Earley Environmental Group

Earley Green Corridor Network

Making Space for Nature in Earley - Summary Document

The Earley Environmental Group (EEG) has developed a Green Corridor Network for Earley. The network combines Earley's green spaces and green links to create a joined-up network of linear corridors that can be protected and enhanced as a comprehensive body of ecological sites and natural habitats. Within each corridor, each green space and link has a role to play in providing natural habitats and routes for local wildlife, and valued leisure space for Earley's residents. The green corridors will help to ensure that "green infrastructure" (green space and links) is preserved for the benefit of wildlife and biodiversity, is protected from the adverse impacts of development, and contributes to the reduction of air pollution and improvement of health. This document is a summary of the EEG's Green Corridor Network consultation document dated 12 December 2022, which can be made available.

The green corridor concept is based on the findings of the **Lawton Report - Making Space for Nature: A Review of England's Wildlife Sites and Ecological Network -** published in 2010. The report looked at ways of better connecting England's wildlife to strengthen ecological networks and encourage nature to thrive against the pressures of climate change and increased development.

Defining the Network

Using the Lawton Report as a starting point and adjusting for Earley's urban environment, the Earley Green Corridor Network comprises the following components:

i) **Core Green Space (Natural):** areas of high nature conservation value which form the heart of the network. They contain habitats that are important to Earley because of the wildlife they support or the ecosystems they provide, as well as the need for them to be managed with priority.

ii) **Core Green Space (Cultivated):** areas such as parks, mown open grassland, horticultural land and allotments that provide ecosystems for wildlife as well as leisure facilities for local residents.

(iii) **'Stepping-Stones'**: small parks and green spaces that provide intermediate habitats for wildlife to move between corridors, enabling them to feed, disperse, migrate or reproduce.

iv) **Green Links:** linear green connectors, such as pathways and lines of trees and shrubs, that link core green spaces and stepping stones, thereby improving the functional connectivity between core areas and enabling species to move between them to feed, disperse, migrate or reproduce.

(v) **Green Transport Corridors:** green connectors that follow main road and rail routes through Earley, enabling species to move between them to feed, disperse, migrate or reproduce.

(vi) **Agricultural Buffer Zones:** areas that surround Earley, forming a buffer between Earley and neighbouring largescale developments.

Whilst most of these designations are used in the Lawton Report, to reflect Earley's urban nature, two types of core green space have been designated; 'natural' and 'cultivated'. The green transport corridors have also been added.

Corridor Development

Figure 1 shows the core green spaces, stepping stones and green links that were identified during the development of the area's green network. Four green corridors were defined using these spaces and links; some with adjoining green branches. Where possible, each of the corridors has been connected to key green spaces beyond Earley, such as Bulmershe Fields, Dinton Pastures, Palmer Park and green areas in Whitley. Three Green Transport Corridors have also been defined. The resulting Earley Green Corridor Network comprises:

Green Corridors

- **The Thames Green Corridor** + Kennet Green Branch
- **The Whiteknights and Bulmershe Green Corridor** + Palmer Park, South Lake and The Cowsey Green Branches
- **Maiden Erlegh Green Corridor** + Reservoir Green Branch
- **Loddon and Lower Earley Green Corridor** + South Loddon Green Branch.

Green Transport Corridors

- **The Great Western Railway Transport Corridor**
- **The South Western Rail/A3290 Transport Corridor**
- **The M4 Transport Corridor.**

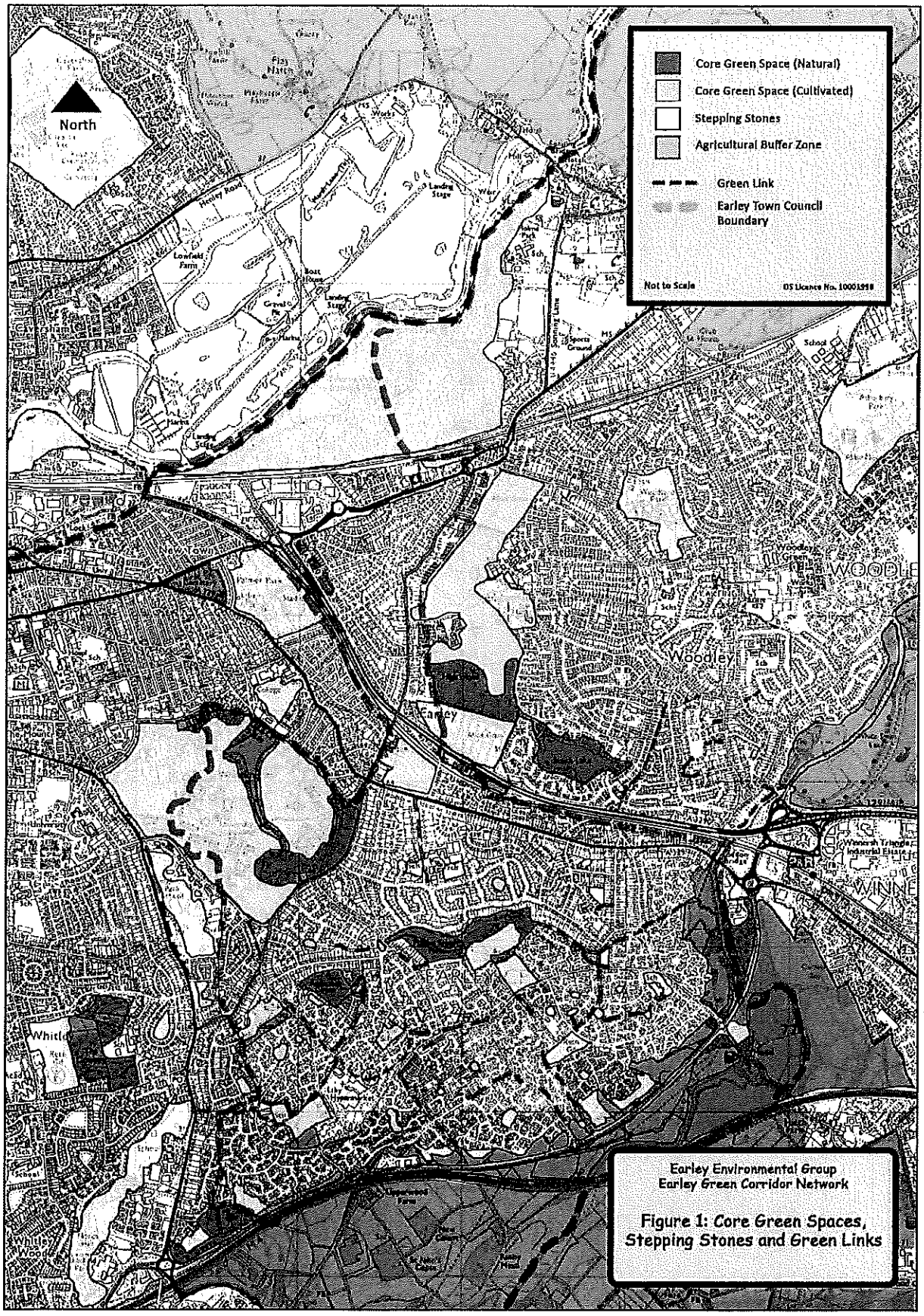
Figures 2 to 5 show the four green corridors and branches, the three green transport links and their connecting green links. The green corridors are shown as a 'schematic footprint' which could be developed to produce a detailed plan for each corridor once the concept has been adopted. The Loddon and Lower Earley Green Corridor incorporates the EEG's proposed **Lower Earley Local Nature Reserve.**

Using the Green Corridor Network

The overall purpose of the Earley Green Corridor Network is to help protect and enhance Earley's natural environment and wildlife. The Network will increase awareness and appreciation of Earley's green infrastructure, encourage a more wildlife-friendly approach to its management, be a reference document for planning applications submitted to Wokingham Borough Council and for assessment by Earley Town Council, and encourage the designation of linear nature reserves across Earley, including the proposed Lower Earley Local Nature Reserve.

Adoption of the Network

The principle of the Earley Green Corridor Network has already been adopted by Earley Town Council within its **Interim Earley Green Infrastructure Action Plan** (April 2022), which states that "A Green Corridor Map being prepared by the Earley Environmental Group will be the hub of all Green Infrastructure policies". Neighbouring local authorities, such as Wokingham and Reading Borough Councils could also take forward the concept to protect green corridors on a wider scale (**Figure 6**). The Earley Green Corridor Network also aligns with the work being undertaken by Berkshire local authorities in the development of **Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS)**, which are special strategies aimed at recovering nature across England; and the **Berkshire Local Nature Partnership (BLNP),** which aims to create a sustainable, healthy and vibrant Berkshire by promoting the conservation and enhancement of nature.


North
Core Green Space (Natural)
Core Green Space (Cultivated)
Stepping Stones
Agricultural Buffer Zone
Green Link
Earley Town Council Boundary
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Earley Environmental Group
Earley Green Corridor Network
Figure 1: Core Green Spaces, Stepping Stones and Green Links

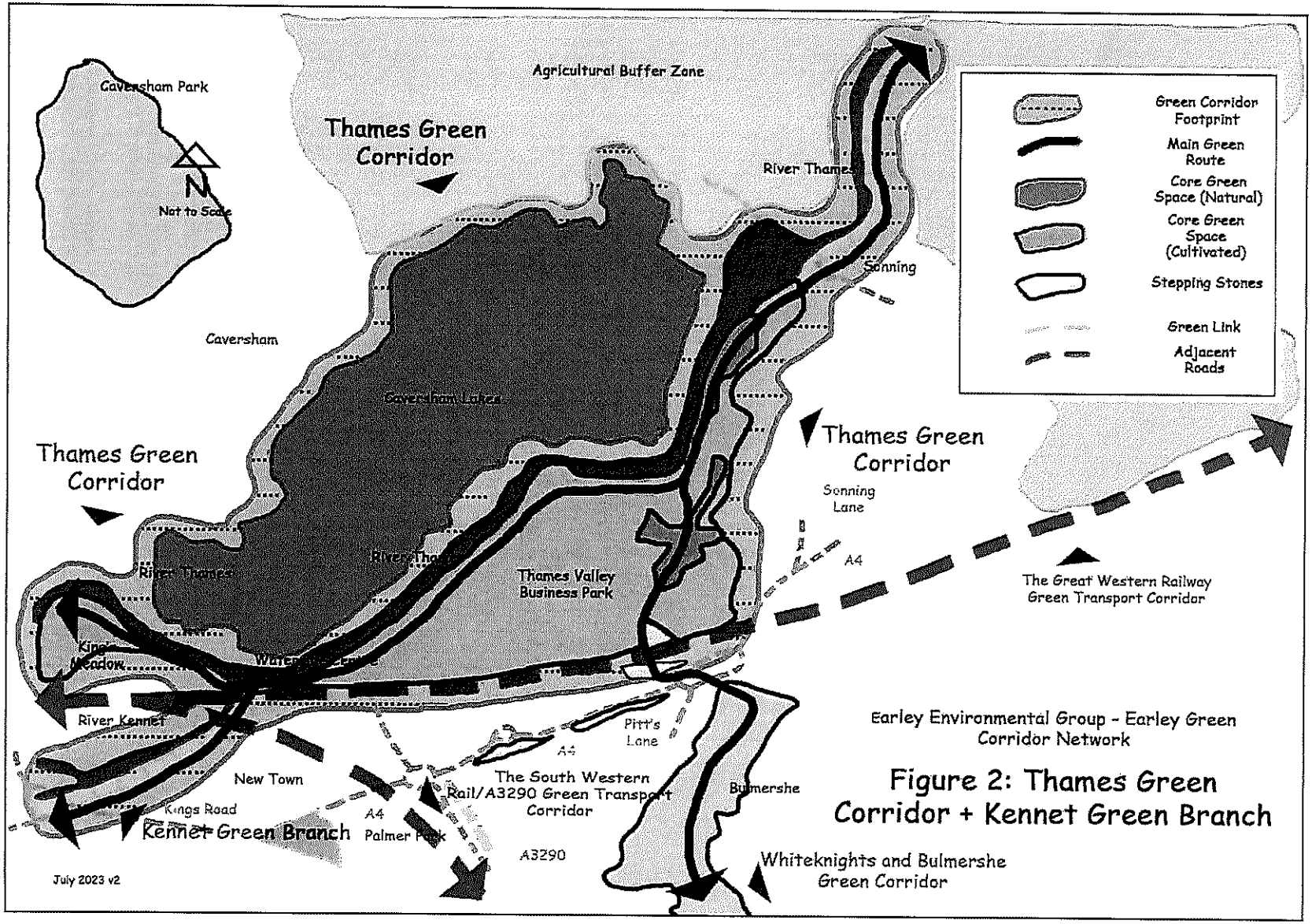
Agricultural Buffer Zone
Caversham Park
N
Not to Scale
Thames Green Corridor
River Thames
Sonning
Caversham
Caversham Lakes
Thames Green Corridor
Green Corridor Footprint
Main Green Route
Core Green Space (Natural)
Core Green Space (Cultivated)
Stepping Stones
Green Link
Adjacent Roads
Thames Green Corridor
Sonning Lane
A4
The Great Western Railway Green Transport Corridor
River Thames
Thames Valley Business Park
River Kennet
Pitt's Lane
A4
New Town
The South Western Rail/A3290 Green Transport Corridor
Bulmershe
Kings Road
A4
Palmer Park
Kennet Green Branch
A3290
Whiteknights and Bulmershe Green Corridor
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Figure 2: Thames Green Corridor + Kennet Green Branch

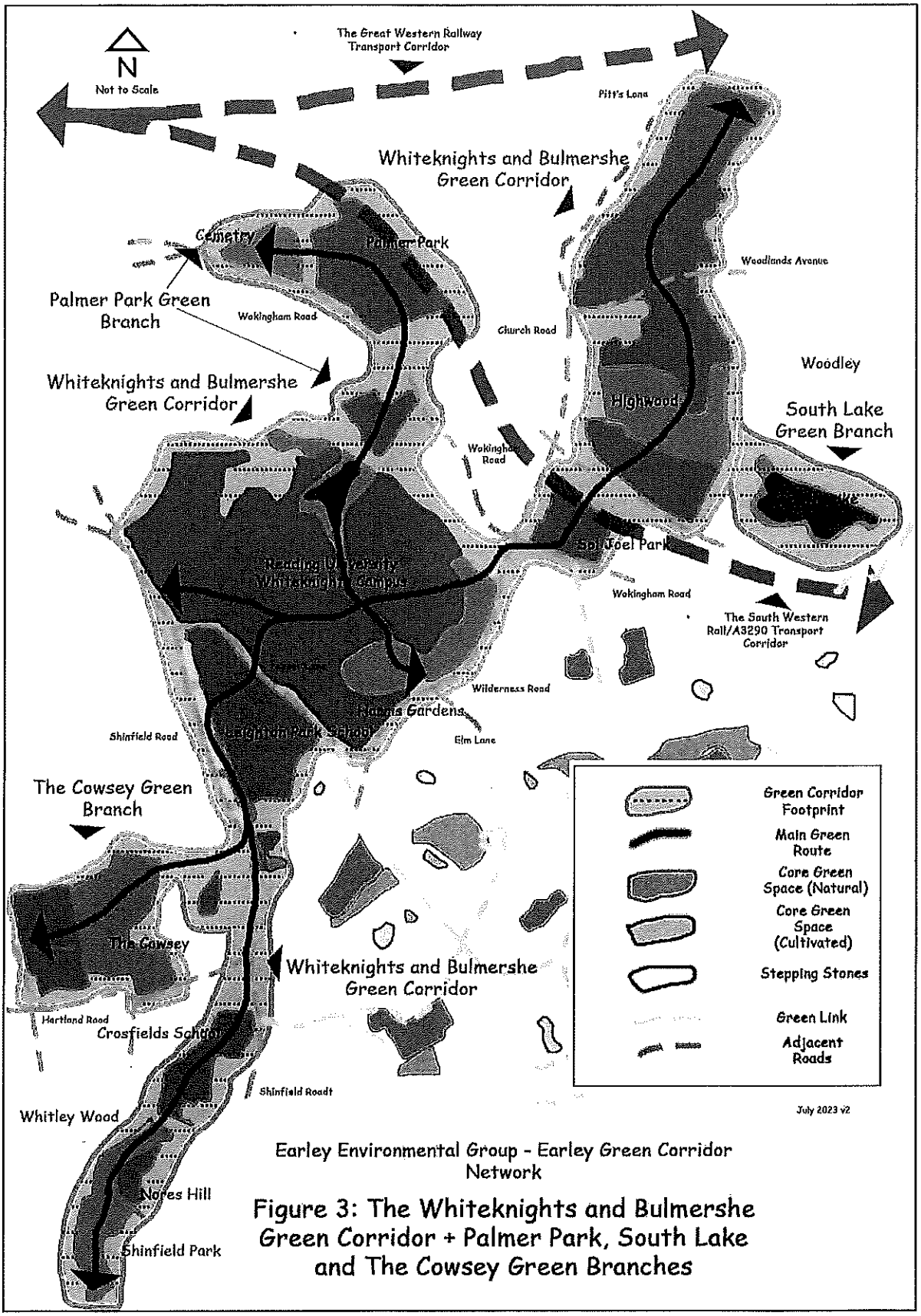

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Figure 3: The Whiteknights and Bulmershe Green Corridor + Palmer Park, South Lake and The Cowsey Green Branches

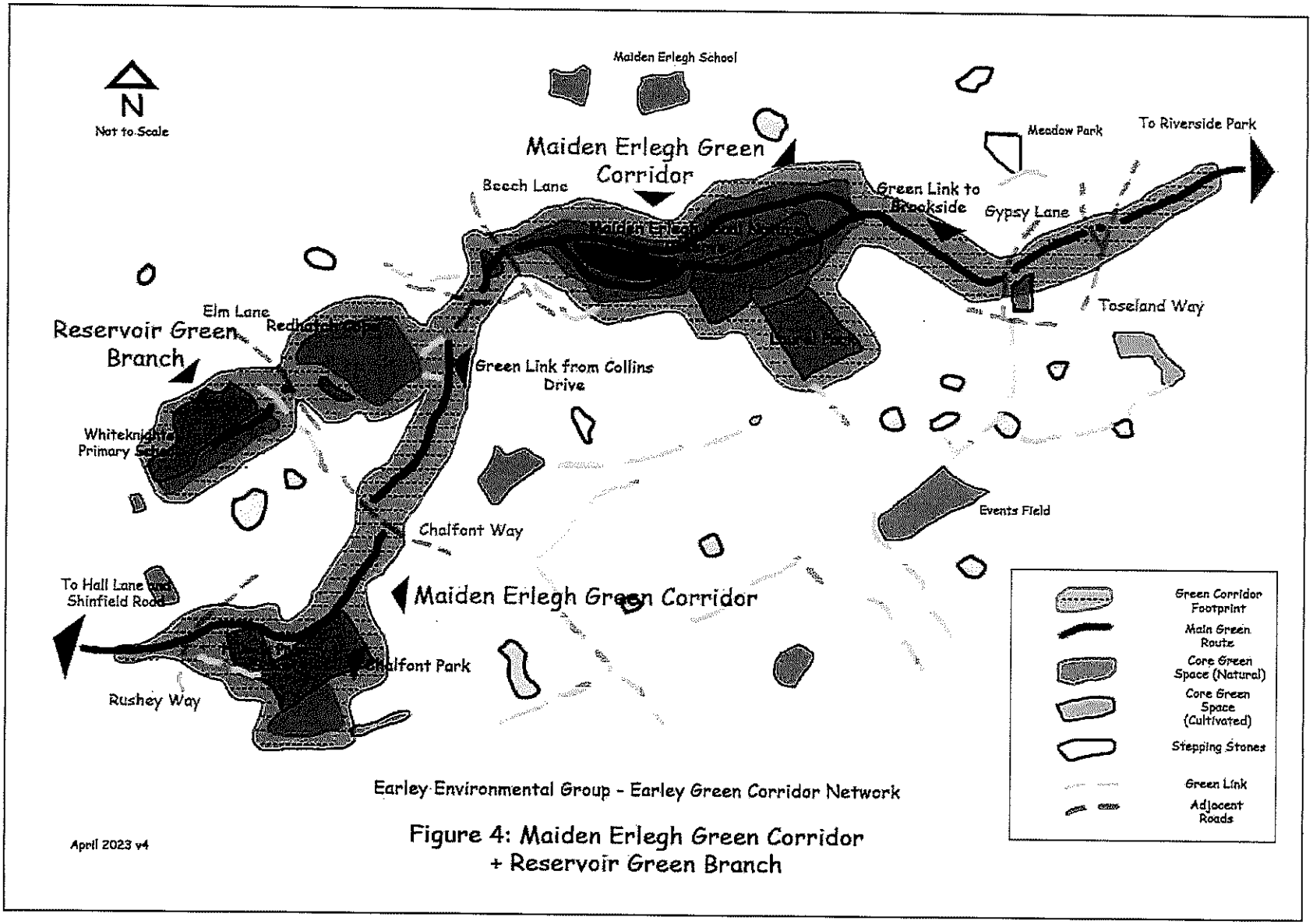
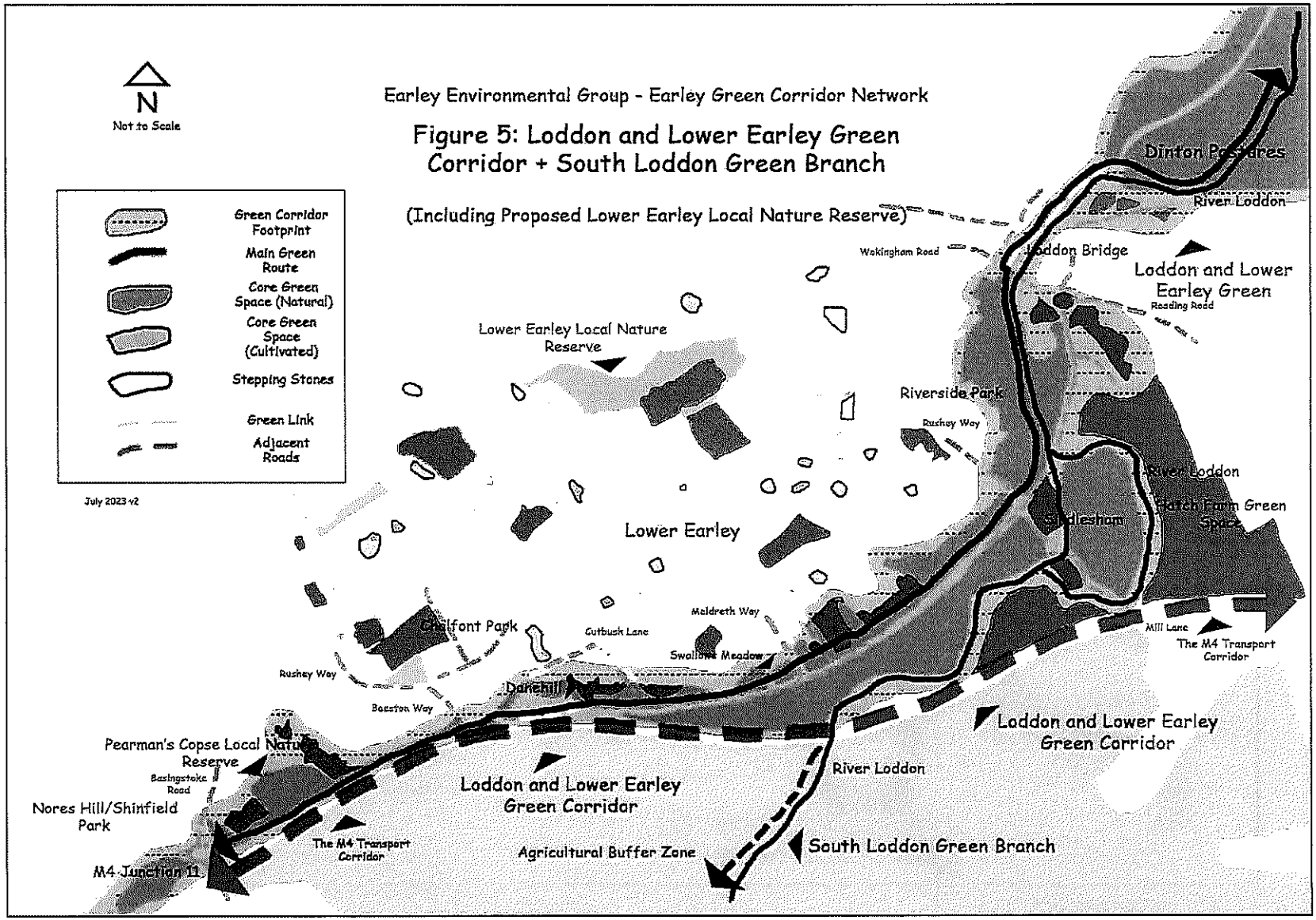


Figure 4: Maiden Erlegh Green Corridor + Reservoir Green Branch


N
Not to Scale
Earley Environmental Group - Earley Green Corridor Network
Figure 5: Loddon and Lower Earley Green Corridor + South Loddon Green Branch
(Including Proposed Lower Earley Local Nature Reserve)
Green Corridor Footprint
Main Green Route
Core Green Space (Natural)
Core Green Space (Cultivated)
Stepping Stones
Green Link
Adjacent Roads
July 2023 v2
Dinton Pastures
River Loddon
Wokingham Road
Loddon Bridge
Loddon and Lower Earley Green
Reading Road
Lower Earley Local Nature Reserve
Riverside Park
Rushey Way
River Loddon
Middlesham
Parish Farm Green Space
Lower Earley
Meldreth Way
Chalfont Park
Cutbush Lane
Swallows Meadow
Mill Lane
The M4 Transport Corridor
Rushey Way
Dorchill
Beaston Way
Loddon and Lower Earley Green Corridor
Pearman's Copse Local Nature Reserve
Basingstoke Road
River Loddon
Nores Hill/Shinfield Park
Loddon and Lower Earley Green Corridor
The M4 Transport Corridor
Agricultural Buffer Zone
South Loddon Green Branch
M4 Junction 11

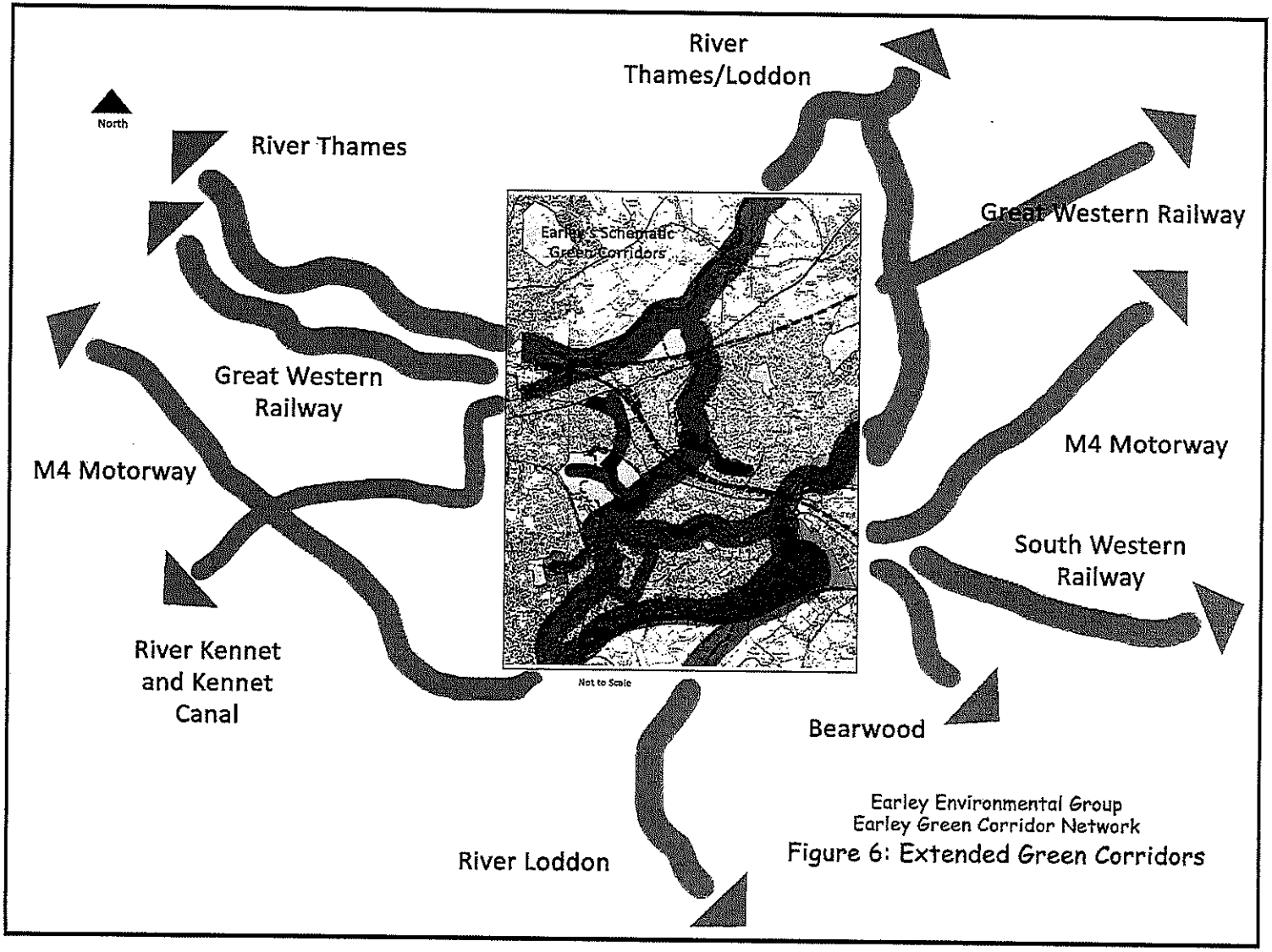


Figure 6: Extended Green Corridors