WILD PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2012-2022

Wild Park circa 1940

David Larkin, May 2012

Contents

Section 0: Summary

This management plan is for Wild Park which encompasses 56Ha (140 Acres) on the dip slope of the chalk of the South Downs about 4km north of Brighton City centre and is located in the South Downs National Park (see fig 1). It adjoins Hollingbury Golf Course, "Moulsecoomb Home Farm" and "39 Acres" field which together form Hollingbury/Wild Park Local Nature Reserve an important green space surrounded by Hollingbury, Hollingdean, Moulsecoomb and Coldean Housing estates. It is owned by Brighton & Hove Council and consists of a variety of habitats including woodland, scrub and internationally important chalk grassland. As well as being important for wildlife it is also an important recreational resource for a large local population.

Over the last century there has been a gradual loss of chalk grassland as scrub has taken over. Some of this scrub has now succeeded to woodland, although large amounts of scrub date from the 1950's. Management of this site should recognise the importance of the semi natural grassland habitat and seek to redress the declines of the last century. In doing this it should not try to return to an unwooded landscape but strive to achieve a diverse mix of chalk grassland amongst a mosaic of other habitats.

Chalk Grassland (lowland calcareous grassland) is the only habitat within the site listed in Annex 1 of the EC Habitats Directive as being of international nature conservation importance[1]. The first priority for the management of this site therefore is to improve the condition/extent of the chalk grassland which is in line with the Forestry Commissions policy on converting woodland to open land[2]. However Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland also occurs on the site and is a UK Priority Habitat and both these habitats are included in the draft Brighton and Hove Local Biodiversity Action Plan, together with dew ponds, which are also present at Wild Park. Maintaining these habitats together creates opportunities for species which move across habitats and therefore promoting a diverse habitat mosaic is also a management priority.

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[1] See http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/Publications/JNCC312/UK_habitat_list.asp

[2] See "When to convert woods and forests to open habitat in England": Government policy March 2010 http://www.forestry.gov.uk/pdf/eng-oh-policy-march2010.pdf/$FILE/eng-oh-policy-march2010.pdf

Several individual species are also identified as priorities and have their own UK BAP species action plans and Wild Park is also home to several species listed in the Brighton and Hove Local Biodiversity Action Plan. For further information see Appendix 1

A major consultation was undertaken towards the end of 2010. This management plan is based on the outcomes of this consultation and will be made available on line and all those have asked for a copy will be made aware of its availability. Other groups such as the South Downs National Park, Natural England, The Forestry Commission, The RSPB and Sussex Wildlife Trust have also been asked for their comments.

Section 1: General Information

Introduction:

This plan supersedes the previous 1997 Hollingbury/Wild Park Management Plan. It covers a ten year period from 2012 to 2022 to coincide with the main period of the Higher Level Stewardship[3] agreement which the council entered into in 2011. The agreement has a break clause in 2016 at which point this management plan should be reviewed to see if it is achieving its aims.

The management plan follows extensive local consultation where the overarching management principals detailed in Section 4, on which this plan is based, received support from 69% or more of those who responded (see appendix 4).

Location:

Wild Park is situated about 4km north of Brighton City centre at grid reference TQ 328 079. There is vehicle access from the A270 Lewes Road and pedestrian access across much of its unfenced boundary. The location, boundary and main access points are shown in the following maps.

[3] Environmental Stewardship is an agri-environment scheme that provides funding to farmers and other land managers in England to deliver effective environmental management on their land. Higher Level Stewardship is a part of Environmental Stewardship which aims to deliver significant additional environmental benefits in priority areas involving more complex environmental management.

Figure 1: Location

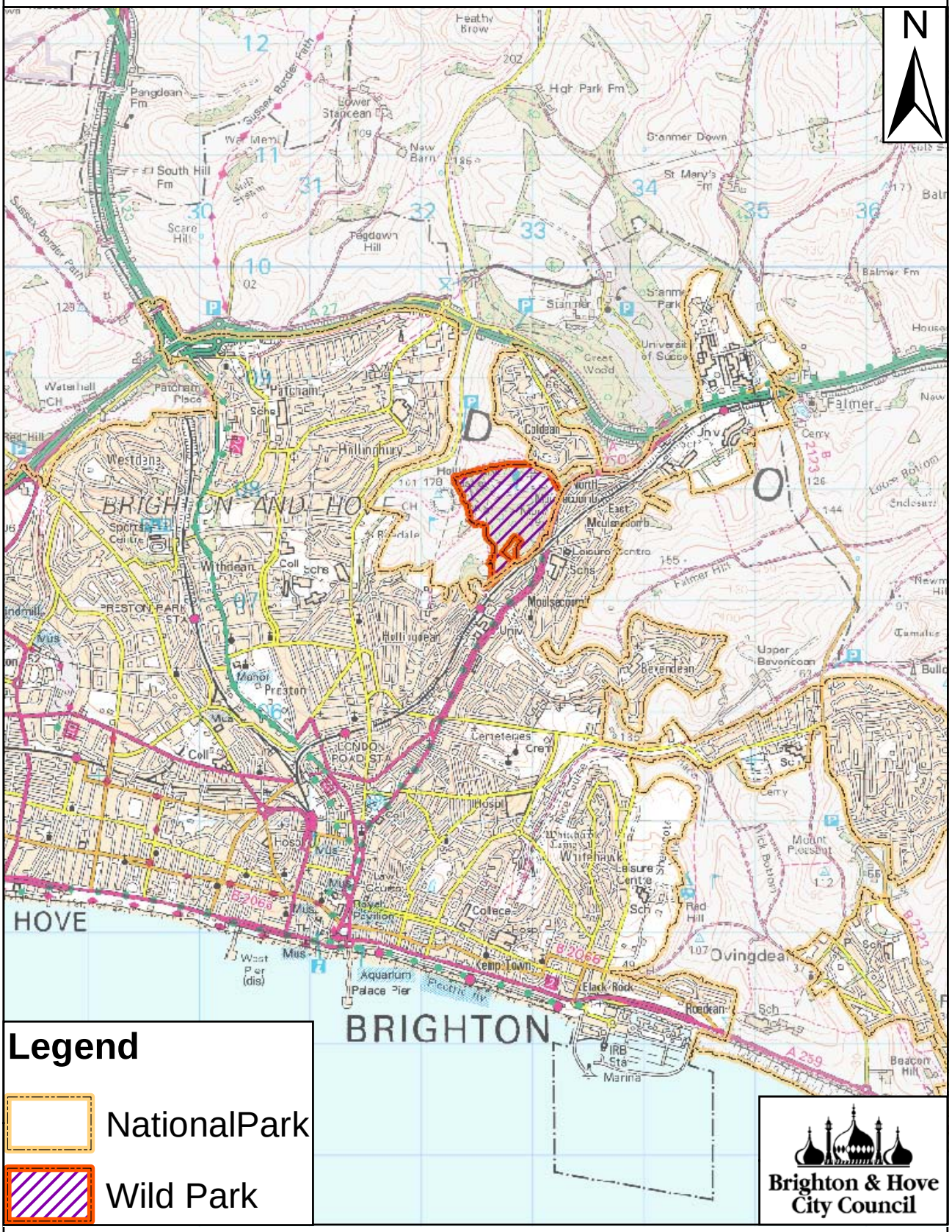

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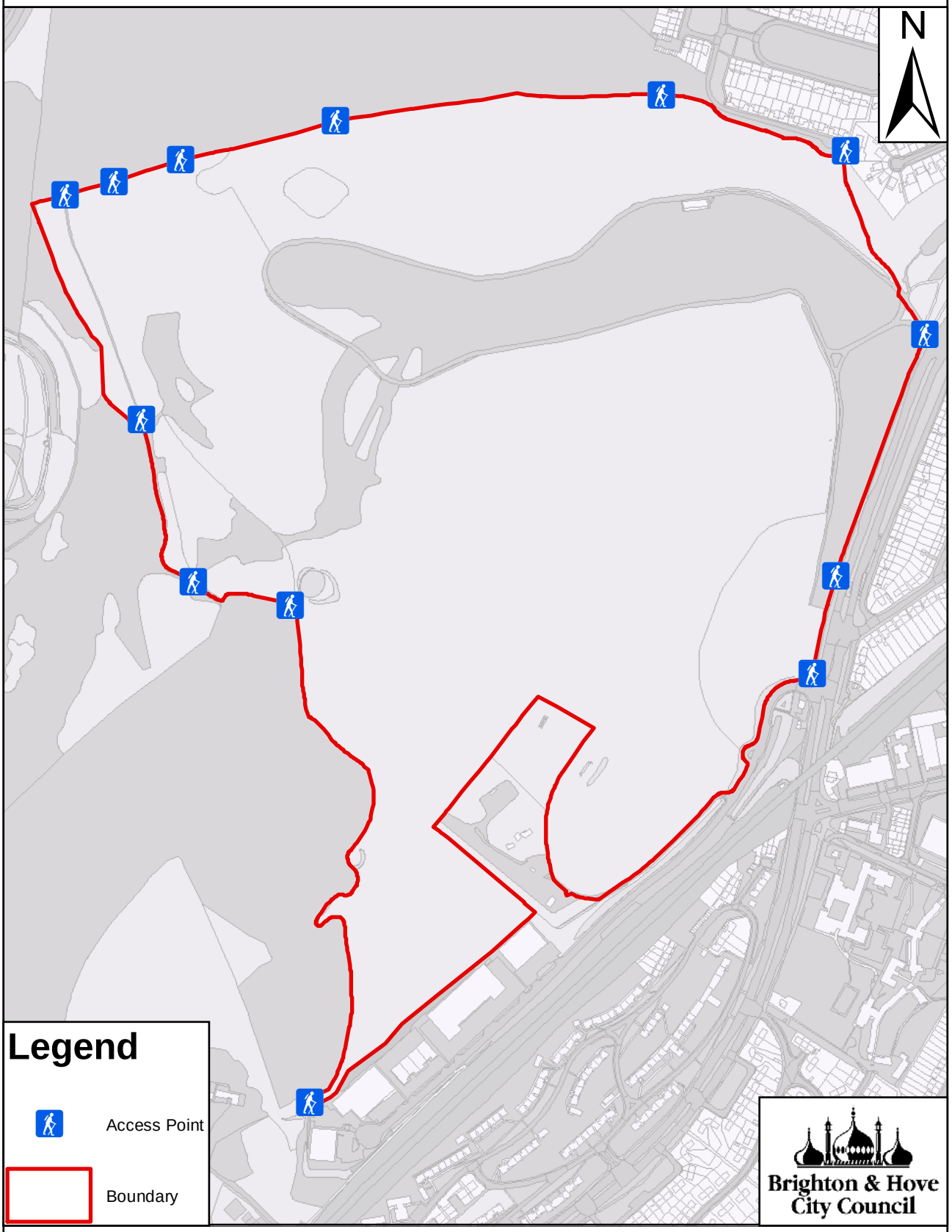
Figure 2: Boundary and Access Points



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Status:
Wild Park lies outside the defined limit of the Built Up Area defined in the Brighton and Hove Local Plan 2005. Countryside protection policies apply here and there is a presumption against development, except in certain circumstances (Policy ENV. 2). It is in the South Downs National Park and is protected by policy ENV. 54 which states that development will normally be refused. Wild Park is also a proposed Local Nature Reserve and is therefore protected from development under policy NC3 of the Brighton and Hove Local Plan 2005.
Wild Park is wholly within the South Downs National Park and the South Downs Way Ahead Nature Improvement Area (NIA). As such it benefits from both statutory and planning policy protection and qualifies for NIA funding from Natural England for chalk grassland recreation.

Tenure and Interests:
The site is owned by Brighton & Hove City Council. Part of the pavilion is rented to the café and the understory is used by the football club for storage

Section 2: Environmental Information

Physical:
The reserve is on the dip slope of the South Downs and is underlain by upper and lower chalk. The soils are typical chalk rendzinas (a thin grassland soil overlying chalk bedrock). Moulsecoomb pit is a large dry valley oriented east/west, however the valley bottom has been re-landscaped.
The South Downs Integrated Landscape Assessment classifies Wild Park as part of the Adur to Ouse Open Downs[1].

> ***Perceptual/Experiential Landscape***
> *The sense of scale in this landscape is vast owing to the expansive, rolling topography, the extremely large fields, and the relatively low presence of vertical features which reveals expansive open skies. These large skies ensure that weather conditions are a dominant influence and create a dynamic, landscape varying with the seasons. The rolling topography gives rise to constantly changing views. Field boundaries, that are geometric in form, appear to curve as they cross the undulating landscape. The general absence of hedgerows and woodland creates a strong sense of openness and exposure – this is particularly evident on the coast where the onshore winds have sculpted hawthorns into contorted, stunted shapes. However, in other inland areas beech clumps create focal features in the open landscape. This is a homogenous, organised landscape as a result of the consistent scale and form of the rolling topography and field patterns. The low density of roads, settlement and people combined with the long views and expansive, elevated character contribute to the perception of a still and remote landscape* South Downs Integrated Landscape Assessment

[1] South Downs Integrated Landscape Character Assessment
http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/integrated-landscape-character-assessment

Broad Management Objective and Landscape Guidelines

- Maintain and increase the species diversity of areas of semi-improved grassland, which act as a reservoir for more common chalk downland species.
- Protect and continue to manage (graze) the existing chalk grassland and chalk – heath sites.
- Manage areas of scrub on steeper slopes to vary the age and species structure and to enhance the distinctive landform.

South Downs Integrated Landscape Assessment

Biological:

Habitat Type	Area (Ha)	Percentage
Calcareous grassland - unimproved	1.9	3.4%
Woodland	14.4	25.4%
Pond	0.1	0.2%
Amenity Grass	6	10.6%
Scrub - dense	23.6	41.7%
Scrub - diverse	3.1	5.5%
Other habitat	2.5	4.4%
Calcareous grassland - semi-improved	5	8.8%

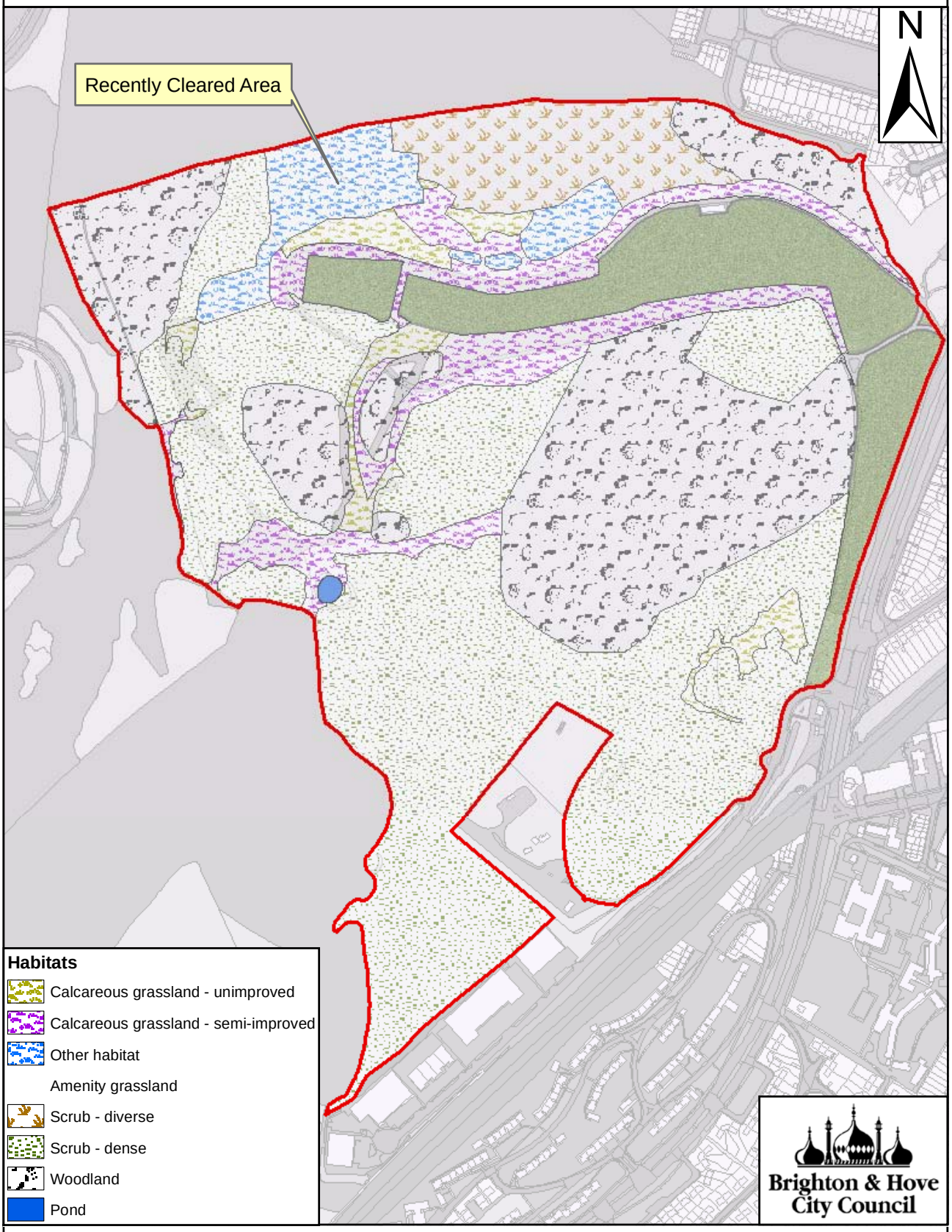
Calcareous grassland – unimproved
Horseshoe Vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*), Rock Rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*), Salad Burnett (*Sanguisorba minor*), Dropwort (*Filipendula vulgaris*), Betony (*Stachys officinalis*), Birds Foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Milkwort (*Polygala vulgaris*), Adonis Blue (*Lysandra bellargus*), Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus malvae*), Dingy Skipper (*Erynnis tages*), Purse Web Spider (*Atypus affinis*), Labyrinth Spider (Agelena labyrinthica), Frog Orchid (*Coeloglossum viride*)
Non native species - Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), Garden Privet (Ligustrum ovalifolium), Aquilegia (*Aquilegia vulgaris)*

Woodland
Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) /Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) secondary woodland with some Oak (Quercus robur) in places. There is a colony of Purple Hairstreak butterflies (*Quercusia quercus*) towards the top of the north facing slope.

Pond
Restored in 1990's, little wildlife due to the turbidity caused by frequent dog activity

Amenity Grass
Little of wildlife interest

Figure 3: Habitats



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Scrub – dense
Large stands of even age Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) monoculture

Scrub - diverse
Scrub mixed in age and species type, mainly Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with Gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and Wayfaring Tree (*Viburnum lantana*), some Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Oak (Quercus robur) in places.

Other habitat
Includes areas cleared over the last 5 years. There are many species of disturbed ground, thistles (cirsium arvense & vulgare), nettles (Urtica dioica), rosebay willowherb (Epilobium angustifolium) and hemp agrimony (Eupatorium cannabinum), and strawberry (Fragaria vesca). Some chalk grassland remnants exist from before it scrubbed over, which contain Rock Rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*), Horseshoe Vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*), etc.
Non native species – Holm Oak (*Quercus ilex*)

Calcareous grassland - semi-improved
Some areas are quite species rich with the banks around the playing fields at the western end containing Thyme (*Thymus spp*), Rockrose (*Helianthemum nummularium*), Birds foot Trefoil (*Lotus spp*), Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*).

Cultural:
Wild Park is downland (as shown on the 1842 tithe map) which was then fenced as a rabbit warren some time before 1900. The South Downs (east of the Adur) were one of the main wool producing regions of the country in the Middle Ages; a period when wool was the most important export commodity produced by the country. This long stable management led to a highly diverse semi natural habitat, chalk grassland. The decline of the sheep industry has been mirrored by a decline in the ancient sheep pasture or chalk grassland. This decline, coupled with the fact that the ancient sheep pasture is one of the United Kingdoms most diverse habitats, has led to it being listed as a priority habitat under the UK's BAP.

The switch from sheep to rabbit grazing would have preserved the open downland nature but the acquisition by the then Brighton Council in 1925 and the cessation of this managed grazing led to the start of a long decline in the condition and extent of the grassland which was slowly replaced by scrub and then woodland (as can be seen by comparing the aerial photographs in Figure 3).

This decline was accentuated in the 1950's when a myxomatosis outbreak decimated the rabbit population, which radically reduced the amount of unmanaged grazing.

When the site was acquired by the council in 1925 it was described as "*A glorious stretch of wild, almost rugged downland with deep valleys and furze clad heights*". This led to the adoption of the name "Wild Park" for the newly created park but the erroneous belief that this was a natural landscape led to the subsequent cessation of managed grazing and its slow decline.

Figure 4: Wild Park From The Air

1946

1970

2000

Recognition of the need for management to maintain grasslands (in the absence of large wild herbivores which were hunted to extinction by man in prehistory) led first to small scale scrub clearance and mowing in the 1980's followed by the reintroduction of managed grazing in the winter of 2008/2009.

In addition since the council's acquisition, its dedication as public open space, and the building of the adjacent housing estates the use of Wild Park for recreation has greatly increased, in particular its use for dog walking.

Future management of Wild Park needs to reflect the importance of its historical sheep pasture as well as its more recent importance for recreation.

In October 2010 a newsletter (Appendix 2) compiled with the help of a focus group representing a variety of interests was sent out to all houses within about 15 minutes walk (about 16,000 people) outlining the current position and inviting people to a series of 4 workshops run by an independent facilitator to establish a common understanding of what is important about Wild Park, the principals for its management, and to plan for the future. A further newsletter (Appendix 3) was sent out with the same distribution as above reporting on the results of the consultation outlining draft principals for the management of the park as well as proposed short, medium and long term proposals. People were invited to attend local displays and to comment on the proposals either at the roadshows or on line. The results of the views expressed on the proposals (appendix 4) were then made available to all those who had asked for them and provided contact details. The writing of this management plan has endeavoured to follow the consensus of these views.

Section 3: Evaluation

Physical

The sense of seclusion provided by the coomb is an important counterpoint to the surrounding housing estates.

Biodiversity

Size:
Wild Park is an unusually large area of undeveloped and non intensively managed land close to the city centre. It contains a significant area of chalk grassland and large areas of scrub and woodland. The south-facing chalk grassland slopes at Wild Park are unusual in the context of the South Downs, where most of the remaining fragments of species-rich grassland are on north-facing slopes. Slope aspect has an important affect on the microclimate and therefore the species composition of the habitat. Over the past century the area of chalk grassland has significantly diminished at the expense of scrub and woodland.

Structure and condition:

Feature	Structure	Condition	Notes
Calcareous grassland - unimproved	Short turf with much invading scrub	Poor	The area of chalk grassland has been steadily declining over the last few decades. What remains has a high scrub content which will rapidly take over without positive management
Woodland	Species poor secondary woodland with little herb layer, although in places there are large stands of Early Purple orchids	Poor	Difficult to increase species/structural diversity without felling and replanting
Pond	Clay with liner	Poor	Holds water well, but excessive use by dogs prevents establishment of any plants and erodes the clay liner
Amenity Grass	Uniform		
Scrub	Uniform even age hawthorn monoculture	Poor	Much of the scrub emanates from the 1950's rabbit decline due to myxomatosis
Diverse Scrub	Variable with herb, shrub and canopy elements	Good	Will need management to prevent succession to ash/sycamore woodland. In some places is expanding at expense of chalk grassland
Other Habitat			Recently cleared areas are dominated by species that benefit from disturbance. One area cleared 10-15 years ago is becoming less dominated by successional species
Calcareous grassland – semi improved	Short to long grass with some scrub coming in	Poor to good	Much has the potential to be restored to chalk grassland, but can be important in its own right. Some recolonisation by Horseshoe Vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*)

Diversity:

Chalk grassland is one of the most diverse habitats in the UK, which in part is responsible for its listing as a priority BAP habitat. It supports a wide range of plants which in turn support a wide range of invertebrates. It is also important for bryophytes and fungi. Some areas of scrub are also quite diverse, particularly on the south facing slope.

Species occurring Wild Park that are listed in the Brighton and Hove local biodiversity action plan:

Taxon	English Name
Bat	Bats have been recorded feeding in Wild Park but not to species level. There is a possible roost in the pavilion.
Beetle	Glow-worm, Lampyris noctiluca.
Bird	Bullfinch, Pyrrhula pyrrhula subsp. Pileata. Corn Bunting, Emberiza calandra subsp. calandra/clanceyi*. Grey Partridge, Perdix perdix*. Lapwing, Vanellus vanellus* Linnet, Carduelis cannabina subsp. autochthona/cannabina* Sky Lark, Alauda arvensis subsp. Arvensis*. Song Thrush, Turdus philomelos subsp. Clarkei. Yellowhammer, Emberiza citronella*.
Butterfly	Adonis Blue, Lysandra bellargus. Chalkhill Blue, Lysandra coridon. Dingy Skipper, Erynnis tages subsp. Tages. Grizzled Skipper, Pyrgus malvae. Silver Spotted Skipper, Hesperia comma. Small Blue, Cupido minimus. Small Heath, Coenonympha pamphilus. Wall, Lasiommata megera. White-letter Hairstreak, Satyrium w-album.
Fly	Phantom or Wasp Hoverfly, Doros profuges.
Moth	Chalk Carpet, Scotopteryx bipunctaria. Scarce Forester, Adscita globulaiae.
Reptile	Common Lizard, Zootoca vivipara. Slow-worm, Anguis fragilis.
Reptile	
Spider	Purseweb spider, Atypus affinis.
Vascular Plant	Fine-leaved Fumitory, Fumaria parviflora. Frog Orchid Coeloglossum viride. Henbane, Hyoscyamus niger. Round-headed Rampion, Phyteuma orbiculare.

* species more likely to primarily be associated with adjacent habitats although may use scrub edge for nesting

More details in Appendix 1

Position in a wider context:
Wild Park forms an important “green lung” being part of a large undeveloped area of countryside projecting into the city. It is connected to the wider countryside (and the rest of the South Downs National Park) by a narrow neck of land containing Ditchling Road which runs north to Stanmer Park via the A27 Brighton By-pass.

Cultural

Accessibility:
The site consists of a flat, dry valley bottom surrounded by steep slopes which is all open access and accessible on foot. The track around the bottom provides easy walking and is frequented by dog walkers. A nature trail runs around the valley which is also well used. There are numerous informal paths. Access is available across the top of the hill from Ditchling Road and many people access this part of Wild Park from the south east. Thus Wild Park is utilized by two distinctive communities, those from Moulsecoomb at the bottom and those from Hollingdean/Hollingbury/Coldean at the top. The valley bottom (pit) has been levelled and reseeded with amenity grass and is used for football in the summer and a variety of public events. There is a small café in the pavilion.
The site falls within the area covered by the Lewes Road Local Sustainable Transport Fund project which will explore opportunities to enhance both pedestrian and cycle access to the South Downs.

Past and current use:
"*During the 1850's when Brighton's downland records begin*" Wild Park was "*amongst the most celebrated of the era for Sussex butterflies, and collectors visited from far and wide*". These collectors were looking for downland butterflies and moths, in particular Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*), Forester Moths (Argynnis *Adscita sps*) and Silver Spotted Skippers (*Hesperia comma*) (A Revised History Of Butterflies And Moths Of Sussex by Colin R. Pratt). Since the building of the adjacent estates and dedication as public open space it has also become a popular dog walking area. The Friends of Wild Park work to enhance the park, carrying out litter clearance, path improvement as well as work to enhance the monument and is surroundings. A community fun day is held once a year. The valley bottom is used for football and band practice. There is a problem with off road motor bikes and BMX bikes in the woods with the creating of new paths and jumps which erode the ground flora and disturb other park users.

Historical:
Several features have been found over the years see attached map. The site was open downland prior to its enclosure as a rabbit warren in the late 19th century/early 20th century. There are Second World War trenches in the north west of the site.

Figure 5: Historical Features

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Potential:
This site has the potential to be one of the best open spaces in the city for wildlife and recreation. Years of neglect have meant that the wildlife value has been decreasing for many years and without a step-change in management intervention, the ecological and recreational value of the park will also soon diminish. The management proposed in this management plan should reverse this decline and start on a path of gradual improvement.

Summary Evaluation Table

Feature	Ranking of importance	Notes (how the decision was made)
Calcareous grassland - unimproved	1	Unimproved calcareous (Chalk) grassland is the only internationally rare habitat in the park and is also a UK BAP Priority Habitat. The area of chalk grassland at this site has been significant but has been in decline through neglect. The remaining fragments, on a south-facing slope, are of high importance in the Brighton and Hove context. There is potential for habitat restoration with appropriate management
Orange-tailed Clearwing Synanthedon andrenaeformis	2	The larva lives for two years or more, boring into the stems of the wayfaring tree (Viburnum lantana) and guelder rose (V. opulus).
Frog Orchid (Coeloglossum viride)	2	Management should ne undertaken to preserve the grassland where this orchid occurs and prevent shading from scrub.
Satyrium w-album White Letter Hairstreak	2	Planting of additional Elms by the pavilion should be considered to replace those lost to Dutch Elm Disease and to provide replacement should the remaining specimens succumb either to Dutch Elm Disease or old age.
Scrub - Diverse	2	The diversity in species and structure of this scrub adds to its importance. However it is a transitional state so unmanaged will proceed to secondary woodland. It also tends to be the leading edge of the scrub where it is invading the chalk grassland
Pond	2	Water features are rare on the downs due to the porous nature of the chalk so any feature has a level of importance
Informal Public Access	2	The park is important for informal access especially dog walking and off road cycling.
Other Habitat	2	With appropriate management this area has the potential to become chalk grassland. It forms an important link between areas of unimproved calcareous grassland that would

		otherwise be isolated
Adonis Blue Lysandra bellargus	2	Some areas of chalk grassland should be kept very short with some areas of bare ground
Calcareous grassland – semi improved	3	With appropriate management this area has the potential to become good chalk grassland. The less fertile species rich areas are important in their own right supporting species such as the Marbled White Butterfly (*Melanargia galathea sere*).
Woodland	3	The woodland is young secondary woodland, therefore lacking the diversity of ancient woodland. However it is included as a UK BAP Priority Habitat and could be improved with management.
Scrub - dense	4	Much of the scrub is an even aged monoculture supporting few species.
Amenity Grass	4	While an important recreational feature the amenity grassland supports little wildlife

Section 4: Main Factors Influencing Management

Rank	Feature	Positive Factor	Negative Factor
1	Calcareous grassland - unimproved	The reintroduction of sheep grazing	Eutrophication, Quantity of scrub, high seed rain of scrub species
2	Other Habitat	Clearance of scrub and reintroduction of grazing	Scrub regrowth; colonisation by opportunist plants which could prevent chalk grassland re-establishment
2	Calcareous grassland – semi improved	Reasonable Species Diversity	Increase of scrub
2	Scrub - Diverse	Variety of species and age structure	Succession to species-poor secondary woodland
2	Pond	Holds water throughout the year. Provides a rare downland water source	Disturbance by dogs/bikes
3	Scrub - dense		Generally even aged monoculture
3	Woodland	Provides some structural diversity	Young and dominated by sycamore and ash with little ground flora
4	Amenity Grass	Foraging area for corvoids and seabirds. Provides recreational space	Poor species diversity

Section 5: Management Policy

Management principals:

1. Wild Park is valued by local residents as an amenity space and as an important urban fringe wildlife site. Bringing together the needs and values of walkers, including dog walkers and children, with wildlife is key to the success of any future management.
2. All the features of the park are of value particularly for nature conservation and recreation. The mix of woodland, scrub at various growth stages and chalk grassland is valued because it is a visually appealing and natural landscape with freedom of access which is rich in wildlife.
3. None of these values of the park are sustainable without management which should aim to ensure the fine mix of natural landscape features is conserved for the benefit of wildlife and people.
4. Until 2010, small scale conservation management had taken place for at least 20 years, but this was not enough to stop the decline of the chalk grassland. Public access around the site has been reduced by the growth of brambles and scrub, the varied landscape has become more uniform and some important habitats are disappearing, such as wildlife-rich chalk grassland which is on the verge of extinction. A change in how the park is managed is needed urgently.
5. Future management must:
   a) Minimise landscape impact to ensure the natural appearance of Wild Park is kept.
   b) Improve public access and enjoyment of the park for quiet recreation (including maintaining the current mix of formal and informal paths).
   c) Take full account of all aspects of the ecology of the park and ensure that all the key habitats and species of importance are conserved (including regular monitoring).
   d) Expand and improve the links between the habitats under particular threat, such as wildlife-rich chalk grassland (including maintaining the previously cleared areas by grazing).

Physical:

Habitat change should be managed to retain a natural aspect to the landscape (straight edges and unnatural angles should be avoid where possible). Fencing should be done so as to minimise its impact on the landscape and access.
Grassland areas should be managed to reduce soil fertility to favour rarer less vigorous species.

Biodiversity:

The condition of the chalk grassland should be managed such that the key species identified in the calcareous (chalk) grassland BAP have a competitive advantage over non typical species. Connectivity of chalk grassland fragments should be improved through selective woodland & scrub clearance

Additional Areas of scrub should be cleared and managed in such a way as to promote the long term creation of chalk grassland.

A second dew pond should be created in a relatively little used part of the park

Areas of scrub should be coppiced to create a diversity of age structure which will promote an increase in biodiversity.

Some trees should be left to reach maturity and dead wood in woodland areas should be left in situ

A woodland 'ride' should be created to improve access and woodland edge habitat which should follow contours to minimise landscape impact.

From time to time the council is approached by developers seeking to relocate reptiles (slow worms and lizards) ahead of developments. Areas of scrub clearance should be used for these relocations with log piles/stack of chipped wood being left to improve the habitat for the reptiles

Cultural:

Interpretation should be provided to enhance people understanding of the importance of the site for wildlife and to encourage them to discover more of the site.

Improved access for cyclists and pedestrians should be provided via the Lewes Road Local Sustainable Transport Fund project. Improvements should include resurfacing of off-road routes, provision of road crossing points to remove barriers, and provision of signing and interpretation boards at access points and the production of leaflets.

The nature trail should be realigned to reduce gradients where possible and should be promoted via interpretation boards and the production of an accompanying leaflet.

Grazing should be balanced so there are always significant areas where sheep are not present so that dogs can be let off the lead.

Events should be organised to promote the great diversity of the park and encourage more people to use and enjoy it.

Research, survey and monitoring:

Existing areas of chalk grassland should be surveyed to provide a more complete species list and to ensure that there is no further decline in their condition
Areas due for clearance should be surveyed prior to any clearance
Cleared areas should be monitored to measure how well they are responding to habitat recreation

Section 6: Management Prescriptions and Operations

Compartment 1: North West Woodland

The compartment consists of woodland and scrub above the break of slope. There are several formal and informal paths which are well used by dog walkers due to the relatively flat nature of the ground. There are also the remnants of Second World War trenches. Management should consist of minimum Intervention, but the main paths should be kept clear and dangerous trees removed

Compartment 2: Diverse Scrub and Woodland

Above the break of slope this compartment contains an area of scrub diverse both in age and structure with some larger trees. The trees become more mature towards the east as the scrub merges into woodland. Below the break of slope there is some scrub and a strip of grassland parallel to the track. This grassland is quite diverse and should be brought into grazing management. Some scrub should be cleared to increase the area of grassland and some scrub coppiced to maintain/enhance its structural diversity

Compartment 3: South Facing Slope

This compartment contains fragments of surviving chalk grassland some of which has been grazed since 2008. A large area was cleared in 2010 which included several smaller patches of chalk grassland which had been almost completely overtaken by scrub.

This cleared area should be fenced and grazed to maintain condition of chalk grassland, although a strip alongside 39 acres should be excluded to allow the scrub to regrow alongside the path. The fence should be set back into the scrub to make it less visually intrusive (and at the head of the coomb it should be realigned to the south west so it is better hidden from the bottom of the valley). The alignment of the fence should avoid crossing paths where possible and gates should be provided at any points if it does. The water supply should be extended to facilitate the grazing.

Follow up treatment will be necessary to control regrowth where scrub has been cleared. Some scrub/trees should be allowed to regrow, however as stump treatment is never 100% effective this can be recruited from specimens that survive the stump treatment. In particular some wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*) should be retained as it is the host of the Orange-tailed Clearwing moth (*Synanthedon andrenaeformis*) which is found here.

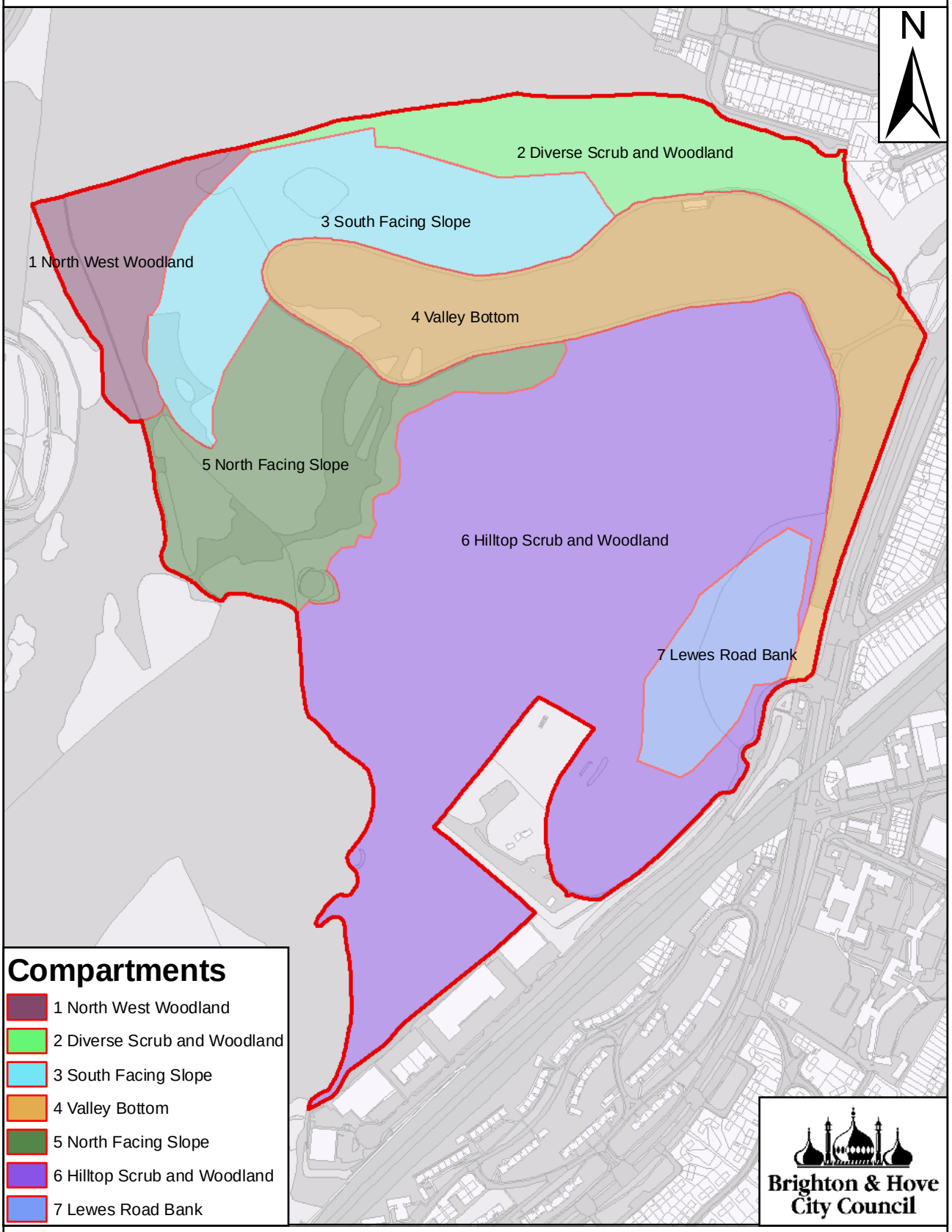
Non native species such as Garden Privet (*Ligustrum Ovalifolium*) and Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*) should be controlled or eliminated to prevent then spreading at the expense of native species

Compartment 4: Valley Bottom

This compartment consists of the flat valley bottom and the flat area alongside Lewes Road. Recreation should be the main priority here, but activities should be avoided that would have negative impacts on the surrounding area.

The banks surrounding the playing fields should be cut once a year in the autumn to allow wildflowers such as Cowslip (*Primula veris*) to flower and set seed.

Figure 6: Compartments



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Compartment 5: North Facing Slope

This compartment consists of the unwooded area running from the valley bottom up the slope and across to the ex-arable field. In the long term the lower section of the slope should be grazed to maintain the habitat in line with the UK Action Plan for Frog Orchids (*Coeloglossum viride*). The woodland edge should be pushed back to reduce shading of the grassland and the new woodland edge coppiced to provide a gradual transition from woodland to grassland.

Fencing and a water supply should be installed to facilitate grazing

The woodland edge on the west of the slope is quite abrupt, some coppicing should be done to soften it, however some mature oaks should be retained for the Purple Hairstreak butterflies (*Quercusia quercus*) which favour mature sheltered oaks on the woodland edge.

The dew pond was restored in the early 1990's. The liner is now showing so remedial work needs to be carried out to protect it.

Compartment 6: Hilltop Scrub and Woodland

The centre of this area is maturing secondary woodland that was badly damaged by the storm in 1987 with many of the wind blown trees are still lying where they fell. As such it is fairly unique in Brighton & Hove and should be left as an example of how nature deals with exceptional events. The surrounding areas are senescent monoculture hawthorn scrub

There should be minimum intervention. The main paths should be kept clear and dangerous trees removed. However a new ride should be created that joins the one coming down from the dew pond to the grassland above Lewes Road. The route should follow the contours but avoid the removal of fallen trees where possible which should be left in situ to allow natural woodland process to take place.

This compartment also contains a monument recoding the dedication of the park to the public on 30th June 1925. The setting of the monument should be restored with the old hedge coppiced and gapped up

Compartment 7: Lewes Road Grassland

Fence and graze the main area of chalk grassland. The fence should be set back into the trees to reduce its visual impact. The area of grassland should be increased by removal of encroaching scrub. The Woodland edge should be coppiced to provide a graded transition from the grassland to the woodland.

Scrub clearance should be prioritised where grassland still persist under the scrub.

The boundary with Lewes Road should be fenced with post and rail fencing (backed with stock netting) to minimise the visual intrusion of the fence.

A new pond should be constructed here. The construction should be a double pond such that part can be fenced against dogs for the benefit of wildlife while dogs are allowed in the other half. It should be similar in dimension to a traditional dew pond (i.e around 30m in diameter) so that it has a large enough catchment to hold water throughout the year.

Nature Trail

The nature trail should be realigned at its south eastern end so that it comes out onto the main track rather than down the flight of steps to make it more easily accessible. An accompanying leaflet should be designed in conjunction with the installation of the on site information boards.

Section 7: Ten Year Work Plan

Year 1, 2012-2013

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Whole site		Keep vegetation from main paths. Monitor cut scrub and manage regrowth as necessary		
Compartment 1 North West Woodland				
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope		Survey Area to be cleared	Install new Fence Line Repair existing Fence and gates. Extend water supply. Graze	Clear scrub where grassland survives underneath.
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom			Cut surrounding banks	
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		Cut steep slopes while dry enough	Cut grassland	
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland		Survey Area to be cleared		Install new fence, Install water supply. Clear scrub where grassland survives underneath. Coppice Scrub. Graze

Year 2, 2013-2014

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Whole site		Keep vegetation from main paths. Monitor cut scrub and manage regrowth as necessary		
Compartment 1 North West Woodland		Install Interpretation board		
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope	Graze	Monitor, Survey Area to be cleared	Graze	Clear scrub Coppice Scrub
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom		Install Interpretation boards	Cut surrounding banks	
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		Cut steep slopes while dry enough. Install Interpretation boards	Cut grassland	
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland	Graze	Monitor	Graze	

Year 3, 2014-2015

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Whole site		Keep vegetation from main paths. Monitor cut scrub and manage regrowth as necessary		
Compartment 1 North West Woodland				
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope	Graze	Monitor, Survey Area to be cleared	Graze	Clear scrub, Coppice Scrub
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom			Cut surrounding banks	Cut butterfly bank
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		Cut steep slopes while dry enough	Cut grassland	
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland	Graze	Monitor	Graze	

Year 4, 2015-2016

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Whole site		Keep vegetation from main paths. Monitor cut scrub and manage regrowth as necessary		
Compartment 1 North West Woodland				
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope	Graze	Monitor, Survey Area to be cleared	Graze	Coppice Scrub
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom			Cut surrounding banks	Cut butterfly bank
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		Cut steep slopes while dry enough, Survey Area to be cleared	Cut grassland	Coppice Scrub
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland	Graze	Monitor, Survey Area to be cleared	Graze	Clear scrub, Coppice Scrub

Year 5, 2016-2017

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Whole site		Keep vegetation from main paths. Monitor cut scrub and manage regrowth as necessary		
Compartment 1 North West Woodland				
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope	Graze	Monitor, Survey Area to be cleared	Graze	Clear scrub,
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom			Cut surrounding banks	Cut butterfly bank
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		Cut steep slopes while dry enough	Cut grassland	
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland	Graze	Monitor, Survey Area to be cleared	Graze	Clear scrub

Year 6, 2017-2018

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Whole site		Keep vegetation from main paths. Monitor cut scrub and manage regrowth as necessary		
Compartment 1 North West Woodland				
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope	Graze	Monitor, Survey Area to be cleared	Graze	Coppice Scrub
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom			Cut surrounding banks	Cut butterfly bank
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		Cut steep slopes while dry enough	Cut grassland	
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland				Start to clear new ride to complete connection from dew pond to Lewes road grassland
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland	Graze	Monitor, Survey Area to be cleared	Graze	Clear Scrub Coppice Scrub

Year 7, 2018-2019

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Whole site		Keep vegetation from main paths. Monitor cut scrub and manage regrowth as necessary		
Compartment 1 North West Woodland				
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope	Graze	Monitor	Graze	
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom			Cut surrounding banks	Cut butterfly bank
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		Cut steep slopes while dry enough.	Cut remaining grassland	
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland		Survey Area to be cleared		Coppice Scrub
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland	Graze	Monitor, Survey Area to be cleared	Graze. Install new fence, extend water supply. Create new pond	Clear Scrub Coppice Scrub

Year 8, 2019-2020

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Whole site		Keep vegetation from main paths. Monitor cut scrub and manage regrowth as necessary		
Compartment 1 North West Woodland				
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland				
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope	Graze	Monitor	Graze	
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom			Cut surrounding banks	Cut butterfly bank
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		Cut steep slopes while dry enough. Survey Area to be cleared	Cut remaining grassland. Install new fence, Install water supply. Graze	Clear Scrub Coppice Scrub
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland		Survey Area to be cleared		Coppice Scrub
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland	Graze	Monitor	Graze	

Year 9, 2020-2021

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Whole site		Keep vegetation from main paths. Monitor cut scrub and manage regrowth as necessary		
Compartment 1 North West Woodland				
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland		Survey Area to be cleared	Install new fence, Install water supply.	Clear Scrub Coppice Scrub. Graze
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope	Graze	Monitor	Graze	
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom			Cut surrounding banks	Cut butterfly bank
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		Cut steep slopes while dry enough. Survey Area to be cleared	Cut remaining grassland	Coppice Scrub Graze
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland		Survey Area to be cleared		Coppice Scrub
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland	Graze	Monitor	Graze	

Year 10, 2021-2022

	Spring	Summer	Autumn	Winter
Whole site		Keep vegetation from main paths.		
Compartment 1 North West Woodland				
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland				Graze
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope	Graze	Monitor. Survey Area to be cleared	Graze	Coppice Scrub
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom			Cut surrounding banks	Cut butterfly bank
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		Cut steep slopes while dry enough.	Cut remaining grassland	Graze
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland		Survey Area to be cleared		Coppice Scrub
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland	Graze	Monitor. Survey Area to be cleared	Graze Construct Dew Pond	Clear Scrub. Clear area of trees to reduce shading of grassland Coppice Scrub

n.b. actual grazing time may vary to fit in with management of other sites

Section 8: Costings

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10
Compartment 1 North West Woodland		£3,000.00								
Compartment 2 Diverse Scrub and Woodland									£11,994.98	£151.46
Compartment 3 South Facing Slope	£11,732.51	£4,260.73	£5,055.03	£3,269.79	£4,640.08	£3,553.70	£3,002.35	£3,002.35	£3,002.35	£3,511.05
Compartment 4 Valley Bottom		£6,000.00								
Compartment 5 North Facing Slope		£9,000.00		£1,199.74	-£26.19	-£26.19	-£26.19	£8,492.70	£1,179.10	£55.95
Compartment 6 Hilltop Scrub and Woodland						£1,057.69	£583.80	£504.56	£636.75	£656.14
Compartment 7 Lewes Road Grassland	£12,249.04	£1,185.81	£1,185.81	£2,846.33	£1,937.77	£2,031.94	£5,461.89	£1,205.17	£1,205.17	£3,425.15
TOTAL	£23,981.55	£23,446.55	£6,240.84	£7,315.86	£6,551.66	£6,617.14	£9,021.85	£13,204.78	£18,018.35	£7,799.75

These costs include allowances for Higher Level Stewarship. Costs are for management by contractor whereas in reality much of the scrub clearance may be done by volunteers.

This area is also included in the council's Single Farm Payment however this payment has not been agreed beyond 2013.

The cost of monitoring & surveying varies from 10% to 50% of the annual cost is about a third of the total cost overall although this may be reduced by use of volunteers/students

Sheep costs are based on £2 per sheep per week and a stocking rate of 0.5 LSU = 4 sheep per ha per year (standard rate is 1LSU per Ha per year but our site are less fertile than average).

The cost of the construction of the new pond is difficult to assess this far in advance as it will depend on the availability of materials and the access available at the time of construction. However it is likely to attract additional external funding

These costing do not include routine grass cutting and path maintenance or other staff time/volunteer expenses

Costs for scrub clearance may be covered by developers where the area is being used for reptile relocation.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Species occurring Wild Park that are listed in the Brighton and Hove local biodiversity action plan

Latin Name	English Name	Taxon	Status	Notes
Lysandra bellargus	Adonis Blue	Butterfly	Locally notable Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Schedule 5 Section 9.5a,b)	**Lowland calcareous grassland HAP.** Sole foodplant is Horseshoe Vetch
Pyrrhula pyrrhula subsp. pileata	Bullfinch	Bird	NERC S41 species	70% of the European population in the UK. 43% decline over 25 years.Associaited with overgrown Hedgerows and field margins. The reasons for bullfinch decline are not fully understood. Scattered breeding records across Brighton & Hove. **Hedgerows HAP, Farmlands HAP**
Scotopteryx bipunctaria	Chalk Carpet	Moth	NERC S41 species	Benfield Hill. Fairly common and widespread on chalk downland and limestone hills in the south. Bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus*) and clover (*Trifolium*) are the larval foodplants. Appears to be a continuing decline in this species distribution. Seems to be dependant on the earliest successional stages of Lowland calcareous grassland.- broken soils on calcareous habitats. Around Brighton, distribution is mostly fragmented on steep, incised bostal paths or on vegetating old disused chalk pits Re-creation of extensive areas of early successional Lowland calcareous grassland seems key to the future of this moth. **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
Lysandra coridon	Chalkhill Blue	Butterfly	Locally notable	Horseshoe Vetch is almost the exclusive food plant but three other food plants have been recorded: Bird's-foot Trefoil Kidney Vetch and Bird's-foot (Ornithopus perpusillus). **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
Zootoca vivipara	Common Lizard	Reptile	NERC S41 species	Declining in Southern England. Needs suitable basking, feeding, breeding and hibernation sites in a connected landscape An"indicator" species for **Urban Commons HAP**
Pipistrellus pipistellus	Common Pipstrelle	Bat	Locally notable	Semi-natural woodland, tree lines, parks and gardens: Summer roosts in cracks and crevices in new and old buildings Winter roosts: trees, buildings. Threats are attributed to the use of agricultural chemicals in the intensification of agriculture and loss of roost sites. Loss of Hedgerows and woodland edge habitats. Declining. Numbers unknown in Brighton & Hove. **Bats Group SAP**
Emberiza calandra subsp. calandra/clanceyi*	Corn Bunting	Bird	NERC S41 species	Dramaric Uk decline. Still breeds at Mile Oak and east of Brighton.**, Farmlands HAP**
Erynnis tages subsp. Tages	Dingy Skipper	Butterfly	NERC S41 species	The main foodplant is Bird's-foot-trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*). Ongoing decline.
Fumaria parviflora	Fine-leaved Fumitory	Vascular Plant	Locally notable	Brighton & Hove is the Sussex stronghold for this species **Arable Annuals Group SAP, Farmlands HAP**
Coeloglossum viride	Frog Orchid	Vascular Plant	NERC S41 species	Declining and a good indicator of a threatened habitat (Lowland calcareous grassland)**.** May be extinct outside Castle Hill NNR. **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP. N.b. not recorded for several years in Wild Park**

Lampyris noctiluca	Glow-worm	Beetle	Locally notable	Rough Lowland calcareous grasslands and scrub interface – **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
*Perdix perdix**	Grey Partridge	Bird	NERC S41 species	Breeds at a number of localities across the Brighton Downs. **Farmlands HAP**
Pyrgus malvae	Grizzled Skipper	Butterfly	NERC S41 species	Found on chlak grasslands with scrub and disused artificial (industrial) habitats such as railway lines. Declined in recent years **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
Hyoscyamus niger	Henbane	Vascular Plant	Locally notable	Annual. Needs disturbed, fertile ground. **Urban Commons HAP**
*Vanellus vanellus**	Lapwing	Bird	NERC S41 species	51% decline over 25 years. Possibly breeds on the downs around the Chattri War memorial. **Farmlands HAP**
Carduelis cannabina subsp. autochthona/ cannabina*	Linnet	Bird	NERC S41 species	Breeding records on the Downs across Brighton & Hove **Farmlands HAP**
Nyctalus noctula	Noctule Bat	Bat	NERC S41 species	Destruction of roost sites through deforestation and removal of winter roosts in buildings threatens remaining populations. Proactive protection of all roosts (trees and buildings) is needed Bat boxes can be used to help maintain existing populations. 21% decline over 6 years. **Bats Group SAP**
Doros profuges	Phantom or Wasp Hoverfly	Fly	NERC S41 species	1980's record from Coldean / Wild Park area. 52% decline over 25 years. Most records of adults are from scrub or wood edge on calcareous grasslands. Factors causing the decline unknown, but calcareous grasslands should incorporate properly managed scrub and woodland edge habitats as positive features. **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
Atypus affinis	Purseweb spider	Spider	Locally notable	Rough chalky grassland – **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
Phyteuma orbiculare	Round-headed Rampion	Vascular Plant	Locally notable	Flagship for **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
Adscita globulaiae	Scarce Forester	Moth	Nationally Scarce	larval foodplants are common knapweed (**Centaurea nigra**) and greater knapweed (**C. scabiosa**). **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
Eptesicus serotinus	Serotine Bat	Bat	Locally notable	Prefers open habitats. Often found in buildings at the edges of towns. Declined due to loss of feeding habitat where large insects such as chafers and dung beetles can be found. As it roosts almost entirely in buildings it is subject to the effects of building work and the use of toxic chemicals in remedial timber treatment. **Bat Group SAP**
Hesperia comma	Silver Spotted Skipper	Butterfly	Former UK BAP priority species	Restricted to chalk downland slopes in Southern England. Has increased significantly since 1980. Requires close grazed turf with bare patches (e.g. through cattle grazing). In Brighton and Hove therae re recent records from Sheepcote Valley and grassland north of Roedean School. **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
*Alauda arvensis subsp. Arvensis**	Sky Lark	Bird	NERC S41 species Birds Directive Annex 2.2	59% deline over 25 years. Still common on Lowland calcareous grassland around Brighton & Hove. **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
Anguis fragilis	Slow-worm	Reptile	NERC S41 species Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (Schedule 5 Section 9.1, 9.5a,b)	A legless lizard found throughout much of Europe. It is widespread in southern England where it is found in a range of open habitats such as rough grassland and heathland with structural variation.Common and widespread in the city. **Gardens HAP, Lowland calcareous grassland HAP**
Cupido minimus	Small Blue	Butterfly	NERC S41 species	69% decline over 25 years, 1984-2003 Still quite common on Lowland calcareous grassland around the city. **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP** flagship species(?)

Coenonympha pamphilus	Small Heath	Butterfly	NERC S41 species	62% decline over 25 years, 1984-2003. Feeds on Fine grasses, especially fescues (**Festuca** spp.), meadow-grasses (**Poa** spp.), and bents (**Agrostis** spp.). On dry, well-drained situations. Still quite common – a S41 species for research purposes only due to rapid decline.
Turdus philomelos subsp. clarkei	Song Thrush	Bird	NERC S41 species	Over 25% of world population in UK; 25% decline over 25 years. Still quite common in Brighton & Hove. **Gardens HAP** – flagship species?
Lasiommata megera	Wall	Butterfly	NERC S41 species	In rapid decline in many inland areas, for reasons unknown. Monitoring required. Foodplants are various grasses. Breeds in short, open grassland where the turf is broken or stony. Found in coastal habitats, including vegetated undercliffs and rocky foreshores, disturbed land, disused quarries, derelict land. **Lowland calcareous grassland HAP / Urban Commons HAP, Martime Cliff and Slope HAP**
Satyrium w-album	White-letter Hairstreak	Butterfly	NERC S41 species	Recent records throughout Brighton and Hove, particularly London Road, Preston Park and The Level. Across the UK 99% decline in abundance over 25 years, although numbers appear to now be stabalising; breeds on elm species, including Wych Elm (**Ulmus glabra**), English Elm (**U. procera**), and Small-leaved Elm (**U. minor**). Breeds on mature trees or abundant sucker growth near dead trees. Survive on the Dutch Elm Disease-resistant variety of **U. japonica**, Sapporo Autumn Gold.
*Emberiza citronella**	Yellowhammer	Bird	NERC S41 species	Confirmed breeding around the Brighton downs. 53% decline over 25 years. Requires abundant invertebrate prey in summer and seed in winter. **Farmlands HAP, Hedgerows HAP**

n.b. bats have been recorded in Wild Park with a possible roost in the pavilion but not to species level

* species more likely to primarily be associated with adjacent habitats although may use scrub edge for nesting

Appendix 2: October 2010 Newsletter

What next?

We are proposing a series of workshops to be held to establish a common understanding of what is important about Wild Park, the principles for its management, and to plan for the future. We are planning to hold these in the evenings and at weekends, and at four locations (Coldean, Hollingdean, Hollingbury and Moulsecoomb). Please contact us to register your preference for a workshop at a particular time or location, and we will write back inviting you to a workshop. Guided walks with local experts are also being run:

Wednesday 6 October. Wild Park walk with Peter Whitcomb and Dave Bangs. Meet: 10am - Wild Park pavilion café off Lewes Road. Map ref: TQ 329 081. Two-three hours.

Thursday 7 October. Wild Park walk with Phil Beldon and Graeme Lyons. Meet: 5.30pm - Wild Park pavilion café off Lewes Road. Map ref: TQ 329 081. Two hours approx.

Saturday 9 October. Wild Park walk with Peter Whitcomb and Dave Bangs. Meet: 10am - small car park at entrance to Lower Roedale allotments off Lynchett Close. Map ref: TQ 320 070. Two-three hours.

Sunday 17 October. Butterflies of Wild Park guided tour with Dr Dan Danahar, Biodiversity Officer for Sussex Butterfly Conservation, to find out how you can help conserve the butterflies at Wild Park. Meet: 10am - Wild Park pavilion café off Lewes Road. Map ref. TQ 329 081.One and a half hours approx.

Sunday 17 October. Butterflies of Wild Park guided tour with Dr Dan Danahar, Biodiversity Officer for Sussex Butterfly Conservation, to find out how you can help conserve the butterflies at Wild Park. Meet: 12.30pm - car park at Hollingbury Golf Club entrance on Ditchling Road opposite Woodbourne Avenue. Two hours approx.

Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear for walking in the countryside, including some steep slopes. Limited parking. Bring binoculars if possible.

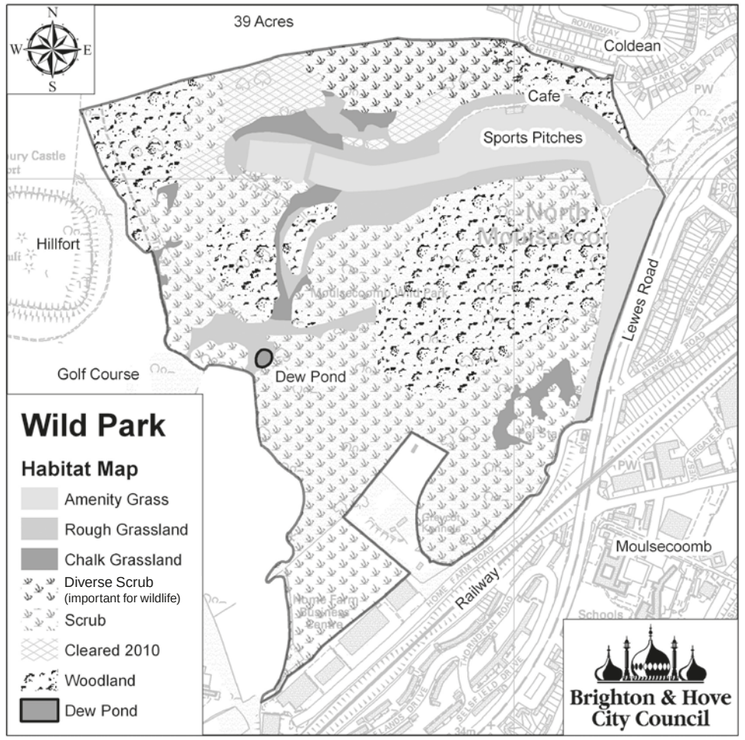
Contact

If you would like to register an interest in a workshop, find out more about an event, make a comment, or receive further updates, please visit www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/wildparkconsultation, e-mail wildparkconsultation@brighton-hove.gov.uk or call us 01273 292929. Or you can write to Cityparks, Stanmer Nurseries, Stanmer Park, Lewes Road, Brighton BN1 9SE.

Please ask to be added to the Wild Park Consultation mailing list and give us your name and address.

This map shows the area of Wild Park we are consulting on, including current habitats and the area cleared in early 2010 before the bird nesting season started. All necessary approvals were obtained, including the full support of the council ecologist, and volunteers removed some of the timber as it had no commercial value.

Please note that there will be specific consultations where any changes are proposed for other areas outside of the boundary on this map.



Wild Park update

October 2010

This is the first update for local residents and anyone interested in Wild Park and its management. It is being sent to all houses within about 15 minutes walk of Wild Park.

Wild Park is a very important space and is in the new South Downs National Park. Not only is it a large, green, open area residents can enjoy for recreation and sports, it is also home to rare chalk grassland, woodland and diverse areas of scrub important for wildlife.

With advice from experts including Natural England and the council ecologist, the council started work on restoring the chalk grassland to pasture by removing small trees and bushes (scrub) and introduced sheep grazing two years ago. This work is about conserving a rare habitat with the particular flora, fauna and wildlife that come with chalk grassland, as well as encouraging access to the park.

You may have seen where the scrub clearance has occurred or read about it in advance in City News last year. The need for this work has been questioned by some local residents.

Some also expressed concerns about whether the council had consulted residents enough. We do want to ensure that as many residents as possible shape the way Wild Park is managed bearing in mind all its important aspects – both recreation and conservation of rare chalk land, woodland and scrub. This newsletter begins a new round of consultation which, in response to residents concerns, will be far more extensive. In the meantime, no further work to clear scrub will be carried out. We are going back to the drawing board and new plans will be drafted with the full involvement of residents.

A group called the Wild Park Focus Group has been set up comprising of representatives from the local action teams (Fiveways and Preston Park, Hollingdean, Moulsecoomb, and Coldean), Friends of Wild Park, local councillors, Natural England

Brighton & Hove City Council

and local conservationists. This group is helping the council with the consultation process to ensure it is wide and as thorough as it can be.

It is intended to hold a number of workshops to start forming new plans for the park and all residents are invited.

This update has been produced by the council with input from the Wild Park Focus Group.

Wild Park pictured in 1946 and 2007 showing the decline in open grassland

Comment from Natural England

Natural England is the government agency whose responsibilities include biodiversity and access, and we are able to offer funding to protect and enhance both of these. We want to see Brighton & Hove City Council protect all of the important habitats for wildlife in Wild Park, as well as ensuring that local people continue to enjoy the park, be it walking the dog, picking blackberries, or cycling, etc, in the numerous ways that they do now.

There are three important habitats for wildlife in the park - woodland, scrub (hawthorn, brambles, etc) and flower-rich chalk grassland. The key issue here is that over the last few decades, scrub has grown over all but a fragment of the remaining flower-rich grassland, one of the richest wildlife habitats we have in this country, but one that has been lost at an enormous rate over the last 50 years, through ploughing, or invasion by dense scrub. The wide variety of species that depend on it, including orchids and butterflies, many of which are likely to have thrived in the combe for many centuries, will disappear in the next few years if some management work does not take place.

We believe that by leaving the woodland areas as woodland, and controlling the scrub in specific areas, the flower-rich grassland fragments can be buffered, linked, carefully conservation grazed, and thereby safeguarded for the future. The resulting mosaic of grassland and scrub would benefit all the important wildlife, including birds, and enhance people's enjoyment of the park.

Comments from people who have objected to the work include:

- The scrub clearance work is destroying a valuable habitat for wild birds and other flora and fauna.
- The park is a much-loved, widely-used public resource and should remain unfenced as open space.
- There is no support whatsoever in the area amongst park-users for this widespread destruction within a much-loved and widely-used area.
- Barbed wire has no place in a public park.
- The work is a waste of public resources.
- Oak trees are being destroyed which has shocked and angered people.
- The council should coppice woods and scrub, and not destroy them.
- There was perfect biodiversity across the grassland, scrub and woodland.
- It is not believed the scrub clearance will result in ancient chalk grassland.
- Sheep will curtail people's freedom to use the park.

These are comments from a petition and they may not represent all the objections to the work. Please also note that the council has subsequently removed the barbed wire.

Comment from Dave Bangs, local Downland conservationist

We are faced with the local extinction of many creatures and flowers at the Wild Park – especially those that depend upon the surviving bits of ancient grassland.

Yet the council's recent drastic clearance of trees and bushes, which are encroaching onto the last grassland fragments, distressed many people. The council hadn't consulted properly either with local residents or experts.

The council had gone from doing far too little, to doing far too much.

Yet, if nothing at all had been done, the last fragments of ancient flowery grassland would disappear within years. The special butterflies, moths and wildflowers were crammed onto them like the animals in Noah's Ark.

When the park was founded in 1925 its slopes were open, with scattered bushes. It was a wonderful playground for local children. By 2005 that openness was lost to thorny scrub.

Many of us love the new trees and bushes, though, for their green shade and their birds.

The Wild Park is big enough for all – for those who love trees and bushes and those who love the ancient grassland.

That means:

- No species or habitats should be allowed to go extinct at the Wild Park (grassland, scrub or woodland).
- All habitats should be managed sustainably. For the woodland and scrub that means a combination of non-intervention and coppicing. The ancient pasture fragments should be big enough and sufficiently inter-linked to survive, without constant threat of extinction, and managed by conservation grazing.
- Consultation is made the heart of management.

Draft principles

1. Wild Park is valued by local residents as an amenity space and as an important urban fringe wildlife site. Bringing together the needs and values of walkers, including dog walkers and children, with wildlife is key to the success of any future management.

2. All the features of the park are of value particularly for nature conservation and recreation. The mix of woodland, scrub at various growth stages and chalk grassland is valued because it is a visually appealing and natural landscape with freedom of access which is rich in wildlife.

3. None of these values of the park are sustainable without management which should aim to ensure the fine mix of natural landscape features is conserved for the benefit of wildlife and people.

4. Until last year, small scale conservation management had taken place for at least 20 years, but this was not enough to stop the decline of the chalk grassland. Public access around the site has been reduced by the growth of brambles and scrub, the varied landscape has become more uniform and some important habitats are disappearing, such as wildlife-rich chalk grassland which is on the verge of extinction. A change in how the park is managed is needed urgently.

5. Any future management must:

   a) Minimise landscape impact to ensure the natural appearance of Wild Park is kept.

   b) Improve public access and enjoyment of the park for quiet recreation (including maintaining the current mix of formal and informal paths).

   c) Take full account of all aspects of the ecology of the park and ensure that all the key habitats and species of importance are conserved (including regular monitoring).

   d) Expand and improve the links between the habitats under particular threat, such as wildlife-rich chalk grassland (including maintaining the previously cleared areas by grazing).

Have your say

More detailed draft plans will be on display locally with a council officer available to answer any questions and receive comments:

- 11am-2pm, Thursday 17 March,
  Hollingdean Children's Centre, Brentwood Road BN1 7DY
- 3.30pm-6pm, Thursday 17 March,
  Coldean Library, Beatty Avenue BN1 9EW
- 8am-11am, Friday 18 March,
  Wild Park café, Lewes Road BN1 9JR
- 8am-11am, Saturday 19 March,
  Wild Park café, Lewes Road BN1 9JR

Further information, including more detailed draft maps, is available online at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/wildparkconsultation

You can also comment on these draft plans online or e-mail wildparkconsultation@brighton-hove.gov.uk or call us on 01273 292929. Or you can write to Cityparks, Stanmer Nursery, Stanmer Park, Lewes Road, Brighton BN1 9SE.

Please send any comments on the draft principles and maps by 31 March 2011.

Where next

All comments we receive will contribute to a new draft management plan for Wild Park which will be published online. Please email us if you would like to be kept informed or give us your name and address if you would prefer to receive a paper copy.

Note that there will be specific consultations where any changes are proposed for other areas managed by the council outside of this main area of Wild Park such as "39 acres" and Hollingbury hill fort, although in the longer term we will look to manage these areas in an integrated way.

Further guided walks being planned in Wild Park later in the year will be advertised locally and on the council website.

Wild Park update

March 2011

This is the second update for local residents and anyone interested in Wild Park and its management. It is being sent to all houses within about 15 minutes walk of Wild Park and anyone who expressed an interest in Wild Park as a result of the first update.

Wild Park is a very important open space for residents to enjoy recreation and sport, as well as being home to rare chalk grassland, woodland and diverse areas of scrub important for wildlife. Further information explaining the importance of Wild Park was set out in the first update – please contact us if you would like details.

Since the first update, five guided walks with local experts and four workshops have been held for residents to establish a common understanding of what is important about Wild Park, the principles for its management and to plan for the future.

As a result of the workshops and other comments received from residents, this update sets out draft principles and draft maps for the future management of Wild Park. These new proposals include far less scrub clearance and minimum fences, which will be topped with plain wire rather than barbed wire, and with accessible gates at any access points.

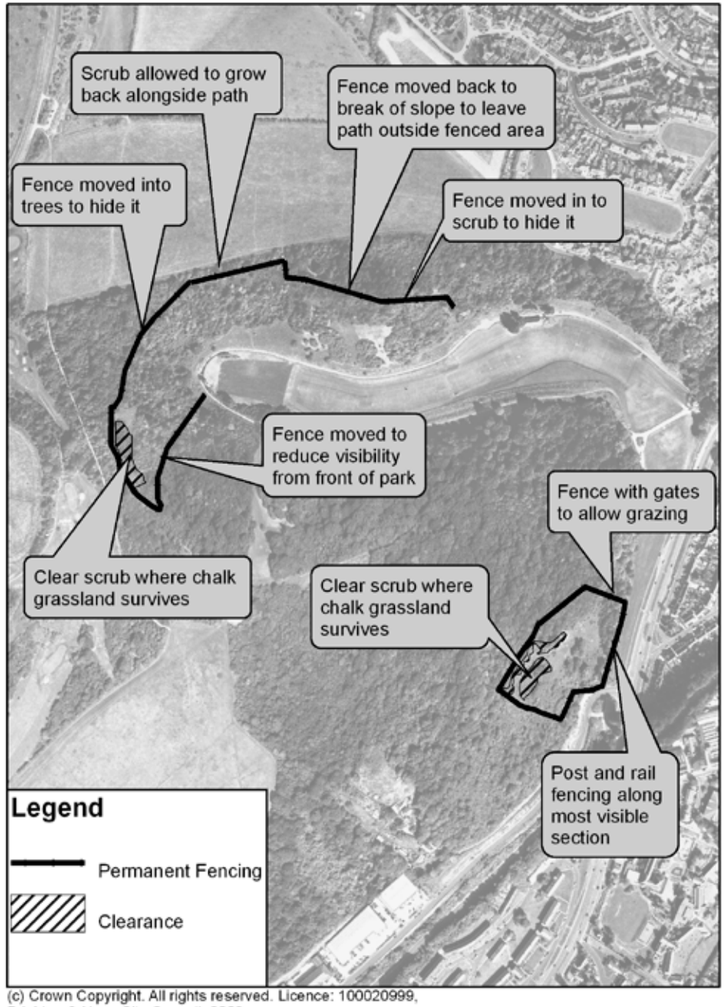
There are a number of ways you can respond to these draft plans, including online feedback, written comments and in person at locally held displays.

This update has been produced by the council with input from the Wild Park Focus Group, comprising representatives from Local Action Teams, Friends of Wild Park, local councillors and Natural England, as well as local wildlife experts who guided the walks last October.

Brighton & Hove City Council

Appendix 3: March 2011 Newsletter

A. Proposed short term management changes (2011/12)



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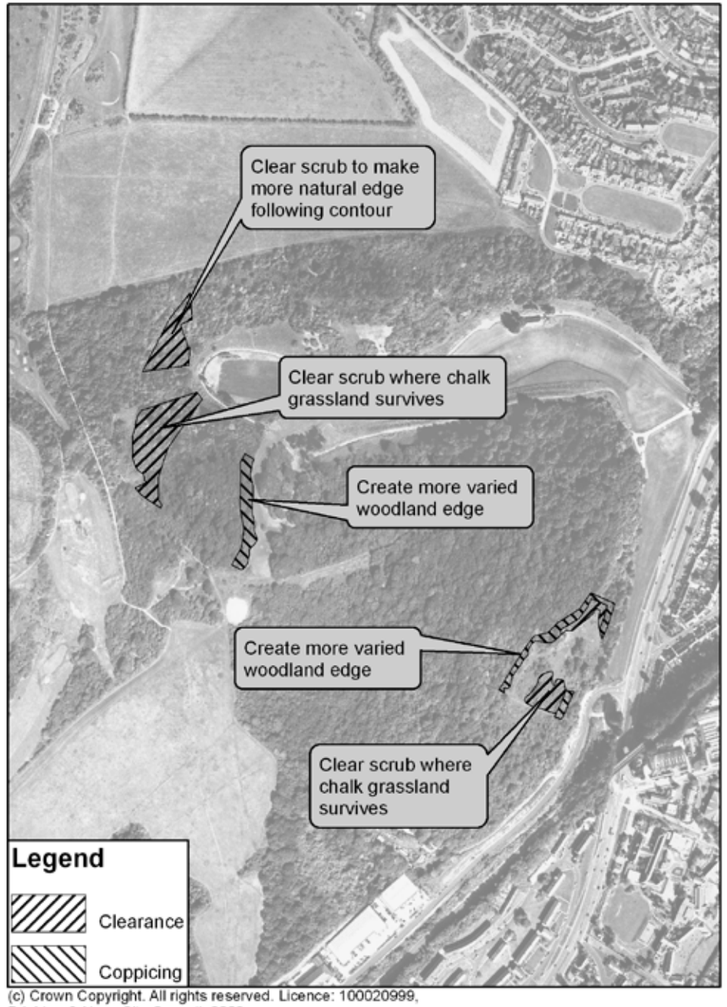
B. Proposed medium term management changes (2012-2016)



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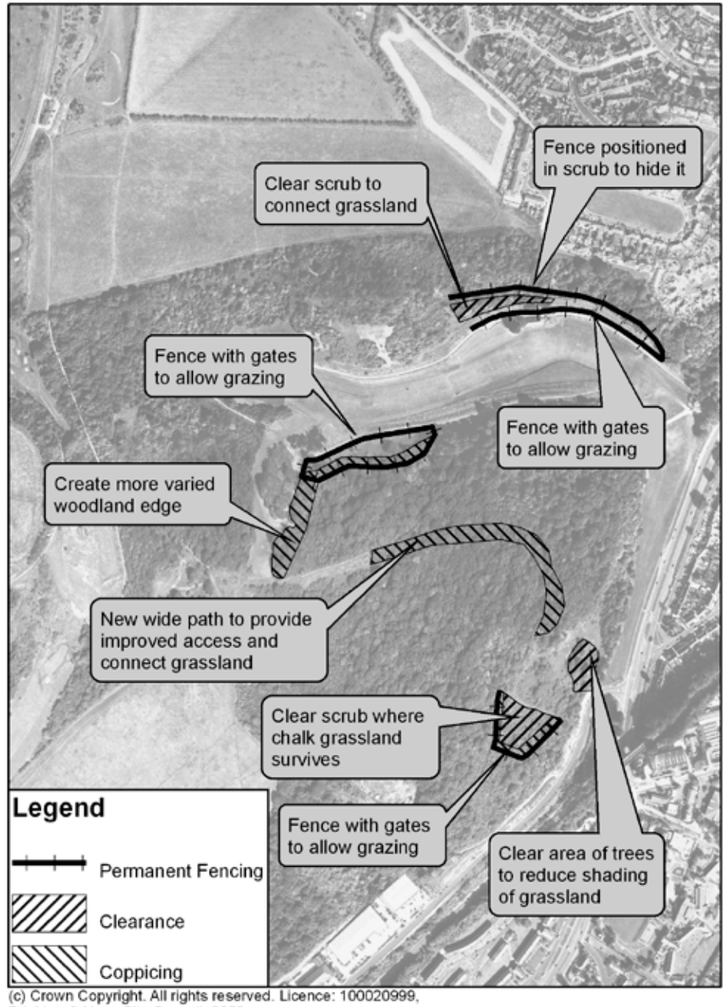
C. Proposed long term management changes (2016 onwards)



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Appendix 4: Consultation results

In total 70 unique responses were received:

- 51 were online responses
- 10 at the public roadshows
- 9 by e-mail.

Overall 70% of people agreed with the proposals, 19% disagreed and 11% did not have an opinion. Of those who expressed an opinion overall 79% agreed with the proposals and 21% disagreed. The 61 responses to the specific questions in the survey are listed below (percentages are of those who answered "Yes" or "No" and exclude those who answered "Don't Know").

Proposals	Total	Yes	No	Yes	No
1. Do you agree with principle 1?	61	53	5	91%	9%
2. Do you agree with principle 2?	61	55	2	96%	4%
3. Do you agree with principle 3?	61	47	8	85%	15%
4. Do you agree with principle 4?	61	35	16	69%	31%
5. Do you agree with principle 5?	60	42	13	76%	24%
6. Do you agree with the short term changes?	59	36	12	75%	25%
7. Do you agree with the medium term changes?	60	34	16	68%	32%
8. Do you agree with the long term changes?	59	33	15	69%	31%

In addition there were 9 people who responded via e-mail so their opinions cannot be attributed to individual questions but of the 7 people who expressed a general opinion on the proposals 5 supported them and 2 opposed them.

Appendix 5: Maps

Figure 7: Clearance and Coppicing

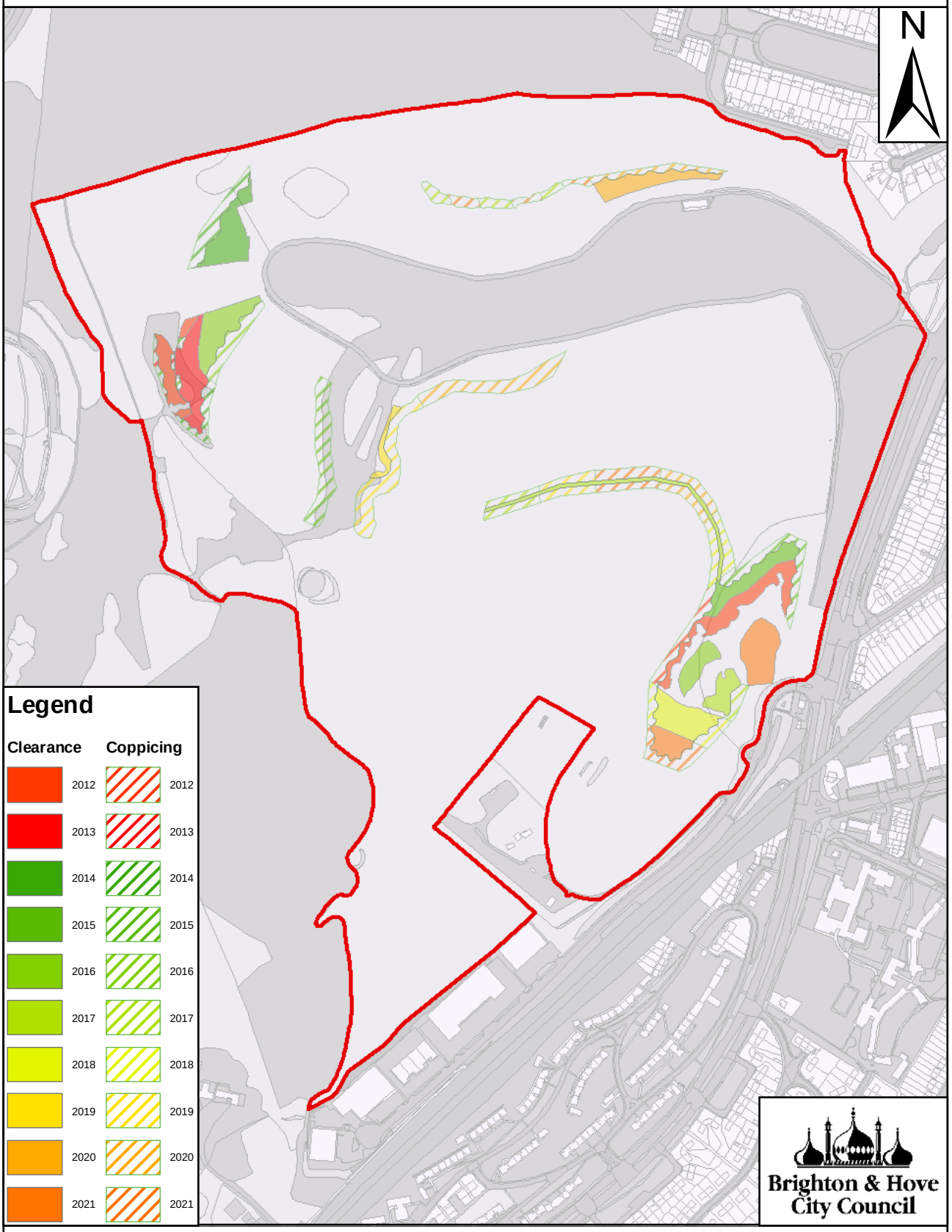

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Figure 8: Fencing

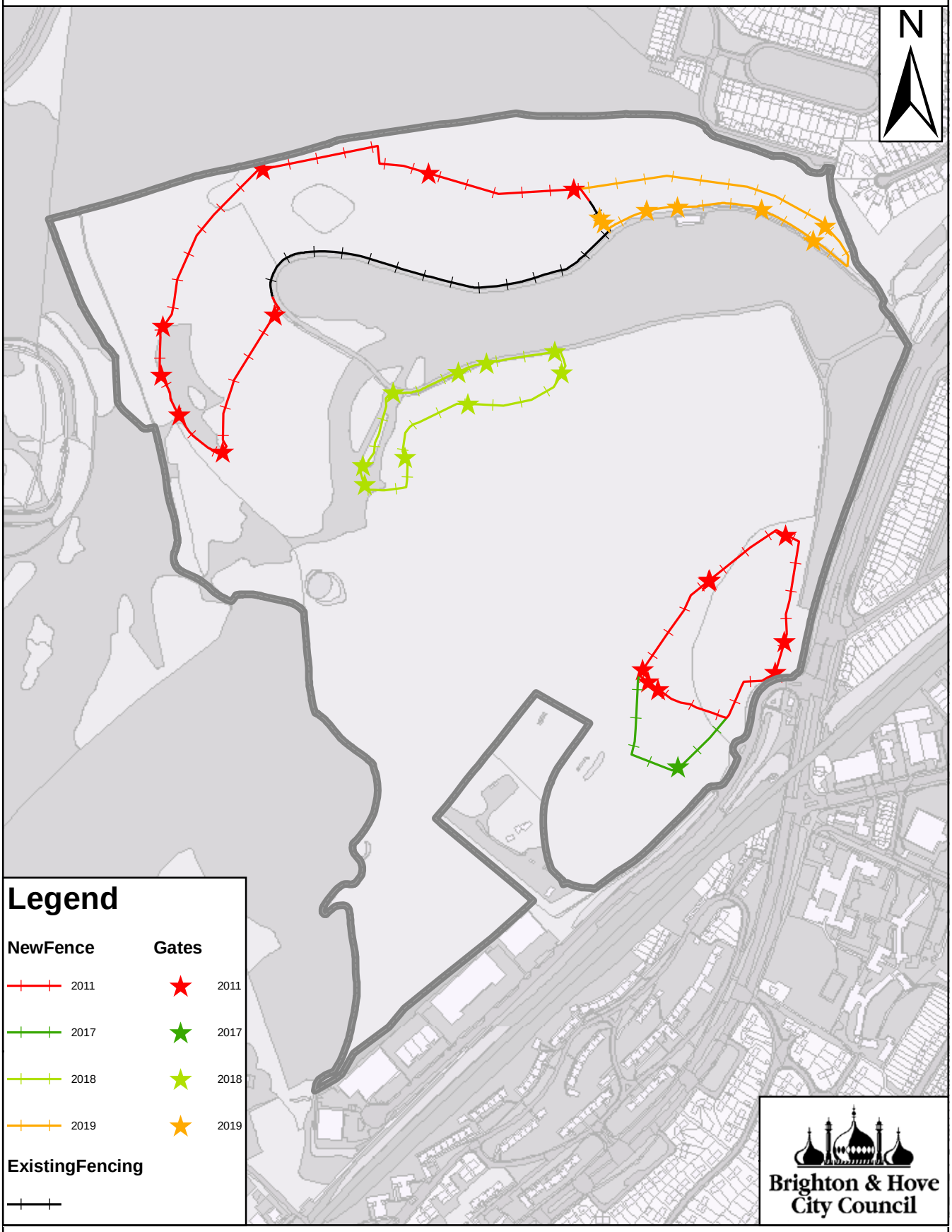

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Figure 9: Monitoring & Surveying

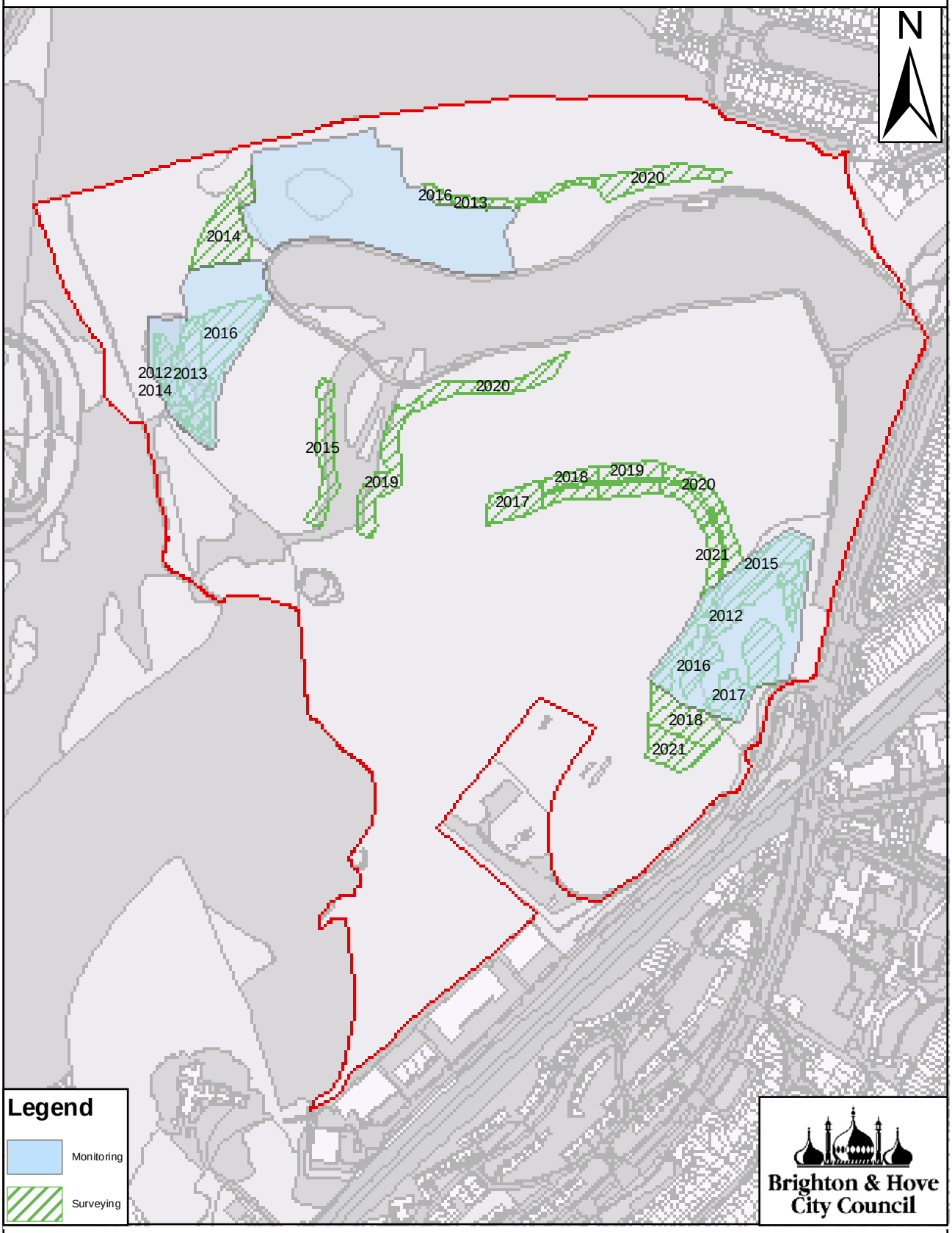

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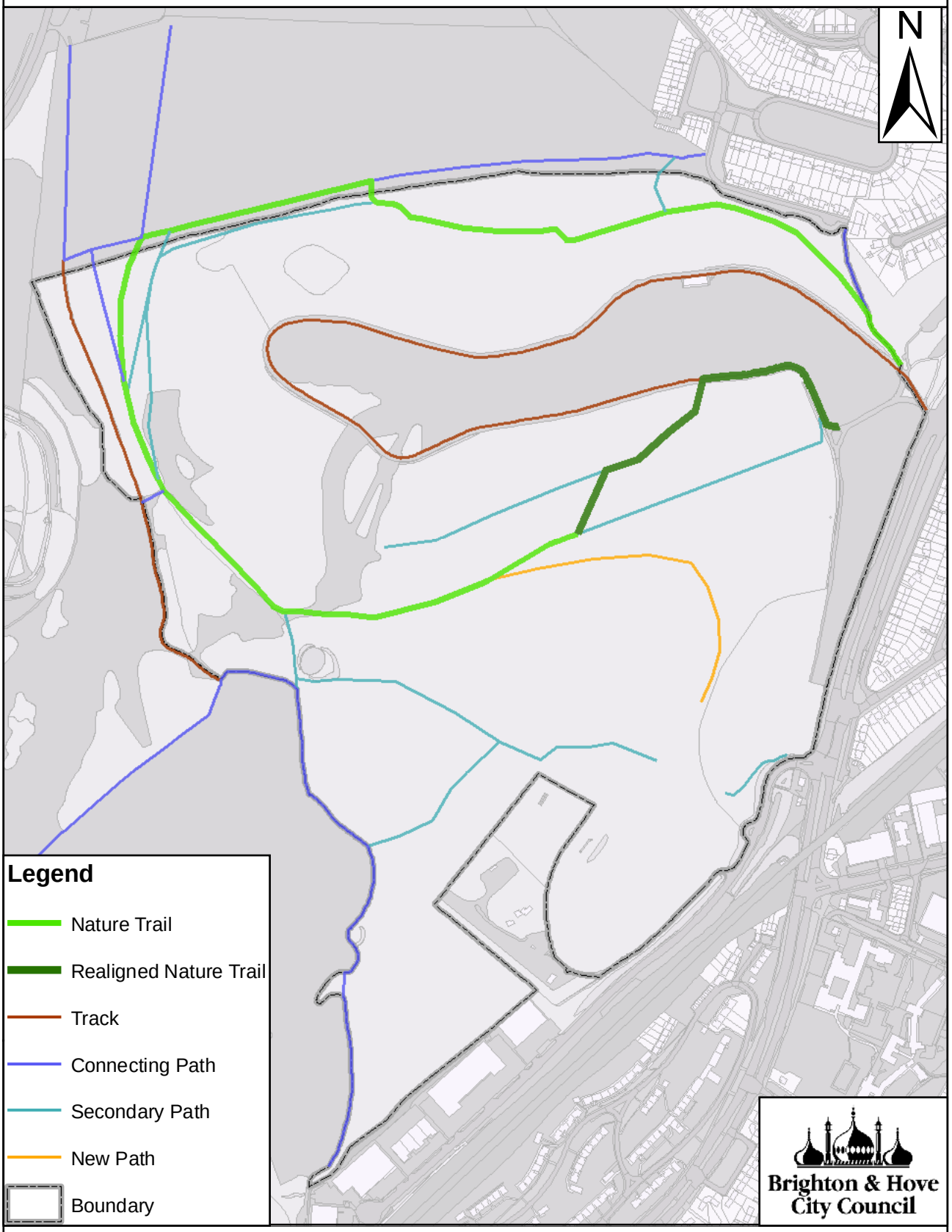
Figure 10: Nature Trail And Other Paths



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