



Brooklands Park: Future improvement plans

Masterplan report - draft for consultation

18th October 2021



prepared by





Brooklands Park, East Grinstead 2020/21 - The Site

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report

The purpose of this Masterplan report is to summarise the masterplanning process for Brooklands Park, East Grinstead, Mid Sussex and to help provide a clear, strategic and comprehensive direction for enhancements / improvements across the Park.

It is intended to be used by various stakeholders involved in the planning, design and ongoing management of the Park. It identifies a series of projects that can be delivered over time when funding and resources become available.

This report includes text, images and plans. The precedent images (from other parks) within the report are intended to help explain the potential enhancements. A plan showing the location and general layout of the potential projects and improvements across the Park is also included.

This report is intended to be fairly short and succinct so to focus on the key aspects of the Masterplan and its implementation. Further detail has been provided as separate documents, information and project updates.

The masterplanning process

The masterplanning process for Brooklands Park started in January 2021. The process was led by Landscape Architects and masterplanners Allen Scott Ltd working alongside MSDC .

The process included desktop and site analysis, stakeholder and community engagement, and a formal consultation process seeking views on a draft version of the proposed Masterplan.

The engagement and analysis process helped establish important ‘themes’ in which the Masterplan focuses on. These themes are aimed at enhancing the Park and its offer to existing and future users of the Park.

The Masterplan and its themes should be reviewed annually. The Masterplan should be updated every five years to reflect any changes / delivered projects.

The methodology

The methodology for this masterplanning process can be described in 4 steps (illustrated below). This methodology enabled the masterplanning team to work directly with MSDC, stakeholders and the community throughout the process to ensure that concerns and aspirations are consistently understood, considered and reflected in the themes, design briefs and within the final proposed Masterplan.

The masterplanning process for Brooklands Park follows a similar process to other parks masterplanning across MSDC.

The project methodology and timeframe was slightly adapted part way through the process because of the easing in lockdown measures related to Covid19 pandemic.

This working draft version of the masterplan report has been prepared during Step 3 and is intended to be used for ongoing engagement / conversations with stakeholders and the wider community.



The four step process is very similar to the masterplanning processes applied to other parks in Mid Sussex such as Victoria Park in Haywards Heath

2: THE ENGAGEMENT PROCESS AND OUTCOMES

The engagement process

A fundamental part of the masterplanning process for Brooklands Park is to engage with a variety of stakeholders and the wider community throughout.

The process included:

- MSDC Officer workshops and regular correspondence;
- One to one meetings and correspondence with various stakeholders already involved in the Park;
- Targeted engagement with nearby clubs, schools and local residents;
- Online questionnaires and information;
- Information shared on park notice boards; and
- Information promoted by East Grinstead Council.

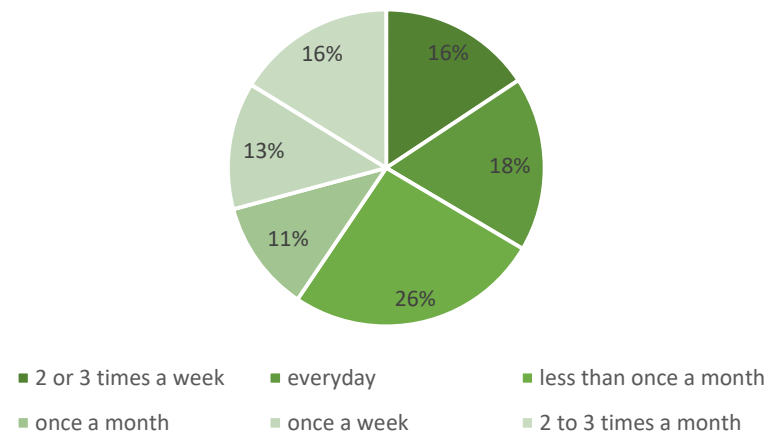
The first online questionnaire received nearly 230 submissions followed by further emails and conversations with users and local residents.

The information gathered from these questionnaires, and the additional conversations with various stakeholders, directly influenced the emerging masterplanning themes and informed a draft Masterplan.

The information shown in this report is intended to be used for further consultation / engagement. This will include a consultation event in the park where the whole community are invited to look at the draft masterplan and comment on it and inform what the priorities might be.

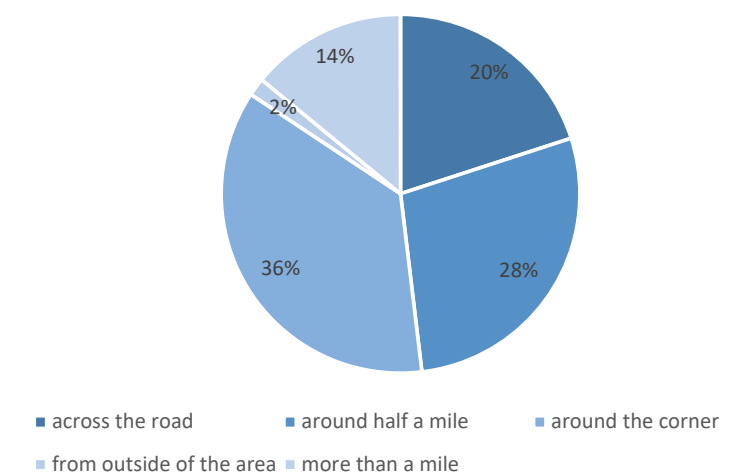
This draft report is available to be viewed on the MSDC website and accompanies an online questionnaire.

Worth noting that whilst the statistics gathered through the online questionnaire survey yield valuable data, they only tell part of the story.



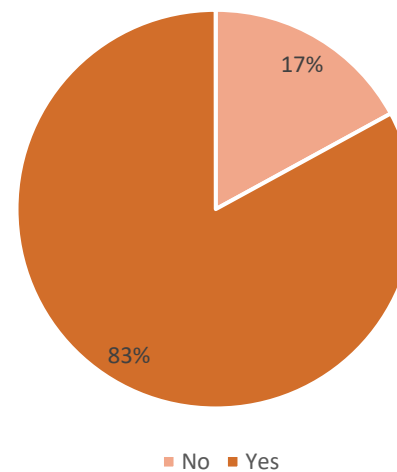
Frequency of visits

*About two thirds of those responded are regular visitors.
About a third are not so regular at the moment.*



Where people are coming from to use the park

Most of those who responded to the questionnaire are local.
Just over 15% travel from slightly further away.



Visits in the last year

17% of those who responded hadn't visited the park in the last year. Reasons included:

- *Nothing there to visit / not enough to draw us there*
- *Don't feel safe*
- *Didn't know it was there*



What we have heard:

Wordcloud created by information gathered during the first round of questionnaires during summer 2021.

3: THE DRAFT MASTERPLAN

Masterplanning themes

The themes on this page are intended to help focus on specific ideas to improve the Park and help guide the Masterplan.

They represent an emerging shared vision for the Park and help articulate the values from those who responded to the community and stakeholder engagement process so far. They have been informed by research and analysis. They also help deliver MSDC corporate objectives and aspirations for enhancing the Park.

These themes are used as part of the community engagement and consultation process. They have been prepared based on the outcomes from the first questionnaire, ongoing engagement with MSDC officers and other key stakeholders.

The emerging Masterplan (next page) shows how these themes relate to the Park and, spatially, demonstrates the long term future for Brooklands Park.

The Masterplan includes some fairly straight forward proposed improvements such as better footpaths and enhancing the existing play area.

It also includes some more substantial improvements aimed at helping make better use of the Park and its assets and giving the community better access to the unique characteristics of Brooklands Park such as the stream, the woodland and the sloping landform.

The final Masterplan will take time to implement and will involve further planning, design and community / stakeholder engagement.

The topic of 'water' runs through all the themes. It is something that was mentioned a lot by those who responded to the first questionnaire and by stakeholders involved so far. The existing stream, although mostly hidden, presents an excellent opportunity to celebrate the parks unique landscape qualities.

THE OVER ARCHING THEMES



NATURE (WILD) FOR EVERYONE

What this means:

- BRINGING WILDLIFE CLOSE TO THE TOWN CENTRE
- CONNECTING PEOPLE TO NATURE
- ECO AREAS WITH BIRD HIDES, BUG HOTELS AND INTERPRETATION
- WILDERNESS ALONG THE STREAM CORRIDOR
- WILDFLOWER MEADOWS / RELAXED MOWING
- CLEANER WATERS
- COMMUNITY PLANTING EVENTS



PLAY (FUN) FOR EVERYONE

What this means:

- WIDER VARIETY OF PLAY EXPERIENCES THROUGHOUT THE PARK (ALL AGES / ALL ABILITIES)
- COMBINATION OF EQUIPMENT AND NATURAL PLAY
- OPPORTUNITY FOR SCULPTURAL PLAY FEATURES
- PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR INCREASED HEALTH AND WELL BEING THROUGH PLAY



ACCESS (PLACE) FOR EVERYONE

What this means:

- IMPROVED ENTRANCES / BOUNDARIES
- CIRCULAR TRAILS / PATHS
- ALL WEATHER (WIDER) PATHS
- MORE SEATING
- PICNIC AREAS
- INTERPRETATION / ACCESS TO INFORMATION
- ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS
- BETTER ACCESS TO THE STREAM

WATER

- PROTECTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE STREAM / BROOK
- CELEBRATING THE STREAM AS THE KEY ATTRACTION / FEATURE
- GETTING ACCESS TO THE WATER
- SUSTAINABLE FLOOD MANAGEMENT / DRAINAGE
- BRINGING THE LIDO BACK TO LIFE (LONG TERM ASPIRATION FOR EAST GRINSTEAD)

Precedent images are used to demonstrate potential successful outcomes

The Emerging Masterplan



LEGEND

- MSDC site boundary
- Existing trees
- Proposed trees
- Selective vegetation clearance
- Enhanced woodland
- Proposed wildflower rich meadows
- Existing footpath enhanced
- Proposed footpaths
- Proposed boardwalk
- Informal footpath
- Proposed wall / bridge enhancements
- Proposed bench / seating
- Existing stream
- Existing spring
- Proposed wetland
- Proposed playspaces
- Proposed wildlife viewing area
- Enhanced carpark
- Proposed footpath steps
- Contour lines (illustrative only)

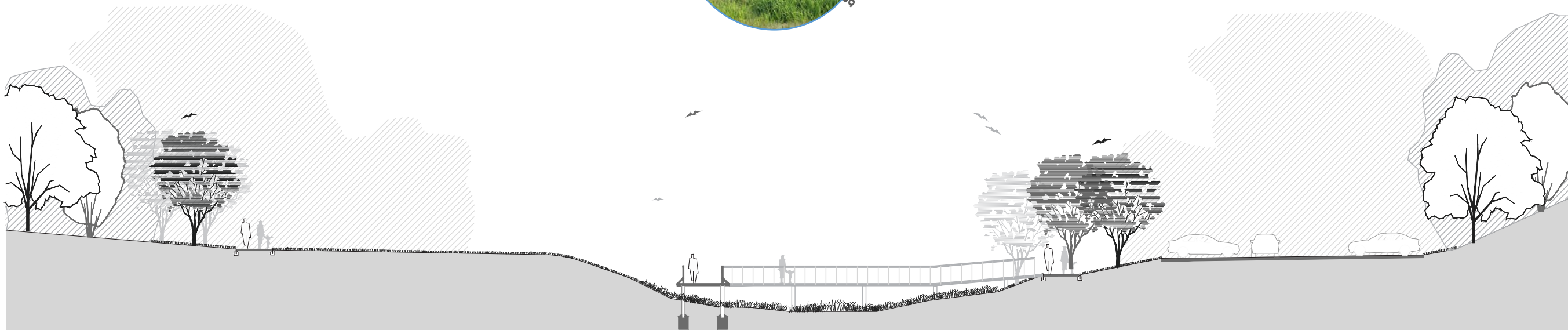
- 1. Wetland boardwalk
- 2. Bridge and beach
- 3. Wildflower slopes
- 4. Adventure playspace
- 5. Informal play / feature
- 6. Better access
- 7. Carpark
- 8. The Viewpoint
- 9. Events space*

* This is the site of the old Lido / outdoor swimming pool. There is some aspiration to bring back a Lido to East Grinstead. This will need further feasibility study / a commercial business case / additional funding.

MORE INFORMATION AND UPDATES CAN BE FOUND ON:
www.midsussex.gov.uk/leisure-sport/parks/

3: THE DRAFT MASTERPLAN

Ideas for improving the park



Indicative cross section through potential events space, wetland and carpark

3: THE DRAFT MASTERPLAN

Ideas for improving the park



Indicative cross section through potential new paths, enhanced playspace, existing woodland, stream/brook and wildflower meadow banks

Precedent images are used to demonstrate potential successful outcomes

3: THE DRAFT MASTERPLAN

Improvement projects

There are 9 potential improvement projects ideas for Brooklands Park:



1. Wetland boardwalk

- naturalising the edges of the stream creating meanders and areas of wetland planting;
- creating new timber boardwalk paths through the wetland;
- adding interesting information / interpretation / signage;
- providing seating / picnic areas; and
- daylighting the stream / brook at the northeast corner of the park and creating a wetland area for people and wildlife



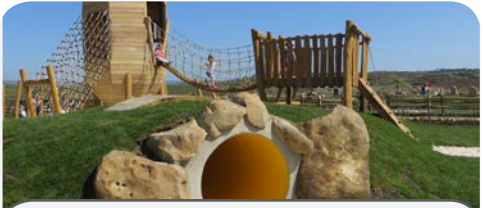
2. Bridge and beach

- improved surfacing / wider path;
- enhanced access down to the stream / brook creating a larger beach area south of the bridge;
- adding interesting information / interpretation / signage; and
- providing seating / picnic areas.



3. Wildflower slopes

- meadow rich grasses on banks / slopes;
- improved drainage;
- opportunity for bug hotels;
- potential interpretation; and
- informal picnic areas.



4. Adventure playspace

- new play equipment;
- natural play features;
- enhanced fencing / gates;
- realigned paths;
- areas of new seating; and
- enhanced planting



5. Informal play / feature

- nature play / bug hotels;
- sculpture play features;
- informal seating; and
- enhanced planting.



6. Better access / new paths

- wider / resurfaced paths;
- additional paths;
- park benches / seating; and
- improved signage at entrances.



7. Carpark improvements

- improved drainage;
- improved edging / surfacing;
- improved signage;
- tree planting; and
- new access paths.



8. The Viewpoint

- wildlife / bird viewing platform;
- interpretation / signage;
- events / activities;
- community planting / maintenance; and
- seating with a view



9. Events space

- flat area of grass for events;
- new paths / access;
- tree planting;
- seating;
- events / activities;
- potential for power supply; and
- future proofed for potential Lido / outdoor swimming pool*

* The proposed events space could lend itself well to restoring the Lido that once stood there, potentially in the form of a naturalised outdoor swimming pool. However, this will need further consideration in the context of a demand and need analysis study and more detailed commercial business case.

Precedent images are used to demonstrate potential successful outcomes

4: NEXT STEPS

Turning Vision into reality

The final Masterplan (+ supporting documents) will provide a strategic framework towards enhancing the Park based on the over arching aspirations and themes drawn from the engagement process. It does not, however, provide all the detail and should not be used to jump straight to construction.

Subject to funding agreements and planning processes, the projects can be delivered in a phased way or as one larger Park enhancement project. For the purpose of this Masterplan report it is assumed that the proposed improvements would be implemented over a number of years in a phased way.

Implementation of the Masterplan is flexible. The proposed improvements can be grouped as per the 9 project areas, or separated into construction works packages across the park - such as a 'footpath enhancement programme' or 'brook / stream enhancements'. It's important that each project should not be progressed without consideration of the wider Masterplan and the over arching themes.

Taking the proposed improvements forward will require further planning and design. Some will also require more community and stakeholder involvement.

It is recommended that workplans / programmes be prepared for the proposed improvement projects. This would include further clarification on the proposed design, materials, specifications, constraints, planning requirements, programme, budgets, procurement models and construction phasing. It is also recommended that detailed surveys (such as topographical, arboricultural and ecological) are prepared for the whole park ahead of the next stage in design. This will help provide clarity and provide a better foundation for the design development and cost estimation for the projects.

This section within the masterplan report will be updated following the next round of community and stakeholder engagement.

“Brooklands Park: a corridor of nature, fun and interest, accessible to the whole community and leading to the front door of the Town Centre. The brook revealed and celebrated. The land enhanced and rejuvenated ”

A draft vision statement for the park



