Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Solihull Local Plan

SA Report accompanying the Regulation 19 consultation on the Local Plan

October 2026

Delivering a better world

Quality information

Prepared by	Checked by	Verified by	Approved by
A.V. Senior Environmental Consultant	R.P. Principal Planner	I.M. Associate Planner	I.M. Associate Planner

Revision history

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Position
V1.0	21.10.26	Initial version for Council comment	C.J.	Planning Policy Lead, SMBC
V2.0	26.10.26	Regulation 19 version	I.M.	Associate Director, AECOM

Prepared for:

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

Prepared by:

AECOM Limited
3 Rivergate
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6ER

aecom.com

© 2026 AECOM Limited.

This document has been prepared by AECOM Limited (“AECOM”) for sole use of our client (the “Client”) in accordance with generally accepted consultancy principles, the budget for fees and the terms of reference agreed between AECOM and the Client. Any information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been checked or verified by AECOM, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document. No third party may rely upon this document without the prior and express written agreement of AECOM.

Table of contents

1. Introduction 1
2. The plan scope 3
3. The SA scope 8

Part 1: What has plan making / SA involved up to this stage? 15

4. Plan making / SA work to date 16
5. Defining growth scenarios 18
6. Growth scenarios appraisal 52
7. The preferred approach 77

Part 2: What are the appraisal findings at this stage? 79

8. Introduction to the appraisal 80
9. Appraising the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan 83

Part 3: What are the next steps? 116

10. Plan finalisation 117
11. Monitoring 118

Appendix A : Regulatory requirements 122
Appendix B : Scoping Responses 128
Appendix C : Constraints and opportunities mapping 130

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

1.1.1 AECOM has been commissioned by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) in support of the preparation of the emerging Solihull Metropolitan Borough Local Plan (hereafter referred to as the Local Plan).

1.1.2 Once adopted, the Local Plan will provide the statutory framework for managing growth and change across the borough to 2043. It will allocate sites to deliver the plan strategy and establish planning policies against which planning applications and development proposals will be assessed and determined.

1.1.3 SA is a mechanism for identifying, describing and evaluating the likely significant environmental, social and economic effects of an emerging plan and its reasonable alternatives, with a view to avoiding and minimising adverse effects and enhancing beneficial effects wherever possible.

1.1.4 Since the introduction of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, local planning authorities have been required to undertake SA as an integral part of the plan-making process. The importance of SA in supporting the preparation of sound Local Plans is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 require that an SA Report is published for consultation alongside the Regulation 19 ('Proposed Submission') version of the Local Plan.

1.1.5 A revised NPPF was published in August 2026. Whilst the Local Plan will be examined against the December 2024 NPPF under transitional arrangements, relevant changes introduced through the 2026 NPPF have also been taken into account where material to the preparation of the Local Plan and this SA.

1.2. SA explained

1.2.1 SA incorporates the requirements of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). As such, SA must be undertaken in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations').

1.2.2 In accordance with the SEA Regulations, an SA Report must be published for consultation alongside the draft plan. The SA Report presents an appraisal of the plan and its reasonable alternatives, with a particular focus on identifying, describing and evaluating the likely significant effects of implementation of the plan (Regulation 12(2)).

1.2.3 More specifically, the SA Report addresses three key areas:

- The plan-making and SA process undertaken to date, including the identification and appraisal of reasonable alternatives;
- The findings of the appraisal at the current stage, including the likely significant effects of the draft plan; and
- The next steps in the plan-making and SA process, including consultation and consideration of representations received.

1.2.4 The SA Report must then be taken into account, alongside consultation responses and other relevant evidence, when finalising the plan.

1.3. This SA Report

1.3.1 This report has been prepared alongside the Regulation 19 ('Proposed Submission') version of the Local Plan and fulfils the requirements for SA under the SEA Regulations. It documents the appraisal process undertaken to support preparation of the Local Plan and presents the findings of that process at the proposed submission stage.

1.4. Structure of this report

1.4.1 This SA Report is structured in three parts, reflecting the key stages of the SA process and addressing the matters required by the SEA Regulations:

- **Part 1** (**Section 4 - Section 7**) explains the plan-making and SA process undertaken to date, including the identification, development and appraisal of reasonable alternatives;
- **Part 2** (**Section 8 - Section 9**) presents the findings of the appraisal of the proposed submission plan, including any likely significant effects and recommendations for plan makers; and
- **Part 3** (**Section 10 - Section 11**) outlines the next steps in the plan-making and SA process, including submission, examination, adoption and monitoring.

1.4.2 The report begins with two contextual sections. **Section 2** introduces the plan and its scope, whilst **Section 3** introduces the scope of the SA, including the SA framework used to appraise the plan and reasonable alternatives.

2. The plan scope

2.1. Introduction

2.1.1 This section briefly introduces the context for preparation of the Local Plan, including the evolving national planning context, the plan area and period, and the objectives that underpin plan preparation.

2.2. Context to plan preparation

2.2.1 SMBC commenced work on a new Local Plan shortly after adoption of the current Local Plan in 2015. Preparation of the new plan has progressed through stages; however, the plan-making process has taken place during a period of significant change in national planning policy and legislation.

2.2.2 The previous Local Plan review culminated in submission of a draft plan for examination in 2021. However, the examination took place during a period of significant change in the national planning system. Following revisions to national planning policy and housing need methodology, SMBC withdrew the plan from examination in 2024 and commenced preparation of a new Local Plan. Most recently, Government published a revised NPPF (December 2024, as amended February 2025) as part of a broader programme of planning reform. SMBC is therefore preparing the emerging Local Plan within an evolving policy context, whilst also responding to the emergence of a West Midlands Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), and wider local government reorganisation.

2.2.3 Central to national planning policy is an expectation that local planning authorities should adopt a positive approach to sustainable development through the preparation of up-to-date plans that seek to meet identified development needs, including housing and employment needs, as far as reasonably possible. A Local Plan also provides an opportunity to consider a range of strategic issues in an integrated way, including the distribution of development, infrastructure provision, climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity enhancement, town centre regeneration, design quality, and the accommodation needs of different communities.

2.2.4 For SMBC, a key consideration for the Local Plan is the provision of sufficient land to support housing and economic growth over the plan period. The Government's standard method currently identifies a Local Housing Need (LHN) for Solihull of 1,289 dwellings per annum, whilst SMBC must also consider the need for employment land and supporting infrastructure. Recent reforms have also introduced the concept of Grey Belt land (land that does not strongly contribute to Green Belt purposes and may have greater potential to accommodate development, subject to consideration of other planning and environmental constraints), within the Green Belt, creating additional opportunities for SMBC to consider how

development needs may be accommodated whilst continuing to support the overall purposes of Green Belt policy.

2.2.5 An up-to-date Local Plan will also strengthen the Council's ability to make planning decisions on a plan-led basis and provide greater certainty for communities, developers and infrastructure providers.

2.3. The plan area

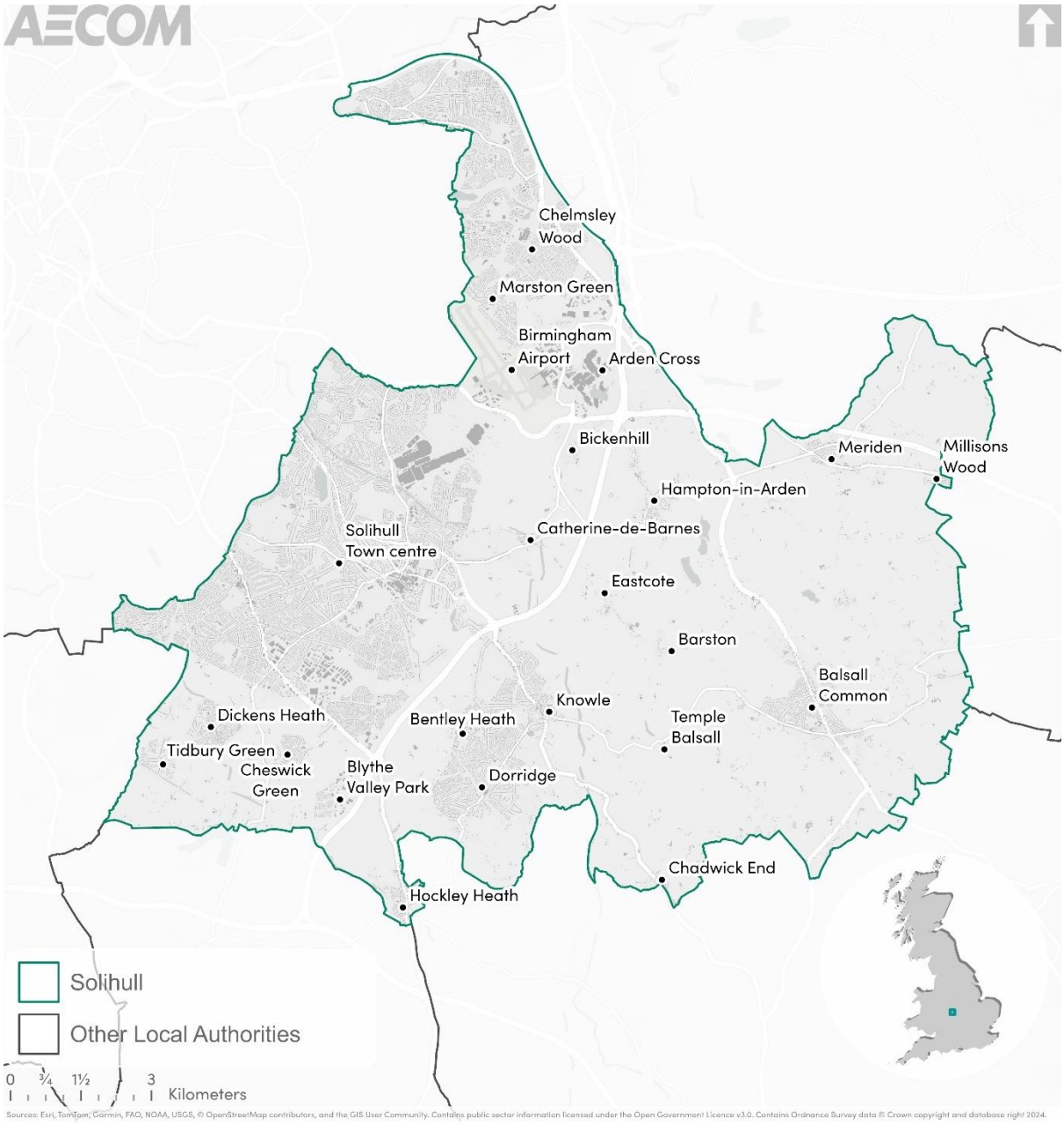
2.3.1 The Metropolitan Borough of Solihull (**Figure 2-1**) is located in the West Midlands and forms part of the West Midlands Combined Authority area. The borough occupies a strategically important location at the heart of the national transport network, benefiting from direct access to the M42, M6 and M40 motorways, Birmingham Airport, the National Exhibition Centre (NEC), and the West Coast Main Line. The borough is also home to nationally significant economic assets, including the UK Central Hub area and the emerging HS2 Interchange station.

2.3.2 The borough comprises a diverse range of urban and rural environments. The principal urban area is focused on Solihull Town Centre and the settlement network in the west of the borough. In contrast, the eastern and southern parts of the borough are predominantly rural in character and contain a network of villages and smaller settlements.

2.3.3 A significant proportion of the borough lies within the West Midlands Green Belt, which plays an important role in managing development patterns and maintaining the separation of settlements. Alongside Green Belt constraints, the borough contains a range of environmental, heritage and landscape assets that contribute to local character.

2.3.4 The borough has experienced significant investment and growth in recent years, including major development associated with UK Central, Birmingham Airport, the NEC and the HS2 Interchange area. These initiatives are expected to continue to influence patterns of development over the plan period and provide important opportunities for housing, employment and infrastructure delivery. They are also likely to represent key components of Solihull's longer-term growth strategy beyond the current plan period, reflecting their strategic economic and transport functions. Furthermore, given their significance within the West Midlands economy, these opportunities are expected to be important considerations in the preparation of the emerging West Midlands Spatial Development Strategy and wider discussions regarding the future distribution of growth across the region.

Figure 2-1: The Metropolitan Borough of Solihull



2.4. The plan period

2.4.1 The Local Plan covers the 17-year period from 2026 to 2043. This timeframe has been selected to ensure consistency with national policy, with paragraph 22 of the NPPF stating that local plans should look ahead over a minimum 15-year period from adoption. A plan period extending to 2043 ensures consistency with this requirement and provides an appropriate framework for addressing the borough's longer-term development needs.

2.4.2 A key feature of the emerging plan period is that the borough already benefits from a substantial pipeline of committed development. This includes sites with planning permission and existing allocations expected to come forward during the plan period, together with land committed for employment development. These commitments form an important component of overall supply and establish the starting point for delivering housing and employment land requirements during the emerging plan period.

2.5. Plan vision

2.5.1 It is important to establish a clear strategic direction for the Local Plan at an early stage in the plan-making process. Therefore, the Local Plan is informed by an overarching vision that describes the Council's aspirations for the borough over the plan period.

2.5.2 The vision is also relevant to the SA process, helping to guide consideration of alternative approaches and providing a context for the appraisal of the plan.

2.5.3 The Local Plan vision is as follows:

‘*By 2043, Solihull will have built on its distinct reputation as an attractive and aspirational place to live, learn, invest, work and play.*

It will have taken advantage of the unique opportunity to maximise the economic and social benefits of HS2 Interchange; reflecting the Borough’s location at the heart of the national rail and motorway network, and the role of UK Central as the international gateway to the West Midlands. In particular the opportunity will have been taken to ensure that HS2 Interchange is well integrated and key economic assets, including Birmingham Airport, the NEC and JLR, are supported by privately and publicly funded transport infrastructure to unlock the full potential for economic growth.

The Borough will play a part in meeting, in a sustainable manner, the needs of its housing market area so that its residents have access to a range and choice of quality accommodation.

The Borough will retain its sense of identity, both in its urban and rural area (including protection of the Green Belt which contains the strategically important Meriden Gap); and the quality of the environment that make it a special place.

This vision will be underpinned by ensuring all relevant activities are underpinned and fully integrated with measures to tackle the Climate Change emergency; recognising that this has a cross-cutting dimension that extends across economic, social and environmental objectives.

Achieving this vision will contribute towards the ability for everyone to have an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous, through growth that creates opportunities for all'

3. The SA scope

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1 The scope of the SA defines the sustainability issues, objectives and assessment criteria that form the basis for the appraisal of reasonable alternatives and the Local Plan. The scope provides the framework for identifying, describing and evaluating likely significant effects.

3.1.2 The aim of this section is to introduce the broad scope of the SA. SMBC consulted on the scope of the SA in January 2026, with the identified key issues and SA framework of assessment questions subsequently refined and updated to reflect the responses received. A post-consultation version of the SA Scoping Report was finalised in July 2026 on this basis and forms part of the evidence base for the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.

3.2. Consultation on the scope

3.2.1 The regulatory requirement is that 'when deciding on the scope and level of detail of the information that must be included in the Environmental Report, the responsible authority shall consult the consultation bodies'. As such, the consultation bodies (the Environment Agency, Historic England and Natural England) were consulted on the SA scope in January 2026.

3.2.2 Responses were received from all three consultation bodies and have informed the ongoing development of the SA framework and evidence base. A summary of the responses, and how they have informed the SA, are provided in **Appendix B**.

3.3. The SA framework

3.3.1 The outcome of the scoping process was an SA framework comprising a series of sustainability objectives and assessment questions organised under a range of sustainability topics. The framework provides the basis for appraisal and has been developed with regard to the sustainability issues, baseline evidence and policy context identified through the scoping process. It also provides a consistent basis for comparing reasonable alternatives and assessing the effects of the Local Plan.

3.3.2 The framework presented in the Scoping Report has been reviewed and refined in light of consultation responses received from the statutory consultation bodies, together with ongoing plan-making and evidence base work. The updated Framework is presented in **Table 3-1**.

3.3.3 The selected SA topics incorporate the environmental topics prescribed by Schedule 2 of the SEA Regulations, whilst also reflecting the wider social and economic issues that are typically considered through SA.

Table 3-1: The SA framework

Objectives	Supporting questions (will the option/draft policy…?)
Accessibility	
• To fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, cultural, recreational, environmental and health systems to create sustainable neighbourhoods and promote healthy lifestyles.	• Integrate new neighbourhoods with existing neighbourhoods?
• To ensure that development is served by or can be served by frequent sustainable transport modes that connects to key centres, includes safe and accessible walking and cycling routes and reduces reliance on private vehicles.	• Have existing frequent and accessible sustainable transport services? • Will the development provide frequent and accessible sustainable transport services? • Provide walkable neighbourhoods? • Co-locate housing with other services and employment opportunities thereby reducing the need to travel? • Locate employment opportunities in proximity to other services?
Air quality and noise	
• Limit air and noise pollution across the borough and support opportunities to enhance air quality and attenuate noise pollution where possible.	• Limit air pollution and/or enhance air quality? • Limit noise pollution and/or attenuate noise interference where possible?

Objectives	Supporting questions (will the option/draft policy…?)
Biodiversity and geodiversity	
• Protect and improve the integrity, function and connectivity of ecological sites. Achieve net gains through the creation and enhancement of species-rich habitats that meet the Lawton principles and are resilient to climate change.	• Meet the objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy? • Avoid/limit impacts on biodiversity? • Improve the resilience of ecosystems to the effects of climate change? • Improve connectivity between priority habitats? • Support native species? • Protect vulnerable species/habitats from anthropogenic encroachment
• To facilitate the delivery and enhance the quality of areas providing multi-functional green and blue infrastructure, including open spaces for recreation, sport and interaction with nature.	• Provide wildlife corridors? • Provide greenways that support walking and cycling infrastructure with species-rich planting? • Include open space for recreation that is accessible to all? • Include opportunities for appropriate tree planting? • Improve ecological quality of local rivers?
Climate change adaptation	
• To ensure that development is resilient to the effects of climate change including extreme weather events, urban heat island effect, adaptable species, with a focus on nature-based solutions.	• Incorporate appropriate nature-based solutions? • Design and layout of development take high winds and urban heat island effect into account? • Help heritage assets be less vulnerable to impacts of climate change?
• Reduce the risk of flooding from all sources to protect communities and businesses including vulnerability to climate change.	• Ensure that development does not increase flood risk on site or downstream? • Avoid vulnerability to flood risk? • Provide/contribute to flood risk attenuation schemes? • Apply the flood risk sequential test?

Objectives	Supporting questions (will the option/draft policy…?)
Climate change mitigation	
• Limit greenhouse gas emissions, reduce energy use, maximise energy efficiency and deliver renewable energy generation in aiding Solihull's net zero objectives.	• Deliver low or net carbon energy? • Reduce energy consumption? • Improve energy efficiency? • Promote low to net zero carbon transport options? • Increase affordability of low carbon/net zero generation? • Tackle fuel poverty?
Communities and health	
• To contribute to regeneration and economic development initiatives that benefit the Borough's communities; especially those in fifth quintile of Indices of Deprivation 2025.	• Contribute to regeneration initiatives?
• To contribute to inclusive growth, address social determinants of health and reduce inequalities within the Borough.	• Include initiatives that benefit inclusive growth? • Promote diversity?
• To fully integrate the planning, transport, housing, cultural, recreational, environmental and health systems to create sustainable neighbourhoods and promote healthy lifestyles.	• Provide new/improved health care facilities that benefit new and/or existing residents? • Provide sustainable transport options? • Provide new/improved community facilities that benefit new and/or existing residents? • Provide new/improved educational facilities that benefit new and/or existing residents? • Integrate new neighbourhoods with existing neighbourhoods?

Objectives	Supporting questions (will the option/draft policy…?)
	• Provide new/improved open space that will benefit new and/or existing residents?
• Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.	• Include initiatives/ measures to reduce/ limit levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime?
Economy and employment	
• Deliver development that supports inclusive economic growth and the investment in infrastructure required to support the vitality and prosperity of the local economy.	• Create new jobs that are accessible in an equitable way? • Encourage employment that is consistent with local needs? • Allow small businesses to thrive? • Encourage rural diversification? • Unlock infrastructure?
• To improve equitable access to employment, education and training opportunities, regardless of background.	• Increase access to employment, education and training opportunities? • Contribute to providing the appropriate skills, education and training for the local/regional economy? • Enhance digital inclusion?
Historic environment	
• To sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets in Solihull.	• Protect heritage assets and their settings? • Help heritage assets be less vulnerable to impacts of climate change? • Promote the public's enjoyment of heritage assets? • Enhance public enjoyment of heritage assets? • Reduce the number of heritage assets on the Heritage at Risk Register?
• To deliver improvements in townscape and enhance local distinctiveness.	• Support patterns of growth that respect local distinctiveness? • Improve the townscape? • Create high quality public realm?

Objectives	Supporting questions (will the option/draft policy…?)
Housing	
• Improve the supply and affordability of housing, with an appropriate mix of types that is of good quality, energy efficient design and resilient to climate change.	• Provide minimum affordable housing threshold? • Can deliver housing in timely way? • Provide accommodation for an ageing population? • Meet the needs of Gypsy and Traveller communities? • Provide a range of house types that meet the HEDNA recommendation? • Have good quality design? • Energy efficient homes? • Resilient to climate change impacts?
Landscape	
• To value and protect the Borough's landscape character and manage the landscape effects of development in recognition of the European Landscape Convention. As well as addressing the risks and opportunities associated with measures to address climate change.	• Be sympathetic to the Arden landscape character? • Consider impacts of climate change on the wider landscape? • Limit light pollution? • Deliver a high quality multifunctional green infrastructure network?
Soils and natural resources	
• Limit the use of natural resources such as land, water and minerals, and limit waste,	• Prioritise the use of brownfield land over greenfield for development? • Make the most efficient use of land? • Reduce water consumption?

Objectives	Supporting questions (will the option/draft policy…?)
whilst increasing reuse and recycling and contributing to a circular economy.	• Limit water pollution and/or improve water quality? • Limit soil pollution and/or improve soil health? • Avoid the loss of BMV agricultural land? • Protect the future use of land for agricultural purposes (e.g. solar farms)? • Avoid the unnecessary sterilisation of minerals deposits? • Re-use and recycle aggregates where possible? • Contribute to the Circular Economy?
Transport	
• To promote sustainable patterns of movement and increase use of public transport, walking and cycling whilst reducing reliance on private vehicles.	• Improve access to public transport? • Support walking and cycling? • Reduce reliance on private vehicles? • Improve connectivity between settlements, employment areas and centres?
Water	
• Protect and enhance water quality and resources, ensuring sustainable water management to support current and future needs while reducing pollution risks	• Limit pollution risks from urban runoff, construction, and wastewater discharge? • Reduce water consumption through incorporation of water-efficient technologies such as rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling?

Part 1: What has plan making / SA involved up to this stage?

4. Plan making / SA work to date

4.1. Local Plan Review (2015-2020)

4.1.1 The Local Plan builds upon work undertaken during 2015-2020 for the withdrawn Solihull Local Plan Review. The Local Plan Review began in 2015 with a Scope, Issues and Options consultation and progressed through Draft Local Plan consultation (2016-2017), a Supplementary Consultation (2019) and publication of a Regulation 19 Draft Submission Plan in 2020. However, the Local Plan Review was withdrawn in 2024.

4.1.2 The Local Plan Review was supported by an SA, site assessment work and other technical evidence. Consultation responses received throughout the process also informed successive iterations of the Local Plan Review and helped identify issues, opportunities and constraints associated with accommodating growth across the borough. Therefore, the previous work established an understanding of the suitability of different growth locations and the sustainability implications associated with alternative approaches to accommodating development.

4.1.3 One of the technical evidence documents that informed the earlier plan-making process was the Greater Birmingham Housing Market Area Strategic Growth Study (2018). The purpose of the study was to consider strategic growth opportunities across the wider area and provide evidence to support local plan preparation. Whilst changes to national policy and local circumstances mean that some assumptions have evolved since publication, the Strategic Growth Study remains a useful source of strategic context when considering growth options within Solihull. The study is also being refreshed as part of work supporting the emerging West Midlands Spatial Development Strategy (SDS).

4.2. The emerging West Midlands SDS

4.2.1 Since preparation of the withdrawn Local Plan, the strategic planning context for Solihull has evolved through the reintroduction of strategic planning at the regional scale. The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has begun work on their SDS, which will provide a long-term framework for housing, employment, infrastructure and environmental planning across the region. Whilst local plans will continue to allocate sites and establish detailed planning policies, the SDS will consider growth and investment priorities that extend beyond individual local authority areas.

4.2.2 This has important implications for Solihull. In particular, SMBC's preferred approach has been to focus the Local Plan on meeting the borough's own LHN, rather than planning for a contribution towards wider regional housing needs. This reflects the expectation that any future redistribution of growth across the West Midlands, including the identification of strategic growth

opportunities within Solihull, should be considered through the SDS as part of a coordinated regional process.

4.2.3 The emerging SDS is also expected to consider longer-term growth opportunities beyond the immediate plan period. Consequently, the consideration of broad locations within the Local Plan (later discussed) is intended not only to help address development needs during the latter years of the plan period, but also to provide an evidence-based starting point for future strategic planning discussions through the SDS.

4.3. Solihull Local Plan (2026)

Call for Sites (2024) and Issues and Options (2026)

4.3.1 Preparation of the emerging Local Plan began with a Call for Sites exercise undertaken between November 2024 and January 2025. Landowners, residents and other interested parties were invited to submit sites that may have development potential. The exercise resulted in over 330 sites being promoted for consideration through the plan-making process.

4.3.2 This was followed by an Issues and Options consultation between January and March 2026. The consultation sought views on the key issues facing the borough and alternative approaches to accommodating future development needs. An SA Scoping Report was prepared alongside the consultation to establish the framework for subsequent appraisal work.

4.3.3 Alongside the Issues and Options consultation, SMBC also commissioned an updated Green Belt Assessment (2026) and Green Belt Village Study (2026). These studies provided an updated assessment of the contribution made by land to Green Belt purposes and identified land with potential Grey Belt characteristics. The studies have informed the identification, refinement and appraisal of growth options and are an important part of the evidence base supporting the Local Plan.

4.3.4 A key consideration for plan making that has emerged since the withdrawal of the Local Plan Review is the increase in housing need arising from the Government's standard method calculation. This establishes an LHN figure of 1,289 dwellings per annum, equivalent to 21,913 dwellings over the proposed 17-year plan period (2026 - 2043).

4.3.5 The appraisal of growth scenarios in this SA (see **Sections 5 and 6**) build upon the evidence, consultation responses and appraisal work undertaken through both the previous Local Plan Review and the Issues and Options (Regulation 18) consultation in January 2026. Together, these stages have helped identify the strategic choices available to SMBC and informed the development of the growth scenarios considered through the SA at this stage of plan making. This is considered below.

5. Defining growth scenarios

5.1. Defining growth scenarios

Top-down (strategic) factors

5.1.1 This section explores the principal strategic factors influencing the definition of reasonable growth scenarios. In particular, the discussion focuses on two inter-related considerations:

- the **quantum** of development to be accommodated through the Local Plan (i.e., the housing and employment context); and
- the **broad spatial strategy**, including the locations and forms of development most suited to accommodating growth.

Housing context

5.1.2 A central tenet of local plan-making is the need to **A)** establish housing need on an objective basis ('policy-off'); and then **B)** determine how the Local Plan should respond to that need ('policy-on'). Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) explains that: *'Housing need is an unconstrained assessment of the number of homes needed in an area. Assessing housing need is the first step in the process of deciding how many homes need to be planned for. It should be undertaken separately from... establishing a housing requirement...*'.

5.1.3 With regard to **step A**, the NPPF expects local housing need (LHN) to be established through the revised standard method. With regard to **step B**, local planning authorities typically set a housing requirement that aligns with LHN. However, national policy recognises circumstances in which it may be appropriate for a housing requirement to depart from LHN.

5.1.4 Consequently, an initial strategic consideration is whether there is justification for the Local Plan to provide for a level of housing growth either below or above LHN. For Solihull, the revised standard method identifies a housing need of 1,289 dwellings per annum (dpa). As a result, LHN across a 17-year plan period (2026 - 2043) equates to 21,913 dwellings.

5.1.5 At the 'Issues and Options' (Regulation 18) stage of plan making in January 2026, one of the scenarios tested through the SA was framed in the context of planning for unmet need in light of the significant constraint to development across the borough. Primarily, the extent of Green Belt land. Whilst there is a strategic case for remaining open to unmet need, the findings of the SA and the availability of land identified through a 'call for sites' exercise demonstrates that there are a number of potential pathways to meeting LHN. For this reason, the basis for the growth scenarios

considered within this Regulation 19 SA Report will be the delivery of LHN in the borough, with lower growth scenarios ruled out at this stage.

5.1.6 National policy equally recognises circumstances where a housing requirement may exceed LHN. NPPF paragraph 69 explains that: '*The requirement may be higher than the identified housing need if, for example, it includes provision for neighbouring areas or reflects growth ambitions linked to economic development or infrastructure investment'*.

5.1.7 With regard to a housing requirement above LHN in order to contribute towards wider strategic housing needs, there remains a degree of uncertainty. Historically, Solihull has formed part of discussions regarding unmet housing needs arising elsewhere within the Housing Market Area; however, the emergence of the West Midlands SDS provides a new strategic context within which any such matters will need to be considered.

5.1.8 The potential for economic growth and infrastructure investment to support housing growth above LHN is also a relevant consideration. In particular, the borough is expected to continue benefitting from major investment associated with UK Central (Arden Cross), HS2, Birmingham Airport and the NEC. As such, there is a reasonable basis for considering whether housing growth above LHN could support wider economic ambitions over the plan period.

5.1.9 Additionally, in accordance with national planning policy and guidance, a potential under-delivery necessitates the application of a buffer to the five-year housing land supply to provide flexibility and resilience in the event of delivery delays or site non-implementation. Housing trajectory work has been completed to ensure that there is sufficient supply during the first part of the plan period to maintain a five-year housing land supply. The appropriate scale of any supply buffer will depend on the nature of the sites identified, recognising that larger and more complex locations for growth are generally associated with greater delivery risk.

Employment context

5.1.10 Updated evidence on employment land need for the borough over the plan period is set out in the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA, 2026) which contributes to the evidence base for the Regulation 19 Local Plan. This indicates a need of up to 6.8 ha (gross) of office land and up to 60.1 ha (gross) of industrial/warehousing land. The approach to meeting employment land requirements during the plan period focuses on safeguarding and expanding employment provision on existing sites and delivering mixed-use development across established strategic sites, for example: UK Central (Arden Cross), Birmingham Airport and the NEC. The integration of employment uses within larger schemes helps to create more self-contained communities, reduce the need to travel and maximise opportunities for active travel and public transport use.

5.1.11 The economic strategy in the Local Plan is driven by the unique opportunities presented by the UK Central proposals. As a nationally significant infrastructure led project driven by the delivery of HS2 and the HS2 interchange station it will contribute towards the delivery of local, regional and national objectives for economic growth. The UK Central area and its components are identified by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) as a key driver in the delivery of regional economic growth objectives.

5.1.12 With further reference to the strategic sites listed above:

- The sites identified within the UK Central Hub area will provide the right type and quantum of uses to meet the employment land needs of the Borough over the plan period as evidenced in the Housing and Economic Needs Assessment (HEDNA 2026). The proposals will also support the future growth and expansion of significant economic assets within the hub area and future job creation.
- Land at Arden Cross (Site UK1) is principally driven by the delivery of the HS2 interchange station and the opportunity to maximise the efficient use of land surrounding the station. Through the consolidation of parking requirements land can be released to maximise the regeneration potential of the site. As a mixed-use site, it will maximise opportunities for sustainable economic development.
- Land at Damson Parkway (Site UK2) will meet any future needs of JLR primarily driven by the sites close proximity to the existing plant, local employment land needs and future needs of other assets in the UK Central Hub area. Development to meet the needs of JLR has already been permitted and completed within the site area.
- Land is expected to come forward at the NEC through proposals for future employment led redevelopment of underused car parking land to the north of the site including an Industrial and logistics hub. As a brownfield site it presents an opportunity for sustainable employment development without further greenbelt release. It also supports the wider objectives of the UK Central proposals.
- The Borough also has a range of existing business parks and employment areas which are important in meeting the needs of local businesses. The Local Plan seeks to protect existing employment land and floorspace from changes to other uses in order to ensure the continued supply of land during the plan period.

5.1.13 Due to the importance of these proposals the Council does not consider there to be any alternative options to deliver economic growth at this scale in the Borough. It is anticipated that longer-term employment needs for the borough (and wider area) will be addressed through an early review of the Solihull Local Plan and the emerging West Midlands SDS.

Broad Spatial Strategy

5.1.14 The discussion is structured under a series of thematic headings reflecting the principal spatial considerations relevant to the preparation of the Local Plan and the development of reasonable growth scenarios.

5.1.15 Specifically, the discussion considers:

- The legacy of the previous spatial strategy established through the withdrawn Local Plan;
- The borough's settlement hierarchy and pattern of development;
- Potential 'new settlement' opportunities;
- Major economic growth and investment opportunities; and
- Green Belt and potential 'grey belt' considerations.

The legacy of the previous spatial strategy

5.1.16 The spatial strategy pursued through the withdrawn Local Plan was based on a 'balanced dispersal' approach. The strategy sought to strike a balance between concentrating development in a limited number of locations and distributing development across a wider range of settlements.

5.1.17 Spatially, the strategy focused growth in locations that were considered accessible and sustainable, identifying site options adjacent to urban areas and settlements with a relatively extensive range of services and facilities. The strategy also sought to support major investment opportunities associated with UK Central, HS2 and wider economic growth ambitions.

5.1.18 The previous spatial strategy provides an important starting point for consideration of reasonable alternatives at this current stage of plan making. For example, whilst circumstances have evolved since the strategy was developed, many of the factors that informed it remain relevant to the emerging Local Plan.

Settlement hierarchy

5.1.19 A key consideration for the Local Plan is the borough's settlement hierarchy and the extent to which different categories of settlement should accommodate future growth.

5.1.20 At the highest level of the hierarchy is **the urban area**, comprising the contiguous built-up area associated with Solihull, Shirley, Monkspath, Olton, Lyndon, Elmdon, Marston Green, Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst, Fordbridge, Smith's Wood and Castle Bromwich, together with the NEC and associated development. This area contains the borough's greatest concentration of population, services, employment opportunities and

transport infrastructure, and therefore represents a logical focus for accommodating development.

5.1.21 The settlement hierarchy also identifies **two rural towns**: Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath; and Balsall Common. These settlements contain a relatively broad range of services and facilities and are generally regarded as the most sustainable locations outside the urban area. Consequently, there is a clear rationale for considering the role that the rural towns might play in accommodating future growth. The Council's consultation material has also highlighted the potential role of the rural towns in accommodating larger infrastructure-led developments, recognising their relative accessibility and service provision.

5.1.22 Beyond the urban area and rural towns is a **network of villages and smaller rural settlements**, including Barston, Berkswell, Bickenhill, Blythe Valley Park, Catherine-de-Barnes, Chadwick End, Cheswick Green, Dickens Heath, Eastcote, Hampton in Arden, Hockley Heath, Meriden, Millisons Wood, Temple Balsall, and Tidbury Green. Whilst these settlements vary considerably in terms of scale, accessibility and service provision, some provide a greater range of facilities than others and may present opportunities for accommodating proportionate levels of growth. In particular, some settlements contain a primary school, convenience store and other local facilities, whilst Dickens Heath is notable for its scale and service provision relative to other rural settlements. It is recognised that several of these rural settlements are 'washed over' by the Green Belt.

5.1.23 The extent to which future development should be directed towards the urban area, rural towns, villages and smaller rural settlements is therefore a central spatial strategy consideration and an important factor in defining reasonable growth scenarios. In line with national policy, **directing growth to sustainable locations is therefore a key priority for the Local Plan, including at broad locations with sustainable transport corridors and within railway station catchments.** This includes Balsall Common, Dorridge, Hampton-in-Arden, Meriden, Shirley/Whitlocks End/Wythall/Earlswood, Tile Hill, and Widney Manor.

Potential 'new settlement' opportunities

5.1.24 The creation of a new settlement has not previously been considered within the Local Plan Spatial Strategy. With respect to the emerging Local Plan, the 'Issues and Options' stage of plan making (January 2026) acknowledges that a new settlement would require significant infrastructure investment, and its location would need to be carefully considered having regard to existing landscape character, Green Belt implications and infrastructure capacity.

5.1.25 No opportunities for new settlements have been promoted by landowners or a consortium of interested parties, and any proposals would need to be

put together 'from scratch'. Additionally, in light of the need to introduce sites that can deliver in the short term / medium term, opportunities for a new settlement are not considered reasonable for the emerging Local Plan.

5.1.26 As there isn't sufficient evidence at this stage underpinning potential opportunity locations across the borough, options for new settlements are expected to be explored within the emerging West Midlands SDS. SMBC are working collaboratively with the West Midlands Combined Authority along with other constituent authorities on the SDS and its supporting evidence base.

Major economic growth and investment opportunities

5.1.27 The borough benefits from a number of strategic economic assets and infrastructure investments that have important implications for the spatial strategy. These include UK Central, Birmingham Airport, the NEC and the HS2 Interchange area. Together, these assets provide opportunities to support economic growth, investment and employment creation throughout the plan period.

5.1.28 These assets also raise important questions regarding the distribution of housing growth, particularly the extent to which development should be focused in locations capable of supporting, or benefitting from, strategic investment and associated infrastructure improvements.

5.1.29 The Council's consultation material also highlights the importance of site typology when considering growth options. Larger infrastructure-led developments can support strategic infrastructure delivery and make a substantial contribution towards development needs but are often associated with longer lead-in times and delivery programmes. Conversely, medium and smaller sites can contribute more quickly towards housing delivery and may play an important role in supporting a deliverable housing trajectory in the short and medium term.

Green Belt and potential 'grey belt' considerations

5.1.30 A significant proportion of the borough lies within the West Midlands Green Belt. Green Belt policy therefore remains an important consideration when determining how development needs can be accommodated.

5.1.31 In the time which has passed since the withdrawal of the previous Local Plan, national policy and guidance relating to the Green Belt have evolved, including the introduction of 'grey belt' policy and updated guidance regarding the role of villages in contributing towards Green Belt purposes. These changes have informed consideration of the borough's settlement hierarchy and the potential opportunities available to accommodate growth. In light of this, the potential to deliver growth via Green Belt release is an influencing factor for the reasonable growth scenarios tested at this stage of plan making.

5.1.32 An updated Green Belt Assessment (GBA) was prepared for SMBC in 2026 to assess the contribution of land within the borough's Green Belt against the purposes of Green Belt designation and to identify potential 'grey belt' locations within the Green Belt. The assessment concluded that 66 parcels make a strong or moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes and identified 72 parcels as having potential Grey Belt characteristics. For the broad areas, three were assessed as making a strong overall contribution to the Green Belt, with the remaining five assessed as making a moderate overall contribution. Potential grey belt was only identified in two of the broad areas (encompassing land around Catherine-de-Barnes and Hockley Heath). Additionally, the assessment also identified four areas of fundamental importance to the strategic function of the Green Belt, three of which are located within the Meriden Gap.

5.1.33 The GBA does not determine whether land is suitable for development and acknowledges that further consideration of environmental constraints, sustainability, infrastructure, deliverability and other planning factors is required. However, for the purposes of identifying reasonable alternatives, the GBA has been used as an initial filtering exercise. Parcels and broad areas identified as making a 'strong' contribution to the Green Belt have been discounted, with the component parts of the growth scenarios (later discussed) considering the implications of Green Belt release at potential 'grey belt' locations.

Bottom-up Factors

5.1.34 Having discussed 'top down' strategic factors with a bearing on defining growth scenarios, the next step is to give 'bottom up' consideration to location-specific factors. Specifically, this section considers the constraints and opportunities at key settlements and locations across the borough that form the building blocks for growth scenarios.

Land availability (i.e., potential site options)

5.1.35 As part of the preparation of the emerging Local Plan, SMBC undertook a Call for Sites exercise between November 2024 and January 2025. Landowners, developers, residents and other interested parties were invited to submit land that may have development potential.

5.1.36 The exercise generated over 330 site submissions distributed across the borough (available to view on this Interactive Map). Whilst site promotion does not in itself indicate that a site is suitable or available for development, the Call for Sites exercise established a comprehensive pool of potential development opportunities for further consideration through subsequent evidence-gathering workstreams.

5.1.37 Individual site options are an important component of the plan-making process; however, they do not generally constitute reasonable alternatives

in their own right within the context of a Local Plan (especially where there is a need to allocate multiple sites across a range of settlements). Nevertheless, each site has been appraised against a range of sustainability criteria within the Council's site assessment methodology. The criteria considered cover the breadth of objectives within the SA framework, and it is therefore not proportionate to duplicate such an exercise through the SA process. This also reflects the fact that the role of the plan is to identify an appropriate package of sites capable of meeting development needs and wider plan objectives, rather than selecting individual sites in isolation.

5.1.38 Through their site assessment work, SMBC highlight that many sites across the borough are expected to perform similarly in sustainability terms, meaning the most meaningful distinction between alternatives may be the broad spatial distribution of growth rather than differences between individual sites. This is considered below.

Constraints and opportunities at key settlements and locations

5.1.39 The SA has evaluated the relative sustainability merits of promoting development at various broad locations in the vicinity of key settlements and locations across the borough (following the points of the compass), The purpose of the appraisal is to inform the growth scenarios tested as reasonable alternatives through the SA at this stage of plan making.

5.1.40 The key settlements and locations considered through the points of the compass appraisal reflect the broad spatial strategy considerations presented in **Section 5.2**, and fall within one of the following categories:

- Adjacent to the urban area or a highly accessible settlement; or
- Adjacent to a settlement that, whilst potentially less accessible, provides a wide range of local services (e.g. towns); or
- A proportionate extension to an existing settlement that has a more limited range of services (e.g. villages); or
- Unless captured by the categories above, located in close proximity to a suitable railway station that is, or can be made, accessible to necessary services.

5.1.41 For each key settlement and location, the following information is presented within the appraisal:

- Overview of the key environmental constraints including in relation to biodiversity, flood risks, the historic environment, landscape quality (including its role and function within the Green Belt), water resources, and agricultural land quality.

- Consideration of potential growth opportunities including in relation to potential site options which have come forward through the Council's 'call for sites' process, and wider factors relating to the 'broad spatial strategy' components of plan making (see **Section 5.2**).
- Constraints and opportunities mapping (see **Appendix C**).

Arden Cross

5.1.42 Arden Cross is located in the north of the borough and forms a major economic and transport hub associated with the UK Central growth area. The area benefits from excellent accessibility, being located adjacent to Birmingham International Airport and Birmingham International railway station and will be served by the future HS2 Interchange Station. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C1 to C3, Appendix C**.

5.1.43 The area is subject to a number of environmental constraints, including a corridor of surface water flood risk through the centre, two areas of priority habitat on the eastern boundary, several areas designated as local wildlife sites (LWS) and a Grade II* listed building on the eastern edge of the area. Land to the north east comprises predominantly Grade 1 agricultural land, whilst the south-eastern section is largely Grade 3a agricultural land. The area is also located within land assessed through the Green Belt Assessment as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes.

5.1.44 Given its strategic role within UK Central, future HS2 connectivity and wider economic significance, there is a clear rationale for exploring alternative levels of growth at Arden Cross. The withdrawn Local Plan identified 1,600 homes for Arden Cross which was supported at examination. **The growth scenarios will consider the implications of delivering higher growth at Arden Cross, with a moderate target of an additional 400 homes and a more ambitious target of an additional 1,400 homes.**

Balsall Common and Berkswell

5.1.45 Balsall Common is located in the eastern part of the borough. The area contains a range of local shops, schools, healthcare facilities and community services and benefits from access to Berkswell railway station and the A452 corridor. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C4 to C6, Appendix C**.

5.1.46 Priority habitats are distributed throughout the area, although they are more concentrated to the north of the settlement, where a local nature reserve (LNR) and several areas of ancient woodland are also located. To the west and south several areas designated as LWS can be found. Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are present in all directions. Agricultural land quality is generally high, comprising predominantly Grade 3a land to the east and a mix of Grade 1 to Grade 3a land to the north, south and west.

5.1.47 Land to the south and west is predominantly located within parcels assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, whilst land to the north is generally assessed as making a moderate contribution. Historic environment constraints are most evident to the north of the settlement, where a Conservation Area and a number of listed buildings are present, although individual listed buildings are also distributed elsewhere around the settlement.

5.1.48 The Berkswell broad area is closely tied to Balsall Common, being located on the settlement's eastern boundary. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C10 to C12, Appendix C**. Environmental constraints affecting the area are broadly consistent with those identified for Balsall Common.

5.1.49 Balsall Common and Berkswell are identified as broad locations for growth (BLG) during the plan period due to the proximity of Berkswell Rail Station. It is acknowledged that there are a number of potential site options within a 1,000m radius of the station. The Council have applied density multipliers[1] to the areas of land which do not overlap with 'Footnote 7' constraints within the NPPF and have applied a net developable area of 50% to ensure that there is land to accommodate associated infrastructure requirements. **With a view to maximising opportunities around sustainable locations during the plan period, applying density multipliers of 35 dph and 40 dph provides a total growth range of between 1,181 and 1,350 homes within this BLG.**

Bentley Heath

5.1.50 Bentley Heath is located to the south of Solihull and forms part of the wider rural town area of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath. The area sits between Dorridge rail station and Widney Manor rail station which are both considered as BLG for the Local Plan (and later discussed within the points of the compass appraisal). Constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C7 to C9, Appendix C**.

5.1.51 Outside of the BLG at Dorridge and Widney Manor, opportunities for growth at Bentley Heath are focused primarily to the north and west of the settlement. Constraints to delivering growth include:

- Priority habitats are present in present in all directions from the settlement, a site of ancient woodland is also located to the west and a LWS can be found to the south. Additional pockets of priority habitat are present to the north.
- Areas of surface water and fluvial flood risk are found to the west, including a larger waterbody to the south-west. The area to the north is

[1] Dwellings per hectare (or dph). Further detail on the methodology for the levels of growth proposed for the broad locations (including assumptions underpinning the dph calculations) is provided in the Housing Supply Topic Paper which contributes to the evidence base for the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan.

comparatively less constrained by flood risk, although a river corridor is located beyond the immediate northern edge of the settlement.

- Land to the west is predominantly Grade 3a agricultural land, whilst land to the north is generally Grade 1 agricultural land.
- The Green Belt Assessment identifies land to the north-west and north-east as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes, whilst land immediately to the north and west is generally assessed as making a strong contribution.

5.1.52 In light of the above, **no further options for Bentley Heath have been explored through the growth scenarios at this stage of plan making additional to the identified levels of growth for the BLG surrounding Dorridge rail station and Widney Manor rail station.**

Birmingham Airport (inc. Bickenhill)

5.1.53 Birmingham Airport is located in the north of the borough and forms a major economic and transport hub. The area benefits from excellent accessibility, including proximity to the NEC, Birmingham International railway station, the strategic road network and the future HS2 Interchange Station. The area is also adjacent to Arden Cross and is surrounded by significant employment uses. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C13 to C15, Appendix C**.

5.1.54 The area is subject to a number of environmental constraints. Extensive areas of priority habitat are located to the south and west, together with locally designated and nationally designated biodiversity assets, including areas of ancient woodland, an LNR, several LWS and nearby SSSIs. Additional LNRs are located to the north of the area. Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are present in all directions, although constraints are less extensive to the north-east.

5.1.55 Grade 1 agricultural land is present to the north and east and predominantly Grade 3a agricultural land is found to the south. Green Belt sensitivities also vary, with land to the south and east generally assessed as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes, whilst land to the west and north is generally assessed as making a weak contribution. Heritage constraints are most evident to the south, where listed buildings and a Conservation Area are present (including at Bickenhill), and to the west, where a number of listed buildings are located.

5.1.56 Potential site options at Birmingham Airport are primarily located to the south (surrounding Bickenhill) and overlap with one (or more) of the constraints discussed above. SMBC have confirmed that the employment offer at the NEC is set to expand during the plan period, and options for the wider UK Central area (i.e., Arden Cross) are being considered separately through the SA. On this basis, **alternatives for Birmingham Airport and**

Bickenhill have not been explored through the growth scenarios tested through the SA at this stage of plan making.

Catherine-de-Barnes

5.1.57 Located between Solihull urban area and the Hampton-in-Arden BLG (later discussed), the settlement contains a limited range of local facilities and is situated close to the M42, Birmingham Airport and the NEC. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C16 to C18, Appendix C**.

5.1.58 Priority habitats and LWS are present in all directions, although they are more extensive to the west and in the far south of the area. Areas of replanted ancient woodland are located to the east and north-west, whilst SSSIs are present in the far south and north-east. Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are distributed throughout the area, with a river corridor in the far south presenting a more significant flood risk constraint.

5.1.59 Agricultural land quality varies across the area, with predominantly Grade 3a agricultural land to the north and east, and a mix of Grade 1 to Grade 3a land to the west and south. Historic environment constraints are relatively limited, particularly to the north where no designated heritage assets have been identified, although a small number of listed buildings are present in other parts of the area. Green Belt sensitivities also vary, with land to the south-west generally assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, land to the north and west making a moderate contribution, and land to the south-east making a weak contribution.

5.1.60 Land to the west of Catherine-de-Barnes (east of Solihull) is allocated within the Local Plan and forms a 'constant' across the growth scenarios considered as reasonable alternatives through the SA. The site was put forward in the now withdrawn Local Plan as a suitable sustainable urban extension to the east of Solihull, recognising it has reasonable accessibility and connectivity to Solihull Town Centre. There is potential to further extend the growth at this location to deliver a sustainable urban extension (SUE) to the west of Catherine-de-Barnes, which would require additional release of Green Belt land. **Applying density multipliers of 35 dph and 40 dph provides a total growth range of between 628 and 718 homes on land to the west of Catherine-de-Barnes.**

5.1.61 Comparatively, land to the east of Catherine-de-Barnes is located within broad area five of the GBA which is one of two broad areas where potential 'grey belt' land has been identified. The land is incongruous to the existing development pattern, with any growth to the east separated from the village by Catherine-de-Barnes Lane and Solihull Road. Constraints associated with land to the east include an adjacent area of ancient woodland, priority habitat in the northern section, and the presence of Grade 3a (i.e., best and most versatile') agricultural land. In light of the constraints and recognising that developing to the east would likely result in an overdevelopment at

Catherine-de-Barnes in combination with land to the west, **the SUE to the west (adjoining the 'east of Solihull' allocation) has been the focus for further consideration through the SA.**

Chadwick End

5.1.62 A ''washed over' Green Belt village on the A4141 Warwick Road located in the south east of the plan area, between Knowle and Warwick. The settlement has limited facilities. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C19 to C21, Appendix C.**

5.1.63 Biodiversity constraints are most evident to the east of the settlement, where an area of LWS, ancient woodland and associated priority habitat is located. Further priority habitat is present to the west, along the borough boundary. A corridor of surface water flood risk runs south-west to north-east through the village centre and continues west along the borough boundary, whilst fluvial flood risk is limited to a narrow strip of Flood Zone 2 along the south-eastern boundary.

5.1.64 Agricultural land quality is generally high, with predominantly Grade 1 agricultural land to the east and south-east and Grade 3a land to the north and west, alongside pockets of Grade 1 and Grade 2 land. The area lies wholly within the Green Belt and is located within a 'broad area' where potential Grey Belt opportunities have not been identified through the Green Belt Assessment. Historic environment constraints are limited to individual Grade II listed buildings distributed to the north-east, west and south of the settlement.

5.1.65 In light of the above, **the settlement has not formed part of the growth scenarios for the SA at this stage of plan making.**

Chelmsley Wood (and the wider north Solihull area)

5.1.66 A major urban area in north Solihull, Chelmsley Wood contains an established town centre, educational facilities, community services and parks, and is connected to the wider borough by bus services and the strategic highway network. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C22 to C24, Appendix C.**

5.1.67 Biodiversity constraints are concentrated along the River Cole corridor, which is designated as a LNR with associated priority habitat and LWS. Two areas of ancient woodland are located in the south-west and south of the area, and further LNRs, LWS and priority habitat are present in proximity to the settlement.

5.1.68 Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are mostly associated with the river corridors to the north and west, with a further corridor of surface water flood risk running south-east through the town centre.

5.1.69 Land to the south and east of the settlement comprises predominantly Grade 1 agricultural land interspersed with Grade 3a agricultural land, whilst land to the north contains smaller pockets of Grade 3a agricultural land. The surrounding Greenbelt has been assessed through the Green Belt Assessment as making a weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.

5.1.70 Opportunities to support the longer-term vitality and viability of town centre environments is a key focus for the Local Plan. With respect to potential site options within and surrounding Chelmsley Wood, whilst there are opportunities surrounding Marston Green rail station and Fordbridge, these are relatively small sites which are predominantly constrained by ecological designations discussed above. Few opportunities exist further to the north due to lack of available site options, although the Council remain committed to investing in the economic regeneration and rejuvenation of north Solihull as a priority area during the plan period. This includes via the aspiration to transform and modernise the area via plans within the Chelmsley Wood Town Centre Masterplan (adopted in January 2023).

5.1.71 A total of 100 homes is expected to come forward within Chelmsley Wood Town Centre during the plan period, covered within the 'constant' elements of the growth scenarios tested through the SA. In light of the above, **alternatives for Chelmsley Wood and the wider north Solihull area have not been tested through the growth scenarios for the SA at this stage of plan making.**

Cheswick Green and Blythe Valley Park

5.1.72 Located in the south west of the borough located between Shirley and Dickens Heath, Cheswick Green includes local shopping, educational and community facilities and is connected to the surrounding urban area by local roads and bus services. Blythe Valley is a strategic business park adjacent to Junction 4 of the M42 which contains office, commercial and ancillary facilities and forms a significant employment location within Solihull. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C25 to C27, Appendix C.**

5.1.73 The area is subject to a number of environmental constraints. The River Blythe SSSI flows through the centre of the area between the two locations. A second SSSI lies to the north-east near Stratford Road. Priority Habitats are distributed throughout the area but are concentrated along the River Blythe corridor. Several LWS are also present to the north and east of Blythe Valley Park and overlap with several areas of priority habitat.

5.1.74 Fluvial and surface water flood risk is mostly associated with the River Blythe and its tributaries, particularly in the area surrounding Cheswick Green and along the M42 to the south-east. Best and most versatile agricultural land surrounding the areas is limited to Grade 3a land found to the south east of Cheswick Green and surrounding Blythe Valley Park.

5.1.75 Green Belt and historic environmental constraints vary across the area. Land to the north and north west of Cheswick Green is assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, while land to the east, south-west and surrounding Blythe Valley Park is generally assessed as making a moderate contribution aside from one parcel to the south, which has been assessed as making a weak contribution. Historic environment constraints are mostly individual Grade II and Grade II* Listed Buildings, concentrated to the west and south west along Tanworth Lane and Salter Street.

5.1.76 The potential site options which surround Cheswick Green and Blythe Valley Park are subject to a number of constraints which make them less suitable for further consideration through the SA. As mentioned, the potential site options to the north and west of Cheswick Green are within 'strong' performing parcels of the Green Belt. The sites to the east and south of Cheswick Green (between Blythe Valley Park) are subject to flood risk issues and contain areas of Grade 3a ('best and most versatile') land. **On this basis, no alternatives have been explored for these locations through the SA growth scenarios tested at this stage of plan making.**

Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green

5.1.77 Dickens Heath is a large village in the south of the borough. It contains a village centre, retail provision, schools, community facilities and open space, and is connected to Shirley, Solihull and surrounding settlements via the local highway network and limited bus services. Tidbury Green, to the south-west, adjoins Shirley and Dickens Heath and benefits from proximity to facilities in the wider urban area. The areas are also served by Wythall, Whitlock's End and Earlswood railway stations. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C28 to C30, Appendix C**

5.1.78 Biodiversity and flood risk constraints are present across much of the area. A LNR lies to the south of Dickens Heath, and several areas of LWS and ancient and semi-natural woodland are concentrated between the settlements and to the north-west and east of Dickens Heath. Priority Habitats are distributed throughout the area, with notable concentrations to the east of Tidbury Green. SSSIs can be found to the south-west and south-east along the River Blythe.

5.1.79 Fluvial flood risk is mostly associated with the River Blythe corridor and to the west of Tidbury Green, while a strip of surface water flood risk runs around the southern edge of Dickens Heath and south through the land between the two villages.

5.1.80 With regard to Green Belt, land to the east of Dickens Heath is assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, whilst land to the south, north and between the two villages is assessed as making a moderate contribution. There is one land parcel to the north west, near Whitlock's End, that is assessed as making a weak contribution. Historic

environment constraints are limited to individual Listed Buildings, with Grade II listed buildings clustered within Tidbury Green and along Tanworth Lane to the east, and a Grade II* listed building to the south-east.

5.1.81 The principal issue at Dickens Heath is infrastructure provision rather than land availability. The settlement has experienced substantial growth over the last decade, much of which has been delivered incrementally rather than through a strategic infrastructure-led approach. The Council's education team has expressed concerns regarding future secondary school provision in the area. Nonetheless, the Parish Council is keen for the settlement to evolve towards town status, and an emerging Neighbourhood Plan is currently being prepared.

5.1.82 Potential site options to the east of Dickens Heath are 'strong' performing Green Belt, there are flood risk issues to the south along with ecological considerations (SSSI/LNR). Land to the west and north west of Dickens Heath is within the BLG around Wythall, Whitlock's End, Shirley, Earlswood (later discussed). Land to the south, west, and north of Tidbury Green is also within the BLG, with land to the east primarily constrained by priority habitats, flood risk issues, and 'moderate' performing Green Belt land.

5.1.83 In light of the above, **no further options around these settlements have been explored through the growth scenarios at this stage of plan making additional to the identified levels of growth for the BLG surrounding Wythall, Whitlock's End, Shirley, and Earlswood.**

Dorridge

5.1.84 Dorridge is located to the south of Solihull and forms part of the wider rural town area of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath. The settlement contains a village centre with a range of local shops and services, and benefits from access to Dorridge railway station. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C31 to C33, Appendix C**.

5.1.85 Biodiversity constraints are most evident to the south of the settlement, where a LNR alongside several LWS, priority habitats, ancient woodland and ancient replanted woodland are located immediately south of Dorridge station. Ancient woodland can also be found to the west, whilst smaller areas of priority habitat are distributed across Dorridge, with notable concentrations found to the south.

5.1.86 Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are present to the south and east, including surface water flood risk to the south of the station and further corridors of surface water flood risk extending through the built-up area of the settlement. There is also fluvial flood risk associated with a river corridor along the eastern boundary of the borough.

5.1.87 Agricultural land surrounding the settlement is predominantly Grade 3a, with a small area of Grade 1 land to the north-west. Land to the west is

generally assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, whilst land to the east and south is generally assessed as making a moderate contribution. Historic environment constraints are concentrated around the centre of the settlement, where two Conservation Areas are located near the station, although individual Grade II listed buildings are also distributed to the west, south and east.

5.1.88 It is acknowledged that there are a number of potential site options within a 1,000m radius of Dorridge station. The Council have applied density multipliers to the areas of land which do not overlap with 'Footnote 7' constraints within the NPPF and have applied a net developable area of 65% to ensure that there is land to accommodate associated infrastructure requirements. **With a view to maximising opportunities around sustainable locations during the plan period, applying density multipliers of 35 dph and 40 dph provides a total growth range of between 615 and 722 homes within this BLG.**

Eastcote and Barston

5.1.89 Eastcote and Barston are 'washed over' villages within the Green Belt located centrally within the borough, between Solihull Town Centre, Hampton-in-Arden and Balsall Common. The areas are rural in character and have a limited range of local services and public transport provision, with access primarily reliant on Barston Lane and private vehicle travel. The areas do, however, benefit from access to Hampton-in-Arden railway station located a short distance to the north. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C34 to C36, Appendix C**.

5.1.90 The River Blythe SSSI passes through the southern and western parts of the area and continues north to the east of Barston. Priority habitat is distributed throughout the area, although it is more extensive to the north-east and can be found to the east of Barston. Areas of LWS are also present in proximity to both settlements.

5.1.91 Fluvial and surface water flood risk is largely associated with the River Blythe, with Flood Zones 2 and 3 present to the south, west and east, whilst a strip of surface water flood risk is observed running from the waterbodies in the north east to the centre of the area. Barston is relatively unaffected by flooding, while Eastcote has isolated areas of surface water flood risk.

5.1.92 Agricultural land quality varies across the area. Grade 2 land, interspersed with pockets of Grade 1 towards Barston, forms a strip between the two settlements, whilst the majority of the surrounding land is Grade 3a. Further areas of Grade 1 agricultural land are present to the south-west and east. The area lies wholly within Green Belt land that has not been assessed for its contribution to Green Belt purposes. Heritage constraints are concentrated within Barston, where a Conservation Area contains numerous Listed Buildings. A second Conservation Area can be found to

the east of Eastcote and a Scheduled monument to the west. Listed buildings are also present along the road linking the two villages.

5.1.93 With respect to potential site options, they are relatively isolated from the settlements and within areas of Green Belt where potential 'grey belt' land has not been identified through the Green Belt Assessment. Alongside the variety of constraints in the wider area, **the settlements have not formed part of the growth scenarios for the SA at this stage of plan making.**

Hampton-in-Arden

5.1.94 A village in the north-east of the borough. The settlement contains a range of local shops, a primary school and community facilities and is served by Hampton-in-Ardon railway station. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C37 to C39, Appendix C**.

5.1.95 Priority habitats extend in all directions from the village centre, although they are most extensive to the west and south-west, including the ground of Hampton Manor. Areas designated as LWS can also be found to the west, north and east of the settlement. The River Blythe SSSI passes along the eastern side of the village, whilst an area of ancient woodland is located to the south-east, adjacent to the railway line. Significant employment areas associated with the airport, Arden Cross and NEC are present to the far north of the village.

5.1.96 Fluvial flood risk is most extensive to the east and north, where Flood Zones 2 and 3 extend across the area. Corridors of surface water flood risk are also found in all directions from the village centre.

5.1.97 Agricultural land surrounding the settlement in predominantly Grade 3a, although land to the east of the River Blythe is generally Grade 1 and a smaller area of Grade 2 land is present to the south. Land to the west, south and east has been assessed as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes, whilst land to the north is assessed as making a weak contribution. Historic environment constraints are mostly associated with the Conservation Area that contains a Grade I Listed Building, a Grade II* Listed Building, a Scheduled Monument and numerous Grade II Listed Buildings.

5.1.98 It is acknowledged that there are a number of potential site options within a 1,000m radius of Hampton-in-Arden station. The Council have applied density multipliers to the areas of land which do not overlap with 'Footnote 7' constraints within the NPPF and have applied a net developable area of 65% to ensure that there is land to accommodate associated infrastructure requirements. **With a view to maximising opportunities around sustainable locations during the plan period, applying density multipliers of 35 dph and 40 dph provides a total growth range of between 734 and 858 homes within this BLG.**

Hockley Heath

5.1.99 A village in the south of the borough located on the A3400 corridor. The settlement contains local shops, services and community facilities and provides connections towards Solihull, Shirley and Stratford-upon-Avon. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C40 to C42, Appendix C**.

5.1.100 Ecological constraints in proximity to Hockley Heath are comparatively limited compared to other settlements in the borough, with small areas of priority habitat present to the south-east of the settlement and a LWS to the west. Areas of ancient woodland, together with priority habitats, are located beyond the borough boundary to the west and south-west. Fluvial flood risk is absent from the settlement and surface water flood risk is limited within the village, with areas susceptible to flooding located primarily on the road network.

5.1.101 Agricultural land surrounding the settlement is almost entirely Grade 3a. Green Belt sensitivities vary, with land to the north-west, south-west and south-east generally assessed as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes, whilst land to the west and south is assessed as making a weak contribution. Historic environment constraints are limited to a small number of Grade II Listed Buildings along Stratford Road and within the village, with a Grade II* Listed Building located beyond the borough boundary to the south-west.

5.1.102 Regarding potential site options, land to the north east is mostly within the neighbouring authority area. Whilst it is a relatively large and unconstrained site option, it does not represent a reasonable opportunity location for the Local Plan but might represent a longer-term growth location as part of the emerging West Midlands SDS. Land to the east, south, and south west of Hockley Heath is also within the neighbouring authority area.

5.1.103 Most of the land to the north of Hockley Heath has been identified as being suitable for employment uses, associated with Indurent Park. These sites are located in broad area seven of the GBA where potential ‘grey belt’ land has been identified. With respect to housing opportunities, the Council considers Hockley Heath as being suitable for limited growth only, having already receiving in excess of 200 homes via planning applications and SHELAA site options. Limiting further growth also prevents the risk of amalgamation with Knowle, Dorridge, and Bentley Heath to the northeast, and towards the M42 and wider urban area to the northwest. In light of this, **the settlement has not formed part of the growth scenarios for the SA at this stage of plan making.**

Knowle

5.1.104 Knowle is located to the south of the borough and forms part of the wider rural town area of Knowle, Dorridge and Bentley Heath. Residents have access to a good range of shops, services and community facilities, and benefit from access to the wider area via the A4141. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C43 to C45, Appendix C**.

5.1.105 Pockets of priority habitat and several LWS are distributed throughout the area, and an LNR is located to the west of the settlement. Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are present across much of the area, particularly to the north, west and south. In contrast, land to the east is comparatively less constrained by flood risk.

5.1.106 Agricultural land quality is generally high around the settlement. Land to the east and north is predominantly Grade 1 agricultural land, with some Grade 3a land present to the north-east. Land to the south and south-east is generally Grade 3a agricultural land, although pockets of Grade 1 land are also present. Green Belt sensitivities are greatest to the north-east, east and south-east, where land is generally assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes. Land to the north and south-west is generally assessed as making a moderate contribution.

5.1.107 Historic environment constraints are concentrated within the settlement itself. The historic core of Knowle is designated as a Conservation Area and contains numerous listed buildings. Beyond this area, heritage constraints are comparatively limited, although a Grade I listed building is located to the north of the settlement.

5.1.108 Land to the north and to the south of Hampton Road are allocated through the Local Plan and form part of the ‘constants’ across the growth scenarios considered as reasonable alternatives through the SA. Further growth to the east and to the south of Knowle are primarily constrained by parcels of land which make ‘strong’ or ‘moderate’ contributions to the Green Belt and contain areas of Grade 1 and Grade 3a (best and most versatile) agricultural land.

5.1.109 There is potential to deliver growth further to the north of Knowle (south of the M42). **Applying density multipliers of 35 dph and 40 dph provides a total growth range of between 805 and 920 homes on land to the north of Knowle.**

Meriden

5.1.110 A village situated in the eastern part of the borough between Birmingham and Coventry. The settlement contains local services, community facilities and a primary school and is located adjacent to the A45 corridor. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C46 to C48, Appendix C**.

5.1.111 Priority habitats are present in all directions, although they are more extensive immediately east and south of the settlement and in the far west. Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are also present throughout the area, with the most significant constraints associated with a watercourse corridor immediately south of the village.

5.1.112 Agricultural land quality varies across the area. Land to the south-west and west is predominantly Grade 1 agricultural land, whilst land to the north and east is generally of lower quality. Green Belt sensitivities are moderate in most directions, with land to the north, west and east generally assessed as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. However, the GBA identifies four areas of fundamental importance to the strategic function of the Green Belt, three of which are located within the Meriden Gap to the west of the settlement. Historic environment constraints are most evident to the west, south and east, where a number of listed buildings are present and Conservation Areas are located to the west and east. Land to the north is comparatively less constrained from a heritage perspective.

5.1.113 Meriden benefits from proximity to employment opportunities and a high-frequency bus network, although it does not have a railway station. There are several land parcels to the north, east, and south which could deliver a strategic urban extension to Meriden. **Applying density multipliers of 35dph and 40dph provides a total growth range of between 1,219 and 1,393 homes on land to the north, east, and south of Meriden.**

Millisons Wood

5.1.114 Millisons Wood is located to the east of Meriden on the borough's eastern boundary. The area is predominantly residential in character and contains a limited range of local services and facilities. Access is provided primarily via the B4104, whilst the nearby Meriden Business Park provides an important source of local employment. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C49 to C51, Appendix C**.

5.1.115 Priority habitats are present in pockets in all directions, although the most extensive areas are located to the south-west where they coincide with areas of ancient woodland and a Local Nature Reserve. Ecological constraints are comparatively less extensive to the north. Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are most evident immediately north of the settlement and in the far south, whilst the western part of the area is comparatively less constrained by flood risk.

5.1.116 Agricultural land quality is generally lower than in many other parts of the borough, with limited areas of best and most versatile agricultural land present other than Grade 3a land in the far south. Green Belt sensitivities are also comparatively limited, with land to the north generally assessed as making a weak contribution to Green Belt purposes and land to the west

making a moderate contribution. Historic environment constraints are minimal, with only a single listed building identified to the east.

5.1.117 With respect to potential growth opportunities, there is one potential site option to the west of the settlement which is adjacent to an area of ancient woodland which is a designated LNR. The site is accessible via Birmingham Road, which connects to Meriden approximately 1km to the west, although it is acknowledged that Millisons Wood has few public transport connections. Alongside the ecological constraints in proximity to the available site and the lack of alternative site options at this settlement, **Millisons Wood has not formed part of the growth scenarios for the SA at this stage of plan making.**

Relief Road (south east of Balsall Common)

5.1.118 The Relief Road area is located on the south-eastern edge of Balsall Common and benefits from access to the settlement's range of local shops, schools, healthcare facilities and community services. Whilst slightly further from Berkswell railway station than other parts of Balsall Common, the area remains connected to the wider transport network via the A452 corridor and local road network. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C52 to C54, Appendix C**.

5.1.119 Priority habitats are present in all directions, whilst LWS can be found to the north and east. Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are distributed throughout the area, with more extensive constraints present to the north and south. Land to the east and west is comparatively less constrained by flood risk, although localised areas of higher flood risk remain present.

5.1.120 Agricultural land surrounding the area is predominantly Grade 3a to the north, east and south, whilst land to the west is generally of higher quality, comprising a mix of Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3a agricultural land. Green Belt sensitivities vary, with land immediately to the north and further to the west generally assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes. Land to the far north and immediately west is generally assessed as making a moderate contribution. Historic environment constraints are most evident to the west, closer to the built-up area of Balsall Common, where a number of listed buildings are present. Additional listed buildings are located to the north and east, whilst the southern part of the area is comparatively unconstrained from a heritage perspective.

5.1.121 The Relief Road is identified as a BLG approximately 1,500m to the south east of Berkswell Station, and is an emerging infrastructure-led growth concept to deliver growth to the south east of Balsall Common (adjacent to Hob Lane). The proposal would effectively round off the settlement through provision of a new road, with land within the 'broad buffer' of the Relief Road potentially being suitable for future growth. Approximately 60% of the

'buffer' area mapped in Appendix C is identified as making a 'weak' contribution to the Green Belt, with the remaining 40% identified as making a 'strong' contribution. There are areas of the site which are at high risk of surface water flooding, and a corridor of land in the eastern section a designated LWS. These constraints would need to be effectively mitigated through the design of the scheme. **Applying density multipliers of 35dph and 40dph provides a total growth range of between 1,000 and 1,100 homes at this BLG.**

Solihull Town Centre

5.1.122 The borough's principal town centre, containing the highest concentration of retail, commercial, leisure and civic services in Solihull. The area is located centrally within the urban area and is served by Solihull railway station, frequent bus services and the strategic road network. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C55 to C57, Appendix C**.

5.1.123 Several areas designated as LWS can be found to the north of Solihull Town Centre. Priority habitats are distributed throughout the wider area, whilst SSSIs are present to the north and east. LNRs occur in all directions and areas of ancient woodland are located to the west, south and east. Significant employment areas are present to the south and north-east.

5.1.124 Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are distributed throughout the area, with higher risk associated with areas near the River Blythe in the east and waterbodies such as Olton Reservoir in the north.

5.1.125 Beyond the existing urban area, agricultural land is predominantly Grade 3a, particularly to the north-east and south-east. Green Belt land to the south, east and north-east are predominantly assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, although smaller areas of moderate and weak contribution are also present, particularly to the north-east.

5.1.126 Historic environment constraints are most evident to the north, south and east, where Conservation Areas and listed buildings are present. The western part of the area is comparatively less constrained from a heritage perspective, although several listed buildings remain present.

5.1.127 Opportunities to support the longer-term vitality and viability of town centre environments is a key focus for the Local Plan, supported through the aspirations of the Solihull Town Centre Masterplan (adopted in 2021). With respect to potential site options, the Mell Square redevelopment within Solihull Town Centre has progressed significantly since the withdrawn Local Plan, with a planning application submitted in 2024. A total of 1,600 homes is proposed (rising from 1,200 since previous plan and considered a maximum figure), alongside a further 469 homes at Eastgate. In light of this, and in combination with the 100 homes at Chelmsley Wood Town Centre (as previously discussed) **a total of 2,169 homes is expected to**

come forward within town centre environments during the plan period, covered within the 'constant' elements of the growth scenarios tested through the SA.

Temple Balsall

5.1.128 Temple Balsall is a small village located in the south-eastern part of the borough. The area is rural in character and has a limited range of local services and public transport provision, with access primarily reliant on the B4101 and private vehicle travel. The village does, however, contain a primary school which serves the local community. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C58 to C60, Appendix C**.

5.1.129 Extensive areas of priority habitat are present to the north and west, whilst comparatively fewer ecological constraints are found to the south and east. To the west, several priority habitat areas also overlap with large areas designated as LWS. The River Blythe SSSI passes through the northern and western parts of the area, contributing to significant biodiversity sensitivities. Fluvial and surface water flood risk is also closely associated with the River Blythe corridor, with extensive areas of flood risk present to the north, west and south. In contrast, land to the east is comparatively less constrained by flood risk.

5.1.130 Land to the south and east is predominantly Grade 3a agricultural land, with smaller areas of Grades 1 and 2 present, whilst land to the north and west is generally Grade 2 agricultural land with pockets of Grades 1 and 3a. Historic environment constraints are particularly evident within and around Temple Balsall itself, where a Conservation Area, scheduled monument and numerous listed buildings are present. Additional heritage constraints include a scheduled monument to the north and a listed building to the west, whilst fewer heritage constraints are present to the south.

5.1.131 With respect to the potential site options which cover land to the east of the settlement, constraints within proximity include a SSSI, Conservation Area, Scheduled Monuments, and areas of flood risk. The sites are also in locations where potential 'grey belt' land has not been identified through the Green Belt Assessment. In light of this, **Temple Balsall has not formed part of the growth scenarios for the SA at this stage of plan making.**

Tile Hill

5.1.132 Tile Hill is located on the borough's eastern boundary and adjoins the built-up area of Coventry. The area benefits from access to Tile Hill railway station, which is located immediately east of the borough boundary within Coventry, and is well connected to services, facilities and employment opportunities within both Coventry and Solihull. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C61 to C63, Appendix C**.

5.1.133 A large area of priority habitat and ancient woodland is present to the north. This area also incorporates an LWS. Smaller areas of priority habitat are located to the south and east. Further ecological constraints, including LNRs and SSSIs, are present within adjacent parts of Coventry to the east. Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk are distributed throughout the area, although constraints are most extensive in the central and southern parts due to the presence of a watercourse and associated floodplain.

5.1.134 Agricultural land is predominantly Grade 3a throughout the area, with smaller areas of Grade 2 land present to the south-west. Land to the north, west, and south is generally assessed as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. Historic environment constraints are found to the west through the presence of several listed buildings. Areas to the north and south are relatively unconstrained from a heritage perspective.

5.1.135 It is acknowledged that there are a number of potential site options within a 1,000m radius of Tile Hill station. The Council have applied density multipliers to the areas of land which do not overlap with 'Footnote 7' constraints within the NPPF and have applied a net developable area of 65% to ensure that there is land to accommodate associated infrastructure requirements. **With a view to maximising opportunities around sustainable locations during the plan period, applying density multipliers of 35 dph and 40 dph provides a total growth range of between 1,041 and 1,190 homes within this BLG.**

West of Coventry

5.1.136 Land to the west of Coventry is located along the borough's eastern boundary and adjoins the Hockley area of Coventry. The area is predominantly undeveloped greenfield land and benefits from proximity to the extensive range of services, facilities and employment opportunities available within Coventry. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C64 to C66, Appendix C**.

5.1.137 Pockets of priority habitat are present to the north and west, whilst a larger area of priority habitat that overlaps with a designated LWS and ancient woodland is located to the south. An SSSI is also located to the east within Coventry. Fluvial and surface water flood risk is present throughout and is associated with several watercourses that pass through the area.

5.1.138 Agricultural land quality is generally consistent across the area, comprising predominantly Grade 3a agricultural land, although land to the west also includes areas of Grade 2 agricultural land. Green Belt sensitivities vary, with land to the north generally assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes and land to the south and east predominantly assessed as making a moderate contribution. Historic environment constraints are comparatively limited, with only a single listed building identified in the western part of the area.

5.1.139 There is a large potential site option to the west of Coventry which has been identified as a possible sustainable urban extension. **Applying density multipliers of 35dph and 40dph provides a total growth range of between 600 and 1,200 homes on land to the west of Coventry.**

Widney Manor

5.1.140 A suburban area in the south-west of the urban area adjoining Solihull Town Centre. The area is served by Widney Manor railway station and benefits from access to services and facilities within Solihull Town Centre and the surrounding urban area. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C67 to C69, Appendix C**.

5.1.141 Extensive areas of priority habitat and several LWS are present to the south and north-east, whilst LNRs are located to the north and west. SSSIs and areas of ancient woodland are also present to the east and south. Areas of fluvial and surface water flood risk occur throughout the area, although constraints are considerably more extensive to the north, east and south due to the presence of the River Blythe and its associated floodplain. An employment area is also located to the south-west.

5.1.142 Agricultural land surrounding the urban edge is predominantly Grade 3a to the north, south and west, whilst land to the east is generally Grade 1 agricultural land. Green Belt sensitivities are also evident, with land to the north, west and immediately south generally assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes. More limited areas of land to the south-west and south-east are assessed as making a moderate contribution. Historic environment constraints are most evident to the north, where several Conservation Areas are present, whilst a smaller number of listed buildings are distributed elsewhere around the area.

5.1.143 It is acknowledged that there are a number of potential site options within a 1,000m radius of Widney Manor station. The Council have applied density multipliers to the areas of land which do not overlap with 'Footnote 7' constraints within the NPPF and have applied a net developable area of 65% to ensure that there is land to accommodate associated infrastructure requirements. **With a view to maximising opportunities around sustainable locations during the plan period, applying density multipliers of 35 dph and 40 dph provides a total growth range of between 512 and 585 homes within this BLG.**

Wythall, Whitlock's End, Shirley, and Earlswood

5.1.144 The area is located in the south-western part of the borough, adjoining Bromsgrove District. Whilst much of the area lies outside of the Solihull urban area, the eastern part extends into the borough and benefit from rail connectivity. In this respect, Wythall, Whitlock's End, Shirley and Earlswood are collectively identified as a broad location which serve the

wider settlement areas of Dicken's Heath and Tidbury Green. The area is predominantly rural in character and forms an important part of the borough's southern fringe. Relevant constraints mapping is presented in **Figures C70 to C72, Appendix C**.

5.1.145 Priority habitats are distributed throughout the area, although they are more concentrated to the south-west. LWS are also present adjacent to Tidbury Green, Whitlock's End Station and Dickens Heath. Areas of ancient woodland are present to the north and south, whilst an LNR is located in the southern part of the area. An SSSI is also located to the south-east. An employment site is situated to the east of the settlement. Fluvial and surface water flood risk is present throughout the area, with more significant constraints occurring to the west and south-east due to the presence of river corridors and associated tributaries.

5.1.146 Land to the east is generally assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, whilst land to the north and south is predominantly assessed as making a moderate contribution. Land to the west is generally assessed as making a weak contribution. Historic environment constraints are comparatively limited, although a number of listed buildings are present in the southern part of the area.

5.1.147 It is acknowledged that there are a number of potential site options within a 1,000m radius of Wythall, Whitlock's End, Shirley and Earlswood stations. Potential site options outside of the 1,000m boundary of this BLG have been discussed separately within this appraisal, specifically within the summaries for Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green. The Council have applied density multipliers to the areas of land which do not overlap with 'Footnote 7' constraints within the NPPF and have applied a net developable area of 65% to ensure that there is land to accommodate associated infrastructure requirements. **With a view to maximising opportunities around sustainable locations during the plan period, applying density multipliers of 35 dph and 40 dph provides a total growth range of between 1,352 and 1,577 homes within this BLG.**

5.2. Arriving at the growth scenarios

Introduction

5.2.1 The discussion has so far focused on: A) strategic considerations relating to growth quantum and broad spatial strategy; and B) the constraints and opportunities for delivering growth at key settlements and locations around the borough. The next stage is to consider how different sources of supply might be combined in order to arrive at the growth scenarios tested as reasonable alternatives through the SA at this stage of plan making.

5.2.2 All growth scenarios incorporate a consistent set of 'constants' in relation to the distribution of growth across the borough. The 'variable' components of

the growth scenarios are derived from a review of the potential opportunities at key settlements and locations around the borough as identified through the points of the compass appraisal (**Section 5.3**), alongside the following principles (see **Table 5-1** below) underpinning the site selection process outlined at the 'Issues and Options' stage of plan making (January 2026).

5.2.3 The purpose of this exercise is not to identify a preferred development strategy. Rather, it is to establish a range of credible and distinct alternatives that reflect the principal choices available to the Council for meeting housing and employment needs across the borough during the plan period (2026-2043).

Table 5-1: Considerations underpinning site selection

	Category	Examples/Comments
Non-Green Belt	PDL/under-utilised land	Land at the NEC.
	Optimise Density (especially town centres or other locations well served by PT)	Solihull Town Centre
	Other Councils meeting Solihull's housing need in their administrative area	Through DtC and/or SDS explore scope for options beyond the Green Belt
Green Belt	PDL	Would need to be located in a sustainable location, or a location that could be made sustainable.
	Grey Belt	
	Other Green Belt locations	

Constants

5.2.4 A number of supply components were treated as constants across all scenarios. These comprise sources of housing supply that are either already committed, have a high degree of certainty, or are consistently available regardless of the spatial strategy ultimately pursued. Just over 65% of supply is delivered via 'constants', which are presented via twelve 'rows' within the growth scenarios table (see **Table 5-2**) as follows:

- **Row 1:** sites with planning permission up 31st March 2026 which are currently under construction.
- **Row 2:** sites with planning permission up 31st March 2026 which are not currently under construction.
- **Row 3:** sites identified in land availability assessments.

- **Row 4:** sites identified in the Council's latest Brownfield Land Register supporting the regeneration of previously developed land (PDL).
- **Row 5:** opportunity sites within town centre environments, comprising sites within Solihull Town Centre and Chelmsley Wood Town Centre as discussed within the Points of the Compass Appraisal.
- **Row 6:** sites which have rolled forward from the previous Local Plan.
- **Row 7:** application of a 10% discount in the totals across Rows 2-6 in recognition of uncertainties around delivery rates and site capacity.
- **Row 8:** anticipated windfall to 2043, comprising no windfall allowance in the first two years of the plan period, followed by 150 per year for the remaining 15 years of the plan period reflecting historical rates of windfall delivery across the borough.
- **Row 9:** the withdrawn Local Plan identified 1,600 homes for UK Central (Arden Cross) which was supported at examination. The variable components tested through the SA have considered additional growth at this location, as discussed in the Points of the Compass Appraisal and in the variable section below.
- **Row 10:** comprises the following site allocations which provide a total supply of 4,877 homes during the plan period, including (with references to site specific policies in the Local Plan):
    - Sites which have been rolled forward from the withdrawn Local Plan which now have a resolution to grant permission as of 1st April 2026 (BC1(A,B,C), BL1N, BL2, HH1, KN2).
    - Sites at Balsall Common, Whitlock's End, Hampton-in-Arden, Knowle, and Solihull which were supported through the withdrawn Local Plan but do not have planning permission as of 1st April 2026 (BC3, BC5, BC6, BC7).
    - Sites identified as well performing options from the Council's site assessment work (BL1, BL3, HA1, ME1).
    - Sites currently going through the planning process which are likely to gain approval (KN1A, KN1B, SO1).
    - Brownfield site opportunities which are owned by the local authority but do not currently have permission (SO2).
- **Row 11:** anticipated windfall across 'grey belt' sites, excluding SUE opportunities around key settlements which are discussed as variables. A total of 372 homes are expected to come forward as windfall at known locations, with a further 628 anticipated across additional locations during the plan period.
- **Row 12:** presumption of approvals around railway stations (i.e., within an 800m distance) based on known site options from the 'call for sites'.

Variables

5.2.5 Following a review of the potential opportunities at key settlements and locations around the borough as identified through the points of the compass appraisal, 'variable' components comprise:

- Opportunities within seven broad locations of growth (BLG) which encompass a 1,000m radius around rail stations across the borough.
- Growth at Meriden which has a high frequency bus network (i.e., up to four services per hour).
- Growth through sustainable urban extensions (SUE) via the release of Green Belt land, at Catherine-de-Barnes, Knowle, and West of Coventry; and
- Additional growth at Arden Cross given its strategic role within UK Central, future HS2 connectivity and wider economic significance.

5.2.6 The first variable relates to the extent of development focused around seven BLG associated with railway station catchments. The Council have applied density multipliers to the areas of land within each BLG which do not overlap with 'Footnote 7' constraints within the NPPF and have applied net developable areas to ensure that there is land to accommodate associated infrastructure requirements. **With a view to maximising opportunities around sustainable locations during the plan period, applying density multipliers of 35 dph and 40 dph provides the following growth ranges across the BLG:**

BLG Name	Total growth at 35 dph	Total growth at 40 dph
Berkswell	1,181	1,350
Dorridge	615	722
Hampton-in-Arden	734	858
Relief Road (south east of Balsall Common)	1,000	1,100
Tile Hill	1,041	1,190
Widney Manor	512	585
Wythall, Whitlock's End, Shirley, Earlswood	1,352	1,577
TOTALS	**6,435**	**7,382**

5.2.7 The inclusion of BLG within the growth scenarios reflects their intended role in accommodating growth during the later stages of the plan period, particularly beyond the first five years. The BLG provide a strategic indication of where longer-term growth could be accommodated in sustainable locations associated with railway stations and public transport

corridors. This approach recognises the increasing emphasis within national policy on the use of broad locations within strategic planning and provides flexibility to respond to future development needs over the medium to longer term. By identifying BLG in sustainable and accessible areas, the draft Local Plan provides an evidence-based starting point for future discussions regarding the distribution of growth beyond the immediate plan period, including through any future Spatial Development Strategy covering the West Midlands.

5.2.8 The second variable relates to the role of Meriden in accommodating growth. Although Meriden is not identified as a broad location due to the absence of a railway station, it benefits from a high frequency bus network and local services. **Applying density multipliers of 35 dph and 40 dph across land to the north, east, and south of Meriden provides a total growth range of between 1,219 and 1,393 homes.**

5.2.9 The third variable relates to the possible opportunities afforded by the release of Green Belt land to deliver SUE around locations with potentially suitable site options. At the 'Issues and Options' stage of plan making (January 2026), SUE, or large infrastructure led developments, were classified as comprising a site (or cluster of sites) which could deliver a minimum of 500 homes. The following locations have been tested as variables through the growth scenarios.

SUE Name	Total growth at 35 dph	Total growth at 40 dph
Land to the west of Catherine-de-Barnes	628	718
Land to the north of Knowle	805	920
Land to the west of Coventry	600	1,200
TOTALS	**2,033**	**2,838**

5.2.10 The final variable relates to the scale of residential development accommodated at Arden Cross. Given its strategic role within UK Central, future HS2 connectivity and wider economic significance, there is a clear rationale for exploring alternative levels of housing growth in this location. The withdrawn Local Plan identified 1,600 homes for Arden Cross which was supported at examination (forming part of the 'constants'). **The growth scenarios will consider the implications of delivering higher growth at Arden Cross, with a moderate target of an additional 400 homes and a more ambitious target of an additional 1,400 homes.**

Growth scenarios

5.2.11 It is acknowledged that theoretically there are several potential combinations which could be applied to the scenarios. The combinations which have been tested seek to avoid an under-delivery or over-delivery of

homes, i.e., from applying lower growth or higher growth across all of the variable components, whilst also reflecting the key choices for plan makers tasked with selecting the preferred approach for the Local Plan at this Regulation 19 stage of plan making.

5.2.12 As discussed in **Section 5.1**, the basis for the growth scenarios considered is the delivery of LHN across the borough, with lower growth scenarios ruled out at this stage. It should be noted that scenarios which rely more heavily on the identified BLG are also associated with a greater degree of delivery uncertainty. The BLG represent strategic areas of search rather than specific site allocations and the anticipated levels of growth would be realised through a combination of potential site options which have come forward via the 'call for sites' process, alongside future site identification and development opportunities over the medium to longer term.

5.2.13 The growth scenarios are as follows, and summarised in **Table 5-2**:

Scenario 1: Constants plus maximum growth across BLG at 40 dph

5.2.14 Scenario 1 assumes full delivery of 7,382 homes across the identified BLG through applying the higher growth figure at 40 dph and would deliver approximately 105% of LHN. Applying the medium growth figure at 35 dph would fall short of LHN and contribute less towards maximising opportunities around sustainable transport networks (i.e., rail stations).

Scenario 2: Constants plus growth across BLG at 35 dph, and additional growth around Meriden at 35 dph (medium density)

5.2.15 Scenario 2 incorporates 1,219 homes across land to the north, east, and south of Meriden at 35 dph, delivering growth at a location which benefits from a high frequency bus network. This scenario would deliver approximately 107% of LHN.

Scenario 3: Constants plus growth across BLG at 35 dph, and SUE via Green Belt release at 35 dph (medium density)

5.2.16 Scenario 3 incorporates 2,033 homes via SUE on land to the west of Catherine-de-Barnes, north of Knowle, and west of Coventry, at 35 dph. A higher percentage of Green Belt land would be facilitated through this scenario, but in locations where public transport networks are not as well established in comparison to Meriden. The Local Plan would meet and slightly exceed LHN through this scenario. This scenario would deliver approximately 110% of LHN, providing a higher supply 'buffer'.

Scenario 4: Constants plus growth across BLG at 35 dph, and additional growth at Arden Cross (higher figure)

5.2.17 As discussed, the withdrawn Local Plan identified 1,600 homes for Arden Cross which is applied as a 'constant' across all growth scenarios, with the

variable components being an additional 400 (lower figure) or 1,400 (higher figure) to take the totals to 2,000 or 3,000, respectively. The higher figure would be required in this scenario to deliver approximately 107% of LHN.

Scenario 5: Constants plus 75% growth across BLG at 40 dph, plus Meriden and SUE via Green Belt release at 35 dph (medium density), and additional growth at Arden Cross (lower figure)

5.2.18 Scenario 5 considers the implications of reducing the reliance on BLG, recognising their intended role in accommodating growth in the medium to longer term (i.e., from years 6-17 of the plan period). A total of 5,537 homes is calculated via applying a 40 dph density multiplier across 75% of the total areas covered by the BLG.

5.2.19 In order to meet (and slightly exceed) LHN through a scenario with a 75% reliance on BLG, land to the north, south, and east of Meriden would be required at medium densities, along with the SUE at Catherine-de-Barnes, Knowle, and west of Coventry at medium densities, and the lower figure of 400 additional homes at Arden Cross. This scenario would provide an approximate 14% supply 'buffer' or headroom above LHN.

Scenario 6: Constants plus 50% growth across BLG at 40 dph, plus Meriden and SUE via Green Belt release at 40 dph (higher density), and additional growth at Arden Cross (higher figure)

5.2.20 Scenario 6 also considers the implications of further reducing the reliance on BLG. A total of 3,691 homes is calculated via applying a 40 dph density multiplier across 50% of the total areas covered by the BLG.

5.2.21 In order to meet (and slightly exceed) LHN through a scenario with a 50% reliance on BLG, land to the north, south, and east of Meriden would be required at higher densities (totalling 1,393 homes), along with the SUE at Catherine-de-Barnes, Knowle, and west of Coventry at higher densities (totalling 2,838 homes), and the higher figure of 1,400 additional homes at Arden Cross. This scenario would also provide an approximate 14% supply 'buffer' or headroom above LHN.

Scenario 7: Maximise growth across the borough

5.2.22 Scenario 7 is a maximum growth scenario for the borough, combining all of the 'constant' and 'variable' components to deliver an approximate 22% 'buffer' or headroom above LHN. The scenario comprises the total growth of 7,382 homes across the identified BLG at 40 dph, Meriden and the three SUE via 'Green Belt' release at 35dph, and the lower figure of 400 additional homes at Arden Cross.

Table 5-2: Growth scenarios tested through the SA

Supply component	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth scenario
Constants							
1. Sites with planning permission (started)	493	493	493	493	493	493	493
2. Sites with planning permission (not started)	2,249	2,249	2,249	2,249	2,249	2,249	2,249
3. Sites identified in land availability assessments	665	665	665	665	665	665	665
4. Sites identified in Brownfield Land Register	21	21	21	21	21	21	21
5. Town Centre Sites	2,169	2,169	2,169	2,169	2,169	2,169	2,169
6. Solihull Local Plan Allocations	65	65	65	65	65	65	65
7. Less a 10% discount (Rows 2-6)	-517	-517	-517	-517	-517	-517	-517
8. Windfall to 2043	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250	2,250
9. UKC HUB TO 2043	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,600
10. Allocated Sites To 2043	4,877	4,877	4,877	4,877	4,877	4,877	4,877
11. Windfall Grey Belt Sites	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
12. Railway Station CFS (within 800m)	837	837	837	837	837	837	837
Variables							
Broad Locations (Total)	7,382	6,435	6,435	6,435	5,537	3,691	7,382
Meriden (N, E, S)		1,219			1,219	1,393	1,219
SUE/Grey Belt			2,033		2,033	2,838	2,033
Arden Cross				1,400	400	1,400	400
Totals							
TOTALS (to 2043)	23,091	23,363	24,177	23,544	24,898	25,031	26,743
LHN	21,913	21,913	21,913	21,913	21,913	21,913	21,913
% of LHN	**105.38%**	**106.62%**	**110.33%**	**107.44%**	**113.62%**	**114.23%**	**122.04%**

6. Growth scenarios appraisal

6.1. Introduction

6.1.1 The aim of this section is to appraise the reasonable alternative growth scenarios identified in **Section 5** against the SA framework presented in **Section 3**. The appraisal considers the likely significant effects of each scenario across the sustainability topics and objectives, enabling the relative sustainability performance of the scenarios to be compared.

6.2. Appraisal methodology

6.2.1 Under each sustainability topic the aim is to: **1)** rank the scenarios in order of performance; and then **2)** categorise the performance in terms of 'significant effects' using the following characters and colours:

- **Red (--)**: major negative – significant adverse effect
- **Amber (-)**: minor negative – adverse effect of limited or uncertain significance
- **Light green (+)**: minor positive – beneficial effect of limited or uncertain significance
- **Dark green (++)**: major positive – significant beneficial effect
- **Yellow (+/-, ++/--)**: mixed effects – a combination of beneficial and adverse effects
- **Blue (0):** neutral effect

Accessibility

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	=1 ++	3 +	4 +	=1 ++	=5 +	=5 +	=5 +

6.2.2 National policy seeks to direct development towards locations that support sustainable patterns of movement, maximise opportunities for travel by public transport, walking, and cycling, and deliver growth in proximity to local services, facilities, and amenities. Consequently, differences between the scenarios are largely influenced by the extent to which growth is focused on rail-connected locations and major transport hubs, as opposed to locations that are more dependent on private vehicle travel to access key services, facilities, and amenities.

6.2.3 A key strength of all scenarios is the inclusion of development directed towards the identified broad locations. These locations are associated with

railway stations and established public transport corridors, providing opportunities for access by rail and bus and supporting more sustainable travel patterns. As a result, all scenarios are expected to perform positively in accessibility terms, recognising that they deliver a significant proportion of growth to locations which connect to services, facilities, and amenities.

6.2.4 The strongest-performing scenarios are those that avoid directing growth towards the less accessible variable locations, and those which have fewer services, facilities, and amenities. Scenario 1 focuses exclusively on growth at the broad locations and therefore maximises the proportion of development located within areas benefiting from rail accessibility. Scenario 4 similarly focuses growth on the broad locations but also incorporates additional development at Arden Cross, which represents the borough's most accessible strategic growth opportunity due to its relationship with Birmingham International Station, Birmingham Airport, the future HS2 Interchange Station and associated transport investment.

6.2.5 Accessibility performance is less strong where growth is directed towards Meriden and the proposed SUEs. This is reflected in the Department for Transport's connectivity scores for the respective areas. Whilst Meriden benefits from reasonable bus connectivity and local services, it lacks direct rail access and therefore does not perform as strongly as the broad locations or Arden Cross. This is included as a standalone variable in Scenario 2, which introduces additional growth at Meriden. The identified SUE locations to the north of Knowle, west of Coventry and west of Catherine-de-Barnes are generally less accessible than the broad locations and Arden Cross. Although these locations adjoin existing settlements and therefore benefit from access to existing services and facilities, they are located away from railway stations and are likely to generate a greater proportion of journeys by private car. This consideration is included in Scenarios 3, 5, 6 and 7, which also incorporate varying levels of SUE development alongside other growth components.

6.2.6 Overall, **Scenarios 1 and 4** are expected to perform most favourably and are judged to result in **major positive effects (++)**. Scenario 1 maximises growth at the broad locations associated with railway stations and established public transport corridors, whilst Scenario 4 combines this approach with additional growth at Arden Cross, the borough's most accessible strategic growth location. **Scenario 2** is expected to result in a **minor positive effect (+)**, reflecting the relatively sustainable location of Meriden and its established bus links. Scenario 3 is also expected to result in a **minor positive effect (+)**, as the proposed SUE locations remain associated with existing settlements and services despite being likely to generate a greater degree of car-based travel. **Scenarios 5, 6 and 7** are likewise expected to result in **minor positive effects (+)**. Whilst these scenarios incorporate a greater reliance on less accessible variables (Meriden and/or the proposed SUE locations), all continue to direct

substantial proportions of growth towards the borough's most accessible locations, particularly the rail-connected broad locations and Arden Cross.

Air quality and noise

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	1 -	3 -	4 -	2 -	=5 -	=5 -	7 -

6.2.7 New development can influence local air quality and noise levels through increased traffic movements and, in some locations, through the introduction of sensitive receptors in proximity to existing sources of noise. Consequently, differences between the scenarios are influenced by the extent to which they promote sustainable travel patterns, as well as their relationship with known sources of transport-related noise.

6.2.8 A key strength of all scenarios is the substantial amount of development directed towards the identified broad locations. These locations are associated with railway stations and established public transport corridors, which can help reduce reliance on private vehicle travel and therefore limit traffic-related air quality and noise impacts. Furthermore, there are currently no declared Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within the borough, suggesting that existing air quality issues are generally less pronounced than in many urban authorities.

6.2.9 The strongest-performing scenarios are those that maximise development at the broad locations whilst avoiding substantial growth in areas associated with known noise constraints. Scenario 1 focuses exclusively on the broad locations and therefore maximises the potential for trips to be undertaken by sustainable modes. Scenario 4 similarly focuses growth on the broad locations, whilst directing additional development towards Arden Cross. Although Arden Cross benefits from good accessibility, its proximity to the relatively densely packed development around Birmingham Airport means that future residents may be exposed to elevated levels of aircraft-related noise and associated air quality effects when compared to other growth locations.

6.2.10 Scenarios which direct a greater proportion of growth to Meriden and the proposed SUEs are less favourable for the air quality and noise topic. For example, growth at Meriden may increase traffic movements on the local road network, although the settlement benefits from existing services and public transport connections which may help moderate effects. The proposed SUE locations also have the potential to generate additional vehicle movements and associated air quality and noise effects. In particular, the SUE location to the north of Knowle lies in proximity to a Noise Action Plan Impact Area associated with the strategic road network.

Some of the broad locations around Dorridge and Widney Manor are also located in proximity to railway-related Noise Action Plan Impact Areas, although these considerations apply to all scenarios given that growth at broad locations are a constant across the options.

6.2.11 Overall, **all scenarios** are expected to result in **minor negative effects (-)** in relation to air quality and noise. Whilst the borough does not contain any declared AQMAs and all scenarios direct substantial proportions of development towards sustainable locations, each scenario would accommodate significant additional growth and is therefore likely to increase traffic movements and the number of people exposed to existing sources of transport-related noise. **Scenarios 1 and 4** perform most favourably due to their strong focus on accessible locations that may reduce reliance on private vehicle travel. **Scenario 2** performs marginally less favourably due to growth at Meriden, whilst **Scenario 3** performs less favourably again due to the inclusion of SUE development, including land in proximity to a Noise Action Plan Impact Area associated with the strategic road network. **Scenarios 5, 6 and 7** perform least favourably as they combine the highest rate of growth across a wider range of locations, and comparatively less growth at broad locations within proximity to rail stations (particularly for **Scenarios 5 and 6**).

Biodiversity and geodiversity

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	1 -	=2 -	=2 -	=2 -	=5 -	=5 -	=5 -

6.2.12 New development has the potential to result in habitat loss, fragmentation and disturbance, whilst also increasing recreational pressure on designated sites and areas of ecological value. Consequently, differences between the scenarios are influenced by the extent to which growth is directed towards locations in proximity to designated biodiversity or geodiversity assets, as well as the presence of habitats of ecological value within or adjacent to proposed development areas.

6.2.13 All scenarios rely to varying degrees on greenfield development. Even where development does not directly affect designated biodiversity sites, the loss of undeveloped land can result in impacts on habitats, species, ecological connectivity and wider ecosystem functions. Consequently, adverse effects may arise in locations that are not subject to biodiversity designations, particularly where development affects agricultural land, hedgerows, woodland, watercourses or other semi-natural habitats.

6.2.14 Several biodiversity constraints are associated with the broad locations, which feature in all scenarios. Key considerations include:

- Whitlocks End: approximately 1 km from Berry Mound Pastures Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Earlswood: approximately 350 m from Clowes Wood and New Fallings Coppice SSSI and 1.7 km from Windmill Naps Wood SSSI;
- Widney Manor: approximately 1.5km from Monkspath Meadow SSSI and 450 m from Malvern and Brueton Park Local Nature Reserve (LNR);
- Hampton-in-Arden: approximately 1.5 km from Bickenhill Meadows SSSI;
- Berkswell: approximately 300 m from Lavender Hall Park LNR;
- Dorridge: approximately 250 m from Dorridge Wood LNR; and
- Shirley / Whitlocks End: approximately 600 m from Bills Wood LNR.

6.2.15 Whilst proximity does not necessarily indicate adverse effects, it highlights the potential for impacts on biodiversity interests that may require further consideration through subsequent plan-making and project-level assessment.

6.2.16 It is also important to recognise that the growth assumptions underpinning the broad locations have been informed by an understanding of environmental constraints. For example, the total levels of growth proposed for each broad location reflect the exclusion of land subject to the most significant environmental constraints and do not generally assume development that would result in direct effects on nationally or locally designated biodiversity sites. Consequently, whilst development within the broad locations may give rise to indirect effects on nearby biodiversity assets, the growth assumptions have sought to avoid areas where direct impacts on designated sites are most likely to arise.

6.2.17 Of the variable growth locations, Meriden is comparatively less constrained from a biodiversity and geodiversity perspective in relation to statutory designated ecological and geological sites, with no such designations identified in close proximity to the proposed growth areas. However, some priority habitat is found adjacent to, and in one case within, the proposed development area. This creates the potential for direct effects on habitats of ecological value unless avoidance and mitigation measures are incorporated into future site design. Consequently, whilst biodiversity and geodiversity risks associated with the variable element in Scenario 2 may be lower than those associated with locations in proximity to designated sites, ecological constraints remain relevant.

6.2.18 The proposed SUE locations are also associated with a range of biodiversity constraints:

- North Knowle SUE:

– approximately 750 m from the River Blythe SSSI;
– approximately 800 m from Malvern and Brueton Park LNR;
– areas of deciduous woodland present along the northern boundary adjoining the M42.

- West Coventry SUE:

– approximately 1.2 km from Tile Hill Wood SSSI;
– approximately 150 m from a Local Wildlife Site.

- West of Catherine-de-Barnes SUE:

– approximately 1 km from Elmdon Coppice LNR.

6.2.19 Consequently, Scenario 3, together with Scenarios 5, 6 and 7, has potential to affect designated sites, priority habitats and ecological networks. However, the larger scale of these development opportunities may also provide greater opportunities to deliver strategic green infrastructure, habitat creation and biodiversity net gain (BNG).

6.2.20 Arden Cross is also associated with biodiversity constraints:

- approximately 350 m from Coleshill and Bannerly Pools SSSI;
- approximately 100 m from the River Blythe SSSI (separated by the A452);
- approximately 150 m from a Local Wildlife Site;
- contains small areas of priority habitat woodland within the site.

6.2.21 Whilst opportunities are likely to exist for mitigation, habitat enhancement and BNG, development at Arden Cross has the potential to affect designated sites, habitats and ecological connectivity. Nevertheless, Arden Cross is a large strategic development opportunity with considerable potential to incorporate strategic green infrastructure, habitat creation and wider biodiversity enhancements as part of a comprehensive master-planned approach. However, it is acknowledged that it might be more challenging to achieve BNG and wider ecological enhancements at locations which apply higher development densities. These considerations are therefore most relevant to Scenario 4, 5, 6 and 7.

6.2.22 Overall, **all scenarios** are expected to result in **minor negative effects (-)** in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity. Whilst the scale, location and nature of impacts would vary, all scenarios involve substantial greenfield development with the potential to affect habitats, ecological networks and designated biodiversity assets. **Scenario 1** performs most favourably as it avoids the additional biodiversity risks associated with the variable growth locations. **Scenarios 2, 3 and 4** perform similarly. Whilst Meriden is not

located in proximity to statutory designated ecological sites, some priority habitat is present within and adjacent to proposed development areas, creating potential for direct effects on habitats of ecological value. By comparison, the proposed SUEs and Arden Cross are associated with a greater number of designated biodiversity assets and habitats of ecological value, although effects are more likely to arise indirectly through proximity and changes in ecological connectivity. **Scenarios 5, 6 and 7** perform least favourably because they combine multiple growth components and therefore have the greatest potential to result in cumulative effects across a wider range of biodiversity assets and ecological networks.

6.2.23 It is recognised that the larger strategic development opportunities may provide greater scope to deliver strategic green infrastructure, habitat creation and BNG than smaller and more dispersed growth locations. However, a precautionary approach has been applied at this stage, pending further detail regarding masterplanning, mitigation and enhancement measures.

Climate change adaptation

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	1 -	2 -	=3 -	=3 -	=5 -	=5 -	7 -

6.2.24 New development has the potential to increase the number of people, properties and infrastructure assets exposed to climate-related hazards, particularly flooding. Conversely, development can also provide opportunities to deliver climate resilience measures, including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), green infrastructure and flood mitigation. Consequently, differences between the scenarios are influenced by the extent to which growth is directed towards locations affected by fluvial and surface water flood risk.

6.2.25 A key consideration is that all scenarios include development within the broad locations. Several of these locations contain areas of Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 associated with local watercourses. Surface water flood risk is also present within all broad locations, although in most cases affects relatively small areas. Consequently, all scenarios have the potential to increase exposure to climate-related flood risk to some degree. However, the growth assumptions underpinning the broad locations have been informed by an understanding of environmental constraints, including flood risk and the capacities assumed for these locations do not generally rely on development within the areas of greatest flood risk. Nevertheless, the potential for development to affect, or be affected by, flood risk remains an important consideration.

6.2.26 Of the variable growth locations, flood risk issues within and surrounding Meriden are contained to a few isolated areas. Whilst surface water flood risk is present across parts of the proposed growth areas, this is generally limited in extent. Land to the south contains large areas of very high surface water flood risk associated with an existing pond; however, the majority of the proposed growth locations are not subject to significant fluvial flood risk constraints.

6.2.27 Flood risk constraints are more evident in relation to the proposed SUEs. In particular, the west of Coventry SUE contains a corridor of Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 associated with a local watercourse that passes through the northern part of the site. Surface water flood risk is also present across the SUE locations, although generally only in limited areas. As a result, Scenarios 3, 5, 6 and 7 have greater potential to be affected by flood risk constraints than Scenarios 1 and 2.

6.2.28 Arden Cross is also associated with flood risk considerations. A corridor of Flood Zone 2 and Flood Zone 3 associated with Hollywell Brook passes through the centre of the site. Areas of surface water flood risk are also present. Consequently, Scenarios 4, 5, 6 and 7 have the potential to result in additional development being located in proximity to areas susceptible to flooding.

6.2.29 Climate change may also increase the frequency and severity of extreme weather events over the plan period. Whilst detailed masterplanning, sustainable drainage measures and climate resilience interventions may help to mitigate these effects, such measures cannot be assumed at this stage of the appraisal. Accordingly, a precautionary approach has been applied.

6.2.30 Overall, all scenarios are expected to result in **minor negative effects (-)** in relation to climate change adaptation. Whilst the scale and nature of effects would vary, all scenarios involve development within locations containing areas of fluvial and/or surface water flood risk, resulting in the potential exposure to climate-related hazards. **Scenario 1** performs most favourably as it avoids the additional flood risk considerations associated with the variable growth locations. **Scenario 2** performs slightly less favourably due to the inclusion of growth at Meriden, although flood risk constraints are generally limited. **Scenarios 3 and 4** perform less favourably due to the presence of Flood Zone 3 land associated with the West Coventry SUE and Hollywell Brook at Arden Cross, respectively. **Scenarios 5, 6 and 7** perform least favourably because they combine multiple growth components and therefore have the greatest potential to increase exposure to climate-related flood risk across the borough.

Climate change mitigation

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	1 -	3 -	4 -	2 -	=5 -	=5 -	7 -

6.2.31 Development has the potential to increase greenhouse gas emissions through construction activity, energy consumption and transport movements. Consequently, differences between the scenarios are influenced by both the overall scale and density of development proposed and the extent to which growth is directed towards locations that support sustainable travel patterns and reduce reliance on private vehicle use.

6.2.32 A key strength of all scenarios is the inclusion of development directed towards the identified broad locations. These locations are associated with railway stations and established public transport corridors, providing opportunities for access by rail and bus and supporting more sustainable travel patterns. Growth directed towards these locations is therefore expected to reduce reliance on private vehicles relative to a more dispersed pattern of development.

6.2.33 Additional differences arise through the variable growth locations. Of these, Arden Cross performs most favourably from a climate change mitigation perspective. The site benefits from proximity to Birmingham International Station, Birmingham Airport, the NEC and the future HS2 Interchange Station. Future public transport investment and the concentration of employment opportunities within and around the area are also likely to reduce the need for longer-distance commuting and support lower-carbon travel patterns.

6.2.34 Meriden performs less favourably than Arden Cross from a climate mitigation perspective. Whilst the settlement benefits from local services and reasonable bus connectivity, it does not benefit from direct rail access and therefore provides fewer opportunities to reduce car dependency than the broad locations or Arden Cross.

6.2.35 The proposed SUEs generally perform less favourably in mitigation terms. Whilst the locations are associated with existing settlements and services, they are typically located away from railway stations and are therefore likely to generate a greater proportion of journeys by private vehicle. As a result, scenarios incorporating significant levels of SUE development are expected to perform less favourably than scenarios focused on rail-connected locations.

6.2.36 The overall quantum of development is also relevant. Higher levels of growth are expected to generate greater construction-related emissions

and increase overall energy demand and transport activity. Consequently, scenarios accommodating larger amounts of development generally have greater potential to contribute to greenhouse gas emissions than lower-growth alternatives.

6.2.37 It is recognised that larger strategic development opportunities, particularly Arden Cross, may provide opportunities to incorporate low-carbon infrastructure, active travel networks, renewable energy generation and energy-efficient design measures. However, detailed masterplanning proposals are not available at this stage and a precautionary approach has therefore been applied.

6.2.38 Overall, all scenarios are expected to result in **minor negative effects (-)** in relation to climate change mitigation. Whilst growth at the broad locations and Arden Cross would support more sustainable travel patterns and help reduce reliance on private vehicle travel, all scenarios involve substantial development and therefore have the potential to increase greenhouse gas emissions through construction activity, energy consumption and transport movements. **Scenario 1** performs most favourably due to its lower level of development and strong focus on rail-connected locations. **Scenario 4** also performs relatively well due to the accessibility advantages associated with Arden Cross and its proximity to major employment locations. **Scenarios 2 and 3** perform less favourably as a result of increased reliance on locations that are less accessible by rail, although it is recognised that growth at Meriden through **Option 2** would connect to a high frequency bus network which may help to support a transition from private vehicles (and associated emissions). **Scenarios 5, 6 and 7** perform least favourably because they combine multiple growth components and deliver the highest overall levels of development.

Communities and health

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	6 +/-	=2 +/-	=2 +/-	1 +/-	5 +/-	4 +/-	7 +/-

6.2.39 Supporting healthy and inclusive communities is a key objective of the Local Plan. The extent to which growth can support access to housing, education, healthcare, employment opportunities, community facilities and recreational assets therefore represents an important consideration in the appraisal process.

6.2.40 A key strength of all scenarios is that development is directed towards existing settlements and locations that are generally well connected to services and facilities. The broad locations are associated with existing communities and, in many cases, benefit from good public transport

accessibility. As a result, housing growth at the broad locations is expected to provide residents with reasonable access to employment opportunities, education, healthcare and community services.

6.2.41 The proposed SUEs and growth at Meriden also perform relatively well. Whilst not generally located within walking distance of railway stations, these locations are associated with existing settlements and services and would provide opportunities to support and enhance existing communities. In particular, the west of Coventry SUE benefits from access to the extensive range of services, facilities and employment opportunities available within Coventry. Meriden also benefits from an established range of local services and facilities and high frequency bus network.

6.2.42 Arden Cross differs from the other growth locations as it does not currently function as an established residential community and contains relatively few existing services and facilities. Consequently, future residents would initially be more reliant on travel to access some day-to-day needs. However, the site occupies a strategically important location adjacent to the future HS2 Interchange Station and forms part of the wider UK Central growth area. The scale and strategic importance of the site provide significant opportunities to deliver new community infrastructure, healthcare provision, public open space, affordable housing and specialist housing as part of a comprehensive masterplanned development. Arden Cross is also located within one of the more deprived parts of the borough and therefore has the potential to support wider regeneration and community benefits.

6.2.43 School capacity is an important consideration across the borough and growth under all scenarios would place additional pressure on education infrastructure. Similar pressures may arise in relation to healthcare provision and other community services. However, larger strategic development opportunities such as the proposed SUEs and Arden Cross may provide greater opportunities to secure new education provision, healthcare facilities and other supporting infrastructure. Likewise, larger sites are likely to provide greater opportunities for the delivery of affordable housing, specialist housing and other forms of housing aimed at meeting identified community needs.

6.2.44 Overall, all scenarios are expected to result in **mixed effects (+/-)** in relation to communities and health. Positive effects are expected through the focus on delivering LHN and improving access to employment opportunities, services and facilities. Larger strategic development opportunities, particularly the proposed SUEs and Arden Cross, may also provide opportunities to deliver affordable housing, specialist housing, community facilities, education provision and healthcare infrastructure. However, all scenarios would increase demand for school places, healthcare services and other community infrastructure. Existing capacity constraints are already evident in parts of the borough and additional

growth has the potential to place further pressure on these services unless appropriate mitigation is secured.

6.2.45 **Scenario 4** performs most favourably due to the opportunities associated with Arden Cross to support regeneration and deliver new infrastructure. **Scenarios 2 and 3** perform similarly well, reflecting their relationship with existing communities, services and facilities. **Scenarios 6 and 5** perform less favourably due to the greater infrastructure demands associated with higher levels of growth, although these are partially offset by opportunities for strategic infrastructure delivery. **Scenario 1** performs less favourably due to its reliance on broad locations and the more limited opportunities to secure wider community benefits through large-scale development. **Scenario 7** performs least favourably due to the overall scale of growth proposed and the associated pressure on community infrastructure.

Economy and employment

€ $ £ ¥	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	7 +	6 +	5 +	=2 ++	4 ++	1 ++	=2 ++

6.2.46 Supporting economic growth and access to employment opportunities is a key objective of the Local Plan. The extent to which development is located in areas that provide access to jobs, support labour supply and take advantage of existing and planned infrastructure investment is therefore an important consideration in the appraisal process.

6.2.47 A key strength of all scenarios is the inclusion of development directed towards the identified broad locations. These locations are generally associated with railway stations and established public transport corridors, providing residents with opportunities to access employment by both private and sustainable modes of transport. Consequently, all scenarios are expected to support access to employment opportunities and labour mobility across the borough and wider sub-region.

6.2.48 Differences between the scenarios arise through the extent to which additional growth is accommodated at Arden Cross, the proposed SUEs and Meriden. Of these locations, Arden Cross offers the strongest economic and employment benefits. The site occupies a highly strategic location within the UK Central area and benefits from proximity to Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Birmingham International Station, Jaguar Land Rover, and the future HS2 Interchange Station. Additional housing growth in this location would provide opportunities to support a location with an established employment offer which is set to expand during the plan period (i.e., the NEC), reduce commuting distances and strengthen links between homes and jobs.

6.2.49 The proposed SUE locations also perform relatively well in economic and employment terms. Whilst they do not provide the same degree of direct access to strategic employment opportunities as Arden Cross, they are generally associated with existing settlements and transport corridors. In particular, the SUE located to the west of Coventry is well positioned to provide access to employment opportunities within Coventry and the wider eastern part of the borough.

6.2.50 Meriden performs less favourably from an economic perspective. Whilst the settlement benefits from reasonable accessibility and access to local employment opportunities, it is less closely associated with the borough's principal economic growth locations. Consequently, the employment benefits associated with growth at Meriden are likely to be more limited than those associated with Arden Cross or the proposed SUEs.

6.2.51 Overall, **Scenarios 4, 5, 6 and 7** are expected to result in **major positive effects (++)**. These scenarios direct growth towards Arden Cross and/or the proposed SUEs and are therefore best placed to support labour supply, improve access to strategic employment opportunities and maximise the benefits associated with UK Central, Birmingham Airport, the NEC, Coventry and the future HS2 Interchange Station. **Scenario 6** performs most favourably due to the combination of substantial housing growth and development at both Arden Cross and the proposed SUE locations.

6.2.52 **Scenarios 3, 2 and 1** are expected to result in **minor positive effects (+).** Whilst all would support economic growth through the provision of additional housing in accessible locations, they are less favourably aligned with the borough's principal strategic employment locations and economic growth opportunities. **Scenario 3** performs most favourably of these scenarios due to the employment accessibility advantages associated with the proposed SUEs, particularly the location to the west of Coventry.

Historic environment

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	1 -	=3 -	2 -	=3 -	=5 -	=5 -	=5 -

6.2.53 New development has the potential to affect the significance of heritage assets directly or indirectly through impacts on their setting. Consequently, differences between the scenarios are influenced by the extent to which growth is directed towards locations in proximity to designated and non-designated heritage assets and areas.

6.2.54 A number of heritage assets and areas are located within the broad locations, which feature in all scenarios (see figures in **Appendix C**). The

broad locations have been defined as areas generally falling within approximately 1 km of the relevant railway station and therefore encompass a wide geographic area containing a variety of environmental and heritage constraints. Key considerations include:

- Berkswell and Hampton in Arden Relief Road broad locations: 11 Grade II listed buildings and two Grade II* listed buildings;
- Tile Hill broad location: six Grade II listed buildings.
- Shirley, Whitlocks End, Wythall and Earlswood Stations broad location: eight Grade II listed buildings and one scheduled monument.
- Hampton-in-Arden broad location: 24 listed buildings, including one Grade I and one Grade II* listed building; two scheduled monuments; and one conservation area;
- Dorridge broad location: two Grade II listed buildings, two conservation areas and one locally listed building.
- Widney Manor broad location: two Grade II* listed buildings and four Grade II listed buildings.

6.2.55 Whilst proximity does not necessarily indicate adverse effects, it highlights the potential for impacts on the setting and significance of heritage assets that would require careful consideration through subsequent plan-making and project-level assessment.

6.2.56 It is also important to recognise that the growth assumptions underpinning the broad locations have been informed by an understanding of environmental and heritage constraints. Consequently, the levels of growth proposed for these locations do not generally rely on development directly affecting designated heritage assets, although the potential for indirect effects on setting remains relevant.

6.2.57 Of the variable growth locations, the proposed SUEs appear to be comparatively less constrained from a heritage perspective. The principal consideration relates to the Knowle North SUE, which lies within approximately 100 m of a Grade II listed building. Whilst this creates potential for effects on setting, opportunities are likely to exist for layout, design and landscaping measures to avoid or reduce impacts. Consequently, heritage risks associated with Scenario 3 are likely to be comparatively limited.

6.2.58 Heritage constraints are more evident in relation to Meriden. The potential sites are located in proximity to a number of heritage assets, including several Grade II listed buildings and locally listed buildings within approximately 250 m of the development areas. One Grade II* listed building lies adjacent to a proposed development area, whilst a conservation area is also located within approximately 250 m.

Consequently, growth at Meriden has greater potential to affect the setting of designated and non-designated heritage assets.

6.2.59 Arden Cross is also associated with heritage constraints. The site contains a Grade II* listed building on its eastern boundary. Whilst there is potential for development to avoid direct effects on the asset itself within the site, there remains the possibility of impacts on its setting arising from large-scale development in the surrounding area. These considerations are therefore relevant to Scenario 4 to 7.

6.2.60 Overall, all scenarios are expected to result in **minor negative effects (-)** in relation to heritage. Whilst the scale and nature of effects would vary, all scenarios involve development in locations containing, or in proximity to, designated heritage assets and areas. **Scenario 1** performs most favourably as it avoids the additional heritage risks associated with the variable growth locations. **Scenario 3** performs next best due to the relatively limited heritage constraints associated with the proposed SUEs. **Scenarios 2 and 4** perform less favourably due to the concentration of heritage assets in and around Meriden and Arden Cross respectively. **Scenarios 5, 6 and 7** perform least favourably because they combine multiple growth components and therefore have the greatest potential to result in cumulative effects on the setting of heritage assets across the borough.

Housing

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	7 ++	6 ++	=2 ++	5 ++	=2 ++	=2 ++	1 ++

6.2.61 Housing delivery is a central objective of the Local Plan. The extent to which the scenarios provide sufficient housing to meet identified needs, support affordable housing provision and maintain flexibility in land supply therefore represents an important consideration in the appraisal process.

6.2.62 All scenarios would deliver substantial amounts of housing which aim to meet or slightly exceed (i.e., provide a 'buffer') to LHN. Each scenario builds upon a common baseline supply comprising commitments, existing allocations, windfalls and development directed towards the identified broad locations.

6.2.63 The constant elements of the scenarios account for approximately 65% of total growth during the plan period, with the identified site allocations assumed to be deliverable within the first five years. Whilst growth within the broad locations is supported during the plan period across all scenarios, it is acknowledged that land availability within the broad locations is not fully

established, and delivering the levels of growth proposed may require additional land where availability is currently uncertain. On this basis, the broad locations are expected to deliver the majority of growth from years 6-17 of the plan period, recognising that these locations may also form part of the longer-term direction of growth for Solihull within the emerging West Midlands SDS (due to their proximity to rail stations and the NPPF direction on unlocking growth in sustainable locations).

6.2.64 The larger strategic development opportunities considered through the scenarios may provide greater opportunities for affordable housing delivery and a broader mix of housing types, sizes and tenures. In particular, the proposed SUEs and Arden Cross are likely to be capable of supporting comprehensive masterplanning approaches, strategic infrastructure provision and substantial affordable housing contributions. Such sites may also be better placed to accommodate specialist housing needs and respond to changing housing requirements over the plan period.

6.2.65 Higher levels of housing delivery may also provide greater flexibility within the housing land supply and increase resilience to changes in site capacity, delivery rates and future housing needs. Consequently, scenarios that provide a larger supply buffer above LHN are generally expected to perform more favourably than scenarios that provide a lower level of flexibility.

6.2.66 Overall, all scenarios are expected to result in **major positive effects (++)** in relation to housing. The focus on meeting (and slightly exceeding) LHN across the scenarios is a key objective for the Local Plan, as firmed up during the initial 'Issues and Options' stage of plan making (January 2026). **Scenario 7** performs most favourably due to the scale of housing delivery achieved and the inclusion of all major growth variables. **Scenario 6** also performs strongly, reflecting its high level of housing delivery and significant contribution from strategic development opportunities, especially the higher allocation at Arden Cross. **Scenarios 3 and 5** perform similarly well. Whilst Scenario 3 delivers a slightly greater number of homes, Scenario 5 includes additional growth at Arden Cross; therefore, both scenarios incorporate larger strategic sites capable of supporting affordable housing delivery, specialist housing provision and comprehensive masterplanning approaches. **Scenarios 2 and 4** perform positively, but less favourably overall. Of these two, Scenario 4 performs slightly better, benefitting from the inclusion of Arden Cross.

6.2.67 **Scenario 1** performs least favourably due to delivering the lowest overall housing supply. Additionally, there are potential deliverability issues with **Scenario 1** given the reliance on broad locations which are likely to unlock growth in the latter half of the plan period. This may provide an element of uncertainty over housing supply during the initial years of the plan period.

Landscape

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	1 -	3 -	4 --	2 -	6 --	5 --	7 --

6.2.68 New development has the potential to alter landscape character, change the perception of openness and result in the loss of undeveloped land. Consequently, differences between the scenarios are influenced by the extent to which growth is directed towards locations that contribute to landscape character and Green Belt purposes.

6.2.69 Solihull does not contain any nationally designated landscapes. Nevertheless, much of the borough lies within the West Midlands Green Belt and is characterised by a predominantly rural landscape. Landscape and Green Belt considerations are therefore closely related in the context of the appraisal.

6.2.70 A key consideration is that all scenarios include development within the identified broad locations. Parts of the broad locations have been identified as requiring the release of Green Belt land identified as potential Grey Belt through the Solihull Green Belt Assessment (2026) (GBA). However, the growth assumptions underpinning the broad locations have been informed by environmental constraints and Green Belt evidence, generally avoiding areas of 'strong' contribution to the Green Belt.

6.2.71 Additional landscape effects arise through the variable growth locations. Development at Meriden would result in the expansion of a settlement into currently undeveloped countryside, giving rise to localised changes in landscape character and settlement form. Arden Cross would also result in landscape effects; however, the site is located within an area already influenced by major transport and commercial infrastructure, including Birmingham Airport, the NEC, the M42 and the future HS2 Interchange Station. Additionally, the Green Belt land at this site is generally assessed as making a weak contribution to Green Belt purposes.

6.2.72 Greater landscape effects are associated with the proposed SUEs. Development at West of Coventry, North Knowle and Catherine-de-Barnes would result in the loss of areas of currently undeveloped Green Belt land and extend development into locations that are presently rural in character. In particular, growth at Catherine-de-Barnes would need to be considered in combination with development proposed at Land East of Solihull, which forms a constant component of all scenarios. Together, these developments would extend built development into a substantial proportion of the existing gap between Solihull and Catherine-de-Barnes, increasing

the potential for major adverse effects on openness, landscape character and the perceived separation between settlements.

6.2.73 Scenarios that combine multiple growth components are associated with an increased potential for cumulative landscape effects, as development would be distributed across a larger number of locations and affect a greater extent of Green Belt land and open countryside.

6.2.74 Overall, all scenarios are expected to result in adverse effects in relation to landscape. **Minor negative effects (-)** are anticipated for **Scenarios 1, 2 and 4**. **Scenario 1** performs most favourably as it focuses growth within the broad locations and avoids the additional landscape effects associated with the variable growth locations. **Scenario 4** performs slightly less favourably due to the inclusion of growth at Arden Cross, although the significance of effects is moderated by the site's strategic context and the surrounding pattern of development and infrastructure. **Scenario 2** performs slightly less favourably than **Scenario 4** due to the landscape effects associated with growth at Meriden and the expansion of a rural settlement into open countryside.

6.2.75 **Major negative effects (--)** are anticipated for **Scenario 3, 5, 6 and 7**. This reflects the inclusion of the proposed SUEs, which are associated with substantial areas of Green Belt release and more extensive changes to landscape character, especially the Catherine-de-Barnes SUE. **Scenarios 5, 6 and 7** perform least favourably as they combine the SUEs with additional growth components, increasing the extent of landscape change across the borough. **Scenario 7** performs least favourably overall due to the scale of development proposed and the resulting cumulative landscape effects.

Soils and natural resources

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	1 --	2 --	4 --	3 --	5 --	6 --	7 --

6.2.76 Development has the potential to result in the permanent loss of agricultural land, sterilisation of mineral resources and increased pressure on finite natural resources. Additional growth may also increase waste generation and demand for water and other environmental resources. Consequently, differences between the scenarios are influenced by the extent to which growth is directed towards locations containing higher-quality agricultural land, safeguarded mineral resources and other resource-related constraints.

6.2.77 A number of resource constraints are associated with the broad locations, which feature in all scenarios. In particular, predictive Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) mapping from 2026 indicates the presence of a range of agricultural land grades, including areas of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land. Consequently, all scenarios have the potential to result in the loss of agricultural land resources. In addition, a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA) is present within the Hampton-in-Arden broad location, and several broad locations contain Historic Landfill Sites (HLS), including land around Widney Manor.

6.2.78 Of the variable growth locations, Meriden is associated with relatively limited agricultural land impacts compared to some alternatives. Whilst a small area of Grade 1 agricultural land is present in the south-western part of the proposed growth area, the majority comprises Grade 3b agricultural land. An MSA is also located adjacent to one of the proposed development sites.

6.2.79 Greater resource-related effects are associated with the proposed SUEs:

- West of Coventry SUE:

– predominantly Grade 3a agricultural land;
– smaller areas of Grade 1 and Grade 3b agricultural land present;
– potential loss of the Veolia Berkswell Wood strategic waste management facility.

- North Knowle SUE:

– largely urban in character;
– located adjacent to the Jacobean Lane Historic Landfill Site.

- Catherine-de-Barnes SUE:

– predominantly Grade 1 and Grade 3a agricultural land;
– smaller areas of Grade 2 agricultural land present.

6.2.80 Consequently, Scenario 3, together with Scenarios 5, 6 and 7, has greater potential to affect agricultural land resources and waste management infrastructure.

6.2.81 Arden Cross is also associated with notable resource constraints. ALC mapping indicates that much of the site is located on Grade 1 agricultural land, with smaller areas of Grade 3a land present in the south-west. The site contains the Middle Bickenhill Lane HLS and is located adjacent to another HLS.

6.2.82 All scenarios would also result in increased waste generation and demand for natural resources, including water. Scenarios accommodating higher levels of growth are likely to result in greater overall resource consumption and waste arisings than lower-growth alternatives.

6.2.83 Overall, all scenarios are expected to result in **major negative effects (--)** in relation to soils and natural resources, resulting from substantial greenfield development with the potential to result in the loss of BMV agricultural land (including Grade 1) and increased pressure on finite natural resources. **Scenario 1** performs most favourably as it avoids the additional resource impacts associated with the variable growth locations. **Scenario 2** performs slightly less favourably due to the inclusion of growth at Meriden, although much of the additional development is focused on land classified as Grade 3b agricultural land. **Scenario 4** performs less favourably than Scenarios 1 and 2 due to the inclusion of Arden Cross, where development would affect additional Grade 1 agricultural land and land associated with HLS. **Scenarios 3, 5, 6 and 7** perform least favourably as they include the proposed SUEs, which are associated with extensive areas of BMV agricultural land and the potential loss of a strategic waste management facility.

Transport

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	=1 ++	3 +	4 +	=1 ++	=5 +	=5 +	=5 +

6.2.84 National policy seeks to promote sustainable transport patterns and maximise opportunities for travel by public transport, walking and cycling. Consequently, differences between the scenarios are largely influenced by the extent to which growth is directed towards locations with access to rail services, bus routes and active travel infrastructure.

6.2.85 A key strength of all scenarios is the inclusion of development directed towards the identified broad locations. These locations are focused around railway stations and established public transport corridors and therefore provide opportunities to access employment, services and facilities by rail, bus, walking and cycling. As a result, all scenarios are expected to perform positively in transport terms.

6.2.86 The strongest-performing scenarios are those that maximise growth around the railway station-based broad locations and highly connected transport hubs. Scenario 1 focuses exclusively on growth at the broad locations and therefore maximises the proportion of development located within walking distance of rail services. Scenario 4 similarly focuses growth on the broad locations but also incorporates additional development at Arden Cross. Whilst the site is currently constrained by major roads and motorways, it benefits from proximity to Birmingham International Station and the future HS2 Interchange Station and is expected to benefit from significant public transport improvements over the plan period, including enhanced connections associated with UK Central.

6.2.87 Accessibility to sustainable transport modes declines where growth is directed towards Meriden and the proposed SUEs. Meriden benefits from relatively frequent bus services but does not benefit from direct rail access. The proposed SUEs generally perform less favourably in transport terms. Whilst all benefit from bus services and active travel opportunities, none are within convenient walking distance of a railway station. The West Coventry SUE benefits from proximity to Local Cycle Route 13, the North Knowle SUE adjoins a cycle route towards Solihull and the Catherine-de-Barnes SUE benefits from cycle connections associated with the Grand Union Canal. This indicates reasonable accessibility, although generally weaker than the rail-based broad locations.

6.2.88 Scenarios 5, 6 and 7 combine growth across a wider range of locations, including Meriden, the proposed SUEs and Arden Cross. Whilst all continue to direct significant development towards accessible locations, they rely less heavily on rail-based growth than Scenarios 1 and 4 and therefore perform less favourably overall.

6.2.89 Overall, **Scenarios 1 and 4** are expected to perform most favourably and are judged to result in **major positive effects (++)**. **Scenario 1** maximises growth at locations within walking distance of railway stations, whilst **Scenario 4** combines this approach with additional growth at Arden Cross, which is expected to become one of the borough's most significant public transport hubs. **Scenario 2** is expected to result in a **minor positive effect (+)**, reflecting the relatively good bus accessibility of Meriden. **Scenario 3** is also expected to result in a **minor positive effect (+)**, benefiting from reasonable bus connectivity and active travel opportunities but lacking direct rail access. **Scenarios 5, 6 and 7** are likewise expected to result in **minor positive effects (+)**. Whilst these scenarios continue to direct substantial proportions of growth towards sustainable transport locations, their greater reliance on Meriden and the proposed SUEs means that they perform less favourably than the scenarios focused primarily on rail-connected locations.

Water

	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
	1 -	2 -	=3 -	=3 -	=5 -	=5 -	7 -

6.2.90 Development has the potential to increase demand for water resources, affect the quality of surface and groundwater resources, and alter natural drainage patterns. Consequently, differences between the scenarios are influenced by the proximity of growth locations to watercourses and water bodies, together with the overall scale of development proposed.

6.2.91 A key consideration is that the entirety of the borough lies within a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) and an area identified as being under water stress. Consequently, all scenarios have the potential to increase pressure on water resources and wastewater infrastructure through the delivery of additional homes and associated population growth.

6.2.92 Several water environment constraints are associated with the broad locations, which feature in all scenarios. In particular:

- The River Blythe passes through parts of the Hampton-in-Arden and Widney Manor broad locations;
- The River Cole corridor passes through the Shirley / Whitlocks End broad location; and
- The North Stratford Canal passes through the Whitlocks End broad location.

6.2.93 A number of broad locations also contain ordinary watercourses, ponds and other water bodies.

6.2.94 It is worth noting that the growth assumptions underpinning the broad locations have been informed by an understanding of environmental constraints, including those related to the water environment. Consequently, the levels of growth proposed for these locations do not generally rely upon development within the most constrained areas and do not assume direct impacts on the most sensitive water environment assets.

6.2.95 Of the variable growth locations, Meriden is associated with a number of ordinary watercourses and drainage ditches. In addition, one of the proposed growth areas to the south contains a water body. Whilst these features may present constraints to development, they may also provide opportunities for sustainable drainage and water management measures.

6.2.96 Water-related constraints are more evident in relation to the proposed SUEs:

- The West Coventry SUE is located adjacent to, and may partially contain, a tributary of the River Sherbourne.
- The North Knowle SUE lies within approximately 50 m of the Grand Union Canal.
- The Catherine-de-Barnes SUE lies within approximately 100 m of the Grand Union Canal.

6.2.97 Consequently, Scenarios 3, 5, 6 and 7 have greater potential to affect watercourses and water-related infrastructure, particularly due to the watercourse running through the West Coventry SUE.

6.2.98 Arden Cross is also associated with water environment constraints. In particular, Hollywell Brook, a tributary of the River Blythe, passes through the site. Development therefore has the potential to affect water quality, hydrology and drainage patterns if not carefully designed and managed. These considerations are relevant to Scenario 4 and those scenarios incorporating additional growth at Arden Cross.

6.2.99 The overall quantum of development is also relevant. Higher levels of growth are expected to increase demand for water resources and wastewater treatment infrastructure. Consequently, scenarios accommodating larger amounts of development generally have greater potential to increase pressure on the water environment than lower-growth alternatives.

6.2.100 Overall, all scenarios are expected to result in **minor negative effects (-)** in relation to water. All scenarios would increase pressure on water resources within a borough that is already identified as being under water stress and entirely located within a NVZ. **Scenario 1** performs most favourably as it avoids the additional water environment constraints associated with the variable growth locations. **Scenario 2** performs slightly less favourably due to the presence of ordinary watercourses and water bodies within the Meriden growth areas. **Scenarios 3 and 4** perform less favourably due to their relationship with watercourses associated with the West Coventry SUE and Hollywell Brook at Arden Cross respectively. **Scenarios 5, 6 and 7** perform least favourably because they combine multiple growth components and therefore have the greatest potential to increase pressure on water resources and affect a wider range of water environment assets.

6.3. Summary of appraisal findings

6.3.1 The appraisal identifies positive and negative effects across all of the reasonable alternative growth scenarios. Whilst differences in performance are evident between the options, all scenarios would deliver substantial levels of housing growth and support economic development over the plan period. The principal distinctions between the scenarios relate to the extent to which growth is focused on rail-connected broad locations, strategic growth opportunities at Arden Cross, growth at Meriden, and the proposed SUEs.

6.3.2 Scenarios incorporating additional growth at Arden Cross generally perform more favourably in relation to accessibility, transport, economy and employment, and communities and health, reflecting the site's strategic location within the UK Central growth area and its proximity to major transport and employment opportunities. By contrast, scenarios including the proposed SUEs tend to perform less favourably in relation to landscape and soils and natural resources due to their association with Green Belt release, the loss of agricultural land and wider landscape effects.

6.3.3 All scenarios result in adverse effects to some degree in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity, climate change adaptation, climate change mitigation, historic environment, landscape, soils and natural resources, and water. These effects principally reflect the scale of growth proposed, the reliance on greenfield development and the presence of environmental constraints across parts of the borough. However, the significance of these effects varies between the scenarios according to the location and scale of development.

6.3.4 No single scenario performs most favourably across all sustainability topics. Rather, each option presents different sustainability benefits and trade-offs that require balancing through the plan-making process. The appraisal findings for each sustainability topic are brought together in **Table 6-1**, which summarises the relative performance of the reasonable alternative growth scenarios across the 13 SA themes.

Table 6-1: Reasonable growth scenarios appraisal summary (rank and significance scoring)

Topic	1: Broad location focus	2: Broad locations + Meriden	3: Broad locations + SUEs	4: Broad locations + Arden Cross	5: Less focus at broad locations (75%)	6: Less focus at broad locations (50%)	7: Maximum growth
Accessibility	=1 ++	3 +	4 +	=1 ++	=5 +	=5 +	=5 +
Air quality and noise	1 -	3 -	4 -	2 -	=5 -	=5 -	7 -
Biodiversity and geodiversity	1 -	2 -	=3 -	=3 -	=5 -	=5 -	=5 -
Climate change adaptation	1 -	2 -	=3 -	=3 -	=5 -	=5 -	7 -
Climate change mitigation	1 -	3 -	4 -	2 -	=5 -	=5 -	7 -
Communities and health	6 +/-	=2 +/-	=2 +/-	1 +/-	5 +/-	4 +/-	7 +/-
Economy and employment	7 +	6 +	5 +	=2 ++	4 ++	1 ++	=2 ++
Historic environment	1 -	=3 -	2 -	=3 -	=5 -	=5 -	=5 -
Housing	7 ++	6 ++	=2 ++	5 ++	=2 ++	=2 ++	1 ++
Landscape	1 -	3 -	4 --	2 -	6 --	5 --	7 --
Soils and natural resources	1 --	2 --	4 --	3 --	5 --	6 --	7 --
Transport	=1 ++	3 +	4 +	=1 ++	=5 +	=5 +	=5 +
Water	1 -	2 -	=3 -	=3 -	=5 -	=5 -	7 -

See section 6.1 for table legend

7. The preferred approach

7.1.1 In the context of the above, and informed by the findings of the reasonable alternatives appraisal and wider evidence base accompanying the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan, the Council's preferred spatial strategy is based principally on **Scenario 1** and is set out as follows:

"The 2020 Plan was based on a spatial strategy that sought to accommodate development needs close to where they arise. As around 75% of the Borough's population live within the urban area, it was appropriate to (at least initially) follow options that made more efficient use of land in this area.

"However, it was acknowledged that there was extremely limited land available that could fulfil this approach, and therefore it was necessary to look elsewhere, including Green Belt options as follows:

- *The UK Central Hub Area and HS2;*
- *Limited expansion of rural villages/settlements; and*
- *New settlements, large-scale urban extensions or significant expansion of rural villages/settlements.*

"With the exception of a new settlement, a combination of the above options was included as the basis for the spatial strategy. It was noted that this approach would strike a balance between concentrating development in a relatively small number of locations and dispersing development across a greater number of locations: a "balanced dispersal" approach.

"The publication of the new NPPF and National Development Management Policies (NDMPs) in August 2026, following consultation commencing in December 2025, has some effect on this overall approach, most notably through the introduction of national policy promoting growth around railway stations. The location of the majority of stations within the Borough (and in close proximity to neighbouring authorities) means that directing growth towards these areas remains broadly aligned with the spatial strategy. Accordingly, the approach continues to provide an appropriate basis for accommodating development needs through the Plan period.

"The strategy also seeks to focus significant development in locations that are, or can be made, accessible and sustainable. These locations will typically be situated on the edge of the urban area or within rural settlements that provide a greater range of services. This is achieved by focusing development on locations that are:

- *Adjacent to the urban area or a highly accessible settlement; or*

- *Adjacent to a settlement that, whilst potentially less accessible, provides a wide range of local services (e.g. towns); or*
- *A proportionate extension to an existing settlement that has a more limited range of services (e.g. larger villages); or*
- *Unless captured by the categories above, located in close proximity to a suitable railway station that is, or can be made, accessible to necessary services.*

7.1.2 *"This approach offers a number of advantages:*

- *It supports the UK Central masterplan and HS2 growth strategy, together with the investment priorities contained within Solihull Connected;*
- *Focusing growth on urban areas and sustainable urban extensions provides the greatest opportunity to improve accessibility and deliver public transport enhancements;*
- *Larger-scale developments can support the delivery of significant infrastructure improvements;*
- *Smaller sites can assist with early housing delivery and support existing services and facilities; and*
- *A wholly dispersed pattern of growth would be less likely to deliver the scale of growth required and more likely to result in piecemeal development affecting a wider area.*

"Accordingly, the strategy discourages development that:

- *Is isolated from existing settlements;*
- *Represents a disproportionate addition to a settlement with only a limited range of services and facilities; or*
- *Occurs in relatively inaccessible locations.*

"Focusing development in existing sustainable locations, and/or locations that can be made sustainable through the delivery of supporting infrastructure, enables an "infrastructure first" approach to be pursued…"

Part 2: What are the appraisal findings at this stage?

8. Introduction to the appraisal

8.1. Appraisal methodology

8.1.1 **Part 2** of this SA Report presents an appraisal of the draft Plan against the SA Framework, with the findings presented under each of the SA topics.

8.1.2 The appraisal in **Part 2** has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations, assessing the likely significant effects of the Plan.

8.2. Policies included in the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan

8.2.1 **Table 8-1** below presents the policies in the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan. In the following appraisal chapter these policies will be referred to by their reference.

Table 8-1: Policies in the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan

Reference	Policy name
	Spatial Strategy
SMBC/SS1	Solihull Settlement Hierarchy
SMBC/SS2	Protection of Vulnerable Gaps
	Delivering a Sufficient Supply of Homes
SMBC/HO1	Provision of Land for Housing
SMBC/HO2	Broad Locations
SMBC/HO3	Affordable Housing
SMBC/HO4	Self and Custom House Building
SMBC/HO5	Housing for Older and Disabled People
SMBC/HO6	Housing Mix - Market Housing
SMBC/HO7	Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)
SMBC/HO8	Residential Accommodation for Looked after Children
SMBC/HO9	Provision of Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers
SMBC/HO10	Safeguarding Gypsy and Traveller Sites
	Building a Strong Effective Economy
SMBC/E1	UK Central Solihull Hub Area
SMBC/E2	Arden Cross

Reference	Policy name
SMBC/E3	National Exhibition Centre (NEC)
SMBC/E4	Birmingham Airport
SMBC/E5	Jaguar Land Rover (JLR)
SMBC/E6	Birmingham Business Park
SMBC/E7	Provision of Land for Employment
	Protecting Green Belt Land
SMBC/GB1	Green Belt Boundaries
SMBC/GB2	Limited Infilling in Villages Lying in the Green Belt
SMBC/GB3	Insetting Settlements from the Green Belt
	Promoting Sustainable Travel
SMBC/TM1	Rapid Transit
	Promoting Healthy Communities
SMBC/HC1	Health and Wellbeing
SMBC/HC2	Health Impact Assessments
	Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment
SMBC/N1	Local Wildlife Sites
	Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment
SMBC/HE1	Assessing Effects on Heritage Assets
	Waste Management
SMBC/WM1	Waste Management Facilities
	Delivery
SMBC/D1	Comprehensive Master Planning for Strategic and Major Development
SMBC/D2	Infrastructure Provision and Developer Contributions
	Balsall Common
SMBC/BC3	Windmill Lane/Kenilworth Road
SMBC/BC5	Trevallion Stud
SMBC/BC6	Lavender Hall Farm
SMBC/BC7	Hallmeadow Road/Riddings Hill
	Blythe
SMBC/BL1	West of Dickens Heath
SMBC/BL3	Whitlock's End Farm

Reference	Policy name
	Hampton in Arden
SMBC/HA1	Meriden Road, Hampton-in-Arden
	Knowle, Dorridge & Bentley Heath
SMBC/KN1A	Land North of Hampton Road, Knowle
SMBC/KN1B	Land South of Hampton Road, Knowle
SMBC/KN2	Safeguarding Land for Arden Academy
	Solihull Town Centre & Mature Suburbs
SMBC/SO1	East of Solihull
SMBC/SO2	Moat Lane Depot
	UK Central Solihull
SMBC/UK1	Arden Cross and HS2 Interchange
SMBC/UK2	Damson Parkway

9. Appraising the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan

9.1. Introduction

9.1.1 The appraisal is presented below as a series of narrative discussions under the SA framework. Each appraisal narrative begins by recapping the conclusion reached in respect of the preferred approach (**Scenario 1**), as per **Section 6**, before going on to consider specific policies presented within the plan. An overall conclusion is then reached on the likely significant effects of the plan under each SA topic.

9.2. Appraisal

Accessibility

	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Major positive (++)	**Major positive (++)**

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.1 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have major positive effects by maximising growth at the broad locations associated with railway stations and established public transport corridors, facilitating access to established local services, facilities, and amenities. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.2 The positive effects identified through the appraisal of Scenario 1 are reinforced by the policy framework of the draft Local Plan. Policy **SMBC/SS1** establishes a settlement hierarchy that directs growth towards the borough's most sustainable and accessible locations (i.e., those with the greatest variety of local services, facilities, and amenities), whilst Policy **SMBC/HO2** focuses planned growth within broad locations associated with railway stations and sustainable transport corridors. The broad locations identified through the draft Local Plan are situated adjacent to the borough's larger settlements and growth at these locations can capitalise on the use of established public transport networks and local services and facilities. This includes locations around Berkswell, Dorridge, Hampton-in-Arden, Widney Manor, Tile Hill and Whitlocks End/Earlswood, all of which benefit from proximity to railway stations and established public transport corridors. As a result, the spatial strategy is expected to maximise opportunities for residents to access employment, services and facilities by sustainable modes of transport.

9.2.3 The Plan's housing allocations are also generally focused on locations that benefit from access to existing services, facilities and public transport:

- The Balsall Common allocations (**Policies SMBC/BC3, BC5 and BC6**) are located within an established settlement served by Berkswell railway station and are supported by policy requirements to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity to the station, local centre and healthcare facilities.
- The Dickens Heath and Whitlocks End allocations (**Policies SMBC/BL1 and BL3**) benefit from proximity to Whitlocks End railway station and include measures to enhance active travel and public transport accessibility.
- The Hampton-in-Arden allocation (**Policy SMBC/HA1**) is located close to Hampton-in-Arden railway station and includes requirements to improve walking and cycling connections to the station, village services and healthcare facilities.
- The Arden Cross allocation (**Policy SMBC/UK1**) occupies one of the most accessible locations in the borough, being adjacent to Birmingham International Station and the future HS2 Interchange Station. The allocation also includes requirements to improve accessibility and create a highly connected mixed-use development focused around a major transport hub.
- The Knowle allocations (**Policies SMBC/KN1A and KN1B**) are not located within immediate walking distance of a railway station but benefit from access to existing bus services and the wide range of services and facilities available within the settlement. Similarly, the Solihull allocations (**Policies SMBC/SO1 and SO2**) benefit from their proximity to Solihull Town Centre and the wider urban area, with policy requirements seeking improvements to pedestrian, cycle and public transport connectivity.

9.2.4 Collectively, the allocations are expected to support sustainable travel patterns by directing growth towards locations that can either utilise existing services and facilities or be connected to them through targeted accessibility improvements.

9.2.5 The strategic employment and transport policies further strengthen the accessibility performance of the draft Local Plan. **Policies SMBC/E1** and **SMBC/E2** promote development within the UK Central Hub Area and Arden Cross, enabling growth to take advantage of Birmingham International Station, the future HS2 Interchange Station and associated transport investment. In addition, **Policies SMBC/E3 to SMBC/E7** focus employment growth within existing strategic employment locations, including the NEC, Birmingham Airport, Jaguar Land Rover and Birmingham Business Park, all of which benefit from good connectivity to

the strategic road network and public transport infrastructure. Locating future employment growth within these established and accessible locations is expected to improve opportunities for residents to access jobs by sustainable modes of transport.

Broader local plan effects related to accessibility

9.2.6 Policy **SMBC/TM1** supports the delivery of rapid transit infrastructure and seeks to maximise connectivity to Metro and Sprint corridors, whilst Policies **SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** require development to be planned comprehensively and supported by necessary infrastructure.

9.2.7 Policy **SMBC/HC1** promotes access to employment, education, healthcare, open space and community facilities, whilst **Policies SMBC/HO3, SMBC/HO4, SMBC/HO5, SMBC/HO8 and SMBC/HO9** require affordable housing, specialist accommodation, children's residential accommodation and Gypsy and Traveller sites to be located in accessible locations with reasonable access to services, facilities and public transport. Collectively, these policies help ensure that the benefits of the spatial strategy are available to a broad range of residents.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.8 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in **major positive effects (++)** in relation to accessibility. The preferred strategy performs strongly due to its focus on growth around higher-order settlements, public transport corridors and railway stations. These benefits are reinforced by policies supporting rapid transit, strategic growth at UK Central and Arden Cross, the concentration of employment development within accessible strategic employment locations, infrastructure delivery and improved walking, cycling and public transport connectivity.

Air quality and noise

	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Minor negative (-)	**Neutral (0)**

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.9 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have minor negative effects due to an increase in traffic movements and the number of people exposed to existing sources of transport-related noise. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.10 Policy **SMBC/SS1** establishes a settlement hierarchy that directs growth towards the borough's most sustainable and accessible locations, whilst

Policy **SMBC/HO2** focuses planned growth within broad locations associated with railway stations and sustainable transport corridors. The broad locations identified through the draft Local Plan are generally situated adjacent to the borough's larger settlements and are capable of taking advantage of existing rail services, bus networks and local facilities. As a result, the spatial strategy is expected to reduce reliance on private vehicle travel relative to a more dispersed pattern of growth.

9.2.11 The draft Local Plan's housing allocations are also generally focused on locations that benefit from access to existing services, facilities and public transport. The Balsall Common allocations **(Policies SMBC/BC3, BC5 and BC6**) are supported by measures to improve pedestrian and cycle links to Berkswell railway station, whilst the Dickens Heath and Whitlocks End allocations (**Policies SMBC/BL1 and BL3**) include requirements to strengthen sustainable access to railway stations, local centres and healthcare facilities. The Hampton-in-Arden allocation (**Policy SMBC/HA1**) includes measures to improve walking and cycling connections to Hampton-in-Arden railway station, village services and healthcare facilities. The Knowle allocations (**Policies SMBC/KN1A and KN1B**) and Solihull allocations (**Policies SMBC/SO1 and SO2**) similarly promote improved walking, cycling and public transport connections. The Arden Cross allocation (**Policy SMBC/UK1**) occupies one of the most accessible locations in the borough and is centred around Birmingham International Station and the future HS2 Interchange Station. Collectively, these measures are expected to support more sustainable travel behaviour and help limit transport-related air quality and noise impacts.

9.2.12 The strategic employment policies further strengthen the performance of the draft Local Plan. **Policies SMBC/E1** and **SMBC/E2** concentrate significant growth within the UK Central Hub Area and Arden Cross, whilst **Policies SMBC/E3 to SMBC/E7** focus employment development within accessible strategic employment locations including the NEC, Birmingham Airport, Birmingham Business Park and Jaguar Land Rover. Locating employment growth within these established centres is expected to reduce the need for longer-distance commuting and support sustainable travel patterns.

Broader local plan effects related to air quality and noise

9.2.13 Several draft Local Plan policies are expected to help avoid or mitigate adverse air quality and noise effects. **Policy SMBC/TM1** supports the delivery of Rapid Transit infrastructure and improved connectivity to Metro and Sprint corridors, helping to reduce reliance on private vehicle travel and associated emissions. **Policies SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** require development to be comprehensively planned and supported by appropriate infrastructure, enabling transport, environmental and community impacts to be addressed in a coordinated manner. **Policy SMBC/HC1** specifically requires development to maintain safe and appropriate levels of air quality

and avoid or mitigate adverse effects arising from noise and other environmental factors affecting health and wellbeing. In addition, **Policy SMBC/WM1** requires waste management facilities to demonstrate that unacceptable impacts arising from noise, vibration, dust, odour, traffic and other emissions can be avoided or appropriately mitigated. Collectively, and alongside the broader focus on delivering environmental improvements within the Local Plan, these policies provide a clear framework for addressing the principal causes of air quality and noise impacts identified through the appraisal.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.14 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in a **neutral effect (0)** in relation to air quality and noise. Whilst growth will inevitably increase population levels and has the potential to generate additional traffic movements and increase exposure to existing sources of transport-related noise, these effects are moderated by the spatial strategy's focus on accessible locations and the package of mitigation measures contained within the policies. These include policies supporting rapid transit, infrastructure delivery, and support for healthy communities.

Biodiversity and geodiversity

	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Minor negative (-)	**Mixed (+/-)**

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.15 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have minor negative effects due to substantial greenfield development with the potential to affect habitats, ecological networks and designated biodiversity assets. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.16 The draft Local Plan's spatial strategy continues to direct a significant proportion of development towards greenfield locations. As identified through the reasonable alternatives appraisal, this has the potential to result in the loss and fragmentation of habitats, impacts on ecological connectivity and increased recreational pressure on designated biodiversity assets. However, **Policy SMBC/HO2** requires development within broad locations to avoid, mitigate or compensate for adverse environmental impacts and to be brought forward in a coordinated manner. This provides a mechanism through which biodiversity considerations can inform the identification of development sites within the broad locations as more detailed proposals emerge.

9.2.17 Several housing allocations are located within, or in close proximity to, biodiversity assets and habitats of ecological value. The extent to which these constraints are addressed through the allocation policies varies:

- **Policy SMBC/BC3 (Windmill Lane/Kenilworth Road)** lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ), although the proposed development type does not trigger consultation with Natural England. The policy includes measures to retain trees and hedgerows and enhance green infrastructure connections through the site.
- **Policy SMBC/BC5 (Trevallion Stud)** lies within a SSSI IRZ where consultation with Natural England is required. The site is located within approximately 250 m of Lavender Hall Park LNR and is adjacent to priority woodland habitat. Whilst the policy requires the retention of trees and hedgerows, it does not include specific provisions relating to the adjacent biodiversity assets.
- **Policy SMBC/BC6 (Lavender Hall Farm)** lies within a SSSI IRZ and is located within approximately 150 m of Lavender Hall Park LNR. The policy includes tree and hedgerow retention measures but contains no specific biodiversity-related safeguards.
- **Policy SMBC/BL1 (West of Dickens Heath)** lies within a SSSI IRZ requiring consultation with Natural England. The site is located within approximately 600 m of Dickens Heath Country Park LNR, is adjacent to a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) and contains a small area of priority and ancient woodland habitat. The policy responds positively to these constraints by requiring retention of LWS and an appropriate buffer to Tythe Barn Coppice.
- **Policy SMBC/BL3 (Whitlock's End Farm)** lies within a SSSI IRZ and is located within approximately 300 m of Bills Wood LNR. The site also contains a small area of priority woodland habitat. Whilst the policy retains trees and hedgerows, it does not include specific requirements relating to the nearby biodiversity assets.
- **Policy SMBC/HA1 (Meriden Road, Hampton-in-Arden)** lies within a SSSI IRZ requiring consultation with Natural England and is located within approximately 100 m of the River Blythe SSSI and within approximately 50 m of an LWS. The policy responds to these sensitivities through requirements to protect ecological assets and provide green infrastructure and SuDS.
- **Policy SMBC/KN1A (Land North of Hampton Road, Knowle)** lies within a SSSI IRZ requiring consultation with Natural England and within approximately 1 km of the River Blythe SSSI. The site is also located within approximately 750 m of Jobs Close LNR, is adjacent to a LWS and adjoins priority woodland habitat. The policy includes strong biodiversity safeguards, requiring retention of, and a buffer to, the LWS.

- **Policy SMBC/KN1B (Land South of Hampton Road, Knowle)** lies within a SSSI IRZ and is located within approximately 500 m of Jobs Close LNR. The site is also adjacent to priority habitat. Whilst the policy includes green infrastructure and drainage requirements, it does not contain specific biodiversity protection measures.
- **Policy SMBC/SO1 (East of Solihull)** lies within a SSSI IRZ requiring consultation with Natural England. The site is located within approximately 900 m of Elmdon Coppice LNR, is adjacent to a LWS and contains both priority woodland habitat and a substantial area of traditional orchard habitat. The policy contains no biodiversity-specific safeguards despite the ecological sensitivities present.
- **Policy SMBC/SO2 (Moat Lane Depot)** lies within a SSSI IRZ, although the proposed development does not trigger consultation requirements. The policy includes an integrated drainage, landscape and ecological strategy which has potential to support biodiversity enhancements.
- **Policy SMBC/UK1 (Arden Cross and HS2 Interchange)** lies within a SSSI IRZ requiring consultation with Natural England. The site is located within approximately 100 m of the River Blythe SSSI and approximately 300 m from Coleshill and Bannerly Pools SSSI, and contains small areas of priority woodland habitat. Whilst the policy promotes green and blue infrastructure through the wider masterplanning framework, it does not contain specific provisions relating to the nearby designated biodiversity assets.

9.2.18 Collectively, these findings indicate that biodiversity considerations have influenced a number of the allocations, although the extent of site-specific mitigation varies. In particular, **Policies SMBC/BL1, SMBC/HA1 and SMBC/KN1A** contain explicit biodiversity safeguards, whereas several other allocations rely more heavily on the wider policy framework and development management process to ensure ecological impacts are appropriately addressed.

Broader local plan effects related to biodiversity and geodiversity

9.2.19 The draft Local Plan includes a number of strategic policies that provide a framework for protecting biodiversity and geodiversity assets. Most notably, **Policy SMBC/N1** safeguards LWS and requires proposals affecting such sites to be assessed against national biodiversity policy. Given the proximity of several allocations to LWS, this policy is expected to play an important role in avoiding, reducing and mitigating ecological impacts arising from development. In addition, **Policy SMBC/E1** requires development within the UK Central Hub Area to deliver a high-quality green and blue infrastructure network and enhance natural assets.

9.2.20 **Policies SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** provide an additional level of biodiversity protection across all major developments, which includes all housing and employment allocations proposed through the draft Local Plan. These policies require development to be comprehensively masterplanned, supported by appropriate green infrastructure and accompanied by any necessary mitigation measures. Consequently, in cases where biodiversity safeguards are not expressly identified within individual allocation policies, the requirements of **Policies SMBC/D1 and D2** are expected to ensure that ecological constraints are considered and addressed through the masterplanning and planning application process. Nevertheless, the level of certainty is greater where specific biodiversity safeguards are included within allocation policies and there may be merit in strengthening some allocations through the inclusion of more explicit biodiversity requirements.

9.2.21 In addition, all major development will be required to deliver statutory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This provides an important mechanism through which habitat enhancement and ecological improvements can be secured alongside development. Whilst BNG would not remove the potential for adverse effects arising from greenfield land take or proximity to designated biodiversity assets, it is expected to create opportunities for habitat creation, ecological enhancement and improvements to wider ecological networks across the borough.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.22 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in **mixed effects (+/-)** in relation to biodiversity and geodiversity. The scale of growth proposed means that development will inevitably result in some loss of greenfield land and has the potential to affect habitats, ecological networks and designated biodiversity assets. Several allocations are located within SSSI Impact Risk Zones and in close proximity to LWS and LNRs, as well as containing priority habitat. However, the draft Local Plan also contains measures designed to protect biodiversity, through green and blue infrastructure requirements, comprehensive masterplanning and environmental mitigation requirements. Furthermore, all major developments will be required to deliver BNG as per national policy.

Climate change adaptation

	**Reasonable alternatives significance score**	**Plan appraisal significance score**
	Minor negative (-)	**Neutral (0)**

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.23 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have minor negative effects due to

development within locations containing areas of fluvial and/or surface water flood risk, resulting in the potential exposure to climate-related hazards. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.24 Several of the draft Local Plan allocations contain areas of fluvial and/or surface water flood risk and therefore have the potential to increase exposure to climate change-related hazards if not appropriately designed and managed. However, a number of allocation policies contain specific requirements intended to avoid development in areas of greatest risk and incorporate measures to improve resilience to flooding and climate change.

9.2.25 The extent to which climate change adaptation and flood risk issues are addressed through the allocation policies varies:

- **Policy SMBC/BC3 (Windmill Lane/Kenilworth Road)** contains areas of surface water flood risk in the northern part of the site. The policy requires the provision of above-ground SuDS features, avoidance of flood risk areas in the north-west of the site and consideration of flood alleviation measures for the wider area.
- **Policy SMBC/BC5 (Trevallion Stud)** contains areas of surface water flood risk in the south of the site. The policy requires the provision of above-ground SuDS features.
- **Policy SMBC/BC6 (Lavender Hall Farm)** is not affected by notable flood risk constraints but requires the provision of above-ground SuDS features.
- **Policy SMBC/BL1 (West of Dickens Heath)** contains areas of surface water flood risk in the western part of the site. The policy requires suitable SuDS, flood risk management measures, above-ground drainage features and the deculverting of an existing watercourse where feasible.
- **Policy SMBC/BL3 (Whitlock's End Farm)** contains areas of surface water flood risk in several parts of the site. The policy requires above-ground SuDS features, avoidance of flood risk areas in the north-west of the site and flood alleviation measures where appropriate.
- **Policy SMBC/HA1 (Meriden Road, Hampton-in-Arden)** contains areas of surface water flood risk in several parts of the site. The policy requires that no development takes place within higher flood risk zones, requires above-ground SuDS and supports the realignment of surface water flows through the site.
- **Policy SMBC/KN1A (Land North of Hampton Road, Knowle)** is affected by Flood Zone 3 along its north-western boundary. The policy requires development to be located outside higher-risk flood zones and requires suitable SuDS and flood risk management measures.

- **Policy SMBC/KN1B (Land South of Hampton Road, Knowle)** is not subject to significant identified flood risk constraints but requires suitable SuDS and flood risk management measures.
- **Policy SMBC/SO1 (East of Solihull)** contains small areas of surface water flood risk. Whilst the policy does not contain detailed flood mitigation requirements, associated infrastructure requirements and the wider policy framework will require flood risk to be appropriately managed.
- **Policy SMBC/SO2 (Moat Lane Depot)** contains extensive areas of surface water flood risk. The policy responds directly to this constraint by requiring an integrated drainage, landscape and ecological strategy and surface water flood mitigation measures as part of the development.
- **Policy SMBC/UK1 (Arden Cross and HS2 Interchange)** contains areas of Flood Zone 3 and surface water flood risk. The allocation is supported by **Policy SMBC/E1**, which requires a strategic green and blue infrastructure network, and by comprehensive masterplanning requirements which provide opportunities to address climate resilience and flood risk issues at a strategic scale.
- **Policy SMBC/UK2 (Damson Parkway)** contains areas of flood risk and includes specific requirements for flood alleviation, enhancement of the Low Brook corridor and the delivery of a high-quality SuDS network.

9.2.26 These findings indicate that climate change adaptation considerations have influenced the allocation strategy. In many cases, flood risk constraints have been explicitly recognised through requirements to avoid development within higher-risk areas, deliver sustainable drainage infrastructure or provide flood alleviation measures. Consequently, the draft Local Plan is expected to reduce the vulnerability of new development to flooding and other climate-related hazards.

Broader local plan effects related to climate change adaptation

9.2.27 The draft Local Plan includes a number of strategic policies that support climate resilience and adaptation. **Policy SMBC/HO2** requires development within broad locations to avoid, mitigate or compensate for adverse environmental impacts. **Policy SMBC/E1** requires the delivery of a strategic green and blue infrastructure network and promotes sustainability principles within the UK Central Hub Area. Green and blue infrastructure can contribute to climate adaptation through natural flood management, urban cooling and wider ecosystem services.

9.2.28 **Policies SMBC/D1** and **SMBC/D2** provide an important framework for ensuring that climate change adaptation measures are incorporated into major development proposals. These policies apply to all major

development sites, including all housing and employment allocations within the draft Local Plan, and require development to be comprehensively planned, supported by appropriate infrastructure and accompanied by any necessary mitigation measures. This is expected to ensure that flood risk, drainage and wider climate resilience considerations are addressed consistently across all allocations, including those where allocation-specific flood risk requirements are more limited. Whilst some allocations contain more explicit climate adaptation measures than others, **Policies SMBC/D1 and D2** provide an important baseline level of protection across the draft Local Plan as a whole.

9.2.29 BNG requirements associated with major development are also likely to support nature-based solutions through habitat creation, ecological enhancement and increased vegetation cover. These measures can contribute to climate resilience through improved water retention, reduced surface water runoff, natural flood management and enhanced resilience to future climate change impacts.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.30 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in **neutral effects (0)** in relation to climate change adaptation. Although several allocations are affected by fluvial and/or surface water flood risk, these issues are addressed through site-specific mitigation measures, strategic green and blue infrastructure requirements, sustainable drainage systems and comprehensive masterplanning. Together with BNG, these measures are expected to improve resilience to flooding and other climate-related hazards in the borough.

Climate change mitigation

	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Minor negative (-)	**Minor positive (+)**

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.31 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have minor negative effects due to the potential to increase greenhouse gas emissions through construction activity, energy consumption and transport movements. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.32 The draft Local Plan's spatial strategy seeks to focus growth within locations capable of supporting sustainable travel patterns. **Policy SMBC/SS1** directs growth towards the borough's most sustainable settlements, whilst **Policy SMBC/HO2** focuses planned growth within broad locations associated with railway stations and sustainable transport

corridors. The broad locations identified through the draft Local Plan are generally centred on locations around Berkswell, Dorridge, Hampton-in-Arden, Widney Manor, Tile Hill and Whitlocks End/Earlswood railway stations. This approach is expected to reduce reliance on private vehicle travel relative to a more dispersed pattern of development and therefore help to limit transport-related emissions.

9.2.33 The draft Local Plan's housing allocations reinforce this approach. The Balsall Common allocations (**Policies SMBC/BC3, BC5, and BC6**), the Dickens Heath and Whitlocks End allocations (**Policies SMBC/BL1 and BL3**), and the Hampton-in-Arden allocation (**Policy SMBC/HA1**) all include measures to improve sustainable transport connectivity. The Knowle allocations (**Policies SMBC/KN1A and KN1B**) and Solihull allocations (**Policies SMBC/SO1 and SO2**) also seek to enhance walking, cycling and public transport connections. The Arden Cross allocation (**Policy SMBC/UK1**) occupies one of the most accessible locations in the borough and is focused around Birmingham International Station and the future HS2 Interchange Station. Collectively, these measures are expected to encourage the uptake of lower-carbon travel options over the plan period.

9.2.34 The strategic employment policies further support climate change mitigation objectives. **Policies SMBC/E1 and SMBC/E2** concentrate significant growth within the UK Central Hub Area and Arden Cross, whilst Policies **SMBC/E3 to SMBC/E7** focus employment growth within existing strategic employment locations. By directing employment and housing growth towards locations with strong public transport connections and close proximity to one another, the draft Local Plan is expected to reduce the need for longer-distance commuting and support more sustainable patterns of development.

Broader local plan effects related to climate change mitigation

9.2.35 Several draft Local Plan policies provide direct support for climate change mitigation. **Policy SMBC/E1** requires development within the UK Central Hub Area to promote sustainable and inclusive growth, maximise connectivity by sustainable modes of transport, limit the use of natural resources and maximise low and zero carbon energy principles. The policy also seeks to support investment in low-carbon technologies and services, helping to embed climate change considerations within one of the borough's most significant growth locations.

9.2.36 **Policy SMBC/TM1** supports the delivery of Rapid Transit infrastructure and improved connectivity to Metro and Sprint corridors, helping to reduce reliance on private vehicle travel. **Policies SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** require development to be comprehensively planned and supported by the infrastructure necessary to facilitate sustainable development, whilst **Policy SMBC/HC1** promotes active travel, healthy lifestyles and improved access to services and facilities by walking and cycling. Collectively, these policies

are expected to contribute towards reducing transport-related greenhouse gas emissions.

9.2.37 The draft Local Plan also contains several housing policies that are expected to contribute indirectly towards climate change mitigation. For example, **Policies SMBC/HO3 and HO6** promote the delivery of a range of housing types and tenures in sustainable locations, helping to support balanced communities and reduce the need to travel.

9.2.38 **Policy SMBC/WM1** provides additional support for climate change mitigation through the promotion of resource efficiency, waste recovery and circular economy principles. The policy requires waste management facilities to incorporate measures to limit greenhouse gas emissions, maximise resource and energy efficiency and facilitate the beneficial recovery and reuse of materials. Development proposals are also expected to consider opportunities for energy recovery and utilisation where practicable.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.39 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in a **minor positive effect (+)** in relation to climate change mitigation. Whilst the scale of growth proposed has the potential to increase greenhouse gas emissions through construction activity, energy consumption and transport movements, the draft Local Plan incorporates a series of policies aimed at reducing emissions and promoting lower-carbon forms of development. These include directing growth towards highly accessible locations, supporting rapid transit infrastructure, promoting active travel, maximising opportunities for sustainable transport, encouraging resource efficiency and supporting low and zero carbon energy principles.

Communities and health

	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Mixed (+/-)	**Major positive (++)**

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.40 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have mixed effects. Positive effects were expected through the delivery of substantial amounts of housing which meets LHN and improved access to employment opportunities, services and facilities. Negative effects were expected through an increase demand for school places, healthcare services and other community infrastructure. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.41 The positive effects identified through the appraisal of Scenario 1 are reinforced by the spatial strategy of the draft Local Plan. **Policy SMBC/SS1** directs growth towards the borough's most sustainable settlements and locations, whilst **Policies SMBC/HO1 and SMBC/HO2** provide for substantial housing growth within accessible locations. Directing development towards existing settlements is expected to improve opportunities for residents to access employment, healthcare, education, shops, community facilities and recreational assets.

9.2.42 The housing allocations are generally located adjacent to existing settlements and therefore have good access to community infrastructure. The Balsall Common allocations (**Policies SMBC/BC3, BC5, and BC6**), the Dickens Heath and Whitlocks End allocations (**Policies SMBC/BL1 and BL3**), the Hampton-in-Arden allocation (**Policy SMBC/HA1**), the Knowle allocations (**Policies SMBC/KN1A and KN1B**) and the Solihull allocations (**Policies SMBC/SO1 and SO2**) are all expected to support existing communities through the delivery of new housing in locations with access to services, facilities and public transport. The Arden Cross allocation (**Policy SMBC/UK1**) will deliver a substantial mixed-use development, including housing, employment and associated facilities, creating a new community at one of the borough's most accessible locations.

9.2.43 The allocations also include a range of measures intended to support community wellbeing and social infrastructure. These include requirements for public open space, children's play provision, sports and recreational facilities, healthcare contributions and education contributions. In addition, **Policies SMBC/BL3 and KN2** support the provision of new and expanded education facilities. As a result, the draft Local Plan is expected to support the delivery of additional community infrastructure alongside population growth.

9.2.44 The strategic employment policies are also expected to contribute positively to communities and health. **Policies SMBC/E1 and SMBC/E2** support significant investment within the UK Central Hub Area and Arden Cross, whilst **Policies SMBC/E3 to SMBC/E7** support the continued growth of key employment locations including the NEC, Birmingham Airport, Jaguar Land Rover and Birmingham Business Park. These policies are expected to improve access to employment opportunities and support inclusive economic growth across the borough. In particular, Arden Cross is located within an area that experiences relatively higher levels of deprivation than many other parts of the borough and therefore has the potential to generate local regeneration and socio-economic benefits.

Broader local plan effects related to communities and health

9.2.45 **Policy SMBC/HC1** provides a strong framework for promoting health and wellbeing through the planning system. The policy seeks to create

healthier places, improve wellbeing and reduce health inequalities across the borough. In particular, it promotes access to employment, education, healthcare, open space, sport, recreation and opportunities for everyday physical activity. It also supports active travel, social interaction, community cohesion, accessible neighbourhood design and improved access to healthcare infrastructure where needs arise through development.

9.2.46 **Policy SMBC/HC2** further strengthens this approach by requiring Health Impact Assessments for relevant planning applications and ensuring that any identified adverse effects are appropriately mitigated. Together, **Policies SMBC/HC1 and HC2** are expected to embed health and wellbeing considerations throughout the development process and support the creation of healthy and sustainable communities.

9.2.47 Housing policies within the draft Local Plan are also expected to generate substantial community and health benefits. **Policy SMBC/HO3** requires significant affordable housing provision, helping to address housing affordability issues and support socially inclusive communities. **Policy SMBC/HO5** requires all new-build housing on major developments to meet M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable standards, with at least 5% of homes delivered as wheelchair-user dwellings. The policy also requires specialist accommodation or care bedspaces on larger developments in response to identified needs. **Policies SMBC/HO7, HO8, HO9 and HO10** further support specialist accommodation needs, including provision for looked after children, care leavers and Gypsy and Traveller communities. Collectively, these policies are expected to contribute positively towards reducing inequalities and improving health outcomes.

9.2.48 **Policies SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** provide an important mechanism for ensuring that community infrastructure is delivered alongside growth. These policies require major development to be comprehensively planned and supported by the infrastructure, services and facilities needed to serve new communities. As all proposals for major development are subject to these requirements, they are expected to significantly reduce the risk that growth would place unacceptable pressure on healthcare, education and community infrastructure.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.49 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in **major positive effects (++)** in relation to communities and health. The Plan will deliver substantial housing growth which meets LHN, support access to employment opportunities and provide a range of affordable, specialist and adaptable housing. These benefits are reinforced by allocation-specific requirements for healthcare, education, open space and recreational infrastructure, together with a strong policy framework promoting health, wellbeing, community cohesion and inclusive growth.

Economy and employment

€ $ £ ¥	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Minor positive (+)	Major positive (++)

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.50 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have minor positive effects, by supporting economic growth through the provision of additional housing in accessible locations. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.51 The positive effects identified through the appraisal of Scenario 1 are significantly strengthened by the spatial strategy of the draft Local Plan. Whilst the provision of 23,091 homes is expected to support workforce growth and increase labour market participation, the draft Local Plan also makes substantial provision for employment development. **Policies SMBC/E1 and SMBC/E2** identify the UK Central Hub Area and Arden Cross as the borough's principal strategic growth location, supporting a major concentration of employment, commercial, education and mixed-use development focused around the future HS2 Interchange Station. This is expected to generate significant employment opportunities and support economic growth at the local, regional and national level.

9.2.52 The draft Local Plan also supports the continued growth and diversification of the borough's key economic assets. **Policies SMBC/E3 to SMBC/E6** provide support for the future development of the NEC, Birmingham Airport, Jaguar Land Rover and Birmingham Business Park. These locations form a key component of the borough's economy and collectively support a substantial number of existing and future employment opportunities. **Policy SMBC/E7** further strengthens this position through the provision of up to 60.1ha of industrial and warehousing land and 6.8ha of office land to meet local and strategic employment needs.

9.2.53 The spatial strategy seeks to align housing and employment growth within accessible locations. Many of the housing allocations are located within reasonable proximity to major employment locations and are served by public transport infrastructure, supporting access to employment opportunities. The Arden Cross allocation (**Policy SMBC/UK1**) is particularly significant in this regard, combining housing, employment, education and transport investment within a strategic growth location. This integrated approach is expected to improve access to jobs, support labour mobility and strengthen links between housing and employment provision.

Broader local plan effects related to economy and employment

9.2.54 A number of draft Local Plan policies further strengthen economic and employment outcomes. **Policy SMBC/E1** supports sustainable and inclusive economic growth, investment in high value-added activities, low-carbon technologies and services, and improved connectivity to key employment areas. The policy also supports infrastructure delivery within the UK Central Hub Area, helping to unlock future investment opportunities and economic growth.

9.2.55 **Policy SMBC/E7** specifically supports the retention and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises across both urban and rural areas of the borough. The policy encourages employment growth in a broad variety of locations, including North Solihull as a priority area, whilst also requiring employment development to support sustainable development principles. In addition, the policy requires major business developments to demonstrate how they will contribute towards meeting local employment needs and supports the provision of high-capacity digital communications infrastructure, helping to improve digital connectivity and business competitiveness.

9.2.56 **Policies SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** are also expected to contribute positively to economic performance by ensuring that growth is supported by appropriate infrastructure. The comprehensive masterplanning and infrastructure delivery requirements are expected to facilitate coordinated development, provide greater certainty for investors and help ensure that development does not outpace infrastructure provision. In addition, the concentration of growth within accessible locations supported by **Policy SMBC/TM1** is expected to improve access to employment opportunities, education and training facilities through enhanced public transport connectivity.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.57 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in **major positive effects (++)** in relation to economy and employment. In addition to supporting workforce growth through substantial housing delivery, the draft Local Plan provides significant opportunities for employment growth through investment within the UK Central Hub Area, Arden Cross and the borough's existing strategic employment locations. These benefits are reinforced through the provision of additional employment land, support for small and medium-sized enterprises, investment in infrastructure and improvements to connectivity.

Historic environment

	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Minor negative (-)	Neutral (0)

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.58 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have minor negative effects due to the inclusion of development in locations containing, or in proximity to, designated heritage assets and areas. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.59 Several of the draft Local Plan allocations are associated with designated heritage assets and therefore have the potential to affect their significance, particularly through impacts on setting. However, their allocation policies include specific measures intended to avoid or reduce such effects:

- The Windmill Lane/Kenilworth Road allocation (**Policy SMBC/BC3**) is located adjacent to Berkswell Windmill (Grade II* listed building). The policy requires low-density development and other measures to protect the setting and functionality of the windmill.
- The Lavender Hall Farm allocation (**Policy SMBC/BC6**) is located adjacent to Lavender Hall Farmhouse (Grade II* listed building) and the Barn at Lavender Hall Farm (Grade II listed building). The policy specifically requires protection of the setting of heritage assets adjacent to the site.
- The Whitlock's End Farm allocation (**Policy SMBC/BL3**) contains Whitlocks Farmhouse (Grade II listed building) and the locally listed Whitlocks End Farm. The policy requires development to respect the setting of Whitlocks End Farm.
- The Knowle allocations (**Policies SMBC/KN1A and KN1B**) both lie within 100 m of Grimshaw Hall (Grade I listed building). **Policy SMBC/KN1A** specifically requires the setting of Grimshaw Hall to be preserved and development to be set back from the immediate locality. Whilst **Policy SMBC/KN1B** does not contain an equivalent heritage requirement, the policy's landscape and design provisions may provide some opportunity to limit effects on the asset's setting.
- The East of Solihull allocation (**Policy SMBC/SO1**) contains Field Farmhouse (Grade II listed building) and lies within 100 m to 239 Lugtrout Lane (Grade II listed building). The policy requires the setting of these assets to be preserved and requires development to avoid harm.

- The Arden Cross allocation (**Policy SMBC/UK1**) contains Park Farmhouse (Grade II* listed building). Whilst the allocation does not contain a specific heritage criterion, development is expected to be delivered through a comprehensive masterplanning process under **Policies SMBC/E2 and SMBC/D1**, providing opportunities to avoid or limit impacts on the asset and its setting.

9.2.60 The remaining allocations are not associated with designated heritage constraints and are therefore less likely to give rise to significant effects on the historic environment. Consequently, whilst the spatial strategy includes several allocations in proximity to designated heritage assets and areas, heritage considerations have influenced the formulation of the draft Local Plan and are reflected in a number of site-specific policy requirements.

Broader local plan effects related to historic environment

9.2.61 **Policy SMBC/HE1** provides a strong strategic framework for the conservation and enhancement of the borough's historic environment. The policy requires designated and non-designated heritage assets, including their settings, to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance and supports heritage enhancement where opportunities arise. It also seeks to preserve and enhance Conservation Areas and safeguard archaeological remains and areas of archaeological potential. **Policy SMBC/SS2** may also provide indirect benefits through the protection of vulnerable gaps, helping to maintain the separation and setting of some historic settlements and heritage assets. In addition, **Policies SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** require development to be comprehensively planned and supported by appropriate mitigation and infrastructure, providing further mechanisms through which heritage impacts can be addressed.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.62 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in a **neutral effect (0)** in relation to the historic environment. Whilst several allocations are located within, adjacent to, or in close proximity to designated heritage assets and areas and therefore have the potential to affect their significance, the draft Local Plan incorporates a strong policy framework designed to conserve the significance of designated and non-designated heritage assets and areas and their settings.

Housing

	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Major positive (++)	**Major positive (++)**

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.63 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have major positive effects due to the delivery of a significant number of homes that would meet (and slightly exceed) the borough's LHN target of 21,913 homes over the 17-year plan period (reflecting 1,289 dpa). The preferred approach is to apply a stepped trajectory, with the allocated sites discussed in paragraph 9.2.65 below primarily deliverable within the first five years of the plan period. The stepped trajectory comprises 400 dpa in years 2026–28; 967 dpa in years 2028–33; and 1,628 dpa in years 2033–43. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.64 The positive effects identified through the appraisal of Scenario 1 are reinforced by the policy framework of the draft Local Plan. Policy **SMBC/HO1** commits to the delivery of at least 23,091 homes over the period 2026-2043, equivalent to approximately 105% of LHN (21,913 dwellings). This is supported by **Policy SMBC/HO2**, which identifies broad locations expected to contribute towards meeting the borough's development requirements.

9.2.65 The housing allocation policies make a substantial contribution towards achieving the overall housing requirement. Collectively, the allocations provide for 4,877 dwellings across sites within Balsall Common, Dickens Heath, Whitlocks End, Hampton-in-Arden, Knowle, Solihull and Arden Cross. The distribution of development across a range of locations and site sizes is expected to support housing delivery across the borough and throughout the plan period, whilst reducing reliance on a limited number of strategic sites. The inclusion of larger strategic sites, particularly Arden Cross (**Policy SMBC/UK1**), also provides opportunities for comprehensive masterplanning and longer-term housing delivery.

9.2.66 A significant proportion of the anticipated housing supply is expected to come forward within the broad locations identified through Policy SMBC/HO2, primarily from years 6-17 of the plan period. Whilst this provides flexibility and supports the preferred spatial strategy, it also introduces a degree of uncertainty because the broad locations do not constitute site allocations and will require future Green Belt boundary amendments and subsequent planning applications before delivery can occur. Consequently, the contribution of the broad locations to overall housing supply is associated with a greater degree of delivery risk than fully

allocated sites. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that there are a number of potential site options within the broad locations which could accommodate growth during the plan period, subject to the delivery considerations above.

Broader local plan effects related to housing

9.2.67 Several draft Local Plan policies are expected to strengthen housing outcomes and improve the extent to which the homes delivered respond to identified needs. **Policy SMBC/HO3** seeks substantial affordable housing provision across major development sites, including a requirement for 50% affordable housing on sites released from the Green Belt and 40% affordable housing elsewhere. This is expected to make a significant contribution towards addressing the borough's identified affordable housing needs and ensuring that a larger proportion of new housing is accessible to households whose needs are not met by the market. **Policy SMBC/HO4** promotes the delivery of Self and Custom Build housing, helping to broaden housing choice and diversify housing supply.

9.2.68 The draft Local Plan also includes a comprehensive suite of policies aimed at meeting specialist and under-served housing needs identified through the evidence base, including the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) and the Council's evidence relating to older persons' accommodation. In particular, **Policy SMBC/HO5** requires all new-build housing on major developments to be built to Building Regulations M4(2) Accessible and Adaptable standards, unless delivered to the higher M4(3) standard, with a minimum of 5% of dwellings required to be wheelchair-user homes. In addition, developments of 300 dwellings or more are required to provide specialist accommodation or care bedspaces in accordance with identified needs. These requirements represent a significant commitment towards meeting the needs of older people and people with disabilities and are expected to improve the long-term suitability and adaptability of the borough's housing stock.

9.2.69 **Policy SMBC/HO6** seeks an appropriate mix of dwelling sizes and types, whilst **Policies SMBC/HO7** and **SMBC/HO8** support the provision of specialist accommodation including Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and residential accommodation for looked after children and care leavers.

9.2.70 The identified need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches over the plan period is largely generated from the households that are currently already living on sites in Solihull. Needs will be met via expansion or intensification of these existing authorised sites, seeking to meet their specific requirements, as well as any vacant pitches or unimplemented planning consents. **Policies SMBC/HO9 and SMBC/HO10** provide a framework for meeting identified Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs across the borough, and safeguarding existing authorised provision. The Council will also look at whether any existing unauthorised sites and pitches should be regularised.

9.2.71 Collectively, these policies are expected to ensure that housing delivery contributes not only to meeting LHN, but also to addressing a broad range of identified specialist needs across the borough.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.72 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in **major positive effects (++)** in relation to housing. The preferred spatial strategy meets (and slightly exceeds) LHN and is supported by a comprehensive policy framework that promotes affordable housing, specialist accommodation, accessible and adaptable housing, self and custom build housing, housing choice and housing delivery.

9.2.73 Although some uncertainty remains regarding the delivery of development within the broad locations of growth (BLG) in the longer-term, the overall effect is expected to remain strongly positive. Following adoption of the Local Plan, the Council intends to move directly into a further Local Plan review. That review is likely to consider a broader range of strategic growth options (including within the broad locations), recognising that these locations may also form part of the longer-term direction of growth for Solihull within the emerging West Midlands Spatial Development Strategy (due to their proximity to rail stations and the NPPF direction on unlocking growth in sustainable locations).

Landscape

	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Minor negative (-)	**Minor negative (-)**

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.74 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have minor negative effects due to the loss of potential greenfield and Green Belt land. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.75 The preferred spatial strategy relies on the release and development of Green Belt land adjacent to existing settlements in order to meet housing and employment needs. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are potential 'grey belt' locations surrounding settlements as identified through the reasonable alternatives appraisal, growth has the potential to result in the permanent loss of open countryside, changes to landscape character and alterations to the setting of settlements. **Whilst Policy SMBC/HO2** requires development within broad locations to avoid, mitigate or compensate for adverse environmental impacts, landscape change remains an inherent consequence of the spatial strategy.

9.2.76 The majority of allocations are located on Green Belt land and therefore have the potential to result in landscape effects through the loss of open countryside and changes to settlement character. The extent to which these effects are addressed through allocation policies varies:

- **Policy SMBC/BC3 (Windmill Lane/Kenilworth Road)** is located on Green Belt land assessed as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. The policy includes requirements for public open space, enhancement of public rights of way and retention of trees and hedgerows.
- **Policy SMBC/BC5 (Trevallion Stud)** is located on Green Belt land assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes and is covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), indicating a potential for major negative effects. However, supporting evidence indicates that the allocation site due to the presence of built development and encroachment in this part of the parcel that this smaller area actually performs less well in its own right. Additionally, a large part of this area is included on the Council's Brownfield Land Register. Mitigation included in the policy requires tree and hedgerow retention.
- **Policy SMBC/BC6 (Lavender Hall Farm)** is located on Green Belt land assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, indicating a potential for major negative effects. However, supporting evidence indicates that the allocation site itself performs less favourably than the wider parcel due to the influence of existing development and the presence of HS2, which will create a new physical feature separating the site from the remaining Green Belt. The policy also includes tree and hedgerow retention measures and protection of the setting of nearby heritage assets.
- **Policy SMBC/BL1 (West of Dickens Heath)** is located on Green Belt land assessed as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes and contains several TPOs. The policy requires retention of trees and hedgerows and the provision of open space.
- **Policy SMBC/BL3 (Whitlock's End Farm)** is located on Green Belt land assessed as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes. The policy requires retention of trees and hedgerows along rights of way and bridleways.
- **Policy SMBC/HA1 (Meriden Road, Hampton-in-Arden)** is located on Green Belt land assessed as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes and contains several TPOs. The policy requires retention of TPO trees and established hedgerows and protection of landscape assets.
- **Policy SMBC/KN1A (Land North of Hampton Road, Knowle)** is located on Green Belt land assessed as making a moderate

contribution to Green Belt purposes and is covered by a TPO designation. The policy requires retention of trees and hedgerows and the provision of open space.

- **Policy SMBC/KN1B (Land South of Hampton Road, Knowle)** is located on Green Belt land assessed as making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes, indicating a potential for major negative effects. However, supporting evidence indicates that the allocation site itself performs less favourably than the wider parcel as it is physically and visually separated from the heritage assets that contribute to the parcel's strong performance and includes elements of previously developed land. The policy also requires retention of trees and hedgerows and provision of public open space.
- **Policy SMBC/SO1 (East of Solihull)** is located on Green Belt land assessed as making a moderate contribution to Green Belt purposes and contains several TPOs. The policy includes public open space requirements but contains relatively limited landscape-specific mitigation.
- **Policy SMBC/SO2 (Moat Lane Depot)** is previously developed land and is not located within the Green Belt. The policy requires an integrated drainage, landscape and ecological strategy and is therefore likely to result in more limited landscape effects than the majority of allocations.
- **Policy SMBC/UK1 (Arden Cross and HS2 Interchange)** is located on Green Belt land assessed as making a weak contribution to Green Belt purposes and contains a TPO. The policy requires the establishment of a high-quality green and blue infrastructure network and comprehensive masterplanning.

9.2.77 Collectively, these findings indicate that whilst many allocations incorporate measures intended to retain important landscape features, most allocations will nevertheless result in the loss of Green Belt land. However, the sensitivity of individual sites varies and, in some cases, evidence supporting the allocations indicates that the allocation site performs less favourably than the wider Green Belt parcel within which it is located. Whilst development of land making a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes would generally be expected to result in more significant adverse landscape effects, the evidence supporting **Policies SMBC/BC5, SMBC/BC6 and SMBC/KN1B** indicates that the allocation sites themselves perform less favourably than the wider parcels within which they are situated. As a result, adverse effects on landscape character are still anticipated, although potential impacts are likely to be less significant.

Broader local plan effects related to landscape

9.2.78 The draft Local Plan includes several policies that are expected to help manage landscape effects. **Policy SMBC/SS2** protects vulnerable gaps between settlements, helping to maintain settlement separation and avoid coalescence. **Policy SMBC/E1** requires the delivery of a strategic green and blue infrastructure network within the UK Central Hub Area (Arden Cross) and seeks to enhance natural assets. These policies are expected to help maintain elements of landscape character and settlement identity despite the growth proposed.

9.2.79 **Policies SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** are also relevant as they apply to all major developments, including all housing and employment allocations within the draft Local Plan. These policies require development to be comprehensively planned and provide mechanisms through which green infrastructure, landscape mitigation and environmental enhancements can be secured. Whilst this is expected to reduce the severity of landscape effects and ensure that landscape considerations are incorporated into the design of new development, these policies are unlikely to fully offset the loss of Green Belt and greenfield land associated with the spatial strategy.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.80 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in **minor negative effects (-)** in relation to landscape. The majority of allocations are located on Green Belt land and will result in the loss of areas of open countryside and changes to landscape character. Whilst mitigation measures have been incorporated within the allocation policies and wider policy framework, adverse effects are still anticipated. However, these effects are generally expected to be localised and moderated through the retention of landscape features, green infrastructure provision and comprehensive masterplanning.

9.2.81 It is important to acknowledge that the borough is significantly constrained by Green Belt land, and the Council's Green Belt Assessment identifies a number of locations where potential 'grey belt' land is identified. Further opportunities for Green Belt release are expected to form longer-term considerations for the borough alongside the wider growth aspirations for the West Midlands region as a whole (and accompanying SDS)

Soils and natural resources

	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Major negative (--)	**Major negative (--)**

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.82 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have major negative effects due to greenfield development with the potential to result in the loss of 'best and most versatile' (BMV) agricultural land and increased pressure on finite natural resources. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.83 The preferred spatial strategy relies heavily on the development of greenfield land to meet housing and employment needs. As a result, the draft Local Plan has the potential to result in the permanent loss of agricultural land, including substantial areas of BMV agricultural land (Grades 1-3a). The extent of this effect varies between allocations:

- **Policy SMBC/BC3 (Windmill Lane/Kenilworth Road)** comprises predominantly Grade 1 and Grade 2 land.
- **Policy SMBC/BC5 (Trevallion Stud)** comprises predominantly Grade 1 land.
- **Policy SMBC/BC6 (Lavender Hall Farm)** comprises predominantly Grade 3a land.
- **Policy SMBC/BL1 (West of Dickens Heath)** is not associated with a notable agricultural land constraint, although the site lies adjacent to a historic landfill site.
- **Policy SMBC/BL3 (Whitlock's End Farm)** is not associated with a notable agricultural land constraint.
- **Policy SMBC/HA1 (Meriden Road, Hampton-in-Arden)** comprises a mixture of urban land and Grade 3a land.
- **Policy SMBC/KN1A** (Land North of Hampton Road, Knowle) comprises predominantly Grade 1 land.
- **Policy SMBC/KN1B** (Land South of Hampton Road, Knowle) comprises predominantly Grade 1 land.
- **Policy SMBC/SO1 (East of Solihull)** comprises substantial areas of Grade 1 and Grade 2 land.

- **Policy SMBC/SO2 (Moat Lane Depot)** comprises predominantly urban land and promotes the efficient reuse of previously developed land.
- **Policy SMBC/UK1 (Arden Cross and HS2 Interchange)** comprises predominantly Grade 1 land together with areas of Grade 3a and urban land. The site also contains a historic landfill site.

9.2.84 Collectively, these findings indicate that a significant proportion of the draft Local Plan's growth is proposed on land classified as BMV agricultural land. Whilst some allocations make use of previously developed land, most notably **Policy SMBC/SO2**, the overall strategy would result in the permanent loss of substantial areas of BMV agricultural land. Given that agricultural land is a finite resource, these effects are likely to be long-term and irreversible. In addition, the presence of HLS at allocations **SMBC/BL1 and SMBC/UK1** highlights the potential need for remediation and management of legacy land contamination issues.

Broader local plan effects related to soils and natural resources

9.2.85 The draft Local Plan includes policies that may help to reduce effects on soils and natural resources. **Policy SMBC/E1** promotes the efficient use of land and requires development within the UK Central Hub Area to limit the use of natural resources and maximise sustainability principles. **Policies SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** require major developments to be comprehensively planned and supported by appropriate infrastructure and mitigation measures, helping to ensure that land resources are used efficiently and that site-specific constraints are appropriately addressed.

9.2.86 **Policy SMBC/WM1** is particularly relevant to this objective. The policy supports the development of an efficient and sustainable waste management network that contributes towards a circular economy and promotes the management of waste at the highest practicable level of the waste hierarchy. It supports the beneficial reuse, recycling and recovery of waste materials, encourages resource and energy efficiency and promotes the production and use of secondary and recycled materials. The policy also gives particular support to proposals that make effective use of existing waste management sites and previously developed land, thereby reducing pressure on undeveloped land and finite natural resources. In addition, the policy requires waste management proposals to address issues relating to land contamination, instability, groundwater and surface water protection, helping to ensure that land quality issues are appropriately managed.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.87 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in **major negative effects (--)** in relation to soils and natural resources. The majority of allocations are located on greenfield land, and several would

result in the loss of substantial areas of BMV agricultural land. Although the draft Local Plan includes policies promoting resource efficiency, recycling, circular economy principles and the effective use of previously developed land, these measures are unlikely to offset the permanent loss of BMV agricultural land associated with the scale of development proposed. Nonetheless, it is important to note that major negative effects for soil and natural resources were concluded for all growth scenarios tested through the SA process at this stage of plan making, reflecting the scale of the challenge in meeting LHN in the absence of suitable and available larger-scale brownfield site options across the borough to accommodate major development.

Transport

	**Reasonable alternatives significance score**	**Plan appraisal significance score**
	Major positive (++)	**Major positive (++)**

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.88 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have major positive effects by maximising growth at locations within walking distance of railway stations. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.89 The positive effects identified through the appraisal of Scenario 1 are reinforced by the policy framework of the draft Local Plan. Policy **SMBC/SS1** directs development towards the borough's most sustainable settlements, whilst **Policy SMBC/HO2** focuses growth within broad locations associated with railway stations and sustainable transport corridors. By concentrating a significant proportion of future development around Berkswell, Dorridge, Hampton-in-Arden, Widney Manor, Tile Hill and Whitlocks End/Earlswood, the spatial strategy is expected to maximise opportunities for travel by rail and reduce reliance on private vehicles.

9.2.90 The draft Local Plan's housing allocations are similarly focused on locations capable of integrating with the existing transport network. The Balsall Common allocations (**Policies SMBC/BC3, BC5, and BC6**) include requirements to enhance pedestrian and cycle connectivity to Berkswell railway station and contribute towards the Balsall Common Multi-Modal Package. The Dickens Heath and Whitlocks End allocations (**Policies SMBC/BL1 and BL3**) include measures to improve active travel and public transport connectivity to Whitlocks End railway station, whilst the Hampton-in-Arden allocation (**Policy SMBC/HA1**) seeks enhanced links to Hampton-in-Arden railway station and village services.

9.2.91 The Knowle allocations (**Policies SMBC/KN1A and KN1B**) and Solihull allocations (**Policies SMBC/SO1 and SO2**) are not located in immediate proximity to railway stations but are located on the local bus network. The site-specific policies for these locations also include requirements to improve pedestrian, cycle and public transport connectivity to nearby centres and transport nodes. The Arden Cross allocation (**Policy SMBC/UK1**) occupies one of the most strategically important transport locations in the country, centred around Birmingham International Station and the future HS2 Interchange Station. The allocation seeks to create a transport-led development with high levels of pedestrian permeability and integration with wider movement networks.

9.2.92 The strategic employment policies further support sustainable transport objectives. **Policies SMBC/E1 and SMBC/E2** focus growth within the UK Central Hub Area and Arden Cross, whilst **Policies SMBC/E3 to SMBC/E7** direct employment growth towards existing strategic employment locations including the NEC, Birmingham Airport, Jaguar Land Rover and Birmingham Business Park. These locations already benefit from significant transport infrastructure and are capable of supporting sustainable access to employment opportunities.

Broader local plan effects related to transport

9.2.93 **Policy SMBC/TM1** provides significant support for the transport performance of the draft Local Plan by promoting Metro and Sprint rapid transit corridors serving the UK Central Hub Area and wider borough. **Policies SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** also require development to be comprehensively planned and supported by appropriate infrastructure, ensuring that transport improvements are integrated into new development. In addition, **Policy SMBC/HC1** promotes active travel and healthy lifestyles through the provision of walking and cycling connections to services, facilities and community destinations.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.94 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in **major positive effects (++)** in relation to transport. The preferred spatial strategy is strongly aligned with the borough's rail and bus network and focuses growth within locations capable of supporting sustainable travel patterns. These benefits are reinforced by the concentration of development around railway stations, the strategic role of UK Central and Arden Cross, the promotion of rapid transit infrastructure and numerous site-specific requirements to improve walking, cycling and public transport connectivity.

Water

	Reasonable alternatives significance score	Plan appraisal significance score
	Minor negative (-)	Neutral (0)

Appraisal of the spatial strategy (incorporating policies)

9.2.95 The appraisal of Scenario 1 (the emerging preferred strategy) concluded that the emerging spatial strategy would have minor negative (-) effects due to increased pressure on water resources and the potential for effects on watercourses, water quality and drainage systems. The proposed plan policies are now factored into this assessment in this section.

9.2.96 The draft Local Plan accommodates significant levels of growth and therefore has the potential to increase demand for water resources and wastewater treatment infrastructure. This is particularly relevant given that the borough lies within a water-stressed area and is wholly covered by an NVZ. Nevertheless, the preferred spatial strategy focuses development within broad locations and allocations that have been identified having regard to environmental constraints. **Policy SMBC/HO2** requires development within broad locations to avoid, mitigate or compensate for adverse environmental impacts, providing a mechanism through which effects on the water environment can be addressed as sites come forward.

9.2.97 Several allocations are associated with water environment constraints and include policy requirements intended to address them. The Balsall Common allocations (**Policies SMBC/BC3, BC5, and BC6**), the Dickens Heath and Whitlocks End allocations (**Policies SMBC/BL1 and BL3**), the Hampton-in-Arden allocation (**Policy SMBC/HA1**) and the Knowle allocations (**Policies SMBC/KN1A and KN1B**) all include requirements relating to SuDS, flood risk management or flood alleviation measures. Similarly, the Solihull allocations (**Policies SMBC/SO1 and SO2**) require integrated drainage strategies and surface water management measures. The Damson Parkway allocation (**Policy SMBC/UK2**) includes flood alleviation measures and the enhancement of the Low Brook corridor as part of a wider SuDS strategy. Collectively, these provisions are expected to reduce potential effects on water quality, drainage and flood risk.

Broader local plan effects related to water

9.2.98 Several draft Local Plan policies are expected to further support the protection of water resources and water quality. **Policies SMBC/D1 and SMBC/D2** require development to be comprehensively planned and supported by appropriate infrastructure, helping to ensure that water supply, drainage and wastewater requirements are addressed in a coordinated manner. **Policy SMBC/WM1** requires waste management

facilities to avoid unacceptable effects on surface water and groundwater and to incorporate measures that support resource efficiency and environmental protection. In combination, these policies provide a framework through which potential effects on the water environment can be identified, managed and mitigated.

Overall effects (and conclusions on significance)

9.2.99 Overall, the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan is expected to result in a **neutral effect (0)** in relation to water. Whilst growth will inevitably increase demand for water resources and wastewater infrastructure within a water-stressed borough, the draft Local Plan contains measures intended to manage flood risk, protect water quality and support sustainable drainage. The inclusion of site-specific requirements relating to SuDS, flood mitigation and integrated drainage strategies further strengthens this position.

Cumulative and In-Combination Effects

9.2.100 Cumulative and in-combination effects refer to the combined impacts of multiple policies, proposals, or developments:

- Cumulative effects arise when several policies or developments affect the same environmental receptor or issue over time; and
- In-combination effects occur when the Local Plan's impacts interact with those from other plans or projects, potentially leading to greater overall effects.

Cumulative Effects

9.2.101 The draft Local Plan is expected to give rise to both **positive and negative cumulative effects**. **Major positive cumulative effects** are anticipated in relation to housing, communities and health, economy and employment, accessibility and transport. The combined effect of **Policies SMBC/SS1, HO1, HO2, E1-E7, HC1, HC2, D1 and D2** is expected to deliver substantial housing and employment growth in accessible locations, supported by improvements to community infrastructure, active travel, public transport and strategic transport networks. Collectively, these policies are expected to contribute towards improved access to jobs, services, facilities and housing, whilst supporting sustainable economic growth and social wellbeing.

9.2.102 **Positive cumulative effects** are also anticipated in relation to climate change mitigation and adaptation. The combined effect of sustainable transport measures, rapid transit infrastructure, green and blue infrastructure, SuDS, BNG and comprehensive masterplanning requirements is expected to improve the resilience of new development to

climate-related hazards whilst supporting lower-carbon travel patterns and more sustainable forms of development.

9.2.103 However, **negative cumulative effects** are also likely to arise. The combined effect of multiple Green Belt and greenfield allocations is expected to result in the permanent loss of open countryside, BMV agricultural land and changes to landscape character. Similarly, several allocations are located in proximity to designated biodiversity assets, priority habitats and heritage assets, creating the potential for cumulative pressures on the natural and historic environment. Whilst the draft Local Plan includes a range of mitigation measures, including site-specific safeguards, environmental enhancement requirements, comprehensive masterplanning and strategic policy protections, some residual adverse effects are expected to remain, particularly in relation to landscape and soils and natural resources.

9.2.104 Overall, cumulative effects arising from the draft Local Plan are expected to be **predominantly positive in the long term**, particularly in relation to housing provision, economic growth, accessibility, transport and community wellbeing. Whilst **negative cumulative effects** are anticipated in relation to the loss of greenfield land, landscape character and agricultural land, these are expected to be reduced through the application of the draft Local Plan's mitigation framework and supporting policies.

In-Combination Effects

9.2.105 The effects of the draft Local Plan have the potential to interact with those arising from neighbouring local plans, strategic infrastructure investment and broader regional growth initiatives. In particular, the continued development of the UK Central Hub Area, HS2 infrastructure, Birmingham Airport, the NEC and associated strategic employment locations is expected to contribute to wider economic growth, investment and connectivity across the West Midlands.

9.2.106 **In-combination positive effects** are anticipated through the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure, including rail investment, HS2, rapid transit proposals and improvements to active travel networks. These initiatives are expected to complement the spatial strategy of the draft Local Plan by improving connectivity between homes, jobs, services and facilities both within and beyond the borough.

9.2.107 Potential **negative in-combination effects** may arise where growth within Solihull combines with development proposed in neighbouring authority areas, resulting in increased pressure on transport infrastructure, biodiversity assets, water resources, environmental capacity and recreational resources. However, these effects are expected to be addressed through statutory environmental assessment processes, cross-boundary working (primarily through the emerging West Midlands SDS),

infrastructure planning and the implementation of relevant local and national planning policies.

9.2.108 Provided that these relationships are maintained and strategic mitigation is implemented, **no significant negative in-combination effects** are anticipated from the draft Local Plan. Ongoing cooperation with neighbouring authorities, infrastructure providers and regional bodies will be important to manage cumulative and in-combination impacts and ensure that development contributes positively to the borough and wider area.

9.3. Recommendations

9.3.1 The SA has identified a small number of opportunities to strengthen the policy framework within the draft Local Plan and increase certainty that potential significant effects are appropriately managed:

- Consider strengthening climate change adaptation provisions within **Policies SMBC/BC5, BC6, SO1 and UK1** through the inclusion of explicit requirements for SuDS and green-blue infrastructure, consistent with the approach taken for other allocations affected by flood risk and climate resilience considerations.
- Consider strengthening **Policy SMBC/KN1B** to ensure that effects on the setting of Grimshaw Hall (Grade I listed building) are considered consistently across both Knowle allocations. This could include the introduction of a site-specific heritage requirement similar to that contained within **Policy SMBC/KN1A**.
- Consider strengthening **Policy SMBC/UK1** (Arden Cross and HS2 Interchange) through the inclusion of a specific heritage criterion relating to the conservation of Park Farmhouse (Grade II* listed building) and its setting. This would provide greater certainty that heritage considerations are incorporated into future masterplanning and development proposals.
- Consider strengthening biodiversity safeguards within **Policy SMBC/SO1 (East of Solihull)**. The site contains priority woodland and traditional orchard habitat and is adjacent to a LWS, but the allocation does not currently include specific biodiversity protection or enhancement measures.

Part 3: What are the next steps?

10. Plan finalisation

10.1. Publication of the Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19)

10.1.1 This SA Report has been prepared alongside the Proposed Submission Local Plan, published under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The report documents how sustainability considerations have informed plan preparation and presents an appraisal of the Proposed Submission Local Plan and the reasonable alternatives considered.

10.2. Representations on the Proposed Submission Local Plan

10.2.1 The Proposed Submission Local Plan and accompanying SA Report are being published for representations on legal compliance and soundness. Representations received during the consultation period will be considered by the Council prior to submission of the Plan for independent examination.

10.3. Submission, examination and adoption

10.3.1 Following the close of the Regulation 19 consultation period, the Council will review the representations received and prepare the necessary documentation for submission. The Local Plan and accompanying SA Report will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

10.3.2 The appointed Inspector will consider the submitted Local Plan, the SA Report and representations made during the consultation period in determining whether the Plan satisfies the relevant legal requirements and whether it is sound.

10.3.3 Where modifications are identified as necessary during Examination, these will be considered through the SA process, as appropriate. Where required, the findings of any additional appraisal work will be published in an SA Addendum alongside consultation on the proposed modifications.

10.3.4 Following completion of the examination process and receipt of the Inspector's Report, the Council may proceed to adopt the Local Plan. An SA Adoption Statement will then be prepared setting out how environmental, social and economic considerations, consultation responses and the findings of the SA have been taken into account in the adopted Plan.

11. Monitoring

11.1.1 The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) require the significant environmental effects of implementing the Plan to be monitored. Monitoring helps to identify any unforeseen adverse effects arising from implementation of the Plan and enables appropriate remedial action to be taken where necessary.

11.1.2 The Local Plan contains a comprehensive monitoring framework which includes a range of indicators relating to housing delivery, employment growth, biodiversity, climate change, infrastructure provision, heritage, transport and other sustainability objectives. The monitoring framework therefore provides an important mechanism for tracking many of the environmental, social and economic effects identified through this SA.

11.1.3 Particular attention should be given to monitoring potential negative or mixed effects identified through the SA, with proposed measures outlined in **Table 11-1** below.

11.1.4 Where monitoring identifies significant unforeseen adverse effects, or where the Local Plan is not performing as anticipated, the Council should consider whether additional mitigation measures, policy interventions or a review of the Local Plan are required.

Table 11-1: Proposed monitoring framework

SA Topic	Indicator	Desired Trend / Target	Monitoring Frequency	Trigger for Further Investigation	Potential Response
Biodiversity and geodiversity	BNG delivered through major developments	Statutory BNG requirements consistently achieved	Annual	BNG not being consistently achieved	Review implementation of biodiversity mitigation and enhancement measures
Biodiversity and geodiversity	Condition of designated biodiversity assets (SSSI, LWS and LNR)	No deterioration in condition	Annual	Deterioration in condition of designated sites	Investigate causes and consider additional mitigation or management measures
Climate change adaptation	Delivery of SuDS, flood alleviation and drainage measures associated with major developments	Delivery in accordance with approved schemes	Annual	Failure to deliver approved measures	Review implementation of allocation and infrastructure policies
Climate change adaptation	Proportion of completed development located within Flood Zones 2 and 3	Majority of development directed to areas at lowest risk of flooding	Annual	Increasing proportion of development completed within Flood Zones 2 and 3	Review application of the Sequential Test and implementation of flood risk policies
Economy and employment	Employment land delivered (ha)	Delivery broadly consistent with Policy SMBC/E7 requirements	Annual	Delivery significantly below expected trajectory	Engage with landowners, developers and businesses to identify barriers

SA Topic	Indicator	Desired Trend / Target	Monitoring Frequency	Trigger for Further Investigation	Potential Response
Historic environment	Number of heritage assets on the Heritage at Risk Register	Stable or decreasing trend	Annual	Increase in heritage assets at risk	Work with Historic England and asset owners to identify management measures
Housing	Net housing completions	Delivery in line with Local Plan trajectory	Annual	Delivery falls below trajectory	Investigate barriers to delivery and review housing land supply assumptions
Housing	Affordable housing completions	Delivery broadly consistent with Policy SMBC/HO3 requirements	Annual	Delivery significantly below expected levels	Review viability and affordable housing delivery issues
Housing	Five-year housing land supply	Maintain minimum five-year supply	Annual	Supply falls below five years	Review housing land availability and delivery assumptions
Housing	Number of homes delivered via Green Belt release (i.e., on ‘potential grey belt’ land)	Delivery in alignment with the findings of the Green Belt Assessment and national policy.	Annual	Delivery exceeds expected levels or where applications are approved in locations which have ‘strong’ contributions to the Green Belt.	Review of Green Belt Assessment findings to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
Housing	Land availability within broad locations and potential impacts on	Ensuring that the proposed levels of growth at broad	Annual	Delivery significantly below expected levels	Review housing land availability and delivery assumptions

SA Topic	Indicator	Desired Trend / Target	Monitoring Frequency	Trigger for Further Investigation	Potential Response
	supply between years 6-17 of the plan period	locations is deliverable.			
Landscape	Delivery of landscape mitigation, green infrastructure and structural planting associated with major allocations	Delivery in accordance with approved schemes	Annual	Significant non-delivery of mitigation measures	Review implementation and long-term management arrangements
Soils and natural resources	Loss of Best and Most Versatile (BMV) agricultural land through completed development	Losses broadly consistent with Local Plan assumptions	Annual	Greater than anticipated loss of BMV land	Consider implications for future site selection and plan review
Transport and accessibility	Delivery of walking, cycling, public transport and strategic transport infrastructure associated with major developments	Delivery in accordance with infrastructure programmes	Annual	Significant delays in delivery	Review infrastructure funding and delivery mechanisms
Water	Ecological and chemical status of waterbodies	No deterioration in WFD ecological status	Annual	Deterioration in waterbody status	Investigate causes and liaise with relevant agencies

Appendix A : Regulatory requirements

As discussed in Section 1, Schedule 2 of the Environmental Assessment of Plans Regulations 2004 explains the information that must be contained in the SA Report. **Table A-1** links the structure of this report to an interpretation of Schedule 2, whilst **Table A-2** explains this interpretation. **Table A-3** then presents a discussion of more how the information in this SA Report reflects the requirements for the SA Report.

Table A-1: Questions answered by this SA Report, in-line with an interpretation of regulatory requirements

Questions answered	As per regulations… the SA Report must include…
Introduction	
What's the plan seeking to achieve?	• An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes
What's the SA scope? (supported by the SA Scoping Report)	
What's the sustainability 'context'?	• Relevant environmental protection objectives, established at international or national level • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
What's the sustainability 'baseline'?	• Relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan • The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected • Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan including those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance
What are the key issues and objectives that should be a focus?	• Key environmental problems / issues and objectives that should be a focus of (i.e. provide a 'framework' for) assessment

Questions answered	As per regulations… the SA Report must include…
Part 1	
What has plan-making / SA involved up to this point?	• Outline reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with (and thus an explanation of the 'reasonableness' of the approach) • The likely significant effects associated with alternatives • Outline reasons for selecting the preferred approach in-light of alternatives assessment / a description of how environmental objectives and considerations are reflected in the draft plan
Part 2	
What are the SA findings at this current stage?	• The likely significant effects associated with the draft plan • The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the draft plan
Part 3	
What happens next?	• A description of the monitoring measures envisaged

Table A-2: Interpreting Schedule 2 and linking the interpretation to the report structure

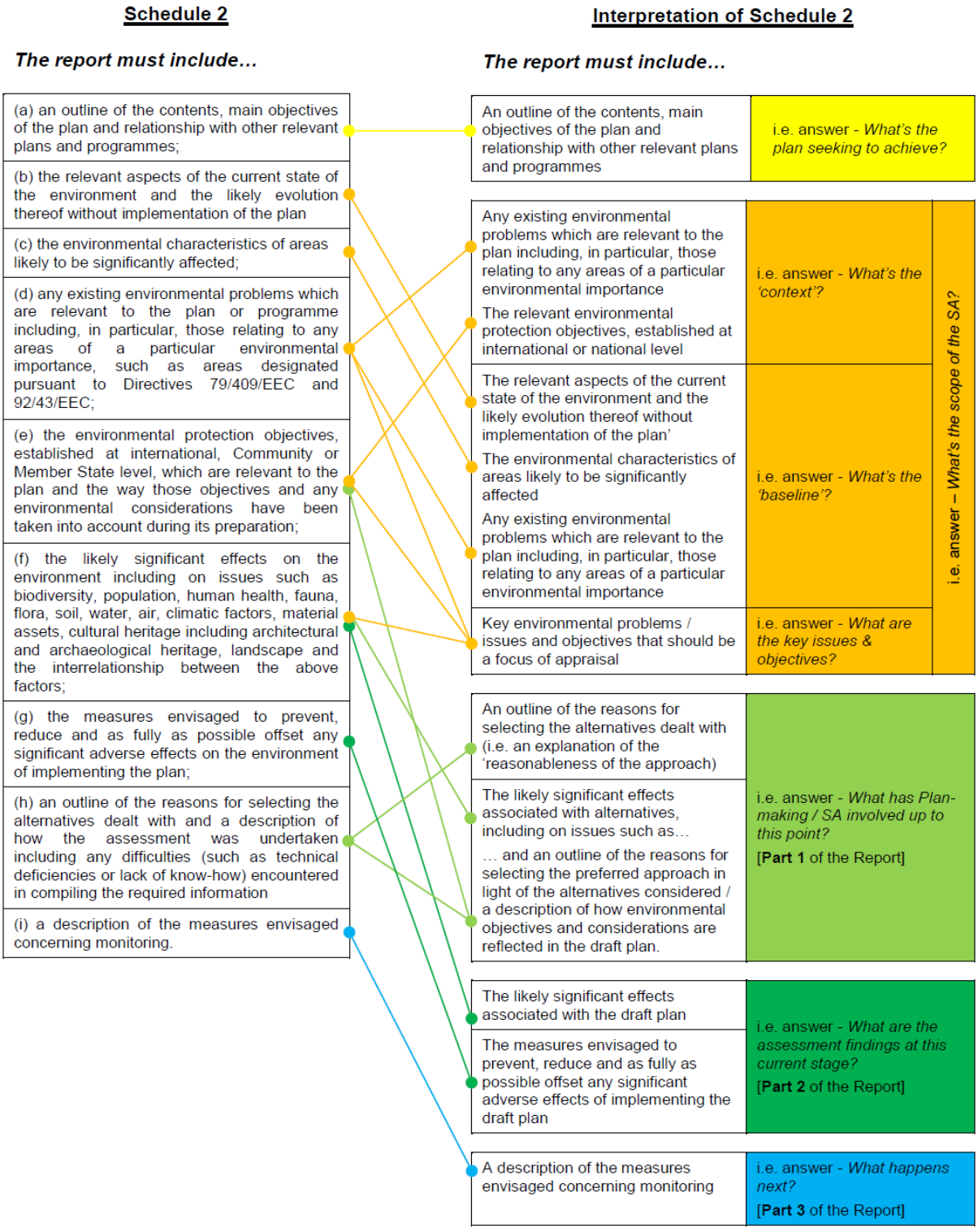


Table A-3: Checklist of how and where (within this report) regulatory requirements are reflected

Regulatory requirement	Information presented in this report
Schedule 2 of the regulations lists the information to be provided within the SA (or in this case, SA) Report:	
• An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes;	**Section 1 and Section 2** presents this information.
• The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme; • The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected; • … environmental problems which are relevant… …areas of a particular environmental importance…;	These matters were considered in detail at the scoping stage, which included consultation on a Scoping Report. The outcome of scoping was an 'SA framework', which is presented within **Section 3**. The SA scope – in terms of key sustainability issues and objectives, including accounting for evolution of the baseline without the plan – is then discussed within the appraisal chapters as appropriate, i.e. in light of the options and proposals that are a focus of the appraisal.
• The environmental protection objectives, established at international, community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental, considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	The Scoping Report presented a detailed context review and explained how key messages from this (and baseline review) fed into the 'SA framework', which is presented within **Section 3**. Also, information on the SA scope is presented as part of appraisal work in **Section 6 and 9**. With regards to explaining *"how… considerations have been taken into account"*, **Section 7** explains reasons for supporting the preferred option, i.e. how/why the preferred option is justified in-light of alternatives appraisal.
• The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets,	**Section 6** presents alternatives appraisal findings in respect of reasonable growth scenarios, whilst **Section 9** presents an appraisal of the Local Plan as a whole. All appraisal

Regulatory requirement	Information presented in this report
cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors.	work naturally involved giving consideration to the SA scope and the various effect characteristics.
• The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan…	**Section 9** presents recommendations and flags potential elements that can be a focus of further work if required ahead of Local Plan finalisation.
• An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information;	**Section 4 and Section 5** deal with 'reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with', with an explanation of reasons for focusing on growth scenarios / certain growth scenarios. **Section 7** explains 'reasons for supporting the preferred approach', i.e. explains how/why the preferred approach is justified in-light of the alternatives / scenarios appraisal. Methodology is discussed at various places, ahead of presenting appraisal findings.
• … measures envisaged concerning monitoring;	**Section 11** presents this information.
• a non-technical summary… under the above headings	The non-technical summary (NTS) is a separate document.
The SA Report must be published alongside the draft plan, in-line with the following regulations:	
• Authorities… and the public, shall be given an early and effective opportunity within appropriate time frames to express their opinion on the draft plan or programme and the accompanying environmental report before the adoption of the plan…	This SA Report (and accompanying NTS) is published alongside the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan in order to inform the consultation and then subsequent plan finalisation.
The SA Report must be taken into account, alongside consultation responses, when finalising the plan:	

Regulatory requirement	Information presented in this report
• The environmental report prepared pursuant to Article 5 [and] the opinions expressed pursuant to Article 6… shall be taken into account during the preparation of the plan… and before its adoption or submission to the legislative procedure.	This SA Report will be taken into account when finalising the plan for publication (see **Section 10**).

Appendix B : Scoping Responses

Table B1: Responses to the SA Scoping Report (2026)

Consultee	Response summary	How the Response was Considered and Addressed
Historic England *E.B., Historic Environment Planning Adviser* *Response received on 04 February 2026*	Historic England highlighted the importance of considering heritage as a theme that cuts across the whole plan, rather than as a standalone topic. The response recommended a number of updates to the historic environment baseline, including references to heritage at risk, canals, registered parks and gardens, and additional Historic England guidance and evidence sources. Historic England also proposed amendments to the SA Framework, including revised heritage objectives and additional assessment questions relating to heritage at risk, public enjoyment of heritage assets and public understanding of the historic environment. The response further highlighted the links between heritage and other SA topics, particularly climate change, biodiversity, landscape, health and regeneration, and recommended that these relationships are reflected throughout the appraisal process.	The comments have been taken into account in preparing the final SA Framework presented in Section 3.3 and in undertaking the appraisal. Relevant evidence sources and guidance have been reviewed and incorporated where appropriate, and the heritage objective and supporting questions have been refined. The cross-cutting role of the historic environment has also been recognised throughout the appraisal, particularly in the cumulative effects section.
Environment Agency *K.M., Planning Specialist* *Response received on 10 February 2026*	The Environment Agency agreed that the key environmental issues had largely been identified in the SA Framework. The response highlighted opportunities to strengthen the consideration of water quality, flood risk, biodiversity and waste management, suggested several additional evidence sources, and supported amendments to the SA	The comments have been reviewed and taken into account in preparing the final SA Framework and undertaking the appraisal. Amendments have been made to the framework to strengthen the consideration of biodiversity, resource efficiency and flood risk, including more proactive wording within relevant objectives and supporting questions.

Consultee	Response summary	How the Response was Considered and Addressed
	Framework relating to biodiversity net gain, the circular economy and climate resilience. The response also highlighted the need for updated technical evidence to support the Local Plan.	Additional evidence sources have been reviewed where relevant, including updated flood risk information from NaFRA2, which has informed the appraisal process. The response has also influenced the monitoring framework, including through the inclusion of indicators relating to WFD waterbody status and development in areas of flood risk.
Natural England *E.B., Higher Officer - Sustainable Development* *Response received on 11 February 2026*	Natural England generally agreed with the proposed assessment approach and SA objectives. The response highlighted the need for robust biodiversity and landscape assessment of the broad locations, clear justification for site selection through the appraisal of reasonable alternatives, and the use of assessment findings to inform mitigation measures and site design principles. Natural England also emphasised the importance of considering direct, indirect and cumulative effects on designated sites, applying the mitigation hierarchy, considering IRZs for SSSIs, and ensuring that appropriate policy safeguards are included within the Local Plan. In addition, the response highlighted the importance of protecting Local Geological Sites and recognising geodiversity within the assessment process.	The comments have been taken into account in preparing the final SA Framework and undertaking the appraisal. Biodiversity, landscape and geodiversity considerations have informed the appraisal of reasonable alternatives and the assessment of site allocations. The SA has considered the potential for direct, indirect and cumulative effects on designated sites, including the use of SSSI Impact Risk Zones where relevant, and has identified the need for mitigation and avoidance measures where appropriate. Geodiversity interests and Local Geological Sites have also been reflected in the baseline and appraisal process, where appropriate.

Appendix C : Constraints and opportunities mapping

C.1 Arden Cross

Figure C1: Arden Cross biodiversity designations

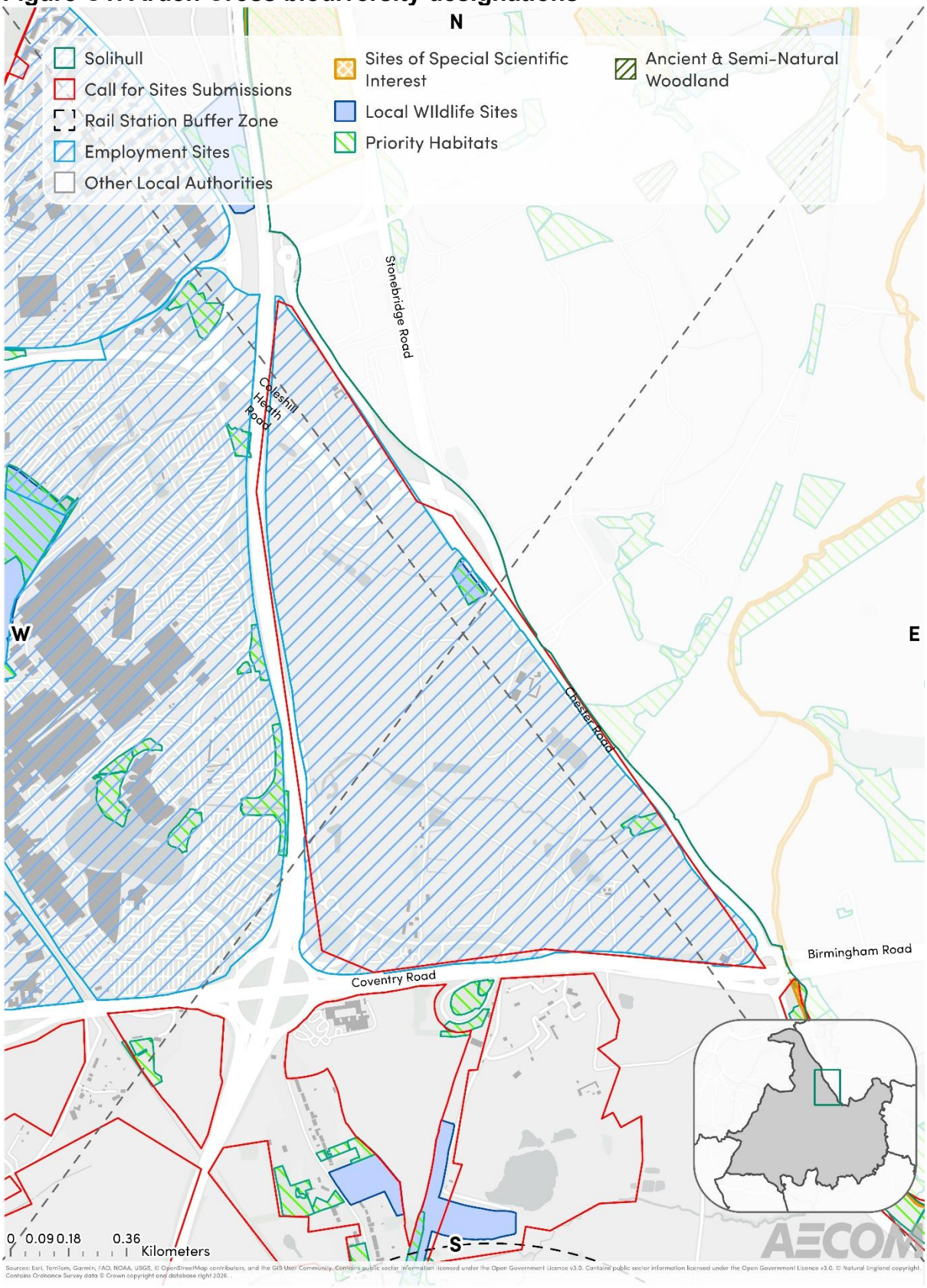


Figure C2: Arden Cross agricultural land and flood risk

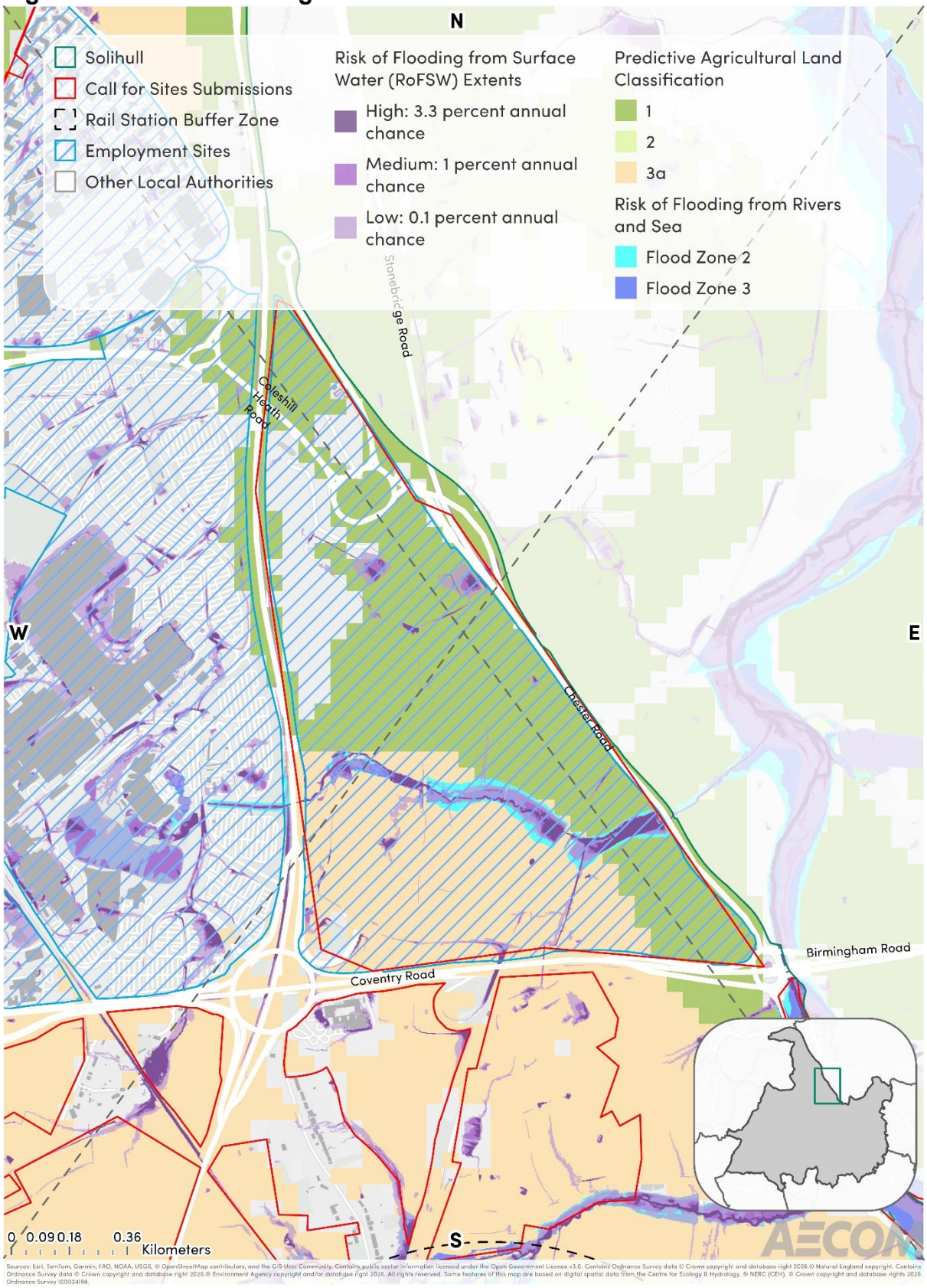
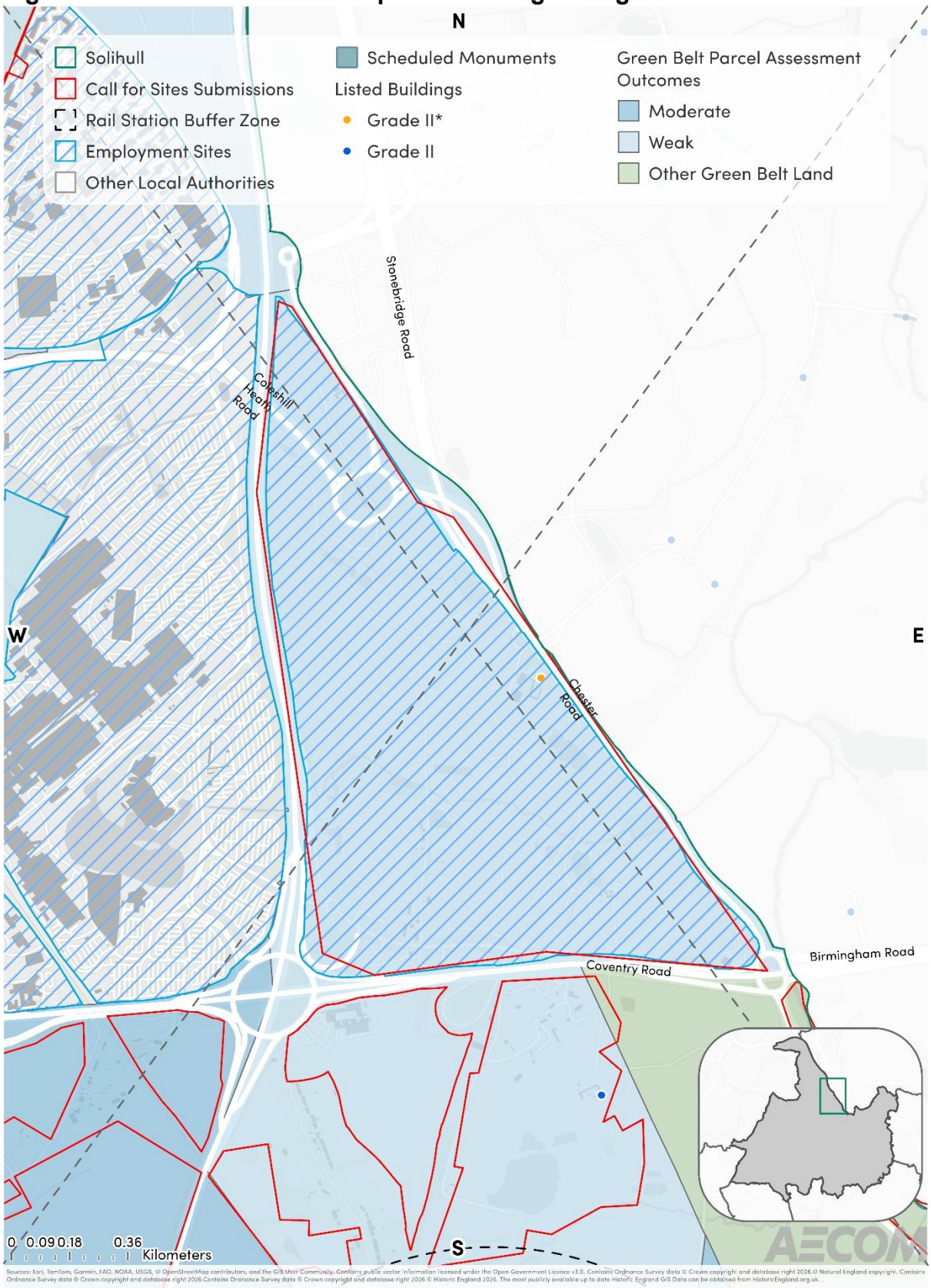


Figure C3: Arden Cross landscape and heritage designations



C.2 Balsall Common

Figure C4: Balsall Common biodiversity designations

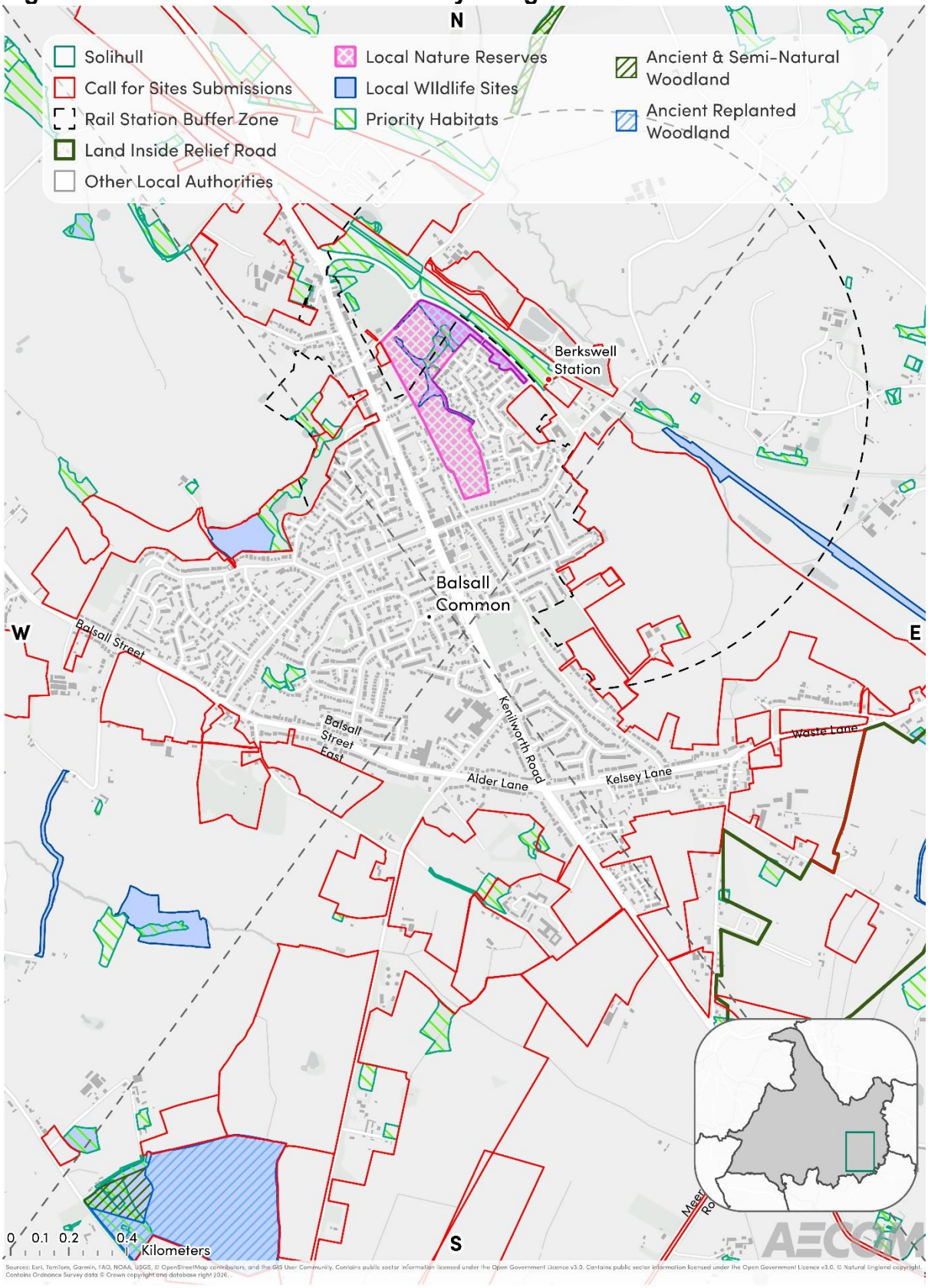


Figure C5: Balsall Common agricultural land and flood risk

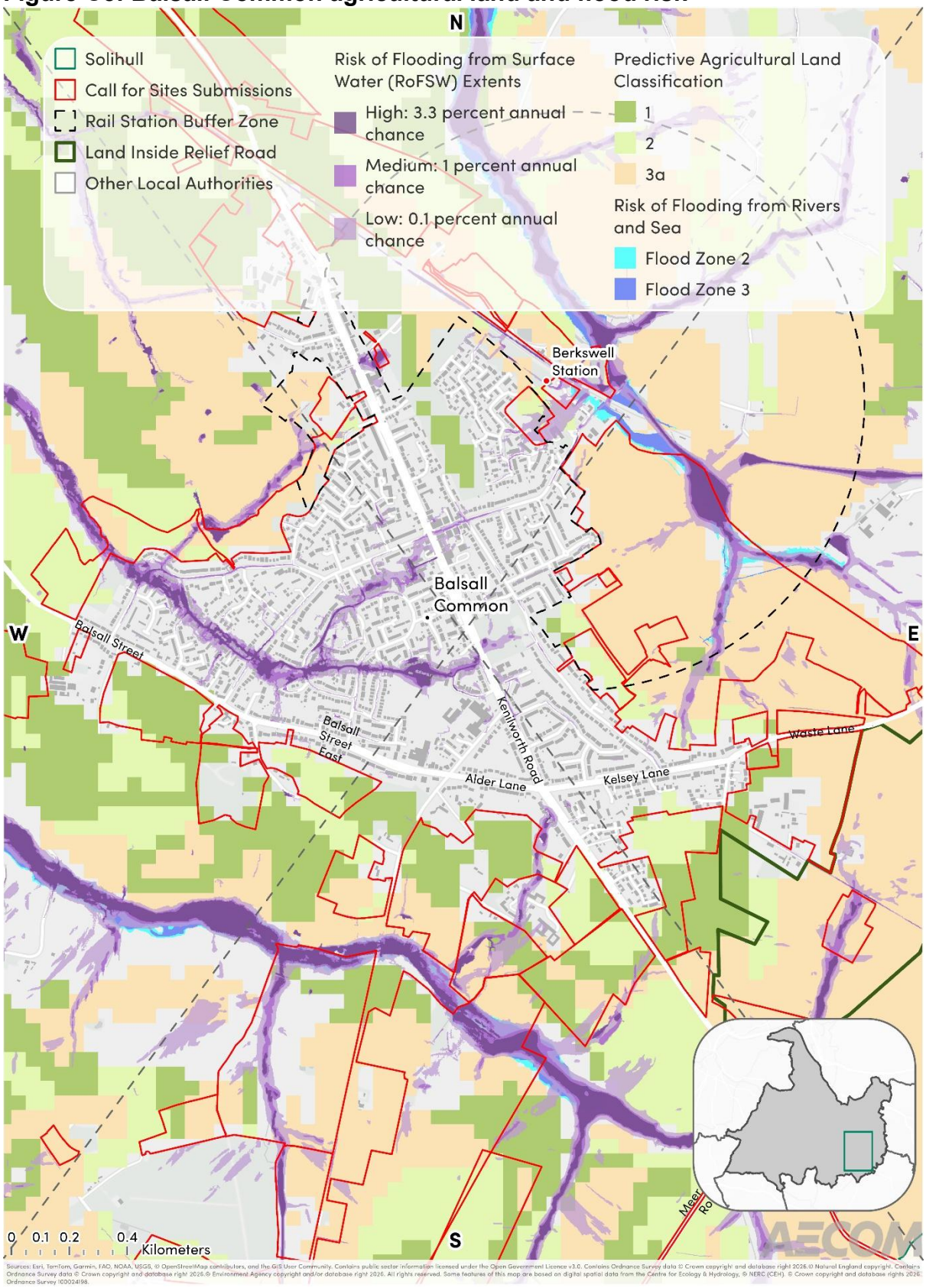
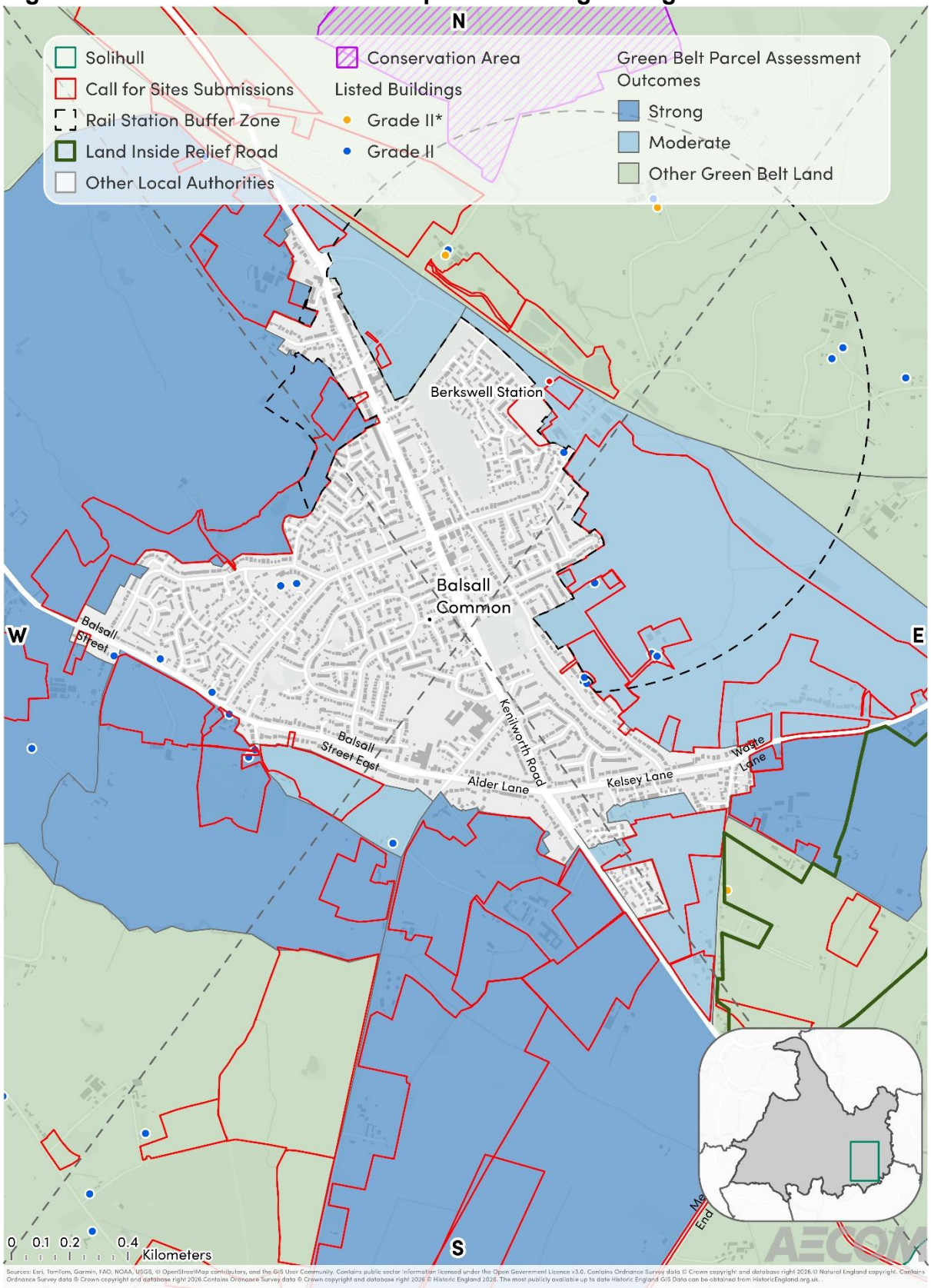


Figure C6: Balsall Common landscape and heritage designations



C.3 Bentley Heath

Figure C7: Bentley Heath biodiversity designations

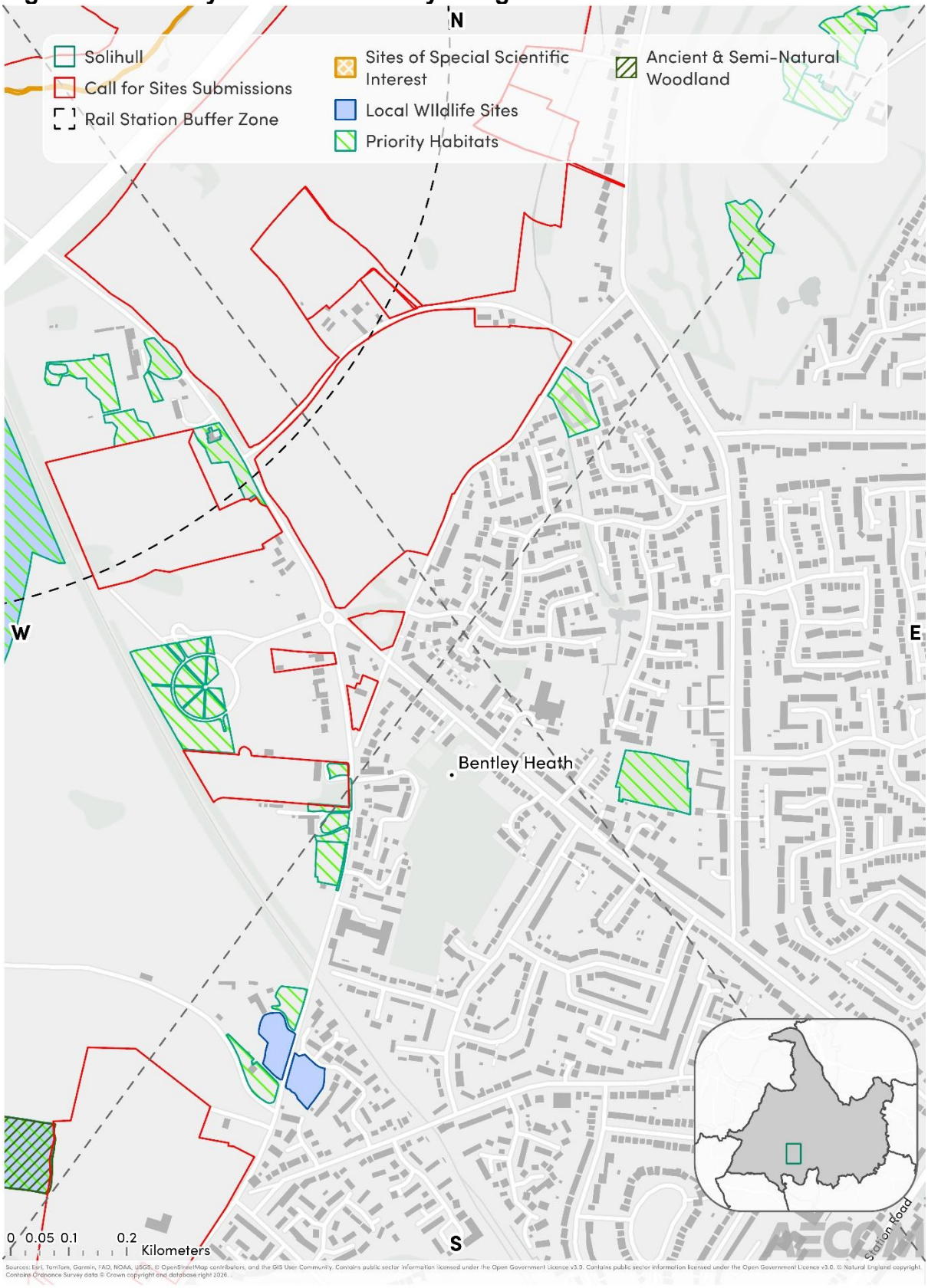


Figure C8: Bentley Heath agricultural land and flood risk

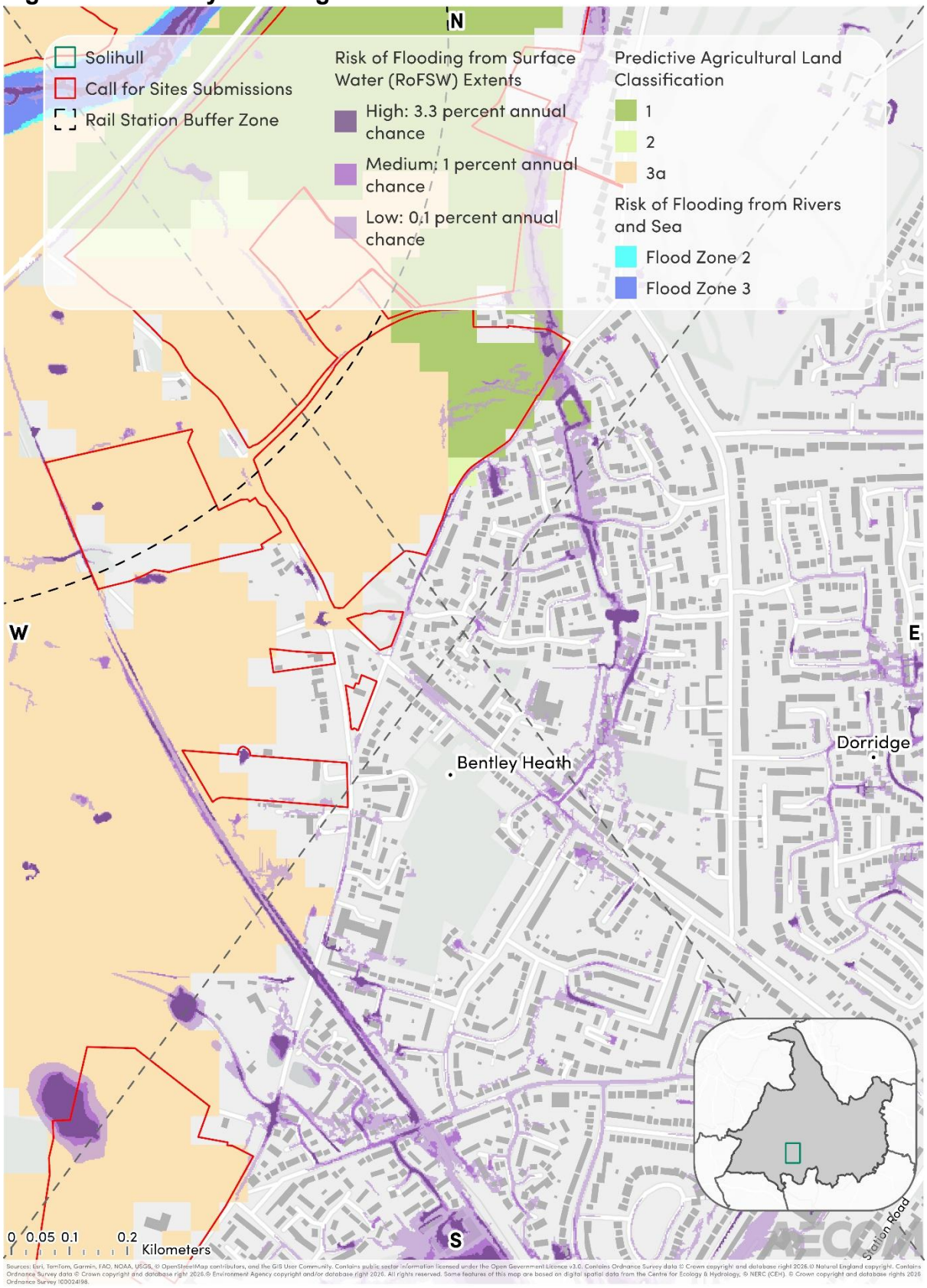
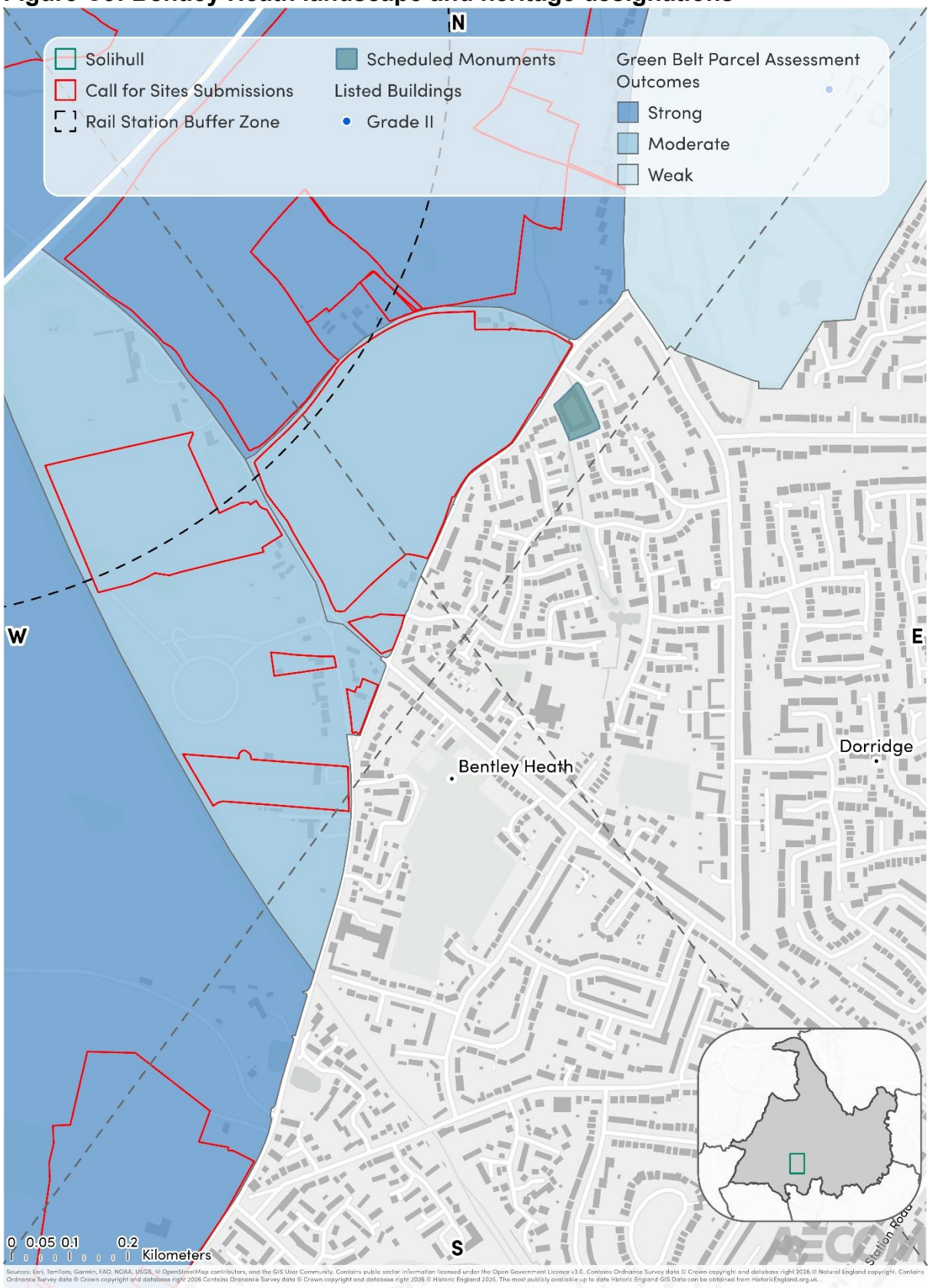


Figure C9: Bentley Heath landscape and heritage designations



C.4 Berkswell

Figure C10: Berkswell biodiversity designations

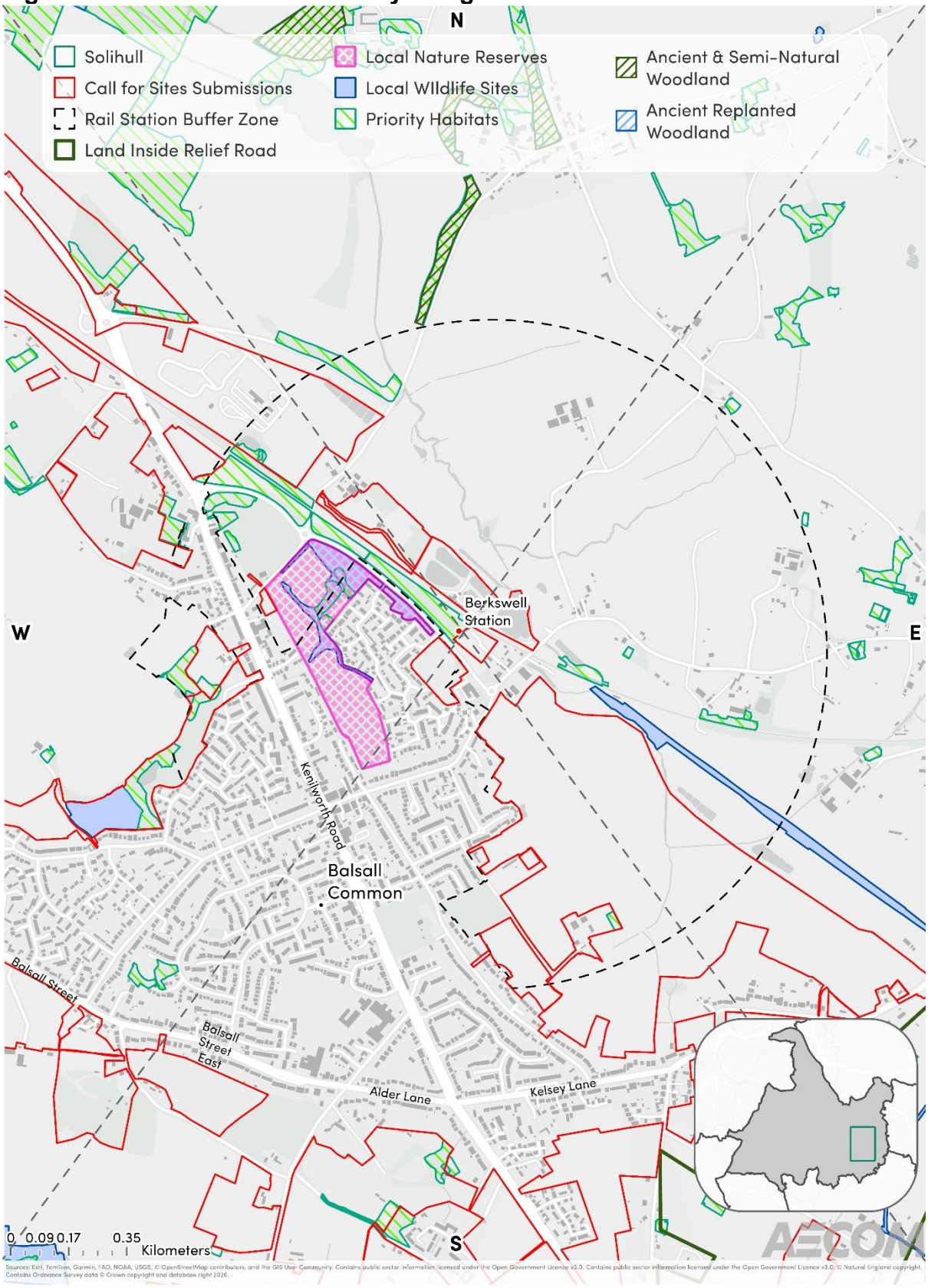


Figure C11: Berkswell agricultural land and flood risk

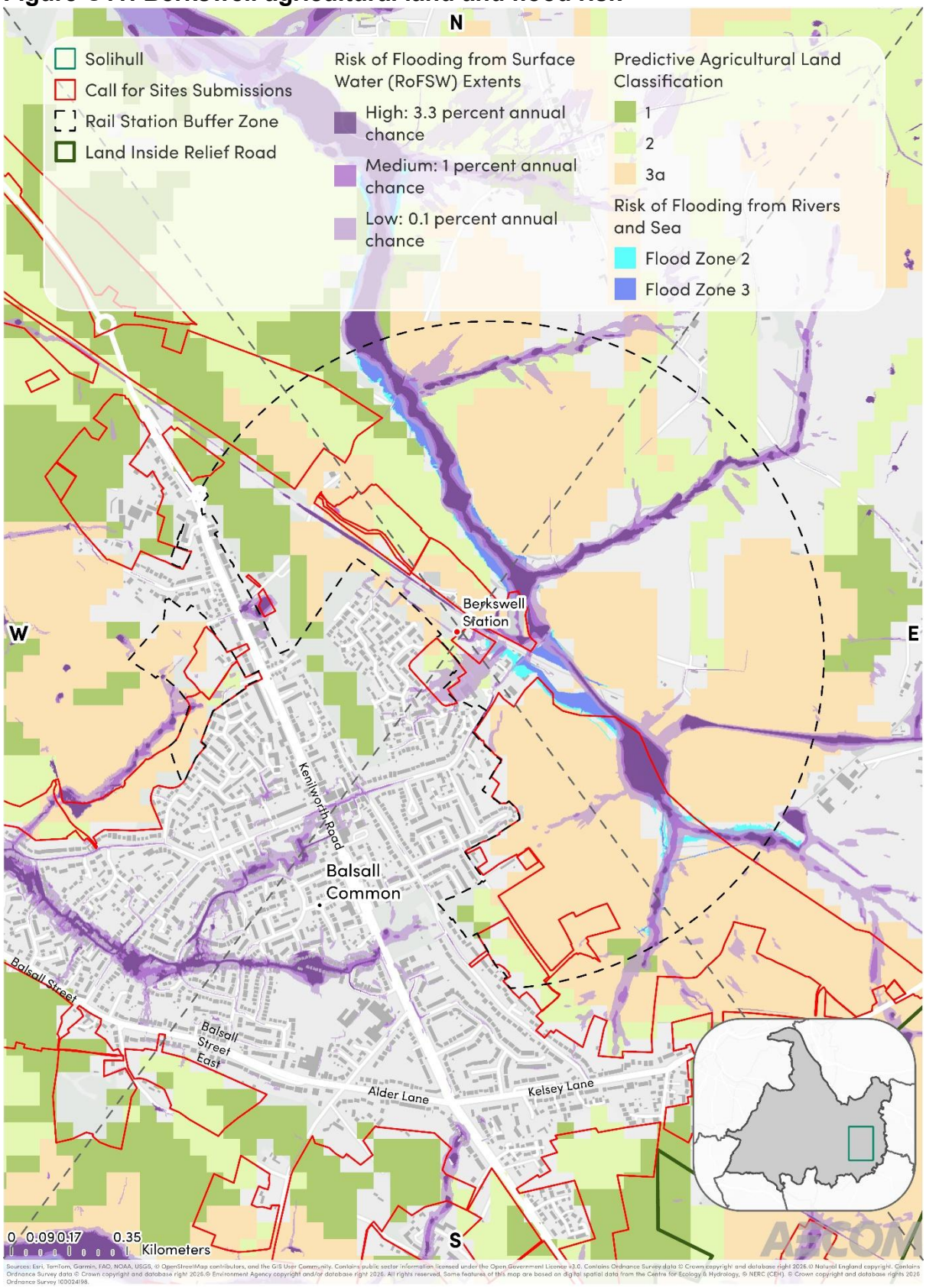
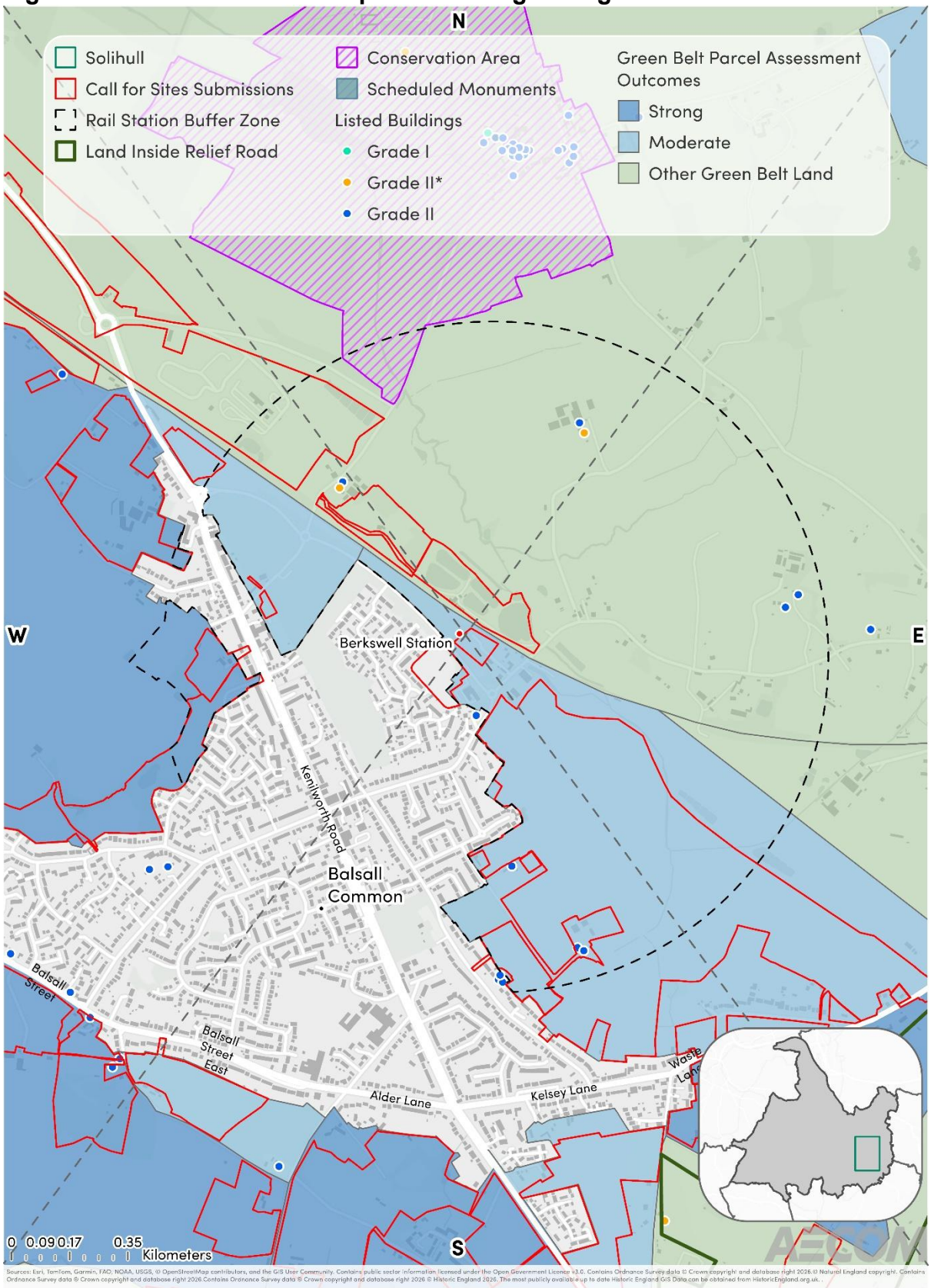


Figure C12: Berkswell landscape and heritage designations



C.5 Birmingham Airport (inc. Bickenhill)

Figure C13: Birmingham Airport biodiversity designations

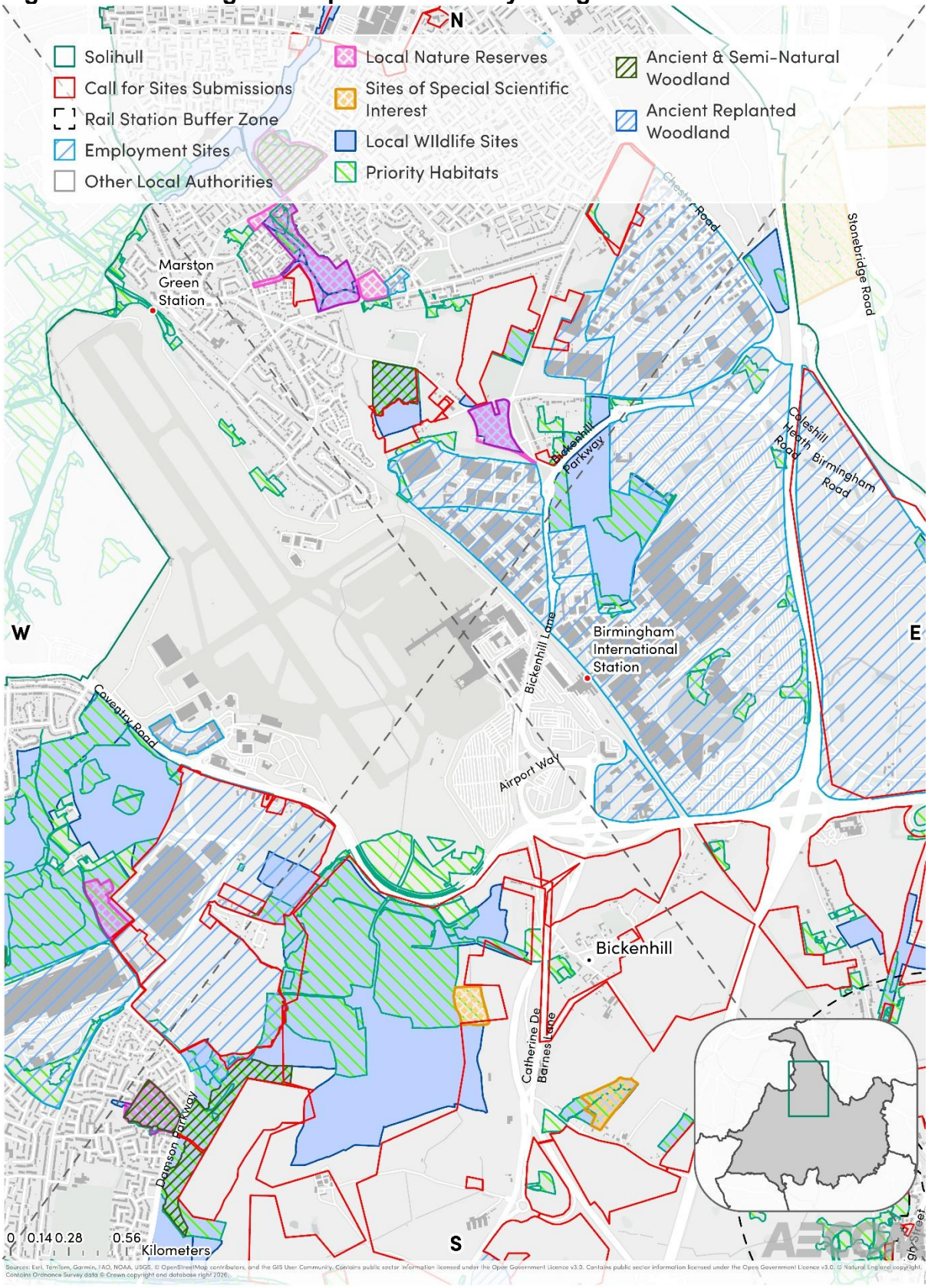


Figure C14: Birmingham Airport agricultural land and flood risk

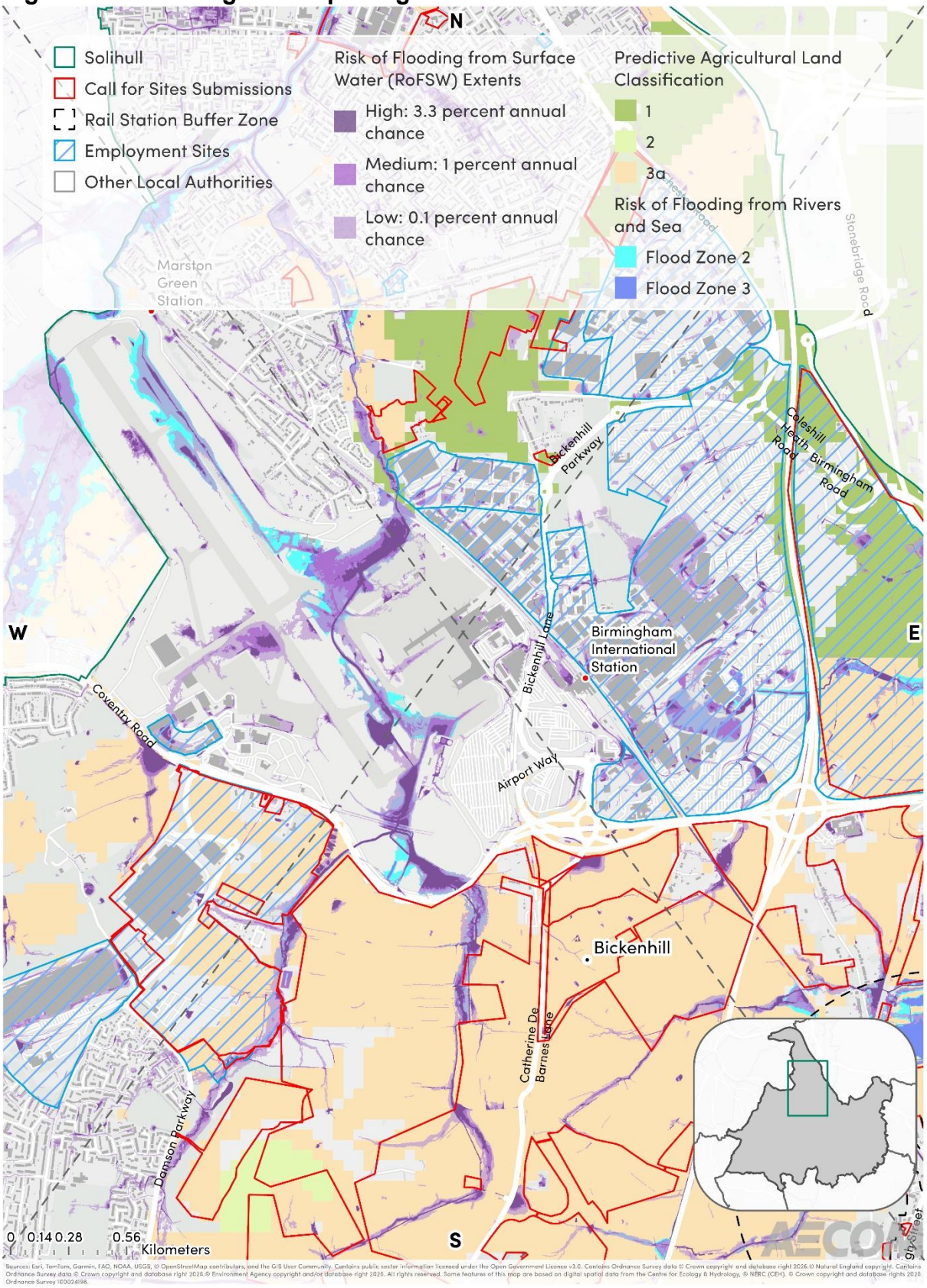
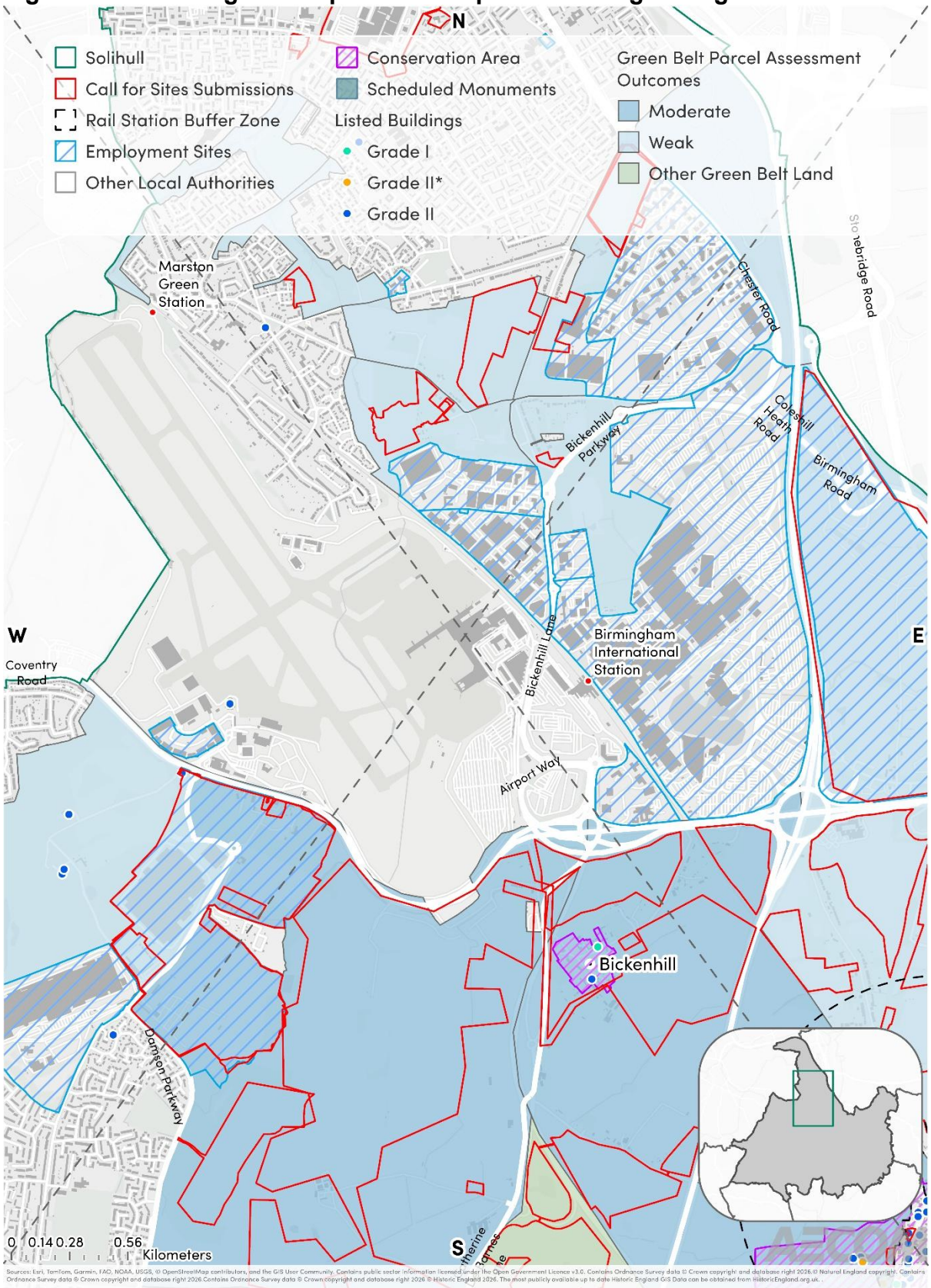


Figure C15: Birmingham Airport landscape and heritage designations



C.6 Catherine-de-Barnes

Figure C16: Catherine-de-Barnes biodiversity designations

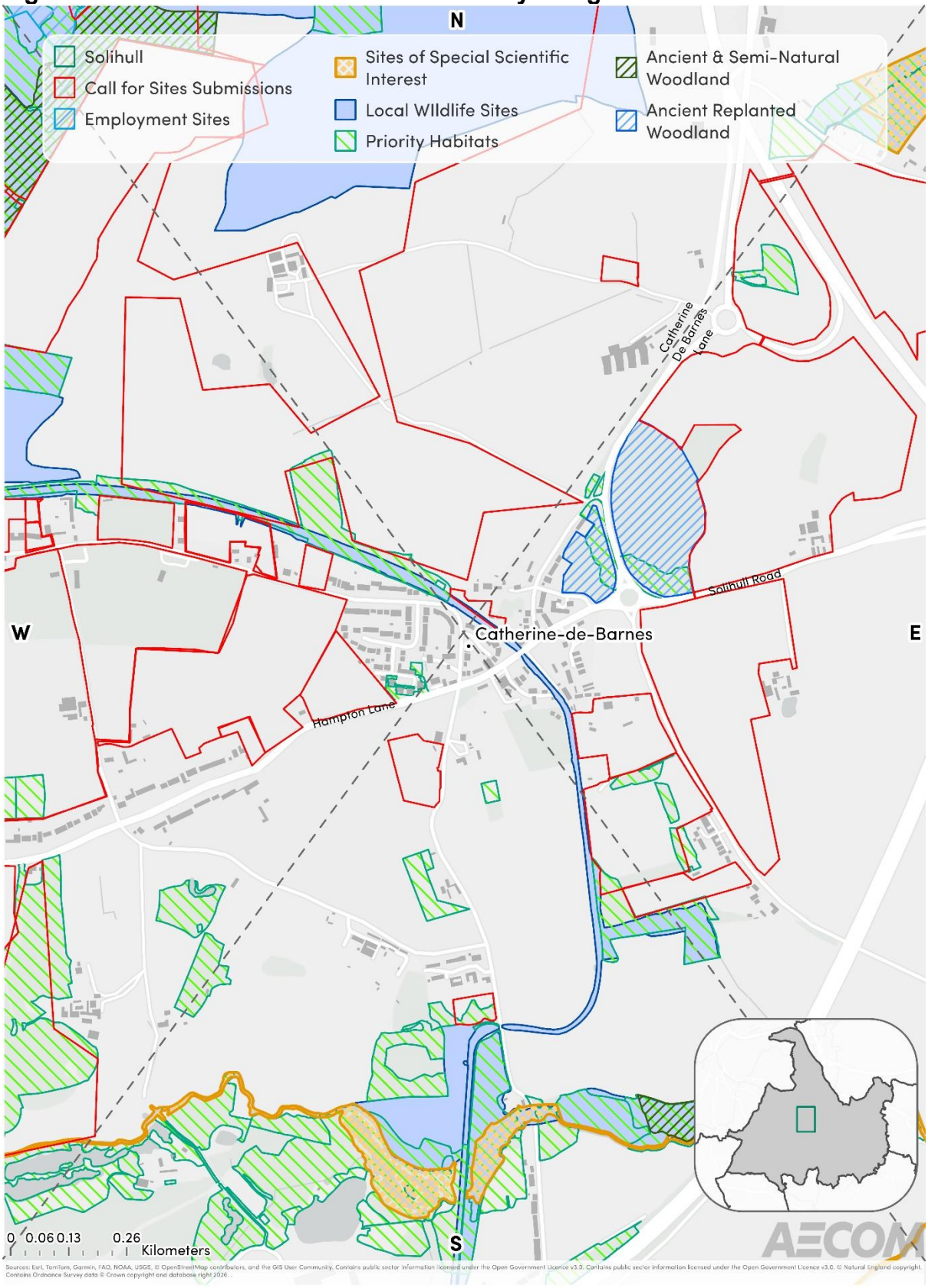


Figure C17: Catherine-de-Barnes agricultural land and flood risk

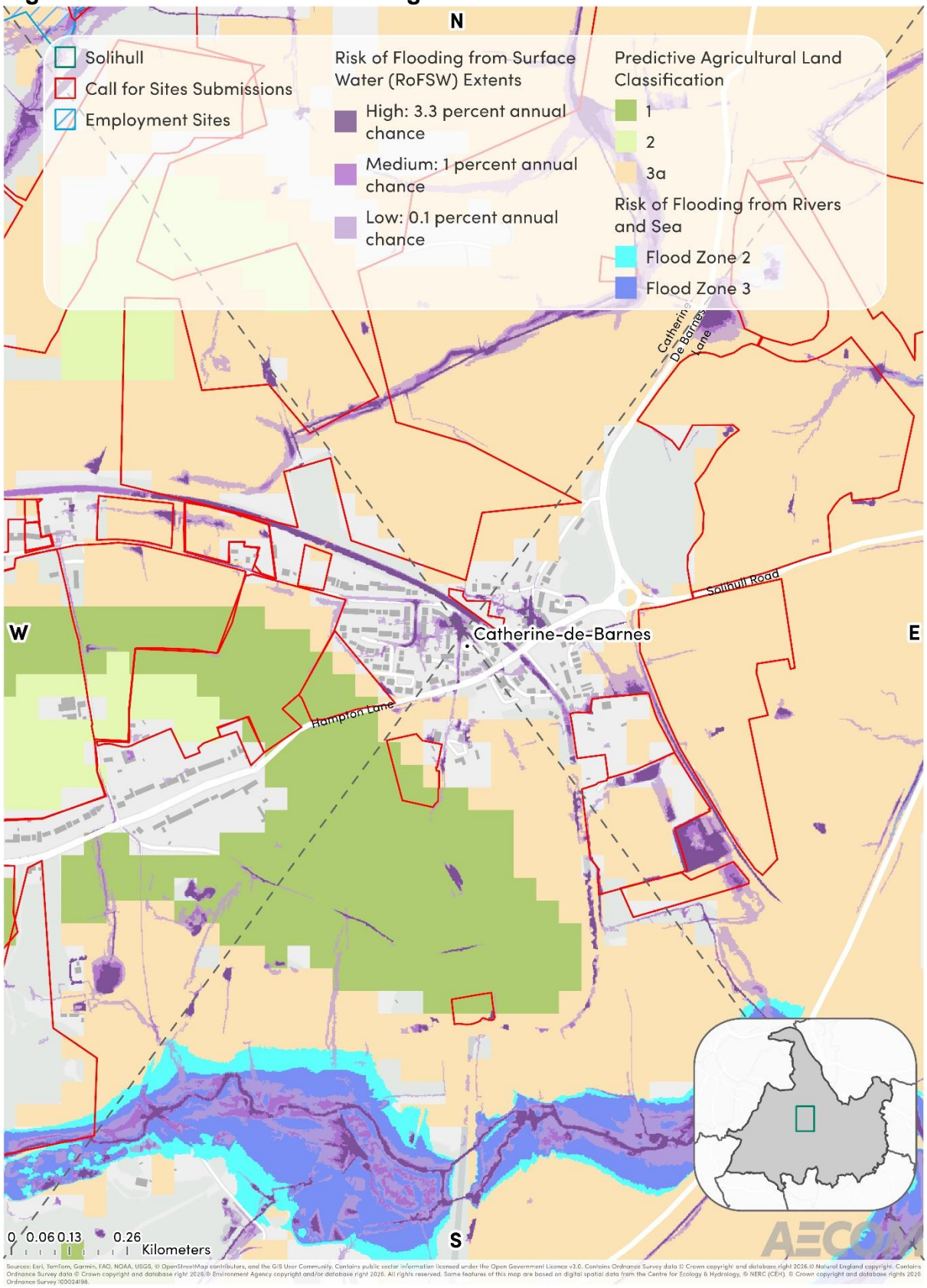
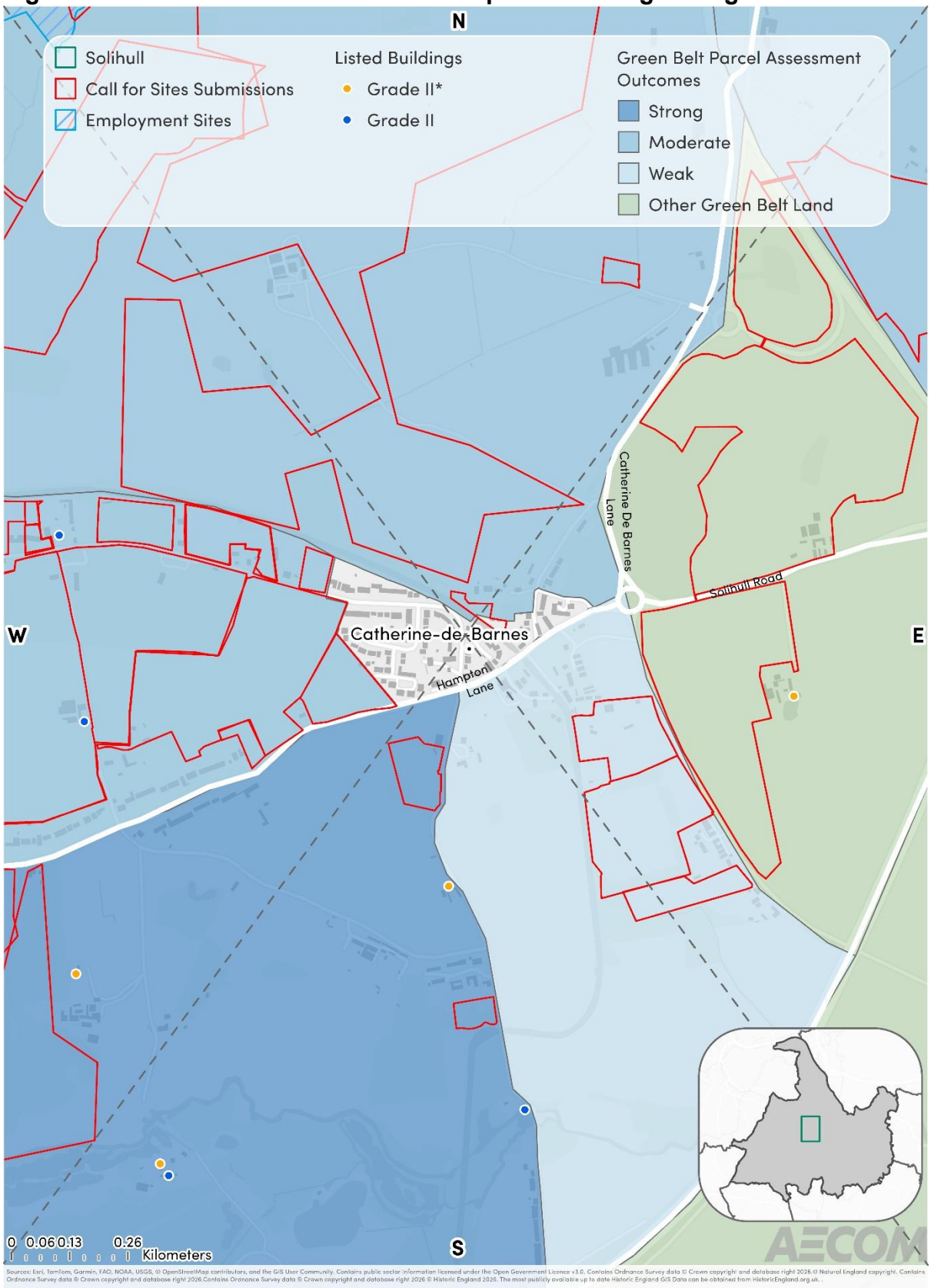


Figure C18: Catherine-de-Barnes landscape and heritage designations



C.7 Chadwick End

Figure C19: Chadwick End biodiversity designations

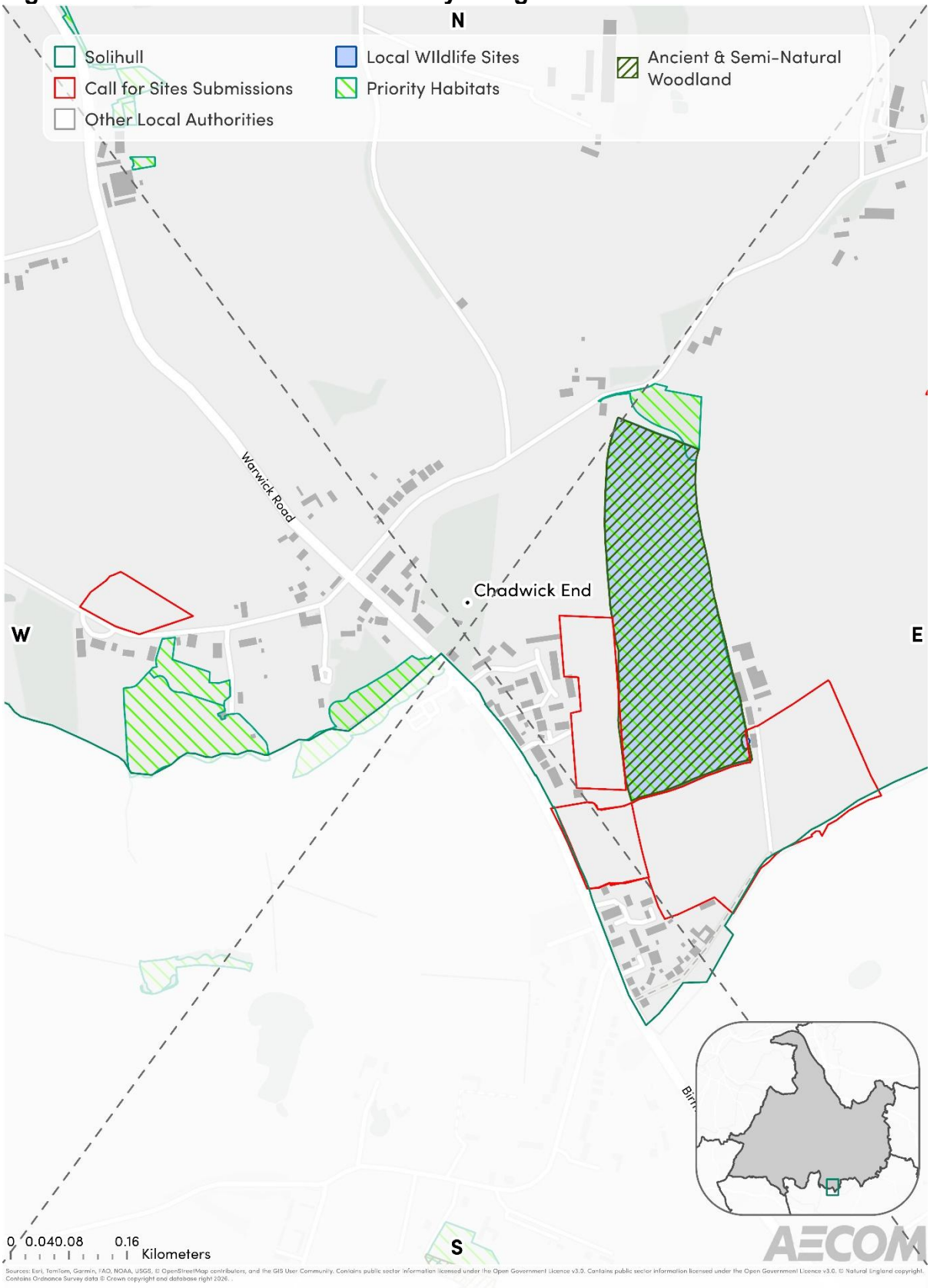


Figure C20: Chadwick End agricultural land and flood risk

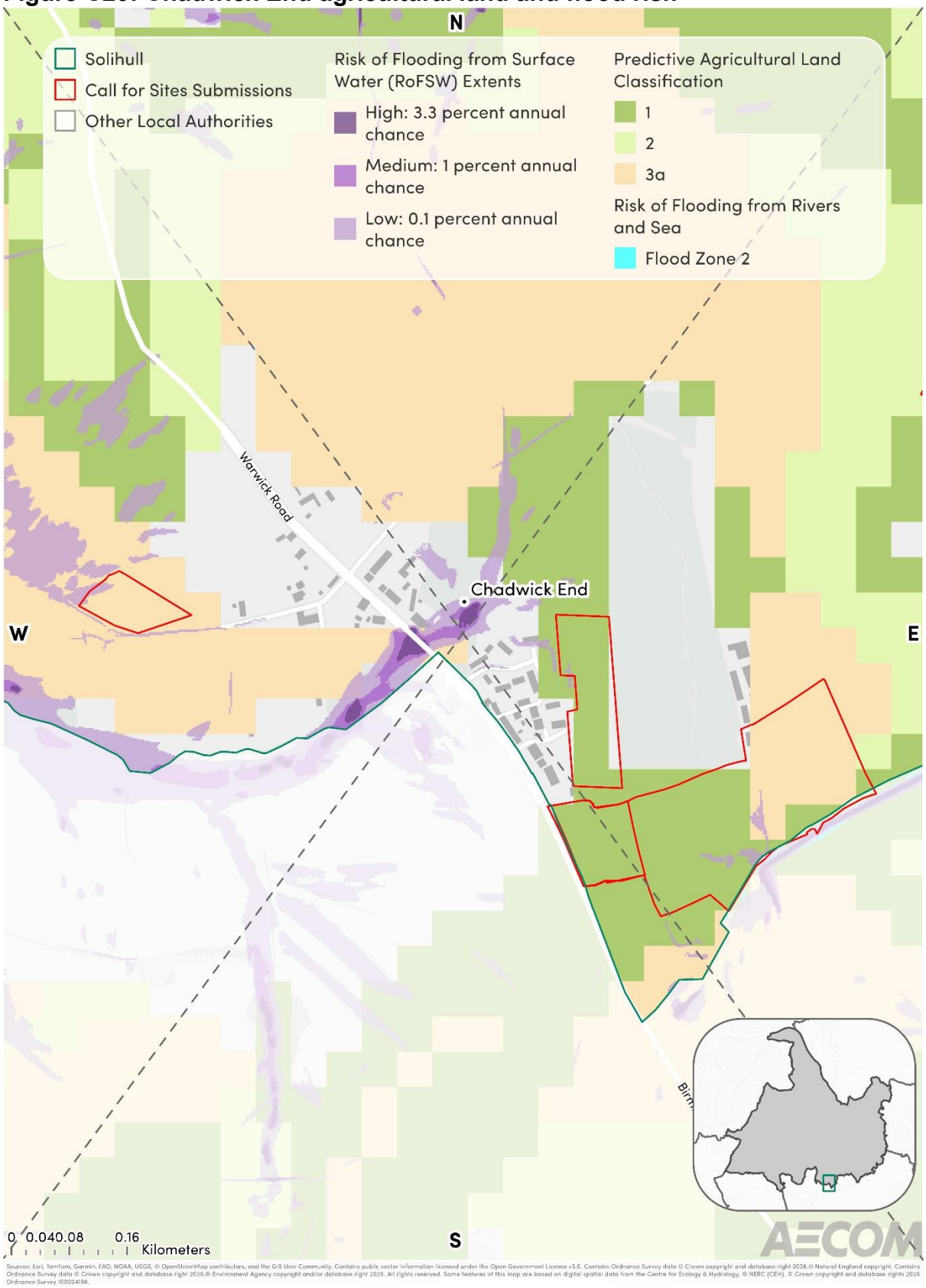
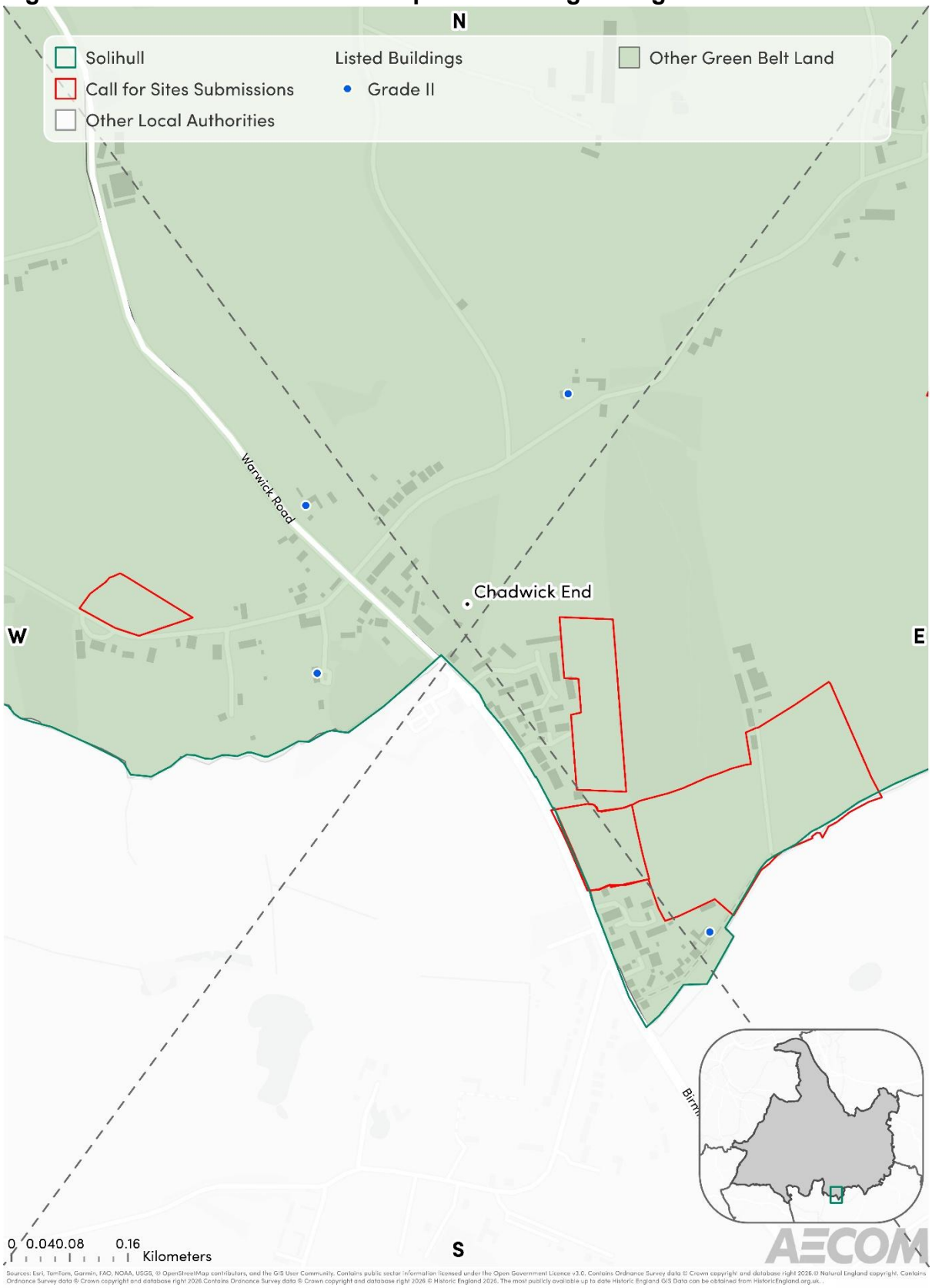


Figure C21: Chadwick End landscape and heritage designations



C.8 Chelmsley Wood (and wider north Solihull area)

Figure C22: Chelmsley Wood biodiversity designations

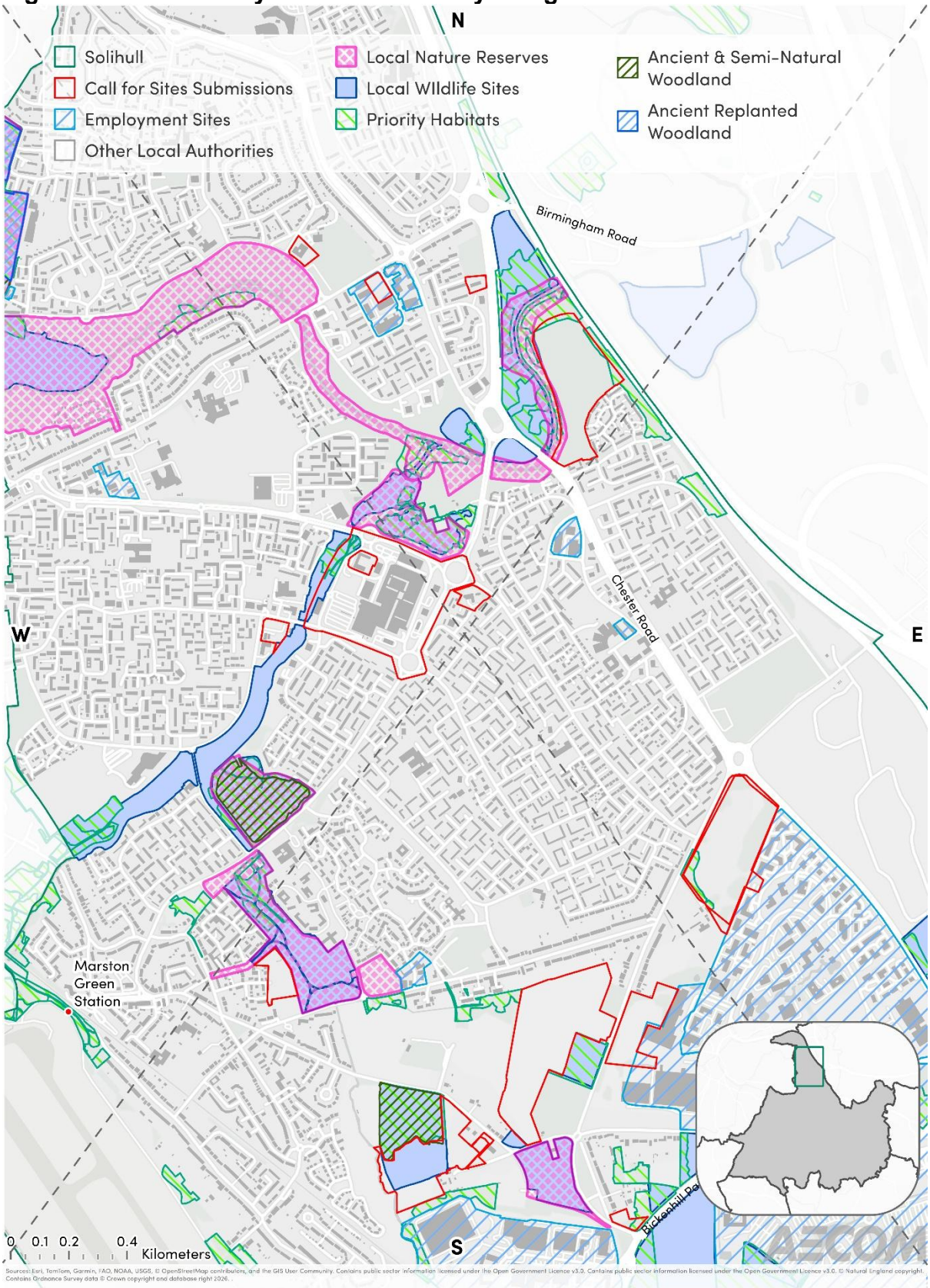


Figure C23: Chelmsley Wood agricultural land and flood risk

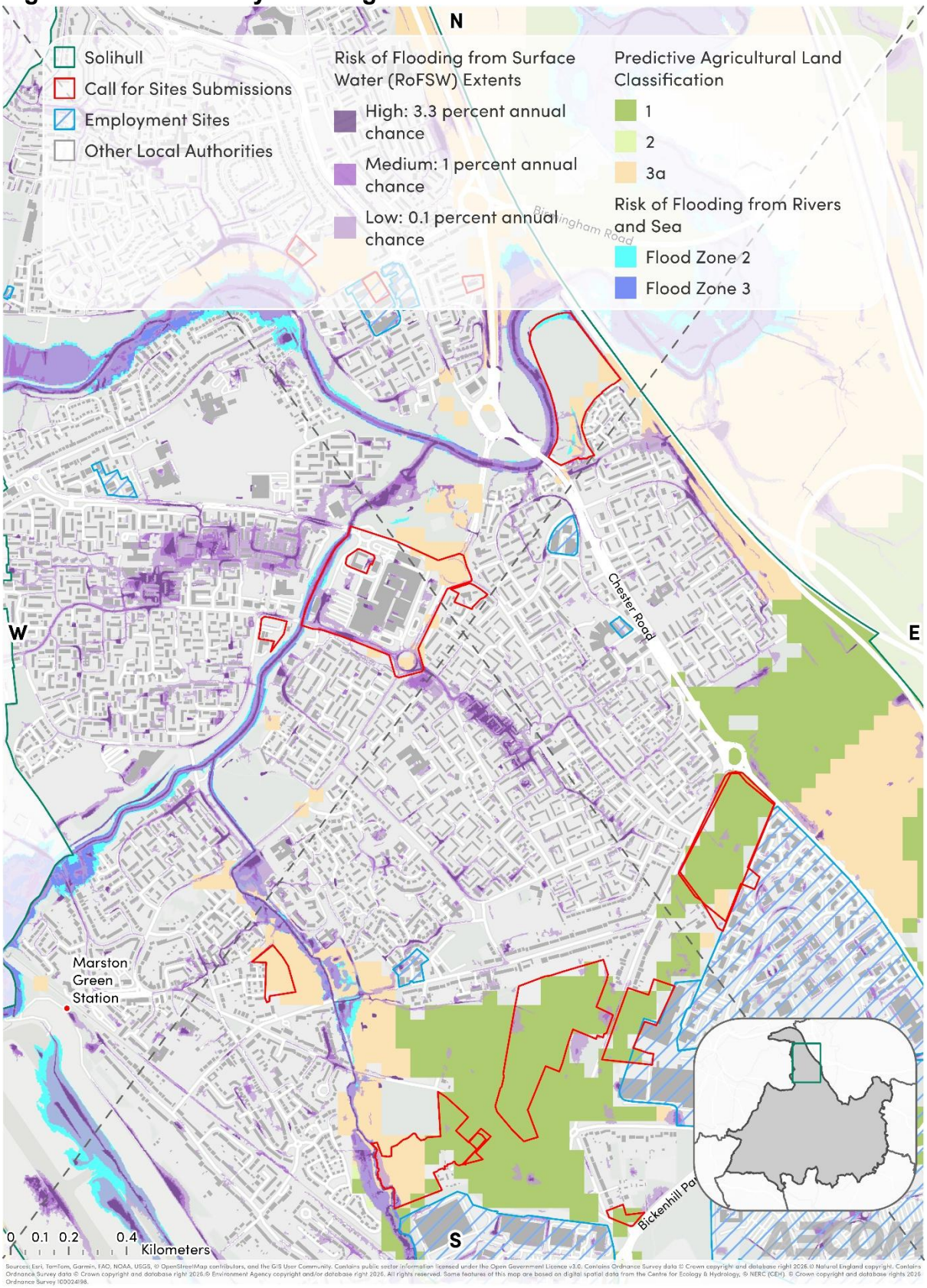
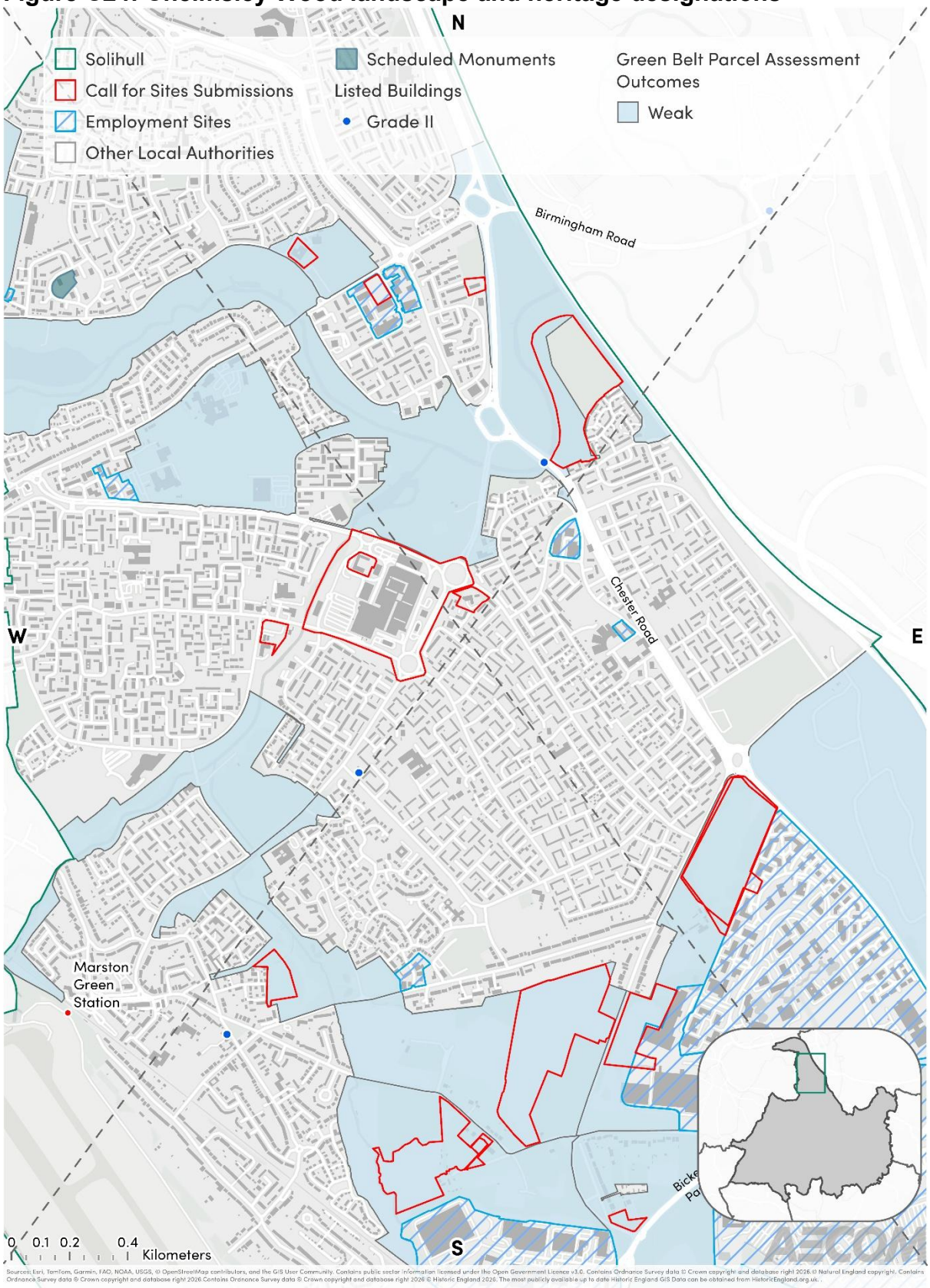


Figure C24: Chelmsley Wood landscape and heritage designations



C.9 Cheswick Green and Blythe Valley Park

Figure C25: Cheswick Green and Blythe biodiversity designations

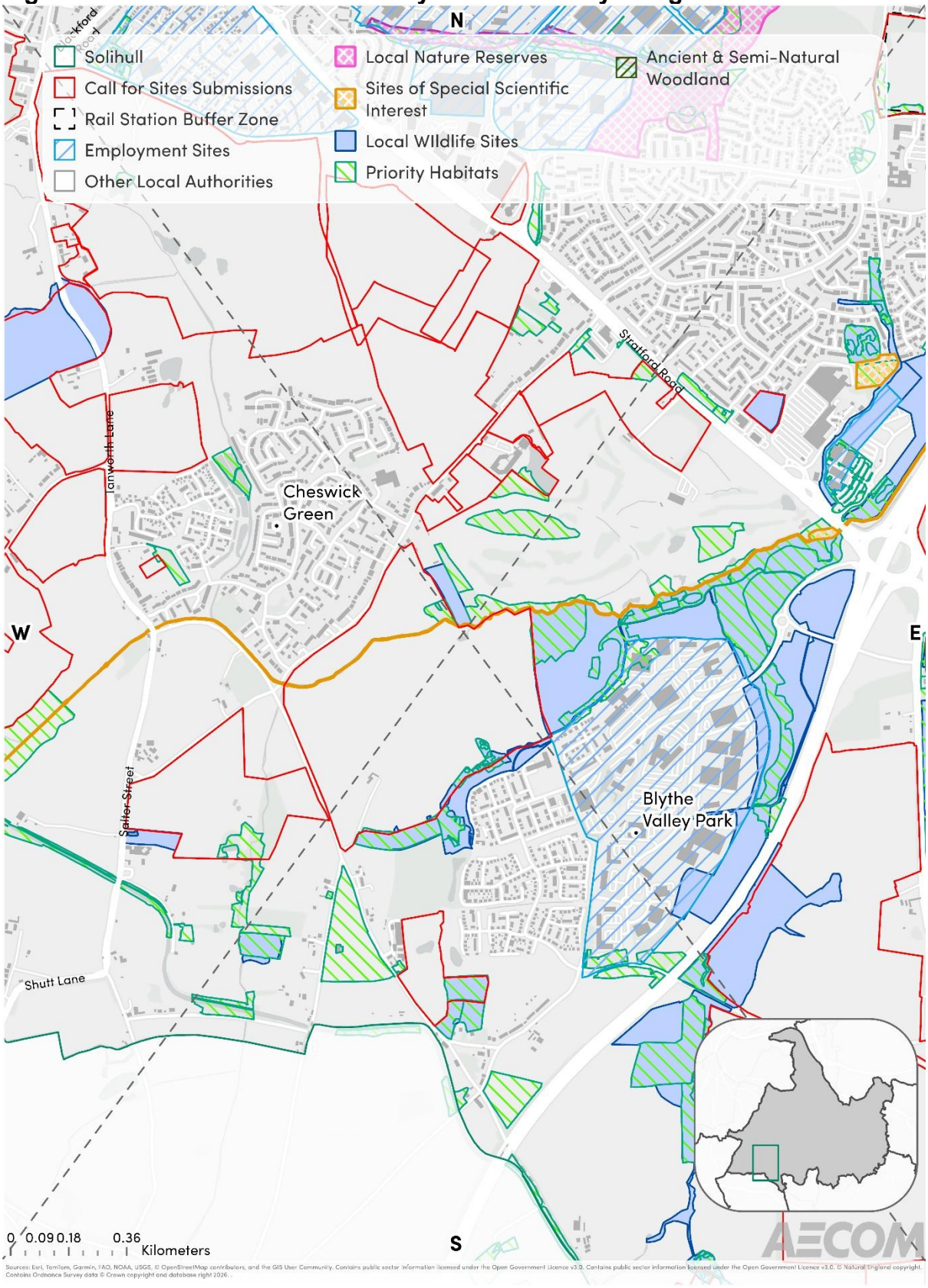


Figure C26: Cheswick Green and Blythe agricultural land and flood risk

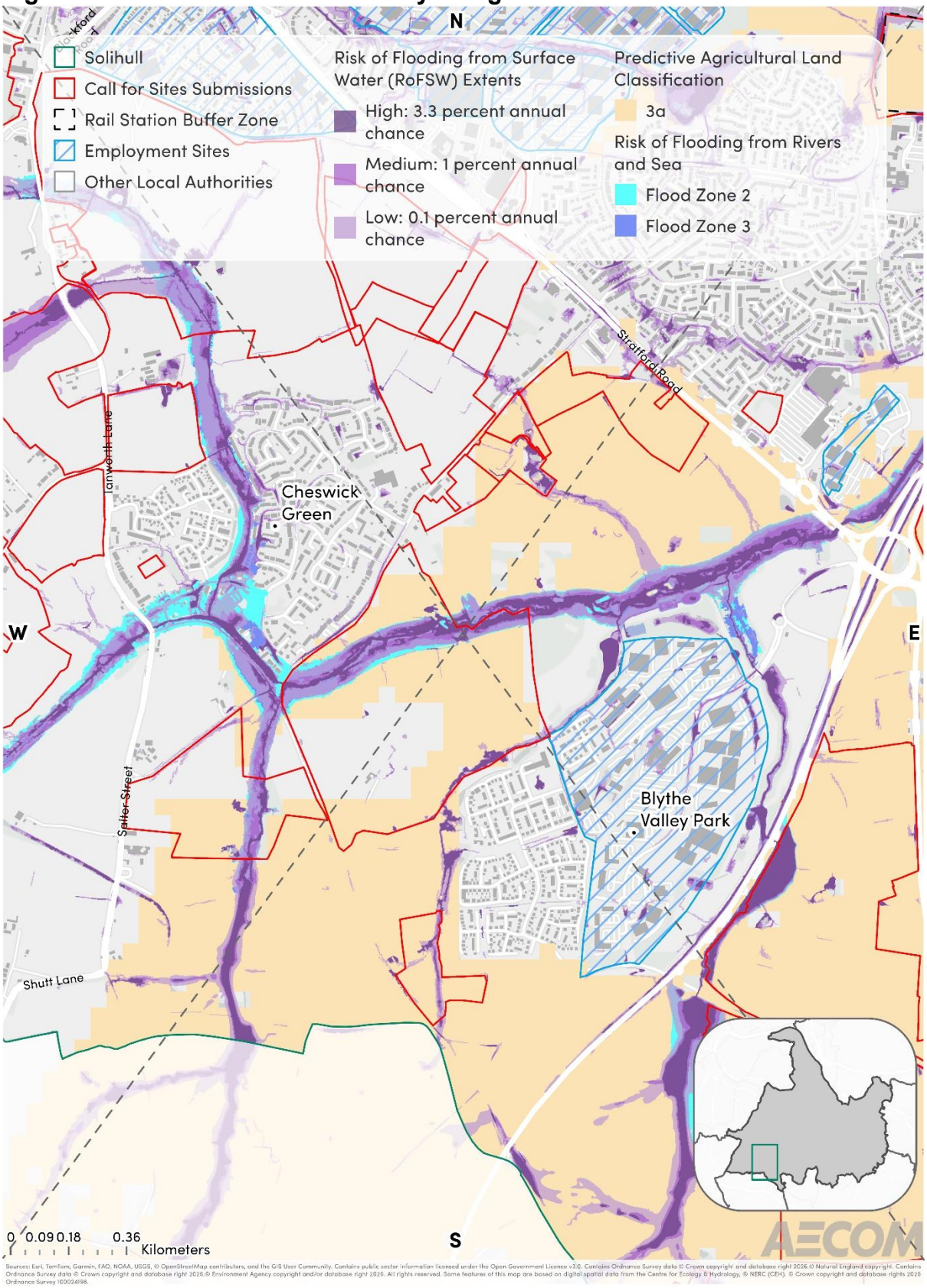
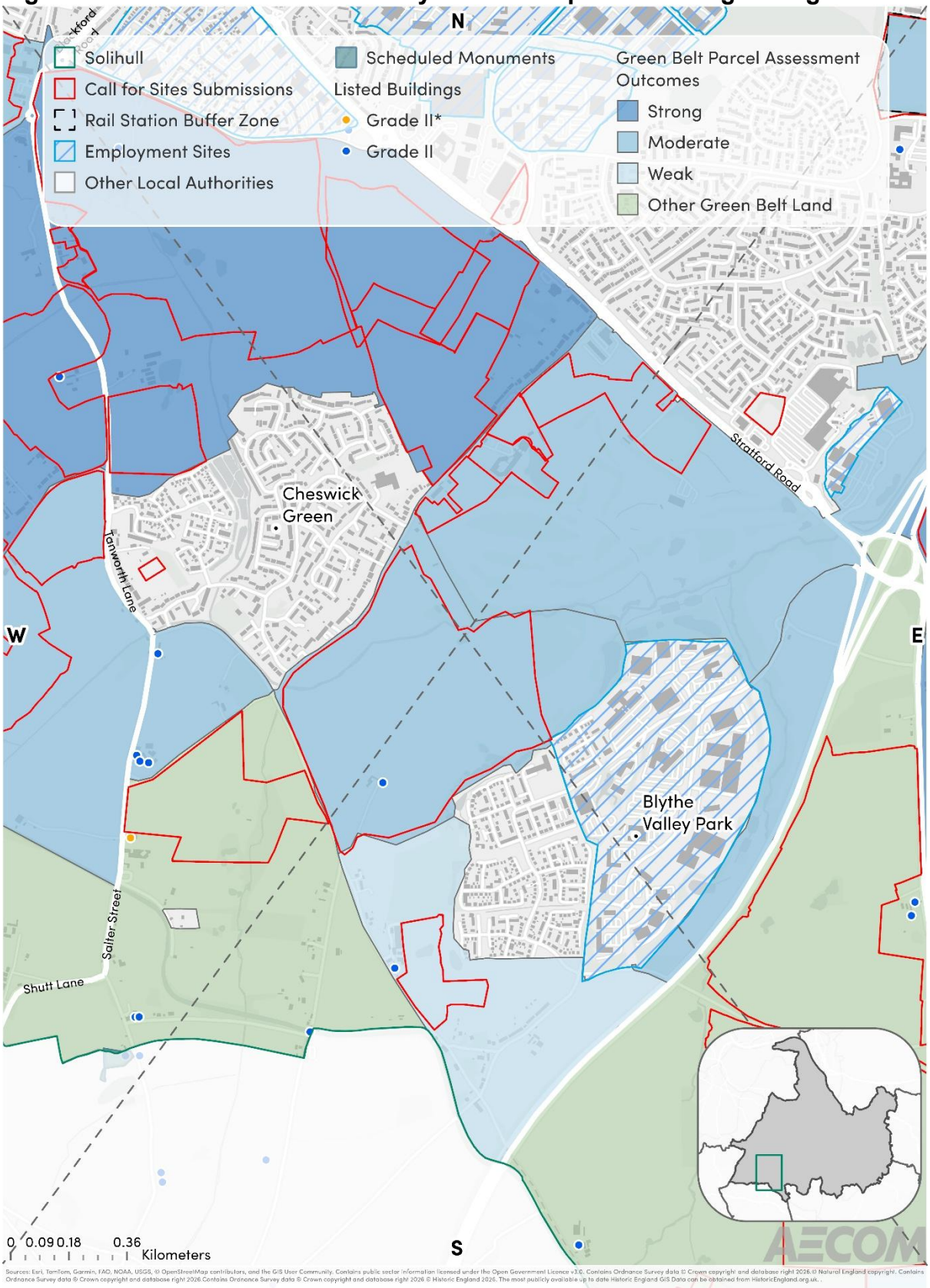


Figure C27: Cheswick Green and Blythe landscape and heritage designations



C.10 Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green

Figure C28: Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green biodiversity designations

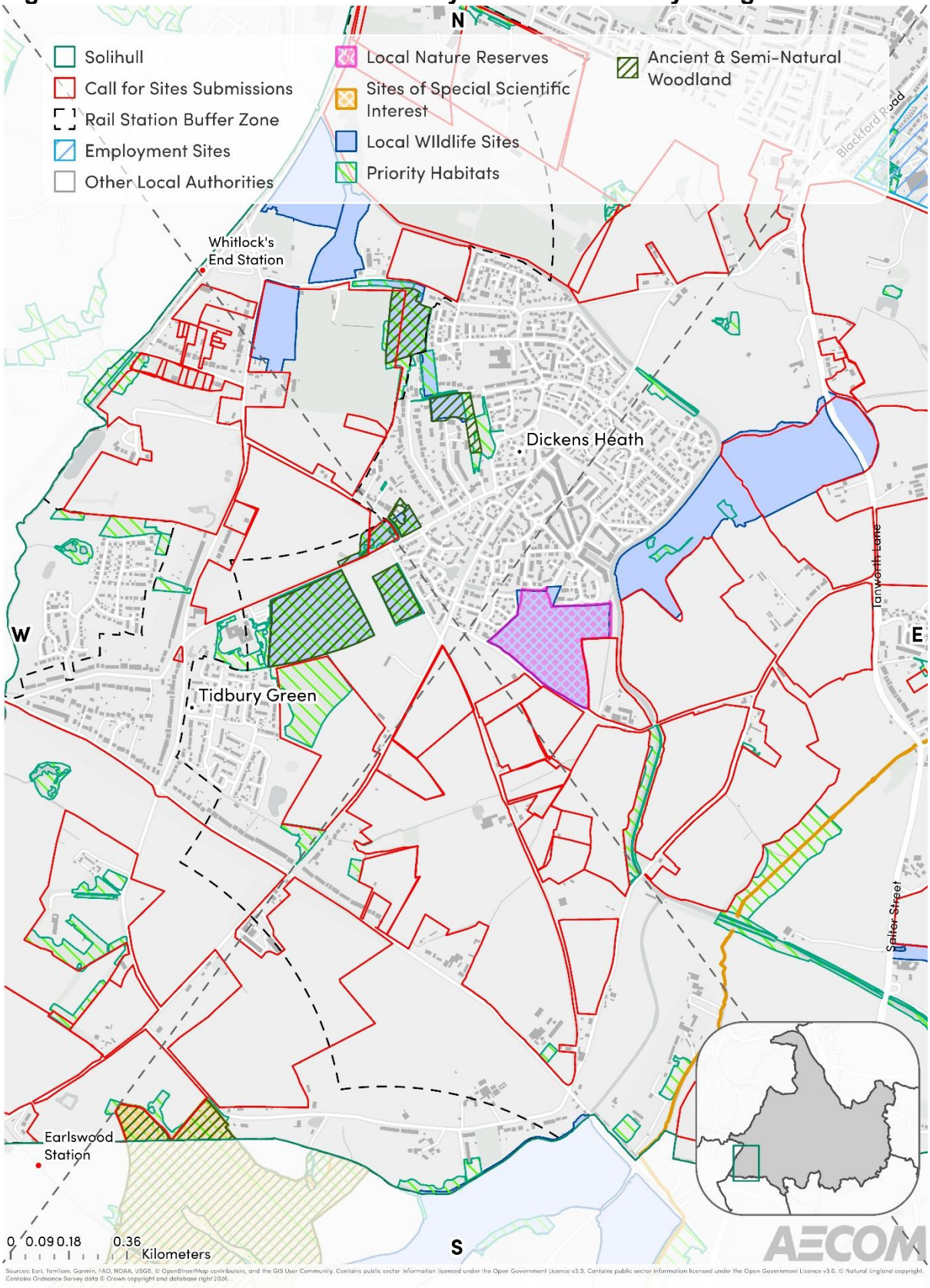


Figure C29: Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green agricultural land and flood risk

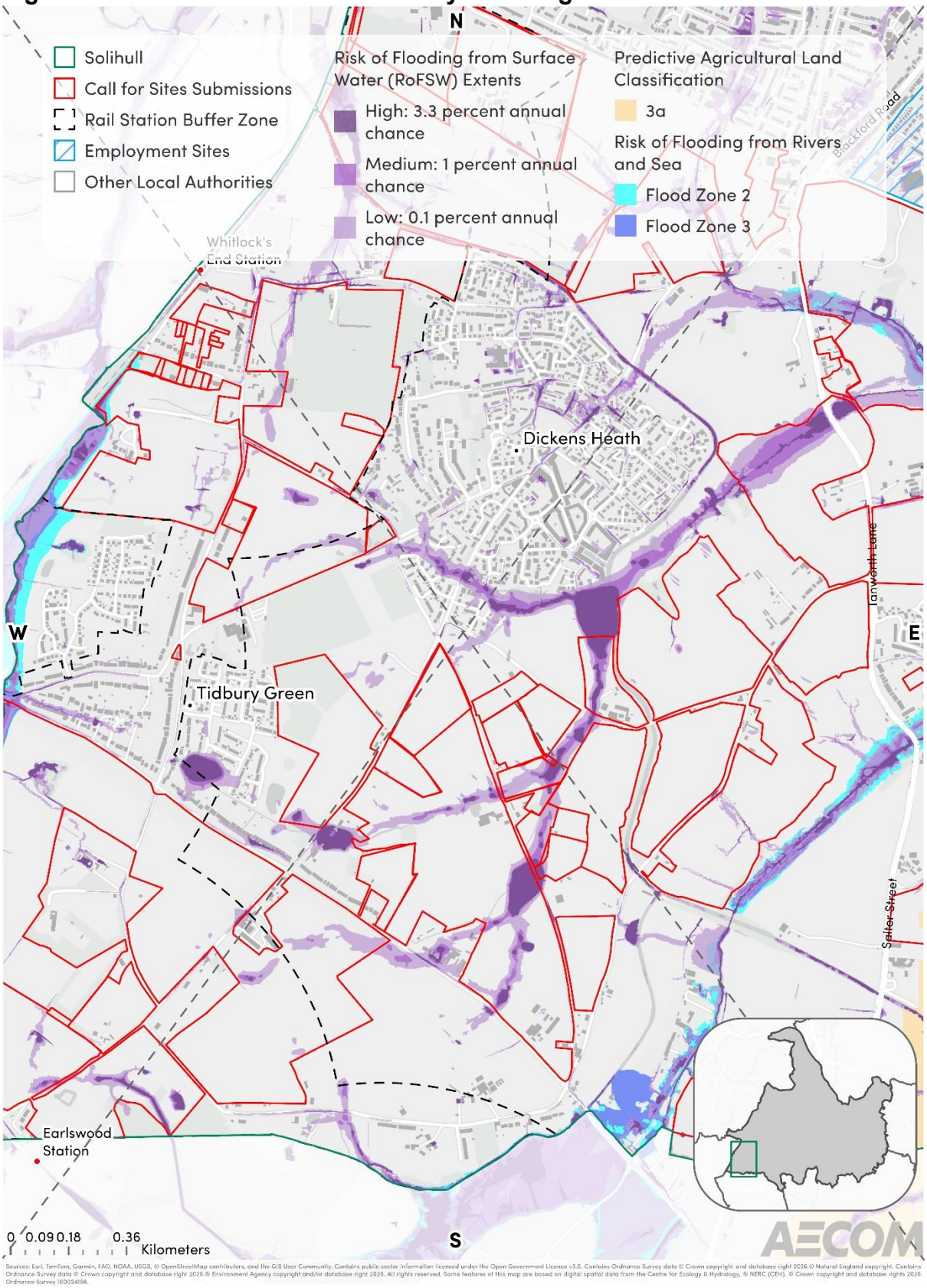
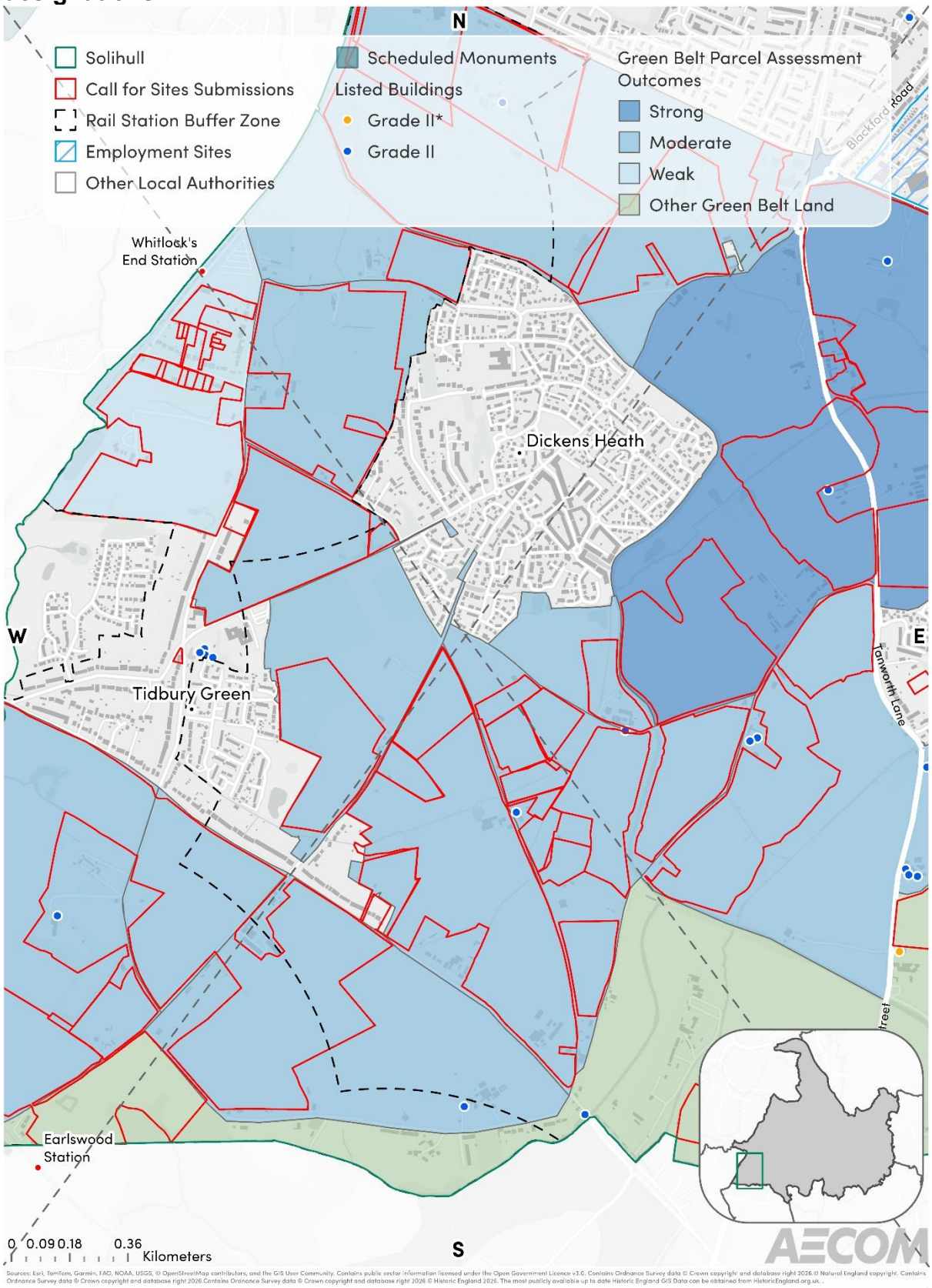


Figure C30: Dickens Heath and Tidbury Green landscape and heritage designations



C.11 Dorridge

Figure C31: Dorridge biodiversity designations

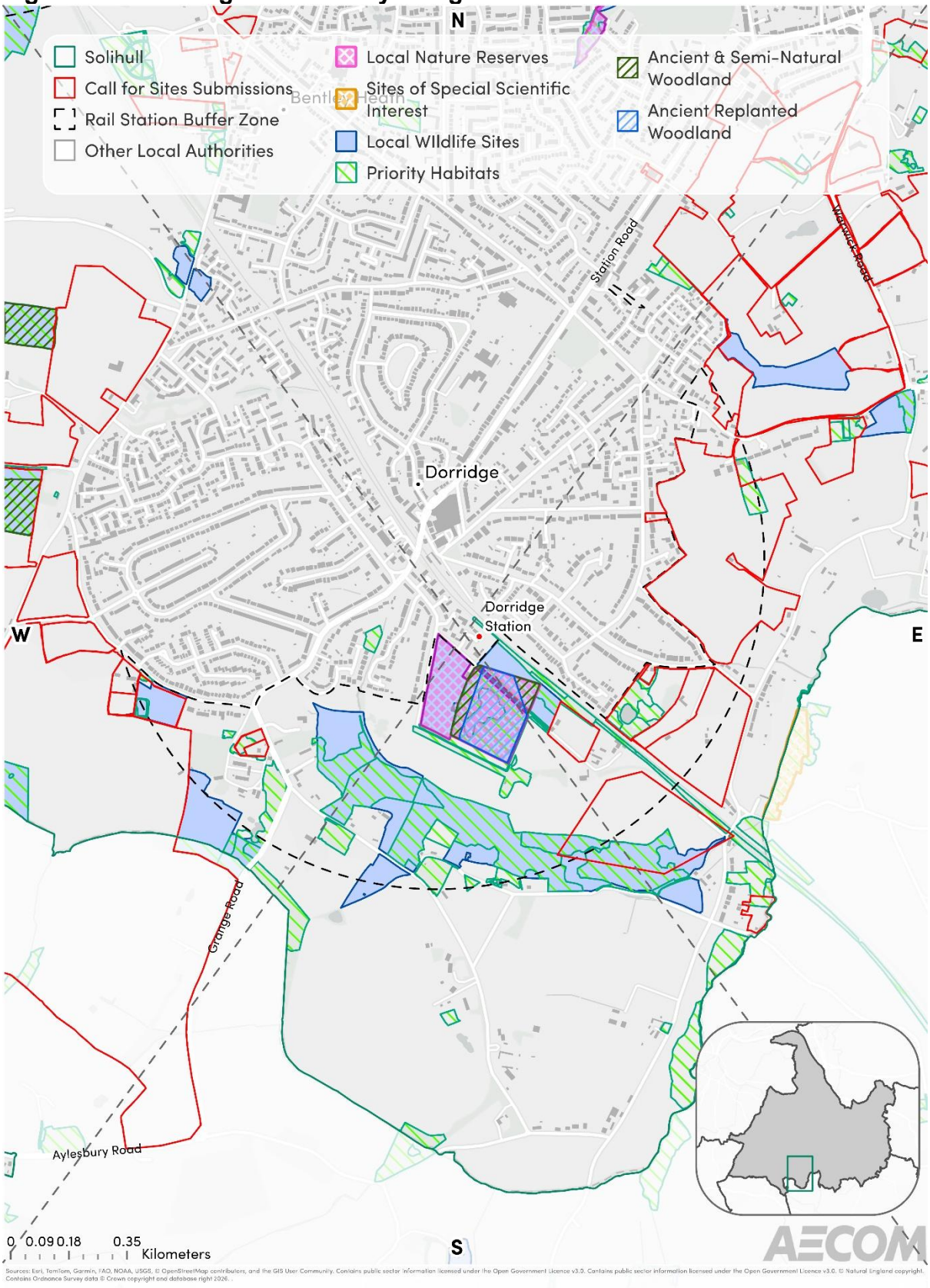
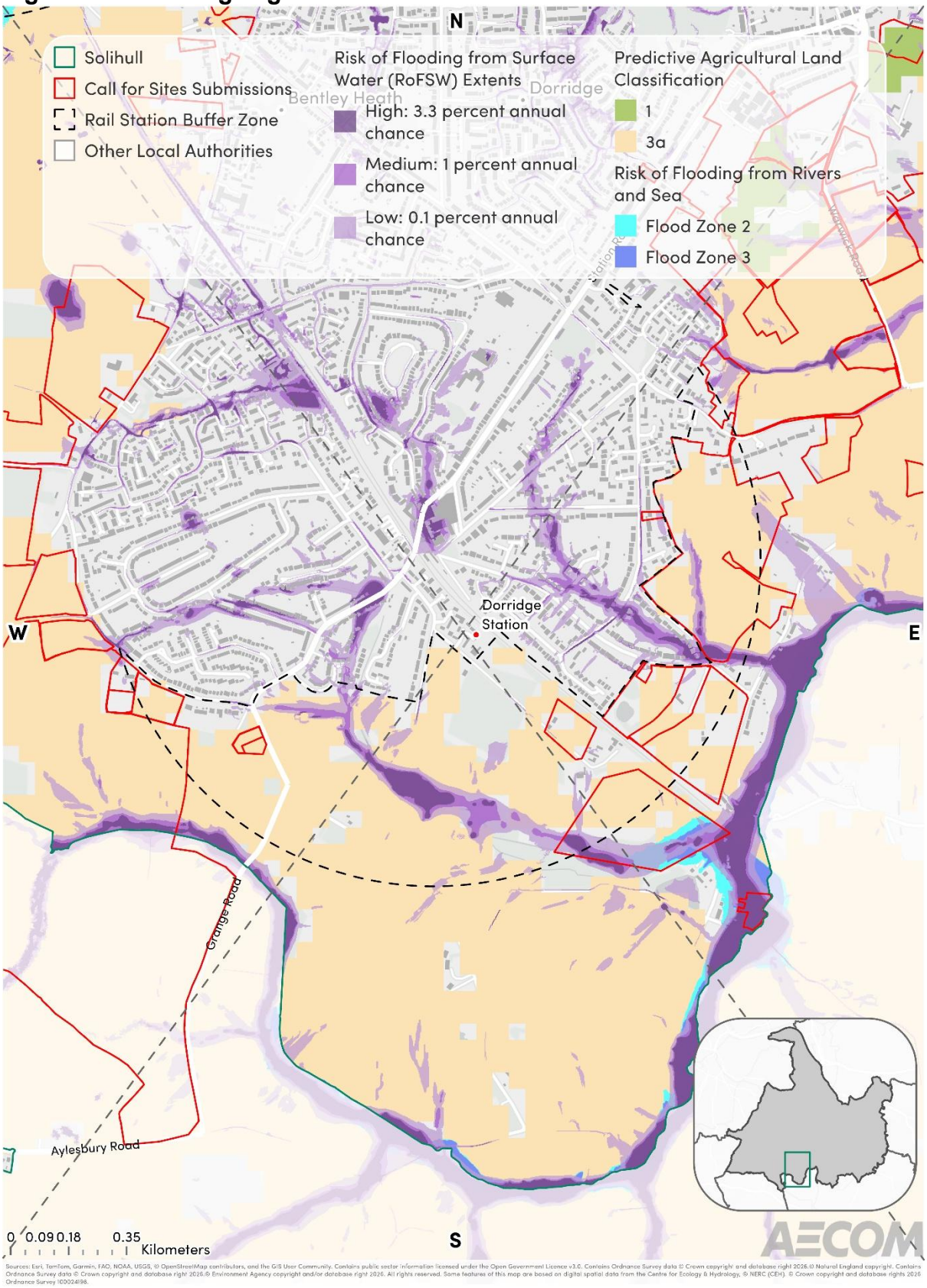
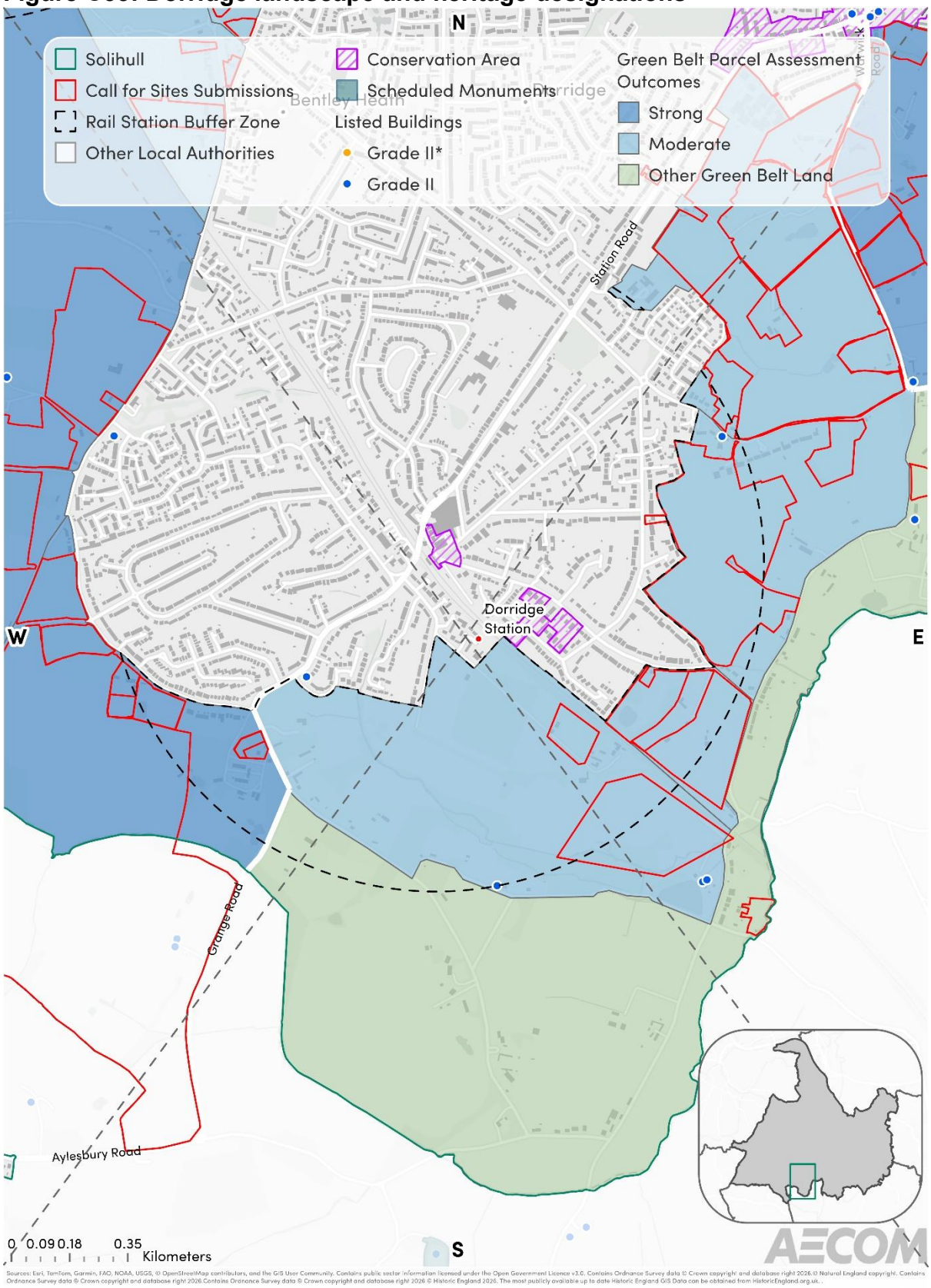


Figure C32: Dorridge agricultural land and flood risk



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community. Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026.© Natural England copyright. Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2026.© Environment Agency copyright and/or database right 2026. All rights reserved. Some features of this map are based on digital spatial data from the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, © NERC (CEH). © Crown copyright and database rights 2026 Ordnance Survey 100024198.

Figure C33: Dorridge landscape and heritage designations



C.12 Eastcote and Barston

Figure C34: Eastcote and Barston biodiversity designations

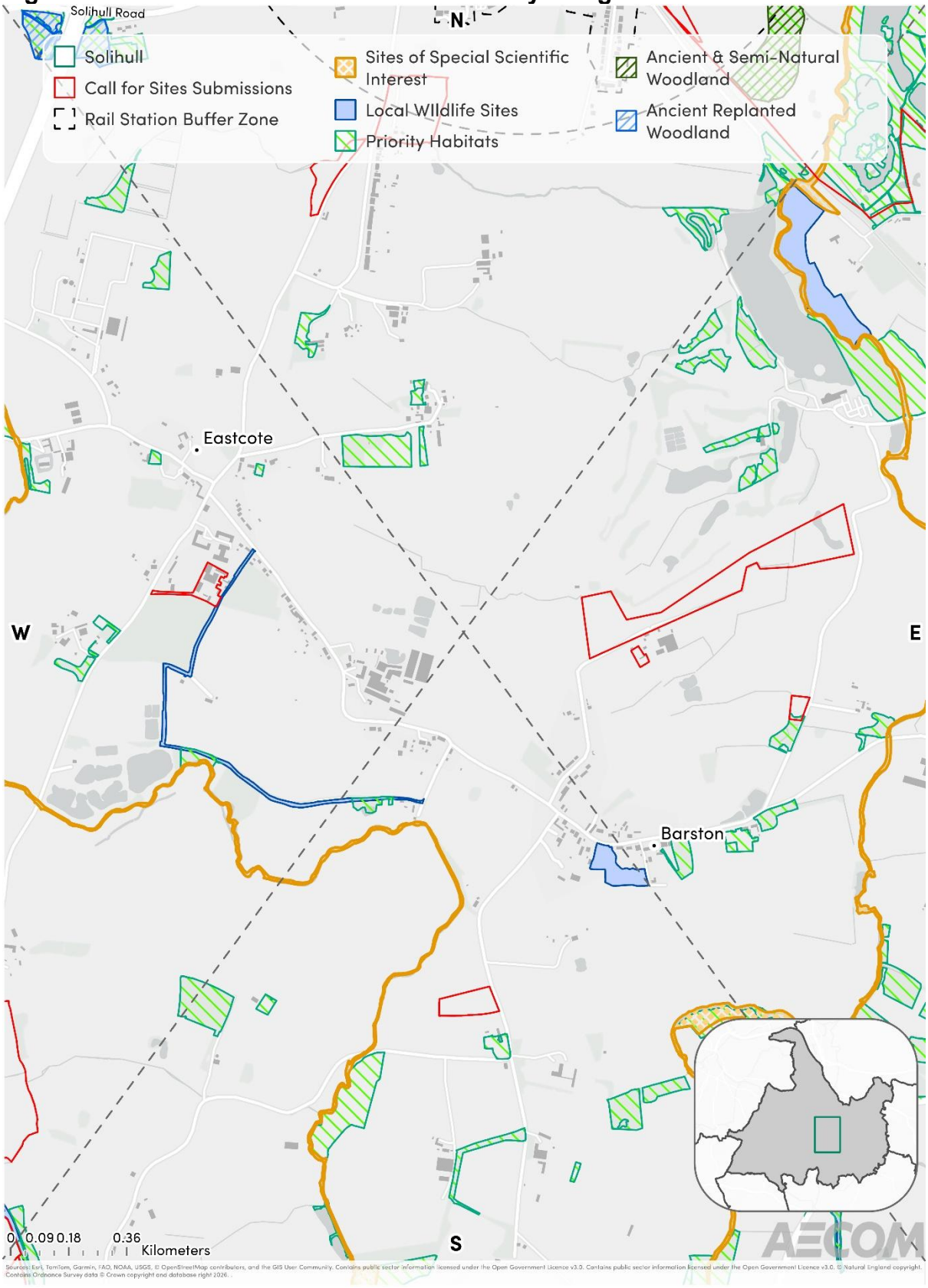


Figure C35: Eastcote and Barston agricultural land and flood risk

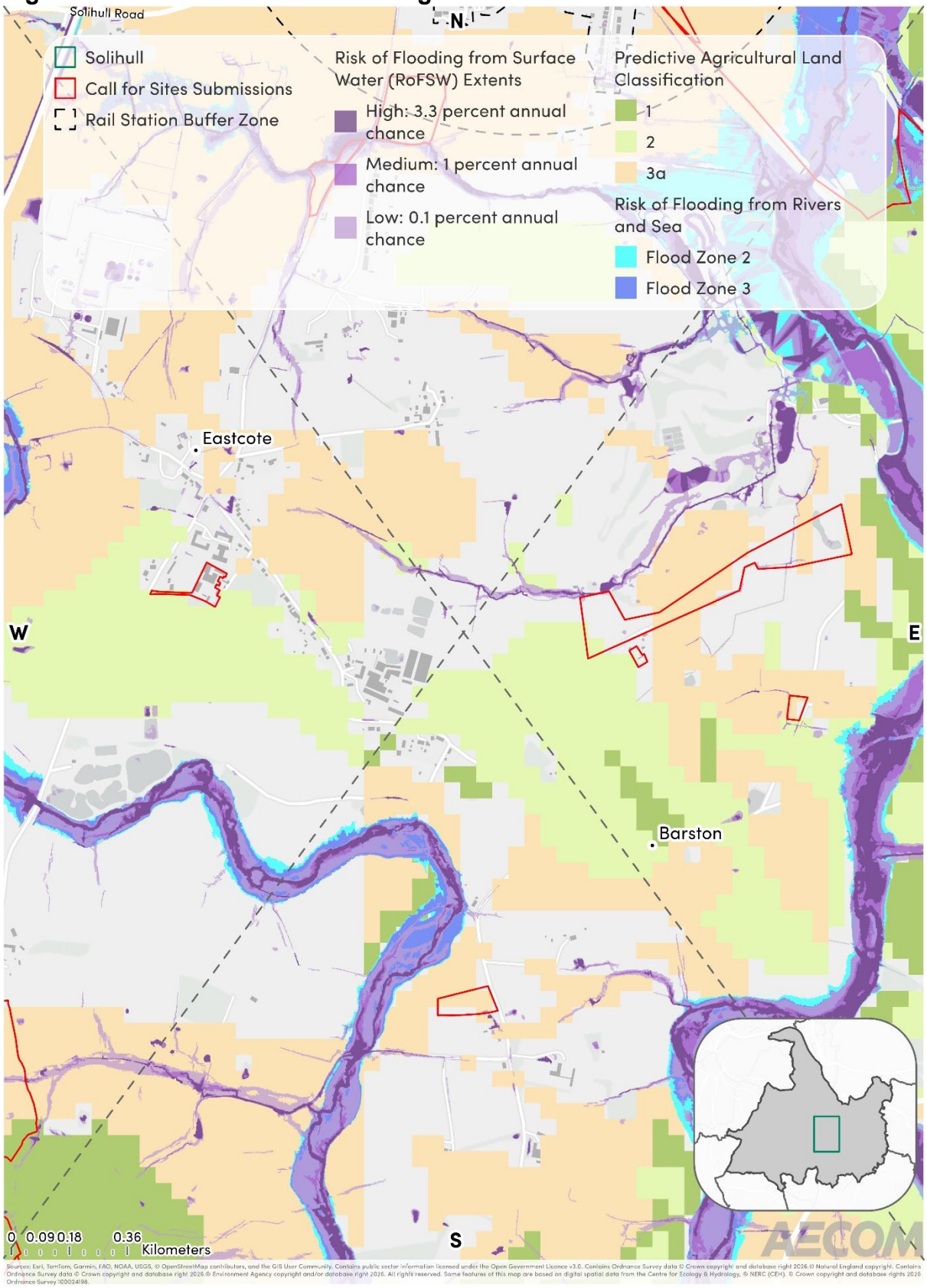
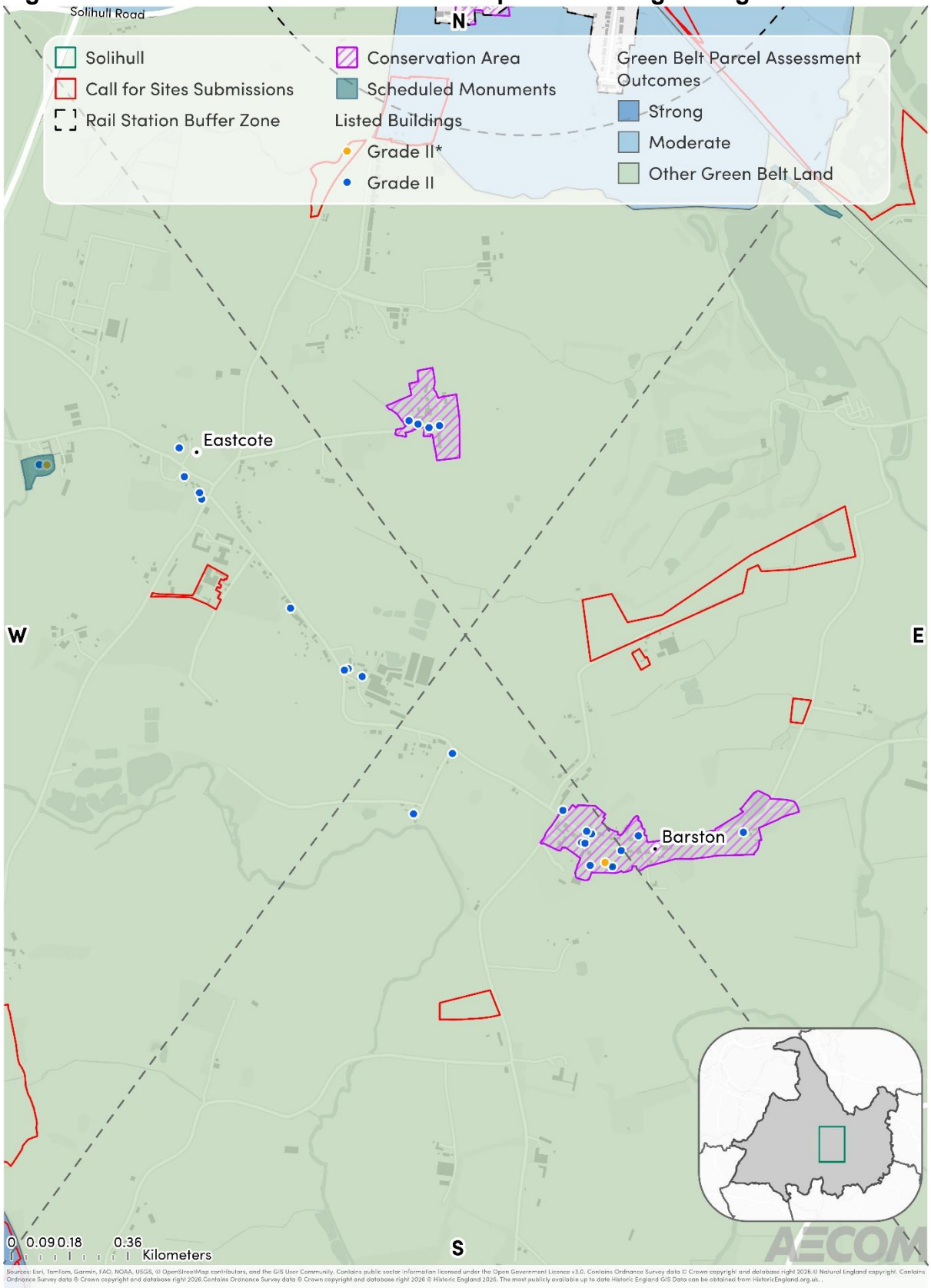


Figure C36: Eastcote and Barston landscape and heritage designations



C.13 Hampton-in-Arden

Figure C37: Hampton-in-Arden biodiversity designations

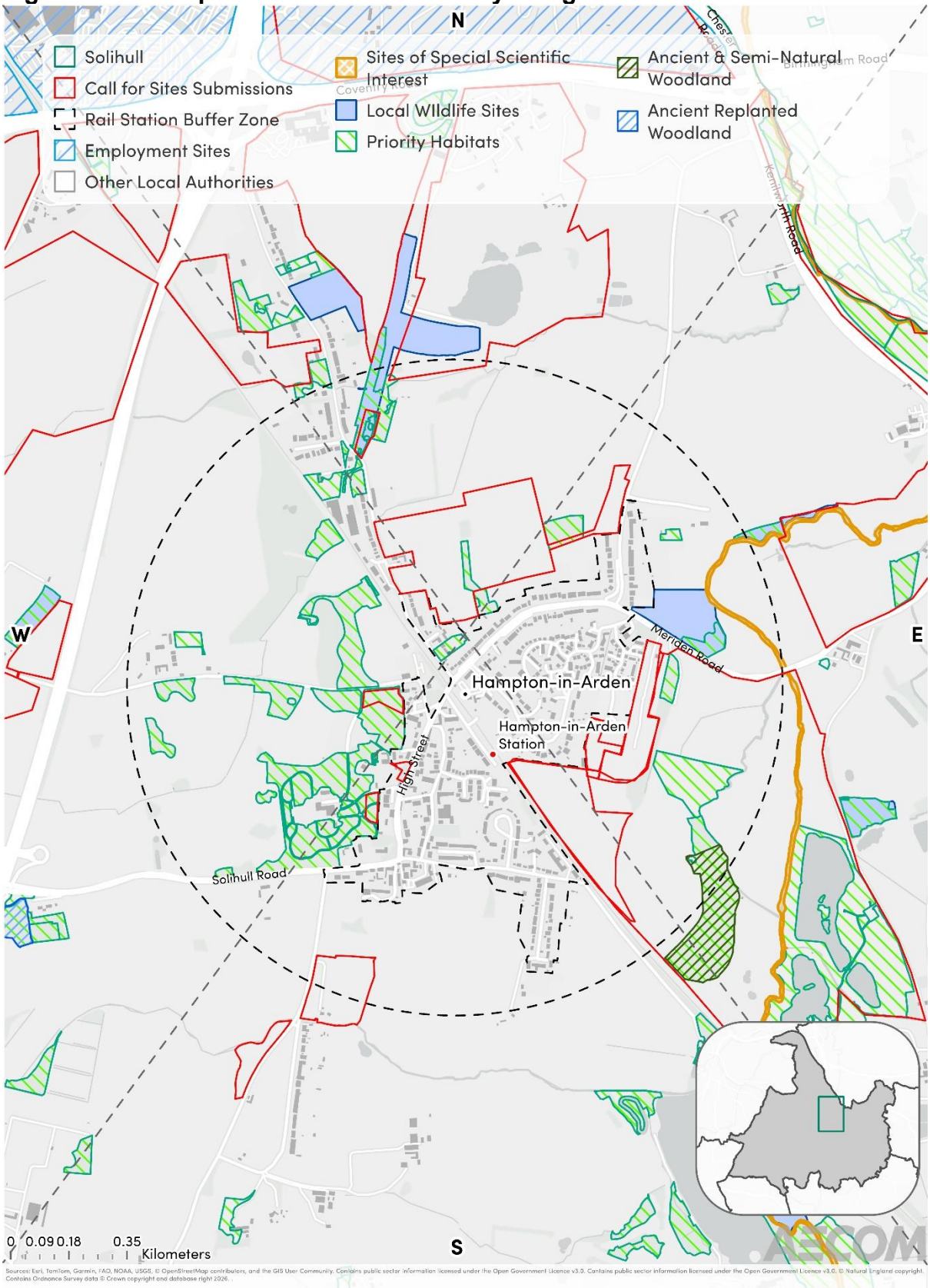


Figure C38: Hampton in Arden agricultural land and flood risk

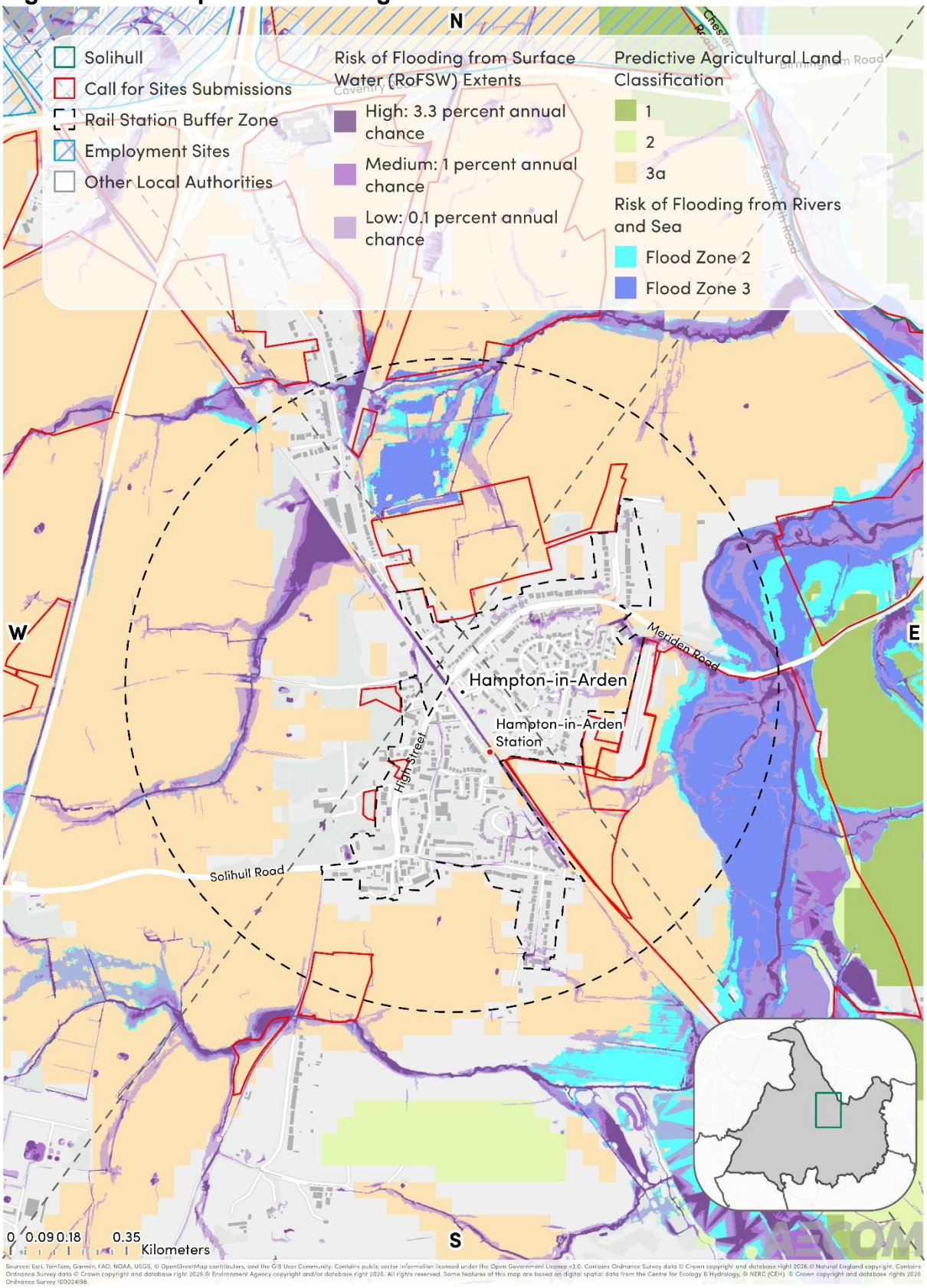
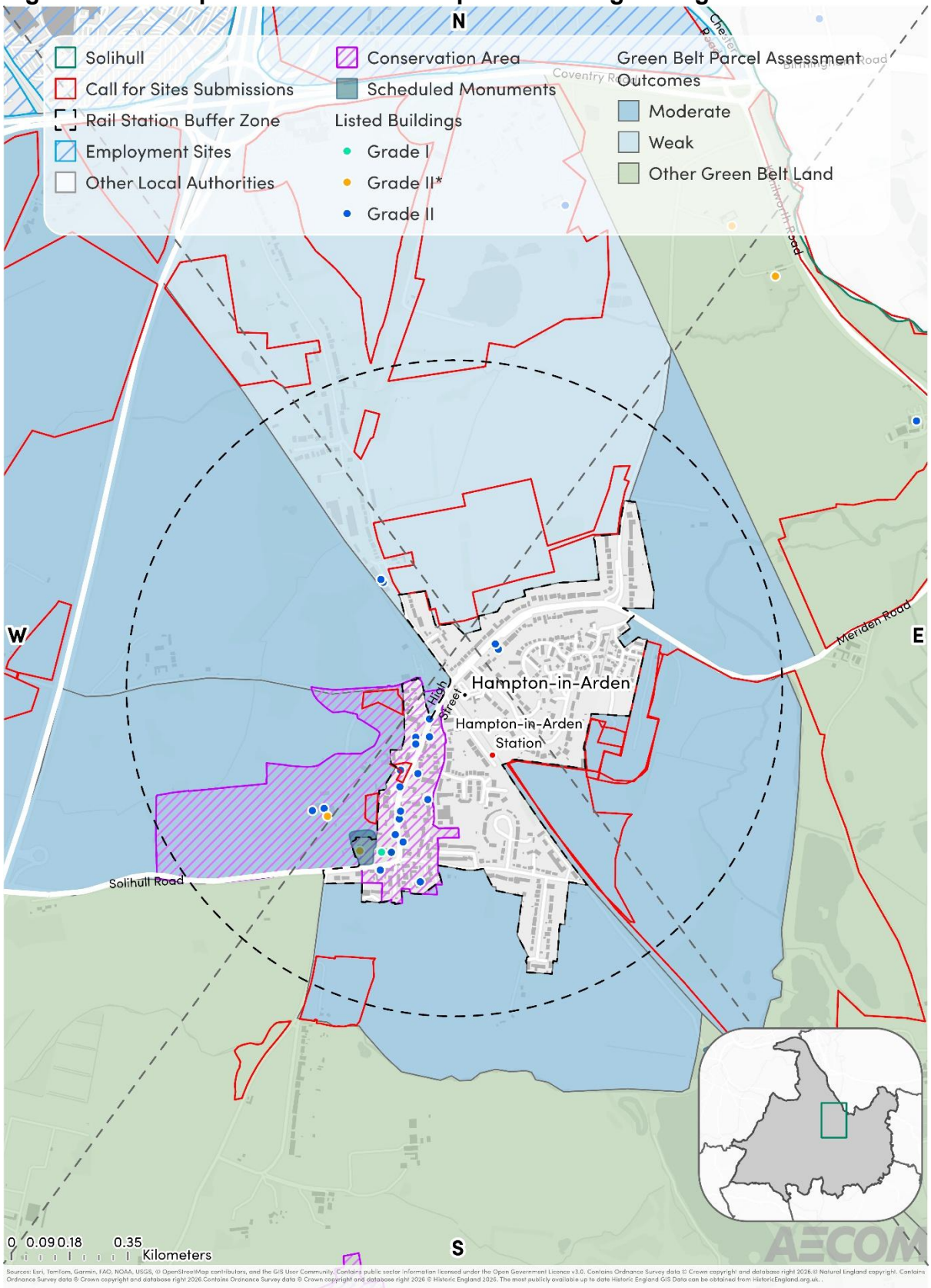


Figure C39: Hampton in Arden landscape and heritage designations



C.14 Hockley Heath

Figure C40: Hockley Heath biodiversity designations

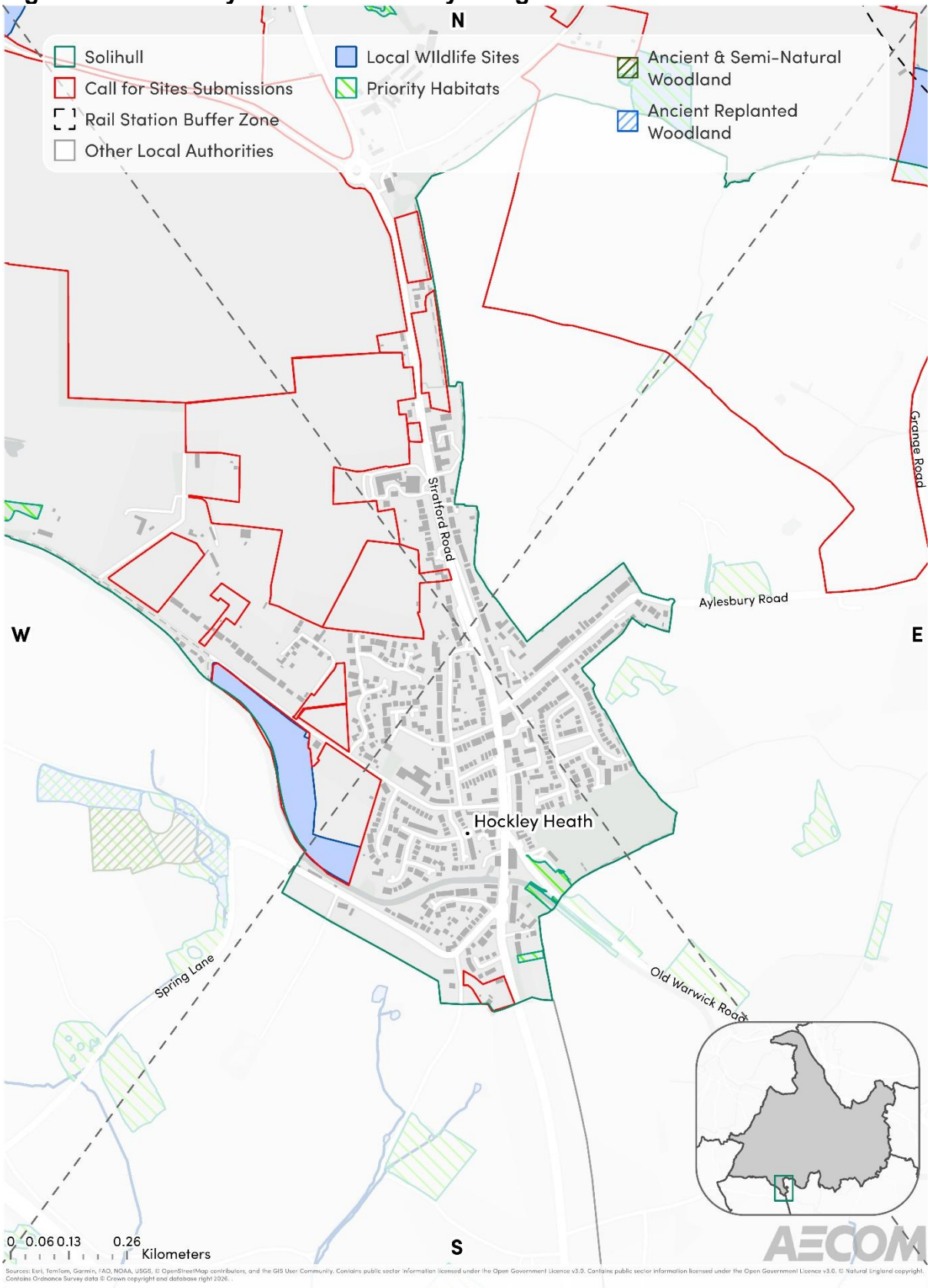


Figure C41: Hockley Heath agricultural land and flood risk

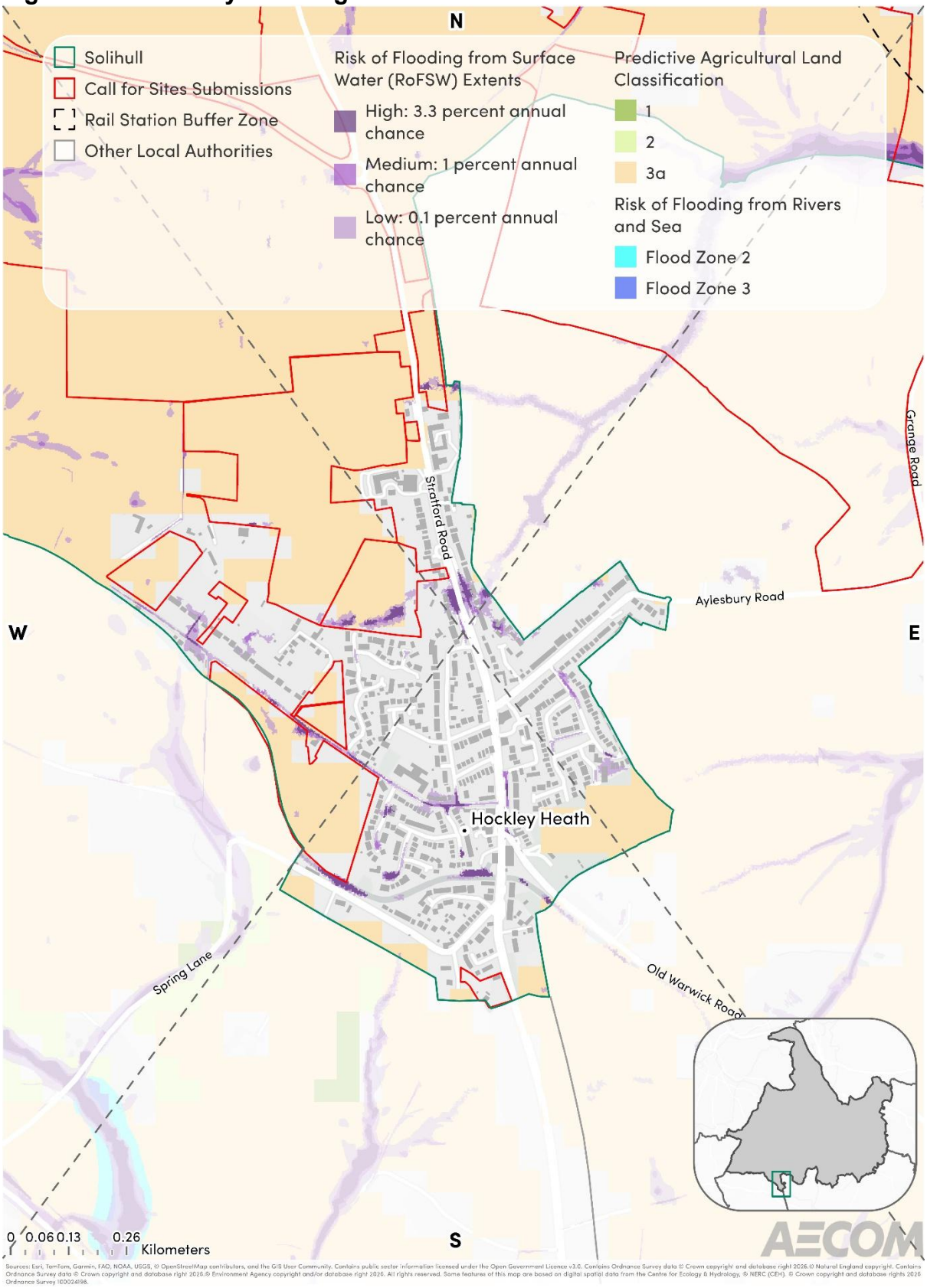
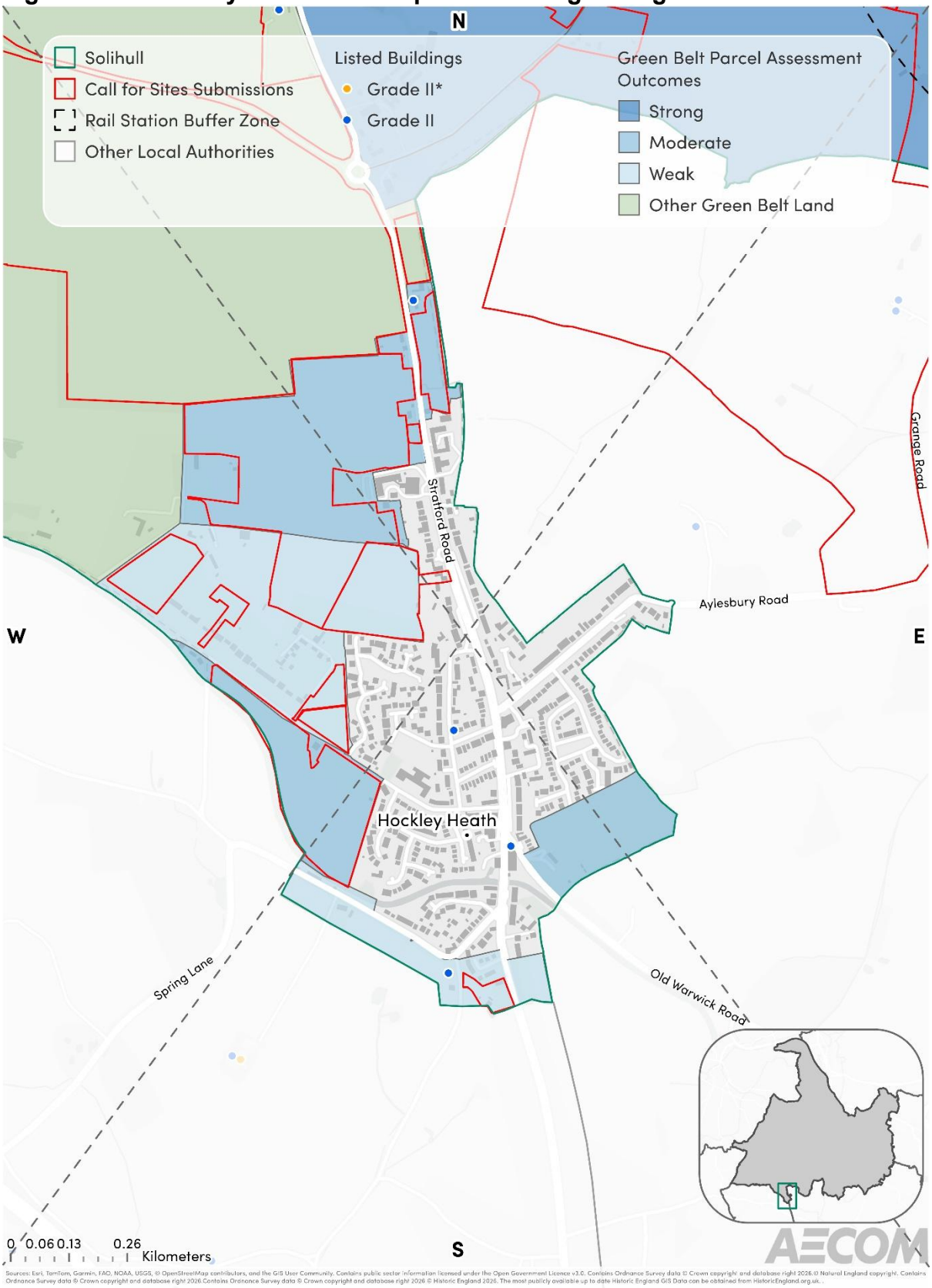


Figure C42: Hockley Heath landscape and heritage designations



C.15 Knowle

Figure C43: Knowle biodiversity designations

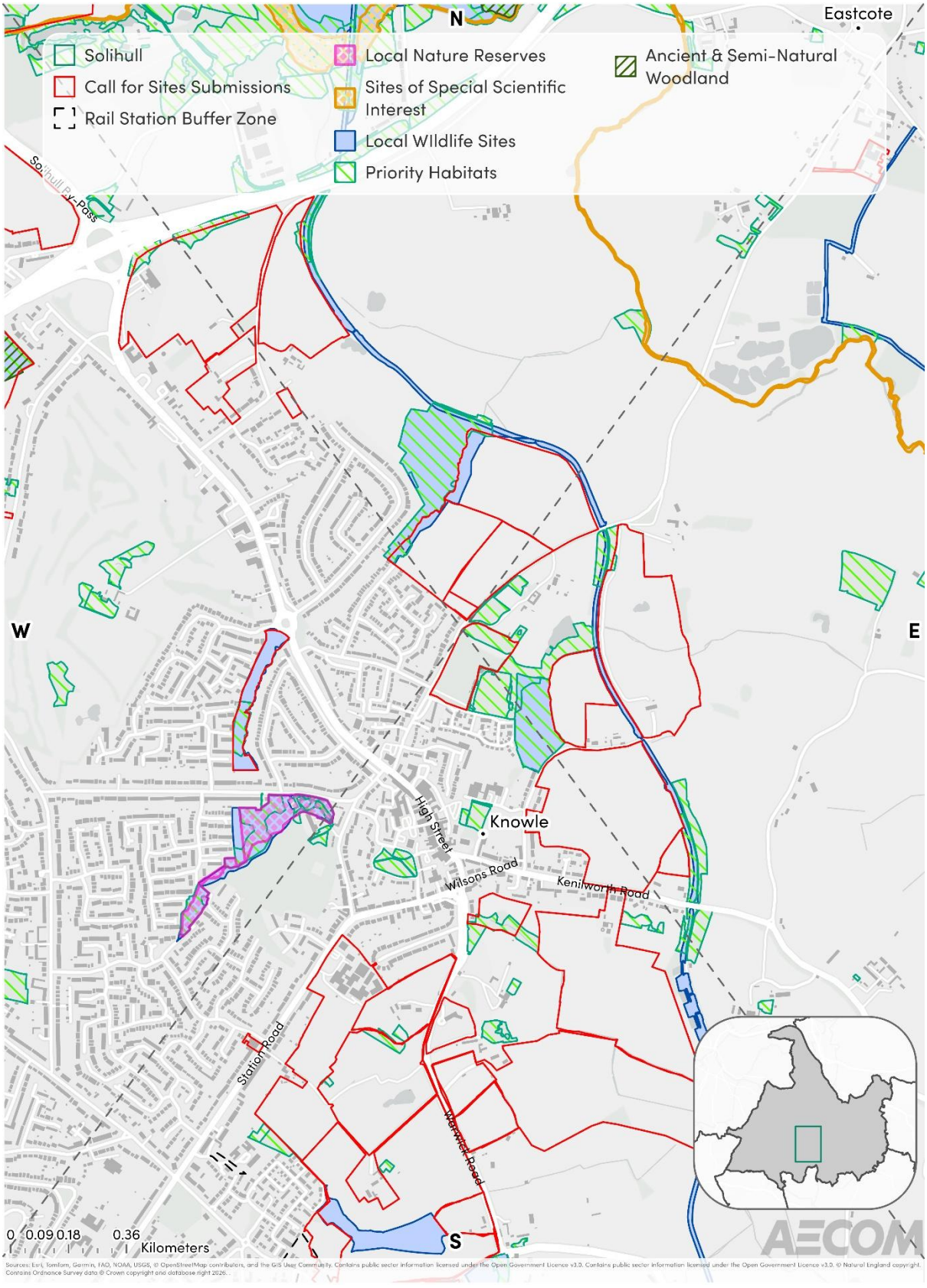


Figure C44: Knowle agricultural land and flood risk

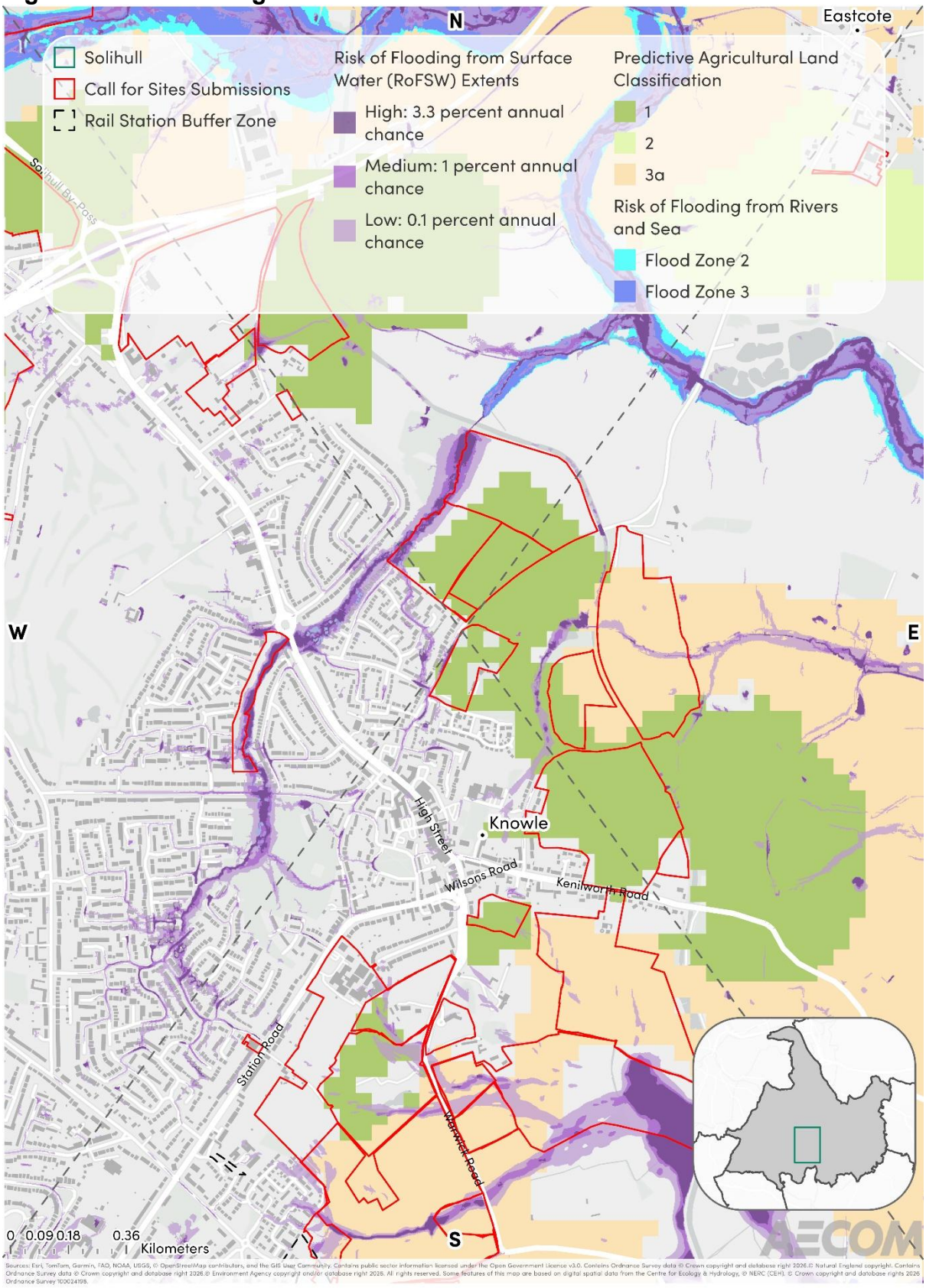
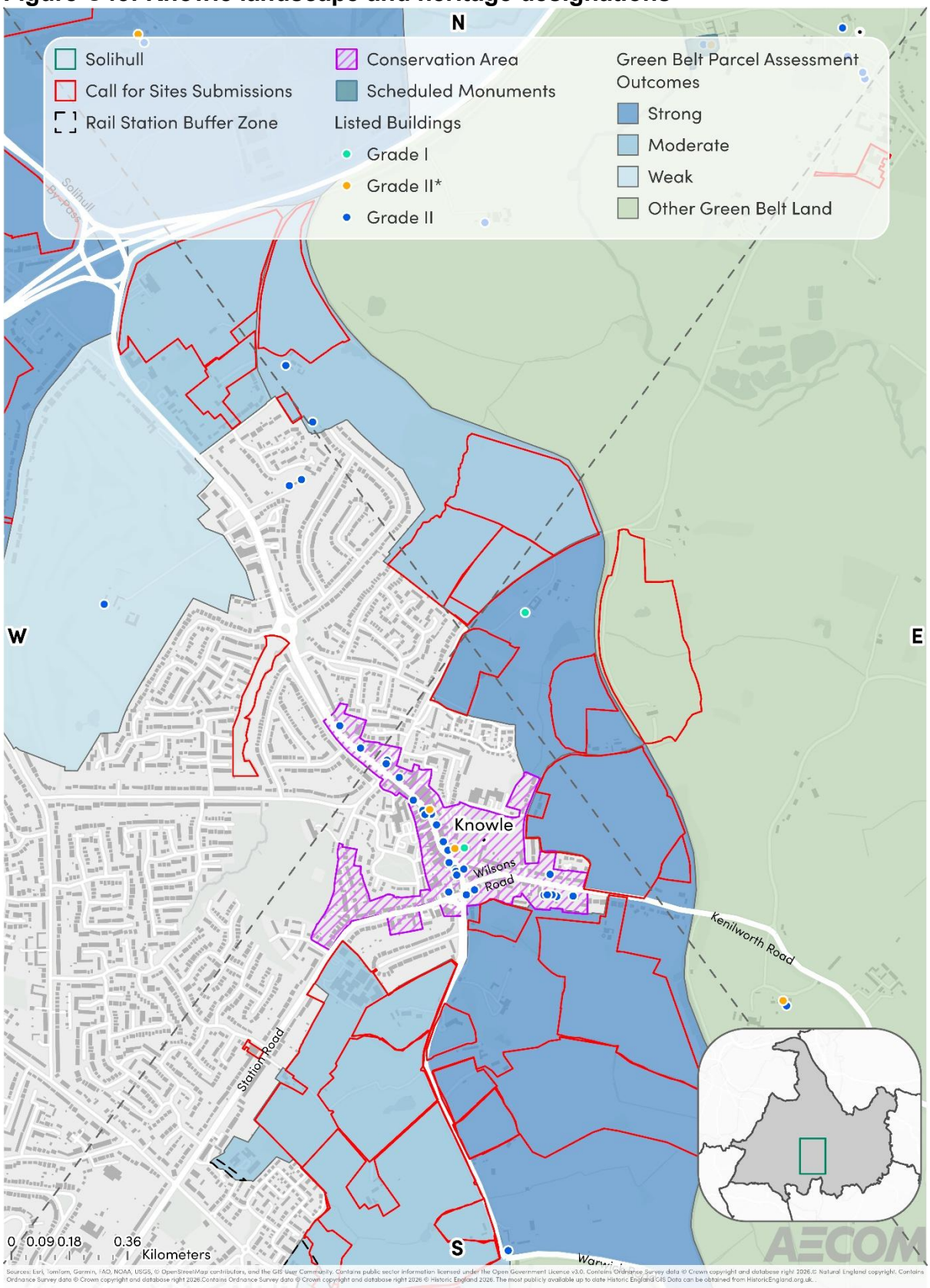


Figure C45: Knowle landscape and heritage designations



C.16 Meriden

Figure C46: Meriden biodiversity designations

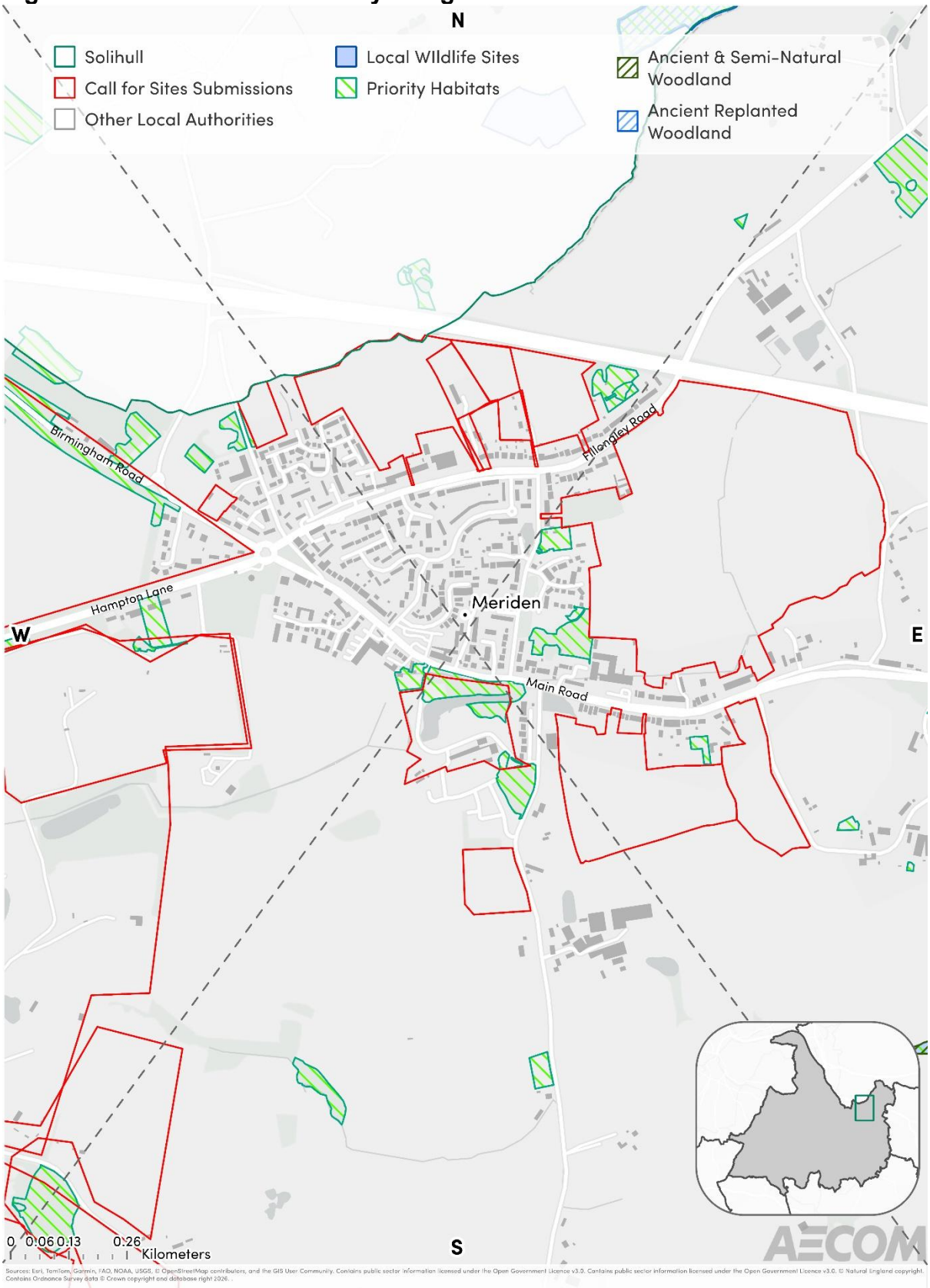


Figure C47: Meriden agricultural land and flood risk

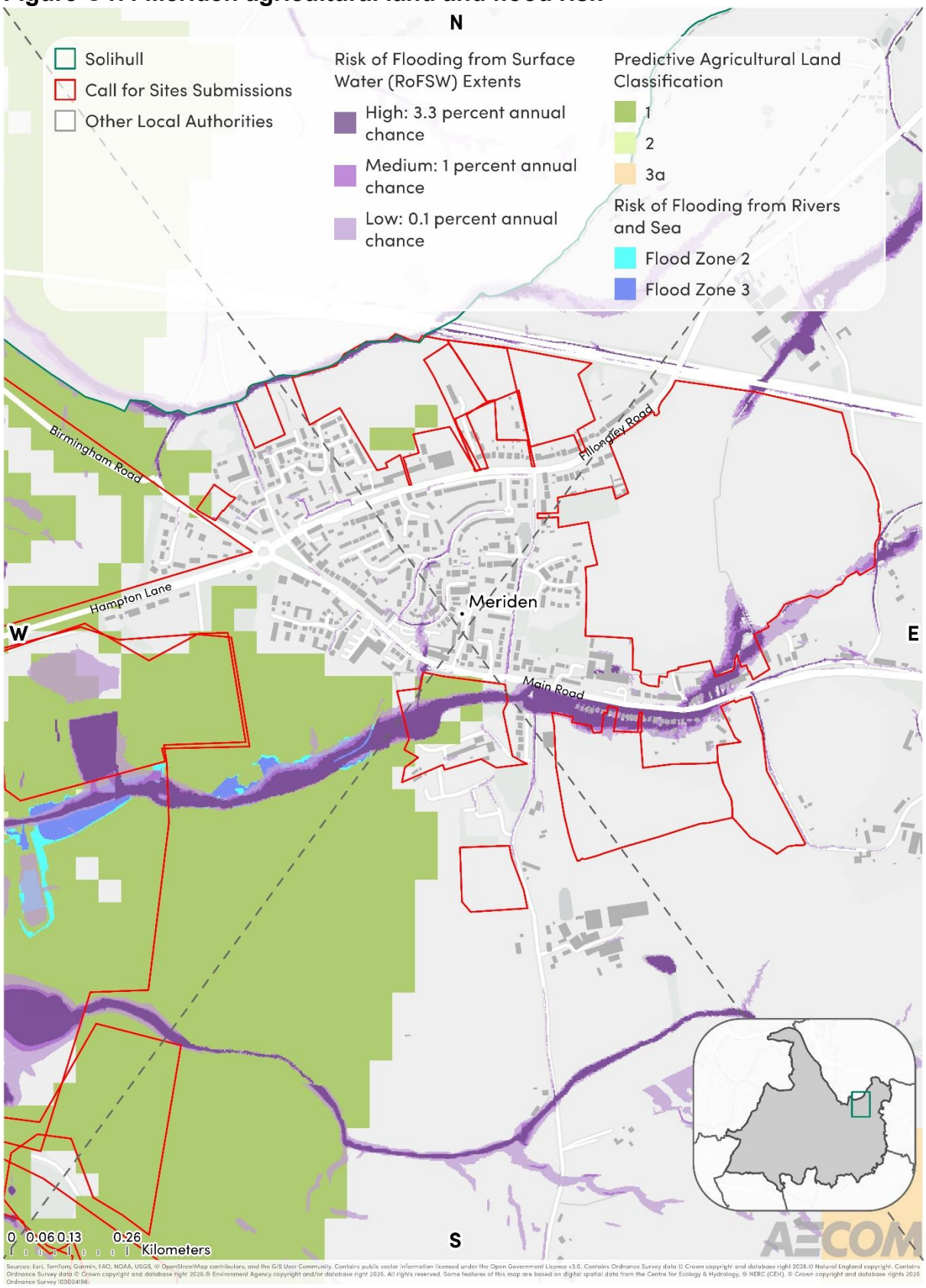
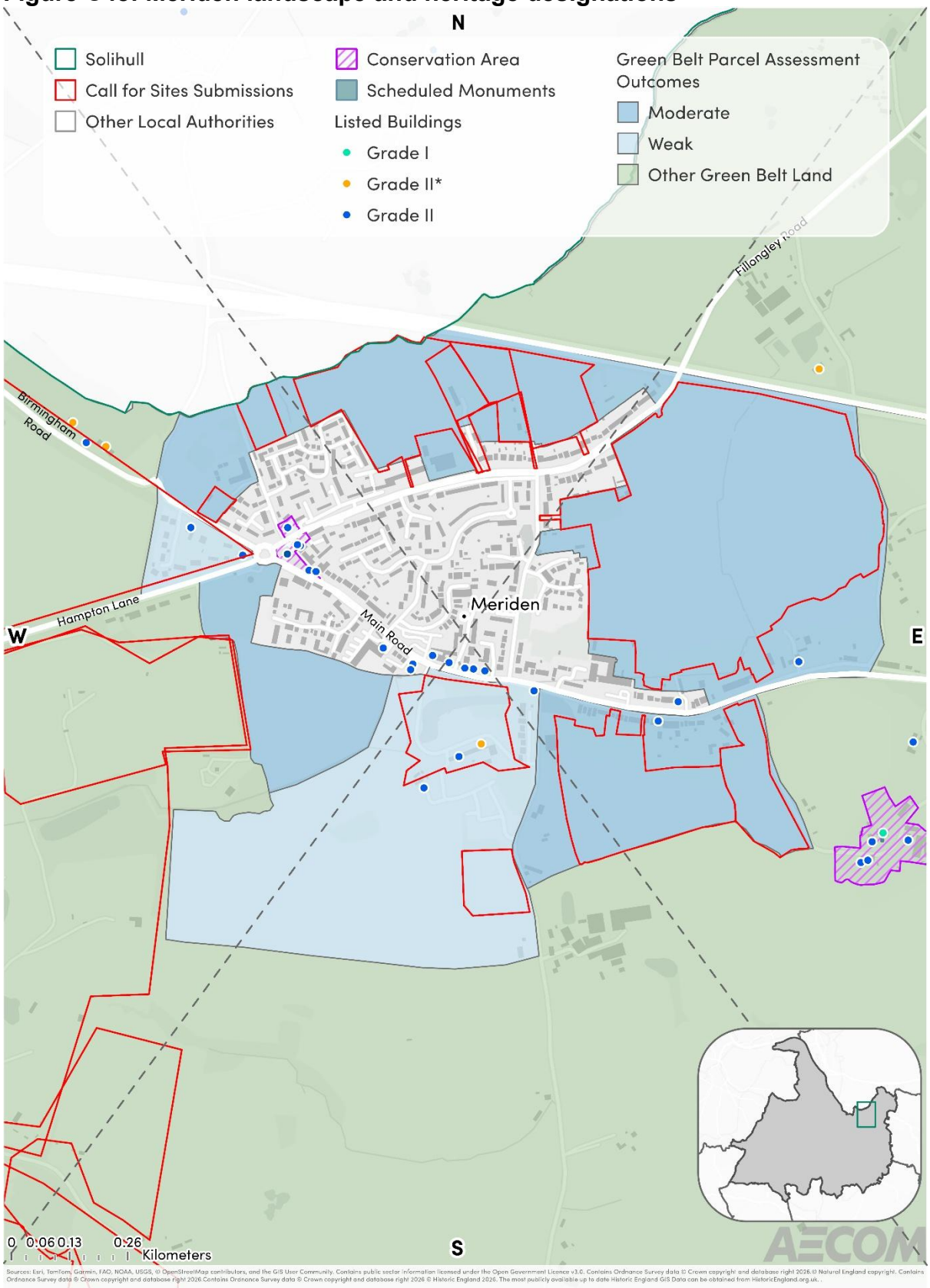


Figure C48: Meriden landscape and heritage designations



C.17 Millisons Wood

Figure C49: Millisons Wood biodiversity designations

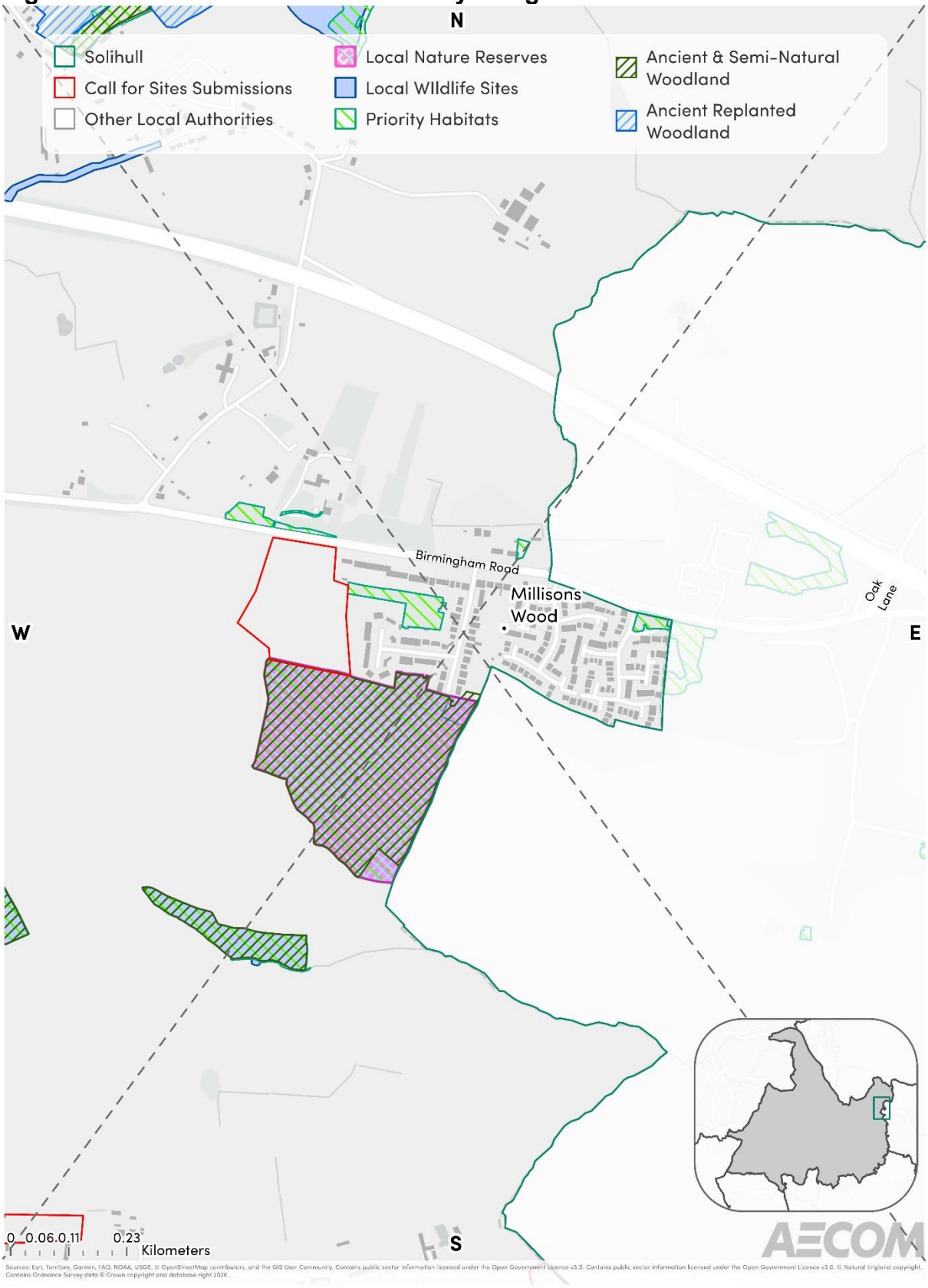


Figure C50: Millisons Wood agricultural land and flood risk

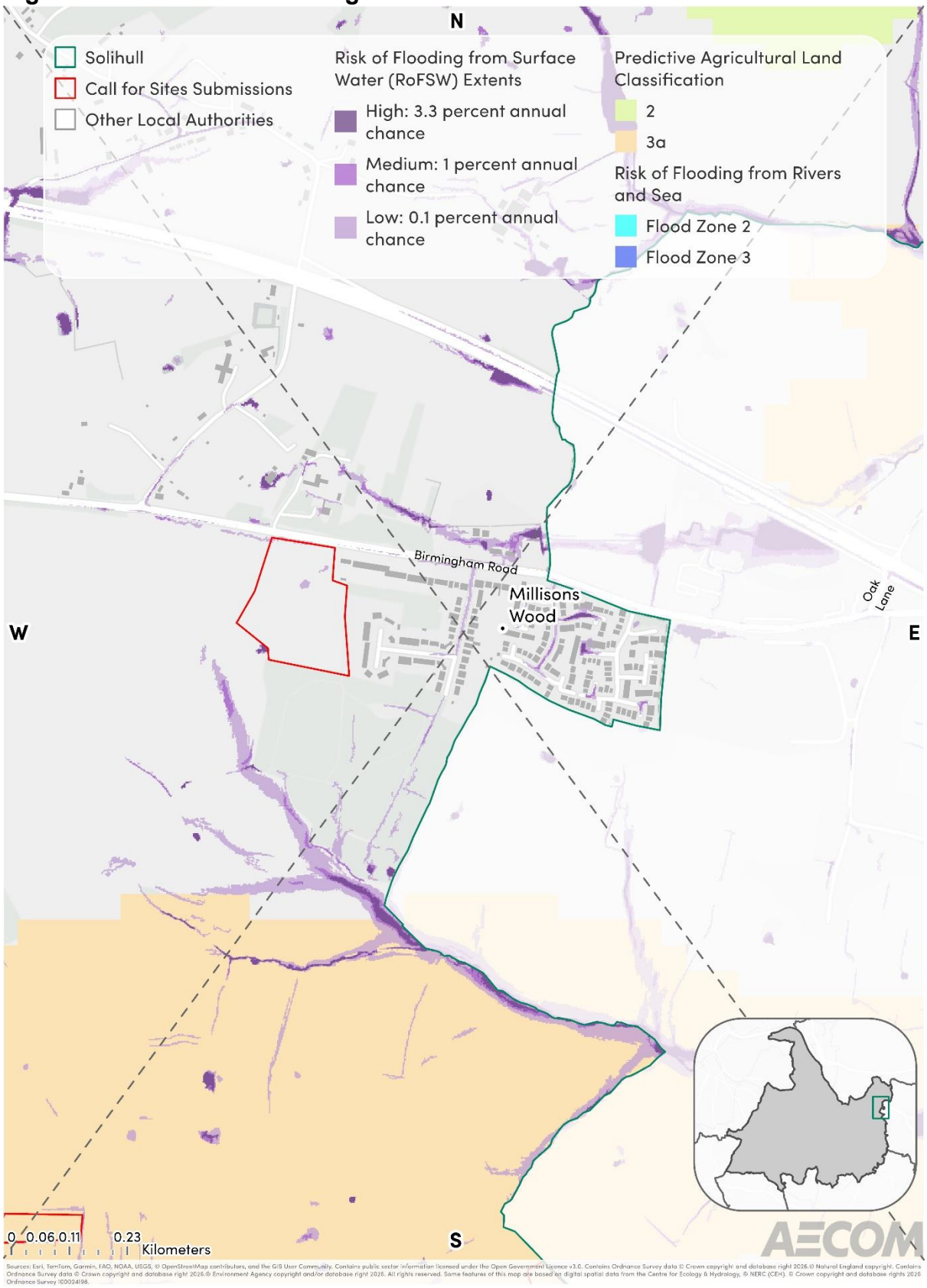
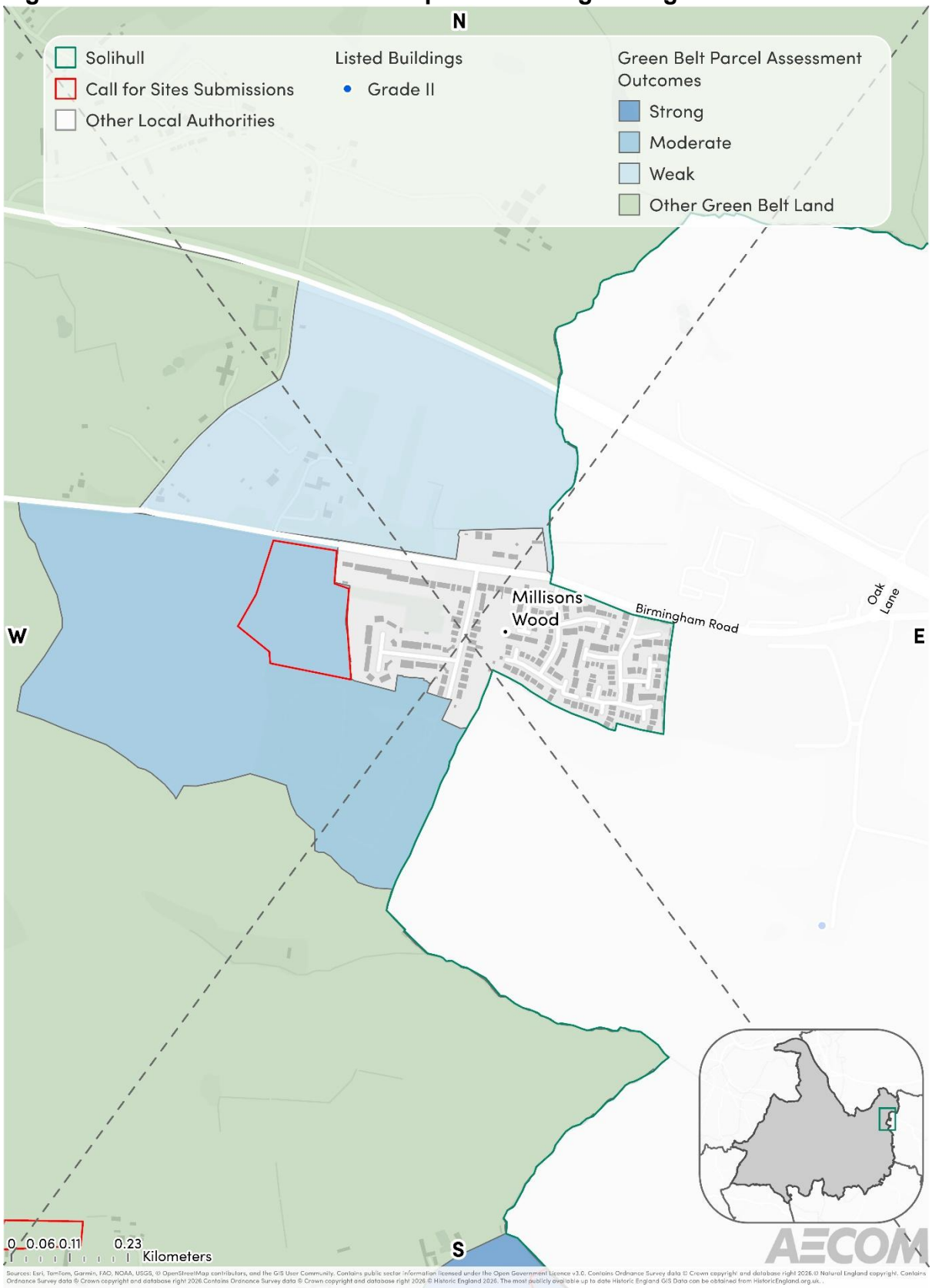


Figure C51: Millisons Wood landscape and heritage designations



C.18 Relief Road (south east of Balsall Common)

Figure C52: Relief Road biodiversity designations

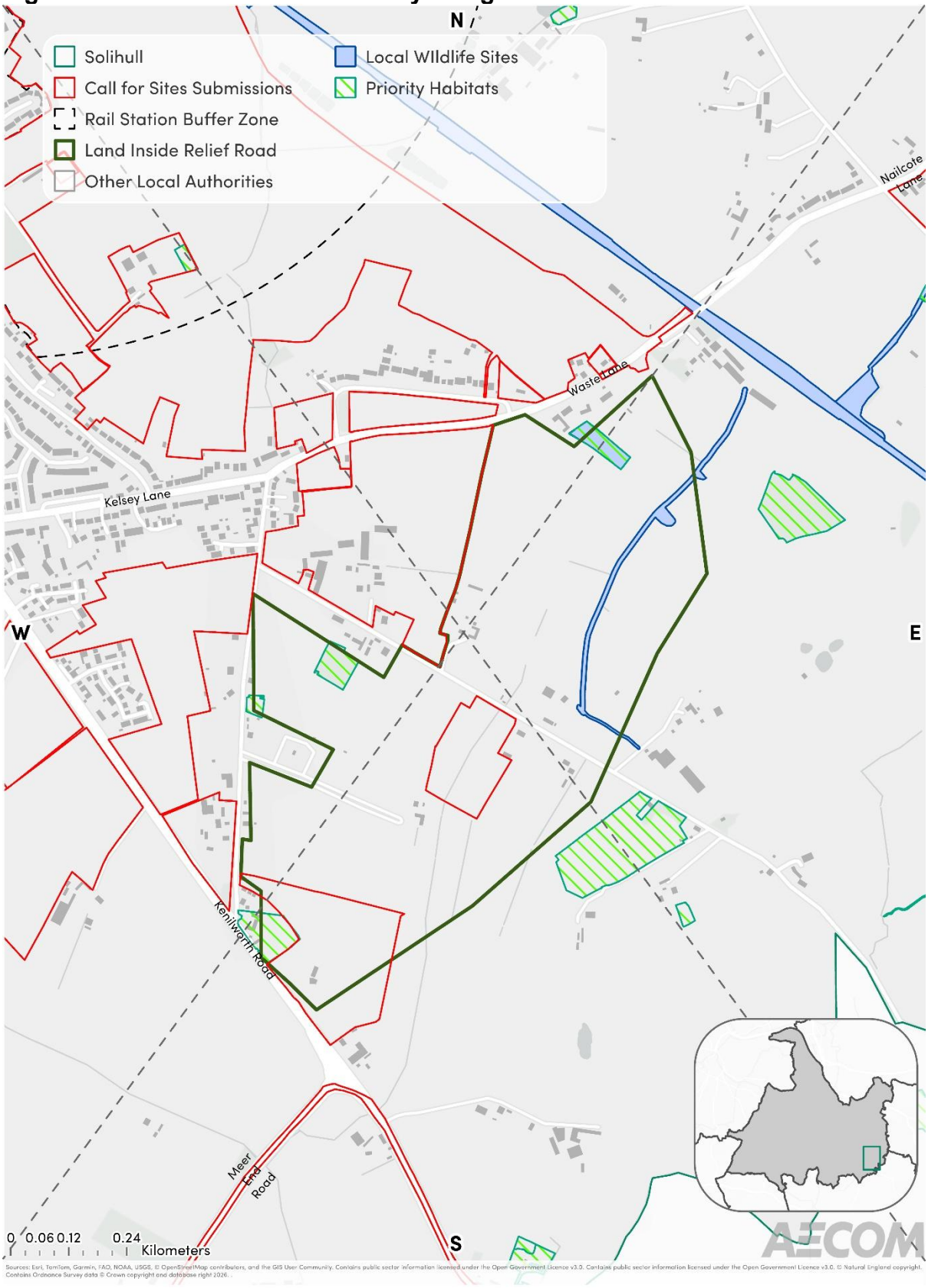


Figure C53: Relief Road agricultural land and flood risk

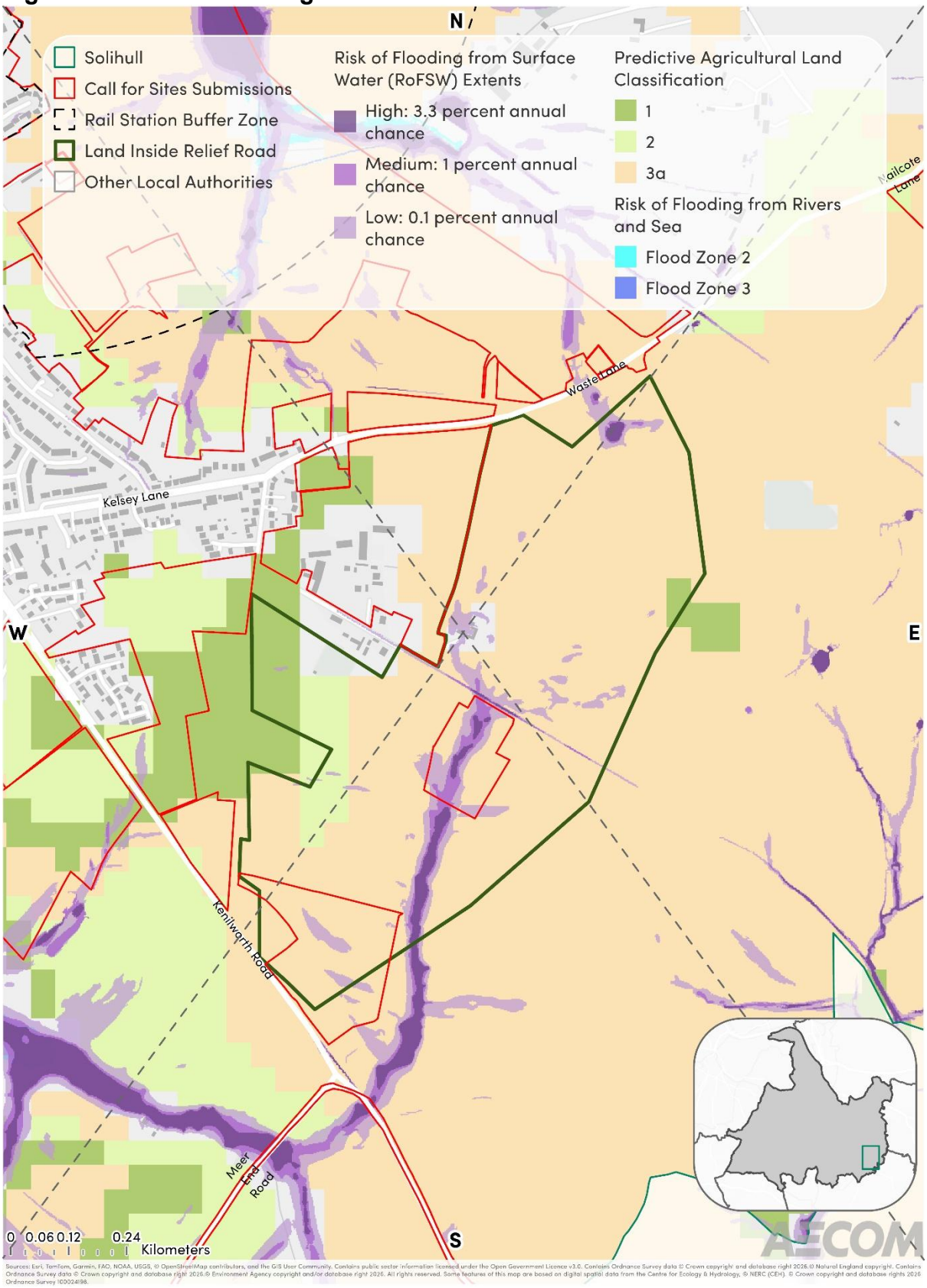
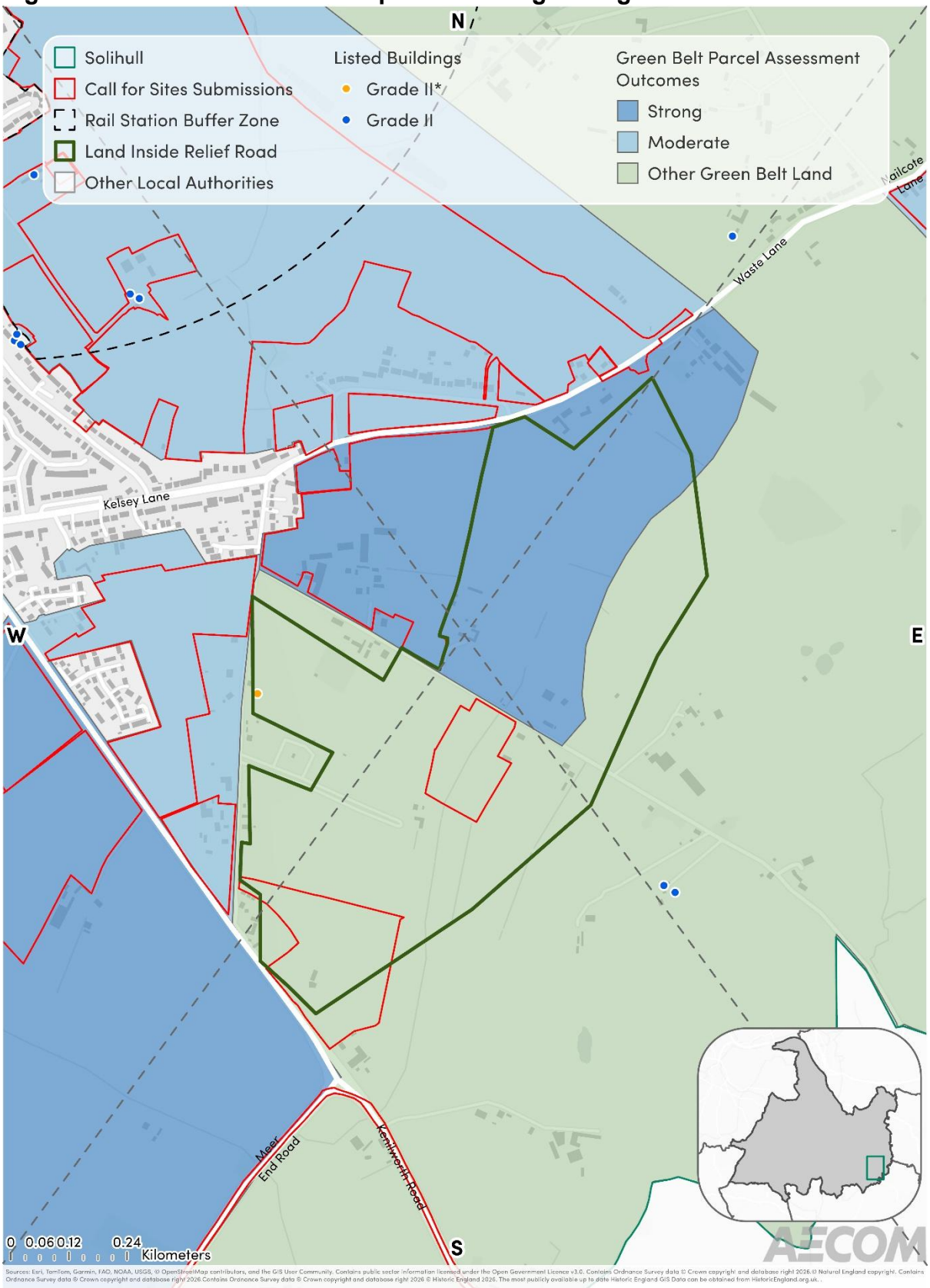


Figure C54: Relief Road landscape and heritage designations



C.19 Solihull Town Centre

Figure C55: Solihull Town Centre biodiversity designations

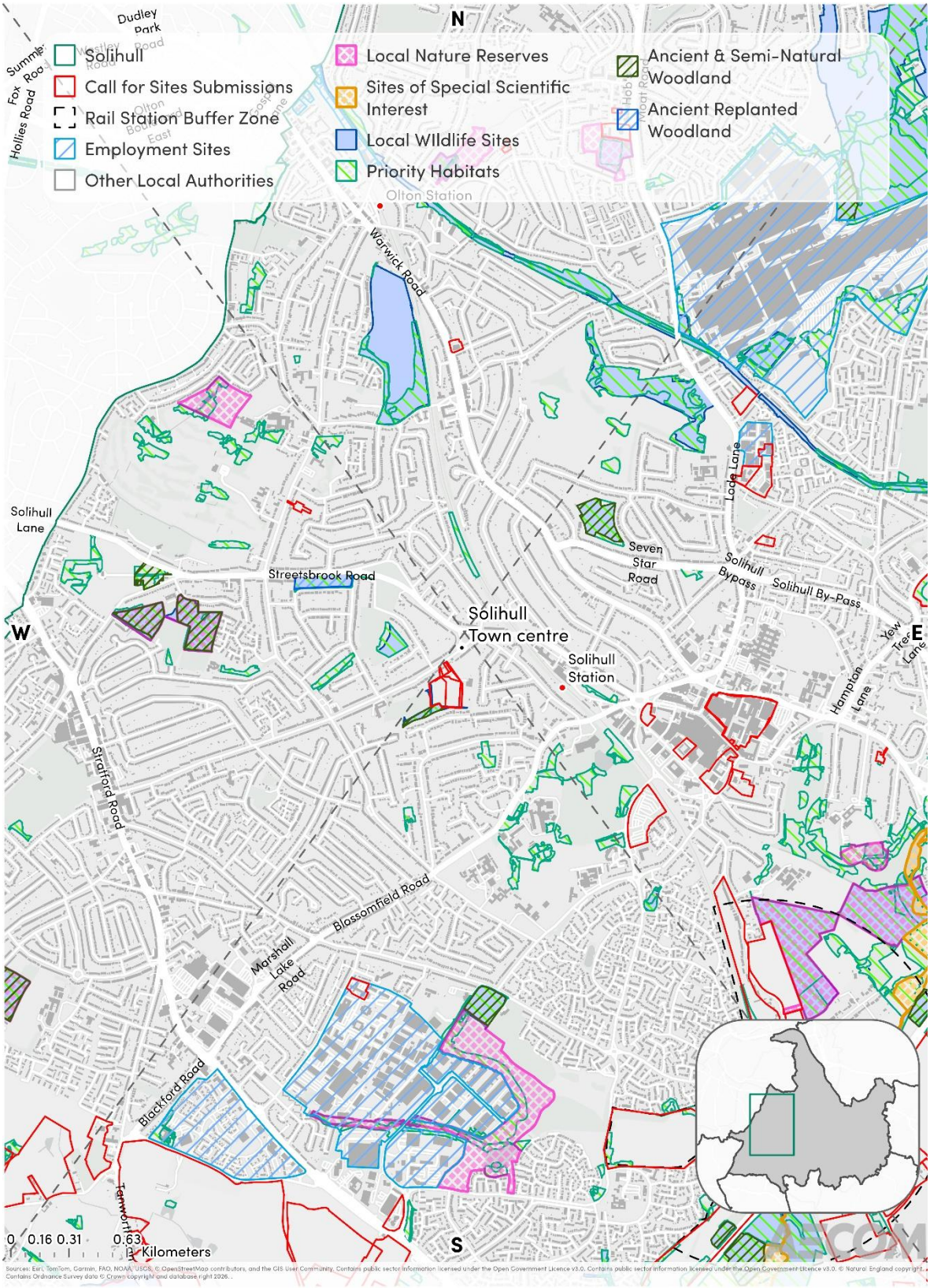


Figure C56: Solihull Town Centre agricultural land and flood risk

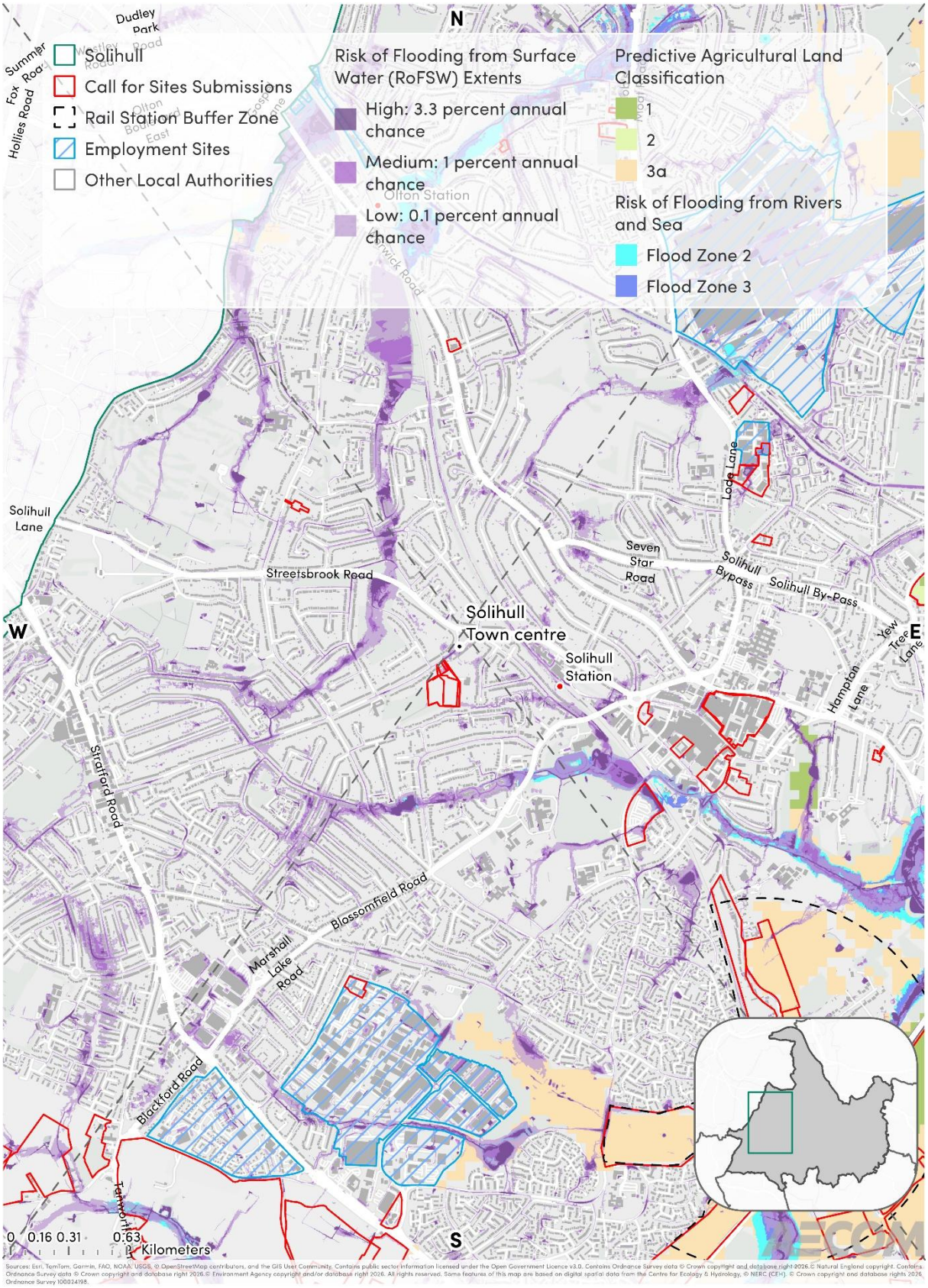
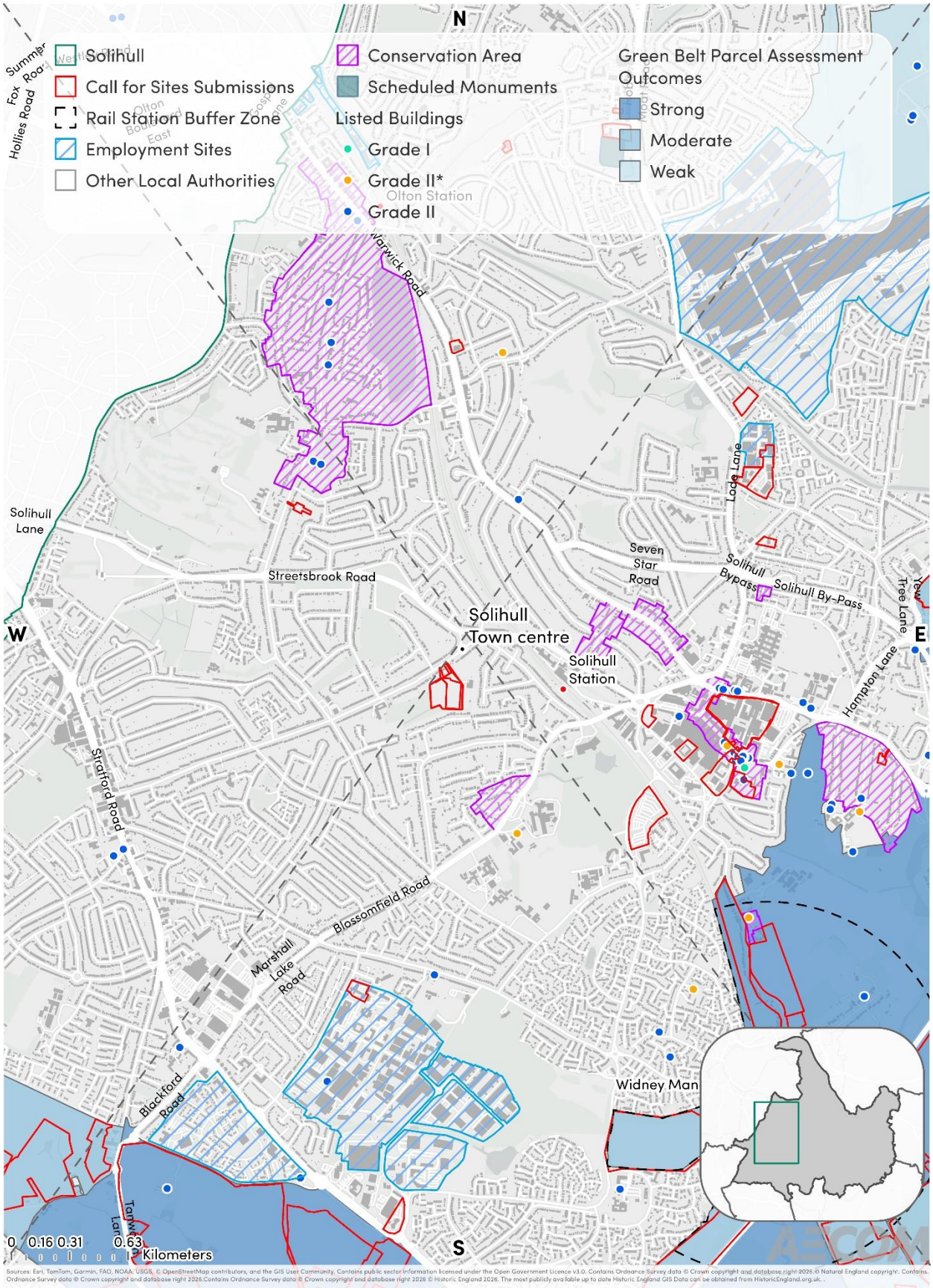


Figure C57: Solihull Town Centre landscape and heritage designations



C.20 Temple Balsall

Figure C58: Temple Balsall biodiversity designations

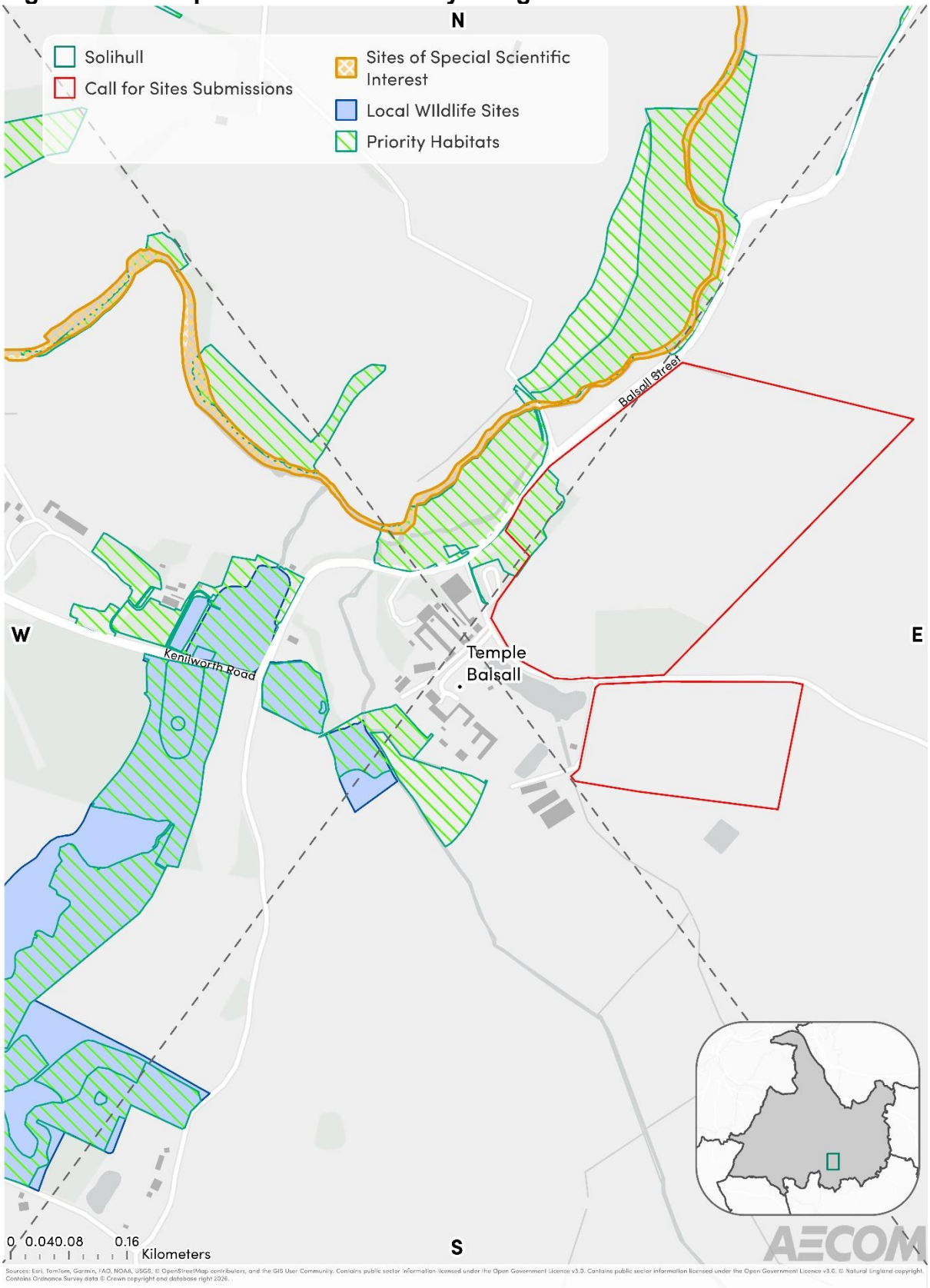


Figure C59: Temple Balsall agricultural land and flood risk

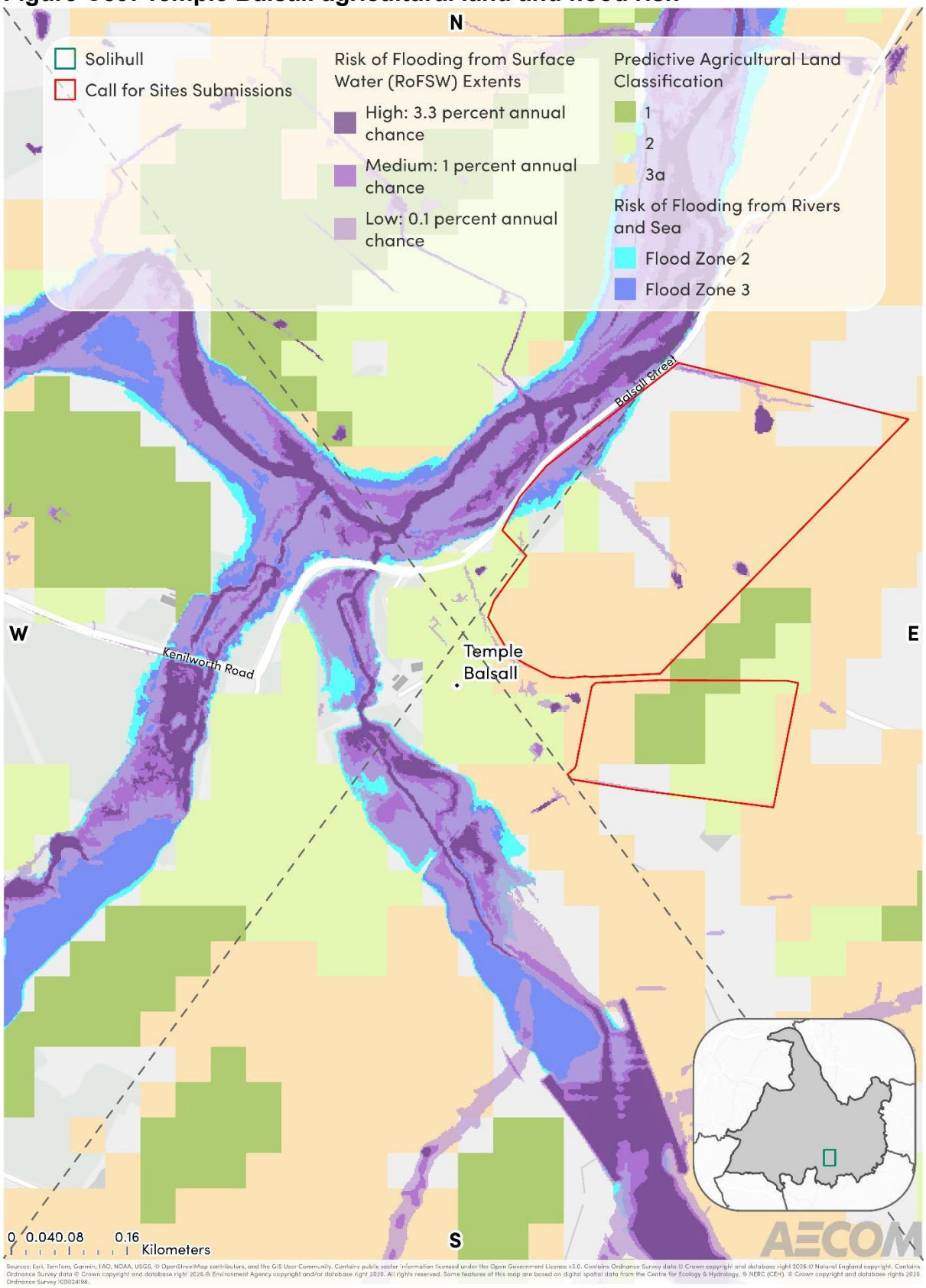
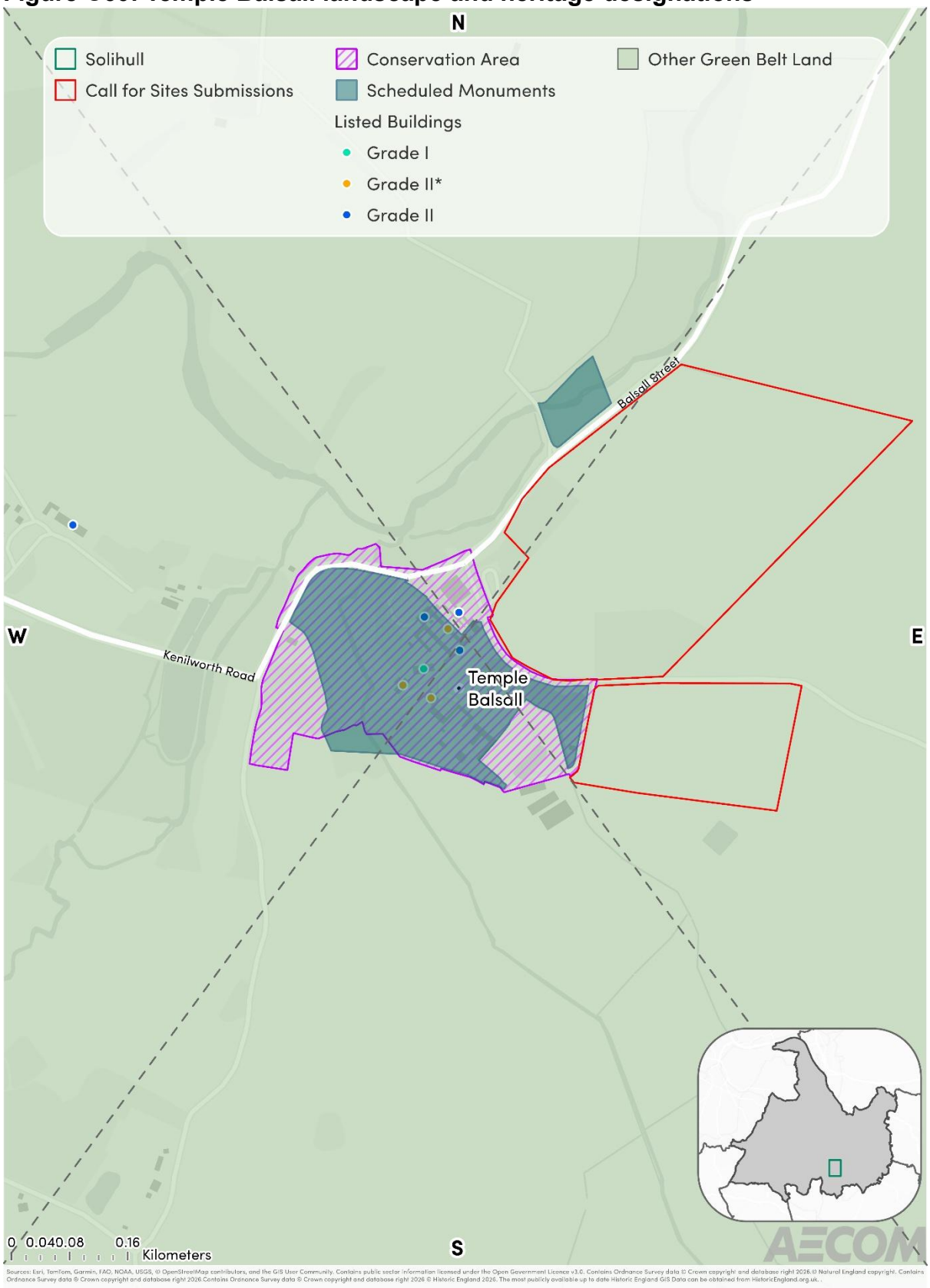


Figure C60: Temple Balsall landscape and heritage designations



C.21 Tile Hill

Figure C61: Tile Hill biodiversity designations

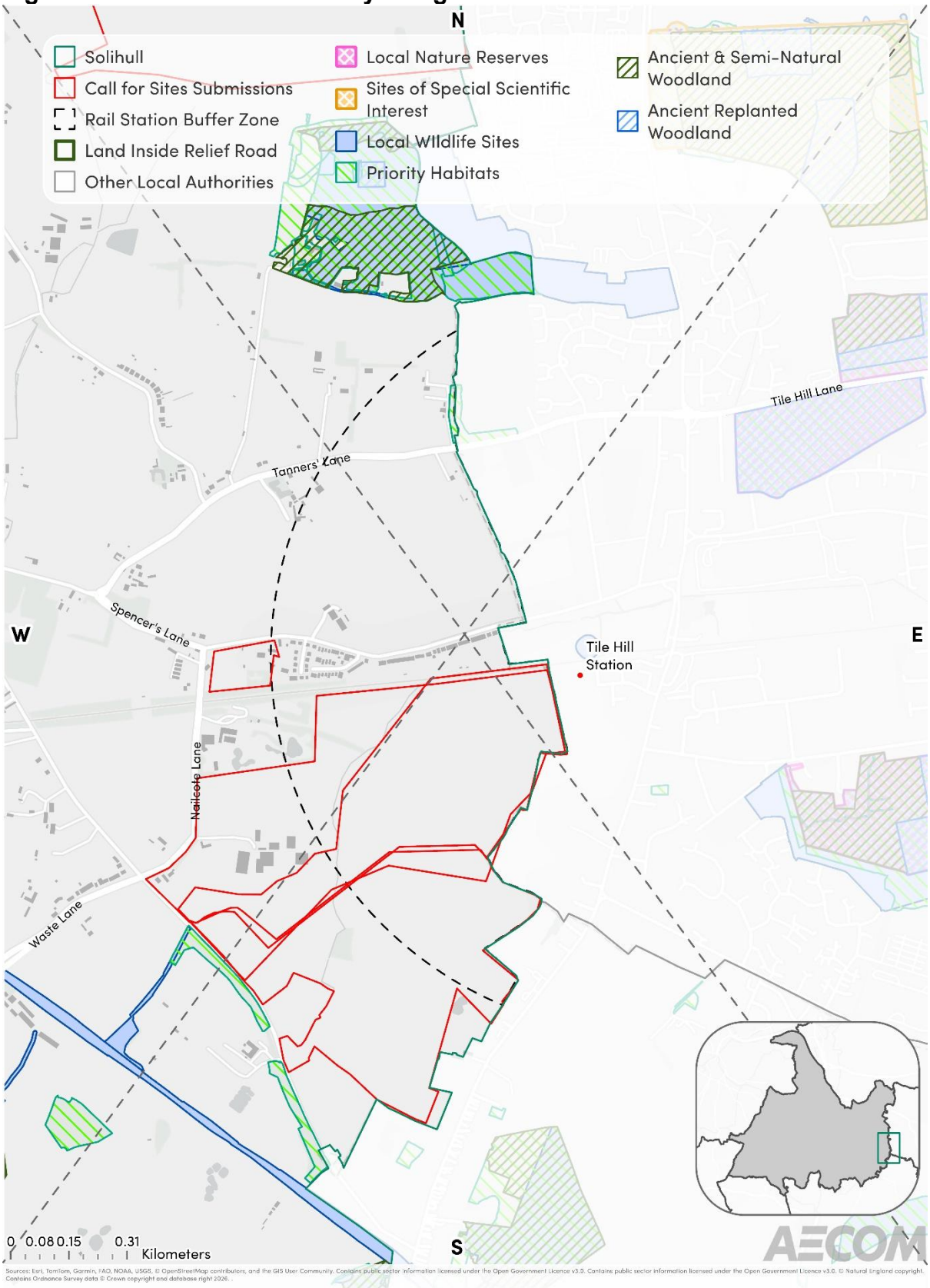


Figure C62: Tile Hill agricultural land and flood risk

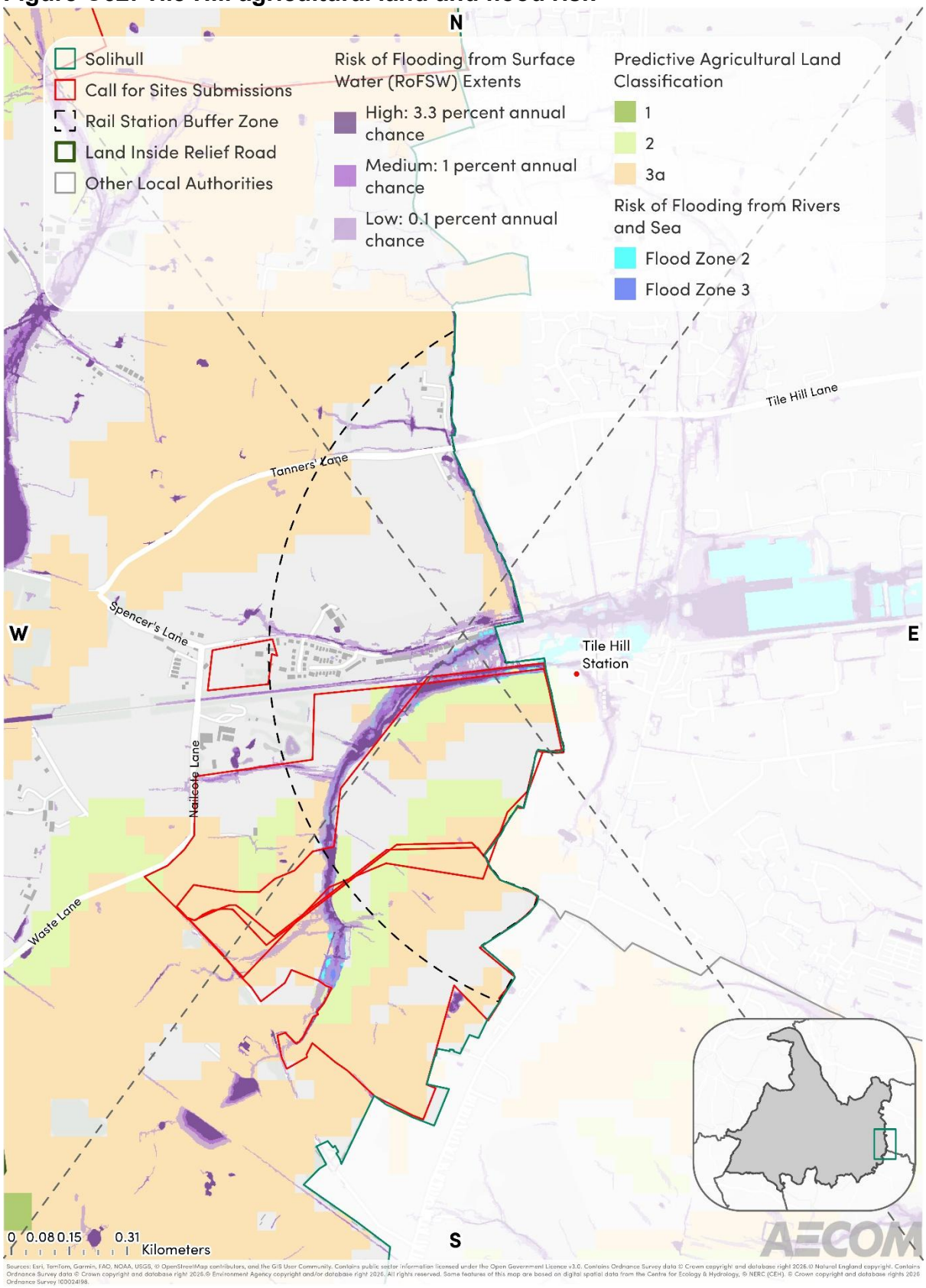
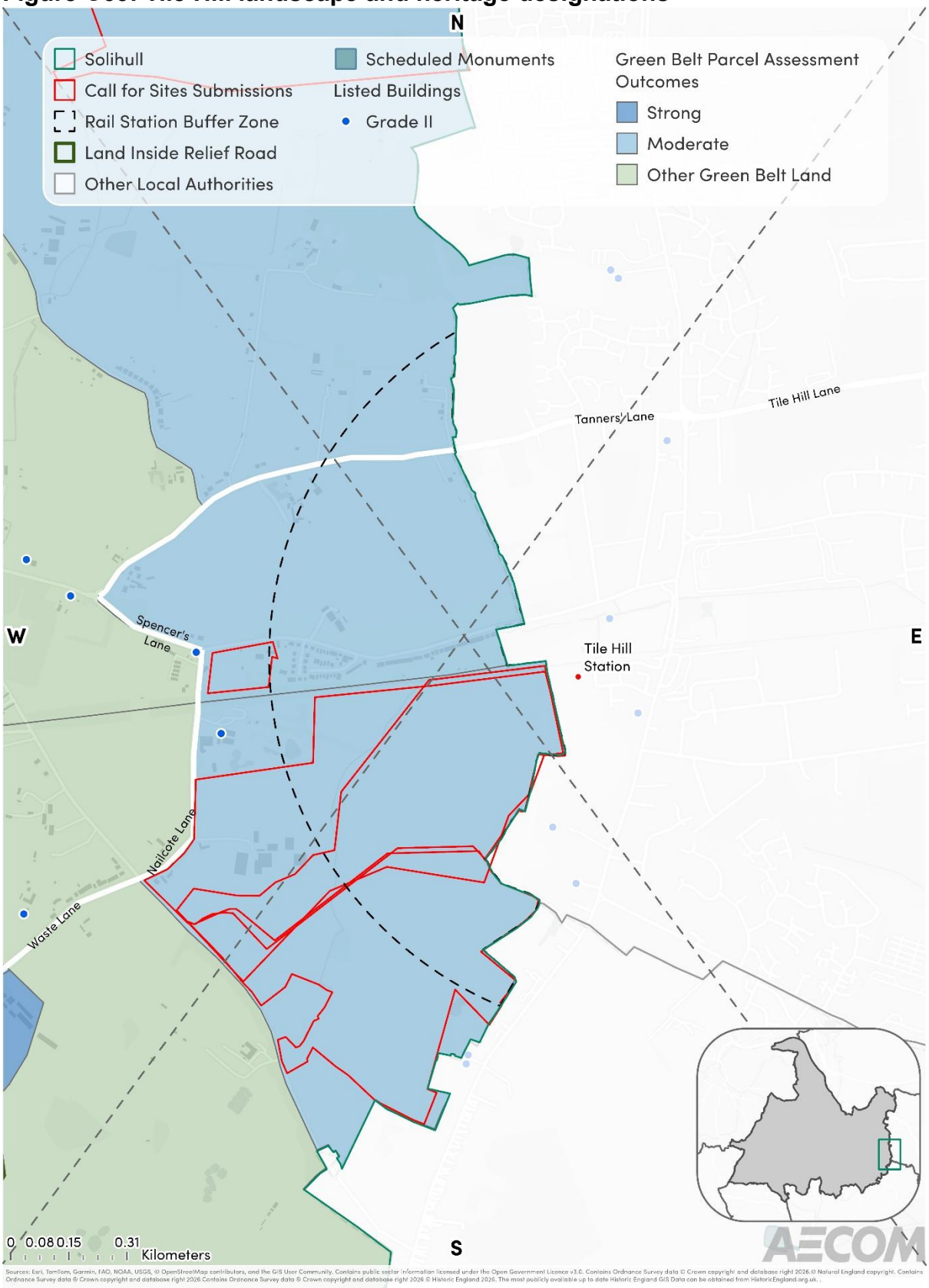


Figure C63: Tile Hill landscape and heritage designations



C.22 West of Coventry

Figure C64: West of Coventry biodiversity designations

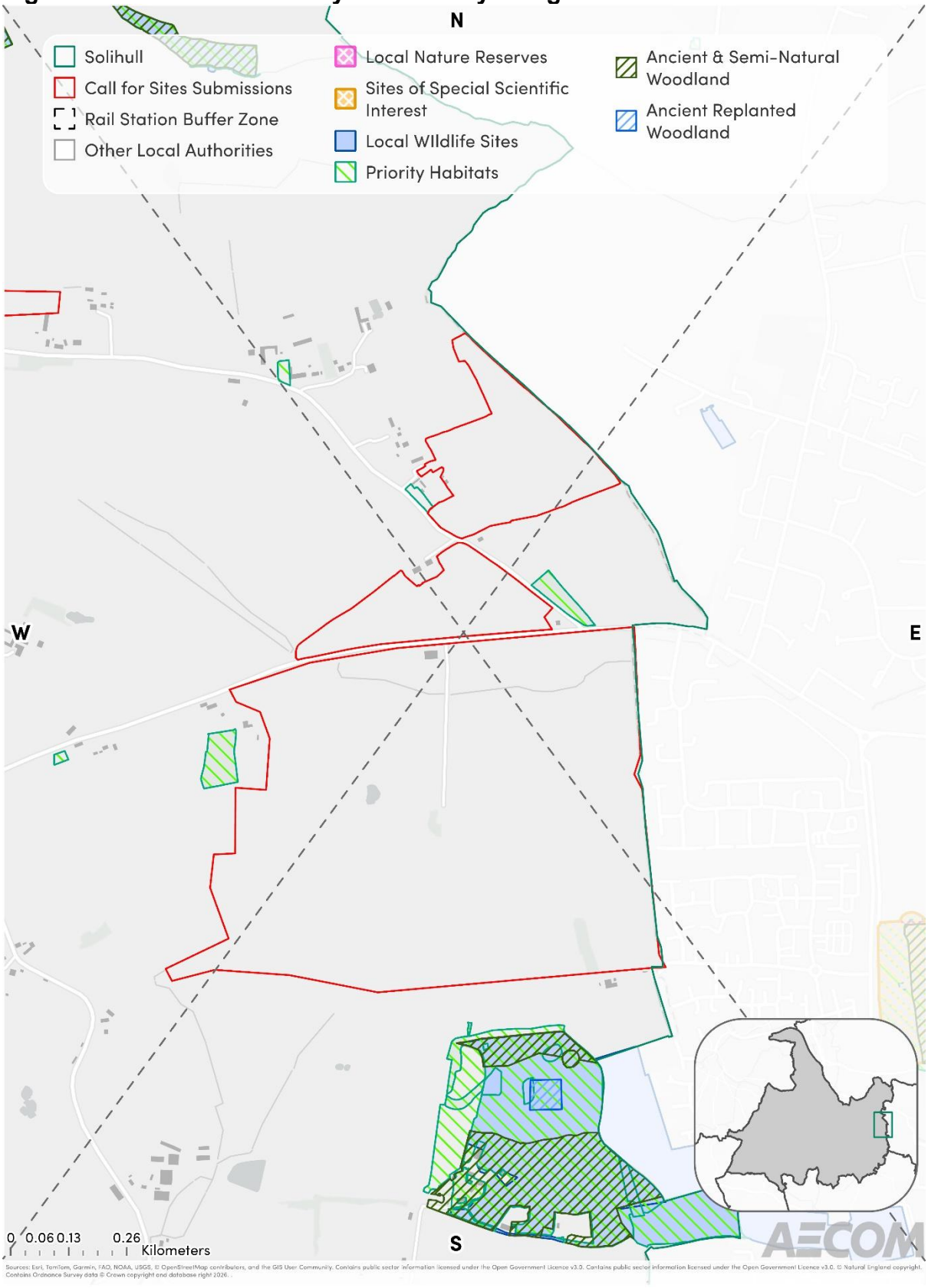


Figure C65: West of Coventry agricultural land and flood risk

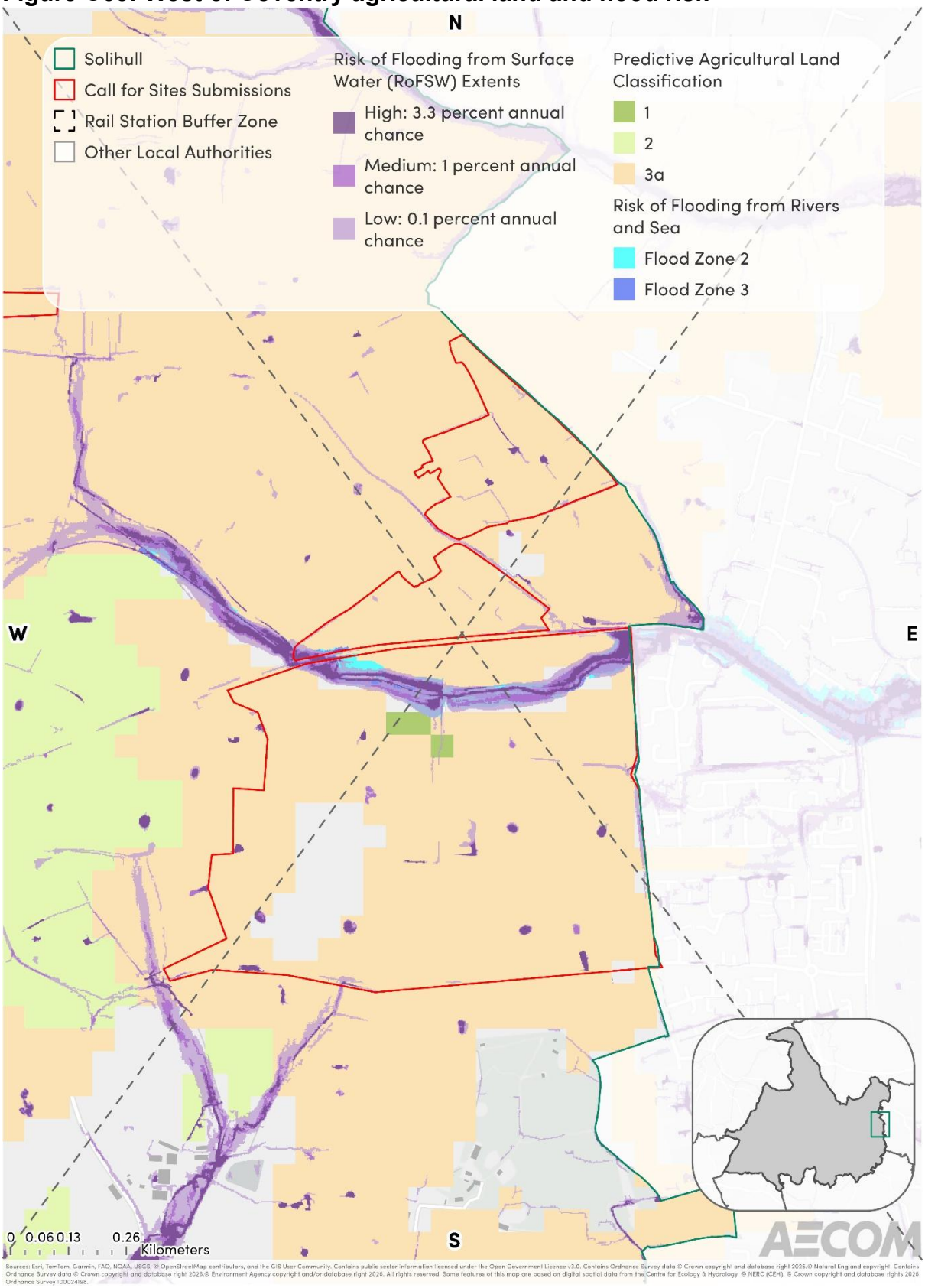
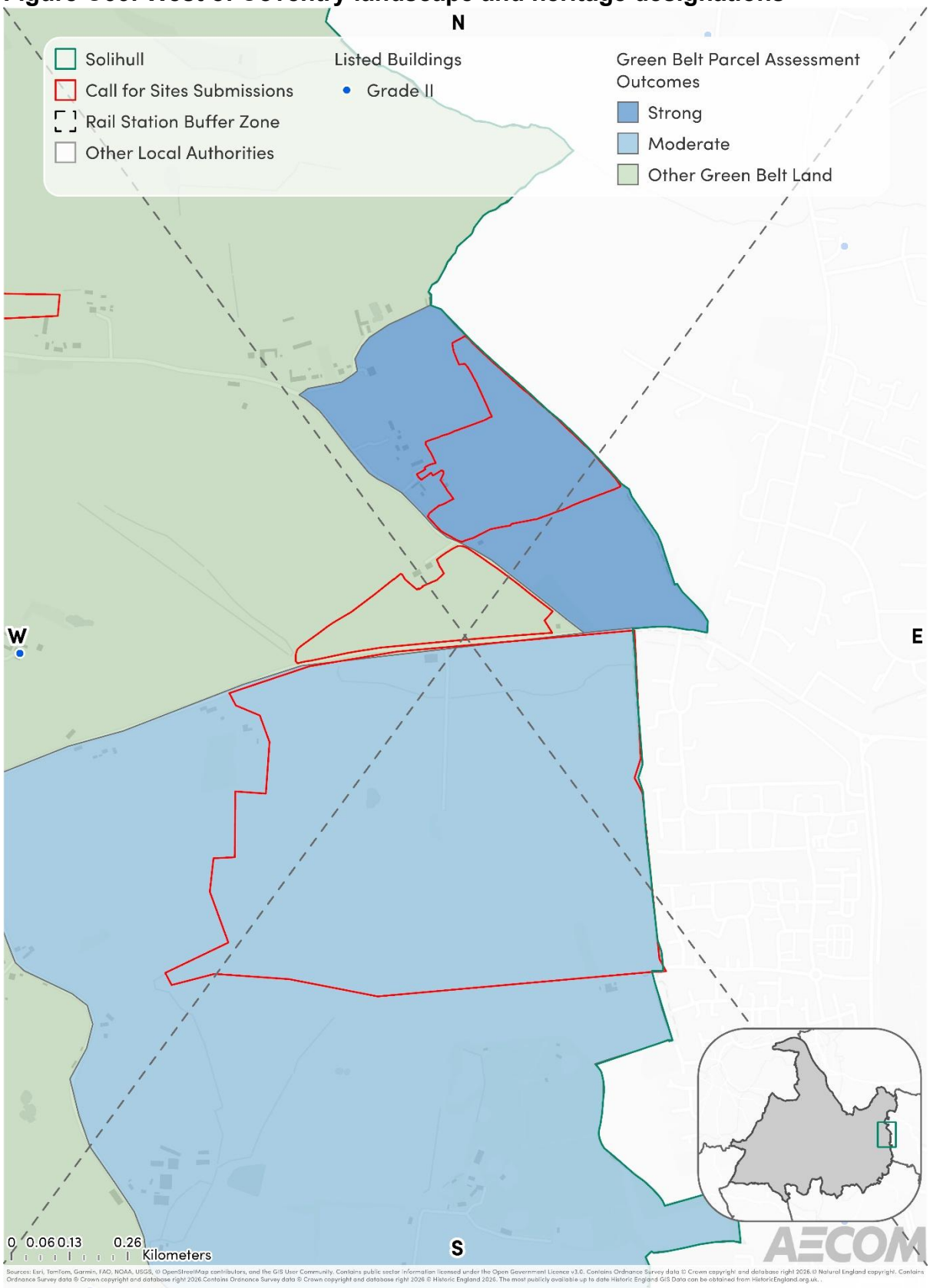


Figure C66: West of Coventry landscape and heritage designations



C.23 Widney Manor

Figure C67: Widney Manor biodiversity designations

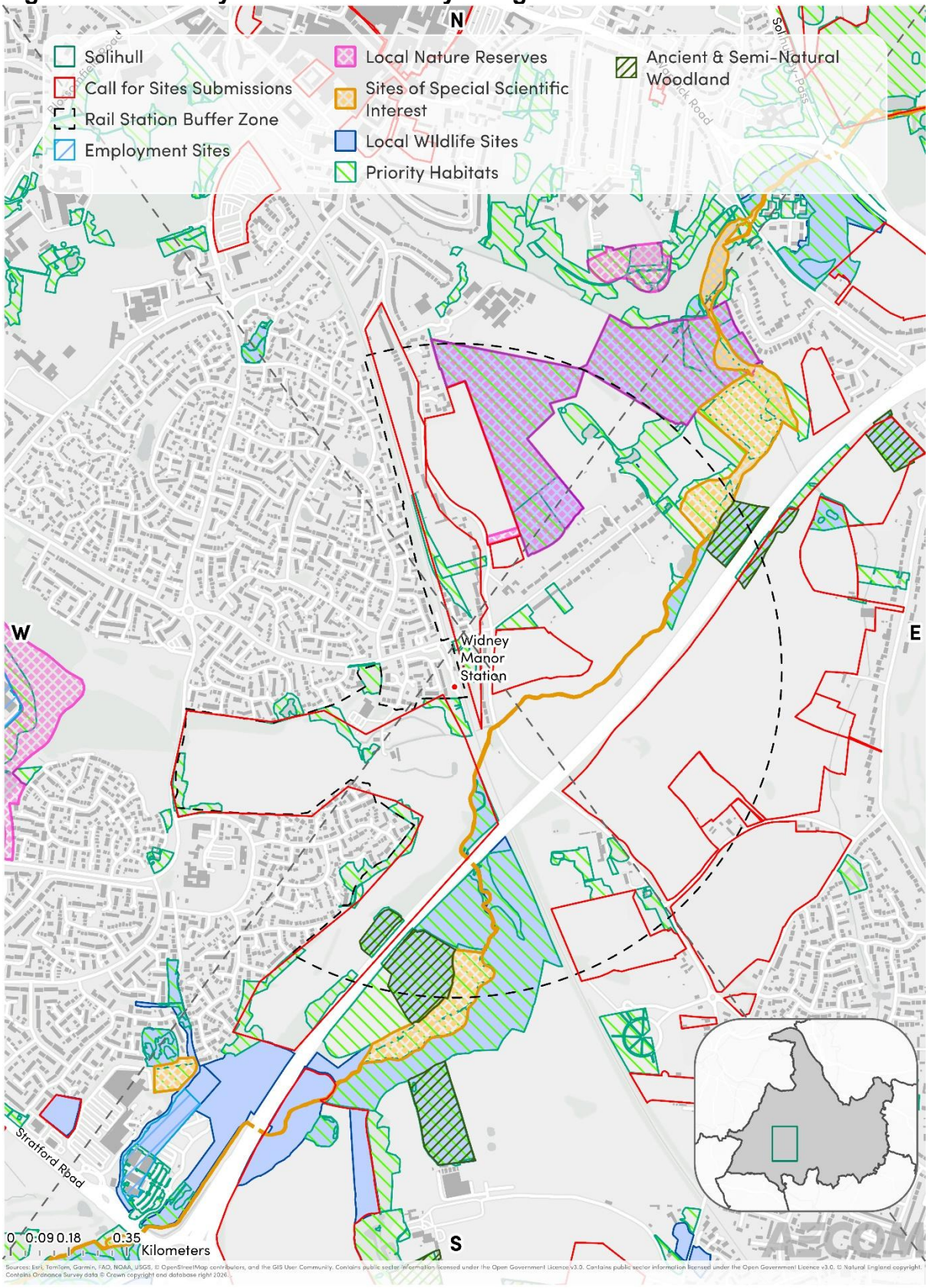


Figure C68: Widney Manor agricultural land and flood risk

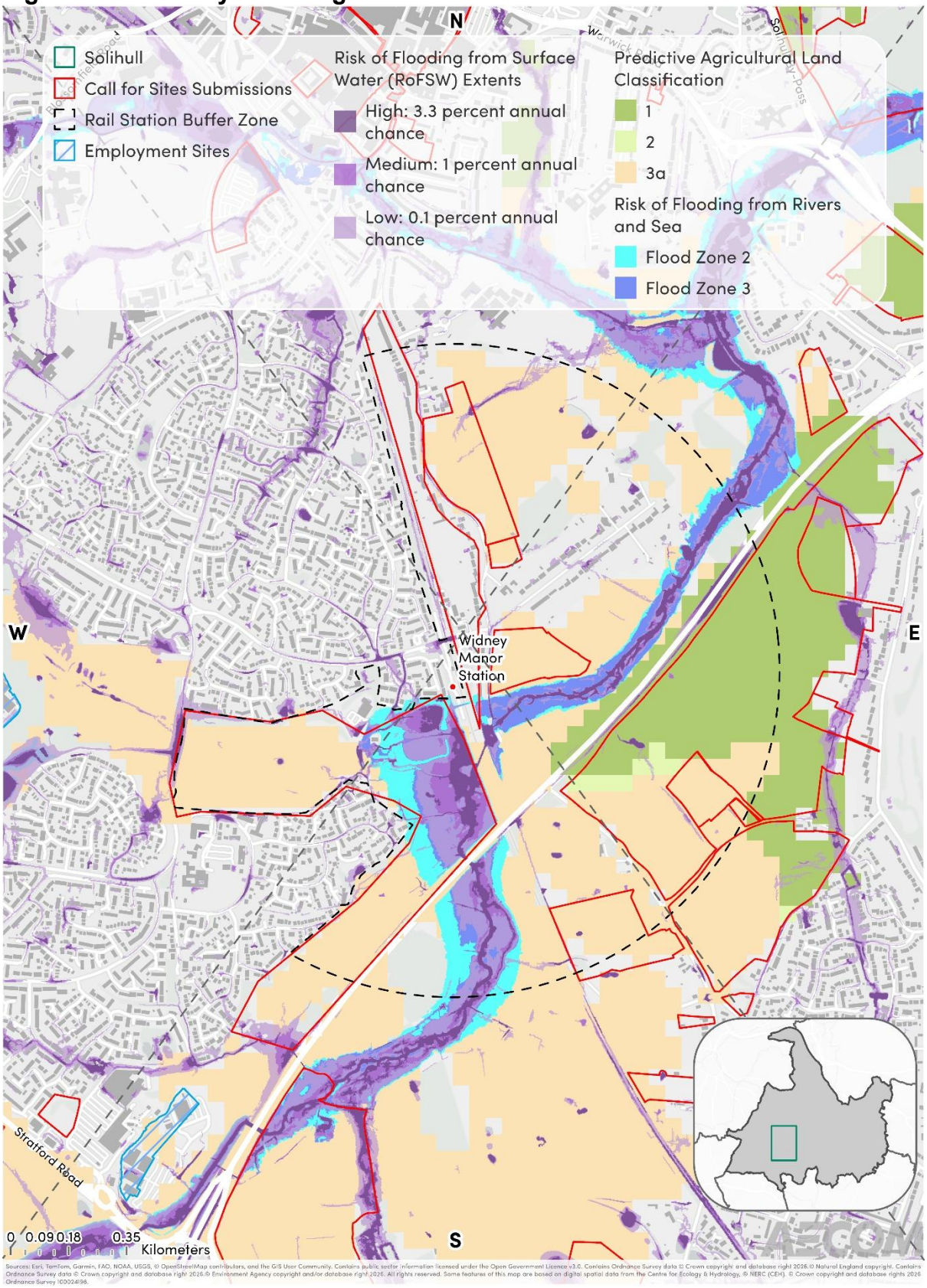
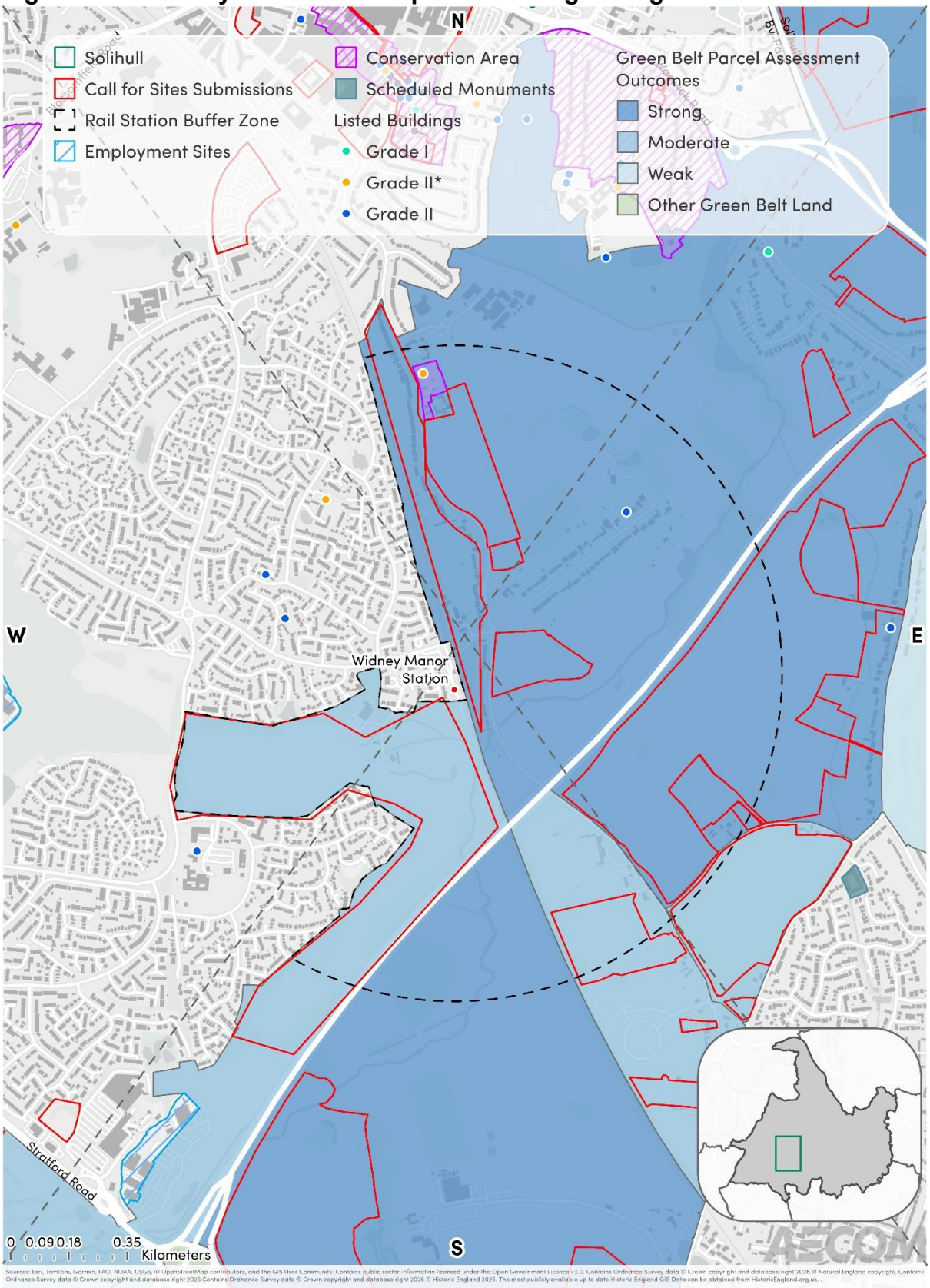


Figure C69: Widney Manor landscape and heritage designations



C.24 Wythall, Whitlock's End, Shirley, and Earlswood

Figure C70: Biodiversity designations

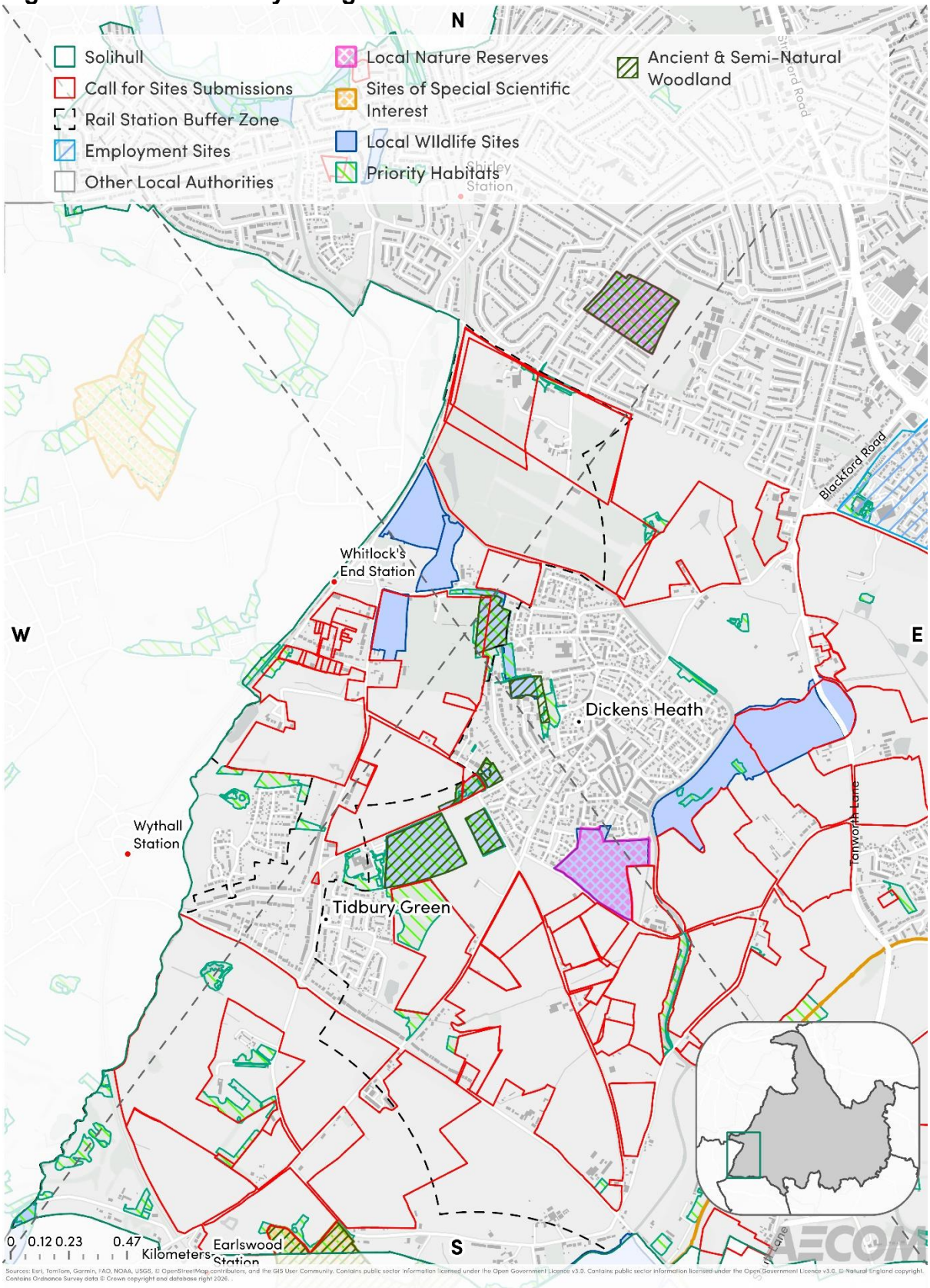


Figure C71: Agricultural land and flood risk

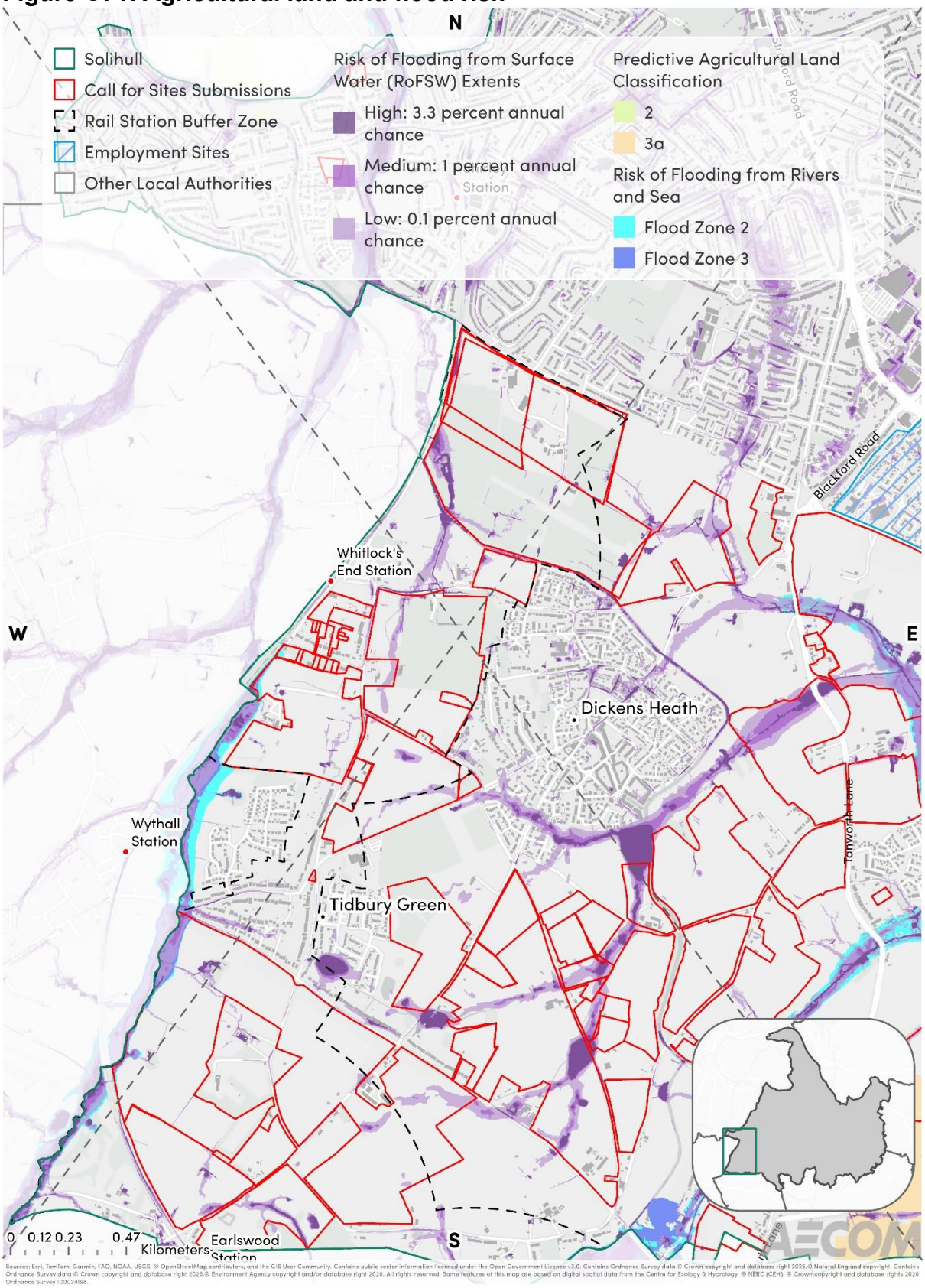


Figure C72: Landscape and heritage designations

