

## **S.E. BRISTOL URBAN EXTENSION - LOCATION OPTION 2 - HICKS GATE**

**SITE NAME:** S.E. Bristol Urban Extension - Location Option 2 -  
**LOCATION:** Hicks Gate  
**GRID REFERENCE:** ST636697 (CGR)  
**SURVEY DATE:** 16/04/2008  
**WEATHER:** SUNNY AND FAIR

**THIS REPORT CONTAINS CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION**

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre (BRERC) was commissioned by Bath and North East Somerset Council to conduct an extended Phase 1 field survey of **S.E. Bristol Urban Extension - Location Option 2 - Hicks Gate**. Two members of BRERC staff visited the site on 16/04/2008. The survey and this report reflect the level of detail required fulfil the survey brief.

The objective of the survey was to undertake a general ecological evaluation of the site and to verify and update the nature conservation data of the target site using **Phase 1 habitat mapping (Figure 1)** with additional **detailed target notes (Figure 2)** and to evaluate the condition, extent and structure of **hedgerows (Figure 3)** of the area in order to:

- confirm and update the existing baseline information
- identify any potential constraints to development, including the presence of European Protected Species, UK Priority Habitat and important hedgerows
- to identify key ecological features that could merit retention within strategic development areas
- Identify the nature and extent of further detailed surveys that would be required to inform future master planning of selected areas.

**Figure 1. Phase 1 Map**

**Figure 2. Target Notes**

**Figure 3. Hedgerow Condition**

**Figure 4. Designated Sites**

**Figure 5. Recommended Retention Features**

**Figure 6. Aerial Photo**

**Appendix 1. Target Notes**

**Appendix 2. Phase 1 codes**

## 2 SURVEY

Species in **bold** are notable in the BRERC region.  
Other notable features are also in **Bold**.

### Methods:

- Phase 1 habitat mapping following the Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey (JNCC).
- Detailed target notes of key ecological features and areas that could require further detailed surveys and that could merit retention within any potential development (Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey JNCC).
- Hedgerow characteristics\*.
- Identification of areas and features

### Note

\*Hedgerows were audited for all woody species and associated features such as banks, ditches and associated trees.

## 2.1 Habitat Overview

Within the target area the following habitat types were found:

*Arable fields*  
*Improved grassland*  
*Semi-improved grassland*  
*Semi-improved neutral grassland*  
*Woodland - Mixed Plantation*  
*Scattered scrub*  
*Hedgerows*  
*Isolated hedgerow and field trees of significant interest*  
*Brook and associated riparian habitat*  
*Spoil*

## 2.2 Habitat Description – Summary of survey.

The land in this Option area is divided by the main Bristol to Bath A4 road and also partially divided by a small brook which runs along part of the site boundary and then flows through a short section of the area.

There are **eight designated sites** either directly adjacent to or in the nearby vicinity of Option area (**figure 4**). These are **Keynsham Humpy Tumps** (Post Industrial Site), **East Wood and Keynsham Humpy Tumps complex** (SNCI) and **Stockwood Open Space SNCI & Local Nature Reserve** (LNR) on the south side of the **River Avon**, which is itself a SNCI; and **Avon Valley Woodlands SNCI & LNR** and **Bickley Wood SSSI** on the north side of the River Avon.

### **The land to the south of the A4 main road**

The majority of the land to the south of the A4 is composed of gently sloping improved fields dominated by one or two sown grass species such as Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne* and Meadow Foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*. Most fields have associated hedgerows. The fields are generally not species-rich but along hedgerows and ditches there is a higher diversity of common herbs. Several hedgerows have ditches associated with them.

Other land parcels are horse paddocks. Where horses are present the swards are generally tightly grazed, the ground somewhat poached and hedgerows generally unmanaged or replaced by fences.

### **The land to the north of the A4 main road**

To the north of the A4 the majority of the land parcels are Perennial Rye-grass dominated fields with hedgerows. The fields are generally not species-rich but along hedgerows there is a higher diversity of common herbs. Several hedgerows have ditches associated with them. To the extreme north, along the boundary, the land falls away into the gorge of the River Avon.

### 3 RECOMMENDATIONS OF IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL FEATURES / AREAS TO RETAIN

#### 3.1 Important ecological features identified that warrant retention and / or further survey

- There are **no designated sites within this option area**. However there are several designated sites directly adjacent to it along the northern boundary. These are **Keynsham Humpy Tumps** (Post Industrial Site), **East Wood and Keynsham Humpy Tumps complex** SNCI (*Note – these two sites largely overlap each other*). **Stockwood Open Space SNCI & LNR** lie along the western boundary on the opposite side of Scotland Lane (**Figure 4**).

On the north side of the River Avon these are **Avon Valley Woodlands Local SNCI and LNR** and **Bickley Wood SSSI**. An element of buffering may be desirable to reduce any potential impacts from development on all the above sites.

The **River Avon SNCI** is also a consideration.

During the survey a **Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*** was seen perched on electricity pylons adjacent to the gorge of the River Avon. One of the surveyors has seen a **Peregrine** in this vicinity on several previous occasions. This has been discussed with the Regional Organiser of the British Trust for Ornithology. The response given was that it is thought a pair of Peregrines attempted to nest in this area this year but were unsuccessful due to the immaturity of the female bird.

- A **small brook** (not named on OS Map) runs along part of the western boundary (Scotland Bottom) and then continues under the A4 road and on through the northern section of the Option Area close to the Hicks Gate roundabout. Where the brook flows within the boundary of the Option Area it is Target Noted (Target Notes 016 & 017) but the **whole brook and its associated riparian habitat** are of potentially high conservation value and an element of buffering may be desirable to reduce any potential impacts from development on this habitat. Although BRERC does not hold any records for Otters here there are records of this species from other watercourses in the wider area.
- In the south-west corner of this Option area there is a plot of **Mixed Broadleaved Woodland** (target note 008). This is mixed woodland with many Larch trees *Larix* sp. amongst a canopy of Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Field Maple *Acer campestre*. Many of the larch are wind blown. The understorey of the woodland is composed primarily of Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. The ground flora includes Dog's Mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, **Bluebell** *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, False-brome *Brachypodium sylvaticum*, a native violet *Viola* sp., **Goldilocks Buttercup** *Ranunculus auricomus*, Primrose *Primula vulgaris*. There are Mammal diggings, holes and tracks within the woodland. Although this wood has been re-planted with many larch trees it still retains semi-natural features and is of conservation value.
- **Hedgerows with seven or more woody species** qualify as "important hedgerows" under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 (**Figure 3**).
- **Target Noted trees** in fields and hedgerows (Target Notes 002, 003, 005, 007, 009, 012, 014, 018, 021, 022, 024 & 025)

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- **Potential bat roosts** (Target Notes 002, 003, 005, 009, 014, 018, 021, 022, 023 and 025)
  - Spoil and derelict areas **potential for reptiles** (Target Notes 010 and 023)

In addition to the Target Noted areas identified for further survey (see Appendix 1), it is **recommended that all the areas listed in section 3.1 are subject to further detailed** survey if likely to be affected by development. Such areas may also warrant protection with buffer zones with to reduce any potential impacts.

**APPENDICES**  
**Appendix 1 – Target Notes**  
**Appendix 2 - Phase 1 Codes**

**MAPS**

- Figure 1. Phase 1 Map**
- Figure 2. Target Notes**
- Figure 3. Hedgerow Condition**
- Figure 4. Designated Sites**
- Figure 5. Recommended Retention Features**
- Figure 6. Aerial Photo**

Appendix 1. Hicks Gate Target Notes

Target Note Number	Grid Ref	Date	Site name	Habitat etc.	Notes	Further survey required
001	ST63636966	16/04/2008		Ditch /stream	Ditch /stream - shaded, but with assoc plants - <i>Scrophularia auriculata</i> , <i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	n
002	ST63516943	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Hedgerow	<i>Quercus robur</i> - veteran tree, 2.5 dbh, multi-stemmed above, deadwood, fungus, potential for bats	y
003	ST63456944	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Hedgerow	<i>Quercus robur</i> - Pollard, deadwood, potential for bats	y
004	ST63376946	16/04/2008		Mammal tracks -Hedgerow	Evidence of mammal tracks and diggings	y
005	ST63666925	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Field	<i>Quercus robur</i> - stag-headed veteran, deadwood, potential bat roost/bird nest	y
006	ST63716921	16/04/2008		Mammal tracks -Hedgerow	Mammal tracks associated with hedgerow, small burrows present - probably rabbit	y
007	ST63726918	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Hedgerow	<i>Quercus robur</i> - pollard	n
008	ST63896932	16/04/2008		Broadleaved Woodland	Mixed BW -wind blown <i>Larix</i> sp., canopy - Ash, Larch sp., <i>Acer campestre</i> . Understorey - Hawthorn. Ground flora - <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> , Bluebell, <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i> , <i>Viola</i> sp., <i>Ranunculus auricomus</i> , <i>Primula vulgaris</i> . Mammal diggings, holes, tracks	y
009	ST64076947	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Hedgerow	2 x <i>Quercus robur</i> - trees with splits and damage. Potential bat roost/bird nest	y
010	ST64046965	16/04/2008		Scattered scrub over bare ground / hard standing	Bare Ground & Scattered Scrub - ex construction site depot. <i>Rubus</i> sp. <i>Buddlija</i> . <i>Saxifraga tridactylites</i> . Potential for reptiles	y
011	ST63326946	16/04/2008		Improved field	20m long patch of <i>Primula veris</i> assoc with a hollow in field	n
012	ST63456921	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Hedgerow	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - pollard	n
013	ST63816951	16/04/2008		Scattered scrub	Large thicket of <i>Prunus spinosa</i>	n
014	ST63826958	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Field	<i>Malus</i> sp. holes, deadwood, <i>Viscum album</i> (Mistletoe), potential for bats	y
015	ST63526941	16/04/2008		Broadleaved Woodland	Planted strip of <i>Tilia x europaea</i> . Narrow strip of woodland-like vegetation with some woodland ground flora - <i>Ranunculus auricomus</i> , <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i> , <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> .	n

016	ST63986982	16/04/2008		Running Water	Stream stony based, with riffles. Overgrown and ditched with open areas. Narrow bankside vegetation Blackthorn & Elder. Bryophytes, Apium nodiflorum, shrimps Gammarus sp.	y
017	ST64086982	16/04/2008		Running Water	Stream stony based, with riffles and muddy patches. Mostly open some deadwood in stream. Narrow bankside vegetation with Salix fragilis. Apium nodiflorum, shrimps Gammarus sp.	y
018	ST64126982	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Hedgerow	Quercus robur. Pollard with deadwood, potential for bats	y
019	ST64146982	16/04/2008		Scattered scrub / running water	Stream running through scrubby, "wooded" area. Riffled stream with bryophytes, Water Figwort. Quercus robur, Elder, Hawthorn, Ivy carpets, Bramble, Dog's Mercury. Mammal holes	y
020	ST64026987	16/04/2008		Marsh	Small wet area adjacent to ditch. Glyceria sp., Juncus effusus, Ranunculus repens, Iris pseudocorus, Veronica beccabunga, Juncus inflexus, Oenanthe crocata. Could have value for Wading birds - e.g. Snipe	n
021	ST63906998	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Field	3 x Quercus robur. 2 potential veterans, one with hollows, both with deadwood, potential for bats. One tree smaller, no hollows or deadwood.	y
022	ST63957004	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Field	Ash with hollows and deadwood, potential for bats	y
023	ST63957010	16/04/2008		Neglected area possible old tip with assoc trees	Rough hollow with abundant Nettles & scattered Quercus robur, one with "woodpecker" hole. Piles of old stone/rubble potential for herp refugia. potential for bats	y
024	ST63667025	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Hedgerow	Very large Quercus robur, tree in fair condition not showing signs of senescence	n
025	ST63806967	16/04/2008		Significant tree - Field	Dead tree - deadwood, broken limbs - potential for bats	y



## Appendix 2. Phase 1 Codes

Code	Habitat classification	Code	Habitat classification	Code	Habitat classification
A	Cultivated/disturbed land, arable	F	Fence	RWD	Running water, dystrophic
AC	Natural inland cliff, acid / neutral	FB	Recently felled woodland: broad-leaved	RWE	Running water, eutrophic
ADH	Dry dwarf shrub heath, acid	FC	Recently felled woodland: coniferous	RWM	Running water, mesotrophic
AF	Acid / neutral flush / spring	FM	Recently felled woodland: mixed	RWO	Running water, oligotrophic
AG	Acid grassland unimproved	FPM	Flood plain fen	S	Artificial spoil
AM	Cultivated/disturbed land, amenity grassland	Ga	Intertidal green algal beds	SAG	Acid grassland semi-improved
AR	Other rock exposure, acid / neutral	H	Hedge, intact, native species poor	SB	Bracken scattered
AS	Natural scree, acid / neutral	H-	Defunct hedge, native species poor	SBW	Parkland / scattered trees, broad-leaved
B	Water, brackish (includes saline lagoons)	HC	Maritime hard cliff	SC	Maritime soft cliff
Ba	Intertidal brown algal beds	HT	Hedge and trees, native species poor	SCG	Calcareous grassland semi improved
BB	Blanket bog	I	Improved grassland	SCW	Parkland scattered trees: coniferous
BC	Natural inland cliff, basic	LH	Lichen / bryophyte heath	SD	Swamp, single species dominant
BDH	Dry dwarf shrub heath, basic	LP	Limestone pavement	SG+target note	Maritime coastal grassland
BF	Basic flush / spring	M	Water, mesotrophic	SH+target note	Maritime coastal heathland
BG	Bare ground	MG	Marsh / marshy grassland	shaded black	Built up area - buildings
BM	Basin mire	MH	Montane heath / dwarf herb	SI	Poor semi improved grassland
BP	Broadleaved parkland / scattered trees	MI	Artificial mine	SMG	Semi natural marshy grassland
BR	Other rock exposure, basic	MP	Mixed plantation	SMW	Parkland scattered trees: mixed
BS	Natural scree, basic	MV	Marginal / inundation, marginal	SNG	Neutral grassland semi improved
BW	Broadleaved woodland	MW	Mixed semi-natural	SP	Swamp
C	Water, marl / tufa	NG	Neutral grassland unimproved	SS	Scrub scattered
CA	Cave	NR	Other herb & fern, non-ruderal	SSM	Saltmarsh scattered plants
CB	Bracken, continuous	O	Water, oligotrophic	SW	Standing water
CG	Calcareous grassland unimproved	OD	Sand-dune, open dune	SWALL	Built up area - sea wall
CP	Parkland/scattered trees, coniferous	P	Bare peat	SWB	Standing water, brackish
CS	Built up area - caravan site	PBW	Broadleaved plantation	SWC	Standing water, marl
CW	Coniferous, semi-natural	PCW	Coniferous plantation	SWD	Standing water, dystrophic
D	Water, dystrophic	PH	Hedges intact or defunct, species poor	SWE	Standing water, eutrophic
DB	Dense bracken	PHT	Hedges with trees, species poor	SWM	Standing water, mesotrophic
DD	Dry ditch	PMW	Mixed plantation	SWO	Standing water, oligotrophic
DG	Sand-dune, dune grassland	Q	Artificial quarry	TR	Other herb & fern, tall ruderal
DGM	Dry heath / acid grassland mosaic	R	Artificial refuse-tip	TS	Tall swamp
DH	Sand-dune, dune heath	RB	Raised bog	VM	Valley mire
DS	Scrub dense / continuous	RH	Hedge, intact, native species rich	W	Wall
DSM	Saltmarsh dense / continuous	RH	Hedges intact or defunct, species rich	WB	Wet modified bog
DW	Sand-dune, dune slack	RH-	Defunct hedge, native species rich	WGM	Wet heath / acid grassland mosaic
DX	Sand-dune, dune scrub	RHT	Hedges with trees, species rich	WH	Wet dwarf shrub heath
E	Water, eutrophic	RHT	Hedge and trees, native species rich	X	Boundary removed
EB	Earth bank	RWB	Running water, brackish	Zo	Intertidal <i>Zostera</i> beds
ESP	Cultivated / disturbed land, ephemeral / short	RWC	Running water, marl		

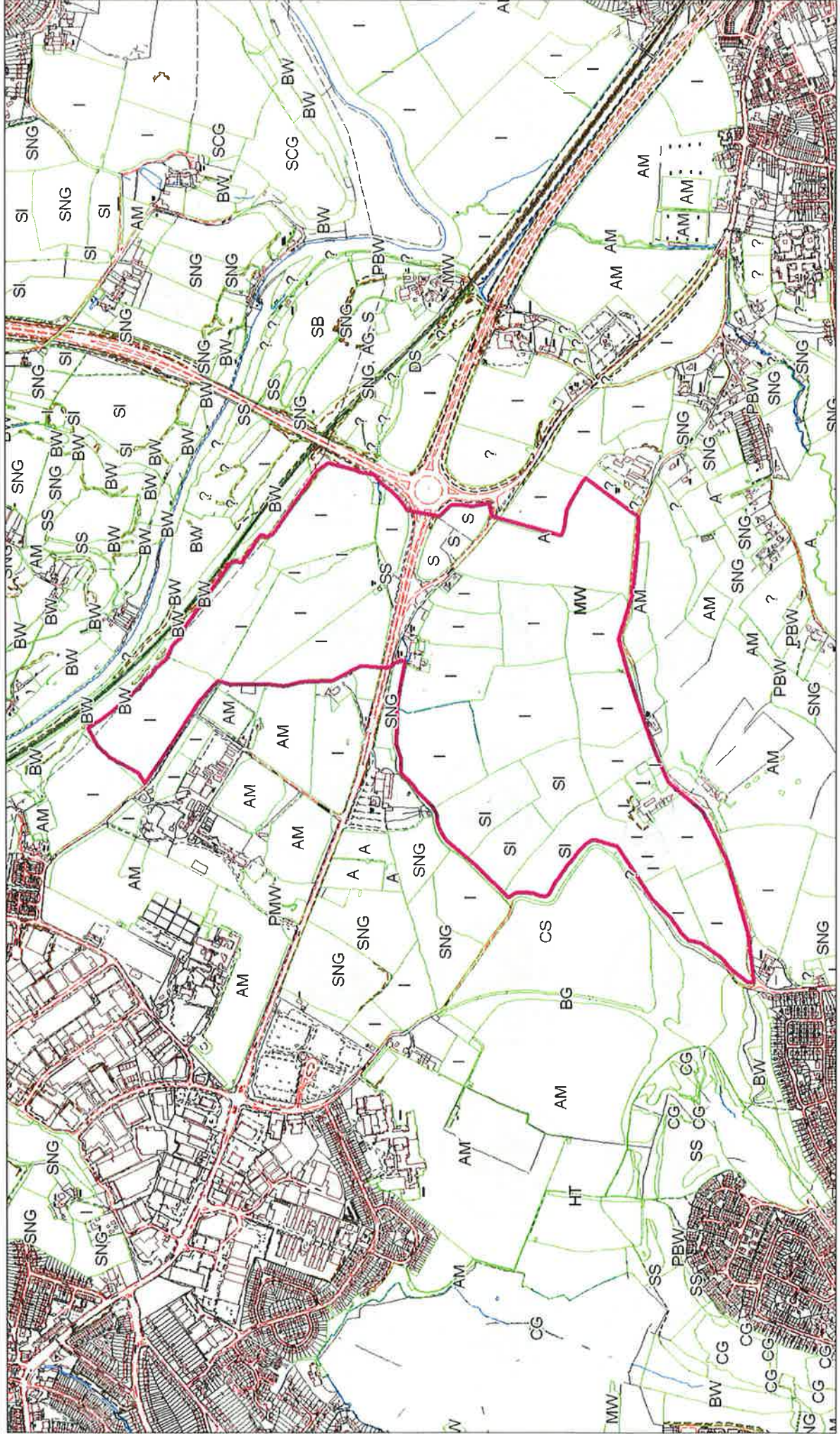
# S.E. Bristol Urban Extension - Location Option 2 - Hicks Gate

Figure 1. Phase 1 Map

Compiled by BRERC on 08/05/2008

Scale 1: 12,660

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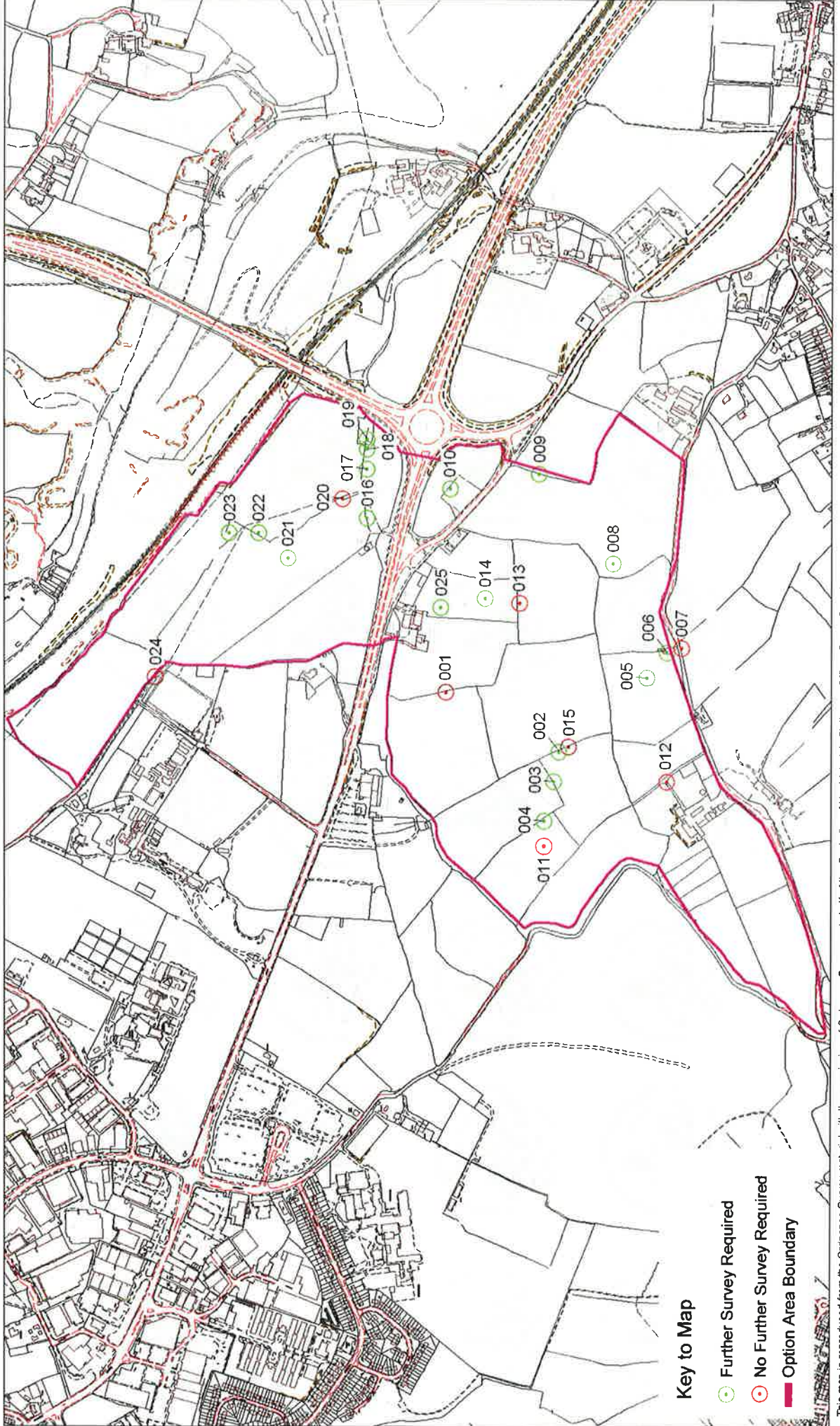
Figure 2. Target Notes

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Scale 1 : 10,260



### Key to Map

-  Further Survey Required
-  No Further Survey Required
-  Option Area Boundary

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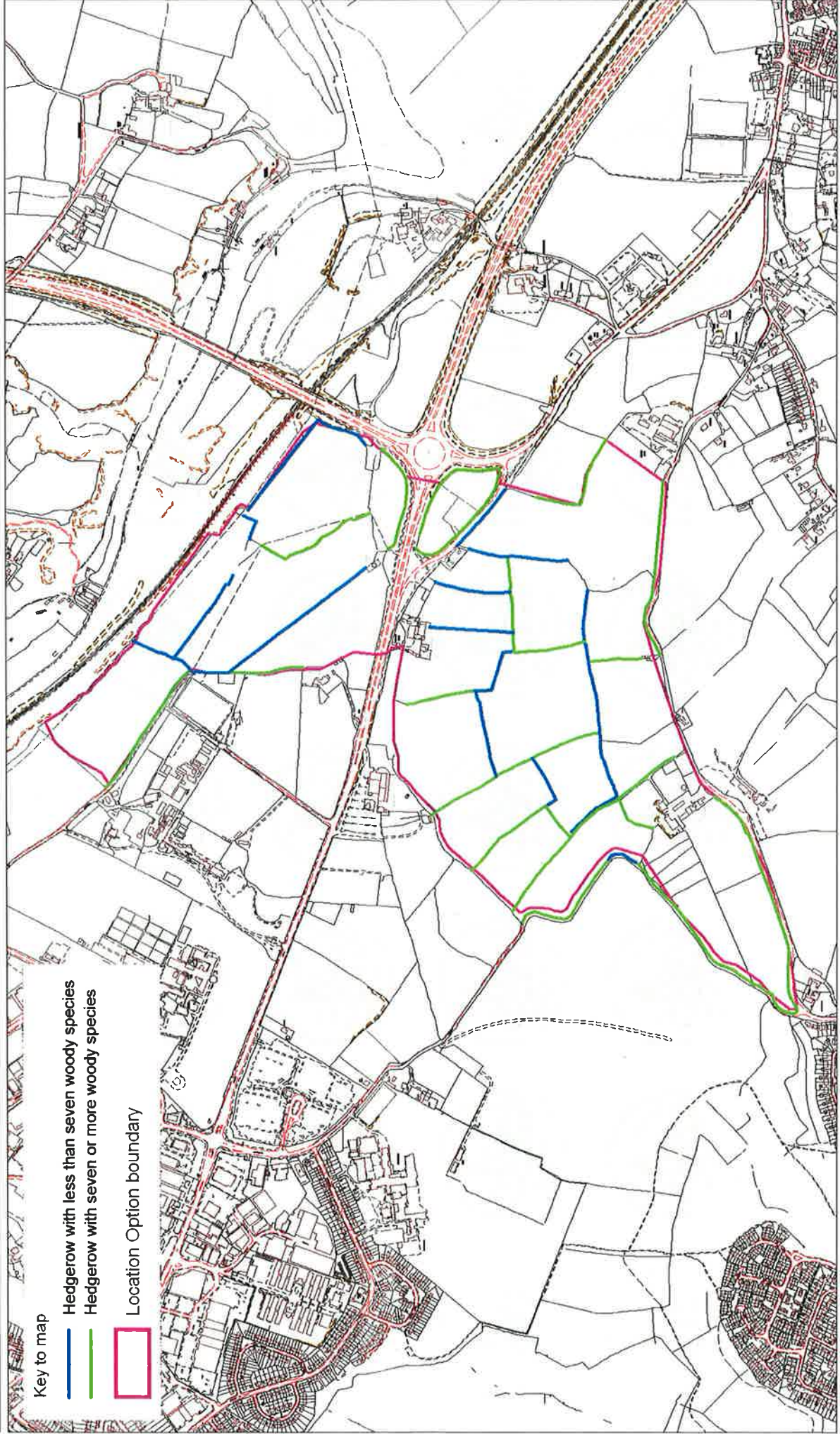
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## Figure 3. Hedgerow Condition

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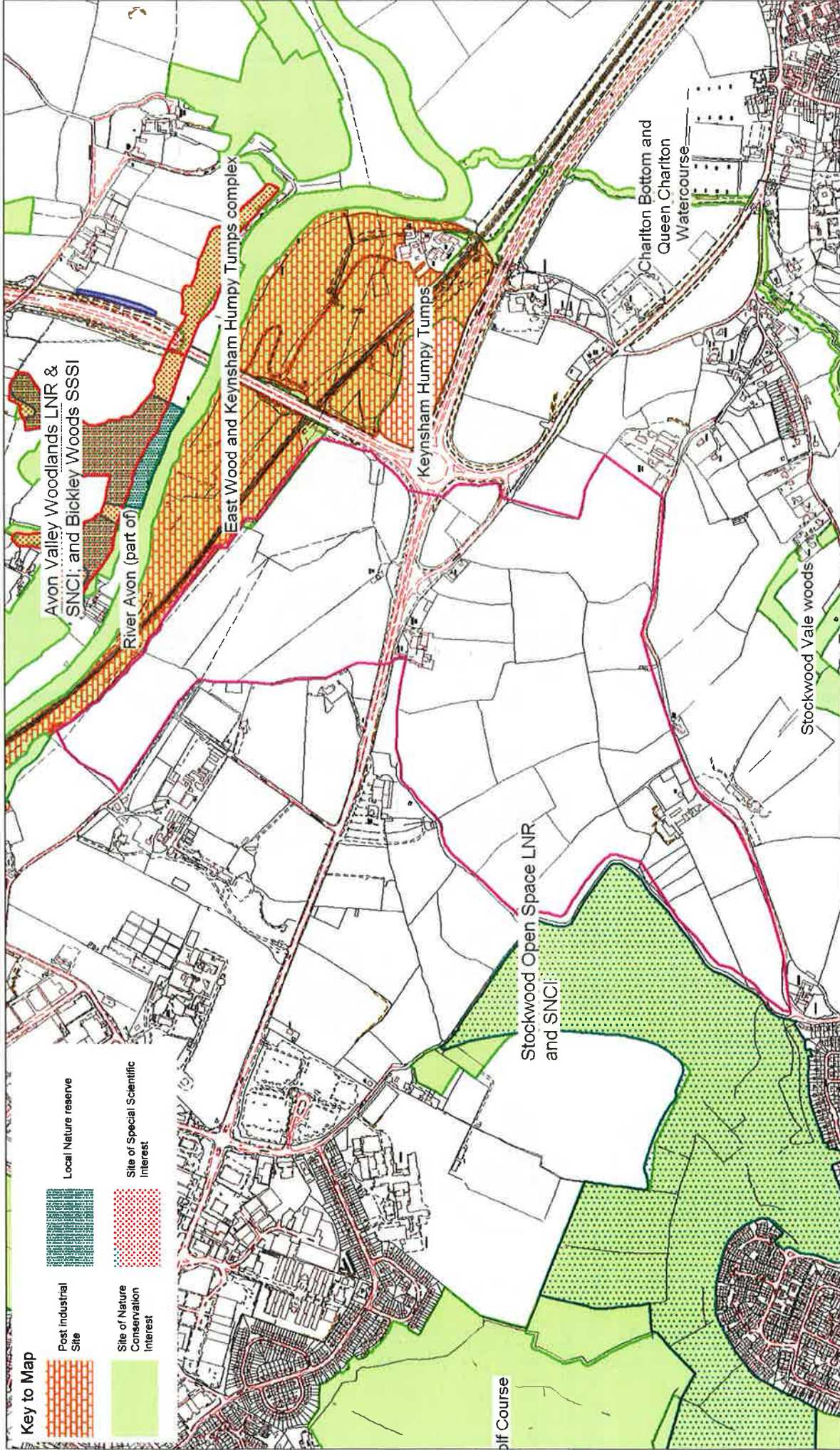
# S.E. Bristol Urban Extension - Location Option 2 - Hicks Gate

Figure 4. Designated Sites

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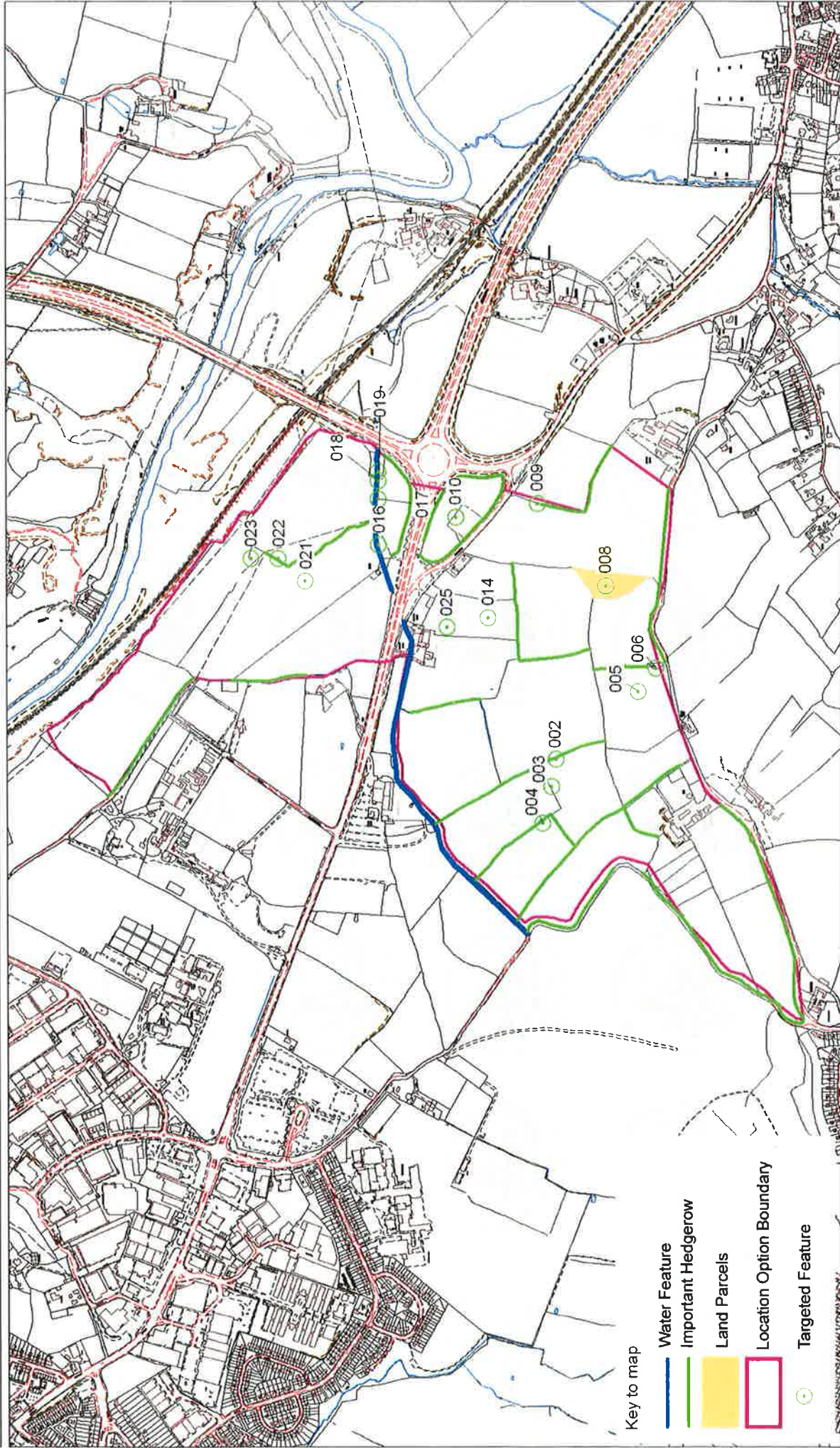
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Figure 5. Recommended Retention Features

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Scale 1: 11,250

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# S.E. Bristol Urban Extension - Location Option 2 - Hicks Gate

Figure 6. Aerial Photo

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Scale 1: 10,710

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