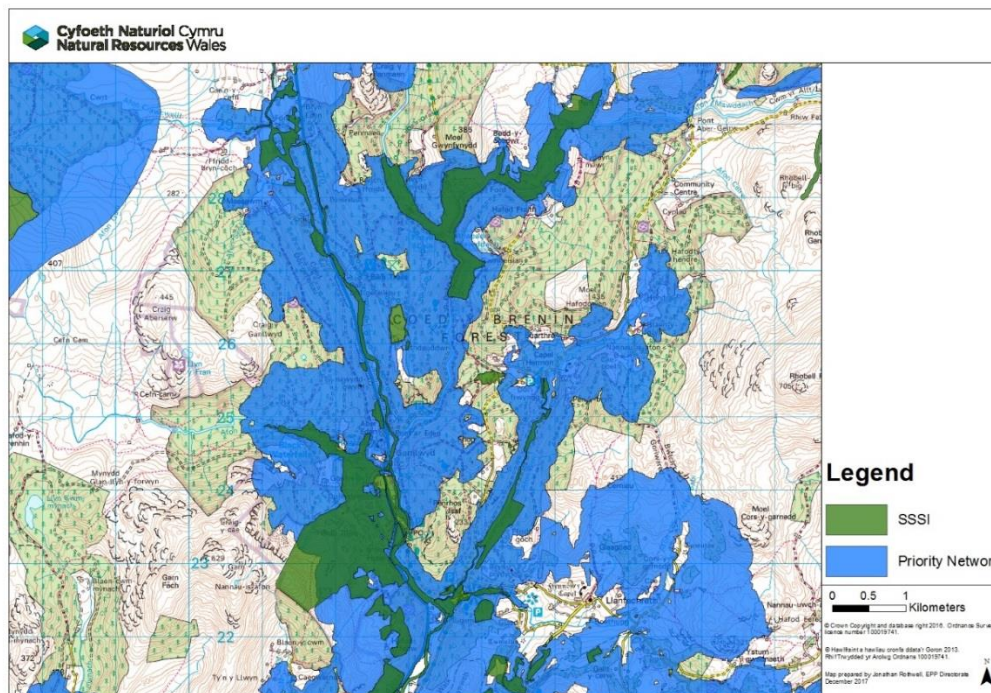


## Making the connection: Woodland and wildlife habitats

The WGWE has an important role to play in building ecosystem resilience and in doing so, reliably provide ecosystem services, benefits and well-being into the future. One of the ways we are doing this is via the mapping of habitat networks. These are a useful tool for understanding connectivity, which is a key requirement of ecosystem resilience.

Connectivity is basically to do with the movement that allows ecosystems to function. It operates in different ways and at different scales, and there is much more to it than simply 'joining up' patches of habitat in the landscape. Populations of species often need to be fit and healthy to be mobile in the first place, so connectivity requires existing wildlife habitats to be well-managed and, where possible, buffered and enlarged. Given the size of the WGWE, it has a significant role to play in supporting and enhancing connectivity to improve ecosystem resilience.

The map below shows a priority habitat network for semi-natural broadleaves within Coed y Brenin, a significant part of which comprises the WGWE. This network is important as it links woodland Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in the area.



A range of activities could help to strengthen the network and overall resilience of the protected sites and wider woodland resource in this area. These might include improved management of existing native woodland and other habitats, restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS), changed silvicultural management practises to improve the structural diversity of the woodland, increasing the overall component of native tree species and maintaining and enhancing other semi-natural habitats. In each case, there may be added benefits from other ecosystem services such as water management, and opportunities for enhanced recreation.

Pursuing SMNR:

