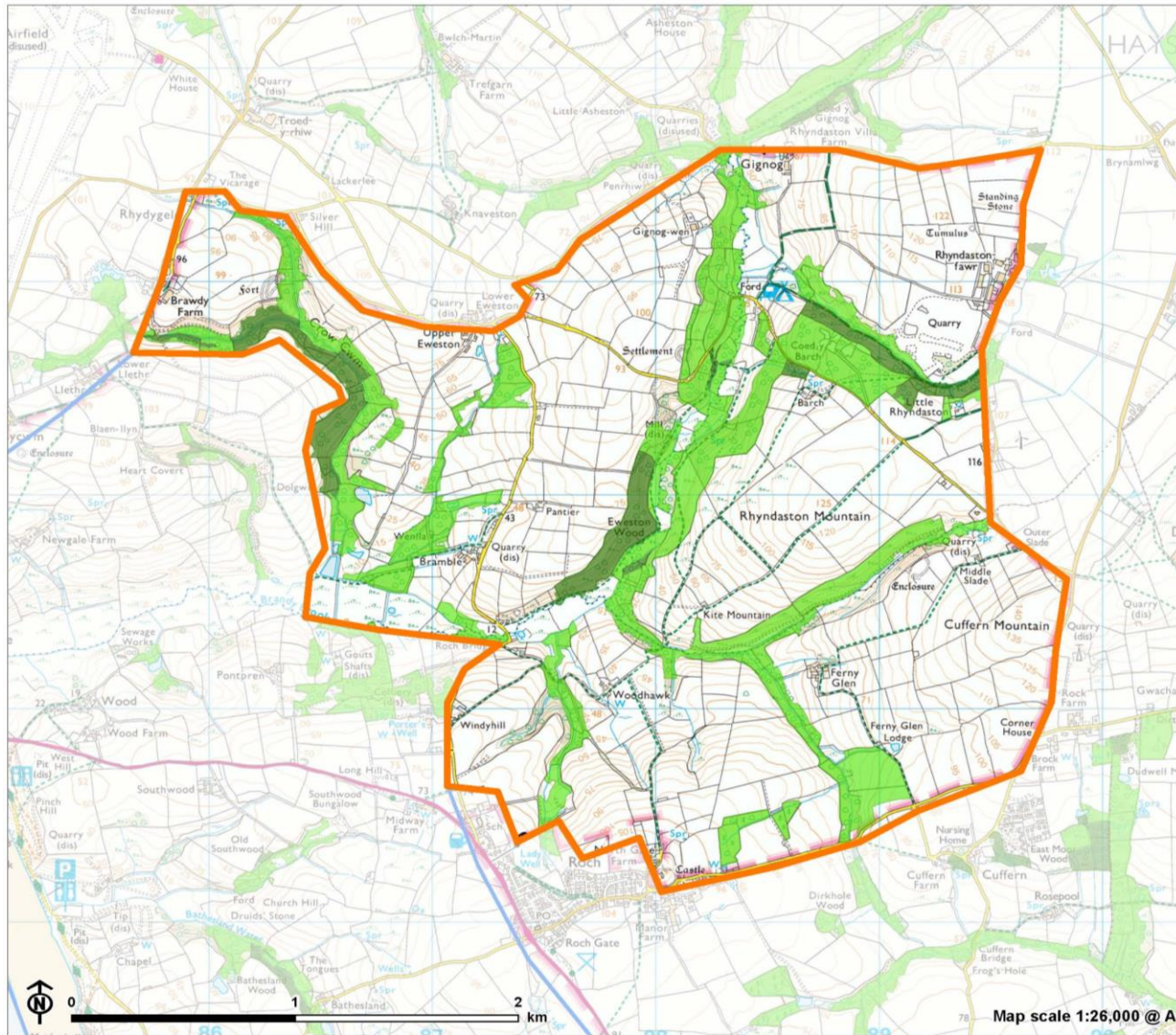


LCA 13: Brandy Brook



Trees and Woodland Siting and Design Guidance
Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority



LCA 13 location and existing woodland coverage

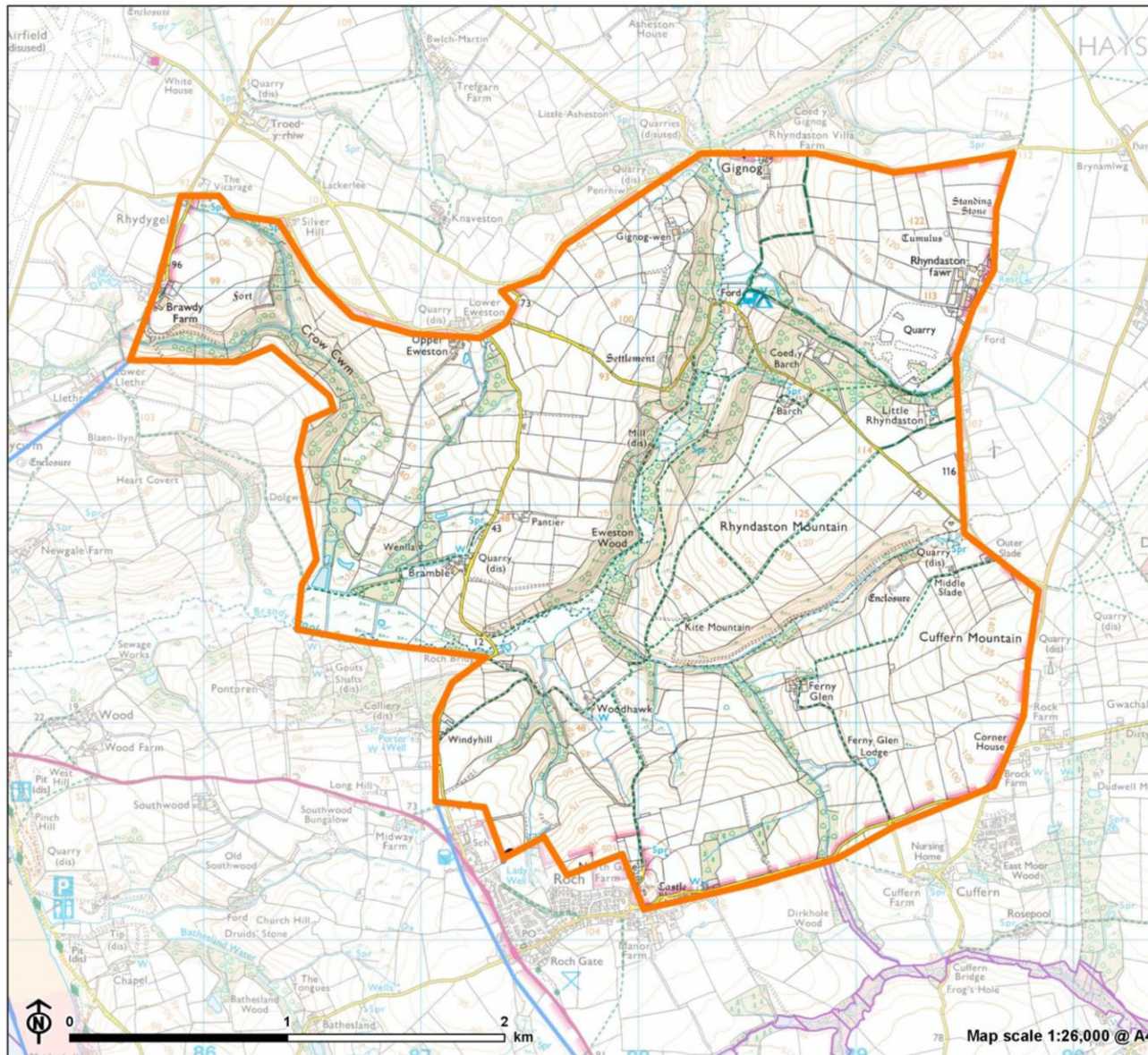
- LCA 13: Brandy Brook
- Neighbouring LCA
- Existing Woodland**
- Ancient woodland
- National Forest Inventory woodland*

*The NFI definition of woodland is a minimum area of 0.5 hectares



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CB AHB EB Collins_N LUC FIGX_11684_r0_LocationAndWoodland_A4L 09/11/2021
Source: OS, FC, NRW



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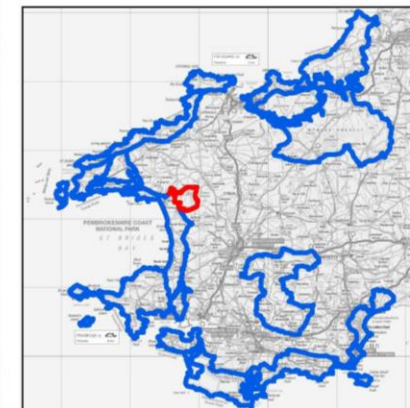
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Source: OS, NRW

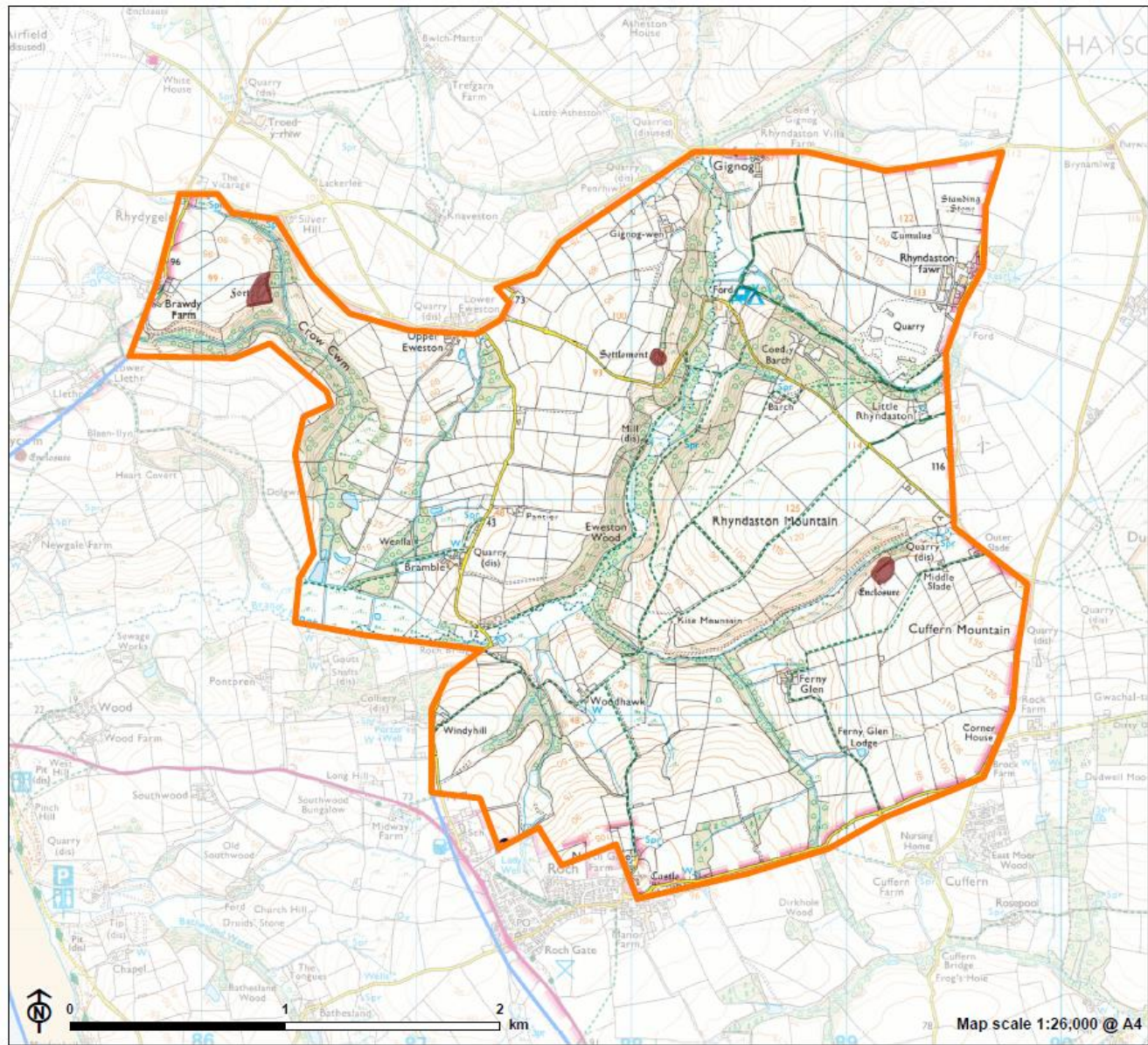
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LCA 13 nature conservation designations

- LCA 13: Brandy Brook
- Neighbouring LCA
- Special Area of Conservation
- Site of Special Scientific Interest





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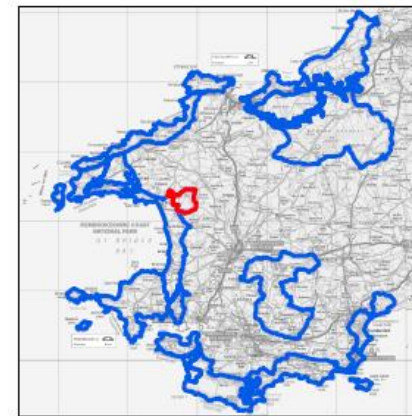
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Source: OS, Cadw

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Park Authority



LCA 13 Historic Environment Designations

- LCA 13: Brandy Brook
- Neighbouring LCA
- Scheduled Monument



Existing woodland coverage within the LCA



View west across the ford of the Brandy Brook, showing mature broadleaved woodland lining the valley.

This Landscape Character Area (LCA) is characterised by a branched lowland river valley which carves through rolling lowland. Woodland comprises 18.3% of the total land cover, the majority of which (65.4%) is broadleaved. The floors and slopes of the small-scale valleys tend to be wooded and include alder and wet woodland as well as other broadleaved species including ash, oak, sycamore, hazel and beech. Larger blocks of broadleaved woodland are located in the north of the LCA at Coed y Barch. Some of these wooded areas extend to over 30 hectares. On the upper valley slopes near Roch in the south of the LCA there are Sitka spruce plantations which are visually prominent and discordant in views. On other upper valley slopes, trees are found within field boundaries or surrounding settlements. Field boundaries are usually defined by species diverse, trimmed hedgebanks. Occasionally hedgerows appear gappy, dominated by gorse or have been replaced by post and wire fencing. Common hedgerow species include blackthorn, hawthorn, sycamore, ash, grey willow, oak and birch. Hedgerow trees are uncommon on the upper valley slopes.

Designated features and valued attributes within the LCA		
<i>The focus of this Guide is on the sensitivity and opportunities for woodland creation in relation to landscape character. It can only play an advisory role in the weighing of potential benefits of woodland creation against likely impacts on non-woodland habitats and cultural heritage assets, which should be considered in more detail at site level. Please refer to the main report for more detail.</i>		
Natural heritage	SAC, SPA, SSSI NNR, LNR (including Wildlife Trust/ RSPB reserves) Ancient woodland, RIGS	There is one SSSI in the LCA which covers less than 1ha. Ancient woodland amounts to 30.2ha There is one RIGS which covers 7.5ha (0.8%) of the LCA.

Cultural heritage	National Park Register of Historic Landscapes Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and HER data	There are three listed buildings in the LCA. There are four Scheduled Monuments which cover 2.9ha (0.3% of the LCA). The LCA includes 75 HER records, which cover a range of archaeological and historical features, including scheduled and undesignated monuments, listed and non-listed historical buildings and locations of finds. These features date from prehistory up to recent times.			
Landscape sensitivity to new woodland planting					
Key sensitivities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The small scale, steep sided valley system which carves through the strongly rolling lowland.■ The distinctively open pastoral slopes of Rhyndaston Mountain and Cuffern Mountain.■ The predominantly pastoral character, interspersed with large areas of riparian habitats including marshy grassland, heathland and woodland habitats, including some areas of ancient woodland.■ The mixed regular and irregular field pattern divided by hedgerows, which is often influenced by the landform.■ Important archaeological sites, including nationally significant medieval earthworks, prehistoric ritual monuments and an Iron Age hill fort (Brawdy Promontory Fort).■ From many parts of the LCA there are views to the prominent 13th century Roch Castle (a Grade I listed building).■ An intimate, sheltered, peaceful landscape with strong naturalistic qualities, particularly along the bottom of the valleys.				
Overview	<p>Features of this landscape which are sensitive to change include the small-scale of the valleys, other important semi-natural habitats and archaeological features. However, the extensive woodland cover already present in the LCA means that sensitivity to woodland planting is reduced.</p> <p>The wooded valley character of the LCA also provides opportunities to extend and link existing woodland with new planting up to medium-scale. Large-scale woodlands would alter the character of the open, agricultural parts of the LCA. Distinctive open elevated areas afforded with views to key focal features including Roch Castle and distant views of rocky outcrops near St Davids are more sensitive to change.</p> <p>The setting that the landscape provides to archaeological features including Roch Castle and prehistoric ritual monuments, Brawdy Promontory Fort and medieval earthworks increases sensitivity and should be carefully considered when designing and siting woodland.</p> <p>Landscape sensitivity to all scales of mixed woodland for this LCA is high.</p>				
Landscape Sensitivity Scores					
Small-scale broadleaved woodlands (≤5ha)	Low				
Small-medium scale broadleaved woodlands (>5- 15ha)	Low				
Medium-scale broadleaved woodlands (>15-30ha)		Low-moderate			
Large-scale broadleaved woodlands (>30ha)				Moderate-high	

Opportunities for future tree and woodland coverage within the LCA

- Woodland creation (up to and including medium scale woodlands) could provide opportunities to increase the connectivity of existing broadleaved woodlands and reinforce the enclosed wooded character of the valleys.
- Up to medium-scale woodland planting along the river valleys could also provide increased connectivity with existing areas of woodland in adjacent landscapes (both within and outside of the National Park boundary).
- Woodland planting provides an opportunity to screen Rhyndaston Quarry from the north.
- Existing woodland in the valleys could be extended further up the valley sides to increase woodland coverage in the agricultural land.
- There are opportunities for the creation of wood pasture to integrate more trees into the agricultural landscape.
- Small or small-medium scale woodland planting could be used to soften the northern settlement edge of Roch village.
- There may be opportunities to site new small-scale woodland to screen farm-based development and integrate it within the existing pattern of woodland distribution and land-use.
- Consider the potential for natural regeneration of semi-natural woodland and scrub extending along the stream valleys to enhance flood management, water quality, biodiversity and to help prevent soil erosion.
- Consider replacing existing Sitka spruce plantation near Roch with native broadleaved species or screening/softening the edge of these by surrounding them with broadleaved species.
- Consider opportunities to restore hedgerow boundaries that are gappy or have been replaced by post and wire fencing.
- Plant new hedgerow trees where this would be in keeping with the existing landscape character, choosing species which are resilient to pests and disease.
- Any new planting should follow principles of good design as set out in the UK Forestry Standard.
- Choose appropriate native species suited to local conditions (e.g. climate, soil, hydrology, existing vegetation) to achieve a diverse woodland mosaic character.

Strategic guidance for new woodland / tree planting

Landform and scale

- Design woodland to align along existing contours and undulations of the landscape, such as along with river valleys and minor stream valleys extending down from the hills.

Landcover (including semi-natural habitats)

- Avoid adversely affecting existing areas of non-woodland semi-natural habitats, directly or indirectly, and encourage diversity of habitat networks. This includes riparian and heathland habitats within the valleys.
- Preserve the agricultural and woodland mosaic character.

Field pattern

- Restore and reinforce the existing field pattern by conserving and regenerating hedgerow boundaries and hedgebanks, particularly where they have been lost or replaced by post and wire fencing.
- Consider allowing hedgerows to grow out (where not obscuring public highways/rights of way) through reduced coppicing/flailing cycles, to enhance biodiversity.
- Conserve existing hedgerow trees and plant new ones where absent or to avoid senescence, using species resilient to pests and diseases.

Existing tree and woodland character

- Conserve the existing woodland cover with its predominantly broadleaved character to improve connectivity and strengthen the landscape framework.
- Protect areas of ancient woodland which occur along the stream valleys. Buffer ancient woodland by establishing fringing areas and encourage natural regeneration to extend coverage along the valleys, enhancing their roles in flood management and reducing diffuse pollution from agriculture.
- Encourage a diverse range of native species to build resilience to the impact of pathogens, pests and diseases, e.g.

Phytophthora, Chalara (ash dieback).

Historic character

- Avoid adversely affecting, directly or indirectly, the rich cultural heritage of the area including nationally significant medieval earthworks, prehistoric monuments and Brawdy Promontory Fort, an Iron Age hill fort.
- Avoid siting woodland across multiple fields which may mask the irregular field patterns which are influenced by the underlying landform.
- Preserve the landscape setting of Roch Castle (a Grade I listed building) in the south western area of this LCA.

Visual character

- Conserve the open views to the coast and surrounding landscapes experienced from higher ground including Rhyndaston Mountain and Cuffern Mountain. When designing and siting woodland, ensure that it does not obscure these important views.
- Conserve key views across the landscape to the landmark feature of Roch Castle.

Perceptual and scenic qualities

- Enhance the experience for recreational users, ensuring public access is maintained across the network of public rights of way through the valleys and agricultural land and that key views from public rights of way are not obscured by new woodland planting.
- Explore whether there is the potential for new access opportunities within the woodlands.
- Have regard to the cumulative impact of woodland creation and tree planting, ensuring it does not lead to a change of landscape character, particularly in the more open landscape of the hills at Rhyndaston Mountain and Cuffern Mountain.



Views north from Roch showing regular hedge-bound fields on Rhyndaston Mountain.



View north-west from the summit of Cuffern Mountain, showing scrub on the valley slopes of the Brandy brook.