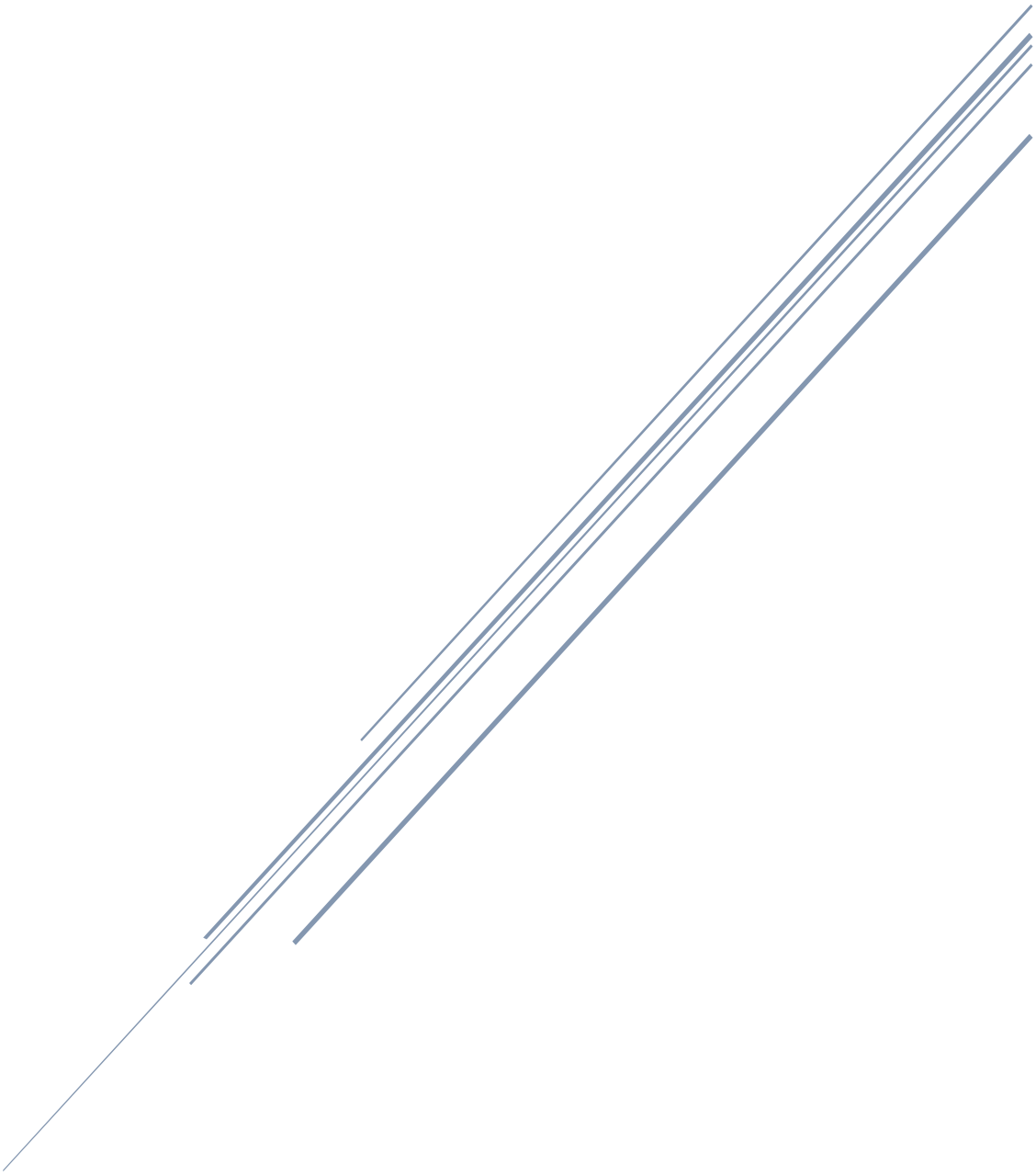
HAGLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Biodiversity Policy



V1 - Adopted – 8th April 2024
Minute Reference – 61/24 item b

Hagley Parish Council Biodiversity Policy

1.0 Introduction - Statutory Duty

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Environment Act 2021, Hagley Parish Council is responsible for conserving its biodiversity and can allocate funds for this purpose. The council must review their policy annually and report on its implementation. As a public authority, Hagley Parish Council must also consider and act on ways to enhance biodiversity.

Hagley has lost some of its natural habitat and species alongside the rest of the UK. The following document should be read in conjunction with the Environment Report, which is part of the Neighbourhood Planning Document and contains seven further policies and objectives (Appendix One). The seven policies are in line with the Worcestershire Council Nature Recovery Plan and are included in the Environment Section of the Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Planning group has also established contact with local voluntary groups working on nature conservation, Wyre Forest District Council, The Wildlife Trust, Natural England and North Worcestershire Water Management.

To support biodiversity, an initial biodiversity audit of council landholdings has been undertaken and the recommendations are included in this policy document and action plan. The initial audit does not replace seeking expert advice on possible actions that can be taken to support biodiversity. All ecology reports are within the Environment Section of the Neighbourhood Plan.

2.0 Definition

Biodiversity refers to the variety of all life on Earth, including every species of animals and plants. It plays a crucial role in maintaining the balance of our ecosystems, which provide us with essential goods and services necessary for our economic and social well-being. These services include food, clean air, and fresh water. Additionally, biodiversity contributes to less obvious services such as natural disaster protection, climate regulation, water purification, and crop pollination. Beyond its practical benefits, biodiversity also enriches our lives by providing cultural services.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

3.1 Aim

The policy aim is to enhance and protect Hagley's biodiversity. Hagley Parish Council will consider sustainability, environmental impact, and biodiversity when making decisions and will develop and implement policies and strategies as required.

3.2 Objectives

The Hagley Parish Council has laid out a plan to enhance the biodiversity of the area. This plan includes four objectives:

Objective One - The council will carefully conserve, protect and develop habitats to benefit biodiversity.

Objective Two - The council will manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that promote biodiversity.

Objective Three - The council will support the community, local businesses and council operations in adopting low-impact practices that benefit the environment.

Objective Four - The council will also support residents and local organisations in their efforts to enhance and promote biodiversity.

4.0 Actions

4.1 Objective One - **The council will carefully conserve, protect and develop habitats to benefit biodiversity.**

The biodiversity policy supports site and building design that benefits biodiversity through the conservation and integration of existing habitats or the provision of new habitats. They will also protect sensitive habitats from development and consider the impact of each proposed development on important habitats for wildlife. In addition, they will evaluate the potential for biodiversity net gain in each development. The parish council will also include environmental policies that support biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.

4.2 Objective Two - **The council will manage its land and property using environmentally friendly practices that promote biodiversity.**

The parish council is committed to promoting and preserving local biodiversity in its landholdings and open spaces. It will conduct regular biodiversity audits to monitor its progress and act as a role model to other landowners by adopting best land management practices.

When managing its open spaces, the council will prioritise the conservation and promotion of local biodiversity. This includes implementing beneficial practices such as careful vegetation cutting and removal, non-use of chemicals, and appropriate timing of maintenance work. In addition, the council will ensure that grounds maintenance contracts are specified in a way that does not harm the natural environment.

Finally, the council will consider biodiversity issues and implement changes when managing its buildings.

4.3 Objective Three - **The council will support the community, local businesses and council operations in adopting low-impact practices that benefit the environment.**

The council aims to increase public awareness of biodiversity issues by promoting them on their website, social media and newsletters. It also plans to engage with local businesses and residents to educate them on the importance of biodiversity in the community and encourage them to get involved. The council will involve the community in biodiversity projects on its land as much as possible, including activities such as tree planting, wildflower meadows, and birdbox making.

4.4 Objective Four - **The council will also support residents and local organisations in their efforts to enhance and promote biodiversity.**

The Hagley Parish Council is committed to collaborating with other organisations to safeguard, promote and enrich biodiversity in the parish areas. The council will examine all local nature recovery strategies, species conservation strategies, or protected site strategies relating to local sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) and assess how they can contribute to implementing the recommendations outlined in these strategies.

ACTION PLAN

Documents used to develop the action plan include the Worcestershire County Council (CC) Pollinator Plan. Worcestershire CC Biodiversity Plan. Detailed plans for the protection of biodiversity are available at: https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/planning-and-developments/environmental-policy/biodiversity-action-plan.

Objective One - Conserve, protect and develop habitats to benefit biodiversity.

ACTION	OUTCOME	TARGET (Years)	REPORTING / PUBLICITY
Raise local awareness of biodiversity across Hagley Parish.	Gain local support for action.	Ongoing	Newsletter, Social Media, website
Conservation and creation of habitats to protect and support local biodiversity, create wildlife corridors (Illustration 1: 11) and encourage suitable planting to support biodiversity.	Create protected wildlife corridors and diversify habitats to meet the needs of a variety of wildlife species, flora and fauna.	Ongoing	Report to Worcestershire Biological Records (WBR), link to Wyre Forest Parish Council, link to Worcestershire County Council Ecology Department
Protect existing environments including Sweet Pool Nature Reserve, Wychbury Hill, Brakes Lane Pond and Wassell Grove.	Evaluate biodiversity net gain for any development and also identify resources to conserve and protect existing sites.	Ongoing	Bromsgrove District Council, Natural Networks
Include environmental policies that support biodiversity within the neighbourhood plan.	To ensure the policies reflect there is a clear plan for all waterways (blue infrastructure) within the Parish. Including those of industrial architectural heritage.	Ongoing	North Worcestershire Water Management

Objective Two - **Hagley Parish Council Land and Property Management**

Site	Action	Outcome	Target	Reporting
Site One Cemetery	Additional planting Supply, maintain and renew bird and bat boxes as required. Hedgehog-friendly panels to be supplied and maintained. Adopt a plan to support wildlife and diversity whilst maintaining the site in a way which enables visitors to experience quiet and calm remembrance.	Increased diversity of habitats and food sources Increased cover and access for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. Encourage insects, particularly pollinators including butterflies and bees.	Ongoing Ongoing Ongoing	Hagley Parish Council
Site Two Recreation ground	Create a wildlife corridor along the recreation ground. Illustration 1 Achieve 'Green Flag' Status Sympathetically maintain hedging. Develop meadow borders. Miner bees are in situ and need a safe environment to thrive. Only use environment-friendly pesticides where necessary and only in ideal weather conditions. Encourage residents to remove litter and pick up after their dogs.	Food sources and cover Bring in recognition and funding. Encourages insects. Sustain and enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing	Hagley Parish Council
Site Three War Memorial	Adopt a management plan to increase biodiversity.	Sustain and enhance natural habitats.	Ongoing	Hagley Parish Council

	Work with the county council on verge management and fruit-growing tree protection. Encourage residents to adopt and look after the area.	Regular attention.		
Site Four Allotment	Develop area around brook as part of wildlife corridor – animals recorded to date include grass snakes, slow worms, and green woodpeckers. Explore the potential for eco therapy with one community allotment. Listen to allotment owners to discover how they would want to improve the natural habitat. Encourage planting to support local pollinators.	Part of the wildlife corridor Support the wellbeing of the community. Improve and enhance natural habitat. Enhance biodiversity		Wildlife Trust Hagley Parish Council
Site Five 'The Triangle'	Look at planting pollinating species and reducing mowing to create a natural environment. This site is owned by WCC so any work must be agreed by them.	Improve and enhance the natural environment	ongoing	Hagley Parish Council/Worcestershire County Council (WCC)
Site Six Sweet Pool Nature Reserve	Sweet Pool Nature Reserve is a rare hydrosere and has had an ecology assessment. The report identifies actions for improvement.	A bid for funding to replace duck boards and place Nature boards. The area surrounding the hydrosere would benefit from creating meadowland. Sweet Pool would be central to Hagley Wildlife Corridor and would benefit from a volunteer programme in partnership	ongoing	Worcester Wildlife Trust Bromsgrove District Council Hagley Parish Council

		with Worcester Wildlife Trust.		

Objective Three - **The council will support the community, local businesses and council operations in adopting low-impact practices that are beneficial to the environment (Appendix Two)**

Action	**Outcome**	**Target**	**Reporting**
Ensure that planning consultations for the built environment are considered against the requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan Encourage hedgehog/small animal highways with permeable boundaries Implement recommendations in the Neighbourhood plan e.g. including swift bricks, a 10% net gain in biodiversity, and bioswales.	Any impact on the biodiversity of any planning applications is considered. Protecting/enhancing habitats Extending habitats and creating wildlife corridors. Protect trees and hedgerows. Creating buffers between housing and nature.	Ongoing	Hagley Parish Council/ Bromsgrove District Council
Ask resident's views on what they would like to be done to conserve biodiversity. Raise awareness of the importance of gardens as habitats for wildlife, with possible actions highlighted in the parish magazine Village News. Create a page on the parish council website for photographs/information/links Encourage local farmers and landowners to contribute.	Engagement/ownership of biodiversity Extending habitats. Promote actions and encourage participation. Promote biodiversity and improved land management.	Ongoing	Hagley Parish Council

Provide seed bombs etc. Discourage floodlighting and review LED lighting around the village.	Pollinating plants Protect nocturnal animals and also reports of light pollution in the housing survey.		

Objective Four - **The council will also support residents and local organisations in their efforts to enhance and promote biodiversity.**

Action	**Outcome**	**Target**	**Reporting**
Support Community Action	Extending habitats.	ongoing	Hagley Parish Council
Support hedge/tree planting in any appropriate areas.	Promote biodiversity.		
Work in partnership with the school to develop young people's awareness of the environment around them.	Promote biodiversity.		
Consider events and offer volunteering opportunities to support biodiversity, working with local organisations.	Promote biodiversity.		
Support local Facebook Blakedown, Churchill and Hagley wildlife groups.	Maintain enthusiasm and engagement with local groups reporting sightings to Worcestershire Biological Records		

Outline of Neighbourhood Plan Environmental Policy for Hagley

Outline of the Environmental Policy detailed in the Neighbourhood Plan for Hagley based on the literature review, the Bromsgrove District Council Planning Department, and the local population's input during the housing census. The policies aim.

1. To protect and preserve the local nature and heritage while promoting sustainable growth and development.
2. To promote local nature recovery and emphasise protecting, enhancing, and expanding existing landscape features such as trees, hedges, meadows, woodlands, and water features.
3. Developing walks and pathways that allow for connection and interaction with nature.
4. Improving water flood management and quality, addressing air quality, minimising noise and light pollution, supporting temperature regulation, incorporating pollinator habitats, and creating new green spaces and features that complement their surroundings.
5. The policy aims to involve the community beyond volunteering for habitat restoration projects and initiatives and achieve a minimum 40% increase in biodiversity for future developments.
6. Specific actions will be taken to identify significant plants, animals, and geology for future management, and the timeline for achieving the policy objectives will be established with the community's agreement.

1.0 Principle One - Hagley is a nature-rich beautiful place.

Policy	Objectives
***To identify and safeguard Hagley Parish assets including trees and promote measurable growth in biodiversity*.**	**- To achieve an increase in biodiversity for all future developments by creating, enhancing, and connecting new and existing habitats and sites.** **- To prevent the loss of mature/veteran trees and preserve existing native trees and woodlands.**

2.0 Principle Two - Hagley is an Active and Healthy Place.

Policy	Objective
Create a green space network that includes existing playing fields, informal parks, recreational areas and Hagley allotments.	**- To assess the current green space to ensure it is fully utilised.**

3.0 Principle Three - Hagley is a Thriving and prospering place.

Policy	Objective
To create an extensive and accessible network of routes throughout the parish.	**- To assess the current network of footpaths, bridleways, and cycle paths to identify opportunities for expansion and enhancement.**

4.0 Principle Four – Hagley to have Improved Water Management.

Policy	Objectives
To promote sustainable water management and mitigate flood risks.	**- To work with Worcestershire County Council to ensure accurate collation of data on blue infrastructure.**

5.0 Principle Five – Hagley to be a resilient and climate-positive place.

Policy	Objectives
Make Hagley a more resilient and adaptive community to climate change while meeting air quality targets.	**- To establish a distinct Green Infrastructure approach and implement localised interventions to minimise climate change's impact on wildlife and Hagley's population.**

6.0 Principle Six – Historical Characteristics of the Parish of Hagley to be conserved and protected.

Policy	Objectives
Preserve Hagley's heritage assets and ensure information on heritage sites is widely available.	**1** ***'….Proactive management of the historic environment which encompasses all Heritage Assets recognised as being of significance for their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest.'*** ***2 '….The demolition of buildings or the removal of trees and other landscape features which make a positive contribution to an area's character or appearance will be resisted.'*** *(Bromsgrove District Council Planning Policy)*

Appendix Two - Land owned/managed by Hagley Parish Council

Site One Cemetery

Images are all sourced courtesy of Google Earth Pro 2.4.2024.



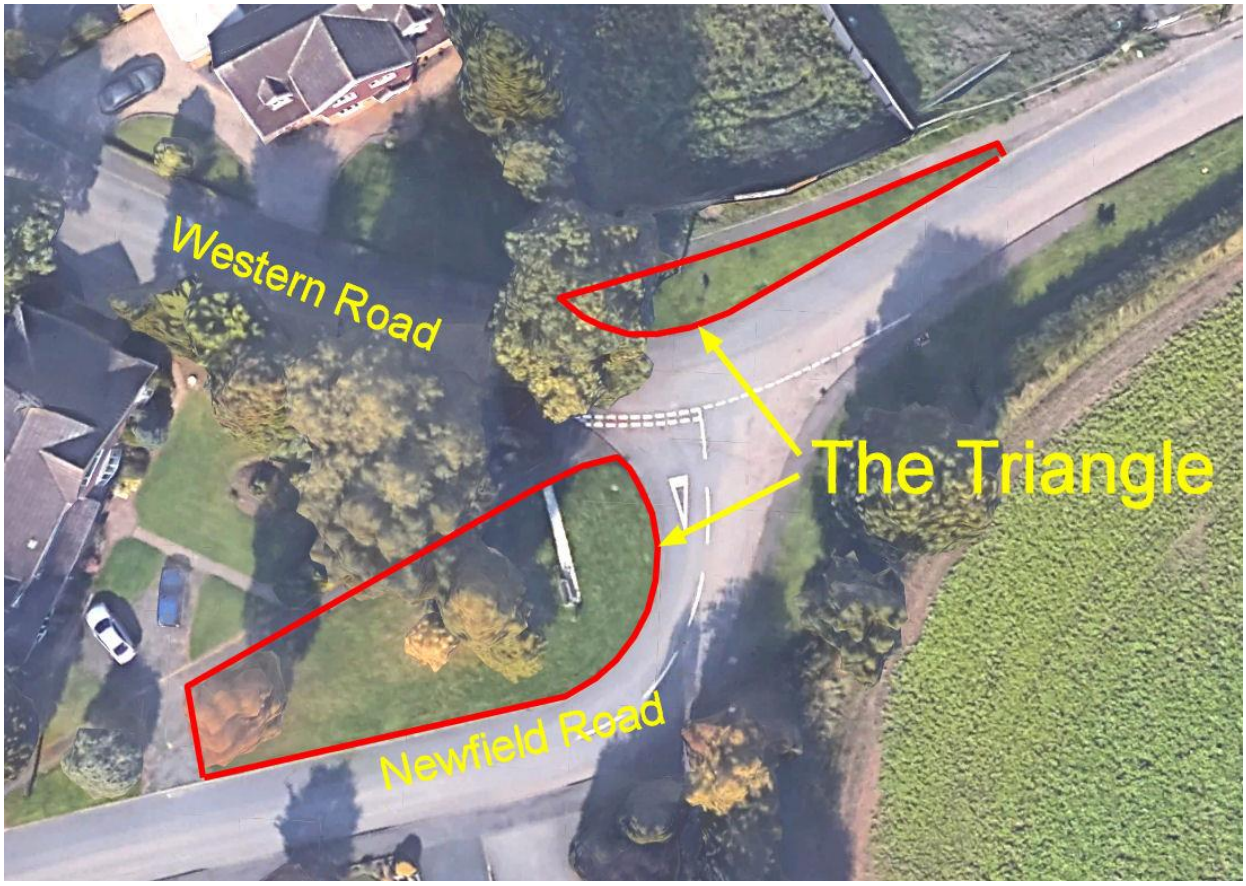
Site Two Playing Fields and Site Four Allotments



Site Three The War Memorial



Site Five The Triangle (Land owned by WCC)



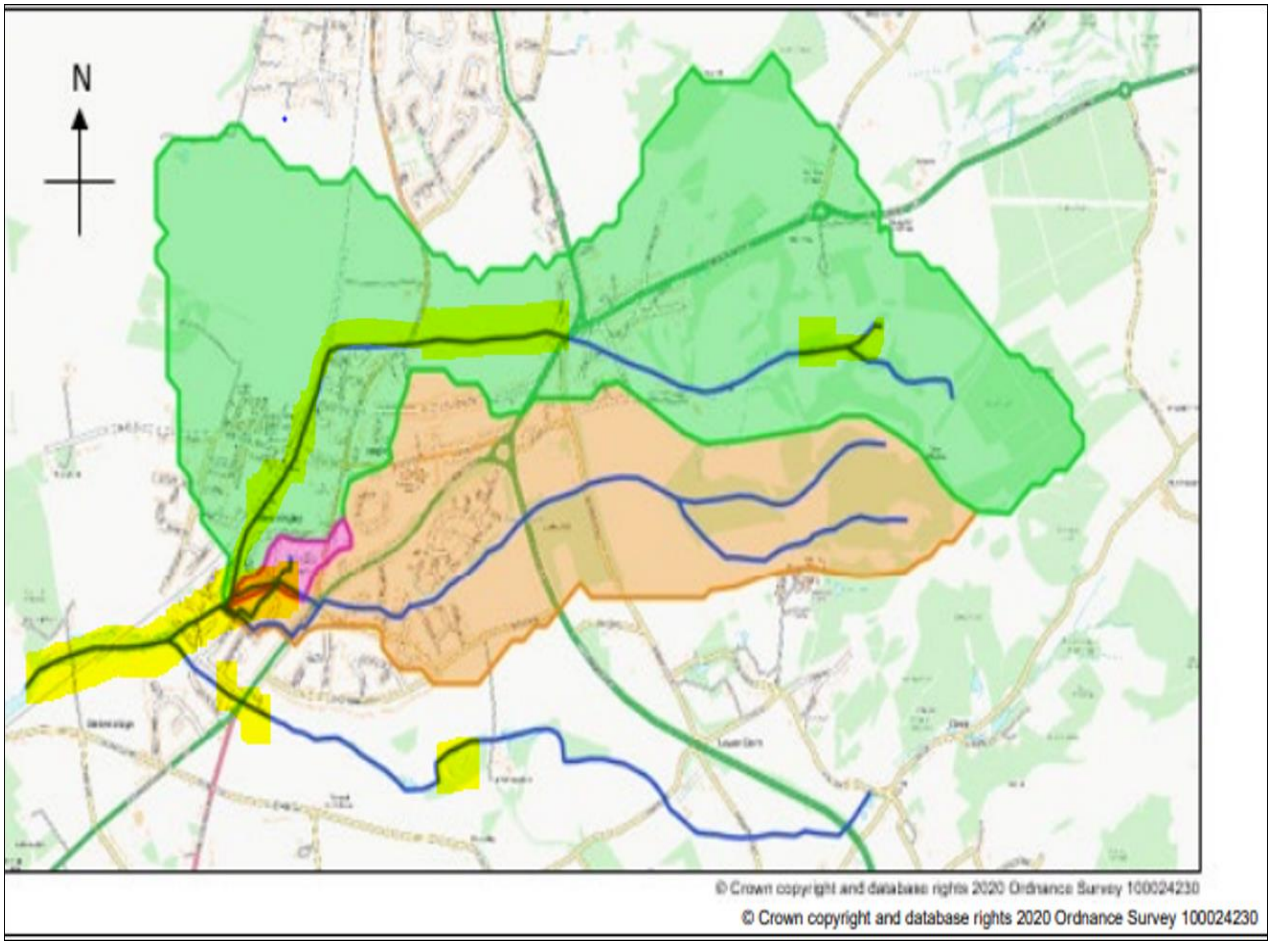
Site Six Sweet Pool Nature Reserve (Land owned by BDC)



Illustration 1

Potential Wildlife Corridors highlighted (for development in Partnership with Wyre Forest PC and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Worcestershire CC Ecology Unit)

(Image sourced Crown Copyright and Database Ordnance Survey 100024230)



© Crown copyright and database rights 2020 Ordnance Survey 100024230