



IVEL SPRINGS

GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN

2020 – 2025

Produced by:

On behalf of:



**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL**



OVERVIEW

Greenspace Action Plans

Greenspace Actions Plans (GAPs) are map-based management plans which specify activities that should take place on a site over a stated period of time; these activities will help to deliver the agreed aspirations which the site managers and stakeholders have identified for that site.

Public engagement

Engagement with stakeholders is at the centre of effective management planning on any site. An initial engagement period was held for six weeks in July and August 2019, to establish core aims and objectives for the site; these are reflected in Section 4. A second stage of engagement was held in February and March 2020 to enable stakeholders to comment on the proposed management actions for the site. An associated engagement response document is included as an appendix to this plan, summarising comments received, and any amendments made to the plan as a result.

Version control

Version	Issue Date	Details	Author	Reviewed	Approved

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1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 Site summary

Site Name: Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve

Site Address: North Road,
Baldock,
SG7 5BX

Grid Reference: North Road Entrance and Allotment Car Park – TL 524264 234452
Norton Road Entrance – TL 524090 234130

Size: 15ha (37acre)

Designations: Scheduled Monument
Local Wildlife Site
Metropolitan Green Belt
Local Nature Reserve

Owner: North Herts District Council

1.2 Vision statement

'Ivel Springs will be an accessible and well-used green space, highly valued by the local community who will be engaged and involved in site management.'

The mosaic of important wildlife habitats will be in positive management, access infrastructure will be maintained to a high standard, and heritage features will be protected.

Partnership work will be at the heart of management activities, recognising the importance of the site within the wider landscape.'

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

2.1 Introduction

Ivel Springs Local Nature Reserve is a 15 hectare (37 acre) open space just north of Baldock which is owned by North Hertfordshire District Council and managed in partnership with the Countryside and Rights of Way Service (CRoW) and Friends of Baldock Green Spaces (FoBGS).


Ivel Springs has a long history stretching back more than five thousand years, and several historic features are located on the site. This includes a designated Scheduled Monument located under the main wildflower meadow.

The site was designated a Local Wildlife Site in 2007 and over time a diverse mosaic of habitats has developed, including wildflower meadows, hedgerows, reedbeds, wetlands and woodland. Chalk springs on the site give rise to the River Ivel which flows north into Bedfordshire to join the Great Ouse River.

The meadow contains a wide range of wildflowers including common knapweed, cowslip, yellow rattle and common birds-foot trefoil, along with more unusual species such as pyramidal orchid and common broomrape. The woodland contains a variety of tree species including alder and a range of willow trees, as well as a number of fruit trees. The mosaic of habitats hosts a broad range of bird species, and evidence of water vole has been recorded in the wetland areas.

Ivel Springs Greenspace Action Plan Location Plan

Legend

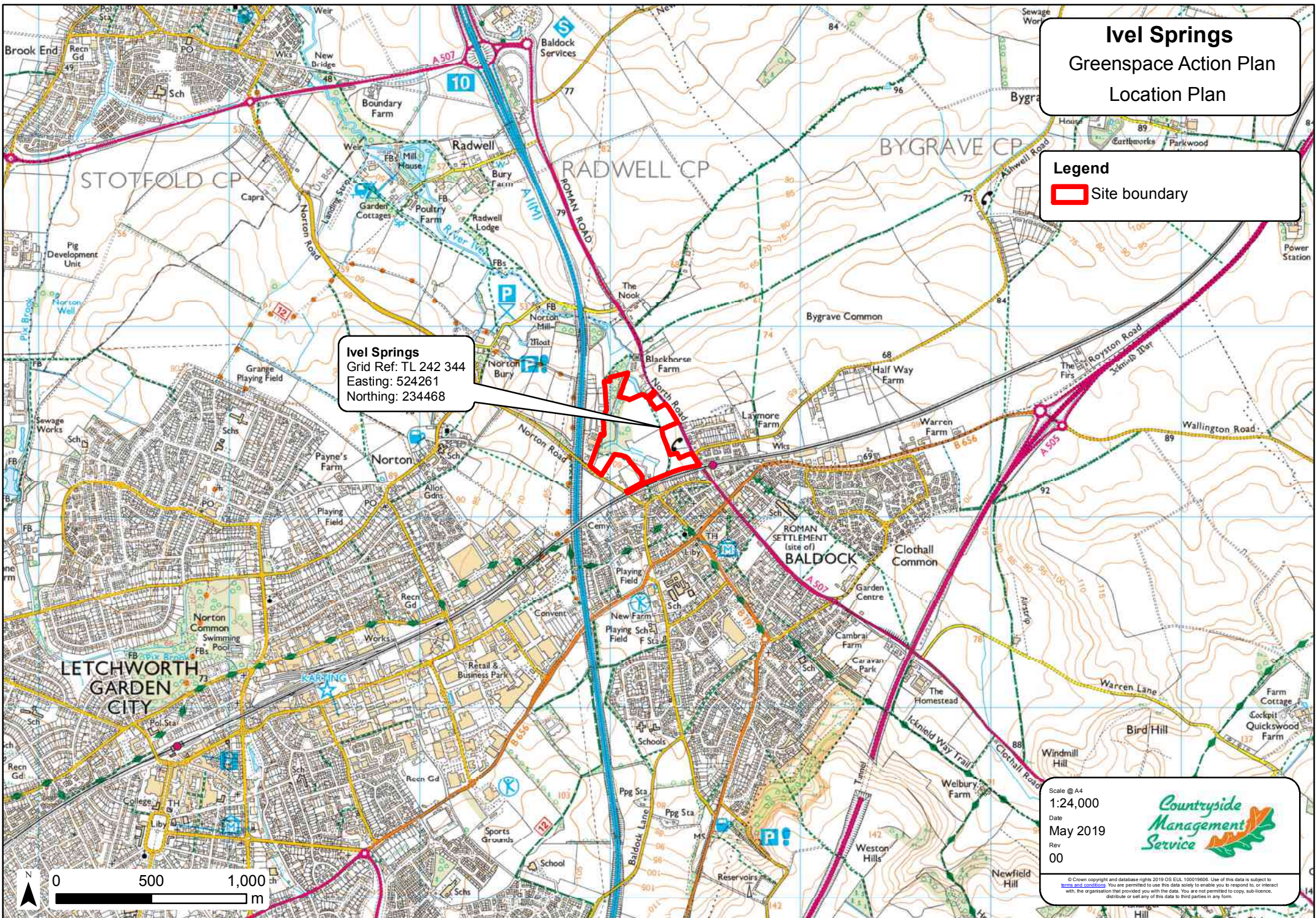
 Site boundary

Ivel Springs
Grid Ref: TL 242 344
Easting: 524261
Northing: 234468

Scale @ A4
1:24,000
Date
May 2019
Rev
00



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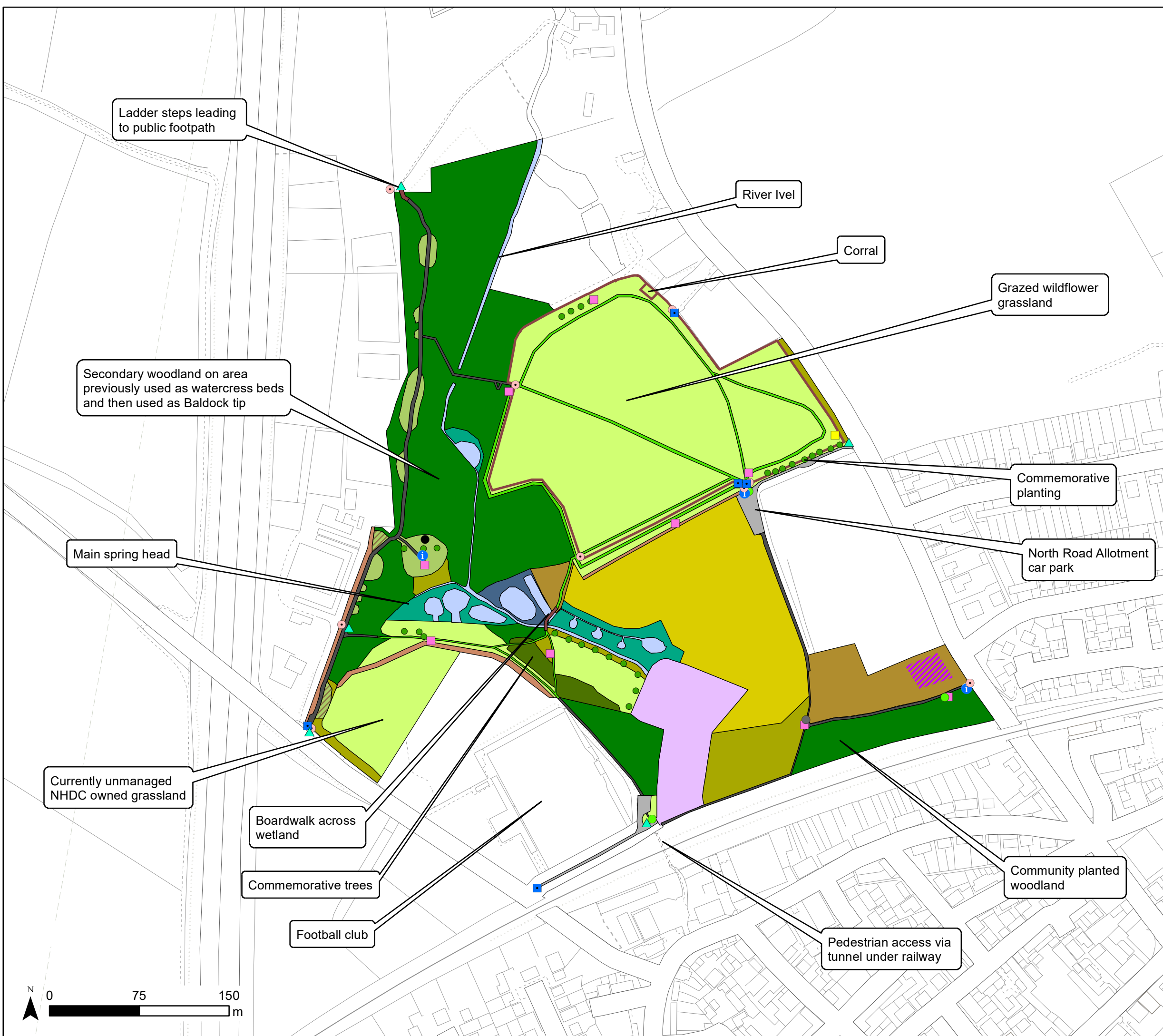
Ivel Springs

Greenspace Action Plan

Site Description

Legend

- Allotments
- Anglian Water site
- Boardwalk
- Car park and access roads
- Commemorative planting
- Glade
- Glade created on previous tarmac area
- Grass path
- Grassland
- Hedgerow
- Orchard
- Scrub
- Steps
- Surfaced path
- Uncultivated allotment land
- Water
- Wet woodland
- Wetland
- Woodland
- Tree
- Bench
- Bin
- Cycle parking
- Entrance sign
- Inspection borehole
- Interpretation board
- Kissing gate
- Vehicle gate
- Water trough
- Fenceline



Ladder steps leading to public footpath

River Ivel

Corral

Grazed wildflower grassland

Secondary woodland on area previously used as watercress beds and then used as Baldock tip

Commemorative planting

Main spring head

North Road Allotment car park

Currently unmanaged NHDC owned grassland

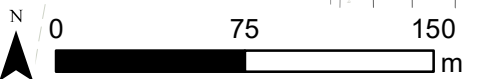
Boardwalk across wetland

Commemorative trees

Football club

Community planted woodland

Pedestrian access via tunnel under railway



Scale @ A3
1:3,000

Date
March 2020

Rev
00



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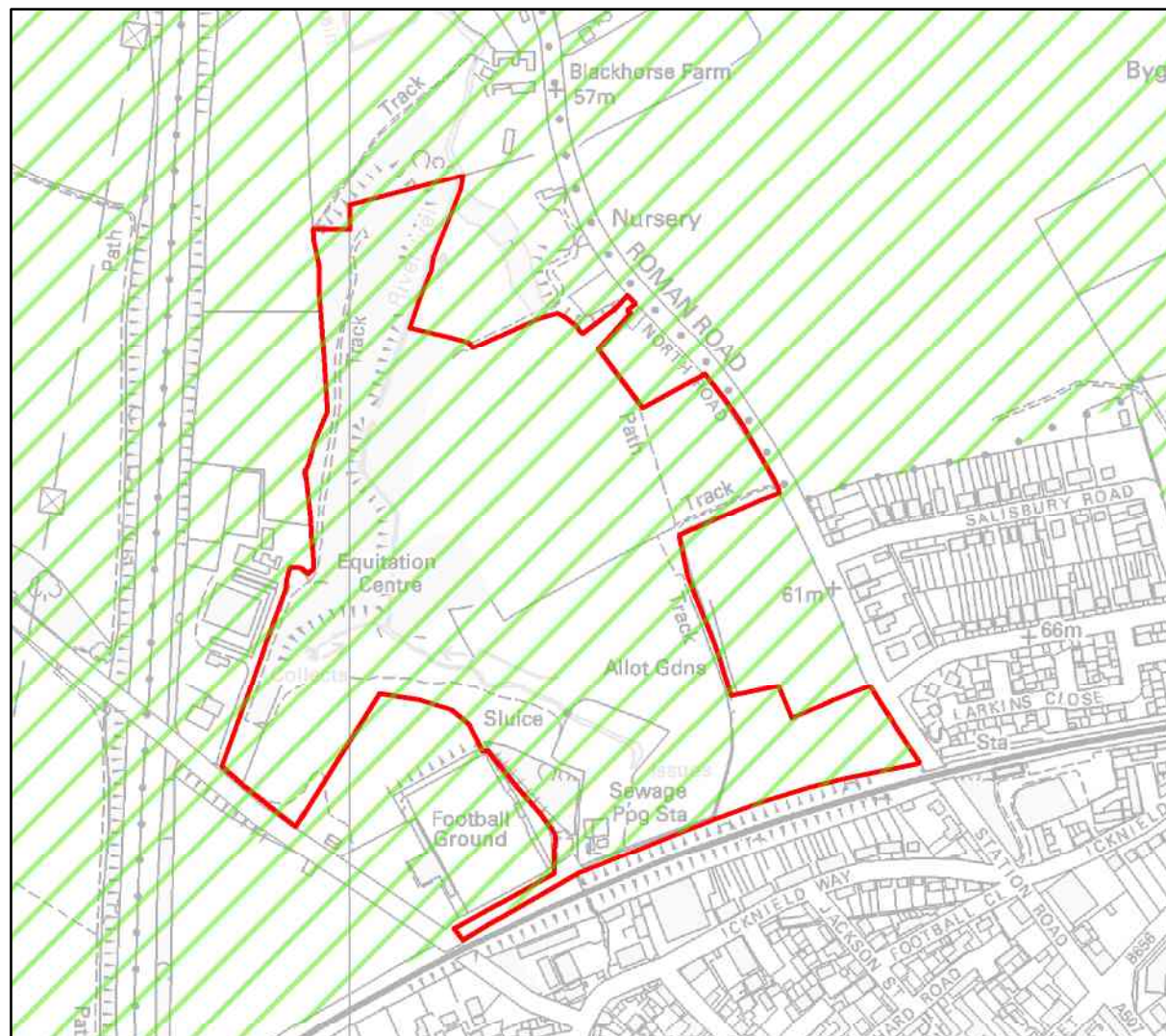
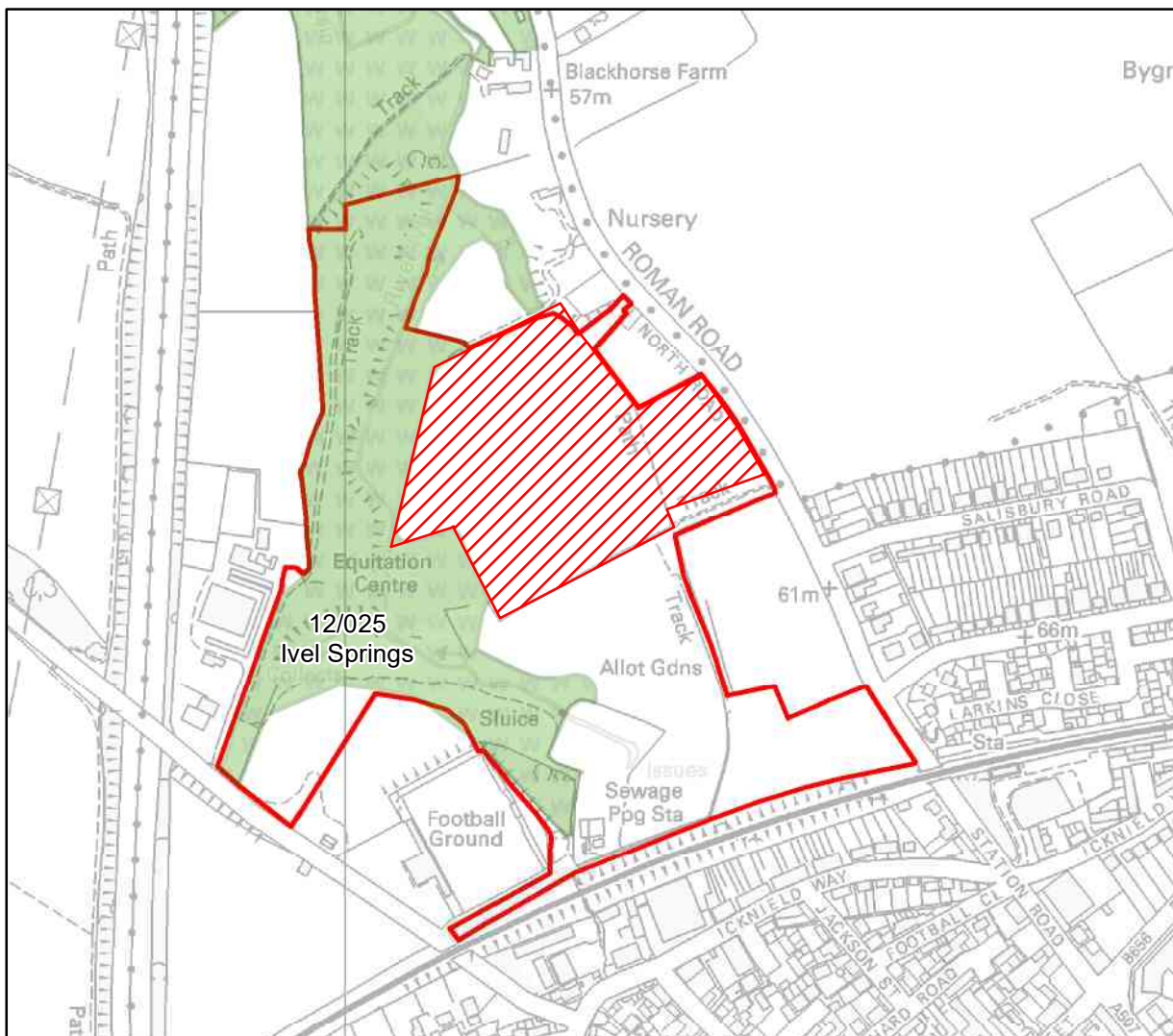
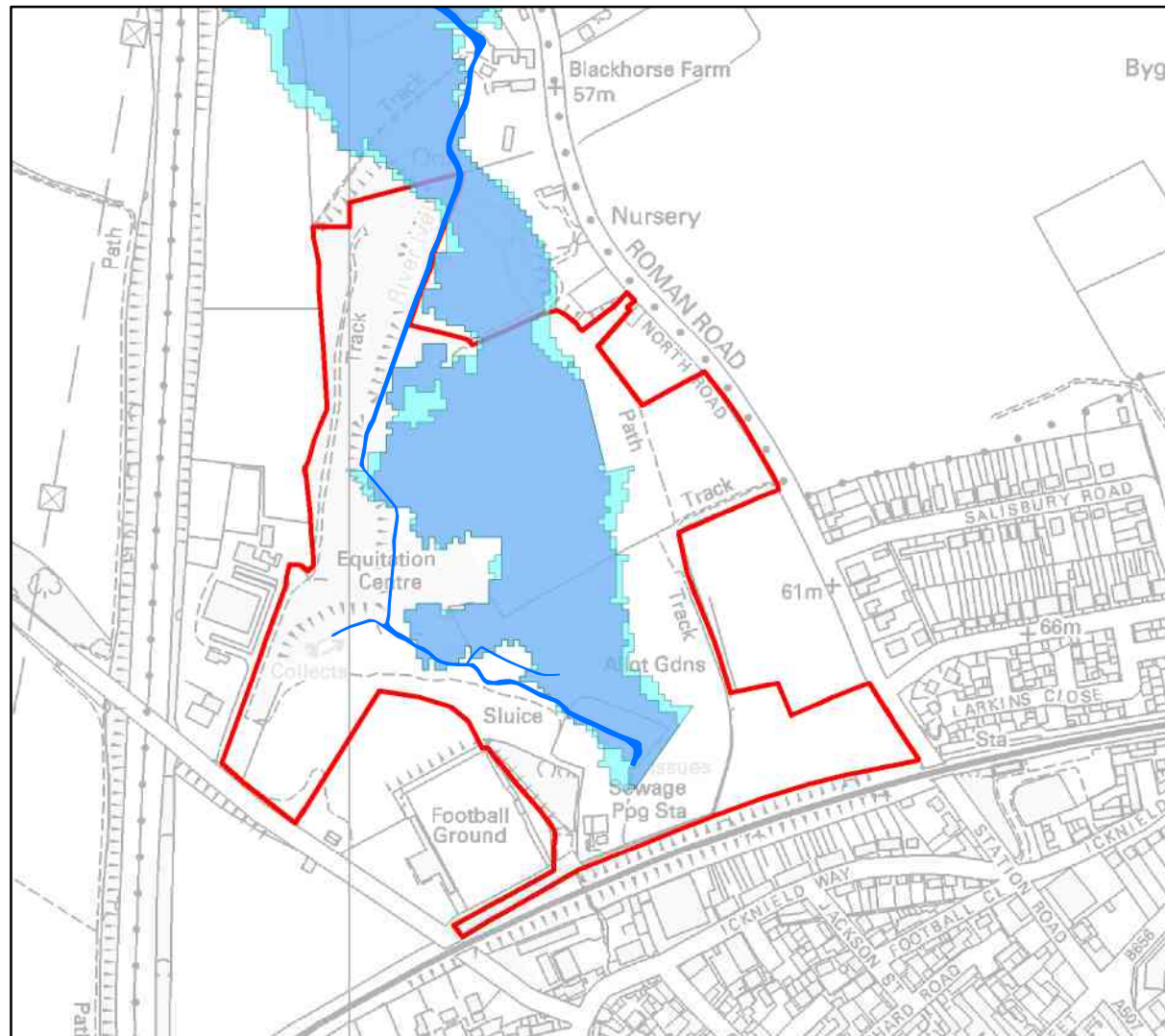
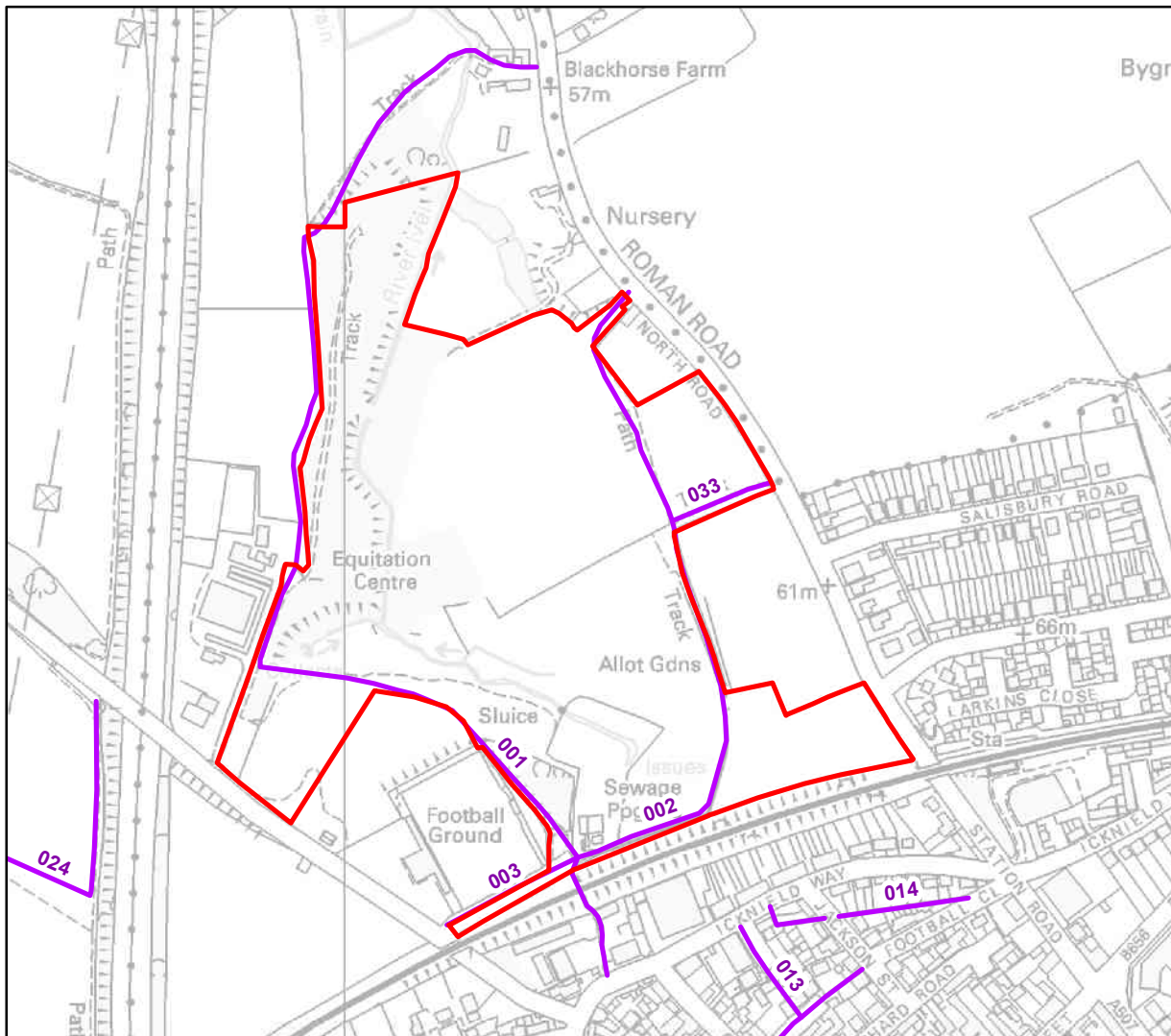
Ivel Springs

Greenspace Action Plan

Constraints Plan

Legend

-  Site boundary
-  Footpath
-  Ordinary watercourse
-  Flood Zone 2
-  Flood Zone 3
-  Scheduled Monument
-  Wildlife Site
-  Greenbelt



Scale @ A3
1:6,000
Date
March 2020
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2.2 Geography and landscape

Ivel Springs sits at the north-eastern edge of 'Landscape Character Area 216 Arlesey – Great Wymondley'. The north of this area is characterised by a large, flat, expansive arable landscape, with the wooded valley of the River Ivel corridor one of its distinctive features. Road and rail corridors are prominent, as is the urban fringe. Ivel Springs sits within this urban fringe, with surrounding land use including residential housing, an equitation centre and a football club. Several major transport corridors also run close by the site, including the London to Cambridge railway line, North Road and the A1.

As a result of its location within the urban fringe, Ivel Springs is within easy reach of a large number of people. The town of Baldock itself has a population of 10,280, with a further 33,249 residents in the nearby Letchworth Garden City (2011 census data). The close proximity of the site to Baldock Railway Station opens the site up to a wider potential audience.

A significant new housing development is proposed adjacent to Ivel Springs at Blackhorse Farm, which is likely to have an impact on the site both in terms of ecology and visitor use.

2.3 History and archaeology

The area around Ivel Springs has a long history of human occupation, dating back to Neolithic times, with further evidence of Roman and Anglo-Saxon use in and around Baldock. The site of a farm settlement is designated as a Scheduled Monument (List Entry Number: 1003548), meaning it has national significance and is protected under statute. The boundary of the Scheduled Monument is roughly in line with the current grazing area.

The course of the River Ivel has been heavily modified by humans, and the wetland area around the springs and upper course of the river are no exception. For around 100 years, up until the 1940s, a large part of the site was used for commercial watercress beds, extending across much of the area adjacent to the river channel. Much of this area was subsequently used as the Baldock tip, with items of old rubbish regularly finding their way to the surface in places. Dredged material from nearby rivers was used to partly cap the tip, creating a highly nutrient rich soil.

2.4 Habitats and wildlife

2.4.1 Grassland

The main area of grassland within the site is the wildflower meadow. This area of previously arable land was seeded around 20 years ago, and up until 2016 was managed with an annual cut-and-lift. Following the installation of fencing and grazing infrastructure, from 2017 onwards the site has been grazed with four longhorn cattle from July to September. Cowslips are the earliest to flower in spring, followed by abundant lady's bedstraw, yellow rattle, meadow cranesbill and common knapweed. Pyramidal and bee orchids are also present. There are small patches of thistle and nettle, along with occasional ragwort within the sward.



Wildflower meadow in early summer



Grazing longhorn cattle

In addition to the wildflower meadow, there are smaller areas of grassland spread throughout the site. Glades have been created along paths through the woodland, which are cut three times a year in April, June and September as part of the grounds maintenance contract. A further two small areas next to the footpath have been seeded with wildflowers where the previous tarmac surface was dug up and removed.



Glade created along footpath



Seeded area at south-western entrance

Many of the glades and smaller grassland areas are currently dominated by nettles and hemlock, most likely as a result of high nutrient levels in the soil.



Nettle dominated glade



Hemlock dominated bank above reedbed

An area of grassland near the wetland is cut at the same time as footpaths and glades. Rabbit grazing also helps keep vegetation here short, which contains wildflowers including selfheal and cat's ear.

A further, larger grassland area is found near the south-western entrance to the site. This area is owned by NHDC but is currently unmanaged. It has developed into rough grassland dominated by nettles and hemlock, along with patches of shorter vegetation, suggesting at least some rabbit grazing also occurs here. The area has been designated for tree planting in a project proposed by Cllr. Muir.



Grassland near wetland



Grassland next to south-western entrance designated for tree planting

2.4.2 Trees and woodland

Secondary woodland is found along the river corridor and on the site of the old tip, comprising species including sycamore, willow, silver birch and oak. Previous work within the woodland has included the felling of several large sycamores to open up the canopy. There is a well-developed understorey, dominated by elder and hawthorn.



Secondary woodland on old tip

Deadwood is an important component of woodlands, providing habitat for numerous species of bats, invertebrates and fungi. Deadwood is well represented within secondary woodland, with both standing and fallen deadwood left in situ where possible. Material from management activities is also kept on site and stacked into habitat piles.



Standing deadwood within woodland



Deadwood pile



Fungus on deadwood

There is an area of wet woodland near the springs and reedbed containing numerous willows, including several almond willows. These are managed by regular pollarding, a traditional technique where trees are cut around head height to promote new growth. The resulting vigorous new growth is cut by volunteers and used as 'binders' in hedgelaying on site. This regular rotational cutting prolongs the life of the trees and provides an additional wildlife habitat.



Pollarded willows in wetland

A number of fruit trees have been identified, mainly along the path running north – south along the western edge of the site. Many of these are currently crowded by surrounding trees.

There are several areas of commemorative planting within the site. This includes the line of trees along the edge of the meadow next to the entrance track, which were planted as 'Trees for Life' to commemorate still-born babies, and two areas of planting near the wetland.



Commemorative planting

At the south-east end of the site is an area of community planted woodland, some of which has been previously managed by coppicing. The area has been gradually thinned in recent years.



Community planted woodland



Woodland following thinning

There has recently been an increase in damage to trees by rabbits bark stripping the bases of trunks, especially in the area of community planted woodland. This damage highlights the need to protect all new planting effectively.



Bark stripping to established tree



Bark stripping to recently planted tree

A further area of planting is found between the allotments and railway line. Much of this planting is ash, and there is evidence of ash dieback present. There is also a relatively high failure rate due to tree guards being left in place, damaging the bases of trunks. Scrub is well established within the area, with extensive bramble, elder and hawthorn.



Ash planting between allotments and railway



Tree failure due to tree guards being left in place too long

2.4.3 Scrub

Scrub habitats, largely dominated by bramble and elder, are found across the site, primarily along grassland and woodland edges. Scrub is regularly cut back where it starts to encroach into grassland areas and on to footpaths.



Developed scrub at edge of grassland

2.4.4 Hedgerows

There are numerous hedgerows across Ivel Springs, several of which have been managed by laying. An ancient hedge between the wildflower meadow and allotments which was mistakenly removed has been replanted and could also be laid in the future.



Recent hedgelaying by FoBGS



Previous hedgelaying

Existing hedgerows have been planted up with whips of native species to fill gaps.



Planted up gap in hedgerow

2.4.5 Wetlands and river

As the name of the site suggests, springs found on site are the source of the River Ivel. The springs have regularly dried up in recent years, with extended periods of dry weather and water abstraction both identified as having an effect on water levels within the chalk aquifer.



Dry riverbed



River channel holding water (February 2020)

Since 2015 Affinity Water has been undertaking monitoring of the upper Ivel to analyse the effects of groundwater abstraction on the river. As a result of this, a number of works are planned as part of Affinity Water's Asset Management Plan 7 (AMP7) to help mitigate these effects.

The river channel itself has been modified in the past and is largely straight and wide, especially considering its location so close to the springs. Plans to narrow the channel and increase sinuosity to create a more natural river habitat are part of the plans in the AMP7 scheme. Overhanging vegetation is regularly cut back to prevent over-shading of the channel.



Monitoring borehole

A former Anglian Water sewage treatment works sits near the springs, which formerly discharged into the wetland and springs area. However, the site now pumps sewage to Letchworth for treatment, further reducing the amounts of water entering the wetland. During periods of heavy rain, run-off from surrounding roads does still enter the wetland via the sewage pumping station.

The Anglian Water site previously contained a reedbed area, extending the wetland habitats found on Ivel Springs. However, lack of management has resulted in the reedbed being lost as the area dried up and scrub encroached.



Anglian Water site



Outflow from Anglian Water site in to wetland

A reedbed is found within the western springs area. Channels are currently cut within the reeds once every three years to promote structural diversity. The reedbed was enhanced through a BIFFA funded project in 2011 which created several pools and enlarged the area through re-profiling of the adjacent bank.



Reedbed area



Reedbed area holding water (February 2020)



Channel cut in reeds

In addition to the reedbed, a wetland area within the springs has developed in one of the areas formally used for commercial watercress beds. This area was also enhanced through the BIFFA funded project, when channels were cleared and three pools dug out in an attempt to hold more water within the area.



Wetland area holding water (February 2020)

Plant species growing in wetter areas include flag iris and redshank, along with common reed, rushes and sedges.



Redshank growing within wetland

Higher ground within the wetland can become overgrown with nettles, thistles and bramble, which can spread in dry conditions. Over the last plan period, vegetation within the wetland has been cut on a three year rotation to prevent this encroachment.



Scrub within wetland area



Wetland following vegetation clearance

2.4.6 Allotments

The allotments make up a substantial area of the central part of the site. The allotments are independent of NHDC and are managed by the Baldock Allotment and Leisure Gardeners' Association (BALGA). The allotment site does not currently extend to the full extent of its statutory land and may expand in the future.



Allotment site

2.4.7 Uncultivated designated allotment land

There are two areas of currently uncultivated allotment land, a small triangular section near the wetland, and a larger parcel of land adjacent to North Road. The smaller section is currently made up of scrub with young secondary woodland developing. The larger area is a mixture of scrub and rough grassland, with an orchard planted at the end next to North Road.



Uncultivated allotment land next to North Road



Orchard within allotment land



Uncultivated allotment land near wetland

2.4.8 Wildlife

The wide range of habitats found on Ivel Springs help support a rich variety of wildlife.

The wetland is known to support water shrew, and there has been evidence of water vole observed in the recent past. The mosaic of habitats will provide feeding opportunities for bats, and mature trees on site are potential roost sites. Meanwhile, grassland and scrub provide suitable habitat for small mammals.



Water vole droppings found in 2015

Bird species recorded include breeding reed warbler and reed bunting within the reedbed.

Wildflower rich grasslands provide a habitat for pollinating invertebrates including butterflies and bees, along with other grassland species such as grasshoppers and crickets, whilst wetlands attract dragonflies and damselflies.

Common lizard has been recorded on site, and the habitats found are also highly likely to support both grass snake and slow worm.

2.4.9 Invasive species

Himalayan balsam is found in the riverbed and is pulled annually by volunteers. Giant hogweed, comfrey and horseradish have been in an herbicide treatment programme in recent years. This has successfully reduced the prevalence of all three species in problem areas.

2.5 Access, facilities and infrastructure

2.5.1 Entrances

The only current parking for the site is at the North Road Allotments car park.



North Road Allotment site car park

There are seven pedestrian entrances to the site, most of these through metal kissing gates, several of which have RADAR access. Four vehicle entrances aid access for management activities.



Pedestrian entrance



Vehicle and pedestrian entrance

At the southern entrance to the site near the Anglian Water site, there is pedestrian access via a tunnel under the railway line.



Pedestrian tunnel under railway

2.5.2 Paths

Paths across the site are largely surfaced with unbound crushed stone and are generally in fair condition. However, they can get muddy at times in wet weather where organic matter has collected on the surface and have varying amounts of vegetation starting to encroach along path edges. Trodden grass paths cross the wildflower meadow, and a path is cut along the top of the bank above the reedbed, which can get muddy in wet weather.



Surfaced path



Surfaced path



Trodden grass paths through meadow



Unsurfaced muddy path

The bases to kissing gates are surfaced with crushed stone and have recently been topped up.

2.5.3 Fencing and cattle infrastructure

Stock fencing was installed around the perimeter of the wildflower meadow in 2016, along with a corral and water supply. Four metal kissing gates within the fenceline allow pedestrian access to the grazed area.



Stock fencing surrounding meadow



Water trough



Corral



Pedestrian gate in to grazing area

Post and rail fencing along the culvert across the river has recently been replaced.



Post and rail fencing

The allotment site has installed rabbit-proof fencing around the perimeter, which also acts as a deterrent to criminal activity. The railway line has a metal palisade fence at its boundary with Ivel Springs.



Allotment fencing



Palisade fencing next to railway

Two stretches of broken, redundant fencing are found on the site, one next to the replanted hedgerow between the wildflower meadow and allotments, and one behind the re-seeded area at the south western entrance to the reserve.



Broken post and wire fence



Broken post and rail fence

2.5.4 Steps and boardwalk

There are three sets of steps on the site. At the northern entrance leading from Baldock Footpath 001 is a set of ladder steps which have recently been repaired with new step boards.



Ladder steps at northern entrance



A set of steps leading out of the meadow towards the river bed have also been repaired with new risers. These steps also have an adjacent ramp to aid access. A further set of steps leads down to the boardwalk crossing the wetland area.



Steps and ramp leading from meadow



Steps leading to boardwalk

The boardwalk itself is in poor condition, with the main structure bowed and the timbers becoming rotten in places.



Rotten post on boardwalk



Bowed boardwalk structure



Boardwalk



Boardwalk

2.5.5 Bins

There are three bins on site which are emptied as part of the grounds maintenance contract.



Bin

2.5.6 Benches

Nine benches are found on the site. Several of these have been replaced during the period of the last plan, while a number of older benches are in poor condition.



Recently installed bench

2.5.7 Interpretation and signage

Two interpretation boards and noticeboards are located at entrances, one next to the allotment car park, and one at the North Road entrance to the site. Panels include a map of the site along with further historical and wildlife information, while the noticeboards are regularly updated by the FoBGS. A third interpretation board is located on the grassland overlooking the reedbed, explaining how the springs function, and the journey water takes from the site. This interpretation is now starting to look tired.



Entrance interpretation board and noticeboard



Car park interpretation/noticeboard



Springs interpretation board

Routed wooden entrance signage welcome visitors to the site at entrances and are currently in the process of being renovated.



Wooden entrance sign

A board at the allotment car park gives information about the Kingfisher Way, and several waymarkers for the route are located on the site.



Kingfisher Way sign



Kingfisher Way waymarker

The site also contains waymarkers and signage for the Rights of Way network.



Rights of Way waymarker



Rights of way finger post

There are two signs marking the areas of currently uncultivated allotment land. These can be confusing for visitors to the site regarding where users can walk.



Allotment land sign

2.5.8 Links to the Rights of Way network

Public Footpaths Baldock 001, 002, 003 and 033 all cross the site in part, and link with other Public Footpaths leading into the towns of Baldock and Letchworth. In addition, there are a number of nearby Bridleways and Restricted Byways which head north into the wider countryside.

The Kingfisher Way long distance route follows the course of the River Ivel and starts at Ivel Springs. The Ickniel Way long distance route runs close by to the south of the site, through Baldock.

2.6 Community and events

2.6.1 Volunteering

The Friends of Baldock Green Spaces (FoBGS) are an active group of local people who help look after the site. They meet on the second Sunday of each month and alternate between working at Ivel Springs and the nearby Weston Hills. In addition, regular volunteer days are held with the CRoW Thursday volunteer group.

2.6.2 Events

An annual 'Meet the Cows' event is held each summer shortly after the cattle arrive on site. These have been very well attended and help promote the benefits of conservation grazing to the wider public.

2.6.3 Promotion

The site is promoted through a number of channels, including the CRoW Facebook page and eNews, the FoBGS Facebook page and NHDC's 'Healthy Hub North Herts' eNews. FoBGS also hold a stall at the annual Baldock festival to promote the group's activities.

3.0 AIM & OBJECTIVES

The aim and objectives of the GAP are as follows:

Aim

Ivel Springs will be a welcoming green space, enjoyed by a wide range of user groups from the local community. The mosaic of habitats found on the site will be in positive management, and heritage features will be protected.

Objectives

A. A welcoming place – *To provide a welcoming green space for the enjoyment of the local community*

- A1 Improve access to, from and around the site where possible – linking to residential areas, local greenspaces, businesses and schools, public transport, shops and local amenities
- A2 Update signage to, from and around the site while making it more attractive

B. Healthy, safe and secure – *To provide and maintain clear and safe public access onto, and around Ivel Springs*

- B1 Carry out reactive tree works to address safety issues
- B2 Respond promptly to reports of misuse of the site

C. Well maintained and clean – *To ensure that all aspects of Ivel Springs are kept clean and well maintained*

- C1 Manage and maintain paths, signage and site infrastructure
- C2 Maintain high standards of site cleanliness through grounds maintenance operations

D. Environmental management – *To ensure all aspects of site management are undertaken with sustainability as a guiding principle*

- D1 Ensure all site activities adhere to relevant NHDC policies and strategies, including all work undertaken by contractors
- D2 Ensure ongoing maintenance costs are financially sustainable
- D3 Secure external funding to ensure the viability of capital works
- D4 Monitor results of delivery to evaluate the success of management activities

E. Biodiversity, landscape and heritage – *To conserve and enhance the important wildlife, landscape and heritage features of Ivel Springs*

- E1 Manage grassland areas to benefit pollinators

- E2 Maintain and enhance wetland areas
- E3 Maintain and enhance the mosaic of habitats found within Ivel Springs
- E4 Work in partnership with stakeholders and local landowners
- E5 Continue to manage invasive species
- E6 Ensure Scheduled Monument and historic features are protected

F. Community involvement – *To ensure engagement and involvement of local communities*

- F1 Support volunteer activity at Ivel Springs and ensure all involved operate towards achievement of the GAP
- F2 Continue to support the FoBGS and encourage the local community to become further involved in the management of Ivel Springs in a structured and supported way
- F3 Seek to actively engage with new communities as they develop, ensuring they are able to positively contribute to future management

G. Marketing and communication – *To promote awareness and interest in Ivel Springs*

- G1 Improve the visitor experience and enhance opportunities for informing and educating
- G2 Promote volunteer and community events at Ivel Springs

4.0 MANAGEMENT PRESCRIPTIONS

4.1 A welcoming place

4.1.1 Signage

Welcome signs at entrances are in the process of being renovated. Rights of Way waymarking will be replaced as required. NHDC will work with BALGA to ensure signage of uncultivated allotment land is less confusing to site users.

4.1.2 Car parking

The only car parking currently to the site is the North Road Allotment Site car park. With planned expansion to the allotment site, and the potential increase in visitors from local developments, pressures on the car park will only be increasing. Options should therefore be investigated in to providing further car parking for the site in the future, including looking at potential entrances from Norton Road.

4.1.3 Infrastructure improvements

4.1.3.1 Benches

The two benches next to the community planted woodland are in poor condition. When the bench at the pedestrian entrance from North Road was installed, the community woodland planting was still young, and the bench offered views over the wider site. However, as the woodland has grown up, the bench is now enclosed and secluded. This bench should therefore be removed, and a new bench installed in a nearby, more open location. The adjacent bin should also be moved with the bench. The second bench, located between the community planted woodland and allotments, should also be replaced. Both benches should be replaced with wooden kit benches to match existing benches installed across the site.



Bench and bin to be replaced and re-located



Bench to be replaced

4.1.3.2 Boardwalk

The boardwalk will require replacement during this plan. A project should be developed for the wetland area, to include the boardwalk replacement.

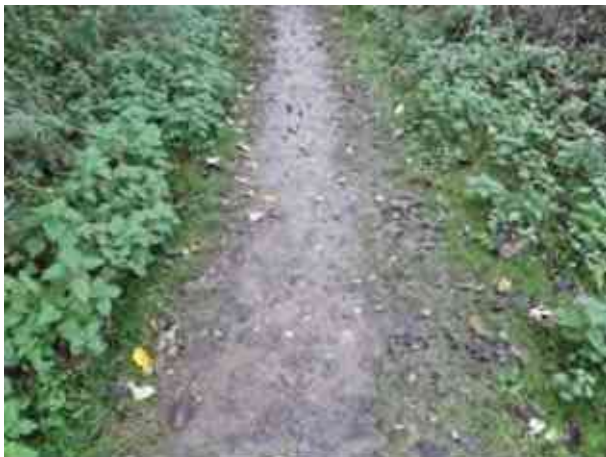
4.1.3.3 Path surfaces

The path along the top of the bank above the reedbed should be surfaced to join with existing surfaced paths.



Path to be surfaced

All surfaced paths should be scraped to remove organic matter and encroaching vegetation to restore the full path width. Path surfaces should then be re-graded as necessary.



Vegetation encroaching across path

The kissing gates around the meadow have recently been topped up with crushed stone, these should be monitored and topped up as necessary.

4.1.3.4 Fencing

The two stretches of broken, redundant fencing identified should be removed.

4.2 Healthy, safe and secure

4.2.1 Tree health and safety surveys

Tree Health and Safety surveys are undertaken every three years in accordance with the NHDC Tree Strategy. Works identified are then prioritised and completed as necessary.

4.2.2 Site inspections

NHDC staff will undertake regular site inspections and will investigate and respond promptly to reports of misuse of the site.

Stock fencing surrounding the wildflower meadow will be inspected each year before cattle arrive, with repairs completed as required to ensure the grazing area is stock proof.

While cattle are on site, a rota is produced to ensure cattle are checked daily. This is delivered through a combination of volunteer cattle checkers and site visits by the grazier.

4.3 Well maintained and clean

The current grounds maintenance programme should continue, including the regular emptying of bins, and the footpath and glade cutting regime of three cuts in April, June and September.

Litter picking, cleaning of signage and small-scale vegetation management around paths will continue to be part of FoBGS and Thursday volunteer task days. Special attention should be paid to keeping areas around kissing gates, benches, steps, interpretation, waymarkers and the boardwalk clear.

4.4 Environmental management

4.4.1 Policies and strategies

Management of Ivel Springs should be guided by all relevant NHDC policies and strategies, including the Green Space Management Strategy (GSMS) 2017-2021. The GSMS is currently under review, with an updated strategy due to take effect from 2021.

4.4.2 Funding

Applications should be made to secure external funding for larger projects and capital works.

4.4.3 Monitoring

A programme of monitoring should be implemented to monitor the success of management activities, including:

- Rapid Grassland Assessment (RGA) of wildflower meadow and glades
- Fixed point photography to monitor habitat changes

Volunteers should be provided with training to deliver these surveys as part of regular volunteer activities.

4.5 Biodiversity, landscape and heritage

4.5.1 Grasslands

4.5.1.1 Wildflower meadow

The current management regime of grazing with four cattle from July – September should continue. Where large patches of thistle have developed within the sward, these should be cut and removed before flowers set seed, in order to prevent further spread amongst the

grassland. The requirement for this should decrease as removal effort reduces the prevalence of thistles. Ragwort is only occasional throughout the sward but should be pulled by volunteers prior to cattle arriving on site.



Large thistle patches

Any future changes to management should be led by the results of RGA surveys. If surveys reveal grasses becoming more dominant or a reduction in species diversity, a periodic early cut of the grassland could be introduced in April/May to remove additional nutrients.

4.5.1.2 Glades

The majority of glades are cut as part of the grounds maintenance contract in April, June and September. The continuation of this regular cutting should gradually reduce the dominance of nettles and allow a more diverse species assemblage to develop. This is already starting to occur in places, with the emergence of patches of wildflowers such as lady's bedstraw, creeping cinquefoil, bird's-foot trefoil, cut-leaved cranesbill and red clover. Where possible, arisings from glade cutting should be removed in an effort to further reduce nutrients in these areas.

Several smaller glades towards the south of the woodland should continue to be cut annually by volunteers in autumn/winter.

4.5.1.3 Grassland above wetland

This area of grassland should continue to be cut at the same time as glades, in order to maintain the assemblage of species present.

4.5.1.4 Uncultivated allotment land

The area around fruit trees should be kept clear; otherwise uncultivated allotment land should be left as non-intervention.

4.5.2 Trees and woodlands

4.5.2.1 Secondary woodland

Secondary woodland can largely be left as non-intervention. Standing and fallen deadwood should be left in-situ where this does not pose a health and safety risk to visitors. Selected

elder and hawthorn along path edges can be coppiced to create a more diverse woodland edge and keep paths clear.



Woodland edge next to footpath ideal for coppicing

4.5.2.2 Community planted woodland

The recent thinning within the community planted woodland has opened up the area well. Previously coppiced hazel can be re-coppiced along the footpath edge where growth is encroaching across the footpath.



Coppicing along woodland/footpath boundary

4.5.2.3 Wet woodland

Crack willows should continue to be regularly re-pollarded every few years, with cuttings used either for binders in hedgelaying, or to create brash piles. Any brash piles should be located away from the wetland to prevent material being washed into the river, and to prevent cuttings establishing as new willows within the wetland. Almond willows should be left on a longer rotation and won't be re-pollarded within this plan period.

4.5.2.4 Commemorative planting

Dense alder regeneration within the commemorative planting near the wetland should be thinned to allow the best stems to develop.



Dense alder growth

4.5.2.5 Fruit trees

Mature fruit trees should be halo-thinned to remove surrounding vegetation. Following this, they can be pruned to encourage new growth and create feature trees. The planted orchard next to North Road should be regularly cleared of vegetation to encourage growth of fruit trees and prevent scrub taking over. Scrub developing between the path and orchard should also be cleared to open up this area further.



Scrub between path and orchard to be cleared

4.5.2.6 Community woodland

Recent rabbit damage should be monitored, and replacement planting of losses undertaken as required.

4.5.2.7 New tree planting

The area of unmanaged NHDC land designated for tree planting should be planted with a mixture of native broadleaf tree species. Due to the presence of rabbit damage to trees on site, 120cm tall tree guards should be used to protect newly planted trees from bark stripping. A planting event should be held to engage with the local community and encourage further involvement in site management. Going forward, the area will be maintained by a new volunteer group, working specifically in the area. Planting and aftercare guidance are outlined in Specification 6.3.

4.5.3 Scrub

Scrub along footpath edges should be regularly cut back to keep paths clear. Scrub along grassland edges should also be regularly cut back to prevent encroachment into grassland habitats. Larger, more developed patches of scrub should be cut on rotation to maintain a range of ages and structures across the site.

All tree and scrub work should be undertaken between September and February to avoid disturbance to breeding birds.

In the area between the allotments and railway line, failed previous ash planting should be cleared, and the area allowed to develop into a mosaic of scrub habitats. This should then be included in future rotational scrub management.

4.5.4 Hedgerows

Previously laid hedges across the site should be trimmed back annually to prevent encroachment across footpaths and to allow light to reach glades.

4.5.5 Wetlands and river

4.5.5.1 River channel

A number of works are planned to the river channel as part of Affinity Water's AMP7 scheme. These consist of:

- Works to increase sinuosity and narrow the channel.
- Spring heads and upper channel excavated out and domestic rubbish/detritus removed. Channel may be backfilled with chalk if jointed chalk not evident after excavation.
- Re-setting of the riverbed under arched culvert to tie in with new bed levels.
- Modification/removal of obsolete structures.
- Flow augmentation, whereby water is pumped into the springs when groundwater levels reach a trigger point.
- Potential to reinstate bypass channel at Norton Mill, downstream of Ivel Springs.

Affinity Water will be responsible for funding and delivering project works prescribed through AMP7.

In addition, overhanging vegetation will continue to be regularly cut back by volunteers to allow light to reach the channel and prevent over-shading. Where dry conditions have allowed scrub to encroach into the channel, this will also be regularly cleared by volunteers.

4.5.5.2 Reedbed

Regular cutting of strips within the reedbed in autumn/early winter should continue, in order to maintain a diversity of vegetation structure. Cuttings can be piled at the base of the bank below the viewpoint to create habitat piles. Channels should be closely raked to remove the build-up of leaf litter and prevent scrub development. Year 2 cutting should be included within the wetland project.

4.5.5.3 Wetland next to Anglian Water site

There is an opportunity to further develop the wetland area to work in conjunction with Affinity Water's AMP7 scheme. A project should be developed for the wetland area to include:

- *Improvements to the outflow from the Anglian Water site.*

Currently, when water does enter Ivel Springs from the Anglian Water site, it rushes through at a high velocity, travelling through the spring area quickly and causing erosion.



Erosion at Anglian Water site outflow

This could be addressed by moving the outflow to the centre of the wetland edge, and the construction of a retaining structure to act as a silt trap and to better regulate water flow. A similar scheme has been completed at Haldens Park in Welwyn Garden City.

- *Excavation of the wetland area to create a new reedbed.*

Filtration through the reedbed would improve the water quality of stormwater discharged from the Anglian Water site, as well as hold water in the spring area for longer.

- *Reinstatement of reedbed in Anglian Water site*

Discussions are ongoing with Anglian Water about reinstating the reedbeds on their site, increasing the size of the overall wetland. With Anglian Water permission, regular small-scale maintenance activities of this could be undertaken by volunteers and the FoBGS.

Vegetation should continue to be cut around wetland pools until the project is delivered, management requirements for this area will be re-assessed following completion of the project.

4.5.6 Habitat enhancements

4.5.6.1 Reptile hibernacula

Reptile hibernacula have previously been created using rubble and soil excavated during footpath works. Soil excavated during planned footpath works can be used to top up existing hibernacula, and depending on the amount of soil generated, create new hibernacula.



Existing hibernacula which could be topped up



Exposed rubble with the potential to create new hibernacula

4.5.7 Invasive species

Himalayan balsam will continue to be pulled from the river channel as part of volunteer task days. A contract is currently in place for the treatment of giant hogweed with herbicide up until 2023. Following this, a review will take place of the need for further treatment going forward.

4.5.8 Allotments

The current extent of allotment land is managed by BALGA. NHDC will work with BALGA regarding any plans to expand the allotments into currently uncultivated allotment land. To facilitate this, the path leading from the car park to the uncultivated allotment land will need to be widened to provide access. This widening would also allow easier delivery of manure and compost to the allotments in the future and allow the area of hardstanding in this area to be used as further parking for allotment holders. This work has the permission of NHDC and dependant on funding, widening could be included in planned path surfacing works.

4.5.9 Scheduled Monument

One of the added benefits of grazing the wildflower meadow is the reduction in vehicle and machinery movements over the Scheduled Monument. The area of the Scheduled Monument should be maintained as grassland and kept clear of scrub to protect features beneath ground from root disturbance.

4.6 Community involvement

4.6.1 Volunteering

The FoBGS will continue to be supported in delivering management activities at Ivel Springs, supplemented by regular task days from the CRoW Thursday volunteer group. Meetings will be held between NHDC, CRoW and FoBGS representatives every six months to discuss and plan work programmes.

A new volunteer group is planned to be set up to maintain the area of newly planted trees, led by Cllr. Muir.

4.6.2 Local groups and initiatives

NHDC, CRoW and FoBGS will work in partnership with local groups and stakeholders for the benefit of Ivel Springs and the surrounding landscape. This should include local landowners and the RevIvel Association, a group of local people concerned about recent low flow levels in the River Ivel.

Opportunities to link with other environment-based initiatives such as 'Baldock Beats Waste' should be encouraged to ensure that environmental and wildlife issues are high on the agenda within the local community.

4.6.3 Potential new developments

The effects on Ivel Springs of the proposed future housing development at Blackhorse Farm should be considered during the planning process, and responses to consultations provided by NHDC and CRoW staff, along with the FoBGS. If development plans progress, any available funding opportunities should be explored to improve the habitats and access infrastructure of Ivel Springs. Consideration should also be given to engaging with new communities as they develop, linking Ivel Springs to proposed new green spaces as part of wildlife corridors and ensuring access links to the site are promoted through the Rights of Way network.

4.7 Marketing and communication

4.7.1 Interpretation and leaflet

An interpretation renewal project should be delivered, to include:

- an updated combination orientation board/noticeboard adjacent to car park.
- an updated interpretation board on the viewpoint overlooking the reedbed, describing the importance of the springs and providing information about the River Ivel. This board should also educate visitors on the importance of reducing water use and how this links with the springs.
- two new orientation boards to be located at the pedestrian entrance from North Road and the pedestrian entrance at the north of the site from Footpath 001.

4.7.2 Events

The annual 'Meet the Cows' event will continue to be held each summer, soon after the cows arrive. Additional events will be delivered through the 'Walks and More' programme, to

further promote the site to the local community, and engage on projects and management activities.

4.7.3 Promotion

The site will continue to be regularly promoted through the CRoW Facebook page and eNews, the FoBGS Facebook page and NHDC's 'Healthy Hub North Herts' eNews. The FoBGS will be encouraged to continue to hold a stall at the annual Baldock Festival and to get involved with other local events and initiatives.

5.0 ACTION PLANS AND MAPS

5.1 ANNUAL AND REGULAR ACTIONS

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
0.1	Graze wildflower meadow with four longhorn cattle	E1, E3, E6	Jul – Sep	CRoW	Contractor	NHDC Budget	£1,400		
0.2	Cut paths and path edges, edge of track to car park, track to sewage pumping station, round entrance points & signs	C1	Apr, Jun & Sep	NHDC	JOC	NHDC GM Budget	GM Contract		
0.3	Cut main glades and viewpoints	C1, E1, E3	Apr, Jun & Sep	NHDC	JOC	NHDC GM Budget	GM Contract		
0.4	Cut smaller glades at boundary with Equitation Centre	E3	Sep – Feb	CMS	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.5	Cut grassland above reedbed and around trees	E1, E3	Apr, Jun & Sep	NHDC	JOC	NHDC GM Budget	GM Contract		
0.6	Cut back vegetation around wetland steps and boardwalk, benches, meadow steps/ramps and steps at northern end of site	C1, E3	As required	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.7	Update & clean sign & notice boards	C1, C2	As required	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.8	Empty litter bins, minimum frequency of once a week	C2	All year	NHDC	JOC	NHDC GM Budget	GM Contract		
0.9	Remove rubbish and fly-tipping	C2	As required	NHDC	JOC	NHDC GM Budget	GM Contract		
0.10	Remove ragwort from grassland areas	E1, E3, E5	Jun/Jul	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.11	Remove patches of thistle from wildflower meadow when required	E1, E3	Jul	CRoW	Vols	Officer time			

0.12	Remove encroaching scrub from grassland areas and rotationally cut larger patches of scrub	E1, E3, E6	Sep – Feb	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.13	Remove encroaching and overhanging vegetation along river	E2, E3	Sep – Feb	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.14	Remove Himalayan balsam from the river channel	E3, E5	Jun/Jul	CRoW	Vols	Officer time			
0.15	Control of giant hogweed	E3, E5	Jun – Sep	NHDC	Contractor	NHDC Budget	Y1 & Y2 £810		Y3 & Y4 £750
0.16	Maintain laid hedges across the site	E3	Sep – Feb	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.17	Clear vegetation from around orchard trees	E3	As required	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.18	Tree planting aftercare, including monitoring of rabbit damage and replacement where necessary	E3	All year	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.19	Cut and remove vegetation around wetland pools, 1/3 to be cut each year (dependant on wetland project)	E2, E3	Sep/Oct	CRoW	Vols	Officer time			
0.20	Prepare Green Flag Application for January deadline		Dec	NHDC	NHDC/ CRoW	NHDC Budget			
0.21	Rapid Grassland Assessment of wildflower meadow and glades	D4, E1, E3	Jun/Jul	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.22	Fixed point photography monitoring	D4, E1, E2, E3, E5, E6	Jan/Apr Jul/Oct	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
0.23	Tree risk management inspections	B1	Every three	NHDC	NHDC	NHDC Tree Budget			

			years						
0.24	Health & safety inspections and undertaking of works	B2, C1	As required	NHDC	NHDC	Officer time/ NHDC GM Budget			
0.25	Develop and promote Friends of Baldock Green Spaces	F1, F2	All year	NHDC/ CRoW	NHDC/ CRoW	Officer time			
0.26	Promote volunteer and community events at Ivel Springs	G2	All year	NHDC/ CRoW	NHDC/ CRoW	Officer time			
0.27	Work together to actively engage with future local developments, including planning applications and consultations, to mitigate potential negative effects on Ivel Springs LNR and identify opportunities for enhancements	E3, F3	As required	NHDC/ CRoW/ FoBGS	NHDC/ CRoW/ FoBGS	Officer time			
0.28	Co-operate with Affinity Water to deliver AMP7 scheme for the upper Ivel	E2, E3, E4	As required	NHDC/ CRoW	NHDC/ CRoW	Officer time			
0.29	Work with local stakeholders to improve Ivel Springs and the wider Ivel catchment	E2, E3, E4, F2	All year	NHDC/ CRoW	NHDC/ CRoW	Officer time			

Ivel Springs Greenspace Action Plan Annual Actions

Task Responsibility

□ District led	} Officer/Contractor delivered
□ CMS led	
□ District led	} Volunteer delivered
□ CMS led	

Legend

- Allotments
- Anglian Water site
- Boardwalk
- Car park and access roads
- Commemorative planting
- Glade cut by contractor
- Glade cut by volunteers
- Grass path
- Grassland
- Hedgerow
- Orchard
- Scrub
- Steps
- Surfaced path
- Uncultivated allotment land
- Water
- Wet woodland
- Wetland
- Woodland
- Tree
- Bench
- Bin
- Cycle parking
- ▲ Entrance sign
- Inspection borehole
- Interpretation board
- Kissing gate
- Vehicle gate
- Fenceline

Annual Management

Habitat Management

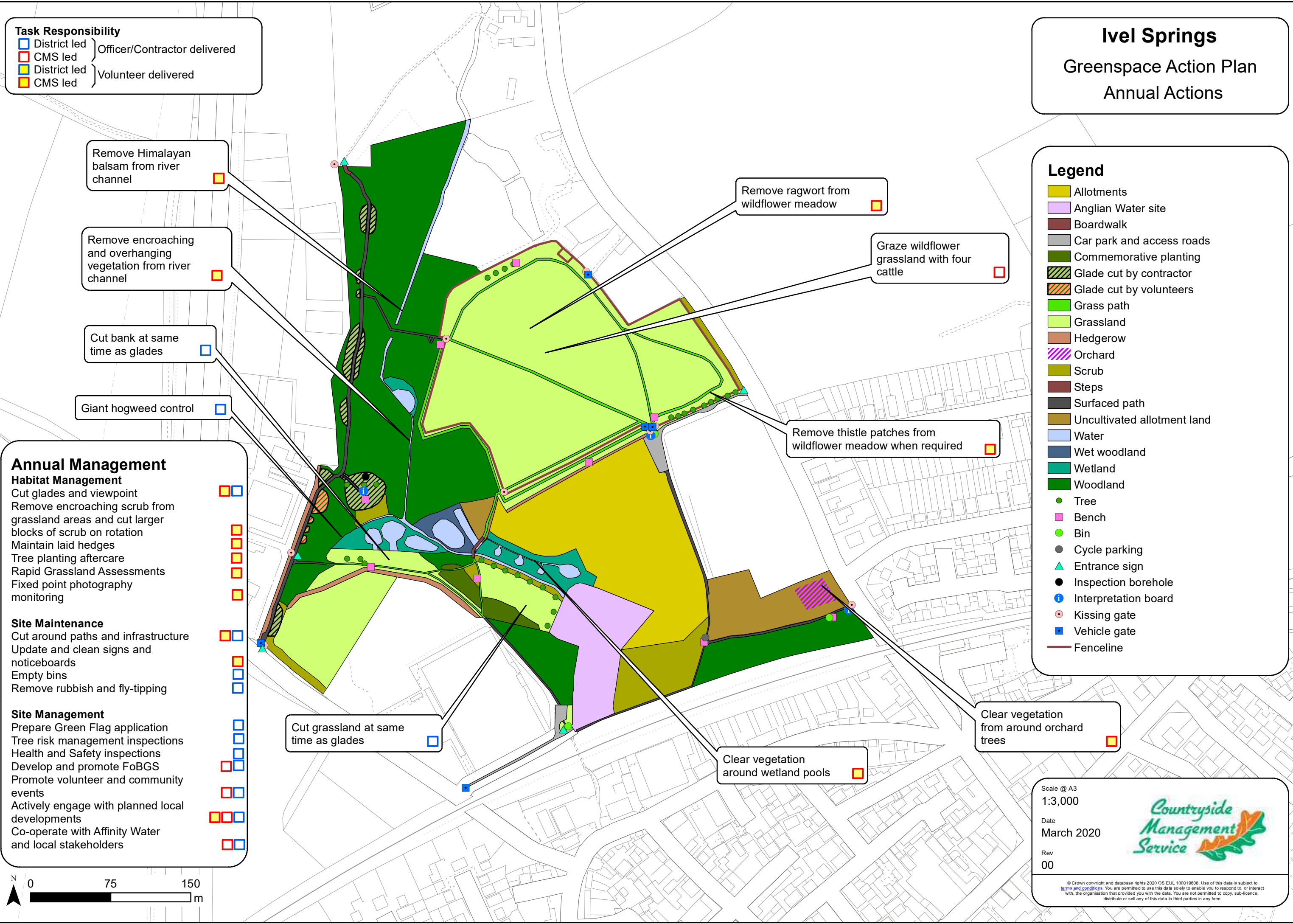
- Cut glades and viewpoint
- Remove encroaching scrub from grassland areas and cut larger blocks of scrub on rotation
- Maintain laid hedges
- Tree planting aftercare
- Rapid Grassland Assessments
- Fixed point photography monitoring

Site Maintenance

- Cut around paths and infrastructure
- Update and clean signs and noticeboards
- Empty bins
- Remove rubbish and fly-tipping

Site Management

- Prepare Green Flag application
- Tree risk management inspections
- Health and Safety inspections
- Develop and promote FoBGS
- Promote volunteer and community events
- Actively engage with planned local developments
- Co-operate with Affinity Water and local stakeholders



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March 2020

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5.2 YEAR 1 2020-21

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
1.1	Develop wetland project and apply for funding to deliver	A1, D3, E2, E3	All year	CRoW	CRoW	Officer time			
1.2	Surface path along top of bank above reedbed (270m)	A1, C1	2020	CRoW	CRoW	NHDC Budget/ RoW Budget	£16,000	6.1 6.2	
1.3	Scrape organic material and regrade existing surfaced paths (1,315m)	A1, C1	2020	CRoW	CRoW	NHDC Budget/ external funding	£40,000	6.1 6.2	
1.4	Widen and strengthen path adjacent to allotments (125m)	A1, C1	2020	CRoW	CRoW	BALGA/ External funding	£10,000	6.1 6.2	
1.5	Clear failed ash planting from scrub area between allotments and railway line	E3	Sep – Feb	CRoW	CRoW/ FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time/ NHDC Budget			
1.6	Clear scrub between orchard and path leading from North Road	E3	Sep – Feb	CRoW	CRoW/ FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time/ NHDC Budget			
1.7	Hold planting event to plant currently unmanaged land with native broadleaf woodland species	E3, G2	Sep – Feb	NHDC	Vols	Officer time/ NHDC Budget	£500	6.3	
1.8	Control of giant hogweed	E3, E5	Jun – Sep	NHDC	Contractor	NHDC Budget	£810		
1.9	Interpretation renewal	A2, G1	All year	CRoW	CRoW	Officer time	£5,000	6.4	

1.10	Replace bench at pedestrian entrance from North Road and relocate along with bin	A1, C1	2020	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time	£250		
1.11	Replace bench between allotments and community planted woodland	A1, C1	2020	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time/ NHDC Budget	£200		
1.12	Halo thin around mature fruit trees	E3	Sep – Feb	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
1.13	Coppice elder, hawthorn and hazel along woodland edges	E3	Sep – Feb	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
1.14	Thin dense alder growth within commemorative planting near wetland	E2	Sep – Feb	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			

Ivel Springs

Greenspace Action Plan

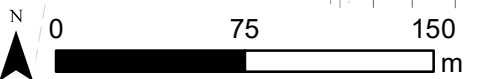
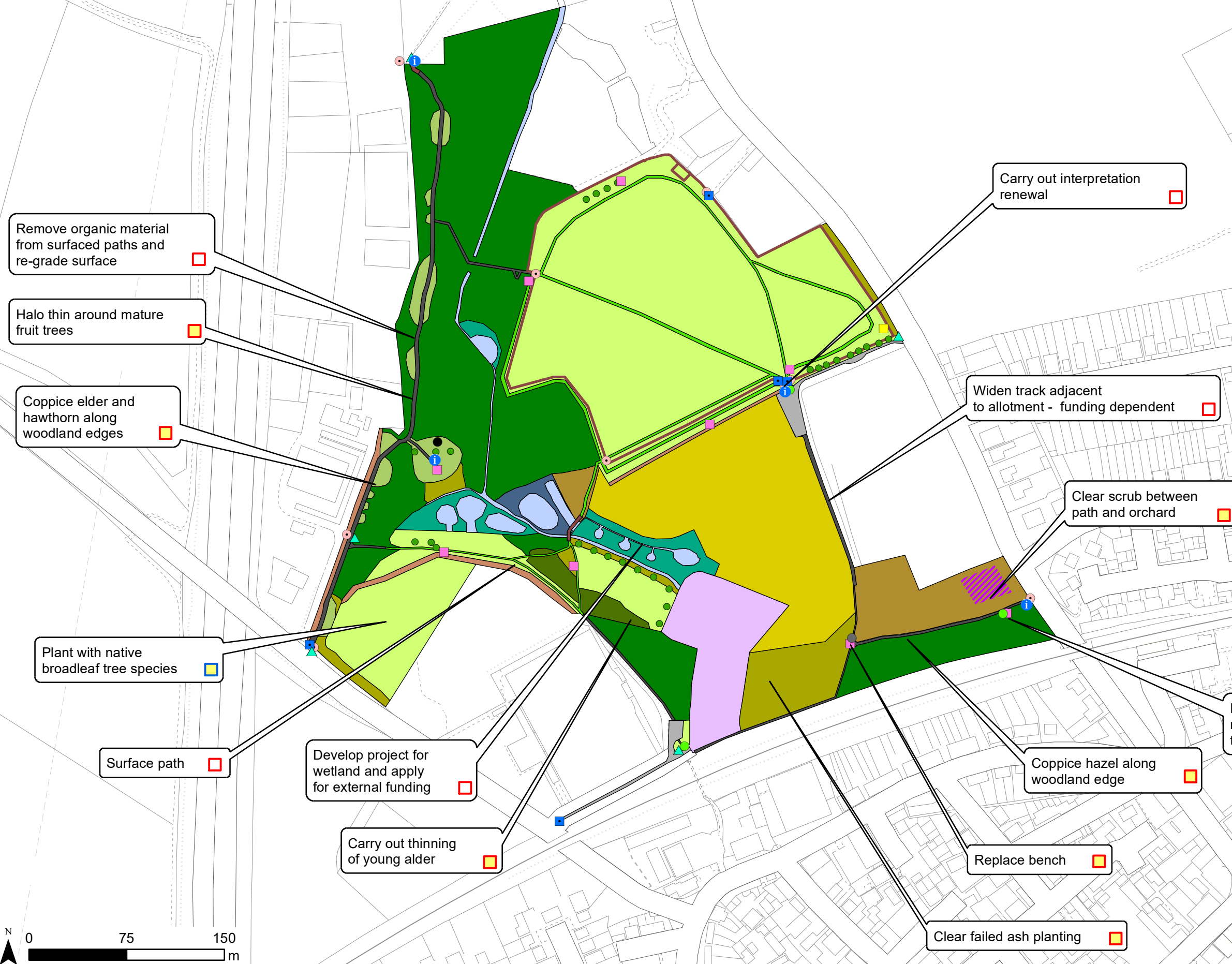
Year 1 2020/21

Task Responsibility

□ District led	} Officer/Contractor delivered
□ CMS led	
□ District led	} Volunteer delivered
□ CMS led	

Legend

- Allotments
- Anglian Water site
- Boardwalk
- Car park and access roads
- Commemorative planting
- Glade
- Grass path
- Grassland
- Hedgerow
- Orchard
- Scrub
- Steps
- Surfaced path
- Uncultivated allotment land
- Water
- Wet woodland
- Wetland
- Woodland
- Tree
- Bench
- Bin
- Cycle parking
- ▲ Entrance sign
- Inspection borehole
- Interpretation board
- Kissing gate
- Vehicle gate
- Water trough
- Fenceline



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5.3 YEAR 2 2021-22

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
2.1	Wetland project delivery (including channel cutting in reedbed)	A1, D3, E2, E3	Sep – Feb	CRoW	Contractor	External	£40,000		
2.2	Prune mature fruit trees	E3	Sep – Feb	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
2.3	Re-pollard crack willows in wetland	E2, E3	Sep – Feb	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			

Ivel Springs

Greenspace Action Plan

Year 2 2021/22

Task Responsibility

□ District led	} Officer/Contractor delivered
□ CMS led	
□ District led	} Volunteer delivered
□ CMS led	

Legend

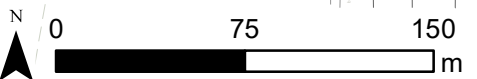
- Allotments
- Anglian Water site
- Boardwalk
- Car park and access roads
- Commemorative planting
- Glade
- Grass path
- Grassland
- Hedgerow
- Newly planted woodland
- ▨ Orchard
- Scrub
- Steps
- Surfaced path
- Uncultivated allotment land
- Water
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- Wetland
- Woodland
- Tree
- Bench
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- Inspection borehole
- ⓘ Interpretation board
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- Vehicle gate
- Water trough
- Fenceline

Prune mature fruit trees

Cut channels in reedbed

Re-pollard willows

Deliver wetland project



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5.4 YEAR 3 2022-23

Annual actions only

5.5 YEAR 4 2023-24

Annual actions only

5.6 YEAR 5 2024-25

Ref no.	Action	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.1	Re-pollard crack willows in wetland	E2, E3	Sep – Feb	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
5.2	Cut channels in reedbed	E2, E3	Sep – Dec	CRoW	FoBGS/ Vols	Officer time			
5.3	Review invasive species control	E3, E5	Summer	CRoW	CRoW	Officer time			
5.4	Prepare GAP 2025-30		All year	CRoW	CRoW	Officer time			

Ivel Springs

Greenspace Action Plan

Year 5 2024/25

Task Responsibility

□ District led	} Officer/Contractor delivered
□ CMS led	
□ District led	} Volunteer delivered
□ CMS led	

Legend

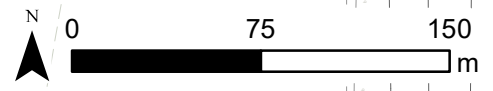
- Allotments
- Anglian Water site
- Boardwalk
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- Commemorative planting
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- Kissing gate
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Prepare GAP 2025 - 2030 □

Cut channels in reedbed □

Review invasive species control □

Re-pollard crack willows in wetland □



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6.0 SPECIFICATIONS

6.1 New path surfacing

1. The safe width of the surfaced area should be 2 metres.
2. Excavate to minimum depth of 150mm, with all soft spots excavated back to firm ground with the purpose of achieving best surface drainage of the finished route, with hollows filled with hardcore to ensure even, firm base layer.
3. Spoil to be used to cover exposed concrete and rubble to create reptile hibernacula.
4. Supply and lay a non-woven geotextile, such as Terram 1500 or similar.
5. Supply, spread, grade and thoroughly compact to a dense, tight, even base course, surface with constant fall, recycled aggregate 50 mm to dust to a finished depth of not less than 150 mm. Ensure that the geotextile membrane is covered at this stage.
6. Supply, spread, grade and thoroughly compact to a dense, tight, even surface, a layer of well graded recycled aggregate (concrete dust/reject sand) 6 mm to dust as surface dressing. Finished, compacted depth to be not less than 45 mm. Edges to be lost in adjoining ground and base course to be completely covered. Material must be completely free from deleterious materials.
7. Path to have a final camber or cross-fall (as appropriate to slope) of at least 50 mm over width.
8. Any protruding objects to be removed by the contractor.

6.2 Path scraping and re-grading

1. Scrape off grass and organic material to finished path width.
2. Spoil to be used to cover exposed concrete and rubble to create reptile hibernacula.
3. Scarify surface of existing path, fill hollows with recycled aggregate 50 mm to dust, grade and consolidate to produce a level surface.
4. Spread, grade and thoroughly compact to a dense, tight, even surface, a layer of well graded recycled aggregate (concrete dust/reject sand) 6 mm to dust as surface dressing. Finished, compacted depth to be not less than 45 mm. Edges to be lost in adjoining ground and base course to be completely covered.
5. Path to have a final camber of at least 50 mm over width.
6. Any protruding objects to be removed by the contractor.

6.3 Tree planting and aftercare

1. Plant each tree in a pit deep and wide enough to contain the full depth and width of the root system.

2. Plant a mix of native broadleaf woodland species at roughly 3m spacing intervals. Plant small groups of the same species together, to avoid competition between different species as they grow.
3. Replace dead trees in the following planting season.
4. Carry out work between 1st November and 31st March.
5. Stake each tree securely, using material appropriate to the size and species of tree.
6. Use tree guards to protect the base of the tree from animals.
7. Maintain guards and stakes until the tree is established, removing stakes when the tree no longer needs support.
8. Control weeds and vegetation around the base of the tree until trees have become established.

6.4 Interpretation renewal

1. The designs are to be based on the NHDC 'house style'.
2. All interpretation should carry the logos of NHDC, CMS and Green Flag Awards.
3. Produce one updated combination orientation board/noticeboard, to replace current board located adjacent to car park. Consisting of an upright frame in green powder coated stainless steel, twin leg, incorporating an A1 size vandal-proof GRP panel (or similar material) and to include an adjoining A2 size magnetic notice board in casing in portrait.
4. Produce one updated interpretation board to replace current board located on viewpoint. Consisting of an upright frame in green powder coated stainless steel, twin leg, incorporating an A1 size vandal-proof GRP panel (or similar material).
5. Produce two smaller map boards, consisting of a frame in green powder coated stainless steel, incorporating an A3 size vandal-proof GRP panel (or similar material). Fixings to attach boards to existing kissing gates.

7.0 APPENDICES

7.1 Process for dealing with oak processionary moth

If OPM is suspected on site:

If a potential oak processionary moth (OPM) sighting is identified on site, either through the course of regular inspections, maintenance activities or reported by a third party or member of the public, the following actions will be taken within the first 48 hours:

1. The exact location will be recorded and photographs of observable caterpillars, nests and webbing will be obtained and sent to the Forestry Commission (FC) for official identification.

Email: OPM@forestrycommission.gov.uk

2. Notices will be posted at prominent access points and close to the location of the sighting to alert people accessing the site to the possible presence of OPM.

Link: [../OPMPublicInformationPoster_06APR16_print.pdf](#)

3. Relevant partners will be informed to ensure that activities are conducted safely or cancelled where necessary.
4. The specific location of the sighting will be assessed with consideration to the typical use of the site. If OPM is identified within close proximity to areas assessed as posing a high risk of public contact then additional precautions such as additional signage or temporary fencing will be taken to reduce the risk of public contact with OPM caterpillars and nests.

Once OPM is confirmed on site:

If OPM is confirmed on site by the FC – either a) following submission of photos from a suspected sighting to the FC or b) through the FC issuing a statutory plant health notice following OPM identification as part of the FC's monitoring programme – then appropriate control measures will be determined within five working days of the FC's confirmed identification.

Initial OPM control measures

While this document outlines the intended process for OPM control this may be adjusted in line with additional instructions included in the statutory plant health notice issued by the FC.

The OPM infestation will be assessed using the following criteria:

- If the infestation is found in areas where limited insecticide spraying is considered acceptable and is discovered in time to complete spraying before caterpillar development renders it resistant to the insecticide (late-May), then spraying represents the best control to limit further advancement of the population.
- If the infestation is found in areas where limited insecticide spraying is considered acceptable but is discovered after caterpillar development renders it resistant to the insecticide (late-May), then spraying in the current season does not represent a viable control to limit further advancement of the population. In this case nest removal should be conducted if a) the infestation is discovered prior to moth

emergence (late-July to mid-August), or b) if nests are in close proximity to high risk areas. Insecticide spraying should then be conducted within acceptable areas the following season.

Following assessment, if spraying in the current season or nest removal is appropriate then a suitably qualified and experienced arborist will be instructed to take appropriate action as soon as possible (typically within five working days). Arborists will be required to conduct insecticide spraying, nest removals and waste disposal in line with FC guidance as set out in chapters 6-7 of the OPM Manual.

Chapter 6: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/pest-and-disease-resources/oak-processionary-moth-thaumetopoea-proceSSIONEA/opm-manual-6-chemical-control-larvae/>

Chapter 7: <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/pest-and-disease-resources/oak-processionary-moth-thaumetopoea-proceSSIONEA/opm-manual-7-manual-removal-nests-and-larvae/>

Subsequent OPM control measures

Based on current FC policy and practice, sites of OPM infestations within the 'control zone' (encompassing the entire county of Hertfordshire) are typically included in the FC's inspection and insecticide spraying programme for two seasons following the initial discovery. The FC informs landowners that are to be included in this programme by February of each year. The FC will be contacted (if no communication has been received) by late-February in the two seasons following the initial discovery to confirm whether the site is to be included in the programme. If the site is not included in the FC's programme then a suitably qualified and experienced arborist will be engaged to conduct insecticide spraying following caterpillar emergence.

Whether insecticide spraying is conducted by the FC or by an appointed arborist the contractors will be required to operate in accordance with FC guidance (outlined above).

Once insecticide spraying has occurred, a suitably qualified and experienced arborist can be instructed to carry out nest removal. This will be conducted only when nests are in close proximity to high risk areas.

Following two seasons of spraying the FC will be consulted to confirm whether OPM has been successfully eradicated from the site. If OPM is still present the FC will be consulted on appropriate future action.

7.2 Engagement responses

Below is a summary of comments received from the second stage engagement process on the Ivel Springs Greenspace Action Plan 2020-25, carried out in early 2020.

Theme of comments	Response and outcome
<p>General</p> <p>Comments were supportive of the aims of the plan and welcomed its production.</p>	<p>No response required.</p>
<p>Allotment expansion</p> <p>The allotment is currently fully tenanted and there are plans to expand. Concerns over pressure on the car park if visitor numbers increase to Ivel Springs.</p> <p>To deliver allotment expansion, the existing path running adjacent to the current allotment site will need to be widened to allow access. This would also allow further parking at an area of hard standing previously created, and easier deliveries of compost and manure. This work has NHDC approval.</p>	<p>Plan amended to include investigating potential for further parking areas.</p> <p>Plan amended to include potential path widening.</p>
<p>Paths and waymarking</p> <p>Plans to resurface paths and surface new section were widely welcomed to improve access.</p> <p>The signs marking designated allotment land are confusing as to where visitors are allowed to walk, especially the sign near the boardwalk.</p> <p>Comments regarding issues with the wider Rights of Way network and Kingfisher Way linking to the site, including installing signage to Ivel Springs from Norton Road.</p>	<p>No response required.</p> <p>NHDC will work with BALGA to ensure appropriate signage which is less confusing to site users.</p> <p>Outside of the remit of the plan, however, comments passed to Access Officer.</p>
<p>Water levels in springs and flow within the river</p> <p>General concerns regarding the water levels within the springs and upper Ivel, especially regarding the effectiveness of the planned augmentation scheme by Affinity Water.</p>	<p>Augmentation scheme is outside the remit of the plan, however NHDC and CRoW will continue to co-operate with Affinity Water and input into all projects on site.</p>
<p>Wetland project</p> <p>Water levels and flow in the wetland will be</p>	<p>Comments noted and will be taken on</p>

<p>highly variable if solely dependent on storm water and run-off. There may also be eutrophication issues with holding silt and nutrient-rich water.</p>	<p>board during project development.</p>
<p>Tree planting</p> <p>The area of rough grassland adjacent to the south-western entrance to the site is to be planted with trees in a project initiated by Cllr. Muir.</p>	<p>Plan amended to reflect planned planting.</p>
<p>Scheduled monument</p> <p>Continued grazing of the Scheduled Monument is welcome to maintain current good condition.</p> <p>The Scheduled Monument should be referred to by the List Entry Number, rather than old SAM number.</p>	<p>No response required.</p> <p>Plan amended.</p>
<p>Infrastructure</p> <p>The bench near the pedestrian entrance from North Road is well used, and should therefore be replaced, not removed.</p> <p>New interpretation boards should include education on how water use affects the springs and how people can help by reducing their own water use.</p>	<p>Bench will be replaced, but location will be moved to a new site nearby which is less secluded and more open.</p> <p>Plan amended to state this should be included.</p>