

Forest Park

Implementation Framework

October 2014



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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council in its Revised Local Plan sets out proposals to provide housing to meet the needs of the Borough up to 2029. The population arising from the proposed development will generate a need for recreation facilities, both formal and informal. The Council considers that accessible space for outdoor recreation, Green Infrastructure (GI), can provide opportunities to meet those needs.
- 1.2 The Revised Local Plan includes proposals for recreation provision on-site in association with the housing allocations at Romsey and North Baddesley. It also includes a proposal for a Forest Park in southern Test Valley, adjoining the M27 motorway. The Forest Park is intended to provide longer term opportunities for informal recreation such as walking and cycling and potentially as an alternative to the New Forest National Park for residents of southern Test Valley and the residential areas adjoin it in south Hampshire (including those in other local authorities within the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)).
- 1.3 The purpose of this document is to provide a framework for bringing forward the Forest Park as a GI asset for south Hampshire within and beyond the plan period of 2029.
- 1.4 The document was the subject of public consultation between the 24th January and 7th March 2014. Comments received were taken into account when finalising the framework. It was approved by the Council at the meeting of the Cabinet on 29th October 2014. The document is available on the Council's website on the Planning Policy web page.
- 1.5 If you have any queries or require further information regarding this document you can contact the Planning Policy Team:
 - via the Council's website www.testvalley.gov.uk
 - via e-mail to planningpolicy@testvalley.gov.uk
 - telephone 01264 368000
 - in writing to the Planning Policy team, Planning Policy & Transport Service, Test Valley Borough Council, Beech Hurst, Weyhill Road, Andover, Hampshire, SP10 3AJ.

2 Background

- 2.1 The recreation potential of the extensive areas of woodland in the south of the Borough close to the M27 motorway has been recognised for some time. An initial study on the feasibility of creating a Forest Park in the woodlands was completed by consultants commissioned by the Council in 2009. The Forest Park was included in the PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy 2010 as one of a number of projects which could make a positive contribution to the GI of south Hampshire. To support the delivery of the project, in 2011 PUSH commissioned a further more detailed study which was undertaken by the Forestry Commission with the Borough Council as the lead PUSH authority. The study has been approved by PUSH and provides the basis for developing detailed proposals for the Forest Park.
- 2.2 In 2012 PUSH undertook a review of all of the identified projects in the Strategy and others in south Hampshire to help focus its resources in terms of future delivery. The GI Implementation Framework sets out 13 key projects considered to be of sub-regional importance, the Forest Park is one, which PUSH together with key partners is keen to see delivered. The Revised Local Plan includes a proposal for a Forest Park through policy LHW3. It was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2014.
- 2.3 The principle of the Forest Park has been supported during the Examinations in Public of both the Southampton City Council and New Forest District Council Core Strategies. In responding to the Council's Revised Borough Local Plan 2014 Eastleigh Borough Council, New Forest District Council, New Forest National Park Authority and Southampton City Council have expressed their support for the proposal. Southampton City Council has identified the potential of the Forest Park to draw visitors so as to reduce pressure on the New Forest¹.

¹ Core Strategy Development Plan Document, Southampton City Council, 2010.

3 Objectives

3.1 The extensive areas of woodland adjoining the M27 Motorway provides an opportunity to develop a significant GI asset which would serve the residents of southern Test Valley and those nearby in Southampton and Eastleigh. Public access is currently restricted to existing rights of way and permissive routes. Much of the woodland is managed by the Forestry Commission primarily for timber production. It is proposed that the Forest Park would be managed to promote increased access by the public for a range of activities including walking, cycling and horse riding, and enhance its importance for biodiversity in addition to the current forestry activities.

3.2 A number of objectives for the delivery of the Forest Park have been identified.

Providing Accessible Green Infrastructure

3.3 Green Infrastructure can be defined as “a network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities”². The importance of GI has increased in recent years with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) setting out advice that local planning authorities should “set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure”³. The Forest Park is a significant GI project which would provide additional recreation opportunities to be created for the benefit and health of local people.

3.4 The woodlands are situated relatively close to large areas of population and proposed housing allocations. They sit alongside a number of existing and proposed cycle routes which will provide links from North Baddesley to Southampton and Valley Park and Chandler’s Ford to Chilworth and Southampton. There are also a number of bus services which operate on routes which pass through the Forest Park e.g. the Romsey to Southampton service via North Baddesley and the Chandler’s Ford to Southampton service provide potential access to the woodlands by public transport. Any proposals should seek to promote links for non-car modes of transport as well as providing access by car.

Reduced Pressure on Sensitive Sites

3.5 The increase in population in southern Test Valley and south Hampshire from new development is likely to have an effect on the New Forest⁴ through a potential increase in visits. Improving public access to alternative locations to a range of users has the potential to reduce pressure on the New Forest. Any proposals which seek to mitigate the impact of development on areas such as

² National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Glossary (2012)

³ National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), paragraph 114 (2012)

⁴ Designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site.

the New Forest by bringing forward elements of the Forest Park would be considered by the Council on their merits. However, the Forest Park is not specifically proposed as mitigation in relation to residential development proposed within the Revised Local Plan.

Enhancing Biodiversity

- 3.6 In recent years retaining and enhancing the biodiversity of an area has become more important. The Government suggests that the population should seek to '*live within environmental limits*'⁵ and so there is a responsibility to look after the rich and varied biodiversity of the Borough, both for current well-being and for future generations. Management of the landscape and future plans need to be sensitive to ensure that the biodiversity of the area is sustained. The Council has adopted a Biodiversity Action Plan⁶ and is committed to enhancing the wildlife value of sites. The woodlands which comprise the Forest Park are of local importance, designated as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and include ancient woodland. There may be opportunities to increase the wildlife value of the sites.

4 Principles for the Delivery of the Forest Park

- 4.1 A number of principles have been identified to inform the development of detailed proposals.
- The Forest Park is proposed as a destination for local short stay recreational visits
 - The areas of woodland which would be opened up to greater public access should be accessible by a range of modes of transport
 - Within the Forest Park, provision should be made for a range of different areas offering different recreation experiences
 - The future management of the woodlands should seek to result in greater biodiversity
 - The woodlands should be managed to realise their value as a source of timber
 - The delivery of the Forest Park would be phased over a period of time in step with the rate of development within the area it is proposed to serve
 - Each woodland to have its own management plan tailored to its particular characteristics

⁵ Guiding principles for sustainable development, DEFRA (Available: <http://sd.defra.gov.uk/what/principles/>)

⁶ Available: <http://www.testvalley.gov.uk/aboutyourcouncil/corporatedirection/environmentandsustainability/bap/>

5 The Extent of the Forest Park

- 5.1 The Forest Park identified in the Revised Local Plan comprises over 400 hectares of woodland in 5 main parcels. The majority of the area identified is located in southern Test Valley, alongside the M27 motorway and adjoins Eastleigh Borough Council and Southampton City Council administrative boundaries. It is adjacent to the settlement of Chilworth and borders the residential areas of Lordshill in Southampton to the south and Chandler's Ford in Eastleigh to the east. See Map 1.
- 5.2 The woodlands included within the proposed Forest park are in a number of private ownerships. The principal landowners are the Willis Fleming Estate, the Barker Mill Estate and the Broadlands Estate. The Forestry Commission manages a significant area within the proposed Forest Park, with the terms of its leases focusing its activities to the management of the woodlands as a timber resource. Nightingale Wood is managed by the Broadlands Estate.
- 5.3 Each of the woodlands has its own characteristics which will inform how each is managed.

6 The Suitability of the Forest Park Woodlands as a Recreation Resource

- 6.1 The Forest Park is proposed as a significant GI asset for southern Test Valley and south Hampshire. The identified woodlands offer the potential to accommodate a range of activities, beyond those currently available.
- 6.2 The Green Dimensions study carried out in 2009 for the Council identified a number of attributes of the woodlands that support its potential to widen the functions it can deliver as a GI asset. The key attributes identified were:
- Landscape and views
 - Relatively quiet locations not perceived to be crowded
 - Areas good for walking / dog walking / recreational cycling / horse riding, choice of routes which have reasonable surfaces
 - Diversity of wildlife and natural interest
 - Areas easy to get to and reasonably close to home

Landscape and Views

- 6.3 The Forest Park woodlands would provide an experience of a varied landscape. This includes conifer and broadleaf woodland and some heathland. There are also existing rides and clearings which provide a degree of openness and there are opportunities to create additional open areas as part of their management.

Quiet and Not Overcrowded

- 6.4 The proposed Forest Park is bisected by the M27 and M3 motorways and there is a background of noise experienced within the area most noticeably in parts of Lordswood, Rownhams Wood and Hut Wood. However, for most of the areas traffic noise and other sources are largely absent. The size of individual woodlands which would comprise the Forest Park are sufficiently large, ranging from 33Ha to 177Ha, to be able to create a perception of not being over crowded for much of the year.

Good for Walking / Dog Walking / Cycling / Horse Riding

- 6.5 In a survey undertaken by Qa Research (2014)⁷ on behalf of the Council, 45% of those surveyed identified that the activities available were important in deciding which spaces to visit. In particular this included being good for walking / dog walking and access to public footpaths / bridleways. There is an extensive network of tracks and rides in the major woodlands which comprise the proposed Forest Park many of which are of a robust construction designed to accommodate forestry operations. There is potential to create new routes and to link existing routes to create a network of routes in terms of distance/time for different users. The management plans for each woodland would set out in detail how each woodland could be accessed by the public.

Diversity of Wildlife and Natural Interest

- 6.6 The environment and access to nature are also important factors in considering whether to visit a certain green space, as identified through the survey undertaken by Qa Research. As noted above, the Forest Park woodlands contain a range of habitats. Much of the area is designated as of local importance for nature conservation and includes a number of habitats or species which are important at a county and national level. The proposed approach to managing the woodlands through long term management plans is likely to result in a greater diversity of wildlife.
- 6.7 The woodlands are currently primarily managed for timber production, yielding timber on a rotation basis. It is planned to continue this approach and make use of this resource. The Forestry Commission currently balances the wildlife value, public access and timber production in many of its large publicly accessible sites and the coppicing of timber need not be detrimental to the ecological objectives of the proposal. Whilst a large part of the area has been converted to commercial conifer forest by the Forestry Commission, there is nevertheless a good visual and woodland variety within the forest created especially by the rolling landform and the many stream valleys along which broadleaf trees such as alder still remain; and the mixture of blocks of conifer and broadleaf tree species. Coppice woodland is a particular feature of the area especially within Nightingale Woods and Hut Wood. There are also a number of old and ancient trees including oak, yew and cedar.

⁷ Open Spaces Residents Survey 2013-14, Qa Research, 2014.

- 6.8 Past land use and management has played a large part in the habitats to be found today. Nightingale Wood has the least proportion of its total area disturbed by clearance of broadleaf woodland and re-planting with commercial conifers. This is reflected in the high ratio of woodland plants to non-woodland plants, and species recognised as the best indicators of truly ancient woodland sites. Lordswood on the other hand, has been extensively cleared and re-planted with commercial conifers. Nevertheless, it retains good remnants of its ancient woodland past. Lordswood also has a greater diversity of habitat types, including small but significant relict areas of heath with heather and bog areas.
- 6.9 Hut Wood is the most diverse of these three sites in terms of habitat and species. It has a high percentage of species and also contains significant areas of marsh, bog and heath.

Woodlands are Accessible

- 6.10 The woodlands of the proposed Forest Park are well related to a large population being located relatively close to; Valley Park, Nursling and Rownhams, Chandler's Ford, Eastleigh and Southampton. Romsey (3.6km from Forest Park via the road network) and North Baddesley (2.6km from Forest Park via the road network) are a relatively short distance away. In addition, some of the woodlands are close to proposed new residential development. For example, Home Wood is adjacent to land south of Chestnut Avenue which is proposed for development by Eastleigh Borough Council.
- 6.11 The local highway network provides access to the woodlands by car and by public transport. There are off road cycle routes to and through the proposed Forest Park. Pedestrian access is also feasible via the existing rights of way network from the residential areas closest to the woodlands e.g. Lordswood and Hut Wood. There is potential to improve the network. The management plans for each woodland can provide the forum for developing new links in partnership with key stakeholders including landowners and the Highway Authority.

7 Delivering the Forest Park

- 7.1 The proposal in the Revised Local Plan, subject to it being included in the adopted version, will provide the long term policy basis for the delivery of the Forest Park. This document is intended to provide the framework for detailed proposals which would be set out in management plans for each woodland.
- 7.2 The delivery of the Forest Park could be linked to the proposed new development around it. For example, public access to Fields Copse has been secured alongside the delivery of housing at land at Redbridge Lane in Nursling.
- 7.3 The Council's approach is to seek a phased provision which is in step with the rate at which the resources are available. Where possible the Council and its

partners will endeavour to put in place the new provision at the earliest opportunity.

- 7.4 The Council, in addition to leading on the delivery of the allocation in the Revised Local Plan, is the lead authority on behalf of PUSH. Through PUSH additional funding sources may also be secured.

Phasing

- 7.5 The provision of the Forest Park is likely to be achieved over a long period of time, extending beyond the plan period of 2029. It is likely to be achieved in phases linked to the rate and scale of development. It will also be influenced by unforeseen opportunities which may present themselves from time to time.
- 7.6 Three broad phases falling within the plan period have been identified comprising; one 2014-19, two 2019 – 24 and three 2024 - 29. A further phase post 2029 to 2036 looks beyond the plan period.
- 7.7 The key elements of phase one are;
- Fields Copse: subject to rates of completion and in accordance with the legal agreement, seek to agree and implement the management plan for Fields Copse
 - Nightingale Wood: seek to agree the securing of public access to the woodland and develop a management plan, and subject to funds commence implementation
 - Home Wood: seek to agree the securing of public access to the woodlands and agree a management plan, implementation would seek to take account of the phasing of development to the south of Chestnut Avenue
- 7.8 The key elements of phase two are;
- Fields Copse, Nightingale Wood and Home Wood: subject to the completion of matters set out in phase one, continue to implement the management plans and keep them under review
 - Hut Wood: develop draft proposals for a management plan, secure public access and subject to funds commence implementation
- 7.9 The key elements of phase three are;
- Rownhams Plantation: develop draft proposals for a management plan and subject to funds secure public access and commence implementation
 - Lordswood: develop draft proposals for a management plan, secure public access and subject to funds commence implementation
 - Review the implementation of existing management plans
- 7.10 The key elements of phase four are;
- To complete delivery of public access and implement the proposals in the management plans

Management Plans

- 7.11 It is proposed that for each woodland a management plan is prepared. The management plan would be prepared and agreed by the Council, the landowners and other key partners which may include the Forestry Commission and adjoining local authorities. The principles on which each plan will be prepared are set out in Appendix 3.

Management Regime

- 7.12 The future long term management of the woodlands is an integral part of the Council's proposals. The woodlands are currently in private ownership and any arrangements will need to be secured by negotiation. A number of options are available including the transfer of land freehold to the Council, long leases to the Council i.e. 125 years, partnerships with the landowners, the Forestry Commission and adjoining local authorities. It is likely that there will be different arrangements for different parcels of woodland. The Council considers that this is entirely appropriate provided that the overall objectives of the Forest Park are achieved.

8 Funding

- 8.1 Funding is likely to come from more than one source. It is anticipated that Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will provide a significant proportion of the funding for the proposal. Other sources of income such as from forestry operations and external grants can be considered.
- 8.2 The Forestry Commission's feasibility study prepared for PUSH in 2011 included estimates of costs of delivering the Forest Park based on a number of scenarios with different levels of provision of facilities. The Council has also considered capital and revenue costs of the delivery of the Forest Park, taking account of discussions with landowners and partners including Eastleigh Borough Council. These calculations do not include the provision of a visitor centre in Lordswood. As at 1st September 2014, just over £84,000 has been secured through legal agreements towards the delivery of the Forest Park. In addition, public access to Fields Copse has been secured through a legal agreement.
- 8.3 The provision of the Forest Park has been included within the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) and within the draft Regulation 123 list as part of the development of the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy. The Council is also willing to contemplate that there may be exceptional circumstances in which the significance and scale of the community benefits included in and material to development proposals would justify a departure from normal planning policy.
- 8.4 The Council is currently working with Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) to consider how Home Wood can be brought forward.

Map 1: Map of the Forest Park



Forest Park

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Appendix 1: Generic Principles of the Management Plans

The Council's preferred approach is to develop a series of management plans which reflect the different characteristics of each woodland and their potential to accommodate public access. To guide their preparation and to enable the overall objectives of the Forest Park to be achieved a set of generic principles has been identified which each management plan will need to address. They are;

Each woodland should be accessible to a range of users

Access by all modes of transport should be provided i.e. walking, cycling, public transport and car. It would be important to ensure that there are provisions in place for the appropriate management of traffic associated with the woodlands.

It may not be possible for all woodland to be accessible to all users, for example depending on its relationship with the bridleway network. To date, access is primarily based on multi user walking and cycling routes.

The ecological value of each woodland should be enhanced.

Timber production should continue

The woodlands represent a valuable resource of timber and management to enable that resource to be realised should be considered.

The management plans should provide a framework for community involvement

There is an opportunity to engage a range of interests in the preparation and implementation of the management plans.

Promotion of the woodlands as an educational resource

The management plans should be subject to regular reviews

The management plans should identify the costs of delivery

The management arrangements of the woodlands should be identified, regard should be had to the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme.

The phasing of the delivery of the proposals of the management plan should be identified.

Appendix 2: Management Plan Principles - Field Copse

(See Map 2)

Accessibility

The Copse is located next to the bridleway which links Rownhams Lane to Coxford Road. For much of its length the right of way forms part of Southampton City Council's Lordswood Greenway. The Copse is accessible on foot from the residential area of Lordswood to the south via existing links.

The right of way could be improved.

The Romsey-Southampton and Winchester - Southampton General Hospital bus services (Bluestar 4 and Stagecoach 46 respectively) pass close to the site. There are also services through the Lord's Hill residential area (First no. 3 and Velvet S1 services). The existing bus infrastructure should be improved.

Within the Copse a network of routes is to be provided. Subject to its feasibility consideration could be given to including a route alongside the Tanner's Brook and a new bridge over the Brook.

Ecological enhancement

The Copse is an important ecological site; it is a SINC and includes areas of ancient semi natural woodland.

Educational resource

There are a number of schools quite close to the Copse. There would be opportunities for the Copse to be used in environmental projects. The management plan could include provision for that to take place in liaison with the landowner.

Management arrangements

The management plan should include details of how the Copse will be managed. The landowner has already agreed to provide the long term management.

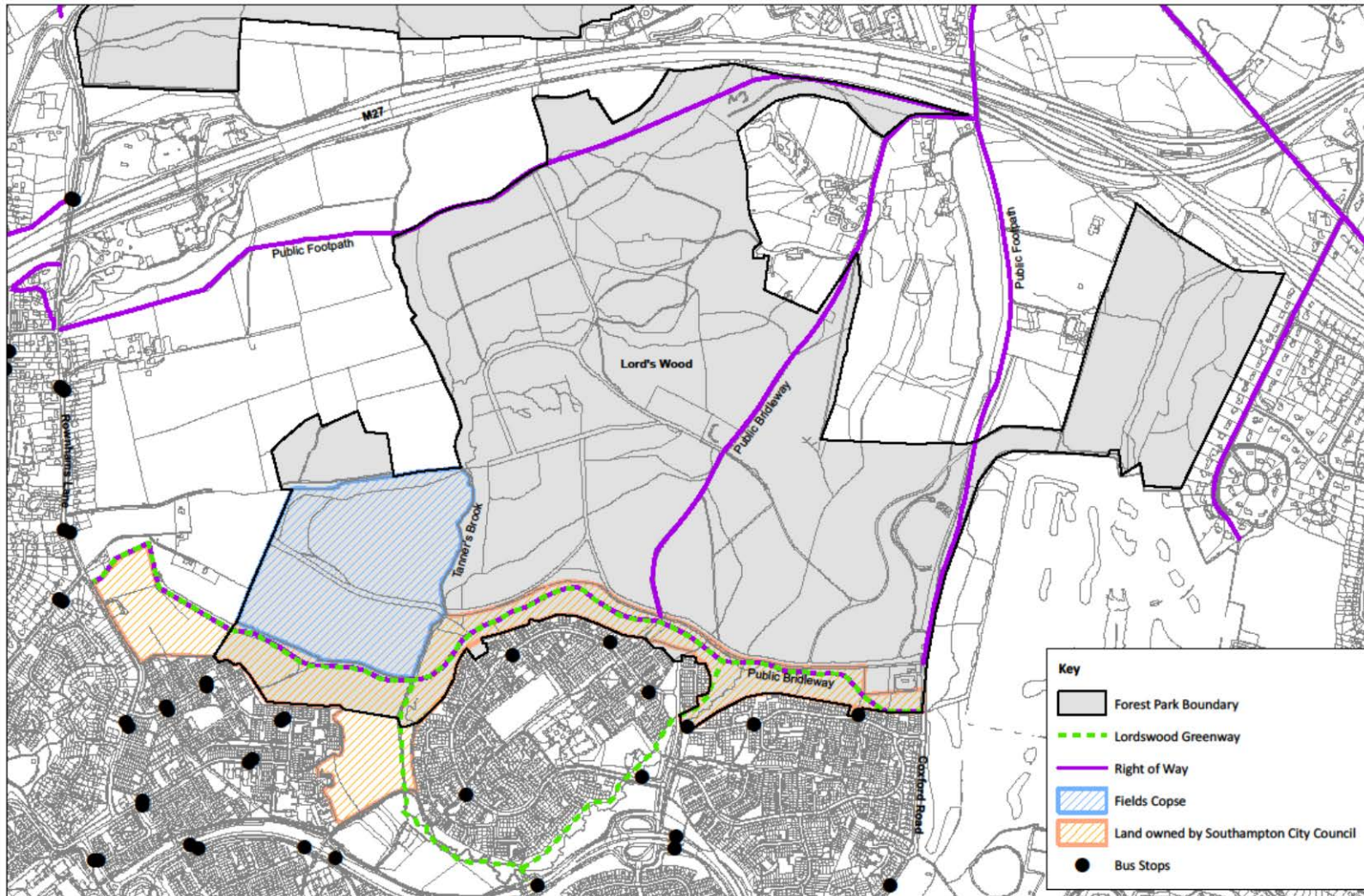
Resources

The resources required to manage the Copse will need to be identified in the management plan.

Phasing

Prior to public access to the Copse being provided it is anticipated that works may be required e.g. tree safety works, provision of defined routes. The phasing of the proposals will need to be set out in the management plan.

Map 2: Lords Wood and Field's Copse



Key

- Forest Park Boundary
- Lordswood Greenway
- Right of Way
- Fields Copse
- Land owned by Southampton City Council
- Bus Stops

N
Forest Park - Lordswood & Field Copse
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Appendix 3: Management Plan Principles - Home Wood

(See Map 3)

Accessibility

Home Wood is located between Southampton and Chandler's Ford. It is bounded by the M3 motorway to the west, Chestnut Avenue to the north, open land to east and Stoneham Golf Club to the south. There is no formal public access to the woodland from the residential area of Chandler's Ford. Bus services runs along Chestnut Avenue, comprising Romsey to Eastleigh (Bluestar 5) and Southampton to Eastleigh and on to Fair Oak (Bluestar 2) services. The nearest stop for these services is approximately 320 metres from the woodland.

Eastleigh Borough Council in its new Local Plan proposes to allocated land adjoining Home Wood for residential development.

The management plan should include a network of multi-user routes (e.g. for walking, cycling and where feasible equestrian users) within the Wood which link to the existing and proposed residential development. The Plan may need to include provision for parking with access from Chestnut Avenue and/or the proposed residential development. Consideration will need to be given to how to control access to private land adjacent to the woodland, such as Stoneham Golf Club.

Ecological enhancement

Home Wood is an important ecological site; it is a SINC and includes areas of ancient semi-natural woodland. This will need to be taken into account as part of the preparation of the management plan. There may be a need to undertake arboricultural and ecological surveys to inform this.

Timber production

The management plan should take account of the viability of the timber resource and how timber production can be managed alongside other objectives for the woodland.

Community involvement

The local community should be involved in the preparation of the management plan and its implementation.

Educational resource

There are schools quite close to the Wood. There would be opportunities for the woodland to be used in environmental projects. The management plan should include provision for that to take place in liaison with the landowner.

Management arrangements

The Wood is privately owned and is currently managed by the Forestry Commission. The Borough Council and Eastleigh Borough Council are exploring

management options, including the Forestry Commission continuing to manage the Wood based on an agreed management plan. A framework for liaison between the organisations and the community should be set out in the management plan.

Resources

The resources required to fund the management plan will need to be identified within the document.

It is anticipated that funding for the management plan can be secured from development contributions

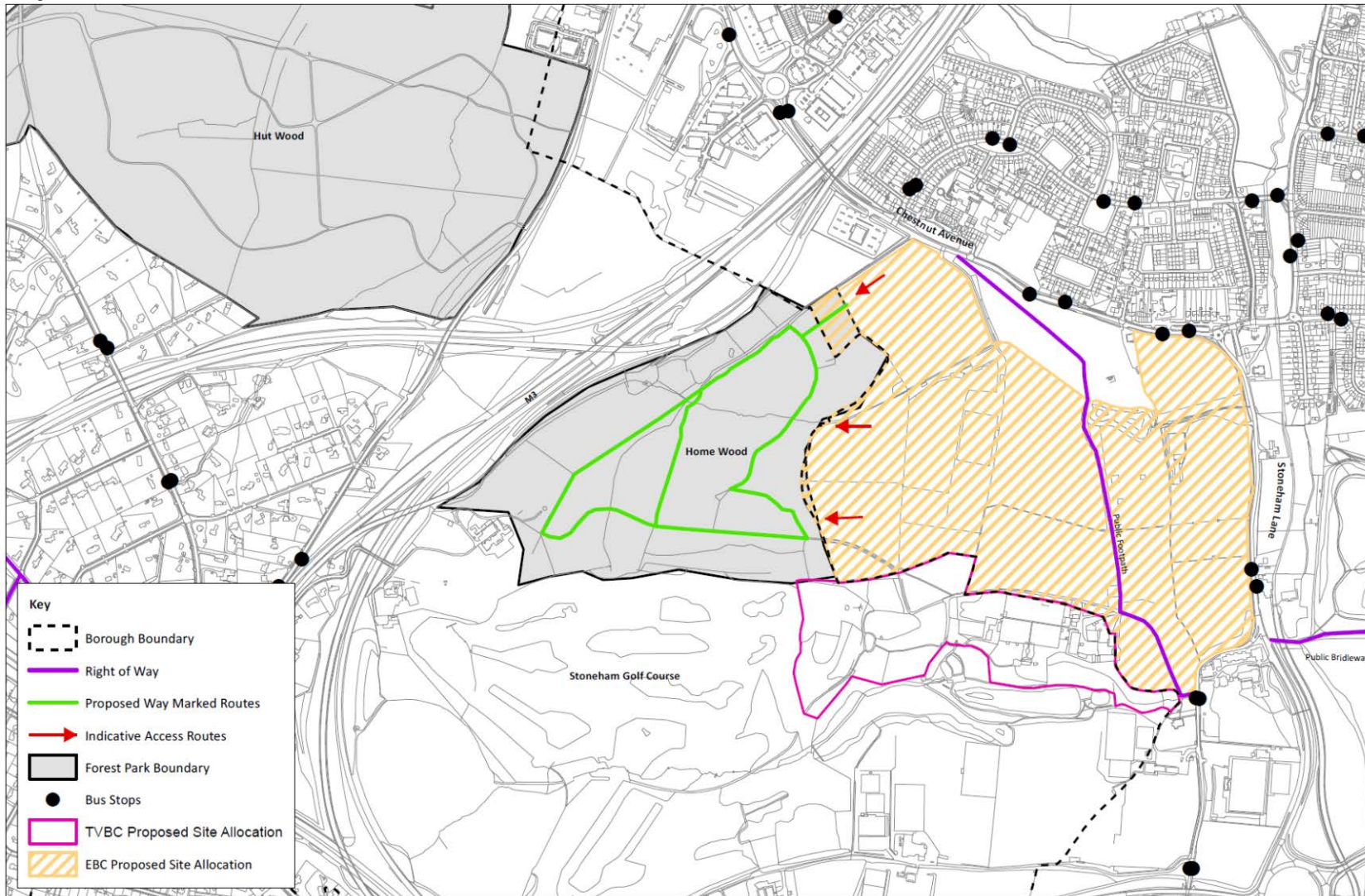
Phasing

Prior to public access to Home Wood being provided it is anticipated that works will be required e.g. tree safety works, provision of defined routes. The phasing of the proposals will need to be set out in the management plan.

Reviews

The management of the Wood will need to be reviewed to take account of the impact of public access. The reviews should be undertaken at regular intervals.

Map 3: Home Wood



Forest Park - Home Wood

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Appendix 4: Background Information

Forest Park Feasibility Study (2009) – Green Dimensions

This initial study sets out that the proposal is feasible in terms of size, location and ambience

www.testvalley.gov.uk/resident/planningandbuildingcontrol/planningpolicy/local-development-framework/evidence-base/evidence-base-leisure/

Forest Park Feasibility Study (2011) – Forestry Commission

This study developed the conclusions of the initial study into implementation options for the woodlands, including costings.

www.testvalley.gov.uk/resident/planningandbuildingcontrol/planningpolicy/local-development-framework/evidence-base/evidence-base-leisure/

PUSH Green Infrastructure Strategy (2010)

The Forest Park is included as a strategic project for PUSH

www.push.gov.uk/green-infrastructure.htm

PUSH Green Infrastructure Implementation Framework (2012)

The Forest Park is included as one of the 13 key projects for the sub region. The document was endorsed by PUSH at its Joint Committee on 2nd October 2012.

www.push.gov.uk/green-infrastructure.htm

New Forest District Council Core Strategy (2009)

The importance of alternatives to the New Forest was noted by the Inspector, including new provision.

www.newforest.gov.uk/media/adobe/p/3/New_Forest_CS_Report_Final_2_.pdf

Southampton City Council Core Strategy (2009)

The Inspector reported that the Forest Park “*should make a significant contribution to increasing the amount of accessible open space on the edge of the city and help to divert additional visitor pressures arising from new housing away from the New Forest National Park, due to its location.*” Paragraph 4.140.

http://www.southampton.gov.uk/Images/Core%20Strategy%20%20January%202010_tcm63-365731.pdf

TVBC Revised Local Plan (2014)

The Forest Park is included as an allocation within the Revised Local Plan as submitted for Examination on the 31st July 2014.

www.testvalley.gov.uk/resident/planningandbuildingcontrol/planningpolicy/local-development-framework/dpd/

Appendix 5: Other Sources of Funding

The English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS)

There are a variety of grant schemes available for the management of woodland. Grants to assist sustaining and increasing the public benefits given by existing woodlands and helping create new woodlands to deliver additional public benefit are summarised below:

Routine Management - A Woodland Management Grant may be available for agreed works including various ongoing maintenance tasks, deer management and the management of public access.

Woodland Management Planning and Assessment - Woodland Management Planning Grants are available to support the preparation of management plans for woodlands.

Woodland Management - The Woodland Improvement Grant (WIG) is available to fund capital works in woodlands that provide an increase in the quantity and quality of public benefits offered by the woodland. WIG will be administered through three funds:

- Woodland biodiversity action plans
- Woodland SSSI condition improvement
- Woodland Access

Replanting trees after felling is supported under a new transitional grant called [Woodland Regeneration Grant](#). This is being made available under WGS until the new EWGS grant scheme is opened.

Other sources of Grant Aid

DEFRA Environmental Stewardship - Environmental Stewardship is a whole farm/estate plan that can include woodland and areas of scrub as well as wood pasture, hedgerows and in-field trees. There are two levels of Environmental Stewardship which are simply known as Entry Level Stewardship (ELS) and Higher Level Stewardship (HLS). The ELS scheme is compatible with the EWGS but woodlands within a EWGS will not be eligible for HLS.

Natural England – NE administer a number of grants available to support biological conservation and the management of designated habitats.

The Forest Friendly Farming Project – This is based in Lyndhurst and works within the New Forest. Its aim is to develop practical ways of supporting farming, commoning and woodland management in the New Forest. The project can provide funding to help towards the costs of woodland management, as well as relevant training, tools and equipment for those working within the project area.

Community Woodland Network Group Sustainability Grants - The Woodland Trust offers grants to community woodland groups. Grants are available from between £500 and £2000 per group to promote sustainability of your woodland work

National Lottery Funds - There are a range of different lottery funds available for environmental works. Use the Good Causes Portal to access information on current grants

Woodfuel Woodland Improvement Grant - This grant supports the sustainable production of woodfuel and other timber products.