

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

**South of Shirley**

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

**Warwickshire Wildlife Trust**

**Ecological Services Warwickshire County Council**



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## Contents

SITE: SOUTH OF SHIRLEY.....	3
Overview .....	3
Key Features .....	4
Recommendations .....	4
Constraints .....	5
Designated Sites .....	7
Habitat Description .....	9
Target Notes.....	10
Habitat Connectivity .....	12
Protected Species.....	13

# SITE: SOUTH OF SHIRLEY

Area: 13.8 hectares

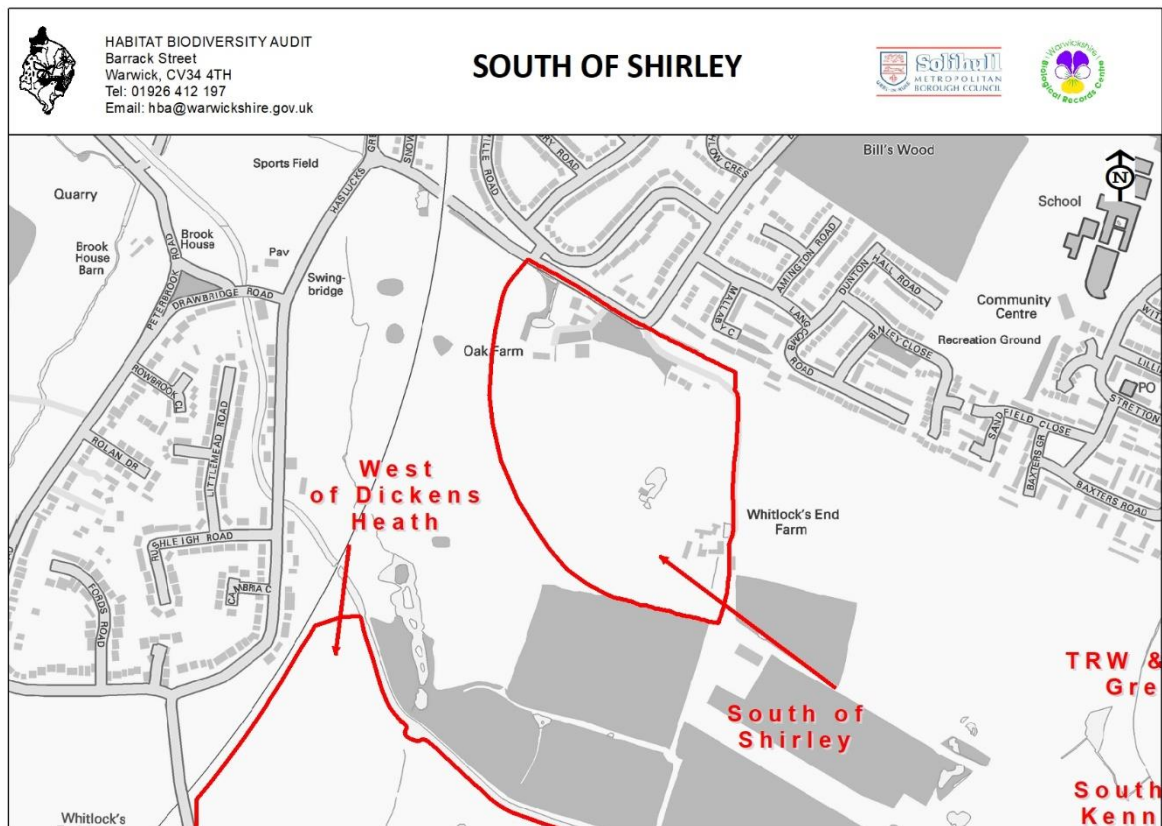


Figure 1 Site Map

## Overview

The development parcel is bordered to the north by the continuous built-up mixed residential and retail neighbourhood of Shirley. The northern boundary adjoins the rear of properties of a number of cul-de-sacs off the more major routes of Bills Lane, Hathaway and Stretton Road close to Bill's Wood and the secondary and specialist academy of Light Hall School. The south-western boundary is dominated by large stands of coniferous plantation managed as Woods Farm Christmas Trees and un-associated business and housing units within Whitlock's End Farm. Coniferous woodland plantation extends to the Stratford-on-Avon Canal where it borders remnant woodland banks composed of veteran and/or notable veteran trees.

## **Key Features**

- Semi-natural Broad-leaved Woodland
- Coniferous Plantation
- Veteran or Notable Trees
- Pond
- Constraints Equate to 17.6% of the Total Area

## **Recommendations**

Several veteran and/or notable trees form a linear block of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland bordering Bills Lane fronting Oak Farm and Woods Farm Christmas Trees. This small woodland block contained by residential and road infrastructure is of significant ecological and landscape value and as such should ardently be retained and incorporated as a potential entrance/frontage of any new development proposals.

Likewise, any veteran and/or notable trees across the parcel should be retained, buffered and incorporated into site design, as valuable habitat acting as important wildlife stepping stones connecting the district of Shirley to the open countryside to the south. These important features present across the open countryside are characteristic and as such any development proposals need to retain and enhance the nature of the landscape.

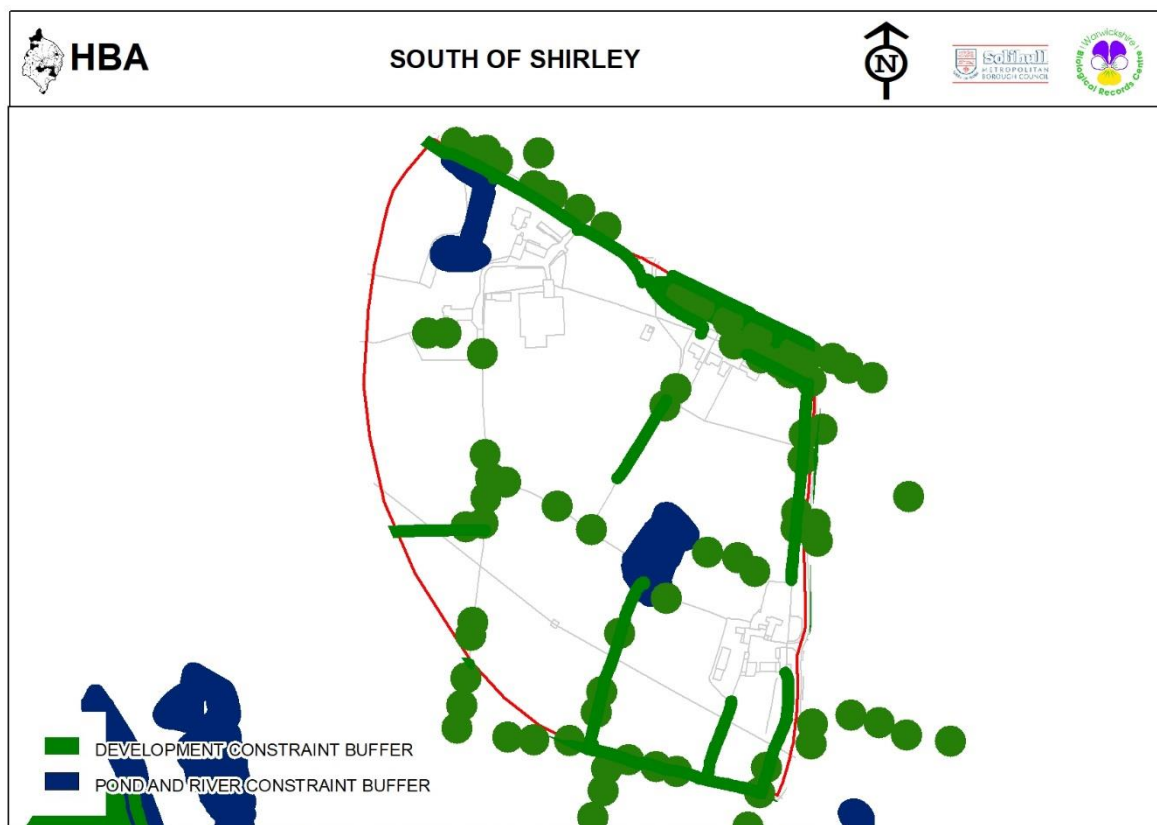
The pond complexes have been provisionally assessed to determine local wildlife site status. This complex is also an important potential site for amphibians and reptiles, which should also be assessed in conjunction with the LWS survey. These ponds could be easily incorporated into site designs and extended as sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS)

Any potentially species-rich hedgerows should be subject to a full hedgerow survey detailed in the Hedgerow Survey Handbook (2nd edition) under The Hedgerows Regulations (made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995).

The enhancement and retention of such high value habitats such as hedgerows, ponds, small brooks and mature trees should be incorporated within development proposals.

Ecological constraints equating to 17.6% of the total area of the development parcel and can be certainly incorporated into development proposals either as open green space via SUDS or as green infrastructure.

## Constraints



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 hedgerows
- Areas of medium to high distinctiveness habitats (Values 4, 5 & 6)
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Veteran/Notable Trees

Constraints equate to 17.6 % of the development parcel including an illustrative 1.1 ha (8.6%) representing a 10m buffer around all identified tree standards. Upwards of 40 trees have been identified across the parcel.

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

# Designated Sites

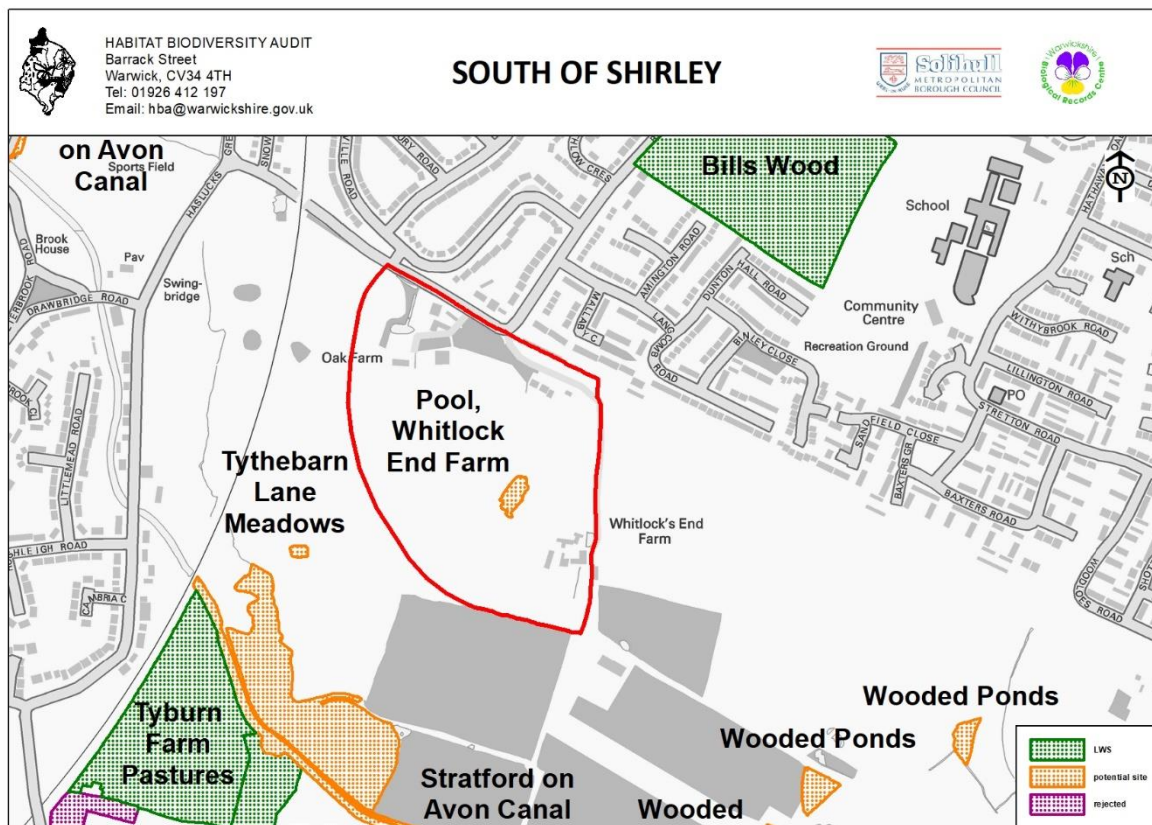


Figure 3 Site Designations

LWS NAME	STATUS	AREA (HA)	SURVEY DATE
POOL, WHITLOCK END FARM (SP17D9)	Potential LWS	0.13	24/08/19
TYTHEBARNLANE MEADOWS (SP17D14P)	Potential LWS	3.11	24/08/19
WOODED PONDS (SP27N7)	Potential LWS	0.6	24/08/19

## Potential Local Wildlife Site

### POOL, WHITLOCK END FARM (SP17D9)

Area; 0.13 ha

The fenced pond is of indeterminate quality with heavy poaching by reared livestock and is not likely to meet LWS criteria.

### WOODED PONDS (SP17D4)

Area; 0.6 ha

It was previously stated that “Those highlighted ponds should be subject to LWS standard survey to determine their conservation importance”.

It is recommended that the ponds are of considerable value to warrant a full Local Wildlife Site survey at a suitable time of year, it may be such that given the intensive nature of the surrounding habitat that the boundary be amended as appropriate.

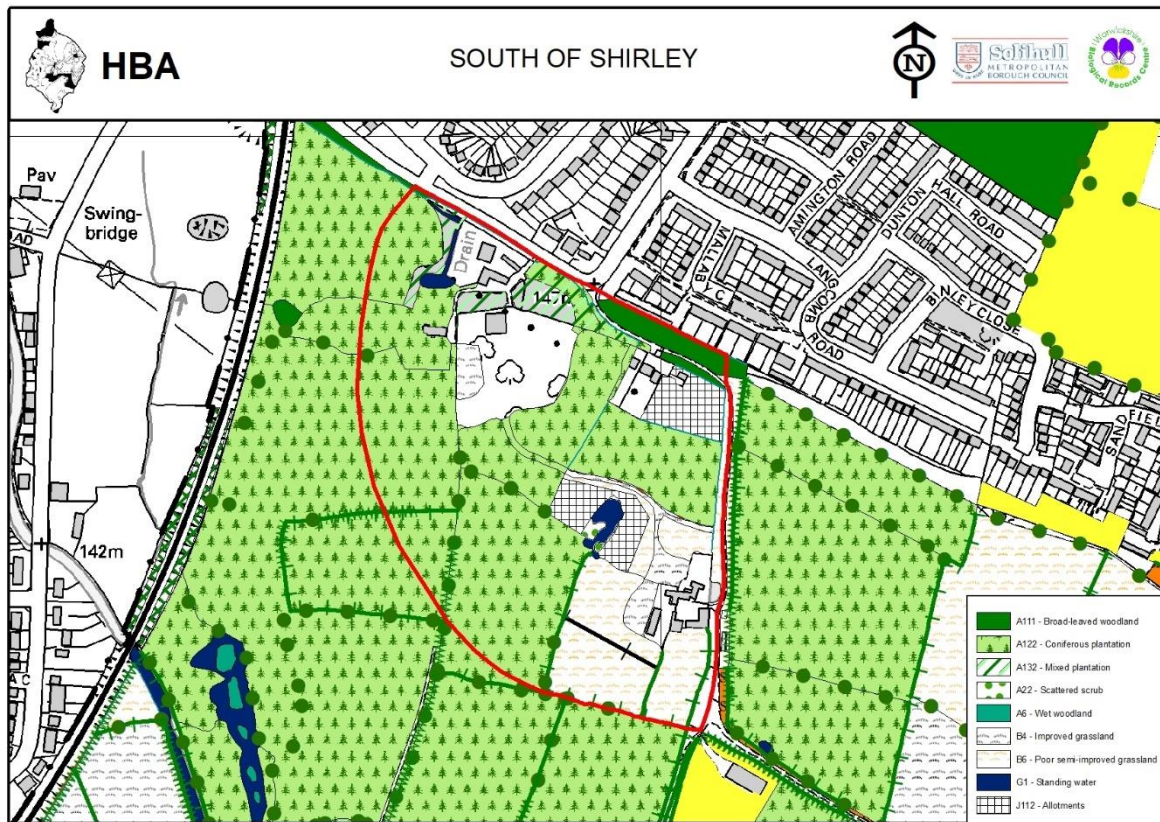
**TYTHEBARNLANE MEADOWS (SP17D14P)**

**Area; 3.1 ha**

Ponds and meadows neighbouring the Stratford-On-Avon Canal, the pLWS is deemed to significant quality to warrant a full LWS survey.

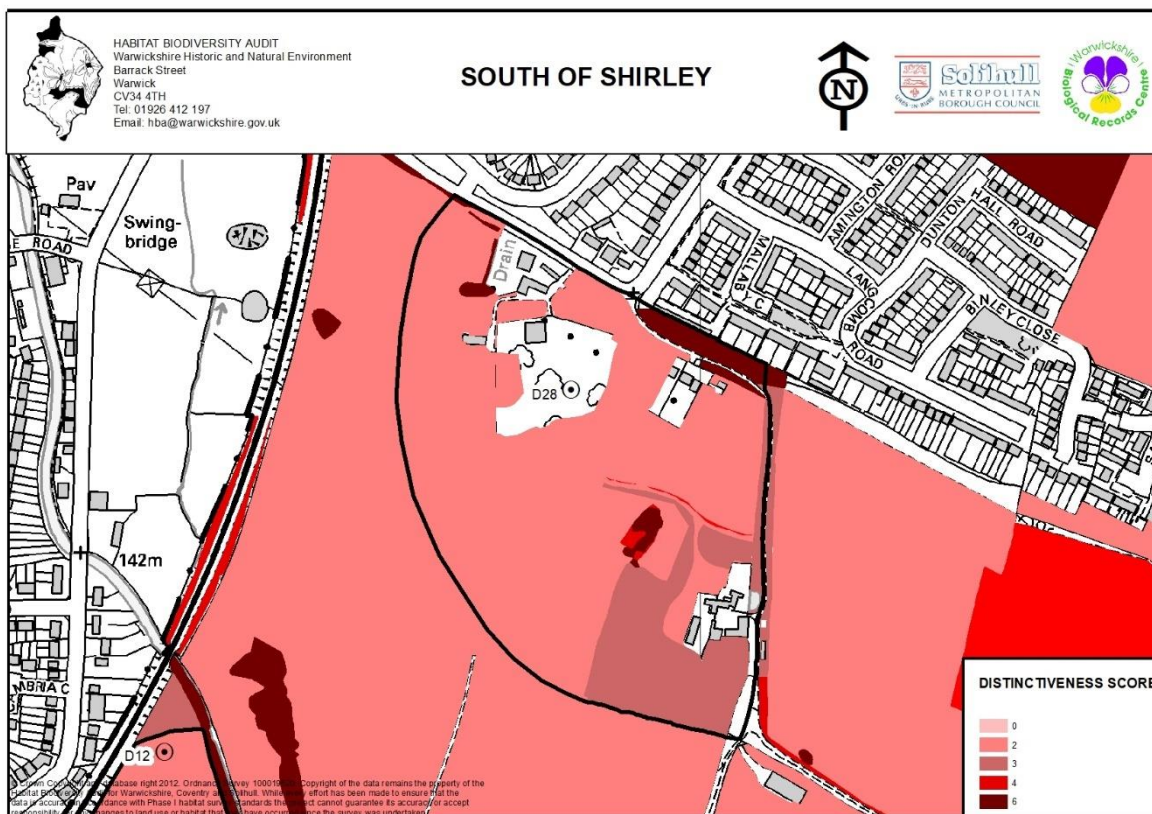


## Habitat Description



**Figure 4 Phase 1 Habitats**

Much of the habitat parcel remains coniferous plantation (A122) for xmas tree production. A pond (G1) previously noted as pLWS quality has been fenced and used for the rearing of reindeer and other livestock. Some mixed planation (A132) exists surrounding the residential Oak Farm. Bands of veteran/notable trees comprise 0.36 ha (2.6%) of broad-leaved semi-natural woodland (A111) in the north-eastern corner of the development parcel separated by Bill's Lane. Bills Lane leads to small-scale business and residential units within Whitlock End Farm, where there are some components representative of un-managed poor semi-improved grassland (B6), however much of the component is being developed to accommodate business units.



**Figure 5 Habitat Distinctiveness & Target Notes**

### Target Notes

Number	Grid Reference	Survey Date
SP17D28	SP1087277748	29/09/2011

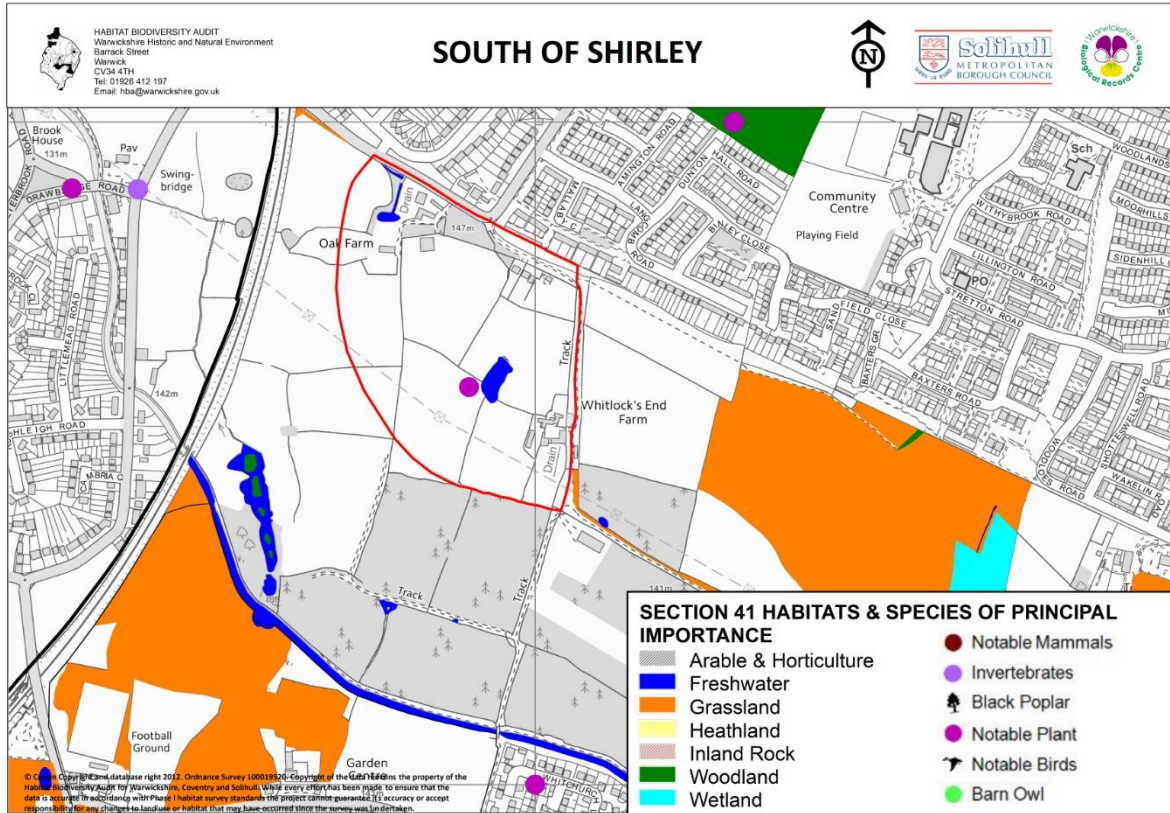
Conifer plantation managed for xmas tree production. Indications of past richness remain along the rides and includes common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), marsh woundwort, great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), tufted hair-grass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*) and Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*).

#### UPDATE 29/09/2011 CT

Industrial yard of Woods Farm Christmas Trees

#### UPDATE 24/09/2019 GP

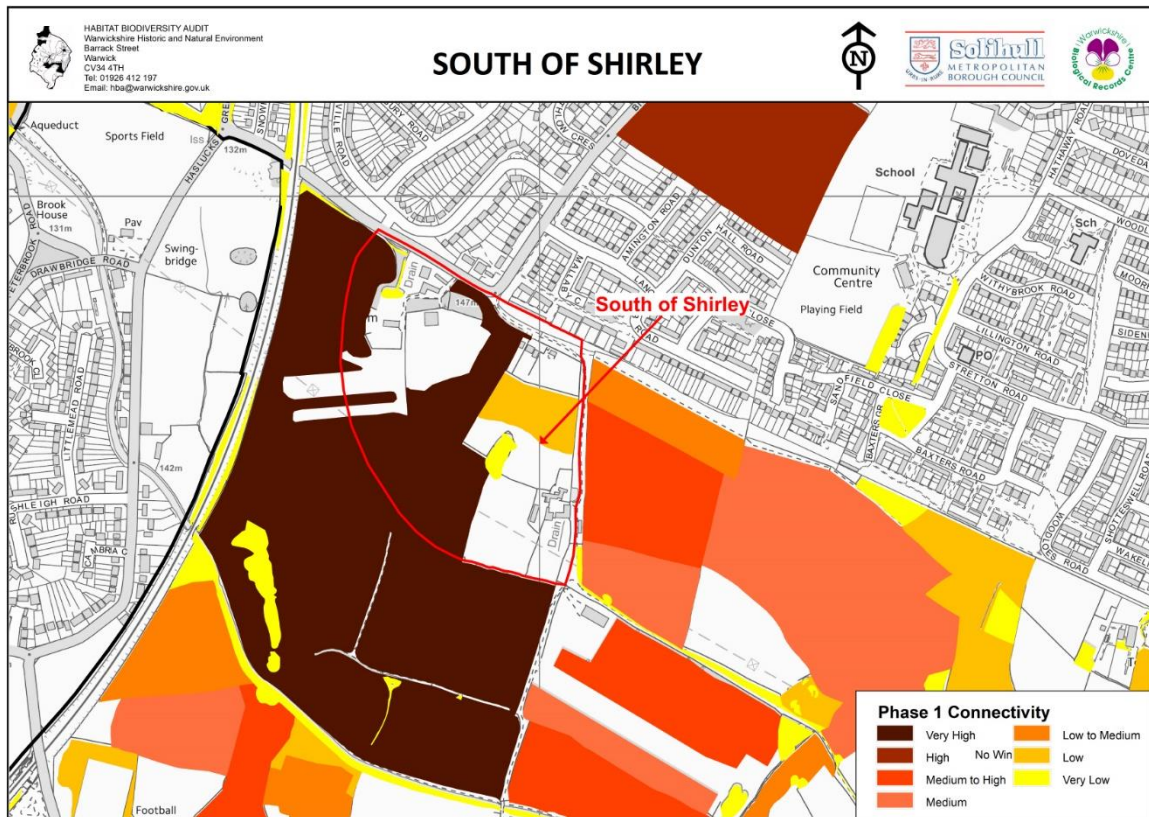
Land use remains for coniferous tree production



**Figure 6 Section 41 Habitats & Species of Principal Importance**



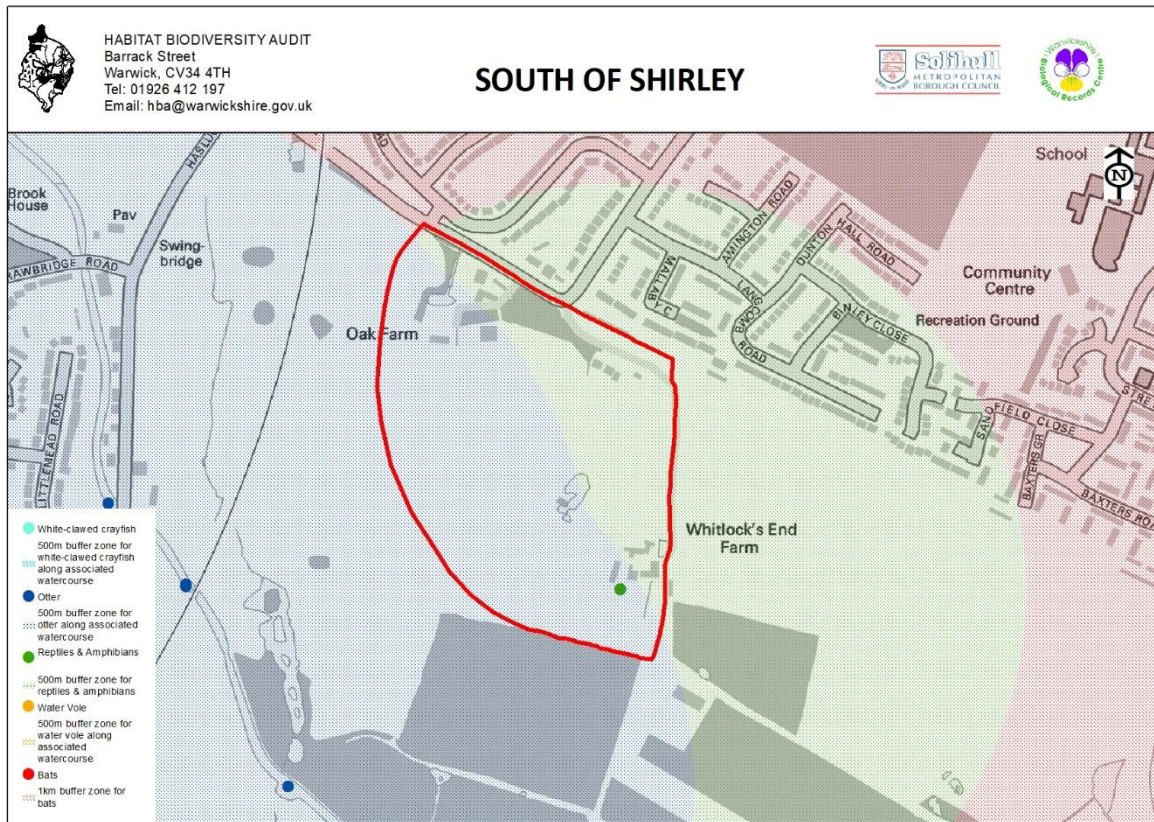
# Habitat Connectivity



**Figure 7 Habitat Connectivity**

The development parcel retains very high woodland connectivity because of the large extent of coniferous tree planting. Grassland connectivity is high to the east and south-west of the development parcel.

# Protected Species



**Figure 8 Protected Species**

Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) were recorded roosting along the Stratford-Upon-Avon-Canal in 2006. Records of Smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) were recorded within Whitlock's End Farm as part of protected species surveys carried out in 2007.

The presence or absence of great crested newts within the network of ponds on site will need to be confirmed prior to development proposals and works. Should the presence of great crested newts be confirmed an assessment of the status and distribution of the population will be required.