A study to identify mitigation opportunities for breeding Nightingales in Medway

Part One: Identifying suitable and deliverable sites locally on the Hoo Peninsula, Medway

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1.0 Introduction

This study, carried out by GGKM on behalf of Land Securities, seeks to develop a robust methodology and identify opportunities for the creation of suitable sites for breeding Nightingales.

The study report will be made available to Medway Council who, as the local planning authority, will determine whether (against the statutory tests) additional compensation is necessary for nightingales beyond that provided for as part of the OPA, in order to address the impact of the development.

GGKM has a role in facilitating **evidence-based decision-making and practical actions** on key environmental issues across North Kent. This study is consistent with that approach, whilst also having strong links with the **GIFT-T! (EU)** project, and with the development of the **Nature Improvement Area.**

2.0 Background

The proposal to carry out this study developed from discussions held between the local planning authority (Medway UC), the landowner/developer (Land Securities) and Martin Hall (GGKM).

Whilst recognising the sensitivities around this proposal, all the above parties are supportive of this positive approach, and have endorsed the aims of the study. The work will be developed in an objective and impartial manner, and the results will be shared with other interested parties in a spirit of openness and transparency.

3.0 Aims of the Study

This study aims to **identify potential strategic and deliverable opportunities to enhance nightingale populations on the Hoo Peninsula**.

4.0 Proposed Outputs

The study will provide:

- A suite of specific attribute maps ('Study Maps') that will be used to define mitigation options on the Hoo Peninsula,
- An assessment of site suitability and deliverability, based on a range of criteria, and
- An indication of the likely costs of delivering the maximum deliverable area of mitigation measures for breeding Nightingale on the Hoo Peninsula.

5.0 Parameters

The following factors have informed and defined the study:

5.1 **Study Boundary**: the Hoo Peninsula plus land to the west to capture Lower Higham area

5.2 **Extent of search**: In order to ensure that the study produces a sufficient number of sites suitable for its purpose, and to avoid uncertainty as to the extent of mitigation measures required, this report will identify the maximum deliverable area of potentially suitable mitigation options. It will not make recommendations as to the actual extent required.

5.3 **Buffer zones**: Any site which lies within 200m of a residential area is less likely to be able to support breeding nightingales due to the threat of predation and disturbance. Accordingly, where a proposed site includes an area within this zone, the site will be mapped but the area of land within this zone will be discounted in terms of its value as a breeding site.

5.4 **Priority sites**: Priority will be given to those sites that are in early successional transition from rough grassland to scrub communities. Such areas are unlikely to hold breeding Nightingales at present, but with positive habitat and access management these currently suboptimal sites will greatly increase their potential to support sustainable nightingale populations, and in the shortest possible timescale.

5.5 **Acceptance of approach**: This study approach is accepted by the main interested parties as employing a sufficiently robust, evidence-based methodology that will enable informed decisions to be made on site selection for breeding Nightingale mitigation.

5.6 **Strategic fit**: The extent to which a site accords with a stated range of policy and strategy documents.

6.0 Methodology

6.1 **Desk-top information gathering**
GIS-based data sets were analysed to develop an evidence base to support the identification of new Nightingale breeding habitat on the Hoo Peninsula. From this analysis a set of Study Maps was produced to spatially present relevant physical and policy factors.
Study Maps have been developed under the following headings (See Appendix 1 for maps and descriptions):

- Habitat Opportunities
- Land cover
- Agricultural Land Classification
- Existing habitat
- SOILSCAPE data
- Medway Landscape Characterisation Study
- Proximity to Public Rights of Way and residential areas

6.2 **Field work and landowner interviews**

6.2.1 Field work was carried out as follows:

- Using the Study Maps generated in Phase 1 to guide the area of search on the ground. This part of the work included visits to identify opportunities for possible sites ‘on the ground’ and a survey of areas where singing nightingales could be heard.
- Visits to sites and site owners/managers to test the deliverability of identified sites and provide ‘real life’ information.

6.2.2 As far as possible, contact has been made with each site owner/manager to test their reaction to a possible proposal to create long term (in perpetuity) Nightingale habitat on their land. The options of land purchase or habitat creation through management agreement was not discussed at this stage.

6.2.3 The following is a summary of the most commonly stated views by landowners/managers:

- Any agreement (for habitat development) would have to be a business arrangement;
- Generally supportive of the aims

- Reservations as a result of uncertainty around future operational interests
- Implications of participation in existing or future agri-environment schemes
- Interested in payments for both the creation of habitat and its long-term management
- Length of agreement - 20 years generally the preferred maximum
- Concerns at increased public access

The detail of landowner/manager responses is at Appendix 2

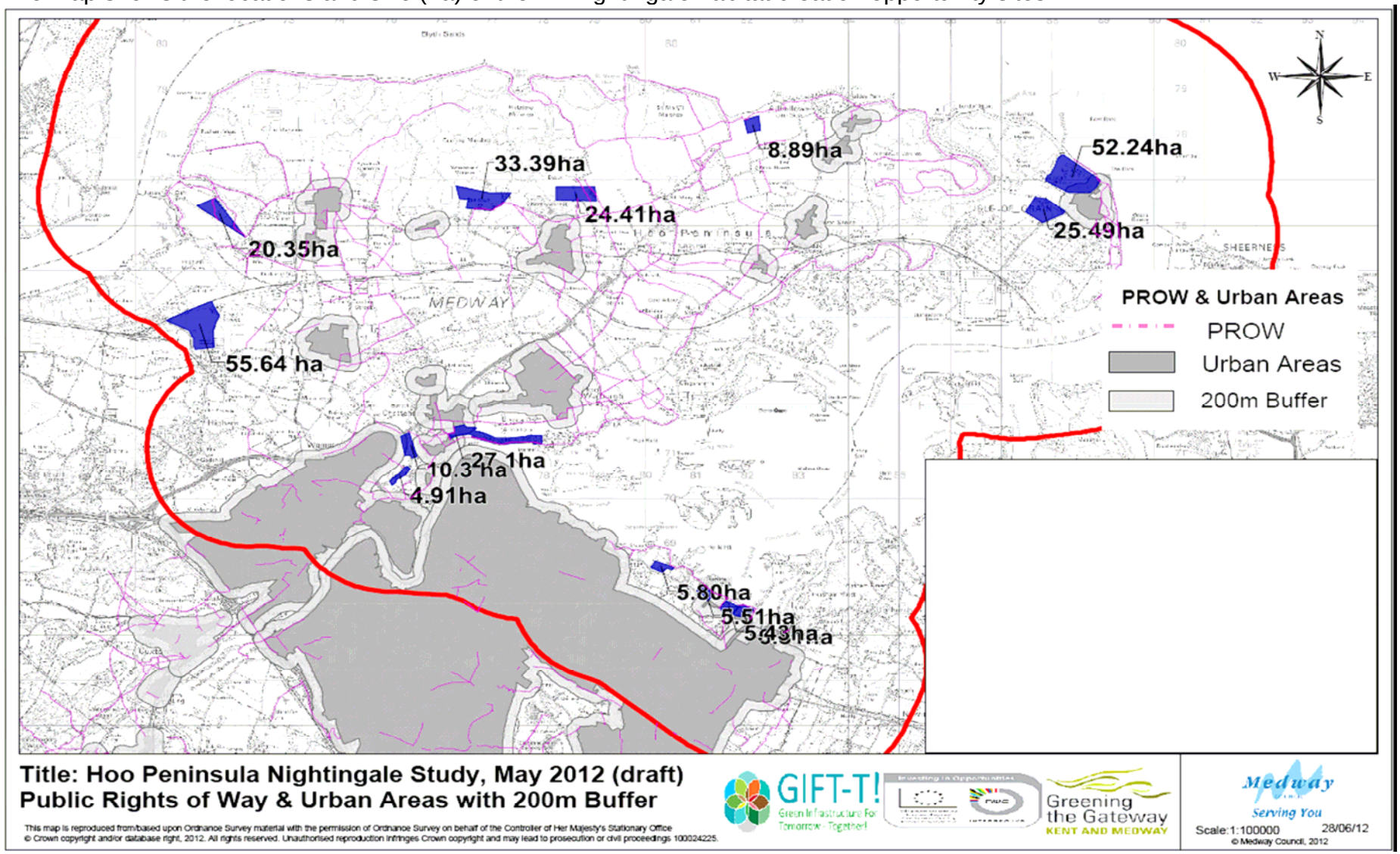
6.3 Taken together, this information has enabled both the identification of **11 possible Nightingale habitat creation sites covering 279.54 hectares**, and the assessment of their individual applicability and deliverability (See Figure 1 and Table 1)

Table 1: Information on the 11 opportunity sites: The table (overleaf) captures key information about each site and forms the basis for assessing suitability and deliverability.

Site / Grid Reference	Size (ha)	Current land use	Scrub cover %	Ease of conversion into Nightingale breeding habitat	Proximity to singing Nightingale	Owner cooperation	Strategic fit
1: Whitewall Creek Sewage Works / Hogmarsh Valley (753,705)	5	Horse pasture and SUDS	15%	Simple. Horse grazing to be controlled and scrub increased. Site is to be entered into HLS so need to check works with NE.	2km	Church Commissioners owned with tenant farmer;	▪ Hoo Peninsula Cluster study ▪ GIFT-T! ▪ Landscape Character Assessment
2: Canal Rd and Church Street (Higham) (713,738)	56	Semi-natural scrub to wetland	30%	Simple. Scrub slowly encroaching across wet grassland. No grazing at present. Minimal visitor management to north.	On site	Privately owned;	▪ Hoo Peninsula Cluster study ▪ GIFT-T! ▪ GTM NIA
3:Cliffe Pits (Cliffe and Cliffe Woods) (718,762)	20	Improved grassland	0%	Simple. Requires fencing to stop rabbit grazing -site could be planted.	Adjacent	Privately owned;	▪ Hoo Peninsula Cluster study ▪ GIFT-T! ▪ GTM NIA ▪ RSPB Conservation Park
4: Bromhey Farm (Cooling) (768,764)	33	Mixed scrub and semi improved grassland - Nature Reserve	60%	Simple. Requires control of rabbit browsing to enhance conditions.	On site	RSPB owned;	▪ Hoo Peninsula Cluster study ▪ GIFT-T! ▪ GTM NIA ▪ RSPB Conservation Park ▪ Landscape Character Assessment
5:Land north of Northward Hill (Cooling) (789,768)	24	Arable	0%	Difficult: Requires change of use from arable. Skeletal shrub remains in hedgerows.	Adjacent	Mr Myatt. No contact has been made but contact details can be provided.	▪ Hoo Peninsula Cluster study ▪ GIFT-T! ▪ GTM NIA ▪ Landscape Character Assessment
6: Clubb Quarry (Perry's Farm, St. James Isle of Grain) (882,765)	25	Quarry site experiencing arable restoration	0%	Difficult. The site has experience some restoration to arable (not complete). Extant planning permission issues plus new application for a Hazardous Waste site.	1km	Clubbs – contact made	▪ Hoo Peninsula Cluster study ▪ GIFT-T! ▪ Four Parishes Plan ▪ Landscape Character Assessment
7: Clubb Quarry (888,771)	52	Restored quarry experiencing natural restoration	20%	Simple. Site is mosaic of wetland, grassland and scrub. Adjacent land has a outstanding planning application.	On site	Clubbs – contact made	▪ Hoo Peninsula Cluster study ▪ GIFT-T! ▪ GTM NIA ▪ Four Parishes Plan
8:Dagnam Farm, Allhallows. (822,782)	9	Semi improved farmed pasture	5%	Simple. Site is grazed by bullocks, farmer tops scrub to reduce scrub encroachment.	5km	Privately owned, contact made with farmer.;	▪ Hoo Peninsula Cluster study ▪ GIFT-T! ▪ GTM NIA ▪ Four Parishes Plan
9: Hogmarsh Valley (755,714)	10	Arable	0%	Difficult – would require conversion from arable to nature conservation scrub.	1.5km	Church Commissioners owned. Land agent contacted but no response. Tenant farmer spoken to.	▪ Hoo Peninsula Cluster study ▪ Landscape Character Assessment
10: Cockham Wood SSSI. 772,714)	27	Hawthorn scrub and oak woodland. Geological SSSI.	100%	Moderate. Site consists of mature scrub that would have to be coppiced.	2.5km	Andrew Brice. Farmer	▪ Hoo Peninsula Cluster Study ▪ Riverside Enhancement Strategy ▪ Medway Green Grid ▪ Landscape Character Assessment
11: Riverside Country Park (819,678)	16	Arable and fallow land.	0%	Easy. Natural succession or planting would provide habitat required.	TBC	Medway Council owned;	▪ Landscape Character Assessment ▪ Medway Green Grid

Figure 1: Location of possible opportunity sites

The map shows the locations and size (ha) of the 11 Nightingale habitat creation opportunity sites.



7.0 Assessment and scoring

7.1 Each site was assessed against the attributes in Table 1 as follows and given a score:-

- **Size**: the larger the better (greater critical mass of foraging and breeding area, increased number of territories that can be supported, increased mosaic/diversity of habitat conditions, larger sites are more resilient to external pressures such as disturbance). The larger the site the higher the score.

- **Current land use**: scores the current land operations reflecting the steps required to move from the current land use type to the desired Nightingale habitat. The more sympathetic the land use the higher the score.

- **Scrub cover**: scores in this section reflects a sites position on a gradient from no scrub to breeding Nightingales to scrub dominant on site. The more scrub the higher the score.

- **Ease of conversion**: This is based upon the scale of the task to move from the existing habitat / land use to the desired ecologically function Nightingale breeding habitat. Arable sites will score a 2 or 4 reflecting the scale of the challenge whilst grassland sites with some existing scrub will have scored either 16 or 32.

- **Proximity to breeding Nightingale populations**: Scoring of this attribute reflects the variance of sites which either contained one or more singing Nightingales or were adjacent to breeding sites. This assessment is based upon site visits not the results of the 2012 Nightingale survey. The closer the site is to singing Nightingales the higher its score.

- **Owner cooperation**: This was assessed on the feedback from landowners/managers. The more receptive a landowner to participating in the project, the higher the score.

- **Strategic fit**: This score reflects the synergy between possible Nightingale habitat creation and the existing green infrastructure / land use policies for an area. The closer the link the higher the score for that particular site.

7.2 Scoring

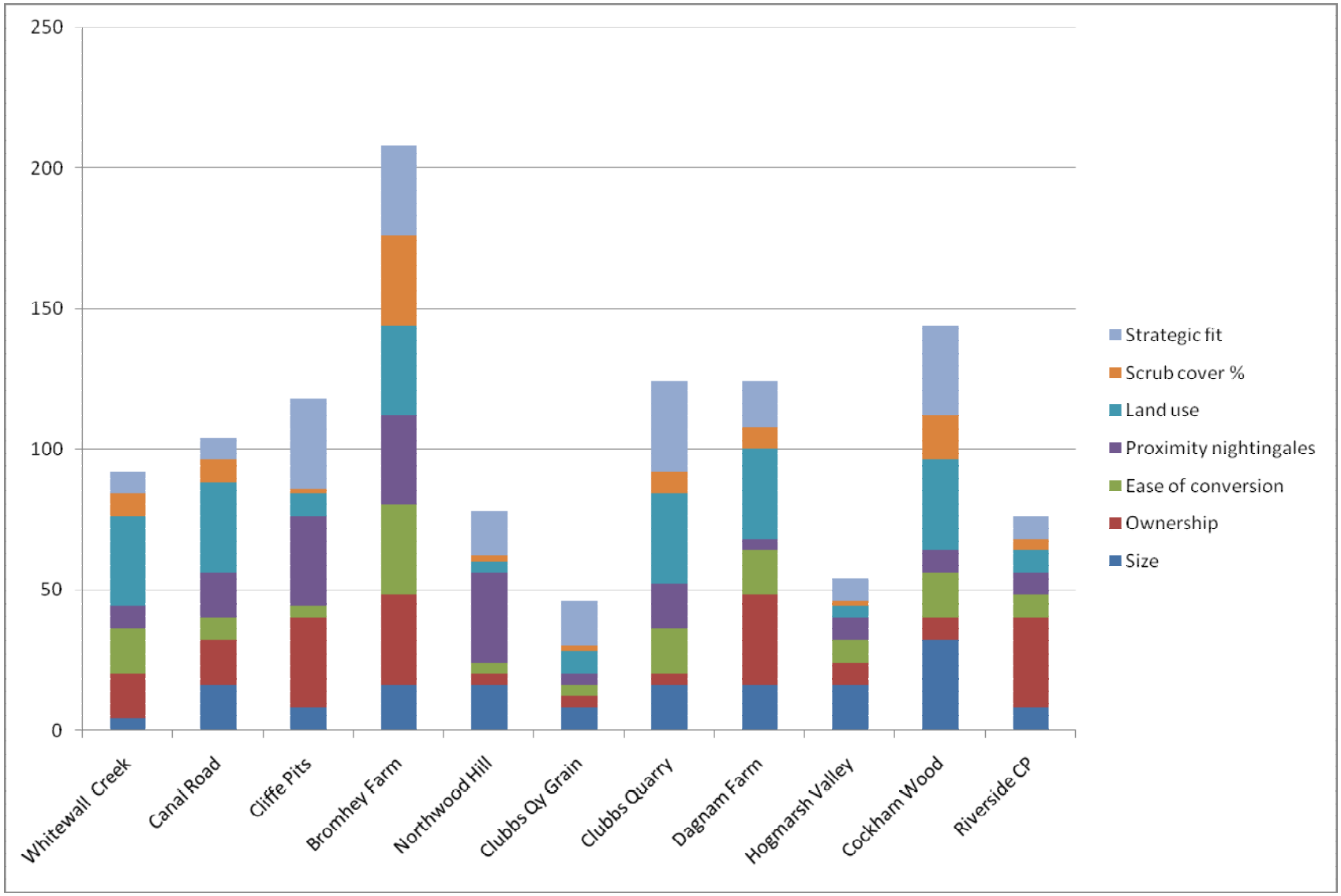
The combined assessments from the desk-top study, field work and landowner liaison provide a score, and a ranking of each comparable site's desirability as a possible Nightingale habitat creation site as shown in Table 3.

Scoring was undertaken using the following possible scores: 2, 4, 8, 16 and 32.

Each site was assessed against the seven attributes in Table 1 to give a set of scores (see Table at Appendix 3 for the detailed scores and totals).

These scores were then transferred to a bar chart to demonstrate graphically the relative value of the attributes for each site. The chart summary of all the scores is shown overleaf in Table 2

(Overleaf) Table 2: Total scores for the 11 identified Nightingale habitat creation opportunity sites


250
200
150
100
50
0
Whitewall Creek
Canal Road
Cliffe Pits
Bromhey Farm
Northwood Hill
Clubbs Qy Grain
Clubbs Quarry
Dagnam Farm
Hogmarsh Valley
Cockham Wood
Riverside CP
Strategic fit
Scrub cover %
Land use
Proximity nightingales
Ease of conversion
Ownership
Size

Ranking of sites (RAG)
Bromhey Farm (Cooling)
Cockham Wood, Upnor
Dagnam Farm, nr Allhallows
Clubbs Quarry – part restored
Cliffe Pits (Cliffe and Cliffe Woods)
Canal Rd and Church Street (Higham)
Whitewall Creek Sewage Works / Hogmarsh Valley
Riverside Country Park
Land north of Northward Hill, (Cooling)
Hogmarsh Valley - arable land
Clubbs Quarry, Isle of Grain

Table 3: Results of scoring categorised using RAG.

7.3 Results

The results of the assessment and scoring exercise show a total of **141 hectares** of land with the greatest opportunity to offer effective and deliverable Nightingale habitat creation opportunities (see green highlighted sites on Ranking of Sites table on this page).

A further **77 hectares** are identified as sites that require greater work and time to create the required habitat conditions (shown amber highlighted on the table).

A final **59 hectares** of land are identified as being capable and deliverable in the much longer term but share considerable questions regarding cost and deliverability (shown highlighted in red on the table).

8.0 Costs

Having identified the five sites with the greatest potential to deliver mitigation opportunities, the study moved on to consider the issue of cost.

8.1 The options for acquiring land to develop habitat suitable for breeding Nightingales are:

- Land purchase and habitat creation/conversion
- Securing management agreements

8.2 The costs will depend on a number of factors, including current land value (e.g. agricultural land classification), the value of current land use, and the cost of conversion. However, to give some idea of the costs at this stage, and based on land prices supplied by Savills (2011 prices) with a value of £15,000 per hectare (£6k per acre), a guide to the cost of land purchase is as follows:

- The five sites totalling **141ha** offering effective and deliverable Nightingale habitat creation opportunities = c.£2.115m
- The sites totalling **77ha** that require more work and time to create ecological condition and landowner agreement =c. £1.155m
- The sites totalling **59ha** identified as being ecologically capable and deliverable but only in the longer term =c. £885k

Additional costs to be included in a Maintenance and Management endowment –this is to be developed by Land Securities and Medway Council.

9.0 Part Two – Additional Strategic Mitigation Opportunities

This report is in two parts. The first part (section 1 to 8) reported on a study that identified a number of potential mitigation sites for breeding Nightingales on the Hoo Peninsula.

This second part of the report is a work in progress, reporting on a higher-level examination that moves the first study forward, and identifies broader compensatory habitat creation opportunities for breeding Nightingales.

9.1 Rationale

A) Explore an idea to set the existing 11 Opportunity Sites (as identified in the first part of the report) within the context of “More, Bigger, Better and Joined” (responding to the Natural Environment White Paper and the basis of Nature Improvement Areas).

B) Respond to a suggestion made by Natural England (Rob Cameron) in a meeting on 3rd July 2012, to examine the potential of the extensive coppice woodland sites to the west of the River Medway as providing suitable mitigation sites.

C) Scoping of two further area-based corridor schemes (one running eastwards along the Medway Estuary from Riverside Country Park to Iwade, and a second from Blue Bell Hill to Wouldham Marshes)

9.2 Key Issues for consideration

9.2.1 (Regarding the Lodge Hill development proposal) Natural England's letter to the inspector states that the delivery of a compensation package **"has the potential to substantially alter the residual impact of development and therefore to affect the balance between nature conservation impact and other public interests"**.

9.2.2 The issue of balance is clearly a key issue for GGKM to address in this study.

9.2.3 NE also make clear that a reduction of the impact on the nightingale population relies on the delivery of ecologically functioning compensatory habitat creation on land outside of the development site.

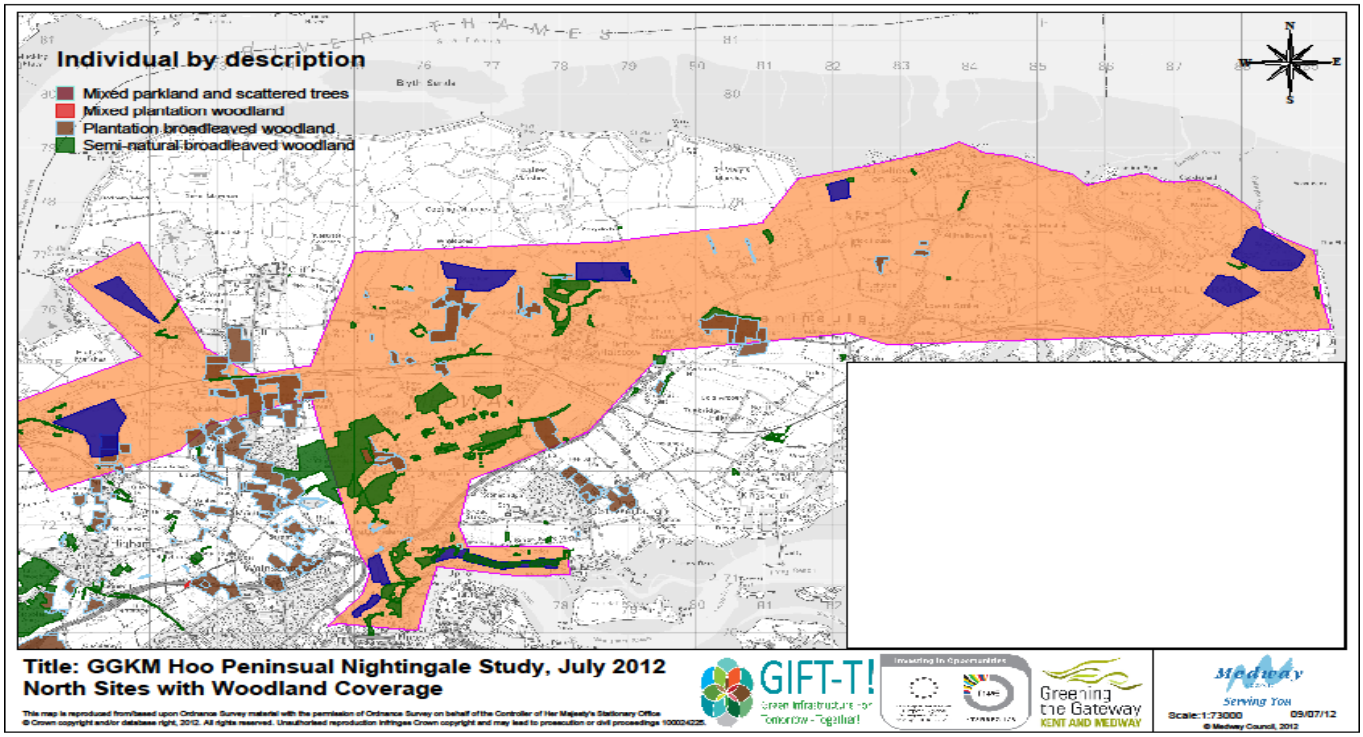
9.2.4 The challenge set by NE is to demonstrate the establishment of a well designed habitat creation scheme of **a sufficiently ambitious scale** capable at least of substantially reducing the residual impact on the nightingale population.

9.3 Proposal A)

To explore an idea to set the existing 11 Opportunity Sites on the Hoo Peninsula within the context of "More, Bigger, Better and Joined" (Environment White (June 2010) and basis of Nature Improvement Areas).

9.3.1 The map at Figure 2 shows the 11 previously identified habitat creation sites set within a matrix of positively managed land. Within this matrix it is proposed that additional smaller scale opportunities could be realised to increase the chance of success of the 11 sites. This work, which could include hedge and tree planting, would help to both tackle habitat fragmentation and to join up sites. This proposal responds positively to Defra's Natural Environment White Paper in its promotion of ***More, Bigger, Better and Joined***. The map at Figure 2 demonstrates this thinking.

Figure 2: Map showing the 11 Nightingale sites (in blue) alongside other woodland (green) within a strategic zone of countryside management (orange)



9.4 Proposal B)

Responding to Rob Cameron's suggestion to examine the potential of the extensive coppice woodland sites to the west of the River Medway as providing suitable mitigation sites.

9.4.1 The sites in question comprise the following extensive coppice woodland sites:-

- Rochester Forest
- The Leisure Plots
- Ranscombe Farm and Great Wood SSSI

9.4.2 An examination of the sites, using desk top study and landowner/manager interviews:

Rochester Forest:

- Rochester Forest is an area that stretches from Strood to Vigo / Trosley and includes many significant blocks of mature native SSSI woodland – as a comparison this area is on a par with The Blean complex (near Canterbury).
- Due to its extent, this area would score well as a potential landscape-scale conservation project.
- The Valley of Visions Landscape Area Partnership Scheme was set up to promote positive management of much of this area.
- Trenport Ltd and Cemex own the majority of the woods and these are already in various woodland management agreements and managed well by Tilhill Forestry.

Conclusion: Initially, it would seem that this area, with its limited number of landowners and large size, could present significant opportunities for Nightingales. However, the forests are already well managed for a broad range of species and therefore the benefits of additional investment for Nightingales would be marginal, difficult to measure/value and may possibly be at the detriment of existing interests. Accordingly this area is not considered worthy of further exploration.

The Leisure Plots:

- The Leisure Plots, Gravesham, are situated adjacent to Cobham Park and Ranscombe Farm and offer an interesting mix of unmanaged scrub, orchards, grassland and woodland.
- The Plots are in multiple ownership by individuals and companies – many of whom once hoped to develop a small holding/home on their plot. Some landowners are no longer traceable.
- The West Kent Downs Countryside Trust has an interest in acquiring all of the plots with the aim to enter them into a scheme of positive management.
- About 15% of plots have been identified for positive management.

Conclusion: Ecologically, the Leisure Plots could be of interest as a potential Nightingale habitat creation site. However, the uncertainty regarding plot acquisition creates unacceptable uncertainty over deliverability and timescale.

Ranscombe Farm and Great Wood

- Ranscombe Farm is a 700 acre farm located between the village of Cuxton and the High Speed Rail Link corridor. It extends westwards into Gravesham and borders Cobham Park and Knights Place.
- The farm includes around 350 acres of sweet chestnut woodland (Great Wood SSSI) managed by Plantlife.
- Plantlife confirm that 100% of Great Wood will be coppiced by 2024 and that all their woodland sites are in Woodland Grant Schemes.
- These sites are single species sweet chestnut coppice and so are not ideal Nightingale habitats. For example, the woods at Ranscombe Farm only had 1 singing male this year and even that is not confirmed.

Conclusion: There would be limited value in investing funds or efforts into Ranscombe Farm for the purpose of mitigation.

Summary conclusion for Proposal B): The sites examined cannot offer sufficient potential, or certainty of ownership, to be considered for mitigation purposes

9.5 Proposal C)

Scoping of two further area-based corridor schemes

- Stretching eastwards along the Medway Estuary from RCP to Iwade
- Stretching southwards from Blue Bell Hill to Wouldham Marshes

9.5.1 The scoping study is based on limited liaison with the Kent Wildlife Trust, Plantlife and Medway Council (Chris Valdus), desk top study including aerial photographs and GGKM's local knowledge.

9.5.2 An examination of an Eastern sites corridor proposal

Within a corridor from Riverside Country Park in Medway to Raspberry Hill, Iwade, in Swale, seven potentially suitable sites have been identified. The total area of search in this corridor, including these sites is some 475.09ha.

The area and the 7 sites are shown in the map at Figure 3, below.

Figure 3: Sites within the Eastern corridor

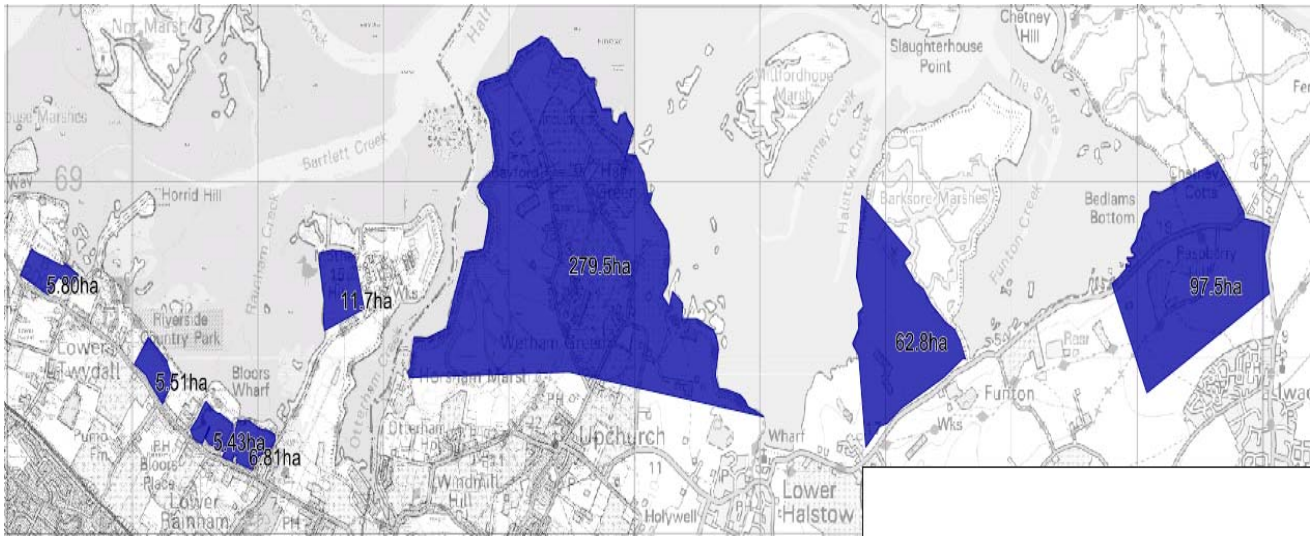
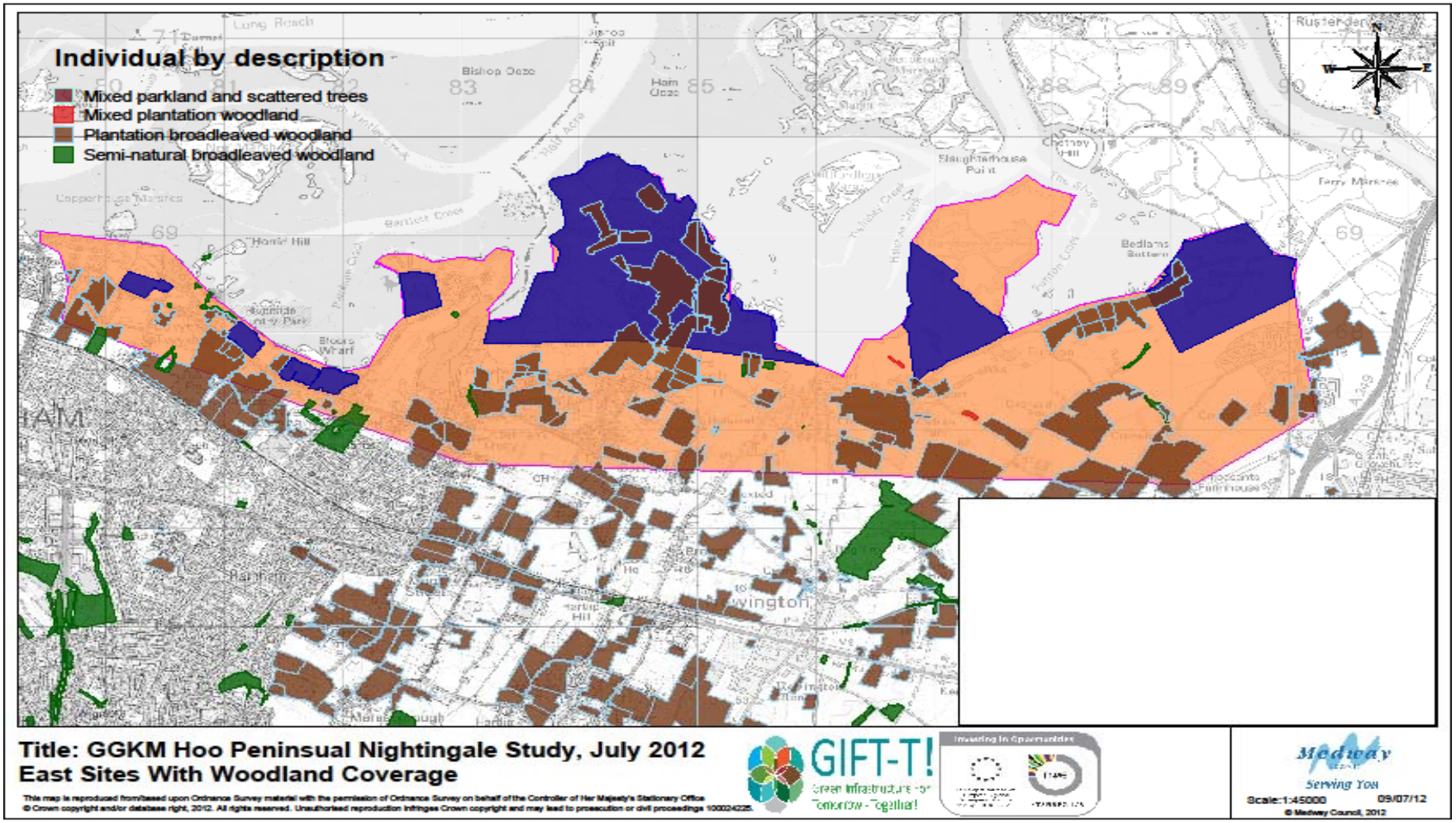


Figure 4: Sites within the Eastern corridor plus woodland coverage



Land at **Riverside Country Park** (RCP)

- The 4 RCP sites are all riparian and are either arable or grassland with some scrub. Medway Council owns these sites.
- Nightingales are heard each year along this eastern section of land – from the Gillingham relief road eastwards.
- The land identified at Motney Hill is a sandy arable field that has spent considerable time in set a side. It is privately owned and the landowner has experienced numerous problems with bank erosion and illegal access. It presents a great opportunity for scrub planting creating a mosaic of rough grassland and scrub.
- The site is close to other conservation land such as the Motney reed bed.
- There is also additional neighbouring land owned by Southern Water that could be developed for Nightingales.

Land to the **north of Upchurch**:

- This area is bordered to the west and east by the Medway estuary. It supports a mix of marshland, coastal, paddocks, arable and orchards.
- Fisheries and livery businesses are prevalent in this area.
- From local knowledge, there could be many opportunities to create new Nightingale habitat in this area.
- This area is within the Nature Improvement Area and therefore liaison with landowners and farmers will increase significantly. This communication could also seek to deliver opportunities for breeding Nightingales.
- This site extends eastwards to Lower Halstow and an area of disused dock and factories, which currently form a valuable wild area. The parish and NE continue to explore positive long-term management options for this area; and the breeding Nightingale habitat work could support this.

Land adjacent to **Barksore Marshes**:

- This area is currently under arable management, and has limited nature conservation value, and therefore offers excellent habitat creation potential.
- This potential is enhanced due to the site being adjacent to Barkshore Marshes – an area of high ecological value fresh and saline habitats.
- I have not explored this area as there are no public rights of way but I have worked with the landowner many years ago to positive end.

Land north of **Iwade**:

- This is an area of orchards and rough grassland. The area looks like it has been worked as brick fields - hence its proximity to the Funton brickworks – now closed.
- Some of the orchards (especially the pear orchards) are no longer managed as an economic interest. The land now seems to lack current function and purpose.
- Two of the landowners are known to GGKM through the NIA works and both have expressed interest in viable environmental schemes.

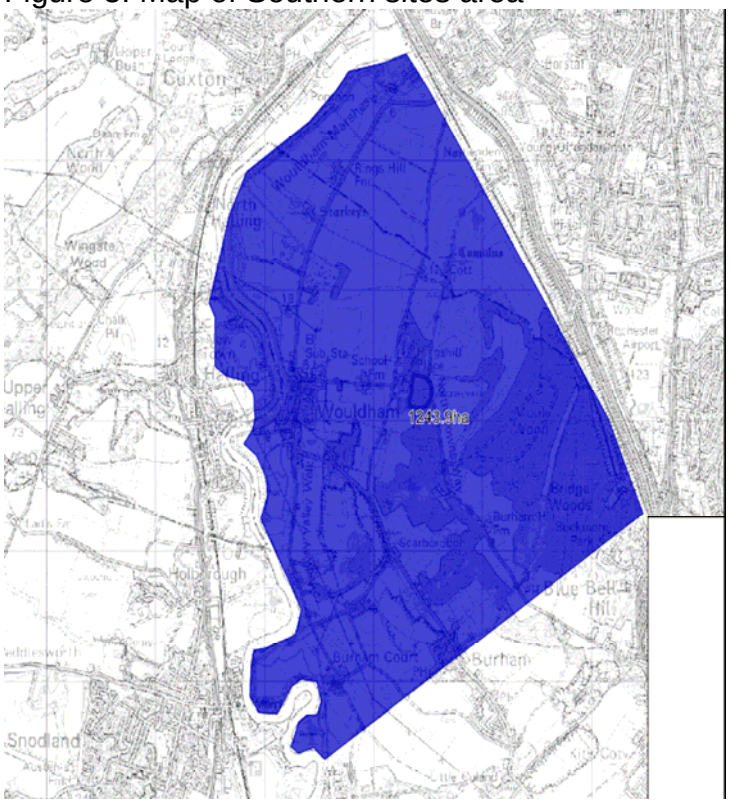
- The land adjacent to Chetney Marshes is wet pasture bordered by scrub. This site represents an immediate quick win.

Summary conclusion for the sites within the Eastern corridor: The sites in this corridor offer huge potential for habitat creation or conversion for mitigation purposes; and could offer some quick wins.

9.5.3 An examination of a Southern sites corridor proposal

- The 1,243ha area shown on the map (at Figure 5) includes a complex mix of broad-leaved woodland, arable, chalk grassland and freshwater marshes.
- This area forms a core of the Medway Gap Biodiversity Opportunity Area and is also being explored by KWT as a Living Landscape area.
- The Valley of Visions HLF project has invested in this area to enhance marshland habitat.
- It would be interesting to explore opportunities to create new Nightingale habitat along the river valley focusing on an arable zone between the freshwater marshes and the higher woodlands and chalky arable lands.
- The area offers a mosaic of opportunities at a truly ambitious scale.
- The area is largely remote and undisturbed.

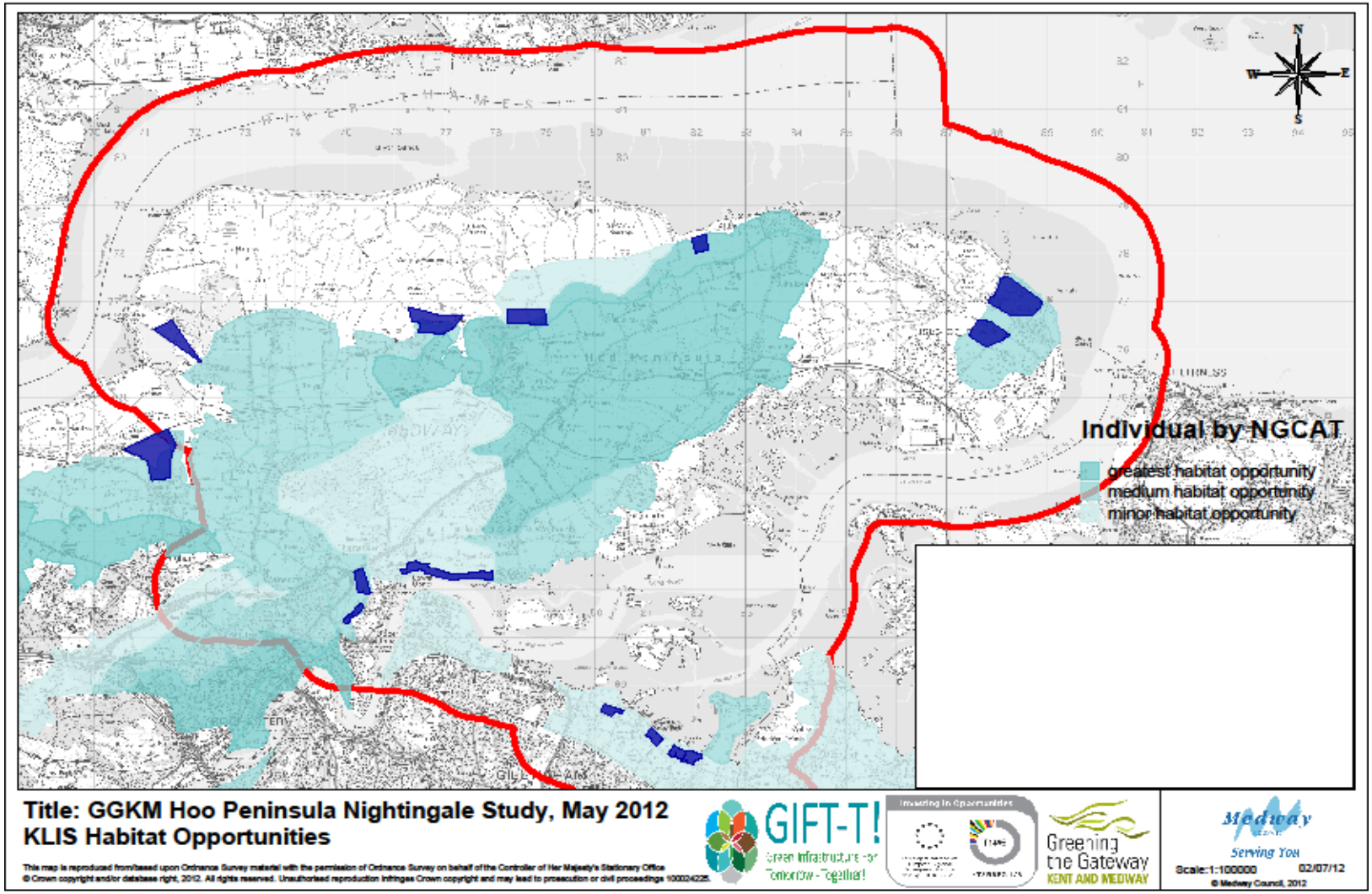
Figure 5: Map of Southern sites area



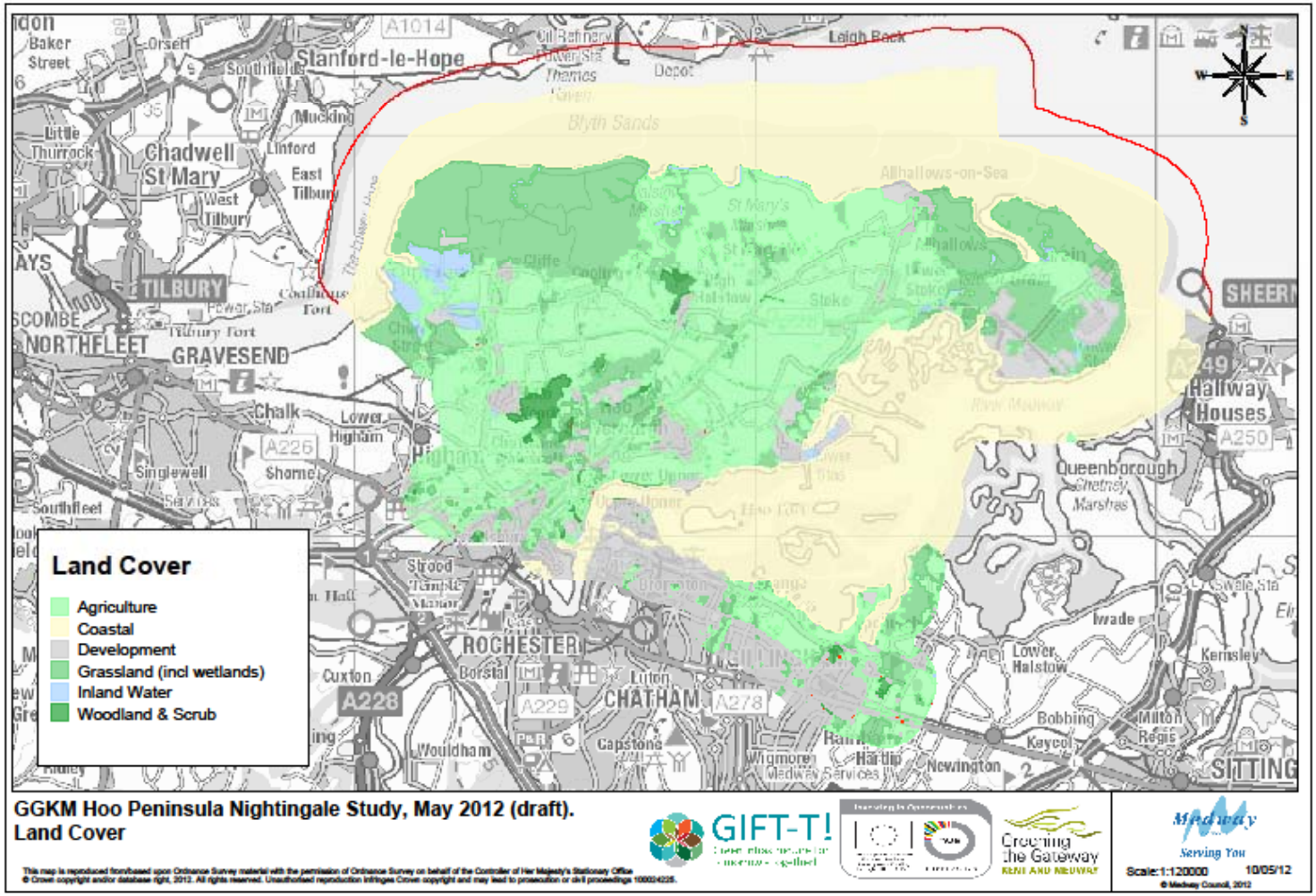
Summary conclusion for sites in the Southern area: This area offers enormous potential to explore the opportunities of a landscape-scale approach to habitat creation.

Appendix 1: GIS-based Study Maps used as evidence base to inform the study:

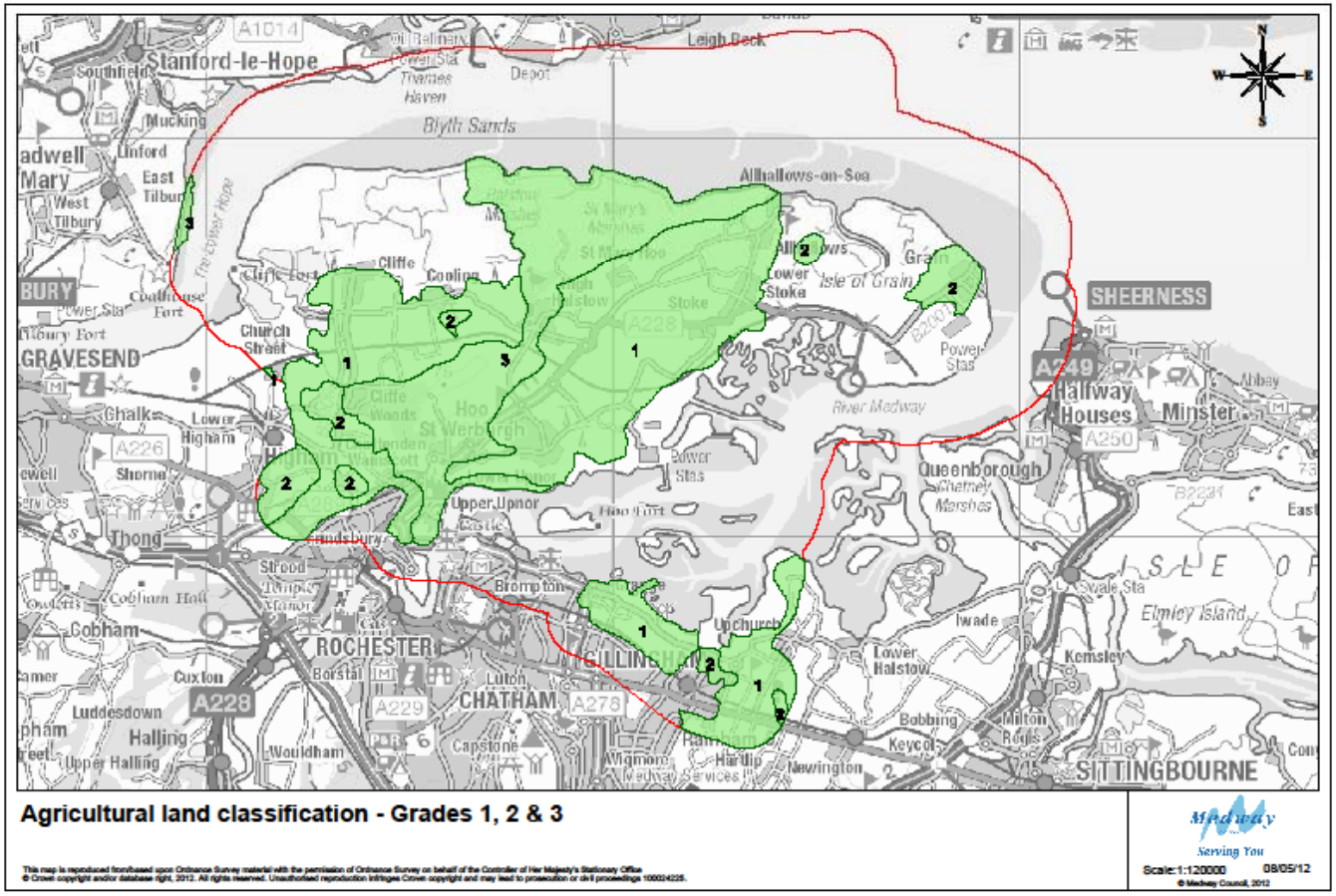
- **Habitat Opportunities** (KLIS data) Wet broadleaved woodland / scrub: This data set shows the areas that are best suited to creation of new woodland / scrub communities. It assess numerous interests such as hydrology, topography and existing land use to score areas from Greatest / Medium to Minor Habitat Opportunity. This data enables comparison between Nightingale opportunity sites and suggested habitat opportunity zones.



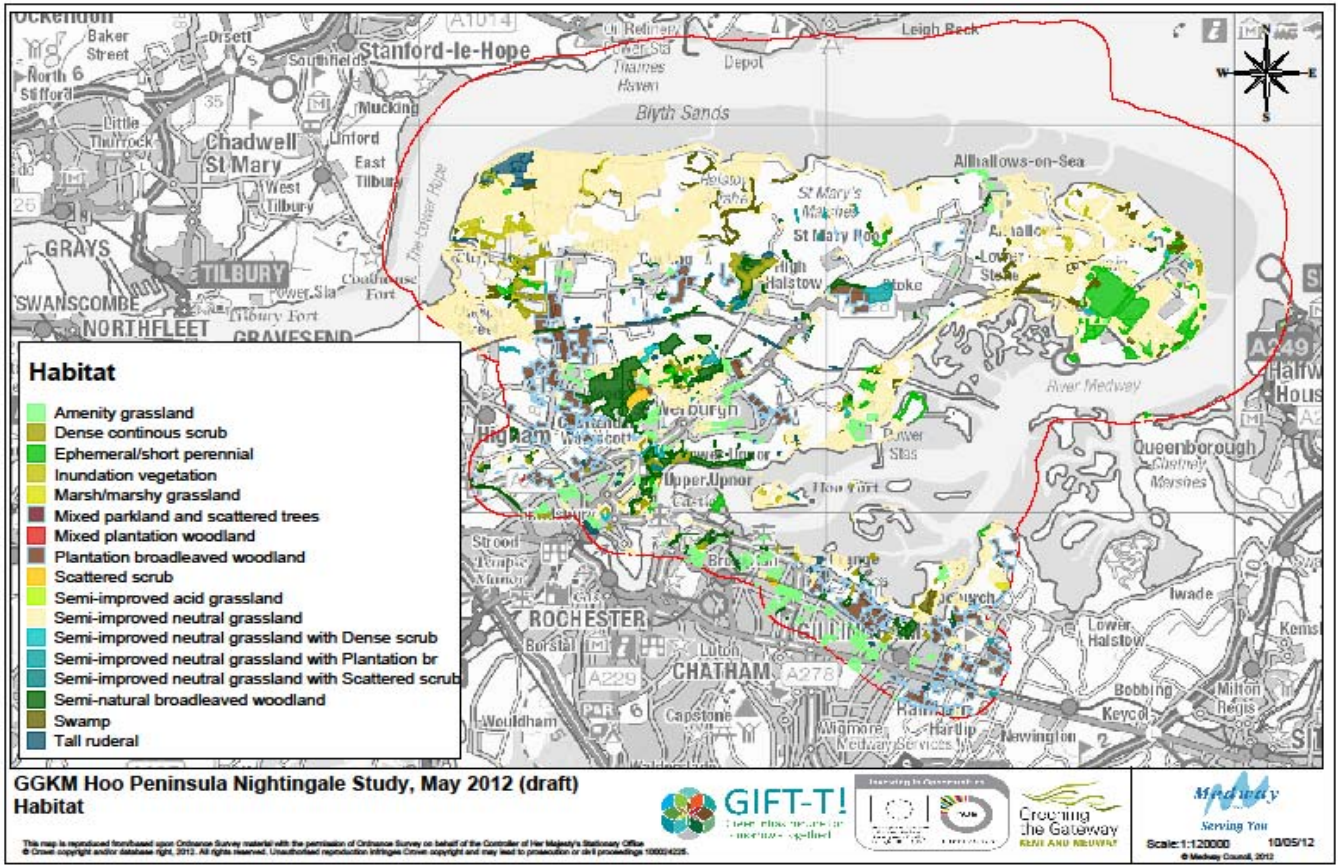
- **Land cover**: This data shows existing land uses adjacent to the currently identified Nightingale opportunity sites.



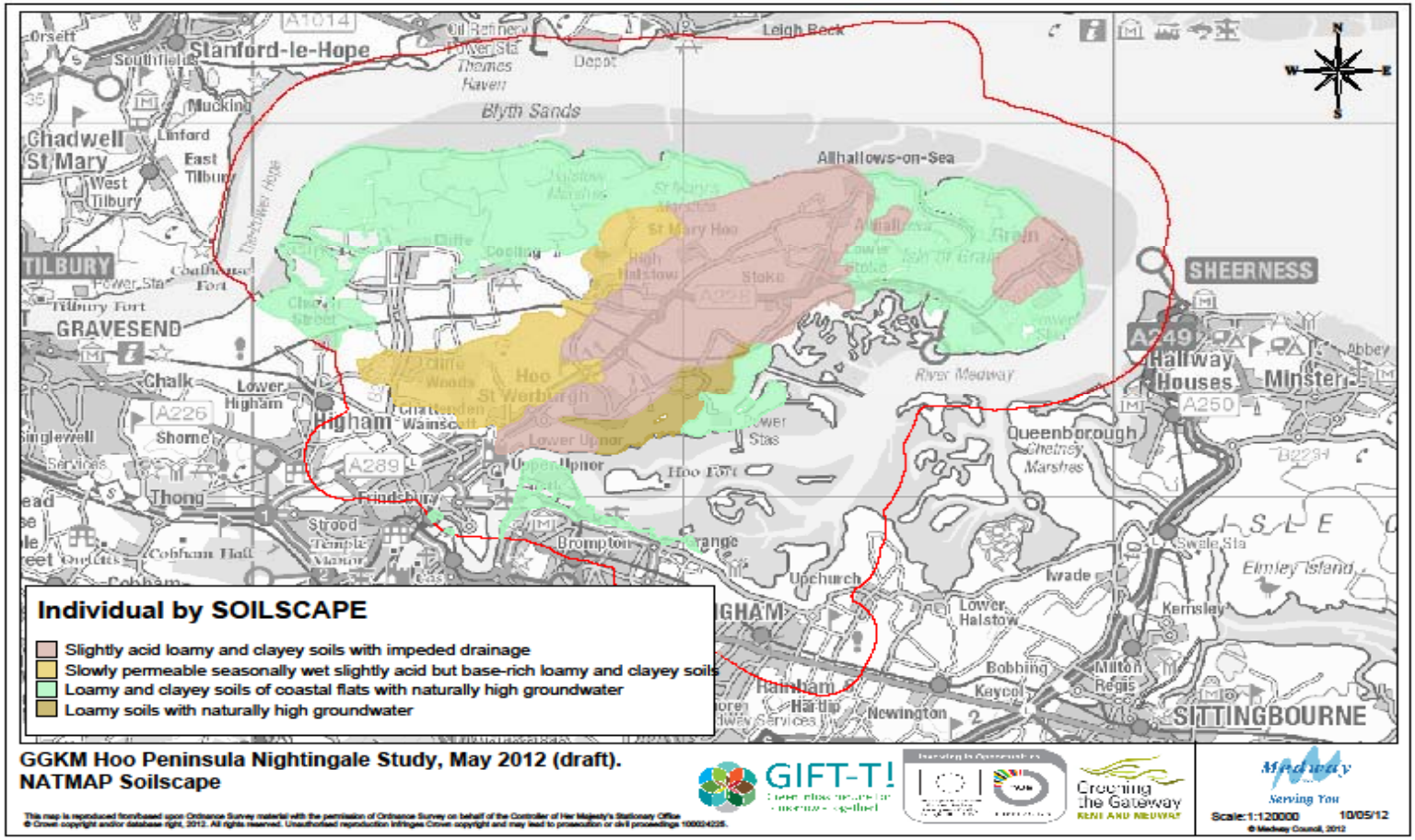
- **Agricultural Land Classification**: This data set shows the most productive agricultural land as grades 1,2 and 3, and the less productive agricultural land as grades 3 and 4. This is useful in determining deliverability of the Nightingale opportunities against farming interests and also acts as a proxy for possible land costs



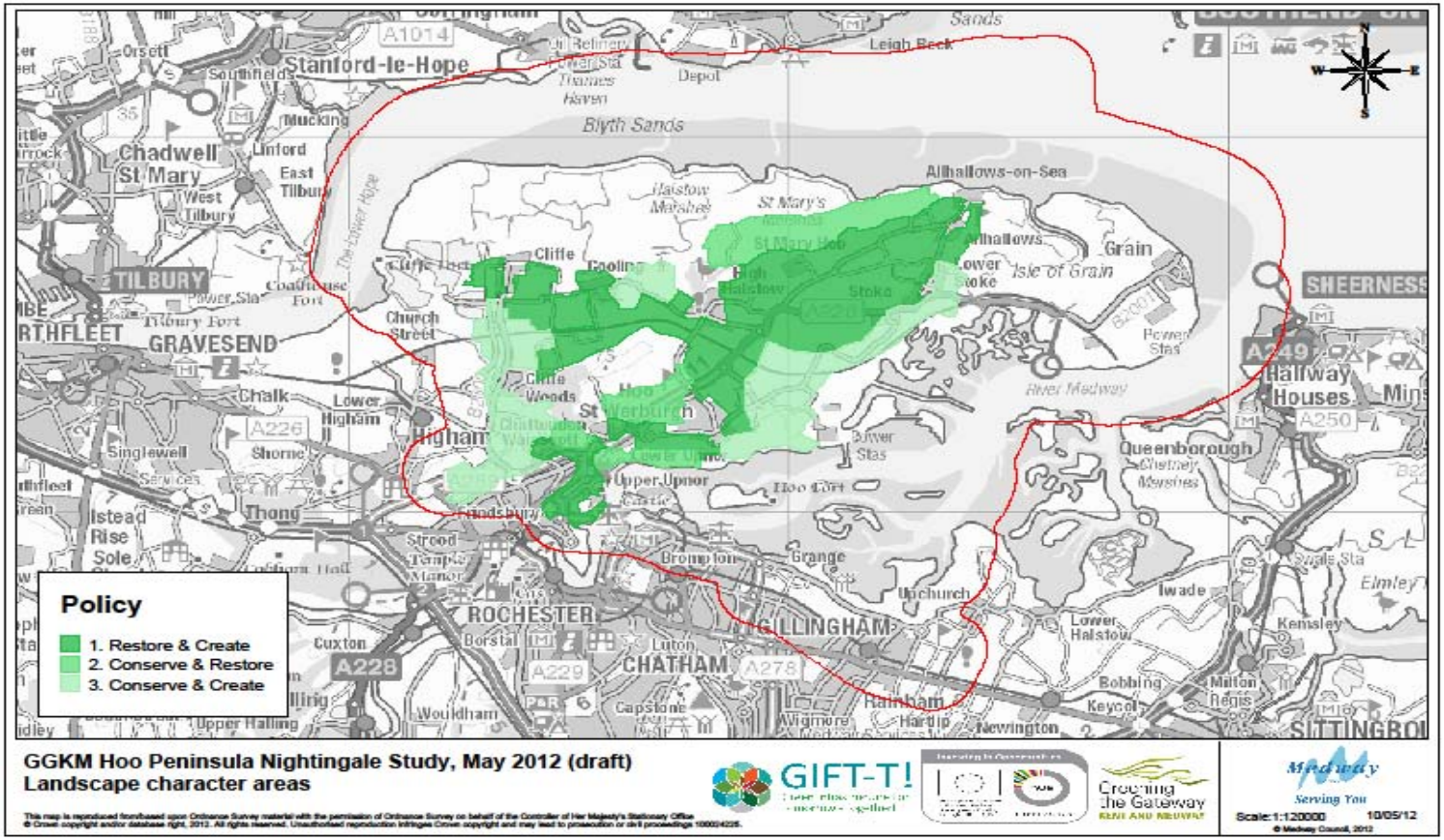
- **Existing Habitat**: This data set shows the presence / absence of existing natural habitat adjacent to the possible Nightingale opportunity sites. Data was selected to demonstrate each site's connectivity to existing scrub / woodland habitat and to illustrate opportunity for increasing connectivity.



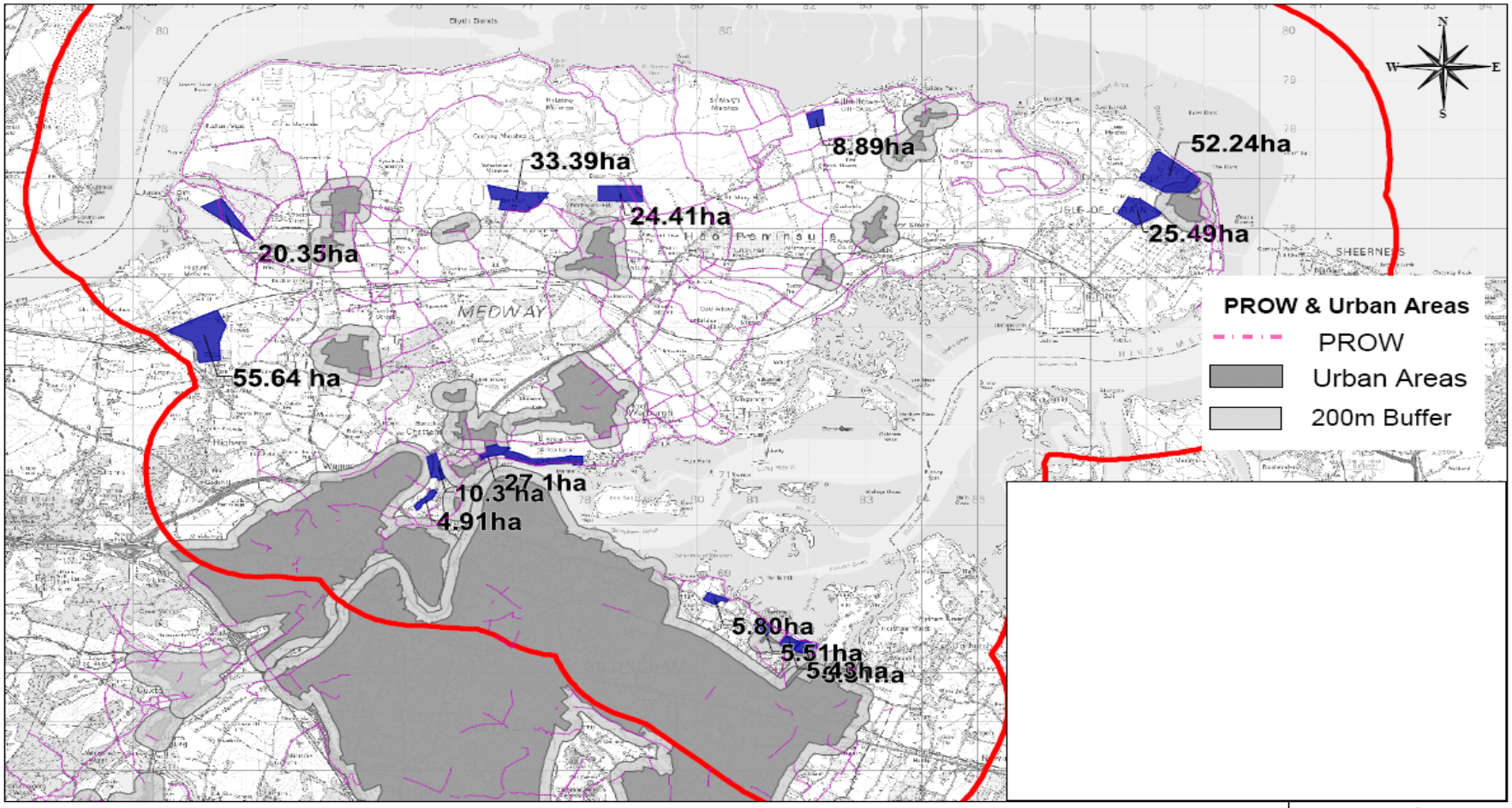
- **SOILSCAPE data**: This data set shows the relationship between the Nightingale opportunity sites and soil type. The soil types selected are those of impeded drainage and / or higher than average groundwater. This is deemed to be of interest because numerous successful Nightingale habitat sites are located in areas experiencing impeded drainage.



- **Medway Landscape Characterisation study:** This data set illustrates the spatial nature of Medway Council's Landscape Characterisation policy in relation to the sought contribution of tree and scrub planting to restoring character. Three policy actions have been mapped 1) Restore and Create, 2) Conserve and Restore and 3) Conserve and Enhance. As site two is in Gravesham it is not covered by the said policy document.



- **Proximity to Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and residential areas**: This data set makes clear the relationship between the Nightingale Opportunity Maps and possible disturbance (using PRoW as a proxy) and to predation of prey (using a 200m buffer to existing residential areas) (for map see main report)



Title: Hoo Peninsula Nightingale Study, May 2012 (draft)
Public Rights of Way & Urban Areas with 200m Buffer

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GIFT-T! Green Infrastructure For Tomorrow - Together!

Greening the Gateway KENT AND MEDWAY

Medway Serving You

Scale:1:100000 28/06/12

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Appendix 2: Summary of key responses from landowner/manager discussions

- **This is a business**: Any scheme would need to be on a solid business footing. Many landowners saw works such as these as a business opportunity. Many expressed the fact that this is not about voluntary measures or voluntary agreements. Related to this point, some tenant farmers were not keen to explore opportunities on land owned by Church Commissioners preferring to promote opportunities on the land that they themselves own.
- **Supportive**: Many of the landowners were supportive of works to create Nightingale habitat and many also stated synergies to either the GIFT-T! or the Nature Improvement Area projects
- **Uncertainty**: One specific landowner currently has significant uncertainty about their future operation interests in relation to extant planning permissions. As such, this landowner has expressed a keenness to be kept informed of opportunities (see text from email below).

  "Yes, please keep us informed. We are interested but you understand the complications".

- **Existing schemes (Entry Level Schemes and Higher Level Stewardship)**: nearly 50% of the opportunity sites are either in or about to enter into ELS or HLS agreements. This was not regarded as a "show stopper" but it was suggested that NE be contacted to talk through implication for existing scheme and payments of working with this scheme.
- **Payment for creation of habitat and its long-term management**: Landowners were interested to learn if they could be paid to both create and then manage the Nightingale breeding habitat. This was seen as an additional business opportunity.
- **For how long?** Some landowners (farmers mainly) asked about how long the land would be tied up as Nightingale habitat. Their preference was for 20 years as a maximum. When told that this was to be a permanent arrangement most were understanding and said that this fact reinforced their first point about this being a business opportunity.
- **Access:** Landowners raised the "access" question expecting that full public access to the site(s) would be required. When it was suggested that access would only be required for monitoring / management purposes their concern was disappeared.
- **Association with Lodge Hill:** No landowner expressed concern regarding links or associations to the proposed development at Lodge Hill.
- **Timing:** No specific issues regarding timing were raised.

Appendix 3: Table showing scores of the 11 eleven sites

Site	Size	Ownership	Ease of conversion into breeding habitat	Proximity to singing Nightingale	Current land use	Scrub cover %	Strategic fit	Total Score
1: Whitewall Creek Sewage Works	4	16	16	8	32	8	8	92
2: Canal Rd and Church Street	16	16	8	16	32	8	8	104
3:Cliffe Pits (Cliffe and Cliffe Woods)	8	32	4	32	8	2	32	118
4: Bromhey Farm (Cooling)	16	32	32	32	32	32	32	208
5:Land north of Northward Hill	16	4	4	32	4	2	16	78
6: Clubbs Quarry, Isle of Grain	8	4	4	4	8	2	16	46
7: Clubbs Quarry	16	4	16	16	32	8	32	124
8: Dagnam Farm, nr Allhallows	16	32	16	4	32	8	16	124
9:Hogmarsh Valley - arable land	16	8	8	8	4	2	8	54
10: Cockham Wood, Upnor	32	8	16	8	32	16	32	144
11: Riverside Country Park	8	32	8	8	8	4	8	76