

Amenities and Leisure Committee Meeting – 13th September 2023

Agenda Item 5.1 – Green Fair

The Day Before

With a forecast of heavy rain, wind and the possibility of Storm Antoni hitting Earley, staff had to consider whether or not the Green Fair could go ahead. Re-scheduling the event to a different date was not feasible, a huge amount of organisation goes into the event and the availability of stallholders would have been uncertain. As we know, the weather can change very quickly, so the decision was made to go ahead and see what the conditions were on the day.

On the Day

Despite a very wet start for staff at 6.30am, we were pleased to see the first of the stallholders arriving at 7am. The atmosphere was very cheerful with stallholders happily helping each another set up. Unfortunately, a few stallholders cancelled the night before and a few others were a no show on the day. Some stallholders arrived late due to the weather, so staff had to think on their feet with some re-arranging of pitches and staff erecting an additional gazebo where visitors could sit and keep dry.

The weather during the morning wasn't too bad, although there was some rain, we had plenty of visitors and everyone was in good spirits. The afternoon saw the arrival of torrential rain and the number of visitors started to dwindle. Officers had concerns about the boggiess of the ground and so, in consultation with the stallholders, we agreed to end the fair an hour early at 2pm.

Refreshments

Maiden Erlegh Rotary Club did a brilliant job serving hot and cold drinks and simple snacks and were very busy throughout the day. The Club put out tables & chairs decorated with tablecloths and flowers, which was a nice touch. The Club are keen to be involved again next year. We have a few ideas to further improve the provision of refreshments at future events, we will look into these and have agreed to have further discussions with ME Rotary Club.

First Class Falconry

The birds of prey display was very popular with all visitors. Alan Greenhalgh, the owner and handler of the birds was friendly, approachable and engaging. We got to know Lisa the Falcon, Molly the Owl and Kookie the Kookaburra and many others. The calls of the birds even had some nearby residents coming along to see if new species of birds had moved onto the nature reserve! We have provisionally booked First Class Falconry to return next year.

General Stats

Out of 49 stallholders who booked, 9 cancelled the day before and 11 were a no show on the day. In total 29 stallholders attended.

Emma Carroll Deputy Town Clerk
25.08.2023

Earley Town Council

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Agenda Item 6.

BERKSHIRE'S LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are part of the Environment Act 2021 and are an England-wide government initiative to recover nature. Each LNRS will map areas of current particular importance for biodiversity and work with partners to agree priorities for nature recovery which will be used to create local habitat maps.

The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead are the Responsible Authority for the Berkshire LNRS. Bracknell, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire and Wokingham are supporting authorities along with Natural England. They will help contribute to the strategy.

The LNRS will be a blueprint for Berkshire's Nature Recovery Network that will help local authorities prioritise where and how they should invest and target action in the short-term. It is hoped it will be a crucial delivery plan for the long-term ambitions of each local authority's Biodiversity Action Plans and climate strategies and more.

RBWM has organised a series of introductory webinars for a wide range of partners, including one for borough, parish and town councils on 20th September 2023 at 11am and one for residents on 26th September 2023 at 7pm.

Full details available at <https://rbwmtogether.rbwm.gov.uk/berkshire-local-nature-recovery-strategy>

Councillors are invited to attend one of these webinars and feed back into any further discussions ETC may have on the Earley Green Corridor.

Note:

I provided information on the Berkshire LNRS to Bob Collis, EEG, and suggested the lead officer at RBWM may be interested in his Earley Green Corridor Network proposal as part of the LNRS. Bob has since contacted her and she has requested a meeting with Bob/EEG to discuss the EGCN idea. Once this meeting has taken place, we will meet with Bob/EEG to explore the possible ways in which ETC can provide support to the proposal. A report will be provided to a future meeting of the A & L committee for discussion.

Jo Friend
Town Clerk
September 2023

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.**

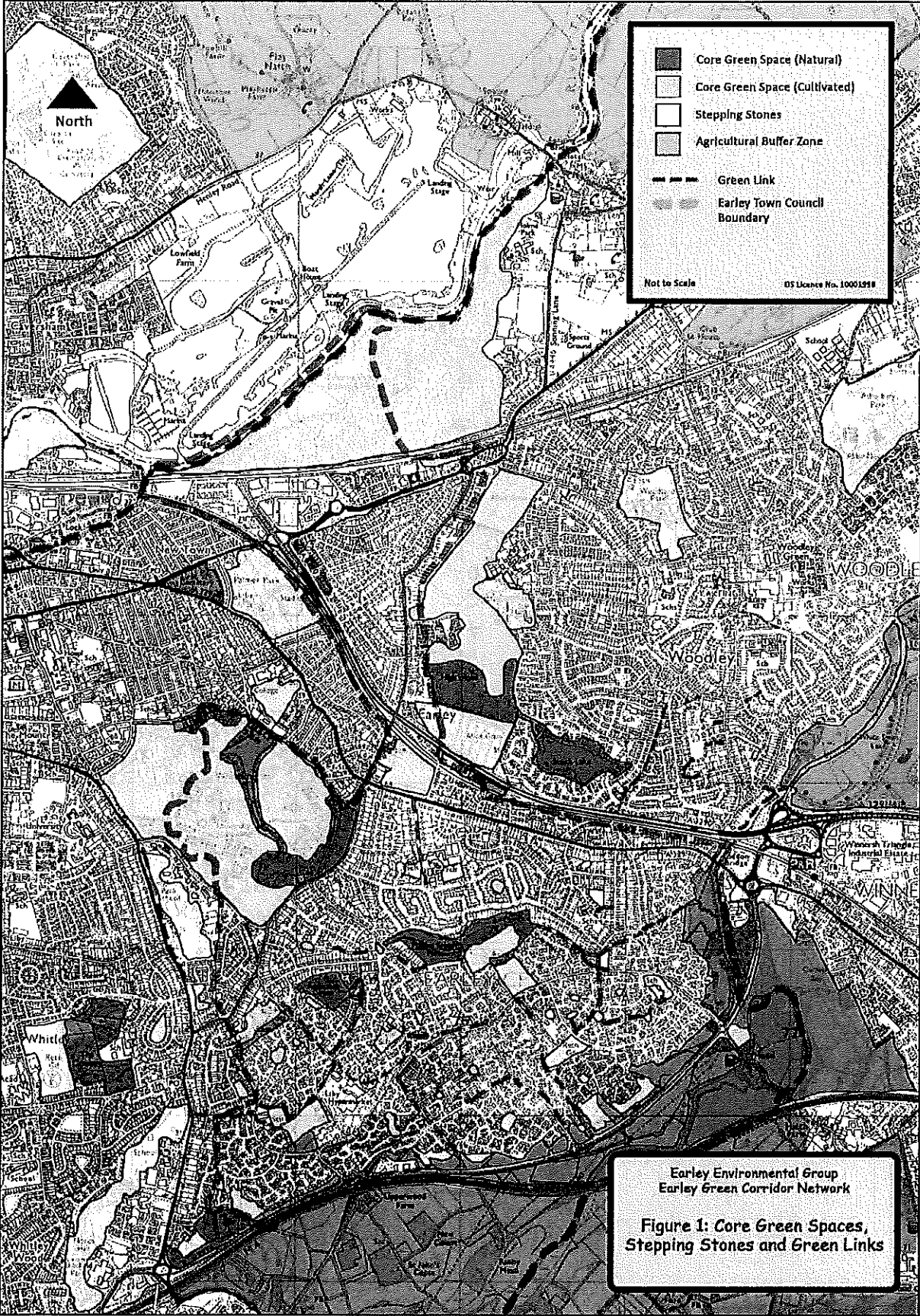
Figures 2 to 5 show the four green corridors and branches, the three green transport links and their connecting green links. The green corridors are shown as a 'schematic footprint' which could be developed to produce a detailed plan for each corridor once the concept has been adopted. The Loddon and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

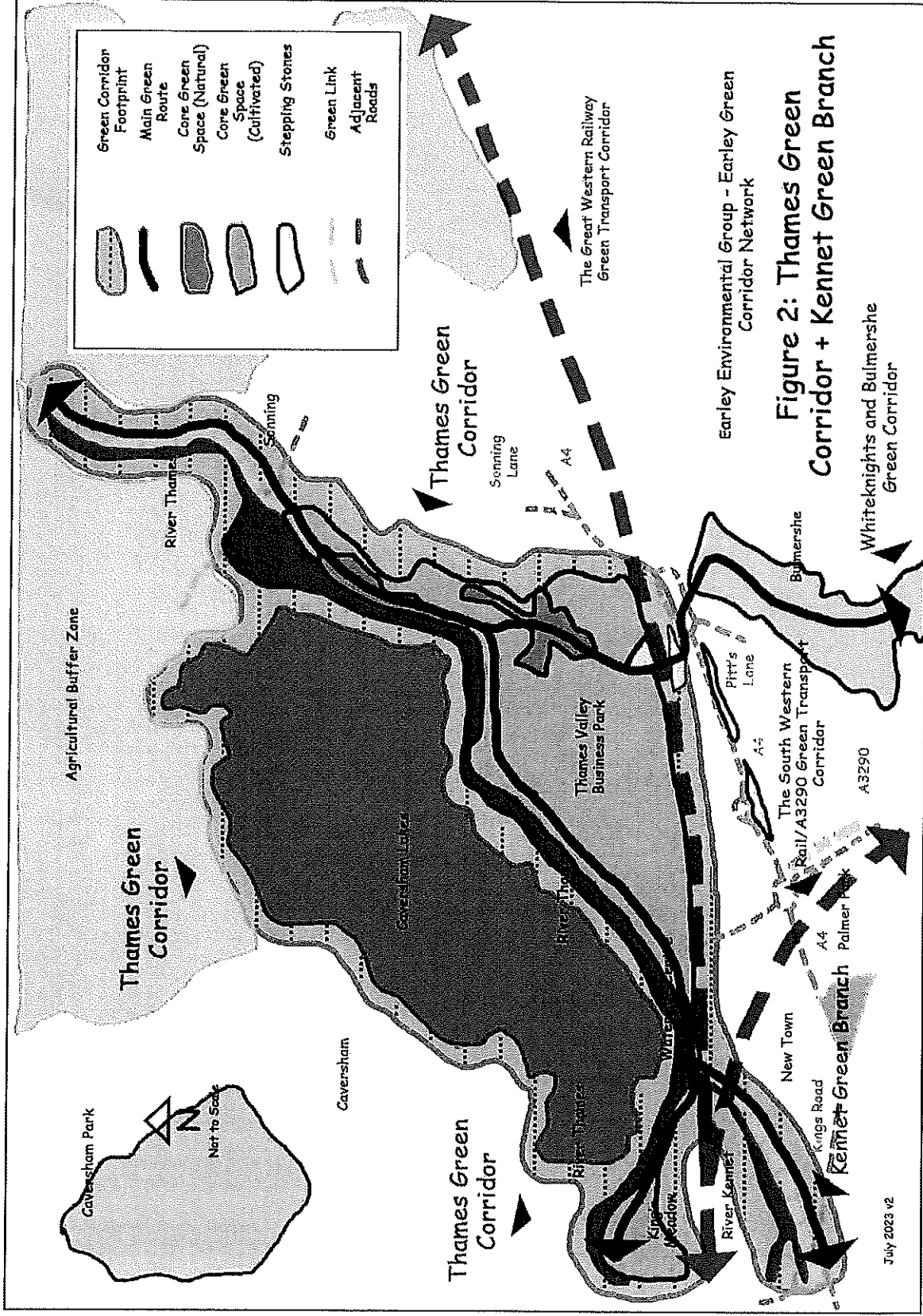
Using the Green Corridor Network

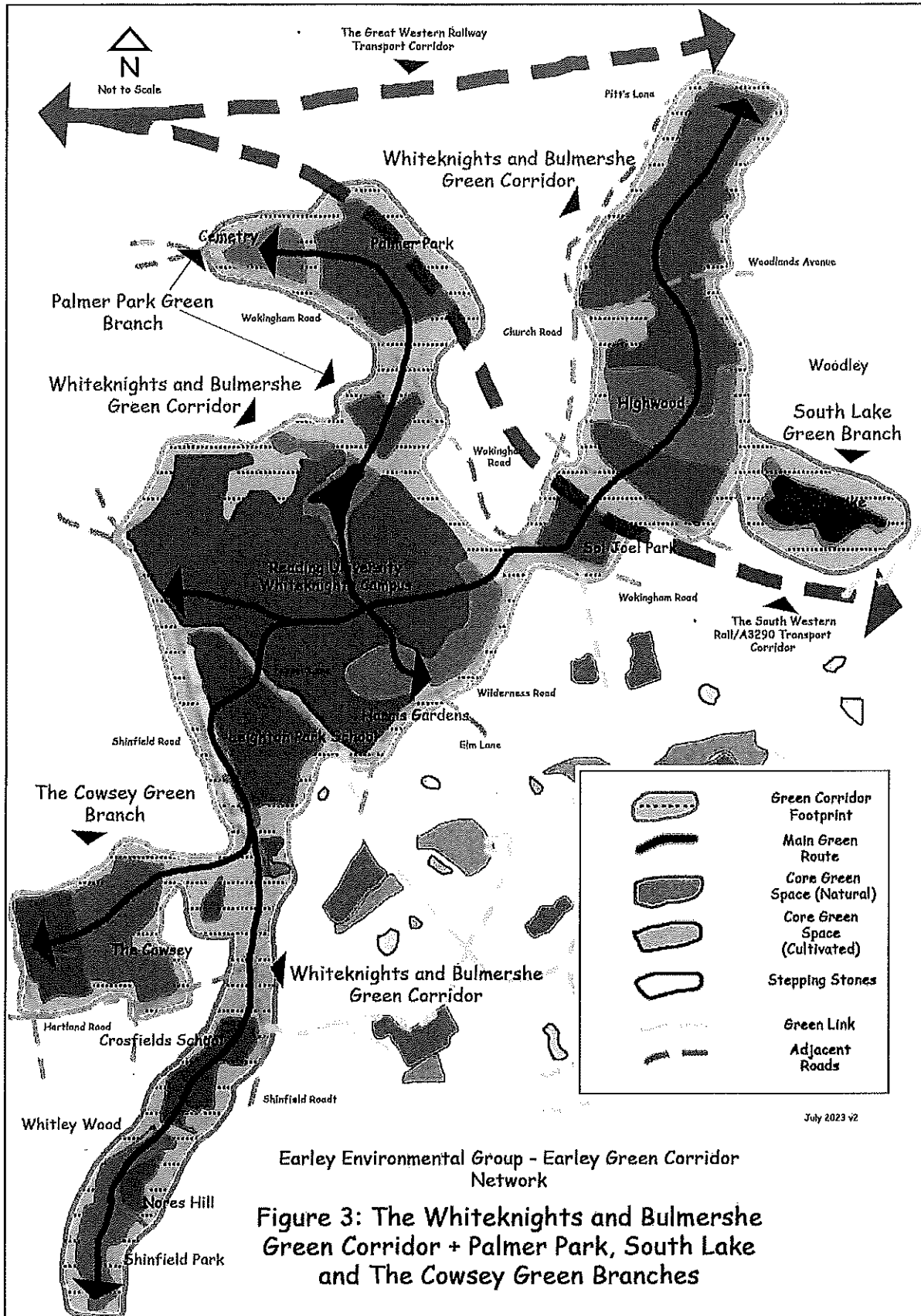
The overall purpose of the Earley Green Corridor Network is to help protect and enhance Earley's natural environment and wildlife. The Network will increase awareness and appreciation of Earley's green infrastructure, encourage a more wildlife-friendly approach to its management, be a reference document 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

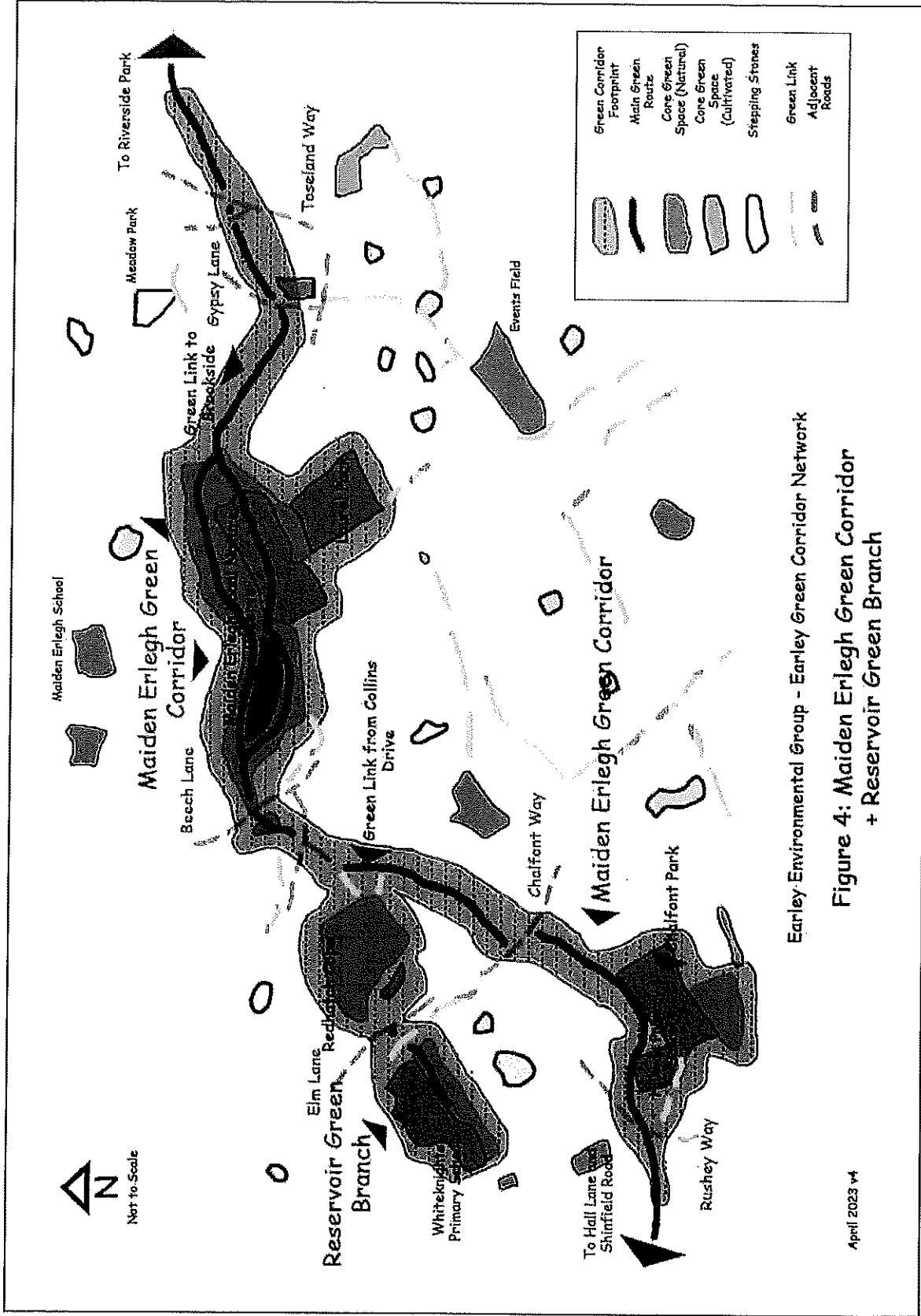
The principle of the Earley Green Corridor Network has already been adopted by Earley Town Council within its **Interim Earley Green Infrastructure Action Plan** (April 2022), which states that "A Green Corridor Map being prepared by the Earley Environmental Group will be the hub of all Green Infrastructure 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.





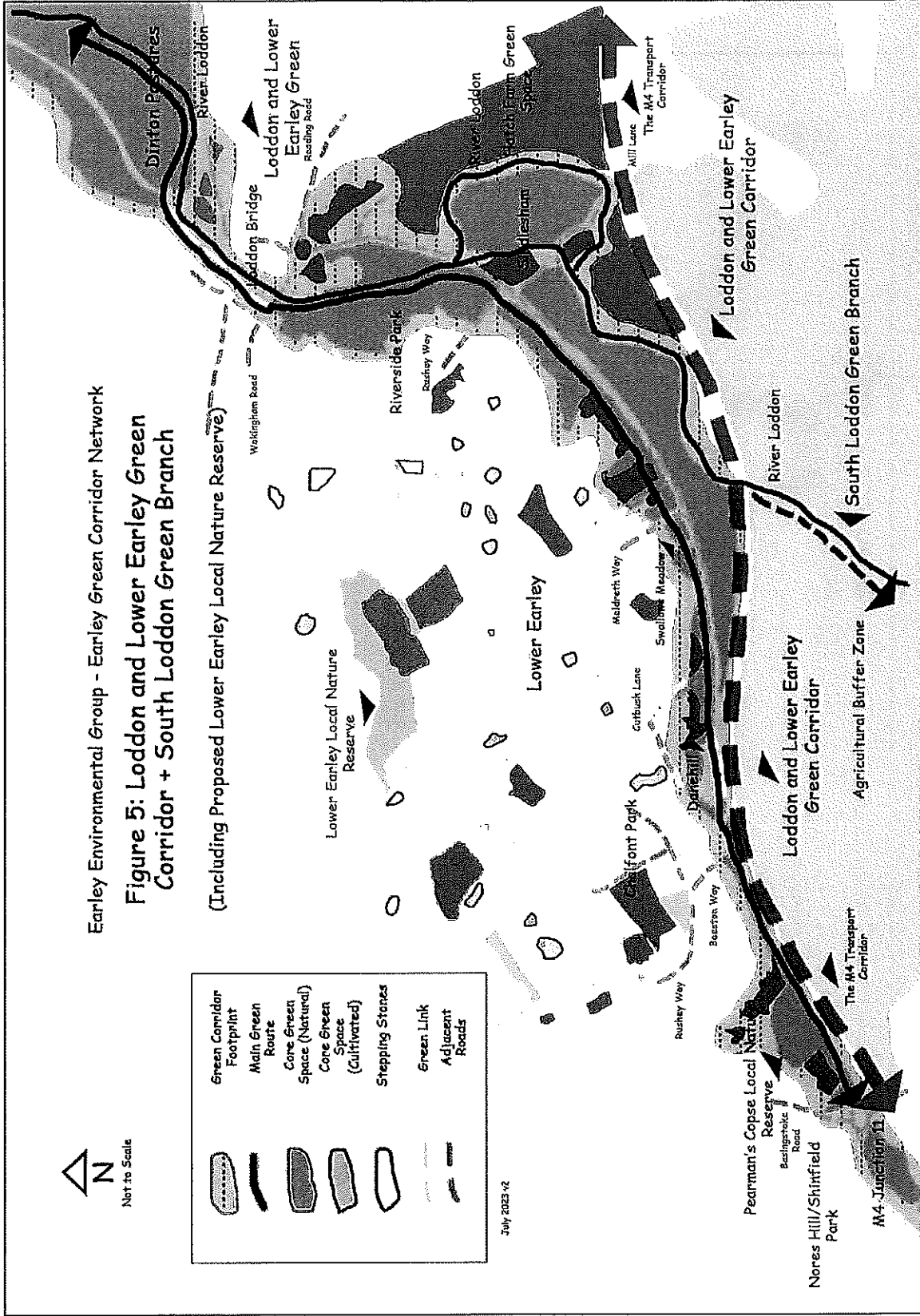


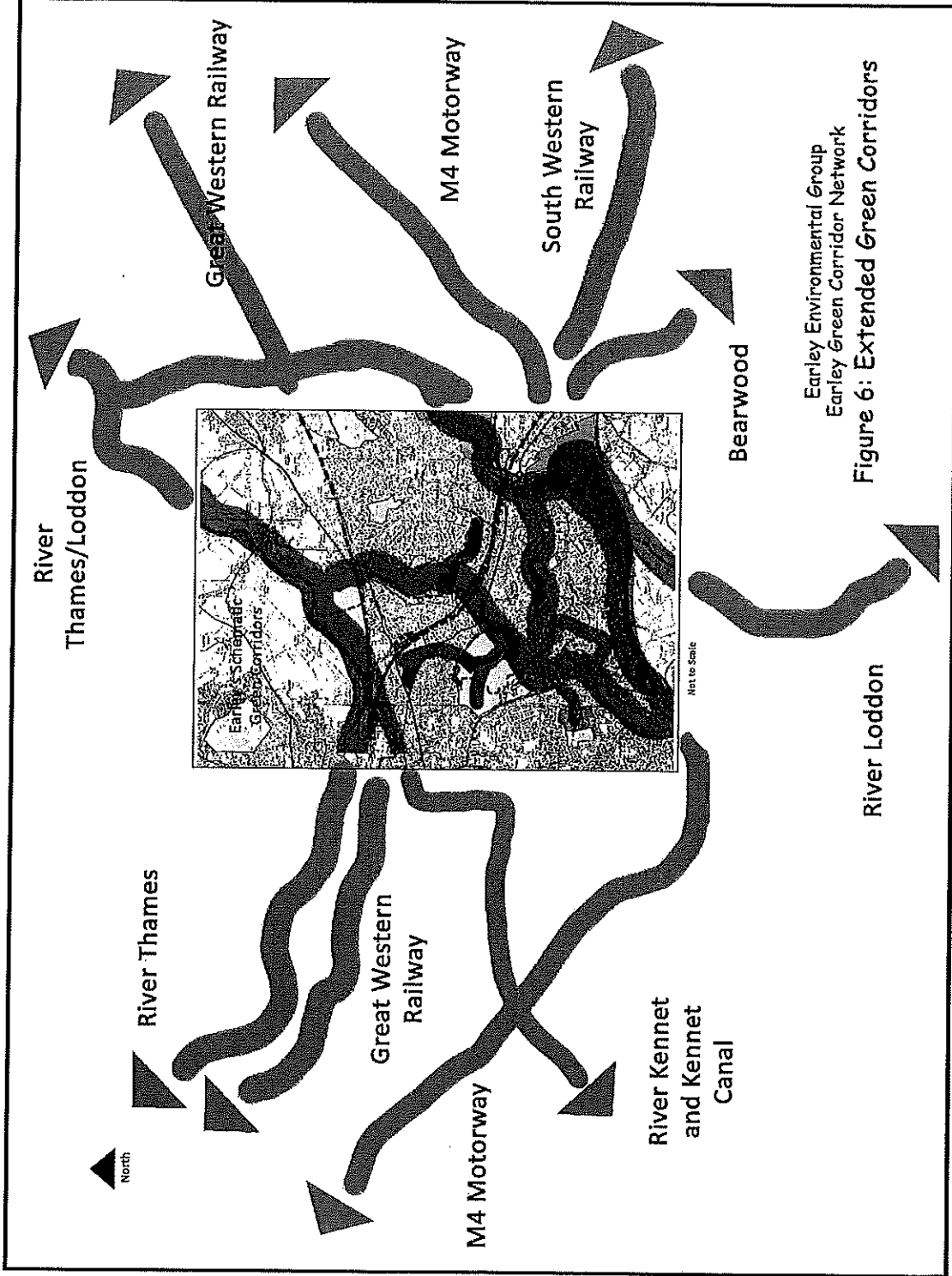
Earley Environmental Group - Earley Green Corridor Network
Figure 3: The Whiteknights and Bulmershe Green Corridor + Palmer Park, South Lake and The Cowsey Green Branches



Earley Environmental Group - Earley Green Corridor Network

Figure 4: Maiden Erlegh Green Corridor + Reservoir Green Branch





Earley Town Council

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Agenda Item 13.

TELEPHONE BOX – SILVERDALE ROAD

At its meeting on 5th July 2023, the Amenities and Leisure Committee discussed the future of the red telephone box in Silverdale Road (adjacent to the parade of shops) which had been adopted by ETC to prevent BT removing this iconic structure.

Councillors have had several discussions about how best to repurpose the structure and have looked at examples of repurposing from other local councils around the country. The kiosk is in poor condition and will need repairs carried out but the Town Council has already repurposed the red telephone box in Wychwood Crescent to house a defibrillator and so has the supplier contacts and experience to do such work. Councillors were mindful that the position of the kiosk makes it very visible to pupils and parents of both Aldryngton Primary School and Maiden Erlegh School and were keen to find a use appropriate to this. It was decided at the July meeting that the kiosk would remain in its current location as moving it would incur significant specialist costs and the structure would lose its power supply.

The Committee agreed that Reading University be contacted to explore some kind of partnership working project. The Town Clerk contacted Molli from External Relations at the University, suggesting the idea whilst acknowledging that the summer break at Reading University would probably mean few responses would be received until the autumn. She circulated my email to various departments at the university and several expressions of interest were received from subject leaders within days. Respondents were excited by the idea of such a project and keen to work with the Town Council. Initial suggestions have included a project by the Typography & Graphics department, a Climate Education kiosk, a well-being project using technology for mindful meditation and an art gallery space. We have agreed to talk further later in September once classes have resumed.

In the meantime, requests have been received by the Town Clerk from two WBC councillors, Cllr Stephen Newton and Cllr Norman Jorgensen following a site meeting they attended with WBC highways officers, MERA and others (no ETC representatives were in attendance as ETC were not informed of the meeting until after the fact). The borough councillors have asked that ETC consider removing the telephone kiosk, either storing it or placing it on another site. They suggest that the kiosk is in poor condition, is not suitable for alternative use at this location and restricts the flow of children coming out of school. The secretary of MERA has also been in contact following that same meeting with a similar request, suggesting that the retention of the kiosk would hamper highways measures intended to improve safety in the area. There has been no contact from WBC highways department nor has any request been made by them.

Jo Friend
Town Clerk
September 2023