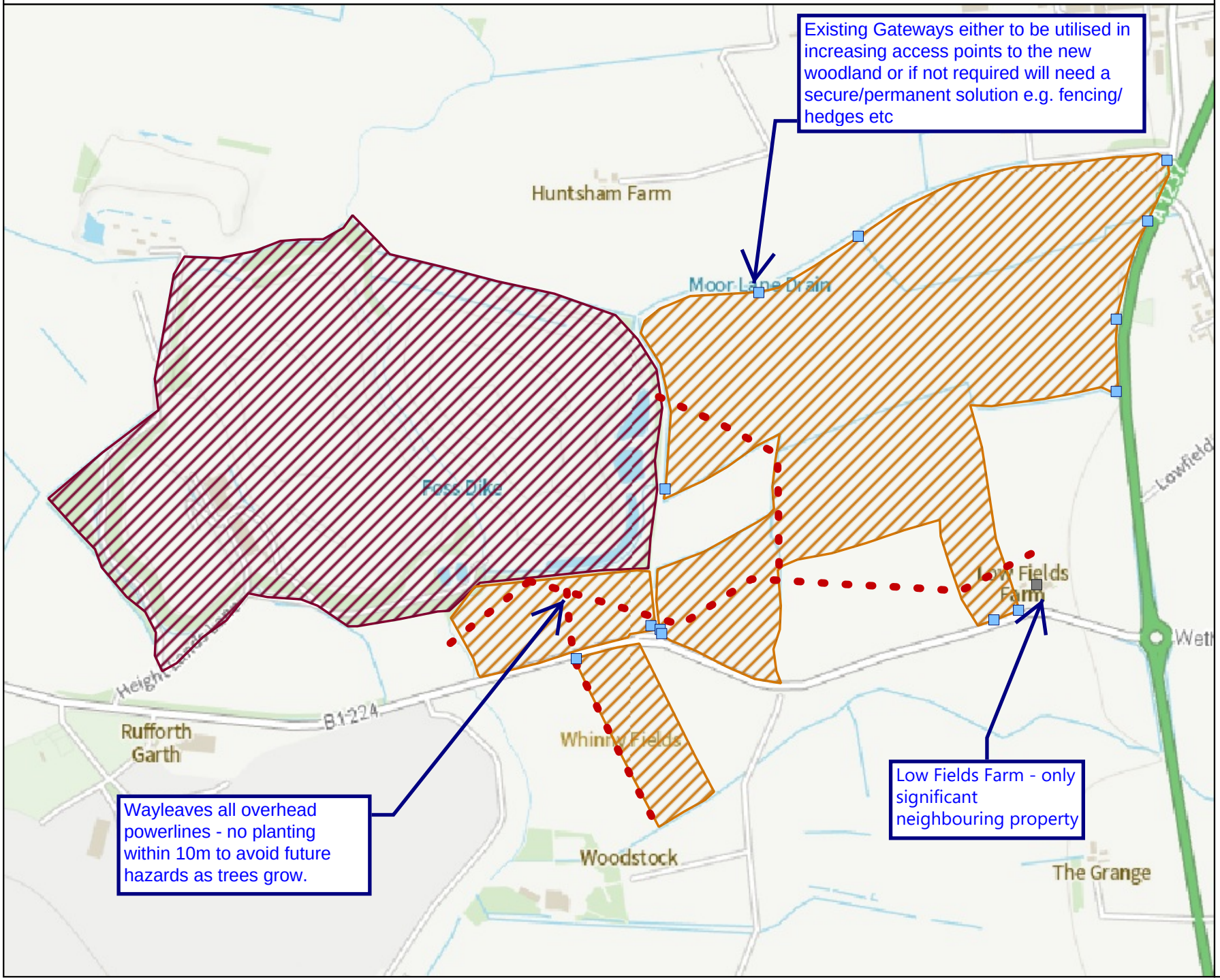
- Cycle Path
- Public Right of Way
- Car Parking
- Neighbouring Villages
- CYC Park and Ride
- YCW Project Area

Date: 19/01/2021

Scale: 1 -22,000

Filename: 00005 5 York Site Plans - Connections and Accessibility.qgz

York Community Woodland: Map 6 - Constraints & Opportunities



WHITE ROSE FOREST

Legend

- Neighbouring Property
- Existing Access/Gates
- Overhead Powerline
- YCW Project Area
- Harewood Whin

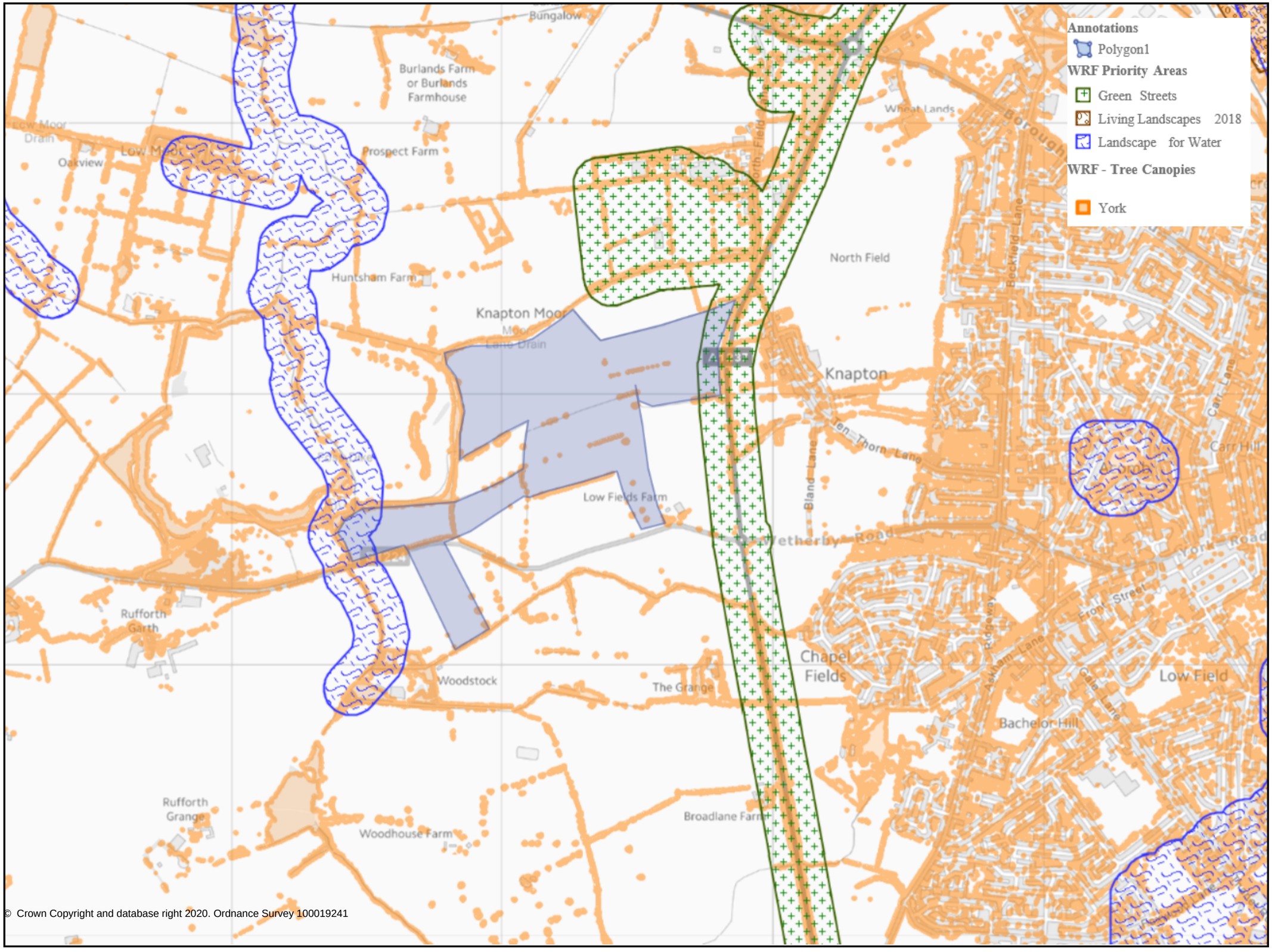
Date: 19/01/2021

Scale: 1 - 11,000

Filename: 00005 6 York Site Plans - Constraints and Opportunities.qgz

Land West of Knapton

YCW_Map 7_ White Rose Forest Priorities



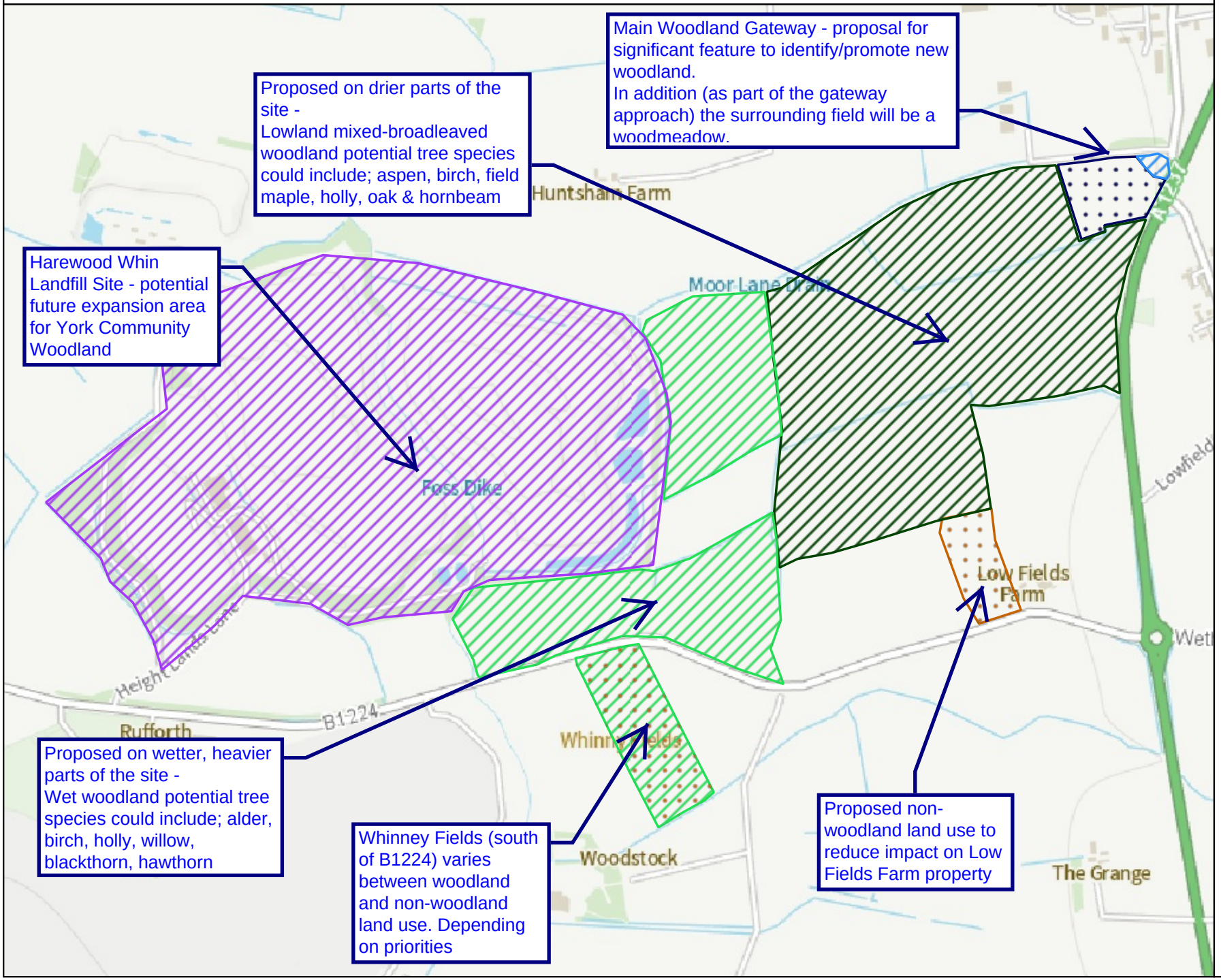
Kirklees Council

Kompass
Kirklees Mapping Service

maps@kirklees.gov.uk

N

York Community Woodland: Map 8 - High Level Concept



WHITE ROSE FOREST

Legend

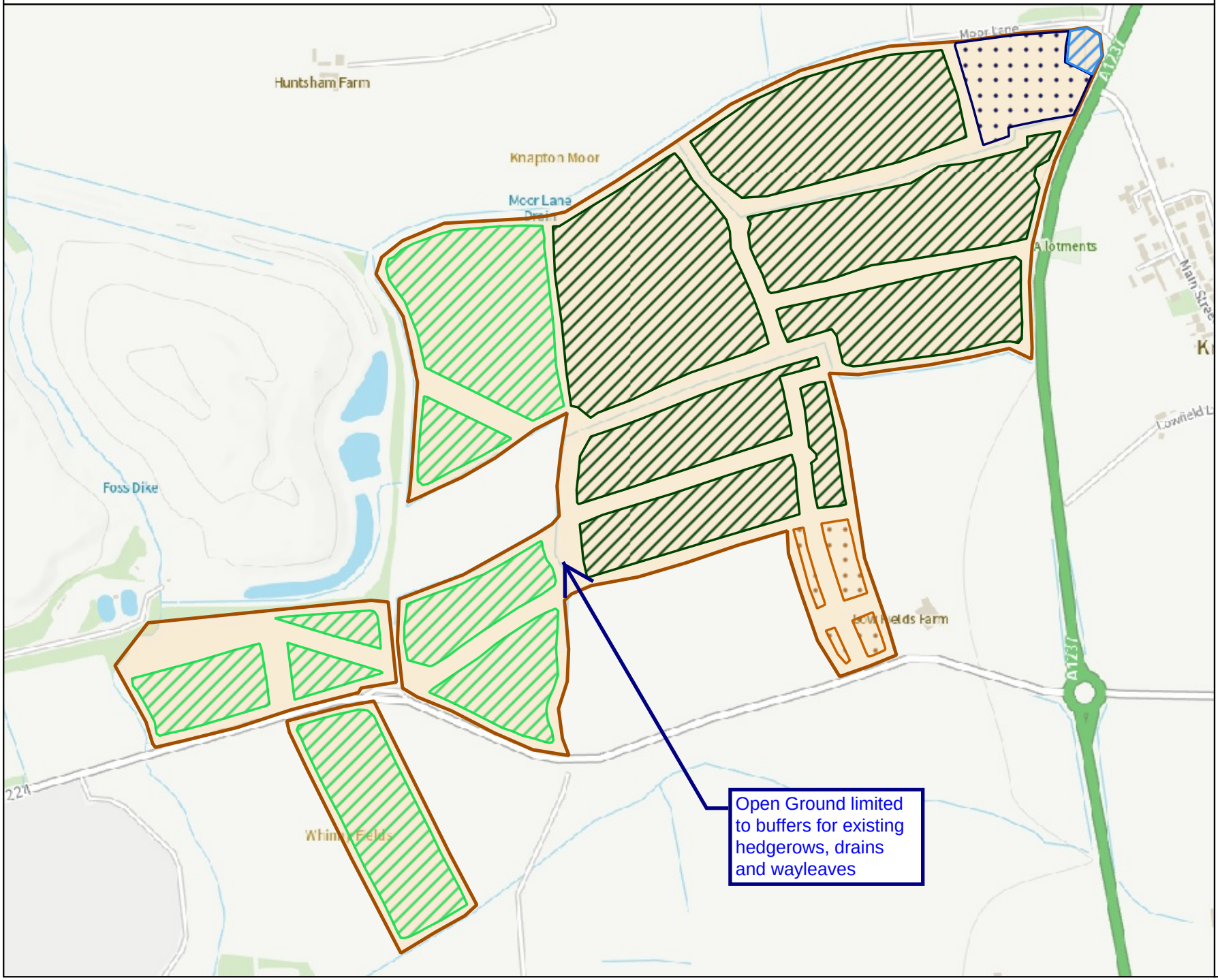
- Main Gateway
- Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Potential Future Woodland Expansion
- Non Woodland Area Conservation
- Non Woodland Area Operations

Date: 19/01/2021

Scale: 1 - 11,000

Filename: 00005 8 York Site Plans - High Level Concept.qgz

York Community Woodland: Map 9 - The Carbon Woodland



WHITE ROSE FOREST

Legend

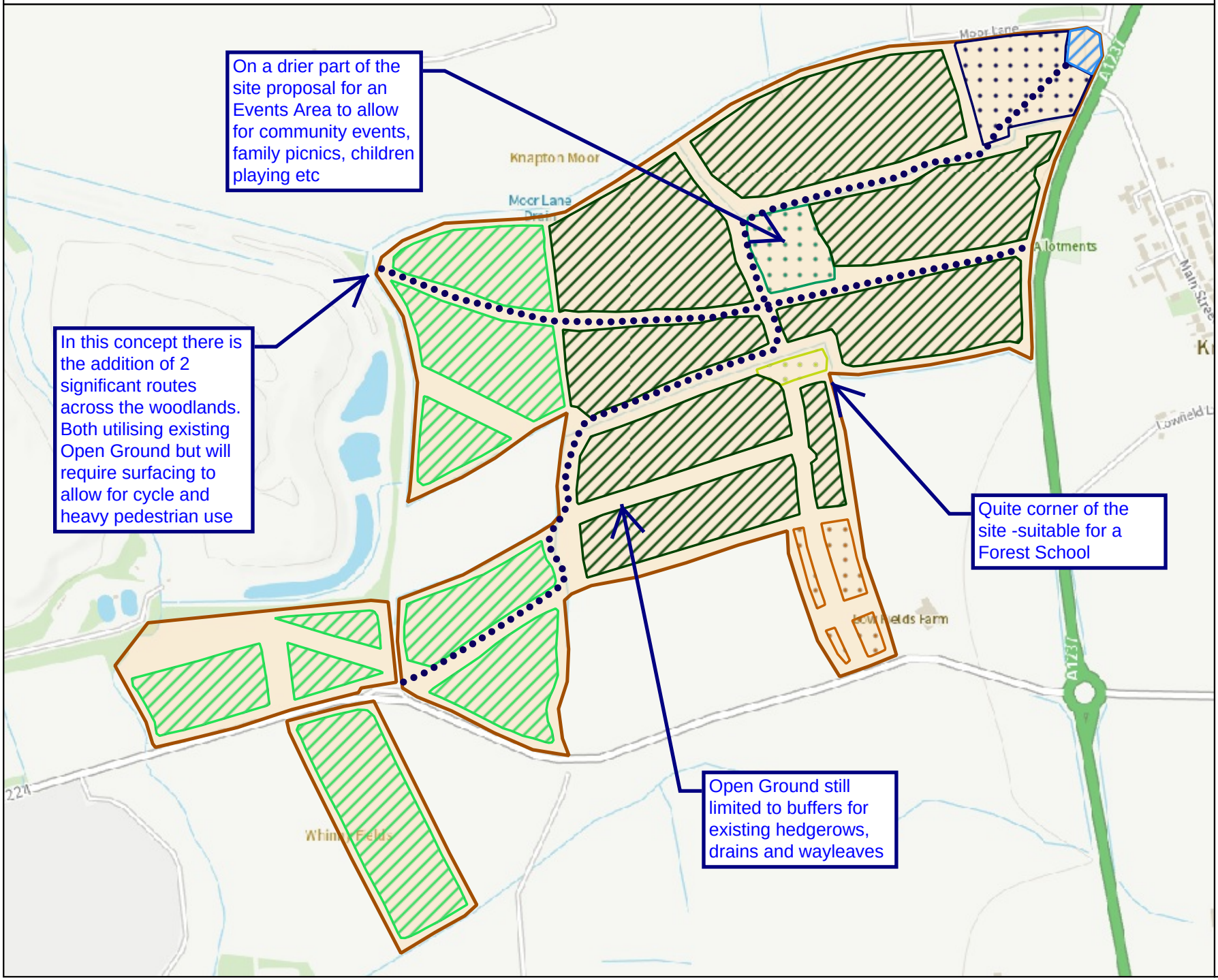
- Woodland Gateway Area
- Mixed Broadleaved Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Conservation Area
- Non-woodland Operational Area
- Project Area Boundary & Open Ground

Date: 19/01/2021

Scale: 1 - 8,000

Filename: 00005 9 York Site Plans - The Carbon Woodland.qgz

York Community Woodland: Map 10 - The Multi-purpose Woodland



WHITE ROSE FOREST

Legend

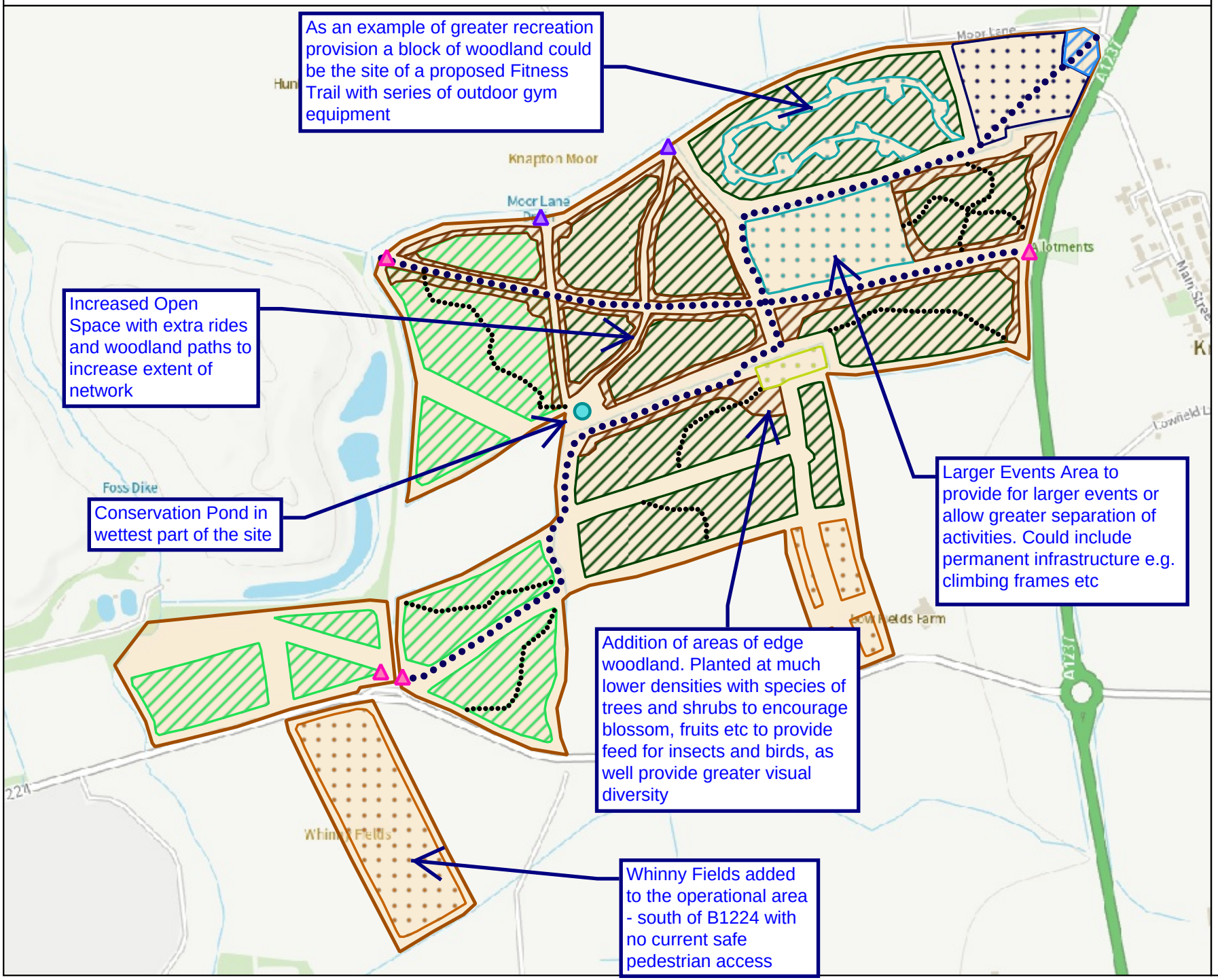
- New Connecting Routes
- Woodland Gateway Area
- Mixed Broadleaved Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Conservation Area
- Event Area
- Forest School
- Non-woodland Operational Area
- Project Area Boundary & Open Ground

Date: 19/01/2021

Scale: 1 - 8,000

Filename: 00005 9 York Site Plans - The Multipurpose Woodland.qgz

York Community Woodland: Map 11 - The Accessible Woodland



WHITE ROSE FOREST

Legend

- Key Gateways Points
- Access Points
- Conservation Feature
- Woodland Paths
- New Connecting Routes
- Woodland Gateway Area
- Woodland
- Wet Woodland
- Edge Woodland
- Conservation Area
- Event/Rec Space
- Forest School
- Operational Area
- Project Area Boundary & Open Ground

Date: 19/01/2021

Scale: 1 - 8,000

Filename: 00005 11 York Site Plans - The Accessible Woodland.qgz