



**The Bullbrook Countryside Corridor
(Edmunds Green Group)
Open Space Enhancement Plan**

**For
Thames Basin Heaths
Special Protection Area (SPA) Mitigation Works**

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1 Introduction

1.1 The Thames Basin Heaths SPA

The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) is a network of heathland sites designated to protect the habitat of the internationally important bird species of woodlark, nightjar and Dartford warbler.

Bracknell Forest Council is legally obliged to make sure that no adverse effect on the integrity of the SPA will arise from new development. As a result, the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Avoidance and Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document (March 2012) (hereafter referred to as TBHSPA SPD) was produced, which identifies measures to avoid and mitigate adverse effects arising from proposed new residential development. The TBHSPA SPD provides an integrated, holistic package of measures which includes both on-site and off-site measures to protect the SPA. A summary of the avoidance and mitigation measures, which will ensure that there will be no adverse effect upon the integrity of the SPA, can be found in section 3 of the TBHSPA SPD. These comprise:

- Provision of or contributions towards Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS)
- Contributions towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM)
- No net increase in residential development within 400m of the SPA.

Natural England has agreed that the implementation of this package of measures will ensure that harm to the SPA is avoided. The reasoning behind each of the measures, and their contribution towards avoiding harm to the SPA, is explained within the TBHSPA SPD. This Open Space Management Plan is one of a suite of plans which solely deal with the implementation of one of the specific measures; enhancing an existing area open space to provide a strategic SANG.

The package of avoidance and mitigation measures will be funded through the collection of financial contributions from new development. Therefore, a proportion of this contribution will fund the specific works to enhance identified areas of open space in line with the TBHSPA SPD, as set out in the remainder of this document.

1.2 Open Space Enhancement Plans

This report comprises an open space enhancement plan which expands upon the enhancement works required within the TBHSPA SPD. It sets out in detail what the actions and expenditure is necessary to bring this site up to SANGS standard.

1.3 Identification of Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGS)

The TBHSPA SPD went through an extensive process to identify areas of open space as suitable alternatives to the SPA. Appendix 4 provides a rationale for the identification of areas of open space and Appendix 5 makes an appraisal of the necessary quality enhancements.

Therefore, this report builds upon the information and research presented within the TBHSPA SPD to provide more detailed works and costs on how The Bullbrook Countryside Corridor could be brought up to a suitable standard to provide an alternative to the SPA.

1.4 The Bullbrook Countryside Corridor as an alternative to the SPA

Natural England have agreed that the sites that make up the Bullbrook Countryside Corridor can be used as SANGS, stating in a letter, dated 5th March 2015, that ‘...*the Bullbrook Countryside Corridor could function as future SANG to be used as a part of Bracknell Forest Council’s suite.*’

The SANGS assessment checklist is used in section 5 to demonstrate how the Bullbrook Countryside Corridor (Edmunds Green Group) are suitable as an alternative to the SPA and how enhancements will enable their use as such. As Edmund’s Green and Whitegrove Copse are designated as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) special attention will be given to ensuring that the provision for increased visitor use will include opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the site.

2 Site Management Statement

2.1 Description

2.1.1 Location

The Bullbrook Countryside Corridor sites are situated to the north of Bracknell within the parishes of Warfield and Bracknell Town (see section 4 site plan). The following sites form the SANGS:

Edmund's Green	2.32 ha
Harvest Hill	2.30 ha (excluding play area)
The Chestnuts	1.08 ha
Whitegrove Copse	3.65 ha

The additional benefit of this SANGS group is that it is connected by the following sites (referred to hereafter as link sites). Although not specifically part of the SANGS, these link sites offer significant potential to provide access improvements to provide the circular SANGS walk and improve access into the SANGS:

Bluebell Hill	2.1 ha
Edmund's Lane (north and south)	0.7 ha
Chestnuts Lane	0.5 ha

2.1.2 Adjacent land

SANGS:

Edmund's Green is bordered on its northern and western boundaries by roads. There is a residence adjacent to the site on the western boundary of the site. The eastern boundary is the Bullbrook stream and footpath/cycleway (Edmund's Lane), beyond which is a residential area. At the southern end are some garages, serving the adjacent residential area, and Bluebell Hill.

Harvest Ride forms the southern boundary of **Harvest Hill**, which is otherwise surrounded by residential development.

The Chestnuts is surrounded by residential development, but is connected to Edmund's Green and Lane by Chestnuts Lane.

Harvest Ride is adjacent to the northern boundary of **Whitegrove Copse**. A footpath/cycleway is adjacent to the southern boundary. To the east and west of Whitegrove Copse is residential development.

Link sites:

Bluebell Hill is surrounded on three sides by housing. Adjacent to the western boundary is Edmund's Lane footpath/cycleway, the Thames Water balancing pond and the garages.

Edmund's Lane is a footpath/cycleway that runs north to south, from Forest Road to Bluebell Hill alongside the Bullbrook. The path is well screened with trees and has areas of open grassland. At various points the route runs past Westmorland Park, other open space, residential development and the Whitegrove local centre.

Chestnuts Lane is a footpath/cycleway that runs from Edmund's Green to The Chestnuts. The route is bordered by trees on both sides and is surrounded by residential development.

2.1.3 Access

There are at least 24 access points into the various sites. Many of these are open gaps into the sites, but there are also some gates at some of the entrances.

There are three footpath/cycleways that provide connections between sites and to surrounding areas. There is one passing to the south of Whitegrove Copse which connects it with Edmund's Green. There is also a path from the Chestnuts which passes through Edmund's Green. Edmund's Lane connects Bluebell Hill with the Whitegrove shopping centre via Edmund's Green.

2.1.4 Geology & soils

The bedrock geology underlying Bluebell Hill is the Bagshot Formation. All the other sites lie over London Clay. There are superficial deposits of Head deposit (Clay, silt, sand and gravel) at Edmund's Green and Alluvium deposit (clay silt sand and gravel) at Harvest Hill.

2.1.5 Topography

Harvest Hill is gently sloping with a southerly aspect. There is a series of three ponds at the lowest part of the site, just to the north of Harvest Ride. Chestnuts Lane is gently rising in a westerly direction with The Chestnuts at the top of this slope. The remaining sites are generally level.

2.1.6 Drainage & flooding

The whole of Edmund's Green and Lane is within Floodzone 2 and Edmund's Green in particular is prone to flooding, especially in winter. Whitegrove Copse has a small stream running through it and the centre of the site can be very wet in winter. Harvest Hill can get very wet in the areas surrounding the ponds at the bottom of the sites, but otherwise its sloping nature means it is well draining. Similarly The Chestnuts is generally well drained due to its sloping nature.

2.1.7 Landscape & views

From Harvest Hill there are views to the south across residential development and of the tree lined Bullbrook. The veteran chestnut trees of The Chestnuts are visible from the

surrounding development above the roof line. The open grasslands of Edmund's Green and Harvest Hill provide a contrast to the woodland of Whitegrove Copse, which has a visual value in softening the otherwise hard landscape.

2.1.8 Wildlife and biodiversity

Ecological surveys for all of the SANGS sites were carried out by John Wenman Ecology in 2014. Below is a summary of the ecological value of each site.

Edmund's Green

The southern and northern ends of the site comprised infrequently cut, semi-improved grassland. The sward in both areas supported a relatively wide range of grass and herbaceous species typical of neutral soils; however the species diversity the diversity of the northernmost section was greater than that to the south and included flowering plant species typical of unimproved grassland such as sneezewort and lady's bedstraw. The northern section of grassland falls within the Edmunds Green Local Wildlife Site and therefore has been recognised as being of conservation importance at the County level. The woodland is an example of the Priority Habitat: Deciduous Woodland and therefore of conservation importance at a local level, but the woodland is relatively small. The semi-improved grassland's infrequently cut sward provides cover for faunal groups of conservation interest that may be associated with grassland such as reptiles, amphibians, small mammals and invertebrates, which will use tall grassland swards for foraging, shelter and breeding. The proximity of the grassland to areas of dense scrub on the site margins is likely to increase its value for notable fauna by providing additional cover. The complex of habitats i.e. woodland, scrub and tall grassland are suitable for notable and protected reptile species particularly slow worm and grass snake. There are several records of the notable invertebrate species: stag beetle within the area surrounding the site and it is likely that the established woodland habitats provide dead wood suitable for breeding stag beetles and other invertebrates associated with dead wood habitats. The complex of wetland, woodland, scrub and semi-improved grassland habitats provide foraging and breeding opportunities likely to be of value for a wide range of invertebrates and foraging bats. Pre-existing records of foraging Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) and common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) are held for Edmund's Lane just to the north of the site. Furthermore, the woodland at the southern end of the site, and the scrub trees on the eastern edge next to the Bull Brook, has mature oak trees that would be suitable for roosting bats (further detailed survey would be required to establish if roosting bats are present. The complex of woodland, scrub and tall grassland and the running water of the Bull Brook provide habitats likely to be valuable to birds.

Harvest Hill

The majority of the site comprised infrequently cut, semi-improved grassland which was dominated by commonly occurring grass species but supported a relatively diverse range of flowering plants in areas. The semi-improved grassland's infrequently cut sward provides cover for faunal groups of conservation interest that may be associated with grassland such as reptiles, amphibians, small mammals and invertebrates, which will utilise tall grassland swards for foraging, shelter and breeding. There are pre-existing records of great crested newt breeding within Rachel's Lake and therefore it is considered likely that should great crested newts continue to breed in the Lake that they would use the grassland as a foraging area and dispersal route. The proximity of the grassland to areas of dense scrub on the site margins is likely to increase its value for notable fauna by providing additional cover. The woodland and wetland habitats at the southern end of the site support a range of native

plant species typical of woodland and wetland habitats and provide both open and closed habitats likely to be of importance to a wide range of fauna including notable species from group such as invertebrates, small mammals, amphibians, reptiles, birds and bats; pre-existing records show that great crested newt – which receives full protection under UK and European legislation – has been recorded breeding within Rachel's Lake and bullfinch – a bird of conservation concern – has been recorded on site.

The Chestnuts

A line of mature sweet chestnut trees had several features typical of over-mature trees such as areas of dead wood and decay and as such the trees are likely to be of ecological value for species that rely on dead wood habitats such as fungi and invertebrates. Furthermore, cavities and splits within sections of dead wood are likely to be of value to roosting bats and nesting birds; woodpecker holes were visible indicating that nesting birds have nested previously. Infrequently cut, poor, semi-improved grassland covered much of the site beneath the scattered mature trees. The sward was dominated by commonly occurring grass species and in several areas the sward was dominated by coarse grasses and was relatively species poor; although flowering plants were an occasional component of the sward. The infrequently cut grassland sward provides cover for faunal groups of conservation interest that may be associated with grassland such as reptiles, amphibians, small mammals and invertebrates, which will utilise tall grassland swards for foraging, shelter and breeding. The proximity of the grassland to areas of dense scrub on the site margins is likely to increase its value for notable fauna by providing additional cover.

Whitegrove Copse

The woodland is structurally diverse with an established canopy, shrub and ground flora layers resulting in a habitat of greater ecological value when compared with more uniform woodlands as a result of the potential for use by a wide range of woodland fauna such as invertebrates, birds, bats and small mammals. The woodland has many mature trees with features suitable for use by roosting bats and the diverse woodland with an established canopy; shrub and ground flora layers and clearings provide a range of foraging opportunities for bats. The mature trees and fallen dead wood are likely to be of importance for species associated with dead and decaying wood such as fungi and invertebrates; there are pre-existing records of stag beetle. The woodland is likely to offer foraging and nesting opportunities for song birds typical of woodland habitats; there are records of mistle thrush and it is likely that the site supports a range of notable song bird species including locally important species such as bullfinch. Several of the mature trees had woodpecker holes indicating the presence of great spotted woodpecker and it is likely that disused woodpecker holes, and other cavities are used by cavity nesting bird species such as the tits and nuthatch for example.

2.1.9 Archaeology & Heritage

The following details were supplied by Berkshire Archaeology from the Historic Environment Record (HER):

Edmunds Green, Harvest Hill and The Chestnuts are located within the wider area of Warfield Park and the records on the HER refer to features connected with the park and the former house. Warfield Park is an estate purchased by Colonel John Walsh in 1765. The estate was enlarged to the west by the addition of Edmunds Green and it then became known as Warfield Park. The park is not shown on Rocques' map of Windsor Forest in 1761 and it is therefore suggested that it may be post-medieval in date. The park is shown on the Warfield tithe award map of 1843 as the land of Sir John Benn Walsh.

There are two 'above ground' features recorded on the HER as associated with the Warfield Park house and grounds. Within The Chestnuts there is a post-medieval icehouse at Warfield Park shown on sketch of estate plan. The icehouse is Grade II listed and is of 18th century date. Constructed of brick, spherical with domed roof, half underground and insulated by covering of earth. Within Harvest Hill there are some ponds (possibly fish ponds) which formed part of an extensive ornamental garden associated with the original house in Warfield Park, which burnt down in 1766. The exact location of some of the other features recorded on the HER are not precisely known, so there is a possibility that other below ground features associated with the park could be present in the SANGS sites.

2.1.10 Recreational uses

All of the sites have paths that are used by walkers and dog walkers. At Harvest Hill there is a play area (outside the SANGS area). Edmund's Green and Lane, Chestnuts Lane and The Chestnuts and Bluebell Hill are used as through routes by pedestrians and cyclists. Edmund's Lane has a sculpture trail of the river life cycle. There is a small community orchard at Edmund's Lane.

2.1.11 Recreational routes

Edmund's Lane and Chestnuts Lane are cycle routes and there are also designated cycle routes through Bluebell Hill.

2.1.12 Interpretation & events

There are site signs at all sites and a site noticeboard at Whitegrove Copse.

2.2 Legal and Planning Framework

2.2.1 Land ownership

All of the sites are owned and managed by Bracknell Forest Council.

2.2.2 Fences & hedges

Edmund's Green is surrounded by an old estate style fence, but this is damaged in a number of places. Whitegrove Copse has post and rail fences on the north and south sides, with typically 1.8 metre close boarded fences on the east and west sides forming the boundary with gardens of the adjacent properties. Harvest Hill, The Chestnuts and Chestnut Lane are also largely surrounded by garden fences.

2.2.3 Site furniture

The following features are located around the sites:

- Bollards at the west entrance to Whitegrove Copse
- Wooden benches at a number of sites
- Litter bins are provided near entrances but vary in condition
- There is a bridge across the Bullbrook in Edmund's Green
- There are a number of wooden plank ditch crossings in Whitegrove Copse.

2.2.4 Byelaws

There are no byelaws specific to these sites.

2.2.5 Designations

The following designations are held by sites within the group:

Designation	Edmund's Green	Whitegrove Copse	The Chestnuts	Chestnuts Lane
Local Wildlife Site (LWS)	✓ (SU87V20)	✓ (SU87Q09)		
Tree Preservation Order		✓ (TPO 180)	✓ (TPO 218, 393)	✓ (TPO 218)
Local Nature Reserve	✓			
Ancient woodland	✓			

TPO, LNR and ancient woodland status provide statutory protection while LWS is a planning consideration.

2.3 Resource Evaluation

Visitor surveys carried out on behalf of Bracknell Forest Council in 2014 found the following results.

Visitor Usage

- The majority of the respondents walked to the sites, from Bracknell, on a journey taking less than 10 minutes (86%) and being 1 mile or under (81%), although this differs significantly between the sites, with 38% visiting the Chestnuts to 'walk'; compared with 40% at Edmund's Green and 53% at Bluebell Hill.
- Half of the visitors at Harvest Hill and 84% at Whitegrove Copse visit the site to 'walk the dog'.
- Just less than half (48%) of visitors use the sites on a daily basis during the winter, with 51% of the respondents using them daily during the summer.
- The number of people using the sites is slightly higher during the weekend according to the respondents.
- The majority (93%) feel safe within the sites.

Visitor Numbers

Park	Projected visits annually
Harvest Hill	6,518
The Chestnuts	24,882
Edmund's Green	71,572
Bluebell Hill	79,099
Whitegrove Copse	16,243

SANGS capacity

The sites in the Bullbrook Countryside Corridor have been assessed for their capacity to mitigate for new residential development based on the results of the visitor surveys. The table below sets out the calculation to determine SANGS capacity. The calculations show that the Bullbrook Countryside Corridor can mitigate for an additional 458 persons (approximately 198 dwellings).

A. SANGs	B. Total visits per annum to SANGs ¹	C. Equivalent no. of visitors p.a ²	D. Estimated Area (ha)	E. Capacity to Mitigate (D / 8x1000)	F. Residual Mitigation Capacity (E-C)	G. Residual Area of SANGs capacity available (F / 1000x8)
Edmunds Green	71,572 visits	426 visitors	2.32 ha	290 persons	-136 persons	-1.08ha
The Chestnuts	24,882 visits	148 visitors	1.08 ha	135 persons	-13 persons	-0.1ha
Harvest Hill	6,518 visits	39 visitors	2.30 ha (excluding the play area)	287 persons	248 persons	1.98ha
Whitegrove Copse	16,243 visits	97 visitors	3.65 ha	456 persons	359 persons	2.87ha
Total (persons)			11.45 ha	1168 persons (approx. 505 dwellings)	458 persons (approx. 198 dwellings)	3.67ha

The Bullbrook Countryside Corridor will have a catchment of 2 km, meaning any development using this SANGS as mitigation must be within this catchment area. See Appendix 1 for a map of the SANGS catchment.

¹ Park Research – Leisure Net Solutions Ltd May 2014

² Calculated by dividing the number of visits to the site per annum by the average number of visits made by users per year (168). See Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance and Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) March 2012 Appendix 4

2.4 Constraints and Issues

- The varying levels of existing visitor pressure needs to be carefully managed in order to provide additional capacity whilst protecting the semi-natural environment which makes the sites attractive.
- The SANGS are owned and managed by Bracknell Forest Council but management requires the co-operation of a group of organisations to ensure the long term cohesion of the countryside corridor.
- Dog fouling is a common issue at dog walking sites and will require action to educate users and improve behaviour. Positive action includes close liaison with the Bracknell Town Council dog warden and an annual educational event held at a nearby park.

2.5 Management Objectives

The following provide the overarching, existing management objectives for the site. These are in addition to the primary objective of this Open Space Enhancement Plan, which is to enhance alternative green space to divert visitors from using the SPA.

2.5.1 Bracknell Forest Council medium term objectives

2) To keep our parks, open spaces and leisure facilities accessible and attractive

Linking to:

- 4) To keep Bracknell clean and green
- 5) To improve health and well-being within the Borough

2.5.2 Bracknell Forest Council Community Plan policies

Priority 2 – Protecting and enhancing the environment

Priority 3 – Improving health and well-being

Linking to:

Priority 5 – A town fit for the 21st Century

Priority 6 – Improving travel and transport

Priority 7 – Promoting community safety

Priority 8 – Improving community engagement

2.5.3 Site-based Objectives

- To provide a high quality recreation resource.
- To manage and enhance the biodiversity and landscape value of the site.
- To develop the site's strategic importance within the context of the developing BFBC Greenspace Strategy and TBHSPA SPD.

2.6 Management Strategies

These are based on the existing management plan:

Site Maintenance

- A1 To maintain and improve the nature conservation value and interest of the grassland areas.
- A2 To maintain and improve the riparian habitat
- A3 To maintain and improve the hedgerow provision on site
- A4 To enhance the character of the site through appropriate management

Visitor Management

- B1 Aim to provide an area open to the public for informal recreation.
- B2 Ensure all access points are usable.
- B3 Ensure all paths are up to the standard set for this site
- B4 Ensure public safety
- B5 Provide related furniture on site where needed
- B6 Provide a site leaflet in conjunction with other BFC leaflets

3 Site Proposals for SPA Mitigation

The measures within this plan were identified by using the suitable alternative natural green space (SANGS) assessment checklist in section 5 of this plan. This sets out criteria which are both essential and desirable in achieving the primary aim of providing alternative green space to divert visitors from using the SPA. The intention of these SANGS is to avoid and mitigate the impacts of recreation arising from new residential development, by preventing an increase in visitor pressure on the SPA.

As a result, the proposed works are in addition to existing management objectives and general upgrading of the site. The enhancements to these alternative areas of open space aim to replicate features which have been found to draw visitors to the SPA and improve access alongside enhancement of the site's natural qualities.

The attached spreadsheet in section 6 lists these works and provides a breakdown of the costs of each element. A selection of the main works is also shown on the annotated site map. The proposals are intended to preserve the informal nature of The Bullbrook Countryside Corridor whilst providing easy access and information to the sites. The proposed works are as follows:

3.1 Information and Interpretation

This work will be crucial to making people aware of the whole SANGS i.e., the suite of sites and how they are linked up by footpaths.

- Site entrance signs at major and secondary site entrances to welcome visitors and aid users in finding the sites and formal access points.
- Site noticeboard and interpretative panels: these will provide information on the network of sites including their links to each other and the wider area. This will incorporate individual site information including features of interest and internal routes. Regularly updated posters and leaflets will also be displayed on noticeboards in order to inform visitors of events and seasonal site information.
- Fingerposts and way-markers at strategic points (primarily site entrances and path junctions) and on the principal paths around the sites will enable visitors to navigate around the sites with ease. They will also help link the sites and raise awareness of the group as well as directing users to adjoining Public Rights of Way for longer routes into the north of the borough.

3.2 Access

- Existing pedestrian entrances will be improved to make them more appealing and accessible, including vegetation removal and repairing fences/gates.
- Paths will be made useable in all weathers, particularly in Whitegrove Copse and Harvest Hill
- Ditch crossings at Whitegrove Copse will be repaired or replaced.

3.3 Furniture

- New site furniture will enhance visitors' use of the site as well as providing a more welcoming and attractive appearance to the area.

- New seating will be provided at strategic points around the site to allow visitors to enjoy the visual amenity of the site and also where rest points may be required.
- New bins will be installed at entrances. These will be combined litter and dog-waste bins in line with the Parks & Countryside Service's policy of using combined bins. Designs will be chosen so as to be in-keeping with the natural theme of the SANGS.
- Fencing will be replaced where it is currently dilapidated

3.4 Habitat Management

Tree management works will be undertaken to ensure the safety of the sites' users and to protect and enhance valuable wildlife habitats. Wildlife features such as bat and bird boxes will be installed around the network of sites.

3.5 Implementation

3.5.1 Funding

Funding for the proposed works as costed in section 6 will come from new residential development within the Borough which is likely to have an adverse effect on the SPA, as set out in the TBHSPA SPD. Due to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations (specifically restrictions on pooling contributions), funding for SANGS enhancement works will be paid either through Section 106 contributions or CIL depending on the number of developments paying into this work

Where there are likely to be more than 5 contributions from different developments towards SANG enhancement works on this site, these costs will be taken from a proportion of the total amount payable under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Where there is likely to be less than 5 contributions from different developments towards SANGS enhancement works on this site, these costs will be taken through Section 106 contributions.

Further SANGS contributions towards, for example, on-going management works, will be paid for by new residential development through Section 106. The TBHSPA SPD states that legal obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) will be entered into before a planning application is determined. These measures will ensure the site is suitable as an alternative to the SPA and will attract new residents away from the SPA.

3.5.2 Prioritising Works

Implementation of the proposed works will be prioritised in the following order (unless deemed inappropriate due to other site works going on at that time):

1. Site access and way-marking works
2. Path improvements and furniture
3. Information and interpretation provision
4. Other works (including habitat management)

The timing of works will relate to planning approvals and the availability of funding through CIL and Section 106.

3.5.3 Monitoring

ODPM Circular 05/2005 on Planning Obligations requires that planning obligations are implemented or enforced in an efficient and transparent way, in order to ensure that contributions are spent on their intended purpose and that the associated development contributes to the sustainability of the area. This will require monitoring by local planning authorities through the use of standardised systems to ensure that information on the implementation of planning obligations is readily available to the local authority, developer and members of the public. Regular reports on the monitoring information will also be provided to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA Joint Strategic Partnership (JSPB).

To meet the requirements of the Circular, monitoring will demonstrate how the spending of contributions on enhancements to an open space site link to specific developments within its catchment area. This will also ensure the capacity of the open space, as calculated in the TBHSPA SPD, is not exceeded and the enhancement works are effective in attracting new visitors from the SPA.

A proportion of the funding obtained through the S106 agreement will provide resources to ensure the full package of avoidance and mitigation measures are monitored to ensure their continued effectiveness.

3.6 Consultation

This plan has been developed in consultation with Natural England. Work has been led by the Bracknell Forest Council Parks & Countryside Service including the Biodiversity Officer and site Rangers.

3.7 Conclusion

The measures within this plan were identified by using the SANGS assessment checklist (see section 5) as being necessary to attract existing users from the SPA and encourage new residents to visit the enhanced area of open space in preference to the SPA. These works are in addition to existing management objectives and general upgrading of the site.

The works will enhance The Bullbrook Countryside Corridor as an open space that provides a range of conditions for visitors of all abilities. The site will be promoted to local residents and new residents through targeted publicity as an attractive alternative to the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.

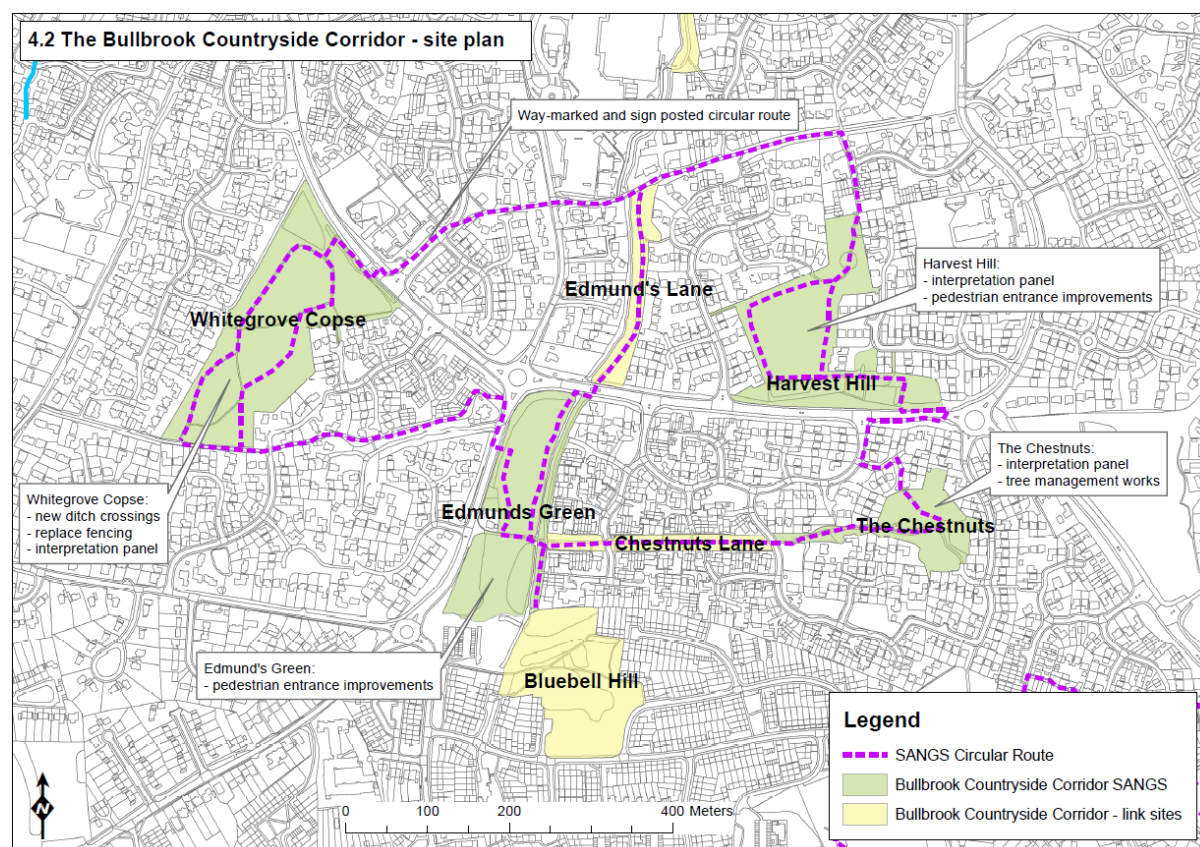
Alongside the capital programme, day to day management is needed to sustain these improvements and ensure that any increased use of the site continues to be attractive to visitors.

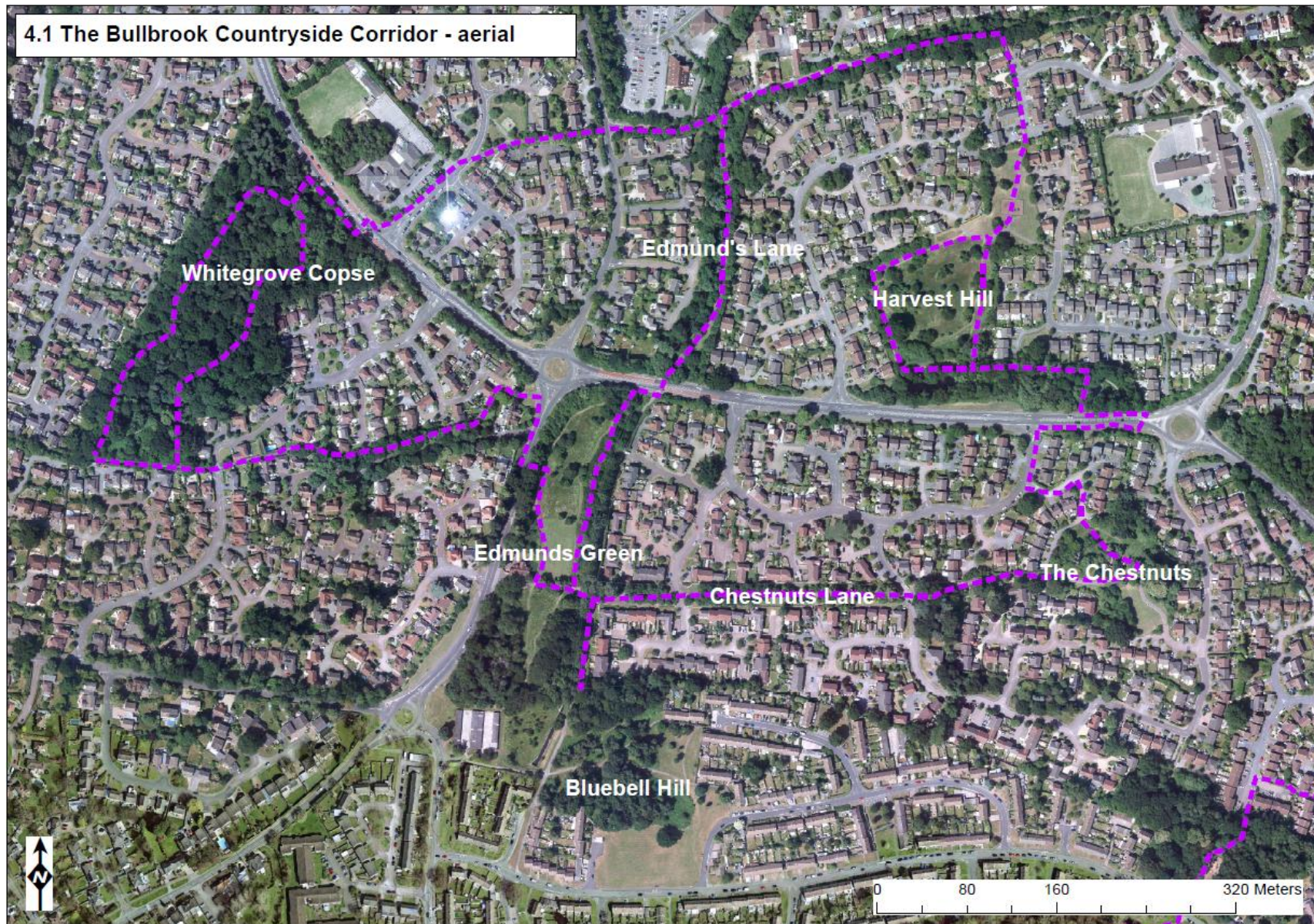
As a component of a wider package of measures the works detailed within this plan will avoid the adverse impacts of recreation arising from new residential development on the SPA and enable sustainable development within the Borough.

4 Site Plan

4.1 Site Plan – The Bullbrook Countryside Corridor proposed SPA mitigation works

4.2 Site Plan – The Bullbrook Countryside Corridor (aerial)





5 SANGS site quality check list

It must be noted that the primary aim of enhancement is to encourage further visitor access. Works should facilitate this by providing management for all weather access, stiles where necessary, site safety in terms of crossing between units and allowing dogs to run off the lead, plus interpretation, route marking, promotion etc. All enhancements must be undertaken prior to inhabitants moving into the dwellings to ensure that people do not develop a habit of visiting other sites, such as the SPA.

The following provides a list of relevant factors in considering a site's suitability to meet SANGS criteria.

Must/should have – these criteria are essential for all SANGS			
	Criteria	Current	Future
1	Parking on all sites larger than 4ha (unless the site is intended for use within 400m only)	N/A	N/A
2	Circular walk of 2.3-2.5km	Currently many informal paths	Various routes possible, but main waymarked circular route of approximately 3 km.
3	Car parks easily and safely accessible by car and clearly signposted	N/A	N/A
4	Access points appropriate for particular visitor use the SANGS is intended to cater for	Access points generally open	Access points improved and new accesses created where needed
5	Safe access route on foot from nearest car park and/or footpath	Yes	No change
6	Circular walk which starts and finishes at the car park	No car park	No change
7	Perceived as safe – no tree and scrub cover along part of walking routes	Several areas are open grassland. Wooded areas not too shaded	Some vegetation management at entrances to improve perceived safety
8	Paths easily used and well maintained but mostly unsurfaced	Paths a mix of surfaced and unsurfaced paths	Main circular route will be surfaced
9	Perceived as semi-natural with little intrusion of artificial structures	Yes	No changes
10	If larger than 12 ha then a range of habitats should be present	N/A	N/A
11	Access unrestricted – plenty of space for dogs to exercise freely and safely	Yes	No change

	off the lead		
12	No unpleasant intrusions (e.g. sewage treatment smells etc...)	None	No change
13	Clearly sign posted or advertised in some way	Some site signs	New site signs where needed and main route waymarked
14	Leaflets or website advertising their location to potential users (distributed to homes and made available at entrance points and car parks)	Whitegrove Copse mentioned on BFC website	New SANGS leaflet and webpage.
Desirable features			
	Criteria	Current	Future
15	Can dog owners take dogs from the car park to the SANGS safely off the lead	N/A	N/A
16	Gently undulating topography	Yes	No change
17	Access points with signage outlining the layout of the SANGS and routes available to visitors	No	News signs and info board will highlight links to other sites
18	Naturalistic space with areas of open (non-wooded) countryside and areas of dense and scattered trees and shrubs. Provision of open water is desirable.	Mix of grassland and woodland, with ponds	Habitat management will maintain this variety
19	Focal point such as a view point or monument within the SANGS	Views from	Features highlighted with information

6 Costs

Works	Location	Unit Cost	Quantity	Total Cost	Priority
Information & Interpretation					
Site entrance signs					
main entrances		£350	4	£1,400	2
secondary entrances		£300	4	£1,200	2
Site notice board with combined interpretive panel	main entrances	£2,500	4	£10,000	2
Fingerposts & Way-markers	At key link locations	£350	15	£5,250	1
Access					
Pedestrian entrance improvements	All entrances	£300 / day	5	£1,500	1
Path improvements	main circular route	£35 / m	300	£10,500	1
Ditch crossings	Whitegrove Copse	£200	5	£1,000	2
Furniture					
Bins (incl. installation)	Site entrances	350	3	£1,050	2
Seating - benches (incl. installation)	Around site	350	2	£700	2
Fencing (replacement)	Whitegrove Copse	£30 / m	110 m	£3,300	2
Habitat Management					
Tree management	all sites	400/day	5	£2,000	1
Wildlife features (bird boxes, bat boxes)		allowance		£475	3
TOTAL COST				£38,375	

7 Glossary

Core Strategy DPD	Document within the Local Development Framework which sets out strategic development proposals until 2026.
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
SANGS	Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space
SPA	Special Protection Area. Designated under the EU Directive 79/409 on the Conservation of Wild Birds.
TBHSPA SPD	Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance and Mitigation Supplementary Planning Document

8 References

Bracknell Forest Borough Council (2007) Medium Term Objectives. Available to download from www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

Bracknell Forest Borough Council (2007) SPA Technical Background Document to the Core Strategy (SPA TBD). Available to download from www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

Bracknell Forest Borough Council (2006) Core Strategy Development Plan Document. Available to download from www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

Bracknell Forest Partnership (2005) Bracknell Forest Sustainable Community Plan. Available to download from www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk.

Thames Basin Heaths SPA Avoidance and Mitigation SPD at <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/thames-basin-heaths-spa-avoidance-and-mitigation-spd.pdf>

9 Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – SANGS catchment area

