

Runnymede 2030

Local Plan

Green and Blue Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Annexes A to D

November 2021



Please note that the maps contained within these Annexes are a snapshot in time and accurate at the time of adoption. Anyone using the maps set out in these Annexes should refer to the Council's latest evidence base and on-line maps to ensure that any updates to designations and/or classifications are taken into account.

ANNEX A - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS: LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER

As recognised in current national planning policy and guidance, GBI exists within a wider context and can help in achieving well-designed places by reinforcing and enhancing local landscape and townscape character, sense of place and natural beauty.

The character of Runnymede Borough's landscapes is described in the 2015 Surrey Landscape Character Assessment, which identifies a range of landscape character types and character areas as shown on **Map A.1**. These reflect the dominant influences on the character of the Borough's landscapes such as geology, landform and hydrology.

The townscape character of Runnymede Borough's towns and main villages is described in the Design SPD, which identifies the key characteristics of each urban area and highlights design guidance for reinforcing local townscape character.

Ecosystem Services and Benefits

High quality and well-maintained GBI assets can help reinforce and enhance the local built, natural and historic character of the Borough's landscapes and townscapes. GBI assets that engage local communities can enhance the local sense of place and foster community spirit. They can be a catalyst for community ownership, stimulating job opportunities by attracting investment and tourism.

Quality green space can have a major positive impact on land and property markets, creating settings for investment and acting as a catalyst for wider regeneration. High-quality, connected environments attract skilled and mobile workers that, in turn, encourage business investment.

Enhancement Opportunities

Opportunities for enhancement of the Borough's landscapes are highlighted in the landscape strategy and land management and built development guidelines for each of the landscape character types identified by the [Surrey Landscape Character Assessment](#):

- Settled and Wooded Sandy Farmland Landscapes
- Sandy Woodland Landscapes
- River Valley Floor Landscapes
- River Floodplain Landscapes

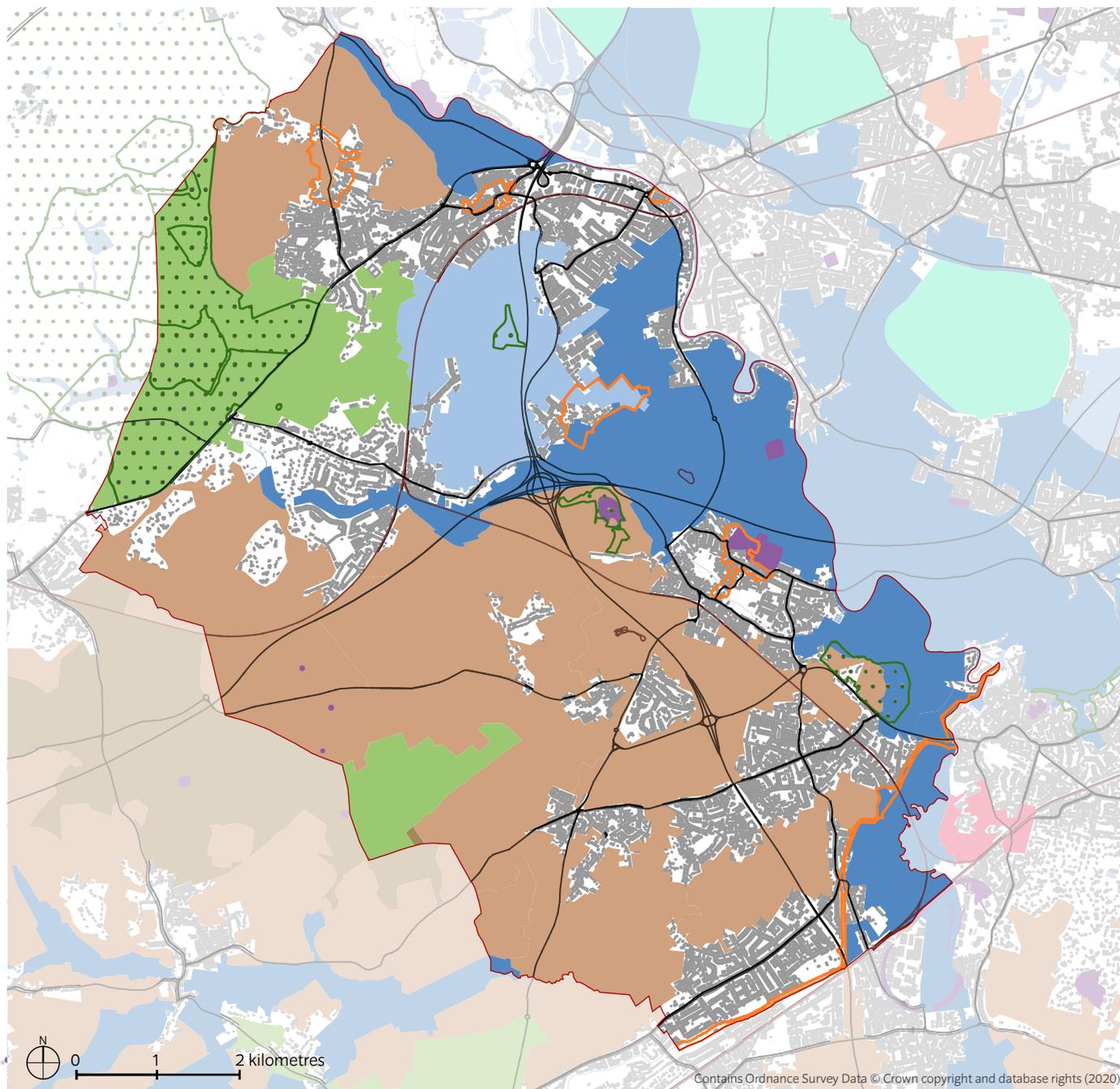
Among other things, the landscape guidelines encourage the use of locally appropriate species.

Guidance on enhancement of urban GBI assets that contribute to the local character of the Borough's main settlements are identified in the Design SPD.

Opportunities for enhancement of GBI assets such as trees, green spaces and rights of way that contribute to the special historic interest of Conservation Areas (see **Map A.1**) are identified in the [Conservation Area Appraisals](#) for Egham Hythe, Egham Town Centre and Chertsey.

In addition, there are opportunities for enhancing GBI features that contribute to the historic significance of the Borough's Registered Historic Parks & Gardens and Scheduled Monuments (see **Map A.1**) through the preparation and implementation of long-term management plans for these heritage assets.

MAP A.1 Landscape and Historic Character



Landscape Character Types¹

- Sandy Woodland
- Settled & Wooded Sandy Farmland
- River Floodplain
- River Valley Floor

Historic Designations

- Registered Historic Park & Garden
- Scheduled Monument
- Conservation Area

¹ Surrey Landscape Character Assessment 2015
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ANNEX B - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS: BIODIVERSITY

Runnymede's Green Infrastructure assets encompass a range of habitat types such as woodland, grassland and lowland heathland. These habitats support a variety of wildlife species. Many of the natural and semi-natural greenspaces in the Borough are designated for their biodiversity value as shown in **Map A.2**.

Runnymede has areas of national and international biodiversity value, including part of the South West London Waterbodies Ramsar and Special Protection Area (and SSSI). The Borough includes part of the Windsor Forest & Great Park Special Area of Conservation (and SSSI), which extends into the north west of the borough. The western part of the Borough is within 400 metres of Chobham Common in the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. The Borough has two other SSSIs: Langham Pond and Thorpe Hay Meadow.

The Borough has a number of ancient woodland sites covering c.315 ha.

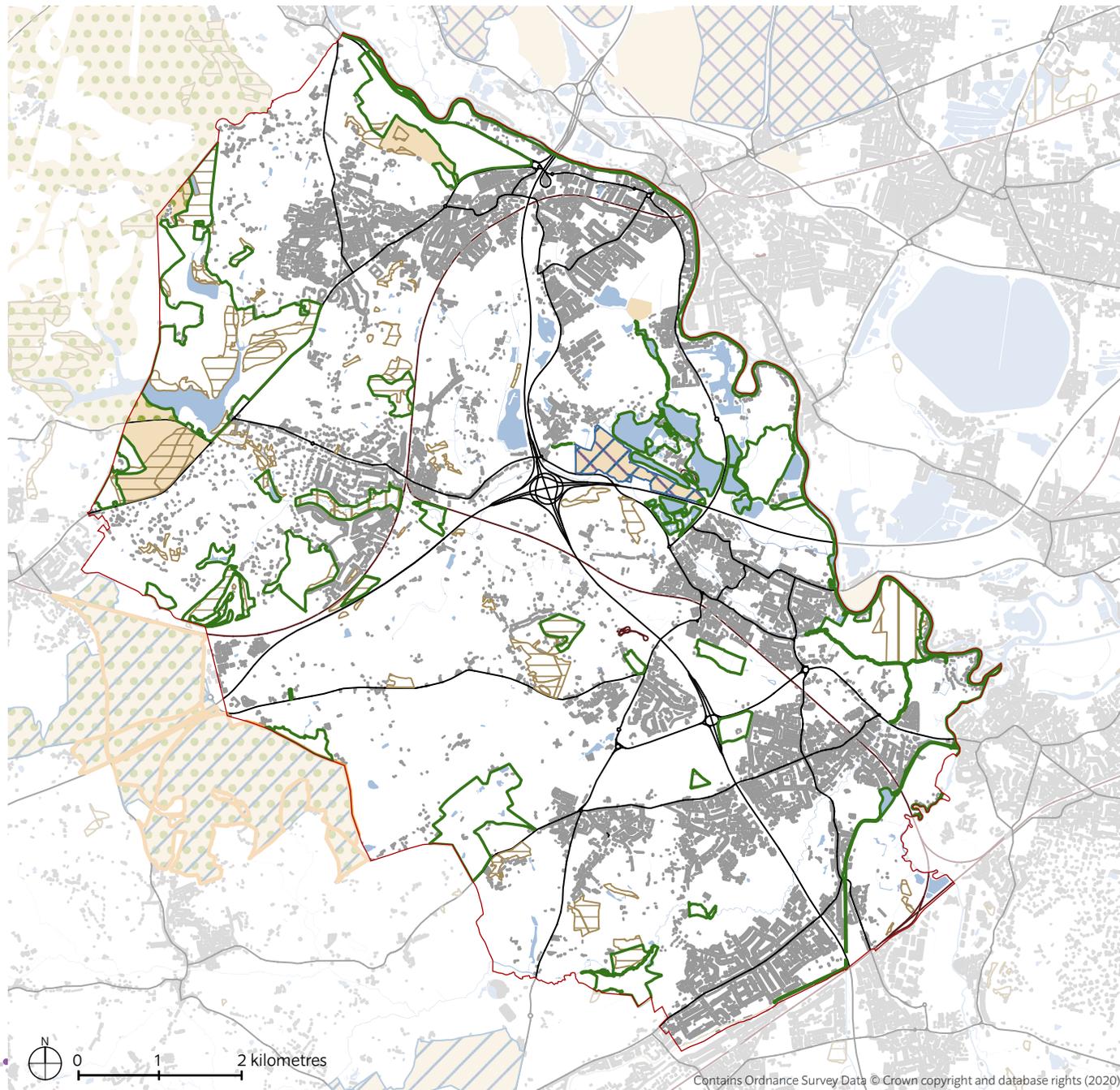
Local biodiversity sites include the Chertsey Meads Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and the Riverside Walk at Virginia Water LNR. The Council has designated 35 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs) in Runnymede.

Priority habitats of principal importance (within and outside of the designated sites) that contribute to the resilience of ecosystems within Runnymede's GBI Network include (see **Map A.3**):

- Lowland heathland
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland meadows
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Lowland Beech & Yew woodland
- Wet woodland
- Wood-pasture & parkland
- Floodplain grazing marsh
- Reedbeds
- Lowland fens
- Rivers
- Eutrophic standing waters
- Ponds
- Hedgerows
- Traditional orchards
- Arable field margins
- Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land

Together, these priority habitats form extensive tracts of natural and semi-natural greenspaces within the countryside and surrounding Runnymede's settlements.

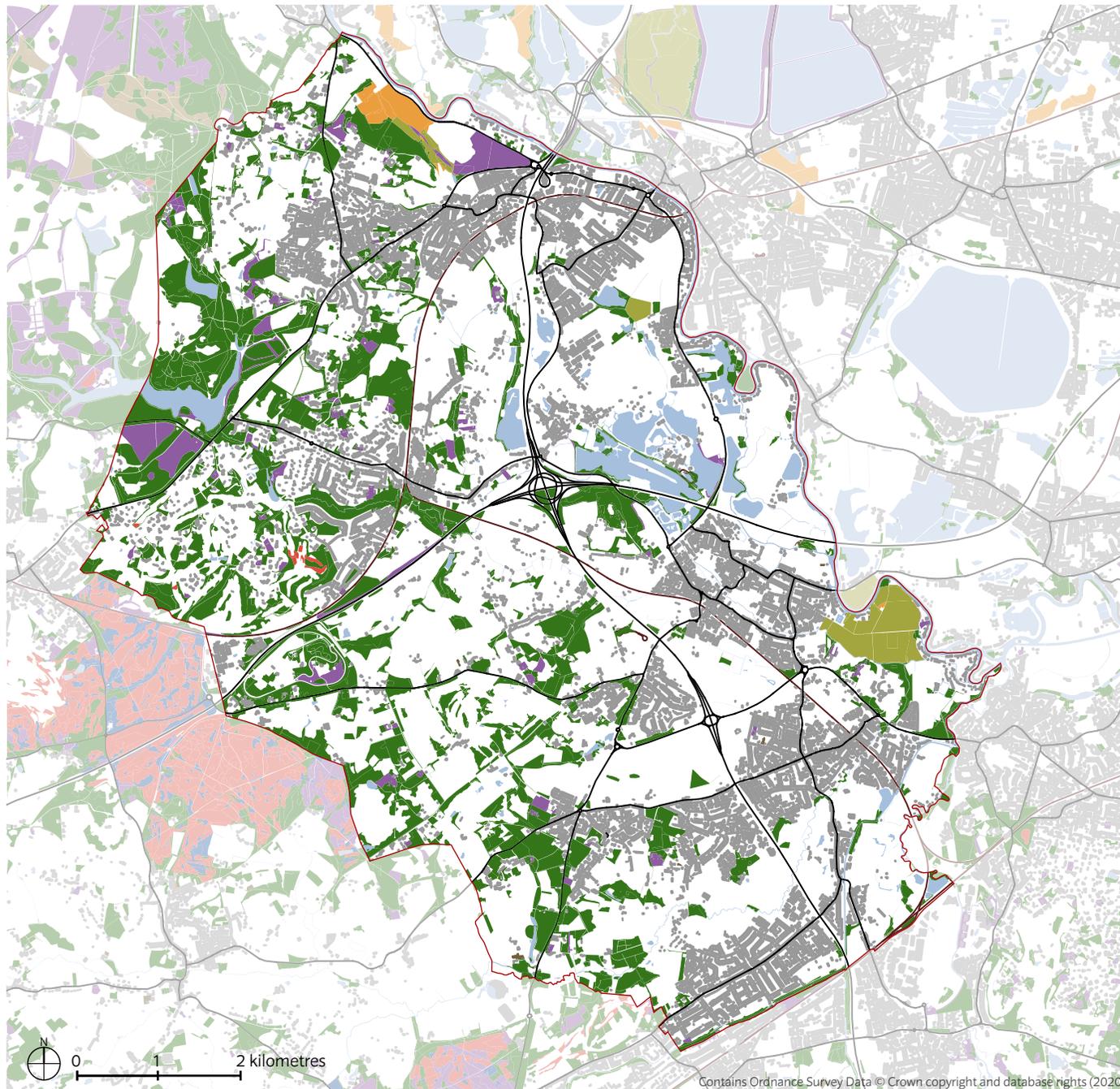
MAP A.2 Biodiversity Sites



- Ramsar
- Special Protection Area
- Special Area of Conservation
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- National Nature Reserve
- Local Nature Reserve
- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
- Ancient Woodland

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MAP A.3 Priority Habitats



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Priority Habitats

- Deciduous Woodland
- Lowland Heathland
- Lowland Meadows
- Good Quality Semi-improved Grassland
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Traditional Orchard
- Lowland Fens
- Reedbeds
- Habitat Mosaic

Ecosystem Services and Benefits

Lowland heathland habitats within Runnymede are shown in **Map A.3**. Once more widespread in Surrey prior to post-war afforestation conversion of heathland sites to coniferous woodland, the remaining small fragments of lowland heathland habitats at Knowle Hill support a range of nationally or internationally rare and endangered species. These fragments form part of a wider heathland network extending beyond the Borough that includes Chobham Common, part of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

Grassland habitats within Runnymede are shown in **Map A.3**. Lowland meadows include Thorpe Hay Meadow, the last surviving example of unimproved grassland on Thames Gravel in Surrey; and Chertsey Meads, 71 hectares of wildflower meadow on the banks of the Thames. A significant area of good quality semi-improved grassland is found on the Runnymede Meadows within the Thames flood plain in the north of the Borough, near Egham. As is the case across most of Surrey, the connectivity of both lowland meadows and semi-improved grassland habitats is very poor within Runnymede as these habitats are fragmented across the landscape.

Where appropriately managed, meadow and grassland habitats can provide climate regulation through sequestration and storage of carbon and other greenhouse gases; help with purification of pollutants and storage of water; and closely interact with wetland systems such as water meadows traditionally managed for storing seasonal floodwaters.

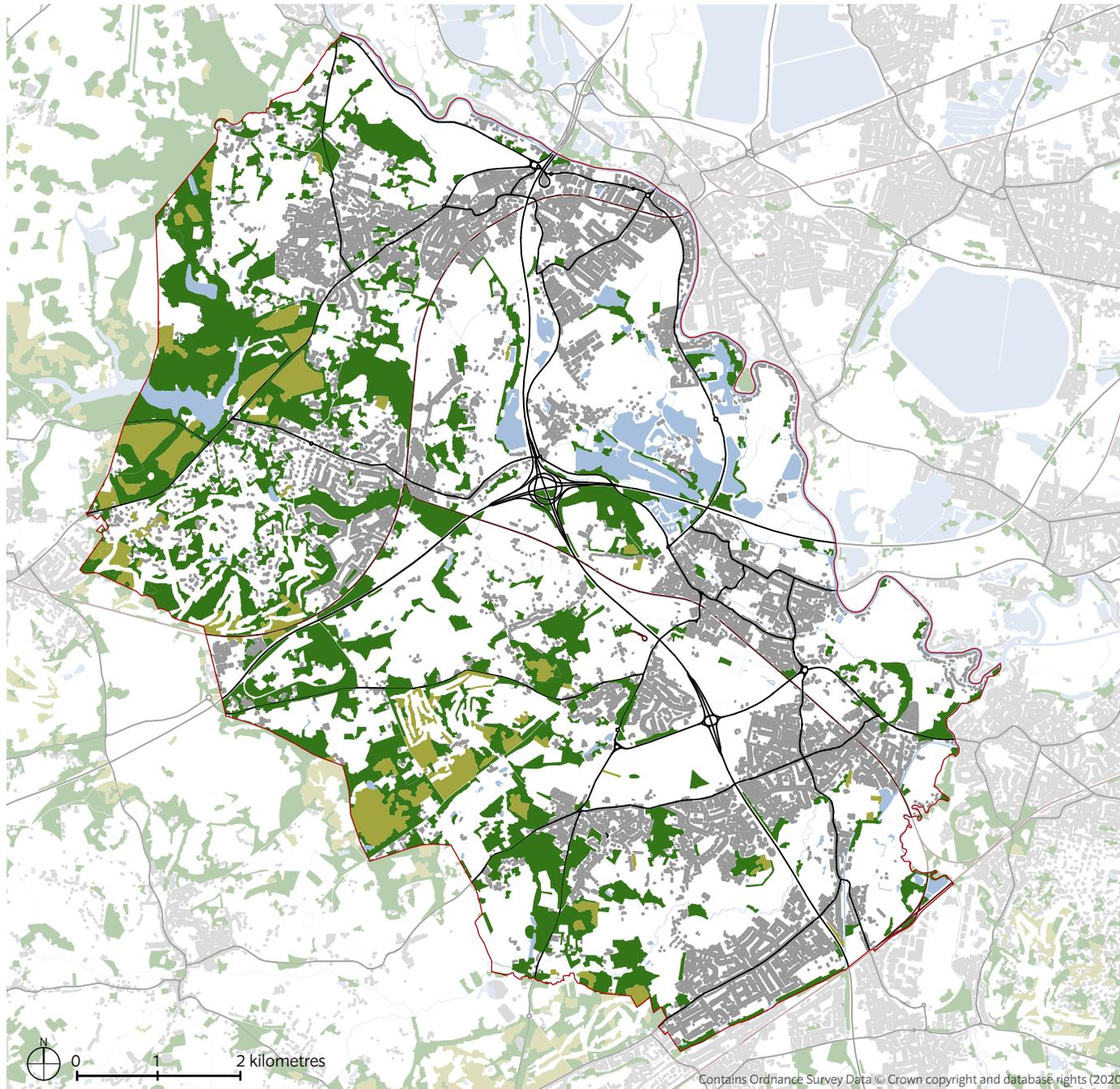
Woodland habitats and trees (see **Map A.4**) contribute to the functioning of social and economic systems and well-being in many ways. They help to regulate climate stress at a local level, provide carbon sequestration and contribute to flood and low river flow risk management; safeguard soils, improve air quality and reduce noise pollution; and can help regulate pests and diseases.

Woodlands play a major role in pollination, soil formation, nutrient cycling, water cycling and oxygen production, all of which are crucial in supporting people's health. The effectiveness of these supporting and regulating services is dependent on the nature, extent and condition, and resilience, of woodland ecosystems. Additionally, woodlands can be managed to provide fuel (biomass) and timber for building materials.

It is increasingly acknowledged one of the most important regulating services that woodlands provide is their capacity to sequester carbon. Predicted changes in climatic conditions have wide-ranging implications for woodlands in Runnymede and across England in terms of how they are managed; the suitability and distribution of different tree species and the benefits derived from them; and in relation to England's carbon footprint and the role woodlands play in climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Some woodlands can provide public access for recreation, such as the some of the larger woodlands outside urban areas including in Windsor Great Park and the Woodland Trust's Cooper's Hill Woods.

MAP A.4 Woodlands



-  Broadleaved Woodland
-  Coniferous Plantation

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The **coniferous woodland** network within Runnymede shown in **Map A.4** comprises coniferous and mixed forests, which are largely privately owned. In addition to providing timber for construction materials and waste for biofuels, coniferous plantation forestry can provide public access for active recreation such as walking and cycling.

Trees and woodlands contribute to linear transport routes and waterways (e.g. canals and rivers), streets, amenity areas, urban parks and informal open spaces and domestic gardens.

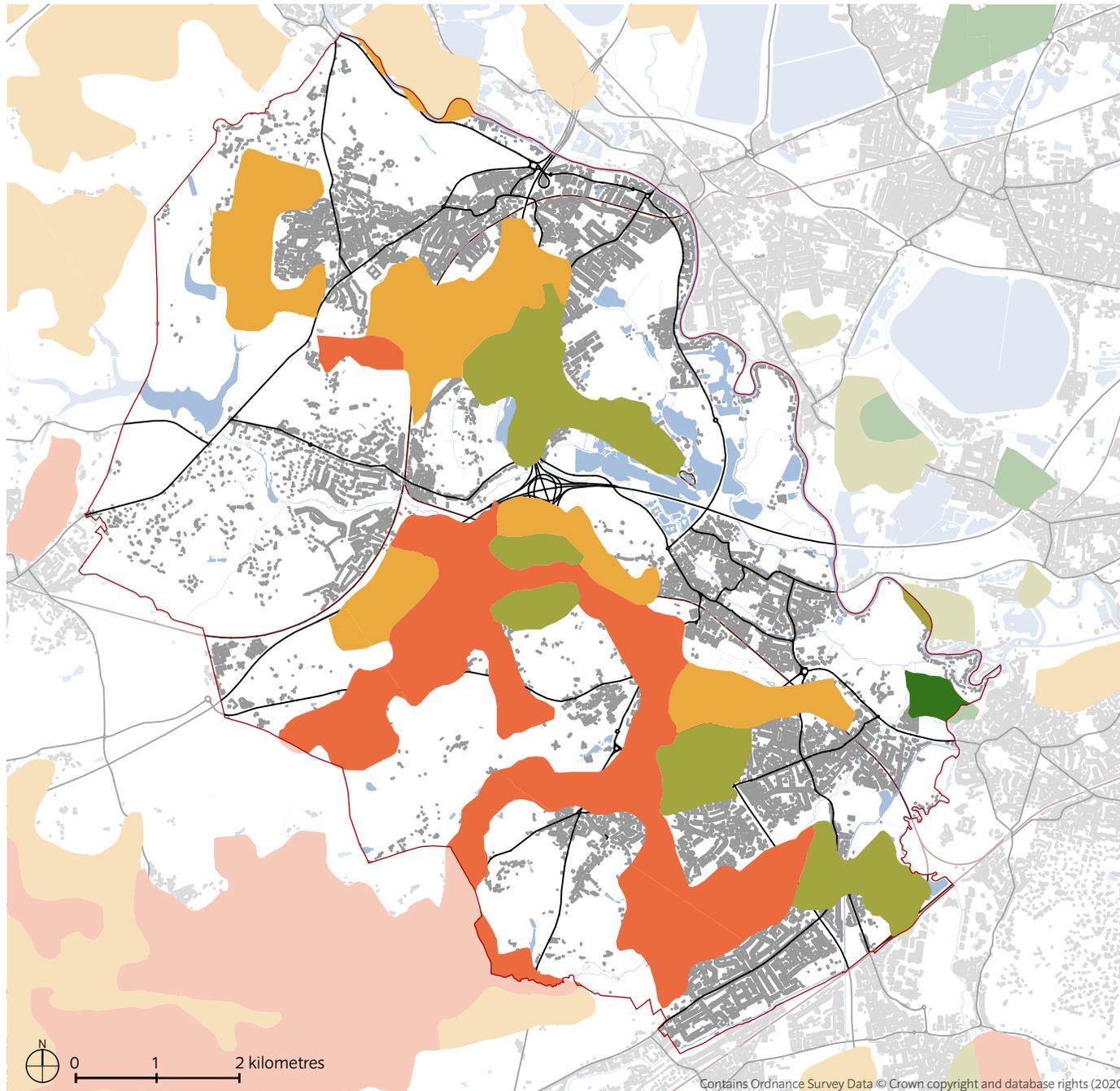
Well-placed and well-chosen trees can provide a range of ecosystem services and benefits. Trees contribute to local environmental character and distinctiveness, which supports the growth of local economies and increases residential values. In addition to providing habitats for wildlife, trees and woodlands cool the air naturally, providing green places for relaxation and enjoyment, make people healthy and happy and help bring communities together.

As illustrated in **Map A.5, enclosed farmland** in Runnymede is predominantly found on poorer quality agricultural land (Grades 3 and 4), which supports a mixture of arable and livestock farming. Enclosed farmland is managed primarily for food production. Runnymede's agricultural sector produces meat and dairy products and some arable crops. Enclosed farmland can also provide biomass fuel.

Enclosed farmland provides habitats for plants, animals and other organisms. How farmland is used can have a significant bearing on global resource use in terms of the import and export of foods, the use of energy and water, and emissions of greenhouse gases. The positive management of enclosed farmland can help safeguard against soil loss, reduce water pollution and siltation, and address localised flooding.

Enclosed farmland supports functioning of social and economic systems in a number of ways, being a focal point for relationships between rural and urban communities.

MAP A.5 Agricultural Land



Agricultural Land Classification

- Grade 1 (Highest Quality)
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5 (Poorest Quality)
- Non Agricultural Land

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Enhancement Opportunities

There are opportunities to improve connectivity of the **Woodland habitat network** through native woodland establishment, restoration of planted ancient woodland sites (PAWS) to native broadleaf woodlands and management of ancient semi natural woodland (ASNW).

With a changing climate comes the increasing likelihood of new diseases and the increased risk of existing fungal diseases being spread to new areas such as *Phytophthora ramorum*. There is an acknowledged need to ensure that woodland ecosystems are healthy, resilient and sustainably managed, maximising the regulating and supporting services that they can provide.

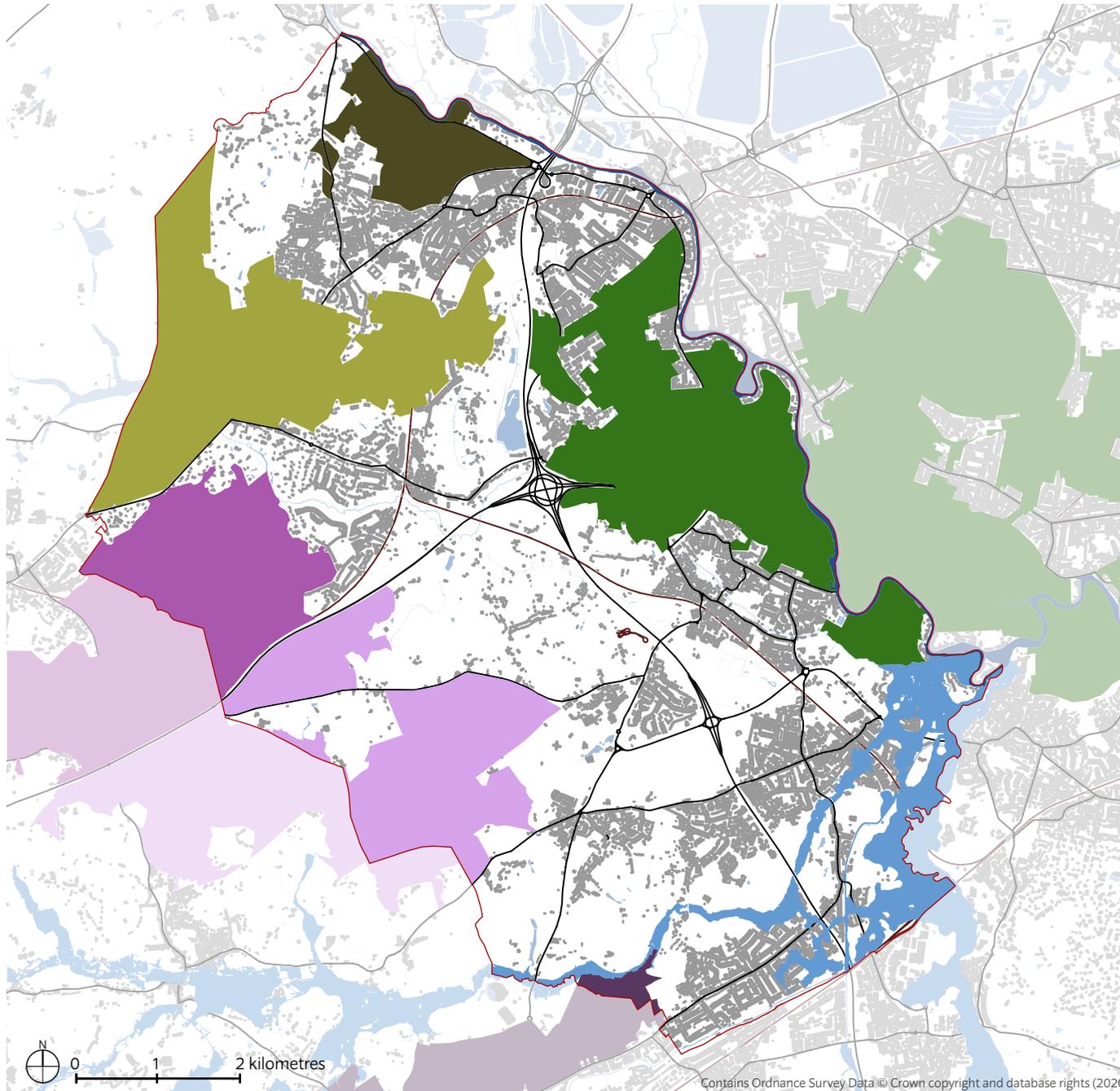
Climate change is likely to have impacts on woodlands, with some woodlands at particular risk due to drought from projected reduced summer rainfall and increasing temperatures.

There are opportunities for securing improved connectivity of the **Lowland Meadows habitat network** (including good quality semi-improved grassland). This includes a focus and priority on the restoration potential for connecting blocks of modified grasslands and meadows within the Borough by removal of plantation forestry and creation of grassland in enclosed farmland areas. Existing areas need careful management to avoid further habitat loss, including appropriate grazing/cutting regimes, and appropriate management of adjacent land to minimise nutrient input and prevent scrub encroachment.

The remaining fragments of **Lowland Heathland habitat network** in Runnymede are particularly sensitive to inappropriate management techniques. The main opportunity for improving the connectivity of the heathland habitat network is to focus on the potential for heathland restoration through clearance of plantation forestry.

The Surrey Nature Partnership has identified a number of **Biodiversity Opportunity Areas** in Surrey. These are priority landscape-scale areas across and beyond the county for restoring, maintaining and enhancing the connectivity of priority habitats to help in the recovery of priority species. Biodiversity Opportunity Areas within Runnymede Borough are shown on **Map A.6**. Objectives and targets for the creation, improvement or restoration of designated sites, priority habitats and priority species recovery within these Biodiversity Opportunity Areas can be found on the Surrey Nature Partnership website.

MAP A.6 Biodiversity Opportunity Areas



Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

-  Thames Valley 01 – Windsor Great Park
-  Thames Valley 02 – Runnymede Meadows & Slope
-  Thames Valley 04 – Thorpe & Shepperton
-  Thames Basin Heaths 01 – Chobham Common North & Wentworth Heaths
-  Thames Basin Heaths 02 – Chobham South Heaths
-  Thames Basin Heaths 05 – Woking Heaths
-  River 04 – River Wey (& tributaries)
-  River 06 - River Thames (tow-path & islands)

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ANNEX C - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS: URBAN GREEN SPACES

Towns and villages form important parts of ecosystems. They are characterised by their history, structure and function (including both natural and built components) and by the cycling and conversion of energy and materials within them. They have their own spatial organisation and distinctive patterns of change which influence species' behaviour, population dynamics and the formation of communities.

Urban Green Spaces in Runnymede have been mapped and assessed in the 2017 Runnymede Open Space Study, which defines the nature and distribution of open spaces in the Borough and identifies the types of open space and locations for which there is under-provision or where quality could be improved.

The Urban Green Spaces in and around the Borough's northern and southern settlements are shown in **Map A.7** and **Map A.8** respectively. These include:

- Public Parks and Gardens (including playing fields & play spaces)
- Amenity Greenspaces
- Allotments and Community Growing Spaces
- Cemeteries and Churchyards
- Woodlands and Trees
- Rivers and Waterbodies

Public parks and gardens are urban green spaces predominantly associated with informal and formal recreation (including playing fields and play spaces). There are a number of public parks, playing fields and play spaces widely distributed throughout Runnymede's towns. Key parks within Runnymede include Chertsey recreation ground; Heathervale recreation ground in Addlestone; Ottershaw Memorial Fields; and The Orchard and Abbeyfields in Chertsey.

Private gardens can provide habitats for wildlife and are also important elements of the urban green space network.

Amenity greenspace is most commonly found in residential areas. It includes informal local recreation spaces and communal green space in and around housing. Amenity greenspaces are also often found in villages, in the form of village greens such as those in Thorpe and Englefield Green. Amenity greenspaces can have an overlapping function with public parks and gardens, and also provide informal opportunities for children's play where there are no other facilities.

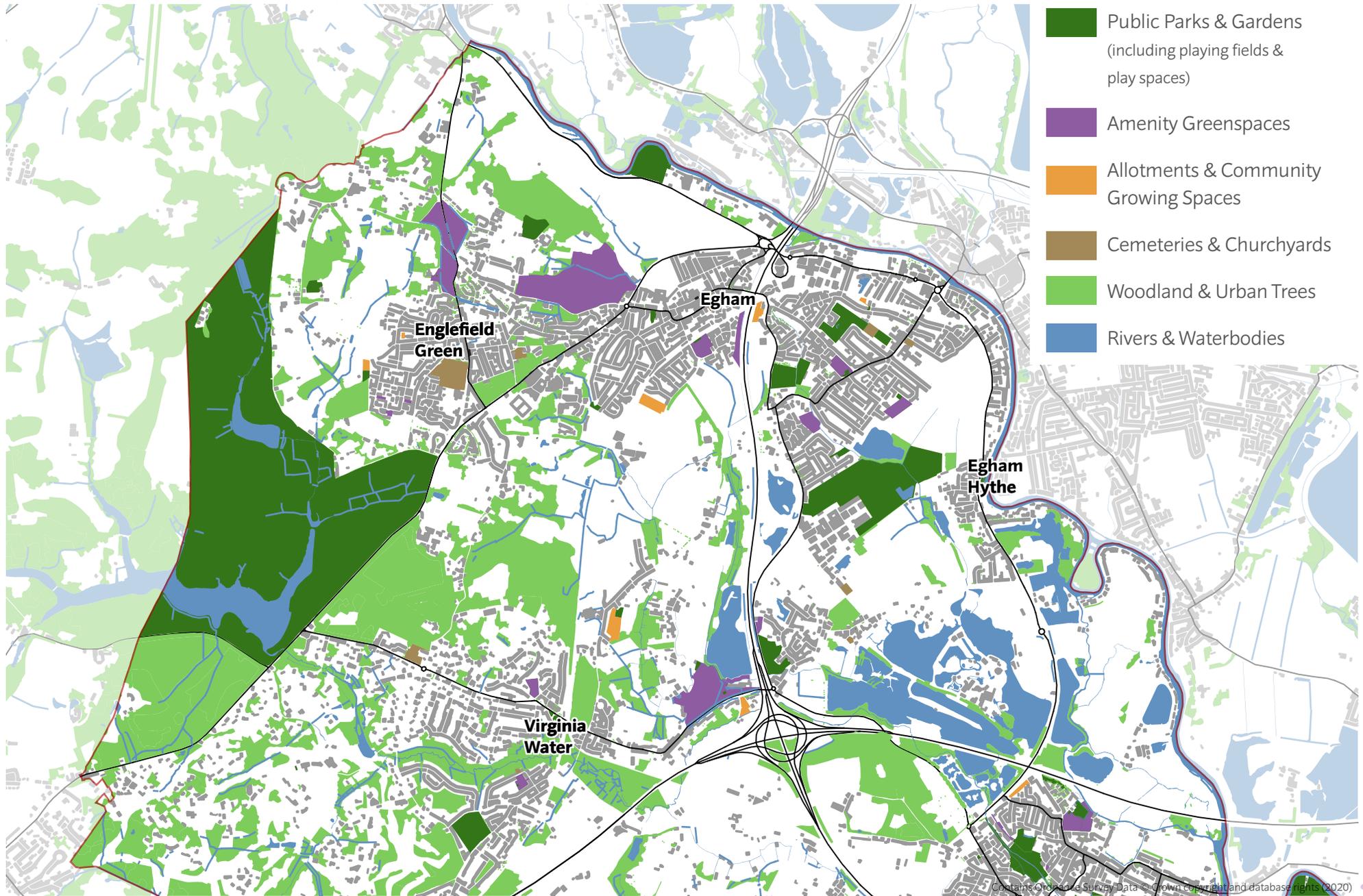
Allotments and community growing spaces are urban green spaces set aside for the purposes of domestic gardening and small-scale horticulture, typically for fruit and vegetable production. There are currently 12 allotments in the Borough. Nine of these are managed by the Council, with the remaining 3 self-managed and leased from the Council by the plot holders.

Allotments are found in the following settlements:

- Addlestone
- Chertsey (2)
- Egham (3)
- Englefield Green (2)
- Thorpe
- Virginia Water
- Woodham/New Haw (2)

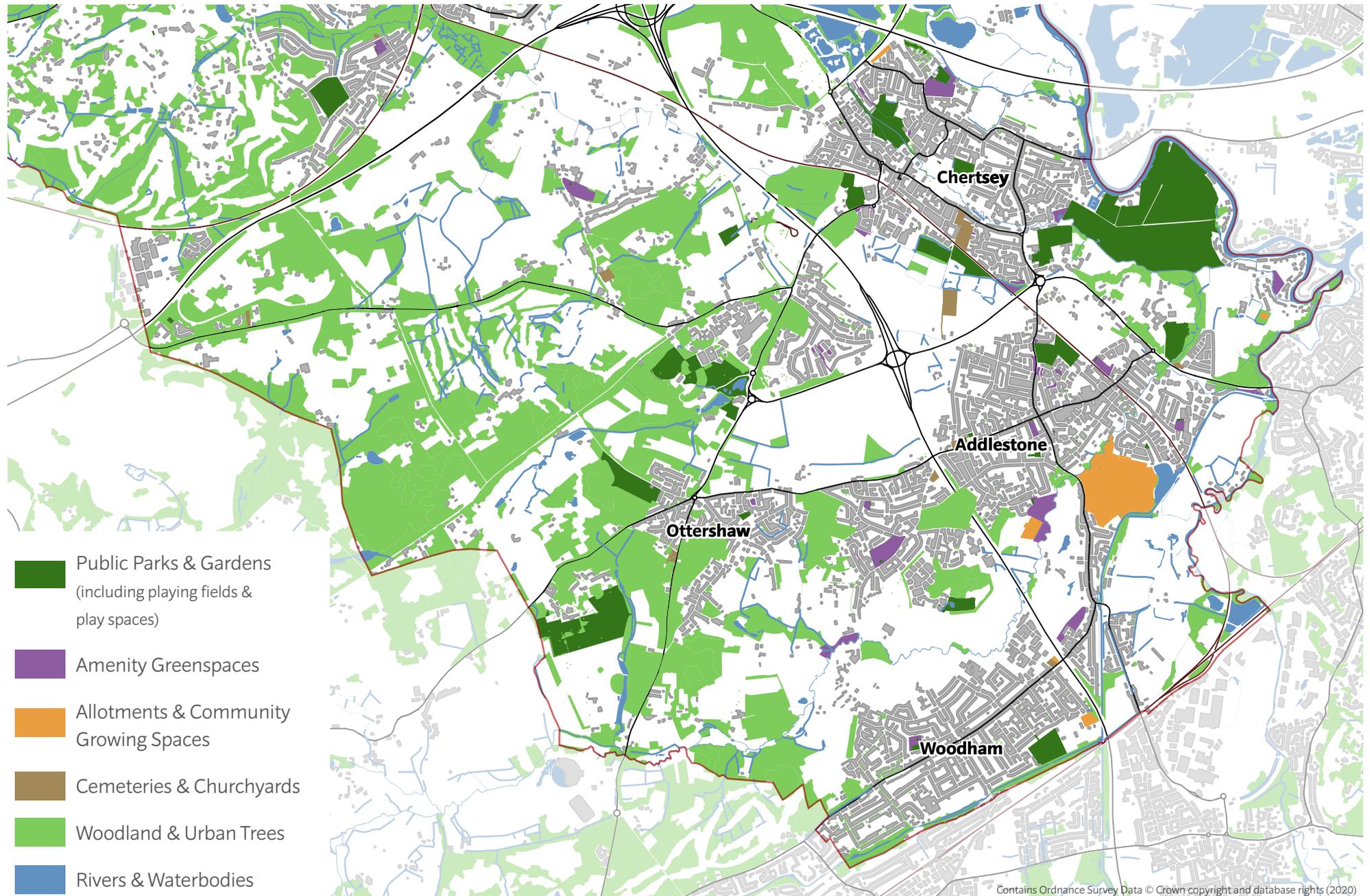
Further provision of allotments and community growing spaces is anticipated within the Longcross Garden Village development.

MAP A.7 Urban Green Spaces - Northern Settlements



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MAP A.8 Urban Green Spaces - Southern Settlements



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Cemeteries and churchyards are urban green spaces associated with parish churches. Runnymede's main cemeteries are Addlestone Cemetery, Chertsey Cemetery, St. Jude's Cemetery (Englefield Green) and Thorpe Cemetery. Churchyards include, for example, St. John the Baptist's Church in Egham, Christ Church in Ottershaw and St. Mary's Parish Church in Thorpe.

Runnymede's urban areas contain a range of **trees, groups of trees or woodlands**, some of which are protected by Tree Preservation Orders made by the Council in the interests of amenity for the local environment and enjoyment by the public.

Rivers and waterbodies provide blue corridors linking urban green spaces, with and without public access.

Ecosystem Services and Benefits

Urban green spaces can support communities by providing opportunities for interaction and engagement. This helps to build social cohesion along with improved mental wellbeing and increased physical activity, both of which are of particular benefit in more deprived areas.

As the most commonly visited places for informal recreation in urban areas, local parks and amenity greenspaces are recognised for the role they play in providing cultural services. Cemeteries and churchyards offer tranquil spaces that afford opportunities for quiet reflection and spiritual enrichment, helping to contribute to people's mental health and wellbeing. They play an important community role, providing a venue for religious ceremonies.

Urban green spaces, such as public parks and gardens and amenity greenspaces, contribute to a settlement's character and provide economic and quality of life benefits by improving neighbourhoods, enhancing house prices and creating a sense of place.

As well as providing a place for people to be active, urban green spaces are critical in helping adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change and air pollution. For example, they can provide opportunities for air and water purification, carbon storage and sequestration, noise alleviation and management of flood risk. Urban green spaces also provide wildlife habitats and contribute to wildlife corridors through built-up environments.

Allotments and community growing spaces provide opportunities for local food production. Allotment gardening can provide an affordable source of fruit and vegetables, particularly for residents without access to a suitable private garden, and is a rewarding pastime that improves the quality of many people's lives. Some of the benefits associated with allotment gardening include:

- A source of affordable good quality food that is an essential part of a healthy diet.
- A physical recreational activity providing health benefits.
- Being a part of an allotment community and the sharing of knowledge with differing age groups and abilities.

Pollinators (including bees, wasps, butterflies, hoverflies and moths) provide essential regulating services for our natural environment. Many of the urban green spaces in Runnymede support pollinators where appropriately managed.

It is now widely accepted that urban trees and woodlands have a vital role to play in promoting sustainable communities. In recent years, a growing body of research has demonstrated that trees bring a wide range of benefits to society as a whole.

As one of the most important components of urban GI, trees can contribute to improved health and wellbeing, increased recreational opportunities, and an enriched environment that ultimately boosts a place's image and prosperity.

Trees on the edge of woodland and alongside roads have a significant potential for 'pollutant scrubbing' and helping to remove airborne pollutants from vehicle emissions for example, thereby helping in regulating air quality. Planting trees with a high propensity to remove pollutants from the air is preferential for incorporating into new and existing urban landscapes and streetscapes¹.

Enhancement Opportunities

Working together to ensure communities are able to benefit from access to urban green space and be involved in its management can help contribute to a more cohesive and equal Runnymede. Working with partners to create safe, appealing places will help to promote community cohesion. Addressing the barriers to people accessing and using urban green spaces for healthy activities, such as making sure they are accessible, well-maintained and safe, will help contribute to a healthier, more equal and cohesive society.

There is increasing evidence linking the provision of high quality green space in urban areas and a reduction in crime. Given that amenity greenspaces are one of the most local types of urban green space, the provision and maintenance of high quality amenity greenspaces close to where people live is essential in order to discourage misuse and encourage a culture of respect.

Promoting the use of urban green spaces and corridors for more active travel is not only a cost effective way of gaining positive health outcomes, it can contribute to reducing local carbon emissions and improve local air quality.

Road traffic is the major source of pollution in Runnymede; the main air pollutants are nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and fine particulates. The air quality across the Borough is generally good; however, nitrogen dioxide concentrations can be of concern close to roads carrying large traffic flows or near busy congested roads in town centres. So far, the Council has declared two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) in the following areas:

- Along the full length of the M25 within the Borough (declared in 2001 for both nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter) including an extended area at Egham (declared in 2015)
- Addlestone Town Centre (declared in 2008 for nitrogen dioxide).

The [2014 Air Quality Action Plan](#) (AQAP) details the measures that the Council is taking, intending and considering that will help to improve air quality both within the AQMAs and throughout the Borough as a whole. These measures include encouraging walking and cycling, tree planting and provision of green roofs.

Urban green spaces can provide opportunities for culture and recreation. Maintaining and improving the quality of our natural areas will provide culturally distinctive and attractive areas for local people to come together to participate in sport and recreational activities, contributing to a more cohesive and equal Runnymede. The better the quality and the more diverse urban green spaces are, the more attractive Runnymede will be to visitors.

Parks and other forms of accessible urban green space positively impact on physical and mental health, and these wellbeing benefits can be maximised by providing equitable access to these spaces.

The quality of some urban green spaces in Runnymede may need improving. In other cases, increased provision of high quality urban green spaces may be required in certain locations to ensure adequate provision to meet needs identified by the Runnymede 2030 Open Space Study and the Runnymede 2030 Local Green Space Assessment.

The key findings of the Runnymede 2030 Open Space Study include:

- Shortfall in outdoor sport provision, provision for children and teenagers and allotments.
- Parks and gardens, amenity green spaces provision for children and teenagers, allotments and cemeteries and churchyards are not very accessible in terms of distance from home in some areas of the Borough (user surveys indicate this does not necessarily equate to under-provision or users feeling that provision of open space in their area is insufficient).
- Provision of open space is generally of medium to high quality. There was a clear distinction between wards in the Borough with low quality and those with high quality.

The Runnymede 2030 Local Green Space Assessment recommended seven sites that have been designated as Local Green Spaces in the adopted Local Plan (and Neighbourhood Development Plans where relevant) for their special value to the local communities that they serve. The designated Local Green Spaces are:

- 1) The Arboretum at Royal Holloway, Egham
- 2) Chertsey Library Grounds
- 3) Gogmore Park Farm, Chertsey
- 4) Hythe Park, Egham
- 5) Walnut Tree Gardens, Egham
- 6) Walton Leigh Recreation Ground, Addlestone
- 7) Frank Muir Memorial Field, Thorpe

There are opportunities to enhance the biodiversity value of grass verges along road corridors through Runnymede, amenity greenspace in residential areas and other urban green spaces to support a wide range of pollinating insects through wild flower planting and implementing cutting management regimes that allow a diversity of plant species to flourish throughout the year.

Opportunities exist for embedding and retrofitting GBI into built development within urban areas - such as biodiverse green spaces between buildings, green roofs, walls and facades, sustainable drainage schemes and other green design measures.

Opportunities for incorporating GBI into new urban developments should be considered. Where appropriate, opportunities could be taken to support local community groups in the transfer of ownership and management of urban green spaces from the Council.

International best practice shows that the best way to ensure urban communities achieve adequate tree canopy cover is to develop a strategic approach to managing urban trees. This involves setting canopy cover targets and adopting local tree strategies for planting the right tree in the right place for the right reasons. This strategic approach is reflected in the Surrey Nature Partnership's position statement (January 2020) on tree planting for climate change mitigation in Surrey.

ANNEX D - BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE ASSETS

River Catchments

Runnymede Borough lies completely within the **Thames River Basin District**. As shown on **Map A.9**, the majority of the Borough lies within the **Wey and Tributaries catchment**, which includes the River Wey, Addlestone Bourne and Chertsey Bourne. The remainder of the Borough falls within the **Maidenhead and Sunbury catchment**, which includes the River Thames.

Canals

As shown on **Map A.9**, Runnymede's blue infrastructure includes the Basingstoke Canal and the **River Wey Navigation**, which are important industrial heritage assets.

The **Basingstoke Canal** runs along the southern boundary of the Borough. Opened in 1794, it was originally conceived as a link between Basingstoke and the River Thames via the River Wey, at a time when the country's waterways were being improved as an alternative to highways for the import and export trade. In 1949 the canal was sold and commercial traffic ceased, partly due to the fact that the navigable length of the canal had reduced over the years. Echoing the original character of the area, the canal is considerably enhanced by woodland at many points along its length.

In combination with the Godalming Navigation, the **River Wey Navigation** forms a continuous waterway with 12 locks which provides a 20-mile navigable route from the River Thames in the Borough of Runnymede to Godalming. The River Wey Navigation connects to the Basingstoke Canal near New Haw, in the south of the Borough adjacent to the M25. Opened in 1653, commercial traffic ceased on the River Wey & Godalming Navigation in 1983 and it is owned by the National Trust.

Lakes

As shown in **Map A.9**, Runnymede has a number of large waterbodies including the lakes around Thorpe (including St. Ann's Lake, Manor Lake and Abbey Lake), which are the result of mineral extraction. Virginia Water Lake in the west of the Borough is a large man-made waterbody associated with the Chertsey Bourne river. There are also other waterbodies connected with the River Thames - such as Penton Hook Marina.

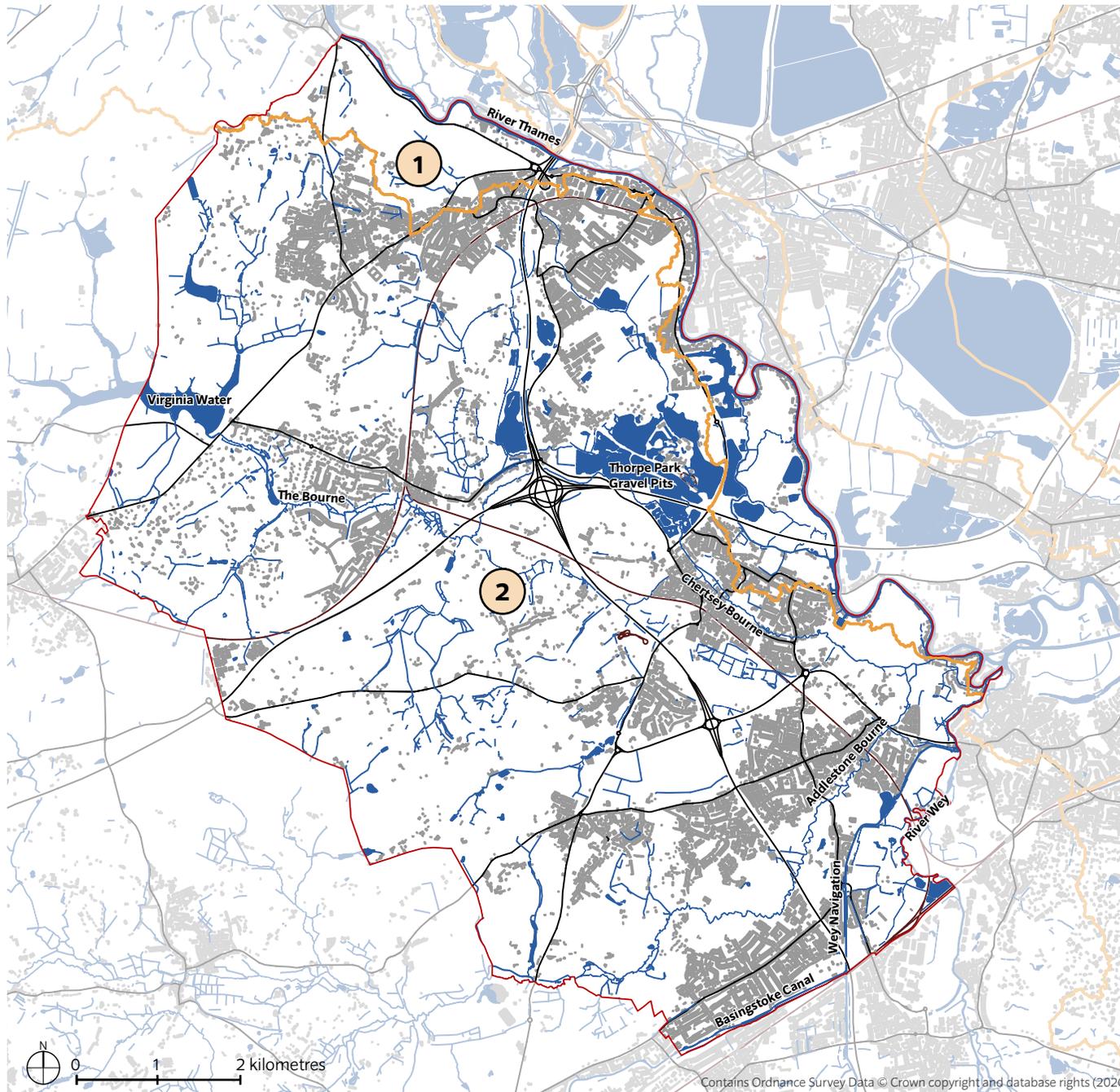
Ecosystem Services and Benefits

Rivers, streams and waterbodies are fundamentally important BI assets. In addition to provision of drinking water, they provide cultural services including leisure activities (such as water sports at St. Ann's Lake near Thorpe) and opportunities for appreciation of water in the landscape. Waterbodies also have an important role in supporting other ecosystem services.

Many of these BI assets provide associated land-based cultural benefits, such as footpaths and greenspaces immediately adjacent to the water. For example, the Sustrans National Cycle Network (NCN) route 221 is a key active travel link along the Basingstoke Canal's towpath.

In particular, freshwater systems help to control runoff from land into rivers, floodplain inundation, groundwater recharge and water quality. These processes are vital for the regulation and supply of water, nutrients, energy flows, solutes, sediments and migratory organisms to ecosystems. Freshwater systems remove and dilute pollutants, store waters to help maintain flows and capture carbon. They are therefore critically important in supporting the functioning of social and economic systems and society's ability to adapt to climate change.

MAP A.9 Blue Infrastructure Assets



-  Blue Infrastructure Assets
-  Surface Water Management Catchment Boundary:
 -  1 Maidenhead and Sunbury Catchment
 -  2 Wey and Tributaries Catchment

Enhancement Opportunities

As identified by the Environment Agency's Thames River Basin District Management Plan, there are opportunities to enhance the water environment through land use planning. These include addressing issues such as diffuse pollution from rural areas, barriers to natural fish movements and migration, and invasive non-native species. The latest Water Framework Directive water quality status of the water courses within the Thames River Basin District can be found [here](#).

The Wey Catchment Management Plan identifies opportunities such as river channel and habitat improvements to increase morphological diversity, riparian vegetation improvements and actions to improve water quality.

There is also an opportunity to control the influx of invasive non-native species such as Floating Pennywort and Himalayan Balsam along water courses.

The Maidenhead and Sunbury Catchment Partnership Action Plan identifies opportunities for developing partnership projects to enhance the ecological and biological status of the catchment's rivers - such as tackling biodiversity issues (including channel structure and function, barriers to fish passage and habitat management), and water quality issues (in particular from phosphorus, sediment and pesticides).

The [River Thames Scheme](#) offers major opportunities for improving biodiversity through creation of habitats that will contribute to the Borough's GBI network. The Environment Agency is working with partners to construct a new flood channel (built in 2 sections) along the River Thames and increase the capacity of Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington weirs. The River Thames Scheme will reduce flood risk to properties in a number of communities along the Thames, including Egham, Thorpe and Chertsey in Runnymede Borough. It aims to enhance the resilience of nationally important infrastructure and contribute to a vibrant local economy. In addition to provision of new public open space and pathways, the Scheme offers major opportunities for

improving biodiversity through the creation of new habitat, providing new recreation activities including walking, cycling, boating and angling.

Although generally well-managed, there are ongoing opportunities to improve the management of trees and hedgerows along the banks of the Basingstoke Canal, and elsewhere where footpaths run adjacent to watercourses such as the River Wey Navigation. Improved management of these historic assets can help reduce landscape crime (littering, anti-social behaviour etc).

Other opportunities include improved provision of wildlife and heritage interpretation along the canals; improving towpath maintenance; improving way marking between these waterways and other nearby destinations; and encouraging recreational uses that help promote health and wellbeing.

As highlighted by the Runnymede 2030 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, there are opportunities to improve surface water drainage by embedding sustainable drainage systems into development, such as rainwater harvesting, living roofs and infiltration trenches/soakaways, and below ground attenuation tanks, in line with best practice guidance.

All enquiries about this paper should be directed to:

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