



Harborough District Green and Blue Infrastructure Study

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1.0 Introduction

Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 This Green and Blue Infrastructure Study (the “Study”) has been prepared by The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd for Harborough District Council.
- 1.2 This Study provides a district-wide analysis of Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) following Natural England’s recommended process for GBI including:
- local context;
 - summary of existing provision;
 - analysis of existing GBI provision; and
 - Recommendations for policy, collaboration and high-level action.
- 1.3 This Study has been produced as an evidence base to support the preparation of the new Harborough District Local Plan which will cover the period 2020 – 2041. The Study aims to identify the location of existing GBI within the District, highlight new GBI opportunities and make recommendations towards policies for the protection, provision and enhancement of GBI.
- 1.4 Key themes for the District’s GBI were discussed during the consultation process. The desire to uplift low levels of biodiversity, support local farmers, and increase people’s access to nature were noted. These themes could be developed into a formal vision by developing a GBI strategy.
- 1.5 The following appendices support this Study:
- Appendix A is the planning policy and strategy review;
 - Appendix B is the consultation summary; and
 - Appendix C is the GBI action plan.
- 1.6 Appendix A provides a summary of national policy drivers and relevant local adopted policies relating to GBI. Appendix B lists main points of information and opinion gathered during the consultation process, following the thematic structure of the report. Appendix C and accompanying mapping provides a view of opportunities for protecting, enhancing, and improving access to GBI in the District.

Definitions

What is GBI?

- 1.7 GBI is the network of green spaces and water environments that sustain the ecosystems which support life. The National Planning Policy Framework¹ (NPPF, 2023) defines GBI as:

“A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.”

Why is GBI Important?

- 1.8 Good GBI is a way of optimising our landscape and urban environment to provide multiple social, health and economic benefits while supporting and improving local ecosystems. The approach differs from traditional ‘grey’ infrastructure which tends to favour mechanical solutions (such as tanks or pipes for water management) that are engineered to solve one single problem.
- 1.9 A well-known example of GBI is Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London. The park has a ‘natural capital account’² which is a way of capturing the value of the different benefits provided by the park. It shows that for the £2.1m yearly maintenance budget, there are £9.6m worth of renewable benefits including carbon sequestration, air quality and improved health outcomes. It also notes that these benefits to the wider population do not result directly in financial revenues to the parks’ department carrying out the maintenance. Further examples of local GBI in Harborough and the UK are presented throughout this report.

Types of GBI

- 1.10 GBI includes the habitats which make up the network including both public and private green and blue spaces listed below:
- Active travel corridors;
 - Agricultural land;
 - Allotments;
 - Amenity open space;
 - Hedgerows;
 - Green roofs and living walls;

1 National Planning Policy Framework - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

2 QEOP 2018 Natural Capital Account Results Note.pdf (live-qeop.pantheonsite.io)

- Grounds to public buildings;
- Grounds to religious buildings;
- Parks and gardens;
- Ponds, lakes and reservoirs;
- Private gardens
- Sport facilities;
- Sustainable drainage systems;
- Vegetation along transport corridors;
- Semi-natural habitats;
- Watercourses; and
- Woodland and individual trees.

Who is responsible for GBI?

- 1.11 GBI transcends administrative boundaries and professional specialisms (including engineering, town planning, farming, landscape architecture, ecology, forestry and healthcare). Citizens and professionals from a range of disciplines need to collaborate in planning and delivering GBI across Harborough District.

GBI and Ecosystem Services

- 1.12 People and nature benefit from many natural resources and processes that are dependent on ecosystem health. GBI planning can help support and underpin ecosystem services relevant to the urban and rural areas of the District.
- 1.13 Ecosystem services are grouped into four broad categories, shown in Figure 1:
- Provisioning services, such as the production of food and clean water;
 - Regulating services, such as managing the climate;
 - Supporting services, such as nutrient cycles and crop pollination; and
 - Cultural services, such as recreational benefits.



Figure 1: Ecosystem Services

Context

Harborough District

- 1.14 Harborough District (the “District”) is in the East Midlands and covers approximately 59,180 hectares. It is the largest district in Leicestershire by area and covers almost a quarter of Leicestershire. The District is bound by nine other local authority areas as shown on Figure 2, including:
- Blaby, Oadby and Wigston, Leicester, Charnwood and Melton to the north;
 - Rutland to the east;
 - North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire to the south; and
 - Rugby to the west.
- 1.15 The District’s population is estimated at 100,481³ and is concentrated in the main towns of Market Harborough and Lutterworth, and other urban areas including Scraptoft and Thurnby.
- 1.16 Market Harborough is the main town and provides a wide range of job opportunities and higher order services including retail, leisure and health. Its railway station has services to London and connecting services via Leicester to the North and Midlands.

³ Office for National Statistics Mid-Year Population Estimates for June 2022

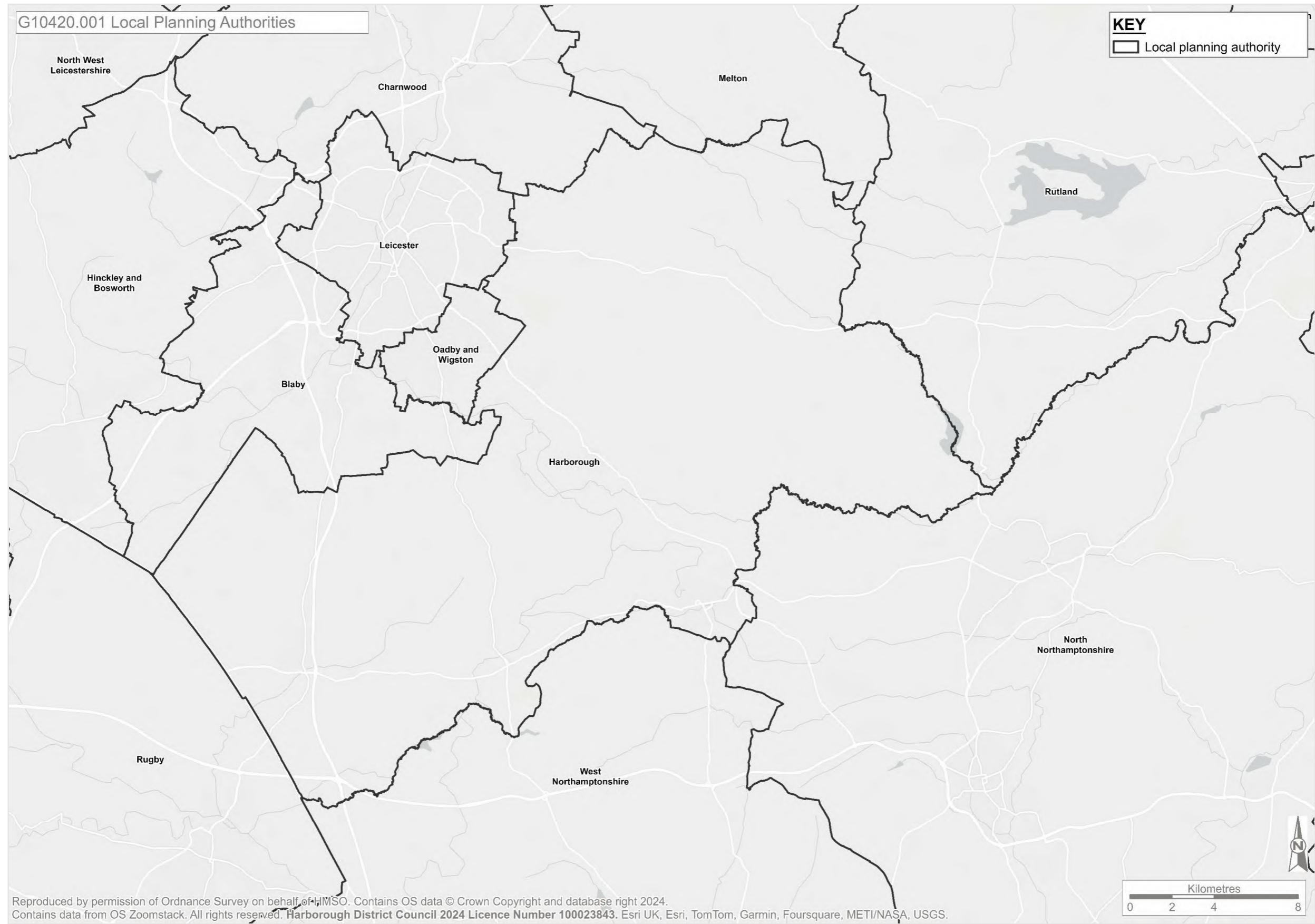


Figure 2: Harborough District geographical context

Local Plan Considerations

- 1.17 The Harborough District Local Plan was adopted in April 2019. It plays a significant role in delivering sustainable development in appropriate locations and in helping to protect the countryside, important green spaces, and built and natural heritage from inappropriate and insensitive development, thus enhancing the quality of life for people and the wider community.
- 1.18 This Study will provide evidence to support the new Harborough Local Plan by:
- Considering relevant guidance and best practice;
 - Considering existing sources of information e.g. the existing Local Plan and existing policies;
 - Mapping existing Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) and provide a detailed assessment on quality, gaps in provision, existing proposals for improvement and provide potential opportunities to expand and enhance the network;
 - Identifying locations of existing and proposed green infrastructure networks and recommend appropriate policies for the provision, protection, and enhancement through the new Local Plan; and
 - Developing an action plan which identified key actions and opportunities for the provision and enhancement of green and blue infrastructure.

Links to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

- 1.19 The Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland is being developed, with Leicestershire County Council appointed as the responsible body for delivery of the LNRS.
- 1.20 The LNRS is expected to be published in July 2025. Harborough District Council is a supporting authority.
- 1.21 The LNRS is required under the Environment Act (2021) and aims to ensure opportunities for recovering nature are joined up. The LNRS will:
- Map existing areas of value for nature;
 - Establish priorities; and
 - Map proposals for interventions to aid nature's recovery and provide wider environmental benefits.
- 1.22 The LNRS will provide landscape-scale approaches to preserve, conserve and enhance the environment.

1.23 This Study aims to complement the LNRS across Harborough and provides relevant information to support planning and investment decisions relating to nature in the interim period until the LNRS is published.

Natural England Green Infrastructure (GI) Framework

Methodology

1.24 This study has been structured to align with current English best practice published by Natural England (NE), which provides a valuable framework with which to navigate the multiple themes and ideas relating to GBI concisely.

1.25 The process journey for local planning authorities (LPAs) has been developed to provide a clear route for developing a successful GBI strategy, shown in Figure 3. This study is focussed on step 3 – ‘evidence’ – providing a clear picture and thorough analysis of the District’s GBI. It refers to all the other steps in the process to provide a strong foundation for any future GBI strategy. The associated action plan supports stages 5 and 6 which require more tangible measures for future planning and progress.



Figure 3: NE process journey for Local Planning Authorities

- 1.26 The NE GI Framework published in 2023 provides ‘Why’, ‘What’ and ‘How’ principles⁴ for GI planning, design and implementation – see Figure 4.
- 1.27 The principles were derived from studying international practice, analysing feedback from 10 GBI trials, and developing the overall GI framework with specialists and representatives across the sector. The principles provide a baseline from which to develop stronger GBI policy.

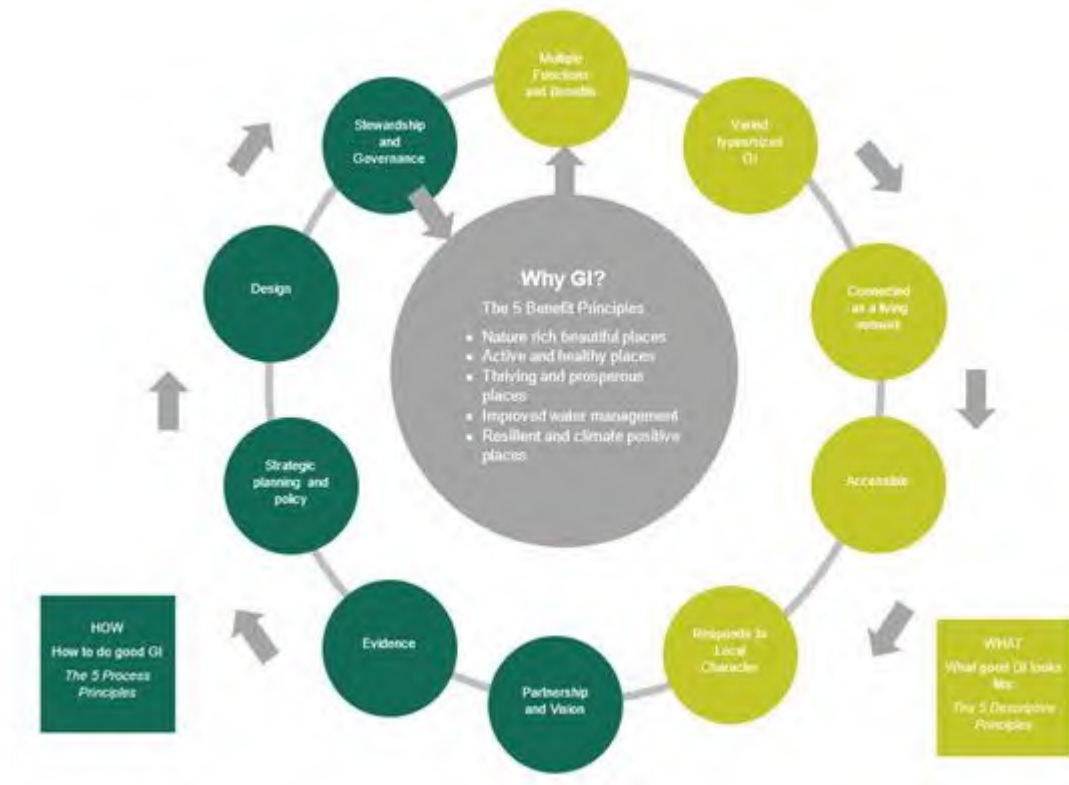


Figure 4: What, Why and How Principles of good GBI

Why Principles

- 1.28 The 5 ‘Why’ principles are concerned with the multiple benefits of GBI in ecosystem management and place-shaping. This Study analyses Harborough District’s GBI by reference to these principles at Chapter 5:
- *Nature-rich beautiful places:* this principle deals with nature’s recovery, protecting and enhancing habitats for wildlife, geology and soils. Our cultural and personal connections to nature are important everywhere, from cities to the countryside.

⁴ Natural England GI Principles. GreenInfrastructurePrinciples.pdf

- *Active and healthy places:* green and blue spaces, routes and neighbourhoods support active lifestyles, connected communities and provide physical and mental health benefits. They reduce urban heat stress, pollution, noise and flooding.
- *Thriving and prosperous places:* good GBI makes places more attractive to live, work and invest in. It helps regenerate local economies and creates green jobs.
- *Improved water management:* GBI manages water at local and catchment scale, reducing flooding and relieving pressure on water infrastructure. Improvements in water quality and natural filtration will also benefit people and wildlife.
- *Resilient and climate positive places:* green and blue spaces need to be resilient to adapt to a changing climate. They can also contribute to net zero targets providing passive cooling and improving air quality.

What Principles

1.29 The 5 ‘What’ principles guide the design and management of new and existing GBI, and are considered in Chapter 6:

- *Multifunctional:* GBI should provide a variety of functions that are relevant to local needs. This is particularly important in urban areas or places where green spaces are scarce and in high demand.
- *Varied:* the wide range of possible spaces, routes and features that can make up a GBI network should provide for specific local needs in appropriate places.
- *Connected:* GBI networks need to join up to function well at small and large scales. They need to connect all the benefits of nature with those that need them.
- *Accessible:* everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy green and blue spaces. GBI needs to create places that are safe, welcoming and inclusive.
- *Responsive to local character:* good quality landscapes will use GBI to protect, enhance and conserve distinctive local spaces which make people feel proud of their local community and identity.

How Principles

1.30 The 5 ‘How’ Principles set out how to plan for GI effectively, work with communities and ensure partnerships and good governance, and are covered in Chapter 7:

- *Partnership and Vision:* GBI should be designed and delivered according to a vision that has been formed through collaboration between a diverse range of citizens from different backgrounds, and professionals across different sectors and disciplines.
- *Evidence:* scientific evidence and good land use practice should be followed when planning GBI. Sound understanding of the benefits of current assets and data on local environmental, social and economic needs will enable resources to be used effectively.
- *Plan Strategically:* GBI assets should be secured in local strategy and policy at all scales as a mainstream consideration in environmental, social and economic policy. This should address inequalities in GBI provision and create sustainable places for current and future generations.
- *Design:* GBI should form part of beautiful, well-designed places that are designed to enhance the natural, historic and cultural character of the landscape or townscape.
- *Managed, valued and evaluated:* there should be a strong business case for GBI assets to secure funding for long-term management and maintenance. Good governance needs to be in place, monitoring and evaluation of asset performance which can be understood and celebrated by local communities.

2.0 Policy Background

2.1 GBI has national and local policy and protection. A comprehensive review of existing policy and strategies is at Appendix A. Figure 5 shows the hierarchy of GBI related Policy and Guidance in Harborough.

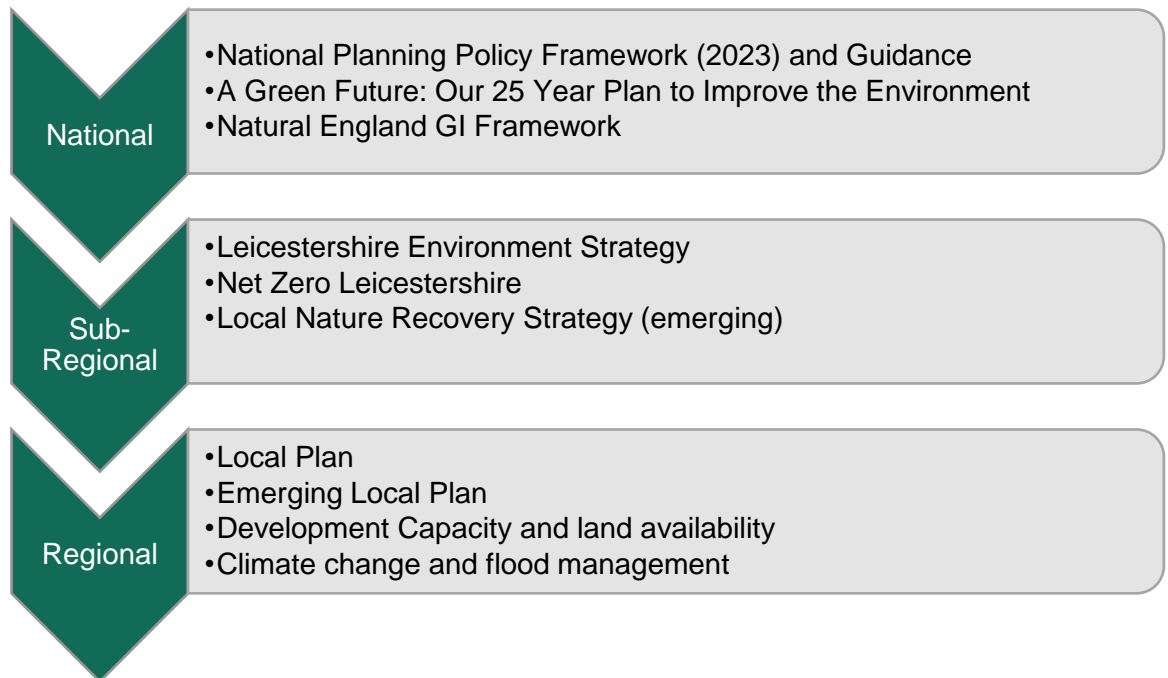


Figure 5: Policy and Strategy hierarchy

National Policy and Guidance

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023)

2.2 The NPPF 2023 describes how GBI fits into the wider context of local authorities' strategic plans. Strategic Plans set the overall strategy for the pattern, scale, and quality of places, encompassing the essential aspects of GBI:

- Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment;
- Encouragement of sustainable development and good design practice;
- Promotion of healthy, inclusive and safe places and communities;
- Protection and enhancement of open, green, and locally significant spaces;
- Support for nature's recovery through resilient ecological networks and net gain for biodiversity; and
- Improvement of air quality, water quality and flood and drought resilience in a changing climate.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 2.3 GI helps absorb pollutants, including emissions from farmland, enabling better air quality. The PPG considers climate change and how a comprehensive approach to GBI can promote better water resource management and water quality. GBI can also reduce overall flood risk on development through sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), which can also deliver benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife. In terms of biodiversity, PPG reinforces the NPPF with the need to pursue sustainable development and achieve net gain in the context of an expanding ecological network.
- 2.4 PPG sets out the value and benefits of open space, sports and recreation and the need to protect and enhance Public Rights of Ways (PRoW) and support active travel. It recognises the important role of GBI in promoting social interaction and healthy lifestyles which relieve pressure and reduce costs for health services. Well integrated GBI can also emphasise local character and identity without stifling innovation and can boost tourism.
- 2.5 PPG promotes evidence-based authority-wide GI strategies and recognises that GI networks cross administrative boundaries and the need for collaboration among stakeholders to address cross-boundary issues. Arrangements for the management and funding of GI are also key and should be identified as early as possible.
- 2.6 PPG provides advice of how to identify suitable mitigation and adaption measures for climate change in the planning process and how to address the impacts of climate change. The PPG states that the impact of climate change needs to be considered in a realistic way and, as part of this, LPAs should identify no or low-cost responses to climate risks that deliver a multitude of benefits, for example, GI that improves adaptation, biodiversity and amenity.
- 2.7 Furthermore, the Climate Change PPG states that when Local Authorities are preparing Local Plans and taking planning decisions, they should pay particular attention to the integration adaption and mitigation approaches and looking for 'win win' solutions. For example, the provision of multi-functional GI can reduce the urban heat island effect, manage flooding and help species adapt to climate change whilst also contributing to a pleasant environment that encourages people to walk and cycle.
- 2.8 In response, this Study provides evidence on the quantity and quality of existing GBI assets across Harborough District, an analysis of pressures facing GBI, and guidance on opportunities for enhancing GBI in the context of existing and planned development, and local priorities and concerns.

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (January 2018, updated February 2023)

- 2.9 The 'A Green Future' plan provides details and new mechanisms that are currently in the process of implementation that will support the practical delivery of all the social, environmental and economic benefits of multifunctional GBI across the many relevant stakeholders. They include support for farmers to implement and maintain appropriate GBI, financial mechanisms and markets for developers to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and comprehensive LNRS to ensure that individual projects contribute to a meaningful overall picture.
- 2.10 This Study provides relevant information to support planners, developers and local communities to inform how these new requirements are implemented across the District.

Local Policy and Guidance

Corporate Plan (2022 - 2031)

- 2.11 The Corporate Plan⁵ was approved in February 2022 and is Harborough District Council's overarching strategic document which covers the full range of the Council's responsibilities and is an important tool to set out the ambitions for the District.
- 2.12 The vision is:
- “working with our communities, we will build a future for the people of Harborough district that gives them the best life chances and opportunities through:*
- *Community leadership to create a sense of pride in our place;*
 - *Promote health and wellbeing and encourage healthy life choices;*
 - *Create a sustainable environment to protect future generations; and*
 - *Support business and residents to deliver a prosperous local economy.”*
- 2.13 The Corporate Plan looks to deliver outcomes across four key areas:
- *Place and Community* – Ensuring there is enough housing to meet the local needs of all ages, that growth provides employment and is designed well, recognising the rural nature of the district and that communities are involved in how that growth is shaped;

5 Corporate Plan (2022-2031) - https://www.harborough.gov.uk/directory_record/472/corporate_plan

- *Healthy Lives* – Giving the guidance and support to all residents to make healthy life choices, to live longer healthier independent lives, not only physically but in good mental health too;
- *Environment and Sustainability* – Enhancing and protecting the natural environment with improved access to open and green spaces, addressing climate issues proactively looking to future sustainable options and reducing environmental crime to further protect the environment; and
- *Economy* – That local employment options are available to allow residents to prosper in the District, developing and retaining the skills employers need, and attracting visitors to contribute to a stable future economy.

Harborough Local Plan (2011-2031)

- 2.14 The Harborough Local Plan⁶ was adopted on 30th April 2019 and is a principal planning document which sets out the vision, objectives, spatial strategy and planning policies for the entire District area. The Local Plan replaces the Council's Core Strategy 2006-2028 and Saved Policies from the previous 2001 Local Plan. The Harborough Local Plan along with 29 'made' neighbourhood plans, and an adopted mineral and waste plan, form the overall development plan for Harborough District.
- 2.15 The Local Plan plays a significant role in delivering sustainable development in appropriate locations and in helping to protect the countryside, important greenspaces, and the built and natural heritage from inappropriate insensitive development, thus enhancing the quality of life for people and communities.
- 2.16 Harborough's positive vision for the future is as follows (paraphrased):
- "In 2031, Harborough District will be a vibrant, safe and prosperous place which retains its identity as a predominately rural area of villages and market towns. Residents will benefit from increased housing, a wide range of local skills jobs and high-quality services and facilities, all of which will promote healthy and safe lifestyles.... The diversity and quality of Harborough's countryside, natural and historic environment will have improved for the benefit of residents and visitors. Air and water quality will have been improved while the impacts of noise and light pollution will have been minimised. There will be better access to the countryside and an improved range of open spaces for local people to enjoy.... By 2031 the District will have improved resilience to the impacts of climate change, with new development located in areas of low flood risk and incorporating energy efficient design and sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) to manage run-off water sustainably. Low carbon design techniques and technologies, increased provision for*

6 Adopted Harborough Local Plan (2011 - 2031) -

https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/5714/harborough_local_plan_2011-2031_-_adopted_april_2019

walking and cycling, and improved access to public transport for new development will have contributed to a reduction in the District's carbon footprint. New development will have been delivered in the most sustainable locations. The historic market town of Market Harborough will have retained its character and strengthened its role as the District's principal town."

- 2.17 The following key issues in relation to GBI have emerged from the Local Plan vision, as well as from evidence studies and previous consultation:
- The spatial strategy for distribution of housing and employment development;
 - Meeting housing needs;
 - Facilitating growth in the economy;
 - Development in the countryside;
 - Green Infrastructure;
 - Climate change;
 - Transport; and
 - Infrastructure.
- 2.18 The following objectives relate directly to GBI and have been identified in relation to delivery of the vision and guiding key issues above:
- Objective 4 relates to maintaining a high quality of life by ensuring that new development delivers the necessary infrastructure including that relating to health, education, transport, open space, recreation and water supply;
 - Objective 5 relates to protecting, enhancing and ensuring the provision of additional accessible community services and facilities;
 - Objective 6 relates to the natural environment, ensuring that it is protected, maintained, restored and enhanced creating links between wildlife sites ensuring that open countryside is preserved against insensitive development, and that landscape and natural resources are protected;
 - Objective 7 relates to protecting the historic environment of Harborough and wider landscape setting;
 - Objective 8 relates to supporting and enhancing the vitality and viability of the market towns for shopping, leisure and tourism, thereby recognising and embracing their valued role as the hearts of the communities;
 - Objective 9 relates to design and ensures that development is of high quality and sustainable relating to the local character. Development should provide attractive, healthy and safe environments, respect residential amenity and sustainable behaviours;

- Objective 10 relates to transport within Harborough and suggest that opportunities should be explored to reduce car use, therefore reducing the impacts of road traffic on local communities, air quality;
 - Objective 11 relates to flood risk, and states that new development should be located in areas which will not put lives at risk of flooding and collapse, ensuring sustainable drainage systems e.g. attenuation basins are created in new developments to reduce wider flood risk; and
 - Objective 12 relates to environmental impact and states that the environmental impact of development and the vulnerability to climate change should be monitored to reduce as much waste as possible, maximising water and energy efficiency and promoting alternative technologies and sustainable construction methods.
- 2.19 A detailed review of the adopted policies in relation to GBI is at Appendix A. Notably policy G11 identifies some strategic GI assets and makes policy for their safeguarding and enhancement:
- Welland, Sence, Soar, Swift and Avon river corridors and the Grand Union Canal;
 - Dismantled railway lines;
 - Saddington, Stanford and Eyebrook reservoirs; and
 - Traffic free cycle routes, and long-distance recreational paths and bridleways.

Emerging Local Plan (up to 2041)

- 2.20 Harborough District Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan which will replace the Harborough Local Plan (2011 – 2031) once adopted. The Issues and Options document⁷ notes that GBI is “a strategic and interconnected network of natural and semi-natural features designed to manage and enhance the environmental, social and economic well-being of a local community or region.”
- 2.21 The document states that GBI is a multifunctional approach to urban and rural planning that aims to provide a range of benefits including flood mitigation, improved water quality, biodiversity conservation, recreation and enhanced urban aesthetics. This can be achieved through urban greening, integrating blue and green infrastructure into new development, green and active travel routes and green travel links from urban to rural areas.
- 2.22 This GBI Study will assess and review GBI assets within the District and as part of the wider GBI network and will identify the best course of action for protection and enhancement.

⁷ Issue and Options Consultation Document

https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/8363/issues_and_options_consultation_document

Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan (2022-2027)

- 2.23 The Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Harborough District⁸ was adopted in April 2019. It lists the key health challenges facing Harborough's population and states that there are many factors which contribute towards a person's mental, physical and social health and wellbeing – many of which may change throughout a person's life.
- 2.24 The strategy promotes community leadership to ensure that collective resources are utilised effectively.
- 2.25 The strategy's vision is to have:
"a culture and environment that promotes and supports health and wellbeing to all, to significantly improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce the district wide inequalities by 2027".
- 2.26 The six strategic priorities are all relevant to GBI, and the second priority specifically mentions access to nature and green spaces:
- Quality homes for all;
 - Community infrastructure and services;
 - Skills, jobs and income;
 - Stronger communities;
 - Mental health; and
 - Physical activity.

Rural Strategy and Action Plan (2023-2028)

- 2.27 The Rural Strategy was adopted in April 2019 and sets out how Harborough District Council can work to overcome challenges, rural proof future policies and realise the unique opportunities to enhance wellbeing & prosperity across the district. The vision for the Rural Strategy is set out as follows:
"Collaborating with our communities, we will build a future for the people of Harborough District that gives them the best life changes and opportunities through:
- *Community leadership to create a sense of pride in our place;*
 - *Promoting health and wellbeing and encouraging healthy life choices;*
 - *Creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations; and*

⁸ Health and Wellbeing strategy 2022-2027 for Harborough District
Health_and_Wellbeing_Strategy_2022_2027.pdf

- Support residents and business to deliver a prosperous and local economy.”

2.28 The Rural Strategy aims are:

- Be inclusive, connected and resilient rural communities, where everyone has the opportunities to participate and access to the services and facilities they need;
- Maintain an environmentally and economically sound rural district where the needs of farming, conservation, development and the economy are appropriately balanced; and
- Create a safe and welcoming district where everyone is provided with opportunities to enhance their physical, social and economic health and wellbeing.

Harborough District Council Climate Emergency Action Plan (2022-2030)

2.29 Harborough District Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019, recognising there is a need for urgent action to reduce emissions and to ensure that communities are prepared and resilient to the effects of climate change. The Council has committed to reducing its own emissions to net zero, as far as practicable by 2030.

2.30 One of the Council’s six key commitments promotes resilient natural systems to help to reduce the impacts of climate change.

3.0 Stakeholder Views

Consultation Process

- 3.1 Consultation for this study was undertaken in two stages. The first stage engaged District and County Council Officers in April 2024 to get an initial understanding of local evidence. The second stage involved wider consultation with local stakeholders and members in June 2024 to build up a detailed picture of Harborough District's GBI vision, opportunities and priorities.
- 3.2 Stage one of the consultation provided an overview of major development areas, relevant planning documents, including those which are emerging, and existing GBI initiatives in Harborough District.
- 3.3 Consultation highlighted that there is an active and influential community of volunteers involved in a wide range of GBI projects across the District.
- 3.4 The second stage comprised two workshops, one for local stakeholders (including representatives from local groups and organisations and neighbouring authorities) and a second workshop for elected Members. A questionnaire was circulated to both groups prior to each workshop, and this was also distributed more widely to parish and town council representatives.
- 3.5 All consultees had the opportunity to respond to the questionnaire between 23rd May 2024 and 16th June 2024. The questionnaire followed the five 'Why' principles from the NE Framework.

Consultation Results

- 3.6 Consultation identified key themes, opportunities and challenges within the District. Headline themes which emerged from the workshops include:
 - Connecting fragmented habitats;
 - Providing accessible green space close to towns;
 - Improving active travel routes between towns and neighbouring villages; and
 - Using Natural Flood Management (NFM) to reduce flooding, improve water quality and create diverse habitats upstream of towns with flooding issues.
- 3.7 Specific consultation headlines relating to the five "Why" principles are provided at Chapter 5.
- 3.8 Further detail on consultation is provided at Appendix B.

4.0 Harbrough District's Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 4.1 This chapter outlines the main GBI assets across the District and is supported by maps to demonstrate the baseline information. Further analysis is provided in chapter 5 against the NE "Why" principles to analyse how well the District's GBI is functioning according to the needs of the local community.
- 4.2 Harbrough District covers 59,269 hectares of which 92.2% is GBI (Figure 6). The remaining 7.8% built environment may also include elements of urban GBI such as private gardens, green roofs, street trees and rain gardens. Except for the principal urban areas, Harbrough has a rural character with undulating topography to the east, and relatively flat areas to the west (Figure 7).
- 4.3 The sloping topography in the northeast of the District shown in Figure 7 preserves a greater variety of habitats in an area known as Leighfield Forest. The steeper hills form catchment boundaries and enable more trees and species-rich grassland due to more difficult terrain for farming and development.
- 4.4 Figure 8 shows ecological designations across the District. Approximately 1% of the District is designated for international and national biodiversity, much of which is associated with Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
- 4.5 Figure 9 and Table 1 demonstrate Harbrough District's GBI by type and broad habitat. Grassland and arable agriculture are the predominant land uses (over 47% and 38% of the District respectively). Woodland cover is approximately 5%.

Table 1: Broad Habitats across the District

GBI types	Quantity (Hectares)	% of District area
Grassland Continuous cover of modified, natural or semi-natural grasses including grazing land, sports pitches and amenity sites. Distinct from "semi-natural grassland" (below)	27,957	47.17%
Agricultural land Cereal and non-cereal crops	22,973	38.76%
Woodland Broadleaved, coniferous or mixed woodland including scattered heathland trees	3,024	5.10%
Non-GBI/ Urban	2,833	4.78%

GBI types	Quantity (Hectares)	% of District area
Roads, buildings, sealed surfaces, unvegetated unsealed surfaces including mineral workings		
Private gardens Mostly soft landscaped spaces which can contribute to GBI	1,647	2.78%
Water Ponds, reservoirs and reedbeds	449	0.76%
Heathland and scrub Vegetation dominated by native shrubs, may include grasses and herbs	220	0.37%
Semi-natural grassland Rough grassland and marsh	9	0.02%
Wetland	12	0.02%
Rock and scree Cliffs, boulders, rock and shingle, in the natural environment	0	0.00%

**All measures are approximate and rounded to the nearest unit. The remaining area (145ha) is unclassified.*

G10420.002.1 HabiTEP+ - Land Cover

Habitats outside Harborough displayed with a transparency, to provide a wider context.

Harborough District - 59,269ha

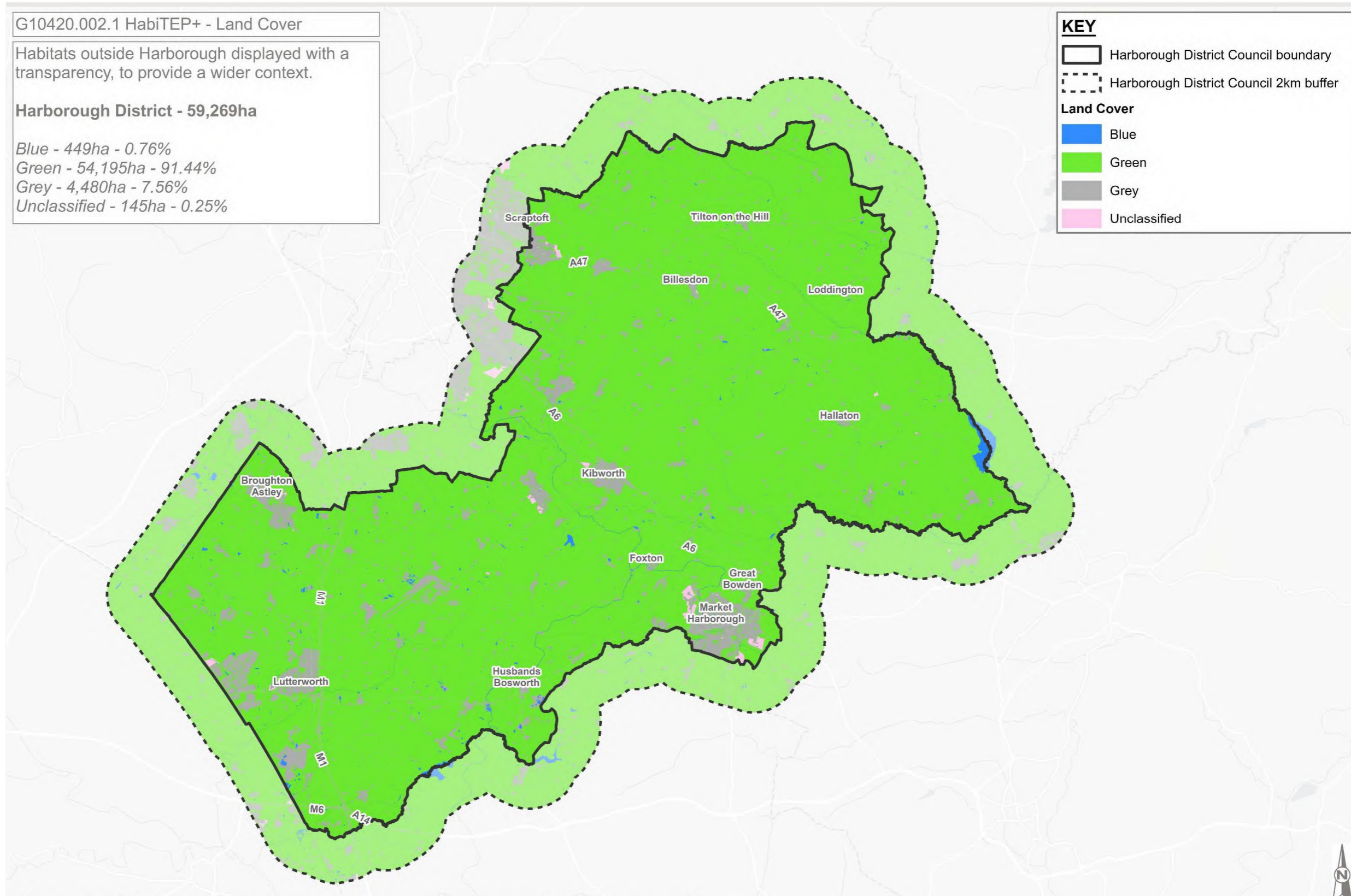
Blue - 449ha - 0.76%
 Green - 54,195ha - 91.44%
 Grey - 4,480ha - 7.56%
 Unclassified - 145ha - 0.25%

KEY

- Harborough District Council boundary
- Harborough District Council 2km buffer

Land Cover

- Blue
- Green
- Grey
- Unclassified



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Figure 6: Land Cover

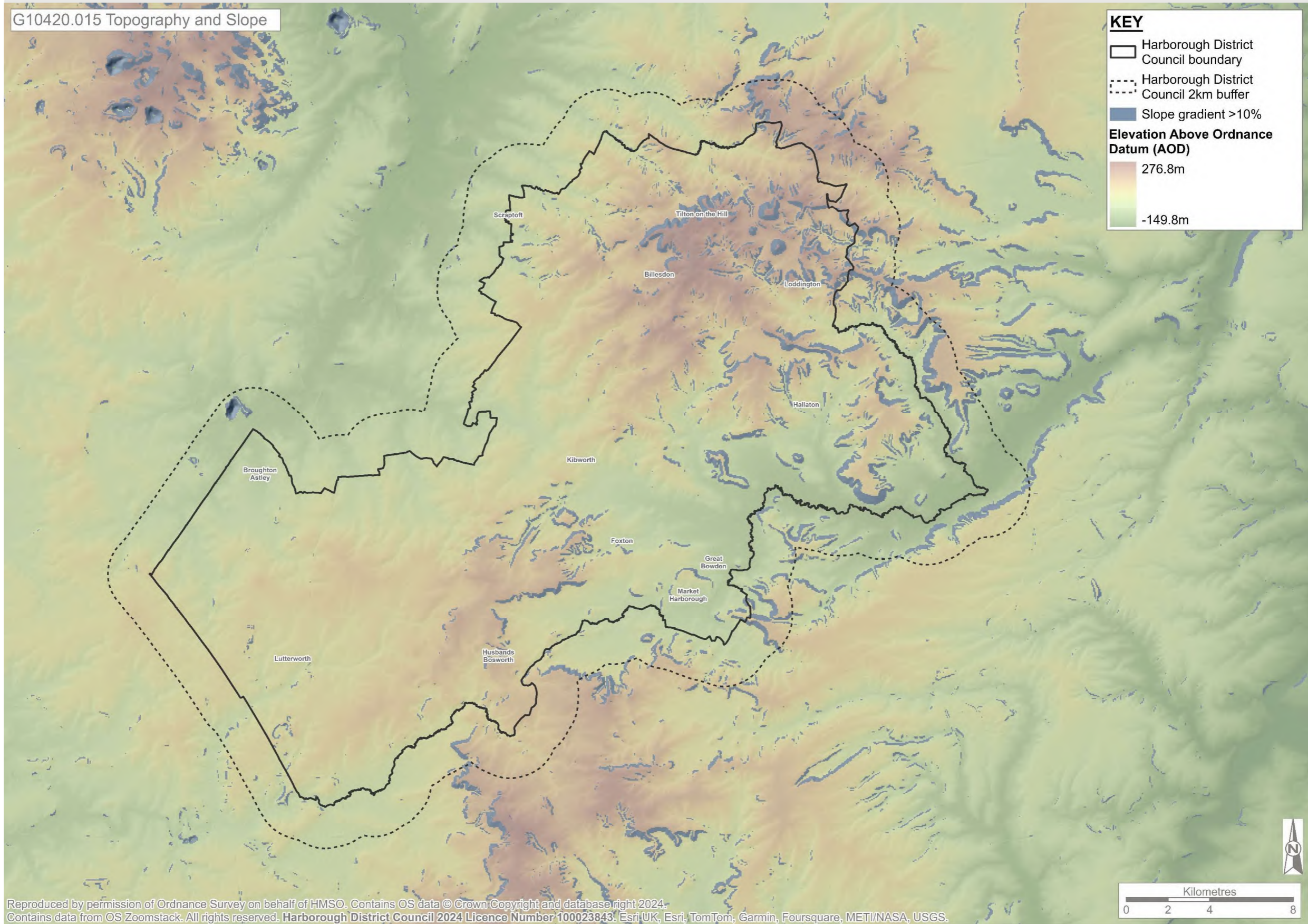


Figure 7: Topography and Slope

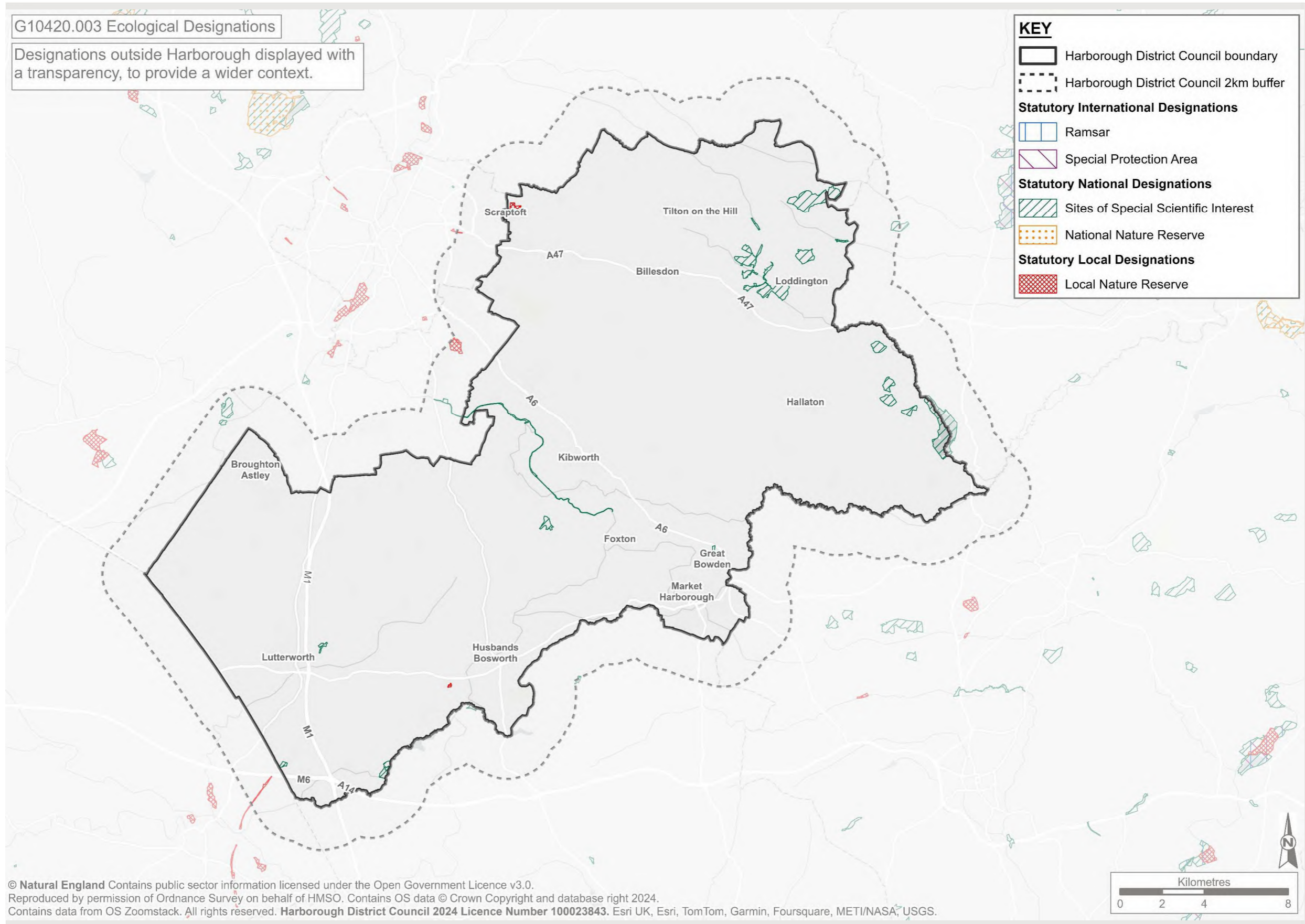


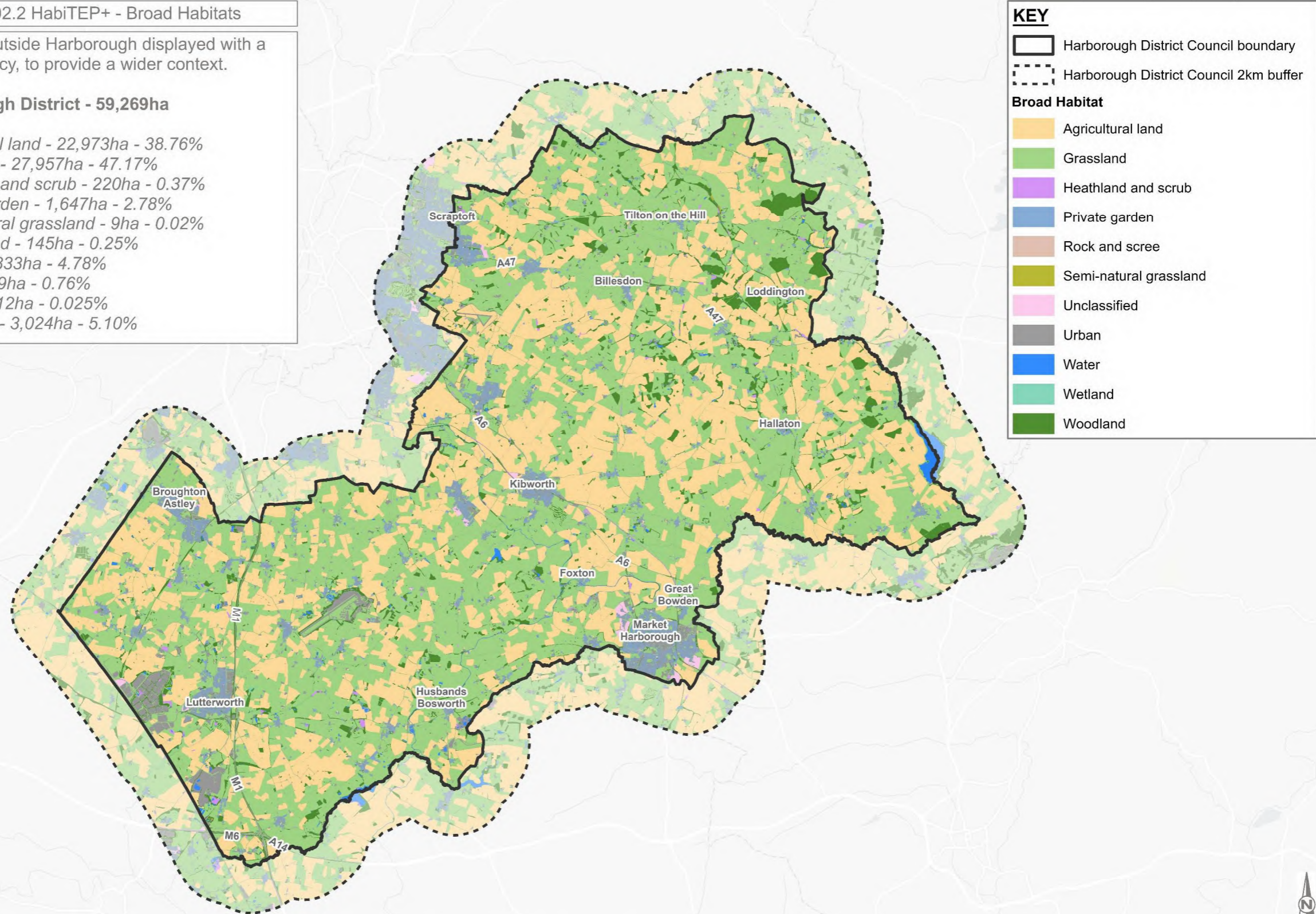
Figure 8: Ecological Designations

G10420.002.2 HabiTEP+ - Broad Habitats

Habitats outside Harborough displayed with a transparency, to provide a wider context.

Harborough District - 59,269ha

Agricultural land - 22,973ha - 38.76%
Grassland - 27,957ha - 47.17%
Heathland and scrub - 220ha - 0.37%
Private garden - 1,647ha - 2.78%
Semi-natural grassland - 9ha - 0.02%
Unclassified - 145ha - 0.25%
Urban - 2,833ha - 4.78%
Water - 449ha - 0.76%
Wetland - 12ha - 0.025%
Woodland - 3,024ha - 5.10%



KEY

- Harborough District Council boundary
- Harborough District Council 2km buffer

Broad Habitat

- Agricultural land
- Grassland
- Heathland and scrub
- Private garden
- Rock and scree
- Semi-natural grassland
- Unclassified
- Urban
- Water
- Wetland
- Woodland

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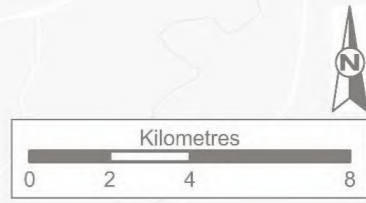


Figure 9: Broad Habitats

GBI Types

- 4.6 This section outlines the types (or sub-habitats) of GBI across the District.

Agricultural Land

- 4.7 Harborough District is predominantly agricultural. Land use for agriculture across the District consists of 35% cereal crops, 4% non-cereal crops and 47% grazing pasture.
- 4.8 Further analysis of the use of land to support biodiversity can be found in Chapter 5 under Principle 1: Nature rich, beautiful places.

Blue Infrastructure

- 4.9 Figure 10 shows Statutory Main Rivers within the District, including the River Welland (and its tributaries of Great Easton Brook, Hallaton Brook, Medbourne Brook, Stonton Brook, Langton Brook, Foxton Brook and the River Jordan) which flow towards the southeast of the District. The River Chater lies to the east of the District, Burton Brook and the River Sence flow northwards towards Leicester, Broughton Astley Brook which joins the River Soar in the west, and the River Swift flows southeast from Lutterworth to join the River Avon. The Eye Brook also runs along the eastern border of the District before joining the River Welland.
- 4.10 The Leicester Line of the Grand Union Canal intersects the District from close to Kibworth Harcourt in the north, to Welford in the south. The Welford Arm branches off to the east just south of North Kilworth, and the Market Harborough Arm joins at Foxton Locks, running eastwards to the waterfront in Market Harborough town.
- 4.11 Figure 11 shows existing blue infrastructure, and Figure 12 shows accessible waterside. Figure 11 uses Natural England data which has been adapted to include areas that are known to be currently publicly accessible, through permissions from the proprietary organisation (e.g. Canal and Rivers Trust).
- 4.12 Saddington Reservoir in the centre of the District is a canal reservoir. The larger Eyebrook Reservoir lies on the eastern border and Stanford and Welford reservoirs lie on the southern border.
- 4.13 Further analysis of Harborough's blue infrastructure can be found in Chapter 5, Principle 4: Understanding and managing water.

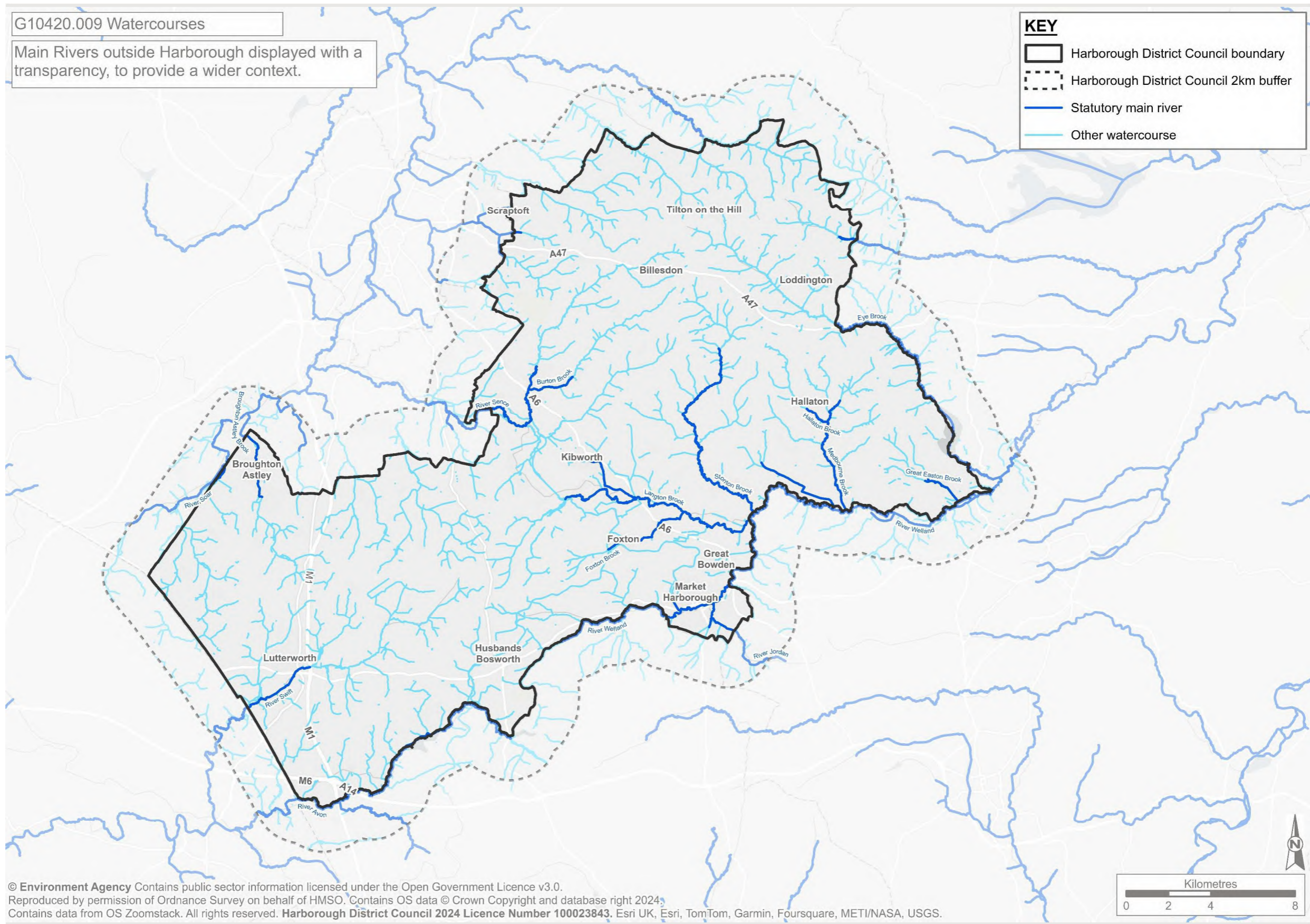
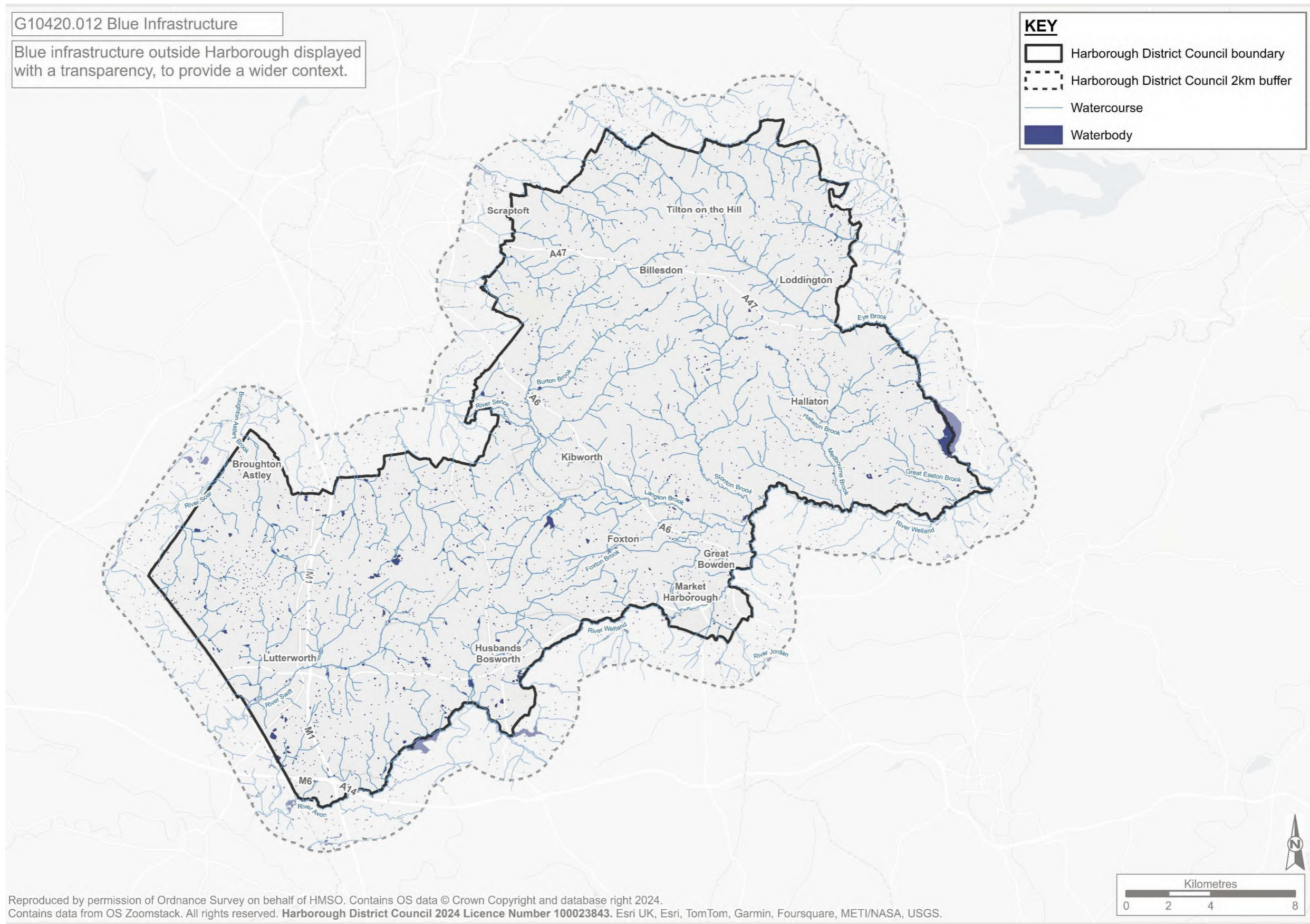


Figure 10: watercourses within Harborough District

G10420.012 Blue Infrastructure

Blue infrastructure outside Harborough displayed with a transparency, to provide a wider context.



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Figure 11: Existing Blue Infrastructure

G10420.014 Accessible Waterside

Accessible waterside data taken from Natural England's Green Infrastructure web map: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Map.aspx>

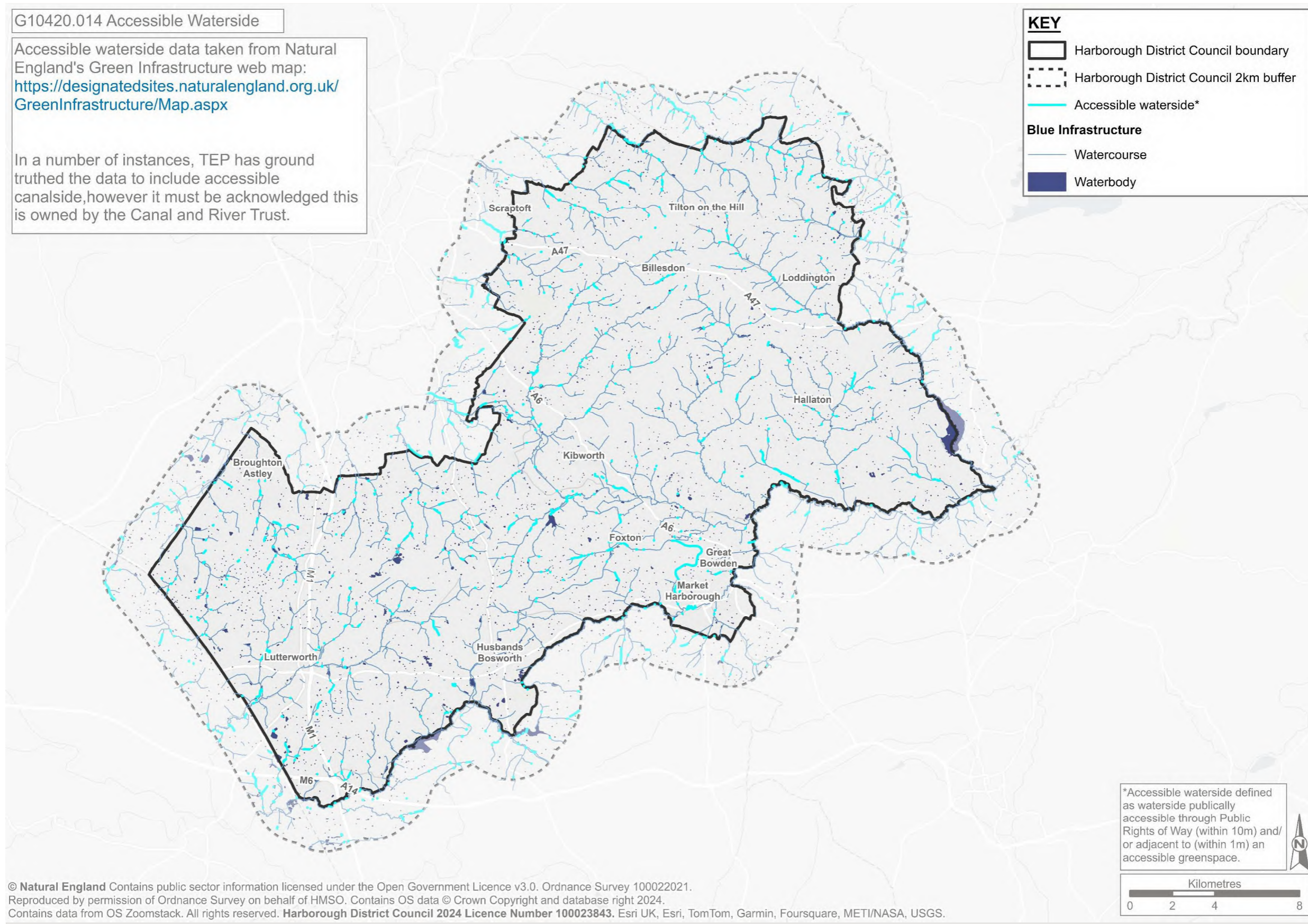
In a number of instances, TEP has ground truthed the data to include accessible canalside, however it must be acknowledged this is owned by the Canal and River Trust.

KEY

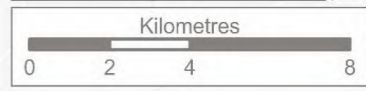
- Harborough District Council boundary
- Harborough District Council 2km buffer
- Accessible waterside*

Blue Infrastructure

- Watercourse
- Waterbody



*Accessible waterside defined as waterside publically accessible through Public Rights of Way (within 10m) and/or adjacent to (within 1m) an accessible greenspace.



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Figure 12: Accessible Waterside

Accessible Open Spaces

- 4.14 The Harborough District Open Spaces Strategy⁹ (TEP ref: 8202.008) maps all open space typologies and provides an assessment of open space standards for quantity, quality, value and accessibility.
- 4.15 The following accessible open space typologies are most relevant to this Study due to their scale and potential to provide multiple GBI functions such as water management, recreation space and biodiversity support:
- Amenity Greenspace;
 - Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces; and
 - Parks and Gardens
- 4.16 Figure 13 shows existing open spaces and Figure 14 shows accessible open space in the District. Figures 15-16 provide further detail of accessible open spaces in Lutterworth, Market Harborough and Scraftoft, three of the more populous towns in the District which are under most pressure from development.
- 4.17 Table 2 shows Harborough’s provision in hectares per 1,000 population of the three main types of open space discussed in this report. They are split to show distribution across the east, centre and west of the District. Further analysis is conducted in Chapter 5 under principle 2: active, healthy places.

Table 2: Open space provision by sub-area

Open Space Typology	Provision across District (ha/1,000)	Provision across east sub-area (ha/1,000)	Provision across middle sub-area (ha/1,000)	Provision across west sub-area (ha/1,000)
Amenity Greenspace	1.17	0.9	1.21	0.97
Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces	9.29	8.5	1.95	3.19
Parks and Gardens	0.41	0.8	0.23	0.31

⁹ Harborough District Open Spaces Strategy

G10420.022 Open Spaces

Data taken from Open Space Assessment 2021. The following typologies are not displayed due to their size and context in a Green Blue Infrastructure setting:

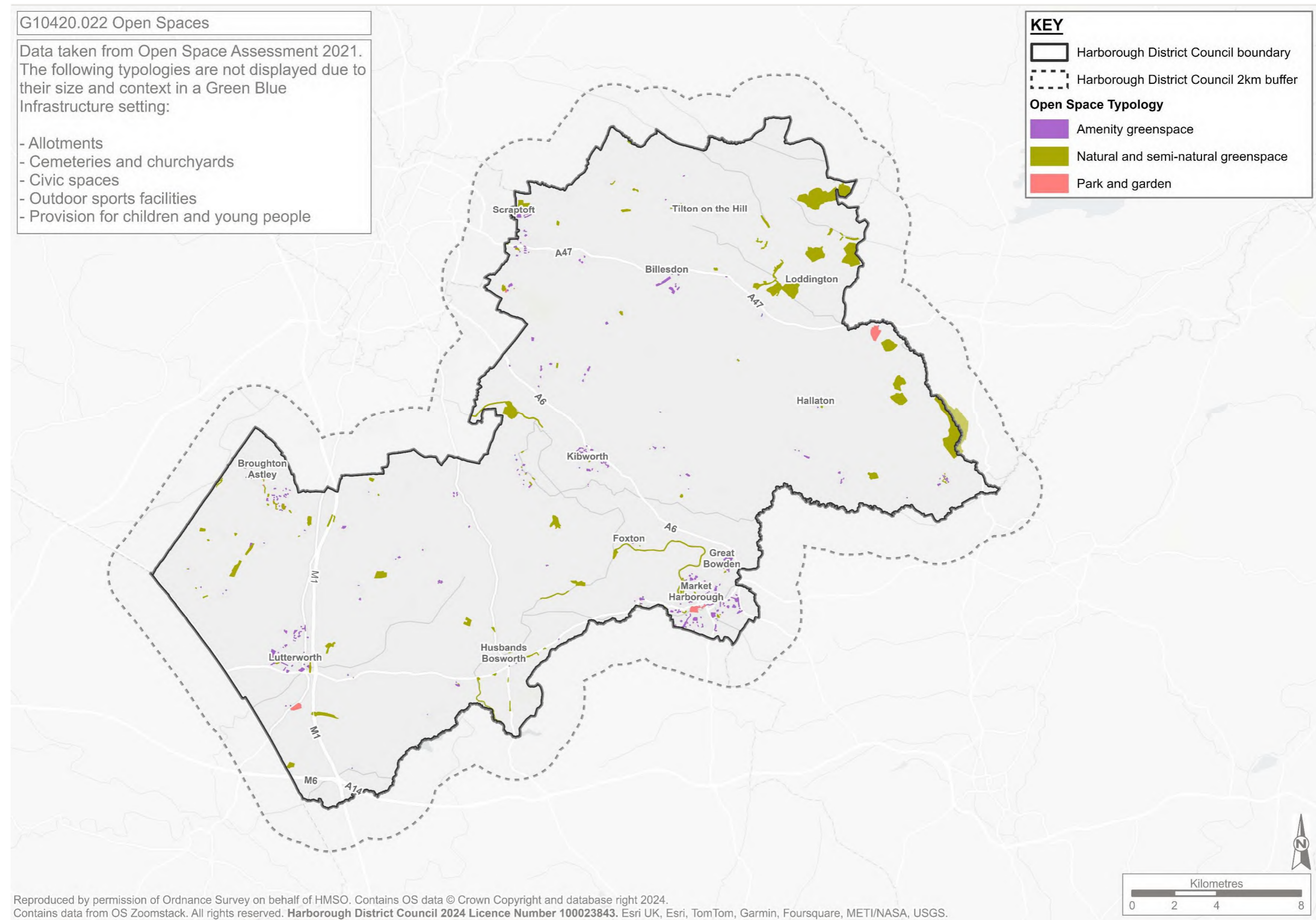
- Allotments
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Civic spaces
- Outdoor sports facilities
- Provision for children and young people

KEY

- Harborough District Council boundary
- Harborough District Council 2km buffer

Open Space Typology

- Amenity greenspace
- Natural and semi-natural greenspace
- Park and garden



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Figure 13: Existing open spaces

G10420.023.1 Accessible Open Space

Accessible woodland and green infrastructure data taken from Natural England's Green Infrastructure web map: <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Map.aspx>

Other accessible open spaces taken from Open Space Assessment 2021. The following typologies are not displayed due to their size and context in a Green Blue Infrastructure setting:

- Allotments
- Cemeteries and churchyards
- Civic spaces
- Outdoor sports facilities
- Provision for children and young people

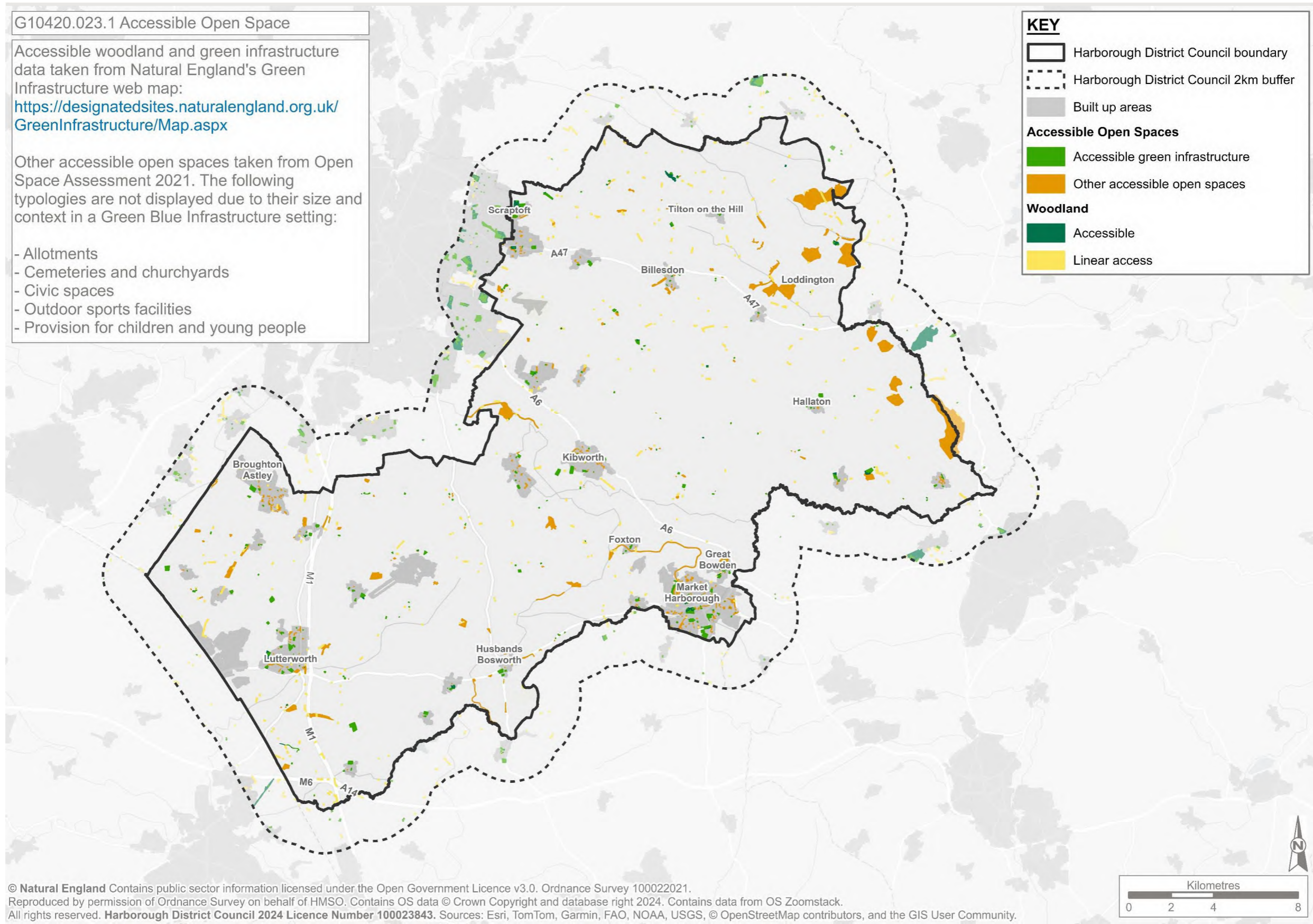


Figure 14: Accessible open spaces

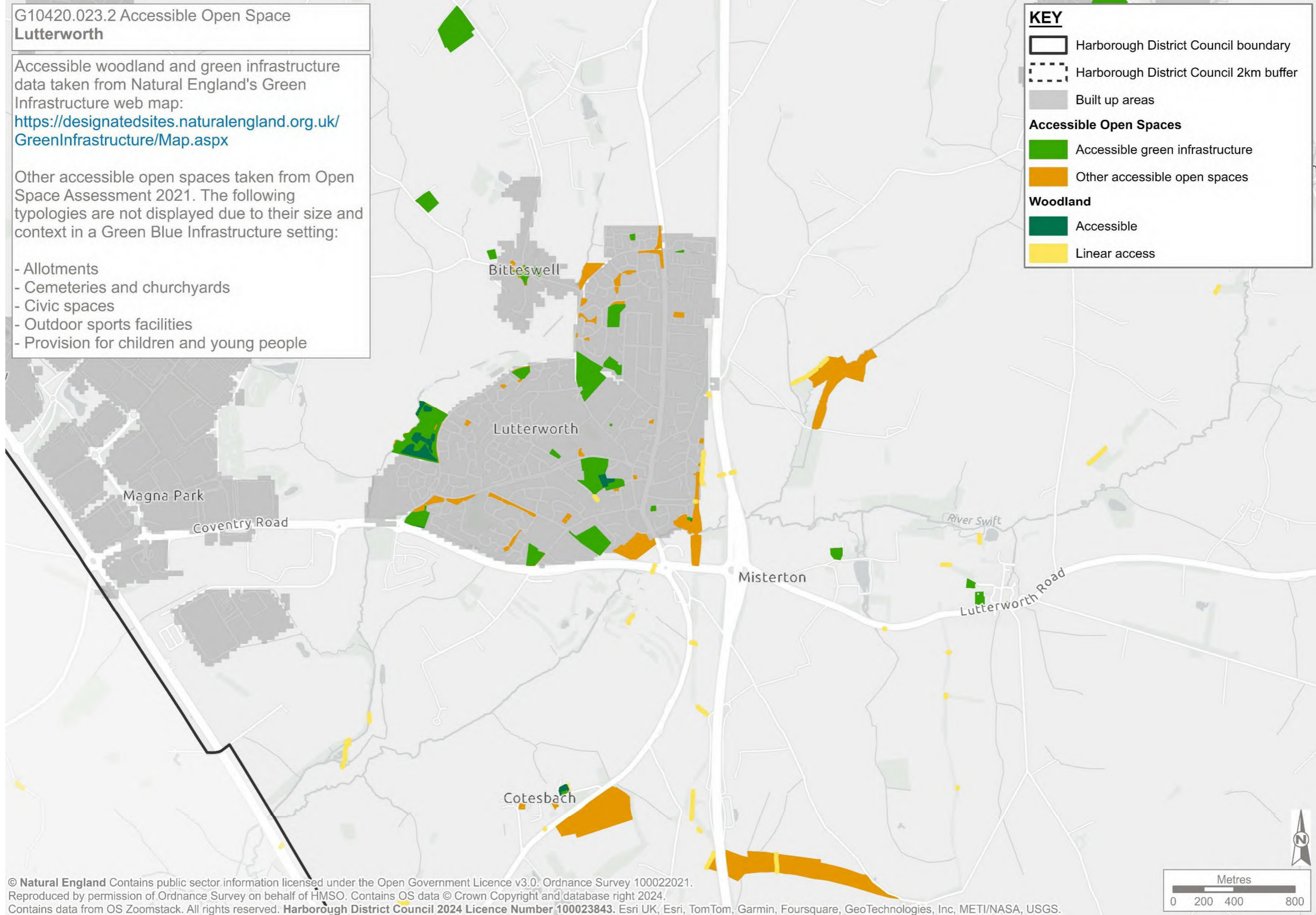


Figure 15: Accessible open spaces - Lutterworth

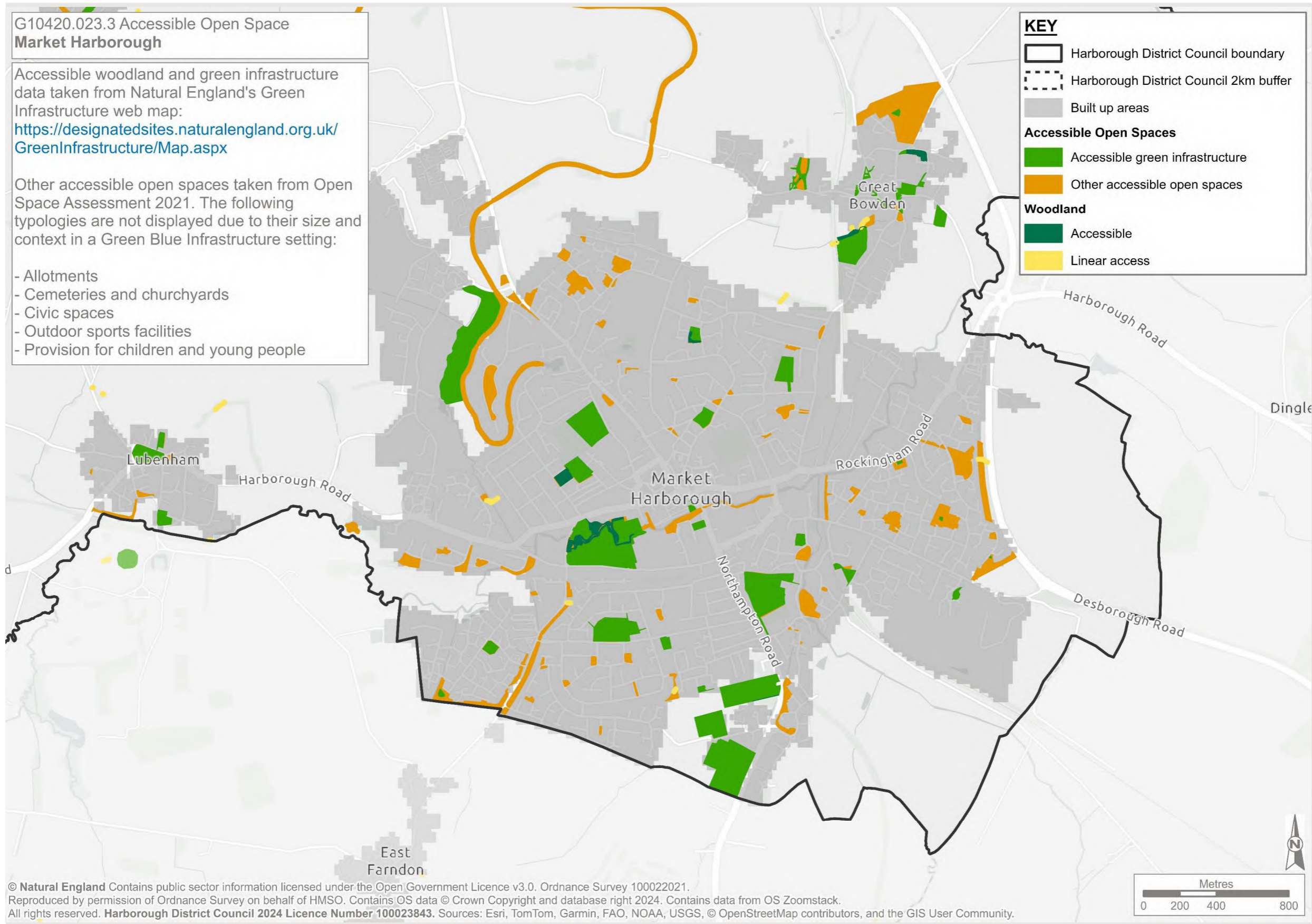


Figure 16: Accessible open spaces – Market Harborough

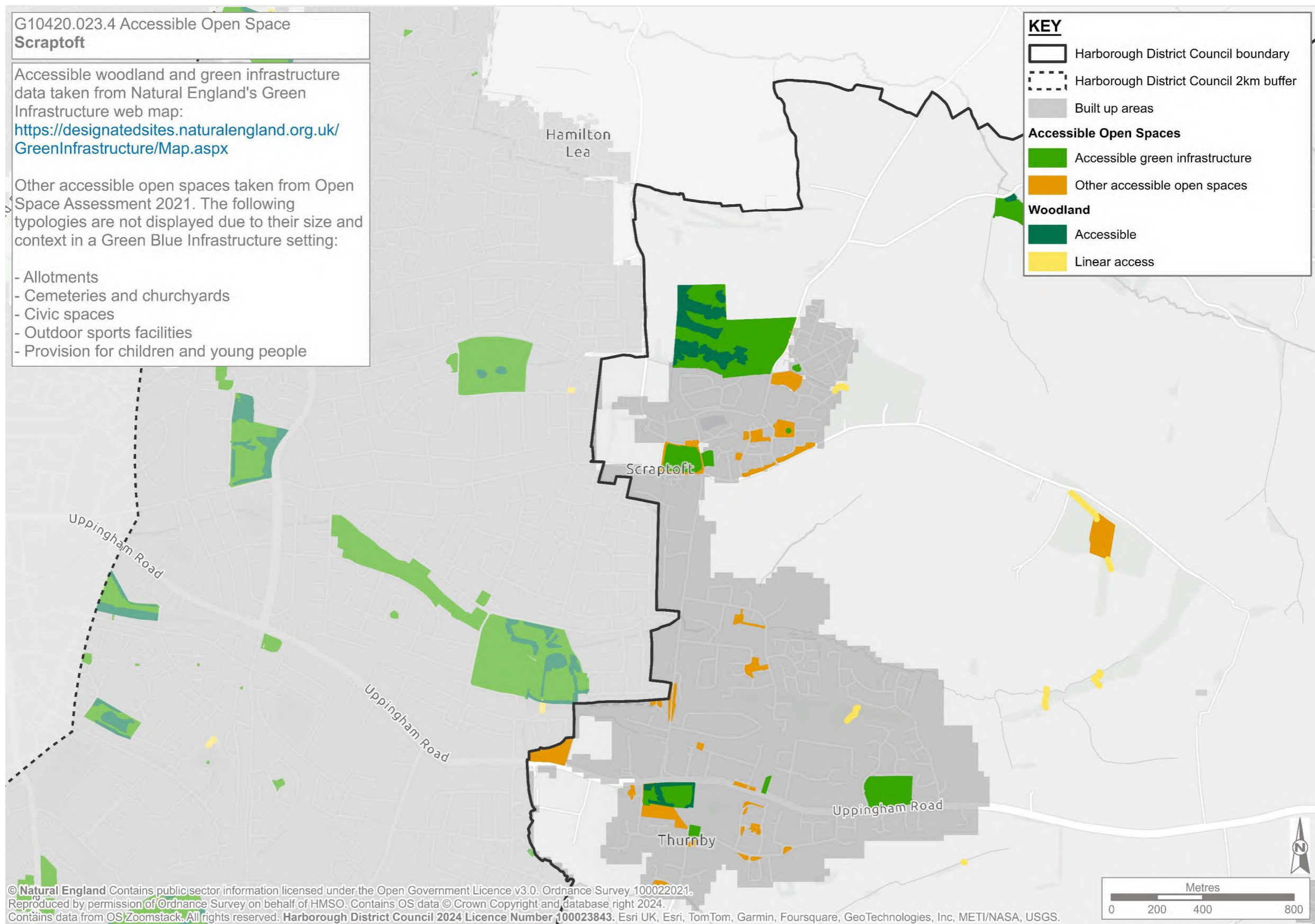


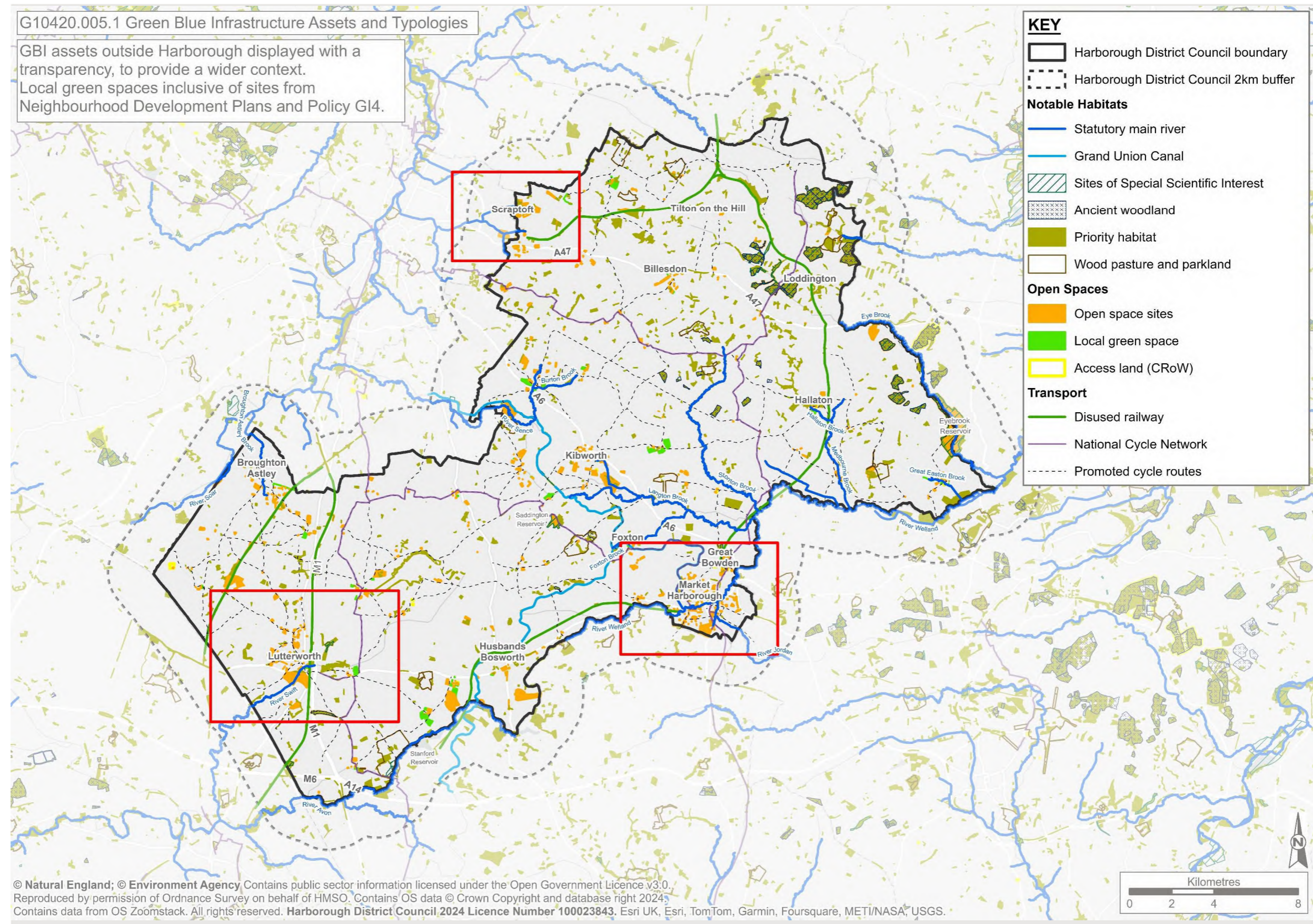
Figure 17: Accessible open spaces – Scraptoft

GBI Assets and Typologies

- 4.18 The principal GBI Assets and Typologies are mapped across the District in Figure 18. The principal assets are the District's:
- Watercourses and waterways, notably the Grand Union Canal (GUC) and the catchments of the Rivers Welland, Sence, Soar, Swift and Avon;
 - Saddington, Stanford and Eyebrook reservoirs;
 - Ancient woodland;
 - Priority habitats;
 - Wood pasture and parkland;
 - Open space sites;
 - Local Green Spaces;
 - Local Wildlife Sites;
 - Statutory designated sites;
 - Access land (Countryside Rights of Way - CRoW);
 - Dismantled Railway lines; and
 - Long-distance recreational paths and bridleways.
- 4.19 From this baseline, Chapter 5 will examine the performance of Harborough's GBI following Natural England's five 'Why' Principles and taking into account insights from the policy review and stakeholder consultation.
- 4.20 There are many local GBI initiatives underway across Harborough District which are related to GBI. Some of these are captured in Table 3 to provide a picture of how much work is already in progress. Initiatives are categorised according to their geographic and thematic scope.

G10420.005.1 Green Blue Infrastructure Assets and Typologies

GBI assets outside Harborough displayed with a transparency, to provide a wider context. Local green spaces inclusive of sites from Neighbourhood Development Plans and Policy GI4.



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Figure 18: GBI Assets and Typologies

Table 3 Existing GBI Initiatives in Harborough

Initiative	Scope/ Location	Nature rich beautiful places	Active and healthy places	Thriving and prosperous places	Improved water management	Climate resilient places
Leicestershire Urban Verges Wildlife Project The Leicestershire Urban Verge Biodiversity Project is a partnership initiative, led by Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) and supported by NatureSpot. The project gives parish councils the opportunity to take over the management of selected verges in their area in order to improve them for wildlife ¹⁰ .	Leicestershire					
Leicestershire Tree Charter The Tree Charter sets out LCC's intent to continue preserving and enhancing its trees and woodlands for the benefit and enjoyment of county residents and visitors ¹¹ .	Leicestershire					

¹⁰ Leicestershire Urban Verge Wildlife Project | NatureSpot

¹¹ Tree charter and our tree management strategy | Leicestershire County Council

Initiative	Scope/ Location	Nature rich beautiful places	Active and healthy places	Thriving and prosperous places	Improved water management	Climate resilient places
<p>Tree Management Strategy (2020-2025) LCC’s strategy for managing its trees and woodlands up to 2025 and forms an important part of its approach to carbon reduction and net zero ambitions. The strategy also recognises the potential impact of significant diseases such as ash dieback, highlighting the action needed to minimise the effects on LCC’s trees¹².</p>	Leicestershire					
<p>James Adler Reserve (Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (LRWT) led) Creation of a new 50-acre nature reserve near Market Harborough. The nature reserve will be managed by Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.</p>	Market Harborough and Great Bowden					

¹² Tree charter and our tree management strategy | Leicestershire County Council

Initiative	Scope/ Location	Nature rich beautiful places	Active and healthy places	Thriving and prosperous places	Improved water management	Climate resilient places
Greener Golf UK Since 2021, several golf clubs have worked together with Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust to discuss and share ideas on how golf clubs can meet their growing environmental challenges together. Most of the golf clubs in the area have been involved in one way or another ¹³ .	Leicestershire					
Leighfield Forest Living Landscape Project (LRWT) The project focuses on the ancient woodlands (some managed by the LRWT) in Leighfield Forest that have become increasingly isolated from one another through activities such as hedgerow removal. LRWT has successfully lobbied for Forestry Commission funding to assist the creation of new woodlands to link the old ones together ¹⁴ .	Leicestershire and Rutland					

¹³ The Greener Golf Group | Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

¹⁴ Living Landscapes | Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust

Initiative	Scope/ Location	Nature rich beautiful places	Active and healthy places	Thriving and prosperous places	Improved water management	Climate resilient places
Harborough Woodland Tree Planting, NFM and Flood Hubs Harborough Woodland is a volunteer group which started in 2020. As well as planting over 34,000 trees, the group has also instigated 12 large-area natural flood management schemes ¹⁵ .	Harborough District					
Leicester Urban Natural Flood Management Project The project aims to improve the Willow Brook catchment in partnership with LCC using Environment Agency funding ¹⁶ .	Leicestershire					

¹⁵ Harborough Woodland - About - Harborough Woodland

¹⁶ Funding secured for natural flood management scheme

Initiative	Scope/ Location	Nature rich beautiful places	Active and healthy places	Thriving and prosperous places	Improved water management	Climate resilient places
<p>Welland Valley Partnership Five Year Catchment Plan 2022-2027</p> <p>The Welland Valley Partnership (WVP) was formed in 2011 through the collaboration of statutory organisations, local authorities, private businesses and charities to identify the pressures on the River Welland catchment and take steps to address them together. The Plan lists features 31 projects, some of which range from river restoration and habitat creation or preservation to engagement and building evidence¹⁷.</p>	<p>River Welland Catchment.</p>					

¹⁷ Welland Valley Partnership – Five Year Catchment Plan 2022 -2027

Initiative	Scope/ Location	Nature rich beautiful places	Active and healthy places	Thriving and prosperous places	Improved water management	Climate resilient places
Leicestershire non-native species initiative (LINNSI) The LCC project focuses around the River Soar in Melton, Harborough and Rutland, and the River Wreake in Melton, to collect data on the spread of invasive species which pose a threat to local wildlife and habitats – including the extent and distribution of invasive species. The information gathered will be used to create plans for the control of invasive species and to prevent them spreading further ¹⁸ .	Leicestershire and Rutland					
Active Together - Harborough Aims to promote participation and opportunities in physical activity, sport and healthy lifestyles throughout the District. It supports people to improve their physical and mental wellbeing ¹⁹ . The website signposts to opportunities for exercise and many of these use Harborough’s GBI resource, including walking group sessions.	Harborough District					

¹⁸ Wildlife boost as projects get almost £27,000 to tackle invasive species | Leicestershire County Council

¹⁹ Active Together Harborough — Home

Initiative	Scope/ Location	Nature rich beautiful places	Active and healthy places	Thriving and prosperous places	Improved water management	Climate resilient places
The Allerton Project The project researches the effects of different farming methods on wildlife and the environment, sharing results of their research through advisory and educational activities. This is undertaken on a 320 hectare demonstration farm in Leicestershire ²⁰ .	Leicestershire and Rutland					
Sustainable Harborough Community Sustainable Harborough Community is a collaboration of communities and individuals coming together to make a difference in matters of sustainability, climate change, and all things 'Green' ²¹ .	Harborough District					
Community Magic Community Magic is the collaboration of volunteer and interest groups to create and mobilise volunteering opportunities to deliver community projects ²² .	Market Harborough					

20 The Allerton Project | Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust

21 Sustainability | Sustainable Harborough Community | England

22 Harborough's community magic

5.0 Local Priorities ('Why' Principles)

Local priorities for GBI

5.1 This chapter provides an analysis of Harborough's GBI by examining the current provision in line with Natural England's five 'Why' Principles – see Figure 19. The NE guidance outlines strategic and local priorities for each of the 'Why' principles, which are repeated at the start of each section. For each principle a summary of the headline points from a review of current local policy and local consultation feedback is presented to give a picture of local priorities against each theme. NE's strategic points are then followed, and additional details derived from mapping is interrogated to establish how Harborough's landscape is delivering the social, economic and environmental functions.

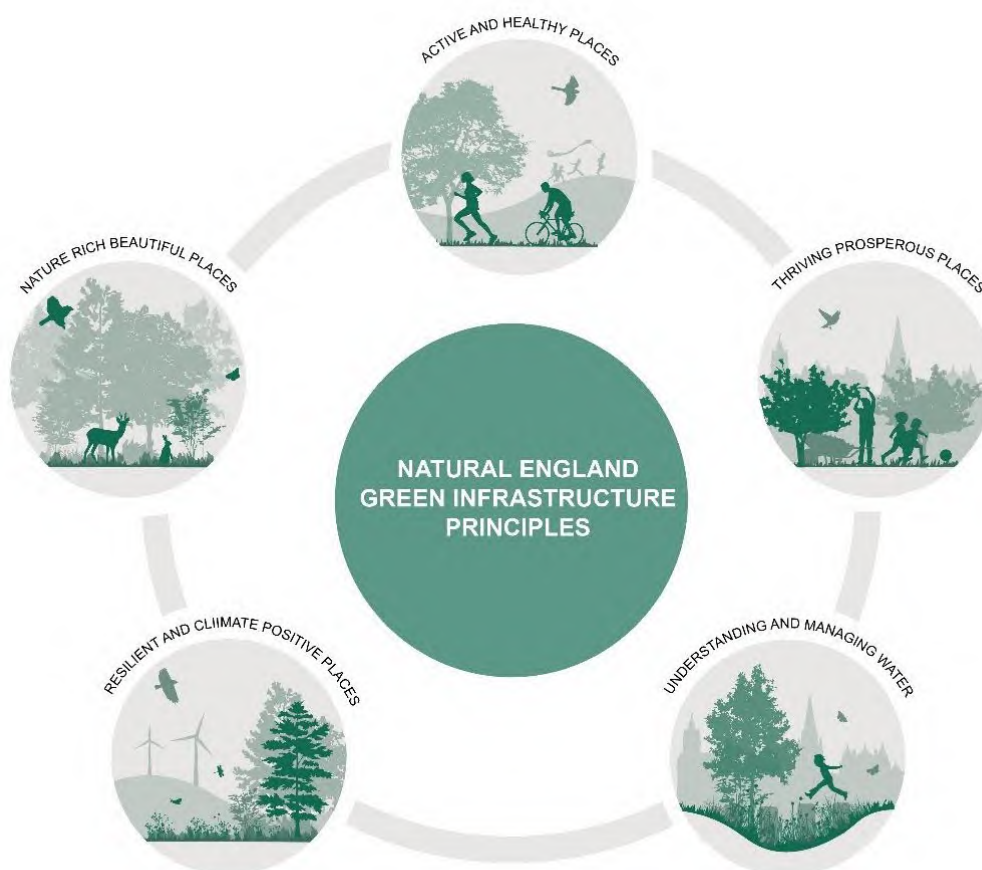


Figure 19: Natural England's 'Why' Principles for GBI

Principle 1 Nature-rich and beautiful places

Vision

Harborough District's GBI supports nature to recover and thrive across the District, conserving and enhancing natural beauty, wildlife and habitats, geology and soils. A joined-up approach to management of GBI will increase connectivity of habitats and overall biodiversity and celebrate our connections with nature.

Natural England Strategic level goals

To achieve thriving and prosperous communities at a strategic level GBI should:

- Integrate with LNRS and seek to contribute to the Nature Recovery Network and to national targets to create and restore wildlife rich habitats and to protect at least 30% of land.
- Create and strengthen networks of habitats and reduce fragmentation
- Help deliver Biodiversity Net Gain requirements
- Contribute to cross species objectives such as pollinator strategies
- Help achieve targeted individual species recovery
- Maintain and enhance geodiversity assets
- Prevent and reduce soil degradation and loss
- Be designed to deliver multiple benefits including landscapes that have a distinct sense of place

Headlines from Policy Review

- National policy and guidance require support and enhancement for resilient ecological networks, biodiversity net gain, aiming to leave nature in a better position than we found it.
- Harborough's Corporate Plan aims to provide housing that meets local needs while respecting the local rural character and enhancing and protecting local spaces.
- The HDC Local Plan 2011-2031 asserts that the natural environment will be protected, maintained and enhanced and that ecological networks are important for wildlife connectivity. Policy GI5 safeguards nationally and locally designated biodiversity sites from development.
- The current Local Plan also includes policies to protect Landscape Character (GD5), Areas of Separation (GD6) and Green Wedges (GD7).

- Some areas in central parts of the district may have more biodiversity value than indicated by habitat and designated site mapping.

Headlines from Stakeholder Engagement

- The LNRS for Leicestershire and Rutland is due in summer 2025 and will set out detailed, mapped habitat protection, enhancement and creation opportunities and priorities for Harborough.
- Harborough is perceived as having the lowest biodiversity in the Midlands.
- A high proportion of existing SSSIs are in good condition.
- Canals and disused railways offer great opportunities for wildlife connectivity.
- Leighfield Living Forest Landscape project in the northeast is reconnecting fragments of an ancient forest landscape.
- Nature Conservation organisations should be financially supported to create more connected habitats.
- Harborough needs good quality connected habitats more than lots of extra quantity – ‘right habitat, right place’.
- Farmers need support to set aside more land for nature conservation.

Nature Conservation

- 5.2 Figure 8 shows statutory and local ecological and geodiversity designations. Figure 8 shows notable habitats across the District. There are 18 SSSIs and 2 Local Nature Reserves. Agricultural land and grassland cover 39% and 47% land respectively, with over 7% of land comprising urban areas and private gardens, and 5% woodland.
- 5.3 Much of the woodland habitat is concentrated in the northeast of the District, including the remnants of the medieval Leighfield forest. Other small areas of ancient woodland are found on the hills around Gumley, and Shawell Wood is bisected by the M1 motorway near Cotesbach, south of Lutterworth.
- 5.4 Eye Brook runs through five SSSIs in the northeastern uplands of the District on its way to the confluence with the River Welland, including ancient woodland areas of Leighfield forest, and the Eyebrook Reservoir. Harborough District hosts the Leicestershire arm of the Grand Union Canal (GUC), and the Kilby to Foxton Canal is a SSSI.
- 5.5 Most of the woodland areas in the northeastern hills are less easily accessed from the district’s two largest settlements of Market Harborough and Lutterworth, although Market Harborough is closer to ancient woodland areas in Northamptonshire towards across to Corby.

- 5.6 The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2026²³ (LBAP) provides action plans for 16 priority species: barn owl; bats; black hairstreak butterfly; black poplar; dingy and grizzled skipper butterflies; dormouse; nightingale; otter; purple small-reed; redstart; sand martin; violet; helleborine; water vole; white-clawed crayfish; wood vetch; swifts; swallows and house martins.
- 5.7 The LBAP acknowledges a national long-term decline of UK Biodiversity Indicators since 1970. On a more local level, it notes that the main reasons for decline in biodiversity in Leicestershire and Rutland are:
- Modern farming methods (discussed under principle 3);
 - Development (discussed under principle 3);
 - Recreational activities (discussed under principle 2);
 - Drainage schemes (discussed under principle 4); and
 - Tidying up and destruction of rough ground and 'brownfield' land (discussed below at section 5.10).
- 5.8 The LBAP guidelines on habitat creation recommend three broad categories of habitat: Wetland for areas which regularly flood, woodland, and open land. New habitat can be used to create a buffer to protect existing areas of high value, and to connect nearby fragments of habitat.
- 5.9 The LNRS is planning to highlight eight main habitat types in Leicestershire and Rutland, of which the first four are the highest priority:
- Woodland and forest;
 - Grassland;
 - Urban;
 - Freshwater;
 - Agricultural;
 - Geodiversity;
 - Open mosaic; and
 - Nature corridors.
- 5.10 Open mosaic habitat (OMH) can be present in brownfield land where there is disturbed ground, ruderal or sparse vegetation. OMH provides critical habitat for pollinators and rare species.

23 BAP space for wildlife part 1 (lrwt.org.uk)

- 5.11 The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Quality Assessment (2020, updated 2022 to include Rutland)²⁴ measures positive and negative indicators of biodiversity from aerial imagery taken 2015-2017. It identifies some biodiversity 'hotspots' in rural areas of Harborough District, including the Leighfield living landscape, and an area in southwest Harborough.
- 5.12 South-west Harborough (south and west of the Kilby-Foxton SSSI section of the GUC bordered by SSSI sites in Misterton, Saddington reservoir and by Laughton Hills) has high landscape diversity and a reasonably robust hedgerow and tree network. Although it has no formal designation, this southwestern area was highlighted in consultation as a priority area for nature recovery. As work on the LNRS develops, this area should be explored to identify potential sites for ecological designation and countryside stewardship.
- 5.13 The area northwest of Leighfield Forest from Billesdon to the border with Melton also has species-rich grassland on steeply sloping pastureland. There are Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) in this area but no SSSI designations.
- 5.14 LRWT is working with the Forestry Commission to restore and reconnect the remaining fragments of ancient woodland which was once a medieval hunting forest. This will form part of a network of 'Living Landscapes' across Leicestershire and Rutland.

²⁴ Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland biodiversity quality assessment report

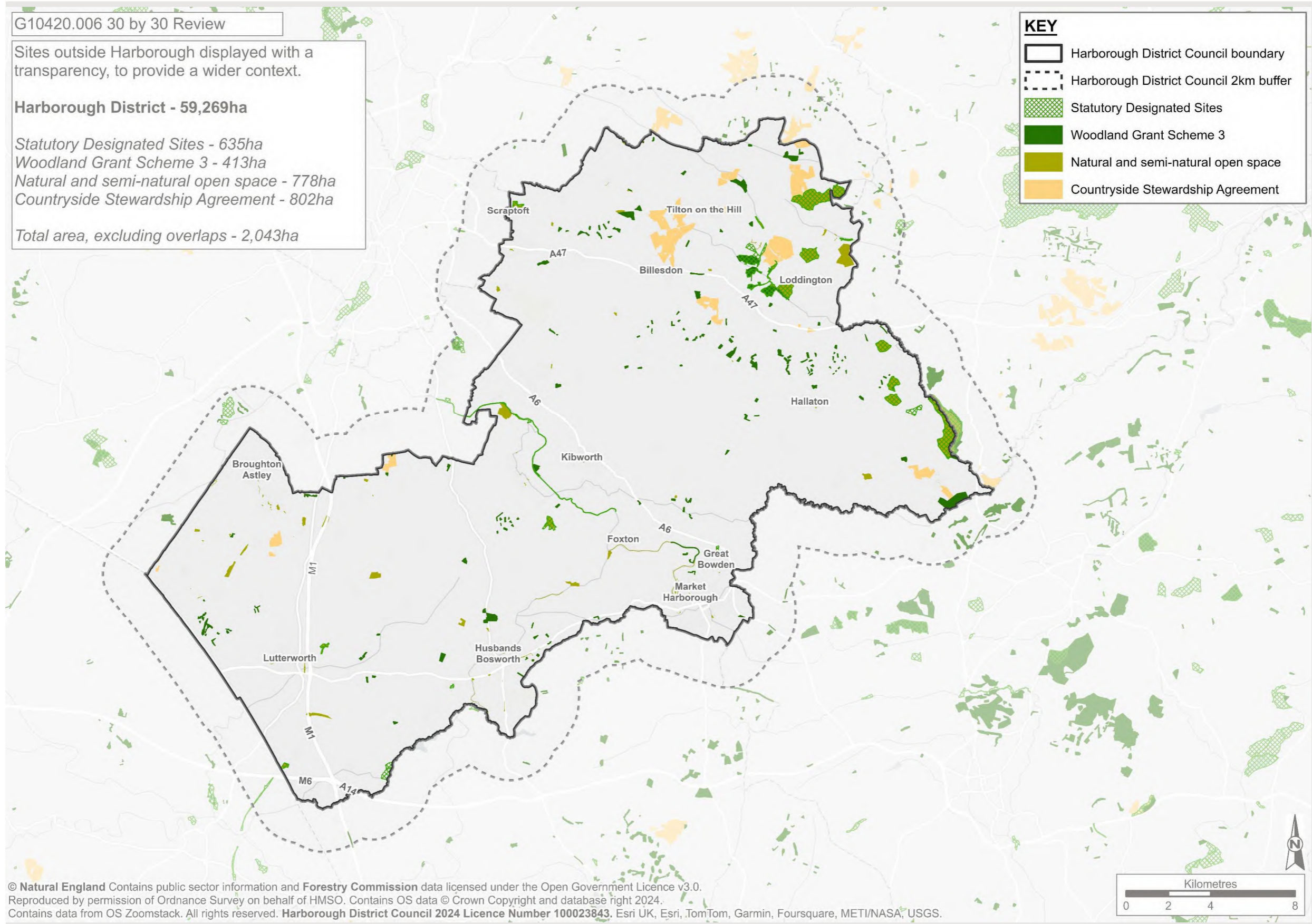


Figure 20: "30 by 30" Review

Managing sites to deliver the '30 by 30' goal

- 5.15 Political leaders participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity in 2020, including the UK, committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. One expression of this commitment is the "30 by 30" goal which is to see at least 30% of land protected and managed for nature by 2030.
- 5.16 Target 3 in the United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)²⁵ identifies two categories of land which can count towards the 30%. These are:
- 'Protected Areas' which should have particular importance for biodiversity and be effectively managed and conserved for nature; and
 - 'Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measure' (OECM) which is an area other than a Protected Area which is governed and managed in ways that achieve positive long term outcomes for biodiversity and associated ecosystem services and networks.
- 5.17 In October 2024, DEFRA published 'Delivering 30 by 30 on land in England'²⁶ which provides guidance on types of land that may be included. To qualify for the 30 by 30 goal, sites must comply with three categories of criteria covering purpose, protection and management.
- 5.18 To meet the purpose criterion, the site should have biodiversity protection as its main purpose to qualify as a 'protected area' even if it has other secondary objectives. Alternatively, it may have protection of nature as a secondary objective, as long as the primary purpose does not conflict with this. Then it could count as an OECM.
- 5.19 To meet the protection criterion, the area must be effectively protected from loss or damage to biodiversity, legally or otherwise; for at least 20 years.
- 5.20 The management criteria cover requirements for governance, management plans, monitoring, evidence of long-term sustainability and wildlife value.
- 5.21 The publication describes types of site and designation currently considered as counting towards the 30 by 30 goal, and further areas with the potential to count:

²⁵ Target 3 (cbd.int)

²⁶ 30by30 on land in England: confirmed criteria and next steps - GOV.UK

- Designations currently counting towards 30 by 30 include SSSI, National Nature Reserves (NNR), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites. Woodland areas that are protected and managed for biodiversity such as the public forest estate are also included.
- Areas considered as potential sites for 30 by 30 include priority habitat and some additional woodland areas, LNRs and Country Parks, Natural World Heritage Sites, National Parks, National Landscapes, Nature Recovery Projects (NRPs) and farmland within any of the above under appropriate management.
- Further nationally unmapped areas with potential to be included for 30 by 30 are Landscape Recovery Projects, land under appropriate agri-environment schemes, LWSs, and other private or public estate such as environmental NGO estate or BNG 'habitat banks'. Government will set out criteria for formally identifying these 'OECM's that count towards 30 by 30.

5.22 Land in Harborough has been examined for compliance with the three types of criteria listed above to build a clearer picture of the potential for nature recovery.

5.23 These areas can then be targeted to contribute to larger scale nature restoration by:

- Strengthening: ensure effective policy and statutory powers are in place to improve management for nature and ensure appropriate access for nature
- Extending and creating: designate new protected areas and restore or create additional habitats outside of these
- Investing: invest in habitat creation both within and beyond protected areas

5.24 Table 4 shows the areas of land in the District that could currently towards the goal, along with nature recovery tactics for each category. Figure 20 shows these areas.

Table 4: Nature Recovery Tactics towards the '30 by 30' goal

Type of Land	Current Area (hectares)	Nature recovery tactics
Counts towards 30x30 goal (SSSI, NNR, SPA, SAC, Ramsar, public forest estate)	1,048	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assess condition of all sites. ■ Set target and plan for all sites to achieve and maintain 'good' condition. ■ Strengthen policy and statutory protections where appropriate. ■ Consider potential to extend or connect existing sites or provide buffers.

Type of Land	Current Area (hectares)	Nature recovery tactics
Potential to count towards 30x30 goal (priority habitat, LNRs, Country Parks, NWHS, NP, NL, NRP, LWS, agri-environment schemes) NB environmental NGO estates and BNG habitat banks could also qualify but the areas of these are unknown.	1,580	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assess condition and biodiversity value of sites. ■ Review management plans and governance for compliance with target 3 criteria. ■ Determine potential for increase statutory protection. ■ Consider options to extended qualifying areas.

- 5.25 The total area of the District is 59,269ha, the current proportion of land that will count towards the 30 by 30 goal is 1.8%, and the proportion that could count is 2.7%.
- 5.26 After discounting overlaps between areas in the above categories, the total area that could currently contribute towards 30 by 30 is 2,043 ha (3.4% of the District).
- 5.27 To achieve 30% coverage in the District, land protected for nature would need to increase by 15,738ha. This is not realistic nor necessary given that other parts of the country have much more semi-natural land and can contribute more towards the target. However, it is vital that Harborough is ambitious for nature recovery which will mean safeguarding and enhancing all existing sites of biodiversity value, bringing their buffer zones into positive management and taking every opportunity to increase the extent of land protected and managed for nature e.g. through environmentally friendly open space management, farming and development-related BNG.
- 5.28 Accepting that 30% is not feasible, even if Harborough aims to achieve 10% of its land contributing to the 30 by 30 target, a further 3,884 hectares of land would need to be brought under biodiversity-friendly management.
- 5.29 The emerging LNRS will provide more detail on where and how improvements to land management, extensions of biodiversity core areas and connections between them will be of most benefit for nature recovery. The LNRS is a county process which sits alongside the national effort to identify and promote 30 by 30 land. In other words, the LNRS will identify areas and types of land in Leicestershire where nature recovery is of most benefit and the 30 by 30 process will provide another way of recognising and supporting landowners in dedicating their land for nature recovery.

Strengthening and De-fragmenting Ecological Networks

- 5.30 Ecological networks comprise GBI with biodiversity importance and include:
- Core areas - statutory sites and locally designated sites of nature conservation value, ancient woodland, waterbodies and priority habitats and their buffers;
 - Linear corridors – green infrastructure within flood zones 2 and 3; and
 - Watercourse corridors – watercourses and their buffers.
- 5.31 Fragmentation of these ecological networks, through habitat loss, results in a loss of connectivity and affects overall biodiversity and resilience to climate change. Opportunities to strengthen our ecological networks may come through GBI associated with development.
- 5.32 Figure 18 shows GBI assets in the District, from which it is possible to derive the core areas for protection. Core areas are existing protected statutory and non-statutory sites of nature conservation, irreplaceable and priority habitats such as ancient woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, waterbodies, semi-natural grassland, heath land and scrub, and floodplain priority habitats, plus a 50m buffer around them. These would be priority areas for management and expansion of existing habitats.
- 5.33 Figure 21 shows biodiversity connectivity, including core areas and buffers, overlaid with nature corridors such as disused railways and rivers, and floodplains.
- 5.34 Given the importance of watercourses for ecological connectivity, and the associated water management benefits, the map also shows flood zones which do not have any core areas or associated buffers. For this study, these are classified as “nature-poor watercourse corridors” due to the current absence of priority habitats and nature conservation management agreements.
- 5.35 River floodplains along the Burton Brook, Langton Brook and Stonton Brook are noticeable for having few GBI assets and can be considered nature-poor corridors. These should be a priority for creation of new habitats.
- 5.36 Habitats created on flood plains are often high in biodiversity. For example, meadows attract pollinators, ground nesting birds such as lapwing and mammals that favour the riparian corridor. Habitat creation on flood plains ensure the most appropriate use of land where development and sealed surfaces are not often practical or suitable.
- 5.37 Creation of floodplain habitats such as pools, wet woodlands and grasslands, or even fencing out sections of riverbank to allow natural regeneration will improve connectivity and contribute to GBI principle 4 “Improved Water Management”.

- 5.38 Such habitat creation can usually be accommodated in a sustainable farming initiative since floodplain land is less suitable for arable cultivation; and livestock access to water can be maintained. Public access routes alongside watercourses can sometimes conflict with floodplain restoration and livestock management, so collaborative approaches to detailed design and routing will be needed. Public access to waterways should be focussed on canals and reservoirs close to residential areas, optimising the accessibility for the widest range of users.
- 5.39 Figure 8 shows Harborough's major roads, the M1, A6 and A47, cut across the landscape creating fragmented habitat areas and barriers for wildlife. Where roads are crossed by rivers or disused railways, these crossings could be managed and adapted to incorporate wildlife-friendly alterations to support wildlife migration wherever possible.
- 5.40 'Green bridges' can be built to provide a place for wildlife to cross over busy roads. They are more common in continental Europe and North America, but there are a few examples in the UK. One was completed in 2005 in Kent, and another in London crossing the A11²⁷. These support wildlife and reduce traffic accidents, so for best effect they should consider data on wildlife related traffic accidents as well as LNRS priorities²⁸.
- 5.41 Recognising the importance of the linear nature of highways for wildlife, Leicestershire Urban Verge Wildlife Project is a scheme that LCC is leading with a partnership including NatureSpot, a local charity that engages the community in discovering and recording local wildlife. They have produced information including a toolkit for local communities and parishes to assess and improve the wildlife value of roadside verges.
- 5.42 Policy for ecological networks would include support for measures to bring core areas and buffer zones into a management system with biodiversity as a primary or secondary objective (see 30 by 30 definitions above); and to promote river and floodplain restoration in the "nature-poor corridors" (Figure 21) taking opportunity to maintain and enhance public access, using collaborative design approaches to resolve potential conflicts with nature recovery and rural land management where possible.

27 Green Bridges: A literature review - NECR181

28 Green bridges: safer travel for wildlife - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

G10420.029.1 Biodiversity Connectivity

Core areas are statutory sites and locally designated sites of nature conservation value, ancient woodland, waterbodies and priority habitats. Core areas have been buffered by 50m.







Linear corridors consist of flood zones 2 and 3.

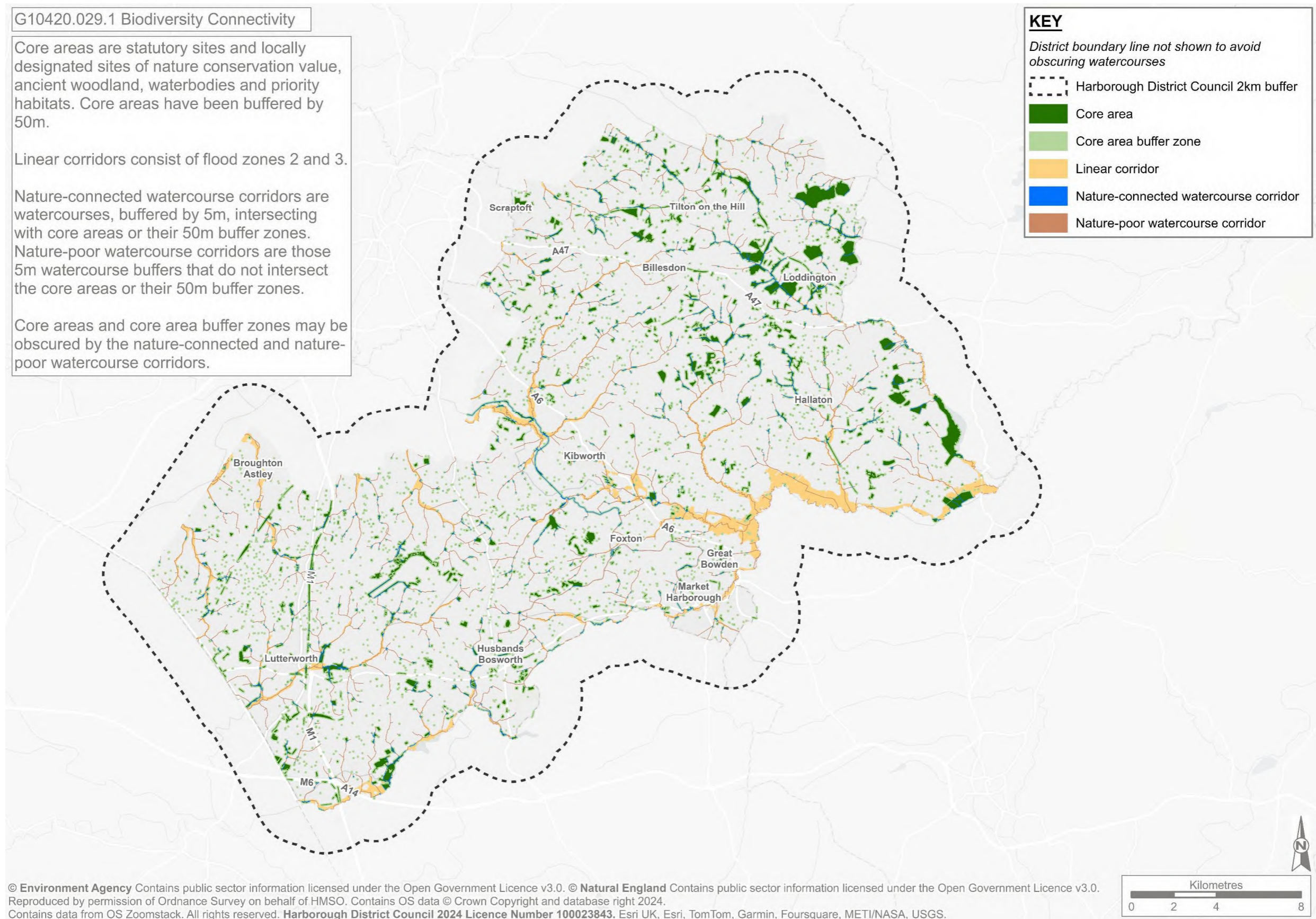
Nature-connected watercourse corridors are watercourses, buffered by 5m, intersecting with core areas or their 50m buffer zones. Nature-poor watercourse corridors are those 5m watercourse buffers that do not intersect the core areas or their 50m buffer zones.

Core areas and core area buffer zones may be obscured by the nature-connected and nature-poor watercourse corridors.

KEY

District boundary line not shown to avoid obscuring watercourses

-  Harborough District Council 2km buffer
-  Core area
-  Core area buffer zone
-  Linear corridor
-  Nature-connected watercourse corridor
-  Nature-poor watercourse corridor



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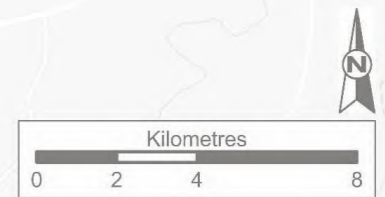


Figure 21: Core Biodiversity Areas, Buffers and Corridors

Contributing to Biodiversity Net Gain objectives

5.43 Mandatory BNG, set at 10% under the Environment Act (2021), has been in force since February 2024 and will generate a steady flow of on and off-site biodiversity enhancements associated with development. Local Plan policy has some influence over how and where the enhancements are made, and can increase the net gain % above 10%, where justified and locally tested²⁹.

5.44 Outside the development sector, voluntary biodiversity contributions including business sponsorships, and corporate “nature-related disclosures” made by financial services firms and larger stock-market listed companies in line with the UN Task Force for Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD)³⁰ may also stimulate a flow of revenue towards BNG.

GI strategies and policies can be used to support aspirations for a Nature Recovery Network (NRN), connecting across urban, urban fringe, coastal and rural areas and enhancing landscape character”

Green Infrastructure Framework, Natural England 2023

5.45 The LNRS will identify areas of priority for nature recovery. This in turn will influence policy about where BNG contributions can be most usefully deployed. BNG should prioritise retention, management and creation of habitats most important to Harborough’s GBI. Key findings from this GBI study are:

- Tree, woodland, woody scrub and hedgerow cover is extremely low, yet it is vital to water quality, biodiversity, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Wetland habitats are extremely limited and fragmented, yet they are vital to water resources, water quality, biodiversity, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Harborough has abundant grassland, yet most of it is of very limited distinctiveness.
- Larger public open spaces should include a mosaic of habitats of medium or greater distinctiveness unless incompatible with the purposes of the open space.

5.46 Table 5 can be used to assist developers, planners and landowners about optimal places in the Districts GBI to deliver BNG, whether that be mandatory, policy-driven or voluntary.

²⁹ Environment Act 2021 (legislation.gov.uk)

³⁰ The Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures

Table 5: Spatial Priorities for delivery of BNG in Harborough's GBI

GBI Principle	Spatial Priority for adding value from BNG	Type of Habitat most likely to add value
Connecting Ecological Networks	<p>Enhance existing and potential 'wildlife highways' like the canals and disused railways, and nature-poor corridors along rivers.</p> <p>Leighfield Living Landscape and south-west Harborough i.e. areas of biodiversity quality identified at a county level by the LLR Biodiversity Quality report.</p>	<p>Grassland of high distinctiveness</p> <p>Woodland (including wet woodland)</p> <p>Reedbeds, ponds</p> <p>Hedgerows and scrubby field margins</p>
Healthy Soils	<p>Regularly tilled soils in arable and leguminous rotations [Figure 22]</p> <p>Amenity and urban landscapes in and near development</p>	<p>Arable field margins and mixed scrub (including watercourse buffer strips) on productive farmland</p> <p>Urban habitats that create deep and healthy soils e.g. raingardens, SuDS-enabled civic trees and private gardens with deep soil provision</p>
Beauty and Distinctiveness	<p>Development in the north-east of the District should focus on woodland connectivity, protecting and enhancing habitats and buffers to the fragments of ancient woodland as part of the Leighfield Living Forest project.</p> <p>Development in the central and southwestern areas should focus on creation of floodplain habitats and natural flood management projects along rivers that will also improve water quality.</p>	<p>Northeast – woodland, woodland edge/ scrub or high distinctiveness grassland.</p> <p>Southwest and central – woodland, hedgerows, scrub high distinctiveness grassland and field margins</p> <p>All river corridors and floodplains – wet woodland, reedbeds, ponds, marginal grassland</p>

GBI Principle	Spatial Priority for adding value from BNG	Type of Habitat most likely to add value
	Also planting of urban trees and SuDS features in towns with flooding issues and poor access to greenspace, or development of mosaic habitats through a larger 'Country Park' project.	
Nature-connectedness	Enhancement of existing hedgerows within planning application boundaries, including any new open space created as part of the development.	Dependent on local research about which habitats are most beneficial to feel connected to nature, provided they are appropriate to local character. Blue social prescribing around the canals and waterways is also relevant
Thriving Places	As set out under "Beauty and Distinctiveness". Also habitats along primary transport corridors	As per "Beauty and Distinctiveness" Appropriate grassland (acid/neutral/calcareous) on major highway verges
Flood Risk Management and Water Quality Improvement	Highest-risk catchments along Stonton Brook, Bourton Brook, and Eye Brook.	Ponds, ditches, floodplain grassland, wet woodlands, field margin habitats along watercourses. In-channel watercourse enhancements e.g. leaky dams, installation of large woody debris
Water Resource Management in face of drought	Creation of SuDS features in and around new development and existing settlements Arable habitats on clay soils in flatter central and southwestern areas.	Street trees in connected SUDS pits, swales and raingardens in urban areas Ponds in rural areas

GBI Principle	Spatial Priority for adding value from BNG	Type of Habitat most likely to add value
Climate Resilience and habitat carbon storage	Local towns	New urban trees
	Ancient woodland areas	New mixed woodland Management of existing woodland to address pests, diseases and invasive species
	Floodplain areas	New wetland habitat

5.47 Part 6 of the Environment Act describes the implementation requirements for BNG:

- Developing corporate strategies on BNG in line with the mandatory requirements set out in the NPPF and Environment Bill;
- Establishing and setting biodiversity targets;
- Integrating BNG within local plan documents; and
- Designing, implementing and maintaining BNG throughout the project lifecycle.

Healthy Soils

5.48 Soils store more carbon than habitats and plants combined. Healthy soils contain a large number and variety of organisms which support other habitats and wildlife and interact to provide a wide range of ecosystem services.

5.49 Figure 22 shows cropping in Harborough District, based on the Crop Map of England data. It shows that cropping in Harborough is dominated by cereal crops. Different tactics for healthy soil management are needed for cereal, leguminous and grassland fields. Defra’s Sustainable Farming Incentive signposts landowners to suitable options to increase soil organic matter³¹ (SOM – essentially the carbon stored in a soil) and reduce erosion.

5.50 For the landowner, the principal benefit of SOM is greater water-holding capacity and biodiversity of soil which gives greater resilience to extreme weather events. During dry periods, soils with high SOM will hold more water, whereas during wet periods, soils will have a greater capacity to store water, reducing flooding and erosion.

³¹ How to do the SFI actions for soils - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

- 5.51 Moreover, soils with a greater water holding capacity require less water from rainfall or irrigation, increasing their resilience and reducing the cost of irrigation and associated infrastructure. Overall, by increasing the water holding capacity of soil, crop yield and environmental resilience will be improved, promoting economic and environmental sustainability.
- 5.52 Stakeholder consultation highlighted the need to reduce use of harmful chemicals in the landscape in order to prevent harm to nature. HDC can review maintenance procedures for council assets and create or promote strong chemical reduction policies and practices (see guidance available from Pesticide Action Network UK³²). For example, Lewes District Council promotes ‘pesticide-free parks’.
- 5.53 Managers of golf courses, parks and cemeteries can also apply healthy soil management practices alongside improved agronomic practices, which can improve the resilience of these surfaces, reducing irrigation requirements and all but the most localised pesticide application. Market Harborough Golf Club has been leading the way in this field, helping to found the ‘Greener Golf’ network in 2019.
- 5.54 Future partnerships could include working with the rural land management sector to promote healthy soil management that:
- Retains soil on the land by reducing sediment run-off or wind-blown erosion during extremes of rainfall or drought; for example cover-cropping and low-tillage practices in arable areas;
 - Increases organic content of soils through application of organic based manures or compost at appropriate times of year;
 - Enables cropping and grazing practices that increase the carbon stored in soils, typically through use of deeper rooting permanent grassland and clover mixes;
 - Celebrates the economic, cultural and biodiversity value of soils; and
 - Reduces use of pesticides
- 5.55 New development has a role in soil conservation:
- Soil conservation and management plans are particularly appropriate for greenfield and open space sites;
 - Soil creation plans are appropriate for brownfield development which generates mineral waste that is capable of being blended and formed into soils that can be used in gardens and amenity spaces (a “circular economy” approach); and

32 Information for local authorities - Pesticide Action Network UK (pan-uk.org)

- Newly-created private gardens could have a minimum soil standard requirement that ensures that incoming residents have deep and fertile soils that can be used for vegetable-growing and also have sufficient water storage capacity to attenuate heavy rainfall. Such a standard could be based on Defra guidance on soil management for landscaping and gardens which refers to a minimum of 150mm of topsoil over a fertile and uncompacted subsoil.

G10420.020.1 Crop Map of England 2021

Land cover outside Harborough displayed with a transparency, to provide a wider context.

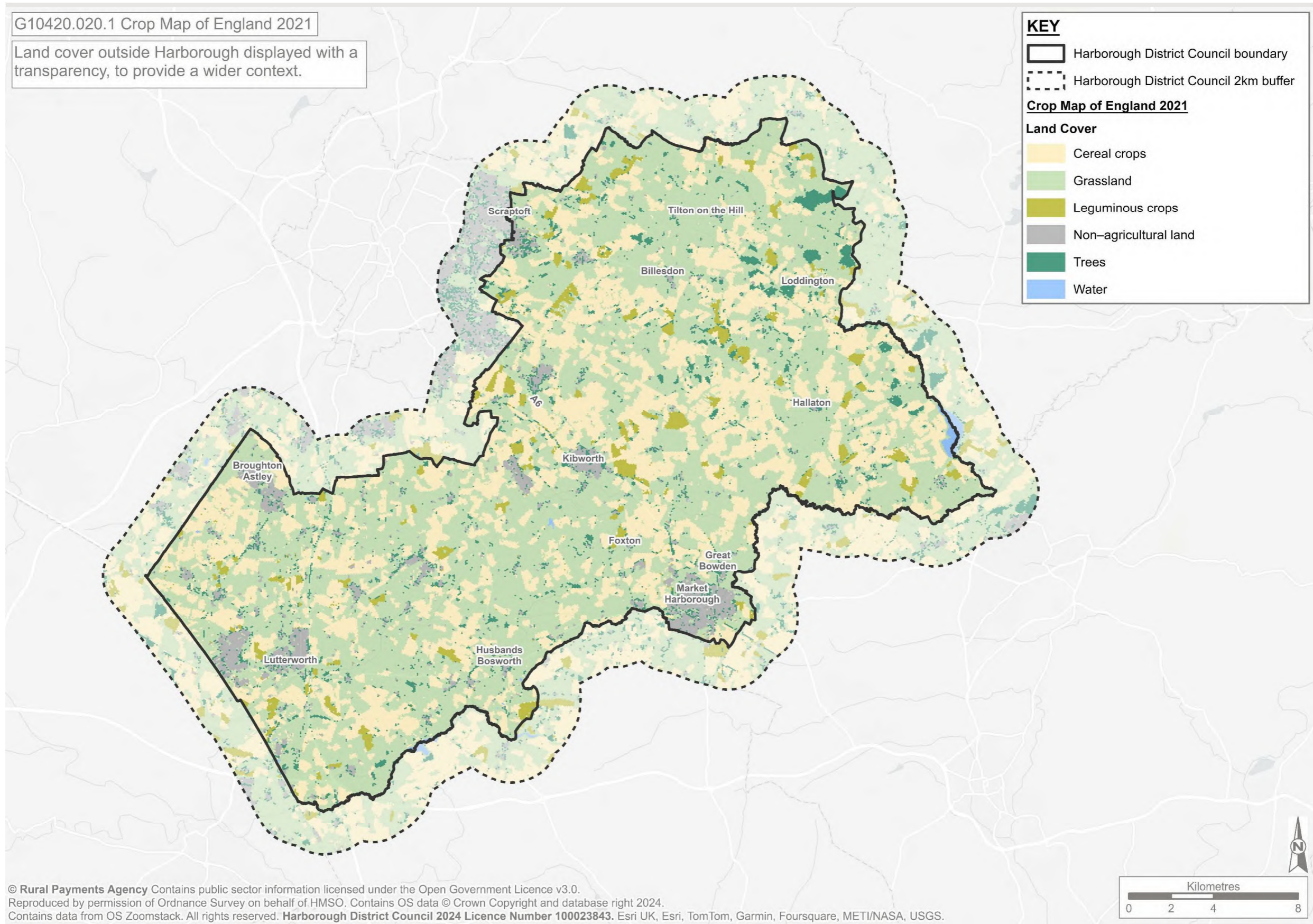


Figure 22: Crop map of England

Landscape Character

- 5.56 Harborough's rural agricultural landscape includes fields of ancient ridge and furrow land which have since been used for pasture, alongside more modern arable farming techniques.
- 5.57 Ridge and furrow fields are common across Leicestershire and the East Midlands, and were used to prevent waterlogging of crops in the clay soils. They are used as a positive indicator of habitat quality in the LLR Biodiversity Quality Assessment.
- 5.58 The Landscape Character Assessment for Harborough District was updated in 2024. Ten Landscape Character Types (LCT) cover the District:
- LCT 1: Farmland Plateau Ridge Tops;
 - LCT 2: Rolling Tributary Farmland;
 - LCT 3: Rolling Wooded Farmland;
 - LCT 4: Settled and Farmed Edge;
 - LCT 5: Settled Vale;
 - LCT 6: River Valley Slopes;
 - LCT 7: River Valley Floodplain;
 - LCT 8: Elevated Farmed Plateau;
 - LCT 9: Open Farmed Lowlands; and
 - LCT 10: Transitional Rolling Farmland.
- 5.59 The Landscape Character Assessment provides detailed landscape character areas (LCA) within each LCT and the associated drivers for change, key sensitivities, landscape strategy and guidance. When considering GBI projects within these LCA's it is important that the Landscape Character Assessment is reviewed to ensure that it is appropriate to the LCT and LCA. For example, it may not be appropriate to plant a large area of trees within areas characterised for their openness.
- 5.60 Natural England's general summary of Environmental Opportunities lists the following headlines for these two areas³³:
- Maintain the strong historic character and heritage and ecological assets of the area, maintaining evidence of past land use and settlement pattern and significant places and events.

33 Summary and Headline Statements of Environmental Opportunity - National Character Area Profiles (nationalcharacterareas.co.uk) and Summary and Headline Statements of Environmental Opportunity - National Character Area Profiles (nationalcharacterareas.co.uk)

- Maintain the sparsely settled, rolling ridges and wide secluded valleys, including field patterns, ridge and furrow, ancient woodlands, country houses and village churches.
 - Manage, conserve and enhance woodlands, hedgerows, streams. Field ponds and rivers in both urban and rural areas to enhance biodiversity and recreation opportunities.
 - Sustainably manage moderately fertile soils, arable crops and livestock to maintain viable food production.
 - Increase, manage and enhance recreational assets, particularly the PRoW network, canals reservoirs, and country parks, improving access for local residents to contribute to their wellbeing and sense of place.
 - Create new habitats such as woodlands and wetlands where opportunities exist, and manage existing grassland, woodlands, coverts and spinneys enhancing sense of place and habitat networks.
- 5.61 Existing Local Plan policy GD 5 requires developments to consider landscape character in a way which:
- Respects and, where possible, enhances local landscape, the landscape setting of settlements, and settlement distinctiveness;
 - Avoids the loss of, or substantial harm to, features of landscape importance;
 - Safeguards important public views, skylines and landmarks; and
 - Restores or provides equivalent mitigation for damaged features and/or landscapes that would be damaged or degraded as a result of the development
- 5.62 The 'Areas of Separation' noted by policy GD 6 intend to preserve the distinctive character of different settlements by preventing the merging of adjacent built up areas. Policy GD 7 describes 'green wedges' which also preserve the character and boundaries of settlements with more regard to the accessible green space, access to the wider countryside and local requirements for associated recreation opportunities. These areas are increasingly under pressure from development.

Quality Summary

- 5.63 Good quality GBI for nature would entail a high percentage of land protected for nature compared to the national average. The guidance document 'Delivering 30 by 30 on land in England' calculates that mapped areas in England show 8.5% land currently counting towards the goal compared to 1.8% in Harborough, and 26.8% land with potential to count compared to 2.7% in Harborough. The large disparity in these figures support the views expressed in the consultation that Harborough is severely nature-depleted.

- 5.64 As approximately 80% land in the District is needed for food production, it is not realistic to compare Harborough with wilder districts containing National Parks and Landscapes, or other ecological designations, or to set similar targets. Harborough's quality of nature provision needs to work with primary food security aims and focus on the right habitats in the right places. Current habitats are very fragmented, so the local priority at a district level should be to connect them via creation of stepping-stone habitats and enhance them by good habitat management.
- 5.65 The northeastern area around Leighfield Forest and the eastern border along the course of Eye Brook to the reservoir has the best provision of designated sites and priority habitats, with notably sparse areas across the rest of the District, particularly those areas furthest from watercourses. This indicates poor quantity of provision for nature-focused areas across the District
- 5.66 The quality assessment from aerial mapping highlights areas in south and west Harborough which display areas with several favourable indicators for habitat quality (see figure 23) in addition to those already identified on habitat maps.
- 5.67 The diverse network of ancient, irregular fields and traditional ridge and furrow systems, combined with the undulating topography between Kibworth and Husbands Bosworth, provides an undiscovered 'hotspot' for biodiversity which differs from the sparse provision that has been mapped. There may be opportunities to develop more designated sites in this area and promote countryside stewardship, especially as the positive indicators for nature are also historic landscape character features which are fundamental to the beauty and identity of the area. Built-up areas are provided in Figure 23 for context.
- .

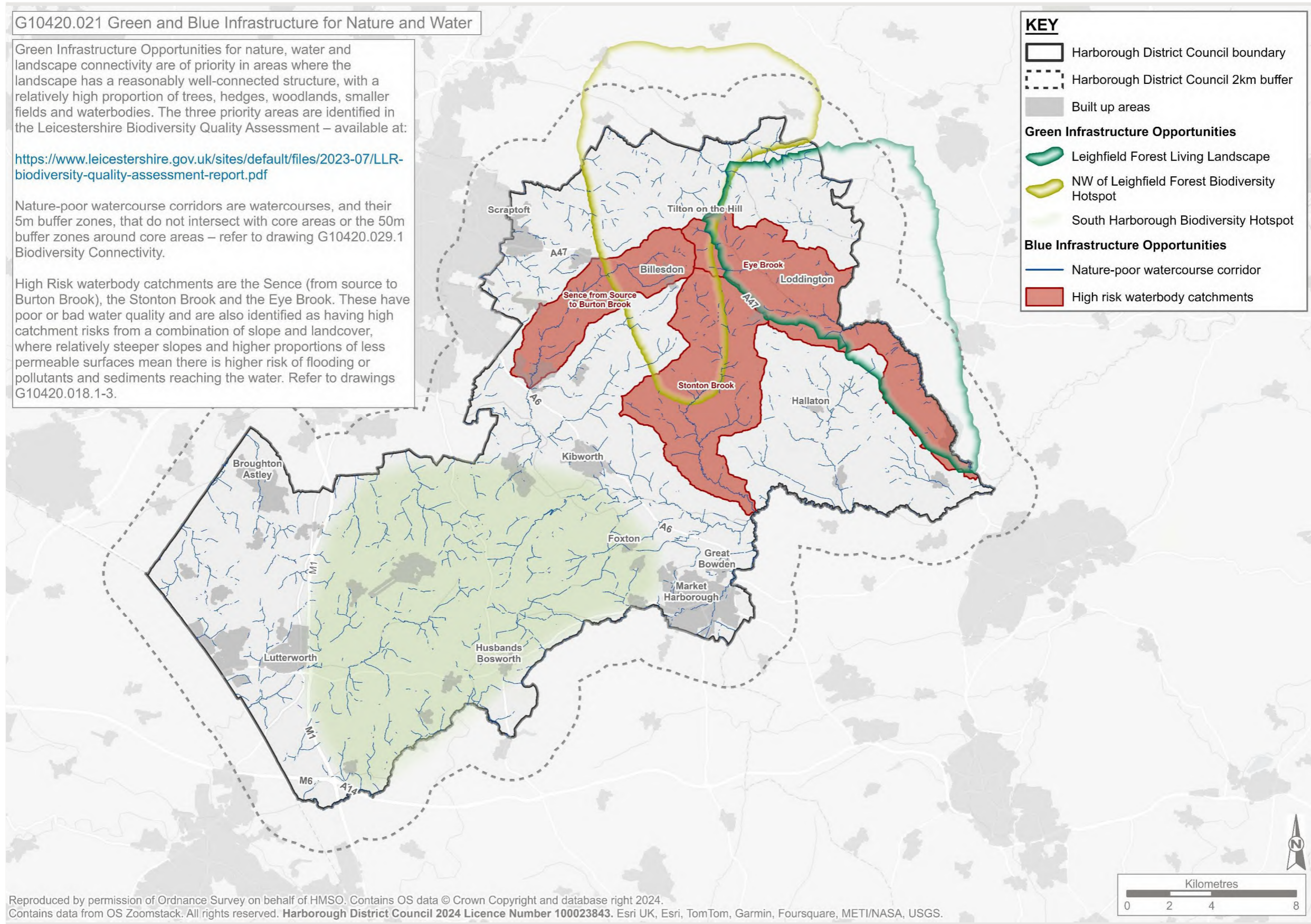
G10420.021 Green and Blue Infrastructure for Nature and Water

Green Infrastructure Opportunities for nature, water and landscape connectivity are of priority in areas where the landscape has a reasonably well-connected structure, with a relatively high proportion of trees, hedges, woodlands, smaller fields and waterbodies. The three priority areas are identified in the Leicestershire Biodiversity Quality Assessment – available at:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-07/LLR-biodiversity-quality-assessment-report.pdf>

Nature-poor watercourse corridors are watercourses, and their 5m buffer zones, that do not intersect with core areas or the 50m buffer zones around core areas – refer to drawing G10420.029.1 Biodiversity Connectivity.

High Risk waterbody catchments are the Sence (from source to Burton Brook), the Stonton Brook and the Eye Brook. These have poor or bad water quality and are also identified as having high catchment risks from a combination of slope and landcover, where relatively steeper slopes and higher proportions of less permeable surfaces mean there is higher risk of flooding or pollutants and sediments reaching the water. Refer to drawings G10420.018.1-3.



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Figure 23: GBI for Nature and Water

Principle 2 - Active and healthy places

Vision

Harborough's green neighbourhoods, routes and green and blue spaces support active lifestyles, community cohesion and nature connections that benefit physical and mental health and improve quality of life. Making spaces where communities can enjoy a greener and more peaceful environment will improve wellbeing and encourage people to see the benefits of engaging with nature.

Natural England Strategic level goals

To achieve active and healthy communities at a strategic level GBI should:

- Reflect public health authority, health leads, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Integrated Care Boards and Integrated Care Partnerships strategic priorities.
- Help achieve area-wide targets for tackling specific illnesses and increase in social prescribing.
- Align with health funding and support which can also deliver GI.
- Align with active travel plans.

Headlines from Policy Review

- National planning policy and guidance reinforce the role of GBI to support healthy communities by encouraging active travel and supporting inclusive social interaction.
- Leicestershire needs to cater for an ageing population with multiple health issues and seeks to embed prevention of poor health in everything it does, enabling healthy choices and increasing walking and cycling trips for short journeys and creating walkable neighbourhoods.
- Leicestershire puts equal weight on physical and mental health, which can both be supported by good GBI.
- Leicestershire's Cycling and Walking Strategy (2021) wants to make cycling and walking the 'obvious choice' for short journeys, creating a step-change in uptake of active travel options across the county.
- Harborough's Corporate Plan aims to guide residents to make healthier choices independently and enhance and protect the natural environment providing better access to green spaces to improve residents' physical and mental health.

- The Local Plan vision aims to improve air and water quality while reducing the impacts of noise and light pollution.
- The Local Plan considers open space part of community infrastructure and highlights the need for accessibility as well as reduced car use.
- Harborough Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2022-24 has two actions to improve local access to green and blue spaces.

Headlines from Stakeholder Engagement

- Improvements are required to signage, paths and accessible waterways.
- Active travel should be encouraged by increasing walking and cycling provision.
- Health and Wellbeing should be considered a primary benefit of GBI.
- Places need to be safe and inviting.
- GBI should consider access for minority groups.
- Areas at higher risk of health inequalities are a priority.
- Health and access to greenspace should be embedded in planning policy and decision-making.
- Better built and natural environments should prevent people becoming ill in the first place and provide a healthy environment for recuperation when people do fall ill.
- GBI should seek to address health inequalities.
- Consider 15/20 minute city principles.
- There is a need for more Country Parks and accessible woodland

Accessible spaces

- 5.68 Figures 14-17 show areas of accessible green or open space within and around all the towns and settlements. The developed area just west of Lutterworth where there are no accessible spaces is the Magna Park Logistics and Distribution Park. The large built-up area to the northeast of Lutterworth is Bruntingthorpe Aerodrome, and the nearby green spaces are associated with the villages of Gilmorton, Peatling Parva and Bruntingthorpe. The other built-up area with limited accessible open space located south of Scraftoft and north of Great Glen, is Leicester Airport.
- 5.69 The northeast of the District is best served for accessible GI, where small villages around Loddington have access to a variety of sites. There are very few areas of accessible woodland in Harborough District, with a few wooded areas within green spaces in towns like Market Harborough. The largest accessible woodland area is located north of Tilton on the Hill.

- 5.70 There are some linear areas of accessible woodland associated with highways and settlements, and several others that are fragmented through the countryside. Trees and woodlands in urban areas provide shade and benefits of urban cooling as well as improving air quality.
- 5.71 Figure 12 highlights areas of accessible waterside in the context of the wider network of watercourses and blue spaces. Accessible waterside is present in small areas throughout the District with the greatest concentration between Market Harborough and south of Kibworth. The proximity of accessible waterside to towns and settlements shows that it is an important resource for enabling physical activity close to communities. Additional seating and signage was highlighted in the consultation as a potential ‘quick win’ to improve accessibility. Recommendations for circular cycle routes and PRow improvements for active travel are included in the Action Plan at Appendix C and can improve access to local waterways and attractions such as Foxton Locks.
- 5.72 One of Leicestershire’s goals in the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032 is to increase the proportion of residents with access to green space within a 10-minute walk. Improvements of PRow access around rural villages, and GBI creation projects around larger towns could contribute to this. All new developments contribute towards accessible routes through Section 106 Agreements.
- 5.73 Actions 2b and 2c of Harborough District Council’s Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2022-24 describe local partnerships already working to improve access to green spaces, canals and waterways. These provide six monthly updates on the Physical Activity Commissioning Plan.

Improving connectivity and promoting active travel

- 5.74 Figure 24 shows a fairly even coverage of PRow and cycleways across the District, with lower provision around Husbands Bosworth.
- 5.75 Leicestershire’s county-wide vision in the Cycling and Walking Strategy includes twenty targets to increase the levels of walking and cycling trips by 15% and increase cycling and walking trips for work and education by 10%. Targets aim to increase physical activity thereby improving physical and mental health, and to reduce short car trips and the associated pollution and carbon emissions. Action S24 of the associated action plan is to establish a baseline from which progress can be measured³⁴.
- 5.76 Good maintenance, mapping and signposting of PRow can contribute to these goals and are also referenced in the Cycling and Walking Action Plan. Permissive pathways from engaged local landowners can also be considered through good

³⁴ Cycling and Walking Strategy Action Plan (leicestershire.gov.uk)

local community networks. New circular cycle routes were also suggested in the consultation and could be linked with the National Cycle Network.

Inclusive access to natural green spaces

- 5.77 Figure 25 shows inequalities in access to natural greenspace at a local level – measured in terms of access to green spaces of 2 or more hectares size within 300 metres of a residential area.
- 5.78 The most favourable areas for access to green space (categories ‘M’ and ‘H’) are found around Lutterworth and Market Harborough, whereas some rural areas fall into less favourable categories L2 and L3. There are some areas with less favourable accessibility categories around the periphery of Market Harborough, Great Bowden and Kibworth.
- 5.79 There are opportunities to address this by incorporating larger green spaces into new developments; some consultation responses noted the need for a country park near Market Harborough. New greenspace provision should, where possible, be accessible to all, with thought given to those of all ages and abilities throughout the design process.
- 5.80 Opportunities for community woodlands and orchards around Market Harborough and Kibworth Golf Course have been detailed in the Action Plan. Additionally natural flood management projects around the Welland Valley may improve access to green space.
- 5.81 The development of the new James Adler Nature Reserve should contribute positively to local accessible greenspace and be easily accessible to residents of Great Bowden and Market Harborough.
- 5.82 Consultation also noted that some areas to the south of Market Harborough with less favourable access border West Northamptonshire, and may require cross border collaboration.
- 5.83 To understand priorities for overcoming barriers to accessing green space, it is helpful to look at the Indices of Multiple Deprivation maps at in figures 26 and 27 which show Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) ranked across England, and Harborough District respectively.
- 5.84 Figure 26 shows the local areas of the District graded according to their IMD decile on the nationwide scale. Harborough District is less deprived than other areas across England, with the most deprived areas (shown as darker purple) in the centre of Market Harborough, and to the northwest of Market Harborough south of Foxton (including the area around HMP Gartree).

- 5.85 Figure 27 adjusts the IMD deciles to compare deprivation levels across Harborough District providing a relative view of deprivation across the District. Larger rural areas which are comparably more deprived and with less favourable access to green spaces include the centre and northeast of the District. These areas could be assessed to review particular needs in local villages, and whether local PRoW are well maintained and accessed.

Healthy communities

- 5.86 Figure 13 shows the types of open space most relevant to GBI due to their potential for multifunctionality. These are amenity greenspace, natural and semi-natural greenspace, and parks and gardens.
- 5.87 The Harborough Open Spaces Strategy (OSS) 2021 measures the quantity of different types of open spaces in terms of hectares provision per 1,000 population. The Study assesses the existing open space provision in the District against national benchmark standards for quantity, quality and value (where available). It sets and applies local standards (where applicable) to highlight any shortfalls in open space provision, including against population figures from 2019 and projected populations for 2036.
- 5.88 The OSS shows a deficiency across Harborough District, for the projected 2036 populations (in hectares per 1,000 population) for natural and semi-natural greenspace (-0.49) and parks and gardens (-0.45).
- 5.89 The scattered nature of some rural settlements means that provision is poorer in those deficient categories. Consultation highlighted the need for active travel links between rural settlements and larger towns, however the delivery of active travel opportunities in rural areas is challenging, due to safety and connectivity issues and ongoing dependency on car use.
- 5.90 Of the 299 audited sites which received a full quality audit, 82.6% had quality scores over 70% achieving ratings of good, very good or excellent. Quality standards are based on the Green Flag Award National Benchmark for quality.
- 5.91 Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Broughton Astley have a good variety of connected greenspaces, however with current and future projected population growth there are quantitative deficiencies in across most typologies.
- 5.92 The Leicestershire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022-32) highlights the need to cater for an ageing population with multiple health issues.
- 5.93 Leicestershire Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report 2020-2021 shows a difference in life expectancy between the most affluent and most deprived areas of 6.4 years for men and 5 years for women. This indicates that priority should be given to more deprived areas for tailoring GBI assets towards improved health

outcomes particularly for vulnerable users³⁵. The consultation highlighted lower income groups and disability groups as the priority vulnerable user groups in the District.

Quality Summary

- 5.94 Harborough population's perceived connectivity to nature is moderate, therefore there is room for improvement to achieve 'good' engagement with nature.
- 5.95 Active travel networks are well dispersed across the District, with a weaker area around Husbands Bosworth that would benefit from better connections.
- 5.96 The OSS 2021 shows that the quality of open space provision is generally high across the District, but there are some quantitative deficiencies in the natural and semi-natural greenspace, parks and gardens, and provision for children and young people typologies. These deficiencies are linked to population growth, and highlight the need for new developments to contribute to appropriate open space provision to address shortfalls in open space provision³⁶.
- 5.97 More detailed mapping and analysis of open space provision around areas with high development pressure is provided in chapter 7.0.
- 5.98 The OSS also shows that only 17% of sites surveyed were fair or poor quality (16% fair, 1% poor).

35 Vulnerable is defined as in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, risk of abuse or neglect (Vulnerabilities: applying All Our Health - GOV.UK)

36 The Open Space Assessment 2021 is linked to specific sub-areas only and based on population data available at the time of writing.

G10420.019 Public Rights of Way and Cycleways

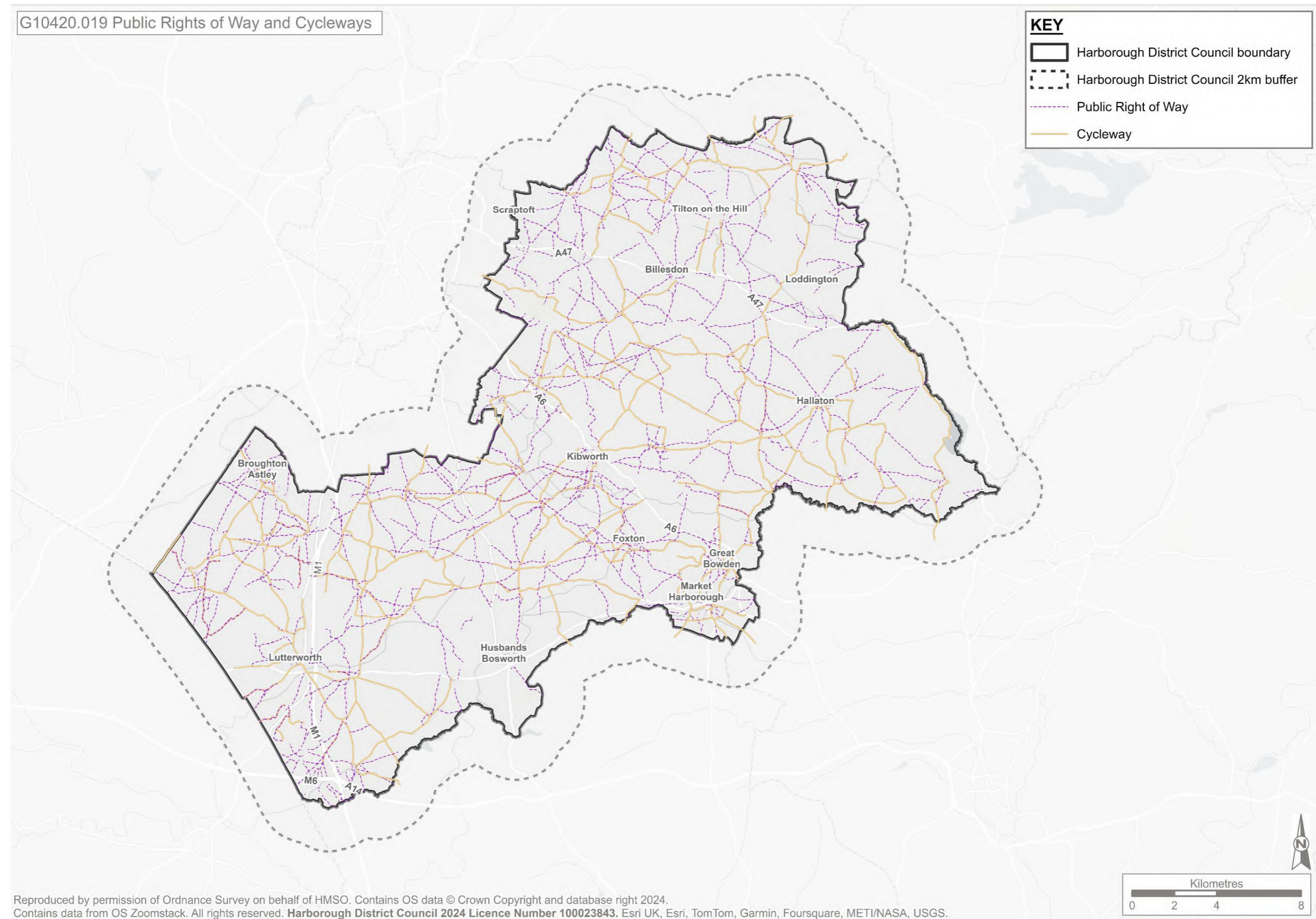
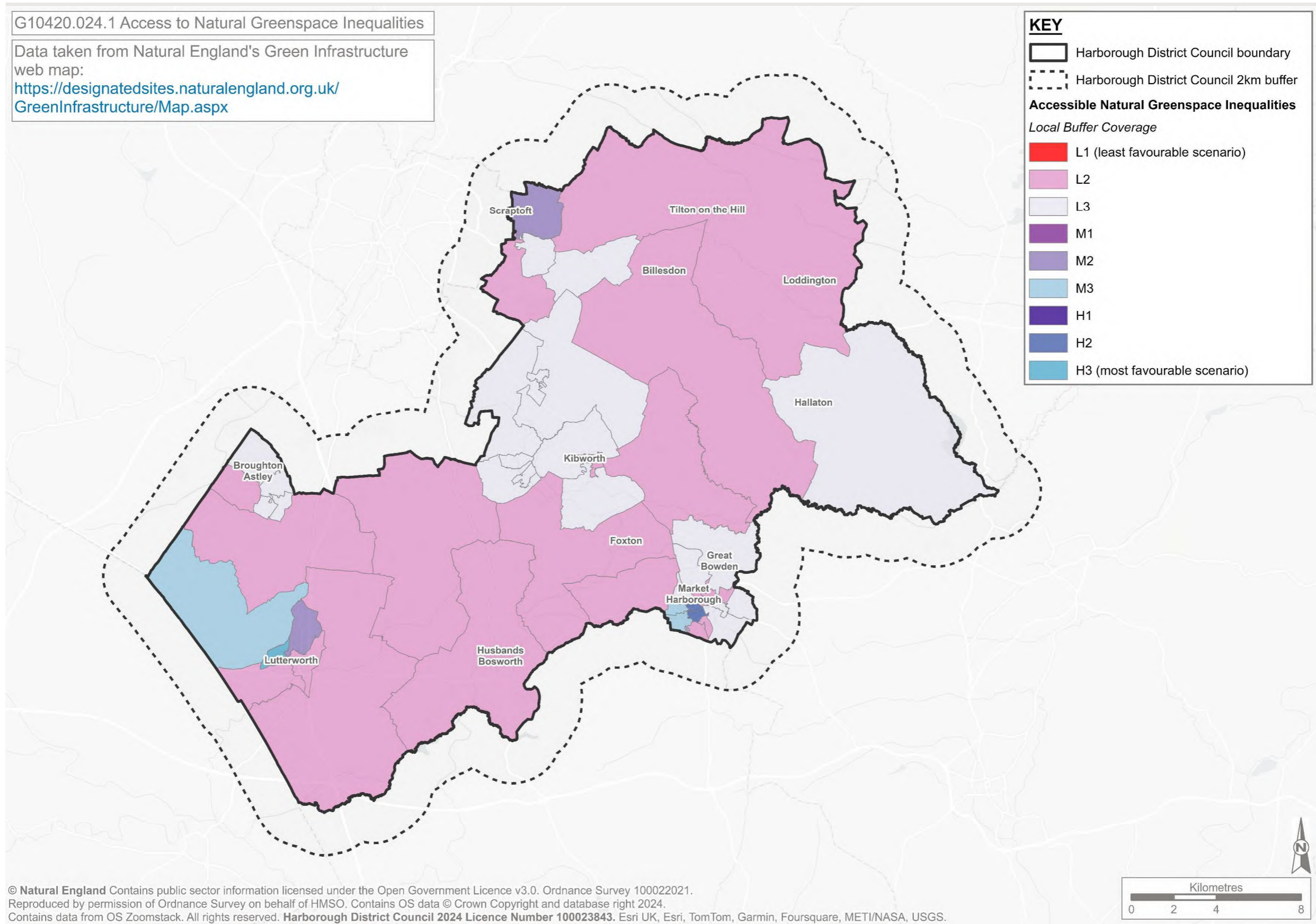


Figure 24: PRow and Cycleways

G10420.024.1 Access to Natural Greenspace Inequalities

Data taken from Natural England's Green Infrastructure web map:
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Map.aspx>



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Figure 25: Access to Natural Greenspace Inequalities

G10420.025.1 Indices of Multiple Deprivation
 Indices of Multiple Deprivation Decile against all 32,844 Lower-Layer Super Output Areas (LSOA) across England.

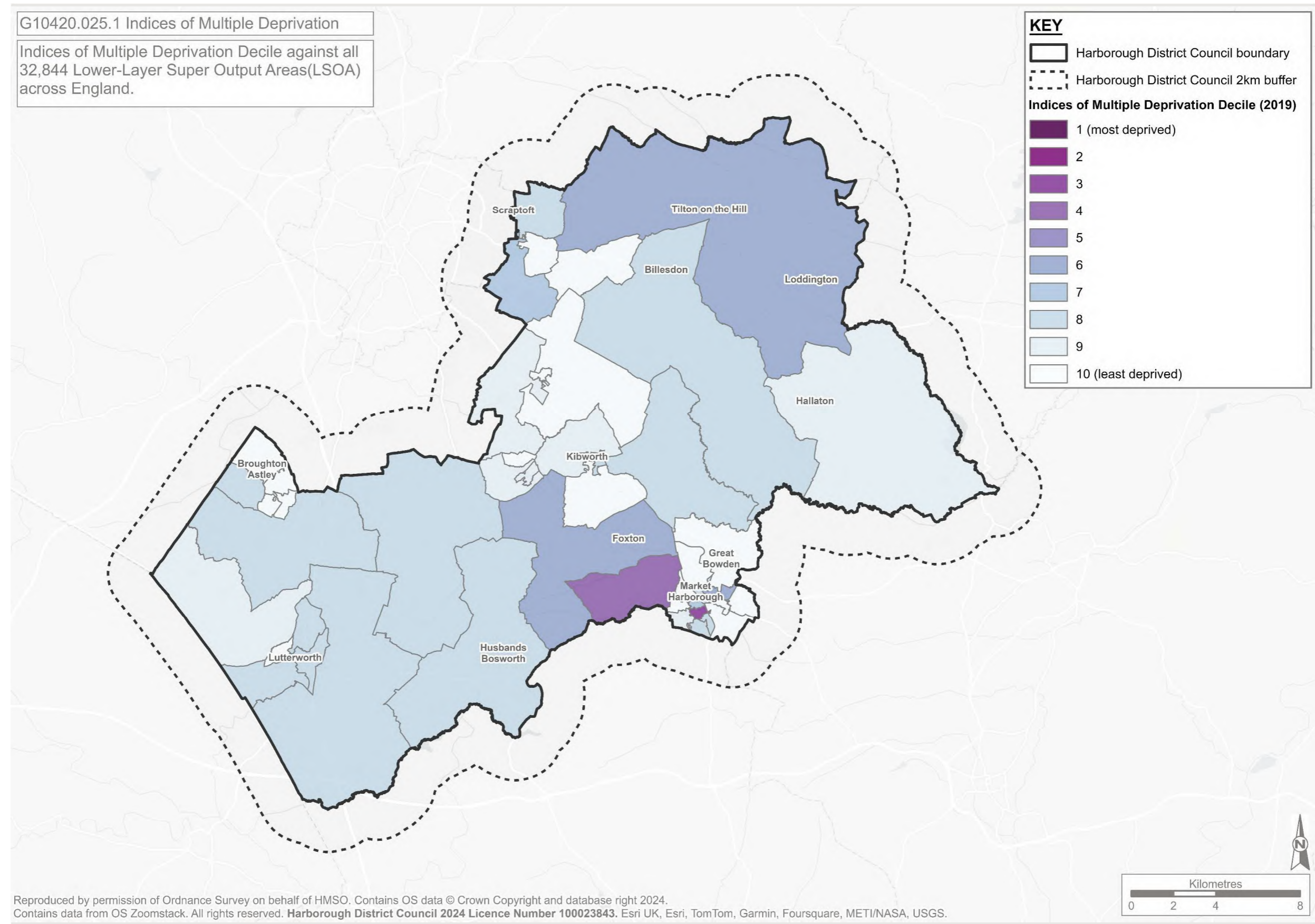
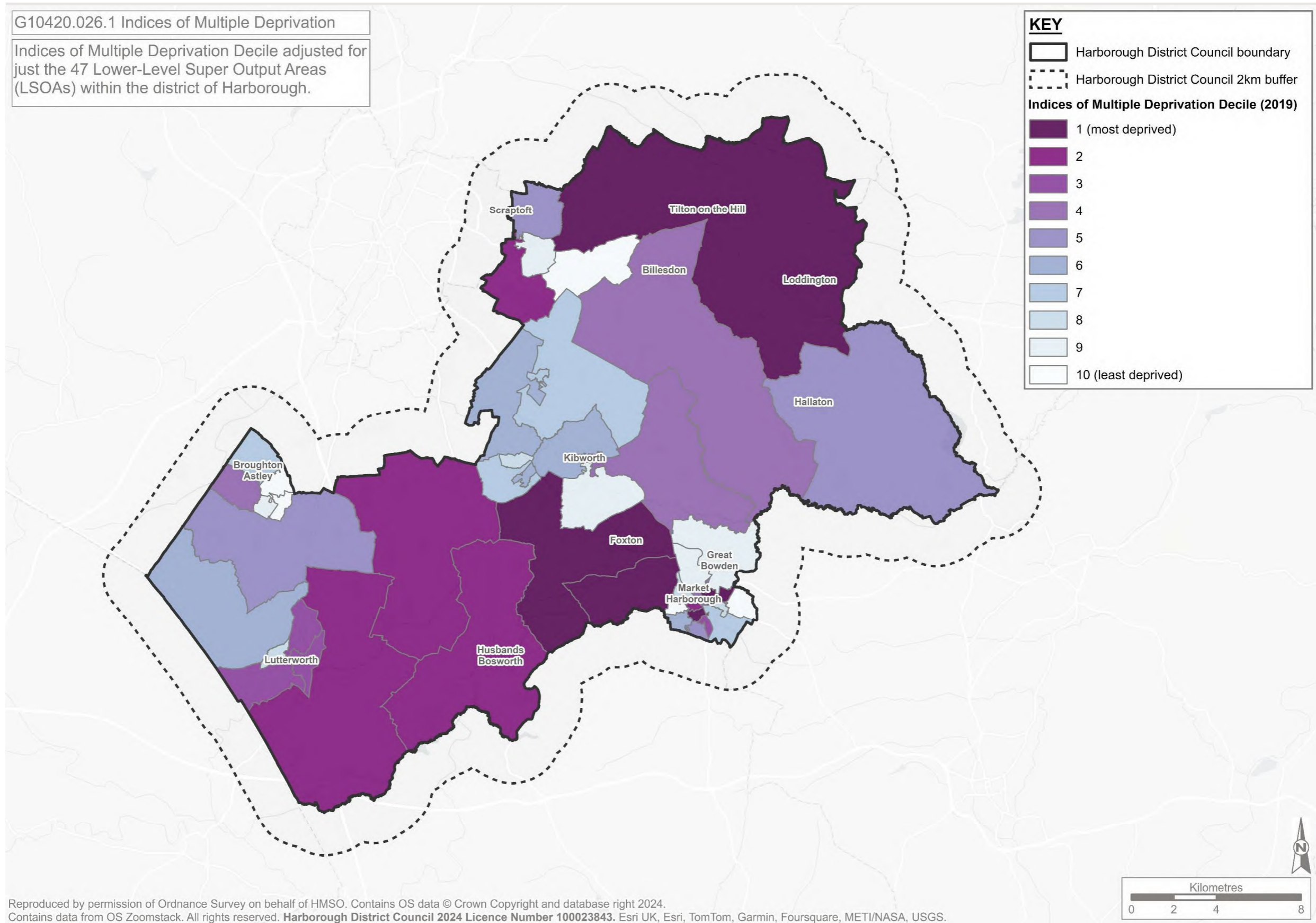


Figure 26: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (England)

G10420.026.1 Indices of Multiple Deprivation
 Indices of Multiple Deprivation Decile adjusted for just the 47 Lower-Level Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the district of Harborough.



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Figure 27: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (Harborough)

Principle 3 Thriving and prosperous places

Vision

Harborough District's GBI helps to create and support food security and prospering communities that benefit everyone. It creates high quality environments which are attractive to businesses, investors and tourists. It creates green jobs, supports high streets, and helps sustain the local economy. It breathes life into the region, providing a focus for strong volunteer communities.

Natural England Strategic level goals

To achieve thriving and prosperous communities at a strategic level GBI should:

- Be a central objective within plans and policies for new development and regeneration;
- Address gaps or pinch points where GBI demand is not being met and development can contribute to the supply;
- Provide opportunities for investment from a broad range of businesses and investors;
- Enable opportunities for collaboration between local and regional economic development bodies on integrating GBI into economic plans and proposals; and
- Maximise economies of scale for projects through funding mechanisms which can pool resources for environmental projects.

Headlines from Policy Review

- National policy supports well designed, sustainable development.
- National policy provides financial incentives to improve biodiversity through BNG, and Sustainable Farming Initiatives are emerging which reward farmers' activities to protect the environment.
- Harborough Corporate Plan aims to provide local employment for residents to prosper and attract visitors to the area to support the economy.
- Harborough Local Plan recognises the importance of GBI for local tourism

Headlines from Stakeholder Engagement

- Major housing pressures and strategic development areas are around Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Scraptoft.

- There are also extensions planned for Houghton, Thurnby, Bushby and Fleckney.
- Travel routes in and out of Leicester are important for commuters and for urban communities to access the natural environment.
- Logistics parks around the southwest of Harborough (e.g. Magna Park) provide a lot of low paid employment which usually attracts workers from outside the District.
- Local businesses have generally good appreciation of GBI and recognise benefits from reduced flooding and a nicer environment.
- Developers sometimes see GBI as an extra cost and are not always well coordinated with each other.
- Food production is recognised as the primary land use, and farmers need appropriate support managing GBI in a financially viable way.
- Community connections and trust are important, engaging farmers with GBI in ways that are helpful to them.
- Diversification into agroforestry is under consideration as a method to help farmers maintain viable income and support nature.
- Tourism industry and heritage trails benefit from good GBI.
- The volunteer community is very active and engaged.
- GBI that makes town centres more resilient and attractive increases footfall and benefits businesses and communities.

Enabling sustainable development

- 5.99 New housing and commercial development in the District will be led by the Local Plan process; a new local plan is currently being drafted which will provide the framework for growth over the plan area to 2041.
- 5.100 Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) have been adopted for 29 neighbourhood areas. These have different categories of recognition and designation for green and open spaces including Local Green Space (LGS), LWS, and other sites of environmental or ecological significance.
- 5.101 In some NP areas ancient hedgerows and fields are listed as non-designated heritage assets. Important trees and tree groups, and wildlife riparian corridors are mapped in some NPs.
- 5.102 Seven of the NPs have no specific green infrastructure features listed. This presents an opportunity for those areas to improve environmental protection of local GBI by adding more detail on important environmental features to promote their importance.

- 5.103 Infrastructure development may come forward outside the Local Plan process; for example, water treatment works and pipelines, new highway and rail infrastructure or energy grid connections.
- 5.104 All new development offers opportunity to protect, create and restore GBI, improving accessibility and connectivity between existing GBI assets. A basic level of GBI uplift can be secured through national planning policy and statute which requires GBI provision, BNG, open space provision, a strategic approach to flood risk and SuDS etc. However, Harborough District policy can go further by:
- Ensuring all development is accompanied by a GBI assessment which shows how the GBI priorities identified in this GBI Study and related studies³⁷ are incorporated into the scheme design;
 - Signposting developers to Natural England's GI Planning and Design Guide³⁸;
 - Adopting policies requiring standards such as the Urban Green Factor³⁹ (UGF) in a manner appropriate to the scale and location of new development in the district; and
 - Adopting site-specific GBI Design Principles for strategic development sites.

Case Study – Urban Green Factor (UGF) policy in action

Urban greening factor policies are increasingly used as a planning tool to improve GI delivery through the process of development and regeneration. They were first developed in Sweden and Germany to combat the growing densification of urban neighbourhoods. UGFs are increasingly being used in the UK by LPAs in the revision of their local plans and have become a prominent policy tool for urban greening across Greater London through the adopted London Plan.

There are two main components of UGF: (a) a target factor score that sets a minimum proportion or percentage of greening for a particular site, area or land use; and (b) a schedule of surface cover types and associated factor weightings that are used to calculate the score.

The Model UGF Standard for England includes both target scores for specific land uses and a set of weighted surface cover types. These have been developed from detailed research on international UGF applications and tailored to current UK planning policy and practice.

The Target Scores for Surface Cover Types comprise a familiar suite of green infrastructure elements including hedging, flower-rich vegetation, tree planting; green roofs and walls; sustainable drainage systems and water features; and paved surfaces.

37 Such as the OSS, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the settlement GBI Appraisals

38 GI Design Guide (naturalengland.org.uk)

39 UGF 3.3 User Guide (naturalengland.org.uk)

Healthy high-streets and business centres

- 5.105 High quality GBI in town and village centres such as Market Harborough and Lutterworth is vital to the setting and attractiveness of these areas for inward investment and high street recovery post-pandemic.
- 5.106 A green and well-maintained environment is shown to boost property and rental values, increase visitor dwell time and provide an attractive environment for traders and small businesses and their staff.
- 5.107 GBI development plans can be prepared for targeted areas such as high streets, with the aim of securing funding for measures such as raingardens, street trees, waymarking, living walls.
- 5.108 Intervention priorities in the District are the town centres and business parks. Although these areas tend to have greater tree canopy cover than the district-wide average, they fall below the national average of approximately 17%; which would be an aspirational target to aim for – refer to Figure 28–Ward Tree Canopy Cover.
- 5.109 Tree canopy cover should be increased throughout the District, particularly in urban areas to improve air quality, and help regulate temperatures. Tree canopy cover could be increased through development of a tree strategy, and implementing a tree replacement ratio, e.g. a minimum of two trees to be planted for one failed or felled tree.

Case Study – Tree Policies and Targets

LPA's can take different approaches to setting planning targets for tree retention and replacement according to the local context.

Wycombe District has undertaken a Canopy Cover Assessment which compares the levels of tree canopy cover across rural settlements and urban areas and establishes a baseline. The report recommends further data collection and analysis of the type and distribution of trees to estimate the value of benefits they provide and develop a comprehensive tree strategy. The tree strategy would set targets for canopy cover with implementation and monitoring requirements, identifying priorities to be addressed through new developer contributions. [Wycombe District Canopy Cover Assessment](#)

Birmingham City Council has adopted a 'Landscape and Green Infrastructure City Manual' which provides detailed information for developers on the council's requirements for protection of existing GBI and delivery and contribution towards new features. For example, the CAVAT Tool is used to determine the value of trees on a development site.

[Landscape and Green Infrastructure City Manual - September 2022 | Birmingham City Council](#)

Supporting the visitor economy

- 5.110 Figure 29 shows some of the Outdoor Visitor Attractions which rely to some degree on the quality of Harborough's GBI. Attractions are not limited to those mapped, and there is no central register of visitor attractions – one opportunity discussed at Chapter 7 ("How" principles) is for increased co-ordination, awareness and joint promotion of GBI initiatives and enterprises.
- 5.111 Policy RT14 in the Local Plan supports the growth of the local tourism industry. Attractive environment and heritage assets are an important draw for visitors, with particular mention of Foxton Locks and the Grand Union Canal as regional attractions.
- 5.112 Outdoor visitor attractions of district-wide importance offer opportunities for job creation and enterprise in recreational, leisure, training and hospitality sectors.

Promoting Natural Capital

- 5.113 Food security is of primary importance in Harborough District. There is wide recognition amongst the key stakeholders consulted that farmers need to be supported to balance environmental considerations with food production and financial sustainability.
- 5.114 The consultation responses indicate that community groups and local individuals have built up positive relationships with the farming community. Local farmers report issues with complicated incentive schemes and programmes that have had insufficient support. However, some local communities organise projects to help local farmers and landowners with interventions such as strengthening hedges or creating NFM areas.
- 5.115 The younger generation of local farmers are recognised as having high environmental awareness and interest in new wildlife friendly or drought resilient farming methods.
- 5.116 Farming clusters are increasingly of interest and were highlighted in the consultation. This is a system by which farmers with an interest in environmentally sensitive farming can encourage neighbours with similar interests to share resources, plans and knowledge. They can compare experiences and trial initiatives such as water friendly farming, use of herbal layers and agroforestry according to local geography and needs.
- 5.117 Herbal leys are leguminous grassland mixes which can support biodiversity and enrich the soil as part of a rotational arable system.
- 5.118 Water-friendly farming initiatives and engagement have been undertaken by Welland Valley Partnership across the Welland catchment.

- 5.119 Agroforestry can help farmers to diversify in a way that can support nature and provide income. Combinations of broadleaved and mixed trees may provide an opportunity for more wildlife friendly plantations by avoiding monocultures.
- 5.120 Community orchards are included in LCC's tree planting scheme, with increasing provision for local communities to plant new orchards or improve existing ones.
- 5.121 The Allerton Project⁴⁰ has researched nature-friendly farming and natural capital accounting (measuring benefits and value of GBI) on its 320ha site in the northeast of Harborough District. This provides a blueprint for nature-friendly farming, however content and guidance are not freely available. Further opportunities for collaboration and dissemination of best practice could be investigated with the Games and Wildlife Conservation Trust.

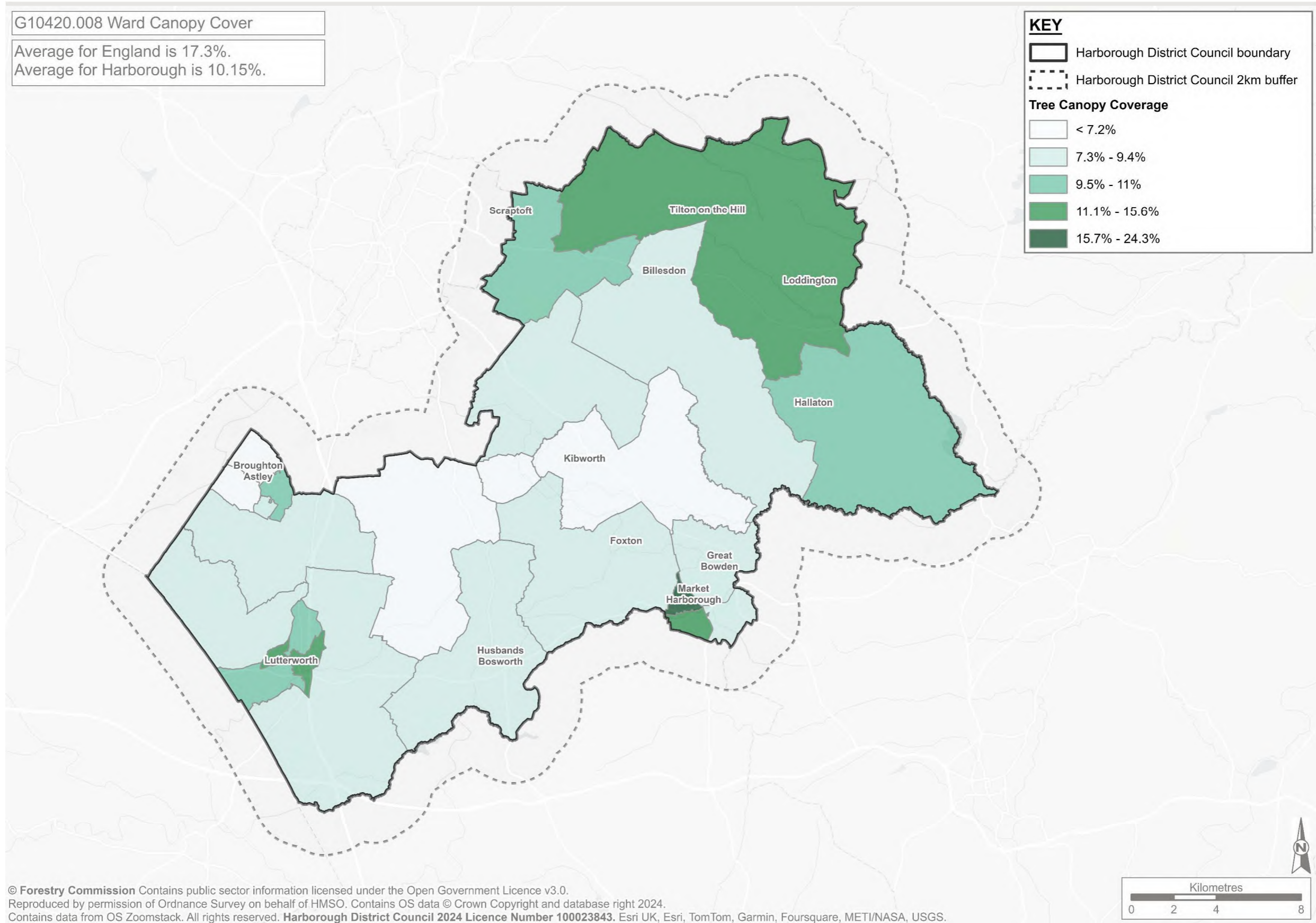
Promoting Thriving and High-Quality GBI Assets

- 5.122 Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 references particular GBI assets in policy G11 including the four main river corridors, the Grand Union Canal, reservoirs, and disused railways. This is positive as it actively promotes these features and protects them from development. The review of the quality assessment and LNRS progress in principle 1 suggests that there is scope to include more green assets such as woodland areas and biodiversity hotspots, particularly where there are groups of fragmented designated sites that would benefit from buffers and additional planting.
- 5.123 NPs promote GBI to a reasonable extent, although the picture is mixed. When NPs are refreshed they may build on the opportunities and recommendations set out in this Study. Further and more detailed promotion of high quality GBI can be achieved by naming spaces and assets of varying types and categories, with an aspiration to achieve high quality audit scores.
- 5.124 The Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2022-2027 recognises 361 voluntary and community groups in Harborough District. Of these only 9 are classed as 'Environment & Conservation', however there are 222 covering the three categories of 'Economic/Community Development', 'Education and Training', and 'Health/Sport'.
- 5.125 It is likely that many of these 222 groups will have some interest in achieving high-quality GBI as it supports economic and community development. These groups may also be experienced in accessing funding streams that could enhance community GBI assets, so there is merit in facilitating collaborative working and idea-sharing between the environment and community/economic sub-sectors of the voluntary and community sector.

⁴⁰ The Allerton Project | Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (allertontrust.org.uk)

5.126 The local initiatives summary at table 3 shows a reasonable range of local GBI initiatives indicating robust promotion and engagement with the local environment. There is greater activity around Market Harborough, as it is the largest settlement and has the most severe flooding issues and has set up local flood hubs and trained flood wardens. There may be further scope to increase community activity in other areas as appropriate for their size and situation.

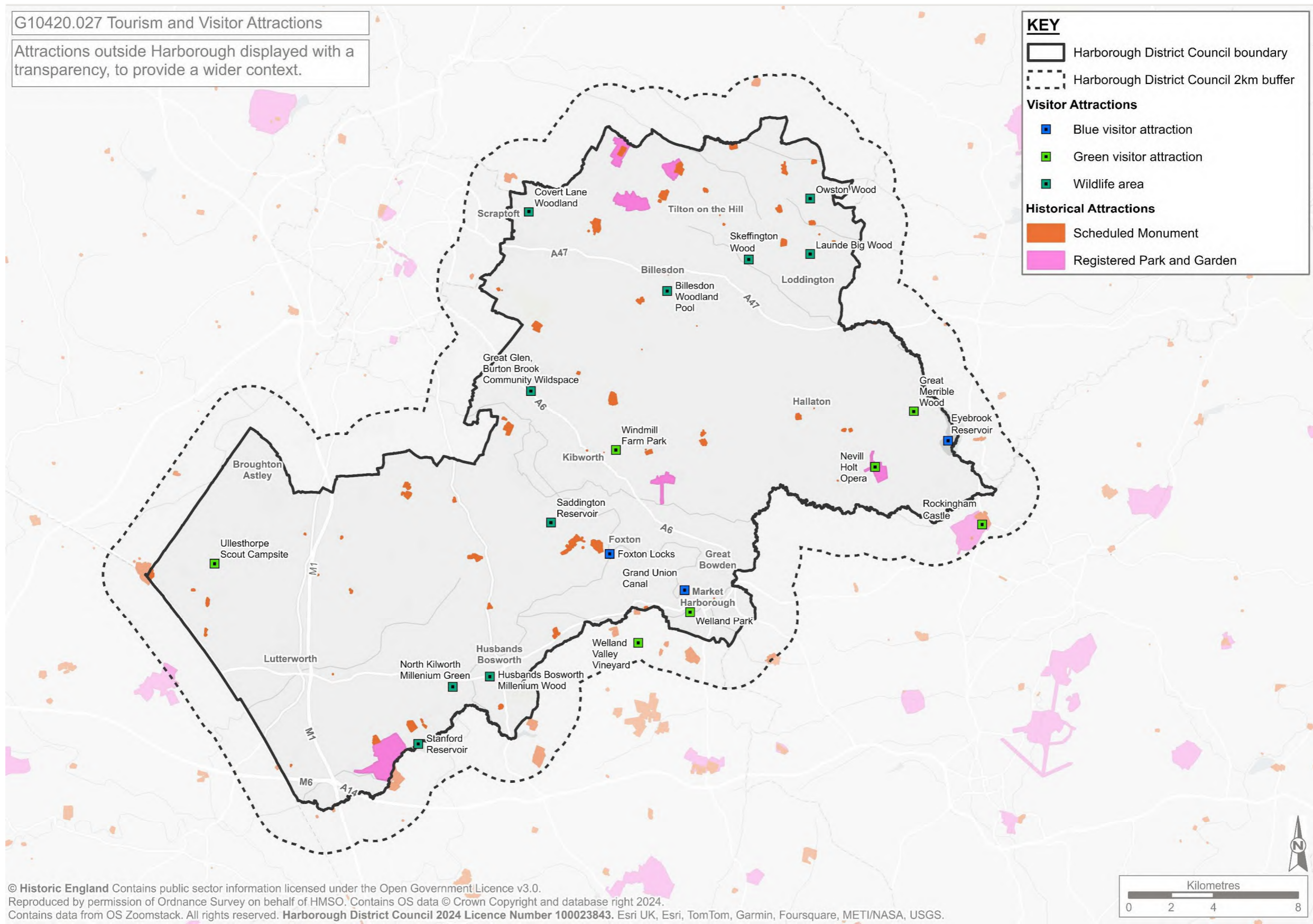
G10420.008 Ward Canopy Cover
 Average for England is 17.3%.
 Average for Harborough is 10.15%.



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Figure 28: Ward Tree Canopy Cover

G10420.027 Tourism and Visitor Attractions
 Attractions outside Harborough displayed with a transparency, to provide a wider context.



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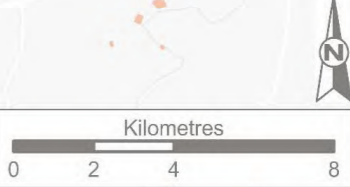


Figure 29: Visitor attractions with an outdoor emphasis

Principle 4 - Improved water management

Vision

Harborough District's GBI is managed to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and natural filtration, helping to maintain the natural water cycle and sustainable drainage at local and catchment scales. Blue assets are celebrated and managed to reduce pressures on the water environment and infrastructure, bringing amenity, biodiversity, economic and other benefits.

Natural England Strategic level goals

To achieve sustainable water management at a strategic level GBI should:

- Be based on an understanding of current and future catchment processes and needs and establish strategies for GBI to respond to these needs at a landscape scale;
- Contribute to the delivery of water management plans, including River Basin Management Plans, Drainage and Wastewater Management Plans and Surface Water Management Plans;
- Aim to reduce flooding risks using nature-based solutions;
- Create and connect new or enhance existing wetland habitats and watercourses;
- Protect and improve the quality of surface water and groundwater, including by reducing pressure on water infrastructure; and
- Improve Climate Change Resilience of freshwater habitats and species.

Headlines from Policy Review

- National planning policy and guidance promotes a proactive approach to managing flood risk, water supply and biodiversity in a changing climate.
- The Local Plan promotes sustainable development in areas not at risk of flooding and encourages the use of SuDS to improve flood resilience.

Headlines from Stakeholder Engagement

- Importance of multifunctional SuDS and NFM.
- Improving the District's poor water quality should be a priority.
- Flash flooding is a problem due to clay soils.
- Siltation runoff from farmland into rivers is a problem and should be reduced.
- Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) such as signal crayfish are an issue.

- Invertebrates struggle with pollution from combined sewer, and canal overflows.
- Market Harborough is the settlement at highest risk of flooding.
- NFM projects around Market Harborough have started to show positive results.
- A Surface Water Plan is in progress to establish a risk management process and map hotspots around Market Harborough.

Existing blue infrastructure

- 5.127 Chapter 4 provides a summary of the location and quality of the District's blue infrastructure, including maps of statutory main rivers and other waterbodies. Further information on catchments and water quality is analysed in this section of the Study.
- 5.128 The Welland Valley Partnership, hosted by East Mercia Rivers Trust, coordinates water management projects across the Welland catchment. The Partnership integrates water quality and flood mitigation projects with improvements to biodiversity, access for people and provision of drinking water.

Increased flood resilience

- 5.129 Flood zones 2 and 3 from Environment Agency (EA) data are shown on Figure 30. The most significant floodplain is in the Upper Welland catchment, from the Kibworths along Langton Brook and eastwards along the Welland. Market Harborough town also suffers from significant flooding.
- 5.130 Local community groups led by Harborough Woodland have delivered significant NFM projects and SuDS interventions in the Market Harborough area. A network of flood hubs and flood wardens are coordinated to provide analysis of flooding hotspots and determine the most effective locations for SuDS interventions.
- 5.131 The floodplain of the River Sence and tributaries around Great Glen and Wistow is the most significant in the Soar catchment, followed by Broughton Astley Brook and the watercourses around Peatling Magna. In the Avon and Rural Rivers and Lakes operational catchment, the floodplain of the Swift and tributaries lies close to Lutterworth and the junction of the M1 and A4303. All of these floodplains have an impact within the District, and also influence further flood zones downstream in neighbouring districts.
- 5.132 Figure 31 shows the overall catchment risk. It shows the relative risk of a particular catchment contributing to downstream flooding and water quality issues. The higher index numbers shown by darker colours indicate where there is a higher risk.

- 5.133 There are several factors which influence the behaviour of water within catchments, notably land use, vegetation cover, topography, soil type and hydrological connectivity. Catchment risk comprises two categories to show the difference between slope-related risks (Figure 32) and landcover-related risks (Figure 33).
- 5.134 The Stonton Brook sub-catchment covering the rural area between Billesdon, Kibworth and Hallaton has the greatest overall risk index score.
- 5.135 The northeast of the District around Tilton-on-the-Hill and Loddington, in the Wreake and Upper Welland catchments, are most influenced by the steep topography. The sub catchments of Burton Brook and Willow Brook around the central northern border of the District and the Soar headwaters in the northwestern areas have the highest runoff risk from impermeable surfaces. They are also upstream of the larger urban areas of Leicester and Hinckley.
- 5.136 Excessive water movement through catchments can be exacerbated by these factors, leading to risks of flooding and pollution runoff. These risks can be managed using nature-based solutions to reduce the adverse effects of flooding and pollution runoff into property and habitats. Appropriate NFM responses include the creation of swales, re-meandering of water courses, alterations to habitat management, on and off-line pools, leaky dams, washlands and wet woodland planting.

Improved water quality

- 5.137 None of the watercourses in the District's four catchments have good ecological status (Figure 34). The rivers with the poorest rating 'bad' are all within the Welland Upper catchment:
- South Gwash;
 - Upper Chater;
 - Stonton Brook; and
 - Jordan (Welland).
- 5.138 The South Gwash flows westwards to Rutland Water, an important source of drinking water for surrounding counties. The Jordan flows northwards into the Welland at Market Harborough with poor ecological status originating from upstream in Northamptonshire.

Reasons for Not Achieving Good Water Quality

- 5.139 The EA catchment explorer shows that the majority of reasons for not achieving good status in the Welland catchment arise from pollution from agriculture and rural land management, followed by pollution from wastewater from the water industry.

Physical modifications and pollution from towns and transport also have a locally significant role, even in this predominantly rural catchment⁴¹

- 5.140 Downstream of the confluence of several tributaries of poor or bad ecological status, the Welland maintains a moderate status from Market Harborough as it flows east towards Stamford.
- 5.141 The Avon and Soar catchments host rivers of moderate ecological status and one of poor status, Burton Brook. The moderate or poor status arising from rural farmland areas mean measures to improve water runoff quality from farmland into neighbouring streams are likely to have the greatest positive impact on water quality throughout the District. They should also have a positive knock-on effect to the ecological status of rivers and waterbodies beyond the District.
- 5.142 Eyebrook Reservoir on the eastern border of the District has moderate ecological status, while the Eye Brook river has poor status. Likewise Stanford reservoir on the southern border in the Avon Rural Rivers and Lakes catchment has moderate ecological status while the Avon itself has poor status.

41 Welland Management Catchment | Catchment Data Explorer

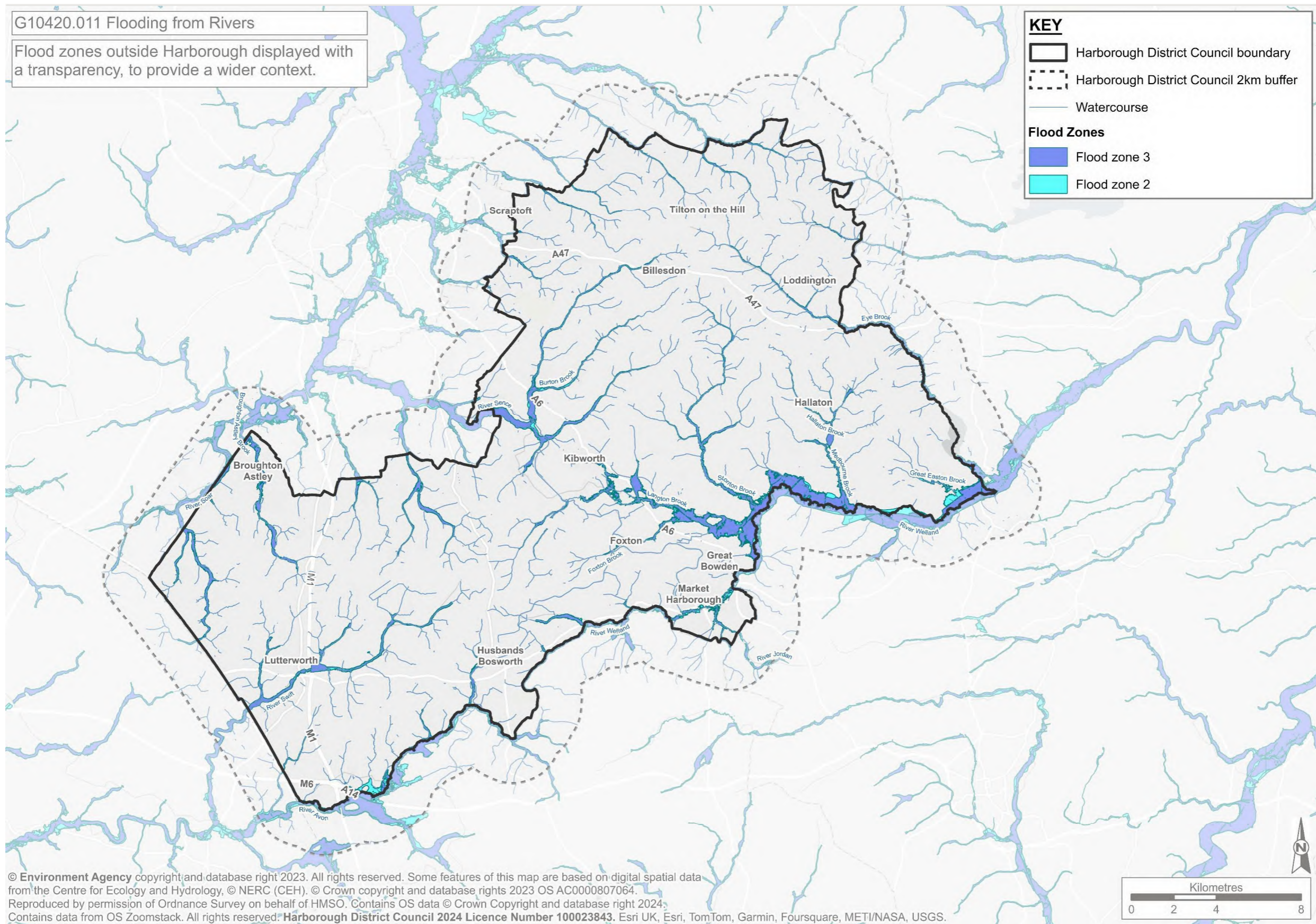


Figure 30: Flooding from rivers

G10420.018.3 Catchment Risk

Catchment risk scores indicate likelihood of a particular catchment to contribute to downstream flooding and water qualities issues. The greater the rank, the greater the risk.

The risk index has been derived from topographical slope and land-cover, where steeper slopes and higher proportions of less permeable surfaces correspond with higher risk rankings.

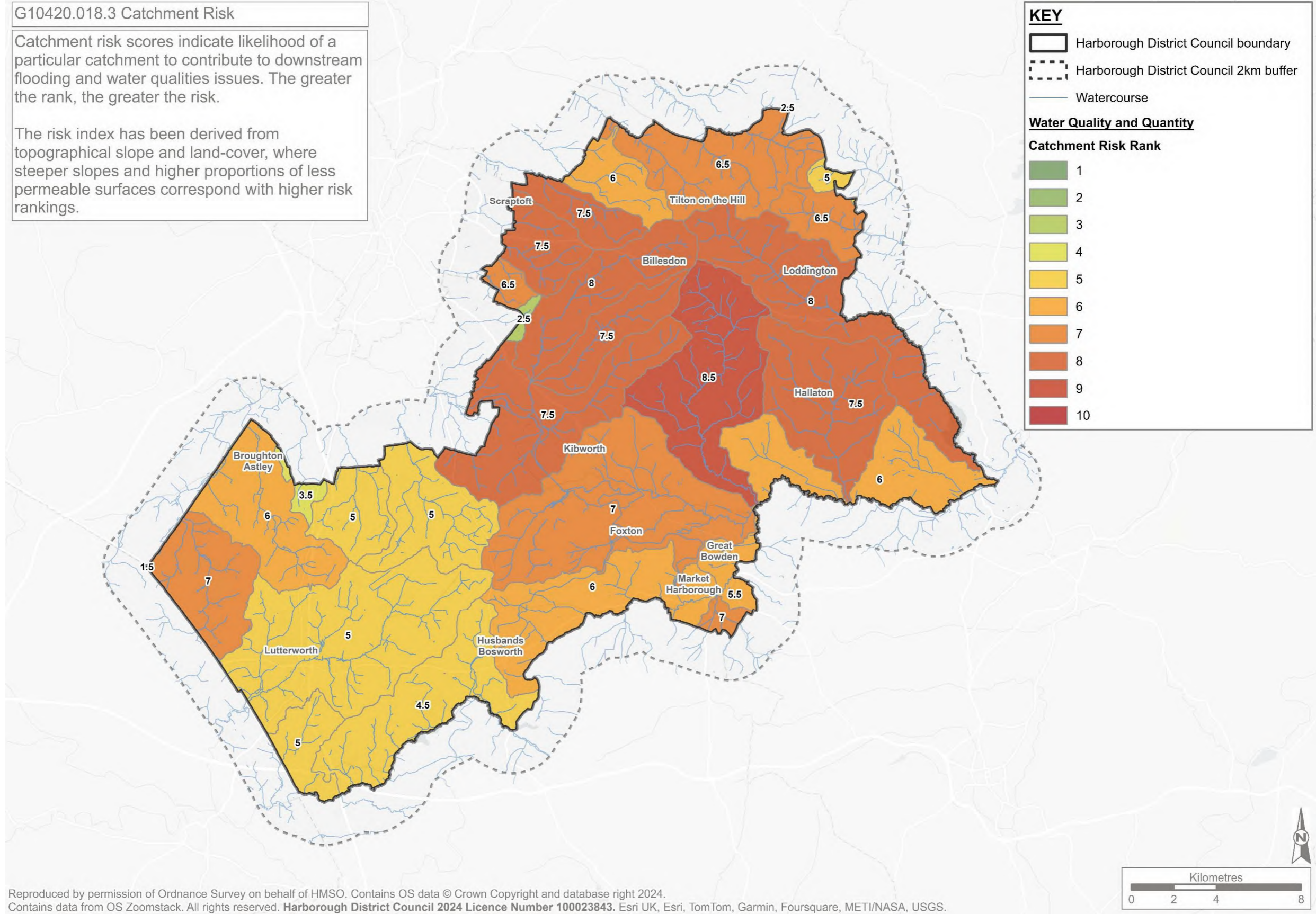


Figure 31: Catchment risk

G10420.018.2 Catchment Risk
Slope

Mean slope degree and percent rise identified within each catchment boundary.

Slope values have been ranked 1 (slight incline) to 10 (sharp incline) based on Jenks Natural Breaks classification.

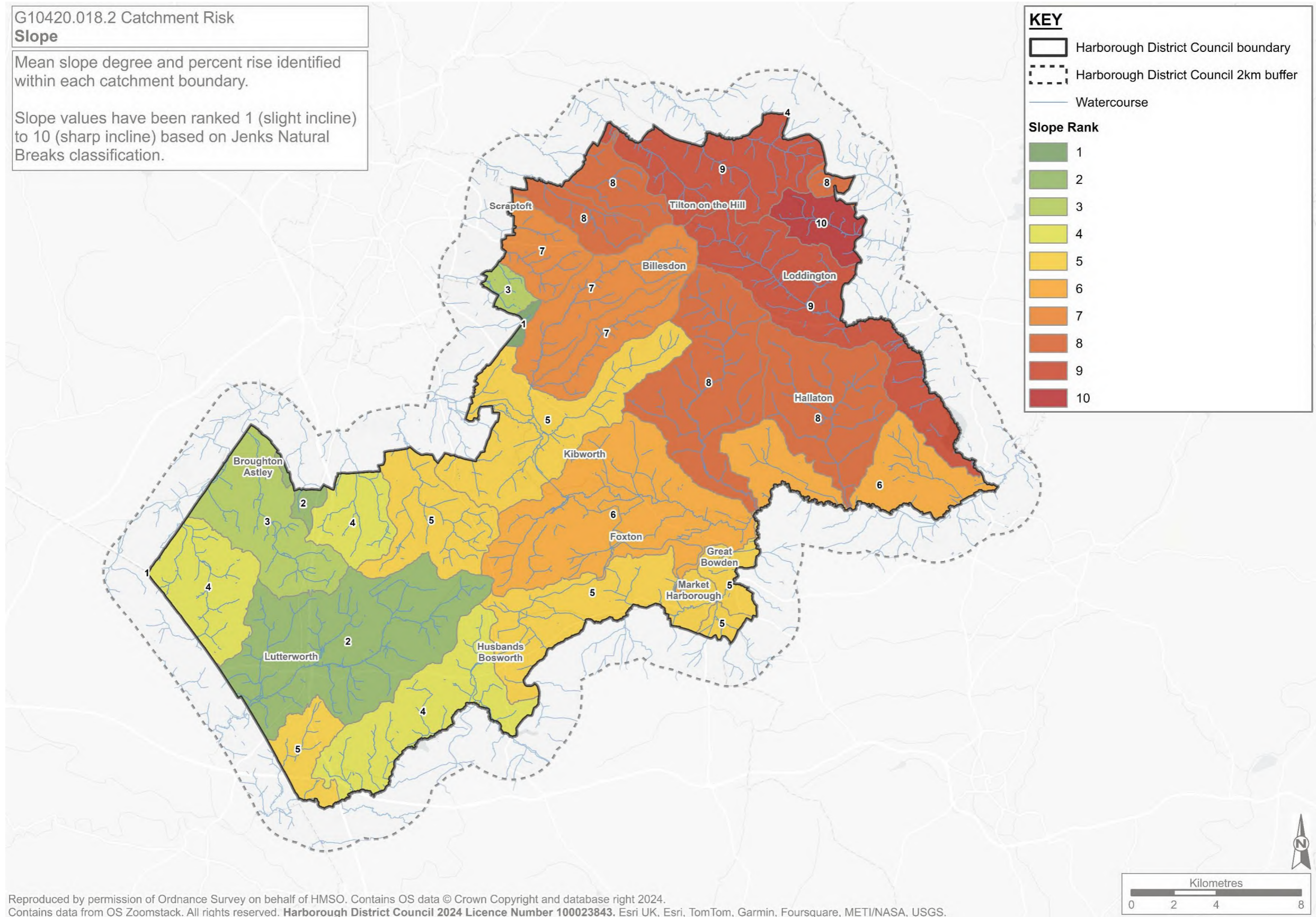


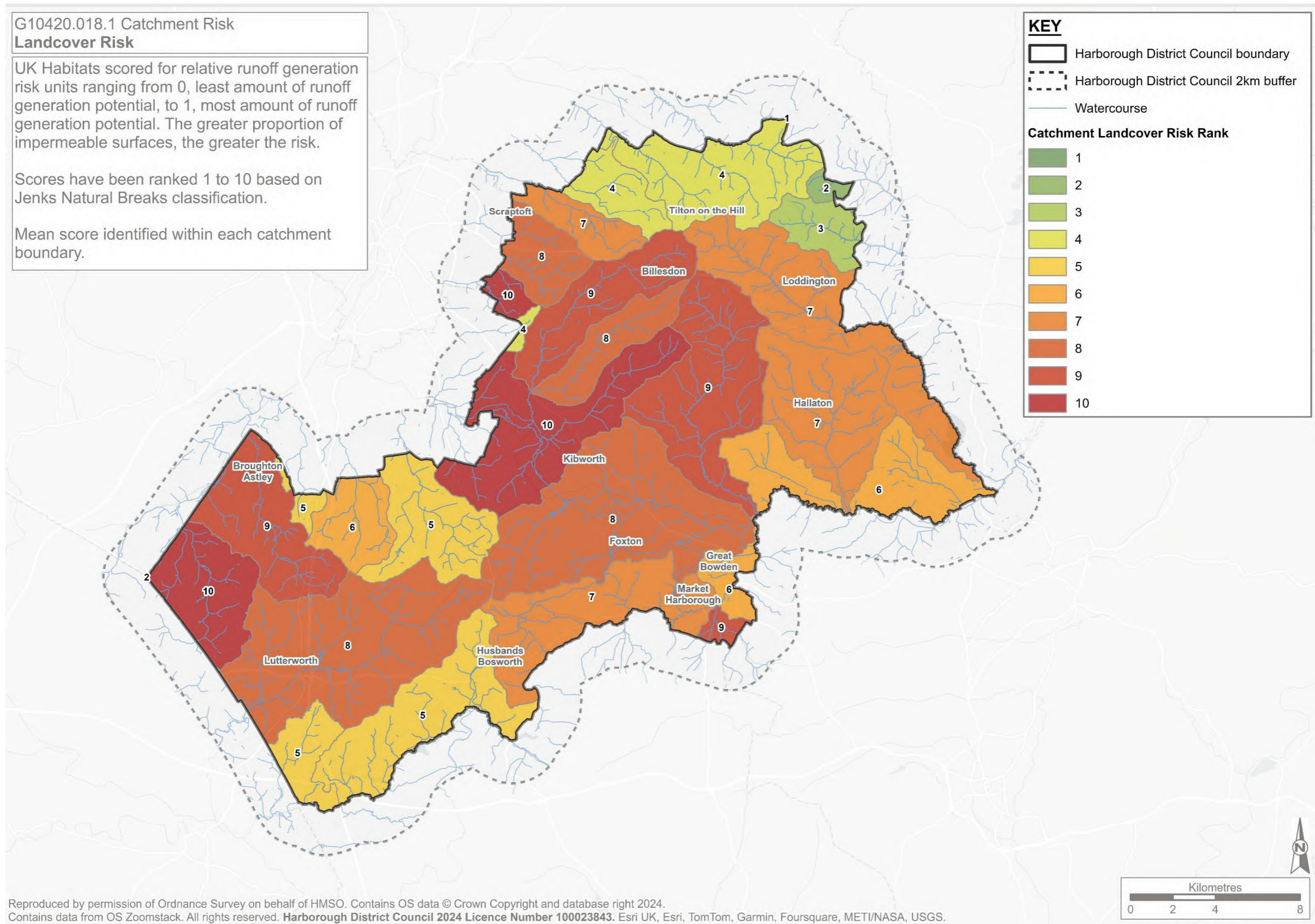
Figure 32: Catchment risk - Slope

G10420.018.1 Catchment Risk
Landcover Risk

UK Habitats scored for relative runoff generation risk units ranging from 0, least amount of runoff generation potential, to 1, most amount of runoff generation potential. The greater proportion of impermeable surfaces, the greater the risk.

Scores have been ranked 1 to 10 based on Jenks Natural Breaks classification.

Mean score identified within each catchment boundary.



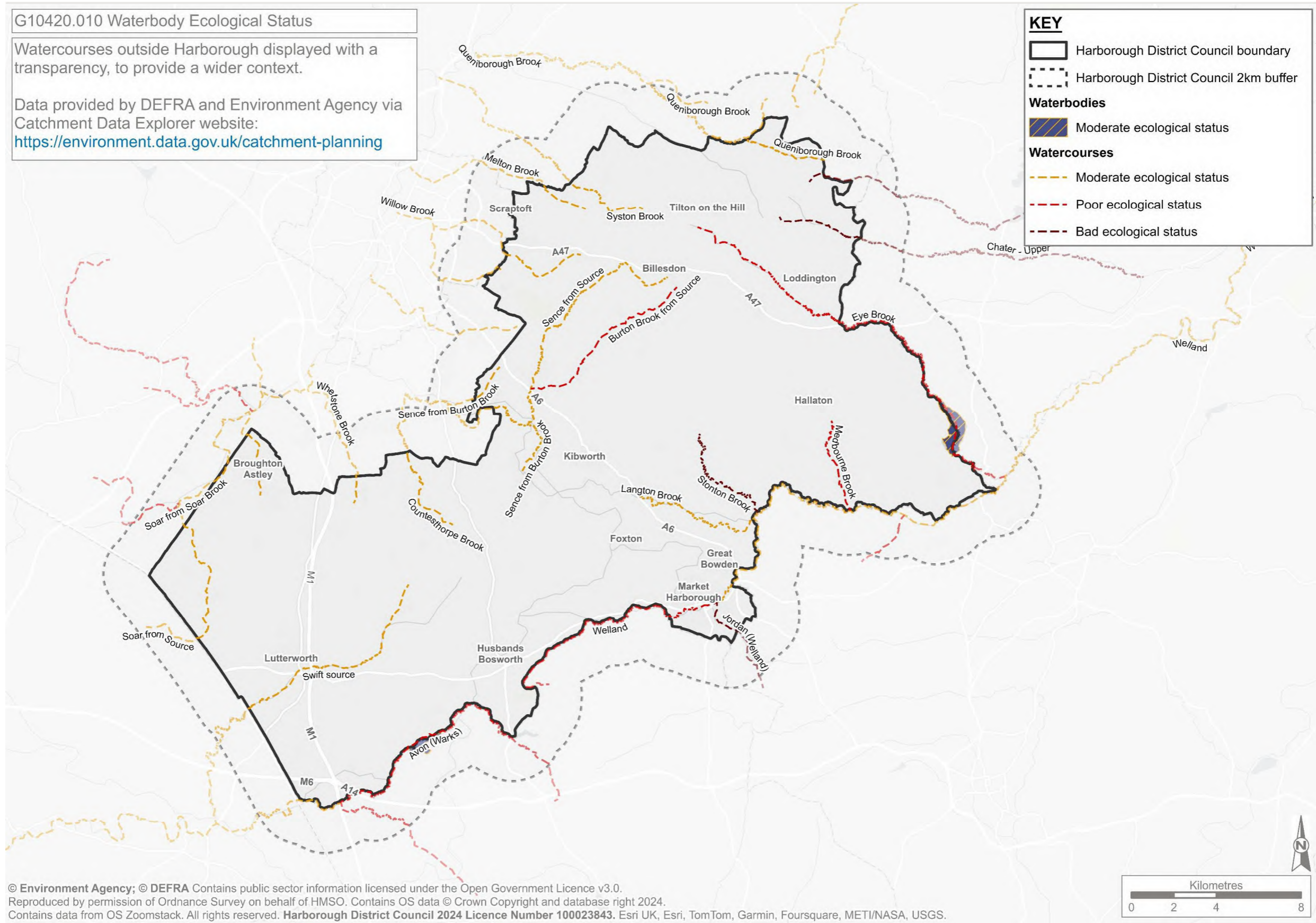
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Figure 33: Catchment risk – Landcover Risk

G10420.010 Waterbody Ecological Status

Watercourses outside Harborough displayed with a transparency, to provide a wider context.

Data provided by DEFRA and Environment Agency via Catchment Data Explorer website:
<https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning>



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Figure 34: Waterbody Ecological Status

GBI Interventions for Water Management – Categories and Priorities

5.143 GBI interventions for water fall into various headings, as shown in Table 6. The table includes spatial priorities, based on the analysis of issues for Principle 4 (Improving Water Quality) and Principle 1 (Nature-rich and Beautiful Places). The fact that a specific watercourse is named as a spatial priority does not mean that interventions elsewhere have no value – the challenge of enhancing water is great and wide-ranging and action everywhere is valuable.

Table 6: GBI Interventions for Water Management

GBI Intervention	Types of Activity	Spatial Priority in Study Area
Addressing Water Industry Discharges	Assisting the water industry to make capital improvements at treatment sites and discharge points, including deploying nature-based solutions such as bio-filters and biobeds to further cleanse water prior to discharge where feasible and beneficial.	To be determined through consultation with water industry and the EA.
Natural Flood Management	Deploying NFM techniques on farmland, upland habitats and local green spaces to reduce pressure on waste water infrastructure during storm events and create new habitats.	All waterbodies and watercourses, especially those shown as 'nature-poor' – see Figure 21
Green-Blue Infrastructure in New Development	Incorporating GBI in new developments e.g. SuDS, rainwater harvesting, NFM techniques, green/blue roofs.	All new development.
Retrofitting GBI in existing urban areas	Raingardens, SuDS-enabled civic trees, SuDS in local greenspaces and allotments, private householder actions such as water butts.	All towns, particularly Market Harborough and settlements bordering Leicester in the north of the District.
Farm Infrastructure Renewal	Assisting farmers and landowners to make capital improvements to their facilities (e.g. washdown areas) to reduce phosphorus, nitrogen, nutrient, pesticide and sediment emissions (see agricultural support case study.)	All sub-catchments but particularly the Stonton and neighbouring areas at highest catchment risk – see Figure 31

GBI Intervention	Types of Activity	Spatial Priority in Study Area
Farmland Management	Promoting soil management plans to increase organic carbon, use of multi-species winter cover crops and herbal leys. Healthy soil management will also sustain agricultural productivity in the face of drought.	All sub-catchments but particularly the Stonton and neighbouring areas at highest catchment risk – see Figure 31
River and Floodplain Restoration	Enabling landowners to implement river and floodplain regeneration techniques as part of their farming operations e.g. buffer strips, planting wet woodland, fencing-out riverbanks, removing weirs and other barriers to fish passage.	All sub-catchments but particularly those in the Upper Welland catchment around Market Harborough.
Local and district-wide drought resilience	Increasing understanding of and incentives for varied water storage and rainwater harvesting measures to reduce abstraction requirements for landowners and residents during droughts.	All areas in Harborough, particularly those with planned commercial and residential development.

Quality Summary

- 5.144 The catchment risk analysis shows that the Stonton Brook catchment is the highest risk in the District in terms of contributing to flooding and water quality issues downstream, with the neighbouring catchments to the east and west scoring next highest. None of the catchments in Harborough scored in the three lowest risk categories, which indicates that this is a serious issue across the area.
- 5.145 Water quality is also generally poor, with no watercourses or waterbodies rating above 'moderate'. The Upper Welland catchment is the largest and hosts the worst quality rivers, but there are also poor-quality rivers in the Soar and Avon catchments.

Principle 5 - A resilient and climate-positive place

Vision

GBI makes Harborough District's settlements more resilient and well-adapted to climate change. In rural and urban areas, our GBI helps to meet net-zero carbon targets. GBI itself is designed and managed to adapt to climate change.

Natural England Strategic level goals

To achieve resilient and climate positive places at a strategic level GI should:

- Be developed in collaboration with key stakeholders to meet national climate change objectives
- Take account of and be planned to respond to the long-term climate change projections in the area
- Contribute to water and transport strategies, policies, and plans

Headlines from Policy Review

- Multifunctional GBI is considered as a 'win-win' scenario to support sustainable development by reducing flooding and overheating, as well as supporting biodiversity and creating a pleasant environment for people.
- LCC aims to reach Net Zero across council functions by 2030 and county-wide by 2045.
- Leicestershire Net Zero Roadmap recognises the need to reduce vehicle mileage, cut emissions including in agricultural and water sectors, enhance ecosystems for biodiversity, air quality improvements and carbon sequestration.
- LCC aims to plant 700,000 trees to help towards the Net Zero target; plotting planting locations on an interactive map
- HDC declared a climate emergency in 2019 and aims to reach net zero across council operations by 2030.

Headlines from Stakeholder Engagement

- Space is needed for water and shade.
- Extreme weather exacerbates health inequalities.
- Tree and hedgerow planting upstream of the principal rivers is important for flood management.
- Woodland Cover should be increased for carbon capture, temperature regulation, and to mitigate flood risk.

- 5.146 There are three opportunities for Harborough’s GBI to be managed and enhanced to contribute to local net zero and climate resilience priorities:
- Increasing carbon stored in habitats (carbon sequestration);
 - Urban Greening for climate resilience; and
 - Future-proofing existing GBI.

Promoting carbon sequestration

- 5.147 Some of the most impactful changes that can be made to increase habitat carbon sequestration in the next two or three decades to 2050 are:
- establishment of new woodlands;
 - conversion of tilled or intensively grazed land to permanent grassland, especially in floodplains and on clay soils; and
 - creation of new wetland habitats such as floodplain meadows, reedbeds, wet woodland and scrub, and ponds⁴².
- 5.148 Tree planting can be targeted to connect existing fragments of woodland habitat and provide buffers around sensitive ancient woodland areas. Refer to Figure 36 for locations of woodland including the medieval Leighfield Forest.
- 5.149 Tree planting is favourable on lower grade, marginal and heavily sloping agricultural land, where it would have limited negative impact on food security and continued agricultural use of higher grade farmland. For example, marginal land such as slopes >10 degrees (Figure 7), and lower grade farmland (Agricultural Land Class (ALC) 3b and 4) and field corners lend themselves to planting of new woodland, or permanent grassland/scrub matrices. District-wide mapping of ALC 3b and 4 is not freely available but as a proxy, the Crop Map of England (Figure 22) shows “grassland” which is more likely to be of lower ALC than cereal and leguminous crops.
- 5.150 LCC aims to plant 700,000 trees (a tree for every person in the county to increase canopy cover, boost biodiversity and help achieve the county’s goal of becoming net zero by 2045⁴³. It is providing free trees for farmers and landowners, working closely with the Woodland Trust.
- 5.151 Floodplain meadows, wet woodlands and wetlands can be established in flood zones 2 and 3 (Figure 30).

42 Carbon-and-habitats-paper-v3.pdf (cieem.net)

43 Leicestershire County Council – Tree for every person campaign (Leicestershire County Council, 2023) <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/tree-for-every-person>

5.152 Larger open spaces, such as district parks, golf courses and other outdoor amenity spaces offer opportunities to relax intensive amenity mowing regimes e.g. No Mow May, planting new woodlands, establishing swales, or creating permanent wildflower areas; these can improve carbon sequestration, a measure that can contribute to the net zero strategies of the organisation owning or managing the open space. Figures 14-17 show larger open spaces in which there may be the potential to change the management regime for habitat carbon storage and sequestration.

Urban greening to support climate resilience

5.153 The District generally is extremely depleted in terms of tree and woodland cover. Figure 28 shows tree canopy cover by ward, which is mostly well below national average and benchmark. Figure 36 shows woodland cover across the District.

5.154 Tree-planting, raingardens and other habitat improvements in small towns are best achieved through numerous micro-scale initiatives, steered by the community but facilitated by the public sector with its access to land and expertise. Funding requires a blended approach of securing grants, developer contributions and sponsorship.

5.155 Householders and gardeners also have an important role to play, given the extent of private garden space across the District. Support for rainwater harvesting, micro green roofs on sheds, mini-wetlands and garden trees can be provided through promotional campaigns, local leadership and business sponsorship. Nervousness about tree-planting (subsidence, damage to drains, overshadowing) can be addressed through provision of information about selection of appropriate tree species.

5.156 Development has an important role in delivering urban greening. Most developments in the urban areas will be minor (<10 houses) and/or infill schemes. The requirement for mandatory BNG will encourage developers to make some extra on-site provision for urban trees and raingardens, but a 10% net gain requirement is unlikely to “move the dial” in the greening of urban areas because of the low baseline value of developments, so other policy tools such as the Urban Greening Factor or an Urban Tree Canopy Standard may be needed.

5.157 Tree Equity score is mapped in most urban areas and is promoted by the Woodland Trust⁴⁴. Figure 35 illustrates the process of calculating Tree Canopy Need based on the Equity Score and assessment of priority.

5.158 The goal is to provide all communities with equitable access to tree cover and greenery to provide health and wellbeing benefits such as relief from heat stress,

44 Is There Tree Equity Where You Live? - Woodland Trust

reduced air pollution, flood protection and further health benefits associated with GBI.

- 5.159 Tree equity seeks to highlight inequitable access to trees at neighbourhood level, starting with a baseline target of 30% canopy cover and then adjusting for population density to judge local need. This need is then compared to actual canopy cover and multiplied by a priority factor giving higher priority to areas with higher health risk and indicators of deprivation. The result is a score from 0-100 where 100 means there are enough trees for the local population.

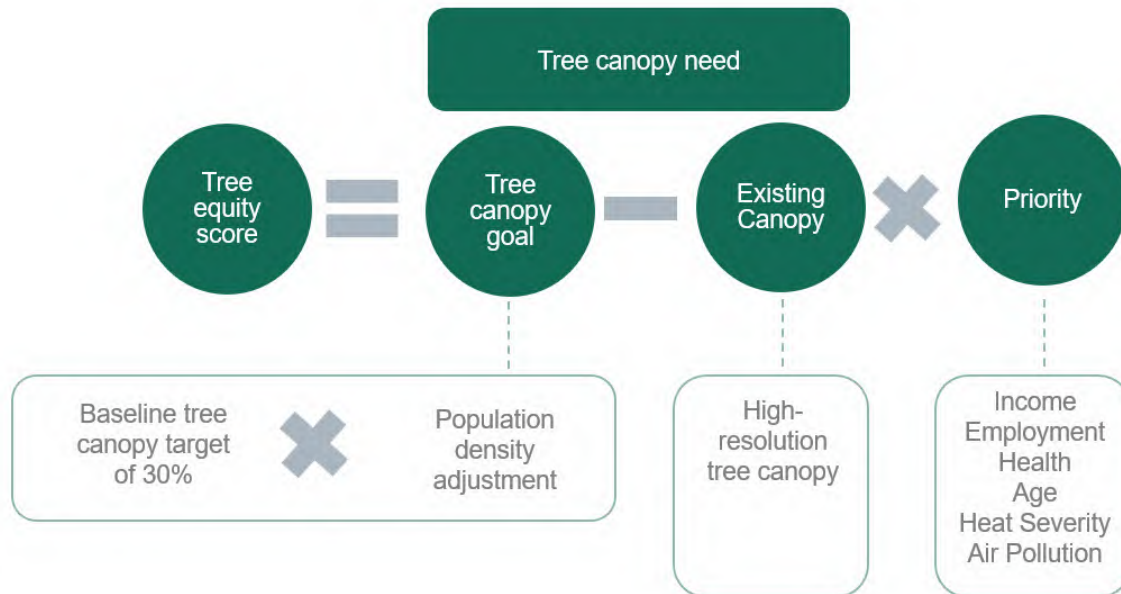


Figure 35: Tree Canopy Need

- 5.160 The only areas in Harborough District for which tree canopy cover information is currently available from the Woodland Trust are Scraftoft and Market Harborough. Figure 37 shows i) that all mapped areas score over 75, and ii) the yellow and orange areas show where tree planting could be targeted to address tree inequity.
- 5.161 It is also worth considering that some of the highest scoring areas are also under pressure from development, and that any development of those areas should consider maintain or improving existing tree equity.

Increasing capacity to accommodate climate change

- 5.162 As the UK faces rapid changes in the form of a warming climate and increasing population, there is increasing competition for space and need to ensure that existing and new green and blue spaces can accommodate the future needs of people and wildlife. Reviewing shortfalls in quality and value for sites which were assessed in the OSS will identify areas to uplift maintenance standards and access

to the district's open spaces, thereby making them more resilient to pressures and demands from a growing population and ongoing climate change.

Pests and Diseases especially Ash dieback

- 5.163 Plant health and biosecurity are an increasing concern and pose a significant threat to the continued health of our ecosystems. In recent years fungal diseases like *Chalara fraxinea* (ash dieback) and pests like oak processionary moth (OPM) have been particularly concerning for native tree populations and/or public health.
- 5.164 Changing climate conditions can provide favourable conditions for imported pathogens, whilst putting stress on existing mature trees and other native plants, reducing their resilience.

Species choice

- 5.165 In protecting our valuable ecosystems there is a need both to conserve existing native species and ensure our landscapes are adapting to a warming climate. Areas that are in open spaces, close to nature reserves and LWSs should normally be enhanced with locally appropriate species that support the ecosystem and reflect local character.
- 5.166 In urban areas that are subject to more extreme temperatures and commonly include amenity space and privately owned gardens, there is more scope for using a wider variety of plants (like Mediterranean or steppe plant communities) that have evolved to deal with more extreme conditions on the continent alongside natives. These can provide extended flowering seasons for pollinators⁴⁵.
- 5.167 The Leicestershire & Rutland Invasive Non-Native Species Initiative (LINNSI) has been awarded nearly £27,000 across two projects to collect data and train local volunteers to manage INNS along the Soar and The Wreake in the northern catchments of the District.

Policy

- 5.168 The above considerations could trigger two responses:
- Ensuring that management of the district's civic trees is well-resourced in respect of disease inspections with rapid response where necessary, and appropriate tree replacement ratios; and
 - Policy requirements for new landscaping that promote native species, but also take account of their future resilience to climate change and the opportunity to use a wider palette of well-adapted species in urban areas.

⁴⁵ [Plants for Pollinators advice and downloadable lists / RHS Gardening](#)

Case Study – Wilder Carbon

The Wilder Carbon initiative is a collaborative project that various Wildlife Trusts including Kent Wildlife Trust have undertaken with business and academic partners to explore how businesses can invest in nature restoration in a way that can effectively tackle the climate and biodiversity crises. A 'Wilder Carbon Standard' has been created to allow buyers to invest in 'units' to fund reliable and effective conservation projects that will lock up carbon for the long term and provide real improvements for biodiversity. Buyers must demonstrate that they are already substantially reducing their own emissions, and the scheme encourages an appreciation of the value of natural resources.

Quality Summary

- 5.169 Tree canopy cover is very low (4%) across the District compared to the national average (17%), although this is to be expected to some extent in a region dedicated to food production. The coverage for Leicestershire is 6%.
- 5.170 Tree equity scores in Market Harborough and Scraftoft are good although current development is likely to increase population. If trees are removed, then replacement canopy cover should be considered to maintain good tree equity - see Wycombe District Canopy Cover Assessment above.

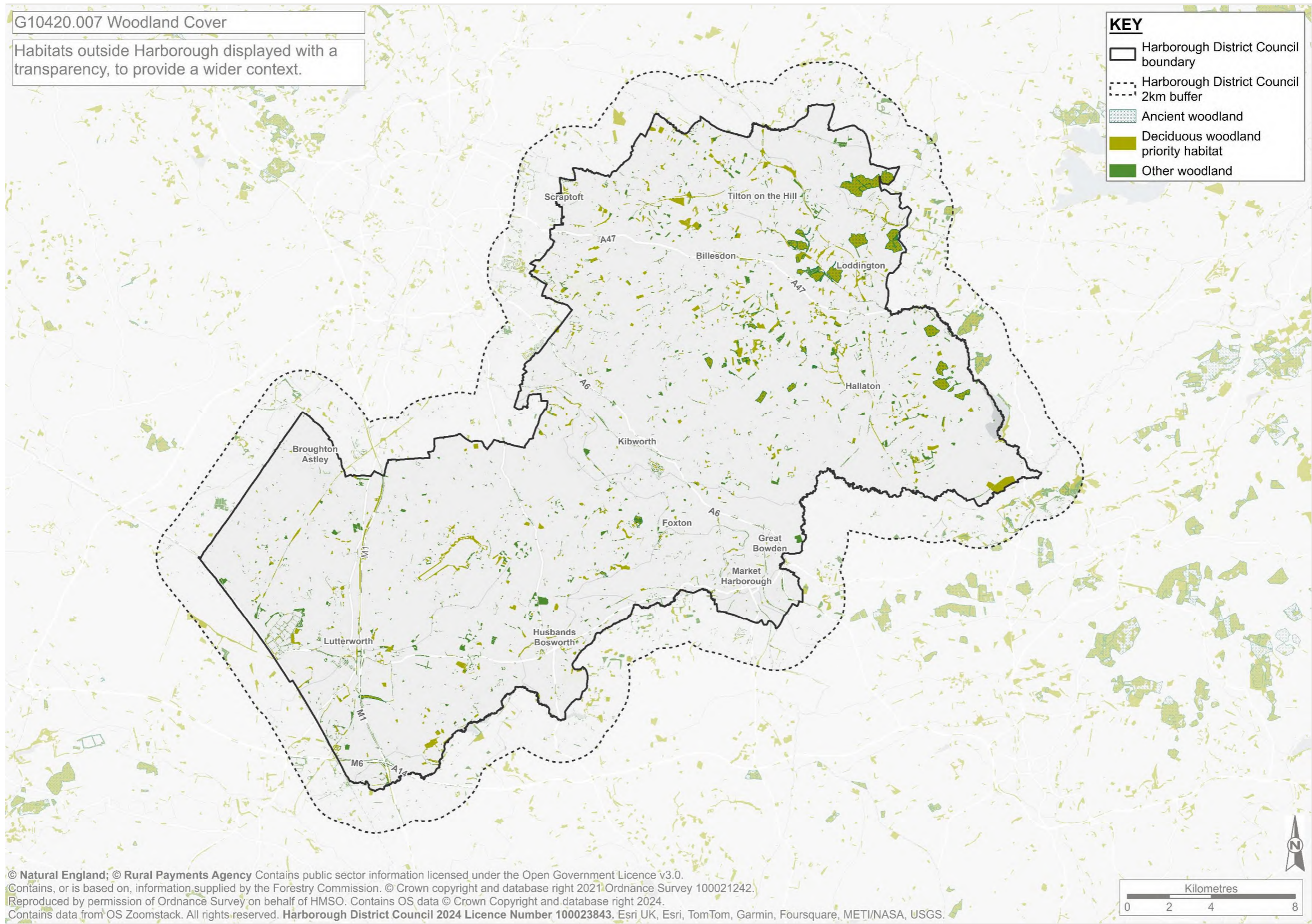


Figure 35: Woodland Cover

G10420.028.1 Tree Equity

Blank areas indicate no available tree equity score. Tree equity score taken from: <https://uk.treeequityscore.org/>

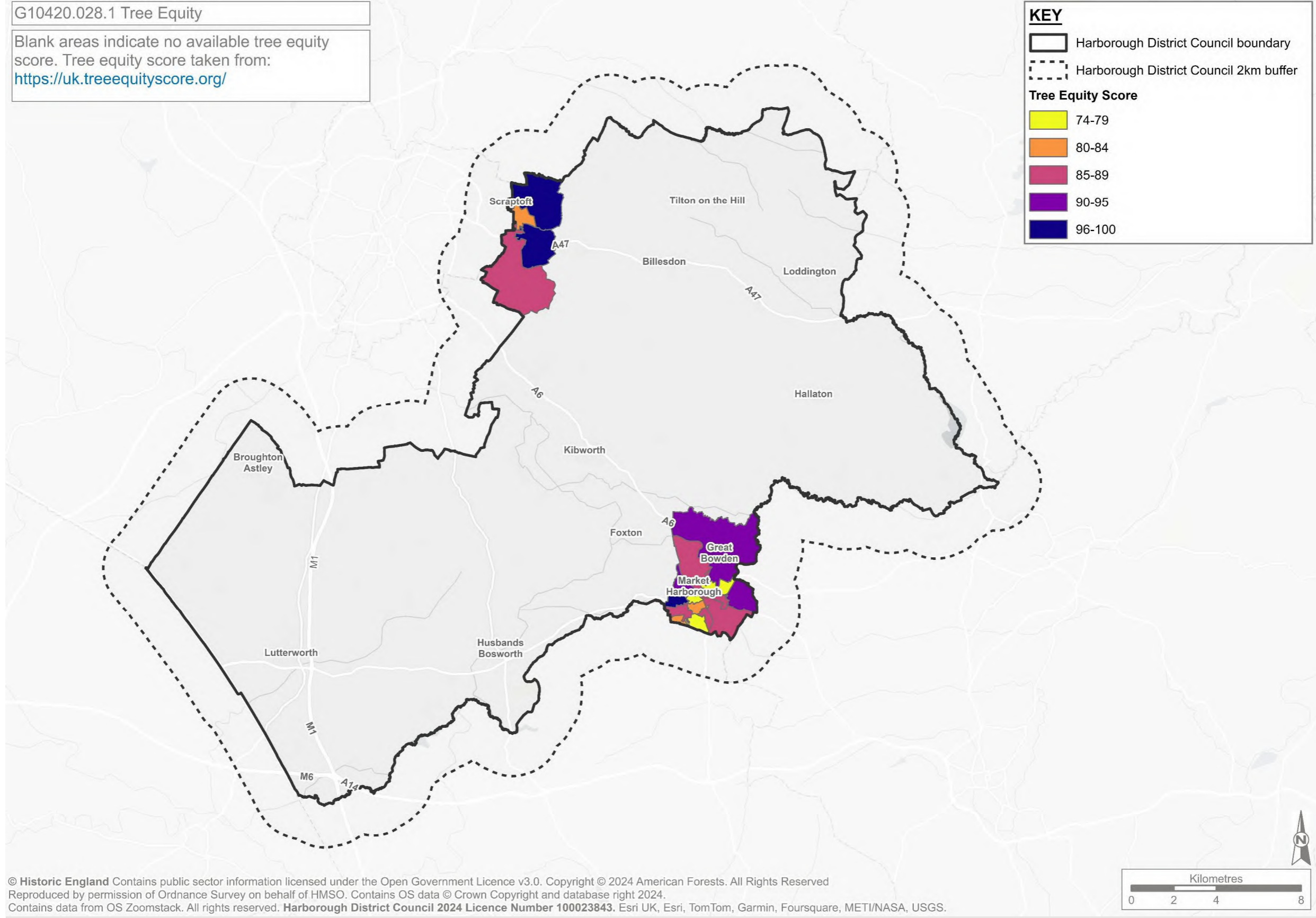


Figure 37: Tree Equity Map

6.0 What good GBI looks like

6.1 Using the mapping, spatial analysis, policy review and insights from engagement with local stakeholders it is possible to identify Harborough District's highest priorities for GBI (in no particular order) as:

- Restoring biodiversity and ecosystem integrity;
- Protecting and enhancing tree cover;
- Enhancing water and soil quality;
- Incorporating GBI into new developments; and
- Enabling active lifestyles and accessibility to GBI.

6.2 The analysis which led to these priorities is set out below, and the five priorities are equal and interconnected. Where possible GBI projects should address as many priorities as possible and include as many relevant stakeholders as possible.

Analysis of the District's GBI

6.3 The strengths and weaknesses of Harborough's GBI, along with opportunities and challenges facing the District's natural environment and those who care for it, are summarised in Table 7.

Table 7: SWOC Analysis

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Good status of SSSIs ■ Good distribution of PRoW across most of the District ■ Canals and reservoirs provide good access to blue space ■ Rivers and canals provide great habitats and networks for nature ■ HDC has first farming cluster in the County ■ Good partnerships and active community groups, with support from local government agencies and groups ■ Ancient historic landscapes provide better wildlife provision than land under more modern farming practices ■ Younger generation of farmers are well informed about environmental issues ■ Good engagement and understanding of GBI and recognition in policy ■ Green Schools programme has been engaging school groups with their local environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Low tree canopy overall ■ Poor drainage from predominantly clay soils ■ Low coverage of area designated or protected for nature, and poor distribution around the District ■ Poor connectivity between designated areas ■ Poor access to woodland and natural spaces for local communities ■ Poor management and accessibility of watercourses ■ GBI deficiencies in the centre, south and west of the District – although there may be unrecognised 'hotspots' for biodiversity ■ Connection of small rural villages to larger centres with better accessible GBI provision ■ M1 and major roads create barriers for nature ■ Market Harborough is particularly vulnerable to flooding ■ Creating new GBI is expensive and many groups are underfunded

Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Expand woodland in the northeast ■ Create accessible community woodlands nearer towns ■ Bring street trees to villages and towns ■ Strengthen hedge and tree networks in agricultural areas ■ Take advantage of canal network and disused railway lines for wildlife connectivity ■ Improve accessibility of canals and rivers for leisure and wellbeing ■ Develop social prescribing ■ Create circular cycle routes aligned with national cycle network ■ Improve PRow around Husbands Bosworth ■ Create a green bridge for wildlife over M1 (or other major roads) ■ Focus growth on areas with existing infrastructure to optimise developer funding ■ Incorporate GBI into strategic development sites ■ Create Country Parks in Market Harborough and north of the District ■ Create strategic BNG offsetting sites within existing ecological networks ■ Circular foraging routes and engagement with children ■ Empower and support community hubs such as Harborough Woodland as an access point to nature ■ Create new narrative around positive nature transformation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Polluted water courses from development and agriculture ■ GBI assets not protected by policy may be lost to development ■ High pressure from development ■ Lack of quantitative data to inform decisions ■ Duplication of work from multiple agencies ■ Over-complicated incentive and finance systems unsuited to smaller spaces and organisations ■ Cuts in funding for the canal network ■ Skills shortages ■ Poorly managed or disconnected GBI in new developments may be ineffective

- 6.4 Three key maps illustrate the spatial priorities and opportunities for management, enhancement and expansion of GBI in the District. These are:
- Figure 18 - GBI Assets and Typologies;
 - Figure 23 - GBI for Nature and Water; and
 - Figure 38 - GBI for People (Access, Health, Economy, Community and Climate Resilience).
- 6.5 GBI Assets and Typologies illustrates the key components of the district's GBI, where a policy priority is to safeguard key features and ensure multifunctional landscape management. The map includes:
- Protected and Designated Sites e.g. SSSI;
 - Ancient Woodland;
 - Priority Habitats;
 - Grand Union Canal;
 - Strategic River Corridors (Welland, Sence, Soar, Swift and Avon);
 - Other statutory main rivers and their floodplains;
 - Saddington, Stanford and Eyebrook reservoirs;
 - Dismantled railway lines and major recreational footpaths/cycleways;
 - Local Green Space (LGS) sites; and
 - Open Space sites.
- 6.6 GBI for Nature and Water captures some of the main themes arising from analysis of the 'Why' principles 1 and 4, showing areas where creation and enhancement of habitats will improve nature connectivity, water quality, flood risk and landscape recovery and thus help to deliver the '30 by 30' goals. Policy priority is to support creation of GBI in these areas and promote investment into natural flood management and sustainable land management. Most of these areas are rural so partnership working between landowners, community groups and environmental trusts, and the water sector is essential. The map includes:
- Leighfield Forest (Living Landscape);
 - North West of Leighfield Forest Biodiversity Hotspot;
 - South Harborough Biodiversity Hotspot;
 - Nature-poor watercourse corridors; and
 - The highest-risk waterbody catchments (those scoring 8 or more in the catchment risk ranking).

6.7 The above categories of GBI priority overlap and indicate that creation of GBI can offer multiple benefits in terms of biodiversity, water management and landscape distinctiveness.

6.8 GBI for People (Access, Health, Economy, Community and Climate resilience) captures some of the main themes arising from analysis of the 'Why' principles 2,3 and 5, focussing on settlements where creation and management of GBI brings socio-economic and health benefits. Policy priority is to support creation and enhancement of GBI assets, usually small at a scale such as civic trees and raingardens, that offer benefits to communities and the local economy. The map includes:

- Green and blue visitor attractions and historical assets and attractions;
- The Grand Union Canal;
- Town, District and Local Centres;
- Open Space Sites >2 hectares;
- Wards where tree canopy cover is less than 10%; and
- Areas where inequality of access to local green spaces falls into the Low (L1, L2 and L3) categories (using Natural England's mapping of population density and multiple deprivation).

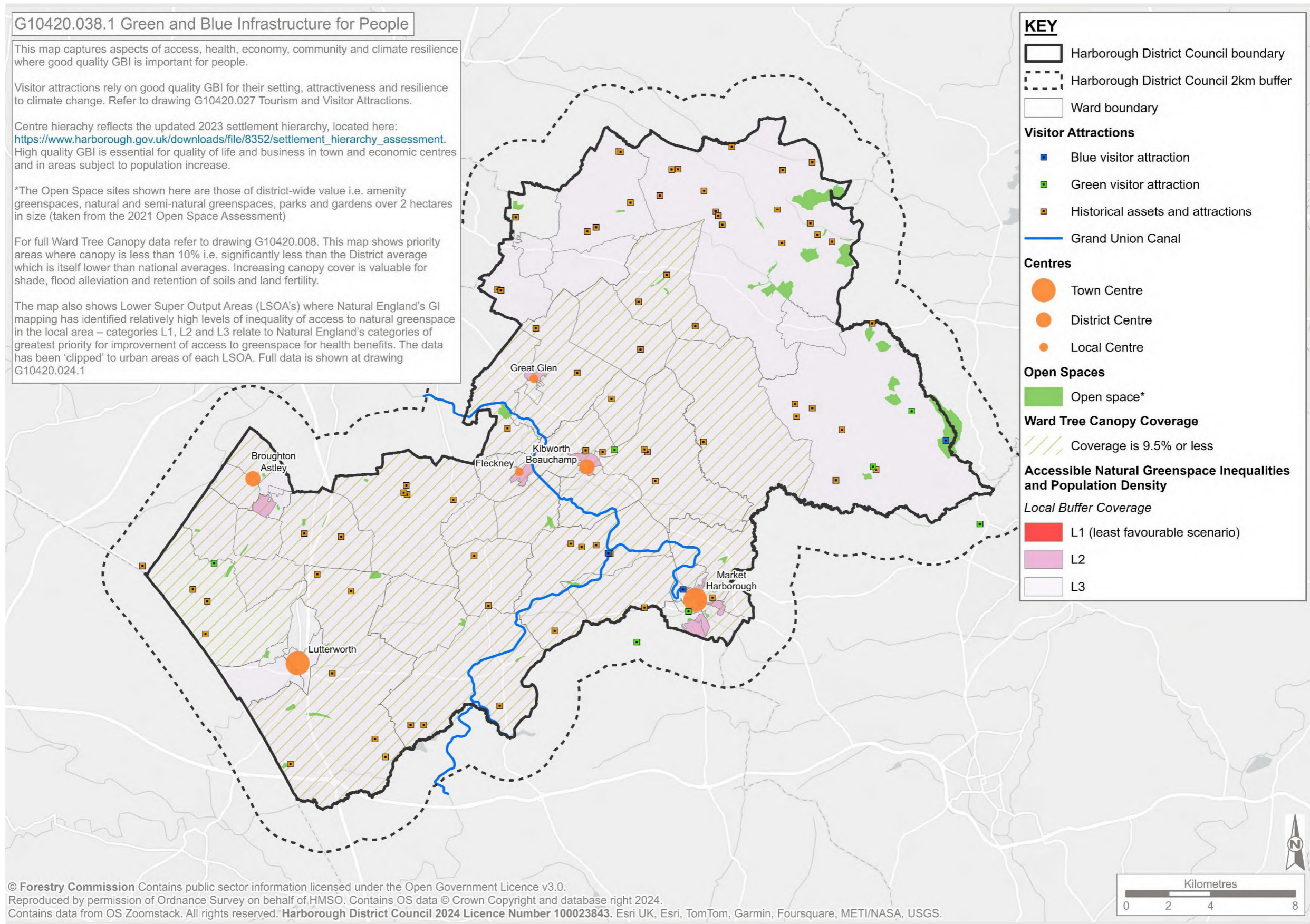


Figure 38: GBI for People (Access, Health, Economy, Community and Climate Resilience)

‘What’ principles

6.9 The five ‘What’ Principles set out what ‘good’ GBI should look like.

The five descriptive ‘What’ Principles in the Natural England GI Framework are:

- Multifunctional: GBI should provide a variety of functions that are relevant to local needs. This is particularly important in urban areas or places where green spaces are scarce and in high demand.
- Varied: the wide range of possible spaces, routes and features that can make up a GBI network should provide for specific local needs in appropriate places.
- Connected: GBI networks need to join up to function well at small and large scale. They need to connect all the benefits of nature with those that need them.
- Accessible: everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy green and blue spaces. GBI needs to create places that are safe, welcoming and inclusive.
- Responds to Local Character: good quality landscapes will use GBI to protect, enhance and conserve distinctive local spaces which make people feel proud of their local community and identity.

Multi-functional GBI

6.10 Good GBI should be multifunctional. At a strategic level this means:

- Combining evidence from a wide range of sources;
- Highlighting how enhancements can be delivered across relevant strategies and delivery plans;
- Identifying inequalities in provision which need addressing;
- Bringing together expertise and ensuring that goals are shared by stakeholders; and
- Being planned as a network of features which work together in combination and across areas.

Case Study: Urban GreenUp, Liverpool

The Urban GreenUp Project provides a demonstration of how nature-based solutions can be applied in urban areas to provide solutions to multiple problems faced in developed areas. Interventions such as street trees, green roofs and green walls to provide pollinator services and passive cooling. Ground level water interventions such as roadside SuDS are designed to provide new green routes for pedestrians and cyclists. Carefully designed street planting also provides shade, capture carbon and filter pollutants.

- 6.11 Much of the GBI in Harborough already serves more than one function. Nature based solutions such as the NFM project in Smeeton Westerby show how large scale rural GBI can provide flood management, new habitats and support people and business across the catchment. The Urban GreenUP case study from Liverpool presents a pioneering example of how urban nature-based solutions can benefit more developed areas. Guidance to support policy development for multifunctional GBI is available from Natural England⁴⁶.
- 6.12 Table 8 lists how multifunctionality can be optimised for different types of space. Some spaces can be difficult to adapt to new functions if they are very small or have particular sensitivities, but as a general rule design and management practices should seek to increase multifunctionality.

Table 8: Optimising multifunctionality in different types of GBI

GBI typology	Primary functions	Further GBI opportunities
Parks	Recreation Wellbeing Community space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Water sensitive design features ■ Ecological enhancements – wildflowers, hedgerows, unmown grass
Footpaths and cycleways	Active travel Wellbeing Sustainable transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Biodiversity enhancement ■ Tourism
Nature reserves and natural spaces	Biodiversity enhancement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Flood mitigation ■ Water quality improvement ■ Wellbeing ■ Education
Watercourses	Flood management Water quality Ecological connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recreation ■ Active travel ■ Health & wellbeing ■ Restoring river/floodplain connections through full restoration
Woodlands	Biodiversity Carbon sequestration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Air quality improvement ■ Wellbeing ■ Food production ■ Passive cooling
Ponds and wetlands	Flood Management Habitat creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Drought resilience ■ Education and engagement

⁴⁶ Corporate document template - branded with cover (accessible)

GBI typology	Primary functions	Further GBI opportunities
Farmland	Food production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Biodiversity corridors ■ Water quality improvements ■ Soil ecosystem improvements

Case Study: Uttlesford GBI Policy

Uttlesford Local Plan has included a policy on GBI that recognises the importance of natural capital, connected networks and the multiple functions of nature. Core Policy 39: Green and Blue Infrastructure describes the role GBI plays in responding to climate change, supporting biodiversity, managing flood risk, protecting and enhancing heritage assets, supporting sustainable transport options and protecting open space for community sports and recreation.

Point ii. of the policy requires all developments to 'ensure that green and blue infrastructure is multi-functional, accessible to all and designed to meet local needs, taking into account the views of key stakeholders.' This is important to ensure that opportunities are not missed by focussing entirely on solving a single issue, such as flooding. Point i. of the policy requires early consideration in the design process which is also important to reduce costly mistakes or alterations later in the development, and ensure that good quality GBI that is relevant to local needs is delivered without unnecessary cost or waste.

[Draft Local Plan Document Branding](#)

- 6.13 The Biodiversity Quality Assessment discussed in Chapter 5 (principle 1) describes how some of the irregular field patterns, ancient hedgerows and ridge and furrow fields that survive from the medieval landscape in the southwest of the district provide an underappreciated resource for nature, important heritage and landscape character features, whilst continuing in farming use.
- 6.14 Welland Park in Market Harborough is a good example of an urban space that is used for recreation, community events, and opportunity for access to the river. Flora and fauna are managed along the river network and habitat improvement works alongside and at confluences of polluted tributaries provide an opportunity for the vegetation and oxygenation to improve quality of water in the Welland, alongside a basic need to address the causes of pollution upstream.

Varied GBI

- 6.15 Good GBI should be varied. At a strategic level this means:
- Combining evidence from a wide range of sources;

- Highlighting how enhancements can be delivered across relevant strategies and delivery plans;
 - Identifying inequalities in provision which need addressing;
 - Bringing together expertise and ensuring that goals are shared by stakeholders; and
 - Being planned as a network of features which work together in combination; and across areas.
- 6.16 GBI is inherently responsive to local conditions and needs. Across the varying terrain, landscape character and demographics of the District, it is important to consider a wide range of land management solutions to maximise the public benefits of GBI.
- 6.17 For example, varied GBI is particularly important to meet the needs of children and young people. As they develop and their needs, abilities and interests change, young people need to be engaged with different types of spaces⁴⁷.
- 6.18 Part of this need can be met by playgrounds targeted at particular ages. However there is increasing importance attributed to 'play along the way' and incidental opportunities for socialising outside. 'Play sufficiency' can be achieved best by consulting with a range of young people from the area in question. This may be particularly helpful where there are recorded open space deficiencies in smaller rural areas with less planned development.
- 6.19 Local GBI networks have been assessed in Chapter 5, and the OSS discussed under principle 2 provides a good picture of the variety and distribution of greenspaces. It provides clear directions for the creation of new GBI facilities for people.

Connected GBI

- 6.20 Good GBI should be connected. At a strategic level this means:
- Achieving a measurable increase in ecosystem services through the creation, enhancement, and connectivity of new and existing sites;
 - Identifying and describing how investment will form an integrated network to provide multiple benefits;
 - Using up to date information on the quality and condition of open space and natural capital assets to establish connections across stakeholder interests that will make GI planning more effective and integrated;

⁴⁷ Play Sufficiency, teenagers and public space - Ludicology

- Being clear where and how GI needs enhancing, who it benefits and inequalities in provision which need addressing;
 - Demonstrating how land allocation and regeneration priorities connect and contribute to the delivery of GBI;
 - Showing how and where the mix of GI functions and services are provided and relate to each other as part of a network; and
 - Providing strong policy protection for the existing GI network.
- 6.21 Rivers, canals and disused railways identified in Chapter 5 can form the basis for linking different GBI investments and opportunities ranging from new developments, town retrofit and rural restoration projects.
- 6.22 Tree planting and retrofit measures for street greening and flood mitigation can be targeted at those areas with identified scarce supply in Chapter 5. The variety and multifunctionality of measures is also important for connectivity. Towns prone to flooding such as Market Harborough might consider street level rain gardens (see Chapter 7 'Design'), whereas areas of lower flood risk might look at community planting and food-growing.
- 6.23 Existing GBI assets that are not already protected by policy can be referenced in Local and Neighbourhood plans when they are reviewed.

Accessible GBI

- 6.24 Good GBI should normally be accessible. At a strategic level this means:
- Responding to the needs of less mobile users and those with long term health conditions;
 - Encouraging inclusive use and considering the needs of different under-represented groups including older people, people living with disabilities, low-income families, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds;
 - Establishing a feeling of safety for all non-motorised users;
 - Overcoming barriers to entry and enjoyment of spaces; particularly through inclusive detailed information and design;
 - Offering opportunities to interact with the natural world for recreation, education, or relaxation;
 - Connecting different communities together; and
 - Supporting local community pride and cohesion.

6.25 The Sensory Trust provides guidance on how to make spaces as accessible as possible. The indicators of good practice⁴⁸ in their 'By All Reasonable Means' document can be used to ensure new and existing GBI is optimised for inclusive use and can help improve existing greenspaces for those who need them most (see Chapter 5, Principle 2). They are:

- Toilets for all visitors;
- Regular accessibility review and response to issues raised;
- Regular and high-quality maintenance;
- Choice of routes with varied distance, challenge and visitor experience;
- Good wayfinding; and
- Seating.

Responding to Harborough's Local Character

6.26 Good GBI should respond to the local character. At a strategic level this means:

- Taking account of the Landscape Character Assessment and the narrative from Principle 1: Nature-rich, beautiful places
- Aiming to strengthen overall existing character historic and beautiful places
- Helping achieve targeted enhancements in character in areas of poor quality

6.27 Harborough's historic agricultural landscape forms a strong part of the identity of the area and is one reason people want to live here. Sensitive development that enhances the local landscape and increases access to nature is already encouraged in policy.

6.28 The Biodiversity Quality Assessment 2022⁴⁹ sheds further light on ways in which the hedgerows and irregular field patterns can benefit nature.

6.29 Locally driven initiatives such as 'Community Magic' support the local character in two ways. They provide real insight into what the needs are from the local community, and engage local people with their landscape as part of their identity.

6.30 'Community Magic'⁵⁰ describes how local community initiatives such as Harborough Woodland are focussed not just on the tree planting or other nature restoration projects they carry out, but on building positive community relationships and connections. They have planted approximately 42,000 trees and implemented approximately 15 large NFM schemes around Market Harborough and the District.

48 ByAllReasonableMeansEnglandAug2020.pdf (sensorytrust.org.uk)

49 Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland biodiversity quality assessment report

50 Harborough's community magic

7.0 How to do Good GBI

- 7.1 The five 'How' Principles in the Natural England GI Framework provide ideas to guide how good GBI should be achieved. This GBI study provides evidence and ideas on how to develop a GBI strategy.

The five 'How' Principles in the Natural England GI Framework are:

- **Partnership and Vision;** GBI should be designed and delivered according to a vision that has been formed through collaboration between a diverse range of citizens from different backgrounds, and professionals across different sectors and disciplines.
- **Evidence;** scientific evidence and good land use practice should be followed when planning GBI. Sound understanding of the benefits of current assets and data on local environmental, social and economic needs will enable resources to be used effectively.
- **Plan Strategically;** GBI assets should be secured in local strategy and policy at all scales as a mainstream consideration in environmental, social and economic policy. This should address inequalities in GBI provision and create sustainable places for current and future generations.
- **Design;** GBI should form part of beautiful, well-designed places that are designed to enhance the natural, historic and cultural character of the landscape or townscape.
- **Managed, valued and evaluated;** there should be a strong business case for GBI assets to secure funding for long-term management and maintenance. Good governance needs to be in place, monitoring and evaluation of asset performance which can be understood and celebrated by local communities.

Partnership and Vision

- 7.2 GBI involves many partners so collaboration for a shared vision is essential. It should:

- Use a partnership approach to establish a long-term vision for how green infrastructure will address core challenges;
- Have an inclusive engagement and consultation strategy based on thorough stakeholder mapping;
- Aim to strengthen communication networks to build knowledge sharing and joint outcomes;
- Promote a GI approach to strategic outcomes in the policies of contributing organisations; and
- Provide information which promotes sustained involvement of stakeholders.

- 7.3 There are several voluntary and community organisations which contribute to GBI across the District as outlined in earlier chapters.
- 7.4 Social prescribing is a way of connecting people to their local communities and environments in a way that meets their mental and physical health needs. This could be explored more in Harborough. Currently there is a website for self-help to enable people to connect with local volunteer opportunities across Leicestershire⁵¹. There is also an action in the Harborough Health and Wellbeing Action Plan to develop blue social prescribing activity session around the canals and waterways. These could be extended to green spaces as well according to demand in local areas and linked with volunteer groups such as community gardening projects and Harborough Woodland.
- 7.5 A central GBI steering group or champion could be considered to coordinate groups that have cross-cutting themes, and are working at very different scales. One way to approach this is to appoint a GBI champion to liaise with communities and developers when consulting on their masterplans and greenspace proposals. Otherwise consultants specialising in community engagement can act as an intermediary, or some developers may already have good local contacts and conduct good long term consultation without an intermediary. Cambridge Youth Engagement Service has won awards for encouraging participation in the planning process⁵² and there is a free toolkit available to help improve engagement with young people in consultation around local developments⁵³.

Evidence Based

- 7.6 Strategic GBI needs to be based on evidence to ensure that resources are used as effectively as possible:
- Evidence should be used to establish a baseline for quantity and provision of GI in an area;
 - The current functions and benefits those assets are delivering should be identified;
 - The priorities and needs of communities should be mapped;
 - Evidence is developed to support conservation of assets currently providing important services;
 - Enhancement of those assets that could deliver better services is evidenced; and

51 Joy - Social Prescribing - Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust (leicspart.nhs.uk)

52 Appendix+E+GCSPS_Youth+Engagement+Report_Spinney+School_070324_V2.pdf

53 Free Youth Engagement Toolkit: "Voice, Opportunity, Power" - Wesport - page 1

- Creation of new assets in areas of identified deficiency is supported by evidence.
- 7.7 This study provides a firm evidence base to identify priorities for action in terms of the five principles of GBI benefit.
- 7.8 For some priorities, further evidence on needs and best practice is required. The narrative at Chapter 5 refers to some evidence gaps, for example:
 - Quality of access to ProW; and
 - Social prescribing needs.
- 7.9 The detailed measurement of ecosystem services and natural capital value is a complex but important task. It can help determine quantitative, robust information from which investment decisions can be made and progress monitored.
- 7.10 One way to approach this valuation is to create a Natural Capital Investment Plan. Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) has already produced a high-level strategic assessment of natural capital assets across the county⁵⁴. This study provides a roadmap for developing an investment plan, which would provide a detailed view of the supply and demand of ecosystem services to enable more targeted investment. Greater Manchester Combined Authority has produced a natural capital investment plan which shows how particular finance models can be applied to support different types of investment⁵⁵.
- 7.11 Fields in Trust has undertaken projects to explain how the different types of value are associated with parks. Following the example of London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Birmingham City Council had their parks assessed with a conclusion that they deliver £24 returns to society for every £1 invested in them⁵⁶.

Strategic Planning

- 7.12 GBI is already included in the NPPF and its value is recognised in many other strategies (see Appendix A). However, GBI is still a relatively new concept and its fundamental importance as planetary life-support is not necessarily understood or valued in the same way as built infrastructure, or healthcare and education services are widely recognised to be.
- 7.13 To integrate GBI into the fullest range of policies, it can be useful to undertake a simple policy-mapping exercise to show the of relationships between different GBI

54 LLEP-High-Level-Natural-Capital-Assessment.pdf

55 Natural Capital Investment Plan Executive Summary - GM Green City

56 True value of city's parks and open spaces calculated at £11billion | Birmingham City Council

themes in policy. This would help to make, maintain, or strengthen links between GBI and wider policy and strategy.

- 7.14 The mapping exercise can help to develop specific elements of a “supportive policy list”. This can set out what role GBI can play, map out stakeholder interests and links and help to communicate the relevance of GBI to the widest range of policy makers and businesses.
- 7.15 GBI supports and should be supported by all areas of local policy and should be promoted within all department strategies across the council. Blackpool Council has demonstrated how this can work (see below) and have embedded green infrastructure in their planning framework through a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)⁵⁷

Case Study – Blackpool’s GBI Strategy and Action Plan integrated with local Town Centre Regeneration

Blackpool is a coastal town balancing a thriving tourism industry, local community needs and space for wildlife in its busy urban centre.

The first GBI strategy was published in 2019 and was accompanied by an action plan providing details on how the strategic objectives would be achieved. Tasks were assigned to lead council departments and stakeholder groups. Progress was reviewed in 2023/24 and a refreshed strategy and updated action plan provided SMART measurable objectives with defined timescales. The GBI strategy is a collaborative effort, supported by department representatives across the council and is referred to in many of the town’s local policies and strategies. Notably it feeds through into the Town Centre Strategy for growth and regeneration.

Appendix A of the Town Centre Action Plan includes a whole section (1B) on environment, which builds in GBI and other environmental considerations to the integral development of the town.

Appendix A Town Centre Action Plan - 6th February 2023.xlsx (blackpool.gov.uk)

- 7.16 Local Plan policy can also set standards for quantity and quality of GBI provision and management. These standards can be used to guide new development and to focus investment and developer contributions towards GBI programmes to tackle needs and deficiencies. An appraisal of possible GBI standards is given at Table 9 below.
- 7.17 The standards referred to in the Table 9 are all available at Natural England’s Green Infrastructure homepage.

⁵⁷ Greening Blackpool SPD adopted May 2022

Table 9: Consideration of potential GBI Standards in Harborough District Planning Policy

GBI Standard	Description and application to Harborough
S1 Green Infrastructure Strategy Standard	This GBI study has been drawn up in accordance with the NE standard. The emerging GBI strategy should continue to follow Natural England Guidance.
S2 Accessible Greenspace Standard	The HDC OSS covers part of this standard. The Local Plan could go further by highlighting specific local priorities and GBI assets in need of improvement.
S3 Urban Nature Recovery Standard	As the LNRS develops, this standard may be appropriate to apply to larger settlements
S4 Urban Greening Factor Standard	<p>This could be particularly helpful for the major growth areas where development is proposed on agricultural land.</p> <p>Application of BNG policy alone is unlikely to deliver significant biodiversity uplift, nor will it necessarily improve tree cover or surface water management. This is because the growth areas have a low BNG baseline and the statutory metric can be satisfied by implementing predominantly grassland schemes. Thus the UGF could be a useful additional policy requirement to secure more tree-planting and natural SuDS.</p> <p>Natural England guidance⁵⁸ provides a review of local council implementation of UGF policies, which typically assign target scores of 0.3 for commercial developments, 0.4 for residential developments and 0.5 for developments on greenfield sites (in the case of London Borough of Sutton).</p>
S5 Urban Tree Canopy Cover Standard	This is useful for ensuring all residents have good access to tree canopy cover, particularly in identified areas with poor tree equity (<80%) and higher health risks (identified via IMD and Health and Wellbeing data).

58 NERR132 Edition 1 Urban Greening Factor for England - Development and Technical Analysis (11).pdf

Design

- 7.18 Good design will successfully weave GBI into new developments and spaces in a way that reflects local character, values and needs and is engaging for users and residents.
- 7.19 This is where the linking of the social, environmental and economic benefits of GBI will be realised. For example, to enable active healthy lifestyles GBI must combine with design guidance on heritage, social value and commerce to achieve:
- Co-location of community facilities
 - Network of multifunctional open space
 - High quality streets and spaces
 - Appropriate infrastructure
 - Active buildings
 - Management, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation
 - Activity promotion and local champions
- 7.20 There is an increasing number of resources available to support good GBI design. Natural England's Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide⁵⁹ is a useful reference for GBI design at catchment, neighbourhood and development-scales.
- 7.21 Building with Nature (BwN) provides planners and developers with a framework of 12 design principles and evidence-based guidance on delivering high quality GI. GBI policy for the district could consider requiring BwN assessment of masterplans for the major growth areas where it is likely to be particularly effective⁶⁰.
- 7.22 Consultation highlighted improvements to seating provision, which is compatible with advice for making spaces more inviting to women and girls. There are further resources available from Make Space for Girls⁶¹.
- 7.23 It can be difficult to design in street trees without conflict with services, particularly in populated urban areas. The Trees and Design Action Group (TDAG)⁶² explores ways to combat air pollution with clever planting design on congested roads.
- 7.24 Whether development is planned in an already congested urban space or expanding into more sensitive rural locations, green roofs can provide a way to take advantage of otherwise vacant space on the top of buildings to provide ecosystem

59 Natural England Green Infrastructure Planning and Design Guide 2023

60 Planners — Building with Nature

61 <https://www.makespaceforgirls.co.uk/>

62 First Steps in Urban Air Quality - Trees and Design Action Group

services. GRO guidelines are regularly updated to support industry professionals achieving BNG and local ecological objectives with well-considered biodiverse roofs.

- 7.25 The design themes, principles and standards mentioned above can be built into the Local Design Code, as required by the National Model Design Code.

Case Study – Design Guides and Standards

Design guides and standards are tools which local planning authorities can use to embed good GBI practice in local developments from an early stage.

[Ebbsfleet Design Guide](#) is easily accessible online and provides a clear overview of its 'Garden City' themes according to local priorities. This format could be adapted by HDC if appropriate and could easily incorporate stronger biodiversity themes and other issues discussed in this study. Each theme provides a checklist for designers to help them create good quality plans and increase the likelihood of successful planning outcomes.

Essex Design Guide provides easy online access covering relevant themes but has gone a step further and created GI Standards. This was part of a trial exercise for the development of Natural England's GI Standards, which can also be referred to in planning policy (described in 14.12 and table 7 above). Essex County Council gained a Building with Nature Policy Award for these standards.

[Essex Green Infrastructure Non-Technical Standards 2022](#)
[Essex Green Infrastructure Standards 2022](#)

Management and Evaluation

- 7.26 Long term management is essential to ensure that the multiple benefits of GBI are delivered to local communities. It is necessary to consider:
- Governance;
 - Management;
 - Valuation;
 - Funding; and
 - Monitoring and evaluation.
- 7.27 There are limits to council adoption of greenspaces in Harborough District, which means that an increasing focus on community ownership and stewardship

arrangements may be possible. Guidance on best practice for stewardship is available from the TCPA⁶³.

- 7.28 Local stewardship has the advantage of enabling local communities to ensure that green spaces are serving their needs. It is important that these projects are well resourced and informed, and connected with the wider picture of GBI activity. The pro-active and successful community GBI groups may be well placed to consider this.

Table 10: Green Space Stewardship Options

Local Planning Authority Adoption	The Local Planning Authority will adopt and manage the development on behalf of the residents.
Management Companies	Often used for green spaces in new developments, management companies are set up to manage assets (land, property or facilities).
Community Land Trusts (CLTs)	Non-profit, community-based organisation run by volunteers that develop housing, workspaces, community facilities or other assets that meet the needs of the community. CLTs are owned and controlled by the community and can ensure assets and housing are made available at affordable levels.
Development Trusts	Community organisations created to facilitate sustainable development in their area. They use self-help, trading for social purpose and ownership of buildings and land to bring about long-term social, economic and environmental benefits in their community. They have traditionally been used in the regeneration of an existing area rather than in the development of a new community.
Community Interest Companies (CIC)	A special type of limited company formed to benefit the community rather than private shareholders. CICs are set up to use their assets, income and profits for the benefit of the community they are intended to serve.
Co-operative Societies	Organisations run for the mutual benefit of their members, with any surplus income usually being re-invested in the organisation to provide better services and facilities. There are several different co-operative societies such as housing co-operatives, consumer co-operatives and worker co-operatives.

63 Toolkit: Long-term stewardship in new communities - Town and Country Planning Association (tcpa.org.uk)

7.29 Resident-led management companies are an example of local stewardship and may consist of a team of employees who run the operational management, with a governance structure involving a board that includes the Local Planning Authority, private sector partners (with decreasing involvement from the developer) and local community groups. The Whitehill and Borden development is one example of cross sector collaboration with a strong focus on building healthy communities⁶⁴.

64 Whitehill & Borden Healthy New Town booklet

8.0 Focus Areas

- 8.1 Three of the most populous towns in Harborough District are Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Scraftoft. These are experiencing development and population growth, and their GBI assets provide opportunities to connect people to nature. In July 2024, site visits were conducted by TEP to these areas to review the GBI priorities for each area given potential increases in population and need for access to the natural environment; along with predictable climate change.
- 8.2 For this review, all the district-wide evidence from earlier chapters of this study was used, but to assist the reader, more detailed 'inset' maps are presented:
- GBI Assets and Typologies;
 - Accessible Open Space;
 - Access to Local Greenspace Inequalities – using data from Natural England, each Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) is assessed in terms of:
 - availability of local greenspace within 300m of residential areas on a low, medium, high scale;
 - Index of Multiple Deprivation
 - Population density
- The resulting 'score' is shown as a matrix where L1 is the least favourable scenario in that there is little access to local greenspace and relatively high deprivation and population density levels. H3 is most favourable in that there is high availability of local greenspace and low deprivation.
- Tree Equity Score, showing for each LSOA the need for trees based on existing canopy cover and likely heat stresses from climate change; and
 - Action Plan projects.
- 8.3 Data on each Action Plan Project map presents opportunities which have been identified through site visits and consultation. Each numbered action relates to the corresponding number within the Action Plan. Existing transport infrastructure is also shown to identify potential connectivity enhancements, alongside potential major housing allocations.
- 8.4 These maps must be interpreted with local knowledge as set out in the narrative for each town.

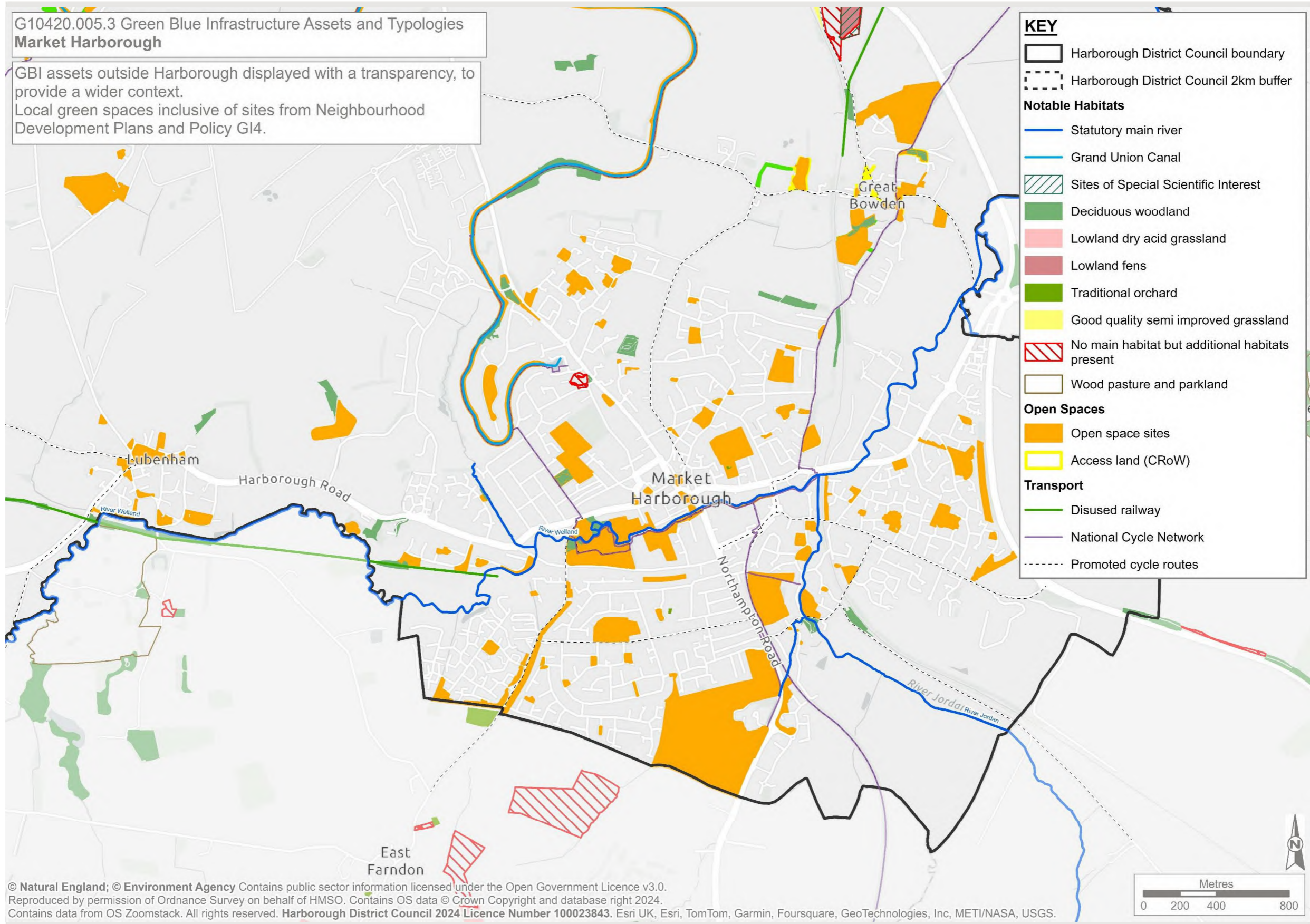


Figure 39: Market Harborough Green and Blue Infrastructure Assets

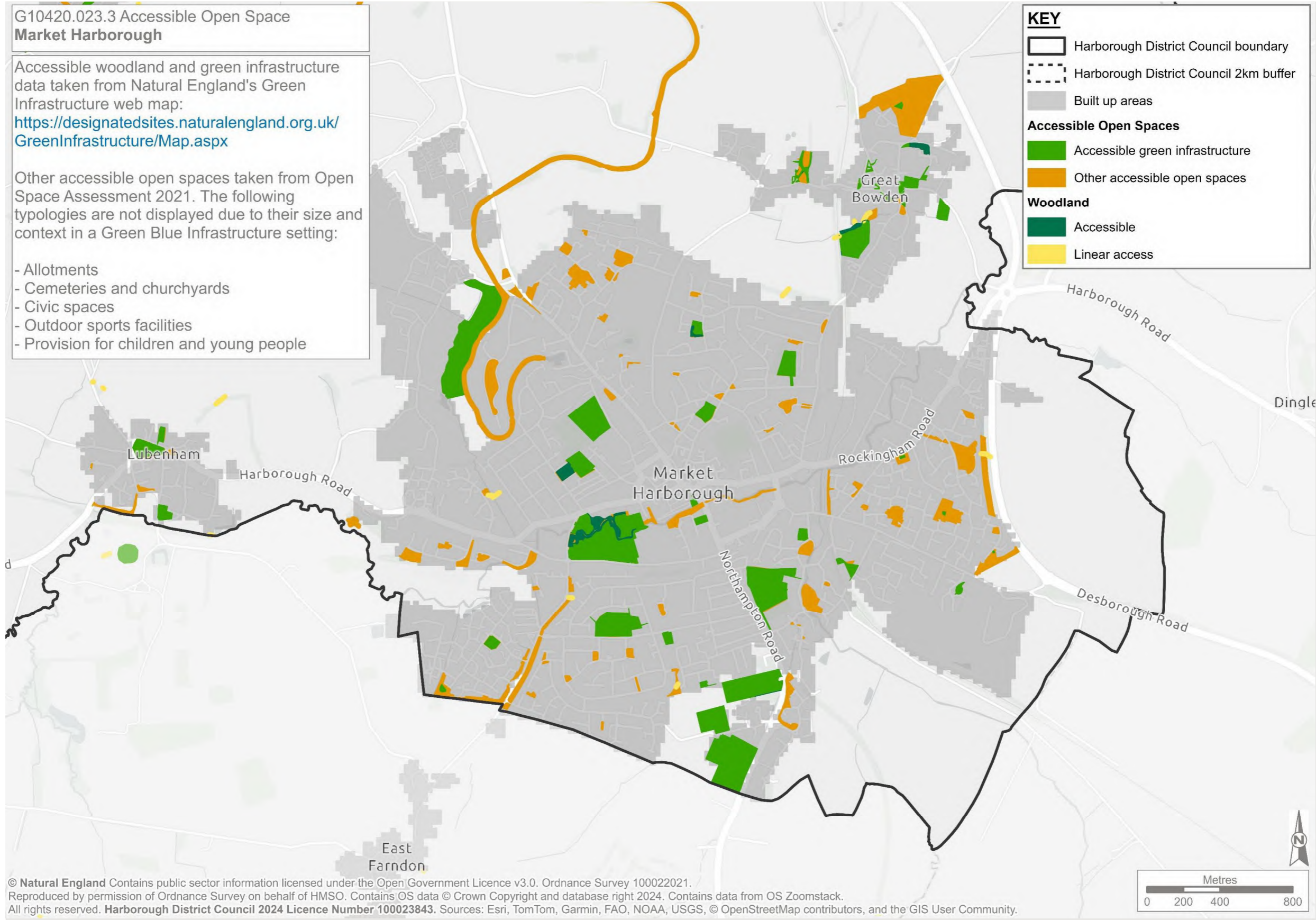


Figure 40: Market Harborough Accessible open spaces

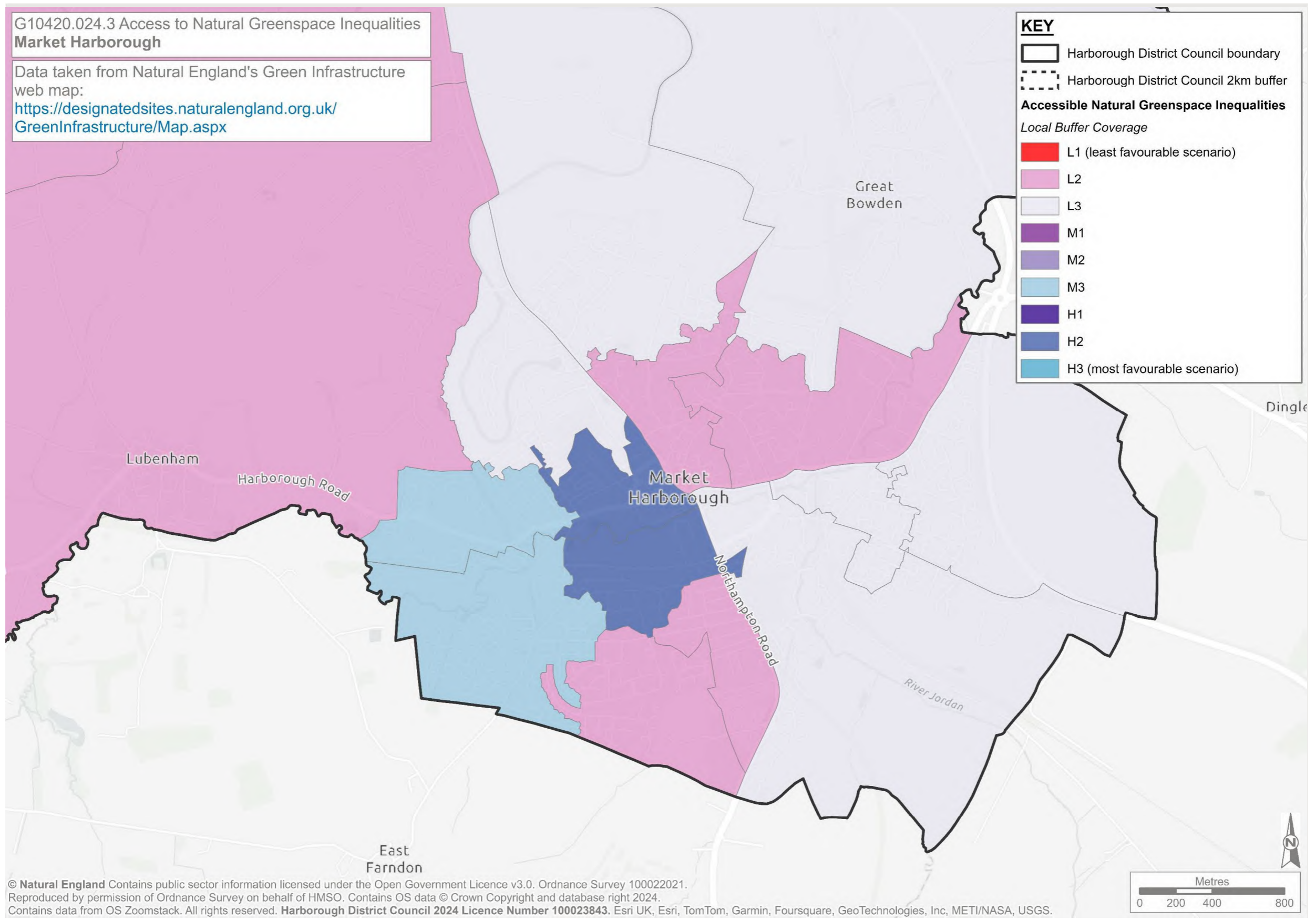


Figure 41: Market Harborough Access to Natural Greenspace Inequalities

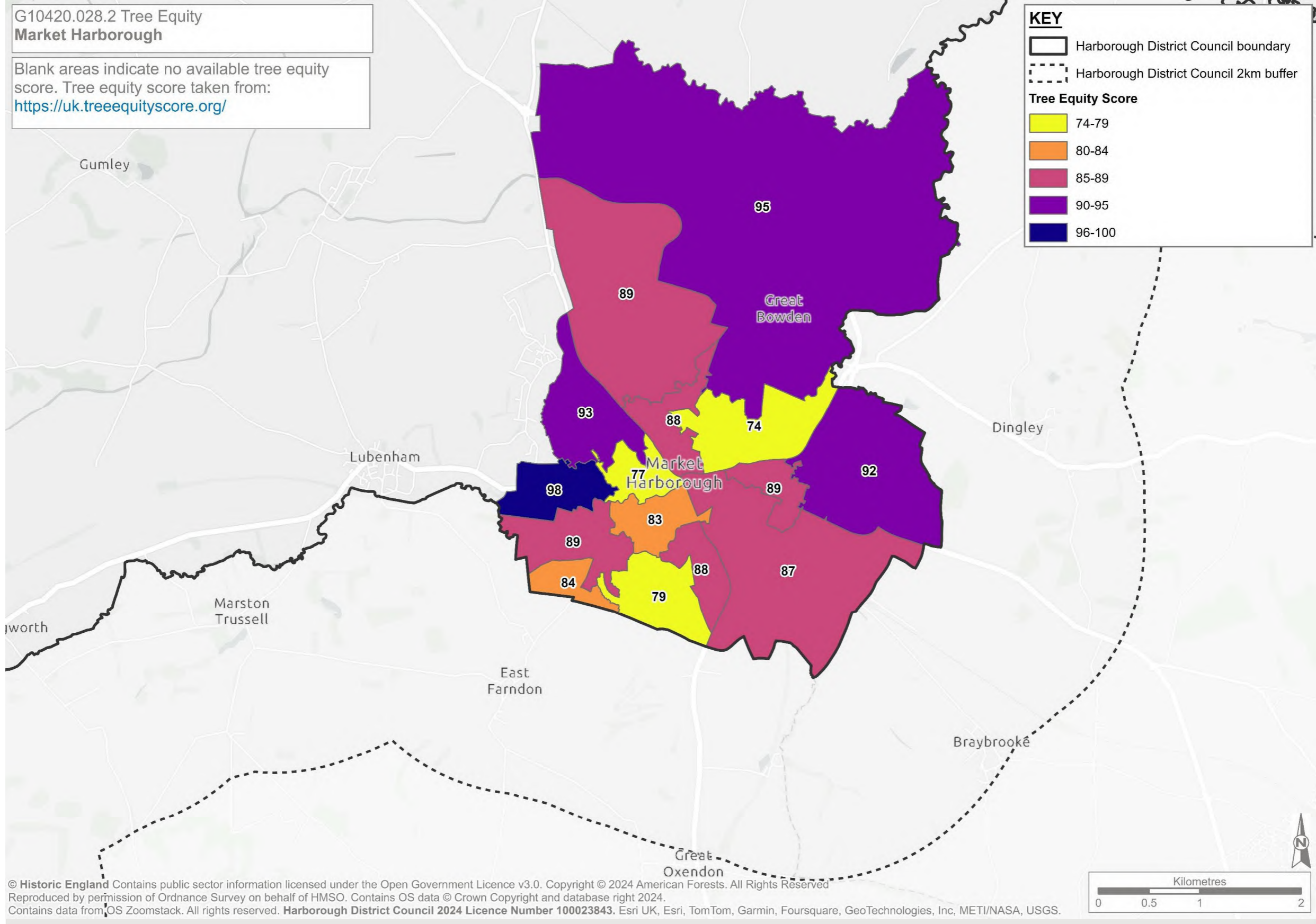


Figure 42: Market Harborough Tree Equity

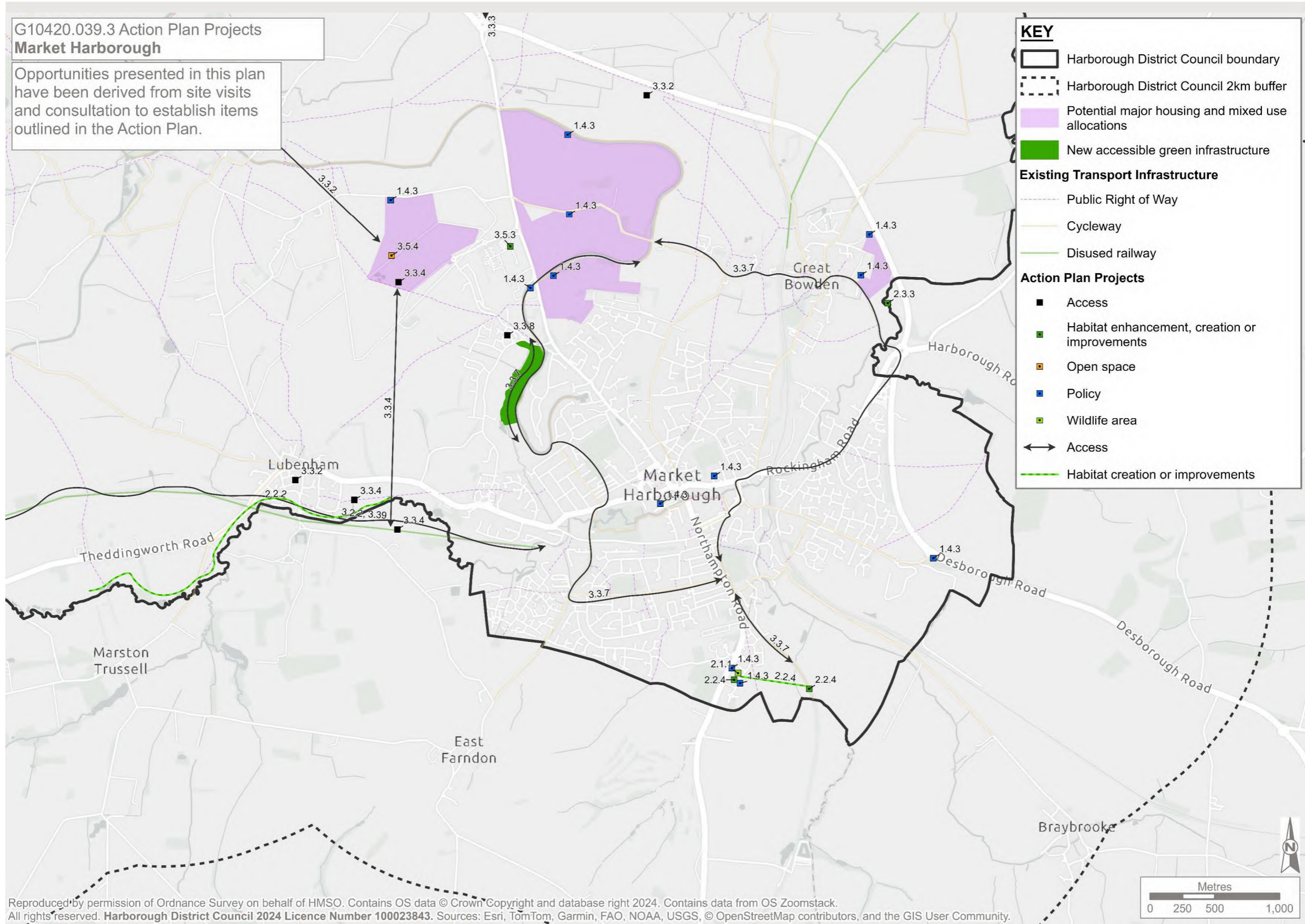


Figure 43: Proposed GBI Actions for Market Harborough

GBI in Market Harborough

- 8.5 Market Harborough lies on the southern border of Harborough District and has the largest population (26,000). There are some areas of deciduous woodland and traditional orchard around the borders of the town, and along the GUC, the River Welland and its tributaries and railway lines (figure 39).
- 8.6 Market Harborough lies on the confluence of the Welland and Jordan rivers, which enter in the town with poor and bad ecological status respectively, leaving with moderate quality (figure 34).
- 8.7 There is good access to the Welland, which is well connected to residential developments.
- 8.8 Welland Park is a good example of multifunctional GBI which serves the town and community and is linked up with the GBI network via the river and cycle network. There are sports and community facilities, varied planting and access to the river.
- 8.9 Market Harborough has serious flooding issues (figure 30) and has been developing a Surface Water Management Plan with hotspot analysis. The active local flood hubs and network of flood wardens are building up a detailed picture of flooding issues and potential solutions.
- 8.10 The centre of Market Harborough is the most deprived, albeit in relative terms, but has good access to open and green spaces (figures 40 and 41). Figure 42 shows the tree equity score is low in the centre, but this is due to the presence of playing fields and open parks around this area. Areas around the north, south and west of the town centre have less equitable access to greenspace, but higher tree equity.
- 8.11 Establishment of street trees, raingardens and SuDS across the town should be targeted on surface water flowpaths, aiming to improve outfalls into the River Welland and its tributaries, thereby reducing waterborne pollution and reducing flooding, also improving canopy cover and access to greenery for health benefits.
- 8.12 Figure 43 presents an overview of GBI opportunities across Market Harborough as identified through site visits and consultation. Market Harborough is very well placed for promoted cycle routes and is linked directly to the National Cycle Network. There is good accessibility to the GUC however there are opportunities to improve footpaths and cycle routes along the rivers. The new Market Harborough County Park is shown to the north-west of the town centre.
- 8.13 Stakeholder consultation highlighted potential for more circular cycle routes and noted that Market Harborough's position on the authority's boundary with both West and North Northamptonshire can provide complications in joining up networks.

Policy, Partnerships and Delivery

- 8.14 Establishment and maintenance of street trees and natural SuDS should be targeted to improve the quality of water outfalling into the River Welland, and to reduce flooding. These issues are well understood by Harborough Woodland and local community networks, who are efficient at mobilising volunteers to deliver projects, once 'areas of search' for new projects are identified, typically on local authority land.
- 8.15 Increasing civic trees in the central and eastern parts of the town would improve canopy cover for more deprived areas. Again 'areas of search' for new tree planting can be identified by local volunteers and Council officers.
- 8.16 Development areas to the south of Market Harborough will need to pay close attention to flood risk, but new development offers NFM opportunities for water quality improvement and flood mitigation along the River Jordan. Woodland planting may serve multiple purposes to maintain character and separation while achieving better access to woodland for new and existing residents.
- 8.17 Community relationships with farmers upstream on the River Jordan (including areas outside the District) could help farmers tackle upstream causes of poor water quality through changes to working practices, NFM and installation of pollution control measures, funded by agri-environment grants, water industry funding and development-related planning conditions.
- 8.18 Developments to the north of Market Harborough around Great Bowden could contribute to protecting and enhancing existing open space and green sites, and create new community woodlands, and improve access to these from Market Harborough town. For example, Market Harborough Country Park provides a green corridor along the GUC between the Wellington Place development and the northwest of Market Harborough Town.
- 8.19 A community project to plant new woodland is already underway in the area. NFM improvements to the Langton Brook (north of Great Bowden) and nearby Welland tributaries would also be valuable contributions.
- 8.20 Surface Water Hotspot mapping for the town identified 15 flooding hotspots, with many areas along the major arterial roads (A508, A304 and B607). Local SuDS measures that reduce pressure on Combined Sewer Overflows could also consider prioritising areas with poor access to natural greenspace in the south and northeast of the District.
- 8.21 Actions to improve quality of lower scoring greenspaces could also prioritise areas with higher IMD and lower access to greenspace. Increased access and seating were highlighted in the consultation.

- 8.22 Blue social prescribing provides opportunities for local activities around the canals and waterways to support mental health and wellbeing and is detailed in the Health and Wellbeing Action Plan. This could be extended to include green spaces. Welland Park already hosts a Park Run, and Symington recreation ground hosts community fairs, races and carnival events.
- 8.23 Welland Valley Partnership catchment management plan currently has three projects specific to Market Harborough, looking at NFM in the north and south of the town (which need funding) and river channel restoration (funded by the EA and Anglian Water).
- 8.24 Poor access to woodland was highlighted as a major issue, and local woodland planting schemes and creations of a Country Park were suggested in the consultation.

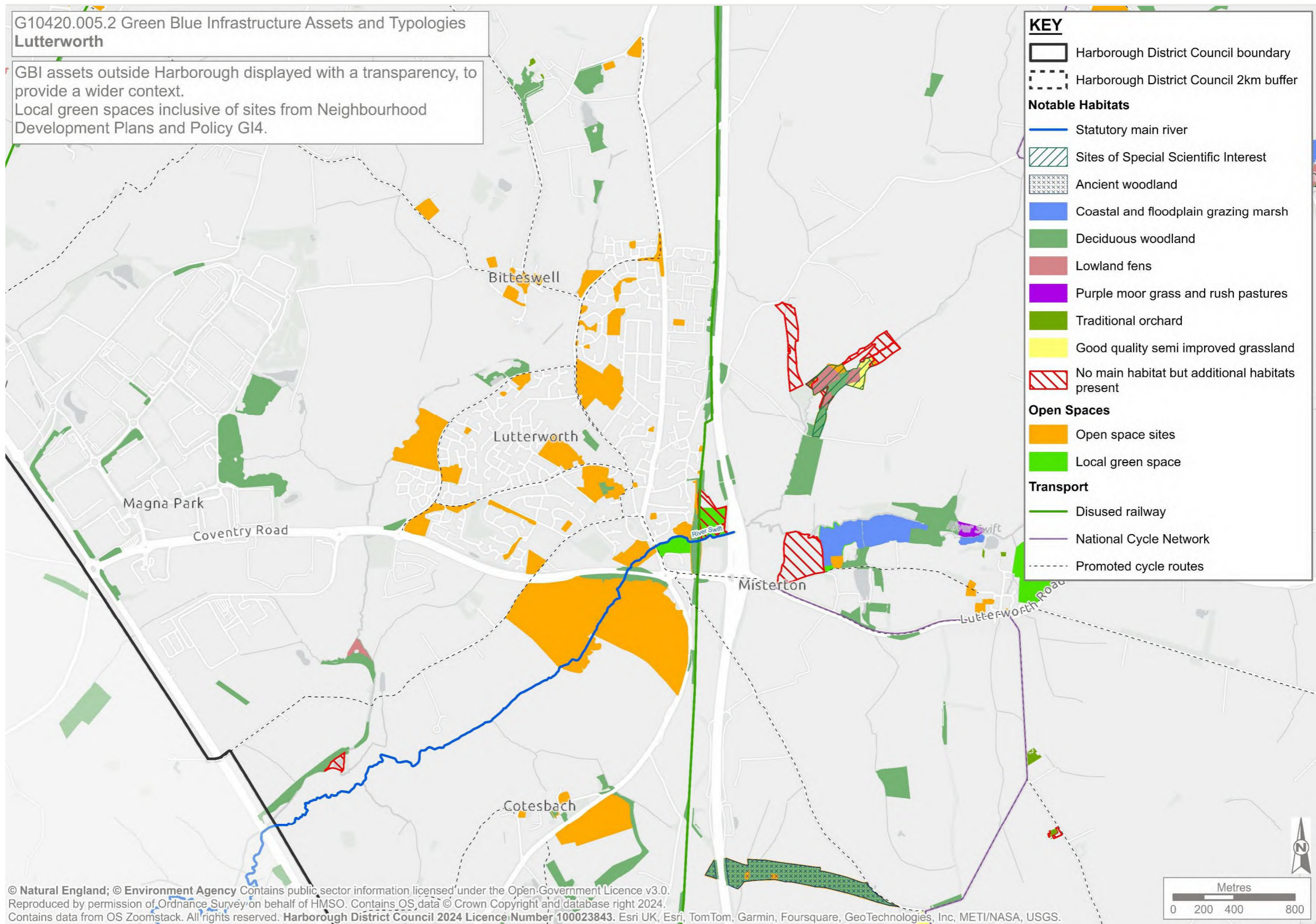


Figure 44: GBI Assets and Typologies - Lutterworth

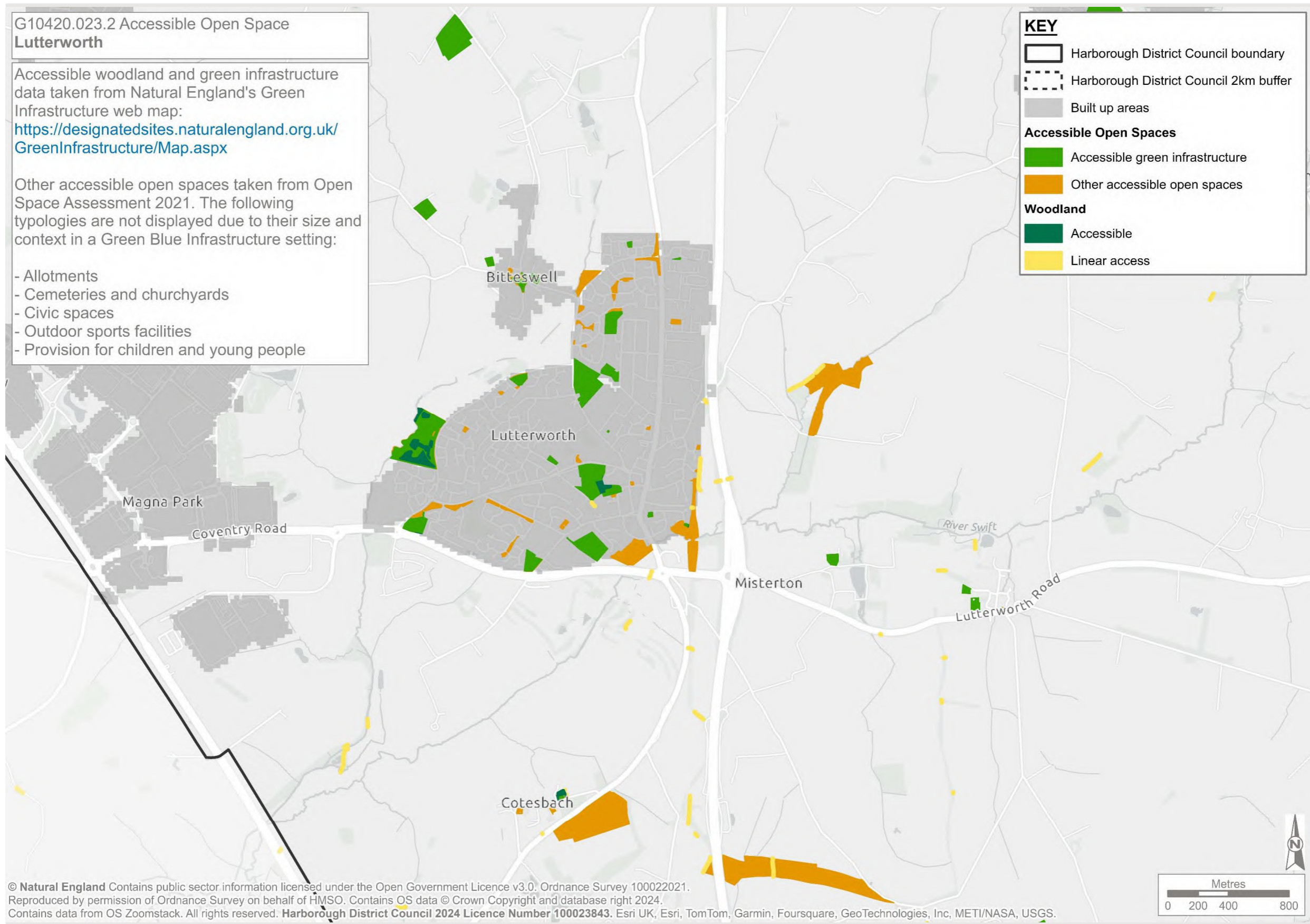


Figure 45: Accessible open space - Lutterworth

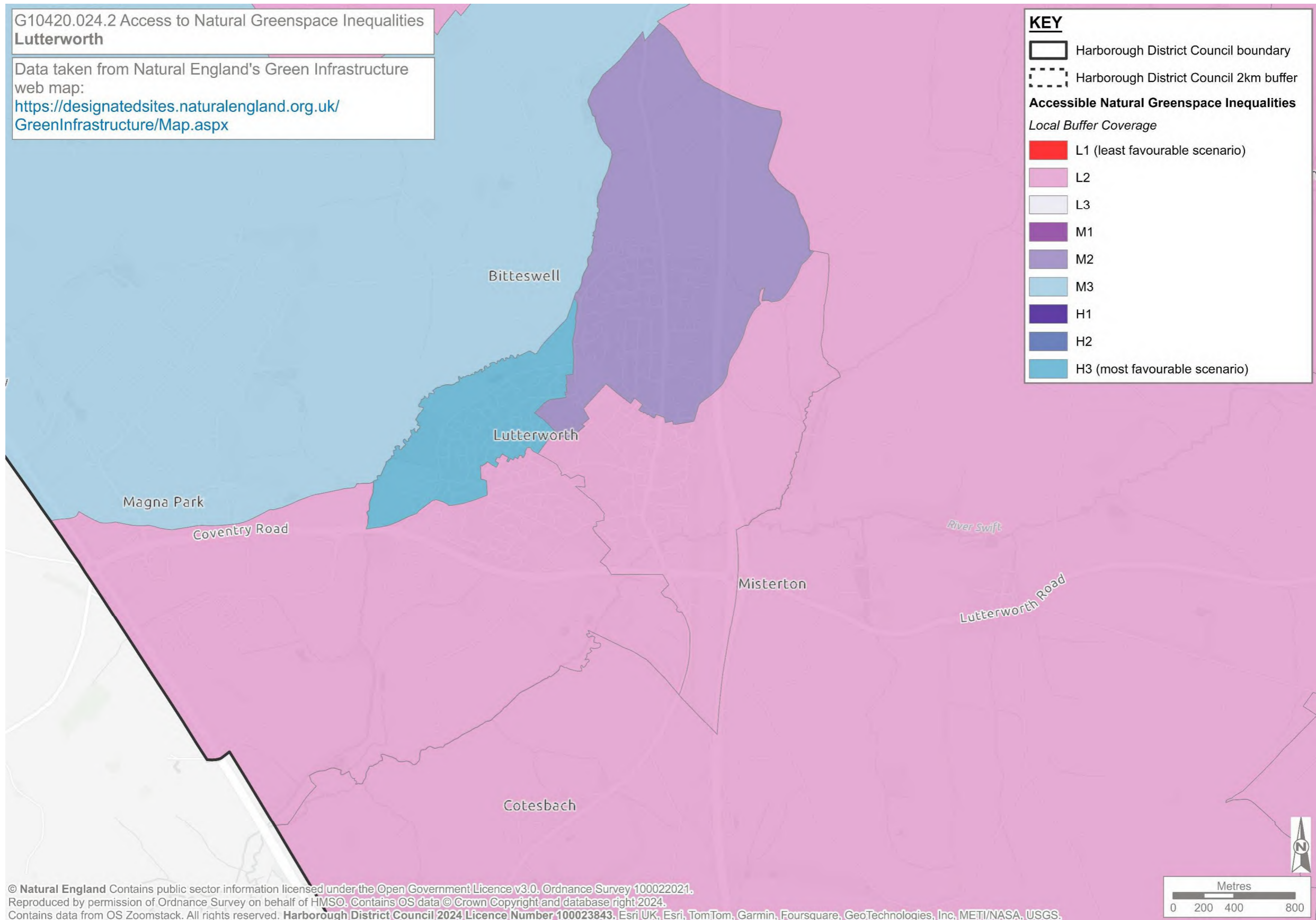


Figure 46: Lutterworth Access to Natural Greenspace Inequalities

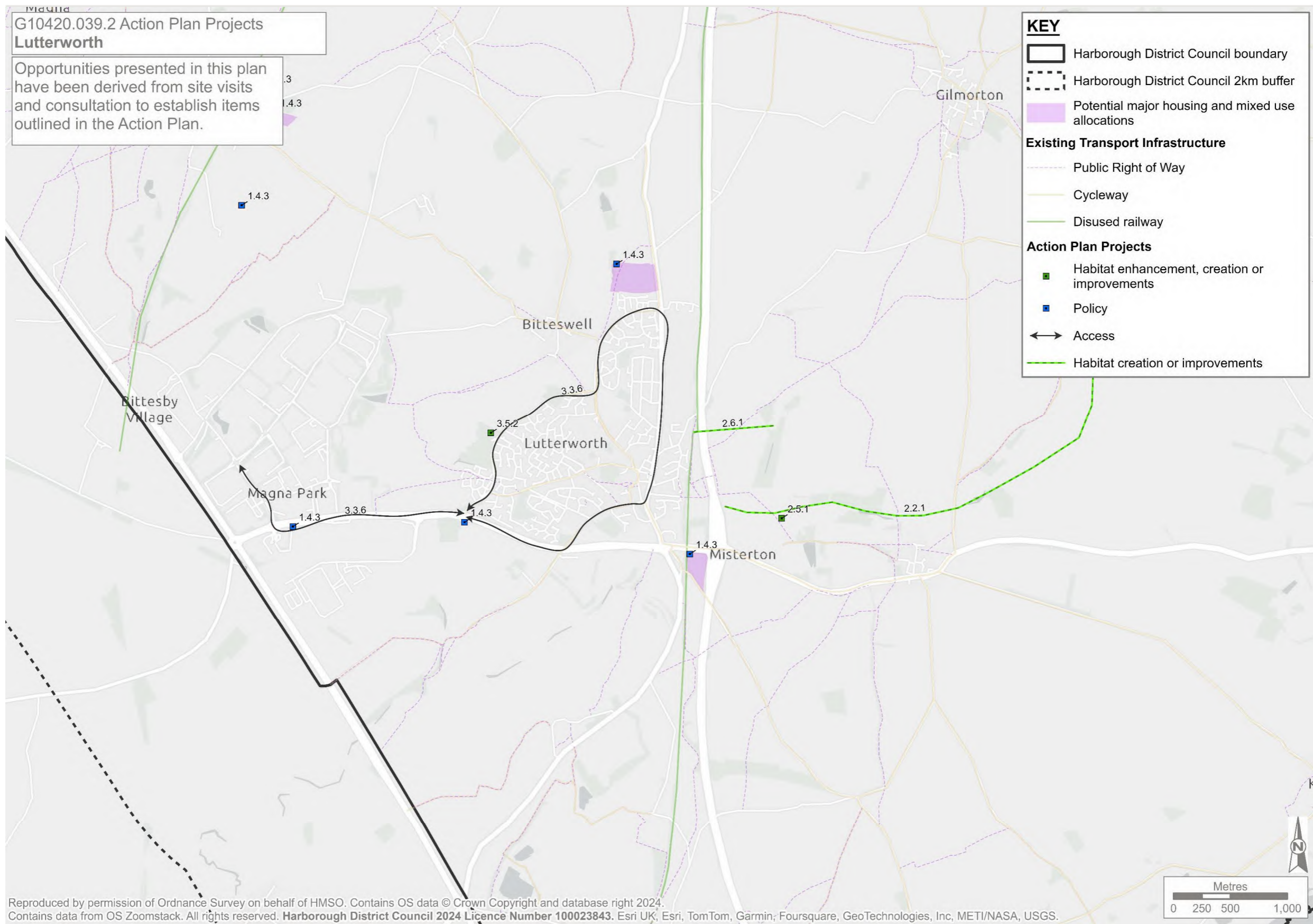


Figure 47: Proposed GBI actions for Lutterworth

GBI in Lutterworth

- 8.25 Lutterworth lies east of Magna Park industrial estate to the west of the District. The M1 motorway runs north to south just east of the town.
- 8.26 The disused railway line which runs alongside the M1 has been highlighted as an important nature corridor (figure 44).
- 8.27 Most notable habitats lie east of the M1 along the River Swift floodplain, including some lowland fens, good quality semi-improved grassland, purple moor grass and rush pastures and deciduous woodland. Misterton Marshes SSSI covers the multiple habitat areas shown on Figure 44 bordering the northern tributary of the Swift.
- 8.28 Bitteswell Conservation Area and Lutterworth Country Park lie to the west of the town.
- 8.29 There is good distribution of open spaces across the town (figure 45), however the area around the M1 corridor and A426 has a significantly worse ANGSt scenario (figure 46). The scarcity of open spaces between these two roads could be addressed through street greening measures.
- 8.30 Figure 34 shows the River Swift has moderate water quality and there are some leisure routes passing through flood management areas to the south of the town.
- 8.31 Like Market Harborough, Lutterworth has several promoted cycle routes radiating from the town and a link to the National Cycle Network but might benefit from more promoted circular routes (figure 47). Access to the disused railways would also provide a potential leisure route.
- 8.32 Promoted active travel routes could also provide clearer links with the River Swift. Some permissive paths across neighbouring farmland east of the motorway were inaccessible and overgrown. Any development in this area may provide chances to improve access and connect routes to the town.

Policy, Partnership and Delivery

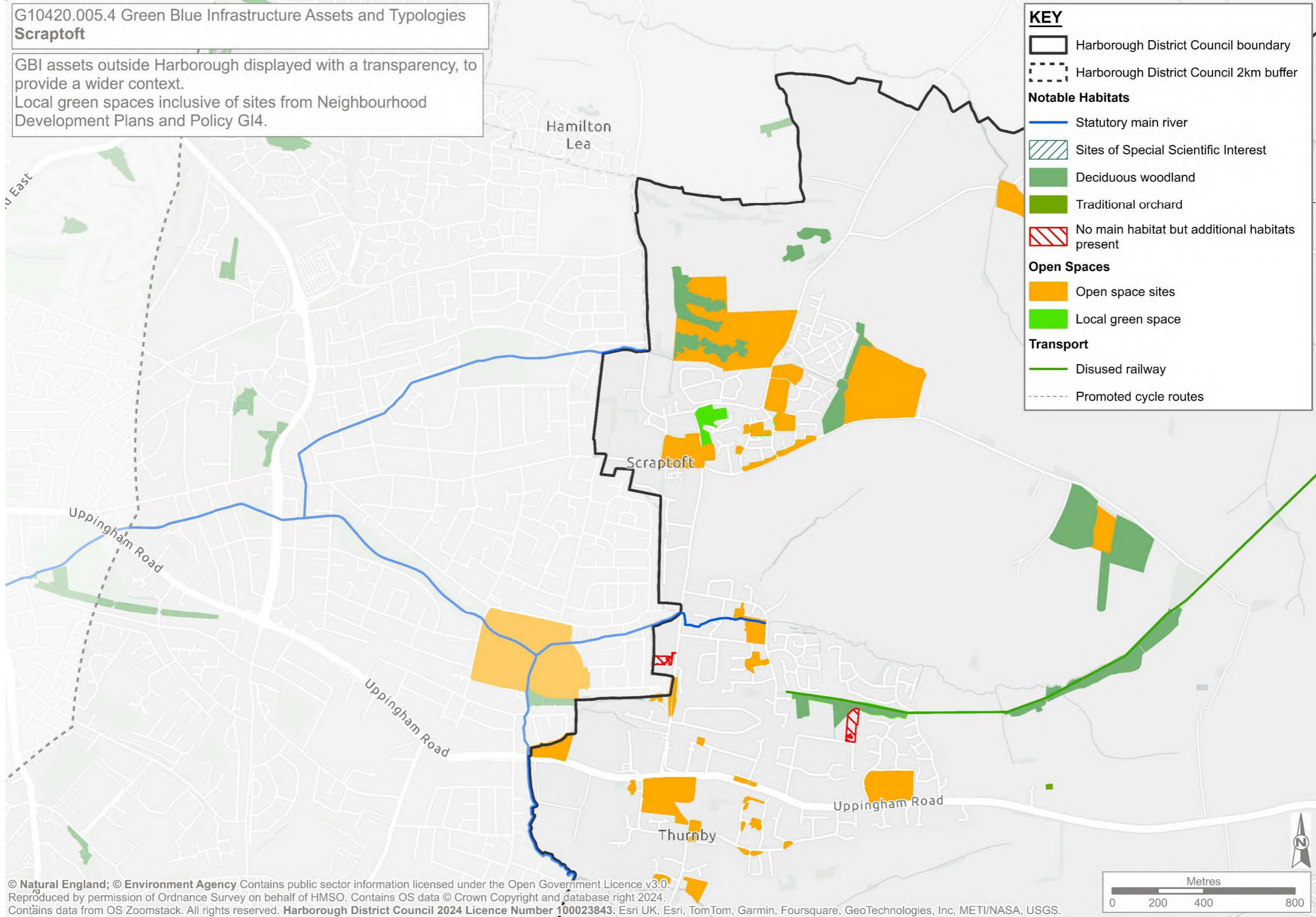
- 8.33 A review of Lutterworth County Park in terms of social, economic and environmental contributions could optimise local contributions and provide guidance for Country Parks elsewhere in the District. Management of water features could be improved to ensure there is some open water space to benefit wildlife.
- 8.34 The strategic development area east of Lutterworth around Misterton Marsh spans the area between a SSSI and important habitat, a small, traditional, tranquil settlement and a significant motorway junction. An Illustrative Masterplan was

produced in 2019 and includes development of new homes, a primary school, community hub and employment use. The GBI that is proposed to be created comprises a community park, green ways (enhancing existing routes), sports pitches, a play area, sustainable drainage features and allotments. The Building with Nature standards would help to optimise the environmental and social outcomes if applied to this area (see action 1.4.3 on Figure 47).

- 8.35 Connectivity for people and wildlife across the motorway should be considered.
- 8.36 There are opportunities to improve access to the River Swift and enhance habitat quality, quantity and connectivity to the benefit of new residential areas. Retention of existing spinneys and mature trees may help to preserve some of the existing settlement identity (see action 2.5.1 and 2.2.1 on Figure 47).
- 8.37 There are good examples of walkways around the River Swift as it passes south of the town. However, promoted active travel routes could also provide clearer links with the River Swift. Some permissive paths across neighbouring farmland east of the motorway were inaccessible and overgrown. Any development in this area may provide chances to improve access and connect routes to the town (see PRoW network on Figure 47).

G10420.005.4 Green Blue Infrastructure Assets and Typologies
Scraptoft

GBI assets outside Harborough displayed with a transparency, to provide a wider context.
Local green spaces inclusive of sites from Neighbourhood Development Plans and Policy GI4.



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Figure 48: GBI Assets and Typologies - Scraptoft

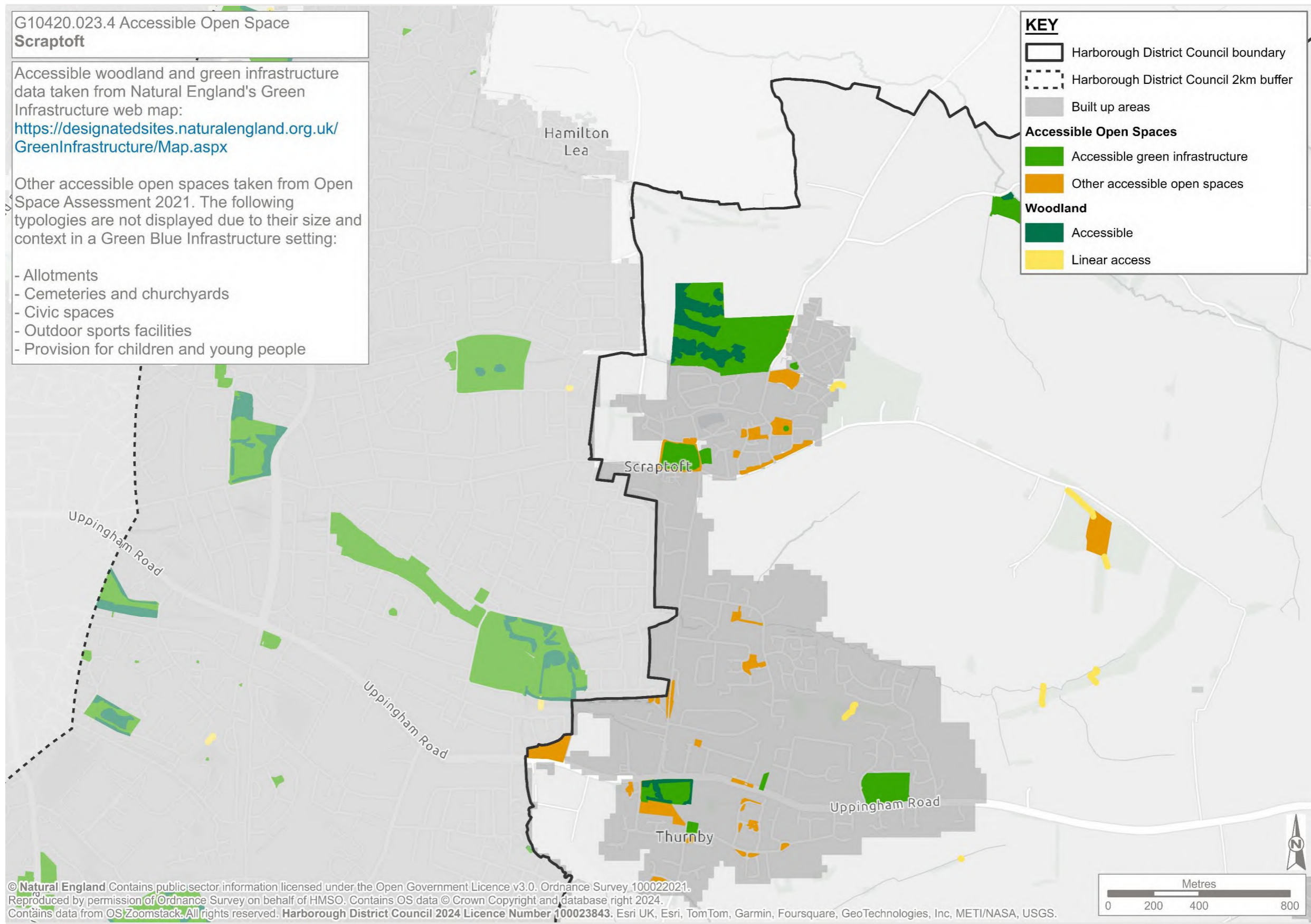


Figure 49: Accessible Open Space - Scraptoft

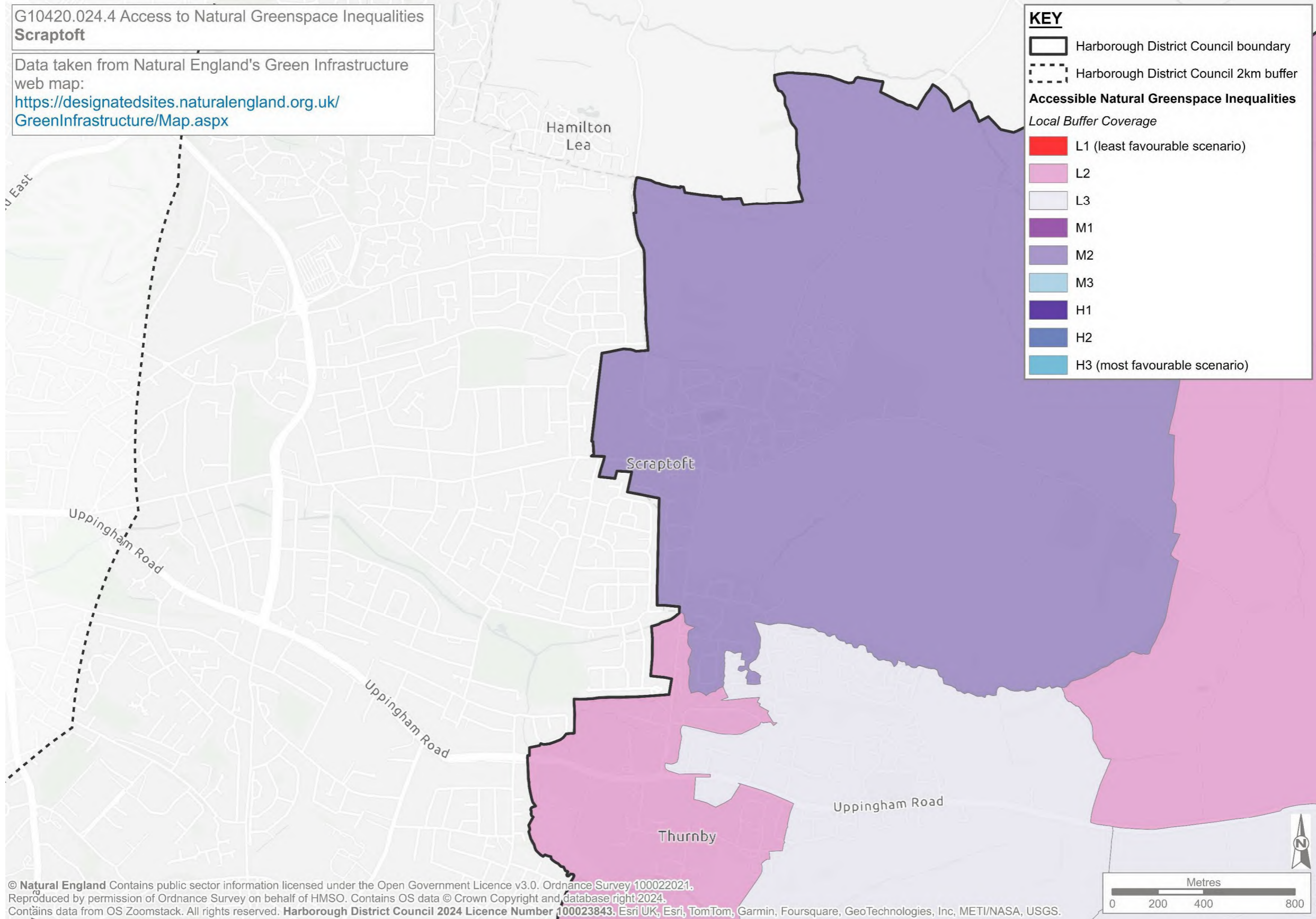


Figure 50: Access to Natural Greenspace Inequalities - Scraptoft

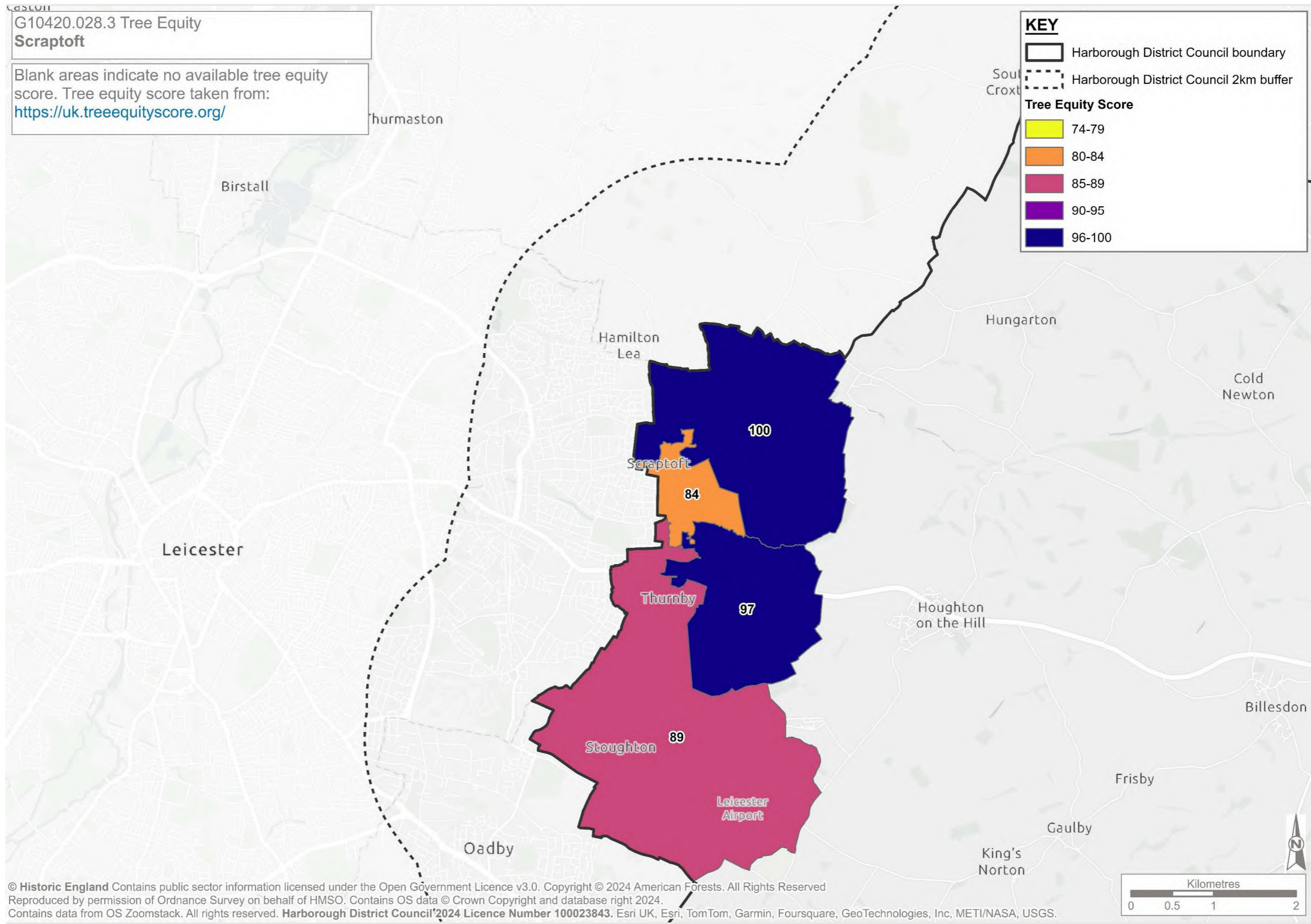


Figure 51: Tree Equity - Scraptoft

G10420.039.4 Action Plan Projects
Scraptoft

Opportunities presented in this plan have been derived from site visits and consultation to establish items outlined in the Action Plan.

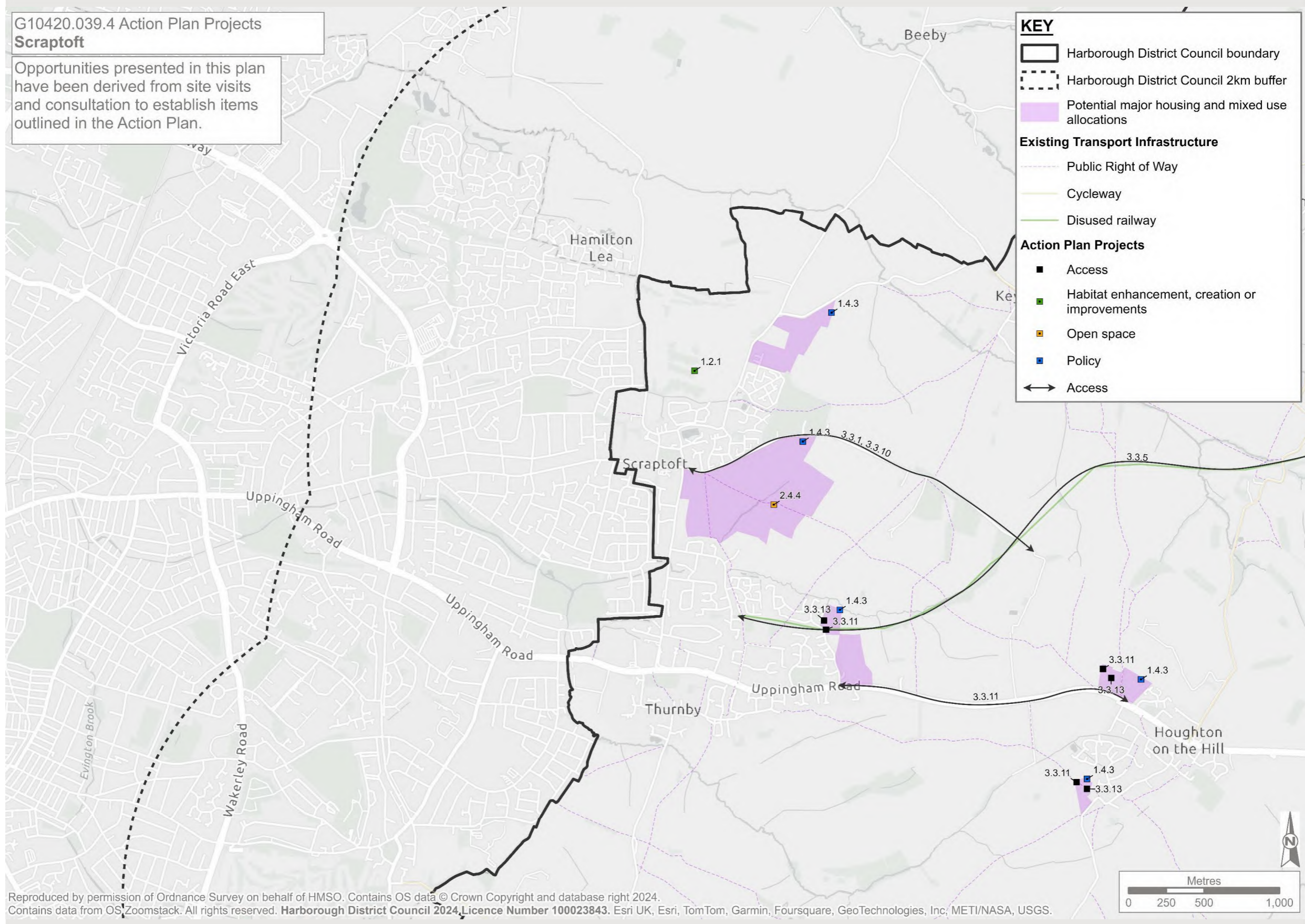


Figure 52: Proposed GBI Actions for Scraptoft

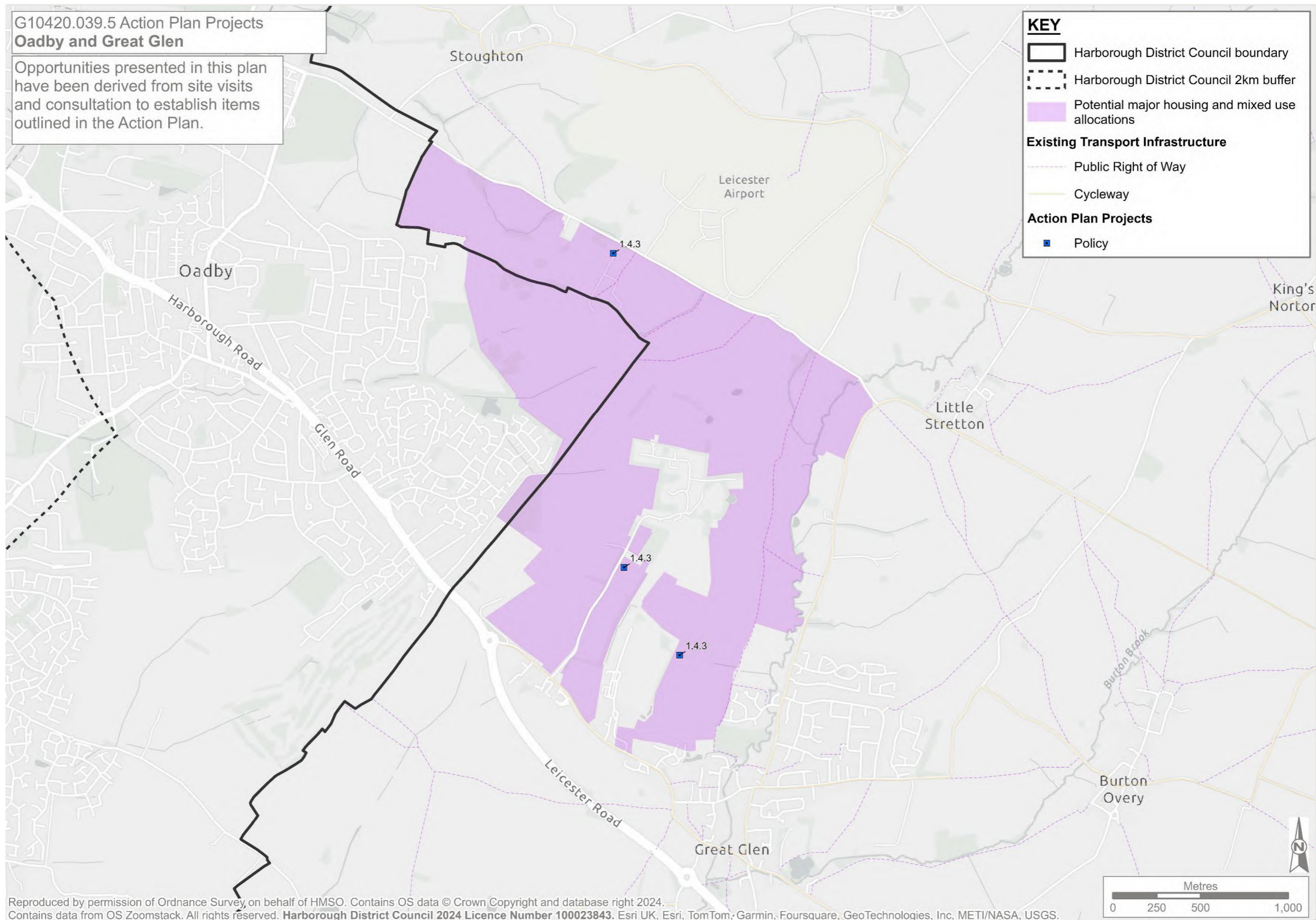


Figure 53: Proposed GBI Actions for Oadby and Great Glen

GBI in Scraptoft

- 8.38 Leicester Principal Urban Area (PUA) covers the whole built up area of Leicester, which includes historic villages within Harborough District that have easy access to the city, such as as Scraptoft, Thurnby and Bushby.
- 8.39 Scraptoft lies on the northern border of the District, on the outskirts of Leicester. It is separated from the city by a 'green wedge' area protected by policy. This consists mainly of a farm, nature reserve and golf course. The nature reserve and golf course area are now considered for strategic development.
- 8.40 The main notable habitats are the deciduous woodland areas to the north within the nature reserve and golf course, and to the east (figure 48). There are other accessible greenspaces shown in figure 49 including SuDS and play areas around the newly developed areas to the east of the settlement, and Edith Cole memorial park to the south.
- 8.41 Figure 49 shows the golf course and nature reserve north of the settlement as accessible. The site visit in July determined that they were not easily or freely accessible to the public, therefore the 'mid range' M2 rating for access inequalities in Scraptoft may overstate the actual quality of access experienced by local people.
- 8.42 Edith Cole Memorial Park and the play areas are included around Scraptoft with poorest tree equity (80-84% recommended tree coverage). The better scoring areas around the periphery also include the strategic development area.
- 8.43 Scraptoft Brook runs through the area but is not easily accessible to residents. Most rivers in the area have moderate water quality (figure 34). There is some evidence of Himalayan balsam along Scraptoft Brook near the nature reserve.
- 8.44 There are some good PRoW to the south of the settlement, however the mapped route at figure 52 to the west towards Leicester is unclear and potentially obscured by new development.

Policy, Partnerships and Delivery

- 8.45 Development around Scraptoft could contribute to significant improvements to access the Scraptoft Brook. This could involve opening more areas around the nature reserve.
- 8.46 Any new development on or around the golf course could retain existing woodland and develop walking and cycle routes to make them more accessible from the village.

- 8.47 Accessible woodland and good canopy cover could be retained and improved by contributing to local community woodlands or a country park – these might enhance local green wedges or areas of separation.
- 8.48 A new Country Park around the areas of separation and green wedge spaces, or incorporated into the strategic development site, could provide accessible greenspace and improved health for communities while preserving some habitat areas and delivering BNG.
- 8.49 Any new GBI should consider accessibility from urban areas of Leicester to contribute to their leisure resource.
- 8.50 Management of waterbodies on new estates and Scraftoft Brook could be improved to ensure access to water.
- 8.51 Walking and cycle routes around the village, and towards Leicester and the open countryside could be clarified and signposted.

GBI in Oadby and Great Glen Development Area

- 8.52 A large potential development area on the border of Harborough District has been identified, which could provide up to 4,000 new homes. This area lies south of Leicester airport between the villages of Great Glen, Little Stretton and Oadby and crosses the administrative boundary between Harborough District and Oadby and Wigston.
- 8.53 Part of the development area identified in Figure 53 falls within one of the highest risk water catchments, and therefore opportunities to manage water effectively through NBS should be prioritised. This could include connected SuDS within developments, or requirements for Building with Nature, Greenspace Factor and/or Tree Canopy targets for large new developments (see 1.4.3 in Figure 53) to be agreed in collaboration with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and local stakeholders.
- 8.54 Developers should consider opportunities to support NBS projects upstream of the development area along Burton Brook and River Sence which would improve water quality. Burton Brook has particularly bad water quality (see Figure 34 Waterbody Ecological Status) and Water quality has been highlighted as a priority for the catchment in the Soar Catchment Management Plan⁶⁵.
- 8.55 PRoW shown on Figure 53 could be enhanced and connected to provide an active travel network appropriate to the development layout, to provide recreation and active travel opportunities for local facilities and commuting routes.

⁶⁵ Soar Catchment Management Plan

- 8.56 The development area falls within an area of low tree canopy cover and poor access to natural greenspace (see Figure 38 GBI for People). Provision of accessible greenspace could support green wedge policy, helping to provide distinctive character areas separate from neighbouring towns and villages. The consultation highlighted a lack of country parks in Harborough District, there may be opportunities to provide a similar well managed park area for people that also provides water management services described in 8.54.
- 8.57 This development area does not fall within mapped high priority opportunity areas for biodiversity, however there may still be opportunities to protect, enhance and connect existing habitats on site and the importance of access to nature for residents should be considered in relation to local community health. Street tree canopy and accessible woodland (e.g. community forests and orchards) can also be considered in relation to the proximity of the airport, and their potential to protect local residents from noise and air pollution.
- 8.58 The Stretton Magna deserted village, two fishponds and a moated site⁶⁶ Scheduled Monument (see Figure 38 GBI for People) could be integrated into new development in a way that retains condition and that celebrates the local history.
- 8.59 Further details of proposed GBI actions can be found in Appendix C.

⁶⁶ 'Stretton Magna deserted village

9.0 Next Steps and summary

Summary of GBI Opportunities in Harborough District

- 9.1 There are many opportunities to improve the GBI resources and networks across Harborough District to benefit communities, businesses and nature. Some of these can be delivered through the Local Plan, others involve communication and collaboration with other stakeholders.
- 9.2 The evidence in this study, notably the Key Diagrams (GBI Assets and Typologies, GBI for Nature and Water and GBI for People) and the Action Plan can be used to inform and advocate GBI activity in several sectors, including:
- **Local Planning**; setting standards and expectations for quantity and quality and multi-functionality of new and retro-fitted GBI, incorporating specific GBI actions into future Neighbourhood Development Plans.
 - **Economic Development, High Streets and Town Centres**; encouraging businesses and town centre managers to implement GBI schemes, build a greener brand, make savings on water management and secure funding for micro-scale GBI schemes;
 - **Water Industry**; encouraging use of Nature-based solutions for surface water management, funding landowners to implement NFM and source-control measures;
 - **Agri-environment and woodland sector**; supporting farmers and woodland owners with stewardship schemes, signposting them to sources of funding and advice and volunteer assistance, championing initiatives in floodplains;
 - **Community and Voluntary groups**; championing their activity and enabling them to assist in delivery of GBI schemes on public land and via developer contributions, supporting individual householders in their pledges and aspirations to improve neighbourhood greenery
 - **Parks, Greenspace and Active Travel Sector**; diversifying management of open spaces based on Green Flag Award quality and value standards in order to improve access for all, safety and security for vulnerable people and under-represented groups, and implement biodiversity and water management schemes

Collaboration

- Engage with local initiatives (see table 3) to see whether any can broaden their scope to include a wider range of GBI benefits; joining forces to deliver projects and secure funding.
- Support the development of farming clusters across the District and County (see 5.116).

- Encourage the expansion of successful community groups like Harborough Woodland that can engage important stakeholders and mobilise volunteer resources. Further examples of community groups and projects that HDC could support are provided in Table 3.
- Support the Welland Valley Partnership to gain further funding and resources.
- Consider convening a regional GBI steering group to deliver a strategic vision and roadmap for GBI, building on existing collaborations working on LNRS and catchment partnerships.
- Convene a Council-wide workshop to discuss all departmental strategies in relation to GBI – how will they benefit from better GBI, and what can they contribute to GBI.

Communication

- Coordinate marketing and communication of successful GBI initiatives across the District so that good practice can be celebrated and replicated. Communication resources can be targeted so that they support local grass-roots initiatives to see collective progress from their local efforts.
- Work with girls, women and vulnerable park user groups to identify their priorities for more and better-managed GBI.
- Wherever possible on council owned and managed assets, advertise details of positive water and nature management.
- Communicate with householders and gardeners to promote measures that can help enhance biodiversity, water resources, flood resilience, tree and shrub planting, pollination, local food-growing etc.

Policy (for Local Plan) and Evidence

- Liaise with local neighbourhood teams to incorporate GBI assets into more neighbourhood plans.
- BNG policy can refer to the spatial priorities listed in table 5.
- Add policy protection for disused railways, canals and rivers as wildlife corridors.
- Add policy protection for GBI assets and support river and floodplain restoration within areas of opportunity present on the GBI for Nature map (Figure 23).

- Consider planning for at least one Country Park space near urban areas currently under-served with good recreation space, and under pressure from development, particularly where there are previous policies protecting them as green wedge or area of separation, or where there are existing priority habitats. Market Harborough and the area around the northern border of the District close to Leicester would most benefit from well-managed recreation space which could support flood management, habitat connectivity and landscape character preservation goals.
- Require development to provide a GBI assessment showing that the priorities identified in this study are incorporated into the scheme design, proportionate to scale and impact of development.
- Consider a requirement for developers to use the BwN standard for large-scale new development. Refer to landscape / GBI Management Guidelines applying to landscape character types.
- Adopt GBI standards such as the UGF, for larger towns like Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Scraptoft and strategic development areas.
- Bring together the emerging LNRS with other opportunity maps for species, new woodland, NFM and improved access into an easily-accessible environmental opportunity / natural capital map(s) to inform Local Plan and county strategies
- Develop policy for maximum inclusivity in access to public open space with reference to Sensory Trust guidance.

Other Policy and Evidence

- Liaise with local neighbourhood teams to incorporate GBI assets into more neighbourhood plans.
- Promote soil conservation and management in rural settings and in the urban areas and construction sectors, setting standards for new open spaces and gardens.
- Address gaps in evidence about GBI needs and best practice in terms of access to PRow, social prescribing needs and natural capital valuation and investment priorities.

Landscape action and management

- Bring as many of the District's open spaces as possible into a form of management which has biodiversity as a primary or secondary objective.
- Support leisure managers (notably parks, gardens, golf, cemeteries) to manage their estates to increase habitat carbon, reduce pesticides, improve water resilience and increase tree canopy cover.

- Create further floodplain habitats where possible, investigating opportunities with local farmers and farmer clusters where the Sustainable Farming Incentive or Stewardship arrangements could be appropriate.
- Prioritise creation of relevant green spaces close to people's homes, particularly in areas where there is mapped evidence of inequality of access to greenspace and health deprivation.
- Adopt site management practices that create safe spaces for girls, women and vulnerable park users.
- Focus open space improvements highlighted in the OSS to improve those rated 'fair' or 'poor', prioritising those in areas with high IMD and ANGSt inequalities. Consider using the 'By All Reasonable Means' principles.
- Create circular cycle routes to link networks of PRow and quiet lanes in GBI, that are wide enough to allow access for users of all abilities.
- Support the water quality enhancements e.g. by setting aside land and resources to improve waterside buffer strips and create filtration wetlands, control INNS and managing SuDS ponds to increase clear water.
- Establish a habitat/carbon "bank" on Council-owned land to assist meeting the district's BNG and net-zero commitments.
- Ensure that management of the district's civic trees is well-resourced in respect of disease inspections with rapid response where necessary, and appropriate tree replacement ratios.
- Enable community and neighbourhood groups to adopt the Green Flag Award system to audit and enhance their spaces.

10.0 Glossary

Allotments: An area of land leased from a local authority or private landlord for growing fruit and vegetables. The land may also be used to grow ornamental plants and keep hens and bees etc.

Amenity: Positive element or elements that contribute to the overall character or enjoyment of an area. For example, open land, trees, historic buildings and the inter-relationship between them, or less tangible factors such as tranquillity.

Benefits: Positive impacts for people and wildlife derived from green infrastructure and natural capital.

Biodiversity: The variation among living organisms in all environments, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems, and the ecological complexes of which they are part. Includes diversity within and between species, and ecosystems.

Biodiversity net gain (BNG): Development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. It is also an approach where developers work with local governments, wildlife groups, landowners and other stakeholders in order to support priorities for nature conservation.

Blue infrastructure: Riverine and coastal environments, and canals and other strategic water features within a green infrastructure network.

Carbon sequestration: The uptake and storage of carbon, for instance by absorption of carbon dioxide by trees and plants which then release oxygen.

Climate change: The large-scale, long-term shift in weather patterns and average temperatures across the world due to the release of greenhouse gases (most notably carbon dioxide) into the air since the mid-1800s by humans – causing temperatures to rise and resulting in permanent changes to the climate, affecting people through flooding and damage to ecosystems.

Climate change adaptation: Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.

Climate change mitigation: Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing the sources of, or enhance the sinks for, greenhouse gases.

Community orchard: A collection of fruit trees planted among grass for the use of local residents, which provide places in which people can meet and plant/cultivate local food.

Conservation: The protection, improvement and use of natural resources in line with principles that assure the highest economic or social benefits for people and the environment.

Designated biodiversity sites: International sites (Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar sites), national sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and locally designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites.

Ecosystem: A dynamic community of living organisms – animals, plants, fungi and microorganisms – and their physical environment that interact as a functional unit.

Ecosystem services: The functions of the natural environment that directly or indirectly provide benefits for people. Ecosystem services include:

- **Provisioning services:** The products obtained from ecosystems, for example food, fibre and fresh water
- **Regulating services:** The benefits obtained from the regulation of ecosystem processes, for example, the regulation of climate, water, air quality, human diseases and erosion control
- **Cultural services:** The non-material benefits people obtain from ecosystems for instance through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, recreation, and aesthetics
- **Supporting services:** Ecosystem services that are necessary for the production and maintenance of all other ecosystem services. For example, soil formation and retention, nutrient cycling, water cycling, and provisioning of habitat. These services often reflect the function and condition of natural capital stock.

Environmental net gain: Improving all aspects of environmental quality through a scheme or project. Achieving environmental net gain means achieving biodiversity net gain first and going further to achieve net increases in the capacity of affected natural capital to deliver ecosystem services.

Green corridor: A strip of green land that connects green areas or hubs and allows the movement and dispersal of wildlife, usually through urban landscapes. Green corridors can also be used to link housing areas to, for example, cycle networks, places of employment, town centres and community facilities, thus promoting walking and cycling.

Green infrastructure: A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity (National Planning Policy Framework, 2023).

Green (or living) wall: A vertical wall (partially) covered in greenery, often planted in soil at the base, but sometimes using wall-mounted boxes or special panels. Green walls offer several benefits such as contributing to heat retention and cooling, storm water retention and capturing pollutants.

Green roof: A vegetative roof system that hosts plants in a growing medium installed over a waterproof membrane. Green roofs can be designed as wildlife habitats and to optimise temperature regulation and/or for aesthetic value. They can also capture and slow the flow of storm water.

Green space: Patch of vegetated land within the urban fabric ranging from pockets of amenity grassland to large parks.

Green space creation: The creation, from space that was previously not green at all, of public open space comprising areas of grass, trees and other vegetation, set apart for recreational or aesthetic purposes in an otherwise urban environment.

Green space enhancement: Improvement to existing green space to make it more attractive, safer and/or of increased biodiversity value. Better management and stewardship can often allow green spaces to flourish so that they can be enjoyed by more people.

Landscape: An area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of their natural and/or human factors (e.g. geology, landform, soils, vegetation, land use and human settlement).

Landscape-scale conservation: The pursuit of multiple benefits from enhancing nature across a defined area that make links to wider economic and social priorities (e.g. water quality, access to nature).

Mental health benefits: Connecting people to a healthy environment is a powerful tool for combatting mental health issues such as chronic stress, depression and anxiety. Access to green space, outdoor exercise and green activities, such as gardening or habitat conservation, can have positive impacts on people with mental ill health.

Multi-functionality: The ability to provide multiple functions by integrating different activities and land uses on individual sites and across a whole green infrastructure network.

Natural capital: The stock of natural ecosystems that yields a flow of valuable ecosystem goods or services, directly or indirectly, to people, including ecosystems, species, freshwater, land, minerals, the air and oceans, as well as natural processes and functions. Natural capital includes many different components of the natural environment, as well as the processes/functions that link these and sustain life.

Natural capital asset: A natural resource that provides a flow of ecosystem services and benefits over time

Natural flood management: Managing flood and coastal erosion risk by protecting, restoring and mimicking the natural 'regulating' function of catchments, rivers, floodplains and coasts.

Nature-based solutions: Actions that are inspired or supported by natural processes and which simultaneously provide environmental, social and economic benefits. Such solutions bring natural features and processes to cities, landscapes and seascapes.

Nature recovery network: An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. Includes the existing network of designated sites and priority habitats, as well as landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.

Open space: All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity

Park: A publicly accessible area of natural, semi-natural or planted space intended for human enjoyment and recreation and often for the protection of wildlife or natural habitats. Parks often host facilities for play and rest.

Physical health benefits: Access to green space for regular exercise can significantly reduce the impacts of cardiovascular disease and other serious health problems. Regular exercise, including walking, can reduce the negative effects of health threats such as obesity, coronary heart disease and respiratory disorders.

Priority habitats and species: Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Rewilding: A form of ecological management which aims to support nature recovery by restoring natural processes that allow the natural succession of habitats and species to occur. In some cases, it may be considered necessary to reintroduce missing keystone species to re-establish natural processes.

Right Tree Right Place: ensuring the right tree is established in the right place, using the right method, for the right reasons, and with the right aftercare. This means increasing tree cover whilst protecting and enhancing what is special and valued in the landscape and keeping the environmental benefits already being delivered. New trees in the wrong locations could result in unintended negative consequences for biodiversity, landscape character and heritage assets, and also reduce resilience to climate change.

Soil organic matter (SOM): All living or once living material added to soil. SOM improves soil structure, fertility and resilience to drought and flooding. It is more than half carbon, so is closely related to 'soil organic carbon' which is more often used as a research term.

Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

Sustainable drainage system (SuDS): An approach to managing surface water run-off from rainfall close to where it falls that replicates natural drainage by slowing and holding back run-off, reducing pressure on existing piped systems and reducing risk of flooding. Where designed as vegetated/green systems, SuDS can help to moderate microclimate, benefit ecology, improve water quality and provide amenity spaces with opportunities for recreation.

Sustainable transport: Environmentally sustainable modes of travel, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Swales: Linear grass covered depressions which lead surface water overland from the drained surface to a storage or discharge system, typically using road verges.

Urban Green Factor (UGF): A policy tool which sets a target for greening the surfaces of a development, promoting increased use of measures with higher provision of environmental surfaces. It is also known as Green Space Factor.

Urban tree planting: The process of planting young trees in towns and cities. As urban sites may not be the natural habitat for trees, tree choice and location are vital if trees are to grow and flourish. Planting trees in urban areas can yield many benefits in addition to their aesthetic value, such as reductions in air pollution and noise levels.

Wellbeing: The state of being happy and healthy. Being in or close to nature can reduce anger, fear, and stress and increases pleasant feelings. Exposure to nature not only make us feel better emotionally, it can also contribute to our physical wellbeing, reducing blood pressure, heart rate, muscle tension, and the production of stress hormones.

Wetland creation: The creation of a distinct wetland ecosystem inundated by water, either permanently or seasonally, where aquatic vegetation thrives. Wetlands can be used for water purification, water storage, sequestration of carbon and other nutrients, the stabilisation of shorelines, and in support of unique plants and animals.

Wildlife corridor: linear features that enable migration and dispersal or otherwise act to link habitats in ways that reduce the isolation of wildlife populations.

Woodland creation: The planting of new trees to form woodland or low-density forest, providing open habitats with plenty of sunlight for inhabitants and some limited shade at ground level. It can help in urban cooling, in providing shade and shelter, in minimising run-off from fields, and in reducing the impact of flooding.

Appendix A: Planning Policy and Strategy Review

Appendix A - Planning Policy Review

This Planning Policy and Document Review identifies national and local issues that green and blue infrastructure (GBI) can help with. It considers where opportunities may arise from GBI to address these issues alongside Natural England's¹ 15 principles for green infrastructure ('why' do good infrastructure, 'what' good infrastructure is and 'how' to do good infrastructure) which is shown below in Figure 1 on Page 5.

The following list of documents are included in this review:

National:

- National Planning Policy Framework (updated December 2023);
- Planning Practice Guidance;
 - Open Space, Sports and Recreation Facilities, Public rights of way and local greenspace (March, 2014);
 - Natural Environment (updated July 2019);
 - Air Quality (updated November 2019);
 - Climate Change (updated March 2019);
 - Flood Risk and Coastal Change (updated August 2022); and
 - Healthy and Safe Communities (updated August 2022).
- HM Government - A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (2018);
- Green Infrastructure Framework – Principles and Standards for England; biodiversity
- The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP);
- The Environment Act – Part 6 - Biodiversity Net Gain;
- Everybody Active, Every Day: Framework for Physical Activity;
- Everybody Active, Every Day: 5 years on (2021);
- Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking (DfT 2020); and
- Promoting Healthy Cities (Royal Town Planning Institute).

¹ <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx>

Local:*Harborough District Council – Planning Policy & Strategies:*

- Adopted Corporate Plan 2022-2031
- Adopted Harborough Local Plan 2011 – 2031;
- Bitteswell Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2023); and
- Infrastructure Funding Statement (December 2019).

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's):

- Planning Obligations SPD.

Neighbourhood Plans:

- Arnesby NDP;
- Billesdon NDP;
- Broughton Astley NDP;
- Burton Overy NDP;
- Dunton Bassett NDP;
- East Langton NDP;
- Fleckney NDP;
- Foxton NDP;
- Gilmorton NDP;
- Great Bowden NPD;
- Great Easton NDP;
- Great Glen NDP;
- Hallaton NDP;
- Houghton on the Hill NDP;
- Hungarton NDP;
- Husbands Bosworth NDP;
- The Kibworth Review NDP;

- Leire NDP;
- Lubenham NDP;
- Medbourne NDP;
- Misterton with Walcote NDP;
- North Kilworth NDP;
- Saddington NDP;
- Scraftoft NDP;
- Shearsby NDP;
- South Kilworth NDP;
- Swinford NDP;
- Tugby and Keythorpe NDP; and
- Tur Langton NDP.

Strategies:

- Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan (2022 – 2027);
- Rural Strategy & Action Plan (2023-2028); and
- Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy (2022 – 2027).

Evidence Based Studies:

- Harborough Open Spaces Strategy (2016-2021);
- Built Sports Facility Strategy;
- Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Facilities Strategy (2022);
- Harborough District Playing Pitch Strategy (2018);
- Harborough District Council Climate Emergency Action Plan (2022 - 2030);

Other relevant strategies & Leicestershire County Council:

- Space for Wildlife: Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 – 2026, 2016;
- Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
- LLR Biodiversity Quality Assessment Report;

- Leicestershire Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022-2032;
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs);
- LCC Tree for Every Person;
- Leicestershire Net Zero Carbon Roadmap;
- Green Infrastructure Strategy – Volume 1 – Sub regional Framework 2010;
- The Sustainable Harborough Challenge Project;

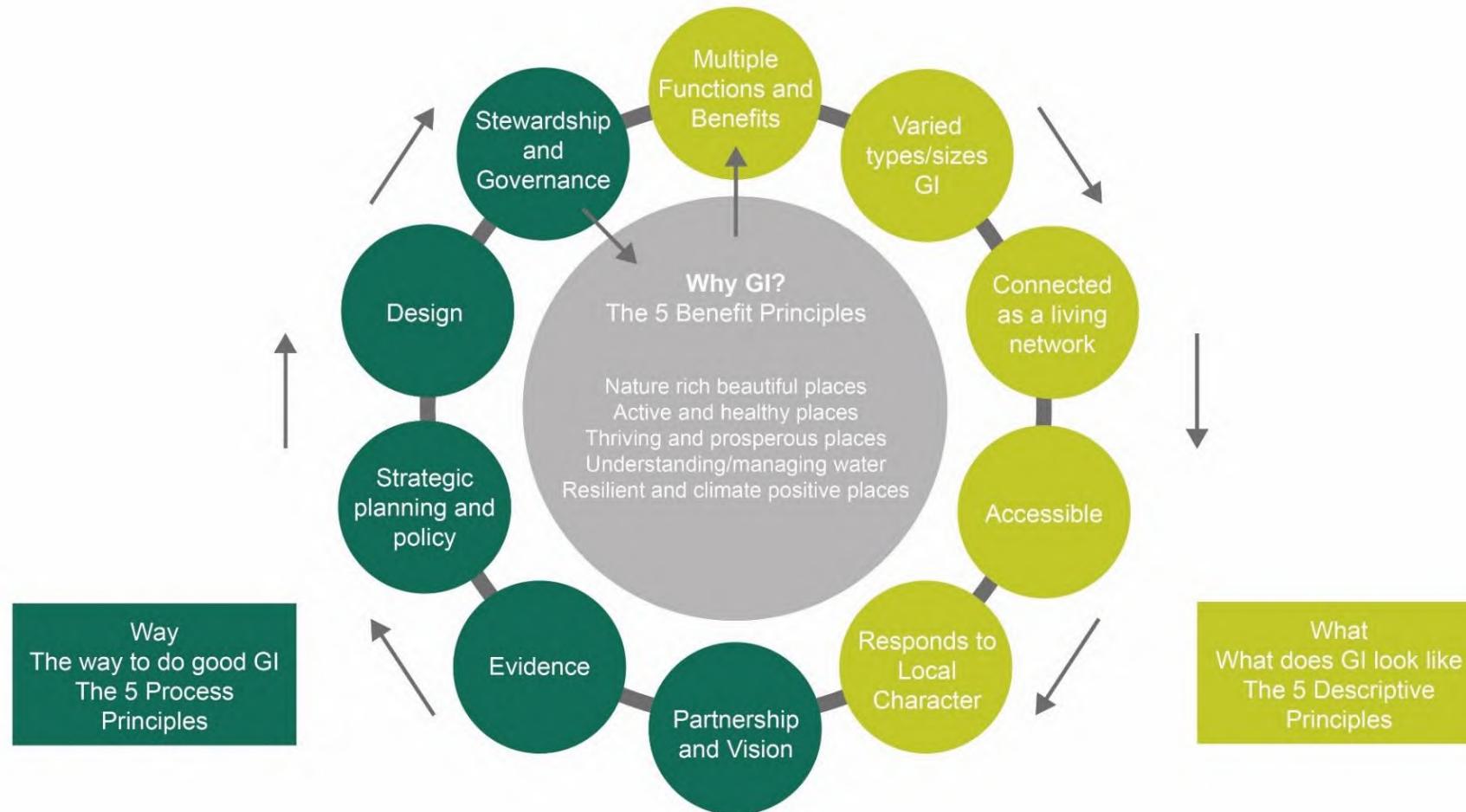


Figure 1 – Natural England’s Principles for Green Infrastructure

National Planning Policies

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
National Planning Policies						
<p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, DLUHC, published December 2023)²</p>	<p>Section 3 (Plan Making) – Paragraph 20 outlines that Strategic Policies, as set by local authorities, should set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale, and quality of places, making specific provision for the ‘conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation.’</p>					
	<p>Section 5 (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes) – Paragraph 74 outlines that the supply of new homes can often be best achieved through planning larger scale development, e.g. new settlements or significant extensions to existing villages and towns, provided they are well located and designed, and supported by facilities (including a genuine choice of transport modes). Working with the communities and with other authorities if appropriate, strategic policy-making authorities should identify suitable</p>					

² NPPF (DLUHC, updated December 2023) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>locations for such development where this can help meet the identified needs in a sustainable way. This considers the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment, infrastructure and scope for environmental gains, ensure size and location will support the community and set clear expectations for the quality of the places to be created and how this can be maintained e.g. Garden City principles.</p>					
	<p>Section 5 (Delivering a sufficient supply of homes) – Paragraph 83, outlines that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will be enhanced or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Planning policies should identify opportunities for villages to grow and thrive, especially where this will support local services. Where there are ground of small settlements, development in one village may support services in a village nearby.</p>					
	<p>Section 6 (Building a strong, competitive economy) – Paragraph 89 states, planning policies and decisions should recognise that sites to meet local business and community needs in a rural area may have to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. In these circumnutates it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surrounding , does not have an unacceptable impact on local roads and exploits any</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>opportunity to make a location more sustainable (e.g. by foot, cycling or by public transport). The use of previously developed land, and sites that are well-related to existing settlements, should be encouraged where suitable opportunities exist.</p>					
	<p>Section 8 (Promoting Healthy and Safe Communities) – Paragraph 96 to 101 outlines that Planning Policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promotes social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other and enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs.</p>					
	<p>Section 8 (Open Space and Recreation) – Paragraphs 105 to 107 in the NPPF set out that Local Green Space (LGS) designation is a way for communities to identify and protect green space of particular importance to them through local and neighbourhood plans. In order for the LGS designation to be used, the green space must be in a reasonably close proximity to the community it serves and be demonstrably special to the local community with a particular local significance (aesthetical, historical, recreational or environmental); and in a local character and now an extensive tract of land. The NPPF states that local</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	policies for managing development within the LGS should be consistent with those for Green Belts.					
	<p>Section 9 (Promoting sustainable transport) – Paragraph 110 states the Planning system should actively manage patterns of growth in support of these objectives. Significant development should be focused on locations which are or can be made sustainable, through limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes. This can help to reduce congestion and emissions, and improve air quality and public health. However, opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural area and this should be considered in both plan-making and decision making.</p> <p>Planning policies should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) support an appropriate mix of uses across an area, and within larger scale sites, to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education and other activities; b) be prepared with the active involvement of local highways authorities, other transport infrastructure providers and operators and neighbouring councils, so that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport and development patterns are aligned; and 					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	c) identify and protect, where there is robust evidence, sites and routes which could be critical in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and realise opportunities for large scale development;					
	<p>Section 11 (Making effective use of land) – Paragraph 123 states that planning policies and decisions should promote an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment and ensuring safe and healthy living conditions. Strategic policies should set out a clear strategy for accommodating objective assessed needs, in a way that makes as much use as possible.</p> <p>Planning policies should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land through mixed use schemes; and b) Recognise that undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as wildlife, recreation, flood mitigation, cooling/shading and carbon storage. 					
	<p>Section 12 (Achieving Well-designed and Beautiful Places) – Under paragraph 135, planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, while not preventing or</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>discouraging appropriate innovation or change and establish a strong sense of place.</p> <p>Paragraph 136 states that trees make an important contribution to the character and quality of urban environments. Planning policies and decisions should ensure that new streets are tree-lined and that opportunities are taken to incorporate trees elsewhere in developments.</p>					
<p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DLUHC, published December 2023)</p> <p>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (DLUHC, published December 2023)</p>	<p>Section 14 (Meeting the Challenges of Climate Change, Flooding and Coastal Change) – Section 14 of the NPPF, emphasises that responding to climate change is central to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.</p> <p>Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, considering the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures (Paragraph 158).</p> <p>Paragraph 159 advises that new development should be planned in ways that ‘avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change. When new development is brought forward in areas which are</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>vulnerable, care should be taken to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures, including through the planning of green infrastructure.'</p> <p>In accordance with Paragraph 167, plans should manage flood risk by using improvements in green infrastructure to reduce the causes and impacts of flooding.</p>					
	<p>Section 15 (Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment) – Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures; and wherever possible, make improvements to the local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, considering relevant information such as river basin management plans (Paragraph 180).</p> <p>Paragraph 181 states that plans should allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in the Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure, and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
<p>Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (DLUHC, published March 2014) – Open space, sports and recreation facilities, public rights of way; and local green space³</p>	<p>Paragraph 96 to 101 – outlines that Planning Policies and decisions should aim to achieve healthy, inclusive and safe places which promotes social interaction, including opportunities for meetings between people who might not otherwise come into contact with each other and enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this would address identified local health and well-being needs.</p>					
<p>PPG (DLUHC/MHCLG, updated February 2024) – Natural environment⁴</p>	<p>Paragraph 001 – The value and benefits of open space is outlined in the PPG, Paragraph 001 which states that “it is for local planning authorities to assess the need for open space and opportunities for new provision in their areas.”</p>					
	<p>Paragraph 004 – PRoW’s form an important component of sustainable transport links and should be protected or enhanced. Paragraph 004 states that the DEFRA Rights of Way circular (1/09) gives advice to local authorities on recording, managing and maintaining, protecting and changing PRoW.</p>					

³ PPG (DLUHC and Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG), March 2014) – Open space, sports recreational facilities, public rights of way and local green space - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/open-space-sports-and-recreation-facilities-public-rights-of-way-and-local-green-space>

⁴ PPG (DLUHC & MHLG, updated February 2024) – Natural Environment – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
<p>PPG (DLUHC & MHCLG, updated March 2019) – Air quality⁵</p>	<p>Biodiversity, Paragraph 009 – reinforces the NPPF which is clear that pursuing sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and that a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution – Planning Practice Guidance (DLUHC) for Biodiversity Net Gain provides further detail on BNG specifically.</p> <p>Paragraph 009 also states that https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/section/40 places a duty on all public authorities in England to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. This should embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision making throughout the public sector.</p> <p>Paragraph 010 states that local planning authorities and neighbourhood planning bodies should therefore seek opportunities to work collaboratively with other partners, to develop and deliver a strategic approach to protecting and improving the natural environment based on local priorities and evidence.</p> <p>It is advised in paragraph 018 that biodiversity in and around development should be led by a local understanding of</p>					

⁵ PPG (DLUHC & MHLCG, updated March 2019) – Air quality – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/climate-change>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>ecological networks and should seek to include improved links between existing sites, habitat restoration and expansion, buffering of existing important sites, new biodiversity features within development and securing long term management.</p>					
<p>PPG (DLUHC & MHCLG, updated March 2019) – Air quality</p>	<p>Green Infrastructure, Paragraph 004 – introduces the concept of GI, paragraph 007 outlines what is meant by a strategic approach to planning for GI. It states that an authority-wide GI framework or strategy should be evidence-based by, for example including an assessment of current green infrastructure provision that identifies gaps in the network and the components and opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>This strategic approach to GI may cross administrative boundaries. Therefore, neighbouring authorities, working collaboratively with other stakeholders including Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), may wish to consider how wider strategies for their areas can help address cross-boundary issues.</p> <p>Paragraph 008 states that arrangements for managing GI, and for funding its management over the long-term, should be identified as early as possible when planning GI and factored into the way that it is designed and implemented.</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
<p>PPG (DLUHC & MHCLG, updated March 2019) – Climate change⁶</p>	<p>Paragraph 002 In reference to encouraging sustainable transport and the location of proposed development, Paragraph 002 states that in plan making, it is important to consider air quality management areas and other areas where there could be specific requirements or limitations on new development because of air quality.</p> <p>Paragraph 008 cites the use of GI (particularly trees) to absorb dust and other pollutants, to be an appropriate mitigation technique to ensure that new development prevents unacceptable risk. In addition, the PPG promotes transport with low impact on air quality.</p>					
<p>PPG (DLUHC & MHCLG, updated August 2022) – Flood risk and coastal change⁷</p>	<p>Local planning authorities should ensure that protecting the local environment is properly considered alongside the broader issues of protecting the global environment. Planning can also help increase resilience to climate change impact through the location, mix and design of development.</p> <p>Paragraph 003 advises that providing sustainable transport is an example of an approach to mitigate climate change by reducing emissions.</p> <p>A further example provided of adapting to climate change relevant to GBI is stated to include the availability of water</p>					

⁶ PPG (DLUHC & MHCLG, updated March 2019) Climate change – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/climate-change>

⁷ PPG (DLUHC & MHCLG, updated August 2022) – Flood risk and coastal change – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/flood-risk-and-coastal-change>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>infrastructure for the lifetime of the development and design responses to promote water efficiency and protect water quality.</p> <p>Paragraph 004 advises that local planning authorities should pay particular attention to integrating adaptation and mitigation approaches and looking for ‘win-win’ solutions that will support sustainable development. One of the win-win solutions presented is the ‘provision of multi-functional green infrastructure, which can reduce urban heat islands, manage flooding and help species adapt to climate change – as well as contributing to a pleasant environment which encourages people to walk and cycle’.</p>					
<p>PPG (DLUHC & MHCLG, updated August 2022) – Healthy and Safe Communities⁸</p>	<p>Paragraph 050 presents GI as an opportunity to reduce overall flood risk in a development area and beyond, as well as the use of SuDS. SuDS provide opportunities such as combining water management with green space with benefits for amenity, recreation and wildlife (Paragraph 051).</p>					
<p>A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (HM</p>	<p>The 25 Year Environment Plan sets our government action to help the natural world regain and retain good health. It aims to deliver cleaner air and water in our cities and rural landscapes, protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats.</p>					

⁸ PPG (DLUHC & MHCLG, updated August 2022) – Healthy and safe communities – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/health-and-wellbeing>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Government, published 2018) ⁹	<p>Policies are divided into key areas to focus actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using and managing land sustainably; Recovering nature and enhancing the beauty of landscapes; Connecting people with the environment to improve health and wellbeing; Increasing resource efficiency and reducing pollution and waste; Securing clean, productive and biologically diverse seas and oceans; and Protecting and improving the global environment. 					
Green Infrastructure Framework (Natural England, January 2023) – Principles and Standards for England ¹⁰	<p>The GI Framework comprises:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GI Principles (what and how of good GI); GI Standards (National standards for GI quantity and quality); GI mapping including environmental and socio-economic datasets; GI Planning and Design Guide; and Process journeys. 	Establishes GI context.				

⁹ A Green Future: Our Year Plan to Improve the Environment (HM Government, published 2018) – <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ab3a67840f0b65bb584297e/25-year-environment-plan.pdf>

¹⁰ Green Infrastructure Framework: Principles and Standards for England (Natural England, published January 2023) - <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/GIStandards.aspx>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
The Natural Environment White Paper (NEWP) (Department for Environment, Food and Rual Affairs (DEFRA), published February 2014) ¹¹	<p>The Government wants to put the value of nature at the heart of decision-making, in Government, local communities and businesses. To achieve this the NEWP focuses on 4 key areas:</p> <p>Protecting and improving our natural environment; Growing the green economy; Reconnecting people and nature; and Demonstrating international and EU leadership.</p>					
The Environment Act – Part 6 (Biodiversity Net Gain) (UK Public General Acts, published October 2014) ¹²	<p>Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is described by DEFA as 'an approach to development that aims the leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than before'.</p>					
Everybody Active, Every Day: Framework for	<p>Everybody Active, Every Day (EAED) is the national physical activity framework for England. The aim of the framework is to bring about real and long lasting change</p>					

¹¹ NEWP (Department for Environment, Food and Rual Affairs (DEFRA), published February 2014) - <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c148840f0b61a825d6532/newp-implementation-update-20140226.pdf>

¹² The Environment Act – Part 6 (Biodiversity Net Gain) (UK Public General Acts, published October 2021) - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Physical Activity (Public Health England, updated January 2021) ¹³	using a long-term, evidence based approach to embed physical activity into the fabric of daily life, making it an easy, cost-effective and ‘normal’ choice in every community in England. The priorities of the framework are: Active society; Moving professionals; and Active environment.					
Everybody Active, Every Day: 5 years on (Public Health England, published August 2021) ¹⁴	Since the release of EAED in 2014, the physical activity message has maintained a national profile, with policy and strategy increasingly including mention and reference of the need to incorporate physical activity. The document was reviewed after 5 years of the Framework being in place and demonstrated that stakeholders received the EAED framework positively. Stakeholders referenced it setting ‘a clear agenda for action’, being ‘based on a strong evidence base’, and reported how valuable it is for organisations ‘wanting to know how to focus on physical activity’. There was agreement that cross-sector and cross-departmental collaboration is crucial for continuing to embed the					

¹³ Everybody Active, Everyday: Framework for Physical Activity (Publish Health England, updated January 2014) - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7d8109ed915d2d2ac09597/Framework_13.pdf

¹⁴ Everybody Active, Everyday – 5 years on (Publish Health England, updated August 2021) – <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/everybody-active-every-day-5-years-on/everybody-active-every-day-5-years-on#:~:text=The%205%20year%20review%20demonstrates,to%20focus%20on%20physical%20activity%27>.

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>messaging on the importance of physical activity at a population level.</p> <p>Active society – There has been increased prominence of physical activity in national strategies and plans, with stakeholders recognising the importance of embedding the message into agendas across several sectors. Feedback to national campaigns, such as This Girl Can’ and ‘10-minute Shake Up’, and local initiatives, such as the ‘Daily Mile’, demonstrates these have positively influenced attitudes towards physical activity.</p> <p>Moving professionals – Professionals within transport and planning have greater awareness of physical activity benefits, with increased investment in campaigns advocating for environments conducive to active living. Local level activation of national initiatives is evidenced, with general initiatives encouraging active travel also gaining prominence.</p> <p>Active environment – National and local policy documents have begun identifying the need to create physical activity advocates across sectors as a catalyst for improved promotion. Specific reference is made to increased upskilling of the non-medical workforce, in a responsive attempt to improve engagement and confidence with people who are inactive or have long term conditions. Continued development of professional physical activity networks is</p>					

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	identified as a crucial outlet for information sharing and mutual exchange among sector advocates.					
Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking (DfT, published July 2014) ¹⁵	<p>A Gear Change was published to provide a step change in cycling and walking over the coming years. Although the challenge is huge, with physical inactivity responsible for 1 in 6 UK deaths, there is an ambition to transform the role of cycling and walking in the transport system. Increasing cycling and walking can help tackle some of the most challenging issues faced by society – improving air quality, combatting climate change, improving health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities and tackling congestion on roads.</p> <p>Bold actions will help to create places where people want to live and work, with better connected, healthier and more sustainable communities.</p> <p>This plan describes the vision to make England a great walking and cycling nation. Its sets out the actions required at all levels to make this a reality, grouped under four themes:</p> <p>Theme 1 - better streets for cycling and people; Theme 2 - cycling and walking at the heart of decision-making;</p>					

¹⁵ Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking (DfT, published July 2014) - <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5f1f59458fa8f53d39c0def9/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Theme 3 - empowering and encouraging local authorities; and Theme 4 - enabling people to cycle and protecting them when they do.					
Promoting Healthy Cities (Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), published October 2014) ¹⁶	Promoting Healthy Cities was published to describe the scale and pace of urbanisation around the world, the health and wellbeing issues experienced by urban populations, and the environmental factors that shape these issues. The report has three sections; Cities, urbanisation and health; Urban environments; and Heathy placemaking for all.					
Promoting Healthy Cities (Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), published October 2014)	Open Space and GI - GI (green spaces and water features) also has an important role to play to minimise the heat island effect, which has negative health effects. A ten per cent increase in green space in our cities could help to keep temperatures at present levels into the 2050s, despite climate change.					
Promoting Healthy Cities (Royal Town Planning Institute	Inequities in access to green spaces - Inequities in access to green spaces can then lead to health inequalities. The most affluent 20 per cent of wards in England have five					

¹⁶ Promoting Healthy Cities (RTPI, published October 2014) – <https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/1470/promoting-healthy-cities-full-report-2014.pdf>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful places	Principle 2 – Active and healthy	Principle 3 – Thriving and	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
(RTPI), published October 2014)	times the number of parks or green space than the most deprived 10 per cent of wards. Thirty-five per cent of people in the lowest socio-economic grade visit green spaces infrequently (less than once a month), due to the low availability and poor quality of green space in deprived areas. Providing excellent quality local green space is an effective way to tackle inequality and improve health.					
Promoting Healthy Cities (Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI), published October 2014)	Availability of green space is positively associated with physical and mental health - The availability of walkable green space is associated with a lower cardiovascular risk and reductions in mortality and morbidity from circulatory disease and higher levels of physical activity in adults and children. Levels of physical activity are not just dictated by the proximity of residents to green spaces however; other influences include the quality of the surrounding environment, the density of residences, the mix of land uses and the degree to which streets are connected and the ability to walk from place to place. Cities need to provide access to local public facilities and spaces for play, sport and recreation, so as to allow children and adults to be physically active.					

Local Planning Policies

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Harborough District Council – Local Plan & Other Policies/Strategies						
<p>Adopted Corporate Plan 2022-2031 (Harborough District Council, adopted February 2022) ¹⁷</p>	<p>The Corporate Plan shows how the District council will help ensure that they are in a place that stands out, not only in Leicestershire, but also nationally as an area where residents can have a good quality of life and where businesses and communities continue to thrive.</p> <p>The Corporate Plan is the councils overarching strategic document. It is the plan which covers the full range of the councils’ responsibilities and is an important tool to set out our ambitions for the district and help focus the efforts and recourses on the right things. This is even more important in the context of constrained budgets increases in demand and continuous change.</p> <p>The vision for the Corporate Plan is to build a future for the people of Harborough District that given them the best chances of life and opportunities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community leadership create a sense of pride on our place; Promoting health and well-being and encouraging healthy life choices; Creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations; and Supporting businesses and residents to deliver a prosperous local economy. 					

¹⁷ [Our policies, plans and strategies - Corporate Plan | Harborough District Council](#)

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<p>Harborough Local Plan (2022-2031)</p>	<p>Policy Context and Vision – The Harborough District Local Plan was adopted in April 2019. The Harborough Local Plan provides an important strategy for Harborough District. The Local Plan provides an overall vision for the District, a number of specific objectives and a detailed set of policies to explain how the vision and objectives will be achieved, together with a Policies Map which shows where policies apply.</p> <p>It will play a significant role in delivering sustainable development in appropriate locations and in helping to protect the countryside, important green spaces, and the built and natural heritage from inappropriate or insensitive development, thus enhancing the quality of life for people and communities.</p> <p>Vision (appropriate to this GBI Study) – “In 2031, Harborough District will be a vibrant, safe and prosperous place which retains its identity as a predominantly rural area of villages and market towns where local communities enjoy a high quality of life. Residents will benefit from increased access to suitable housing, a wider range of local skilled jobs, and high quality services and facilities, all of which promote healthy and safe lifestyles.</p> <p>The District will have a diverse and thriving economy, with market towns and some large villages acting as employment and service centres for their surrounding rural areas. The diversity and quality of Harborough’s countryside, natural and historic environment will have improved for the benefit of residents and visitors. Air and water quality will have been improved while the impacts of noise and light pollution will have been minimised. There will be better access to the countryside and an improved range of open spaces for local people to enjoy.</p> <p>By 2031 the District will have improved resilience to the impacts of climate change, with new development located in areas of low flood risk and incorporating energy efficient</p>					

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	<p>design and sustainable drainage systems (SuDs) to manage run-off water sustainably. Low carbon design techniques and technologies, increased provision for walking and cycling, and improved access to public transport for new development will have contributed to a reduction in the District’s carbon footprint.</p> <p>New development will have been delivered in the most sustainable locations. The historic market town of Market Harborough will have retained its character and strengthened its role as the District’s principal town.</p> <p>These two market towns, along with settlements near to the edge of Leicester (Scraptoft, Thurnby and Bushby), Broughton Astley and the rural centres, will have been the main focus for development. Residential development will have been delivered to meet strategic and local needs and the necessary infrastructure and community facilities needed to support this growth will have been delivered on time. Selected rural villages will have seen small-scale, sensitively located development to support local objectives, meet local housing needs and sustain village services. In the wider countryside only very limited development will have taken place to meet specifically identified housing needs and support long-term rural sustainability.</p> <p>The economic base of the District will have been strengthened through the fostering of new enterprise and the sustainable growth of existing businesses. Supporting infrastructure will be in place to allow businesses to grow”.</p> <p>“New housing developments will be high quality, well designed, and respectful of their setting in order to ensure that the character of the District’s towns and villages is maintained and protected. Communities will have access to improved social, recreational, sports, health and educational facilities”.</p> <p>“Existing valued community services will have been retained and necessary new ones delivered to keep pace with development. The design of the public realm will have</p>					

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	responded to the needs of the elderly, young and other vulnerable sections of the community, thereby assisting in a sense of inclusiveness and well-being for all residents”.					
	Objective 4 – Infrastructure: Support local communities and maintain a high quality of life by ensuring that new development delivers the necessary infrastructure including that relating to health, education, culture, transport, open space, recreation, water supply and treatment (includes those only relating to GBI).					
	Objective 5 – Protection of local services: Protect, enhance and, where appropriate, secure the provision of additional accessible community services and local facilities, supporting innovation in their delivery across the District.					
	Objective 6 - Natural environment: Protect, maintain, restore and enhance the quality, diversity, character, local distinctiveness, biodiversity and geodiversity of the natural environment, creating links between wildlife sites ensuring that open countryside is protected against insensitive and sporadic development, the characteristics of the local landscape are respected, and the unnecessary loss or sterilisation of natural resources is prevented.					
	Objective 7 – Historic environment: Protect and enhance the character, distinctiveness and historic significance of settlements and their wider landscape and townscape settings.					
	Objective 8 – Town/village centres: Support and enhance the vitality and viability of market town and larger village centres as places for shopping, leisure, cultural, commercial and community activities, thereby recognising and embracing their valued role as the hearts of their communities.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Objective 9 – Design: Ensure that new development is of high quality and sustainable design which reflects local character and distinctiveness, provides attractive, healthy and safe environments, respects residential amenity and promotes sustainable behaviours.					
	Objective 10 – Transport: Provide greater opportunities to reduce car use, thereby reducing the impacts of road traffic on local communities, the environment and air quality, by locating development where there is good access to jobs, services and facilities, and by supporting improvements in public transport, walking and cycling networks and facilities.					
	Objective 11 – Flood risk: Locate new development in areas which will not put life or property at risk of flooding and build associated resilience by requiring the use of appropriate sustainable drainage systems in new developments and allowing for the provision of infrastructure associated with minimising flood risk, including in relation to future risk from climate change.					
	Objective 12 – Environmental Impact: Minimise the environmental impact of development and its vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, by reducing pollution and waste as much as possible, maximising water and energy efficiency, and promoting the use of low carbon, renewable energy, and other alternative technologies, with sustainable construction methods.					
	Objective 13 – Tourism and Culture: Promote the sustainable growth of tourism, cultural activities and access to the countryside for the benefit of both residents and visitors Enable the interpretation of the cultural assets of the District in order to enrich people’s experience.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>Policy SS1 – The Spatial Strategy: The Spatial Strategy (related to GBI) for Harborough District to 2031 is to:</p> <p>Maintain and improve the character and environment of the market town of Lutterworth and develop Broughton Astley;</p> <p>Strictly control development in the countryside and on designated open space within all settlements.</p>					
	<p>Policy GD 2 – Settlement Development: In addition to the sites allocated in Neighbourhood Plans, development within the existing built up area of Market Harborough will only be permitted where: it respects the form and character of the existing settlement and, as far as possible retains existing boundaries. In addition to the sites allocated in this Local Plan development adjoining to the existing or committed built up area of Market Harborough will only be permitted it is physically and visually connected to and respects the form and character of the settlement and landscape as well as retaining as far as possible natural boundaries within and around the site, especially trees, hedges and watercourses.</p>					
	<p>Policy GD 3 – Development in the Countryside: Outside of Market Harborough development will only be permitted where it is required for the following purposes; agriculture, local food initiatives, outdoor sport, minerals and water development, rural housing, conversion and minor extensions.</p>					
	<p>Policy GD 5 – Landscape Character: Development should be located and designed in such a way that it is sensitive to its landscape setting and landscape character area and will be permitted where it:</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>Respects and, where possible, enhances local landscape, the landscape setting of settlements, and settlement distinctiveness;</p> <p>Avoids the loss of, or substantial harm to, features of landscape importance;</p> <p>Safeguards important public views, skylines and landmarks; and</p> <p>Restores or provides equivalent mitigation for damaged features and/or Landscapes that would be damaged or degraded as a result of the development.</p>					
	<p>Policy GD 6 – Areas of Separation: Areas of Separation, are designated between, Great Bowden and Market Harborough, Bitteswell, Lutterworth and Magna Park. Development in the Areas of Separation will be permitted where it would not compromise, either alone or in conjunction with other existing or proposed development, the effectiveness of the Area of Separation in protecting the identity and distinctiveness of these settlements.</p>					
	<p>Policy GD 7 – Green Wedges: Green Wedges are defined on the Policies Map with the aims of:</p> <p>Preventing the merging of settlements;</p> <p>Guiding development form;</p> <p>Providing access from urban areas into green spaces/open countryside; and</p> <p>Providing recreational opportunities.</p> <p>Development within Green Wedges will be permitted where:</p> <p>It relates to agriculture, horticulture, forestry, nature reserves, allotments, burial grounds, outdoor leisure, sporting or recreation facilities including school playing fields, cycleways, footpaths or bridleways;</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>It retains the open and undeveloped character of the Green Wedge;</p> <p>It retains or creates additional green networks between the countryside and open spaces within the urban areas and benefits biodiversity;</p> <p>It retains or enhances public access to the Green Wedge, especially for recreation; and</p> <p>Any built development is small scale and necessary to the operational requirements of the activity.</p>					
	<p>Policy GD 8 – Good Design in Development: Development will be permitted where it achieves a high standard of design, including meeting the following criteria (only those in relation to GBI):</p> <p>Being inspired by, respecting and enhancing both the local character and distinctiveness of the settlement concerned;</p> <p>In areas with high heritage value;</p> <p>Being designed to minimise impact on the amenity of existing and future residents by:</p> <p>Respecting the context and characteristics of the individual site, street scene and the wider local environment to ensure that it is integrated as far as possible into the existing built form;</p> <p>Minimising the amount of water consumption;</p> <p>Minimising opportunity for crime and maximising natural surveillance;</p> <p>Protecting and enhancing existing landscape features, wildlife habitats and natural assets (including trees, hedges and watercourses) as an integral part of the development; and</p> <p>Enhancing the public realm, including high quality open spaces and links to the wider green infrastructure network to promote healthy lifestyles.</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>Policy RT 4 – Tourism and Leisure: The potential of tourism in the District will be maximised and tourism and leisure opportunities for visitors and residents will be increased by:</p> <p>Supporting the retention, enhancement and expansion of existing tourism and leisure attractions and tourist accommodation;</p> <p>Permitting development of tourism and leisure attractions and tourist accommodation that are well connected to other leisure destinations and amenities, particularly by public transport, walking and cycling;</p> <p>encouraging enhancement of the environment and local distinctiveness, including heritage and landscapes, which will increase the attractiveness of the District to visitors and increase tourism.</p> <p>New tourist accommodation, attractions and other tourism-related development will be directed to Market Harborough town centre.</p> <p>The Council will support the promotion and management of Foxton Locks and the Grand Union Canal in line with the ambition for the area to be a regional tourist attraction.</p>					
	<p>Policy HC 2 – Community Facilities: Development proposals which would result in the loss of existing community facilities will be permitted where:</p> <p>It can be demonstrated that there is no longer a need for the facility, either for its original purpose or another community use; or</p> <p>Another community facility of similar function and scale and with sufficient capacity to meet needs is available within easy and safe walking distance of the majority of the community which it serves; or</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>The community facility is to be replaced by a facility that is of a scale, function and standard equivalent to, or superior than, the existing facility, is within easy and safe walking distance of the majority of the community which it serves, and is to be made available before the closure of the existing facility;</p> <p>Development at existing community facilities will be permitted in order to assist it their diversification and improved accessibility where the proposal seeks to sustain the future of the facility; and</p> <p>Proposals for the provision of new community facilities and the flexible use of existing space for community uses will be permitted where they are within easy and safe walking distance of the majority of the community they will serve.</p>					
	<p>Policy GI 1 – Green Infrastructure Networks: Development which supports the potential of the following strategic green infrastructure assets to contribute to the wider green infrastructure network will be permitted:</p> <p>Welland, Sence, Soar, Swift and Avon river corridors and the Grand Union Canal;</p> <p>Dismantled railway lines;</p> <p>Saddington, Stanford and Eyebrook reservoirs; and</p> <p>Traffic free cycle routes, and long-distance recreational paths and bridleways.</p> <p>The green infrastructure assets listed above will be safeguarded and, where possible, enhanced by ensuring that: a. development does not compromise their integrity or value; development contributes wherever appropriate to improvements in their quality, use and multi-functionality; and</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	opportunities to add to or improve their contribution to the green infrastructure network are maximised through partnership working.					
	<p>Policy GI 2 – Open Space Sports and Recreation: Development resulting in the loss of or reduction in defined open space, sport and recreation facilities will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that:</p> <p>A robust assessment clearly demonstrates that the space or recreational facility is surplus to local requirements and will not be needed in the-long term in accordance with local standards; or</p> <p>Replacement areas will be at least equivalent in terms of quality, quantity and accessibility, and there will be no overall negative impact on the provision of open space in accordance with local standards; or</p> <p>The proposal is for alternative recreational provision which meets evidence of local need in such a way as to outweigh the loss.</p> <p>Developments of more than 10 dwellings which would result in deficiencies in the quantity, accessibility and/or quality of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities should contribute towards:</p> <p>The provision of specific new open space, sport and recreation facilities in accordance with local standards; and/or</p> <p>The enhancement of identified existing facilities to meet the relevant local standards. 4. New open space, sport and recreation facilities should be provided within residential development sites (unless otherwise agreed by the Council) and should:</p> <p>Be accessible, usable, of high quality and good design, visible and safe and include facilities for a range of ages;</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate															
	<p>Enable links to be created between new development and surrounding recreational networks and facilities (including Public Rights of Way);</p> <p>Provide an appropriate landscaping and landscape maintenance scheme; and</p> <p>Specify, prior to the commencement of development, the responsibilities for management and maintenance in-perpetuity of the open space, sport and recreation facility.</p> <p>Table 1: Typologies of open space, sport and recreation and quantity provision standards for Harborough District.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type</th> <th>Quantity</th> <th>Accessibility</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Parks and Gardens</td> <td>0.4ha per 1,000 population</td> <td>4km or 10 min drive</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces</td> <td>8.5ha per 1,000 (rural area) 1.5ha per 1,000 (urban area)</td> <td>1.6km or 20 min walk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amenity Greenspace</td> <td>0.9ha per 1,000 population</td> <td>800m or 10 min walk</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Green Corridors and Greenways</td> <td>Usually, linear footpath or cycle route so not realistically measurable</td> <td>1.6km or 20 min walk</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Type	Quantity	Accessibility	Parks and Gardens	0.4ha per 1,000 population	4km or 10 min drive	Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces	8.5ha per 1,000 (rural area) 1.5ha per 1,000 (urban area)	1.6km or 20 min walk	Amenity Greenspace	0.9ha per 1,000 population	800m or 10 min walk	Green Corridors and Greenways	Usually, linear footpath or cycle route so not realistically measurable	1.6km or 20 min walk					
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	Provision for Children and Young People	0.3ha per 1,000 population	400-800m or 5-10min drive						
	Outdoor Sport Facilities	Refer to Harborough Playing Pitch Strategy	4km or 10 min drive						
	Cemetries and Burial Gardens	0.35ha per 1,000 population	2km or 5 mins drive/bus						
	Civic Spaces	No normal amount New pedestrian spaces to be provided in new shopping centres; or existing to be enhanced through contributions	Not applicable						
	Policy GI 3 – Cemetries: The Council will ensure sufficient burial provision continues to be provided in the District through extensions, an additional Crematorium site has been identified near Harborough Road.								
	Policy GI 4 – Local Green Space: Local green spaces are allocated on the Policy Map and will retain their openness permanently. Further Local Green Space may be identified								

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>through Neighbourhood Plans. The construction of new buildings on Local Green Space will not be permitted other than:</p> <p>Buildings providing appropriate facilities for outdoor, sport and recreation;</p> <p>Replacement buildings; and</p> <p>Limited affordable Housing for Local Community Needs.</p>					
	<p>Policy GI 5 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity: National and locally designated biodiversity and geodiversity sites, will be safeguarded. Development will therefore only be permitted where:</p> <p>There is no impact on: conservation sites, irreplaceable habitats, nationally designated sites, locally designated sites, there is no loss of any agricultural land or natural resources.</p> <p>Development should contribute towards protecting and improving biodiversity and geodiversity by; protecting and enhancing habitats and populations of priority species, maintaining biodiversity through construction, improve water quality through the Water Framework Directive, and protect features and areas of geodiversity and enhance them to improve connectivity of habitat, amenity use, education and interpretation.</p>					
	<p>Policy CC 1 – Mitigating Climate Change: Major development will be permitted where it demonstrates: a. how carbon emissions would be minimised through passive design measures;</p> <p>The extent to which it meets relevant best practice accreditation schemes to promote the improvement in environmental and energy efficiency performance;</p> <p>How the development would provide and utilise renewable energy technology;</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>Whether the building(s) would require cooling, and if so how this would be delivered without increasing carbon emissions;</p> <p>What existing buildings to be retained as part of the development are to be made more energy efficient; and</p> <p>How demolition of existing buildings is justified in terms of optimisation of resources in comparison to their retention and re-use; and g. how carbon emissions during construction will be minimised.</p>					
	<p>Policy CC 2 – Renewable Energy Generation: Development for renewable and low carbon energy will be permitted where;</p> <p>It is appropriate for the technology for the site;</p> <p>There is limited noise intrusion; and</p> <p>It does not contribute towards unacceptable visual impact.</p>					
	<p>Policy CC 3 – Manging Flood Risk: New development should take place in the areas of lowest risk of flooding, including the potential future risk due to climate change. The Sequential Test, and, where necessary, the Exceptions Test should be used to assess the suitability of proposed development. Site-specific flood risk assessments of all sources of flood risk on the site and downstream of the site will be required as appropriate. All developments should take place within Flood Zone 1 wherever possible. Developments in Flood Zones 2 or 3 will require as site specific flood-risk assessment.</p>					
	<p>Policy CC 4 - Sustainable Drainage: All major developments must incorporate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). Prior to the commencement of the development, the responsibilities for management and maintain in perpetuity must be agreed. The design and layout of the SuDS must, manage the water close to its source, use the water as a</p>					

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	resource, provide re-naturalisation of modified watercourses where practical, ensure that flooding will not occur to property in and adjacent to the development.					
	Policy IN 1 – Infrastructure Provision: Major developments will be permitted where there is, or will be needed, sufficient infrastructure capacity to support and meet all the requirements arising from it. Direct provision and/or financial contributions towards meeting the eligible costs of infrastructure. Planning obligations will be formed under the Section 106.					
	Policy IN 2 – Sustainable Transport: Development proposals should have regard to the transport policies of the Local Transport Authorities. Proposals should seek to maximise the use and efficiency of existing transport facilities and where necessary provide mitigating measures to deal with the impacts of development on the transport networks. Residential and commercial development proposals will be permitted, subject to the provision of safe access, measure to facilitate and encourage safe access, protection of, connection to existing pedestrian, cycle and equestrian routes, provision of electric vehicle stations and the mitigation of air quality and residential amenity.					
	Policy IN 4 – Water Resources and Services: Water resources will be protected, and water services provided. Development will be permitted only where it would, not adversely impact the quality of any water course into which the surface water emanating from new development flows; have access to adequate water supply; have ready access to foul water dispersal and treatment, have no impact on and, wherever possible contribute to an enhanced water environment and its associated ecology.					
	L1 East of Lutterworth Strategic Development Sites: The new Strategic Development Site at Lutterworth will provide a multifunctional green infrastructure network, including: Greenways for walking, a community park containing outdoor sports facilities to be					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>provided before completion of 300 dwellings or as otherwise agreed by the Council; natural and semi-natural greenspace (including the existing woodland and Misterton Marshes SSSI which is to be protected as non-accessible open space); measures to minimise potential visual impact on nearby heritage assets and their setting, in accordance with Policy HC1; a cemetery (in accordance with Policy GI3) and allotments; local public open space, including equipped play space and multi-use games areas, in accordance with Policy GI2 and a phasing plan to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority.</p>					
<p>Bitteswell Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (Harborough District Council, adopted February 2023)¹⁸</p>	<p>Bitteswell is a small village in Harborough which has a large range of heritage. The Conservation Area protects some of Bitteswell village. The settlement pattern of Bitteswell was formed in medieval times. There is a long history of agricultural land use and the development of Bitteswell is intertwined with the farmland that surrounds it. The special interest of the Bitteswell Conservation Area is derived from the following key characteristics:</p> <p>The medieval settlement pattern;</p> <p>The strong agricultural character of the village and the relationship of the fields and farms to the traditional housing and other buildings;</p> <p>The role of the village greens in the character and daily life of Bitteswell;</p> <p>The variety of building styles and the use of thatch, brick and slate for buildings, especially for traditional housing and farm buildings. The open spaciousness of the village;</p>					

¹⁸ Bitteswell Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (Harborough District Council, adopted February 2023)
https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/7793/bitteswell_conservation_area_appraisal_and_management_plan_2023

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>The relationship between the built environment of the settlement and the natural environment both within it and surrounding it which contributes to the rural tranquillity of Bitteswell; and</p> <p>The public footpaths which relate the village to its hinterland.</p> <p>Opportunities for the environment – Bitteswell conservation area is generally in good condition and is well cared for. The village greens are well maintained. They provide pleasant environment in which to site, and they contribute to the rural tranquillity and proximity to nature that is characteristic of Bitteswell.</p>					
<p>Infrastructure Funding Statement (Harborough District Council, December 2019)¹⁹</p>	<p>The Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) for the 2022 and 2023 Monitoring Period was published by Harborough District Council for the annual statement of the financial and non-financial Section 106 contributions including affordable housing, community facilities, open space, sport and recreation provision.</p> <p>The aim of the Infrastructure Funding Statement is to increase transparency by providing an annual statement of accounts.</p> <p>The following projects were delivered with IFS contributions last year:</p> <p>Lutterworth Rugby Club (partly funded through S106 developer contributions);</p> <p>The new Kibworth Skatepark (solely funded through Council S106 developer contributions); and</p> <p>All-weather Sports Pitches situated at the Robert Smyth Academy, Market Harborough (partly funded through S106 Council developer contributions).</p>					

¹⁹ Infrastructure Funding Statement (Harborough District Council, adopted December 2019)
https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/8348/infrastructure_funding_statement_2022-23

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Harborough District Council – Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)						
Planning Obligations SPD (Harborough District Council, adopted June 2022) ²⁰	The Planning Obligations SPD has been prepared to inform developers, landowners, infrastructure providers and local communities about the approach Harborough District Council takes to secure a range of community infrastructure. A planning obligation is legally enforceable and entered into under section 106 (S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990). This SPD replaces the previous HDC Planning Obligations 2017.					
Harborough District Council – Adopted Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) ²¹						
Arnesby NDP (adopted January 2019)	Policy Env1 – Local Green Spaces: Development will be supported on where it would not result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the following Green Spaces, or their settings: St Peters Church; Baptist Chapel Burial Ground; and Manor House Grounds.					

²⁰ Planning Obligations SPD (Harborough District Council, adopted June 2022)
https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/8142/planning_obligations_spd_2022

²¹ Neighbourhood Plans <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/bfcb08a4ef274ce7acc2b691020ccd1e>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Policy Env2 – Protection Of Other Sites And Features Of Environmental Significance: Development proposals will be supported only where they do not adversely affect, but actually protect and/or enhance.					
	Policy Env3 – Other Important Green Spaces: Development will be supported which does not adversely affect the character and features of the following sites: St Peters Churchyard; Baptist Chapel Burial Ground; Village Green Mill Hill Road; Green lanes south; Arnsby Village Hall; and Stoneleigh Open Space.					
	Policy Env 4 – Biodiversity And Wildlife Corridors: Development proposals shall safeguard locally significant habitats and species and/or create new habitats for wildlife.					
	Policy Cf1 – The Retention Of Community Facilities And Amenities: Development leading to the loss of an existing community facility (as listed below) will only be supported where it can demonstrate: There is no longer any need or demand for the existing community facility; The existing community facility is no longer economically viable, or; The proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	accessible location.					
Billesdon NDP (adopted 2014)	Policy Bp7 – Design: New development should meet the requirements of the Billesdon Village Design Statement. Housing developments of five or more dwellings should achieve 12 ‘greens’ against the requirements of Building for Life 12 and be eligible for ‘Building for Life ‘Diamond’ status.					
	Policy Bp14 – Water Management: New development should incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) with attenuation, storage and treatment capacities incorporated. Consideration should also be given to potential water logging, land contamination and waste water treatment capacity					
	Policy Bp20 – Biodiversity: New development should not harm the network of local ecological features and habitats. New development will be expected to maintain and enhance existing ecological corridors and landscape features (such as watercourses, hedgerows and tree-lines) for biodiversity, if appropriate					
	Policy Bp21 - Climate Change: Where compatible with the Village Design Statement, the incorporation of rain harvesting, grey water recycling, high standards of insulation and renewable energy systems in new and existing development will be encouraged.					
Broughton Astley NDP (adopted 2013)	Policy L1 – Improved Leisure Facilities: South of Broughton Way is allocated for the provision of additional community and leisure facilities. The second and third choice sites suggested during the Big Plan consultation will be considered if the allocated site is not granted permission to proceed. Site 1B is allocated for a centrally located community and leisure facility which will provide a minimum 4-court sports hall, gym and dance facilities,					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	all-weather pitch, changing facilities, meeting rooms and associated administration and parking facilities for the benefit of all the community.					
	Policy Statement CI1 – Contributions To New Infrastructure And Facilities: Financial contributions will be required, as appropriate, from each developer to mitigate the impact of the development on essential infrastructure such as public utilities, libraries, policing, waste services and the highways network. Financial contributions will be required, as appropriate, from each developer to fund additional healthcare, education and leisure services within the village in accordance with the obligations detailed in the Harborough District 'Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation 2009 (or subsequent revisions).					
Burton Overy NDP (adopted November 2018)	Policy Dbe1 – Design: All new development proposals of one or more houses, replacement dwellings and extensions will be supported where they have regard for the following building design principles to a degree that is proportionate to the development					
	Policy Env1 - Local Green Spaces: The following areas are designated as Local Green Spaces: Fish Ponds Field; Springs Field; Banks Field; Main Street Spinney (Perry's); Strip of Land along the front of the Old Heather Garden; and Traffic island bearing the village sign.					

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	New development will not be supported on land designated as local green space except in very special circumstances.					
	<p>Policy Env2 - Protection Of Sites Of Environmental (Natural And Historical) Significance: Local sites have been identified as being of local significance for wildlife (biodiversity) and/or history. They are important in their own right and are locally valued. Development proposals that affect them should:</p> <p>protect and enhance habitats and populations of priority species where appropriate;</p> <p>protect and enhance river and waterway corridors;</p> <p>provide contributions to wider biodiversity improvements in the vicinity of the development concerned; and</p> <p>protecting features of geodiversity interest and enhancing them to improve connectivity of habitats, amenity use, education and interpretation.</p>					
	Policy 3: Biodiversity General – Development proposals that cannot avoid (through, for example, locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigate, or, as a last resort, compensate for, the loss of a nationally or locally identified site of biodiversity value will not be supported					
	Policy Env4: Biodiversity, Woodland, Trees And Hedges – Development proposals that will adversely affect trees, woodland and hedges of environmental (biodiversity, historical, arboricultural) significance, or of landscape or amenity value, will not be supported. Proposals for new build housing should be designed to retain such trees and hedges wherever possible. Where destruction cannot be avoided developers will be required to plant replacement native species trees (on a two-for-one basis) or hedges using native species either on the site or elsewhere in the parish.					

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Dunton Basset NDP (adopted 2020)	Policy H2: Design Quality - Development proposals must demonstrate a high quality of design, layout and materials in order to make a positive contribution to the special character of Dunton Bassett Parish.					
	Policy Env1: Local Green Space – Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the following Local Green Spaces will not be permitted other than in special circumstances. All Saints churchyard and entrance. The Beat and Loves Lane, and Well Lane green space.					
	Policy Env2: Important Open Spaces – The following open spaces in Dunton Bassett are of high value for recreation, beauty, amenity, tranquillity or as green spaces within or close to the settlements. Development proposals that result in their loss, or have a significant adverse effect on them, will not be supported unless the open space is replaced by equivalent or better provision in an equally suitable location, or unless the open space is no longer required by the community					
	Policy Env4: Woodland And Notable Trees – Woodland and notable trees should be protected from loss or damage in development proposals and where possible integrated into their design. Where loss is unavoidable, the developer should provide biodiversity net gain through new planting either on site or elsewhere.					
	Policy Env 5: Biodiversity And Habitat Connectivity - All new development proposals will be expected to safeguard habitats and species, including those of local significance. If significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided (through 33 locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or compensated for, planning permission should be refused.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>Policy Env10: Area Of Separation – To maintain the physical and visual separation between Broughton Astley and the rural northwest part of Dunton Bassett, an Area of Separation is designated. Development proposals in the identified gap between villages should be located and designed to maintain, and wherever possible, enhance the separation of the villages.</p>					
	<p>Policy Cf1: The Retention Of Community Facilities And Amenities - Development leading to the loss of an existing community facility (including the village hall, DBA public house, church, school, childrens’ play area and allotments) will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that any of the following apply:</p> <p>A) There is no longer any need or demand for the existing community facility;</p> <p>b) The existing community facility is no longer economically viable; and</p> <p>c) The proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location within the Parish.</p>					
<p>East Langton NDP (Adopted in June 2018)</p>	<p>Policy DBE3: Design - This policy will apply to all new commercial and residential developments, including one or more houses, and replacement dwellings. All development should continue to reflect the character and historic context of existing developments within the Parish. However, contemporary and innovative materials and design will be supported where positive improvement can be robustly demonstrated without detracting from this historic context.</p>					
	<p>Policy Env 1: Protection Of Local Green Spaces - The following sites are proposed for designation as Local Green Spaces. Development proposals that result in their loss, or in any harm to their biodiversity, historical features, character, setting, accessibility or</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	amenity value will not be permitted. ‘Thorpe Path’, Church Langton, Village ‘green’, Church Langton, Cricket Ground, East Langton, Coronation Gardens, East Langton.					
	Policy Env 3: Biodiversity - Development proposals will be expected to protect local habitats and species, especially those covered by relevant European and English legislation and to achieve biodiversity net gain, where possible, by creating new habitats for wildlife; The Plan will designate two wildlife corridors as shown (map below) along the flood plains of Langton Brook and Stonton Brook; and All new housing development of one unit or more will be required to contribute towards the improvement of the wildlife corridors.					
	Policy Env 4: Trees - Development proposals that damage or result in the loss of trees and hedges of good arboricultural, ecological, historical and amenity value will not normally be permitted. Proposals should be designed to retain trees and hedges of arboricultural, ecological and amenity value. Proposals should be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees.					
	Policy T2: Footpaths, Footways And Bridleways – Improvements (including signage) to the network of footways and footpaths will be supported. Development proposals that will adversely affect existing footways and footpaths will not be permitted except in special circumstances or where appropriate mitigating measures can be provided.					
	Community Action 3: Public Transport – The Parish Council will work with the Highways Authority, transport providers and developers where appropriate to preserve and where possible enhance the public transport service for the Parish.					
Fleckney NDP	Policy F1: Countryside - The Countryside (land outside the Fleckney Limits to Development as defined on the Policies Map) will be protected for the sake of its intrinsic character, beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
(Adopted June 2018)	natural resources and to ensure it may be enjoyed by all. Development in the Countryside will be strictly controlled in accordance with Harborough Local Plan					
	Policy F2: Public Rights Of Way Network - Development should protect the Rights of Way and wherever possible create new links to the network including footpaths and cycle ways. The extension of the existing Rights of Way network to create a 'Fleckney Round' together with links to Saddington and Wistow are encouraged.					
	Policy F3: Ecology And Biodiversity - Development should not harm the network of local ecological features and habitats which include (as shown on the Policies Map Policy F3): A. Fleckney Brook B. Pond west of Fleckney Lodge C. Hedgerow along parish boundary (south) D. Fleckney Grange Hedgerow E. Fox Covert Plantation F. Coal Pit Lane Hedgerow G. Hedgerows near Woodbine Cottage H. The Meadows Ash I. Fleckney Road Hedgerows & Ash J. Ash trees north of Kilby Road New development will be expected to maintain and enhance existing ecological corridors and landscape features (such as watercourses, hedgerows and tree-lines) for biodiversity thus demonstrating overall net-gain.					
	Policy F4: Trees And Hedgerows - Existing trees and hedgerows should be retained where possible and integrated into new developments. Development that damages or results in the loss of ancient trees, hedgerows or trees of good arboricultural and amenity value will not normally be supported. Proposals should be designed to retain ancient trees, hedgerows or trees of arboricultural and amenity value. Proposals should be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees and hedgerows, indicating replanting where appropriate.					
	Policy F7: Local Green Spaces - The following sites have been designated as Local Green Spaces: A. Duck pond and amenity area, Saddington Road B. Fleckney Primary School					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	playing field C. Amenity areas off Stenor Close D. Amenity area at Long Grey E. Leicester Road Recreation Ground F. Leicester Road allotments G. St Nicholas churchyard and cemetery H. Kestrel Close amenity area I. The Wranglands amenity area J. Edward Road play area K. Lodge Road Recreation Ground L. The Meer Flood Relief Basin M. Band Hall Field, Wolsey Lane Development that would harm the openness or special character of a Local Green Space.					
Foxton NDP (Adopted in July 2014)	Policy F1: Countryside The Countryside - (land outside the Foxton Limits to Development and the Foxton Locks Area as defined on the Policies Map) will be protected for the sake of its intrinsic character, beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and to ensure it may be enjoyed by all. Development in the Countryside will be limited to that which supports community uses, essential infrastructure and that which requires a rural location (including the special circumstances set out in paragraph 55 of the NPPF).					
	Policy F2: Renewable Energy - Small-scale ground-mounted solar photovoltaic farms will be supported where specific criteria are met.					
	Policy F3: Tranquillity - Development proposals must consider and address their potential impact on local tranquillity; accordingly, the following will not be supported: A. Industrial, commercial, leisure, recreation and sporting proposals that introduce sources of noise, particularly nighttime noise, above the ambient level; and B. Developments requiring floodlights, security lights and streetlights. Planning conditions will be applied to ensure appropriate control.					
	Policy F4: Foxton Areas Of Separation - The open character of the two Foxton Areas of Separation, as defined on the adjacent map and the Policies Map, will be retained. The construction of new buildings or inappropriate uses of land which adversely affect this open					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>character or the character and setting of Foxtton village will not be supported. Any development proposal within the Areas of Separation must assess and address its impact on the setting of Foxtton Village, (as appropriate) the historic Foxtton Locks and the objective of separation and give specific attention to location, design and landscaping appropriate to the character of the area.</p>					
	<p>Policy F5: Ecology And Biodiversity - Development must have appropriate regard for the network of local ecological features and habitats. New development will be expected to maintain and enhance existing ecological and landscape features (such as watercourses, hedgerows and treelines) for biodiversity. Development proposals shall support the delivery of the Water Framework Directive and its objectives as set out in the Anglian River Basin Management Plan.</p>					
	<p>Policy F6: The Canal The Grand Union Canal - is recognised as a heritage asset, a key strategic Green Infrastructure and wildlife corridor, and a recreation and tourism resource that can be enjoyed for its contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations. It is a key feature that contributes to the character of Foxtton and the location and design of new development must have appropriate regard for the significance of this asset and its setting.</p>					
	<p>Policy F9: Local Green Spaces - The Local Green Spaces identified on the Policies Map will be protected and enhanced. Development which is harmful to these Local Green Spaces will not be supported.</p>					
	<p>Policy F10: Trees - Development that damages or results in the loss of ancient trees or trees of good arboricultural and amenity value will not normally be supported. Proposals</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	should be designed to retain ancient trees or trees of arboricultural and amenity value as these help to define the character of Foxton. Proposals should be accompanied by a tree survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees and indicates replanting where appropriate.					
	Policy F20: Foxton Locks - Development proposals which contribute to and support the conservation, presentation, interpretation and positive management of the Foxton Locks Area (as defined on the adjacent map), and allow for waterside and countryside recreational enjoyment, will be supported where: A. New visitor attractions are directly associated with Foxton Locks; B. Proposals have appropriate regard for the significance of the heritage assets of the Locks Area and their setting; C. Proposals address all other relevant Policies in this Plan, in particular Policies F3, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 10; Foxton Neighbourhood Development Plan: Submission 46 D. Traffic implications, including those for the nearby Foxton village, are fully assessed and addressed; related measures that may need to be considered include traffic management, public transport improvements, road signage and junction improvements.					
Gilmorton NDP (Adopted January 2022)	Policy G1: Countryside - (land outside the Gilmorton Limits to Development as defined on the Policies Map) will be protected for the sake of its intrinsic character, beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and to ensure it may be enjoyed by all. Development in the Countryside will be strictly controlled in accordance with Harborough Local Plan Policies SS1 and GD3.					
	Policy G2: Gilmorton Area Of Separation - The open character of the Gilmorton Area of Separation, as defined on the adjacent map and the Policies Map, will be retained. The construction of new buildings or inappropriate uses of land which adversely affect this open character or the character and setting of Gilmorton village will not be supported. Major development proposals within the Areas of Separation must assess and address their					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	impact on the setting of Gilmorton Village and the objective of separation and give specific attention to location, design and landscaping appropriate to the character of the area					
	Policy G3: Locally Important Views - Development should be located and designed in a way that is sensitive to its landscape. Development should not significantly harm and, where possible, enhance the following important views and vistas seen from publicly accessible locations: 1. Footpath Y93: Wheelers field view south 2. Footpath Y93: Wheelers field view west 3. Flat Lane (off Mill Lane): View north					
	Policy G5: Ecology And Biodiversity - Development should not harm the network of local ecological features and habitats (as shown on the Policies Map): A. Hedgerow north-west of Cotes de Val B. Old Fishponds in corner of improved grassland C. Pond, bordering Peatling Road D. Pond between improved grassland and arable field E. Dismantled Railway F. Pond New development will be expected to maintain and enhance existing ecological corridors and landscape features (such as watercourses, hedgerows and tree-lines) for biodiversity thus demonstrating overall net-gain. All new buildings should incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity.					
	Policy G7: Rural Economy - The sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise through the conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings will be supported where it meets the requirements of Harborough Local Plan Policies GD3 and BE1.					
	Policy G8: Local Green Spaces - The following sites (identified on the Policies Map) have been designated as Local Green Spaces: A. Kimcote Road Playing Fields B. All Saints Churchyard C. Primary School Playing Fields D. Gilmorton Allotments E. Lutterworth Road Recreation Ground F. Jubilee Wood, Peatling Parva Road G. Hilly Hollow Play Area, Kimcote Road H. Gilden Drive Play Area, Lutterworth Road					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
<p>Great Bowden NPD (Adopted May 2020)</p>	<p>Policy Env 2: Protection Of Local Green Space - The following areas shown on the Policies Map are designated as Local Green Space, see supporting information. A. Churchyard of St Peter and St Paul parish church B. Great Bowden Cemetery C. Green Lane Great Bowden Neighbourhood Plan 41 D. Great Bowden Recreation Ground E. Community Wood Development that would be harmful to the openness of a Local Green Space will only be permitted in very special circumstances.</p>					
	<p>Policy Env 3: Other Important Open Space - The following areas are designated as Important Open Spaces and shown on the Policies Map. The areas shall be safeguarded as open spaces and enhanced to improve their quality and usage as open spaces. F. Upper Green (Common Land CL70; and roadside verges) G. Central Village Greens (Common Land and Registered Village Green VG81) H. Nether Green (Common Land CL75) I, J, K. Middle Green (Common Land CL71, 72 and 73) L. Leicester Lane verge M. Great Bowden Academy playing fields and woodland N. Market Harborough lawn tennis club courts and facilities O. Main Street verge P. Main Street verges (four) Q. Leicester Lane Allotments</p>					
	<p>Policy Env 8: Protection Of Other Sites And Features Of Natural Environmental Significance - Twenty-eight sites, have been identified as being of at least local significance for wildlife. Development proposals affecting site 1 will be considered against national and strategic local policies. Development proposals affecting the other sites should demonstrate that the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the impact on the site and the identified features.</p>					
	<p>Policy Env 9: Biodiversity - Development proposals will be expected to protect local habitats and species and where possible and viable, to create new habitats for wildlife and promote and increase biodiversity; b. The wildlife corridors shown on the Policies Map and listed in the supporting information will be maintained, promoted and supported as a</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	biodiversity resource. Development proposals which impact on the corridors will be resisted.					
Great Easton NDP (Adopted February 2017)	Policy Nhe1: Protection Of Local Green Spaces - Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, an identified Local Green Space (listed and mapped below in figure 4, and detailed in Appendix 2) will be resisted.					
	Community Action Nhe 1: Other Important Open Space - The Parish Council will actively work with Harborough District Council and other partners to secure the protection of the locations and features of the following sites (listed and mapped below, figure 5, and detailed in Appendix 4) through existing or new designation as Harborough District Council OSSR sites.					
	Policy Nhe 4: Important Trees And Hedges – a) Development proposals that damage or result in the loss of woodland (map below, figure 8) or individual trees of arboricultural, landscape or ecological significance and amenity value will not normally be permitted. Proposals should be designed to retain or replace such trees and woods. Development proposals should also be accompanied by a survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees. b) Eight species-rich hedges of historical and ecological significance (see map below, figure 8) are proposed as Non-designated Heritage Assets.					
	Community Action Nhe 3 - The Parish Council will seek to work with landowners, community groups and appropriate charities and other organisations to identify suitable sites for planting and subsequent management as community woodlands.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Policy Nhe 5: Biodiversity - Development proposals will be expected to protect local habitats and species, especially those covered by relevant European and English legislation and, where possible, to create new habitats for wildlife. Projects for enhancing riparian habitats in and around the main watercourses of the River Welland, Eye Brook and Great Easton Brook will be encouraged.					
	Community Action Nhe 4: Biodiversity - The Parish Council in conjunction with other bodies will prepare and keep updated an environmental inventory list of known sites of biodiversity interest.					
	Policy Nhe 6 Protection Of Views Of Landscape And Community Value - Development that impacts in any way on the following locally important and valued views will be strongly resisted: i. Panoramic views southwest and northeast from the high ground on the lane to Eyebrook Reservoir ii. Southeast into and over the village from Bush House Farm iii. West from Holt View (start of footpath B66) across open countryside toward Nevill Holt iv. Southwest from Stockerston Road at north end of village v. North up Church Bank toward the parish church, characteristic green verges and sunken roadway vi. Southeast from Church Bank down High Street to the war memorial and out of the village vii. Southeast along Brook Lane towards Barnsdale, green verges, village brook and banks, mature trees, vernacular architecture viii. Northeast along Barnsdale into the village centre, vernacular architecture and layout ix. Southeast from Barnsdale at entry to the village toward Welland valley water meadows and Rockingham x. Panoramic views south east from Caldecott Road over water meadows to Rockingham Castle and the hills beyond.					
	Policy Nhe 7: Footpaths, Bridleways And Cycleways - Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths will					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	not be supported. Developer contributions will be sought to improve and extend the network of footpaths where appropriate.					
	Community Action Nhe 5: Footpaths, Bridleways And Cycleways - The Parish Council will actively seek to work with other bodies to achieve enhancements to the present network of footpaths, including replacement of stiles with kissing gates where appropriate, and to develop an off-road or separated roadside cycleway from the village to Bringhurst School.					
	Policy T3: Footpaths & Cycle Paths – The protection of the existing cycle and pedestrian network and its extension to provide off-road cycling connections between the Primary School and the village centre will be supported.					
Great Glen NDP (Adopted January 2020)	Policy Nhe 4: Important Trees And Hedges – Development proposals that damage or result in the loss of woodland (map below, figure 8) or individual trees of arboricultural, landscape or ecological significance and amenity value will not normally be permitted. Proposals should be designed to retain or replace such trees and woods. Development proposals should also be accompanied by a survey that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees. b) Eight species-rich hedges of historical and ecological significance (see map below, figure 8) are proposed as Non-designated Heritage Assets.					
	Community Action Nhe 3 - The Parish Council will seek to work with landowners, community groups and appropriate charities and other organisations to identify suitable sites for planting and subsequent management as community woodlands.					
	Policy Nhe 7: Footpaths, Bridleways And Cycleways - Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths will not be supported. Developer contributions will be sought to improve and extend the network of footpaths where appropriate.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Community Action Nhe 5: Footpaths, Bridleways And Cycleways - The Parish Council will actively seek to work with other bodies to achieve enhancements to the present network of footpaths, including replacement of stiles with kissing gates where appropriate, and to develop an off-road or separated roadside cycleway from the village to Bringhurst School.					
Hallaton NDP (Adopted April 2021)	Community Action 1: Important Open Spaces – The Parish Council will actively work with HDC, landowners, the community and other partners to secure the protection of the locations and features of the following sites (listed in Policy ENV 2), mapped in Figure 7 and detailed in the Environmental Inventory, Appendix 7) through confirmation as existing, or designation as new, Open Space, Sport and Recreation (OSSR) sites in appropriate typologies.					
	Policy Env 2: Important Open Spaces – The following sites and as shown in Figure 7 are of high value for sport, recreation, amenity, tranquillity or as green spaces within the built-up area. Development proposals that result in their loss, or have a significant adverse effect on them, will not be supported unless the open space is replaced by equivalent or better provision in an equally suitable location, or it can be demonstrated that the open space is no longer required in the short, medium and long term.					
	Policy Env 5: Notable Trees – 60 individual trees or coherent groups (see Appendix 11 for list and photographs) have been identified as having high arboricultural, historical, ecological and/or landscape value. They should be protected from felling, uprooting or wilful damage, including by development proposals, unless they are independently judged by a qualified arboriculturalist to present an unmanageable public safety risk.					
	Policy Env 7: Biodiversity, Hedges And Habitat Connectivity- Development proposals must protect and enhance wildlife-rich habitats and ecological networks and take every opportunity to provide a net gain in biodiversity including through the creation of new					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	habitats. Development proposals should avoid the total loss or harm to hedgerows of historical and ecological importance or amenity value. Where removal or harm is absolutely necessary, replacement hedgerows or other suitable replacement habitats will be provided. Development proposals should not damage or adversely affect the habitat connectivity provided by the wildlife corridors					
	Policy Env 10: Renewable Energy Infrastructure - Large-scale energy generation development proposals will be not be supported. Wind turbine development proposals must be for no more than one turbine and the facility must be off-grid. Proposals for small-scale, local resident, business, amenity or community-initiated, solar and wind generation infrastructure of an appropriate scale for the size, character and level of other facilities, the built environment and services in the village, will be supported					
	Community Action 4: Energy Infrastructure - The Parish Council will liaise with Western Power to help ensure that the future energy infrastructure is capable of meeting the increased demand for electricity within the Parish.					
	Policy Tr3: Footpaths, Bridleways And Cycleways - The retention, upgrading and, where appropriate, extension of the footpath, cycleway and bridleway networks in the Parish will be supported in order to: a) Service new developments and connect them to the existing pedestrian and cycle network; b) Encourage walking and cycling over car use for making journeys within the Parish; and c) Provide an improved and more extensive footpath, cycleway and bridleway network to support exercise and leisure activities for Hallaton Parish residents and visitors.					
Houghton on the Hill NDP	Policy D3: Preserving, And Ensuring The Provision Of, Green Space Within Houghton - (see Objective 5) All formally identified green spaces existing in Houghton and the minor					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
(Adopted December 2017)	ones which exist should be protected. New developments should incorporate incidental green space as described in section 1.5 of the VDS.					
	Policy S3: Provision Of Allotments - Community allotments will continue to be provided within Houghton so long as there is sufficient demand from Houghton residents. The Parish Council owns the land on which the present allotments lie. The current allotment site is now surrounded by areas which have planning permission for development of new housing . The Parish Council has been looking, and will continue to look, for land for possible re-location.					
	Policy S6: Construction Of A Golf Course - The construction of a golf course to the east of Houghton on the Hill is not opposed subject to conforming with all the criteria set out in the NP.					
	Policy E1: Maintenance And Development Of Green Spaces - The village has five major existing green spaces and many important smaller open spaces.					
Hungarton NDP (Adopted July 2017)	Policy Env2: Protection Of Other Sites Of Ecological And Geomorphological Significance - The protection and enhancement of the identified significant feature sites shown in the NP) will be supported.					
	Policy Env4: Biodiversity - Development proposals will be expected to safeguard locally significant habitats and species, especially those protected by relevant English and European legislation, and, where possible, to create new habitats for wildlife.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Community Action Env2: Biodiversity - The Parish Council in conjunction with other bodies will maintain the environmental inventory list of known sites of biodiversity interest prepared for this Plan; b) The Parish Council will work with community groups, landowners, funders and other organisations to enhance the biodiversity of the Parish by creating and/or managing habitat sites (e.g. wildflower meadows, woodland, wetland) on suitable parcels of land					
	Policy Env8: Important Hedges - Development proposals that damage or result in the loss of identified hedges of historical and ecological significance and amenity value will be resisted. Proposals should be designed to retain and manage such hedges where possible. Nine species-rich, ancient hedges are of high historical and ecological importance and are formally identified in the Plan as non-designated heritage assets					
	Community Action Env3: Hedgerows – The Parish Council will endeavour to work with landowners, farmers, funding bodies and the community to protect, enhance and manage all hedged field boundaries, roadside hedges and others for the benefit of biodiversity and as valued landscape features					
	Policy Env10: Footpaths And Bridleways - Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the existing network of footpaths and bridleways will not be supported					
	Community Action Env4: Footpaths And Bridleways - The Parish Council will work with landowners, Leicestershire County Council, community groups and other bodies to achieve enhancements to the present network of walking routes in the Parish.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Husbands Bosworth NDP (Adopted June 2020)	Policy Env 1: Protection Of Local Green Space – Areas detailed in the NP are designated as Local Green Space, which will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of land within the Green Belt.”.					
	Policy Env 2: Protection Of Sites Of Environmental Significance The sites mapped (figures 6.1, 6.2) have been identified as being of significance for their environmental features (natural and/or historical). They are important in their own right and are locally valued. Development proposals affecting these sites should demonstrate that the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location outweighs the impact on the site and the identified features.					
	Policy Env 4: Local Landscape Character The area mapped in figure 8 comprises a landscape that is an important and highly valued environmental resource within Husbands Bosworth parish. Development must respect the distinctive landscape character of the area as identified in the Laughton Hills Landscape Character Area. Development should respect features of landscape importance, safeguard important views, skylines and landmarks and restore or provide equivalent mitigation for landscapes that would be harmed as a result of development.					
	Policy Env 5: Biodiversity, Woodland, Hedges And Habitat Connectivity - Development proposals should safeguard locally significant habitats and species and where possible, should secure net gains for biodiversity. The creation of new habitats for wildlife will be supported. Development proposals that damage or result in the loss of identified woodland and hedges of historical and ecological significance and amenity value will not be supported. Proposals should be designed to retain and manage all local woods and					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	species-rich hedges whenever possible. Development affecting this corridor should secure net gains for biodiversity					
	Policy Env 7: Biodiversity Protection In New Development – The provision of the following will be supported: a. Roof and wall construction following technical best-practice recommendations for integral bird nest boxes and bat breeding and roosting sites b. Hedges (or fences with ground-level gaps) for property boundaries that maintain connectivity of habitat for hedgehogs					
	Policy Env 8: Energy Generation And Conservation - The development of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, and energy storage solutions will be supported, subject to demonstrating respect for local character, including the need to be compatible with the Laughton Hills Landscape Character Area, and demonstrating respect for residential amenity.					
The Kibworth NDP (Adopted May 2023)	Policy Csa6: Parks And Green Spaces - The following parks, sports and recreation grounds shown on the Proposals Map will be safeguarded: Jubilee Green Warwick Road Rookery Close Larks wood Smeeton Road Kibworth Cricket Club ground Football field(off Fleckney Road).					
	Policy Env1: Protection Of Local Green Spaces - Local Green Spaces are designated and development on the sites will not be acceptable other than in very special circumstances, including the development of utility infrastructure provided by Anglian Water. (1) Kibworth storm water retention basin (2) Church Road east woodland, allotments and pond					
	Policy Env2: Important Trees And Woodland - Development proposals should be laid out and designed to avoid damage to or loss of woodland and trees of arboricultural and					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	ecological significance and amenity value will be resisted. Proposals should be designed to retain such trees where possible. Trees that are lost or damaged should be replaced on a two-for-one basis using semi mature trees planted in accordance with the British Standard on Trees BS5837:2012.					
	Policy Env3: Biodiversity - Development proposals should protect local habitats and species, in accordance with the status of the site, especially those identified as candidate (cLWS), proposed (pLWS) or validated Local Wildlife Sites(LWS),or those covered by relevant English and European legislation, and, where possible, to create new habitats for wildlife. The Plan will designate a wildlife corridor is designated along the course of the Burton Brook as shown on the proposals map.					
Leire NDP (Adopted in January 2021)	Policy Env 2: Important Open Spaces - Policy Env 2: Important Open Spaces -The following open spaces in Leire (and figure 6) The following open spaces in Leire are of high value for recreation, beauty, amenity, tranquillity or as green spaces within or close to the built- to the built-up area. up area. up area. Development proposals that result in their Development proposals that result in their loss, or loss, or have a significant have a significant adverse effect adverse effect on them, will not be supported unless the open spa on them, will not be supported unless the open space is replaced by at least e is replaced by at least equivalent provision in an equally suitable location, or unless it can be demonstrated that the open space is no longer required by the community.					
	Policy Env 11: Biodiversity Protection In New Development – Provision should be made in the design and construction of new development to protect and enhance biodiversity,					
	Policy Env 13: Managing And Providing Resilience To Flood Risk Providing Resilience To Flood Risk – Flood Risk – 1. In conformity with HDC Local Plan policy CC3, development proposals within the areas indicated in Figure 17 in Figure 17 will be required, where					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>appropriate, to demonstrate will be required, where appropriate, to demonstrate that the benefit of development that the benefit of development outweighs the harm in relation to its adverse impact outweighs the harm in relation to its adverse impact on climate change targets, and on the targets, and on the likelihood of it conflicting with future flood mitigation strategies and infrastructure proposals. Mitigation strategies and infrastructure proposals.</p> <p>2. Proposals to construct new (or modify existing) floodwater management infrastructure (ditches, floodwater management infrastructure (ditches, roadside gullies, retention pools, etc.), including within the built- within the built-up area, will be supported. up area, will be supported.</p>					
<p>Lubenham NDP (Adopted May 2017)</p>	<p>Policy Lnp14: The Development Of New Housing And New Business Space - within the Neighbourhood Plan Area should include measures to positively protect and enhance the natural environment and biodiversity of the area. Development proposals should where appropriate provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. boundary screen planting that is sympathetic to its setting and uses native plant species; b. multifunctional areas of greenspace, providing for recreation and surface/groundwater management and increased opportunities for biodiversity; c. opportunities for innovative areas for greenspace such as roof gardens and green/living walls, and; d. habitats for wildlife such as bat boxes and owl boxes where appropriate. 					
	<p>Policy Lnp15: Proposals For New Residential And Business Development - should look to explore opportunities to provide for and/or enhance access to and views of the open countryside and in particular towards the River Welland, the disused railway line and towards Market Harborough, Bramfield and Gartree</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Misterton and Walcote NDP (Adopted May 2018)	Policy BNE 8: Green Spaces - Development, will be supported on local green spaces where it will not unduly affect the openness and essential quality of the space, with particular consideration given to scale, design and location of the proposal. Proposals should demonstrate consideration of how they will: A Protect, restore and enhance biodiversity and/or access to biodiversity. B Improve community cohesion through considerations such as increased social activity.					
	Policy Env 1: Protection Of Local Green Space - The following areas are each designated as Local Green Space: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misterton churchyard and meadows; and • Walcote parkland 					
	Policy Env 2: Protection Of Sites Of Environmental Significance – The sites in the NP are of local (or higher) significance for their historical and/or natural environment features. Their historical features are extant and have visible expression, their species and habitats are ecologically important in their own right, and they are locally valued. The historical and/or ecological significance of the features, species, or habitats occurring on these sites should be weighed against the benefits of a development proposal, or of a change of land use requiring planning approval, affecting them.					
	Policy Env 3: Open Spaces, Sports And Recreation Sites - Development proposals that result in the loss, or have a significant adverse effect on the following important open spaces will not be supported unless the open space is replaced by equivalent or better provision in an equally suitable location, or unless it can be demonstrated to the Local Planning Authority that the open space’s amenities are no longer required by the community.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Policy Env 6: Biodiversity, Woodland, Hedges And Habitat Connectivity - New development will be expected to safeguard and enhance locally significant habitats and species, especially those protected by relevant English and European legislation, and, where practicable, to create new habitats for wildlife. To be supported development proposals must retain, or replace on site, all ancient or veteran trees, ancient woodland and species rich hedgerows unless it is demonstrated that this is not practical or viable.					
North Kilworth NDP (Adopted in June 2017)	Policy Nk6: Sustainable Development – Where appropriate and viable, development should incorporate sustainable design, drainage and construction techniques and practices to meet high standards for energy and water efficiency, including the use of renewable and low carbon energy technology.					
	Policy Nk10: New Or Improved Community Facilities - Improvements to the quality and/or range of community facilities in the Neighbourhood Area will be supported subject to such development representing local character and being easily accessible by sustainable modes of transport including walking and cycling.					
	Policy Nk12: Protection Of Local Green Spaces - The sites listed below and shown on the accompanying plans are protected as Local Green Space, where new development is ruled out other than in very special circumstances.					
	Policy Nk13: Biodiversity - Development proposals that affect a site of ecological value will be expected to conserve and enhance its significant features, species and habitats, and to apply the hierarchy of avoid, mitigate and compensate.					
	Policy Nk14: Important Trees And Hedges - Development proposals that damage or result in the loss of trees and hedges of good arboricultural, ecological and amenity value will not					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	be supported. Proposals should be designed to retain trees and hedges of arboricultural, ecological and amenity value.					
	Policy Nk15: Landscape - Development proposals should respect the quality, character, distinctiveness and amenity value of the Neighbourhood Area’s landscape.					
	Policy Nk16: Important Open Views And Vistas - Development proposals that affect the identified important views and vistas will be required to respect and enhance this by ensuring that the visual impact of development on these views is carefully controlled. a) Views from Stoney across and beyond to the Jurassic clay ridge known as the Northamptonshire heights; b) Views from South Kilworth across open paddocks towards the undulating roofline of the Village; c) Street vistas down High Street toward War Memorial; from Pincet Lane towards the White Lion; and along Dag Lane towards the Church; and d) Views across paddocks east towards North Kilworth Hall.					
	Policy Nk19: Footpaths, Footways And Bridleways - The improvement or expansion of the Neighbourhood Area’s existing network of cycleways, footways and/or footpaths will be supported. Development proposals will be expected to protect any existing cycle ways, footways and footpaths.					
	Community Action: Developer Contributions - The Parish Council will seek, wherever possible, to use financial contributions obtained through the Community Infrastructure Levy or negotiated planning obligations; for the following: - Measures aimed at improving parking, congestion and traffic calming in the Village; - Affordable housing; - Pedestrian Crossing over the A4304 if not delivered through the housing provision in NK2;and - The enhancement of public footpaths (and cycleways) to provide better connectivity within the Parish.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Saddington NDP (Adopted in October 2018)	Policy H4: Brownfield Sites – Development proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of redundant land or buildings within the Limits to Development will be supported, but development on redundant land of high ecological value will not be supported, unless policies in the development plan that conserve and enhance ecological value are complied with.					
	Policy Env 2: Local Green Spaces – Development proposals that would result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the following Designated Local Green Spaces, will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances: Bullbeds, allotment gardens, Saddington Cemetery.					
	Policy Env 3: Protection Of Sites And Features Of Environmental Significance – The following sites shown on figure 8 have been identified as being of local significance for biodiversity (species and habitats) and / or history. They are important in their own right and are locally valued. Development proposals that affect them will be expected to protect or enhance the identified features. a) Saddington Reservoir b) St Helen’s Churchyard.					
	Policy Env 4: Important Open Spaces – Development proposals that result in the loss of, or have a significant adverse effect on, the following areas of public open space will not be supported, unless the public open space is replaced by an equivalent or better provision in an equally suitable location or it can be demonstrated that the public open space is no longer required by the community.					
	Policy Env 5: Biodiversity And Wildlife Corridors - Development proposals will be expected to safeguard locally significant habitats and species and, where possible, to create new habitats for wildlife. Trees and hedgerows of good arboricultural, biodiversity and amenity value should be protected from loss or damage as a result of development. Wherever possible, they should be integrated into the design of development proposals.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Development proposals should be accompanied by a tree survey of at least (currently) BS5837 standard, or the standard in force at the time, that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees. Development proposals should not damage or adversely affect the wildlife corridors identified on the map below. Development should not create barriers to the permeability of the landscape for wildlife in general, or fragment populations of species of conservation concern.					
	Policy Env 10: Flooding - Every development proposal of appropriate scale and where relevant will be required to demonstrate that: a) The development and its occupants are safe from flooding for its lifetime; b) Its location takes geology, hydrology and flood risk into account, including undertaking a hydrogeology study whose findings must be complied with in respect of design, groundworks and construction; c) Its design includes, as appropriate, sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), surface water management measures and permeable surfaces; and d) It does not increase the risk of flooding to third parties.					
	Policy Env 11: Energy Generation And Conservation – Development that incorporates environmentally sound energy generation and/or storage technologies will be supported. Large scale wind turbines and solar farms are not appropriate in the Laughton Hills Landscape Character Area or in the small part of the Lutterworth Lowlands Landscape Character Area between Saddington and Fleckney. Proposals for small-scale renewable energy generation and energy storage facilities will be considered favourably, on their merits, providing that conditions regarding habitats and species, heritage assets, landscape character, noise and visual impact are in place.					
Scraptoft NDP (Adopted on March 2015)	Policy S5: Landscape Protection Development - That will have a significant adverse impact on topography and landform or lead to the removal of important features of the historic landscape, including parks and gardens, estates and mature hedgerows and woodlands, will not be permitted. New development on the edge of the built-up area of Scraptoft should					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	incorporate design and mitigation measures that minimise any adverse impact on the surrounding landscape.					
	Policy S6: Green Wedge - The open and undeveloped character of the Leicester/Scraptoft Green Wedge, will be retained.					
	Policy S8: Countryside - The Countryside will be protected for the sake of its intrinsic character and beauty, the diversity of its landscapes, heritage and wildlife, the wealth of its natural resources and to ensure it may be enjoyed by all. Development in the countryside will be limited to that which requires a rural location.					
	Policy S9: Local Green Spaces - The Local Green Spaces will be protected and enhanced. Development which is harmful to these Local Green Spaces will not be approved.					
	Policy S10: Design - All new developments should reflect the distinctive character of Scraptoft as demonstrated by the traditional architectural features and building materials evident in the Scraptoft Conservation Area.					
	Policy S11: Biodiversity - New development should not harm the network of local ecological features and habitats. New development will be expected to maintain and enhance existing ecological corridors and landscape features (such as watercourses, hedgerows and tree-lines) for biodiversity. The retention and improvement of Scraptoft Local Nature Reserve is supported. Improvements should include maintaining the quality and increasing the extent of species-rich grassland; improving the appearance and biodiversity value of boundaries; information to the public; and public safety.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Policy S12: New Community Hall - A new Community Hall will be developed on land at Beeby Road. The Community Hall will provide a multi-use facility that will incorporate recreation facilities and will be capable of hosting a branch GP surgery.					
	Policy S13: Allotments - Community allotments will be provided at Beeby Road.					
Shearsby NDP (Adopted in October 2017)	Policy Cf1: The Retention Of Community Facilities And Amenities - Development leading to the loss of an existing community facility (including the village hall, village green, children’s play area, Chandlers Arms and Shearsby Bath) will be supported provided it can be demonstrated that either: a) There is no longer any demonstrable need or sustainable demand for it; b) It is no longer economically viable; or c) Relocation to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location is achieved prior to its loss.					
	Policy Cf2: New Or Improved Community Facilities - Proposals that improve the quality and/or range of community facilities will be supported, provided that the proposed development will not: (a) generate a need for additional parking that cannot be accommodated within the site or the adjacent highway without undue risk to highway safety; and (b) be of a scale in excess of assessed community needs (c) be inaccessible for pedestrians or cyclists.					
	Policy Env 1: Local Open Areas - Development proposals that would not result in the loss, or have an unacceptably adverse effect on the open character, of any of the following areas, shown in Figure 6, will be supported: Thorpehill Farm, Spinney west, Thorpehill Farm Spinney east, Back Lane verges and green areas, Fenny Lane – Bear’s Hole and field, Welford Road bungalows triangle, Old Turnpike road.					
	Community Action Env 3: Hedgerows – The Parish Council will work with landowners, farmers, funding bodies and the community to protect, enhance and manage hedged field					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	boundaries, roadside hedges and others for the benefit of biodiversity and as valued landscape features					
	Policy Env 5: Important Trees And Woodland – Development proposals shall ensure the conservation of existing trees and woodland present within or immediately adjacent a site, ensuring all healthy examples are retained or new planting is provided to compensate for any unavoidable loss.					
	Community Action Env 4: Biodiversity - The Parish Council will actively seek to work with community groups, landowners, funders and other organisations to enhance the biodiversity of the Parish by creating and/or managing habitat sites (e.g. wildflower meadows, woodland, wetland) on suitable parcels of land					
	Policy Env 6: Footpaths And Bridleways - Development proposals shall preserve existing Public Rights of Way and where possible provide for the improved maintenance and connectivity of the existing Public Rights of Way network, supporting sustainable modes of transport and travel choices, including the Public Right of Way between Shearsby and Arnesby.					
South Kilworth NDP (Adopted in March 2016)	Policy H7 – Design: All development should be designed to make a positive contribution to its surrounds.					
	Policy Env 1 – Protection Of Local Green Spaces: The areas below are designated as areas of Local Green Space, which will be protected in a manner consistent with the protection of land within Green Belts.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Valley bottom pasture; Fishponds pasture; Village allotments; and Old gravel pit field.					
	Policy Env 2 – Important Open Space: Development resulting in the loss of playing fields, allotments or land use for formal recreation will not be supported.					
	Policy Env 3 – Protection Of Important Views: Development proposal should respect the open views and vistas identified below and in Figure 8.					
	Policy Env 4 – Woodland, Trees And Hedges: Development should not result in the loss of trees of biodiversity, landscape, amenity or arboricultural value, or result in loss or damage to woodland or hedgerows. Where such loss is unavoidable, development should demonstrate net gains in biodiversity, through the planting of new trees, woodland and hedgerows.					
	Policy Env 5 - Biodiversity And Wildlife Corridors: Development affecting the wildlife corridors identified on Figure 9 should not result in the creation of barriers to the permeability of the landscape for wildlife or lead to the fragmentation of populations of species of conservation concern. The conservation and/or enhancement of the identified wildlife corridors will be supported. Development impacting on biodiversity should secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.					
	Policy Env7: Flooding - Development should ensure that: a) the development and its occupants are safe from flooding for its lifetime; b) its design includes, as appropriate,					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), surface water management measures and permeable surfaces; and c) it does not increase the risk of flooding to third parties.					
	Policy En8: Access And Rights Of Way - Development proposals that result in loss of or have a significant effect on the existing rights of way will not be supported. Proposals to maintain, upgrade and, where appropriate, extend the pedestrian footpath network in the Parish will be supported.					
	Policy Cf1: Retention Of Community Facilities - Proposals that will result in the loss of an existing community facility or amenity as listed above will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that: a) there is no longer any need or demand for the existing community facility; or b) further to 12 months active and open marketing it can be demonstrated that the existing community facility is no longer economically viable; or c) the proposal makes alternative provision for the relocation of the existing community facility to an equally or more appropriate and accessible location within the Parish.					
	Community Action Cc-Cf 5: Communal Green Space/Park – The Parish Council will explore and support the development of a new communal green space at the heart of South Kilworth village whilst continuing to maintain and improve the existing village green.					
	Community Action Ca-Cf10: Footpaths - Parishioners greatly appreciate the range of footpaths within the parish, although some could be better maintained. A proposal has been made to extend and link them together e.g. Walcote Road extension and Rugby					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Road link, and links with reservoir and old railway. The provision of a dog walking path in the village e.g. around the playing fields will be pursued.					
Swinford NDP (Adopted In September 2018)	Policy Env1: Local Green Spaces – The following local green spaces are designated – The Glebe, the Mourant Orchard, the Paddock and the Village Green.					
	Community Action 2: Other Important Open Space - The Parish Council and the community will actively work with Harborough District Council and other partners to secure or continue protection of the locations and features of the following sites – All Saints Church, Childrens Play Areas, The Chequers Public House, Sports Field, Winsford Church, Chapel Fields Green and the Cemetery.					
	Community Action 3: Increase In Tree Planting - The Parish Council together with an appointed Tree Warden will actively support groups to seek grants to enable the planting of more trees in the Parish to enhance the environment and help to improve air quality.					
	Community Action 4: Important Trees - The Parish Council together with an appointed Tree Warden will continue to identify trees and woodland of value for recommendation to the Planning Authority for Tree Preservation Orders. The appointed Tree Warden will also consider the issue of air pollution mitigation owing to the proximity of the major motorway junction (Junction 19 M1) and its impact upon air quality in the Parish.					
	Community Action 5: Biodiversity - The Parish Council in conjunction other bodies will keep updated the list of known sites of biodiversity interest that forms part of the Environmental Inventory prepared for this Plan. The Parish Council will actively seek to work with					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	community groups, landowners, funders and other organisations to enhance the biodiversity of the Parish by creating and / or managing habitat sites (e.g. wildflower meadows, woodland, wetland) on suitable parcels of land.					
	Community Action 7: Community Facilities - The Parish Council will support the listing of Assets of Community Value and once listed, will work to support their longevity. The Parish council will conduct a review of community facilities, groups, and their importance within the community.					
Tugby and Keythorpe NDP (Adopted in November 2022)	Policy Env5: Sites And Features Of Natural Environment Significance – The sites and features mapped here have been identified as being of at least local significance for their natural environment. They are ecologically important in their own right, make a local contribution to carbon sequestration, and are locally valued. The significance of the species, habitats or features present should be balanced against the benefit of any development that would adversely affect them.					
	Policy Env6: Important Trees And Hedges - Development proposals should: a) increase tree coverage and retain existing trees and hedges by integrating them into the design of the development; and b) not unavoidably damage or result in the loss of trees, hedges and woodlands of arboricultural, ecological and/ or amenity value					
	Policy Env9: Footpaths And Bridleways - To be supported development proposals should retain public footpaths and bridleways (see figure 14) that are within their site; where there is an adverse impact on the value of the footpath/bridleway then appropriate mitigation is required.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Policy Env10: Flood Risk Resilience – Proposals to construct new (or improve existing) floodwater management infrastructure (ditches, roadside gullies, retention pools, etc.), including within the built-up area, will be supported in principle.					
	Policy Env11: Renewable Energy Generation Infrastructure – Proposals for local resident, business, amenity or community-initiated solar and wind generation infrastructure, in particular single small- scale (turbines less than 30m), will be supported, subject to their complying with the environmental protection conditions listed in HDC Local Plan (2011 – 2031) Policy CC2.					
	Policy Cfa1: The Retention Of Community Facilities And Amenities - The following community facilities are valued by the community and are to be retained and their improvement is supported in principle: Tugby School, the Parish Church, the village hall and astroturf, the play area, the allotments, the car park and the pub. Development resulting in the loss of or reduction of a community facility will not be permitted unless it can be clearly demonstrated that the exceptions set out in the HDC Local Plan (2011 - 2031) Policy HC2 apply					
	Community Action 1: Maintenance Of Existing Community Assets - The Parish Council will work to maintain and develop key community assets in the village: a) The pub is a key village asset that absolutely needs to be supported and kept open. The Parish Council will continue to consider whether to register the pub as an asset of community value. b) Support the North Memorial Hall Trust to maintain the assets under its management. c) Liaise with local landowners to ensure all rights of way are maintained and, where possible, enhanced.					
Tur Langton NDP	Policy Env1: Protection Of Local Green Spaces – Development will be supported only where it would not result in the loss of, or have an adverse effect on, the following					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
(Adopted in April 2019)	designated Local Green Spaces, or their settings: Manor garden earthworks meadow, Old chapel paddock, South meadow, Old pits meadow, East field.					
	Policy Env2: Protection Of Other Sites Of Environmental (Natural And Historical) Significance – Development proposals affecting the following sites (map figure 5, detailed in the supporting Environmental Inventory) will be expected to protect or enhance their identified features. Field with site of Roman villa, Field with Anglo-Saxon site and woodland , John Stanhope Memorial Wood, Ridge and furrow field north of village, 37 Small enclosure field north of ‘St Andrews View’, Small enclosure field north of South View farm, Long field west of Shangton Road, Field east of modern agricultural buildings, Gravel pits spinney, Ridge and furrow field with pond north of Cranoe Road, King Charles’s Well field, Croxfield spinney and field, Ridge and furrow field, Ridge and furrow field with stream and pond.					
	Policy Env3: Important Woodland, Trees And Hedges - The following locations have important trees (map Figure 6.1, detailed in the supporting Environmental Inventory) at the following locations.					
	Policy Env4: Biodiversity - Development proposals shall safeguard locally significant habitats and species and/or create new habitats for wildlife.					
	Community Action Env2: Biodiversity - The Parish Council in conjunction will other bodies will keep updated the environmental inventory list of known sites of biodiversity interest prepared for this Plan; b) The Parish Council will actively seek to work with community groups, landowners, funders and other organisations to enhance the biodiversity of the Parish by creating and/or managing habitat sites (e.g. wildflower meadows, woodland, wetland) on suitable parcels of land.					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Community Action Env3: Footpaths And Bridleways - The Parish Council will monitor the condition of the existing network of footpaths and bridleways, and work with the responsible Local Authority departments and with the community and landowners to ensure that the network is maintained in a safe, useable condition. The Parish Council will actively seek to work with landowners, Leicestershire County Council and other bodies to create and maintain enhancements to the present network of walking routes in the parish.					
	Policy Env7: Sustainable Development - Where development proposals help achieve the aim of a low carbon economy, contributing to mitigating and adapting to climate change by including sustainable design, energy generation, drainage and construction techniques and practices (in isolation or in combination with existing infrastructure) they will be supported provided they do not materially detract from: a) health, well-being, privacy (aural or visual) of property occupants; b) biodiversity; c) visual character of the built environment and local landscape, or; d) are disproportionate in scale to the size/level of local facilities/services.					
	Policy Env8: Rivers And Flooding – Development will be required to demonstrate that: a) the selected location takes full account of geology, hydrology and potential flood risk, ensuring it does not increase the risk of flooding to third parties, and; b) its design includes sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), incorporating surface water management measures and permeable surfaces.					
	Policy Cf2: New Or Improved Community Facilities - Proposals that improve the quality and/or range of community facilities, will be supported provided that the development will: a) meet design criteria of Policy H3; b) not detract from residential amenity by merit of excessive traffic movement or other disturbance; c) not generate parking need that cannot					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	be adequately catered for within the site; d) be of a scale proportionate to local need, and e) be readily accessible for cyclists and/or pedestrians.					
Harborough District Council – Strategies						
Rural Strategy 2023 –2028 and Action Plan (Harborough District Council, adopted 2022) ²²	<p>The Rural Strategy sets out how HDC can work together to overcome challenges, rural proof future policies and realise the unique the unique opportunities we have to enhance wellbeing & prosperity across the district.</p> <p>The vision for the Rural Strategy is set out as follows: Collaborating with our communities, we will build a future for the people of Harborough District that gives them the best life changes and opportunities through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community leadership to create a sense of pride in our place; Promoting health and wellbeing and encouraging healthy life choices; Creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations; and Support residents and business to deliver a prosperous and local economy. <p>The aim of the Rural Strategy is as follows:</p> <p>Be inclusive, connected and resilient rural communities, where everyone has the opportunities to participate and access to the services and facilities they need;</p>					

²² Rural Strategy 2023-2028 (Harborough District Council, adopted January 2023) https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/7884/rural_strategy_2023_-_2028

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>An environmentally and economically sound rural district where the needs of farming, conservation, development and the economy are appropriately balanced; and</p> <p>A safe and welcoming district where everyone is provided with opportunities to enhance their physical, social and economic health and wellbeing.</p> <p>There are seven overarching strategic priorities around community, environment, economy, wellbeing, connectivity, housing and equity.</p> <p>The successes for this strategy will be measured through an action plan - https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/7883/rural_strategy_action_plan.</p>					
Voluntary and Community	<p>HDC recognises the important contribution that the voluntary and community sector makes to communities across the District. Continued budget pressures have caused the Council to have to rethink how it delivers its services and through a transformational programme</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Sector Strategy 2022 – 2027 (Harborough District Council, adopted January 2022) ²³	<p>(BC25) is redesigning its operations and services. The purpose of this Strategy is to outline a framework and set of priorities to guide support and engagement with the voluntary and community sector from 2022 until 2027. Collaborating with communities, the Council will build a future for the people of Harborough District that gives them the best life chances and opportunities through:</p> <p>Community leadership to create a sense of pride in our place</p> <p>Promoting health and wellbeing and encouraging healthy life choices and creating a sustainable environment to protect future generations;</p> <p>Supporting businesses and residents to deliver a prosperous local economy.</p>					
Evidence Based Studies						
Harborough District Council Open Space Strategy (TEP, prepared March 2021) ²⁴	<p>TEP (The Environment Partnership) was commissioned by HDC in May 2020 to produce and Open Space strategy for the District.</p> <p>Of the 654 open spaces in the District, 299 sites were audited for Quality and Value. Sites smaller than 0.2 ha with exception of Provision for Children and Young people, Greenways and Outdoor Sports Facilities. Allotments and Community Gardens, Amenity Greenspace, Cemeteries and Burial Grounds, Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace, Parks and Gardens and Provision for Children and Young People were assigned an accessibility standard.</p>					

²³ Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2022 – 2027 (Harborough District Council, adopted January 2022)

https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/7885/voluntary_and_community_sector_strategy_2022_-_2027

²⁴ Harborough District Council Open Space Strategy (TEP, March 2021) https://www.harborough.gov.uk/directory_record/4179/open_spaces_strategy_2021

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate																		
	<p>There is no accessibility standard assigned for Civic Spaces as there is no accessibility National Benchmark (Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard², 2015) for this typology.</p> <p>Table 2 - Typologies of open space, sport and recreation and quantity provision standards for Harborough District.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type</th> <th>Quantity (ha/1,000)</th> <th>Accessibility</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Allotments and Community Gardens</td> <td>0.35</td> <td>4km (10 min drive)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Amenity Greenspace</td> <td>0.9</td> <td>800m (10 min walk)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cemetries and Burial Grounds</td> <td>0.35</td> <td>2km (5min drive/bus)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Civic Spaces</td> <td>N/A</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Natural and Semi Natural Areas</td> <td>8.5 (District Wide)</td> <td>1.6km (20 min walk)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Type	Quantity (ha/1,000)	Accessibility	Allotments and Community Gardens	0.35	4km (10 min drive)	Amenity Greenspace	0.9	800m (10 min walk)	Cemetries and Burial Grounds	0.35	2km (5min drive/bus)	Civic Spaces	N/A	N/A	Natural and Semi Natural Areas	8.5 (District Wide)	1.6km (20 min walk)					
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Civic Spaces	N/A	N/A																						
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Reference	What does it say?			Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Parks and Gardens	0.8	4km (10min drive/bus)					
	Provisions for Children and Young People	0.25	400-800m (5-10mins walk)					
	Greenways	3.3km/1,000	20 mins drive time (Taken from BSFS)					
Harborough District Council Built Sports Facility Strategy (Nortoft, adopted December 2020) ²⁵	<p>HDC adopted the Built Sports Facilities Strategy in December 2020. The Strategy considers the demand for indoor sports facilities larger than 3 court badminton hall size, in addition to swimming pools, leisure centres, fitness gyms, indoor netball and tennis, indoor bowls and other built facilities for indoor sport. In addition, the Council's Community Partnerships Team has prepared a study of Village and Community Halls throughout the district which is included as a section in the Strategy.</p> <p>The following table provides the provision guide for new housing developments.</p>							

²⁵ Harborough District Council Built Sports Facility Strategy (Nortoft, December 2020)
https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/6912/hdc_bfs_summary_final_170320_v31

Reference	What does it say?				Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Facility type	Quantity (per 1,000 population)	Accessibility	Quality					
	Sports Halls	0.27 badminton courts fully available at peak time	20 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance					
	Swimming pools	9.6 sq m water space fully available at peak time	20 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance					
	Fitness Facilities	5.84 stations fully available at peak time	15 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport England and the relevant national governing body guidance					

Reference	What does it say?				Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Indoor netball courts/outdoor floodlit courts	0.02 indoor courts fully available at peak time 0.02 floodlit outdoor courts fully available at peak time	District wide	Design and quality to meet Sport					
	Indoor tennis	0.04 indoor tennis courts fully available at peak time	30 minutes by car	England and the relevant national					
	Squash courts	0.04 courts fully available at peak time	20 minutes by car	governing body guidance					
	Village halls and community halls	Additional and improved facilities including storage to enable more sports activities to be offered, such as gymnastics and	800m walk 10 minutes by car	Design and quality to meet Sport					

Reference	What does it say?				Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	Walking, cycling and horse riding routes	short mat indoor bowls Towards improvements in the network of walking, cycling and horse riding routes; on-site to connect the development to the wider network, and off-site to identified projects	20 minutes by car	England and the relevant national					
Harborough District Playing Pitch Strategy (Nortoft,	Nortoft has prepared the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) on behalf of HDC for the period up to 2031. The Strategy has two key objectives:								

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
February 2018) ²⁶	<p>Objective 1 - To protect the existing supply of playing pitch facilities, outdoor tennis courts and bowls greens, where they are needed for meeting current or future needs.</p> <p>Objective 2 - Secure tenure and access to sites for clubs through a range of solutions and partnership agreements and maximise community use of education sites where there is demand.</p> <p>The following actions have been provided specifically in relation to different types of developments.</p> <p>Strategic development sites: Must have planned playing field provision, off-site provision for the SDAs in relation to cricket, rugby and hockey.</p> <p>Other developments: Assessed using the demand expected to be generated by other developments using the Sport England Pitch Calculator.</p> <p>Planning applications: Ensure that all approved new application provides sports provisions;</p> <p>Major developments: Seek to develop mechanisms to share developer contributions to ensure a clear impact on Harborough sites.</p>					
Playing Pitch Strategy Update &	<p>The Playing Pitch Strategy (2018) was updated in 2020 to account for policy changes in relation to Football Pitches. The below list includes the key strategic actions which should be undertaken to improve the quality of football pitches within Harborough District:</p>					

²⁶ Harborough District Playing Pitch Strategy (Nortoft, February 2018)
https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/4352/gr6a_harborough_pps_final_report_080218

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
<p>Action Plan (Nortoft, adopted September 2023)²⁷</p>	<p>Pursue a formal Community use agreement at all existing and any future proposed pitches on education sites;</p> <p>Ensure that policy provision is made to secure develop contributions towards new and improved football facilities</p> <p>Examine the feasibility of providing a 3G pitch at an appropriate site;</p> <p>Dialogue between the response bodies on coordinating shared artificial grass pitch needs; and</p> <p>Review sit specific grounds maintenance needs through the FA Pitch Improvement.</p> <p>Pitch/Site specific improvements –</p> <p>Birds Barn – Secure additional pitches on land adjacent to the site; provide a new pavilion;</p> <p>Bowden’s Park – Investigate the feasibility of providing floodlit hybrid pitch, and improve the changing facilities;</p> <p>Frolsworth Road Recreation Ground – Assess pitch using Pitch Power, implement improved maintenance.</p>					
Other Relevant Strategies & Strategies from Leicestershire County Council						
<p>Space for Wildlife: Leicester, Leicestershire and</p>	<p>In Leicestershire and Rutland, where more than 80% of the land is farmed, good habitats for wildlife are now very rare and much of our wildlife is being squeezed out and continues to decline. Space for Wildlife has three main components:</p>					

²⁷ Playing Pitch Strategy Update & Action Plan (Nortoft, adopted September 2023) https://www.harborough.gov.uk/downloads/file/8204/5_football_pitch_needs

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan (dates ranging from 2016 – 2026) ²⁸	<p>To promote the restoration, management and creation of BAP priority habitats</p> <p>To promote the creation of new wildlife habitat in the wider countryside</p> <p>To survey, monitor and promote favourable management of existing good sites through the Local Wildlife Sites system.</p> <p>The Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland protect the following habitats (each have their own action plans):</p> <p>Reedbeds;</p> <p>Fast flowing streams;</p> <p>Sphagnum ponds;</p> <p>Springs and flushes;</p> <p>Neutral grassland;</p> <p>Heath grasslands;</p> <p>Calcareous grassland;</p> <p>Roadside verges;</p> <p>Field Margins;</p> <p>Rocks and Built structures;</p> <p>Urban Habitats.</p>					

²⁸ Space for Wildlife: Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan (dates ranging from 2016 – 2026) <https://www.lrwt.org.uk/about-us/caring-wild-places/biodiversity-action-plan>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	The Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland protect several wildlife species as well as habitats, which have their own action plans.					
Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Leicestershire County Council) ²⁹	<p>Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) are a new mandatory system of strategies under the Environment Act 2021 that apply to certain geographical areas, ensuring that opportunities to recover nature are joined-up. They are primarily aimed at landowners, farmers, local authorities and environmental groups.</p> <p>The LNRS will go further than other policies already at play in Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland (LCC) by bringing together landscape scale, multifaceted approaches focused on preserving, conserving and enhancing nature and meeting other environmental objectives such as climate change, flood mitigation and improved air and water quality. Action to recover nature results in healthier and thriving ecosystems. An ecosystem is a geographic area where plants, animals, and other organisms, as well as weather and landscape, work together to form a bubble of life.</p> <p>The benefits include:</p> <p>cleaner water for drinking and bathing;</p> <p>cleaner air for us to breathe;</p>					

²⁹ Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Leicestershire County Council) <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/local-nature-recovery-strategy/what-a-local-nature-recovery-strategy-is>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>healthier soils for growing food and other products such as timber, biofuels and other products we need everyday;</p> <p>conservation of minerals and geodiversity for future generations to use and learn from a variety of biodiversity that also helps us pollinate our food, manage pests and disease as well as providing the health and well-being benefits of interacting with nature and the world around us.</p> <p>It will also strengthen local ambitions on climate change and flood risk management. This will be by guiding nature-based approaches to carbon removal and storage and flood prevention.</p> <p>The Biodiversity Quality Assessment provides details results on the Biodiversity Quality Assessment in LLR. The full LNR report is currently under consultation.</p>					
<p>Leicestershire Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy Leicestershire County Council, 2022-2032)³⁰</p>	<p>Leicestershire's Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy is a plan to improve the health and wellbeing of children and adults in the County and to reduce health inequalities.</p> <p>The overall vision is; 'Giving everyone in Leicestershire the opportunity to thrive and live happy, healthy lives'</p> <p>We want to ensure the communities of Leicestershire have the opportunity to have the best health and wellbeing they can across the life course. This includes putting equal weight on their mental and physical health and ensuring we have healthy places, cultures</p>					

³⁰Leicestershire Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy Leicestershire County Council, 2022-2032) <https://www.lsr-online.org/joint-health-and-wellbeing-strat>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>and environments to support this. We want to embed a strength-based approach to allow individuals, families and communities to support each other, aim high and thrive.</p> <p>The following objectives will be followed to achieve the aim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing person centred care and support; Embedding prevention in all that we can do; Enabling independence and self care; Health and equity in all policies approach; Prioritising mental and physical health equally; Supporting the covid-19 pandemic recovery; and Trauma informed approach. 					
<p>Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans & Action Plan (LCWIPs) (Leicestershire County</p>	<p>The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan was adopted in November 2023. The Plan provides aims, objectives and themes of how to improve Cycling and Walking within the area. Here in Leicestershire, cycling and walking levels are lower than the national average. In order to make the most of these opportunities, this Strategy has been developed, alongside an Action Plan of prioritised interventions. The Strategy is shaped around an overarching vision and three key objectives. The vision for the future of walking and cycling in Leicestershire is:</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Council, 2020) ³¹	<p>“For Leicestershire to become a county where walking and cycling are safe, accessible and obvious choices for short journeys, and a natural part of longer journeys, helping to deliver healthier, greener communities.”</p> <p>To support this vision, the three core objectives are:</p> <p>To enhance the infrastructure that supports cycling and walking in Leicestershire;</p> <p>To enable people to cycle and walk in Leicestershire;</p> <p>To inspire a step change in cycling and walking in Leicestershire.</p> <p>Leicestershire County Council is committed to increase levels of active travel in the county and is setting ambitious targets to meet the challenges of improving public health, air quality and congestion.</p> <p>Our targets over the next 10 years are to:</p> <p>Increase cycle and walking trips to schools and education by 10%</p> <p>Increase commuting cycle and walking trips to employment by 10%</p> <p>Increase the levels of walking and cycling trips in the county by 15%</p>					
Leicestershire County Council –	LCC aims to plant a tree for every person in the County. LCC’s ambitions are to make Leicestershire greener; boost biodiversity; and become a net zero County by 2045. We					

³¹ Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans & Action Plan (LCWIPs) (Leicestershire County Council, 2020) <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cycling-and-walking/local-cycling-and-walking-infrastructure-plans-lcwips>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Tree for every person campaign (2023) ³²	<p>will help to plant 700,000 trees – a tree for every person who lives in the county, vastly increasing its tree cover.</p> <p>Our vision...</p> <p>...is to help to plant 700,000 trees across Leicestershire – a tree for every person, over the next ten years. We’re doing this so that our vital urban and rural treescapes can thrive - for now and for future generations.</p> <p>LCC currently provides a free tree scheme for farmers and landowners and works closely with the Woodland Trust to offer tree packs for planting projects including the new hedgerows and the creation of new woodlands.</p>					
Leicestershire Net Zero Carbon Roadmap (Buro Happold, 2021) ³³	<p>The Leicestershire Net Zero Carbon Roadmap (was published in 2021), the study aims to provide a clear understanding of where emissions are concentrated within Leicestershire, and the themes for intervention needed to eliminate GHG emissions in the county. The purpose of this report is to:</p> <p>Provide an overview of Climate Change Action Plan strategies and modelling undertaken;</p> <p>Identify main sources of emissions from Leicestershire;</p>					

³² Leicestershire County Council – Tree for every person campaign (Leicestershire County Council, 2023) <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/tree-for-every-person>

³³ Leicestershire Net Zero Carbon Roadmap (Buro Happold, 2021) <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2022/4/19/Leicestershire-Net-Zero-Carbon-Roadmap.pdf>

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	<p>Scope and baseline emissions categories for the council to monitor in future years;</p> <p>Model policy interventions and decarbonisation interventions needed to achieve net zero, considering the suitability of existing policies and targets to meet the net zero 2045 targets and the Paris Agreement;</p> <p>and</p> <p>Provide LCC with a clear and concise evidence base that can be used to engage with a range of relevant stakeholders on this issue (including communities stakeholders, industry bodies, service providers and Government ministries).</p>					
	<p>Theme 1 – Reduce vehicle milage and switch fuel type:</p> <p>Road transport emissions account for a significant proportion of Leicestershire’s total emissions. Reducing transport emissions is vital to achieving net zero, as well as providing additional co-benefits such as reduced air and noise pollution.</p>					
	<p>Theme 4 – Consumption emissions: Drive national decarbonisation efforts to decarbonise consumption emissions Industry, agriculture, water treatment, and the embodied carbon of manufacturing are all high carbon emitters, both within Leicestershire and nationally. Leicestershire can engage with, and contribute to, national decarbonisation and circular economy efforts, supporting the county’s decarbonisation whilst driving national efforts.</p>					
	<p>Theme 5 – A green Leicestershire Enhance ecosystems and create accessible and inclusive green spaces. Ecosystem enhancement, increasing biodiversity and natural conservation projects are all essential to protecting. Leicestershire’s ecosystems and</p>					

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
	ensuring natural areas in the county can flourish. These spaces are essential for air quality, carbon sequestration and climate resilience.					
Green Infrastructure Strategy: Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and Sub-Regional Centres (Green Infrastructure – Volume 5, 2011) ³⁴	<p>The Strategic GI Network report comprises the following:</p> <p>Assessment of Strategic GI Assets, Needs and Opportunities – drawing on the Stage 1 GI audit, enhanced by selected relevant additional data as appropriate; and</p> <p>Strategic GI Network – a ‘key diagram’ type plan, plus supporting explanatory text, identifying a proposed ‘aspirational’ multifunctional strategic GI network that connects communities and wildlife at the sub-regional and city scales.</p>					
The Sustainable Harborough	The Sustainable Harborough Project was set up in 2012 and employs a wide range of energy saving activities, such as retro-fitting of water saving devices, a demonstration EcoHouse to monitor energy at street level. It will develop a food growing enterprise including a local food hub, and a virtual market place. The scheme will develop a green burial site in local woodland and protect bees and a variety of insects.					

³⁴ Green Infrastructure Strategy (Green Infrastructure – Volume 5, 2011)
https://www.nwleics.gov.uk/files/documents/6_cs_gi_volume_5_strategic_gi_network_leicester_pua_and_sub_regional_centres/6C%27s%20GI%20Volume%205%20-%20Strategic%20GI%20Network%20%28Leicester%20PUA%20and%20Sub-Regional%20Centres%29.pdf

Reference	What does it say?	Principle 1 – Nature rich and beautiful	Principle 2 – Active and healthy places	Principle 3 – Thriving and prospering	Principle 4 – Improved water	Principle 5 – Resilient and climate
Challenge Project35						

³⁵ The Sustainable Harborough Challenge Project (Community Fund, 2012) <https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/funding/grants/0030112579>

Appendix B: Consultation Summary

Appendix B – Full Stakeholder Consultation Analysis

As part of the Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Study, TEP consulted with local officers, key stakeholders and council members. Consultation included discussion with local officers in April 2024 followed by workshops and interviews undertaken with stakeholders in summer 2024 to understand key opportunities and challenges they face with regards to GBI, current and future GBI initiatives and existing strategies in place.

For strategic stakeholders, an interactive online workshop was delivered in June 2024 which was supported by an online questionnaire. Individual interviews were held with several key stakeholders who were unable to attend the online workshop. For Council members the same workshop was delivered online and in person in July and September 2024, including the same online questionnaire. Local parish councils were also invited to complete the online questionnaire.

Information gathered from both parts of the consultation process has been summarised below and has informed the GBI Study. Consultation is summarised against each of the Natural England Why Principles, SWOT analysis and local initiatives.

Consultation Analysis

Nature Rich and Beautiful Places

The stakeholder insights provided by the consultation for nature-rich, beautiful places are:

- Refer to Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) and Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) priorities (e.g. black redstart, otter, water vole);
- Reduce chemical use to prevent harm to nature;
- Protect existing habitats;
- Rivers, ponds and canals are important blue assets;
- The Grand Union Canal (GUC) is an established GBI corridor with Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) stretches connecting to surrounding districts and is a priority for nature recovery;
- Town parks and street trees are important urban assets;
- Disused railways and canals are important wildlife highways and are a priority for biodiversity restoration and bringing people closer to nature. They will also facilitate northward migration of species displaced by climate change;
- To maximise biodiversity restoration potential of disused railways, surrounding areas need to be brought into greater active conservation management – this is a priority project for Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust (LRWT);
- Leighfield Forest Living Landscape is an important nature recovery project with LRWT exploring potential to link fragments of ancient woodland, improving the condition of existing woodland and create new woodland to connect existing fragments;
- SSSIs and Local Nature Reserves are important biodiversity assets;
- A high proportion of SSSIs are in good condition;
- The District has the ‘lowest biodiversity in the Midlands’ according to Midlands Engine data, which matches local perception;
- The region has limited diversity of habitats - more wetlands, grasslands, hedgerows and open mosaic habitats are needed to support species recovery;
- There is particularly poor provision of woodland in the west of the district;
- GBI deficiencies should be addressed in the west and southwest of the district where growth will be greatest;

- Community networks encourage engagement of farmers and the general public with nature;
- Landowner engagement is key to enhancing and creating new habitats;
- Harborough is an agricultural district that is not likely to achieve 30% of land protected primarily for nature, but more nature-friendly farming practices would be very valuable;
- Harborough needs good quality connected habitats more than it needs large new extensions of habitat – ‘right habitat, right place;’
- Developers could be encouraged to gain environmental accreditation such as Building with Nature;
- Strengthening presence of trees and hedgerows in agricultural landscape is essential;
- The LNRS project across Leicestershire and Rutland has been combining mapping layers to build up a detailed interactive map of the GBI baseline across the two counties. This is going through detailed analysis and stakeholder consultation and is due summer 2025;
- The LNRS will provide spatial details of priorities for connectivity of existing habitats, and areas that are less suitable for development or crop production (such as steeply sloping grasslands for wildflower meadows);
- The GBI Study should consider the future needs of both people and wildlife, and separate them as they may have different needs;
- The Welland Valley straddles the Harborough and North Northamptonshire border and should be recognised as an area for biodiversity net gains. It is recognised by North Northamptonshire Council as a biodiversity corridor (Policy 19 of the Joint Core Strategy)
- Financial support for farmers, landowners and environmental non-governmental organisations (NGO) will help work towards the 30 by 30 goal;
- Harborough is perceived to have one of the lowest levels of biodiversity in the Midlands (referencing data from Midlands Engine);
- The M1 and major roads create barriers for wildlife. A wildlife bridge over the M1 should be considered; and
- Areas of separation should be maintained around Lutterworth, Bitteswell and Magna Park.

Detailed location notes:

A grant was applied for (unsuccessfully) to create a riparian semi-natural greenspace east of Lutterworth, to the east of the M1.

The area east of Lutterworth towards Husbands Bosworth and the Welland Valley upstream of Market Harborough is an ecologically poor area that should be prioritised for large scale nature restoration projects, and projects with farmers to enhance hedgerows etc.

The SSSI east of Lutterworth needs protecting and enhancing.

Fields separating Leicester and Thurnby and Leicester and Scraftoft should be retained for separation and public access improved.

The strategic development area north of Scraftoft should maximise potential delivery of GBI.

Scraftoft Local Nature Reserve had the designation removed due to the progression of the strategic development area, however consideration should still be given to how it can be enhanced and managed for biodiversity.

There is very low tree cover in Market Harborough.

Disused railway corridor and junction north of Tilton can be enhanced for nature conservation.

There is potential for the disused railway line south of Broughton Astley to become a linear nature reserve.

Rectangle at Old Mill Road, Broughton Astley could become a small country park and/or wetland nature reserve, helping with water management.

2.5 hectare pond area off Orchid Place Broughton Astley could become an accessible nature reserve, currently inaccessible Harborough District Council (HDC) owned land.

Potential for hedgerow enhancement in degraded areas west and south of Broughton Astley.

Biodiversity hotspot area from quality assessment study has been flagged as ecologically poor in consultation.

Active and Healthy Places

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- More country parks are needed in easy travelling distance from Market Harborough, and towns south of Leicester to the north of the district;
- If new country parks are created on new developments they need to consider maintenance and management responsibility and parking provision;
- GBI interventions should prioritise areas at higher risk of health inequality;
- Lower income groups and disability groups were highlighted as priority vulnerable groups;
- Projects like the 'Greener Schools' group which works with teachers and school children, and 'Community Magic' which builds community relationships and support through environmental work, have been enthusiastically adopted in Market Harborough;
- Market Harborough has a very active and knowledgeable community network. However, it has a particular administrative issue with coordinating projects as it lies on the border between three counties;
- Travel links into Leicester city are very important;
- Fosse Park and Blaby are also a big draw for the local economy;
- Magna Park is a huge and expanding employment centre providing poorly paid employment in distribution. There is a lot of industrial growth around Lutterworth which is also serving Blaby. Active travel opportunities have not always been maximised around Magna Park. The nature of the economic expansion can be difficult to reconcile with community and environmental needs in the area;
- Market Harborough needs better connected active travel ways between the town and neighbouring villages. More local schemes are planned in Lubenham and Market Harborough;
- Active travel links between medium/smaller villages and larger towns should be a focus to support smaller settlement service and infrastructure;
- The district is well served for Public Right of Ways (PRoW), priority should be given to how they can be maintained and improved where required;
- There is a reliance on cars and private transport, GBI should support reduction of car use and increase in walking/cycling provision;
- Illegal parking around schools is a major issue in Market Harborough, Market Harborough Forum has been granted money for active travel revolution scheme. A pilot programme is under consultation;
- Programme cycling walking infrastructure plans, Market Harborough Cycling and Walking Study is due to start consultation soon, led by HDC to understand existing travel modes;

- It is important to plan for better built environment and living conditions to prevent illness;
- Facilities need to be in place and accessible for those who do become ill;
- A healthy environment should support those who fall ill to recuperate;
- Health and wellbeing benefits of GBI should be promoted as a primary and not a secondary benefit;
- Behaviour change is slow, but active school travel is encouraged as a big theme. This is seen as a way of forming good habits early. Market Harborough Forum and active together are looking at 'Active Tracker' WOW tracker;
- Canal towpaths offer health and wellbeing benefits and are free to use;
- Benches around Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) features may encourage social interaction in communities;
- Benches and seating are a popular recommendation to encourage girls and young women to use outdoor spaces, referenced in 'Make Space for Girls' guidance;
- SuDS in developments could provide routes to river and canal corridors;
- Social prescribing is currently focussed on blue prescribing and is generally linked to the active travel work;
- Health and access to green space should be embedded in planning;
- Low provision of GBI may be linked to healthy life years lost;
- GBI provision should be targeted where there is most need, close to the highest number of people;
- GBI quality standards could be set in planning, e.g. Green Flag, sensory trust;
- Rural communities can access Active Travel England funding. Leicestershire County Council (LCC) generally follow public health data which leads to towns not rural communities, however rural villages can apply for support if they have a project to pursue;
- LCC are about to run winter campaign on winter health and active travel, and e-bike trials;
- Routes with obstructive gates that are difficult for cyclists also tricky for wheelchairs, all should be LTN120 compliant;
- It would be helpful to highlight relevant info for people where routes aren't accessible;
- Former railway managed as country parks, historically by Northamptonshire Parks team but management is still ongoing. It is a linear recreation route and managed as such; and
- Harborough has great hotspots for nature but poor accessibility to the natural world for people.

Detailed location notes:

Wellington Place to Market Harborough town centre has fast cycle lanes and muddy, unsafe crossings. This stretch would benefit from controlled crossings or a roundabout.

There is an opportunity for a new play park, community space, community garden/orchard or allotments in the vicinity of Gartree prison development.

There are bridges crossing the disused railway line north of Lutterworth which are in dangerous condition and in need of repair.

Community groups could be harnessed to help clear overgrown ponds in Lutterworth Country Park, but would need safety advice and guidance.

Foxton, Sutton Bassett and Lubenham – Issues with quality of PRow.

The B6047 between A47 and A6 would benefit from a cycle lane.

Gallowfield Road is dangerous for pedestrians and would benefit from pavement and an informal walking route around the prison and new prison development area. Some existing PRow in this area have uneven surfaces.

The canal towpath from Foxton to Market Harborough Wharf is a good asset.

There is no footpath from Lubenham to Theddingworth.

Disused railway west of Lubenham could be opened up as a walk, connecting with other PRow.

The A4304 does not offer any safe pedestrian routes into Market Harborough.

Covert Lane in Scraftoft could be improved to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Brocks Hill Country Park is just over the border between Oadby and Wigston.

Developer contributions associated with the new business park in Kibworth, could support Natural Flood Management (NFM) projects south of Smeeton Westerby.

A cycle route could join the disused railway west of Market Harborough with Adams Mile, and the strategic development area northwest of Market Harborough.

Lutterworth cycleways published on the map are inaccurate, HDC publish a cycleways map.

Thurnby and Houghton ward would benefit from more signage to encourage use of footpaths and other green infrastructure.

A walkway and linear nature reserve could be developed on the disused railway from Thurnby-Bushby-Scraftoft- Ingarsby, to connect into Leicester city.

More cycle paths could be developed between Covert lane, Scraftoft and Houghton.

Improvements are needed to cyclepaths between Houghton and Bushby.

Create a circular cycle route around Lutterworth linked to Magna Park Country Park and Lutterworth Country Park.

Create a circular cycle and walkway around Market Harborough and into Brampton Valley Way and Station.

Add flood management measures and SuDS to all Market Harborough car parks as is currently under commons car park.

There is passive and active leisure potential at Eyebrook Reservoir.

Thriving and Prosperous Places

District-wide

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- Development is needed for economic support in smaller villages. Tiny growth is bad for shops which need higher footfall and benefit from local population increase.
- Local businesses usually have more awareness of GBI than developers;
- Developers sometimes perceived GBI as an additional cost without considering the benefits;
- GBI supports local businesses and communities by reducing flooding and overheating;
- There has been an increase in 'glamping' provision;

- There are no large hotels in the district;
- Foxton Locks is one of the largest blue visitor attractions, and is a grade II* listed monument and the Foxton Inclined Plane (built to allow boats to bypass the locks) is a Scheduled Ancient Monument;
- The canal network brings visitors in from beyond the local area and contributes to the local economy;
- The Canal and River Trust (CRT) will be getting less funding in the following years and will rely on more community support;
- Saddington Reservoir could be developed more for visitor access but has parking and water quality issues;
- Some GBI locations will need to focus on access and recreation rather than habitat and species protection;
- GBI can support/increase tourism by make attractive spaces with shade and seating where people want to spend time and socialise, and by creating safe inviting access and active travel;
- GBI can protect and connect heritage assets and trails;
- Some local farmers have had a bad experience with trials of environmental incentive schemes and ‘top down’ approaches from other organisations. Community connections have been more successful at building trust and collaborative solutions;
- Harborough is a predominantly agricultural district and needs to recognise the challenges faced by farmers. Food security and biodiversity should be looked at together in a way that supports farmers to make positive changes that are economically viable;
- NFM projects rewet flood prone areas and support farmers managing challenging land;
- Habitat and foraging resources are important for agricultural pollinators, flora and fauna;
- The Forestry Commission is looking at ways of promoting agroforestry models combining coniferous and broadleaved crops;
- Herbal lays have also been successfully used by some local farmers; and
- The Allerton Project has done some research on nature friendly farming practices which would be useful to employ at a wider scale.

Detailed location notes:

Farm shops and associated cafes and restaurants are popular around the Langtons.

Magna Business Park and the logistics ‘golden triangle’ area around Lutterworth provides many low paid jobs for people commuting from Leicester, Coventry, Bedworth and Nuneaton.

Local roads are too narrow for the increasingly intense lorry traffic.

There is a consultation live with LCC for sand and gravel quarries southeast of Lutterworth.

High cross scheduled monument on the western extremity of the district was an ancient transport hub, marking the ‘centre’ of Roman Britain.

Lutterworth Museum and St Mary’s church in Lutterworth are important historical and heritage sites that could be linked to active travel routes.

More signage and interpretation boards along the River Welland in Market Harborough might encourage people to dwell longer.

Improved Water Management

District-wide

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- Harborough District has predominantly clay soils and suffers from flash flooding;
- Harborough Woodland and local community groups have implemented many NFM projects particularly around Market Harborough which suffers from severe flooding, particularly surface water flash floods;
- NFM projects are needed around small villages and the headwaters of all watercourses
- Market Harborough has a network of flood hubs and flood wardens, building up detailed knowledge about local flooding hotspots and which solutions are most effective;
- Engagement with local schools and communities has included social media discussion with the tag #getriverpositive;
- There are documented wellbeing benefits from regular, easy access to green and blue spaces;
- Canal towpaths provide an opportunity to support and promote healthier lifestyles and active travel as a resource that is free to the public;
- Improvements to the canal towpaths could help facilitate year-round use;
- New developments of appropriate scale and location could encourage and support recreational use of the canal network, providing they protect its ecological value and character;
- A surface water management plan has focussed on mapping flood hotspots in Market Harborough and produced a process flow diagram, but would benefit from funding to continue the study;
- New developments in Market Harborough include some poorly implemented SuDS measures, and sometimes transfer of ownership and management have been unsuccessful;
- Swales are sometimes not designed or connected correctly;
- Local highways team are not adequately resourced to maintain road gulleys sufficiently which has contributed to flooding issues;
- Flagship Welland project has proposed a project to install reedbeds to treat the outfall from sewerage works but did not succeed in winning funding;
- Siltation runoff from farmland into rivers is an issue that needs addressing in all catchments;
- Magna Park runoff may be exceeding the capacity of the small river it flows through, despite NFM developments in the new country park;
- Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) are a big problem as the thick clay soil in the area means there are no soakaways;
- Thames River Trust (TRT) host the Soar Catchment Partnership, which is led by the Environment Agency. The Soar Catchment Plan (SCP) summarises the key issues, priorities and actions for the area to the north of Harborough including the Soar and Wreake sub-catchments;
- Willow Brook NFM project now has funding but is still at early stages of project initiation and engagement;
- Drought resilience and future water availability should be considered;
- Rivers and canals provide north/south wildlife corridors for intra-habitat permeability;
- The canal network provides a significant habitat in its own right;
- Straightened rivers lack trees and habitat;

- GBI should look to restore as natural a channel as possible to the River Welland, including tree planting, tree pinning, channel narrowing, gravel re-introduction;
- It is expensive to restore over dredged, straightened rivers which are cut off from the flood plain;
- Water quality is generally poor in the area and should be a high priority for future interventions;
- Invasive non-native species (e.g. mink and American crayfish) are an issue in local waterways;
- Habitat management should be carried out to reduce the risk of spread of invasive species as much as possible;
- There is a need for high quality, geographically disconnected habitat sites to refuge vulnerable species such as water vole and white clawed crayfish;
- Invertebrates struggle with pollution from CSOs;
- Water vole habitats are important;
- The catchment issues affecting Harborough are also common beyond the district borders;
- Water Industry Natural Environment Programme should be the baseline for projects and investments; and
- Welland Valley Partnership is funding driven but covers a large area and is understaffed.

Detailed location notes:

Balancing ponds at Market Harborough Airfield Business Park are unattractive.

NFM priority areas around Market Harborough are Glooston, Upstream of Lubenham, and Jordan catchment.

Lubenham suffers from flooding from the brook.

The carpark east of the bridge into Lutterworth floods.

New wetlands along the river swift near the M1 east of Lutterworth would help alleviate flooding downstream.

Resilient and Climate Positive Places

District-wide

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- It is important to make space for water and shade;
- Health inequalities are linked to risks from extreme weather;
- SuDs are important for cooling urban areas;
- Increase survivorship of migrating organisms through urban areas;
- Planting can be used for carbon sequestration and to capture pollutants;
- There needs to be more support for small scale carbon/biodiversity schemes and projects that involve less bureaucracy;
- There needs to be a joined up approach to flood risk and drought resilience, planning wetland and tree planting projects upstream of problem areas;
- Increasing woodland cover is important for carbon capture, temperature regulation and flood risk;
- Channel narrowing will ensure a sustainable flow during hotter summers;
- NFM and water friendly farming techniques should be employed to reduce sediment loss during more intensive rain events;

- Increase water retention within catchment, increasing overall availability;
- The area is relatively high water stress for the catchment – 25% reduced water availability;
- There is a need for more rainwater recycling projects. Anglian Water have been leading the way with drought resilience and water-smart communities;
- Resilience should be considered during the design stage of new developments;
- New developments should be set back at least 8 m from the top of the bank of a main river to retain a natural buffer and green corridor for wildlife;
- Consider deficiencies in tree cover and whether a % canopy provision could be justified as a requirement for new developments;
- Harborough Woodland have planted more than 40,000 trees through community planting projects;
- Midlands Forest Network want to increase canopy coverage from 4% to 19%; and
- The University of Nottingham have been mapping heat stress for residents and looking at how GBI could alleviate stress at peak times.

Detailed location notes:

There are opportunities for tree planting at Kibworth Golf Course.

There are opportunities for tree planting around Great Bowden and Market Harborough.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- Harborough has huge areas of green space and countryside which can easily be adapted for tree planting;
- Harborough offers lots of places to go to and the canals and railway lines are generally flat and more accessible. The canal towpath leads straight from Market Harborough into the surrounding countryside;
- Quiet rural towns and villages that are attractive to visit – Market Harborough, Lutterworth and Bitteswell, Langton/Laughton, and Wistow (including Wistow Rural Centre);
- Rivers and ponds provide biodiversity highways and habitat banks;
- Canals and reservoirs can provide access to blue space;
- River floodplains and riparian corridors provide valuable habitat and water management;
- Foxton Locks, Neville Holt, Standford Hall and rural churches contribute to local character;
- There is a variety of different tourist attractions across the district;
- There are good local sports facilities with no flooding problems on sport pitches (particularly around Lutterworth);
- Disused railway;
- A high percentage of SSSIs are in good condition;
- Good community groups with active volunteer resource and partnership working, with high levels of understanding and recognition of GBI;
- Local support and capacity for GBI measures in parks and open spaces;
- Leicestershire has some great examples of GBI across the county;
- Harborough is a strategic district for nature recovery, with interest from local government and agencies; and

- Harborough hosts the only farming cluster in the county.

Weaknesses

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- The main natural spaces, designated areas and woodlands are in the remote areas in the east of the district, which are difficult to access for most residents who live mainly along the A6 and A426 corridors;
- Many PRoW are in poor condition with poor quality stiles and are not very accessible for less mobile users;
- There is a lack of good signage on PRoW;
- Harborough has poor tree coverage and lacks accessible/community forests;
- There is a particular lack of GBI in the centre, south and west of the district;
- Habitats are fragmented, there are poor links between designated areas;
- It is difficult to create good active travel links between smaller villages and larger service centres;
- Many residents rely on private transport;
- Landowner engagement and lack of access to land can present barriers to improving GBI;
- Landowners (particularly parish councils) need better knowledge and skills regarding GBI;
- There is poor governance and management of some GBI;
- There has been little work to improve biodiversity over the previous fifty years and limited engagement with climate issues in the past;
- The planning system has not been used historically to force developers to create sustainable habitats and GBI;
- Some organisations are underfunded and cannot deliver new GBI assets or connections, or manage them adequately;
- The district lacks country parks; and
- There are long allotment waiting lists.

Opportunities

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- Harborough District is uniquely placed within Leicestershire and Rutland to facilitate the recovery of nature, as species continue to move northwards from neighbouring regions, establishing robust/resilient ecological networks across the District is imperative;
- Encourage developers to implement more environmental measures within new developments;
- Guide development growth to areas where there is existing infrastructure and capacity, and take the opportunity to develop good GBI which is also accessible to existing communities nearby;
- Health Impact Assessments can be used as part of the planning process to ensure the GBI network is considered for protection and extension through assessment of its impact on wellbeing;
- Link GBI clearly to health outcomes and capture co-benefits referring to recommendations in Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) report on air quality;
- Enhance existing strategic ecological networks through BNG offsetting;
- Extend Millenium wood near Fleckney;

- Better management, signage and promotion could encourage more people to enjoy the local countryside;
- Develop more cycling and walking routes;
- Audit GBI assets owned by HDC to highlight more opportunities through a biodiversity enhancement strategy (e.g. Broughton Astley land could become a small nature reserve);
- Waterways could be enhanced and management improved;
- Improve pathways and access to waterways;
- Plant more disease resistant elms;
- Provide more country parks and accessible/community woodland near town centres (particularly Market Harborough);
- Provide more community orchards and allotments in new developments;
- Develop more water based leisure activities;
- Further development around the Grand Union Canal could provide additional boating/marina capacity to attract visitors and more marine employment sites;
- Create new walkway around wetland by airport roundabout;
- Green community hubs can make the most of the multiple benefits of GBI for people and the environment;
- Empower community leadership;
- More urban street trees can alleviate flooding and provide multiple benefits;
- SuDS can become a design feature or focal point;
- Work with providers such as Gazeley in Lutterworth to provide additional GBI;
- New sources of green finance and income could help fund new GBI work;
- Protect open spaces through designation; and
- Create a new narrative converting from most ecologically degraded district to most improved.

Threats

The district-wide stakeholder insights provided by the consultation are:

- Ash dieback threatens woodland cover;
- Pollution (e.g. phosphates) from agriculture threaten biodiversity in watercourses;
- There is high pressure from development which may reduce sense of place and merge different settlements;
- Flash flooding;
- Drought and extreme heat;
- Poor air quality;
- Poor forward planning from developers leading to poor developments;
- GBI assets that are not formally protected in policy may be lost to development;
- There is pressure from commercial development, e.g. sand and gravel quarries near Lutterworth;
- Increased traffic around the logistics hub puts pressure on narrow roads and increases air pollution in Lutterworth which has previously been in an Air Quality Management Area;
- Piecemeal infrastructure threatens connectivity of GBI networks;
- Poorly resourced or implemented management can make new GBI interventions less effective, so maintenance and management should always be considered;
- Access to funding may reduce (e.g. large CRT cuts to funding are confirmed);

- There is risk from flooding to properties and businesses, particularly in Market Harborough;
- Budget cuts and skills shortages; and
- Multiple users of GBI data may be duplicating work or using conflicting data sources.

GBI Initiatives

The consultation highlighted a range of local and nationwide GBI initiatives listed below.

Local Initiatives

- Leighfield Living Landscapes and Leighfield Forest Plan;
- Blooming Lutterworth (helping manage town flower beds);
- Broughton Astley Volunteer Group (BAVG);
- Haygates Farm veterans refuge;
- James Adler Nature Reserve;
- Huxley Park
- Anglian Water rewilding projects;
- Sustainable Harborough's transport group;
- Harborough flood forum;
- Kibworth & Smeeton Nature Project reintroducing meanders to Langton Brook;
- Example – Biophillic School in Derby;
- Wistow Maze;
- Cotesbach Educational Trust;
- Alpaca walks;
- South of Leicester Wellbeing Project (with CRT and HDC);
- Midlands Forest Network;
- Tree Charter and Tree Management Strategy (LCC); and
- Leicestershire Nature and Climate Pact (LCC).

Other Initiatives

- Bedfordshire Blue Lens LNRS;
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority Ignition Project; and
- Derbyshire Biophilic School.

Appendix C: GBI Action Plan

Green and Blue Infrastructure (GBI) Action Plan (2024-2034)

This Action Plan:

- Sets out the headline actions to achieve the strategic objectives for Harborough District's GBI over the next 10 years as set out in the GBI Study;
- Lists programmes and/or projects that deliver the headline action;
- Estimates costs using a banding system - £ = <£15K, ££ = £15K to £50K, £££ = £50K - £200K, ££££ = >£200K, or TBD where cost is unknowable pending definition of scope and feasibility;
- Identifies responsible parties and stakeholders for each project/programme; and
- Proposes a timescale for short, medium and long-term actions with specific and measurable outcome criteria.

This Action Plan will be reviewed and updated at regular intervals, following adoption of the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

Funding to implement this Plan will come primarily from external sources but also needs to optimise internal resources and processes across the Council.

All the outcomes are linked to the strategic objectives in Harborough's GBI Study supporting the emerging Local Plan. These fall into the following three categories:

1. Protect and Enhance Existing GBI;
2. Create new GBI and improve nature connectivity and networks; and
3. Improve access and engagement with the natural environment.

Associated Action Plans:

- Harborough Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2022-2024¹ (HWAP)
- Leicestershire Country Council Cycling and Walking Action Plan 2021² (CWAP)
- Welland Valley Partnership – Five Year Catchment Plan 2022-2027³ (FYCP)

¹ [Health Wellbeing Action Plan 2022-2024 \(1\).pdf](#)

² [Cycling and Walking Strategy Action Plan \(leicestershire.gov.uk\)](#)

³ [Welland Valley Partnership – Five Year Catchment Plan 2022-2027 \(eastmercia.org\)](#)

Headline Action	Project/Programme	Action reference	Action	Cost Band	Stakeholders	Timeline
Objective 1: Protect and enhance existing GBI						
1.1 Improve water management to reduce flooding and improve water quality	Complete Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) and mapping of flood hotspots in Market Harborough and subsequently draw up a prioritised intervention programme for using nature-based solutions to slow and store water in existing green spaces	1.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete SWMP 	£	HDC LLFA, Harborough Woodland	12 months
	Work with landowners and the water industry to devise a programme for addressing point source pollution arising from agriculture, water treatment and highways discharges, particularly in the highest risk catchments	1.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the suds network and runoff channels in country park and landscaped areas around Magna Park to deal with excess runoff and highway pollution. 	TBD	HDC LLFA, EA, Anglian Water, Landowners, Highways Agency, Rivers Trust	24 months
	Ensure existing SuDS features (e.g., swales, ponds) in new developments are correctly linked and maintained to provide a functioning SuDS chain in accordance with CIRIA guidance	1.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SuDS systems to be reviewed ahead of sign off of the development. 	£	Planning department, Harborough Woodland, Management organisations	2 years
	Water quality improvements to reservoirs across the district	1.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve water quality at Saddington reservoir 	TBD	HDC, CRT, Anglian Water	2 Years
1.2 Ensure existing GBI assets are under management	Review all locally designated wildlife sites to see where management could be improved and subsequently draw up a scheme to bring at least 90% into a funded management plan	1.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance condition of Scraftoft Local Nature Reserve. 	£	Wildlife Trust, Landowners, LNRS team	6 months
	Optimise nature-friendly management practices across council-owned assets (e.g. no mow May, pesticide-free parks) – commencing with a review of opportunities and identification of next steps for changing operational practices and consulting nearby communities	1.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review maintenance operations across Council-managed assets to determine where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Pesticide use can be reduced B. Mowing regimes can be relaxed 	£	HDC Parks team, LCC highways and management companies	24 months
	Support farming clusters to develop across the district	1.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide promotional material, links to community volunteers, support for funding bids, awards – to expand and celebrate good practice in farm-scale management of GBI assets such as woodlands, watercourses, ponds, rights of way 	££	Local community groups, farmers	12 months
1.3 Adopt a quality standard such as Green Flag Awards for parks.	Adopt Green Flag Award (GFA) standard for town parks and green spaces	1.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of the Green Flag Award process and consider applying for the Award. 	£	Parks Team	6 months
	Agree target for number of greenspaces to achieve GFA within the next 5 years.	1.3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shortlist target number of sites for the Award 	£	Parks Team, local councillors	6 months
	Align council management practices and volunteer group activities towards this goal	1.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek opportunities to engage the community in taking ownership of existing open spaces 	£	Parks Team, community groups	18 months
1.4 Improve policy protections for existing GBI	As neighbourhood plans come up for review, protect and promote management of specific named GBI assets	1.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure evidence base is kept up to date to ensure neighbourhood plans are informed by the correct baseline 	£	Neighbourhood planning teams, Local councillors, HDC planning department	5 years
	Build GBI firmly into health, transport, economic and social policies and strategies	1.4.2		£	All HDC departments	2 years

Headline Action	Project/Programme	Action reference	Action	Cost Band	Stakeholders	Timeline
Objective 1: Protect and enhance existing GBI						
	Investigate and adopt GBI standards such as the Urban Green Factor and Building with Nature to apply to all significant development sites	1.4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider commissioning an Urban Greening Factor Study for the District Research Building with Nature and engage with developers to ascertain viability of applying the scheme to all significant development sites. 	£	HDC Planning team	12 months
	Promote the use of Biodiversity Net Gain and other nature recovery funds to enhance management of existing GBI assets such as woodlands, hedges, ponds and watercourses in areas known to be important for nature and landscape recovery e.g. Leighfield Forest, SW Harborough Biodiversity Quality Area and the strategic river and canal corridors	1.4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish approach to habitat banking within the district including off-site areas which could be enhanced through the planning process. 	£	HDC Planning team	12 months

Headline Action	Project/Programme	Action reference	Action	Cost Band	Stakeholders	Timeline
Objective 2: Create new GBI and improve nature connectivity and networks						
2.1 Create new woodlands and hedgerows	Develop new community woodlands	2.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create connected network of community orchard, copse and wildlife park around Compass Point Business Park and Enterprise Centre south of Market Harbough 	£££	Harborough Woodland & community groups, Wildlife Trust	2 years +
	Explore significant opportunities for tree planting	2.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact Kibworth Golf course to discuss tree planting opportunities 	£	HDC, Kibworth Golf Course	6 months
	Enhance and create hedgerows	2.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance hedgerows in degraded areas west and south of Broughton Astley 	£	HDC, local landowners, Broughton Astley Parish Council	18 months
	Engage landowners bordering the disused railway lines and biodiversity core areas to explore opportunities to plant new woodland and wetland buffers and link fragmented habitats	2.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and liaise with landowners of disused railway corridor and junction north of Tilton to protect and enhance area for nature conservation. 	££	Harborough Woodland & community groups, LNRS team	1 year
		2.1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create nature reserve along disused railway line south of Broughton Astley 	£££	HDC, Local community groups, Wildlife Trust	2 years +
2.2 Create new wetlands and Natural Flood Management schemes	Engage landowners bordering rivers and floodplains focusing on nature-poor corridors to optimise water management and biodiversity outcomes	2.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage landowners along the Swift and tributaries upstream of Lutterworth to explore wetland creation to alleviate flooding downstream (link to actions XY) 	£££	Harborough Woodland & community groups, Wildlife Trust, Welland Valley Partnership	2 years +
		2.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore potential for NFM/ wetland creation around Lubenham to alleviate flooding from River Welland and tributaries, and further protect Market Harborough town downstream. 	£££	Harborough Woodland & community groups, Wildlife Trust, EA, Welland Valley Partnership	1-2 Years
	Focus on flood management and water quality improvements that can be delivered through new developments	2.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use developer contributions from Kibworth Business Park to support NFM projects south of Smeeton Westerby. 	£	HDC Planning, Harborough Woodland	1 Year
		2.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect habitats on Brampton Valley Way to Compass point wildlife park (ref 2.1.1 above) via linked SUDs habitat features, restoring derelict ponds and ditches in any new developments nearby. 	£	HDC, Harborough Woodland, Market Harborough Town Council	1-2 Years
	Collaborate with catchment partners	2.2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and promote projects detailed in the Welland Valley Partnership FYCP. Assist WVP with funding bids. 	£	Welland Valley Partnership	2 years +
		2.2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with neighbouring councils on Biodiversity Net Gain opportunity areas around Market Harborough developments linking with flood management initiatives along the Welland Valley. 	££	HDC, North Northamptonshire Council, West Northamptonshire Council, Wildlife Trusts	1-2 Years

Headline Action	Project/Programme	Action reference	Action	Cost Band	Stakeholders	Timeline
		2.2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the Willow brook NFM project (Soar Catchment) 	Already funded	Trent Rivers Trust, HDC	1 Year
		2.2.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pursue alternative funding opportunities for Flagship Welland project for reedbed installation to treat outfall from sewage works 	£	Flagship Welland, Harborough Woodland, Anglian Water	1 Year
2.3 Create new spaces managed for nature	Create new Local Wildlife Sites	2.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support local neighbourhood plans in identifying and protecting important wildlife sites, with reference to LNRS 	£	HDC, Wildlife Trust, local parishes and neighbourhood groups	2 Years
	Create new Local Nature Reserves	2.3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create new publicly accessible nature reserve on 2.5-hectare pond area (owned by HDC) off Orchid Place, Broughton Astley 	££	HDC, local community groups, Broughton Astley Parish Council	2 Years
		2.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and promote community activity around the creations of new James Adler Nature reserve north of Market Harborough 	£	HDC, Wildlife Trust, Harborough Woodland	6-12 months
	Support GBI creation in Leighfield Living Forest	2.3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Wildlife Trust team to leverage funding from planning contributions such as BNG, green finance and grants. 	££	LRWT, LNRS team	12 months
2.4 Create new Country Parks	Review successes and learning points from Lutterworth Country Park.	2.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review design, implementation and management of the Country Park to determine the most appropriate way forward to create more country parks in the district 	£	Lutterworth Town Council, HDC	12 months
	Explore sites for a new Country Park accessible from Market Harborough	2.4.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are several potential locations for Country Parks easily accessible from Market Harborough which could contribute to NFM projects and water quality improvements, these should be investigated further with local community groups, developers and landowners. 	££	HDC, Harborough Woodland, local developers	12 months
	Explore sites for a new Country Park accessible from Leicester	2.4.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rectangle at Old Mill Road, Broughton Astley could be converted to a small Country Park and/or wetland nature reserve to contribute to natural water management. 	£	HDC, local community groups, Broughton Astley Parish Council	12 months
		2.4.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider potential for country parks in strategic development areas which might support/protect green wedge areas and open spaces around e.g. Thurnby and Bushby 	£	HDC, local parish/neighbourhood councils	1-2 Years
2.5 Establish SW Harborough Biodiversity Quality Area as a concept	Support LNRS team in identifying the area as a policy and investment priority, then draw up a preliminary action identifying for early-win projects	2.5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider development of riparian corridors east of the M1 area to complement habitats and spinneys around Misterton. This may link with NFM projects around the Swift and tributaries upstream of Lutterworth and be guided by the forthcoming LNRS. 	££	HDC Planning Team, LRWT, LNRS team	24 months
2.6 Create stepping stone	With reference to the existing Biodiversity Quality Assessment and emerging LNRS, survey best options for enhancing or creating	2.6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct feasibility study for wildlife bridge over M1 following publication of LNRS, possibly linking with disused railways north of Lutterworth and Misterton Marshes SSSI 	£££	LRWT, Local Nature Partnership	2 years

Headline Action	Project/Programme	Action reference	Action	Cost Band	Stakeholders	Timeline
links between existing sites	a wildlife bridge across the M1 or major roads, and present business case to highways authorities.					
2.7 Retrofit GBI in towns	Implement civic and street trees with connected SuDS where appropriate	2.7.1	Develop Surface Water Management Plan, flood hubs and community initiatives to develop street trees and rain gardens particularly in Market Harborough	£££	Highways, Planning, Harborough Woodland	2+ years
	SuDs planting beds along highways and urban streets	2.7.2	Add SUDs and flood management measures to all Market Harborough carparks following example of The Commons carpark	£££	Highways, Planning, community groups	2+ years
2.8 Improve policy promoting GBI in development	Follow up to date GBI policy standards and guidelines published by Natural England	2.8.1	Investigate policy options such as requiring Building with Nature assessment and/or Urban Greening Factor for new major developments. Include provision and management of GBI and SuDS in Local Design Codes.	££	HDC Planning Team	12 months
2.9 Devise local funding streams for GBI	Develop a local GBI and Natural Capital Investment plan	2.9.1	Working with local and county business and philanthropic sectors, draw up a green investment plan to take advantage of voluntary and corporate nature/climate-related obligations for nature positivity and carbon offsetting	£££	Local Nature Partnership, LCC and HDC Economic Development teams	24 months

Headline Action	Project/Programme	Action Refence	Action	Cost Band	Stakeholders	Timeline
Objective 3: Improve access and engagement with the natural environment						
3.1 Improve access to blue infrastructure	Provide access to blue infrastructure through new development	3.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore collaborations with local businesses and community groups to create action plan around strategic developments to improve access to local rivers and the canal network. 	£	Welland Partnership Locally engaged developers e.g. Gazeley	6 months
	Improve safe access to blue infrastructure for vulnerable users	3.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Canal and Rivers Trust to implement any access improvements, additional seating etc that will support access for vulnerable users to watercourses near major towns. <i>Link to HWAP action 2.d and blue social prescribing.</i> 	££	CRT, local community groups	2 years
	Improve access to reservoirs	3.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate options for active and passive leisure activities at Eyebrook reservoir. 	£	HDC, landowners and management company	1 Year
3.2 Improve access to woodland	Link woodland creation projects to active travel plans	3.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support woodland creation projects proposed in new strategic development areas, and encourage them to provide walking and cycling links to town populations particularly where there are high ANGSt inequalities 	££	Planning team, transport, developers	5 years
	Consider links with active travel routes, and appropriate parking and hygiene facilities when creating new NFM or connecting existing fragments of habitat.	3.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider opening up of the disused railway west of Lubenham for walkers, connecting with other PRoW while also providing a wildlife corridor. 	££	Transport, local community groups	5 years
3.3 Improve walking and cycling routes	Ensure circular leisure routes are available from larger towns, connecting with national cycle network, heritage assets and accessible greenspaces. <i>Link with PRoW improvement plan in CWAP S12.</i>	3.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve active travel and recreation links between communities and Leicester city and suburbs through retained fields separating Leicester and Thurnby, and Leicester and Scraftoft (particularly Covert Lane). 	£££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	2 years
		3.3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve PRoW quality and develop informal walking routes around Foxton, Sutton Bassett, Theddingworth and Lubeham, including development area around Gartree prison. 	££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	1-2 Years
		3.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider developing cycle lanes and routes around the B6047 between the A47 and A6. 	££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	3-5 years
		3.3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a cycle route to join the disused railway west of Market Harborough with Adams Mile, and the strategic development area northwest of Market Harborough. 	££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	2-4 years

Headline Action	Project/Programme	Action Reference	Action	Cost Band	Stakeholders	Timeline
Create safe (ideally 'traffic-free') cycling and walking routes to link rural settlements to larger towns. <i>Link with related actions in CWAP e.g. S10</i>		3.3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create walkway and linear Nature reserve on the disused railway connecting Thurnby-Bushby-Scraptoft-Ingarsby and Leicester city. 	££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	2-4 years
		3.3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create Circular cycle route around Lutterworth Linked to Magna Country Park and Lutterworth Country Park and cultural attractions such as Lutterworth museums and churches. 	££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	2-4 years
		3.3.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create circular cycle route and walkway around Market Harborough and into Brampton Valley Way and Station. 	££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	2-4 years
	3.3.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review cycle lanes from Wellington Place to Market Harborough town centre for maintenance, safety and integration with road safety measures with regard to improving muddy areas and dangerous crossings. 	£££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	2 years	
	3.3.9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve pedestrian access into Market Harborough along the A4304 corridor – consider disused railway route. 	££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	2-4 years	
	3.3.10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists along Covert Lane in Scraptoft and develop more cycle paths between Covert Lane, Scraptoft and Houghton. 	££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	1-2 Years	
	3.3.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve cycle paths between Houghton and Bushby. 	££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	2 Years	
	3.3.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repair bridges crossing the disused railway north of Lutterworth which are in dangerous condition. 	£££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	3-5 years	
	3.3.13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve signage around Thurnby and Houghton to encourage use of footpaths and green spaces. 	£	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	1-2 Years	
	3.3.14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve active travel routes to Blaby, Fosse Park and Leicester for commuters. 	££	HDC and LCC Transport and Leisure departments	2-3 Years	

Headline Action	Project/Programme	Action Reference	Action	Cost Band	Stakeholders	Timeline
3.4 Support nature-friendly farming	Support and enable local farmers to lead their nature friendly farming programme	3.4.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support creation of new farming clusters so that farmers and landowners can learn more about financial support and benefits of GBI, and direct their own interventions 	££	HDC all departments, farming community	12 months
3.5 Increase community engagement	Support expansion of successful community groups	3.5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review 'greener schools' and 'community magic' models active in Market Harborough with a view to supporting expansion in other towns and villages. 	£	HDC all departments	6 months
	Coordinate district and county-wide communication of GBI assets, availability and volunteer opportunities. <i>Link to HWAP actions 6.b, 6.c and wider work around mental health.</i>	3.5.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with local community groups to help clear overgrown ponds in Lutterworth Country Park – with professional guidance 	££	HDC communications	6 months
		3.5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with local community groups and managers at Market Harborough Airfield Business Park to improve balancing ponds. 	£	HDC, managers and owners of Business Park, Harborough Woodland	1 Year
	Provide forum for existing non-environmental community groups to consider how use and enjoyment of GBI can become part of their activity	3.5.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with local community to plan for local outdoor spaces around the Gartree development, e.g. play park, community garden or orchard, allotments etc. 	£	HDC all departments	6 months
3.6 Increase access for vulnerable users and minority groups	Review accessibility of GBI using Sensory Trust standards	3.6.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with local community groups representing vulnerable users to ensure appropriate improvement and implementation of accessibility practices 	££	Parks Team	12 months
	Develop social prescribing programmes and community initiatives in towns. <i>Link with HWAP actions 2.c and 2.d</i>	3.6.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on existing work with blue social prescribing in the area and refer to wider examples of best practice around the country to optimise community programmes 	£££	ICB, parks and community organisations	3 years
	Ensure varied demographic groups are closely involved in consultation processes	3.6.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and improve communication and consultation with local community groups covering different demographics and user needs 	££	ICB, planning and community organisations	6 months
3.7 Integrate GBI and health outcomes into all council policies and decision frameworks	'Town Hall' meeting for all departments to discuss their strategies in relation to GBI	3.7.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene a strategic meeting for all council departments in which they identify GBI contributions to their strategies and work programmes and commit to appropriate GBI protection and enhancement actions. 	£	HDC all departments	6 months
	Training on nature and carbon literacy across council	3.7.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure education on GBI and natural capital is integrated thoroughly with any existing training, particularly carbon or climate themed programmes, to enable all HDC staff to optimise their knowledge and contribution to GBI. 	£££	HDC all departments	2 years

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