

	AGENDA ITEM 8
	GTP/07/16
Committee:	GREAT NOTLEY COUNTRY PARK JOINT VENTURE PARTNERSHIP BOARD
Meeting Date:	20th July 2016
Report:	Update on Great Notley Country Park Strategic Review
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Purpose of Report

To receive an update on the Great Notley Country Park Strategic Review.

**place
services**

Great Notley Country Park Strategic Review: Masterplan baseline

Project Design by Place Services at Essex County Council

Date: 28 | 06 | 2016

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PROJECT NAME:

Great Notley Country Park Strategic Review: Masterplan Baseline

1 SUMMARY DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 Over the past 8 years Great Notley Country Park (GNCP) has transformed into an important visitor attraction within the District of Braintree. It is estimated that there have been over 1,000,000 visitors to the country park since 2008.
- 1.2 Given a potential increase in the population of Braintree District of circa 33,000 new residents in approximately 15,200 new dwellings over the next 15 years. It is considered an appropriate time to review the long-term strategic aspirations and vision for the park.
- 1.3 This document is a Project Design for the completion of a 'Masterplan Baseline' on behalf of Essex County and Braintree District Council who operate the park in partnership. It follows a Strategic Review Workshop held at Great Notley Country Park in September 2015.
- 1.4 The key output of the work will be the establishment of a coherent baseline with which to inform the production of a masterplan. It will collect and analyse a range of data about the park, its environs, operation and users to help articulate a vision for Great Notley together with a number of options for its future improvement.
- 1.5 This project design has been produced by the Place Services team at Essex County Council (ECC). The project will be carried out by Place Services staff, based at County Hall, Chelmsford with support from ECC and BDC officers.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The current partnership between Braintree District Council and Essex County Council for the management and operation of Great Notley Country Park (GNCP) was established in 2008. Since then the partnership has seen the park transform into an important visitor attraction within the District of Braintree and wider Essex.
- 2.2 The site has seen investments in play equipment, the visitor centre, car parking an artificial grass pitch (AGP) and multi-use games area (MUGA), other grass pitches, the sky ropes, organised events and the overall maintenance of the park itself.
- 2.3 The park has seen significant increases in popularity amongst local residents and visitors from further afield who use the park for both formal and informal leisure and recreation activities.
- 2.4 The park has a number of important roles, including meeting objectives around:
- health and well-being;
 - giving children the best start in life; and
 - providing a high quality environment.
- 2.5 Given the anticipated growth of up to 950 new homes each year via implementation of Braintree District Council's new Local Plan by mid-2017 GNCP will face increased opportunities to welcome new users.
- 2.6 It is therefore considered an appropriate time to review the long term strategic aspirations and vision for the park for the next 10-15; given the context of a potential increase in the population of Braintree District of circa 33,000 new residents in circa 15,200 new dwellings over the next 15 years.
- 2.7 An initial officer level 'strategic review' workshop was held on the 23rd September 2015 at Great Notley Country Park. This was followed by a report and presentation of the results to the Great Notley Joint Venture Partnership Board. This initial work set out a series of 'next steps' with a view to compiling a baseline to inform the production of a masterplan. These 'steps' or work streams, which form the basis of the current project design, are as follows:
1. Physical Constraints
 2. Stakeholder Analysis
 3. Market Information
 4. Operational Analysis
 5. Finances
 6. Options

3 AIMS, OBJECTIVES & OUTPUTS

3.1 The key aim of the baseline will be to address the question posed at the Great Notley Country Park Strategic Review Workshop: **“What information is needed to create a masterplan?”**

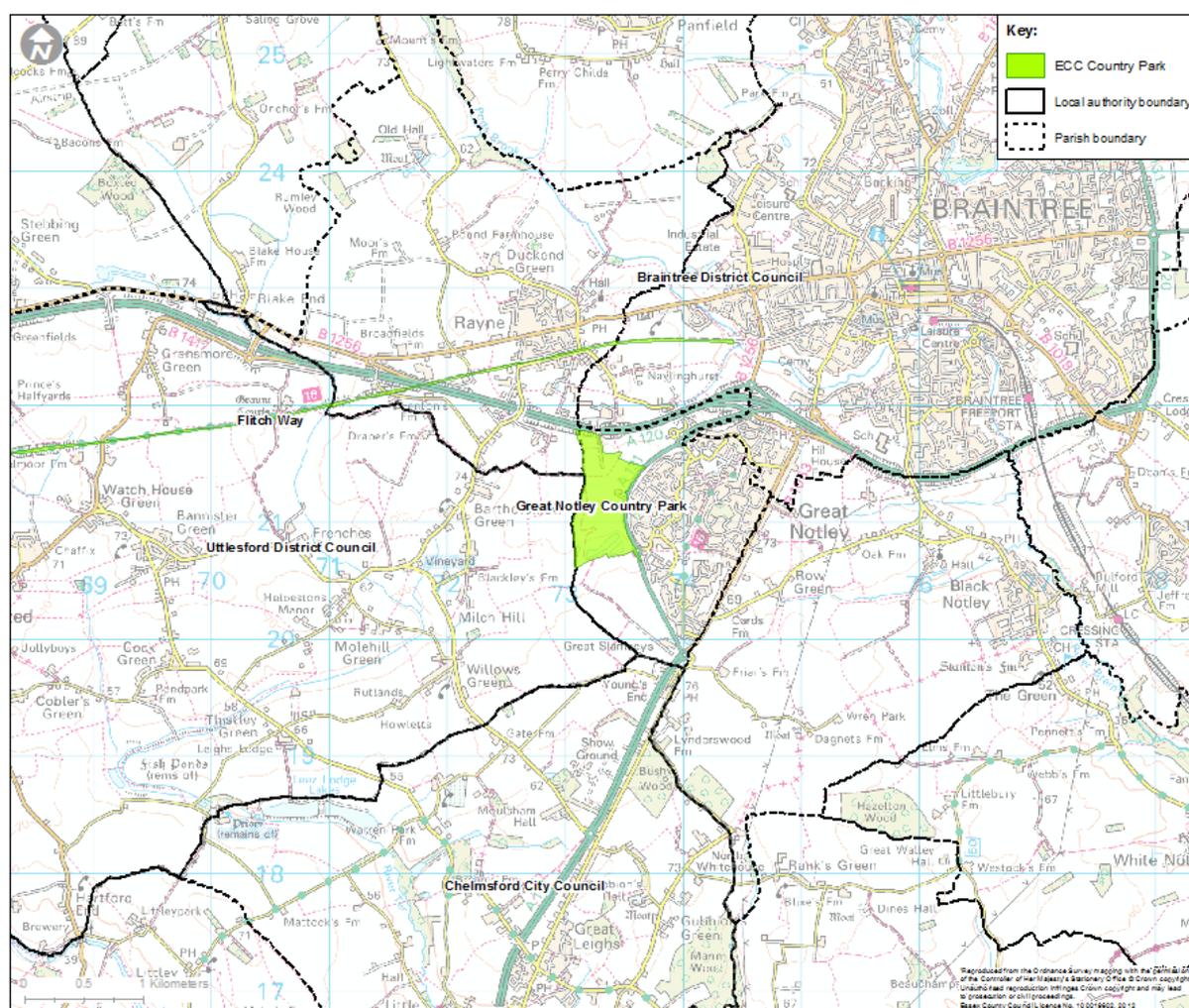
3.2 Attendees to the workshop were also asked to define **“..what constitutes a ‘master plan’?”**. The feedback from attendees can be summarised as follows, a masterplan should:

- 1) Be based on a vision.
- 2) Be endorsed and owned by members.
- 3) Set out management arrangements’.
- 4) Set out an investment strategy over 10-15 years. With a clear funding plan.
- 5) Include competitor analysis and identify GNCP’s unique selling point.
- 6) Analyse current and future demographics.
- 7) Sets out customer needs/wants (and non-customer).
- 8) Reflect regional and national agenda (health and wellbeing)
- 9) Based on best-practice, but also includes an innovative approach.
- 10) Separate to the implementation/action plan
- 11) Outline Risks
- 12) Include development Options (be inspiring)
- 13) Include what we ‘will not do’.
- 14) Establish a carrying capacity.
- 15) Be a business plan type document

4 PROJECT SCOPE

- 4.1 The geographic scope of the baseline study will focus primarily upon GNCP, but contextual data will be collected beyond the boundary of the park with regard environmental, land-use (competitor) and visitor (customer) information.
- 4.2 At the workshop the opportunity to work with Uttlesford District Council, who are also currently preparing their Local Plan, was raised. Uttlesford residents have limited access to natural green space, and therefore there could be opportunities to expand GNCP at the Uttlesford boundary. Moreover, if the country park expands into Uttlesford opportunities to gather developer contributions (section 106 and community infrastructure levy (CIL)) from new development within Uttlesford could also be explored.
- 4.3 All options at this stage are considered to be ‘on-the-table’, and there will be no further significant investment in GNCP before the outcome of this work is completed and a subsequent masterplan is produced.

Figure 1. Study area



5 PROJECT PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS

- 5.1 An officer-level Project Steering Group will be formed from attendees of the original Strategic Review Workshop. It will provide technical guidance and encourage stakeholder engagement. Members will include the following:
- Claire Bunn, Senior Ranger (Great Notley Country Park)
 - Steve Bunn, Head Ranger (Great Notley Country Park)
 - Lee Crab, Head of Environmental Health and Leisure (Braintree District Council)
 - Nick Day, Parks and Open Spaces Manager (Braintree District Council)
 - Tim Dixon, Head of Country Parks (Essex County Council)
 - Cerena Ashwell, Marketing - Country Parks (Essex County Council)
 - Joby Humm, Leisure Contracts Officer (Braintree District Council)
 - Alan Massow, Senior Policy Planner (Braintree District Council)
 - Paul Partridge, Head of Operations (Braintree District Council)
 - Tania Roberge, Marketing and Communications Manager (Braintree District Council)
 - Luke Bristow, Senior Consultant (Place Services)
 - Paul Frainer, Head of Natural Environment Team Place Services.
- 5.2 The key 'baseline' information identified in the workshop report is held by a range of stakeholders including officers within BDC/ECC, government agencies and other partner organisations.
- 5.3 **Table 1** sets-out the information to be collected under each work stream. **Appendix A** – provides an initial inventory of information/data identified in the report of the strategic review workshop ('What information is needed to create a masterplan?').
- 5.4 The Sourcing data in a timely fashion is likely to represent one of the main challenges to ensuring the timely delivery of the project. Therefore, the inception meeting of the Project Steering Group inception meeting will focus on reviewing the format and availability of information, identifying key data holders and establishing a timetable for its collection or collation.

Table 1 – Information required to inform baseline

Work stream no.	Work stream name	Details
1	Physical Constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information held by BDC and ECC to be pulled together and presented by Place Services
2	Stakeholder Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Historic information held by BDC and ECC Need to undertake non-user survey Need to undertake user survey (peak/off peak)
3	Market Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographics held by BDC and ECC Competitor analysis research needs to be undertaken
4	Operational Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information held by BDC and ECC
5	Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information held by BDC and ECC
6	Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would be based on the information above.

6 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

6.1 Approach to Project Management

Throughout the duration of the project, Project Management will be undertaken by Luke Bristow, ensuring tasks are completed on time and to budget. Paul Frainer will act as Project Executive, and will chair Project Steering Group meetings and facilitate workshops with officers and members.

6.2 Communication

Effective and thorough consultation and engagement with partners and key stakeholders will be important to the successful delivery of the project.

Members of the Project Team will be based at County Hall, Chelmsford. Internal communication will largely be face-to-face and via email. Regular email updates will be issued to the Project Steering Group as necessary.

6.3 Project review

The project is divided into 7 stages (see **Section 7**) reflecting the outcomes of the initial strategic review workshop. Project Review Meetings will take place at the conclusion of each main phase. Project assurance will be provided by the Project Executive and Project Manager who will be responsible for checking progress against the Project Design.

Any changes to the Project Design, timetable, and costs will be identified by the Project Manager and Project Executive, before communication to Project Steering Group.

6.4 Quality and standards

Data will be stored and disseminated in accordance with the Council's spatial data standards*.

**In 2007 The European Union published a Directive (2007/2/EC) establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information In the European Community (INSPIRE). All local authorities in England must comply with publishing geospatial information related to the environment according to specific technical specifications.*

6.5 Approach to Risk Management

Table 2 identifies the main risks to project delivery that have been identified at the design stage; risks that arise as the project progresses will be brought to the attention of the Project Executive and remedial action agreed with the Head of Commissioning (Sustainable Essex Protection) and the Project Steering Group where appropriate.

Table 2 – main project risks

Risk	Remedial action
Delays sourcing data inputs from third-party organisations.	Escalation of data request by ECC/BDC senior management.
Incomplete data coverage as a result of poor-quality data or refusal of data request.	Adjust data resolution to ensure consistent coverage. Seek technical guidance from Project Steering Group.
Attendance of senior officers and members to meetings and workshops.	Ensure sufficient notice is provided to attendees. Allow for contingency dates should there be delays sourcing data and information.

6.5 Consultation

Consultation with the intended audience of the Essex Natural Capital Asset Check will be used to validate the outputs, raise awareness in advance of its dissemination and develop consensus around its interpretation and use.

6.6 Dissemination

The initial results of the Masterplan Baseline will be shared via the Project Steering Group and to members of the Great Notley Joint Venture Partnership Board. A hard copy and electronic report together with electronic data and maps will be the primary output for dissemination.

7 STAGES AND TASKS

To complete work streams 1-6 (see Table 1), it is envisaged that the project will take around 4-5 months to complete and comprise 6 stages. Critically, the programme will need to allow time and sufficiently flexibility to source data and information from a considerable number of different officers and organisations; and to plan and prepare the two proposed workshops.

Stage 1 Project Setup and Management (w/c 23rd May – w/c 6th June)

Task 1 Project Governance/Management

The project manager (Luke Bristow) will oversee the day-to-day operation of the project, including monitoring of costs and timetable, ensuring that the project produces the work agreed in the Project Design. Task 1 will include finalising the project governance structure and final composition of the Project Steering Group.

Task 2 Sign-off Project Design

Review and agree final Project Design with Tim Dixon and Paul Partridge.

Task 3 Inception Meeting (14th July)

Inception meeting with Project Steering group to discuss information availability and agree responsibilities and timetable for collation.

Stage 2 Work streams 1-5: Collation and collection of information and data (w/c 27th June – 26th Aug)

Task 4 Data and information requests

Following inception meeting, a standard email will be prepared and sent to relevant data holders and/or officers responsible for collecting new survey information. To be followed-up where necessary by phone-calls. Task to be overseen by Luke Bristow with support from Business Services.

Task 5 Data formatting and storage

Data storage protocols to be agreed by the Project Team with data stored locally in the project folder ready for formatting. This task is to be completed by Sally Gale.

Collation of ECC/Place Services data will commence immediately upon agreement of project design.

Task 6 Review and sign-off data licences

Where necessary, licencing agreements to be signed and stored in the project folder.

Stage 3 Members and senior officers workshop (w/c 12th Sept)

Task 7 Prepare material

In advance of workshop prepare presentation and circulate summary interim report based on results of work-streams 1-5.

Task 8 Hold workshop at Great Notley Country Park

Paul Frainer and Luke Bristow to present interim findings and facilitate workshop with members and senior officers at GNCP. Attendees would be drawn from Great Notley Joint Venture Partnership Board and other key stakeholders such as UDC members/officers.

Stage 4 Options appraisal (Work stream 6) and final draft report (26th Sep – 4th November)

Task 9 Complete options appraisal and final draft report

Using information gathered from work-streams 1-5 and feedback from workshop an options appraisal will be completed and incorporated into a final draft report. Task to be completed by Luke Bristow and overseen by Paul Frainer.

Task 10 Disseminate draft report

Final draft report data will be circulated to Project Steering Group for comment and review.

Stage 5 Final workshop (tbc November)

Task 11 Prepare material

In advance of workshop prepare presentation and circulate summary final draft report based on results of work-streams 1-6.

Task 12 Present final draft report

Paul Frainer and Luke Bristow to present interim findings and facilitate workshop with members and senior officers at GNCP. Attendees would be drawn from Great Notley Joint Venture Partnership Board and other key stakeholders such as UDC members/officers.

Stage 6 Final Report (December/January)

Task 13 Disseminate data and final report

Incorporating appropriate feedback from final workshop, the final report and data will be circulated to the Project Steering Group and Great Notley Joint Venture Partnership Board and other key stakeholders such as UDC members/officers.

Appendix A - What information is needed to create a masterplan?

- 1) Options appraisal type process (stage 1)
 - To include a do nothing differently and further options
 - Costing and projected income for each option
 - Inspiring, innovative ideas
- 2) A clear vision
- 3) Context
 - Historical information
 - Regional and national objectives
 - A pledge detailing what the master plan is not.
- 4) Stakeholder analysis
 - Political buy-in / member support
 - Customer feedback
 - (PARC, GNFC)
 - Staff involvement
 - Parish councillors
 - Football pitch users
- 5) Market information
 - Demographics
 - Benchmarking
 - What is happening in surrounding area (Suffolk / Herts)
- 6) Physical constraints and opportunities
 - Scale and landholding
 - Wildlife surveys
 - Environmental constraints
 - Constraints mapping
 - Car parking capacity

- Opportunities linked to transport network
- Opportunities to link to Flitch Way
- Football development if pitch is relocated
- Infrastructure

7) Operational analysis

- Staffing levels
- Resources
- Parking issues at Notley Estate
- Local Authority ownership / budget management principles within a local authority
- Asset management

8) Finances

- Fundraising / revenue costs
- Investment
- Need for net surplus
- Budget
- True operating costs