



Sanders Park

Management and Maintenance Plan

2022 – 2027



people spaces places

Sanders Park

Management and Maintenance Plan

July 2022

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1 Where are we now?

1.1 Site

1.1.1 Location

As shown in **Figure 1**, Sanders Park is located primarily in Sanders Park Ward, with southern parts of the site situated in Hill Top Ward and a section in Perryfields Ward.

Sanders Parks is located near Bromsgrove Town Centre and surrounded by residential housing to the north and south. The northeast edge of the site runs adjacent to the Kidderminster Road (A448) while the southeast edge lies next to St John's CE Middle Academy School. The western edge of the site runs adjacent to Whitford Road and opens out to the wider countryside. Owing to this position, Sanders Park forms an essential link between Bromsgrove Town Centre and the surrounding countryside.

1.1.2 Site Description

Sanders Park covers around 15.32 hectares and contains various facilities for informal and formal recreation (**Figure 2**). The western area of the site extending to Whitford Road provides space for informal recreational use. The area contains grass areas, trees, and pathways linking Bromsgrove Town Centre to the wider countryside.

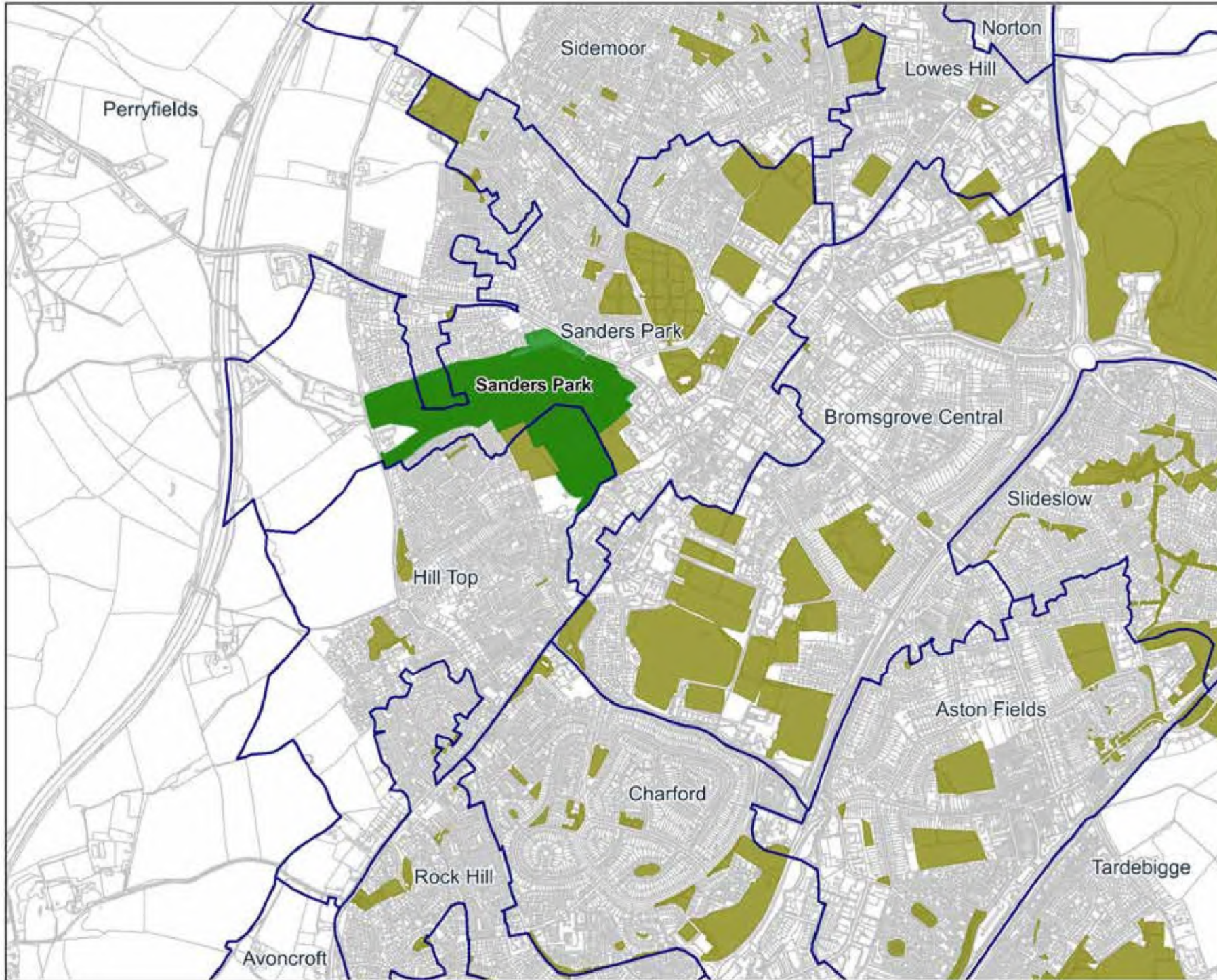
The central core of Sanders Park is more formally laid out. It comprises areas of close mown grass, seasonal planting, sensory garden, path networks and is where most activities and facilities are concentrated. At the centre is the pavilion building, containing a cafe, information office, toilets and changing facilities. Adjacent to the pavilion is a bowling green, tennis court and Multi-Use Games Area.

To the north of the pavilion is the Jubilee Bandstand and Cotton Mill Pond. The site also contains a play area with junior and toddler play provision and outdoor fitness facilities.

To the southwest of the site's core is a skate park. The southwestern area of Sanders Park also contains a sports pitch used for football. South of the pitch is a second basketball court.

The site is bisected by the Battlefield Brook, which flows west to east through the centre of the park before changing course to the south and entering the town centre.

Vehicle and pedestrian access to Sanders Park is available at the main entrance off the Kidderminster Road (A448). A car park is located at the north of the site with access off Kidderminster Road provide spaces for approximately 50 cars (including the car park extension). Electric charging points for two vehicles has recently been installed in the car park in designated bays. There is additional pedestrian access from Whitford Road, Deansway, Factory Lane and Dawson Road (as shown in **Figure 2**).



Sanders Park Management and Maintenance Plan

Figure 1 Sanders Park Site Plan

LEGEND

- Sanders Park
- Other Open Spaces
- Ward Boundaries
- Bromsgrove District

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Figure 2
Sanders Park Site Plan

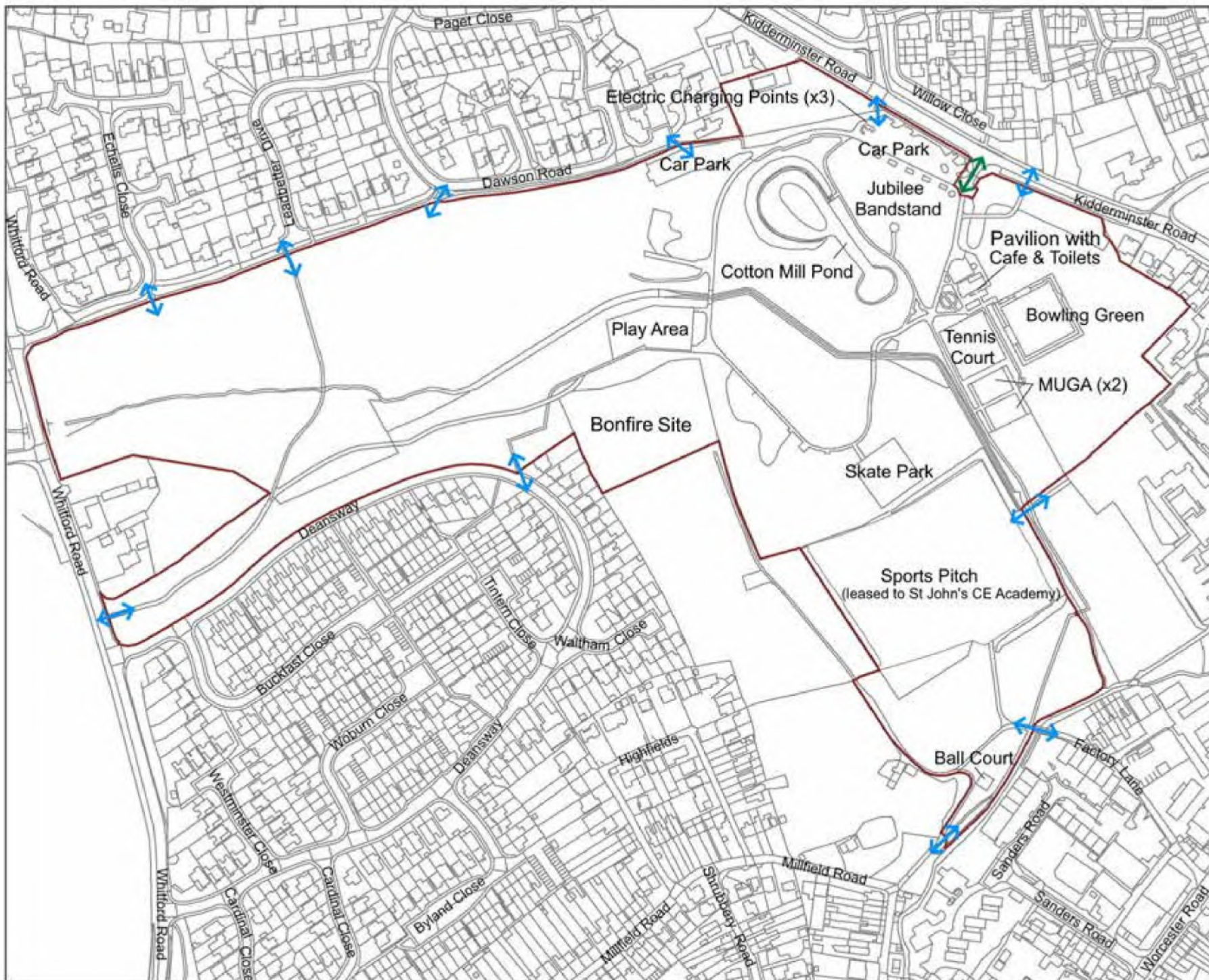
LEGEND

-  Site Boundary
-  Vehicle Access
-  Pedestrian Access



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1.1.3 Designations & Legal Issues

Ownership

Sanders Park is owned and managed by Bromsgrove District Council. **Figure 3** below shows the conveyances which led to the development of Sanders Park.

Conveyances 40 and 40A, dated 1 July 1927, created an open space Watt Close, marking the early development of Sanders Park.

In 1948 land now forming the site's northern area, adjacent to Kidderminster Road, was sold by Mary Beatrice Sanders to Mr Albert Grosvenor (Conveyance 121A). Part of this area of land subsequently passed to Bromsgrove Council and is now within the park's boundary.

The core formal area of Sanders Park was gifted to Bromsgrove Urban District Council in 1952 and effectively marked the creation of Sanders Park. This land is described in Assent 121A dated 25 January 1952. As indicated in **Figure 3**, not all of this land is now within the boundary of Sanders Park. The area to the north of the dotted black line is now Watt Close Allotments, also managed by Bromsgrove District Council. Land to the south of the dotted line is thought to be leased for agricultural purposes, outlined in the Leases section below.

Spadesbourne Walk came into the possession of Bromsgrove Council in 1962 (Conveyance 253), forming a vital pedestrian link between Sanders Park and the Town Centre and is now managed as part of the park.

Sanders Park was further extended to the west in 1973 with the addition of land bounded by Dawson Road, Deansway and Whitford Road (Conveyance 563). The covenant associated with this land was dated 10 April 1973.

Covenants and Restrictions

The Assent 121A came with Covenants and Conditions that still apply to the site. The covenant prescribes the following restrictions on use:

Land use "The land shall be used as Pasture Land or as a Park or recreation ground only and so far as is possible shall be used as an open space forever".



Trees "No trees on any part of the land shall be cut down or destroyed unless the same are diseased or dangerous in which case the Council covenant to forthwith plant further trees in their place and to plant further trees to replace any trees which have died".

Events and Activities "As soon as the said land or any part thereof has been converted into a Public Park a Supervisor shall be appointed to keep order and to prevent trespass to the adjoining land entrance gates shall be provided which shall be closed at such a time in the evening as the Council shall think fit that no Bands shall be allowed to play on any part of the said land in such a position or manner that they cause nuisance or

**Sanders Park
Management and
Maintenance Plan**

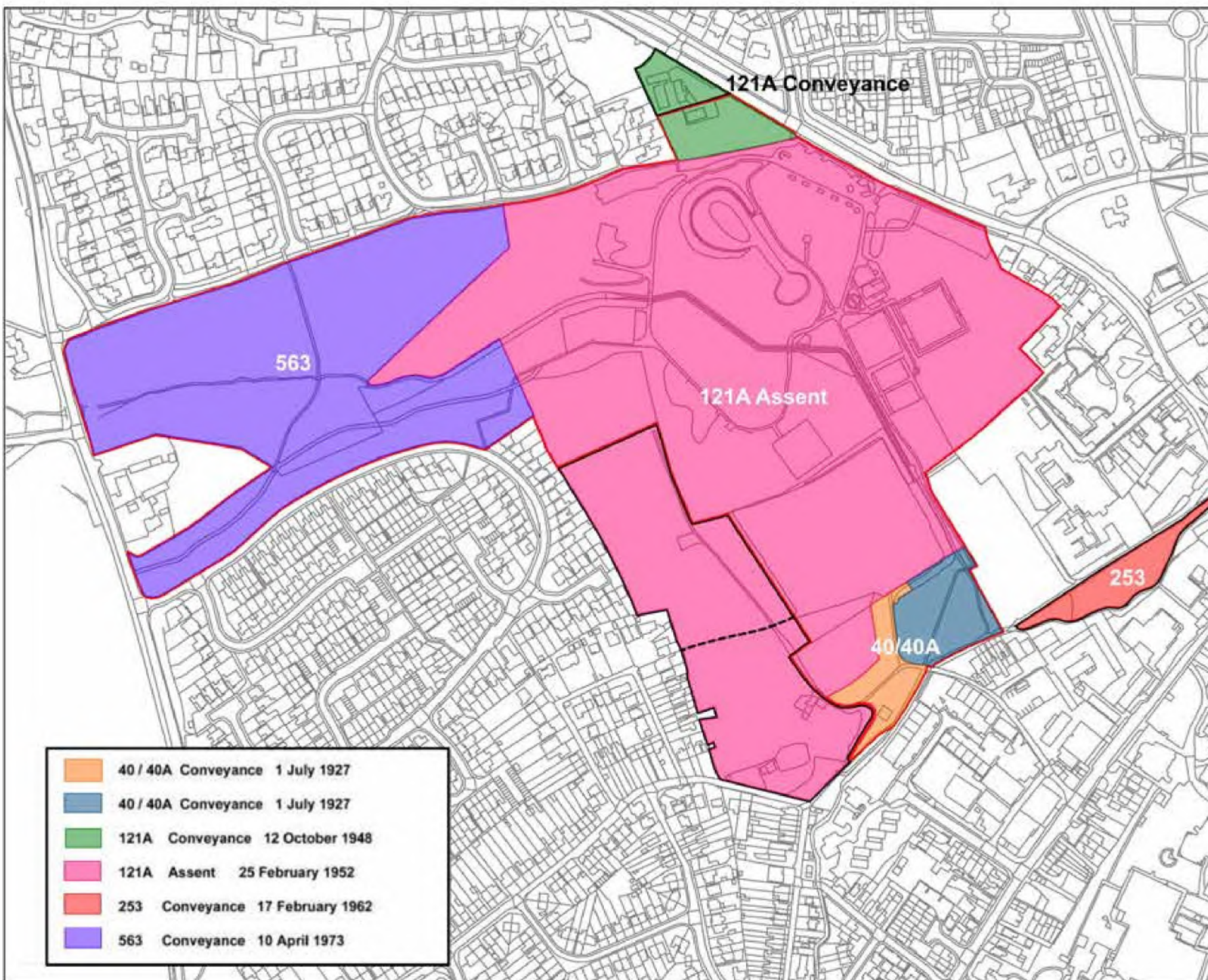
**Figure 3
Development of
Sanders Park**

LEGEND

-  Outside park boundary
-  Inside park boundary

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-  40 / 40A Conveyance 1 July 1927
-  40 / 40A Conveyance 1 July 1927
-  121A Conveyance 12 October 1948
-  121A Assent 25 February 1952
-  253 Conveyance 17 February 1962
-  563 Conveyance 10 April 1973

annoyance to the owners or occupiers of dwelling houses on the Kidderminster Road Bromsgrove that no blood sports of any sort shall be carried on upon the said part nor shall any part thereof be used as a refuse tip or as a site for fairs roundabouts or similar gatherings”.

Sanders Park is not affected by any covenants relating to Charitable Status.

Licences

There are no licenses currently applied at Sanders Park.

Leases

The land outside the park boundary in Conveyance 121A (shown in **Figure 3**) now accommodates the scout/guide hut and is leased to the Guide Association from Bromsgrove District Council.

The land within the park at Bath Meadow adjacent to Watt Close is believed to be leased for agricultural purposes (A in **Figure 4**). However, the current status of the lease could not be ascertained. The land was on a two-year lease entered into by the District Council and the leaseholder on 7 May 2003. The lease generates an annual income for the District Council. The agreement required that the leaseholder maintains the land in its current condition, maintains all ditches and drains, and ensures they are free from obstruction. The landowner was also to keep all hedges and gates in good repair and stock-proof condition and not change the hedges or boundaries without the consent of the District Council.

The area currently used for sports pitches adjacent to the school (B in **Figure 4**) is subject to a 99-year lease formed between the Urban District Council of Bromsgrove and Worcestershire County Council on 21 November 1958. The Lease allows the use of the land as playing fields for the adjacent St John’s CE Middle Academy only, in return for the payment of an annual “peppercorn” rent. Under the terms of the Lease, Worcestershire County Council are permitted to erect fencing as appropriate and expected to maintain these boundary treatments. In addition, the County Council is expected to maintain the brook course to allow the “free and uninterrupted flow of water”. Buildings and structures can only be erected on the site with the consent of Bromsgrove District Council.

A Deed of Grant was made with the British Gas Corporation on 6 January 1981, which provides the right to lay or maintain a main or pipe along a specified route. The width of the land affected is twelve feet and is shown in **Figure 4** below. British Gas also have the right of access to carry out maintenance works within this area.

The pavilion café is currently operated by a third party. The lease was signed in April 2016 and is due to expire in spring 2026. The lease generates an annual income for the District Council in the form of a monthly rent. The agreement requires that the leaseholder to keep the café open during agreed hours, not allow a build-up of waste and must keep the building, fixtures and fittings in good condition. No building works are to take place at the premises without approval from the council.

Sanders Park Management and Maintenance Plan




Figure 4 Leases affecting Sanders Park

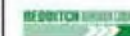
LEGEND

 Site Boundary

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-  A - Leased until 6 May 2005
-  B - Leased until 20 November 2057
-  C - Deed of Grant 6th January 1981



join the green plan

Planning Status

Sanders Park is designated as Open Space under the Bromsgrove Development Plan, allowing the space some protection. The Council "will not permit the loss or displacement of existing indoor and outdoor open space, sport and recreation facilities", unless there is a proven surplus of provision, the benefit of the development outweighs the harm or an alternative facility of equal or higher quality will be provided. Where development does occur, "the Council will require appropriate compensatory measures for the loss in the form of equivalent or improved facilities and/or financial contributions from developers".

Sanders Park lies adjacent to but outside the Bromsgrove Town centre Conservation Area and is unaffected by any policies relating to the conservation area.

Byelaws

The current Byelaws for Sanders Park were made under sections 12 and 15 of the Open Spaces Act 1906 and were adopted on 20th March 1997.

The byelaws cover the following:

- Vehicles- cycles, motorcycles and motor vehicles.
- Climbing
- Removal of structures
- Erection of structures
- Trading
- Grazing
- Protection of horticultural features from people and vehicles.
- Removal of substances (soil, plants, trees etc)
- Playing of games
- Missiles
- Bathing and pollution of water
- Protection of wildlife
- Obstruction

Offenders against byelaws can be removed by an officer of the council or constable and are liable on summary conviction to a fine. These byelaws revoke the previous byelaws made in 1969.

Vehicles are allowed into the site only in designated and signed areas e.g. the car park, unless the Council has set apart a space in the ground for such use. Any seasonal overspill car parking on grass areas needs to be clearly signed. Invalid carriages are exempt and allowed to use the full extent of the park.

Cycling is not allowed in Sanders Park; however, cycles are permitted within the site. This restriction needs to be reviewed due to: the presence of a BMX facility within the park; the park being used to hold cyclo-cross and 'bike-athon' events and the NCN 46 route through the south western edge of the park.

Trading of any description is not permitted unless by prior arrangement with the council.

Games are restricted to areas where the Council has made specific notice for particular pastimes. Therefore, the playing of games should only happen in designated areas. In addition, the byelaws permit games to be stopped where the state of the ground is unfit for its intended purpose.

Bathing, washing or wading is not allowed within any of the watercourses.

Fishing, hunting or shooting is not allowed. However, at the Council’s discretion, fishing is allowed and may be authorised.

In November 1996 the Council decided that only those under 12 years of age who are under parental supervision shall be allowed to fish in the pond and that only the use of fishing nets be permitted.

1.1.4 History

Sanders Family

Sanders Park was developed on an area of rough pastureland that was left to the town by Lucy Mary Sanders and Mary Beatrice Sanders in 1952. The two were daughters of Benjamin Hadley Sanders, a former Town Clerk of the Urban District Council and founder of a factory making buttons. The family were prominent in the history of Bromsgrove Town. **Table 1** below outlines the family’s chronology.

Year	Event
1832	Buck House (The Cotton Mill) and the 1832 Cholera epidemic
1850	Benjamin Hadley Sanders & Literary & Scientific Institute
1852	Death of the ‘Button King’, Benjamin Sanders
1853	James Wilkinson Sanders buys the Cotton Mill Estate
1856	The estate passes to Benjamin Laurence Sanders
1860	Benjamin Hadley Sanders is appointed Clerk to the Local Board
1863	Nailer’s strike. Support from B. H. Sanders and the Local Board
1864	The Estate passes to Thomas Tudor Sanders
1865	Thomas Tudor has the 9-acre pool drained
1868 & 1869	Nailer’s Strike. Both have open assistance from B.H. Sanders and Local Board
1881	Death of Thomas Tudor Sanders. Estate passes to Benjamin Hadley Sanders
1885	B.H.Sanders founds Bromsgrove Rovers
1892	B.H.Sanders has Cotton Mill demolished and swimming bath built
1900	B.H.Sanders & altercation with minority of Local Board
1910	B.H.Sanders dies
1912	Horse trough erected at corner of Rotten Row and The Strand

1945	Lucy Mary Sanders dies
1951	Mary Beatrice Sanders dies leaving Cotton Pool Estate to Bromsgrove Council.

Table 1 Sanders Family Chronology

Benjamin Hadley Sanders (1830-1910) was a notable member of Bromsgrove’s community. He helped establish Bromsgrove’s Literary and Scientific Institute in 1850 when he was just 20 years old. Literary and Scientific Institutions were subscription clubs, usually with a library and newspaper room. Their educational function was gradually taken over by the public libraries in the later 19th century. The Bromsgrove Institute preceded the 1870 Elementary Education Bill and demonstrates Sanders’s interest in improving the social and economic life of the community.

Benjamin became a qualified solicitor practicing in Bromsgrove and remained active in community. In 1858 he was appointed to St John’s Church Restoration Committee and in 1860 he was appointed Clerk to the Local Board (now Bromsgrove District Council). Whilst Clerk for the Local Board, he became involved in many disputes between the Board and community. One notable occasion was during the Bromsgrove Nail Riots where he helped bring the situation under control and liaised between the nail makers and the Local Board to bring about a suitable compromise.

In 1892 the Sanders’ family Cotton Mill was demolished and Benjamin used the bricks to erect model cottages near Watt Close. The site was then transformed into a much-needed open-air swimming pool. Until then people had learnt to swim in the canals and dammed rivers. The swimming pool was donated to the Local Board and improved in 1927. It was closed in 1939 due to being sited next to the gas works –swimmers could come out of the pool dirtier than they went in!

In 1910 Benjamin Hadley Sanders died. He had dedicated 50 years as Clerk to the Local Board, founded Bromsgrove Rovers and provided legal service to many families in the Bromsgrove District. He had shown himself to be interested in improving the community’s social and economic status through democracy, education and the provision of community facilities.

Development of the Park

When the land was left to Bromsgrove Urban District Council, one of the conditions made by Miss Sanders was that no existing trees should be cut down, unless they were diseased or dangerous. In addition, any trees that died or had to be cut down must be replaced.

This stipulation was more than complied with because although several trees were diseased and dangerous and removed, more than 600 trees and shrubs were planted and others have been added since.

Between the First and Second World Wars the land occupied by the playing field was a rubbish tip. As a result of the tip the Battlefield Brook was diverted to its current course. The construction commenced in the autumn of 1963 with a comprehensive drainage scheme and containing Battlefield Brook in a defined channel. Although not very pleasing to the eye it had to be this way as in parts the brook was spreading into marshy areas 50 metres wide.

A budget of £10,000 was allocated to the Parks Department for initial site clearance, hedge cutting and for the removal of dangerous old trees and acres of bramble and scrub.

Sound and healthy trees were retained and dead wood and pruning and surgery carried out. Rock Hill Development was under construction and a large quantity of top soil was imported from the Fox Lane site to fill depressions and low marshy areas.

Cotton Pool was dredged and many years accumulation of mud and debris removed. At this stage the final design and layout was approved and a further budget allocation of £10,000 was made available for the next stage. The majority of this work was carried out by direct labour with the exception of plant hire and heavy earth moving equipment.

In August 1965 cultivation and shaping of the open areas began and seed sown. By the spring of 1966 a good sward was established. 1966 was an important year, contracts were awarded for the construction of the Bowling green, tennis courts, roads, bridges and the enlargement and development of Cotton Pool. Direct labour was employed to complete the basic accommodation works associated with the major contracts.

Tree and shrub planting commenced during the autumn and winter of 1966/7. A planting scheme was introduced using a selection of native trees and exotic species to provide interest throughout the year, evergreens and conifers, with trees and shrubs that display interest in spring and summer, with flower and foliage, autumn colour and fruits, and finally winter interest with attractive bark and form.

The final stages of major construction were carried out during 1968/69. This included the completion of the pavilion, creation of the children's playground and the development of a purpose-built parks Department Depot and nursery.

The Park was officially opened in the summer of 1969 by a surviving nephew of the Miss Sanders. In the summer of 1969 additional land was acquired and added to the Park during 1973.

Surplus funds from the Bromsgrove Housing Association which administered some of the Charford Housing Estate were donated to the Bromsgrove Urban District Council specifically to contribute to the provision of a park pavilion.

1.1.5 Biodiversity

Habitats and Species of Note

Battlefield Brook is listed as a Local Wildlife Site, which gives some measure of protection in planning policy. The Brook rises on the Waseley Hills and flows down through Wildmoor, Catshill and West Bromsgrove through Sanders Park before joining the Sugar / Spadesbourne Brook (River Salwarpe) in the centre of Bromsgrove.

The Battlefield Brook was identified by the former National Rivers Authority as one of the top 40 low flow rivers in the country. During the 1980s many local people within the catchment of the brook reported concerns about low flow. The Environment Agency have indicated that unsustainable abstraction of groundwater from the Bromsgrove Groundwater Unit has impacted upon the baseflow of the surface water and stream features in the Battlefield Brook catchment. The Groundwater Unit has been closed to further licensing of abstraction since 1983. Flow rate and water quality of the Battlefield Brook through Sanders Park has increased since this time.

A project team including representatives from the Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water and the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust was formed in 2002 to define the low flow problem and restore flow to the river. Two boreholes have been constructed on Battlefield Brook to maintain and supplement baseflow. They are operated by Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency.

Bromsgrove District Council, in partnership with the Battlefield Brook project team commissioned a trial restoration of the heavily canalised reach of the Battlefield Brook in Autumn of 2009. The first phase of works was funded from £12,000 provided by the Council to commence the scheme which included a detailed design model as well as the 50-metre trial section.

The vision and aims of the project were to:

- Re-create a wildlife rich stream corridor in Sanders Park for the benefit and enjoyment of local people
- Safeguard and enhance water vole populations on the Battlefields Brook by linking upstream and downstream populations
- Create still water habitat for water voles, aquatic invertebrates and aquatic and wetland flora adjacent to the restored stream channel
- Improve green corridor links to the Town Centre

In 2017, Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency continued work on the restoration of the Battlefield Brook. As part of the project, the remaining concrete channelling was removed and the brook bed and banks were re-landscaped to create a more natural profile. The work was completed in late 2018.

Sanders Park is one of the only three remaining sites in Worcestershire believed to be inhabited by **Water voles** (*Arvicola amphibious*) and countywide surveys have concluded that the Sanders Park was a critical location for water voles within Bromsgrove.

Due to the protected status of water voles, any previous work on Spadesbourne or Battlefield Brook has been preceded by monitoring and informed by mitigation and protection strategies.

In 2015, prior to the repair of the 75-metre embankment between Factory Lane and Brook Road on Spadesbourne Brook, water vole surveying was carried out, confirming their presence at the site. Recommendations were made to ensure the works would have minimal impacts on the water voles present. No water vole activity was identified at the site where the repairs were to take place, hence the work was able to go ahead, with some precautionary measures.

In 2016, the Worcestershire Wildlife Consultancy (part of the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust) produced a strategy to mitigate and manage the potential negative effects of the proposed restoration of Battlefield Brook. In 2017, a more details Protection Strategy was produced by Middlemarch Environmental Ltd. Outlining pre-, mid- and post-development guidance to minimise impacts on the water vole population.

More recently, North Worcestershire Water Management have carried out monitoring of water vole populations. Members of the Environmental Services Team and three Park Team members undertook a Water Vole training course in May 2021.

During the water vole survey, **Himalayan balsam** (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was also found at Sanders Park. Himalayan balsam is detrimental to water voles as it shades out food plants and favourable vegetation that supports this species. Hence the report suggested that the control of Himalayan balsam should be a priority action. Clearance was carried out in Sanders Park in October 2003. There is a plan being drawn up to deal with invasive non-native species at sites across Bromsgrove. A plan was put together by North Worcestershire Water Management who have involved contractors to implement it from spring 2022.

For more information see **Appendix A Water Vole Information**.

1.2 Organisation

Sanders Park is managed and maintained by Bromsgrove District Council. The council operates shared services with Redditch Borough Council for parks and open spaces and these are set out under the organisation structure section below.

1.2.1 Policy context summary

National Policies

National policies of relevance to this Management and Maintenance Plan (MMP) are summarised below.

Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs)

The Plan was published in January 2018 and updated in May 2019. It sets out six goals for improving the environment, including thriving plants and wildlife and enhanced beauty, heritage, and engagement with the natural environment. It also looks to manage environmental pressures by improving biosecurity. These will be achieved through ensuring there are high quality, accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work and encouraging more people to spend time in open spaces to benefit their health and wellbeing. Relevant to this MMP, the Plan targets to create or restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife-rich habitat outside the protected site network, plant 180,000 hectares of trees by the end of 2042.

Environmental Bill 2020 (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs)

The Bill was introduced into parliament on 15 October 2019 and re-introduced following the general election on 30 January 2020. The Bill will ensure environmental principles are implemented in law and provides measures to enhance and protect the natural environment, improve air and water quality and tackle waste and resource efficiency. Elements of the Bill relevant to this MMP include establishing the Office for Environmental Protection (a new body which will monitor progress towards improving the natural environment in line with government targets) and supporting the delivery of the 2017 Litter Strategy. The Bill will also make the development of Local Nature Recovery Strategies across England a requirement.

The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy)

The Ten Point Plan was published in November 2020. It aims to mobilise £12 billion of government investment, and potentially another £36 billion from the private sector, to create and support up to 250,000 green jobs. The Plan focuses on increasing ambition across ten areas, including promoting green public transport, cycling and walking, offering further funding for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to reduce emissions from public buildings and creating new National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Public Health England Strategy 2020 to 2025

Published in 2019, the Strategy sets out priorities for delivering its key aims of keeping people safe, preventing poor health, narrowing the health gap and supporting a strong economy. Priorities include promoting healthier diets and weights by creating vibrant, health-promoting environments and ensuring children have the best start in life by developing healthy places for families that help to reduce inequalities, vulnerability and adversity.

Improving Access to Greenspace 2020 (Public Health England)

Published in March 2020, the report provides an update on the 2014 report. It reviews evidence on the health benefits of living in greener communities, the impact on inequalities in health and makes recommendations to help Local Authorities, policymakers and developers provide equitable greenspaces for communities. Priorities set out by the report include promoting the role of open space in health through interventions, such as green social prescribing initiatives and prioritising improving access to open space, especially in areas of deprivation or where there is poor or unequal access.

Space to Thrive Report

The Space to Thrive Report was conducted by researchers from Sheffield Hallam University and The University of Sheffield. It was produced with The National Lottery Community Fund and published in January 2020. Based on its findings, the Report recommends that open spaces be seen as social and physical infrastructure, with investments in both the physical state of the site and activities that encourage its use and bring the local community together. It also recommended open spaces should support health and wellbeing and promote connections with nature through their design and maintenance.

Local Policies

Local policies, including Worcestershire County Council and Council policies relevant to this MMP are outlined below.

Worcestershire Joint Health and Well-Being Strategy 2016 - 2021

The Strategy sets out a vision for Worcestershire to be "healthier, live longer and have a better quality of life", focussing communities and groups with the poorest health outcomes. Six fundamental principles underpin the Strategy, including empowering individuals and families and taking local action. A renewed focus is also placed on the prevention of poor health and wellbeing, with actions including creating a health-promoting environment and encouraging and enabling people to take responsibility for themselves.

Bromsgrove District Council the Plan 2019-2023

The Plan sets out the vision to "enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses, and visitors through the provision of high-quality services, ensuring that all in need receive appropriate help and support". Among the Plan's purposes are to provide independent living and active, healthy lives and create communities that are safe, well-maintained and green.

Bromsgrove District Plan 2011-2030 (Adopted January 2017)

The Local Plan is based on the vision that "By 2030 Bromsgrove District and its communities will have become sustainable, prosperous, safe, healthy, and vibrant. People from all sections of society will have been provided with access to homes, jobs, and services. The attractiveness of the District in terms of its natural environment, built form and settlements will have been preserved and enhanced". It sets out 12 strategic objectives to deliver this vision, including improving quality of life, protecting and enhancing the natural environment, safeguarding natural resources, adapting to climate change, and fostering community pride. Two policies outlined in the Plan are relevant to the management and maintenance of open space. These are delivery of a high-quality green infrastructure network and providing high-quality, accessible open space, sport, and recreation facilities to ensure local communities have good health and well-being.

Bromsgrove Partnership

The Bromsgrove Partnership brings together different organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors in its role as the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The LSP aims to provide a forum for local organisations to come together and address critical issues more effectively and cohesively. The LSP work to support the delivery of the Bromsgrove District Plan and work toward the vision to "...make Bromsgrove District the place to live, do business and to visit".

1.2.2 Organisational structure

Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council share the same management team as shown in **Figure 5** overleaf. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for strategic planning alongside the Deputy Corporate Executive (DCX) and Strategic Director. The CEO and DCX form the Senior Management Team and are responsible for the Council's overall performance. The Director of Finance and Resources is responsible for managing the Council's resources, including facilities, personnel and budgets. Under the management of the CEO, DCX and Director of Finance and Resources are the Council's departments, each with its own service head, as shown in **Figure 6**. Bromsgrove and Redditch Council's operate a number of shared services.

Figure 6 on page 18 shows the fourth-tier managers who report to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services.

Figure 5 Heads of Service

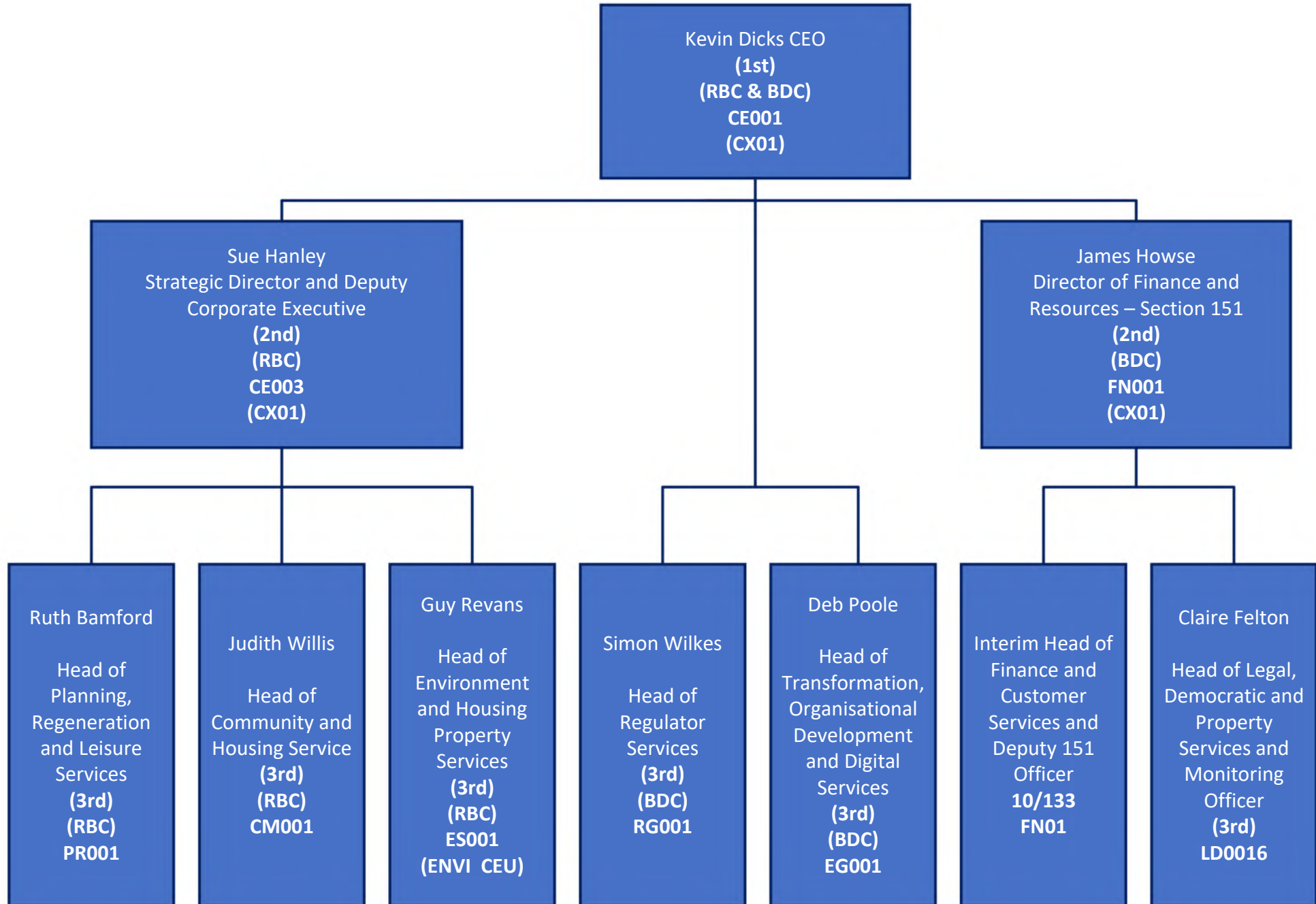
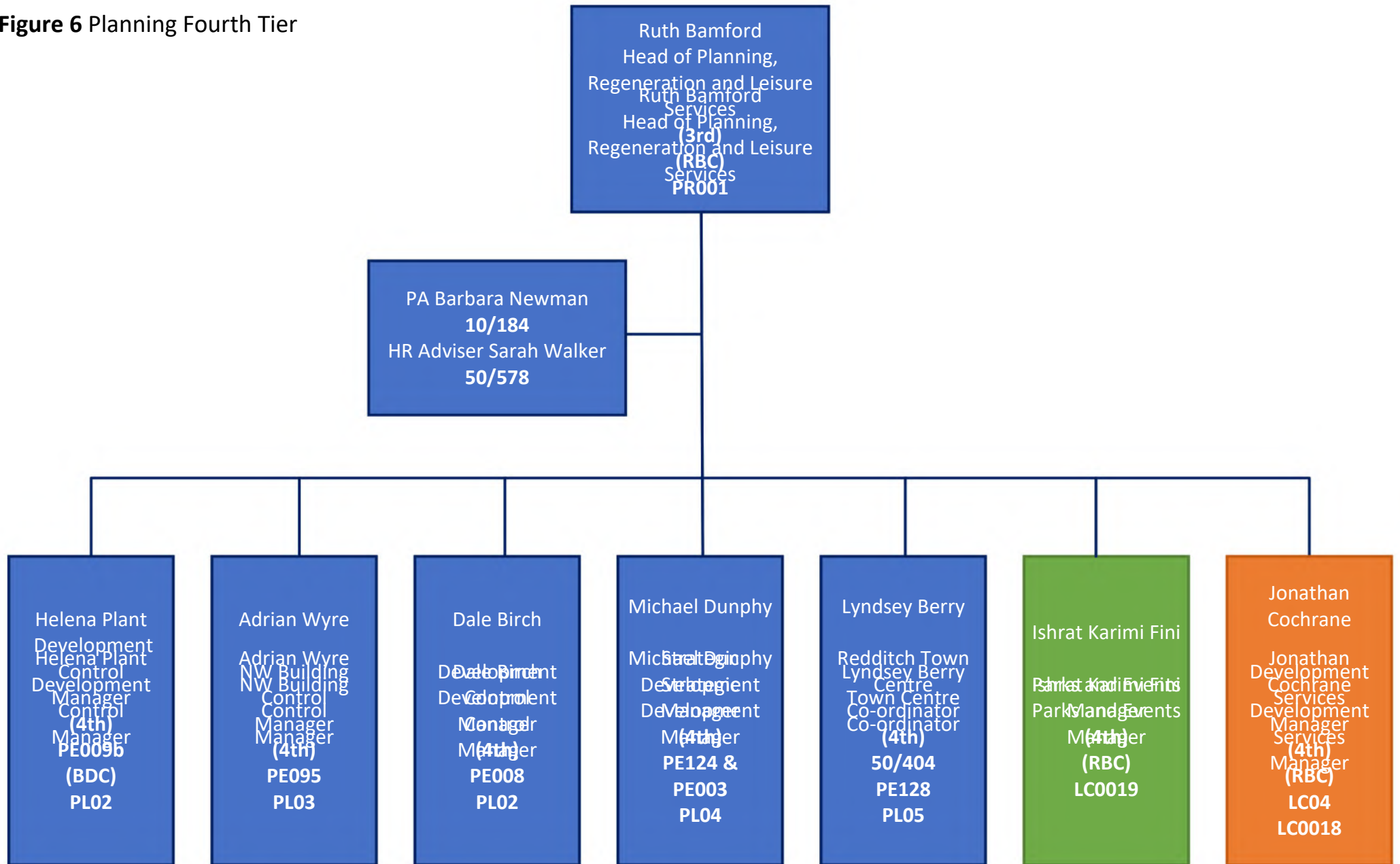


Figure 6 Planning Fourth Tier



Parks and Events Services

Figure 7 shows the organisational structure of Parks and Events Services, headed by the Parks and Events Manager. The service includes the Parks Operational Team, the Projects and Events Team and the Parks Development Team who oversee the following:

- Management and Delivery of Council, Community and Business Events within Parks and Civic Spaces (Including management of the Christmas Light Contract)
- Project management and monitoring of s106 monies
- Advising on the leisure and cultural implications of planning applications
- Parks development
- Play management
- Contract management (lease) facilities within parks
- Manage the Service Level Agreement in place with Rubicon Leisure Limited Company (sports, physical activity leisure centres and building management), a council-owned leisure company
- Stewardship programme
- Water risk management
- Allotment provision
- Management of heritage assets
- Woodland conservation and management
- Football pitch bookings
- Land management / Grounds Maintenance
- Woodland conservation and management
- Management of heritage assets

The Operations Team, under Operational Team Leader, manage and maintain strategic sites: Arrow Valley Park, Morton Stanley Park, Sanders Park and Lickey End Recreation Ground. The Team are responsible for golf course management (fine turf and sports pitch management) and maintenance at Pitcheroak Golf Course. They also manage and carry out equipment maintenance on all play areas in Redditch and Bromsgrove, as well as managing and doing some maintenance work on football pitches at the following sites:

- Greenlands
- Green Lane Pitches (Morton Stanley)
- Old Forge and Pathways (in Arrow Valley)
- Terrys Field
- Lickey End Recreation Ground
- Charford
- Braces Lane
- St Chad's Park

- King George Vth Playing Field

The Operations Team have a management role in many of the smaller green spaces across Redditch and Bromsgrove but do not do regular maintenance, this is done by the Place Teams. Place Teams (described below) carry out tasks such as litter picking, routine play area inspections and grass cutting. The Operations Team get involved when things such as bridges, fencing needs replacement as they hold budgets for this kind of work.

Maintenance, such as tractor mowing, hedge flailing, is carried out with assistance from the Environmental Services Team. Although the Operations Team manage the football pitches, it is the responsibility of the Environmental Services Team to carry out day to day maintenance.

Development Services

As shown in **Figure 8**, Development Services is headed by the Development Services Manager. Development Services deliver a range of practical projects that encourage residents to participate in arts, sports and heritage activities. The team also offers organisational development support to the leisure and culture sector. They act as a specialist advisory service internally and externally concerning all matters relating to sports, arts and heritage. They currently oversee the following:

- Health intervention projects to reduce symptoms and pain e.g. due to MS, COPD, Dementia, and Cancer, postural stability, obesity, low mood and anxiety (Public Health)
- Targeted activity and creativity programmes in ward areas of low engagement
- Activity and creativity programmes with target groups, such as those with low engagement levels due to disability or youth at risk, vulnerable residents, BAME communities
- Economic impact projects such as community arts in shop windows, pop up museums, public art installation encouraging footfall and secondary spend
- Community safety projects through deterrent positive activities
- Public realm enhancement through public art commissioning, temporary activities to improve place
- Activity and Creativity Consortium management to deliver externally funded projects
- Providing organisational development support to clubs, societies, venues (circa 300 per annum)
- Developing civic pride through awards and recognition schemes

Figure 7 Parks and Events Service

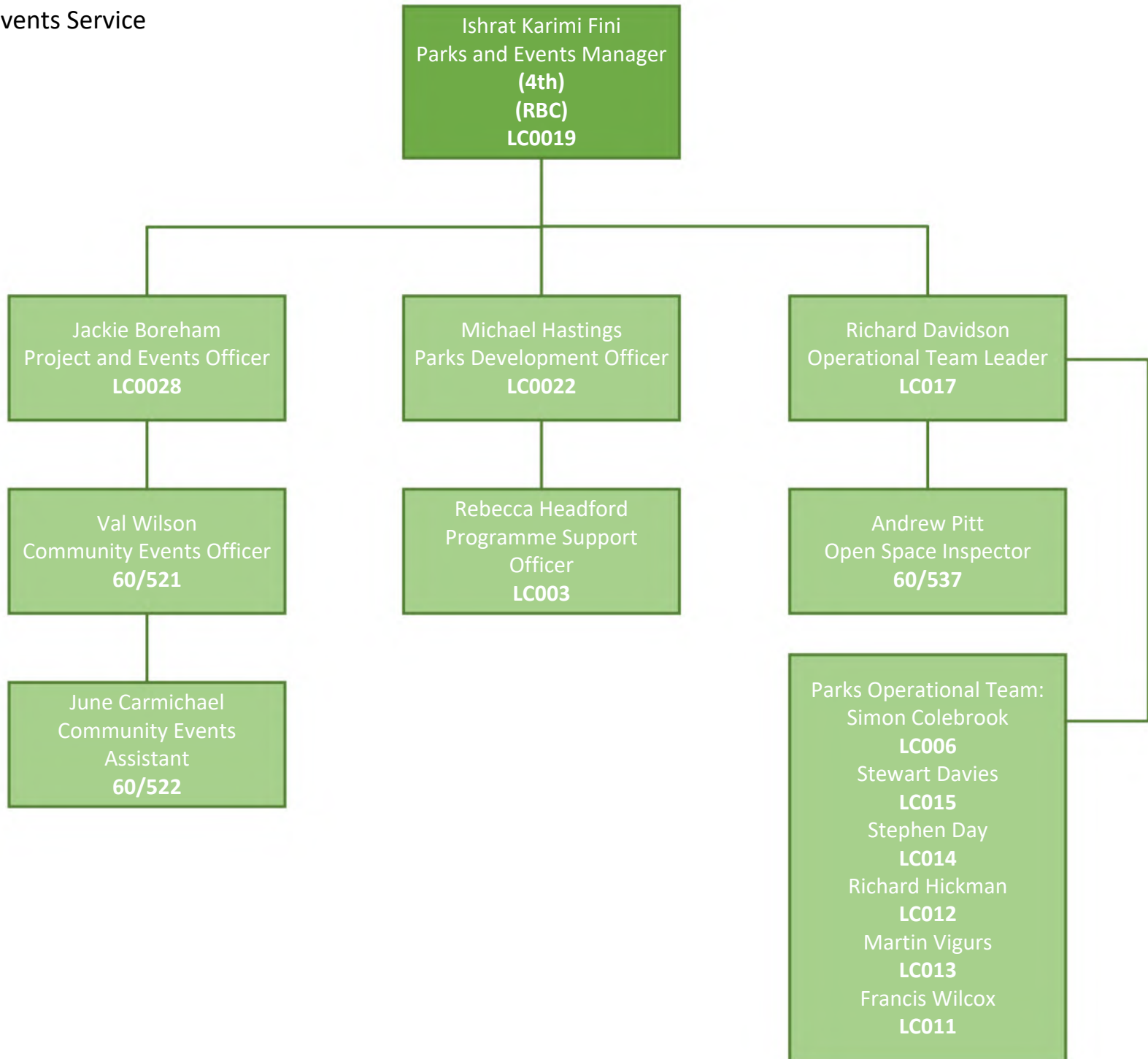
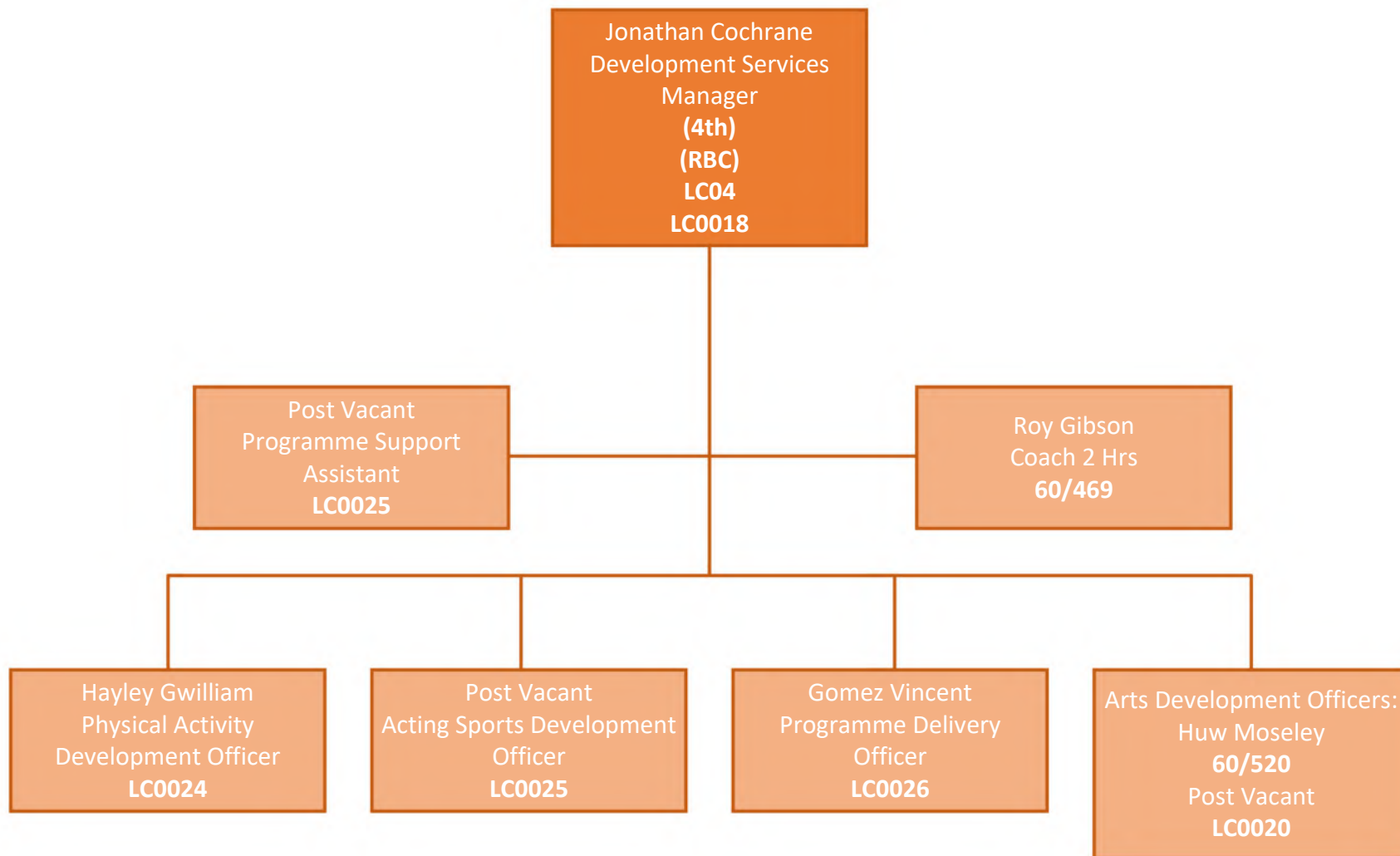


Figure 8 Development Services



1.3 Core Team and Place Teams

The Core Team and Place Teams sit within Environment and Housing Property Services, shown in **Figure 9**. The Teams carry out all of the ground maintenance work across Redditch Borough and Bromsgrove District excluding some works on the four strategic sites. They work closely with the operations Team detailed above.

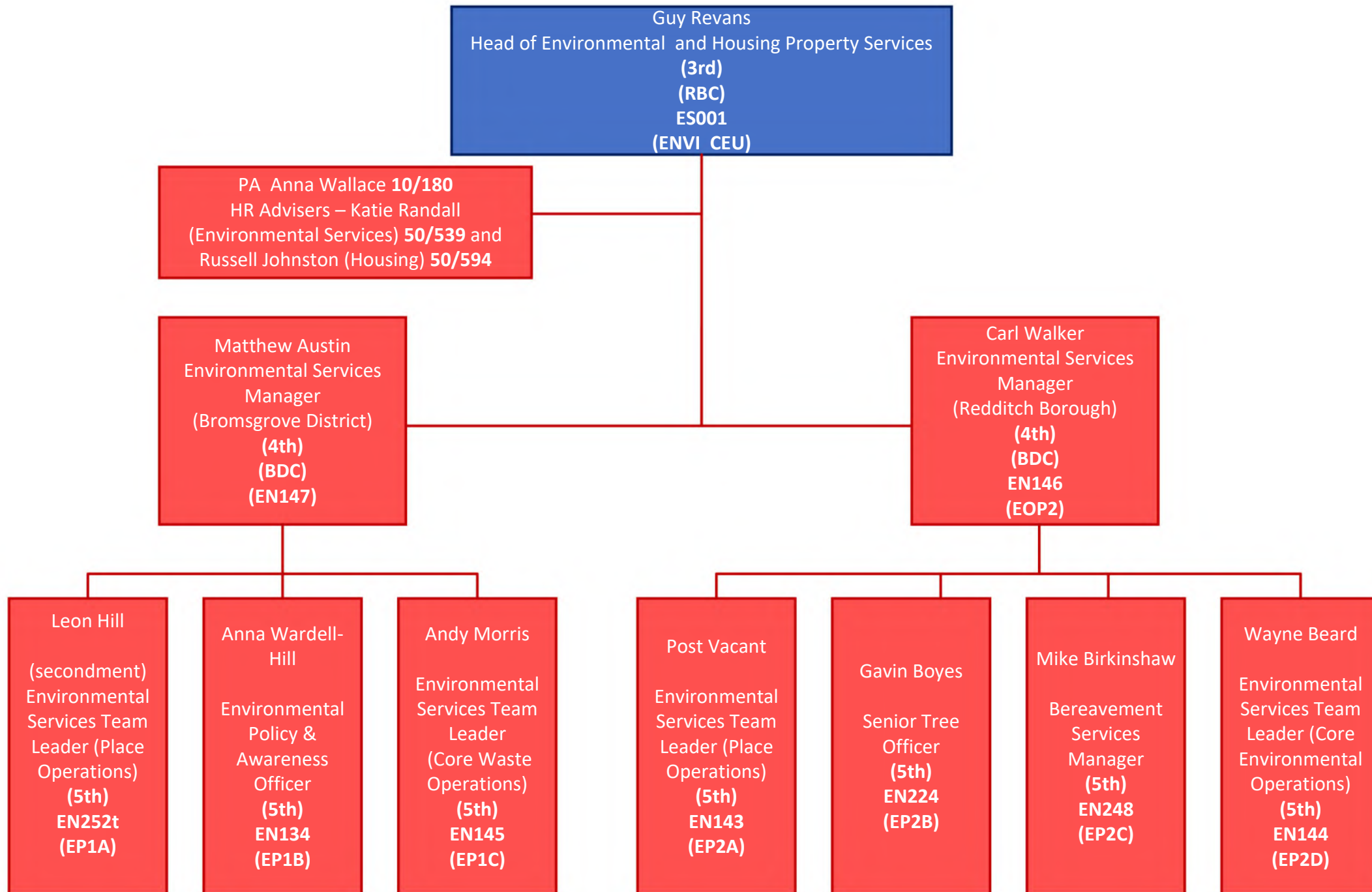
The service area is led by the Head of Environment and Housing Property Services. The Team is divided between two Environmental Services Managers (**Figure 9**).

The Environmental Services Manager (Bromsgrove District) manages work on Lickey End Recreation Ground, St Chad's Park and George Vth Park. The team also support litter picking and some of the ground maintenance within Bromsgrove sites.

The Environmental Services Manager (Redditch Borough) oversees the Tractor Team who are responsible for large scale mowing and seasonal hedge flailing and scrub encroachment clearance at all sites, as well as ad-hoc graffiti removal. The team are also responsible for the following work:

- Arrow Valley Country Park - Land Drainage – culvert checks, ditch works/improvements
- Morton Stanley Park - Land Drainage – culvert checks, ditch works/improvements
- Batchley Pool and Brockhill Park – cleansing/emptying of litter bins, Land Drainage – culvert checks, ditch works/improvements
- Overdale Park - cleansing/emptying of litter bins, Land Drainage – culvert checks, ditch works/improvements

Figure 9 Environmental and Housing Property Services



1.3.1 Current management and maintenance arrangements

Operations Team

The Operations Team manages and maintain strategic sites, including Sanders Park.

Place Teams

The Place Teams carry out regular mowing, seasonal hedge flailing and scrub encroachment clearance, plus any ad-hoc graffiti removal. They are also responsible for checking the culverts and any ditch works and improvements.

The full Grounds maintenance schedule for Sanders Park is included in **Appendix B Grounds maintenance schedule** on page 53.

1.4 Community

1.4.1 Demographics of Catchment

Sanders Parks covers the following wards: Bromsgrove central (Norton, Sidemoor, Lowes Hill, Central, Sanders Park, Slideslow, Hill Top, Charford, Rock Hill, Aston Fields).

- Total population of wards = 34,623
- 48.4% male & 51.6% female

	Wards	Bromsgrove
18 & under	23.6%	21.7%
18 - 24	5.5%	5.0%
25 – 44	24.6%	22.8%
45 - 64	26.7%	27.8%
65 over	19.6%	22.7%

Table 2 Age Profile

Within the surrounding wards, there appears to be a greater number of young people when compared to the wider borough. Those aged 18 & under make up 23.6% within the wards, compared to 21.7% in Bromsgrove. Furthermore, those aged between 18-24 make up 5.5% within the wards and 5.0% in Bromsgrove.

An average of 82.2% of 16- 64-year-olds are economically active, just above the Borough average of 81.0%.

Ethnic profile:

- White 93.7%
- White other 2.1%
- Mixed 1.3%
- Asian 2.2%
- Black 0.4%
- Other 0.2%

Around 4% of residents are of BAME ethnicity, reflective of BAME population within the Borough in which 4.2% are of BAME ethnicity. However, it is important to note that data at ward level is only available from 2011, and data for the borough is taken from 2016 estimates. Therefore, it is likely that there will be some variation.

Average life expectancy:

- Male 79.6
- Female 83.0

Slightly lower than Borough average of 80.4 for males and 83.9 for females

17.3% of resident's day to day activities are limited a lot or a little, similar when compared to borough in which 17.6% of resident's activities are limited by a lot or a little.

The 10 surrounding wards range in levels of deprivation. Four out of the ten wards contain Lower Super Output Areas considered to be in the top 20% & 30% most deprived in England according to the 2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation.

1.4.2 Current Use

Sanders Park is classified as a destination site by Bromsgrove District Council. It provides a wide range of facilities for use by the local and broader community while the cafe and information centre in the pavilion building encourage visitors to stay longer at the site and use its facilities.

Children and families use the "state of the art" play area, including equipment for toddlers and juniors. The site also includes facilities for recreation and exercise for older children and adults: a skatepark, two basketball courts and a Multi-Use Games Area. There are also changing rooms located in the pavilion.

The tennis courts and bowling pavilion require booking to use them. Visitors can do this at the cafe.

The bowling green and changing facilities in the pavilion were formerly used by several local bowling clubs. However, over recent years the demand for bowls has declined. The main club associated with Sanders Park folded in 2018. Bromsgrove District Council sports development officers have supported other local clubs with the development of bowls and to attract new members. However, these attempts have been unsuccessful and other local clubs have not been attracted to Sanders Park. The Playing Pitch Strategy has identified that the Bowls Green at Sanders Park to be surplus to requirements. Future use of the bowls green and pavilion needs further development work.

Sanders Park is also the starting point for the three way-marked, circular Royal Hunters' Walks, created by Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council. Information for the three walks is available online.

At present Bromsgrove District do not monitor visitor numbers at any of their sites. However, a borough-wide online consultation in 2020 asked respondents about their frequency of visits to Sanders Park.

Before lockdown, Sanders Park was well used; only 28.1% of respondents never visited, and around one in six respondents (17.7%) visited Sanders Park at least weekly (**Chart 1**).

During lockdown, the proportion who tended to visit at least weekly stayed somewhat similar (18.5%) to pre-lockdown levels. However, the results show a shift from respondents who reported visiting monthly or less to never visiting (which increased by 23.6% during lockdown).

By September-October 2020, less than half of respondents (44.9%) said they never visited. The proportion visiting monthly or less increased to 33.0%, indicating that the frequency of visits returned to pre-lockdown levels.

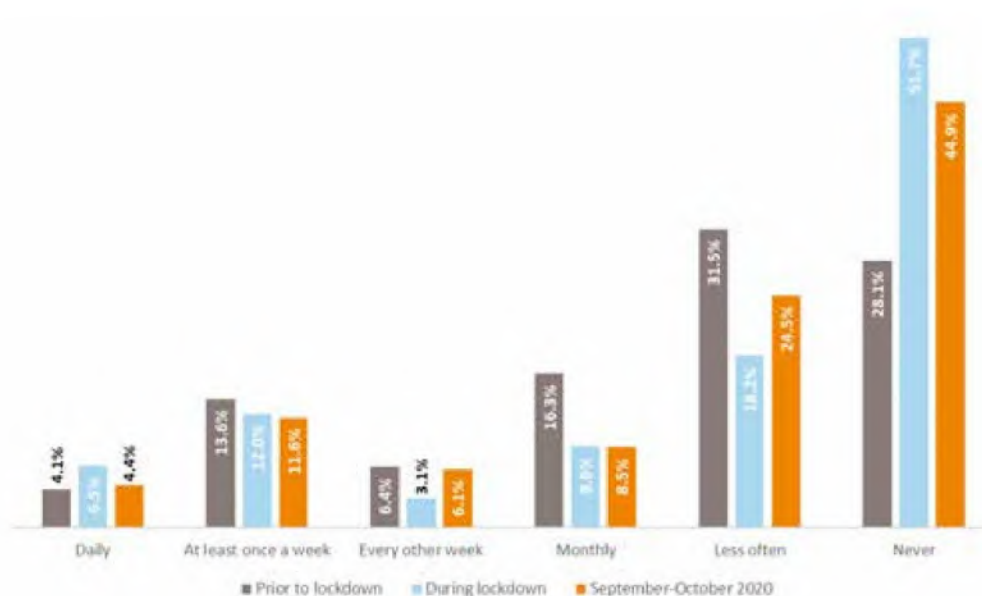


Chart 1 How often do you use Sanders Park?

1.4.3 Current Events and Activities

Sanders Park hosts a range of events and activities, attracting large numbers of visitors. The COVID-19 pandemic limited the number and scale of events that could take place in 2020, a small number of events went ahead in 2019 and 2021. These included:

- Choirs event (June 2019)
- Street Theatre (July 2019 and August 2021) attracted up to 800 visitors
- Bonfire event (November 2019) attracted between 3,000 and 5,000 visitors
- Bandstand events (several Sundays 2021) attracted between 250 and 300 visitors

1.4.4 Current Volunteer Participation

A group of three to six volunteers from the Keep Bromsgrove Beautiful group meet frequently throughout each week to undertake a litter pick at Sanders Park.

The Phoenix Group, consisting of between six and 20 volunteers, make pathway improvements, paint fences, plant, weed and litter pick two to three times a year. However, they were unable to meet for 18 months between 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19.

The gates are opened by the Facilities team as part of their timeline to open and clean the toilets - the closure is operated by operatives within the facilities team who are paid additionally to lock the gates at agreed timings.

1.4.5 Recent Consultation

Bromsgrove District Council has run five community surveys over the previous four years. As part of the 2020 borough-wide community survey, respondents were asked what improvements would improve their experience of Sanders Park (**Chart 2**). Almost half said more planting and floral displays (46.1%) or more furniture, such as benches and bins (45.5%). Around a third also said improved parking (34.5%) and walking routes (33.3%).

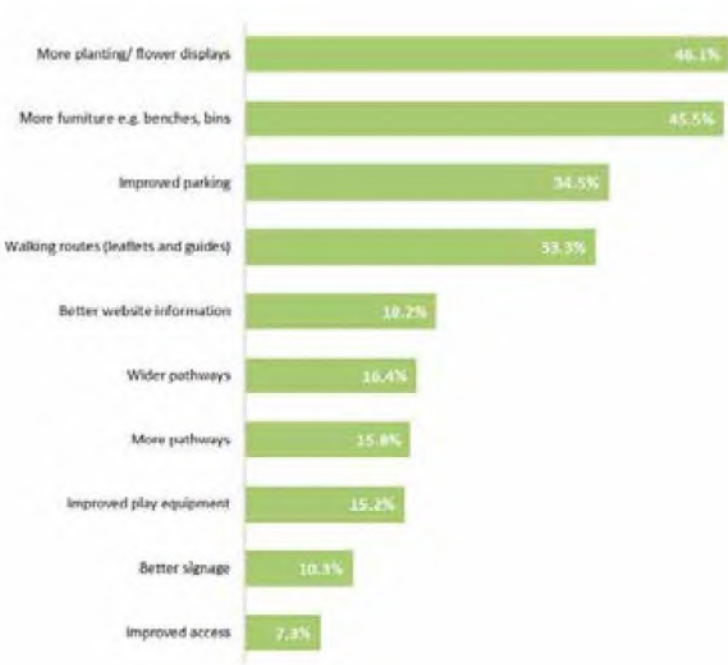


Chart 2 What improvements would improve your experience in our parks and open spaces?

2 Where do we want to be?

This section sets out an analysis of the current quality of the site using the Green Flag Award criteria and then draws on information from site assessments, community consultation and discussions with key council staff to develop a series of recommendations for the future management, maintenance and development of Morton Stanley. The following section sets out all of the actions arising from this assessment, also later captured on a Masterplan.

For more information on the Green Flag Award scoring criteria please visit:

<https://www.greenflagaward.org/how-it-works/judging-criteria/>

2.1 A Welcoming Place

2.1.1 Welcome

Entrances have good access with clear signs displaying the name of the park and authority. Horticultural features are concentrated in areas near the main entrance but these have become compromised and currently have limited aesthetic appeal.

Recommendations

1. Consider a redesign of horticultural features near the main entrance to make the site more welcoming.

2.1.2 Good and Safe Access

There is clear separation of vehicles and pedestrians and welcoming views into the park. Access points were wide and unobstructed. Cycling is permitted and encouraged; the NCN Route 46, cycle route 1 and cycle route 22 passes through the park. The route is a good width with signage to indicate shared space. There are cycle racks near the café and the playground. Car parking is provided and is generally of a good standard. However, there is not sufficient capacity at peak times (general use and during events) and the link to the car park extension is narrow. The car park would benefit from being reconfigured, to increase car parking capacity, enable better circulation and to create separate entry and exist points. These proposals would require capital funding to be implemented.

The western side of the park ('Top Field') is well used by dog walkers and local residents. There is informal car parking on street, but there is an opportunity to formalise this and provide a small number of parking bays at this boundary (parallel to Whitford Road). Use of a cellular material to reinforce a grass surface would be appropriate and reduce the visual impact.

Recommendation

2. Review the 'no cycling' policy within the park as this signage conflicts with the provision of designated cycle routes through the park.
3. Reconfigure the car park to increase capacity, improve circulation and create separate entry and exit points (subject to external / capital funding).
4. Investigate options to install appropriate car parking bays at the western side of the park parallel to Whitford Road.

2.1.3 Signage

There is signage present, including name of the site and managing organisation. Signage includes information about the Royal Hunters' Walks, interpretation of the Battlefield Brook improvement project and signage about water voles. Signage is generally in good condition but lacks overall coherence. Some of the signage is outdated, irrelevant, contradictory and in a poor state of repair.

There are notice boards in which to display relevant information.

Recommendations

5. Carry out repairs to the Water vole sign.
6. Carry out a signage audit to review and update all signage within the park.
7. Standardise where appropriate all signage throughout the park ensuring that information is relevant, current and of appropriate quality.

2.1.4 Equal Access for All

There is a good network of paths providing easy access for buggies and wheelchair users. There is ramped access to the café, disabled toilets and gentle gradients throughout the path network. There is a good range of busy and quiet areas, spaces being used by a range of audiences including nursery groups and teens. Dogs are allowed throughout the park except the play areas. The control of dogs on site appeared to be acceptable.

There are number disabled parking spaces in the carpark.

2.2 Healthy, Safe and Secure

2.2.1 Appropriate Provision of Quality Facilities and Activities

There is a good range of facilities for all ages including; café, toilets, range of play equipment, a green gym, skate park, Multi Use Games Area, basketball courts, tennis courts and green open space. There is also adequate provision of benches and seating throughout the park.

The tennis courts are currently used for casual play. Locally and nationally, there are good examples of commercial partners taking on the management of similar facilities. Working with a specialist provider could increase use and provide infrastructure for enhanced marketing and promotion, online booking, training sessions and specific events. The Council will explore the feasibility to work with a specialist provider at Sanders Park (and other parks and open spaces as appropriate).

The bowling green and pavilion are currently underutilised and surplus to requirements as sporting facilities. The pavilion building is serviced with water and electric heating and has a small kitchen. It is suitable as a meeting and private hire venue and been used for council meetings and has been used for community hire/use. The pavilion needs to be actively promoted and work carried out to attract a range of suitable uses and activities that are appropriate to the park setting. In the longer-term redevelopment of the bowling green and pavilion with a third sector or commercial partner could be explored.

The skate park is a popular facility, although user feedback suggests that the facility could be upgraded to provide a better experience. Some users have requested a concrete bowl style facility. The Council will investigate options for further enhancing the skate park.

- | Recommendations |
|--|
| 8. Review options for the maintenance of Tennis courts with regard to sweeping and moss removal etc. |
| 9. Investigate the feasibility of different operating models for the running of tennis provision at Sanders Park (and other open spaces (as appropriate). |
| 10. Investigate alternative options for how the bowls pavilion could be used to increase activity and generate revenue. |
| 11. In the longer term, explore the redevelopment of the bowling green and pavilion to establish whether there are opportunities for a third sector or commercial partner. |
| 12. Investigate options for further enhancing the skate park. |

2.2.2 Safe Equipment and Facilities

The equipment and facilities appeared to be in good working order and have been maintained to a good standard. Regular inspections of the play area and equipment have taken place.

An inspection of the play equipment was conducted in July 2022. It found that the general site surface and toddler multi play surface were worn and in need of repair. Two items (the mission unit with zip wire and bearings in the toddler multi play) were worn. The edges of the coco wave surface had also shrunk.

It should be noted that there are ongoing works with Sutcliffe (play equipment company) following the findings of the mission unit. A considerable amount of funds has already been invested in refurbishing and replacing parts on the Sutcliffe Play equipment. At the point of writing, much of the work had already been costed and was imminent.

Recommendations

- 13. Continue refurbishing and replace equipment in play area, including the tyre swing, mission unit with zip wire and bearings on toddler multi play as identified in the inspection report.
- 14. Resurface play area as set out in inspection report.

2.2.3 Personal Security

There are good sight lines throughout the majority of the park. There was a wide range of park users on site and all appeared to be using the space without restrictions to personal safety. There was lighting present along National Cycle Network (NCN) and CCTV near sports facilities. There was no evidence of vandalism or graffiti adding to feeling of safety.

2.2.4 Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling

There were no issues with dog control evident on site. There seemed to be an adequate provision of bins throughout the park and dog waste appeared to be disposed of responsibly. There was evidence of some dog fouling in less formal parts of the site. The site lacks signage about responsible dog ownership.

Recommendations

- 15. The council should consider whether improvements can be made to signage regarding responsible dog ownership.

2.3 Well Maintained and Clean

2.3.1 Litter and Waste Management

There was adequate provision and distribution of bins around the site, most of which were in good condition. Extra bins around the café are provided by the concession. There was very little litter visible on site and any present appeared to have been recently dropped. There was also good control of litter in wooded and less formal areas of the site.

Recommendations

- 16. Introduce a programme of replacement of corroded bins.

2.3.2 Horticultural Maintenance

Grass areas were in good condition with some being left unmown and being managed as wildflower meadows. Horticultural features are focussed in the sensory garden, around the café, at the main entrance and near to the bandstand. The standard of planting and maintenance of these features could be improved e.g. box hedging features and planting near the main entrance.

Recommendations
17. Where mowing has been reduced investigate seeding or alternative land management options for meadow to increase biodiversity value and aesthetic amenity
18. Capacity seems to be lacking to maintain horticultural features. Consider; a) Adapting bed for perennials which need less annual attention b) Increasing capacity for maintenance through volunteer groups c) Review and redesign significant horticultural areas d) Climate adaptation, drought tolerant planting

2.3.3 Arboricultural Maintenance

There is a good variety of trees on site that appear to be well maintained e.g. removal of damaged limbs and no evidence of unsafe trees. There is also evidence of recent tree planting to maintain rows and avenues.

The path in the south of the park leading to Spadesbourne Walk (highway) would support the introduction of a new tree avenue planted with suitable species (Liquid Amber have been planted elsewhere and are supported by Parks Staff). This area has also been enhanced with the recent change to managing the area as wildflower meadow.

Recommendations
19. Investigate feasibility of creating a new double tree avenue along the path leading to Spadesbourne Walk.
20. Review/ remove redundant tree stakes.
21. Carry out a tree survey.

2.3.4 Building and Infrastructure Maintenance

Buildings and bridges were in a good state of repair although maintenance work is required to some dwarf walls.

The area outside the café (where investment has been made to open up the building near the bandstand) requires further investment to create a more formal outdoor seating area to ensure the café offer can be seen

more clearly from entrance. The small hexagonal building (Information Centre) also needs to be addressed whether it is required for repair or removed to create a more open area for outdoor seating.

Recommendations
22. Develop design options for the setting of the café to provide an attractive and flexible space around these key visitor facilities.
23. Damage to one low wall to be repaired.
24. Willow spilling on banks of brook needs replacing to protect the bank.

2.3.5 Equipment Maintenance

Equipment and facilities all safe, evidence of inspection of play equipment with a tyre swing seemingly removed for repair. The water fountain taped up but assume this is a COVID measure.

2.4 Environmental Management

There was evidence of pesticide use along kerb edging.

An Environmental Audit of Sanders Park and its management and maintenance was carried out in January 2006. The audit considered compliance with legislation, control of pollution and environmental performance.

The audit did not identify any breaches of legislation or evidence of pollution arising from the operations on site. The assessment found that;

“It was clear that in a number of areas a considerable amount of effort and management time has been directed to reducing the wider environmental impact of Parks and Community Service’s operations as they relate to Sanders Park”.

The assessment identified that there is no peat use within Sanders Park as a growing media, soil conditioner or for any other purpose and this has been the position since before 2000. The report does however, recommend that the authority seeks documentary evidence to demonstrate this achievement.

A number of other recommendations have been made with regard to establishing baseline data, setting targets and improving the environmental performance of Sanders Park.

No further audits have been carried out and there is no evidence that the environmental performance has been monitored.

Recommendations
25. Consider introducing a monitoring framework to keep track of the environmental performance at Sanders Park.

26. The council needs urgently to develop an overarching environmental management strategy linked into individual service plans and operational procedures.

2.5 Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

2.5.1 Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora

Recent project to improve Battlefield Brook evident, also planting in the woodland pond. Good levels of wild areas of bramble etc around site providing good habitat.

Consultation with the Environment Agency has indicated that they wish to install a 'Flume' to the lower brook course to monitor water levels and flow. The Council will work with the EA and their contractors to implement this and other measures to improve the brook course. We will also explore the opportunities to reprofile and de-canalise further sections of the brook course.

Recommendations

27. Work with the EA to install a 'flume' on the lower brook course to monitor water levels and flow.
28. Work with the EA to investigate the opportunities to de-canalise further sections of the lower brook course
29. Carry out a survey to assess water vole population and manage habitat to support and encourage water voles.
30. Consider provision of standing dead wood where appropriate to diversify habitat.
31. Consider other habitat creation eg. Bug hotels

2.5.2 Conservation of Landscape Features

Areas around the Cotton Pool are well maintained.

2.5.3 Conservation of Buildings and Structures

The bandstand is in good condition and was repainted in 2022.

2.6 Community Involvement

2.6.1 Community Involvement in Management and Development

The Rotary Club have been involved in work at the site, with voluntary work taking place occasionally. There is no Friends Group at present.

Recommendations

32. The council needs to develop a dialogue with the local community.
33. The council should investigate opportunities for volunteering and community engagement.

2.6.2 Appropriate Provision for Community

Good provision on site and range of audiences using the park. Involvement of the Rotary Club evident. There is also a regular programme of bandstand events run by the council and a junior ParkRun.

2.7 Marketing and Communication

2.7.1 Appropriate Educational and Interpretational Information

Signage as above, further interpretation may be available from the information point when open.

2.8 Management

2.8.1 Ecological Survey

An Ecological Survey was carried out in 2007 by the Worcestershire Wildlife Consultancy.

Recommendations

34. Carry out an updated Ecological Survey.

2.8.2 Tree Survey

A comprehensive survey of all trees on land owned, managed or maintained by Bromsgrove District Council Culture and Community Services was undertaken on 15 March 2004 by Arboricultural Asset Management Ltd. Every tree has been individually numbered with details of the species, maturity, height, condition, identified hazards, likelihood of hazard failure, recommended action and suggested work prioritisation recorded in a database and digitally mapped.

The survey recorded 46 species and 561 trees in total within Sanders Park. The most common species were Leyland Cypress, hybrid Black Poplar, Common Ash, Silver Birch and Norway Maple.

The survey found that the condition of the tree stock in Sanders Park was generally acceptable. There were no trees recorded as requiring “urgent and immediate action” or “urgent priority”. However, four trees were identified as requiring attention within a suggested timescale of 2 months and a further 17 trees requiring attention within a suggested timescale of twelve months. Of these trees that required work, 9 required felling.

A further survey of all the park trees has been scheduled for Spring 2006 which will also include updating the GIS Tree Survey database.

Annual Tree Surveys were planned as part of the 2010-2015 Management and Maintenance Plan. However, there is no evidence that these have been carried out.

Recommendations
35. Carry out a new tree survey to ensure recommendations are more up to date.

2.8.3 Water Safety Inspections

A Water Safety Inspection of the brook course was carried out in January 2018. The risk level was assessed as medium and it was recommended that vegetation be maintained around the brook course.

In December 2018, the pond and Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Pond were assessed. The pond was assessed to be medium risk and the following recommendations were made:

- Repaint white lines on the steps.
- Continue to maintain paths around pond.
- Keep signs clean and visible.
- Install adequate and specific water hazard signage

The Worcestershire Wildlife Trust Pond was assessed to be increased risk and the following recommendations were made:

- Fencing requires repair above inlet culvert.
- Gabion basket next to inlet culvert requires repair.
- Remove Island.
- Additional fencing above inlet.
- Add Adequate specific hazard signage.
- Maintain area of vegetation / trees that surround pond.

Recommendations
36. Ensure the recommendations have been implemented; carry out a new water safety inspection.
37. To carry out a risk assessment of the water bodies within the park to determine if life saving devices should be provided.

2.8.4 Invasive Non-Native Species

Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) is present along the brook at Sanders Park. There is a plan being drawn up to deal with invasive non-native species at sites across Bromsgrove. A plan was put together by North Worcestershire Water Management who have involved contractors to implement it from spring 2022.

Recommendations
38. Implement plan to eradicate Himalayan Balsam.

2.8.5 Playing pitch strategy

The bowls facility on site appears to be surplus to requirements.

Recommendations

39. Consider the findings of the playing pitch strategy in relation to bowls.
40. Should the bowls facility be surplus then the council should carry out an options appraisal for its future use.

3 How will we get there?

The action plan below brings together all of the recommendations in section 2 above and considers a reasonable timescale for their implementation along with an indicative lead officer and also any resource or financial implications

It should be noted that generic actions across all 8 priority parks are picked up in the overall Priority Parks Strategy.

Figure 10 on page 47 visually shows the site-based improvements that are set out above.

Recommendation		Financial Year	Lead Officer(s)	Partners	Resource implication
A Welcoming Place					
1	Consider a redesign of horticultural features near the main entrance to make the site more welcoming.	2024	Operations Team Leader	Environmental Services, Volunteers	Departmental budgets or capital funding
2	Review the 'no cycling' policy within the park as this signage conflicts with the provision of designated cycle routes through the park.	2023	Parks Development Officer	Internal Departments	Officer time
3	Reconfigure the car park to increase capacity, improve circulation and create separate entry and exit points (subject to external / capital funding).	2024	Parks Development Officer	Internal departments	Capital Funding
4	Investigate options to install appropriate car parking bays at the western side of the park parallel to Whitford Road.	2024	Parks Development Officer	Internal Departments	Capital Funding
5	Carry out repairs to the Water vole sign.	2023	Operations Team Leader	Contractors	Officer Time Departmental Budgets
6	Carry out a signage audit to review and update all signage within the park.	2023	Parks Development Officer	Volunteers	Officer Time
7	Standardise where appropriate all signage throughout the park ensuring that information is relevant, current and of appropriate quality.	2023	Parks Development Officer		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
Healthy, Safe and Secure					
8	Review options for the maintenance models of Tennis courts with regard to sweeping and moss removal etc.	2023	Operations Team Leader		Officer Time Departmental Budgets

Recommendation		Financial Year	Lead Officer(s)	Partners	Resource implication
9	Investigate the feasibility of different operating models for the running of tennis provision at Sanders Park (and other open spaces (as appropriate).	2023	Parks Development Officer		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
10	Investigate alternative options for how the bowls pavilion could be used to increase activity and generate revenue.	2023	Parks Development Officer		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
11	In the longer term, explore the redevelopment of the bowling green and pavilion to establish whether there are opportunities for a third sector or commercial partner.	2024	Parks Development Officer		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
12	Investigate options for further enhancing the skate park.	2024	Parks Development Officer		Officer Time Departmental Budgets Capital Funding S106
13	Replace tyre swing, mission unit with zip wire and bearings on toddler multi play as identified in the inspection report.	2023	Operations Team Leader		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
14	Resurface play area as set out in inspection report.	2023	Operations Team Leader		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
15	The council should consider whether improvements can be made to signage regarding responsible dog ownership.	2023	Operations Team Leader		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
Well Maintained and Clean					

Recommendation		Financial Year	Lead Officer(s)	Partners	Resource implication
16	Introduce a programme of replacement of corroded bins.	2023	Operations Team Leader		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
17	Where mowing has been reduced investigate seeding or alternative land management options for meadow to increase biodiversity value and aesthetic amenity.	2024	Parks Development Officer Operations Team leader		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
18	Capacity seems to be lacking to maintain horticultural features. Consider; a) Adapting bed for perennials which need less annual attention b) Increasing capacity for maintenance through volunteer groups c) Review and redesign significant horticultural areas d) Climate adaptation, drought tolerant planting	2024	Operations Team Leader	Volunteers	Officer Time Departmental Budgets
19	Investigate feasibility of creating a new double tree avenue along the path leading to Spadesbourne Walk.	2025	Parks Development Officer	Internal Departments Volunteers	Officer Time Departmental Budgets External Funding
20	Review/ remove redundant tree stakes.	2023	Operations Team Leader	Volunteers	Officer Time
21	Carry out a tree survey.	2024	Operations Team Leader	Internal Departments	Officer Time Departmental Budgets

Recommendation		Financial Year	Lead Officer(s)	Partners	Resource implication
22	Develop design options for the setting of the café to provide an attractive and flexible space around these key visitor facilities.	2024	Parks Development Officer	Internal Departments External contractors/consultants	Officer Time Departmental Budgets Capital Bid/External Funding
23	Damage to one low wall to be repaired.	2023	Operations Team Leader	External contractors	Officer Time Departmental Budgets
24	Willow spilling on banks of brook needs replacing to protect the bank.	2023	Operations Team Leader	Internal Departments External Contractors	Officer Time Departmental Budgets
Environmental Management					
25	Consider introducing a monitoring framework to keep track of the environmental performance at Sanders Park.	2024	Parks Development Officer	Ecological/environmental contractors	Officer Time Departmental Budgets External Funding
26	The council needs urgently to develop an overarching environmental management strategy linked into individual service plans and operational procedures.	2024	Parks and Events Service Manager	Internal Departments External Contractors/Consultants	Officer Time Departmental Budgets Capital Bid
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage					

Recommendation		Financial Year	Lead Officer(s)	Partners	Resource implication
27	Work with the EA to install a 'flume' on the lower brook course to monitor water levels and flow.	2024	Operations Manager	Environment Agency	Officer Time Departmental Budgets
28	Work with the EA to investigate the opportunities to de-canalise further sections of the lower brook course.	2025	Parks Development Officer	Environment Agency	Officer Time Departmental Budgets External Funding/Capital Bids
29	Carry out a survey to assess water vole population and manage habitat to support and encourage water voles.	2024	Parks Development Officer	Ecologists	Officer Time Departmental Budgets
30	Consider provision of standing dead wood where appropriate to diversify habitat.	2024	Operations Team Leader		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
31	Consider other habitat creation e.g., Bug hotels	2024	Operations Team Leader		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
Community Involvement					
32	The council needs to develop a dialogue with the local community.	2023	Parks Development Officer		Officer Time Departmental Budgets





Recommendation		Financial Year	Lead Officer(s)	Partners	Resource implication
33	The council should investigate opportunities for volunteering and community engagement.	2024	Parks Development Officer		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
Management					
34	Carry out an updated Ecological Survey.	2024	Parks Development Officer		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
35	Carry out a new tree survey to ensure recommendations are more up to date.	2024	Operations Manager	Internal Departments External Contractors	Officer Time Departmental Budgets
36	Ensure the recommendations have been implemented; carry out a new water safety inspection.	2023	Operations Team Leader		Officer Time Departmental Budgets
37	To carry out a risk assessment of the water bodies within the park to determine if life saving devices should be provided.	2023	Operations Manager		Officer Time
38	Implement plan to eradicate Himalayan Balsam.	2023	Parks Development Officer	North Worcestershire Water Management Internal Departments External Contractors Volunteers	Officer Time Departmental Budgets External Funding
39	Consider the findings of the playing pitch strategy in relation to bowls.	2023	Parks Development Officer		Officer Time

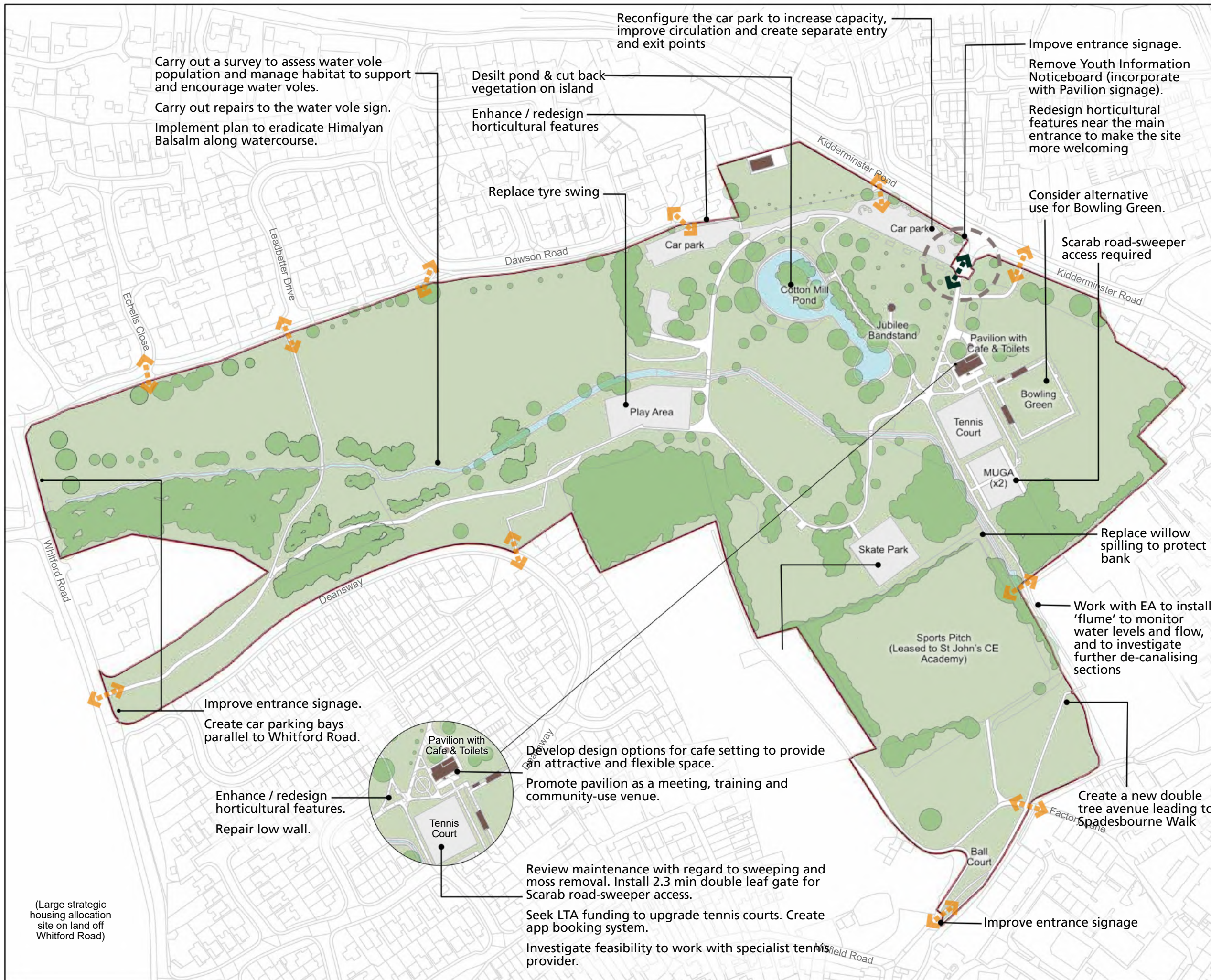
Recommendation		Financial Year	Lead Officer(s)	Partners	Resource implication
40	Should the bowls facility be surplus then the council should carry out an options appraisal for its future use.	2023/4	Parks Development Officer		Officer Time Departmental Budgets

Sanders Park Management and Maintenance Plan

Figure 10 Sanders Park Masterplan

LEGEND

-  Site boundary
-  Pedestrian access
-  Vehicular access
-  Main entrance



(Large strategic housing allocation site on land off Whitford Road)

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4 How will we know when we have arrived?

The management plan will be reviewed annually by the council team along with any key stakeholders to track its implementation.

The Action Plan will be formally reviewed annually, with progress recorded and future actions reviewed and prioritised.

Appendix A Water Vole Information

Water voles (*Arvicola amphibious*) have been identified at Sanders Park. Since 1900, there has been a long-term decline in water vole distribution and numbers both nationally and in Worcestershire.

A countywide study in 2000 identified Bromsgrove District as the site of the only remaining water vole populations in the county. In 2002, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust conducted a water vole survey across 32 sites in Bromsgrove District, including 20 along the Spadesbourne Brook. The survey team found evidence of water voles at 11 of the sites, including Sanders Park.

The report concluded that the Sanders Park was a critical location for water voles within Bromsgrove. Sanders Park (along with Lickey End) “are probably the most important sites in Worcestershire . . . these populations are fragmented and isolated and therefore vulnerable to extinction unless the correct sympathetic management suggested is carried out”.

Recommendations made by the report included the removal of scrub and trees, which increase shading on the bankside and inhibit the growth of grasses, wetland and water plants used by the water vole. Removal of litter also discourages brown rats (*Rattus norvegicus*), which compete with the water vole.

In 2005, the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust developed a Water Vole Conservation Strategy for Bromsgrove District Council, and between 2005 and 2015, around 70% of the recommended actions and activities had been carried out.

As part of the 2018-2027 Worcestershire BAP, a Species Action Plan (SAP) for water voles was developed. Its main conservation aim was to avoid the loss of water vole habitat and re-connect fragmented habitats where possible. Conservation objectives set out by the plan which are relevant to Sanders Park included survey work to confirm the current population distribution and improved accuracy of public recording and awareness raising.

Work that has taken place at Sanders Park has included a reduction in grass mowing, laying a Midland style hedgerow and tree planting. As part of the Council’s commitment to the 2009 West Midlands Biodiversity Pledge, a small wetland area was created, improving the quality of the habitat and increasing the total amount of habitat by approximately 50%. Monitoring at the site which took place 12-months after the wetland area was created, concluded there had been a 400% increase in the water vole population. In 2019, a viewing platform and interpretation boards were installed to raise awareness and contribute to the objectives of the water vole species action plan.

By 2018, it was believed that only three sites, including Sanders Park, were still inhabited by water voles. This further highlights the importance of continued maintenance and conservation work at the site. Below is key information on water voles, including their preferred habitat and management recommendations.

Water Vole Habitat

Water voles tend to live on the banks of densely vegetated rivers, streams, canals or ditches. They will burrow into the banks, so prefer soft, undisturbed earth banks. Water voles can also be found in ponds, lakes, marches, wet moorland and reedbeds, where they will wave rugby ball-sized nests made of reeds.

Vegetation is vital to water voles, both as cover from predators and for food. Notably, a water vole needs to consume the equivalent of 80% of its body weight in food each day and a breeding female double that amount.

Threats

There are several reasons for declines in water vole populations:

- Predation by American mink (*Neogale vison*)
- Habitat loss
- Population fragmentation
- Water pollution
- Drought
- Flooding

Protection and Designations

Water voles are listed as endangered on Great Britain and the England Red Lists for Mammals. They are included as a priority UK Biodiversity Action Plan species.

Water voles were given full legal protection under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amends). Schedule 5 of this Act makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place that a water vole uses for shelter or protection. It is also an offence to disturb, kill or injure a water vole or handle a water vole without a licence. Disturbing or harming a water vole, damaging its habitat or destroying or blocking water vole burrows could lead to prosecution. Offences carry a maximum penalty of £5,000.

They are also listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Lawful and essential operations affecting water vole habitat must take full account of this protected status and avoidance of damage/adequate mitigation must be undertaken.

Under the Water Act 1989 (and amends), it is an offence to cause or knowingly permit a discharge of poisonous, noxious or polluting matter to enter any controlled waters without proper authority.

Locally, water voles have been identified as a priority species by the Worcestershire BAP since 1997. Within Bromsgrove, the Spadesbourne Brook and the Battlefield Brook are both listed as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), which gives some measure of protection in planning policy.

Management

Minimal management is required to ensure a habitat are suitable for water voles; they are reliant on the maintenance of vegetation. As ecosystem engineers, their burrowing, feeding and movement also facilitate the creation of ideal conditions for themselves other river species.

Recommendations for management include:

- Ensure works are carried out between late September and early February, so there are no disturbances during the breeding season.
- Ensure there are at least two metres of uncut bank-side vegetation or grass.
- Cut alternate banks each year, so there is always vegetation available.
- Do not cut bank-side vegetation too short.
- Coppicing bank-side trees will open up sections of the bank, ensuring grasses and vegetation are not overshadowed.
- When de-silting, avoid disturbing the bank-sides, keep machinery to one side to ensure to other side remains intact, and only remove silt from the centre of the channel. When completed, deposit silt away from the water.

Existing Conservation Work

The Wildlife Trust's National Water Vole Database & Mapping Project collects and analyses national data on water vole and mink distributions and water vole reintroductions (see below for link).

Alongside their monitoring work, the Wildlife Trust works alongside other organisations to maintain and restore water vole habitats and populations.

An example of a successful project includes the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) Water Vole Recovery Programme. The longest running water vole recovery project, the BBOWT Water Vole Recovery Programme has been working to increase populations of water voles across the three counties since 1998. Works have included mink population control and habitat enhancement, clearing scrub and trees along the

River Misbourne. Between 2008 and 2018, the total area of water vole activity increased by 80%. Information on the project is available via the following links:

www.bbowt.org.uk/news/water-voles-thriving-oxfordshire-and-berkshire-and-given-helping-hand-buckinghamshire

www.bbowt.org.uk/wildlifewildlife-conservation/water-vole-recovery-project

Additional Information

Further information on water voles is available via the following links:

Wildlife Trust information on water voles: www.wildlifetrusts.org/wildlife-explorer/mammals/water-vole

Water vole: watervole.org.uk/

Current work being carried out by the Wildlife Trust: www.wildlifetrusts.org/saving-species/water-voles

The National Water Vole Database & Mapping Project: www.wildlifetrusts.org/national-water-vole-database-mapping-project

Bromsgrove Mink and Water Vole Strategy: www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/media/1075430/Mink-and-Water-Vole-Strategy-Bromsgrove-District-Council.pdf

Species Action Plan: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/10852/s4_water_vole_species_action_plan

People's Trust for Endangered Species monitoring programme: ptes.org/get-involved/surveys/countryside-2/national-water-vole-monitoring-programme/

Worcestershire Biological Records Centre: wbrc.org.uk/WBRC/searches.html

Appendix B Grounds maintenance schedule

