

HOBBY CLOSE FIELD, WECOCK FARM PROPOSED LAND REPROFILING

Design and Access Statement



**CLIENT: PORTSMOUTH CITY COUNCIL &
WECOCK BIG LOCAL COMMUNITY GROUP**

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1 Summary

- 1.1 This Design and Access Statement (DAS) explains the process by which the proposed design has been conceived and the various considerations made.

Portsmouth City Council (PCC) is keen to resolve drainage issues at the recreation ground known as Hobby Close Field, Wecock Farm. The field and surrounding woodland is owned by the Council. Poor drainage and heavy clay soils currently limit its use for sports during many months of the year. The existing land drainage system is poor and needs improving. Havant Borough Council is working in collaboration with PCC to carry out improvements to the land and drainage on its behalf.

- 1.2 This project will create a new landform by reprofiling the recreation ground using 'end of waste' imported inert sub-soil material such that the land form itself becomes the drainage medium. This will allow the recreation ground's use throughout the year once the works are complete.

- 1.3 Pre-application advice was sought from Havant Borough Council's Planning team on 17th February 2020 and it was agreed that planning approval was needed for the land raising elements of the project only. The construction of a new play and skate park are considered permitted development. Therefore this DAS covers the land raising elements in detail and refers more generally to the play area and skate park as these are linked to the land raising works.

2 The Recreation Ground today

- 2.1 Hobby Close Field lies on the outer edge of Wecock Farm surrounded by a belt of mature woodland. New building works for a large housing estate by Linden Homes just north of it will mean that the recreation field will soon serve a larger neighbourhood. There is a ball court, skate park and play area at the lower end of the field adjacent Hobby and Merlin Close. These are underused. The play area is dated, and the skate park has subsidence problems which have incurred high maintenance costs in recent years. The Council's intention is to retain the ball court which is in good condition, but replace the skate park and play area with new facilities in the lower field, expanding and improving the current offer considerably. The grass open space beyond these recreational facilities at the higher end of the field provides ample space for playing football and other sports but because the ground is made up of heavy clay and becomes very waterlogged for much of the year, it is seldom used. The woodland belt around the perimeter of the recreation ground is used by dog-walkers on the tracks and paths linking to the surrounding Wecock Farm neighbourhood. See images below:



Skate area and ball court with open grass space beyond and woodland belt surrounding



Play area, SE corner of field, with Merlin Close housing to left of view

- 2.2 There is open access to the site by foot from public footpaths surrounding the field, and by road from Hobby Close and Merlin Close directly at the southwest end. A new road named Powell Drive has recently been created northeast of the field from Eagle Avenue to access the new housing development known as Catherington Park. An old bridle path known as Woodcroft Lane runs along the north of the site but has been stopped up since the development site has been started. See access plan below:

HOBBY CLOSE FIELD, WECOCK FARM - PROPOSED SITE ACCESS FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKS Drwg 1650-LA-5000 Rev A


Site access plan (also attached as drawing 1650-LA-5000 Rev A)

- 2.3 Although a land drainage system does exist, it has failed in the last decades to have any benefit to the site. The poor drainage due to the underlying clay means that in the wetter seasons of the year, the field becomes waterlogged, and during the summer months the ground becomes very hard. This means that the open space is not usable as intended, with children having to go to other sites in the area which are difficult to travel to unaccompanied, involving crossing busy roads.
- 2.4 A first phase of drainage improvements were carried out in 2019 by Havant Borough Council on behalf of PCC and enabled with CIL funding. This provided a drainage ditch along the southeast edge culminating in a temporary seasonal pond at the end with overflow to an existing street drain on Merlin Close. See image below:



Seasonal pond for drainage, SE corner of field

3 Development rationale

- 3.1 A land form reprofiling at Hobby Close Field is considered a cost-effective, sustainable and resilient solution to the drainage issue of the grass field. This involves bringing imported 'end of waste' inert sub-soil material onto the site and using it to change the shape of the land into a form which has no low spots in which drainage issues could develop, whilst providing opportunities for landscaping and separating the play and sports facilities into different areas.
- 3.2 The proposed land form (drawing 1650-LA-5401A) involves importing approximately 9,000 cubic metres of material onto the site to create a large, relatively flat area on the higher terrace for the sports pitch; its dimensions are approximately 50m x 100m. The side slopes to the raised land form would be set at 1 in 5 (20%) and the lower slope would be 1 in 9 (11%).
- 3.3 The lower terrace involves importing approximately 2,200 cubic metres of material onto the site to create a smaller, relatively flat area for the skate park and play area. Its dimensions are approximately 40m x 32m. The side slopes to the raised land form would be set at 1 in 5 (20%) and the lower slope would be 1 in 9 (11%).
- 3.4 The lower terrace would feature several small mounds no higher than 1.2m shaped to provide partial screening and natural character for informal play and viewing. The mounds also help separate different parts of the play and skate areas. Drawing 1650-LA-5402 illustrates the concept masterplan for the play and skate area.

4 Drainage

- 4.1 The primary driver of the scheme is to improve drainage by creating a new land form which is self-draining by design. Surrounding woodland and residential properties bounding the field will not be affected by the works.
- 4.2 The drainage concept involves using the imported free draining material to channel water into a new piped land drainage system connected to the ditch. The proposed solution is to initially strip the topsoil from the site to expose the underlying clay, and then import the 'end of waste' inert self draining material, placing it onto the clay and using the natural shape of the underlying ground to channel it into a new piped land drainage system subsequently installed through the imported material into the clay. The topsoil will then be replaced, with sand slitting employed over the pitch area to assist rain water to percolate through the soil naturally to reach the piped system. This piped system will connect into the ditch from where an overflow pipe will take any excess water from the drainage system into the existing piped drainage system in Merlin Close at an attenuated rate.
- 4.3 It is accepted that in areas where the inert material has not been placed rainwater falling on the edges (both of the land form and on the existing ground around its edge) will be unable to easily access the drainage system. A shallow swale has been created along the southeast edge of the field reflecting the existing ground levels which fall first southwest-wards and then southeast-wards, reaching the same point at the south east end of the field. See drawing 2018-14-006 for details

of the upper field drainage and 1650-LA-5300C for details of the lower field drainage and connection to the existing swale and attenuation pond.

5 Construction Traffic Management Plan

5.1 The project requires importing of 11,200 cubic metres of drainage blanket material and 'end of waste' inert fill.

5.2 The construction procedure would be as follows:

- Create a site access from Powell Drive, with the cooperation of Linden Homes, using dropped kerbs and short sections of road base material to reach perimeter of the woodland belt (utilising existing opening in fenceline and footpath route)
- Create a temporary construction route through the woodland belt to the site: firstly through the woods to the northeast corner of the higher terrace for the large sports field works; and secondly along the field edge to the existing skate area for accessing the lower terrace area for the play area and skate park.
- Fence off site working areas around the perimeter of the field
- Strip topsoil from working areas and stockpile adjacent, starting with lower terrace, working back to upper terrace
- Roll formation and install drainage blanket
- Import fill material to shape
- Replace topsoil onto new land form
- Seed and landscape higher terrace for sports field
- Complete play area and skate park construction, then seed/turf for opening to public use
- Removal of site fencing and temporary haul routes, making good/reinstating grass and woodland areas

5.3 It is anticipated that the work would be carried out over a six month period from August 2020 allowing the two terraces to be constructed concurrently, and detail construction of the play area and skate park to follow on from the initial ground raising of the lower terrace. The works will be carried out by two main contractors working side by side with separate working areas. The land raising works will be carried out by one contractor; the play area and skate park construction by a second contractor. Coordination site meetings will be held to ensure safe working practices and clear communication between the different contractors. Safety fencing would be used to secure the perimeter of the construction and land raising works. The recreation ground would be closed to the public for the duration of the construction period.

- 5.4 Establishment of the grass sward and landscaping would require areas to be fenced off from the general public for at least 6 months.
- 5.5 On completion the temporary site access from Powell Drive will be removed and reinstated to footway and verge.
- 5.6 The volume of material to be imported will require agreement of a construction management plan. It is proposed that the number and size of lorries to be used to bring the material to site be as follows:

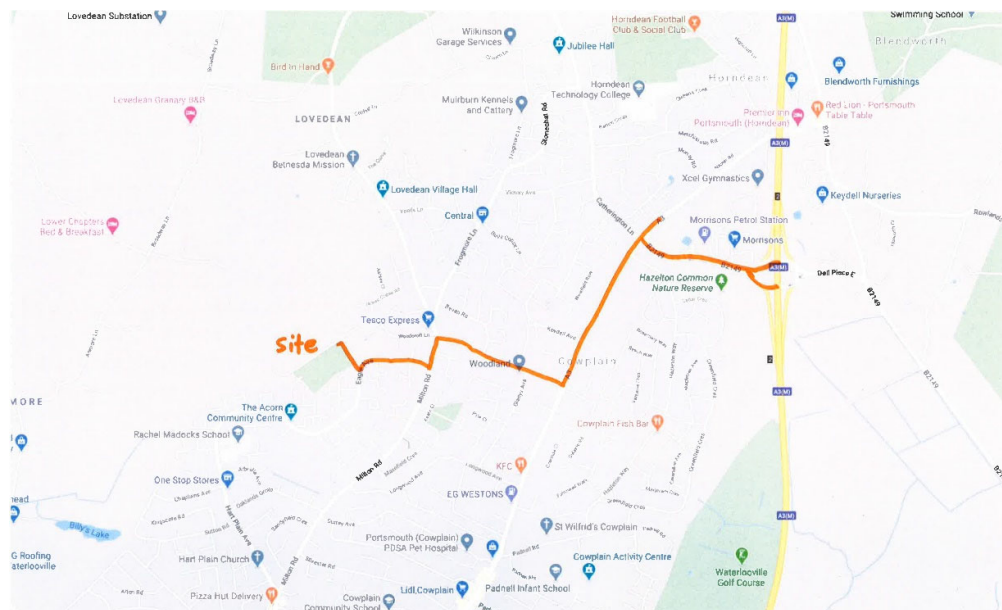
Maximum vehicle size: 16T (equivalent 8m³ bulk)

Maximum number of deliveries per hour: 4 (four)

Hours of working: 0700 – dusk Monday – Friday; 0700 – 1200 Saturday.

Hours of delivery: 0900 – 1600 Monday – Friday; 0900 – 1100 Saturday.

- 5.7 These proposed working and delivery hours reflect that the route will be sharing Powell Drive, the new access road to Catherington Park via Eagle Avenue.
- 5.8 Wheel washing will be available within the site compound to ensure mud is not carried onto the surrounding roads.
- 5.9 Because the materials to be used on site for the land forming will be processed off site, delivery will be from a recycling centre rather than from construction sites. This means that a route can be fixed as all delivery traffic will be coming from one direction. It is proposed that deliveries are taken from the B2149 on the junction with the A3M. This route is summarised below:



Routing to site from A3M junction B2149

- 5.10 A noise impact assessment for the construction works is included as part of the planning application.

6 Land ownership

- 6.1 The land is in the ownership and management of Portsmouth City Council.

7 Ecology

- 7.1 Records and observations indicate that the area is currently a regimented amenity grass sward with little biodiversity. The surrounding woodland belt contains many mature native trees and offers good biodiversity. The woodland lies out of the area of development, therefore all trees will be retained where possible, but access through it is required for site construction to take place, to avoid bringing heavy traffic through the small roads of Kite and Merlin Close. A temporary construction route has been proposed to limit the impact on trees (see Access Plan in section 2.2). An Arboricultural Method Statement and Impact Assessment have been prepared and will be submitted as part of the planning application to address specific issues relating to the trees in the woodland. An Ecological Survey & Report has been prepared and demonstrates low biodiversity on site, but potential impacts on species in the surrounding woodland. It recommends on-site attendance during works by a qualified ecologist to advise on mitigating impacts. The report forms part of the planning application.

8 Conclusion

- 8.1 The project will resolve the drainage issues which currently limit the public use of the site during the year. It will create raised grass terraces providing a new sports field on the large upper terrace, and a diverse play and skate park area on the smaller lower terrace. New footpaths will encourage improved access to the recreation ground and also encourage better informal exercise, play and sport. New tree planting and grass mounds will help provide visual interest and enhance the setting of the play and skate facilities.
- 8.2 The Design & Access statement demonstrates that the works can be built in accordance with all identified ecological, construction management and technical requirements.