

RICKMANSWORTH AQUADROME

MANAGEMENT PLAN

2022 - 2027



LEADER OF THE COUNCIL STATEMENT – FOREWORD

Dear Residents and Aquadrome Users,

I am delighted to share with you the Management Plan for Rickmansworth Aquadrome 2022-27. This Plan has been developed in partnership with Countryside Management Services and Three Rivers District Council, with input from your local ward councillors, key stakeholders, Aquadrome user groups and consultation from local residents.



We are proud of our green spaces and in particular, Rickmansworth Aquadrome with its Local Nature Reserve status. We remain committed to doing all we can to make our green spaces and parks the very best they can be.

The Aquadrome is unique in what it has to offer, protect and enhance. The site has rare wet woodlands, a chalk stream – a habitat of national and global importance, wildfowl, lakes and beautiful views. Our visitors have an opportunity to connect with nature whilst being on the doorstep of Rickmansworth town.

The beauty of the Aquadrome also offers homes to many water sport groups as well as an excellent café and two play areas designed to allow young people to play on an exciting variety of equipment. All of this combines to make for a memorable visit.

Rickmansworth Aquadrome has been nationally recognised through the Green Flag Award scheme, and our Plan whilst aspirational in places, aims to protect and enhance the site for future generations of wildlife and visitors. As climate change becomes increasingly important, the Aquadrome allows us to make a positive contribution towards this impact.

This Management Plan looks to show how the Council is meeting and addressing the criteria of the Green Flag Award scheme. It sets out the priorities for action and improvement of the Aquadrome over the coming years so that the important balance of protecting wildlife and encouraging visitors to the site is achieved.

I hope you find this document useful and I would encourage you to make the most of this exceptional open space.

Thank you,

Cllr Sarah Nemes
Leader of Three Rivers District Council

OVERVIEW

Management Plan

This is a map-based Management Plan which specifies activities that could take place at the Aquadrome (subject to funding) between 2022 and 2027; these activities will help to deliver the agreed aspirations which the site managers, public and stakeholders have identified for the site.

Public Engagement

Engagement with stakeholders is at the centre of effective Management Planning on any site. An initial engagement period was held in September and October 2021, to establish core aims and objectives for the site; these are reflected in Section 4. A second stage of engagement took place in May and June 2022, enabling stakeholders to comment on the proposed management actions for the site. A total of 321 members of the public responded and over 600 comments were recorded. An associated engagement response document, published as an appendix to this plan, summarises comments received and any amendments made to the plan as a result.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Rickmansworth Aquadrome Local Nature Reserve is a 41 hectare Green Flag award winning green space to the south of Rickmansworth town centre, extremely well-used for outdoor recreation, valued by the local community and rich in wildlife.

It comprises two lakes, Bury Lake to the west and Batchworth Lake to the east, along with surrounding areas of open grassland and wet woodland. It is bounded to the north and east by the River Colne, to the south by the Grand Union Canal and to the west by Stockers Lake Local Nature Reserve.

The lakes were formed as a result of gravel extraction, leaving behind large holes in the valley floor which naturally filled with water when extraction stopped in the 1920s. Some of the extracted gravel was used to build the original Wembley Stadium.

Visitor facilities are extensive and popular. The Aquadrome is open 365 days a year, with no admission charge and a large car park. Other facilities include a large play area, café and toilets and a dog free picnic area with a wildwood den play area. The lakes host organisations including the Café in the Park, Rickmansworth Water Ski Club, Bury Lake Young Mariners, and Uxbridge Rovers Angling and Conservation Society.

There is a network of tarmac paths around the site which make it easy to get around and fully accessible to buggies and wheelchairs. These paths also form a key part of wider links for active travel and recreation. National Cycle Network Route 6 between Uxbridge and Watford runs along the southern edge of the site, with a separate fork heading between the two lakes and across the Colne to the northeast. Public footpath Rickmansworth 65 follows the western boundary between Bury Lake and Stockers Lake, and there are links at several points onto the Grand Union Canal towpath.

As well as being designated a Local Nature Reserve, the Aquadrome is also a Local Wildlife Site, due to its mosaic of mature wet woodland with old drainage ditches, rough open areas with tall herbs and marginal aquatic vegetation at the lake edges including sedges, rushes and reeds. Attempts have been made in the past to expand this marginal vegetation, both to enhance the valuable habitat and to reduce erosion at the lake shores, with mixed success. It is an important site for waterfowl and has records for nationally notable beetles. The River Colne, a chalk river along the northern boundary of the site, is a further valuable habitat for wildlife.

Accessible, well maintained parks and open spaces have never been more vital to the health and wellbeing of individuals than during the Covid-19 pandemic. Ensuring that the Council has a clear and effective Management Plan in place for the Aquadrome

over the next five years will ensure that this is a space that can be used by all of the local community for their own physical and mental wellbeing.

1.2 Future of the Aquadrome

In recent years the management of the Aquadrome has largely focused on maintenance of existing features and infrastructure, with some improvements to the boat house and club house at Bury Lake Young Mariners and upgraded play facilities.

This new plan represents an opportunity to take a fresh look at the site and to explore ideas to make it balance as well as it can the needs of both the community and wildlife.

Key priorities for the Aquadrome over the next five years include biodiversity and sustainability, accessibility, managing the risk of flooding, the identity of the site, maintaining a strong relationship with the site community, improving the visitor experience, and considering the landscape and functionality of the area around the café.



2.0 OUR AQUADROME

2.1 Summary Maps

Four maps are included below:

- Location – the setting of the Aquadrome within Rickmansworth, showing the boundary of the site.
- Site description – the key habitats, features and facilities of the Aquadrome.
- Constraints – factors which may affect decision-making, related to access, flood risk and designated sites.
- Strategic areas – a zoning map to inform prioritisation, including between recreational use and biodiversity.

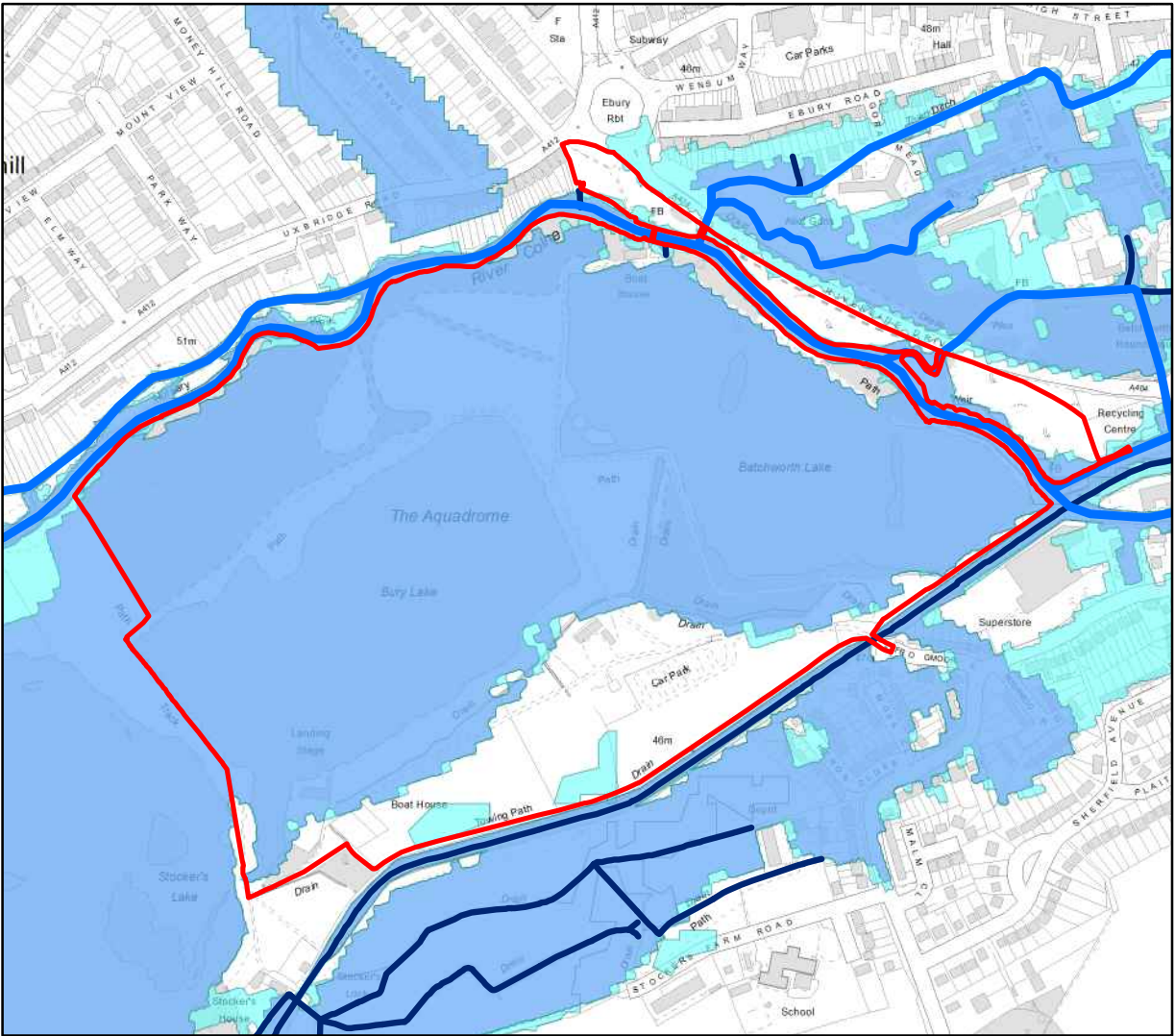
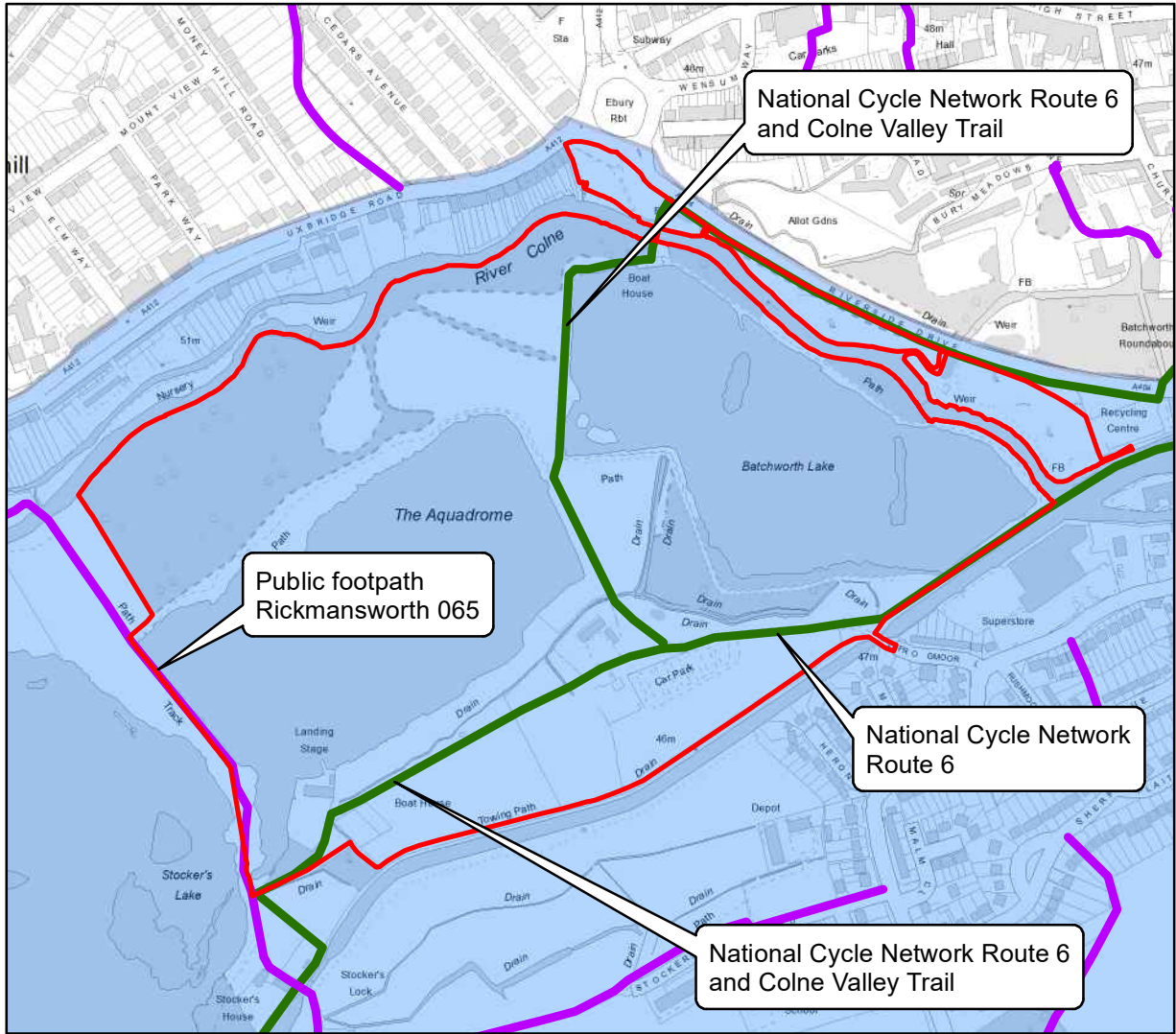
Rickmansworth Aquadrome
Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27
Location Plan

Rickmansworth Aquadrome
Grid Ref: TQ 055 938
Easting: 505507
Northing: 193814

Scale @ A3
1:12,000
Date
September 2022
Rev
01



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Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Constraints Plan

- ### Legend
- Site boundary
 - Footpath
 - Sustrans National Cycle Network
 - Colne Valley Regional Park
 - Main Rivers
 - Ordinary watercourses
 - Flood Zone 3
 - Flood Zone 2
 - Local Nature Reserve
 - Local Wildlife Site
 - Conservation Areas
 - Green Belt



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Date
September 202

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Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Site Description

Legend

- Bench
- Culvert
- Cycle parking
- Dog bin
- Entrance sign
- Finger post
- Fishing platform
- Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- Noticeboard
- Pedestrian access
- Picnic bench
- Sluice
- Vehicle gate
- Welcome board
- Fence
- Amenity grassland
- Bridge
- Buildings and containers
- Porous paving grid
- Car park
- Conservation grassland
- Floating island
- Island
- Marginal vegetation
- No public access
- Open water
- Play area
- Rough grassland
- Sealed surface
- Steps
- Unsealed surface
- Unsurfaced path
- Watercourse
- Weir
- Wet woodland
- Trees and woodland

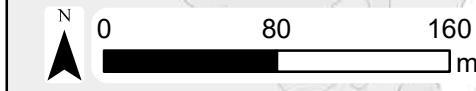
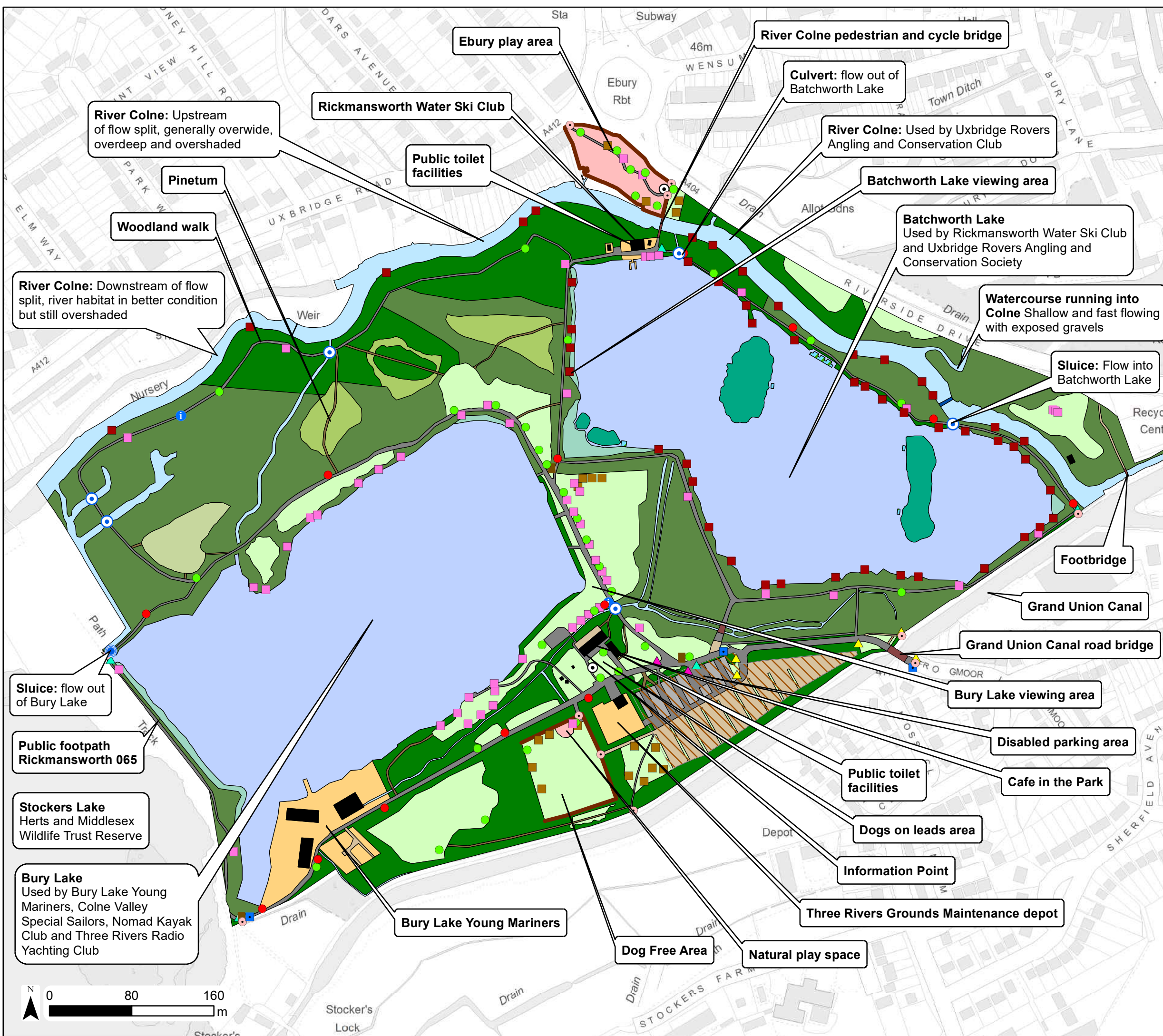
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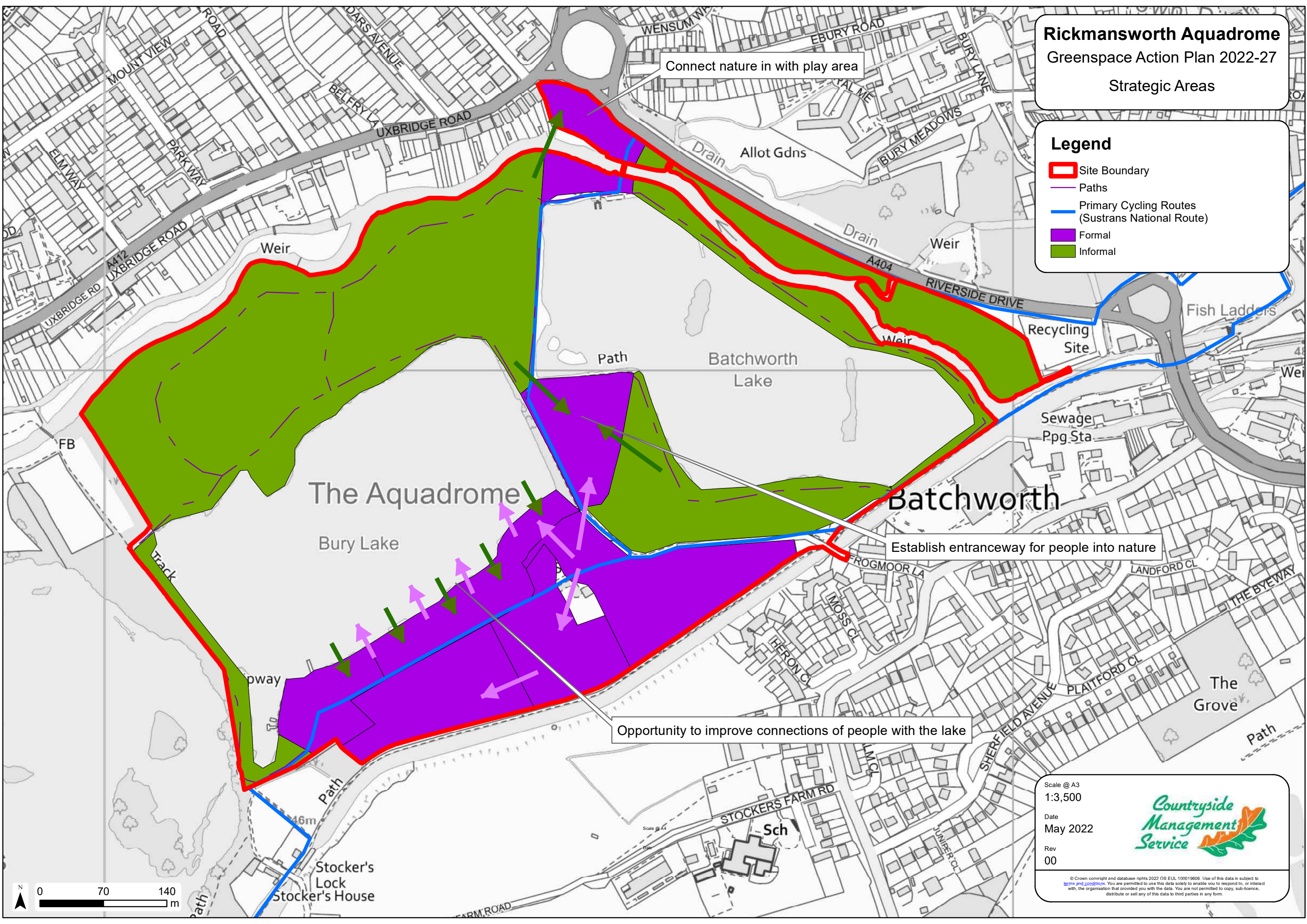
Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Strategic Areas

Legend

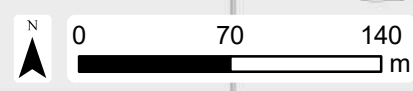
- Site Boundary
- Paths
- Primary Cycling Routes
(Sustrans National Route)
- Formal
- Informal



Connect nature in with play area

Establish entranceway for people into nature

Opportunity to improve connections of people with the lake



Scale @ A3
1:3,500
Date
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00



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2.2 Geography and Landscape

2.2.1 Landscape

The Aquadrome lies within the [Colne Valley Gravel Pits Landscape Character Area](#). This is a young landscape created through extensive mineral extraction in the early 20th century, relatively peaceful and valued for its range of recreational opportunities on the edge of extensive urbanisation.

Key characteristics noted in the landscape character assessment are:

- Level river valley between 0.6 and 1km wide.
- Extensive and numerous waterbodies following restoration of sand and gravel workings.
- Areas of both remnant and restored pasture.
- Widespread recreational opportunities associated with waterways and wetlands.
- Controlled access to areas creating a tranquil character.
- Strong vegetated character hiding both settlement and waterbodies.

The landscape character assessment sets out guidelines for managing change, which align closely with priorities for the Aquadrome and include:

- Maintain a balance between conservation, recreation and agricultural activities in the area.
- Promote sustainable and integrated multiple uses for gravel pits and canals.
- Support the continued management of valuable nature conservation sites associated with former mineral extraction.
- Manage the wetland and waterside tree population, particularly those that are short-lived, by selective felling, coppicing, pollarding and replanting on a rotation basis to maintain tree cover.
- Encourage the establishment of buffer strips of semi-natural vegetation along all watercourses, avoiding potential conflict with recreational use.
- Control erosion and pollution of waterbodies, canals and watercourses.
- Protect remaining river valley habitats of significant nature conservation interest, including reed swamp, wet woodland, open water, spring sources and reed beds.
- Improve management of recreational areas to enhance biodiversity value.
- Improve the layout, surfacing, signage and landscape design of the Aquadrome car park and entrance.
- Ensure structures and activities for active recreation are visually integrated.

2.2.1.1 *Aquadrome strategic areas*

The strategic area map in 2.1 above divides the Aquadrome into formal and informal zones. In the formal areas, centred around the café and entrance area from the car park, sports clubs and play areas, we will prioritise encouraging leisure and

recreational activities. Meanwhile in the informal areas, such as within woodlands and on quiet lakeside paths, we will aim to enhance biodiversity and develop natural spaces. The map identifies where the spaces can interact with each other to provide a coherent, functional and enjoyable layout to the site. This interaction can include picnic benches or viewing areas overlooking the natural habitats, landscape design recognising the natural setting and sports and recreational clubs using the lake.

The map also shows the National Cycle Network routes on and around the Aquadrome. These will be the priority routes for cycling across the site and will be managed to provide additional width for cycling alongside other user groups.

2.2.2 Geology and soils

The geology of the Aquadrome is river alluvium, of clay, silt, sand and gravel. This is overlain by a loamy and clayey floodplain soil. Groundwater is naturally high, meaning that the soil is naturally wet.

2.2.3 Topography

The Aquadrome sits on a flat river valley flood plain – across the whole of the Landscape Character Area the altitude ranges only from 39-46m.

Batchworth and Bury Lakes are similar in general structure, with edges shelving steeply to a depth of 1-2m and flat beds ranging from approximately 2-3m deep. There are relatively few areas with shallow water, but where this is the case, such as in the south-western corner of Batchworth Lake, reed beds have become established.

A topographic survey of Bury and Batchworth Lakes was carried out in 2013, and a topographic survey of part of the Aquadrome, covering the car park and areas around buildings, was carried out in December 2020.

2.2.4 Watercourses and lakes

The River Colne runs along the northern and eastern boundaries of the Aquadrome. There are also numerous drainage ditches around the site.

Water levels on Batchworth Lake are controlled by a sluice on the northeast side of the lake where water enters from the Colne. There is a further connection out of Batchworth Lake into the Colne at the northern corner of the lake.

Bury Lake is spring-fed. Water flowing out of the lake currently flows over a notch next to a sluice gate at the northwest corner of the lake, which has been informally repaired to prevent flows around the structure, and along a minor watercourse to the Colne.



Sluices at inflow to Batchworth Lake and outflow from Bury Lake.

As a result of its flood plain location, flood risk is high across much of the Aquadrome. All of the site is in Flood Zone 3 except an area around the café and car park, reflecting a probability of flooding of 1 in 100 or greater. The flood risk map is included in the Constraints map in Section 2.1.

The high flood risk is reflected in recent experience, with considerable areas of the site becoming inaccessible due to flooding during the winter of 2020/21.

Given this status, and the importance of the flood plain in managing flood risk to nearby properties, management proposals for the Aquadrome can seek to mitigate the impact of flooding on the site but not to reduce flood risk for the site.

2.3 Heritage

2.3.1 Archaeology

The only record on the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record for the area of the Aquadrome is as the site of Bury Farm, a post-medieval farmstead. The farmstead is shown on the 1822 map and may have been much older, as the name implies it was a manorial possession. The farm complex lay at the end of a track from Frogmoor Lane, with its own bridge over the Grand Union Canal. The farm was still shown on Ordnance Survey maps in 1935, but by 1962 only the access track and one of the buildings survived. The track now leads to the Aquadrome car park and the farmstead survives as the small Three Rivers District Council depot.

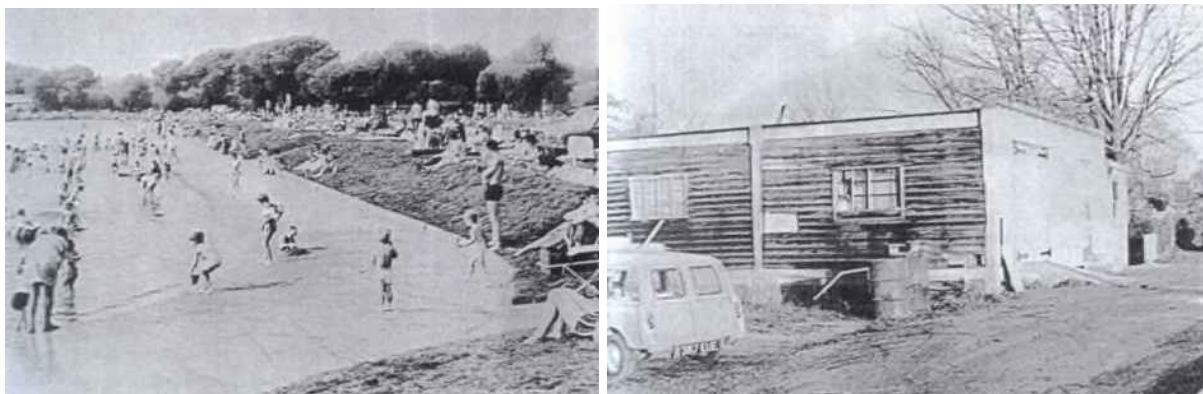
2.3.2 Site History

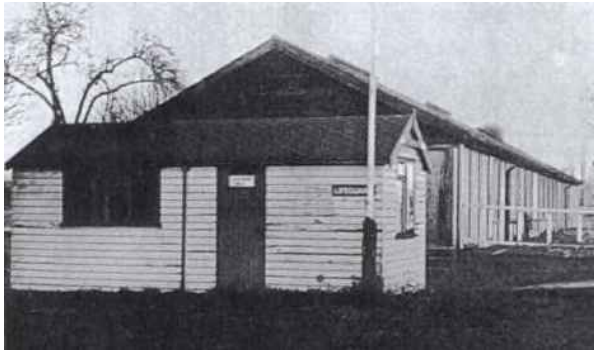
Batchworth and Bury Lakes were formed as a result of gravel extraction. Batchworth Lake was dug first, appearing on OS maps by 1914, and gravel extraction stopped in 1926. Some of the extracted gravel from the lakes is said to have been used to build the original Wembley Stadium, which opened in 1923. The gravel extraction left large holes in the valley floor, which naturally filled with water, aided by natural springs. Batchworth Lake is now topped up by the River Colne and Bury Lake is spring-fed. Both lakes have channels which drain back into the River Colne.

By 1928 the Aquadrome was owned by The Aquadrome Company, a group of London businessmen who profited from the recreational value of the site until 1941 when the Aquadrome was commandeered by the War Department for army exercises. Rickmansworth Urban District Council purchased the Aquadrome in 1960 and it passed into the ownership of Three Rivers District Council in 1974.



The Aquadrome in the 1920s





Bathers at the Aquadrome when the site was under private ownership, the original water ski hut (1960) and the original Bury Lake Young Mariners building.

The Aquadrome was designated, after extensive consultation with Natural England, as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) in 2007. Local Nature Reserve is a statutory designation declared by the Local Authority. In declaring the site as a Local Nature Reserve the Council accepted the responsibility to ensure that the special interest of the site is maintained, which will be a key focus of this Management Plan.

The lakes at the Aquadrome are part of a series of gravel pits which run from Rickmansworth to Staines along the Colne valley. The Colne Valley Regional Park was founded in 1965 to safeguard this mosaic of farmland, woodland and water with over 200km of rivers and canals and over 60 lakes. The Aquadrome is the northern gateway to the Park.

2.4 Biodiversity and Sustainability

2.4.1 Habitats

The large majority of the site is designated both as a Local Nature Reserve and a Local Wildlife Site. The description of the Local Wildlife Site is as follows:

*Flooded gravel pits along the valley of the River Colne with Bury Lake to the west and Batchworth Lake to the east, and urban areas to the north, east and southeast. Some small spp-rich grassland areas with relict areas of mature wet woodland composed of Crack Willow (*Salix fragilis*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) with some Hybrid Black Poplar (*Populus x canadensis*) plantation. Old drainage ditches run through the wooded areas. The lake edges support sedges (*Carex* spp.), rushes (*Juncus* spp.), Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*), Reed Sweet-grass (*Glyceria maxima*), Wild Angelica (*Angelica sylvestris*), Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*) and other marginal aquatic vegetation. The rougher open areas are mainly dominated by tall herbs, particularly Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) but there are some extensive areas of Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) in parts of the grassland and woodland areas. The site has records for nationally notable beetles and is an important site for birds, particularly water fowl. Grass Snakes (*Natrix natrix*) have also been recorded*

from the site. Wildlife Site criteria: Mosaic; wet woodland, neutral and wet grassland, fen and swamp indicators.

2.4.1.1 Wet woodland

Much of the woodland at the Aquadrome is classified as wet woodland, a habitat of principle importance as defined under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). The areas of wet woodland are shown in the site description map in Section 2.1.

Wet woodlands develop from trees and scrub dominated by alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and willow (*Salix* sp.) establishing on former fen swamp habitats and are typically found around former gravel extraction sites such as the Aquadrome. Wet woodland can appear untidy, as it naturally perpetuates itself through fallen trees and limbs re-rooting. Dead wood in wet woodland provides specialised habitats not found in other forms of woodland, so is left in situ where it does not pose a health and safety risk. A very large number of invertebrates is associated with this habitat type.

At the Aquadrome, the wet woodland areas have plentiful deadwood and a reasonable structure throughout, with drains running across the area. There are plentiful mature trees, including common and grey alder (*A. glutinosa* and *incana*), crack willow (*S. fragilis*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), with a mid-layer including elder (*Sambucus nigra*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and grey willow (*Salix cinerea*).

2.4.1.2 Other woodlands

Around the northern fringes of the site, the woodland is broadleaved plantation, with hybrid black poplars (*Populus x canadensis* agg.) particularly prominent. Other species represented include alder (*A. glutinosa*), grey alder (*A. incana*) and Turkey oak (*Quercus cerris*). This area has a good structure, with a plentiful mid-layer including hazel (*C. avellana*), hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*) and field maple (*Acer campestre*).

To the south, the wet woodland merges into smaller, drier areas of broadleaved woodland with hawthorn (*C. monogyna*), ash (*F. excelsior*), alder (*A. glutinosa*) and willow (*Salix* sp.). Although small, these remaining woodlands do provide a network of connecting habitats across the whole site. The network of paths and amenity grassland areas functions as woodland rides and glades, which is of value to a range of wildlife.

An interesting feature of the site is the pinetum in the woodland north of Bury Lake, which supports specimens of a variety of conifer species such as western red cedar, Sitka spruce and giant redwood.



Pinetum

2.4.1.3 *River Colne*

The River Colne is a chalk river and as such a habitat type of national and global importance. Chalk rivers at their best are characterised by clear water, a diverse aquatic flora and a corresponding diversity of invertebrates and fish. The river is combined with and impacted by the Grand Union canal at various locations, including at the upstream end of the Aquadrome site, with a detrimental effect on this character.

There are two distinct sections of the Colne through the Aquadrome in terms of the character of the river. Adjacent to Batchworth Lake, and west as far as a flow split north of Bury Lake, the river is both over-wide and over-deep, resulting in a sluggish flow, siltation and a lack of in-channel vegetation. West of that flow split, the river becomes much shallower and faster-flowing, with exposed gravels, and is more characteristic of a chalk river. Throughout this stretch of river, the channel is over-shaded by bankside trees, limiting the growth of marginal and in-channel vegetation.

There are two weirs on the section of the Colne through the Aquadrome, which have the effect of impounding the river and potentially interrupting the movement of fish. The large upstream weir maintained by the Canal and River Trust controls water levels on the Grand Union Canal and is not passable by fish, but a small watercourse connects to the Colne on both sides of this weir, enabling fish movement around it. The smaller downstream weir appears to control levels on a perched channel which splits from the Colne and runs parallel to it to the north. Again, there is no formal fish pass but downstream links between the two channels may enable the movement of fish.



Upstream and downstream weirs on the River Colne

This stretch of the Colne is impacted by pollution from various sources, including grey water discharge from canal boats, upstream pollution on the Colne, outfalls within the site, and discharges from the Chesham Sewage Treatment Works, which is permitted to discharge diluted sewage into the Chess if its storm tank's capacity is exceeded. Further information on the issue on the Chess and ongoing work to address it can be found here: [Waste Water and Storm Discharges \(threerivers.gov.uk\)](https://threerivers.gov.uk/Waste-Water-and-Storm-Discharges)

Within the wet woodland, river bank erosion is focused to a few limited informal areas where dogs tend to enter the water. There is more serious bank erosion close to the Grand Union Canal. This can be attributed to a combination of bird feeding, with swans frequently entering and leaving the water, signal crayfish burrows and erosion related to flooding.



Bank erosion on the woodland walk and close to the Grand Union Canal

2.4.1.4 *Batchworth and Bury Lakes*

Lake edges with emergent vegetation form an important part of the network of wetland habitats on this site. They provide a habitat for a range of species from dragonflies and damselflies, to nesting birds and spawning fish.

This marginal vegetation occurs sporadically in small areas around both lakes, in areas not overshadowed by trees and often in association with previous efforts to aid

its establishment. The establishment of marginal vegetation is constrained by the steeply shelving edges of the two lakes and a lack of light resulting from the tree-lined margin of both lakes.

The plant community here includes common fleabane (*Pulicaria dysenterica*), hemp agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*), yellow flag iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), gypsywort (*Lycopus europaeus*), purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) and lesser pond sedge (*Carex acutiformis*). There are also stands of common reed (*Phragmites australis*), along the south west shores of both Bury and Batchworth Lakes.

Batchworth Lake also has two large wooded islands, and two much smaller wooded islands in its south-western corner. On all the islands the trees grow densely and have not been managed in recent times.



Batchworth Lake, showing tree-lined shore and wooded island to right of image, and Bury Lake.

2.4.1.5 Grassland

Much of the grassland in the core part of the Aquadrome is managed as amenity grassland and has very limited botanical interest. Rougher grassland in open areas within the woodland north of Bury Lake is dominated by tall herbs, particularly stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), with some extensive areas of meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*).

2.4.2 Species

The following paragraphs give a brief summary of some of the more notable species present at the Aquadrome. More detailed information is provided in Appendix H and available via the Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre.

2.4.2.1 Mammals

Mammal records for the Aquadrome are relatively sparse. A bat survey conducted in September 2007 recorded six species of bat and a high level of bat activity: serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*). The Aquadrome supports a

good diversity of habitats suitable for a range of insects and therefore for foraging bats. The results of this bat survey are included as Appendix J.

Otter spraint was recorded in 2015 from the Grand Union Canal south of Batchworth Lake, and water voles are present on the river Colne at nearby Stockers Lake. Habitat provision for water voles should be a key consideration for management of the river along the northern boundary of the Aquadrome, as it occupies a large part of the gap between the population on the Colne and another population on the Chess starting just upstream of its confluence with the Colne. There is also a single record of weasel, a Hertfordshire Species of Conservation Concern (threatened in a Hertfordshire context, defined within the 'Hertfordshire's State of Nature' report (2020)).

2.4.2.2 *Reptiles and amphibians*

Grass snakes are known to be present at the Aquadrome, but there are no records of amphibians. Given the suitable habitat it is likely that at least common frog, common toad and smooth newt are present on site.

2.4.2.3 *Birds*

Bird records are much more numerous. Species recorded which are listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, making it an offence to disturb them at their nests, include kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Cetti's warbler (*Cettia cetti*), hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) and red kite (*Milvus milvus*). Birds recorded which are on the UK red list include cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*), lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) and house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

The Aquadrome is of particular importance for water birds, especially during the winter. Species present include mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), gadwall (*Anas strepera*), pochard (*Aythya ferina*), tufted duck (*Aythya fuligula*), goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) and coot (*Fulica atra*). Wildfowl are counted through the monthly British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Wetland Bird Survey, and more information on the results of this survey can be found here: [Herts Bird Club | Wetlands Bird Survey \(WeBS\)](https://hertsbirdclub.org.uk/wetlands-bird-survey-webs/) ([hnhs.org](https://hertsbirdclub.org.uk/wetlands-bird-survey-webs/))

2.4.2.4 *Plants*

Flowering plants of note recorded at the Aquadrome include the Hertfordshire Rare species alder buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*), ragged-robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) and common valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*).

2.4.2.5 *Invertebrates*

The Aquadrome has supported a number of nationally and locally rare invertebrates, although many records are very old. These records are primarily associated with the

wetland and marginal habitats found on the site, with several associated with species of willow. These are detailed in Table 3 of Appendix H.

2.4.2.6 *Non-native species*

Noteworthy non-native species present include Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), including at the pinetum and on the river Colne, American signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*), muntjac deer (*Muntiacus reevesi*), cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos albus*). There have also been recent reports of American mink (*Neogale vison*) on the Colne.

There is a large resident population of Canada goose (*Branta canadensis*) which gather at regular feeding points with mallard and mute swan (*Cygnus olor*). This generates unpleasant accumulations of bird faeces in certain areas. Bird feeding and the open bins around the site also support a large population of rats.

Floating pennywort (*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*) has not yet been recorded at the Aquadrome, but is present in the Colne catchment upstream and downstream of the site and is regularly inadvertently transported by boats on the Grand Union Canal. There is a high risk that it will arrive on the site in the near future.

2.4.2.7 *Pests and diseases*

The presence of ash dieback is monitored as part of tree health and safety surveys. Ash is present within both broadleaved and wet woodland, and there is a prominent line of ash trees along the southern side of the entrance road.

Oak Processionary Moth (OPM) was first discovered in England in 2005. It has since become established in London and spread into surrounding counties, reaching Three Rivers District in 2019. While the moth is harmless, caterpillars pose a risk to public health through microscopic hairs which cover its body. Contact with hairs typically causes skin rashes, although symptoms can include eye irritation, sore throats and in extreme cases breathing difficulties and allergic reactions. OPM is present at the Aquadrome, and TRDC have worked in partnership with the Forestry Commission to manage it, following the correct procedure for nest removal and spraying.

2.4.3 **Nearby sites**

There are two adjacent sites of particular ecological interest. Stockers Lake is similarly designated as a Local Nature Reserve and a Local Wildlife Site, as well as being a Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) reserve. It has particular importance for birds, attracting large numbers of water birds, and is one of the best places in the county for wintering wildfowl, notably shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) and goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*). Stockers Farm Meadow is a Local Wildlife Site on the south side of the Grand Union Canal which supports numerous neutral grassland indicator species as well as attracting breeding and wintering waders.

2.4.4 Grounds maintenance

Grounds maintenance for the Aquadrome is undertaken as specified within Appendix A.

Litter and waste are managed by the grounds maintenance team. Litter and dog waste bins are maintained and emptied on a regular basis or immediately when full. Waste arising from litter bins and litter bins is separated off site for recycling.

All maintenance activities are delivered against the site risk assessment, detailed within Appendix F.

2.4.4.1 *Tree safety*

The Council takes a risk-based approach to tree safety at the Aquadrome, as outlined in the Council's Tree Strategy. A formal inspection of trees in high-risk zones is carried out once every 18 months and the Council's Tree Officers undertake an inspection of the main footpaths and high use areas annually. In addition, inspections will also be carried out following high winds, and on request. Any works identified will be prioritised as follows: urgent safety works will either be rectified the day they are observed, or the immediate drop zone cordoned off until the tree can be made safe; high priority works will be undertaken within 6 weeks of a defect being observed; and low priority or routine works will be undertaken within 6 to 9 months.

2.4.5 Environmental management and sustainability

The Council has a strong commitment to the environment and environmental sustainability and recognises the impacts its operations have on the environment. Three Rivers District Council's dedication to protect the environment is reflected in council policies, strategies, commitments and partnerships. Some relevant initiatives include:

- Peat will not be used on any of our sites.
- Pesticides will not be used unless there are no alternative means of control. Glyphosate will not be used in the district except for the control of Japanese knotweed.
- Only FSC timber is used across the district.
- All cleaning materials are phosphate free.

More detail on environmental management and sustainability at the Aquadrome is provided in Appendix M.

2.5 Recreational Facilities

The Aquadrome is a significant, well-used and highly valued green space. As well as the wide range of activities described in Section 2.7, it offers many opportunities for informal recreation such as walking, birdwatching, running and cycling.

2.5.1 Public Facilities

2.5.1.1 *Café in the Park*

The [Café in the Park](#) is open from 9am to 4:30pm seven days a week, serves food and drink and has inside and outside tables, including a large outside seating area to the rear. At the entrance to the café is a separate unmanned Information Point providing information on the Aquadrome and surrounding area.

2.5.1.2 *Public toilets*

Adjacent to the café is a separate building housing public toilets, including disabled toilets. The toilets are open from 8am-9:30pm (May to September) and 8am-6pm (October to April).

Additional public toilets with the same opening times are available at the Water Ski Club building on the north side of Batchworth Lake.

2.5.1.3 *Play*

The Ebury play area includes equipment which is physically challenging, functional and imaginative and caters for a range of ages and physical abilities. It is in a safe area and dogs are excluded.

A new wildwood den play space in the dog-free area offers a feeling of wildness, nature discovery and imagination, and is constructed with natural tree trunks. In the wider site there are opportunities to develop the imagination, a connection to nature and stimulate the senses through free and wild play.



Café and toilet block, and wildwood den play space

These facilities conform to standards for playground equipment and surfacing.

A new outdoor fitness zone will be installed to the north of the car park in 2022/23.

2.5.1.4 *Geocaching*

The Aquadrome is increasingly popular with geocachers and there are several geocaches hidden around the site. Geocaching is an outdoor treasure hunt whereby participants locate hidden containers (the geocaches) using GPS and then share their experiences online.

2.5.2 **Buildings and structures**

2.5.2.1 *Buildings*

There are a number of buildings and storage containers around the site. Maintenance responsibility for most of these falls within the various leases, including the Café in the Park, the Bury Lake Young Mariners (BLYM) compounds, Rickmansworth Water Ski Club and the Uxbridge Rovers Angling and Conservation Society (URACS) container. The toilet block, including a flat, and the Grounds Maintenance Depot are maintained by the Council. No opportunities for solar panels on existing buildings have been identified, but solar panels would be considered as part of any new buildings which were built on the site.

2.5.2.2 *Bridges*

The Council own and maintain the footbridge over the river Colne towards Riverside Drive, and the footbridge over the watercourse north of the Grand Union Canal.



River Colne footbridge from Riverside Drive and footbridge leading towards the Grand Union Canal

2.5.2.3 *Algae control buoys*

Algae control buoys have been installed on Bury and Batchworth Lakes. Their purpose is to prevent harmful algae blooms resulting from the growth of

cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae. The toxins released by these algae blooms would otherwise have the potential to harm people, pets and fish.

The devices are powered by solar panels and incorporate water quality sensors monitoring chlorophyll-a (green algae), phycocyanin (blue-green algae), pH, dissolved oxygen, water temperature and turbidity. This information is collected and monitored in real time with SIM-based communication, with live data on how the systems are working and any changes in water quality.

Algal blooms are controlled through low-power ultrasound treatment which only targets the algae and does not impact other elements of the aquatic ecosystem. The treatment works by affecting the algae's buoyancy regulation, preventing them from accessing sunlight and nutrients and causing them to sink to the bottom of the lake and decompose naturally without releasing harmful toxins.

Algae control buoys in each of the lakes have an annual maintenance and operation cost of approximately £23,000 and further replacement costs for components based on the product lifecycle and issues such as vandalism.

2.5.2.4 Fishing platforms

There are around 34 fishing platforms around Batchworth Lake. The maintenance of these platforms is the responsibility of the Council.

2.5.3 Access

2.5.3.1 Location and public transport

The Aquadrome is located off Frogmoor Lane, Rickmansworth, WD3 1NB. Its Ordnance Survey Grid Reference is TQ054939.

It is a seven minute walk from Rickmansworth rail and London Underground station to the Riverside Drive entrance. There is a bus stop on Harefield Road at the end of Frogmoor Lane, just one minute from the Frogmoor Lane entrance. For more information on public transport options, visit <https://www.intalink.org.uk/>

2.5.3.2 Entrances

The Aquadrome has six public access points, with a variety of entrance structures in place:

- Frogmoor Lane (southern edge, also serving as the main entrance for vehicles): lockable vehicle gate with signed opening hours and adjacent lockable pedestrian gate.



- Grand Union Canal towpath (southern edge): no entrance structures.



- Public Footpath Rickmansworth 065 from Stockers Farm Road (south west corner): lockable vehicle gate and staggered barriers with no pedestrian access control.



- Public Footpath Rickmansworth 065 from Uxbridge Road (north west corner): no entrance structures.



- Riverside Drive (north east corner): lockable pedestrian gate.



- Grand Union Canal towpath (south east corner): staggered barriers, no access control.



- Grand Union Canal towpath (southern edge, east of Frogmoor Lane bridge): no entrance structures.



There is a further short, unsealed path through the part of the Aquadrome east of the river Colne, which runs along the west side of the recycling centre from the Grand Union Canal to Riverside Drive. The Council owns land up to the north bank of the watercourse north of the Grand Union Canal, as well as the footbridge over the watercourse.

2.5.3.3 *Public Rights of Way and the National Cycle Network*

Public Footpath Rickmansworth 065 runs along the western boundary of the site along the causeway between Bury Lake and Stockers Lake, linking Uxbridge Road and Stockers Farm Road.

There are two branches of National Cycle Network Route 6, which runs from Uxbridge through Rickmansworth to Watford, within the Aquadrome. The route leaves the Grand Union Canal towpath to enter the Aquadrome in the south west corner of the site. At the café it forks. One route continues along the entrance path towards Frogmoor Lane, rejoining the Grand Union Canal towpath east of the road bridge. The other route heads north between Bury and Batchworth Lakes and across the bridge to the Riverside Drive entrance, then continues south east along Riverside Drive. The two forks rejoin one another at the western end of the Ebury Way. There is cycle parking next to the café.

The Colne Valley Trail, a shared-use route, starts at the Aquadrome and runs south through the Colne Valley Regional Park to Colnbrook, with an additional branch running to Langley. It shares much of its route with the National Cycle Network and links with the Ebury Way to the north. There are aspirations to extend the trail to meet the Thames Path at Staines.

2.5.3.4 *Path network*

The main path network around the Aquadrome is surfaced with tarmac. Path widths are variable and can be dependent on available space, particularly around

Bury Lake. The quality of path surfaces is generally good except where flooding, erosion or heavy use has caused damage.

Further minor unsurfaced paths shown on the Site Description map in Section 2.1 provide alternative options to explore the site.

2.5.3.5 Car park

The Aquadrome has a large public car park, which is currently open from 8am-9:30pm (May to September) and 8am-6pm (October to April).

The entrance road and access routes into the northern part of the car park are surfaced with tarmac for disabled parking spaces adjacent to the main entrance. The remainder of the parking spaces in this area are surfaced with porous plastic paving grids. The southern part of the car park has an unsealed surface with grass banks dividing sections of the car park.

2.6 The Aquadrome Community

2.6.1 Visitor Surveys

2.6.1.1 Online visitor surveys

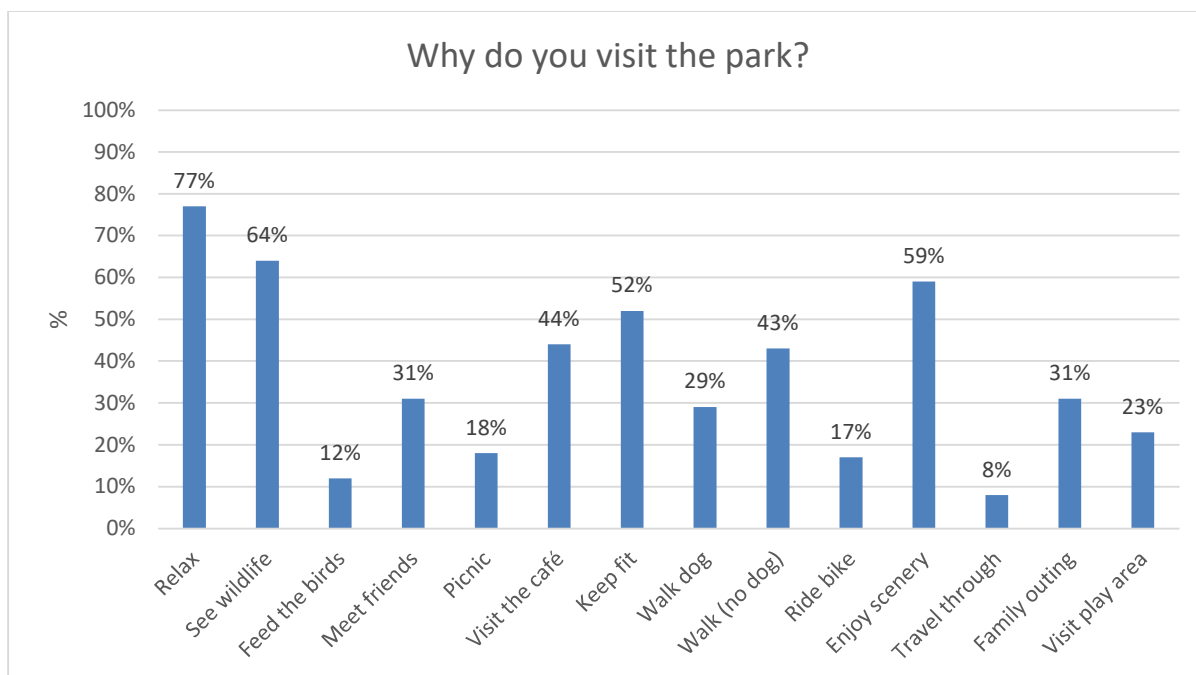
Aquadrome visitor surveys have been conducted by Three Rivers District Council to ensure that visitor needs are being met and the quality of the site and facilities are being upheld. Visitor survey information collected during 2018, when 554 online responses were received, is included in Appendix K.

Satisfaction levels are consistently high across various measures, as shown in the table below.

Data from Aquadrome visitor satisfaction survey 2018.

	% very good/good
The design and appearance of the park	94
The standard of cleanliness of the park	88
The maintenance of the park	91
The facilities and/or services that are provided for children and their parents	81
Overall impression of the park	94

The visitor survey also provides valuable information on how the site is used, with a strong focus on simply relaxing, enjoying the wildlife and the scenery, and getting some exercise.



2.6.1.2 Public engagement on the Aquadrome management plan

Public and stakeholder engagement took place between May and June 2022. This included an online survey, engagement with Aquadrome Forum members and attendance at the Rickmansworth Festival.

A total of 321 members of the public responded to the survey and over 600 comments were recorded. An associated engagement response document, published as Appendix P to the management plan, summarises comments received and any amendments made to the plan as a result.

2.6.1.3 Visitor observations

Visitor observations were carried out for the first time in July 2022, to gain a baseline measurement of footfall at the Aquadrome, and to measure changes in usage over the period of this management plan. Observations were carried out for two-hour periods in the morning, at lunchtime and in the afternoon, on both weekdays and weekends. Summary data is presented in the tables below.

Data from Aquadrome visitor observations July 2022.

Visitors	Minimum no.	Maximum no.
Weekday	358	428
Weekend	600	957

Vehicles	Minimum no.	Maximum no.
Weekday	7	11
Weekend	13	19

Age group	%	Ethnic group	%	Activity	%
0-11	19	White	77	Visible disability	3
12-21	6	Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups	5	Walking	76
22-40	33	Asian/Asian-British	16	Walking with dog(s)	12
41-60	25	Black/African/Caribbean/Black-British	1	Cycling	7
61+	17	Other	1	Running	4
				With pram/ buggy	6

2.6.2 Community Involvement in Management and Development

The Aquadrome is located in the heart of Rickmansworth and forms the northern gateway to the Colne Valley Regional Park. The Local Nature Reserve is an important site within the district and the local community. As such a number of organisations and partners are involved in the site and may help inform the Management Plan including:

- Countryside Management Service
- Colne Valley Park Trust
- Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre
- Friends of Stockers Lake
- Rickmansworth Residents' Association
- Rickmansworth Waterways Trust
- Environment Agency
- Canal and River Trust
- Licensees and leaseholders based at the Aquadrome
- Aquadrome Users Forum

Local Countryside Management Service volunteers are able to carry out voluntary practical conservation tasks at the Aquadrome in support of the Management Plan as part of their work around the district.

2.6.3 Aquadrome Users Forum

The Aquadrome Users Forum was formally established in 2009. The aim of the group is to involve the principal user groups of the Aquadrome in its management and future improvements and to provide on-going feedback to the Council.

The Forum is attended by key Council officers. Members include:

- Bury Lake Young Mariners
- Rickmansworth Water Ski Club
- Three Rivers Radio Yachting Club
- Nomad Kayak Club
- Uxbridge Rovers Angling and Conservation Society
- Café in the Park
- Friends of Stockers Lake
- Rickmansworth Residents' Association
- Rickmansworth Waterways Trust
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- parkrun
- Up to three representatives of general users of the Aquadrome, to include disability representation and young families

The Forum meets twice a year. As well as being an opportunity for the users of the Aquadrome to be involved in the management of the site it also provides the chance for users to network, exchange information and update each other on various projects, helping the groups work together.

The terms of reference for the Aquadrome Users Forum are contained within the Appendices.

2.6.4 Licences and Leases

Licences and leases relating to the Aquadrome cover fishing on Batchworth Lake and the River Colne, the Café in the Park, land at Bury Lake leased to Bury Lake Young Mariners and Nomad Kayak Club, land at Batchworth Lake leased to Rickmansworth Water Ski Club, and the use of both lakes for water sports.

2.6.5 Byelaws and Public Spaces Protection Order

Three Rivers [Byelaws \(threerivers.gov.uk\)](https://www.threerivers.gov.uk) and a [Public Spaces Protection Order \(PSPO\) \(threerivers.gov.uk\)](https://www.threerivers.gov.uk) relating to dog walking apply to the Aquadrome.

As well as establishing general rules for dog walking across the district including a limit of four dogs walked by one person and a requirement to prevent dog fouling, the PSPO has specific application to the Aquadrome. It defines an area surrounding the Café in the Park where dogs must be kept on a lead. It also excludes dogs from the Ebury play area and the fenced picnic area.

2.6.6 Safety and perception of safety

In the 2018 visitor survey, perception of safety reported by visitors to the Aquadrome during the day and after dark was very different. In daylight, 97% of visitors feel very safe or fairly safe. After dark, only 27% of visitors would feel very safe or fairly safe, and 44% of visitors would feel fairly unsafe or very unsafe. Most visitors would not visit after dark in any circumstances, but those that would indicated that a lack of lighting, and young people hanging around were particular deterrents.

To improve visibility, feelings of security and light levels, paths are kept open through clearance of vegetation. Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) visit the Local Nature Reserve on a regular basis as part of their patrol routes.

The main council contact number and website address are given on the Aquadrome interpretation boards and signage to help visitors contact the council should they need to. The Three Rivers Leisure website includes an online reporting mechanism for all parks and open spaces: [Contact | Three Rivers Leisure](#). The Aquadrome car park is currently closed at 9:30pm from May to September and 6pm from October to April to help prevent people and groups gathering in this area. There is also a Groundsman on site during the site's opening hours, and a flat within the Aquadrome site is occupied by a member of the Council's Environmental Protection Team, further contributing to the security of the site.

Safety from vehicles is maintained by a site speed limit of 5mph, both around the car park and on the maintenance road on the south side of Bury Lake. In this area of the site a separate footway has been designated to minimise risk to pedestrians.

2.6.7 Fly tipping and vandalism

When a report of fly tipping or vandalism is received an Environmental Protection Inspector will examine the location and gather evidence within 24 hours. The area will then be made safe and any damage repaired. Vandalism is also reported to the Community Safety Intervention Officer who liaises with the Police.

The council has a commitment to remove graffiti within 48 hours of a report and racist graffiti within three hours, and works with the Hertfordshire Constabulary to catch graffiti offenders.

2.7 Education and Activities

A wide variety of community events and activities are held at the Aquadrome. Many of the events and activities on offer promote healthy living through physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

The most popular event is the annual [Rickmansworth Festival](#). This free annual festival attracts more than 20,000 people during the third weekend in May. The event is a celebration of our canals and environment and includes an array of canal boats from across the county, canal boat trips, charity group stands, traders, live music from local bands and an environmental marquee promoting local environmental groups. The festival is the biggest event in which the council is involved and attracts people from across the district and beyond, including a large boating community. The Rickmansworth Festival is organised in partnership with the Rickmansworth Waterways Trust and all funds raised go towards the Learning at the Lock educational programme run by the Trust.



The diverse range of water sports offers something for everyone, no matter their age or ability – water skiing, sailing (including activities for disabled users), kayaking, remote control yachting and angling.

- [Rickmansworth Water Ski Club](#) – open every weekend and on Wednesday afternoons throughout the year on Batchworth Lake.
- [Bury Lake Young Mariners](#) – promoting the development of life skills in young people through the medium of sailing, with courses available for anyone from age 9 to adults. Also provide sailing opportunities for disabled residents through [Colne Valley Special Sailors](#).
- [Nomad Kayak Club](#) – regular recreational sessions on Sundays at 10am and Wednesdays at 6pm (summer only), based at Bury Lake Young Mariners on Bury Lake.
- [Uxbridge Rovers Angling and Conservation Society](#) – offer angling on Batchworth Lake and along the River Colne.
- [Three Rivers Radio Yachting Club](#) – weekly sessions operating and racing radio-controlled model yachts, on Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays on Bury Lake.



Bury Lake Young Mariners



Other community activities on offer at the Aquadrome include:

- [Nordic Walking](#) – weekly on Mondays at 10am. Sociable exercise involving walking with specially designed poles to improve fitness.
- [Play Rangers](#) – sessions encouraging children and young people to explore their local green spaces, with a variety of activities including den building, campfires and team games. Operating in the Easter and summer holidays at the Aquadrome.
- [Moving Mums](#) – weekly Stroller Strength classes on Mondays at 11:30am, combining walking with the pram with post-natal specific toning exercises.
- [parkrun](#) – weekly 5km timed run on Saturdays at 9am.
- [Hertfordshire Health Walks](#) – regular free walks led by trained volunteers aiming to get people more active to improve their health and fitness. Walks were offered at the Aquadrome until 2021 and may be restored subject to volunteer walk leader availability. See the linked programme for an up-to-date timetable of walks.
- Guided walks – led by TRDC or in conjunction with CMS. May focus on particular aspects of the wildlife such as wildfowl or bat walks, or activities for families.
- [3-2-1 running route](#) – marked 3km running route promoted by RunTogether, part of England Athletics.

2.8 Marketing and Communication

2.8.1 Promotion

The Aquadrome Local Nature Reserve and the events that take place on the site are promoted through:

- The [Three Rivers Leisure](#) website, including the [Aquadrome's dedicated webpage](#) and pages for events and activities.
- Three Rivers District Council social media.

- Regular press releases.
- Regular updates to councillors and stakeholders, including through the Aquadrome Forum.
- Council notice boards: located around the district, including at the Aquadrome, with site specific noticeboards within the Information Point at the Aquadrome.
- Aquadrome site leaflet: distributed to libraries, leisure venues, council offices, etc.
- Signage: off-site directional signage, on-site entrance signage and interpretation.

2.8.2 Branding

Existing signage around the Aquadrome reflects different branding used on the site at different times. Some entrance signage displays an old Aquadrome logo. More recent interpretation and signage follows a style used in parks and green spaces across the district, but without any site-specific branding. The Council have recently developed a new logo and branding suitable for signage and publications related to the Aquadrome, details of which are contained in Appendix L.



Old-style Aquadrome logo (left) and newer district-style interpretation without Aquadrome logo.

2.8.3 Signage and interpretation

A considerable variety of signage and interpretation has been installed at the Aquadrome, at different times and by different organisations.

2.8.3.1 Signage

Entrance and information signs, of different designs but primarily of an older style, are located at several points on the approach from Frogmoor Lane, including the image in 2.8.2 and the additional images below. All entrances have some form of entrance signage or interpretation panel, with the exception of a minor entrance from the Grand Union Canal at the west end of the car park.



Entrance sign on Frogmoor Lane side of Grand Union Canal bridge, and information signs on Aquadrome side of bridge.

There are two noticeboards of different designs close to the car park, one council noticeboard and one for clubs and organisations. There is also some route signage, including large fingerposts at key points and smaller waymarking posts marking routes including the 3-2-1 running route referenced in 2.7.



Three Rivers District Council noticeboard and clubs and organisations noticeboard.

2.8.3.2 Interpretation

Interpretation panels around the Aquadrome follow a consistent design, shown in the image in 2.8.2. There are large orientation panels of this design at most entrances, with the exception of two pedestrian entrances from the Grand Union Canal. There are also two smaller interpretation panels featuring the site's wildlife and its wet woodland habitat.

2.8.4 Off-site signage to the Aquadrome

The route from the M25 to the Aquadrome is signed with a combination of normal road signs and brown signs.

The only off-site pedestrian and cycle signage to the Aquadrome is from the Grand Union Canal at Stockers Lock and the entrance south-west of the car park.

3.0 FUTURE OF THE AQUADROME

3.1 Creating Biodiverse and Sustainable Environments

A high priority for the future management of the Aquadrome is that the valuable habitats and unique character of the green space are maintained. One of the primary reasons to visit the Aquadrome is to relax and enjoy the wildlife and scenery. Yet there are considerable pressures from the large visitor numbers, and many of the proposals set out in this plan seek to make the site even more attractive to visitors.

This tension will be managed through the zoning approach described in 2.2.1.1, with leisure and recreational activities taking priority in formal areas and a focus on enhancing biodiversity and developing natural spaces in informal areas.

3.1.1 Woodland

The areas of wet woodland around the site represent a habitat which is rare in Hertfordshire and valuable, characterised by plentiful fallen deadwood. To maximise the value of this habitat, the non-intervention approach pursued in these areas should continue. Wet woodland can appear untidy and neglected, and should be celebrated through better and more prominent interpretation to help explain this management decision to visitors.



Wet woodlands

Other woodlands around the site, both the broadleaved plantations to the north of the site adjacent to the wet woodland and the smaller broadleaved woodlands to the south of the site, are generally in good condition and management interventions over the next five years are not a priority, except where targeted to benefit other features of the site such as the river Colne. Within the formal areas of the Aquadrome a different standard of woodland maintenance should be applied, with any fallen trees or deadwood within 5m of paths removed or used to create habitat piles further into the woodland. Otherwise, a similar non-intervention approach should be applied.

The woodlands to the north of Bury Lake benefit from a series of paths, functioning as rides, and glades, which are of considerable benefit in adding habitat diversity. These areas have had little maintenance in recent years and require both a

restoration of annual or biennial grass cutting with removal of arisings, to prevent succession to scrub and woodland and maintain the rough grassland habitat, and work to remove fallen trees and control willow scrub which has become established around the margins of the glades. This scrub should then be managed on a ten-year rotation. Informal paths should also be restored to reinstate public access to these areas.

Within one of these glades is the Aquadrome's pinetum, which has similarly lacked recent maintenance. This should be restored and promoted as a feature of the Aquadrome. A previous survey of the trees within the pinetum should be updated, identifying and mapping species represented, assessing their condition and providing recommendations for work required, including trees to remove, trees in need of arboricultural work and gaps where additional trees could be planted. The recommendations from this survey should then be delivered.

In addition, the work described above to remove fallen trees, control willow scrub and restore annual or biennial grass cutting should take place in this area. Initially, a mown path should be re-established through the centre of the pinetum on a route which is currently blocked by fallen trees. Alongside delivery of the recommendations from the pinetum survey, this path should then be improved to provide an accessible link through the pinetum and between the path around Bury Lake and the woodland walk. This would require a gate at the southern entrance to enable pedestrian access control when flooded, as for the other entrances to the woodland walk described in 3.2.5.1.

Once restored, the area should be properly promoted and interpreted, through inclusion on the site map in the main orientation panels, inclusion in site signage and provision of dedicated interpretation. As well as interpretation of the pinetum this would include a focal point to introduce and celebrate the wet woodland habitat, with an opportunity for the new path above to pass through an area of wet woodland on a boardwalk.

3.1.2 River Colne

Habitat management along the river Colne will be undertaken alongside and in partnership with Uxbridge Rovers Angling and Conservation Society (URACS), who lease fishing rights for the river. URACS are working in conjunction with HMWT to develop their own Fishery Management Plan for the benefit of river habitats and the fishery. The Council will also work closely with the Environment Agency on habitat improvement work relating to the river.

3.1.2.1 *Marginal plant growth*

The habitats on the river bank are dominated by mature trees and scrub, with very little marginal vegetation. Tree works should be undertaken at key locations along the river corridor, with a long-term aim to reach a 50:50 balance between shade and

light. This work should be targeted to maximise use of existing light tunnels and areas of silt deposits and marginal vegetation growth. It will be focused on the river bank itself, with intervention within the wet woodland south of the path limited to the large poplars, some of which could be monolithed (i.e. reduced to their main stem) to add light and create additional roosting habitat for bats. The tree works can also be connected with associated work around Batchworth Lake. As the balance of habitats changes, the long-term aim will be to maintain diversity of tree species and ages along the bank, alongside open well-lit marginal areas.

These tree works should considerably increase the amount of marginal and in-channel vegetation and provide habitat stepping stones to help water voles colonise this stretch of the river.

3.1.2.2 *In-channel habitats and geomorphology*

Any fallen trees causing obstruction for angling will be removed or cut back. However, wherever these can fulfil a function as a refuge or flow diverter they should be left in place.

The upstream stretch of the river in particular is over-wide and over-deep, resulting in sluggish flow, siltation and a lack of in-channel vegetation. To encourage the development of more diverse flow patterns and hydromorphological features, when tree works are undertaken, selected trees should be felled into the river and pinned to act as flow deflectors. There will also be opportunities for large woody debris to be placed in the channel, secured appropriately. Locations should be selected carefully to avoid impact on angling and can be considered throughout the site, with a focus on the upstream stretch. In addition, berms can be constructed to narrow the channel in places on the upstream stretch.



Fallen tree increasing flow diversity and over-wide upstream section of river

3.1.2.3 *Weirs*

There are two weirs on the section of the Colne within the Aquadrome. These impact the river in particular through impoundment, negatively influencing the geomorphology and habitats of the chalk river and obstructing the natural movement

of fish. As the larger upstream weir is required to maintain water levels on the Grand Union Canal, removal cannot be considered, and a formal fish passage structure is not a priority given the alternative channels that already provide a route around the weir.

The small and relatively simple downstream weir may be required to maintain levels on the channel to the north of the Colne, but this is not certain. The function of the weir should be investigated as part of the hydrological study discussed in 3.1.3 to confirm whether there is an opportunity for removal or modification to benefit the geomorphology of the river upstream of the weir and the movement of fish.

3.1.3 Ditches and minor watercourses

Ditches across the site are generally overgrown and unmaintained, and the hydrology of the site and function of these ditches is not fully understood. From a habitat perspective most sit within the wet woodland habitat and minimal intervention is appropriate, as allowing old drainage ditches to become blocked is beneficial for the habitat, subject to the outcome of the proposed hydrological survey.

Management to open ditches or create views may be appropriate for aesthetic reasons. This will include opening a short section of the ditch adjacent to the pinetum to reveal this habitat and provide a window into the wet woodland, and clearance of trees along the ditch north of the café to reveal the ditch and establish views to the lake as part of wider entrance improvements. In addition, the line of willows north of the access road should be coppiced or pollarded, generating additional light and habitat diversity and revealing the ditch behind them.

A better understanding of site hydrology would be valuable and could help identify further opportunities for ditch restoration or maintenance to improve the way water in the site is managed and reduce the risk of points on the path network being flooded without detracting from the flood plain function of the site. A hydrological study should be undertaken to inform this and provide recommendations for an appropriate ditch maintenance regime. This should also consider how water levels in the lakes are managed at times of higher and lower flow in the Colne.

3.1.4 Lakes

3.1.4.1 *Batchworth Lake*

A key aspiration of this plan is to further re-wild and restore Batchworth Lake for the benefit of both marginal vegetation and wildlife.

As on the river Colne, the habitats around the lake are dominated by mature trees and scrub, with limited marginal vegetation. Tree works to bankside trees around the lake should be undertaken to increase light levels, give marginal vegetation more opportunity to become established and increase overall structural diversity. On the north-east shore of the lake, this work can be connected with associated tree works

along the river Colne, to maximise light reaching the Colne. Again, similarly to habitats along the Colne, the long-term aim will be to maintain diversity of tree species and ages along the banks, alongside open well-lit marginal areas. Where possible, timber should be stacked on the banks to provide deadwood habitat. At least eight trees which have fallen into the lake will be retained as wildlife habitat and safe angling features.

Previous largely unsuccessful attempts to establish marginal vegetation around the lake shores have left unsightly structures and floating frameworks around much of the lake. Any structures, including posts and chicken wire, should be removed. Further targeted work to establish marginal vegetation should be undertaken. This should consider and seek to mitigate the factors which previously caused failure, including lack of light, the impact of wildfowl and wave action, including from the water ski boat. Delivery should be approached in piecemeal fashion to allow specific attention to be given to different part of the lake shore and for interventions to be specifically targeted. This will include stronger bird protection and perhaps angled front edges to reduce the impact of wave action.

The old floating island frameworks should be restored and relocated, while seeking through placement of the frameworks to mitigate the factors which caused failure when first installed. A new design of floating island is now available which is more hard-wearing than the frameworks previously installed at the Aquadrome and can support herb-rich vegetation including trees and provide cover for fish. While re-use of the existing frameworks is more cost-effective and should be attempted first, these should also be considered as part of the marginal vegetation design work. Relocated and new floating islands should be placed close to banks similarly to existing floating islands and in consultation with the Water Ski Club to avoid any impact.



Heavily shaded shore of Batchworth Lake, and floating island frameworks with failed establishment

The south-western corner of the lake should be managed as a refuge for fish and other wildlife by reducing the density of trees on the two small islands and removing colonising trees from the sheltered area between the islands and the lake shore to preserve the reedbed habitat. Coppicing and pollarding the line of willows south of the lake here will have the additional benefit of increasing light levels to the lake

shore and establishing views of Batchworth Lake from the amenity grassland east of Bury Lake.

As on the river Colne, habitat management on Batchworth Lake will be undertaken alongside and in partnership with URACS, to whom fishing rights for the lake are licensed. URACS are working in conjunction with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) to develop their own Fishery Management Plan for the benefit of the lake, conservation of the site and fishery.

3.1.4.2 *Bury Lake*

The focus of management of the marginal habitats of Bury Lake should similarly aim for this marginal vegetation to be as structurally diverse as possible.

Willows on the bank at the north-east corner of the lake should be re-pollarded to aid development of the pollards and add habitat diversity. Further occasional coppicing or pollarding along the north shore, where existing marginal vegetation occurs, would also support habitat diversity and generate views from the path.

Along the causeway between Bury Lake and Stockers Lake, where there has been some successful establishment of reeds, occasional willows should be coppiced or pollarded to support the development of marginal vegetation. The most successful establishment of reeds has been north of a small peninsula into the lake close to the kayak area. This should be extended by clearing all the willows in the sheltered area south of that peninsula to generate light and using pre-established coir rolls to accelerate the establishment of reeds.

Further establishment of marginal vegetation is likely to be more successful on the south shore of the lake where sufficient light exists or can be generated, with less exposure to waves generated by prevailing winds and avoiding areas with high wildfowl pressure. Small areas should be established, including just east of the radio yachting club jetty and at the east end of the BLYM compound. Establishment on the lake shore in both areas could be undertaken using pre-established coir rolls supported by chestnut stakes, with infill behind. Adjacent to the BLYM compound, at the eastern end where it is also suitable for establishing wetland vegetation, the area should be seeded with an appropriate seed mix for seasonally wet soils. In this area trees on the lake shore should also be coppiced to increase light levels and establish a view of the lake from the main path.

3.1.5 **Grassland**

The majority of the amenity grassland at the Aquadrome is very well used and should be retained. However, there are opportunities for improved grassland management, both for wildlife and to add interest to the site.

At the north-eastern corner of Bury Lake, part of the area of amenity grassland backing onto the wet woodland should be sown with a native wildflower mix and

moved into an annual conservation grassland cut and lift regime, with a mown grass path maintained through the middle of this area to give visitors more opportunity to enjoy it.



Amenity grassland north-east and south of Bury Lake

Management of the area of grassland south of Bury Lake is constrained by its use during the Rickmansworth Festival in late May. A wildflower meadow should be established in this area using a seed mix containing plants which will respond well to regular mowing, with mowing relaxed in spring to allow cowslips to flower and then relaxed again from June to allow flowering of other species. A mown grass path should be maintained through the middle of the meadow. In the small area of grassland south-west of the car park, which is proposed in 3.2.1 for establishment of a small orchard, a similar seed mix should be established.

In order to increase the quantity of pollinator-friendly plants, there will also be an increase in bulb planting within amenity grassland parts of the site.

Management of the glades within the woodland is described in 3.1.1 above.

Two areas of amenity grassland alongside Riverside Drive can be moved to a conservation cut to enhance the buffer to the woodland and river, leaving a 2m strip of amenity grassland alongside the cycle path. Another area of amenity grassland on the east side of the Colne closer to the recycling centre can also have a conservation cut added around its margins.

Across the site, at least a 1m strip of amenity grass or vegetation will be cut back alongside all pathways.

3.1.6 Species

Across all species found at the Aquadrome, a relative lack of recent information means volunteer wildlife recording, whether casual or specialist, is of great value. All wildlife recording should be supported and records should be submitted to the [Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre](#) (HERC) through the [Hertfordshire Natural History Society](#) (HNHS).

For specialist species groups, invitations should be extended to the relevant county recorders, again through HNHS, offering and supporting access to the site for recording. Based on the invertebrate list in Appendix H Table 3, this should include beetles and moths.

3.1.6.1 *Mammals*

The section of the Colne through the Aquadrome is a high priority for water voles, as a missing link between populations downstream on the Colne near Stockers Lake and upstream on the Chess. Water voles are not currently present in this section, but annual surveys will be undertaken by HMWT to look for signs of presence. Habitat management works along the river Colne described in 3.1.2 will aim to create stepping stones of marginal vegetation, currently largely absent on this section of the river, which is important water vole habitat.

Bats should be another key consideration in habitat management. While relatively old, the 2007 bat survey included as Appendix J still provides relevant information on how bats use the site and its habitat management recommendations remain applicable. These include the encouragement of marginal aquatic vegetation around the lake and development of structurally diverse margins, the retention of bankside mature trees avoiding removal of dead wood unless essential, pollarding or re-pollarding lakeside trees to benefit insect diversity and long-term bat roosting opportunities, appropriate consideration of bat roosting potential when undertaking any tree works and maintenance of woodland clearings with valuable sheltered woodland edge habitats.

3.1.6.2 *Reptiles and amphibians*

Although there is little available information on reptiles or amphibians at the Aquadrome, grass snakes are known to be present. Good habitat management of wetland and wet woodland habitats as described in the sections above will suit grass snake and common amphibians, and active encouragement could include creation of hibernacula and grass snake egg-laying heaps. Gathering further information through volunteer surveying would be beneficial.

3.1.6.3 *Birds*

Through the BTO Wetland Bird Survey (2.4.2.3), long-term wildfowl records for the Aquadrome are good. The main limitation to use of the lakes by wildfowl is disturbance, but the adjacent Stockers Lake provides a valuable refuge. Work described above to increase the quantity and diversity of marginal habitat and reduce the density of trees on the islands in Batchworth Lake will help provide cover for wildfowl and increase the habitat value of the lakes.

3.1.6.4 *Plants*

The last botanical survey of the Aquadrome was undertaken in 2012 and is included as Appendix I. An updated survey should be undertaken to help understand any changes in the habitats over the last ten years and provide an up-to-date baseline to help understand the impacts of the habitat management proposed in this plan.

3.1.6.5 *Invertebrates*

The nationally and locally rare invertebrates historically recorded at the Aquadrome tend to be associated with its characteristic wetland and marginal habitats. Optimum management of these habitats as described in the sections above should benefit these invertebrates if still present.

3.1.6.6 *Non-native species*

Japanese knotweed is present at the Aquadrome, including within the pinetum area and on the river Colne. There is an ongoing control programme which aims to prevent its spread and eradicate it from the site.

Cherry laurel and snowberry grow along the bank of the river Colne and should be removed where possible to reduce shading of the banks and allow more space for native marginal and bankside vegetation to establish. Some will be retained to allow for use in natural play.

As well as having significant fish and invertebrate predation impacts, signal crayfish excavate extensive burrow networks and contribute to bank erosion on the river and lakes and also increase silt loads in the water. They are known to be present in very high densities in this part of the Colne valley. Due to the size of the crayfish population, control on the river Colne and Batchworth Lake would be impractical under current regulations, and a fishing club close to the Aquadrome has ceased crayfish control for this reason. Habitat enhancement proposals on the river Colne should be considered carefully in collaboration with ColneCAN to avoid further supporting the crayfish population.

To contribute to landscape-scale water vole conservation, a mink monitoring programme should be instated and will be led by HMWT. This will establish whether mink are present in the area. The results of the monitoring programme will be reviewed, and should mink be recorded, consideration will be given to how this is managed.

It is unlikely to be possible to prevent the arrival of floating pennywort on the river Colne within the Aquadrome, as the installation and regular maintenance of a boom at the entrance from the Grand Union Canal is not thought to be practical. Regular monitoring should take place to identify its arrival as soon as possible and help manage its impact.

3.1.7 Heritage

The Aquadrome has a rich history of recreational use, as evidenced by the photos included in section 2.3.2, but no opportunity is currently provided for modern visitors to understand this history.

Around 100 years since the site was first used for public recreation, this is an ideal time to tell its story, using photos, memories and records from the Aquadrome community and the Three Rivers Museum to help tell the story of the site.

Information gathered should be drawn together to provide the content for interpretation panels celebrating the heritage of the Aquadrome. These panels could be sited in the same location as historic photos were taken from, to demonstrate the way the site has changed since. This will also provide an opportunity to link to the Grand Union Canal and Batchworth Lock Canal Centre and the shared heritage of these areas.

3.2 To Be Welcoming for All

3.2.1 A Coherent Entrance to the Aquadrome

The area around the car park and the café, where many people access the site, is currently comprised of a series of disjointed spaces some of which have little purpose or connectivity.



Aquadrome entrance views

A landscape plan will be developed to provide a coherent visitor experience, create a sense of arrival and connect the various areas around the Aquadrome entrance. This will build upon the popularity of the café and the close proximity to the car park to establish this area as a hub of activity, from where people can then head out to explore the wider Aquadrome.

The development of the landscape plan will require additional feasibility work for core elements including the redesign of the car park and to investigate underground utilities adjacent to the café. It will also incorporate further stakeholder consultation and is expected to require submission of a planning application.

The landscape plan will have the following objectives:

- A welcoming entrance for people as they enter from the car park
 - Entrance signage and interpretation
 - Seating and waiting areas
 - Attractive planting and coherent paths connecting to the lake, café, car park and dog-free area
 - Screening of the utilities to the west of the café
 - Fully utilise information point adjacent to the café
- A space for interaction with the lake
 - Dramatically opening up views of the lake from the area around the café
 - Construct or repurpose the two existing footbridges into a single wider, more attractive and more welcoming crossing towards the lake
 - Re-landscape the former bird feeding area
 - Install a new surfaced path to improve accessibility and better connect to and through this location and beyond.
- A calm and contemplative space
 - Quieter area adjoining the busier interactive space to enjoy a more relaxed atmosphere overlooking Bury Lake
 - Continue to support and enable use by the model boat club
 - Construct a small shelter in an artistic style, doubling both as a sculpture and as a shelter, with good visibility in and out to restrict antisocial behaviour
 - Continue the existing path through into the adjoining woodland, connecting the space into the more informal, natural areas of the site. This will also make a short circular walk possible starting from the café and improve the accessibility of this area. Rather than leading to the jetty, this path should run along the back of the open space next to the lake.
 - Replace the bridge where this path joins the main path around Bury Lake.

- Creation of an 'interactive natural play trail'
 - Supports use of the area by families and helps to tie together the different spaces around the entrance
 - A series of interactive features leading from the café into the adjoining spaces, including the dog free area and the woodland and grassland further west
 - Small and removable features that enable the spaces to remain flexible and available for other uses such as large events, for example, sculptures or brass rubbings linked to the park
 - Potential for additional larger play structures within the wooded area
 - Sculptures can be visible from the car park to 'signpost' the trail

- A functional and fully utilised car park
 - Consideration of changes to the flow of the car park, having an entrance from the eastern end and exit only at the current entrance/exit. This would encourage full usage of the car park
 - Utilise all areas of the car park, removing scrub encroachment from the southern edge
 - Aspiration to improve the surfacing across the whole car park and consideration of car park drainage
 - Ensuring dedicated bays are allocated for disabled users
 - Investigate the possibility of installing EV chargers within the car park
 - Clearly marked pathways leading people into the main areas of the park and towards the canal, supported by waymarking
 - Improved location and style of cycle parking, including a cycle maintenance unit
 - Establish views from the car park to the welcoming entrance area
 - Establishing a functional entranceway into the Grounds Maintenance depot
 - Setting aside a dedicated area for temporary storage of grounds materials
 - Setting aside a dedicated area for deliveries for stakeholders of the site
 - Restore the hedgerow along the boundary with the canal to provide a robust barrier and habitat and improve views to the canal, working in partnership with the Canal & River Trust
 - Use low level earth banks to separate each section of the car park. Use these earth banks to plant trees, with high canopies to provide clear sight lines across the car park, providing additional habitat and making the car park more attractive

- Lakeside picnic area
 - Establish views out from the north-eastern bank of Bury Lake

- Install intermittent picnic benches on the lake side of the path
 - Renew benches overlooking the lake on the opposite side of the path
 - Significant planting of spring bulbs to the right and left of the main path as visitors approach the lakes, including native plants such as snake's head fritillary.
- Planting of an orchard area and community planting area
 - Utilising and creating a habitat in the otherwise unutilised area to the southwest of the car park
 - Provide a link through to the canal and to the dog-free area
 - Enhance signage and waymarking coming into the Aquadrome from the canal towpath and vice versa
 - Plant locally relevant trees of edible varieties
 - Add interpretation of orchard.
 - Install the carved 'Colne Valley' sculpture marking the northern gateway to the Colne Valley Regional Park
 - Clearance of vegetation to open up the visibility of the canal from the Aquadrome and to extend the space available for the orchard and community planting area.

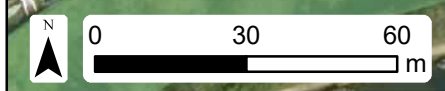
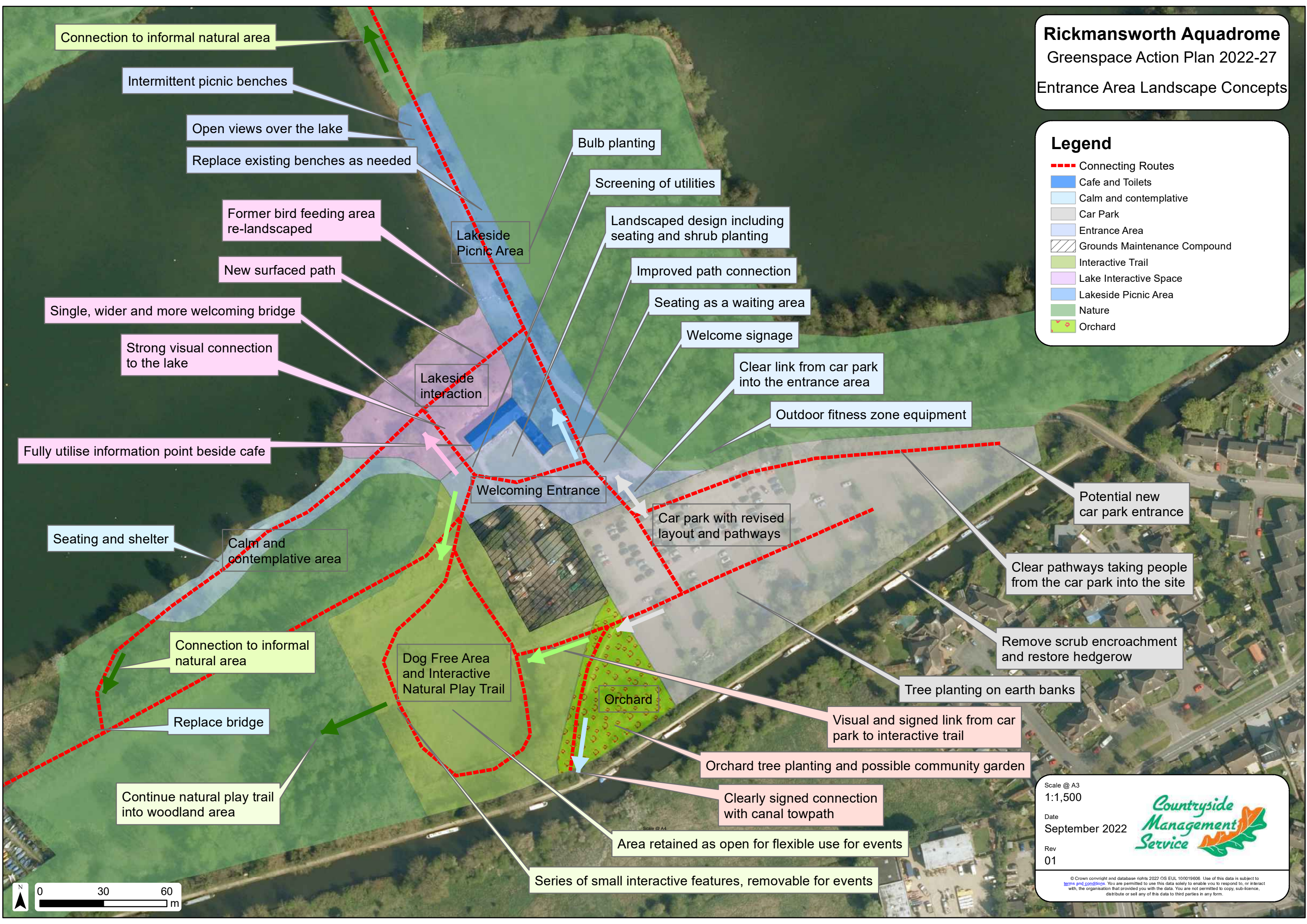
Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Entrance Area Landscape Concepts

Legend

- Connecting Routes
- Cafe and Toilets
- Calm and contemplative
- Car Park
- Entrance Area
- Grounds Maintenance Compound
- Interactive Trail
- Lake Interactive Space
- Lakeside Picnic Area
- Nature
- Orchard



Scale @ A3
1:1,500

Date
September 2022

Rev
01

Countryside Management Service

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3.2.2 Signage and interpretation

Signage around the Aquadrome is tired and outdated, appearing cluttered and unattractive. The same posts are often used for multiple signs, and signs from different organisations appear next to each other. Branding across signs installed by the council at different times is inconsistent, and site entrances are not clearly signed.

Map-based orientation panels at the majority of entrances are in good condition but have had additional signage added to the same posts at a later date and lack any strong Aquadrome branding. Habitat-based interpretation panels are small and opportunities are missed to interpret additional areas of interest.



Multiple signs on one set of posts, and temporary signage attached to interpretation.

Directional signage within the site is relatively limited. There are large wooden fingerposts at only three locations, signposting main destinations and the National Cycle Network route.



Fingerpost example

Following the development of new branding for the Aquadrome (Appendix L), this is an ideal opportunity to replace signage and interpretation across the site, strengthen the identity of the Aquadrome and greatly improve the visitor experience. This should include:

- New welcome signs at all pedestrian entrances.
- Updated vehicle entrance sign at entrance to bridge from Frogmoor Lane.
- Updated information signage including car park and site opening hours, site rules, fishing rights and bird feeding areas. All temporary and informal signage and posts which are no longer required should be removed. Only signage agreed and installed by TRDC and following Aquadrome branding will be permitted. Signage should be rationalised as far as possible to minimise the number of individual signs.
- New signage to encourage respectful shared use of the facilities of the Aquadrome to manage and reduce conflict between user groups will be investigated, designed and installed. This will be part of a comprehensive signage scheme across the wider cycling network.
- Updated orientation panels following new brand and using new DDA compliant structures. Elements of artwork developed for existing panels, in particular the site map, can be updated and used again where appropriate. Orientation panels should be added at entrances where they are not currently present. Mapping should incorporate minor paths to encourage people to use different routes around the site, and interpretation should promote the Colne Valley Regional Park and the Colne Valley Trail through inclusion of maps showing the wider area.
- Larger (A1) habitat interpretation panels following the new brand guidelines and using new DDA compliant structures. These should cover the following themes:
 - Lakes
 - Wet Woodland
 - River Colne, highlighting the value of chalk rivers and the flood plain character of the whole site
 - Pinetum
 - Orchard and Community Planting
 - Wildflower Meadow Creation (north-east corner of Bury Lake).
- New historical (heritage) interpretation as referenced in 3.1.7.
- Consideration of interpretation targeted at children.

- Consideration of digital interpretation and interactive online map to control the number of physical signs on the site.
- Updated noticeboards as part of the new welcome hub area.
- New directional signage around the site including fingerposts showing routes and destinations and linking to nearby locations such as Rickmansworth town centre and railway station, Uxbridge Road, the Grand Union Canal, Batchworth Lock Canal Centre, Stocker's Lake HMWT reserve and the rest of the Colne Valley Regional Park. As with orientation panels, signage/maps should include minor paths to encourage visitors to explore different routes around the site.

3.2.2.1 *Directional signage to the Aquadrome*

Signage to the Aquadrome from the surrounding area is currently very limited and should be enhanced in several locations.

- The route from Rickmansworth station and the town centre to the Aquadrome is not currently signed. Aquadrome signs should be added to existing fingerposts at the station and through the town centre. On the route from the High Street, blue cycle and pedestrian signage to the Aquadrome should be added, linking to the upgraded crossing on Riverside Drive.



Examples of existing signage on Station Road and Riverside Drive (signs on reverse of the latter are cycle and pedestrian signage to town centre).

- There is no signage from Batchworth Lock Canal Centre to the Aquadrome. A sign should be added to the existing set of fingerposts.

- There is also no signage from Uxbridge Road to the Aquadrome. A blue pedestrian sign should be added to the signpost at the beginning of public footpath 065.



Existing signage at Batchworth Lock Canal Centre and Uxbridge Road entrance to footpath 065.

3.2.3 Entrances to the Aquadrome

As well as the improvements to welcome signage described in 3.2.2, structures at the entrances to the Aquadrome should also be made consistent, attractive and enable access to the site to be controlled when necessary. The gates referenced below would be kept permanently open and used only when necessary to enable closure of parts or all of the Aquadrome, in circumstances such as high winds or flooding.

- Frogmoor Lane (southern edge, also serving as the main entrance for vehicles): existing entrance structures fit for purpose.
- Grand Union Canal towpath (south-west of car park): add new gate to enable pedestrian access control.
- Public Footpath Rickmansworth 065 from Stockers Farm Road (south west corner): remove existing unattractive entrance structures and replace with new high vehicle gate to enable vehicle and pedestrian access control.
- Public Footpath Rickmansworth 065 from Uxbridge Road (north west corner): add new gate to replacement bridge (see 3.2.5.2) to enable pedestrian access control. Along the site boundary to the north of this bridge there is an unsightly chain link fence through the edge of the wet woodland, which serves no obvious purpose. Following confirmation that this fence is owned by the Council, it should be removed.
- Riverside Drive (north east corner): path and gate require widening and area around path requires landscaping.
- Grand Union Canal towpath (south east corner): remove staggered barriers and replace with new gate to enable pedestrian access control.

- Grand Union Canal towpath (southern edge, east of Frogmoor Lane bridge): add new gate to enable pedestrian access control.

3.2.3.1 *Riverside Drive entrance*

The bridge over the river Colne from Riverside Drive is a key entrance to the site and a gateway to the Colne Valley Regional Park. It leads to Rickmansworth High Street via an upgraded roundabout on the A412 providing for pedestrian and cycle access and is part of a significant route for active travel, on National Cycle Network route 6.

However, it currently does not meet the minimum standard for the network, due both to its narrow width and its low headroom. It is also in poor condition and the existing structure would require extensive and costly maintenance and resurfacing if retained. The bridge is currently being reviewed by the Council to consider the options for its replacement.



Riverside Drive bridge and entrance view

Complete replacement of this bridge can greatly improve the entrance to the Aquadrome from Rickmansworth town centre and enable safe shared use of the National Cycle Network route between pedestrians and cyclists. Any new bridge will be significantly wider than the existing bridge and will be in-line with modern standards, including removing the existing headroom constraints.

As part of the design and construction process, consideration will need to be given to the impact on higher value trees in proximity to the bridge, along with accessibility from and to the Aquadrome from Riverside Drive.

The entrance from Riverside Drive and Ebury play area is visited frequently by families and other visitors and is a busy section of the Aquadrome.

Re-design of this area provides the opportunity to make a strong and positive first impression on the visitor. The area between Riverside Drive and Batchworth Lake should be improved to include:

- A visually welcoming entrance with landscaping on both sides of the bridge.
- Widened footway from Riverside Drive to reduce the drop from the path and on both approaches to match the width of the new bridge.

- Relocate the play area fence into the play area to allow widening of the footway.
- Improved site branding and directional signs (3.2.2).
- Enhanced seating near Ebury play area.
- Planting a native hedgerow along the roadside boundary of Ebury play area, which will be kept to a maximum height of 1.5m to maintain visibility to the play area.
- Screening or replacement of unsightly fencing and storage containers within the compounds of the Water Ski Club and URACS.

Consideration will also be given to improving the current facilities provided at this arrival point. These could include:

- Improved and enhanced toilet facilities, including the potential for a Changing Places toilet (fully accessible adult and child toilet and changing space).
- Informal information and interpretation point to showcase the diverse habitats at the Aquadrome and to highlight its Local Nature Reserve status.

3.2.4 Site furniture

Site furniture used at the Aquadrome, including benches, picnic tables and bins, has not always followed a consistent design, leading in some areas to an untidy feeling. Furniture locations have not always been carefully considered, leading to uneven provision across the site.

In addition, the open-topped wooden bins currently used across much of the Aquadrome are not fit for purpose, being easily accessed by rats and therefore exacerbating the problem with rats on the site. This is similarly true of the open-topped animal bins around the café and at the Riverside Drive play area.

New consistent designs for site furniture to be used across the site will be agreed as an early action within this plan. Seating and picnic tables should be attractive, meet accessibility standards and take into account the advantages of recycled plastic and sustainable timber. Litter bins should have a closed top. All designs should be in keeping with the natural environment.

Provision of bins and benches should be reassessed prior to any replacement to ensure all are located strategically and provision is fit for purpose. Benches should be placed at intervals, in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act. Benches currently sited on the northeast side of the river Colne close to Riverside Drive (see map in Section 5.4) are not required and will be removed.

Benches and picnic tables should be replaced either as part of larger improvement projects such as the entrance enhancements described in 3.2.1, or at the end of their functional life. When benches are replaced on the main path network, where possible they should be installed to a Disability Discrimination Act compliant

standard, on a hard standing pad with adjacent wheelchair space. Consideration will also be given to existing Memorial benches and any new ones will follow the [Council's Memorial Bench, Tree and Plaque policy](#).

All litter bins should be replaced with a more suitable closed design, with consideration given to larger bins in the main entrance area close to Café in the Park. Existing red dog waste bins will be replaced with green dog waste bins at the end of their lives.

3.2.5 Path network

The main paths around the Aquadrome are surfaced with tarmac and are generally in moderate to good condition. Some sections are older and there are also issues with flooding and resultant surface damage.

3.2.5.1 *Flooding and erosion*

Flooding of the path network has been a significant issue on the causeway west of Bury Lake and on the woodland walk north of Bury Lake. Water flows across the causeway from Bury Lake into the adjacent Stockers Lake in at least two locations, and also impacts the same footpath to Uxbridge Road. The hydrological study referenced in 3.1.3 will aim to understand if there are any mechanisms by which these flood flows can be directed differently to reduce impact on the path network, and if not, to establish whether short sections of path could be built up, and water allowed to pass underneath the path through culverts. In either case it will be essential to ensure that there is no impact on the functioning of the flood plain.

In its low-lying riverside location, the woodland walk is especially flood prone. Flooding here should be considered a normal event and public access managed accordingly. There are currently sections of temporary fence panels at each end of the path which are used to close it when necessary for safety reasons but are unattractive. These should be replaced with permanent gates of a similar design to those used at the entrances (Section 3.2.3). The frequent flooding means that surfacing here has been less long-lasting. This area should be considered within the scope of the hydrological survey to explore whether there are any solutions to improve drainage of this part of the path network, including options to raise the path in places and allow water to drain underneath. Any recommendations should be implemented, subject to approval from the Environmental Agency.

Any further resurfacing here should also be carefully planned and designed to maximise its longevity, with the primary aim of preventing ingress of water. This will include using impermeable asphalt, laid when the ground is dry by machine if possible, with edges well-compacted for the best possible seal.

At two locations away from the woodland walk, erosion adjacent to the paths is a particular concern. At the northwest corner of Bury Lake, despite previous efforts to reinforce this area, wave action from the lake has eroded the shore up to and in one location under the surfaced path.

At the eastern end of Batchworth Lake, bank erosion on the river Colne close to its confluence with the Grand Union Canal is now close to affecting the path. This riverbank erosion is likely to be a result of three factors: the attraction of bird feeding in this area, with heavy birds and in particular mute swans repeatedly hauling themselves out of the water and damaging the bank in the process, the burrows of non-native American signal crayfish, and erosion from the river itself in high flow conditions. The river is now particularly over-wide in this area.



Erosion under path at northwest corner of Bury Lake; erosion and swan feeding at eastern end of Batchworth Lake

In both locations the banks require reinforcement and building out into the lake or river. This should be undertaken using natural, soft engineering if feasible, though designed with care and taking account of the causes of erosion to ensure long-term stability. Options could include a rock bag base with imported infill secured by coir matting, or hazel faggots secured with chestnut posts again supporting imported infill. Stability will be aided in both cases by the establishment of native marginal vegetation, which will require both sufficient light and protection from disturbance by people or wildfowl to establish successfully.

3.2.5.2 *Bridges*

At the northwest corner of Bury Lake, the reinforcement work should incorporate replacement of the narrow bridge to make it wider, as it is a key pinch point on the path network. The sluice at the outflow from the lake should also be formally repaired or replaced, subject to the results of the hydrological study referenced in 3.1.3, to ensure that water levels in Bury Lake can be effectively controlled.

The bridge over the river Colne from Riverside Drive is discussed in 3.2.3.1.

3.2.5.3 *Long-term resurfacing programme*

An assessment of existing path surfaces has been undertaken to inform the requirement for resurfacing in the action plan for the next five years, and a longer-term plan for resurfacing included as part of the capital programme (Appendix C).

As well as the areas described above, priorities for resurfacing in the next five years include:

- Surfacing a short desire line at the path junction between Bury Lake and Batchworth Lake.
- Managing desire lines around the car park and café through wider consideration of the entrance to the Aquadrome described in 3.2.1.
- Surfacing a short section of unsealed surface and replacing the sleeper bridge which is currently in poor condition on the path leading directly from the car park to Batchworth Lake (see map in Section 5.5).
- Resurfacing a short section of unsealed surface and a poorly designed intersection of multiple paths at the pedestrian entrance from the Grand Union Canal at Frogmoor Lane to make this entrance more functional and consistent with the rest of the site and its position on the National Cycle Network.
- Resurfacing the path running parallel to the north of the entrance road to a width appropriate for shared use as part of the National Cycle Network.
- In combination with resurfacing on the section of the causeway impacted by flooding, and the resurfacing of footpath 065 to Uxbridge Road by Hertfordshire County Council (3.2.5.4), the remainder of the causeway should be resurfaced if budget allows. The surface of this section is currently in moderate condition, with a desired width consistently higher than the surfaced width evidenced by erosion on the path edges. It should be surfaced to a wider width where possible, cutting back vegetation where necessary to achieve this.
- Path edges along the north side of Bury Lake between the southern entrance to the woodland walk and the path to Batchworth Lake are generally poor unless previously repaired, with untidy transitions from repaired to unrepaired edges. Edges should be repaired on one or both sides of the path throughout this section.
- Surface a path through the pinetum with crushed stone or as a raised boardwalk, as described in 3.1.1.
- Regrade an existing path from the north-east corner of Bury Lake to the west side of Batchworth Lake and maintain as a mown grass path, to improve east-west connections in this area.



Examples of deteriorating path surface and erosion on path edges along the causeway

Our aspiration is that any new sections of surfacing should have a minimum width of 3m where space allows, and that the main routes through the site on the National Cycle Network between BLYM, Riverside Drive and the Grand Union Canal should have a minimum width of 4m where space allows.

3.2.5.4 *Public Footpath Rickmansworth 065*

As well as running along the causeway, this public footpath provides a link from the Aquadrome to Uxbridge Road. The surface here runs over private land and is maintained by the local Highway Authority, Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside and Rights of Way service, which regularly maintains the surface and bridges.

The surface and bridges on this route are of considerable importance to improve access to and through the Aquadrome from Uxbridge Road. It currently has an unsealed surface which needs regular maintenance to remain in a good condition and includes a very narrow bridge with an identified need to be widened to improve access.

The Three Rivers Cycling and Walking programme (2019) proposes an upgrade to this path to connect Uxbridge Road with the National Cycle Network route, as a second phase to a previous route improvement, along with path and bridge improvements. This is being developed with the support of Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside and Rights of Way service.

3.2.5.5 *Grand Union Canal towpath*

The Grand Union Canal towpath runs just outside the Aquadrome along its southern boundary and is a closely linked recreational opportunity. While outside the direct

scope of this plan, it is being considered as part of the Council's Walking and Cycling Strategy work programme as an area in need of improvement. Any improvements would be delivered in partnership with the Canal and River Trust.

The unsealed path between the Grand Union Canal and Riverside Drive adjacent to the recycling centre is within the ownership of the Council. This path is heavily encroached in places by laurel, which requires clearing to make the path more open and welcoming.

3.2.6 Accessibility

The site boasts a significant amount of level surfacing, which makes it attractive and accessible for all.

The good network of surfaced paths enables easy access throughout the site, with paths wide enough to accommodate a range of users, albeit constrained at certain points. Improvements to pathways and bridges outlined within this Management Plan will further improve the accessibility of the site. Benches provide frequent resting points and when replacement is required, this will be done with accessibility in mind (3.2.4). Fishing platforms should also be designed to enable easy access to the lake edge where possible (3.3.6). Inclusion of a Changing Places toilet and space will greatly enhance the experience for users with a disability.

3.2.7 Asbestos management

It is recognised that there is Asbestos Containing Material (ACM) at the Aquadrome. This was deposited upon the site following the completion of gravel extraction in the 1920s and 1930s, when the risks posed by asbestos fibres were not known and the rules around disposal were unregulated.

ACMs in an untouched state are generally safe and in general day-to-day use, the site is well within safe legal limits for the presence of asbestos fibres in the atmosphere. The Council have engaged external consultants to assist with the development of an Asbestos Management Plan to ensure the asbestos present is managed safely in the long term. Early recommendations include maintaining the water level in Batchworth Lake to encapsulate ACMs beneath the surface of the water, regular picking of loose ACMs, together with prohibiting any work to the banks or site, unless agreed and managed by TRDC and in accordance with the Asbestos Management Plan.

3.3 A Friendly Site Community

The Aquadrome is a hugely popular site with many different user groups using the green space in different ways. The Council aims to maintain a strong relationship with all members of the Aquadrome community and to maintain a balance between the needs of different user groups. The Aquadrome Users Forum is a key tool both to maintain that relationship and to help different user groups maintain contact and work together.

3.3.1 Impact of visitor numbers

Visitor numbers to the Aquadrome are high and there are a range of impacts on the site which impact all site users. These impacts include litter, dog fouling, congestion on the path network and in the car park, conflict between user groups and disturbance of wildlife.

Actions to address these impacts are set out elsewhere in the plan, including signage to encourage respectful shared use (3.2.2), path resurfacing and widening at key pinch points (3.2.5), signage of minor paths which provide alternative walking routes (3.2.2) and a zoning approach where biodiversity and natural spaces are prioritised in the informal parts of the site (2.2.1.1). Improvements to the layout and design of the main entrance area can help this busy part of the site absorb visitors (3.2.1). Habitat enhancements such as establishment of more diverse marginal vegetation around the lakes will help mitigate the impacts of disturbance on wildlife (3.1.4).

3.3.2 Litter

To promote responsible use of the site, new bins should incorporate signage asking people to take their litter home with them if bins are full.

Litter is a particular problem on the Colne through the Aquadrome and around the lakes, both dropped within the Aquadrome and entering the site from the Grand Union Canal and collecting on marginal vegetation and trees. Litter on the Colne and around Batchworth Lake is collected regularly by URACS bailiffs.

3.3.3 Vehicle access

There are currently numerous vehicle movements within the Aquadrome along the south side of Bury Lake, and the council's intention is to reduce this number and restrict vehicle access to essential uses only.

It is the responsibility of TRDC authorised staff to open and close the main entrance gate on Frogmoor Lane. There should be no vehicle access to the car park and no deliveries outside the normal car park opening times detailed in 2.5.3.5.

There should be no vehicle movements within the site, other than for those with a disability or to drop off large items at premises within the site. When disabled access is required, a blue badge should be clearly displayed on the dashboard and the vehicle parked on hard standing only. There should be no parking on the grass or under trees.

When driving through the site, hazard lights should be used and the site speed limit of 5 mph should be observed. We also recommend that a banks person walks ahead of any vehicles driving on site, particularly when busy.

Vehicle access arrangements will continue to be monitored and kept under review.

3.3.4 Dogs

3.3.4.1 Dog control

Dog control is a concern of many users of the Aquadrome, and there has been a rise in reports of anti-social behaviour by dogs in the Aquadrome, including chasing and killing wildlife, chasing cyclists and loose dogs running up to other users. The Council's Animal Welfare and Licensing Inspector carries out community education on responsible dog ownership and can issue Fixed Penalty Notices if necessary.

The Council currently allows dogs to be off the lead on the site if kept under control. The only area where dogs must be on a lead is directly surrounding the café. Should such incidents continue, the Council may look to implement a variation to the existing Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO).

3.3.4.2 Dog access to the river Colne and lakes

There are several points along the woodland walk where dogs frequently enter the river Colne. This informal access damages the river bank, causes the river to become over-wide in these locations and areas used become very muddy. In addition, anti-flea treatments are washed into the river system and adversely affect invertebrate life. While it is difficult to prevent dogs accessing the river, information discouraging this will be incorporated in interpretation and signage.



Eroded riverbank.

Dog access to the lakes can have a similar negative impact by causing erosion and affecting invertebrate life. The water can also be dangerous for the dogs themselves, including a risk of poisoning by blue-green algae. We will therefore similarly discourage dog access to the lakes.

3.3.5 Bird feeding

While bird feeding is a much-enjoyed family activity, it does have negative consequences for the site, attracting unnaturally large numbers of waterfowl whose faeces are smelly and unappealing on paths and amenity grassland around the lakes, and have a negative impact on water quality in the lakes themselves. A further

unintended consequence is that the ready availability of food also supports a large population of rats.

In response to feedback received from the consultation on this plan, the two designated and signed bird feeding areas at the Aquadrome, in the southeast corner of Bury Lake and on the west side of Batchworth Lake, will be removed and re-landscaped. A third undesignated bird feeding area on the river Colne in the southeast corner of the site will also be re-landscaped. All three locations will have new information signs celebrating the wildfowl of the Aquadrome and highlighting the negative impacts that feeding can have.



Bury Lake and Batchworth Lake designated bird feeding areas; unofficial bird feeding area on river Colne

3.3.6 Fishing swims

The fishing swims around Batchworth Lake have been constructed at various times and do not follow a consistent design. Some are in good condition but many are not, and have been badly eroded. Accessibility is inconsistent.



Examples of eroded fishing swims

The fishing swims should be repaired and replaced on a rolling programme based on need. Replacement platforms should be based on a set of designs which maximise resistance to wave erosion and therefore durability and ensure a consistent appearance around the lake. Disabled access to fishing platforms should be improved by considering and incorporating accessibility in standard platform designs. Approximately 35 swims around the lake will be maintained for safe angling.

While there are some less formal structures in places along the river Colne, these are not generally required for fishing. Platforms should only be installed or maintained where absolutely necessary, and unsafe platforms should be removed.

3.3.7 Wild swimming

Wild swimming is not permitted at the Aquadrome, either in the lakes or in the river Colne. The use of Bury Lake for wild swimming would need to be managed by a swimming club in association with Bury Lake Young Mariners, both as leaseholders for water sports on the lake and as the only location with good facilities for water sports. However, this is not currently supported by either BLYM or the Council. Other local opportunities for wild swimming exist, including at [Denham](#) and at [Merchant Taylors' lake](#).

3.3.8 Access to the river Colne

The Council's policy is that access to the river Colne from the Aquadrome is not permitted, either for kayaks or for swimming. However, we do not control use of the river itself. We will continue to use 'no swimming' and 'no canoeing' signage to manage access to the river.

3.3.9 Defibrillators

There is currently an internal defibrillator in the BLYM compound and within the Café in the Park. At least one external defibrillator should also be provided on the Aquadrome site, around the café area.

3.3.10 Programme of activities

A wide variety of activities is already offered at the Aquadrome as detailed in 2.7. These activities have a strong focus on health and wellbeing and also links to nature and conservation. The Council will look to extend the range of activities on offer through its Community Biodiversity Officer and Community Parks and Sustainability Officer.

In order to manage the number and the environmental impact of events on the site and wildlife, the council has developed a Hire of Grounds policy for the Aquadrome, which is included as Appendix E.

Practical conservation volunteering at the Aquadrome has been limited in recent years. Volunteers should be engaged in the delivery of actions from the plan where feasible. The local Countryside Management Service volunteer group working across south-west Hertfordshire will be able to work at the Aquadrome in support of the Management Plan.

In addition, or in coordination with these volunteer tasks, conservation volunteering sessions should be offered as one-off events to provide further opportunities for members of the local community to contribute to the management of the site.

3.3.11 Hire of Grounds

Certain areas of the Aquadrome can be hired for activities. Due to its Local Nature Reserve status, there are several restrictions on hire including the nature, time and size of the activity. Details of these restrictions and terms of hire are detailed in the Hire of Grounds form included as Appendix E.

3.3.12 Marketing and communications

Marketing of the Aquadrome will be greatly aided by the development of the new branding detailed in Appendix L and updates to interpretation and branding around the site.

The site leaflet will be redesigned in a digital format and no longer distributed in printed form.

The content of the website should be kept under regular review to ensure information is up to date. Upcoming site activities and events should continue to be promoted using the promotional tools detailed in 2.8.1.

3.4 A High Quality Green Space

3.4.1 Funding and partnership work

This Management Plan is highly aspirational and delivery will be dependent on working in partnership with other organisations and the Council's success in accessing external funding from a wide variety of sources.

Project development and funding applications will be a key aspect of the work in the first year of the plan. Delivery will also be supported by building and maintaining strong partnerships with all the organisations noted in 2.6.2, along with neighbouring authorities, in particular the Borough of Hillingdon. Expected and potential funding sources include:

- Three Rivers District Council revenue and capital budgets
- Three Rivers District Council Community Infrastructure Levy. Provision of biodiversity net gain in mitigation for nearby development may be a suitable mechanism to fund biodiversity improvements.
- Hertfordshire County Council Rights of Way and Sustainable Hertfordshire budgets
- Hertfordshire County Council Section 106 funds for sustainable transport
- Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Veolia Environmental Trust funding
- Additional Mitigation Plan (AMP) funding
- HS2 funding
- Environment Agency budgets (River Colne)
- Sustrans (National Cycle Network)
- Crowdfunding

In addition to the Aquadrome Users Forum, which is intended as a group for the principal users of the Aquadrome, we intend to establish a project steering group which will advise on and support development of projects identified in this plan, and will have a wider membership than the Forum.

3.4.2 Monitoring visitor feedback

The online visitor survey for the Aquadrome has remained open since 2018 but has not been promoted or updated; 157 surveys were completed between 2019 and 2021 compared to 554 responses during 2018.

The content of the survey should be updated to reflect the priorities set out in this Management Plan and promoted on the site during the summer of 2023 to gather up to date and relevant visitor feedback.

The survey should remain available in subsequent years, before being promoted again during the summer of 2026 to collect comparative data and assess progress made during the period covered by this Management Plan.

As part of the development of this Management Plan, feedback has been sought on a briefing document and a draft Management Plan to ensure that the priorities and actions set out are as well aligned as possible to visitor expectations.

3.4.3 Visitor number monitoring

Following initial visitor observations in July 2022, further visitor observations will be undertaken every two years to help understand the usage of the site.

We will also identify a digital method to monitor visitor numbers at key entrance points, which is likely to include but may not be limited to an automated vehicle counter at the main entrance. We will be open to any opportunities to use new technologies to help understand the use of the site.

3.4.4 Accreditation and awards

The Aquadrome currently holds a [Green Flag Award](#), demonstrating that it meets this national standard for parks and green spaces. The council will seek to retain this accreditation over the next five years and aim to improve scores to the maximum possible.

Other awards will be sought and applied for where relevant and appropriate, once the core actions set out in this Management Plan have been achieved and where this would help raise the profile of the Aquadrome and maximise its value to the community.

4.0 DELIVERING THE FIVE-YEAR VISION FOR THE AQUADROME

4.1 Vision Statement

“For the Aquadrome to be enhanced, nurtured and protected. To achieve the balance so nature can flourish and visitors can connect with and discover beautiful and unique habitats, whilst understanding the importance of the environmental heritage of the site.”

The Aquadrome is a well-used site, offering a unique opportunity to engage with the high numbers of visitors to proactively inform, educate and share the value and significance of the site's habitats, wildlife and impact on wellbeing. Linked to the global Climate Change emergency, the window for influencing behavioural change and an awareness of how vital the local environment is, must be seized now to ensure the balance of Rickmansworth Aquadrome is achieved.

Over the next five years, the key priorities for the Aquadrome include enriching biodiversity and sustainability, improving accessibility throughout the site, managing the risks of flooding and creating a site identity. It will also remain a priority to foster strong relationships with the site community, to improve site interpretation, and to consider the landscape ensuring that a good visitor experience around the café and beyond is delivered. These priorities will ensure that Rickmansworth Aquadrome is future proofed for future generations and future wildlife.

Following the Council's Climate Change Emergency and Sustainability Strategy, there is an opportunity to maximise the biodiversity value of the Aquadrome, including reducing grass cutting, creating meadows, reducing lake erosion, enhancing valuable existing habitats and providing opportunities for species such as water voles.

The Aquadrome offers 41 hectares of lake and woodland, within walking distance of the town. Accessible, well maintained open spaces have never been more vital to the health and wellbeing of individuals. Since Covid-19, usage has increased for people seeking connection with nature, their environment and to improve their happiness.

This new 5 year plan is an opportunity to protect and enhance nature, alongside creating a green haven for the community so that wellbeing can be promoted.

Three Rivers District Council, along with its partners, is delighted to deliver the aspirational vision of balanced biodiversity and connection and invite the community to visit and embrace Rickmansworth Aquadrome.

4.2 Objectives

A. Creating Biodiverse and Sustainable Environments

The Aquadrome will conserve and enhance wildlife, landscape and heritage features and all aspects of management will be undertaken with sustainability as a guiding principle.

- A1 To ensure robust environmental management
- A2 To educate and inform visitors about vital wildlife and their habitats
- A3 To deliver sustainable solutions to preserve and protect the environment
- A4 To preserve the landscape and heritage of the Aquadrome

B. To Be Welcoming for All

The Aquadrome will be an inviting, clean and well-maintained green space for all to enjoy.

- B1 To provide an inviting green space
- B2 To ensure the site is clean and well maintained
- B3 To ensure the site is accessible for all
- B4 Ensure the Aquadrome can be easily navigated and flows smoothly between the different zones

C. A Friendly Site Community

The Aquadrome community will be engaged and involved in the site and the needs of all visitors will be balanced.

- C1 To work with and engage key stakeholders for the Aquadrome
- C2 To develop a programme of activities focused around nature and conservation
- C3 To develop a programme of activities focused around health and wellbeing
- C4 To develop and promote marketing and communications

D. A High Quality Green Space

The Aquadrome will be a flagship destination, providing high quality facilities and diverse recreational opportunities alongside its rich wildlife habitats.

- D1 To retain Green Flag accreditation
- D2 To monitor visitor feedback and satisfaction levels
- D3 To apply for relevant awards

5.0 ACTION PLANS AND MAPS

The action plans are divided into revenue and capital sections. Revenue items will generally be funded and delivered through existing Council revenue budgets. Capital items have no funds currently allocated to them, so delivery would require following the Council's capital bid process or securing external funding. All costs are estimates and full costs will need to be identified for each item prior to the submission of a capital bid or external funding application. Total estimated capital costs are detailed in 6.2.2.

Abbreviations used: TRDC – Three Rivers District Council; L&L – Landscapes and Leisure; EP – Environmental Protection; GM – Grounds Maintenance; CRoW – Hertfordshire County Council Countryside and Rights of Way Service; Vols – Volunteers; EA – Environment Agency; HMWT – Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust; RWT – Rickmansworth Waterways Trust

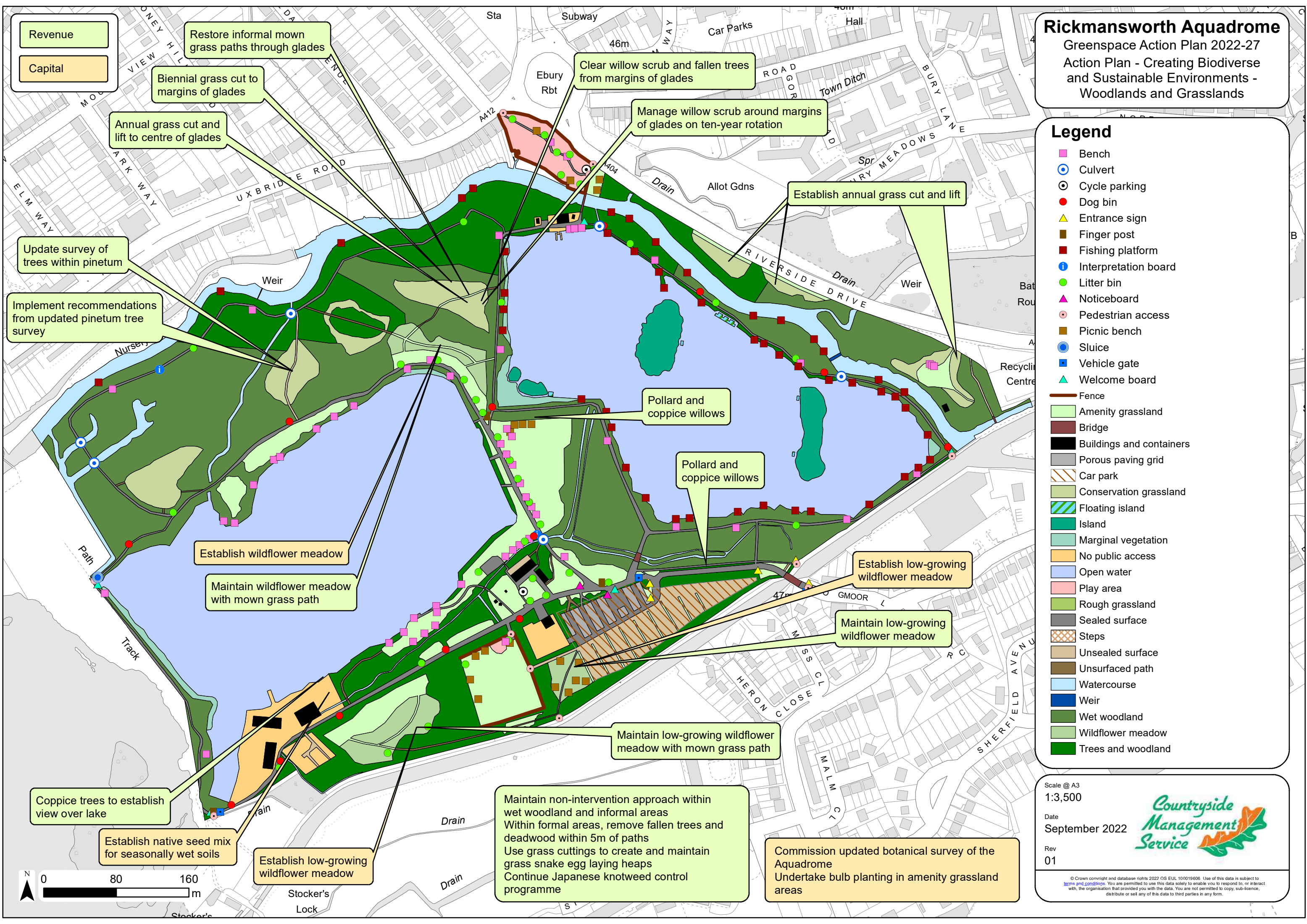
5.1 Creating Biodiverse and Sustainable Environments (Woodlands and Grasslands)

Ref no.	Action - Revenue	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.1.1	Maintain non-intervention approach within wet woodland and informal areas	A1	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.1.2	Within formal areas, remove fallen trees and deadwood within 5m of paths	A1, B2	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.1.3	Undertake annual grass cut and lift to centre of glades.	A1, B2	Annual	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.1.4	Undertake biennial grass cut to margins of glades, half each year	A1, B2	Annual	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.1.5	Restore informal mown grass paths through glades including clearance of trees/scrub where necessary	A1, B2	Year 1	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.1.6	Clear willow scrub and fallen trees from margins of glades	A1, B2	Years 1-2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Vols/ Contractor	Vols/TRDC	£10000		
5.1.7	Manage willow scrub around the margins of glades on a ten-year rotation	A1	Annual	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Vols	Vols/TRDC	NA		

5.1.8	Update survey of trees within the pinetum, including recommendations on future management	A1	Year 1	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.1.9	Implement recommendations from updated pinetum tree survey	A1	Year 2	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Trees budget	£10000		
5.1.10	Pollard and coppice willows south-west of Batchworth Lake	A1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	Trees budget	£3500		
5.1.11	Pollard and coppice willows along ditch north of access road	A1, B1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	Trees budget	£3500		
5.1.13	Incorporate new wildflower meadow in amenity mowing regime	A1, B2	Year 2	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget		1	
5.1.14	Incorporate new wildflower meadow in annual cut and lift regime with mown grass path	A1, B2	Year 3-5	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget		1	
5.1.16	Coppice trees at eastern end of BLYM compound to establish view from main path over Bury Lake	A1, B1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	Trees budget	£1000		
5.1.18	Incorporate new low-growing wildflower meadows in amenity mowing regime	A1, B2	Year 2	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget		3	
5.1.19	Incorporate new low-growing wildflower meadows in amended mowing regime to allow flowering in spring and later summer, with mown grass paths	A1, B2	Year 3-5	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget		3	
5.1.20	Undertake annual grass cut and lift in grassland areas adjacent to Riverside Drive	A1, B2	Annual	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.1.21	Use grass cuttings to create and maintain grass snake egg laying heaps	A1, A3	Annual	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget		4	
5.1.24	Continue ongoing Japanese knotweed control programme	A1, B2	Year 1-3	TRDC EP	Contractor	EP budget	£15000		

Ref no.	Action - Capital	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.1.12	Establish wildflower meadow in amenity grassland north-east of Bury Lake	A1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£2000	1	

5.1.15	Establish appropriate native seed mix for seasonally wet soils at eastern end of BLYM compound	A1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£500	2	
5.1.17	Establish low-growing wildflower meadow areas within grassland south-west of car park and grassland south of Bury Lake	A1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£2500	3	
5.1.22	Undertake bulb planting in amenity grassland areas of site	A1	Year 2	TRDC L&L	Vols/ contractor	External	£15000	5	
5.1.23	Commission updated botanical survey of the Aquadrome to provide habitat baseline	A1	Year 2	TRDC L&L	Consultant	Site capital budget	£5000		



Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27
Action Plan - Creating Biodiverse
and Sustainable Environments -
Woodlands and Grasslands

Legend

- Bench
- Culvert
- Cycle parking
- Dog bin
- Entrance sign
- Finger post
- Fishing platform
- Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- Noticeboard
- Pedestrian access
- Picnic bench
- Sluice
- Vehicle gate
- Welcome board
- Fence
- Amenity grassland
- Bridge
- Buildings and containers
- Porous paving grid
- Car park
- Conservation grassland
- Floating island
- Island
- Marginal vegetation
- No public access
- Open water
- Play area
- Rough grassland
- Sealed surface
- Steps
- Unsealed surface
- Unsurfaced path
- Watercourse
- Weir
- Wet woodland
- Wildflower meadow
- Trees and woodland

Scale @ A3
1:3,500

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5.2 Creating Biodiverse and Sustainable Environments (Lakes and Watercourses)

Ref no.	Action - Revenue	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.2.4	Continue non-intervention approach on ditches around the site except where other priorities (flood risk, aesthetic) apply	A1	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.2.5	Open a short section of ditch adjacent to pinetum	A2, B1	Year 2	TRDC L&L	Contractor	External	£3000		
5.2.7	Maintain fallen trees in channel except where they obstruct angling or impact flood risk	A1	Ongoing	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Trees budget	TBC		
5.2.10	Confirm function of lower weir and review options for removal or modification	A1	Year 1	CRoW/EA	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.2.15	Review success of floating island restoration and consider installation of additional floating islands	A1	Year 5	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time	Staff time	TBC		
5.2.22	Re-pollard willows around north-east corner of Bury Lake	A1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£1500	8	
5.2.27	Instate mink monitoring programme on river Colne	A1	Year 1	HMWT	Vols	HMWT	NA		
5.2.28	Review results of mink monitoring programme	A1	Year 3	TRDC L&L/HMWT	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.2.29	Establish floating pennywort monitoring programme on river Colne	A1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Vols	Vols	NA		

Ref no.	Action - Capital	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.2.1	Commission hydrological study of the Aquadrome to optimise management of water on the site	A1, A3, B1, B3	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Consultant	Site capital budget	£5000		

5.2.2	Implement recommendations of hydrological study (5.2.1) related to ditch restoration and management	A1, B2	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	TBC		
5.2.3	Implement recommendations of hydrological study (5.2.1) related to flood risk management	A1, A3	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	TBC		
5.2.6	Undertake tree works along river Colne corridor to support development of marginal vegetation	A1	Years 1-3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£20000	6	
5.2.8	Install flow deflectors and large woody debris in river channel	A1	Years 1-3	TRDC L&L/CRoW/	Contractor	External	£10000	6	
5.2.9	Construct berms in river channel	A1	Years 1-3	TRDC L&L/CRoW/	Vols	Vols	NA	6	
5.2.11	Remove cherry laurel and snowberry from river bank	A1	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor / Vols	External/ Vols	£2000	17	
5.2.12	Undertake tree works on bankside trees around Batchworth Lake to support development of marginal vegetation	A1	Years 2-5	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£10000	7	
5.2.13	Remove all posts and chicken wire from previous marginal vegetation work	B1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Vols	Vols	£5000	7	
5.2.14	Restore and relocate floating island frameworks	A1	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£5000	7	
5.2.16	Design and deliver marginal vegetation establishment work on Batchworth Lake south shore	A1	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£15000	7	
5.2.17	Design and deliver marginal vegetation establishment work on Batchworth Lake west shore	A1	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£15000	7	
5.2.18	Design and deliver marginal vegetation establishment work on Batchworth Lake north shore	A1	Year 4	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£15000	7	
5.2.19	Design and deliver marginal vegetation establishment work on Batchworth Lake east shore	A1	Year 5	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£15000	7	

5.2.20	Thin trees on two small islands in SW corner of Batchworth Lake by 50%	A1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW/ URACS	Contractor	External	£2000	7	
5.2.21	Remove colonising trees from sheltered area behind small islands	A1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£2000	7	
5.2.23	Carry out coppicing and pollarding of occasional trees along north shore of Bury Lake	A1	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£5000	8	
5.2.24	Carry out coppicing and pollarding of occasional trees along west shore of Bury Lake	A1	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£5000	8	
5.2.25	Clear trees from sheltered corner close to kayak area and establish reeds using pre-established coir rolls	A1	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor / Vols	Site capital budget/vols	£5000	8	
5.2.26	Establish small additional areas of marginal vegetation using pre-established coir rolls on south shore of Bury Lake	A1	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor / Vols	Site capital budget/vols	£5000	8	

Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27
Action Plan - Creating Biodiverse
and Sustainable Environments -
Lakes and Watercourses

Legend

- Bench
- Culvert
- Cycle parking
- Dog bin
- Entrance sign
- Finger post
- Fishing platform
- Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- Noticeboard
- Pedestrian access
- Picnic bench
- Sluice
- Vehicle gate
- Welcome board
- Fence
- Amenity grassland
- Bridge
- Buildings and containers
- Porous paving grid
- Car park
- Conservation grassland
- Floating island
- Island
- Marginal vegetation
- No public access
- Open water
- Play area
- Rough grassland
- Sealed surface
- Steps
- Unsealed surface
- Unsurfaced path
- Watercourse
- Weir
- Wet woodland
- Wildflower meadow
- Trees and woodland

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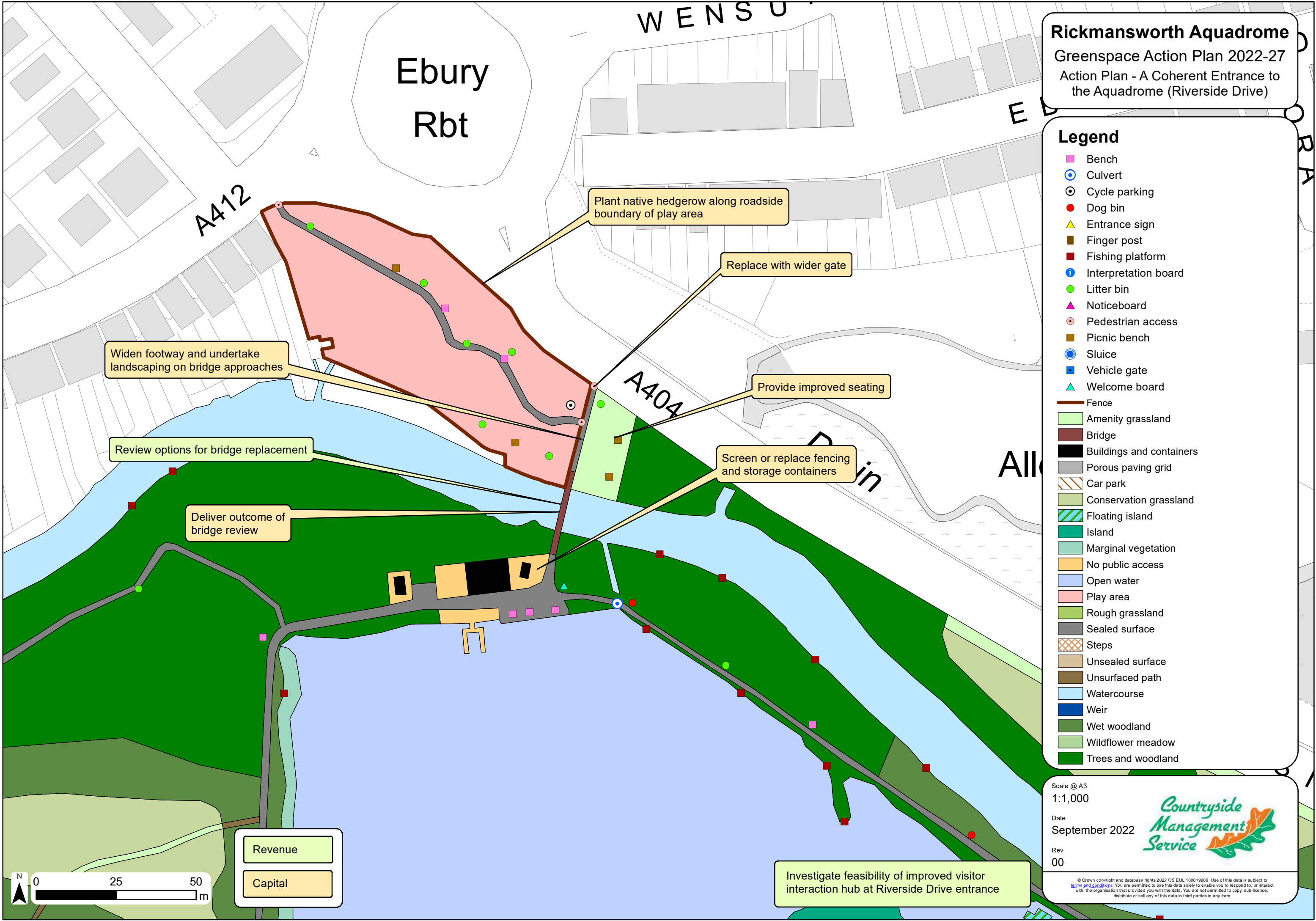
Revenue
Capital

5.3 To Be Welcoming for All – A Coherent Entrance to the Aquadrome

Ref no.	Action - Revenue	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
Riverside Drive entrance									
5.3.4	Investigate feasibility of improved visitor interaction hub	B1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/ Property	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.3.5	Review options for replacement of river Colne bridge	B1, B2, B3	Year 1	TRDC Property	Officer time	Staff time	NA		

Ref no.	Action - Capital	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
Frogmore Lane entrance									
5.3.1	Develop landscape plan encompassing objectives for the entrance to the Aquadrome, including necessary feasibility work and stakeholder engagement (this includes the main carpark and the two vehicle gates)	B1, B4	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time/ consultant	Staff time/ TRDC budget/ external	£50000		
5.3.2	Prepare detailed designs for entrance improvements and secure planning permission if required	B1, B4	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time/ consultant	Staff time/ TRDC budget/ external	£50000		
5.3.3	Deliver entrance improvement project	B1, B4	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	TBC		

Riverside Drive entrance									
5.3.6	Deliver outcome of bridge review	B1, B2, B3	Year 3	TRDC Property	Contractor	TRDC capital budget/ external	TBC		
5.3.7	Widen footway and undertake landscaping on both approaches, including relocation of play area fence	B1, B3	Year 3	TRDC L&L	Contractor	External	£4000		
5.3.8	Replace gate with wider gate	B1, B3	Year 3	TRDC L&L	Contractor	External	£2000		
5.3.9	Provide improved seating near Ebury play area	B1	Year 3	TRDC L&L	Contractor	External	£1000		
5.3.10	Plant native hedgerow along roadside boundary of Ebury play area	A1, B1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Vols	Vols/ external	£500	18	
5.3.11	Screen or replace fencing and storage containers within leased compounds dependent on bridge design and review	B1	Year 3	TRDC L&L	Contractor	External	£2000		
Riverside Drive entrance map follows below. Please refer to the Entrance Area Landscape Concepts Map (p48) and accompanying section 3.2.1 for more detail on likely actions around the Frogmore Lane entrance									



Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Action Plan - A Coherent Entrance to the Aquadrome (Riverside Drive)

- #### Legend
- Bench
 - Culvert
 - Cycle parking
 - Dog bin
 - Entrance sign
 - Finger post
 - Fishing platform
 - Interpretation board
 - Litter bin
 - Noticeboard
 - Pedestrian access
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 - Sluice
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 - Sealed surface
 - Steps
 - Unsealed surface
 - Unsurfaced path
 - Watercourse
 - Weir
 - Wet woodland
 - Wildflower meadow
 - Trees and woodland

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5.4 To Be Welcoming for All – Signage and Interpretation, Entrances and Site Furniture

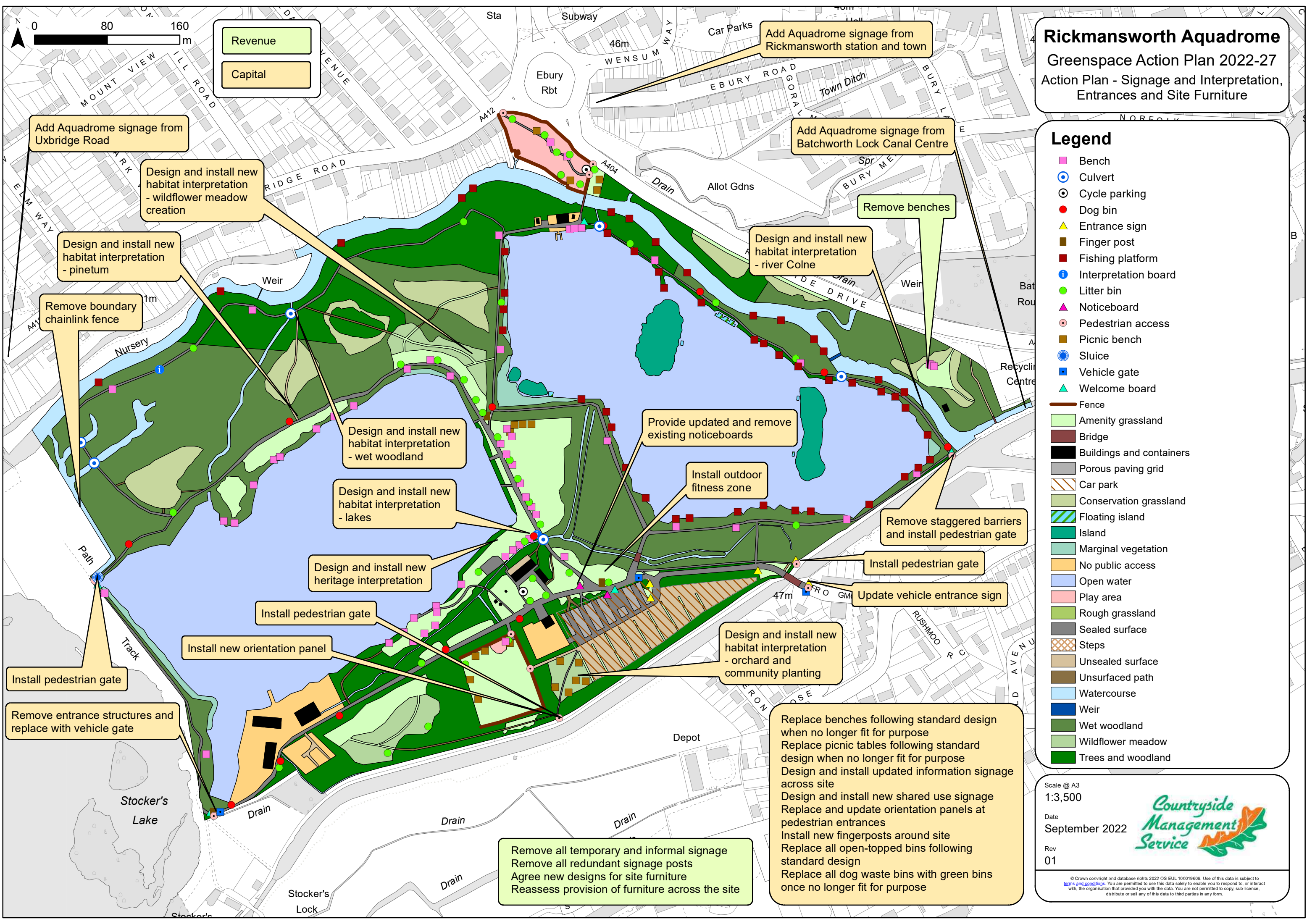
Ref no.	Action - Revenue	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.4.3	Remove all temporary and informal signage	B1, B2	Year 2	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.4.4	Remove all redundant signage posts	B1, B2	Year 2	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.4.22	Agree new designs for site furniture	B1, B3	Year 1	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.4.23	Reassess provision of furniture across the site	B1, B3	Year 1	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.4.25	Remove benches on the east side of the river Colne close to Riverside Drive	B1, B2	Year 1	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			

Ref no.	Action - Capital	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.4.1	Update vehicle entrance sign at bridge from Frogmoor Lane	B1	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£4000	9	
5.4.2	Design and install updated information signage including car park signage and site rules	B1	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£10000	9	
5.4.5	Design and install new shared use signage for paths	B1, B3, C1	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£1500	9	
5.4.6	Replace and update orientation panels at pedestrian entrances (6 No.)	B1	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£30000	10	

5.4.7	Install new orientation panels at pedestrian entrances from Grand Union Canal (Frogmoor Lane and south-west of car park)	B1	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£4000	10	
5.4.8	Design and install new habitat interpretation panels – lakes, wet woodland, river Colne, pinetum, wildflower meadow creation, orchard and community planting (6 No.)	A2, B1	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£20000	11	
5.4.9	Design and install new heritage interpretation panel in locations of historic photos (1 No.)	A4, B1	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£3000	11	
5.4.10	Provide updated noticeboards as part of new welcome hub, and remove existing noticeboards	B1	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£4000		
5.4.11	Install new fingerposts at key locations around the site (4 No.)	B1, B4	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£8000	12	
5.4.12	Add Aquadrome signs to fingerposts between Rickmansworth station and town centre	B4	Year 1	TRDC Transport	Contractor	TRDC capital budget	£500	12	
5.4.13	Add blue cycle and pedestrian signage on route from Rickmansworth High Street to Riverside Drive entrance	B4	Year 1	TRDC Transport	Contractor	TRDC capital budget	£250	12	
5.4.14	Add Aquadrome sign to fingerpost at Batchworth Lock Canal Centre	B4	Year 1	RWT	RWT	RWT/ TRDC capital budget	£250	12	
5.4.15	Add blue pedestrian signage to Aquadrome from Uxbridge Road	B4	Year 1	TRDC Transport	Contractor	TRDC capital budget	£100	12	

5.4.16	Grand Union Canal towpath entrance (south-west of car park) – install pedestrian gate	B1, B3	Year 2	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Site capital budget	£2500	13	
5.4.17	Entrance from public footpath (south-west corner) – remove existing entrance structures and replace with new high vehicle gate	B1, B3	Year 2	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Site capital budget	£2500	13	
5.4.18	Entrance from public footpath (north-west corner) – install pedestrian gate on replacement bridge	B1, B3	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	Site capital budget	£8000	13	
5.4.19	Remove boundary chainlink fence through wet woodland north of north-west entrance	B1, B2	Year 2	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Site capital budget	£2000		
5.4.20	Grand Union Canal towpath entrance (south-east corner) – remove staggered barriers and replace with pedestrian gate	B1, B3	Year 2	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Site capital budget	£2500	13	
5.4.21	Grand Union Canal towpath entrance (east of Frogmoor Lane bridge) – install pedestrian gate	B1, B3	Year 2	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Site capital budget	£2500	13	
5.4.24	Replace benches following standard design once no longer fit for purpose	B1, B2	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	External	£2000 per bench		
5.4.26	Replace picnic tables following standard design once no longer fit for purpose	B1, B2	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	External	£3000 per bench		
5.4.27	Replace all open-topped bins following standard design	B1, B2	Year 2	TRDC EP	GM	External	£350 per 120 L and £650 per 240L bin		

5.4.28	Replace all dog waste bins with green bin design once no longer fit for purpose	B1, B2	Year 2	TRDC EP	GM	External	£250 per bin		
5.4.29	Install outdoor fitness zone north of the car park	B1	Year 1	TRDC L&L	Contractor	TRDC capital budget	£30000		



Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Action Plan - Signage and Interpretation, Entrances and Site Furniture

Legend

- Bench
- Culvert
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- Dog bin
- Entrance sign
- Finger post
- Fishing platform
- Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- Noticeboard
- Pedestrian access
- Picnic bench
- Sluice
- Vehicle gate
- Welcome board
- Fence
- Amenity grassland
- Bridge
- Buildings and containers
- Porous paving grid
- Car park
- Conservation grassland
- Floating island
- Island
- Marginal vegetation
- No public access
- Open water
- Play area
- Rough grassland
- Sealed surface
- Steps
- Unsealed surface
- Unsurfaced path
- Watercourse
- Weir
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- Wildflower meadow
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5.5 To Be Welcoming for All – Path Network

Ref no.	Action - Capital	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.5.1	Implement recommendations of hydrological study (5.2.1) related to path resurfacing on causeway between Bury Lake and Stockers Lake	A3, B2, B3	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	TBC	14	
5.5.2	Resurface remainder of causeway on footpath 065 to a greater width where possible.	B2, B3	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£75000	14	
5.5.3	Implement recommendations of hydrological study (5.2.1) related to drainage improvements on the woodland walk	A3, B2, B3	Year 4	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	TBC	14	
5.5.4	Install two pedestrian gates at entrances to woodland walk	B2	Year 2	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Site capital budget	£6000	13	
5.5.5	Carry out feasibility and design work for long-term bank and path reinforcement at north-west corner of Bury Lake	A3, B2, B3	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Consultant	Site capital budget	£5000		
5.5.6	Implement long-term bank and path reinforcement at north-west corner of Bury Lake	A3, B2, B3	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£20000		
5.5.7	Replace bridge at north-west corner of Bury Lake with a wider bridge than existing	B2, B3	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£10000		
5.5.8	Repair or replace sluice at outflow from Bury Lake subject to recommendations of hydrological study (5.2.1)	A3, B2, B3	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£5000		

5.5.9	Carry out feasibility and design work for long-term bank and path reinforcement along river Colne at eastern end of Batchworth Lake	A3, B2, B3	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Consultant	Site capital budget	£5000		
5.5.10	Implement long-term bank and path reinforcement along river Colne at eastern end of Batchworth Lake	A3, B2, B3	Year 4	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£10000		
5.5.11	Surface short desire line at path junction between Bury Lake and Batchworth Lake	B1, B3	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	Site capital budget	£2000	14	
5.5.12	Surface short unsealed section on path from car park to Batchworth Lake	B1, B3	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	Site capital budget	£5000	14	
5.5.13	Replace sleeper bridge on path from car park to Batchworth Lake	B1, B3	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	Site capital budget	£10000		
5.5.14	Surface unsealed section at pedestrian entrance from Grand Union Canal at Frogmoor Lane and resurface path intersection	B1, B3	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	Site capital budget	£15000	14	
5.5.15	Resurface path parallel to entrance road and widen	B1, B3	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£25000	14	
5.5.16	Repair path edges on north side of Bury Lake	B1, B3	Year 5	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£20000	15	
5.5.17	Improve standard of path through pinetum	A2, B1, B3	Year 3	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£25000		
5.5.18	Regrade path from the north-east corner of Bury Lake to the west side of Batchworth Lake and maintain as mown grass path	B1, B3	Year 4	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£6000	16	
5.5.19	Clear laurel along path between Grand Union Canal and Riverside Drive	B1, B3	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	Site capital budget	£1500	17	

Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Action Plan - Path Network

Legend

- Bench
- ⊙ Culvert
- ⊙ Cycle parking
- Dog bin
- ▲ Entrance sign
- Finger post
- Fishing platform
- i Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- ▲ Noticeboard
- Pedestrian access
- Picnic bench
- ⊙ Sluice
- Vehicle gate
- ▲ Welcome board
- Resurfacing
- Fence
- Amenity grassland
- Bridge
- Buildings and containers
- Porous paving grid
- Car park
- Conservation grassland
- Floating island
- Island
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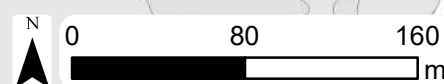
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Revenue
Capital

5.6 To Be Welcoming for All – Clean, Well-maintained and Accessible

Ref no.	Action - Revenue	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.6.1	Deliver grounds maintenance as specified in grounds maintenance schedule	B2	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.6.2	Manage collection of litter and dog waste according to grounds maintenance schedule	B2	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.6.3	Maintain buildings and structures according to maintenance schedule	B2	Ongoing	TRDC Property/ Leaseholders	TRDC Property/ Leaseholders	Property budget/ Leaseholders			
5.6.4	Undertake annual maintenance of algae control buoys	B2	Annual	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Site revenue budget	£23000 p.a.		
5.6.5	Address fly-tipping, vandalism and graffiti promptly and according to council policy	B2	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.6.6	Collect litter from bankside vegetation on river Colne	B2	Ongoing	TRDC EP/Vols	GM/Vols	EP budget/ URACS	NA		
5.6.7	Implement tree safety inspection process	B2	Ongoing	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.6.8	Deliver reactive tree safety works	B2	Ongoing	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Trees budget			
5.6.9	Cut 1m grass verges on path edges	B2	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.6.10	Maintain pathways by cutting back vegetation by 1m on either side of paths	B2	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget			
5.6.11	Enhance and implement asbestos management plan for outdoor spaces and water	B2	Year 1	TRDC L&L/ Property	Officer time	Staff time			

Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27
Action Plan - Clean,
Well-maintained and Accessible

Legend

- Bench
- Culvert
- Cycle parking
- Dog bin
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Collect litter from bankside vegetation on river Colne

Undertake annual maintenance of algae control buoy

Undertake annual maintenance of algae control buoy

Deliver grounds maintenance as specified within Appendix A
Manage collection of litter and dog waste
Maintain buildings and structures according to maintenance schedule
Address fly-tipping, vandalism and graffiti promptly and according to council policy
Implement tree safety inspection process
Deliver reactive tree safety works
Cut 1m grass verges on path edges
Maintain pathways by cutting back vegetation by 1m on either side of paths
Enhance and implement asbestos management plan for outdoor spaces and water

Revenue

Capital

0 80 160 m

5.7 A Friendly Site Community

Ref no.	Action - Revenue	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.7.1	Support all casual and specialist wildlife recording across the site.	C1	Ongoing	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time/ Vols/HMWT	Staff time	NA		
5.7.2	Invite county recorders for beetles and moths to visit and survey the site	C1	Ongoing	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time/ Vols/HMWT	Staff time	NA		
5.7.3	Support HMWT water vole project including surveying and habitat improvements on TRDC land on and around the Aquadrome	C1	Ongoing	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time/ Vols/HMWT	Staff time	NA		
5.7.4	Collate photos and memories from the Aquadrome community to inform and illustrate new heritage interpretation	C1	Year 1	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.5	Work with volunteers on habitat management of the river Colne and Batchworth Lake	C1	Ongoing	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.6	Continue to maintain strong relationships between members of the Aquadrome community through the Aquadrome Forum	C1	Ongoing	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.7	Review and update Batchworth Lake fishing licence	C1	Year 3	TRDC Property	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.8	Review and update river Colne lease of fishing rights	C1	Year 3	TRDC Property	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.9	Annual review of all licences and leases	C1	Annual	TRDC Property	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.10	Explore options for on-site vehicle monitoring at vehicle entrance	B1, C1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/ Property	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.11	Implement appropriate vehicle access restrictions	B1, C1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/ Property	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.12	Continue to monitor and review vehicle access arrangements	B1, C1	Ongoing	TRDC L&L/ Property	Officer time	Staff time	NA		

5.7.17	Deliver programme of repair and replacement of fishing platforms on Batchworth Lake	B1, B2	Ongoing	TRDC L&L	Vols	Site revenue budget	£2000 p.a.	19	
5.7.18	Remove unsafe fishing platforms on river Colne	B1, B2	Year 1 then ongoing	Vols	Vols	Vols	NA		
5.7.19	Maintain 'no swimming' and 'no canoeing' signage	B1, B2	Ongoing	TRDC EP	GM	EP budget	£5000 p.a.		
5.7.21	Provide and facilitate a broad programme of activities for visitors	C2, C3	Annual review	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.22	Implement Hire of Grounds agreement for the Aquadrome	C2, C3	Ongoing	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.23	Extend range of activities offered through Community Biodiversity Officer and Community Parks and Sustainability Officer	C2, C3	Annual review	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.24	Seek to engage local volunteers in delivery of the Management Plan	C1	Ongoing	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.25	Offer one-off conservation volunteering events	C2, C3	Ongoing	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.26	Support the Rickmansworth Festival	C1, C2, C3	Annual	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.27	Review the website and ensure the information is up to date	C4	Monthly	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.7.28	Promote site activities and events online, through the media and on site noticeboards	C4	Ongoing	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		

Ref no.	Action - Capital	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.7.13	Ensure dogs on leads area around café is clearly signed	B1	Year 1	TRDC Animal Welfare	Officer time	Staff time	£1000		

5.7.14	Discourage dog access to the river Colne and lakes at the Aquadrome through signage and interpretation	B1	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£15000		
5.7.15	Re-landscape former bird feeding areas	B1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	Site capital budget	£30000	19	
5.7.16	Design and install new information signs in former bird feeding areas	B1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£6000	21	
5.7.20	Provide external defibrillator in café area	B1, B3	Year 1	TRDC L&L	Contractor	External	£2000		
5.7.29	Redesign site leaflet in a digital format only	C4	Year 2	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Contractor	External	£1500	20	

Support casual and specialist wildlife recording across the site
Invite county recorders for beetles and moths to visit and survey the site
Support HMWT water vole project on and around the Aquadrome
Work with URACS on habitat management of the river Colne and Batchworth Lake
Maintain strong relationships between members of the Aquadrome community through the Aquadrome Forum
Annual review of all licences and leases

Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Action Plan - A Friendly Site Community

Legend

- Bench
- Culvert
- Cycle parking
- Dog bin
- Entrance sign
- Finger post
- Fishing platform
- Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- Noticeboard
- Pedestrian access
- Picnic bench
- Sluice
- Vehicle gate
- Welcome board
- Fence
- Amenity grassland
- Bridge
- Buildings and containers
- Porous paving grid
- Car park
- Conservation grassland
- Floating island
- Island
- Marginal vegetation
- No public access
- Open water
- Play area
- Rough grassland
- Sealed surface
- Steps
- Unsealed surface
- Unsurfaced path
- Watercourse
- Weir
- Wet woodland
- Wildflower meadow
- Trees and woodland

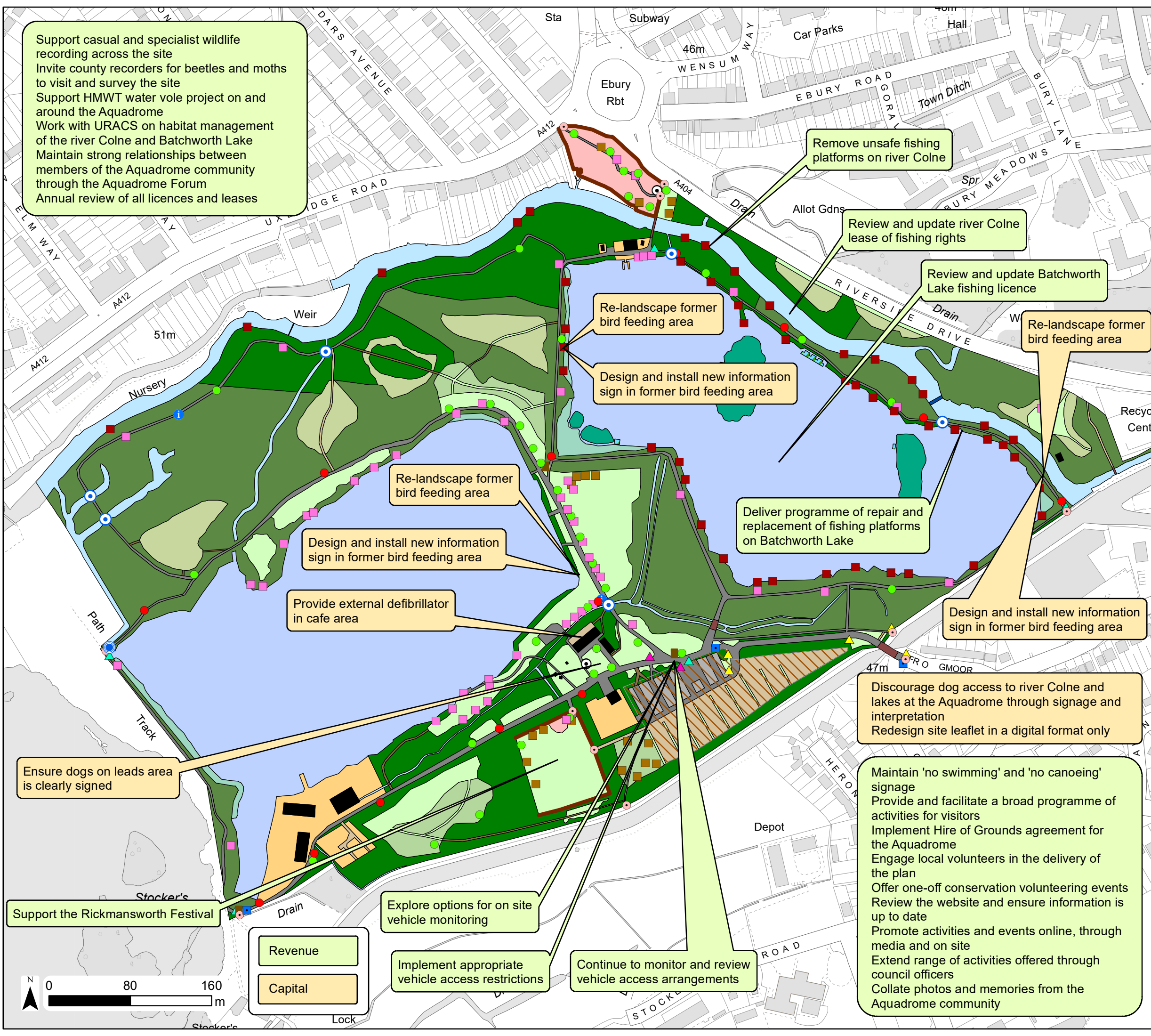
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Date
September 2022

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5.8 A High Quality Green Space

Ref no.	Action - Revenue	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.8.1	Prepare and submit grant funding applications to support delivery of objectives	C1	Year 1	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.8.2	Develop relevant partnerships to access partner funding and support grant funding applications	C1	Ongoing	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.8.3	Establish project steering group involving partner organisations	C1	Year 1	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.8.4	Update content of online visitor survey	D2	Year 1	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.8.5	Promote online visitor survey on site	D2	Year 2, Year 5	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.8.6	Retain Green Flag Award status	D1	Annual	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.8.7	Review opportunities to apply for relevant awards where there is a tangible benefit to the site	D3	Ongoing	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.8.8	Undertake visitor observations	D2	Year 3, Year 5	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.8.10	Explore digital methods for visitor number monitoring	D2	Year 1	TRDC L&L	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.8.11	Review Management Plan delivery		Annual – March	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time	Staff time	NA		
5.8.12	Develop Aquadrome Management Plan 2027-32		Year 5	TRDC L&L/CRoW	Officer time	Staff time	NA		

Ref no.	Action - Capital	Obj. Ref	When	Lead	Delivery	Funding	Est. Cost	Spec. Ref.	Status
5.8.9	Explore installation of automated vehicle counter at Frogmoor Lane entrance	D2	Year 1	TRDC L&L	Contractor	Site capital budget	£5000		

Rickmansworth Aquadrome

Greenspace Action Plan 2022-27

Action Plan - A High Quality Green Space

Legend

- Bench
- ⊙ Culvert
- ⊙ Cycle parking
- Dog bin
- ▲ Entrance sign
- Finger post
- Fishing platform
- i Interpretation board
- Litter bin
- ▲ Noticeboard
- ⊙ Pedestrian access
- Picnic bench
- ⊙ Sluice
- Vehicle gate
- ▲ Welcome board
- Fence
- Amenity grassland
- Bridge
- Buildings and containers
- Porous paving grid
- Car park
- Conservation grassland
- Floating island
- Island
- Marginal vegetation
- No public access
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- Rough grassland
- Sealed surface
- Steps
- Unsealed surface
- Unsurfaced path
- Watercourse
- Weir
- Wet woodland
- Wildflower meadow
- Trees and woodland

Develop relevant partnerships
 Establish project steering group involving partner organisations
 Retain Green Flag Award status
 Apply for relevant awards where there is a tangible benefit to the site
 Review management plan delivery
 Prepare and submit grant funding applications
 Update content of online visitor survey
 Promote online visitor survey on site
 Undertake visitor observations
 Explore digital methods for visitor number monitoring
 Develop Aquadrome management plan 2027-32

Scale @ A3
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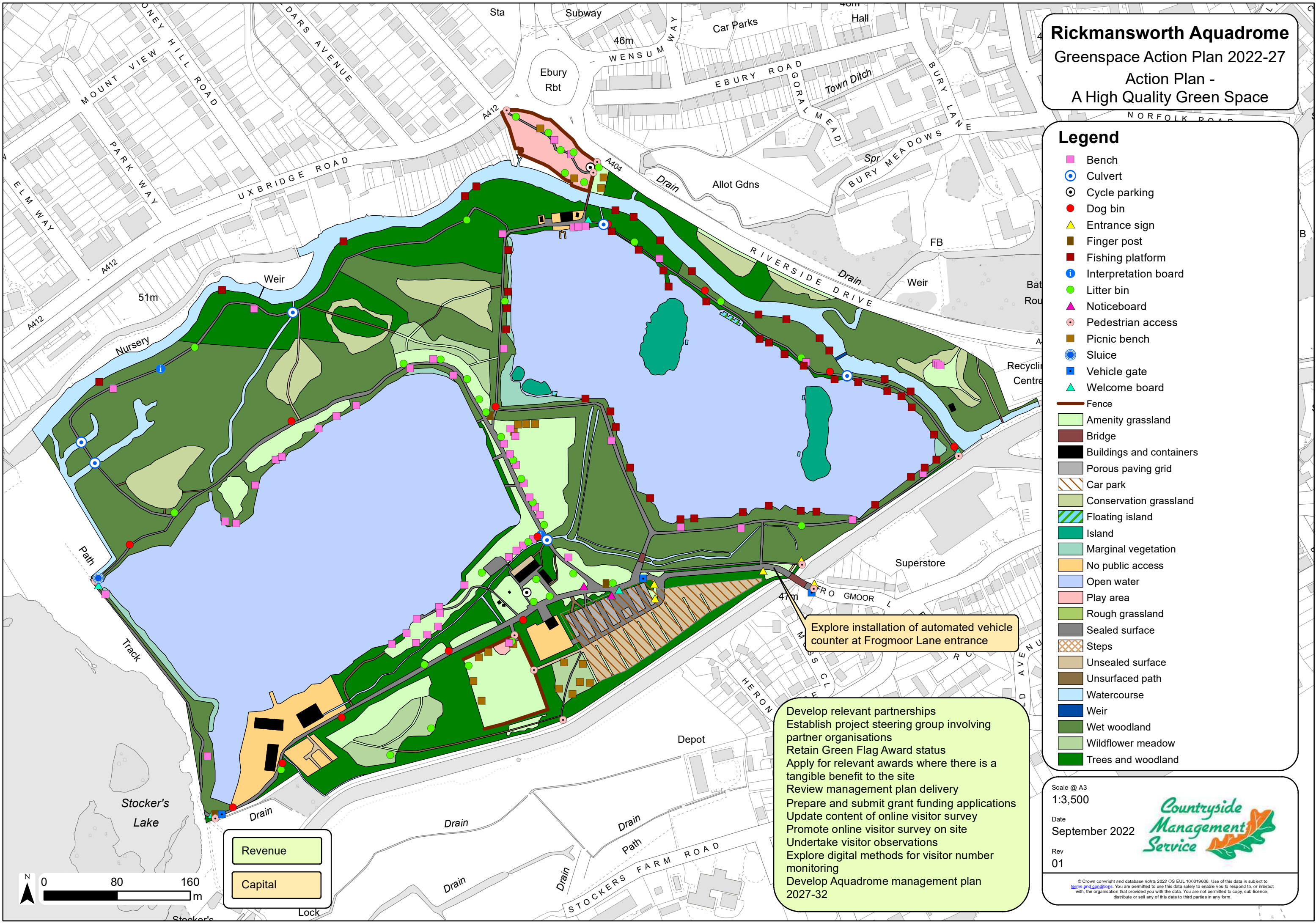
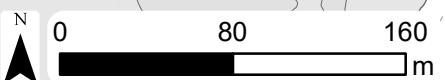
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Revenue
 Capital



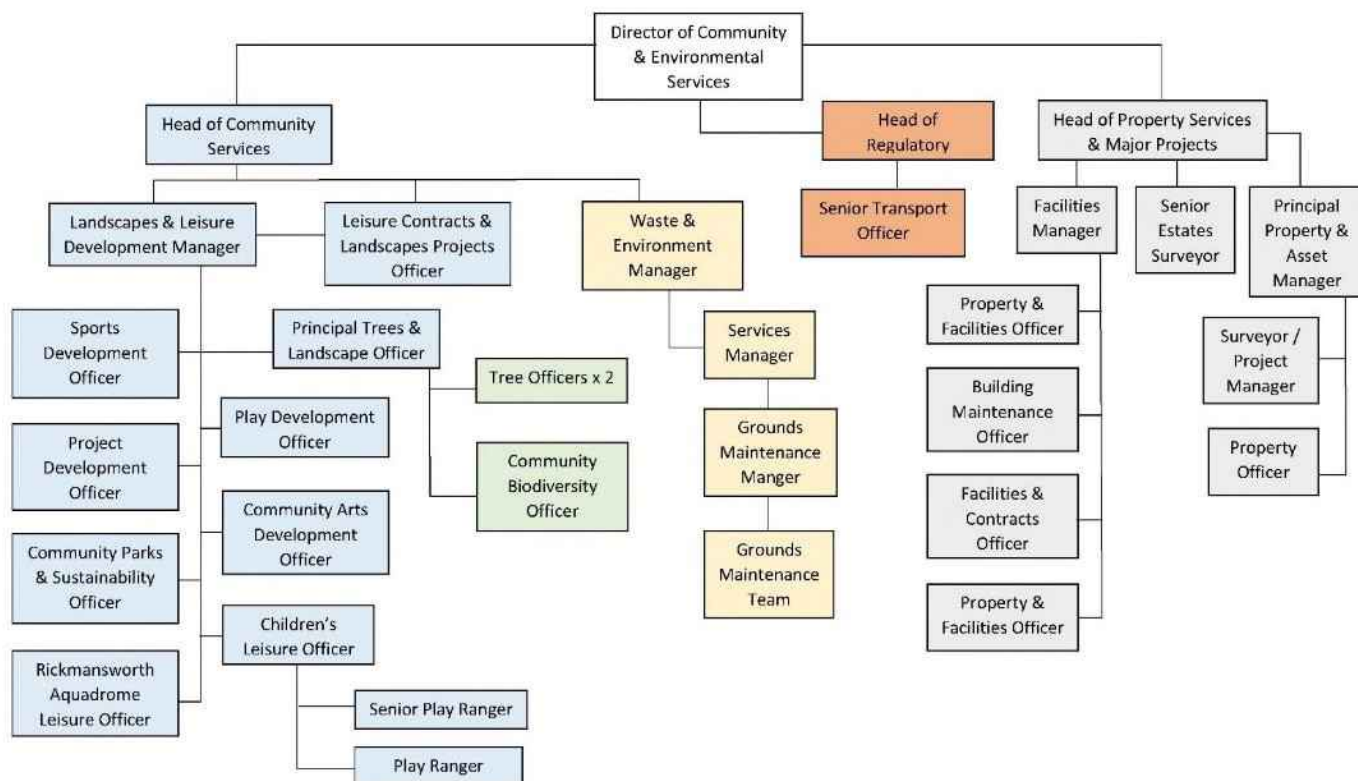
6.0 RESOURCES AND FUNDING

6.1 Resources – Staffing

The current staffing structure overseeing the management of the Aquadrome can be split into three sections:

- Conservation, tree management and biodiversity
- Maintenance
- Leisure and recreational facilities

All of these sections sit within the directorate of Community and Environmental Services and under the Head of Community Services and Head of Properties:



Existing staff resourcing is funded directly by Three Rivers District Council.

Posts within the remit of the Landscapes and Leisure Development Manager are responsible for the strategic management of conservation within the Aquadrome including developing the biodiversity of a variety of habitats and managing the tree stock.

Staff within Environmental Protection are responsible for the day-to-day maintenance of the Aquadrome. This includes roles such as:

- Inspecting play equipment

- Grass cutting
- Litter picking
- Minor works and repairs
- Hedge and shrub cutting
- Cut and lift of meadow land where required

Staff within Property and Facilities are responsible for the management of assets across the Aquadrome.

In addition, other departments across the Council support the work at the Aquadrome and will support the delivery of the greenspace action plan over the next five years. This includes links with the Council's Walking and Cycling Strategy and Community Partnerships.

6.2 Funding

As with many areas in Local Government, the requirement is to focus on generating additional income to mitigate reductions in funding from Central Government, rather than impact any service delivery. With that in mind, funding for the management of the Aquadrome comes from, and will continue to come from, a variety of sources including capital and revenue funding from Three Rivers District Council's central budget, supported by external funding. Securing external funding to deliver the Council's aspirations for the Aquadrome is one of the main aims of this Management Plan.

6.2.1 Council Budgets

Funding for conservation, tree management and biodiversity, including staff management, are covered in the budget managed by the Landscapes and Leisure Development Manager. This is set and agreed at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting based on the upcoming year's programme of works.

The main Parks and Open Spaces revenue budget covering maintenance sits with the Environmental Protection team. This includes vehicle management, equipment and staffing of the Environmental Protection team to maintain the Aquadrome day to day and maintenance or replacement of small value assets.

Works to any buildings or assets within parks and open spaces such as pavilions, toilets or car parks and any associated utility bills is catered for within the Property Management budget.

There are several capital budgets to support the work at The Aquadrome, managed by both Leisure and Landscapes and Properties. These are small capital budgets and are mainly utilised for small pathway repairs and the algae monitoring system.

Any larger maintenance works, or works identified through the operational maintenance checks, are managed via the Capital budget, which is planned on a district basis rather than by individual park or open space, and agreed at Leisure,

Environment and Community Committee and subsequent Policy and Resources Committee. Match funding is sought wherever possible, which may be from partnership working with Community and Parish Councils, utilising Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, previously known as s106 funding, or seeking external funding from other stakeholders or funding bodies such as Public Health, sporting bodies or the National Lottery.

Leisure and recreational activities that take place in parks and open spaces are funded from revenue budgets within the Leisure Development team, such as Community Arts, Play and Sport.

The Action Plan shows not only the required tasks, targets and responsibilities for the management of the site, but also the agreed budget. Where improvement of the site or its facilities are required, this is identified and the budget is agreed using the project Management Plans in place for Three Rivers District Council. Where there is no cost or the task requires no additional funding and is completed using Council staff the staffing costs are covered using revenue budgets.

Any income generated within parks, e.g. activities, hire of grounds, filming, sports pitches and buildings fees, goes towards the budget.

Volunteers, such as the Countryside Management Service practical conservation volunteer group which works around the District, deliver some activities and support the management of the Aquadrome. Materials, equipment, training costs and officer support are provided by the Council. Other volunteer activity at the Aquadrome is managed by partners such as BLYM, parkrun and the Rickmansworth Festival.

The Council continues to face financial challenges and therefore needs to continue to seek external funding and generate additional income.

6.2.2 Estimated capital costs

Theme	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Total
Creating biodiverse and sustainable environments (woodlands and grasslands)	£5000	£20000				£25000
Creating biodiverse and sustainable environments (lakes and watercourses)	£24000	£34500	£47500	£17500	£17500	£141000
A coherent entrance to the Aquadrome ¹	£50500	£50000	£9000			£109500
To be welcoming for all – signage and interpretation, entrances and site furniture ²	£1100	£97500	£7000			£105600
To be welcoming for all – path network ³	£28500	£116000	£65000	£16000	£20000	£245500
A friendly site community	£39000	£16500				£55500
A high quality green space	£5000					£5000
TOTAL	£153100	£334500	£128500	£33500	£37500	£687100

¹ Excludes major entrance improvements at Frogmore Lane entrance and bridge replacement at Riverside Drive entrance.

² Excludes bench, picnic table and bin replacement.

³ Excludes implementing recommendations of hydrological study.

7.0 REVIEWING AND MANAGING

7.1 Management Plan

The new Aquadrome Management Plan will follow on from previous work carried out on the site. It is intended to be a simple, easy to read plan, accessible to interested members of the public and for use by officers of Three Rivers District Council and the Countryside Management Service to help guide the work of Environmental Protection, contractors and volunteers.

The plan includes themed management maps to show the actions planned in specific areas of work. The document will be reviewed annually to ensure it remains effective and relevant. It identifies works, provides specifications and enables funding and resources to be allocated for improvements.

7.2 Review and Update

The Aquadrome Management Plan 2022-2027 will be reviewed annually between Leisure and Landscapes, Property, Environmental Protection and any other Council service where necessary, alongside the Countryside Management Service, during the autumn period. This review will consider the planned activities and associated budgets for the coming year, reflect on the previous year and make any necessary adjustments to ongoing maintenance regimes.

Additional capital expenditure for tasks will be identified and relevant funding procedures followed in order to deliver these projects.

8.0 APPENDICES

- 8.1 Appendix A: Aquadrome Grounds Maintenance Schedule**
- 8.2 Appendix B: Indicative Specifications**
- 8.3 Appendix C: Not Used**
- 8.4 Appendix D: Wider Context: Policies and Strategies that relate to the Aquadrome**
- 8.5 Appendix E: Aquadrome Hire of Grounds**
- 8.6 Appendix F: Health and Safety**
- 8.7 Appendix G: Aquadrome Forum**
- 8.8 Appendix H: Species Records**
- 8.9 Appendix I: Local Wildlife Site Survey Report**
- 8.10 Appendix J: Rickmansworth Aquadrome Bat Survey 2007**
- 8.11 Appendix K: Visitor Survey Information**
- 8.12 Appendix L: Aquadrome Brand Guidelines**
- 8.13 Appendix M: Environmental Management and Sustainability**
- 8.14 Appendix N: Engagement Response Document**