

Chapter/ Section	Section 4.2.5 Landscape, Natural, Cultural and Built He
Amendment ref.	Amendment 4.9
Page no.	153
Policy/Objective No.	Insert New SLO GI7 SLO2
Text/Policy/Objective Amendment Wording	
<p>Insert new SLO</p> <p>GI7 SLO2:</p> <p>To ensure the adequate protection and augmentation of the identified Alluvial Rathcoole Woodlands within the zoning RU, and in recognising their value as green infrastructure and the potential linkages to Lugg Woods and Slade Valley and other amenity areas, provide for sensitive passive amenity uses which have regard to their Annex 1 status.</p>	

The Four Districts Woodland welcomes the opportunity to provide an observation and contribute to the public consultation on the material alterations to the Draft County Development Plan.

What GI7 SLO2 means, we hope, is that the Alluvial component of the existing Woodland within the rewilding area that is proposed to be zoned Rural is adequately protected. The means by which this will be achieved needs to be specified i.e., a management/protection plan put in place with protection at its core. It needs to be statutorily protected i.e., proposed pNHA, Nature Reserve or SAC.

According to Hodd, 2021, unpublished:

This site should be designated as a proposed Natural Heritage Area (pNHA), which would recognise its locally important role on an official level. It could also be designated as a National Nature Reserve.

The only means by which augmentation of alluvial Woodland can be achieved is by allowing the continued expansion eastward and allowing the existing trees within that area to mature. The proposed Res N, if realised, will mean the removal of all trees within its area and will stop any

further woodland development. However, augmentation has been mentioned with reference to the scrub areas within the alluvial woodland itself, which are quite small in area < 1 ha and are effectively part of the alluvial woodland and are currently rewilding.

Throughout the material supplied, there are various references to Rathcoole Woodlands:

- Alluvial Rathcoole Woodlands within the zoning RU x 2 references
- Alluvial Woodlands at Rathcoole within the zoning RU
- woodlands at Rathcoole x 2 references
- Rathcoole Woodlands x 2 references
- alluvial woodlands at Rathcoole

It is clear that the Council distinguishes between alluvial woodland in the proposed RU zoning, and woodland that has not reached its potential as a protected habitat yet and is outside of the Ru zoning proposal. We encourage the Council to consider all woodland equal in this area, regardless of annex status, given that the only real difference is age/stage of woodland development. If rewilding is allowed to continue, there could be between the existing 12.8 ha of alluvial woodland (Hodd, 2021 unpublished) up to 23 ha. There is already 14.8 ha of woodland and another 3 ha of grass/woodland habitat mosaic.

There needs to be a map in the County Draft plan that clearly indicates what or where the alluvial woodland is within Rathcoole Woodlands. It needs to be evident, otherwise it appears to be no different to other areas zoned rural. This leaves the Alluvial Woodland habitat in a precarious position and an unknown element to most.

