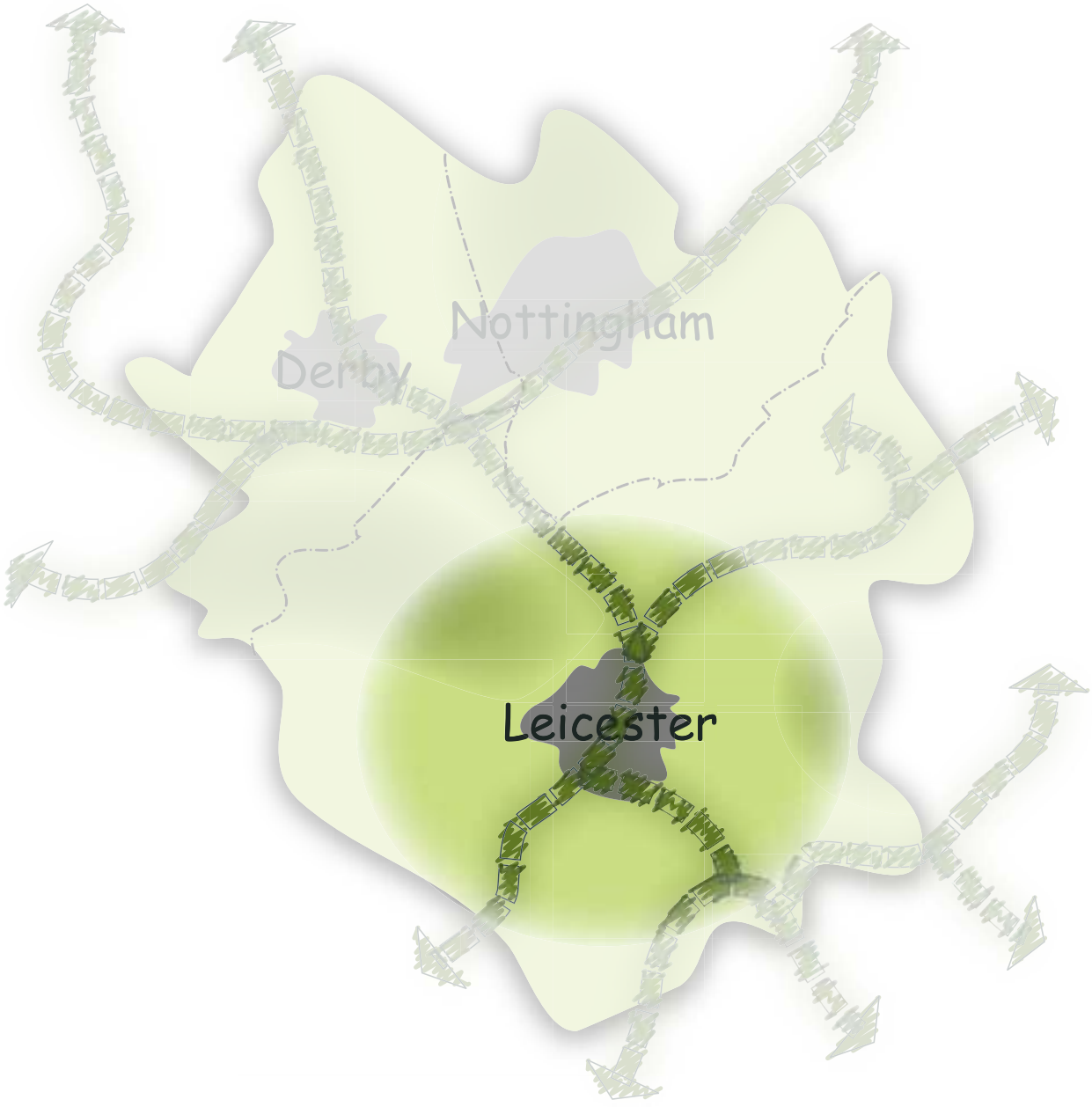
Green Infrastructure Strategy

Volume 5

Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and Sub-Regional Centres



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FOREWORD

The East Midlands region faces an unprecedented scale of growth over the coming years, especially in the 6C's sub-region. In light of the scale and number of new houses that are planned, we recognised the need to develop a strategic approach to provision of Green Infrastructure (GI) as an environmental life support system for healthy communities and ecosystems. We wanted to maximise the potential of GI to bring about multifunctional holistic solutions to achieve wide ranging environmental, economic and social benefits, including climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The 6C's partnership have been working together with key players across the area for the last two years to produce this exciting and important Strategy. The challenge is now to deliver and manage GI along with the "grey infrastructure" needed to support sustainable communities in the sub-region. This Strategy represents a major step forward to achieve this by:

- Giving the strategic spatial framework needed to safeguard, manage, and extend networks of GI in local planning documents;
- Showing how the benefits of GI to economics, climate change, health, biodiversity and landscape can be realised;
- Significantly reducing the amount of data required to produce local policy documents; and
- Identifying funding sources and mechanisms for the delivery of GI and the priorities for investment.

I cannot commend enough the monumental achievement of the 6Cs Strategic GI Project Board, and also the overall 6Cs Partnership, in producing this sub-regional GI Strategy.

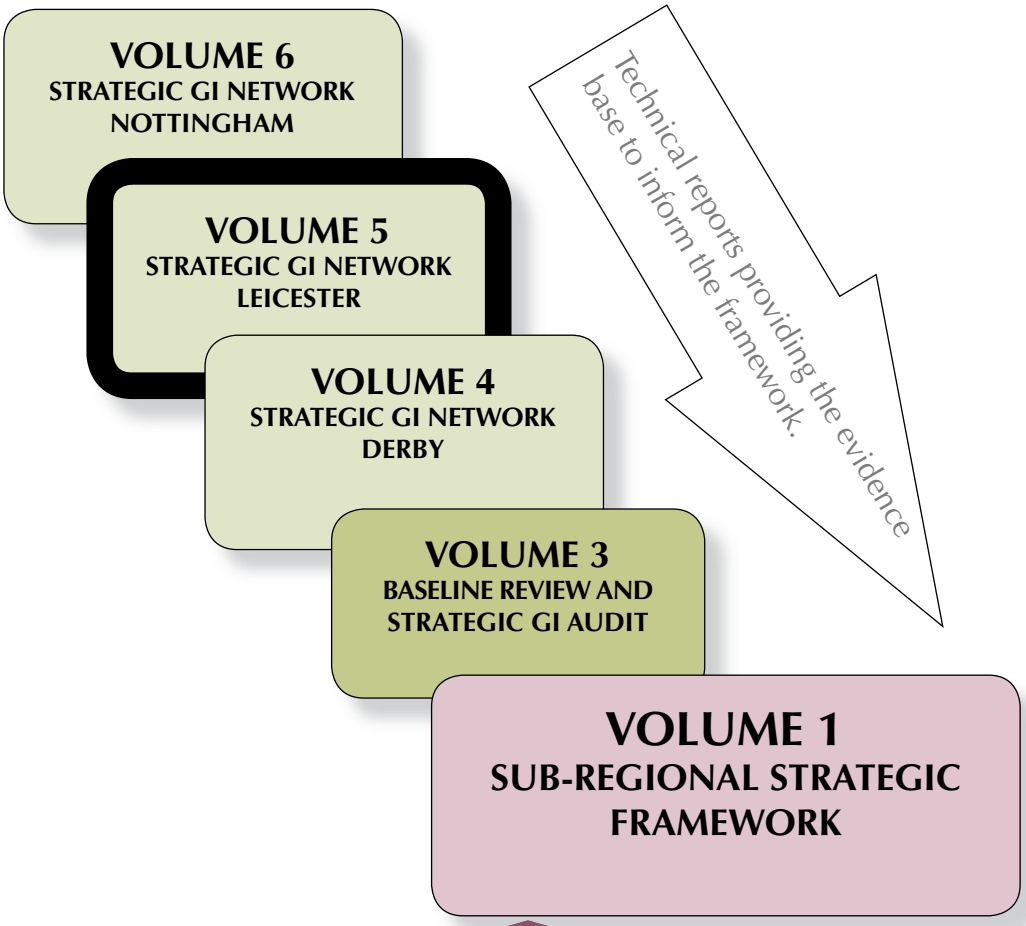
It provides a framework for all those working to plan and deliver sustainable development, and GI delivery in particular, within the sub-region and elsewhere around the East Midlands Region over the forthcoming years.

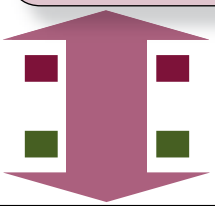
Alison Hepworth
Chair, 6Cs Strategic GI Project Board

STRATEGY STRUCTURE

STRATEGY

Long-term vision for the strategic GI network across the 6Cs Sub-Region





VOLUME 2
ACTION PLAN

Key actions required to deliver the Strategic Objectives: promotion, advocacy and partnership working

Projects and initiatives to deliver the Sub-Regional GI Network

DELIVERY

Implementation of the Strategy to be reviewed regularly to reflect changing priorities and emerging delivery opportunities

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Area and Context

1.1.1 **Figure 1.1** shows the Study Area for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray Strategic GI Network.

1.1.2 This report should be read in conjunction with:

- **Volume 1:** The Sub-Regional Strategic Framework (particularly **Section 3.0** – The Shared Vision, **Section 4.0** - The Strategic Green Infrastructure Network, and **Section 5.0** - The Delivery Framework);
- **Volume 2:** The Action Plan;
- **Volume 3:** The Baseline Information Review and Strategic GI Audit for the Sub-Region;
- **Volume 4:** The Strategic Green Infrastructure Network for the Derby Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centre of Swadlincote; and
- **Volume 6:** The Strategic Green Infrastructure Network for the Nottingham Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Hucknall and Ilkeston.

1.1.3 The locations of strategic growth within the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area (HMA) will have an impact on the prioritisation of resources and investment in the proposed GI Network. The current position with regards to the planning of strategic development sites within the HMA is summarised below as at April 2010[1].

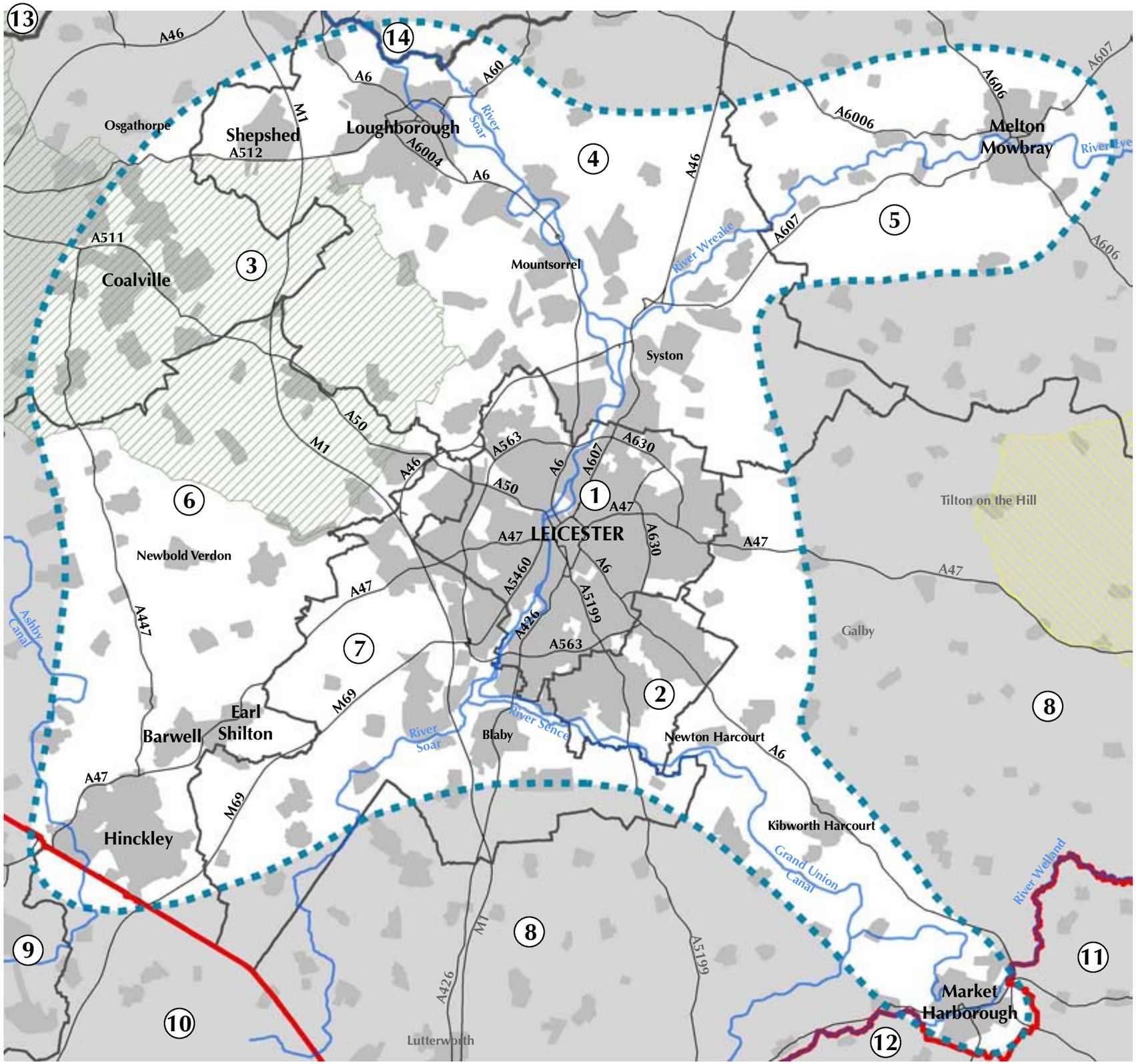
Blaby District Council

1.1.4 The submission version of the Blaby District Core Strategy was the subject of consultation between 30th July and 10th September 2009. Following representations from statutory consultees and the public, it was considered that further evidence was required and work is currently taking place. While the Council has not withdrawn its support for the potential location for a Sustainable Urban Extension[2], the site may be considered as a 'broad area' rather than as a specific allocation in any future iteration of the Core Strategy.

Charnwood Borough Council

1.1.5 The Charnwood Local Development Framework Core Strategy Further Consultation Report (October 2008)[3] identified preferred locations for growth to the west of Loughborough and to the east of Thurmaston/north of Hamilton. These are for two Sustainable Urban Extensions -

[1] See Section 1.3 of **Volume 2** for updated information.
[2] As shown on http://idocs.blaby.gov.uk/external/planning-building/planning/consultation/cs-proposals-map.pdf.
[3] The Core Strategy can be accessed at http://www.charnwood.gov.uk/pages/further_consultation_october_2008.



KEY

Indicative GI Network Areas

- Derby GI Network
- Nottingham GI Network
- Leicester GI Network
- Urban Areas
- 6Cs Growth Point
- District/Borough Boundaries
  - 1 Leicester City Council
  - 2 Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
  - 3 North West Leicestershire District Council
  - 4 Charnwood Borough Council
  - 5 Melton Borough Council
  - 6 Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council
  - 7 Blaby District Council
  - 8 Harborough District Council
  - 9 Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
  - 10 Rugby Borough Council
  - 11 Kettering Borough Council
  - 12 Daventry District Council
  - 13 South Derbyshire District Council
  - 14 Rushcliffe Borough Council
- County Boundaries
- The National Forest
- Leighfield Forest
- Principal Rivers and Canals
- Main Roads

This Figure represents relevant available information provided by stakeholders at the time of the study, and may not be exhaustive. The accuracy of digital datasets received, which have been used in good faith without modification or enhancement, cannot be guaranteed. Commensurate with its intended 'city-scale' focus, the Strategic GI Network Plan illustrates indicative GI assets and opportunities at a strategic level, which do not necessarily indicate a constraint on development.

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Figure 1.1
Study Area and Context

one of 3,500 dwellings (Loughborough) and another of 5,000 dwellings (Thurmaston). The consultation indicated that the Sustainable Urban Extensions would be brought forward by two specific allocations in the Core Strategy, and would be complemented by the specific strategic allocation of a Science Park extension for Loughborough.

Harborough District Council

1.1.6 Harborough District Council is proposing a strategic development area of at least 1,000 dwellings to the north west of Market Harborough as the principal focus for future development of the town (the Airfield Farm area)[4]. The area has been identified in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy document "Towards a Final Draft". The Core Strategy Development Plan Document is due for pre-submission approval by the Council in July 2010 and formal consultation in September.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

1.1.7 Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council adopted their Core Strategy in December 2009[5] and have now begun work on masterplanning their two Sustainable Urban Extensions at Barwell and Earl Shilton through a joint Area Action Plan Development Plan Document. The Council are preparing a preferred options version of the document and currently intend to consult on this during 2010 with adoption in September 2011. The Barwell and Earl Shilton Sustainable Urban Extension Area Action Plan will set the masterplan and policies which will be applied alongside the Core Strategy to guide and determine delivery of these growth areas.

Leicester City Council

1.1.8 The Leicester Local Plan and emerging Core Strategy identifies two main growth areas in the City. Ashton Green is a proposed Sustainable Urban Extension to the north of the City, which will accommodate approximately 15% (3,500 dwellings) of all housing growth in the City up to 2026[6]. The other main growth area is the Strategic Regeneration Area (SRA) which is planned to provide around 54% (12,000) of all new housing in the city up to 2026[7], with priority being given to Abbey Meadows and Waterside as the focus for new housing in and close to the city centre. Leicester City Council is also working jointly with Charnwood and Blaby Councils on Sustainable Urban Extensions in their respective districts, which are located on the edge of Leicester city.

[4] As shown on http://www.harborough. gov.uk/downloads/Strategy_Key_Diagram_V6.pdf.
[5] For more detail visit www.hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk.
[6] Further information is available at www.leicester.gov.uk/ashtongreen.
[7] Further information and plans can be found in the adopted 2006 Local Plan (available at www.leicester.gov.uk/localplan) and the 2009 Submission Core Strategy (available at /www.leicester.gov.uk/corestrategy).

Melton Borough Council

1.1.9 At an Extraordinary Council meeting in November 2009, Councillors agreed to support the building of 1,000 new homes as an urban extension to the north of Melton Mowbray[8], which will incorporate a partial bypass and the development of 30ha of employment land to the west of Melton Mowbray. This proposed development is to be incorporated within the Melton Local Development Framework Core Strategy. However, the final submission version of this document has yet to be confirmed by Full Council and the final round of consultation undertaken before submission to the Secretary of State.

1.2 Scope

1.2.1 The Strategic GI Network report comprises the following:

- Assessment of Strategic GI Assets, Needs and Opportunities – drawing on the Stage 1 GI audit, enhanced by selected relevant additional data as appropriate; and
- 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. It is intended to help focus attention on land that needs to be safeguarded, managed or secured in positive ways to create a multifunctional network of greenspaces and assets for which investment can deliver the greatest range of benefits

1.3 Key Documents

1.3.1 The key documents that have informed the development of the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray Strategic GI Network are:

- Blaby District Landscape and Settlement Character Assessment (2008)
- Blaby District PPG17 Open Space Study (2009)
- Harborough District Landscape Character Assessment (2007)
- Harborough District PPG17 Open Space Study (2004)
- Hinckley and Bosworth Green Infrastructure Study (2008)
- Hinckley and Bosworth Green Space Strategy, which includes a PPG17 assessment (2005) (currently under review)
- Hinckley and Bosworth Landscape Character Assessment (2006)
- Leicester City Greenspace Strategy 2008-2015 (2007)
- Leicester City PPG17 Open Space Study (2007)
- Leicester City's Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007-2017

[8] An indicative map of the proposal can be found at www.melton.gov.uk/pdf/Northern% 20Growth%20Option%20-20Housing%20Option% 20C.PDF.

- Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy (Leicestershire County Council, 2001, addendum 2006)
- Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan (version 2, 2002)
- Leicestershire Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006-2011
- Melton Borough Landscape and Historic Urban Character Assessment Report (2006)
- Melton Borough PPG17 Open Space Study (2006)
- National Forest Biodiversity Action Plan (2nd edition, 2004)
- North West Leicestershire District PPG17 Open Space Study (2008)
- Northamptonshire GI Strategic Framework (2006)
- Oadby and Wigston Borough PPG17 Open Space Study (2009)
- Oadby and Wigston Landscape Character Assessment (2005)
- Oadby and Wigston Parks and Open Space Strategy (2006-2011)
- River Soar and Grand Union Canal Emerging Strategy (ARUP, 2008)
- Stepping Stones Project - Creating a Green and Prosperous Future: A Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2008)
- The National Forest Delivery Plan 2009-2014
- The National Forest Strategy 2004-2014 (includes a Landscape Character Assessment)

2.0 STRATEGIC GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS, NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

2.1 Existing Strategic Green Infrastructure Assets

2.1.1 **Figures 2.1** to **2.5** show existing strategic GI assets that form the 'backbone' or underlying framework for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray Strategic GI Network. The mapping is based on the datasets used in the Stage 1 work, enhanced where appropriate by selected relevant additional datasets identified in consultation with local stakeholders[9].

2.1.2 A key source of additional data used is the PPG17 Open Space datasets provided by the local authorities, where available[10] (see **Figure 2.3**). **Appendix A3** provides details of the PPG17 datasets supplied, and the methodology for consolidating these into a consistent open space typology for the purposes of this study.

2.1.3 The distribution and extent of existing strategic GI assets in and around the Study Area is shown on **Figure 2.5**. These assets include:

- Existing natural greenspace[11];
- Existing strategic accessible natural greenspace[12];
- Existing strategic countryside access routes[13];
- Existing open space[14] and green wedges[15];
- Historic environment assets[16];

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[9] A record of stakeholder consultation is provided **Appendix A1**. Sources of GI asset mapping data used in the Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough, Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray are provided in **Appendix A2**.

[10] Charnwood Borough Council is currently producing a PPG17 Open Space Study, while Melton District Council do not hold PPG17 datasets. In the absence of the latter, mastermap has been used to represent open space.

[11] For the purposes of the mapping methodology presented in this report, 'natural greenspace' is defined as: land, water or geological features that have been colonised by plants and animals and are dominated by natural processes (as defined by English Nature in Accessible Natural Greenspace in Towns and Cities).

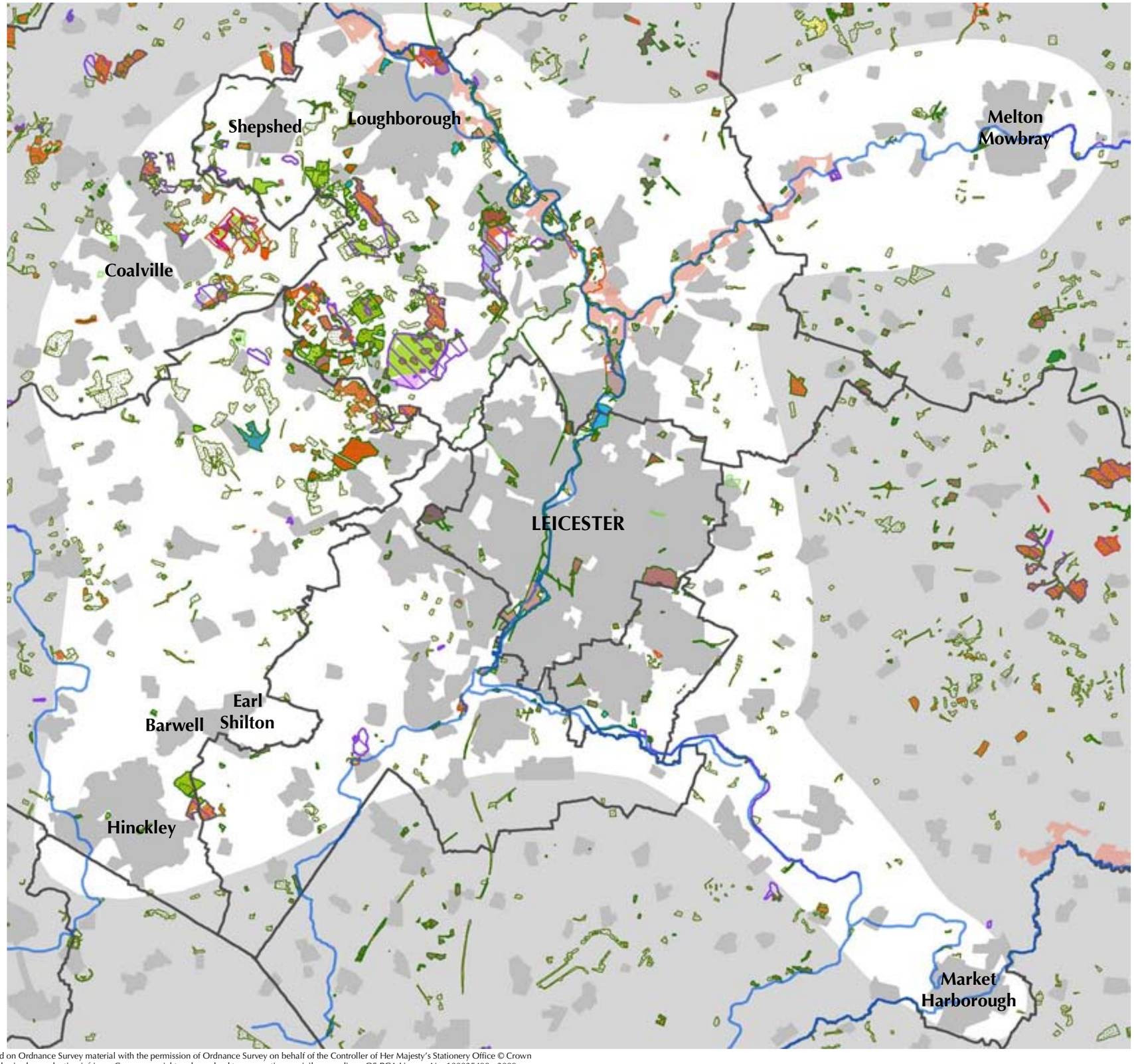
[12] For the purposes of the mapping methodology presented in this report, 'strategic accessible natural greenspace' is defined as natural greenspace greater than 2ha in size that is normally available for public access on foot, providing opportunities for open access for informal recreational activities.

[13] For the purposes of the mapping methodology presented in this report, 'strategic countryside access routes' are defined as: linear, generally off-road and car free routes, that are normally available for public access on foot, horseback or by cycle providing opportunities to access the countryside for informal recreation activities. It should be noted that Public Rights of Way have been considered to inform needs and opportunities. However, for presentational purposes they have not been mapped as part of the existing strategic GI assets.

[14] For the purposes of the mapping methodology presented in this report, 'open space' is defined as: parks and gardens, amenity greenspaces, natural and semi-natural greenspaces, green corridors, cemeteries and churchyards, allotments, children's play space and outdoor sports facilities.

[15] Green wedges are not necessarily covered by PPG17 Open Space datasets. However, following stakeholder consultation, they have been included (where available) on **Figure 2.3**. The Green Wedge areas deliver, or have the potential to deliver, a range of GI functions and benefits in close proximity to urban communities. Such benefits, either existing or potential, will vary from one area to another. It should be noted that the Regional Plan requires that Green Wedges be reviewed for their suitability. It should therefore not be assumed that all of the Green Wedges will be retained in their current form.

[16] For the purposes of the mapping methodology presented in this report, 'historic environment assets' are defined as: designated historic environment assets including scheduled monuments, historic battlefields, conservation areas, listed buildings, world heritage sites, and parks and gardens of historic interest.



KEY

Natural/Semi-Natural Habitats (based on Wildlife Trust and Natural England BAP Priority Habitat data)

- Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Eutrophic Standing Waters
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Fen
- Lowland Heathland
- Lowland Meadows
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush-Pastures
- Reedbed
- Wood-Pasture and Parkland

Designated Areas

- National Nature Reserves
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserves
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves (with Public Access)

Woodland and Trees

- National Inventory of Woodland and Trees

- Urban Areas
- District/Borough Boundaries
- Principal Rivers and Canals

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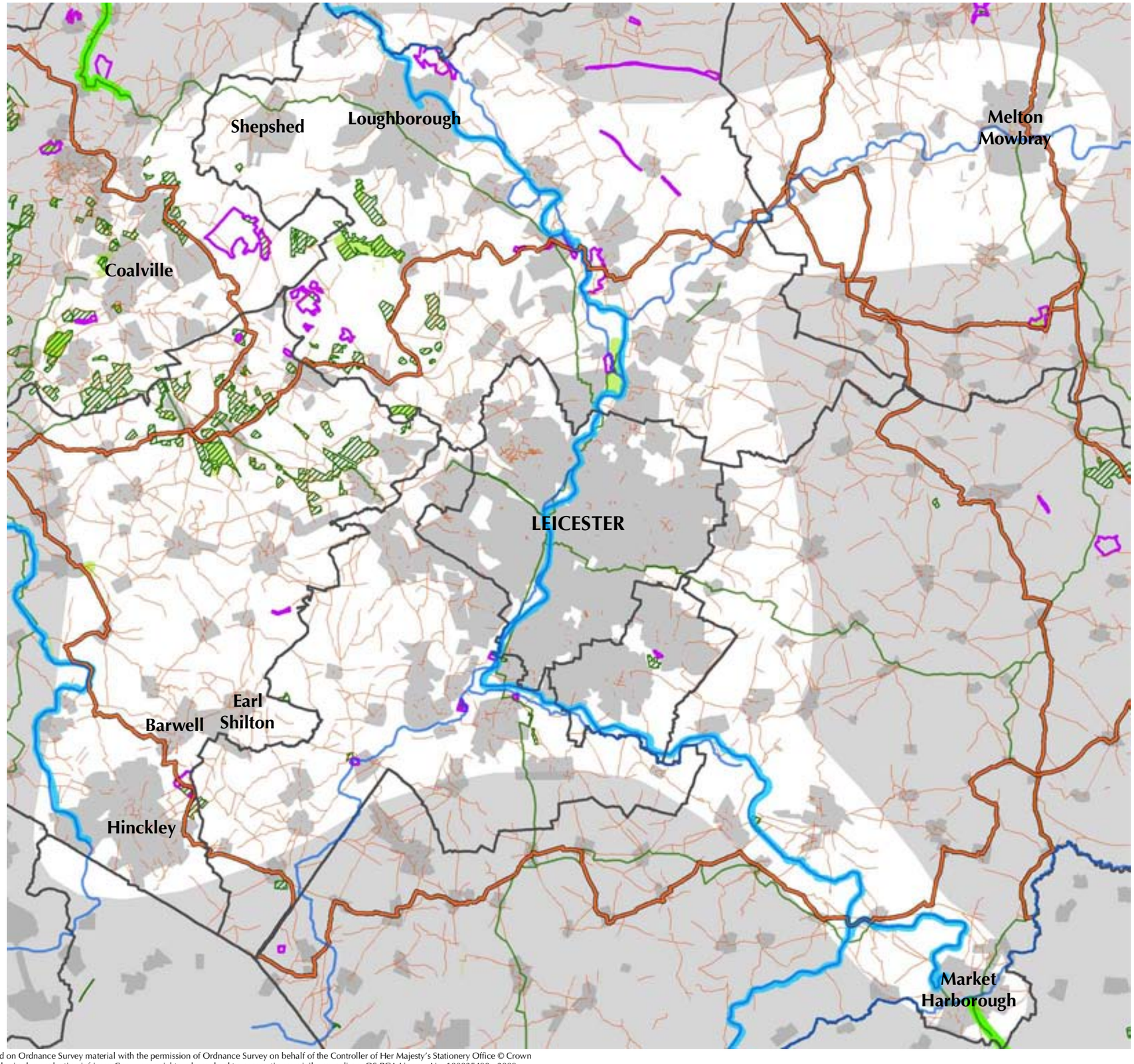
Figure 2.1
Biodiversity - Existing Strategic Assets (Natural Greenspace)



KEY

Existing Strategic Accessible Natural Greenspace

Land greater than 2ha in size that is normally available for public access on foot, providing opportunities for open access for informal recreational activities.

- Open Access Land and Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves with Public Access
- Accessible Woodland
- National Trust Land with Open Access
- Country Parks

Existing Strategic Countryside Access Routes

Linear, generally off-road and car free routes, that are normally available for public access on foot, horseback or by cycle providing opportunities to access the countryside for informal recreation activities.

- Promoted Recreational Routes
- Cycle Network
- Navigable Waterways (indicative)
- Greenways

Public Rights of Way Network

- Public Rights of Way Network

- Urban Areas
- District/Borough Boundaries
- Principal Rivers and Canals

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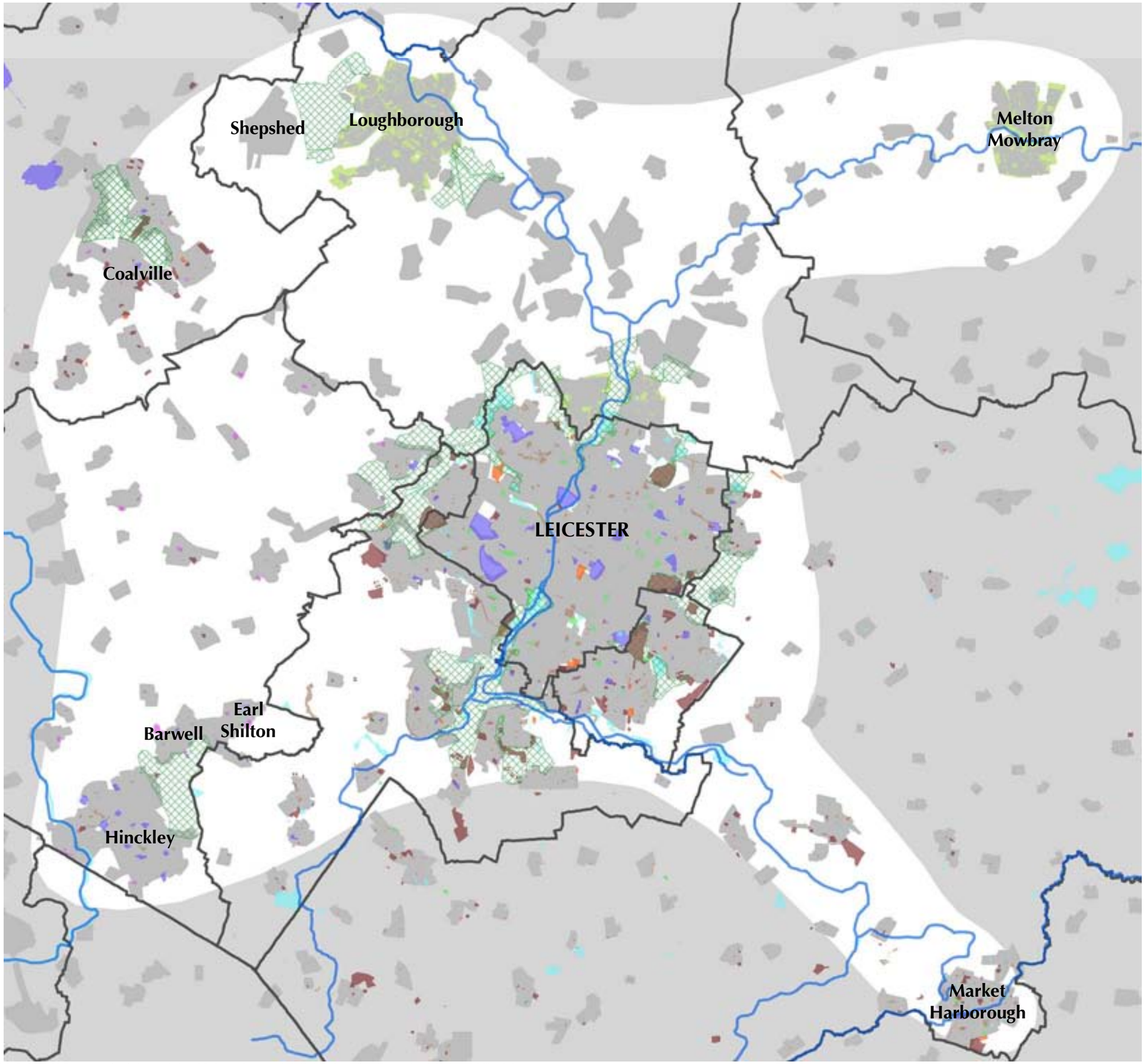
Figure 2.2
Access & Recreation - Existing Strategic Assets



KEY

Existing Open Space
(As provided in PPG17 Open Space datasets, see Appendix A3 for details)

- Allotments
- Amenity Greenspace
- Cemeteries & Churchyards
- Children's Play Space
- Green Corridor
- Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace
- Outdoor Sports Facilities
- Parks & Gardens

Existing Open Space in Loughborough, Leicester Outskirts (which fall within Charnwood Borough Council) and Melton Mowbray
(Mapped using Mastermap, see Appendix A4 for details)

Green Wedge

Urban Areas

District/Borough Boundaries

Principal Rivers and Canals

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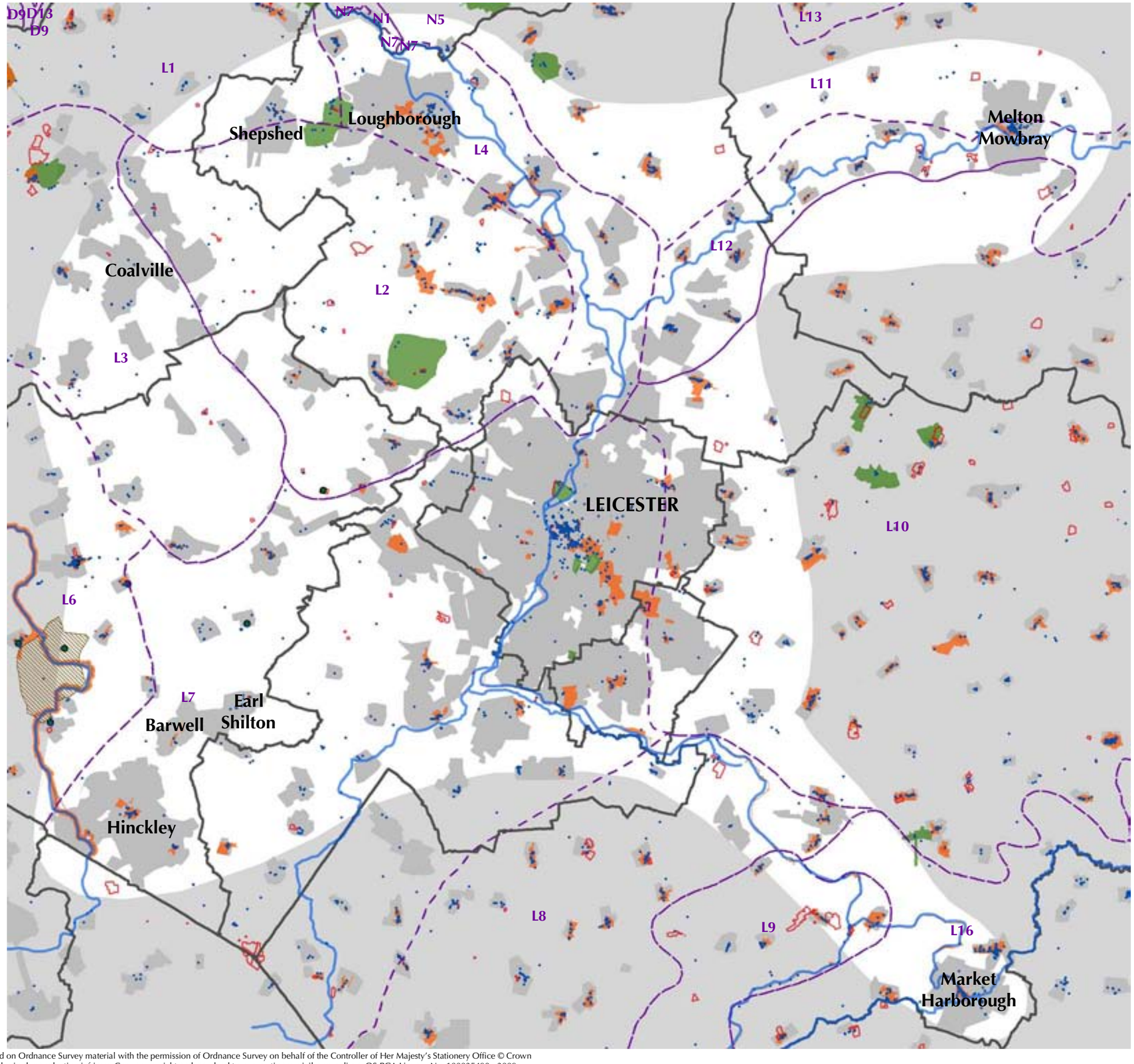
Figure 2.3
Open Space and Green Wedges - Existing Strategic Assets



KEY

Published Landscape Character Units

Derbyshire Landscape Character Types

- D9 Estate Farmlands
- D13 Sandstone Slopes and Heaths

Nottinghamshire Landscape Character Types

- N1 Terrace Farmlands
- N5 Village Farmlands
- N7 River Meadowlands

Leicestershire Landscape Character Areas

- L1 Langley Lowlands
- L2 Charnwood Forest
- L3 The Coalfield
- L4 Soar Valley
- L6 Mease/Sence Lowlands
- L7 Upper Soar
- L8 Lutterworth Lowlands
- L9 Laughton Hills
- L10 High Leicestershire
- L11 The Wolds
- L12 Wreake Valley
- L13 Belvoir Scarp
- L16 Welland Valley

Designated Historic Environment Assets

- Scheduled Monuments
- Historic Battlefields
- Conservation Areas
- Listed Buildings
- Hinckley and Bosworth Heritage Assets
- Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site
- Parks & Gardens of Historic Interest

- Urban Areas
- District/Borough Boundaries
- Principal Rivers and Canals

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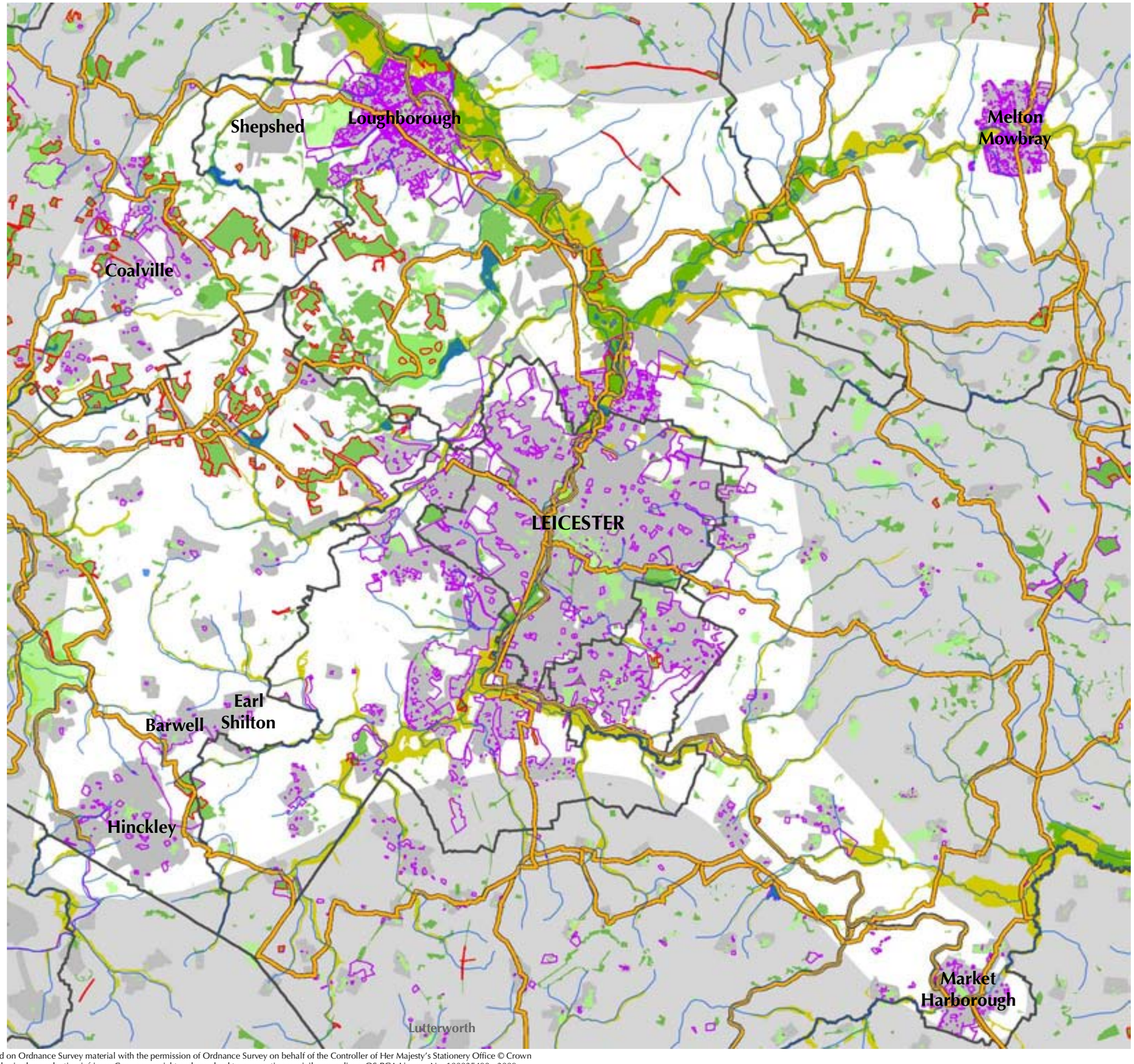
Figure 2.4
Landscape Character and Historic Environment - Existing Strategic Assets



KEY

- **Existing Natural Greenspace** (See Figure 2.1)
- **Existing Strategic Accessible Natural Greenspace** (See Figure 2.2)
- **Existing Strategic Countryside Access Routes** (See Figure 2.2)
- **Existing Open Space and Green Wedges** (See Figure 2.3)
- **Designated Historic Environment Assets** (See Figure 2.4)
- **Predominantly Undeveloped Natural Floodplain**
- **Watercourses and Waterbodies**
- Urban Areas
- District/Borough Boundaries

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Figure 2.5
Strategic GI Assets

- Watercourses and waterbodies[17]; and
- Predominantly undeveloped natural floodplain[18].

2.2 Strategic Green Infrastructure Needs

Accessible Natural Greenspace Deficiencies

2.2.1 Based on the assessment of accessible natural greenspace provision undertaken in Stage 1, **Figure 2.6** identifies the location and distribution of different sizes of strategic accessible natural greenspace sites[19] and their respective catchments based on Natural England's Accessible Natural Greenspace Standard[20] (ANGSt) model. Although designed primarily for use in the urban context, the ANGSt model can also be used to assess how accessible natural greenspace in the wider countryside contributes to levels of provision for both urban and rural communities. Applying the Standard enables a consistent comparison to be made between the levels of accessible natural greenspace available to people across the sub-region.

2.2.2 It is important to recognise the strategic role of accessible agricultural landscapes in the wider countryside beyond the specific sites of accessible natural greenspace considered in this report. Key areas with deficiencies of accessible natural greenspace within the Study Area are:

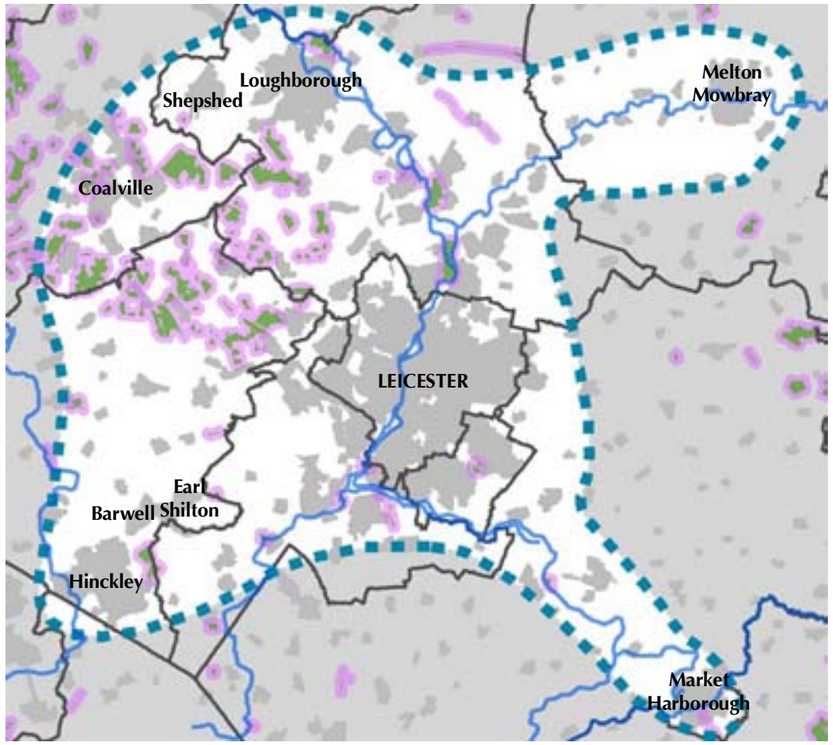
Leicester

- Deficiency of sites over 2ha (within 300m of inhabitants) for almost all of Leicester's population. Residents in a small area in the north and discrete areas in the south have access to sites;
- Deficiency of sites over 20ha (within 2km of inhabitants) for almost all of Leicester's population. Residents in an area in the north have access to sites;
- Deficiency of sites over 100ha (within 5km of inhabitants) for all of Leicester's population;
- Deficiency of sites over 500ha (within 10km of inhabitants) for all of Leicester's population.

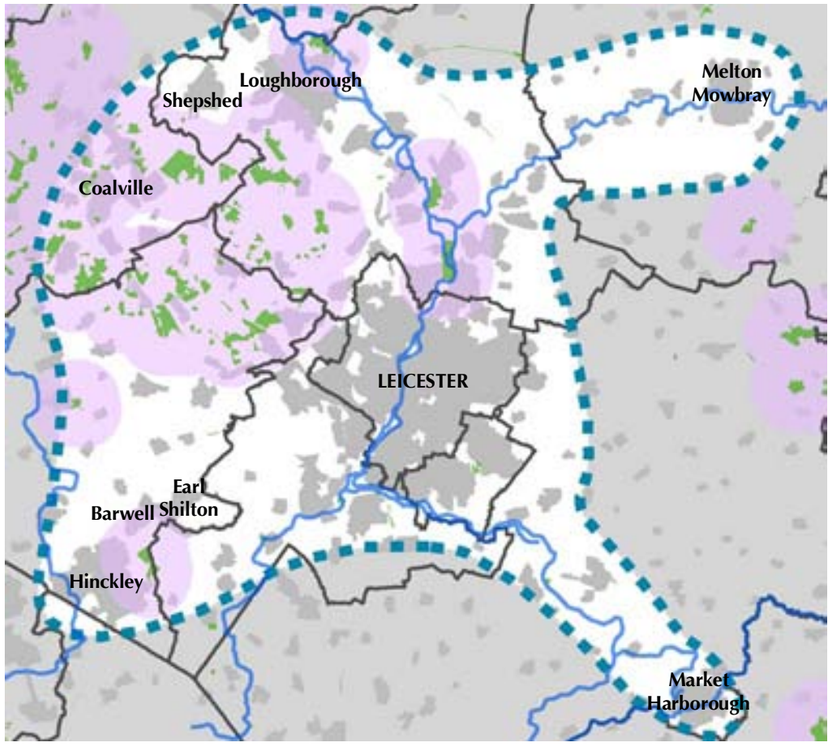
Coalville

- Deficiency of sites over 2ha (within 300m of inhabitants) for parts of Coalville's population. Residents in an area north-east, in the centre, and a small area in the south have access to sites;
- Deficiency of sites over 500ha (within 10km of inhabitants) for all of Coalville's population.

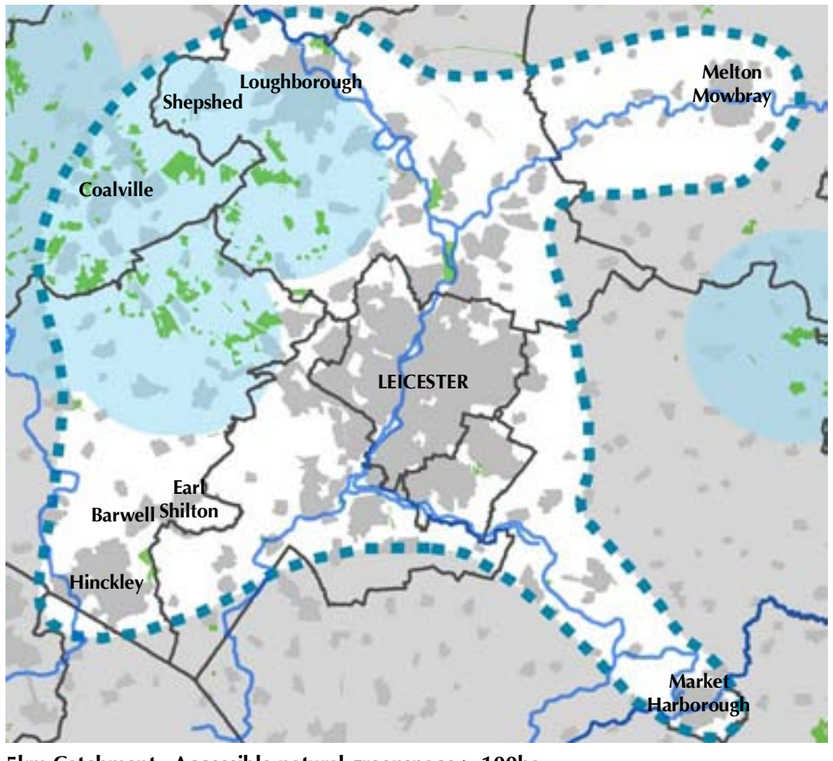
[17] For the purposes of the mapping methodology presented in this report, 'watercourses and waterbodies' are as defined by the meridian datasets for 'Lakes' and 'Rivers'.
[18] For the purposes of this Study, the natural floodplain (the extent of the floodplain if there were no flood defences or certain other manmade structures and channel improvements), is shown only in predominantly undeveloped areas outside of the main settlements.
[19] Strategic accessible natural greenspace sites shown on **Figure 2.6** represent available information provided by stakeholders at the time of the Study and may not be exhaustive.
[20] Providing Accessible Natural Greenspaces in Towns and Cities: A Practical Guide to Assessing the Resource and Implementing Local Standards for Provision (English Nature, 2003)



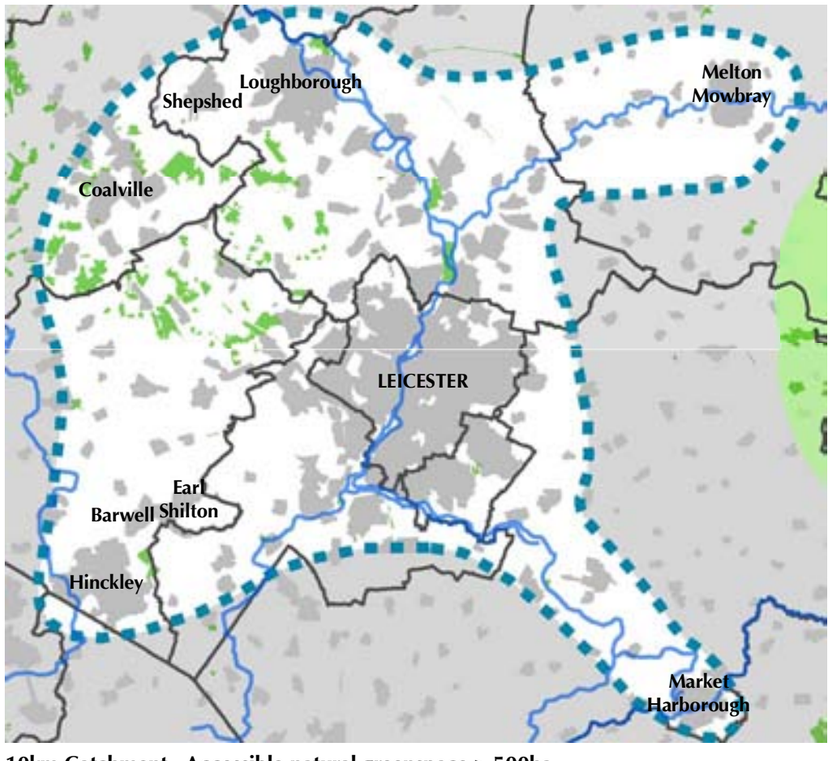
300m Catchment - All accessible natural greenspace



2km Catchment - Accessible natural greenspace > 20ha



5km Catchment - Accessible natural greenspace > 100ha



10km Catchment - Accessible natural greenspace > 500ha

KEY

Accessible Natural Greenspace Catchments

- 300m catchment - all accessible natural greenspace
- 2km catchment - accessible natural greenspace >20ha
- 5km catchment - accessible natural greenspace >100ha
- 10km catchment - accessible natural greenspace >500ha

Existing Strategic Accessible Natural Greenspace

Land greater than 2ha in size largely outside urban areas that is normally available for public access on foot, providing opportunities for open access for informal recreational activities.

- Leicester GI Network
- Urban Areas
- District/Borough Boundaries
- Principal Rivers and Canals

This Figure represents relevant available information provided by stakeholders at the time of the study, and may not be exhaustive. The accuracy of digital datasets received, which have been used in good faith without modification or enhancement, cannot be guaranteed. Commensurate with its intended 'city-scale' focus, the Strategic GI Network Plan illustrates indicative GI assets and opportunities at a strategic level, which do not necessarily indicate a constraint on development.

0 2 4 km

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Figure 2.6
Strategic GI Needs - Accessible Natural Greenspace Deficiencies

Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton)

- Deficiency of sites over 2ha (within 300m of inhabitants) for all of Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton's populations;
- Deficiency of sites over 20ha (within 2km of inhabitants) for populations living in the western part of Hinckley, north Barwell and most of Earl Shilton;
- Deficiency of sites over 100ha (within 5km of inhabitants) for all of Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton's populations;
- Deficiency of sites over 500ha (within 10km of inhabitants) for all of Hinckley, Barwell and Earl Shilton's populations.

Loughborough (including Shepshed)

- Deficiency of sites over 2ha (within 300m of inhabitants) for all of Shepshed's population and almost all of Loughborough's population. Residents in a small area in the north of Loughborough have access to sites;
- Deficiency of sites over 20ha (within 2km of inhabitants) for all of Shepshed's population as well as populations living in south-east and north-west Loughborough;
- Deficiency of sites over 100ha (within 5km of inhabitants) for populations living in north Loughborough;
- Deficiency of sites over 500ha (within 10km of inhabitants) for all of Loughborough's population.

Market Harborough

- Deficiency of sites over 2ha (within 300m of inhabitants) for almost all of Market Harborough's population. Residents in a very small area in the south do have access to a site ;
- Deficiency of sites over 20ha (within 2km of inhabitants) for all of Market Harborough's population;
- Deficiency of sites over 100ha (within 5km of inhabitants) for all of Market Harborough's population;
- Deficiency of sites over 500ha (within 10km of inhabitants) for all of Market Harborough's population.

Melton Mowbray[21]

- Deficiency of sites over 2ha (within 300m of inhabitants) for all of Melton Mowbray's population;
- Deficiency of sites over 20ha (within 2km of inhabitants) for all of Melton Mowbray's population;
- Deficiency of sites over 100ha (within 5km of inhabitants) for all of Melton Mowbray's population;
- Deficiency of sites over 500ha (within 10km of inhabitants) for all of Melton Mowbray's population.

Other Settlements

- Deficiency of sites over 2ha (within 300m of inhabitants) for almost all other settlements' populations. Residents in small discrete areas have access to sites (e.g. north-west Bagworth and north-west Ibstock;

[21] It is understood that a 55ha Country Park is located north of Melton Mowbray. This Country Park was not part of the datasets received and is therefore not shown as part of the strategic accessible natural greenspace on **Figure 2.6**. However, taking this into account, the deficiency of sites over 2ha (within 300 of inhabitants) would not include residents living in the northern part of Melton Mowbray. Additionally, the majority of Melton Mowbray's residents would have access to a site greater than 20ha within 2km of where they live.

- Deficiency of sites over 20ha (within 2km of inhabitants) for approximately half of other settlements' populations (e.g. for the populations of Newbold Verdon, Newton Harcourt, Croft, and Desford);
- Deficiency of sites over 100ha (within 5km of inhabitants) for approximately half of other settlements' populations (e.g. Rotherby, Foxton, Sapcote, and Kirkby Mallory)
- Deficiency of sites over 500ha (within 10km of inhabitants) for all other settlements' populations.

Open Space Deficiencies

2.2.3 Relevant PPG17 Open Space studies have highlighted varying deficiencies in open space across the Study Area. Shortfalls in open space provision for areas within the Study Area, as described in individual PPG17 Open Space studies, are provided in the following table. Deficiencies related to Charnwood Borough Council are not included as their PPG17 Open Space Study is currently in preparation. The distribution of existing open spaces (using PPG17 open space datasets) is shown on **Figure 2.3**. In the absence of a PPG17 dataset for Charnwood and Melton Borough Councils, open space has been mapped indicatively, using mastermap (see **Appendix A3** for details).

Rights of Way Needs

2.2.4 Needs identified in Leicester City and Leicestershire's Rights of Way Improvement Plans include the following:

Leicester City Rights of Way Improvement Plan

- Keep routes free from obstructions;
- Ensure suitable, good quality surface condition for relevant users;
- Provide crossings for routes crossing the road network;
- Improve signing;
- Provide new links and safeguard existing links, particularly linking communities with local authorities;
- Improve access to everyday services, places of work, schools, healthcare and shopping by improving and promoting the Rights of Way network to improve links from residential areas to such services;
- Ensure adequate width of path for the purpose it is used for;
- Promote routes which are alternatives to the car, within schools and businesses;
- Promote routes that are accessible to disabled users;
- Establish and promote circular leisure routes.

Open Space Type	Blaby District Council	Leicester City Council	Harborough District Council	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (currently under review)	Melton Borough Council	North West Leicestershire District Council	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
Parks & Gardens	Under provision across the District except for Elmesthorpe, Wigston Parva, Cosby, Thurlaston, Sapcote and Kirby Muxloe parishes	Across the City, overall there is sufficient supply (about 35% above the required standard), and just under 60% of wards have sufficient supply. There is generally good access to parks across the City, however, notable gaps exist in the following areas and wards: *East: Humberstone & Hamilton; *South: Eyres Monsell and Aylestone; *North-East: Rushey Mead and Belgrave; *Central: Castle and Westcotes; *West: Beaumont Leys (southern part of ward). A number of existing open spaces have the potential to fill the gaps in the provision of District Parks, these are: *Aylestone Meadows and Aylestone Hall Gardens; *Sturdee Road Recreation Ground, linked with Featherstone Drive; *Hamilton Park; *Rushey Fields Recreation Ground and Cossington Street	When applying the provision standard of 0.4 ha per 1000 population to the district as a whole, there is a total shortfall of provision equivalent to 11.79 hectares. The smallest deficiency is in Market Harborough and Lubenham (where Welland Park is located) and amounts to 0.22 hectares – this will reach 1.57 hectares in 2011	not specified	Catchment mapping shows that there are no settlements in Melton without access to formal open space. No additional demand for formal open space has been identified through the consultation undertaken.	Deficiency in open space in the following parishes: * Ibstock: 1.17ha * Coalville: 0.87ha * Ellistown & Battleflat: 0.69ha * Belton: 0.3ha * Charley: 0.036ha	It is fair to conclude that the provision of 'Parks & Recreation Grounds' should be increased, as a significant number of respondents felt the existing provision should be increased. Within the Borough, a significant number of Parks and Recreation Grounds contain provision for Outdoor Sport, i.e. sites are multifunctional. So in practice, the two typologies are often provided together, and consideration should be given to the two standards together in terms of a quantity provision standard (see outdoor sport below), particularly for new provision. See PPG17 study for deficiencies by wards (all of which apply to this report's study area)

Open Space Type	Blaby District Council	Leicester City Council	Harborough District Council	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (currently under review)	Melton Borough Council	North West Leicestershire District Council	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
		Recreation Ground; *The Rally Park. *Willowbrook Park, Monks Rest Gardens and Ocean Road Open Space;					
Amenity Greenspace	Under provision in Aston Flamville, Croft, Elmesthorpe, Potters Marston, Sharnford, Wigston Parva, Leicester Forest West, Cosby and Glen Parva parishes	Across the City there is just enough informal open space against the standard, however, only 30% of wards have an over supply. There is a reasonable average distribution of informal open space across the City. While there are gaps in access in all wards, when informal space is considered along with parks the majority of wards have an open space near to their residents' homes. The following observations can be made: *There are a number of informal open spaces in the east and south of the City which have the potential to be upgraded to 'parks' and fill some of the gaps identified in access to parks; *There is a considerable concentration and overlap in access of informal open space	When applying the provision standard of 0.8ha – 1ha per 1,000 people, there is an overall deficit of amenity green space within the district. Within the Market Harborough and Lubenham area, total provision amounts to 1.39 ha per 1,000 people. Although this will decrease to 1.15 ha by 2016, application of the standard still results in a small oversupply of between 8.78 - 13.29 ha total	Not specified	No deficiency identified in the settlement of Melton Mowbray.	Not specified.	The existing average level of provision of informal open space across the Borough is1.2 ha per 1,000 people. A minimum level of provision of 0.5 ha per 1,000 people is proposed. See PPG17 study for deficiencies by wards (all of which apply to this report's study area)

Open Space Type	Blaby District Council	Leicester City Council	Harborough District Council	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (currently under review)	Melton Borough Council	North West Leicestershire District Council	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
		in the Beaumont Leys area. *There is an opportunity to look to use informal open space for alternative uses, this may include changing their typology e.g. for providing new play areas where there are gaps in provision, or indeed where there is significant over supply (e.g. Beaumont Leys, Eyres Monsell), to dispose of land for development.					
Children's Play Spaces	Under provision across the District	Overall there is an under supply (-5.04ha or about 10%), however, only 3 wards exceed the standard for provision. The following observations are made in relation to the provision of equipped play areas in the City: *All wards within the City have play areas; *There is an uneven distribution of play areas, for example there is a high concentration and overlap of facilities in the Spinney Hills/Latimer wards, in contrast there is only one facility in Thurncourt ward; *Access to play areas cannot be considered in isolation, for example while there are several	Based on a provision standard of 0.3 hectares, there is a total deficiency of 13.5, rising to almost 15 by 2011. The largest deficiency of provision for children and young people is in Market Harborough, where there is a shortfall of 4.85 hectares	There is a deficiency in the amount of equipped children's play space currently provided within the borough. The biggest quantitative shortfalls in the provision of equipped play space are in Hinckley (1.2 ha), Burbage (1.11 ha), Earl Shilton (0.60 ha) and Groby (0.59 ha).	Deficiency in Melton Mowbray north-east. To meet deficiencies, it is assumed that a site of 0.036 ha is required.	Deficiency in open space in the following parishes: * Ibstock: 0.324ha * Belton: 0.1515ha * Charley: 0.08ha	The existing average level of provision of equipped play space across the Borough is 0.03 ha/1,000 people. A standard for provision is proposed of 0.30 ha of equipped space (i.e. excluding any buffer zone space) per 1,000 people. See PPG17 study for deficiencies by wards (all of which apply to this report's study area)

Open Space Type	Blaby District Council	Leicester City Council	Harborough District Council	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (currently under review)	Melton Borough Council	North West Leicestershire District Council	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
		play areas in the Spinney Hills area that overlap in access, the majority are small play areas with 2 or 3 items of equipment, and as such there is still a very small under supply of quantity for the ward; *Access to play also needs to be considered with the quality of the play provision, so one large good quality play area may better meet the needs of the community than several small poor quality areas; *The provision for play is focused on equipped provision, but many other open spaces offer opportunity for informal play, such as kickabout areas. The PPG17 study, Play Strategy and the Greenspace Strategy offer significant opportunity to develop and improve the provision of equipped play spaces in the City. Key opportunities include the removal of smaller areas of play equipment, with a focus on improving fewer larger play areas.		Within these settlements it is recommended that as well as new provision existing equipped areas are improved and expanded to include a range of facilities. In Hinckley it is recommended that five new multigames facilities be installed over the next five years. This alone will be the equivalent to an additional 0.25 hectares of equipped play space.			
Allotments	Under provision across the District except for Croft,	There is generally good access to allotments across the City. This is further explored in the	The total provision of 0.29 hectares per 1,000 population	There are currently not enough	Catchment mapping shows that there are no	Not specified	See PPG17 study for deficiencies by wards (all of which apply to

Open Space Type	Blaby District Council	Leicester City Council	Harborough District Council	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (currently under review)	Melton Borough Council	North West Leicestershire District Council	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
	Huncote, Blaby and Braunston parishes	allotment strategy.	translates into a shortfall of just 4.64 hectares of allotments across the whole district. Allotment provision within both Market Harborough and Lubenham and the Western Area is almost at it's optimum level	allotment plots to meet demand in Hinckley	settlements in Melton without access to formal open space. No additional demand for formal open space has been identified through the consultation undertaken.		this report's study area)
Cemeteries & Churchyards	Sufficient provision across the District	Not specified		Quantity assessments indicate that there is an estimated requirement each year for 825m² new burial land at Ashby Road Cemetery, Hinckley.	Catchment mapping shows that there are no settlements in Melton without access to formal open space. No additional demand for formal open space has been identified through the consultation undertaken.	Not specified	See PPG17 study for deficiencies by wards (all of which apply to this report's study area)
Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspaces	Sufficient provision in outdoor sports limited, playing fields and playing field limited.	Across the City, overall, there is sufficient supply of natural greenspace (just over 20% above the required standard), however, in contrast to the statistics for Parks, only 6wards	The application of these provision standards illustrates that there is a total oversupply of natural and semi	It is recommended that a full audit of accessible natural green space in the	No deficiency identified in the settlement of Melton Mowbray.	Not specified	The existing average level of provision of accessible natural greenspace across the Borough is 1.8 ha/1000 people.

Open Space Type	Blaby District Council	Leicester City Council	Harborough District Council	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (currently under review)	Melton Borough Council	North West Leicestershire District Council	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
	Under provision in outdoor sports in Aston Flamville, Potters Marston, Wigston Parva, Leicester Forest West, Leicester Forest East, Cosby, Sapcote, Countesthorpe, Kilby, Whetstone, Glenfields, Kirby Muxloe and Lubbesthorpe parishes	(28%) have sufficient supply. This indicates that provision of natural greenspace is unevenly distributed across the City, with a few large areas making up the contribution The following observations are made: *There are gaps in access to natural greenspace across the City; *There is an important green corridor focused around the river, running roughly north to south within the City; *Access to natural greenspace tends to be to larger areas of space, most of which are located on the fringe of the City (e.g. Watermead Country Park and Castle Hill Country Park). *Developing the partnership with Groundwork Leicester and Leicestershire offers one of the best opportunities for improving the provision and management of natural greenspace in the City. *There are also opportunities to create natural greenspace habitats in existing open spaces, particularly in wards	natural open space within the district. The Market Harborough and Lubenham area has a deficiency of 7.04 hectares at present, which is predicted to rise in future years to 13.98 hectares.	borough be completed in Year 2 of the Strategy, complying with English Nature's Accessible Natural Greenspace (ANGSt) model			The proposed quantity standard for natural greenspace, therefore is of 0.8 ha per 1,000 people. See PPG17 study for deficiencies by wards (all of which apply to this report's study area)

Open Space Type	Blaby District Council	Leicester City Council	Harborough District Council	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (currently under review)	Melton Borough Council	North West Leicestershire District Council	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
		where there is currently an under supply of natural greenspace. The improvement of existing Local Nature Reserves and the establishment of new reserves offer a significant opportunity to improve the provision of natural greenspace in the City.					
Outdoor Sports Facilities	Under provision in Aston Flamville, Elmesthorpe, Potters Marston, Sharnford, Wigston Parva, Leicester Forest West, Glen Parva, Huncote, Braunston, Sapcote, Countesthorpe, Kilby, Glenfields, Kirby Muxloe and Lubbesthorpe parishes	There is an under supply across the City (66ha or about 18%), only 2 wards exceed the standard for provision. The access standard set for outdoor sports facilities means the standard is met across the City. Leicester City Council is currently in negotiation with the Football Foundation to develop a major capital programme to improve outdoor sports facilities within the City. The project, estimated at £12 million, seeks to create 8 hub sites across the City, providing facilities for football and other outdoor sports. The 8 sites are: *Aylestone Playing Fields *Aylestone Recreation Ground *Beaumont Park		The Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Playing Field Assessment identifies a 10.59ha surplus of sports pitches in Hinckley and Bosworth – the equivalent to approximately 14 football pitches. These figures, however, disguise localised deficiencies and the poor quality of facilities, which	Not specified	Deficiency in open space in the following parishes: * Coalville: 24.33ha * Charley: 0.31ha	The findings of the technical assessment on football pitch supply and demand did not conclude there to be a shortfall in terms of space available, but rather a mismatch between the demand from different age groups and the size of pitches marked out. Many junior and youth teams play on surfaces marked out primarily for adult teams. The technical guidance includes pitches within the private sector and controlled pitches, which have limited access. See PPG17 study for deficiencies by wards (all of which apply to

Open Space Type	Blaby District Council	Leicester City Council	Harborough District Council	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (currently under review)	Melton Borough Council	North West Leicestershire District Council	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
		*Hamilton Park *Knighton Park / Welford Road *New College *Rushey Fields *Samworth Academy		is affecting their capacity to meet demand.			this report's study area)
Green Corridors	Not specified	There are very good green corridor links between north and south within the City running through and nearby green wedges and parks, following the course of both the river/canal and a former railway line. This is a major recreation resource. However green corridors in other directions are far more limited. Although Leicester is moderately well supplied with radial routes including National Routes 6 and 63, it lacks good links between outer suburbs, schools, and employment sites including two major hospitals. Sustrans have worked with the City Council to identify an orbital route to augment patchy present provision and fulfil a Local Transport Plan aim over the next five years.		Not specified	Consultation identified demand for the following green corridor – Melton to Bingham wildlife corridor.		See PPG17 study for deficiencies by wards (all of which apply to this report's study area)

- Develop proposals for improved use of roadside verges for walkers and riders;
- Prioritise the development of links to the National Cycle Network and the development of routes within the Local Transport Plan priority areas;
- Create a schedule of off-road and on-road cycle routes for immediate future development to provide recreational and other travel opportunities for all;
- Seek to make all routes available to as wide a range of the community as possible, with regard to location and costs;
- Seek to have all routes as free from barriers as possible;
- In considering improvements to local path networks, work with adjoining authorities, in particular, Leicester City Council;
- Have regard to the needs of communities accessing paths that live outside the county area;
- Raise the length of paths passed;
- Maintain a fully waymarked and signed network;
- Have roadside rights of way signs in place;
- Priority improvements will be focused on the half of the network in and within 1 kilometre from urban areas;
- Where appropriate, surface routes that offer potential for increased use, including access to facilities.

Landscape Character Needs

2.2.5 Within the Study Area, the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Landscape and Woodland Strategy as well as Landscape Character Assessments produced by Blaby District, Harborough District, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, Melton Borough, Oadby and Wigston Borough councils and the National Forest highlight guidelines for protecting and enhancing the character of landscapes within the study area.

2.2.6 The following Leicestershire landscape character areas (see **Figure 2.4**) fall within the Study Area.

- Langley Lowlands (L1)
- Charnwood Forest (L2)
- The Coalfield (L3)
- Soar Valley (L4)
- Mease/Sence Lowlands (L6)
- Upper Soar (L7)
- Lutterworth Lowlands (L8)
- Laughton Hills (L9)
- High Leicestershire (L10)
- The Wolds (L11)
- Wreake Valley (L12)
- Welland Valley (L16)

2.2.7 The Nottinghamshire Landscape Guidelines (1997) and the Greater Nottingham Landscape Character Assessment (2009) provide guidelines for those landscape character types which fall within the northern extremity of the Study Area. These include:

- Terrace Farmlands (N1)
- Village Farmlands (N5)
- River Meadowlands (N7)

2.2.8 Derbyshire County Council has developed an approach for identifying strategic opportunities for GI based on analysis of historic landscape character and biodiversity assets. Subject to availability of appropriate historic landscape characterisation data, this approach could be applied within this Study Area to achieve a consistent analysis of historic environment GI resources across the 6Cs sub-region.

Biodiversity Needs

2.2.9 The relevant Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) provide targets and actions in response to identified needs for enhancing and extending habitats and species of nature conservation value within the Study Area. See **Section 2.4** below for further details.

2.3 Strategic Public Benefits of Green Infrastructure Provision

2.3.1 It is increasingly recognised that investment in GI such as accessible greenspace networks and other 'green assets' can provide a wide range of multiple public benefits for both rural and urban communities. The East Midlands Public Benefit Mapping Project[22] gathered evidence from 27 different sectors, all relevant to the East Midlands Integrated Regional Strategy's objectives, in order to map where:

- There is the greatest need for the public benefits GI brings;
- There is the greatest opportunity for GI to support sustainable economic growth;
- Such needs and opportunities can be met in parallel; and
- Greatest multiple public benefit in terms of social, environmental, economic and multiple outcomes exist.

2.3.2 The East Midland's public benefit maps provide a strategic overview of where investment in GI is most likely to deliver greatest public benefit in the region. It should be noted that these maps should be considered in the context of the East Midlands Public Benefit Mapping Project as a whole, in particular in relation to the Project's constraints and limitations[23]. The public benefits mapping can help target actions in relation to:

- Provision of new or enhanced GI for areas of present and future deficit;
- Management of existing GI resources to increase their usefulness (multifunctionality);

[22] Green Infrastructure for the East Midlands – A Public Benefit Mapping Project , (East Midlands Regional Assembly, 2006).
[23] Green Infrastructure for the East Midlands – A Public Benefit Mapping Project (East Midlands Regional Assembly, 2006) can be downloaded from http://www.emra.gov.uk/publications/housing-planning-and-transport/environment/green-infrastructure-in-the-east-midlands-a-public-benefit-mapping-project.

- Conservation of key GI resources which contribute to the region's environmental infrastructure; and
- Improving connectivity of existing GI resources where they are presently fragmented.

2.3.3 The areas with greatest potential to provide combined multiple public benefits (emphasising top 30% environmental benefits) from investment in GI provision within the Study Area are shown on **Figure 2.7**[24]. Key areas include:

- A series of areas (including Anstey and north Groby) north-west of Leicester;
- The River Soar Corridor from south of Leicester to north east Loughborough;
- The confluence of the Rivers Wreake and Soar;
- Discrete areas south and south-east of Leicester; and
- An area north of Coalville, extending to west Loughborough.

2.4 Strategic Green Infrastructure Opportunities

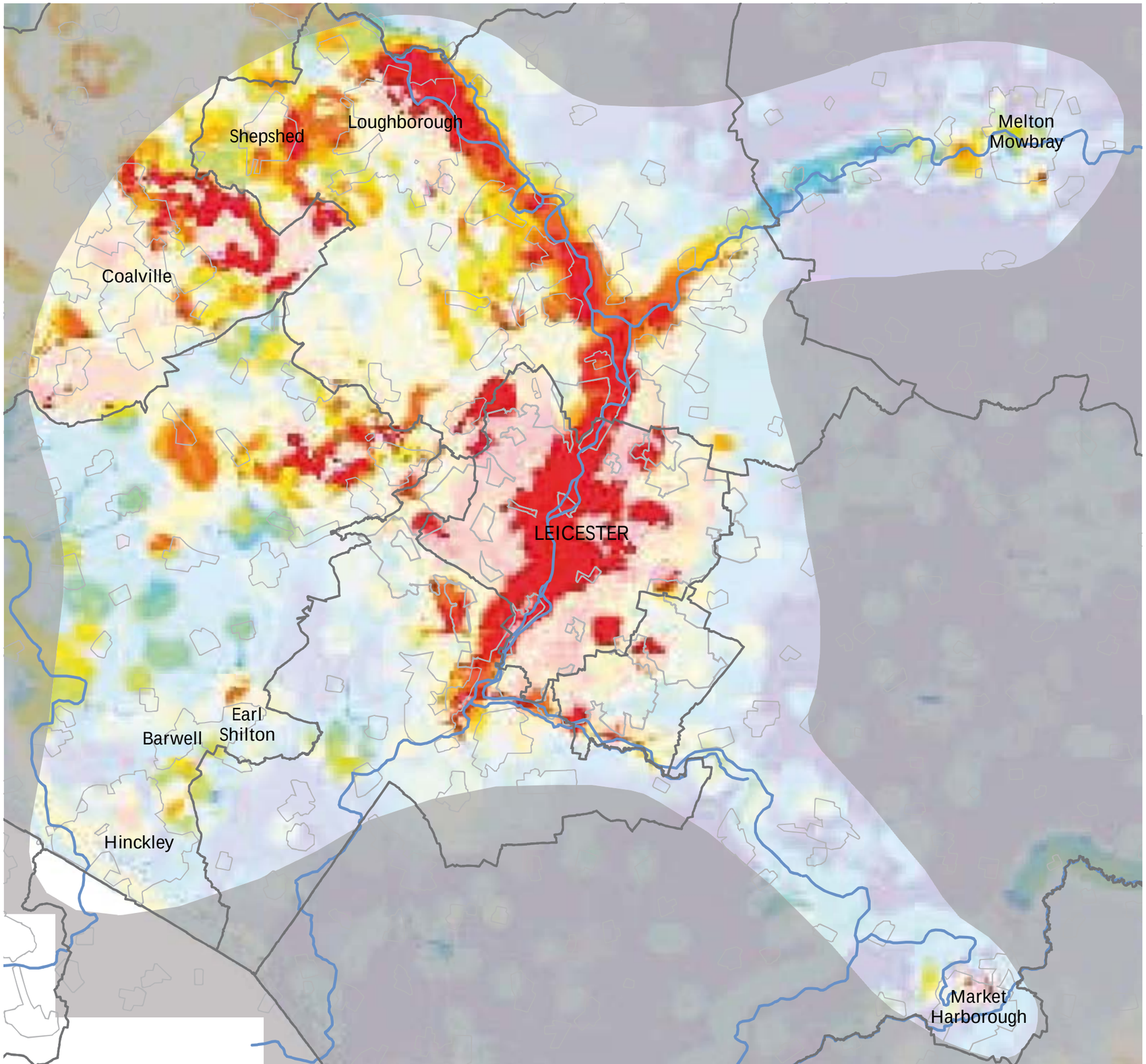
Strategic Opportunities for Enhancing Connectivity of the Greenspace Network for Biodiversity

2.4.1 Opportunities for enhancing connectivity of the natural greenspace network for biodiversity have been identified based on the mapping exercises undertaken for the Stage 1 Strategic GI Audit and subsequent consultation exercises.

2.4.2 Opportunities for habitat creation, restoration, extension and enhancement have been identified with reference to targets and actions set out in the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Biodiversity Action Plan[25,26] (LL&R LBAP) and the National Forest Local Biodiversity Action Plan[27] (NF LBAP). The targets and actions set out in these Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) are a response to identified needs for maintaining, enhancing and extending the geographical range of habitats considered important for their biodiversity value. The opportunities described below are, therefore, intended to help meet the needs identified in LBAPs by providing a focus for where habitat creation, restoration, extension or enhancement could be targeted and delivered through practical action.

2.4.3 It is recognised that the LBAPs cover areas that are geographically larger than the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray Strategic GI Network Study Area, and therefore the opportunities set out below are

[24] Map 31C 'Combined Multiple Public Benefit Emphasising Top 30% Environmental Benefits' was taken from Green Infrastructure for the East Midlands – A Public Benefit Mapping Project (East Midlands Regional Assembly, 2006). Reproduced with the permission of the East Midland Regional Assembly.
[25] http://www.lrwt.org.uk/bap.asp.
[26] Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan (Version 2, report prepared on behalf of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity, 2002).
[27] The National Forest Local Biodiversity Action Plan (The National Forest, 2nd Edition, 2004).



KEY

Potential for Combined Multiple Public Benefits

(As per Map 31c of the Green Infrastructure for the East Midlands - A Public Benefit Mapping Project, East Midlands Regional Assembly, 2006)

High

Low

Urban Areas

District/Borough Boundaries

Principal Rivers and Canals

This Figure represents relevant available information provided by stakeholders at the time of the study, and may not be exhaustive. The accuracy of digital datasets received, which have been used in good faith without modification or enhancement, cannot be guaranteed. Commensurate with its intended 'city-scale' focus, the Strategic GI Network Plan illustrates indicative GI assets and opportunities at a strategic level, which do not necessarily indicate a constraint on development.

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Figure 2.7
Strategic Public Benefits of GI Provision

not intended to deliver all the targets and actions assigned to each habitat type within each LBAP. Nevertheless, the majority of some habitat types, for example; woodlands, grasslands, rivers and streams and open standing water, fall within the Study Area and therefore opportunities for these habitat types could deliver a correspondingly large proportion of the biodiversity action plan targets. Conversely, habitats such as heathland and acid grasslands may be more restricted geographically to the area predominantly covered by the Charnwood Forest, and therefore opportunities for extending and enhancing these habitats may be correspondingly more restricted.

2.4.4 The LL&R LBAP is currently forecasted to be largely completed in 2010. It is anticipated that the opportunities identified could provide a focus for future LL&R and NF LBAP targets and actions, to ensure an integrated approach to future biodiversity action planning for Leicester and this area of Leicestershire.

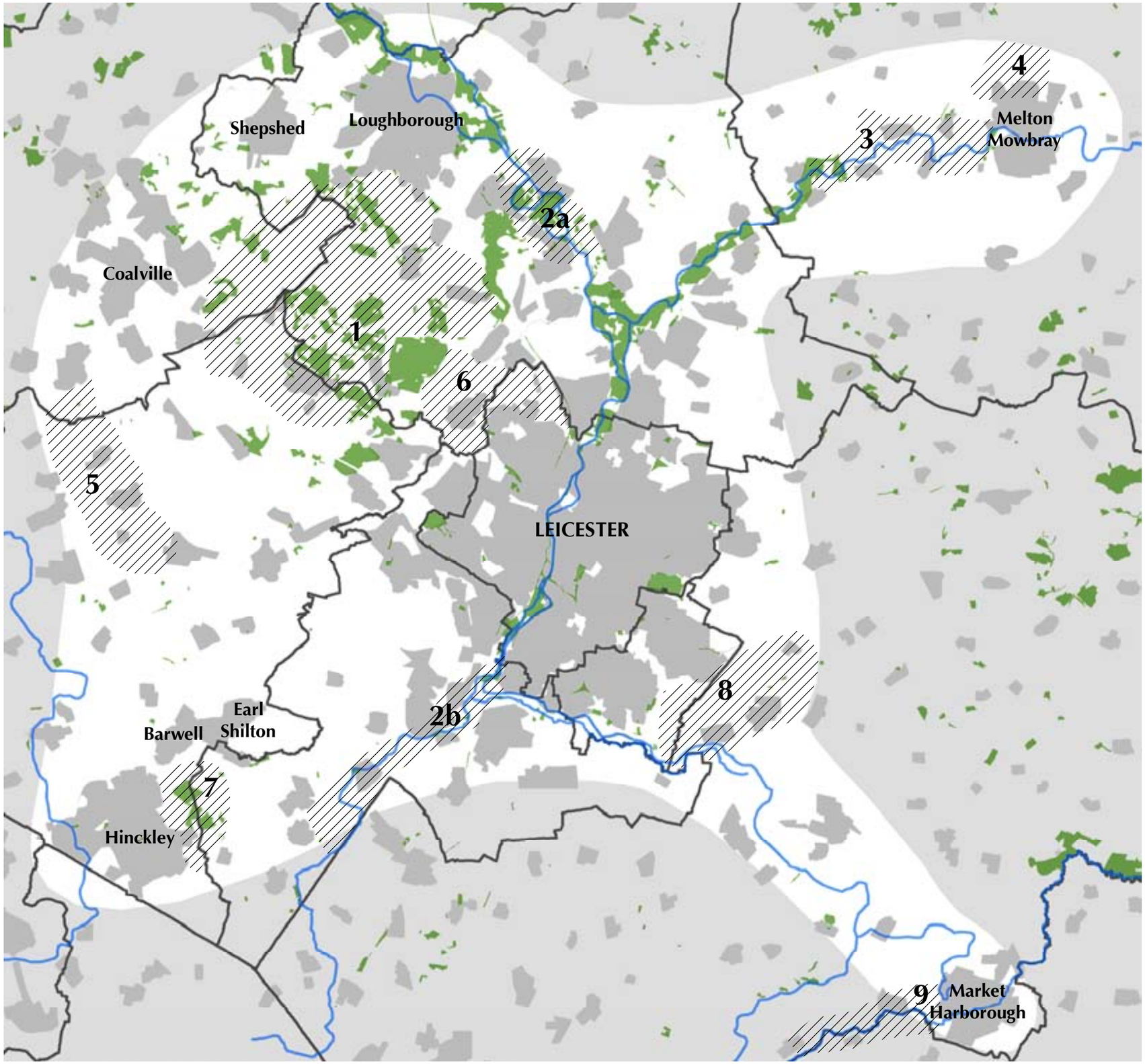
2.4.5 **Figure 2.8** provides an overview of the strategic opportunities for enhancing connectivity of natural greenspace for wildlife in relation to broad habitat types. The figure illustrates the distribution of existing habitats and identifies strategic opportunities based on site suitability for the creation of new, or restoration of existing, areas of habitat. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement were selected on the basis of two criteria: i) where fragmented areas of existing semi-natural habitat could be linked by the extension or creation of new areas of habitat, thus forming larger, more stable habitat mosaics, or ii) where there were no areas of existing semi-natural habitat (e.g. south east Leicester and around Newton Harcourt and Great Glen) but the creation of new habitats would help to bridge gaps in the current resource and provide linkages between and around urban fringes and the wider countryside.

2.4.6 Opportunities for enhancing connectivity of the natural greenspace network in the Study Area are set out by broad habitat type in **Appendix A4**. These include:

- Woodland;
- Grasslands and heathland;
- Fen, marsh, swamp, and reedbeds;
- Rivers and streams;
- Standing open waters;
- Hedgerows, field margins, buffer strips and arable field margins;
- Earth Heritage; and,
- Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land.

Strategic Opportunities for Enhancing Accessibility of the Greenspace Network for People

2.4.7 Strategic opportunities for enhancing the connectivity of the Greenspace network for people are illustrated in **Figure 2.9**. Opportunities for new/enhanced access linkages in the form of strategic multi-user greenways are identified. Greenways do not have any status in law. They



KEY

Existing Natural/Semi-Natural Greenspaces (Priority Habitats)

Strategic Opportunity Areas
(See Appendix A5 for details)

1 Charnwood Forest
2a Mountsorrel
2b River Soar/Sence South Leicester
3 River Wreake West of Melton Mowbray
4 North Melton Mowbray
5 Ibstock to Newbold Verdon
6 North West Leicester
7 East Hinckley/Burgage Common
8 South East Leicester
9 River Welland at Market Harborough

Urban Areas

District/Borough Boundaries

Principal Rivers and Canals

This Figure represents relevant available information provided by stakeholders at the time of the study, and may not be exhaustive. The accuracy of digital datasets received, which have been used in good faith without modification or enhancement, cannot be guaranteed. Commensurate with its intended 'city-scale' focus, the Strategic GI Network Plan illustrates indicative GI assets and opportunities at a strategic level, which do not necessarily indicate a constraint on development.

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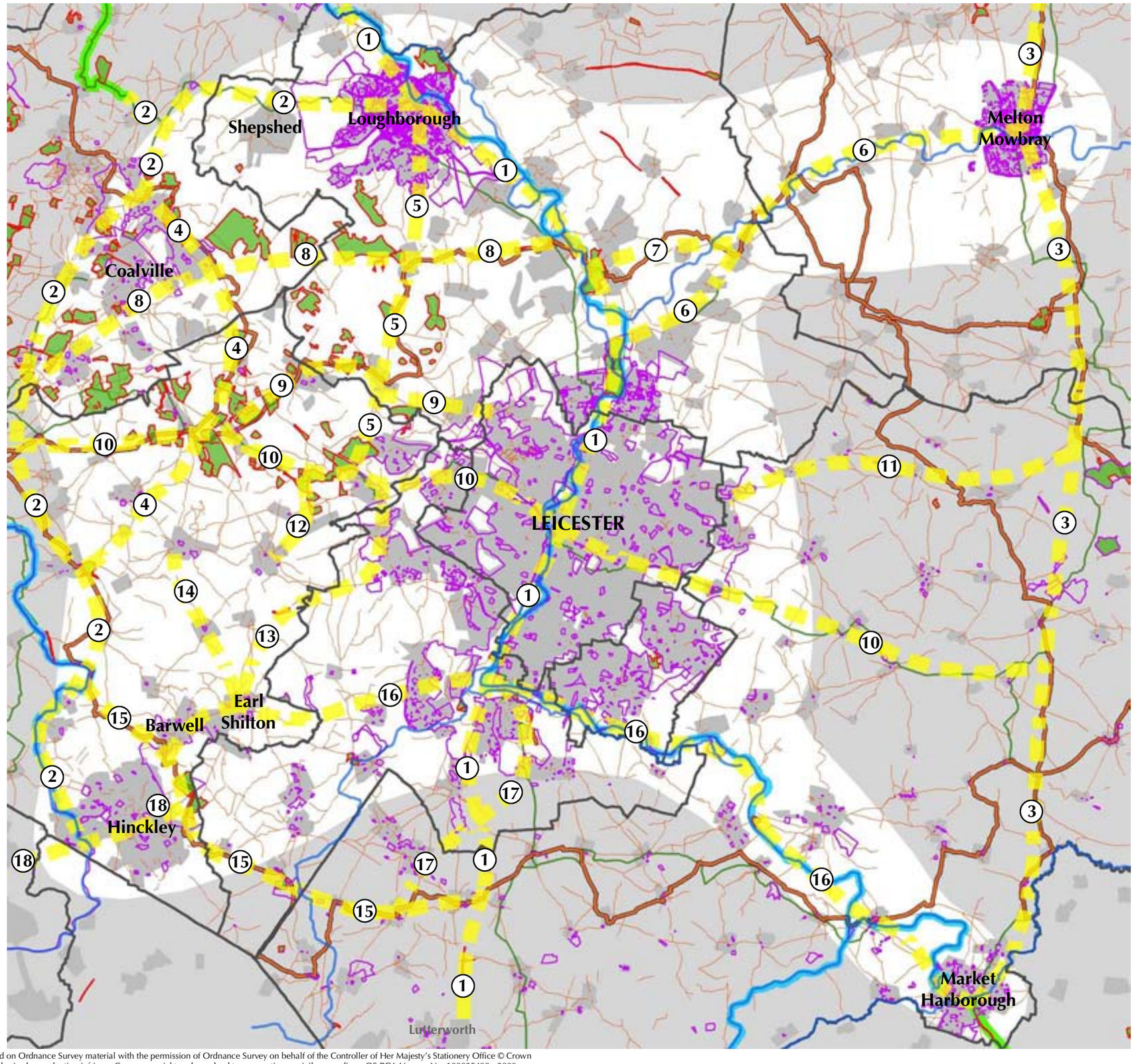
Figure 2.8
Strategic Opportunities for Enhancing Connectivity of the Greenspace Network for Biodiversity



KEY

Existing Strategic Accessible Natural Greenspace

Strategic Open Space

Existing Strategic Countryside Access Routes

Linear, generally off-road and car free routes, that are normally available for public access on foot, horseback or by cycle providing opportunities to access the countryside for informal recreation activities.

- Promoted Recreational Routes
- Cycle Network
- Navigable Waterways (indicative)
- Greenways

Public Rights of Way Network

- Public Rights of Way Network

Opportunities for New/Enhanced Access Linkages

- (14) Proposed Greenways

- Urban Areas
- District/Borough Boundaries
- Principal Rivers and Canals

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Figure 2.9
Strategic Opportunities for Enhancing Accessibility of the Greenspace Network for People

can be defined as 'largely off-highway routes for shared use by people of all abilities on foot, bike or horseback, for commuting, play or leisure; connecting people to facilities and open spaces in and around towns, cities and the countryside'[28]. Greenways are especially valuable for wheelchair users, battery powered scooters, and buggies. In many cases they utilise existing bridleways or restricted byways with full legal rights for such usage. In other cases, greenways can be permissive routes, owned and managed by a local authority or voluntary organisation such as Sustrans, which the public have permission to use in appropriate ways.

2.4.8 Due to of their nature as broad through routes, greenways can include street furniture, sculpture, interpretive panels, and act as havens for wildlife along the verges, with overhanging shrubs or trees. They also have significant potential to replace many local car journeys, both as green walking and cycling routes. The proposed greenway network provides key access routes from Leicester, Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray linking with surrounding villages and further beyond to recreational sites in the wider countryside. They can be designed as integral parts of Sustainable Urban Extensions. Natural England has published a best practice Greenway Handbook[29] aimed at helping practitioners plan, design and create off-road routes to meet the needs of walkers, cyclists[30] and/or horse riders for informal recreation and commuting purposes. Proposals for new greenways should complement improvements to the existing rights of way network. A best practice example for greenways is included in the GI Guide for the East Midlands[31].

2.4.9 There are currently no published greenway strategies in the Study Area. However, the concept of providing multi-user routes or greenways forms part of the visions for the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council GI Strategy (2008), the Stepping Stones GI Delivery Plan (2008) and the River Soar and Grand Union Canal Emerging Strategy (2008). For the purposes of this Study, an aspirational network of potential greenways is shown on **Figure 2.9**, linking directly into settlements, continuing through communities to join other routes, and providing a linear transport route from settlements into the wider countryside or to demand destinations. Proposed individual greenways generally follow existing Rights of Way, and/or a section of the cycle network, and/or promoted recreational routes.

2.4.10 Opportunities for new multi-user greenway routes include:

1. Lutterworth to Blaby, Leicester, Loughborough and towards Long Eaton

[28] As defined by Natural England: http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Recreation/Greenways/index.asp (accessed June 2009).
[29] Natural England's best practice Greenway Handbook is available to download from the following website: http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Recreation/Greenways/index.asp (accessed May 2009).
[30] For the purposes of this study, Greenways are not intended to be used for meeting demands for provision of formal competitive off-road cycling.
[31] GI Guide for the East Midlands (EMGIN, 2008): Case Study 12 – Trent Valley Greenway, Long Eaton, Derbyshire.

2. West Hinckley to Market Bosworth, Ravenstone, Whitwick, Osgathorpe and Loughborough
3. Market Harborough to Melton Mowbray and towards Grantham
4. Market Bosworth to south east Bagworth and Whitwick
5. North Ratby to Newtown Linford and Loughborough linking with Ashton Green Sustainable Urban Extension
6. Melton Mowbray to north Syston and the River Soar
7. Rearsby to Sileby and the River Soar
8. Mountsorrel to Woodhouse Eaves, Coalville and Ibstock
9. Beaumont Leys to Newtown Linford, Markfield and Thornton
10. Goadby to Leicester, Thornton, Nailstone and Odstone
11. South of Owston to Tilton-on-the-Hill and east Leicester
12. Desford to Newtown Unthank and Ratby Burroughs
13. Earl Shilton to Leicester Forest East and south east Ratby
14. Earl Shilton to Kirkby Mallory and Newbold Verdon
15. Dunton Bassett to east Hinckley and the Ashby Canal
16. Market Harborough to south Leicester, Narborough, Earl Shilton and Barwell
17. Leire to Broughton Astley, Countesthorpe, Blaby and the Grand Union Canal
18. East Hinckley towards Nuneaton

3.0 STRATEGIC GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORK

3.1 General

3.1.1 This section brings together and integrates the analysis of GI assets, opportunities and needs within the Study Area set out in **Section 2.0** to identify a proposed **'aspirational' multifunctional strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray**.

3.1.2 The purpose of the strategic GI Network is to provide the conceptual perspective or 'bigger picture' for the delivery of large-scale GI within the Study Area that connects communities and wildlife at the sub-regional and city-scales. It is intended to help focus attention or priority on land that needs to be safeguarded, managed or secured in positive ways to create a multifunctional network of greenspaces and assets for which investment can deliver the greatest range of benefits. It is not a rigid approach; the Strategic GI Network is intended to be flexible and responsive to opportunities - such as changing land ownership, community aspirations, access to funding, development opportunities, policy considerations etc - that may change priorities for investment over time.

3.1.3 The intention is to ensure that the integrity of the overall Strategic GI Network is not compromised by inappropriate development and land management. This means that there needs to be flexibility, and in cases where there is an unavoidable need to trade off existing GI assets to meet social and economic needs, this should be offset by mitigation and compensation measures to enhance the functionality of other GI assets elsewhere within the Strategic GI Network. However, some semi-natural habitats, such as ancient woodlands, are irreplaceable and need protection. Where development is planned within or in close proximity to a GI corridor, it should become an integral feature to the design and 'identity' of the development site to ensure that the connectivity of the network for both public benefit and biodiversity is retained and enhanced.

3.1.4 The proposed Strategic GI Network provides a spatial context for the delivery of the overall Vision for GI in the 6Cs sub-region related to the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray.

Setting Priorities for Green Infrastructure Investment

3.1.5 The GI concept applies across the whole of the Study Area, and it can occur at any scale. However, the proposed Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray Strategic GI Network identifies locations where targeting investment in GI is most likely to deliver multiple benefits across a range of key environmental, social and economic policy areas.

3.1.6 The main priorities are considered to be:

- To focus investment on GI provision and management to address current deficits of provision/needs;
- To meet the GI needs of communities in and around the 6Cs sub-region who are likely to experience major growth-related pressures in the period to 2026;
- To protect, enhance and manage existing valuable GI assets that are under current or future pressure, in particular accessible natural greenspaces, biodiversity sites and river valleys/wetlands.

3.1.7 In response to the above, the proposed overall Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray shown on **Figure 3.1c** identifies broadly defined corridors and zones, within which it is recommended that investment in new and enhanced GI provision be prioritised and delivered over the next 15-20 years. These corridors and zones reflect the identified opportunities and needs for enhancing the connectivity and accessibility of the greenspace network for biodiversity and public benefit at the sub-regional and city scales. They provide the context for development of GI initiatives and projects that would provide, in many cases, multiple functions and benefits to meet a range of social, economic and environmental needs. GI related proposals within and adjacent to the corridors and zones would focus on the enhancement and restoration of existing GI assets, as well as the creation of new resources.

3.1.8 Existing strategic GI assets which form the backbone of the proposed overall Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray are shown combined on **Figure 3.1a**. Following stakeholder consultation, examples of existing GI Destinations[32] have been included on **Figure 3.1a**.

[32] The GI Destinations included on **Figure 3.1a** were chosen based on them being well known GI sites/visitor destinations.

3.2 Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure

Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Corridors

3.2.1 **The Sub-Regional Corridors** identified on **Figure 3.1b** generally reflect significant wildlife habitat corridors/areas that link with Strategic GI in surrounding areas at the sub-regional level, and have an important role to play in maintaining the overall integrity of the 6Cs GI Network in the long term. They comprise a mosaic of land uses, natural, built heritage and archaeological resources and settlements, and are intended to become fully multifunctional zones with the ability or potential to deliver the following key GI 'functions':

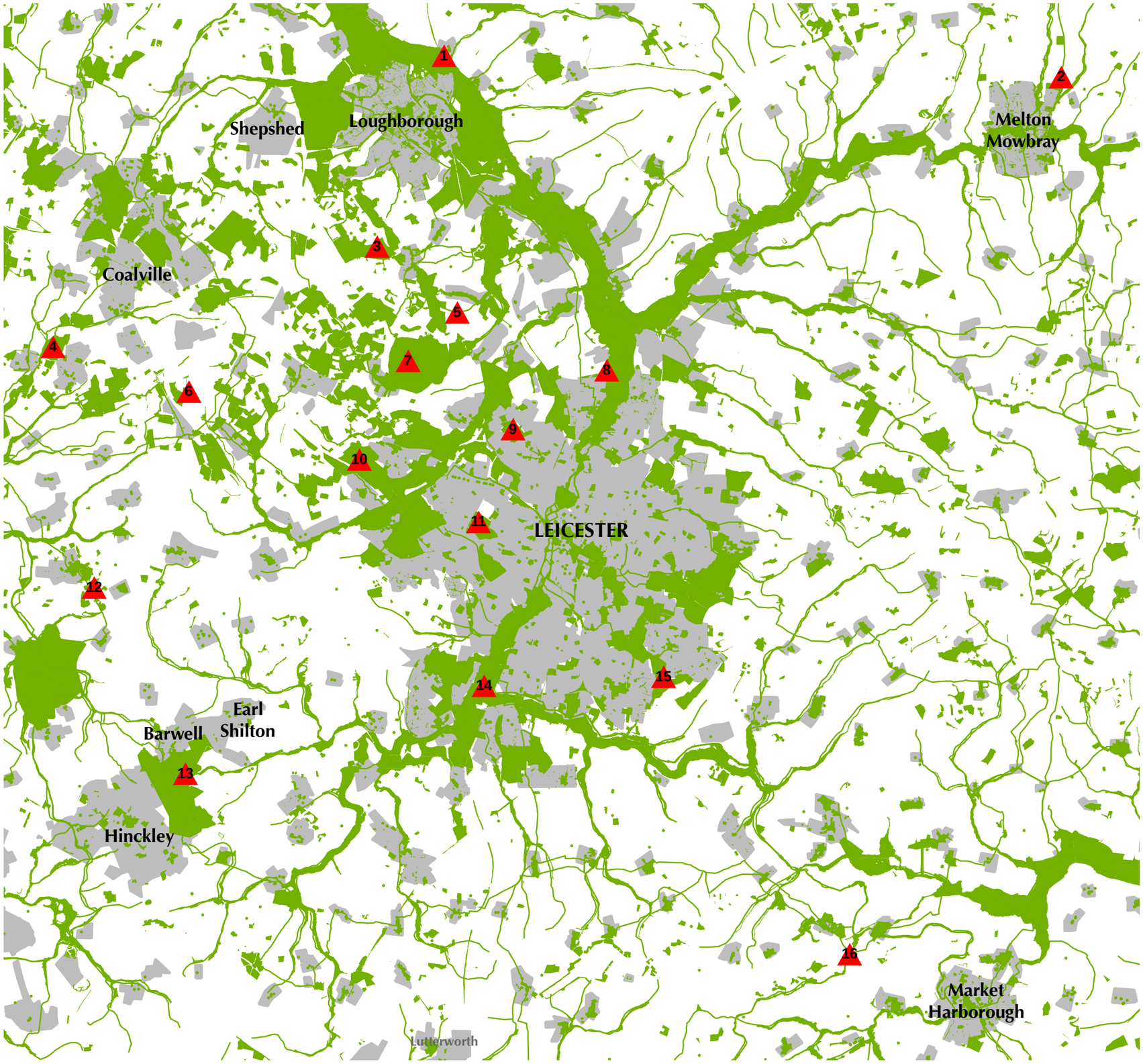
- Access and Movement – linking settlements to their hinterland, destinations and the wider strategic access network. The corridors provide sustainable links through attractive green routes with clear way marking and other relevant facilities. They also provide opportunities to enhance the management, presentation, accessibility and interpretation of greenspace;
- Biodiversity – providing a focus for the enhancement and linkage of the biodiversity resource;
- Mitigation of flood risk, enhancement of water management and other natural process roles;
- Enhancement and promotion of landscape and urban character to celebrate the distinctiveness of these different corridors;
- Enhancement and promotion of heritage and cultural assets; and
- Enhancement and promotion of recreation and leisure, providing connections between communities, accessible greenspace and other destinations.

3.2.2 The Sub-Regional GI Corridors form the backbone of the 6Cs GI Network and provide the core of the proposed Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray. They are:

C – National Forest and Charnwood Forest

Key Characteristics

- Settlements – Coleorton, Swannington, south Shepshed, south-west Loughborough, Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, south-west Quorn, south-west Mountsorrel, Rothley, Rothley Plain, Cropston, Thurcaston, Swithland, Anstey, Groby, Ratby, Whitwick, Coalville, Ravenstone, Ibstock, Ellistown, Bardon, Copt Oak, Stanton-under-Bardon, Markfield, Newtown Linford, Field Head, Thornton, Bagworth, Newtown Unthank, Thringstone and Botcheston, south-west Quorn and west Rothley
- Land use features – M1 and M42 motorways; mineral extraction (coal, brick clay, fireclay, hard rock); mature and establishing woodlands; Thornton, Blackbrook, Cropston and Swithland Reservoirs; recreational sites including Conkers, Bradgate Park, Snibston Discovery Museum, Beacon Hill Country Park, Sence Valley Forest Park, and many National Forest woodlands with public access.
- Habitat features - lowland mixed deciduous woodland (including wet woodland), lowland meadows, eutrophic standing water, lowland dry acid grassland and lowland heath e.g. variety of high quality grassland sites within Charnwood Forest; eutrophic water in reservoirs; Martinshaw, Pear Tree and Burroughs Woods (all owned by the Woodland Trust) form the largest continuous area of woodland in the National Forest.



KEY

Combined Existing Strategic Green Infrastructure Assets
(See Figure 2.5)

1 Examples of Green Infrastructure Destinations

1 Loughborough Meadows
2 Melton Mowbray Country Park
3 Beacon Hill Country Park
4 Sence Valley Forest Park
5 Swithland Reservoir
6 Bagworth Wood and Maynard Park Nature Reserve
7 Bradgate Country Park
8 Watermead Country Park
9 Castle Hill Country Park
10 Martinshaw Wood
11 Western Park
12 Market Bosworth Country Park
13 Burbage Common and Woods Country Park
14 Glen Hills
15 Brocks Hill Country Park
16 Foxton Locks Country Park

Existing Urban Areas

Strategic GI Network Study Areas for the Three Cities within the 6Cs Sub-Region

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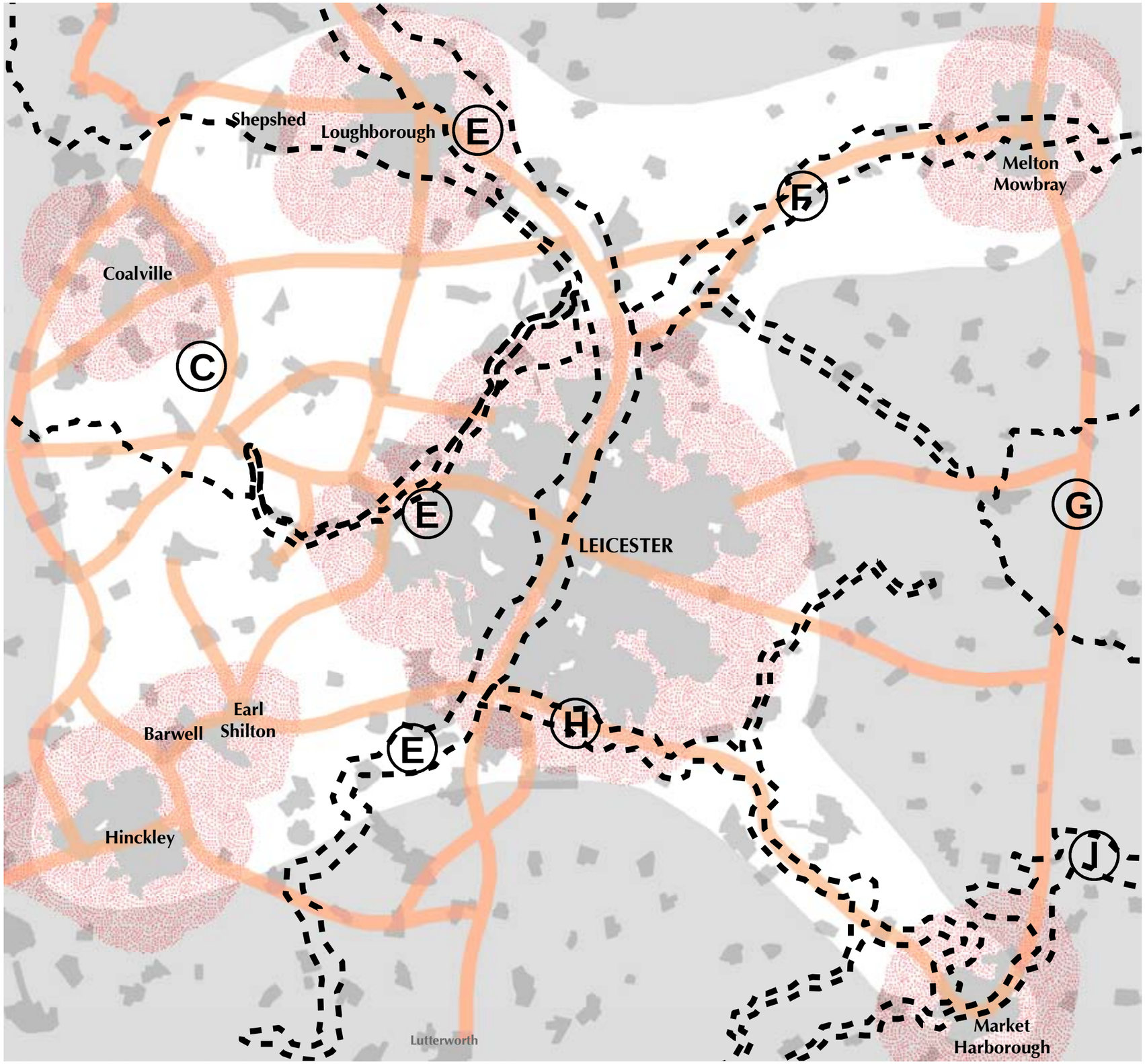
Figure 3.1a
Strategic GI Network - Existing GI Assets



KEY

Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Corridors

C - National Forest and Charnwood Forest
E - Soar Strategic River Corridor
F - Wreake Strategic River Corridor
G - Leighfield Forest
H - Sence Strategic River Corridor and Grand Union Canal
I - Welland Strategic River Corridor

Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones

City-Scale Green Infrastructure Corridors
(See Figure 2.9)

Existing Urban Areas

Strategic GI Network Study Areas for the Three Cities within the 6Cs Sub-Region

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Figure 3.1b
Strategic GI Network - Proposed GI Corridors & Zones

KEY

Sub-Regional Green Infrastructure Corridors
(See Figure 3.1b)

Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones

City-Scale Green Infrastructure Corridors
(See Figure 2.9)

Combined Existing Strategic Green Infrastructure Assets
(See Figure 2.5)

Existing Urban Areas

Strategic GI Network Study Areas for the Three Cities within the 6Cs Sub-Region

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Figure 3.1c
The Overall Strategic GI Network

- Cultural heritage features – Historic Parks and Gardens at Coleorton Hall and Bradgate Park; conservation areas in a number of settlements including Newtown Linford and Coleorton; scheduled monuments including Moira Furnace and Grace Dieu Priory.
- Geodiversity features – Charnwood Forest contains some of the most important geodiversity features in England, containing some of the oldest rocks exposed in the country and the site of the first fossil found in the world from Precambian rocks.

Key Opportunities for Delivering GI Benefits

- Access and movement - potential to establish traffic free multi-user greenways that link key GI assets with local communities. Opportunities to create new open access through woodland creation and a National Forest long distance trail as part of the National Forest's Delivery Plan. As part of delivering the vision for the proposed Charnwood Forest Regional Park, there are opportunities for the existing network of strategic green spaces and access routes within Charnwood Forest to be enhanced with new green spaces and access routes, created to remedy gaps in current provision and provide for future need, to maximise access to and from the settlements surrounding Charnwood Forest, and to link to other sub-regional and local GI assets.
- Biodiversity – opportunities for landscape-scale habitat management, creation, restoration and extension for all key habitat features e.g. grasslands at Beacon Hill and Altar Stones. From its original 6% woodland cover, the National Forest's eventual wooded area will spread over about a third of the area. The National Forest planting strategy is to create 16,500ha of new woodland and a minimum of 1,000ha of other habitats within the National Forest's boundary.
- Natural processes – opportunities for water management through appropriate land management e.g. nitrate management work on Charnwood Forest farms.
- Cultural heritage – opportunities to enhance the management, presentation, accessibility and interpretation of historic environment assets, e.g. Bradgate Park Historic Park and Garden.
- Landscape – opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape through positive landscape intervention measures and land management actions informed by Landscape Character Assessments e.g. retention and restoration of traditional drystone walls within Charnwood Forest.
- Geodiversity – opportunities to promote geodiversity features for scientific research and education at all levels and to link geodiversity with the landscape.

E – Soar Strategic River Corridor

Key Characteristics

- Settlements – Normanton-on-Soar, Stanford-on-Soar, north-east Loughborough, east Hathern, Barrow-upon-Soar, Quorn, east Mountsorrel, west Sileby, Cossington, Rothley, Wanlip, Leicester (a corridor broadly following the Soar Valley and Grand Union Canal), east Narborough, south-east Huncote, north-west Croft, east Stoney Stanton, east Sapcote, Sharnford, Claybrooke Magna, and east Wibtoft.
- Land use features – A6 and A46 trunk roads; Nottingham-London rail line; Grand Union Canal; mineral extraction (gypsum at Barrow-upon-Soar, former sand and gravel workings); recreational sites including several marinas between Zouch and Barrow-upon-Soar; Watermead Country Park; Abbey Park and Great Central Way Sustrans route; currently designated major Green Wedges to north and south of Leicester.
- Habitat features – floodplain grazing marsh, lowland mixed deciduous woodland (including wet woodland), lowland meadows, rivers and streams, reedbed, eutrophic standing water, and lowland fen eg Loughborough Big Meadow; wet grassland in the Cossington area.
- Cultural heritage features – Abbey Park Historic Park and Garden, conservation areas in many settlements including Quorn, Leicester, Sileby, Rothley, Narborough, and Barrow-

upon-Soar; scheduled monuments including Mountsorrel Market Cross; tradition of basket making around Normanton on Soar.

Key Opportunities for Delivering GI Benefits

- Access and movement – potential to establish traffic free multi-user greenways e.g. linking the communities of Loughborough, Leicester and Lutterworth to one another and to Strategic GI assets such as the River Soar, Grand Union Canal and Watermead Country Park.
- Biodiversity – opportunities for river corridor habitat management, creation, restoration and extension in all key habitat types; e.g. floodplain meadows in the Loughborough and Cossington areas.
- Natural processes – opportunities to manage flood risk through appropriate land management e.g. Cossington Meadows.
- Cultural heritage – opportunities to enhance the management, presentation, accessibility and interpretation of historic environment assets, e.g. Abbey Park Historic Park and Garden.
- Landscape – opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape through positive landscape intervention measures and land management actions informed by Landscape Character Assessments e.g. conservation of old willow pollards along watercourses through improved management; increasing tree cover through planting of wet woodlands.

F – Wreake Strategic River Corridor

Key Characteristics

- Settlements – north Syston, Queniborough, north Rearsby, south Thrussington, south Hoby, Rotherby, East Goscote, Frisby-on-the-Wreake, Kirby Bellars, north Burton Lazars, Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake, Brooksby, Asfordby and Melton Mowbray.
- Land use features – A607 linking Leicester/Melton/Grantham; Leicester/Peterborough rail line; mineral extraction (sand and gravel); Brooksby Agricultural College; recreational sites at Priors Water near Asfordby, Melton Mowbray Country Park, and golf course at East Goscote.
- Habitat features – floodplain grazing marsh, lowland mixed deciduous woodland (including wet woodland), rivers and streams, and eutrophic standing water e.g. Priors Water – wetland bird conservation.
- Cultural heritage features –, conservation areas in many settlements including Melton Mowbray and Rotherby; scheduled monuments including Kirby Bellars Priory.

Key Opportunities for Delivering GI Benefits

- Access and movement – potential to establish traffic free multi-user greenways e.g. linking the communities of Melton Mowbray and Syston to one another and to Strategic GI assets and communities outside the corridor such as Watermead Country Park and Sileby.
- Biodiversity – opportunities for river corridor habitat management, creation, restoration and extension in all key habitat types e.g. Priors Water; restoration of sand and gravel extraction areas.
- Natural processes – opportunities to manage flood risk through appropriate land management e.g. flood management works on the rivers Wreake and Eye around Melton Mowbray.
- Cultural heritage – opportunities to enhance the management, presentation, accessibility and interpretation of historic environment assets, e.g. Melton Mowbray's historic core.
- Landscape – opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape through positive landscape intervention measures and land management actions informed by Landscape Character Assessments e.g. new streamside and wet woodland planting.

G – Leighfield Forest

Key Characteristics

- Settlements – Tilton on the Hill, Skeffington, Tugby, Loddington, Owston, and East Norton.
- Land use features – A47 Leicester/Peterborough road crosses south of area; predominantly agricultural area with concentration of ancient semi-natural woodland sites e.g. Owston Wood, Launde Big Wood; Leicestershire Round and Midshires Way long distance footpath routes cross the area.
- Habitat features – lowland mixed deciduous woodland (including wet woodland), lowland meadows, eutrophic standing waters, and rivers and streams e.g. the Eye Brook.
- Cultural heritage features – conservation areas in all settlements; scheduled monuments including Launde Abbey and moated site at Tilton on the Hill; ridge and furrow.

Key Opportunities for Delivering GI Benefits

- Access and movement – potential to establish traffic free multi-user greenways e.g. linking the communities of Tilton-on-the-Hill and Owston;
- Biodiversity – opportunities for landscape scale/river corridor habitat management, creation, restoration and extension in all key habitat types e.g. woodland planting to link ancient semi-natural woodland sites already a Forestry Commission project.
- Natural processes – opportunities for water management through appropriate land management e.g. nitrate management work on Leighfield Forest farms.
- Cultural heritage – opportunities to enhance the management, presentation, accessibility and interpretation of historic environment assets, e.g. historic villages such as Tugby.
- Landscape – opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape through positive landscape intervention measures and land management actions informed by Landscape Character Assessments eg increasing tree cover through new hedgerow tree planting.

H – Sence Strategic River Corridor and Grand Union Canal

Key Characteristics

- Settlements – southern Leicester, north Blaby, south Newton Harcourt, Wistow, west Great Glen, Little Stretton, east Fleckney, north Saddington, south Smeeton Westerby, Foxton, and north Market Harborough.
- Land use features – A6 trunk road and Leicester/London rail line touch on northern part of corridor; Grand Union Canal; recreational sites including Wistow Country Park and Foxton Locks.
- Habitat features – lowland mixed deciduous woodland (including wet woodland), lowland meadows, rivers and streams and eutrophic standing water e.g. Narborough Bog.
- Cultural heritage features – conservation areas in several settlements including southern Leicester, Foxton, and Market Harborough; scheduled monuments including medieval settlement remains at Wistow.

Key Opportunities for Delivering GI Benefits

- Access and movement – potential to establish traffic free multi-user greenways e.g. linking the communities of Leicester and Market Harborough to one another and to the Grand Union Canal and River Sence.
- Biodiversity – opportunities for river corridor habitat management, creation, restoration and extension in all key habitat types e.g. wet woodland and lowland meadows.
- Natural processes – opportunities to manage flood risk through appropriate land management e.g. flood management works on the River Sence around southern Leicester.

- Cultural heritage – opportunities to enhance the management, presentation, accessibility and interpretation of historic environment assets, e.g. Market Harborough's historic core.
- Landscape – opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape through positive landscape intervention measures and land management actions informed by Landscape Character Assessments eg increasing tree cover through streamside scrub and willow planting.

I – Welland Strategic River Corridor

Key Characteristics

- Settlements – Welham, south-east Thorpe Langton, Market Harborough (a corridor through it), Lubenham, Marston Trussell and Theddingworth.
- Land use features – A4304 Rugby/Market Harborough road follows corridor west of Market Harborough; predominantly agricultural except for the Market Harborough urban area.
- Habitat features – lowland meadows, rivers and streams and eutrophic standing water e.g. east of Lubenham.
- Cultural heritage features – conservation areas in a number of settlements including Market Harborough, Lubenham and Theddingworth; scheduled monuments including moated hall site at Lubenham and medieval settlement remains at Theddingworth.

Key Opportunities for Delivering GI Benefits

- Access and movement – potential to establish traffic free multi-user greenways, e.g. linking the communities of Market Harborough and Welham to one another and to the River Welland;
- Biodiversity – opportunities for river corridor habitat management, creation, restoration and extension in all key habitat types e.g. lowland meadows.
- Natural processes – opportunities to manage flood risk through appropriate land management e.g. flood management works on the River Welland around Market Harborough.
- Cultural heritage – opportunities to enhance the management, presentation, accessibility and interpretation of historic environment assets, e.g. Market Harborough's historic core;
- Landscape – opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape through positive landscape intervention measures and land management actions informed by Landscape Character Assessments e.g. conservation of old willow pollards along watercourses through improved management.

Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zones

3.2.3 Taking into account the 6Cs sub-region's existing demographic patterns, and the spatial pattern of changes in population arising from the future growth proposed under the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan and the East Midlands Regional Plan, the countryside in and around Leicester, Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray has greatest demand, and therefore need, for enhanced provision of existing and new GI. These broad zones include areas of land that represent a significant resource for urban communities in the sub-region, comprising dynamic and complex mosaics of land uses and habitats. They are the immediate landscape setting for Principal Urban Areas and Sub-Regional Centres, have a critical role to

play in linking town and country, and will experience major planned growth. By their definition, Sustainable Urban Extensions are likely to be located within these areas. Existing GI resources in such areas are already experiencing urban edge issues, and are therefore likely to come under increasing pressure in the future.

3.2.4 In recognition of their strategic importance for delivery of GI from a sub-regional perspective, the countryside in and around Leicester, Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray has been defined as **Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones** (see **Figure 3.1b**): The indicative extent of the Zones defined on **Figure 3.1b** is generic, and simply intended to schematically illustrate the transition between urban and rural land uses around the Principal Urban Areas and Sub-Regional Centres.

3.2.5 Through investment in GI provision, the Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones have the ability or potential to deliver a range of economic, environmental and social benefits related to the following GI themes or functions[33]:

- **A bridge to the country** - linking housing, schools, health centres and hospitals, bus and train stations in urban centres to the existing/enhanced access network to connect with accessible greenspaces in the wider countryside;
- **A gateway to cities and towns** - providing an improved image, experience and sense of place through investment in an improved environmental quality for public rights of way and spaces;
- **A health centre** - contributing to health improvements and well-being through schools, hospitals and health centres promoting opportunities to access greenspaces for exercise as part of health programmes;
- **An outdoor classroom** - opportunities to provide environmental education through parks, nature reserves and farm-based activities;
- **A recycling and renewable energy centre** - helping address climate change through sustainable management of waste, water and pollution, production of energy crops and creation of woodland to act as carbon sinks;
- **A productive landscape** – recognising the role of urban fringe farmland in food production, processing of local produce and retail (farm shops) for urban areas;
- **A cultural legacy** - increasing awareness of historic features in the urban fringe landscape and how they contribute to sense of place for local communities;
- **A place for sustainable living** - ensuring that future development links with the urban area and addresses issues such as fly-tipping, indistinct boundaries, poor accessibility, fragmented landscapes, etc;
- **An engine for regeneration** – providing quality of life benefits through opportunities for community involvement through volunteering or gaining new skills in environmental improvement work, particularly within areas of multiple deprivation; and
- **A nature reserve** - strengthening biodiversity, geological and geomorphological conservation management for sites in and around urban areas.

3.2.6 Within the Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones, land is widely used by urban communities as a resource for informal, and often unauthorised, recreation leading to

[33] Key functions as described in Countryside Agency's vision for the Countryside in and around Towns (2005)

conflicts with other land uses. Additionally, the poor permeability of some built up areas can be a barrier to accessing the surrounding countryside. These Zones would benefit from the adoption of a strategic and co-ordinated approach to managing access for urban communities into the surrounding countryside. It is envisaged that the Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones would encompass a network of interlinked and multifunctional greenspaces that connect with city/town centres, public transport nodes, and major employment and residential areas, including new Sustainable Urban Extensions. A careful balance will need to be struck between creation of new GI and the need to safeguard existing natural and cultural features that contribute to the character and value of the wider agricultural landscape.

3.2.7 Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zones have an important role to play in relation to improving linkages and connectivity between Principal Urban Areas/Sub-Regional Centres and the wider GI network of Sub-Regional and City-Scale GI Corridors. In particular, Sustainable Urban Extensions will need to protect the integrity of the wider GI network, and support existing urban areas, by maintaining and enhancing GI within the Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zones. Further work is required at the local level to identify specific opportunities for integrating GI provision into local development and delivery plans within individual Zones.

3.3 City-Scale Green Infrastructure

3.3.1 A network of **City-Scale GI Corridors** is proposed (see **Figure 3.1b**) linking up settlements, strategic GI assets, and Sub-Regional Corridors. In many cases, the City-Scale GI Corridors extend into the urban areas, providing key elements of the Urban Fringe GI Enhancement Zones. While these corridors are indicative, they demonstrate the priority that should be given to achieving a connected network of green access links within and between urban areas. Typically, the City-Scale GI Corridors follow existing and proposed greenways and are key to enabling doorstep to countryside connections within the overall Strategic GI Network. They comprise a mosaic of land uses, natural and built heritage resources and settlements and have the primary aim of providing access and movement linkages for people. With investment, these GI Corridors are intended to deliver one or more of the 'functions' of a Sub-Regional Corridor as described above in paragraph 3.2.1.

3.3.2 Within the context of the Sub-Regional and City-Scale GI Corridors and Urban Fringe Green Infrastructure Enhancement Zones, are opportunity areas for new and enhanced localised GI. Examples of opportunity areas are provided in **Appendix A5** (it should be noted that the list of examples provided is not exhaustive). The opportunity areas are intended to be multifunctional and help towards delivering a range of public benefits. They focus on opportunities for the enhancement and restoration of existing GI assets, as well as the creation of new resources (the

latter could include one or a combination of appropriate greenspaces, e.g. parks, allotments, semi-natural greenspaces, and/or children's play areas).

3.4 Delivering the Green Infrastructure Network

3.4.1 This report promotes a strategic network for guiding the delivery of GI provision for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray within the context of the proposed vision and delivery framework set out in the Strategic Framework.

APPENDIX A1
RECORD OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

RECORD OF STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

Targeted stakeholder meeting held on the 18th August 2009, 2.00 - 5.00pm at Glenfield Parish Council to review Volume 5: Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray.

Attendees

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Helen O'Brien	Nature Conservation Officer	Leicester City Council
Marie Wykes	Planning Policy Officer	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Tony Lockley	Environmental Action Team Leader	Leicestershire County Council
Andy Jackson	Project Manager	Stepping Stones
Alison Booth	Senior Planning Officer	NW Leicestershire District Council
Emma Bentick	Planning Officer	NW Leicestershire District Council
Jamie Carr	Planning Officer (Forward Plans)	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
Anna Collins	Planning & Conservation Advisor	Natural England
Caroline Lambert	Greenspace Manager	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Emma Grady	HMA Co-ordinator	Leicester & Leicestershire HMA
Simon Evans	Chief Landuse Officer	National Forest
Ryan Astill	Planning Policy Officer	Melton Borough Council
Ed McWilliam	Countryside Service Policy and Promotions Officer	Leicestershire County Council

Apologies

Name	Job Title	Organisation
Richard Brown	Principal Planning Officer	Charnwood Borough Council
Sue Timms	Senior ecologist	Leicestershire County Council
Paul Tebbitt	Planning Policy Officer	Blaby District Council
Rob Thornhill	Planning Policy Officer	Blaby District Council
Steve Pointer	Policy Manager - Built Environment Services	Harborough District Council
Lesley Aspinall	Planning Policy Officer	Harborough District Council

Key Messages

- More 'local colour' needed to be added to the corridor descriptions so that the document sounded less generic and more 6Cs specific – the suggestion was that this could be based on landscape character information.
- There needed to be a clear separation between 'evidence' and 'strategy' in the way the document was structured so that the link between the evidence base and the recommendations being made could be logically followed.
- A number of people felt that the inclusion of the Biodiversity Opportunity Maps in the Stage 2 reports was confusing and they could not see how the links between Stage 1 (that did not include these Bio Opportunity Maps) and Stage 2 had been made. The suggestion was to remove these Biodiversity Opportunity Maps from Stage 2.
- There should be flexibility between the level of information and detail contained within each Strategic GI Network report so that local information and work could inform the Stage 2 Reports and be incorporated where appropriate. This will result in subtle differences between the 3 sections opposed

to the guiding principle of Stage 1 being that data and information needed to be of a consistent nature across the 6Cs sub-region as a whole. But we still need to be clear that this is a strategic document.

- Opportunity Areas to be removed from Figure 3.1 but descriptions to remain within the Report text.
- Within each Strategic GI Network report, the spatial relationship between the study area and the whole of the 6Cs sub-region and between each Study Area needs to be shown.
- Green wedges for Leicestershire and Derby need to be included. HMA contacts will provide this information as GIS shape file.
- Urban fringe areas were identified as key but people found it hard to find the corresponding section within the report that made reference to them.
- The term 'local' corridors and opportunity areas needed to be amended.
- There needs to be a clear message that the proposed network and opportunity areas are not intended to be restrictive in any way and allows flexibility in terms of delivery. This 'message' will be made clearer if the 'local' corridors identified on the figure 2.9 are broadened and 'smoothed out'.
- Where GIS data did not exist people were supportive of the approach taken using Mastermap (particularly Melton BC).
- The extent of the floodplain (defined by the EA indicative floodplain dataset) shown on Figure 2.5 needs to be amended. It was suggested that this datatset is switched on first and the urban area dataset switched on top.
- Figure 3.1 is to be complemented by 2 additional maps; one to show the existing GI assets, one to show just the conceptual GI network and Fig 3.1 will remain to show the two combined.

APPENDIX A2
SOURCES OF GI ASSET MAPPING DATA USED FOR VOLUME 5

SOURCES OF GI ASSET MAPPING DATA USED FOR VOLUME 5
Strategic GI Network for the Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray

Datasets used in the preparation of the Stage 2 Strategic GI Networks for the Three Cities are subject to licence arrangements with the individual suppliers and are subject to copyright. Requests for data should be addressed to the appropriate suppliers.

Dataset	Owner	Data Source/Supplier
BASE MAPPING		
6Cs sub-region Boundary	6Cs Strategic GI Board	Sharon Jefferies, 6Cs Growth Point GI Development Co-ordinator Leicestershire County Council County Hall (room 500) Glenfield LE3 8TE
GI Network Boundaries	Indicative boundaries created by Chris Blandford Associates	Chris Blandford Associates
Meridian data - A Roads - County Council Region - District Council Region - Dula region (settlements) - Lake Region - Motorways - Rail Lines - Rivers	Ordnance Survey	Richard Venables Forestry Commission Operational Support Mapping and Geographic Information Unit Silvan House 231 Corstorphine Road Edinburgh EH12 7AT
BIODIVERSITY NETWORK MAPPING		
Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	Natural England	Brian Crumley Natural England Data Services Science Services Team Northminster House Peterborough PE1 1UA
National Nature Reserves	Natural England	See above
National Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats	Natural England	See above
Local Nature Reserves	Natural England	See above
Nottinghamshire Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	Nottinghamshire Biological Record Centre	Rob Johnson Natural History Museum Wollaton Park Nottingham Nottinghamshire NG8 2AE
Leicestershire Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	Leicestershire Wildlife Trust	Leicestershire Environmental Resources Centre (LERC) Holly Hayes 216 Birstall Road Birstall Leicestershire LE4 4DG
Leicestershire Wildlife	Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife	Andy Lear

Dataset	Owner	Data Source/Supplier
Trust Nature Reserves	Trust	Conservation Officer Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust Brocks Hill Environment Centre Washbrook Lane Oadby, LE2 5JJ
Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves	Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust	Gary Craggs Conservation Administrator Conservation Policy and Planning Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust The Old Ragged School Brook Street Nottingham, NG1 1EA
ACCESS PROVISION NETWORK MAPPING		
Access Land (includes Registered Common Land)	Natural England	Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (www.magic.gov.uk)
Leicester City Rights of Way	Leicestershire County Council	Paul Standley Leicester City Council New Walk Centre, Welford Place Leicester LE1 6ZG
Leicestershire Rights of Way	Leicestershire County Council	Edwin McWilliam Leicestershire County Council County Hall (room 500) Glenfield LE3 8TE
Leicestershire Long Distance Promoted Paths	Leicestershire County Council	Edwin McWilliam Leicestershire County Council County Hall (room 500) Glenfield LE3 8TE
Nottinghamshire Rights of Way	Nottinghamshire County Council	See above
The National Forest access map, woodland layer and boundary	The National Forest Company	Annette McGrath Research & Monitoring Officer National Forest Company Enterprise Glade Bath Yard, Moira, Swadlincote, DE12 6BA
Leicestershire Country Parks	Leicestershire County Council	Bill Carter Countryside Manager Leicestershire County Council County Hall (room 500) Glenfield LE3 8TE
National Trust Land - 24 hr Open Access and Limited Access Land Datasets	National Trust	Mike Renow-Clarke The National Trust Heelis Kemble Drive Swindon SN2 2NA
Forestry Commission Woodland	Forestry Commission	Graham Bull Woodland Surveys Unit Biometrics, Surveys and Statistics Division Forest Research Northern Research Station Roslin Midlothian EH25 9SY

Dataset	Owner	Data Source/Supplier
		Scotland
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (NIWT)	Forestry Commission	Forest Research Northern Research Station Roslin Midlothian EH25 9SY
Woodland Trust Access Land	Woodland Trust	The Woodland Trust Autumn Park Dysart Road Grantham Lincolnshire NG31 6LL
Leicestershire National Cycleway Network	Leicestershire County Council	Edwin McWilliam Leicestershire County Council County Hall (room 500) Glenfield LE3 8TE
Leicester City Cycle Routes	Leicester City Council	Paul Standley Leicester City Council New Walk Centre, Welford Place Leicester LE1 6ZG
Extent of Navigable River	British Waterways	British Waterways
ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTER AND LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS MAPPING		
Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest	English Heritage	Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (www.magic.gov.uk)
Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest - North West Leicestershire PPG17 Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Assessment	North West Leicestershire District Council	Alison Booth North West Leicestershire District Council Council Offices, Coalville, LE67 3FJ.
Scheduled Monuments	English Heritage	See above
Listed Buildings	English Heritage	Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (www.magic.gov.uk)
Battlefields	English Heritage	Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (www.magic.gov.uk)
Conservation Areas - Leicestershire	Leicestershire County Council	Leicestershire County Council County Hall (room 500) Glenfield LE3 8TE
Derbyshire CC Landscape Character Types	Derbyshire County Council	Derbyshire County Council County Hall Matlock DE4 3AG
Nottinghamshire CC Landscape Character Types	Nottinghamshire County Council	Nottinghamshire County Council Trent Bridge House Fox Road West Bridgford Nottingham NG2 6BJ
Leicestershire CC Landscape Character Areas	Leicestershire County Council	Leicestershire County Council County Hall (room 500) Glenfield LE3 8TE

Dataset	Owner	Data Source/Supplier
ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS AND NATURAL RESOURCES MAPPING		
Indicative Floodplain	Environment Agency	Environment Agency Sapphire East 550 Steetsbrook Road Solihull B91 1QT
PPG17 OPEN SPACE, SPORT & RECREATION AND GREEN WEDGES MAPPING		
Blaby District Council PPG17 Open Space Study and Green Wedges	Blaby District Council	Jo Hickling Blaby District Council Desford Road Narborough Leicester LE19 2EP
Leicester City Council PPG17 Open Space Study and Green Wedges	Leicester City Council	Emma Grady Leicester City Council New Walk Centre Welford Place LE1 6ZG
Harborough District Council PPG17 Study and Green Wedges	Harborough District Council	Lesley Aspinall Harborough District Council Adam and Eve Street Market Harborough Leicestershire LE16 7AG
Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council PPG17 Open Space Study and Green Wedges	Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council	Paul Grundy Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Argents Mead Hinckley LE10 1BZ
North West Leicestershire District Council PPG17 Open Space Study and Green Wedges	North West Leicestershire District Council	Alison Booth North West Leicestershire District Council Council Offices, Coalville, LE67 3FJ.
Oadby and Wigston Borough Council PPG17 Open space Study and Green Wedges	Oadby and Wigston Borough Council	Jamie Carr Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Station Rd Wigston LE18 2DR

APPENDIX A3
PPG17 OPEN SPACE DATASETS & OVERARCHING TYPOLOGY METHODOLOGY

PPG17 OPEN SPACE DATASETS AND OVERARCHING TYPOLOGY METHODOLOGY

It was agreed that the Stage 1 GI audit would be enhanced at Stage 2, using selected relevant additional data as appropriate. PPG17 Open Space studies, which categorise open space sites by type (such as allotments, parks and gardens and children's play spaces) were identified as key to providing datasets to enhance the Stage 1 work. **Figure 2.3** has been enhanced using relevant datasets/GIS shapefiles, where available, from such studies.

With regards to the Strategic GI Network for Leicester Principal Urban Area and the Sub-Regional Centres of Coalville, Hinckley (including Barwell and Earl Shilton), Loughborough (including Shepshed), Market Harborough and Melton Mowbray, PPG17 Open Space studies and their datasets/GIS shapefiles were requested from the following local authorities:

- Blaby District Council;
- Charnwood Borough Council;
- Leicester City Council;
- Harborough District Council;
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council;
- Melton Borough Council;
- North West Leicestershire District Council; and
- Oadby and Wigston Borough Council.

Types chosen by individual local authorities to categorise their open space sites vary and are not all relevant to enhancing the GI networks for the Three Cities. It was thus necessary to define an overarching set of types, appropriate to enhancing the Stage 1 GI audit, in which to organise open space types provided. The Green Infrastructure Guide for the East Midlands[34] describes green infrastructure assets as 'consisting of public and private assets, with and without public access in urban and rural locations, including:

- Allotments
- Amenity space, including communal green spaces within housing areas
- Green corridors and hedgerows, ditches, disused railways, verges
- Brownfield and Greenfield sites
- Urban parks and gardens
- Registered commons and village town greens
- Children's play space
- Natural and semi-natural habitat for wildlife
- Playing fields
- Cemeteries
- Pocket parks
- Country parks
- Woodland
- Historic parks and gardens and historic landscapes
- Nature reserves
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Scheduled Monuments
- Locally designated heritage sites, including county wildlife sites
- Waterways and water bodies, including flooded quarries
- Development sites with potential for open space links
- Land in agri-environment management
- Public rights of way, cycleways and other recreational routes'.

Based on the above and the GI typology proposed in Natural England's Green Infrastructure Guidance (2009), the following typology was used to categorise open space sites provided by individual local authorities. Definitions for individual open space types vary between PPG17 Open Space studies. The definition provided below for each open space type thus takes into account all definitions provided for the type in individual PPG17 Open Space studies (as shown in the following tables).

[34] The Green Infrastructure Guide for the East Midlands (East Midlands Green Infrastructure Network, 2008)

- **Parks and Gardens** – including urban parks, country parks, and formal gardens
- **Amenity greenspaces** (most commonly but not exclusively in housing areas) – including informal recreation spaces, housing green spaces, village greens, urban commons, green roofs, and other incidental space
- **Natural and semi-natural greenspaces** – including woodland and scrub, grassland (e.g. downland and meadow), heath and moor, wetlands, open and running water, wasteland and disturbed ground, bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs and quarries)
- **Green Corridors** – including rivers and canal banks, road and rail corridors, cycling routes, pedestrian paths, and rights of way
- **Cemeteries and Churchyards**
- **Allotments**
- **Children's Play Space** – including play and youth facility areas such as equipped playgrounds, youth shelters, BMX and skateboard parks, ball courts, Multi-Use Games Areas, and other more informal areas
- **Outdoor Sports Facilities** – including natural and artificial surfaces used for sports and recreation. Examples include recreational grounds, sports pitches, school and other institutional playing fields athletic tracks, bowling greens, tennis courts, golf courses, and other outdoor sports area.

PARKS AND GARDENS	Definition – as described in individual PPG17 Open Space Studies
Amber Valley	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens.
Ashfield	Town parks - Large areas of urban green space designed and managed for public enjoyment, providing a range of landscape elements, recreational opportunities and facilities. Main focal green spaces for towns or large neighbourhoods. --- Formal gardens - Areas of historic designed green space combining a variety of landscape and horticultural elements. Usually associated with historic buildings or estates rather than urban residential environments. May have restricted access.
Blaby	For the purpose of this study all sites including recreation grounds, parks, and formal gardens have been placed under a single classification called Parks, Gardens and Recreation Grounds. They take on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions, including: • Informal recreation and outdoor sport. • Play space of many kinds (including for sport and children's play). • Providing attractive walks to work. • Offering landscape and amenity features. • Areas of formal planting. • Providing areas for 'events'. • Providing habitats for wildlife.
Broxtowe	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens.
Charnwood	PPG17 in progress
Derby City	PPG17 in progress
Erewash	Parks are essentially local provision to be accessed fairly spontaneously, and on foot, so there is an expectation that they should be sufficiently local to allow this.
Gedling	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens.
Harborough	This type of open space includes urban parks, formal gardens and country parks that provide opportunities for various informal recreation and community events.
Hinckley and Bosworth	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens.
Leicester City	Public parks and gardens take on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions, including: • Informal recreation and outdoor sport

	• Play space of many kinds (including for sport and children's play) • Providing attractive walks to work • Offering landscape and amenity features • Providing areas for 'events' • Providing habitats for wildlife. Parks are more than simply recreational space- they are a composition of features the combined value of which might be seen as greater than that of the constituent parts.
Melton	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens.
North West Leicestershire	The decision where to place parks and open spaces is based on factors such as the scale of the site, its function, its location and the facilities that are available.
Nottingham City	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events.
Oadby and Wigston	For the purpose of this study all sites including recreation grounds, parks, and formal gardens have been placed under a single classification called Parks and Recreation Grounds. They take on many forms, and may embrace a wide range of functions, including: • Informal recreation and outdoor sport. • Play space of many kinds (including for sport and children's play). • Providing attractive walks to work. • Offering landscape and amenity features. • Areas of formal planting. • Providing areas for 'events'. • Providing habitats for wildlife.
Rushcliffe	No definition in the part of the report which we hold.
South Derbyshire	Accessible, high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens.

AMENITY GREEN SPACE	**Definition**
Amber Valley	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Ashfield (neighbourhood greenspaces)	Recreation Grounds - spaces providing some formal recreational opportunities (a football pitch and sometimes a playground) and limited landscape elements. Local small green spaces- small green spaces providing opportunities for informal or passive recreation close to home or work. Semi-private space - spaces which are publicly accessible, but physically associated with adjacent buildings. Includes green

	space around flats. --- Incidental green space - green space providing limited recreational opportunities due to size or lack of facilities, but offering a visual break in a built up area. Includes, for example, large verges.
Blaby (informal open space)	The category is considered to include those spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out nor managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat. These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics: • Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences. • Predominantly lain down to (mown) grass. • Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks). • Unlikely to have planted flower beds or other formal planted layouts, although they may have shrub and tree planting. • Generally no other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment or ball courts), although there may be items such as litter bins and benches. Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates and general recreation spaces. They can serve a variety of functions dependent on their size, shape, location and topography. Some may be used for informal recreation activities, while others by themselves, or else collectively, contribute to the overall visual amenity of an area.
Broxtowe	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. Including amenity spaces, verges and roundabouts.
Charnwood	PPG17 in progress.
Derby City	PPG17 in progress.
Erewash	This is informal space in urban areas, normally in or around housing developments, that can help to create a more attractive townscape and that is often used for play and other recreation.
Gedling	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Harborough	This type of open space is most commonly found in housing areas. It includes informal recreation spaces and greenspaces in and around housing with its primary purpose to provide opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Hinckley and Bosworth	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
Leicester City	It is quite difficult to offer a practical definition of Informal Green Space/Amenity green space compared with other types of open space covered by this study. The category is considered to include those spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out and or managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat. These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics: • Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences.

	• Predominantly laid out to mown grass. • Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks). • Unlikely to have planted flower beds or other formal planted layouts, although they may have shrub and tree planting. • Generally no other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment or ball courts), although there may be items such as litter bins and benches. Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates and general recreation spaces. They can serve a variety of functions dependent on their size, shape, location and topography. Some may be used for informal recreation activities, while others by themselves, or else collectively, contribute to the overall visual amenity of an area. However, as a general rule such spaces will not include highway verges and other incidental open space that does not fall within the definition of recreational open space contained within Section 1. The exception to this the above 'working' definition of Informal Green Space is through the inclusion of churchyards within this heading which, apart from their primary purpose, do serve an important visual and amenity function.
Melton	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.
North West Leicestershire	Not included.
Nottingham City	Supplementary open greenspace that enhances the appearance of the City
Oadby and Wigston	The category is considered to include those spaces open to free and spontaneous use by the public, but neither laid out nor managed for a specific function such as a park, public playing field or recreation ground; nor managed as a natural or semi-natural habitat. These areas of open space will be of varied size, but are likely to share the following characteristics: • Unlikely to be physically demarcated by walls or fences. • Predominantly lain down to (mown) grass. • Unlikely to have identifiable entrance points (unlike parks). • Unlikely to have planted flower beds or other formal planted layouts, although they may have shrub and tree planting. • Generally no other recreational facilities and fixtures (such as play equipment or ball courts), although there may be items such as litter bins and benches. Examples might include both small and larger informal grassed areas in housing estates and general recreation spaces. They can serve a variety of functions dependent on their size, shape, location and topography. Some may be used for informal recreation activities, while others by themselves, or else collectively, contribute to the overall visual amenity of an area..
Rushcliffe	No definition in the part of the report which we hold.
South Derbyshire	Opportunities for informal activities close to home or work or enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas.

NATURAL/SEMI-NATURAL	Definition
Amber Valley	Natural and semi natural greenspaces, including urban woodland.
Ashfield (sub groups shown separately)	Country parks - Areas of managed semi-natural green space which combine ecological habitats with opportunities for passive recreation and a range of public facilities (such as visitor) centres, cafes and toilets) --- Informal woodland - Areas of accessible woodland with opportunities for passive recreation but limited or no facilities. --- Other natural and semi natural spaces - Areas of green space with a predominantly natural characteristic and incorporating a variety of potential ecological habitats. Includes areas of grassland and wetland. Provide opportunities for passive recreation but limited facilities. --- Restored landscapes - Areas of formerly industrial land being restored to a semi-natural state. Commonly take the form of planted spoil heaps creating a distinctive landscape feature defined by the relief of the land. As sites mature, they will tend to become informal woodland or country parks. --- Reservoirs - Spaces dominated by large water bodies, but providing accessible semi-natural green space at its margins.
Blaby	For the purpose of this study (Accessible) Natural Green Space covers a variety of spaces including meadows, river floodplain, woodland and copse all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment. Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis. Although many natural spaces may not be 'accessible' in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity. Natural Greenspace with limited public access (e.g. RSPB reserves) have been mapped where known.
Broxtowe	Wildlife conservation, bio-diversity and environmental education and awareness. Includes: • Grassland • Tree Planted Areas • Woodlands • Wetlands • Scrubland • Rivers, Canals and Waterways • Green Corridors

Charnwood	PPG17 in progress.
Derby City	PPG17 in progress.
Erewash	The study is confined to those spaces that are accessible to the public. They serve not only as habitats for plants and animals but can also provide leisure and play opportunities. Several of these spaces are protected by formal designation.
Gedling	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits).
HarborougH	This type of open space includes woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons, meadows), wetlands, open and running water, nature reserves and wastelands with a primary purpose of wildlife conservation and bio-diversity.
Hinckley and Bosworth	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits).
Leicester City (ANG)	For the purpose of this study Accessible Natural Green Space covers a variety of spaces including meadows, river floodplain, woodland, copse all of which share a trait of being managed primarily for wildlife value but which are also open to public use and enjoyment. Many of the Natural Green Spaces are within parks, cemeteries, or other types of open space, and in these cases Natural Green Space is listed as a secondary type in the tables within the ward profiles.
Melton	Wildlife conservation, biodiversity and environmental education and awareness - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits).
North West Leicestershire	Not included.
Nottingham City	Sites for wildlife conservation, biodiversity, environmental education and awareness
Oadby and Wigston	For the purpose of this study (Accessible) Natural Green Space covers a variety of spaces including meadows, river floodplain, woodland and copse all of which share a trait of having natural characteristics and wildlife value, but which are also open to public use and enjoyment. Some sites will have statutory rights or permissive codes allowing the public to wander in these sites. Others may have defined Rights of Way or permissive routes running through them. For the remainder of sites there may be some access on a managed basis. Although many natural spaces may not be 'accessible' in the sense that they cannot be entered and used by the general community, they can be appreciated from a distance, and contribute to visual amenity. Natural Greenspace with limited public access (e.g. RSPB reserves) have been mapped where known.
Rushcliffe	No definition in the part of the report which we hold.
South Derbyshire	Previous studies have assessed green corridors and semi natural greenspaces. These typologies have, therefore, not been covered in this report.

GREEN CORRIDORS	Definition
Amber Valley	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way
Ashfield (green routes)	Walking or cycling routes - linear green spaces providing surfaced paths for walking and/or cycling, but limited open space for other activities. --- River corridors - Linear green spaces forming the margins of a river or canal.
Blaby	Not included.
Broxtowe	Not included.
Charnwood	PPG17 in progress.
Derby City	PPG17 in progress.
Erewash	Not included.
Gedling	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way.
Harborough	This open space type includes towpaths along canals and riverbanks, cycleways, rights of way and disused railway lines with the primary purpose to provide opportunities for walking, cycling and horse riding whether for leisure purposes or travel and opportunities for wildlife migration.
Hinckley and Bosworth	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way.
Leicester City	The main links are essentially a combination of open space identified as Natural and Semi Natural Green Space, and Parks. Walking and cycling are continually identified by national surveys as major recreation activities in their own right, but are also endemic to everyday 'healthy living' (such as walking or cycling to work, the shops, or school). As activities they should be encouraged as a means of making both recreation and utility trips. Green recreational corridors will also include: • The local public Rights of Way network • Promoted long distance footpaths and cycleways • Permissive routes. It is also recognised that some of these routes (especially in urban areas) will also serve as utility routes and can also be of significant ecological value. Links between City and countryside are important for accessing the wider rights of way network and quiet lanes, and can help to reduce car usage.
Melton	Walking, cycling or horse riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way.
North West Leicestershire	Not included
Nottingham City	Not included.

Oadby and Wigston	Not included.
Rushcliffe	No definition in the part of the report which we hold.
South Derbyshire	Previous studies have assessed green corridors and semi natural greenspaces. These typologies have, therefore, not been covered in this report.

Allotments - This includes all forms of allotments with a primary purpose to provide opportunities for people to grow their own produce as part of the long-term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion. This type of open space may also include urban farms and community gardens.

Cemeteries and Churchyards - Cemeteries, disused churchyards and other burial grounds.

Children's Play Space – including play and youth facility areas such as equipped playgrounds, youth shelters, BMX and skateboard parks, ball courts, Multi-Use Games Areas, and other more informal areas.

Outdoor Sports Facilities – including natural and artificial surfaces used for sports and recreation. Examples include recreational grounds, sports pitches, school and other institutional playing fields athletic tracks, bowling greens, tennis courts, golf courses, and other outdoor sports area.

Datasets/GIS shapefiles received from individual local authorities are provided in the following tables. Information is also provided regarding whether the data was used, if not the reason for not using it, and the type it was categorised into within the overarching typology. Both Charnwood Borough Council and Melton Borough Council were unable to provide GIS Shapefiles at the time of writing this report. Charnwood Borough Council is currently carrying out their PPG17 assessment, while Melton Mowbray had no digital shapefiles for their PPG17 assessment. In this instance, Mastermap was used to define indicative areas of open space. The Natural Environment (boulders, boulders scattered, coniferous trees, coniferous trees scattered, coppice or osiers, heath, marsh reeds or saltmarsh, non conifereous trees, non conifereous trees scattered, orchard, rock, rock scattered, rough grassland, scree and scrub) and Natural Surface descriptive groups, from Mastermap, were selected and mapped to represent open space within Loughborough (including Shepshed), Leicester's principal urban area which falls within Charnwood Borough Council, and Melton Mowbray's urban areas.

Blaby District Council			
Data received	**Used/Not used**	**Justification for not using it**	**Type**
Allotment	Used	N/A	Allotment
Children and Young People Space	Used	N/A	Children's Play Space
Churchyard & Cemetery	Used	N/A	Cemeteries & Churchyards
Informal Open Space	Used	N/A	Amenity Greenspace
Natural Green Space	Used	N/A	Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace
Outdoor Sport	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports Facilities
Outdoor Sport (limited access)	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports Facilities
Parks & Recreational Ground	Used	N/A	Parks & Gardens – no attributes available to differentiate parks and recreational grounds
Playing field	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports Facilities
Playing Field (limited access)	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports Facilities

Leicester City Council			
Data received	**Used/Not used**	**Justification for not using it**	**Type**
Green Wedge	Used	N/A	Green Wedge
Amenity Greenspace	Used	N/A	Amenity Greenspace
Cemeteries	Used	N/A	Cemeteries and Churchyards
Children & Young People	Used	N/A	Children's Play Space
Civic	Not used	Not part of the typology of GI assets	N/A
Natural & Semi-Natural	Used	N/A	Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace
Outdoor Sports	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports Facilities
Parks	Used	N/A	Parks & Gardens
TQ Allotments	Used	N/A	Allotments

North West Leicestershire District Council			
Data received	**Used/Not used**	**Justification**	**Type**
Wild406	Not used	Could not be used as drawn as lines and not polygons	N/A
Green Wedge	Used	N/A	Green Wedge
Historic Gardens	Used	N/A	Parks and Gardens
Allotments and Cemeteries	Used	N/A	Cemeteries and

			Churchyards (attributes show that all sites in this category are cemeteries)
Children's Play Area	Used	N/A	Children's' Play Space
Common	Not used	Attributes show that this site is not part of the typology of GI assets	N/A
District Park	Used	N/A	Parks and Gardens
Informal Countryside	2 Sites Used	No attributes for some sites which thus cannot be categorised	Parks and Gardens
Local Open Space	Some sites used	No attributes for some sites which thus cannot be categorised	*2 sites - Parks and Gardens *16 sites - Outdoor Sports Facilities *4 sites - Children's Play Space
Recreation Ground	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports Facilities
Schools	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports Facilities
The following shapefiles are not the right format: Area C Coalville-Ravenstone, l14_bo~4	Not used	N/A	N/A

Melton Borough Council			
Data received	**Used/Not used**	**Justification for not using it**	**Type**
Protected Open Areas	Not used	Unable to categorise sites	

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council			
Data received	**Used/Not used**	**Justification for not using it**	**Type**
Amenity Greenspace	Used	N/A	Amenity Greenspace
Green Corridors	Used	N/A	Green Corridor
Outdoor sports Facilities	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports Facilities
Parks and Gardens	Used	N/A	Parks & Gardens
Provision for Children & Young People	Used	N/A	Children's Play Space
Heritage Assets	Used to enhance Figure 1.2d	N/A	N/A
Tourism assets	Not used	Does not show specific sites	N/A
Ashby Canal	used	N/A	Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace
Access and Recreation	Not used	Does not show specific sites	N/A
Biodiversity Improvement Area	Used for analysis in Figures 1.2i and 1.2j	N/A	N/A
Tourism Area	Not used	Does not show specific sites	N/A
Tourism Support Area	Not used	Does not show specific sites	N/A
Existing Strategic Access Routes	Used to verify data previously	N/A	N/A

	collected		
Potential Strategic Access Routes	Used for analysis in Figures 1.2k	N/A	N/A

Oadby and Wigston Borough Council			
Data received	**Used/Not used**	**Justification for not using it**	**Type**
Agricultural Land (no access)	Not used	Not part of the typology of GI assets	N/A
Allotment	Used	N/A	Allotment
Children & Young Peoples Space	Used	N/A	Children's Play Space
Churchyard & Cemetery	Used	N/A	Cemeteries & Churchyards
Informal Open Space	Used	N/A	Amenity Greenspace
Natural Green Space	Used	N/A	Natural & Semi-Natural Greenspace
Outdoor Sport	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports Facilities
Outdoor Sport (Limited)	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports Facilities
Park & Recreational Ground	Used	N/A	Parks & Gardens – no attributes available to differentiate parks and recreational grounds

Harborough District Council			
Data received	**Used/Not used**	**Justification for not using it**	**Type**
Parks and Gardens	Used	N/A	Parks and Gardens
Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace	Used	N/A	Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspace
Amenity Greenspace	Used	N/A	Amenity Greenspace
Provision for Children and Young people	Used	N/A	Children's Play Space
Outdoor Sports facilities	Used	N/A	Outdoor Sports facilities
Allotments and Community Gardens	Used	N/A	Allotments
Cemeteries and Churchyards	Used	N/A	Cemeteries and Churchyards
Civic Spaces	Not Used	Not part of the typology of GI assets	N/A

APPENDIX A4
BIODIVERSITY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES BY BROAD HABITAT TYPE

BIODIVERSITY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES BY BROAD HABITAT TYPE

Opportunities for enhancing connectivity of the natural greenspace network in the study area are set out below by broad habitat type. Opportunity areas have been identified as either i) general search areas e.g. River Trent, River Soar, quarries etc., or ii) specific locations within general search areas where opportunities for extending or enhancing known existing areas of semi-natural habitat have been identified. The codes in brackets relate to **Figure 2.8**:

Woodland

Resource

Although not all woodlands included within the NIWT are classified as BAP habitats, the data has been included as part of the resource audit because they will provide some value for woodland biodiversity. Moreover, plantation woodlands are also included within the National Forest LBAP and have therefore been taken into consideration when identifying opportunities.

Analysis of the data shows that the Study Area supports the following woodland resource:

Table W1: Woodland Resource for the Study Area

Woodland Type: Biodiversity Action Plan	**Woodland Type: National Inventory of woodland and trees (NIWT)**	**Area (ha) (BAP woodland)**	**Area (ha) (NIWT woodland)**	**Total Area (ha)**
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland		1,427		
Wet woodland		207		
	Broadleaved		1,771	
	Coniferous		275.5	
	Mixed		327.5	
	Young trees		824.5	
	Shrubs		12.5	
	Felled		31	
Totals		1,634	3,242	4,876

Biodiversity Action Plan Targets

Table W2: Woodland BAP Targets for the Study Area

Action	**Target**
Woodland Creation	100ha broadleaved woodland (outside National Forest)
	10ha wet woodland
	10ha new wood pasture adjacent to existing sites
Restoration	100ha PAWS
Positive Management	3 wood pasture and parklands into positive management

Table W3: Mature Tree BAP targets for Leicestershire and Rutland/The National Forest

Action	**Target**
Creation	3000 new pollards
Designation	300 mature tree wildlife sites

Opportunities

The woodland resource for the Study Area is predominantly concentrated to the north west of the area in the general vicinity of Charnwood Forest and the National Forest. It is noted that the BAP targets the creation of new woodland outside the National Forest. Opportunities for creating new, and extending and linking existing, woodlands should be considered in the following areas:

- Charnwood Forest (1): lowland mixed deciduous woodland;
- River Soar – Mountsorrel (2a): lowland mixed deciduous woodland and wet woodland;
- River Wreake – west of Melton Mowbray (3): lowland mixed deciduous woodland and wet woodland;
- Ibstock – Newbold Verdon (5): lowland mixed deciduous woodland (particularly in the area around Grange Wood);
- North West Leicester (6): lowland mixed deciduous woodland;
- River Soar/Sence – South Leicester (2b): wet woodland;
- East of Hinckley (7): lowland mixed deciduous woodland (particularly in the area around Burbage Woods;
- South east Leicester (8): lowland mixed deciduous woodland (to create links with Leighfield Forest);
- River Welland at Market Harborough (9): wet woodland.

Grasslands and Heathland

Resource

Table G1: Grassland and Heathland Resource for the Study Area

Habitat Type	Area (ha)
Floodplain grazing marsh	475
Wet meadow	
Lowland meadow (neutral grassland)	1,772
Calcareous grassland	9.2
Acid grassland	760.5
Lowland heath	84

Biodiversity Action Plan Targets

Table G2: Grassland and Heathland BAP Targets for Leicestershire and Rutland/The National Forest

Habitat Type	Action	Target
Floodplain grazing marsh	Habitat creation	50ha
	Appropriate Management	15 wetland Wildlife Sites
Lowland meadow (neutral grassland)	Creation	500ha
	Sympathetic management	50 sites into positive management
Calcareous grassland	Creation	40ha
	Sympathetic management	10 calcareous grassland SSSIs or wildlife sites
Heath grassland	Creation	100ha within Charnwood Forest
	Restoration	40ha

Opportunities

Opportunities for creating, restoring and extending grasslands and heathland should be centred on:

- Charnwood Forest (1): acid grassland, heathland, and dry meadows;
- River Soar – Mountsorrel (2a): wet meadows and floodplain grazing marsh;
- River Wreake – west of Melton Mowbray (3): wet meadows and floodplain grazing marsh;
- North of Melton Mowbray (4): acid grassland and calcareous grasslands;
- East of Hinckley (7): dry meadows and acid grassland;

- South east Leicester (8): dry meadows.

Fen, Marsh, Swamp and Reedbeds

Resource

Table F1: Fen, Marsh, Swamp and Reedbed Resource for the Study Area

Habitat Type	**Area (ha)**
Fen, marsh and swamp	17.5
Reedbed	140

Biodiversity Action Plan Targets

Table F2: Fen, Marsh, Swamp and Reedbed BAP Targets for Leicestershire and Rutland/The National Forest

Habitat Type	**Action**	**Target**
Springs and flushes	Appropriate management	10 spring and flush Wildlife Sites
Reedbed	Habitat creation	10ha
	Appropriate management	All reedbed wildlife sites

Opportunities

Opportunities for creating, restoring and extending fen, marsh, swamp and reedbeds should be centred on:

- River Soar – Mountsorrel (2a): fens and reedbeds;
- River Soar/Sence – South Leicester (2b): fens and reedbeds;
- River Wreake – west of Melton Mowbray (3): fens and reedbeds.

Rivers and Streams

Resource

Table R1: Rivers and Streams Resource for the Study Area

Habitat Type	Area (km)
Rivers and Streams	131.4

Biodiversity Action Plan Targets

Table R2: Rivers and Streams BAP Targets for Leicestershire and Rutland/The National Forest

Action	**Target**
Restoration	4 degraded stream habitats

Opportunities

Opportunities for creating (buffer strips), restoring and managing rivers and streams should be centred on:

- River Soar;
- River Wreake;
- River Welland; and,
- The Grand Union Canal.

Standing Open Waters

Resource

Table S1: Standing Open Water Resource for the Study Area

Habitat Type	Area (ha)
Standing Open Water	975

Biodiversity Action Plan

Table S2: Standing Open Water BAP Targets for Leicestershire and Rutland/The National Forest

Action	Target
Creation	100 ponds
Restoration	Water quality within existing lakes

Opportunities

The whole of the Study Area should be considered as an opportunity area for the creation and restoration of ponds. Specific areas should be identified at the local area for pond creation. Although individual ponds provide value for wildlife, associations of ponds that are geographically linked provide enhanced biodiversity by facilitating species dispersal and migration. Furthermore, ponds associated with different habitats (e.g. urban, woodland, open grassland) will tend to develop different characteristics which add to the overall diversity of the pond resource within the Study Area.

While there may be opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value of the large reservoirs such as Cropston and Swithland, the primary opportunities for enhancing the biodiversity value of open standing water are likely to be in relation to the old gravel pits, particularly those within the Soar valley (for example between the A46 and A563 north of Leicester) and Wreake Valley (south of Ashfordby). The relationship between old gravel pits restored for biodiversity with the river, floodplain grazing marsh, fens, swamps and reedbeds also helps to enhance the overall biodiversity value through connectivity. Consideration should also be given to opportunities for retaining open water as part of any work to restore disused quarries.

Hedgerows and Field Margins

Biodiversity Action Plan Targets

Table H1: Hedgerows and field margins BAP Targets for Leicestershire and Rutland/The National Forest

Habitat Type	Action	Target
Hedgerows	Creation	170km
	Positive Management	Enhance 250km
Field Margins	Creation	750km
		15km beetle banks
		135km conservation headlands
		1km cultivated field margins

Opportunities for the creation, restoration, extension and enhancement of hedgerows, field margins, buffer strips and arable field margins should be considered throughout the Study Area.

Earth Heritage

Resource

Table EH1: Earth Heritage Resource for the Study Area

Habitat Type	Area (ha)
Earth Heritage	136ha

Biodiversity Action Plan

Table EH2: Earth Heritage (Rocks and Built Structures) BAP Targets for Leicestershire and Rutland/The National Forest

Action	Target
Management	5 rock and built structure Wildlife Sites

Opportunities

- Bardon Hill quarry;
- Cliffe Hill quarry;
- Croft & Huncote quarry;
- Main quarry, Mountsorrel;
- Cadeby quarry.

Open Mosaic Habitats on previously developed land

Resource

Table OM1: Open Mosaic Habitats Resource for the Study Area

Habitat Type	Area (ha)
Open Mosaic Habitats	75.5

Biodiversity Action Plan

There are no specific BAP habitat targets for open mosaic habitats.

Opportunities

A number of Local Wildlife Sites designated as open mosaic habitats on previously developed land are within the Study Area, including Ashfordby Hill Local Wildlife Site. and Wigston Railway triangle

APPENDIX A5
EXAMPLES OF OPPORTUNITY AREAS

EXAMPLES OF OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Examples of opportunity areas for new and enhanced localised GI are provided below. It should be noted that the list of examples provided is not exhaustive. The opportunity areas are intended to be multifunctional and help towards delivering a range of public benefits. They focus on opportunities for the enhancement, restoration, and conservation of existing GI assets, as well as the creation of new resources (the latter could include one or a combination of appropriate greenspaces, e.g. parks, allotments, semi-natural greenspaces, and/or children play areas).

The opportunity areas described below were identified through interpretation of the relationship between:

- opportunities arising from the analysis of the GI resources (particularly in relation to the proposals for developing ecological networks for wildlife and movement networks for people);
- accessible natural greenspace deficiencies;
- areas capable of delivering combined multiple public benefits;
- stakeholder consultation; and,
- existing relevant strategies (e.g. the National Forest Delivery Strategy).

Charnwood Forest
An Area which provides opportunities for creating new, restoring, and extending and linking existing woodland (within the Charnwood Forest and to the National Forest), and for creating, restoring and extending habitat types including lowland acid grassland, lowland heathland, and dry meadow, as well as linking and extending areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland. This area could connect with proposed City-Scale GI Corridors (e.g. proposed greenway linking Woodhouse Eaves and Coalville) and provide opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape. As well as being in an area with high potential for delivering combined multiple public benefits through GI provision/enhancement, it could bridge a gap in the provision of accessible natural greenspace sites of varying sizes, including a large-scale site close to the growing urban areas of Leicester, Coalville and Loughborough. The East Midlands Regional Plan recognises the need for measures to protect and enhance the particular character of Charnwood Forest through a Regional Park initiative.

River Soar Floodplain: Mountsorrel to Loughborough
An Area which provides opportunities for creating, restoring and extending habitat types including lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland, lowland meadows, floodplain grazing marsh, fen and reedbed and opportunities for creating (buffer strips), restoring and managing rivers and streams. This area could connect with a proposed City-Scale Corridor (e.g. proposed greenway linking Mountsorrel and Leicester) and the River Soar and Grand Union Canal. It could provide opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape and the management, presentation, accessibility and interpretation of the historic environment (e.g. Quorn historic village).As well as being in an area with high potential for delivering combined multiple public benefits through GI provision/enhancement, it could bridge a gap in the provision of accessible natural greenspace sites of varying sizes on the doorstep of communities including Loughborough, Quorn, Barrow-upon-Soar, Mountsorrel, and Sileby, and also within 2-10km of a wider range of communities.

River Soar Floodplain: South West Leicester
An Area which provides opportunities for creating, restoring and extending habitat types including wet woodland, fens, reedbed and opportunities for creating (buffer strips), restoring and managing rivers and streams. This area could connect with proposed City-Scale Corridors (e.g. proposed greenway linking Leicester and Lutterworth) as well as the River Soar, River Sence and the Grand Union Canal. As well as being in an area with high potential for delivering combined multiple public benefits through GI provision/enhancement, it could bridge a gap in the provision of accessible natural greenspace sites of varying sizes on the doorstep of communities including south west Leicester, Narborough, and Blaby, and also within 2-10km of broader range of communities. It could provide opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape and to manage flood risk.

River Wreake Floodplain: West Melton Mowbray

An Area which provides opportunities for creating, restoring and extending habitat types including lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland, wet meadows, floodplain grazing marsh, lowland fen and reedbed; and opportunities for creating (buffer strips), restoring and managing rivers and streams. This area could connect with a proposed City-Scale GI Corridor (e.g proposed greenway linking Melton Mowbray to the River Soar) and provide opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape. As well as being in an area with fairly high potential for delivering combined multiple public benefits through GI provision/enhancement, it could bridge a gap in the provision of accessible natural greenspace sites of varying sizes on the doorstep of communities including Melton Mowbray, Asfordby Hill, Asfordby, and Kirby Bellars and also within 2-10km of a broader range of communities. It could also offer opportunities to enhance the management, presentation, accessibility and interpretation of the historic environment (e.g. Melton Mowbray's historic core) and the management of flood risk.

Ellistown to South Newbold Verdon Extraction Sites
An Area which provides opportunities for creating, restoring and extending lowland mixed deciduous woodland (particularly in the area around Grange Wood). As well as being in an area with fairly high potential for delivering combined multiple public benefits through GI provision/enhancement, it could bridge a gap in the provision of accessible natural greenspace sites of varying sizes on the doorstep of communities including Ellistown, Ibstock, Newbold Verdon, Osbaston, Barlestone, and Nailstone, and also within 2-10km of a broader range of communities. This area would connect with proposed City-Scale GI Corridors (e.g. proposed greenway linking Bagworth and Whitwick) and provide opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape. The Hinckley and Bosworth GI Strategy (2008) includes this area as part of its strategic intervention areas, focusing on three main extraction sites: the Ibstock Colliery site between Bagworth Heath and Grange Wood, the Cliffe Hill Quarry site to the north-west of Stanton- under-Bardon, and the Cadeby Quarry to the south of Newbold Verdon. It discusses how 'sensitive redevelopment could have a myriad of benefits to local communities, wildlife and landscapes, including increased capacity for biodiversity through the creation of new and expansion of existing habitats and the provision of recreational resources'.

North West Leicester Urban Fringe
An Area which provides opportunities for creating, restoring and extending lowland mixed deciduous woodland, acid grassland and lowland meadows. As well as being in an area with high potential for delivering combined multiple public benefits through GI provision/enhancement, it could bridge a gap in the provision of accessible natural greenspace sites of varying sizes on the doorstep of communities including north-west Leicester, Thurcaston, and Cropston, and also within 2-10km of a broader range of communities. This area could connect with a proposed City-Scale GI Corridor (e.g. proposed greenway linking north-west Leicester, Anstey and Loughborough) and provide opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape. It could provide opportunities to enhance the management, presentation, accessibility and interpretation of historic environment assets (e.g Rothley historic village) and would offer opportunities to manage flood risk. The Stepping Stones Project GI Delivery Plan includes this area as part of its intervention areas, describing it as 'a priority area for increasing community access to the high quality greenspace within and outside the Stepping Stones Project area, particularly to the National Forest'. It describes 'opportunities to improve the area's currently limited ecological resource through biodiversity enhancements including linkages to high quality resources'.

Hinckley Urban Fringe: Barwell to East Hinckley Countryside Gap
An Area which provides opportunities for creating, restoring and extending habitat types including lowland mixed deciduous woodland (particularly in the area around Burbage Woods), dry meadows and acid grassland. As well as being in an area with fairly high potential for delivering combined multiple public benefits through GI provision/enhancement, it could bridge a gap in the provision of accessible natural greenspace sites of varying sizes on the doorstep of communities including Hinckley and Barwell, and also within 2-10km of a broader range of communities. This area could connect with proposed City-Scale GI Corridors (e.g. proposed greenway linking Barwell and Hinckley). The Hinckley and Bosworth GI Strategy (2008) includes this area as part of its strategic intervention areas, focusing on Burbage Common and Woods. It describes this area as being possibly the most important area in the Borough in terms of its functional value to local communities. An increase in the current Burbage Common and Woods greenspace site's size is anticipated to increase both community value (especially in view of projected growth) and biodiversity holding capacity.

South East Leicester Urban Fringe
An Area which provides opportunities for creating, restoring and extending habitat types including lowland mixed deciduous woodland and dry meadows. This area could bridge a gap in the provision of accessible natural greenspace sites of varying sizes on the doorstep of communities including south east Leicester, Great Glen, and Newton Harcourt, and also within 2-10km of a broader range of communities. This area could connect with a proposed City-Scale GI Corridor (e.g. proposed greenway linking south east Leicester and Market Harborough) as well as the River Sence and Grand Union Canal. It could provide opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape.

West Market Harborough Urban Fringe
An Area which provides opportunities for creating, restoring and extending wet woodland as well as opportunities for creating buffer strips and reedbeds, restoring and managing rivers and streams. This area could bridge a gap in the provision of accessible natural greenspace sites of varying sizes on the doorstep of communities including Market Harborough and Lubenham, and also within 2-10km of a broader range of communities. This area could connect with a proposed City-Scale GI Corridor (e.g. proposed greenway linking Market Harborough and the Grand Union Canal) and provide opportunities to enhance the character and distinctiveness of the landscape and to manage flood risk.

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