

Welcome to the Local Habitat Map for Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland

Developed as part of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), these maps provide a detailed look at areas of existing ecological value as well as opportunities for nature recovery.

The main purpose of an LNRS is to agree the priorities and measures needed for nature recovery, and identify locations to create or improve habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and the wider environment. This is to enable effort and resource to be targeted where it will have greatest impact and to encourage more coordination in habitat creation and improvement activities.

The maps are designed as interactive maps and can be viewed best through the following link:

<https://haveyoursay.leicestershire.gov.uk/local-nature-recovery-strategy-local-habitat-map>

How to use the maps

Each map comes preloaded with several layers of information. To choose the layers you want to see, simply click on the 'layer' tab in the top left corner of the map, and from the drop-down menu switch the layers off and on.

Some maps have 'Markers' placed in them. As with layers, you can select the markers you want to see by clicking the marker tab in the top left corner of the map and choose your selections from the drop-down menu. Click on the markers in the map to reveal information about that location and surrounding areas. These markers provide information on the priorities and measures begin proposed in those locations, plus additional information such as wider environmental benefits and priority and indicator species.

When viewing the map, you have the ability to scroll in and out and you can make the map larger by clicking the arrows in the top right corner of the map.

What Does the Map Show?

The Local Habitat Map is divided into several key categories to help local authorities, landowners, conservation groups, and the public better understand the state of biodiversity in the area. It aims to support efforts to restore, connect, and protect vital ecosystems and wildlife habitats across the strategy area. These maps include:

Map 1. Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)

This map shows the areas whose importance for biodiversity has already been recognised and protected, it includes protected and designated sites and known areas of irreplaceable habitats.

- **Protected and Designated Sites:** These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR), and other designated sites, which are safeguarded due to their ecological and geological importance.
- **Irreplaceable Habitats:** These habitats include Ancient Woodlands, Lowland Fen Marsh, and Ancient Trees.

Map 2 a. Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB)

This map shows the areas that have been identified for habitat creation, enhancement and protection. These are a direct result of ecological modelling and stakeholder engagement, and include:

- **Ecological Connections:** These are areas where we can establish or restore habitat corridors, allowing wildlife to move more freely across the landscape. Connecting fragmented habitats is critical for the long-term survival of species and the health of our environment.
- **Opportunities to create New Bigger Areas:** These identify locations where new habitats can be created or where existing habitats can be made larger. Bigger areas are more resilient to pressures, and benefit species that require larger territories and overall biodiversity.
- **Buffer Zones:** Buffer areas are suggested around core habitats to protect them from external pressures like development or intensive land use. These areas also act as transitional areas between natural habitats and human-altered landscapes.
- **Opportunities to Create Better Quality Habitat:** These are areas where degraded or low-quality habitats can be enhanced to improve biodiversity. This may include activities like enhancing grassland, eradicating invasive species and planting native species, or creating and managing species rich hedgerows.

Map 2 b. Have Your Say

This map allows you to have your say on the areas identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and is a simplified version of Map 2 a, Areas that Could become of particular importance.

Map 3. Nature Networks in the Urban Landscape

This map shows the core urban habitats within the built environments. It also shows 'green wedges' or 'areas of separation' and 'connectivity zones'. Along with 'railways', 'canals' and 'flood zone 3', these are Areas that could become of particular importance, chosen for habitat creation, protection and enhancements. Together these areas create nature networks which consist of corridors and steppingstones.

- **Corridors:** Railways, river, canals, roadside grass verges etc
- **Steppingstones:** Parks, gardens, schools, churchyards, street trees, sustainable urban drainage, green roofs and walls, sports fields etc
- **Green wedges and Areas of separation:** These are areas of protected open space that prevent urban sprawl, conserve natural habitats, provide recreational opportunities, support sustainable land use, and help mitigate climate effects in urban areas.
- **Connectivity Zones:** These are areas that have been identified through ecological modelling and deemed strategic locations to create and enhance species rich habitats. These zones are located in areas that would improve urban species movement (such as Hedgehogs) by creating new steppingstones.

Map 4. Rivers, Waterbodies and Flood Zones

This map takes a closer look within the Flood Zone 3 boundary (ACB) to identify suitable natural flood management measures such as reconnecting rivers to their floodplains. It shows areas for biodiversity and areas where recovery or enhancement of biodiversity could make a particular contribution to other environmental benefits.

Map 5. Priority Species (Fauna)

This map shows where priority species have been recorded in recent decades and we have confidence these locations could be suitable for measures that protect and enhance their populations. These records are displayed as either 2km squares, landscape areas such as the Soar Valley, or boundary lines. Each of these priority species has a bespoke measure designed to protect and enhance their populations. These measures can be viewed in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Some of the priority species require action in very specific locations such as the Adder (found in Heathland), some species require action across a larger landscape such as Willow Tit (which require the creation and management of Wet Woodland), and some species are widespread and haven't been mapped, such as Hedgehog because measures for these species should be considered across the whole strategy area.

Map 6. Priority Species (Vascular Plants and Lichen)

This map shows where rare vascular plants and lichen have been recorded. In total there are 77 vascular plants and 6 lichen which are found at 3 or fewer sites across Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland. These species require special protection and have bespoke measures shown in the map. To protect the exact location of these species, 2km squares have been used to identify their general location. To find out more about these species please contact the LLR LNRS email address and the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Record Centre (LRERC).

Who are the maps for?

The Local Habitat Map is a valuable resource for anyone interested in contributing to nature recovery efforts. Whether you're a landowner looking to enhance biodiversity on your property, a conservation group planning new projects, or a local planner aiming to integrate nature into future development, this map provides the guidance you need.

- **For Farmers, landowners and managers:** The map identifies areas where ecological connections or habitat improvements could be made.
- **For Conservationists:** The map shows priority areas for habitat restoration, creation and protection efforts.
- **For Developers and Planners:** Integrate the map's guidance into local planning to ensure that future developments contribute to, rather than detract from, local biodiversity goals. They recognise that the areas of mapped measures are of 'high strategic significance' in BNG metric (Biodiversity Net Gain).
- **For Residents:** The map enables everyone to look closely at their area and where possible, contribute to nature recovery goals both locally and at landscape scale.
- **Public bodies and others** interested in the wider benefits of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

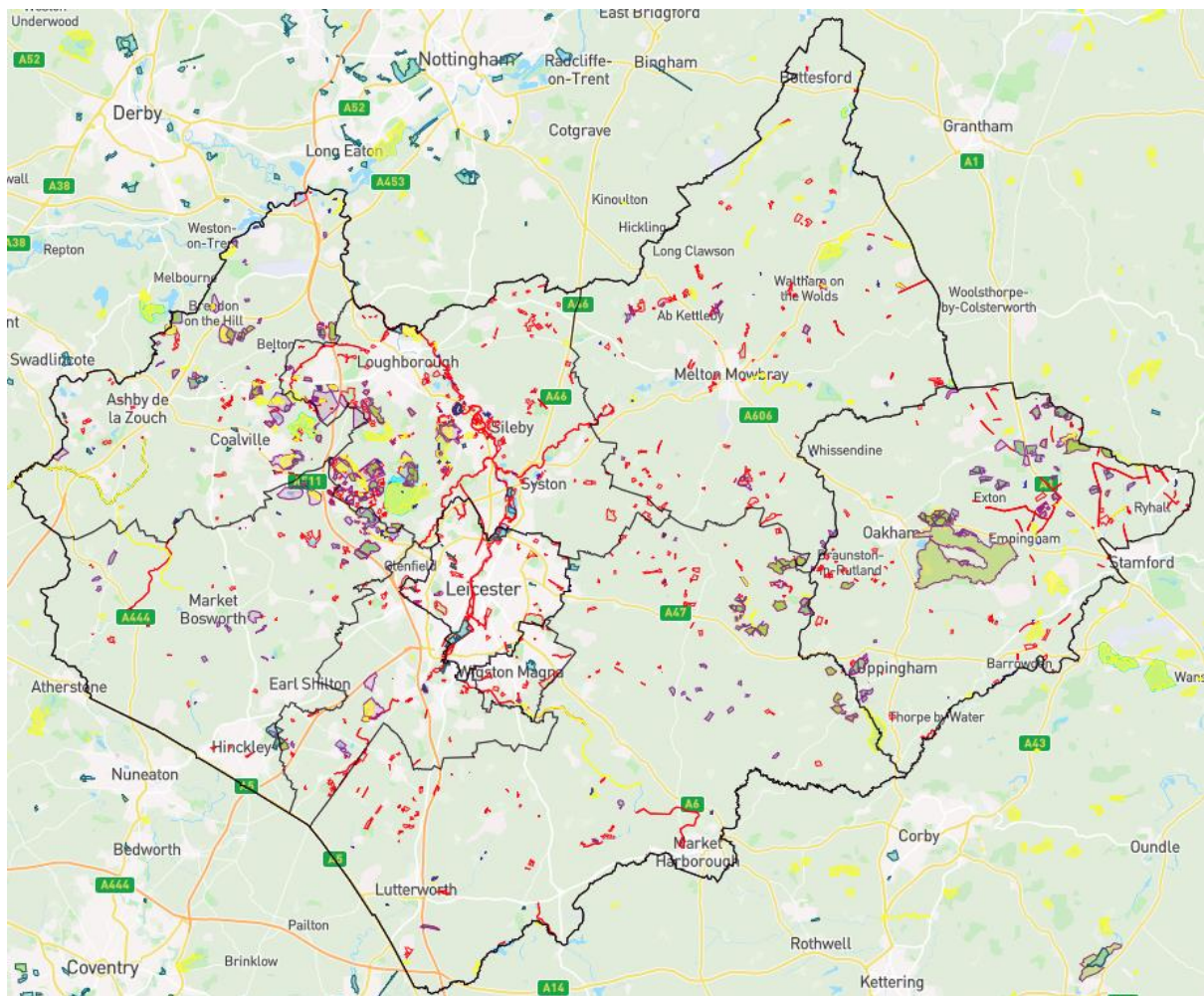
Why Is This Important?

The Leicestershire, Leicester, and Rutland strategy area is home to a diverse range of habitats that support a wide variety of wildlife. However, many species are under threat due to habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation. The Local Habitat Map is a key tool in addressing these challenges, supporting efforts to restore nature across the landscape, combat biodiversity loss, and contribute to the national and global objectives for nature recovery.

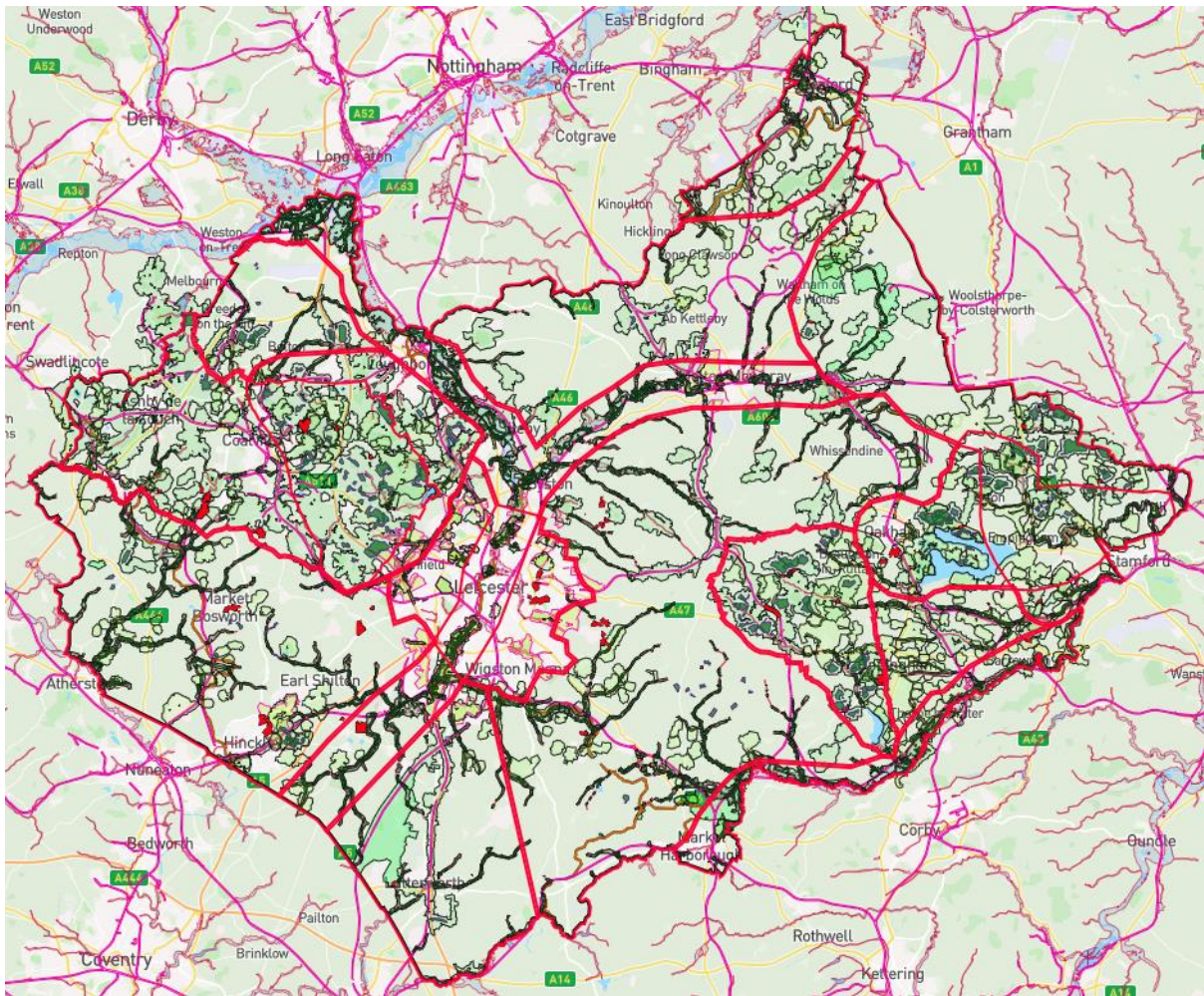
By identifying areas of both existing ecological value and opportunities for enhancement, we can work together to ensure that nature thrives for future generations.

Provided below are screenshots of each of the maps provided in the link to provide an indication of the content/purpose of each map.

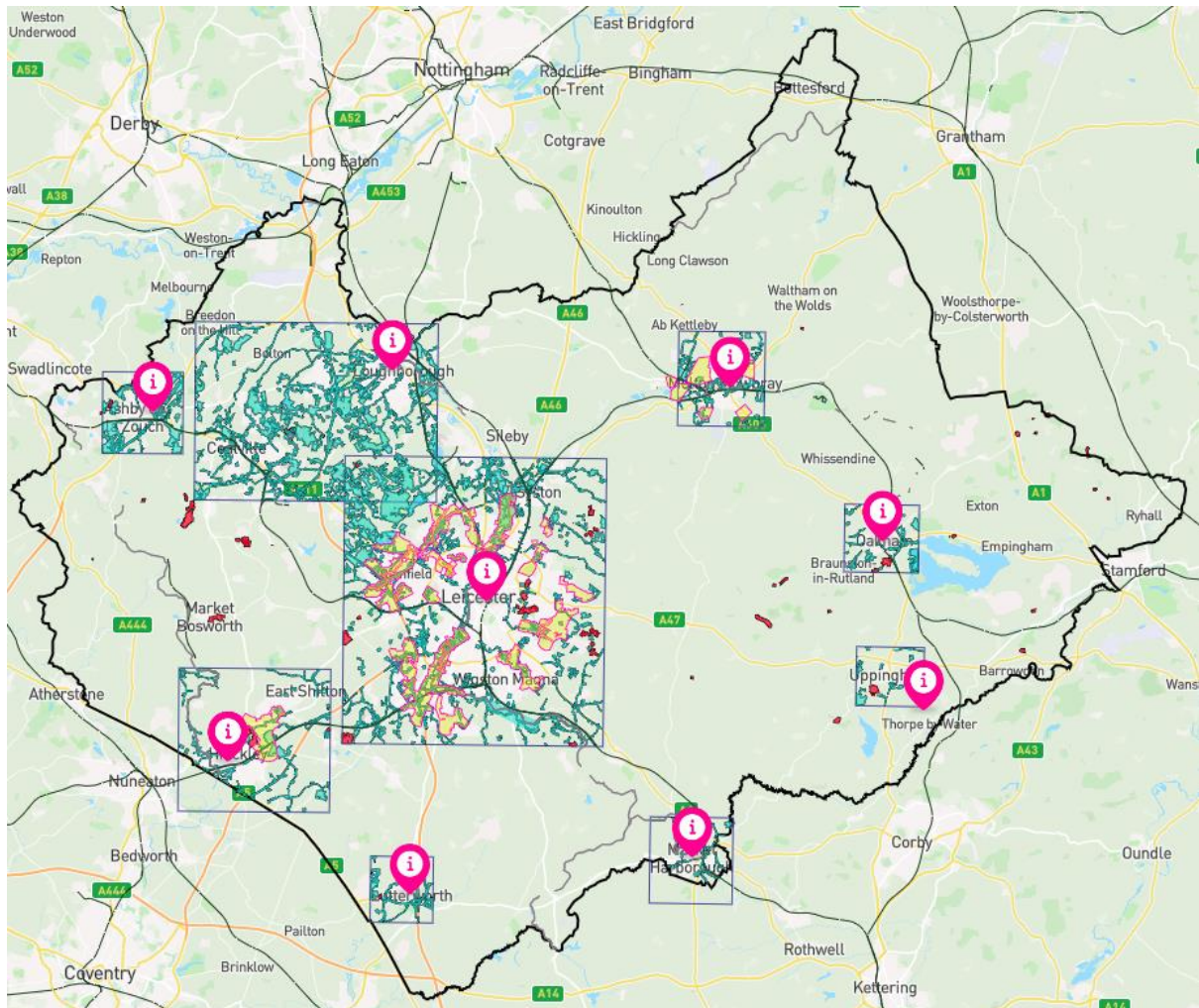
Map 1. Local Nature Recovery Strategy - Existing Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity (APIB)



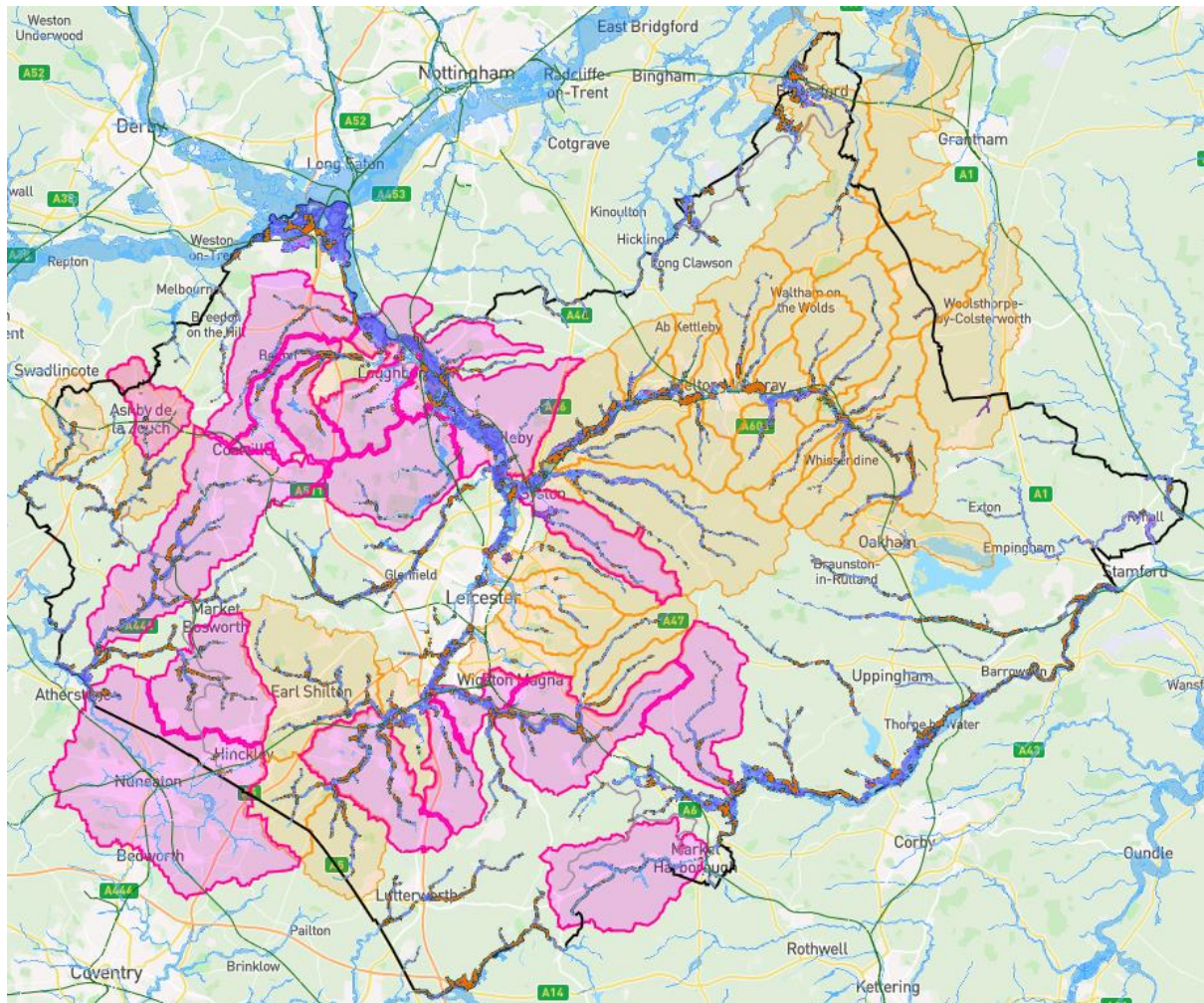
Map 2a. Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB)



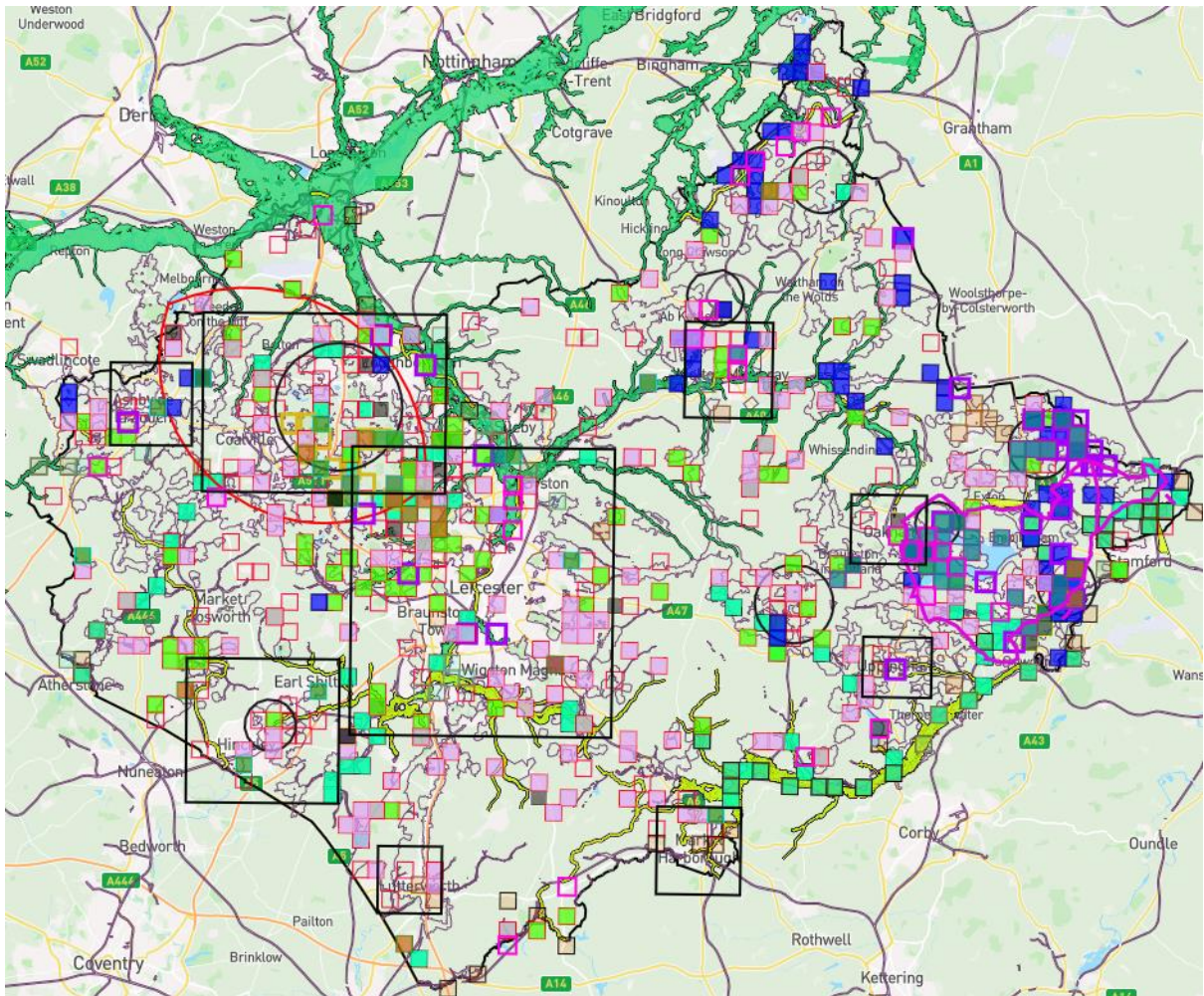
Map 3. Nature Networks - Areas that Could Become of particular Importance (ACB) in the Urban Environment

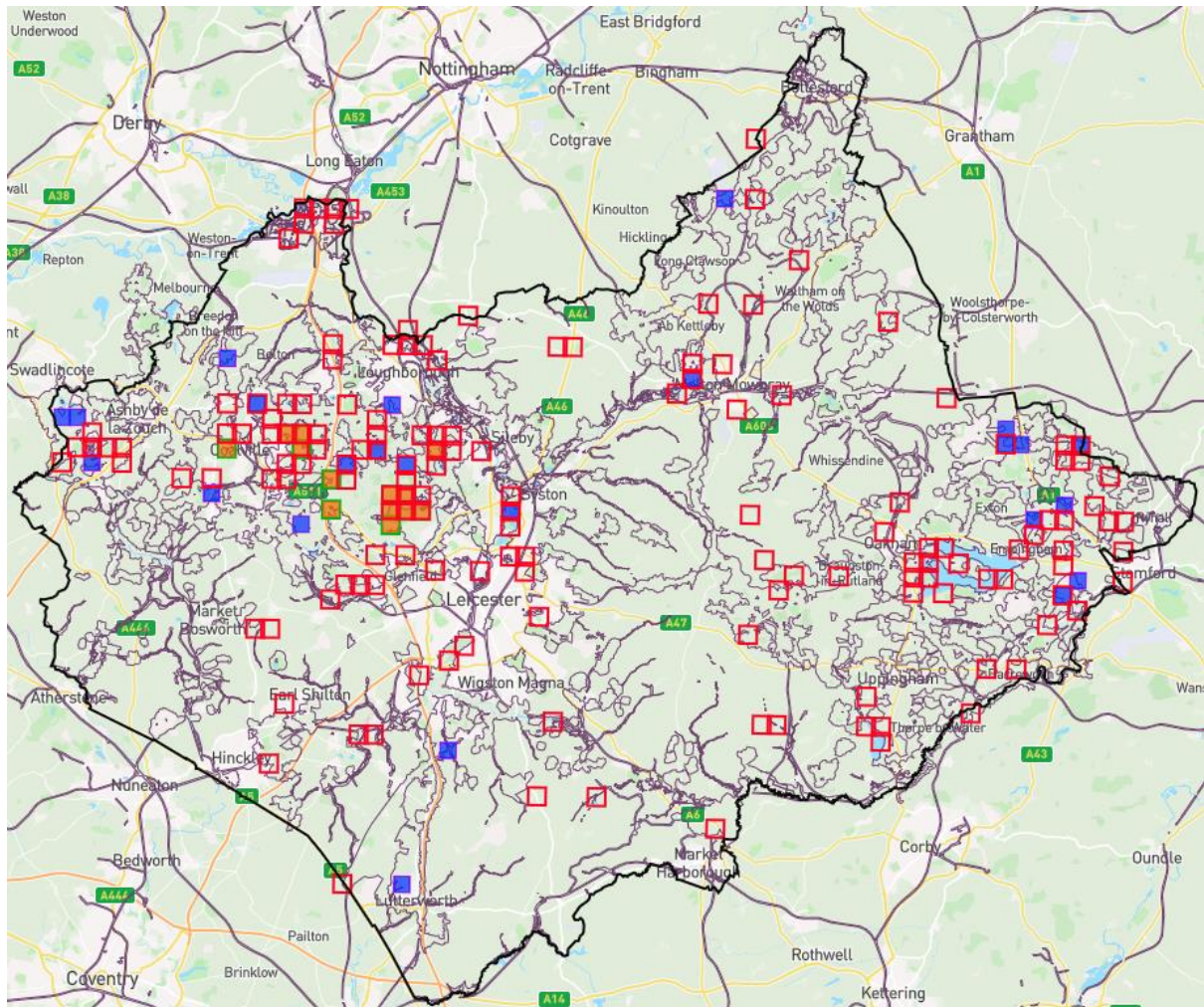


Map 4. Areas that Could Become of particular importance (ACB) in Flood Zone 3



Map 5. Priority Species Map



Map 6. Priority Species: Rare Vascular Plants and Lichens

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