

Evidence base: Important Natural Habitats and Ecological Connectivity

HM Government's [25 Year Plan](#) refers to creating a Nature Recovery Network with particular emphasis on landscape scale actions. Connectivity of sites is vital.

Connectivity has been at the forefront when identifying sites for inclusion under the Important Natural Habitats policy of the Histon & Impington Neighbourhood Plan (Policy HIM12). Map 1 illustrates this connectivity.

This Policy supports [Local Plan policies](#) through identifying areas that are valued locally for their biodiversity.

Note the sites referred to here, in both the map and schedule, are identified by the numbering used in Table 4 of the [Histon & Impington Neighbourhood Plan 2020 – 2031](#).

Criteria applied

Only nationally recognised or county-level criteria for habitats or species requiring particular protection were applied to identify the features included in the lists for each site.

These habitats and species are summarised in the Schedule below.

In the Schedule, under “key habitat”, habitats which are listed as a UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat are shown as follows:

- Habitats specifically shown on [Defra's Magic database](#) are shown in **maroon** and marked with a **Φ**.
- All other BAP habitats are shown in **green** and marked with a **#**.

UK BAP list of [priority habitats](#) includes:

- Arable field margins
- Hedgerows
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland. Deciduous woodland is a [“Priority habitat”](#) explicitly shown on Defra's Magic database.

The “species recorded” lists only species which feature as:

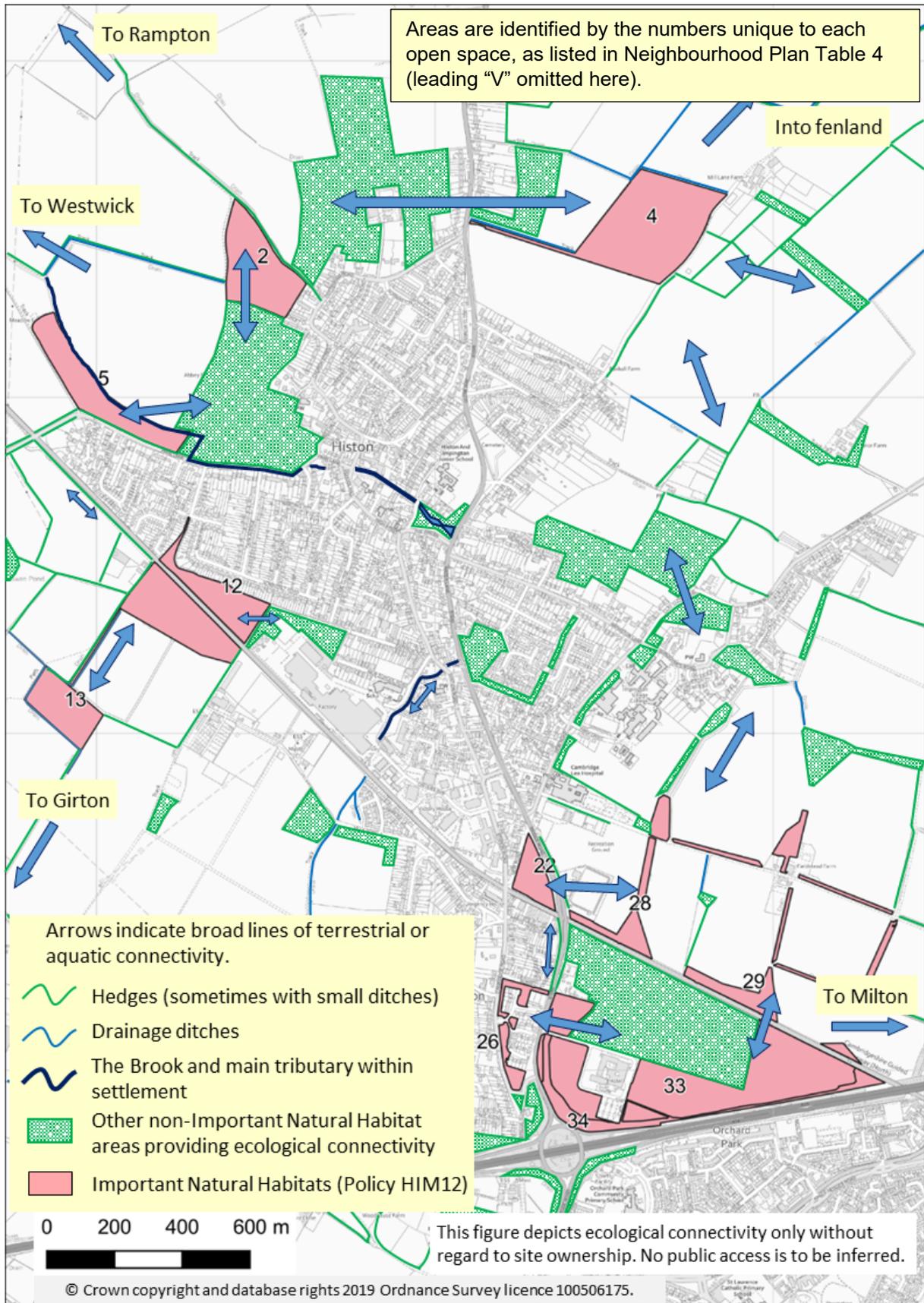
- UK BAP [priority bird species](#)
- Species listed under [Section 41](#) of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act
- [“Red list”](#) species in Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds
- UK BAP priority [terrestrial invertebrate](#) species
- [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough](#) Biodiversity Group’s:
 - [Local Priority Species](#) and
 - [Additional Species of Interest](#).

Species marked % have not been recorded recently (generally since the start of 2013).

For each site, the Schedule lists species which are on the [Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre](#) (CPERC) database or have been recorded by expert naturalists.

Information on other species present can be found in the individual site dossiers provided as supporting evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan. For some sites there is very little information, so the lists are incomplete.

Map 1 – Important Natural Habitat Sites Provide Ecological Connectivity



Schedule of Important Natural Habitats

V2 Croft Close Set Aside

Key habitat and species recorded

Deciduous woodland

Species	Turtle Dove
	Barn Owl
	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker %
	Song Thrush
	House Sparrow
	Bullfinch
	Linnet
	Yellowhammer
	Reed Bunting
	Grass Snake

Key connectivity

Links directly to area around Abbey Farm and Histon Manor to the south, which is designated as “Broad leaved woodland” under National Forest Inventory (see Magic) together with stands of “deciduous woodland”.

Through Histon Manor, links to Rowley’s Field (V5) and hedges along Gatehouse Road¹.

Merges with hedgerows along Gun’s Lane track, an ancient trackway with valuable hedgerows connecting Histon to the Westwick area and then providing connectivity through to Rampton.

¹ In spring 2020, the formal name of this road was being changed from New Road, Histon.

V4 Northern Buxhall Farm

Key habitat and species recorded

Arable field margin #

Hedgerow #

Wildlife sympathetic farmland

Species	Grey Partridge
	Cuckoo
	Barn Owl
	Skylark
	Starling
	Song Thrush
	House Sparrow
	Yellow Wagtail
	Bullfinch
	Linnet
	Corn Bunting
	Yellowhammer
	Reed Bunting
	Brown Hare

Key connectivity

The hedgerows, ditches and open landscape provides connectivity into the extensive areas of farmland in the fenland to the north and north west.

There is also connectivity to the west, across the northern edge of Histon, towards Croft Close Set Aside (V2) and Gun's Lane. (This connectivity is impaired for terrestrial species by the B1049 and a single line of houses.) In this respect Northern Buxhall Farm is in a pivotal location.

V5 Rowley's Field (Long Meadow)

Key habitat and species recorded

Hedgerow #

Semi-natural grassland

Running open water

Species	Turtle Dove
	Barn Owl
	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker %
	Song Thrush
	House Sparrow
	Bullfinch
	Linnet
	Yellowhammer
	Reed Bunting
	Water Vole
	Grass Snake

Key connectivity

Links directly to area around Histon Manor and Abbey Farm to the north, which is designated as “Broad leaved woodland” under National Forest Inventory (see Magic) together with stands of “deciduous woodland”. This in turn links with Croft Close Set Aside (V2) and thence to Gun’s Lane (see above).

Links to hedges along Gatehouse (formerly New) Road.

V12 Manor Park Field and Histon Wood

Key habitat and species recorded

Deciduous woodland Φ

Established hedgerow #

Young trees (traditional orchard Φ)

A mosaic of inter-dependent habitats

Species	Starling
	Song Thrush
	Spotted Flycatcher
	House Sparrow
	Dunnock
	Bullfinch
	Lesser Redpoll

Yellowhammer
Reed Bunting
Brown Long-eared Bat
Common Lizard

Key connectivity

Connects directly to established hedge forming part of the Girton Wood site (V13), and through this via a mature hedge links to young deciduous woodland on northern outskirts of Girton.

Ecologically it is closely connected to the dense scrub within the Hain Daniel jam factory site, which is believed to provide safe habitat for a variety of birds, reptiles and invertebrates. The paddock and stables to the north-west, though excluded from the V12 site, is also part of the ecological mosaic.

Through a series of hedges and ditches connects to area of young trees alongside Beck Brook, east of Oakington.

V13 Girton Wood

Key habitat and species recorded

Young trees (**deciduous woodland #**)

Species	Starling
	Fieldfare
	Redwing
	Dunnock
	Bullfinch
	Yellowhammer
	Reed Bunting

Key connectivity

Integral link in providing connectivity in form of hedgerows and adjacent ditches south west from Histon Wood (V12), connecting areas around Histon and Girton.

V22 Crossing Keeper's Copse

Key habitat and species recorded

Deciduous woodland Φ

Species	Song Thrush
	Dunnock

Key connectivity

Aerial connectivity (link at ground level present but impaired by the B1049) to the adjacent Western Woodland on Fieldstead Farm (V28), which comprises patches of mature woodland.

Ecologically, the site is part of the southern cluster of inter-connected woodlands and fields comprising sites V28, V29, V33, V34 and V26 (see entries in this Schedule).

The lines of trees either side of Bridge Road, plus the adjacent fields (east) and gardens (west) provide some direct connectivity southwards to the woodland near the Holiday Inn driveway (V33) and to the Impington Coppice woods (V26).

V26 Impington Coppice

Key habitat and species recorded

Deciduous woodland Φ

Species	Song Thrush
	Mistle Thrush
	House Sparrow
	Dunnock

Key connectivity

Good aerial connectivity, but link at ground level impaired by the B1049, to the adjacent deciduous woodland on Cawcutt's Lake site (V33).

Ecologically, the site is part of the southern cluster of inter-connected woodlands and fields comprising sites V33, V34, V29, V28 and V22 (see entries in this Schedule).

The lines of trees either side of Bridge Road, plus the adjacent fields (east) and gardens (west) provide direct connectivity up to the Crossing Keeper's Copse (V22) and to Fieldstead Farm (V28, V29).

V28 Western Woodland on Fieldstead Farm

Key habitat and species recorded

Deciduous woodland Φ (part)

Hedgerow #

Species	Song Thrush
	Dunnock
	Bullfinch
	Linnet
	Lesser Redpoll
	Common Toad

Key connectivity

V28 and V29 are both part of the same ecological unit.

Part of a mosaic of mature hedgerows with stands of deciduous trees, connecting to the woodland elsewhere on the Farm (V29 and other similar parts of the farm to the east), to the Crossing Keeper's Copse (V22) as well as to the deciduous trees in and around the Impington Village College grounds.

The ditches connect through to the ponds south of Percheron Close, and the adjoining Pocket Park, making a good corridor for water dwelling taxa.

V29 Central Woodland on Fieldstead Farm

Key habitat and species recorded

Deciduous woodland Φ (part)

Hedgerow #

Species	Song Thrush
	Common Toad

Key connectivity

V28 and V29 are both part of the same ecological unit.

Part of a mosaic of mature hedgerows with stands of deciduous trees, connecting to the woodland elsewhere on the Farm and to the trees and open land around Cawcutt's Lake (V33).

V33 Cawcutt's Lake and adjacent land

Key habitat and species recorded

Deciduous woodland Φ (part – in north west)

Hedgerow #

Standing water

Species	Herring Gull
	Starling
	Mistle Thrush

Key connectivity

Complements hedgerow mosaic on Fieldstead Farm to the north and linking through to Impington Coppice (V26) in the west.

V34 Land alongside the A14/B1049 near the interchange (north east quadrant).

Key habitat and species recorded

Semi-natural grassland

*Some of site is in a temporary condition while the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme is implemented. In part to be replanted as **deciduous woodland** Φ .*

Species	Mistle Thrush
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Key connectivity

Abuts and complements the Cawcutt's Lake (V33) and adjacent fields site.

Until it was felled by Highways England, the woodland north-east of the roundabout connected with the woodland in V33. The felled woodland is to be reinstated by Highways England and there are plans to extend it.

Website addresses in full:

HM Government's 25 Year Plan:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

Local Plan policies <https://www.scams.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/the-adopted-development-plan/south-cambridgeshire-local-plan-2018/>

Histon & Impington Neighbourhood Plan 2020 – 2031

<https://www.scams.gov.uk/planning/local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-planning/histon-impington-neighbourhood-plan/>

Defra's Magic database <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

UK BAP list of priority habitats <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5706>

Defra's Magic database "Priority habitat" <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

UK BAP priority bird species <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5163>

Section 41 of the 2006 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4958719460769792>

Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds

https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/shared_documents/publications/birds-conservation-concern/birds-of-conservation-concern-4-leaflet.pdf

UK BAP priority terrestrial invertebrate species <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5169>

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Group

<http://www.cpbiodiversity.org.uk/who-we-are/member-organisations>

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Group Local Priority Species

<http://www.cpbiodiversity.org.uk/biodiversity-action-plans/priority-species>

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Group Additional Species of Interest

<http://www.cpbiodiversity.org.uk/biodiversity-action-plans/priority-species>

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre

<https://www.cperc.org.uk/>