



Request for Quotation

Request for Quotation: Survey of Woodland Habitats within Arundel Park SSSI, Fairmile Bottom SSSI, Pads Wood SSSI, Treyford to Bepton Down SSSI and Rook Clift SSSI in West Sussex

You are invited, to submit a quotation for the requirement described in the specification below.

Please confirm, by email, receipt of these documents and whether you intend to submit a quote.

Your response should be returned to the following email address by:

Email: steve.walker@naturalengland.org.uk

Date: **03/02/2023**

Ensure you state the reference number and 'Final Submission' in the subject field to make it clear that it is your response.

Contact Details and Timeline

Steve Walker will be your contact for any questions linked to the content of the quote pack or the process. Please submit any questions by email and note that, unless commercially sensitive, both the question and the response will be circulated to all tenderers.

Action	Date
Date of issue of RFQ	13/01/2023
Deadline for receipt of Quotation	03/02/2023
Intended date of Contract Award	w/c 06/02/2023
Inception Meeting	w/c 20/03/2023
Intended Contract Start Date	w/c 27/03/2023
Draft report submitted to Project Officer	w/c 31/07/2023
Draft report to be returned to contractor with Natural England comments	By 21/08/2023
Intended Delivery Date / Contract Duration	04/09/2023

Glossary

Unless the context otherwise requires the following words and expressions used within this Request for Quotation shall have the following meanings (to be interpreted in the singular or plural as the context requires):

“Authority”	Means the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs acting as part of Natural England
“RFQ”	Means this Request for Quotation and all related documents published by the Authority and made available to suppliers
“Contract”	Means the contract to be entered into by the Authority and the successful supplier.

Conditions applying to the RFQ

You should examine your response to the RFQ and related documents ensuring it is complete prior to submitting your completed quotation.

Your quotation must contain sufficient information to enable the Authority to evaluate it fairly and effectively. You should ensure that you have prepared your quotation fully and accurately and that prices quoted are arithmetically correct for the units stated.

The supplier by submitting a quotation is deemed to accept the terms and conditions in the RFQ. Failure to comply with the instructions set out in the RTQ may result in the supplier’s exclusion from this procurement.

Acceptance of Quotations

By issuing this RFQ the Authority does not bind itself to accept any quotation and reserves the right not to award a contract to any supplier who submits a quotation.

Costs

The Authority will not reimburse you for any costs and expenses which you incur preparing and submitting your quotation, even if the Authority amends or terminates the procurement process.

Clarifications

The Authority reserves the right to discuss, confidentially, any aspect of your quotation with you prior to any award of Contract to clarify matters.

Amendments

The Authority may amend the RFQ at any time prior to the deadline for receipt. If it amends the RFQ the Authority will notify you in writing and may extend the deadline for receipt in order to give you a reasonable time in which to take the amendment into account.

Conditions of Contract

Natural England's general Terms and Condition can be found [here](#).

Specification

The Authority is Natural England. The Authority's priorities are to secure a healthy natural environment; a sustainable, low-carbon economy; a thriving farming sector and a sustainable, healthy and secure food supply. Further information about the Authority can be found at: [Natural England](#)

1. Background

Natural England is commissioning this contract to update outstanding SSSI condition assessments on various woodland units in West Sussex as part of a new Protected Site Strategies (PSS) pilot. The Sussex Woods PSS pilot project has a particular focus on deer impacts on Protected Sites.

Below is a list of the sites and units requiring surveys as part of the contract. Please note units on some sites may be omitted for assessment since these may already have current assessments or cover other habitat types (e.g. grassland).

Arundel Park Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located north of Arundel.

Arundel Park is a large site containing a matrix of habitats centred around an old deer park. Beech woodland and Oak-Ash woodland exist alongside unimproved grassland of the Chalk Downs. These

habitats support large numbers of rare and unusual invertebrates, particularly beetles and flies. Butterflies, grasshoppers and crickets also use the site in large numbers. Swanbourne Lake is an important area together with wildfowl reserve reed-bed for wintering and breeding birds. An area of marshy grassland has developed at the edge of the lake containing fen plants infrequently found elsewhere in Sussex.

Arundel Park is one of the most important sites in the country for invertebrates including a number of rare and notable species. The area has a particularly diverse breeding bird community and is important for overwintering species. The site also includes examples of species-rich chalk grassland containing several plants uncommon in Sussex.

Units to be assessed as part of contract:

- Unit 3 - 24.7643 ha - BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND -
- Unit 6 - 21.7664 ha - BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND
- Unit 8 - 26.0731 ha - BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND

Fairmile Bottom Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 5km north-east of Arundel

Calcareous woodland and scrub on a moderate north-west facing scarp of the South Downs between Houghton and Slindon. The woodland is Beech and Yew with mixed Oak, Ash and Hazel. The clay-with-flints deposits found over the chalk provide local variation. The western end of the site is semi-open species-rich *Festuca-Avenula* grassland supporting several orchid species.

Units to be assessed as part of contract:

- Unit 2 – LNR East - 16.2093 ha - (BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND)
- Unit 3 – Yew Wood - 26.2505 ha (BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND)
- Unit 4 – Rewell Wood - 3.663 ha - (BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND)

Treyford to Bepton Down Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 6km south-west of Midhurst

The majority of this site consists of wooded scarp slopes on the South Downs. It is mainly north facing and supports a range of woodland communities, including Yew woodland. Included within the site are areas of unimproved chalk grassland supporting communities typical of the South Downs. The integrity of the site has been compromised by several areas of conifer plantations. These have been excluded from the SSSI resulting in isolated blocks of SSSI on Bepton Down and Stead

Units to be assessed as part of contract:

- Unit 2 - 43.1036 (BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND)
- Unit 3 - 38.7657 (BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND)

Rook Cliff Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 3km east of South Harting

Rook Cliff is an ancient woodland site that remains in a semi-natural condition. The site is dominated by large coppice stools of Large-leaved lime (*Tilia platyphyllos*), together with Ash and some Beech. The presence of Large-leaved lime as a canopy dominant makes this woodland virtually unique. The site also supports a number of mollusc species and a rich bryophyte flora.

Units to be assessed as part of contract:

- Unit 1 - 10.6816 ha (BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND)

Pads Wood Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is located approximately 2km south of South Harting

Pads Wood is a good example of a coppice-with-standards ancient woodland. Ash and Oak dominated stands support a large number of lichens and mosses on their trunks and branches (epiphytes). Understorey trees include Hazel and Field maple. The field layer is rich in flowering plants following coppicing.

Units to be assessed as part of contract:

- Unit 1 - 1.5667 ha (BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND)
- Unit 2 - 20.676 ha (BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND)

Please note all SSSI boundaries are Open Data and can be downloaded from our external platforms the Natura England Open Data Geoportal (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England) - [Sites of Special Scientific Interest \(England\) | Natural England Open Data Geoportal \(arcgis.com\)](#))

Hope that helps,

2. Aim

The aim of this contract is to undertake a Woodland Habitat survey within the SSSIs with the objectives as:

1. Provide a habitat description, record presence of species and assess condition of woodland units using set method – detail follows in section 3.
2. To record any threats, notably deer impacts, on condition of woodland units

Please note the contractor should have some experience of surveying mixed and yew woodlands since this comprises the dominant habitat type on the units to be assessed.

The results will allow Natural England to undertake a SSSI Condition Assessment of the woodland units.

3. Methodology

The surveyor will need to survey the area shown on the maps at Annex 3; the total SSSI areas equate to approximately 134ha. (Arundel Park), 61ha (Fairmile Bottom), 121ha (Treyford to Bepton Down), 11ha (Rook Clift) and 22ha (Pads Wood) of which only relevant habitats must be surveyed. Maps are included within Annex 3 – please contact project manager if you require GIS shapefiles for SSSI units.

I. Field Work

Using the methodology contained in the **Detailed methodology for Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Woodland Habitats (Version February 2004)** provide a habitat condition and record any deer browsing impacts which are affecting condition.

Forms for the two habitat types are included in Annex 1 and Annex 2. It is advisable to run through these forms at the Project Inception meeting with NE's lead advisor for Protected Sites (Kathy Troke-Thomas: Kathy.Troke-Thomas@naturalengland.org.uk) - prior to survey to ensure the methodology is fully understood.

Please note:

- A W-shaped transect should be walked throughout the target habitat on each unit.
- At least 10 sample stops are required per unit. A GPS taken at each stop and recorded on a map of the unit.
- At each survey stop the following are required; recording set habitat variables, record species, narrative of habitat condition and take photo. See monitoring forms in Annexes.
- In addition to map with stops identified, please include an annotated map with target notes of any usual or important findings and location.
- At the end of each unit use the criteria on the monitoring form to assess whether the habitat feature on the SSSI unit passes or fails. Identifying key threats and management recommendations.

II. Indicative survey locations

If the area is not well known to the contractor pre-survey reconnaissance of the indicative survey locations should be carried out to determine the general nature and extent of the woodlands/terrain and to confirm suitable locations for survey transects. It is estimated that a preliminary walk-over assessment of all the proposed survey locations would take a maximum of two full days. Following the initial reconnaissance Natural England would welcome any advice or recommendations regarding the locations to be surveyed. For instance, the contractor may wish to recommend a variation of survey location(s) based on their experience. This can be discussed at the inception meeting.

III. GPS data formats

It is important to be able to geo-locate the survey effort so that geospatial cross-referencing with other data sources can take place.

Please provide Natural England with a map showing proposed transect routes to be agreed prior to surveys. The final transect route and location of survey stops should be provided to Natural England, annotated on a map and in GIS format or in x:y co-ordinates entered into an Excel spreadsheet.

IV. Access to Land

Due to the short time between the award of contract and expected field survey date, Natural England will initially obtain land owner/manager permission in advance of the surveys providing approximate timings of site visits.

Land manager contact details to be supplied to the contractor at the start of contract by Natural England. The contractor will then liaise directly with landowners and occupiers to arrange specific dates and times for access. Permissions must be obtained at least 48 hours prior to monitoring, with any refusals or other issues notified to the Natural England project officer within 3 working days.

4. Analysis and Reporting

The outputs, unless agreed otherwise in writing by the Project Officer, will be as detailed in this section.

I. Reporting and presentation of data

A report will be produced to include introduction, methods and results together with maps (pdf or jpeg format) showing the locations of transect routes. This should include all completed forms and photos for each survey stop.

Provide information on survey visits (date, etc.). Provide an indication of the reliability of survey and any limitations likely to reduce reliability of results.

Additional descriptive sections in the report relating to plant species of conservation interest and concern can be included at the discretion of the contractor.

A general description of the woodland and scrub habitat should be included, as well as identifying any threats and management recommendations.

5. Health & Safety / Known hazards & risks

Risks associated with field-based work need to be considered. The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 is to be fully complied with at all times.

Please provide a clear and structured proposal to demonstrate your intended approach to health and safety on this project and how you ensure the requirements of legislation are met.

The risk assessment must also include a section on Covid-19 which covers:

- Assurance that contractors will work within government guidance on working outdoors: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/construction-and-other-outdoor-work>
- Assurance that coronavirus specific risk assessments have been carried out by the contractor.

If Covid-19 restriction changes affect the work as part of this contract, the successful contractor must inform the project manager within two working days and provide an updated risk assessment within five working days.

The risk assessment must also include a section on Avian influenza which covers assurance that contractors will work within the latest government guidance on Avian influenza.

Your quotation for the work should be accompanied by the following Health and Safety documentation required by Natural England:

- Risk assessment: this must take the hazards identified above into account.
- Valid certificates (if appropriate) to be made available on request:
- Employers Liability Compulsory Insurance
- Public Liability Insurance – provide description of level taken out
- Professional Indemnity Insurance – provide description of level taken out

Work shall not commence without Natural England being in possession of appropriate documentation and an agreed safe method of working.

The scoring quality criteria are listed in Annex 4.

6. Outputs

An electronic copy of the draft report, in Word format, should be submitted to Natural England for consideration and comments. All reports should be submitted according to the timescale given on page 1/2. All reports should be sent to the Project Officer.

Please note reports should be formatted as per Natural England guidance. Below is an external link to the latest version of the NE Commissioned Report template (which also contains guidance):

<http://nepubprod.appspot.com/publication/5790636781600768>

Prices

- i. Prices must be submitted in £ sterling, inclusive of VAT.
- ii. Please price against the work described in this specification and annexes and complete the pricing template in Annex 5.
- iii. The tenderer should demonstrate how they will cover the survey area and how the visits will be organised in terms of personnel and timescales.
- iv. Day rates and numbers of days for key staff should be provided. Costs should be broken down to show the time allocated to each part of the project. Please itemise other costs including material / equipment costs. Please detail any assumptions made when pricing for any aspects of this tender.

It is anticipated that this contract will be awarded for a period of 8 months to end no later than 04/09/2023. Prices will remain fixed for the duration of the contract award period. We may at our sole discretion extend this contract to include related or further work. Any extension shall be agreed in advance of any work commencing and may be subject to further competition.

Suppliers should email invoices to APinvoices-NEG-U@gov.sscl.com or post them to:
Shared Services Connected Limited
Natural England
PO Box 793
Newport
NP10 8FZ
Please ensure that the Purchase Order number is included on the invoice

Quotation Submission

Your tender should include the following information

- i. Pricing Template (Annex 5)
- ii. Your proposal outlining how you will meet Natural England's Requirements.
- iii. Methodology including a proposed outline schedule or timetable of works, including a rationale for the estimate of the number of days required for field survey work, how you will cover the survey area, and how the visits will be organised in terms of personnel and timescales.
- iv. Insurance certificates.
- v. Health and Safety Policy.
- vi. Risk Assessment including that for Coronavirus.
- vii. Acceptance of terms and conditions

Evaluation Criteria

The contract will be awarded to the tender which best fits the profile of requirements. This will be assessed by the Project Officer in consultation with relevant colleagues using the evaluation criteria detailed below.

As part of the evaluation process a quality threshold will be placed on each scoring criterion identified below. If your tender falls below the threshold then your bid will not be considered.

Your tender should include the following information and supporting evidence.

Evaluation Criteria	Weighting (%)	Threshold score out of 10	Tender Information
Technical expertise and experience – Please provide details of your experience in undertaking: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Woodland Habitat Surveys Please provide details of your experience in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis, presentation and reporting of data generated from surveys. 	25	8	Previous contracts for undertaking Woodland Habitat surveys for site evaluations and Site Condition Monitoring on SSSI sites. Qualifications, technical merit and experience of key staff engaged on the contract e.g. CVs, woodland survey / contracts, technical qualifications. Particular reference should be made to experience of surveying mixed and yew woodland habitat types. This assessment is not a Deer Impact Assessment but requires general observations and the contractor must have a good understand of deer impacts (Refer to guidance below: https://www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk/uploads/guides/183.pdf)
Fit with Specification and methodology – Availability: Please provide full details as requested under Tender Information. Capability for full delivery of expectation: Please provide full details as requested under Tender Information.	15	7	Include details of availability given the timescales page 1/2 and a proposed outline schedule or timetable of works. Include details of capability for field survey work with a clear rationale for the estimated number of days for field work. Please include details of how the survey area will be covered and how the visits will be organised in terms of personnel and timescales.
Project and risk management, and resources allocated – Please provide full details as requested under Tender Information	15	7	Details of personnel, support systems, organisational and management skills to deliver all aspects of the requirement in full. This must include an assessment of the risks to project delivery and mitigation (including contingency in the event of delays), evidence of quality control measures and project management procedures.
Financial (value for money)	50	No threshold	Include all costs and VAT clearly itemised.

The scoring quality criteria are listed in Annex 4

Contract Management

This contract shall be managed on behalf of the Authority by:

Steve Walker

Senior Adviser: Protected Site Strategies Pilot Co-ordinator

Tel: 07919 570703

Email: steve.walker@naturalengland.org.uk

Natural England will raise purchase orders to cover the cost of the services and will issue to the awarded supplier following contract award.

Suppliers will be required to invoice after each contract milestone. An invoice schedule will be agreed after the contract is awarded.

Fortnightly updates during the first month then monthly updates thereafter, an e-mail summary of work progress should be sent to the project officer monthly.

Disclosure

All Central Government Departments, their Executive Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies are subject to control and reporting within Government. In particular, they report to the Cabinet Office and HM Treasury for all expenditure. Further the Cabinet Office has a cross-Government role delivering overall Government policy on public procurement, including ensuring value for money and related aspects of good procurement practice.

For these purposes, the Authority may disclose within Government any details contained in your quotation. The information will not be disclosed outside Government during the procurement.

In addition, the Authority is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004, which provide a public right of access to information held by public bodies. In accordance with these two statutes, the Authority may be required to disclose information contained in your quotation to any person who submits a request for information pursuant to those statutes.

By submitting a quotation you consent to these terms as part of the procurement.

Disclaimers

Whilst the information in this RFQ and any supporting information referred to herein or provided to you by the Authority have been prepared in good faith the Authority does not warrant that this information is comprehensive or that it has been independently verified.

The Authority does not:

- make any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the RFQ;
- accept any liability for the information contained in the RFQ or for the fairness, accuracy or completeness of that information; or

- accept any liability for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation or any other liability which cannot lawfully be excluded) arising as a result of reliance on such information or any subsequent communication.

Any supplier considering entering into contractual relationships with the Authority following receipt of the RFQ should make its own investigations and independent assessment of the Authority and its requirements for the goods and/or services and should seek its own professional financial and legal advice.

Protection of Personal Data

In order to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 the contractor must agree to the following:

- You must only process any personal data in strict accordance with instructions from the Authority
- You must ensure that all the personal data that we disclose to you or you collect on our behalf under this agreement are kept confidential.
- You must take reasonable steps to ensure the reliability of employees who have access to personal data.
- Only employees who may be required to assist in meeting the obligations under this agreement may have access to the personal data.
- Any disclosure of personal data must be made in confidence and extend only so far as that which is specifically necessary for the purposes of this agreement.
- You must ensure that there are appropriate security measures in place to safeguard against any unauthorised access or unlawful processing or accidental loss, destruction or damage or disclosure of the personal data.
- On termination of this agreement, for whatever reason, the personal data must be returned to us promptly and safely, together with all copies in your possession or control.

General Data Protection Regulations 2018

For the purposes of the Regulations the Authority is the data processor.

The personal information that we have asked you provide on individuals (data subjects) that will be working for you on this contract will be used in compiling the tender list and in assessing your offer. If you are unsuccessful the information will be **held and destroyed within two years** of the award of contracts. If you are awarded a contract it will be retained for the duration of the contract and destroyed within **seven years** of the contract's expiry.

We may monitor the performance of the individuals during the execution of the contract, and the results of our monitoring, together with the information that you have provided, will be used in determining what work is allocated under the contract, and in any renewal of the contract or in the award of future contracts of a similar nature. The information will not be disclosed to anyone

outside the Authority without the consent of the data subject, unless the Authority is required by law to make such disclosures.

Annexes

Annex 1

Refer to Woodland Feature Assessment form for BROADLEAVED, MIXED AND YEW WOODLAND – provided as part of tender package.

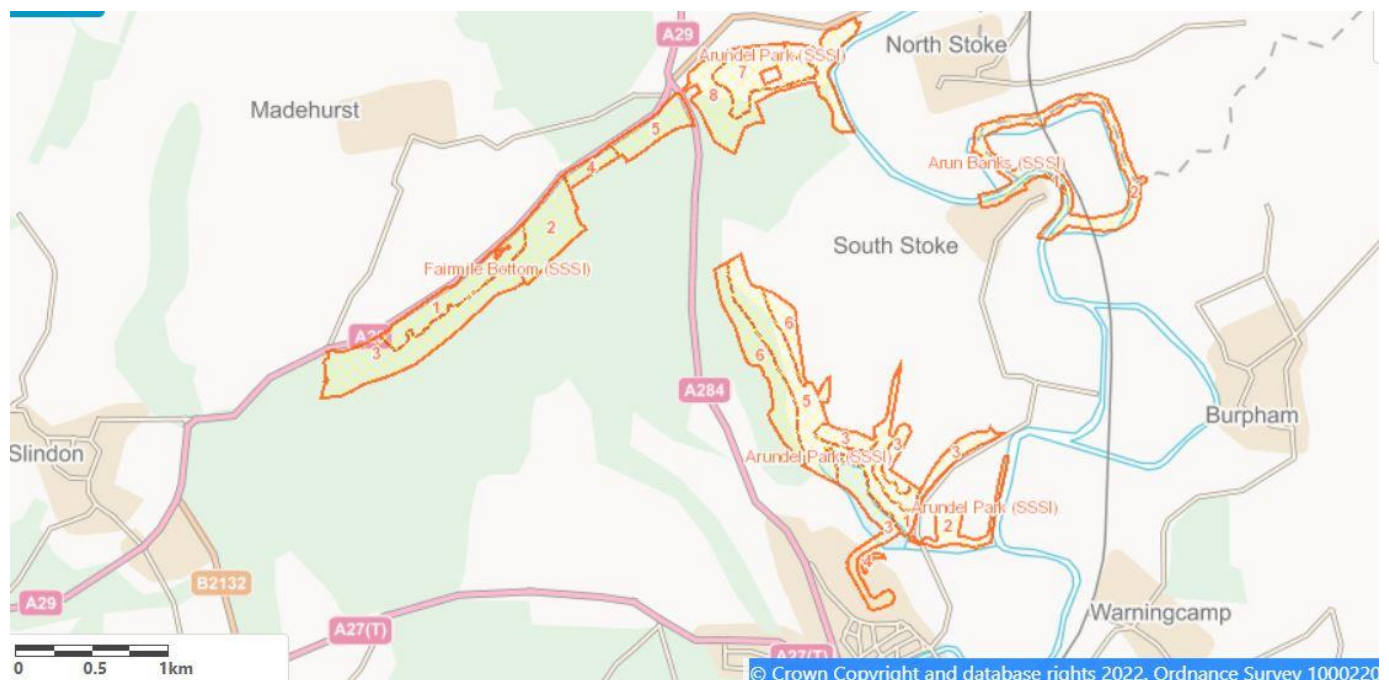
Annex 2

Refer to Woodland Feature Assessment form for Lowland Mixed Deciduous W8 W12 & Nationally scarce plant - *Tilia platyphyllos*, Large-leaved Lime – provided as part of tender package.

Annex 3: Maps of SSSI units to be surveyed

Please note all SSSI boundaries are Open Data and can be downloaded from our external platforms the Natura England Open Data Geoportal (Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England) - [Sites of Special Scientific Interest \(England\) | Natural England Open Data Geoportal \(arcgis.com\)](#))

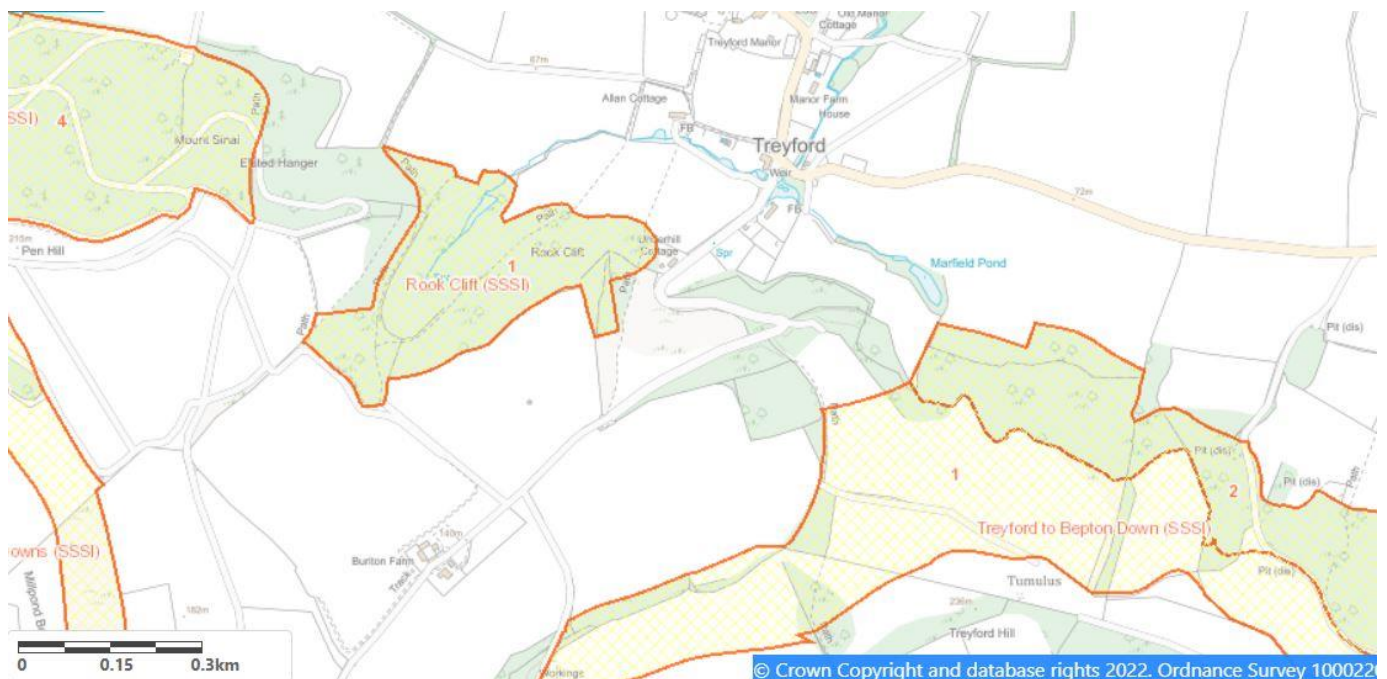
Arundel Park & Fairmile Bottom SSSI



Treyford to Bepton SSSI



Rook Cliff SSSI



Pads Woods SSSI



Annex 4: Scoring Criteria

Scoring - Quality Criteria	
Rating of Response	Score
<u>Very Good or Fully Compliant Submission:</u> meeting all requirements and is fully explained in comprehensive detail.	9 - 10
<u>Good or Fully Compliant Submission:</u> meeting all the requirements and is explained in reasonable detail.	7 - 8
<u>Satisfactory or Compliant Submission:</u> meeting the essential requirements and is explained in adequate detail.	5 - 6
<u>Weak or Partially Compliant (Minor issues) Submission:</u> falls short of requirements in some areas and is poorly explained.	3 - 4
<u>Unacceptable or Non-Compliant (Major issues) Submission:</u> fails to meet requirements and is not explained.	1 - 2

Annex 5: Pricing specification

Item of work/task	Grade of Staff	Day Rate	Number of days	Total Cost
Project management meetings				
Pre-survey reconnaissance				
Field survey				
Collation and analysis of results				
Reporting				
Other costs including materials / equipment				
T&S				
Total excl. VAT				

(Note please submit separate Pricing specification for the four diurnal visit scenario)