

Submission on Historic and Natural Environment.

This paper argues that building on green belt in Keresley is not consistent with national legislation and policy about biodiversity.

1) legislation. The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 provides,

“40Duty to conserve biodiversity

(1)Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

2) Policy -

Biodiversity 2020 is a national strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services; it was published in summer 2011. It sets out the Government's ambition to halt overall loss of England's biodiversity by 2020.

It is a Defra public service target to halt the decline of specialist farmland birds.

The Lawton Report, Making Space for Nature, states that we must move away from protecting particular sites and move to landscape scale conservation.

Keresley is an important Biodiversity asset because:

1. it contains a significant number of BAP bird species (list already provided in evidence) which are an indicator for wider Biodiversity, according to Natural England 2015 publication, Land Management EIN 008.
2. It is home to protected species including great crested newts, 5 species of Bats, and badgers.
3. It contains 3 ancient woodlands and a rich network of ancient hedgerows. -
4. Fragmentation and isolation of sites and species is a major factor in loss of biodiversity and action should be taken to prevent this.
5. maintaining connectivity, between the woodlands, and in the hedgerows, is vital both locally and regionally. the link that Keresley provides to open countryside is important for Coventry as it has reduced links from north and south already.
6. Keresley is at the eastern edge of Meriden gap which needs to be retained as a north south corridor to allow for climate change. It is an important corridor enabling movement and connection of species and habitats.

Building in Keresley – on land currently green belt - would have a devastating local impact

on biodiversity, and be hugely detrimental to the stated aims of the Lawton Report, B2020, and the Natural Environment white paper.

Historic Landscape:

“One of the core principles in the National Planning Policy Framework is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Local plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside”. PPG paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 8-001-20140306

1. Keresley is beautiful and has a distinctive character in the area.
2. According to the Warwickshire Design Guidelines (previously cited) , Keresley is the best remaining example of Ancient Arden in the county. See also Natural England <file:///C:/Users/geringmr/Downloads/97%20Arden%20RY%20v5.pdf> for a full listing of the many benefits provided by Arden landscape eg

■.

1. Veteran oak trees with obvious cavities, splits or holes may provide important roost sites for bats such as Soprano pipistrelle bats and potential nest sites for birds.
2. ■ Mature oak trees provide important food plant for rare priority species such as false mocha moths that feed on oak leaves. ■ Defining feature across whole areaBroadleaved woodlands support a range of priority plant species such as the narrow leaved helleborine and spreading bellflower. Records show that the there are two main populations for these two species in the UK; in the West Midlands with very good numbers in Arden, and on the Welsh borders. This priority species is regarded as threatened and consideration should be given to expansion of habitat.
3. ■ The river valleys cut through the rolling landscape, providing distinctive local landscapes and hosting remnant areas of important wetland habitat. ■ Priority habitats include wet woodlands, floodplain grazing marsh and lowland meadows.
4. Management to enforce sense of place is likely to increase sense of history. Conserving and enhancing the distinctive landscape features is also likely to benefit biodiversity by enhancing or expanding available habitat. Increasing sense of history has some potential to increase tourism. This could in turn lead to increasing recreational opportunities and sense of place by reinforcing the historic character of the landscape.

5. Increasing tranquillity through expanding areas of woodland could also increase biodiversity and sense of place.
 6. There is a strong resource here that could be utilised and increased without significant effects on other services. However, increased recreation may have minor negative effects on tranquillity, biodiversity through disturbance and potentially a small effect on food production through, for example, taking land out of production to produce paths in some areas.
 7. The improvement in the condition, and expansion, of woodland and priority habitats will assist in climate regulation through the storage of carbon. Increases in habitat extent could also have a positive effect on increasing recreation, water quantity, water quality and regulating soil erosion but is likely to have a negative impact on agriculture.
 8. Designated sites provide important and accessible sections of geology allowing the interpretation, understanding and continued research into the geodiversity of the NCA.
7. Keresley contains a wealth of historic assets including a stone age hill fort, a roman fortification, a standing medieval village, a probable Saxon burial mound, a complete economic stone age settlement area, including hunting, cultivation, and settlement areas. Rare medieval coins have been found there.

A plan to build 3100 homes in Keresley, when there is no necessity to build there – argued in my submission on Green Belt– would be entirely contrary to national policy and legislation. For a local plan to be sound, it must be consistent with national policy.

At the local plan hearings in July, the council argued that landscape damage was not significant because you won't see the 3000 homes from the ancient monument (stone age/roman fort) at Corley. This is a nonsense to suggest that all of the landscape value, or a substantial part of it, is contained in one particular vista. The Arden landscape is characterized by its leafy lanes, holloways, and mosaic of small fields and woodlands. Traveling north through Keresley, on Bennetts Road or the Tamworth Road, all of that landscape value would be obliterated. The Council argument is akin to suggesting that historic preservation interests are well served by saving just the façade of Coventry Cathedral – a one eyed, one dimensional view of heritage.

Appendix

There is Rich Biological Connectivity in Keresley. In the following figures, Compare the connectivity in the green belt area of Keresley, where building is proposed with the absence of connectivity in the built areas adjacent and the poor area connectivity in the agricultural areas to the north and west.

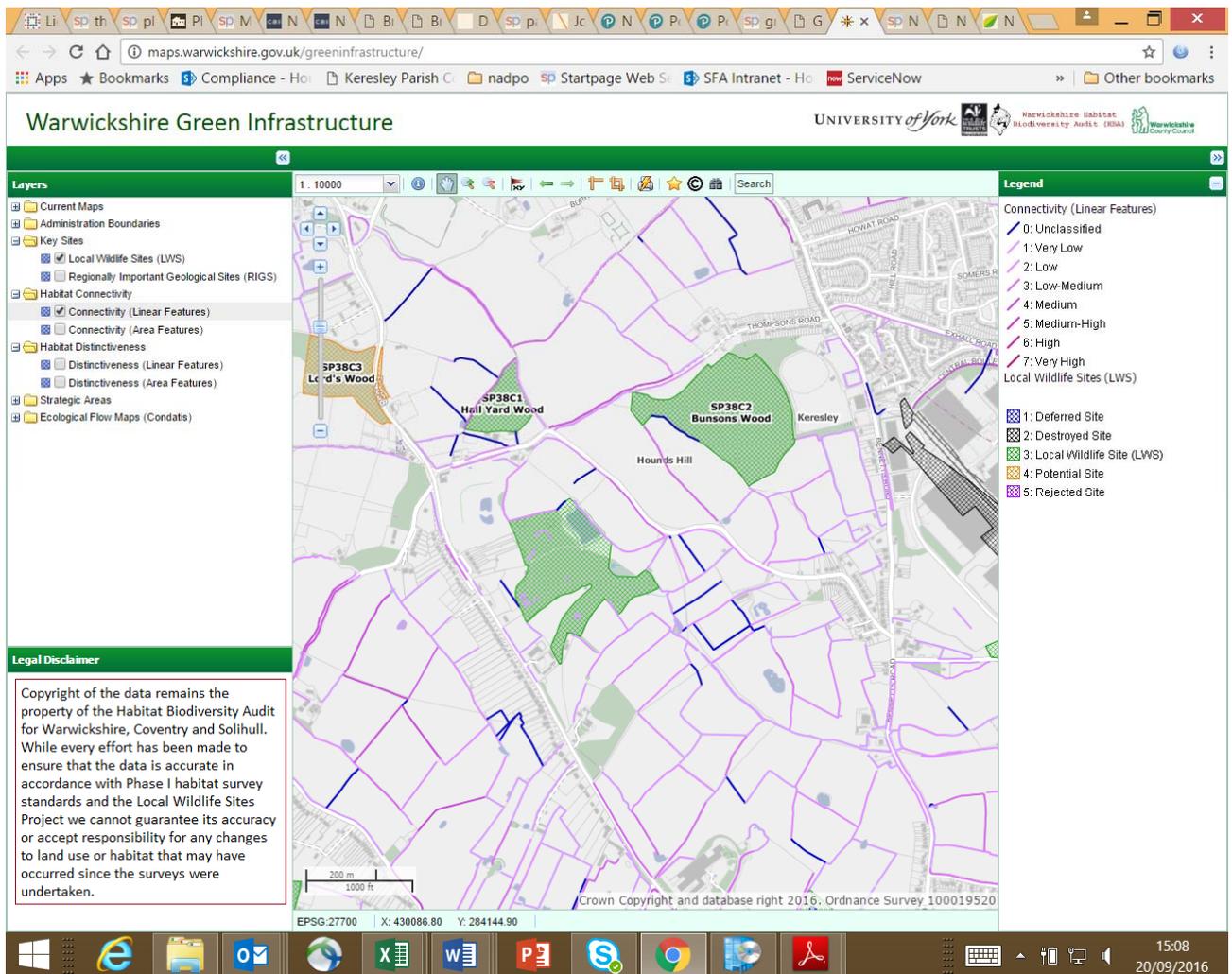


Figure 1 Hedgerow connectivity Coventry, small scale

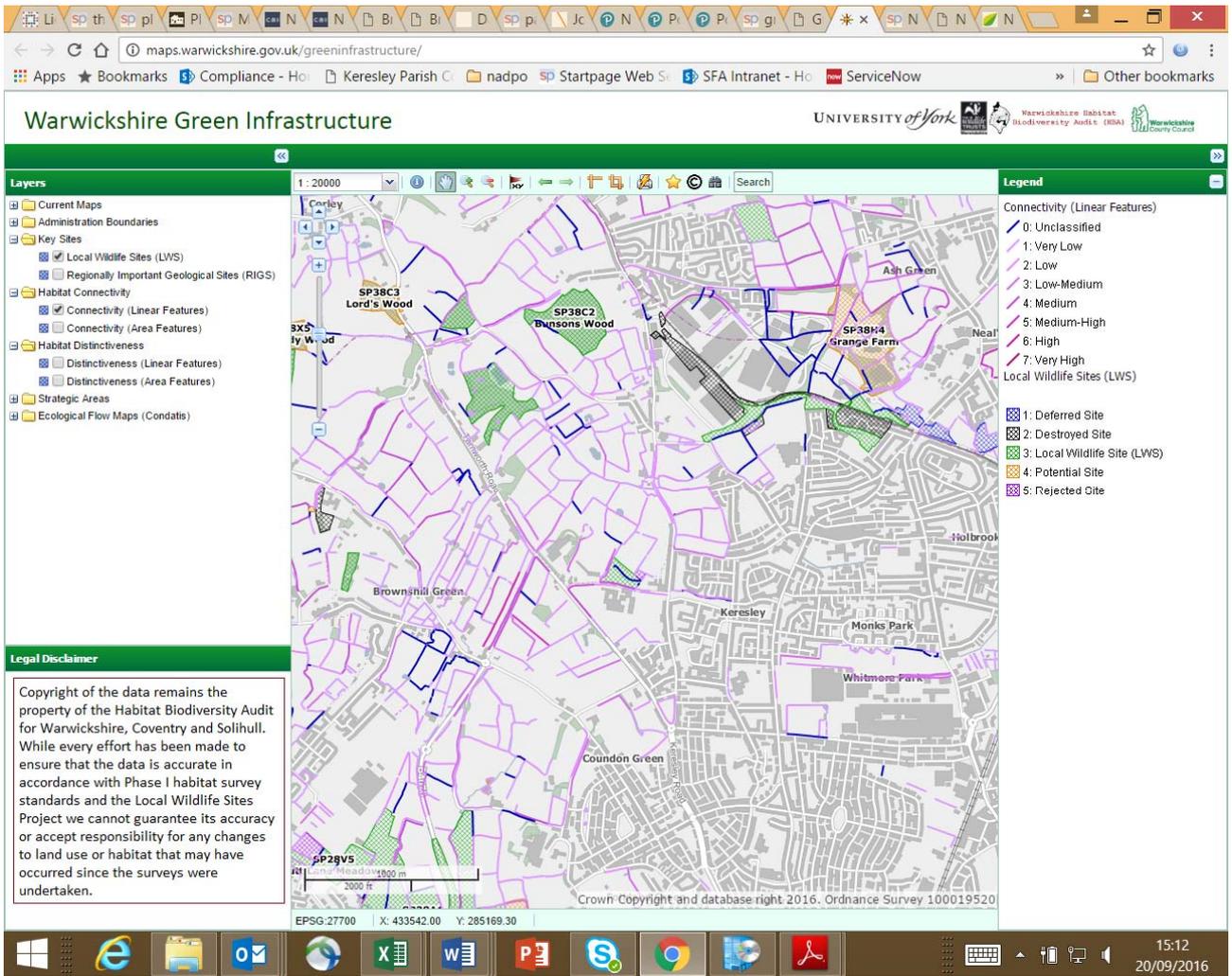


Figure 2 larger view - note absence of connectivity in built areas.

Keresley also contains important features for area connectivity ie woodlands and meadows.

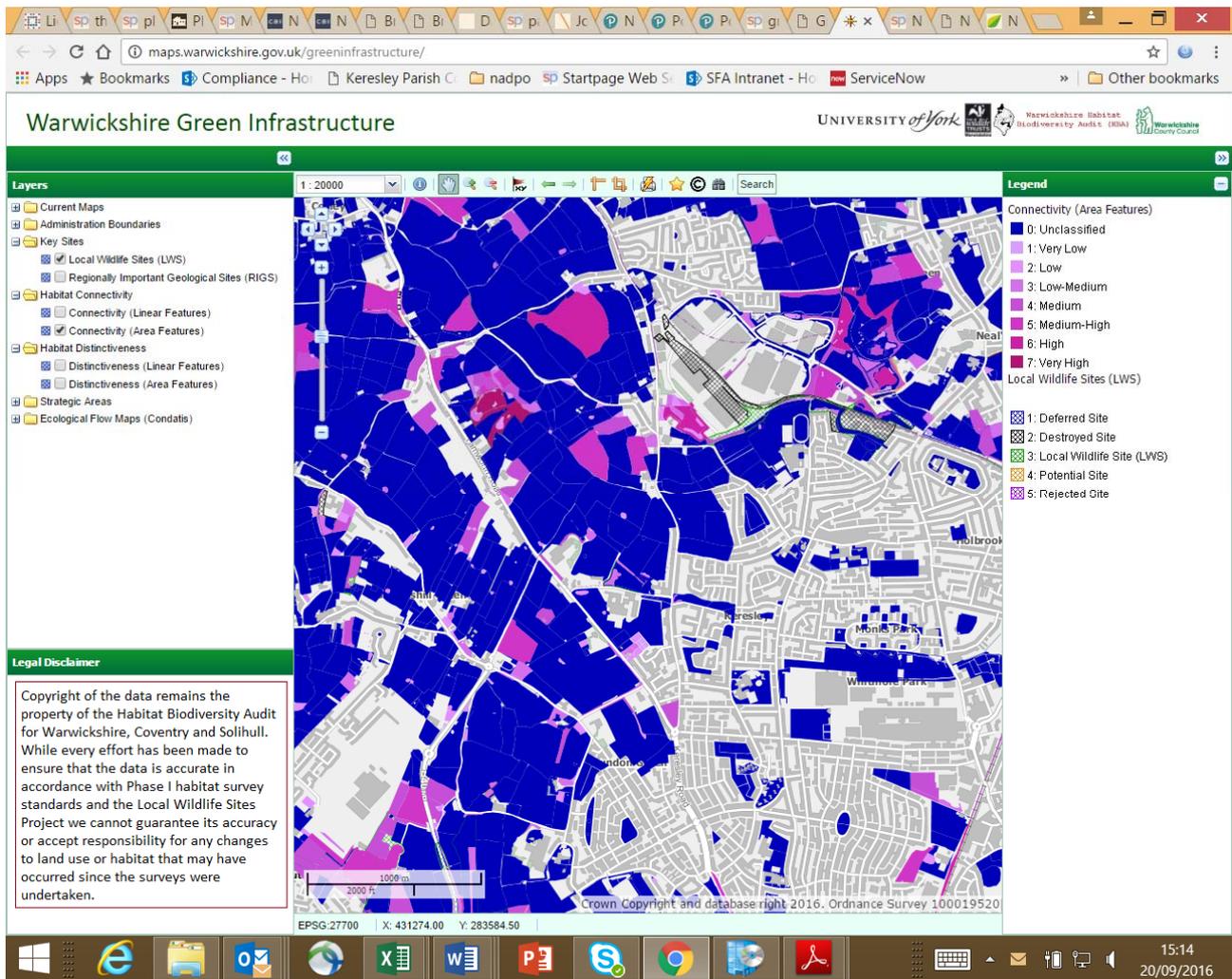


Figure 3 Area Connectivity - Woodlands and grassland in keresley

Looking at a larger scale, (below) area connectivity in the north west quadrant of Coventry is poor. Retaining current good medium hi connectivity in Keresley is essential (note, the blue areas in the map, which are deemed 'unclassified' are areas which have not received a favourable connectivity rating from the Warwickshire Habitat Biodiversity Audit. They have been assessed. Phone Conversation with the Habitat Biodiversity Audit)

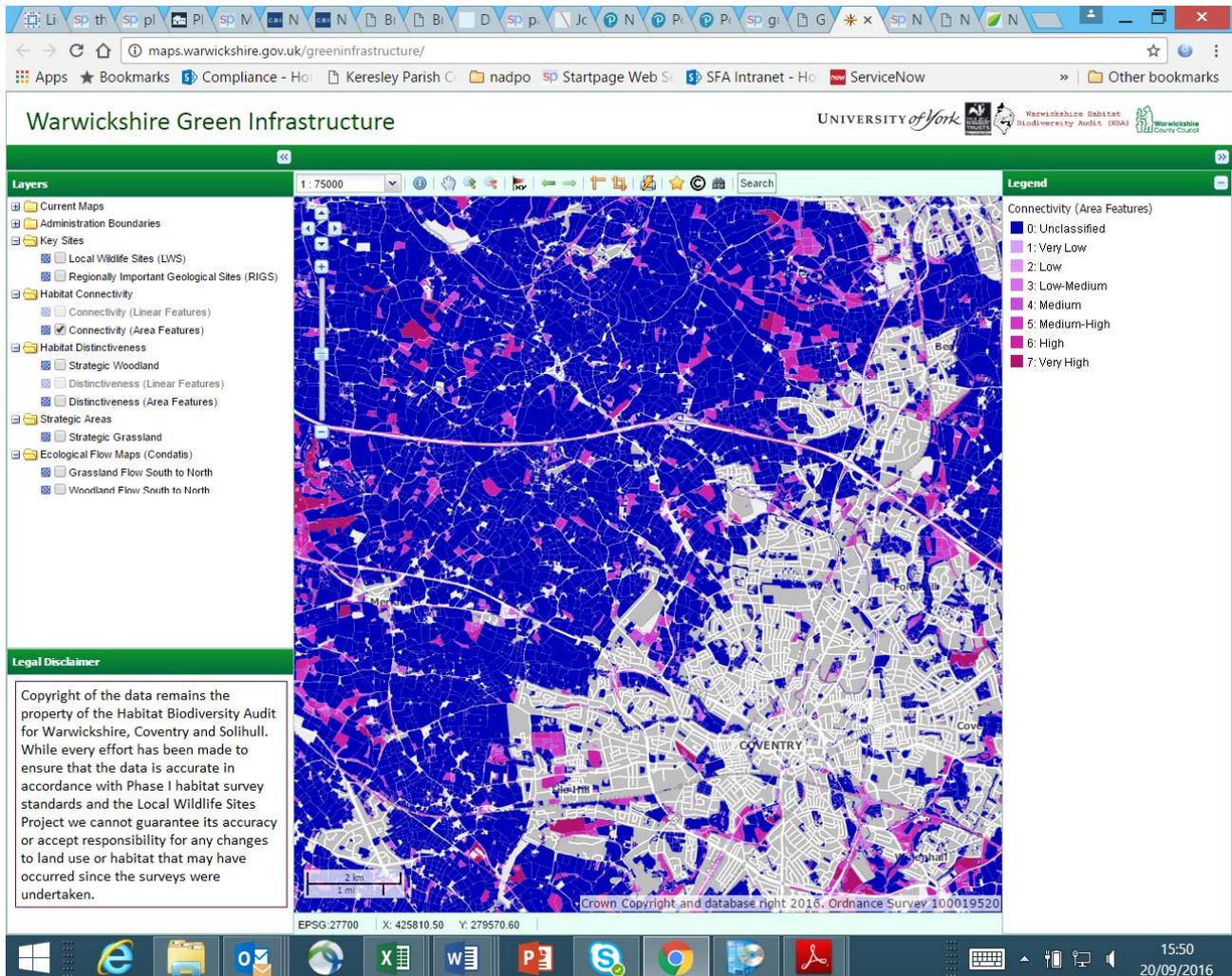
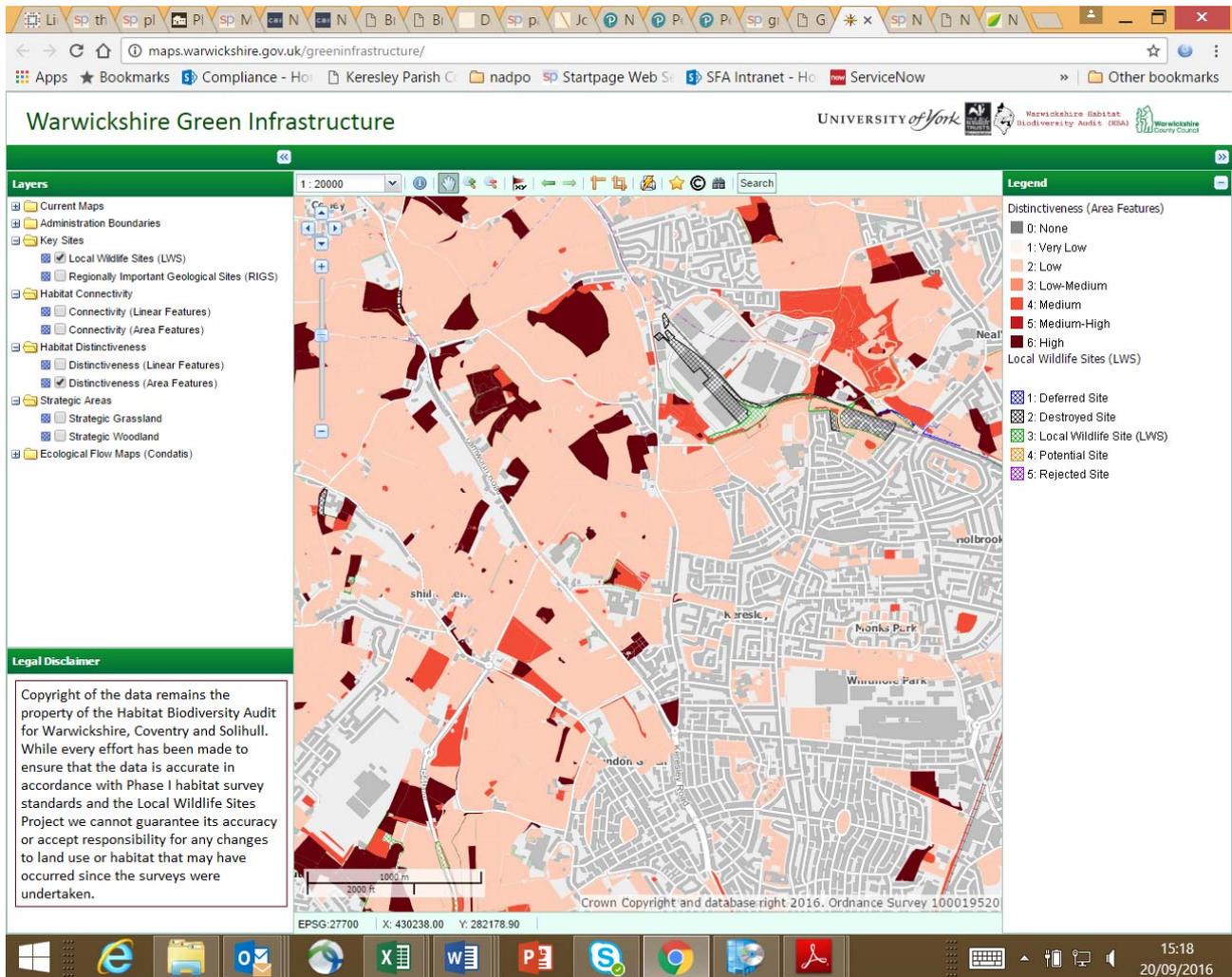


Figure 4 Larger Scale - Area Connectivity in NW quadrant of Coventry.

The ancient woodlands and meadows provide a notable concentration of highest value area distinctive features



Looking at the wider Coventry Area, it is evident that Keresley is among the 10 best clusters of distinctive wildlife habitat around the city (see below). It has 3 very good quality ancient woodlands, one of them a rare wet alder woodland (Queens Wood).

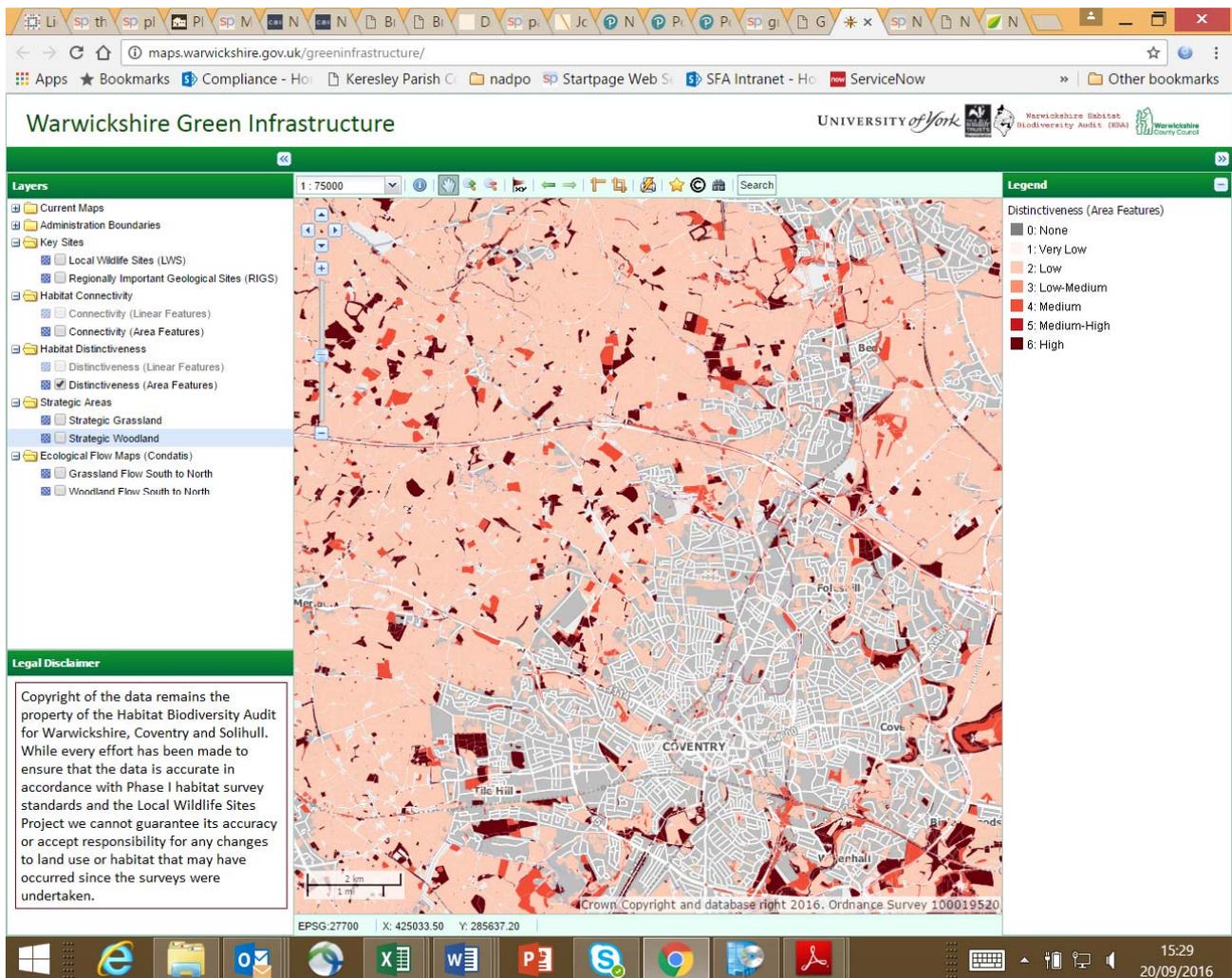


Figure 5 Wider Coventry area, distinctive habitat - with hi species count or unusual species.

The Ancient Woodlands and Grasslands, provide a good concentration of strategic grassland and strategic woodland.

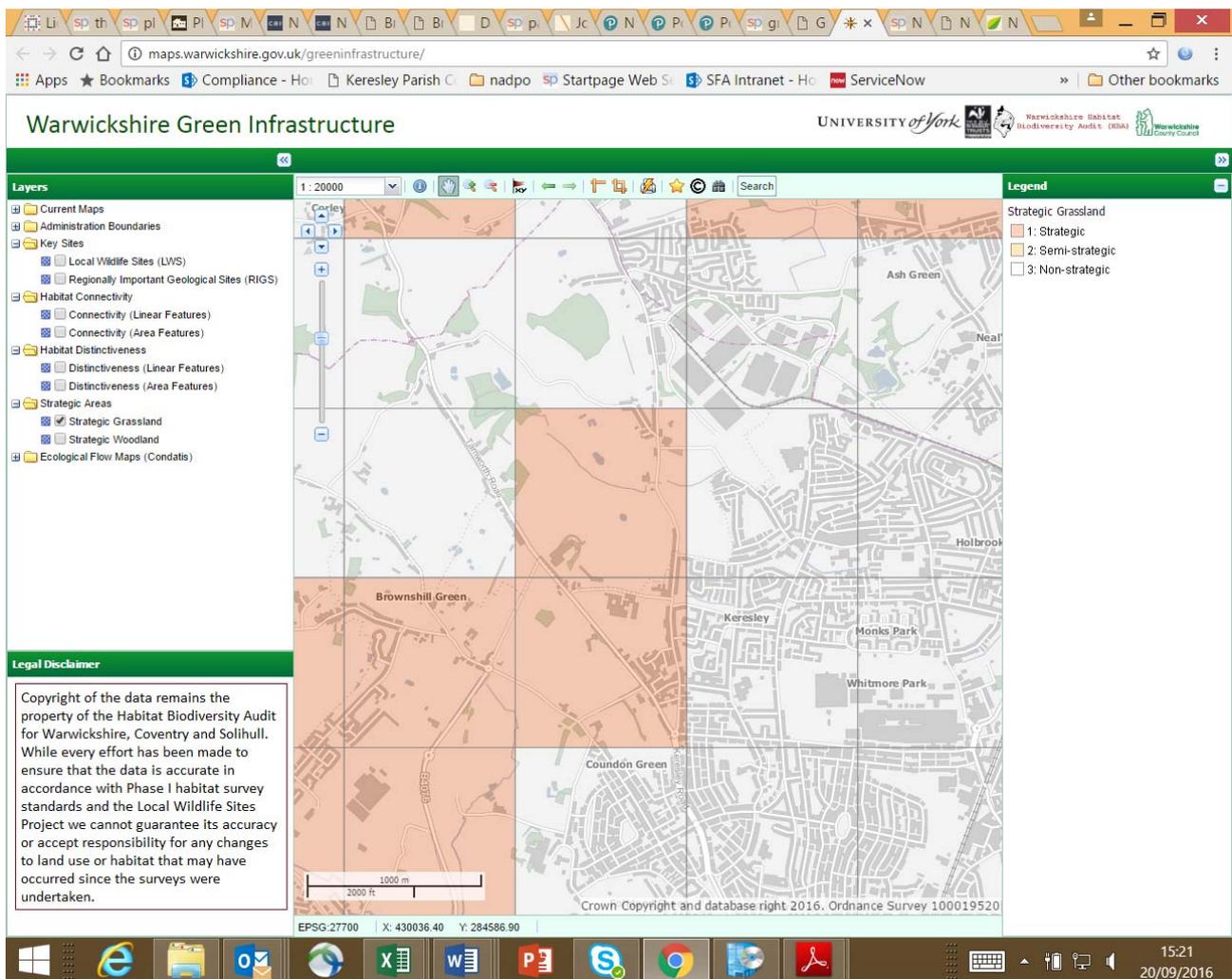


Figure 6 strategic grassland area

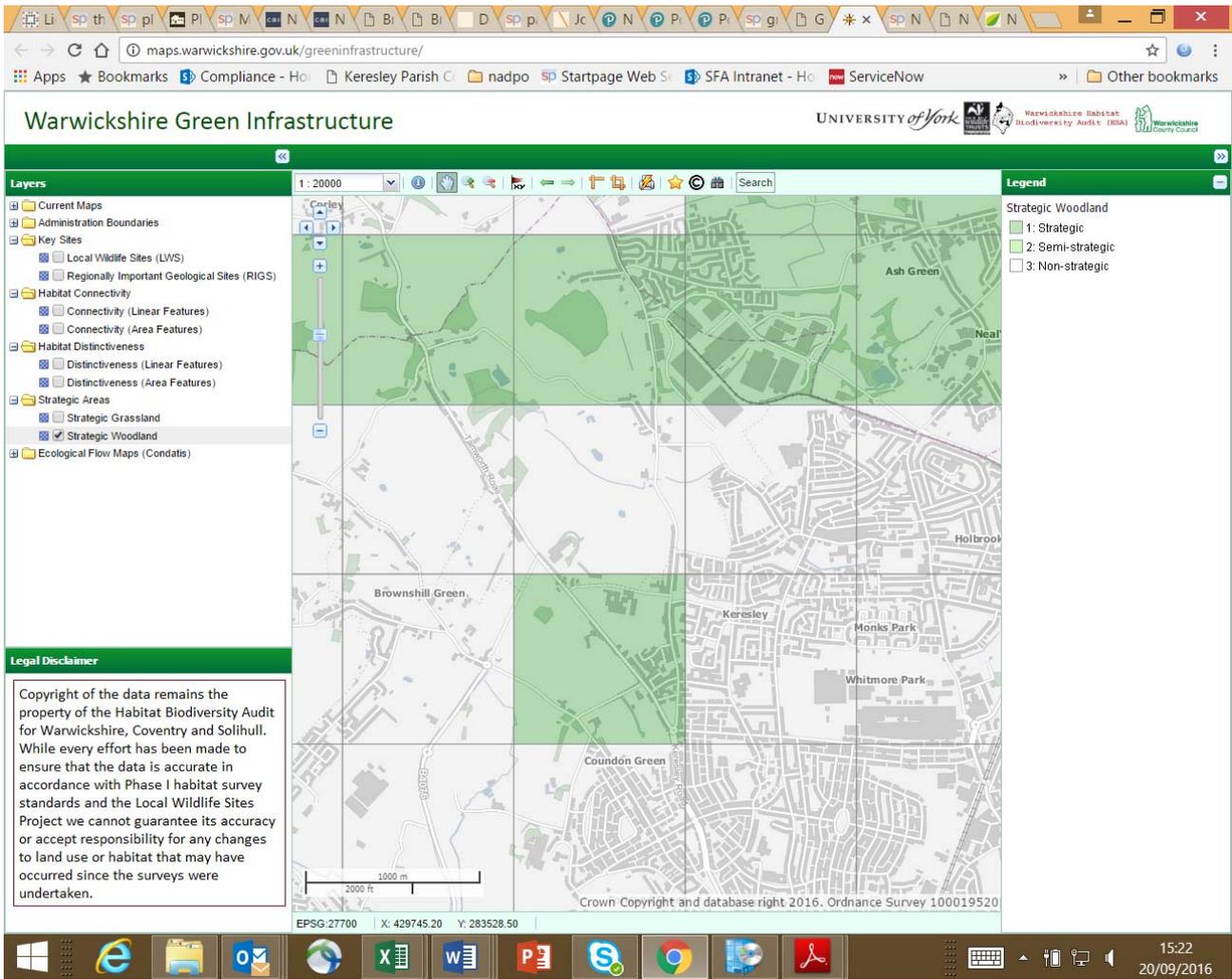


Figure 7 Strategic Woodland

On a larger scale, strategic woodland is largely absent from the blocks around keresley

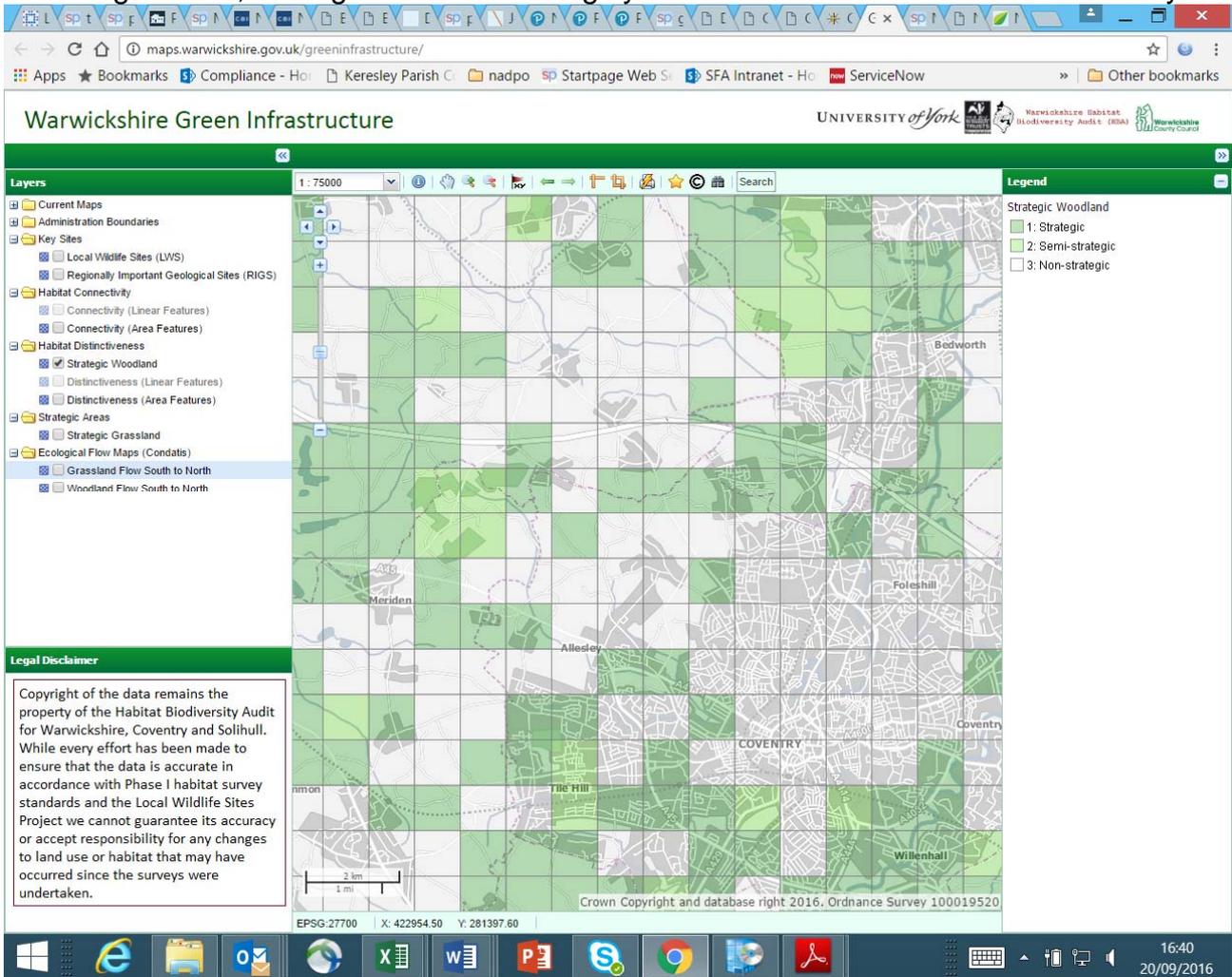


Figure 8 Strategic woodland largely absent from area around keresley