

# Chapter 5

## People

GBI assets providing health and societal benefits, including wider connections to nature for both residents and visitors are considered. Furthermore, the distribution of easily accessible and high quality multi-functional open spaces is examined. The permeability of Herefordshire's landscape and potential for integration of sustainable travel to enhance access is also reviewed.

### Strategic objectives

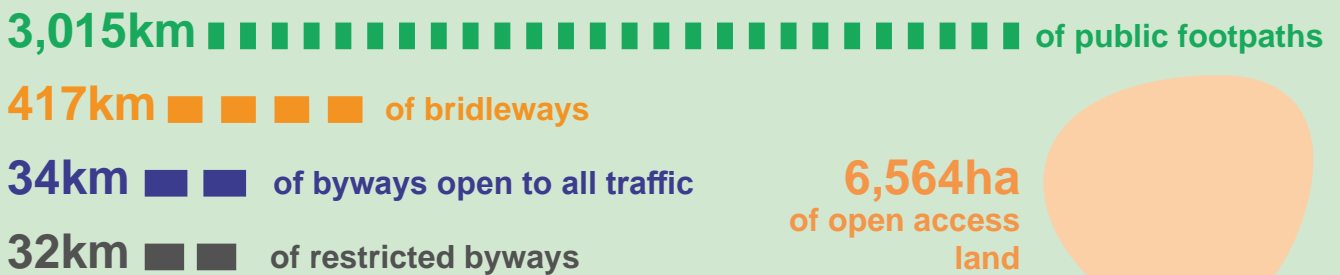
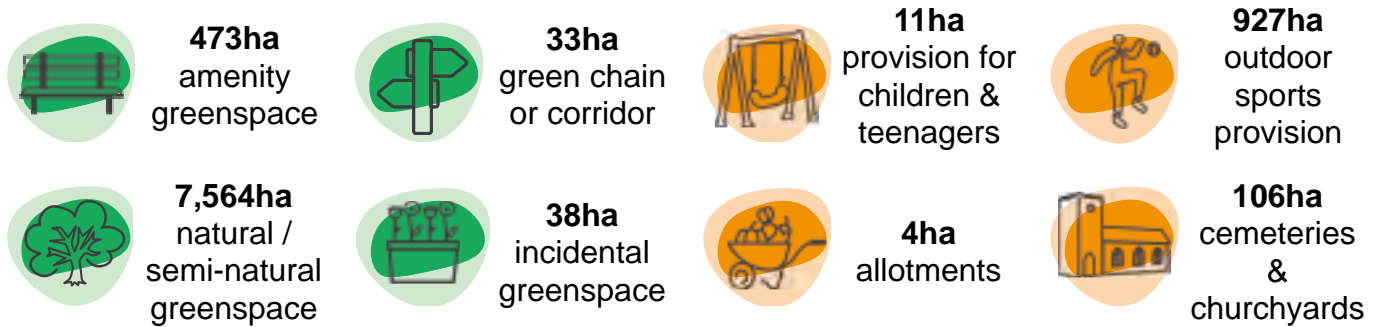
- *Multifunctional:* Improve the quantity, quality and connectivity of greenspaces to provide recreation as well as health and wellbeing benefits for the wider community.
- *Varied:* Deliver a wide variety of types of GBI assets, at varying scales, that can provide a range of functions and benefits to people. Consideration should be given to varying perceptions and the creation of inclusive environments for all.
- *Connected:* Promote movement corridors using green and blue networks, whilst protecting and enhancing existing natural features.
- *Accessible:* Ensure that GBI is inclusive, accessible and provides associated health benefits for local people and visitors.
- *Responds to Local Character:* Utilise GBI to accommodate and manage change to retain locally valued landscape characteristics and benefits.

# Chapter 5 - People Summary



## Key assets

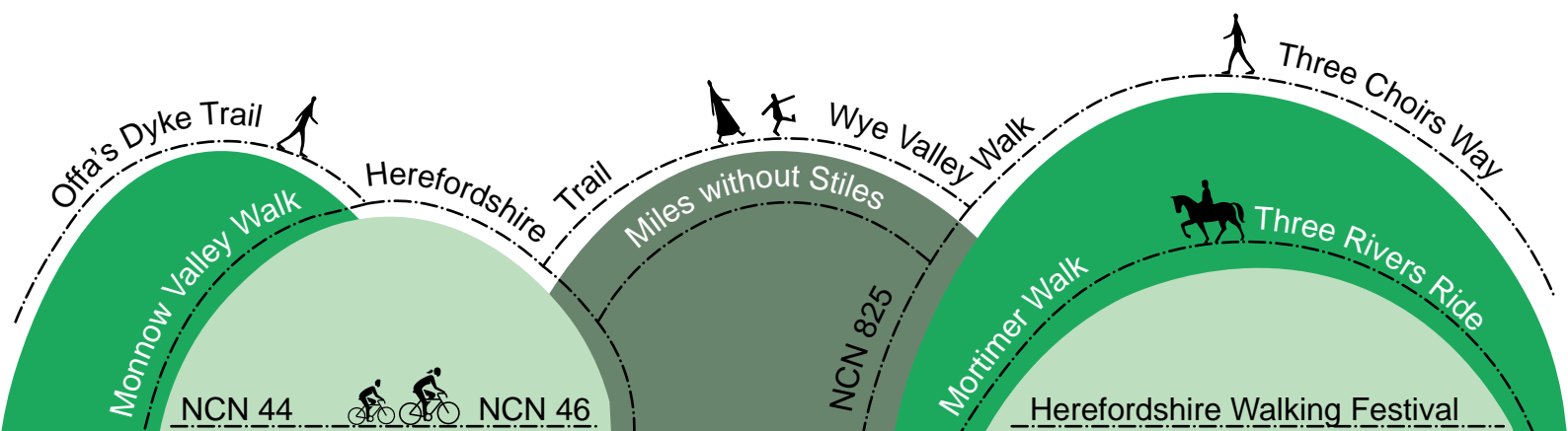
There is the equivalent of 40ha of accessible greenspace per 1000 of the population. Other open space typologies cover an additional 1048ha of open space across Herefordshire.



- Ambitious plans exist to re-establish sections of the Herefordshire and Gloucestershire Canal with walking and cycling opportunities along its towpath.
- A public right of navigation exists along the entire lengths of the River Wye and River Lugg as they pass through Herefordshire, making them popular recreation assets with paddlers.



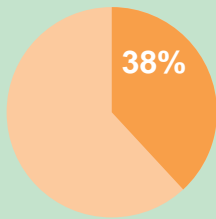
- Outside of the AONBs, Queenswood Country Park and Arboretum is a popular destination site within easy reach of Hereford and Leominster.
- In 2015, it was estimated that the 5 million visitors to Herefordshire contributed £442 million to the economy and supported 6,688 jobs. Distinctive heritage assets, links to local food production and rural countryside form important tourist attractors within Herefordshire.



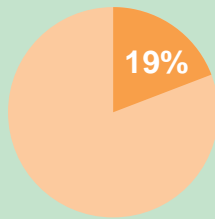
# Drivers and issues

- Fragmentation of the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network is common across Herefordshire and reduces wider connectivity and interactions with the countryside.
- The Herefordshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan highlights the need for better access to destination sites as well as car-free links between villages and amenities.
- Walking and cycling levels in Hereford are below the national average.

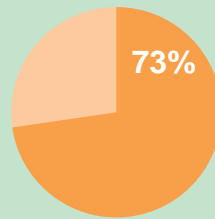
## Trips taken by car that are 2km or less in Hereford



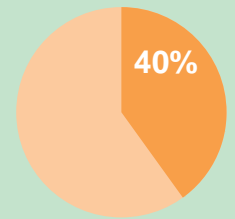
Hereford



England (excl. London)



Hereford

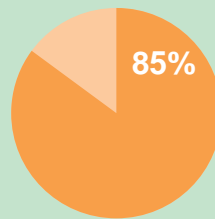


England (excl. London)

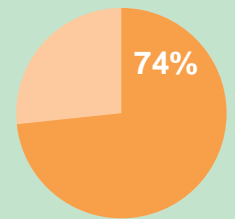
## Trips taken by car that are 5km or less in Hereford

### Private car ownership in households

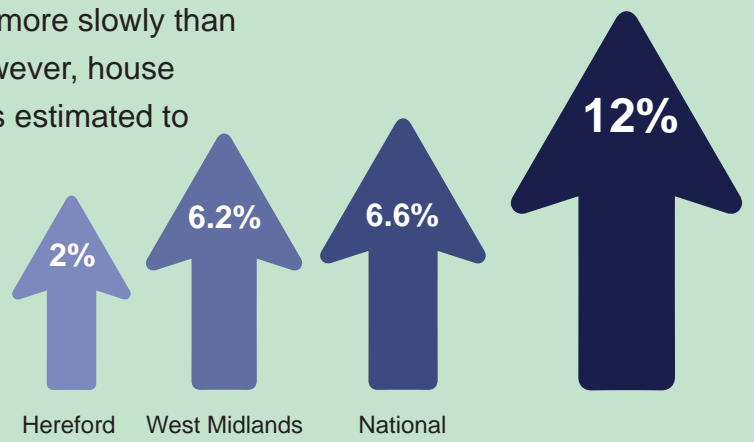
- This trend of private car dominance is replicated across the county.
- Bus passenger journeys across Herefordshire in 2019/20 were 44% lower than in 2011. This decline in bus patronage is partly attributed to a perception of poor network reliability and increasing fares.
- Recreation pressures are common across a number of the county's designated sites, including the Lugg corridor at Hereford and the Malvern Hills AONB. Pressures on watercourses through paddling and canoeing is also prevalent across the Wye and Lugg. This is likely to be exacerbated through development and population growth.
- Herefordshire's population has grown more slowly than the national and regional average, however, house building targets mean the population is estimated to grow much more by 2041, with a requirement for 17,000 new homes to be delivered between 2021-2041.
- Greatest growth and therefore population increases is estimated to be around the major settlements.



Hereford

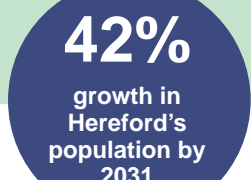


National



Population growth 2011 - 2021

Estimated growth in Herefordshire by 2031





Twice as many people (10%) express low life satisfaction in Herefordshire compared to the UK as a whole.



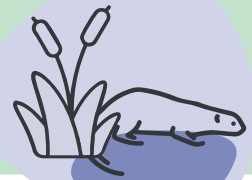
26% of people in Herefordshire experience loneliness some of the time and 8% feel lonely all the time (compared to 6% of people in England).



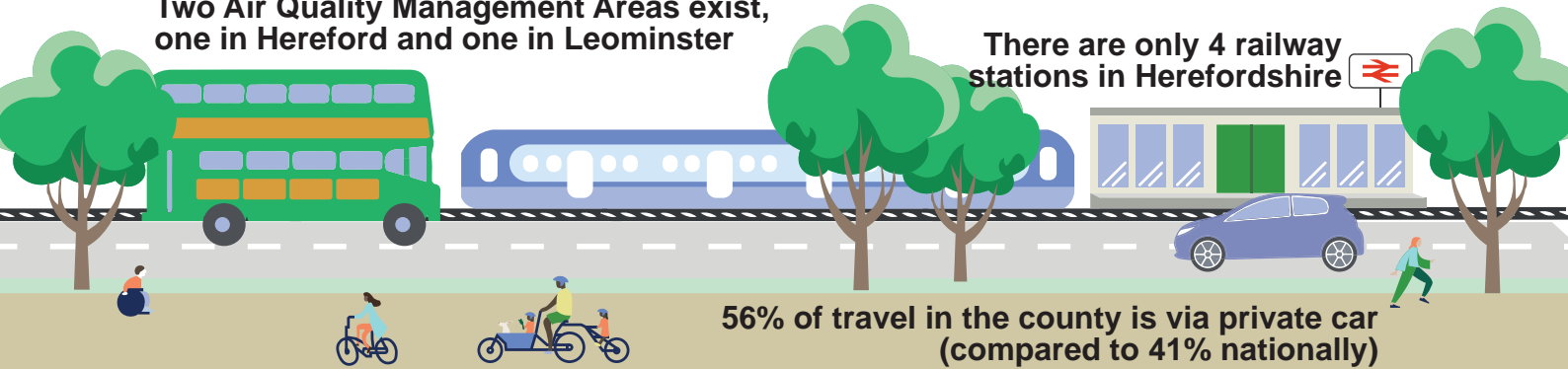
People reporting to be 'active' in Herefordshire (59.1%) is lower than the national average (62.3%).

- The market towns of Bromyard, Leominster, and Ross-on-Wye have less than the recommended 3ha of accessible greenspace per 1000 population and over half of the settlement is outside of the 5-minute and 15-minute 'close to home' standard. The Natural England GI Framework states that there should be an ambition for everyone to have access to a variety of greenspace within 15 minutes' walk from home.
- Nearly three-quarters of all open space within Herefordshire is common land, which has limited recreational value. This is particularly the case for larger spaces (over 10ha). The reliance on one type of open space reduces the overall multifunctionality of the open space network.

Over 80% of open space overlaps with sites covered by natural heritage designations



Two Air Quality Management Areas exist, one in Hereford and one in Leominster



There are only 4 railway stations in Herefordshire

56% of travel in the county is via private car (compared to 41% nationally)

## Emerging opportunities

Improve fragmented PRowS and wayfinding for multiple users

Implement signage initiatives to educate people on farming practices

Enhance recreation access within areas surrounding the Lugg corridor

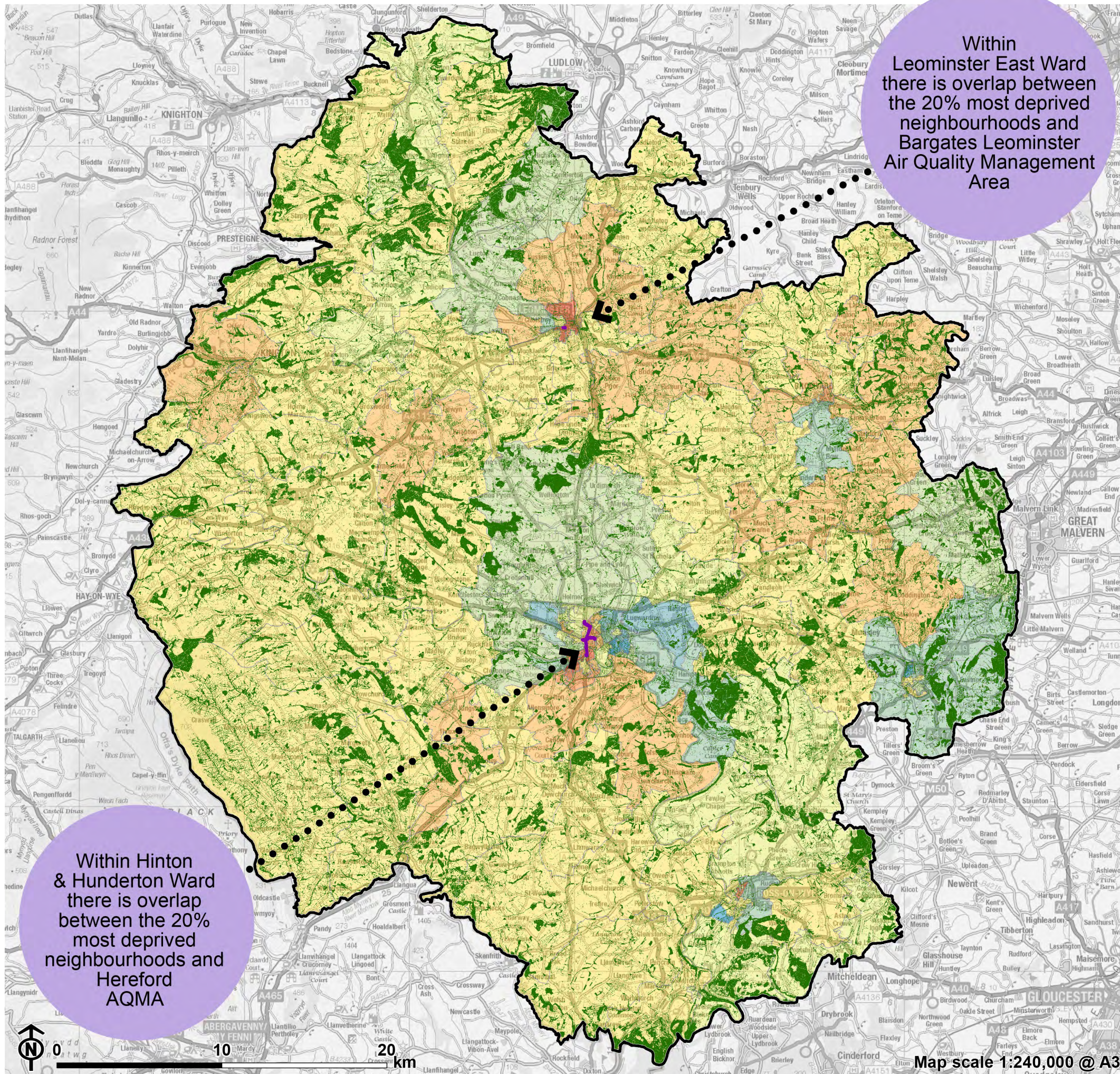
Inclusive, imaginative & creative play spaces for children & young people

Develop heritage trails and promoted routes between destination spaces

Revive the Herefordshire & Gloucestershire Canal for active travel and recreation

Identify 'active access', 'exploring nature', & 'undisturbed areas'

Encourage local management of open spaces using 'friends of' groups



Within Leominster East Ward there is overlap between the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods and Bargates Leominster Air Quality Management Area

Within Hinton & Hunderton Ward there is overlap between the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods and Hereford AQMA



Figure 5.1: IMD, tree coverage and Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs)

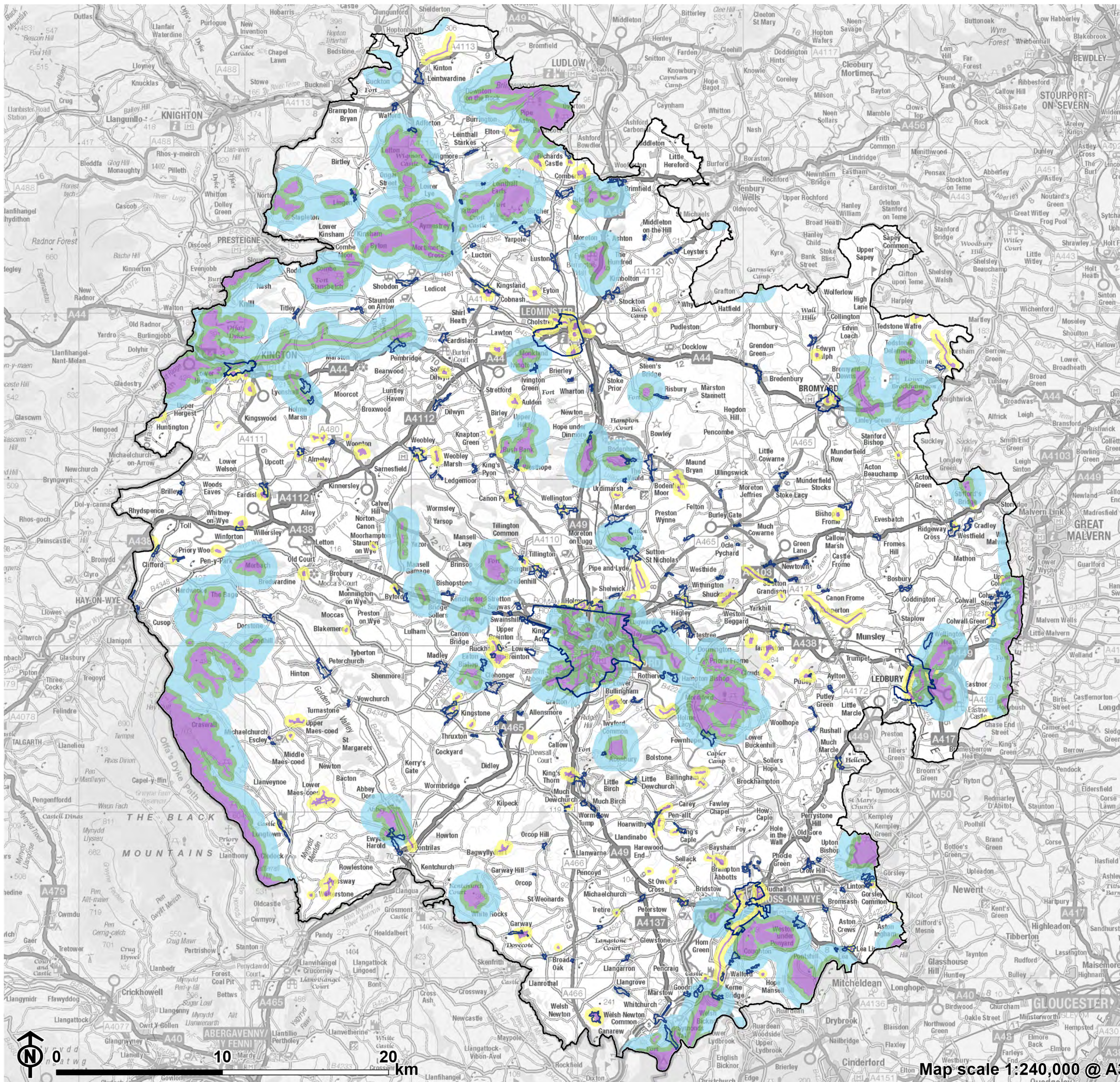
- Herefordshire boundary
  - Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)
  - Tree canopy
- Index of Multiple Deprivation**
- 0 - 10% (most deprived)
  - 10 - 20%
  - 20 - 30%
  - 30 - 40%
  - 40 - 50%
  - 50 - 60%
  - 60 - 70%
  - 70 - 80%
  - 80 - 90%
  - 90 - 100% (least deprived)

15.6%  
average tree canopy cover within wards in the most deprived 30%



Average tree canopy cover in Herefordshire is  
**19.1%**

Source: Herefordshire Council, DEFRA, Communities & Local Government, Ministry of Housing, Ordnance Survey



**Figure 5.2: Access to greenspace close to home**

(from Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework Map)

- Herefordshire boundary
- Settlement
- Greenspace (publicly accessible open space)
- 5 minute standards - access to doorstep or local greenspace
- 15 minute standards - access to neighbourhood greenspace
- Access to 5 minute and 15 minute standards

	% of area with doorstep / local provision	% of area with neighbourhood provision
Hereford	71%	90%
Bromyard	45%	1%
Kington	65%	77%
Ledbury	72%	68%
Leominster	46%	6%
Ross-on-Wye	61%	54%
Rural (within rural settlements)	21%	25%

Source: Herefordshire Council, Natural England, Ordnance Survey



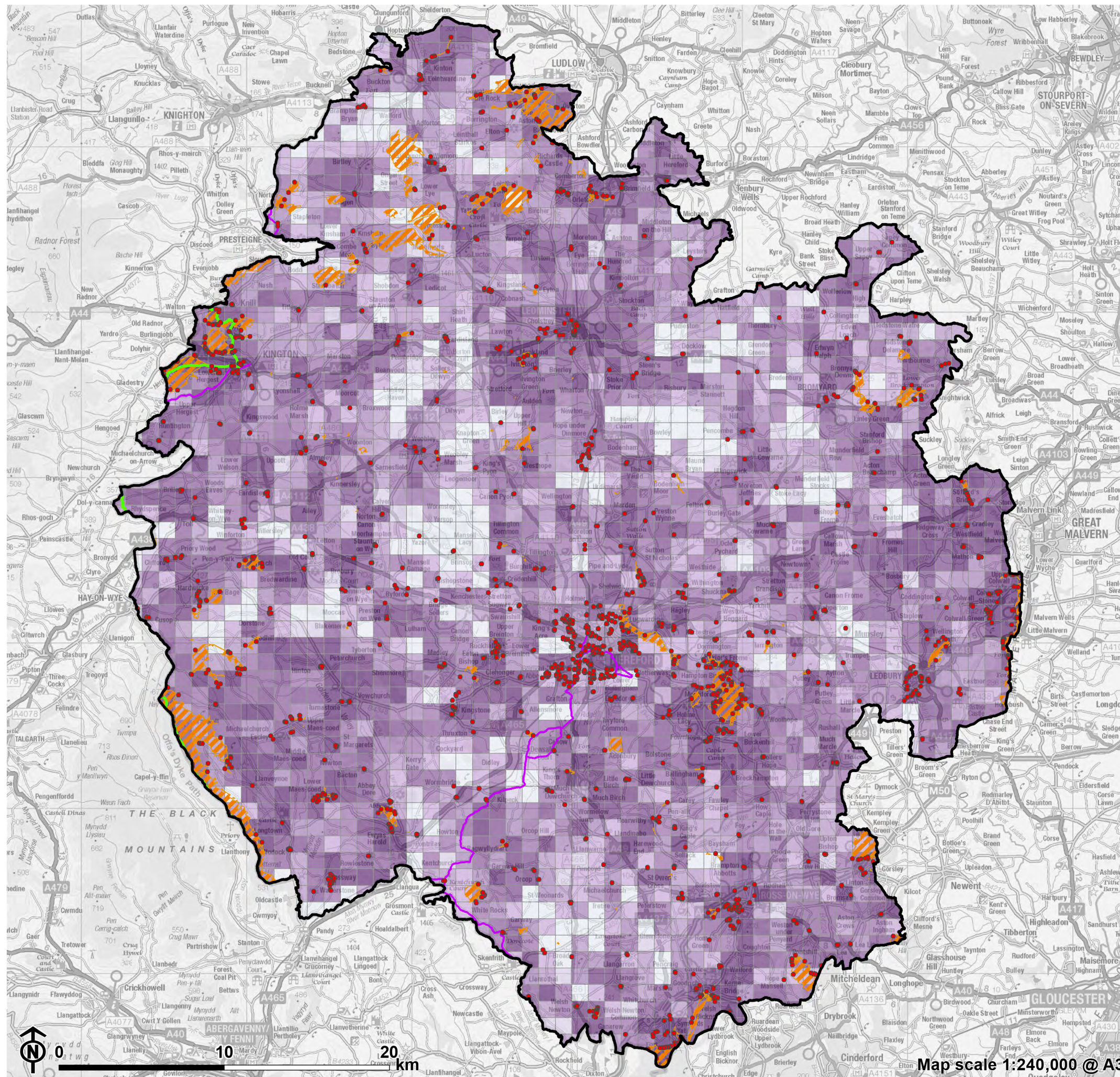
**Figure 5.3: PRoW density and access points**

- Herefordshire boundary
- CRoW Access all areas
- National Cycle Network
- National Trail
- Access point (formal point of access to a public open space)

**PRoW density:**

**Total PRoW (m)**

- 0
- 0 - 115
- 115 - 525
- 525 - 904
- 904 - 1190
- 1190 - 1545
- 1545 - 1964
- 1964 - 2458
- 2458 - 3217
- 3217 - 16609



Approximately **3,498km**  
PRoW in Herefordshire



NCN Route 46 forms **27km** of  
continuous promoted cycle route



**5,900ha** of open access land,  
notably in the north and west of the county

Source: Herefordshire Council, Natural England, Sustrans, Ordnance Survey

Map scale 1:240,000 @ A3

## Key findings from stakeholder consultation

**5.1** The key findings from consultation and engagement (see **Chapter 1**) are listed below:

- Access to green space should be considered in relation to areas of significant deprivation in Herefordshire to help address health and socio-economic inequalities.
- The potential exists to develop an evidence base to inform future contributions around open spaces – could look at projects which alleviate recreational pressure and provide connections to less sensitive GBI assets. Open spaces can influence all themes, with the opportunity for projects to emerge from these initiatives.
- Consideration should be given to balancing the functionality of green spaces.
- Links to health and wellbeing should be used as a ‘hook’ to provide the evidence base to support enhanced greenspace provision.
- Work with the Environment Agency to manage recreational pressure, particularly from canoeing on the River Wye, whilst still maintaining the physical recreation and wellbeing benefits associated with use of the watercourse.
- Explore opportunities for green ‘social prescribing’ to improve mental wellbeing particularly in areas of poor health and high deprivation. The concept should be adopted county-wide, rather than limited to South Wye.



## Conclusions and next steps

### **Public rights of way (PRoW)**

Key issue: Limited and fragmented PRoW network across the county, particularly in relation to bridleway provision.

Next steps: There is a significant need to address severance of these routes and improve safety at key access points where linkages are provided to the local road network. Management of existing PRoW should seek to maximise accessibility by ensuring routes are free from excessive overgrown vegetation. Signage improvements on local trails should be implemented as part of a coherent signage strategy.

### **Active travel**

Key issue: Reliance on private transport for travel within a predominantly rural county, characterised by a dispersed settlement pattern and historic road network.

Next steps: Explore the opportunity to prioritise the creation of active travel routes which connect residential and employment areas with safe, all-weather walking and cycling routes. The multifunctionality of these routes should also be promoted, providing green corridors with integrated Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). Active travel should link up services and facilities, including train stations and bus routes to increase public transport usage.

### **Enhance the multifunctionality of open space**

Key issue: 90% of open space in Herefordshire is natural and semi-natural greenspace, with a significant proportion of this comprised of common land.

Next steps: Seek to increase multifunctionality of open spaces by introducing areas of amenity and active recreation into natural and semi-natural greenspace (whilst avoiding the increasing pressure on the most sensitive, designated habitats). The creation of district-scale destination natural spaces, to complement existing provision such as Queenswood Country Park, should be explored.

### **Visitor pressure**

Key issue: Manage recreational pressure on sensitive sites, including those designated for landscape or ecological value.

Next steps: Consideration should be given to the adoption of a hierarchy of access at sensitive sites to mitigate recreational pressure. This could include the identification of areas for 'active access', 'exploring nature', and 'undisturbed areas' to manage recreational sensitivities. Enhancement of existing district-wide destination sites and creation of larger, accessible natural areas should also be encouraged and promoted to enhance the tourism and recreational offer of the county.

### **Quantity of accessible greenspace within market towns**

Key issue: Bromyard, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye have low levels of neighbourhood greenspace provision (15 minute standards).

Next steps: Explore opportunities for the creation of greener neighbourhoods with multifunctional spaces at least 0.5ha in size as part of new developments and population growth within the market towns.