

NATURE

Landscape context + vision

The vision for the future of South West Rugby's nature is to create a holistic landscape connecting people, place and nature. Through public consultation there is a clear directive from the local community to protect the landscape and its biodiversity.

South West Rugby is within a number of land holdings, as outlined on page 11. The intention of this section is to represent the South West Rugby urban extension as a sum of its parts and demonstrate how nature connects across land holding boundaries.

Figure 19 represents the different ownership parcels; landscape character zones span across these parcels with landscape features, such as woodland and riparian habitats, connecting across neighbouring ownership parcels. The landscape character is based upon an internal landscape assessment undertaken by Warwickshire County Council in 2017.

The landscape strategy for individual applications will need to consider the context of the proposed development and its holistic place within South West Rugby's landscape. Acknowledging the impacts on visual and landscape receptors outside of the individual ownership boundary.

This is considered by outlining existing landscape characters, illustrating existing landscape features, recommending buffers and boundary treatments and presenting the potential overall connectivity that may be achieved across the urban extension.

These overarching considerations are then concentrated into design principles for landscape, including soft landscape palettes, treatments of public open spaces. On all figures the proposed movement corridors from the Masterplan are represented to indicate the human connectivity across South West Rugby and its potential interplay with the existing landscape.

The preservation and application of landscape treatments to routes, streets and spaces is expected to be in accordance with the landscape character, further information in included in the Public Spaces section.

Also refer to:

Movement

Public spaces

Built form

Identity

RBC local plan policy: DS8, DS9, HS1, NE1, NE2, NE3 SDC1, SCD2 + South West Rugby Masterplan SPD (2021, updated 2024)

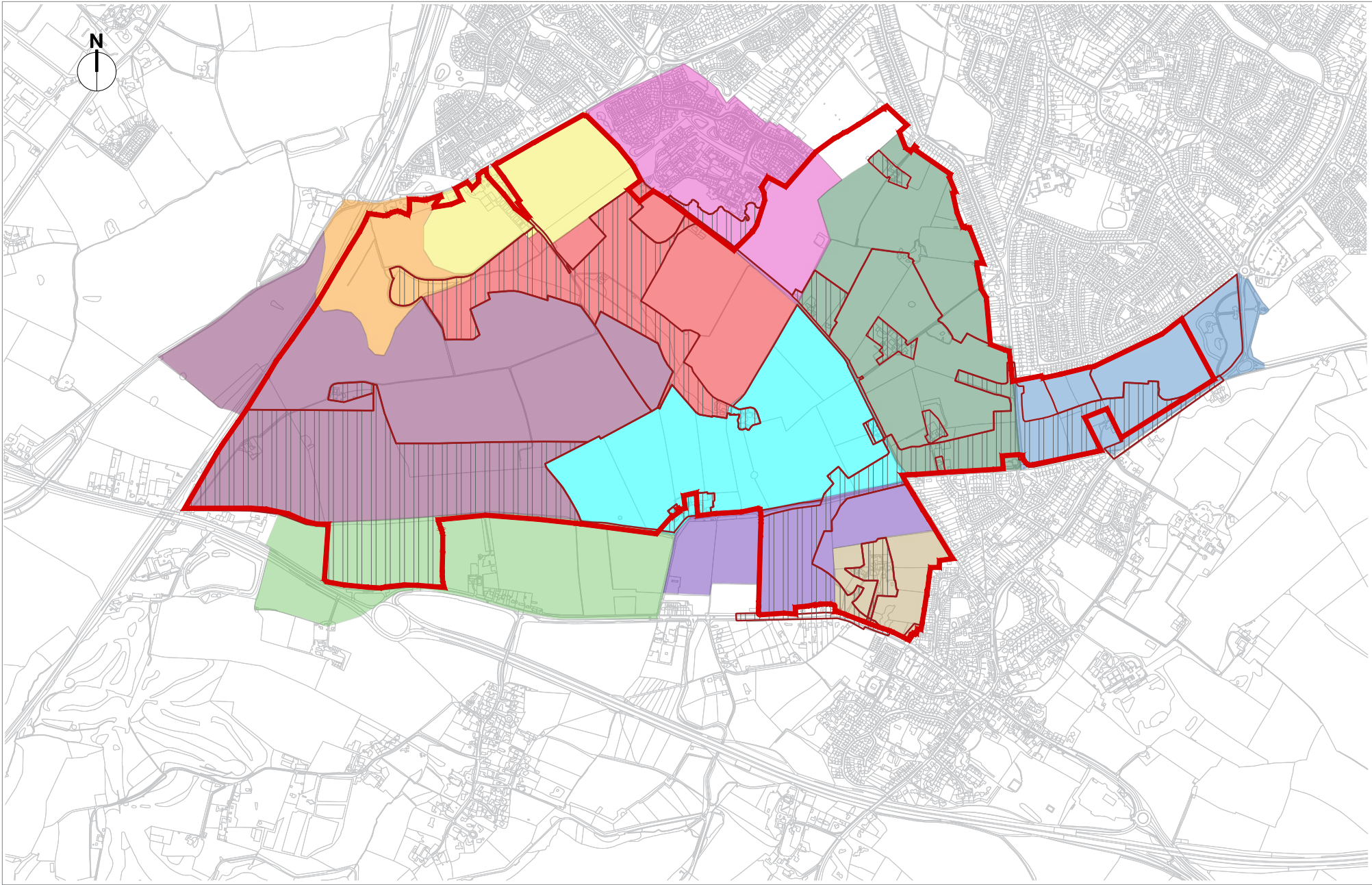


Figure 19: Ownership parcels + landscape character zones.

Key

Allocation boundary

Ownership parcel boundaries

Existing residences/farms, existing development/determined planning applications and fixed features such as Cawston Spinney.

Parcel 20d

Regular small-medium scale field pattern, dense to scattered mature roadside and hedge trees, abrupt settlement edge to east.

Parcel 20e

Flat, framed landscape, strong tree cover.

Parcel 20f

Sports club grounds and amenity land on settlement edge with a small field of pasture to the south.

Parcel 20h

Very gently undulating, fairly open framed landscape, tree cover limited to lime avenue and clusters.

Parcel 20i

Gently undulating, large woodland block.

Parcel 20j

Gently sloping, geometric medium to large scale field pattern, rises to west.

Parcel 22a

Undulating, medium to large field pattern, open views from north, tree cover encloses and frames landscape to south.

Parcel 20n

Undulating, open medium -large scale field pattern, very prominent skylines, strong landscape framework.

Parcel 21c

Flat, medium to large scale geometric field pattern, tree cover at zone boundaries.

Parcel 20m

Open and flat, small-medium field pattern, prominent skyline

Parcel 21b

Flat, medium to large scale geometric field pattern, enclosed and softened by vegetation.

Parcel 21a

Geometric small to medium scale field pattern, scattered mature trees, good tree cover.

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Connectivity: green + blue infrastructure

The overarching aim of the nature section of the design code is to connect people, place and nature. To achieve this requires strategic consideration across and beyond the area of the sustainable urban extension, as illustrated by Figure 20. Figure 20 illustrates key strategic connections and draws together information in local plan policy DS8 and the adopted Masterplan SPD.

Integration of connectivity from routes and streets to green corridors works towards building a healthy community of people and nature. Green infrastructure should be viewed as social as well as ecological infrastructure and the principles set out by Natural England must be considered for all landscaping schemes:

- Multifunctional
- Varied
- Connected
- Accessible
- Character

By considering Green Infrastructure holistically across South West Rugby a sense of place can be forged within this new community.

NA.01 Landscapes need to be bigger, better and joined and this **should** be at the foundation of landscaping within applications.

NA.02 The design of public open spaces **should** endeavour to create opportunities for the local community to have access to nature. Aiming to create opportunities for people to foster a sense of connection to the environment, enjoy physical activity, reduce social isolation, and provide a platform for community engagement.

NA.03 Landscape treatments to verges alongside routes and PRoWs **should** be designed to create safe spaces for users with good visibility and enhanced wildlife connectivity.

NA.04 Where SUDs are utilised the landscaping **should** optimise connectivity for nature ensuring that vegetation does not encroach onto the route.

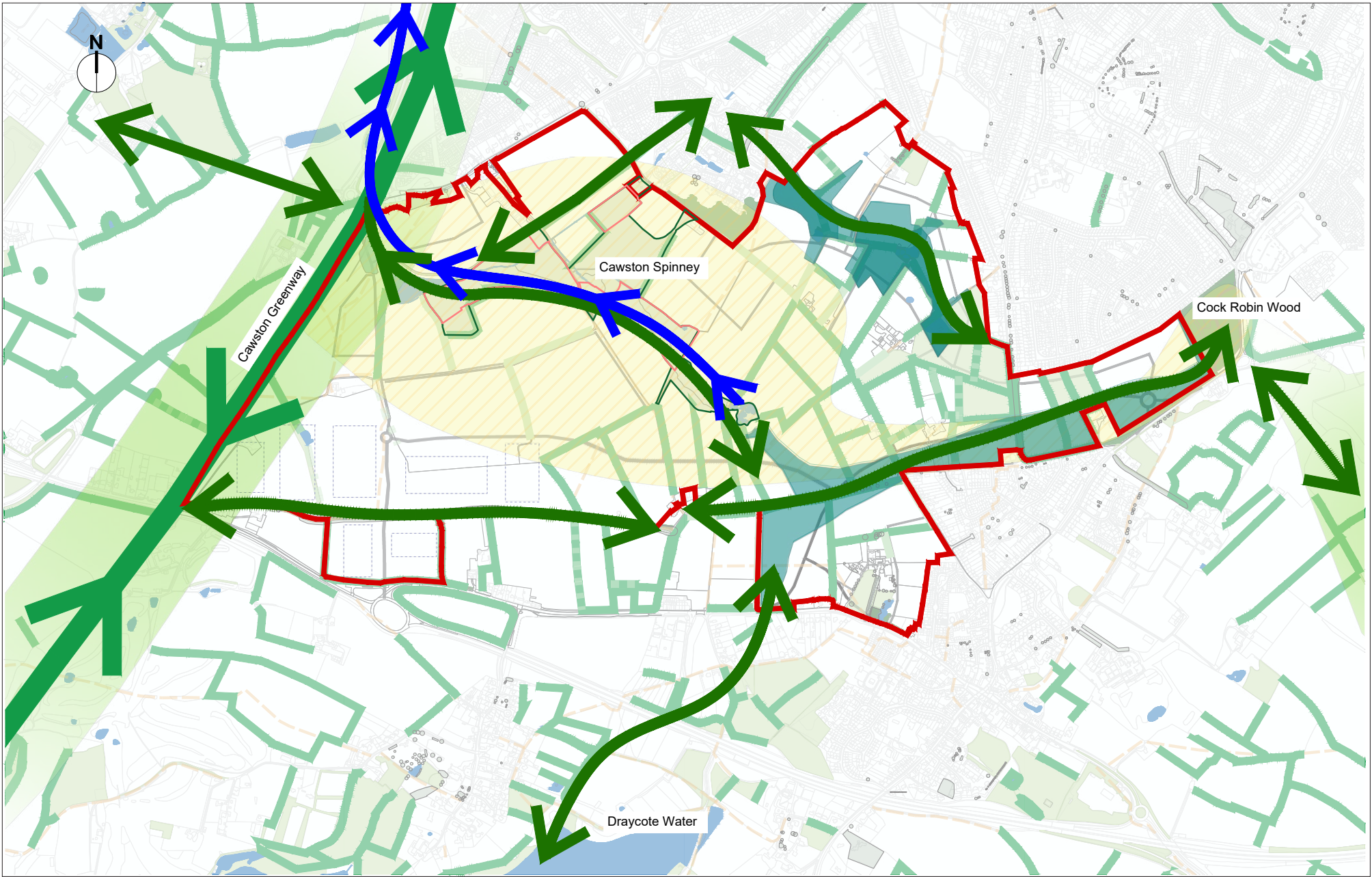
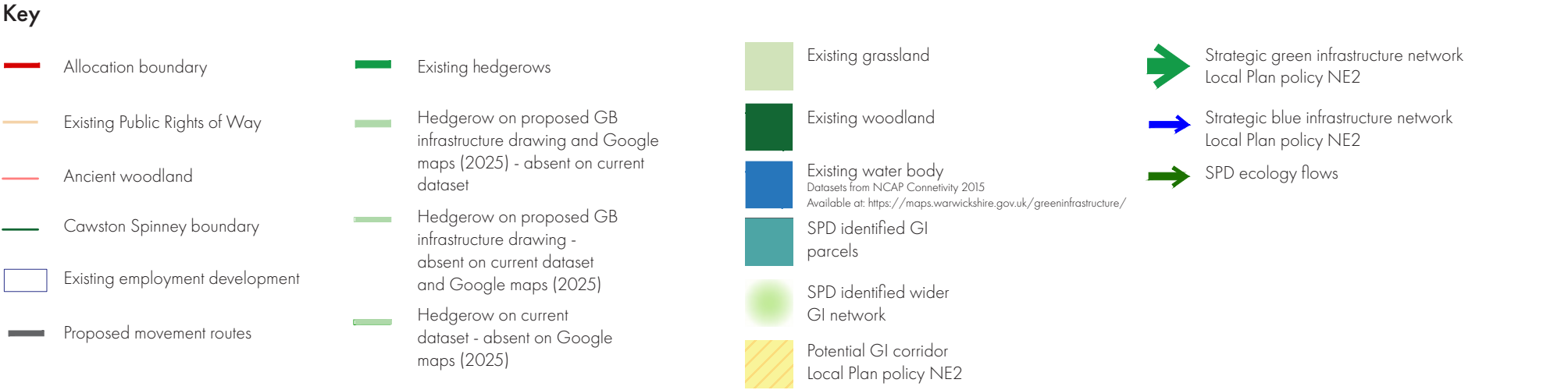


Figure 20: Green + blue infrastructure connectivity.



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Reflecting landscape character

It is integral that the landscape character of the urban extension must be represented/reflected within landscaping schemes.

The site is within the Dunsmore and Feldon (96) National Character Area and sits within the Dunsmore regional character, outlined in the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines (1993). This is further distilled into the Plateau Fringe and Plateau Farmlands landscape types.

- NA.05** Key features of the landscape character which **should** be maintained or reflected include:
- Tree avenues in the wider urban landscape which are a feature on the skyline. These create character for the urban fringe.
 - Landscape framed by hedgerows and woodland blocks in the eastern zones (parcels 20e, 20d, and 20h)
 - Open character surrounded by the strong landscape framework in the western zones 20n and 22a. The landscape framework includes Cawston Greenway, Cawston Spinney and mature trees, which **must** be protected and enhanced.
 - Mature trees within hedgerows, such as in zone 20d, **should** be preserved, maintained and promoted using new planting where trees are not prevalent.
 - PRoWs which link landscapes and create access to landscape features. These are strong landscape features and **must** be retained or realigned. They **should** also be enhanced with additional landscape features to provide better connectivity for communities, supporting recreational use.
 - Views to landscape and features, particularly Cawston Spinney.

Cawston Spinney
Cawston Spinney comprises woodland and ancient woodland (as shown in figure 21 (existing landscape features) on p44. The adopted masterplan SPD includes a Management Plan for Cawston Spinney to be referenced in applications impacting this area.



Some of the existing landscape features that make up the landscape character.

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Existing landscape features

Figure 21 illustrates landscape features and habitats that have been identified across the site using numerous datasets. This is indicative of the landscape features that are considered of value but thorough assessments of existing landscape features will be expected to be undertaken for all proposals.

These features are subject to buffers and/or wide landscape margins as on p45.

- NA.06 The protection, retention and enhancement of landscape features **should** be a priority within applications to have meaningful, positive contributions to nature and nature's recovery. There **must** be robust justification for their losses.
- NA.07 All ancient woodland sites **must** be conserved and restocked with locally occurring native species.
- NA.08 The reinstatement of lost landscape features **could** add a positive contribution to the habitat offerings within the allocation. For example through the consultation it has been identified that a waterbody identified in the eastern portion of the site on the GIS dataset is not currently visible on the site.
- NA.09 The Cawston Spinney Management Plan **must** be adhered to by all stakeholders.
- NA.10 Preservation of TPO trees and feature trees category A or B **must** be to BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations'.
- NA.11 Where the intersection of development and existing high quality trees; TPOs, Cat A and B trees, cannot be avoided, landscape techniques such as root cell systems **must** be explored and robust explanation must be made for losses.
- NA.12 Opportunities **should** be explored to enhance retained hedges, for example through actions such as gapping up and the promotion of existing hedgerow trees, appropriate to the local character.

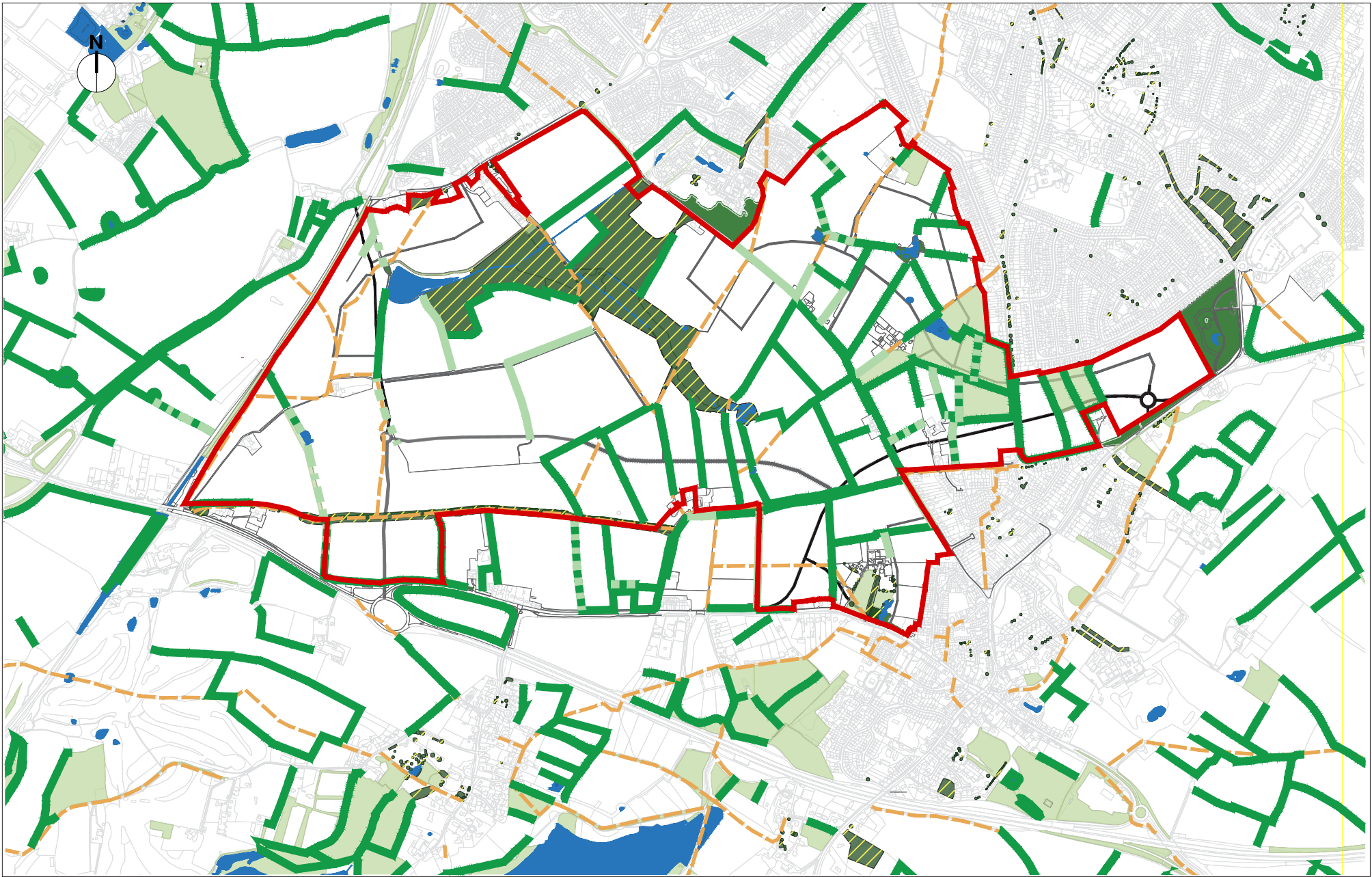


Figure 21: Existing landscape features.

Key

	Allocation boundary		Existing hedgerows		TPOs
	Existing Public Rights of Way		Hedgerow on proposed GB infrastructure drawing and Google maps (2025) - absent on current dataset		Existing grassland
	Ancient woodland		Hedgerow on proposed GB infrastructure drawing - absent on current dataset and Google maps (2025)		Existing woodland
	Existing employment development		Hedgerow on current dataset - absent on Google maps (2025)		Existing water body Datasets from NCAP Connectivity 2015 Available at: https://maps.warwickshire.gov.uk/greeninfrastructure/
	Proposed movement routes				

Also refer to:

- Movement
- Public spaces

RBC local plan policy: NE1, NE2, NE3, SDC6 + South West Rugby Masterplan SPD (2021, updated 2024)

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Buffers + boundaries

Buffers are expected to play a role in the philosophy of protecting and managing existing landscape features as discussed on the previous page. The objectives are to protect the existing landscape feature and enhance the urban extension's ecological potential through the retention and development of habitats and corridors. In respect of Cawston Spinney; which includes ancient woodland (ancient woodland addressed specifically below); the objective of buffers is further to mitigate the impact of surrounding development and associated intensified human access.

Where are buffers anticipated?

Figure 22 indicates the types of landscape feature which should benefit from landscape buffers where retained. These include:

- Woodland
- Ancient woodland (see section below)
- Waterbodies
- Hedgerows
- Cawston Greenway

Figure 22 is not to scale, and is considered indicative.

The nature of buffers

NA.13 Buffers to existing landscape features **should** provide the optimum widths for the protection and management of the habitat. Applicants **must** demonstrate suitable buffer widths and treatments within applications.

NA.14 Buffers **should** be landscaped, using appropriate native species. This **could** include dense woodland matrix planting with ecotones of scrub, grassland and wildflowers representative of the local character.

NA.15 New footpaths **should** be outside of root protection zones and set back from ecologically valuable existing landscape features.

NA.16 Opportunities to use buffers to enhance green infrastructure and habitat connectivity across the landscape **should** be explored.

Ancient woodland buffer

NA.17 The ancient woodland of Cawston Spinney **must** be protected by a buffer of at least 15m. The buffer **should** increase if arboricultural and impact assessments indicate this is necessary.

NA.18 The buffer to the ancient woodland **should** contribute to wider ecological networks and the green infrastructure of the area (see page 45).

NA.19 The buffer to the ancient woodland should consist of semi-natural habitats such as woodland with mixes of scrub, grassland and where appropriate, heathland and wetland. These habitats **should** be in-keeping with the landscape character of the area.

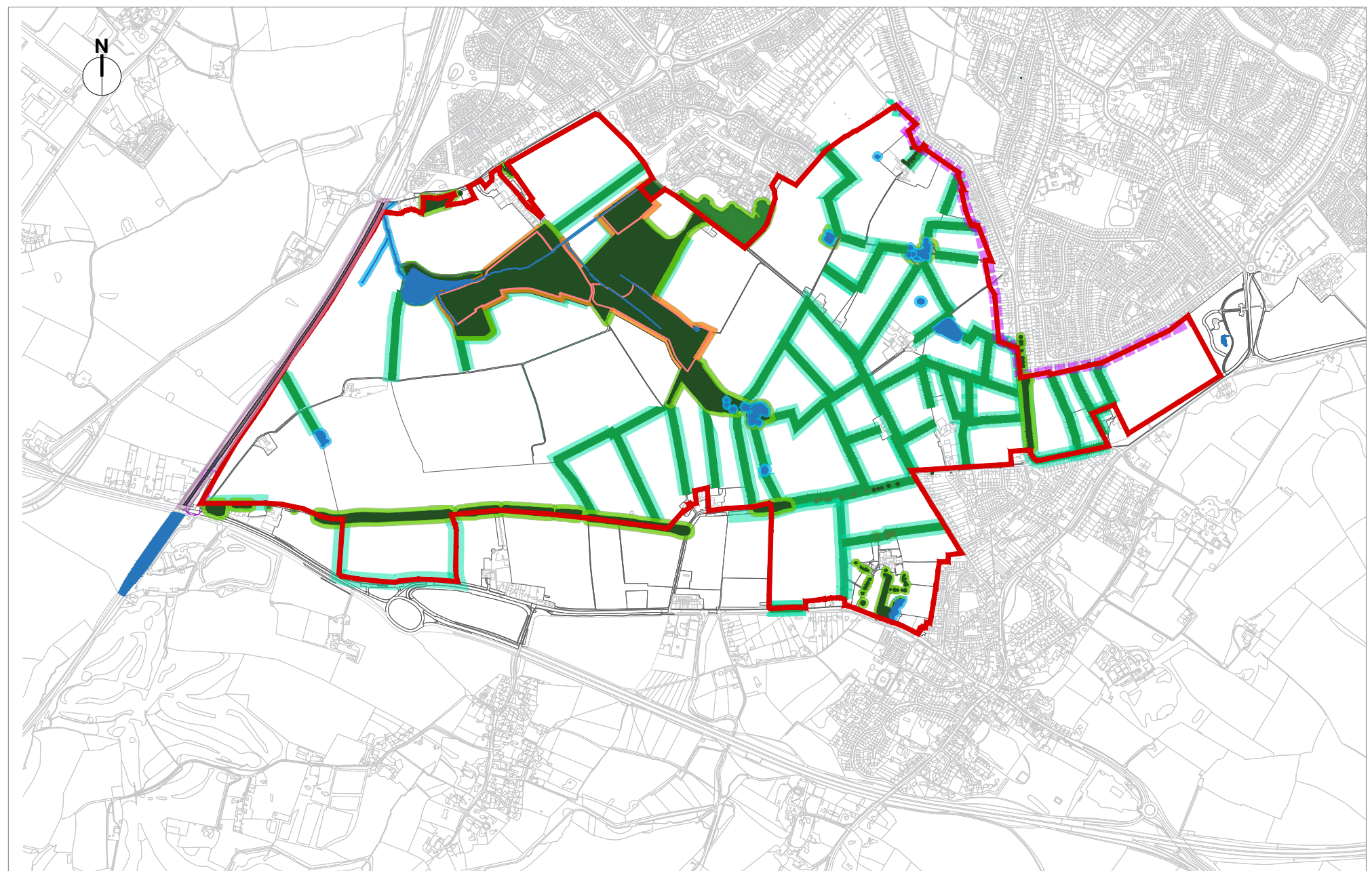


Figure 22: Indicative buffers.

Site boundaries as buffers

The boundaries of the site present opportunities for ecological enhancements through the creation of landscaped boundaries that adopt the philosophy of buffers. Figure 22 illustrates the site boundary on the eastern side as having particular potential for this based upon landscape analysis.

NA.20 Where appropriate, the opportunity to use landscape interventions to create a buffer between new and existing developments at the eastern boundary **should** be explored.

NA.21 Connections along boundaries to create active travel routes and link parcels **should** be explored.

Key

- Allocation boundary
- Proposed hedgerow buffers
- Eastern boundary: Landscape treatments along this boundary are expected to be in keeping with enclosed character of this eastern portion of the allocation. It is appropriate to explore landscape treatments that create habitats; for example permeable boundaries and areas of landscaping following a philosophy of protection and management.
- Ancient woodland
- Proposed ancient woodland buffer
- Existing woodland
- Proposed woodland buffer
- Existing water body
Datasets from NCAP Connectivity 2015
Available at: <https://maps.warwickshire.gov.uk/greeninfrastructure/>
- Proposed waterbody buffer
- Cawston Greenway
- Proposed buffer to Cawston Greenway

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Public open space

Open space provision

The South West Rugby Masterplan SPD identifies the amounts of different types of open space required across the allocation. These are represented below.

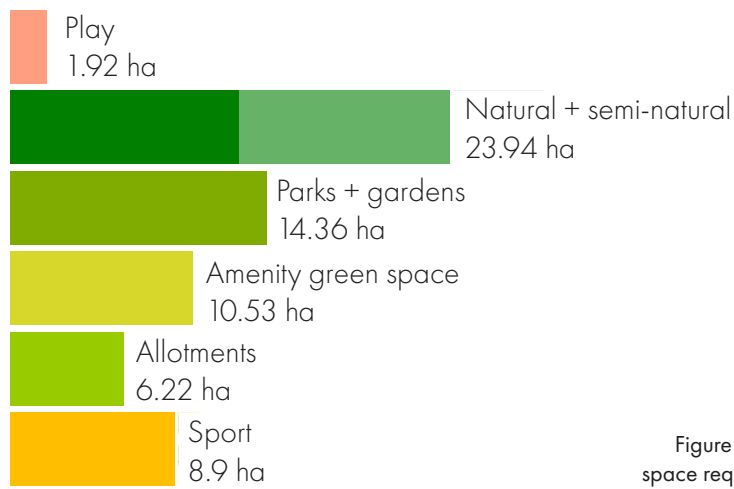


Figure 23: Amounts of each open space required at South West Rugby.

Natural and semi natural green spaces

Natural and semi natural open spaces include woodland, scrub, grassland, wetlands, and open or running water.

The adopted South West Rugby Masterplan SPD identifies that the apportionment of open space between typologies is likely to favour natural and semi-natural typologies, rather than formal spaces in order to maximise green infrastructure between Cock Robin Wood and Cawston Spinney, and beyond (see green infrastructure). Whilst public access is anticipated in these areas, design and management arrangements must take account of potential conflicts between public access and nature functions.

Parks and gardens

Parks and gardens include urban parks, squares, country parks and formal gardens. These would normally contain a whole range of quality facilities and experiences for all members of the public. These can be classed as the Borough’s main parks and would allow the visitor to spend several hours enjoying the open space environment.

Amenity green space

Amenity green spaces can include informal recreation spaces in and around housing, communal greenspaces, and community growing spaces (allotments are defined separately). These spaces may include elements of hard space, as well as soft space.

Allotments

Area of land for rent for growing plants and vegetables.

Also refer to:

RBC local plan policy: HS4, SDC6 + South West Rugby Masterplan SPD (2021, updated 2024)



Amenity space at Monksmoor, Daventry



Amenity space at Houlton, Rugby



Amenity space at Derwenthorpe, York



Caldecott Park, Rugby



Allotments



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Access to open space

Accessibility standards are set out below. These seek to ensure that all homes have access to open space within a 200-300m walking distance, and access to a full range of open space types with 1000m as recommended by the Fields in Trust. Flexibility may be applied with regards the space typology for the purpose of accessibility standards where properties are within a 5-minute walking distance of an open space (other than amenity space).

The accessibility standards have been stated below as maximum walking distances, as this is generally easier to understand.

NA.22 Walking times **must** involve consideration the route options to the relevant space (and not the distance ‘as the crow flies’) and should also consider different walking speeds.

Open space typology	Accessibility standard (maximum walking time)
Amenity space	5 minutes
Park and garden	15 minutes
Natural/semi natural	15 minutes
Allotments	15 minutes

NA.23 All homes **must** have access to some open space within a maximum 5-minute walk

NA.24 Development proposals **must** demonstrate that accessibility standards are met within any detailed layouts submitted.

Play
Appendix F of the South West Rugby Masterplan SPD sets out the criteria for the provision of Locally Equipped Areas of Play (LEAPS) and Neighbourhood Equipped Areas of Play (NEAPS) across the allocation. This includes criteria for:

- Accessibility
- Minimum areas
- Specification

NA.25 Play areas **should** seek to incorporate natural play equipment and features.

Informal play
NA.26 The use of playful features along active travel routes **could** be included and is encouraged. including in playable streets, and adjacent open spaces.



Natural play features along a pedestrian route in Houlton.



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Open space design principles

Small public open spaces create nodes within green infrastructure benefitting community health and wellbeing of communities and biodiversity.

NA.27 Design of recreational facilities **must** reflect the character of the existing landscape.

NA.28 At all scales these spaces **must** be equitably accessible. Their design, maintenance and use **must** promote equality and inclusion.

NA.29 Across South West Rugby routes **must** be as accessible as possible, giving consideration to their context, and well maintained with clear way marking.

NA.30 Design **must** prioritise opportunities for people to interact and notice nature through the development of habitats in public open spaces.

NA.31 Variety in spaces, habitats, experiences **must** be created to encourage a wide range of users and activities. e.g. SUDs, ponds, orchards and play parks.

NA.32 Within new parks and public open spaces all habitats **should** be created for wildlife benefit.

NA.33 Provisions for protecting habitats by limiting public access **must** be established within the design process. e.g. landscape buffers, designated footpaths, boundary treatments such as knee rails or fences.

NA.34 Signage and interpretation **should** be utilised to promote support with users for habitat protection and building community involvement in local open spaces.

NA.35 Incidental landscape interventions such as green roofs and walls can act as stepping stones across the urban environment **should** be considered in the design of the public realm.



Greenways utilising existing landscape features to create active travel routes.



Local community groups can get involved in creating landscapes.



Retention of mature trees create a sense of place and character.



Natural play encourages connection to landscape.



Green roofs can provide stepping stones of green infrastructure.



A diversity of spaces create opportunity for social prescribing.

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Landscape proposals

- NA.36** Landscape proposals **should** be diverse, from structure to species, ensuring a healthy, biodiverse landscape.
- NA.37** As part of drainage strategies, the use of water management interventions **should** be explored, for example SUDs, filtration tree pits and permeable paving.
- NA.38** Permeable, soft landscape boundary treatments **should** be utilised to strengthen natural connectivity. This applies to both front and rear boundary treatments.
- NA.39** Hard boundary treatments **should** be made permeable for wildlife movement by using techniques such as hedgehog holes within barriers.
- NA.40** Where soft landscaped buffers and boundaries are utilised as screening the treatment **must** be adequate in height and width to satisfy a Landscape Visual Assessment following the methodology set out in the most recent edition of the Guidelines for Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (GLVIA).
- NA.41** The following palettes have been produced as a guide for species that **could** be selected for landscape schemes.
- Trees
Woodland blocks are a characteristic of the plateau landscape and create nodes within wildlife corridors.
- NA.42** New woodland planting **must** favour oak as the major tree with silver birch on sandy soils.
- NA.43** New woodland planting **should** consist of a diverse stand structure to help with climate resilience and protect from pest and diseases.
- NA.44** As a guidance woodland mixes **should** contain no more than:
- 10% of the tree stock in the area being of one species
 - 20% of the tree stock in the area being of one genus
 - 30% of the tree stock in the area being of one family.
- NA.45** A diversity of tree species **should** be selected for the public open space across sites.
- NA.46** Species ultimate size **must** be considered to ensure plant selections are appropriate for the scale of the public open space.
- NA.47** Species selections **should** be appropriate to the landscape character whilst promoting climate resilience and species diversity.
- NA.48** Species diversity **must** be maintained throughout public open space selections.



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Landscape proposals

Street trees

- NA.49** Street tree species **must** be selected that are tolerant of urban conditions aligning with the landscape character of the site.
- NA.50** Biodiversity and climate resilience **must** be demonstrated through plant selections.
- NA.51** Tree avenues **should** be introduced where appropriate in keeping with character.
- NA.52** Verges **must** be adequate widths to accommodate tree size at maturity and provide enough space and uncompacted soil for the tree’s root area (see also ‘Public Space’).
- NA.53** As trees mature and overhang nearby routes, they **should** be able to be maintained to achieve tree canopy clearances below in line with the Warwickshire Design Guide: :
- Footpath/Footway: 2.4m
 - Cycleway: 3.5m
 - Carriageway: 5.2m

Boundaries and edges

- NA.54** Species rich native hedgerows act as corridors for wildlife and where appropriate, **should** be utilised over single species hedges in landscaping schemes.
- NA.55** Single species native hedges **should** be prioritised as boundary treatments where species-rich native hedgerows are inappropriate over impermeable treatments such as fencing.
- NA.56**Species rich native hedgerows **must** consist of 7 or more species,providing suitable food sources for local wildlife and good blossoming sequence.
- NA.57** Hedgerow ‘standard’ trees **should** be included using species such as Oak, Small-leaved Lime and disease resistant Elm to enhance age structure and strengthen landscape character.
- NA.58** Hedges and hedgerows **must** suit the available space and available maintenance regime.

Scrub

- NA.59** Scrub **should** be specified to improve species diversity particularly at the edges of public open space and developments for screening and buffers.
- NA.60** Where scrub is utilised it **must** be located carefully to ensure safety and visibility.
- NA.61** Opportunities to promote the restoration of historic heathland through mixed planting of deciduous and coniferous species **should** be explored where appropriate to the landscape character.

Hedgerows



Prunus spinosa

Corylus avellana

Crataegus laevigata

Cornus sanguinea

Ligustrum vulgare



Acer campestre

Crataegus monogyna

Single species hedges



Carpinus betulus

Fagus sylvatica

Taxus baccata

Ilex aquifolium

Acer campestre

Scrub



Crataegus monogyna

Calluna vulgaris

Prunus spinosa

Viburnum opulus

Salix caprea

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Landscape proposals

Grassland and wildflowers

- NA.62**To strengthen the sense of landscape cohesion and connectivity opportunities **should** be identified for wide woodland and scrub margins of 4-6m with potential for wildflowers and grasslands.
- NA.63** Areas of grassland and wildflowers **should** be used to create ecotones to offer diversity and enhance green infrastructure.
- NA.64** Wide margins **should** be designed and managed to put more heterogeneity into the landscape whilst providing attractive, lower maintenance plant displays.
- NA.65**Wildflower and grassland species mixes **must** be led by the distinctiveness of the local flora and the specific site conditions.
- NA.66** Seed supplies **should** be of local providence, the coronation meadows of Draycote and Dunchurch could be used as donor sites.
- NA.67** If generic, non-local seed mixes are to be used they **must** be supplied from a reputable specialist supplier of UK native wildflower seed.
- NA.68** Amenity grass and floral rich species mixes which can be maintained with flowering to 600mm **must** be selected for verges along movement corridors where taller vegetation is unsuitable.






Wildflowers

Woodland








Hyacinthoides non-scriptaAnemone nemerosaPrimula vulgarisSilene dioicaRanunculus ficaria

Wetter valleys



Juncus inflexusCarex pendulaChrysosplenium oppositifoliumLotus pedunculatusCaltha palustris

Coronation meadows



Adders Tongue FernCowslipGreen Winged OrchidMeadow VetchPepper Saxifrage