

Report

Report to:	Planning Committee
Date of Meeting:	5 October 2021
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise)

Subject:	Designation of Local Nature Reserves
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Seek approval for the declaration of 16 new Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and an extension to the existing LNR at Langlands Moss under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended).

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that committee agree to declare, under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended), the designation of 16 new LNRs and an extension to the existing LNR at Langlands Moss, as listed in paragraph 4.2 and indicated in the maps attached as appendices to the report.

3. Background

3.1. Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are areas of natural heritage that are at least locally important. They combine protection of natural heritage with opportunities for people to enjoy, learn about and experience nature close to the communities. Local authorities have powers to select and designate LNRs under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended).

3.2. There are 75 LNRs in Scotland. There is currently one LNR in South Lanarkshire at Langlands Moss, East Kilbride. Figures vary across Scotland with many other local authorities designating only one or two sites. Glasgow currently has 12 LNRs: North Lanarkshire has 9.

4. Current Position

4.1. The designation of LNRs has been identified as an action in the Council's Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan (2018-22). In addition the South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy (2018-22): Strategic Outcome 2 states that designated and locally important sites are to be conserved and that Local Nature Reserves are to be identified and designated.

4.2 During the preparation of the South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2 (SLLDP2) the provision of 16 new LNRs was proposed through the identification of the following sites. Maps showing the location of these sites are found in the appendices to the report.

- ◆ Backmuir Woods, Hamilton
- ◆ Blantyre, Bothwell and Uddingston
- ◆ Cadzow Glen, Hamilton
- ◆ Fernbrae Meadows, Rutherglen
- ◆ Greenhall, Millheugh and Barnhill, Blantyre
- ◆ Hamilton Low Parks, Hamilton
- ◆ Holmhill Wood Community Park, Cambuslang
- ◆ James Hamilton Heritage Park, East Kilbride
- ◆ Jock's Burn, Carluke
- ◆ Milton, Carluke
- ◆ Morgan Glen, Larkhall
- ◆ Mossneuk, East Kilbride
- ◆ Neilsland and Earnock, Hamilton
- ◆ Stonehouse Park, Stonehouse
- ◆ Udston and Glenlee Woods, Hamilton
- ◆ Westburn, Cambuslang

In addition, an extension to the existing Langlands Moss LNR was proposed.

4.3 The indicative boundaries of the proposed LNRs were shown as proposals on the Strategy Map in the Proposed Plan which was the subject of public consultation. In accordance with the statutory requirements for development plans, all addresses which neighbour the sites were notified directly as part of the consultation. In addition, an advertisement was placed in the local press. Existing community groups associated with sites were also notified and have been able to comment on plans.

4.4 The outcome of the consultation exercise on the proposed plan was reported to Planning Committee on 26 February 2019. 25 representations relating to the LNRs were received. The vast majority of comments were strongly supportive of the proposal to establish new LNRs. A small number of responses raised detailed issues regarding particular sites. These are matters which would be addressed through management plans for the sites. The representations were then considered during the Examination that took place in 2019/20. The Reporters recommendations were set out in the Examination Report received in August 2020 which in turn was reported to the Planning Committee on 1 December 2020. SLLDP2 was adopted by the Council on 9 April 2021. The adopted Plan states that the Council will develop a programme for the formal designation of the LNRs, and will prepare supporting planning guidance, including the maps showing the site boundaries.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1. This report is seeking approval for a declaration to be made that the proposed LNRs have been formally designated by the Council. A draft management statement has been prepared for each site which gives information on its importance in nature conservation terms and setting out the aims for the site in the future. This document includes information about all the sites and describes the work carried out to date, the extent and type of community involvement, and plans for the future. They are available on the Council's website.
- 5.2 Within three years of the formal designation of a LNR, the Council is required to prepare a full management plan for each site. This will expand on objectives and actions outlined in the existing management statements providing detailed information on projects, timelines and potential funding sources. These documents commit the Council to consulting, engaging with and involving communities in the designation and management of proposed LNRs, and to providing opportunities for all to engage with nature, use sites for volunteering, education and health improvement.
- 5.3 Some sites have already had significant investment to improve access to them and other infrastructure. Similarly some have active community groups who are closely involved in the management of the sites. At the same time the opposite is the case for some of the sites. The Countryside and Greenspace team will continue to work in partnership with the local communities to ensure that the ecological quality of the sites is maintained and managed; to foster an understanding and facilitate enjoyment of the natural heritage of the park; and to increase public use through improved access, interpretation, education and promotion of sites. Each site has a Countryside Ranger who will work with the local community, groups and schools.
- 5.4 Two sites (Backmuir Woods and Low Parks) include Common Good assets. Under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 these areas will be subject to further separate community consultation before designation can proceed. Should there be no objections, LNR designation of these areas will be progressed.
- 5.5 One site (Fernbrae Meadows) includes an area that, while within the administrative boundaries of South Lanarkshire, is owned by Glasgow City Council and is managed by them as part of the adjacent Cathkin Braes. The Council will seek to enter into an agreement with Glasgow City Council to designate the area as a LNR if these proposals are approved. It will continue to be owned and managed by Glasgow City Council and places no additional burden on South Lanarkshire Council.
- 5.6 Designation of these sites as LNRs has been progressing in consultation with NatureScot which is required under Section 21(6) of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Guidance on the designation of LNRs states that sites should
 - ◆ provide accessible, positive, current or potential informal opportunities for raising people's awareness, understanding and enjoyment of, and involvement with, their local natural heritage and
 - ◆ be, or have the potential to be, of special natural heritage interest in the area, through good management and safeguarding of the site.

All of the sites are located within South Lanarkshire, are owned by South Lanarkshire Council and have been identified as being of value due to their biodiversity, cultural history, community value, educational use and/or accessibility. Nature Scot have confirmed that they are supportive of the designations and welcome the commitment of South Lanarkshire Council to work towards fulfilling the potential of each site, in partnership with the local community. They therefore endorse the declaration of the sites as Local Nature Reserves.

- 5.7 If Committee agrees the recommendation then a Local Nature Reserve declaration will be published to provide public notification of the existence of the newly declared sites. Once declared, the areas will be managed as nature reserves as outlined in the draft management statements.

6. Employee Implications

- 6.1. With the exception of Fernbrae Meadows, as discussed at paragraph 5.5, the sites are entirely owned by South Lanarkshire Council and maintained by Grounds Services with grounds maintenance regimes in place; no additional staff time is required for the planned ongoing site management.

7. Financial Implications

- 7.1. At present there are no resource implications for the Council arising from the proposed declaration. The site management plans, once completed will highlight key areas requiring investment. These will link with responsibilities as part of the Core Path Network, Open Space Strategy (forthcoming), Biodiversity Duty, and Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy.
- 7.2. Ongoing maintenance of land and repairs to infrastructure will require to be met by Council budgets, potentially alongside external funding as required. There is already good partnership working with community groups at many sites where external partners contribute significantly to fund raising for work on Council land.
- 7.3. Scottish Government have recently awarded Nature Restoration Funds to Local Authorities; this can be used to enhance the biodiversity of proposed LNRs. There is potential for other funding streams such as the Climate Emergency Fund to improve urban greenspaces and their outdoor access.

8. Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications

- 8.1. The management of sites for biodiversity has the potential to help mitigate the effects of climate change for example through natural flood management and carbon storage. There is also a need for biodiversity to be improved to make natural systems better able to cope with the impacts of a changing climate, such as improving habitat networks to increase species resilience.
- 8.2. Biodiversity actions are incorporated in the Council's Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy. Measures are reported on through statutory Climate Change Duties.
- 8.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment was carried out on the adopted SLLDP2 and no further SEA is required.

9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 9.1. This report does not introduce a new or recommend a change to existing policy, function or strategy; therefore no impact assessment is required. Consultation has been undertaken with residential neighbours to sites, the general public, site community groups and NatureScot.

Michael McGlynn

Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

14 September 2021

Link(s) to Council Objectives and Values

- ◆ Improve the quality of life of everyone in South Lanarkshire
- ◆ Make communities safer, stronger and sustainable
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Encourage participation in physical and cultural activities
- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities
- ◆ Improve achievement, raise educational attainment and support lifelong learning
- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent

Previous References

- ◆ Planning Committee Report 26 February 2019: South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2
- ◆ Planning Committee Report 1 December 2020 : South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2

List of Background Papers

- ◆ South Lanarkshire Biodiversity Strategy
- ◆ Biodiversity Duty Implementation Plan
- ◆ South Lanarkshire Local Development Plan 2
- ◆ Letter from Nature Scot dated 9 September 2021

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

Sheila Alderson, Planning Officer

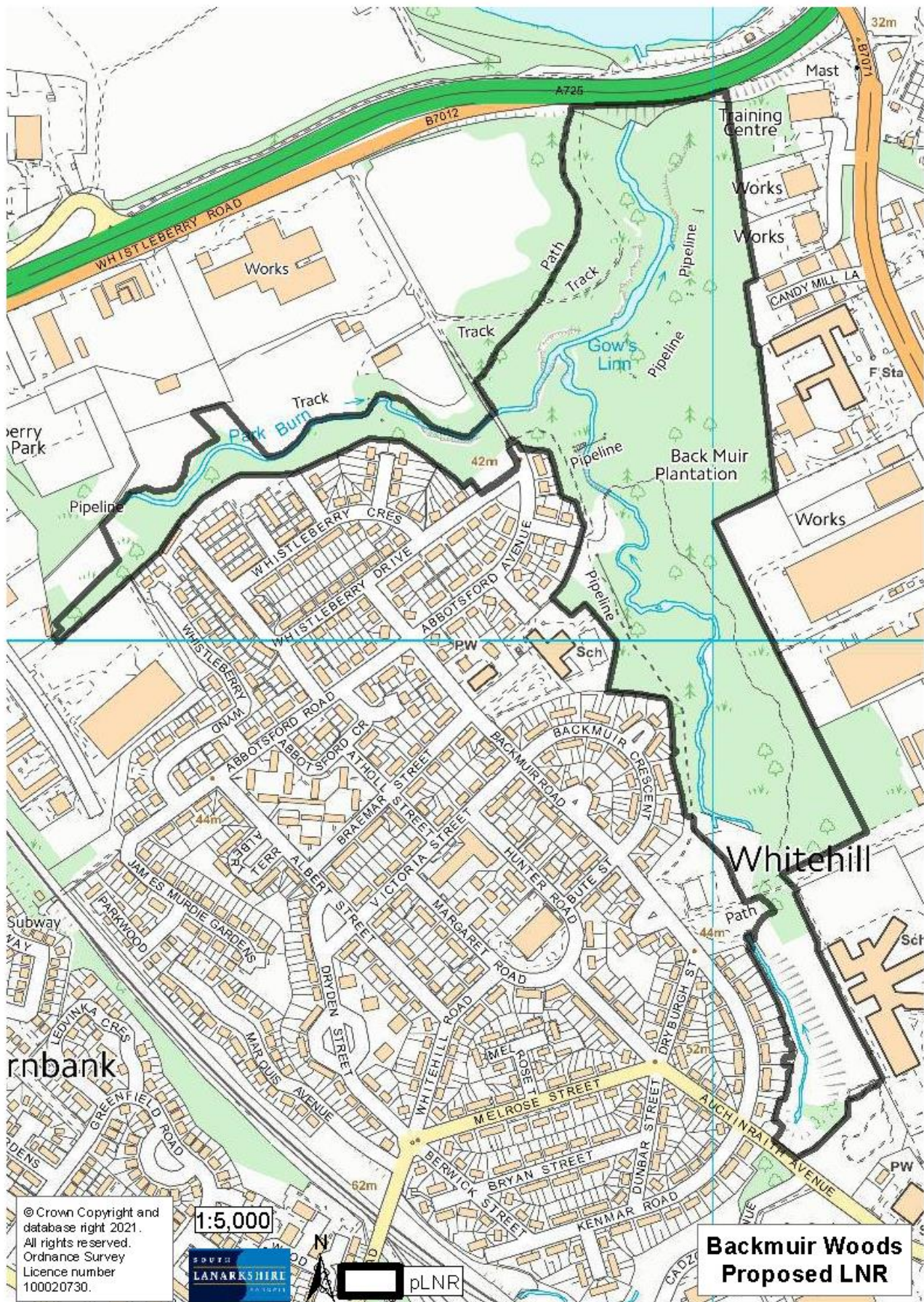
Sheila.alderson@southlanarkshire.gov.uk

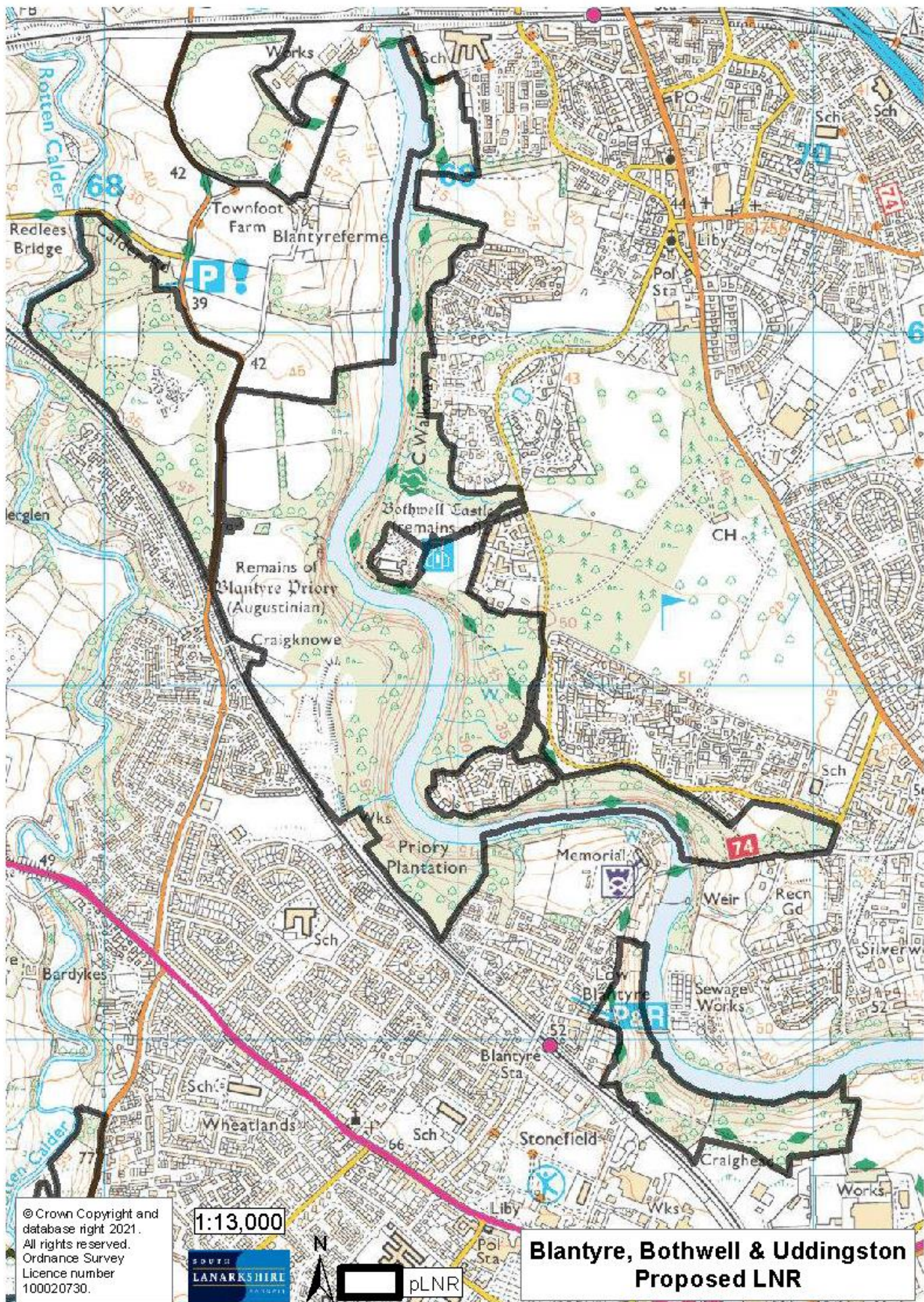
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Appendices – Site maps



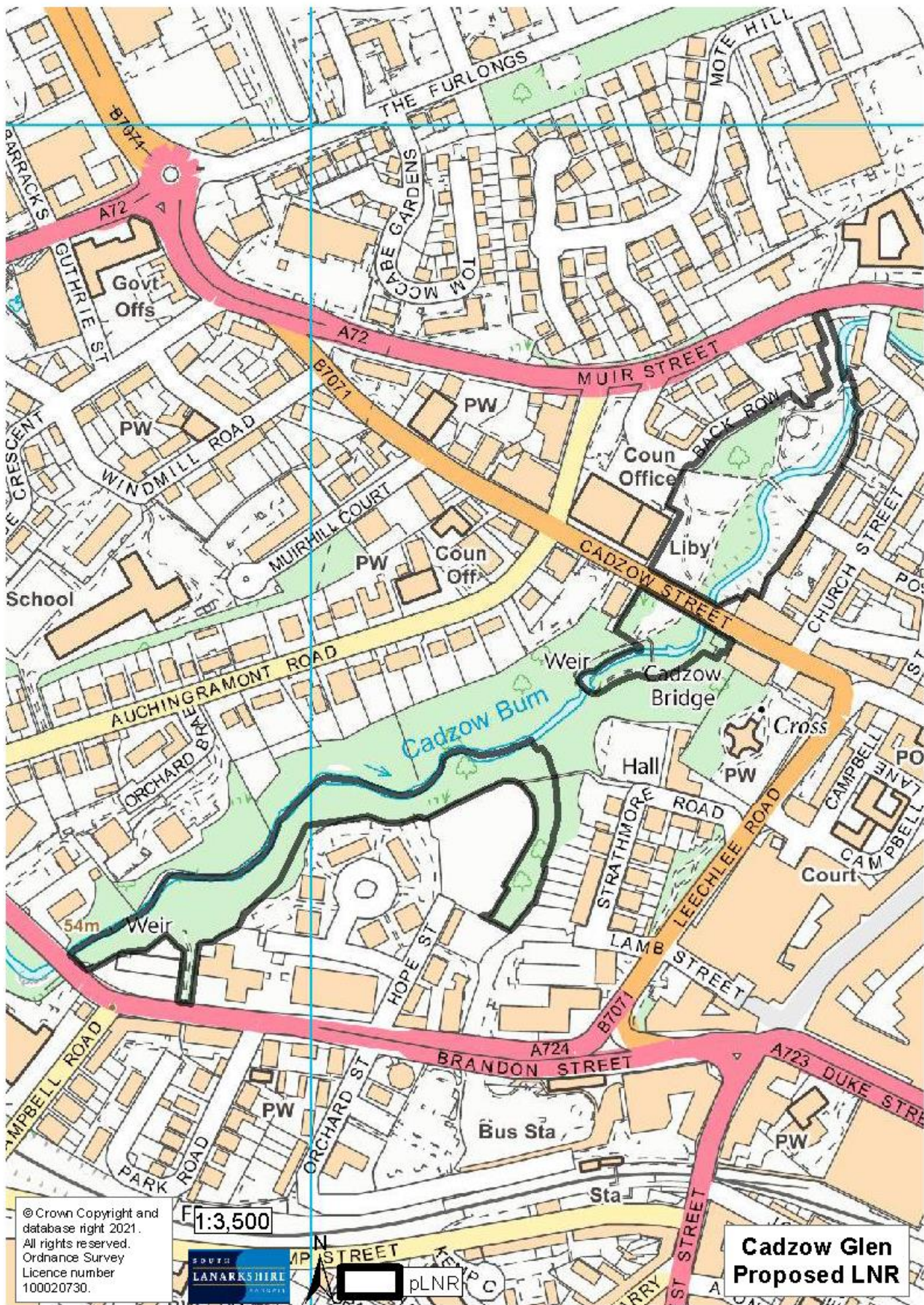


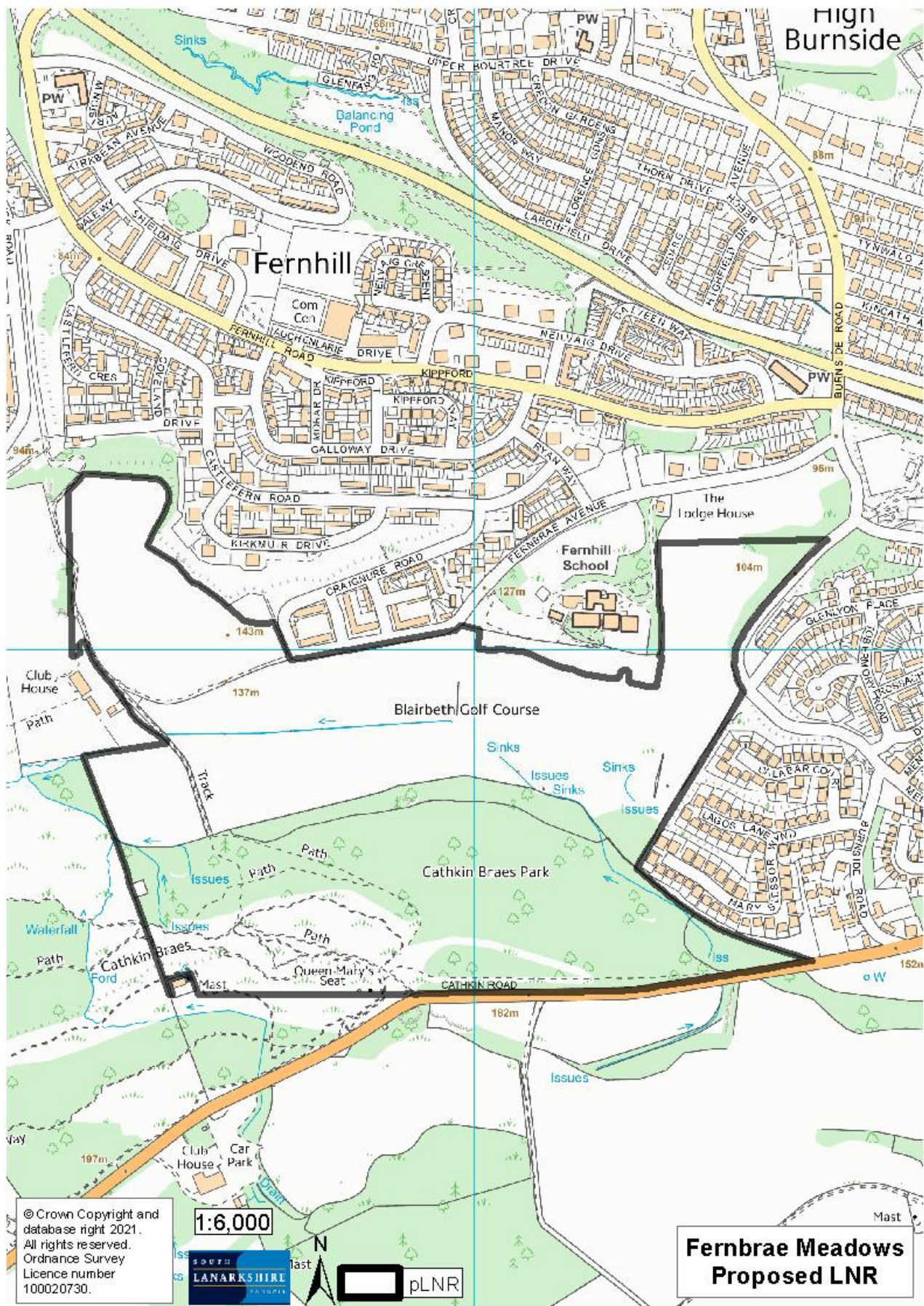
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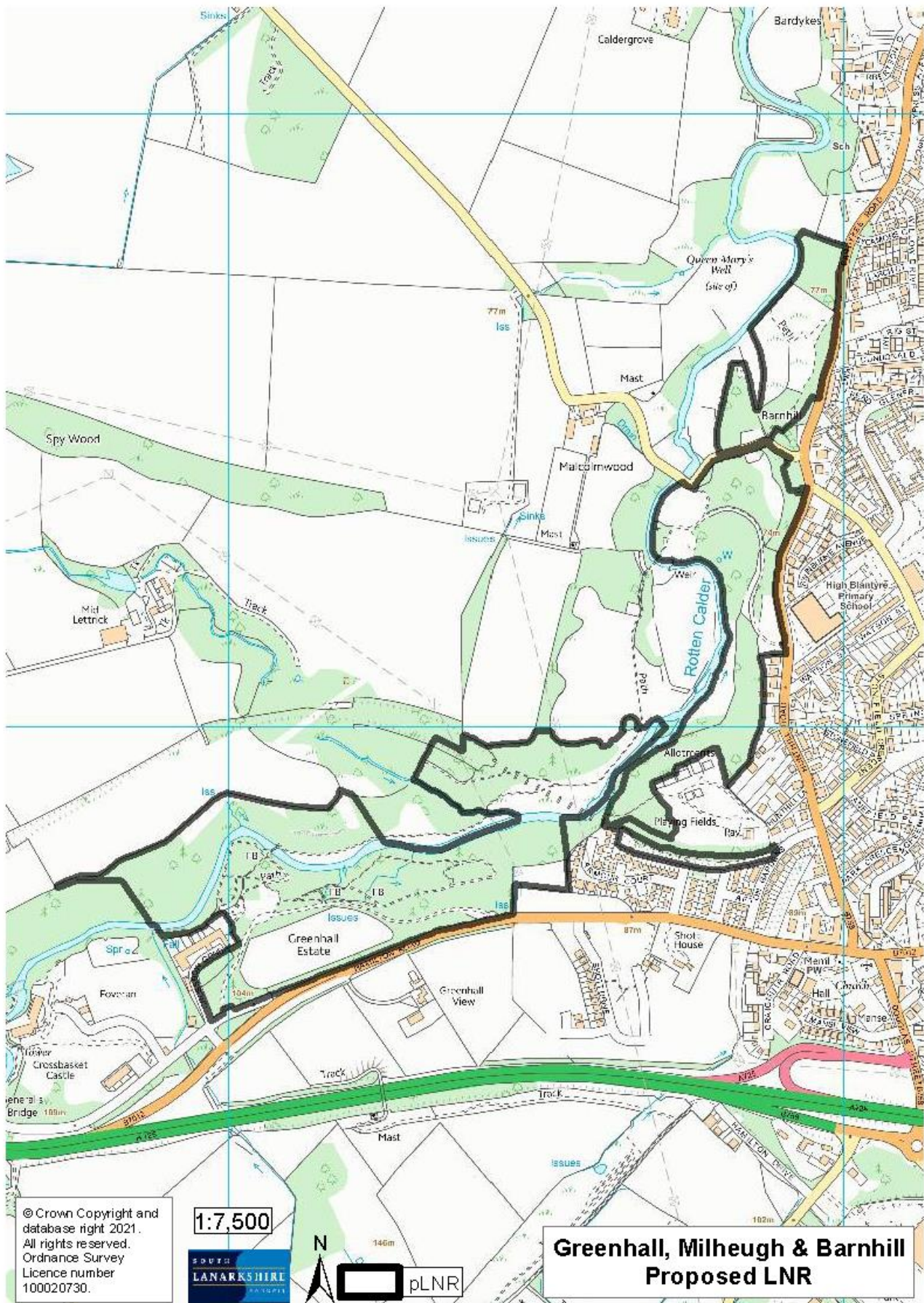
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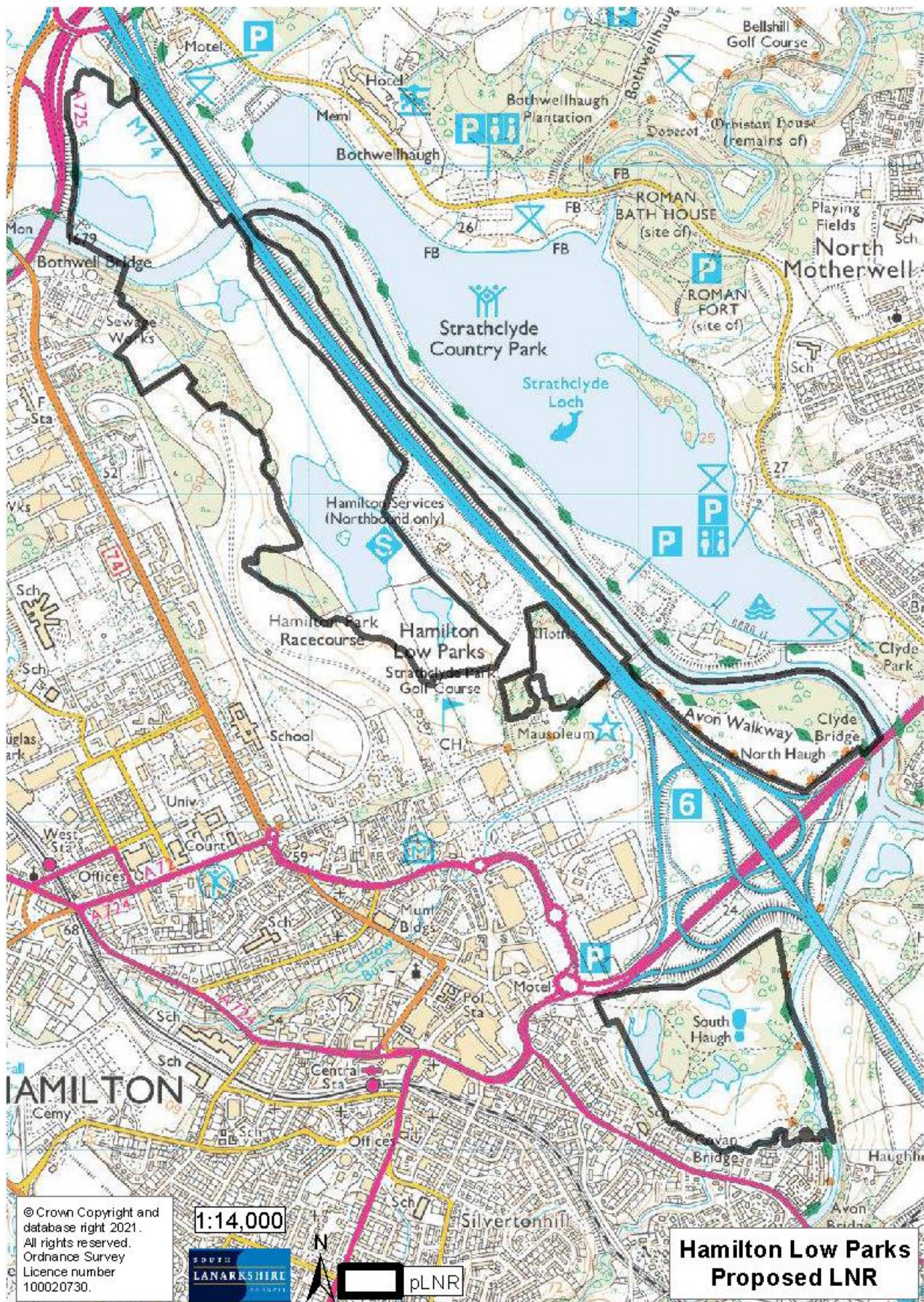


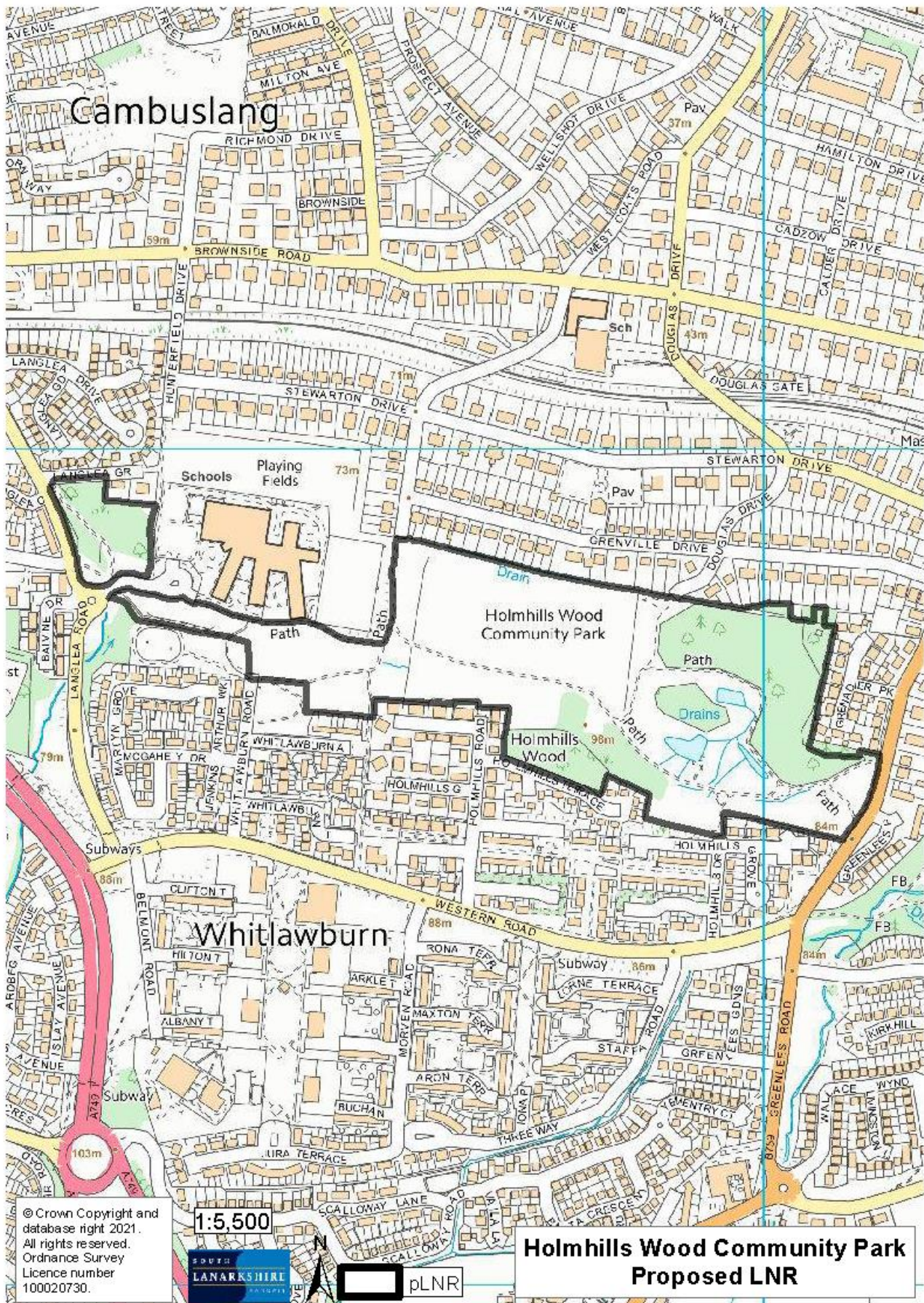
**Blantyre, Bothwell & Uddingston
Proposed LNR**



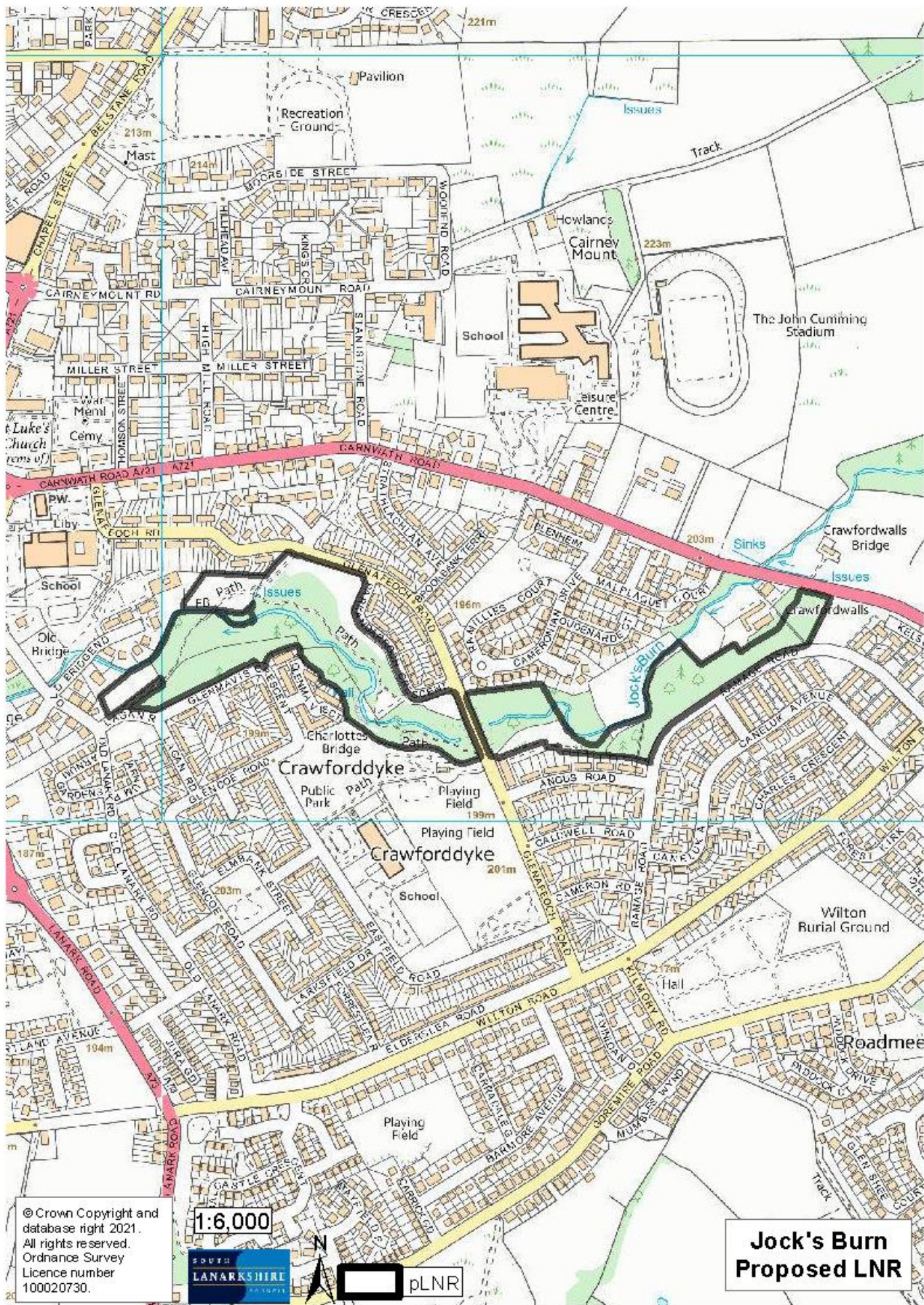


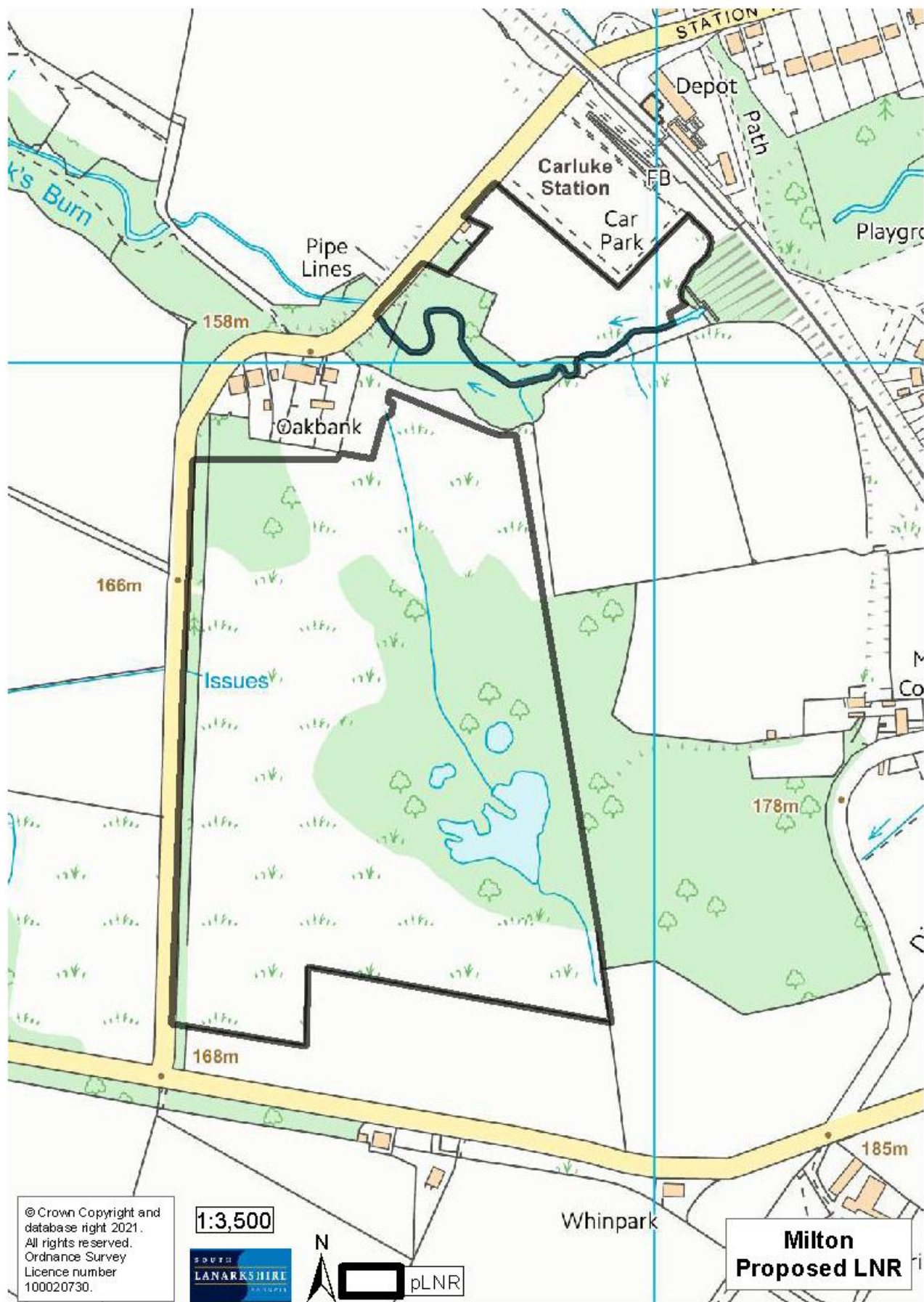


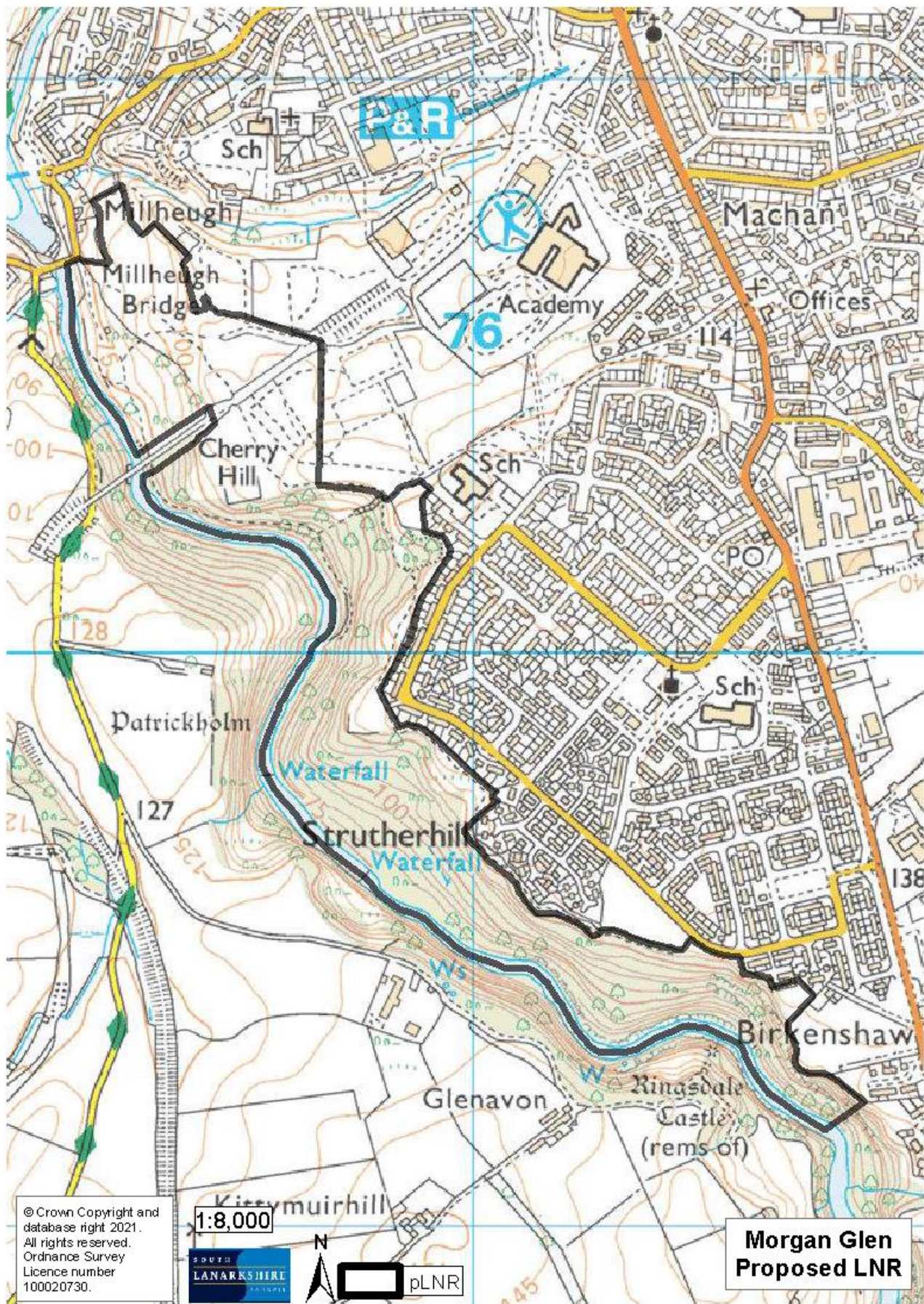


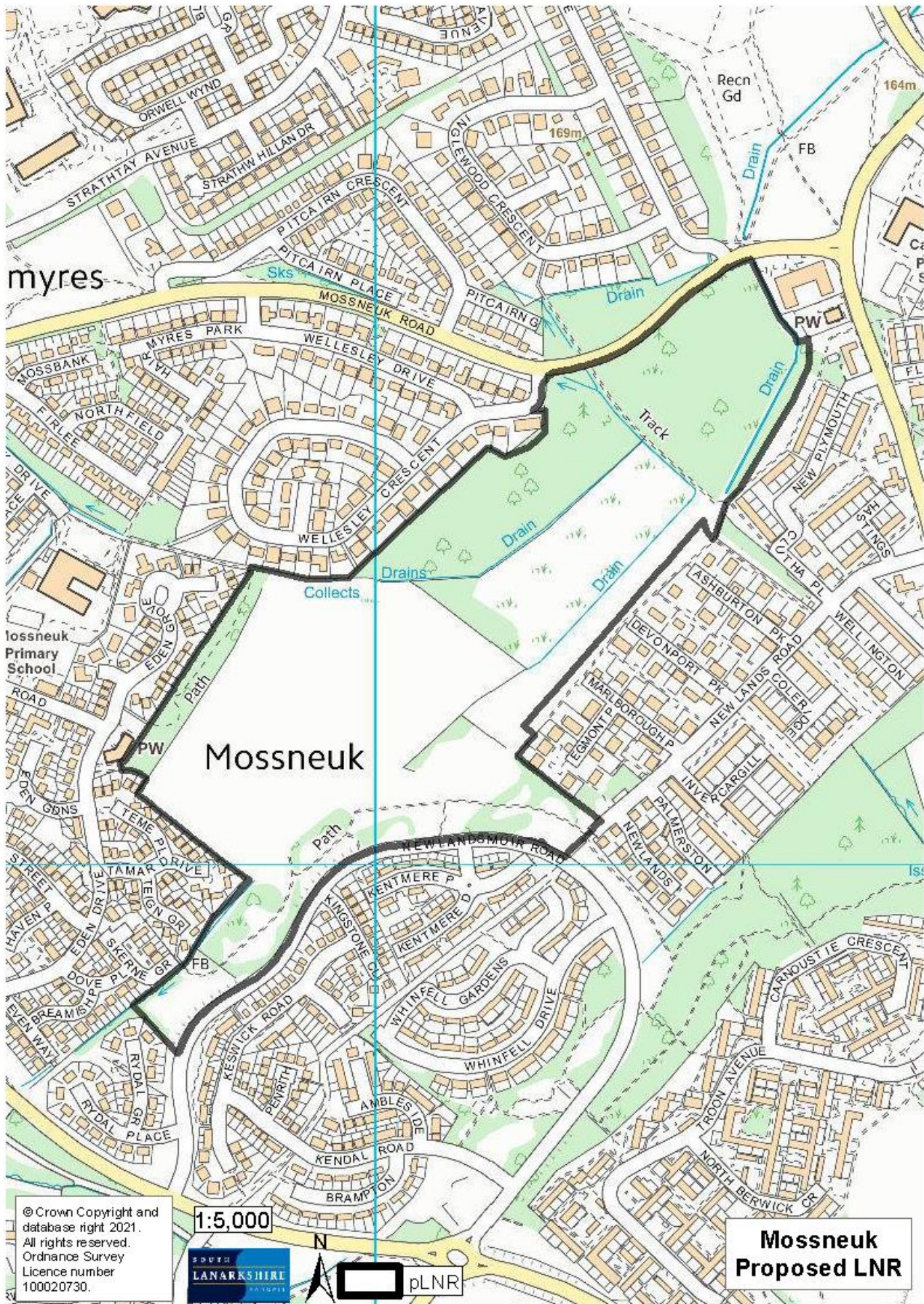




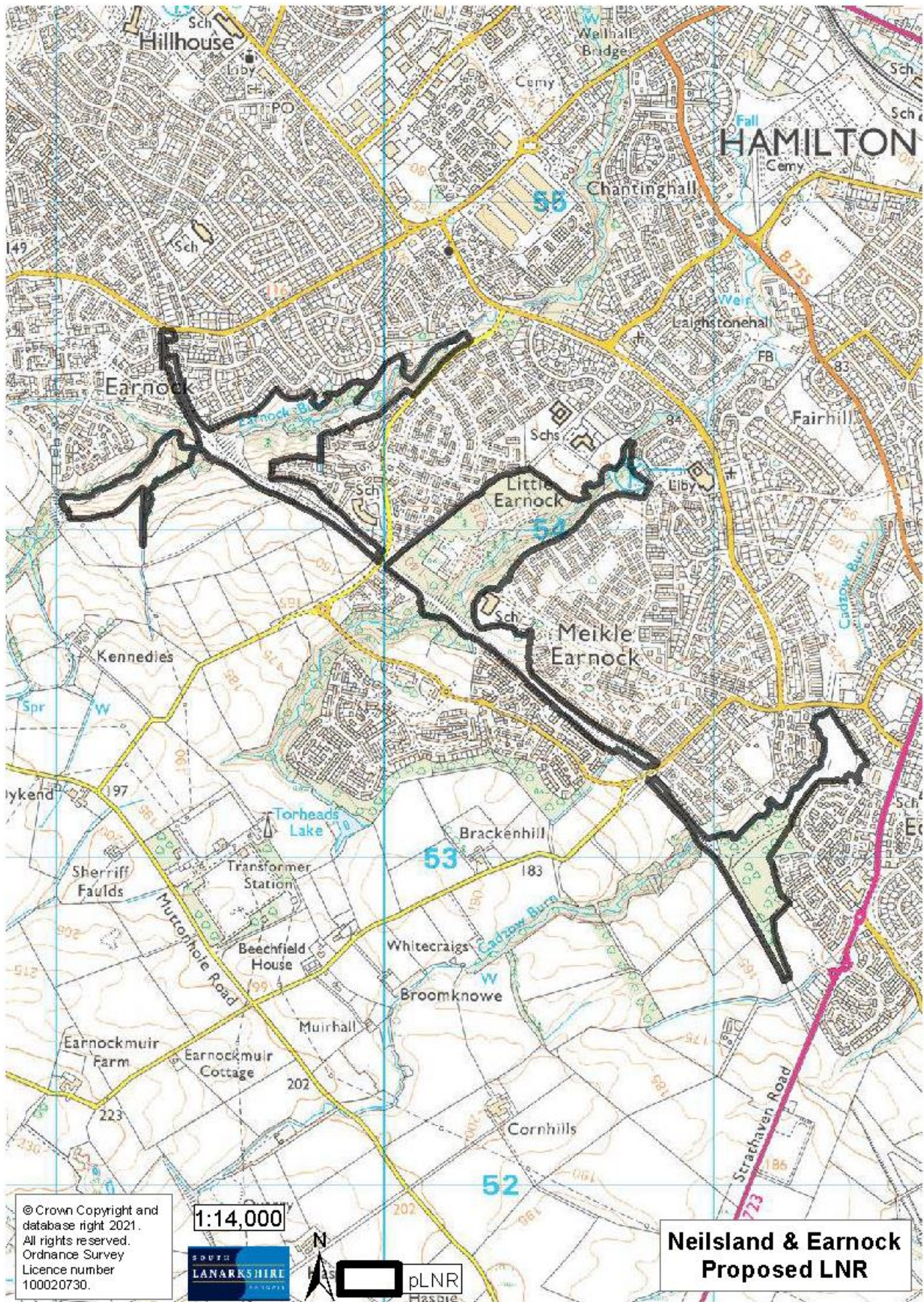


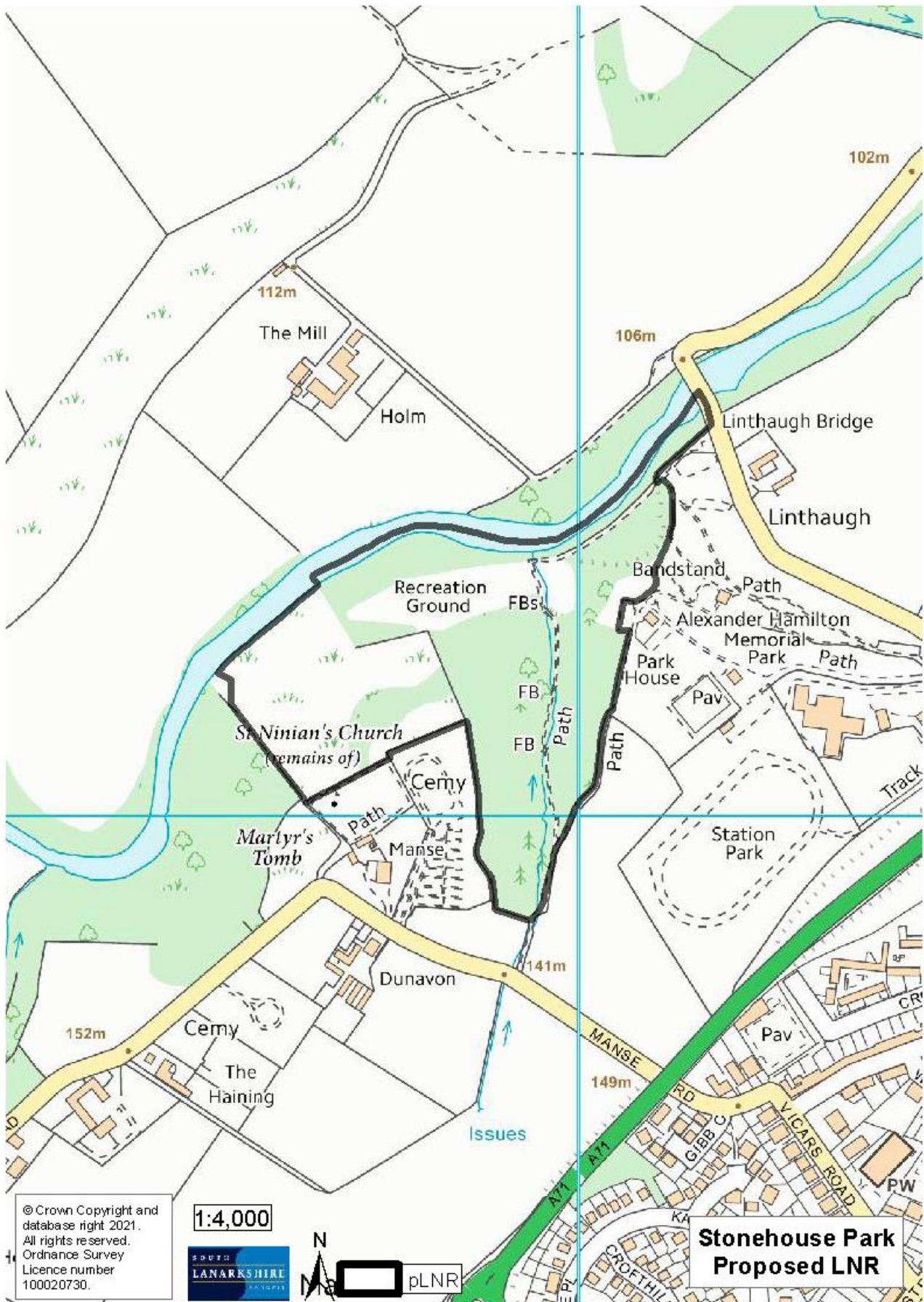






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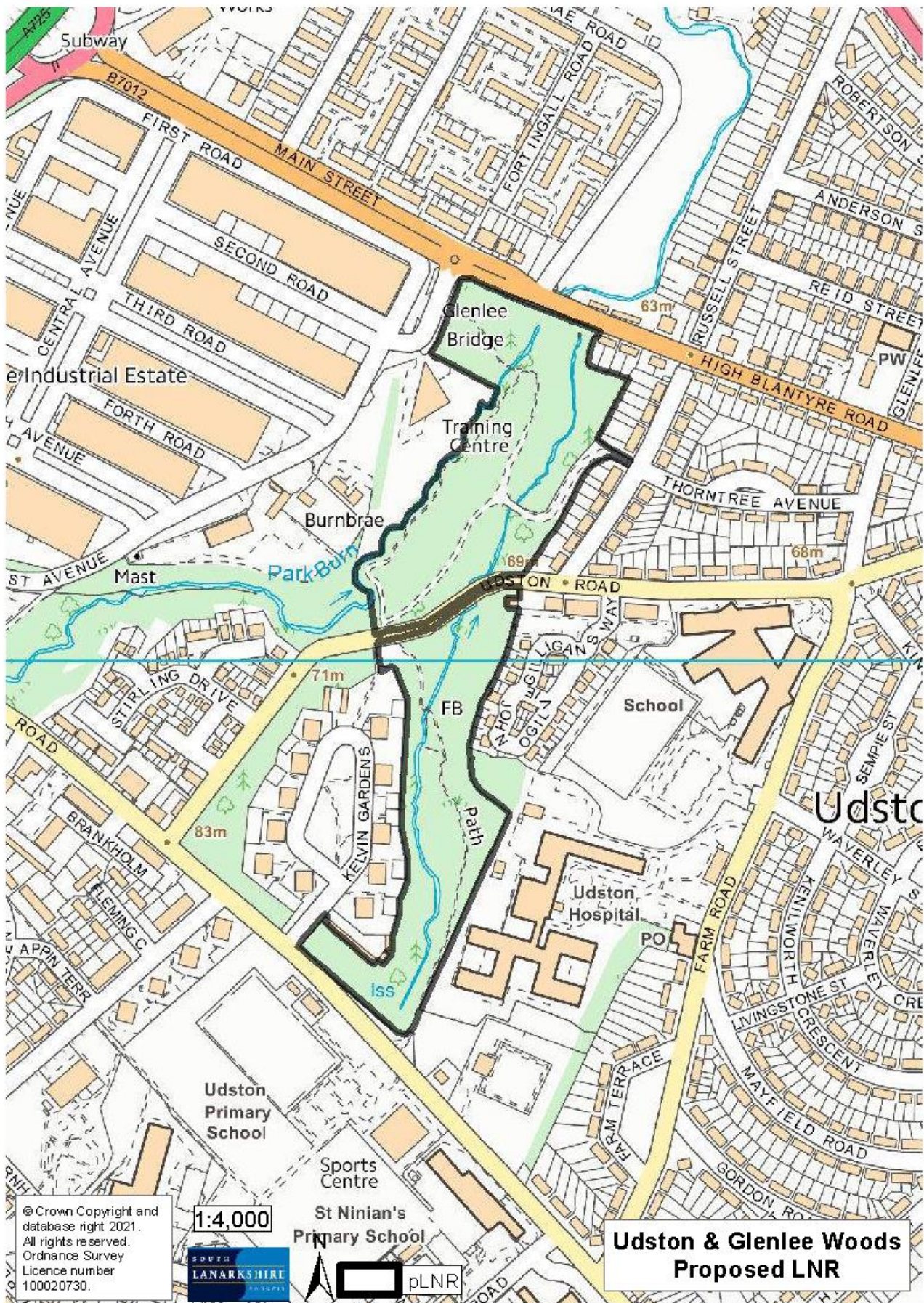


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**Stonehouse Park
Proposed LNR**



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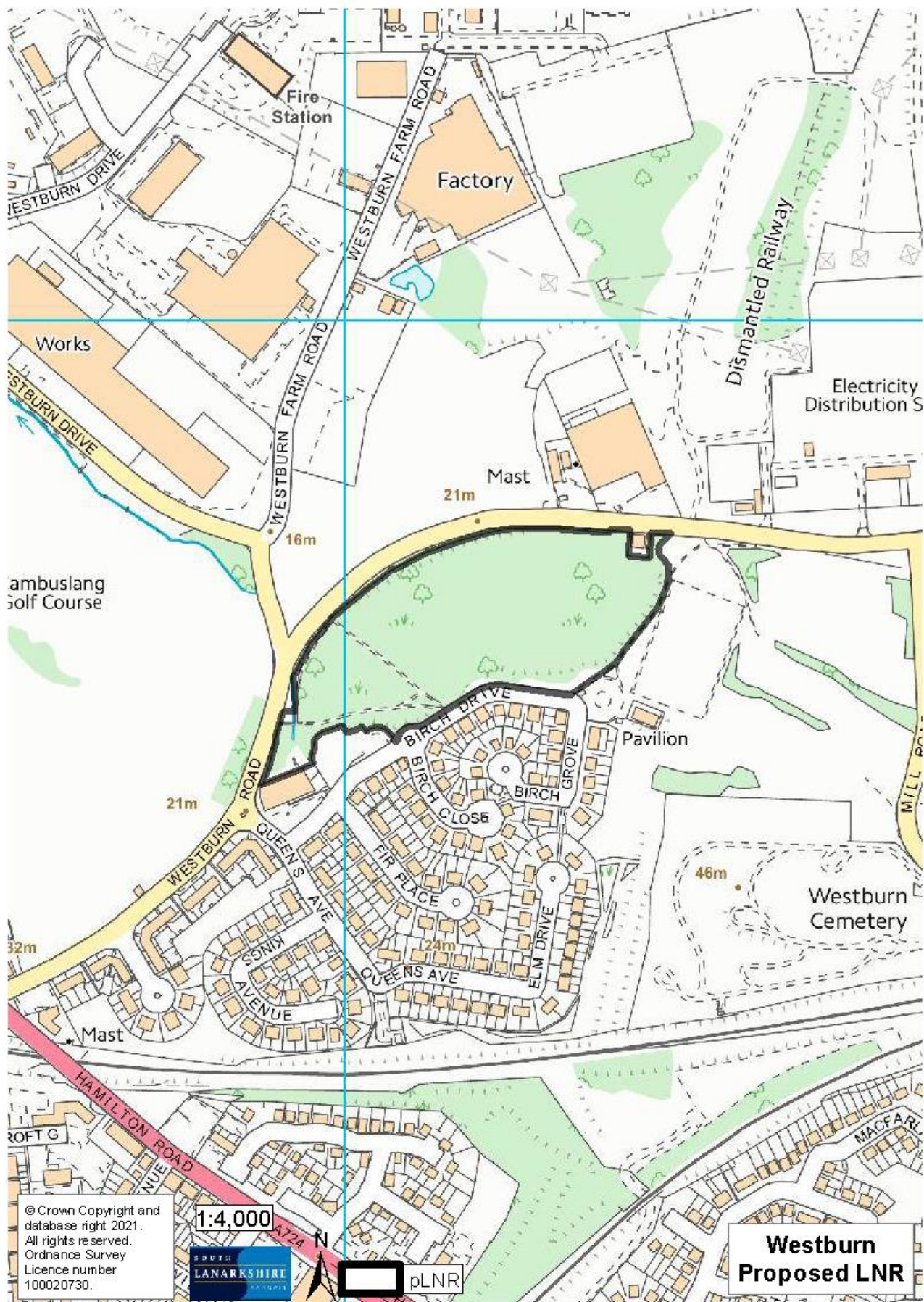
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St Ninian's
Primary School



**Udston & Glenlee Woods
Proposed LNR**



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SOUTH
LANARKSHIRE

N
pLNR

**Westburn
Proposed LNR**

