

## ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

### LANDUSE AND LANDSCAPE FEATURES SURVEY CONTINUED:

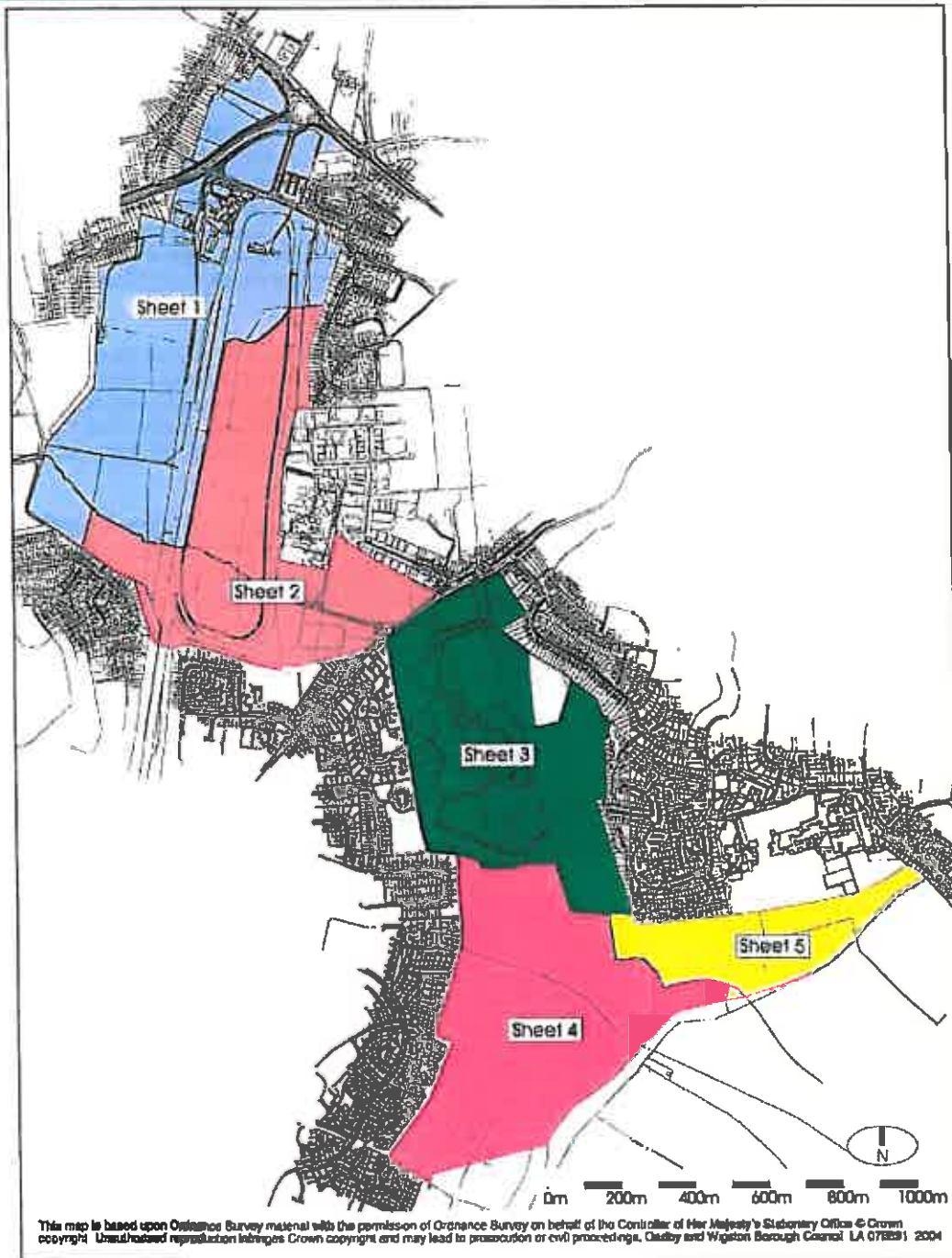
The Country Park is composed of a variety of habitats including broadleaved woodland plantation, hedgerows, grassland and arable fields. The new woodland planting is 2-5 years old and mainly comprised of native species. Existing hedges with mature trees and new hedge planting enhance the ecological value of the woodland. Existing hedges and new planting link the ridge and furrow pasture to the north and the arable fields to the east with the woodland. The arable fields within the Country Park are under Countryside Stewardship and have closely cropped grass headlands.

Wildlife records for the Country Park include a variety of common and less common species, (Management Plan for Brocks Hill Country Park, Oadby, Leicestershire, Summer 2002). Wildlife diversity is expected to increase over time as habitats mature and benefit from appropriate management. The wildlife interest in the Country Park undoubtedly benefits from the close proximity of Lucas' Marsh Nature Reserve to the east.

To the south of the Country Park are arable fields that run down to Black Well Syke, a small stream on the southern boundary of the Green Wedge. The nature conservation value of this southern area is poor. There is one hedgerow linking the Country Park with the small stream and the countryside beyond. The wildlife potential of this and other hedgerows is severely limited by current management practices, lack of connectivity and the intensive nature of the land use. In two of the fields there are the remains of field ponds, (please refer to graphic sheets 4 and 5 overleaf).

Black Well Syke emanates from the residential area to the east flowing between Coombe Park Recreation Ground and school playing fields. For half its length, downstream to a small copse, tall trees including coppiced crack willows heavily shade it. The copse, only part of which is in the Green Wedge includes tall mature ash and crack willow. Many of the trees are fallen or rotten. Downstream of the copse the stream runs in a steep sided open ditch with trimmed banks.

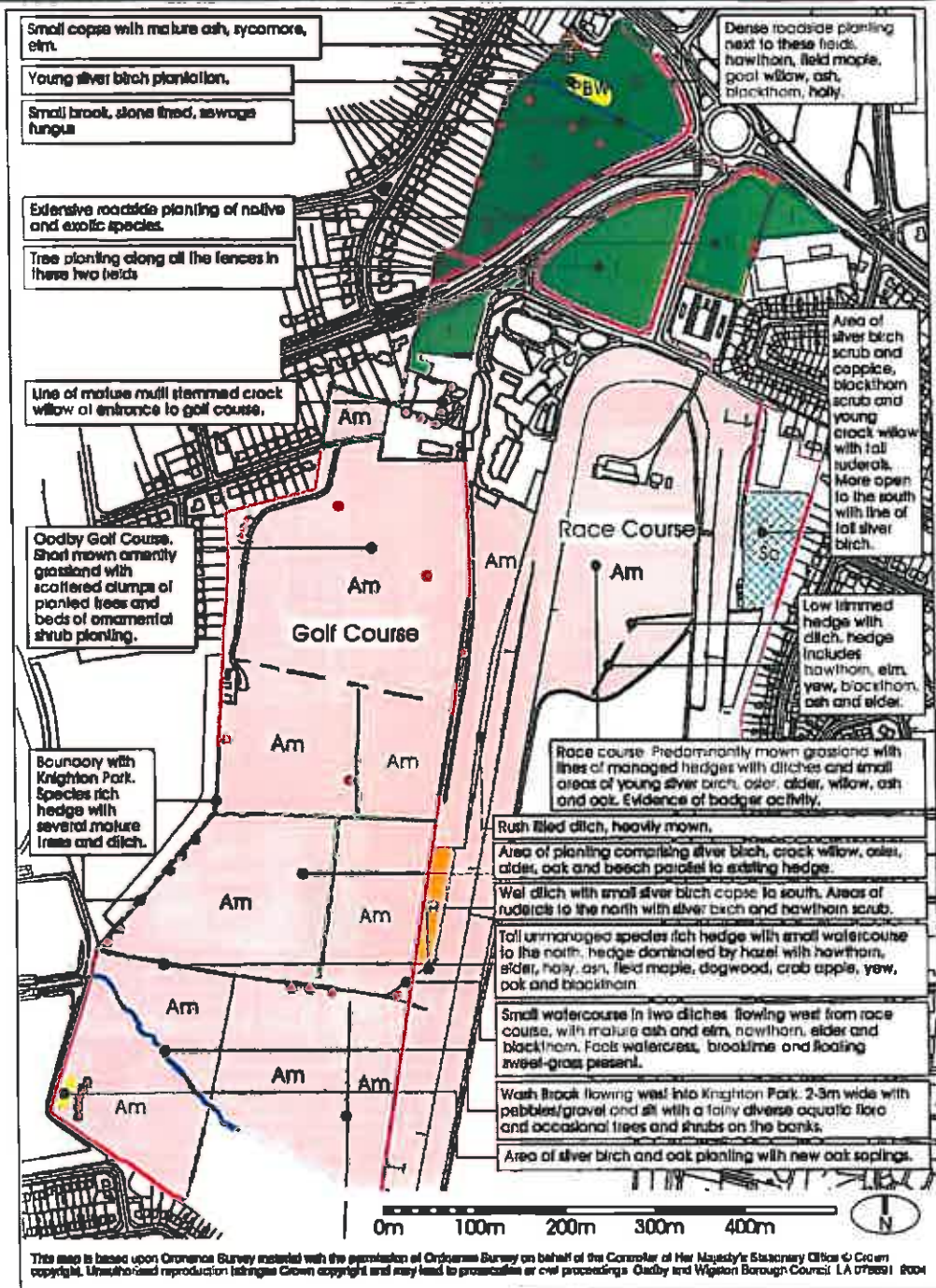
# SURVEY



**SHEET LOCATIONS PLAN**

# OADBY & WIGSTON GREEN WEDGE

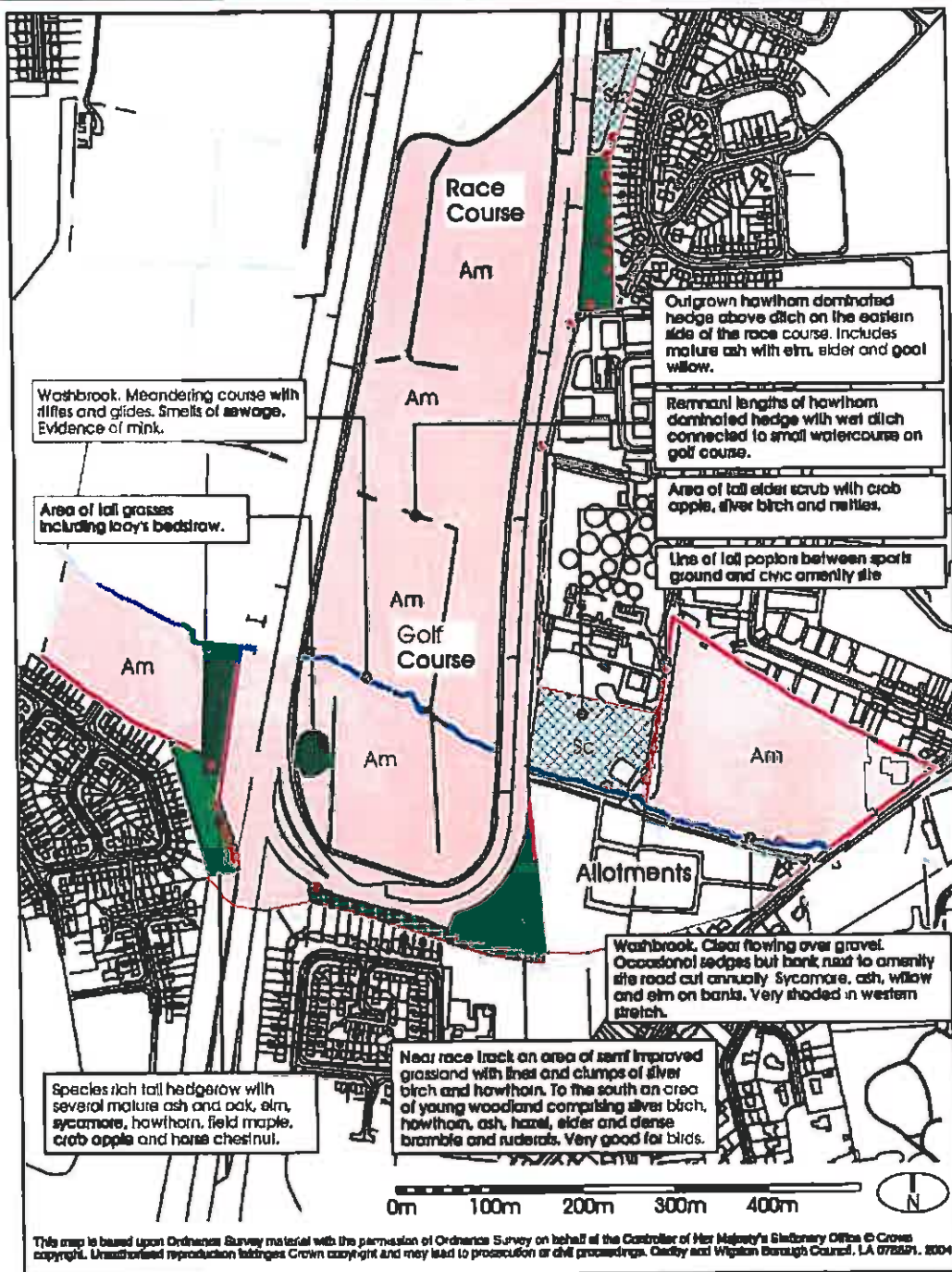
TWO



SHEET ONE

For key please refer to Landuse and Landscape Features Pull Out Plan, page 63.



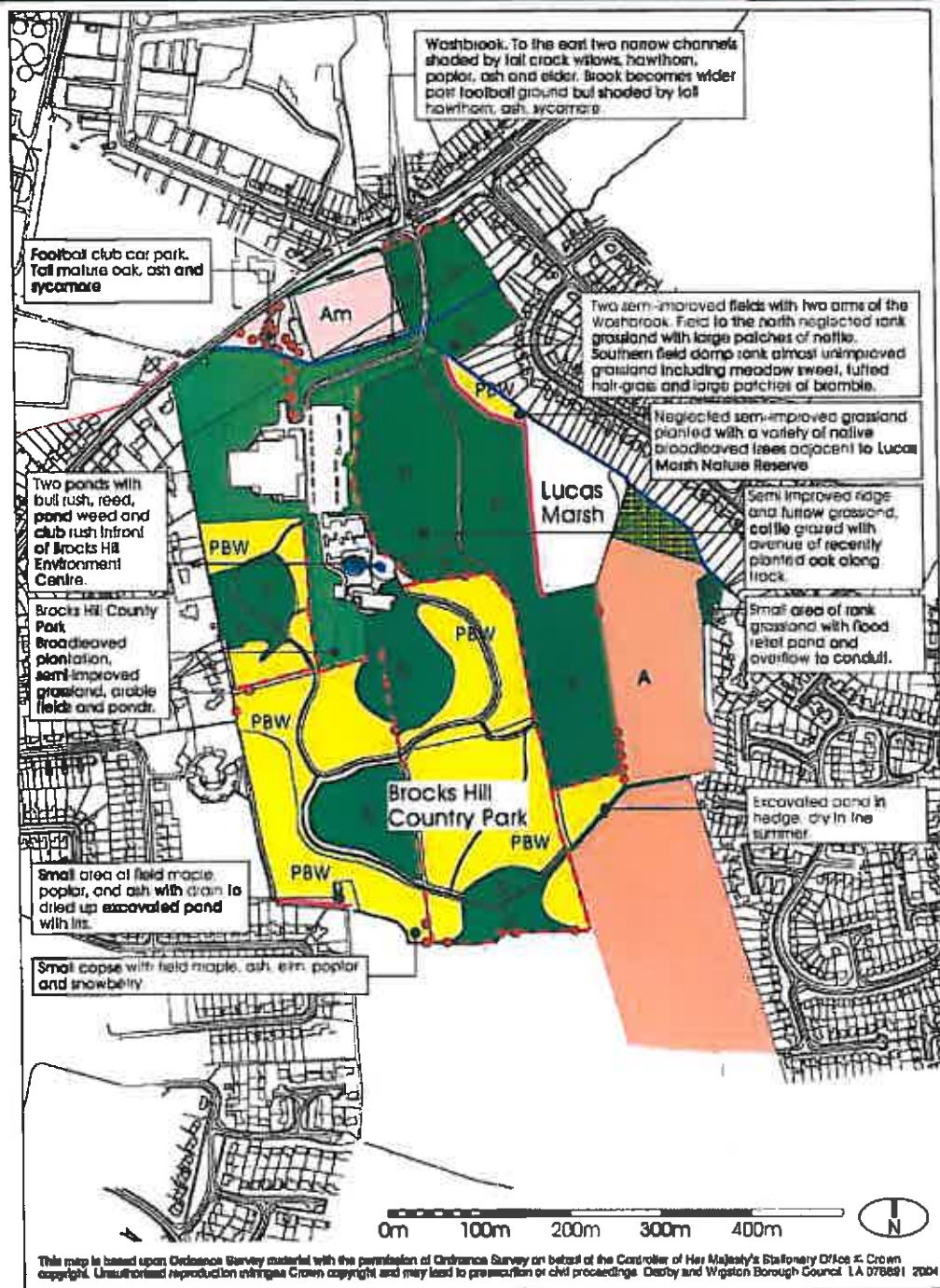


## SHEET TWO

For key please refer to Landuse and Landscape Features Pull Out Plan, page 63.

# OADBY & WIGSTON GREEN WEDGE

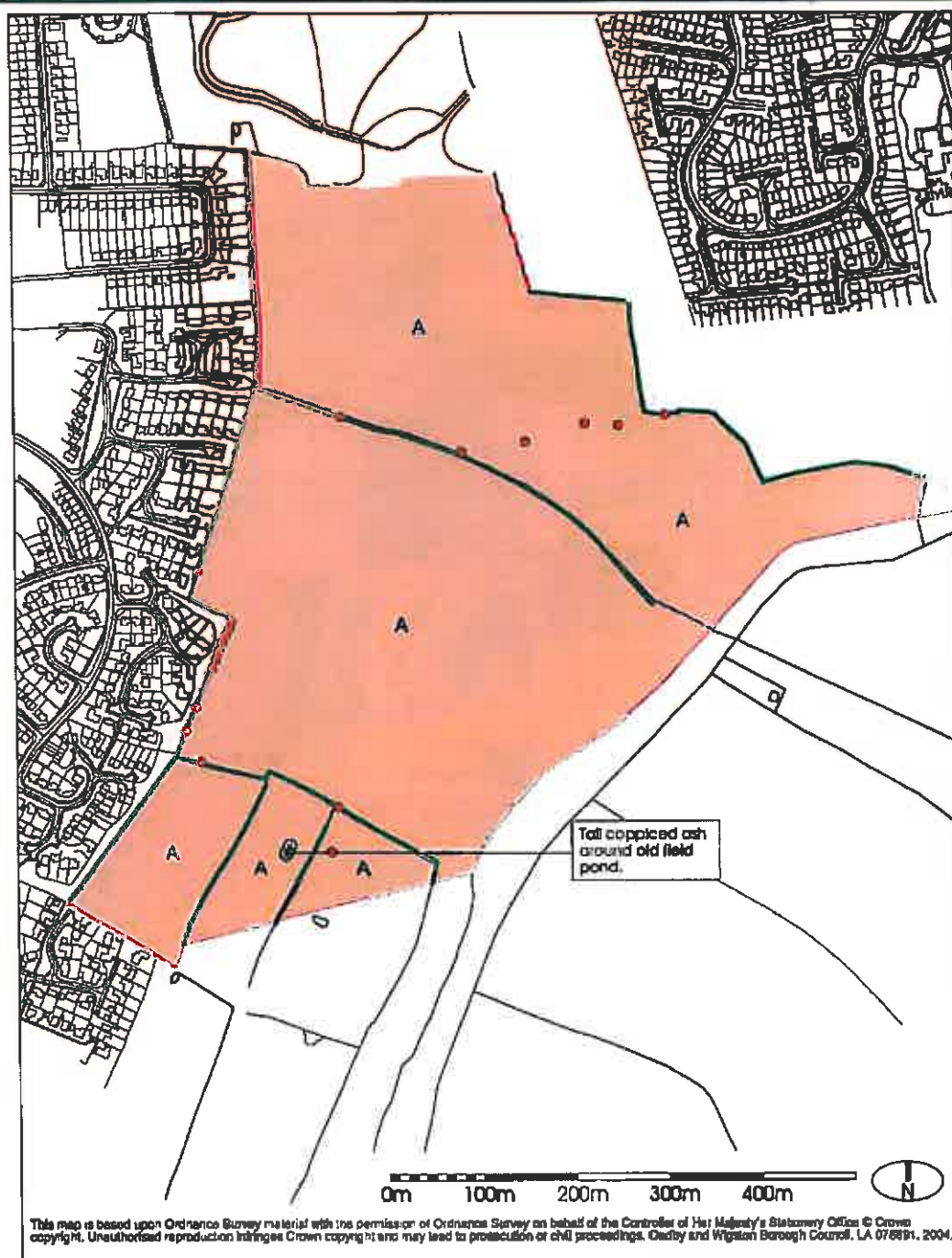
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## GREEN WEDGE

For key please refer to Landuse and Landscape Features Pull Out Plan, page 63.



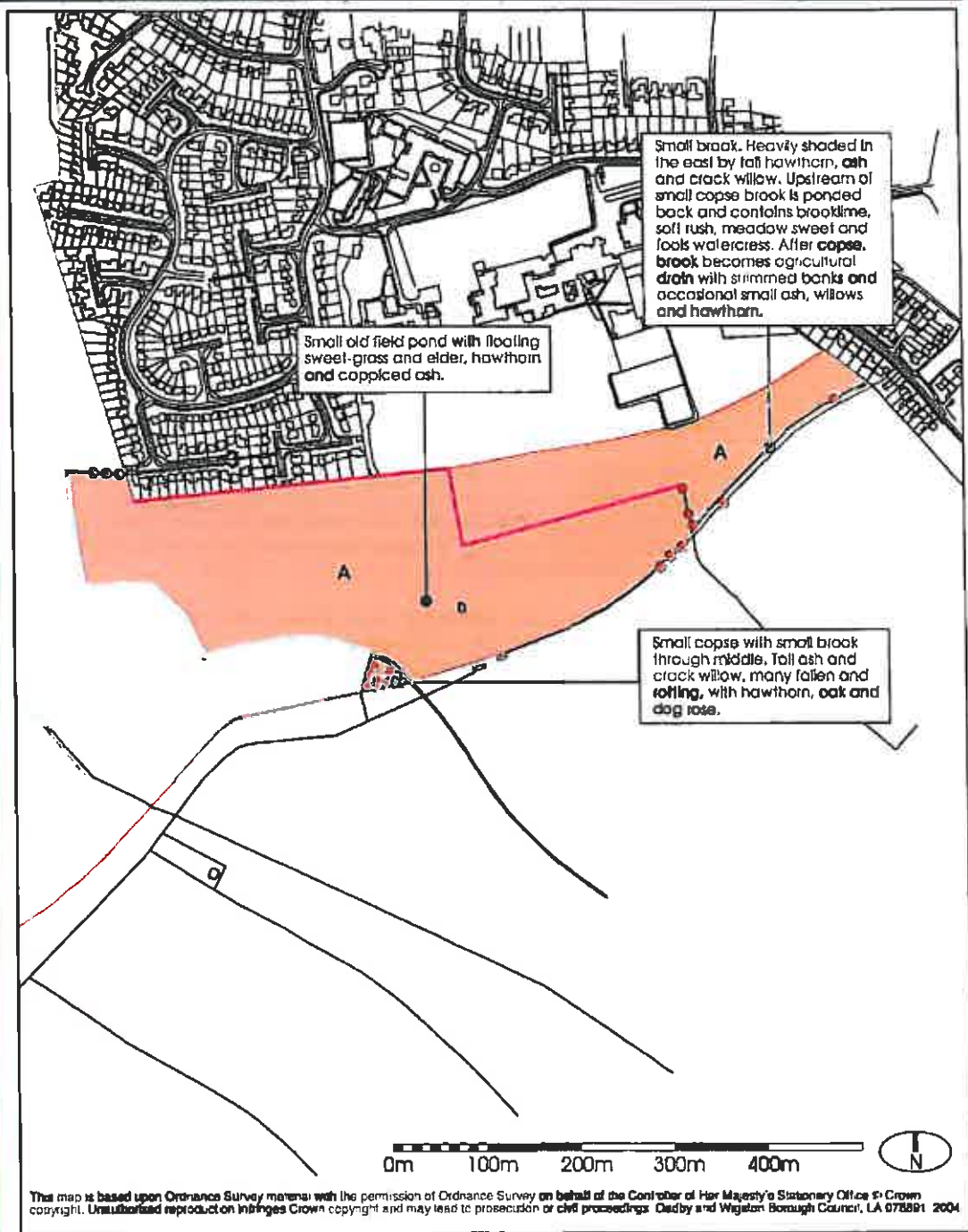


#### SHEET FOUR

For key please refer to Landuse and Landscape Features Pull Out Plan, page 63.

# OADBY & WIGSTON GREEN WEDGE

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SHEET FIVE

For key please refer to Landuse and Landscape Features Pull Out Plan, page 63.



## **2c: TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS**

Information was supplied by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council, concerning the location of Tree Preservation Orders (T.P.O's) within the Green Wedge area.

T.P.O's are designated by a local authority in order to preserve a single or group of trees that are considered important either historically, ecologically or aesthetically, which may otherwise come under threat.

There are no T.P.O's recorded in the Green Wedge north of Oadby road. However in the southern portion of the Green Wedge the numbers of T.P.O's recorded are quite extensive. These can be roughly broken down into three groups.

The first is a selection of thirty one mature trees in the car park adjacent Oadby Town Football Club Grounds, T.P.O 28/29. The species are comprised predominantly of oak and ash with some hawthorn, sycamore, willow and maple species.

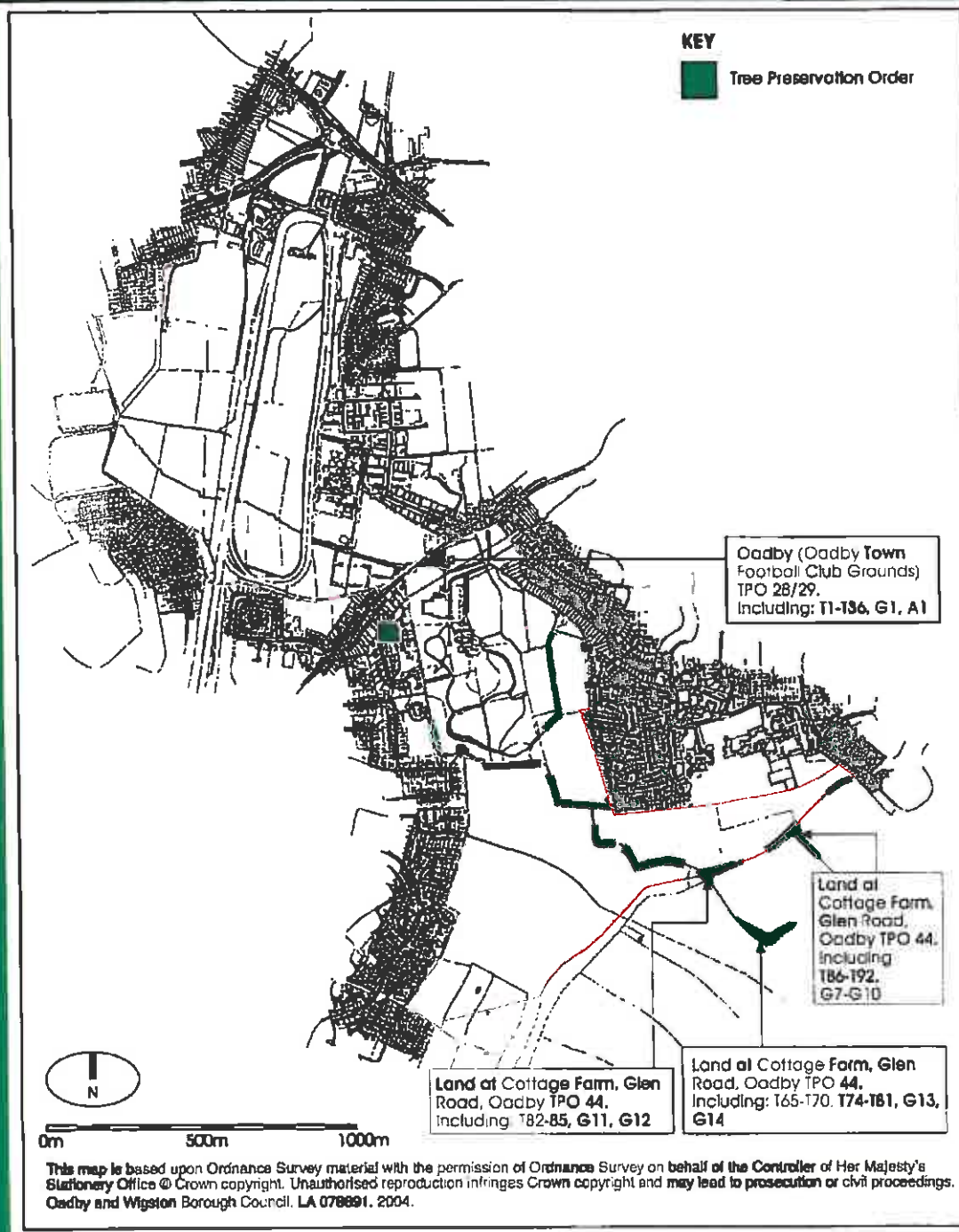
The second selection consists of four lengths of native hedgerow containing hedgerow trees that form important boundaries between Brocks Hill Country Park and neighbouring farmland and also Glenmere Community Primary School and the Parklands leisure centre. A number of these hedgerows are species rich and all constitute remnant field boundaries.

The third is a selection located within the south eastern portion of the Green Wedge, called land at Cottage Farm Glen Road, T.P.O 44. This T.P.O constitutes a number of linear groups and individual specimens, which roughly follow the line of a watercourse along the southern boundary of the wedge and field boundaries northwards towards Brocks Hill. The species comprise predominantly of willow and hawthorn with some ash, sycamore, oak and field maple.



# OADBY & WIGSTON GREEN WEDGE

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## **2d: COUNTRYSIDE STEWARDSHIP**

There are a small number of landowners who are registered with the Countryside Stewardship Grant Scheme. However for the purposes of this report only two may be disclosed as details of a number of schemes are classified as confidential information and therefore cannot be included in this document. Confidential scheme details only account for a minor portion of the overall uptake.

As the graphic on the following page illustrates there are two main areas under stewardship. The first is for land at Knighton Park immediately west of the Green Wedge area. This grant, registered by Leicester City Council, started in October 1995 and is for hedge restoration and associated fencing works.

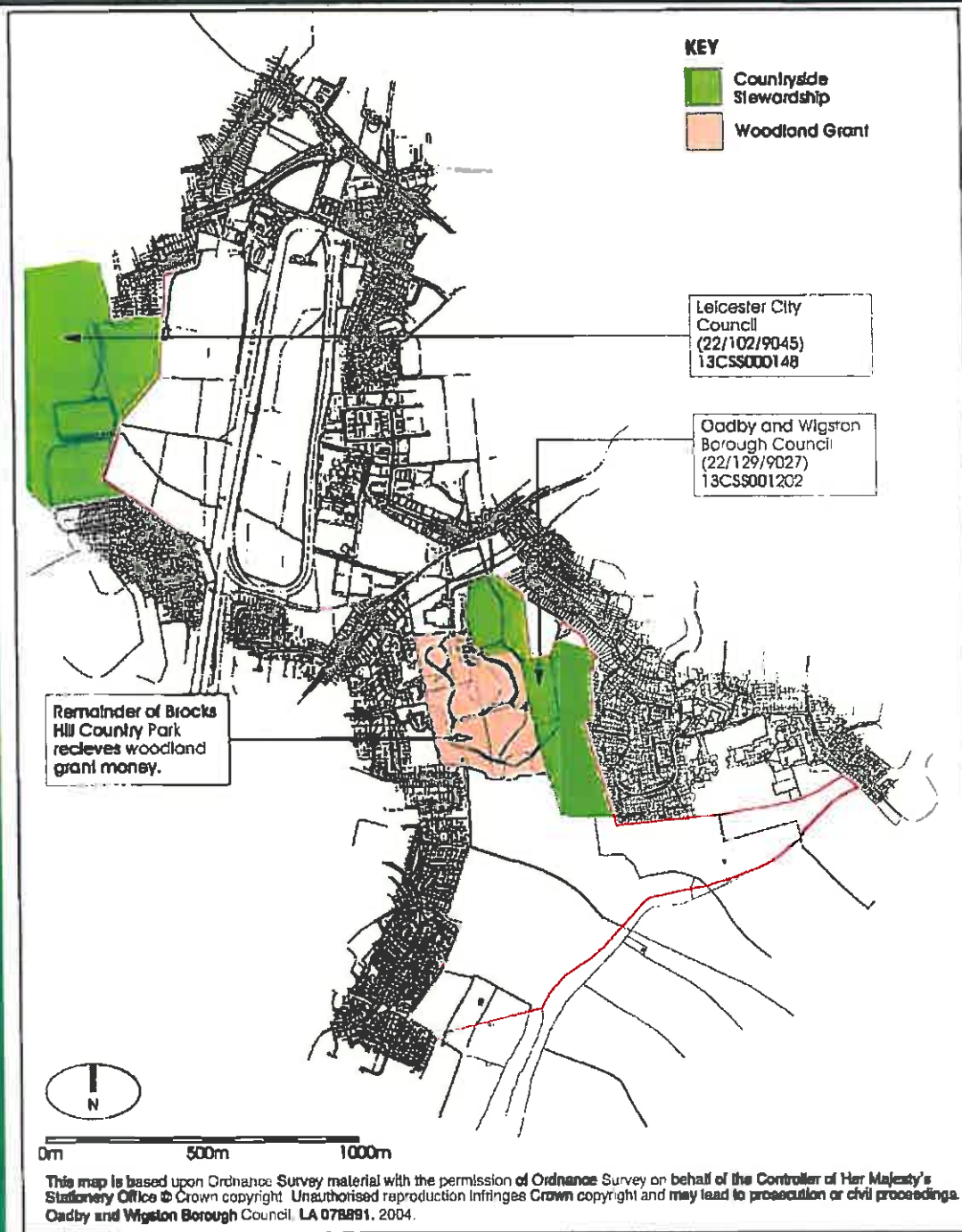
The second Grant Scheme covers four fields within Brocks Hill Country Park in the centre of the Green Wedge. This scheme was started in September 1997 by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and runs until 2006. This scheme includes management prescriptions for permanent grassland (ridge and furrow) and arable reversion to wildflower meadow. It also includes the creation of six metre wide grassed margins or headlands to arable fields. Hedge planting and laying, coppicing works, pond restoration and the construction of stiles and gates for disabled public access were all agreed as capital items.

Evidence on the ground would indicate that those provisions made in the above schemes are in operation and would appear to be working well.

In addition to Countryside Stewardship Grants Brocks Hill Country Park also receives grant money for woodland planting as indicated overleaf.

# OADBY & WIGSTON GREEN WEDGE

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## 2e: USAGE

### LANDUSE AND OWNERSHIP

#### Landuse

Landuse has been illustrated in terms of formal and informal recreation. This has been categorised according to the following:

#### Formal Recreation Use

Private ownership  
Membership or fee required  
Attendance to a sporting fixture  
Exclusive – Selective group

#### Informal Recreation Use

Public Ownership  
No membership required  
Inclusive – Available to everyone

The majority of the area falls within the formal recreation category. In the north the golf course and Racecourse provide valuable recreation opportunities however these are limited to race day fixtures, membership and or a fee, i.e. the golf course is a pay to play course, which gives these areas a level of exclusivity. Similarly the allotments and Parklands leisure facility have an exclusivity, permitting only specific forms of recreation. Oadby Town Football Club and the rugby club either side of Oadby Road are two more areas, which provide valuable recreation opportunities limited to members or spectators.

One possible exception to this rule is the playing fields belonging to Beauchamp College and Gartree High School in the south east. Although these offer a degree of informal recreation their main purpose is for school organised events and they are therefore exclusive to the children who attend these institutions.

There is only one official area for informal recreation, namely Brocks Hill Country Park in the centre of the wedge. Acquired by the Local Authority, (policy R9 in the local plan), this area although offering formally organised events is open to the public for a range of informal activities and no membership is required.

Two areas have been proposed in Oadby and Wigston Borough Councils local plan for informal recreation, (policies R8 and R10). However in order for these areas to be realised they have to first be acquired or leased from the landowners.

#### Land Ownership

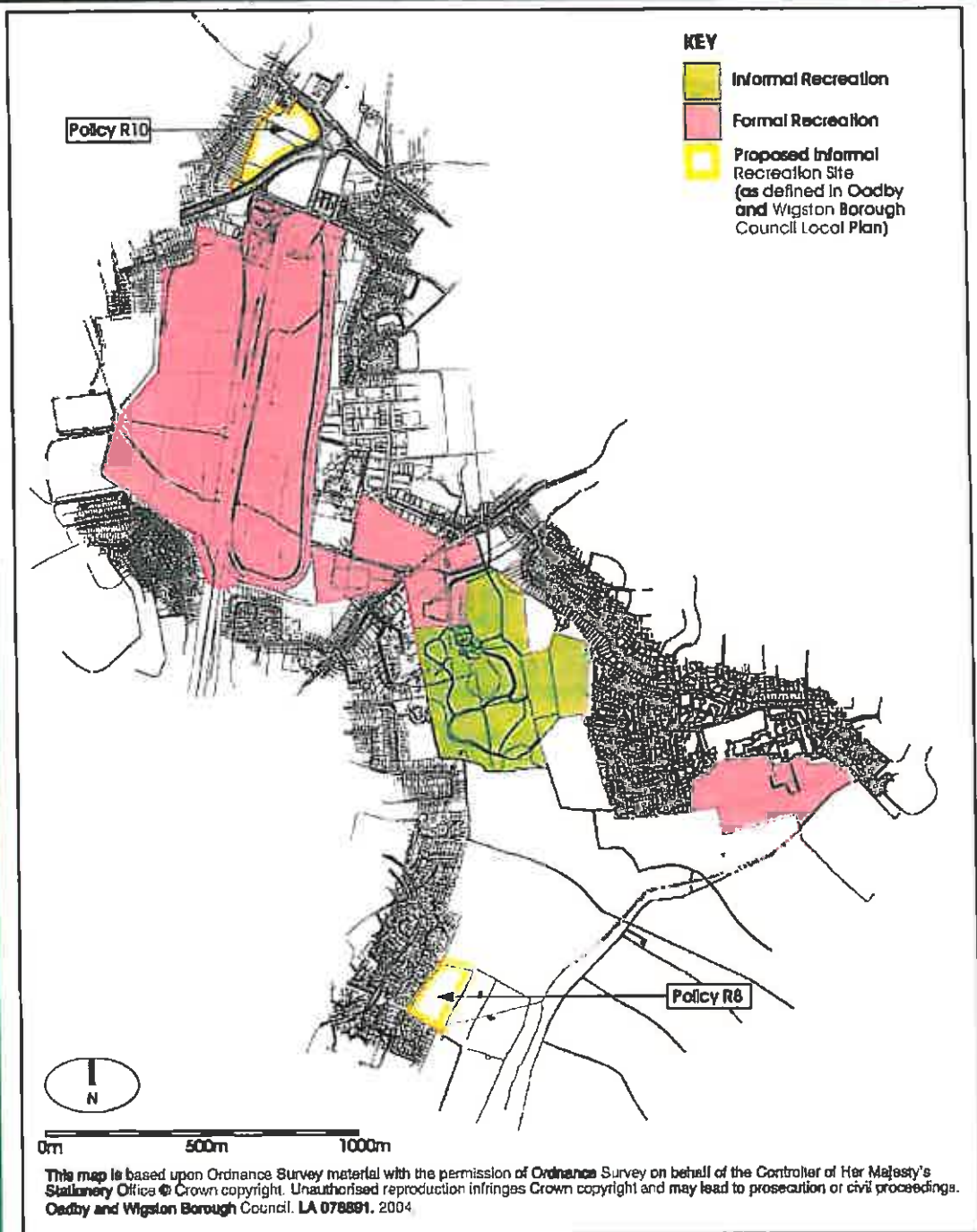
Contact with landowners was made by telephone from a list provided by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council. The purpose of the study was explained to the landowners contacted and permission requested to gain access to their land.

Some owners failed to reply to telephone messages and a small number were not contacted as their details were incomplete. Where it was not possible to gain permission/access full use was made of accessible adjoining land and publicly accessible rights of way to carry out the survey.

Details of landowners are to be given to Oadby and Wigston Borough Council however they have not been listed here or illustrated on the plan overleaf in order to maintain their privacy.

# OADBY & WIGSTON GREEN WEDGE

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## USAGE

### FOOTPATHS AND CYCLEWAYS

The Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge has no designated cycleways, byways or Bridleways.

Footpaths are also extremely limited in the Green Wedge. Only three formal routes exist. The first is a poorly signed through route running east – west to the north of the Racecourse. Historically this was a continuous route however it now falls into two sections dissected by the construction of Palmerston Way (the A563 ring road). The first half, to the west of the ring road runs between houses from Shanklin drive to the south of the Triangle. The second half continues east in the same direction from Palmerston Way, connecting across the end of the Leicester Racecourse into Granville Avenue. This route would appear to be moderately used providing an off road path between housing areas.

Observing a number of people using the above route it would appear to be largely used to access a local petrol filling station adjacent to the wedge. Although prohibited through signage and fencing, signs of access are also visible from this route into the southern portion of the Triangle.

The second route forms part of The Meres, an ancient route way more recently renamed as the Two Steeples Walk, a ten mile circular walk devised by Wigston Civic Society to celebrate the millennium. This route connects Wigston Town centre to the west of the wedge in a south easterly direction across and beyond the wedge towards Newton Harcourt. This route would appear to be relatively well used and is also visibly signed. A number of dog walkers were observed using this route.

The third route is a small section of pathway that starts adjacent to Beauchamp College and heads southwards to join up with a bridleway and onto a wider countryside network. This is not a well signed route and would appear to be largely used by pupils at break periods to leave school premises.

A number of obvious desire lines exist that run along the edge of arable fields between Brocks Hill Country Park and the farmland to the south. These routes tend to be circular extending down towards the Two Steeples Walk and returning back into the Park. Similarly desire lines exist from the Two Steeples walk south towards Wigston Magna.

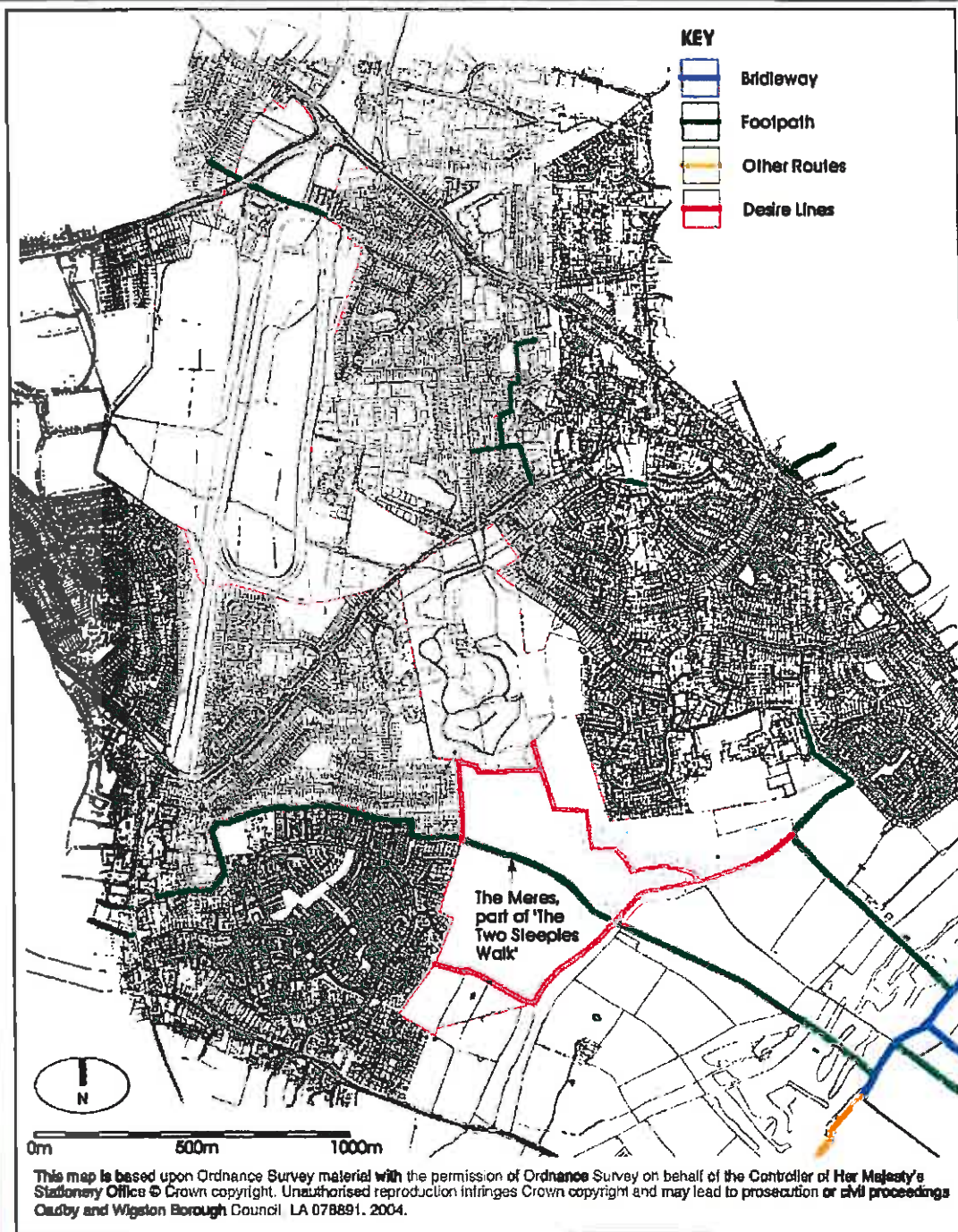
Unauthorised access points were observed between Knighton Park and Oadby golf course through gaps in the hedge. Although no one was observed using these points, signs of access including tracks to and from were evident.

Information was collated from Leicestershire County Council records and Ordnance Survey Explorer Map number 233.



# OADBY & WIGSTON GREEN WEDGE

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## 2e: ARCHEAOLGY

The study of archaeological interests for the purposes of this report is desk based, with the information having been sourced from Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Local Plan and the Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Record Service of sites and monuments.

Generally archaeological finds are found in the highest concentration in the centre of the Green Wedge around the eastern and western boundaries of Bracks Hill Country Park. The finds here largely comprise findspots of pottery, flints, an unidentifiable Roman coin, an Anglo Saxon brooch and a Medieval lead spindle. A potential burial at LE4957 has also been recorded.

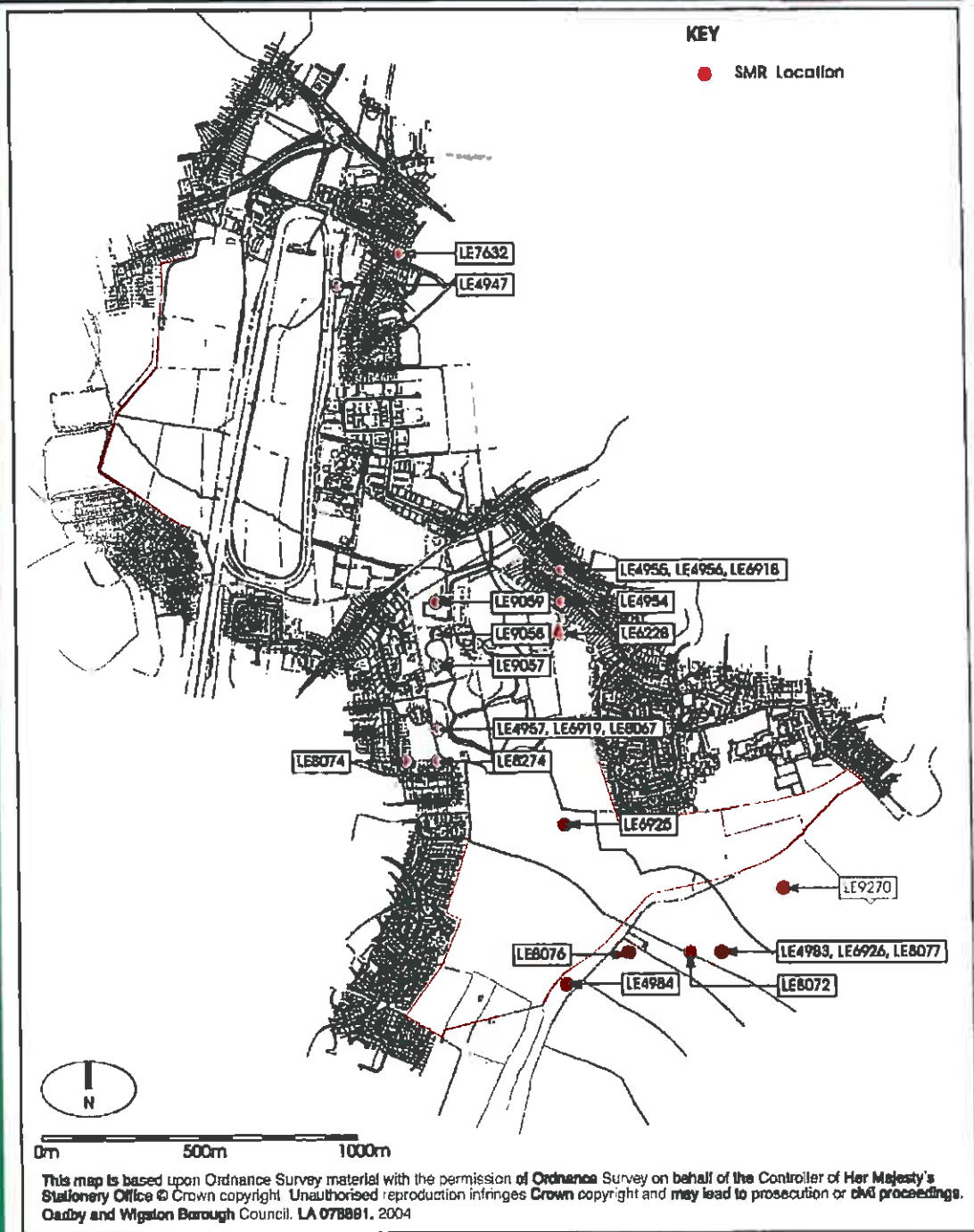
To the north of the wedge a windmill dated to 1540AD – 1899AD has been documented but no finds or sub surface deposits are recorded to confirm this record. In the south a single find has been recorded dated to the Medieval period, 1067AD – 1539AD.

The most significant finds are located beyond the wedges boundary to the east of Bracks Hill Country Park including LE4956, a burial with 80 skeletons and numerous cremation pots dated back to 43AD – 409AD.

CODE:	DESCRIPTION:	GRID REF:
<b>Sites within the Green Wedge boundary</b>		
LE4947	Post Medieval Windmill – Documentary Evidence	SK615008
LE4957	Early Bronze Age burial? – Find	SP618994
LE6228	Early Anglo Saxon Findspot - Find	SP622997
LE6919	Medieval Findspot - Find	SP618994
LE6925	Medieval Findspot – Find	SP622991
LE8067	Late Roman Findspot - Find	SP618994
LE9057	Early Roman Findspot – Find	SP618996
LE9058	Early Neolithic to Late Bronze Age Findspot – Find	SP618997
LE9059	Medieval Findspot - Find	SP618998
<b>Sites outside of the Green Wedge boundary</b>		
LE4954	Late Iron Age to Late Roman Site - find, Roman Hearth and Ditch – Sub Surface Deposit	SP622998
LE4955	Roman Inhumation – Find	SP622999
LE4956	Early Anglo Saxon Site + Hearth – Find and Sub Surface deposit	SP622999
LE4983	Prehistoric Site – Find	SP627987
LE4984	Prehistoric Site – Find	SP622986
LE6918	Medieval Findspot – Find	SP622999
LE6926	Medieval Findspot – Find	SP627987
LE7632	Early Neolithic to Late Bronze age Findspot – Find	SK617009
LE8072	Roman Findspot – Find	SP626987
LE8074	Early Roman Findspot - Find	SP617993
LE8076	Roman Findspot - Find	SP624987
LE8077	Roman Findspot - Find	SP627987
LE8274	Findspot – Find	SP618993
LE9270	Early Mesolithic to Late Bronze Age Flint Scatter	SP629989

# OADBY & WIGSTON GREEN WEDGE

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## 2e: SCHOOLS

### Proximity to the Green Wedge

Schools feature prominently around the Green Wedge. There are eleven schools located within one kilometre of the Green Wedge boundary of which seven are less than five hundred metres from the boundary, (equivalent to approximately a ten minute walk). Five schools share a boundary with the wedge.

### Consultation

As part of the study six of the seven schools were consulted as follows:

1. Beauchamp College
2. Gartree High School
3. Brocks Hill Primary School
4. Langmoor Primary School
5. St John Fisher Roman Catholic Primary School
6. Glenmere Community Primary School

The seventh school is the Leicestershire Girls High School to the north of the wedge off the A6, London Road. This school was not consulted due to time constraints and the relative distance of the school to the wedge i.e. it is only just within 500m.

Current access and use of the Green Wedge was discussed with school representatives. Once established, opportunities for future use, access, the safe routes to schools initiative, footpath and cycle links and boundary screening/security etc. were discussed. The graphic on page 33 illustrates the findings of these discussions.

Certain schools noted that wider or more direct access and potential links through the wedge would be of benefit to their pupils. Beauchamp College, with the widest catchment area noted that they had significant traffic congestion problems. This institution noted their intention to provide additional cycle lock up facilities and believed that links and access would be a positive development. In contrast Brocks Hill Primary School and Gartree High School, with much smaller catchments restricted to the east of the Green Wedge, saw boundary security as their primary concern.

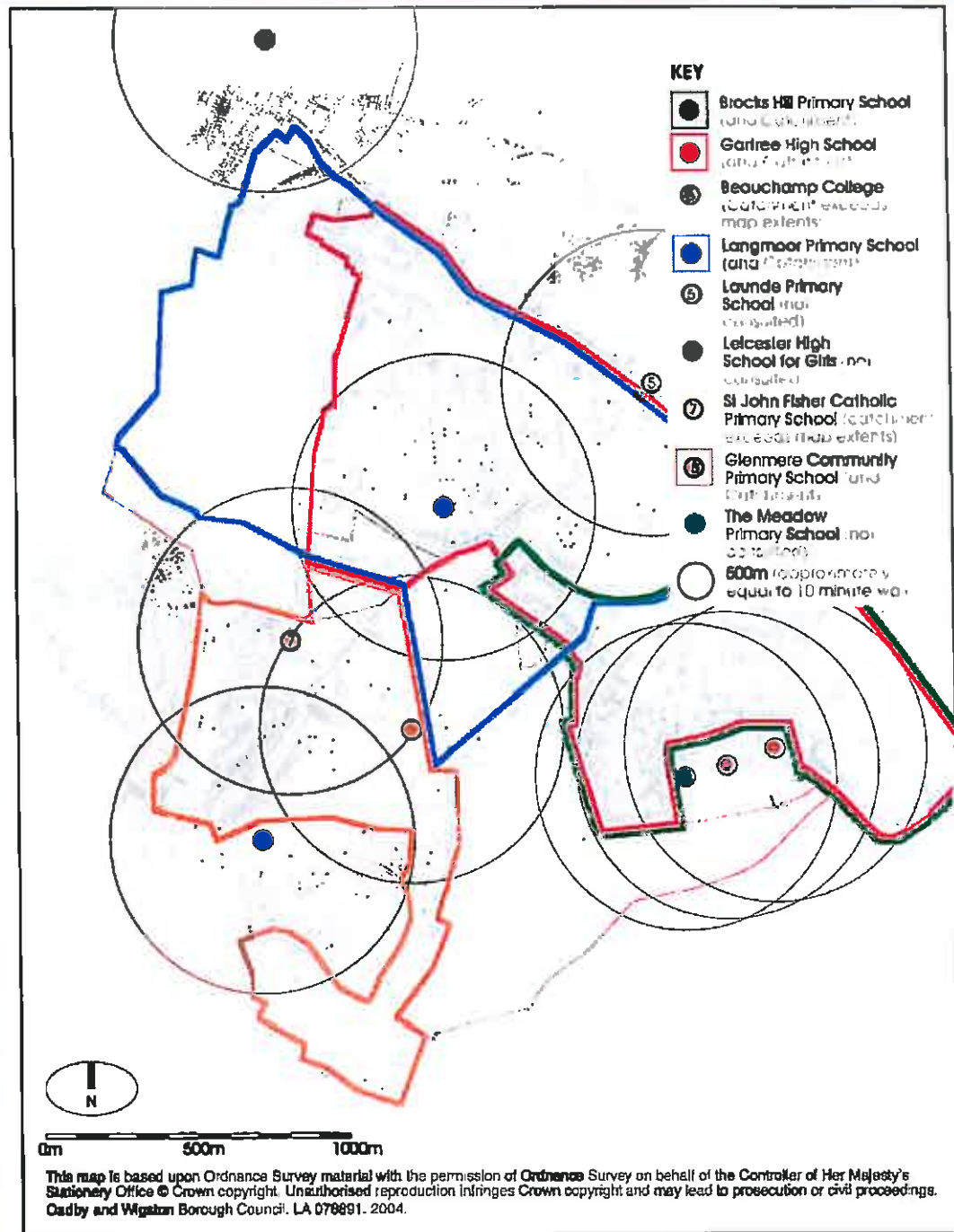
Beauchamp College, Gartree High and Glenmere Primary School all noted that with greater access they would consider using Brocks Hill Environment Centre and Country Park more than they currently do. All had issues with the dangers posed by Oadby Road and the expense of bussing pupils to this facility. St John Fisher and Langmoor Primary schools to the north of Oadby Road shared concerns about this danger and noted that wider pavements, barriers and safer crossing points would assist access to and from the schools and the Country Park. The desire for a secondary pedestrian access into the Country Park from Oadby Road was also noted.

St John Fisher RC Primary school noted that they would be interested in being involved in any footpath/cycleway linkage initiatives and that direct access through their boundary to the golf course and Knighton Park would be welcomed if secure.

Glenmere Community Primary School noted that creating a direct access to the Country Park through their shared boundary would be relatively straightforward but that this would have to be securely gated.

# OADBY & WIGSTON GREEN WEDGE

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# SURVEY

