



Horseshoe Lake
Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Plan
for
Special Protection Area (SPA) Mitigation Works
June 2020

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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 (BFC) 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 Supplementary Planning Document (SPA SPD) was approved in 2018. The SPA SPD identifies measures to avoid and mitigate adverse effects arising from proposed new residential development. The SPA SPD provides an integrated, holistic package of measures which includes both on-site and off-site measures to make the SPA less attractive in addition to making other areas of open space more attractive. 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 document. These comprise:

- **Provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG)** to attract people away from the SPA and hence reduce pressure on it;
- **Access management and monitoring measures** on, and monitoring of, the SPA to reduce the effect of people who visit 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 SPA SPD. This Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Plan (SANG plan) will deal solely with the implementation of one of the specific measures; enhancing an existing area open space.

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

1.2 Open Space Management Plans

This report comprises an open space management plan which outlines the enhancements required for the site known as 'Shepherd Meadows North SANG'. This will also enable avoidance and mitigation measures to be closely linked to contributions from specific developments as detailed in the SPA SPD.

1.3 Identification of Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space (SANGS)

The SPA SPD went through an extensive process to identify areas of open space as suitable alternatives to the SPA. This plan builds upon the information and research presented within the SPA SPD to provide more detailed works and costs on how this site could be brought up to a suitable standard to provide an alternative to the SPA.

1.4 Horseshoe Lake as an alternative to the SPA

The site was considered to be an appropriate area of alternative open space and “*has considerable potential for improvement.*”, as stated by Natural England in a letter dated 12 January 2007, following a site visit.

A SANG Management Plan was agreed with NE in 2007 and has been operating successfully since then. This document is an updated version of the SANG Plan which better reflects

current site requirements, addresses visitor requirements such as those reflected within the recent (Jan/Feb 2018) visitor survey (see section 2.3) and aims to make the site more attractive and increase usability to visitors by addressing issues raised over time. This plan revision will not have an impact on the agreed mitigation capacity as previously agreed with Natural England, at 1,080 persons (based on the minimum 8ha per 1000 new residents SANG standard) which is equivalent to approximately 467 dwellings or 8.64ha of SANG (based on the dwelling occupancy in Bracknell Forest of 2.31 person per dwelling).

The SANGs assessment checklist is used in section 6 below to demonstrate how Horseshoe Lake is suitable as an alternative to the SPA and how enhancements will enable its use as such.

2 Site Management Statement

2.1 Site Description

Area: 19.38 hectares (10.07ha excluding water and water-sports centre and out-buildings)

Horseshoe Lake is named after its horseshoe-shaped island and lies about half a mile to the west of Sandhurst. Originally part of an extensive network of working gravel pits that have now been flooded, this site now occupies an attractive setting in the Blackwater Valley and is a popular venue for those who enjoy birdwatching, walking and water-sports.

2.1.1 Location

Horseshoe Lake is a flooded gravel pit situated off Mill Lane in Sandhurst Parish, Bracknell Forest borough.

OS Grid Ref: SU820624.

2.1.2 Adjacent land

The River Blackwater adjoins the southern boundary of the site and also forms the Borough boundary with Hampshire County and Hart District Council.

The site lies within the project area of the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership (BVCP). The western boundary adjoins Moor Green Lakes, a nature reserve managed by the BVCP, and to the east Church Farm flooded gravel pits which are managed for coarse fishing.

2.1.3 Access

The main site access is from Mill Lane where there is free parking (currently mostly in unmarked areas). The site can be accessed by 7 formal entrances including the car park, with pedestrian access points from Mill Lane, Lower Sandhurst Road, the junction of Lower Sandhurst Road / Ambarrow Lane and the riverside path.

Cycling is permitted on the riverside path, and horse-riding on the permitted bridleway to the north east and northern edge of the site. Limited disabled access (e.g. wheelchairs) is available from the car park.

The Blackwater Valley Path, a 23-mile long distance route from Aldershot to Swallowfield, follows the riverside path through the site.

2.1.4 Geology and soils

The lake is a former gravel pit. Apart from a small strip of Bracklesham Beds close to Ambarrow Lane, the site is mainly alluvium deposits, much of which has been extracted. The soil is free draining but because it is close to the water table it can become very wet in winter.

2.1.5 Topography

Perhaps one of the lowest sites in the borough lying mainly below the 55-metre level. The site is fairly flat, sloping down to the water on the north and east sides.

2.1.6 Drainage and flooding

The site has two ditch outlets, one into the Blackwater river and one into Moor Green Lakes to the west. If the water level is too high it can flow through these points, firstly to the other lake, secondly to the river. Being next to the river, flooding is possible but the far (south) bank of the river is lower and more likely to flood first.

2.1.7 Landscape and views

The site is clearly visible from Finchampstead Ridges, Ambarrow Lane and public footpaths to the north. The site lies within the Blackwater Valley Area of Special Landscape Importance (Bracknell Forest policies map, 2013). There are fine views out from the site particularly of the valley slopes to the north.

2.1.8 Wildlife / biodiversity

The site supports a variety of wildlife including numerous water birds, 12 species of dragonfly, and 18 species of butterfly. WeBS counts have shown over 20 species of bird wintering on the lake and surrounding habitat including large numbers of Wigeon, Gadwall and Coot along with notable regular wintering Goosander.

Five Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species have been recorded at the site: Barn owl, Bullfinch, Kingfisher, Ragged robin and Noctule bat. The BFC BAP 2018-2023 includes targets of relevance to Horseshoe Lake, including "Restore or enhance 2km of river habitat for BAP species" within Wetland HAP enhancements.

2.1.10 Archaeology and heritage

The site is located on previous gravel workings and so has evidence of this former industrial activity.

2.1.11 Recreational uses

The site is used for informal recreation, with activities including walking, dog-walking, birdwatching, horse-riding and cycling. Angling is permitted on the River Blackwater (but not on the lake) - fishing licenses are leased to the Hartley Witney Angling Club.

Water-sports on Horseshoe Lake are based at the on-site activity centre, managed by Freetime Leisure. These include dinghy sailing, windsurfing, canoeing and rafting and open water swimming.

2.1.12 Recreational routes

Horseshoe Lake is connected to Ambarrow Hill and Court SANG via public footpaths Sandhurst FP11 and FP10 which lead north from the site and turn right across the fields at Ambarrow Lane.

The Blackwater Valley Path runs through the site along the riverside path. A circular walk around the site and over Finchampstead Ridges is published in the BVCP's Blackwater Valley Circular Walks booklet.

The Three Castles Path passes north to south through Horseshoe Lake on Sandhurst FP19 and then follows FP22 along the bank of the Blackwater, heading towards Eversley Cross.

The Wokingham Way, a 56-mile walk in 10 sections around Wokingham Borough boundary follows the same paths through Horseshoe Lake. This walk was developed by Loddon Valley Ramblers and supported by Wokingham Borough Council.

2.1.13 Interpretation and events

The current site information provision includes:

- Name and ownership signs at the two main entrances.
- A noticeboard at the car park including regularly updated posters and leaflets.
- An ex-Berkshire County Council interpretive board on the riverside path, where it joins Mill Lane.
- An A4 leaflet produced by BFBC but no longer printed. This is now available as an online downloadable resource only.
- Webpages on the BFBC website at www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/parks as well as through the TBH wardens at: www.tbhpartnership.org.uk

The Parks and Countryside Service uses the site as a location in which to hold public events such as guided nature walks and wild craft. Work groups of conservation volunteers are also actively involved in managing the site.

2.2 Legal and Planning Framework

2.2.1 Land ownership

The site is under the ownership of BFC and was bought from Hall Aggregates in 1993, for the purpose of establishing an outdoor water sports facility. Since 1994, a lease / management agreement was signed with Freetime Leisure, to operate on site providing watersports activities.

Two public footpaths run across the site and a further footpath runs from the northern boundary:

- Footpath 22 Sandhurst runs along the Blackwater River to the southern edge of the site. Cycling on this footpath, on a permissive basis, was approved by Leisure Committee in June 1998.
- FP19 Sandhurst runs from Mill Lane near the Blackwater River, north east across the site to Lower Sandhurst Road.
- FP11 Sandhurst runs northwards from the site to Ambarrow Lane, opposite FP19's exit onto the road.
- In addition, a permitted bridleway runs around the eastern and northern sides of the site, approved by Leisure Committee in 1994.

Considerable potential exists to increase the site's links with the wider countryside, the public rights of way network in Bracknell Forest, Wokingham Borough and Hart District Council and other countryside sites in the boroughs and further afield.

2.2.2 Fences and hedges

Internal fences were erected when the site was purchased, to allow the area to be grazed in the form of two paddocks. An original fence line runs along the western boundary, which is the responsibility of the adjacent landowner (Moor Green Lakes Nature Reserve). A highway boundary fence runs along the northern boundary of the riverside footpath. An old hedge line, which is thin and well cut back, runs along the north and east boundaries. Some replanting has been carried out to allow the hedge to grow on and be laid in the future.

2.2.3 Site furniture

Field gates and kissing gates are located at the Mill Lane entrance to the riverside path and at the ownership boundary at the western end of the riverside path. Two field gates give access to the paddocks, one from Mill Lane and one from the riverside path. Kissing gates are also located at the pedestrian entrances to the site and internal gates on the paths to the western boundary. Internal gates are to be re-evaluated and removed where possible to provide better access, site boundary gates will remain restricting access onto nearby lanes (section 3.3).

Benches are located at the car park, footpath near the water sports centre and riverside path. Bins are also located at strategic points such as the car park and Mill Lane riverside path entrance.

2.2.4 Byelaws

There are no site byelaws.

2.2.5 Designations

The site lies within the Blackwater Valley Area of Special Landscape Importance, a designation within the Bracknell Forest Borough planning policy which seeks to safeguard the special landscape character of the area.

2.3 Resource Evaluation

Horseshoe Lake provides an important site for both recreation and nature conservation purposes in the parish of Sandhurst and for a large area to the south of the borough and adjacent areas. In addition to the water-sports centre which is the only one of its type in the borough, opportunities for many other types of recreation exist at the site, ranging from walking, cycling and horse-riding to birdwatching. These are balanced against the site's wildlife importance.

Surveys undertaken for the 2006 Bracknell Forest SPA Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy produced the following results:

Visitor Usage

- 82% of all visitors surveyed stated this was the open space they regularly visited, with Sandhurst Memorial Park, South Hill Park and the Look Out being other sites frequented.

- Visitors tend to visit on a less frequent basis with 44% visiting less than once a week and only 8% visiting more than 5 times a week.
- Horseshoe Lake is used for a wide range of purposes, including exercising the dog (31%), walking (28%), organised sport (13%), relaxing (8%) and enjoying the wildlife (8%).
- Visits tended to be long, with 41% between 1 and 2 hours and 10% over 2 hours.
- It was not deemed to be a crowded area, with 72% of respondents rating it as 'not busy' and nobody stating it was always busy. 92% of visitors would continue to use the park if visitor numbers doubled.

Visitor Numbers

Total visits per year – 30,000 (existing)

Annual visitors – 179 (using 2006 visitor data)

Potential visitor capacity – 1,080 (using area of 10.07ha which excludes water)

Accessibility

- The majority travel by car (69%) and the remainder by walking (26%) or cycling (5%).
- There appears to be fewer very local visitors than average, with only 8% from within 1 kilometre and the majority (72%) travelling between 1 and 5 kilometres. This corresponds with slightly longer than average journey times with 31% traveling between 11 and 20 minutes and 6% travelling over 20 minutes.
- 62% of visitors surveyed used the car park. 29% of these thought the number of spaces was only satisfactory (as opposed to quite good or very good) and 21% thought the quality was satisfactory
- In general the location was thought to be convenient, with 82% of users rating the convenience as very good or quite good.
- Safety of the car park could be improved as 8% of visitors rate this as poor and 46% rate the safety as satisfactory.

A further visitor survey was commissioned and carried out by Footprint Ecology during January and February 2018. In summary findings were as follows:

- The site continues to be used for a range of activities including;
 - Dog walking (73%)
 - Walking (18%)
 - Family outings (6%)
 - Commercial dog walking (2%)
 - Bird watching/wildlife enthusiasts (2%)
- Visitors tend to spend longer on site than other SANGs in the survey with 2% spending less than 30mins, 66% 30mins-1 hour and 32% 1-2hours.
- Multiple reasons were given for visiting the site (note interviewees were able to give multiple responses);
 - Water feature (65%)

- Close to home (45%)
- Scenery/views (45%)
- Wildlife/nature (39%)
- Good for dog (25%)
- Interviewees were asked to rate the following 1 (very poor) to 10 (very good);
 - Paths – 6.7
 - Parking – 8.2
 - Dogs – 8.7
- Suggested future site improvements included the following top answers;
 - Better paths (41%)
 - Dog Fouling issues (18%)
 - More car parking (10%)
 - Café (8%).

BFC has considered the results of these surveys in updating this SANG Plan.

2.4 Constraints and Issues

- Three main uses of the site that need to be managed together:
 - Informal recreation
 - Biodiversity and landscape value
 - Water-sports
- No dedicated team is available for the site. Works are managed by the Parks and Countryside service and resources prioritised alongside the management of over 80 other sites.
- The use and legal classification of routes is not uniform across the site and includes cycling and horse-riding on public footpaths.
- Water quality and safety.
- Scrub encroachment.

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 Management Plan, which is to enhance alternative green space to divert visitors from using the SPA.

2.1.1 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

2.1.2 Bracknell Forest Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2014

- Priority 1a – Opportunities for everyone
- Priority 2a – Sustainable development
- Priority 2b - Protecting the environment
- Priority 2c – Travelling around the Borough
- Priority 3b – Enjoying life
- Priority 3c – Being & feeling safer

2.1.3 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 SPA Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (2018).

2.6 Management Strategies

These strategies include principles previously agreed with Natural England to ensure the best management of Horseshoe Lake.

2.6.1 Site Maintenance

- To undertake regular inspections and surveys.
- To maintain all paths, car parks, site furniture, interpretation and notice boards.
- To address any anti-social behaviour that occurs at car park.
- To maintain and improve the nature conservation value and interest of the site.

2.6.2 Biodiversity

- To maintain and improve the nature conservation value and interest of the grassland areas, woodland, hedgerows and lake.
- To maintain areas of short grass in the meadow and woodland clearings.
- To control any invasive species.

2.6.3 Visitor Management

- Provide an area open to the public for informal recreation,
- Improve access to the site including all major and secondary site entrances and links to the wider countryside.
- Upgrade all paths across the site to allow reasonable all year-round access.
- Ensure public safety.
- Provide furniture, including bins and benches, at appropriate locations around the site.

- Provide both on- and off-site site information and interpretation, including a leaflet, webpage, noticeboards and events.

3 Site Proposals for SPA Mitigation

Following approval and implementation of the SANG plan in 2007, HSL is currently (to date of this revision) 57% enhanced to SANG standard based on the pre the costings in the 2007 SANG Plan.

Changes in site requirements over time and feedback from visitors, including within the 2018 visitor survey have led to a revision of priorities and the requirement to further enhance visitor site experiences for all user groups.

The following site proposals describe the existing as well as future enhancements and were identified using the SANG checklist attached to this plan (section 6). 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. Enhancement works will continue to be completed in separate stages in advance of the occupation of dwellings, maintaining effective use of the SANG before fulfilling further enhancements. This ensures that the amount of new dwellings occupied does not exceed the capacity of the SANG to mitigate its effects on the SPA.

Enhancements incorporated within this plan are designed to provide a semi-natural, semi-wooded landscape providing the relative wildness seen as desirable by visitors. Habitat improvements will be provided to maintain an enhanced visitor experience as well as the wildlife value of the site. The habitat improvements laid within this plan contribute to enhance the site to SANG standard in line with the quality guidelines set out in section 6, where any further biodiversity improvements are to be considered to provide biodiversity net gain.

Section 7 lists these works and provides a breakdown of the costs of each element. The works are also shown on the annotated site map (section 4). The proposed works are as follows:

3.1 Information and Interpretation

- Larger roadside signs to guide visitors to the site from nearby roads and junctions.
- Renewed site entrance signs at major and secondary site entrances to welcome visitors and aid users in finding the site and its formal access points. In particular, entrances off the Lower Sandhurst Road are currently hidden and under-used.
- Site noticeboard and interpretive panels: these will provide information on the site and its background, commencing with an information point at the car park to introduce the site and enable people to see where they are and how they can move around the site via the various paths. Further boards will explain the site's wildlife importance with panels about habitats and key species in woodland, wetland and heathland areas. 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 site will enable visitors to navigate around the site with ease. They will also help link the site to adjoining public rights of way, long distance paths (such as the Ramblers Route, Wokingham Way and Three Castles Path) and other sites such as Ambarrow Court SANG, thereby providing an even greater green space and path network.

- A colour leaflet which will include site and access information, background details of the different areas, nature conservation information as well as a map to help visitors find their way around. The existence of a leaflet distributed via the Borough Council offices, Town Council office, website, libraries and information points such as The Look Out Discovery Centre will also help inform potential visitors of the site's presence and its use as an alternative recreational resource to the SPA. Marketing will also include targeting new residents; including providing information at locations such as Estate Agents.
- A further leaflet is available through the TBH wardens which includes information and location of all SANG sites within the TBH SPA catchment.

3.2 Access

- Roadside signs to guide visitors to site from nearby roads and junctions.
- Surfacing to the southern car park will be improved by regularising the macadam area, marking spaces and installing formal edging to prevent encroachment onto the site.
- Existing paths around the site, including public rights of way, will greatly benefit from resurfacing works to allow easy access around the site all year round. These include Sandhurst Footpath 19 which runs from Mill Lane near the Blackwater River, across the eastern part of the site to the Lower Sandhurst Road and Sandhurst FP22 alongside the Blackwater River. These are both main thoroughfares around the site, with the latter also forming part of the Blackwater Valley Path, a 23-mile long distance route from Aldershot to Swallowfield.
- Link paths will be provided to guide visitors from the car park to the lake and watersports centre as well as an additional pathway allowing pedestrians travelling from Sandhurst on foot more convenient access from Lower Church Road into the site. A further pathway along the eastern side of the water-sports centre will provide dog walkers or those requiring a quieter route to pass the seasonally busy lakeside activities area, whilst maintaining a link to the circular site route.
- In addition, a permissive bridleway runs along the north-east and northern edges of the site providing an alternative path for walkers, cyclist as well as site access for horse-riders. The Bracknell Forest Local Countryside Access Forum has expressed a wish to see this bridleway dedicated as a right of way and added to the Definitive Map and Statement.
- Paths that link Horseshoe Lake to the wider countryside, public rights of way network and other countryside sites will also be improved. These include sections of Sandhurst FP22 alongside the river and signposting along Sandhurst FP11 which runs north from the northern boundary of the site towards Ambarrow Lane – this links the site to Ambarrow Court/Hill SANG), Finchampstead Ridges (a National Trust owned area to the north west) and the Wokingham District public rights of way network.
- Bank repair works are also proposed to Sandhurst FP22 alongside the River Blackwater at several points where water erosion has caused bank failures. These works will help to open the full width of the path and enhance access.

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 bins are proposed for the site, to be placed at strategic locations such as the main and secondary entrances. These will be combined litter and dog-waste bins in line with the BFC Parks & Countryside service's policy of using combined bins.
- New fencing is proposed to the meadow to the north east of the site. This area is grazed by cattle, a key component of the site management which is therefore critical to its provision as a recreational resource.
- Redundant, less accessible gates will be removed providing increased, unhindered access throughout the promoted SANG route.
- New seating will be provided at strategic points around the site, located to allow visitors to enjoy the visual amenity of the site and also where rest points may be required at the furthest points from site entrances.
- A new 'dog beach' area will provide a resource where dogs can paddle and swim in the quieter north-western corner of the lake. 73% of current site visitors are using the site for dog walking. The additional of an informal beach area allows for safe entry into the water away from the seasonally busy water-sports activity centre. At the same time, the effect of bank erosion caused by dogs in other parts of the lake and the riverbank will be reduced by reed bed planting and bank repairs respectively.
- Access to the currently restricted, mowed grassland area, north of the water-sports centre will be enhanced through the use of natural materials and landscaping to allow for an informal, creative children's play area. This will also provide an excellent opportunity to educate users on the environment including the availability and responsible use of SANGs.

3.4 Habitat Management

- Large areas of scrub clearance are proposed to all sides of the lake itself, particularly the eastern and western grazed meadows. Clearance will be carried out in order to increase the nature conservation interest of the site by removing invasive species and creating a variety of vegetated areas and habitats for different species. The welcoming nature and visitor experience of the site will also be enhanced by opening up views around the site and across the lake. Vegetation clearance and management will also increase the safety and security of the site for users.
- The addition of native marginal planting around selected areas of the lake will provide further habitat and refuge for wildlife as well as being useful to restrict areas where the public and dogs can enter the water.
- The Horseshoe shaped island in the north-western corner of the lake will be cleared of scrub, the high banks reduced along with stone laid to provide a wildlife refuge and safe breeding site particularly for waterfowl and migrant Terns. The shape of this island is where the site gets its name and therefore clearing the scrub will help to visually enhance the identity of the SANG.

3.5 Implementation

3.5.1 Funding

Funding for the proposed works 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 Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Supplementary Planning Document (2018). This states that legal obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act will be entered into before a planning application is determined. A proportion of the total amount payable under this agreement will go towards SANG enhancement and in perpetuity maintenance measures as detailed in this SANG plan. These enhancement 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 or seasonal restrictions):

1. Site entrance and visual works
2. Path and access improvements
3. Information and interpretation provision
4. Other works (including habitat management)

3.5.3 Maintenance

The SANG will be maintained in perpetuity, defined as 125 years in the SPA SPD. The SPA contribution which is allocated for in perpetuity maintenance will be applied as necessary in order to maintain the standard of the site and keep it functioning as a SANG. It will be necessary to alter annual expenditure of the in-perpetuity maintenance fund to respond to the needs of the site at a particular time. Expenditure may therefore be higher in some years than others.

3.5.3 Monitoring

Local planning authorities are required to keep a copy of any planning obligation together with details of any modification or discharge of the planning obligation and make these publicly available on their planning register.

Any local authority that has received developer contributions is required to publish an infrastructure funding statement at least annually.

Local planning authorities are expected to use all of the funding they receive through planning obligations in accordance with the terms of the individual planning obligation agreement. This will ensure that new developments are acceptable in planning terms; benefit local communities and support the provision of local infrastructure.

For the financial year 2019/2020 onwards, any local authority that has received developer contributions (section 106 planning obligations or Community Infrastructure Levy) must publish online an infrastructure funding statement by 31 December 2020 and by the 31 December each year thereafter.

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. Details of the monitoring and review of the SPA SPD are outlined in Section 4.7 of the document.

3.6 Consultation

This plan has been developed in consultation with Natural England, the Borough Council's Biodiversity Officer, Site Ranger and Planning Policy Officers, who have been able to comment on the proposals in order to combine objectives and provide an inclusive plan.

3.7 Conclusion

The measures within this SANG plan were identified using the SANG surveys and SANGS checklist (section 6) 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.

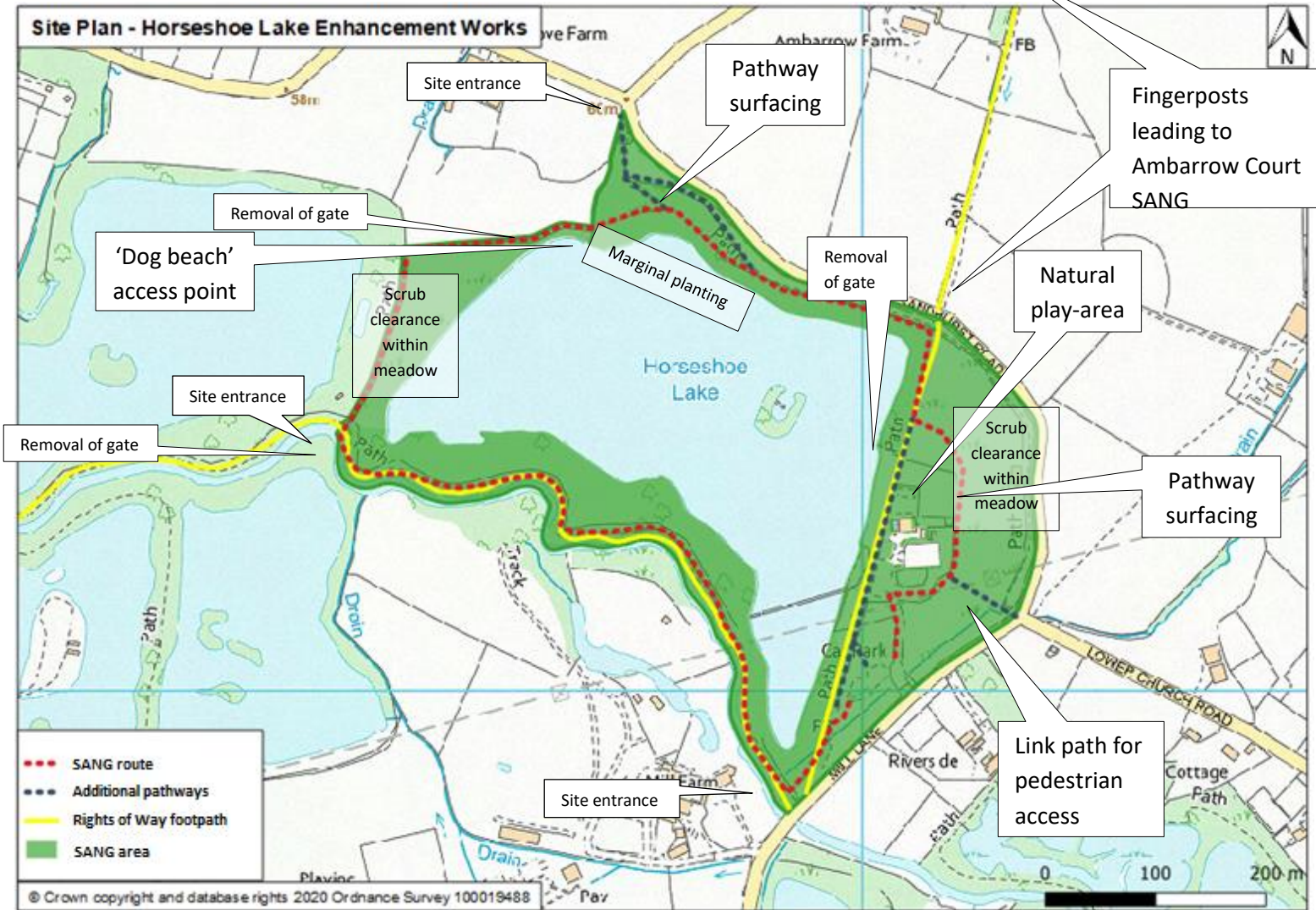
The works will significantly enhance Horseshoe Lake and provide a more attractive, welcoming, user-friendly and accessible site. New interpretive material will provide the means to raise awareness and encourage an increase in visitor numbers. Targeted marketing will ensure that the site is well publicised.

Alongside the SANG 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.

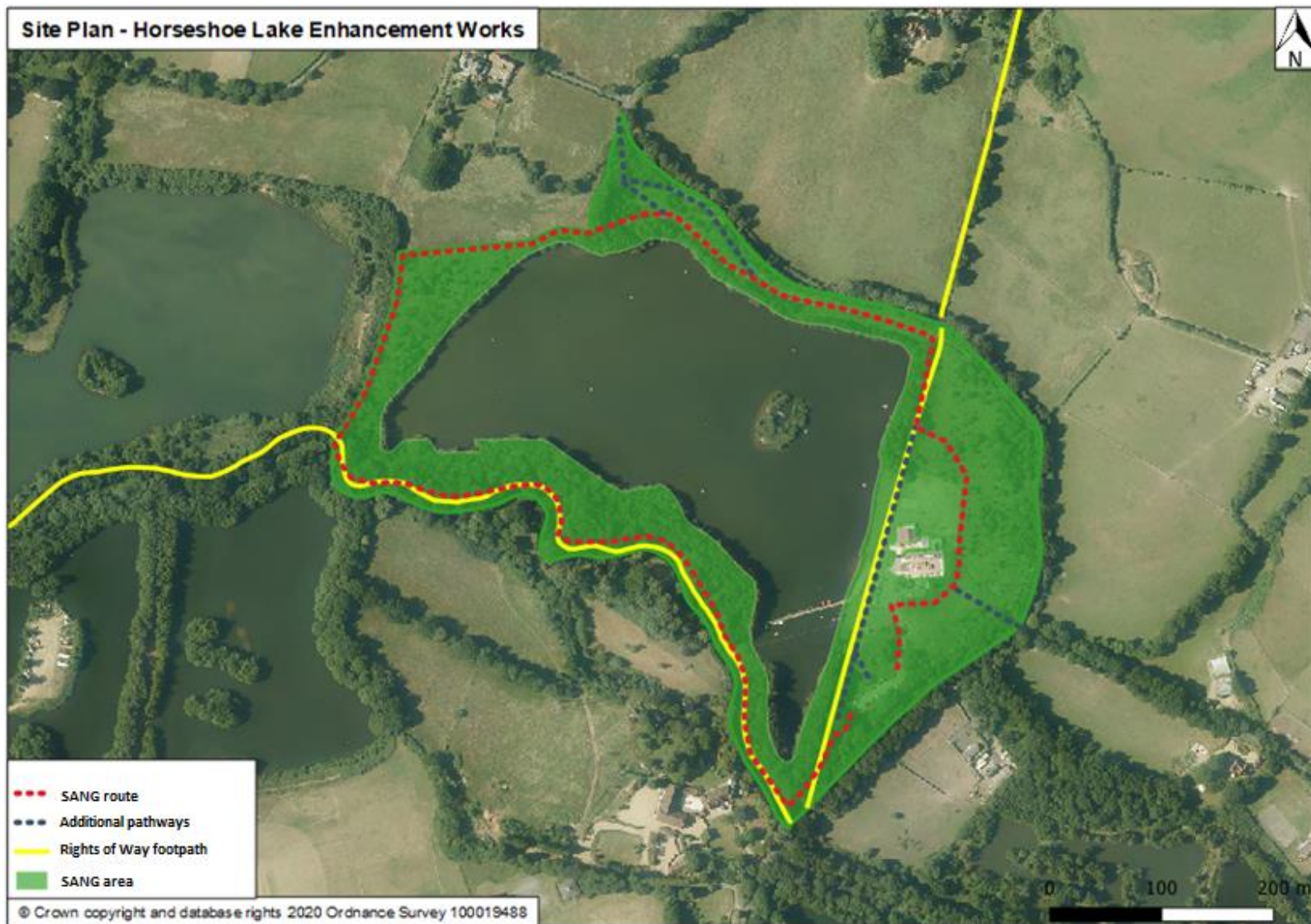
As a component of a wider package of measures the works detailed within this plan will avoid the adverse impacts of recreation arising from new residential development on the SPA and enable sustainable development within the Borough.

4 Site Plan

4.1 Site Plan – Horseshoe Lake proposed SANG enhancement works



4.2 Site Plan – Horseshoe Lake (aerial)



5 Additional Enhancements not Funded by SANG contributions

Reflecting the current site requirements and those requested through, for example, the recent (2018) site visitor survey, additional enhancements have been identified as necessary to further improve the site experience and functionality of the SANG. The basis for these enhancements is to better reflect the various current user groups of the site and increase the enjoyment and usability of those groups. The projected capacity of the SANG will not be affected. These works will not be funded by SPA contributions but fully provided by BFC and therefore are not included with the projected SANG costings.

Café pitch (mobile catering)

A small catering pitch is to be provided on the northern side of the existing water-sports activity building allowing for a mobile catering unit to be utilised. Both site and water-sports visitors will be able to benefit from this installation. This will also provide a low impact solution to the request of an on-site café by regular visitors through the recent site survey.

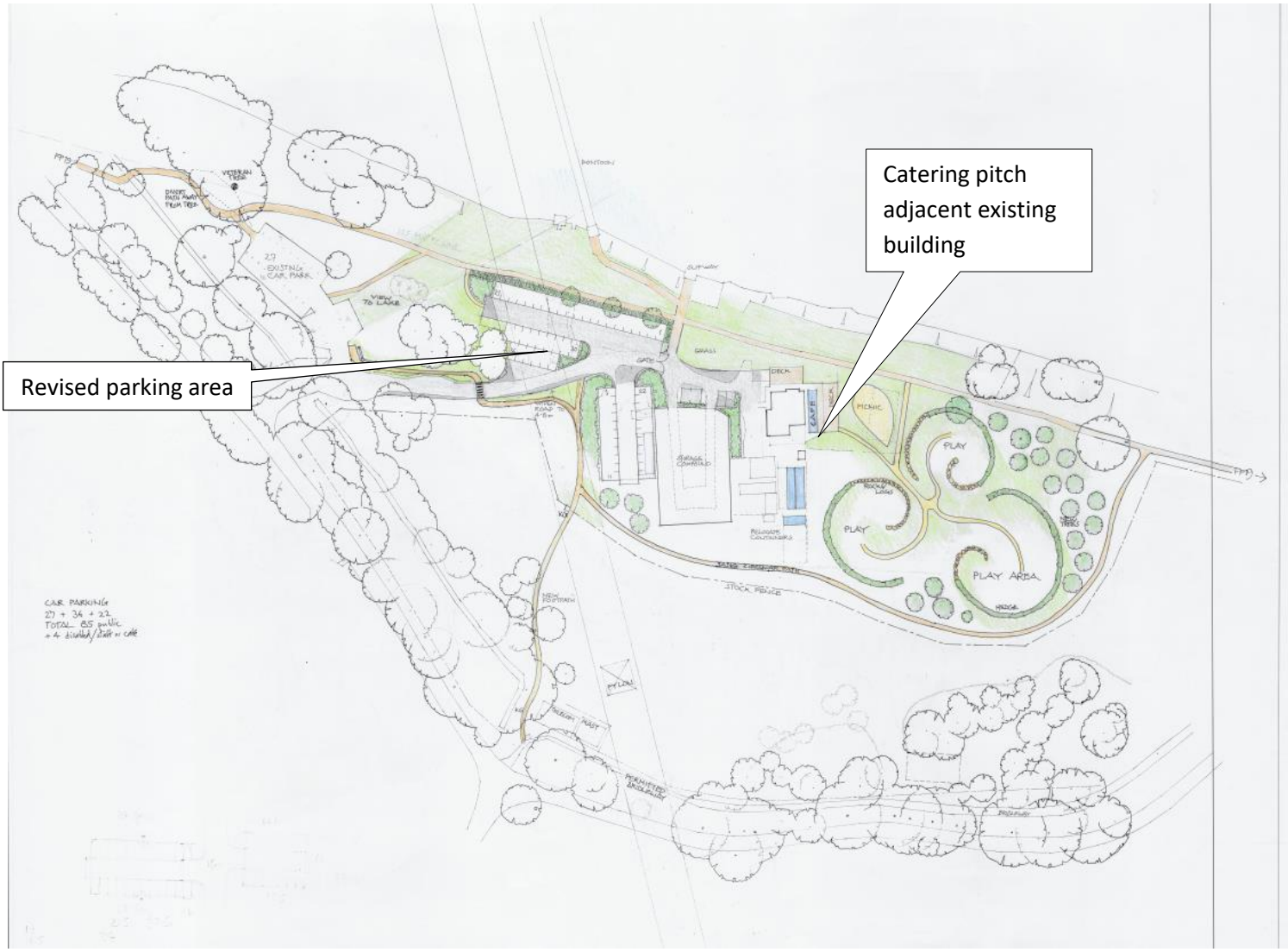
Redefined car parking areas

The current informal car parking available to the south of the water-sports centre is to be formalised with no net increase in parking capacity. (See image 5.1 and 5.2 for existing and future car parking layout). By surfacing and bay marking we aim to provide a safer and more user-friendly solution to the current parking availability, where the recent visitor survey revealed a rating of 8.2 (out of 10) and was the third highest improvement request.

5.1 – existing site layout



5.2 - projected site plan



6 Quality - SANGs Criteria Checklist

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. BFC 'pump prime' enhancement work prior to inhabitants moving into the dwellings ensuring occupations are not held up and 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 based on Natural England guidance.

	Criteria	Current	Future
Must/should haves – criteria essential for SANGs			
1	Parking on all sites larger than 4Ha (unless the site is intended for use within 400m only)	Formal car park for countryside site and informal for watersports centre.	Improved links and signage from car park to site. Resurfaced car parking around water-sports centre. Car park spaces will be marked out and formal edging will be installed to prevent encroachment onto the site. This will result in no net increase in car parking spaces compared to the existing situation.
2	Circular walk of 2.3-2.5km	Choice of routes around site and into wider countryside and rights of way network.	Improved surfacing and signage around and into/out of site.

3	Car parks easily and safely accessible by car and clearly sign posted.	Road sign & site entrance signs.	New site entrance signs.
4	Access points appropriate for particular visitor use the SANGS is intended to cater for.	7 pedestrian entrance points.	All entrance points to be upgraded to allow disabled access where applicable. All main paths to be surfaced. Older redundant gateways will be removed.
5	Safe access route on foot from the nearest car park and/or footpath.	Wide choice of routes around site from car park and entrance points.	Improved links and signage from car park to site, around the eastern side of the water sports centre and from Church Road
6	Circular walk which starts and finishes at the car park.	Car park located at eastern edge of site allowing routes around site in choice of directions.	Improved links and signage from car park to and around site.
7	Perceived as safe – no tree and scrub cover along part of walking routes.	Open plan car park and views.	Shrub clearance to enhance views across site and safety and security for users.
8	Paths easily used and well maintained but mostly unsurfaced.	Mix of surfaced and unsurfaced paths.	Path surfacing to be hoggin to retain natural feel.
9	Perceived as semi-natural with little intrusion of artificial structures.	Minimal way-marking and site furniture.	Some benches and signage to be added to enhance visitor experience but remain in-keeping with environment.

10	If larger than 12 Ha then a range of habitats should be present	Large areas of open space, scrub, trees and river. Site focused around large lake.	Routes available through identifiable habitats. Site management aims to increase biodiversity value of habitat types.
11	Access unrestricted - plenty of space for dogs to exercise freely and safely off the lead.	Open areas available within site, separated from cattle grazing areas.	Fencing improvements to grazed areas.
12	No unpleasant intrusions (e.g. sewage treatment works, smells etc.).	No unpleasant intrusions. HV powerline on pylons on part of site.	HV powerline on pylons on part of site.
13	Clearly signposted or advertised in some way.	Road sign & site entrance signs. BFC site webpage. TBH Partnership webpage and leaflet.	New site entrance signs; interpretive panels at car park and riverside; directional fingerposts around site and wider countryside; site leaflet. BFC site webpage.
14	Leaflets or websites advertising their location to potential users. (distributed to new homes in the area and at entrance points and car parks).	BFC site webpage and leaflet available to download online. TBH Partnership webpage and leaflet.	Webpages updated with site information and news. New site leaflet. Leaflet to be available from proposed catering pitch/play area.
Desirable features			

15	Can dog owners take dogs from the car park to SANGs safely off the lead.	Car park adjacent to links around site.	Improved links and signage from car park to site. Reaching the circular route avoiding the watersports activity area requires crossing the access road inside the site. Dogs should be on lead here, where a zebra crossing will be provided.
16	Gently undulating topography.	Undulating topography around lake sides.	Undulating topography around lake sides.
17	Access points with signage outlining the layout of the SANGS and routes available to visitors.	Various access points onto site	New interpretive panels at car park and riverside and directional fingerposts around site.
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.	Large areas of open space, scrub and trees. Site focused around large lake.	Many vegetated areas retained and improved for biodiversity value. Site focused around lake.
19	Focal point such as a view point or monument within the SANG.	Lake provides central focus and viewpoint for site.	Shrub clearance to enhance views across site.

7 Costings

Costs reflect and include current completed enhancements as well as future expenditure.
Original (2007) plan is currently 57% complete to date of this revision.

Works	Location	Unit/total Cost	Quantity	revised budget 2020
Information & Interpretation				
Site signs				
- Main entrance		£567	1	£567
- Secondary entrances		£279	4	£279
Roadside directional signs	Mill Lane	£450	1	£450
Site noticeboard with combined interpretive panel	Car park	£2,274	1	£3,779
	watersports centre	£1,505	1	
Interpretation panel	Riverside path	£1,500	1	£1,500
Fingerposts	Mill Lane footpath entrance/Lower Sandhurst Road/Lower Sandhurst Road / Ambarrow Lane entrance	£1,404	allowance	£1,404
Installation costs		n/a	n/a	£1,775
Site Leaflet	n/a	n/a	20,000	£2,046
Total Info.& Interp.				£11,801
Access				
Replace boardwalk leading to river	Car park to river	£40/m	approx. 45	£1,735
Path Improvements	main circular route/links to entranceways/alternative route passed activity centre	£40/m	approx. 2250	£91,924
Bank repair works to riverside path	Riverside path	n/a	n/a	£11,236
Total Access				£104,895
Furniture				
Seating - benches (incl. installation)	Car park	£1,775	1	£1,775
	Riverside path	£1,317	1	£1,317
natural play area	eastern side of site	£100,000	1	£100,000
Dog Beach' area	north-western corner of lake	£25,000	allowance	£25,000
Total Furniture				£128,092
Habitat Management				
Fencing (stock-proof)	Eastern meadow	£15 / m	approx. 1700	£24,727
island habitat creation	Lake island	£25,000	allowance	£25,000
Lake marginal planting	Lake edges		allowance	£10,000
Scrub management	western and eastern grazed meadows		allowance	£7,400
habitat management/landscaping	all site	£40,000	allowance	£40,000
Total Habitat Man.				£107,127
TOTAL COST				£351,915

8 Glossary

SANG	Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.
SPA	Special Protection Area.
SPA SPD	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Supplementary Planning Document (SPA SPD)

9 References

Bracknell Forest Council, The Council Plan. Available to download from <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/strategies-plans-and-policies/council-plan/about-council-plan>

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

Footprint Ecology - Thames Basin Heaths SANG Visitor Survey Analysis 2018

Thames Basin Heaths SPA Supplementary Planning Document (2018) <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/planning-policy/supplementary-planning-documents/thames-basin-heaths-spa-supplementary-planning-document>