

**Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Additional Site Options
Ecological Assessment:**

Windmill Lane and Kenilworth Road

**Habitat Biodiversity Audit Partnership for Warwickshire, Coventry
and Solihull**

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Ecological Services Warwickshire County Council



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SITE: WINDMILL LANE & KENILWORTH ROAD

Area: 16.5 hectares

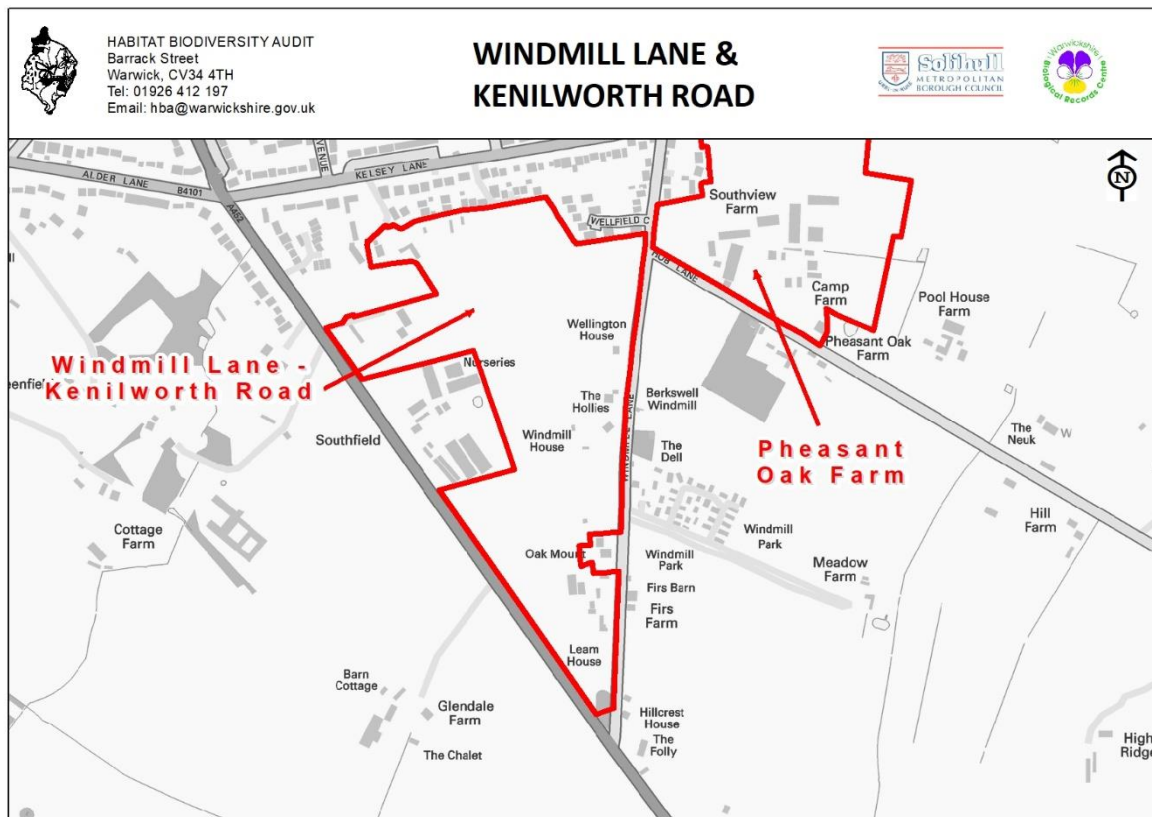


Figure 1 Site Location

Overview

The development parcel abuts the southern extent of the sub-urban commuter village of Balsall Common consisting of small fields of improved grassland in the Arden landscape. Fields are separated by neglected hedgerows that have become shrubby with frequent gaps creating sections of linear trees. The northern grasslands contain characteristics of flood-meadow with patches of swamp and marshy grassland.

Residential properties of Kelsey Lane and Wellfield Close determine the northern boundary transposing to Windmill Lane enclosing small-holdings of Wellington House, The Hollies and Windmill House abutting Leam House incorporating veteran trees categorized as broad-leaved parkland.

Berkswell Windmill, The Dell and Windmill Park lie directly opposite, the other-side of Windmill Lane. A public footpath transcends across the parcel where the western boundary follows Kenilworth Road skirting around the newly development housing unit of Elysian Gardens.

Key Features

- Wet Marsh and Marshy Grasslands
- Veteran/Notable Trees
- Broad-Leaved Parkland
- Historic Hedgerows & Wood Banks
- Pond
- Great Crested Newts

Recommendations

The existing stand of semi-natural woodland on the Kenilworth Road should be retained and hedgerows where possible should be retained and restored. Consideration should be given to the wet marshy grasslands as areas for habitat creation as wetland retention areas incorporating ponds and patches of inundated vegetation.

It is preferential that the high number of veteran/notable trees be retained and form part of enhanced and extensive green infrastructure. These important features present across the open countryside are characteristic of the Arden landscape and as such any development proposals need to retain and enhance the nature of the historic landscape.

In this case, it is likely that these landscape assets or features could be affected and as such a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment is recommended. In addition, a supplementary tree or arboriculture survey will help determine the height of tree and/or the spread of the tree's canopy so that adequate buffers can then be calculated.

A measurable target will be to retain all existing green infrastructure by a very sensitive "parcel by parcel" design strategy. The southern boundary of the development parcel is particularly sensitive where mature woodland banks and veteran/notable trees combine with former parkland to form valuable habitat immediately adjacent to the triangle formed by the intersection of Kenilworth Road and Windmill Lane. The periphery of the development should be maintained as it's age and woody nature are valuable features and worthy of retention.

Constraints

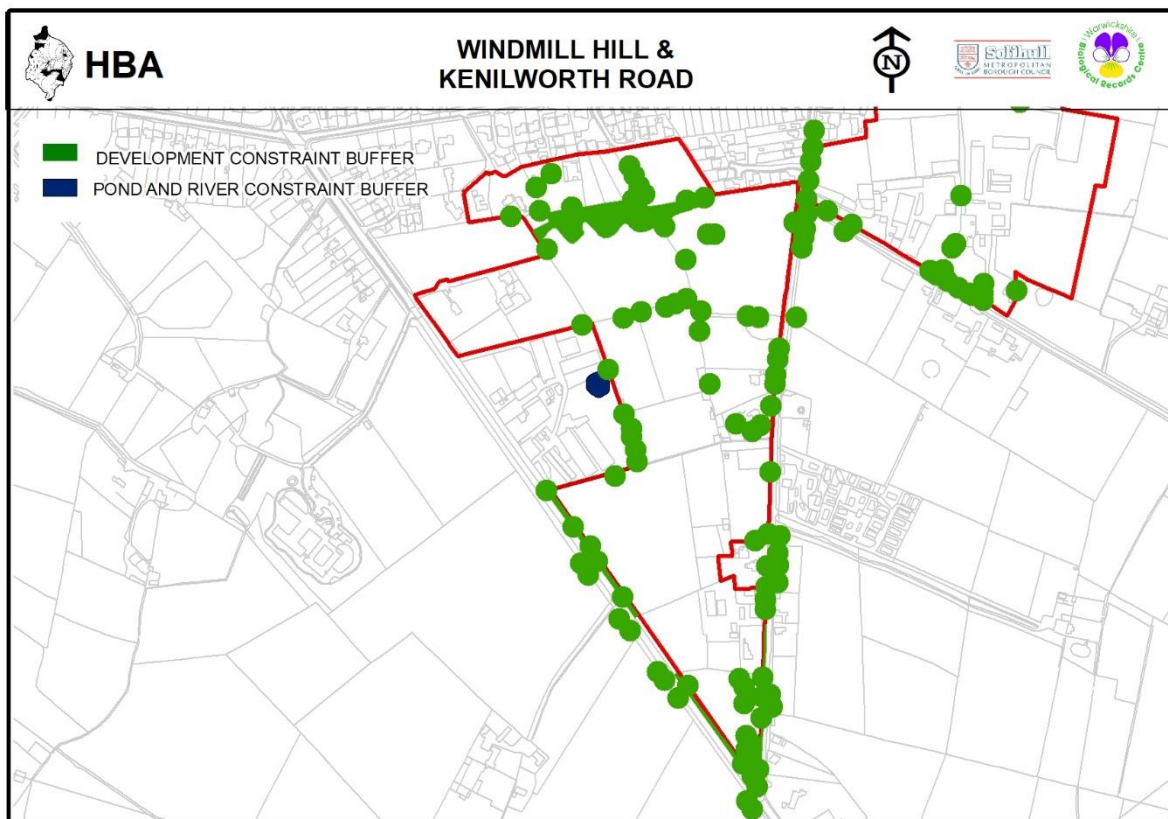


Figure 2 Constraints Map

The areas marked in green and blue on the above constraints map as a component of a very early and preliminary assessment represent existing biodiversity value and should ideally be retained and incorporated into any development proposals. They indicate where development should be avoided, and ecological enhancement encouraged. The maps show's a feasible case scenario with the aim to meet no net loss and the net gain approach. The green and blue areas at the absolute minimum highlight the need for further ecological investigation.

They include:

- 30m buffer around woodland
- 8m buffer either side of adjacent to watercourses
- 8m buffers around ponds
- 5m buffer either side of intact hedgerows
- Areas of medium to high distinctiveness habitats (Values 4, 5 & 6)

The circular green dots represent notable/veteran trees which should be retained and incorporated into green infrastructure. They are currently buffered by default at 15 metres as recommended by Natural England. A tree or arboriculture survey is recommended for the site to distinguish on such issues, determining height of tree and the spread of the tree's canopy so that adequate buffers can then be calculated. The buffers are not exact but illustrative based on the extent of the canopy from aerial photography. You could buffer these trees either by 5m from the

extent of the canopy, or by the length of the tree trunk or by a standard length being 15 to 30m depending on results from an arboriculture survey. If veteran trees are identified, a buffer of 30m would be recommended. The development parcel is characteristic of the Arden Landscape so woodland, hedgerows and notable/veteran trees are of the utmost importance.

Designated Sites

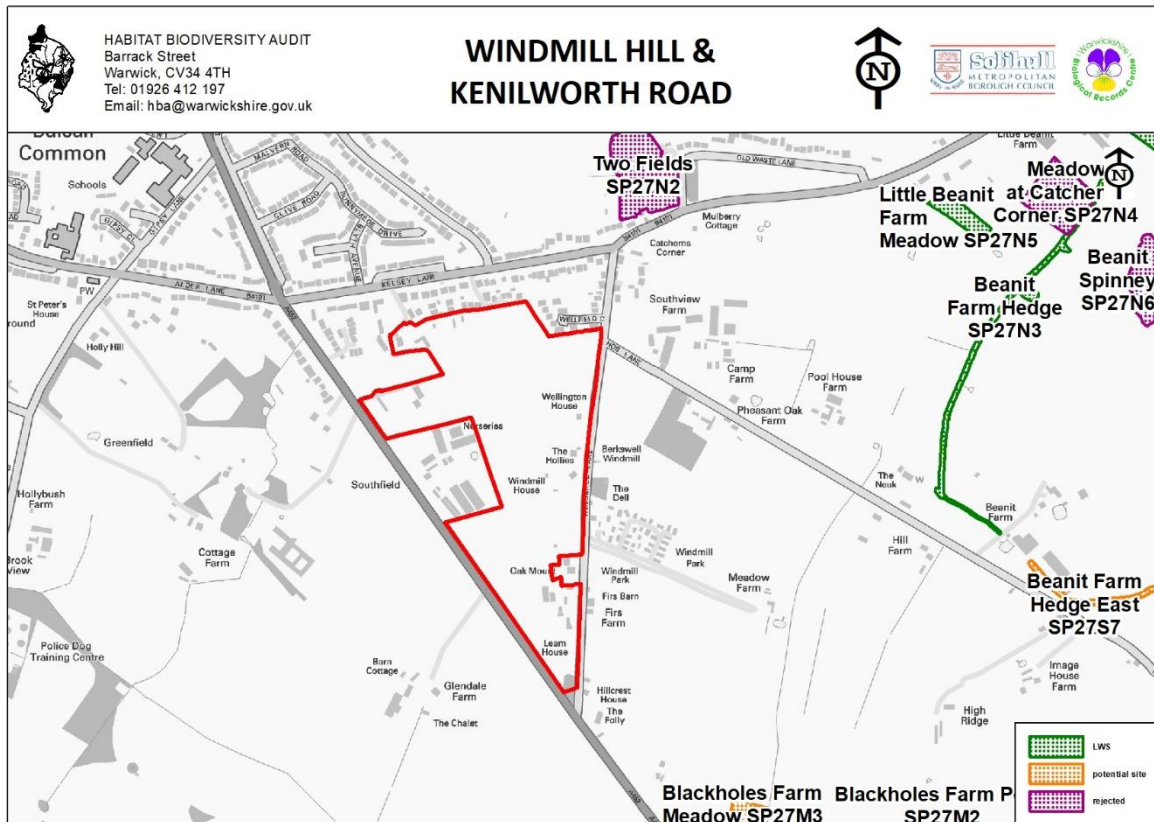


Figure 3 Site Designations

There are no designated or potential sites in or nearby to the proposed development site. It is not considered that any designated sites including Local Wildlife Sites will be affected by any proposed works regarding the development parcel.

Habitat Description

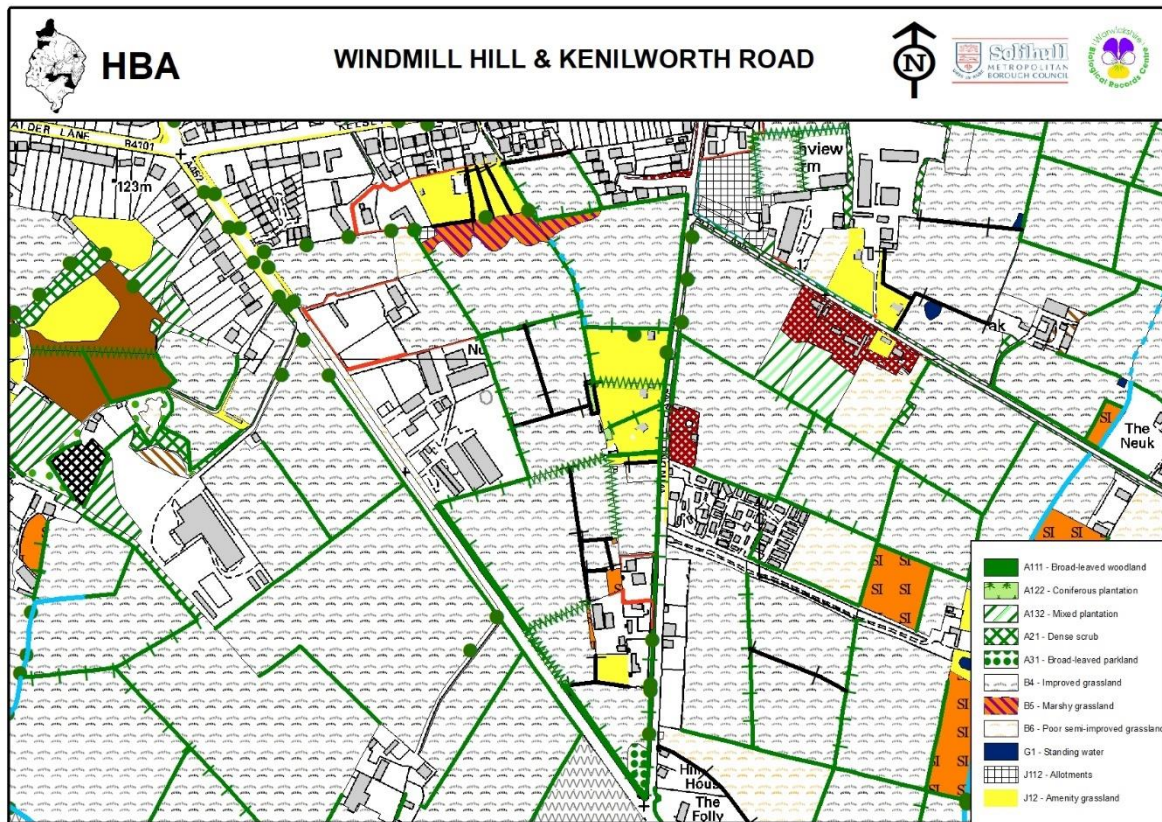


Figure 4 Phase 1 Habitats

The site consists mostly of improved grassland (B4) with low habitat distinctiveness with high sitting water levels characteristic of flood-meadow grassland with marshy grassland (B5) with high distinctiveness. The other high distinctiveness habitat is the small area of semi-natural woodland (A111) and broad-leaved parkland (A3) along the Kenilworth Road.

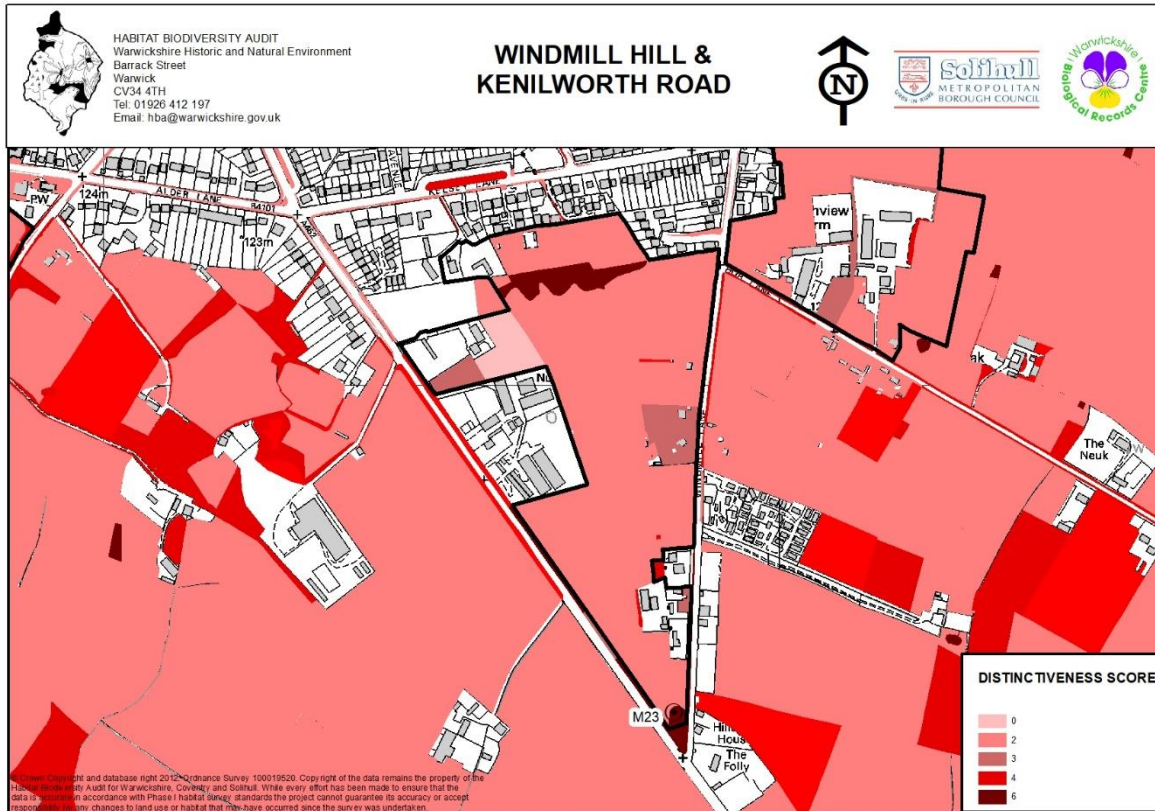


Figure 5 Habitat Distinctiveness & Target Notes

Target Notes

Number	Grid Reference	Survey Date
SP18Q18	SP2484275506	06/09/1997

Broad-leaved plantation of loosely scattered trees.

UPDATE 07/02/2020 GP

Loosely scattered broad-leaved trees particularly standard veteran pedunculate oaks (*Quercus robur*) with planted scot's pine in places now more remnant of broad-leaved parkland.

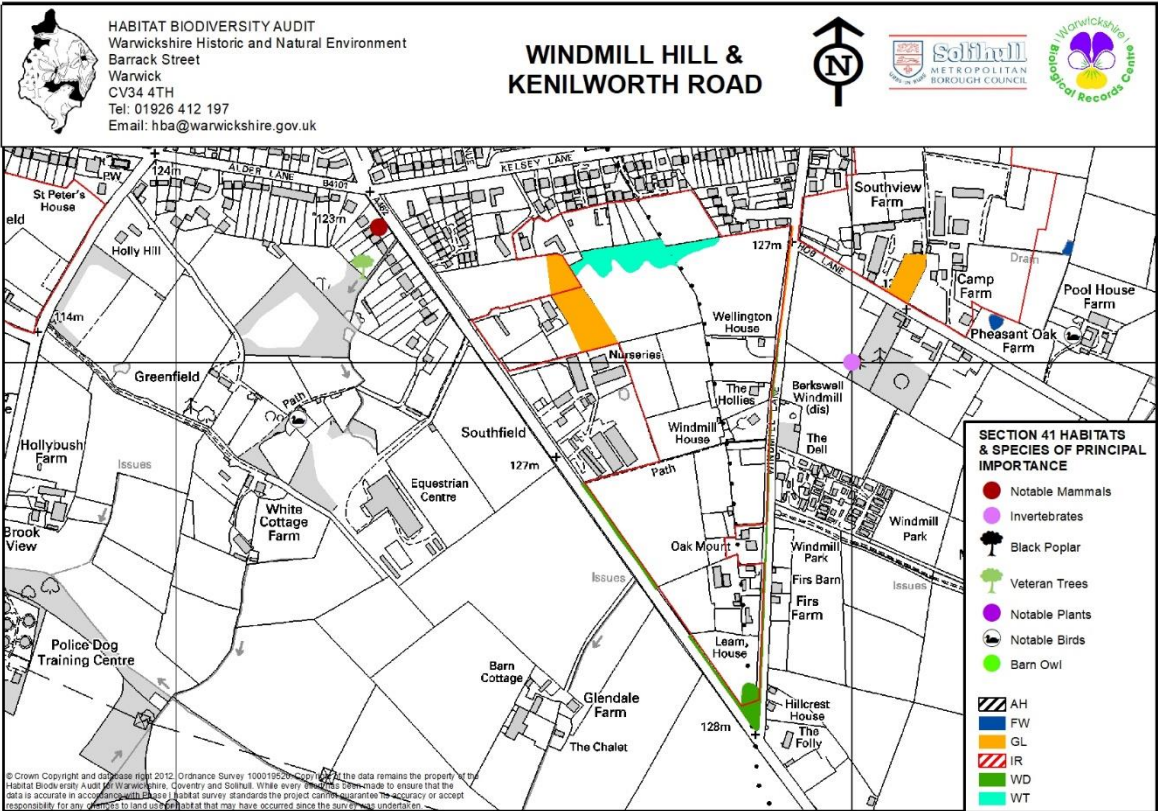


Figure 6 Section 41 Habitats and Species of Conservation Importance

Habitat Connectivity

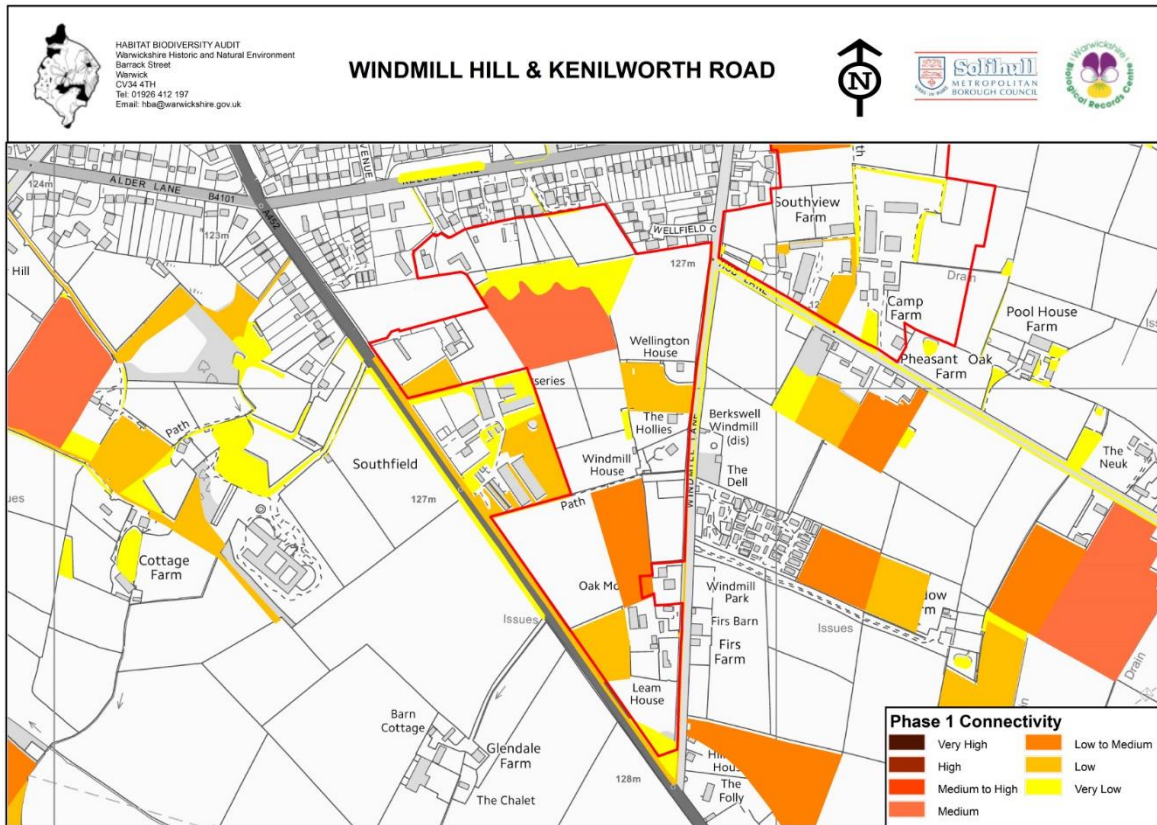


Figure 7 Habitat Connectivity

Marshy grassland ranges from Very Low - Low to Medium Connectivity where previously identified better quality grasslands occupy Low to Medium Connectivity.

Protected Species

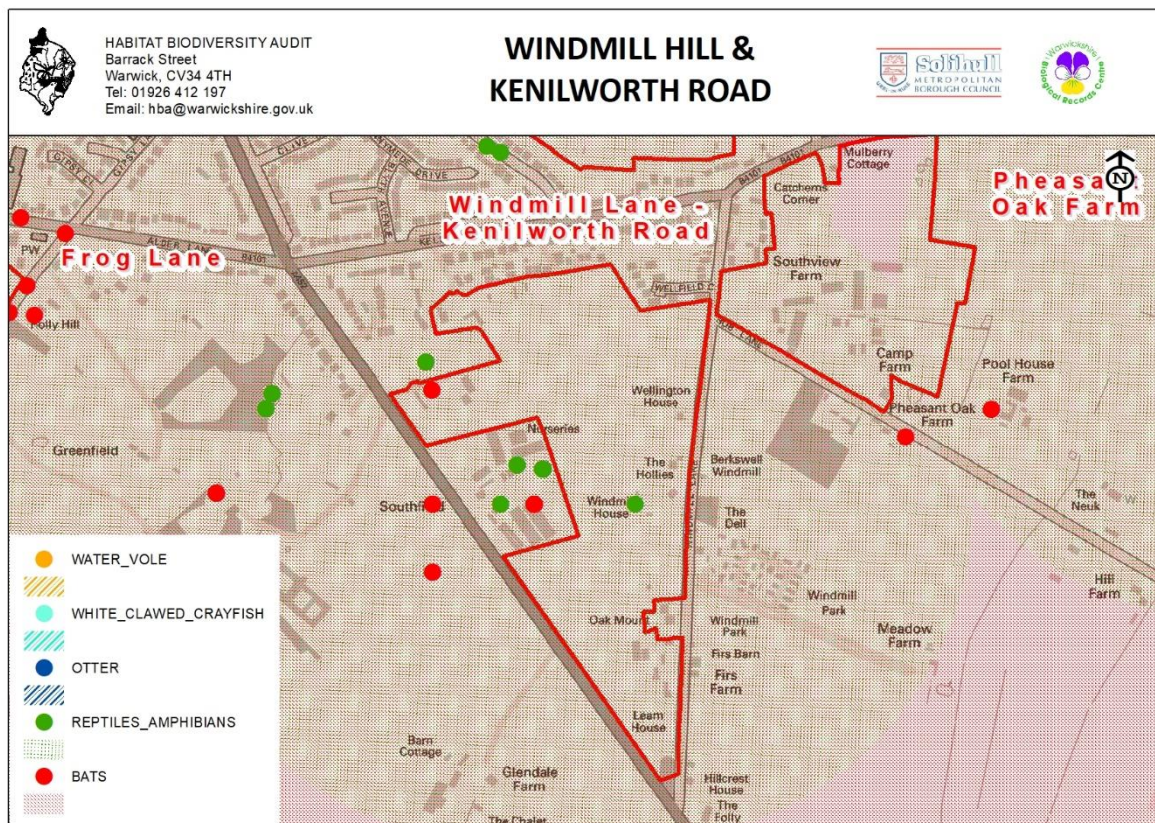


Figure 8 Protected Species

There is a number of protected or notable species recorded close to the western boundary relating to a new housing development named Elysian Gardens. As part of protected species surveys, smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulagris*), common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and great crested newts (*Tristatus cristatus*) were recorded within a pond on the eastern outskirts of the newly developed parcel by professional ecologists in 2014. Likewise, recent records for roosting and foraging Brown long-eared bats (*Plecotus auritus*) are present 100m east of the development on the other side of Kenilworth Road. Ponds and some suitable if not ideal connecting habitat were provided under previous development provision which should be enhanced within any proposed plans.

Redundant records for a bat species are present on Hob Lane 315m west of the proposed development parcel.