

Hallow Neighbourhood Plan
Hallow Parish Council and Malvern Hills District Council
Response to Examiner's Clarification Note (17th March 2021)
25th March 2021

Points for Clarification	Response from Hallow Parish Council (HPC) and Malvern Hills District Council (MHDC)
<p>Policy HAL1</p> <p>1. Paragraph 6.13 of the Neighbourhood Plan refers to the site appraisal of potential sites undertaken by consultants AECOM, and by the District Council. I have taken the latter reference to refer to the site assessment undertaken as part of work to prepare the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review. Please confirm this understanding is correct.</p>	<p>The District Council site assessments referred to in paragraph 6.13 refer to the Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) undertaken as part of the work preparing for the South Worcestershire Development Plan Review.</p>
<p>Policy HAL3</p> <p>2. The term “other relevant studies e.g., those relating to landscape and heritage” is imprecise in that it does not adequately guide parties preparing development schemes and</p>	<p>Paragraph 16 of the Framework says that policies should be clearly written and unambiguous so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals.</p>

<p>does not provide a basis for decision making. I invite comment on my intention to delete this term.</p>	<p>In light of the above, it is agreed that the term “<i>other relevant studies e.g., those relating to landscape and heritage</i>” is imprecise in that it does not adequately guide parties preparing development schemes and does not provide a basis for decision making.</p>
<p>Policy HAL4</p> <p>3. The term “other relevant planning guidance” is imprecise in that it does not adequately guide parties preparing development schemes and does not provide a basis for decision making. I invite comment on my intention to delete his term.</p>	<p>Paragraph 16 of the Framework says that policies should be clearly written and unambiguous so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals.</p> <p>In light of the above, it is agreed that the term “<i>other relevant guidance</i>” is imprecise in that it does not adequately guide parties preparing development schemes and does not provide a basis for decision making.</p>
<p>Policy HAL8</p> <p>4. Regulation 16 representations have queried the inclusion of significant areas of intensively managed arable and livestock land within the identified Green Infrastructure network. I have noted the comment of the Parish Council on Regulation 16 representations states “<i>The NDP does not identify large areas of arable land as GI per se, such areas are identified as part of the GI network as they are within the key GI corridors of the River Severn and the land around and linking to Spindlewood.</i>” The Green Infrastructure network identified on the Policies Map and on Map 13 of the Neighbourhood Plan is presented with precise boundaries and</p>	<p>Hallow Parish Council has set out the sources of information and the methodology for identifying the Green Infrastructure boundaries proposed in Policy HAL8 in Appendix A.</p> <p>Further clarification can be provided by the Parish Council if required.</p> <p>District Council officers are supportive of the principle of Policy HAL8 but are unclear whether all parts of the proposed Green Infrastructure Network identified on Map 13 meet the Framework definition of “<i>a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.</i>”</p> <p>District Council officers note that:</p>

<p>those boundaries are used to define where Policy HAL8 is to apply. Please direct me to the evidence that supports the precise boundaries adopted in particular with respect to inclusion of significant areas of intensively managed arable and livestock land?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Environmental Character Areas (ECA's - Map 1 in Appendix A) do not identify Green Infrastructure per se – the purpose of the ECA's is to inform GI priorities in the event that there is a development proposal on the land. We note that the first line of the HPC Methodology says that the ECAs were used as a "starting point" in developing Policy HAL8. • The status of the Green Spaces identified on Map 6 in Appendix A is unclear. The Green Spaces are not identified as Green Spaces in SWDP 38 or proposed Local Green Spaces in Policy HAL6. Map 6 has been taken from Figure 19 (page 48) of the Ecological Search for Hallow, but the evidence underpinning the map and status of the identified Green Spaces is unclear. • Arable land is identified on Figure 6 (page 27) of the Ecological Search for Hallow.
<p>Policy HAL13</p> <p>5. The third paragraph of the policy which refers to <i>“the benefits of the proposal”</i> does not have sufficient regard for paragraph 197 of the Framework which requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. If the reference to <i>“the benefits of the proposal”</i> is deleted the remainder of the third paragraph duplicates national policy. Paragraph 16 of the Framework states <i>“Plans should serve a clear purpose, avoiding unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area (including policies in this Framework,</i></p>	<p>The aim of the third paragraph of Policy HAL3 was to reflect the intention of paragraph 197 of the Framework.</p> <p>However, it is now recognised that balancing the scale of harm / loss against the “benefits of the proposal” (as proposed in HAL 13) and “the significance of the heritage asset” (paragraph 197 of the Framework) may result in different outcomes and, as a consequence, the wording of the third paragraph does not have sufficient regard to the Framework.</p>

<p><i>where relevant</i>)." I invite comment on my intention to recommend the third paragraph of the policy is deleted on this basis.</p>	<p>It is accepted that if the third paragraph was re-worded to accord with paragraph 197 of the Framework then it would unnecessarily duplicate the Framework.</p>
<p>Policy HAL15</p> <p>6. It is inappropriate to include the term "<i>to Worcester</i>" as the Neighbourhood Plan can only relate to land within the Neighbourhood Area. I intend to recommend a modification in this respect so that the policy has sufficient regard for national policy and "<i>is clearly written and unambiguous, so it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals</i>" as required by paragraph 16d) of the Framework. I invite comment on this proposed modification.</p>	<p>It is acknowledged that the Neighbourhood Plan can only relate to land within the Neighbourhood Area.</p> <p>We would welcome a re-wording of the policy to ensure that it has regard to national policy and ensure that it is clear and unambiguous.</p>

**Sources of Information and Methodology for Identifying
the Green Infrastructure Boundaries proposed in Policy HAL8**

The Green Infrastructure network identified on the Policies Map and on Map 13 of the Neighbourhood Plan is presented with precise boundaries and those boundaries are used to define where Policy HAL8 is to apply. Please direct me to the evidence that supports the precise boundaries adopted in particular with respect to inclusion of significant areas of intensively managed arable and livestock land?

Planning Policy Framework

National planning policy defines Green Infrastructure (GI) as:

“A network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities.”

The South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016) Policy 5 on GI includes three components: component A deals with new housing development and is not relevant to the current matter; components B and C are as follows:

“B. The precise form and function(s) of GI will depend on local circumstances and the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy’s priorities. Developers should seek to agree these matters with the local planning authority in advance of a planning application. Effective management arrangements should also be clearly set out and secured. Once a planning permission has been implemented, the associated GI will be protected as Green Space (SWDP 38 refers).

C. Other than specific site allocations in the development plan, development proposals that would have a detrimental impact on important GI attributes within the areas identified as “protect and enhance” or “protect and restore”, as identified on the Environmental Character Areas Map, will not be permitted unless:

- i. A robust, independent assessment of community and technical need shows the specific GI typology to be surplus to requirements in that location; and*
- ii. Replacement of, or investment in, GI of at least equal community and technical benefit is secured.”*

In developing Policy HAL8 the Parish Council have followed the following key principles as set out in national planning policy, GI should:

- be a network
- be multi-functional
- be urban and rural
- deliver a wide range of benefits

And in defining Hallow’s GI the following key principles in SWDP Policy 5:

- precise form and function will depend on local circumstances and the *Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy*'s priorities; and
- the areas identified as “protect and enhance” or “protect and restore”, as identified on the Environmental Character Areas Map have been central to the GI network identified.

Sources

In developing HAL8 the following sources have been used:

Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy [link](#) and evidence base documents [link](#) and the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Priority Areas interactive map [link](#)

The work of the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Partnership to identify 30 Worcestershire Environmental Character Areas (ECAs) [link](#)

Ecological Search for Hallow (Worcestershire County Council) - [link](#)

DEFRA's Magic Map Application [link](#)

Methodology

Using the ECA work as a starting point, Hallow falls within three broad ECAs:

- ECA1 Teme Valley and Wyre Forest
- ECA2 Severn Valley North (this is not referenced in the Background/Justification to policy HAL8)
- ECA22 Severn Meadows Corridor

ECA1 and ECA2 are identified in the work cited above as “protect and enhance”, ECA22 as an of “protect and restore”. These areas are identified for particular attention under SWDP Policy 5C. In such areas, development proposals that would have a detrimental impact on important GI attributes will not be permitted unless the policy limitations of Policy 5 are met.

Taking the ECAs as the starting point and strategic context the Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy was used to identify the overarching attributes of each of the ECAs.

For ECA1 these are:

1. Teme Valley and Wyre Forest	
Strategic GI Approach	Protect and enhance environmental quality / invest in socio-economic enhancements.
Overarching principles – Environment	Enhance stream and river corridors. Protect ancient countryside character. Protect and enhance the ancient woodland habitats of the Wyre Forest. Enhance and expand acid grassland habitats.
Overarching principles – Socio-Economic	Enhance economic wealth and address health inequalities. Main economic issues: below average household income. Main health issues: respiratory, heart diseases and mental health.

Source: Table D1, page 55 (Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy)

For ECA2:

2. Severn Valley North	
Strategic GI Approach	Protect and enhance environmental quality / invest in socio-economic enhancements.
Overarching principles – Environment	Restoration of the Severn floodplain.
Overarching principles – Socio-Economic	Enhance economic wealth and address health inequalities. Main economic issues: below average household income. Main health issues: heart diseases.

For the Severn Meadows:

22. Severn Meadows Corridor	
Strategic GI Approach	Restore environmental quality / invest in socio-economic enhancements.
Overarching principles – Environment	Protect and enhance multi-functional Severn river corridor.
Overarching principles – Socio-Economic	Opportunities to reduce the incidence of health inequalities and increase household incomes.

Source: Table D1, page 60 (Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy)

In developing Policy HAL8 various approaches were considered ranging from a simple area wide policy with no accompanying map, through to a policy with indicative or thematic mapping. The final outcome, following discussions and comments from Malvern Hills District, it was decided a more detailed map was needed if the policy was to provide certainty and clarity for decision makers.

To this end, the Parish Council employed, in conjunction with the strategic documents already referenced, the more detailed mapping provided by Worcestershire County Council in the *Ecological Search for Hallow*. A number of the maps from this document are reproduced in the HNDP as Maps 9, 10, 15 and 16.

This document was used as the basis for drawing up the boundaries on the HNDP Policies Map, this boundary sought to identify and include the following:

- The corridors of the Severn Valley and Laugherne Brook;
- Designated sites – Local Wildlife Sites and Grassland Inventory Sites (Map 2 of this note);
- Habitat Inventory Sites, including Biodiversity Action Partnership (BAP) and other grassland sites (Map 3). Overlaying this information with the BAP Habitat Network shows a good fit with the GI network identified on Map13 of the HNDP (Map 4);
- Tree and woodland habitats (Map 5) and orchards; and
- Green Spaces identified in Figure 19 of the *Ecological Search* (Map 6).

Based on these key elements of Hallow’s GI network the composite map included in the HNDP was produced. This is considered to be compatible with the strategic

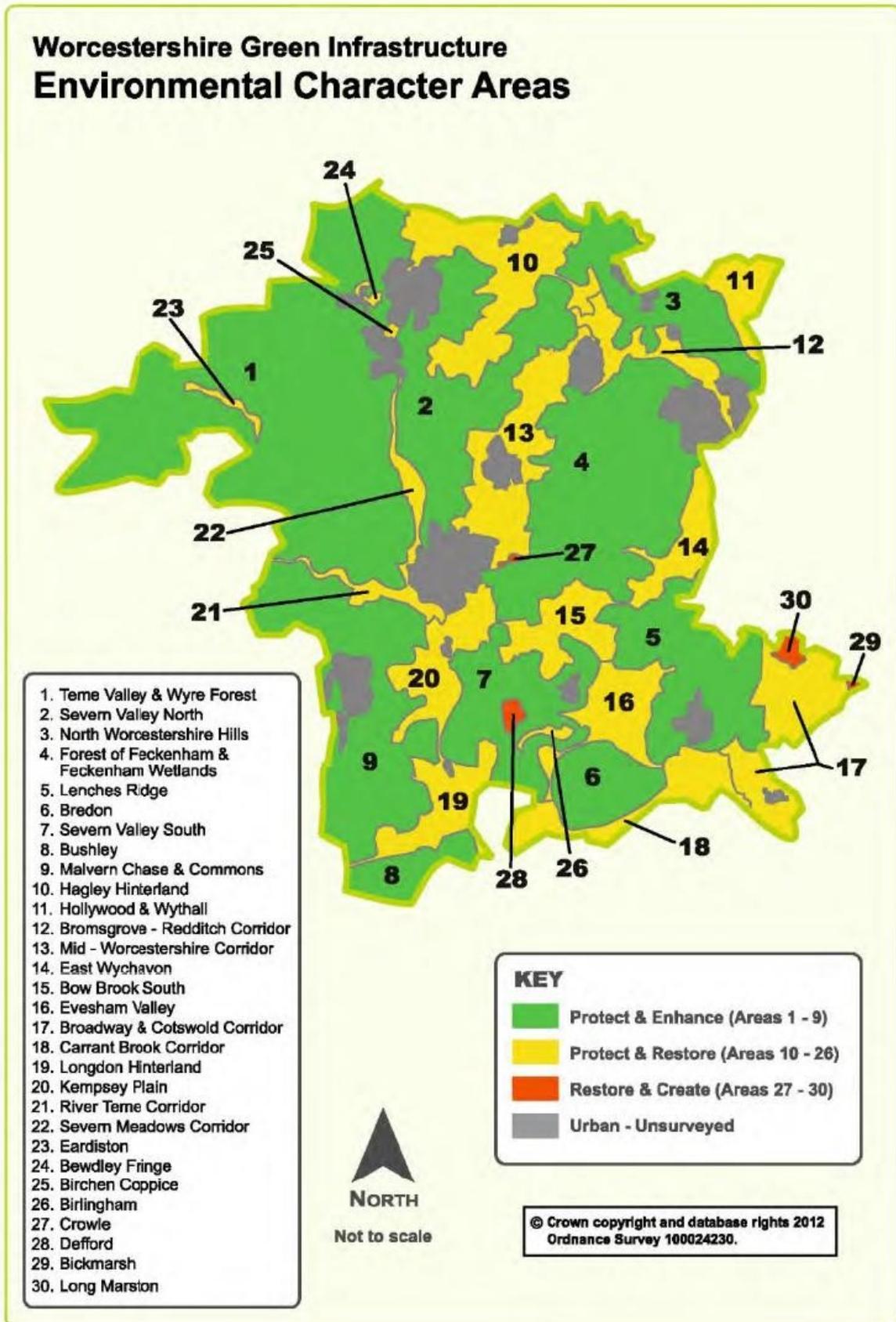
approach set out for each ECA and to be a suitable response to the overarching principles set in the ECAs to:

- Enhance stream and river corridors
- Protect ancient countryside character
- Protect and enhance ancient woodland habitats
- Enhance and expand acid grassland habitats
- Restore the Severn floodplain
- Protect and enhance the multi-functional Severn Corridor

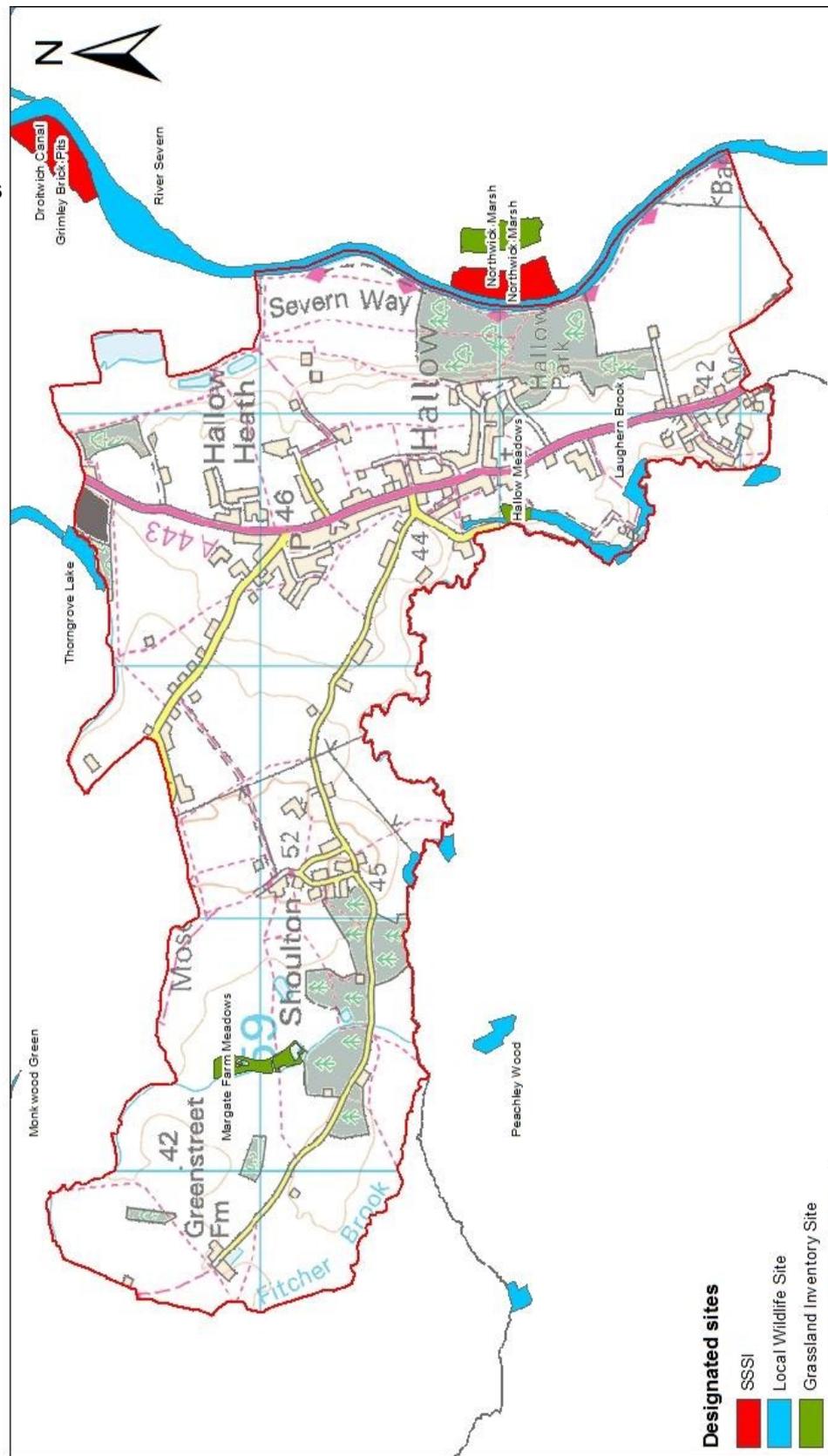
By mapping the GI resources in this way and through Policy HAL8 the HNPD will ensure that the GI network in the neighbourhood area is given proper consideration when making planning decisions.

•

Map 1. Environmental Character Areas (Source: Worcestershire Green Infrastructure Strategy)



Map 2. Hallow Des
Ecological Search for Hallow



worcestershire
county council

County Hall,
Spetchley Road,
Worcester WR5 2NP

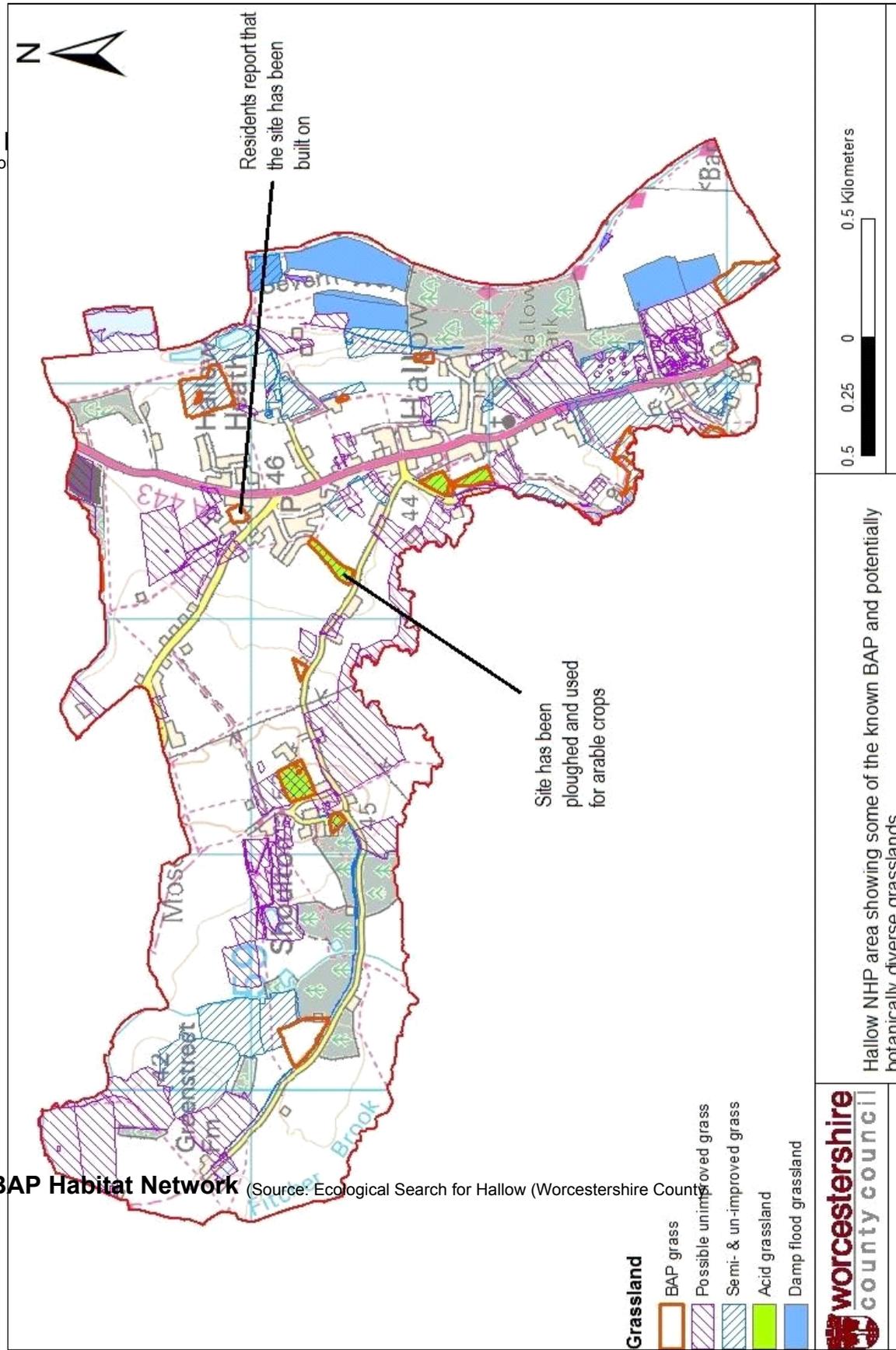
Scale: 1:19,382

Hallow NHP area showing designated sites of nature conservation significance

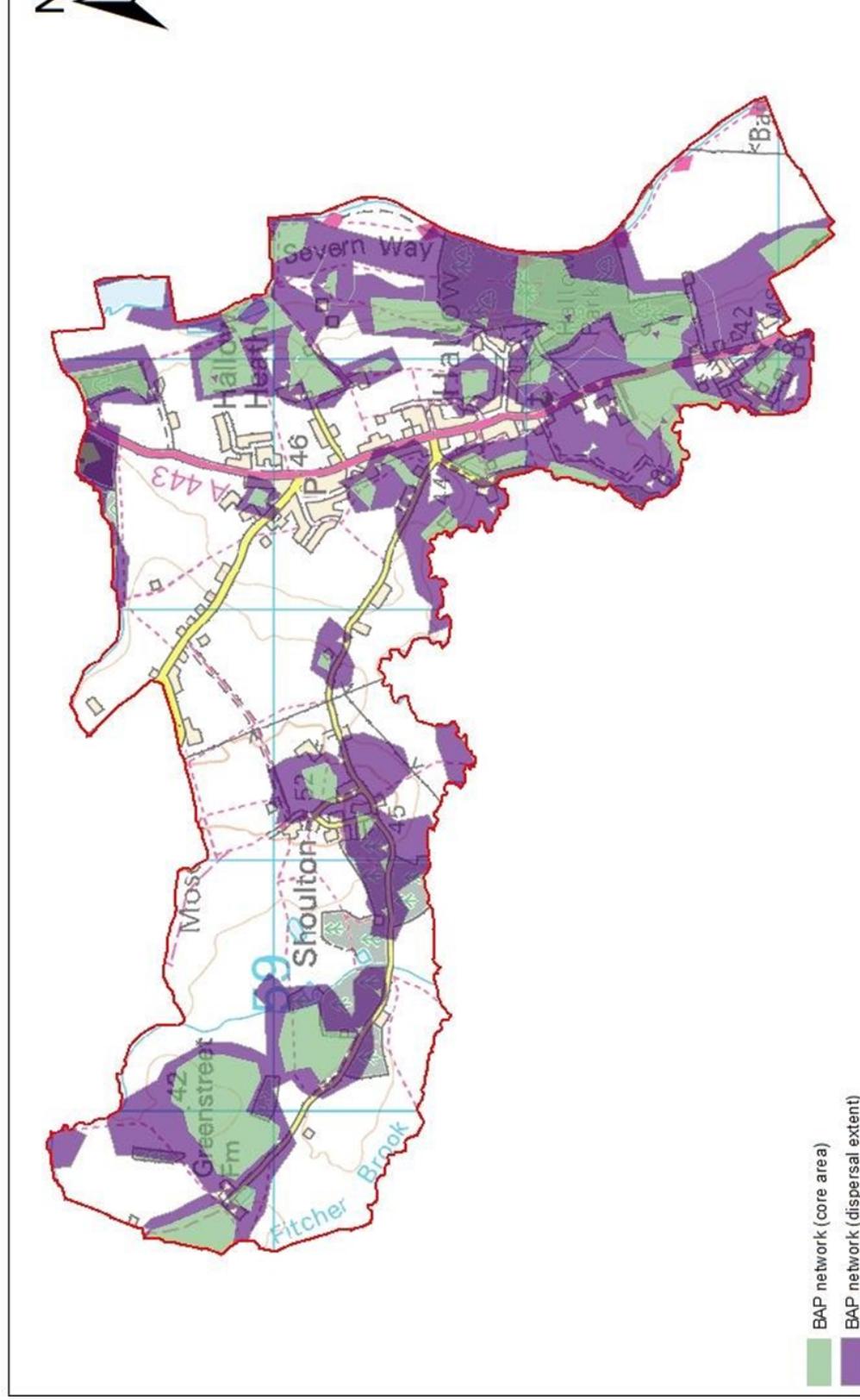
0.5 0.25 0 0.5 Kilometers

© Crown copyright and database rights
2019 Ordnance Survey 100024230

Map 3. BAP and
Hallow (Worcestershire Co



Map 4. Merged BAP Habitat Network (Source: Ecological Search for Hallow (Worcestershire County Council))



- BAP network (core area)
- BAP network (dispersal extent)



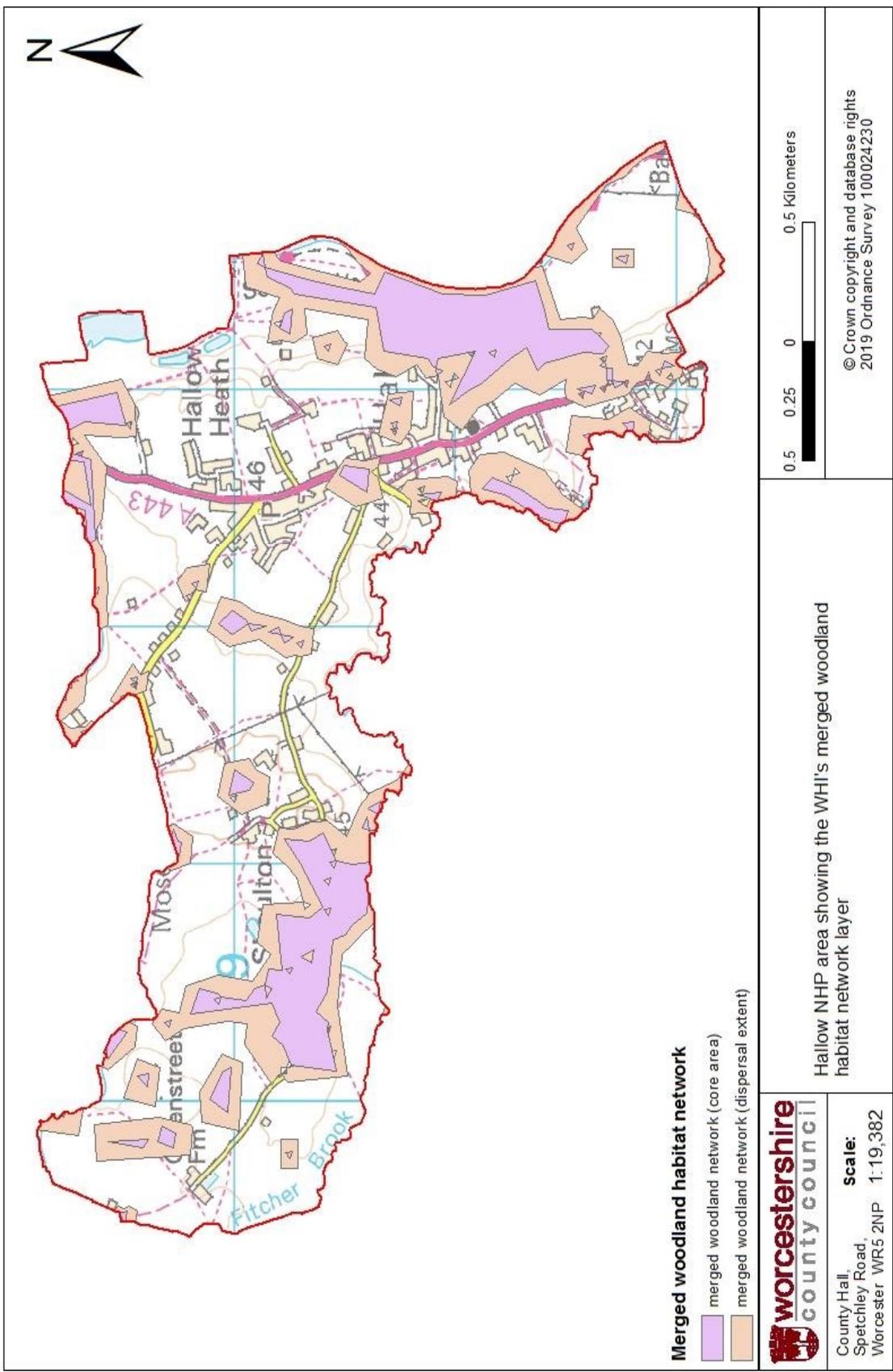
County Hall,
Spetchley Road,

Scale:

Hallow NHP area showing the WHI's merged Biodiversity
Action Plan habitat network



Map 5. Tree and Woodland
 Council)



Map 6. Green Space

