

# Warwickshire County Farms and Smallholdings

## Estate Profile 2010



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**Cover Photo Top:** Harvesting at Coney Grey Farm, Ryton on  
Dunsmore

**Cover Photo Bottom:** Dexter Cattle at Manor Farm, Ryton on  
Dunsmore

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**Warwickshire County Farms and Smallholdings: Strategy 2010 – 2025  
- published as separate document**

## 1. Introduction

Farms have been owned by Local Authorities for over 100 years. Following a period of acquisitions post the two world wars, and rationalisation to produce viable holdings from the 1960's to the 1990's, some authorities have followed a policy of disposal and sold off their estates while others have continued to maintain, and in some cases increase, the size of their holdings.

This Profile of Warwickshire County Council's Farms and Smallholdings ('the estate') details the size and nature of the estate and illustrates the range of activities carried out. It also refers to a number of key issues which provide a wider context for the information provided in the Profile.

## 2. The size and value of the estate

There is a varied picture of estate size around the country. Warwickshire County Council's Farm and Smallholdings Estate is approximately 2,037 hectares in size. An estate review in 1995 led to a series of disposals of farms to sitting tenants resulting in a 13.8% decline in the amount of land held.

In 2009 the estate was valued at £22.36 million. This valuation is subject to existing tenancies. Annual income from the estate is currently £540,000. However, significant land within the estate has development potential. It is currently estimated that approximately 240 ha or 12% of the estate has the potential for development in the longer term.

### ***Capital re-investment: Famington Farm, Bidford on Avon***

This mixed 150 acre holding included an old set of farm buildings of historic interest together with an adjacent derelict cottage. The Council recognised that the buildings were at the end of their useful life and disposed of the old complex to a local developer, utilising the capital receipt to build new 'fit for purpose' agricultural buildings on the holding.



The size of the estate is below average when compared to some neighbouring shire counties. Table 1. shows the estate area of a number of neighbouring authorities and their proportion of the total farmed area of their county.

**Table 1. Estate area and comparison with neighbouring counties**

County	Estate Area (ha)	Proportion of Total Farmed Area in County
Staffordshire	3522	1.8%
Gloucestershire	3450	1.6%
Leicestershire	3000	1.5%
<b>Warwickshire</b>	<b>2037</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
Worcestershire	1656	1.3%

Source: DEFRA/CIPFA County Farms and Rural Estates Statistics 2007

### 3. Tenants and tenancies

Turnover in tenancies has been slow. Consequently the age profile of the tenants is elderly. Table 2 shows an estimated current age profile of tenants

**Table 2 Age profile of tenants**

Age	Proportion of tenants in age band%
60+	40
50-59	35
40-49	17
<40	7

#### Key Points

- 40% of tenants are above the age of 60.
- The majority of tenants, 75%, on estate farms are over 50 years of age.

Tenancy agreements for the letting of county farms fall into two main types. These are 'lifetime/retirement tenancies' under the Agricultural Holdings Act 1986 and the newer 'Farm Business Tenancies' (FBTs) under the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995, that run for a fixed term. The County Farms and Smallholdings Estate Team seek to move tenants onto FBTs when the opportunity arises. All new lettings are FBTs. Table 3 sets out the current proportions of tenancy agreements on the estate



### **Farm diversification: Carpenters Farm, Warmington**

Estate tenant Robert Leach has been at Carpenters farm since 1988. His primary enterprise is rearing Shorthorn cattle and a flock of Badger Faced sheep. He saw a business opportunity to market his produce direct to local and passing customers through a farm shop. A small scale shop opened in the mid 1990's, with a cutting room for preparing his meat being added in 2001. With the increasing interest in local food the shop has recently been extended. He also retails milk from another WCC farm, as well as cheeses, vegetables and speciality produce.



**Table 3. number and types of tenancy agreements**

Tenancy Agreement	No. of Farms with this agreement
Lifetime/Retirement	30
Farm Business Tenancy	16

#### Key Points

- 65% of tenancy agreements on county farms are lifetime/retirement agreements.
- Farm Business Tenancies tend to be held by those in the younger range of the tenant age profile.

## **4. The makeup of the estate**

The estate mainly comprises a number of farms, bare land and stand alone cottages. In addition, however, there is small amount of allotment land as well as a range of commercial letting arrangements on the estate. For example Warwick Greyhound Track and the Warwick International School of Riding at Guys Cliff are part of the estate.

### **4.1 The farms – ‘Fully equipped holdings’**

There are forty six farms or ‘county farms’ and smallholdings. These are described as ‘fully equipped’ and this refers to the presence of a farmhouse, agricultural buildings and land. These farms cover approximately 1,708 ha and make up some 85% of the area of the estate and account for approximately 80% of the estate’s income.

**Farm diversification: Butlers Road Farm, Long Compton - Bed and Breakfast**

Estate tenant Peter Whittaker runs a 114 acre beef enterprise on this Cotswold holding. His wife Eileen has used the farmhouse to offer B&B for a number of years. They can offer up to 8 bed places. They are Heart of England Tourist Board approved 3 star, and provide a base for family holidays in the summer and frequently take visitors round the farm buildings to see calves being born and other farming activities.



Farm holdings on the estate are dispersed throughout the county. The maps show their location. Table 4 below illustrates the number and proportion of farms and land in each borough/district.

**Table 4. Distribution of farms and smallholdings by borough and district**

Borough/District	Number of Farms	Proportion of all farms on estate %*	Area (ha) covered by farms	Proportion of land area of all farms on estate %*
North Warwickshire	6	13	244	14
Nuneaton & Bedworth	2	4	115	7
Rugby	13	28	439	26
Stratford on Avon	20	43	752	44
Warwick	5	11	163	10

\*Total does not equal 100 due to rounding

**Key Points**

- Stratford on Avon District contains both the highest number of farms and the largest land area of the county farms. 43% of the county farms are in the Stratford on Avon District.
- Approximately 70% of farms are in Stratford on Avon District and Rugby Borough.
- Although Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough has just two farms, it contains the largest farm on the estate.

Table 5 shows the range in the size of the fully equipped holdings on the Warwickshire estate.

**Table 5. Size of farm holdings**

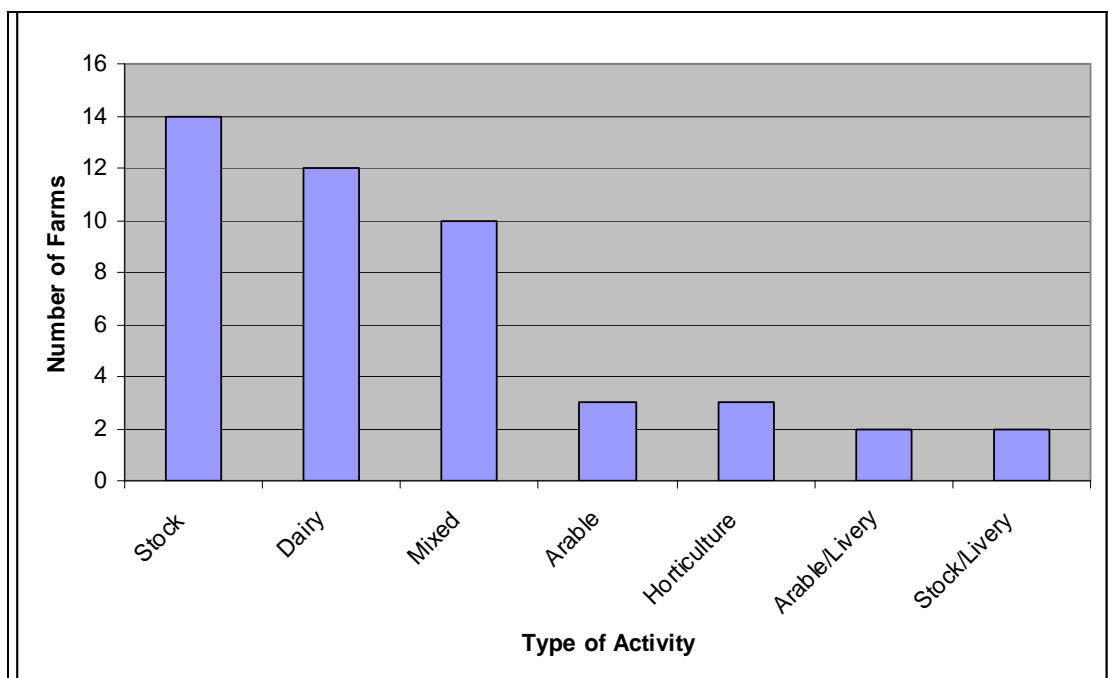
Holding Size (Ha)	Number of Farms	Proportion of Farms at this Size %
< 20	12	26
20-40	13	28
40-60	14	30
60-80	6	13
80-100	1	2

Key points:

- 26% of the farms on the estate are less than 20 hectares.
- The majority of farms on the estate, 58%, are between 20 and 60 hectares.
- The smallest farm is 1.65ha, the largest is 94.65 ha. The former is a small stock enterprise, the latter a dairy farm. Stock farming refers to the rearing of animals which, in practice, on the estate means cattle (other than dairy) and/or sheep.

Figure 1 shows the different types of farming carried out on the estate.

**Figure 1. Types of farming activity**



Key Points

- 30% of the estate farms are stock farms.
- Just over a quarter of the farms on the estate are dairy farms.
- A fifth of the estate farms are mixed arable and stock farms
- Four farms include a livery enterprise as part of their activities



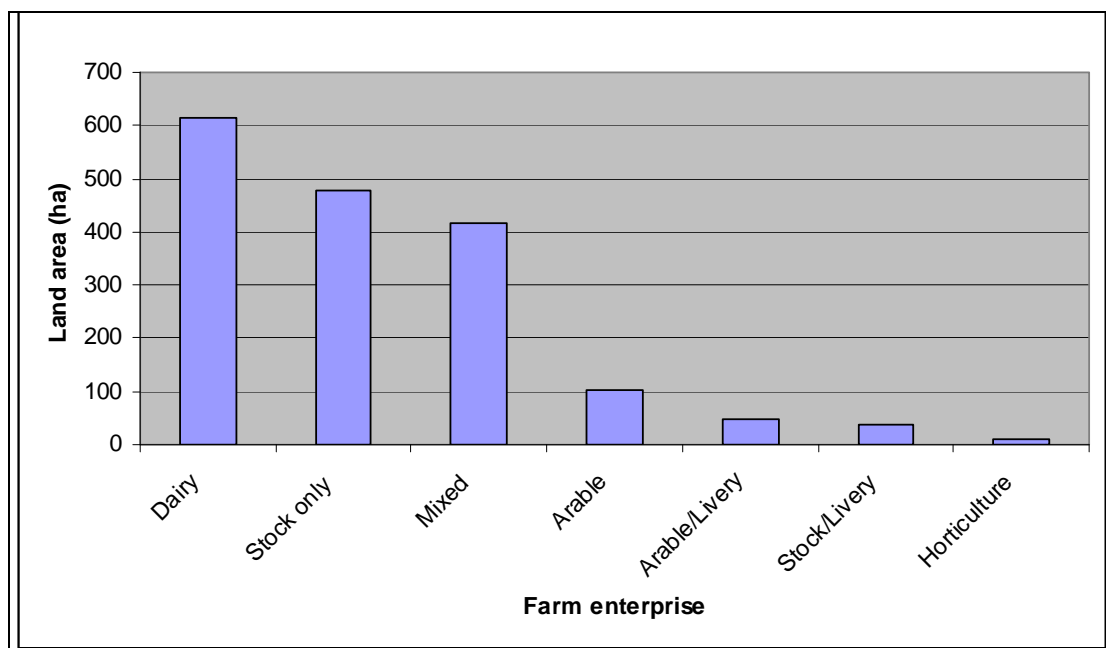
**Pedigree Dairy Herd: Top Farm, Weddington, Nuneaton**

Tenant Ian Showell, together with his wife Karen and son James, manage this 240 acre dairy. James is the third generation of Showells at Top Farm. The Council invested in a new dairy building in 2009 with the tenant providing the fixtures and fittings. The herd at Top Farm was the only holding on the estate to be culled as a result of the Foot and Mouth outbreak in 2001. The Showells have since rebuilt a prize winning Holstein-Friesian herd that are highly productive and are, unusually, milked three times a day.



Figure 2 shows the land area on estate farms devoted to each type of farming activity.

**Figure 2 Area of land by farming activity**



**Key Points**

- 36% of the land on equipped farm holdings is devoted to dairy farming. This equates to approximately 30% of the total estate
- Just over a quarter of land on estate farms is stock only farming
- A further quarter of the land on estate farms is mixed arable and stock farming.
- Horticulture accounts for just 0.6% of the land used on estate farms.

Table 6 shows the average size of estate farms involved in the above enterprises.

**Table 6. Size of estate farms**

Enterprise	Average size of farm (ha)
Dairy	51
Mixed	42
Stock Only	34
Arable Only	34
Arable/Livery	23.5
Stock/Livery	19.5
Horticulture	3

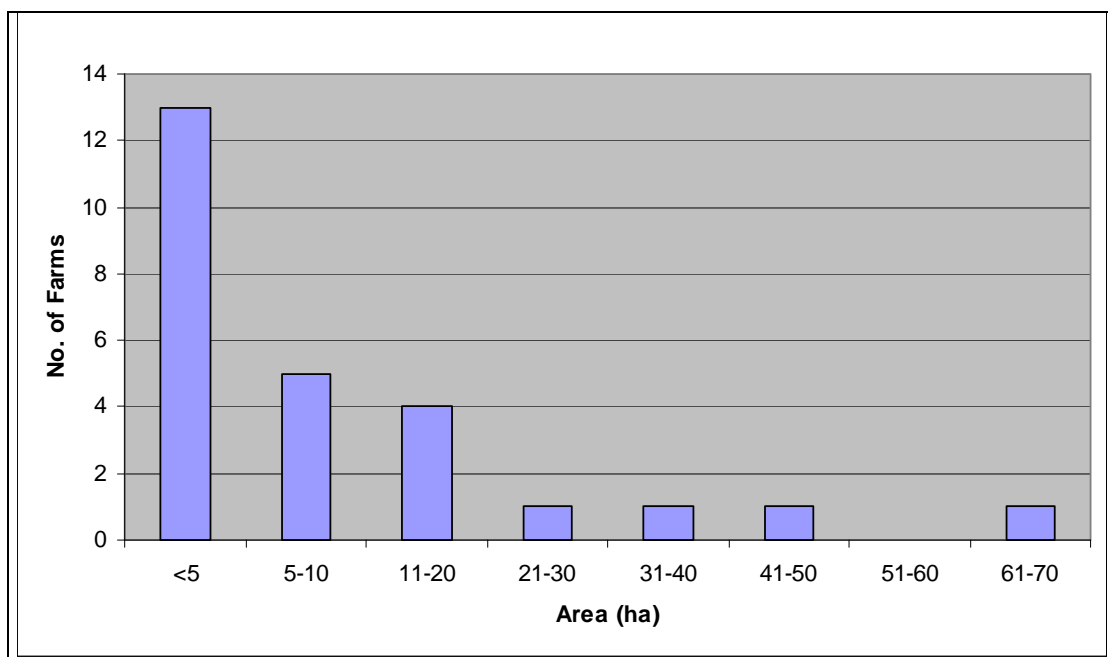
**Key Points**

- Dairy farms on the estate have the largest average size.
- The average size of mixed farms on the estate is higher than those involved in either stock only or arable only farms.

**4.2 Land only Holdings**

There are twenty six land only holdings on the estate. They consist of bare land and may have agricultural buildings but no farm house. These holdings total 286 ha and account for approximately 14% of the total estate area. Figure 3 shows the size of land only holdings

**Figure 3. Distribution of land only holdings by size**



## Key Points

- The majority, 85%, of land only holdings are less than 20 hectares.
- Half of the land only holdings are less than 5 hectares.
- 40% of land only holdings are for arable enterprises
- Approximately 30% of land only holdings are used for stock enterprises.
- Approximately a quarter of land only holdings are rented by tenants on fully equipped farms under separate tenancy agreements to their farm holding.
- Just over half of the land only holdings area (153ha) is rented by tenants on fully equipped holdings.

In six cases, land only holdings are let to existing estate tenants with equipped farms, to improve the size and viability of their holdings. These are not included in the figures above.

### 4.3 Allotments and 'horticultural strips'

A small proportion of the estate's land comprises allotments and horticultural strips. Together these total 6.7 hectares and account for just 0.3% of the total estate area.

There are also four allotment sites as part of the estate. Three of these, located in Harbury, Moreton Morrell, and Salford Priors are managed by the local Parish Councils. One, in Nuneaton is managed by the Borough Council.

There are also eight 'horticultural strips' which are significantly larger than an allotment, and are typically about 0.5ha each. These are located in Bidford on Avon and licence agreements regularise the arrangements with the individual tenants. They are a remnant of medieval strip farming systems and of considerable historical interest.

### 4.4 Cottages

There are twenty one cottages on the estate which are let to tenants under a variety of tenancies. Some of the cottages are stand alone dwellings while others are sub let by tenants on the estate's equipped farm holdings.

#### ***Affordable housing: Mabels Farm, Ilmington***

Mabels Farm, Ilmington is a 70 acre dairy farm with land on the periphery of the village. A local need for affordable housing has been identified and following discussions with Warwickshire Rural Housing Association, 0.8 acres of land has been earmarked for social housing. It is proposed that the land will be sold at agricultural rather than development value, to enable the development to proceed. The scheme demonstrates the potential for the estate to contribute to the Council's Affordable Housing policy.



## 4.5 Environmental Stewardship and Woodlands

The Campaign for the Farmed Environment, is a voluntary scheme to encourage environmental benefits on farmed land. There is a national target of 70% of all farmland to be managed in an agri-environment scheme by June 2012. Nineteen farming tenants are currently signed up to the Entry Level Scheme for environmental stewardship covering 675 ha of the estate. At present, approximately 33% of the farmed estate area is under an environmental stewardship scheme.

The estate also contains a number of small areas of woodland. It is estimated there is in total about 40 ha of woodland across the estate. This is mostly in small parcels, often within or adjacent to existing holdings, but not necessarily part of the tenancy agreement.

The largest single area is Bob's Wood, Corley, a mixed woodland of 2.5 ha.

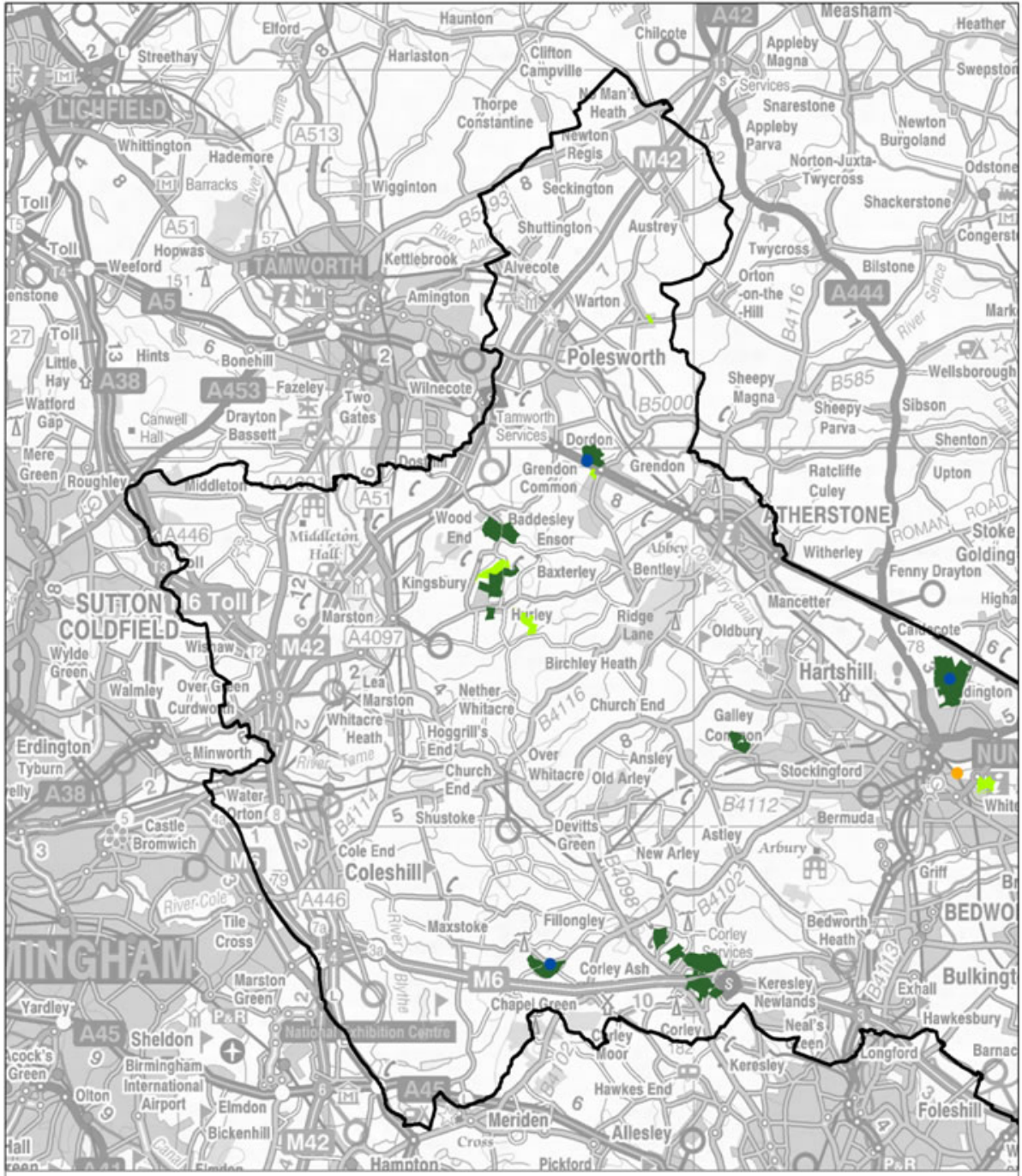
Warwickshire County Council has recently commissioned consultants to evaluate the biomass potential of existing woodland. The report will also include an evaluation of the potential for growing biomass fuels on other land owned by the County Council such as country parks.



Allotments, Harbury



# Annex 1 - Maps

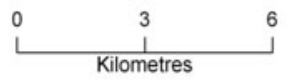


## Warwickshire Smallholdings (August 2010)

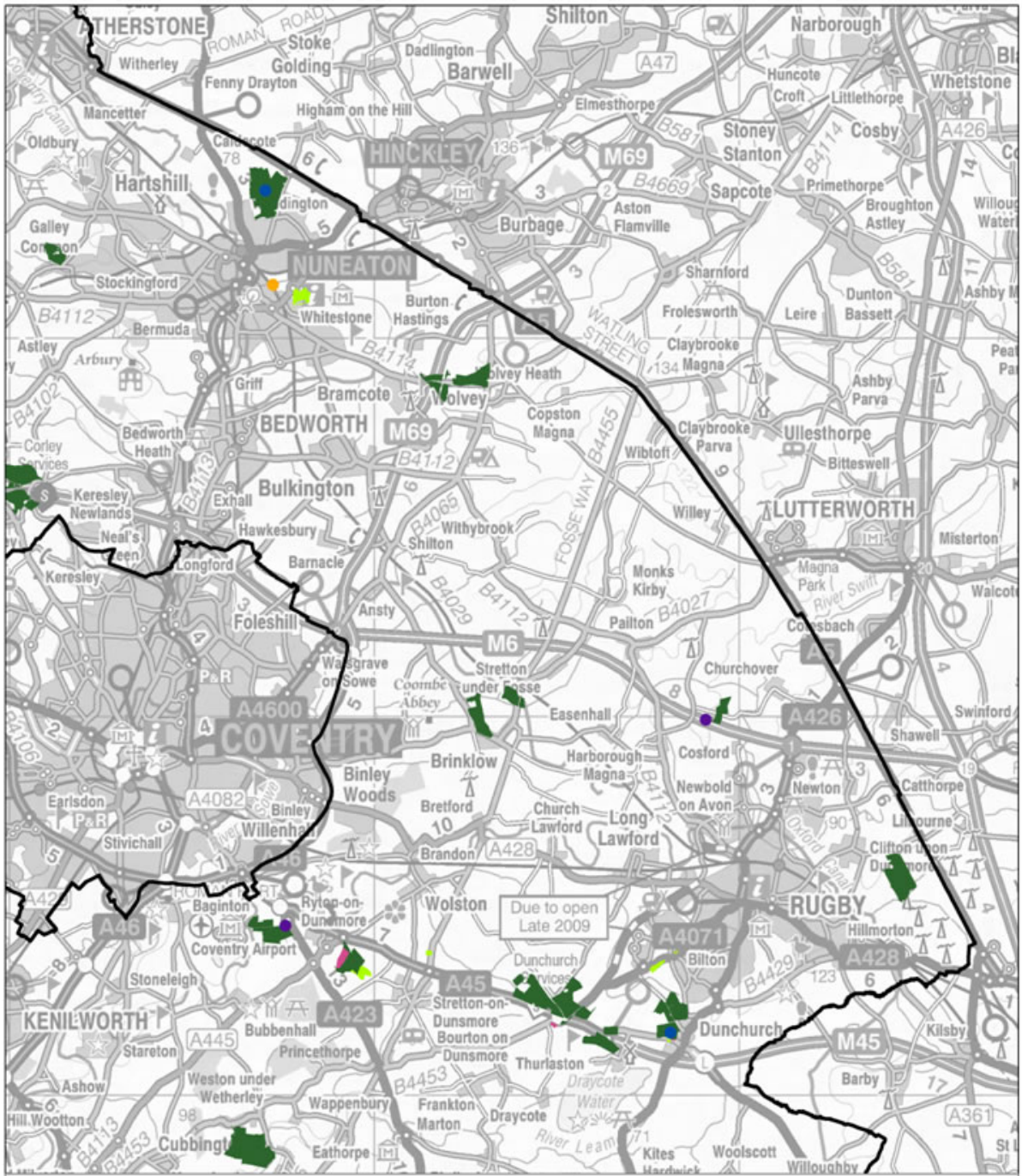
-  Warwickshire County Boundary
-  Cottage (Stand Alone)
-  Cottage (Sub-let)
-  Allotment
-  Bare Land
-  Commercial Letting
-  Equipped Farm Holding
-  Miscellaneous



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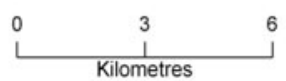


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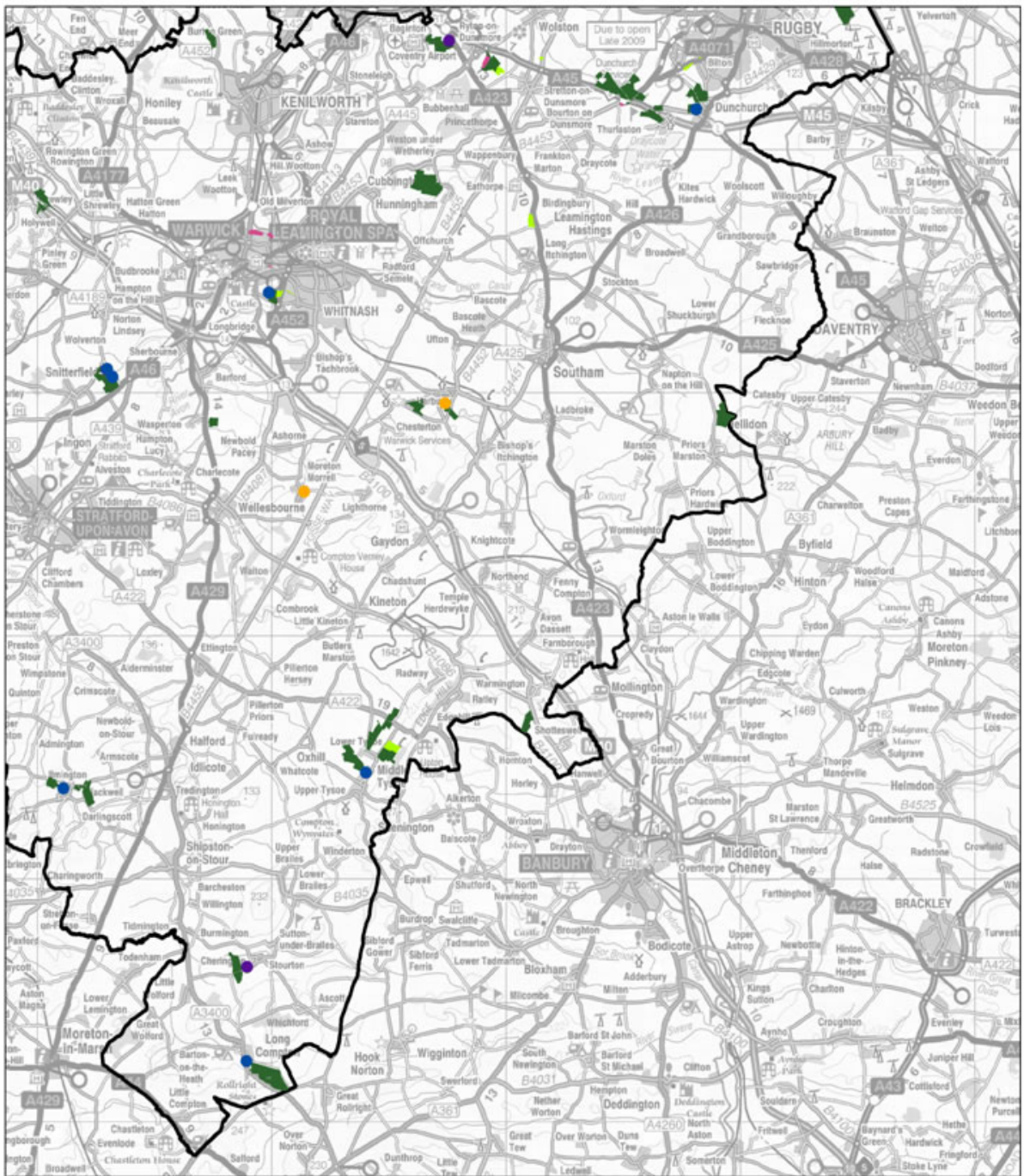


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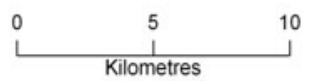


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## Annex 2 - Glossary

<b><i>Agricultural Holdings Act</i></b>	Former legislation that enabled County Council's to create and let <b><i>Smallholdings</i></b> . The act effectively created 'lifetime tenancies', many of which persist today. See also <b><i>Farm Business Tenancies</i></b> .
<b><i>Countryside Stewardship</i></b>	Scheme of grants made for farming and managing land in an environmentally sensitive manor, e.g. wide field margins for wildlife. Currently comprises an Entry Level Scheme and Higher Level Scheme (ELS and HLS respectively). Payments are to reflect the loss of income potential by farming land less intensively and/or to encourage biodiversity.
<b><i>Cross compliance</i></b>	The current scheme of regulation for farmers in receipt of the single farm payment under the <b><i>Single Payment Scheme</i></b> . Failure to comply puts payments at risk.
<b><i>Decent Homes Standard</i></b>	The Government standard stating that a home should be warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities, recognising that decent homes are important for the health and well-being of those living in them. The standard applies to all local authority and social housing.
<b><i>Diversification</i></b>	Any non agricultural business enterprise operating from an agricultural premise, e.g. farm shops, horse livery, etc.
<b><i>Entry Level stewardship</i></b>	See <b><i>Countryside Stewardship</i></b>
<b><i>Farm Business Tenancies</i></b>	Modern fixed term farm tenancy under the Agricultural Tenancies Act 1995. See also <b><i>Agricultural Holdings Act</i></b> .
<b><i>Higher Level Stewardship</i></b>	See <b><i>Countryside Stewardship</i></b>
<b><i>Nitrate Vulnerable Zone</i></b>	Legal designation for land within water catchments at risk of high levels of nitrates, recognising that over 60% of nitrates entering water courses do so as run-off from agricultural land, reducing Oxygen levels and compromising plant and animal life. Applies to all of Warwickshire.
<b><i>Single Payment Scheme</i></b>	Current scheme of agricultural support from the EU often referred to as the 'single farm payment'. It differs from previous support as the level of subsidy has been 'de-coupled' from production, i.e. payments are no longer per head of stock or per tonne of grain. Payments are linked to a scheme of <b><i>cross compliance</i></b> .
<b><i>Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</i></b>	Conservation designation and legal protection for nature and geological sites in the UK.
<b><i>Smallholding</i></b>	A small farm, often run by a sole trader or family on a full or part time basis.
<b><i>Vernacular buildings</i></b>	Built with local resources and local traditions, often contributing to the local distinctiveness and sense of place of an area.







Cattle at Herberts Farm, Middle Tysoe



Sheep at Bridge Barn Farm, Hunningham