



North Ely Park A Landscape Vision

19 February 2015

1.	Introduction	03			
1.1	Project scope	03			
1.2	Structure of the report	3			
2.	Landscape context	06			
2.1	Green infrastructure	06			
2.2	Landscape character	07			
3.	Design	13			
3.1	Design evolution	13			
	Ely's landscape setting	13			
	Surface water attenuation	14			
	Routes	15			
	Landscape structure	16			
3.2	Landscape masterplan	18			
	Biodiversity	18			
	Sustainable urban drainage	18			
	Access	18			
	East side	21			
	North side	26			
	West side	28			
3.3	Capital costs	30			
4.	Management	31			
4.1	Park Governance Considerations	31			
	Phased growth of the park	31			
	Park identity and area	31			
	Responsibility and accountability	31			
	Partners and Stakeholders	31			
	Security of funding	32			
	Skills and resource	32			
	4.2 Park Governance Options	32			
	Land Trust - management options	33			
	Land Trust - added value	34			
	4.3 Park Management Structure	35			
5.	Consultation	36			
5.1	Stakeholders	36			
5.2	Local community	36			
5.3	Design revisions	36			
6.	The Next Steps	37			
6.1	Phasing	37			
6.2	Phase 1	37			
6.3	Remaining phases	39			
	Appendices	41			
Appendix 1	North Ely Park - Order of Cost Estimate Final	42			
Appendix 2	Outline landscape management prescriptions	43			
Appendix 3	Public exhibition - summary of responses to questionnaire	47			

1.1 Project scope

Sheils Flynn has been appointed by East Cambridgeshire District Council (ECDC) to develop and deliver a vision for a new country park as part of housing development in North Ely. The Sheils Flynn team includes quantity surveyors, WT Partnership and landscape management consultants, Land Management Services.

The project will explore how the new country park, known as North Ely Park, can contribute to the development of an attractive and distinctive landscape setting for Ely. It shows how this new park can be designed to reinforce historic patterns of land use on the Isle of Ely and the surrounding fenland, 'knitting into' existing green infrastructure (GI) networks so that it extends and enhances connections across and onto the fringes of the fen island.

It is important to note that this project provides a vision for North Ely Park which has been shaped by extensive consultation with statutory agencies, local organisations and the local Ely community. It is a long term vision which will not be delivered at once but over a number of years in conjunction with the adjoining housing development.

Figure 1 shows the context for North Ely Park in relation to existing settlement and the planned new developments in North Ely led by developers, Endurance Estates and the Church Commissioners.

The project for the design of North Ely Park was

undertaken in two stages. Stage 1 focused on developing an over-arching vision for the park, balancing priorities, establishing creative design principles and developing a concept design which could be costed. Stage 1 was completed in September 2014 and the resulting concept design and cost plan was used to inform the ongoing viability work and Section 106 negotiations.

Stage 2 incorporated more extensive consultation, so that the emerging design could be shaped by discussion with developers, landowners, stakeholders and local communities. This final Stage 2 report is a Landscape Vision which illustrates and describes balanced proposals for a mix of uses alongside a strategy for the implementation and long term sustainable management and maintenance of the park. The report incorporates a capital cost plan and an estimate of future maintenance costs.

1.2 Structure of the report

Following this introductory section, the report is structured as follows:

- Section 2, Landscape Context - describes how the site for the new park can contribute to green infrastructure on a sub-regional scale and how it fits within the distinctive landscape character context of the Isle of Ely.
- Section 3, Design - traces the evolution of the design and describes how the key strands of design thinking come together in the overall

masterplan for North Ely Park. This section also summarises the estimated capital costs of the park, with reference to Appendix 1 (provided as a separate report by quantity surveyors, WT Partnership).

- Section 4, Management - provides recommendations for the sustainable management and governance of North Ely Park (with reference to Appendix 2, which provides detailed landscape management prescriptions).
- Section 5, Consultation - describes the extensive stakeholder consultation that has shaped the masterplan, with reference to Appendix 3, which summarises responses from the public consultation.
- Section 6, Next steps - explains the anticipated phased process for the implementation of North Ely Park and recommendations for the implementation, management and governance of phase 1.

Appendix 1 - Estimate of capital costs for North Ely Park (separate report by WT Partnership)

Appendix 2 - Detailed landscape management prescriptions for North Ely Park

Appendix 3 - Summary of responses to the public consultation

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-  Proposed North Ely Country Park
-  Open water/river
-  'A' roads
-  'B' roads
-  Public right of way
-  Railway lines
-  National cycle route 11 (on roads)
-  National trail/promoted long distance route
-  Ely Station
-  New housing development
-  Ely Cathedral



Figure 1 - North Ely Country Park - site context



The slopes of the Isle of Ely form a backdrop to views from Kettleworth Drove, on the edge of the fenland to the north. The water tower is a striking landmark

2.1 Green infrastructure

Figure 2 shows how the site for North Ely Park fits within the wider GI context for the Isle of Ely at a sub-regional scale.

The existing Ely Country Park is a popular riverside destination to the east of the Isle of Ely. The newly refurbished play area and adjacent meadow off Willow Lane are fully accessible, but public access to the more extensive wetlands and water meadows to the east is limited because of their exceptionally high nature conservation value.

The new North Ely Park has the potential to divert existing and additional recreational pressure away from more sensitive wildlife areas including Ely Pits and Meadows Site of Special Scientific Interest. To achieve this, it must include multi-functional GI of sufficient area and quality to be attractive to people, offering significant areas of informal open space for quiet enjoyment of the countryside and wildlife as well as appropriately located areas offering more formal recreation opportunities.

The relatively limited extent of existing public open space means that the new country park to the north of Ely is a much needed recreational resource and will provide a valuable addition to the GI network. Footpath and cycleway connections between the greenspaces provide important recreational opportunities for more extensive outings and ECDC's wider vision is to enable footpath access right around the perimeter of the Isle of Ely.

Views to Ely Cathedral from footpaths within Ely Country Park, to the east of the Isle of Ely.



North Ely Park contributes to the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy¹, which sets out objectives, targets and projects for a strategic GI network. The Strategy specifically identifies the further development of Ely Country Park and Ely North to provide additional locations for outdoor activity in the urban-fringe. It identifies opportunities to restore Chettisham Meadows and create a strategic habitat link joining Ely Country Park, Chettisham Meadows, Little Downham LNR and the Ouse Washes and to develop new, and enhance existing open spaces to form a connected and multi-functional network of spaces that links homes, work places and leisure facilities.

The GI Strategy identifies a priority GI corridor between Chatteris and Ely, part of which is illustrated on Figure 2. This opportunity for enhanced countryside access could potentially be developed along the lines of the old drove roads.

Figure 3 shows the local GI context for North Ely Park. In particular it highlights the important local public rights of way - Clayway Drove along the eastern margins of the site, and Kettlesworth Drove to the north. Both routes are historic rights of way which run alongside the catchwater drains which define the outer margins of the Isle of Ely.

There are opportunities to enhance the local GI network by providing or enhancing public rights of way between the new North Ely Park and the

¹ Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, Cambridgeshire Horizons, 2011

existing Ely Country Park and between North Ely Park and the existing network of long distance promoted national trails (Hereward Way, Fen Rivers Way and the Ouse Valley Way) and cycle routes (National Cycle Route 11).

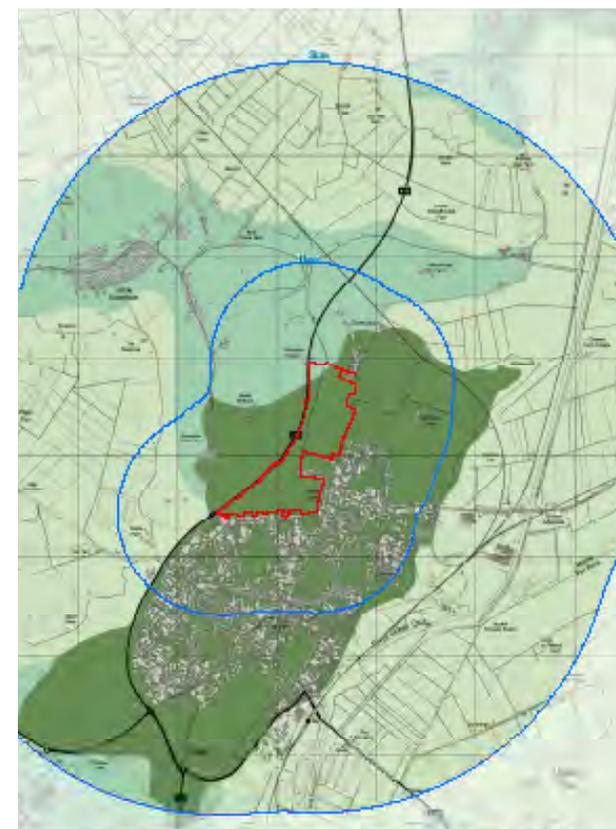
Given the relatively high proportion of railway commuters in Ely (and the likelihood that many of those arriving to live in the new development will also travel by train, new cycle routes should be provided, connecting the new North Ely housing developments to Ely Railway Station.

2.2 Landscape character

The distinctive landscape character of the Isle of Ely reflects the landform of the fen island, one of the largest islands of higher land in the fen basin. The Isle of Ely is capped by Boulder Clay left by ice age glaciers, so the historic settlements that developed on the higher land was supported by agricultural land with very different soils to those of the surrounding waterlogged fen.

The drawing opposite is taken from the Environmental Impact Assessment for the housing development to the north-west of Ely. It highlights local variations in landscape character at the scale of the Isle of Ely, which reflect the higher land and the underlying soils. To the north-west of the Isle of Ely, the historic village of Little Downham is also sited on an 'island' of slightly higher land overlooking the fen.

Figure 4 shows variations in local landscape



Settlement Scale
Landscape Character
Extract from North Ely
Environmental Impact
Assessment (Fig. 6.6),
LDA Design, Feb. 2012

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-  Proposed North Ely Park
-  Ely Country Park (existing)
-  County Wildlife Sites,
Local Nature Reserves and SSSIs
-  Important urban parks and open spaces
-  'A' roads
-  'B' roads
-  Public right of way
-  National trail/promoted long distance route
-  National cycle route 11 (on road)
-  Proposed GI corridor (Chatteris to Ely) in
Cambridgeshire GI Strategy
-  Open water/river
-  Ely Cathedral



Figure 2 - Strategic green infrastructure context

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-  Proposed North Ely Park
-  Ely Country Park (existing)
-  County Wildlife Sites and SSSIs
-  Important urban parks and open spaces
-  Public right of way
-  National trail/promoted long distance route
-  National cycle route 11 (on road)
-  Open water/river
-  West margin of North Ely Park along A10*

* This part of North Ely Park will be delivered in accordance with the proposals in the Endurance Estates application. It has not been included in the preliminary costing for the concept design at this stage.



Figure 3 - Local green infrastructure context

character in the vicinity of the North Ely Park site. The local landscape character area classification shown on Figure 4 is based on the broader scale classification shown on the extract from the EIA (which shows 'Ely Island' in dark green; 'Transition Island' in a mid green colour and 'Fenland' in light green) but shows variations in landscape character within and adjacent to the North Ely Park site at a finer grain.

The band of dense, mature vegetation along Clayway Drove gives the landscape to the east a relatively enclosed character, but the landscape becomes more open to the north and east, with long views out across the railway line (which is in

cutting here) to Waterden Fen.

The existing industrial development at Chettisham, influences the character of the landscape to the north west of the site. Here it is relatively enclosed, as a mix of buildings and hedgerow trees provide a backdrop to local views.

Over-scaled industrial structures, such as the animal feed factory at Chettisham and Ely water tower are typical fen landmarks.

In the centre of the site, a minor valley containing a narrow reservoir is enclosed by existing mature trees.

To the west, there is a transitional landscape

on the fringes of the Isle of Ely and the lower fen island on which the historic village of Little Downham is sited. Little Downham was the site of the Bishop of Ely's Summer Palace and deer park in the Middle Ages and the landscape here has a smaller scale than the surrounding fens, with hedged fields, scattered trees and remnant orchards.

The vast, open and expansive arable landscape of the fens surrounds the Isle of Ely, creating striking contrasts in scale, landscape pattern and landscape character.



View to the site of North Ely Park from Kettlesworth Drove

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Broad scale landscape character (based on the EIA extract)

- Ely Island
- Transition Island
- Fenland

Local landscape character in the vicinity of the Country Park

- Ely Island Open/North
- Ely Island Enclosed/West
- Ely Island Enclosed/Centre
- Ely Island Semi-Open/East

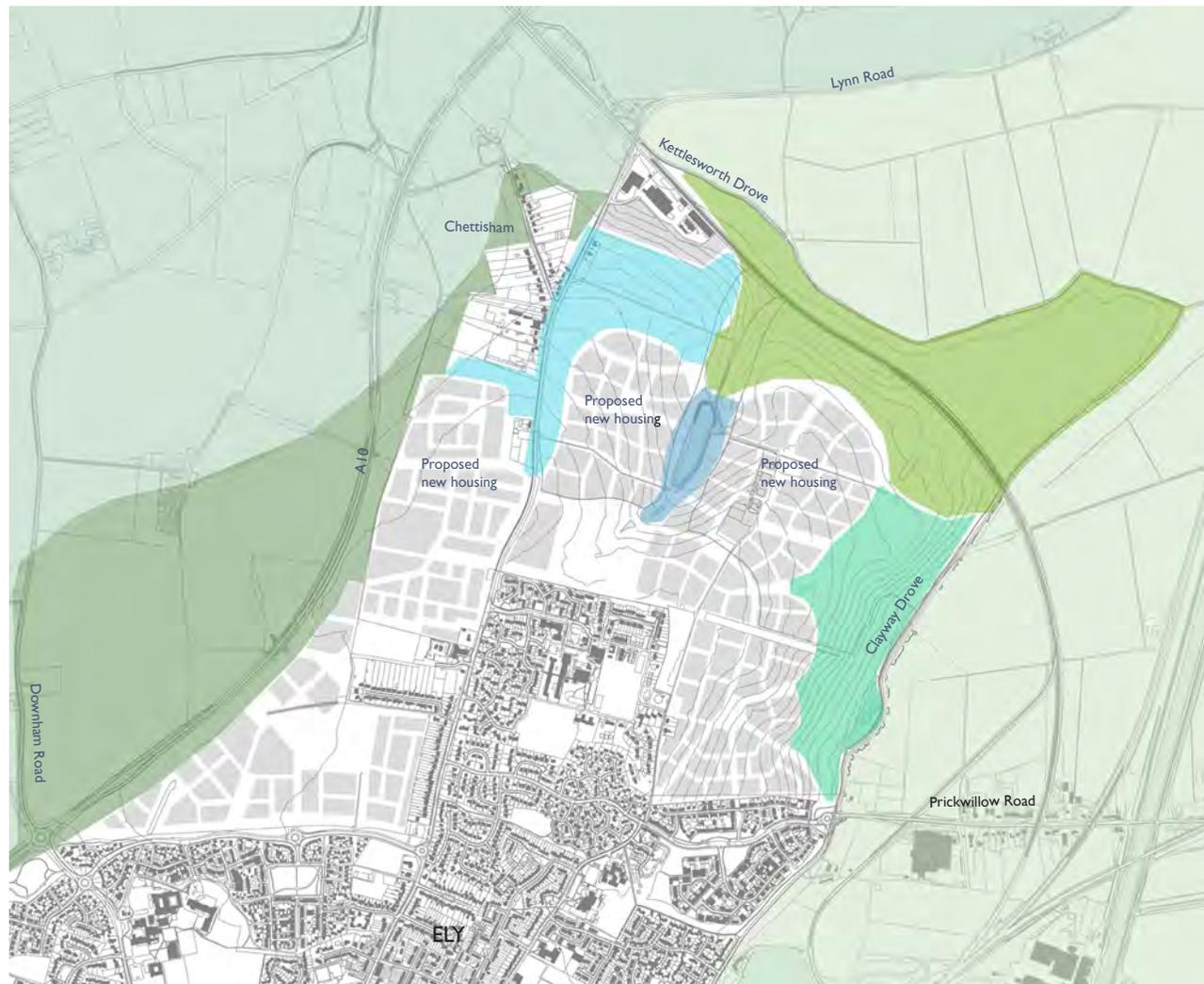
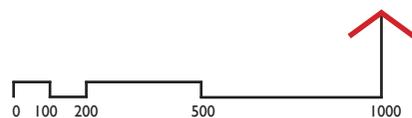


Figure 4 - Local landscape character



Ely Island Enclosed/West

Views towards the industrial site at Chettisham, to the north west of North Ely Country Park



Ely Island Semi-Open/East

Views to the east are partially contained by the band of existing mature trees along Clayway Drove



Ely Island Enclosed/Centre

The reservoir, which occupies the minor valley in the centre of the North Ely Country Park site is surrounded by mature vegetation

3.1 Design evolution

3.1.1 Ely's landscape setting

The outer margins of the fen islands are typically defined by curving catchwater drains, which follow the contour at the break of slope, emphasising the local landform and often marking the historic boundary between the relatively small-scale farmland on the fen islands and the expansive, geometric pattern of arable fields in the surrounding fen.

The margins of the north part of the Isle of Ely are defined by the catchwater drains along Clayway Drive to the east and Kettlesworth Drive to the north. The island edge landform extends beyond the railway line, which is hidden in cutting to the north-east but visible and at grade as it curves to the north on the approach to Chettisham.

Analysis of local views and the natural topography of the Isle of Ely highlights the importance of the open views across Waterden Fen to the north-east. The landscape setting of the Isle of Ely is defined by the combined influence of these long views and the historic droves and catchwater drains which form the natural boundary of the fen island.



3.1.2 Surface water attenuation

New development to the north of Ely will require extensive surface water attenuation. Following the logic of the historic island edge, which is defined by catchwater drains along the break of slope, the new surface water attenuation should be accommodated by a new catchwater drain approximately along the 8m contour, which is associated with water storage and a new fen landscape. This will fulfil the statutory requirement that surface water runoff from new development is attenuated on-site, with no surface water runoff entering the existing catchwater drains/wetlands.

Diagram 1 shows the existing drainage system - the catchwater drain along Clayway Drive and the existing reedbed alongside

Diagram 2 shows the proposed new catchwater drain along the 8m contour, just to the west of Clayway Drive

Diagram 3 shows the proposed new wetlands associated with the new surface water attenuation - a sequence of permanent wetlands along the eastern margins of the site between the new catchwater drain and Clayway Drive and a sequence of ephemeral wetlands along the central minor valley in the central-north part of the site, which would be flooded seasonally during periods of heavy rainfall.

Diagram 4 shows how surface water runoff from the new development would be channelled to connect with the proposed new drainage system.



1. The catchwater drains define the island edge



2. A new island edge - a new catchwater drain



3. New wetlands - new fenland



4. Surface water runoff - connections

3.1.3 Routes

The new park provides an opportunity to enhance connections to the existing network of footpaths, bridleways and cycleways, with potential links along Clayway Drive to the Fen Rivers Way and Ouse valley Way and along Kettlesworth Drive to Hereward Way (Diagram 5). There is also an important opportunity to develop a multi-user access route southwards from Clayway Drive along Prickwillow Road to the existing Ely Country Park.

Within the new park, proposed strategic routes (Diagram 6) will provide circular routes around the new wetlands on the east side of the park and a relatively elevated perimeter route around the edge of the housing, with superb views across the Fens to the north of the Isle of Ely. This strategic route will be stepped slightly above the slope to facilitate views across the park. Car parks will provide gateways to the new park accessed from Thistle Corner and Lynn Road.

At a local scale, connections between the new residential areas and North Ely Park will be aligned to link with routes and views within the new developments (Diagram 7).



5. Existing public rights of way



6. Proposed strategic connections



7. Proposed local connections between housing areas and the new park

3.1.4 Landscape structure

The new housing will be quite exposed and the housing edge will benefit from an interface of orchards and groups of trees, which will help to manage climatic issues while also softening the profile of the new buildings and preventing a stark built skyline in views from the lower margins of the country park and from Clayway Drove and Kettlesworth Drove to the east and north.

Diagram 8 shows how a small-scale pattern of orchards, community gardens and groups of trees will soften views to the new housing and frame views out across the park and the fens to the north.

Diagram 9 shows the location of new woodlands which will define the small swales that channel surface water run-off from the housing to the wetlands on the lower slopes.

Between the woodlands, the slopes of the country park will be flanked by a mosaic of meadow habitats. Diagram 10 shows amenity meadows which are fully accessible for informal recreation and Diagram 11 shows the extensive grazed meadows which reflects the open character of the landscape in this area and provide a foreground to the gateway views out from and back to the Isle of Ely from Waterden Fen. The railway line acts as a ha ha in this area, as trains are hidden from view within a cutting.



8. A new housing edge buffer - orchards, parks and woodland



9. New connecting woodlands



10. A mosaic of amenity space with meadow



11. More inaccessible grazing meadows

Within this overall landscape structure, there are opportunities for secluded greenspaces around Highflyer Lake and for elevated greens alongside the housing edges (Diagram 12).

Diagram 13 shows the location of sports pitches, play parks and allotments. A maintenance depot for the Country Park could also be located in this area. Note that many play parks will be provided within the new housing areas so there will be a network of accessible play spaces threading through the new residential areas and out into North Ely Park. There will also be cricket and football pitches provided within the new housing areas.

There will also be opportunities for small-scale interventions that heighten people's appreciation of the landscape. Examples are lookouts and a sculpted viewing mound that provide elevated viewpoints (Diagram 14).



12. Secluded greenspace around Highflyer Lake and elevated greens along perimeter path



13. Playing fields, play parks and allotments



14. Landmarks - edges, bridges, sculpted viewing mound and lookouts

3.2 Landscape masterplan

The drawings in this section of the report show how the individual strands of design thinking (in Section 3.1) come together in the overall landscape masterplan for North Ely Park, which will:

- enhance Ely's landscape setting;
- attenuate a significant amount of surface water runoff from the adjacent housing developments;
- create and improve connections to new and existing residential areas;
- enhance the wider GI for the Isle of Ely; and
- create a distinctive landscape character.

Figure 5 explains the proposed structure of North Ely Park in terms of eight broadly defined 'activity zones'.

Figure 6 is the overall landscape masterplan, which is followed (on pages 21, 26 and 28) by more detailed descriptions of the east, north and north-west sections of the park. These drawings reflect comments received from both statutory consultees, a community consultation and a workshop with a local school.

3.2.1 Biodiversity

The landscape masterplan aims to provide features which will promote biodiversity and enable visitors to appreciate and enjoy the wildlife of the park.

The park will include extensive new wetlands and a mosaic of grassland, meadow and woodland habitats. Areas shown as 'meadow' will include amenity meadow areas, which are mown on a regular basis, areas sown with a meadow flower/grass mix (mown twice a year) and extensive grazed pastures, which would be sown with a nectar-rich flower/grass mix.

The margins of woodland areas might be sown with a woodland edge/hedgerow flower/grass mix. These areas would be contiguous with the wildflower meadows, and managed in the same way. Woodland areas will be planted with native species, especially those bearing berries (holly, guelder rose, hawthorn, blackthorn, elder), which are attractive for people and provide breeding habitat/shelter and a source of food for birds and other wildlife.

3.2.2 Sustainable urban drainage

Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) are an approach to managing rainfall which falls onto the hard surfaces that are prevalent in urban areas.

The wetlands, swales and water meadows in North Ely Park are designed to attenuate surface water

run-off from the new residential neighbourhoods in North Ely. Other SUDS features, particularly on the fringes of the housing areas, will include semi-permeable surfaces, swales, temporary and permanent ponds and planting which is designed to maximise surface water attenuation, improve water quality, enhance biodiversity and create distinctive landscape features.

3.2.3 Access

Many of those consulted during the design process for North Ely Park were concerned about the impact of the additional traffic that will be generated by the new housing areas. The park has a role in helping to minimise traffic congestion by providing a strategic cycle route that connects the new housing areas to Ely railway station and the city centre.

The hierarchy of cycle, pedestrian and bridle routes within the park will also provide multiple opportunities for family and weekend recreation, particularly if there is easy, safe access.



1

Play and recreation with open access



2

Meadow and woodland with open access



3

Orchards, allotments and community gardens



4

Grazing meadows with controlled seasonal access



5

Sculpted valley landform for summer events and temporary winter floodwater storage



6

Clayway Drove - linking the park to the wider countryside



7

A10 and buffer woodlands



8

Development drainage attenuation - water and reed fenland ecology

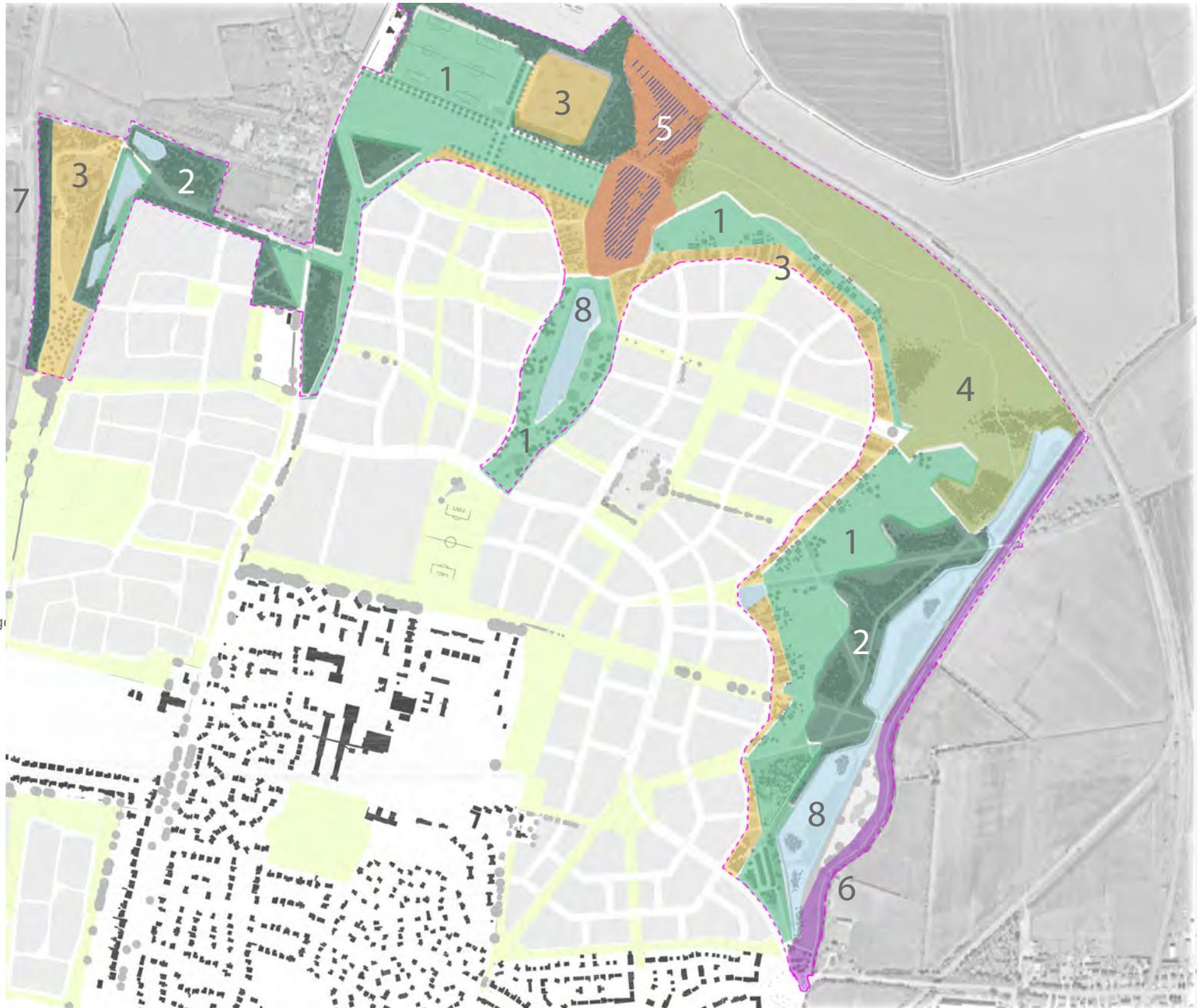


Figure 5 - Activity zones

-  North Ely Park
- EXISTING**
-  Rivers and drains
-  Ponds to be retained
-  Buildings
-  Trees
-  Contours
-  Hedge
- PROPOSED MASTERPLAN**
-  Play areas
-  Buildings
-  Public open spaces
- PROPOSED NORTH ELY PARK**
-  Woodland trees (Woodland edge flower/grass mix)
-  Avenue trees
-  Orchard trees
-  Parkland trees
-  Amenity grass
-  Meadow (Meadow flower/grass mix)
-  Grazing meadow (Nectar rich flower/grass mix)
-  Allotments/community garden
-  Footway/cycleway
-  Footpath (Asphalt)
-  Footpath (Bound gravel)
-  Clayway Drove (Historic drove)
-  Contours (1 m)
-  Sculpted viewing mound
-  Lookout structure
-  Gabion wall
-  Adventure play
-  Events stage area
-  Activity building
-  Boardwalks/bridges
-  Flood storage reservoir
-  Attenuation ponds
-  New catch drains



Figure 6 - Landscape masterplan

3.2.4 East side - parking, play and a sequence of wetlands

The principal entrance to the park will be from the south east, where a car park will provide dramatic gateway views across the new wetlands and existing reedbed. This is a more intimate part of the park, where circular walks follow the margins of the wetlands, with connections across to Clayway Drove to the east and the new residential neighbourhoods on the slopes to the west.

Small woodlands define and screen the swales that facilitate surface water run-off from the housing edge to the wetlands and new catchwater drain along the foot of the slope to the east. A new shared space crossing over Prickwillow Road at Thistle Corner provides a multi-user route which connects to Ely Country Park to the south along the pavement of Prickwillow Road.

Figure 7- Landscape masterplan - detail east side

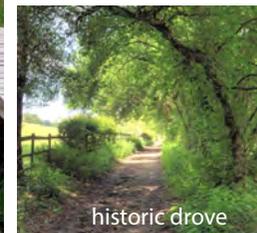
Figure 9 - Sections A, B and C

Figure 10 - Sections A, B and C - detail

Figure 11 - East side wetlands and connection to Clayway Drove - sketch



East entrance - car park, interpretation and adventure play



Wetlands - reedbeds and pools, pathways and bridges define the fen island margins

-  North Ely Park
- EXISTING**
-  Rivers and drains
-  Ponds to be retained
-  Buildings
-  Trees
-  Contours
-  Hedge
- PROPOSED MASTERPLAN**
-  Play areas
-  Buildings
-  Public open spaces
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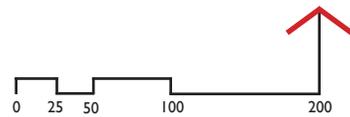
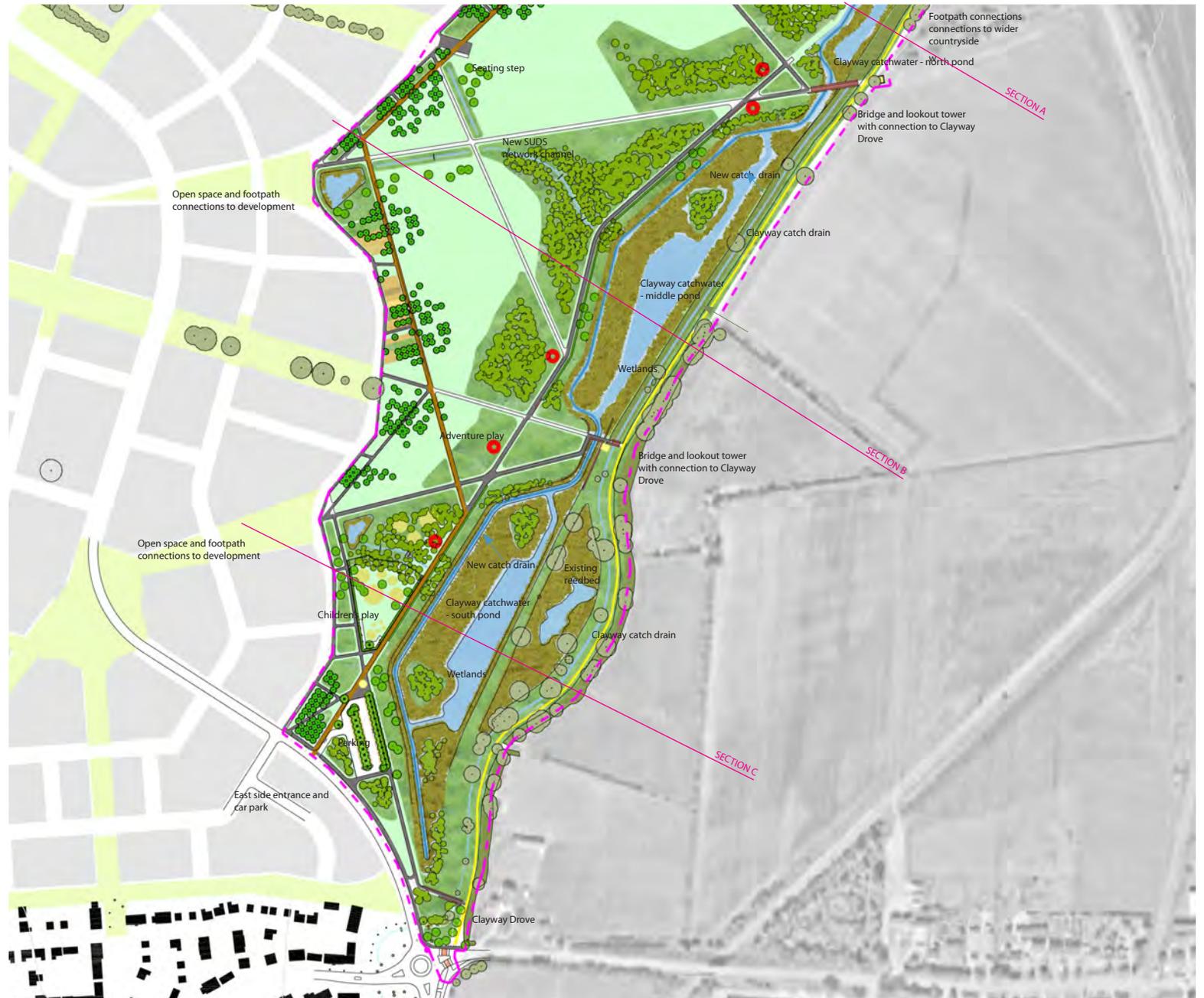


Figure 8 - Landscape masterplan - detail east side

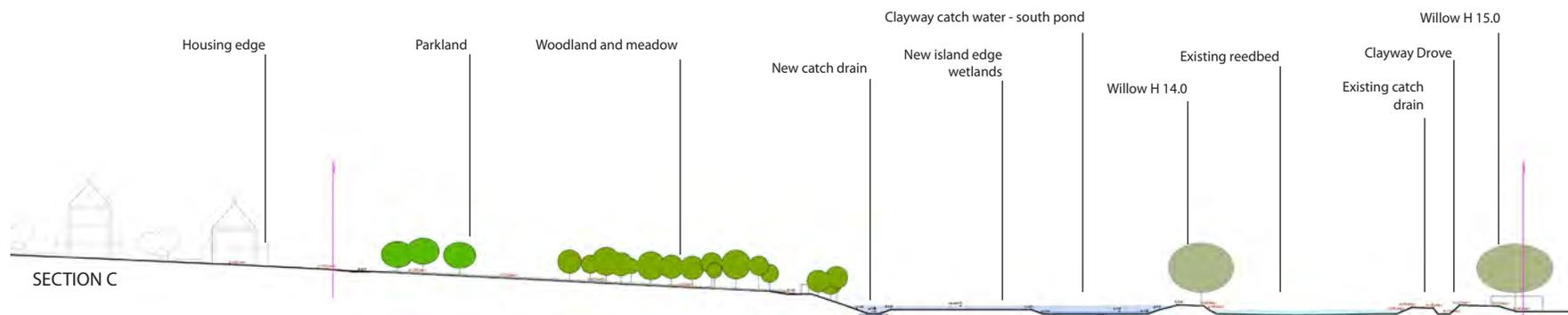
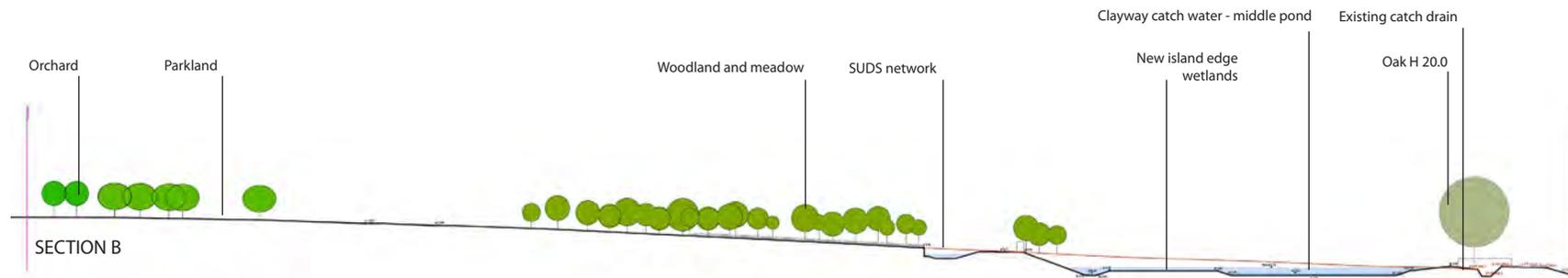
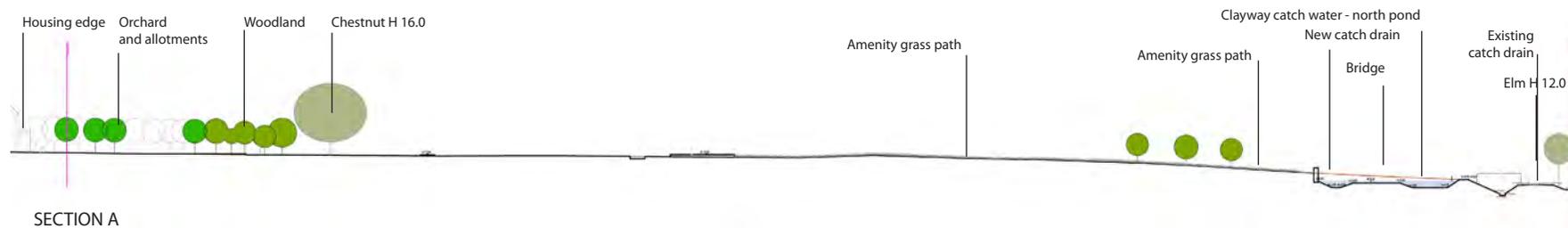


Figure 9 - Sections A, B and C

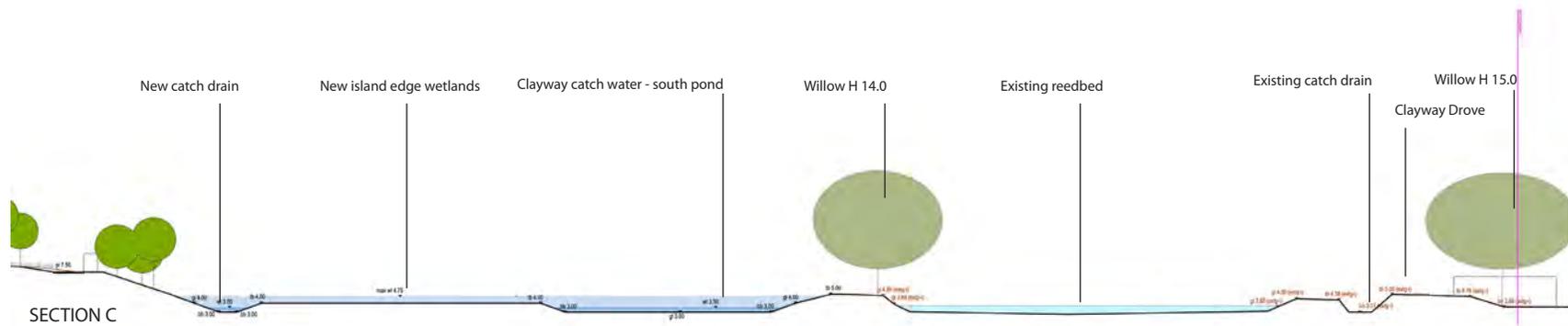
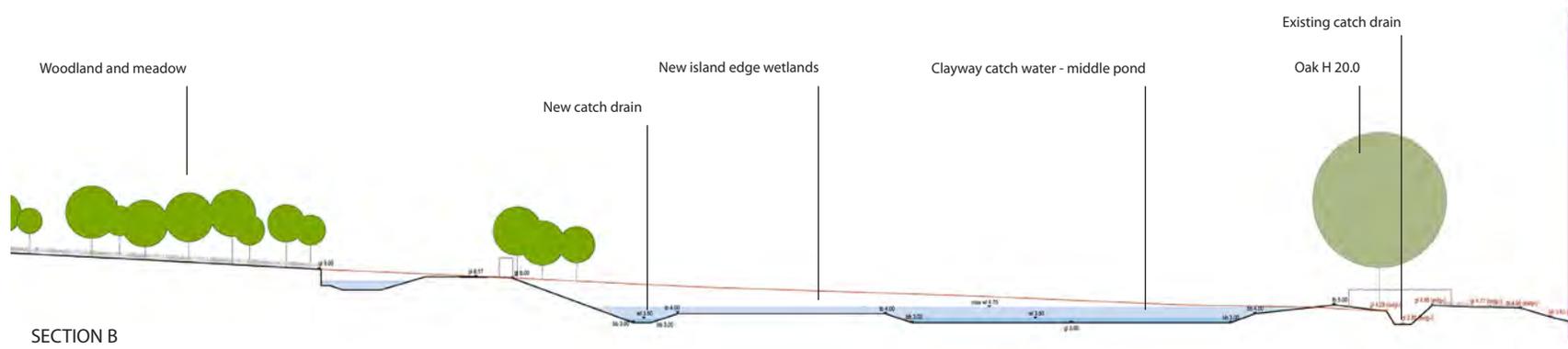
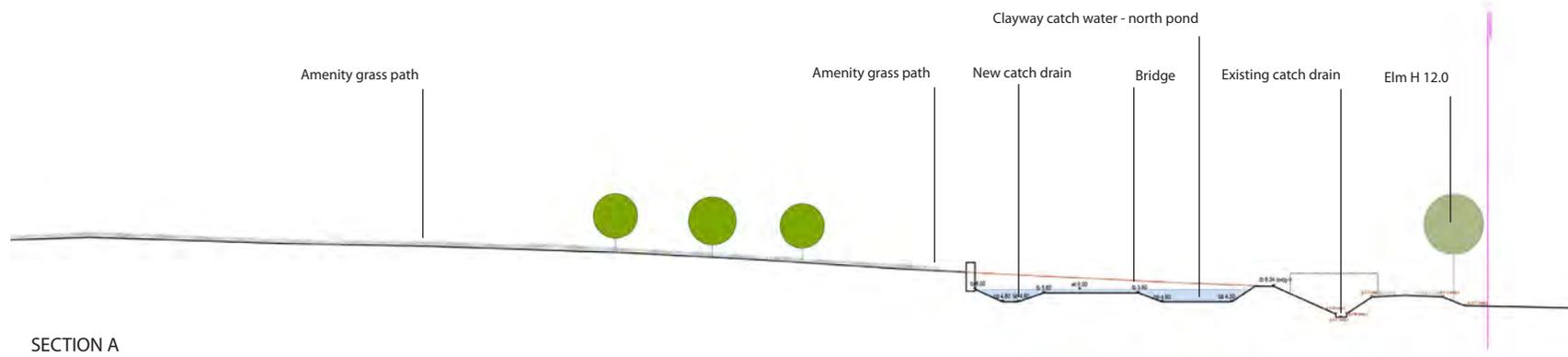


Figure 10 - Sections A, B and C - detail



Figure 11 - East side wetland and connection to Clayway Drove - sketch

3.2.5 North side

Views to the Chettisham industrial area are partially screened by woodland planting, which also shelters the allotments. Two large shallow attenuation areas will be dramatic, sculpted damp meadows with seasonally fluctuating water levels. The form of these low-lying meadows follows and accentuates the natural topography of the central valley before extending along part of the railway line. They act as a buffer, preventing access to the section of the railway that is at grade.

To the north east, the ridge of higher land extends beyond the railway line, which is cut into the north east flank of the Isle of Ely. The railway is hidden from view at this point and a broad, sweeping meadow forms a key component of the city's landscape setting. It reflects the expansive scale of the landscape and provides a sense of proportion, contrasting with the housing and trees on the skyline and the smaller scale landscapes on the slopes of the island to the north east and west. This meadow may be grazed and only partially accessible, but there will be long views across Waterden Fen from the housing edge.

A pathway leads around the perimeter of the new residential areas, defining the margins of a lively neighbourhood zone, where allotments and orchards are a focus for communal activity. The pathway may be stepped so that it is slightly elevated above the slope. Groups of orchard trees and some larger woodlands will shelter the housing edge, softening the skyline silhouette of

the buildings in views from the fens and framing views out from the island.

Lighting will be provided within residential areas and so the perimeter path around the park edge of the residential neighbourhoods will be partially lit. However, no lighting is envisaged within the park itself.

Figure 12 - Landscape masterplan - detail north side



Eastern slopes - long views and open meadows

Kettlesworth - valley lake, sculpted slopes, wet meadows and sheets of floodwater

-  North Ely Park
- EXISTING**
-  Rivers and drains
-  Ponds to be retained
-  Buildings
-  Trees
-  Contours
-  Hedge
- PROPOSED MASTERPLAN**
-  Play areas
-  Buildings
-  Public open spaces
- PROPOSED NORTH ELY PARK**
-  Woodland trees (Woodland edge flower/grass mix)
-  Avenue trees
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-  Parkland trees
-  Amenity grass
-  Meadow (Meadow flower/grass mix)
-  Grazing meadow (Nectar rich flower/grass mix)
-  Allotments/community garden
-  Footway/cycleway
-  Footpath (Asphalt)
-  Footpath (Bound gravel)
-  Clayway Drive (Historic drove)
-  Contours (1 m)
-  Sculpted viewing mound
-  Lookout structure
-  Gabion wall
-  Adventure play
-  Events stage area
-  Activity building
-  Boardwalks/bridges
-  Flood storage reservoir
-  Attenuation ponds
-  New catch drains



Figure 12 - Landscape masterplan - detail north side

3.2.6 West side

This part of the Country Park has a relatively formal character, with axial tree-lined paths, playing fields, extensive open lawns, allotments and a small car park. The meadows and grasslands on the fringes of the housing areas are partially enclosed by new woodland planting which also softens and integrates the built edge in the wider views. A community orchard provides a focus for activity and reflects the historic pattern of land use on the fringes of Ely.

In the centre of the housing area, the existing reservoir (Highflyers Lake) is sited within a steep-sided valley. Groups of native trees will supplement the existing mature trees that are retained on the valley slopes. A path around the lake will connect to routes within the adjacent residential areas, as well as linking to the principal network of routes within the country park.

Figure 13 - Landscape masterplan - detail west side



North Park - axial geometry of avenues, allotments, lawns and sports, framed by woodland

North west meadows - woodlands, orchards and meadow - village green

-  North Ely Park
- EXISTING
-  Rivers and drains
-  Ponds to be retained
-  Buildings
-  Trees
-  Contours
-  Hedge
- PROPOSED MASTERPLAN
-  Play areas
-  Buildings
-  Public open spaces
- PROPOSED NORTH ELY PARK
-  Woodland trees (Woodland edge flower/grass mix)
-  Avenue trees
-  Orchard trees
-  Parkland trees
-  Amenity grass
-  Meadow (Meadow flower/grass mix)
-  Grazing meadow (Nectar rich flower/grass mix)
-  Allotments/community garden
-  Footway/cycleway
-  Footpath (Asphalt)
-  Footpath (Bound gravel)
-  Clayway Drove (Historic drove)
-  Contours (1 m)
-  Sculpted viewing mound
-  Lookout structure
-  Gabion wall
-  Adventure play
-  Events stage area
-  Activity building
-  Boardwalks/bridges
-  Flood storage reservoir
-  Attenuation ponds
-  New catch drains

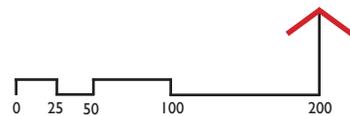


Figure 13 - Landscape masterplan - detail west side

3.3 Capital Costs

The concept design drawings presented in this report have been developed using AutoCAD, so that they can be measured by quantity surveyors, WT Partnership, and used to provide a preliminary cost estimate.

The cost estimate is available as a separate report NORTH ELY PARK - STAGE 2 - COST PLAN, 18 February 2015². Refer to Appendix 1.

Figure 14 shows the subdivision of the North Ely Country Park site into the seven areas referenced in the Cost Plan. The areas are:

- Northwest Corner
- Northwest to Kettleworth
- Highflyers Lake
- Kettleworth Reservoirs
- Northeast of Kettleworth
- East Side (north)
- East Side (south)

² NORTH ELY PARK - STAGE 2 - COST PLAN, 18 February 2015

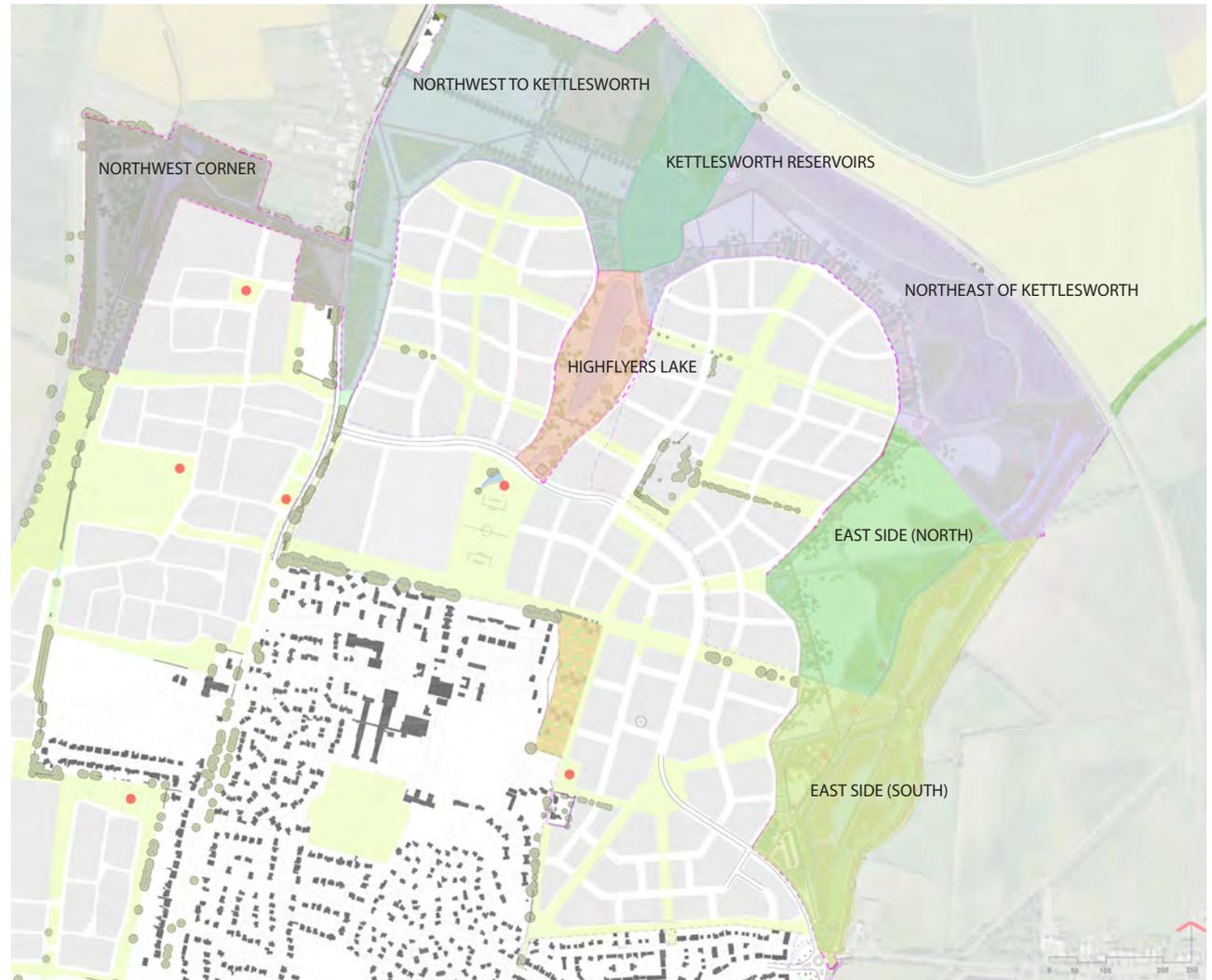


Figure 14 - Areas referenced in the Cost Plan

4.1 Park Governance Considerations

North Ely Park will create a significant open space and a major recreational resource for the residents of Ely. It is essential that a robust and sustainable governance organisation and supporting management structure is developed in parallel with the design and creation of the park, in order to protect both the capital investment and ensure the park continues to provide a valuable local amenity for years to come. Outline management prescriptions for the types of landscape shown on the landscape masterplan are provided in Appendix 2. Key considerations in the planning and establishment of a park governance structure for North Ely Park are set out below.

4.1.1 Phased growth of the park

The Park will be created in stages, linked to the phased development of the housing areas. It seems likely that the park will be delivered in a series of stages with the first phase delivered after 600 houses have been completed in the adjoining housing area. It is currently anticipated that this first phase will enable the creation of two sections of the park, which are unlikely to be directly linked. Refer to Figure 14 showing the different sections of the park. Phase 1 will include East Side (south), Highflyers Lake and Kettlesworth Reservoirs. It is possible that public access to Highflyers Lake and Kettlesworth Attenuation Reservoirs will be restricted until the surrounding housing is complete. The park governance structure will need to be sustainable from the outset, but will

also need to evolve as the park grows.

4.1.2 Park identity and area

North Ely Park will create a major open space providing a range of facilities and activities. Initially, however, the park will comprise two disparate open spaces. The park will also link with the neighbouring Ely Country Park via a multi-access route along Prickwillow Road from Thistle Corner. There will be opportunities to strengthen the physical links between these two open spaces and, potentially, to establish a governance and management structure encompassing both parks.

Discussions relating to park governance and management should take account of both the phased development of the park and the relationship with neighbouring parks and open spaces, principally Ely Country Park, to establish whether there is potential to provide more effective management of the wider parks and open space network. This also applies to the green space/public realm elements within the development e.g. verges, street trees, pocket parks, play areas etc.

4.1.3 Responsibility & accountability

The managing organisation will be accountable to a range of stakeholders. It is important that local people have a good understanding of how the park is to be governed and managed, in particular if this is not to be led by East Cambridgeshire DC. Park management funding may be delivered through a range of mechanisms including baseline funding

through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), endowment(s), service charges and additional funding via grants, management schemes such as agri-environment, and other fund raising. It is anticipated that the majority of the funding for ongoing management could be from house owners within the new development paying service charges. This would provide a direct financial contribution to the park, whilst other Ely residents will see the park as an amenity for the town as a whole. Other stakeholders and partners may provide resources for park management. The Governance body will need to establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability to funding bodies, the local community and stakeholders.

4.1.4 Partners and Stakeholders

Discussions have been held with a number of local and regional organisations currently engaged in landscape, open space and habitat management locally. The establishment of community gardens, allotments and local sports clubs are also an integral part of the conceptual design for the park, so it is anticipated that the number of stakeholder groups will increase over time. It is also anticipated that park management will involve working in association with statutory bodies such as Natural England and the Environment Agency, partnerships with regional bodies such as the Beds, Cambs and Northants Wildlife Trust and the National Trust and practical management tasks involving local organisations such as Ely Wildspace and Ely Perspective. Grazing management may involve a neighbouring

land owner. The establishment of a park forum, to enable stakeholders and partners involved in the park to meet on a regular basis, would provide a mechanism to enable a co-ordinated approach to park management and stakeholder involvement.

4.1.5 Security of funding

Initial capital funding and a degree of revenue has been earmarked for Phase 1 through CIL. Other options for additional funding could include any endowments associated with the phased residential development, service charges and revenue from CIL for later residential phases. Local authority parks, open space and countryside management budgets are, however, currently the subject of increasing uncertainty in the light of funding cuts. The establishment of a Governance organisation with the ability to pursue and secure external funding, would potentially provide a sustainable and secure funding model. This would, however, require a strong lead organisation able to take on the liabilities associated with public open space and to resource park management.

4.1.6 Skills and resources

Resourcing and procuring park management and maintenance is likely to involve a combination of traditional contract arrangements combined with working with partner organisations and local groups.

There is a desire to establish a park which provides opportunities to work with local voluntary organisations and supports the creation

of new community groups with direct involvement in particular elements of the park, such as the allotments and community gardens. The park also incorporates a range of wildlife habitats, grazing land and sports pitches. The governance organisation and site management team will need to procure baseline park maintenance services such as cleansing to deliver a safe and accessible park, combined with the promotion and co-ordination of volunteer activities, training and skill development, and enabling local groups to take a greater role in managing their open space.

4.2 Park Governance Options

Preliminary discussions have been held with a number of organisations in order to evaluate options for the future governance and the structure, funding and resourcing of park management of North Ely Park.

North Ely Park will create a substantial and diverse open space. ECDC currently manages the neighbouring Ely Country Park in association with local groups such as Ely Wildspace. For North Ely Park, increasing pressure on local authority parks and open spaces funding will necessitate the need to consider a number of opportunities for management in partnership with both local and regional groups and organisations. This has initiated a review of the options for the establishment of a governance body and supporting management structure specific to

North Ely Park.

Informal discussions have been held with a number of local, regional and national organisations in relation to the governance and management of North Ely Park. These include:

- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- City of Ely Council
- The National Trust
- Environment Agency
- The Land Trust
- Beds, Cambs and Northants Wildlife Trust
- Ely Wildspace
- Ely Perspective

ECDC is keen to support the creation of a more independent, community based governance body for North Ely Park. Many of the above organisations have indicated a desire to contribute skills and resources to the management of the park but only one, the Land Trust, has indicated that it has the motivation, resources and skills to take the lead role in the Governance and Management of North Ely Park, albeit perhaps in partnership with other organisations.

The Land Trust has a strong track record in securing the long term future for parks and open spaces through land ownership and responsible management of land for the benefit of local communities. The Land Trust is an independent registered charity and currently has a portfolio of

over 50 sites covering in excess of 2,000 hectares across the country.

The benefits of the Land Trust taking on such a role are:

- An organisation with a strong track record in the management of parks and open spaces for the benefit of local communities
- Charitable status and not for profit organisation consistent with the park objectives for a strong community base to site management
- Strong track record in working in partnership with national, regional and local organisations in site management
- Significant skills in developing sustainable funding models for parks and open spaces of terms for land transfer, governance structures and management responsibilities
- Consultation with local stakeholder groups to establish potential for involvement and resourcing

The following steps are proposed in order to explore further the viability of a role for the land Trust in the governance and management of North Ely Park.

- The Land Trust to be invited to make a presentation to ECDC officers and members
- The Land Trust to set out a costed, phased management model and action plan for North Ely Park

- ECDC to confirm current levels of funding to be secured through CIL and endowments
- ECDC to liaise with the Church Commissioners and Endurance Estates in order to clarify service charge levels (negotiations could also involve the Land Trust)
- The Land Trust to review anticipated income against the management model in order to assess project viability and evaluate other funding options
- Define and agree park extents and areas of responsibility eg internal and external boundaries (eg relating to open space within residential areas), routes for footpaths and rights of way, responsibilities for SUDS features and sports facilities
- Initiate negotiations and provisional heads of terms for land transfer, governance structures and management responsibilities
- Consultation with stakeholder groups to establish potential for involvement and resourcing.

Alternatives to the Land Trust might include the creation of a private sector management company linked to the development and set up by the developer(s). The management company option would probably be complicated by the phased nature of development and the fact that more than one developer is involved. Creation of a management company would, however, have the potential benefit of enabling joint management

of the Country Park with the open spaces and public realm within the housing areas. There are potential issues associated with accountability, in particular if a body was funded partly through resident service charges. A private company also does not benefit from many of the tax advantages and fund raising opportunities associated with bodies with a charitable status or a not for profit organisation. There would be little benefit in a third party management company adopting management of the Country Park unless there is a potential commercial benefit associated with the land.

A more appropriate option might be to establish a Trust, Community Interest Company (CIC) or other form of partnership for the Country Park, involving ECDC and local interest user groups with a vested interest in the management of the land. Successful establishment and a long term sustainable structure would be dependent on agreement of an appropriate baseline funding whether in the form of an endowment or through service charge (see options below). One of the principal benefits of such an approach is that this structure could be developed incrementally in parallel with the phased residential development. For instance at Phase 1, an informal partnership could be established with maintenance responsibilities, with a gradual growth to a fully independent Trust or other structure, potentially with land ownership transfer. There are many examples of independent Trusts associated with stewardship of regional and local parks and other

open spaces.

A further consideration is the adoption and management of the SUD's features within the Country Park. These may be fully adopted by the management of the park or may be retained and adopted by others. Unlike the remainder of the park the SUDs features have an operational function, providing the principal land drainage system associated with the development. Operational management and maintenance could be retained by Anglian Water or the Environment Agency or a management company appointed by the housing developers or form part of the wider Country Park management. In any event an operational maintenance specification for the drainage system, attenuation ponds and associated structures would need to be developed.

4.2.1 Land Trust - management options

There are a range of management and funding options available and the Land Trust can advise on an appropriate package of sustainable funding, tailored to the specific circumstances of North Ely Park and, if relevant, other parks and open spaces in Ely. The Land Trust can also raise funding as part of this process. Management of multiple landscapes by one organisation is likely to result in economies of scale. The following outlines basic options for management and funding adopted by The Land Trust elsewhere.

Option 1: The Land Trust to take land into long-term ownership and management

Where the landowner would transfer the freehold or long leasehold of the open space areas (and associated responsibility for operational management and maintenance) to the Trust, accompanied by an agreed capital payment (endowment). This endowment, would be invested by the Trust, providing an annual return from which it is able to fund future site works and management in perpetuity. The size of the endowment depends on the needs of the site, the level of maintenance specified as a requirement, the liabilities taken on, and the potential to leverage other sources of funding and income.

Option 2: The Land Trust to manage land on a service/estate charge basis with transfer of freehold on a single transfer or phased basis

For this option, The Land Trust would propose a charge on the residential developments within the project that would contribute towards the management and maintenance of the public open space on the premise that all those living and working in the area enjoy the benefit.

In such a case the freehold of the public open space surrounding the properties and the areas of recreation corridor could be transferred to the Trust (or a wholly owned site specific management company to permit them to comply with charitable law) in return for the right to collect annual charges. The Land Trust can, through their funding model, calculate the cost of the service or estate charge against the level of management required ensuring that this is kept at an affordable level

whilst providing an agreed level of management.

Option 3: A combination of Options 1 and 2

On schemes of this scale there may also be benefits in developing a "hybrid" option which combines both an endowment and service charge element. This enables distinctions to be made between those green spaces specific to the new community (eg local parks, play areas, flood attenuation etc) and those that are expected to fulfil a wider role (eg Town Park, Country Park, wetland conservation areas etc.) The relative balance of proportion between the two elements could be relatively flexible.

4.2.2 Land Trust - added value

Beyond the basic provisions, a range of options might be available to support wider "multi-functional" objectives dependent on priority and which can be evolved over time. The Land Trust is currently managing other sites which provide examples of delivery of multiple benefits on the ground. These include: a sustainable urban extension at Butts Lane, Stanford-le-Hope in Essex; Northumberlandia and ; Wellesley Woodlands, 110 hectares of community space at the heart of Grainger's Aldershot Urban Extension.

Multiple benefits might include:

- Conservation and habitat management: Mitigating, strengthening and developing the bio-diversity value of the area in support of wider strategic objectives. Potentially supported through grants and licenses and collaborations

and partnerships with existing strategic deliverers (eg ECDC, Wildlife Trust).

- Access and recreation: Developing the access and recreation network across the site and beyond. Providing an attractive, extensive area of open land provides a range of opportunities for paths, cycleways and amenity uses. Again, this might potentially be supported through planning, and strategic partnerships. This would also create some scope for the likes of cycle hire etc may also provide additional revenue opportunities.
- Health and well-being: Providing a safe, clean and accessible venue as a focus for physical and mental health initiatives can create additional opportunities for public health funding.
- Volunteering: Developing a strong “friends of” group and developing local community involvement and capacity is seen as a prerequisite of a sustainable greenspace. Voluntary work makes a significant contribution through payments in kind as well as creating opportunities through a range of third sector funding streams.
- Commercial: Developing opportunities for social enterprise, franchises and on-site commercial business opportunities (within the context of the site management plan).

A phased transfer of the park to the Land Trust would initiate the creation of a park specific governance body. The Land Trust has experience in the establishment of a range of governance and management models and structures.

Negotiations between the Land Trust, ECDC, Developers and other local stakeholders should inform the creation of a governance body and supporting management structure tailored to North Ely Park. It is anticipated that ECDC would retain a key partnering role which would strengthen the potential to link management with the adjacent Ely Country Park.

4.3 Park Management Structure

The Management Structure for the park will also need to evolve as the park grows. North Ely Park will be a diverse landscape incorporating extensive areas of meadow, woodland and wetland, sports pitches, community gardens and allotments and grazing. Although it is anticipated that governance will fall under the remit of a single organisation, park management is likely to be undertaken through a range of procurement mechanisms and partnerships. The list below provides a typical model or series of arrangements which might be suited to North Ely Park:

- Sports pitches, arboriculture, litter and cleansing and routine grass cutting: Partnership with ECDC and local sports clubs
- Grazing Meadow: partnership with local grazier or Wildlife Trust
- Learning, skills and training: partnership with Wildlife Trust and others eg National Trust and/or local training providers
- Waterways: partnership with Environment Agency, Wildlife Trust and possible local groups

eg Fishing Clubs

- Allotments and Community Gardens: partnership with local community groups, schools and allotment associations
- Woodland and Meadows: partnership with Ely Wildspace, Ely Perspective and others
- Events and activities: Partnership with Ely Wildspace, Ely Perspective, local schools, ECDC, City Council/parish councils, Wildlife Trust, etc

Initially a relatively simple partnering arrangement between the Land Trust and ECDC may be appropriate to deliver the management of the Phase 1 areas. There is also potential to rely on existing ECDC resources and local groups such as Ely Wildspace, for the delivery of park management, during the early stages, although Ely Wildspace has indicated that it is not willing to take any formal responsibility for ongoing management activities in North Ely Park. The creation of a North Ely Park Ranger or Management Post is, however, considered essential to the successful establishment and management of the park. This post will provide a combination of site management and administrative roles together with community engagement and outreach work. The appointment of a Park Ranger or Manager would be important to protect the significant investment made in the site and would provide a cost effective means for its management.

During Phase 1 this post is likely to be part time, but would have the potential to take on responsibilities for

other sites such as Ely Country Park. This would enable costs to potentially be split between organisations. The Ranger post would combine a community engagement with practical management and maintenance role, thereby reducing other routine maintenance costs. The post could, therefore, be part funded through any endowment associated with the Country Park. Full time Ranger salaries are typically of the order of £18 to 25k per annum, depending on the skills base and responsibilities associated with the post.

Key tasks or duties of the Park Ranger or Manager might include:

- Co-ordination of a North Ely Park Forum and work in association with other stakeholders and community groups
- Co-ordination and organisation of activities to be held on the site including volunteer work and events
- Planning annual management programmes and supervision of day to day routine site maintenance by contractors or in house teams
- Work to ensure co-ordinated management with neighbouring land owners
- Monitoring of maintenance work carried out by contractors/in house teams
- Undertaking site inspections (including Play Areas ROSPA checks), daily tasks such as litter picking and minor repair works eg to fences
- Outreach work with local schools, colleges, youth

service and other groups, and promotion of the park amongst the local community and address anti-social behaviour

- Carrying out of guided walks and visits to local community groups
- Undertaking or co-ordination and administration of ecology and tree surveys and other potential tasks such as water quality monitoring
- Lead on local fund raising and grant applications
- Administration of secured management funding programmes such as agri-environment schemes
- Provide a site presence and public face for the park encouraging self-policing amongst users

5.1 Stakeholders

The organisations consulted during the course of this project were:

Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust
Cambridgeshire County Council
ECDC
City of Ely Council
Ely Perspective
Ely Wildspace
Ely Wildlife Trust
Ely Society
Environment Agency
Natural England
The Land Trust

5.2 Local community

An exhibition of the concept design proposals was held in Ely Library on 6-8 November 2014. The exhibition panels were also presented on the ECDC website from 6-28 November.

Those attending the exhibition and visiting the website were encouraged to complete a questionnaire which asked:

- which aspects of the park design they liked the most and which they disliked;
- whether they felt anything was missing;
- which types of uses of the park they felt were most important;

- whether the proposals offered the right balance between use by people and the enhancement of the environment for wildlife;
- whether the proposals had succeeded in making access to the countryside safe, easy and enjoyable for everyone;
- whether they had any suggestions as to how the park should be managed;
- whether they had any suggestions as to how income could be generated
- if they would like to be involved in helping to look after parts of the park in the future, perhaps as a volunteer;
- if they felt the new park should be promoted as a key component of Ely's tourism offer; and
- if they saw the new park as a regional attraction or a local facility.

A summary of responses is provided in Appendix 3.

In parallel to the public consultation process, year 8 students at Ely College (aged 12-13) developed their own designs for North Ely Park. A selection of their proposals were presented to key stakeholders, including the Mayor of Ely and some were posted on ECDC's website. There were some exciting and feasible ideas, not least for activity hubs, community farms and wetland sports.

5.3 Design revisions

The landscape masterplan for North Ely Park was shaped by the stakeholder and community consultation through an ongoing, iterative process. Specific revisions following the public exhibition were;

- definition of a hierarchy of access routes, including specific cycleways and links to the city centre and railway station;
- inclusion of natural play, as a fundamental ingredient of the park, particularly within the sculpted meadow areas where temporary flooding might be expected to occur.
- identification of a potential area for performances and events
- inclusion of a viewing mound possibly using soil generated by excavation of the attenuation ponds
- identification of a potential location for an 'activity building'
- provision of more information on the potential habitats to be created

6.1 Phasing

As outlined in section 4.1.1, the Park will be created in stages, linked to the phased development of the housing areas. It seems likely that the park will be delivered in a series of phases, with the first phase delivered after 600 houses have been completed. It is currently anticipated that this first phase will enable the creation of two sections of the park, which are unlikely to be directly linked. Refer to Figure 15 - Phasing Areas.

6.2 Phase 1 works

Phase 1 of the park is associated with Phase 1 of the new housing development (800 new homes on Church Commissioners land). The location of Phase 1 of the park has been in part determined by the location of the attenuation for the housing development.

It is assumed that the park will be developed in conjunction with the housing developers in order that the requirements of the attenuation can be co-ordinated with the wider objectives of the country park. It is clear that there will need to be a level of co-operation in the design, planning approval and installation stages.

The capital cost plan has made various assumptions on those items funded by developers and funding by the country park. The level of CIL funding anticipated for phase 1 (a one-off payment of £622,868) will be insufficient to complete all the

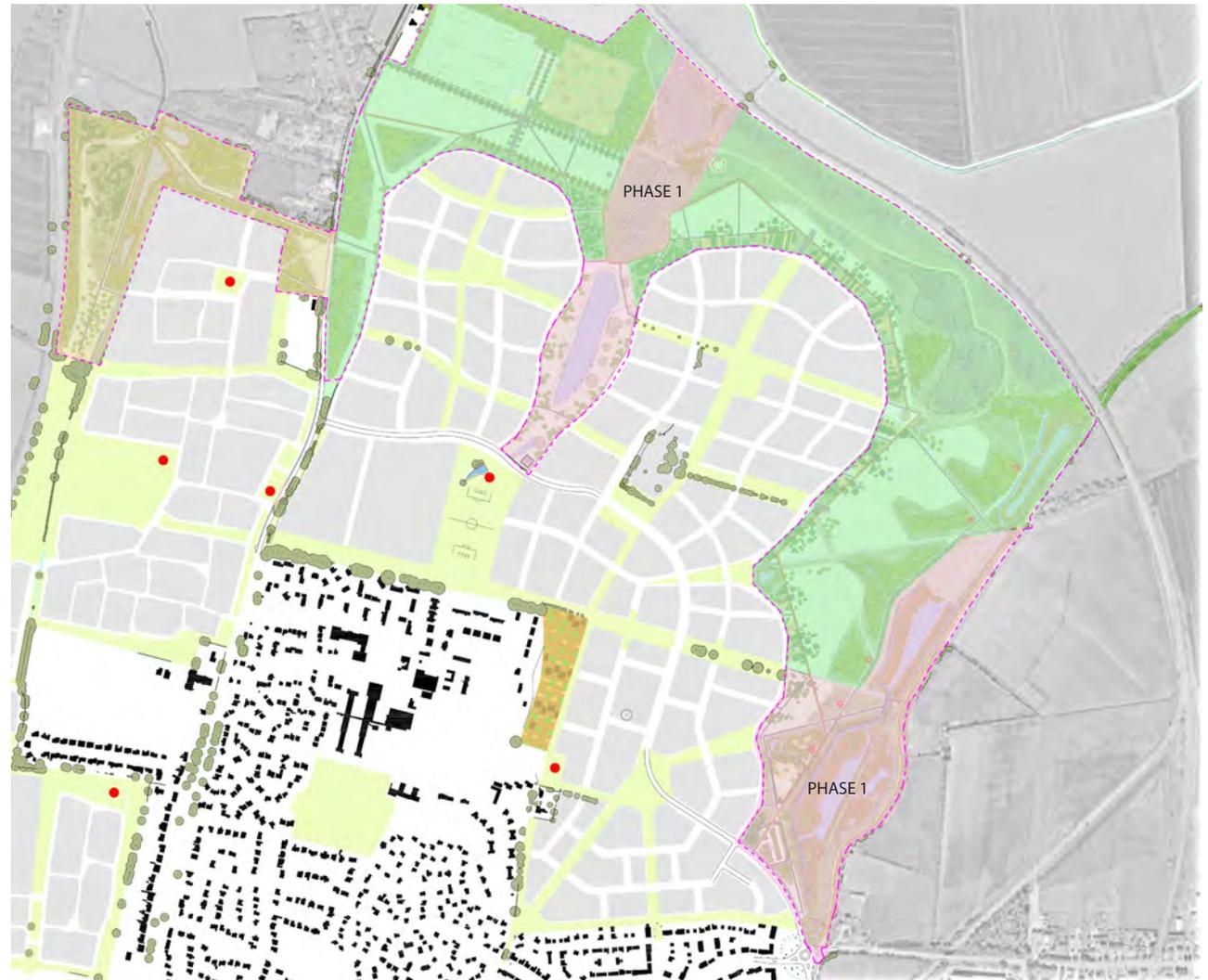


Figure 15 - Phasing Areas

planned works in the phase 1 area. Refer to the Cost Plan in the Appendix.

The cost plan indicates the capital cost of the full phase 1 area would be in the order of £1,180,000. Given the shortfall the following series of diagrams explores the potential stages of delivery of Phase 1. Items to be delivered by the developers are integrated and considered in the sequence. Figure 16 indicates the elements which would be in place after the initial investment.

Completion of the remaining elements of Phase 1 would be dependent on securing other sources of funding. Some works could be undertaken by volunteer groups such as tree planting etc.

6.3 Remaining Phases

Development of other phases of the Country Park will be dependent on the build of future phases of the housing development. As with Phase 1 the creation of the attenuation features and reuse of the spoil generated within the Country Park will be driven by the housing development. The negotiation of the level of CIL funding and endowments associated with each housing phase will inform the sequence and extent of construction of the future phases of the Country Park.



Phase 1a - Surface water attenuation and associated possible reuse of spoil



Phase 1b - Carpark and associated works



Phase 1c - NEAP and associated works



Phases 1a - c

-  North Ely Park
- EXISTING**
-  Rivers and drains
-  Ponds to be retained
-  Buildings
-  Trees
-  Contours
-  Hedge
- PROPOSED MASTERPLAN**
-  Play areas
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- PROPOSED NORTH ELY PARK**
-  Woodland trees (Woodland edge flower/grass mix)
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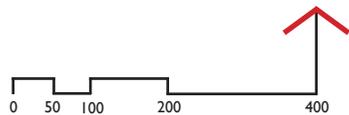


Figure 16 - Phases 1a - c



Appendix 1 North Ely Park - Stage 2 Cost Plan , 18 February 2015

Provided also as a separate report by WT Partnership

Appendix 2 Outline Management Prescriptions



Amenity Grass

The amenity grasslands will provide areas for informal play and recreation. Some areas will be maintained by frequent mowing to enable use for ball games and other informal sport, whilst other areas can be maintained as less formal areas characterised by an open low grassy sward, incorporating a range of low growing flowering species that can withstand regular use, but with capacity to cope with periods of higher, possibly event related, usage. The sculpted slopes will be managed predominantly as less frequently mown amenity grass. The sports pitches in the North Park will be subject to additional winter maintenance, pitch marking and match preparation.

- Areas used regularly for sports and activities: maintain sward between 20 mm and 50 mm
- Less formal areas and sculpted slopes: maintain sward between 40mm and 80 (remove arisings). Delay first spring cut and extend periods between cuts on occasion to allow flowering
- Occasional scarification, aeration and re-seeding of worn areas
- Winter management of sports pitches

Meadow Grasslands

The meadow grasslands will provide colourful, species rich native wildflower grasslands and will

be managed to enhance biodiversity.

- Cut in late summer to height of 75 to 100 mm. Where possible leave cuttings for two or three days prior to removal
- Mown paths through meadows cut as a swathe width to a height of 75 to 100 mm during summer months
- If necessary carry out spring cut to control invasive weed species
- Monitoring and hand pulling of weeds where necessary
- Possible need for scarification and overseeding of areas where wildflower establishment is poor

Grazing Meadows

The grazing meadows will be sown and managed as traditional pasture. Grazing and public access will be managed in order to minimise potential conflicts between livestock and disturbance, in particular from dogs. The grazing meadow boundaries will be secured through livestock fencing and layered hedging.

Woodlands

A range of woodland types will be planted with areas of coppice and standard trees, mixed scrub and copses together with damp woodland typical of alder/willow carr in the wetter areas.

The majority of the woodland will be planted and managed primarily for amenity and wildlife habitat. A buffer woodland (bordering the A10) will provide a screen between the Country Park and the road. All woodland will be managed using traditional woodland techniques, with timber re-used on site in fencing, activities such as den building, providing plant supports for the allotments and wetland management. Woodland edges, rides and clearings will be created in order to provide a gradation of woodland edge habitats through scrub and meadow.

- Woodland Management Plan to be prepared setting out proposed regimes relating to cyclical operations, such as coppicing and thinning, providing a diversity of habitats and woodland structures across the Country Park
- Regimes to be adapted to provide timber products for re-use on site
- Tree and woodland management to maximise opportunities to retain standing and fallen dead wood habitat
- Woodland edges managed by regular coppicing of scrub to create scalloped edges in order to maximise habitat value
- Coppice regimes to include short rotation coppice of willow and medium and long term rotation coppice of hazel and other species
- Buffer woodland managed by selective thinning and coppicing in order to retain woodland screen

Parkland Trees

Individual and groups of Parkland trees are located primarily on the upper slopes of the Country Park adjacent to the residential areas. These trees will soften the residential edge and provide structure, shade and wildlife interest. Parkland trees will also include pollarded willows in the wetter areas. Trees will be allowed to develop a natural form and habit with minimal works undertaken to maintain trees in a safe condition.

- Formative pruning, stake and tree protection management of young trees as required
- Annual safety inspections and five yearly condition surveys
- Tree works as required to maintain trees in safe condition
- Tree management to maximise opportunities to retain standing and fallen dead wood habitat
- Willow pollards cut back every 3 years

Avenue Trees

Avenue Trees are located at some of the access points and along routes within the more formal layout of the northern sections of the park. Management will be similar to that for the Parkland Trees but with an additional need to manage crown heights in order to maintain access routes.

- Formative pruning, stake and tree protection management of young trees as required
- Annual safety inspections and five yearly condition surveys
- Tree works as required to maintain trees in safe condition and removal of branches overhanging paths and roads

Native Hedges

Native hedges will border the allotments, orchards and community gardens and the grazing meadows. These will be managed to ensure they provide effective livestock barriers and to provide cover and wildlife corridors.

- Hedges cut annually or biennially (depending on location) in late winter to ensure berries and fruits are retained as a food source throughout the winter

Swales

The swales will form a network of linear sustainable drainage features, transporting and cleansing surface water run-off. The swales will form colourful strips of wetland vegetation through the surrounding amenity grassland and wildflower meadows. The swales will incorporate check dams to interrupt the flow of water, aiding management of water quality and creating different moisture gradients. Planting within swales will reflect these changing conditions.

- Inspect and retain integrity of check dams and adjacent ground areas, in particular following heavy rainfall events and repair as required and remove litter and debris
- Cut back invasive or aggressive herbaceous and/or woody growth (cut back no more than 25% of the swale area in any one year)
- Check for and remove all non-native species at each maintenance visit

Attenuation Ponds

The attenuation ponds will be subject to occasional water inundation in particular during the winter months. When dry these will be maintained as less formal, species rich amenity grass and meadow. As with the swales attenuation ponds should be checked following major rainfall events, in particular, as water levels fall leaving debris and litter.

Waterbodies and Reedbeds

One of the principal objectives of the management of the principal water bodies and reedbeds will be to maintain a balance between open water and reedbed. Water depths within ponds and other water bodies should be managed to prevent gradual silting up and minimise the risk of encroachment by reedbeds.

Areas of reed will be cut as required in order to promote new growth and prevent silting up,

leaving a fringe of undisturbed reedbed on the edges.

- Reedbeds cyclical cutting in early winter (November to December)
- Cutting to maintain a network of small channels of open water through the reed bed
- Monitoring of balance between open water and reedbed and silt removal if required
- Removal of scrub from reedbeds

Allotments, Orchards and Community Gardens

The focus of these areas will be on community involvement, activities and food production. It is anticipated that allotment associations and Community garden clubs or groups will be established in order to lead on the management of these areas.

Play Areas

Play areas will combine natural play with equipment set in a natural setting. The principal management requirements will be regular inspections and safety checks and maintenance as required.

- Daily routine visual inspection - to identify various hazards resulting from vandalism, extreme weather, general wear and tear
- 1 to 3 month operational inspection -

more detailed inspection to check the operation and stability of equipment, especially for wear and tear

- Annual inspection - to establish overall level of safety of equipment, foundations and surfaces; equipment with moving parts checked twice a year

Signage, Furniture and other structures

Signage, furniture and other structures such as fencing, boardwalks, fishing platforms and pond dipping areas will be checked regular for signs of damage and cleansed and repaired as necessary.

Appendix 3 Public exhibition - summary of responses to questionnaire



Aspects of the park's design that people favoured

Overall, the public were interested in the diversity and the sense of community that the park would give to the local area. There was keen support for community gardens, allotments and recreational facilities such as multiple children's play areas within the park. Having lots of access points from around Ely was also important and this highlighted the need for running and cycling trails. The development proposed lots of different terrains such as meadows, wetlands, lakes and orchards which again, were highly requested.

Aspects of the park's design that the people disliked or were less happy about

There were mixed views about how the land would be used by the community. Some respondents were concerned about the traffic the new development would cause and highlighted the fact that the plans don't provide a clear solution to this. Another worry is that there wouldn't be enough car parking facilities for the number of people visiting the area as only 2 small car parks are due to be built. Some individuals requested that the children's play areas and formal sports grounds should be near the family housing developments for the community's independence and ease. One individual also posed the idea of having various cafes within the park.

Is anything missing?

A relatively high proportion of respondents (19 out of 43) called for facilities for recreational

running, including fitness trails, low level lighting for running after dark and a 5km route suitable for an Ely ParkRun. Others called for a visitor centre, cafe, toilets and a bandstand - attractions that would draw people to the park. One person asked for there to be dedicated bridleways, separate from footpaths and cycleways. Also on the theme of access, there was a request for good pedestrian and cycle links to the city centre and Ely Railway Station. At a more detailed scale, there were calls for the inclusion of public art, sheltered seating areas, and some truly wild space - for den building and foraging.

Which types of uses of the park were felt to be most important?

The top priority (by some distance) was provision for access and recreation, with a high proportion of these respondents making specific reference to the importance of the use of the park for recreational sports and running. The next priority for respondents was community gardens and allotments, followed by wildlife habitats and access to nature, children's play (with mention of the importance of natural adventure play) and rainwater storage.

Does the park offer the right balance between use by people and enhancement of the environment for wildlife?

68.2% of respondents proposed that the development offered a good balance between use by people and enhancement of the environment for wildlife. Several comments indicated that the

park would offer facilities that Ely is lacking and would encourage local people to lead a more active outdoor lifestyle. However, 18.2% of respondents disagreed and felt that the development would disrupt the environmental balance for wildlife in the local area.

For example, East Cambridgeshire Green Party commented that the proposals did not contain sufficient space for habitats and wildlife. However, they would feel more positively towards the plans if the new park contributed to county and regional biodiversity objectives. It was also suggested that all new structures must blend into the landscape to create a natural feel to the park. One individual stated that they would like to see paths with public rights of way signposted to allow people to explore walks outside the park as well as around it.

Does the park provide safe, easy and enjoyable access to the countryside for everyone?

61.9% of the respondents agreed that the plans would provide safe, easy and enjoyable access to the countryside. However, a few comments indicated that the plans for the park didn't fit their requirements. One individual stated that the park would be too far out for existing house owners in Ely and would only be easily accessible for the people living in the new housing developments. Other issues such as the park being too near the railway and the uncertainty that the park will be well lit at night were also mentioned. Another comment requested for there to be available barbeque and picnic areas throughout the park.

The plans for the park address solutions to problems involving flooding, however, comments were made to highlight the fact that the excess flood water may block access to the countryside at several points throughout the year.

Do you have suggestions as to how the park should be managed?

The majority of respondents suggested that the new park should be managed by ECDC, but with close involvement by local community organisations, including a local neighbourhood committee. Three respondents noted that professional, skilled management was required and that there should not be over-reliance on volunteers.

There were calls for a park warden/ranger and for associated opportunities for apprenticeships and volunteering. Several respondents commented that the local community should be involved - in overseeing the management strategy for the park, in volunteering activities and in specific areas, such as allotments and community gardens. Two suggested that a Park Trust should be developed to run the park (in one case that this should be funded by the developer); another suggested a local committee with diverse membership (chaired by ECDC). One person called for establishment of a volunteer network from the start (under the supervision of an NGO) and for links with the new community (and existing) schools at an early stage - lots of school projects, activities based around the new greenspace, its design, its functions, its

history and its implementation.

Do you have any suggestions as to how income could be generated?

There were lots of comments regarding how the park would generate income. Lots of respondents suggested that parkrun would be a good option as lots of runners participate weekly. This would require a large car park and potentially a small coffee shop for people to have access to. Others proposed that bike hire and tennis court usage (either for general booking or for sports clubs) would generate good income. One respondent stated that if the designated running tracks are good enough, they have the potential to be used for competitions and sporting events throughout the year, attracting other regional clubs to the park. A few individuals suggested having a farmer's market or running large festivals and fairs within the facility to generate income.

Would you like to be involved in helping to look after parts of the park in the future, perhaps as a volunteer?

52% of respondents (24 people) said 'yes' to this question; 22% (10 people) said 'no'. Others were undecided. Those who responded positively provided their contact details.

Should the park be a regional attraction or a local facility?

Overall, there were mixed opinions as to whether the park would be a local or a regional attraction.

However, 53% of the respondents believed it would be more of a localised facility. A few comments implied that the space would be too small for the project to be a regional attraction and that there weren't any plans for cafes or a large car park to be built. 29.5% of the respondents disagreed and some believed that if there was to be a keen emphasis on running trails, the park had the potential to become a regional attraction. One individual suggested that a parkrun in the new park would attract people on a more regional scale; or perhaps a clear 5km/10km running route could be marked. Others stated that if there was a large interactive children's play area and wildlife management schemes were put in the place, the park could become a regional facility.

Should the park be promoted as a key component of Ely's tourism offer?

81.8% of respondents thought that the park could be used as part of Ely's tourism. However a few comments suggested that the park was too far out of the city centre to be appealing to tourists visiting the area for a short period of time. One individual proposed the idea of a river tour starting in the city centre and visiting various places before mooring at the new country park on its return. If this wasn't to happen, others pointed out that there would have to be a clear route for public transport so that tourists could access the park easily as part of their day. There are many historical sites in the centre of Ely which one person emphasised by stating that there wouldn't be enough time in a tourist's day to see the country park as well as all

of the other destinations they would like to visit. However, only 13.6% disagreed with the fact that the park could be used for tourism which shows that it definitely has the potential.



