



The Agile Initiative

at the Oxford Martin School

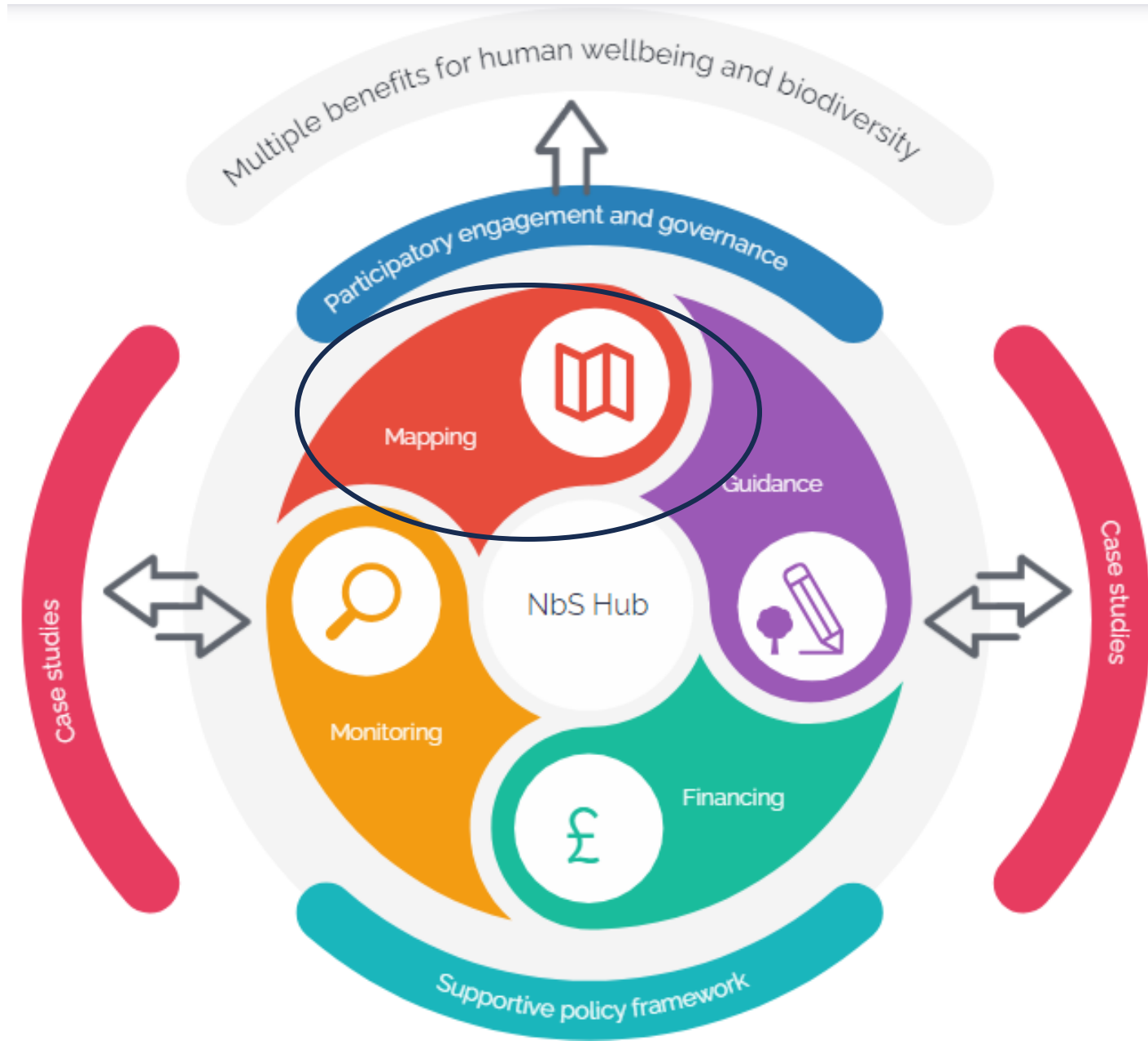
NATURE RECOVERY AND NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS OPPORTUNITY MAPS



Environmental Change Institute



Agile Initiative Sprint 3: Scaling up high quality NbS in the UK



The Agile Initiative research sprint on Scaling up NbS in the UK

<https://nbshub.naturebasedsolutionsinitiative.org/>

Integration

How this Hub supports an integrated approach to scaling up NbS

Governance

Effective engagement for successful NbS

Mapping NbS Opportunities

Finding suitable NbS for the local context

Monitoring NbS Outcomes

Focus on biodiversity and soil metrics

Case Studies

Inspiring examples of NbS in the UK

Funding Programmes

UK funding finder tool

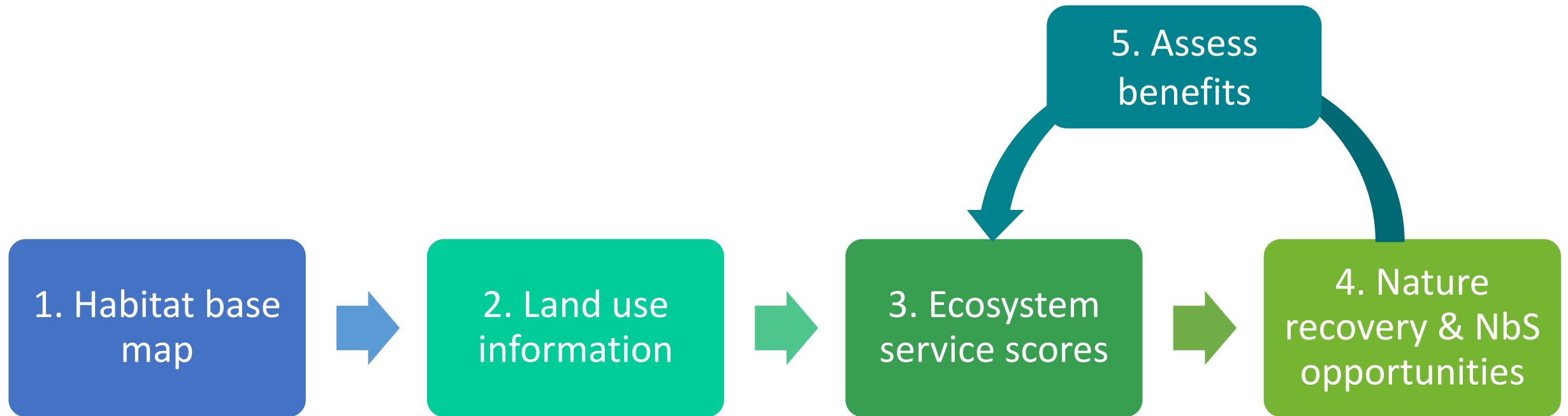
Information & Guidance

A library of useful guidance for practitioners

Policy Briefs & Reports

Agile advice for policy-makers

What are the Agile opportunity maps?



- Maps can be generated anywhere in England using freely available software
 - Suggesting suitable interventions for specific locations
- Intended to be used as part of a participatory process with local stakeholders
 - Ground truthing essential!

Example output: high priority opportunities in each location

Options for polygon:

Grass,
Orchard,
Silvopasture,
Silvoarable

Options for polygon:

Wetland
mosaic

Options for polygon:

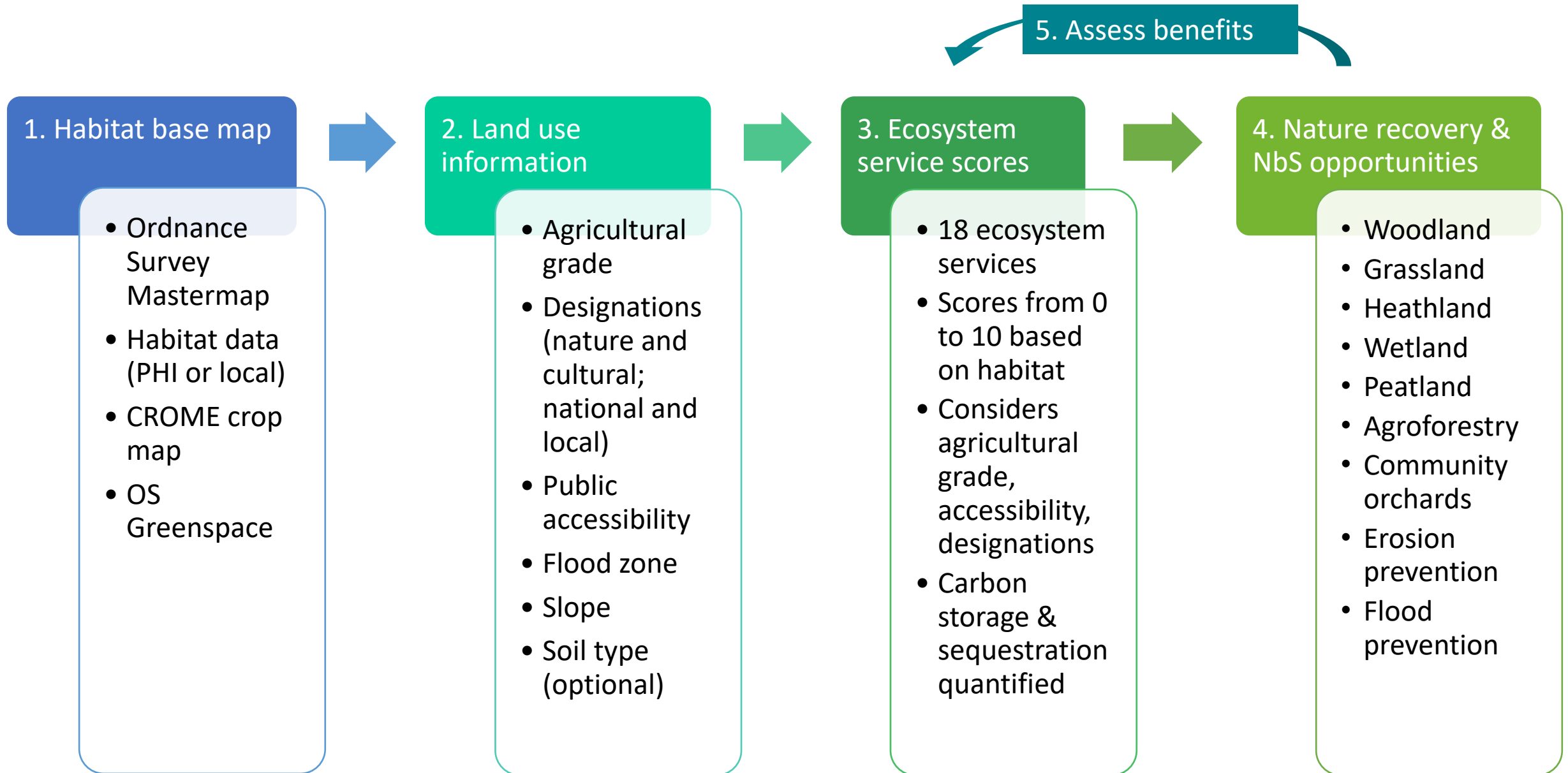
Natural
regeneration,
Silvopasture



Main potential opportunities

- Natural regeneration
- Wood
- Grass
- Grass, Wood
- Heath
- Grass, Heath
- Heath, Wood
- Peat
- Wetland
- Wetland, Grass
- Orchard
- Grass, Orchard
- Silvopasture
- Silvoarable

How the mapping system works



The Agile opportunity maps integrate many of the LNRS data layers

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs

NCEA National Capital and Economic Assessment

Local Nature Recovery Strategy Data Viewer

Home Data Map Data Download Help

LNR areas Section 107(2) data Section 107(5) data Section 107(6) data Other data sources

Search

- Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Grades - Post 1988 [Download](#)
- AIMS Spatial Flood Defences (inc. standardised attributes) [Download](#)
- Ancient Woodlands (England) [Download](#)
- Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) [Download](#)

< 1 of 85 >

Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) Grades - Post 1988

Guidance

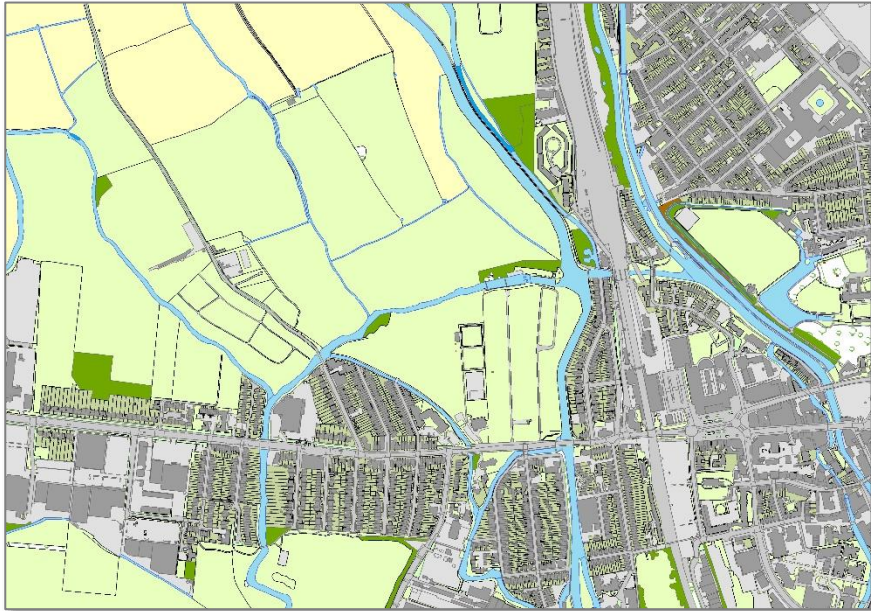
[Agricultural Land Classification \(ALC\) Grades - Post 1988.pdf](#)

Data owner	Natural England
Licence	Open Government Licence
Description	This is the most detailed and up to date ALC dataset. It is however of limited extent compared to the England-wide ALC data also found on this data viewer (provisional agricultural land classification, ALC). The post 1988 agricultural land classification (ALC) site data was scanned from original sites surveyed in detail by the then Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries

1. Agile habitat maps: complete and detailed coverage

OS Mastermap
complete coverage

less detail on natural habitats and farmland



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Local or national habitat and priority habitat data

excludes urban

more detail on semi-natural habitats

- Natural land
- Agricultural land
- Woodland
- Water
- Manmade surface
- Building
- Garden



- Arable
- Improved grassland
- Semi-natural grassland
- Ephemeral / short perenni
- Woodland
- Water
- Built up areas

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CROME Crop Map of England
Arable vs improved grassland

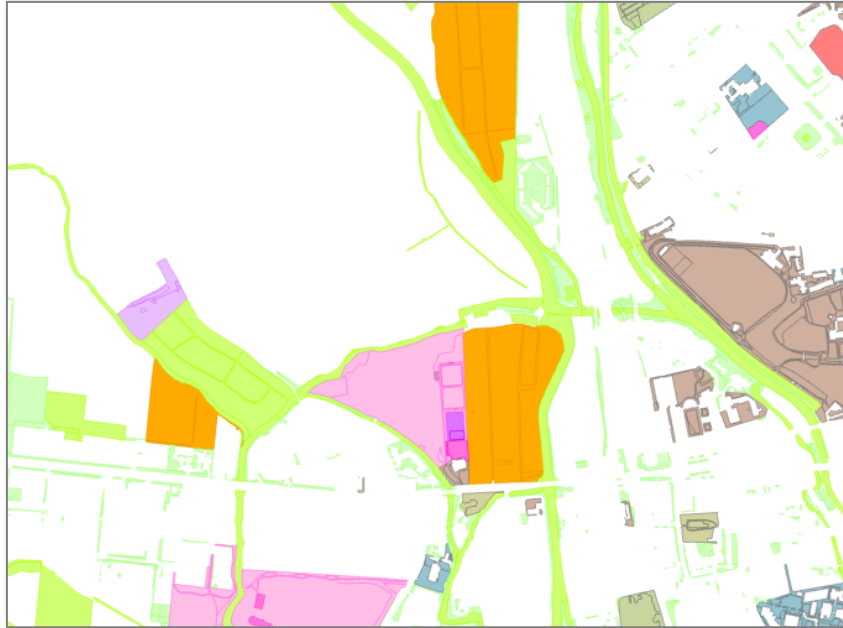
1. Agile habitat maps: complete and detailed coverage



OS Open Greenspace
OS Mastermap Greenspace



Agile habitat maps
Complete detailed coverage



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- Allotments Or Community Growing...
- Amenity - Residential Or Business
- Amenity - Transport
- Bowling Green
- Camping Or Caravan Park
- Cemetery
- Golf Course
- Institutional Grounds
- Land Use Changing
- Natural
- Other Sports Facility
- Play Space
- Playing Field
- Private Garden
- Public Park Or Garden
- Religious Grounds
- School Grounds
- Tennis Court



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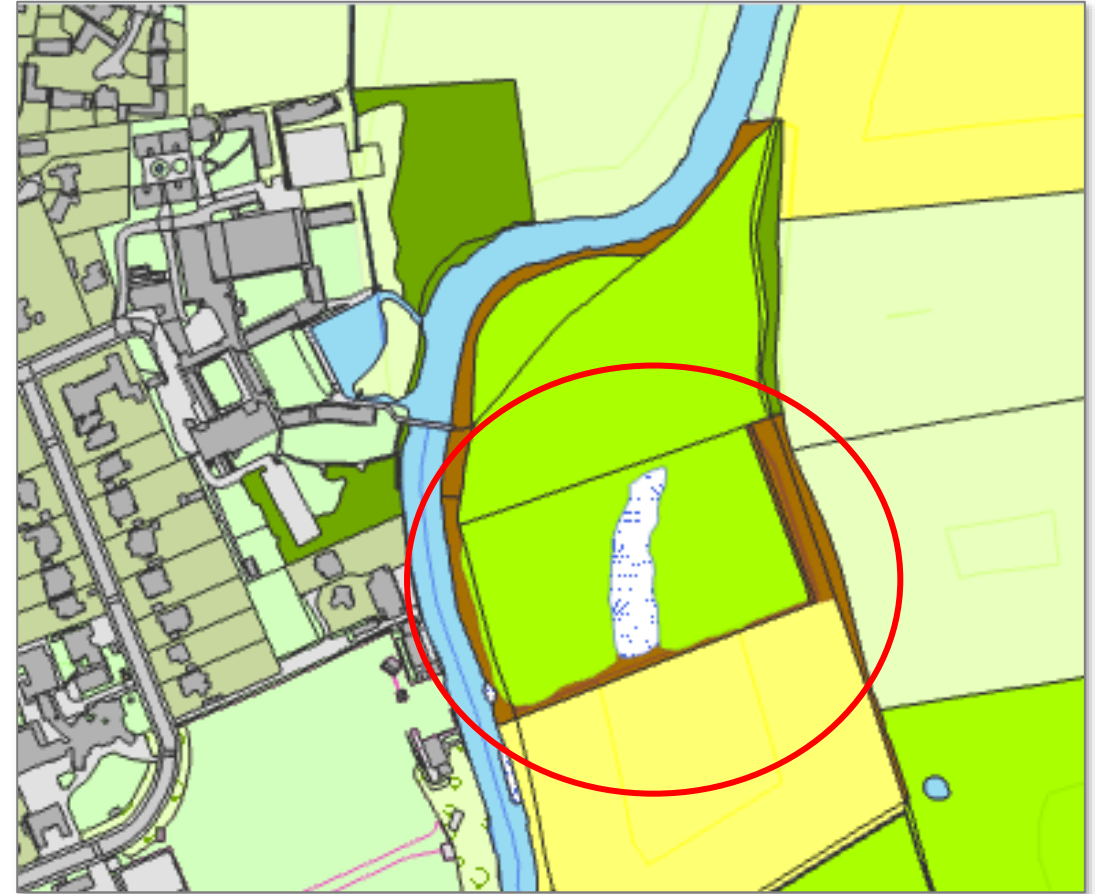
Agile maps match OSMM but include smaller habitat patches

OS Mastermap



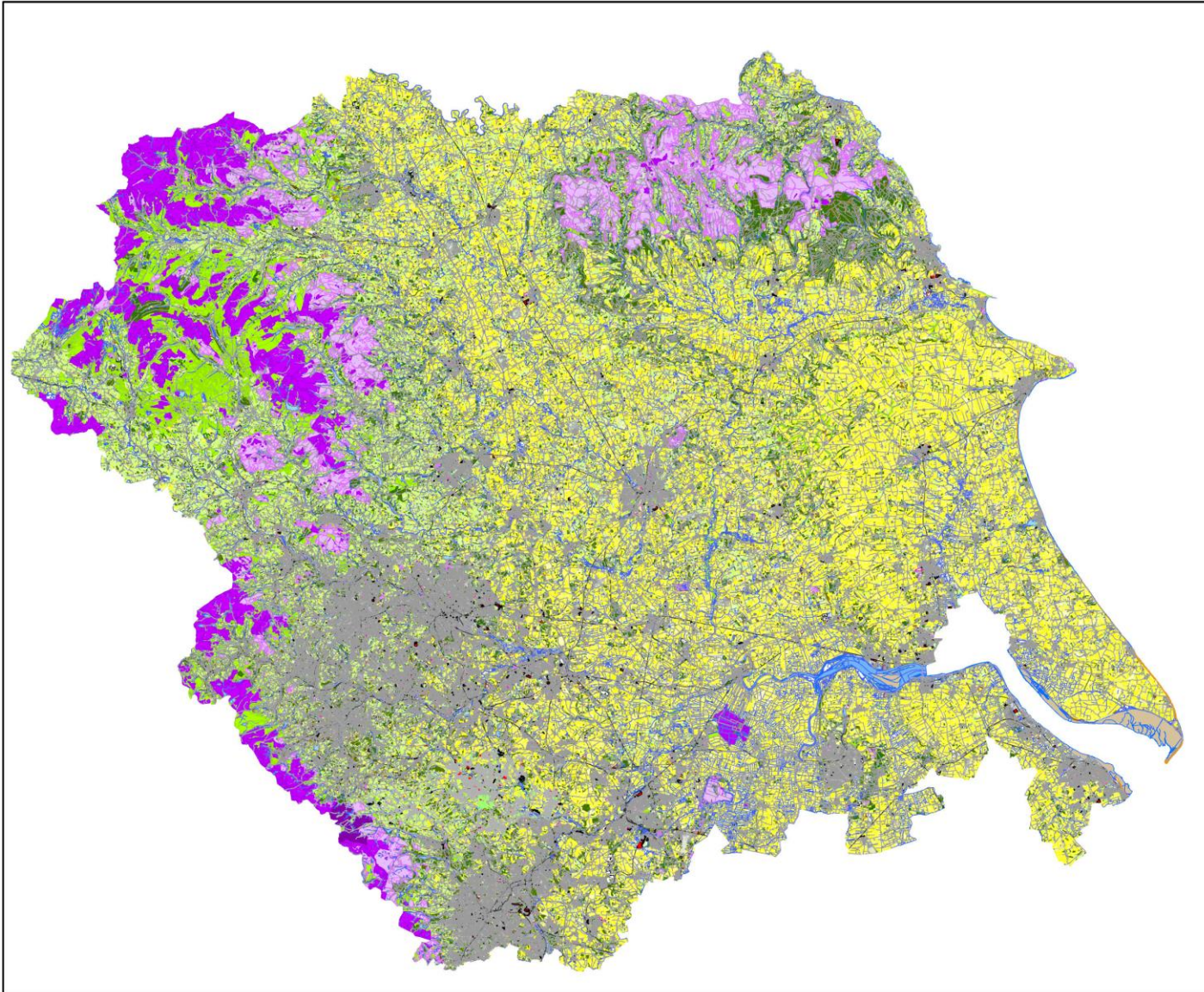
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Agile map – shows additional wetland and scrub



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-> Agile habitat maps can instantly provide a full habitat inventory
(whole county or subset such as core areas or opportunity areas)



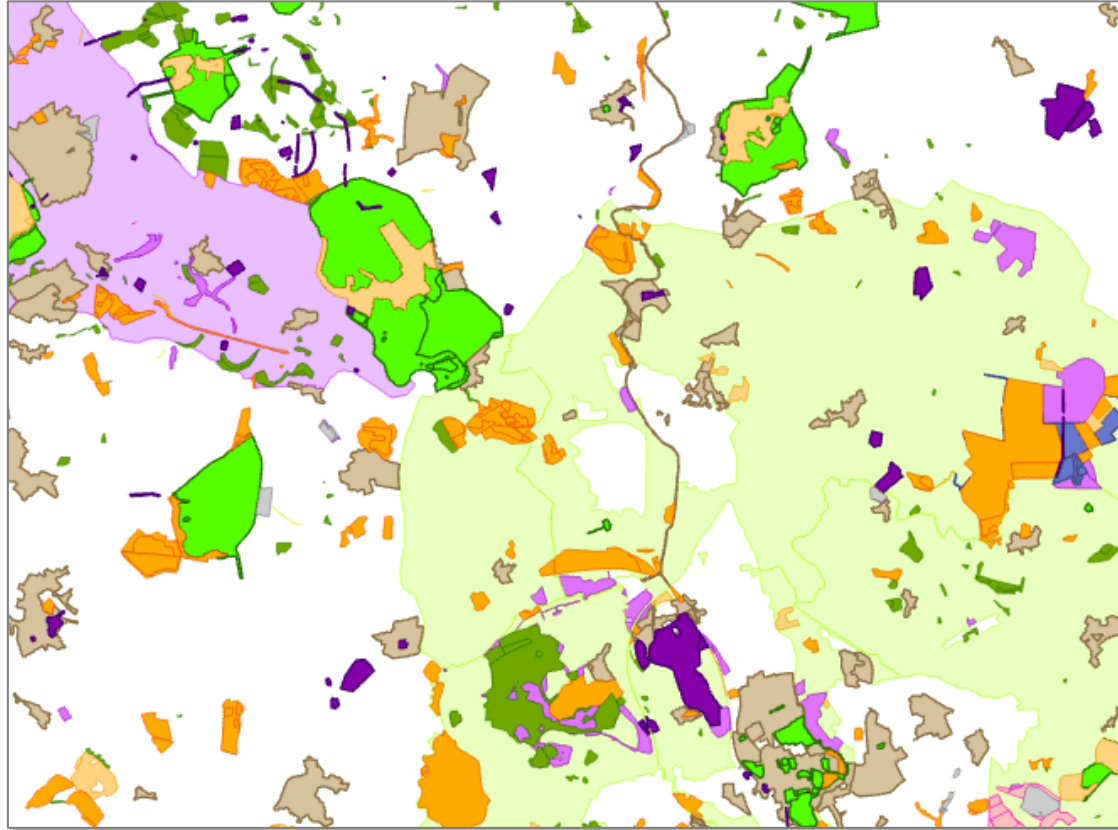
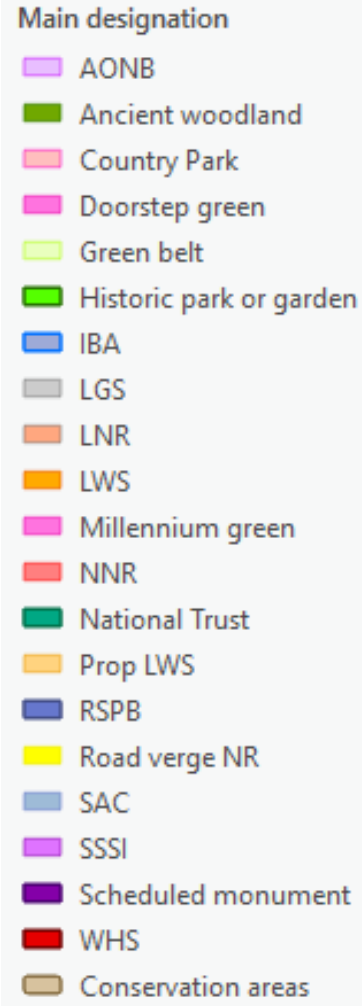
- Arable
- Improved grassland
- Semi-natural grassland
- Broadleaved woodland
- Coniferous woodland
- Wood pasture and parkland
- Orchards
- Scrub
- Heath
- Bog
- Fen, marsh and swamp
- Water
- Coastal
- Rock, scree and boulders
- Urban green space
- Built-up areas
- Quarry, landfill, bare ground
- Unknown

Example of part of a habitat inventory table (first few rows and columns)

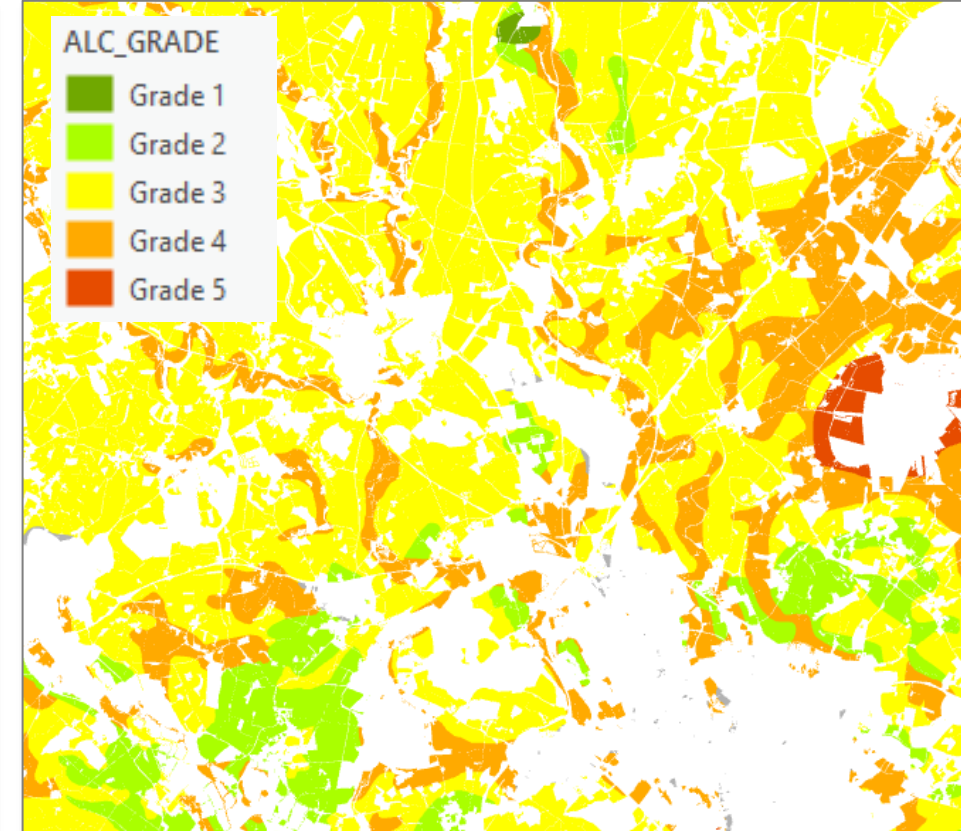
Interpreted_habitat	Total	Barnsley	Bradford	Calderdale	Craven	Doncaster	East Riding of Yorkshire
Acid grassland	22,208	101	721	2,286	7,063		
Agricultural land	12,768	597	458	693	541	698	1,144
Allotments, city farm, community garden	1,221	105	79	28	16	118	103
Amenity grassland	6,923	432	683	386	37	431	225
Aqueduct	0		0	0	0	0	0
Arable	630,067	9,166	3,305	3,345	7,036	28,940	180,644
Bog	74,818	1,928	1,198	7,639	19,269	2,191	361
Boulders	620	0	24	10	476	0	10
Bridge	207	7	8	10	8	15	17
Bridge: natural	11	0	0	1	1	1	1
Building	28,048	1,166	2,164	990	482	1,677	2,816
Calaminarian grassland	78				16		
Calcareous grassland	9,437				6,042	6	1,014
Canal	578	8	35	43	38	82	113
Cemeteries and churchyards	1,224	58	104	51	27	68	117
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	5						
Coastal lagoons	2						0
Coastal rock	1,043						160
Coastal sand dunes	105						82
Dense scrub	2,109	104	58	38	71	155	225

2. Additional land use data layers are integrated into the habitat map

Designations



Agricultural land class



Also: Public accessibility, Peat status, Flood zone, Slope, Soil type

All integrated into the habitat map as additional attributes

3. Ecosystem services mapped

Provisioning services

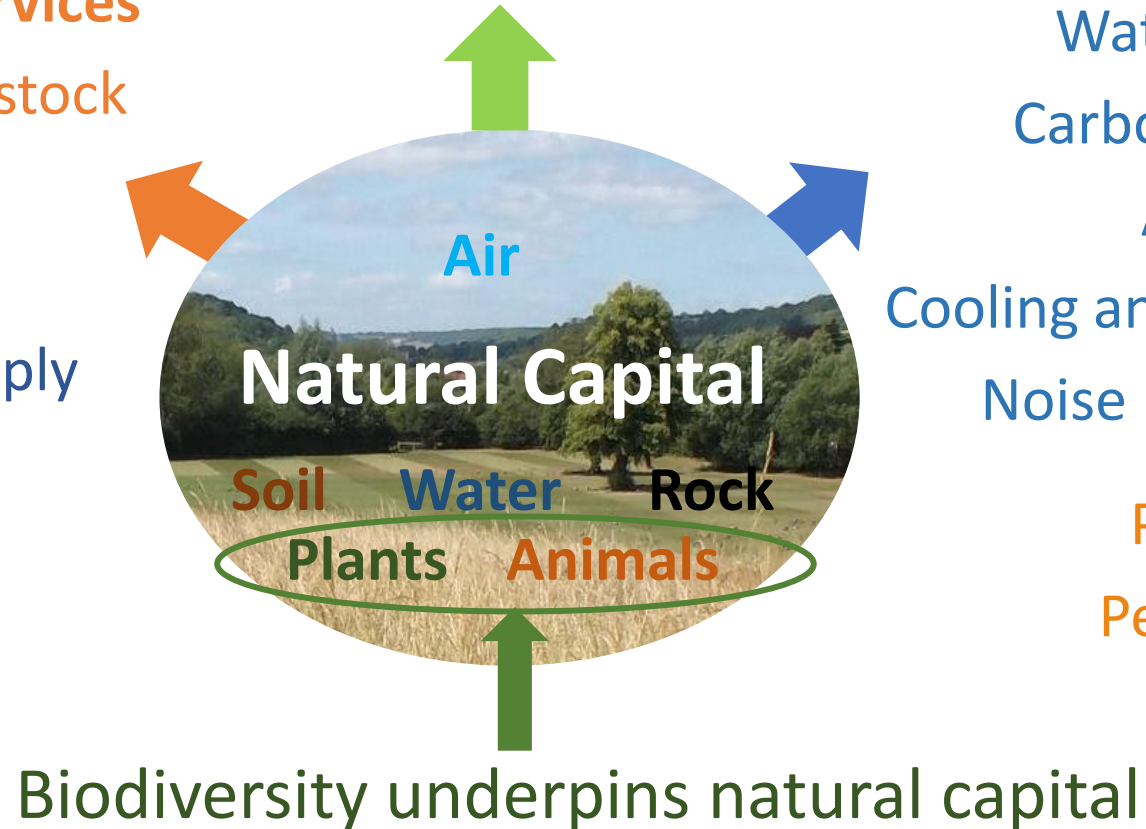
Food crops, livestock
Wood
Fish
Fresh water supply

Cultural services

Recreation
Aesthetic value
Education and knowledge
Interaction with nature
Sense of place

Regulating services

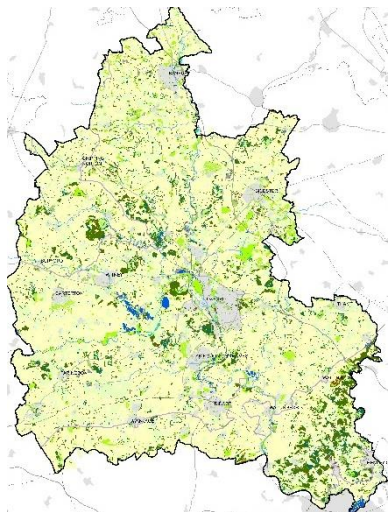
Flood control
Erosion control
Water quality
Carbon storage
Air quality
Cooling and shading
Noise regulation
Pollination
Pest control



Ecosystem service scores

1. Scores reflect the potential for each habitat to deliver each of the 18 services
2. Apply the scores to the habitat map -> maps for each service
3. Multipliers adjust scores: e.g. agricultural land use class (for food provision) and public access (for recreation)

Habitat and land use maps



+

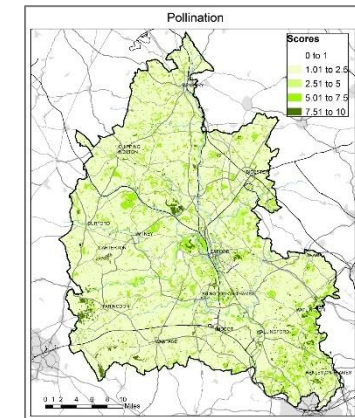
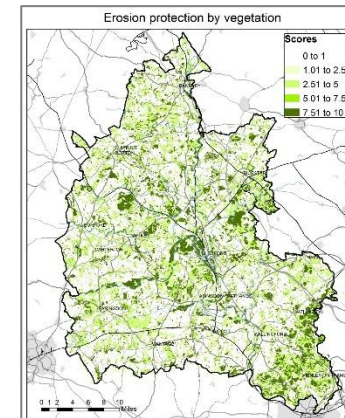
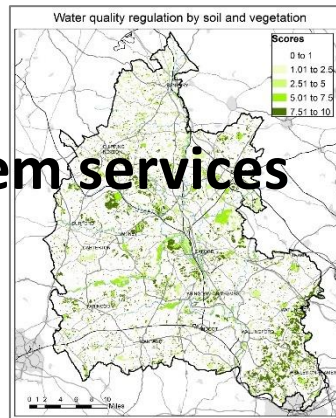
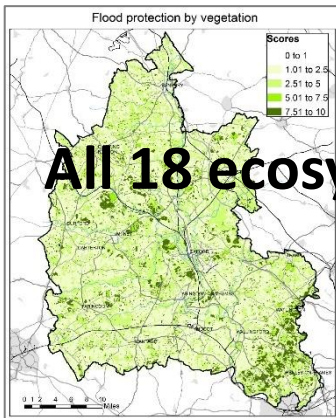
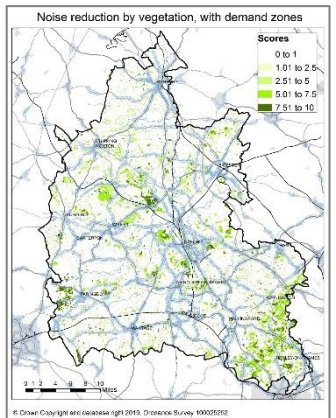
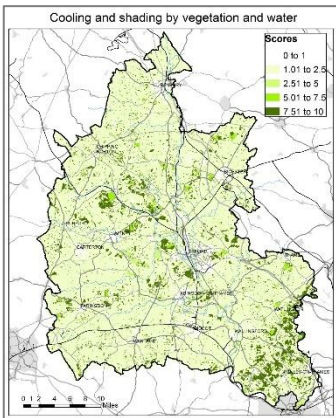
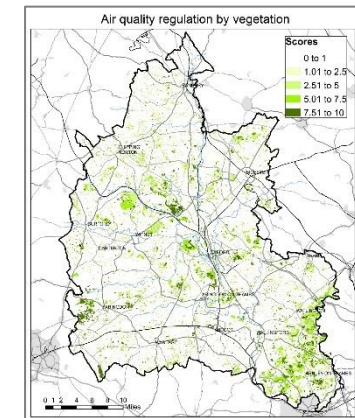
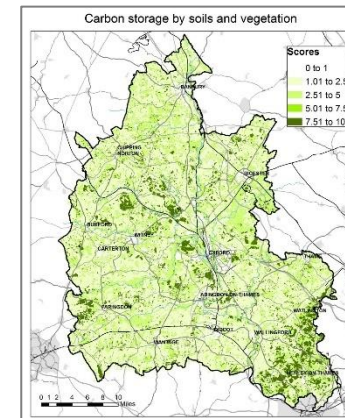
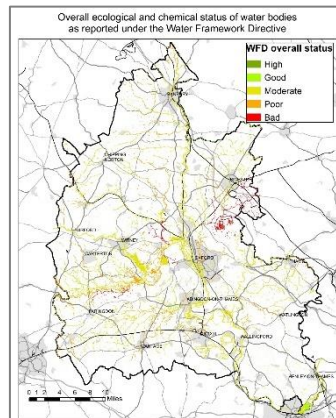
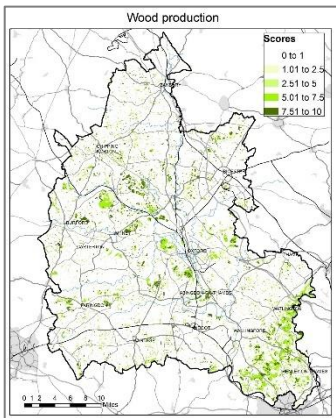
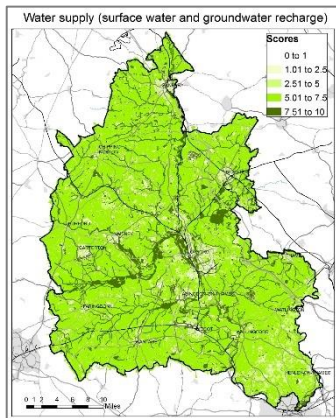
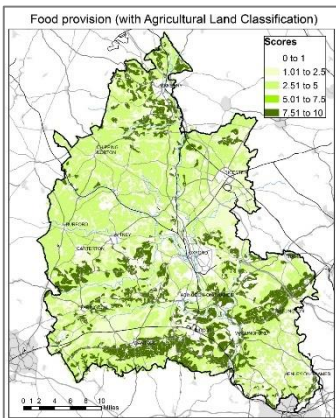
Matrix of scores for each habitat and land-use type

Habitat	Food	Wood	Fish	WaterProv	Flood	Erosion	WaterQual	Carbon
Broadleaved, mixed and yew semi-natural woodland	1	6	0	3	9	10	10	10
Broadleaved, mixed and yew plantation	0	8	0	2	9	8	8	9
Native pine woodlands	0	0	0	3	9	8	6	7
Coniferous plantation	0	10	0	1	10	6	5	8
Wood pasture and parkland with scattered trees	5	2	0	7	6	8	6	5
Traditional orchards	5	1	0	7	8	8	5	5
Dense scrub	1	2	0	4	6	8	5	6
Hedgerows	1	1	0	4	6	8	5	5
Felled woodland	0	0	0	4	1	0	1	2
Tall herb and fern	1	0	0	8	5	8	5	4
Bracken	1	0	0	8	5	8	5	4
Semi-natural grassland	6	0	0	8	4	8	4	4

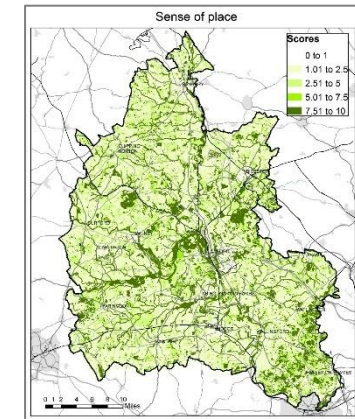
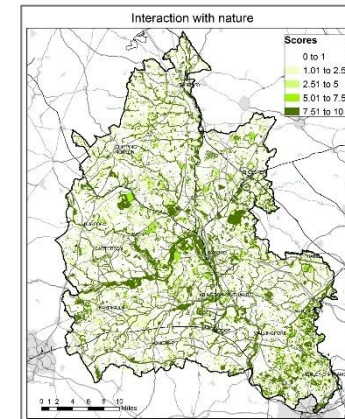
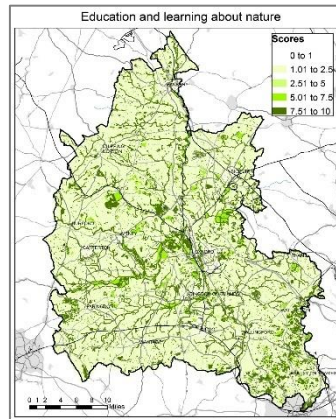
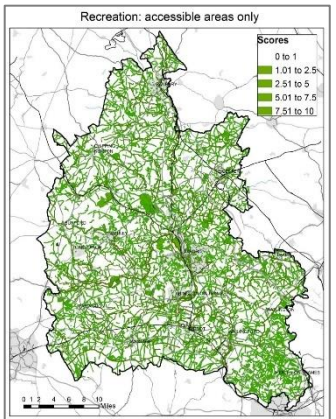
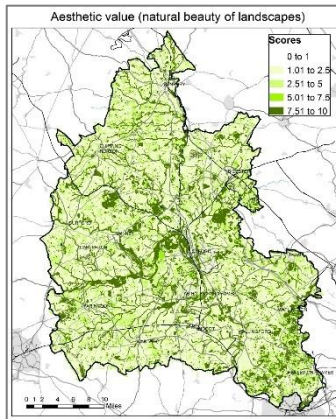
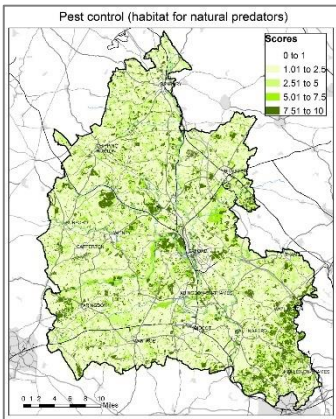


Ecosystem service maps

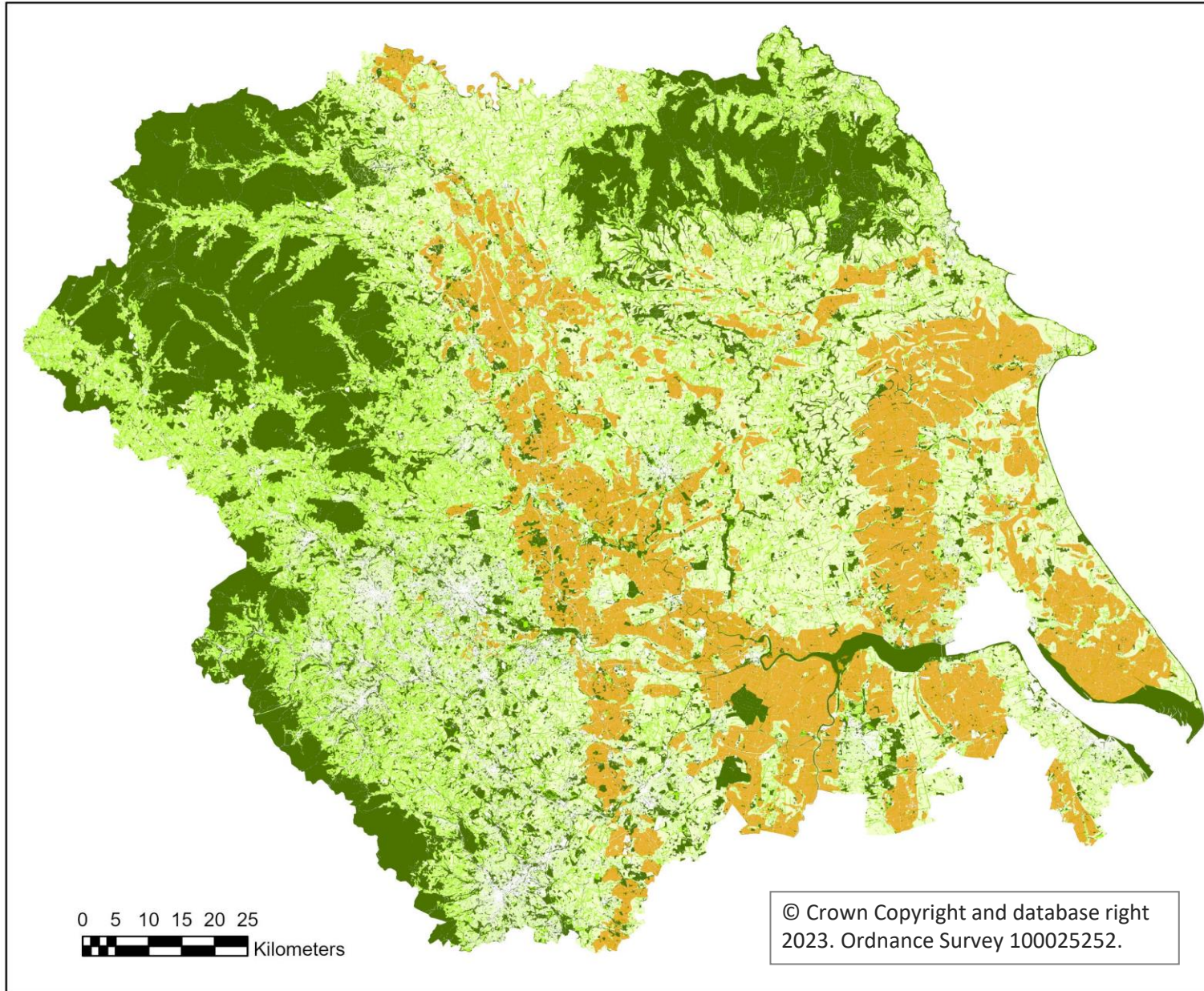




All 18 ecosystem services



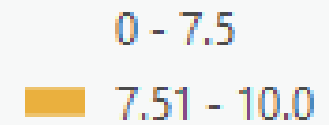
Maximum score for regulating and cultural services; high score for food



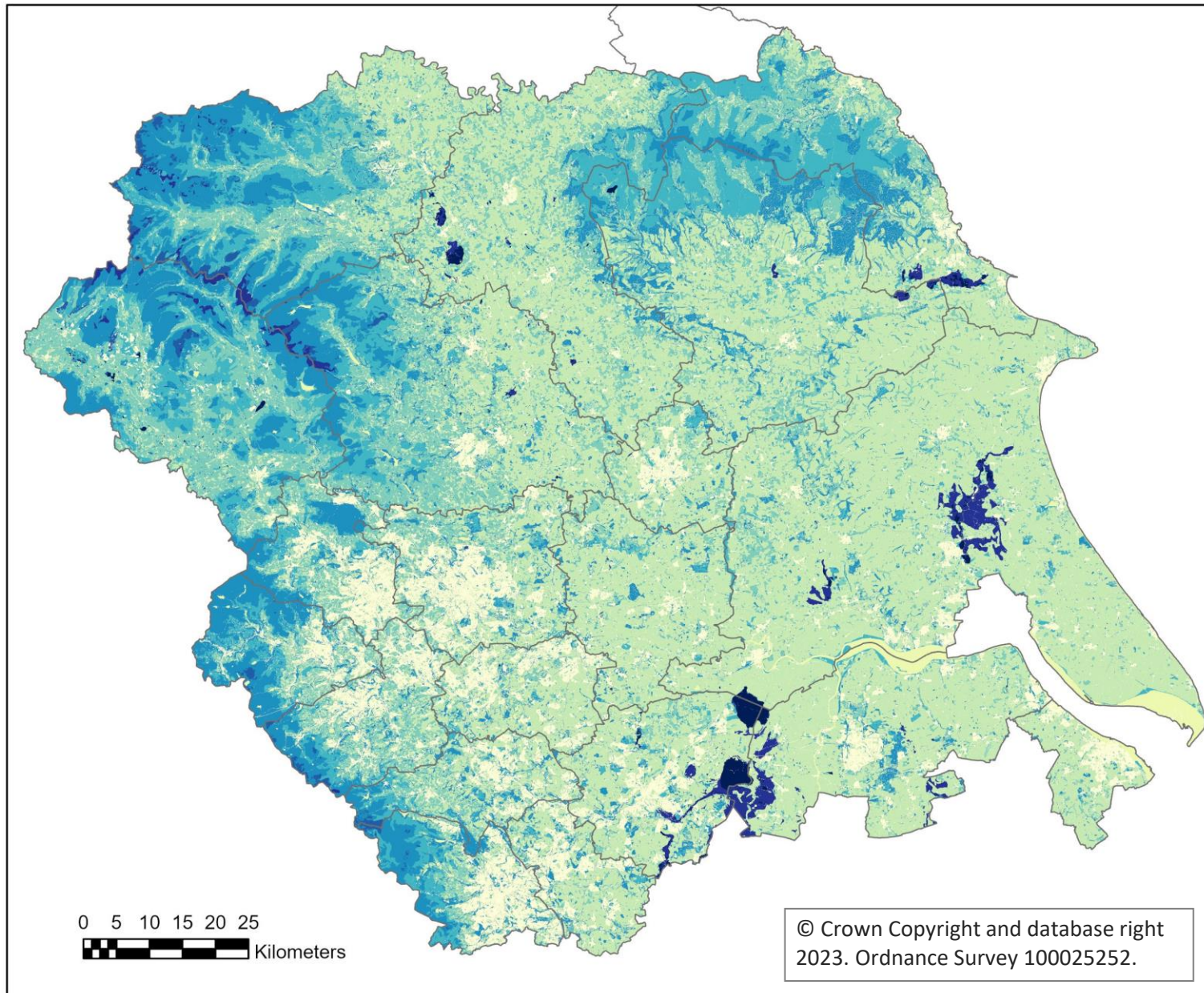
MaxRegCult



FoodxALC



Carbon storage t/ha



Non-peat soils: estimates per habitat from various literature sources e.g. Cantarello et al 2011; Natural England (Gregg et al 2021)

Peat soils: Natural England peat status and GHG emission dataset

Carbon_tha



4. Mapping opportunities for nature recovery and NbS

Constraints:

High grade farmland

Semi-natural habitats

Peaty soils

Designated areas – may be constraints

Opportunities:

Potential habitat networks:

- Woodland
- Grassland – Acid, Neutral, Calcareous
- Heathland
- Wetlands (flood zone; wetness index)

Peatland restoration

Agroforestry

Community orchards (near urban areas)

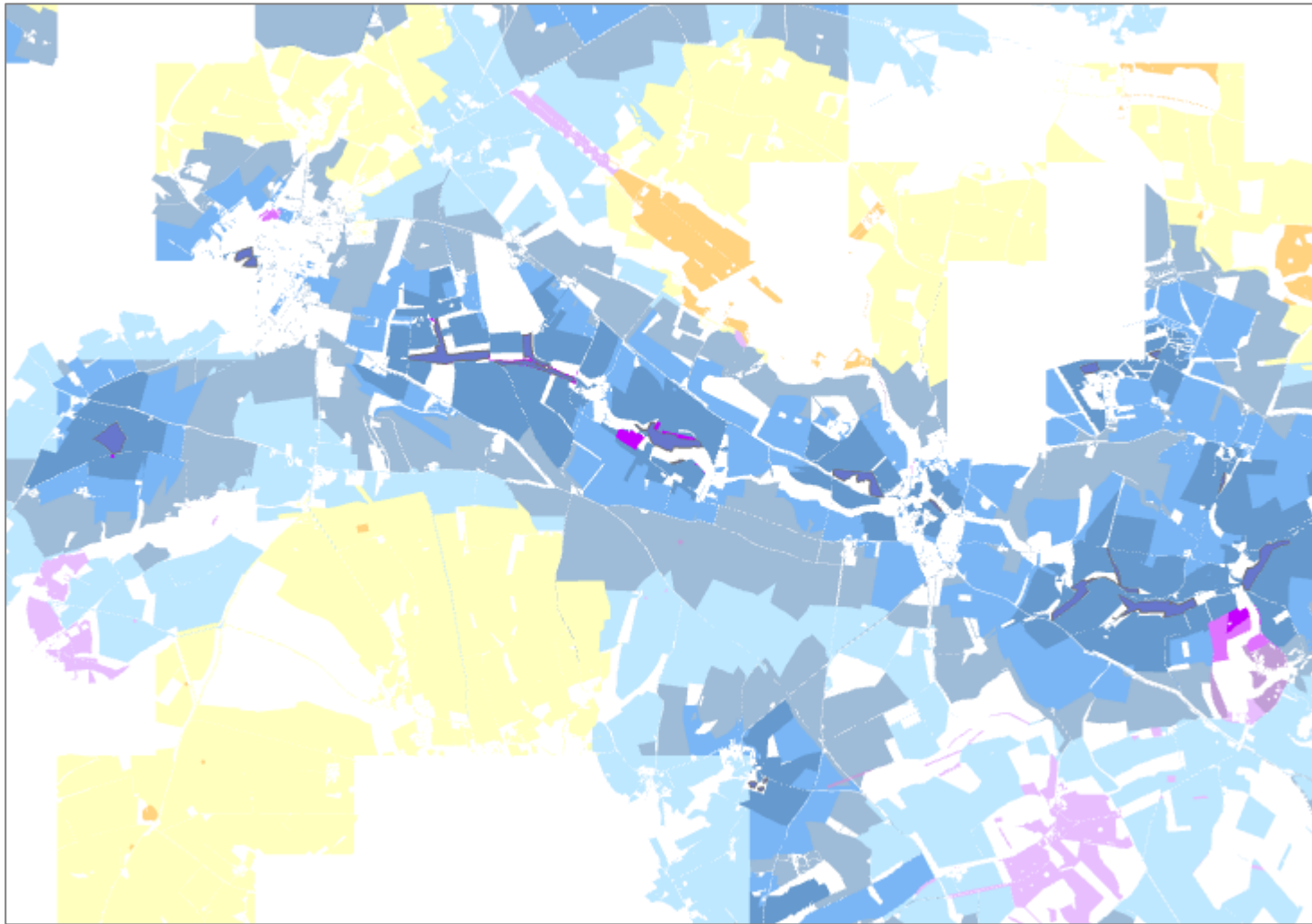
Erosion prevention (steep slopes and erodible)

Natural flood management (upper catchments, poorly drained soils)

4. Mapping opportunities for nature recovery and NbS

	Arable	Improved grassland	Amenity grassland	Poor semi-improved grassland	Bracken	Felled woodland	Semi-natural habitats	Deep Peat	Shallow peat and peaty pockets	Verges	ALC 1 or 2	Flood zone
Woodland	y	y	y	y	y	y	n	n	n	n	n	y
Grassland	y	y	y	y	y	y	n	n	y	y	If impr. grass	y
Heathland	y	y	y	y	y	y	n	n	y	n	n	y
Wetland	y	y	y	y	y	y	n	n	y	n	if peat	essential
Peatland	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	n	y	y
Silvoarable	y	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	y	y
Silvopasture	unless ALC 1 or 2	y	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n	y	y
Community orchard	y	y	y	y	y	y	n	n	n	n	n	y

Habitat network approach



Core calcareous grassland

Calcareous grassland network

200m

500m

1000m

Extension zone

No constraints

Opportunities in designated areas

200m, designated

500m designated

1000m designated

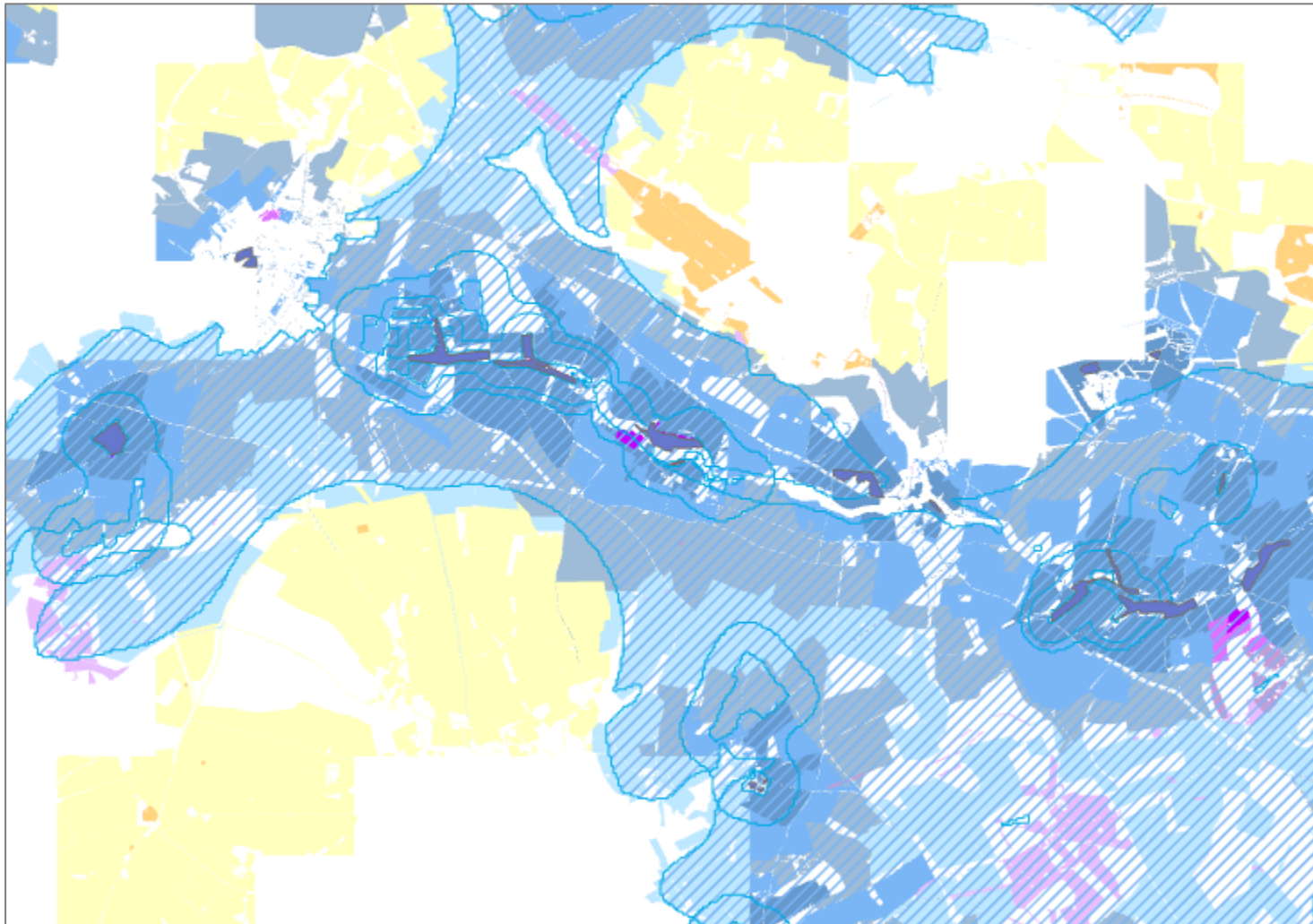
Extension zone, designated

No constraints, designated

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Uses BGS Soil Parent Material 1km squares for soil type (free data) but can use Soilscares or similar if available

Habitat network approach



Core calcareous grassland
Calcareous grassland network

- 200m
- 500m
- 1000m
- Extension zone
- No constraints

Opportunities in designated areas

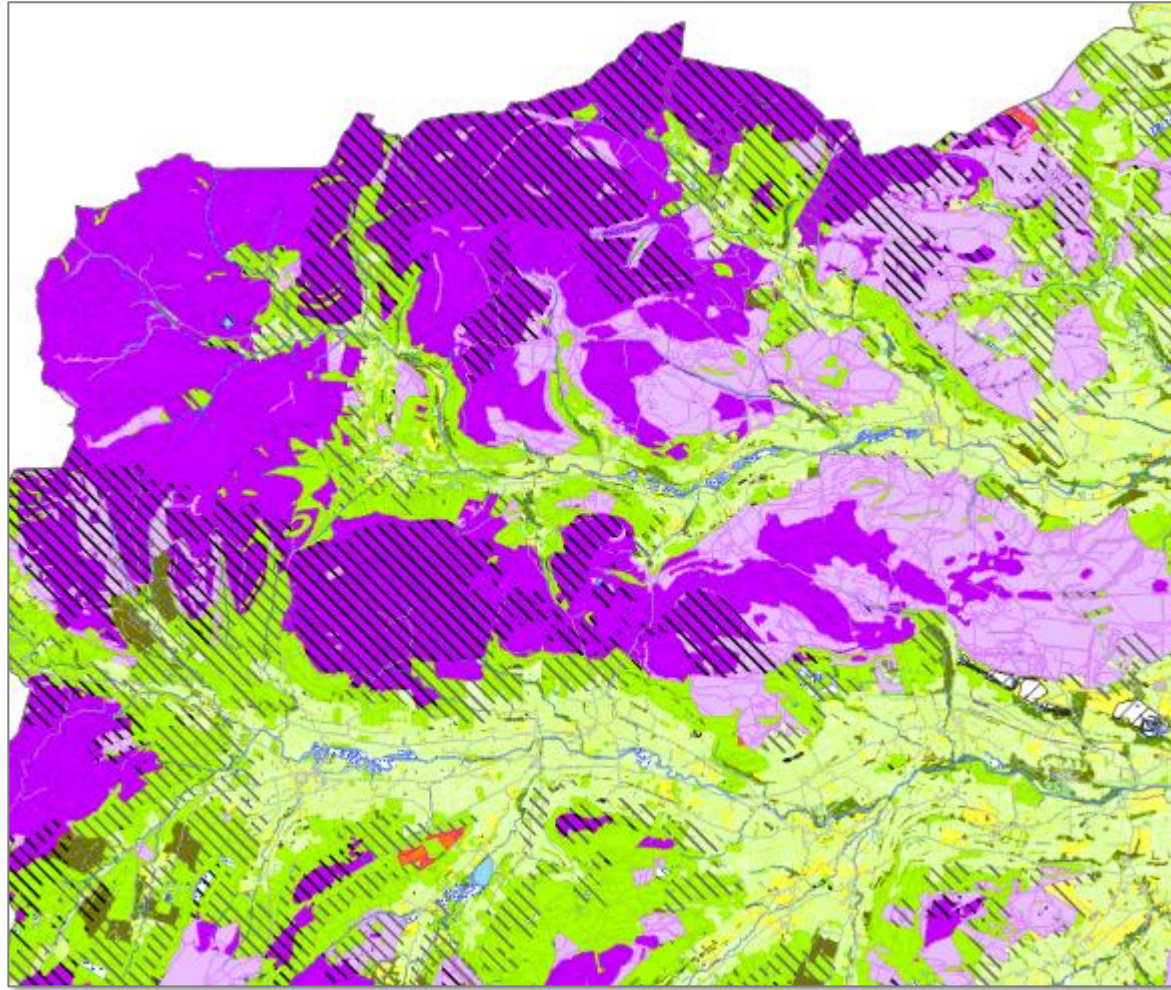
- 200m, designated
- 500m designated
- 1000m designated
- Extension zone, designated
- No constraints, designated

Natural England lowland calcareous grassland habitat network

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Peatland opportunities

Peatland opportunities

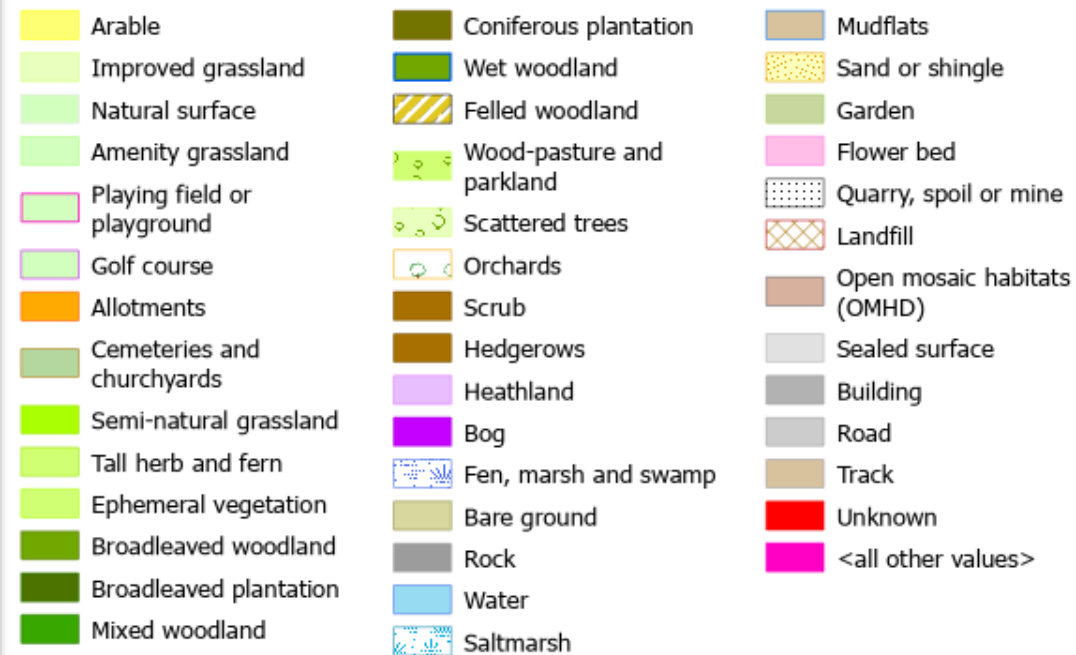
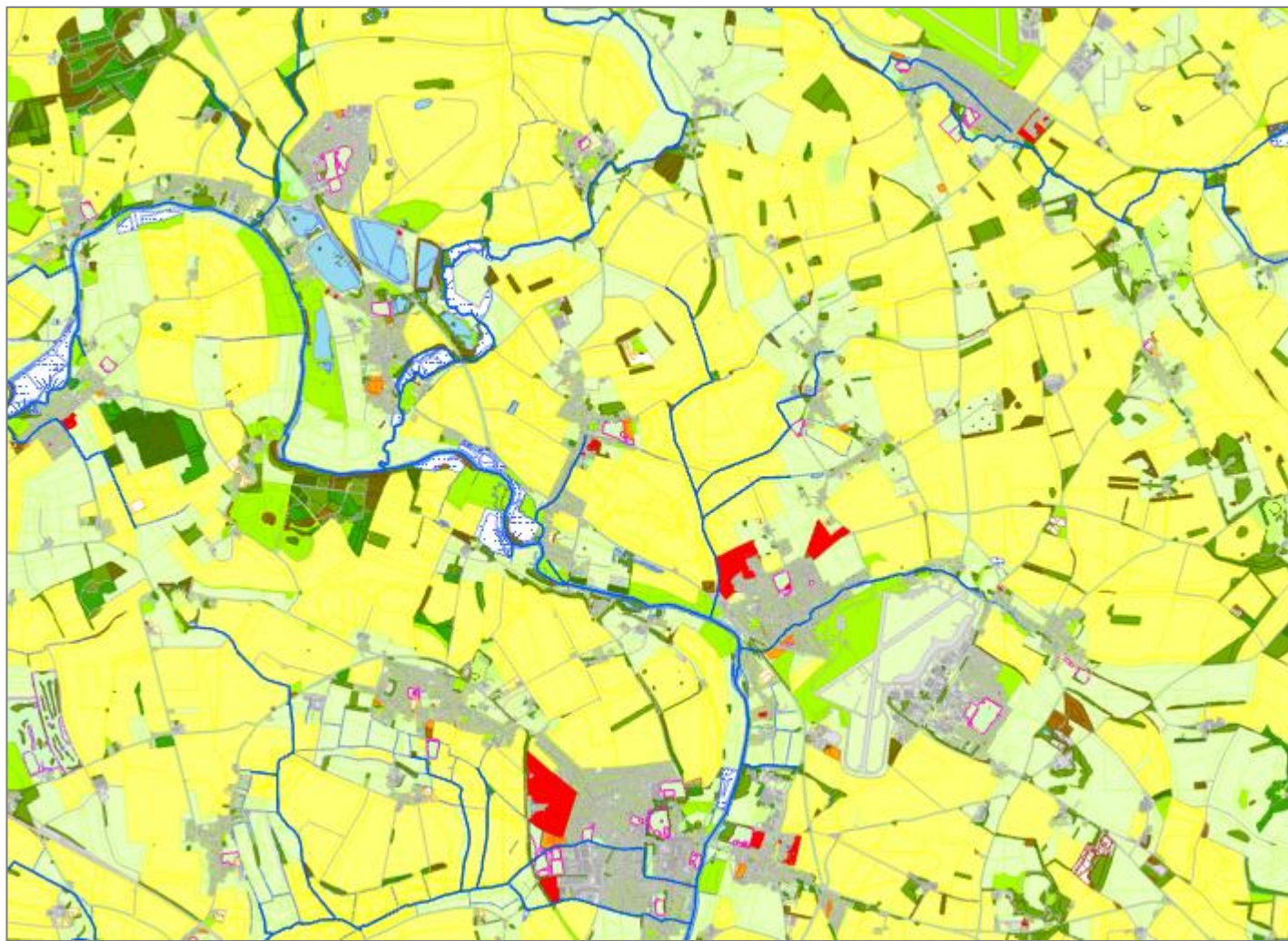


- 1 Deep peat
- 2 Shallow peat
- 3 Peaty pockets

Source: Natural England Peat Status and GHG emissions dataset

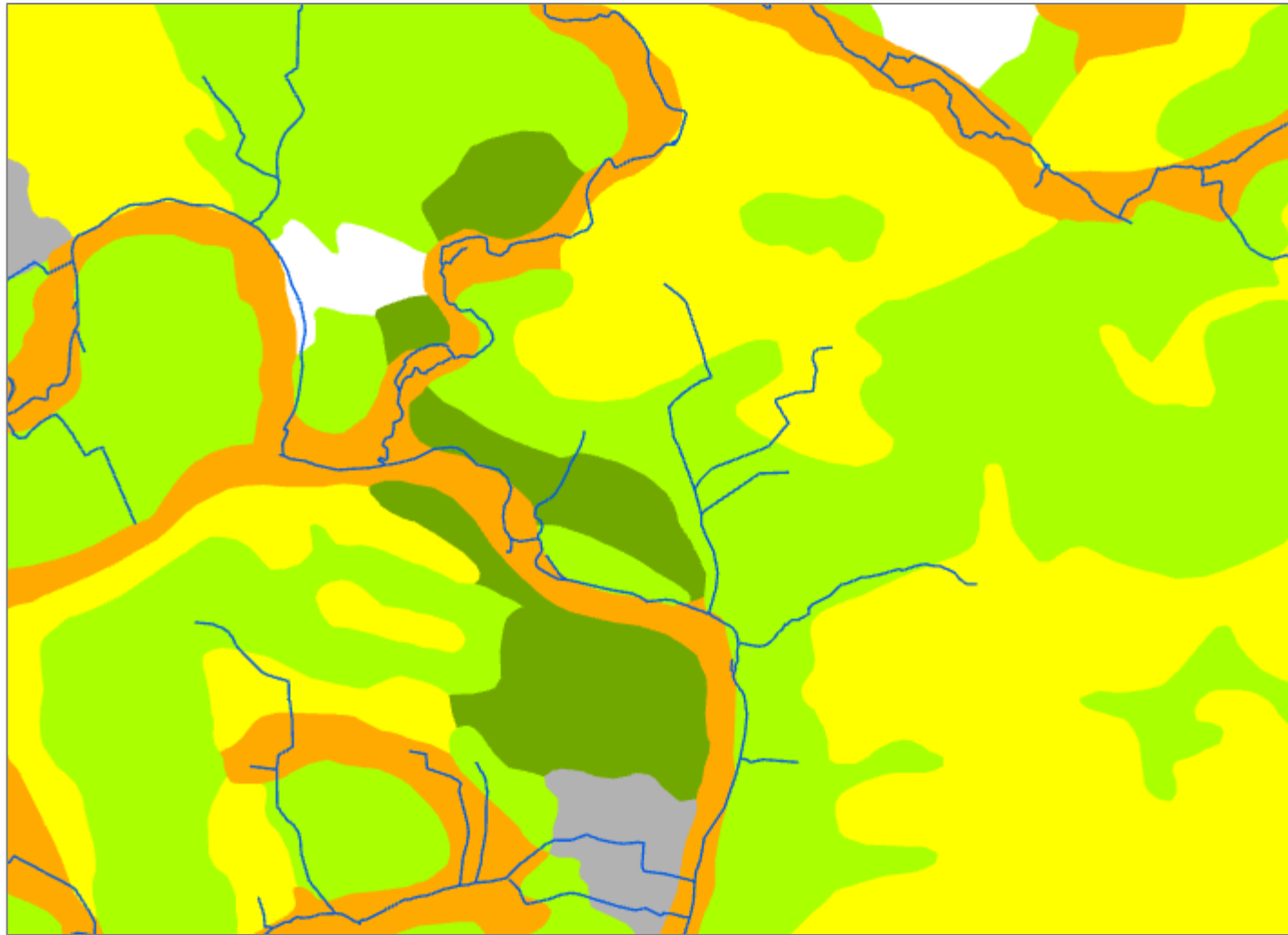
Identifies peat that is degraded (e.g. drained, burned, overgrazed, etc)

Example: Habitats



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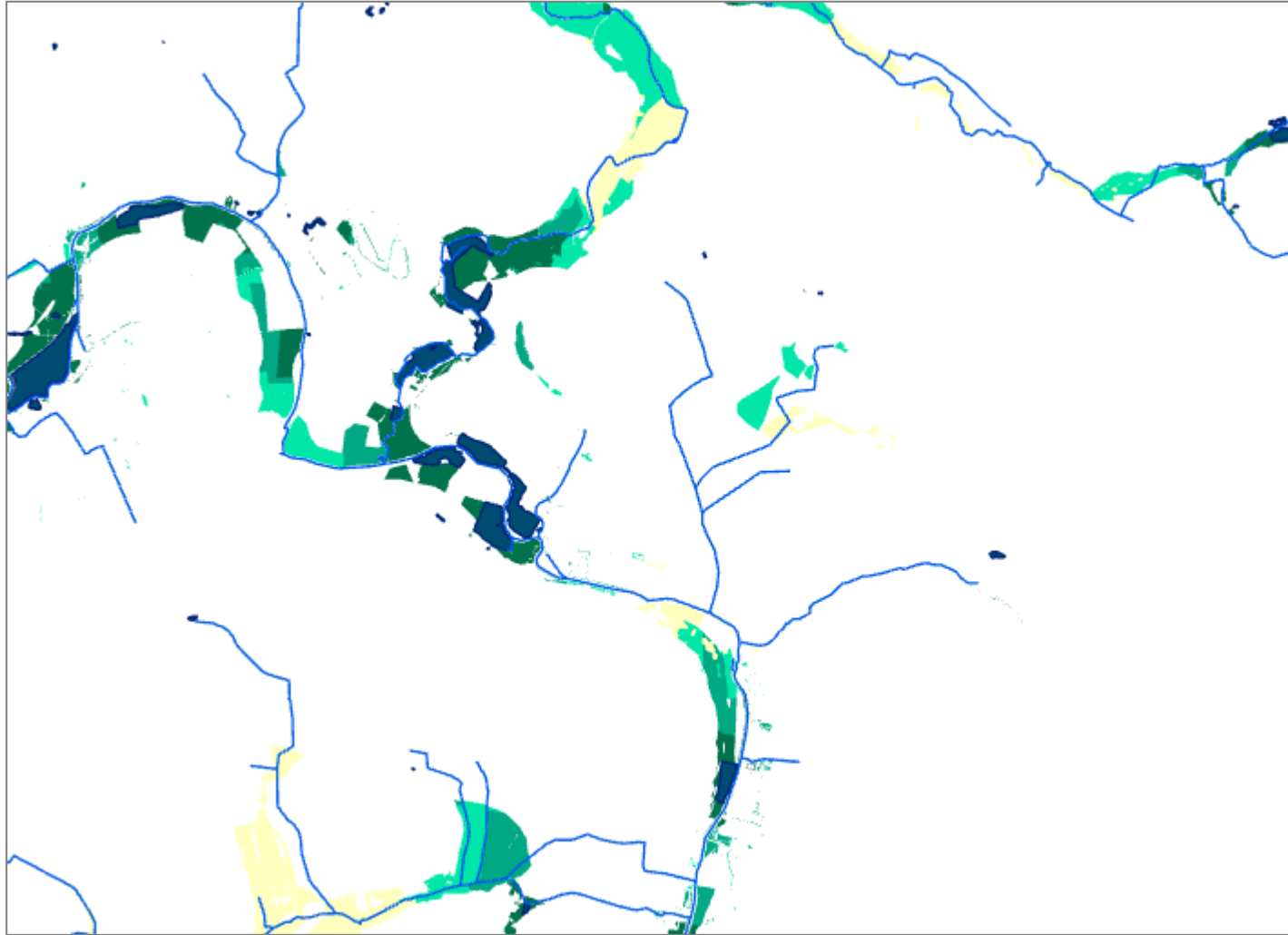
Agricultural Land Class



ALC_GRADE

- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5

Wetland network (restricted to floodplain)



Core_Wetland_

Wetland network

200m

500m

1000m

Extension zone

No constraints

Opportunities in designated areas

200m, designated

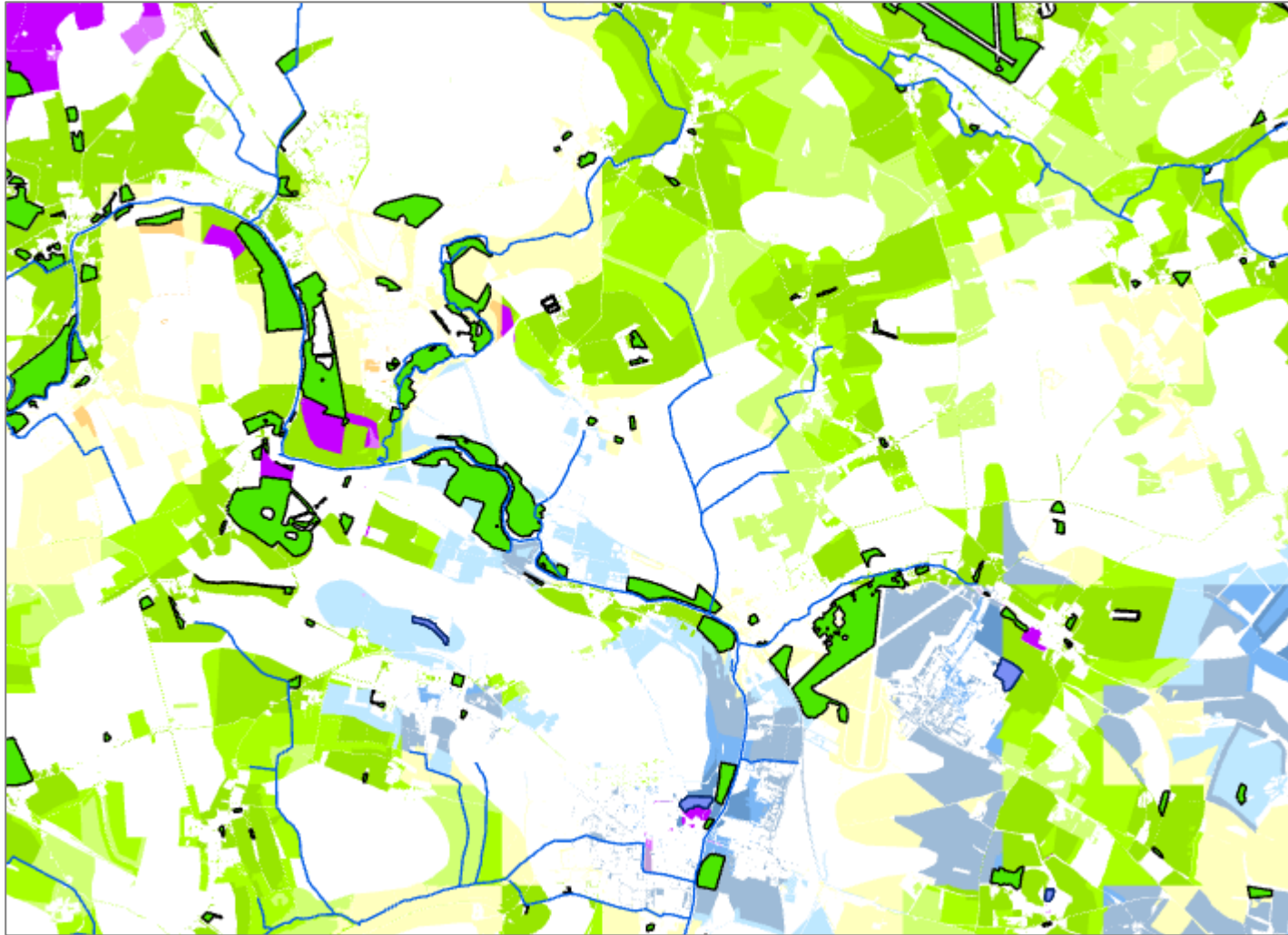
500m designated

1000m designated

Extension zone, designated

No constraints, designated

Grassland network



 Core grassland habitat

Calcareous grassland network

Neutral grassland network

 200m

 500m

 1000m

 Extension zone

 No constraints

 200m

 500m

 1000m

 Extension zone

 No constraints

Opportunities in designated areas

 200m, designated

 500m designated

 1000m designated

 Extension zone, designated

 No constraints, designated

Woodland network



 Core woodland habitat

Woodland network

 200m

 500m

 1000m

 Extension zone

 No constraints

Opportunities in designated areas

 200m, designated

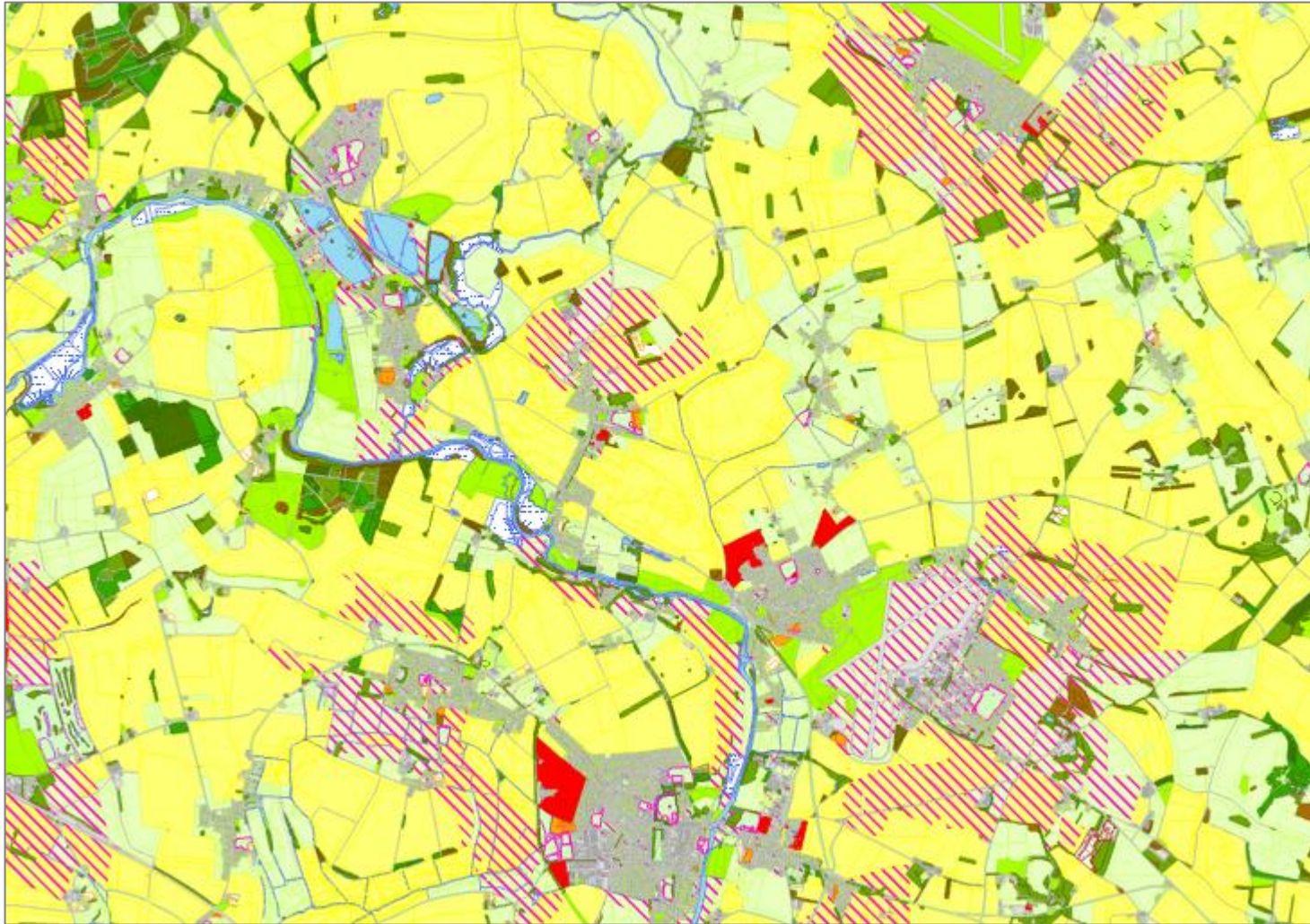
 500m designated

 1000m designated

 Extension zone, designated

 No constraints, designated

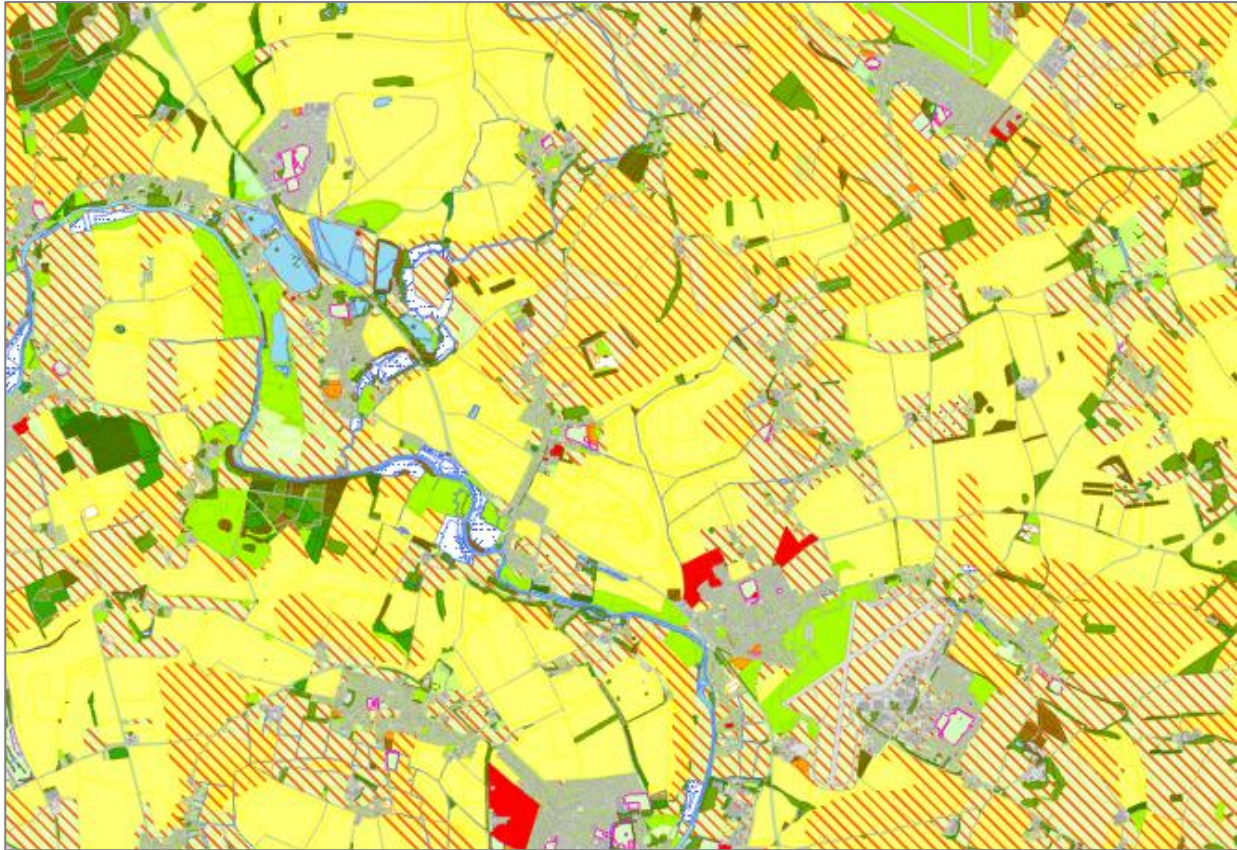
Community orchards



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Agroforestry

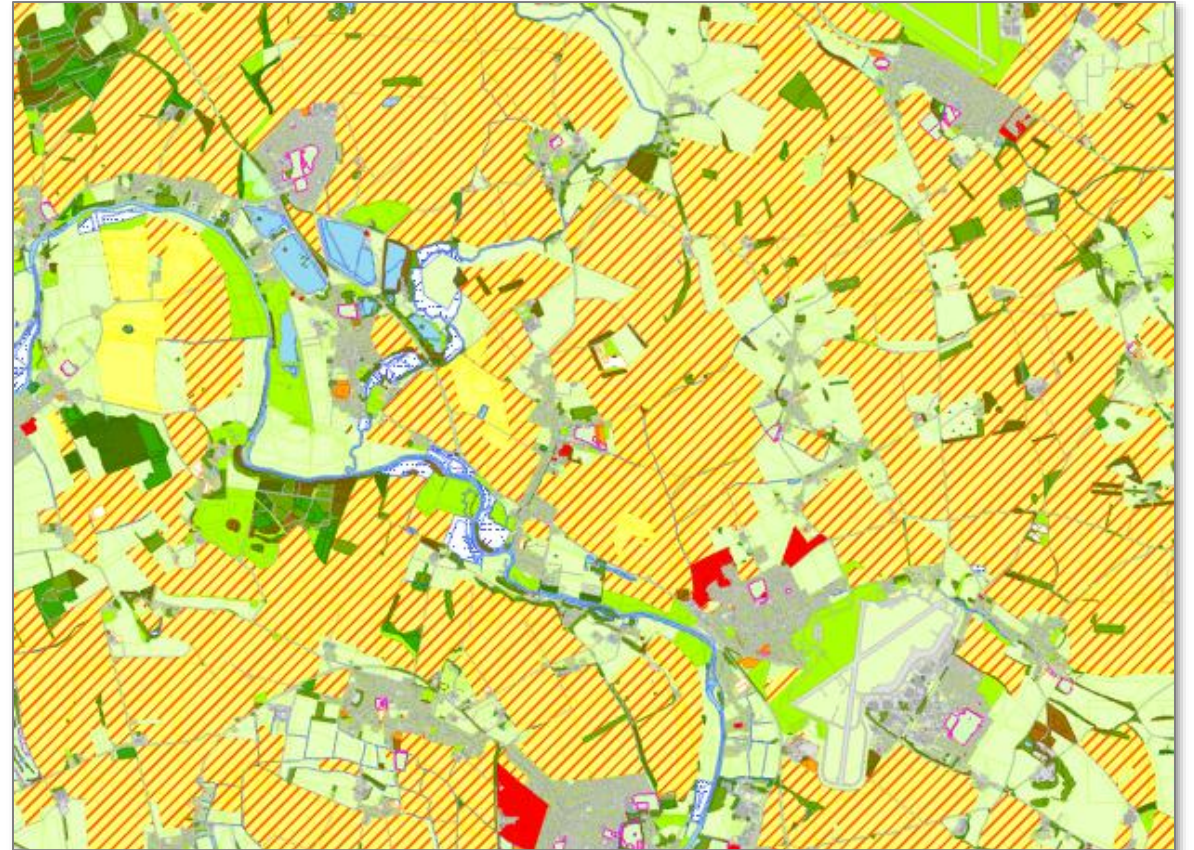
Silvopasture



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Avoids Grade 1 and 2 arable land

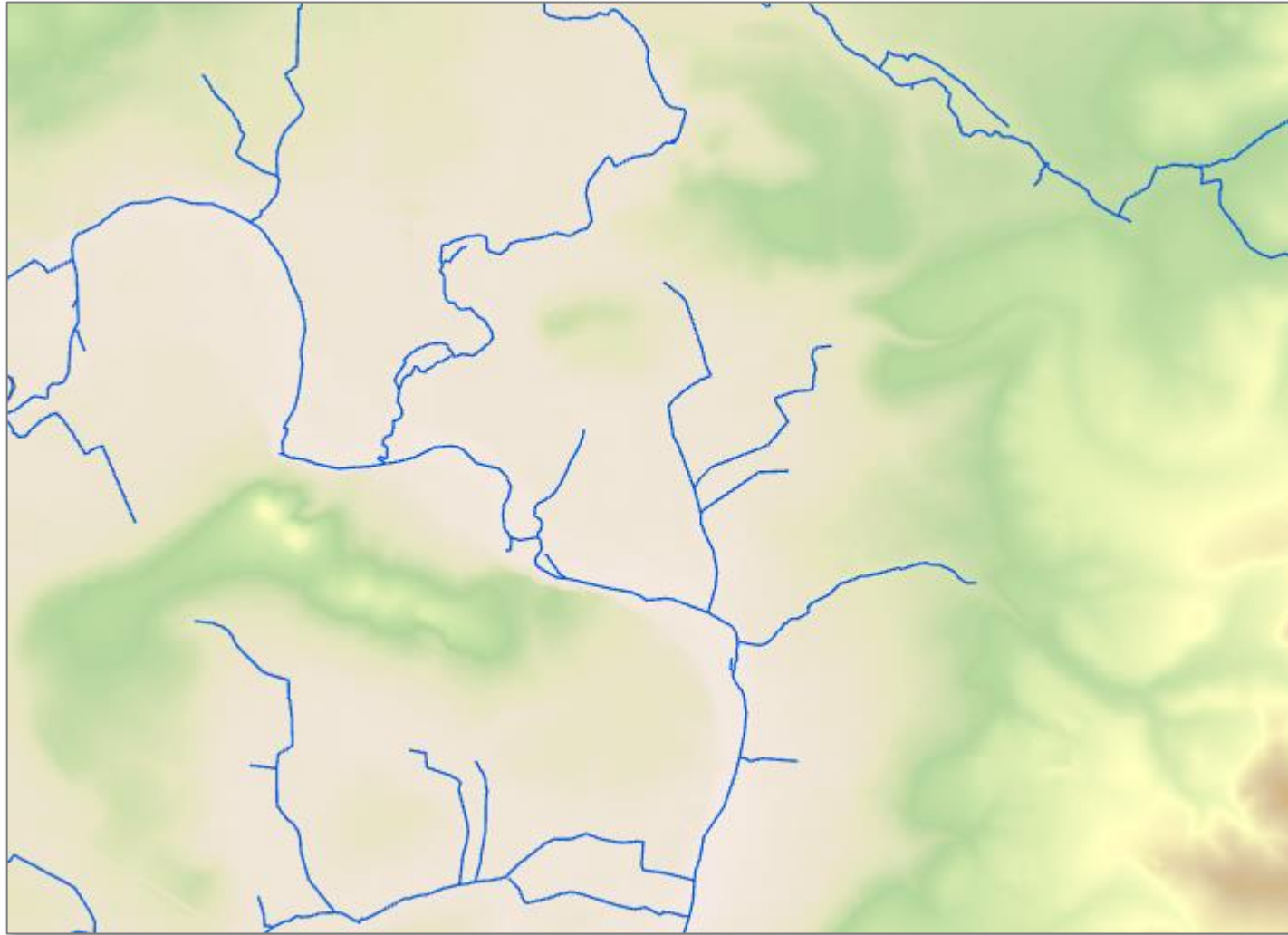
Silvoarable



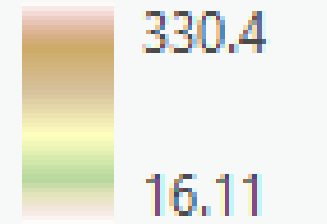
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Avoids pasture

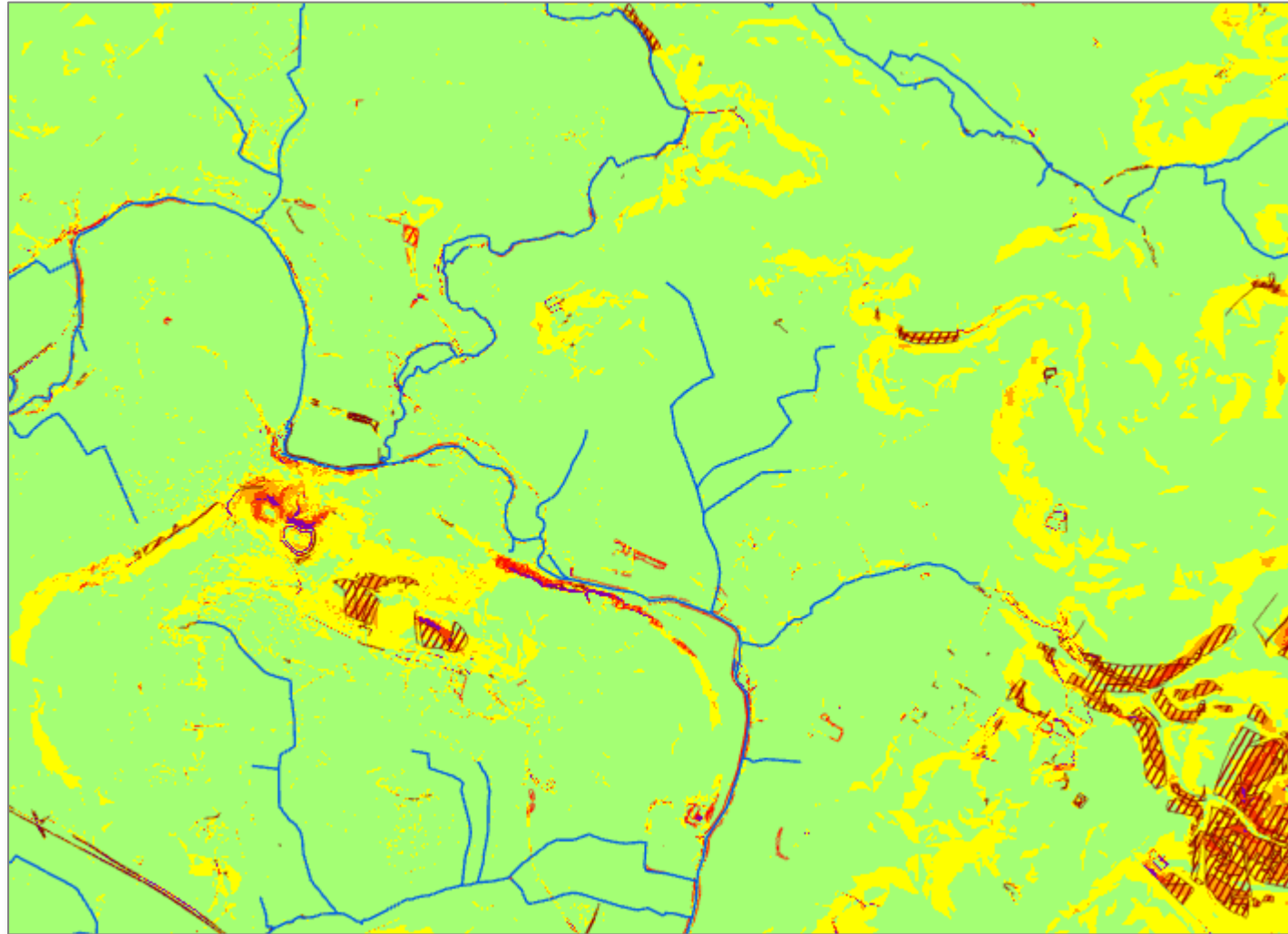
Erosion prevention: 5 m digital terrain model - > steep slopes



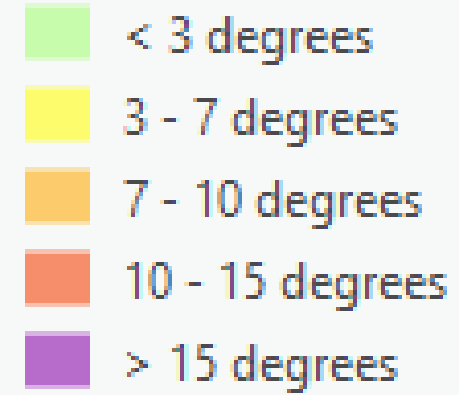
Metres above sea level



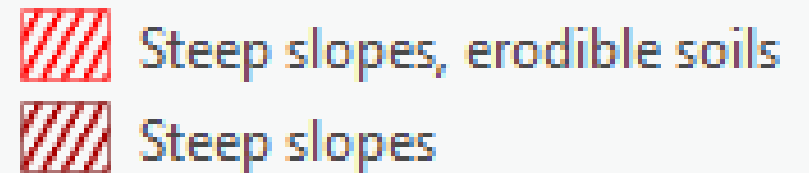
Erosion opportunities on slopes over 7 degrees



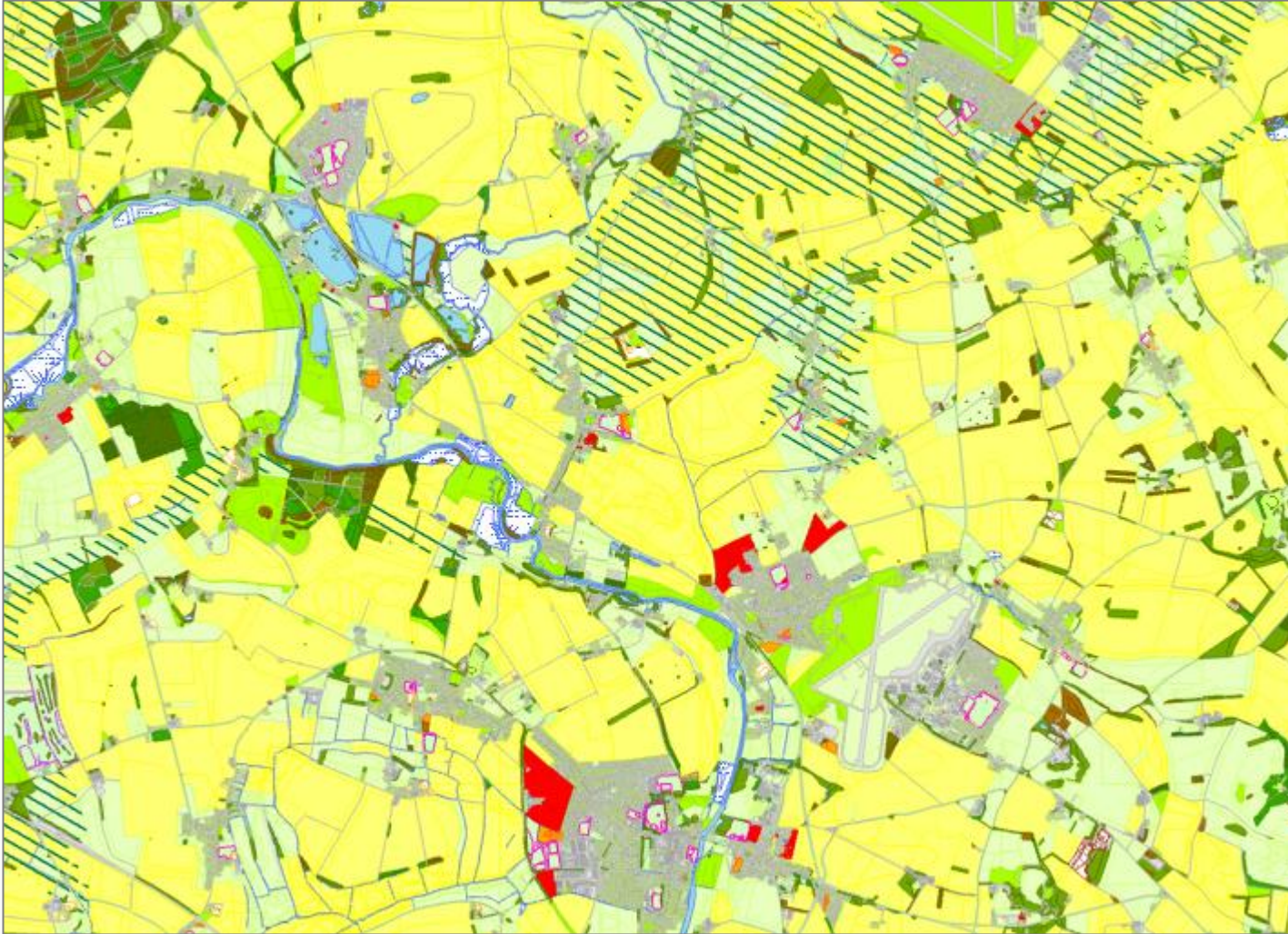
Slope



Erosion opportunities



Natural Flood Management opportunities (limited)



Opportunities for NFM such as woodland creation to improve infiltration on soils with impeded drainage

Source: Environment Agency Wider Catchment Woodland

High priority opportunities in each location

Options for polygon:

Grass,
Orchard,
Silvopasture,
Silvoarable

Options for polygon:

Wetland
mosaic

Options for polygon:

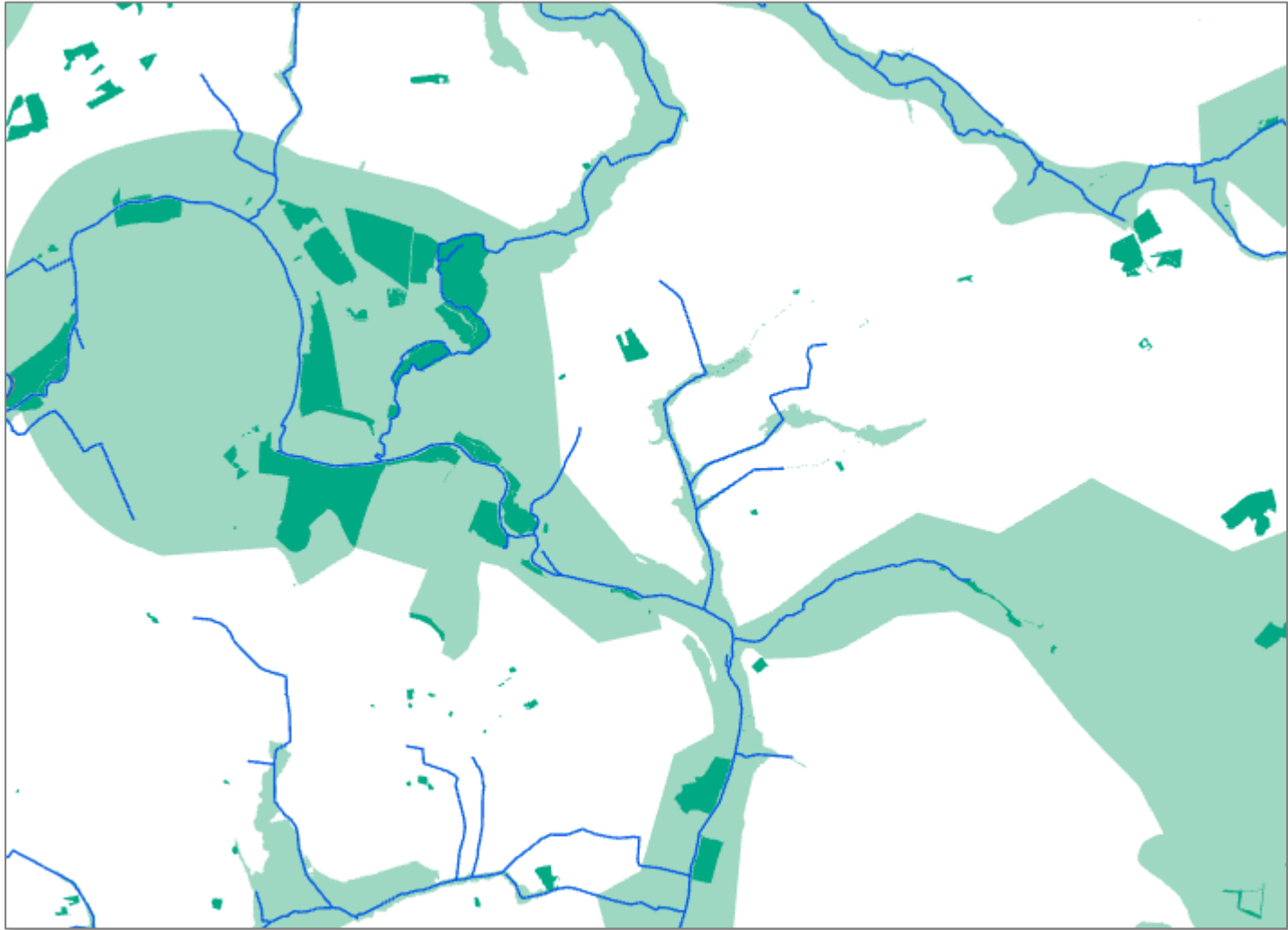
Natural
regeneration,
Silvopasture



Main potential opportunities

- Natural regeneration
- Wood
- Grass
- Grass, Wood
- Heath
- Grass, Heath
- Heath, Wood
- Peat
- Wetland
- Wetland, Grass
- Orchard
- Grass, Orchard
- Silvopasture
- Silvoarable

Integrating with existing Nature Recovery Network produced by stakeholders



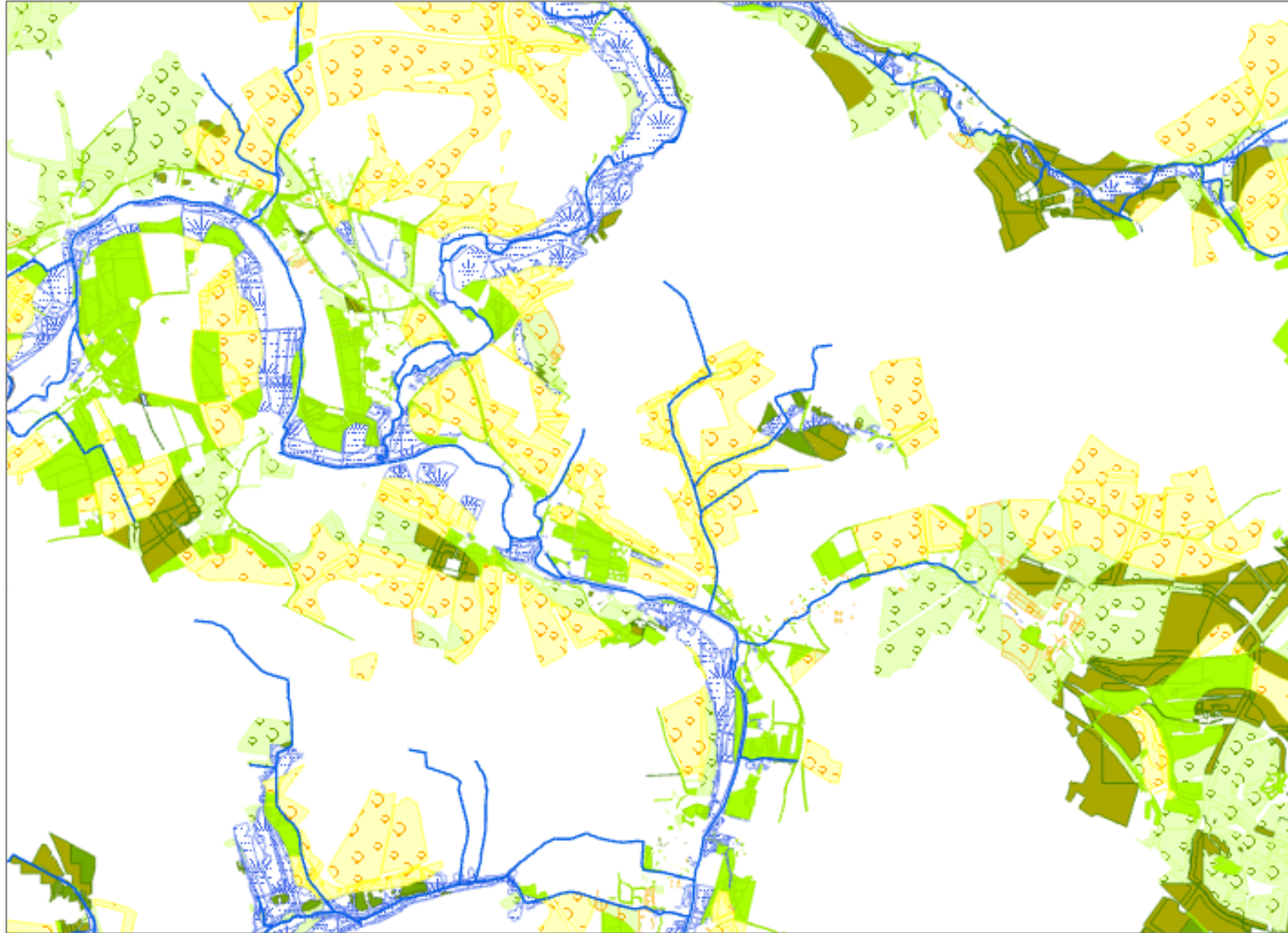
 Nature Recovery Network core zone



 Nature Recovery Network Recovery zone



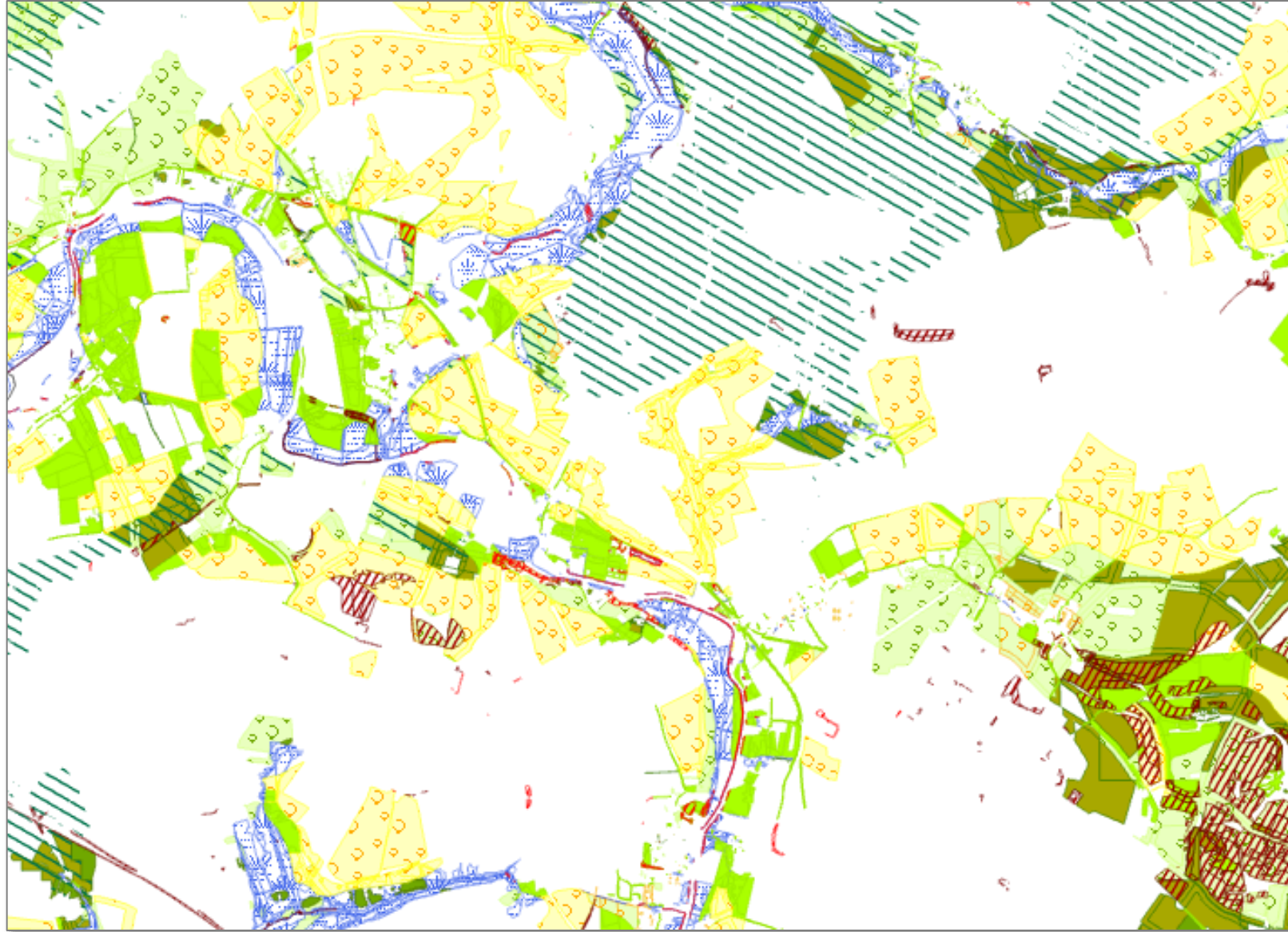
Priorities clipped to existing Nature Recovery Network



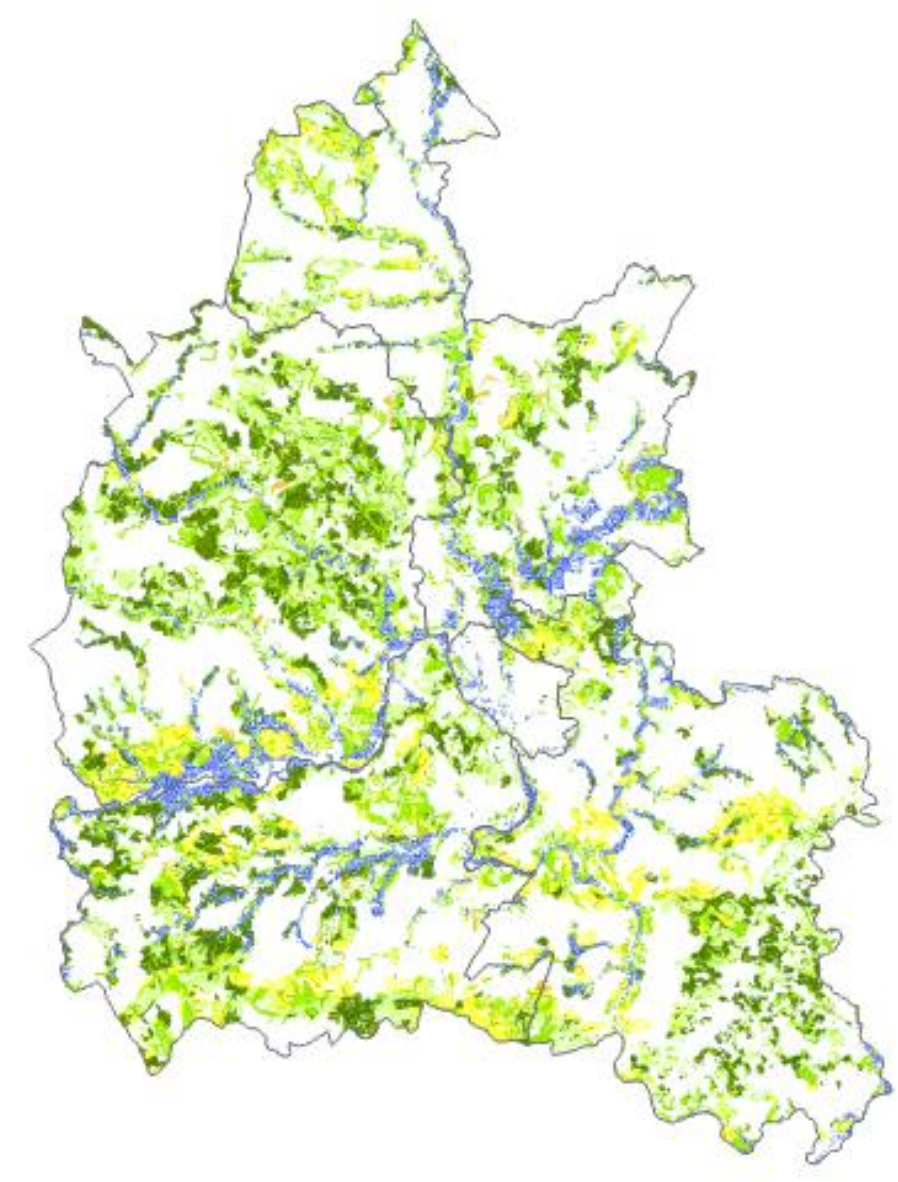
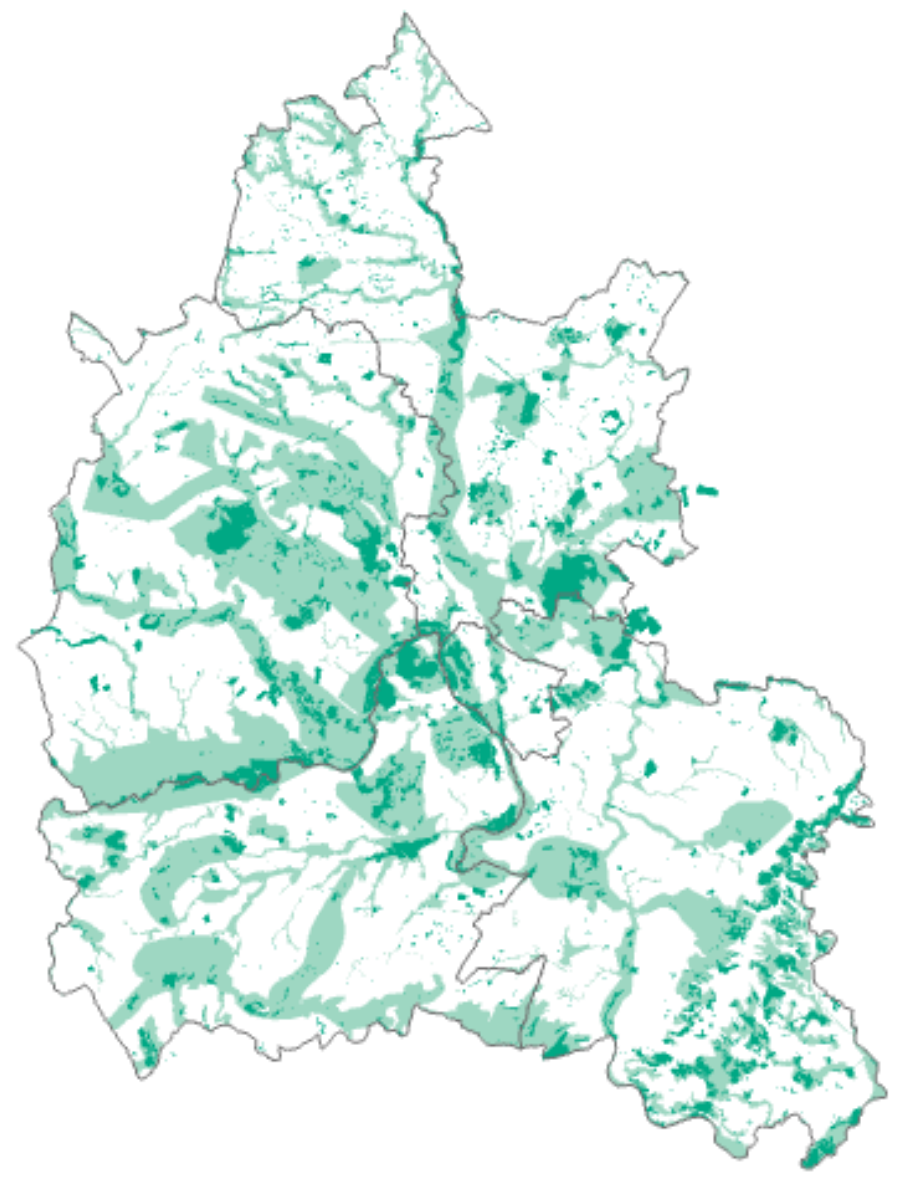
- Natural regeneration
- Wood
- Grass
- Grass, Wood
- Heath
- Grass, Heath
- Heath, Wood
- Peat
- Wetland
- Wetland, Grass
- Orchard
- Grass, Orchard
- Silvopasture
- Silvoarable

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Example: Combined highest priority opportunities



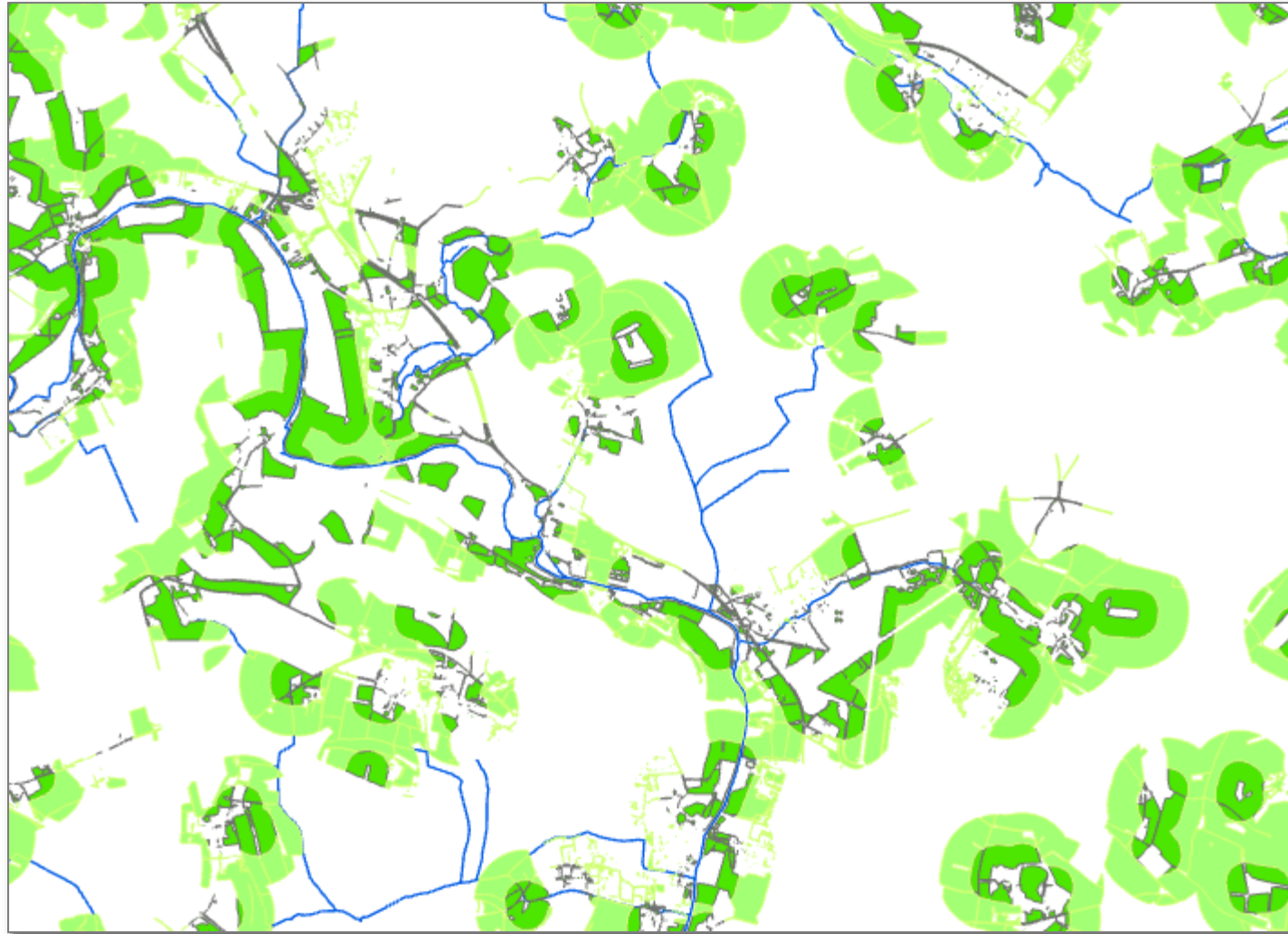
Using with existing nature recovery networks at county scale



Exporting individual layers: grassland opportunities

200m zone

500m zone



5. Assessing the benefits from nature recovery and NbS

Baseline carbon stored (tC/ha)



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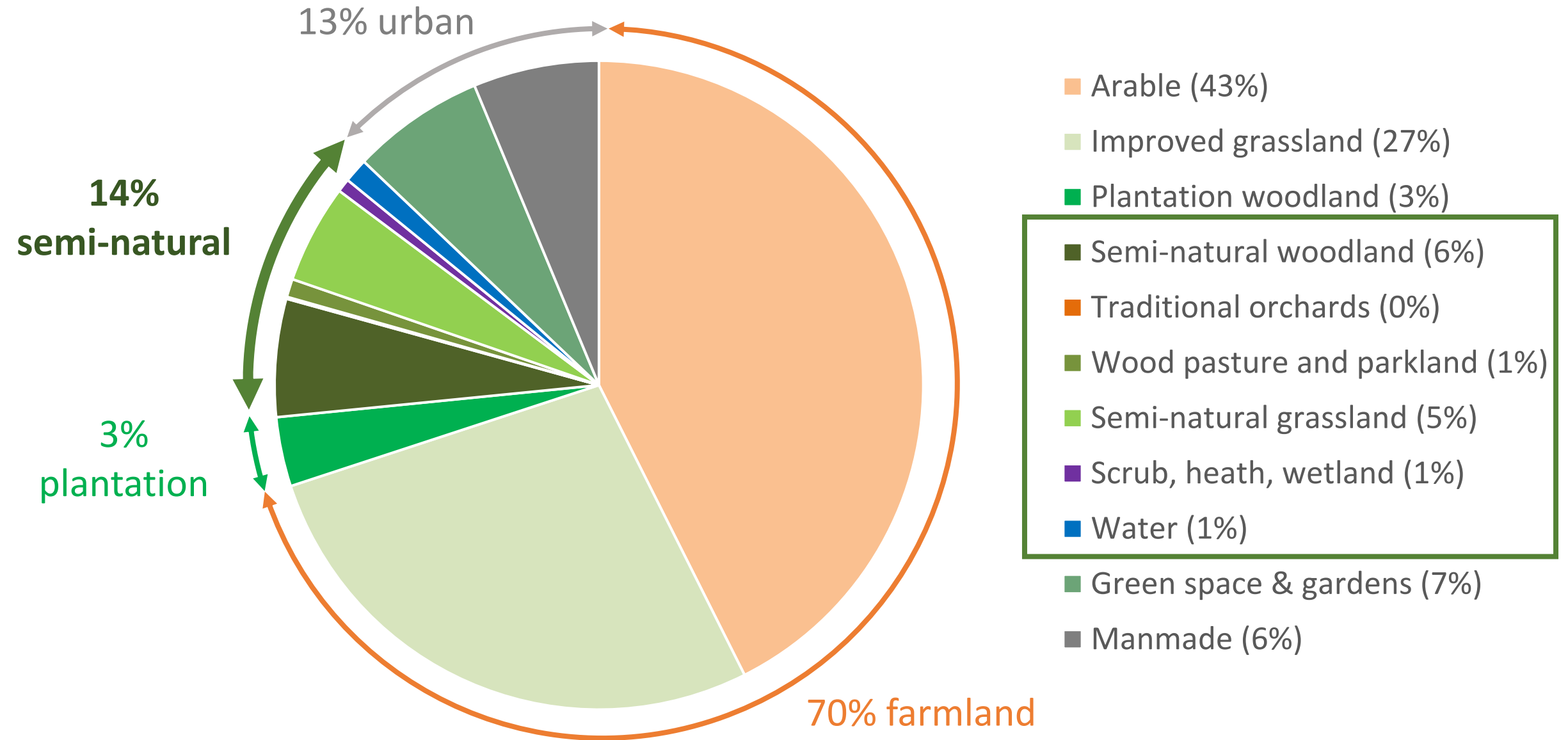
Baseline maximum score for regulating and cultural ecosystem services (scale 0-10)



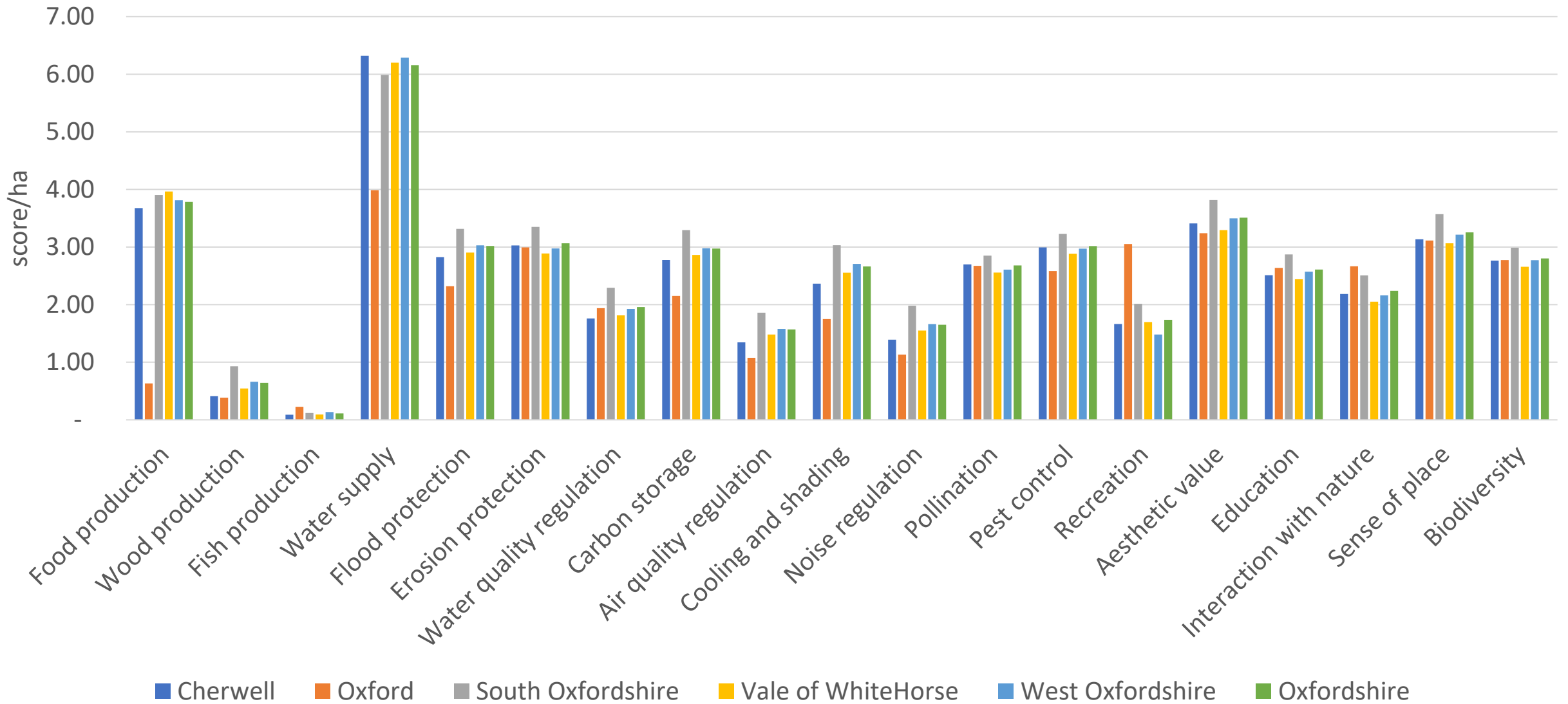
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**Maps can be used to assess change from baseline for nature recovery options
(separate step using spreadsheet; not yet automated)**

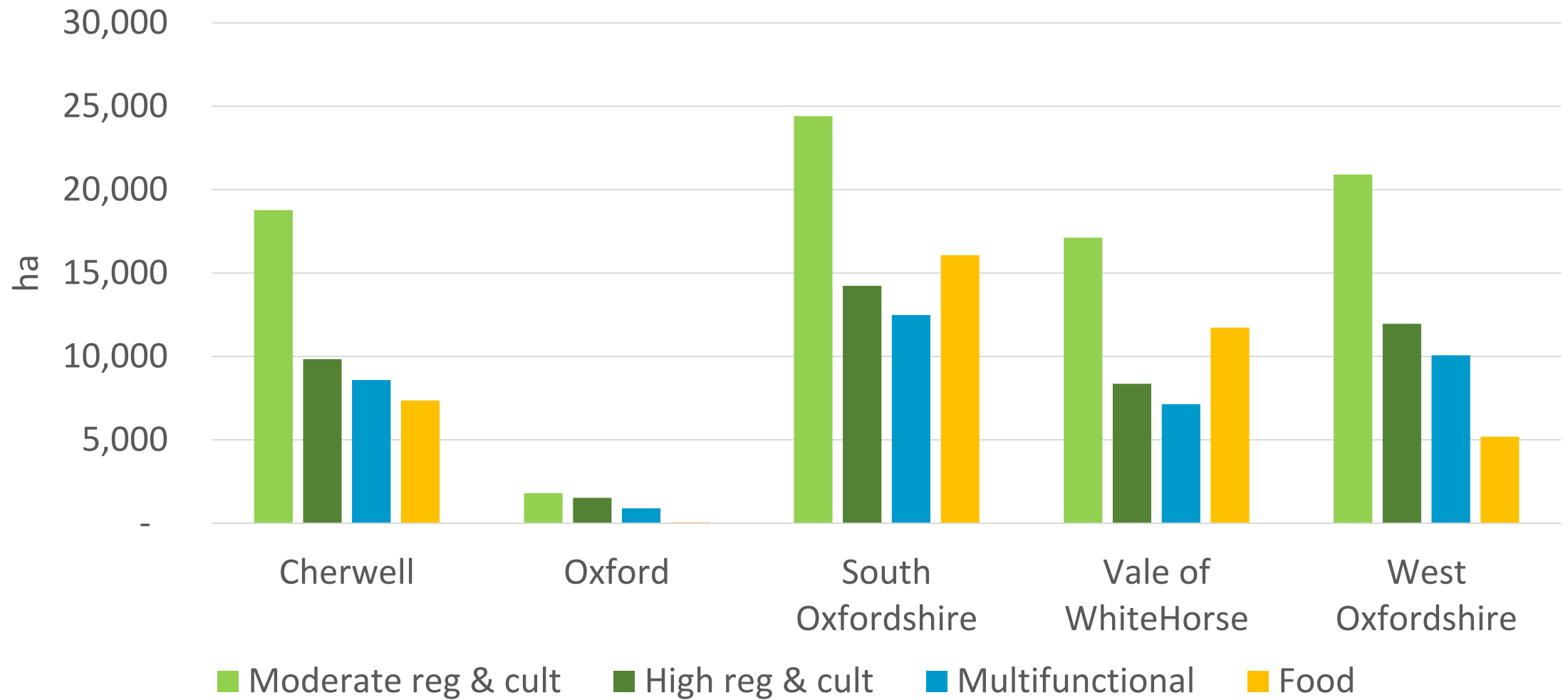
Baseline inventory



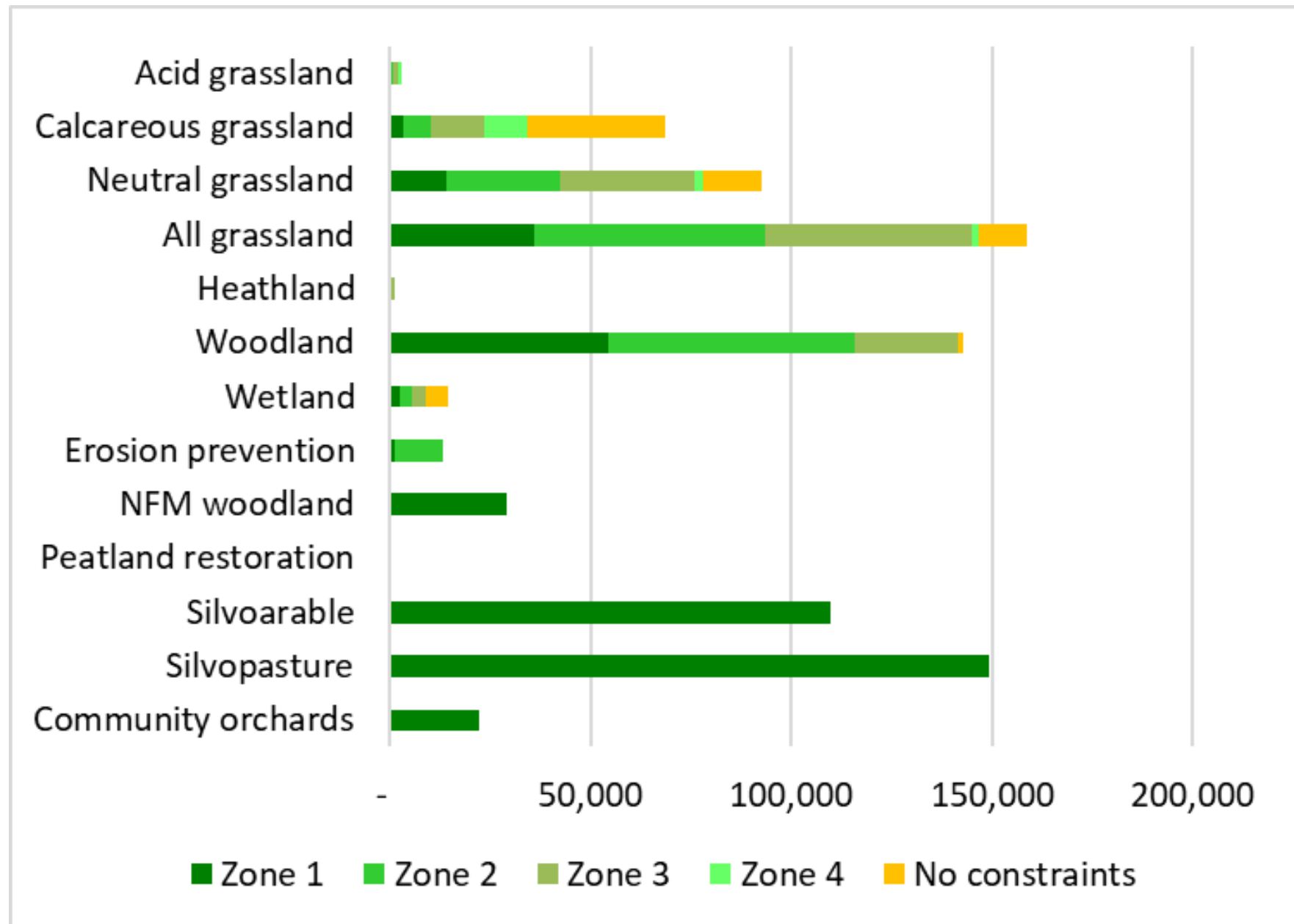
Ecosystem service scores per ha



Area of high scoring natural capital assets



Opportunity assessment



Can use with Natural England's Environmental Benefits from Nature Tool

Select area of interest:	1 year	10 year	30 year	Confidence
Whole area				
Food production	↓	↓	↓	●
Wood production	→	→	↗	●
Fish production	→	→	→	●
Water supply	↓	↓	↓	●
Flood regulation	↓	↓	↗	●
Erosion protection	→	↗	↗	●
Water quality regulation	↗	↗	↗	●
Carbon storage	↓	↓	→	●
Air quality regulation	↓	→	↗	●
Cooling and shading	↓	→	↗	●
Noise reduction	↗	↗	↗	●
Pollination	↓	↗	↗	●
Pest control	↓	→	↗	●
Recreation	↗	↗	↗	●
Aesthetic value	↓	↗	↗	●
Education	↗	↗	↗	●
Interaction with nature	↗	↗	↗	●
Sense of place	↓	→	↗	●

Change in average score per hectare

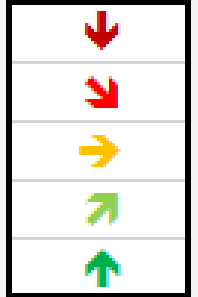
Large decrease (more than -2.5 points out of 10)

Decrease (-0.25 to -2.5 points out of 10)

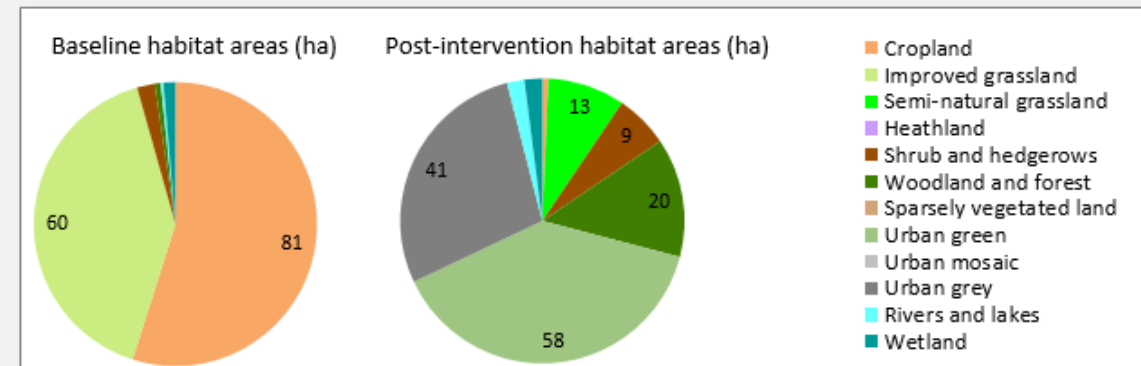
Minor change (-0.25 to 0.25 points out of 10)

Increase (0.25 to 2.5 points out of 10)

Large increase (more than 2.5 points out of 10)



Changes in Natural Capital Assets (total on site and off site)



Using the maps

- Decision-support, not decision-making
- Show areas that could be suitable for different opportunities, avoiding key constraints
- Use as part of a participatory stakeholder engagement process
- Ground truthing and input from local experts is important
- Designated areas may or may not be suitable – seek guidance from site managers /ecologists



Examples of how the maps can be used

- LNRS support (testing in Oxfordshire and Yorkshire)
- Farmer Clusters (North-East Cotswolds Farmer Cluster Landscape Recovery Plan)
- Parish and Neighbourhood nature recovery plans
- Natural capital assessments
- Land use planning for large estates and other landowners



Using Agile maps for Local Nature Recovery Strategies

1. Map areas of principal importance for biodiversity

- Map includes designated sites, ancient woodland, lowland fens
- Can produce **complete detailed habitat inventory** in those areas

2. Map areas where nature recovery action has been taken

- Areas can be added manually to map polygons
- Can then **determine % of each habitat protected or in recovery**

3. Describe the strategy area, its biodiversity and opportunities for recovery

- Produces **habitat map and inventory**
- Future pressures – shows habitats in areas for development

4. Agree priorities and identify potential measures

- Engage with local organisations to produce longlist - Agile engagement guidance

5. Map areas that could become of particular importance

- **Maps scoring nature recovery and NbS opportunities & benefits**
- Refine and check maps as part of a participatory process

Summary of Agile maps



1. Complete, detailed coverage with no gaps or overlaps – allows full inventory and ‘white space’ options
2. Match OS Mastermap boundaries but also include smaller habitat patches
3. Include constraint and opportunity layers, all in one dataset for rapid assessments
4. Show opportunities for nature recovery and nature-based solutions
5. Open source code can be used to generate the maps anywhere in England
6. Maps can be updated easily:
 - Download zip files from the LNRS data viewer and elsewhere to a specified directory
 - Run the python code (takes 3-4 days)
7. Flexible - can respond to user requests for changes and new features

Agile map creation software: data entry spreadsheet



Script_first_used_in	Agile_parameter	Input_value	Data_type	Status	Where_set	Instructions
SetUp_FileStructure.py	Agile_folder	C:\Agile_maps	String	Essential	Spreadsheet	Enter file path for the top-level Agile ma
SetUp_FileStructure.py	UK_data_folder	C:\Agile_maps\UK_data	String	Optional	Spreadsheet	Central folder to hold national datasets t
SetUp_FileStructure.py	spreadsheet_folder	C:\Agile_maps\Spreadsheets	String	Optional	Spreadsheet	Equivalent to the Spreadsheets folder dc
SetUp_FileStructure.py	repository	C:\Agile_maps\Area1	String	Essential	Spreadsheet	Top level folder to hold the input and ou
SetUp_FileStructure.py	input_data_folder	C:\Agile_maps\Area1\Input_data	String	Not usually ch	Spreadsheet	Local folder to hold input data specific to
SetUp_FileStructure.py	output_folder	C:\Agile_maps\Area1\Output	String	Not usually ch	Spreadsheet	Local folder to hold output data for the a
SetUp_FileStructure.py	boundaries_location	C:\Agile_maps\Area1\Input_data\Boundaries	String	Optional	Spreadsheet	Expected location of dataset containing a
SetUp_FileStructure.py	boundaries_shp_template	*.shp	String	Optional	Spreadsheet	Template string to use when searching fo
SetUp_FileStructure.py	boundaries_gdb_fc_template	*	String	Optional	Spreadsheet	Template string to use when searching fo
SetUp_FileStructure.py	use_name_field	TRUE	Boolean	Essential	Spreadsheet	Enter True if the names of the areas you
SetUp_FileStructure.py	area_name_field	NAME	String	Essential	Spreadsheet	If the area names (to be used for creatin
SetUp_FileStructure.py	bounding_box	FALSE	Boolean	Optional	Spreadsheet	True if you want to create a minimum bo
SetUp_FileStructure.py	boundary_buffer	1000	Integer	Optional	Code	If a minimum bounding box is used inste
SetUp_FileStructure.py	buffer_in_separate_gdb	FALSE	Boolean	Optional	Code	There are two options for buffers. 1. You
SetUp_FileStructure.py	existing_OSM	FALSE	Boolean	Optional	Code	True if you want to use an existing OSM
SetUp_FileStructure.py	OSMM_location	C:\Agile_maps\Area1\Data\OSMM_Area1_2024.gdb	String	Optional	Code	If using a pre-existing merged OSMM file
SetUp_FileStructure.py	OSMM_name	OSMM	String	Optional	Code	If using a pre-existing merged OSMM file
SetUp_FileStructure.py	tile_folder	C:\Agile_maps\Area1\Input_data\OSMM	String	Optional	Spreadsheet	If you are extracting OSMM data from on
SetUp_FileStructure.py	OSMM_fc_name	Topgraphicarea	String	Essential	Spreadsheet	Name of the required OSMM feature clas
SetUp_FileStructure.py	habitat_data_source	PHI	String	Essential	Spreadsheet	Enter PHI if you are using Natural Englan

Selection NEY Balruddery Oxfordshire_HLU Oxfordshire_PHI NECFC Area_1 Default ...

Requirements for using the maps



To use maps created by someone else

- OS Mastermap license
- Ideally, ArcGIS (so you can use the maps ready set up with the correct symbologies)

To create the maps yourself

- OS Mastermap license
- ArcGIS
- Very basic understanding of how to run python code
- Storage space (at least 1 Gb for the final map for a typical county)

Limitations



1. Weaknesses in underlying datasets (habitats, farmland, soils)
2. Licensing required for ArcGIS, OS Mastermap and possibly LERC data (OK for council and contractors)

Next steps

1. Refine network mapping: circuitscape / omniscap
2. Automate assessment of benefits
3. Integrate National Forest Inventory to identify forest cleared ready for replanting
4. Further opportunities – air quality regulation, areas deprived of green space
5. Wider testing and refinement with feedback from users

Visit the NbS Knowledge Hub to find out more

<https://nbshub.naturebasedsolutionsinitiative.org/>



Nature-based Solutions Knowledge Hub
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Welcome to the nature-based solutions knowledge hub

An integrated one-stop resource to guide users through the process of governance, designing and funding Nature-based Solutions (NbS), and

Featured updates

River of Life: wetland restoration along the River Thames

Feb 2024

Case study

Hogacre Common Community Eco Park

Feb 2024

Case study

The Great North Bog: a partnership for landscape-scale peatland

Fill in the form on the NbS Knowledge Hub mapping page to test the software for your area

<https://nbshub.naturebasedsolutionsinitiative.org/>



Expression of Interest for using the Agile Nature Recovery and Nature-based Solution Opportunity Maps

If you would like to use the Agile maps to explore opportunities for nature recovery and nature-based solutions in your area, please enter your contact details here and we will get back to you. The maps can currently be applied anywhere in England, and we are working on adapting them for the other UK nations, starting with Scotland.

alison.smith@eci.ox.ac.uk [Switch accounts](#)



Not shared

* Indicates required question

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