



Morton Stanley

Management and Maintenance Plan

2022 – 2027



Morton Stanley

Management and Maintenance Plan

June 2022

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1 Where are we now?

1.1 Site

1.1.1 Location

Morton Stanley Park is located in West Ward, adjacent to Redditch Golf Club (**Figure 1**). It is also bordered by urban development, private recreational green space and farmland. The Park covers 36.89 hectares and can be accessed on foot via multiple entrances off Windmill Drive (B4504) and Green Lane. The site also has two car Parks; one is located off Green Lane and the other off Windmill Drive. Disabled Parking spaces are available at both car Parks. Monarch's Way, a waymarked Public Right of Way, runs through the site, from Windmill Drive to Green Lane. A second Public Right of Way run from Morton Lane on the southern edge and runs through the woodlands to join with the main path network (**Figure 2**).

1.1.2 Site Description

Figure 2 shows the site plan for Morton Stanley Park. The site combines areas for formal and informal recreation, including play provision, expanses of open mown areas and marked football pitches, along with ecologically rich ponds and woodland. Morton Stanley Park also maintains a historic character and historic features are evident. These include mature hedgerows and veteran trees, along with evidence of remnant orchards and large open areas of wildflower meadow.

To aid the management and set a firm direction, Morton Stanley Park was divided into six separate zones. These descriptive zones range from active play to passive recreation and illustrate the diversity of experience and enjoyment the Park offers. The zones are shown in **Figure 3** on page 4.

Zone 1

Zone 1 provides the initial welcome to the site. It has open vistas and directional signage. This zone includes a variety of play facilities in sight of the main car park. The installation of a café and toilets is planned for March 2022. Near the play area are picnic tables, litter bins, and recycling facilities.

The zone is predominantly close mown grass with hedgerows. There are two shallow ponds in this area with open access. The ponds are not signed following the corporate water policy and guidelines issued by RoSPA.

Dog owners are encouraged by signage to keep their dogs on a lead in this area.

Morton Stanley Park Management and Maintenance Plan

Figure 2
Morton Stanley Park Site Plan

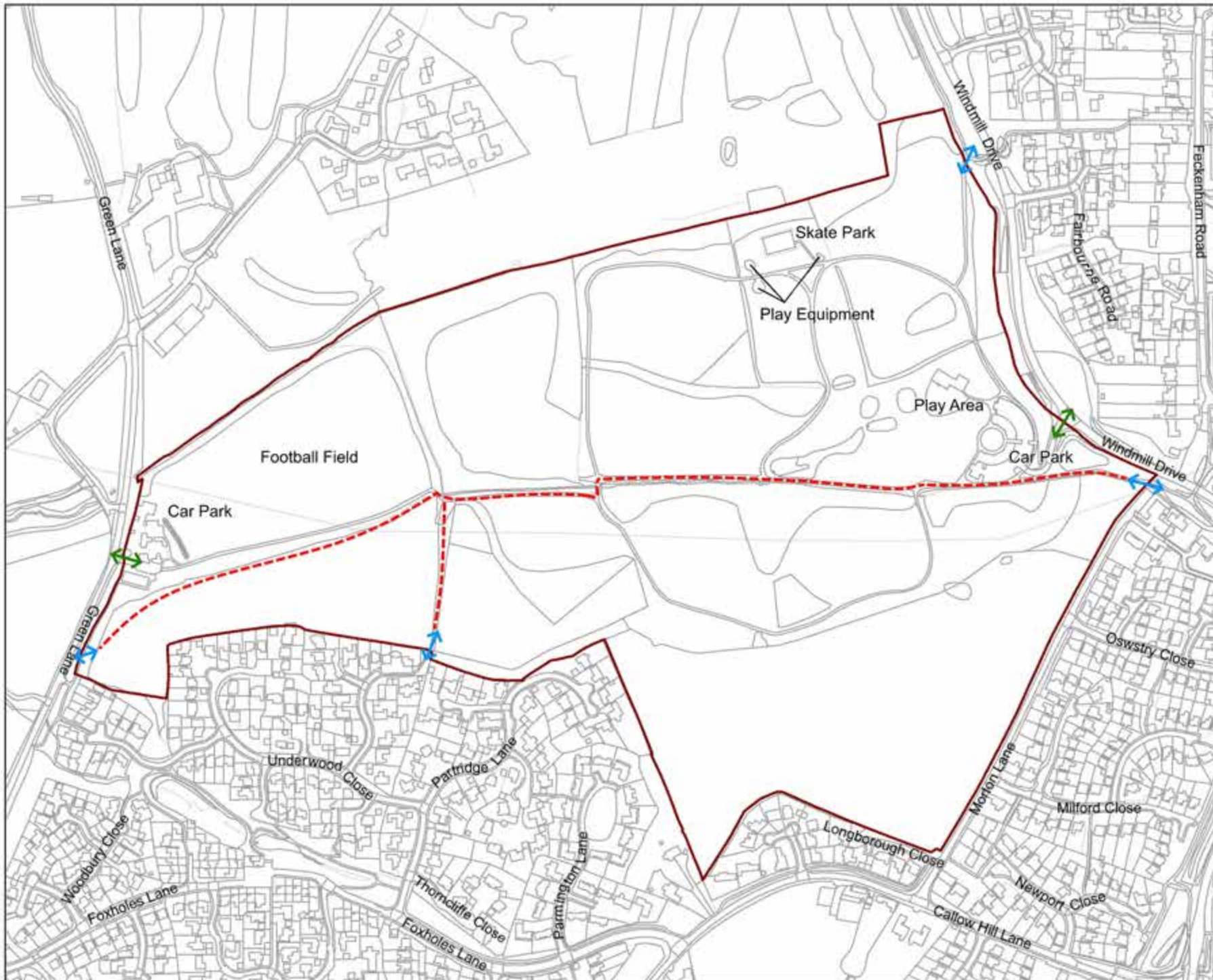
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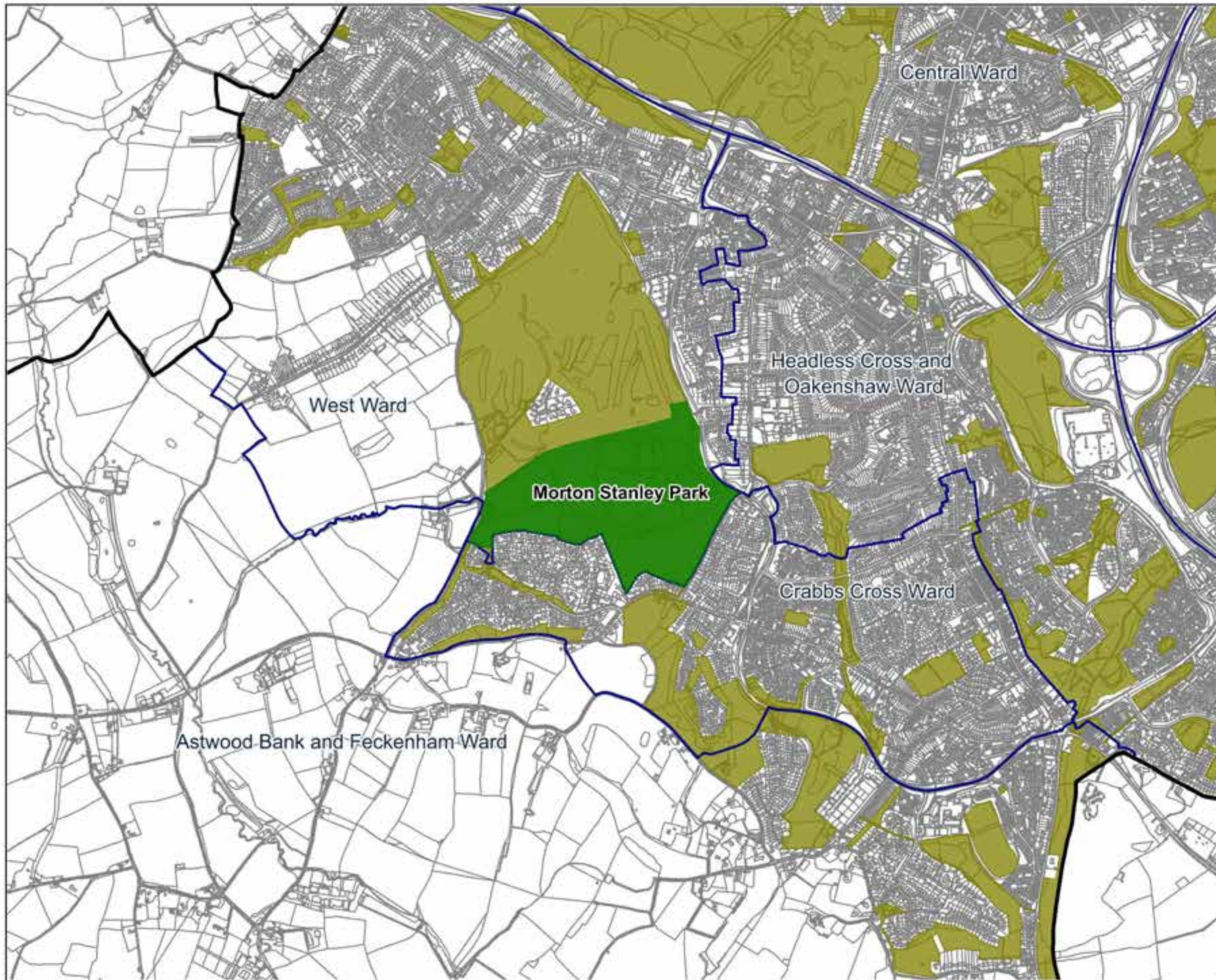
-  Site Boundary
-  Pedestrian Access
-  Vehicle Access
-  Public Right of Way



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**Morton Stanley Park
Management and
Maintenance Plan**

**Figure 1
Morton Stanley Park
Location Plan**

LEGEND

- Morton Stanley Park
- Other neighbouring open space
- Ward Boundaries
- Redditch Borough

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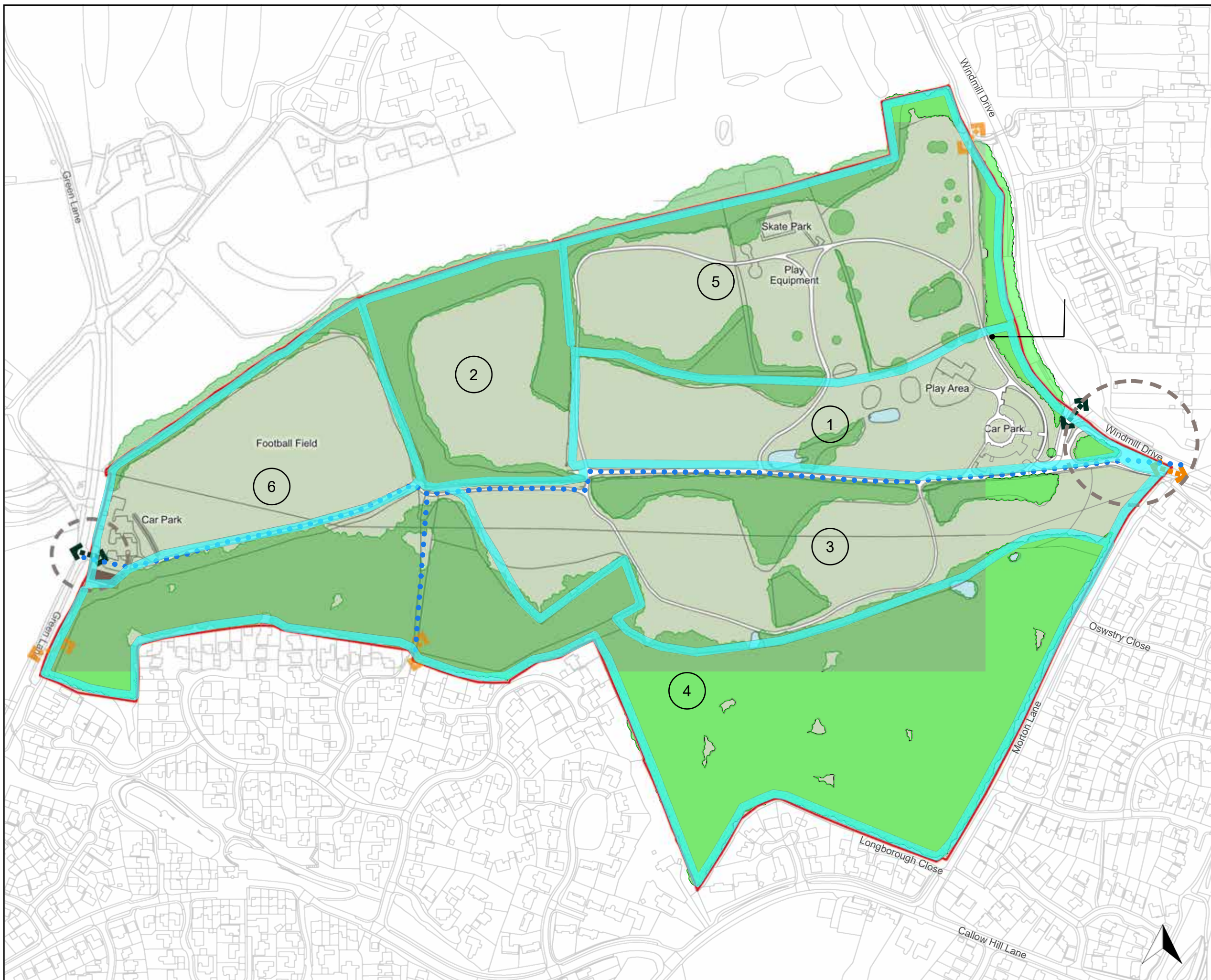


Morton Stanley Park Management and Maintenance Plan

Figure 3
Morton Stanley Park Zone plan

LEGEND

-  Site boundary
-  Pedestrian access
-  Vehicular access
-  Public Right of Way
-  Main entrance



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Zone 2

Zone 2 has been the site for the annual Fun Day and other public events. It is flat and accessible and has formal pathways to three sides with hedgerows to the north and northeast, providing shelter from extremities. It is close mown amenity grassland and provides access to other areas within the site.

Zone 3

This area is currently managed as a hay meadow. The meadow is an important habitat and has been classified as unimproved neutral grassland, known under the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) system as MG5 grassland by Natural England. This type of grassland was once the ubiquitous type of old meadow and pasture typical in the English lowlands. The meadow is bordered and intersected with a tarmac footpath.

Zone 4

This large area comprises 10.1 hectares of woodland and is designated as a Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site. The paths are constructed from either crushed brick or wood chippings, which have reverted back to earth/mud paths over the years. There are several access points into the woodland from the tarmac paths running through the site. The southern edge of the woodland borders several residential areas.

Zone 5

Zone 5 contains the skate and BMX park, installed in 2004 following consultation with 'friends' and park users. Further equipment for older children and teenagers was installed in 2008 following a successful bid to the Worcestershire Play strategy. Occupying a 150-metre footprint, the facility includes a twin fly zip wire, aero-skate and basket swing. This zone is sloped and bordered by a mature laid hedgerow that creates a buffer to other park users who may enjoy the passive recreation of meadows and woodland but remains accessible to families with older children using the play facilities in Zone 1.

Zone 6

Zone 6, known as the as the Green Lane pitches, comprises four junior and mini football pitches and changing rooms. This zone includes the Green Lane Car Park at the west extremity of the site. It has a tarmac footpath to the South and hedgerow to the North. The pitches are renovated in the late spring and provide additional areas for recreation throughout the summer.

1.1.3 Designations & Legal Issues

Ownership

The tenure of land edged red on plan 'Morton Stanley Park' is freehold. The tenure held by the Council on trust that the same shall be used in accordance with the terms of William Morton Stanley deceased will dated 22 November 1924, namely, for the use of the inhabitants of the Urban District of Redditch and the Parish of Webheath.

Covenants and Restrictions

A covenant exists not to use the land for any purpose other than public open space and allotments incorporated into Morton Stanley Park.

Stewardship

There was a previous Stewardship agreement which expired in 2020. The conservation and management of the areas to increase ecological diversity with particular regard to brown hairstreak butterflies and native flora continue to be carried out by the midweek conservation volunteer group. Management of docks, creeping thistle and ragwort and rotational cutting of blackthorn is carried out on a regular basis.

Licences and Leases

One licence has been identified regarding the park. There is a wayleave agreement/authority with Western Power, who require access to overhead high voltage cables.

There is an informal agreement with a local farmer who cuts the meadow area once a year in July. The agreement includes collecting the cut hay three days later and removing it from the site. It's understood that the hay crop is used for animal food for the cattle at Bordesley Meadows, part of the Arrow Valley Country Park. This was previously funded through a stewardship agreement with DEFRA. This agreement is understood to have expired in 2020 and the work is currently funded directly by the council. The local junior football club, Headless Junior FC, pay an annual fee for use of the pitches and changing pavilion.

Planning Status

Morton Stanley Park is designated as Primarily Open Space under the Redditch Local Plan No. 4, allowing the space some level of protection. Proposals that will reduce the provision of Primarily Open Space "will not normally be granted planning permission unless it can be demonstrated that the need for development outweighs the value of the land as an open area". However, proposals "that contribute to both the Green Infrastructure Network in the Borough and the nature and purpose of the open space" may be approved. Where development that results in the loss of an open space the Council "will require the provision of equivalent or improved facilities and/or financial contributions from developers".

As shown in **Figure 4**, the wooded areas of Morton Stanley Park are a Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site according to the Redditch Local Plan No. 4. It was declared a Local Nature Reserve on the 14th October 1999. This designation included 94 hectares of land throughout the Borough that was recognised as a locally important venue. The designation was formally recorded under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. **Figure 4** also shows the individual plantations which make up the woodlands. The largest is known as Woodland Coppice, with Walkwood Coppice comprising two plantations (indicated by the black dotted line), divided by a footpath.

Two New Town Tree Preservation Orders (NT TPO) were signed in 1965. They provide protection to all trees that were in existence at the time the order was signed. NT TPO 32 covers all land to the south of the Public Right of Way, which runs through the centre of the site, and includes what are now the Local Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites. NT TPO 33 covers the football pitch area off Green Lane.

Byelaws

There are no current byelaws affecting Morton Stanley Park.

Access

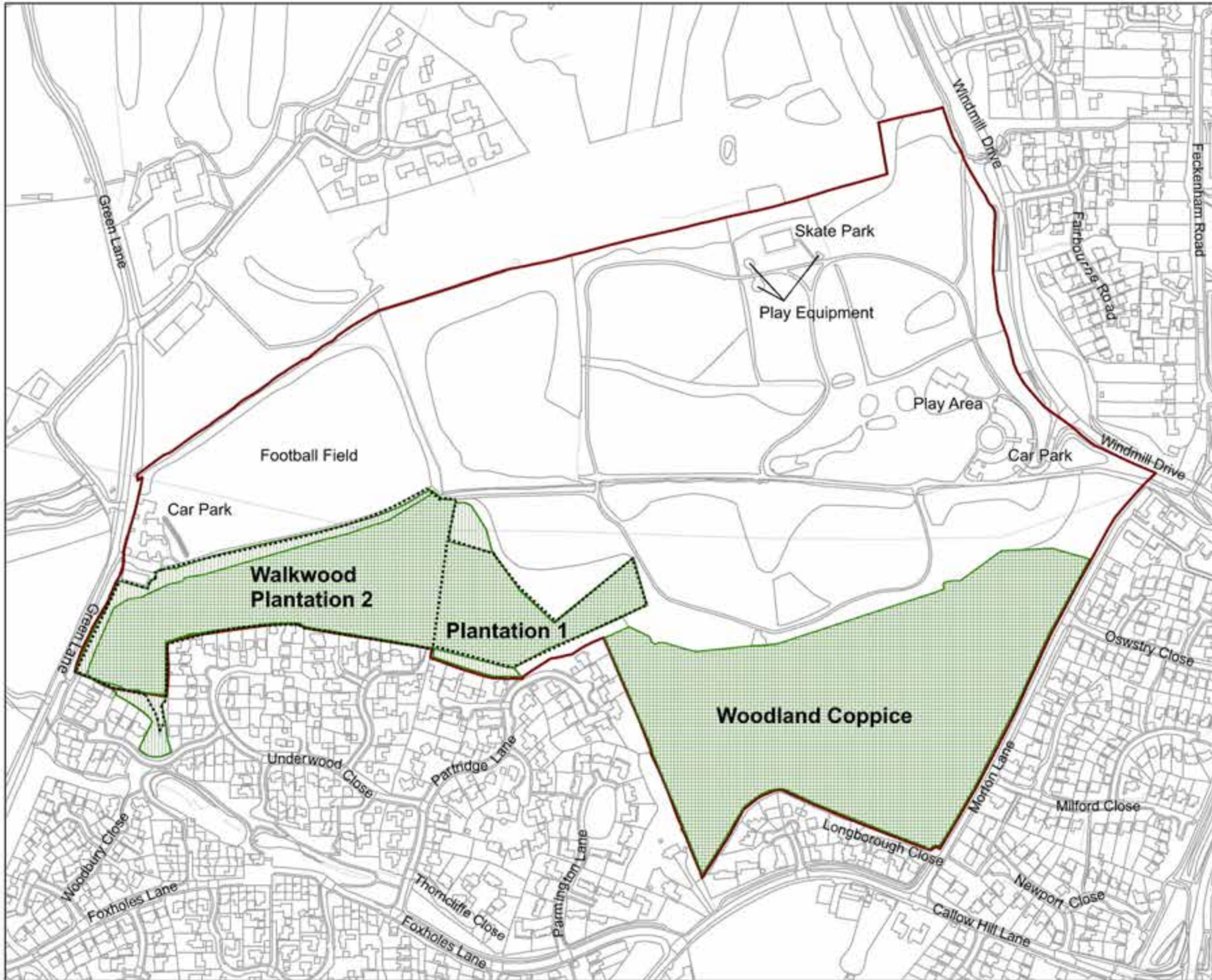
There are two public rights of way within Morton Stanley Park. Monarch's Way enters the Park from the Windmill Drive Car Park and runs centrally to the path network to the West. A second right of way enters the Park from Morton Lane through the woodlands, running north to join Monarchs Way at a central location within the Park. Both Public Rights of Way are shown in **Figure 2**.

No formal easements or way leaves have been located / identified other than those for statutory services including easements in relation to Midlands Electricity Board and Severn Trent for the alteration, removal, replacement and enlargement of their services with 24 hours required notice excluding emergency.

Various agreements and consents authorising Eon to erect lay and use overhead and underground electricity transmission/distribution lines and ancillary apparatus are in existence.

**Morton Stanley Park
Management and
Maintenance Plan**

**Figure 4
Morton Stanley Park
Site Designations**



LEGEND

-  Site Boundary
-  Local Nature Reserve
-  Local Wildlife Site



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Wider Legislation

Morton Stanley Park is also covered by a legislative framework which seeks to address and control behaviour and activities within the Council’s green spaces. These issues are actively promoted and enforced in partnership with the police, community wardens and other council departments and responsibilities are outlined in **Table 1** below.

Legislation	Relevance to green space	Responsible organisation
Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996	Dog fouling, fines and disposal.	Redditch Borough Council
Crime and Disorder Act 1998	Community safety e.g., anti-social behaviour and sight lines.	Police, Redditch Borough Council & strategic partners
Equality Act 2010	Access and participation for disabled people.	Redditch Borough Council
Occupiers’ Liability Act 1984	Health & safety of visitors.	Redditch Borough Council
Health and Safety Act 1974	Health and safety of visitors and workers.	Redditch Borough Council
Road Traffic Act 1991	Illegal access by motorcyclists.	Police
Environmental Protection Act 1990	Litter, fly tipping and abandoned vehicles.	Redditch Borough Council

Table 1 Legislative Framework

1.1.4 History

Historically the location that now forms Morton Stanley Park was known as Upper Grinsty Farm. The farmhouse was situated near the site of the main car Park off Windmill Drive. The farm was owned by William Morton Stanley (1840 – 1924), a local industrialist and needle maker who owned factories in Redditch. In 1909, when the factories were sold to Kirby, Beard and Co from Birmingham, Morton Stanley became a full-time farmer.

Around 1913, Morton Stanley purchased Upper Grinsty Farm and retired there. During this time, he began to breed Mastiff dogs and won several important championships.

Upon his death in 1924, Morton Stanley gifted his cottage and land to his housekeeper for her lifetime. Following this, he wished for the land "to be used and applied at all times hereafter as a Park for the use of the inhabitants of the Urban district of Redditch and the Parish of Webheath-and to be called the Morton Stanley Park".

Following the housekeeper's death around 1959, the Council passed a resolution stating they would "undertake to defray the capital cost of laying out Upper Grinsty Farm as a public Park if and when this is possible on the lines set out in the Clerk to the Councils Affidavit and to provide the excess cost over and above the funds provided by the Will of maintaining it as such". In 1960 Upper Grinsty Farm and Grinsty Cottage were conveyed to Redditch Urban District Council by Mr Thomas per the Will of William Morton Stanley.

In 1964, Redditch was designated as one of the Mark II New Towns by Sir Keith Joseph. The new town designation was intended to ease the expansion from Birmingham and the West Midlands during the 1960s.

Between 1960 and 1970, the land was mainly used for hay crops. During this time, the pressure for development and a growing need for improvements to the road infrastructure threatened the bequest of William Morton Stanley. In 1972 the then Redditch Urban District Council planned to move the site near Plymouth Road and develop the site for housing with the attached golf course. The Council faced stiff opposition from the swiftly formed Headless Cross Residents Association (HCRA), who successfully defended the Park.

In 1978, Windmill Drive was planned, and with an agreement from the Charities Commission, six acres were taken from Morton Stanley Park for its construction in exchange for 14 acres.

Redditch Development Corporation transferred further land to Redditch Borough Council. The site was extended to Green Lane and the playing fields were constructed.

Following consultation on the draft plan in 1982 and a revised plan was produced in 1984, a final development plan for Morton Stanley Park was drawn in 1986, providing the setting and diversity of habitats we see today.

1.1.5 Biodiversity

Alongside the formal areas designed for play and recreation, Morton Stanley Park provides a rich mosaic of habitats.

There are two ecologically rich ponds located in Zone 1.

The wildflower meadow in Zone 3 is classified as MG5 or unimproved neutral grassland under the National Vegetation Classification (NVC). These grasslands can contain rare or scarce species and provide habitat for communities of macro fungi and myriad bird, mammal and invertebrate species. The central meadow area has a colony of around a 100 to 150 common spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsii*). One of the other meadow areas has an extensive area of Knapweed (*Centaurea spp.*). Since the 1960's the number of MG5 grasslands or

unimproved neutral grassland has decreased dramatically due to drainage, ploughing and re-seeding and from the use of high rates of fertilisers. There are now less than 6,000 ha remaining in England. To maintain MG5 grassland it must be managed as a hay meadow or pasture management using sheep, cattle and horses. This area at Morton Stanley Park is currently cut annually by a local farmer.

Zone 4 is a 10.1 hectares woodland comprising three plantations. In the past volunteers have carried out coppicing in the woodland to provide hazel stakes and heatherings for local hedge laying projects throughout the Borough. The Woodland Coppice is a Local Nature Reserve and Local Wildlife Site under the Redditch Local Plan No. 4. The Woodland Coppice is also a Site of Scientific Interest. The wood is predominantly oak occurring on Acid soil with some trees of unusual interest. The woodland ponds, although not currently managed, were previously recorded as breeding sites for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*).

Ecological survey work has been carried out at the site for amphibians, birds and plants. However, this data is likely out of date now, having been carried out ten years ago. There are references to historic records of frog and toad on-site, however, the exact species are not known. There are no current surveys for these species.

Brown Hairstreak butterflies (*Thecla betulae*) have been recorded on-site regularly and at the last informal recording over 70 eggs were recorded in the blackthorn. The mid-week conservation volunteer group, led by a specialist contractor, carry out work to sustain the species including planting specific species of wildflowers within the meadows.

1.2 Organisation

Morton Stanley is managed and maintained by Redditch Borough Council. The council operates shared services with Bromsgrove District 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.

Borough Of Redditch LPLAN No. 4 Adopted January 2017 (under review)

The Local Plan is based on the vision outlined in the Redditch Sustainable Community Strategy. It is envisaged that by 2030: "Redditch will be successful and vibrant with communities that have access to good job opportunities, good education, good health and are communities that people will be proud to live and work

in". The Council developed 13 objectives to deliver its vision, including maintaining the natural environment and landscape, adapting to climate change, and enhancing cultural and leisure opportunities. Several policies outlined in the Plan are also relevant to the management and maintenance of open spaces; Policies 12, 13 and 14 ensure the protection of existing open space (both designated and incidental) and require the creation of new open space as part of new development. Policy 43 also refers to the protection and enhancement of open space as leisure and tourist attractions.

The Redditch Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

The Redditch Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) brings together public, private, business, community, and voluntary sector representatives. The LSP holds quarterly meetings to update all partners on projects and discuss ideas or concerns, funding opportunities, and national or regional priorities changes. Their purpose is to provide an overview to ensure resources are distributed effectively and the needs of local communities are met. They work towards the vision that "Redditch will be successful and vibrant with communities that have access to good job opportunities, good education, and good health and are communities that people will be proud to live and work in".

Redditch Sport and Physical Activity Strategy 2017 – 2022 Active Redditch

This Strategy sets out the vision "to create a healthy and active community within Redditch by providing access to a range of opportunities which increase levels of participation, reduce health inequalities; enhance health and wellbeing, resulting in an improved quality of life" by 2022. Its purpose is to guide decision-makers, practitioners and agencies involved in sports and physical activity. It covers six themes based on national outcomes and regional priorities. These include creating healthier, more inclusive communities and providing safe spaces to play and be active. Overall, the Strategy forms a tool for partners to undertake future planning, delivering ideas and local initiatives, empowering communities to implement projects within their areas. It seeks to facilitate sharing knowledge between partners to help develop action plans.

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 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 5**. Bromsgrove and Redditch Council's operate a number of shared services.

Figure 6 on page 16 shows the fourth-tier managers who report to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services.

Figure 5 Heads of Service

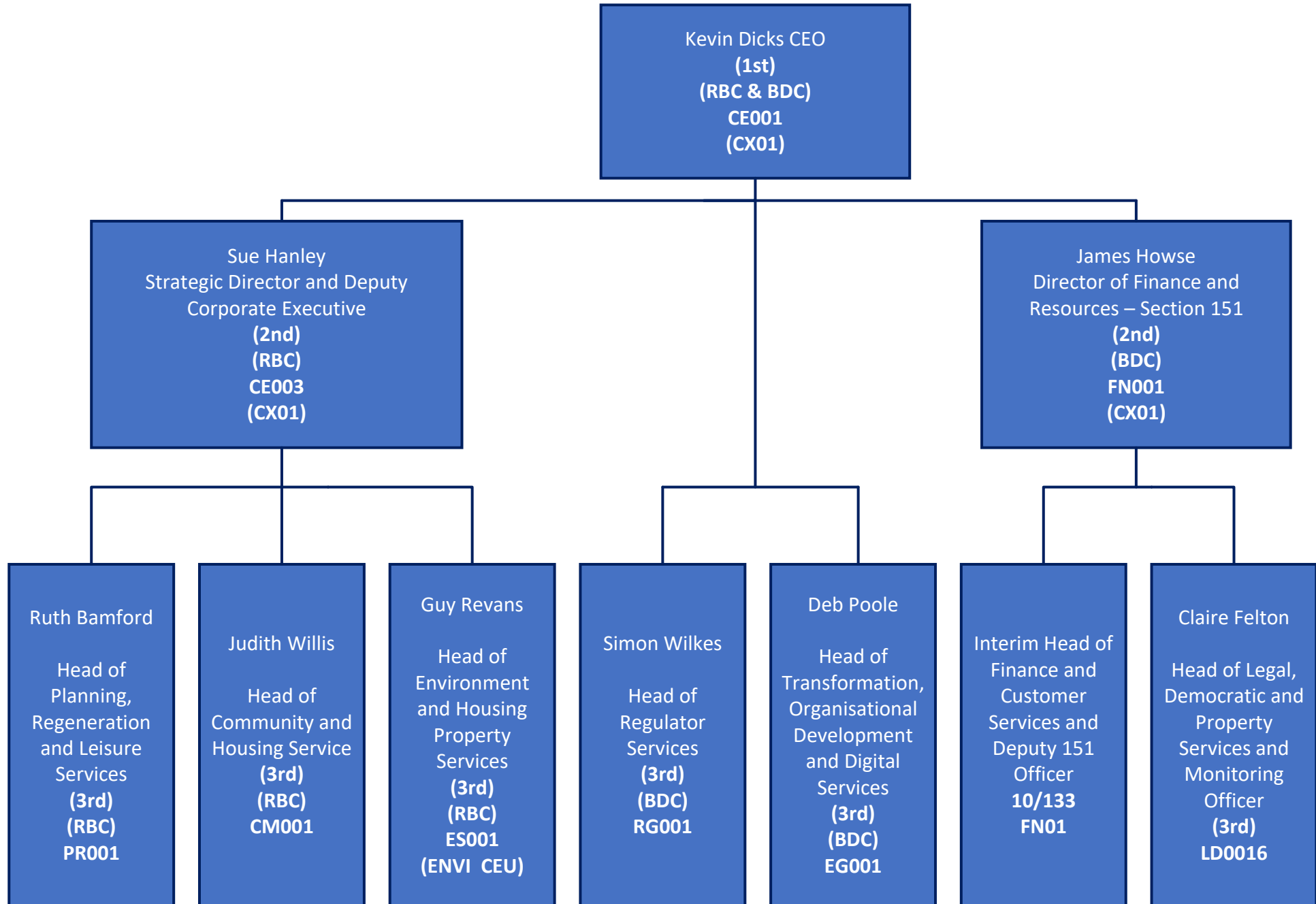
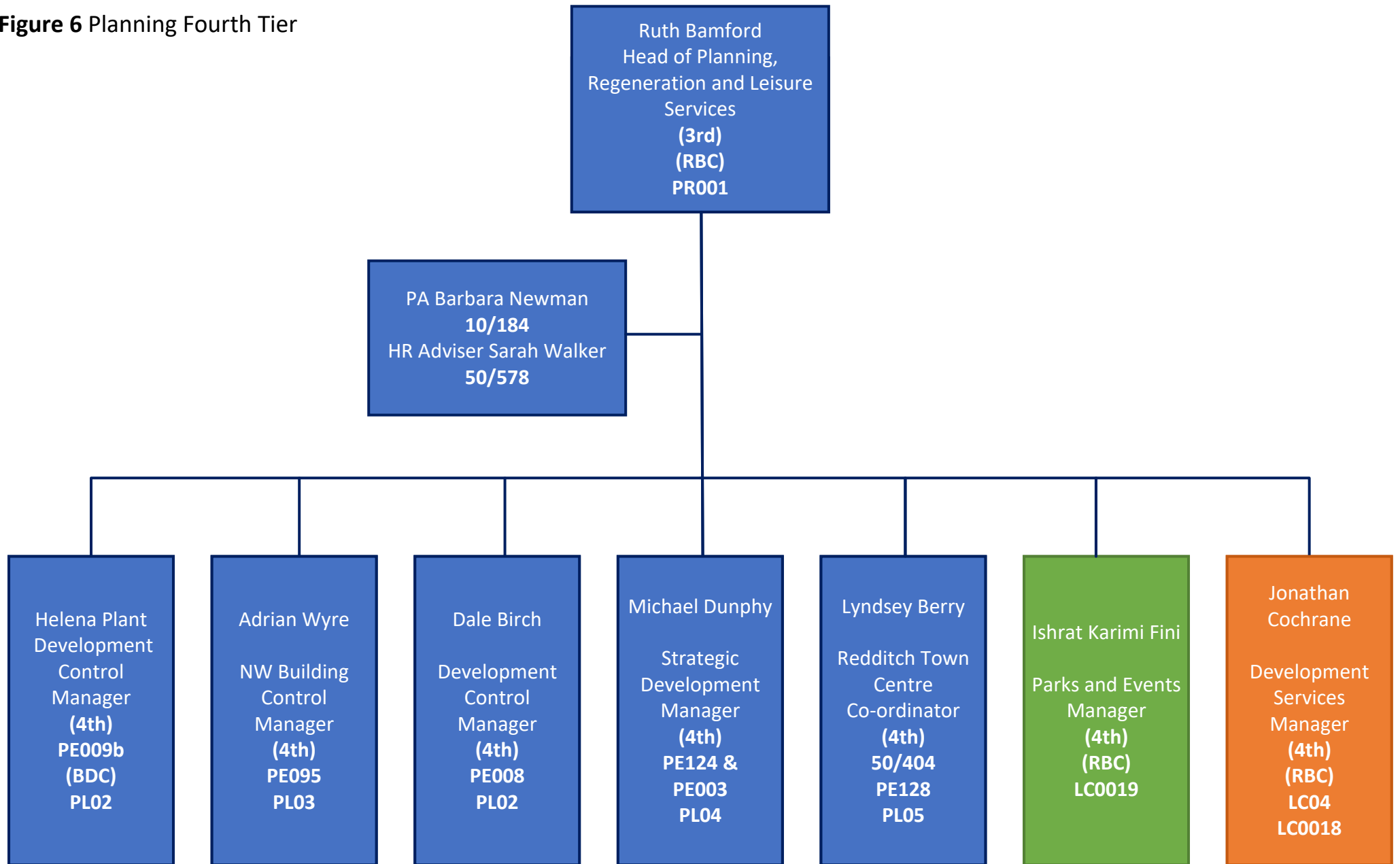


Figure 6 Planning Fourth Tier



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

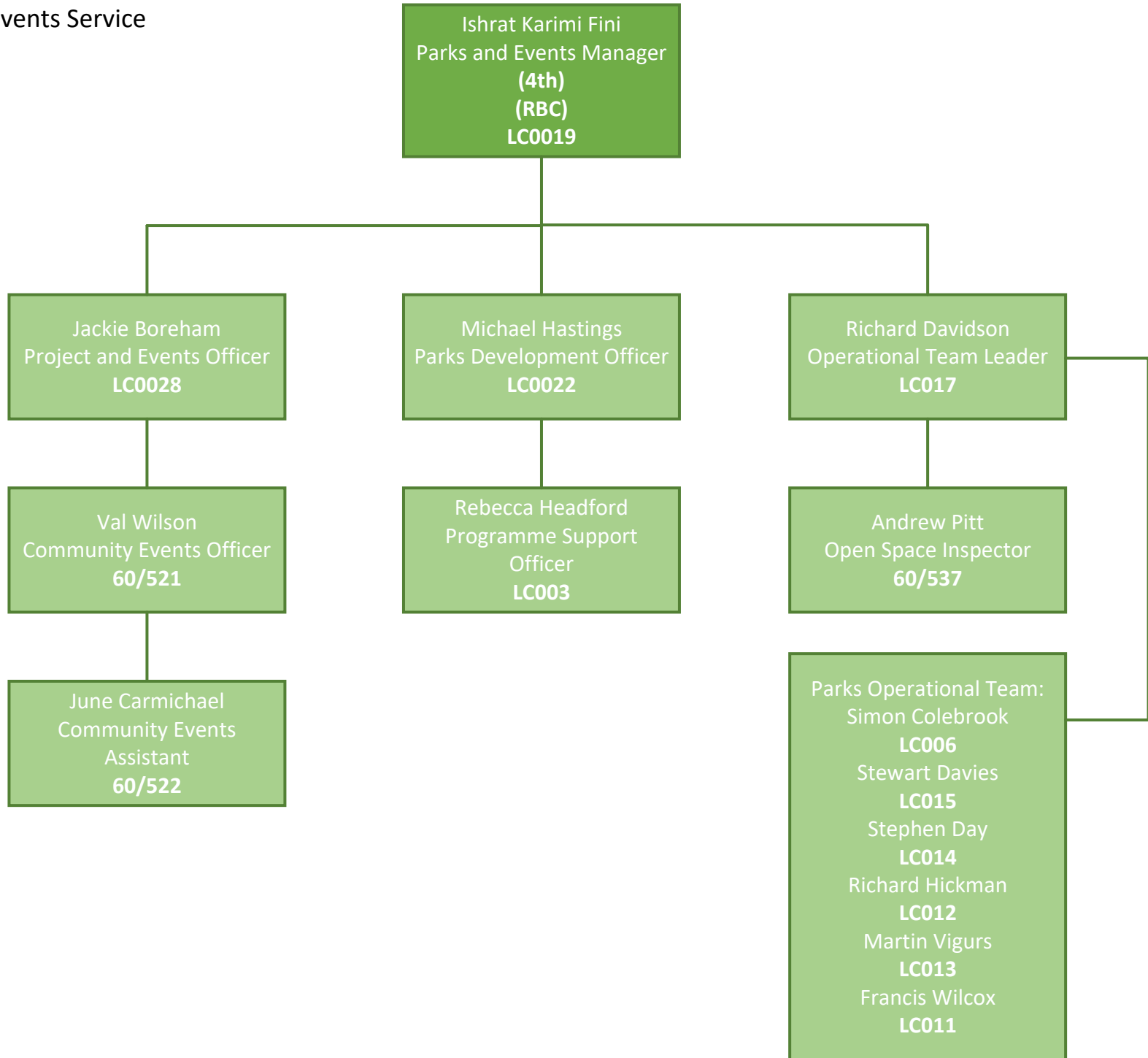
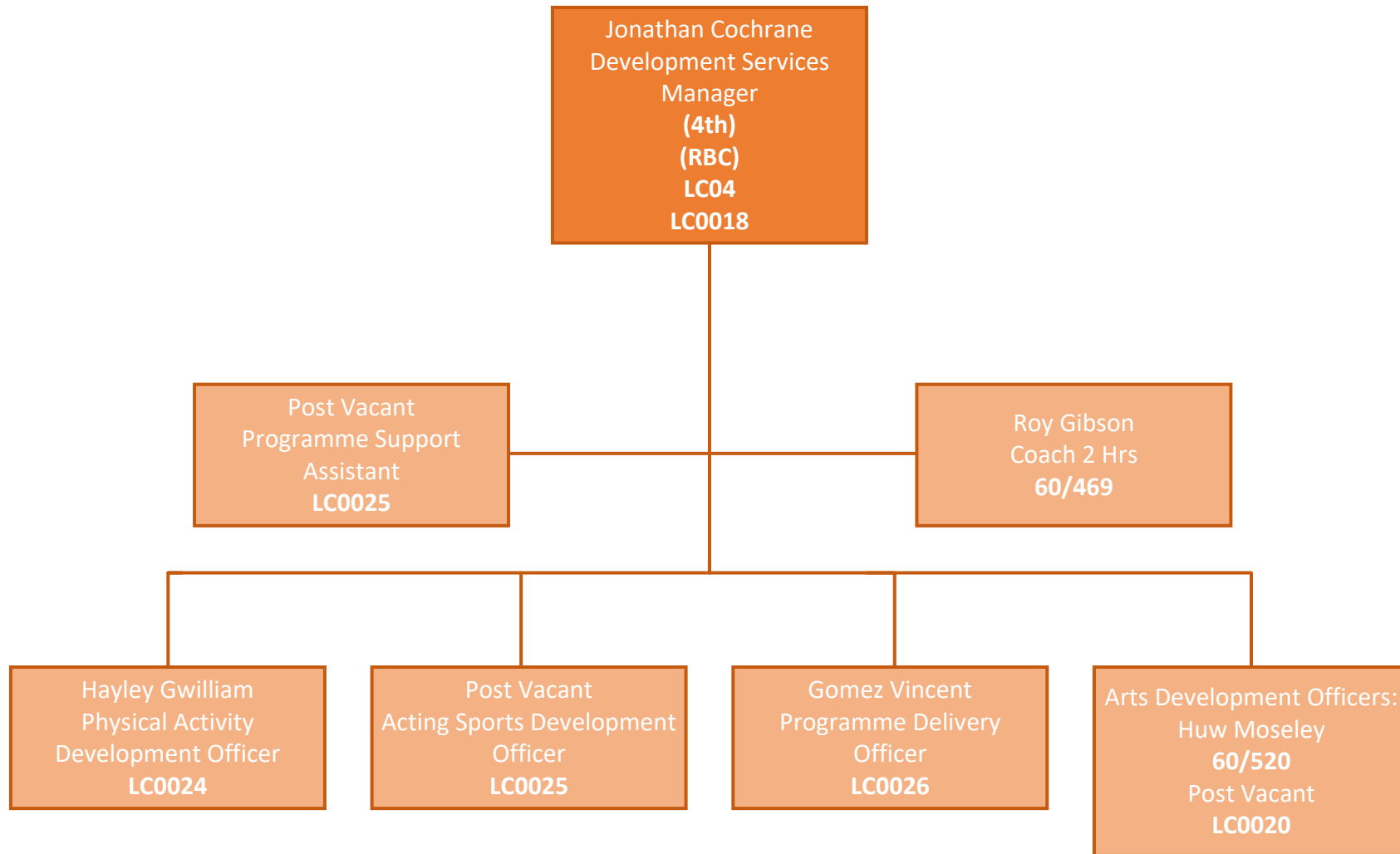


Figure 8 Development Services



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.

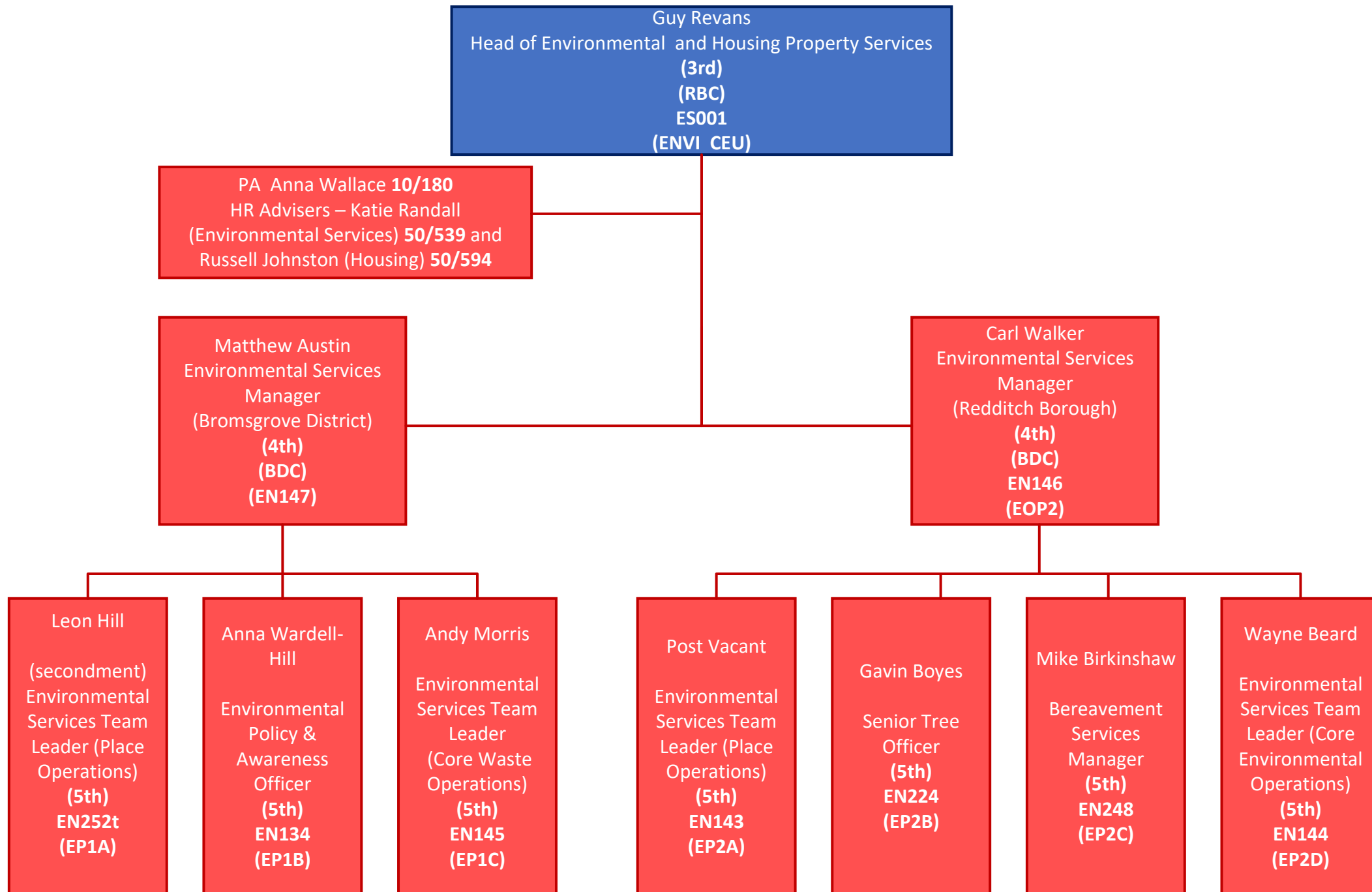
The service area is led by the Head of Environment and Housing Property Services. The Team is divided between two Environmental Services Managers (**Figure 9**).

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



1.2.3 Current management and maintenance arrangements

Operations Team

The Operations Team manages and maintain strategic sites, including Morton Stanley.

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 Morton Stanley is included in **Appendix A Grounds Maintenance Schedule** on page 48.

At present, Redditch Borough Council also commission a Woodland and Forestry Management Agent who advise on best woodland management practises for woodlands and plantations within its ownership. They also liaise on the Council's behalf with third parties as required on woodland management issues to gain appropriate permissions and maximise on any potential sources of grant funding and revenue streams. The three-year contract was awarded to Pryor and Rickett Silviculture in late 2021.

1.3 Community

1.3.1 Demographics of Catchment

Morton Stanley Park is located in West ward, Crabbs Cross Ward and Headless Cross and Oakenshaw Ward.

- Total population = 19,782 (West = 5,967, Crabbs Cross = 5,533, Headless Cross & Oakenshaw = 8,282)
- 49.3% male & 50.7% female

	Wards	Redditch
18 & under	20.6%	23.4%
18 – 24	5.3%	5.9%
25 – 44	22.9%	26.7%
45 – 64	28.7%	25.3%
65 over	22.5%	18.7%

Table 2 Age Profile

The surrounding wards appear to have an older population when compared to the wider borough. Those aged between 45-64 within the ward is 3.4% higher when compared to Redditch and those aged 65+ within the ward is 3.8% higher when compared to Redditch. Whereas, numbers of those aged 44 and under are lower when compared to the wider borough.

An average of 83.4% of 16–64-year-olds are economically active, just below average within Redditch.

Ethnic profile:

- White 93.8%
- White other 2.4%
- Mixed 1.4%
- Asian 1.7%
- Black 0.6%
- Other 0.1%

Just below 4% residents are of BAME ethnicity, significantly lower than BAME population within Redditch. 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 78.8
- Female 84.1

Reflective of average life expectancy within Redditch

17.3% of resident’s day to day activities are limited a lot or a little, reflective of those within Redditch Borough.

The surrounding three wards range in levels of deprivation. Headless Cross & Oakenshaw Ward contains Lower Super Output Areas considered to be in the top 20% & 40% most deprived areas in England according to the

2019 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. However, the remainder West ward & Crabbs Cross have low levels of deprivation, with Lower Super Output Areas in the top 10% most affluent in England.

1.3.2 Current Use

Morton Stanley Park contains a wide range of facilities for the local community. Children and families visit to use the multiple play facilities, which includes provisions for toddlers and juniors and play equipment accessible for disabled children. The nearby picnic area also includes a disabled access picnic bench. There is provision for older children and adults: the skate park facility serves BMX, mountain bikes, skateboards, and inline skating. The risky play area also provides play equipment suitable for juniors and teenagers.

The football pitches in Zone 7 are extensively used for local competitive matches throughout the playing season. It is used by Headless Junior Football Club.

The Park is also popular for informal recreation. Morton Stanley Park is an extremely popular venue for dog walkers and benefits from formal tarmac footpaths throughout the majority of the site. The pathways allow for recreation and exercise in bad weather. Moreover, while the footpaths follow the topographical contours, there are no steps or stiles to negotiate, meaning large sections of paths are relatively level and accessible to those less able.

Other visitors may also visit the Park to enjoy the rich vistas, which include views of the Malvern Hills, or its rich range of habitats, including woodlands and wildflower meadows.

At present Redditch Borough 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 Morton Stanley Park. As

Chart 1 shows, visit frequency dropped during lockdown and has since remained low compared to pre-lockdown levels. Prior to lockdown, around a third of respondents (32.6%) reported visiting Morton Stanley at least monthly, while a further third (35.2%) visited less often and the remaining third (32.2%) never visited. During lockdown, the proportion who never visited doubled to 60.9%, while the proportion of respondents who reported visiting at least monthly dropped to a quarter (25.2%). As of September-October 2020, the proportion visiting at least monthly remained at about a quarter (24.0%) and around half of respondents (52.8%) were not visiting.

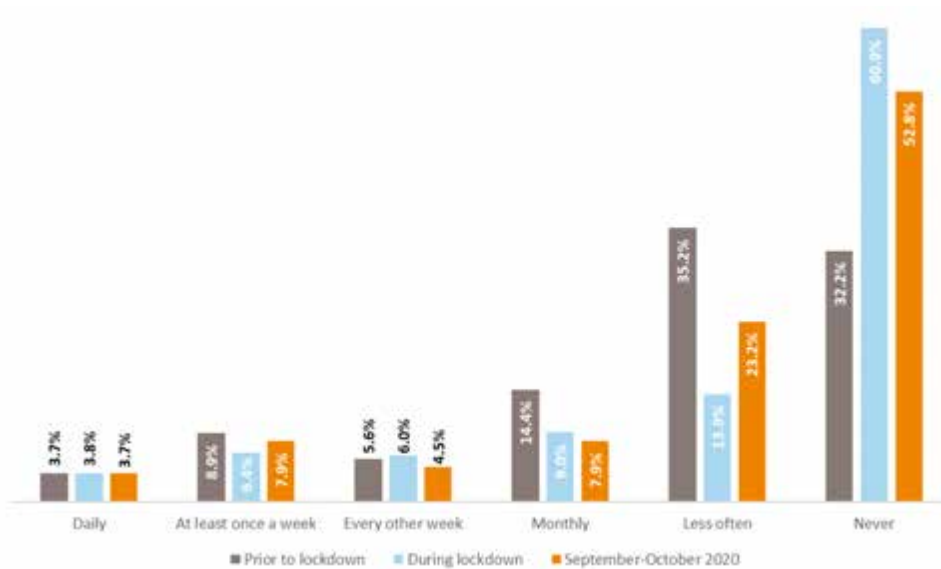


Chart 1 How often do you visited Morton Stanley Park?

1.3.3 Current Events and Activities

Morton Stanley Park is an ideal venue for large-scale events and activities and since 2004 the Park has hosted the annual Morton Stanley Park Fun Day. The event has grown quickly and is firmly embedded in the calendar of summer events within the Borough, and attracts visitors from neighbouring regions.

In 2007 the fun day attracted around 4,000 visitors, who enjoyed live music, attractions, stalls and performances. The fun day aims to celebrate the qualities of Morton Stanley Park and activities are vetted as to their appropriateness to the setting. The Park has played host to falconry displays, Viking battles and encampment, live 50's and 60's music, theatre and pottery workshops, classic vehicles, cycling, tai chi, environmental, conservation and local based stalls alongside working demonstrations and information on Council services.

Across two days in August 2019, Morton Stanley Park hosted the Morton Stanley Festival, attracting around 4,000 visitors on each day.

1.3.4 Current Volunteer Participation

Through the 1970s and early 1980s, the HCRA played an essential part in the securing and identity of Morton Stanley Park. Some of the HCRA members participated in the Friends of Morton Stanley Park. The Friends Group had a strong working relationship with Redditch Borough Council and had over 70 members. The Friends group has now disbanded.

The mid-week Conservation volunteers meet once a week onsite to undertake path clearance, scrub clearance, weeding, planting, fencing and litter picking etc. The group includes around 15 members.

1.3.5 Recent Consultation

As part of the 2020 community consultation, respondents were asked what would improve their experience of Morton Stanley Park (**Chart 2**). With almost half of respondents (47.4%) the most popular improvement was more furniture, such as benches and bins. This was followed by more planting and flower displays (32.3%) and walking routes (27.8%).

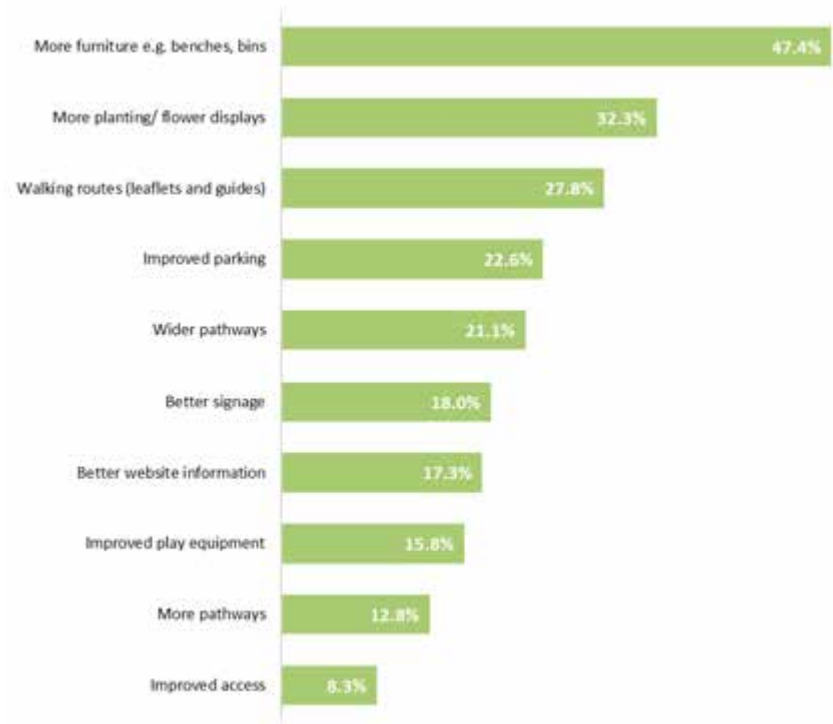


Chart 2 What would improve your experience in our Parks and open spaces?

2 Where do we want to be?

This section sets out an analysis of the current performance 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 (7)

The main entrance to Morton Stanley Park is from the B4504 Windmill Drive. There is welcome signage and free parking with open and clear views into the park. From here there is direct access along a tarmac footpath to the junior play area, proposed café and toilets and into parkland beyond. The entrance at Green Lane also provides free parking with lighting and direct access to the football fields and wider path network.

See plate 1

2.1.2 Good and Safe Access (7)

The network of tarmac paths provides good and safe access throughout the park. However, the recently installed tarmac path to the north of the site is showing some signs of deterioration; it appears that there has been shrinkage beneath which has resulted in surface cracking.

There are a series of steps within the woodland area that are believed to have been installed in the 70s or 80s through Manpower Services Commission scheme.

Some sections of footpaths in the woodland are waterlogged and muddy. It is understood that some woodland path sections have previously been surfaced with crushed stone

See plate 2 images 1,2,3

Recommendations
1. Consider remediation measures to fill the cavities/contact contractor to carry out defect repairs.
2. Survey the condition of the steps in the woodland and carry our repairs as necessary.
3. Further survey of woodland paths needed to consider scope for improvement.

2.1.3 Signage (6)

There is a variety of signage styles throughout the park.

There are wooden welcome signs at the Windmill Drive entrance. The stainless-steel notice boards are in good working order and provide up to date information. There is some internal way marking using finger posts however, these are mostly of timber construction and starting to deteriorate.

The Monarch's Way footpath follows a public right away through the park. There is some signage for navigation. Redditch BC ladder style information boards at the main entrances are in a fair condition, however some of the contact information needs to be updated.

William Morton Stanley information board provides an interesting insight into the history of the park but has become faded and may prove difficult to read.

See plate 1 image 1, plate 2 image 4,

Recommendations

4. Carry out a signage audit and update and repair as necessary.
5. Include information regarding Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife site and SSSI designations at Morton Stanley to highlight the importance of the site for wildlife habitat and the conservation work that is being carried out.
6. Consider adding information regarding the history and course of the Monarch's Way Long Distance Footpath that runs through the centre of the site.

Morton Stanley MMP

Plate 1



Image 1
Entrance from Windmill Drive



Image 2
View into park from Windmill Drive carpark



Image 3
Entrance from Green St



Image 4
View into park from Green St carpark

Morton Stanley MMP

Plate 2



Image 1

Tarmac paths provide access for all abilities



Image 2

Surface cracks in tarmac path



Image 3

Woodland path and steps



Image 4

Information is out of date

2.1.4 Equal Access for All (7)

There is a network of tarmac paths throughout the park which provide excellent access for visitors of all abilities. The car park nearest to the Windmill Drive entrance has designated disabled parking towards the centre of the car park. There are paths throughout the woodland area which are not surfaced. The stepped access from Underwood Close into the woodland provides access for the 'fit and able' visitors to the park.

Recommendations
7. Consider additional disabled parking spaces near the new café.
8. Check that access to the new café is DDA compliant.
9. Check that the condition of the timber stepped access from Underwood Close is acceptable.

2.2 Healthy, Safe and Secure

2.2.1 Appropriate Provision of Quality Facilities and Activities (8)

There is a good provision of facilities for all ages on site. These facilities include junior, senior and teen play/seating areas, paved kick about area, table tennis, volleyball net and skate park. The café and toilet provision are due to be installed and operational in summer 2022.

There are changing facilities at the Green Lane car park. The pavilion is an extensive brick built and concrete tiled structure. It is understood that only one part of it is used by the Headless Cross junior football club and that the Rangers were previously based in this building.

Sports pitches are used by Headless Cross junior football club. There are four pitches for football including; 11 aside, nine aside, seven aside and five aside pitches. The club pay annually for the use of sports pitches and a changing pavilion.

Sports pitches are used for overflow car parking when there are large events at Morton Stanley Park.

Recommendations
10. Consider scope for other uses of the pavilion building
11. Consider scope for further sports and recreation activities/provision at the Green Lane car park area. This could become more of a sports zone within the site
12. There is section 106 available which needs to be spent on sports provision at the park. There may be scope to use this for drainage works on the Boundary ditches between the pitches and the woodland. Improvements to car parking and the pavilion may also be eligible

2.2.2 Safe Equipment and Facilities (7)

Equipment and facilities on site appeared to be well maintained. It was noted that bricks were missing from both low brick walls near to the new café site and open access to the ditch may be a potential hazard to park users.

See plate 3 images 1 and 2

Recommendations

- 13. Carry out repairs to areas of wet pour in senior play area.
- 14. Assess risk of open access to ditch adjacent to footpath.

2.2.3 Personal Security (8)

The wide-open spaces and clear views across the park create a feeling of safety. There is lighting at the Green Lane car park but it is not known whether this is still operational

Recommendations

- 15. Check that lighting at Green Lane car park is functioning as required

2.2.4 Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling (7)

The site is popular with dog walkers. There is a variety of 'no dog fouling' signage around the site. There was no evidence of dog fouling around the site and dog owners observed on site appeared to be behaving responsibly.

Recommendations

- 16. Consolidate dog fouling signage and improve message of no fouling particularly around the wildflower meadow and in ecologically sensitive areas.

2.3 Well Maintained and Clean

2.3.1 Litter and Waste Management (8)

There was little evidence of litter on site. The bins appeared to have been recently emptied and were in a serviceable condition. The paths were clean and free of debris. The car park off Green Lane was generally observed to be free of litter.

2.3.2 Horticultural Maintenance (7)

The shrubs and grass on site appeared to be managed to a reasonable standard.

There are number of drainage ditches on site. There is one that runs between the woodland and the main footpath. Another runs between the woodland and the sports pitches. These flow to the south into Alcocks Brook which then feeds into Swansbrook.

The events area has reasonable drainage although the northern parts have some issues with poor drainage. Vehicle access to the events area is via the main spine footpath that runs east west from Windmill Drive to Green Lane.

The shrub area at the Windmill Lane entrance car park is in need of a redesign to enhance the area and improve the visitor welcome.

See plate 4 image 4

Recommendations
17. Localised clearance works and improvements to the drainage is required/should be considered
18. Consider alternative layout of the site for events eg. locate heavy/large equipment and stages in drier areas to the south of the site
19. Redesign the shrub bed at the Windmill Lane car park eg. restore as grassed area or shrub area providing year round colour and interest.

2.3.3 Arboricultural Maintenance (6)

There was evidence of coppicing in the woodland area. Also, there was evidence of some recent cutting back of oaks (which did not comply with current best practice) along the woodland edges by the council maintenance team.

See plate 3 image 3

Recommendations
20. All arboricultural works should follow current best practice.
21. There is scope for hedge laying and gapping up existing hedges and maintaining these more effectively.

2.3.4 Building and Infrastructure Maintenance (6)

Site furniture has been added over the years and is of various designs and construction. The older litter bins in particular are in poor condition and are rusting and corroding at the base. The council is typically replacing these with plastic bins which are more durable and do not corrode.

There is a long-term plan to remove the dog bins so that in future dog waste will be disposed of in the general waste bins.

See plate 3 image 4

Recommendations
22. Carry out an audit of all park furniture and choose a style that will be durable, accessible and have a colour theme throughout the site.

2.3.5 Equipment Maintenance (8)

The skate park was installed 17 years ago and comprises a tarmac surface with specialist ramps.

The play area has a good range of equipment for different age groups. The zip line has the mechanisms removed over winter to prevent damage to the ground beneath the equipment

Recommendations
23. Consider opportunities for enhancing/upgrading the skate park.

2.4 Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage

2.4.1 Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora (8)

Ecological survey work has been carried out at the site for amphibian species, birds and plants. However, this information is approximately 10 years old. The woodland ponds were recorded as breeding sites for great crested newts.

The woodland ponds have not been managed for some years and the smaller of the two ponds is now quite silted up and is not holding very much water. There was previously a policy of non-intervention but this should now be reviewed.

Brown Hairstreak butterflies have been recorded on site regularly and at the last informal recording over 70 eggs were recorded in the blackthorn.

The meadow areas are cut once a year in July by a local farmer. This was previously funded through a stewardship agreement with DEFRA. This agreement is understood to have expired in 2020 and the work is currently funded directly by the council. The contract includes cutting, then collecting the hay three days later and removing from site. It is understood that the hay crop is used for animal food

The central meadow area has a colony of around a 100 to 150 common spotted orchid. One of the other meadow areas has an extensive area of Knapweed.

Line clearance work has been carried out by western power distribution contractors and they have a legal right to enter the site to maintain a clear route alongside the power cables. It is understood that a six-metre wayleave is required as a minimum.

See plate 4 images 1, 2 and 3

Recommendations
24. Carry out ecological surveys to monitor populations of amphibians, birds and plants and manage habitat accordingly.
25. Continue to carry out rotational cutting of blackthorn to support the populations of Brown Hairstreak butterflies.
26. Consider using the seed hay crop as a seed source for other meadow management works.
27. Continue to manage meadow areas to support the populations of knapweed and common spotted orchid
28. Manage the clearing created beneath the power line as a woodland ride to create diverse and species rich edge habitats. Seek advice from conservation volunteer group/wildlife trust regarding management for target species

2.4.2 Conservation of Landscape Features (6)

It appears that the drainage trench has been cut through historic ridge and furrow.

Recommendations

29. Consider measures to conserve the ridge and furrow landscape feature.

2.4.3 Conservation of Buildings and Structures (N/A)

2.5 Community Involvement

2.5.1 Community Involvement in Management and Development (5)

The mid-week conservation volunteers are managed by a paid coordinator who also takes on some of the management tasks on a self-employed basis.

The conservation volunteers come out once per week for around 40 weeks of the year and each session is typically attended by 10 volunteers. The volunteer group is not constituted although they do own and use their own tools. Many of the volunteers have been involved with the group for over 20 years.

There currently is not an active friends group in this park. There is a local police and crime team (PACT) and it's understood this is a local neighbourhood forum but not one dedicated to looking at Park issues.

2.5.2 Appropriate Provision for Community

There is an event space within the park on the northern side between the play area and the Green Lane car park. This has traditionally hosted events such as the Morton Stanley festival. This was a two-day family orientated event which is free entry. Running costs were offset for charges for concessions and the fairground.

Morton Stanley MMP

Plate 3



Image 1
Wet pour shrinkage



Image 2
Damaged wall and access to ditch



Image 3
Follow current best practice for all tree work



Image 4
Corroded bins

Morton Stanley MMP

Plate 4



Image 1
Pond in woodland



Image 2
Pond near café site



Image 3
Clearing beneath the power line



Image 4
Shrub area at Windmill Drive entrance

2.6 Management

2.6.1 Playing Pitch Strategy

The Playing Pitch Strategy audit carried out in 2021 examined the four football pitches on site.

These include one Adult (11x11), one youth (9x9), one youth (7x7) and one mini (5x5). The audit looked at both the pitch quality and also the built facilities on site to support sports use.

Item	Adult 11x11	Youth 9x9	Youth 7x7	Mini 5x5
Pitch	52.9% standard			
Built facilities	7.7% poor			

All four pitches received the same scores. The auditor noted that Redditch Borough Council “have got s106 money to improve pitches and ancillary facilities”. The pitches were described as “poor to average markings, no goals, long grass, flat and even pitch, poor drainage”.

Recommendations
 30. Carry out improvements to sports pitches as set out in the PPS audit.

2.6.2 Tree Survey

There have been no tree surveys carried out at Morton Stanley. Passive monitoring takes place whenever Council operatives are on site or ad-hoc inspections take place following reports of issues from staff or residents. There are no formalised, scheduled inspections or written reports/surveys.

Recommendations
 31. Carry out a tree survey.

2.6.3 Water Safety Inspections

A Water Safety Inspection was carried out at Morton Stanley in 2018/19. Both the streams and pond were assessed and the risk level was deemed “increased”. The stream required “some fencing work, ditch clearance and possibly general signage...”. The assessment recommended that signage was installed at the ponds and the reeds be cleared out. It also suggested partial fencing be considered.

Recommendations
 32. Ensure the recommendations have been implemented; carry out a new water safety inspection.

2.6.4 Community consultation

When asked what would improve their experience of Morton Stanley, respondents to the 2020 community consultation said more site furniture (47.4%), more planting and flower displays (32.3%) and walking routes (27.8%).

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.

Recommendation		Financial Year	Lead Officer(s)	Partners	Resource implication
A Welcoming Place					
1	Consider remediation measures to fill the cavities/contact contractor to carry out defect repairs.	2022-23	P&EO	Contractors	People/Funding
2	Survey the condition of the steps in the woodland and carry our repairs as necessary.	2022-24	Operational Team	Contractors	People/Funding
3	Further survey of woodland paths needed to consider scope for improvement.	2022-23	Operational Team	Contractors	People/Funding
4	Carry out a signage audit and update and repair as necessary.	2022-23	PDO	Contractors	People/Funding
5	Include information regarding Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife site and SSSI designations at Morton Stanley to highlight the importance of the site for wildlife habitat and the conservation work that is being carried out.	2022-23	PDO and Operational Team	Contractors	People/Funding
6	Consider adding information regarding the history and course of the Monarch's Way Long Distance Footpath that runs through the centre of the site.	2023-24	PDO	Contractors	People/Funding
7	Consider additional disabled parking spaces near the new café.	2023-24	P&EO	Contractors/Planning	People/Funding
8	Check that access to the new café is Equality Act compliant.	2022-23	P&EO	Engineering Officer	People
9	Check that the condition of the timber stepped access from Underwood Close is acceptable.	2022-23	Operational Team	Contractors	People/Funding
Healthy, Safe and Secure					
10	Consider scope for other uses of the pavilion building	2024-25	P&EO and Operational Team	Property Services/Contractors	People/Funding
11	Consider scope for further sports and recreation activities/provision at the Green Lane car park area. This could become more of a sports zone within the site	2024-27	P&EO and Operational Team	Development Services	People/Funding

Recommendation		Financial Year	Lead Officer(s)	Partners	Resource implication
12	There is section 106 available which needs to be spent on sports provision at the park. There may be scope to use this for drainage works on the Boundary ditches between the pitches and the woodland. Improvements to car parking and the pavilion may also be eligible	2023-24	Operational Team and P&EO		
13	Carry out repairs to areas of wet pour in senior play area.	2022	Operational Team	NA	Completed
14	Assess risk of open access to ditch adjacent to footpath.	2022-23	P&EO	Contractors	People/Funding
15	Check that lighting at Green Lane car park is functioning as required	2022-23	PDO	Property Services/Engineering	People
16	Consolidate dog fouling signage and improve message of no fouling particularly around the wildflower meadow and in ecologically sensitive areas.	2023-24	PDO and Operational Team	Contractors	People/Funding
Well Maintained and Clean					
17	Localised clearance works and improvements to the drainage is required/should be considered	2023-24	Operational Team and P&EO	Contractors	Playing Pitch Strategy/People/Funding
18	Consider alternative layout of the site for events eg. locate heavy/large equipment and stages in drier areas to the south of the site	2022-ongoing	P&EO	Contractors/Suppliers/Event Organisers	People/Funding
19	Redesign the shrub bed at the Windmill Lane car park eg. restore as grassed area or shrub area providing year round colour and interest.	2023-24	PDO and Operational Team	Contractors	People/Funding
20	All arboricultural works should follow current best practice.	2022-ongoing	Operational Team	Contractors	People/Funding
21	There is scope for hedge laying and gapping up existing hedges and maintaining these more effectively.	2023-ongoing	Operational Team /PDO	Midweek Conservation Volunteers/Contractors	People/Funding
22	Carry out an audit of all park furniture and choose a style that will be durable, accessible and have a colour theme throughout the site.	2022-2024	Operations Team	Contractors	People / Funding
23	Consider opportunities for enhancing/upgrading the skate park.	2025-26	P&EO	Contractors	People/Funding






Recommendation		Financial Year	Lead Officer(s)	Partners	Resource implication
Biodiversity, Landscape and Heritage					
24	Carry out ecological surveys to monitor populations of amphibians, birds and plants and manage habitat accordingly.	2023-25	PDO	Contractors/Ecologists	People/Funding
25	Continue to carry out rotational cutting of blackthorn to support the populations of Brown Hairstreak butterflies.	2022-ongoing	Operational Team/PDO	Midweek Conservation Volunteers	People/Funding
26	Consider using the seed hay crop as a seed source for other meadow management works.	2022-ongoing	PDO	Midweek Conservation Volunteers	People/Funding
27	Continue to manage meadow areas to support the populations of knapweed and common spotted orchid	2022-ongoing	PDO	Midweek Conservation Volunteers	People/Funding
28	Manage the clearing created beneath the power line as a woodland ride to create diverse and species rich edge habitats. Seek advice from conservation volunteer group/wildlife trust regarding management for target species	2023-25	PDO	Contractors/Ecologists	People/Funding
29	Consider measures to conserve the ridge and furrow landscape feature.	2023-25	PDO	Contractors/Ecologists	People/Funding
Management					
30	Carry out improvements to sports pitches as set out in the PPS audit.	2023-27	Operations Team and P&EO	Contractors	People/Funding
31	Carry out a tree survey.	2023-2027	PDO	Environmental Arboriculture Dept	People/Funding
32	Ensure the recommendations have been implemented; carry out a new water safety inspection.	2022-2027	Operational Team	National Water Safety Bodies /ROSPA	People/Funding

Figure 10 overleaf visually shows the site-based improvements that are set out above.

Morton Stanley Park Management and Maintenance Plan

Figure 10
Morton Stanley Park Masterplan

LEGEND

-  Site boundary
-  Pedestrian access
-  Vehicular access
-  Public Right of Way
-  Main entrance



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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 Grounds Maintenance Schedule

