

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

Meriden Road

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

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Ecological Services Warwickshire County Council



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SITE: MERIDEN ROAD

Area: 5 hectares

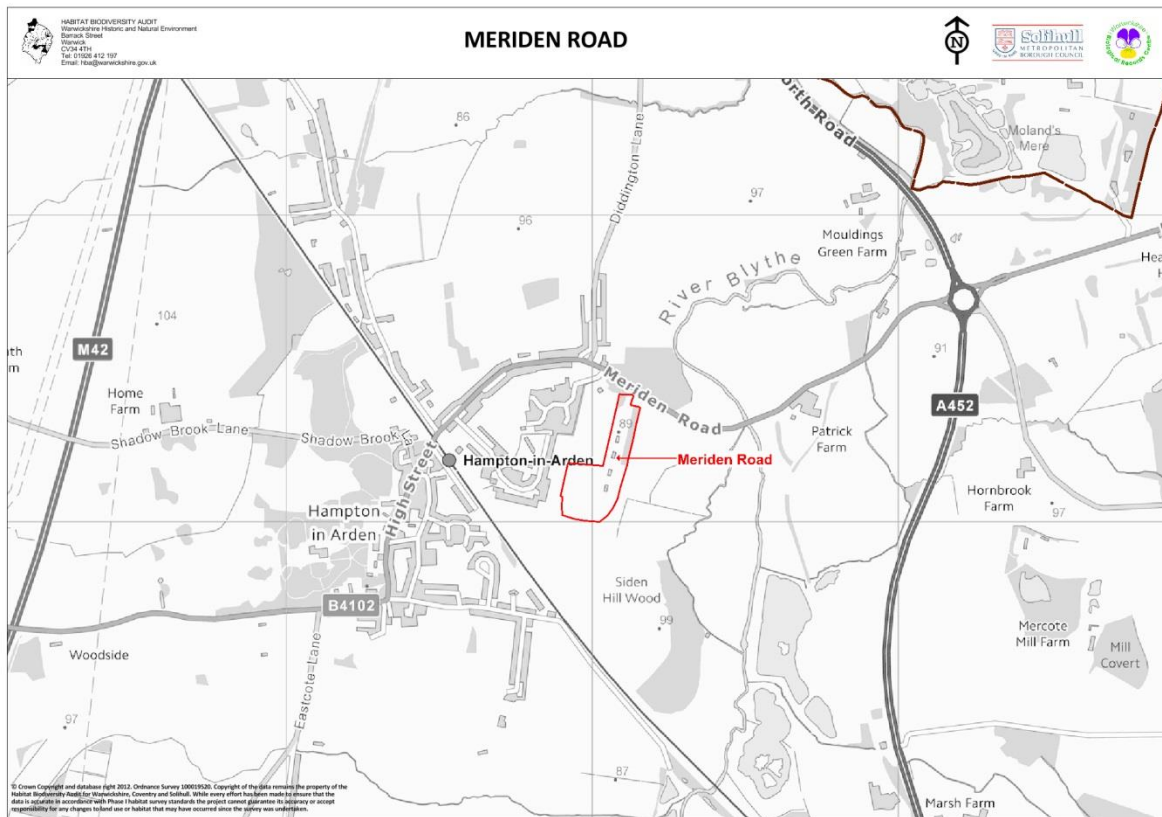


Figure 1 Site Location

Overview

The Meriden Road site is adjacent to existing housing off Lapwing Drive and The Crescent to the west within the village and civil parish of Hampton-in-Arden with open countryside to the east curbed by the River Blythe and southwards by Siden Hill Wood. The southern boundary is again marked by open countryside checked only by West Coast Main Railway Line. The northern boundary is the Meriden Road across which are the priority grasslands of the River Blythe Hampton Depot potential wildlife site (SP28A9).

The development parcel itself is mostly brown field with hard standing for vehicles and some belts of scrubland and small compartments of developing broad-leaved woodland. The parcel also includes a single arable field bordered by an important hedgerow with veteran and/or notable trees.

Key Features

- Scattered Scrub
- Small Compartments of Developing Broad-Leaved Semi-Natural Woodland

- Hedgerow
- Strip of Broad-Leaved Plantation
- Veteran Trees
- Constraints Equate to 33.8 % of the Total Area

Recommendations

The small compartments of scattered scrub, developing broad-leaved semi-natural woodland, broad-leaved plantation and veteran/notable trees identified on the constraints map should be incorporated as green infrastructure especially at the entrance and on the periphery of the development parcel.

Along the eastern boundary is the opportunity to have a wildlife corridor and buffer between the proposed development site and the open countryside. The buffer would connect to the River Blythe-Hampton Depot potential local wildlife site priority grasslands, which we would recommend for survey as part of development proposals.

Retention of all existing hedgerows within and around the proposed development is recommended with implementation of a 5-10m buffer around boundary features.

It is preferential that the two veteran/notable trees and the adjacent hedge on the western corner be especially preserved as green boundary features. A tree or arboriculture survey is recommended to determine the extent of appropriate buffers.

The small compartments of developing woodland do not warrant substantial buffering as they themselves can be incorporated as green provision to complement any development and avoid harm to the existing environmental assets.

Constraints

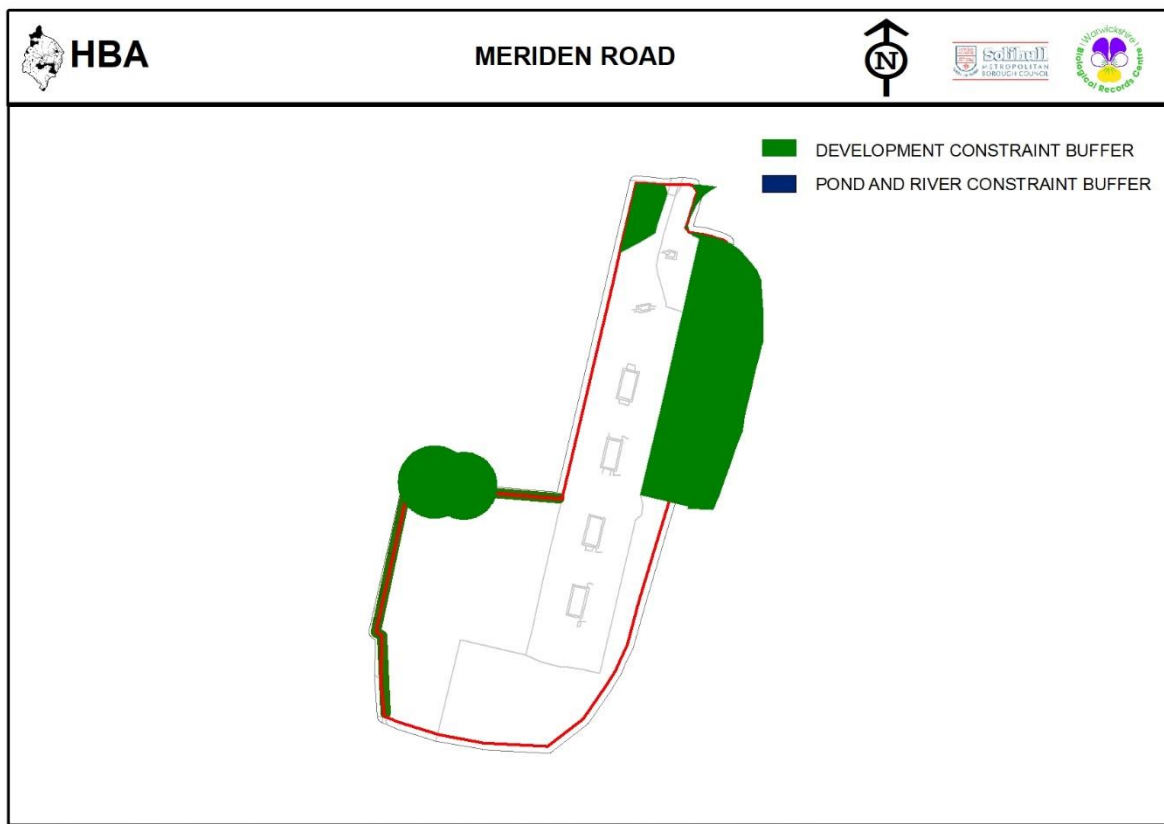


Figure 2 Constraints Maps

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 33.8 % of the development parcel including an illustrative 0.42 ha (8.4%) representing a 15m buffer around all identified tree standards.

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.

Designated Sites

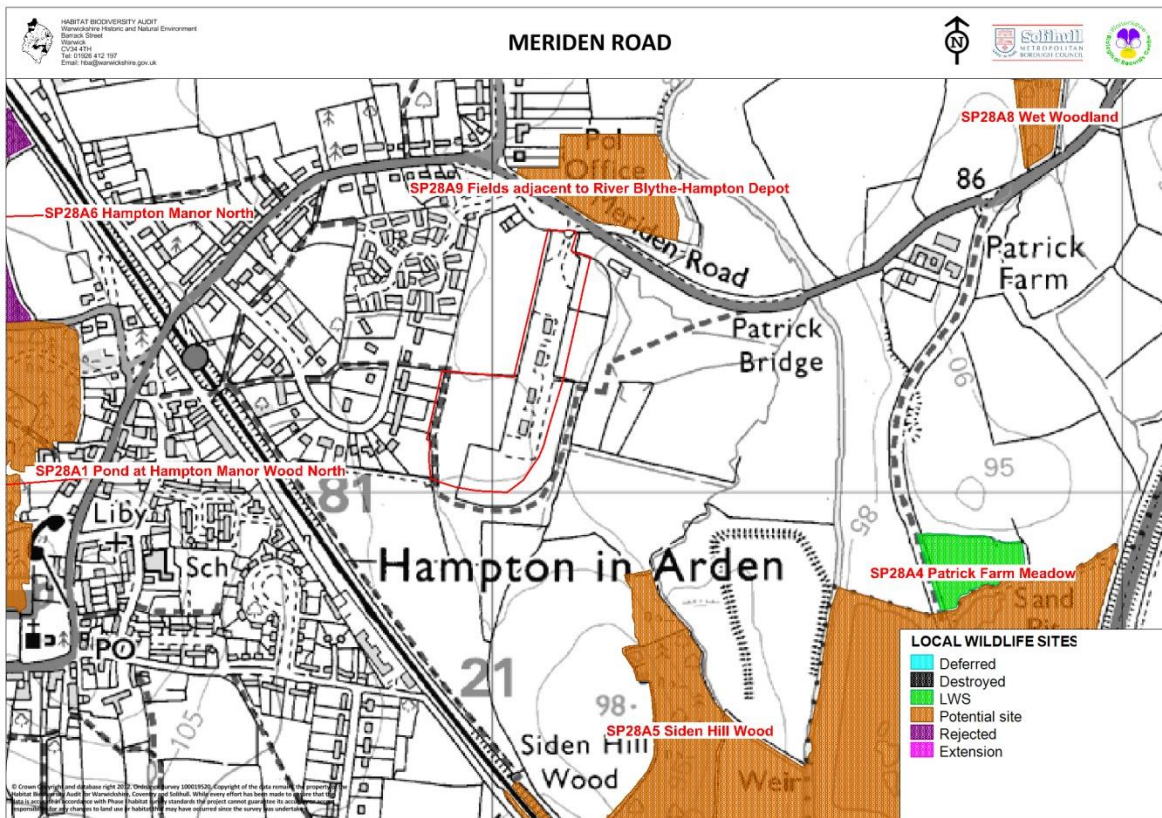


Figure 3 Site Designations

There are no existing or potential local wildlife sites present within the development boundary. Immediately adjacent to the entrance of the site across Meriden Road sits the River-Blythe-Hampton Depot potential Local Wildlife Site (SP28A9). Southwards lies Siden Hill Wood potential Local Wildlife Site (SP28A5).

Potential Local Wildlife Site

FIELDS ADJACENT TO RIVER BLYTHE-HAMPTON DEPOT (SP28A9)

Area; 2.6 ha

Habitat Description

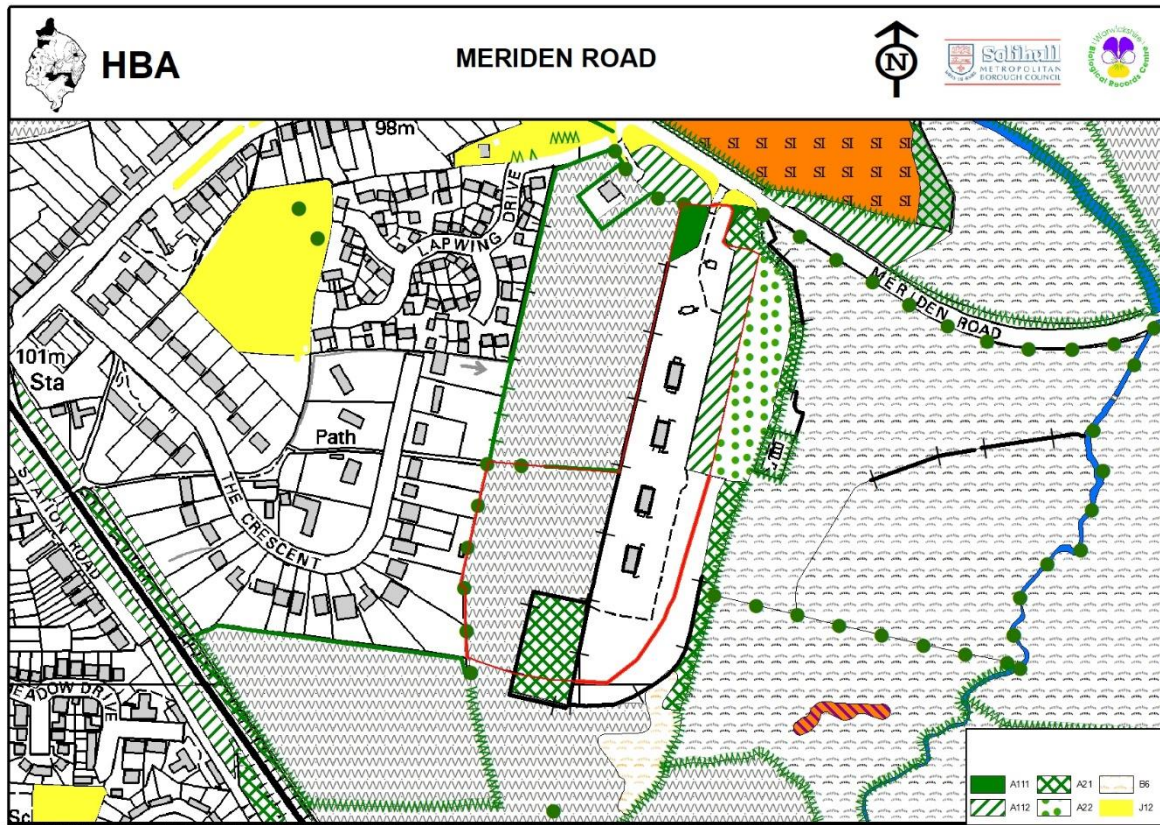


Figure 4 Phase 1 Habitats

The main area of the site has been recorded as bare ground and hard-standing. There are small areas of dense scrub (A21) and broad-leaved plantation (A112) with medium habitat distinctiveness and part of an arable field (J11) with a low distinctiveness score. At the entrance the scrub has succeeded to low-quality developing woodland (A111) with some larger more mature trees interspersed with emerging scrub triggering this designation. To the north-west of the entrance lies broad-leaved planation planted as parkland (A112) with short mown grassland and scattered planted amenity trees. Immediately outside of the eastern development parcel boundary is an expanse of scattered scrub (A22) adjacent to a remote operational station.

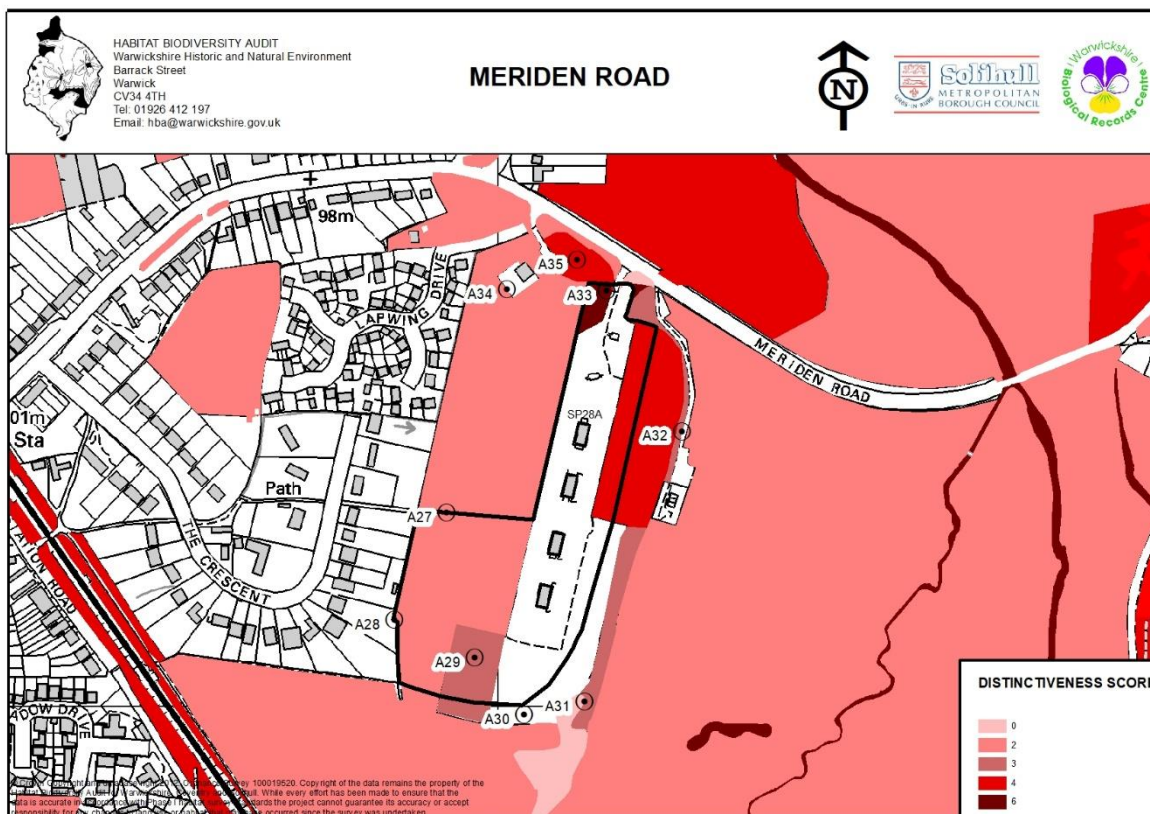


Figure 5 Habitat Distinctiveness & Target Notes

Highly distinct habitats are identified as broad-leaved plantation, scattered scrub and broad-leaved woodland compartments within the development parcel itself. With neighbouring distinct parcels as those priority grasslands contained within River Blythe Hampton Depot potential local wildlife site and those woodland and running water habitats of Siden Hill Wood potential Local Wildlife Site (SP28A5) and the River Blythe.

Target Notes

Number	Grid Reference	Survey Date
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SP27A27	SP2094681192	20/08/2019
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Two large veteran pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*).

SP27A28	SP2089781086	20/08/2019
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Planted residential parkland with Leyland cypress (*X Cuprocyparis leylandii*) with native ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) on the rear property boundary.

SP27A29	SP2097481057	20/08/2019
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Fenced shrub with some planted trees of pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), bird cherry (*Prunus padus*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*).

SP27A30

SP2102180992

20/08/2019

Common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Russian comfrey (*S. x uplandicum*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), spear thistle (*C. vulgare*), green alkanet (*Pentaglottis sempervirens*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), wild teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*) and hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*).

SP27A31

SP2108181004

20/08/2019

Poor semi-improved grassland leads to a band of dense scrub separated by the footpath with hazel (*Corylus avellana*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*) with great willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*), hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*), tutsan (*Hypericum androsaemum*), Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*), perforate St John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*).

SP27A32

SP2118081269

20/08/2019

Band of scrub of blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), black medick (*Medicago lupulina*) and broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*).

SP27A33

SP2110681409

20/08/2019

Mature trees of pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) with elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) in the understorey with common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.).

SP27A34

SP2100581405

20/08/2019

Hedge with goat willow (*Salix caprea*) and Leyland cypress (*X Cuprocyparis leylandii*).

SP27A35

SP2107781442

20/08/2019

Planted broad-leaved trees over short mown grassland.

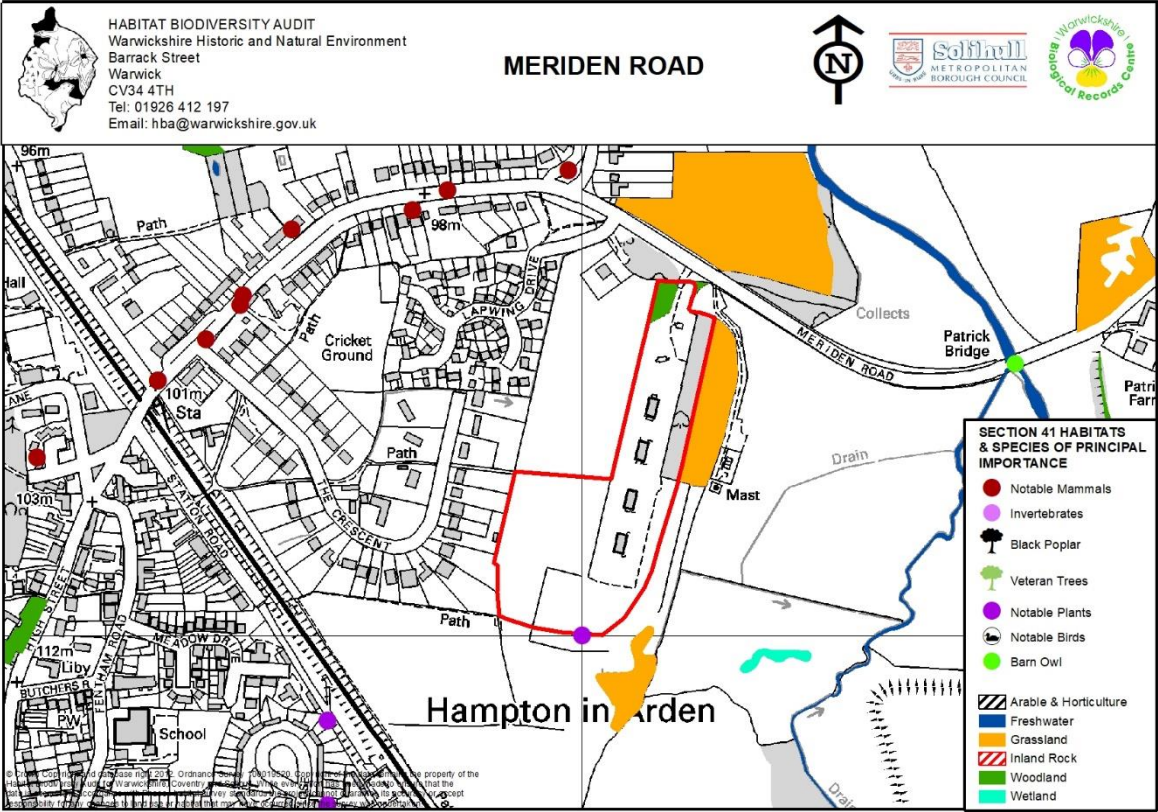


Figure 6 Section 41 Habitats & Species of Principal Importance

Habitat Connectivity

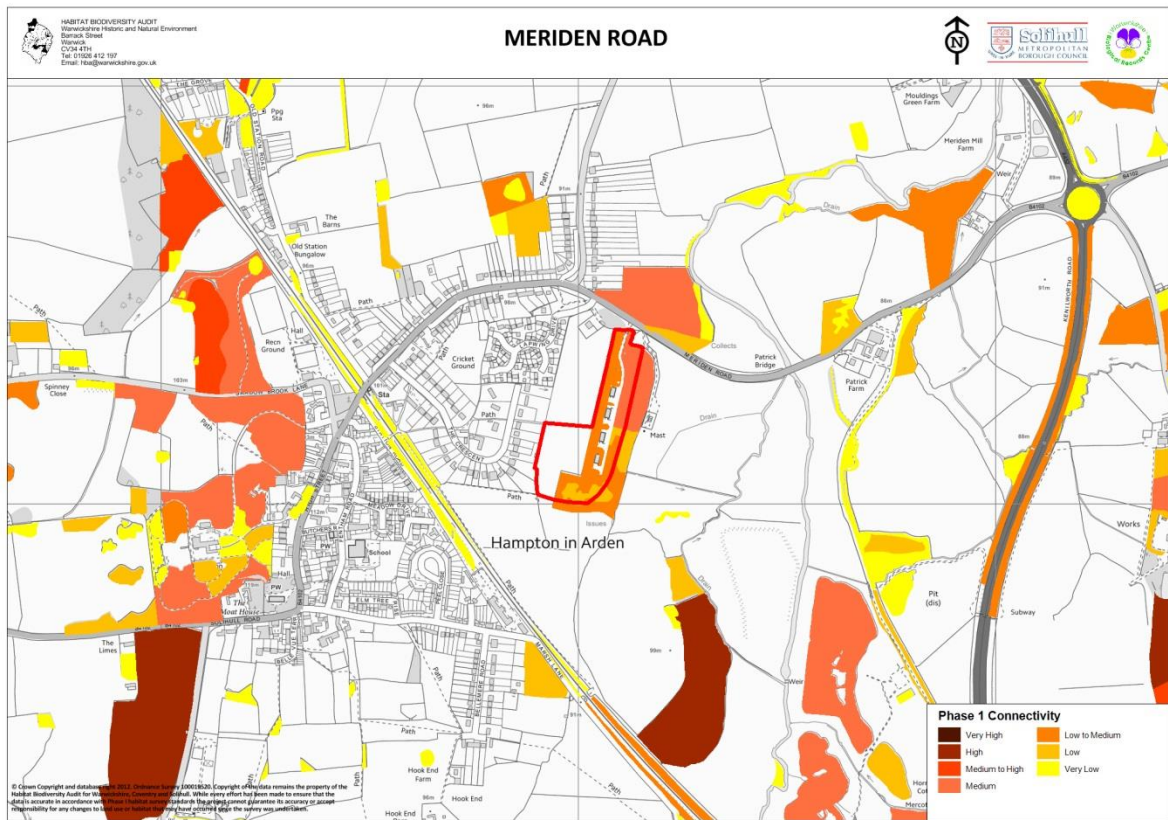


Figure 7 Habitat Connectivity

Primary connectedness occurs between the ruderal, scrub and small broad-leaved plantation woodland habitats of the development parcel with priority grasslands of River Blythe Hampton Depot potential local wildlife site (SP28A9) and those habitats contained within Siden Hill Wood potential Local Wildlife Site (SP28A5).

Protected Species

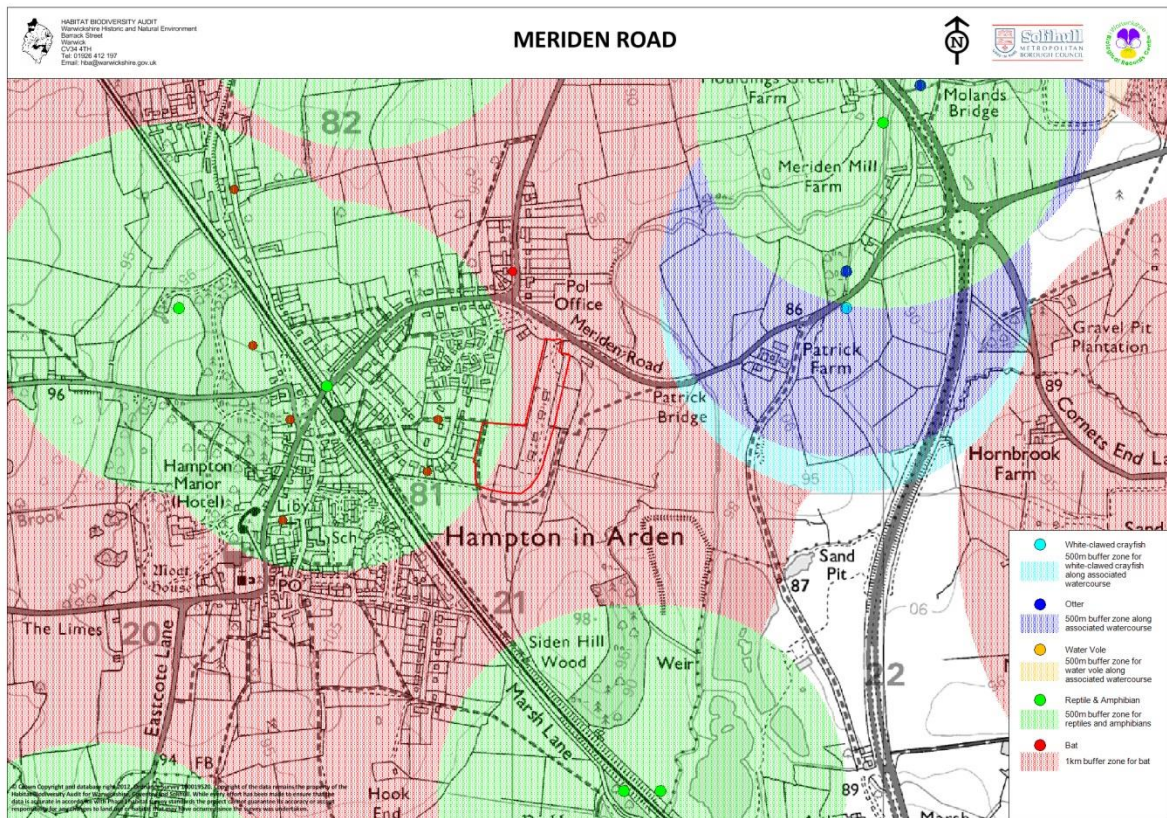


Figure 8 Protected Species

Confirmed roosting records endure for Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) in residential properties along the Crescent in 2012 and 2013, 130-180 m away from the western site boundary. Therefore the development may provide foraging habitat for this species of bat and as such protective species surveys may be required following more extensive surveys prior to any development.

A recent record denotes the presence of slow worm within the surroundings of Hampton-in-Arden Train Station in 2014, 450m west of the development parcel. During consequent surveys, the presence or absence of slow worm should be determined and as such appropriate action taken to avoid harming slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*).