
MAXIMISING THE POTENTIAL OF CHERRY ORCHARD JUBILEE COUNTRY PARK

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park (COCP) is an important green asset owned by the Council. This report proposes the adoption of the strategy, as set out in the appended draft master plan.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The previous report to the Investment Board in July 2019 explained that the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park Management Plan 2011-2016 has not been subsequently renewed. It was agreed that the vision and strategy for COCP, as set out in the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park Management Plan 2011-2016, be revisited and a new strategy for the development and preservation of COCP be created.
- 2.2 A Member Working Group was set up to develop the new strategy and action plan for approval/adoption by Investment Board and the Council. Development of the new strategy was to be undertaken in conjunction with the Friends group and wider public consultation

3 COUNTRY PARK MASTER PLAN

- 3.1 Allen Scott were appointed by the Council to prepare a RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) stage 2 master plan, in consultation with the Friends of Cherry Orchard Country Park, the Member Working Group, and Council officers. The master plan identifies potential projects, which will be further developed and brought back for consideration.
- 3.2 The purpose of the master plan is to provide a concept design for future improvements and enhancements to the park and to co-ordinate these with other policy and strategy objectives, including the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) and connectivity improvement proposals identified in the Sustrans Walking and Cycling Greenway Network Report.
- 3.3 The key sections of the master plan are summarised below.
- 3.4 The Site Description (page 4) and Analysis (page 12)

This identifies and describes the sites in terms of: vegetation types; hydrology; access; surrounding character (urban edge); topography; and relevant policy (Planning).

3.5 Consultation (page 14)

A consultation event to present thoughts on the master plan to the Member Working Group and stakeholders took place in November 2019. It was attended by Council officers, Councillors and Friends of Cherry Orchard Country Park. The outline proposals appeared to be broadly well received and some strong themes emerged in feedback, particularly concerning biodiversity. Opportunities identified were grouped into facilities - café, visitor centre, toilets, events - cycling, education and, experience - identity, discovery, exploration.

3.6 Strategies and Objectives (page 16)

The outcomes of the master plan aim to respond to wider strategies and objectives identified as part of the Council's Open Spaces Strategy 2015 and wider policies identified in its adopted Core Strategy and Development Plan Documents (DPDs). Alongside this, reference has been made to supporting work by Sustrans, work by Essex Wildlife Trust and the activities of the Friends of Cherry Orchard Country Park.

3.7 Reviewing these policies in relation to the Upper Roach Valley and Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park broad strategy is embedded in policies that underpin four themes: 1) Ecology and Biodiversity; 2) Health and Wellbeing; 3) Access and Connectivity; and 4) Green Tourism and Rural Diversification.

3.8 Design Opportunities (page 18)

The master plan identified 6 broad areas of the park, each with its own distinct character and design opportunities that were developed under the 4 key themes, as set out above and set out in the Proposals Maps (page 20). These are summarised below:

- Area 1 – comprises the Saxon Business Park to the east of the country park and identifies key opportunities as improving the two way connectivity between the business park and the country park; and extending the country park brand into the business park through appropriate landscaping.
- Area 2 – Is located at the eastern end of the country park adjacent to the main road and car park. Key opportunities are identified as being based around developing the arrival point as a hub/core that delivers the majority of green tourism and events within the park. It is this area that visitor facilities and access would be concentrated within.
- Area 3 – Is within the centre of the park and consists of open meadows and the lake. Key opportunities are identified as habitat and lake enhancements, integrating the lake and footpath connectivity into the context of the immediate landscape.

- Area 4 – Again, as above is within the central aspect of the park and consists mainly of plantations with a connecting ride network. The key opportunity is viewed as the enhancing connectivity whilst retaining the emerging woodland character.
- Area 5 – This area is similar to area 3, with wide open meadows and sits at the western end of the country park, which is clearly delineated from Area 6.
- Area 6 – This is a distinctive, different character, formed of ancient and mature woodlands. The key opportunities are based around habitat management, natural play, and improving connectivity through woodland ride management.

3.9 RIBA Stage 2 Master Plan (page 22)

This sets out a list of identified improvements to the country park to deliver the Council's and stakeholder aspirations. Key concepts are the improvements of access, such as boardwalks, footbridge and surfaced pathways linking the east to west aspect of the park. The development of the visitor hub at the eastern end - with visitor facilities, play areas and events space; and the enhancement of biodiversity features and diversity throughout the site, particularly around the lake and woodland areas.

4 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The master plan may raise unrealistic expectations of what will be achieved in terms of improvements to the Country Park. It should be noted that the master plan provides a concept template against which the appropriateness of funding opportunities can be considered, ensuring that as funding and improvement opportunities arise, they are consistent with the brand and sense of place that the master plan has identified.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no resource implications arising directly out of this report. Any concepts for future improvements and enhancements to the park will need to be fully developed and costed and agreed in line with the Council's financial regulations before they are pursued.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are none arising out of this report.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impacts (either positive or negative) on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

8 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL**

- (1) That the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park master plan be approved.
- (2) That the Member Working Group seeks to explore and identify opportunities that can deliver against the actions set out within the master plan.



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Background Papers:-

None.

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CHERRY ORCHARD COUNTRY PARK

RIBA Stage 2 Masterplan Proposals
2nd Draft



INTRODUCTION

Cherry Orchard Country Park was conceived by Rochford District Council in 2000 and the first phase completed in 2003, turning an area of farmland into a country park through land acquisitions and the planting of in excess of 60,000 trees. It is a linear park that extends over 200 acres from Cherry Orchard Road to Grove Road, Rayleigh.

Allen Scott were appointed by Rochford District Council in the summer of 2018 to prepare a RIBA Stage 2 Masterplan in consultation with the Friends of Cherry Orchard Park (FoCOP) and council officers.

The purpose of the report is to provide a concept design for future improvements and enhancements to the park and to co-ordinate these with other policy and strategy objectives, including the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) and connectivity improvement proposals identified in Sustrans Walking and Cycling Greenway Network Report. The report is set out in five sections;

- Introduction;
- Executive Summary;
- The Site;
- Analysis;
- Consultation;
- Masterplan Strategies and Objectives;
- Design Opportunities;
- Proposals
- RIBA Stage 2 Masterplan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cherry Orchard Country Park is a beautiful place, natural, unspoiled, and loved. All those involved in its conception implementation and care should feel proud of their achievements creating a country park for the people whilst being hugely sympathetic to the character of the local landscape, its habitats and wildlife.

The park is youthful, its 60,000 saplings are only just beginning to achieve their purpose in providing structure and screening but this establishing framework is just part of an existing mature landscape of meadows, mature and ancient woodland, rivers and rolling farmland that contribute to its physical character.

A connecting network of footpaths and the Roach Valley Way national trail link the park with the urban fringe of Rayleigh, wider Upper Roach Valley, countryside and woodland. Despite this opportunities exist for further accessibility improvements not only within the park, but also through planned developments including the Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) and proposals in Sustrans Walking and Cycling Greenway Network Project.

The value of connectivity is just one of a number of opportunities around which a longer term masterplan vision for the park can be embedded. Other extremely important themes include Ecology and Biodiversity, Health and Wellbeing and Green Tourism and Rural Diversification. These themes can help structure future proposals, plans for the management and maintenance of the park and its role and importance in existing and future planning policy.

The future of the park seems certain but having a plan, even conceptual, can be a hugely valuable foundation around which future decisions can be discussed and made. The ideas and aspirations within any plan should sit comfortably with the broader long term visions established in planning policy and strategies but also through dialogue with the people that actively use and visit the park on the day to day basis.

The proposals and outcomes of this report have been developed alongside consultation with council officers and the Friends of Cherry Orchard Country Park. They are intended as a starting point for the next stage in defining the longer term vision for the park.

CONTENTS

- INTRODUCTION
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
- THE SITE
- ANALYSIS
- CONSULTATION
- MASTERPLAN STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES
- DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES
- PROPOSALS
- RIBA STAGE 2 MASTERPLAN







THE SITE

VEGETATION At the western end the park comprises a large area of mature woodland, Grove Woods, and ancient semi natural woodland New England Wood (Local Wildlife Site). The remainder of the woodland throughout the park largely comprises recent plantations from the park inception in early 2000's, a high forest mix of ash, oak and hornbeam, with smaller localised stands of hazel coppice and silver birch with wild cherry. Elsewhere the park is arranged as open fields of rough grass, wild flowers and a recent orchard planted by the friends group.

-  High Forest Mix
-  Ancient Semi Natural Woodland
-  Silver Birch and Wild Cherry
-  Hazel Coppice
-  Grass and Wildflowers









HYDROLOGY The two main water features associated with the park are the River Roach (identified as Nobles Green Ditch by the Environment Agency) which flows in a west east direction along the northern boundary of the park and the lake, also located on the northern boundary. The river originates in the Rayleigh Hills to the west and flows east towards the Rochford basin and further east again where it becomes tidal and is managed by the Crouch Harbour Authority. The river is categorised as highly modified and has historically been heavily modified to improve flood protection. It is currently failing to meet its Water Framework Directive (WFD) objectives for invertebrates, but recent work has been carried out on the stream to introduce woody debris, improving river morphology and creating fast and slow flowing water important in the formation of riffles, pools and meanders. This work was carried out by FoCOP in conjunction with Essex Wildlife Trust.

-  River Roach
-  Lake



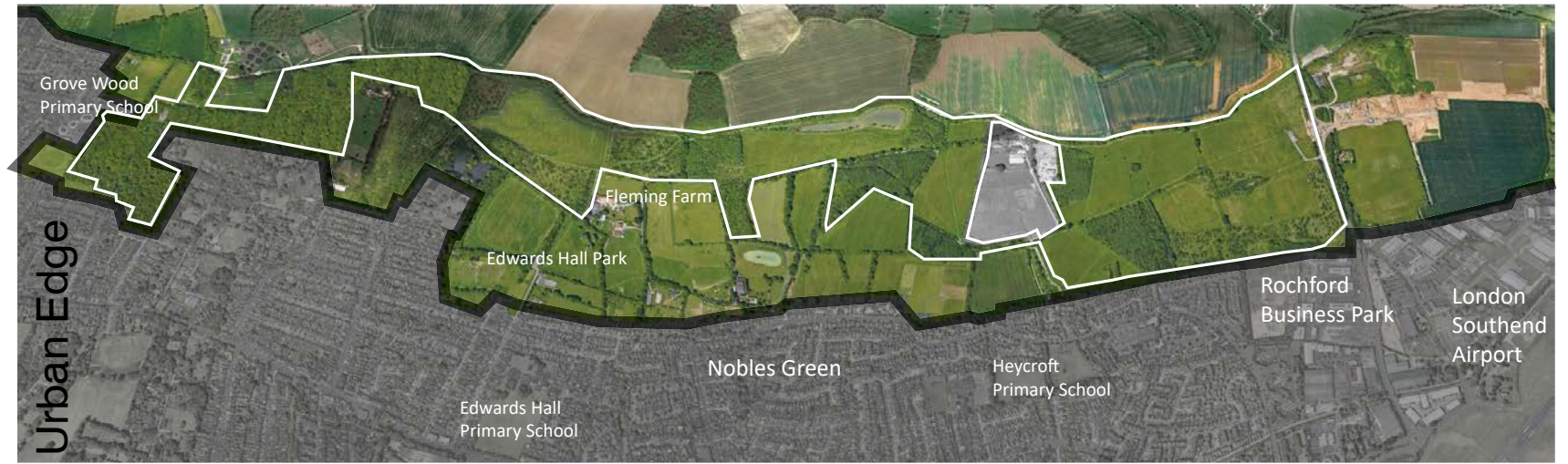
The lake is man made and created in 2002 but has suffered from bank erosion, primarily by dog and human activity. It has also been affected by blue green algae, which is toxic, particularly to dogs. The lake is currently fenced and fishing prohibited.

ACCESS The park is criss-crossed by footpaths, bridleways, byways and organically evolving desire lines. There are three car parks that serve the park, Cherry Orchard Way, Grove Woods and Edwards Hall. The park also has a number of pedestrian entry points which connect it to the urban fringe of Nobles Green on the southern boundary and wider countryside to the north via the Roach Valley Way which winds up through The Scrubs towards Hockley Wood. Since the park's inception a number of natural desire lines have formed as worn tracks, whilst other routes through the new plantations are regularly cleared by the FoCOP. Paths are predominantly unmade and in some areas become waterlogged and impassable. Finger posts and path markers have recently been installed to improve wayfinding and connectivity with the wider countryside.

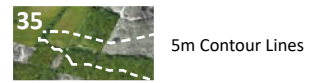
-  Roach Valley Way
-  Bridleway
-  Byway
-  OS Designated Footpaths
-  Other Paths / Desire Lines
-  Main Access Points



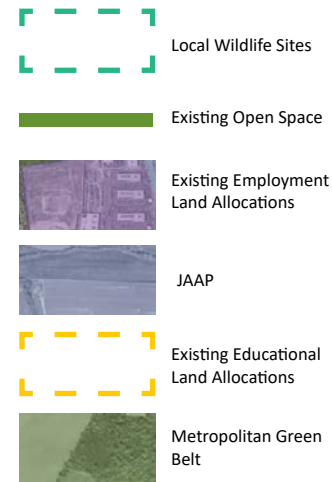
URBAN EDGE The park has a strong urban edge along the majority of its southern and western boundary comprising the residential areas of Rayleigh and Nobles Green, partly buffered through its central section by Edwards Hall Park and Flemings Farm. At the eastern end of the park and along the southern and western park edges land use becomes more industrial. Within this urban fringe there are a number of primary schools, including Grove Wood Primary School, Edwards Hall Primary School and Heycroft Primary School. To the north the park opens up to an agricultural landscape fragmented by hedgerows and woodland.



TOPOGRAPHY The country park lies topographically within a shallow west to east sloping basin, the land falling from 40m A.O.D to 15m A.O.D and the basin sides following the line of the River Crouch. For all intensive purpose and in relative access terms it can be described as flat with no dramatic changes in level across its east west or north south orientation. There are however some localised changes in levels and indications of drainage channels, particularly in Grove Woods and New England Woods. Also at the eastern end is a sunken depression that was at one point used as a shooting range.



PLANNING The country park lies within the Upper Roach Valley, which is predominantly designated as Green belt and has a number of Local Wildlife Sites including Grove Woods (R5), New England Wood (Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (R10). Local Wildlife Sites are not designated under national or international statutory protection but are considered to be of significant wildlife value. At the eastern end of the park beyond Cherry Orchard Way the London and Southend Airport Joint Area Action Plan (JAAP) policy area provides the framework for the regeneration and expansion of London Southend Airport.



CHERRY ORCHARD COUNTRY PARK

- 1 Car park
- 2 Panoramic view looking east
- 3 Signage and wayfinding
- 4 Examples of furniture and boundary treatments
- 5 Pet cemetery
- 6 Orchard trees
- 7 Change of character
- 8 The Lake from the south side
- 9 River Roach and riparian landscape
- 10 Diversity of scale and character
- 11 Furniture
- 12 Wider footpath connections



1 Car park access road giving an indication of sense of arrival and country park character. Hedging and tree planting helps to screen and soften the car park and mown margins contrast with more relaxed meadow grass management.



2 Panoramic view looking east towards Blatches Farm and showing a wide open expanse of rough grass wildflowers, establishing woodland coppice and mature riparian vegetation along the line of the River Roach.



4 Typical examples of furniture and internal boundary treatments.



5 "Pet Cemetery" memorial burial area.



9 The River Roach is a beautiful crystal clear river that meanders along the northern boundary of the country park and is a natural attractor for people and wildlife.



10 Another example of the diversity in landscape scale and character between open grassland, woodland and narrow connecting tracks.



3 Signage and wayfinding at the car park entrance.



6 Young orchard trees establishing within an area of stockproof fencing.



7 Change of scale and character from the openness of the western end of the country park to intimate enclosed woodland walks.



8 The lake is fenced to limit access and prevent fishing. The lake is attractive but has become a management problem because of its location towards the centre of the site away from primary points of access.



11 Attractive and recently installed finger posts are in keeping with the character of the country park and installed through the work of the "Friends of Cherry Orchard Country Park".



12 The country park footpath network connects with the wider landscape, here leading to the "The Scrubs" and connecting with the Roach Valley Way.

CHERRY ORCHARD COUNTRY PARK

- 13 The Lake from the north side
- 14 Hazel coppice
- 15 Roach Valley Way footbridge
- 16 Blatches Farm
- 17 Shooting range
- 18 Grove Woods footpath
- 19 Playground
- 20 Location panels and information boards
- 21 Wider footpath connections



13 The lake from the north side looking towards the southern end.



14 Coppiced hazel offers opportunities to showcase types of vegetation management and timber harvesting.



15 The Roach Valley Way crosses the River Roach via an informal pedestrian footbridge.



19 Play equipment in the recreation ground next to Grove Woods.



20 A narrow track across Grove Woods leading to the sewage works and footpath connection to Hockley Woods.



25 Woodland pathways drive through recently planted stands of young trees.



16 Blatches Farm is privately owned but lies within the country park.



17 A former shooting range was located within a depression in one of the woodland copses.



18 The footpath from Grove Woods car park leads immediately into woodland in contrast to the openness of the Cherry of the Cherry Orchard Way car park.



21 New England Wood is designated as ancient semi natural woodland, a woodland that has existed continuously since 1600 or before.



22 Informal connections across the River Roach into the wider landscape to the north.



23 Drainage connections discharge into the River Roach

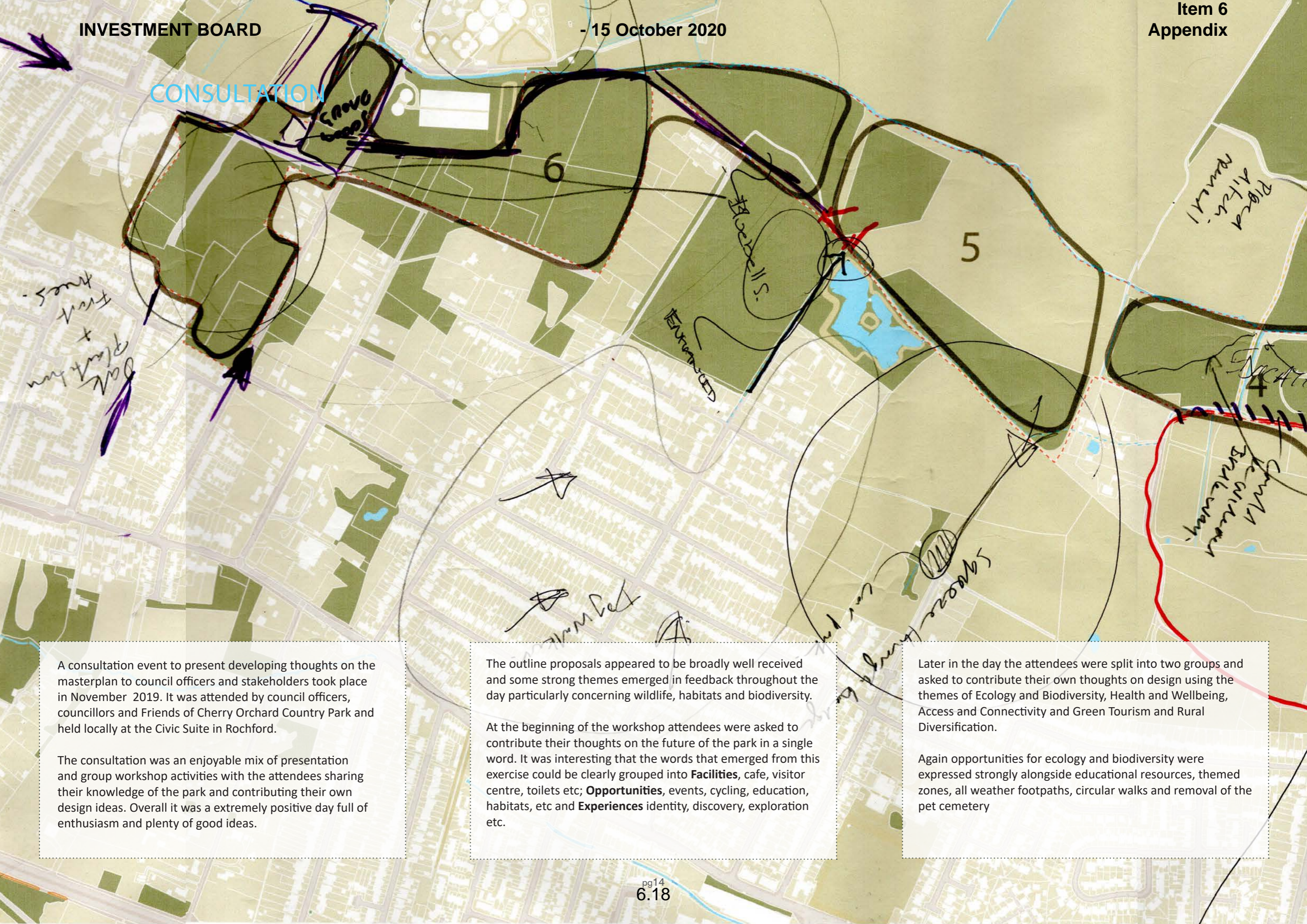


24 Beyond New England Wood the country park landscape opens up again into open grassland and wildflower meadow.





CONSULTATION



A consultation event to present developing thoughts on the masterplan to council officers and stakeholders took place in November 2019. It was attended by council officers, councillors and Friends of Cherry Orchard Country Park and held locally at the Civic Suite in Rochford.

The consultation was an enjoyable mix of presentation and group workshop activities with the attendees sharing their knowledge of the park and contributing their own design ideas. Overall it was an extremely positive day full of enthusiasm and plenty of good ideas.

The outline proposals appeared to be broadly well received and some strong themes emerged in feedback throughout the day particularly concerning wildlife, habitats and biodiversity.

At the beginning of the workshop attendees were asked to contribute their thoughts on the future of the park in a single word. It was interesting that the words that emerged from this exercise could be clearly grouped into **Facilities**, cafe, visitor centre, toilets etc; **Opportunities**, events, cycling, education, habitats, etc and **Experiences** identity, discovery, exploration etc.

Later in the day the attendees were split into two groups and asked to contribute their own thoughts on design using the themes of Ecology and Biodiversity, Health and Wellbeing, Access and Connectivity and Green Tourism and Rural Diversification.

Again opportunities for ecology and biodiversity were expressed strongly alongside educational resources, themed zones, all weather footpaths, circular walks and removal of the pet cemetery



Circular trail themed discovery

Noisy instant camera views

Replaces by mansion

1 car spaces

ADDITIONAL PARKING

PLAY SPACE / EQUIPMENT - THEMED

Replaces by mansion
Consideration for roads with a view

Private house
Houses
sheds

TRAILS

possibly ideal place for a cafe

Extensions

Peony's House

Top 17

not use

Replaces by mansion

3

Private house
Houses
sheds

Loggy

Stish
can be
on camera

Net North

2x Views

Extensions

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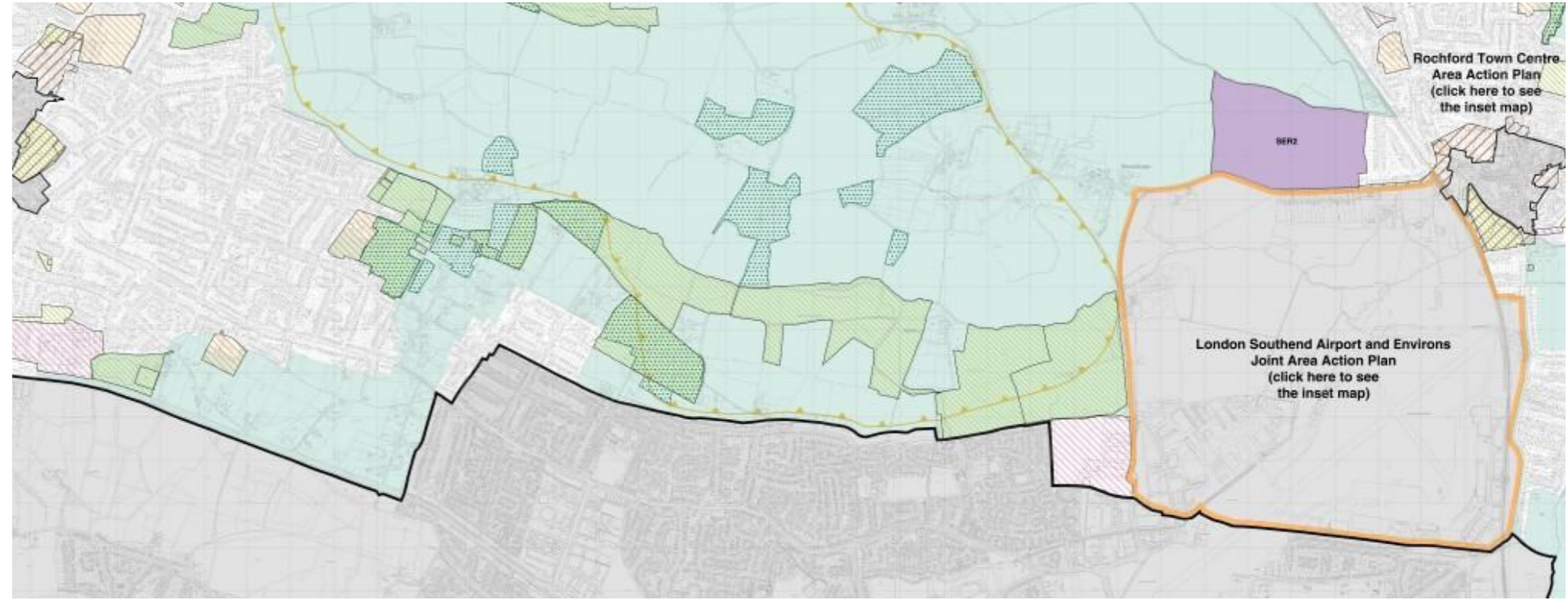
MASTERPLAN STRATEGIES AND OBJECTIVES

The outcomes from this Stage 2 design report aim to respond to wider strategies and objectives identified by Rochford District Council as part of its Open Space Strategy 2015 and wider policies identified in its adopted Core Strategy and Development Plan Documents (DPD'S). Alongside this reference has been made to supporting work by Sustrans (Walking and Cycling Greenway Network Project) work by Essex Wildlife Trust and the activities of the Friends of Cherry Orchard Park (FoCOP) and consultation with stakeholders. Particular reference has been made to the following;

- Local Development Framework Core Strategy, RDC, December 2011; Particularly policies associated with the Greenbelt, Upper Roach Valley, Environmental Issues, and Transport
- Local Development Framework Allocations Plan, RDC, February 2014; Particularly Ecological and Landscape Allocations
- London Southend Airport & Environs Joint Area Action Plan, RDC, December 2014
- London Southend Airport & Environs Joint Area Action Plan Walking and Cycling Greenway Network Project, Sustrans, December 2015
- Open Space Strategy, RDC, March 2015
- FoCOP Website
- Work of Essex Wildlife Trust, in particular improvements to the River Roach (Nobles Green Ditch) and enhancements to the lake.

Local Development Framework Core Strategy

Greenbelt: Policy objectives within the Core Strategy aim at protecting the openness and character of the Rochford Green Belt and in the long term to ensure that it remains predominantly underdeveloped, Policy GB1 Green Belt Protection. However exemptions under PPG2 for development in the greenbelt are captured in Policy GB2 Rural Diversification and Recreational Uses for essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation which



preserve the openness of the Greenbelt and do not conflict with the purposes of land in it.

Upper Roach Valley: The Upper Roach Valley has become a vast "Green Lung" surrounded by Southend, Rayleigh, Hockley and Rochford and provides a substantial informal area of recreation, with green links between the Country Park and wider Upper Roach Valley. The need for informal recreation space in South East Essex, has been identified on numerous occasions over many years, including in the 1982 and 2001 Structure Plans and the 2005 Thames Gateway South Essex Green Grid Strategy. The approach to the development of the Country Park has centred on ensuring that the right conditions are in place in order for flora and fauna to flourish, whilst utilising existing feature of the landscape with the minimum of human interference.

Connectivity improvements have already been carried out including access and car parking but there is potential to further expand connectivity to enhance informal recreation opportunities, in particular by linking cycle and footpath networks, Policy UVR1 Upper Roach Valley: Protected and

Promoted for Recreation with Improved Connectivity to other parts of the Upper Roach Valley

Environmental Issues: The Council is committed to the protection, promotion, and enhancement of biodiversity through the district including Local Wildlife Sites (LoWSs) Policy ENV 1 Protection and Enhancement of Natural Landscape and Habitats and the Protection of Historical and Archaeological Sites

Transport Objectives: To work with Essex County Council and other organisations such as Sustrans to ensure that a safe, accessible and convenient network of cycle and pedestrian routes is implemented across the District and aid the delivery of Greenways identified in the Thames Gateway Green Grid Strategy alongside Essex County Council and neighbouring authorities. Cycling and Walking Policy T6, Greenways Policy T7.

Local Development Framework Allocations Plan

The Allocation Plan sets out how land will be allocated across the district for a range of uses. It

also sets out sites for protection including Green Belt, Local Wildlife Sites, open spaces and the Upper Roach Valley

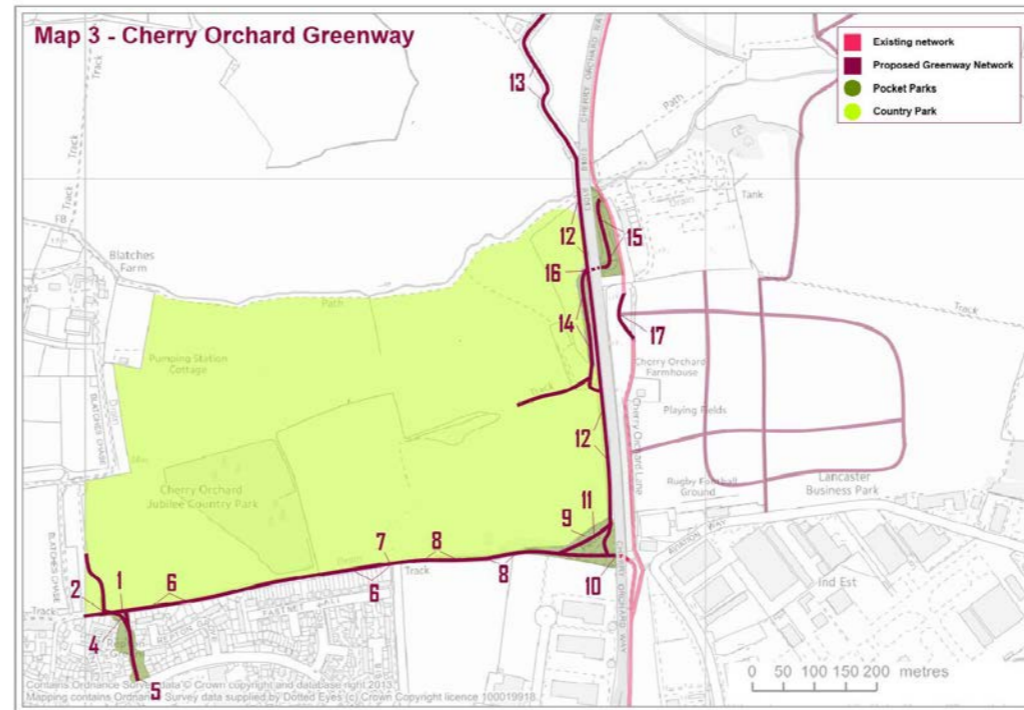
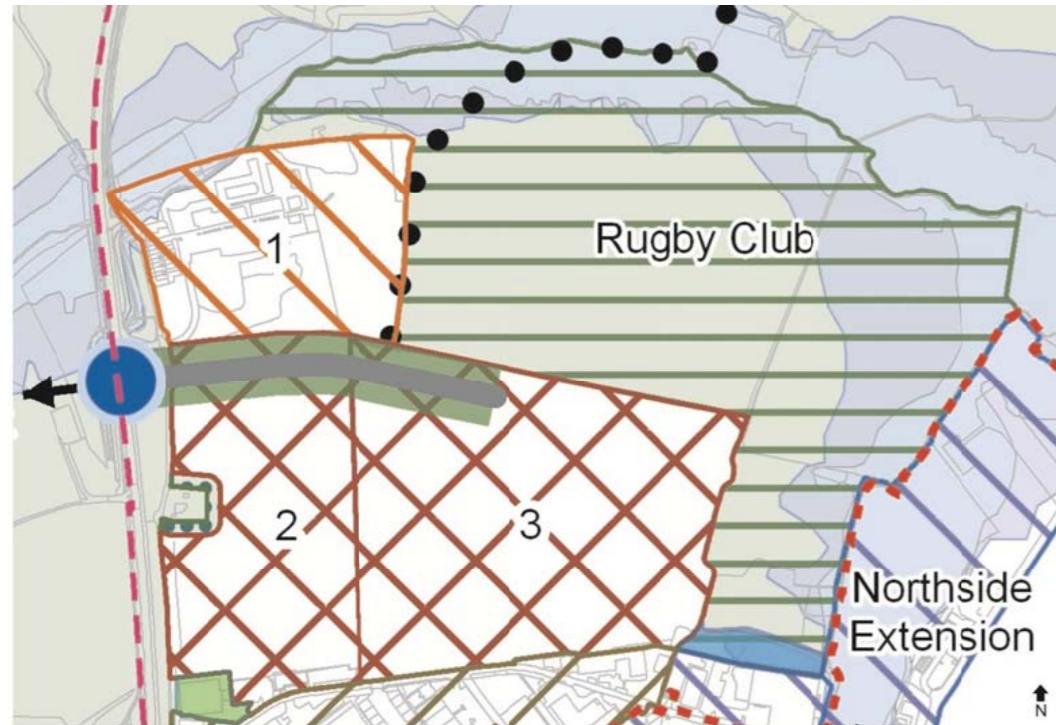
Ecological and Landscape Allocations

Local Wildlife Sites Policy ELA1: Does not have statutory protection but represents the minimum habitat that needs to be protected in order to maintain the current wildlife levels in Essex.

Policy ELA3 Upper Roach Valley: Support the protection of the Upper Roach Valley and expansion and improved connectivity between the Country Park and wider Roach Valley. (The area was designated in the 2006 Rochford District Replacement Local Plan as a Special Landscape Area and an Area of Ancient Landscape)

London Southend Airport & Environs Joint Area Action Plan, (JAAP), RDC, December 2014

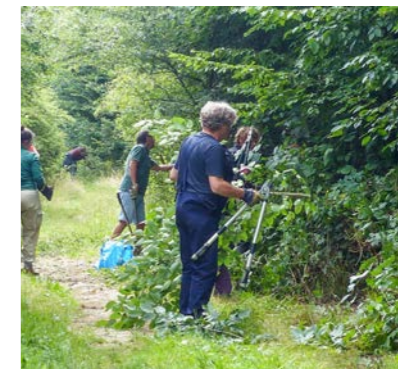
London Southend Airport has been identified as a driver for economic development. The JAAP provides the framework for the regeneration and



ECOLOGY
AND BIODIVERSITY



HEALTH
AND WELLBEING



ACCESS
AND CONNECTIVITY



GREEN TOURISM AND
RURAL DIVERSIFICATION



expansion of London Southend Airport and its environs through economic growth, by providing opportunities for a range of economic, social, environmental and transport benefits. It builds on policies in the Rochford District Council and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Core Strategies, which provide the overarching strategic policy frameworks for the development of London Southend Airport and Environs.

The development of the Saxon Business Park will provide an opportunity to construct a new permanent access to the Country Park in association with the access to the business park.

Policy ENV4 – Country Park; Access and Facilities
A link to the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park will be provided in conjunction with the development of Area 2 of the Saxon Business Park and the construction of a new access road.

London Southend Airport & Environs Joint Area Action Plan Walking and Cycling Greenway Network Project, Sustrans, December 2015

Outlines the actions required to create a Greenway

Network to the north and east of the proposed Southend Airport Business Park (SABP) and to create linear parks and open up access to a number of “green lungs” pocket parks and open spaces including the Country Park.

Open Space Strategy, RDC, March 2015

The Open Space Strategy has been produced in response to a growing understanding of the importance of outdoor activity as a key contributor to a healthy lifestyles. It seeks to ensure that open space supports communities, the enhancement of health and wellbeing of residents and the biodiversity of the District. It recommends a series of cross space actions but also some specific recommendations for the Country Park including;

- Manage and enhance area of regionally scarce and important woodland, at Betts Wood, Hockley Woods and Rawreth Hall Woods;
- Investigate the potential to introduce cafes and other revenue generating activities at Hockley Woods and Cherry Orchard Country Park;
- Under the Cherry Orchard Country Park Outdoor Visitor Centre Project;

1. Identify and work with local partners to develop visitor provision
2. Improve outdoor facilities including play area, possible water park etc;
3. Develop building resources in order to add to visitor experience;
4. Develop a plan for expanding and charging for car parking

- Work with the Friends of Cherry Orchard Country Park to assist with active site maintenance, consultation and fundraising potential

Reviewing these policies in relation to the Upper Roach Valley and Cherry Orchard Country park broad strategy is embedded in policies that underpin;

Ecology and Biodiversity

Health and Wellbeing

Access and Connectivity

Green Tourism and Rural Diversification

DESIGN OPPORTUNITIES

AREA 1

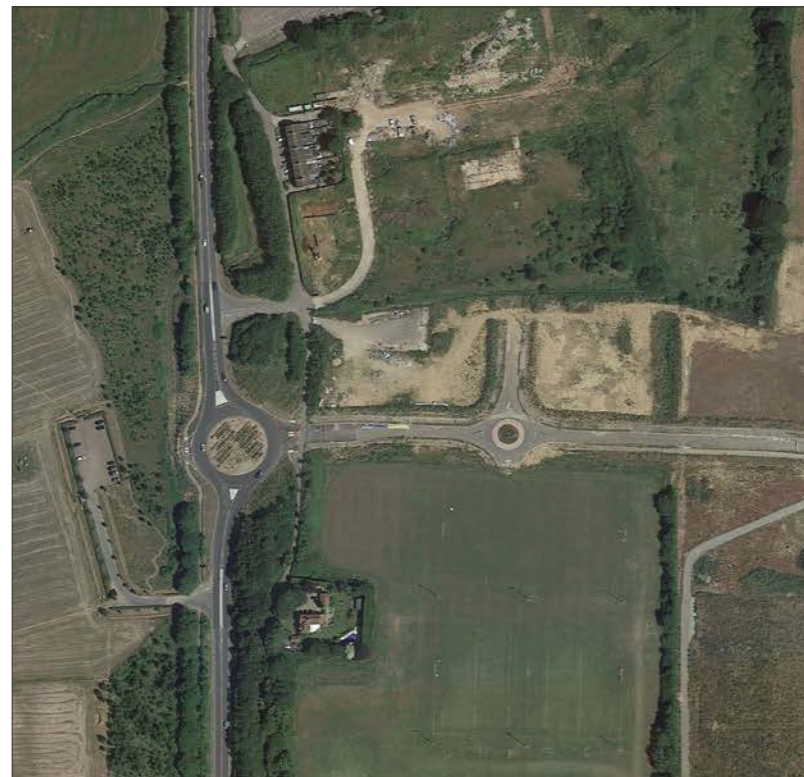
AREA 1 Comprises the JAAP, which seeks to promote economic development in South East Essex through the expansion of London Southend Airport and the development of new high quality business parks . Within the immediate context of country park the JAAP allocates land to accommodate up to 99,000 sqm of new employment space located north of Aviation Way and East of Cherry Orchard Way in an area to be known as Saxon Business Park. The allocation will accommodate 5450 additional jobs in the area to 2021 and beyond

Opportunities

IMPROVED TWO WAY CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN THE JAAP AND COUNTRY PARK AND EXTEND THE COUNTRY PARK INTO THE JAAP

Potential Design Elements / Considerations

- Wayfinding markers within the JAAP to the Country Park
- Extension of the Country Park as a green wedge into the JAAP
- Safe pedestrian crossing point across / under Cherry Orchard Way
- New vehicular junction linked to the Saxon Business Park entrance
- Improve connectivity to Sustrans routes and implementation of the outcomes from the Walking and Cycling Greenway Network Project



AREA 2

AREA 2 Is located close to the JAAP, the main road, and car park. It is an obvious arrival point with an existing access road and opportunities for improved connectivity through the JAAP business development area junction improvements and improved connectivity presented within the Sustrans Greenway Network Project Proposals and immediate proximity of the Roach Valley Way. It is an open landscape with wide panoramic views across the beautiful landscape to the north, but its eastern half is unduly influenced by the noise and proximity to the main road which impacts on any feeling of country park character, which only unfolds as you progressively move away from the noise and visual intrusion of vehicles on the main road.

Opportunities

HUB / CORE/ GREEN TOURISM and EVENTS SPACE.

Potential Design Elements / Considerations

- Country park welcome signage, location totem and wayfinding markers
- Car park expansion area
- Refreshments kiosk / cafe
- Play and fitness facilities
- Circular walk
- Improve connectivity to Sustrans routes and implementation of the outcomes from the Walking and Cycling Greenway Network Project
- Large area of amenity grass for general recreation and events
- Picnic area
- Wide strip of buffer planting to the main road
- Retention of wide panoramic views to the north
- Physical and visual connection with the River Roach
- Perimeter areas of meadow grass and wildflowers



AREA 3

AREA 3 is well away from the noise and visual intrusion of Cherry Orchard Road and has a quieter and greater sense of isolation within the wider countryside than AREA 2, from which it is separated by Blatches Farm. It is disposed to large areas of open grass and wildflowers, separated by blocks of woodland including Hazel Coppice, high forest mix of Ash, Oak and Hornbeam and areas of establishing young Silver Birch, and Wild Cherry. Part of the western field includes a large lake. Located towards the centre of the country park it is awkward to access and manage and whilst it is stocked with fish fishing bailiffs are not able to effectively police it. Fishing is therefore prohibited and access to the water edge prevented by fencing.

Opportunities

HABITAT AND LAKE HUB ENHANCEMENT WORKS

Design Objectives

- Develop Stage 3 design proposals alongside Essex Wildlife Trust lake improvement works
- Continue to maintain and improve footpaths, wayfinding and connectivity
- Improve visual and physical connection with the River Roach
- Promote examples of woodland management and interpretation of woodland management e.g coppicing
- More fully integrate the lake with its immediate landscape context and footpath network
- Further promote habitat interventions and biodiversity



AREA 4

The park alters again in AREA 4 becoming largely wooded and continuing the trend of increasing enclosure away from Cherry Orchard Road. It is an important point of connection with footpaths from the north south, east and west at “Pooh Sticks Bridge” and is located right at the centre of the park, also connecting with the wider landscape to the north, Scrubs Wood, Gusted Wood and Hockley Woods. The woodland is both recent establishing and mature.

Opportunities

HABITAT AND CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENT WORKS

Design Objectives

- Continue to maintain and improve footpaths, wayfinding and connectivity
- Improve visual and physical connection with the River Roach.
- Promote examples of woodland management and interpretation of woodland management
- Further promote habitat interventions and biodiversity



AREA 5

AREA 5 is similar to AREA 3 with a large open meadow area and recent woodland plantations to the west and east. Grass paths provide east west connectivity adjacent to the River Roach and southern plantation.

Opportunities

HABITAT AND CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENT WORKS

Design Objectives

- Continue to maintain and improve footpaths, wayfinding and connectivity
- Improve visual and physical connection with the River Roach.
- Further promote habitat and biodiversity



AREA 6

Again becomes wooded with an entirely different character to the eastern end of the country park. The woodland is mature, high forest mix of ash oak and hornbeam part of which, New England Wood, is designated as Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, a designation indicating that it has been continually wooded since at least 1600AD.

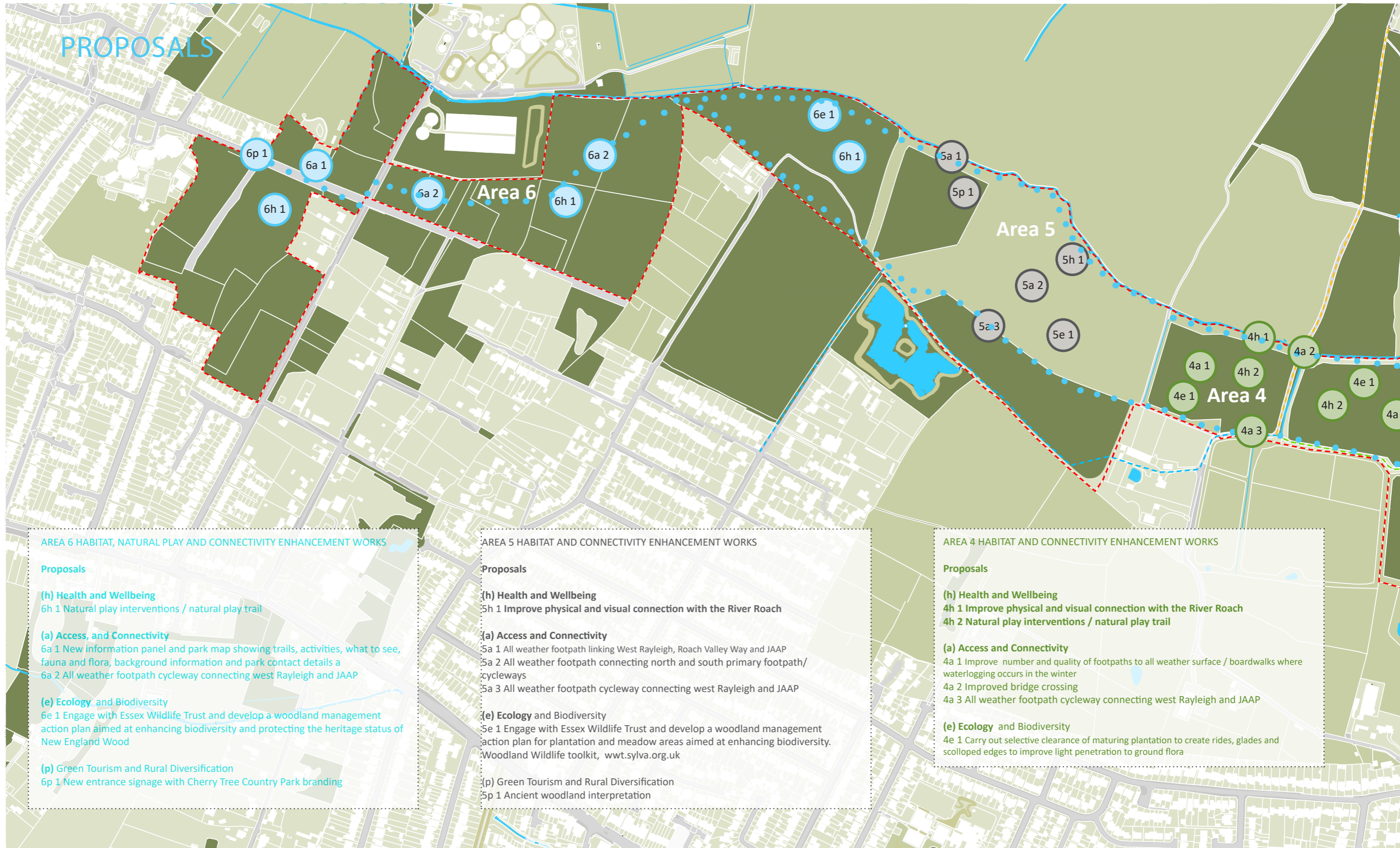
Opportunities

HABITAT, NATURAL PLAY AND CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENT WORKS

Design Objectives

- Improve arrival experience
- Continue to maintain and improve footpaths, wayfinding and connectivity
- Improve visual and physical connection with the River Roach
- Promote examples of woodland management and interpretation of woodland management
- Manage and enhance New England Wood as an example of regionally scarce and important woodland
- Introduce natural play elements





AREA 6 HABITAT, NATURAL PLAY AND CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENT WORKS

Proposals

(h) Health and Wellbeing
6h 1 Natural play interventions / natural play trail

(a) Access, and Connectivity
6a 1 New information panel and park map showing trails, activities, what to see, fauna and flora, background information and park contact details a
6a 2 All weather footpath cycleway connecting west Rayleigh and JAAP

(e) Ecology and Biodiversity
6e 1 Engage with Essex Wildlife Trust and develop a woodland management action plan aimed at enhancing biodiversity and protecting the heritage status of New England Wood

(p) Green Tourism and Rural Diversification
6p 1 New entrance signage with Cherry Tree Country Park branding

AREA 5 HABITAT AND CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENT WORKS

Proposals

(h) Health and Wellbeing
5h 1 Improve physical and visual connection with the River Roach

(a) Access and Connectivity
5a 1 All weather footpath linking West Rayleigh, Roach Valley Way and JAAP
5a 2 All weather footpath connecting north and south primary footpath/ cycleways
5a 3 All weather footpath cycleway connecting west Rayleigh and JAAP

(e) Ecology and Biodiversity
5e 1 Engage with Essex Wildlife Trust and develop a woodland management action plan for plantation and meadow areas aimed at enhancing biodiversity. Woodland Wildlife toolkit, wwt.sylva.org.uk

(p) Green Tourism and Rural Diversification
5p 1 Ancient woodland interpretation

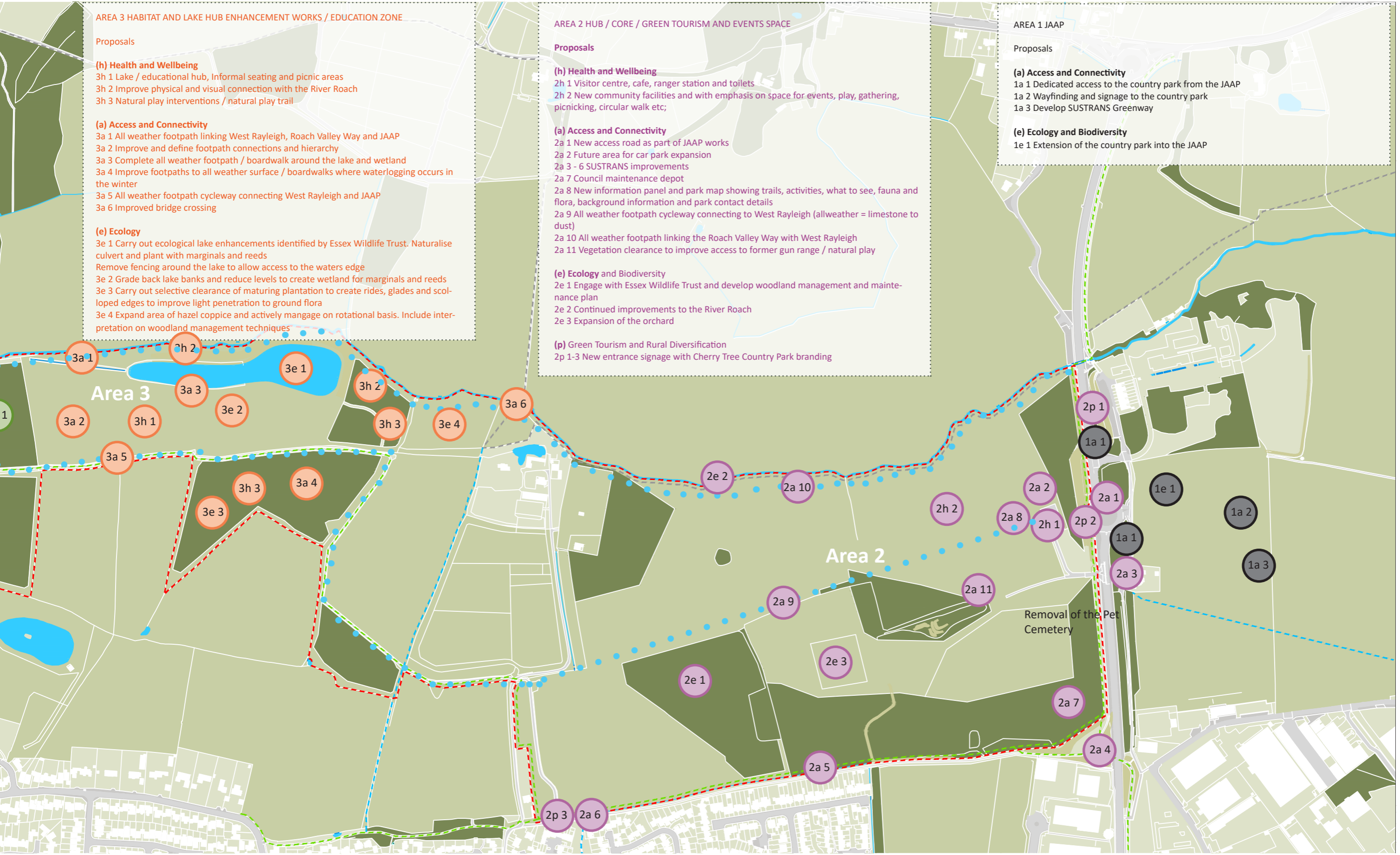
AREA 4 HABITAT AND CONNECTIVITY ENHANCEMENT WORKS

Proposals

(h) Health and Wellbeing
4h 1 Improve physical and visual connection with the River Roach
4h 2 Natural play interventions / natural play trail

(a) Access and Connectivity
4a 1 Improve number and quality of footpaths to all weather surface / boardwalks where waterlogging occurs in the winter
4a 2 Improved bridge crossing
4a 3 All weather footpath cycleway connecting west Rayleigh and JAAP

(e) Ecology and Biodiversity
4e 1 Carry out selective clearance of maturing plantation to create rides, glades and scalloped edges to improve light penetration to ground flora



AREA 3 HABITAT AND LAKE HUB ENHANCEMENT WORKS / EDUCATION ZONE

Proposals

(h) Health and Wellbeing

- 3h 1 Lake / educational hub, Informal seating and picnic areas
- 3h 2 Improve physical and visual connection with the River Roach
- 3h 3 Natural play interventions / natural play trail

(a) Access and Connectivity

- 3a 1 All weather footpath linking West Rayleigh, Roach Valley Way and JAAP
- 3a 2 Improve and define footpath connections and hierarchy
- 3a 3 Complete all weather footpath / boardwalk around the lake and wetland
- 3a 4 Improve footpaths to all weather surface / boardwalks where waterlogging occurs in the winter
- 3a 5 All weather footpath cycleway connecting West Rayleigh and JAAP
- 3a 6 Improved bridge crossing

(e) Ecology

- 3e 1 Carry out ecological lake enhancements identified by Essex Wildlife Trust. Naturalise culvert and plant with marginals and reeds
Remove fencing around the lake to allow access to the waters edge
- 3e 2 Grade back lake banks and reduce levels to create wetland for marginals and reeds
- 3e 3 Carry out selective clearance of maturing plantation to create rides, glades and scoloped edges to improve light penetration to ground flora
- 3e 4 Expand area of hazel coppice and actively manage on rotational basis. Include interpretation on woodland management techniques

AREA 2 HUB / CORE / GREEN TOURISM AND EVENTS SPACE

Proposals

(h) Health and Wellbeing

- 2h 1 Visitor centre, cafe, ranger station and toilets
- 2h 2 New community facilities and with emphasis on space for events, play, gathering, picnicking, circular walk etc;

(a) Access and Connectivity

- 2a 1 New access road as part of JAAP works
- 2a 2 Future area for car park expansion
- 2a 3 - 6 Sustrans improvements
- 2a 7 Council maintenance depot
- 2a 8 New information panel and park map showing trails, activities, what to see, fauna and flora, background information and park contact details
- 2a 9 All weather footpath cycleway connecting to West Rayleigh (allweather = limestone to dust)
- 2a 10 All weather footpath linking the Roach Valley Way with West Rayleigh
- 2a 11 Vegetation clearance to improve access to former gun range / natural play

(e) Ecology and Biodiversity

- 2e 1 Engage with Essex Wildlife Trust and develop woodland management and maintenance plan
- 2e 2 Continued improvements to the River Roach
- 2e 3 Expansion of the orchard

(p) Green Tourism and Rural Diversification

- 2p 1-3 New entrance signage with Cherry Tree Country Park branding

AREA 1 JAAP

Proposals

(a) Access and Connectivity

- 1a 1 Dedicated access to the country park from the JAAP
- 1a 2 Wayfinding and signage to the country park
- 1a 3 Develop Sustrans Greenway

(e) Ecology and Biodiversity

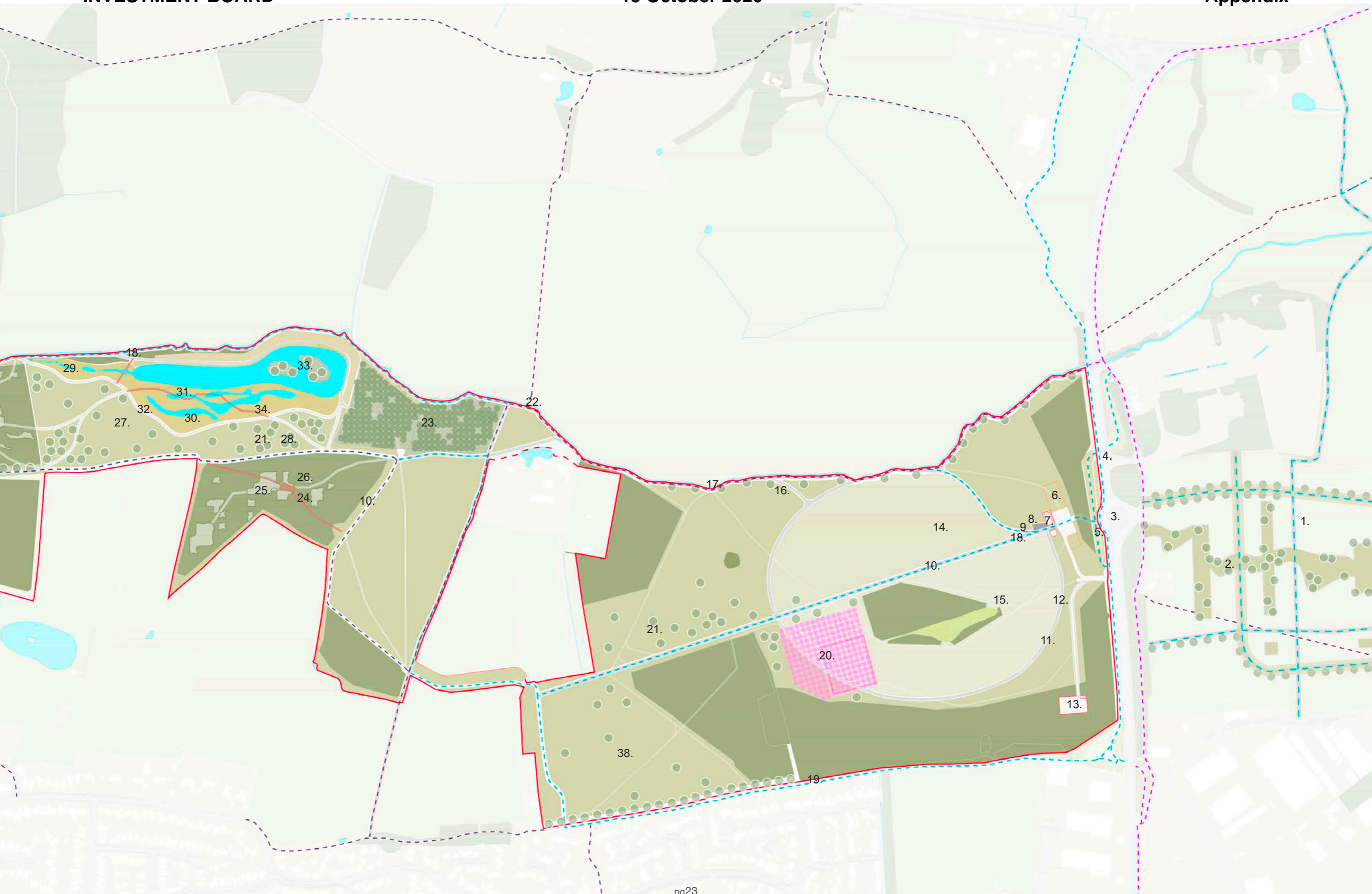
- 1e 1 Extension of the country park into the JAAP

RIBA STAGE 2 MASTERPLAN



- 1. Implement Greenway proposals within the JAAP wayfinding to other Greenway and National Trail routes
- 2. Extend Country Park into the JAAP using boulevards, parks, verges and tree planting heirachy
- 3. Improve vehicular access into the Country Park (round-a-bout completed 2019)
- 4. Explore viability of re-opening pedestrian underpass to improve access from the east side of Cherry Orchard Way
- 5. Install Cherry Orchard Country Park identity marker
- 6. Provision for car park expansion
- 7. Cherry Orchard Country Park visitor centre, rangers office, cafe and toilets
- 8. Orientation space with panoramic views across wider countryside to the north west
- 9. Park signage and trail information
- 10. All weather footpath cycleway Greenway extension linking the JAAP with west Rayleigh
- 11. Circular walk / cycleway
- 12. Pet Cemetery removed
- 13. Park depot and access track
- 14. Events, picnic area and potential play space (biased towards natural play)
- 15. Clearance of vegetation to improve access to former gun range / provison of natural play
- 16. Selective clearance of vegetation along River Roach to improve visual and physical access
- 17. Continued improvements to the River Roach with Essex Wildlife Trust
- 18. Widened all weather footpath along the River Roach connecting to the Roach Valley Way with west Rayleigh
- 19. Greenway bridleway and country park access improvements from Noblesgreen

- 20. Orchard expansion
- 21. New tree planting
- 22. New footbridge
- 23. Enlarged area of regularly managed hazel coppice with improved access and interpretation
- 24. Improved access through establishing plantation including boardwalks to waterlogged areas
- 25. Thinning of plantation to create glades and rides and improved light levels for ground flora
- 26. Natural play interventions
- 27. Educational Zone (wildlife, habitats, landscape management)
- 28. Explore viability of outdoor education centre for forest/woodland skills (promote links with local primaray schools)
- 29. Naturalisation of canalised inflow/outflow to lake and establishment of marginals and reed beds
- 30. Grading of lake banks to create wetland area for marginals and reed beds
- 31. Board walks and bird watching stations
- 32. Circular lake walk and improved allweather footpath connections
- 33. Creation of lake islands from excavated spoil
- 34. Wetland and riparian landscape interpretation
- 35. Ancient woodland interpretation and management information
- 36. Natural play interventions
- 37. Boardwalks over ditches and waterlogged areas
- 38. Potential for play area (biased towards natural play)



INVESTMENT BOARD
PRECEDENT IMAGES

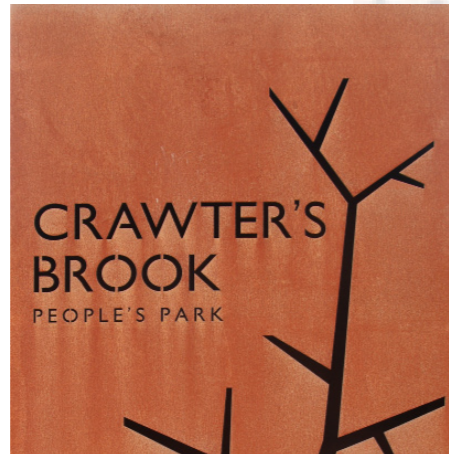
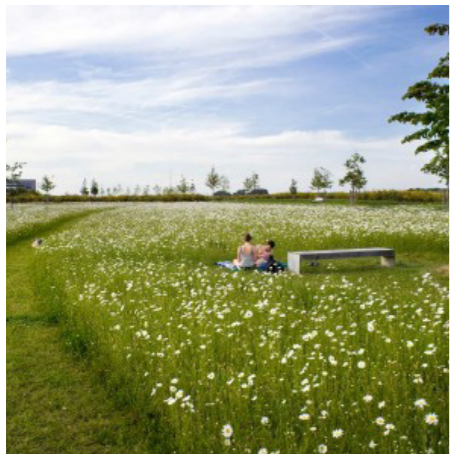
- 15 October 2020

Item 6
Appendix

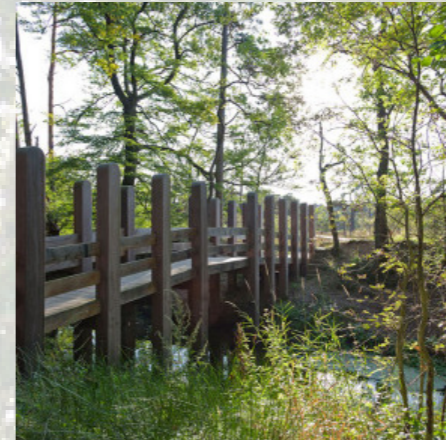
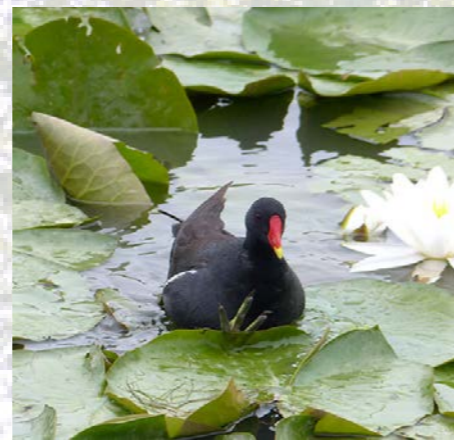
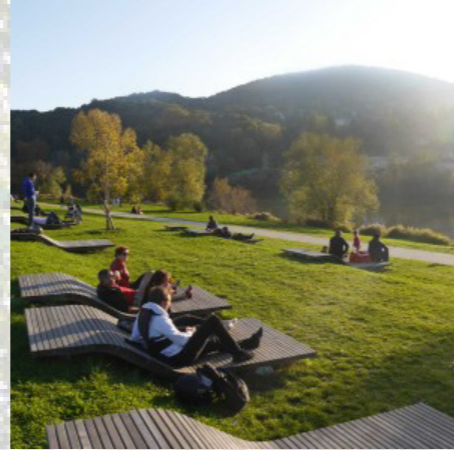
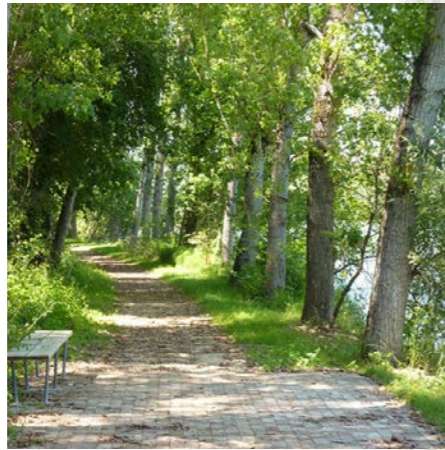
AREA 1



AREA 2



AREA 3



AREA 4

