

Technical Note

Project:	Havant Thicket Reservoir (HTR)		
TN Ref. No:	HTR-ATK-XX-XX-RP-Z-0076		
Subject:	Access for Non Motorised Users (NMUs)		
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1. Introduction

Complementary to its infrastructure resilience function, the reservoir will provide a new recreational facility/resource adjacent to one of the more deprived areas in south east Hampshire, in an area which the community can access on foot, by bike, or through existing bus routes.

More than 29,500 people live within reasonable walking distance of the Site (1.5km) and 120,000 people live within reasonable cycling distance of the Site (4.5km). Opportunities for walking and access for the elderly is currently undersupplied and Havant Borough Council specifically expressed a need to ensure provision for improved opportunities.

The landscape design has sought to improve accessibility to the site and new facilities for a wide range of visitors with varying abilities. The Scheme includes a network of trails and paths for walking, cycling and horse-riding, with links to others in the wider area and this is expected to lead to overall improvements in health and well-being for the local community.

The reservoir scheme will not be completed and open to visitors for 8-9 years, the detailed design of the scheme will inform the final layout of paths and will open up further recreational, access and movement opportunities.

This note provides a summary of the proposals to provide an accessible network of paths and cycle routes and good connections to the local pedestrian, bridleway and cycle network.

2. Pre-application discussions

Significant stakeholder engagement has been undertaken to help shape the overall design including:

- Regular Stakeholder engagement meetings;
- Conservation, Access and Recreation (CAR) Workshops with representatives from the UK water companies;
- Meetings with Hampshire County Council (HCC) Highways team;
- Two formal public consultation exercises; and
- Public access meetings with Harry Goodchild (HCC Definitive Map Manager), Elliott Rowe (HCC Area Manager), Tim Speller (HCC Manager of SCP) and Sue Montila (British Horse Society).

Two key observations relevant to this note from the public access meetings are:

- The proposed paths at the reservoir site provide good linkages into the existing public rights of way including; Staunton Way, Shipwrights Way and Dunsbury Park to A3(M) crossing to Cowplain.

- No concerns about the public bridleway being diverted south of the reservoir. The existing public bridleway exit point onto the B2149 is not considered safe due to very poor visibility sight lines as it emerges onto the B2149 and no space for a horse to turn safely if there is an obstruction. Stated preference was having the public bridleway route along Cedar Drive and emerge at the roundabout.

3. Internal Access and Movement

Important pedestrian access points are from the east at the entrance to the Forestry England (FE) car park, south east at Gipsies Plain, the connection to Staunton Country Park (SCP) along The Avenue, by the bus stop on Swanmore Road to the east and in the north west corner from the car park. These 'gateways' will provide interpretation signage to inform the public and assist in navigation around the site.

The development will upgrade existing access points around the site. New kissing gates (accessible and cycle friendly) and horse friendly gates are proposed along Cedar Drive. The pedestrian entrance along Swanmore Road will include a new gated entrance (accessible and cycle friendly). Access points are discussed in more detail below.

Walkers - Portsmouth Water's design response has been to provide a scheme with an extensive network of walks of varying lengths; consideration was given to suitable distances for short and long walks that connect into existing long distance paths. The distance for a long circular route around the reservoir utilising the crest is 5km (3.1miles) and 1km route for a shorter circuit through the woodland to the north which offers variety. HCC design standards for bridleways suggests a minimum 3m wide path. The operational maintenance track and crest pathway are proposed 4m wide and permissive paths around the visitor centre will be a minimum 2m wide. The connectivity to paths within Staunton Country Park (SCP) is very important as part of the wider walking network and to re-establish a strong link between these areas of differing landscape character, providing enjoyment and amenity for all abilities.

Cyclists - The provision of an integrated network through the landscape will see a variety of options for cyclists. The longest circular route on site will be 5.5km (3.4miles) and will connect to existing neighbouring routes. The cycle routes will allow for a wide range of experiences allowing for exploration through the landscape.

Horse riders - The development results in the loss of a public bridleway that must be replaced. The current bridleway has a blind exit onto the Manor Lodge Road and local horse riders are choosing not to use this for safety reasons. The development will improve the safety of an alternative access point, for equestrians in particular, at Whichers Gate roundabout and along Cedar Drive.

With a permanent diversion of the bridleway to the south of the embankment along the operational maintenance track, a temporary diversion will be required to the north during construction through FE land. This temporary diversion will revert back to a permissive route following the opening of the permanent diversion allowing for a circular bridleway route of 5.75km (3.6 miles). Replacing the existing bridleway with a circular route that runs close to the reservoir will give a completely different experience to the current route.

The proposed internal movement network, temporary and permanent bridleway diversions and connections to the local network are illustrated in the Outline Masterplan (see Figure 2 below) and Planning Drawings.

3.1. Integrating Access into Landscape

Wetland - Boardwalks through natural wetland planting will bring the community closer to nature and viewing locations for the wetlands will be at the end of gated pathways preventing access for dogs. The access will be single tracks with no connectivity, so people will have to make a conscious decision to go down them and stray from the main routes helping to minimise the impact on the wildlife.

Visitor Centre - A variety of routes, designed for all different users and accessibility, will start here promoting activity, health and wellbeing benefits across the Site. Whilst experiencing different landscapes such as the reservoir, wetlands, grassland, and forests; the route will connect people to nature and different wildlife species.

Viewing Area - The location of the proposed viewing area was chosen because of its proximity to the neighbouring Warren Park, offering local residents somewhere nearby to lookout across the reservoir. A plaza area with seating adjacent to a planted raised bed, provides a point to rest along the 5.5km circular route of the reservoir.

The Avenue - The staircase leading from Staunton Country Park to the top of the embankment is seen as a key opportunity to celebrate the interface between the reservoir and the park and to integrate the historic environment into the visitor experience. Visually the steps would also provide a focal point at the end of the Avenue and can be used to interpret the changes to the historic landscape through time. There will be views across the water to the visitor centre and wetlands as well as looking back above the tree line of the Avenue towards the Registered Park and Garden and its features and follies.

These areas are illustrated in the Design and Access Statement.

3.2. Site Management Plan

Portsmouth Water, Hampshire County Council (who manage Staunton Country Park) and Forestry England are committed to a tripartite management arrangement on the long-term management of the visitor centre, car parking, public amenity and publicly accessible woodland and wetland areas of the Site. This will be enshrined in a Management Agreement. Hampshire County Council and Forestry England have experience of similar, successful arrangements. Site management arrangements will be the subject of a planning obligation. It will be important to ensure that public access does not compromise the biodiversity objectives for the woodland and wetland areas.

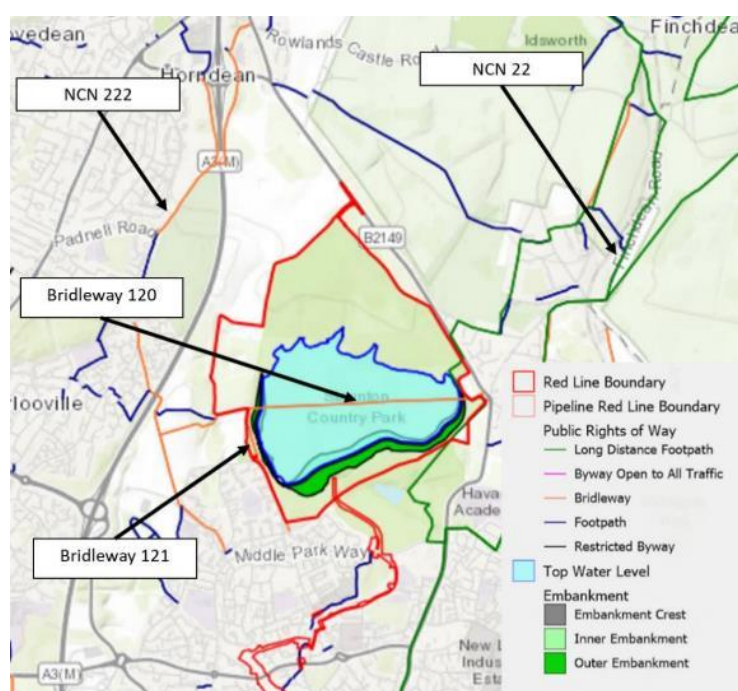
4. Integration with Local Network

4.1. Public Rights of Way

There are several Public Rights of Way (PROWs) located in the vicinity of the site, with the routes most relevant to the Scheme shown in Figure 1 below.

The network of existing PROWs includes Bridleway 121 which runs along part of the western boundary of the development site, along Swanmore Road routing north along the edge of Cabbagefield Row before meeting Bridleway 120 just south of Bells Copse. Bridleway 120 crosses the site on an east-west alignment. It passes the north edge of Middle Clearing before crossing The Avenue. To the east of The Avenue it continues east past Gipsies Plain before emerging on Manor Lodge Road adjacent the War Memorial at Rowland Castle. The Staunton Way Long Distance Path enters the site at Mallard Road further north.

Figure 1 - Existing Network of PROWs and Active Travel Routes



4.2. Cycling

Off-road cycling provision is provided within the locality of the site. There is a walking and cycling path along the eastern side of the B2149 (southern section), as well as a Shared User Path (SUP) along the western side where the B2149 enters the Leigh Park residential area. There is also a SUP along the northern side of Middle Park Way which is segregated from the carriageway by a grass verge. The underpass adjacent to the B2149 / Middle Park Way junction also provides a safe crossing point for cyclists with ramps and suitable widths. There are also on-road cycle lanes along Swanmore Road for a distance of approximately 600m from its junction with Middle Park Way. These routes are generally in good condition, are well-lit and appropriate signage is provided.

With the exception of the A3(M), and the northern section of the B2149, the majority of the roads in the vicinity of the site are residential in nature with a speed limit of 30mph in place. This, along with the generally level gradient,

the reasonable surface quality and the suitable carriageway widths creates an environment which could be conducive to on-road cycling.

There are two National Cycle Network (NCN) routes near the site, including Route 222 and 22. To the east of the site Route 22 will connect Banstead (near Epsom) and Brockenhurst via Dorking, Guildford, Farnham, Petersfield, Havant, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight between Ryde and Yarmouth. Route 222 provides a north south link between the sections of Route 22 to the west of the site. Both routes are made up of on-road and off-road sections, Route 22 includes the SUP along the eastern side of the B2149 in the Leigh Park residential area.

4.3. Off Site Access

It is anticipated that up to 30% of visitors from within the 15 minute cordon will either walk or cycle to the site. This is approximately 200 additional trips across the busiest weekend day in the summer, spread across the main access points. This number would be lower during the winter and during a typical weekday.

As stated above, there are a number of existing entry points and the locations of these points will remain unchanged. There is also the proposed vehicle entrance to the north of the site which cyclists could use if already cycling along the B2149.

The majority of the local roads benefit from pedestrian infrastructure, except for the A3(M) and the northern section of the B2149. Manor Lodge Road which serves the residential area of Red Hill has a footway along its eastern side for the majority of its length, with the northern section of footway segregated from the carriageway via a grass verge.

For the purposes of this note the outline masterplan below has been labelled as 1-8 representing the 8 main non-motorised user access points into the site from the surrounding area:

Figure 2 – Outline Pan with access points highlighted



It is considered that the majority of these additional trips would use access points 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 with the largest catchment of local residents being located in these areas. It is considered that those in the Rowlands Castle area could be spread across access points 2 and 3 and would be directed to these locations within the wayfinding strategy that will be developed during detailed design.



Photo 1 – Castle Road (Access 1)

Access point 1 serves as an existing access to Havant Thicket. There are no existing crossing points at this location, and it has been agreed with HCC, as Local Highway Authority, that a controlled crossing here would not be appropriate. Pedestrian visitors will be directed towards Access 2 which is a safer, more suitable crossing point and part of a PRoW. However, provision will be made as part of the Scheme for the following upgrades to accommodate existing users:

- Footway widening on eastern side of B2149;
- Dropped kerb on Castle Road to allow cyclists to cross at the crossing point rather than negotiate the junction;
- Dropped kerbs and tactile paving;
- A short section of new footway on western side of B2149 into the site.

These upgrades are illustrated in Drawing HTR-ATK-XX-ZZ-DR-D-0001 in Appendix 1 of this document.



Photo 2 – Uncontrolled crossing of B2149 at Mallard Road (Access 2)

Access point 2, is an uncontrolled crossing point which provides access to the Forest of Bere Car park close to the junction with Mallard Road. This crossing is part of the Staunton Way Long Distance Path route, it is well lit with street lighting provided along its length, the footways are also in reasonable condition and generally of suitable width. It is considered that this crossing provides a suitable crossing opportunity for pedestrians and cyclists to access the reservoir site and would not be significantly affected by the relatively low increase in footfall (e.g. 50 across the day).

It has been agreed with HCC that provision will be made as part of the Scheme for the following upgrades to accommodate existing users and any increased use as a result of the reservoir scheme:

- Dropped kerbs;
- Tactile paving;

- Widening of the footway along the eastern side of the B2149;
- Connection for cyclists travelling from the south and north into shared footway;
- Widening of the refuge island; and
- Upgrading the access into the site for pedestrians and cyclists.

These upgrades are illustrated in Drawing HTR-ATK-XX-ZZ-DR-D-0002 in Appendix 1 of this document.



Photo 3 – Uncontrolled crossing of B2149 at Whichers Gate (Access 3)

Manor Lodge Road (B2149) connects to the southern section of the B2149 via two mini-roundabouts. The southernmost of which benefits from an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing with dropped kerbs and a pedestrian refuge island, connecting to Access 3. The B2149 also has a footway along its eastern side, dropped kerbs are provided at crossing points such as its junction with Durrant Gardens.

The uncontrolled crossing provides a crossing opportunity and links to a site access at Cedar Drive that Portsmouth Water is committed to upgrade as part of the scheme to connect to the diverted bridleway. It is therefore considered appropriate to provide an improved crossing opportunity at this location. Portsmouth Water will contribute to improve the crossing facilities at Whichers Gate as part of a wider HCC strategy to improve the highway operation in this area, this can be secured through the s106 agreement.

Approximately 130m to the south of Durrant Gardens, footway provision is also provided on the western side serving the residential properties at this location. The footway on the eastern side then forms a walking and cycling path which continues to the south to its junction with Middle Park Way and onwards into the surrounding residential areas. Street lighting is provided along this route and the footways are generally in reasonable condition and of suitable width.

A grade separated crossing off the B2149 is provided near its junction with Middle Park Way in the form of an underpass providing a safe crossing location for pedestrians. Dropped kerbs and tactile paving are provided at this crossing location, as well as at the crossing of Middle Park Way. There is a pedestrian provision along both sides of Middle Park Road in form of a SUP on the northern side and a footway on the southern side. The surface quality is of reasonable condition and the widths generally appear suitable, with street lighting being provided along its length; this is considered to provide a suitable connection to access points 4 and 5. There are also several uncontrolled crossings provided along Middle Park Way which include dropped kerbs and tactile paving, with some providing access to bus stops.

Portsmouth Water will contribute to upgrading provision for pedestrians and cyclists between Middle Park Way and the site boundary to access points 4 and 5.



Photo 4 – Site Access 6 at south west corner of the site off Swanmore Road

Site access point 6 is at the south west corner of the site close to the junction with Well Meadow which serves the people in this vicinity. There is an existing kissing gate which will require localised upgrading only which will be undertaken as part of the Scheme proposals.



Photo 5 – Site Access 7 and bus stop on Swanmore Road

Footways are present on both sides of the southern section of Swanmore Road from its junction with Middle Park Way to Mewsey Court, north of Mewsey Court there are footways on the western/southern sides only. The footways are of reasonable width and are segregated from the carriageway by a grass verge for much of their length; in addition, street lighting is provided throughout. Several uncontrolled crossings with dropped kerbs and tactile paving are also provided.

As part of the scheme it is proposed to upgrade site access 7 (Photo 5) with an accessible and cycle friendly gate. In addition, it has been agreed with HCC that provision will be made for:

- A connecting footpath from the bus stop to this new pedestrian and cycle access point (photo 5) plus a dropped kerb for cyclists;
- A connecting footpath from the bus stop further to the north and a new non motorised user (NMU) access onto Bridleway 121 plus dropped kerb for cyclists;

Site access 8 is at the junction of Bridleway 121 and 120, a crossing will be provided from the site to connect to Bridleway 120 and localised upgrading will assist people with access to site.

HCC has requested that Bridleway 121 is stopped up from where it enters the site off Swanmore Road and exits the site to the north to address an historic anomaly with this route and avoid the proposed access junction. Provision will be made as part of the Scheme for a new access for NMUs from Swanmore Road onto Bridleway 121 to the north.

The proposals for NMU access at Access 7, including the diversion of Bridleway 121, are illustrated on the revised Vehicle Access Route South and Vehicle Access Junction South planning drawings.

In summary, Portsmouth Water is committed to:

Table 1 – Provision for NMU Access into the site

NMU Access	Commitment
Access 1 (B2149 at Castle Road)	Provision for: • Footway widening on eastern side of B2149; • Dropped kerb on Castle Road to allow cyclists to cross at the crossing point rather than negotiate the junction; • Dropped kerbs and tactile paving; • A short section of new footway on western side of B2149 into the site.
Access 2 (B2149 at Mallard Road)	Provision for: • Dropped kerbs; • Tactile paving; • Widening of the footway along the eastern side of the B2149; • Connection for cyclists travelling from the south and north into shared footway; • Widening of the refuge island; and • Upgrading the access into the site for pedestrians and cyclists.
Access 3 (B2149 at Whichers Gate)	Improving site access at Cedar Drive to connect to the diverted bridleway with new kissing (accessible and cycle friendly) and horse friendly gates. S106 contribution towards improved crossing facilities as part of the wider HCC highway improvement strategy.
Access 4 and 5 (from Middle Park Road to site boundary)	S106 contributions towards upgrading provision for pedestrians and cyclists.
Access 6 (southern end of Swanmore Road)	Localised upgrading as part of Scheme.
Access 7 (adjacent to Southern Vehicular Access)	A new gated pedestrian and cycle access from Swanmore Road into the site (south of the new vehicular access). New NMU access into the site to the north of the southern access road (diversion of Bridleway 121). Footway improvements between the two bus stops in this location and new NMU access provision. Dropped kerbs for cycle access.
Access 8 (junction of Bridleways 120 and 121 and site boundary)	An NMU crossing will be provided at this point to link back onto Bridleway 120 and s106 contribution towards localised upgrading to assist people with access to site.

4.4. Public Transport

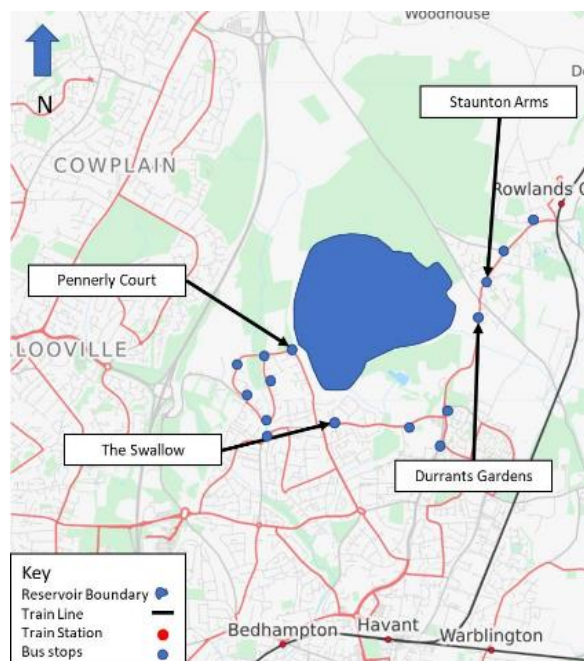
The site is well served by public transport with reasonable bus links located nearby. In addition, there are a number of railway stations located approximately two miles south of the site and a station approximately one mile to the east. The locations of the bus stops within 300m of the site boundary and the nearest railway stations are shown in Figure 3.

Several bus stops are located within close proximity to the site. The most notable stops with the most frequent services near the site access points include:

- Pennerley Court;
- The Swallow;
- Durrants Gardens; and
- Staunton Arms.

The Pennerley Court stops include easy access kerbing, a flagpole and timetable, a shelter is provided for southbound services. The Swallow stop also includes easy access kerbing, a flagpole and timetable as well as a shelter. The Durrant Gardens and Staunton Arms stops consist of flagpoles and timetables only. The services that serve the bus stops are listed in the Transport Assessment (Table 3-1).

Figure 3 - Bus Stops and Railway Stations near the site



5. Summary

The Scheme includes an extensive network of paths of varying lengths for non motorised users of varying abilities, these paths are integrated within the existing and proposed landscape features, wetland and visitor centre. The paths connect into the existing wider PRoW network and improve safety of access to the diverted bridleway. This network is illustrated on the Planning drawings and described in the supporting documents notably the Design and Access Statement, Transport Assessment and Environmental Statement.

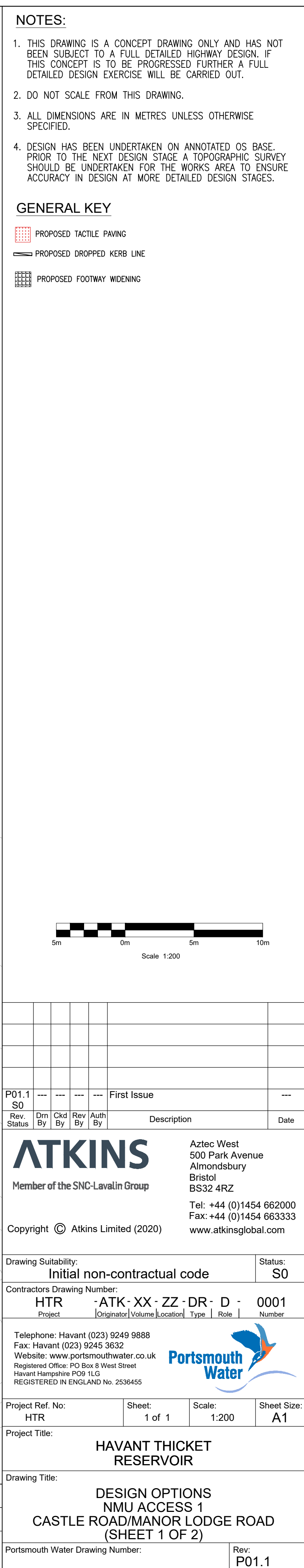
It is anticipated that up to 30% of visitors from within the 15-minute cordon will either walk or cycle to the site. This is approximately 200 additional trips in the busiest weekend day (less than 50 trips within the busiest hour) in the summer, spread across the main eight access points. This number would be lower during the winter and during a typical weekday. It is considered that the majority of these additional trips would use access points to the south and south west of the site adjacent to the largest catchment of local residents and where the quality of connections into the site is good. Additional trips in the Rowlands Castle area would be spread across access points 2 and 3 and would be directed to these locations within the wayfinding strategy that will be developed during detailed design.

This would not be a significant increase in numbers per access point and it is considered that the proposed upgrades and improvements are proportionate to the likely impact, they will ensure that the access points accommodate the forecast number of trips, with capacity for some future growth.

The reservoir scheme will not be completed and open to visitors for **8 – 9 years**, the detailed design of the scheme will inform the final layout of paths and will open up further recreational, access and movement opportunities including from the north (in consultation with the landowner).

Future management and maintenance of the path network and access points will be covered by the Site Management Plan, a tripartite agreement which is being developed between Portsmouth Water, Hampshire County Council and Forestry England.

Appendix A. Upgrading Proposals for Access 1 and 2



(SHEET 1 OF 2)	
Portsmouth Water Drawing Number:	Rev: P01.1

