

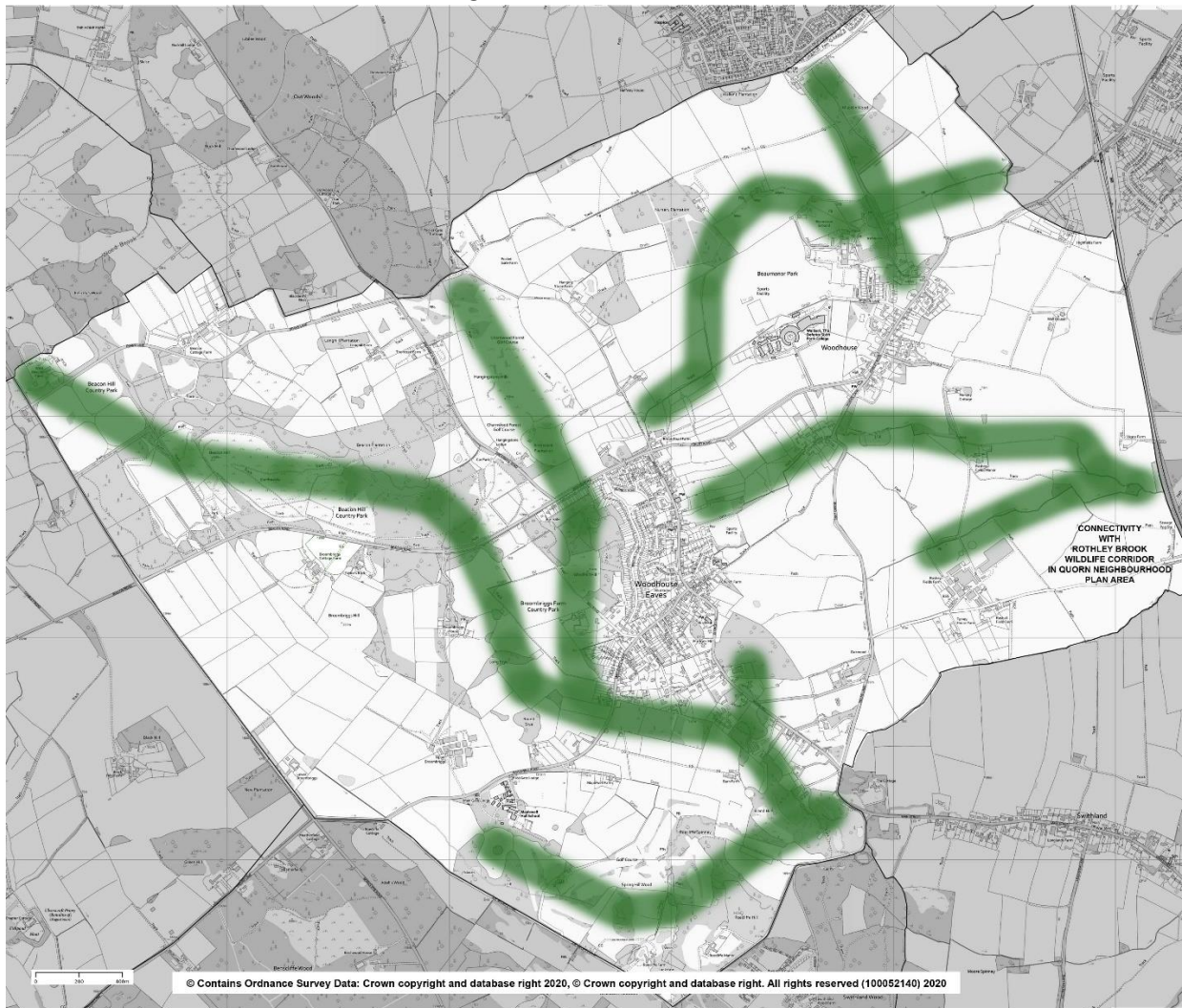


**Woodhouse Parish  
Neighbourhood Plan 2020- 2036  
Referendum version  
August 2021**

## Biodiversity, woodland, trees and hedgerows, and habitat connectivity

95. Woodhouse parish's location in and close to Charnwood Forest gives it an ecological richness higher than that of most other parts of Leicestershire. The Plan Area has four SSSIs and a considerable number of individual sites already designated, nationally and locally, for their biodiversity value. It might be argued, particularly in terms of new development pressure, that protection of wildlife in the Plan Area is therefore already assured, and that outside the already designated areas there is less need for vigilance when Planning decisions are being made. This would be a misunderstanding of the concept of biodiversity. England's biodiversity is entirely and only the sum of the wildlife across all of its individual parishes. Woodhouse parish is more important in this regard than most, but its species and habitat diversity outside the protected areas even now is being reduced by new development and intensive agriculture. The ecosystems (soils, plants and animals) affected by such changes are effectively exterminated. Residents want the Plan Area to play its essential part in protecting what remains of England's threatened and diminishing biodiversity.
96. Woodland, and its linear equivalent habitat of hedgerows, is a case in point: its relative ubiquity in the Plan area gives it greater significance as a resource for biodiversity protection in both national and Charnwood Borough contexts, meaning policies protecting it against damaging development should be more strictly applied, not relaxed.
97. Connectivity is an essential component of biodiversity. Isolated populations of animals and plants are at risk of destruction or of simply 'dying out'. Wildlife Corridors aim to re-connect populations and habitats within parishes and more widely. A network of wildlife corridors has been identified during the preparation of this Plan (Figure 14, policy ENV 4). A significant woodland corridor connects the main groups of habitat sites in Woodhouse Parish with the Outwoods SSSI to the north and Swithland woods SSSI to the south. On the west /east axis a wildlife corridor connects and passes through the two villages and into the Quorn Neighbourhood Plan Area to join the regional CBC Green Infrastructure corridor in the Soar Valley,
98. This policy therefore supports strong parish-level compliance with the relevant Charnwood Borough Council policies, the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 (as amended), and the European Habitats and Species Directives [or their transitioned English equivalents] – and about how Woodhouse Parish can make a vital contribution to maintain biodiversity by taking it into account, at a parish level of detail, in the Planning system. It is also in conformity with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 174 (a) and (d); 179; 179 (a); 179 (c); and 182.

Figure 14: Wildlife corridors



**POLICY ENV 4: BIODIVERSITY, WOODLAND, TREES AND HEDGEROWS, AND HABITAT CONNECTIVITY-** Proposals for new development impacting the areas identified on Figure 13 and 13.1 should incorporate measures for the protection and enhancement of local biodiversity, as detailed in this policy:

If significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided (through locating to an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated or compensated for, planning permission should be refused. Development must have appropriate regard for the network of local ecological features and habitats. New development will be expected to maintain and enhance existing ecological and landscape features (such as watercourses, hedgerows and treelines) for biodiversity.

Trees of arboricultural, historical, ecological and/or landscape value, including those in development proposal sites, should be protected from felling, uprooting or damage unless they have been independently judged by a qualified arboriculturalist to present an unmanageable public safety risk. Development proposals that would damage or result in the loss of woodland will not be supported unless the environmental and ecological harm is demonstrably outweighed by the benefits of the development. Development proposals affecting trees or woodland need to be accompanied by a survey proportionate to the tree's importance that establishes the health and longevity of all trees within the site.

If destruction of trees and woodland by new development is unavoidable, developers will be

required to plant replacement indigenous trees or woodland on the site or to make provision for an equivalent or greater compensatory area of planting elsewhere in the Parish.

Development proposals should not adversely affect the habitat connectivity provided by the wildlife corridors identified in Figure 14.

## Protecting the historical environment

### Sites of historical environmental significance

99. A group of inventory sites scores highly for history (scoring at least 3/5 under this criterion). The features for which the identified sites have been selected and notified are listed in the environmental inventory (Appendix 6). The map (Figure 15) shows their locations.

100. The historical environment sites comprise a) statutorily protected sites, b) sites with extant and visible archaeological or historical features or proven buried archaeology, as recorded in the Historic England and Leicestershire Historic Environment Records databases, and c) other sites of historical and social significance identified in local records and during the inventory process.

Figure 15: Sites of historical environment significance

