

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

**Lavender Hall Farm**

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

**Warwickshire Wildlife Trust**

**Ecological Services Warwickshire County Council**



**December 2019**



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# LAVENDER HALL FARM

Area: 3.8 hectares

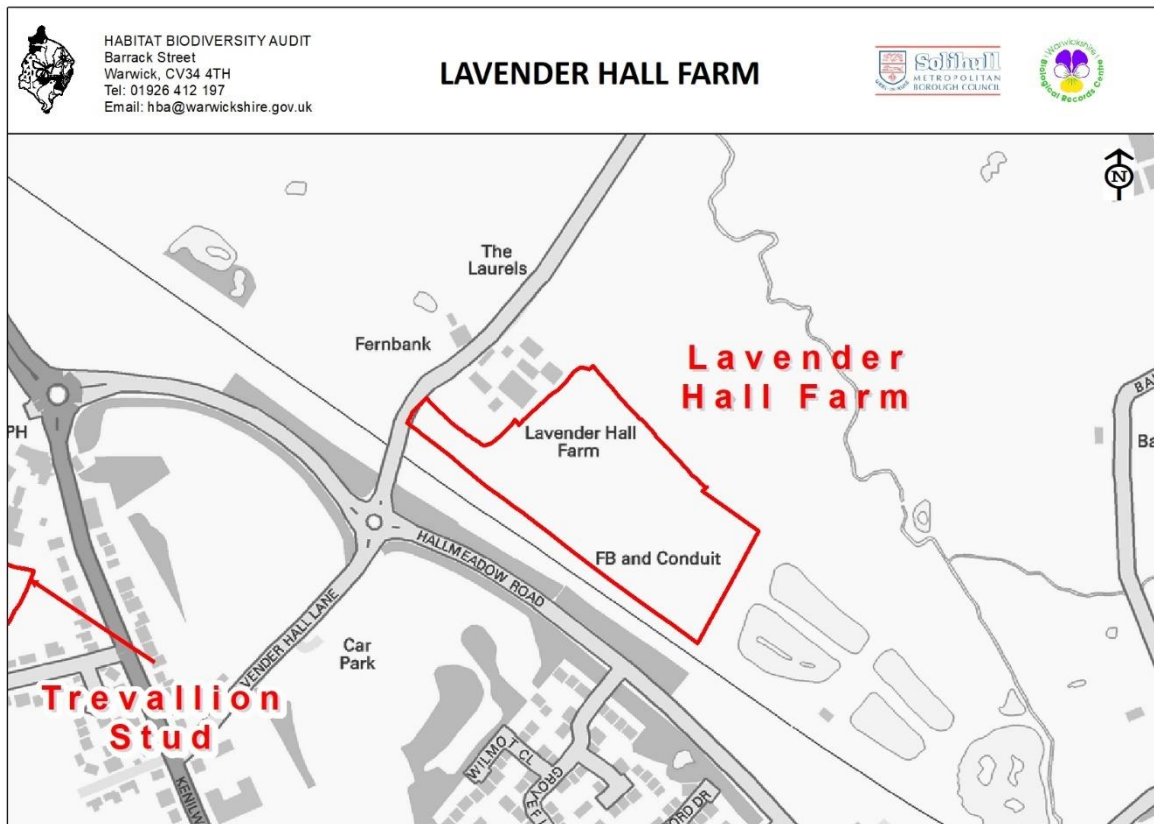


Figure 1 Site Location

## Overview

Lavender Hall Farm is a mixed land use parcel currently comprising handstanding of the mechanical yard of Multi Vehicles Mover Ltd and Lavender Hall Auto Repairs with grassland and scattered scrub sandwiched between five fishing lakes of Lavender Hall Fishery opened in 1998 on the south-eastern boundary. Scrub along the West Coast Main Line marks the southern boundary with broad-leaved planation woodland off Hallmeadow Road, across from the West Coast Main Line Railway. Lavender Hall Lane joins Hallmeadow Road at the roundabout which acts as a link to the A452 Kenilworth Road. The 16<sup>th</sup> century listed period property lies north, just outside the proposed development parcel fronting Lavender Hall Lane adjacent to the properties of Fernbank and The Laurels.

## Key Features

- Mosaic of Scattered Scrub and Poor Semi-Improved Grassland
- Veteran Tree
- Colony of Orchids
- Botanical Survey to Assess Viability of Bee Orchid Colony

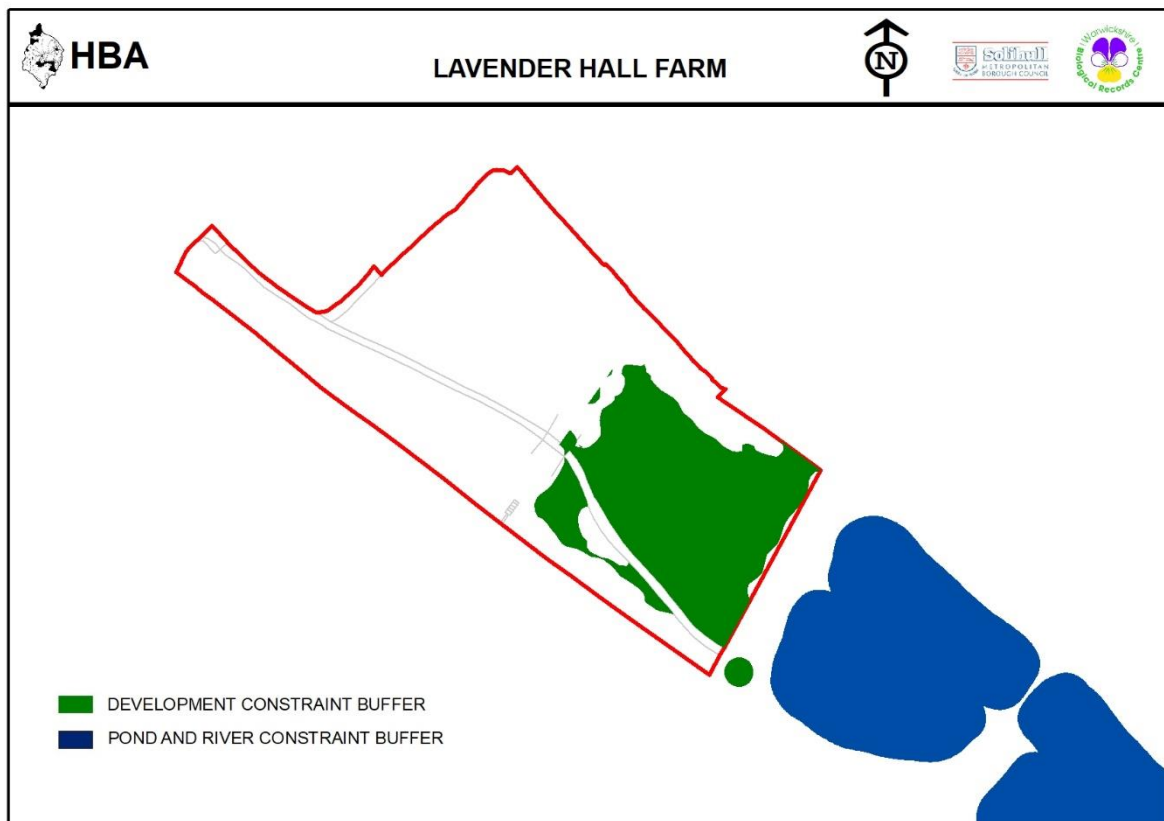
- Cutting and Translocation of Turves using Standard Machinery During Normal Construction Works
- Ecological Constraints Equate to 26.3% of the Total Area

## **Recommendations**

The central section of the development parcel from an ecological perspective holds the most value predominately by the presence of a strong population of bee orchids present within disturbed grassland and scrub, with succession over previous brownfield. It would be preferable to maintain and encourage the strongest components of the population within development proposals following an analysis of the placement and viability of the population at an appropriate time of year. As a last resort, translocation of the population should follow a site-specific carefully planned translocation methodology based on a detailed understanding of the target species requirements. The supervision of the translocation process by a specialist plant ecologist and performed by skilled machine operators using standard machinery would improve the likelihood of success. The translocation process would take place during normal excavation or site preparation works.

It is recommended that this central band of poor semi-improved grassland and scattered scrub be subject to an LWS survey. Considering the temporal nature of both the short perennial grassland vegetation and the bee orchid population; specifically, the species niche requirements that require a high percentage of bare ground and short ephemeral vegetation to flourish. It is conceivable that if the compartment does not receive direct management to combat scrub succession it will become unsuitable to support the orchid population. Considering the latter, unless the areas being retained within development proposals receive active management to maintain short and ephemeral vegetation, translocation becomes the preferable mitigation measure.

## Constraints



**Figure 2 Constraints Map**

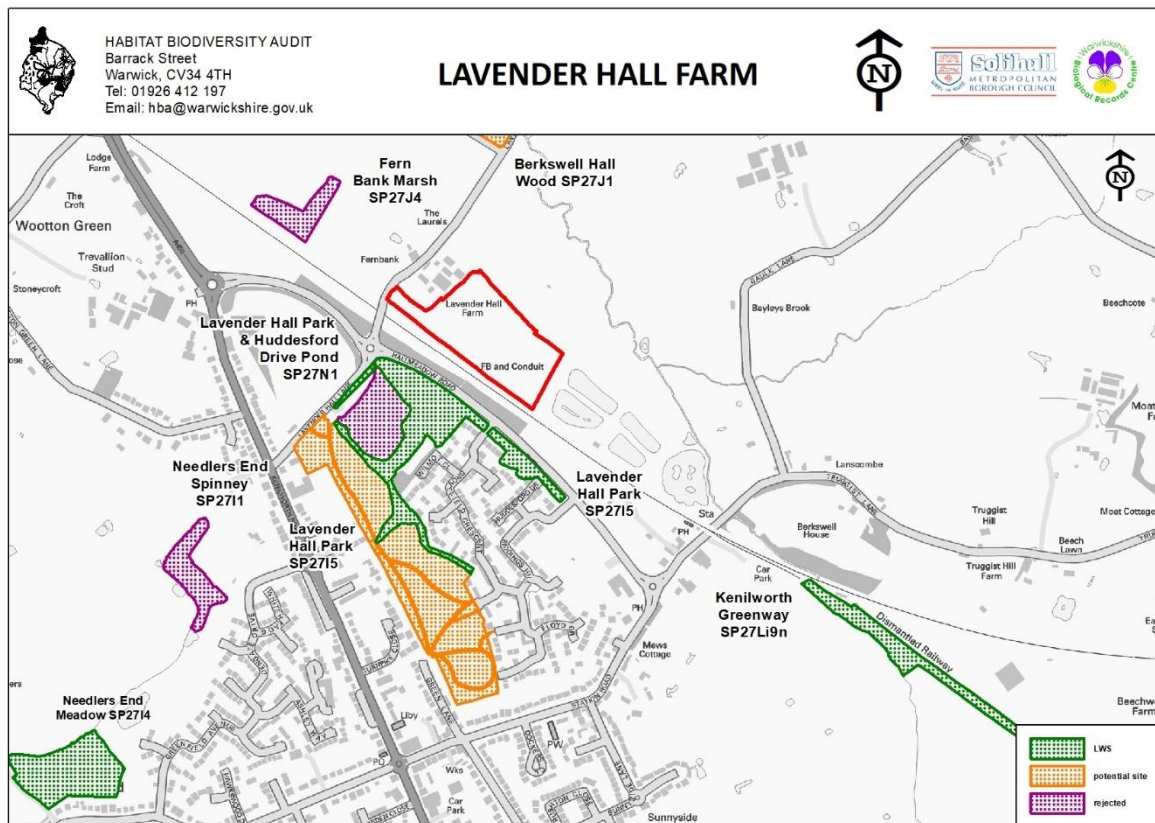
The areas marked in green and blue on the above constraints map indicate where development should be avoided and ecological enhancement encouraged.

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)

The ecological constraints of the development parcel equate to 26.3% of the total area but with the caveat that translocation of the bee orchid population to other areas on site by the cutting and translocation of turves using standard, non-specialist machinery during normal operation works take place, would likely remove the ecological constraint.

## Designated Sites



**Figure 3 Designated Sites**

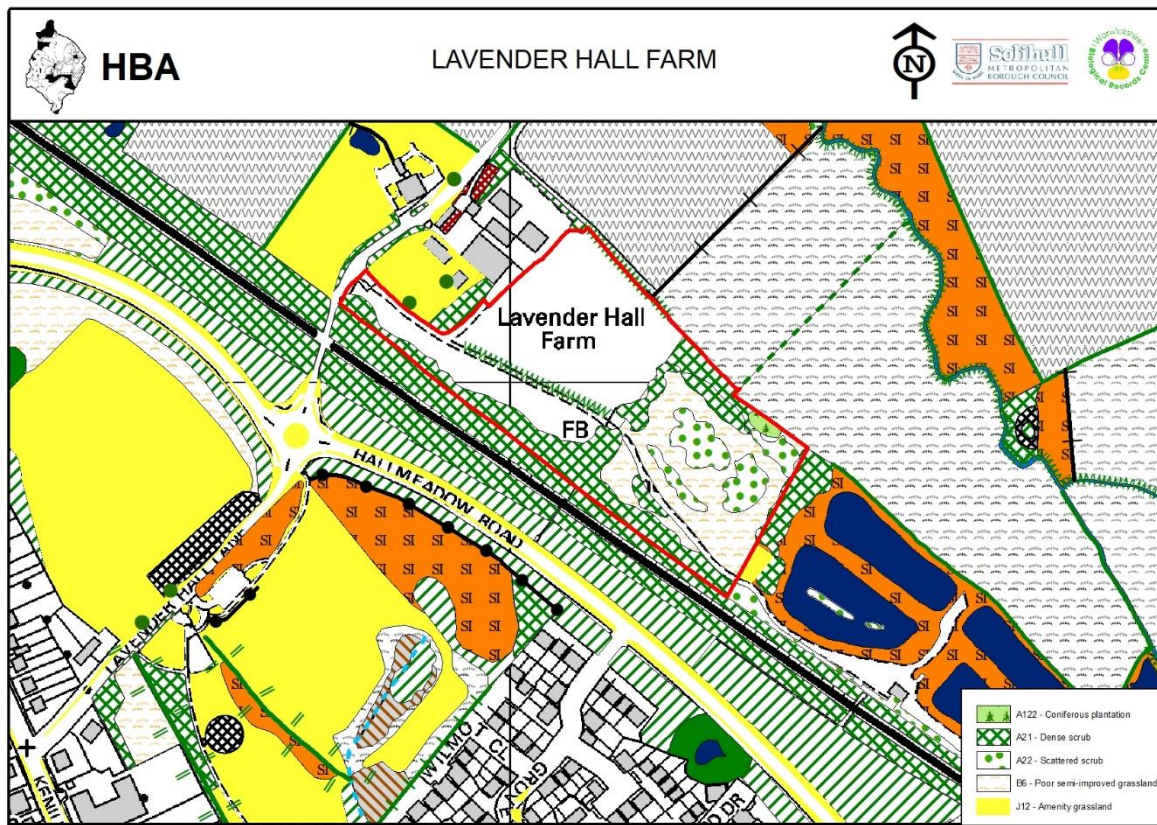
It is recommended that the central band of poor semi-improved grassland and scattered scrub be subject to an LWS survey. Considering the temporal nature of both the short perennial grassland vegetation and the bee orchid population; specifically, the species niche requirements that require a high percentage of bare ground and short ephemeral vegetation to flourish. It is conceivable that if the compartment does not receive direct management to combat scrub succession it will become unsuitable to support the orchid population. Considering the latter, unless the areas being retained within development proposals receive active management to maintain short and ephemeral vegetation, translocation becomes the preferable mitigation measure.

### Local Wildlife Site

LWS NAME	STATUS	AREA (HA)	SURVEY DATE
KENILWORTH GREENWAY (SP27Li9n)	LWS	16.5	14/10/2015
NEEDLERS END MEADOW (SP27I4)	LWS	2	24/05/2005
LAVENDER HALL PARK (SP27I5)	LWS	3.1	23/08/2018
BERKSWELL HALL WOOD (SP27J1)	Potential LWS	60	04/07/2001
LAVENDER HALL PARK (SP27I5)	Potential LWS	5.7	23/08/2018
NEEDLERS END SPINNEY (SP27I1)	Rejected LWS	0.95	04/07/2001
LHP/HUDESFORD DRIVE POND(SP27N1)	Rejected LWS	1.43	23/08/2018
FERN BARN MARSH (SP27J4)	Rejected LWS	0.78	04/06/2001



## Habitat Description

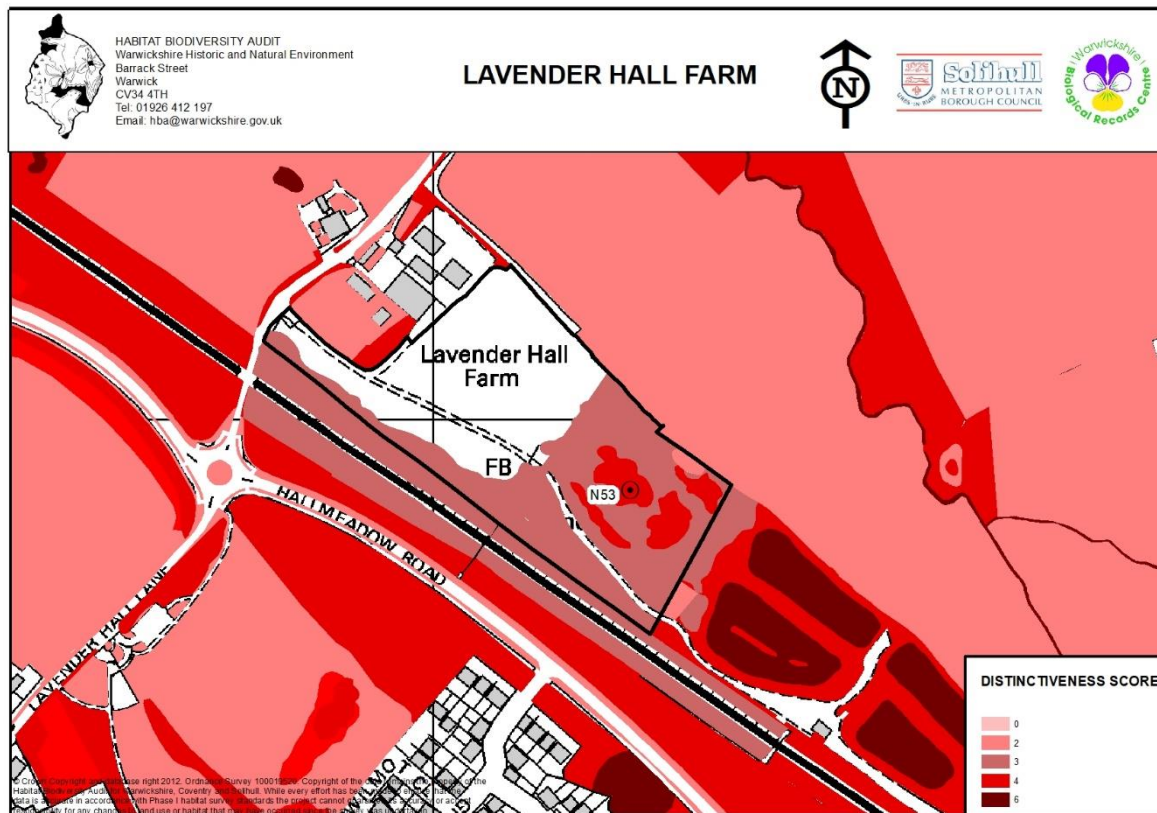


**Figure 4 Phase 1 Habitats**

The habitats within the parcel comprise poor semi-improved grassland overlain by a mosaic of scattered scrub, where the ground has been previously disturbed and consequently marked as a brownfield site. This disturbance has increased the presence of sandy bare ground which is preferential to the establishment of the existing orchid colony found within the grassland sward. Large numbers of bee orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) with rare pyramidal orchid (*Anacamptis pyramidalis*) were found by the Warwickshire Flora Group, during a walkover survey which took place in June 2019. Consequently, the central band of scattered grassland and scrub of former brownfield is the most valuable habitat on site.

It is preferable that the orchid population is assessed during a suitable time period to establish its viability and to address appropriate mitigation measures. It may be possible to incorporate the strongest components of the grassland and the orchid population into possible development plans. As a last resort, the translocation of the population to other areas on site under the implementation of method statement could use the cutting and translocation of turves using standard, non-specialist machinery.

Close to the existing fisheries car park just outside the south-eastern boundary as part of the fishery grounds lies veteran/notable trees which are important features that should be retained.



**Figure 5 Habitat Distinctiveness & Target Notes**

Highly distinct habitats include the aquatic and sub-aquatic habitats of Lavender Hall Fishery including standing water (G1), wet woodland (A6) and marginal vegetation on the pond fringe (F1, F22) and the semi-improved grassland (B6) and scrub mosaic (A21, A22) on former brownfield.

## Target Notes

Number	Grid Reference	Survey Date
SP27N53	SP2414477937	05/07/2012

Previously disturbed land reverting to open scrubland regenerating with young hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), occasional pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and willows (*Salix* spp.). The ground flora comprises a mix of grasses and shrubs including rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*), common ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*) and spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*).

Patchy areas of semi-improved grassland comprise of Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and creeping bent (*Agrostis stolonifera*) occur in sections of the site. Forbs include common sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), bush vetch (*Vicia sepium*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), long-stalked crane's-bill (*Geranium*



columbinum), common bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), meadow buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), creeping buttercup (*R. repens*), creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), black medick (*Medicago lupulina*), common mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), musk-mallow (*Malva moschanta*), fox-and-cubs (*Pilosella aurantiaca*), oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), broad-leaved willowherb (*Epilobium montanum*) and dusky crane's-bill (*Geranium phaeum*).

The grassland contains occasional soft (*Juncus effuses*) and jointed rush (*Juncus articulatus*).

### **UPDATE GP 23/08/2019**

Former brownfield site has succeeded to poor semi-improved grassland with scattered scrub. The poor semi-improved grassland comprises grasses of Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), tufted hair-grass (*Descampsia cespitosa*), false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and forbs typical of ranker grassland with common mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*), square-stalked St John's-wort (*Hypericum tetrapterum*), common ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), spear-thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), ox-eye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), black medick (*Medicago lupulina*), self-heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), autumn hawkbit (*Leontodon autumnalis*) creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*),

The scrub is dominated by hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), goat willow (*Salix caprea*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), dog-rose (*Rosa canina*), butterfly-bush (*Buddleja davidii*) elder (*sambucus nigra*), osier (*salix viminalis*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), hedge woundwort (*Stacys sylvatica*) and bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*).

The disturbed and scrubby nature of the site as a former brownfeld site combined with elements of fly-tipping and movement of soil and vehicles is well-represented in its flora with patches of early colonisers and exotics including smooth sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*) redshank (*Persicaria maculosa*), perennial sow-thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*), common fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), common evening-primrose (*Oenothera biennis*), snapdragon (*Antirrhinum majus*), petty spurge (*Euphorbia peplus*), colt's-foot (*Tussilago farfara*), red valerian (*Centranthus ruber*), columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris*), scentless mayweed (*Tripleurospermum inodorum*), garden lady's-mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*), caper spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*), mullein, knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*) wild teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), Canadian fleabane (*Conyza canadensis*), spearmint (*Mentha spicata*), musk-mallow (*Malva moschanta*), field madder (*Sherardia arvensis*), yellow procumbent yellow-sorrel (*Oxalis corniculata*) and weld (*Reseda luteola*).

Sedges and rushes within the sward included false fox-sedge (*Carex otrubae*), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) and hard rush (*J. inflexus*)

Japanese knotweed is present on the north-east boundary of the development parcel presumably having been fly tipped.

Abundant bee orchids were seen by the Warwickshire Flora Group during a field survey in June 2019.

## Section 41 Habitats and Species of Conservation Importance

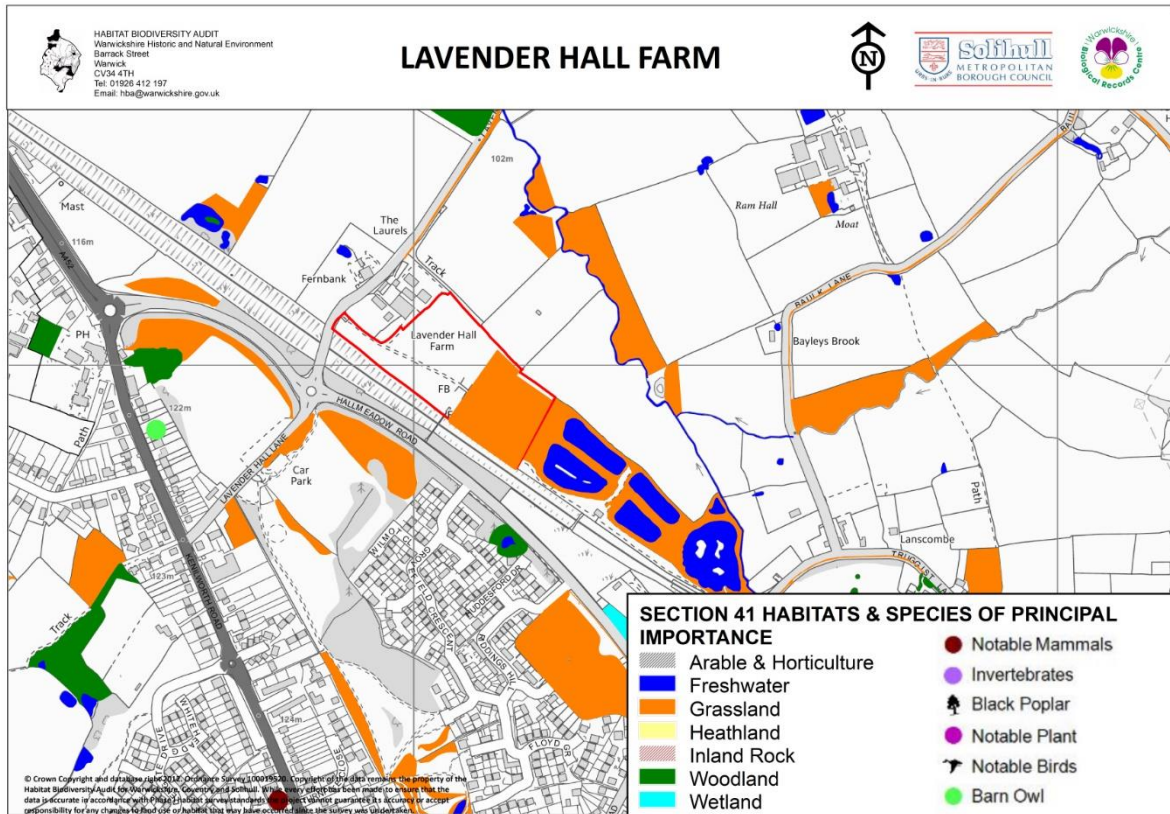
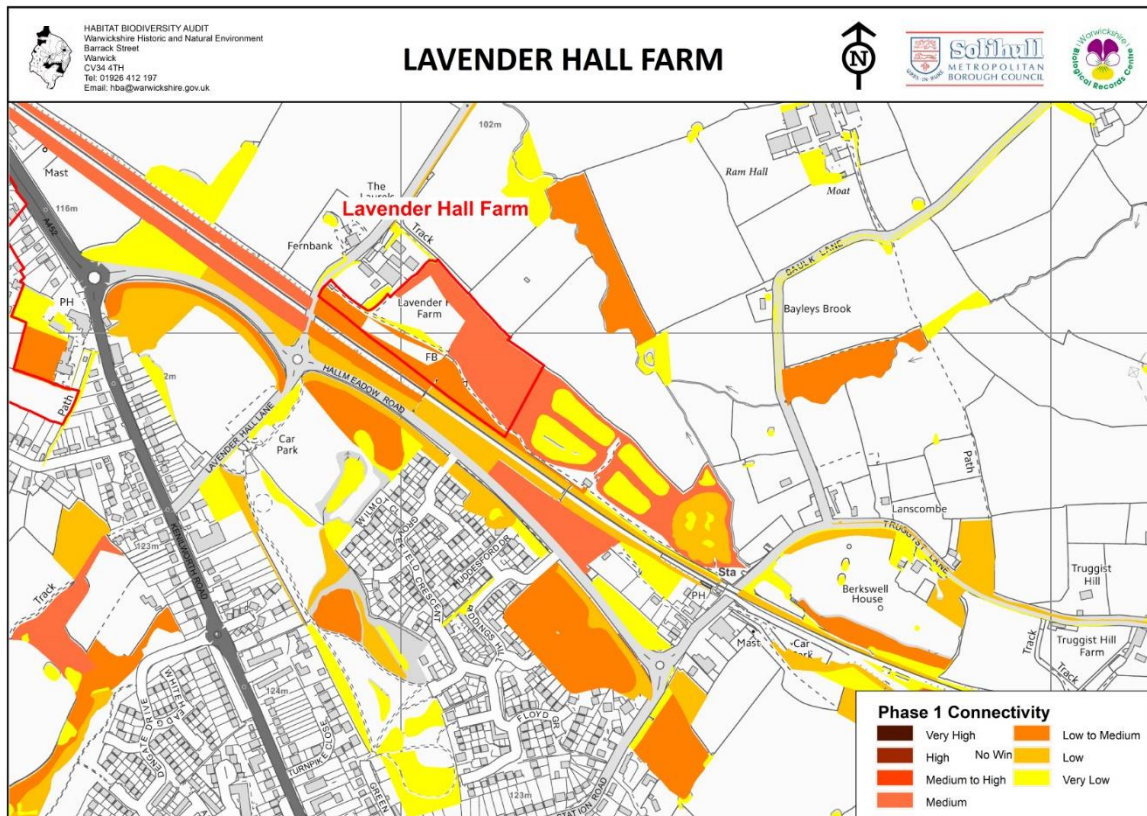


Figure 6 Section 41 Habitats and Species of Conservation Importance

# Habitat Connectivity

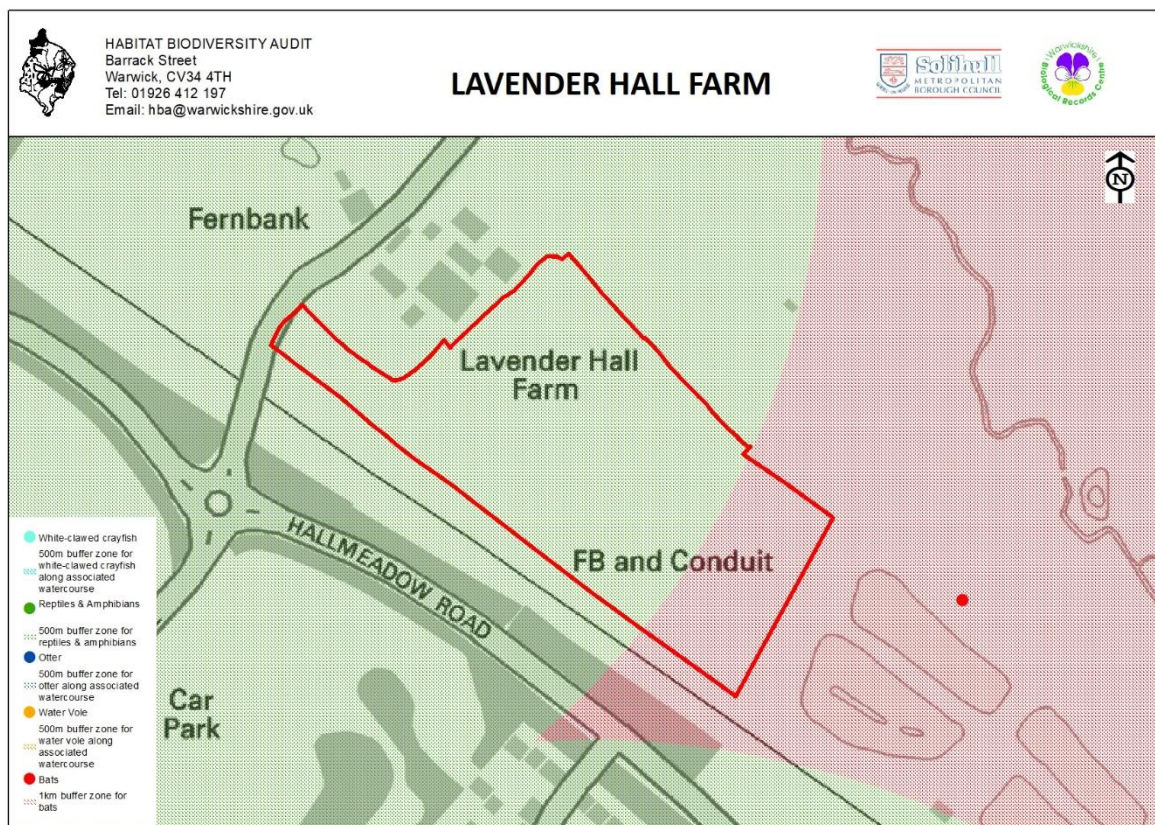


**Figure 7 Habitat Connectivity**

Aquatic and sub-aquatic habitats range from very low to medium connectivity with the scrub and grassland components occupying low to medium connectivity becoming isolated by transport infrastructure.



## Protected Species



**Figure 8 Protected Species**

There are no protected or notable species records located within the site boundaries, however records exist close by for Daubenton's (*Myotis daubentonii*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and a myotis bat species exist from Spring-Summer 2014 giving the location Bayley's Brook (Ram Hall), recorded by mist net/harp tarp with an accuracy of 100m. Foraging records for common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) exist within the urban centre of Balsall Common.

A small to medium great crested newt breeding pond sits 210m away with records up to 2013 surveyed as part of HS2 operations and accurate to 1m.

We recommend that protected species are taken into consideration through more detailed ecological assessments, regarding work taking place close to Lavender Hall Fishery. The site does contain potential for reptiles and amphibians particularly slowworm and common lizard. Please take note that an absence of species records does not mean an absence of species.