

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 31 August 2021
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Bartlett, Joy, McKenna, Mortimer, Newton, Purle (Vice-Chairman),
M Rose, S Webb and Young

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

AGENDA

Page No.

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Notification of Substitute Members
3. Election of Chairman
4. Urgent Items
5. Notification of Visiting Members
6. Disclosures by Members and Officers
7. Disclosures of Lobbying
8. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.
9. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 29 June 2021 1 - 6
10. Presentation of Petitions (if any)
11. Questions and answer session for members of the public (if any)
12. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)
13. Committee Work Programme 7 - 8
14. Reports of Outside Bodies

Issued on Friday 20 August 2021

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

| | |
|---|----------|
| 15. Social Housing Provider Presentation - Golding Homes | |
| 16. Reference from the Policy and Resources Committee - Lessons learned from 'No Mow May' | 9 |
| 17. Appointment to the Howard de Walden Centre | 10 - 12 |
| 18. Recovery and Renewal Actions | 13 - 45 |
| 19. England Trees Action Plan Update | 46 - 86 |
| 20. Brenchley Gardens | 87 - 95 |
| 21. Community Safety Plan Timetable | 96 - 102 |

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting in person or by remote means, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Thursday 26 August 2021). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Thursday 26 August 2021). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the **Policy and Resources Committee**, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by **three** Councillors, to the **Head of Policy, Communications and Governance** by: **16 July 2021**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29 JUNE 2021

Present: Councillors Joy, McKenna, Mortimer, Munford, Perry, Purle, D Rose (Chairman), M Rose and Young

28. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bartlett and Newton.

29. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Perry was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Bartlett, and Councillor Munford was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Newton.

30. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

31. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

There were no Visiting Members.

32. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

33. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

34. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

35. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 JUNE 2021**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

36. **PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS**

There were no petitions.

37. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

38. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

39. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that a Reference had been received from the Policy and Resources Committee to ask the Committee to review the No Mow May Scheme, which would be added to the Work Programme for the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

40. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies, however two vacancies for Trustees at the Howard de Walden Centre were noted, with one expression of interest received from a relevant Ward Councillor. The second vacancy would be advertised to all Members.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

41. 4TH QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2020/21

The Head of Finance introduced the budget monitoring report and noted that the annual accounts had not yet been audited, and so figures should be treated as provisional. Within the revenue budget for the Committee, a favourable variance of £589,000 was reported which was largely due to significant increases of income for both the Crematorium and the garden waste services.

The Council had a total underspend of £1.2 million which was largely a result of the government funding received to support with the impact of the pandemic. However, it was highlighted that these were one-off sums and so would not strengthen the longer-term financial position of the Council.

Within the capital budget, the main areas of expenditure were the developments at Brunswick Street and Union Street, and the purchase of Springfield Mill.

The Senior Business Analyst introduced the performance monitoring report, outlining that four of the fifteen key performance indicators (KPIs) for the Committee did not reach their targets. It was noted that three KPIs had missed their target by more than 10%: Contamination – tonnage per month rejected; percentage of successful relief duty outcomes; and

number of houses of multiple occupation (HMOs) brought to compliance by private rented sector licensing (bi-annual KPI).

Contamination: tonnage per month rejected had consistently missed its target throughout the year, which was partially attributed to the increase in household waste and recycling due to more residents working from home, and therefore increasing the risk of contamination. A plan of work had been scheduled by the Waste Team to improve contamination. It was explained that the percentage of successful relief duty outcomes remained above the national average, and the annual target for the number of HMOs brought to compliance was met despite the target being missed in quarters three and four.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing and Community Services advised that the Council's KPIs related to homelessness activity could be measured against the national statistics retrospectively, however consideration would need to be given to ensure that comparisons were made on a like for like basis and took account of a local area's specificities.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 4 for 2020/21, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 4 be noted; and
3. The Performance position as at Quarter 4 for 2020/21, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.

42. ACCESS TO SERVICES REVIEW MEMBERSHIP

The Senior Policy and Engagement Officer introduced the report, explaining that there were two vacancies on the Access to Services Task and Finish Panel following the elections. It was deemed an appropriate time for new membership as the panel were still at the stage of learning and evidence-gathering.

Current Members of the panel expressed positive views of the work being carried out as part of the review.

RESOLVED: That Councillors McKenna and Young be appointed to the Access to Services Task and Finish Panel.

43. REFRESH OF THE COUNCIL'S TENANCY STRATEGY

The Head of Housing and Community Services introduced the report following consultation with local housing providers. As requested by the Committee, the policy included information for tenants with pets, and

feedback confirmed that the proposed Tenancy Strategy did not conflict with that of the local housing providers.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Tenancy Strategy 2021-26, as attached at Appendix A to the report, be adopted; and
2. The secure tenancy agreement, as attached at Appendix C to the report, be approved for use by the Housing Service.

44. DURATION OF MEETING

6.53pm to 7.27pm.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
ACTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 29 JUNE 2021

Present: Councillors Joy, McKenna, Mortimer, Munford, Perry,
Purle, D Rose (Chairman), M Rose and Young

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Bartlett and Newton.

15. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Perry was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Bartlett, and Councillor Munford was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Newton.

16. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

17. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

18. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

19. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

20. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

21. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1 JUNE 2021

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

22. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

23. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

24. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

25. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

26. THE 2021/2022 STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT AND REVISED COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

The Community Protection Team Manager introduced the report, explaining that the Community Safety Plan had been amended since the previous meeting of the Committee. Further emphasis had been placed on the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, and the foreword by the Leader of the Council was to be updated before the report would be presented at full Council.

It was confirmed that the foreword would be drafted in collaboration with officers, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Committee, and circulated to the Committee ahead of the full Council meeting.

RESOLVED: That

1. The updates to the Strategic Assessment be noted particularly with regard to the growing and effective use of powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014; and
2. The adoption of the June 2021 Update of the Community Safety Plan 2019-22, as attached at Appendix 3 to the report, be recommended to Council, with updates to be made to the foreword by the Leader of the Council working with the Vice-Chairman prior to submission to Council for approval.

27. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 6.53pm.

2021/22 WORK PROGRAMME

| | Committee | Month | Origin | CLT to clear | Lead | Report Author |
|--|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Housing Strategy Update - Consultation | CHE | 05-Oct-21 | Officer Update | | John Littlemore | John Littlemore |
| Low Emission Strategy Refresh and Anti-Idling Policy | CHE | 05-Oct-21 | Officer Update | | John Littlemore | Tracey Beattie |
| Q1 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2021/22 | CHE | 05-Oct-21 | Officer Update | No | Mark Green | Ellie Dunnet |
| Review of the Pet Policy pilot | CHE | 05-Oct-21 | Officer Update | | John Littlemore | Hannah Gaston |
| Housing Strategy Consultation Review | CHE | 30-Nov-21 | Officer Update | | John Littlemore | John Littlemore |
| Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23-2026/27 | CHE | 30-Nov-21 | Governance | No | Mark Green | Ellie Dunnet |
| ✓ Fees and Charges 2022/23 | CHE | 30-Nov-21 | Governance | No | Mark Green | Ellie Dunnet |
| Q2 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2021/22 | CHE | 30-Nov-21 | Officer Update | No | Mark Green | Ellie Dunnet |
| Review of the use and enforcement of ASB powers with a view to procuring a pronounced tightening | CHE | 30-Nov-21 | Cllr Request | | John Littlemore | Martyn Jeynes |
| Review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the community safety unit | CHE | 30-Nov-21 | Cllr Request | | John Littlemore | John Littlemore |
| Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals 2022/23 | CHE | 04-Jan-22 | Governance | No | Mark Green | Ellie Dunnet |
| Q3 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2021/22 | CHE | 01-Feb-22 | Officer Update | No | Mark Green | Ellie Dunnet |
| Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment - Crime and Disorder Committee | CHE | 01-Mar-22 | Officer Update | | John Littlemore | Martyn Jeynes |
| Possible Provision of further Council owned G&T Sites | CHE | TBC | Cllr Request | | William Cornall | William Cornall |

2021/22 WORK PROGRAMME

| | Committee | Month | Origin | CLT to clear | Lead | Report Author |
|--|-----------|-------|----------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Parks Delivery Plan for Biodiversity | CHE | TBC | Officer Update | No | Jennifer Shepherd | Andrew Williams |
| Options on Tightening the Approach to Littering, Graffiti and Waste Crime (to incorporate Street Cleansing Monitoring) | CHE | TBC | CLlr Request | | John Edwards | John Edwards |
| Provision of GP Services and Community Hub Update from the CCG | CHE | TBC | CLlr Request | No | Alison Broom | Alison Broom |

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COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

31 AUGUST 2021

REPORT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 23 JUNE 2021

BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

Issue for Decision

On 23 June 2021, the Policy and Resources Committee considered the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update.

During the debate, the 'No Mow May' campaign promoted by the Council during May 2021 was discussed as it was felt this could have been better advertised.

Recommendation Made

That the Committee review the lessons learnt from the 'No Mow May' campaign.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update was presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on Wednesday 23 June 2021.

Extract from Minute 17 of the above-mentioned meeting is outlined below:

The 'No Mow May' scheme that was promoted during May 2021 was highlighted, with a report on the tree coverage of Council owned land to be presented to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee later this year. Further work into the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure at the depot and the Council's vehicle replacement plan were noted.

The Committee expressed support for the progress made on the points within the action plan, with the importance of providing various types of transport across the borough highlighted. The principle of the 'No Mow May' campaign was supported, but it was felt that it should have been better advertised to residents.

In noting the report, the request was made for the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to review the lessons learnt from the campaign as the body responsible for the Safe, Clean and Green Strategic Objective.

Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended

None.

Background Documents

Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 23 June 2021:

[Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

Appendices - None

Agenda Item 17

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

31 August 2021

Trustee Appointment to the Howard de Walden Centre

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Final Decision-Maker | Communities, Housing and Environment Committee |
| Lead Head of Service | Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | Lara Banks, Democratic Services Officer |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive Summary

Provide a short, one paragraph summary of the report. This section is best filled out once you have written your report.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the nomination form from Councillor Martin Cox be considered, and
2. That the Committee consider any nominations received up to the meeting.

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|--|----------------|
| Communities, Housing and Environment Committee | 31 August 2021 |

Trustee Appointment to the Howard de Walden Centre

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Howard de Walden Centre is a charity providing a youth and community centre for the residents of Maidstone, and two Trustee positions are reserved for Council representatives. This is usually restricted to East and North Ward Members, however if a relevant nomination is not received, the restriction is lifted.
 - 1.2 The Trustees are appointed by the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee for a term of 4 years, and both positions are currently vacant. One nomination form has been received from Councillor Martin Cox, and is attached at Appendix A.
 - 1.3 The remaining vacancy was discussed at the meeting of the Committee on 29 June 2021 and, as per the Constitution, the position was subsequently advertised to all Members. At the point of agenda publication, no further nominations have been received.
 - 1.4 The Chair of the Howard de Walden Centre has confirmed he would be happy to accept a non-Councillor for the second position of Trustee. Therefore the Committee are asked to consider whether there is another individual they would like to appoint at the meeting. Nomination forms will be accepted up until the meeting itself.
-

2. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Nomination Form from Councillor Martin Cox
 - Appendix 2: Blank Nomination Form
-

3. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

NOMINATION FORM TO OUTSIDE BODY

| | |
|---|--|
| Date ...28/June 2021 NAME: | Cllr Martin Cox |
| ADDRESS: | |
| TELEPHONE NO: | 07970 723975 |
| NAME OF ORGANISATION APPLYING FOR: | Howard de Walden |
| ROLE APPLYING FOR: | Trustee |
| REASON FOR APPLYING: | I have been in the role for the last 8 years and have seen the great progress from Mike Fitzgerald, I wish to give support to the trust and its chairman. |
| WHAT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE COULD YOU BRING TO THE ORGANISATION?: | I have very good local knowledge, being a ward member for East Ward. Also have been involved with the renovations (ongoing) to the building, I have been able to help and advise with some of the organisation. We are a productive group. I have also played a part in designing some of the Logo and Signage around the building. |

NOMINATION FORM TO OUTSIDE BODY

Date

| | |
|---|--|
| NAME: | |
| ADDRESS: | |
| TELEPHONE NO: | |
| NAME OF ORGANISATION APPLYING FOR: | |
| ROLE APPLYING FOR: | |
| REASON FOR APPLYING: | |
| WHAT SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE COULD YOU BRING TO THE ORGANISATION?: | |

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

31 August 2021

Recovery and Renewal Actions

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Final Decision-Maker | Policy and Resources Committee |
| Lead Director | Alison Broom, Chief Executive |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy Communications and Governance Anna Collier, Policy and Information Manager John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Communities John Edwards, Street Scene Operations Manager |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive Summary

This report details proposed actions for recovery and renewal from the COVID-19 public health emergency that relate to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee's terms of reference. The actions at **Appendix A** have been developed following Councillor and Officer input, including briefings, workshops and formal debate at Policy and Resources Committee.

Purpose of Report

Discussion and Recommendation: For the Committee to provide feedback to the Policy and Resources Committee.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. Consider the actions at appendix A and agree feedback to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration at their meeting on 20 October 2021.

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|--|-------------------|
| Communities, Housing and Environment Committee | 31 August 2021 |
| Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee | 14 September 2021 |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 15 September 2021 |

| | |
|---|--|
| Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee | 21 September 2021 |
| Policy and Resources Committee | 20 October 2021 and 6-monthly until October 2023 |

Recovery and Renewal Actions

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Impact on Corporate Priorities | <p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>The actions recommended align with the Council’s ambitions set out in our strategic plan including the areas of focus agreed by Full Council in February 2021 for 2021-26-</p> | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Cross Cutting Objectives | <p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The action plan is cross-cutting and will have a positive impact on the Council’s cross cutting objectives and in particular that deprivation and social mobility are reduced</p> | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Risk Management | <p>The action plan has been put in place to mitigate the risks to our economy and communities and the council.</p> | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Financial | <p>In addition to the un-ringfenced grant, the Government has announced the £56 million ‘Welcome Back Fund’, Maidstone’s allocation from this fund is £153,551.</p> <p>Several ringfenced and other grants will continue support specific activities related to the Council’s COVID-19 response. These</p> | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |

| | | |
|-----------------|---|---|
| | <p>include the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), from which Maidstone has been allocated £222,043 for 2021-22, in addition to £371,103 devolved from Kent County Council during 2020/21, Test and Trace Grants and New Burdens funding.</p> <p>The Council also has access to other funding streams which may be used to support certain activities linked to recovery planning. These include s106 funding for town centre planning, and income retained through the Kent Business Rates Pool which can be used for activities which support economic development more widely.</p> | |
| Staffing | Staffing implications have been set out in the action plan where additional staffing resources are needed to deliver the projects. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Legal | <p>The Council has a general power of competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation.</p> <p>The Local Government Act 1972, section 111(1) also empowers a local authority to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of their functions. The recommendation and the proposals in this report regarding recovery and renewal from the COVID-19 pandemic are arrangements that can be undertaken under the above legislation.</p> <p>The Council will also be obliged to comply with relevant legislation, such as the Coronavirus Act 2020, related regulations, the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 and such other updated legislation required to address the continuing impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on the recovery proposals being considered by the Council as part of the "Build Back Better" agenda.</p> | Legal Team |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Privacy and Data Protection | Some of the projects may require data protection impact assessments if they involve new activities and/or personal data. These will be completed prior to activities commencing. | Policy and Information Team |
| Equalities | Some projects may require an EqIA. These will be completed prior to activities commencing. | Policy & Information Manager |
| Public Health | We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Crime and Disorder | The report includes actions that may have a positive impact in terms of crime and disorder with actions on community responsibility, resilience and levelling up | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Procurement | On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises in line with financial procedure rules. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |
| Biodiversity and Climate Change | The Committee has identified that the green agenda is important in its approval of the build back better principles, the actions will support the Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy. | Head of Policy, Communications and Governance |

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's consideration of its approach to recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic commenced in June 2020. A framework of objectives and themes was agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 24 June 2020 following consultation with a politically balanced member group. It was agreed that this group would, amongst other things, provide feedback and suggestions for proposed actions for recovery ahead of these being sent to the relevant committees for decision making where this was required.
- 2.2 The Council's initial consideration of recovery was undertaken in the context of significant budgetary constraints and uncertainties. However, as part of the local government financial settlement for 2021/22, councils across the country received additional resources for addressing COVID-19 and its effects. This was reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 10 February 2021 where it was noted that Maidstone's share of the un-ringfenced grant was £860,000. In line with government guidance, the first call on this grant was identified for the immediate COVID-19 response in 2021/22. It was later recognised that it would be appropriate to deploy this funding to support the recovery from COVID-19 and that a further report

would be brought to Policy and Resources Committee setting out the recovery strategy and likely funding requirements. As this is a one-off grant, it would not be prudent to use it to offset underlying budget pressures and it was not therefore included within the Strategic Revenue Projection. The revenue outturn for 2020/21 was better than had been feared at times during the year for the reasons set out in the 4th Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk report presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd June 2021. Given this context consideration could be given to applying the £860,000 grant to projects which would help deliver the recovery objectives, KPIs and updated areas of focus already in place.

2.3 Further Councillor engagement took place through a briefing held on 9 June 2021. The briefing covered:

- Updated position on the impact and effect of the pandemic
- Themes previously agreed by Policy and Resources Committee
- Project ideas reflecting the objectives and KPIs previously agreed

Following this, a discussion paper was presented to and debated at Policy and Resources Committee on 23 June. A follow up meeting was then held with Service Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs to continue to work on the Council's approach to recovery and renewal including a distilled list of projects.

2.4 From the discussions with Councillors, Build Back Better principles for Maidstone have been agreed and an Action Plan developed which meets the cross-cutting principles.

2.5 It was identified by Councillors at the workshops and at committee that whilst funding was from a one-off source, it should be put to use in ways to ensure legacy and longevity where possible. Actions have been identified that will ensure we maximise the one-off spend to leave a legacy.

2.6 An Action Plan has been developed for Recovery and Renewal with the following themes:

- Vibrant Economy
- Community Resilience
- The Way we Work
- Responding to Increased Demands

The plan has been considered by Policy and Resources Committee and this Committee is now asked to consider those actions that fall within its terms of reference and provide comment to Policy and Resources Committee.

2.7 Policy and Resources Committee have strategic oversight for recovery and renewal and progress on the final plan will be reported to the Committee on a six-monthly basis.

2.8 It should be noted that the Council has existing responsibilities in relation to responding the Pandemic and if the current surge continues this may result in an increased demand in support for those affected by COVID-19. The Action Plan is such that not all work will commence at the same time, nor

will it require the total resource to be allocated and spent immediately as such if further resources were required to respond to the pandemic, actions and spending could be paused and adjusted and reported to this Committee to ensure the Council remains in a state of readiness to respond.

2.9 The Council is currently undertaking a number of initiatives in response to the pandemic including:

- Maintaining a community hub and helpline,
- Identifying and supporting financially vulnerable people
- Initiatives to re-open the high street safely including digital campaigns and promotions to encourage visitors
- Making the best use of the Homelessness Prevention Grant to enable households to remain in their homes.
- COVID-19 compliance checks
- Agile working

2.10 We have previously reported on our response to the pandemic and these reports are listed as background documents.

2.11 Details on each project or action proposed which falls within the Committee's remit has been provided in **Appendix A**, following discussions with Councillors further explanation and information on the Community Resilience Fund is set out below and in **Appendix C** to this report.

2.12 The Community Resilience Fund set out in Appendix A has been proposed following the successful Winter Funding Grant whereby small and large voluntary and community sector groups were able to bid for money to run initiatives to keep vulnerable people warm and fed. The themes for the fund have been identified as a result of our survey of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) earlier this year (**Appendix B**), which shows a significant change in demand for services in relation to Mental Health and Isolation and Loneliness. This was also evidenced in our resident survey carried out in 2020 on the impact of the pandemic.

2.13 The Fund will provide one-off money of between £500-£5000 to support projects run by the community and voluntary sector that benefit the residents of Maidstone centred on mitigating the impact of the pandemic.

2.14 A draft scheme structure and application process has been designed (at **Appendix C**) which incorporates best practice from Local Authorities across the country and is mindful of our recent learning with the Winter Funding Grant; the scheme should be kept as simple as possible to maximise uptake.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 The Committee is asked to consider the actions for recovery and renewal that are outlined in Appendix A for comment. The Committee is asked to comment on the proposals and make recommendations as appropriate.

4. RISK

- 4.1 The Coronavirus Pandemic has had a severe and long-lasting impact on the lives of Maidstone communities and businesses, not responding and effectively planning for recovery and renewal will increase the risk to our communities and businesses as well as the Council. The Council's corporate risk register contains risks relating to the pandemic the actions proposed will mitigate the risks.
-

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 As well as consultation with Councillors through the Member COVID-19 recovery consultative forum, reports were received on a regular basis by Policy and Resources in 2020 and 2021:

24 June 2020: Response to Covid19 Public Health Emergency
Approach to recovery from the Covid19 Pandemic

16 September 2020: Strategic Plan Review – Update on Priority Milestones

20 January 2021: Strategic Plan – Proposed Areas for Focus 2021-2026
and Key Performance Indicators for Covid-19
Recovery

10 February 2021: Strategic Plan Refresh

- 5.2 On the 9 June 2021 a virtual member briefing was held for Members where information was provided on the impact to date of the pandemic, and stimulated discussion on what to 'Build Back Better' would mean for Maidstone, this was followed by a discussion paper on 23 June 2021 and a workshop with the Service Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs. All of this feedback has been taken into account in the development of the actions for recovery and renewal.
- 5.3 A report was taken to Policy and Resources on the 21 July where the projects and actions for recovery and renewal were agreed for the purpose of engagement with the service committees.
-

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Proposals will be considered by all four Service Committees before being considered by Policy and Resources in October. Work will then commence on the actions when approved, including communication.
-

7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Recovery and Renewal Actions
 - Appendix B: Voluntary and Community Sector Survey Results
 - Appendix C: Draft Resilience Fund Overview, Application Form and Score Sheet
-

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

24 June 2020: Response to Covid19 Public Health Emergency

<http://app07:9080/documents/s71373/Maidstone%20Councils%20Response%20to%20Covid19%20Pandemic.pdf>

24 June 2020: Approach to recovery from the Covid19 Pandemic

<http://app07:9080/documents/s71374/Maidstone%20Councils%20approach%20to%20Recovery%20from%20the%20Covid19%20Pandemic.pdf>

16 September 2020: Strategic Plan Review – Update on Priority Milestones

<http://app07:9080/documents/s72419/Strategic%20Plan%20Review%20-%20Update%20on%20Priority%20Milestones.pdf>

20 January 2021: Strategic Plan – Proposed Areas for Focus 2021-2026 and Key Performance Indicators for Covid-19 Recovery

<http://app07:9080/documents/s74258/Strategic%20Plan%20-%20Proposed%20Areas%20for%20Focus%202021-2026%20and%20KPIs%20for%20Covid19%20Recovery.pdf>

10 February 2021: Strategic Plan Refresh

<http://app07:9080/documents/s75590/Strategic%20Plan%20Refresh.pdf>

23 June 2021: Recovery and Renewal Discussion Paper

<http://app07:9080/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=577&MIId=4624&Ver=4>

21 July 2021: Recovery and Renewal Actions Report to Policy and Resources

<http://10.201.64.164/documents/s77897/Recovery%20and%20Renewal%20Actions.pdf>

Recovery and Renewal Actions for Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

| Resilient Communities | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Action | Resources | Target start and end | Committee and Senior Responsible Officer | Build Back Better Principle |
| Establish Community Compact and working arrangements with the Voluntary and Community Sector – as agreed by the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee in November 2021. | Already Funded from Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) | May 2021 – ongoing | CHE/AW | Strengthening Community Resilience |
| Support and Encourage Volunteering in the Borough. A joint project with the voluntary and community sector to develop a system/approach/support to enable and encourage volunteering. This will then be supported through changes to the Service Level Agreement with Involve. | £25,000 | June 2021- June 2022 | CHE/AW | Strengthening Community Resilience |
| Equip Trinity Foyer to be a Community Hub Supply and fit of IT and office equipment to create a hub which will allow training and meetings and other services to be provided. | £30,000 | June 2021 – October 2021 | CHE/JL | Strengthening Community Resilience |

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---------------------|--------|------------------------------------|
| <p>Love Where You Live and Get Involved.</p> <p>Community environmental projects to encourage a sense of civic pride across communities; meeting a desire not only to live in a clean and attractive place but also to actively contribute to transforming, enhancing and maintaining those spaces. Funding at this scale would enable work with up to 8 local groups, providing support to enable them to set up and get going.</p> | £35,000 | September 2021-2023 | CHE/JE | Strengthening Community Resilience |
| <p>Community Resilience Fund</p> <p>The Community Resilience Fund offers a one-off support payment of up to £5,000 for projects that benefit the residents of Maidstone, centred on the impact of the pandemic and for the purpose of the recovery in the coming months.</p> <p>Eligible projects could include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Befriending schemes to tackle loneliness • Youth groups providing recreation opportunities for young people • Grassroots sports clubs who need funding to purchase kit and equipment for children to encourage increased fitness and mental wellbeing • Support schemes targeting residents whose mental health has suffered because of loneliness or isolation due to the pandemic • Schemes to support employability schemes for residents that have faced unemployment caused by the pandemic • Projects designed to encourage residents to access nature for exercise and wellbeing. | £150,000 | October 2021 | CHE/AW | Strengthening Community Resilience |
| Total | £240,000 | | | |

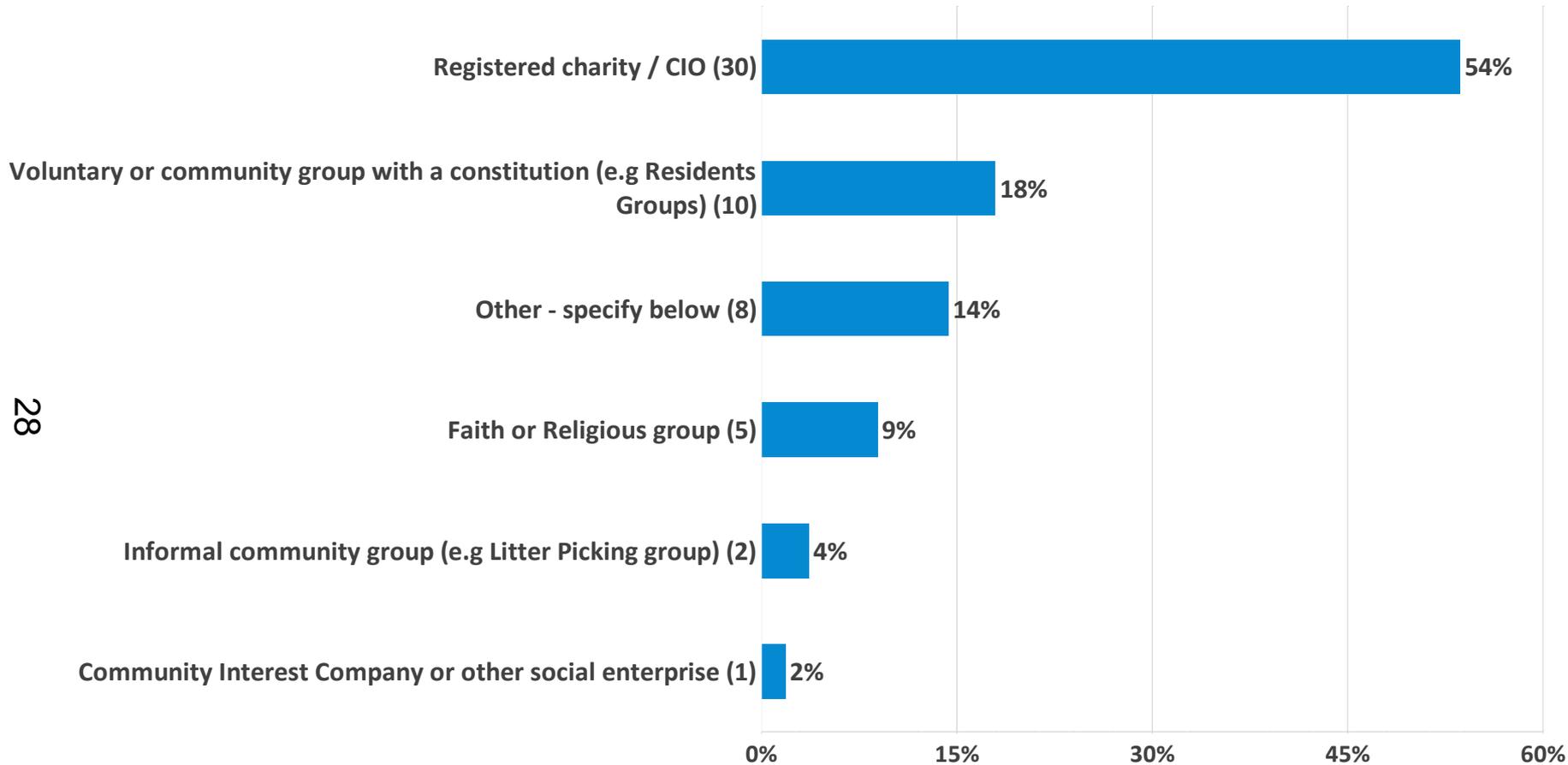
Community Support Groups – Impact & Recovery Survey

March 2021

Total Respondents 57

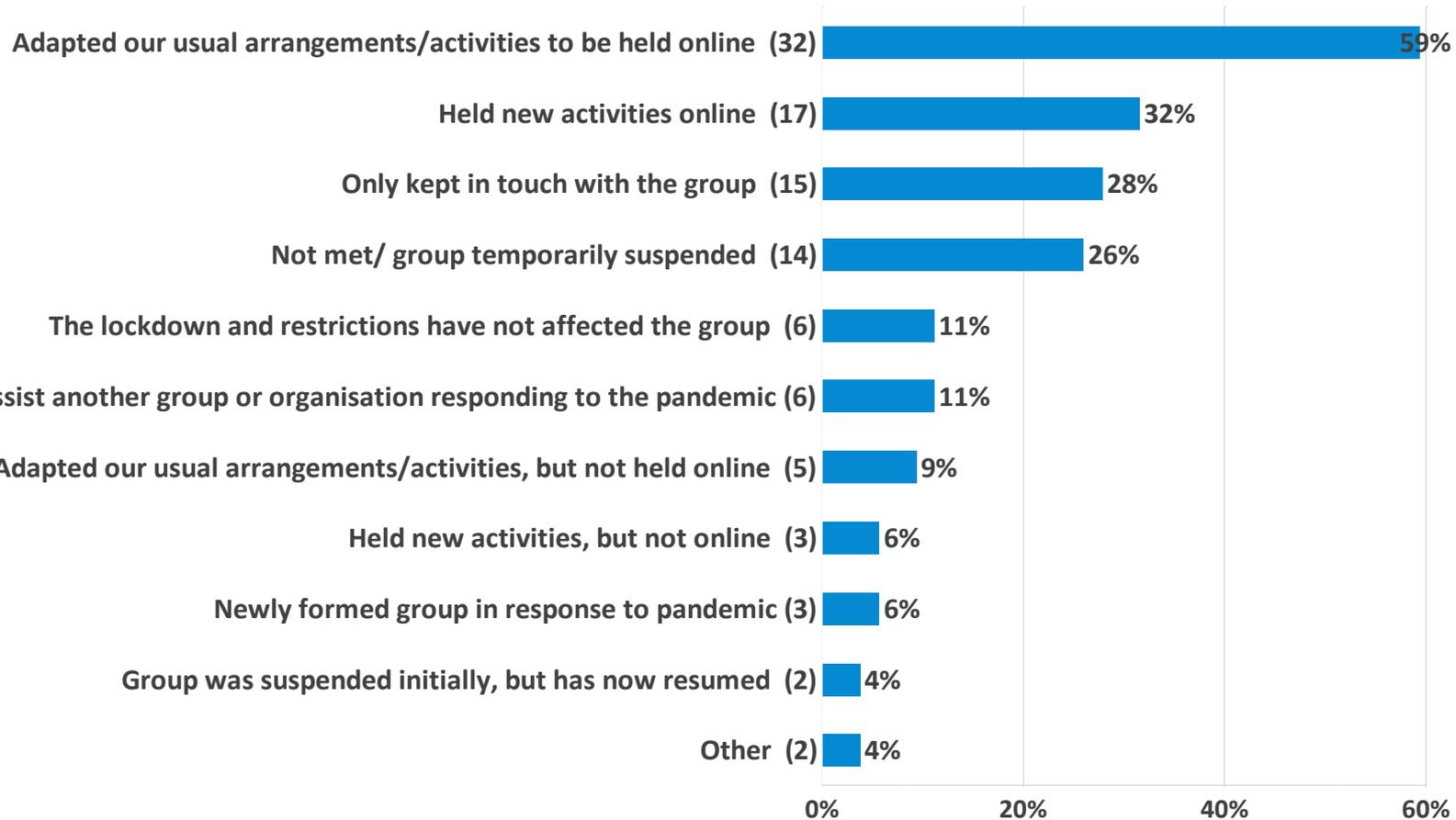


Response by Organisation Type

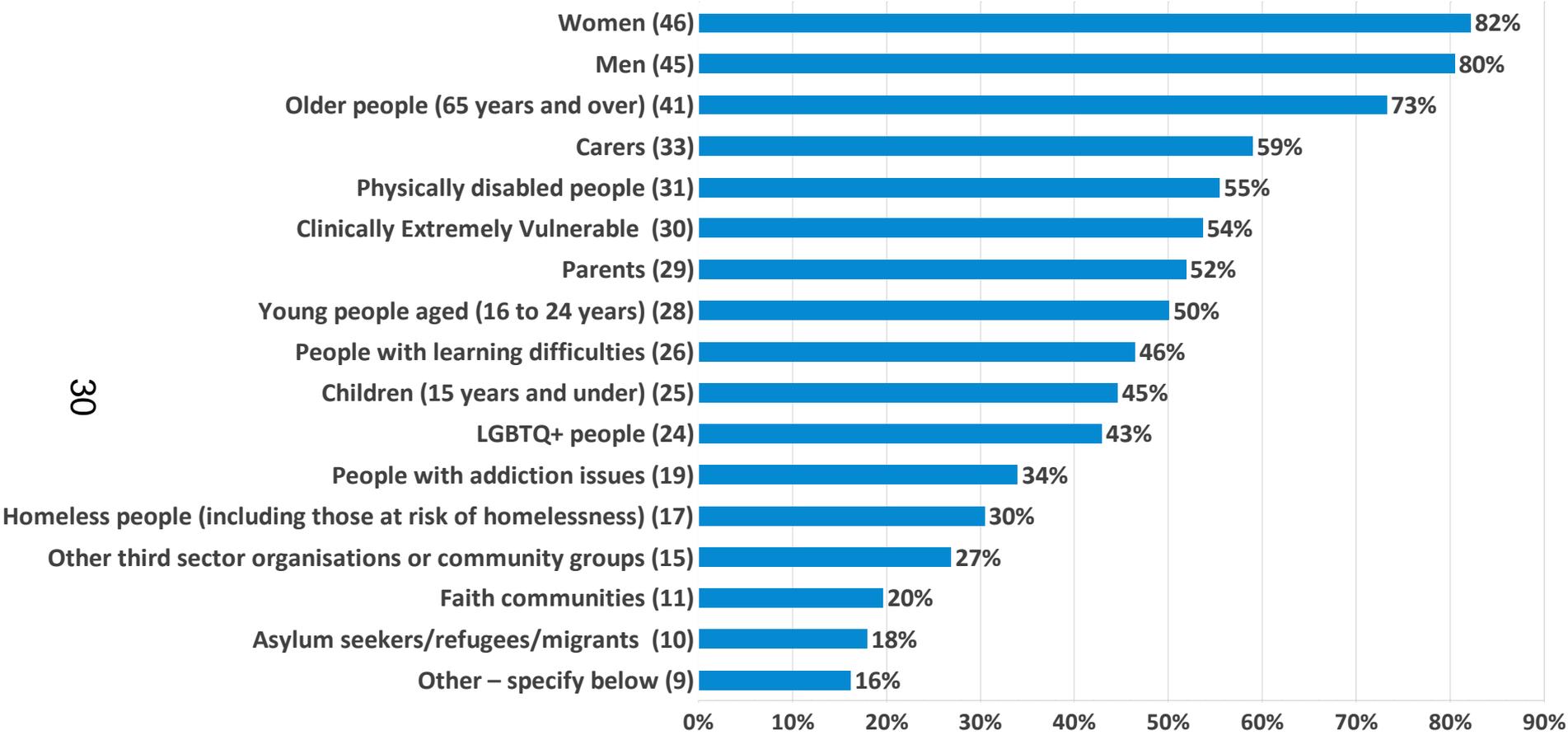


28

Operation of Groups since March 2021

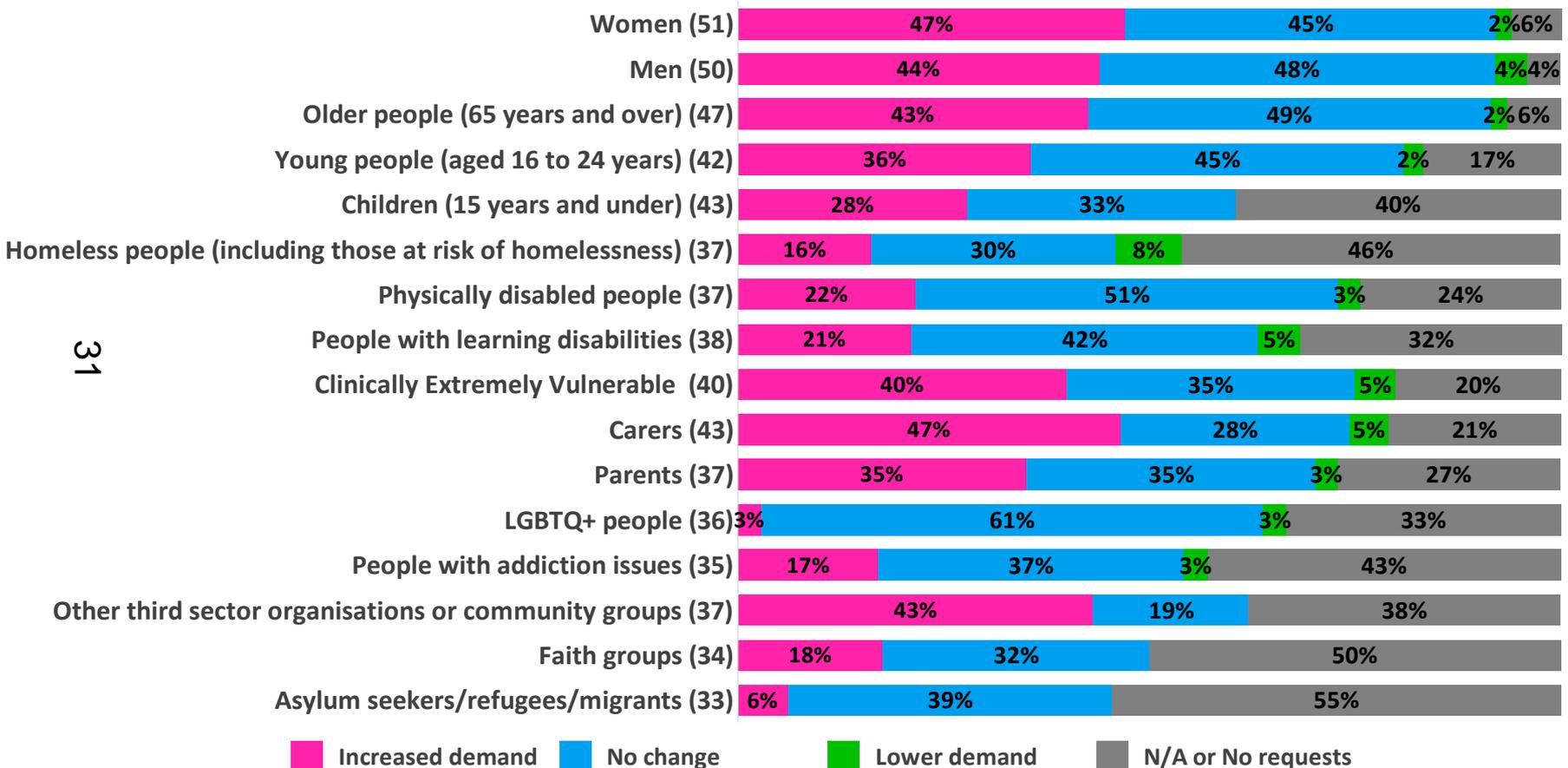


Who has been using services in the last 12 months

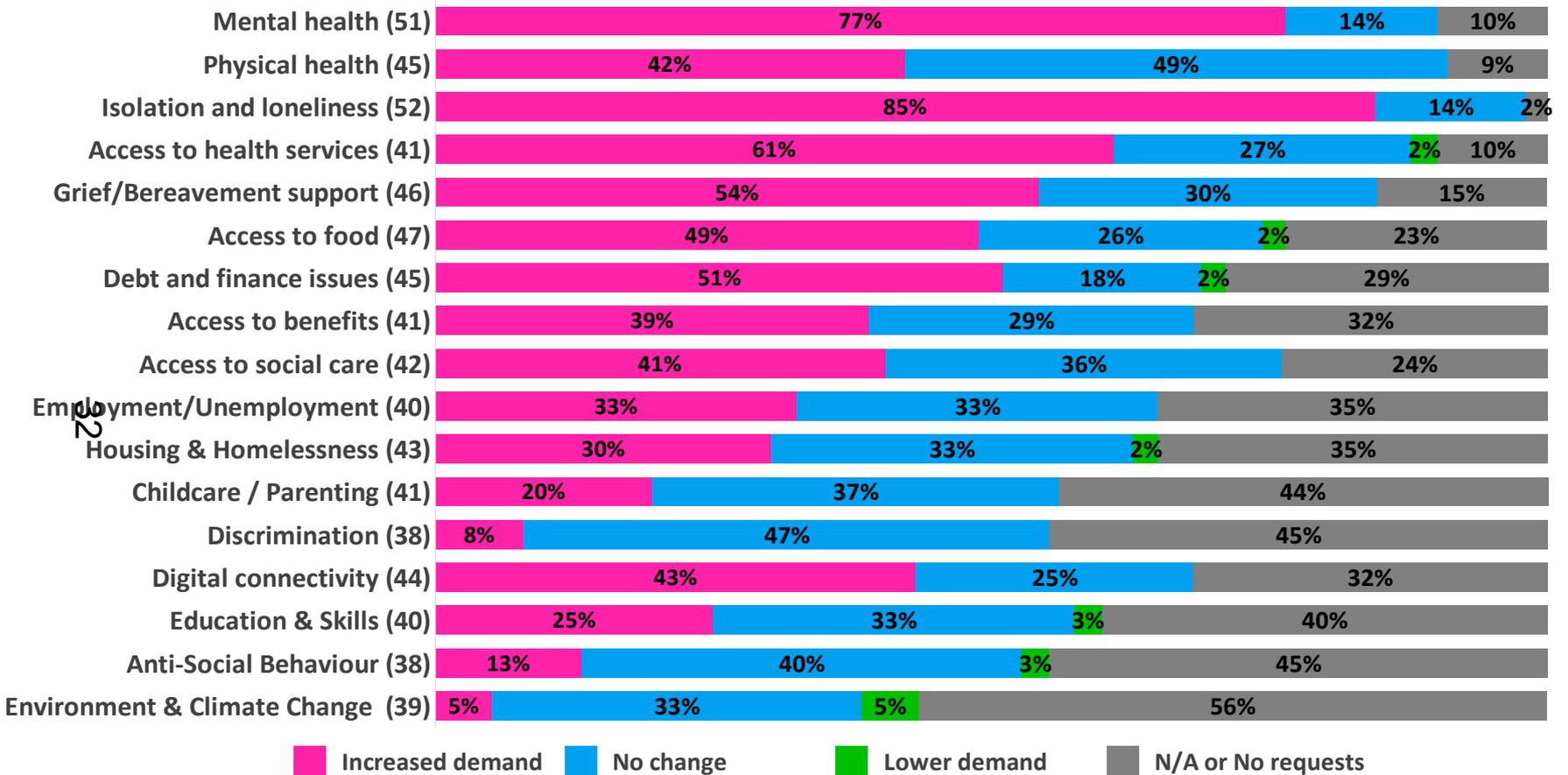


30

Change in service users over last 12 months



Change in demand for services

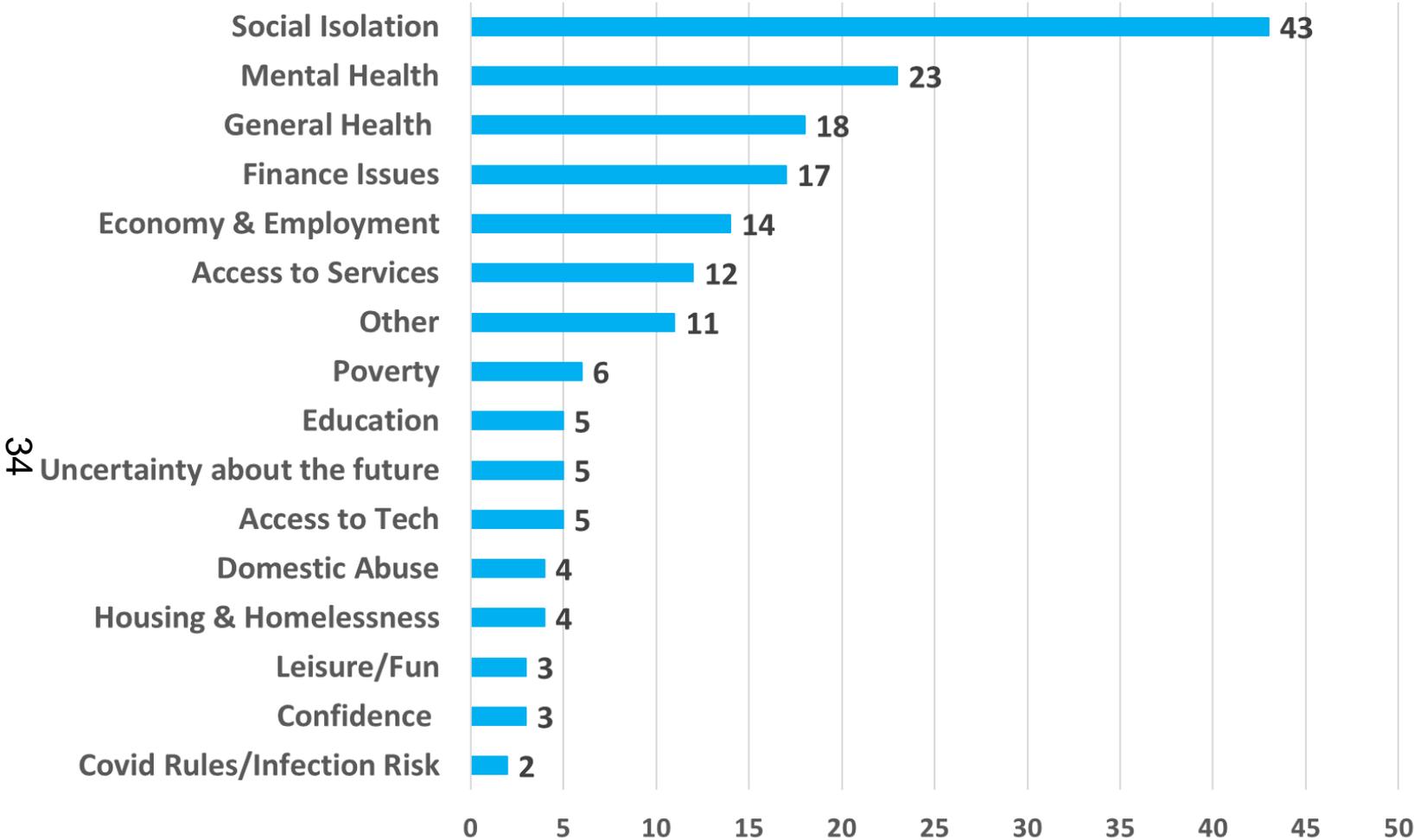


New Services

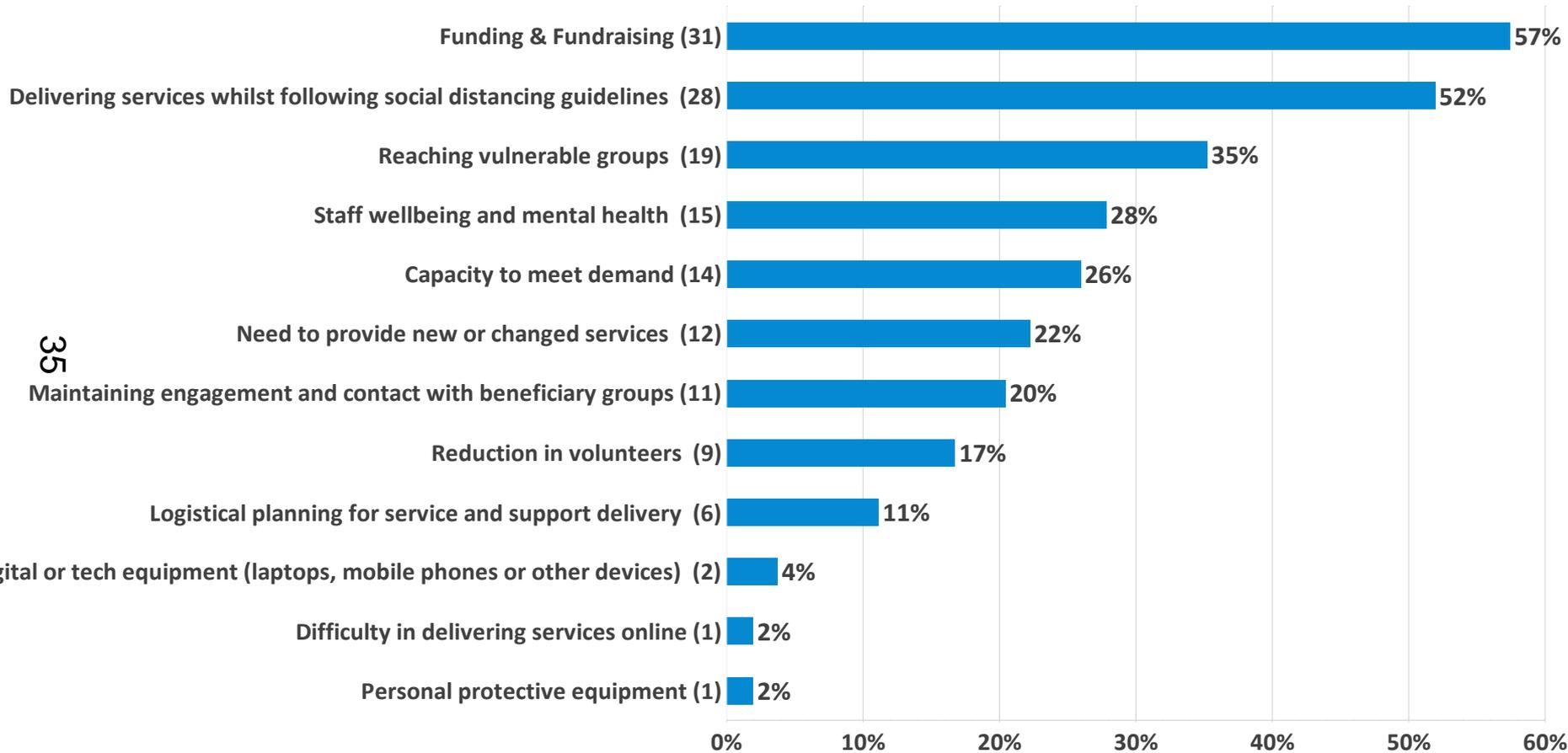
- 16 - Social activities (including online activities).
- 7 – Deliveries
- 3 - Learning & Training
- 2 – Food supplies
- 1 – technical support –getting people online

33

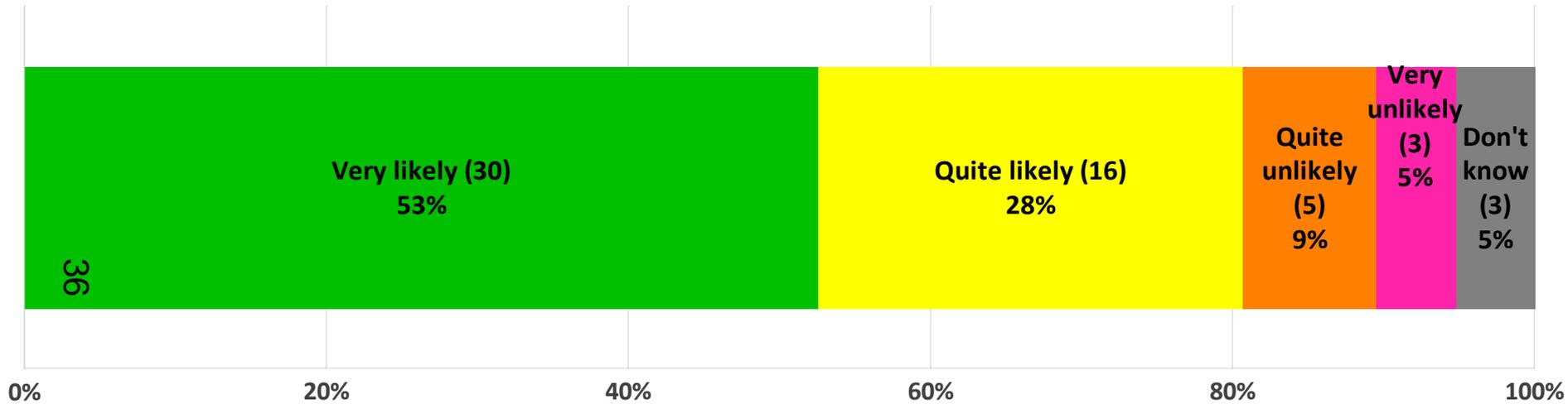
Issues for Maidstone



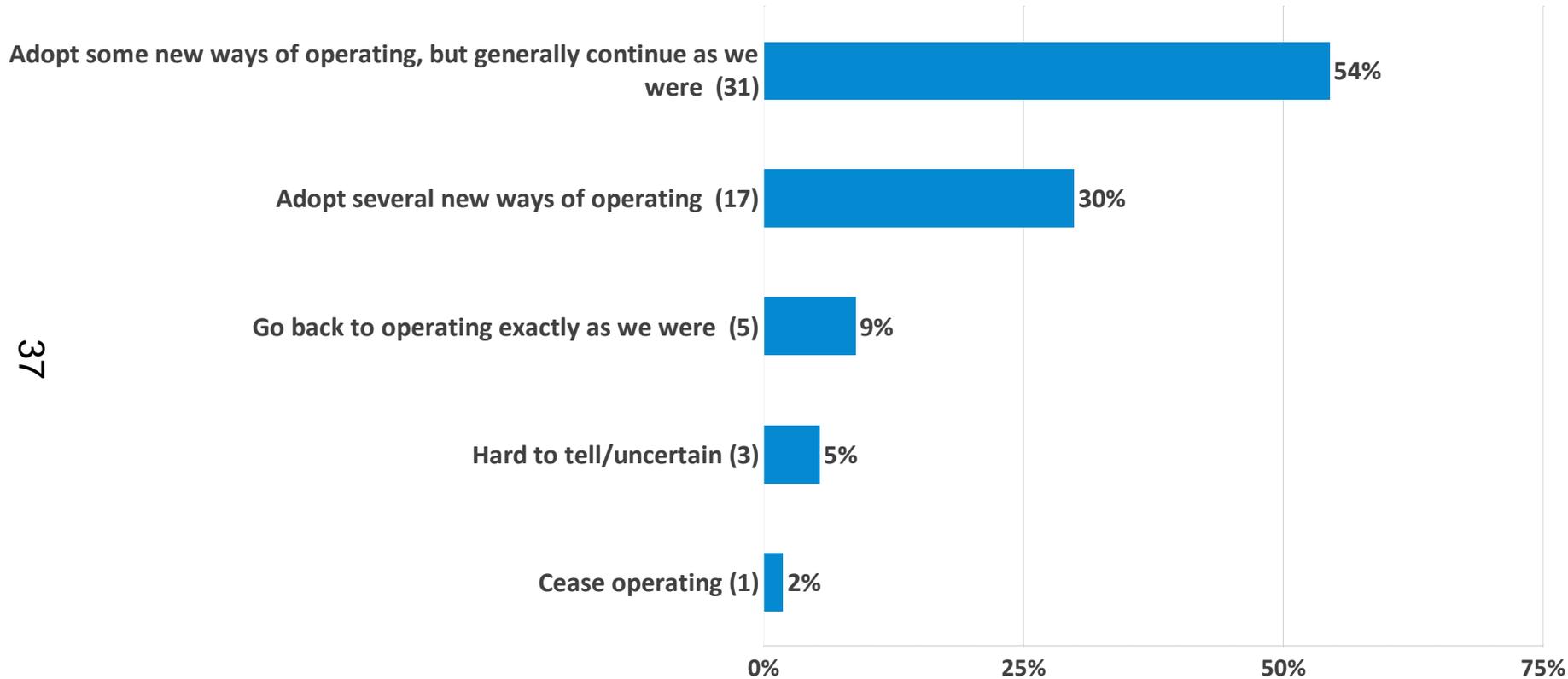
Challenges for the future



Future Operation of Group



Future Operation of Group



37

Support to Thrive

1. Funding (28)
2. Recruiting Volunteers (16)
3. Premises & Venues (13)
4. Communication & Publicity (7)
5. Partnership opportunities & working (2)

(Draft)

Community Resilience Fund

Introduction

The purpose of the Community Resilience Fund is to help voluntary and community sector organisations respond to, survive, and recover from the impact of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proven an unprecedented challenge for us all. Many pressures and difficulties have been experienced by individuals, families, and organisations in Maidstone and the longer-term impact is yet to be seen.

A survey conducted of the Voluntary and Community Sector in 2021 identified that there were two areas strongly identified as having a change in demand for services, with more demand in relation to Mental Health and Isolation and Loneliness. These areas of need were also strongly identified through our work with Parish Councils and Community and Voluntary Groups as part of the Community Hub.

The Community Resilience Fund offers a one-off support payment for projects that benefit the residents of Maidstone, centred on the impact of the pandemic and for the purpose of the recovery in the coming months. The fund will be promoted widely to the Voluntary and Community Sector. Any scheme approved will be subject to monitoring through Service Level Agreements.

Eligible projects could include but are not limited to:

- Befriending schemes to tackle loneliness
- Youth groups providing recreation opportunities for young people
- Grassroots sports clubs who need funding to purchase kit and equipment for children to encourage increased fitness and mental wellbeing
- Support schemes targeting residents whose mental health has suffered because of loneliness or isolation due to the pandemic
- Schemes to support employability schemes for residents that have faced unemployment caused by the pandemic
- Projects designed to encourage residents to access nature for exercise and wellbeing.

Who Can Apply?

This fund is open to voluntary and community sector organisations based in Maidstone or predominantly serving Maidstone communities and residents.

Below is a list of the types of eligible organisations and you must be able to tick one of these.

- Voluntary and community organisations
- Registered charities
- Social enterprises
- Group of organisations if they are led by a voluntary and community organisations or social enterprise
- Statutory bodies (including Parish or Community Councils)
- Community interest companies (with two or more directors).

***Eligible organisations must have:**

- An eligible bank account i.e., not a private company and not a private individual's bank account
- Adequate policies and procedures in place to meet due diligence requirements and safe practices including, but not limited to safeguarding, health and safety, financial management

How much money can you bid for?

Bids are invited for amounts from £500 to £5000

Eligible expenditure

The grant can fund:

- staff salaries
- project activities
- running costs
- small-scale refurbishment
- equipment
- organisational development

How to Apply

An application form is available here:

Online form

Paper version

Please submit completed application to VCSliaison@maidstone.gov.uk

How Will Successful Bids Be Selected?

Each eligible application will be assessed by the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance, Head of Housing and Communities in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee and marked against the following criteria

- Does the project support mental health, social isolation, or inclusion? (out of 10)
- Local need and community benefit (out of 10)
- Is the support required in response to the pandemic? (out of 10)

All grant applicants will be notified by email as to whether their application has been successful. There is no appeals process, but written feedback will be provided on request.

Application Form

Contact Details

First person's contact details

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Full name | |
| Telephone number | |
| Email | |
| Role in organisation | |

Second Person's Contact details

Please provide a second contact in case you are unavailable – this must be somebody from the same organisation as the first person listed above.

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Full name | |
| Telephone number | |
| Email | |
| Role in organisation | |

About your group or organisation

Please select your type of organisation.

If successful we may ask you to provide evidence such as a governing document which must be valid at the time of application or constitution.

| | |
|---|--|
| Registered, exempt or excepted charity | |
| Charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) | |
| CIC limited by guarantee <i>(and have charitable objectives)</i> | |
| Charitable company (limited by guarantee) | |
| Community benefit society (Bencom) | |
| Constituted community group | |
| Faith group, where the activity is not promoting religion | |

| | |
|---|--|
| Please supply any relevant registration or reference numbers. | |
|---|--|

Briefly summarise the Maidstone communities of identity or geography that your partnership usually works with. For example:

- a. "our youth partnership works with young people in Tovil to provide youth and play services"
- b. "our network supports vulnerable adults across the Maidstone borough"
- c. "our partnership works with those affected by loneliness in the town centre"

Word count: 250 words

What difference does your partnership/collaboration/network make to the health and wellbeing of residents? Please give examples:

Word count: 250 words

Your Proposal

1. Context - Give an overview of the main issues affecting the organisation in delivering this kind of work? You should include the main issues the communities you work with are facing and where there may be barriers or strengths you wish to build upon with your proposal.

Word Count: 350 words

2. Response – Summarise your proposal – what do you want to do?

Word Count: 350 words

3a. Impact - How will this proposal build the resilience of your organisation? Please also include any wider positive impact on VCSE organisations that aren't directly involved but do the same kind of work.

Word Count: 250 words

3b. Impact - How will this proposal directly benefit the health and wellbeing of local Maidstone Residents.

Word Count: 250 words

3c. Impact - How will you monitor and assess the impact of your proposal? Please include details of any performance targets and indicators and proposed methodologies.

Word Count: 250 words

Score Matrix

| Organisation | Project | Amount Requested | Does the project Mental Health, Social Isolation or Loneliness? (out of 10) | Local need and community benefit (out of 10) | Is the support required in response to the pandemic? (out of 10) | Total Score |
|--------------|---------|------------------|--|--|--|----------------|
| | | | | | | |
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Agenda Item 19

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

31 August 2021

England Trees Action Plan Update

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Final Decision-Maker | Communities, Housing and Environment Committee |
| Lead Head of Service | Mark Green, Director of Finance & Business Improvement |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | Kathryn Moore, Transformation Team Leader and James Wilderspin, Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive Summary

An urgent item was raised at the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee on the 1 June 2021 regarding the England Trees Action Plan and the positive impact tree planting can have towards tackling the climate emergency and air quality issues for Maidstone.

This report is to provide an update on the England Trees Action Plan, other strategies, initiatives, relevant policies and the initiation of the action plan at Maidstone Borough Council for tree planting activities across the borough.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee notes the report.

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|--|----------------|
| Communities, Housing and Environment Committee | 31 August 2021 |

England Trees Action Plan Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Impact on Corporate Priorities | <p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>We do not expect the actions within the report will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council's ability to achieve the outcomes within Safe, Clean and Green.</p> | Transformation Team Leader |
| Cross Cutting Objectives | <p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report supports the achievement of the Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected cross cutting objectives.</p> | Transformation Team Leader |
| Risk Management | Please refer to paragraph 5.1 in the report. | Transformation Team Leader |
| Financial | Funding has already been allocated to actions via the Biodiversity and Climate Change Funding and this report does not request further funding for implementation. We will continue to bid for external funding to help achieve our aims. | Finance Team |
| Staffing | We will deliver the actions within the report with our current staffing. However, it is recognised that external expertise will be | Transformation Team Leader |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | required, and these costs are considered within the funding. | |
| Legal | There are no legal implications associated with the actions set out in the report which is to note the update on the trees action plan and not for decision. | Legal Team |
| Privacy and Data Protection | No impacts on Privacy and Data Protection identified as a result of the report. | Policy and Information Team |
| Equalities | A high-level Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the Biodiversity and Climate Change action plan and further assessments will be made for relevant projects. | Policy & Information Manager |
| Public Health | We recognise the actions in the report will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. | Transformation Team Leader |
| Crime and Disorder | There are no Crime and Disorder issues to note. | Transformation Team Leader |
| Procurement | There is likely to be significant ongoing procurement implications arising from implementation of the actions and the procurement team will be involved throughout. | Transformation Team Leader |
| Biodiversity and Climate Change | The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and are noted in section 2.2. | Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager |

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Planting trees and increasing woodland cover is a powerful solution to combating climate change and mitigating increasing global temperatures and keeping them below the 1.5C global target. Tree planting comes with numerous side benefits including, increasing biodiversity, reducing soil degradation and increasing water retention, reducing temperature rise and providing natural flood management if planted in the right places. Trees also have a significant positive impact on our wellbeing and health. Maidstone Borough Council and our members recognise the need and benefits that tree planting in the borough will bring, and this report is to update and inform on our long-term strategy to begin widescale tree planting across the borough and with our partners.

2.1 The England Trees Action Plan

The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024 was released in May 2021 and sets out the government's long-term vision for the treescape it wants to see

in England by 2050 and beyond. The plan provides a strategic framework for implementing the Nature for Climate Fund of which £500 million is allocated. With this funding the intention is to treble tree planting by the end of the current Parliament as part of the UK's ambition to plant 30,000 hectares of woodland per year by then.

The report highlights that public access to trees and woodlands will be improved in a responsible way, by encouraging community-led tree planting and investing in partnerships with communities and local government. An action is to publish guidance for local authorities to develop their own local tree and woodland strategies.

The report also covers multiple aspects of trees including encouraging support to private landowners for example the Woodland Carbon Guarantee, this will encourage an increase to woodland planting rates and the domestic market for woodlands by giving landowners the option to sell their captured carbon in the form of verified carbon credits, and opening the Local Authorities Treescap Fund, to work in partnership with Non-Governmental Organisations, local landowners, and community groups to deliver strategic planting and natural regeneration of trees outside of woodlands for the benefit of local communities and nature.

Whilst the England Trees Action Plan provides some guidance it does put tree planting in the context of the government's Nature Recovery Network, which has not yet been published and will not be available until the end of 2021. The Government's new Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery Schemes are due to provide the main mechanism for publicly funded woodland creation after 2024.

2.2 Our Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan

The Policy and Resources Committee adopted the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action plan on the 21st of October 2020. Within the action plan there are four key actions which relate to trees. Action 6.1 encourages tree planting in new developments, namely as part of the Local Plan 'to increase tree coverage and other wildlife habitats to allow biodiversity in new developments'. This will also be supported by the national policy indicated in the England Trees Action Plan which states

'We are committed to seeing all new streets lined with trees. Developers should work with local authorities to plan, plant, and manage these trees, and agree how they will be funded - including through developer contributions such as Biodiversity Net Gain. Obtaining the expert services of local tree officers is recommended to help ensure trees and woodlands are planted and managed effectively.'

The England Trees Action Plan proposes changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, to make clear the expectation that trees, such as community orchards, should be incorporated in new developments and that streets should be tree lined. Which will not only help ensure trees are included in new development but that these are the correct species of trees to ensure maximum benefits and longevity.

Action 6.3 of our plan, *to support and signpost community groups on tree planting and after care,* is ongoing and currently compliments the Queens Green Canopy (QGC) project. The QGC is to mark the Queens Platinum Jubilee and will see a unique tree planting campaign being rolled out across the UK. Amongst other initiatives the QGC will encourage schools, communities, and groups to engage and apply for free saplings through The Woodland Trust and raise awareness to protect our ancient woodlands. We will support this project through promotions and signposting to ensure we link our own MBC tree planting initiatives with the QGC campaign.

As set out in the Action Plan a large contributor to increasing tree coverage in the borough falls under action 6.9 – *‘where feasible increase tree cover to 2/3 on our estate and contribute to the Kent aim to plant 1.5 million trees and aim towards national average tree cover of 16%.’* For this action please note that while we may be able to advance with tree planting on our estate where possible in the short term, larger scale tree planting activities is contingent on partnerships with larger landowners in the borough and will be rolled out over a longer timeframe. Therefore, tree planting activities will be incremental, and subject to expert advice on what time of year is best to plant different native species, as well as soil and maintenance needs. For these reasons, a feasibility study will be commissioned to ensure that best practices are followed and a realistic timescale is established to plant the trees and ensure their longevity.

The Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emission strategy is to develop and implement a strategy to establish 1.5 million new trees (or their carbon sequestration equivalent) in Kent and Medway. Kent County Council are currently recruiting a Kent Tree Strategy Officer who will be responsible for working with partners across the county to commence delivery on this targeted 1.5 million new trees, turning the high-level aspirations of the (currently draft) Kent Tree Establishment Strategy into action. An emphasis on expansion and reconnection of existing woodland (including urban woods) will define the action within our plan and the Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy which envisages a landscape-scale approach and implies looking at the borough as a whole. This is why the development of the Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery Schemes will be integral to influencing this action and ensuring woodlands are connected and biodiversity is able to thrive.

The final action within our Biodiversity and Climate Change action plan which supports increasing tree coverage is action 6.12 *‘audit trees on council land and create a maintenance plan.’* Tim Moya Associates have carried out tree audits with support from the MBC Parks department over the past few years covering our entire estate and have built up a thorough database that can be used to assess how the stock can be maintained and enhanced as part of the tree planting plans.

2.3 Tree Planting in Maidstone

The aim of the trees project is to increase tree cover across the borough whilst ensuring the right trees are planted, in the right place for the right reasons. Preliminary discussions have taken place with the Kent Wildlife Trust about the need for a baseline for tree planting such as sites that

would be suitable, which species would be appropriate, and whether it is possible to create woodland corridors. We have now scoped this piece of work and the Terms Of Reference (TOR) can be found in Appendix 1. Next steps will be to commission an appropriate provider and then use the TOR to inform our future tree planting throughout the borough.

As indicated in the TOR, encouraging natural regeneration of our existing woodlands will be central to the tree planting plan. MBC estate and areas for trees is limited, so where possible larger swathes of land will be sought as larger scale planting areas will maximise the benefits and will be far more cost effective. We also recognise that the cost of purchasing land for tree planting is substantial and therefore conclude the most beneficial way to increase tree coverage in the borough is to work in partnership with landowners to seek appropriate areas for large scale tree planting (see section 2.5).

In areas such as parks and open spaces, tree planting will ensure maximum open spaces are still available for the public, and that appropriate sized trees are planted to reduce the risk of vandalism and damage to the trees in areas with more public access. A maintenance plan will also be developed to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to protect new trees from damage and vandalism, as well as how to care for trees in an urban area to ensure there is not risk to the public or infrastructure.

Tree planting also has numerous side benefits in combating some of the impacts of climate change. As part of the MBC tree planting plan where possible trees will be planted to reduce the impacts of flooding. Studies have shown that planting more trees allows for increased evaporation from broad leaves, increases the soil and roots retention and absorption of rainwater and reduces the impacts of flooding if planted in the right places. Tree planting along riverbanks can also reduce the impacts of bank erosion and more canopy cover in urban areas can increase the coverage of shade and reduce temperatures. The feasibility study will highlight areas of Maidstone Borough where tree planting will have these side benefits and close collaboration with the Planning department will ensure that natural solutions are also used to reduce the impacts of climate change in our borough.

Close collaboration with Kent County Council will also be sought on tree planting permission along streets throughout Maidstone. Tree planting activities on public streets will also be developed closely with the Planning Department and experts to ensure that roots and the growth of trees in the longer term do not damage the pavements, roads, phone/electric cables, and other infrastructure.

2.4 The Woodland Trust

We have engaged with the Woodland Trust and they are happy to work in partnership with MBC to further the joint aims of sustainably increasing tree cover. However from initial discussions the Trust do not envisage further extensive planting opportunities on open land that they own on the Hucking Estate, as such land is an important habitat in its own right. The

Trusts' approach to providing *Woodland Advisors* to support landowners to create woodland could be replicated and focussed within the borough or used as a shared resource with neighbouring boroughs as a County based resource. There are perceived benefits for landowners working with independent charitable organisations with a strong and easily understood 'Woodland' brand and image compared to a local authority and a partnership with the Woodland Trust would be a valuable asset as part of our tree planting plan.

2.5 Large landowners and call for sites

As mentioned, due to limited areas for wide scale tree planting on the MBC estate, we will seek out partnerships a collaboration with major landowners across the borough and to utilise land for larger scale tree planting and to maximise the positive impacts. We will look to carry out calls for sites, create a strategy for discussion with landowners and stakeholder engagement, host further events, such as wilding events, to develop strong relationships with landowners.

For example, MBC will seek partnership opportunities with the Kent County Agricultural Society to engage with local farmers to find synergies between tree planting and encouraging biodiversity on their lands – such as wild corridors, soil and water management, improved animal welfare, and added revenue. MBC will also seek to work with parish councils for added benefits to parish land.

2.6 Development of partnerships with local business and scoping the engagement of third-party carbon offsetting schemes

Additional funding for tree planting activities will be sought with external sponsorship through application to Lotteries grants and trusts, as well as potential funds derived from the public purchasing a tree (e.g. for commemorative purposes). MBC will also scope synergies with local private sector on their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and to potentially secure funding from local private sector to purchase trees/allocate land and spaces for tree planting.

Additionally, opportunities will be scoped for 'carbon offsetting' schemes and potential of collaboration with third-party organisations that calculate carbon emissions and offer tree planting carbon offsetting projects. Woodland carbon offers exciting opportunities for the private sector and other investors and there is a need to develop these markets further in the UK with support from councils who may have land availability and can facilitate partnerships that would create a win-win opportunity for all parties.

2.7 The Pleasant Forest Project

The Forestry Commission are creating a new multi-purpose woodland in the borough – Pleasant Forest which will be a 127-hectare site at Platts Heath. Public consultation on Pleasant Forest closed in February 2021 and design plans have been finalised and can be found in Appendix 2. The forestry commission have placed an order with the tree nursery for

180,000 trees and 35,000 shrubs and will begin planting in November 2021.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 That the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee notes the report.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee notes the report.
-

5. RISKS

- 5.1 Due to the high demands for tree planting which has been impacted by government funding and COVID-19 we may struggle to buy quantities of trees required from a bio-secure nursery. This may also increase the price of trees which has an impact on budget. This risk can be mitigated by working with other organisations and partners to increase the buying power of the authority. Appropriate procurement processes will be followed to ensure value for money.
- 5.2 If species selection is inappropriate and saplings are planted poorly, not maintained and watered sufficiently in the first 3 years, are destroyed by animals, or suffer from pests or disease this will reduce the survival rate of saplings. A management plan will need to be put in place to reduce this risk.
- 5.3 Tree planting will need to be conducted with the planning department to ensure areas/land allocated for tree planting will not be jeopardised by further development. Equally, tree planting proximity to infrastructure such as roads, paths and buildings will also need to be closely coordinated with the planning department to ensure, potential trees falling in high winds or the growth of roots do not cause potential dangers and impacts to the public.
- 5.4 With additional tree coverage comes additional risk of forest fires, particularly in light of future hotter drier summers projected. Risk mitigation strategies will be developed in coordination with the Kent Fire and Rescue Service and emergency planning and reliance officer.
- 5.5 Risk of vandalism and damage to the trees in areas with more public access. A maintenance plan will be developed to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to protect new trees from damage and vandalism, as well as how to care for trees in an urban area to ensure there is not risk to the public or infrastructure.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 None

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 Initiate General Public Communication and Engagement Campaign

Next steps include the development of an appropriate inclusive Public Communication and Engagement Campaign to inform and engage with the general public on tree planting plans and activities. This campaign will seek local community support and develop action groups to take part in planning and tree planting activities.

As part of this communication strategy an inclusive/equality assessment will be conducted to ensure gender equality, the inclusion of minority groups, appropriate measures are taken for persons with disabilities and ensuring access. The outcome of the assessment will also help with the involvement of inter-generational schemes and a multi-faith approach.

7.2 Partnership development with landowners and private sector

As indicated in section 2.5, and in parallel with the development and implantation of the communications campaign, engagement with landowners and private sector will be sought to align local benefits and plans for tree planting throughout the borough.

7.3 Commissioning of the feasibility study

A major initial step is the commissioning of the feasibility study (See Appendix 1 TOR). Following the commencement of the communications campaign, initial scoping activities conducted by MBC, and initial discussions and negotiations with landowners, the feasibility study will be commissioned to shed light on a realistic timeframe for tree planting based on season, species, and location of potential wide scale tree planting over the coming years. The feasibility study will also establish a baseline of the number of trees in the borough, and benchmarks for tree planting over the coming years to track the increased numbers of trees, Carbon sequestered, and log a record of improvements to soil, water retention, canopy cover, temperature and increase in biodiversity.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: Terms of Reference
 - Appendix 2: Pleasant Farm Design Plans
-

Maidstone Tree Planting Project

Commission to provide a baseline for tree cover in Maidstone

Terms of Reference

Background:

The England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024 was released in May 2021 and sets out the government's long-term vision for the treescape it wants to see in England by 2050 and beyond.

An action is to publish guidance for local authorities to develop their own local tree and woodland strategies.

Whilst the England Trees Action Plan provides some guidance it does not put tree planting in the context of the government's Nature Recovery Network, which has not yet been published and will not be available until the end of the year. The Government's new Sustainable Farming Incentive, Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery Schemes are due to provide the main mechanism for publicly funded woodland creation after 2024.

The Policy and Resources Committee adopted its Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan on 21 October 2020 and includes four key actions which relate to trees:

- Action 6.1 - encourages tree planting in new developments
- Action 6.3- supports and signposts community groups on tree planting and aftercare.
- Action 6.9 - where feasible increase tree cover to 2/3 on our estate. This is linked to the Kent and Medway Energy and Low Emission strategy which includes development and implementation of a strategy to establish 1.5 million new trees (or their carbon sequestration equivalent) in Kent and Medway. An emphasis has been placed on expansion and reconnection of existing woodland (including urban woods) and the Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy envisages a landscape-scale approach, which implies looking at the borough as a whole. The development of our Local Nature Recovery and Landscape Recovery Schemes will be integral to achieving this.
- Action 6.12- audit trees on council land and create a maintenance plan. Safety audits have been carried out on the Council's tree stock over the past few years providing a database for management purposes.

Objectives:

Tree Planting Project:

To increase tree cover across the borough, ensuring the right trees are planted, in the right place for the right reasons.

This commission:

To assess available information and provide a baseline for current tree cover within Maidstone Borough. Provide a methodology for identifying new areas for tree planting and a strategy to monitor and review the success of this tree planting initiative.

Scope:

Identify existing tree canopy cover in Maidstone Borough by defined area using GIS and other available data. If information is lacking, establish a cost-effective way of providing quantitative and qualitative information, enabling distinction by type and value.

Produce a methodology which enables a sieve of land within the borough to optimise the benefits of new tree/woodland planting. This should consider land identified in current biodiversity and infrastructure strategies and where new planting would achieve the most benefits. Sites should be located to enable connectivity and should be appropriate in terms of current biodiversity value, landscape character, topography, geology/soil type, historical setting and land use. Areas to be discounted from this search should include:

1. Designated/protected sites
2. Key habitats
3. Other unsuitable land such as sports pitches, golf courses, residential gardens, other areas of existing woodland, water bodies etc.

Methodology

Undertake desktop assessment of information already available, including the Urban Canopy Cover Map, Maidstone Ancient Woodland Inventory, MAGIC maps, GIS mapping layers, MBC tree safety audits etc.

Reporting/program

1. Draft report on baseline and methodology for approval
2. Final report

Key stakeholders:

Kent Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission, Environment Agency, KCC Ecology, KCC Highways

References:

England Trees Action Plan 2021-2024

Kent Nature Partnership Biodiversity Strategy

MAGIC maps

Ancient Woodland Inventory

Urban Canopy Cover Map (<https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/research/i-tree-eco/urbancover>)

Kent Downs AONB Management Plan

Maidstone Local Plan

Maidstone Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan

Maidstone Landscape Character Assessment and Landscape Guidelines

Maidstone Landscape Capacity Study

MBC tree safety audits, produced by Tim Moya

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee report, England Trees Action Plan Update, August 2021

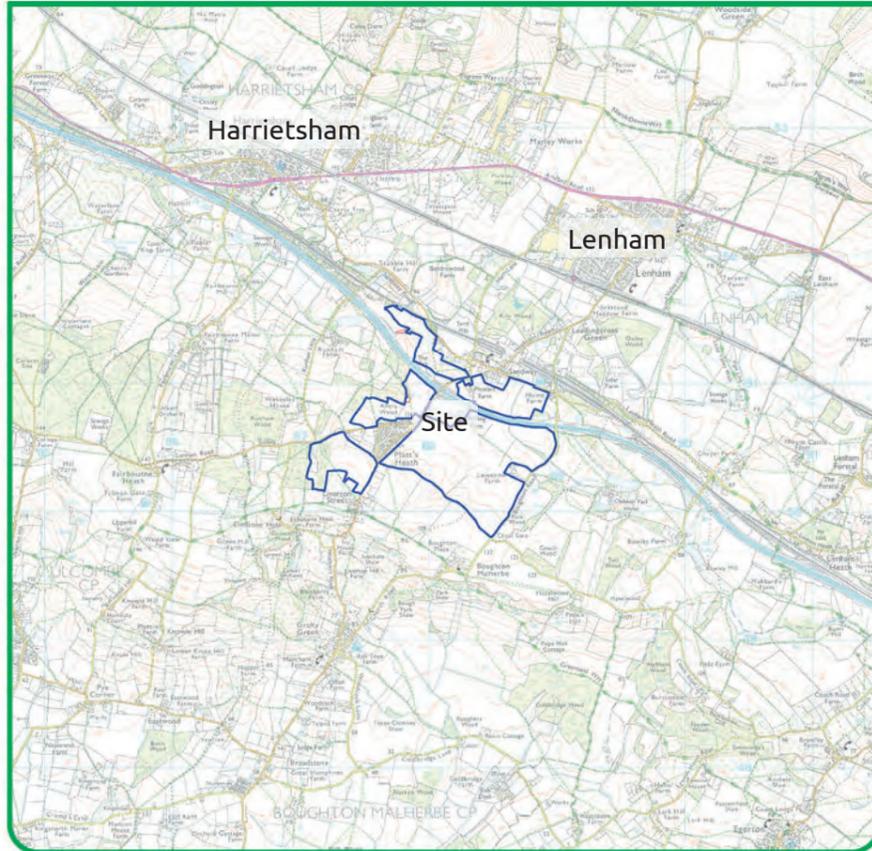


Forestry England

Pleasant Farm Woodland

Final Design Consultation





In January 2020, Forestry England bought Pleasant Farm near Lenham in Kent. This multi-million pound investment is part of our contribution to increase the nation's forest.

This document reveals our vision for a new woodland for timber, wildlife and people.





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View looking south from Pilgrims way

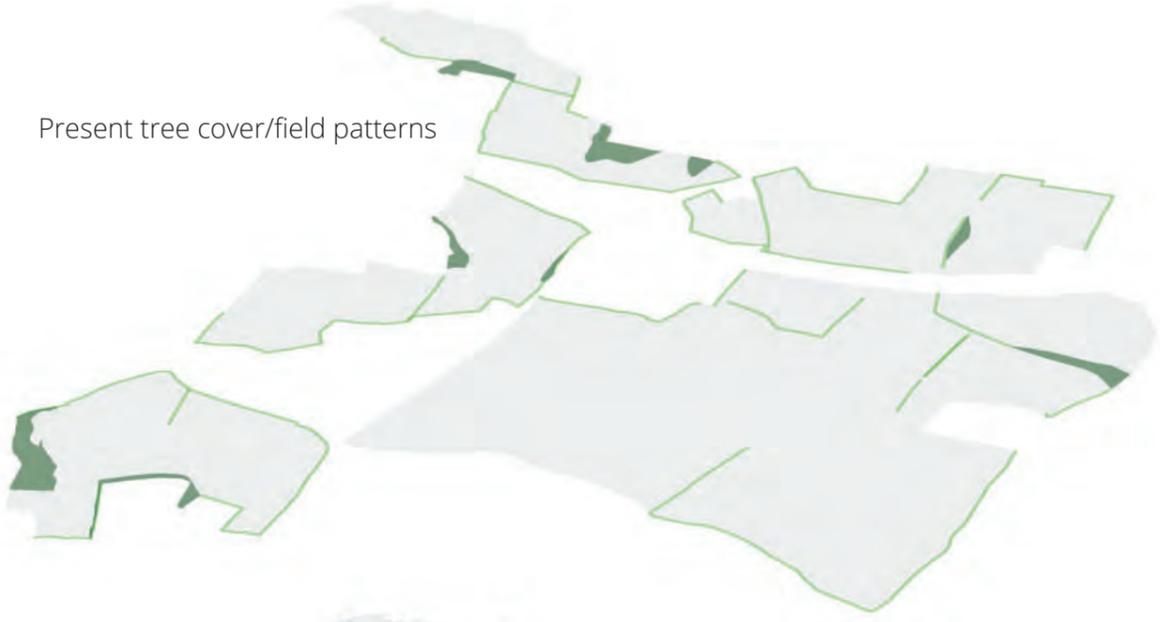
As this photograph shows, the site sits within an area of low lying land that is obscured even from higher vantage points in the surrounding landscape by trees, hedges and woodland.

The site is set within a context that features significant areas of woodland cover. The site sits within a Landscape Character area broadly characterised by extensive areas of arable farming and Ancient Woodland of mixed species.

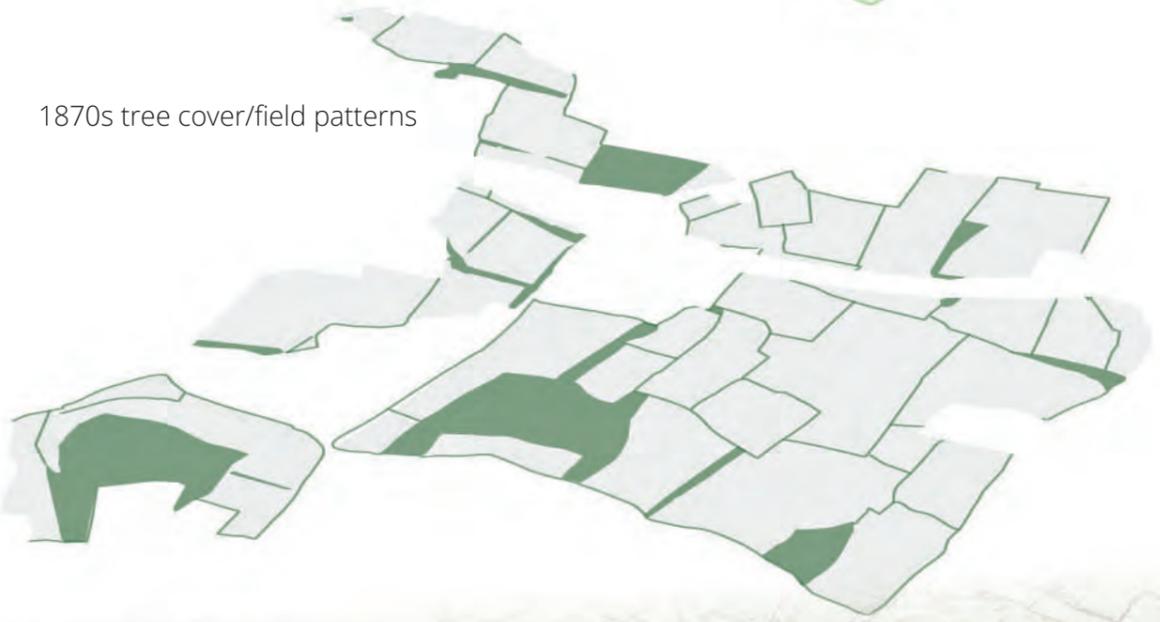
Pleasant Farm has mostly freely-draining deep loamy soils that are well suited to woodland creation. The presence of areas of nutrient poor sandy soils, and areas of shallow soils provide excellent opportunities to provide a mixed habitat while existing drainage lines offer some potential for wet habitats.

Landscape Change

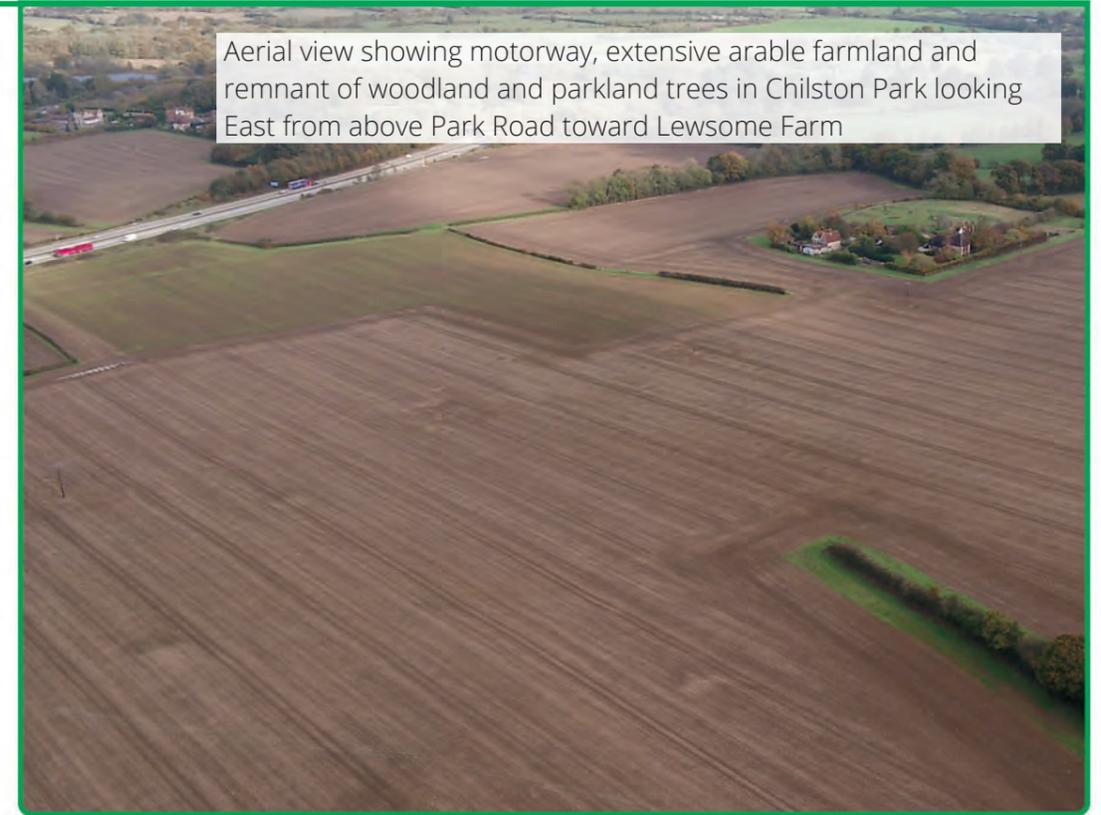
Present tree cover/field patterns



1870s tree cover/field patterns

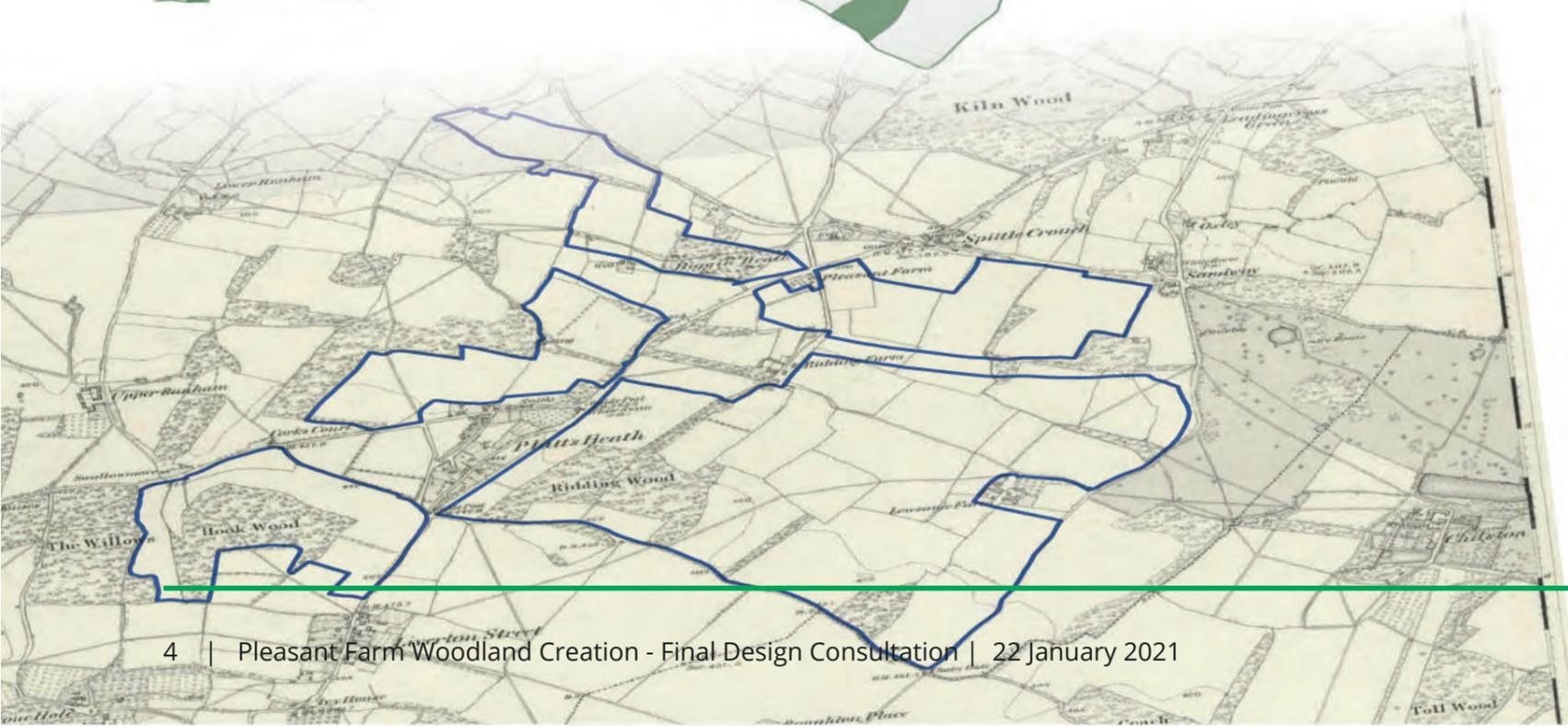


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Aerial view showing motorway, extensive arable farmland and remnant of woodland and parkland trees in Chilston Park looking East from above Park Road toward Lewsome Farm

As with so much of the British landscape, the small field pattern with hedgerows and woodlands has receded in the last 150 years. Large scale modern transport and utilities infrastructure has had a significant effect on the character of this landscape as has intensive agricultural production. Woodland has been lost and field boundaries removed with the consequence that habitat has been lost, fragmented and become disconnected.





At Forestry England, we are excited to be creating a new woodland for people, nature and the economy. It will make a significant contribution to locking up carbon, becoming a great place for wildlife, and growing sustainable timber.

Spread across 5 plots, our woodland at Pleasant Farm will:

- Contribute to increased woodland cover and carbon capture through sustainable timber production
- Restore and connect habitats
- Increase woodland resilience to prepare for future climate change
- Enhance biodiversity
- Provide a space for you to relax and enjoy the outdoors

Each of the plots will have a focus that builds upon its key features:

Plot A
Access for All

Plot B
Woodland for the Community

Plot C
Peacefulness and Nature

Plot D
Sustainable Timber Production

Plot E
Research woodlands



View of existing trees in hedge boundary of plot A

In November 2020, we held an online public consultation to engage with local residents and neighbours of the site. A short explanatory video and consultation document were produced to explain our initial concept design plan. We collated the comments and concerns from those who participated in the online questionnaire and consultation calls, and the project team has adapted the concept design plan in response.

Opportunities and activities

A strong majority of respondents (88.9%) agreed that Pleasant Farm would accommodate opportunities to exercise, relax and learn. An easy access trail in plot A and grass footpaths across all 5 plots will allow pedestrian access to the site all year round. Events held on site, such as community tree planting, pond restoration, wildlife spotting and creative arts, will provide opportunities to learn.

If you are interested in getting involved with any of these activities, please get in touch at pleasantfarm@forestryengland.uk

Wildlife, biodiversity and animals on site

Respondents were positive that Pleasant Farm would be beneficial for wildlife and specifically mentioned butterflies, bats, buzzards, hedgehogs, barn owls, badgers, great crested newts and dormice. One respondent mentioned horse-riding and bridleways. Information from TROT, the local bridleway licensing authority, led to a decision by the project team against putting in bridleways. The fast-moving traffic on roads between plots, lack of bridleway specification tracks and lack of de-boxing facilities nearby informed this decision.

Landscape

Local residents were concerned that the noise pollution from the M20 would spoil the tranquillity of the site for both people and wildlife. Our tree planting proposal can only mitigate some of the noise pollution from the motorway. However in response to the consultation we have adjusted the planting adjacent to the M20 corridor in Plot B to include faster growing conifers to provide year round screening of views of the motorway.

The concerns relating to noise pollution contributed to plot C being selected as the most popular plot to visit for recreation (66.7%). The wildflower meadow, large pond and seed orchard will provide opportunities for interpretation and engagement with local schools and residents.

Car park and traffic management

The car park location and traffic management were common concerns raised. We would like to reassure everyone that the aim is to maintain a low-key site primarily for local residents rather than creating a large scale attraction. The location of the small (15-20 spaces) car park in plot A will be directly accessible from the A20 via East Street. This aims to minimise traffic flow through Sandway and Platts Heath.

Crime Prevention and Safety

We have a duty of care to both visitors and staff, so we want to ensure that Pleasant Farm is a safe, clean, and enjoyable place to be. Our final design plans and ongoing management of the site has been reviewed by a local crime prevention officer. On their advice, and with the results from the questionnaire, we will lock the car park at night, add a height barrier and plant thorny shrubs along key borders.

If you would like to get in touch with the local crime prevention liaison regarding our plans please email CSU.Maidstone@Kent.Police.Uk (Note this should not be used for reporting crime).

Outline Woodland Creation Plan

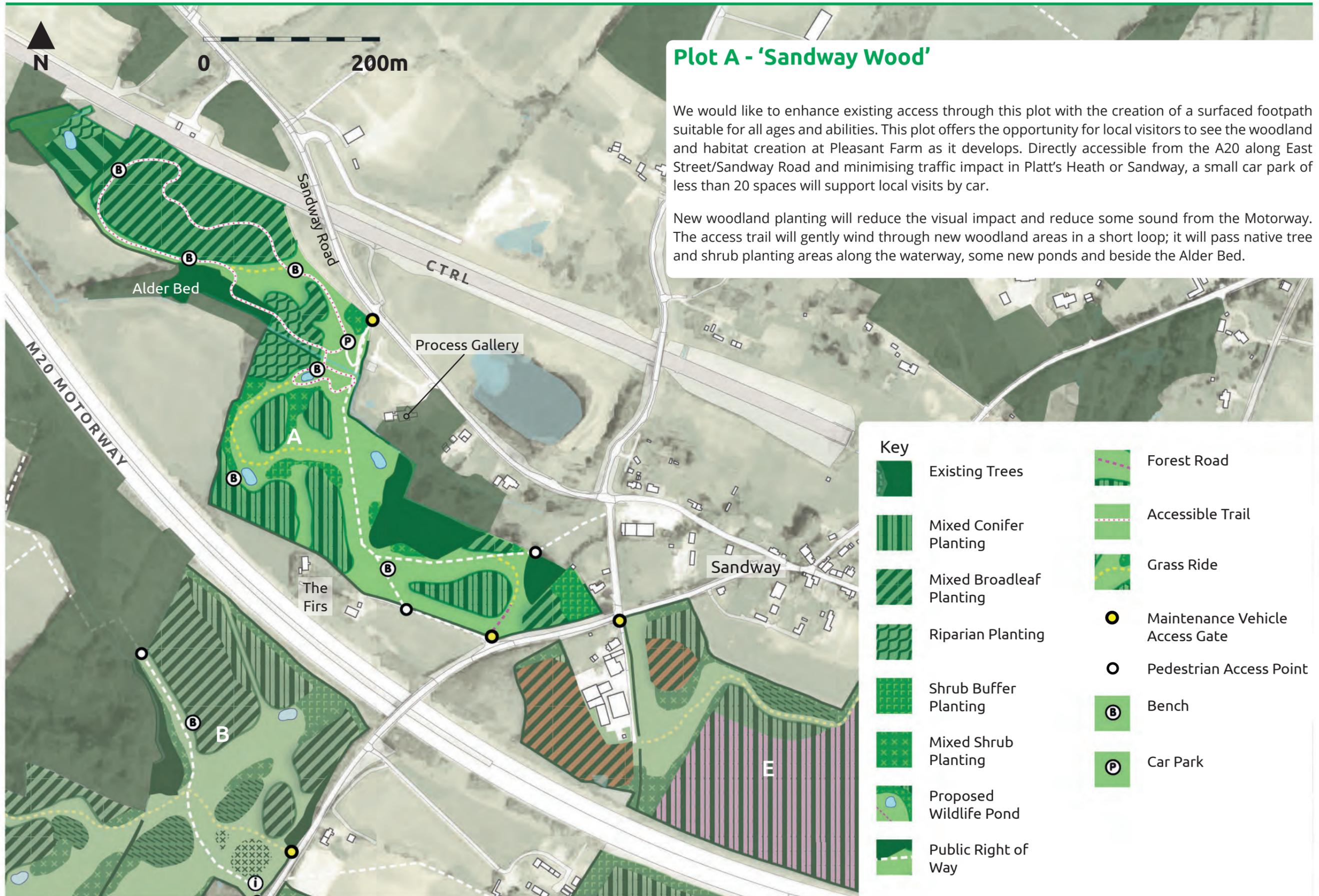


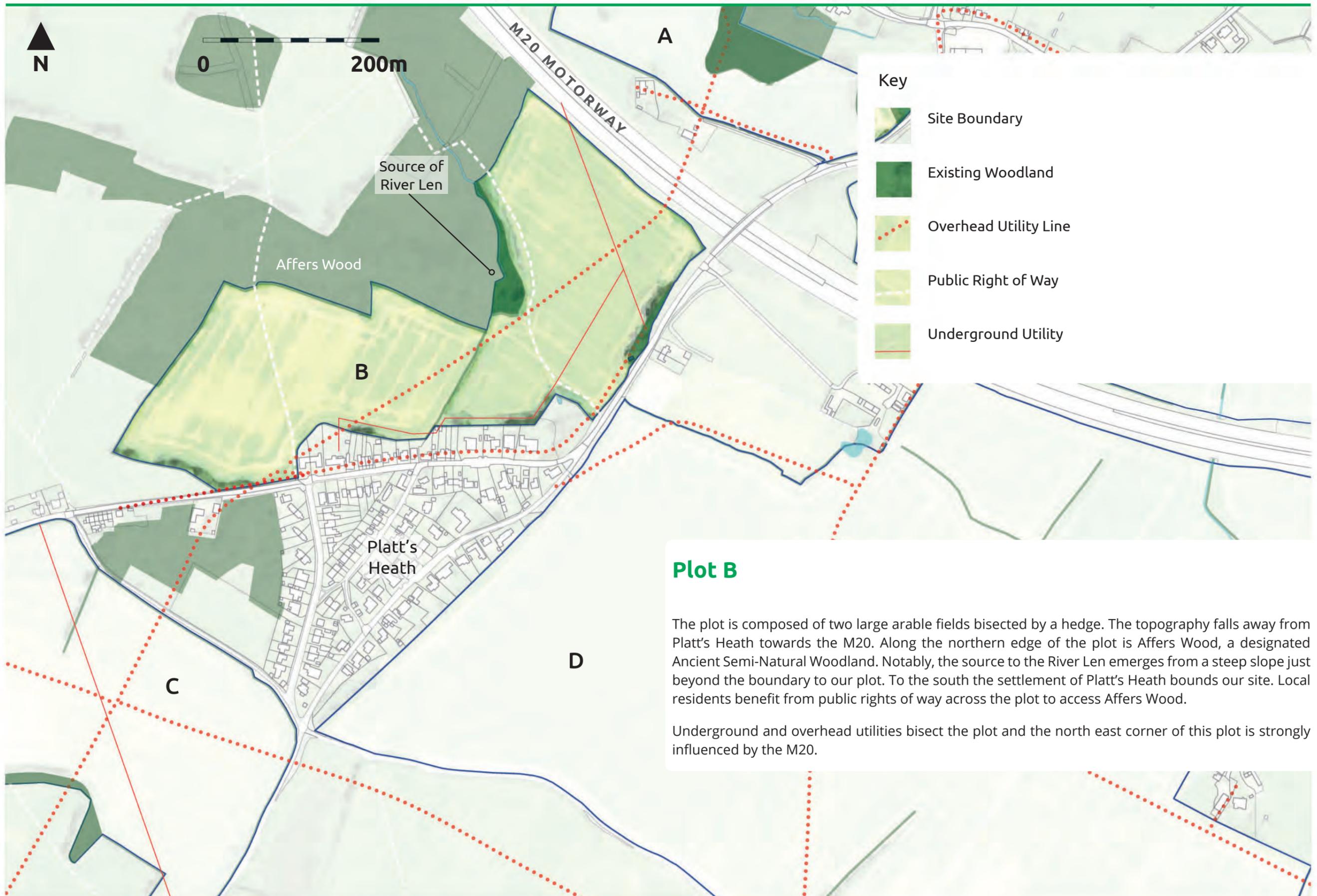


Plot A - 'Sandway Wood'

We would like to enhance existing access through this plot with the creation of a surfaced footpath suitable for all ages and abilities. This plot offers the opportunity for local visitors to see the woodland and habitat creation at Pleasant Farm as it develops. Directly accessible from the A20 along East Street/Sandway Road and minimising traffic impact in Platt's Heath or Sandway, a small car park of less than 20 spaces will support local visits by car.

New woodland planting will reduce the visual impact and reduce some sound from the Motorway. The access trail will gently wind through new woodland areas in a short loop; it will pass native tree and shrub planting areas along the waterway, some new ponds and beside the Alder Bed.

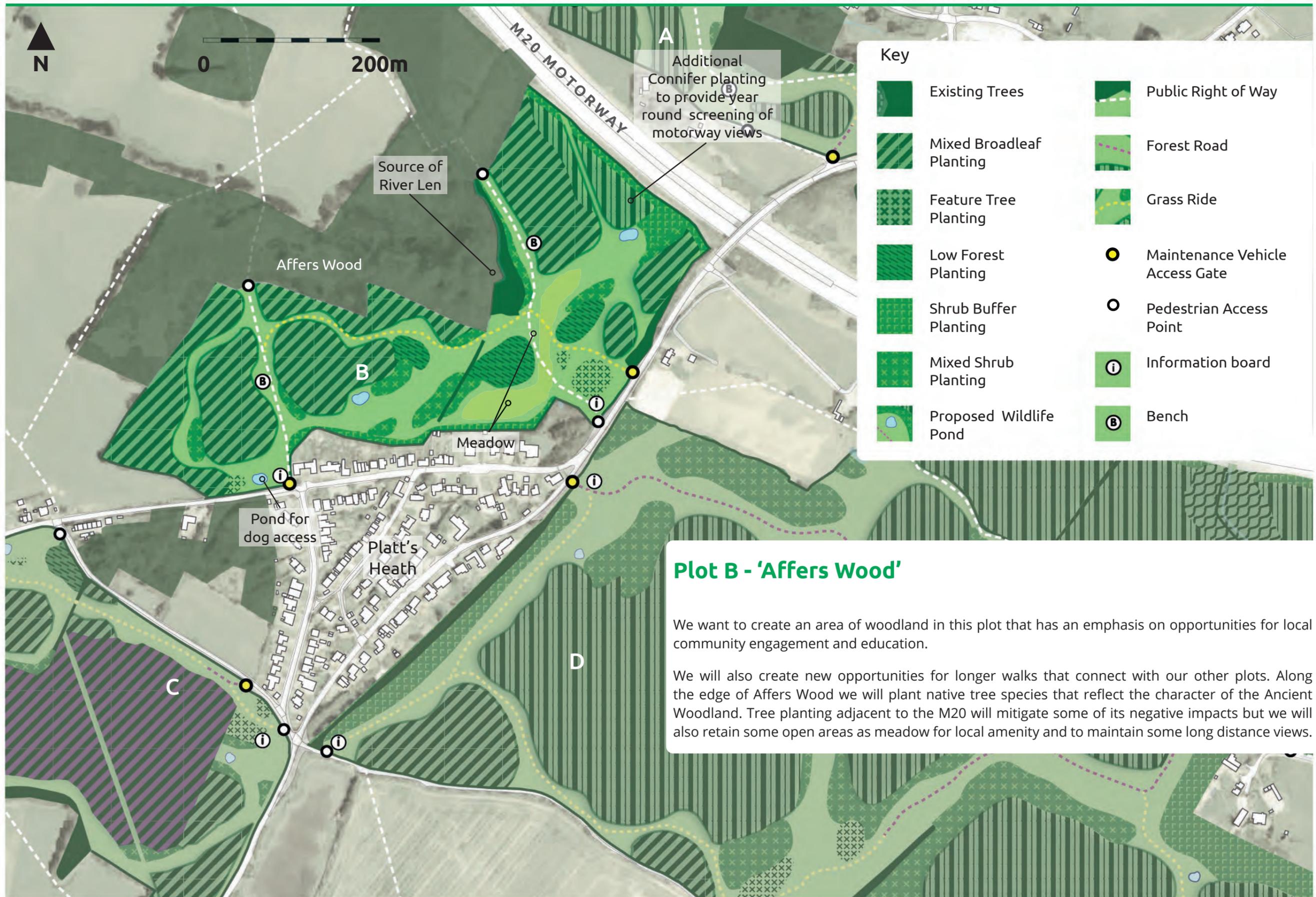


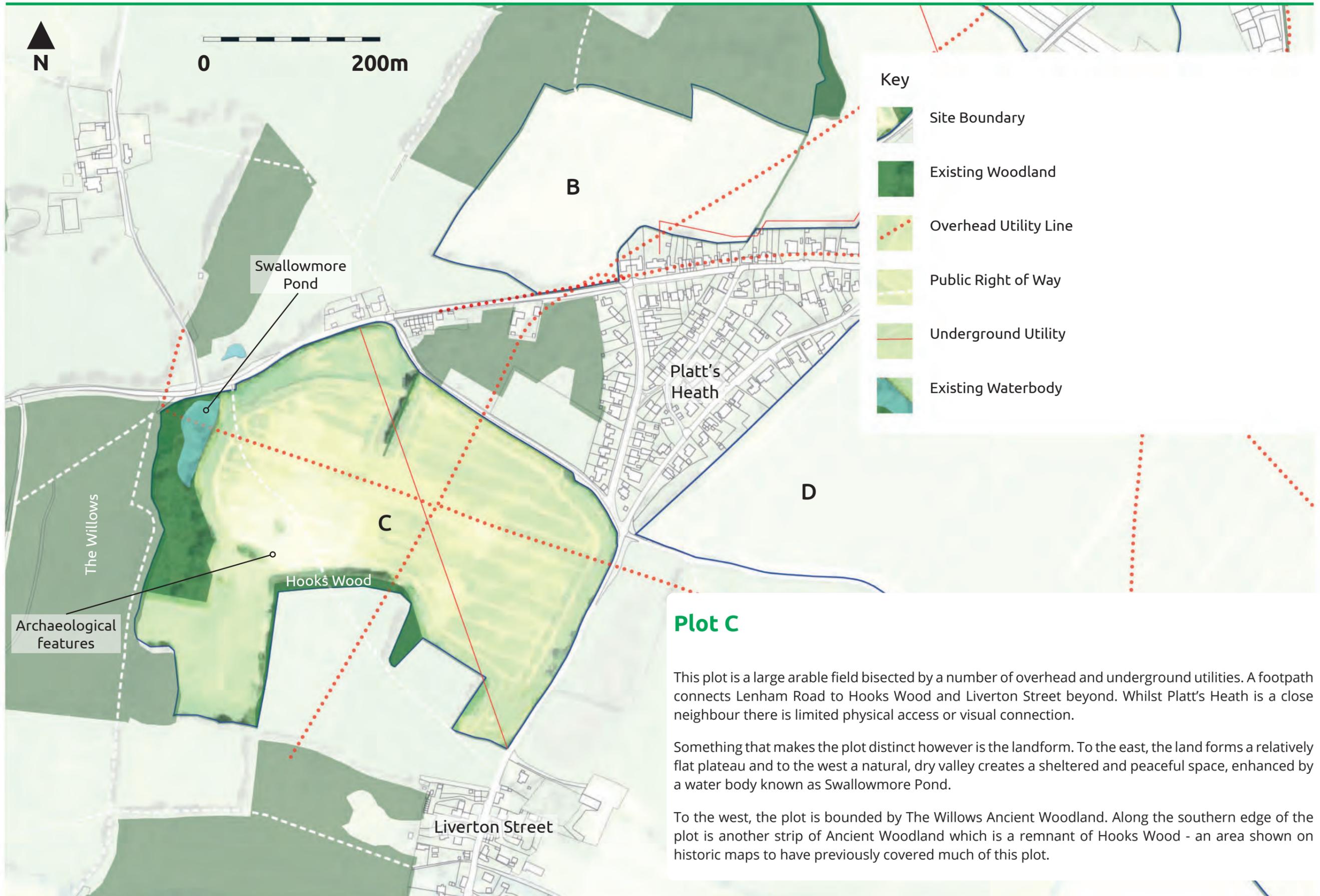


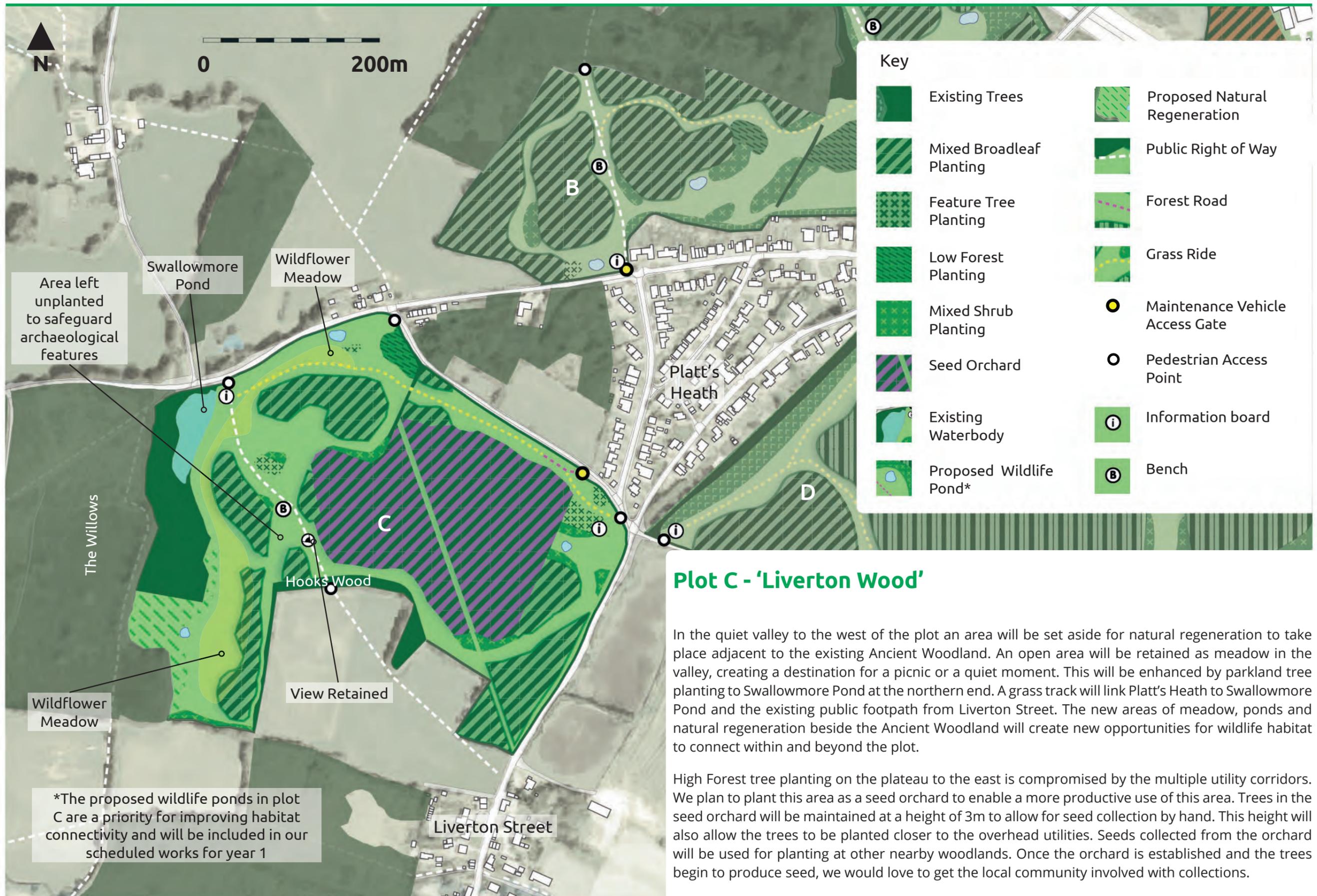
Plot B

The plot is composed of two large arable fields bisected by a hedge. The topography falls away from Platt's Heath towards the M20. Along the northern edge of the plot is Affers Wood, a designated Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. Notably, the source to the River Len emerges from a steep slope just beyond the boundary to our plot. To the south the settlement of Platt's Heath bounds our site. Local residents benefit from public rights of way across the plot to access Affers Wood.

Underground and overhead utilities bisect the plot and the north east corner of this plot is strongly influenced by the M20.









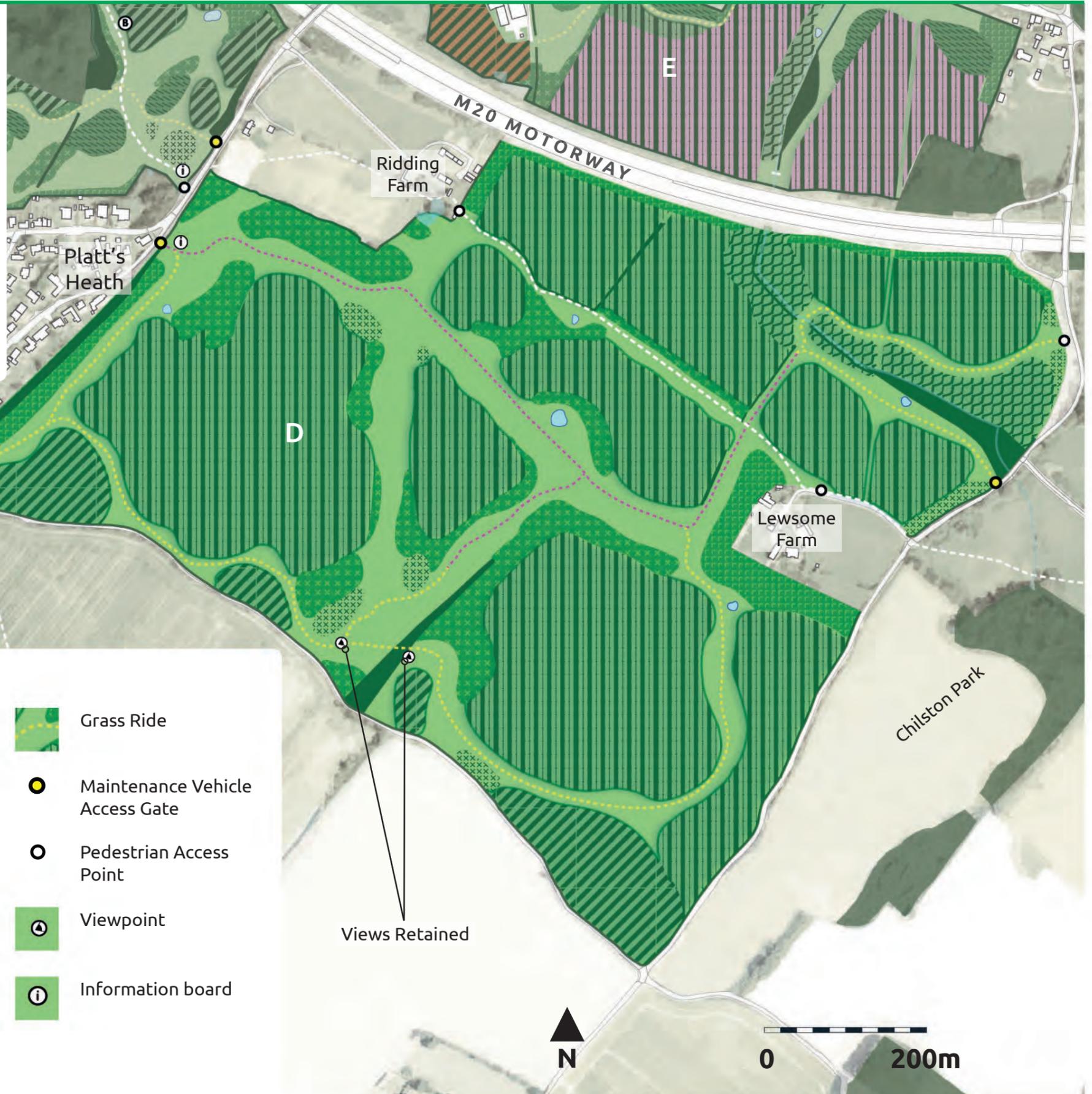
72

Plot D - 'Chilston Wood'

The scale of this plot creates the opportunity to focus on planting larger areas. This will support our aim for sustainable timber production at Pleasant Farm.

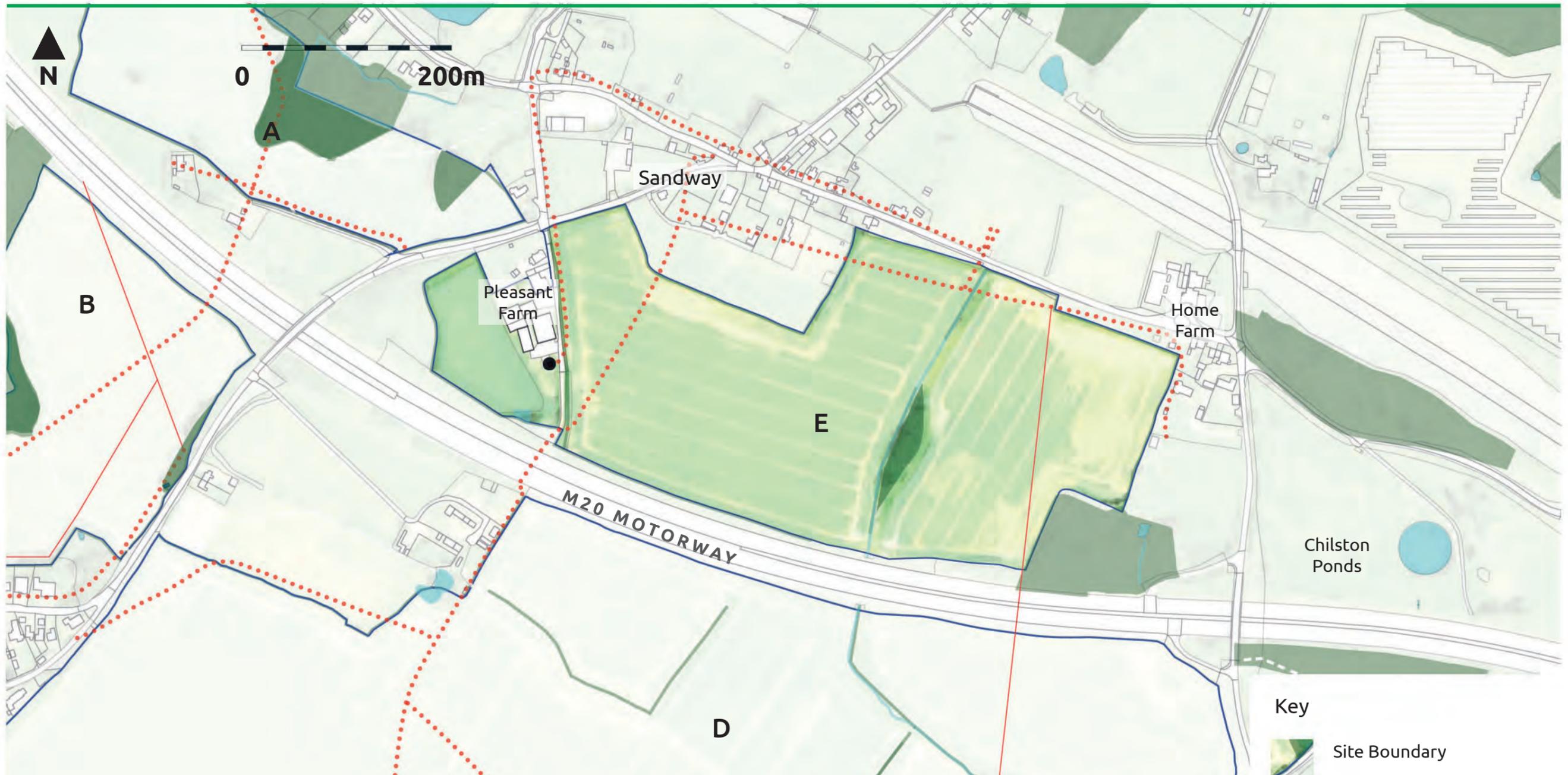
Grass rides will loop through the woodland creating walks that will be enhanced by feature trees that reflect the character of neighbouring Chilston Park. Distant views northward to the Kent Downs AONB will be retained by keeping unplanted areas on high ground to the south and along main rides.

New ponds, as well as tree and shrub planting, will greatly enhance opportunities for wildlife, creating connections within the plot and beyond.



| Key | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|--|---------------------------------|
| | Existing Trees | | Grass Ride |
| | Mixed Conifer Planting | | Maintenance Vehicle Access Gate |
| | Mixed Broadleaf Planting | | Pedestrian Access Point |
| | Riparian Planting | | Viewpoint |
| | Feature Tree Planting | | Information board |
| | Low Forest Planting | | |
| | Shrub Buffer Planting | | |
| | Mixed Shrub Planting | | |
| | Existing Waterbody | | |
| | Proposed Waterbody | | |
| | Public Right of Way | | |
| | Forest Road | | |

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Plot E

The plot is made up of three arable fields. One small to the west, bounded by the M20 and Pleasant Farm buildings; and two larger units to the east divided by a drainage channel.

A telecommunications mast and four concrete/steel frame agricultural buildings are associated with Pleasant Farm.

The settlement of Sandway is a short distance to the north of the plot beyond a series of paddocks and gardens, but this plot has no public right of way and is adversely affected by road noise from the M20.



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Key

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
|  | Existing Trees |  | Low Forest Planting |
|  | Mixed Conifer Planting |  | Shrub Buffer Planting |
|  | Riparian Planting |  | Mixed Shrub Planting |
|  | Feature Tree Planting |  | Maintenance Vehicle Access Gate |
|  | Research Plots (Forest Research) |  | Proposed Waterbody |
|  | Future Trees Trial plots |  | Grass Ride |

Plot E - 'Barr Wood'

A grass path to the north, away from the motorway, between the two ends of the plot, will create a partial link between the Chilston Ponds Nature reserve and plot A.

Primarily, this plot will be given over to our partner organisation, Forest Research, who will use the area to research and identify tree species best suited to a changing climate. Their research plots will comprise over 19 different tree species.

Forestry England are also hoping to partner with the Future Trees Trust to set up some field trials to assess the genetic components of high-quality trees. In this plot birch and sycamore will be monitored regularly for health, growth, form, and timing of budburst. Once the trial is complete, the mature trees could then be used as a tested seed orchard. With improved seed available, Future Trees Trust are also looking to establish a demonstration plot which will visibly show the increased growth rate and better form of the improved seed.



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Woodlands, Hedges and Trees - Design Principles

NOW



Many of the field boundaries to our land are marked by hedges of varying condition, with gaps in places and some lengths entirely missing.

FUTURE



We will establish new hedgerows at our field boundaries. We will also conserve, enhance and restore remaining hedgerows, filling gaps with diverse native tree and shrub species to create strips that establish robust habitat reserves and corridors for nature.

Woodlands, Hedges and Trees - Design Principles

NOW

FIELD BOUNDARY HEDGE COMPOSED OF VERY LOW TREE/SHRUB SPECIES DIVERSITY

NARROW FIELD MARGINS OF GRASS/WEED

ARABLE CROP

The land at Pleasant Farm will continue to be put to productive use, however the annual rotations of arable crops will be replaced by long rotations of trees harvested for construction timber, fencing material, paper and card products and wood fuel a long time in the future.

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FUTURE

DIVERSE SHRUB PLANTING TO CREATE GRADED EDGES FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT

OPEN SPACE MANAGED AS MEADOW

The open character of the site will change slowly over a long period of time, but we have incorporated open space into our design so that views and habitats are maintained.

We will manage woodland edges for a graduated transition between woodland and open meadow.

We will also manage paths, rides and clearings to create sinuous margins with ecologically rich, native shrub species. These will form a network of habitat corridors that encourage wildlife.

Woodlands, Hedges and Trees - Design Principles



Around the outer edge of our tree planting areas we will plant native shrubs to create a graded edge to the woodland blocks. This will soften the appearance of woodland blocks and also create a network for the benefit of small mammals, invertebrates and reptiles, connecting them to habitat areas within and beyond Pleasant Farm.

Where our site bounds Ancient Woodland we will soften the transition between our tree planting and native woodland by planting with native broadleaf species, or leaving areas unplanted to allow them to regenerate naturally.



Tree planting

Shrub planting

Natural regeneration or Native species tree planting

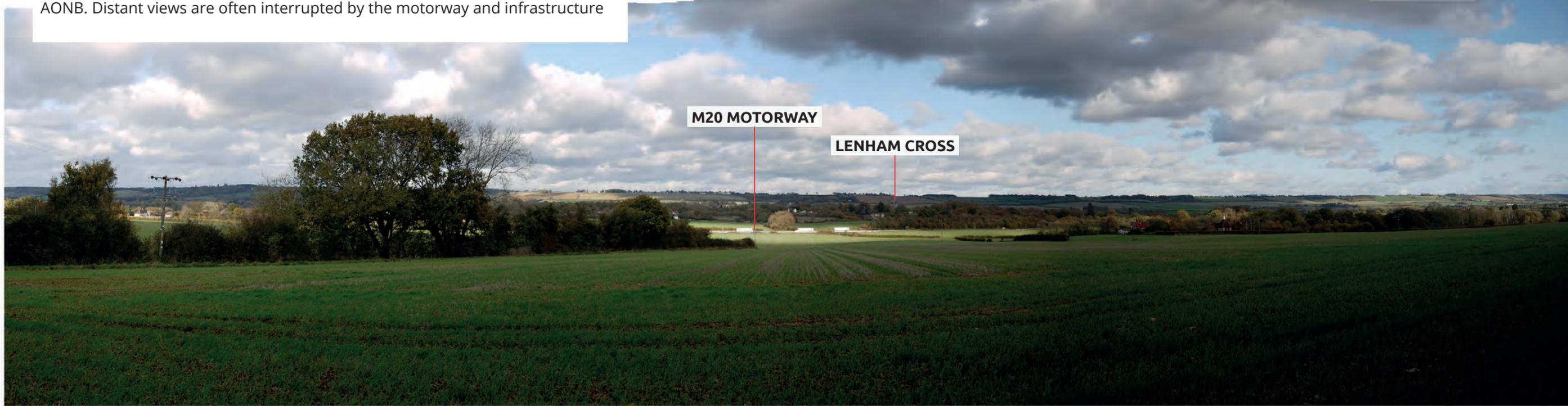
Existing hedge

Ancient Woodland

Woodlands, Hedges and Trees - Design Principles

The open character of the arable land affords distant views toward the Kent Downs AONB. Distant views are often interrupted by the motorway and infrastructure

October 2020



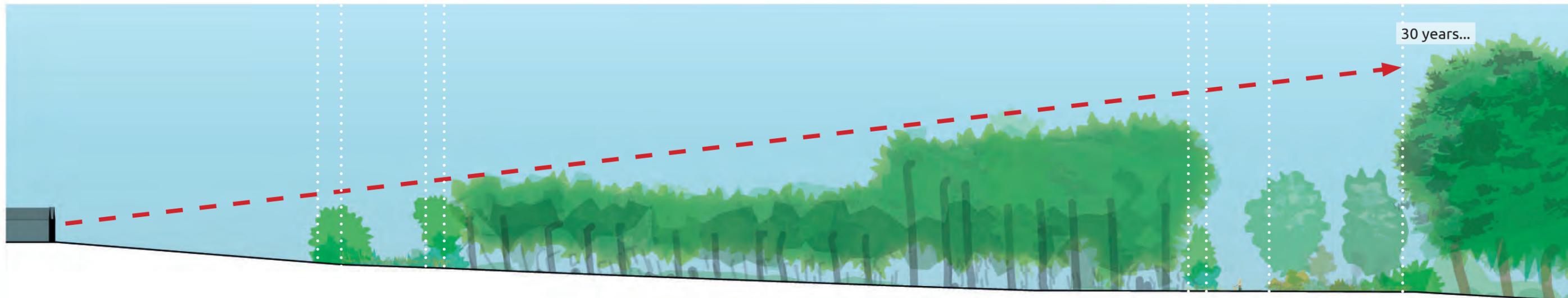
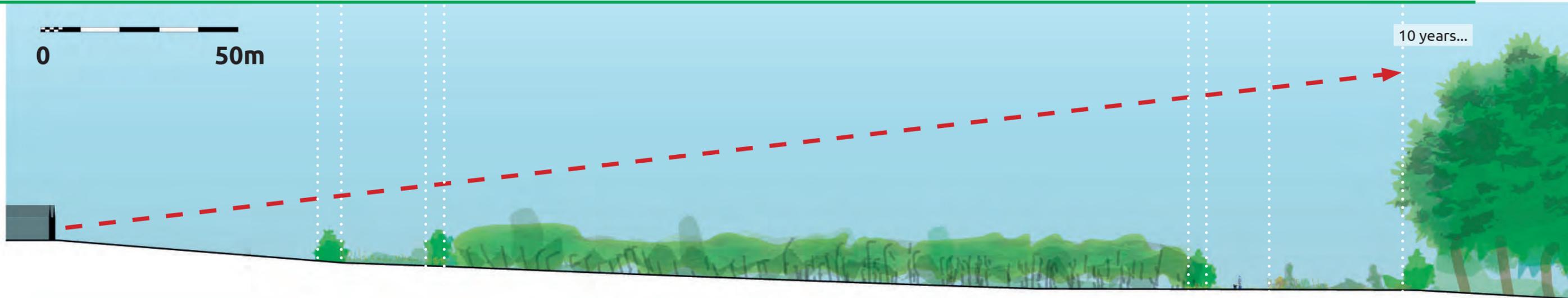
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Our paths and rides will create new access around the woodland. The tree and shrub planting offer the opportunity to screen views of motorway and transport infrastructure but we will also create clearings and add benches to make the most of views.

This is a long distant view but it is difficult to pick out individual features



Woodlands, Hedges and Trees - Design Principles



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Neighbouring property

Shrub planting

Shorter tree species chosen to maintain view toward Affers Wood

Tree planting

Shrub planting

Natural regen

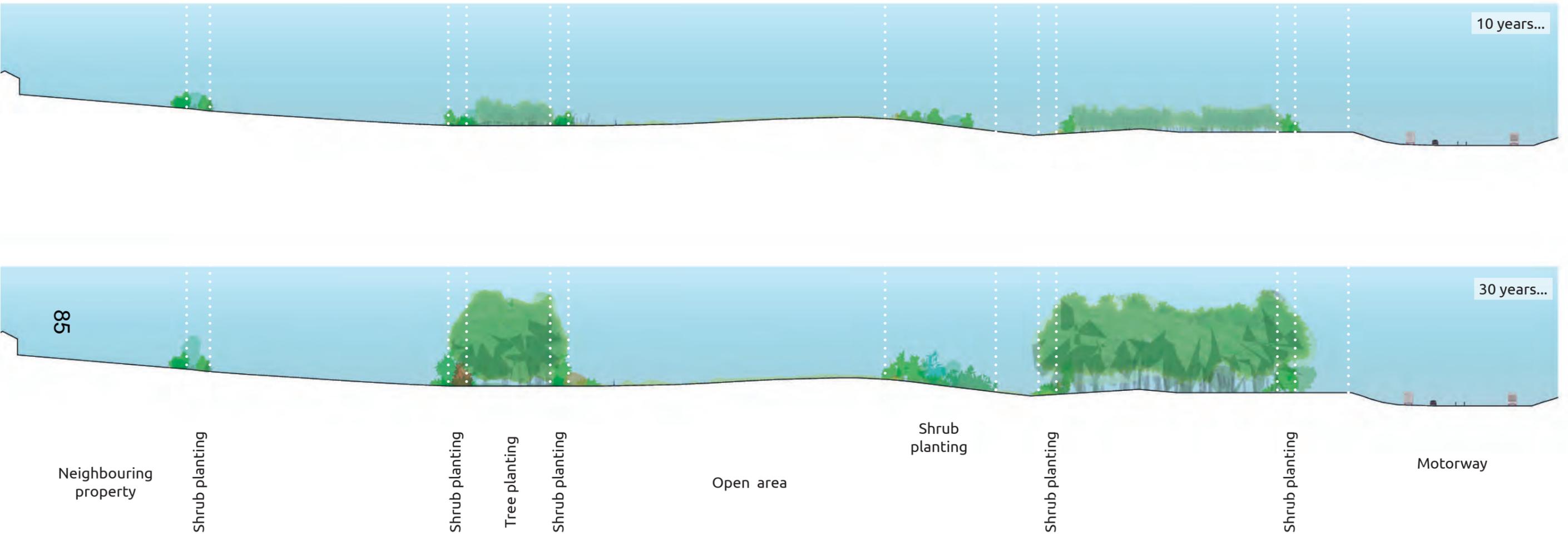
Ancient Woodland



Typical section from houses on Lenham Road across Plot B toward Affers Wood.

We will endeavour to design the tree planting to respond to neighbouring residences concerns.

Woodlands, Hedges and Trees - Design Principles



Typical section from houses on Lenham Road across Plot B toward the M20 motorway.

Tree planting will mitigate some of the influence of the motorway.



Common dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)
© Stuart Sutton

To create a site that works for wildlife we have first considered what is there already by carrying out a preliminary ecological assessment. This gathered the biological records, not just for the farm, but also the surrounding area to consider the wildlife context. We have also carried out some walk-over surveys and wintering and breeding bird surveys.

The biological records show that the arable farm is currently of limited wildlife value, with the remaining species-poor hedgerows being where most wildlife has been found. There are also some small areas of woodland, small streams and two ponds. The headline protected species found in the surveys and records include Badger, Dormouse, Great Crested Newt and Bats.

To guide our site development for wildlife we are following the principles of 'Better, Bigger, Connected and More', outlined in the [Making Space for Nature](#) report. 'Better' means creating a diverse range of habitats and micro-habitats. 'Connected' means ensuring habitats are within easy travelling distance for a range of wildlife, that they work at many different scales, and that they connect with neighbouring sites: a stepping-stone network for wildlife across the local area.

By creating a range of habitats for Great Crested Newts and Dormouse we will be enhancing the populations for some of the rarest animals in the local area. These two species will act as 'flagship' species, creating opportunities for a much wider range of other species.

New habitats to be created will include broadleaved and mixed woodland areas and diverse shrub and scrub belts. A significant extent of flower-rich grassland will be created throughout the plots and new ponds will be created over several years. The diverse range of shrubs will work for wildlife in the same way the hedges have done, but in a much-improved way and should provide dense cover, pollen, nectar, and fruits throughout the year.

By enriching the farm with a wide range of planted species and diverse habitat structures that connect across the plots, we will give wildlife the greatest opportunity not only to move in and thrive, but also to move around the site and into the wider landscape.

Neal Armour-Chelu
Forestry England, East England Forest District, Ecologist.

Substantial evidence suggests that improved biodiversity and improved ecosystem services, such as carbon capture and flood mitigation, go hand in hand. Increased diversity improves an ecosystem's resistance to disturbances, such as pests and background climatic change.

Forest Research advised the project team on species selection with the aim to create a diverse planting mix resilient to climate change. In support of their work the species underlined in the table (right) will be included in a Forest Research operational trial area to identify species best suited to a warming climate.

The main productive conifer species are Douglas Fir, Western Red Cedar and Western Hemlock as advised by Forest Research for the soil types present at Pleasant Farm. Scots Pine will also be planted to reflect the character of the Chilston Pines park and other fragments of heath that neighbours the site. Many of these productive species are shade tolerant and can therefore be grown in a planting mix with other faster growing species.

The main broadleaf species, which will be predominantly for recreation areas, are Sessile Oak, Sweet Chestnut, Aspen and Small-leaved Lime. Some areas of broadleaf planting will be clumped areas or widely spaced to create a more open parkland feel.

Mature trees already on site will be retained and where planting is adjacent to existing ancient woodland it will reflect the existing native species. Along the boundaries of neighbouring properties will be thorny shrubs, including gorse and hawthorn, to provide security and privacy whilst preserving views from and light into the properties.

The table (right) lists the species that will be planted at Pleasant Farm and the proportional use of space on site. In area, the mixed conifer planting will account for 44% whilst broadleaf and shrub planting cover 15% and 12% respectively. 25% will be maintained as open space, including water bodies and wildflower meadows, whilst the existing 3% woodland cover will be maintained. The design, including the proportions of the use of space at Pleasant Farm, is in compliance with the [UK Forestry Standard](#).

| Conifer | | Broadleaf | | Shrubs | |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Species | Number (k) | Species | Number (k) | Species | Number (k) |
| <u>Atlas Cedar</u> | 0.81 | Aspen | 3.30 | Alder Buckthorn | 4.12 |
| <u>Coast Redwood</u> | 0.81 | Black Walnut | 1.18 | Blackthorn | 6.96 |
| Corsican Pine | 7.77 | Common Alder | 0.95 | Dogwood | 4.12 |
| Dawn Redwood | 0.04 | Crab Apple | 0.29 | Elder | 4.06 |
| Douglas Fir | 42.74 | Hornbeam | 3.16 | Gorse | 7.71 |
| European Larch | 12.58 | Italian Alder | 0.91 | Guelder Rose | 2.15 |
| <u>European Silver Fir</u> | 0.81 | Native Black Poplar | 0.88 | Hawthorn | 6.84 |
| <u>Grand Fir</u> | 0.81 | Pig Nut | 0.71 | Hazel | 6.96 |
| Japanese Red Cedar | 1.40 | Red Oak | 0.93 | Privet | 4.06 |
| <u>Leyland Cypress</u> | 0.81 | Rowan | 1.27 | Purging Buckthorn | 4.12 |
| Macedonian Pine | 13.39 | Scarlet oak | 0.93 | Rose | 6.96 |
| Maritime Pine | 8.58 | Sessile Oak | 17.27 | Spindle | 7.02 |
| <u>Noble Fir</u> | 0.81 | Silver Birch | 1.40 | Wild Cherry | 4.06 |
| <u>Norway Spruce</u> | 0.81 | Small-Leaved Lime | 1.71 | Willow | 2.27 |
| Oriental Spruce | 5.28 | Sweet Chestnut | 3.54 | | |
| <u>Pacific Silver Fir</u> | 0.81 | Tulip Tree | 0.71 | | |
| Scots Pine | 7.29 | Whitebeam | 0.17 | | |
| <u>Serbian Spruce</u> | 0.81 | Wild Cherry | 1.18 | | |
| <u>Wellingtonia</u> | 0.81 | Wild Service Tree | 1.02 | | |
| Western Hemlock | 9.78 | | | | |
| Western Red Cedar | 9.78 | | | | |
| <u>Weymouth Pine</u> | 0.81 | | | | |
| Total | 127.52 | Total | 41.49 | Total | 71.46 |



We hope you have found this information useful and we welcome any comments you have. These plans are also being reviewed by local councils and other stakeholders.

If you'd like any further information or have specific questions, please get in touch with Naomi at pleasantfarm@forestryengland.uk

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

31 August 2021

Brenchley Gardens

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Final Decision-Maker | Communities, Housing and Environment Committee |
| Lead Head of Service | William Cornall Director of Regeneration & Place |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | Brenchley Gardens is located in High Street Ward |

Executive Summary

Brenchley Gardens is a beautifully maintained public park located next to the Maidstone Museum in the Town Centre and is much valued by the local community. Following concerns raised about the misuse of the park by some sections of the community, officers have met to plan how best to address the community safety issues of concern and encourage a more positive use of the park for the better enjoyment of everyone. This report sets out the actions undertaken and planned to date and seeks the Committee's views on achieving that aim.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee endorses the approach set out in the body of the report to address community safety concerns and create a more positive environment at Brenchley Gardens.
2. The Committee directs the Head of Housing & Community Services to provide an update report to the November meeting of the CHE Committee.

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|----------------|-------------|
| CHE Committee | 31-08-2021 |
| CHE Committee | 30-11-2021 |

Brenchley Gardens

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Impact on Corporate Priorities | <p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council’s ability to achieve the aims of a safe, clean and green place; together with a thriving place.</p> | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Cross Cutting Objectives | <p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations support the achievement of the cross-cutting objectives.</p> | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Risk Management | Already covered in the risk section. | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Financial | <p>The actions described in this report would be funded from a range of sources. The musical events in Brenchley Gardens described in paragraph 2.10 have been funded from the government’s Welcome Back Fund. The cost of any new fencing would have to come from the Parks improvements capital programme, which amounts to £50,000 in 2021/22. General officer support for all initiatives would</p> | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| | be funded from within existing budgets. | |
| Staffing | We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Legal | <p>Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council's duties under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.</p> <p>The Council has a duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to consider the crime and disorder implications of their decisions and the responsibility to co-operate in the reduction of crime and disorder in the Borough.</p> <p>Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1988 states:</p> <p>"Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those function on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can prevent, crime and disorder in its area".</p> | Team Leader (Contentious) |
| Privacy and Data Protection | Accepting the recommendations will have no impact on the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. | Policy and Information Team |
| Equalities | The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Public Health | We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Crime and Disorder | The recommendation will have a positive impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed. | Head of Housing & Community Services |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| Procurement | Not applicable. | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Biodiversity and Climate Change | <p>The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This aligns with action(s) (number and quote action) of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan. | Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer |

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Brenchley Gardens has a rich history and the accolade of being Maidstone’s first public park when completed in 1873. The park includes a wonderful example of a Victorian Bandstand and the cenotaph to the Queen’s Own Royal West Kent Regiment together with the more recent statue honouring the Royal Engineers and celebrating Maidstone’s connection with the Gurkhas.
- 2.2 Brenchley Gardens throughout its history has been a source for enjoyment and pleasure for the many people that visit the park. However, it has also attracted an element that has misused this public facility. Fortunately, serious incidents are rare but do occur. More prevalent is low level anti-social behaviour that detracts from the wider community being able to fully enjoy the facilities that the park brings.
- 2.3 Throughout the day and evening the dynamics within the park change, as different groups congregate within the park at various times of the day. This can range from commuters accessing the park as part of their throughfare, families enjoying the surroundings, school children using the park as part of their journey to and from school, and others who use the park as a convenient point of congregation due to its close location near to the town centre.
- 2.4 Not all of this use is positive and some of the more negative activity ranges from noisy behaviour that can disturb other users of the park or be intimidating, through to low level and more serious criminal activity. Data held by the local Police team demonstrates that the majority of the minor incidents take place during the daytime to early evening and this is confirmed by the experience of our staff who maintain the park or are located nearby in the Museum.
- 2.5 In 2020, MBC’s Community Protection Team set up monthly multi-agency meetings to develop a partnership approach to promoting a more positive use of Brenchley Gardens and develop a positive guardianship for this public space. Now that most of the Covid19 restrictions have been lifted actions to enhance use of the park can be implemented and further developed. Agencies involved in discussions include the Police Community

Safety Unit Team, KCC Social Services Youth Team and from MBC staff from Community Protection, Parks & Open Spaces, Museum, and Communication Teams. The objective has been to explore and develop a holistic approach which ensures that Brenchley Gardens is experienced as a pleasant environment free from crime and disorder. Activities include providing deck chairs for the public to come and sit in the park and various music events.

2.6 Recent analysis of criminality undertaken by Kent Police looked at reported incidents in Brenchley Gardens and the surrounding area. This included parts of Week Street, St Faiths Street and the Maidstone East Station. Amongst the key findings of the analysis of data which looked at the period issues between April and July 2021 identified:

- with over 100 crimes recorded in the area 16 Crime Reports referred specifically to Brenchley Gardens.
- across the wider area there were incidents which included anti-social behaviour including by young people, violence including domestic violence, drug dealing, drug taking, drunkenness and child sexual exploitation.
- assaults are the highest crime type recorded; they are committed across a number of different groups.
- temporal analysis found criminality in the area was more prevalent mid-afternoon through to approximately 10pm, with a significant peak between 20:00 – 21:00.

2.7 In response to this information the Kent Police Community Safety Unit have successfully bid for and secured the Kent PCSO Task Force. The PCSO Task Force, made up of 21 officers, will provide a high-visibility presence for 6 to 8 weeks from mid-August. Their focus area is dedicated to Brenchley Gardens and the immediate surrounding area but does extend to Whatman Park to cover for any displacement. The main objective is to tackle crime and disorder in Brenchley Gardens following a number of high-risk high harm crimes that have occurred there recently. The task force will accumulate information and intelligence which can then be used to ensure an evidence-based approach to identification of interventions to tackle crime and disorder occurring there. It is suggested that decisions with respect to future actions in the park are not made until the outputs from this work are available.

2.8 Recent Ward Cluster meetings, instigated by the CHE Committee, have enabled local ward councillors to have an input into the debate and discussion around improving the use and perception of Brenchley Gardens. This has included sharing their concerns about reported incidents in the media and perceived increases in ASB. Members have expressed a desire to ensure that measures are proportionate to the issues being experienced and well publicised to ensure that general users of the park are not unfairly prevented access to it. Suggestions made by ward members included preventing access at night and removing the defunct toilet block to create a hard standing for use/hire.

- 2.9 A number of initiatives have been explored with the aim of reducing anti-social behaviour and mitigating safeguarding risks relating to young persons. The model employed looks at 4 factors:
- Features of the Offender- opportunity to commit offences, presence of a victim, access to the location, risk of being caught.
 - Features of the Victim – access to the location, lack of guardianship, peer pressure, why have young people always congregated here.
 - Location- lighting, CCTV, access, proximity to other “attractors”, facilities, shelter.
 - Community – guardianship, alternative use of the location, atmosphere.
- 2.10 We are intending to build on the highly popular and successful events staged in the park earlier this year by the Maidstone Area Arts Partnership, with funding from Maidstone Borough Council. This included performances by the Maidstone Youth Music Society and BAE Systems Brass Band. Other initiatives to promote a broader use of the park include:
- An outreach event including BBQ hosted by Switch Café youth outreach and other voluntary groups.
 - Supervised deck chairs, to operate during August for 6 weeks.
 - Bandstand music events - 5 events planned in September.
 - Wine Festival – late summer.
- 2.11 These events are intended to encourage a broader and more positive usage of the park. Guardianship is also provided passively through CCTV. Currently there is a fixed operational camera within the park that has provided evidence and support to the police. Additional cameras could be considered but Brenchley Gardens is a relatively small park and any additional cameras would need to be justified in accordance with the CCTV policy guidance.
- 2.12 In terms of making facilities within the park more secure and to deter unwanted congregating around the Bandstand, costs have been sought to provide additional fencing in keeping with the original design and listed status.
- 2.13 Consideration could be given to making the park less accessible at night but any proposal would need to be weighed against the freedom of passage for residents who live at the bottom of the park, those using the park as part of their commute, the proportionality of the action in terms of both the amount of antisocial behaviour/crime it is intended to address and the cost and the effectiveness and cost of alternative interventions. This would also impact on the approach of having free and easy access to our public facilities and does not directly deal with the majority of incidents, which occur during the daytime. It is suggested that consideration of further interventions is made after the outcomes from the taskforce work, currently underway, are known.
- 2.14 **Appendix A** sets out a summary of actions taken, planned and for consideration in the future.

- 2.15 Through a combination of promoting an optimistic profile for the park together with providing opportunities for positive activities with a subtle but focused approach to tackling misuse, it is expected that Brenchley Gardens will once again enjoy the good reputation it deserves. It is proposed that a further report is provided to the CHE Committee later in the year to reflect upon the approach suggested in this report and its outcomes.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to endorse the approach set out in the body of the report and provide feedback.
- 3.2 Members could choose not to endorse the approach suggested but to do so would not address the concerns expressed by Members and staff about how the park is misused by a minority of the community.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is contained at paragraph 3.1, as this will enable the Council to address the concerns that have been raised about the use of Brenchley Gardens.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks are within the council's risk appetite and mitigating actions will be proposed if needed.
-

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 A communication strategy will be implemented to support the existing series of promotions intended to raise awareness of the park and to support the events to create a more community friendly use of the park.
-

7. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix A – Summary of actions taken and planned to improve Community Safety in Brenchley Gardens

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

BRENCHLEY GARDENS ACTIONS DELIVERED, PLANNED OR FOR CONSIDERATION TO ADDRESS COMMUNITY SAFETY

| MEASURES ALREADY IN PLACE | MEASURES PLANNED FOR DELIVERY | POSSIBLE FURTHER MEASURES TO BE CONSIDERED |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Brenchley Gardens partnership working group- Monthly meeting to develop ideas and initiatives based around intelligence and data around the park to ensure Brenchley Gardens is promoted and celebrated as Maidstone’s hidden gem. (Since Spring 2020)</p> <p>PCSO Task Force- High visibility foot patrols by dedicated policing team, supported by MBC CPT and BID Ambassadors.</p> <p>Increased use of the park through a series of events- increases footfall, increases natural guardianship, feel good atmosphere. (August and September)</p> <p>Weekly Youth Outreach visits - partnership officers from Switch Café, Salus, KCC Youth Services and Kent police visit Brenchley Gardens and surrounding area every Friday night to engage with young people. (Ongoing for many years)</p> <p>Summer Deck Chairs- supervised provision of chairs for people to use and enjoy in the park. Increases footfall and natural guardianship (August/September)</p> | <p>Olympia Boxing – weekly youth outreach provision funded by Maidstone local children partnership group (KCC) where a trained youth engagement team will work with young people using boxing as an engagement tool. This is not about teaching people to fight but encourages discipline, fitness alongside tackling general behaviour and life issues. The provision will run weekly on a Friday night from September with the hope to engage a small group that will then move to a nearby indoor location in the winter months.</p> <p>Parks Accreditation- Our outrageous ambition is to get the park formally recognised for excellence through an appropriate scheme such as Green Flag. This can take up to 5 years.</p> | <p>Reinstating the “frill” railings on the bandstand- This could reduce the use of the bandstand by those looking to perch or congregate under the bandstand. The original railings were removed so the metal could be used as part of the world war response. The railings will also increase stability of the bandstand itself. Works on this would be subject to funding and planning permission due to the heritage nature of the bandstand/park.</p> <p>Installation of gating and Night time closure- This needs very careful consideration balancing the views of various stakeholders; it is proposed that a conclusion is not reached on the way forward until the task force has completed its work.</p> <p>Assessments of the area by Designing Out Crime Team at Kent police identified that one way to reduce incidents in the park at night would be to close the park. This could be through a partial closure of some of the entrances from Maidstone East and Station Road, or a full closure if it includes the vehicular access from St Faiths Street. This would be subject to consultation, planning and funding.</p> |

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| <p>Monitored/Passive CCTV- a high-resolution CCTV camera in the middle of the park provides both monitored and passive surveillance through the partnership with One Maidstone and Mall Security Officers.</p> <p>Communications Strategy- positive pieces about the events and the park’s history.</p> <p>Schools Officers- Kent police have introduced new school officers who can be used to identify and work with young people who are accessing the park</p> | | <p>Consideration would need to be given as to how this would impact on reasonable enjoyment of the park by the general public, whether this impacts on commuters. A partial closure may also create a space where people become unwittingly trapped and a full closure will reduce a natural surveillance and could lead to those who are willing to gain entry to the park by climbing existing fencing and then being out of sight for extensive periods of time. Another consideration is displacement as this may see vulnerable people moved to areas with less guardianship and could therefore be more vulnerable in a different location.</p> <p>Increased CCTV Coverage- Additional CCTV could be considered to cover the entrance from the high-level bridge or the rear of the Museum if it could be deemed proportionate to increase surveillance in the park. This would be subject to additional funding of compatible CCTV units.</p> <p>Redevelopment/removal of the existing toilet block- Proposed through a Ward Cluster meeting, consideration could be made to utilising either the building or the space better. Ideas such as a café or a space for a vendor to be stationed could be considered.</p> |
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Agenda Item 21

COMMUNITY, HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

31 August 2021

Community Safety Plan Timetable

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Final Decision-Maker | Council |
| Lead Head of Service | Alison Broom Chief Executive |
| Lead Officer and Report Author | John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Classification | Public |
| Wards affected | All |

Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposed timetable and process to enable Maidstone Borough Council to adopt a new 3-year Community Safety Plan 2022-25.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee approves the timetable and process to enable the Council to adopt a new Community Safety Plan 2022-25 and provides direction on Member engagement.

Timetable

| Meeting | Date |
|----------------|------------------|
| CHE Committee | 31 August 2021 |
| CHE Committee | 30 November 2021 |
| CHE Committee | 1 March 2022 |
| Council | 13 April 2022 |

Community Safety Plan Timetable

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

| Issue | Implications | Sign-off |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Impact on Corporate Priorities | <p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve the corporate priority of a 'safe, clean & green place'.</p> | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Cross Cutting Objectives | <p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the cross-cutting objectives.</p> | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Risk Management | Approving the recommendation in the report minimises the risk of the Council and the Maidstone Community Safety Partnership not having an up-to-date Community Safety Plan. | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Financial | Producing the updated proposed Community Safety Plan can be undertaken within existing resources. The Community Safety Plan 2022-25 will provide the foundation for the Community Safety Partnership to prioritise and apply partner resources and bid for additional resources to achieve the outcomes identified | Section 151 Officer & Finance Team |

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|--|---|---|
| Staffing | We will deliver the Community Safety Plan document with our current staffing. | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Legal | Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council's duties under Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Council has a duty under Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to formulate and implement strategies for the reduction of crime and disorder in the area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); and for combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area and for the reduction of re-offending in the area | Team Leader (Contentious) |
| Privacy and Data Protection | Accepting the recommendations will not impact on the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. | Policy and Information Team |
| Equalities | The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment an equalities impact assessment will be completed as part of strategy development | Policy & Information Manager |
| Public Health | By adopting a new Community Safety Plan we recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. | Public Health Officer |
| Crime and Disorder | The recommendation will have a positive impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Procurement | Not applicable | Head of Housing & Community Services |
| Biodiversity and Climate Change | The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and are; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change. | Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This aligns with action(s) (number and quote action) of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan | |
|--|---|--|

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council is under a statutory requirement (Crime and Disorder Act 1998) to produce and adopt a Community Safety Plan in conjunction with its local Community Safety Partnership (CSP). Under the Crime and Disorder Regulations 2007, local authorities and borough CSPs in England and Wales are required to:

- Produce an annual strategic assessment
- Produce a three-year rolling partnership plan setting out partnership priorities, with actions to deliver these priorities
- Have a dialogue with communities to both inform these processes and explain the outcomes

2.2 The data gathered from the annual Community Safety Assessment will assist in developing the priority areas for the Community Safety Plan (CS Plan) to focus on. This draws on recorded crime data. However, the data extracted from this source does not provide the sole intelligence for the CS Plan. In addition, this can be supplemented by relevant national data, the Police Crime & Commissioner's findings, data held by health organisations and information arising from public engagement.

2.3 The process of putting the refreshed Community Safety Plan in place includes

- Assessment of the national and local context including relevant national priorities and data and the strategic priorities adopted by the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
- Review of the results from the previous plan
- Analysis of data including reported crime held by Kent Police and data relating to anti-social behaviour held by the council, data held by health organisations including that relating to violence and mis use of drugs
- Analysis of qualitative information obtained via surveys for example by the Police and Crime Commissioner
- Engagement with councillors to better understand concerns expressed by the public
- Engagement with the public – to better understand concerns and obtain feedback on proposed priorities and actions
- Engagement with partners

2.4 Set out in the table below is the proposed timetable to enable adoption of the refreshed Community Safety Plan by Council by April 2022:

| Date | Activity | Comment |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| August/September 2021 | Initial data analysis | Collation of key partner quantitative data concerning crime and disorder in Maidstone borough |
| 09 Sept 2021 | Member engagement event if needed | Proposed date for all member engagement |
| Sept – Nov 2021 | Public consultation | 6-week consultation period |
| 23 Sept 2021 | Safer Maidstone Partnership meeting | Initial engagement on developing Plan |
| September-November | Analysis of data and survey feedback | Preparation of initial feedback to CHE Committee |
| 30 Nov 2021 | CHE Committee | Update report to CHE on consultation responses |
| November 2021-January 2022 | Development of objectives and areas of focus for the refreshed plan in collaboration with partners | Preparation of draft Plan and programme of actions |
| TBC Feb 2022 | Safer Maidstone Partnership | Review of the draft CS Plan 2022-25 |
| 01 Mar 2022 | CHE Committee | Report proposing CS Plan for CHE Committee to recommend to Council |
| 13 Apr 2022 | Council | Adoption of the CS Plan 2022-25 |

2.5 The CHE Committee also has the role of an Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Community Safety and in undertaking this role it can assist in:

- Improving what the partnership does by focusing on the outcomes and outputs of partnership activity.
- Improving how the partnership operates by reviewing its membership, strategies, objectives and service delivery.
- Reviewing performance management arrangements to ensure that they are robust and effective, e.g. in measuring and monitoring performance at a district level.
- Reviewing policy development to ensure that the partnership remains focused on those areas of greatest local concern.

2.6 There is no statutory requirement to consult with the public and therefore no prescription as to how a consultation should be undertaken, although good practice documents exist including one produced by the Local Government Association. It is recommended that public consultation is undertaken because it is important that public perception concerning community safety

issues and concerns is taken into consideration in identifying priorities for the plan and that this information is up to date.

- 2.7 As part of having oversight of the development of the CS Plan, the CHE Committee is asked to provide a member perspective on engagement with the wider public and stakeholders in developing the draft new CS Plan. Members could take the view that debate within CHE Committee in relation to this report could suffice. Alternatively, a date could be set aside to enable broader engagement with all elected members through a briefing workshop that could focus on developing the key issues for the public survey.
- 2.8 It is proposed to carry out a 6-week public consultation period to better understand the public perception of crime and disorder within the Maidstone Borough area. The last time a specific community safety consultation was undertaken was the Community Safety Survey 2016, which was linked to the CCTV Review at the time and focused on feelings of safety in Town Centre and participants' local area.
- 2.9 The timetable set out in Paragraph 2.4 is indicative at this stage, as the development of the CS Plan is dependent on when the data that forms the Community Safety Assessment is released. This data set is formed of police data together with information collated by the Kent Community Safety Partnership. The development of the local CS Plan must also have regard to the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner's own Strategic Plan, as future grant funding from the PCC's office is reliant on there being a synergy between the local CSP's and PCC's priorities.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to adopt the outline timetable set out in Paragraph 2.3 and endorse a Member Briefing in early September 2021 to scope the public engagement to be undertaken during a 6-week period commencing in September 2021.
- 3.2 The Committee could decide not to engage with the public in the development of the new CS Plan but this is not recommended, as members have previously indicated a desire to do so and public consultation will provide an important element in the formulation of the new CS Plan.
- 3.3 The Committee could choose to do nothing but this is not recommended, as the Council is under a statutory duty to provide an up to date Community Safety Plan.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The option set out in Paragraph 3.1 is preferred, as this will enable the Council to develop a robust CS Plan and for the Council to fulfil its statutory duties in relation to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

5. RISK

- 5.1 The recommendation if adopted will reduce the risk of the Council not being compliant with its statutory duties and will assist in reducing crime and disorder within the Borough.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government Association Councillor Guidance

<https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/community-safety-1e2.pdf>