

TO: EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CULTURE, DELIVERY AND PUBLIC
PROTECTION
27 September 2021

**PARKS AND OPEN SPACES QUALITY IMPROVEMENT – OUTDOOR RECREATION
IMPROVEMENTS AT HORSESHOE LAKE**

Director of Place, Planning and Regeneration

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek approval for the allocation of S106 funding (£35,360) to support improvements to outdoor recreation facilities at Horseshoe Lake.
- 1.2 To confirm which financial contributions secured from developers under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 will be applied to the project. ([ANNEX 1](#)).
- 1.3 If approved, the S106 monies will be used to provide a new natural play space and will enable improvements to facilities at the water sports centre, including better parking, more accessible paths and new outside changing and toilet facilities.
- 1.4 The funding will be split between the Horseshoe Lake Activity Centre and Bracknell Forest Council and used towards providing new accessible toilets and shower facilities (led by watersports provider) and improved car parking and natural play facilities (led by BFC).

2 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 **That £35,360 of S106 contributions (as summarised in [ANNEX 1](#)) are allocated to fund improvements to recreational facilities at Horseshoe Lake, subject to appropriate planning permission being awarded.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 Developer contributions are collected through S106 agreements to support “providing, expanding or improving open space, and/or outdoor recreational facilities (which may include the acquisition and/or improvement of land and/or buildings and/or carrying out or assisting in the carrying out of nature/landscaping conservation projects) within 3 kilometres of the Site.”
- 3.2 The justification for requiring developers to supporting the improvement of open space and outdoor recreational facilities is given in The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

‘8. Promoting healthy and safe communities

98. Access to a network of high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities, and can deliver wider benefits for nature and support efforts to address climate change...’

- 3.3 The improvements deliver key objectives in The Council Plan 2019-2023:
 - *continue to provide easy access to the natural environment*
 - *protect our highly valued green spaces and strategic green gaps*
 - *protect green spaces, the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and maintain strategic gaps between communities*

- *enhance facilities and customer experience at Horseshoe Lake and maintain other council open spaces*

3.4 The borough council has adopted a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy (2012) and the improvements at Horseshoe Lake are in accordance with delivering the following three priorities:

1. Monitor and assess quality standards across parks and open spaces. Manage sites to a high standard; carry out improvement works to sustain and improve quality in line with the Bracknell Forest Council 'Plus One Principle' and relevant national guidance.

8. Enhance outdoor sport and play provision (including ancillary facilities).

11. Encourage greater community involvement and additional partnership working between agencies, groups and organisations.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 It is necessary to improve access to facilities at Horseshoe Lake, to be inclusive to all users, and compliant with the Disability and Discrimination Act. It's mandatory for all establishments and service providers that are open to the public to take reasonable steps provide access for disabled people.

4.2 The site doesn't currently have any play features, which is a missed opportunity to cater for young families. The play area will be sympathetically designed so that it's within the keeping of the natural character of the area.

4.3 The land at Horseshoe Lake is managed as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), to provide an alternative place for recreation away from the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. SANGs funding is already committed to improvements outside this project scope (see 5.3). S106 funding is required to deliver these wider improvements to play and ancillary recreation and sports provision.

4.4 Not using the s106 development monies could result in a failure to mitigate the impact of development and a missed opportunity for *'providing, expanding or improving open space, and/or outdoor recreational facilities.'* It could also lead to funds being returned to the developers if no other qualifying scheme was located through which to deliver enhancements in the time available.

4.5 The wide range of S106 open space and recreation contributions available in the borough have been assessed in order to eliminate those lying outside the distance constraints of the developments as set out in the respective s106 agreements.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1 Horseshoe Lake is a 22-acre (8.9 hectare) open space in Sandhurst. The site consists of natural open space and a lake, which is a popular venue for water sports activities such as open water swimming and sailing.

The lake edge and water sports facility that sits within the wider SANG is well used by residents, however, during school holidays and at weekends the site can become very busy, a point that has been raised by residents.

Many residents experience barriers to enjoying healthy time outdoors. This includes limited access to toilets, seating and shelter; with a need to be more appealing to children and finding enough opportunity to be close to nature, with long walks.

- 5.2 A project to carry out sensitively delivered small-scale enhancements at Horseshoe Lake will address some of these issues, and increase the accessibility of this beautiful open space, whilst protecting its natural character.

Simple upgrades will be made to the existing core functions of the site, including the provision of the lake for water sports and the management of the wider site as a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). The priority is to improve the experience for site users, while protecting the important local wildlife.

The upgrades specifically include:

- formalising the existing non-chargeable parking areas
- enhancing the landscape quality, including the creation of spaces for natural play and discovery
- continuing to make the lake and existing building available to the site-based water sports operator
- Making accessible public toilets available as well as outdoor shower facilities which will be managed by the tenant on site

See our [Horseshoe Lake enhancements page](#) for details of previous improvements.

- 5.3 This report relates to additional improvements required to recreation facilities, which aren't listed in the SANG open space management plan.
- 5.4 The landscape around the buildings will be designed to incorporate opportunities for natural play and discovery while learning about wildlife habitats. These spaces are currently of low biodiversity value, and they will be sympathetically designed so that it's within the keeping of the natural character of the area. They will be free to access and will require very little maintenance.
- 5.5 Improvements to parking at Horseshoe Lake are proposed that aim to support the function of the existing road network by making sure that adequate space is available on the site for people to arrive and easily park their vehicles. There are no new parking charges proposed or limitations on the duration of the stay.

The proposal concentrates on parking provided within the site for water sports which are currently informal. This is intended to be improved, to make sure the spaces for water sports function effectively and to make sure separate access to the SANG is not made difficult when the water sports use is high. To achieve this the site compound, which is used for storage, will be moved, with the space reallocated to accommodate parking. Three new disabled parking bays will be provided within the new parking layout. Relocating the car park and connecting path, which is subject to the relevant planning permission being obtained, will help to improve the flow of visitors to the site.

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This parking area will continue to be managed by the watersports company who run the building, as part of their provision of activities. The main SANG car park is unaffected by the proposals.

- 5.6 There are no existing public toilets and the shower facilities are very outdated. The proposals are to offer outdoor facilities to current users to enable them to enjoy the site in comfort, which will be managed by the watersports company who run the building. The facilities will be made fully accessible, with a hoist for access and adult changing tables provided.
- 5.7 See [ANNEX 3](#) for a site plan of how the new improvements will look. All these enhancements are designed to benefit existing site users rather than attracting new users and will compliment and add to existing facilities.
- 5.8 They will be subject to being awarded planning permission for the new car park and paths and for the outside changing and toilets.
- 5.9 Horseshoe Lake Activity Centre and Bracknell Forest Council will receive an even split of the £35,360 s106 funding if approved with small a proportion of it going to project facilitation costs. Horseshoe Lake Activity Centre is contributing £15,000 of its own funding towards the toilet and shower facilities.
- 5.10 Parks and countryside are consistently rated by residents as one of the things they most like about living in the borough. During the coronavirus pandemic these spaces have become even more important to residents and were vital in helping to maintain their health and wellbeing. It's important that we continue to invest in them to factor in greater use and an increasing population. [See ANNEX 6](#) for the results of a resident's phone survey conducted last year.
- 5.11 S106 funding is secured in accordance with adopted planning policy. Of significance is Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (2005) (ref. section 5.11 Open Space of Public Value and the 'Plus One' Principle whereby works are prioritised towards improving quality of existing open spaces over time.
- 5.12 In addition to being secured to fund quality improvements, there is a requirement that developer contributions are allocated to open spaces capable of serving the development from which the contribution was paid. Available funding usually needs to be allocated to a specific project identified in the s106 agreement, or to a site within a specified distance (usually 3kms) of the contributing development. The contributions to be allocated are set out in [ANNEX 1](#).

6 **ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The allocation of funding proposed in this report complies with the requirements of the s106 agreements.

The approval of the recommendation in the report falls within the decision making remit of officers in consultation with the Executive member pursuant to the Bracknell Forest Council Constitution June 2020 Part 2, section 6 paragraph 6.2 (a)(vi).

Executive Director: Resources

6.2 The financial implications are set out in the report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

6.3 An EIA scoping assessment has been carried out for this project and included in [ANNEX 4](#). There are no negative impacts resulting from the proposed project.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.4 S106 contributions will need to be refunded should they not be allocated in accordance with the respective legal agreement. Providing these new facilities would reduce the future maintenance requirements at Horseshoe Lake while increasing the quality and accessibility of services and represent a cost saving to the borough council.

Assistant Director: Planning

6.5 The proposed improvements to outdoor play and recreation are within the terms of the relevant S106 agreements. This will help to improve the quality and capacity of outdoor leisure in the area, thereby mitigating the impact of the relevant development in this regard.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

7.1 Horseshoe Lake site users
Residents

Representations Received

7.2 Local feedback from a questionnaire carried out in 2019 has been used to shape the enhancements. [See ANNEX 5](#).

See [ANNEX 6](#) for findings from the Coronavirus phone survey of Bracknell Forest residents - July 2020.

Background Papers:

[ANNEX 1: S106 Allocation details and map](#)

[ANNEX 2: Application form](#)

[ANNEX 3: Plan of improvements](#)

[ANNEX 4: EIA Scoping assessment for project](#)

[ANNEX 5: Bracknell Forest Council: Horseshoe Lake Customer Survey, August 2019](#)

[ANNEX 6: Coronavirus phone survey of Bracknell Forest residents, July 2020.](#)

Contact for further information

Rangers Enquiry Line

Email: rangers@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Tel: 01344 354441

Revisions:

V1 02.08.2021

V2 18.08.2021

V3 01/09/2021

V4 09.09.2021

V5 16.09.2021

ANNEX 1 S106 Allocation details and map

YN CODE	PLANNING REF.	PLANNING SITE NAME	WARD	AMOUNT AVAILABLE	AMOUNT TO ALLOCATE	TERMS	SPEND APPLICATION DATE
YN218	00/01099/FUL	14-17 Pinefields Close	Crowthorne	£101.78	£101.78	TBC	N/A
YN444	11/00001/FUL	Iron Duke, 254 High Street, Crowthorne	Crowthorne	£11,703.28	£11,703.28	For providing, expanding or improving open space and/or outdoor recreational facilities within 3km	06/03/2020*
YN470	12/00208/FUL	Land At Whitmore Close, Sandhurst	Owlsmoor	£12,141	£12,141	As above	N/A
YN507	27/10/2015	43 Kings Road, Crowthorne	Crowthorne	£2,020	£2,020	As above	27/10/2022
YN514	11/00705/FUL	7 Scotland Hill, Sandhurst	Little Sandhurst and Wellington	£1,076	£1,076	As above	13/01/2022
YN519	11/00590/FUL	Bellbrae House, 168 High Street, Crowthorne	Crowthorne	£4,280	£4,280	As above	21/07/2022

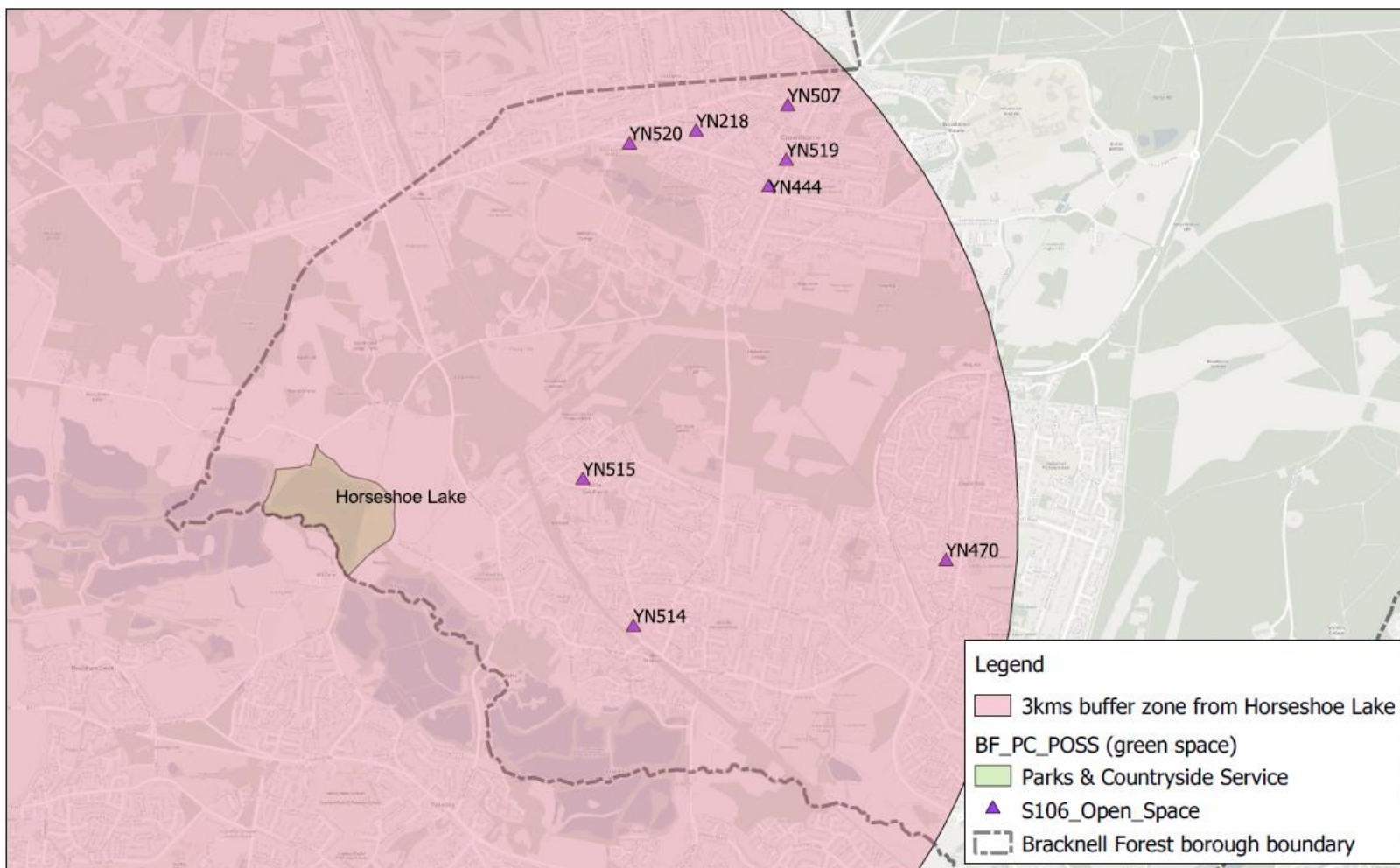
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YN CODE	PLANNING REF.	PLANNING SITE NAME	WARD	AMOUNT AVAILABLE	AMOUNT TO ALLOCATE	TERMS	SPEND APPLICATION DATE
YN515	13/00855/FUL	23 Prince Drive, Sandhurst	Little Sandhurst and Wellington	£1,999.94	£1,999.94	As above	02/03/2023 and 01/03/2024
YN520	13/00667/FUL	Merrowcroft 75 Waterloo Road, Crowthorne (Merrow Court)	Crowthorne	£2,038	£2,038	As above	09/04/2022

Total: £35,360

* Decision to approve a larger scale project at Horseshoe Lake was made by Executive on 12/2/2019. Whilst the project has been significantly scaled down, many of the elements relating to the improvements are continuing through this project. Full decision here: <https://democratic.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?id=2902>

S106 developments within 3kms of Horseshoe Lake



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ANNEX 2: Parks and Countryside Service Application Form



Section	Criteria	Project 7
1: Contact Details	Name	Chris Swatridge
	Contact	Chris Swatridge Chris.Swatridge@bracknell-forest.gov.uk
2: Organisation Information	Name of organisation	Bracknell Forest Council
	Other	
	Department/service area/section	Parks and Countryside Service
	Lead officer	Stephen Chown
	Lead member	Cllr John Harrison
	Lead director	Andrew Hunter
	Decision maker	Cllr John Harrison
	Date of decision	TBC
	Reason Key	
	Making representations	
	Financial impact	
	Consultation carried out?	Yes
	Consultation details	Park visitor questionnaire Covid-19 Residents' Survey 2020.
	Equalities scoping report completed and provided with the application?	Yes – see annex 3
	Document(s) to be considered	
	Background papers	
	Open/exempt?	
	Explanation for exemption	
	Key decision	
	Exempt report	
2: Project Description	Type of project	Blue and Green Infrastructure - Active Open Space of Public Value (Active OSPV)
	Other	

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Section	Criteria	Project 7
	Project Address	Horseshoe Lake Activity Centre Mill Lane Sandhurst Berkshire GU47 8JW
	Accompanying map	Yes – see annex 1
	Parish	Sandhurst
	Ward	Little Sandhurst and Wellington
	POSS reference number	69
	Brief description of scheme	Recreation improvements including new natural play spaces and car park improvements.
	Policy / Strategy Objectives Being Delivered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parks and Open Spaces Strategy • The POSS Study • Council Plan – protecting and enhancing our environment
	Total estimated cost of scheme	£50,360
	Estimated amount of s106 funding required	£35,360
	Existing funding	Yes
	Timeline	The project is underway, with the work to improve natural play spaces and car parking facilities due to take place this year. The plan is to complete the project by 1 April 2022.
	Details of previous improvement projects	The first upgrade to connect the water sport building to mains drainage was completed in the spring of 2020. Further enhancements have been carried out to the footpaths, car parking and wildlife habitats. For further information see our Horseshoe Lake enhancements page .
	Additional information	The updated site open space management plan , which has been approved by Natural England, describes some of the other enhancements, which will maximise the public enjoyment of the SANG's open spaces and minimise the impact on the borough's Special Protection Areas (SPA).
	Project finished?	No.

Lead Contact: Chris Swatridge
Position (Officer / Member): Senior Ranger
Date: 1 August 2021

ANNEX 3: Site plan showing improvements

Current site layout visible on Google maps:

<https://g.page/horseshoelakeactivitycentre?share>

Initial proposed layout of the improvements, which are subject to change. Further plans of the proposed improvements to the car park / path and the toilets and changing facilities will be made available in the subsequent planning applications.



ANNEX 4: Equality Impact Assessment Scoping

Initial Equalities Screening Record Form

Date of Screening: 01.08.2021	Directorate: Place, Planning and Regeneration		Section: Bracknell Forest Council Parks and Countryside Service
1. Activity to be assessed	Quality improvements to outdoor facilities at Horseshoe Lake		
2. What is the activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy/strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Function/procedure <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project <input type="checkbox"/> Review <input type="checkbox"/> Service <input type="checkbox"/> Organisational change		
3. Is it a new or existing activity?	<input type="checkbox"/> New <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Existing		
4. Officer responsible for the screening	Chris Swatridge		
5. Who are the members of the screening team?	Chris Swatridge, Rose Wicks and Carl		
6. What is the purpose of the activity?	The aim is to upgrade outdoor recreation facilities at Horseshoe Lake using s106 developer contributions, in accordance with Planning Obligations SPD (section 5.11) and the BFC Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2012.		
7. Who is the activity designed to benefit/target?	The improvements will benefit all users of the site.		
Protected Characteristics	Please tick yes or no	Is there an impact? What kind of equality impact may there be? Is the impact positive or adverse or is there a potential for both? If the impact is neutral, please give a reason.	What evidence do you have to support this? E.g. equality monitoring data, consultation results, customer satisfaction information etc Please add a narrative to justify your claims around impacts and describe the analysis and interpretation of evidence to support your conclusion as this will inform members decision making, include consultation results/satisfaction information/equality monitoring data
8. Disability Equality – this can include physical, mental health, learning or sensory disabilities including conditions such as dementia.	Y ✓	N	By having fully publicly accessible toilets on site anyone with a disability will be positively affected by the changes. The lack of toilet availability is
			A government report in 2008 recommended the provision of toilets to encourage more visitors to the countryside. It also found that lack of public toilets disproportionately

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			often a barrier for visiting the countryside. A hoist and changing tables are proposed as part of these improvements, to make the facilities fully accessible.	affected disabled visitors. https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmcomloc/636/636.pdf
9. Racial equality	Y	N ✓		
10. Gender equality	Y	N ✓		
11. Sexual orientation equality	Y	N ✓		
12. Gender re-assignment	Y	N ✓		
13. Age equality	Y ✓	N	As above, a lack of toilets could affect elderly visitors more.	Government report found that elderly people need to use the toilet more: https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmcomloc/636/636.pdf
14. Religion and belief equality	Y	N ✓		
15. Pregnancy and maternity equality	Y ✓	N	The lack of toilets also disproportionately affects pregnant women and nursing mothers.	A 2008 government report found that women in these groups “needed to use the toilet more often” https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmcomloc/636/636.pdf
16. Marriage and civil partnership equality	Y	N ✓		
17. Please give details of any other potential impacts on any other group (e.g. those on lower incomes/carers/ex-offenders, armed forces communities) and on				

<p>promoting good community relations.</p>			
<p>18. If an adverse/negative impact has been identified can it be justified on grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group or for any other reason?</p>	N/A		
<p>19. If there is any difference in the impact of the activity when considered for each of the equality groups listed in 8 – 14 above; how significant is the difference in terms of its nature and the number of people likely to be affected?</p>	Yes.		
<p>20. Could the impact constitute unlawful discrimination in relation to any of the Equality Duties?</p>	Y	N ✓	
<p>21. What further information or data is required to better understand the impact? Where and how can that information be obtained?</p>	N/A		
<p>22. On the basis of sections 7 – 17 above is a full impact assessment required?</p>	Y	N ✓	
<p>23. If a full impact assessment is not required; what actions will you take to reduce or remove any potential differential/adverse impact, to further promote equality of opportunity through this activity or to obtain further information or data? Please complete the action plan in full, adding more rows as needed.</p>			
<p>Action</p>	<p>Timescale</p>	<p>Person Responsible</p>	<p>Milestone/Success Criteria</p>
<p>Ensure any signage put in place is clear and accessible to all.</p>	<p>2021-2023</p>	<p>Chris Swatridge</p>	<p>Feedback received from site users.</p>
<p>Paths and car park are designed with accessibility in mind.</p>	<p>2021-2023</p>	<p>Chris Swatridge</p>	<p>As above</p>

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<p>Outside changing facilities and toilets are accessible to all users.</p>	<p>2021-2023</p>	<p>Horseshoe Lake Water Sports Centre</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>24. Which service, business or work plan will these actions be included in?</p>	<p>Parks and Open Spaces Strategy - S106 quality improvement programme, based on the Plus 1 Principle.</p>		
<p>25. Please list the current actions undertaken to advance equality or examples of good practice identified as part of the screening?</p>	<p>When carrying out site quality improvements, the following actions are undertaken to ensure that any new / improved site features are made accessible to all park users:</p> <p>Follow guidance from the Sensory Trust:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice and guidance – Sensory Trust Guides • Developing inclusive communication - Sensory Trust <p>Provide appropriate specifications to contractors, which include the need to adhere to equalities best practice guidelines.</p>		
<p>26. Director's signature.</p>	<p>Signature: Date:</p>		

When complete please send to abby.thomas@bracknell-forest.gov.uk for publication on the Council's website.

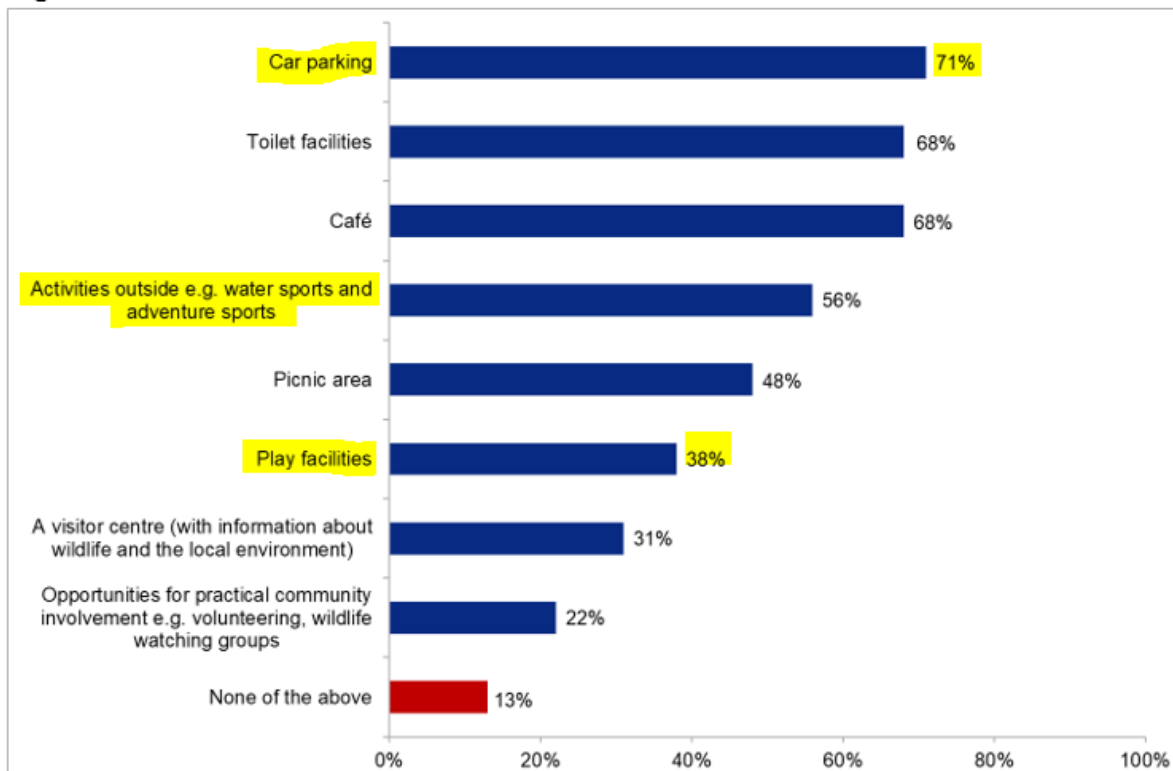
ANNEX 5: Bracknell Forest Council: Horseshoe Lake Customer Survey, August 2019

Use and impact of proposed improvements

13% of the survey respondents, on the day of the interview, said they were visiting the lake for **play** or to have a picnic, and 26% said they have visited the lake for this purpose in the last 12 months. Also, 5% (recorded under ‘other’ responses), said they visited for recreation, to relax and/or to meet friends.

On the day of the interview, 18% of respondents to the survey said they were visiting the lake for **water sport activities** as a participant and 22% as an observer (in total 36% said they participated in and/or observed water sports – some people selected both responses). Also, 5% (recorded under ‘other’ responses) said they were involved in the Triathlon as either a participant, observer or volunteer).

Figure 2.5: Use of new facilities



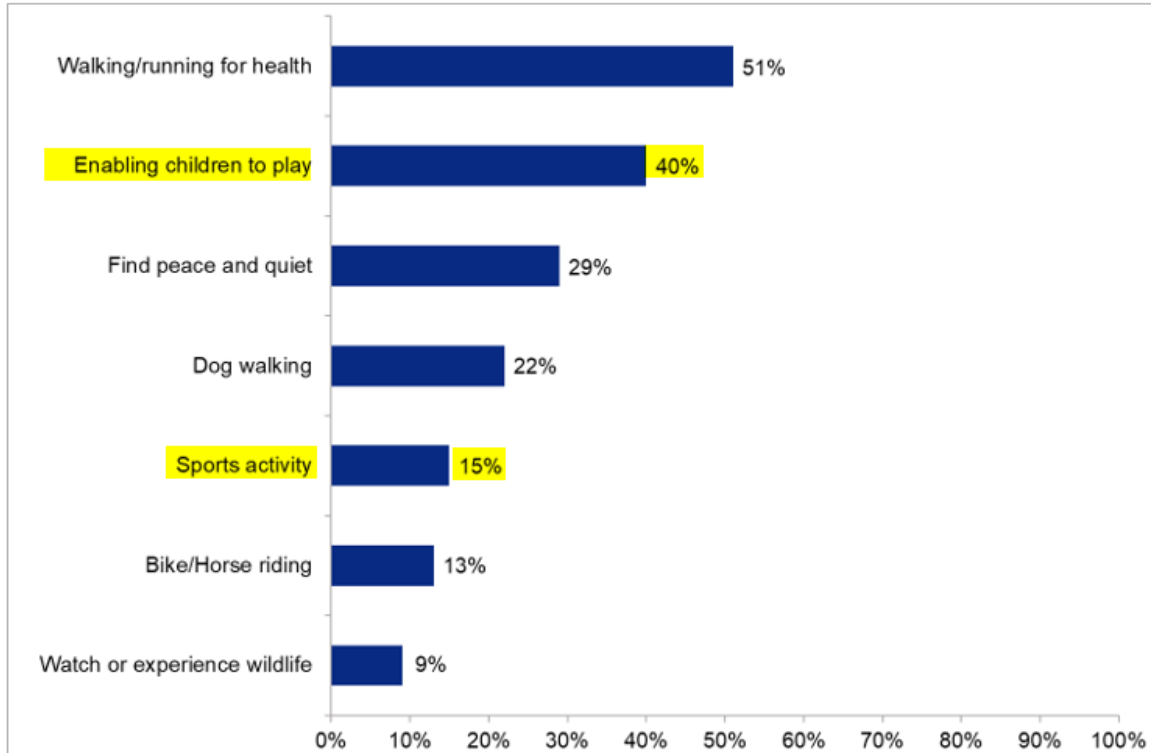
Number of respondents: 204.

Question asked: If the Council was to enhance the existing Horseshoe Lake site with the following facilities, which would you use?

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

A Town Centre Natural Space Survey, also conducted in October 2019, revealed that enabling children to play (40%) was one of the two most cited reasons for visiting natural spaces.

Figure 2.2: Reasons for visiting natural spaces



Number of respondents: 239 (question only asked to respondents that visit natural spaces).

Note: Respondents could select more than one answer.

Question asked: What are the purposes of your visits to natural spaces?

ANNEX 6: Coronavirus phone survey - July 2020

In July 2020 we asked 1,800 residents about their experiences during the coronavirus pandemic through a phone survey.

All responses were confidential and the results are now being used to help us plan for the borough's recovery from coronavirus over the next 3 years.

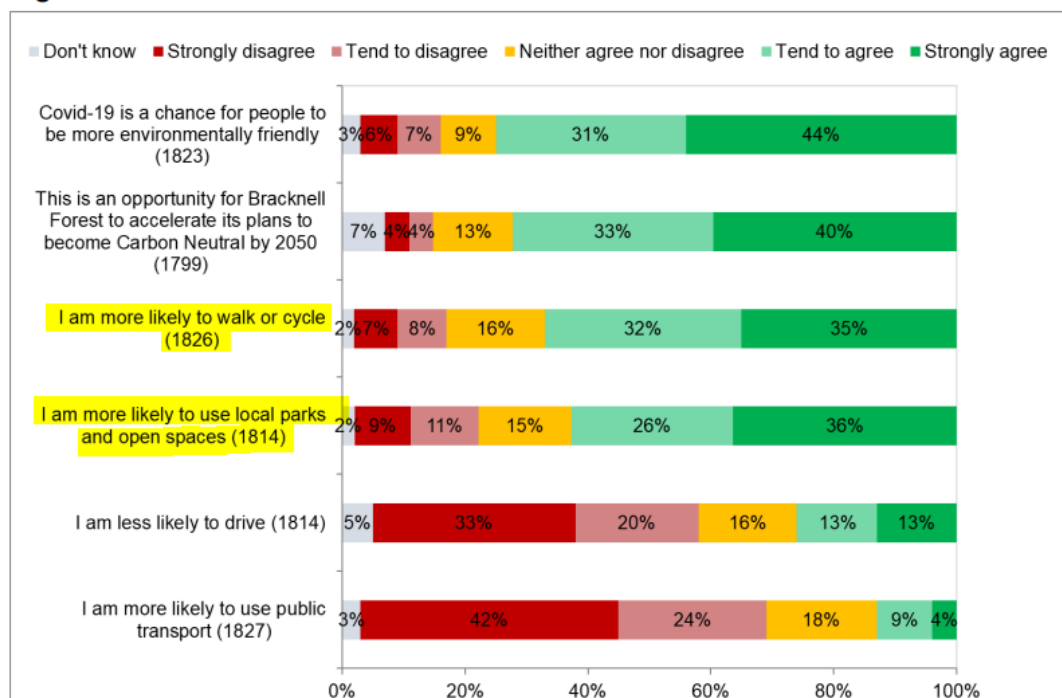
The survey was carried out by independent company Public Perspectives. It included a range of questions on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on residents, their family and the local community. Residents were asked to list their favourite 3 things about living in the borough. The main things residents enjoy are:

- the borough's parks and countryside
- council run sports and leisure facilities
- highways

As part of this survey, residents provided views about accessing healthcare and the support they need to recover from the experience of the pandemic. Around six-in-ten residents spent more time in nature, visiting open spaces since lockdown began on 23 March and about half of residents tried a new form of exercise or exercised more, while smoking and drinking levels remained about the same.

Of the residents surveyed, 67% agreed that they are more likely to walk or cycle and 62% agreed they are more likely to use local parks and open spaces.

Figure 2: The views of residents about travel and the environment in the future



Numbers in brackets are the number of respondents to each statement.

Question: Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about travel and the environment in the future, due to your experience of Covid-19?