



Existing view looking northwest across the River Gade



6

### 6.3 Heath Park Gardens and River Gade Studies: Part 2

6



Existing view looking north along the River Gade

In addition, a series of pontoon build-out decks are proposed in a similar style and material to the pedestrian bridge, which will extrude from the concrete edge on the west side of the river. They would provide amenity and educational value. It is expected their construction would be a hardwood timber either cantilevered or supported from below.

The path to the west of the river would be resurfaced and extended. This would tie into the design for Heath Park Gardens and provide a more inviting and usable access route. We propose a tarmac construction with a spray and chip surface dressing for aesthetics and durability.





Existing view looking south along the River Gade

Where the path does not make contact with the waters edge, naturalising the bank is proposed through the removal of unnecessarily concrete and the planting of aquatic species to improve biodiversity, ecological and aesthetic value. Where the path abuts the river, coir matting and marginal planting to screen the revetments will be introduced to soften the hard edge.

#### Recommendations:

Improve and extend the path along the River Gade, to provide a footway set away from Two Waters Road. New crossings and build-outs are also proposed to increase the usability of the area, and provide a potential educational resource.

## 6

## 6.4 Improving Access Between the Moors and Two Waters Road

A further pedestrian bridge is proposed to the south of Heath Park connecting the suggested new path on the west side of the River Gade and Two Waters Road at its junction with the Grand Union Canal.

This bridge would allow direct access from Two Waters Road to the Moors, and also provide a link from the south whereby pedestrians can leave Two Waters Road and walk via Heath Park Gardens to the Town Centre without having their access further impeded by roads and traffic lights.

This proposal would improve accessibility between the Town Centre to the Apsley triangle, and any new development to the east of Two Waters Road.

Potential constraints to this are the required headroom for passing boats on the canal presently set at 3.5m above the water, and the potential incursion of the bridge on Hemel Hempstead Town Cricket Club. Any bridge construction must be compliant with British Waterways' Code of Practice.

Construction of a bridge such as this would necessitate steel construction although considerable further design input would be required to make the bridge suit both its location and its purpose.





Existing view looking north showing an informal descent to the Grand Union Canal adjacent to the bridge crossing the canal at Two Waters Road.

#### Recommendations:

Introduce new bridge connection to facilitate the new path along the Gade through Heath Park Gardens and Balderson's Moor. This will connect to the canal bridge over Two Waters Road, and provide access between any new development to the east of Two Waters Road and the Moors.

## 6

## 6.5 Bulbourne Moor Overflow Culvert Improvements

The removal of the concrete culvert pipe that allows overflow from the Grand Union Canal to enter the River Bulbourne is proposed. This will promote biodiversity in the area as well as the aesthetic value of Bulbourne Moor. It is intended to incorporate a bridge to maintain accessibility across the moor for visitors and livestock.

This would be accomplished by removing the concrete pipe and lining the watercourse with a plantable coir matting to resist erosion, and planting the banks with aquatic and semi aquatic species. Phragmites could be planted in a balancing pond to filter the water before it reaches the Bulbourne.

Challenges to this include maintaining access for both visitors and livestock, and the nature of the water flow that can be strong at times. Proposals to counter these issues include exposing the lower two thirds only of the culvert to maintain access near the canal and the possible retention of a half ring of concrete to further resist erosion, and maintain a consistent water flow.



### The Local Plan Suggests:

This objective generally seeks the retention of open land within the Inset Area. Unrestricted or piecemeal development would damage the continuity, integrity and value of open land, particularly through the valley bottoms. The environment of the rivers should be enhanced as a wildlife resource and the Grand Union Canal developed as a heritage attraction, informal leisure route and wildlife corridor.





Existing view looking south from the Grand Union Canal.

Recommendations:

Expose the culvert on Bulbourne Moor to increase the wildlife and ecological value as well as the aesthetics of the Moor. Vegetation based water filtration and a balancing pond element could be introduced.

## 6.6 Canal Towpath and Bridge Improvements

It is proposed that the towpath along the Grand Union Canal be resurfaced, and that lighting and other general improvements be made to the fabric of the bridges where Station Road and Two Waters Road pass over the canal.

These proposals will improve user experience of the canal, which is a significant east-west pedestrian and cycle traffic movement corridor.

### 6

It is suggested that the canal towpath be resurfaced with tarmac and a spray and chip surface dressing for both aesthetic and durability reasons. Improvements to the canal bridges include additional lighting to make the area safer and promote use of the towpath during the evenings. Potential decoration to under bridge walls could be installed including, for example, wayfinding maps of the local canal system or historic information about Hemel Hempstead, both designed with input from local users.

Prior to any lighting installation, a full bat survey should be carried out and any proposals designed not to interfere with wildlife movement at night.





6

Existing view east along the towpath showing the road bridge across the Grand Union Canal at Station Road.



#### Recommendations:

Improve the towpath and bridges over the Grand Union Canal. Some strategies include potential wayfinding additions and install lighting to increase the safety and evening use of the area.

## 6.7 Station Moor Access Improvements

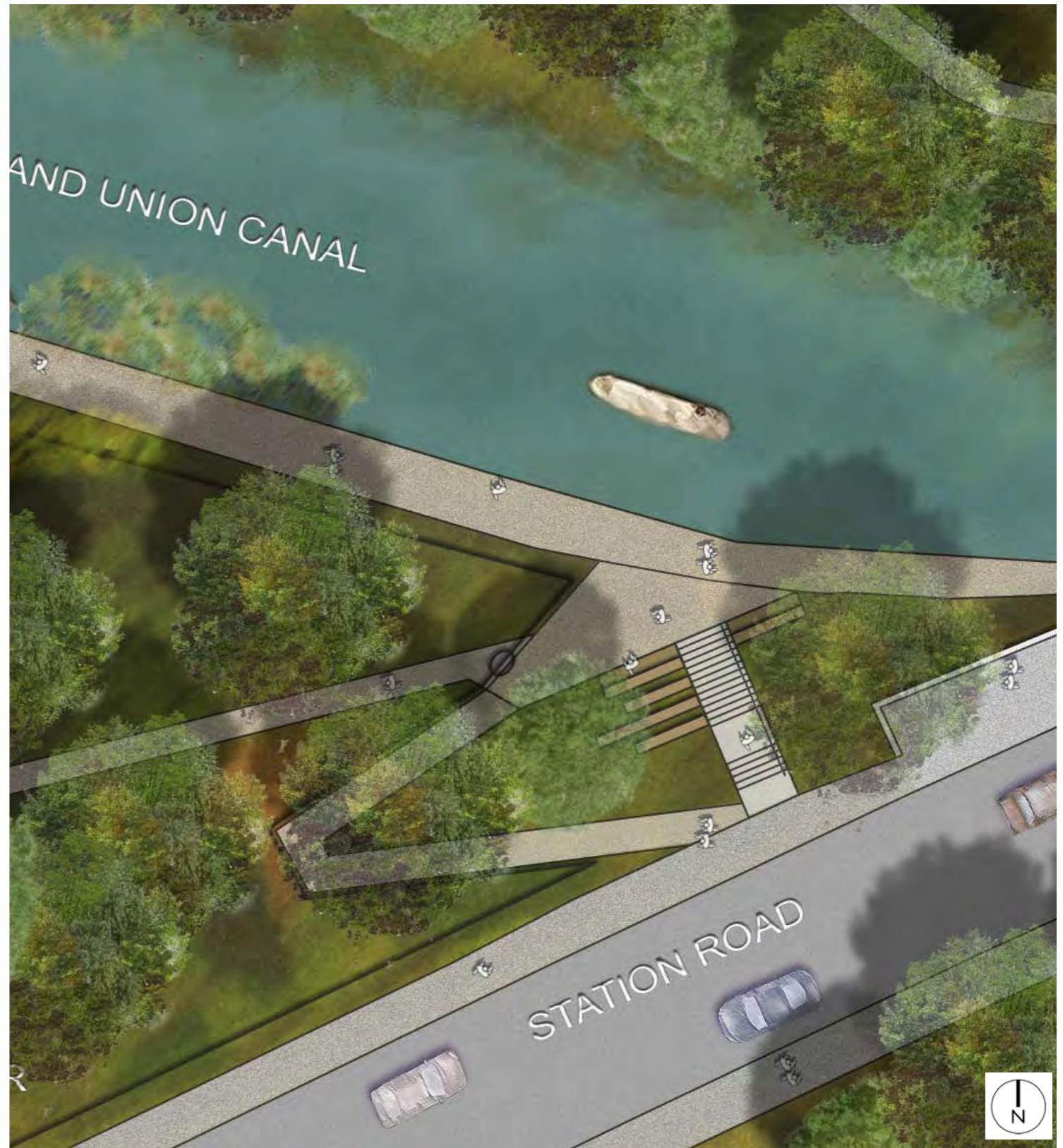
In addition to the towpath and canal bridge improvements, it is proposed that better access from the roads to the towpath and moors be created. Station Road is a fast moving access way between Hemel Hempstead Station and the Town Centre; at present it is also the logical method for foot traffic to move along this route as poor access down to the canal and Station Moor impedes both commuter and leisure users.

### 6

It is proposed to create a wider and better constructed stairway down to the towpath from Station Road, incorporating seating steps and planting, and a DDA compliant ramp to make the moor and towpath accessible to all.

In conjunction with this, an improved entryway including new fencing (in keeping with the Box Moor Trust's existing style) and a double width kissing gate are proposed. Improved wayfinding and signage are also suggested. These interventions will make a more inviting and accessible entrance to Station Moor and promote commuter and leisure use of the area.

The stairway and ramp would be of concrete construction with a non-slip aesthetically pleasing surface cladding or dressing, incorporating handrails and tactile paving where necessary.





Existing view of stepped access from Station Road to Station Moor.



6



Existing view of gate and fence at the northeast corner of Station Moor.



#### Recommendations:

Improve access, including disabled access, to the towpath and Moors. A more inviting and direct access to the path across Station Moor will increase the use of the pedestrian Town Centre- station link and access to the Moors.

## 6.8 Footpath Improvements on Station Moor

To further improve the access between Hemel Hempstead Station and the Town Centre in addition to the proposals in 6.7 and 6.8, a resurfaced path across Station Moor is proposed. The existing surface is a mulch that is often difficult underfoot in winter, and resurfacing would assist with DDA compliance and allow year round use. This path will also allow people to make this journey away from the noisy and busy Station Road, and it is expected it will attract the greater share of pedestrians, as it is a more direct route.

### 6

We suggest a tarmac path with a surface spray and chip finish in keeping with the aforementioned proposals.

The Local Plan Suggests:

People should be encouraged to use their cars on a more considered basis and to use other means of transport more frequently. The creation of new cycle routes and footways should be made more attractive to users. The Gade valley is flat and would be a suitable corridor for cyclists if opportunities are identified to create a new safe route complementing the local highway authority's network.





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Existing view looking southeast along the path across Station Moor

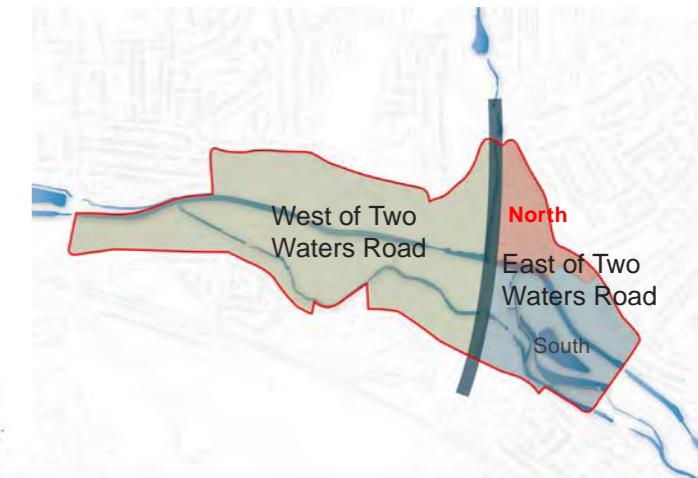
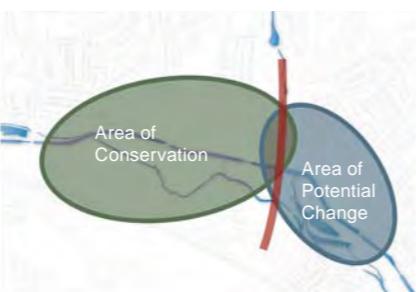
**Recommendations:**

Improve the surfacing and wayfinding to the footpath across Station Moor. This will strengthen the under used Town Centre to Station connection, and encourage footfall across the site in general.

## 7.0 Concept Options: East of Two Waters Road

This section investigates the design rationale of the areas east of Two Waters Road, first to the north and then to the south of the Grand Union Canal. This part of the study area has been identified as having greater potential for comprehensive enhancement.

A number of design options are shown here, with the rationale behind them. From this a detailed design has been developed as shown in section 7.3.



### 7.1 Design Rationale- North of the Grand Union Canal

7



Aerial view of existing site



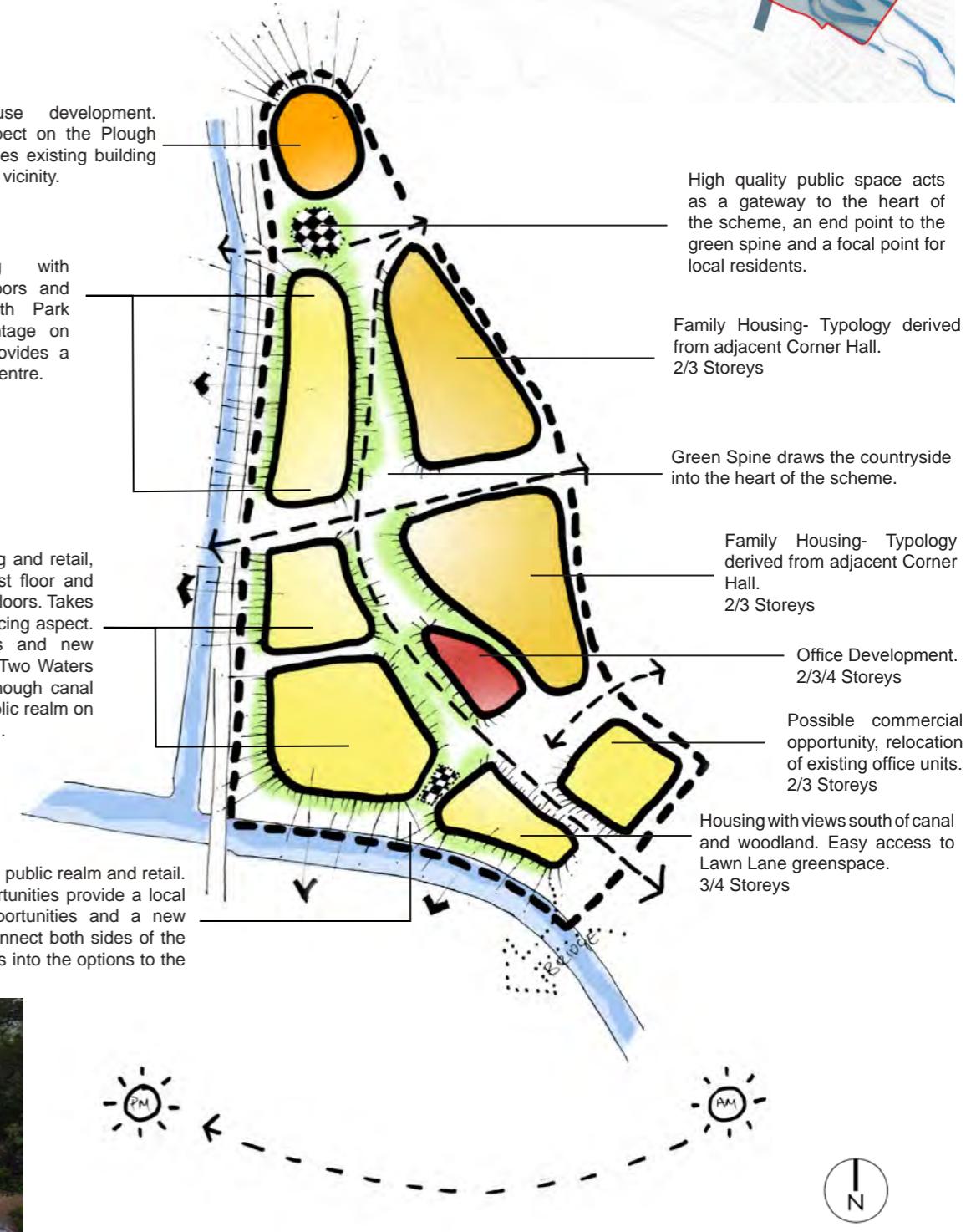
Panorama showing the existing view east along the canal from Two Waters Road

Landmark mixed use development. Provides a strong aspect on the Plough roundabout and matches existing building height typologies in the vicinity.  
6/7/8 Storeys

Apartment Housing with views across the Moors and the redesigned Heath Park Gardens. Strong frontage on Two Waters Road provides a gateway to the Town Centre.  
4/5 Storeys

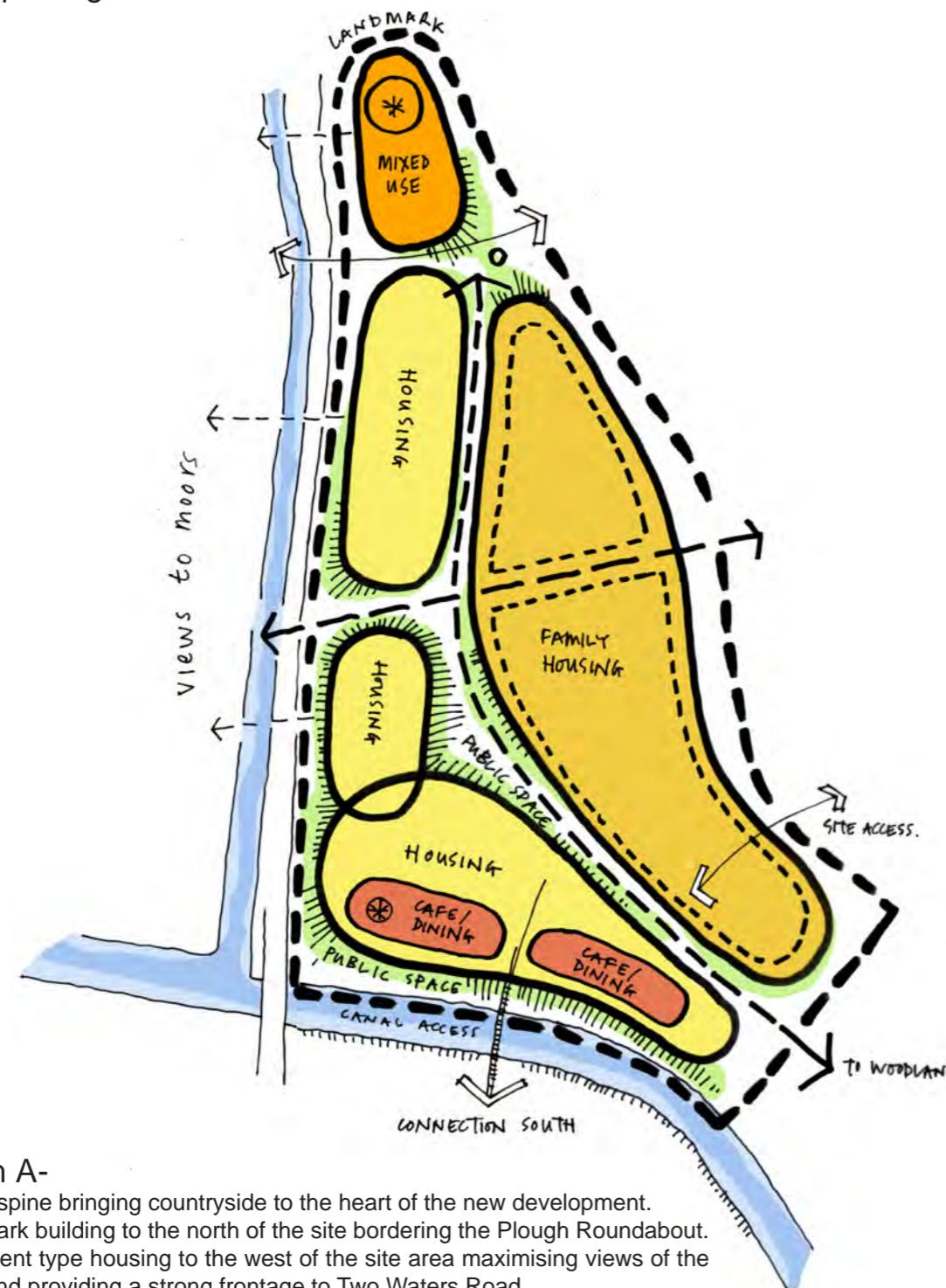
Mixed use cafe/ dining and retail, on the ground and 1st floor and housing on the upper floors. Takes advantage of south facing aspect. Mooring opportunities and new bridge to the west of Two Waters Road. Added value through canal proximity and new public realm on both sides of the canal.  
3/4 Storeys

High quality canal side public realm and retail. Cafe and dining opportunities provide a local amenity. Mooring opportunities and a new bridge to the south connect both sides of the canal and tie proposals into the options to the south.



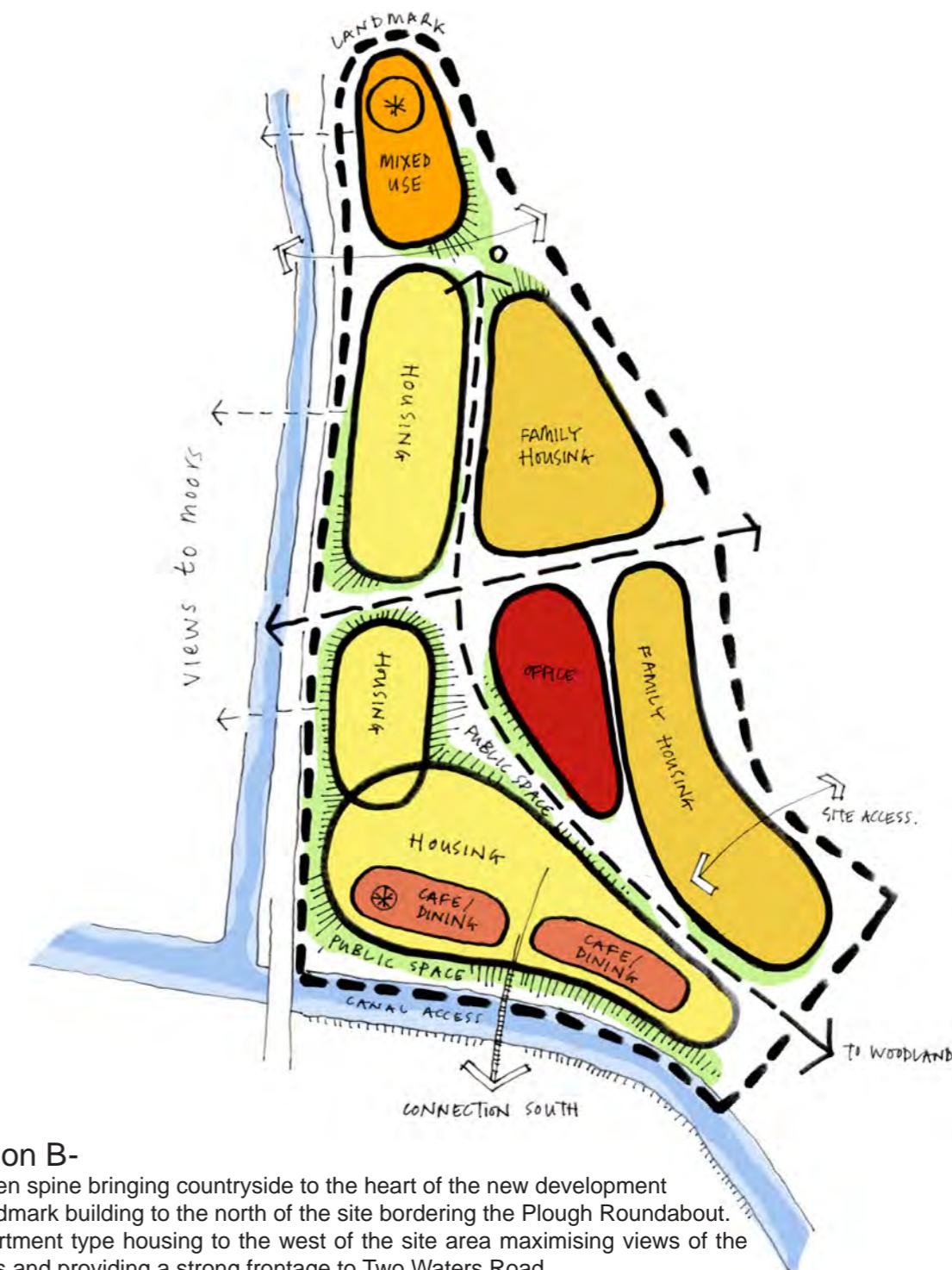
## 7.2 Concept Diagrams- North of the Grand Union Canal

7



### Option A-

- Green spine bringing countryside to the heart of the new development.
- Landmark building to the north of the site bordering the Plough Roundabout.
- Apartment type housing to the west of the site area maximising views of the moors and providing a strong frontage to Two Waters Road.
- Mixed use housing, retail, cafe/dining development bordering the canal to the south capitalising on views south and mooring opportunities.
- Family Housing to the east linking with the style in Corner Hall.
- Layby mooring opportunities within the canal to allow boaters to use the facilities.



### Option B-

- Green spine bringing countryside to the heart of the new development
- Landmark building to the north of the site bordering the Plough Roundabout.
- Apartment type housing to the west of the site area maximising views of the moors and providing a strong frontage to Two Waters Road.
- Mixed use housing, retail, cafe/dining development bordering the canal to the south capitalising on views south and mooring opportunities.
- Family housing to the east linking with the style in Corner Hall.
- Office development in the heart of the site.
- Layby mooring opportunities within the canal to allow boaters to use the facilities



### 7.3 Developed Design Option- North of the Grand Union Canal

1. Landmark residential/ retail building of a comparable height to the Riverside development opposite.
2. New public square links landmark building to Heath Park Gardens and Lawn Lane, and reinforces a focal point to the green spine through the masterplan.
3. Residential apartment building providing views across the moors and strong frontage to Two Waters Road.
- 4 . An enhanced public realm experience along Two Waters Road with widened footways, tree planting and spaces that respond to the new buildings.
5. Family housing with back gardens takes influence from the adjacent Corner Hall residential typology.
6. Office opportunity with some relocation of existing employment.
7. Mixed use development taking advantage of canalside location with cafe/dining and retail on the ground floor with residential above.
8. Mixed use development taking advantage of canalside location with cafe/dining and retail on the ground floor with residential above.
9. Layby mooring opportunity for visiting boats, with access to the new development, the Moors and Town Centre.
10. An enhanced public realm along the canalside complements the ground floor uses of Blocks 7and 8.
11. Highly vegetated green spine through the scheme softens the development, bringing in the Lawn Lane woodland and countryside influence of the moors into the proposals. Swales and water attenuating ponds provide local flood storage and habitat creation along this route.
12. New pedestrian footbridge enhances connections north and south of the canal.
13. Corner Hall access road retained, however becomes a 'shared surface' environment.
14. Residential apartment building providing views across the moors and strong frontage to Two Waters Road.
15. New pedestrian footbridge connecting the Moors to the new development to the east of Two Waters Road.
16. Family housing with back gardens takes influence from the adjacent Corner Hall residential typology.
17. Residential apartment opportunity.



## An Impression of the Green Spine Looking North



1. 4-5 storey apartment housing with views overlooking Heath Park Gardens and the Moors.

2. Informal public gardens soften the built development.

3. Shared pedestrian and vehicle access.

4. Swales and balancing ponds for storm water attenuation.

5. 2-3 storey family housing along Lawn Lane.

## 7.4 Design Rationale- South of the Grand Union Canal

This section investigates the design rationale of the areas to the east of Two Waters Road, and south of the Grand Union Canal. As in the area to the north, this part of the study area has been identified as having greater potential for comprehensive enhancement, although there are clearly further ecologically sensitive aspects to consider.

A number of design options are shown here, and the rationale behind them. From this a detailed design has been developed as shown in section 7.6.

### 7



Two Waters East is a designated open space in the Local Plan, a possible conflict exists as this is a potential development site. It has however, undergone contamination remediation so its use as a recreational open space is limited.

Dacorum Borough Council owned bedding plant nursery site. This has potential to remain as a plant production base tied into ecological and commercial activities.

The Lake in the Apsley Triangle is used by the Boxmoor and District Angling Society and limits public access.

Corner Hall greenspace is also designated Open Space in the Local Plan. It is under used and isolated from the nearby residential area. It has potential as a development site with good links to the Grand Union Canal.

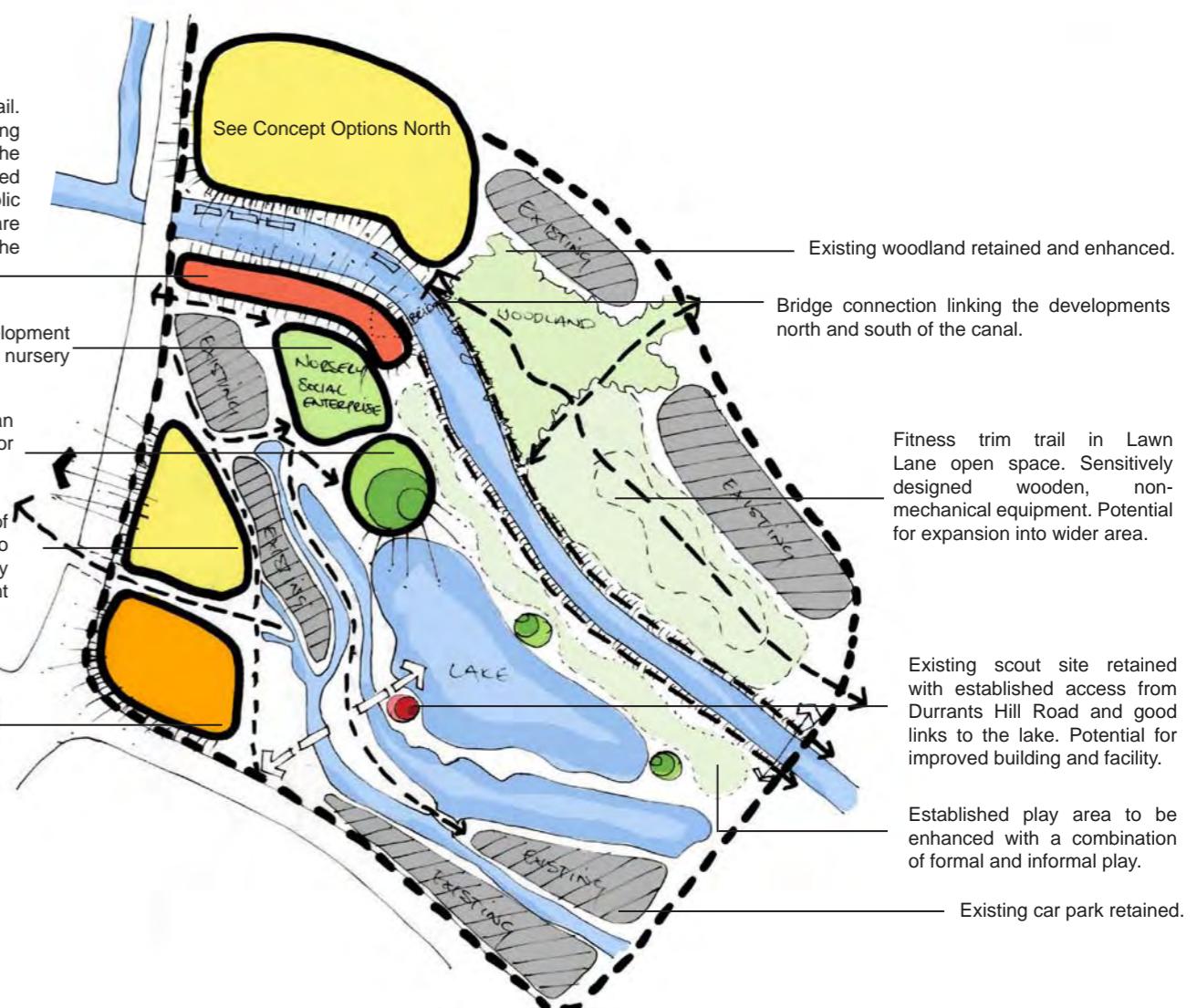
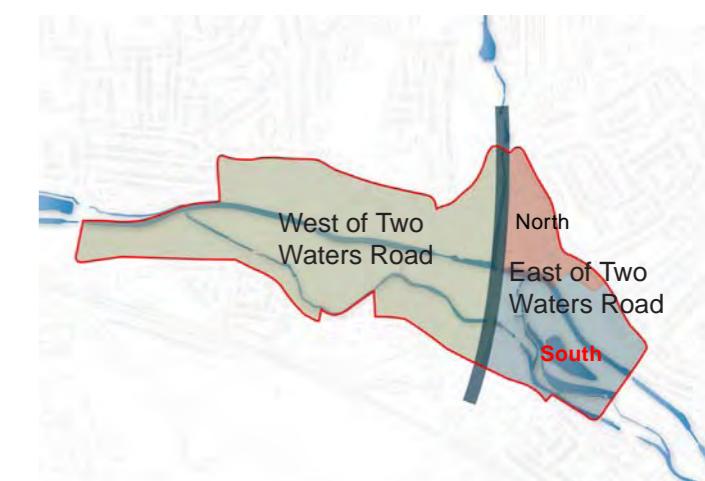
Mixed use cafe/ dining and retail. Takes advantage of mooring opportunities and new bridge to the west of Two Waters Road. Added value through proximity to new public realm on both sides of the canal. Care will be taken not to overshadow the canal and towpath.  
3/4 Storey

Council nursery site ideal for redevelopment as a non-commercial/ charitable nursery tied into an eco centre proposal.

New eco/ wetland centre, as an educational resource and visitor attraction.

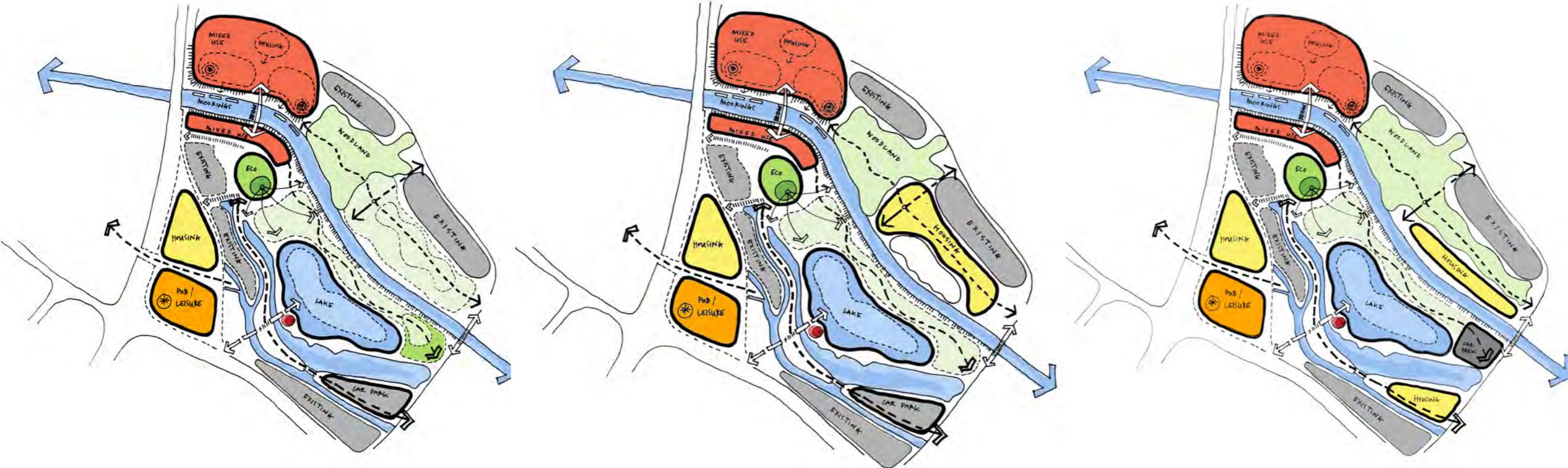
Apartment housing with views of the Moors. Strong frontage on Two Waters Road provides a gateway from the A41. Possible development for a contaminated site.  
4/5 Storeys

Pub or cafe/ dining provides landmark gateway. Possible site for relocation of cafe/dining associated with station gateway scheme.  
3/4 Storeys



## 7.5 Concept Diagrams- South of the Grand Union Canal

7



### Option A- Minimal Intervention

- Pub/ Dining on Two Waters East.
- Housing on Hewden Hire Site.
- Eco Centre making use of lake and wetland habitat.
- Residential and retail/cafe development south of the canal off Two Waters Rd.
- Scout capacity retained on site due to troop size requirements and their preferred isolation at their current location.
- New bridge connecting developments north and south of the Grand Union Canal.
- Developments will carefully tie in with existing canal and towpath users and enhance the waterside experience.

### Option B- Medium Intervention

- Pub/ Dining on Two Waters East.
- Housing on Hewden Hire Site.
- Eco Centre making use of Lake and wetland habitat.
- Residential and retail/cafe development south of the canal off Two Waters Rd.
- Residential development at Lawn Lane Open Space.
- Scout capacity retained on site due to troop size requirements and their preferred isolation at their current location.
- New bridge connecting developments north and south of the Grand Union Canal.
- Developments will carefully tie in with existing canal and towpath users and enhance the waterside experience.

### Option C- Maximum Intervention

- Pub/ dining on Two Waters East.
- Housing on Hewden Hire Site.
- Eco Centre making use of Lake and wetland habitat
- Residential and retail/cafe development south of the canal off Two Waters Rd.
- Relocation of car park off Durrants Hill Road and housing on existing car park site.
- Residential development adjacent to canal at Lawn Lane Open Space.
- Scout capacity retained on site due to troop size requirements and their preferred isolation at their current location.
- New bridge connecting developments north and south of the Grand Union Canal.
- Developments will carefully tie in with existing canal and towpath users and enhance the waterside experience.



## 7.6 Developed Design Option- South of the Grand Union Canal

- 7**
1. Eco/ wetland education centre, set back from the lake to preserve the marginal habitat.
  2. Nursery site with renewed use (car park shared with the Eco Centre).
  3. Mixed use cafe/dining retail development. Building heights restricted so as not to overshadow the canal or towpath. Connected in character to the development opposite across the canal.
  4. Pub/cafe/dining with strong visual character to frame the entrance to the Town Centre.
  5. Residential apartment building providing views of Moors and strong frontage to Two Waters Road.
  6. Lawn Lane Open Space and trim trail, with improved entrances and footpath from Lawn Lane and Durrants Hill Road.
  7. Scout building and facilities.
  8. 'Old' Two Waters Road to maintain car parking but to be resurfaced to promote a 'shared surface' environment.
  9. Lake. Angling to be retained but public access improved and occasional boating to be explored. The established marginal habitats and biodiversity to be protected and enhanced.
  10. Feature decks and shelters around the lake are accessed via new footpaths around the lake perimeter, where existing vegetation permits. The shelters can be used for angling, scouting, boating docks and teaching points associated with the Eco Centre.
  11. Existing woodland retained.
  12. Existing play space integrated with wider development and improved with natural, artificial and educational play elements.
  13. Existing car park retained.
  14. Canal towpath upgraded.



## Impressions of the Lake and Eco Centre



View of proposed Eco/ Wetland Centre



View of proposed Eco Shelters and lake use

## 7.7 Lawn Lane Open Space

The existing area between Lawn Lane and Durrants Hill Road is a quiet, under used space which scored poorly in the Open Space Assessment. Its proximity to a mature woodland area and the Grand Union Canal should be exploited with pedestrian access from Lawn Lane and Durrants Hill Road improved, and greater connection introduced to the proposals to the west.

### 7

The recommendation is to maintain its informal natural appearance but to increase usability by introducing improved footpath links, seating and the provision of a fitness trail.

A 2 metre wide footpath is proposed to improve access and usage for all. The footpath would link the various elements of a fitness trim trail through the space as described on page 63. Access to the space would be improved through the widening of entrances, the reduction of overgrown vegetation and greater signage and way finding.

The canal side location could be exploited by the opening up of vistas and greater access to the waters edge where appropriate. Waterside marginal habitats and general biodiversity improvements should be encouraged.



Existing entrance from Lawn Lane



Existing entrance from Durrants Hill Road



1. Entrance to Lawn Lane Open Space from Lawn Lane



2. Entrance to Lawn Lane Open Space from Durrants Hill Road

The area is under the ownership of Dacorum Borough Council so the planned works will not require adjustments to leases or agreement of other parties. Proposals to improve access include the widening of paths, the improvements of gates, the removal of excessive vegetation and improved signage.

The Trim Trail will be a series of exercise equipment in a compact circuit. The equipment shown here are examples of the type of equipment preferred; they are non-mechanical, this will prevent many health and safety issues as well as limiting the possibility of failure of the equipment, and are made of wooden or natural materials to better suit the location. There is potential for the extension of the trim trail to other areas of the project study area, with the possible use of further equipment and mile markers for joggers and cyclists.

The existing play space off Durrants Hill Road has potential to be enhanced through a greater mix of natural, informal play, combined with traditional equipment.

The play area should be extended so it is given more prominence to Durrants Hill Road with improved footpath access and greater lighting, signage and soft landscaping. The access to the Scout Building should be retained.



3. Proposed Play Space off Durrants Hill Road

#### Possible Trim Trail Equipment



Chin Up Bars



Balance Beam



Parallel Bars



Basic Workout/ Seating Bench



Horizontal Ladder



Leap Frog



Rope Climb



Sign Board



Existing play space off Durrants Hill Road

## 7.8 Masterplan

7



## Impressions of Proposed Interventions



1. View of Heath Park Gardens



2a. Bridge across the River Gade at Heath Park Gardens



2b. Proposed Path adjacent to the River Gade at Heath Park Gardens



2c. Edge softening of the Gade at Heath Park Gardens



3a. Towpath and Canal Bridge Improvements at Station Road



3b. Night View of Towpath and Canal Bridge Improvements at Station Road



4. Access Improvements from Station Road to Station Moor



5. Footpath improvements on Station Moor



6. Access improvements to Station Moor



7. Culvert improvements on Bulbourne Moor



8. Bridge and Access proposals from Two Waters Road to the Grand Union Canal and Heath Park Gardens



9. Green Spine to the East of Two Waters Road

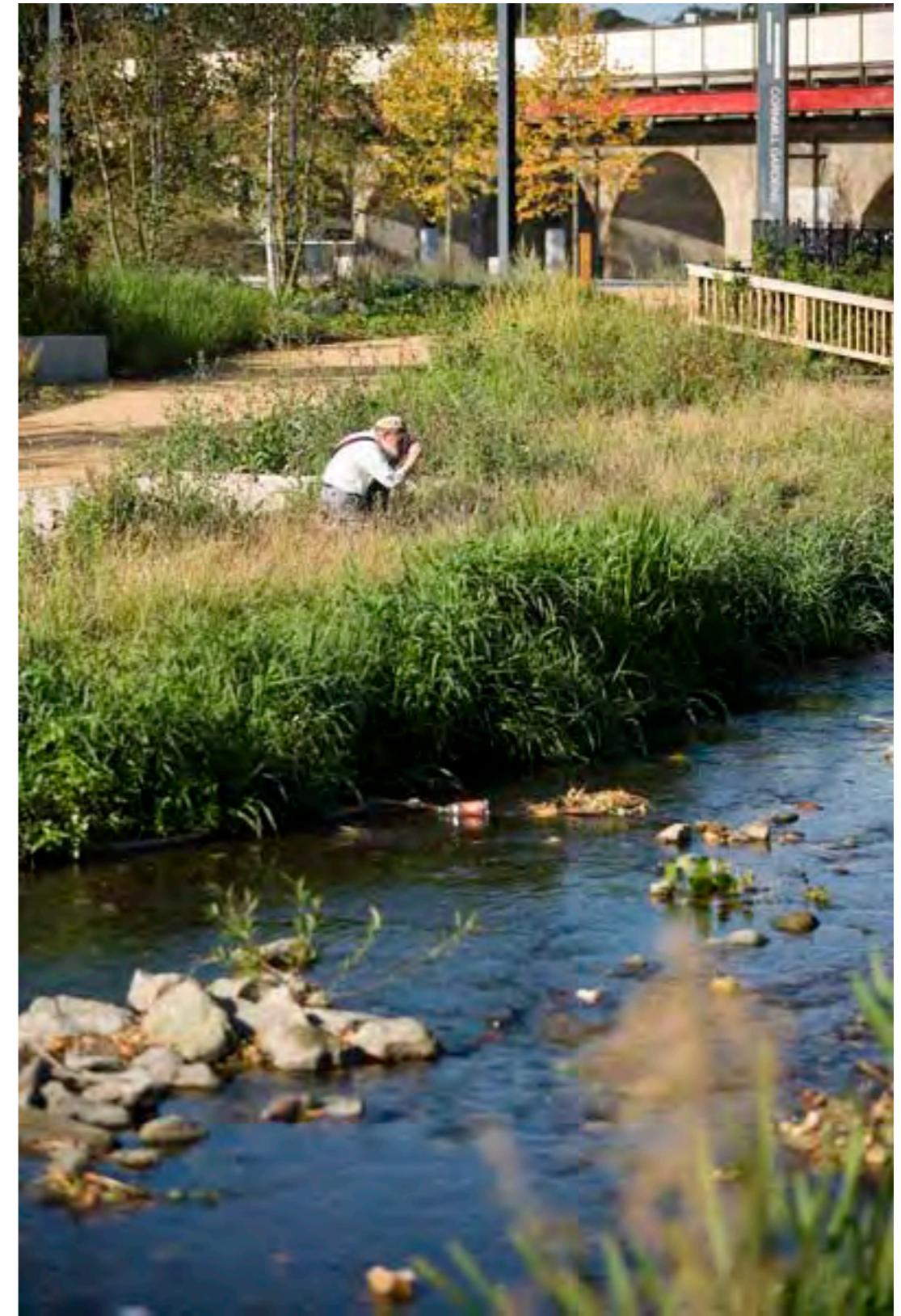


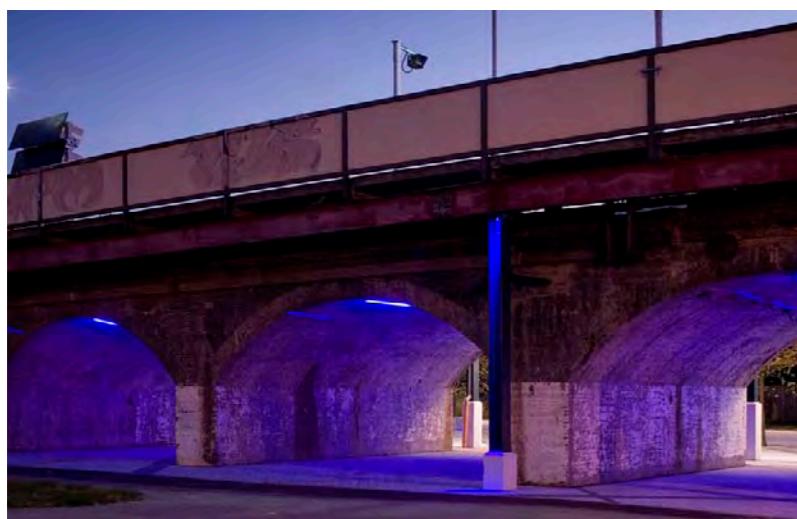
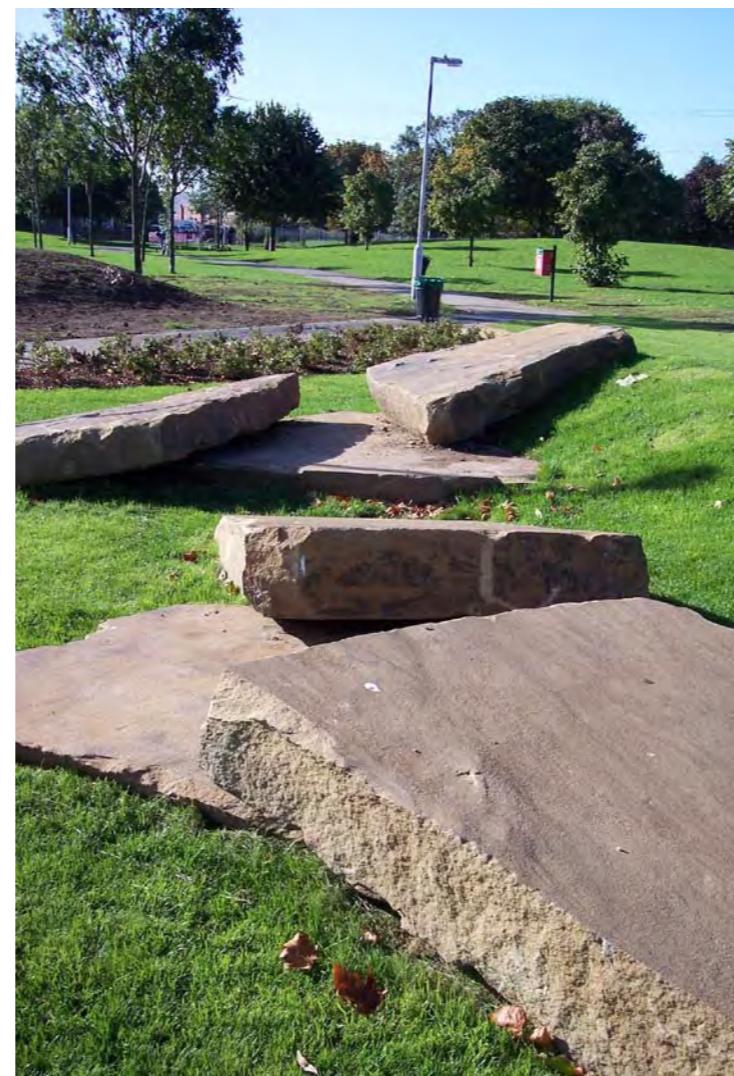
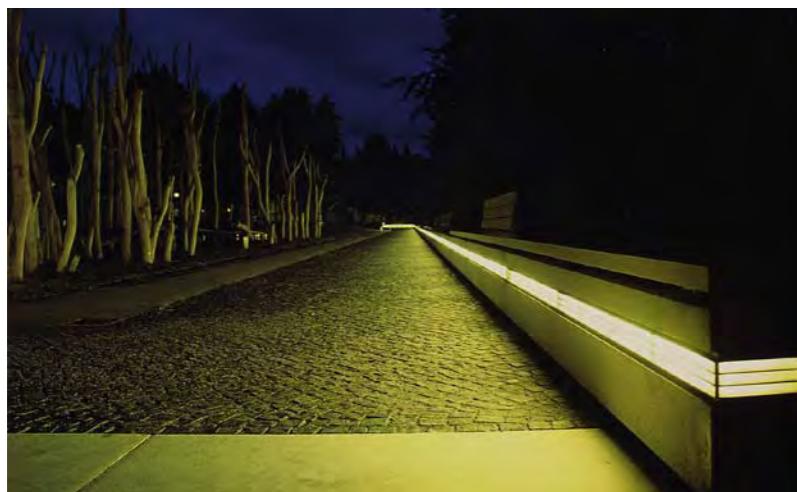
10. Eco Centre near the Lake within the Apsley Triangle



11. Enhanced Play Area off Durrants Hill Road

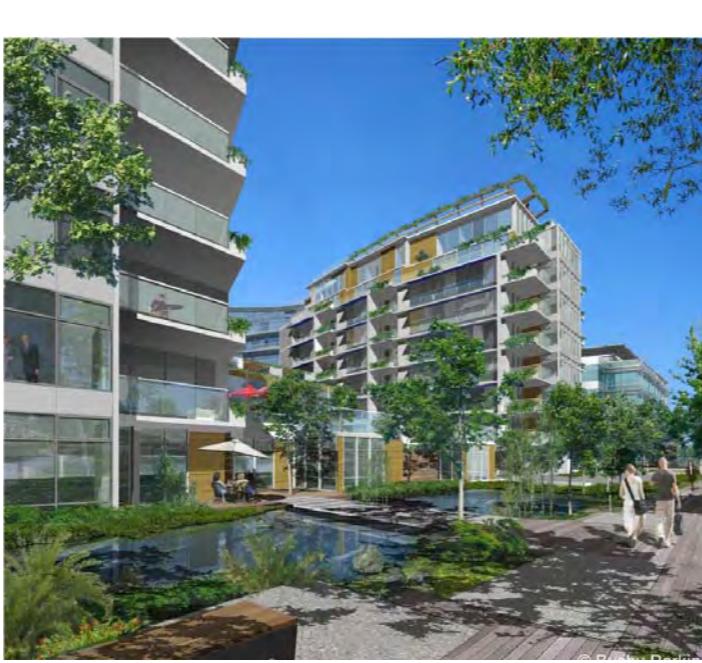
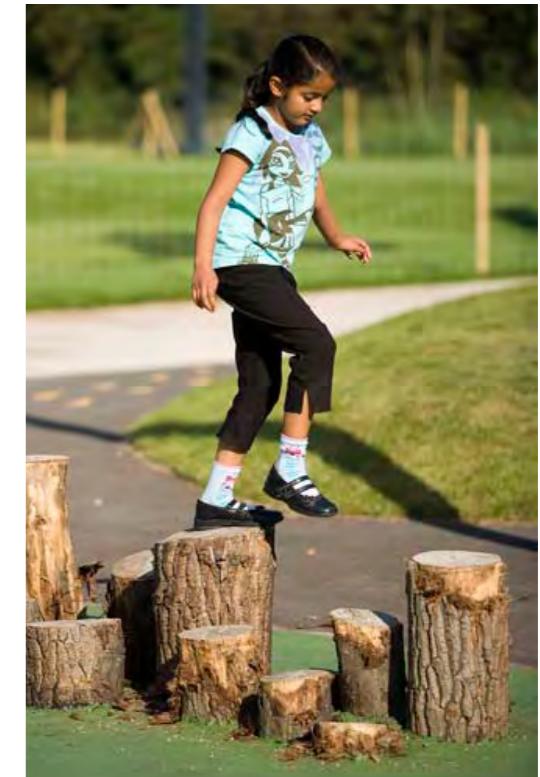
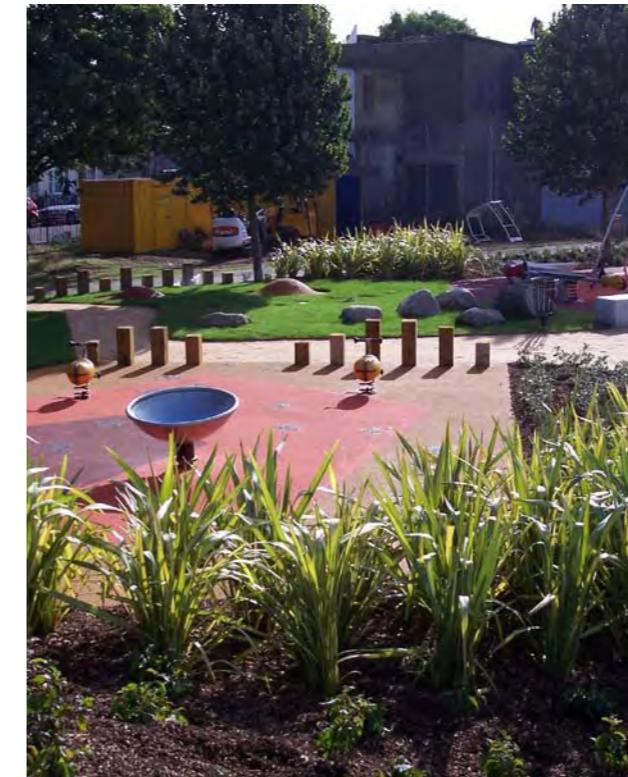
## 7.9 Precedent Images: West of Two Waters Road





## 7.10 Precedent Images: East of Two Waters Road





# Appendix 1

Consultation Report





# Appendix 1:1 Consultation Report

## Approach and Consultation Timetable

A1

In order to build upon the brief and the aspirations set out by the client team, a series of consultations and meetings have taken place involving members of the public, various departments within Dacorum Borough Council and key stakeholders in order to drive the project forward. This is in keeping with Dacorum Borough Council's philosophy of involving the community in decisions that will ultimately affect their lives.

A public consultation event took place in the pedestrianised Marlowes Town Centre shopping area on Thursday 24th June 2010 in order to coincide with the busy market day thus being able to speak to as wide an audience as possible. Alternative communication methods were also used, including a paper questionnaire for those unable to give their views on the day, and an online questionnaire on the Dacorum Borough Council website, advertised through a press release.

A series of stakeholder meetings have taken place throughout the data gathering and report writing process.

## Responses from Stakeholder meetings

### Environmental Forum Water Group 28th April 2010

The river restoration project and how our feasibility can build upon its proposals  
The need to identify funding streams so that necessary works can take place  
Consideration of the low flows and flood scenarios need to be explored  
Link to Town Centre regeneration  
Fishing lake – current depths, access and safety issues  
The existing water courses and controls/connections within these  
Adjacent studies and links up and down stream  
General access, circulation and parking within the area  
Water flows from the Town Centre, current waste of pure water  
Historic significance – fishing destination and Mills  
Current pollution problems and water quality  
Potential community / volunteer involvement in maintaining / improving the rivers  
The perception and knowledge of the water courses – link to education and interpretation  
The concept and usage of the area – the notion of a green space / park.

### Boxmoor Trust Meeting 14th May 2010

Initial concern from PA that the site boundary appears too large and that the moors to the west are sacrosanct and should not be developed. BDP explained that the red line boundary is indicative and does not necessarily mean that anything will be, or has to be proposed within it.  
  
There were different perceptions within the Trust as to whether the land was over or under used. The western field currently has a large dog walker usage. The Trust would not support tarmac covered paths but they need to demonstrate they have allowed for DDA requirements and were keen to explore the views of mobility impaired users.  
  
Pathways should not ruin the countryside feel or alter the character of the moors  
  
The trust reiterated the view that the land is a 'working countryside' and their objectives are Amenity, Social Welfare and Recreation. There a balance required in how the land operates from a grazing regime to allowing recreational activity.  
  
Grazing is an important aspect to the management of the moors, the Trust would be reluctant for a change in use as the size of them would make maintenance difficult and expensive.  
  
The financial consideration of the Trust is very important. The B&Q site generates 57% of the Trusts income, therefore any proposals for this land should aim to improve income and not reduce it.  
  
The Trust would like to see the Nickey Line embankment remain and enhanced as an important landscape feature.  
  
The Trust was concerned over the long term investment of building a marina versus its financial returns but also the visual impact on the site. New buildings for example should be sited to the south, at Two Waters junction rather than in Heath Park Gardens.  
  
Heath Park Gardens is viewed by the Trust as the most important green space of the study area, which should be maintained and protected.

**Nick Graham, Parks and Open Spaces Officer, Dacorum Borough Council, 2nd July 2010**

This project provides a golden opportunity to develop and improve a large green space on the edge of the town. The study has identified current usage, and outlined some potential improvements that will enhance the space for the benefit of the local community. From the discussion during the meeting it seems clear that it is vitally important that the views of the Box Moor Trust as the majority land owner are fully taken into account and reflected in the draft Master Plan. This project will only succeed if it is genuinely a partnership between the Trust and the Council. As Ian Richardson highlighted, this is an opportunity to improve the space and that the Trust should keep an open mind – this also applies to Dacorum. A lot more work needs to be done to ensure that the proposals are acceptable to all.

I personally like the concept presented and think that the potential for improving/enhancing access and linkages with the surrounding area, interpretation of site features (chalk stream, etc.), and enhancing biodiversity value will be particularly beneficial. A cafe/refreshment facility at Heath Park or at Blackbird's Moor could be popular with local people.

The Central Nursery is within the area under consideration, and it should be noted that this site is still being used by Clean, Safe and Green as a holding/storage area and for bedding plant production. The impact of the loss of this site on the service should be considered when developing the Master Plan.

**Stakeholder Meeting Dacorum Borough Council  
29th June 2010**

Dennis Furnell BMT: Thinks proposals are like a 'theme park'. Stresses BMT's majority ownership of the discussed area. Considers draft proposals not good for the canal gateway area. Points out the possibility of SSSIs in the area.

Stresses limitations on BMT land usage.

Peter Ablet BMT : Would prefer use of the term 'working countryside', and says people enjoy using the area.

Ian Richardson BMT: Says there is still 'tweaking and refining' to be done to the proposals but thinks there is merit in the plans. Thinks the Moors are under utilised and BMT will research usage. Understands that BDP recognise the continuity of the moors.

BMT: Considers disabled access an issue.

Paul BW: Fully in support of the study, glad that the waterways are central to any future plans. Says people don't move east to west much so the canal is not much use in this. Use the Canal as a spine. What is wanted here? Considers there to be noise issues on the moors.

DF BMT: People picnic on the moors, no one goes to Heath Park.

Roger Hands BMT: understand that BDP are taking the BMT into account. Thinks the area should be considered as a whole, and thinks the study will 'come good'. Would prefer rivers to be referred to as Chalk Streams, and that they are a rare a valuable asset.

James DBC Planning: Considers that proposals should be part of a wider scheme and these need connecting. Thinks the Two Waters Road separates two areas, the moors are an area of 'preservation' and the other side is an area of 'active change'. These must be complementary to each other. Hopes study will address connectivity. Potential for development in the Apsley triangle and the area to the north. Suggests an open character to any development in the area.

DF BMT: Stresses BMT ownership to areas and restrictions on land usage. The BMT is unique. Suggests BMT could incorporate the council nursery site.

Chris Taylor DBC: Open up the connectivity between

The project, led by landscape architects from BDP, aims to improve the open spaces for the community to enjoy. Wildlife and biodiversity will be protected, and accessibility to the site will be improved. The existing natural features will be enhanced by adding new facilities, based on the views of local people and groups. New facilities could include allotments and community gardens, countryside interpretation facilities, playground equipment, sports facilities, improved foot and cycle paths, performance spaces and places to eat and drink.

As key organisations in the management of this important greenspace and its surroundings, and in planning for its future, you are invited to meet BDP and contribute to this ongoing study.

5pm at the Council Offices on Tuesday 29th June

For more information please contact either:

Pam Halliwell - Pam.Halliwell@dacorum.gov.uk  
Claire Covington - Claire.Covington@dacorum.gov.uk

BDP.

the Town Centre and the station. Improve perception of this.

PA BMT: people do currently walk from the station to the town.

RH BMT: Jelicoe wanted to make more of link from the station to the Town.

PA BMT: Integrated transport could improve path to station along avenue.

Paul BW: Would like legibility of towpath connections and Time to Station/ Centre signage.

BDP: In our experience people don't walk. Current situation needs improving, small changes can make a big difference. West of the Two Waters Road should be preserved and east of the Two Waters Road should be changed. Improvements on how these are connected.

**Consultation with Simon Fancourt leader of 1st Apsley Scout Group based in the Apsley Triangle:**

We are members of the scout association, this is made up by layers, the association is sub divided by counties then districts then to group level, each group is an individual charity on its own and has uniformed volunteers and a committee an average size of a group is a beaver colony a cub pack and a scout troop with around 50-60 young people and around 10 adults

But we at apsley are different, our group is one of 12 making the hemel district, which is one of 20 making herts county, our group is made up of 4 lots of beavers, 3 lots of cubs and 2 lots of scouts. In total over 270 youngsters and around 40 adults, our building is used every weekday evening from around 430pm till approx 10pm, at present we do not have events on every weekend, however the idea of a 3rd scout troop on a Saturday morning is at planning stage. We sometimes do have a group or section event at the weekend using our HQ, like this term we have a Christmas craft event on a Saturday. Also if we go away camping and equipment comes back wet we use the HQ to dry tents etc in the day time.

Our building has its own grounds which we use for our members, we have a fire circle at the rear of our building which is used for outdoor cooking activities it also has log seating around the main circle. At the front of our HQ we have hard standing which we use for activities like pioneering projects or teaching new outdoor skills before going out into the open like orienteering.

We also have space to hold group outdoor events like are Halloween event where we have lots of outdoor bases as well as indoor bases.

We have space for cars to park in our grounds and down the drive, at some change over times i.e. when beavers are going home and cubs arriving we can have 50 or so cars parked, they also gain access to our grounds via Durrants Hill road. Our location also has other benefits, our members often go outside, in the summer time you can often see beavers playing or doing activities in the green space next to the play park. We also use the field for games and activities like tracking, known to us as Lawn Lane field and our older members often use the towpath to walk to Boxmoor Trust Land to play games like rounders etc.

When also looking at nature badges we use the water next to us for info as well as using the Trust land and activity centre they have.

One of the great advantages of our location is our neighbours, we never have any problems or complaints about noise traffic etc.

When I took over this group in 1994 the group was in need of much modernisation both in membership and the HQ, the fantastic adult team I lead have transformed this group both in membership and the improvements of the HQ, we have spent well over £50k in improvements; these include a complete new floor, a new security system, a full re-wire of the whole HQ, a complete new toilets including a disabled toilet, a new kitchen and new water tank and pump for the water from the well. We have had a new oil heating system put in including new oil tank - as there is no mains gas to our building. The inside has had at least two full repaints.

Our plans for the future is to have a new roof put on next summer holidays which then will have solar panels attached to it, we have estimates and are currently sourcing funding ( the reason how i found out about your scheme, as we have asked for an extension on our lease).

We also have future plans which include new perimeter fence and entrance gates, we are also looking at improving the hard surface and a make over of the exterior paint work etc of the building.

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## Consultation Event Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Thursday 24th June 2010

The event took place at on Market Day in the Town Centre shopping area in order to attract the wide cross section of the community and the largest amount of consultees possible.

The event involved consultants from BDP utilising the boards opposite and on the following pages (41 & 42) to highlight the project study area and provide a list of ideas and stimuli to assist the public in commenting on what (if anything) they would like to see improved in the area.

Consultants from BDP successfully spoke to and received comments from approximately 70 people.

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### Consultation Responses from Public Event:

Retain green space, clean up generally and river  
More play areas and paths  
Make Apsley Triangle greener  
No more commercial development

Doesn't use heath park  
Keep parking but make less haphazard near cricket club  
Underpass needs improvement  
Leave Moors as they are  
No need to improve footpaths  
Clean up Apsley Triangle, keep as green space though  
Housing possible on nursery site  
Access to B&Q is difficult

Extra sports facilities – particularly archery (150-200m length) -can be temporary  
Remain green space  
Enjoys canal and pub walks

Doesn't use area – thinks of heath park as separate to moors  
Wants café facilities  
Wants improvement in Apsley triangle  
Sports facilities – particularly tennis  
Improve canal towpath surface  
Wants new bridges throughout area  
Thinks Apsley Triangle and Heath Park are under used  
Better access across Magic roundabout  
Improve Heath Park (more flowers)

Better toilet facilities on moors

More and better bins

Better play – paddling pool?  
Improve canal access and cycling path

Closer mowing regime

Likes cattle

More recreation facilities

Stop people parking and going to the station – wants parking for people to use the site  
Thinks public transport is adequate

Area well used for dog walking  
Improve Apsley Triangle – greenspace  
Must not urbanise moors

Not enough parking – formalise parking on cricket club road

Canal is good

Doesn't want return of lido by the lock  
Remove B&Q

Develop Apsley Triangle – under used at present

Wants public access to fishing lake

Better access across waterways particularly on moors

Improve parking (make limited time restrictions)  
Better disabled access

Better litter control

Retain existing moors

No more industrial areas

More trees

Allotments and city farming wanted

Better river quality

Wants nature interpretation centre

Retain existing moorland as both natural and grazed

More temporary events

Better litter control (pigeonhole bins)

No more B&Q and car showrooms – make greenspace

No new housing

Reduce cricket road parking – more enforcement

More parking off the moors

Separate cycle and path along canal – maybe both sides

Improve underpass

Thinks Dacorum has issues with planning generally

New toilets (somewhere out of the way)

Walks on moors

Retain moors as they are

No new housing (flats)

No parking on road near cricket club

**The Project**

BDP have been commissioned by Dacorum Borough Council to undertake a feasibility study into the prospectus to the existing town centre, including the Canal towpath, buildings and infrastructure, including the Apsley Triangle.

The study will assess the constraints and opportunity for enhancing the site to serve local residents and visitors to the area, in keeping with the aims of the Hemel 2020 vision.

**Location of the Study Area**

The project study area is located South of the Town Centre between the A41 and the A414, running through Dacorum Hill and Station Road. It is also at the confluence of the River Gade and the Dacorum Brook, as well as the Royal Midland Canal and the Dacorum Canal. The area is currently presented to motorists accessing the town from the A41, from the south, as a single, open space area at ground level. It is a vital open space to residents of the adjoining Canalside and Dacorum Hill residential areas.

The proposed study area is approximately 23 hectares, the majority of which is open land, in the ownership of Dacorum Borough Council. The area contains a mix of residential premises, local businesses, schools, parks and gardens, schools, retail and businesses within the UK, Buntingford and Hemel Hempstead.

Other key sites include: Catherine Gardens in Hemel Hempstead, Roger Black's in Luton and the award winning regeneration of Catherine Gardens and Luton Fields in the London Borough of Luton.

For more information please see our web site:  
[www.bdp.com](http://www.bdp.com)

**Who We Are**

BDP is a multi-disciplinary practice of landscape architects, urban designers, architects and engineers, with a London office in Chelmsford. We work with public authorities, developers and private clients to deliver sustainable developments and spaces that are good for people, the environment and the economy. Our clients include BAA, Transport & District Authorities, National Grid, Network Rail, the Environment Agency and the Royal Parks.

Our work includes: Catherine Gardens in Hemel Hempstead, Roger Black's in Luton and the award winning regeneration of Catherine Gardens and Luton Fields in the London Borough of Luton.

For more information please see our web site:  
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**Two Waters Open Space Feasibility Study**

**BDP.**

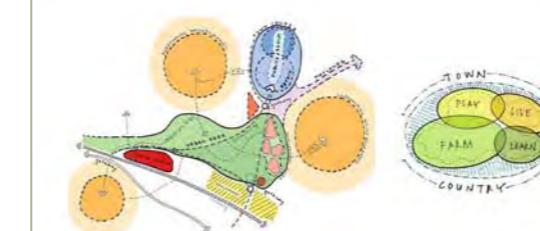
Consultation Board 1



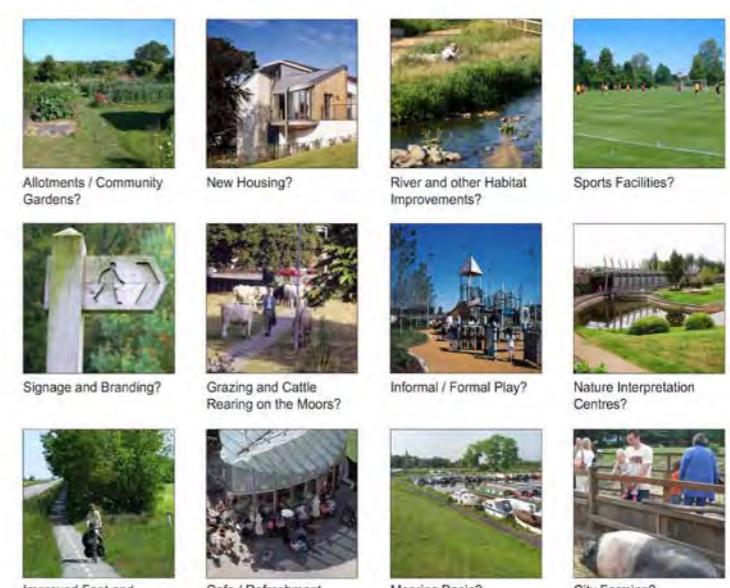
Consultation Board 2

### What we aim to achieve

- To provide a green open space circulation route into and through the town and identify links beyond, with a clear sense of connection and continuity between the different sections and the wider green space network;
- Provide an attractive open space facility for the community to visit and enjoy;
- Define the southern entrance into Hemel Hempstead through a strong visual statement to announce arrival;
- Provide a sense of progression along the gateway corridor to and from the southern end of the town centre;
- Provide an accessible and welcoming environment within the public domain. This is to include well marked entrances, identified and signposted routes for both pedestrians and cyclists and improved infrastructure;
- Ensure future projects can achieve value for money;
- Set out a long term vision for the future use and enjoyment of the area as a whole;
- Preserve and enhance wildlife and biodiversity through the development and management of a range of habitats, including enhancements to the water environment;
- To make visible and legible the relationships between the watercourses and the industrial and social history of the landscape;
- To provide high quality green space as a setting for new development and redevelopment on the edge of the town centre.



### What Would You Like To See?



Two Waters Open Space Feasibility Study

Consultation Board 3

## Consultation Responses from Public Event:

- General parking issues – restrict station users parking near cricket club
- Better cycle access on station road
- Heath Park is currently isolated and undesirable
- Better access to greenspace from Corner Hall – improved magic roundabout crossing arrangement
- Subway improvements
- Keep B&Q
- Separate cycle path along canal
- Improve existing triangle greenspace and links to Apsley
- No need for toilets or café facilities
- Apsley Triangle possible location for development – lake area is quite blank – better access to water
- Improve design line access between Apsley Triangle and Town Centre
- Would like more seasonal events
- Screen planting on moors for oil tanks
- More enforcement and better bins (litter control)
- Canal and water garden improvements
- No hard surface paths – would like chip bark
- More and improved signposting
- Better use of Boxmoor Wharf – paint B&Q green would like retail or commercial development
- More housing
- Toilet and café facilities (maybe pub) café on water?
- Open up public access to lake in Apsley Triangle
- Keep all as open as possible
- Retain existing moors
- Improve and better access to Heath Park
- More play areas
- Upgrade canal paths and cycling access
- Remove B&Q and make greenspace
- No new development at all
- Likes cattle and thinks they are in the public interest
- Retain existing moors
- More seasonal events (steam fair/circus)
- Need housing not more greenspace – but develop away from this area
- Retain existing moors
- Canal improvements
- No need for more sports
- Pick up the Nickey line – include a bridge at this point
- The informality is key – the lack of definition is what makes it successful
- Some areas should be left alone to aid ecology
- An area of contaminated land could be used for car parking or park and ride facility – improves transport from the south
- Nowhere for kids to go – or people with disabilities  
Youth centre with educational resources but can be used by older generations as well – bingo!/dinner dances
- More moorings would be good by B&Q site – an actual marina on that site, would encourage people to go into Town Centre – increase tourism
- Heath Gardens good place for children's play area  
Allotment gardens would be susceptible to vandalism  
Improved cycle routes and signage from Town Centre required to train station



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## Consultation Responses Received via Email

*All responses are reproduced verbatim*

Much of the area of the study is Boxmoor Trust land. Station Moor and Harding's & Bulbourne Moor are unique in being wild meadow and pasture that is accessible to the public. Absolutely no change must be made to the use or designation of these areas with the possible exception of the area between the old Nickey Line embankment and the new road linking the Plough roundabout with the A41.

Blackbirds Moor is a little more managed and already includes a cricket pitch and play area. Nothing should be changed on Blackbird Moor. An area which could be changed is that to the east of the new link road and what is known as the Apsley triangle. This area is neglected and only used as a thoroughfare. The old plant hire depot needs to be cleared away.

The Heath Park area is not so well maintained as it used to be and there is need for much better pedestrian access around the roundabout and between Heath Park and Riverside and between Riverside and Station Road and Riverside and Lawn Lane.

Dacorum Council cannot afford to spend money on gardens so there would be little point in developing new gardens unless long term sponsorship could be found. None of the areas in the study should be considered for new housing. Much of it is designated flood plain anyway and Boxmoor Trust land is protected by the Trust. Boxmoor Trust land is a valuable public asset which must be retained as meadow and pasture with public access. Similarly, Dacorum is already well provided for in sports facilities so this should not be considered.

Outdoor events and performance already take place on the moor. There is no need for any permanent facility. The area is already well provided for in places to eat and drink. Two pubs overlook Blackbird Moor. There are cafes and restaurants in St John's Road in Boxmoor and in the Riverside area. The Apsley triangle area may be suitable for a visitor centre if it is sensitively designed.

I'm afraid I do not agree with the overall premise of this study in viewing these open spaces as an "urban park", it would seem primarily as a means to satisfy narrow targets for formal recreational leisure space.

In this international year of biodiversity the ecological richness and heritage of these areas should be celebrated, protected and enhanced, certainly avoiding any additional pressures through the urbanising development of an "urban park". Traditional management

through grazing maintains valuable habitats as well as potentially playing a small role in local food security.

The juxtaposition of grazing animals in meadows managed for wildlife set against the existing urban environment is a fantastic and relatively rare sight of which we should be proud – Hemel needs no more positive a "southern gateway" than that!

Crucially, a review of the future of these open spaces needs to be in the context of changing times as the result of climate change and global resource depletion - a fundamental re-think of the way we regard our environment and precious 'natural' green open spaces, with a much greater emphasis on biodiversity, managing 'ecosystem services' and growing food rather than a traditional predict and supply approach to formal recreational provision. Linked green 'natural' open spaces will help to buffer challenges that may come possibly in the near future.

I would wholeheartedly support measures to encourage positive, ecologically sustainable, locally relevant and meaningful interaction with this 'common land', increasing people's understanding of their local biodiversity, the issues around local food, re-skilling for a more resilient future. Opportunities to learn about food growing, livestock rearing and to develop a real connection with the countryside would be a positive use for the Central Nursery site and the derelict area at Two Waters formerly earmarked for a hotel development (not required now as there are two large new hotels nearby). This "town farm" could incorporate the suggested "Nature Interpretation Centre" with a state-of-the-art 'green building', perhaps generating its own energy from biomass and water power. It could be an information 'hub' with café and facilities that would not impact on the main areas of Trust land, be a base for conservation work to support continuing enhancements for biodiversity, be linked to a community garden and allotments and a place to buy local food.

Information about local walks and heritage, a start for guided walks, at such a 'hub' would minimise the need for a plethora of signs, on-site interpretation and unnecessary overt "branding" which would compromise the landscape.

Heath Park could become a more productive landscape with fruit trees and edible planting replacing the remaining formal horticultural beds, perhaps 'adopted' by

new residents of the Image development that overlook the space. Fencing would be needed for a "community garden" which would visually break up the open character of the land here and may be inappropriate.

I welcome a review of footpath and cycle routes, with appropriately designed 'access for all' gates replacing styles and kissing gates on main routes. I would support a new foot and cycle bridge linking Heath Park to the canal towpath and the continuation of the Nickey Line cycle route to the station, approximately on the line of the former railway bridge. Re-surfacing the canal towpath is needed as an important cycle and walking route, but formalising further paths through Trust land (to create a "circular route") should be avoided, as it would create loss of habitat and destroy the visual integrity of the meadows. One of the pleasures of walking across these open spaces is their undefined, informal character. Key mown grass routes can allow access for disabled people from well-designed entrance areas.

A "mooring basin" should only be considered as part of future re-development of the B&Q site (former Roses Lime Juice wharf), if this is ever planned. There should be no loss of green space for a mooring basin, which after all is really not much better than a car park offering little to its surroundings. Visitor car parking should also be resisted except for disabled spaces at certain locations, as with better footpath and cycle routes there should not be a need to drive to these local green spaces so near to the Town Centre and main bus routes. Existing parking problems are largely due to commuters avoiding use of the station car park.

The area is not suitable for further formal sports provision with its associated development of related infrastructure. The success of the current use of these open spaces is the relaxed way that cricket matches, practise nets, angling, picnicking, kick-about, boating, cycling, walking, grazing and wildlife all co-exist within a lush, bio-diverse 'natural' river landscape with little apparent conflict. Setting up defined "zones" may destroy this happy co-existence creating hierarchies of use and 'ownership' and preventing the multi-layered uses. Directing efforts instead into helping people to use the area well, creating a culture of care and litter awareness particularly amongst young people, would be a good move. Flexibility and multiple layers of use mean that creating a defined permanent performance area would not be appropriate. The very successful Music on The Moor event uses grazing land either side

of the Bulbourne without a permanent facility being required, it creates the atmosphere of a festival in the countryside.

Improving play provision rather than extending it is needed. Existing play areas at Durrants Hill, Blackbirds Moor and Chaulden could be enhanced/replaced with well designed places that respond better to their environment as well as giving greater creative play value (ref. the 'natural play' agenda that has been embraced in other towns). Creation of a large 'destination' play area in the Two Waters open spaces should be resisted - Gadebridge Park, with its existing parking, is more suitable for this sort of facility. Opportunities for informal play already exist in abundance unofficially throughout the area: paddling in the Bulbourne, rope swings, logs to climb, long grass to hide in. As someone who grew up here I know from first-hand experience how valuable this informal exploration is, something that cannot easily be 'designed' for.

So in summary I would support small-scale improvements to access and habitat enhancement and the creation of a multi-use green 'hub' on existing built or derelict Council or Trust land, but would resist the creation of an "urban park" and associated formal facilities.

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## Consultation Responses Received via Online Form- [www.dacorum.gov.uk](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk)

**Two Waters Open Space Feasibility Study**

Please comment on the project. What do you think of the aims of the Two Waters Open Space Study?

Which of the ideas for improvements to the area would you support? (tick as many as appropriate)

- Allotments / Community gardens
- New housing
- River and other habitat improvements
- Outdoor sports facilities
- Signs (for example, historical information boards, suggested walks, wildlife information)
- Grazing and cattle
- Children's play facilities
- Visitor Centre (for conservation, heritage and/or nature information)
- Improved footpaths
- Improved cycle path
- Picnic facilities
- Places to eat and drink
- Mooring provision for recreational boating
- Town farm (educational / leisure facility)
- Orchards
- Green energy creation
- Outdoor events and performance space

Other Suggestions?

Please Return By Post To: or Visit [www.dacorum.gov.uk](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk) to fill out an online form  
 Claire Covington  
 Dacorum Borough Council  
 Hemel Hempstead  
 Herts  
 HP1 1 HH

Consultation Period closes  
 5th July 2010

The Government 25% cut on Council services can be made here, and council tax spent more wisely elsewhere. Let the moors be as they were dedicated to us – open spaces – not playgrounds, parks, games, pitches

Leave our moors to be just that – open spaces, natural, grazing land. The grass does not need to be cut – turn it into hay once a year as it was in 1935. Let children use their imagination rather than 'feed' them with too many facilities

I am not happy with the aims of this study. Although I appreciate that some people may actually like the ideas of this 'Open Space Consultation' I personally don't – I really like the moor just as it is a free unique space of countryside which in my opinion creates a perfect strong visual statement to announce arrival from Apsley / the A41 bypass into the town.

Please leave the moor as it is, the only suggestion I have is that they acquire new large litter bins specially designed so that people/children can't unofficially empty them and that the litter can't be blown out of them or crows/pigeons etc can't drag all the left-over take away remains out and leave scattered on the moor. As already happens daily.

I like the idea of enhancing nature but am very worried about building places to eat and sports facilities on land that has been a nature reserve too many different animals and the thought of turning these areas into allotments horrifies me. I live in a block of flats overlooking Durrants Hill park and it's a haven for wildlife, we have an abundance of bird life including a lesser spotted woodpecker, sparrow hawk, nuthatch, songthrus we even have a red kite that hovers overhead as well as all the normal garden birds these would disappear if the land had any development on it.

Good aims. Improving wildlife areas and access are important. A welcoming gateway to Hemel Hempstead that keeps the 'green' look.

Somewhere accessible and safe for teenagers to congregate, maybe kick a ball around, and have somewhere they may be encouraged to deposit their rubbish? No more housing unless infrastructure e.g. roads is improved. Also parking facilities. Maybe cheap at the station, so that Boxmoor roads no longer are a carpark.

I think the aims look very good. An improved green space at the entry to the town would greatly enhance Hemel Hempstead.

I think at a time of cut backs in the council this area should be left as it is. Leave the moors alone. We don't need more housing around that area of the town. There is a huge brown field site where Lucas aerospace was. Develop that. We have the area around Kodak Tower being developed for housing. There is the Boxmoor trust which has a farming/educational area, why would we need another area a mile down the road. We have mooring for boats at Apsley which again is only about a mile away.

I fully appreciate the desire to enhance open spaces for greater public use. However a very careful balance must be struck between enhancement of what exists and the addition of buildings, signage and enclosed play spaces. The latter three can easily spoil the 'natural' look that exists now, will require maintenance funds and can in themselves attract even more litter than presently occurs - especially on Blackbirds Moor. On balance, I am not in favour of adding any structures to what is generally well maintained natural space.

I think it would be beneficial to make some changes which are for the community but I do not agree with building houses on the moor land. Historically this land was protected by a community and this is the way that it should continue to be. If buildings were to be put up I think they should be in keeping with the environment, eco friendly and again being linked to the community. If allotments were introduced the produce should be sold through the venues, children, schools or groups should be involved in this and more local events- i.e. picnic on the moor etc should be organised celebrating local food and the moor itself.

An outdoor gym would only work if it is made out of wood or something which isn't taking away from the visual look of the moor. More running routes with Mile markers would be useful or the ability to hire bikes on site for an hour to explore the area. It would need to attract people outside of the area- being a boxmoor resident this would also need to be accommodated with parking etc otherwise it would spill over into the residential roads.

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I would be for any improvement of walks and cycle paths but am against any new building being built. I live in the area and one of the reasons we bought the house was the fact we looked over the moor. I feel any new building to the area would affect how nice the area is at present. The parking is already a problem around that area so if you were to improve the area to bring in visitors a carpark would need to be provided.

Don't put housing anywhere near this scheme, it will be used as a lever in years to come to take back the green space and extend the development. That's what DBC has done with nearly all the green space we used to have, by design in the New Town. There are plenty of sports facilities in town, this site should be for those who detest sport but enjoy peace and quiet and tranquil surroundings without being invaded by the lycra brigade. Moorings, other than those present on the canal, will lead to demands for further boating services in the centre of this zone. There are plenty of visitor moorings available if BW were to manage them, and residential moorings will make this section look like Apsley Mills.

A good idea if they listen to what the local people say - but not if they put more housing up. We do not need any more housing. I also desperately wish they'd do something with the waste land near Jarman Park. Make it a desirable place for our youngsters/teenagers to go at night. Pull down Jarman World Leisure Centre and rebuild a decent one

Please can we have public tennis courts and basketball areas which do not require massive fees - or put a few football nets up. But not all football. I would desperately love to see a decent youth club for our youngsters/teenagers.

Toilets!! I've often thought why we don't have open tennis courts - where people don't have to pay extortionist club fees - or why not a 'tennis' wall - where people can get rid of some of their energy with a tennis racket. Give people a tennis wall.

Yes, a lovely riverside cafe and tables and chairs and umbrellas with toilets facilities. Great. But absolutely NOT any more housing or flats. We do not have a hospital to facilitate the increase in population and also what with water shortage and the current trend to put on suite showers and toilets with every bedroom - there is not enough water. A band stand for Sunday concerts and cream teas. Yes please.

It is beyond belief that the Council is considering changing this simply beautiful open space. Now that the Town Centre has been turned into a concrete jungle, this area has been a breath of fresh air. It has been the treasure of Hemel Hempstead and it saddens me to think that it will be changed for no good reason. The residents of the area do not need more sports facilities, cafes and housing. What is the justification for all of this? Surely the Council has more important things to spend the public money on than wasting it on changing something that is a close to perfect as a simple open space. I am also disappointed that the consultation has not been widely publicised - how has this happened? To be fair to the residents of Hemel Hempstead and to gain a true view of their opinions, this consultation period should be extended.

I am extremely concerned about the aims of the Two Waters Open Space Study. We already have an attractive open space for the community to visit and enjoy, to quote your document - with the very important omission of the word "facility". It does not need to be a facility, that suggests interfering and making artificial. Please leave it alone, we have the real thing. The entrance to Hemel Hempstead from this side is lovely, something to be proud of, we constantly comment how lucky we are to live nearby and ask ourselves how many other towns could boast such beauty. There are other areas of allotments in the town, are they oversubscribed? They didn't use to be. We do not need more here. We used to have community gardens opposite the Kodak building but there seems to have been cut backs in the spend on planting in recent years. If community gardens are required put those back, they were nice, and that area now looks bereft of interest, don't destroy natural wild space.

Under no circumstances build anything at all; there has been enough new housing in the town. The open spaces should be guaranteed preserved. River and habitat improvements should only happen if experts genuinely believe them to be necessary, otherwise it is just interference.

The current arrangement with cattle and horses grazing is wonderful and a fabulous asset to the town, do not change that. No visitor centre thank you, the info centre in town has been abandoned hasn't it; something out here would be a ridiculous waste of money. No the foot paths are fine, mud is real. We don't want some sanitised outdoors "facility" thank you, we are happy

with the genuine outdoors.

It would be nice to be able to cycle somewhere safe with children locally, away from cars and away from the edge of the canal - but not at the expense of the moor.

The moor is different from the park and we are very lucky to have it. Absolutely no to building restaurants etc. There are already numerous different establishments all trying to make a living who don't need more competition and we don't want buildings there. There are plenty of mooring opportunities already, all along there. I don't think we need a town farm "facility", something artificial, we've got real cows and horses, it's fabulous. And there are lots of those places around. What would the intention be regarding orchards? Is this still to be a community space? Who would the fruit belong to and what would be done with it? We already have RES in Kings Langley doing a brilliant job of green energy creation and education. There is no need to compete with them. The field used for Music on the Moor is already great, we do not need something permanent and purpose built. That would just spoil the place for all the time it was not being used.

I believe that this area does need to be looked at but not to be changed drastically. It is lovely when you come off the bypass to see the fields and canals horses and cattle. We often walk through the moor on a weekend with our children and it is nice to be able to have natural open space like this. I feel that to start changing it in any way or building on it would be outrageous and I would oppose any building works or structures, the area just needs tidying up.

Music on the Moor is a fantastic venture and appreciated by all the local residence. I was unsure about marking the outdoor events but I think to build something permanent would not be in keeping with the area and most definitely no more housing or places to eat.

I think the aim of the study is to complement what is already there. This whole area should be first looked at as a conservation area for people to learn and see how the area once was. It is also an area for families and people to walk in peace and relax in an ever increasing developed area. It works as a great contrast to the magic roundabout and the new build in the Town Centre, old Kodak building. This area is the first sight for people getting off the train and puts the village and Hemel in a very good light. The area is part rural which is a nice

touch between the city centre and the local rural villages. The open space is for the people and sometimes less is more. Do not build on it or change it for the sake of it, just because it is open space and we have some money. More explanation of the area in a small visitor centre, with all the walks available with info. Most of the moor is not visited due to being unknown. More grazing; kids and adults alike love the animals grazing. Perhaps have more small festivals, great community events and promoting the moor. BUT NO MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Why are you looking for new ideas? Boxmoor is distinctive. Develop it with publicity and education. This is a moor with its own character. Keep the moor distinctive for all visitors and people of Hemel. Use its beauty, wild fauna and flora, history, geography. Quiet recreation, its sanctuary.

Don't put buildings up like cafes because they look horrible boarded up at night. Encourage people to bring their own food or buy it from a portable place which drives away when not in use. Allow all areas to feed gulls, ducks, moorhens, swans etc otherwise too few spaces and it gets smelly. Provide a hide.

The aims seem very good, but I think they would be very expensive to keep everything in good order. Every new project that is developed, gradually falls into disrepair, and though the moors and canal area certainly need money spent on them to keep them in order, they are at least beautiful in a wild way and partly look after themselves. Also people do not treat these areas well, and unfortunately leave a lot of rubbish about. I hope some improvements do go ahead and I look forward to enjoying them.

We do not need a city farm we are not in a city. We have a great sports centre, athletics track, tennis courts etc. We are inundated with new housing and have plenty of allotments.

Worrying that it is headed Two Waters when the development plan shows that the whole of Box Moor is to be affected. More worrying still that this was very poorly communicated and that with the exception of one Box Moor Trust volunteer out of the 20 people I spoke to regarding this, no-one knew about it. The aim to increase usage of the Moor is fine. I use it most days and it does seem busy, though perhaps not the London Road side. It would be great if all areas of the Moor were more accessible to families - e.g. a path suitable for buggies, children's bikes.

The idea of allotments is fine - this could be used by schools - and there used to be allotments on the Moor. Additional signage encouraging people to use all parts of the Moor would be good.

Improved footpaths across the Moor and more importantly along the canal towpath would be useful to encourage people to walk along all of the Moor - perhaps with maps available similar to Ashridge.

The aims are generally good but they must protect the open space with a largely agricultural feel which is one of the really special and unique features of Boxmoor. We understand the pressures for development but it would be tragic if this land, dedicated by deed for the public good and preserved as open space for over 400 years was lost or degraded.

Additional pedestrian / cycle bridges over the canal and other waterways to improve access in the 'north / south' direction which is poor at the moment with few bridges and the rather unsafe option of using lock gates. Walking / cycling east west are much easier as that is the direction of most paths / crossing points. Providing additional crossings between Bulbourne Meadow and Bulbourne Moor on the line of the old railway and on to Heath Park, and between Station Moor and Blackbirds Moor would be a major improvement in access from the London Road area to Boxmoor and the Town Centre.

Opening up the Bulbourne riverside east from the old railway bridge crossing in Bulbourne Meadow / Bulbourne Moor towards Two Waters which is currently fenced off, and inaccessible to walkers and / or wildlife viewers. Better management of currently uncontrolled weed growth and opening up this area would improve the looks of this 'gateway' from the A41 bypass.

If the improved facilities are going to attract more visitors, some car parking space must be provided, perhaps using the disused roads (Two Waters & Corner Hall) in a more efficient manner than the haphazard parking that often takes place at present.

It is possible that wildlife protection zones would be a good idea, i.e. areas without public access. These should be properly marked out and advertised / explained with interpretation boards and viewing areas. Then there would be public understanding and support.

I think it would be beneficial to make some changes which are for the community but I do not agree with building houses on the moor land. Historically this land was protected by a community and this is the way that it should continue to be. If buildings were to be put up I think they should be in keeping with the environment, eco friendly and again being linked to the community.

The first thing this area needs is for someone to look after it and protect it as it is. To clean up the litter, empty the dog bins, remove shopping trolleys from canals etc. We are lucky to have such beautiful space on our doorstep but it is turning into a dirty uncared for space.

I think that the project is a good idea, and any improvement that can be made around that area is a good idea. If you can improve the cycle arrangements into town and the station this would be a positive thing.

No more new housing please! The line from Hemel Hempstead and Apsley stations into London is already well over capacity during peak periods and cannot cope with more commuters being attracted to the town. If more housing is planned, direct investment in the local rail network should be a pre-condition to Planning Permission being granted. With the number of flats being created in Hemel, what local people really need is green space in which they can relax. Allotments and the like would be a great way of doing this and I am sure would help ease the growing rate of stress and depression related mental illness in the area.

I think there is already enough space devoted to sport and children's facilities and the rest of Boxmoor is already used for cattle grazing, so I would support something for adults and/or families to enjoy together in their spare time.

Grazing of livestock so close to a Town Centre is fairly unique and is I believe of great value to the town. The presence of these roaming animals is a connection to our rural past and gives a psychological lift to those who see them every day.

Heath Park /Plough Gardens feel under used and undervalued. Put a cafe in the middle. Suggest better landscaping as well.

The Plough Roundabout is a great barrier to people circulating from the Town Centre to the green areas. Signage and maps in town would be an improvement and entice people to make the trip. There is a much used pedestrian corridor from the railway station to the Town Centre. This needs better signs, more continuity, regularly spaced litter bins and perhaps a cycle lane.

Access to the grazing areas needs to have stock proof disabled entry gates at some points. At present wheelchair users cannot get into these areas.

Use the Paper mill site to generate small hydro electricity. It already has the place for two water wheels. This would be a great educational facility and could pay back with

electricity sold to the grid.

Put some moorings for narrow boats along the edge of B&Q's car park, at present this is occupied by a crash barrier more suited to a motorway.

The area from Two Waters to the canal should be put to good use for housing as at the moment it is of no use to the public at all. Any development in this area will enhance the approach to the Town Centre but will also leave the Heath Park area as a good recreational space

Probably a good idea, the areas should include the provision of excellent standard public toilets As a resident in Two Waters, I would like the area to remain a green space. I would be strongly against anything that would cause further traffic congestion and parking problems.

Good aims. Improving wildlife areas and access are important. A welcoming gateway to Hemel Hempstead that keeps the 'green' look.

The aims are generally good but they must protect the open space with a largely agricultural feel which is one of the really special and unique features of Boxmoor. We understand the pressures for development but it would be tragic if this land, dedicated by deed for the public good and preserved as open space for over 400 years was lost or degraded.

The area of moorland bounded by Two Waters Way/London Road/Station Road is mostly unused apart from the grazing of cattle and could be put to far better use by housing development with community gardens as a centre-piece. There is no lack of green space in the town as we already have Gadebridge Park, the Water Gardens and Heath Park as a central spine. The Town Centre is now over-developed with accommodation and will be even more so if West Herts College land is partly-used for more housing. To use this triangle of land for housing development will enhance the entrance to the Town Centre and tidy-up an area badly in need of so doing.

It is important for the scheme to protect the "Green Lungs" of Hemel Hempstead. Conservation, protection and enhancement should be paramount. The areas designated for use with families should be nearer the town, with adequate enforced parking. As an original Allotment Holder (we were evicted when the new road came through) I am sure local residents would welcome its return! But it needs to be in an area that can provide adequate parking and security. The grazing is both useful and provides a useful educational means for children, perhaps some rare breeds? More suitable

trees need to be planted and protected from both cattle and careless fighting dog owners.

There are plenty of sports facilities already, and it is only worth siting play activities where they can be monitored, and in the area most appropriate. A visitor centre with educational field studies etc. would be useful to help all of Hemel Hempstead's residents.

The importance and value of our GREEN LUNGS. Places to eat and drink facilities should be placed nearer the town, with supervision and adequate refuse facilities and parking. Parking will have to be monitored, because us residents living near the moor have enormous problems with regular station parkers.

I think that it would be nice to make the open spaces more "user-friendly" and attractive. However, I'm also a bit concerned that some of the suggestions would spoil the whole point of having open spaces. New housing, loads of cafes, large playing fields - these needs are already catered for in other nearby areas. The whole point of the open heathland is that it's a nice green space where ponies and cattle can graze, people can walk, anglers can fish, etc. I think that ANY changes would need to be thought of VERY carefully in order not to spoil the whole purpose of the moors and open spaces. The ideas of orchards and gardens for food production are great. The urban farming idea is quite good but again I would caution against taking up too much of the space. After all, there is the Boxmoor Trust where there is a visitor centre, farming, etc - can't that be made more use of instead of duplicating some of these things within the same area?

I feel strongly that the Box Moor Trust lands should be left as they are. They provide a wonderfully green 'lung' close to the town centre and are well maintained by the Trust and well used by the public. Leave well alone! The Apsley Triangle is another matter - better access and scrub clearance is needed.

I feel strongly that the Moors should be left as they are – a natural open space, where you can walk everywhere, mingle with horses and cows, picnic in the grass, play games anywhere, and observe nature.

We already have the large and very nice Gadebridge Park with the facilities suggested in the study. The moors are a wonderful contrast to the well kept park. As to the areas on either side of Two Waters i.e. Two Waters Moor West and East could have allotments and communal gardens or orchards. Leave the rest alone.

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## Summary

The public consultation event yielded a response from 70 people on the day and the subsequent online invitation received 160 responses. The online questionnaire included seventeen suggestions for how the Two Waters area could be improved and respondents were invited to tick those that they felt were appropriate. The questionnaire also allowed further opinions and views to be added, which have been assessed with the responses gained from the consultation event and compiled in Appendix 1.

The results of the online questionnaire have been collated below:

- |       |   |
|-------|---|
| 71.7% | River and other habitat improvements  |
| 63.8% | Grazing and cattle  |
| 58.6% | Signs (for example, historical information boards, suggested walks, wildlife information) |
| 55.3% | Improved footpaths  |
| 48.0% | Improved cycle path   |
| 35.5% | Picnic facilities   |
| 35.5% | Orchards  |
| 31.6% | Allotments / Community gardens  |
| 27.0% | Visitor Centre (for conservation, heritage and/or nature information)                     |
| 25.0% | Children's play facilities  |
| 24.3% | Outdoor events and performance space  |
| 21.7% | Mooring provision for recreational boating  |
| 19.7% | Green energy creation   |
| 14.5% | Town farm (educational / leisure facility)  |
| 11.8% | Outdoor sports facilities   |
| 11.8% | Places to eat and drink   |
| 2.6%  | New housing   |

It is important to note that the percentages provide a useful impression of what the Two Waters study area should encompass. The majority of the responses feel very strongly that the Moors are a significant asset to the town and as such, retaining and protecting their heritage and the habitats would continue to enhance the area. Opportunities to improve wayfinding and access for pedestrian and cyclists were also positively received. Suggestions for more built orientated ideas such as sporting facilities, kiosks or restaurants and residential opportunities were perceived to offer less value to this part of the town.

## Gazette article, Wednesday 10th July

# Two Waters Open Space Feasibility Study

Given the Moors are a distinctive piece of countryside close to the Town Centre, a large proportion of the feedback received focuses on the Moors. A significant number of responses echo the sentiment that they should be left as they are, but offer limited suggestions on the remainder of the Two Waters study area such as the Apsley Triangle or Corner Hall. However, a number of repeating comments were received, which are summarised as follows under seven key topics:

## The Project

- The description of the scheme as an 'Urban Park' as set out in the Hemel 2020 Vision conveys the wrong intentions for Two Waters and has led to a false impression that the Moors will become over designed and developed.
  - The projects aims however look very good- overall, the view was that an improved green space at the entry to the town would greatly enhance Hemel Hempstead.

- Any physical outcome of the project should address management and maintenance. Litter and rubbish scattered on the moors is an ongoing issue. Litter bins or collection regimes should be improved.

## The Moors

- The Moors should be left as they are – a natural open space, where you can walk, mingle with wildlife, picnic in the grass, play games, observe nature and watch events.
  - The project should complement what is already there.
  - Much of the area of the study is unique in being wild meadow and pasture that is accessible to the public. No change must be made to the use or designation of these areas.
  - The moors are different from a town park, they offer a great contrast to the Town Centre with a largely agricultural feel which is one of the special and unique features of Boxmoor, and therefore they should be protected.

## **Access and Circulation**

- A review of footpath and cycle routes, with appropriately designed 'access for all' gates is welcomed.
  - Re-surfacing the canal towpath is desired as it is seen as an important cycle and walking route, but overly formalising further paths through Trust land should be avoided.
  - Pedestrian access from Riverside to Heath Park should be improved and between the Town Centre to the rail station. The Plough Roundabout is perceived as a barrier to people circulating from the Town Centre to the green areas. Wayfinding in the town would be an improvement and entice people to make the trip.
  - Some areas of the Moors should not be publicly accessible to maintain wildlife protection zones.
  - Improved accessibility to the moors for families and those with impaired mobility is encouraged.
  - Additional pedestrian / cycle bridges over the canal and other waterways to improve access in the North / South direction should be looked at.
  - Visitor car parking should be limited to disabled spaces at certain locations; the focus should be on better footpath and cycle routes as the area is well serviced by buses and close to the Town Centre. Many of the problems caused by ad hoc car parking are due to people trying to avoid parking in town, which is viewed as too expensive.

## The Rivers and Canal

- A “mooring basin” should only be considered as part of any future re-development of the B&Q site.
  - There should be no loss of green at the expense of any mooring basin.
  - A facility to moor boats is not required as this is catered for close by at Apsley Mills.

## Sport and Play

- The area is not suitable for further formal sports provision with its associated development of related infrastructure.
  - Outdoor gyms / fitness trails should be located sensitively and be made from materials that respond to the character of Two Waters. Opportunities for running routes and the ability to hire bikes on site to explore the area would be welcomed.
  - The study area has a lot of maintained space taken up for cricket, and there is no local deficiency for sports, so the area does not require any further sporting facilities.
  - Sport that requires fencing and hard surfacing is not seen to be fit in with the natural surroundings, therefore should not be encouraged.
  - Improving play provision rather than extending it is required. Other parks within the environs of the Town Centre have good enough facilities; this space should not duplicate those.
  - The moors offer enough informal play opportunities already



### The potential for change

- Heath Park could become a more productive landscape and recreational space. At present this area feels under used and undervalued.
- No development, such as buildings of any kind should be developed on the Moors.
- Opportunities to learn about food growing, livestock rearing and to develop a real connection with the countryside was seen as a potential positive use for the Central Nursery site and/or the derelict area at Two Waters Road.
- The combination of facilities should be explored such as a 'town farm' and 'Nature Interpretation Centre' with proposals seeking to generate its own energy from biomass and water power.
- The Apsley triangle area is viewed as neglected and only used as a thoroughfare. The old plant hire depot could be redeveloped.
- If buildings are suggested, they should be in keeping with the environment, eco friendly and linked to the community.
- There should be no competition or duplication of local facilities, for example, moorings already at Apsley, green energy and education carried out at Kings Langley and various cafes/ restaurants which already exist within the Town Centre.
- Housing near this scheme was particularly unfavourable, though comments suggest this applies mainly to Boxmoor Trust land.
- Allotments could be a positive use of space as the site historically had some by Two Waters Road. However they should be in an area that can provide adequate parking and security.
- There is no need for a city farm- the moors have a variety of wildlife, including horses and livestock.
- Places to eat and drink should be placed nearer the town where there is greater footfall, natural surveillance, plus adequate refuse and parking facilities.

### Signage and other Infrastructure

- Wayfinding and information about local walks and heritage is seen as a good idea, but branding and quantity of signs should be limited so the landscape is not compromised.
- Increasing the opportunity for people to gain a better understanding of their local biodiversity is viewed as a positive.
- Public Toilets facilities would be welcomed.
- No permanent performance area is required; this may end up being redundant for long periods of time- the grazing land is adequate for events to take place, such as Music on the Moor.

People feel very lucky to have such an amenity the Moors provide on their doorstep, so are rightfully protective of it. The grazing of livestock so close to a Town Centre is fairly unique and provides a strong connection to Hemel Hempstead's rural past. Adding any structures to what is generally a well maintained natural space is not favoured, though small scale improvements to habitat enhancement and access to open space areas is seen as a positive improvement. The responses suggest that people are receptive to larger scale change but this should only take place on existing built or brownfield land and any buildings proposed should be in keeping with the local character, eco friendly and be linked to community use.

**Two Waters Open Space Feasibility Study**



Dacorum Borough Council is working in partnership with the Box Moor Trust and other local organisations to enhance a 23.7 hectare green space around Two Waters Road, Hemel Hempstead. The area encompasses Heath Park, the Bulbourne, Hardings and Blackbird's moors, and the Apsley Triangle.

The project, led by landscape architects from BDP, aims to improve the open spaces for the community to enjoy. Wildlife and biodiversity will be protected, and accessibility to the site will be improved. The existing natural features will be enhanced by adding new facilities, based on the views of local people and groups. New facilities could include allotments and community gardens, countryside interpretation facilities, playground equipment, sports facilities, improved foot and cycle paths, performance spaces and places to eat and drink.

As key organisations in the management of this important greenspace and its surroundings, and in planning for its future, you are invited to meet BDP and contribute to this ongoing study.

**5pm at the Council Offices on Tuesday 29th June**

For more information please contact either:

Pam Halliwell- Pam.Halliwell@dacorum.gov.uk  
 Claire Covington- Claire.Covington@dacorum.gov.uk

 **BDP.**

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