



Public Document Pack

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11 January 2024

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Environment Committee will be held in **Council Chamber, Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road, Littlehampton, BN17 5LF** on **Tuesday 23 January 2024 at 6.00 pm** and you are requested to attend.

Members: Councillors Wallsgrove (Chair), (Amanda) Worne (Vice-Chair), Blanchard-Cooper, P. Bower, Brooks, Elkins, Greenway, Madeley, May, Warr and Wiltshire

PLEASE NOTE:

A live webcast of the meeting will be available via the Council's [Committee webpages](#).

Any members of the public wishing to address the Committee meeting during Public Question Time, will need to email Committees@arun.gov.uk by 5.15 pm on **Tuesday 16 January 2024** in line with current Committee Meeting Procedure Rules.

For further information on the items to be discussed, please contact Committees@arun.gov.uk

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members and Officers are invited to make any declaration of pecuniary, personal and/or prejudicial interests that they may have in relation to items on this agenda, and are reminded that they should re-declare their interest before consideration of the items or as soon as the interest becomes apparent.

Members and Officers should make their declaration by stating:

- a) the item they have the interest in
- b) whether it is a pecuniary/personal interest and/or prejudicial interest
- c) the nature of the interest

3. MINUTES

(Pages 1 - 22)

The Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Environment Committee held on 21 November 2023.

4. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

To receive questions from the public (for a period of up to 15 minutes)

6. BERSTED BROOKS PARK PROJECT

(Pages 23 - 90)

The report provides an update on the Bersted Brooks Park project, including a summary of the stakeholder engagement and public consultation, and outlines proposals to be taken forward.

7. COMMITTEE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2024/25 - ENVIRONMENT (Pages 91 - 98)

The purpose of the report is for this Committee to consider and recommend its 2024/25 revenue budget, which will be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024. The Policy and Finance Committee will consider the overall revenue budget for 2024/25 so that it can make recommendations to a Special Meeting of the Council on 21 February 2024.

[30 Minutes]

8. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 31 DECEMBER 2023 (Pages 99 - 104)

The report sets out in further detail the Committee's Revenue and Capital programme budget performance projections to the 31 March 2024.

[10 Minutes]

9. Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI'S) WHICH FORM PART OF THE COUNCIL'S VISION 2022-2026.

This report will set out the performance of the Key Performance indicators at Quarter 3 for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 December 2023.

The report will be circulated separately to the agenda.

[10 Minutes]

OUTSIDE BODIES - FEEDBACK FROM MEETINGS

10. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 105 - 106)

The Committee is required to note the Work Programme for 2023/24.

[5 Minutes]

Note : If Members have any detailed questions, they are reminded that they need to inform the Chair and relevant Director in advance of the meeting.

Note : Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings – The District Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in its decision making and permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. This meeting may therefore be recorded, filmed or broadcast by video or audio, by third parties. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Council and as available via the following link [Filming Policy](#)

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

Subject to approval at the next Environment Committee meeting

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ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

21 November 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Wallsgrove (Chair), Worne (Vice-Chair), Blanchard-Cooper, P. Bower, Brooks, Elkins, Greenway, Madeley, May, Warr and Wiltshire

Councillors Bicknell, Cooper, Mrs Cooper, Goodheart, Gunner and Haywood were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

[Note: Councillor Worne was absent from the meeting during discussion of all or part of Minute 383]

376. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Greenway declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 7 as a Member of Bersted Parish Council and a Member of Friends of Bersted Brooks.

377. MINUTES

A query was raised regarding Minute 89 around the cost of producing the discs. Officers confirmed they believed this was showing correctly in the Minutes.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 07 September 2023 were approved by the Committee. These would be signed after the meeting.

378. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

[During discussion of this Item, Councillor Greenway declared a Personal Interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council]

[During discussion of this Item, Councillor Elkins declared a Personal Interest as a Member of West Sussex County Council]

The Chair confirmed that there was one urgent item for the Committee to consider, which would be discussed under Item 4 of the meeting. She explained that following Wednesday night's Full Council meeting where the urgent item entitled 'Storm Ciaran and Flooding Impacts' was considered and approved, an urgent report had been circulated to Members of the Environment Committee entitled 'Arun Flood Forum Following Storm Ciaran'. This Item was business of such urgency as to require

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immediate attention by the Committee in accordance with Committee Procedure Rule 3.1(vii).

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Environment and Climate Change introduced the report to Committee. He explained a report had been taken to Full Council on 08 November 2023 following Storm Ciaran which followed unprecedented rainfall in October 2023 and resulted in flooding impacts across the District. Full Council recognised the impacts on residents and business and recommended the Environment Committee establish a Forum to review the incident, to investigate and consider the contributing factors, impacts and possible solutions. The Forum would be made up of various partners responsible for flood preparation, planning and response, including the Environment Agency, Southern Water, West Sussex County Council and others. The Forum was to be Chaired by a suitably qualified independent person, and authority was delegated to the Environment Committee. In accordance with the Civil Contingencies Act (CCA) 2004 the District Council took the lead role in coordinating the recovery from an incident. He then took Members through the recommended Terms of Reference for the Forum, which were set out in Appendix 1, and explained this had been based on the model of other flood forums across the nation that were already operating.

The Chair then invited questions, and Councillor Greenway proposed an amendment to the Terms of Reference as shown in italics below. This was shared to the screen for Members to see.

Terms of Reference - Arun Flood Forum

1. Purpose of the Forum

The main purpose of the Forum is to:

- Understand the issues behind the main flooding events which occurred within the District following Storm Ciaran in October 2023.*
- Understand other recent flooding events which have occurred within the District where homes and businesses have been affected.*
- To understand the impact new development **and climate change have both** ~~has~~ had on these flooding events.*
- To make recommendations on practical and deliverable measures to reduce the impact of flooding on the District's residents, businesses and the environment, and to promote the implementation of permanent and sustainable solutions to mitigate or alleviate flooding.*
- The Forum will also seek to improve communication between the flood risk management authorities and representatives from flood affected communities.*
- **To highlight and signpost to residents funding opportunities, and help educate residents about what more they can do to protect their own properties.***

2. Scope

The Forum will focus on areas of flood risk resulting from the Storm Ciaran event but will cover other areas of flood risk as determined by the Forum.

43. Objectives

The Forum will work to:

- *Clearly establish the impact of flooding following the events following Storm Ciaran*
- *Clearly identify the highest risk areas to flooding resulting from the above review – which communities and businesses are at highest risk.*
- *Hear from communities and businesses affected by the flooding events.*
- *Understand the relationship between new developments and the functional flood plan, how they are drained and the impact on existing built up areas.*
- *Understand the various agencies roles and responsibilities in dealing flooding both in terms of prevention and solutions.*
- *Set out measures to mitigate these risks, from those already established and identify additional measures to assist in future flooding events.*
- *Consider the key agencies' responsibilities and their working relationships with the Council and each other.*
- *Establish what arrangements there are for involving and consulting local communities in determining flood prevention plans and in flood response and recovery arrangements.*
- *Ensure that partners' own organisations are aware of and can respond to flood related issues within their assigned duties and resources.*
- *Review procedures for flood prevention, response and recovery.*
- *Arrange periodic and appropriate training or information exchange for relevant personnel, including partners' own workforces, emergency services, volunteers and other stakeholders on the operational aspects of flood risk management.*
- *Make recommendations for appropriate action by the Council and partner agencies.*
- *Actively address funding opportunities to support projects / proposals resulting from the Forum.*
- *Ensure that the Council's interests are represented at regional and national level in respect of flood policy development and funding.*

4. Chairing

- *The Forum will be chaired by an independent professional, **with experience of chairing meetings, creating action plans, and understanding technical issues.***
- *The Chair will be chosen by the Chief Executive's Recruitment and Selection Panel.*

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- **The Chair will be responsible for communicating and engaging with other bodies, partners, landowners and other stakeholders to facilitate their engagement with the forum.**

5. Membership Attendees

- ~~The Forum will be chaired by an independent professional.~~
- ~~Up to 4 District Councillors from flood affected wards (with not more than one representative from each ward). All other Members are able to attend to observe and ask questions.~~
- ~~Up to 4 Parish Council representatives, who should be the Chair or Vice Chair of their Parish Council, (with not more than one representative from each parish)~~
- **Any Arun District councillor, West Sussex County councillor and town/parish councillor within the Arun District can attend all meetings of the Forum.**
- Appropriate officer representation from Southern Water
- Appropriate officer representation from the Environment Agency
- Appropriate officer representation from West Sussex County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority
- Relevant officer representation from Arun District Council
- ~~The group may co-opt representatives of other organisations to sit on the group as appropriate.~~
- **Any affected business, resident, landowner or interested party within the District.**

6. Meetings and frequency

- The group will meet 4 times per year or as determined by the Forum.
- All meetings to be held in person.

7. Leadership and Governance

- The Forum would not be a committee, sub-committee or working party of the authority. Instead, it would be a body established by the Environment Committee and the appropriate statutory power for its establishment would be the Council's general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.
- Agendas and minutes of the Forum meetings will be reported to Environment Committee.
- Forum member representatives attendees will determine for themselves how they wish to report back to their own organisations and communities on the work of the group.
- **Attendance at Membership of the Forum meetings** provides no undertaking or commitment by any member organisation to make available funding for any scheme or proposal, but representatives will use their best endeavours to secure funding from appropriate sources.

- *ADC will provide secretariat services for the Forum.*

98. Decision-Making Process

- *The Forum will make recommendations to Environment Committee where they relate to ADC decisions. It will have no decision-making authority.*

109. Communication

- *Communication resulting from the Forum meetings will be shared through ADC Communications team.*

Proposed Forum topics /meetings—~~one subject per meeting~~

- *To hear from affected communities and business representatives*
- *National Flood Forum experience, role and responsibilities*
- *Environment Agency (EA) responsibilities and actions*
- *Southern Water (SW) responsibilities and actions*
- **ADC responsibilities and actions**
- *WSCC (Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)) responsibilities and actions and ADC's role*
- *Impact of planning and development*
- **Landowners responsibilities and actions**

Councillor Greenway explained that during the debate at Full Council, Members had commented that it did not just relate to storm Ciaran, so he had tried to remove reference to this in the amendment. He was disappointed that Climate Change had not been mentioned in the Terms of Reference, so the amendment reflected this under Purpose. He had also included ways that members of the public may be able to help themselves right now, such as highlighting and signposting funding opportunities, and helping to educate residents about what more they could do to protect their own properties. He felt there was also little mention of responsibilities of landowners and riparian owners, so he amended the attendees to include them. He felt the Membership contradicted itself as although only allowed 4 District Councillors, it mentioned other Members could attend and observe, and he questioned what the role of the designated District Councillors would be on the Forum. He wanted to open this up to include West Sussex County Councillors and Parish Councillors. Under the possible Forum topics he had added 'Arun District Council's Responsibilities and Actions', and had crossed out one subject per meeting as he felt this may not take up a whole meeting. He had added in a section for Chairing the meeting to include how the Chair would be chosen and what their responsibilities would be.

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Madely.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer and Director of Environment and Communities explained to Members that the Chief Executive's Recruitment and

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Selection Panel would not be able to select the Chair of the Forum, as the purpose of the Panel was solely to select the Chief Executive.

With the agreement of the Committee the Chair announced a short adjournment to allow Members the opportunity to study the amendment.

Upon resuming the meeting, the proposer of the amendment, Councillor Greenway, with the agreement of the seconder, Councillor Madeley, altered his amendment as shown below in italics, which was shared to the screen for all Members to see. He explained that he had removed Paragraph 4 which related to the Chair, which he had done due to the advice of the Interim Chief Executive Officer and Director of Environment and Communities that the Chief Executive's Recruitment and Selection Panel would not be able to select the Chair of the Forum. He explained he would like Paragraph 5 to return to the Substantive, with the small amendment of allowing District and County Councillors to be able to attend the forum to observe and ask questions.

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- *To understand the impact ~~new~~ development **and climate change have both** had on these flooding events.*
- *To make recommendations on practical and deliverable measures to reduce the impact of flooding on the District's residents, businesses and the environment, and to promote the implementation of permanent and sustainable solutions to mitigate or alleviate flooding.*
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- ***To highlight and signpost to residents funding opportunities, and help educate residents about what more they can do to protect their own properties.***

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The Forum will focus on areas of flood risk resulting ~~from the Storm Ciaran event but will cover other areas of flood risk~~ as determined by the Forum.

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The Forum will work to:

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- *Up to 4 District Councillors from flood affected wards (with not more than one representative from each ward). All other **District and County Councillors** are able to attend to observe and ask questions.*
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- *Appropriate officer representation from West Sussex County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority*
- *Relevant officer representation from Arun District Council*
- *The group may co-opt representatives of other organisations to sit on the group as appropriate.*

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- *The group will meet 4 times per year or as determined by the Forum.*
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- *The Forum would not be a committee, sub-committee or working party of the authority. Instead, it would be a body established by the Environment Committee and the appropriate statutory power for its establishment would be the Council's general power of competence under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011.*
- *Agendas and minutes of the Forum meetings will be reported to Environment Committee.*
- *Forum member representatives **attendees** will determine for themselves how they wish to report back to their own organisations and communities on the work of the group.*
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- *ADC will provide secretariat services for the Forum.*

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- *Environment Agency (EA) responsibilities and actions*
- *Southern Water (SW) responsibilities and actions*
- ***ADC responsibilities and actions***
- *WSSC (Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)) responsibilities and actions and ADC's role*
- *Impact of planning and development*
- ***Landowners responsibilities and actions***

Members were then given additional time to read the altered amendments to the Terms of Reference, as above. Members confirmed they understood these amendments, and the Chair invited debate as follows:-

- *This forum was important to residents as all areas were affected by flooding.*
- *It was felt important that Climate Change was included as there had been a dramatic increase to rainfall which had an impact, particularly where ditches were overflowing. It was asked whether this process would address the duties*

- under the Flood and Water Management Act of all the parties involved. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change confirmed it would.
- It was asked how it would be decided which District Councillors would sit on the Forum, as it was felt that all wards were flood-affected. The Interim Chief Executive Officer and Director of Environment and Communities explained this would be decided by Members, but it would be a collaborative forum and would report back to the Environment Committee. It was an opportunity to examine the issues behind the main flooding events which had occurred within the District.

The amendment was put to the vote and was declared CARRIED.

Turning to the substantive, the amended recommendations were proposed by Councillor Blanchard-Cooper and seconded by Councillor Greenway.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

The Terms of Reference, as amended by Committee, be approved.

379. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed one question had been submitted, which is briefly summarised below:

1. From Jan Malpas to the Chair of the Environment Committee, regarding Beach Access for all.

(A schedule of the full question asked and the response provided can be found on the [Environment Committee Public Question Web page](#))

380. QUARTER 2 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer introduced the report to Committee. He explained that the report was a forecast of outturn verses budget as at Quarter 2 (at the end of September). He drew Members' attention to table 1 on page 14, the bottom line showed a revenue budget underspend of £55k, which was a change of around £58k from the previous quarter, smaller amounts in the overall Committee budget. The main reasons were outlined in Paragraphs 4.2-4.7 of the report. Building Control Fees were around £35k lower than budget, which he felt was due to the general economic downturn; Car Parking Income was £55k higher than budget income, parking fees were increased in January this year, and it was fair to say those had not generated the extra level of income hoped for,

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however it was higher than budget income; he corrected that Cemeteries and Churchyards should read £21k underspend not overspend and this was related to staffing costs; Cleansing Services were showing £152k overspend which was predominantly due to two reasons, inflation was still high, and there was a back-dated pay increase for the contract staff involved in delivering that service; Parks and Greenspaces were showing £125k underspend, which was largely due to staff vacancies; he corrected that Management and Support costs should say a £53k underspend change since quarter 1, the report incorrectly said £125k. With regards to the Capital Programme the only issue to report was the slippage of £200k on the skate park, which was a result of capacity issues.

There were no questions from Members.

The Committee noted the report.

381. BERSTED BROOKS PARK

The Chair confirmed that this Item would be withdrawn for consideration at this meeting without discussion, and would instead be on the agenda for the next meeting of the Environment Committee on 23 January 2024. The reason for this was that the Item was not time sensitive and Members had requested a briefing for Members of the Environment Committee and Ward Members by the Lead Officer.

382. ADDITIONAL HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION LICENSING SCHEME

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Principal Environmental Health Officer introduced the report to Committee. The report had originated from a Full Council resolution with two strands, the first relating to the quantity of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Planning Policy Committee had implemented Article 4 Directions in January 2023, which meant that any new HMOs in the wards of River, Hotham and Marine now required planning permission. This report related to the second strand, which was the quality of HMOs, and proposed an extension to the type of HMOs requiring a licence. Currently there was a mandatory national HMO licence scheme that required any property with five or more people forming two or more households, sharing facilities to hold a licence. The Housing Act 2004 gave Local Authorities the discretion to introduce additional HMO licensing schemes. This could be to extend the type of properties that required licensing and could apply to the whole district or certain wards. The Council commissioned a report by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) and following the evidence and data provided, a public consultation took place between 12 June – 20 August 2023 on the proposal to introduce an additional HMO licensing scheme in the wards of River, Hotham and Marine. This would include properties occupied by three or four occupants forming two or more households, sharing facilities. It would also include Section 257 HMOs, which were properties converted into self-contained flats where the conversion did not meet current Building Regulations, with less than two thirds of the flats owner-occupied.

The aims of the scheme was to improve the standard of accommodation in the three wards. The report included a summary of the consultation results and feedback. There had been 99 responses to the survey, 69 being owner-occupiers, 14 tenants, 10 landlords and 6 other. 5 individual representations had been made. In summary there was agreement and support for the types of properties to be included within the scheme, the wards to be targeted and what the aims of the scheme would achieve. However, it must be noted that the highest number of respondents were from either tenants or owner occupiers, as opposed to landlords.

The HMO Licensing was a cost recovery scheme, and an analysis of the current mandatory licensing regime had been undertaken to ensure the Council had used a clear evidence base to set fees in order to fully recover the allowable costs incurred in regulating these properties. The proposed fees were shown at paragraph 4.35 and would be set for the 5 year term of the license. There was a risk to realising this income, based on the accuracy of figures from the BRE and also the risk of potential for landlords to choose to move out of the market. Resources would be required in terms of a Team Leader, HMO Officer and Technical Support Assistants, which were identified at paragraph 4.29. The additional licensing scheme, if introduced, would be for a five year period, after which time the Council would be required to evaluate its success, undertake another public consultation and a report would be provided to Members again with regards to whether the scheme should continue and/or be expanded to other wards. Currently these properties were not proactively inspected, and this scheme was a cost recovery way of introducing such a programme to enable inspections to ensure minimum standards and improve private rented sector accommodation for some of the more vulnerable residents.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- It was felt the consultation response rate was disappointing, and there was concern not enough weight had been given to landlords' views. The Principal Environmental Health Officer agreed that the response rate was disappointing, however letters had been sent to all households and businesses within the three wards, two landlord events had been held, and the consultation had been widely publicised.
- There was concern around the costs. The Principal Environmental Health Officer explained that they had broken down all of the costs and the admin involved in the tasks, and were confident that the fees stated would cover the cost to provide the scheme. This would be kept under review.
- There was concern that some existing landlords may choose not to continue providing accommodation.
- One Member stated there were differences between the fire brigade fire conditions and Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) fire guidance. The Principal Environmental Health Officer explained that the LACORS guidance needed to be followed, which was enforced by the Local Authority as they were the lead for fire safety in HMOs.

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- There was concern this would apply to homeowners taking in lodgers. The Principal Environmental Health Officer explained that where people took in up to two lodgers the property would not be classed as an HMO.
- It was suggested that consultation in future be available in simpler English or multiple languages. The Principal Environmental Health Officer explained they had tried to provide the information as simply as possible, but took the comments on board.
- The National Residents Landlords Association (NRLA) had offered to work with the Council to develop a dispute resolution service, and Officers views on this were sought. The Principal Environmental Health Officer explained the Council had a good relationship with the NRLA, and had responded to say they welcomed the idea of sharing best practice.
- The letter on page 105 from a local property manager made one Member think this may not be a good idea, most of the small private HMOs were not badly managed and it could drive some landlords out of business. The Member felt Arun should not expand too far outside of its' statutory duties, and financially It didn't seem like a good time to be doing this.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Blanchard-Cooper and seconded by Councillor Worne.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1. It recommends to Full Council to Designate the whole of the three wards of Marine, Hotham and River as subject to Additional Licensing under section 56(1)(a) of the Housing Act 2004 for all Houses in Multiple Occupation that contain three or four occupiers making up two or more households irrespective of the number of storeys, and those properties defined as Section 257 Houses in Multiple Occupation under Housing Act 2004. Such designation to take effect in the financial year 2024/2025 and last for 5 years, the specific date to be agreed by the Group Head of Technical Services in consultation with Legal Services.
2. The fees for Additional HMO Licensing as set out in 4.35 be agreed for 2024/25.
3. It recommends to Policy and Finance Committee that the resources as set out in paragraph 4.29 are agreed in order to implement the additional HMO licensing scheme within the three wards of River, Marine and Hotham.

383. AIR QUALITY STRATEGY

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Environmental Health Team Manager introduced the report, which concerned adoption of an Air Quality Strategy for Arun. Air pollution was associated with a number of adverse health impacts and was recognised as a contributing factor in the onset of heart disease and cancer. Additionally, air pollution particularly affected the most vulnerable in society. The Government had recently published their revised Air Quality Strategy (2023) and had revised the local air quality management framework which Arun followed, which now placed a new requirement on Local Authorities without air quality management areas to produce an air quality strategy, setting out the action that they would take to improve air quality in their area. Air quality monitoring carried out by the Council continued to indicate that there was good air quality within the District and the air quality objectives for Nitrogen Dioxide were being met. This was carried out through a system of 26 Nitrogen Dioxide monitoring tubes.

This first Air Quality Strategy set out the steps that were already being taken to help improve air quality, as part of the Sussex Air Quality Partnership and specifically within Arun, and the proposed priority areas. The air quality work was in relation to public health management and not directly to do with sustainability, although there were direct links as set out in part 14 of the report. The priority areas for focus within Arun included continuing with existing workstreams such as the NO₂ monitoring programme, amendments to the taxi licensing policy and our work as part of Sussex Air, which could be met within existing resources. Initial work to determine the feasibility of smoke control areas, investigate use of fixed penalty notice powers relating to idling vehicles, and evaluating options for proactive dust monitoring of large construction sites, would also be carried out utilising existing capacity within the Environmental Health Service. However, the ability to take some of these items forward, for example should it be determined appropriate to introduce a smoke control area or a programme of proactive dust monitoring, may be contingent on identifying additional capacity or resources, such as may be available through Defra grants, or revenues received from fixed penalty notice receipts.

Members (and a non-Committee Member given permission to speak) then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- It was asked what progress had been made across Arun regarding installation of on-street electrical charge points. The Group Head of Technical Services explained electric vehicle charge points were being rolled out across the County. There had been some lessons learnt from phase one roll-out where six charge points were being installed at every location, there was now a different approach involving earlier consultation with stakeholders. The intention was now to install two electric charge points at most locations, ensuring the infrastructure was there, and more could be installed as required.
- Clarification was sought on the impact of taxis. The Environmental Health Team Manager explained they were looking at revision of the taxi licence policy to look at introducing emission standards for taxi vehicles, and a report was going to Licensing Committee in December in relation to that matter.

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- It was asked whether buses would be monitored, in particular the measuring of particulates. The Environmental Health Team Manager explained the impact of busses would not be monitored directly. Any additional measures would need separate funding, however every year as part of the Sussex Air Quality Partnership there were opportunities to apply for funding through Defra, so this was something that could be looked at in the future.
- It was asked whether there were sufficient number of electric charge points at Harwood Road and Arun Civic Centre. The Group Head of Technical Services was confident there were sufficient numbers for Arun's modest fleet of electric vehicles.
- It was asked that the Group Head of Technical Services noted that electric vehicle charge points needed to be accessible.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Madeley and seconded by Councillor Bower.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1. The Air Quality Strategy be adopted.
2. Authority be given to the Group Head of Technical Services to make minor and administrative amendments to the Strategy.

384. VARIATION TO PARKING FEES

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Technical Services introduced the report to Committee. He explained The Off-Street Parking Strategy 2021-2026 set out that the Council would review the charges annually. Inflation over the last 12 months had been running at around 10%, Consequently, three car parking fee options had been prepared from which the Committee was asked to select one. Option A delivered the smallest increase in revenue for the Council, which had been achieved by increasing fees overall by 5%, and represented a below inflation increase and thus a real term cut in income. Option C delivered the highest increase in revenue, with higher increases across all fees. This had been based on inflation plus 5%, for a 15% increase in fees overall. Option B delivered a medium increase in revenue, with fees increasing broadly in line with inflation, which was the recommended option, and would prevent the Council's income reducing in real terms. He then went onto explain the other recommendations.

Councillor Blanchard-Cooper proposed an amendment to the Officer recommendations, which was to add an additional proposed amendment to the Parking Order under recommendation 2, as follows:

2.3e. To change West Green car park tariff banding to replace reference to 3 hours with 4 hours.

Councillor Blanchard-Cooper explained current parking times restricted the use of the Harvester restaurant and Windmill Theatre, and this change would be more suitable when these facilities were back in use.

This amendment was seconded by Councillor Warr.

Councillor Greenway raised a Point of Order asking whether the substantive recommendations should be proposed and seconded before an amendment could be made. The Committee Manager advised that in Committee it was often the case that amendments be made to the Officer recommendations prior to the substantive recommendations being proposed and seconded, however if Members wanted to Move the recommendations prior to amendments being put forward, this would also be acceptable.

Following the opportunity being given to debate the amendment, it was put to the vote and declared CARRIED.

Councillor Elkins proposed an amendment to recommendation 2.6 as follows (deletions are shown in ~~strikethrough~~):

- 2.6 The development of a plan for improving ~~and introducing fees to~~ the car park to the rear of the Bluebird Café, Ferring Rife, Ferring.

Councillor Elkins explained that the matter of introducing fees had been raised over a number of years. It was a very popular location, and had mixed ownerships and was often flooded with an enormous amount of water. Councillor Elkins felt the existing wording implied it was a prerequisite that fees would be introduced, and he felt this should not be the case.

This amendment was seconded by Councillor Bower.

The Interim Chief Executive Officer and Director of Growth suggested that Councillor Elkins consider rewording his amendment to (additions shown in **bold**):

- 2.6 The development of a plan for improving and introducing fees to the car park to the rear of the Bluebird Café, Ferring Rife, Ferring, **and to report the outcome of these investigations to Committee for further consideration.**

Councillor Elkins was happy with these changes to the amendment, but felt strongly the word 'consider' in relation to introducing fees, should be included. With the agreement of the seconder, the amendment was therefore altered to (additions shown in **bold**):

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- 2.6 The development of a plan for improving and **consider** introducing fees to the car park to the rear of the Bluebird Café, Ferring Rife, Ferring, **and to report the outcome of these investigations to Committee for further consideration.**

Debate was opened on the amendment and support was offered for this. One Member was concerned about the linkage between introducing fees and paying for the improvements to the car park. The Interim Chief Executive Officer and Director of Growth explained investigations had not yet been conducted and ownership had not yet been looked into, therefore they were not yet aware of the costings of improvements and so were not currently in a position to look at how this would be funded.

Upon taking the vote, the amendment was declared CARRIED.

Returning to the substantive, the Chair invited Members to debate and ask questions on the recommendations.

It was asked whether further information could be circulated to Committee regarding paragraph 4.14, the solar canopy for Mewsbrook car park. The Group Head of Technical Services explained they were looking for approval to develop a proposal, it would then be brought back to Committee.

One Member felt that increasing car park charges would not support the needs of businesses, workers, shoppers, commuters, and visitors. There was concern no usage report of the car parks was included in the report, and he felt that Option B rise was too high and would increase higher than inflation. Reassurance was sought that the new pay and display machines used by Arun would allow for periods of less than 2 hours to be purchased. The Group Head of Technical Services explained that this was correct regarding the parking machines, and the Parking Services Review would address the concerns around the usage information.

The Committee gave their permission for a non-Committee Member to speak. It was requested that Committee exclude the car park in Middleton-On-Sea from recommendation 2.3. It was felt Arun could establish user data in a cheaper and more user-friendly way. The car park was extremely well used and did not suffer from long-stayers or abandoned vehicles. The Parish Council wanted to encourage use of the car park and it was felt this may have the opposite effect. There were also concerns that charges may be required for this at some point in the future if ticket machines were installed. The Group Head of Technical Services explained that the car parks would remain free under the proposals.

Clarification was sought on the free tickets. The Group Head of Technical Services explained users would be obliged to obtain a free ticket from the machine. The purpose of this was to gather data on the usage of the car park and also to enable

enforcement of long-staying and abandoned vehicles. He pointed out that Felpham Parish Council, where two of the car parks were situated, had confirmed their support for the installation of the machines.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Worne and seconded by Councillor Wallsgrove.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1. Parking fee option B be introduced with effect from 01 April 2024.
2. Authority be delegated to the Group Head of Technical Services to advertise, consider representation and determine the following proposed amendments to the Parking Order:
 - a. To agree the redefinition of all short and long stay car parks as ‘town centre’ car parks.
 - b. To agree to the addition of Eldon Way car park to Arun District Council’s Parking Order and the associated charging tariff as set out in Appendix 1.
 - c. To agree the installation of parking ticket machines within the three free car parks operated in partnership with Middleton-On-Sea and Felpham Parish Councils.
 - d. To agree the cessation of refunds issued for the cancellation of virtual parking permits for Arun District Council car parks.
 - e. To change West Green car park tariff banding to replace reference to 3 hours with 4 hours.
3. Authority be delegated to the Group Head of Technical Services to introduce and revise annually an administration fee for road closures based on the cost recovery principal.
4. A feasibility assessment for the installation of a solar canopy in Mewsbrook car park, be undertaken.
5. The development of a plan for improving and to consider introducing fees to the car park to the rear of the Bluebird Café, Ferring Rife, Ferring, and to report the outcome of these investigations to Committee for further consideration.
6. A Parking Services Review be commissioned, and its scope as set out in paragraphs 4.17 – 4.30.

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385. UPDATE ON BEACH ACCESS FOR ALL - BOGNOR REGIS

[During discussion of this Item, Councillor Madeley declared a Personal Interest as the Ward Councillor for Felpham West]

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Senior Coastal Engineer introduced the report to Committee. He explained this followed a report brought to Committee in February. The report illustrated the steps taken to meet the short-term objectives. A survey of existing ramps was attached as an appendix to the report, which presented methodology and identified that two ramps were suitable for future clearance. Those ramps were Blakes Road and Gloucester Road. The selection criteria applied principles from national standards and considered the entire access chain, thinking about transport, local infrastructure such as toilets, parking and cafes. It was important to note that the supporting provisions were extremely important when delivering accessible infrastructure. The report also begun to consider some of the medium and long-term objectives, exploring potential funding sources, possible stakeholders and talking to neighboring authorities about their experiences. Worthing Borough Council had kindly provided a statement under 4.6, they had their own issues in developing their model. Steps had been taken to commence stakeholder engagement and some positive meetings with Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester (VAAC), whose connections would help to progress stakeholder engagement along with the Vice-Chair of his Committee. Officers were looking to hold stakeholder engagement meeting in January.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session which is summarised below.

There was concern that the two ramps to access the beach were in Gloucester Road and Blakes Road, which were used by jet skis and the sailing club. The Senior Coastal Engineer explained that they were looking to work actively with jet ski users and Felpham Sailing Club. There was a local business that had an interest in working with the Gloucester Road ramp, and it was hoped an agreement could be come to regarding managing this ramp.

It was suggested the best place for a ramp would be in the centre of Bognor Regis opposite Place St Maur, and it was asked whether the possibility of using ramps there had been excluded. The Senior Coastal Engineer explained the ramps that had been discounted were primarily due to them being covered in shingle, the shingle was the primary coastal defence. The possibility of a new ramp in that area would need to be looked at alongside a major capital project such as renewal of the sea defences.

The Senior Coastal Engineer and Group Head of Environment and Climate Change were thanked for their work on this report and also the Bognor Regis Beach Access Working Party, and it was clear they had wanted to support making the beach accessible. Immediate action had taken place allowing some access onto the beach during the summer of 2023, and this work would be continued for the 2024 season.

One Member was disappointed with what had been achieved so far, and hoped to see other things in place such as clearing shingle from more ramps, installing and a trial with beach wheelchairs, and he felt a budget was required. He hoped to see a metal roller ramp installed in the summer of 2024. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change reminded Members that Committee agreed to the objectives set out in the report in February, and it was based on taking lots of small steps with the aim of helping as many people as possible. This was aimed at access for all, and the stakeholder meeting would invite people to make representations, to clearly understand people's aims and objectives. Nothing was discounted at this time, but Officers were keen not to embark on projects that would not be supported by stakeholders. One of the aims was for Bognor and the coast along this stretch to become an exemplar for access for all. The Senior Coastal Engineer explained that they needed to focus on the mental barriers as well as the physical solutions, and it was really important that supporting infrastructure was in place as this was instrumental in overcoming barriers, such as having toilet facilities etc.

A non-Committee Member given permission to speak by the Committee, and hoped that the stakeholder group were able to discuss the possibility of more Arun-owned ramps being cleared of shingle, so further investigations could take place.

The report was noted.

386. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2022-2026 - QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2023 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023.

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Technical Services introduced the report, the purpose of which was to update the Committee with the Quarter 2 Performance Outturn for the Key Performance indicators for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023.

Members then took part in a question-and-answer session and the following points were made:

- CP39 (Building Control) – Were we continuing to see an increase in this return? The Group Head of Technical Services confirmed in October it had improved to 65%
- CP39 (Building Control) – Was there a reduction in people requesting Building Control Services, were people are seeking independent services? The Group Head of Technical Services explained Arun's market share in building regulation work was much higher than that of neighbouring authorities. Arun have been struggling for some time to recruit for a Senior Building Control Surveyor, however the market supplement for this had now been revised, and they were in a position to recruit for this post with a greater prospect of success. The team had been carrying out large volumes of work and also new competency assessment requirements that they were having to go through which was time consuming, so it was felt it was testament to the team's hard work that they were in the position they were.

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- CP24 (Household Waste and Recycling) – It was asked whether there was a plan to achieve the targets. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained the insight gained in the food waste trial showed that where food waste was collected separately, recycling rates could reach upwards of 60%, and the Government had clarified this would be mandated from March 2026. A report would be going to the Committee in March 2024.
- CP25 (Contractor Green Space Management) – of 57 sites, 11 had failed to meet contractual standards and 7 had exceeded. Could Members be provided with a breakdown of this. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change would provide a breakdown to Members after the meeting.
- CP37 and CP40 – these targets were both set at 100%, which neither were currently meeting, and it was asked whether the target was too high? The Group head of Technical Services felt a target of 99% would be more appropriate.
- CP24 (Household Waste and Recycling) – It was asked whether seagull proof bags and smaller boxes for people with no frontage, would be continued. The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change would circulate information regarding this to Members after the meeting.

The report was noted.

387. OUTSIDE BODIES

Upon the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Wiltshire gave a brief update on The Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group (LGA Coastal SIG), explaining they were currently a number of things they were promoting including Motion for the Ocean.

388. WORK PROGRAMME

Upon the invitation of the Chair, the Group Head of Technical Services presented the Work Programme to Committee, explaining that the Disabled Facilities Grant Item had been removed from the January meeting, as this had to be adopted by all Districts before the end of the calendar year. Revisions to the policy were very minor and were all in relation to providing larger grants for people in the District, reflecting the construction inflation increases. A Bathing Water Quality report had been added.

The Group Head of Environment and Climate Change explained that the Rights to the River Arun, which was a Motion at Full Council, would also be added to the Work Programme in due course.

Members were concerned that there were no budget reports on the Work Programme. The Group Head of Finance confirmed a Budget report would come to the January Committee.

It was asked whether a scrutiny report around the cleansing services could be added to the Work Programme. At Policy and Finance Committee the results of the residents survey showed there was a distinct split of East and West around cleanliness, and it was hoped an item specifically around this could be brought in order that it be scrutinised.

A non-Committee Member given permission to speak was concerned that regular reports brought to Committee in the past, such as tree planting, an annual update on engineering service, food safety plan etc, were not currently showing. It was asked that a review be undertaken regarding this to ensure the previously regular items were added to the Work Programme. The Chair confirmed this would be looked into.

The Work Programme was noted.

(The meeting concluded at 8.45 pm)

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Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Environment Committee – 23 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Bersted Brooks Park Project
LEAD OFFICER:	Philippa Dart – Director of Environment and Communities and Interim CEO Joe Russell-Wells – Group Head of Environment and Climate Change
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Sue Wallsgrove
WARDS:	Bersted Ward
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:	
<p>The Bersted Brooks Park project will implement the council’s vision that aims to provide infrastructure that supports wellbeing, through easily accessible and safe greenspace, and encourage our community to embrace healthy and active lifestyles. It will also deliver the environment theme of the vision which aims to protect and enhance our natural environment, while considering climate change and biodiversity.</p>	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:	
<p>The Bersted Brooks Park project sits within the Environment and Communities Directorate plan.</p>	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:	
<p>A sum of £320k for the project has been included in the capital programme. The allocation was agreed by the Environment Committee on 20 January 2022 and approved by Full Council on 23 February 2022.</p> <p>Project costs will include professional fees to prepare plans for the scheme and capital works to implement the proposals.</p> <p>It is anticipated that an approval will enable additional funding sources such as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and from other partnership organisations e.g., Environment Agency for flood mitigation.</p>	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the project, a summary of the public consultation and masterplan proposals, and confirms the area of Bersted Brooks Park.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Committee is requested to:

1. Endorse the revised area of the Bersted Brooks Park masterplan as shown in Appendix 5.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 The report provides an update on the Bersted Brooks Park project, including a summary of the stakeholder engagement and public consultation, and outlines proposals to be taken forward.

4. DETAIL

4.1 Background

Arun District Council commissioned consultants Stephenson Halliday to advise on the enhancement of the open spaces at Bersted Brooks and Bersted Park. The key principle was to create a design concept masterplan for these areas to enable local people to visit and enjoy recreation in a countryside environment, whilst enhancing biodiversity and mitigating the effects of climate change and flooding.

The area proposed is approximately 47 hectares of public open space, in the ownership and management of Arun District Council. This includes Bersted Brooks Local Nature Reserve, and areas of public open space to the north and south of Rowan Way (A259) which were adopted from the residential development at Bersted Park.

4.3 Work undertaken to date

Work undertaken by the consultants has included the following:

- Review of site information and previous survey work to identify evidence gaps and produce a baseline and analysis report, including Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis.
- Engagement with stakeholders.
- Preparation of a draft concept masterplan for public consultation.
- Production of a final concept masterplan report following public consultation, with recommendations for proposed enhancement and future management and maintenance requirements.

During the initial scope review with the consultants, the reference to 'Country Park' was removed as this term was thought to be misleading and not representative of the planned proposals. The term was intended to differentiate between the district's formal, urban parks and the open spaces at Bersted which are more rural in character. However, 'Wildspace on your doorstep', a strap line introduced by Stephenson Halliday is more representative of the proposal – giving a local resource to local residents within the district.

4.4 Site review and analysis

In reviewing previous surveys and information about the site, Stephenson Halliday were able to identify any gaps in evidence, and assess constraints and opportunities of the site. These are summarised in Appendix 1.

The open spaces were analysed in terms of typography, hydrology, landscape character, connectivity, facilities and habitats. Future survey needs were also identified. A review of constraints looked at what is preventing the sites being used to their full potential, while site opportunities were summarised in themes linked to the environmental and social benefits of green infrastructure. The themes helped to form early proposal ideas with the aim of generating discussion in how the open space could be enhanced.

4.5 Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement was carried out between March - June 2023 to obtain initial views from a range of stakeholders and feed these into the design proposals.

Contact was made with representatives from different organisations who have an interest in the open spaces. They were invited to share information on site management and give views on what improvement ideas might be feasible.

Stakeholders included Arun District Council (ADC) Officers, ADC Members, Bersted Parish Council, West Sussex County Council, Environment Agency, Southern Water, Natural England, Sussex Wildlife Trust, Arun and Rother Rivers Trust, Langmead Group, Friends of Bersted Brooks and residents of Bersted Park.

Stakeholders supported better access for visitors, enhancing habitat opportunities, inclusion of new facilities (e.g. temporary café, natural play) and promoting education. The importance of protecting wildlife and ensuring proposals do not impact on flooding was highlighted. Parking and the need for additional bins were noted as current challenges.

Residents of Bersted Park were asked how they currently use the open spaces, what they see as important and how the sites could be improved.

Many residents regularly use both Bersted Brooks and Bersted Park for a range of activities including dog walking, enjoying the wildlife and landscape and to keep fit. Opportunities to be close to nature, to enjoy a clean and litter-free environment and to feel safe were most important to residents when visiting the site. When thinking about improvements, residents identified concerns about ditch maintenance. This was followed by wanting improvements to flood mitigation and water quality and also the condition of the footpaths and site access.

In addition, residents of the Bersted Park development highlighted concerns about encouraging more people to the area which would increase issues with car parking, drainage and litter. A summary of the stakeholder engagement undertaken is included in Appendix 1.

4.6 Public consultation

Following the stakeholder engagement, the feedback was incorporated into the draft concept masterplan.

The proposals were published online for public consultation between 5 and 31 July 2023. The masterplan was also available to view at Bersted Community Centre on 15 July which gave people the opportunity to talk to the project team. The results of the public consultation which included Parish Council representation can be found in the summary report in Appendix 2.

The principles of enhancing the open spaces were supported with the results showing that most people responded positively to the proposals presented. The most popular proposals were as follows:

- 86% want to see the creation of natural flood interventions.
- 85% supported the idea of wetland planting to improve flood resilience.
- 76% were in favour of the interpretation and restoration of historic features.
- 71% agreed with the proposal for a wildspace meeting point.
- 70% wish to see the introduction of new ditch crossing points.

Other supported proposals included the creation of nature-only zones to encourage wildlife, the installation of raised walkways to enable year-round access, a safe crossing over the A259, the incorporation of natural play features and expanding the car park at Bersted Brooks.

Overall, respondents were largely supportive of the proposals for Bersted Brooks, but less supportive that the masterplan proposals include the residential area of the Bersted Park public open space. A number of comments stated a preference for making improvements at Bersted Brooks rather than Bersted Park.

In addition to the completed survey questions a number of written representations were also received. Particular concerns raised by residents focused on the issues set out in Appendix 3.

4.7 Summary of Consultant Report

Stephenson Halliday has provided a Concept Masterplan Report (Appendix 4) which summarises the aims of the project and the opportunities presented by the public open spaces. The report sets out the themes which came from the public consultation and recommends proposals to be implemented in a phased approach. The proposals are described in 4.8.

4.8 Summary of masterplan proposals and recommendations

The consultation results and feedback received has been valuable in understanding how people would like to see the proposals taken forward. They have defined the concept masterplan proposals and incorporate those which received the highest level of support. The masterplan area has been revised in response to the consultation and Appendix 5 shows the updated area of Bersted Brooks Park.

The masterplan is a long-term plan which can be delivered in phases over a number of years and as funding becomes available. This could include opportunities for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) funding. Some proposals are simpler in scope and can be progressed in the short term. Others are more complex and will require further surveys and studies to be undertaken. It is possible that not all the funding currently allocated to the project will be required. The council intends to seek funding from external organisations to supplement the expenditure.

The following table sets out the vision and proposals for the open spaces and summarises the benefits of each:

Vision	Proposals	Benefits
1. A place to enjoy the outdoors	Raised walkways / improved access	To increase the accessibility of the open spaces and enable access all year round, including to areas susceptible to flooding.
	Nature only areas	To limit human activity in sensitive areas of the site and enhance wildlife habitats.
	Improved parking	To expand and improve quality of parking provision at Bersted Brooks.
	Wild space meeting point	To create a focal point for people to enjoy the natural setting.
2. To learn from and respond to nature and the landscape	Waymarking and signage	To assist people in navigating across the open spaces.
	Natural play	To create interest and promote learning for young visitors.
	Community events	To encourage sense of community and introduce volunteering across the open spaces.
	Historical interpretation / restoration	To further understanding of the site and its historical context.
	Natural flood interventions	To mitigate for the future impact of flooding.

	Linear edible landscapes	To encourage engagement with nature.
3. To bring wildlife to your doorstep	Enhance existing habitats and biodiversity through planting and management	To ensure wildlife and open spaces are accessible to local people.

The initial priorities for delivery will focus on expanding the car park at Bersted Brooks and introducing signage to help visitors navigate the site and are expected to be carried out by spring 2025.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to seek input from a range of stakeholders to the design proposal. This was followed by public consultation on the concept design masterplan, as detailed in 4.5 and 4.6 above.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

1. To approve the recommendation as set out in the report.
2. To not approve the recommendation.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 7.1 Funding for delivering the project is included in the capital programme which was approved by Full Council in February 2022. The project will be fully funded from borrowing. The revenue costs of borrowing will reduce if the council is successful in securing other external funding.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 A risk assessment and method statement will be produced by the Principal Designer for any proposals progressed, and the project will be delivered in accordance with the Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 2015.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 9.1 This is an update report and there are no governance or legal implications at this stage.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 10.1 Additional revenue funding approved by Full Council on 23 February 2022 will contribute to the future management of the scheme.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT (for review)

- 11.1 Where applicable, aspects of the proposals will be delivered in accordance with the Construction, Design and Management (CDM) regulations 2015. Risks will be considered by the project team and consultants during design phase, and health and safety will be managed by the Principal Designer during the construction works. There will also be ongoing health and safety management responsibilities for the proposals, such as risk assessment, inspection and maintenance, that will need to be considered and appropriately resourced.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

- 12.1 The Council will retain responsibility for the completed scheme. The proposals will result in improvements to council assets as well as additional maintenance obligations.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

- 13.1 The project will help to improve the social and environmental well-being of visitors, and tackle health inequality by providing a good quality greenspace that is available for the whole community. The project also aims to improve accessibility to areas of public open space.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

- 14.1 Environmental sustainability will be addressed at design stage to ensure that the council reduces its carbon footprint, its impact on the environment and the use of natural resources. Contractors will be required to provide evidence of their environmental sustainability policies, including any carbon impact footprints, and demonstrate how these will be applied/reduced on the project.
- 14.2 The scheme will provide a natural area designated for local people to visit and enjoy recreation in a countryside environment and improve their mental health and well-being. In addition, the scheme will enhance biodiversity and make improvements to flora and fauna.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 15.1 Improvements to the open space for leisure and recreation will help to discourage crime associated with anti-social behaviour (ASB). Encouraging greater use of a well-maintained open space will allow the community to take

ownership from the minority who may misuse the site. Improvements to site design and scheduled maintenance will open views and create clear sight lines.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 The proposed scheme fulfils the freedoms and rights within the Human Rights Act 1998. There are no negative implications in terms of human rights impacts.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 There are no specific Freedom of Information or Data Protection issues arising from the proposals in the report.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Rachel Alderson

Job Title: Principal Landscape & Project Officer

Contact Number: 01903 737946

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

[Environment Committee - 20 January 2022, Item 579](#)

[Full Council Meeting - 23 February 2022, Item 681](#)

[Environment Committee – 17 November 2022, Item 429](#)



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Rev 01 FINAL

BERSTED BROOKS PARK

Wildspace on your doorstep

Summary Baseline Analysis and Consultation Report

Document history

	Name	Date / Revision
Author	David Walker	07/11/23 - Rev01
Technical Reviewer	Lynne Houlbrooke	07/11/23 - Rev01
Approved	Andrew Tempany	07/11/23 - Rev01

CONTENTS

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4	1. Introduction
6	2. Understanding the Significance of the Site
7	3. Study and Landscape Context
13	4. Constraints and Opportunities
15	5. Consultation Summary.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report contains a summary of the detailed Baseline and Analysis Report which provides a more comprehensive analysis of the site and its surrounds.

Stephenson Halliday have been commissioned by Arun District Council to produce a RIBA Stage 2 Masterplan for an existing public open space, facilitating access to the countryside and contact with nature at Bersted, to the north of Bognor Regis in West Sussex. The masterplan design will be delivered together with outline management recommendations, and broad recommendations for future delivery. As part of the project, a stakeholder engagement process has been undertaken to obtain initial views to input into the proposed design, followed by a process of public consultation on the masterplan itself, once prepared.

An initial site visit and a review of existing site information was undertaken, along with an assessment to identify any gaps in survey information which are required to aid design progression. The process of gathering data relating to the natural, environmental and social assets, as well as using information gained from the site visit, have supported the development of constraints and opportunities, a summary of which are provided at Section 4.



Photograph 1: Bersted Brooks Local Nature Reserve.



Photograph 2: Aldingbourne Rife.



Photograph 3: Eastern Field.



Photograph 4: Western Field.

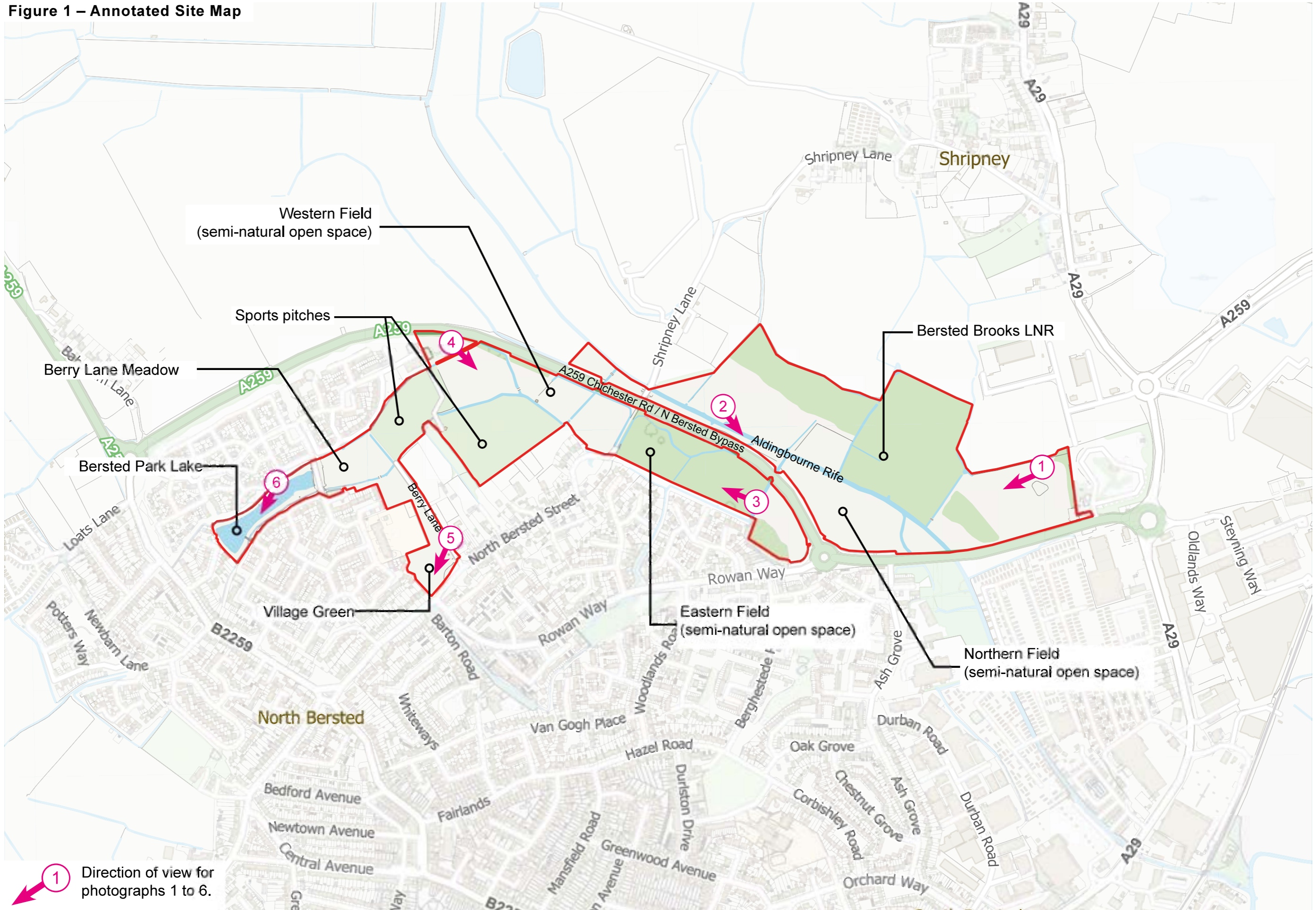


Photograph 5: Village Green.



Photograph 6: Bersted Park Lake.

Figure 1 – Annotated Site Map



① Direction of view for photographs 1 to 6.

2. UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SITE

The site has been analysed and viewed within its wider setting (1km study area) in order to understand the context that it sits within.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

The documents reviewed include plans, frameworks, strategies, guides, assessments, studies and reports, providing valuable insight, policies and objectives.

The documents provide recommendations which relate either specifically to the site and its surrounds, or more generally to the wider area or surrounding landscape.

The following information was recorded as part of the review:

- The key findings of the document;
- The importance/relevance and key considerations of the key findings for masterplan;
- Where more information is required.

FINDINGS FROM THE DOCUMENT REVIEW

The results of the document review have fed into constraints and opportunities for the site, and these are presented at Section 4 of this report.

Opportunities have been identified to fall within seven main themes which link closely to ecosystem services and environmental and social functions of green infrastructure. They relate to Green Flag Award

standards, Building with Nature standards and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as relevant. These opportunities have been considered in the context of the existing site and will build a robust, evidence-based picture and context for the masterplan proposals.

The seven opportunity themes across the site are identified below:



GAP ANALYSIS

As part of the review process, gaps in site survey information which could be required to improve knowledge and provide an evidence base for developing the later stages of design work, such as RIBA Stage 3, 4 and 5, have been identified. Information which may contribute to the progress of the project is listed below.

- Ecological information
- Hydrology information
- Transport Assessment / Active Travel Plan
- Arboricultural information
- Topographic information
- Visitor surveys and accessibility reporting
- Disability and access audit
- Play area information
- Management Plans

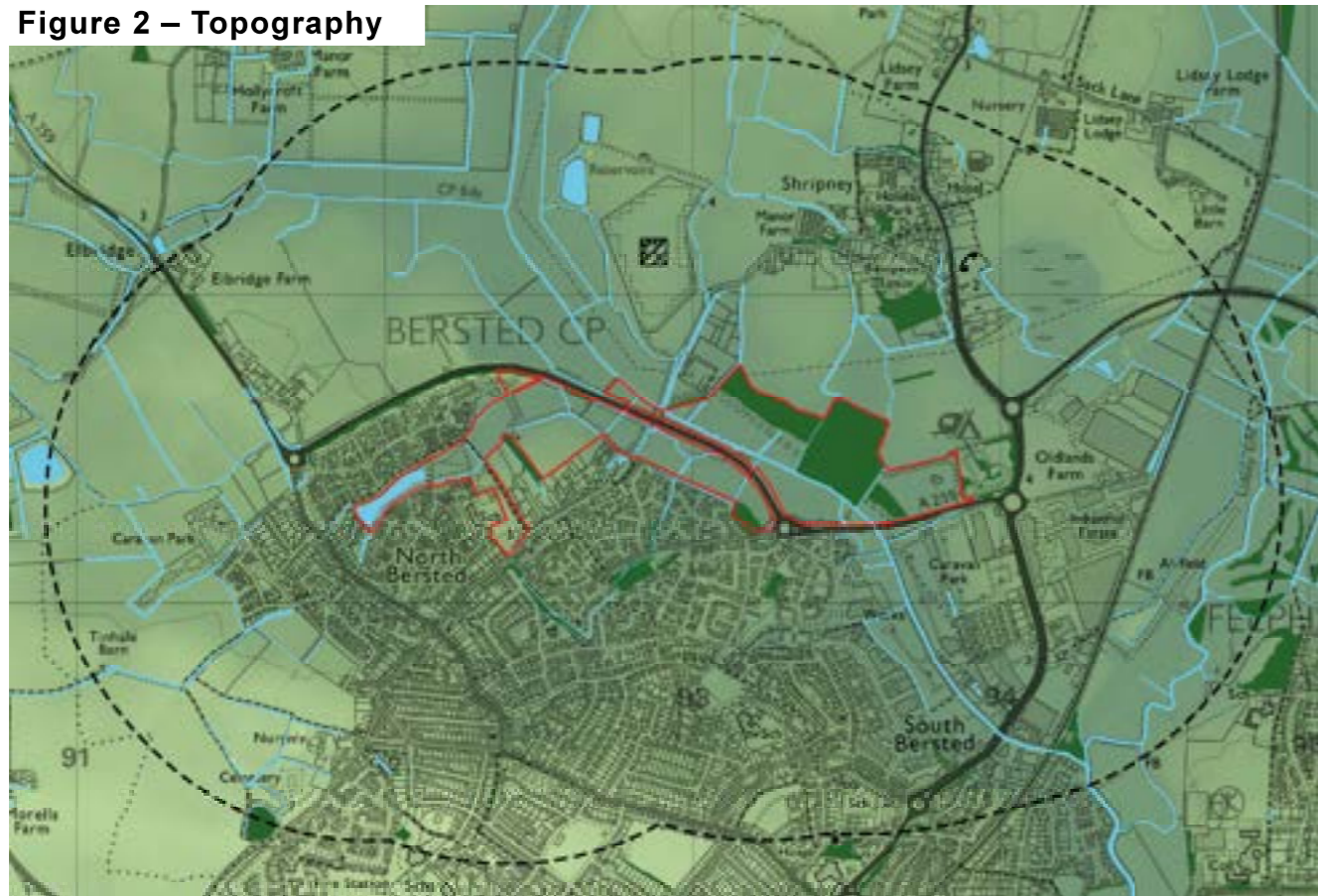
3. STUDY AND LANDSCAPE CONTEXT

As part of the analysis, a review of mapping data in relation to the site and its wider setting (1km study area) has been undertaken. The following information has been reviewed in relation the site and it's surrounds:

- Topography
- Hydrology
- Landscape character
- Designations
- Access / connectivity
- Facilities / local amenities
- Land ownership

Mapping is shown on the subsequent pages in this section. A more comprehensive analysis of mapping has been provided as part of the full version of this report.

Figure 2 – Topography



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TOPOGRAPHY

The topography of the site and its surrounds are shown on Figure 2.

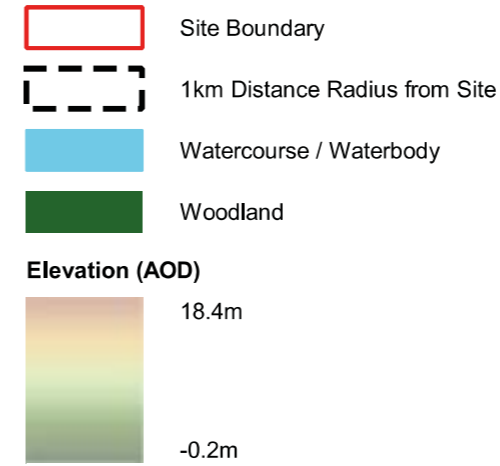
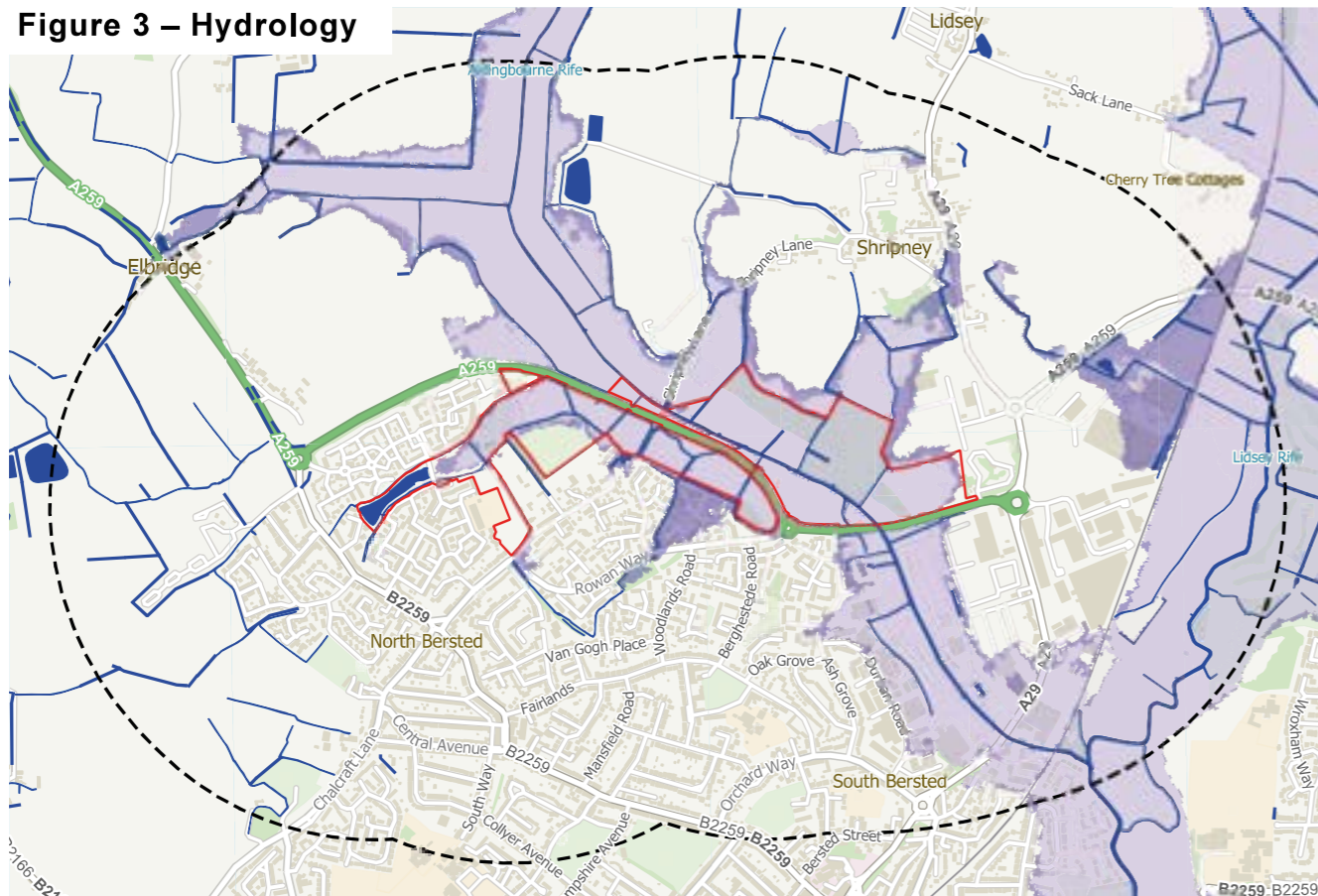


Figure 3 – Hydrology



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HYDROLOGY

The hydrology of the site and its surrounds are shown on Figure 3.

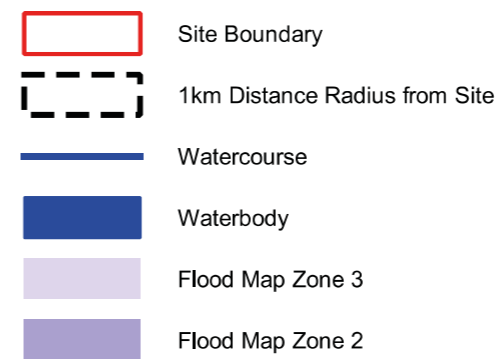
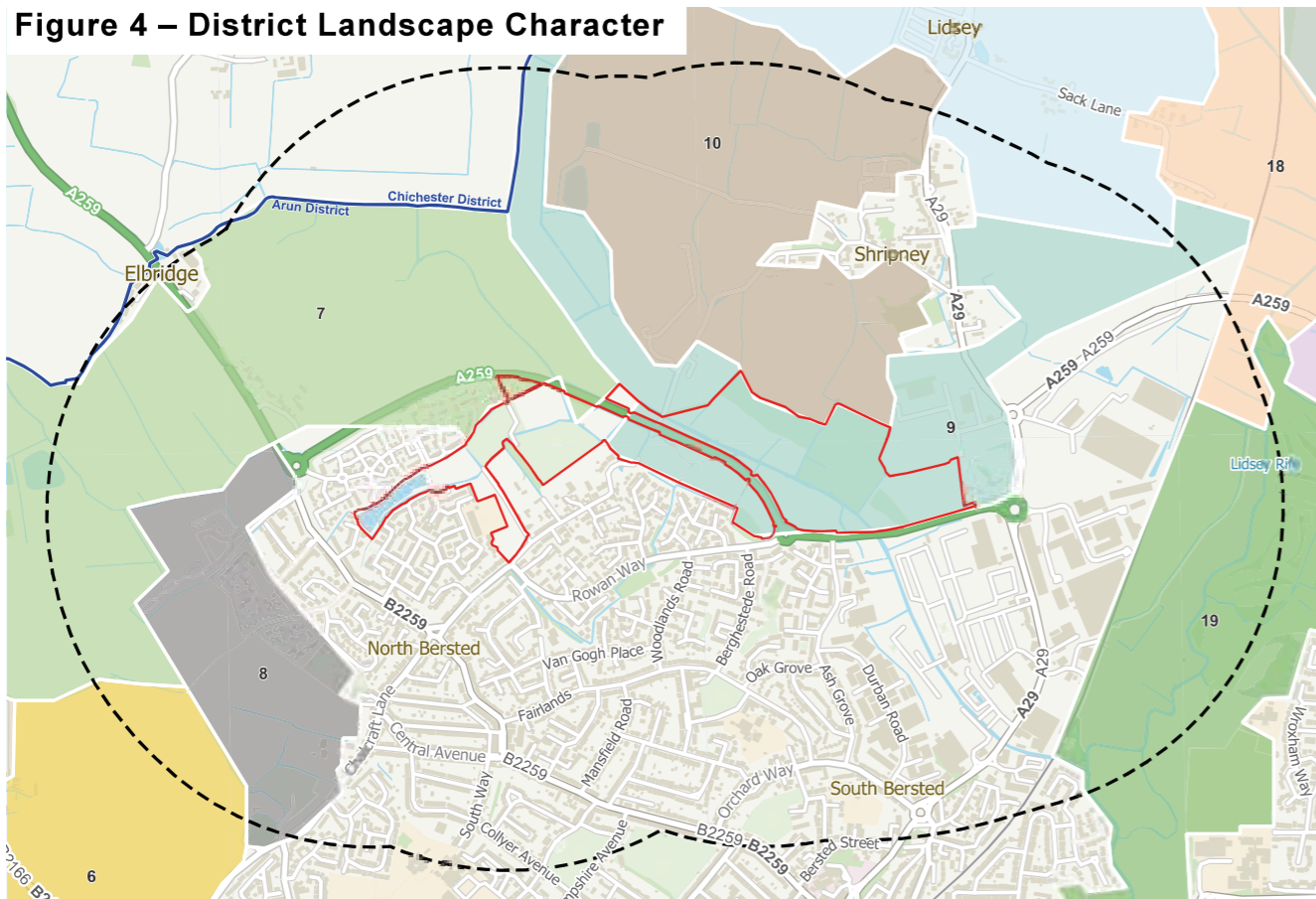


Figure 4 – District Landscape Character



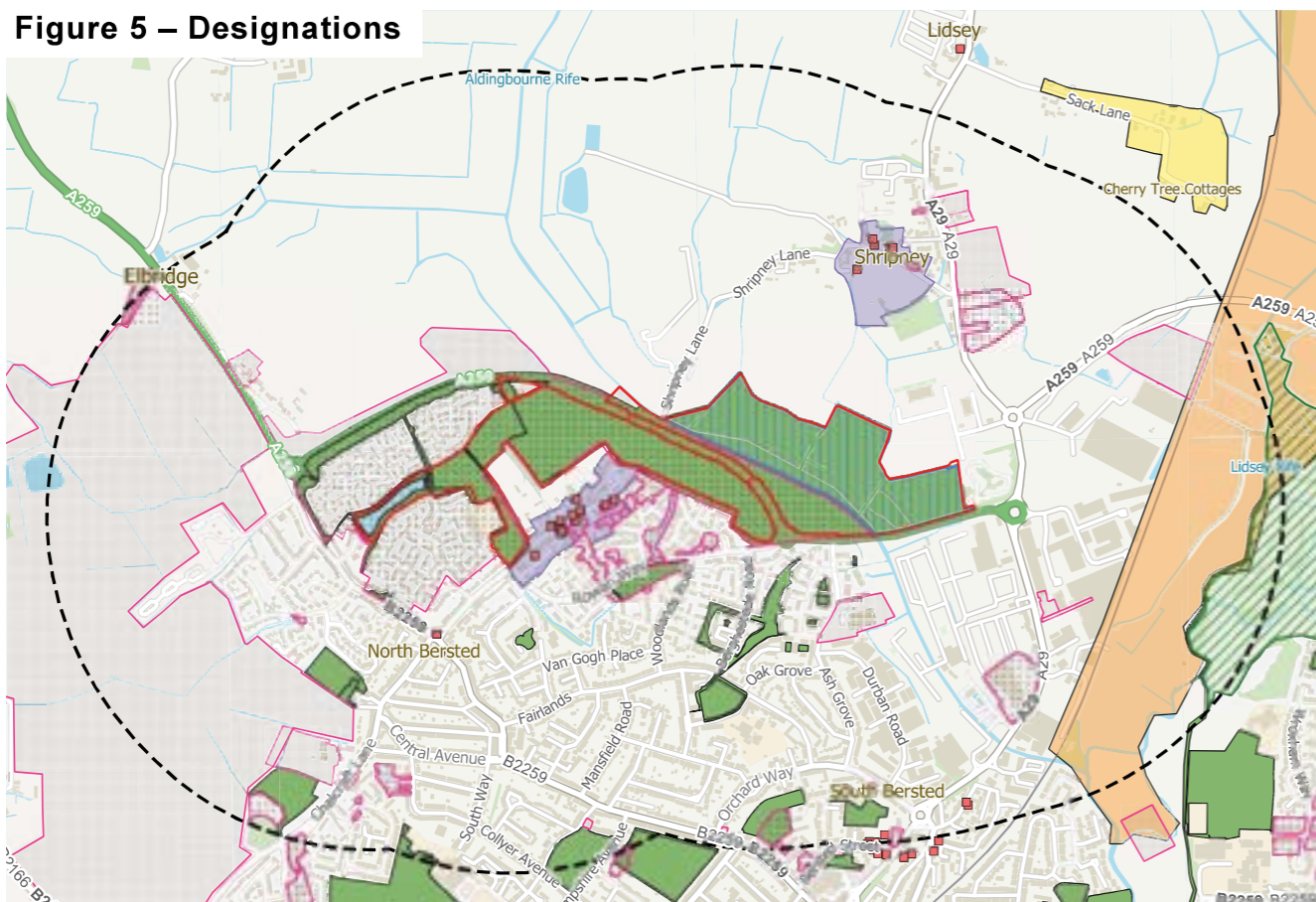
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DISTRICT LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

Arun district LCAs are shown on Figure 4.



Figure 5 – Designations



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DESIGNATIONS

Relevant designated interests are shown on Figure 5. These either influence the character of the site and/or form constraints material to the development of the Masterplan.

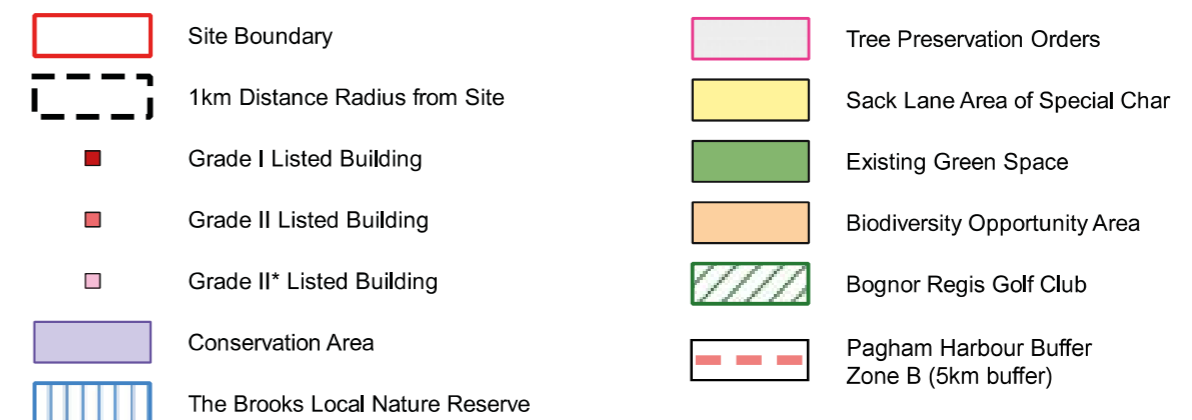
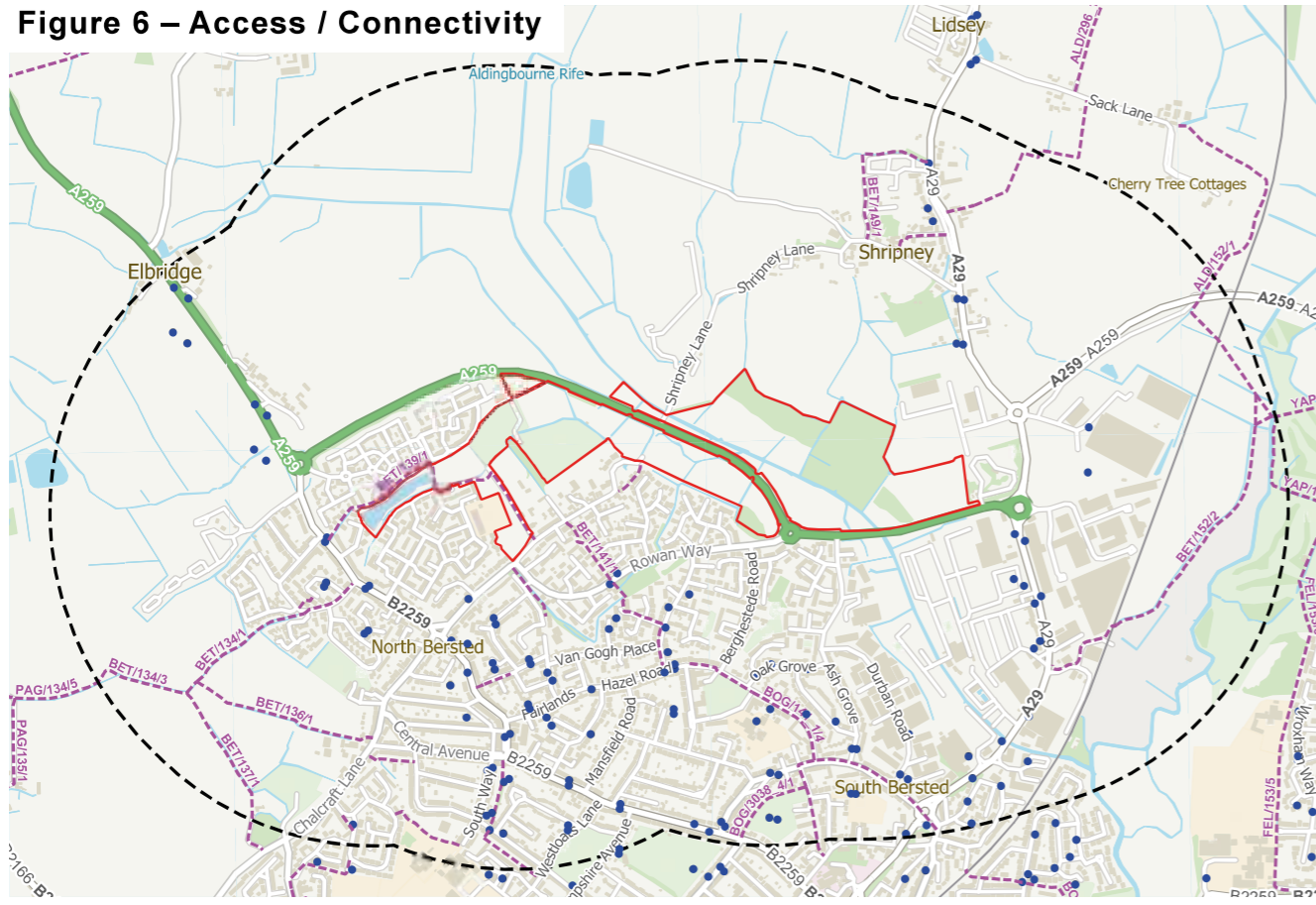


Figure 6 – Access / Connectivity



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ACCESS / CONNECTIVITY

Figure 6 shows the local road network, bus stops and Public Rights of Way which provide access to the site.





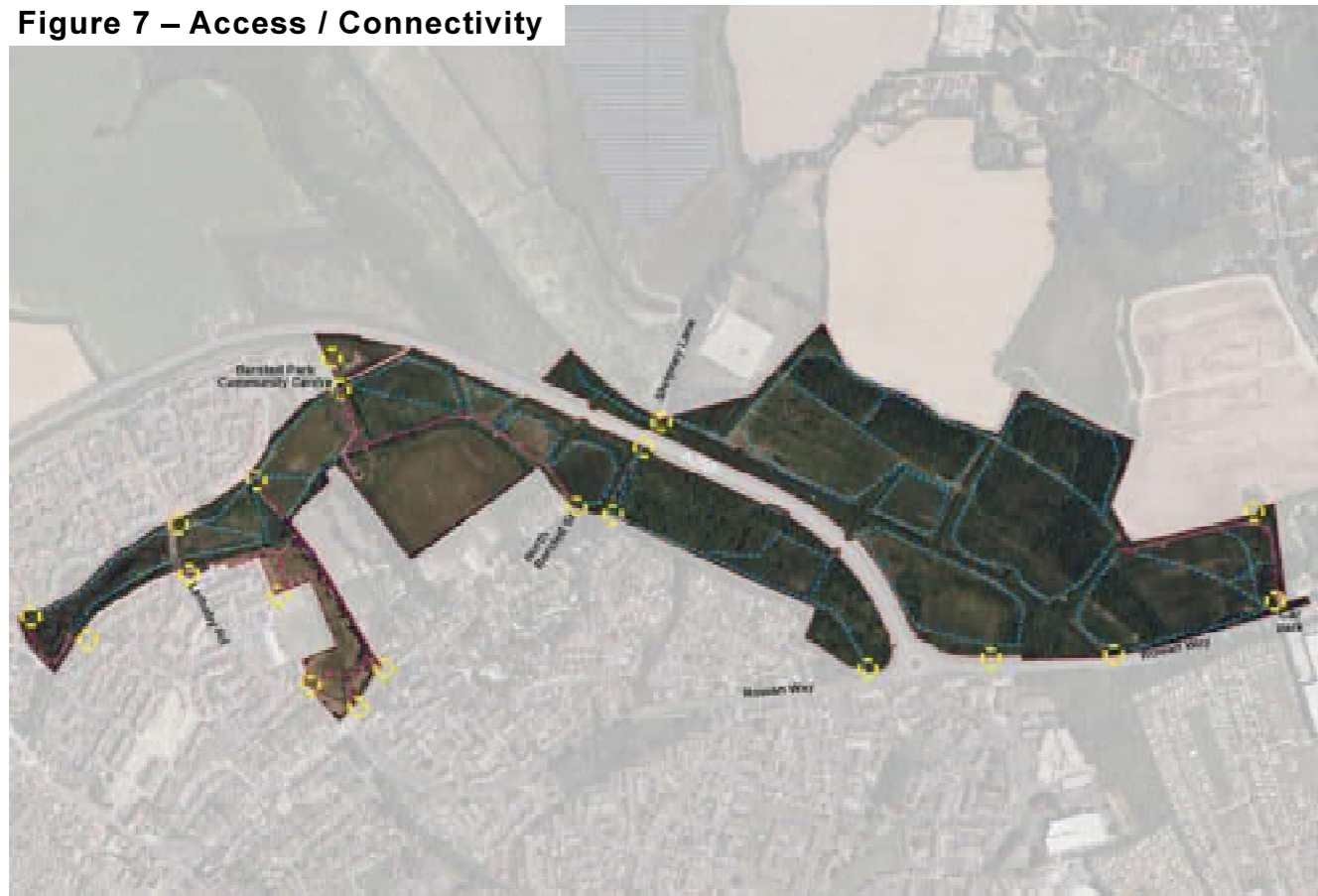
-  Site Boundary
-  1km Distance Radius from Site
-  Footpath
-  Bus Stop

Figure 7 – Access / Connectivity



Aerial image. © 2022 Microsoft Corporation © 2022 Maxar ©CNES (2022) Distribution Airbus DS.

CONNECTIVITY - WITHIN THE SITE

There are various formal access routes (both hard surfaced or mown paths) as well as unofficial routes/desire lines noted across the site. These have been shown on the annotated aerial image at Figure 7, together with all the points of access / entrance points from the surrounding areas.




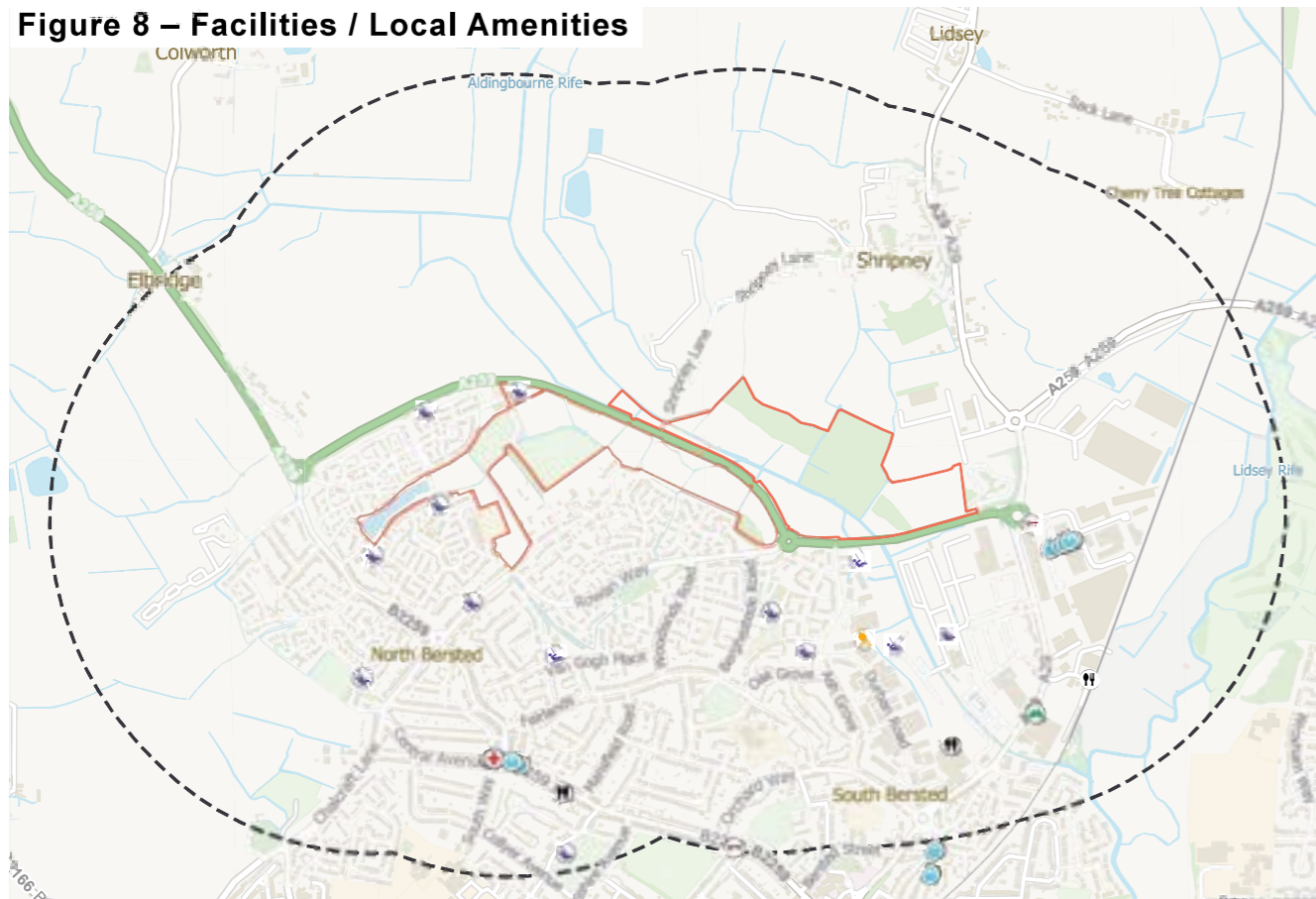
-  Access point
-  Hard surfaced paths
-  Mown paths or desire lines

Figure 8 – Facilities / Local Amenities



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FACILITIES / LOCAL AMENITIES

Local facilities and amenities are shown on Figure 8.











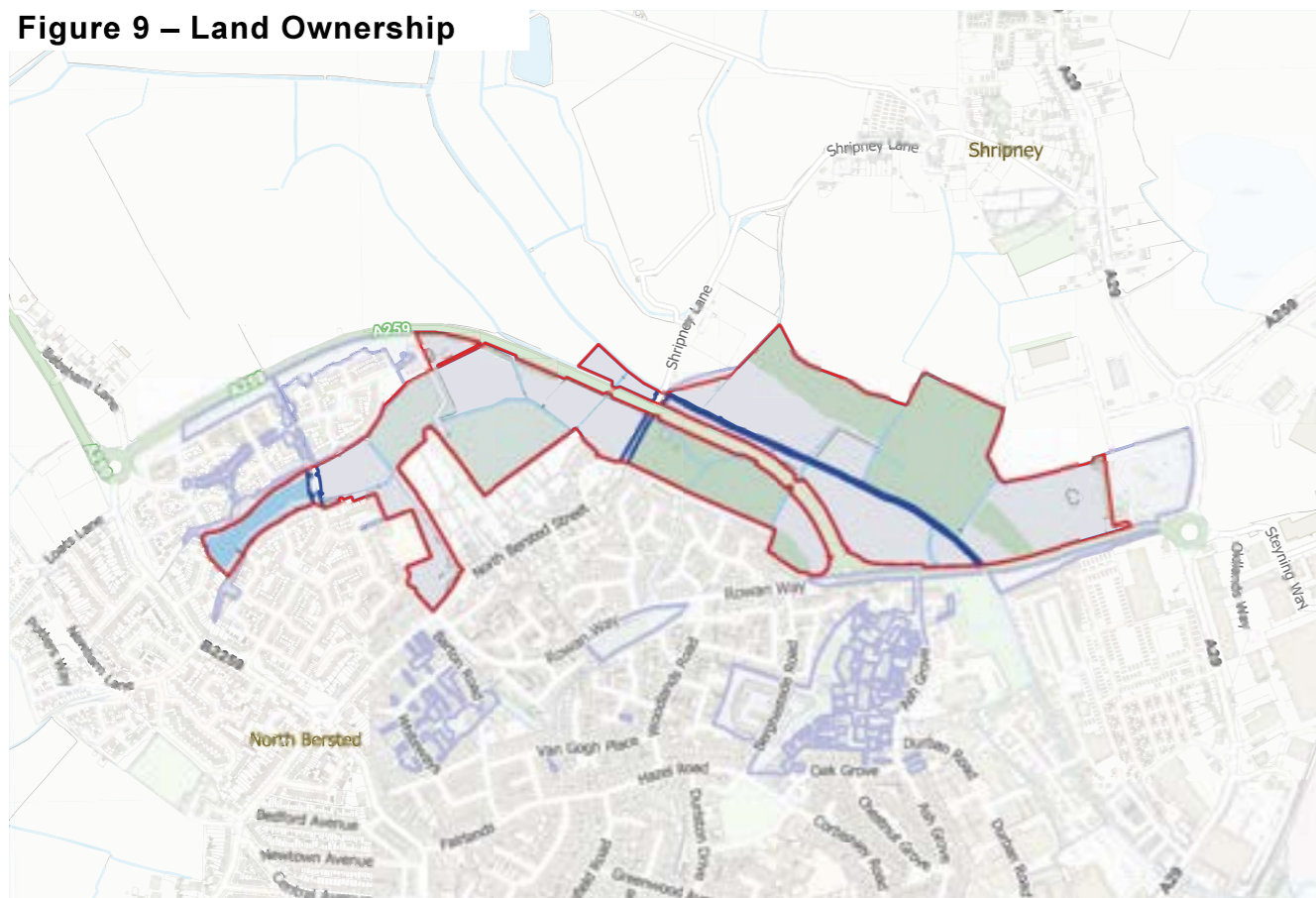
-  Site Boundary
-  1km Distance Radius from Site
-  Restaurant/Cafe/Fast Food
-  Bench
-  Cycle Parking/Cycle Repair Station
-  Healthcare
-  Post Box
-  Shop
-  Playground
-  Fitness/Sports Centre



Figure 9 – Land Ownership



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LAND OWNERSHIP

Land owned by Arun District Council is shown on Figure 9.

-  Site Boundary
-  Land within Ownership of Arun District Council within the Vicinity of the Site

BIODIVERSITY / HABITAT SURVEY INFORMATION - Summary

The site has notable wildlife value at several locations, particularly at Bersted Brooks LNR, Aldingbourne Rife and the associated ditch network, and at Bersted Lake. The information gathered from site visits carried out by Stephenson Halliday in October 2022 and January 2023, together with a review of survey/management information have helped build an understanding of the site in terms of species and habitat diversity.

Bersted Brooks comprises a range of habitats including mature trees, mixed woodland, wildflower areas, an area laid out as an orchard area, hedges, scrub, ponds, ditches, reed beds and habitats bordering Aldingbourne Rife.

Bersted Park comprises areas of wildflower grassland, hedgerows, scrub, treelines, ditches, amenity grassland, shrub beds and sports pitches. Bersted Park Lake comprises a pond area with significant reeds and an island containing mainly Willow.

There are numerous species of note recorded at the site, including European Water Vole (mammal), Common Pipistrelle Bat (mammal), Marsh Harrier (bird), Lapwing (bird), Wasp Spider (invertebrate), Stag Beetle (invertebrate), Adder (reptile), and Ruff (bird).



Photograph 7: A water vole eating by Jonathan Ridley.

HISTORIC / CULTURAL - Summary

The site is located on former agricultural land, previously used for growing a range of arable crops. Through reference to historic aerial photography, the site comprised a series of irregular shaped fields, divided by mostly intact hedgerows and ditches/watercourses.

Archaeological surveys have revealed artefacts relating to the Palaeolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age (early, middle and late), Iron Age (middle and late) and Roman periods.

The North Bersted Man - A warrior grave equipped with an exceptional set of objects was discovered by Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd in 2008 during archaeological investigations, prior to the construction of the housing development Bersted Park. Additionally, there are two pillboxes constructed in 1940 and 1941 located on site. The pillboxes were designed to house machine guns and rifles contributing to lines of defense along the south-east and eastern coast of Britain.

Through reference to historic maps and aerial imagery, the site can be interpreted as forming part of extensive former agricultural land. Berry Lane appears to be a historic route, and this is evident on the ground today as it has a holloway or sunken lane character, with ancient woodland indicator species at the edges.



Photograph 8: Pillbox within Western Field



Photograph 9: Berry Lane

4. CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

This section provides a summary of identified constraints and opportunities that have become apparent through site visits, and document / baseline review. A full list of constraints and opportunities, as well as corresponding plans, are included within the full version of this report.

CONSTRAINTS

A range of spatial and thematic constraints were identified in relation to issues such as access and connectivity, safety, lack of site usability at times of flooding, character and sense of unity, lack of wayfinding and interpretation, deterioration of features, lack of car parking, biodiversity and management.



Photograph 10: Defaced information board at Bersted Brooks.



Photograph 12: Busy crossing over the A259 / N Bersted Bypass.



Photograph 11: Impacts from overhead lines on landscape character



Photograph 13: Pot holes at Bersted Brooks LNR car park.

OPPORTUNITIES

A series of opportunities have been identified relating to...



Conserving and enhancing biodiversity

... the management of existing and/or creating new habitats, providing a richer landscape mosaic, natural flood management, and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological connectivity.



Access to green recreation

... increased year-round usability for recreational and educational use, enhancing rights of way, paths and wider access links within the vicinity, facilitating equal access, and improving visitor access infrastructure.



Flood mitigation and healthy ecosystems

... the restoration and re-naturalisation of the watercourses, improving wetland habitat and flood capacity, targeted tree / woodland planting to aid attenuation, and enhancing biodiversity.



Lifelong learning/ skills for life

... learning and development, bringing local people together to engage with the floodplain landscape, building knowledge, skills and confidence, developing relationships whilst learning about natural processes.



Landscape setting and character/sense of place

... re-naturalisation and restoration of aspects of historic lowland wetland landscape character, increasing perceived tranquility and the sense of relative naturalness, whilst maintaining key views / visual links.



Healthy and cohesive communities

... encouraging sustainable, active and healthy travel, education, engaging visitors about wildlife value and healthier living, facilitating child development, and using the site for local green prescribing initiatives.



Historic character

... increasing public knowledge and appreciation of the sites historic and cultural associations, its past uses and historic features.

5. CONSULTATION SUMMARY

OBJECTIVES

This section summarises the approach and feedback received as part of the stakeholder and community consultation exercises to inform the development of proposals for the Bersted Brooks Park concept masterplan, that meet current and emerging needs and aspirations.

The aims and objectives of stakeholder and community engagement for this project were to gather key stakeholder views on both the opportunities and constraints for this area, assessing the current uses and condition and planning for the future. This was to be conducted taking account of planning regulations, national, regional and local guidance. Information would feed into initial concepts, which could be developed and presented as a evolving, fluid concept masterplan for delivery across a number of years.



Opportunities Map on Display on 15.03.23

APPROACH

Consultation on such a large project included a high number of individuals and groups. After stakeholders were consulted, an initial concept plan would be available to the wider public for further consideration.

Stakeholders were categorised into 4 groups.

- Group 1 included ward, parish and county councillors, council departments, and the Friends of Bersted Brooks group.
- Group 2 included various non-departmental public bodies, government agencies, local conservation organisations, and residents' groups.
- Group 3 included neighbouring landowners and the local MP.
- Group 4 included other organisations using the site for various recreational activities, organisations operating on adjacent land and various other interested parties.

Methods of engagement included:

- Initial introductory email
- Meeting/event around parameters of potential project scope
- Follow up telephone calls with individual department representatives

- Email correspondence
- Telephone Interviews or online meetings
- Participation in survey on or offline
- Residents Newsletters/ Social Media Facebook project page
- Open event at local venue

Consultation Activity Timeline

Group 1

An internal stakeholder event was held on the 15.03.23. Invitations were sent out following an introductory email from Arun District Council, to introduce the team and project. Of the 51 invitations sent 15 people attended the event, with requests for follow up discussions from a further 2 people. This represented a good cross section of stakeholders across various departments and organisations.

Group 2

The project team drafted specific, technical email introductions relating to areas these organisations were most likely to engage with us on. The team held several positive online Teams meetings with local organisations in this area.

Group 3+4 - Various email, online meeting and phone contact were made.



Photograph 14: Feedback notes on one of the Opportunities plan 15.03.23

First advert in local newsletter

An advert was placed in the newsletter delivered over the weekend of 18/19th March 23. This advert informed residents that consultation was at an early stage and to look out for ways to engage.

Facebook page

A Facebook project page was created which went live on 20.04.23.

Residents survey

A residents' survey seeking feedback on initial plans was created and rolled out through the Council's website, and the Facebook

pages. The Residents survey went live and was open from the 22.05.23 until 12.06.23.

Second advert in local newsletter

Another advert was placed in the Bersted Park residents newsletter to notify of the public consultation which included an opportunity to view the revised and re-defined concept masterplan proposals in person at Bersted Community Centre on 15.07.23.

Public Consultation

A public consultation went live between 07.07.23 until 31.07.23. The survey contained several questions regarding individual elements of the concept masterplan proposals. Project staff for Stephenson Halliday and Arun District Council were present at the event on 15.07.23 to help answer queries on the day. The event was well attended.

Advertisement in Bersted Park Residents Newsletter

Three display boards within the online survey and at public event 15.07.23

FEEDBACK

Initial feedback highlighted issues around flooding and drainage, highways for access and connectivity across the A259, parking, a need for raised pathways for year round access, and wildlife conservation and enhancement. Also dog fouling, bins, seating and issues around the addition of seasonal facilities like refreshments were raised.



Word cloud created from data collected on 15.03.23

The residents survey went live and was open from the 22.05.23 May until 12.06.23, and received 178 responses, which represented over 31% of the 564 Residents at Bersted park. This is a higher than average response rate (usually 10-15%) over 30% is considered good.

Some of the feedback from residents related to ownership and maintenance issues. The adoption of roads within the private Bersted Park estate (a process which began in January 2023) raised concerns that residents would have less privacy, security and parking than they do currently.

There were 121 responses to the public consultation. There was broad support for the design proposals with most people responding either strongly agree or somewhat agree to each. Additional comments received raised concerns about parking pressures in residential areas and were not supportive of seasonal parking in Shripney Lane. There was also concern about increased anti-social behaviour, potential for increased flooding, increased litter and future resource for maintenance. People were supportive of opportunities to increase accessibility to wet areas of the site, enhancing habitats and biodiversity and also introducing an area for seating and wildflower planting.



Project facebook page

Final overall summary:

- People were happier to see improvements made to Bersted Brooks Nature Reserve, than Bersted Park.
- Some Bersted Park residents have some concerns around the move from private to Council adoption of roads and maintenance which need resolving before discussions around further improvements on the Bersted Park side can progress.
- Improvements to car parking at Bersted Brooks Local Nature Reserve are generally welcome.
- Limited boardwalks were popular if water resistant materials are used and can cope with flooding.
- A positive number of people responded to the option of volunteering in the parks.



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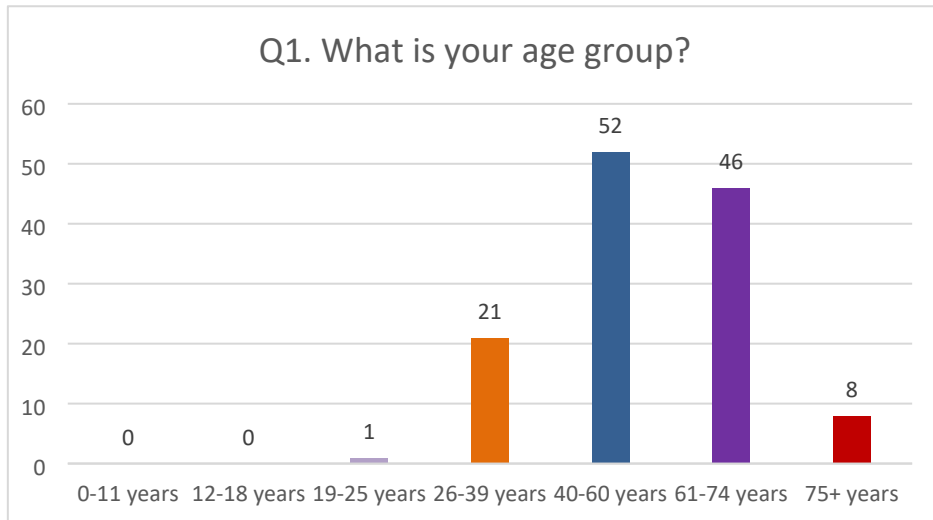
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Bersted Brooks Park Public Consultation Summary

Q1. What is your age group?



Q2. Where do you live? (Please provide a postcode if you are happy to)

121 responses:

Bognor (PO21): 65

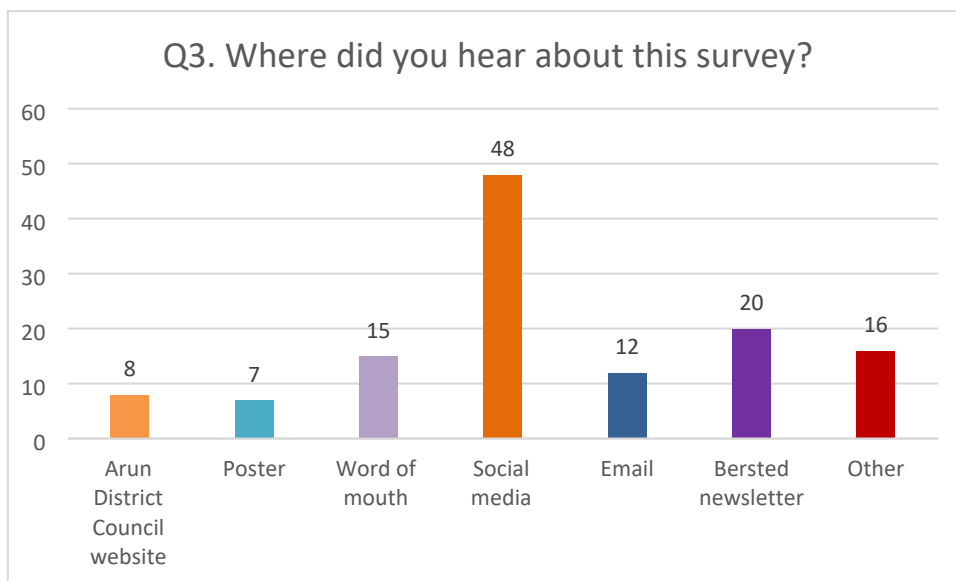
Bognor (PO22): 50

Bognor (Other): 4

Littlehampton: 1

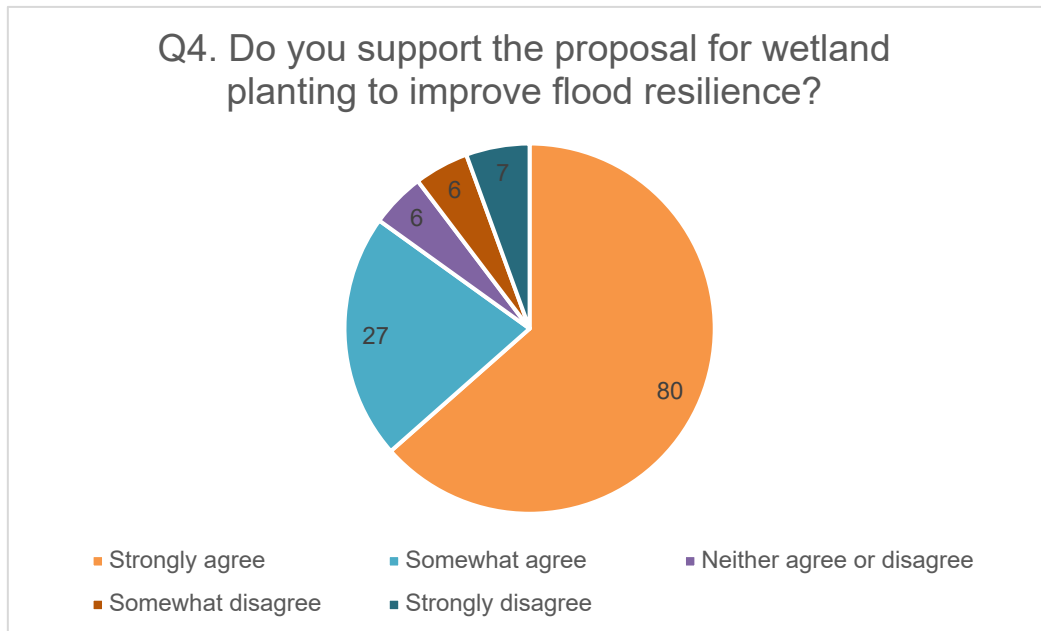
East Preston: 1

Q3. Where did you hear about this survey?

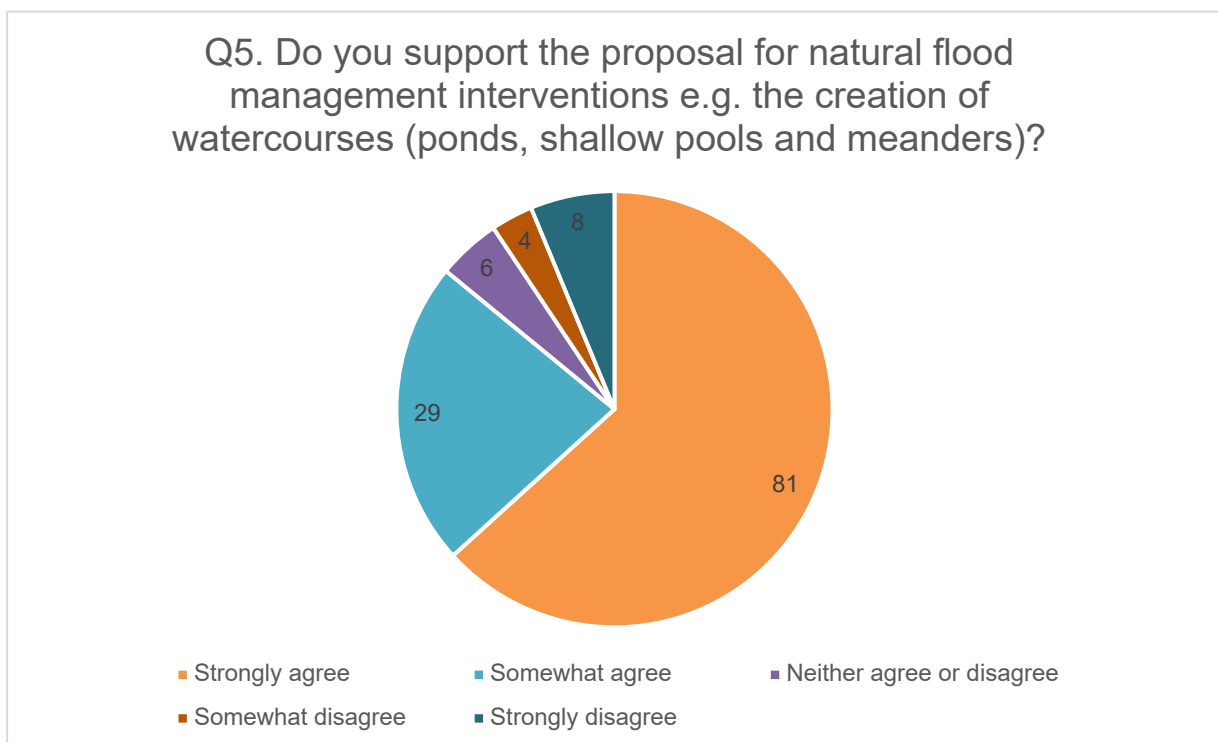


The following questions are about making improvements to flood management and wildlife habitats:

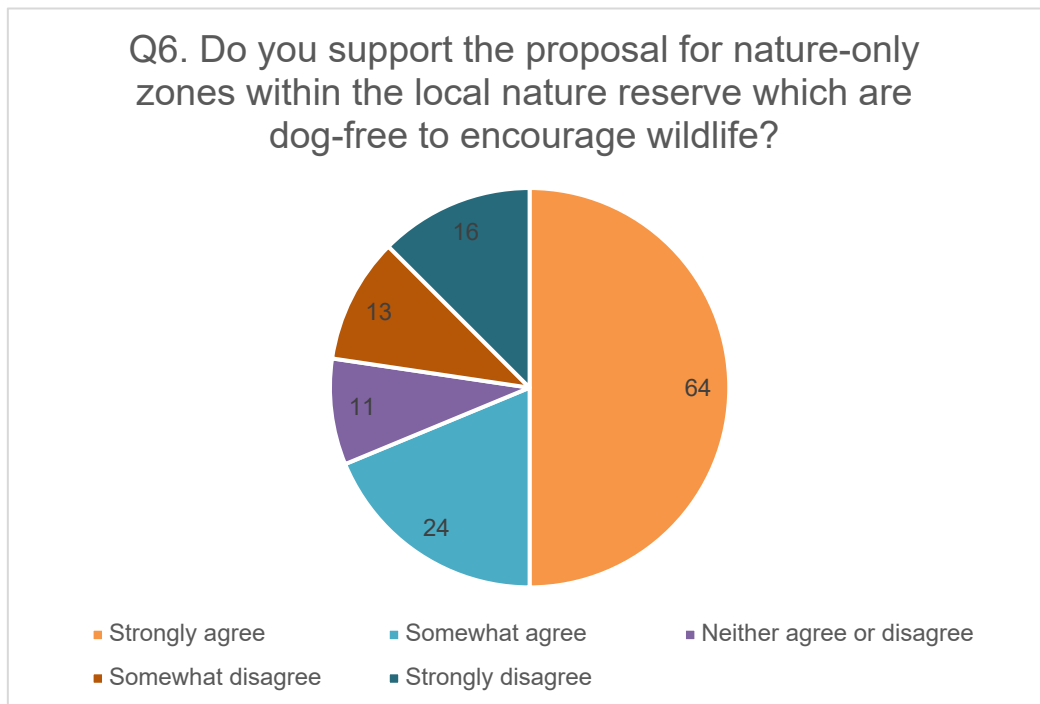
Q4. Do you support the proposal for wetland planting to improve flood resilience?



Q5. Do you support the proposal for natural flood management interventions e.g. the creation of watercourses e.g. ponds, shallow pools and meanders?

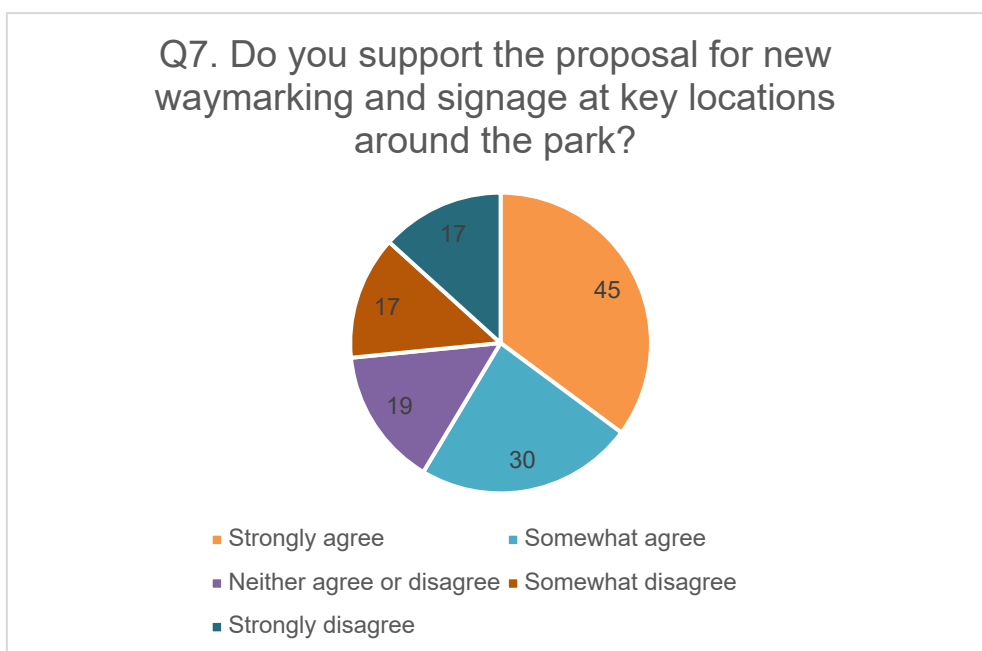


Q6. Do you support the proposal for nature-only zones within the local nature reserve which are dog-free to encourage wildlife?

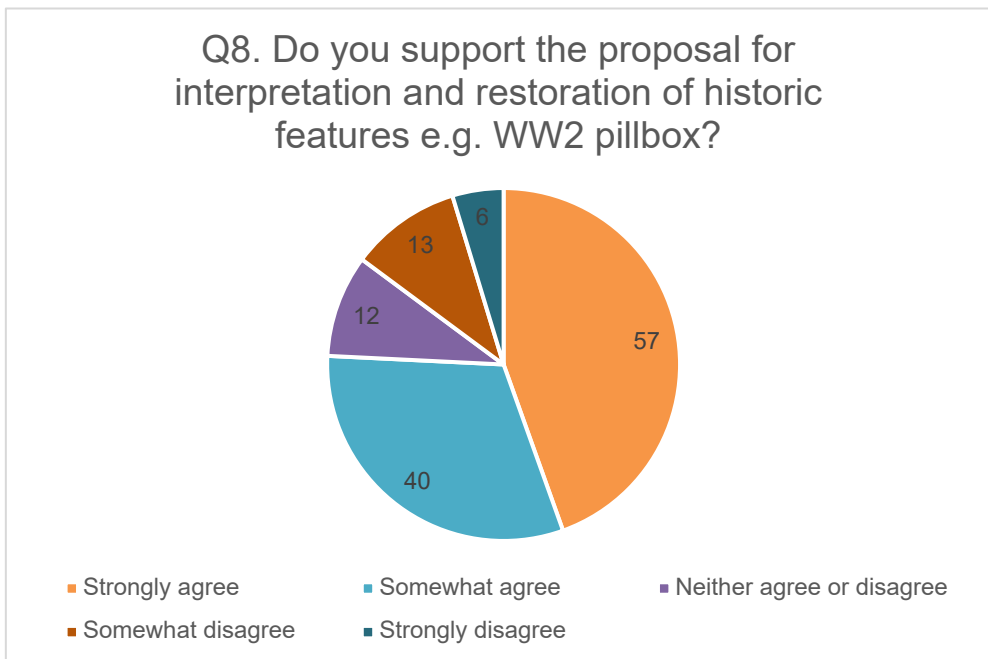


The following questions are about introducing new signage and opportunities for education:

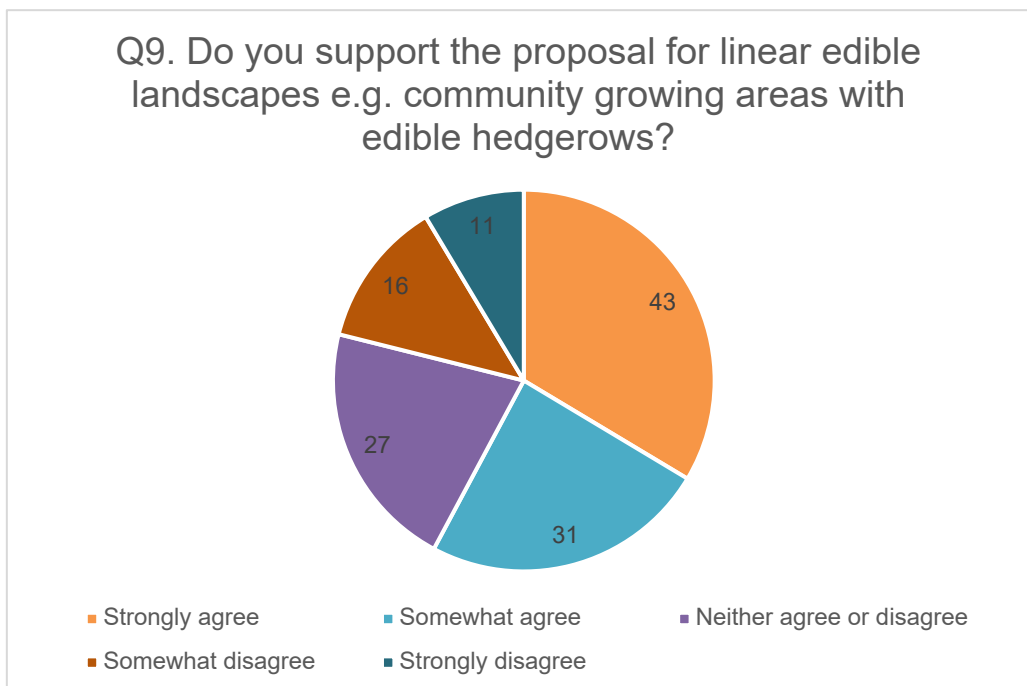
Q7. Do you support the proposal for new waymarking and signage at key locations around the park?



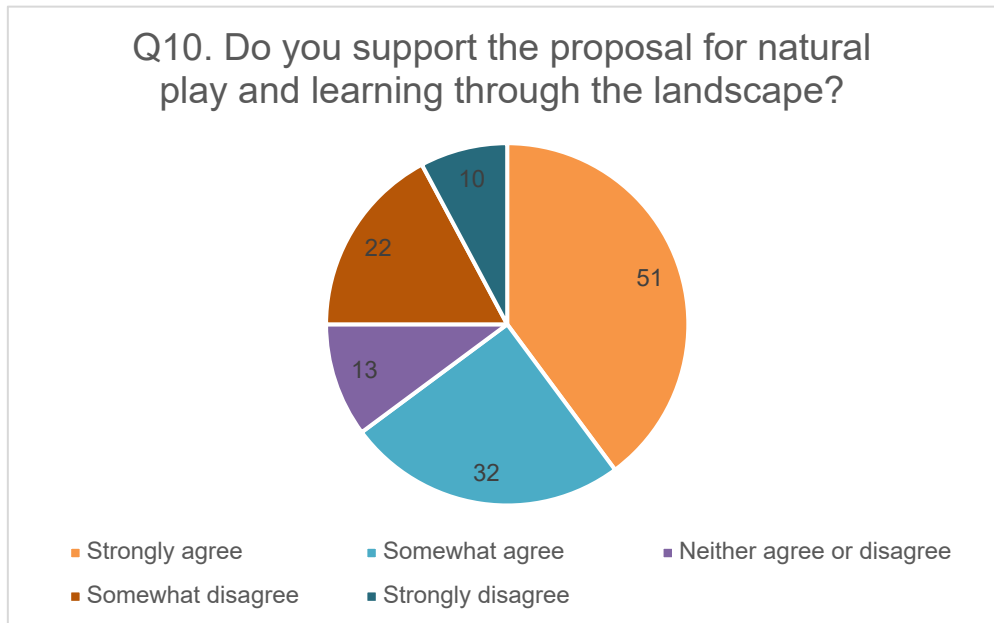
Q8. Do you support the proposal for interpretation and restoration of historic features e.g. WW2 pillbox?



Q9. Do you support the proposal for linear edible landscapes e.g. community growing areas with edible hedgerows?

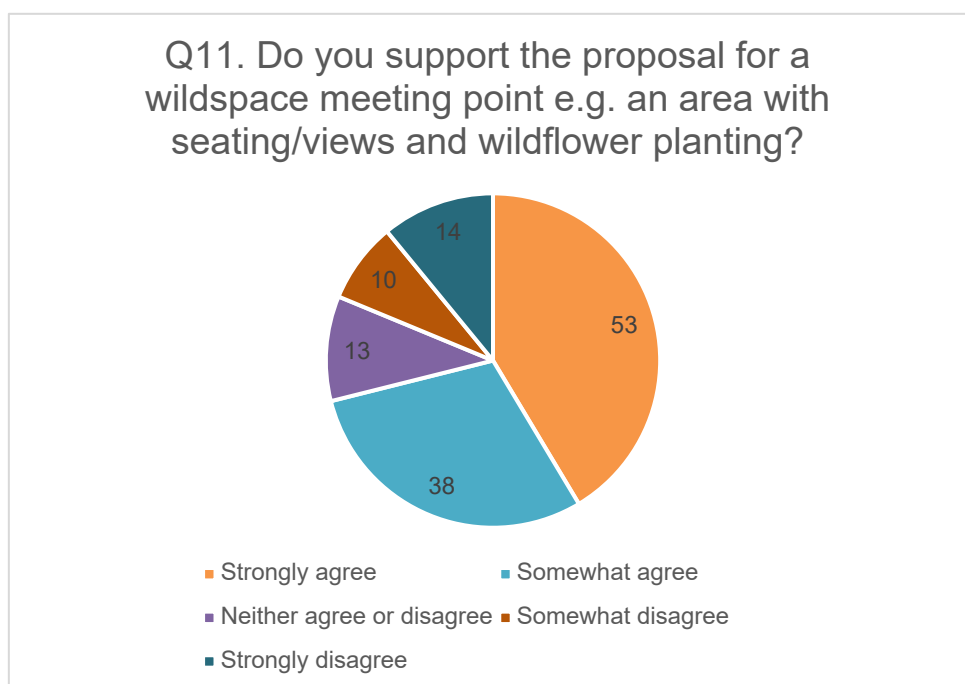


Q10. Do you support the proposal for natural play and learning through the landscape?

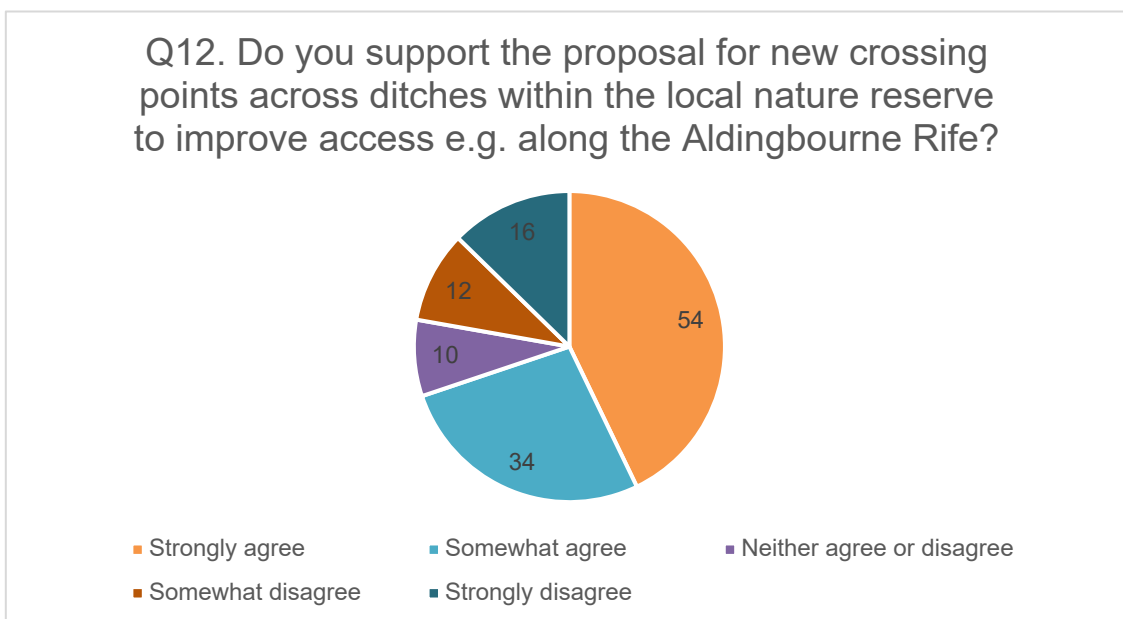


The following questions are about making improvements to access around the open spaces:

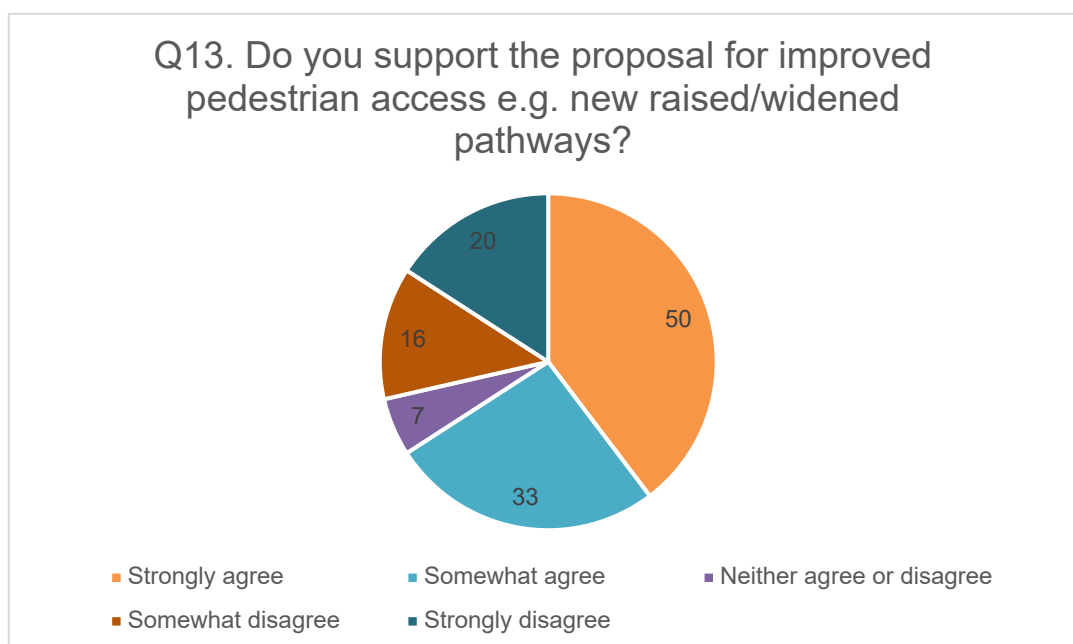
Q11. Do you support the proposal for a wildspace meeting point e.g. an area with seating/views and wildflower planting?



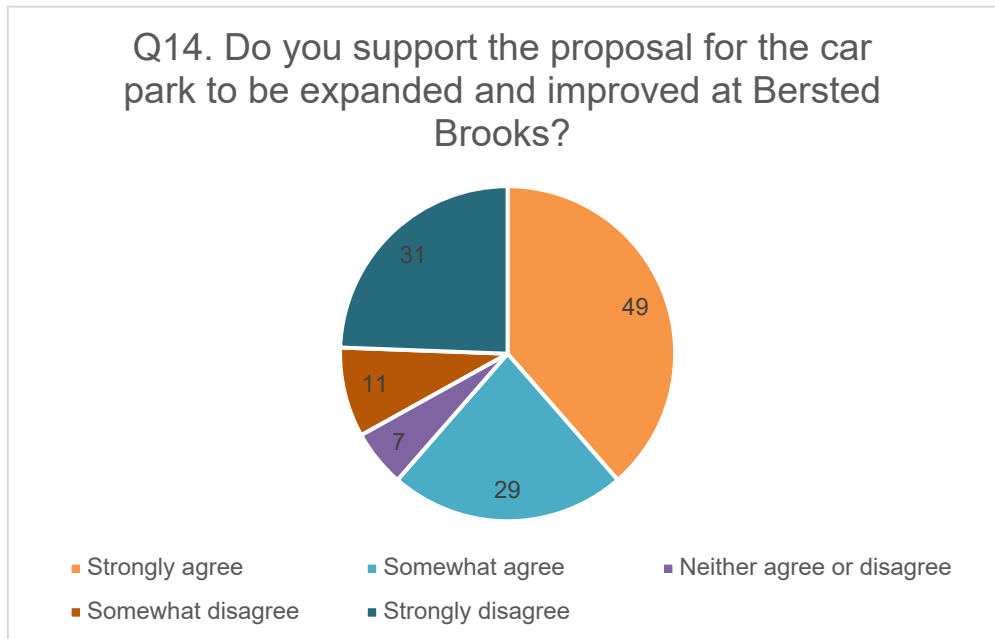
Q12. Do you support the proposal for new crossing points across ditches within the local nature reserve to improve access e.g. along the Aldingbourne Rife?



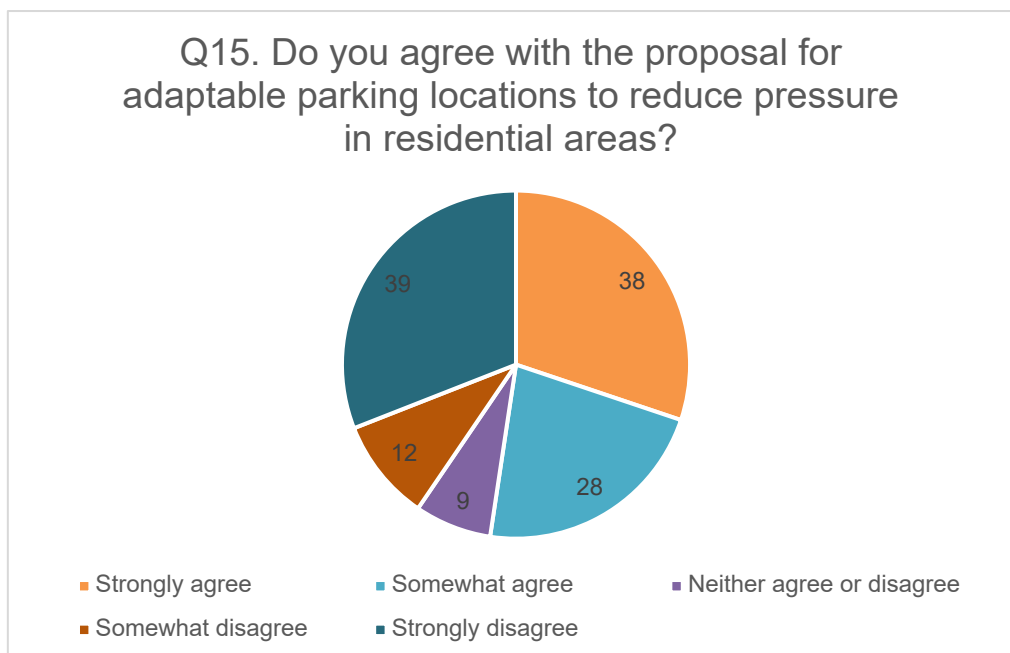
Q13. Do you support the proposal for improved pedestrian access e.g. new raised/widened pathways?



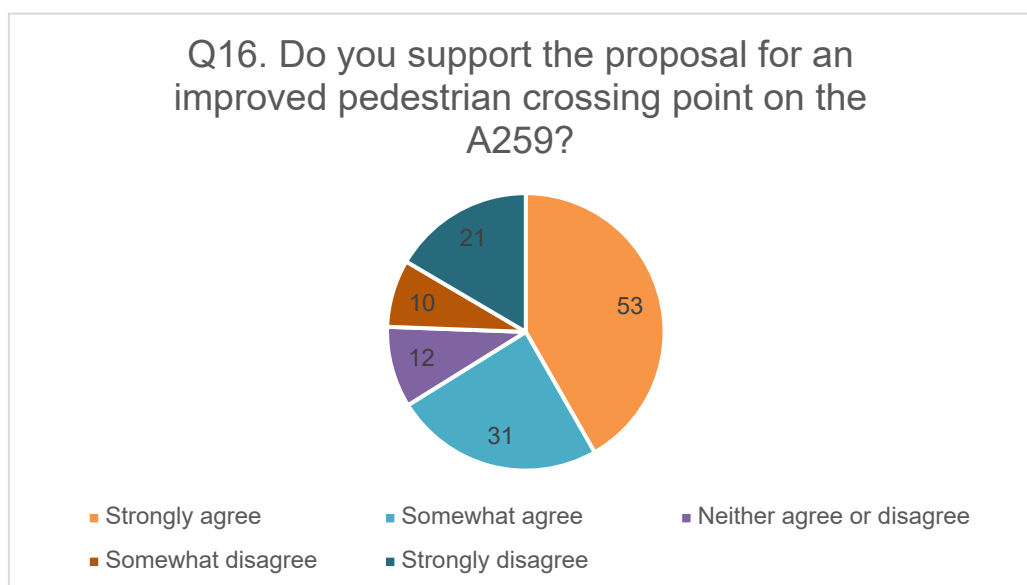
Q14. Do you support the proposal for the car park to be expanded and improved at Bersted Brooks?



Q15. Do you agree with the proposal for adaptable parking locations to reduce pressure in residential areas?



Q16. Do you support the proposal for an improved pedestrian crossing point on the A259?



Q17. Do you have any comments you wish to share about the scheme?

Main concerns arising from the masterplan	Number of responses
Increased demand for parking and issues with vehicle access for residents on the Bersted Park estate	30
Seasonal car parking area at Shripney Lane causing issues for residents	26
Increased anti-social behaviour/unauthorised access	20
Increased future flooding/drainage issues	20
Increased dog fouling and litter/fly tipping	15
Lack of resource for current/ future maintenance of site	15
Focus of masterplan should be on Bersted Brooks not Bersted Park	14
Impact on nature and biodiversity	9
Café facilities will create issues with litter and need for toilets	5
Safety of boardwalk/viewing platform design	5
Unnecessary removal of trim trail items	4
Practical safety of crossing point/bridge on A259 and the associated cost	4
Funding for the scheme being insufficient/ should be used elsewhere	4
The impact on covenants and legal issues arising from previous agreements	2

**Bersted Brooks Park
Public consultation concerns**

Concern	Consultation Response
<p>Increased demand for parking and issues with vehicle access for residents on the Bersted Park estate. Seasonal parking area at Shripney Lane causing issues for residents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas for additional seasonal parking were identified on the draft concept masterplan. These have since been reviewed and removed where not supported. • The existing car parking provision is proposed to be expanded subject to planning approval. • There is an option to amend the proposed site boundary and move focus away from Bersted Park. • Coach parking at the Bersted community centre could be reviewed with a view to replacing with additional car parking. • ADC can assist in liaising with WSCC to progress adoption of highways. This will enable the potential of residents permits to be considered in future.
<p>Increased anti-social behaviour / unauthorised access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing accessibility across the site will encourage a wider range of people to use more of the site, and therefore improve natural surveillance. Increasing ownership and sense of pride in site can discourage anti-social behaviour. • Design proposals will open up lines of sight and views.
<p>Increased future flooding and drainage issues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The masterplan proposals include wetland planting to improve flood resilience of the site and natural flood management interventions. • Hydrology surveys would be required ahead of any works to inform design improvements. Plans would be reviewed by ADC's Engineers to ensure they are appropriate. • A response to concerns around the maintenance and protection of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) was provided to the Environment Committee (Public Question Time) on 7 September 2023). In summary proposals will not impact on the existing SuDS provision and will need to comply with government guidance. Link to full response: Public Pack)Public Question Time Schedule - Environment Committee 07 September 2023 Agenda Supplement for Environment Committee, 07/09/2023 18:00 (arun.gov.uk)
<p>Increased dog fouling, litter, fly tipping</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design through management of the site will create opportunities to discourage human activity in certain locations. Specific areas can be designated for dog walking while other areas are left wilder. • Review of bin locations.

Lack of resource for current and future maintenance of site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposals are accompanied by management principles, which will require changes in maintenance regimes and additional resource to implement.
Focus of masterplan should be on Bersted Brooks not Bersted Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed site boundary has been amended to move focus away from Bersted Park.
Impact on nature and biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The aim of the project is to enhance habitat creation and biodiversity. Nature only zones will restrict human activity in some areas and benefit wildlife.
Café facilities will create issues with litter and need for toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an opportunity in future to locate mobile catering unit at Bersted Brooks car park.
Safety of boardwalk / viewing platform design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The design and routes of boardwalks would be subject to assessment and engineering advice, to ensure the selection of appropriate materials and implementation of correct maintenance regime.
Unnecessary removal of trim trail items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The consultation plan identified that some items of trail equipment would be relocated. The results showed there was limited appetite for change. Equipment will continue to be managed in current location and subject to routine replacement depending on its condition.
Practical safety of crossing point/bridge on A259 and the associated cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The A259 is a major barrier to crossing between the open spaces. A bridge would serve as a crossing point but as a long-term aspiration and be subject to future funding.
Funding for the scheme being insufficient / should be used elsewhere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposals would be delivered over a long period. Current funding will enable the delivery of early works, but other funding will need to be explored for longer-term works. The masterplan would need to be updated to reflect this.
The impact on covenants and legal issues arising from previous agreements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A response to concerns relating to restrictive covenants linked to the transfer of public open spaces was provided to the Environment Committee (Public Question Time) on 7 September 2023). In summary ADC will comply with its obligations under all covenants agreed to. Link to full response: (Public Pack)Public Question Time Schedule - Environment Committee 07 September 2023 Agenda Supplement for Environment Committee, 07/09/2023 18:00 (arun.gov.uk)



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Rev 02 FINAL

BERSTED BROOKS PARK

Wildspace on your doorstep

Concept Masterplan Report



Project managed and funded by Arun District Council



Prepared by Stephenson Halliday, an RSK Company,
with input from Plumb Associates

Consultation was undertaken with a range of stakeholders and the local community, whose contributions are gratefully acknowledged.

Document history

	Name	Date / Revision		
Author	David Walker	10/10/23 - Rev00	27/10/23 - Rev01	03/11/23 - Rev02
Technical Reviewer	Lynne Houlbrooke	10/10/23 - Rev00	27/10/23 - Rev01	03/11/23 - Rev02
Approved	Andrew Tempny	11/10/23 - Rev00	27/10/23 - Rev01	03/11/23 - Rev02

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4	1. Introduction
5	2. Towards a masterplan
7	3. Masterplan vision and concept
12	4. What happens next...
21	5. Delivery plan

1. INTRODUCTION

Bersted Brooks and Bersted Park are both well-loved by those that use and live by them. The open spaces provide valuable green recreation opportunity for visitors and a naturalistic outlook for the surrounding community – wildspace really is on the doorstep for many local people.

The open spaces are not without their challenges however, which needs to be addressed. There is potential to improve their contribution as valuable green and blue infrastructure through the masterplanning process. Response to these issues could include looking at how to build better resilience to climate change; promoting strong, well integrated, and cohesive communities; conserving natural resources and increasing biodiversity; and protecting and enhancing the outstanding landscape and historic features.

The Masterplan Report is provided along with the accompanying Summary Baseline Analysis and Stakeholder Feedback Report, a separate document which provides background information. This report should therefore be read in conjunction with that separate document.



Bersted Brooks Local Nature Reserve.



Aldingbourne Rife.



Western Field.



Eastern Field.

2. TOWARDS A MASTERPLAN

Bersted Brooks and Bersted Park have been identified as having potential for improvement to enhance their provision as valuable, usable open spaces within the local area, as part of the wider open space provision across the district.

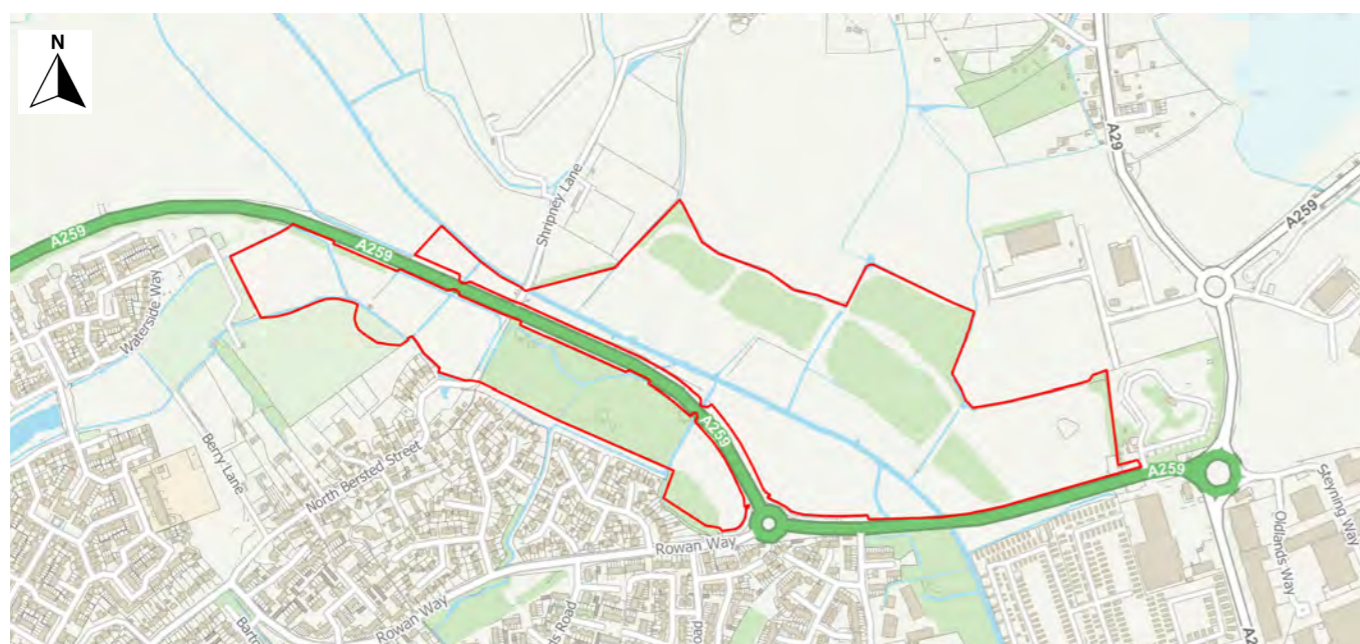
It is clear from the initial research and the public consultation processes carried out that these areas are used by local people for a range of activities, such as dog walking, enjoyment of the landscape setting and wildlife, keeping fit and spending time with family and friends. Many who live nearby already have a sense of ownership over the open spaces due to regular recreational use or even volunteering to help maintain the areas; this sense of ownership should

be encouraged and nurtured. Therefore, a sensitive approach is required to balance the various aspects of community use and interest, whilst looking to make needed improvements for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The site faces various challenges, and these have come to the forefront through the research and engagement process, as part of the evolution of the concept design. Some of the key challenges include flooding which causes large portions of the site to become inaccessible for long periods; and the lack of car park provision which results in congestion within the surrounding streets, which affects some residents' enjoyment of their homes.

With the above in mind, the types of intervention that have been explored as part of this process include:

- Flood mitigation and alleviation
- Improved access, including a focus on year-round access
- Potential to increase parking provision
- Enhanced opportunities for community use
- Opportunities for enhancing biodiversity, and
- Improved signage, interpretation, and wayfinding.



Site layout - Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2022.



Key challenge - Flooding and future adaptability. Photo by Keir Greenway (17th Nov 2022)

The process has identified 7 themes which represent the priorities for the open spaces and which have been used to frame the development of the Concept Masterplan. The themes link closely to ecosystem services and environmental and social functions of green infrastructure as well as the Green Flag Award standards, Building with Nature standards and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as relevant.

The 7 themes are as follows:

:



Conserving and enhancing biodiversity



Landscape setting and character/ sense of place



Flood mitigation and healthy ecosystems



Historic character



Healthy and cohesive communities



Access to green recreation



Lifelong learning/ skills for life

3. MASTERPLAN VISION AND CONCEPT

The Bersted Brooks Park masterplan has developed from the consultation process where stakeholders and community members have engaged.

The masterplan vision for Bersted Brooks Park has evolved through the awareness of a landscape that needs improved climate change resilience in order to serve its purpose as a useable community open space. A 'design through management' approach would be adopted to help deliver the outcomes in different stages, seeking to conserve and protect the best and most valuable elements of the area, whilst managing access to open-up more opportunity for enjoyment of them, where appropriate.

The key aspects of the masterplan vision are as follows:

- **Bersted Brooks Park to be a place to enjoy the outdoors in all conditions.**
- **Bersted Brooks Park to be a place to learn from and respond to nature and the landscape.**
- **Bersted Brooks Park to be a place to bring wildlife to your doorstep.**



Aerial image. © 2022 Microsoft Corporation © 2022 Maxar ©CNES (2022) Distribution Airbus DS.

Bersted Brooks Park to be a place to enjoy the outdoors in all conditions:

Parts of the open space could become more accessible throughout the year via walkways to provide opportunity for green recreation, even when the site is suffering from flooding. Year-round access is considered important for both the physical and mental health of the local community. Improved access would allow more opportunity for regular engagement with the outdoors, sense of community, and to learn about the floodplain environment.

The benefits of walkways would be twofold – as well as providing continual opportunity for people to use the open space, the routes would also encourage people along specific routes, allowing other parts of the site to become wilder. Subtle landscape interventions could reinforce this, discouraging human and pet activity away from areas that are noted for their wildlife value.



Raised pathways



Year-round access for the benefit of the physical and mental health of the local community



Bersted Brooks Park to be a place to learn from and respond to nature and the landscape:

Part of the reason the site is special is due to its function as a floodplain. The land around the Aldingbourne Rife takes on excess water in times of flooding; this is what it is there to do. The landscape and associated ecology of the area should be celebrated as one of the park’s key characteristics. It is important that all proposed landscape interventions located within the floodplain are subject to detailed hydrological surveys and engineering input to ensure that the function of the floodplain is not compromised. As the site becomes more usable at times of flooding, opportunities would be unlocked for nature connectedness and education regarding the floodplain environment through interpretation boards, natural play, and community-based areas and events.

The park’s cultural heritage is also important; the site has a story which should be told. The WW2 pillboxes and the former agricultural use of the landscape are opportunities for further learning and community engagement.



Natural play and educational opportunities

Opportunities to learn about the floodplain landscape



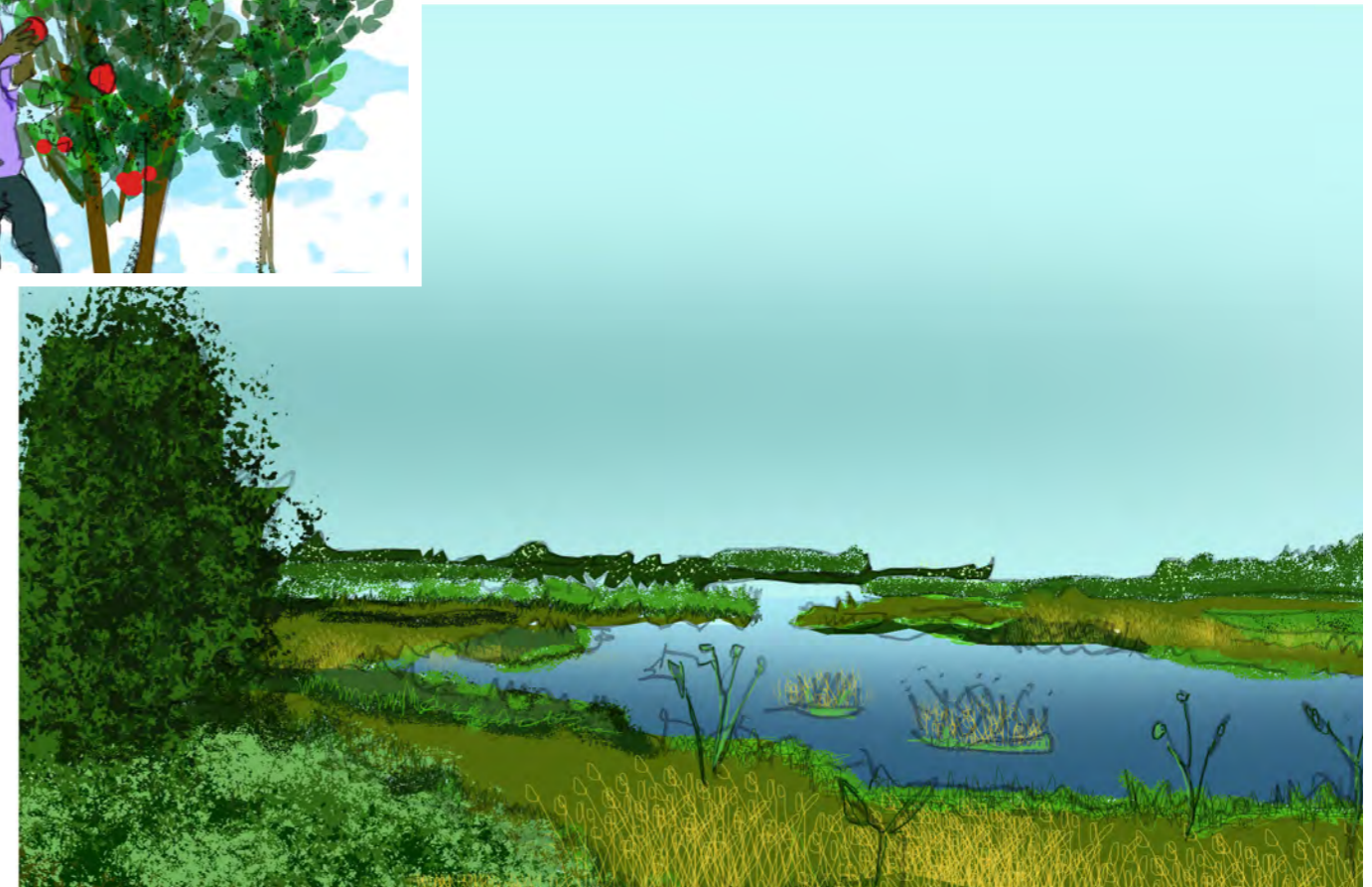
Bersted Brooks Park to be a place to bring wildlife to your doorstep:

The open space is bordered on several aspects by built up, residential areas. For local people, wild space really is on their doorstep with habitats associated with the river and surrounding tributaries and ditches, and wetland planting including meadows, hedgerows and trees just metres away.

Existing habitats across the park would be enhanced, and new planting would be provided to help increase biodiversity, enhancing the site's contribution to the ecological network of wildlife-rich places in the local area. New planting and habitat creation, located and managed appropriately, would increase the sense of naturalness and offer further opportunity for engagement with nature by the local community.



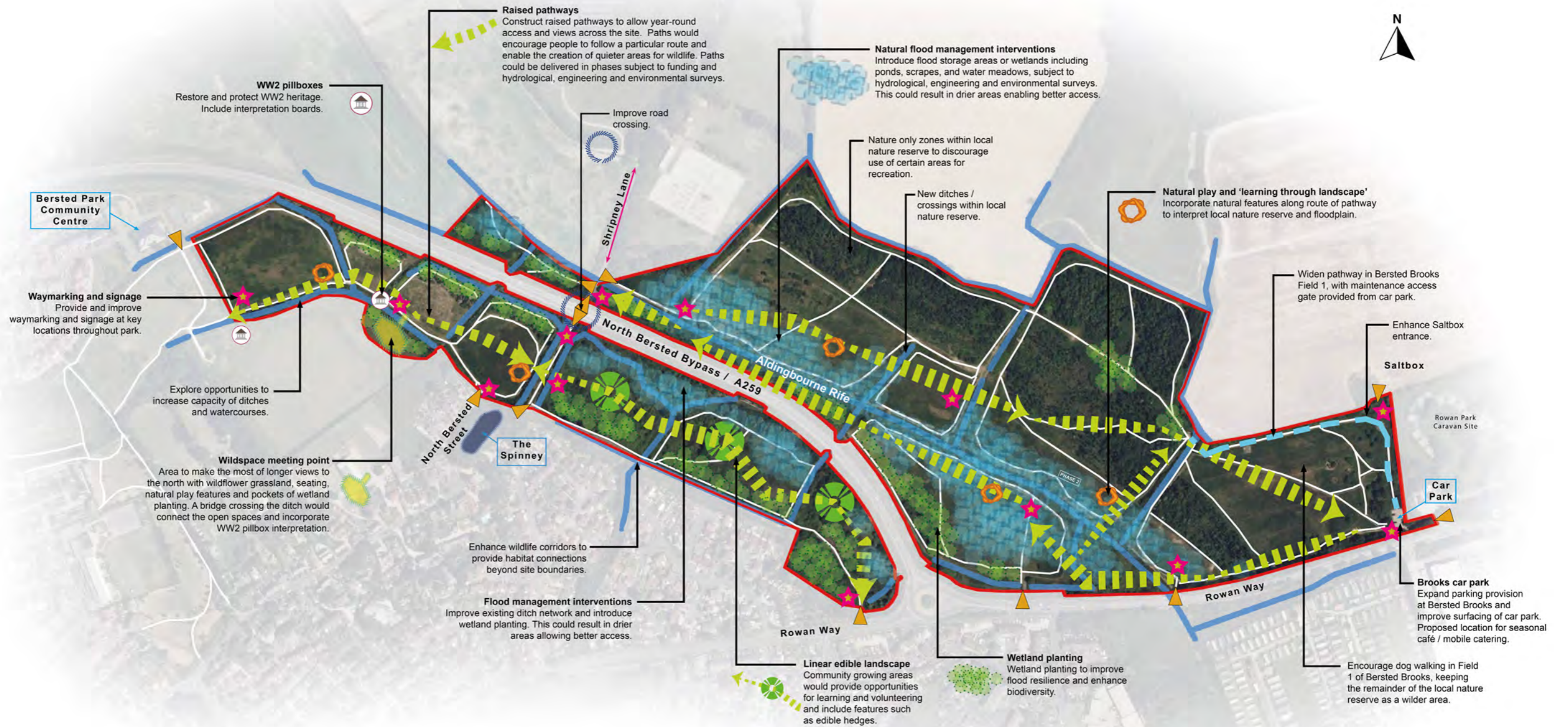
Engagement with nature



Wetland habitats associated with the river



Concept Masterplan



4. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

This section looks at how the Masterplan could be delivered, proposing a phased approach which takes into consideration the feedback received during the consultation stage.

Early-stage works are proposed, with medium and long-term projects also recommended. This section sets out the notion of the Masterplan as a fluid 'roadmap' document which can be changed and updated. Outline management principles of the various projects are also presented.

Consultation

A summary of the key themes that were drawn out of the consultation process and are relevant to masterplanning at this strategic level, are provided below. Please refer to the Summary Stakeholder Feedback Report for the full picture in terms of stakeholder response to the scheme.

- A number of residents had concerns about the inclusion of areas of Bersted Park and felt the focus of works should be on Bersted Brooks LNR. Bersted Park is considered by many as an open space that was provided for the community in the localised area.
- The crossing over the A259 / North Bersted Bypass is seen as a barrier to connecting the two open spaces. Many see it as a dangerous crossing. There is considerable scepticism around ever being able to bring forward a safer bridge crossing due to significant costs.

- The vast majority of those who engaged understood the need for the open spaces to have better resilience to climate change. This includes the importance of year-round access, and there was considerable support for raised pathways to provide this. However, there was much scepticism about the costs of implementation and ongoing maintenance. There are also concerns around works within the floodplain (i.e., construction of walkways, raising ground levels, and allowing water to continue to flow as it should).
- The issue of congestion on the streets around Bersted Park, especially the lack of parking, is an emotive issue for residents. As a result, anything that is likely to bring more visitors to the area is generally looked upon negatively by many residents.
- The idea of satellite, seasonal parking areas to ease pressure on the residential streets was generally supported, although some discussion was had around suitable locations given the floodzone and potential for anti-social behaviour.
- Concerns were raised about the current and future management of Bersted Park Lake in terms of its function as an attenuation feature and its importance to the hydrology for the surrounding housing development, citing the level of reed growth as an issue.
- The proposal for natural play and 'learning through landscape' features was received positively, along with opportunities for education about the floodplain and landscape/ecology generally.
- Dog walking generally divided opinion, with many citing the naturalness of Bersted Brooks LNR needing better protection from dog walking activity, while others were less supportive of dog-free zones.
- There was some support for mobile/small scale catering, although this was to some degree countered by some residents considering this a

something that would encourage more people to the area, and therefore a negative thing.

- Most agree and support the idea of more opportunity for community involvement.
- Various technical advice was received from stakeholders, including high level hydrology/ drainage advice and regarding river and ditch habitat enhancement opportunity.

The Concept Masterplan as a Roadmap – a dynamic process

The responses received as part of the consultation exercise have helped lead the type and location of the proposals, particularly in terms of priorities of delivery.

The Masterplan should be viewed as an evolving, fluid document with an estimated timeframe of around 30 years. Smaller, early works projects that are delivered successfully and are perceived positively may help to ease public and stakeholder concern in some respects, meaning similar schemes could be rolled out in other parts of the wider site as time goes on. Also, funding streams may become available which allow for progression of works that at one stage seemed unobtainable. Therefore, the concept masterplan may be updated to reflect the change in circumstances or general opinion.

The proposals are broken down into early works, mid to long-term works, and long-term aspirations.

Early works

Specific aspects of the masterplan have been identified as having potential to be delivered earlier than others. These are works of a small to medium-scale which could be delivered with relative ease and at a lower estimated cost compared to some of the mid to long-term works proposed. Some of the early works have been broken down into individual smaller-scale projects as shown on the subsequent pages, with the project areas identified on the plan on the next page. The identification of the individual projects that could be delivered in the short-term is based on aspects of the concept masterplan that were met with general support during the consultation process as well as being generally simpler and less costly to deliver.

Mid to long-term works

Other aspects of the masterplan are envisaged as interventions that could be delivered further down the line when more funding may be available, and in some cases based on the success of the smaller-scale projects delivered as part of the early works.

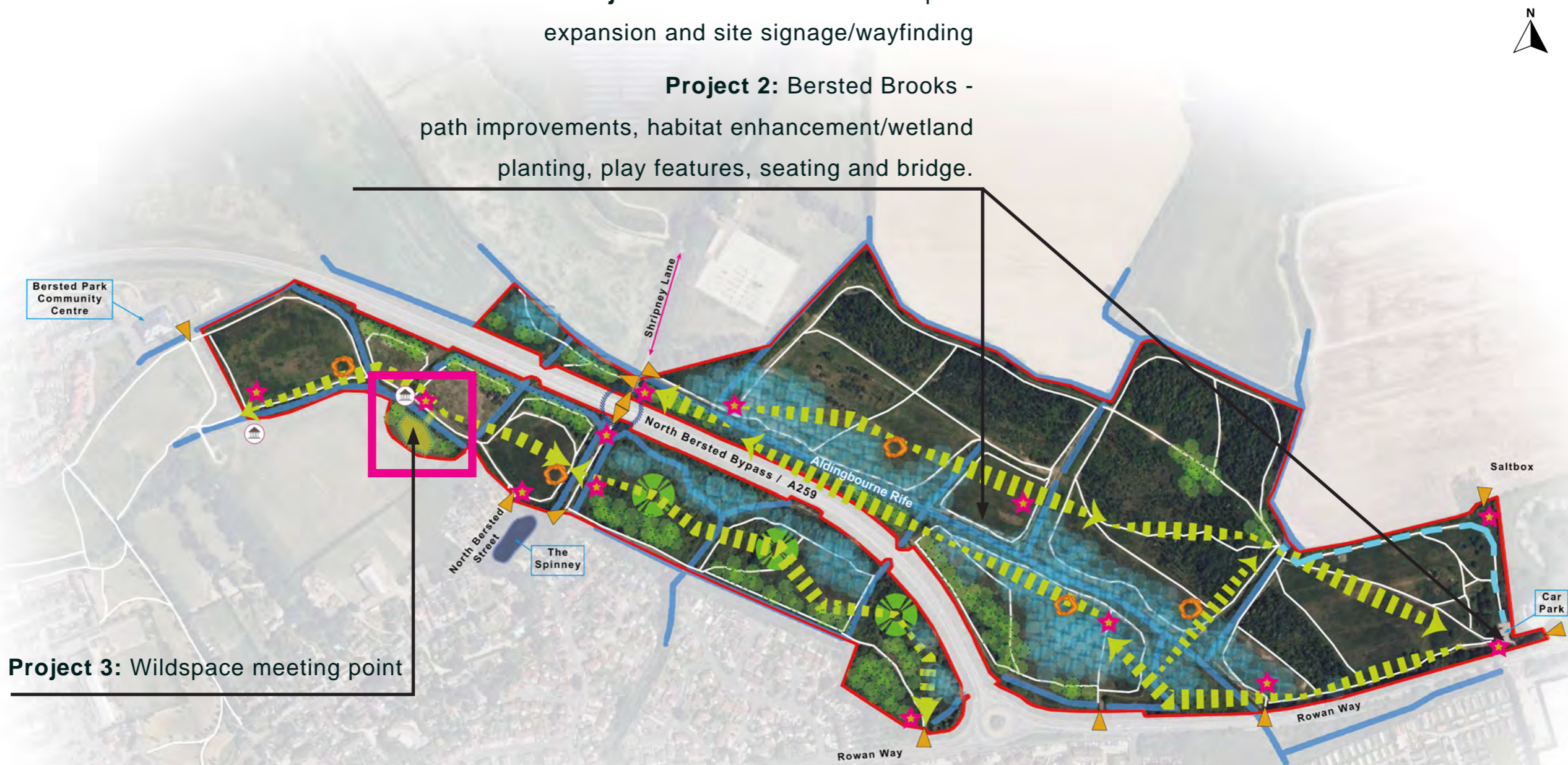
Long term aspirations

The long-term aspirations are large scale, high-cost works that would require a significant amount of stakeholder engagement and additional funding.

Early works – individual, smaller-scale projects

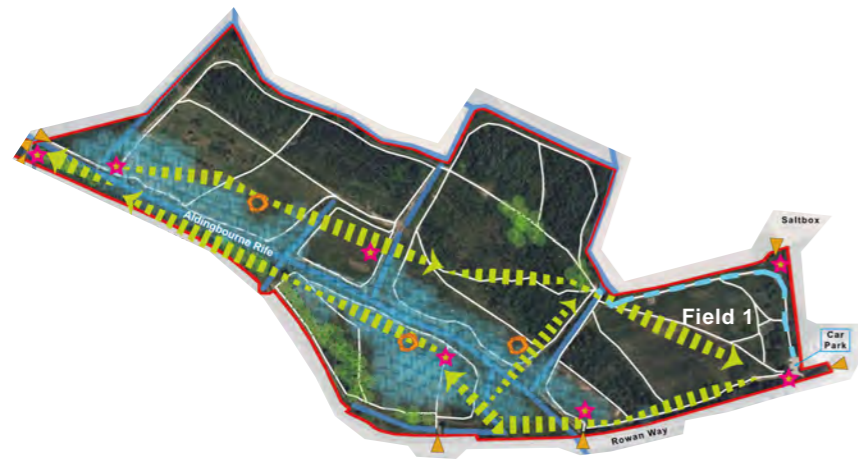
Project 1: Bersted Brooks - car park expansion and site signage/wayfinding

Project 2: Bersted Brooks - path improvements, habitat enhancement/wetland planting, play features, seating and bridge.



Project 3: Wildspace meeting point

Project 1: Bersted Brooks - car park expansion and site signage/wayfinding.



- Bersted Brooks car park to be expanded and resurfaced in accordance with detailed survey information and recommendations.
- Opportunity for mobile catering within remodelled car park to provide refreshments, local business opportunity, and heightened sense of community.
- Wayfinding within the site is to be improved to aid movement and flow of people, particularly for those who have not visited the site before. Wayfinding would encourage the use of certain parts of the site keeping other areas more natural, improve user experience, and contribute to a sense of wellbeing and security.
- Interpretation would help visitors form an emotional connection, encouraging those who use the open

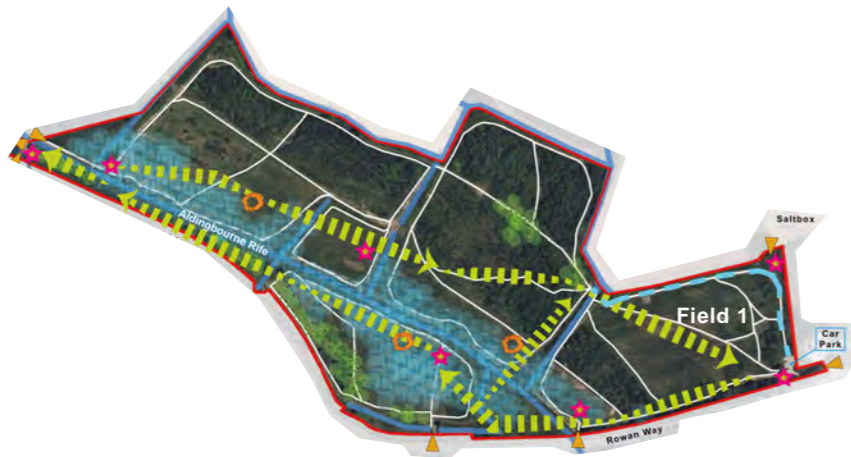
space to care about the park's characteristics. Interpretation would establish features of value, helping visitors discover the meanings and significance associated with them. Interpretation may be in the form of boards, self-guided trails, viewing points, wildlife viewing hides and organised events within the local community.

- More 'nature only zones' would be implemented, to ensure better protection of areas that are particularly ecologically sensitive. Subtle landscape interventions could be used such as wayfinding and strategically placed natural barriers, as well as natural fencing. Information boards would also be installed at key locations along Aldingbourne Rife, warning visitors of the risks.
- Measures to be taken to encourage dog walking to Field 1, keeping the remainder of the LNR as a wilder area. Signage to be installed to educate dog walkers of the potential damaging effects to wildlife from dogs. The grassed areas in the vicinity of the car park to be managed as short grass for amenity use and to allow dog waste to be picked up more easily than in long grass. A mosaic of pathways/ mazes, weaving posts, tunnels and other dog

exercise features made of natural materials, to encourage dog walking to Field 1, compensating for 'nature only zones' in other areas of the LNR.



Project 2: Bersted Brooks - path improvements, habitat enhancement/wetland planting, play features, seating and bridge.



- The pathway around the north of Field 1 would be widened, with maintenance access gate provided from the northern edge of the enlarged and resurfaced car park.
- Formal and informal natural play items would be located at key locations including steppingstones, logs, and wildlife seating circles, providing the opportunity for exploring, jumping, climbing, crawling, roleplay, feeling, smelling, and more, whilst exploring the open space. Opportunities to educate visitors about the floodplain environment would be explored as part of interactive play.
- Interface with Saltbox Industrial Estate to be enhanced both on the Brooks side, and on the Saltbox side with benched seating, wayfinding and

interpretation boards. Work with stakeholders who have shown interest in improving this crossover between sites.

- Opportunities to reinforce landscape structure and habitat would be fully explored throughout the project area. This would require detailed habitat surveys to ascertain the present condition and species composition. Planting would aim to increase biodiversity and habitat resource and aid flood mitigation. In terms of Biodiversity Net Gain, there is also potential for habitat creation in parts of the site to deliver off-site 'biodiversity units' for development being brought forward in the surrounding area, with money from the sales potentially reinvested into the park improvements. Work with Friends of Bersted Brooks who have a detailed understanding of the site.
- A boardwalk could be constructed to provide a circular route. This would be subject to detailed hydrological survey and assessment information and engineering advice. The location shown is indicative. The route of the pathway would be designed to make the most of views across the landscape setting, avoid any new planting and any features of notable landscape/ecological value. The walkway

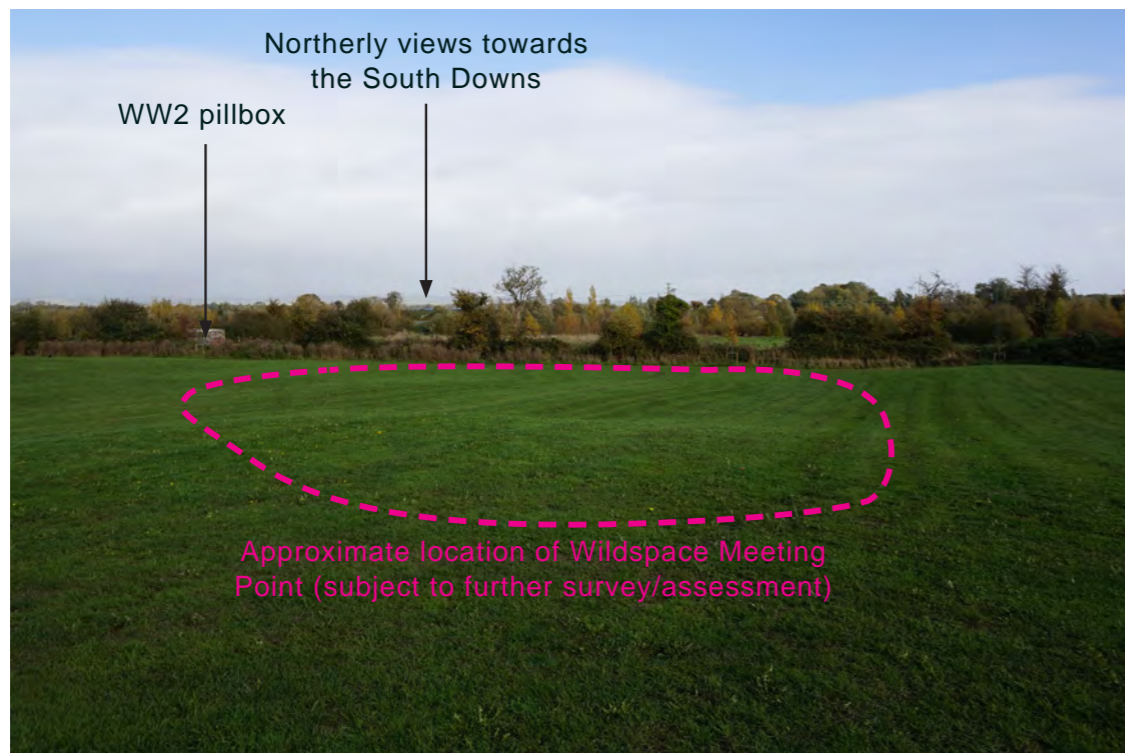
could provide the opportunity to access this part of the site even at times of severe flooding and would, to a degree, encourage human/pet activity along one route, reducing impact on wildlife. The boardwalk could cross the Aldingbourne Rife at a chosen point, with interpretation regarding the floodplain environment at key locations.



Project 3: Wildspace meeting point



- An area to make the most of the longer views towards the South Downs to the north and make full use of a relatively dry part of the site.
- Area to include wildflower grassland, pockets of native shrub planting, seating, natural play and 'learning through landscape' features.
- Visual connection to the WW2 pillbox on the northern side of the ditch, and potentially to the sunken pillbox to the west, to be enhanced. Interpretation boards to describe their importance as part of Britain's defences during WW2.
- Riparian planting along the ditch to be reinforced and enhanced where appropriate.
- Floodplain landscape and wildlife interpretation boards to be incorporated.
- Bridge crossing over the ditch to allow for better connectivity.
- A place for harnessing sense of place and quiet contemplation.
- An alternative space for users of the adjacent sports pitches and their families/spectators.



Mid to long-term works

Raised pathways

Based on the success and support for the early works within Bersted Brooks Nature Reserve, subject to detailed survey and assessment, and depending on access to funding, further raised walkways could be implemented to provide better year-round access across the site. Paths would encourage people to follow a particular route and enable the creation of quieter areas for wildlife. The main route along Aldingbourne Rife could be sufficient width to allow for bicycles, providing connectivity to the network beyond the site boundary. Raised pathways could be made of waste plastic or of a permeable raised causeway type design.



Linear edible landscape alongside wetland

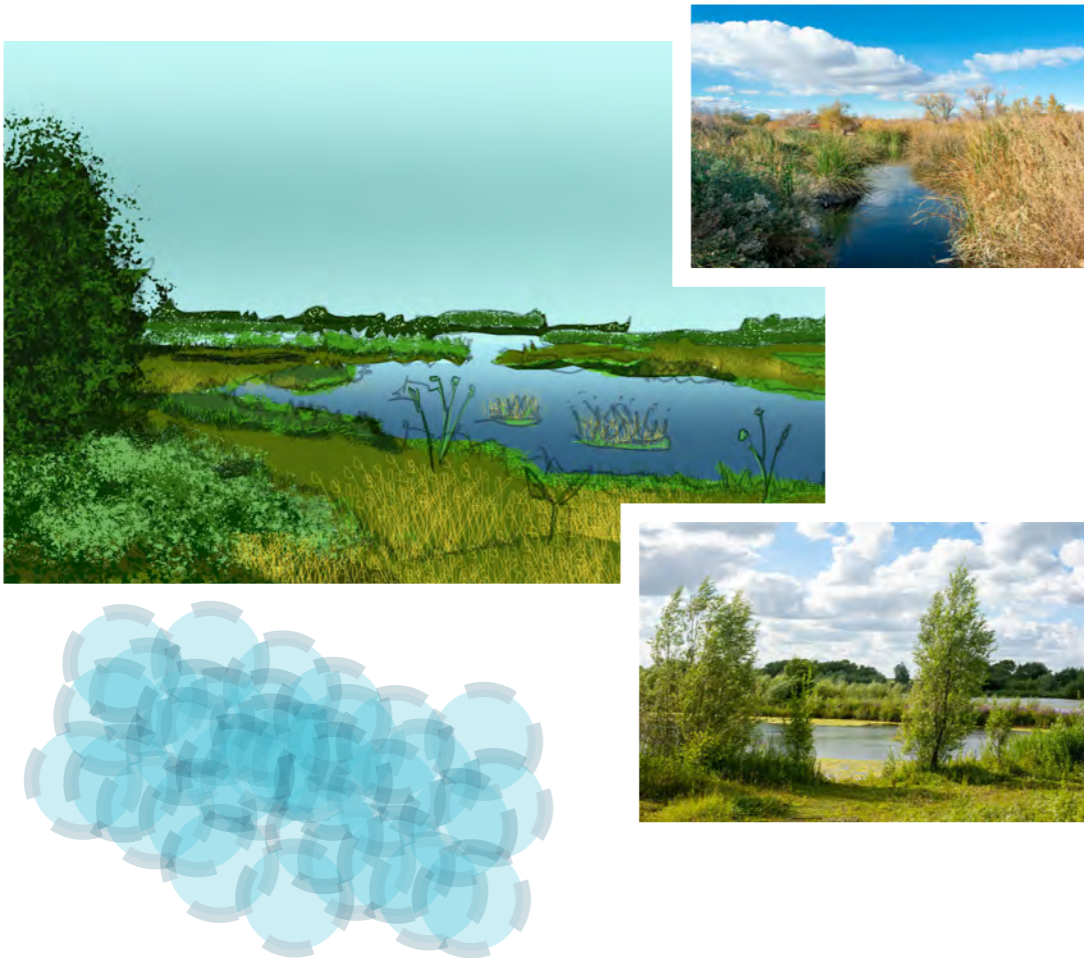
A raised pathway could provide access to a series of flood resistant community growing areas as a local resource and to provide opportunities for learning and volunteering. The pathway and growing areas would incorporate features such as edible hedges along with natural flood management interventions such as junction ponds and water meadows and wetland planting. Boundary planting would be bolstered to provide a buffer with the residential properties, whilst maintaining natural surveillance.



Mid to long-term works

Natural flood management interventions

Subject to detailed hydrological surveys and engineering input, the aim would be to store water in certain places for longer, meaning specific parts of the site were drier for longer periods than at present. Interventions could include junction ponds, scrapes, water meadows, along with further riparian planting and would alleviate flooding, benefit wildlife and provide enhanced recreation opportunity. Opportunities for education about the natural flood management methods used should be explored as part of the strategy for interpretation on the site.



Long-term aspirations

Road crossing improvements, potential bridge over North Bersted Bypass / A259 linking the two areas north and south

The masterplan process is an opportunity to identify future options for consideration as part of the feasibility exercise. The crossing over the bypass is clearly a major barrier to the overall connectedness of Bersted Brooks and Bersted Park, this was reinforced through feedback received during the consultation process. Road crossing improvements would be explored to provide a better link between the two areas, reducing or removing the risks associated with the busy crossing. As part of the inclusive design process, consideration should be given to quality design that meets the needs of the widest range of users.



Outline management principles and aims

A series of outline principles and aims have been developed to help guide the ongoing management of the open space. These are as follows:

- The Adopt a 'design through management' approach, increasing access in certain areas, easing pressure on other parts of the open space. Discourage human activity in specific locations to aid the re-naturalisation and wilding of the landscape.
- Provide a welcoming environment, encouraging and facilitating year-round access to the open space for both physical and social benefit, whilst also safeguarding local wildlife and habitats across the park.
- Maintain and enhance the diverse range of habitats within the open space, notably woodland, scrub, meadow, and watercourses, increasing foraging, nesting and breeding opportunity with encouragement of wildlife corridors. Ensure habitat management is appropriate and based on best practice, particularly within Bersted Brooks Local Nature Reserve.
- Maintain formal/designed landscape areas whilst increasing awareness and understanding of the site's natural environment and history, such as the WW2 heritage.
- Ensure a healthy, safe and secure experience for site users.
- Provide opportunities to increase community use and involvement, allowing local people to take a degree of ownership, particularly through volunteering opportunities, education, events, interpretation and building partnerships.
- Improve the environmental quality and management of the park using sustainable practices, including the effective management of watercourses.
- Provide a well-maintained and clean open space for community use, maintaining the landscape and infrastructure to a high standard.

5. DELIVERY PLAN

This section provides summary discussion regarding a delivery plan for the masterplan proposals, potential delivery models and likely funding streams. The projects presented in the previous section are summarised in tabular form on the following page with the main features clearly identified. All works would be subject to detailed survey and assessment, particularly hydrological, ecological and engineering input.

Delivery models

Delivery models used to deliver projects such as those presented and manage parks and open spaces include:

- Local authorities working with in-house parks teams or private contractors
- Local authorities forming partnerships with other public sector organisations (e.g. other local authorities / Environment Agency / Natural England), or with Parish and Town Councils
- Dedicated groups setting up charitable trusts or community interest companies (CIC)
- Private management companies established to manage open space associated with a specific development.

Funding streams

There is a diverse offering of potential funding streams to support the delivery and future management of parks and open space projects. These include:

Grant funding applications can be made for projects and associated management, such as:

- Habitat creation / enhancements (e.g. Woodland Creation Planning Grant)
- Natural flood management (e.g. Natural Flood Management Programme)
- Historical environments (e.g. National Lottery Grants for Heritage)
- Sports facilities (e.g. Sport England - Active Together Fund)
- Community growing projects (e.g. National Lottery Community Fund)
- Improving connectivity (e.g. National Highways Environment Designated Funds).

Other sources of funding include:

- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
- Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) - habitat banking

- Income-generating opportunities
- Partner funding.

Early works – individual, smaller-scale projects	Main features
Project 1: Bersted Brooks - car park expansion and site signage/wayfinding.	Car expansion, site signage/wayfinding, establishment dog friendly area within Field 1 and nature only zones within the wider project area.
Project 2: Bersted Brooks - path improvements, habitat enhancement/wetland planting, play features, seating and bridge.	Path improvements, interpretation, planting/habitat creation or enhancement, natural play and 'learning through landscape' features, seating, a boardwalk could be constructed (3m width for pedestrians and cycles, made of waste plastic), including a bridge over the Rife.
Project 3: Wildspace meeting point	Hard and soft landscaping, seating, bridge, signage, play features.
Mid to long-term works	
Raised pathways	Additional boardwalks (3m width for pedestrians and cycles, made of waste plastic), or permeable causeway type paths, based on success and support of initial raised pathway works.
Linear edible landscape alongside wetland	Boardwalk (3m width for pedestrians and cycles, made of waste plastic), community garden.
Natural flood management interventions	Professional and contracting services to cover natural flood management interventions.
Long-term aspirations	
Road crossing improvements, potential bridge over North Bersted Bypass / A259 linking the two areas north and south	Pedestrian / cycle bridge.

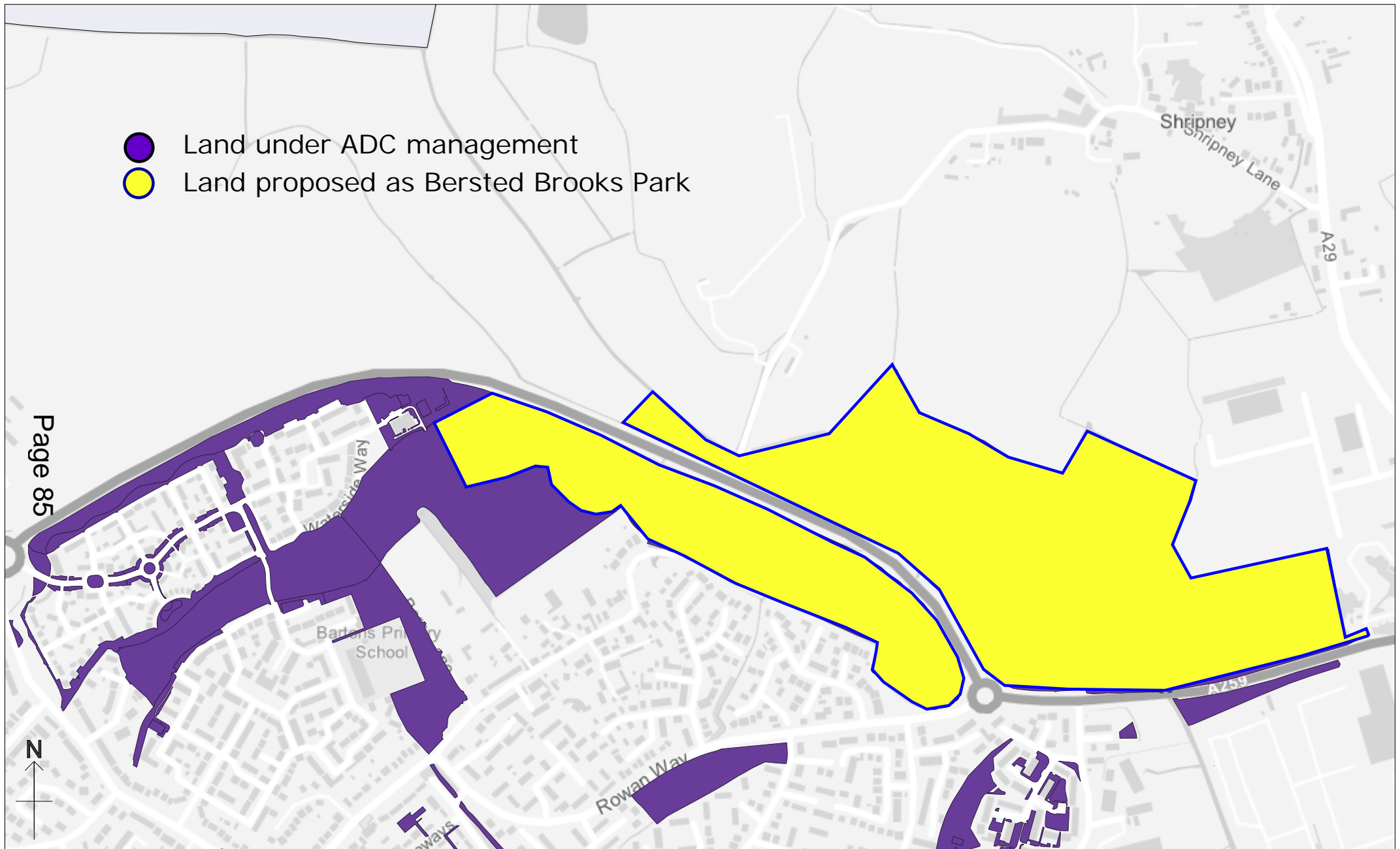


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Arun District Council Maps



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EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name of activity:	Bersted Brooks Park	Date Completed:	18 October 2023
Directorate / Division responsible for activity:	Services	Lead Officer:	Rachel Alderson
Existing Activity	Y	New / Proposed Activity	Y
		Changing / Updated Activity	Y

What are the aims / main purposes of the activity?

Public open space enhancements to enable local people to visit and enjoy recreation in a countryside environment, including improving accessibility, enhancing biodiversity and mitigating the effects of climate change.

What are the main actions and processes involved?

Construction of improved footpaths, raised walkways, and enlarged car park. Introduction of natural play. Enhancements to biodiversity and flood mitigation measures

Who is intended to benefit & who are the main stakeholders?

Residents and visitors to the area.

Have you already consulted on / researched the activity?

Stakeholder engagement and public consultation was undertaken between March 2023 and July 2023.

Impact on people with a protected characteristic (What is the potential impact of the activity? Are the impacts high, medium or low?)

Protected characteristics / groups	Is there an impact (Yes / No)	If Yes, what is it and identify whether it is positive or negative
Age (older / younger people, children)	Yes	Positive impact – the introduction of natural play items will create interest for younger visitors

		and encourage physical activity. Improving the accessibility of the open spaces will open up the site to a wider range of visitors.
Disability (people with physical / sensory impairment or mental disability)	Yes	Positive impact – improving the accessibility of the open spaces, particularly pathways and a larger car park, will enable visitors with impaired mobility to access a more rural environment.
Gender reassignment (the process of transitioning from one gender to another.)	No	
Marriage & civil partnership (Marriage is defined as a 'union between a man and a woman'. Civil partnerships are legally recognized for same-sex couples)	No	
Pregnancy & maternity (Pregnancy is the condition of being pregnant & maternity refers to the period after the birth)	Yes	Positive impact - the site will be more accessible for visitors with pushchairs.
Race (ethnicity, colour, nationality or national origins & including gypsies, travellers, refugees & asylum seekers)	No	
Religion & belief (religious faith or other group with a recognised belief system)	No	
Sex (male / female)	No	
Sexual orientation (lesbian, gay, bisexual, heterosexual)	No	
Whilst Socio economic disadvantage that people may face is not a protected characteristic; the potential impact on this group should be also considered	Yes	Positive impact – an enhanced, accessible local wildlife space close to residents which avoids the need to travel.

What evidence has been used to assess the likely impacts?
Widely documented benefits of accessible greenspace eg. Improving Access to Greenspace; A New Review for 2020 – Public Health England. Countryside for All; Good Practice Guide – Fieldfare Trust.

Decision following initial assessment			
Continue with existing or introduce new / planned activity	Y	Amend activity based on identified actions	N

Action Plan			
Impact identified	Action required	Lead Officer	Deadline
Introduction of natural play features	Review as part of design phase	RA	October 2024
Improved accessibility of pathways and larger car park	Review as part of design phase	RA	October 2024
Enhanced, accessible local wildlife space	Review as part of design phase	RA	October 2024

Monitoring & Review (additional note - to be reviewed regularly throughout detail design stages of the project)	
Date of last review or Impact Assessment:	As above
Date of next 12 month review:	October 2024
Date of next 3 year Impact Assessment (from the date of this EIA):	October 2026

Date EIA completed:	18 October 2023
Signed by Person Completing:	Rachel Alderson

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Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Environment Committee – 23 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Committee Revenue and Capital Budgets 2024/25
LEAD OFFICER:	Antony Baden, Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Sue Wallsgrove
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:	
The Council's financial planning and budget promotes all the Council's Corporate Priorities.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:	
The Council's financial planning and budget influences all Directorates of the Council.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:	
The draft budgets for this Committee are shown in the appendices.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of the report is for this Committee to consider and recommend its revenue budget for inclusion in the Council's overall 2024/25 revenue budget. These will be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024 when it considers the Council's revenue and capital budgets for 2024/25 so recommendations can be made to a Special Meeting of the Council on 21 February 2024 regarding the budget setting and level of Council Tax for the District for 2024/25.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that this Committee:
- (a) Agrees the 2024/25 Revenue Budget as illustrated in Appendix A of this report;
 - (b) Agrees the 2024/25 Capital Programme as illustrated in Appendix B of this report; and
 - (c) Recommends to Policy and Finance Committee that the Revenue Budget for this Committee be included in the overall General Fund Budget when the Policy and Finance Committee considers the Council's budgets at its meeting on 8 February 2024.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 3.1. The purpose of the report is for this Committee to consider and recommend its 2024/25 revenue budget, which will be submitted to the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024. The Policy and Finance Committee will consider the overall revenue budget for 2024/25 so that it can make recommendations to a Special Meeting of the Council on 21 February 2024.

4. DETAIL

- 4.1. The general background to the budget was included in the Financial Prospects 2024/25 to 2028/29 report to Policy & Finance Committee on 26 October 2023. An updated report was also presented to Policy & Finance Committee on the 8 January 2024.
- 4.2. Financial forecasting continues to be extremely difficult due to high inflation rates and various other external factors affecting the economy therefore budgets have been compiled on the best information available.
- 4.3. The basis of the 2024/25 budget broadly assumes that current levels of service provision will remain unchanged. This means that whilst cost increases have been included, there is no growth within the budget proposals.
- 4.4. The net change in the revenue budget between 2023/24 and 2024/25 is £90k and the key changes are summarized in the table below:

Change	Amount £'000
Salary inflation	350
Car Parks income (increases approved in January 2023)	(246)
Contract inflation mainly on the Cleansing Services and Greenspace Management contracts	475
Savings identified by the Financial Strategy paper	(543)
Other minor changes	54
Total	90

- 4.5. The savings of £543,000 identified in the Financial Strategy paper referred to in paragraph 4.4 are as follows:

Change	Amount £'000
Additional car parking income approved by Environment Committee in November 2023	230
Reduced in Foreshore seasonal staff hours	46
Do not recruit to vacant part-time project officer post	22
Increased recovery of staff costs from external funding	6
Additional income from an increase in Cemetery fees,	60
Reduction in the Events management budget	50
Efficiency savings on Environmental Health consultations	50
Increased fees & charges income from Events	3
Ensure full cost recovery of staff costs from Licensing Sub Committee hearings	15
Introduce pre-application and other advice fees for all licensing services	10
Reduced costs in the Play area budget	20
Do not recruit to vacant Parks officer post	30
Send Disabled Facilities Grants acknowledgement letters by email instead of post	1
Total Savings	543

- 4.6. The level of funding for the capital programme will be determined at the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024. Existing schemes and new schemes will continue to be reviewed during 2024/25 for affordability and deliverability. The impact of any new borrowing will also be kept under review and reported to Members during the financial year.
- 4.7. The planned capital programme for this committee totals £1.7 million for 2024/25 and is detailed in Appendix B.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1. No consultation has taken place with external organisations regarding this committee's budget, but a wider budget consultation process is taking place in respect of the Council's overall budget and will be reported to Policy and Finance Committee on the 8 February 2024.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 6.1. Not applicable.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 7.1. The revenue budget and the capital programme will be monitored and reported to this Committee throughout 2024/25.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. The risks outlined in the Financial Prospects Report 2024/25 to 2028/29 to Policy & Finance Committee on the 26 October 2023 remain relevant. Members may wish to review these alongside this report.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 9.1. The Council has a legal duty to ensure its revenue and capital expenditure can be met by its income, inclusive of reserves.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 10.1. There are no direct implications. Any subsequent Human Resources impact arising from the savings programme will be managed in accordance with Council policies and procedures.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

- 11.1. There are no direct implications, but Members will note the reduction in Foreshore staff hours outlined in paragraph 4.5 above.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

- 12.1. There are no direct implications.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

- 13.1. There are no direct implications.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

- 14.1. There are no direct implications.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

- 15.1. There are no direct implications.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

- 16.1. There are no direct implications.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1. There are no direct implications.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Antony Baden

Job Title: Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer

Contact Number: 01903 737558

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

[2023/24 Budget Report to Full Council 01 March 2023;](#)

[Financial Prospects 2024/25 to 2028/29 –Policy & Finance Committee 26 October 2023;](#)

[Financial Prospects 2024/25 to 2028/29 update – Policy & Finance Committee 8 January 2024;](#)

**Environment Committee
General Fund Revenue Budget 2024/25**

Actual 2022-23 £'000	Description	Budget 2023-24 £'000	Budget 2024-25 £'000
Environment Committee			
Direct Services			
98	Building Control	192	251
(29)	Bus Shelters & Street Nameplates	11	1
(956)	Car Parks	(898)	(1,144)
(30)	Cemeteries & Churchyards	12	(12)
6,233	Cleansing Services	7,699	8,220
135	Coast Protection & Land Drainage	69	134
44	Emergency Planning & Support	50	54
579	Environmental Health & Protection	607	641
2	Foreshores	47	24
1,163	Parks & Green Spaces	2,157	2,367
346	Private Sector Housing	288	324
7,585	Total for Direct Services:	10,234	10,860
Environment Committee			
Management & Support Services			
509	Engineering & Infrastructure Services	576	668
509	Total for Management & Support Services:	576	668
	Salary adjustment		(85)
8,094	Environment Committee Sub Total:	10,810	11,443
	Savings identified by Financial strategy		(543)
	Committee Total:		10,900

**Environment Committee
Capital Programme 2024/25**

Actual 2022/23 £'000	Description	Original Budget 2023/24 £'000	Updated Budget 2023/24 £'000	Budget 2024/25 £'000	Budget 2025/26 £'000	Budget 2026/27 £'000	Budget 2027/28 £'000	Note
1,129	Disabled Facilities Grants	1,400	1,400	1,580	1,580	1,580	1,580	1
0	Parks Chipper	0	0	0	0	26	0	
82	Keystone Centre	0	250	0	0	0	0	
237	Sunken Gardens	0	176	0	0	0	0	
438	Place St Maur	0	17	0	0	0	0	
199	Play Areas	255	663	120	155	100	90	2
0	Bersted Brooks Park	0	320	0	0	0	0	
2,085	Committee Total	1,655	2,826	1,700	1,735	1,706	1,670	

Notes

1. The Council offers grants to homeowners to adapt their properties enabling them to remain in their own homes and community. The scheme is funded by government grant.
2. The Play Areas spend is the Council's scheme of replacing play areas with up to date, safe equipment in line with the Council's adopted 10-year play area strategy.

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REPORT TO:	Environment Committee - 23 January 2024
SUBJECT:	Budget Monitoring Report to 31 December 2023
LEAD OFFICER:	Antony Baden – Group Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Sue Wallsgrove
WARDS:	All
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION:	
The Council’s budget supports all the Council’s Objectives.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT:	
Budget monitoring and forecasting are key in ensuring sound financial control and control of spending is in place. It is also a major part in ensuring sound governance arrangements.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY:	
The report shows the Committee’s Revenue budget and Capital programme forecast out turn position for 2023/24 to the end of Quarter 3.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1. The purpose of this report is to appraise the Environment Committee of its forecast out turn against the 2023/24 budgets, which were approved by Full Council at its meeting of the 9 March 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1. It is recommended that the Committee notes the content of this report.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1. The report sets out in further detail the Committee’s Revenue and Capital programme budget performance projections to the 31 March 2024.

4. DETAIL

4.1. Table 1 below details the 2023/24 forecast revenue budget out turn to the end of Quarter 3 and anticipates an underspend of £339k, which is a favourable movement of £284k against the £55k underspend reported in Quarter 2. The significant changes in the forecast are explained in paragraphs 4.2 below.

Table 1

Environment Committee					
	Budget	Forecast	Variance	Variance	Movement
	2023-24	Q3	Q3 to Q2	Q2	
Description	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Building Control	192	201	9	35	(26)
Bus Shelters & Street Nameplates	10	(9)	(19)	(8)	(11)
Car Parks	(899)	(1,201)	(302)	(55)	(247)
Cemeteries & Churchyards	12	(10)	(21)	(21)	-
Cleansing Services	7,699	7,852	152	152	-
Coast Protection & Land Drainage	69	134	65	65	-
Emergency Planning & Support	50	50	-	-	-
Environmental Health & Protection	606	606	-	-	-
Foreshores	48	3	(45)	(45)	-
Parks & Green Spaces	2,158	2,033	(125)	(125)	-
Private Sector Housing	288	288	-	-	-
Management and Support Services	577	523	(53)	(53)	-
Total for Environmental Committee:	10,810	10,470	(339)	(55)	(284)

4.2. **Car Parks** - £247k favourable variance due to approved parking charge fee increases approved at Environment Committee 31st Jan 2023 when compared to budgeted levels. There is less of an increase in income than was forecast when the fee increases were approved in January 2023 due to poor weather in July and August. The increased levels have been addressed during the budget setting for 2024/25 and will include the revised income budget.

Table 2

	Original 2023/24 Budget	Slippage from 2022/23	In Year additions	Other Changes	Revised 2023/24 Budget	Forecast Out Turn 2023/24	Variance	2024/25 Budget	2025/26 Budget	2026/27 Budget
Project	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Improvement & Discretionary Grants	1,400	0	0	0	1,400	1,400	0	1,400	1,400	1,400
Keystone Centre	0	250	0	0	250	250	0	0	0	0
Sunken Gardens	0	226	0	0	226	176	-50	0	0	0
Bersted Brooks Park	0	320	0	0	320	22	-298	298	0	0
Parks Chipper	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26
Place St Maur	0	22	0	0	22	17	-5	5	0	0
Play Areas	255	285	124	0	664	433	-231	65	150	100
Total Environment Committee Capital	1,655	1,103	124	0	2,882	2,298	-584	1,768	1,550	1,526

- 4.3. Table 2 above details the Committee's 2023/24 forecast capital programme out turn as at Quarter 3. The total capital budget for 2023/24 is £2,882k which includes slippage from the previous year of £1,103k. There have been changes within year of an additional £174k within Play Areas funded from S106 and other grants/contributions (approved under delegated, except for £64k which was approved at Environment Committee January 2023) and reduction of £50k in relation to other skate park projects to allow an enhanced budget provision for these in 2025/26.
- 4.4. Expenditure on the Sunken Gardens project has out turned at £50k under budget and the Place St. Maur project is also complete apart from a contract retention sum of £5k.
- 4.5. Bersted Brooks Park stakeholder engagement has been undertaken, and proposals were published for public consultation in July 2023. The results of the consultation were due to be presented to the Environment Committee in November 2023, however this has been deferred to the January 2024 meeting, at which members will be asked to endorse the revised masterplan for the site in order that the early works proposals can be progressed. A full cash flow plan can then be produced, and any remaining project budget will be carried over to 2024/25 to allow for project delivery.
- 4.6. The £200k budget re: Bognor skate park within Play Areas is to be carried forward to 2024/25 as a delayed capital project. The approach for the Bognor skate park project depends on the outcome of the business case appraisals to be carried out by Property & Estates for the Rock Gardens site. This is also the case for other skatepark projects, so the budget has been adjusted in 2023/24 to allow an enhanced budget provision for this project in 2025/26. However, this is also subject to change depending on the outcome of the business cases appraisals.

4.7. The Capital programme is being reviewed as part of the budget setting process and will take account of progress against the 2023/24 budget. Any changes will be reported to this Committee for approval by Policy & Finance Committee.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1. Consultation with other stakeholders is not required for this report.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

6.1. There are no alternative options to this report.

7. COMMENTS BY THE INTERIM GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

7.1. There are no additional financial implications arising from the matters set out in this report. Committee will note that the Group Head of Finance & Section 151 Officer will work throughout the financial year with other Group Heads to mitigate any overspends that have been highlighted in the report and to maximise potential income generation opportunities/cost avoidance efficiencies.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1. Regular budget monitoring and forecasting mitigates against the risk of poor financial control and ensures that Members are informed when corrective action is required and what action has been taken.

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

9.1. There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1. None.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1. None.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1. None.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1. None.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1. None.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1. None.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1. None.

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1. None.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Antony Baden

Job Title: Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer

Contact Number: 01903 737558

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

[Budget Book 2023/24](#)

[Minute 779, Full Council 9 March 2023 – Arun District Council budget 2023/24.](#)

[Quarter 2 Budget Monitoring Report, Environment Committee, 21 November 2023, Minute 380.](#)

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Environment Committee	<u>Report Author</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Full Council Meeting Date</u>
Bathing Water Quality	Neil Williamson	15 June	6 pm	19 July
Public Space Protection Order for Dogs	Neil Williamson			
Play Area improvements 2023/24	Rachel Alderson			
Q4 KPI Report				
Two-Hour Town Centre Parking Schemes	Lisa Emmens	7 Sept	6 pm	8 Nov
Public Space Protection Orders for Adoption	Neil Williamson			
Q1 KPI Report				
Review of Car Park Tariffs	Lisa Emmens	21 Nov	6 pm	10 Jan
Beach access update report	Joe Russell-Wells/Karl MacLaughlin			
Bersted Brooks Park	Joe Russell-Wells/Rachel Alderson			
Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation – Consultation Results and Outcomes	Louise Crane			
Air Quality Strategy	Neil Williamson			
Q2 KPI Report				

Environment Committee	<u>Report Author</u>	<u>Date of Meeting</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Full Council Meeting Date</u>
Q3 KPI Report Bersted Brooks Park Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring Report Committee Revenue and Capital Budgets 2024/25 - Environment	Joe Russell-Wells/Rachel Alderson Antony Baden Antony Baden	23 Jan	6 pm	13 March
Combined Cleansing Services Contract – service configuration and tender scope approval Contaminated Land Strategy Bathing Water Quality Update from the Free Parking Scheme Review Working Party (information update)	Oliver Handson Neil Williamson Neil Williamson Chair of the Working Party	19 March	6 pm	9 May