



# Laigh Hills Park, Dunblane Strategic Landscape Masterplan Masterplan Report 2014

## Executive Summary

This document reports on the landscape masterplanning process which has been initiated by Strirling Council's Land Services Department for Laigh Hills Park, Dunblane. This report summarises the masterplanning process and sets out recommendations at this stage in an ongoing design, development and management process. This process will continue into the future and beyond the commission for this strategic stage of the project. It is acknowledged that this document will be built on, and added to into the future, with revised and updated reports as detailed designs and other key phased changes within the park are developed.

The main aim of this document is to assist both the Land Services Department and other key stakeholders to make informed and targeted decisions with regard to the use, management and any physical changes within Laigh Hills Park and surrounding environs, which will meet the needs and aspirations of both local people and visitors to the area. This report is set within the wider framework of National and European Governments' planning, social and environmental policy.

This document will also allow third party stakeholder and funding organisations the opportunity to see clearly how proposals recommended through the masterplanning process have been developed based on clear evidence.

This masterplan is therefore underpinned with baseline studies included within the technical appendix, addendum Extended Phase One Ecology report and Laigh Hills Park Civil Engineering Inspection, stage reports and illustrative landscape spatial masterplan drawings. Together, this information provides a structured and evidence based tool for informed decision making with regard to all aspects of the park and park environs moving forward.



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## 1.0 Background & Introduction

Connon Design Ltd. with JDC Ecology, Millard Consulting Civil Engineers, The Rennie Partnership Quantity Surveyors & Ideas Economic Development consultants, were commissioned on 21st August 2013 by Stirling Council's Land Services Department to develop a long-term, Strategic Landscape Masterplan for Laigh Hills Park, Dunblane. It was agreed that, as the project was strategic, further detailed studies, such as; detailed topographic surveys, hydrology, detailed ecology, tree/woodland condition surveys, civil engineering feasibility studies would be better targeted, following the recommendations from this strategic landscape masterplan.

The main aim of the masterplanning process at this stage therefore, is to understand and document Laigh Hills Park's; Social, Environmental, and Economic contexts. This will inform the development of targeted, meaningful and prudent design and management solutions, which best balance the identified needs and aspirations of the local and wider communities, including visitors to the area.

A key aim of this report is also to document the approach taken and to record the evidence in support of the strategic landscape masterplan. This will give funders and decision-makers confidence in supporting proposed improvements to the Laigh Hills Park.

Connon Design has been working closely with a steering group throughout this process comprising; Stirling Council's Land Services Department, Local elected Councillors, Dunblane Community Council and Dunblane Development Trust.

A wider key Stakeholder group was identified by the steering group (see appendix). This group, together with the wider community, have been consulted

throughout the process so far at key project milestones.

### Report Structure

The report is structured in two parts. The first part is an illustrated summary of the masterplanning process that has been carried out to date. This part concludes with recommendations and the proposed way forward, including recommendations for possible sources of funding. This is summarised in two park proposals drawings which are included at the end of this document.

The main proposals recommended comprise a combination of use & management and physical interventions within the park & the park environs.

The second part of the document is a technical appendix which includes evidence of the baseline studies, including the community consultations carried out in support of the development of the masterplan proposals and recommendations.

### Key Stages Summary

#### The Masterplanning Process

In order to produce a robust masterplan, it is necessary to develop a framework of understanding including a project Vision and Aims & Objectives (see consultation summary below). These have been developed together with the key stakeholders and the project steering group. This has took place alongside a strategic policy review in order to understand the contexts within which this project is being developed.

The key stages are summarised below:

Stage 1 - Framework



Fig 1.0 Project Location

**“ Modern public services should be shaped by evidence-based policy making. This means using evidence to design policy that we know, or at least have strong objective reasons to believe, will work. Without evidence, it can be impossible to tell if good intentions will turn into good outcomes ”**

ref: Equalities Impact Assessment Guidance 2009 -

- Policy Context & Area Appraisal including; Baseline studies (desk & field studies see technical appendix).
- Project Vision, Aims & Objectives developed through key Stakeholder consultations:

Key Stakeholders (including the steering group)  
Dunblane Primary School  
Dunblane High School  
Public Consultation Open Day

## Stage 2 - Masterplan

- Detailed site appraisal including detailed baseline site studies (desk & field studies - see technical appendix).

## Masterplan Proposals & Recommendations:

1. Spatial landscape proposals plan (s)
2. Use and management recommendations (report)
3. Laigh Hills Park Design Guide
4. Detail Design & further studies
5. Park Marketing Plan

It should be noted that the design process is iterative. Information gathered and assessed through the masterplan therefore continually shapes the process. This should continue beyond the scope of this strategic stage in the masterplanning process through the detail design stages.

## Laigh Hills Park Location

Laigh Hills Park is a significant and very well used public open space located to the Northwest of the historic centre of Dunblane (see fig. 1.0 & fig. 2.0 above). It covers an area of approximately 21 hectares (circa 52 acres). This is equivalent to approximately 21 times the size of Dunblane's Cathedral precinct (including the Cathedral). Much of the extent of the park is defined by the Allan Water which flows in a distinct loop to the North,

Northwest and North-North-East of the Park.

Other boundaries include; the Barbush housing development to the eastern edge of the Park, and 20th century housing developments adjacent to the Historic Ramoyle area of Dunblane to the southern extent (see fig. 2.0)

Laigh Hills Park is recognised both locally and regionally within the Stirling Council Area as a significant recreational and ecological landscape asset for both visitors to, and local residents of, Dunblane.

Laigh Hills Park forms part of the Dunblane Greenbelt and is identified as Public Openspace in the Local Development Plan. It forms part of both a green and blue ecological corridor and has a significant and diverse range of wildlife and ecological habitats. This enriches it as an asset and as a destination for local people to experience the benefits of the natural environment within walking distance of much of Dunblane.

## Policy Context Review:

Planning Context & Other Relevant Local Developments.

The following Local, National & International Policies have been reviewed in the preparation of the proposals within this masterplan:

- The emerging *Local Development Plan*
- Conservation Area & Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) including *Conservation Appraisal, Dunblane revised 2012*
- *Central Region, Landscape Character Appraisal, 1999* (Ash Consulting Group) SNH
- Stirling Core Paths review & Local Green Paths Network Map, Harvey
- *Stirling Open Space Strategy 2012*.
- *Stirling Countryside Access &*



Fig 2.0 - Park location

- *recreation strategy, 1999*
- *Stirling Pitches Strategy 2013*, Kit Campbell Associates
- Active Stirling Sports Strategy
- *CSGN Draft - Green network & Open space - Supplementary Guidance, 2011*
- *Equality Impact Guidance, Equality & Human Right Commission, 2009*
- *PAN 78 Inclusive design - Scottish Government 2006*
- *Designing Places - A Policy Statement for Scotland, 2001*
- *Cycling By Design 2010 - Transport Scotland*
- *Laigh Hills Cycle Access Route Preliminary Inspection & observations, December 2011*, IKM consulting
- Sherrifmuir Park – cycle trails - current planning application.
- NCN Dunblane to Doune NCN no. 756
- *Ponds Pools Lochans - SEPA*
- *Water Courses in The Community - SEPA*
- *Secure By Design - Youth Shelters*
- *The Street and Place Names of Dunblane and District*, Archie McKerracher, T.
- *The History of Dunblane*, Alexander B. Barty
- *100 Years of Golf in Dunblane*, Pat MacLachlan
- Improvements to walking & Cycling paths & routes in the Dunblane Area, Jan 2011 - Sustainable Dunblane
- *Dunblane Allan Water Restoration Project, repair and Maintenance Strategy, September 2013 - IKM Consulting/DDT*
- *Civil Engineering - Laigh Hills Park Inspection*. November 2013, Millard Consulting
- Future Stirling to Perth Railway electrification - Transport Scotland

Relevant Guidance, Studies & other proposed developments within the area:

The above policy context has provided information on the wider policy aims of Stirling Council, The Scottish Government and includes European policy for example; on access to the countryside & protected species of plants and animals. Local study work has also been taken into consideration including the Dunblane Green Travel Map.

Policies and directives from other key stakeholder organisations such as Central Scotland Green Network (CSGN) and Sustrans have provided a policy framework of information which has informed the masterplanning process. This is particularly relevant to this project in terms of equalities and access to the countryside legislation and policy.

**Key Issues:**

The site is not within the Dunblane conservation area. There are no specific Tree Protection Orders, although existing trees are currently within the legal control of Stirling Council.

The site is within the Local Plan Countryside policy boundary, forms part of the Openspace audit (policy 1.3) and is designated as 'Green corridor' (policy 1.3). The Towns and Villages Plan notes the following with regard to Laigh Hills Park:

*'The Laighhills Park is the main recreational area in Dunblane and while it provides the usual items of play equipment it is also a Wildlife Site with a natural and semi-wild character which is appreciated by many local residents. An Urban Nature Conservation Strategy, prepared on behalf of and adopted by the Council, has suggested that the Laighhills Park should be designated as a Local Nature Reserve. The Scouring Burn is also identified as an important wildlife corridor which will be protected from development.'*

The above also notes the importance of connectivity to the local paths and long

distance cycle networks.

It is likely that major infrastructure works in close proximity to the railway line will require planning approval.

Any proposed structures or building within the park will require planning permission.

Any increase modifications to the adopted Haining access road will require Roads Construction Consent (RCC) screening.

There are Core Paths running through, and connecting to the site, that have informed the development of the masterplan.

Proposed works affecting existing water courses and wetlands may require SEPA screening & approvals.

**2.0 Project Framework & Baseline**

**Social Context**

Dunblane is a settlement with a population of approximately 8,930. It is a significant Tourist attraction due in part to it's Historic Cathedral and Town Centre. While there is some mixed local employment, many local people use Dunblane as a place from which to commute for employment in larger surrounding settlements.

There are three Primary Schools and two Secondary Schools within the settlement.

Dunblane has a vibrant High Street with a number of small to medium sized business including cafes, eateries, pubs and restaurants through-out the historic centre.

There are a number of churches and other places of worship as well as other key local community-use buildings which are generally located in and around Dunblane centre.

Dunblane also has a tennis club which is centrally located to the south of the

settlement centre.

Laigh Hills Park is a significant local asset and is currently well used by local people for a very wide range of social and recreational activities. The Park's location close to the centre of Dunblane and between two large housing areas contributes to it's popularity with both local people and visitors to the area.

The Historic review (see appendix - community consultation uses review) suggests that the park has been used in the past for organised social gatherings such as Highland Games events. The community consultation provides some evidence in support for increasing organised use of the Park for festivals or public events.

A historic and current Park uses survey has been carried out (see technical appendix) and clearly shows that the park has been used for a wider

The Project's Draft Vision Statement, Aims & Objectives were developed with the steering group members. These were then presented at the community wide consultation event where no adverse comments were received.

**“ Vision Statement:**  
**'The Vision for the Laigh Hills is to maintain and enhance the benefits which the area can provide as a significant recreational, environmental, cultural and historical asset for all the residents of Dunblane and for visitors to the area. ”**

*Aims of the masterplan:*

1. To work towards encouraging use of the park by as wide and diverse range of people as possible.
2. To improve the management and maintenance of the park in a way that balances recreational uses together with conservation and increased use of the park.
3. To improve to the system of paths and access routes, throughout the park in order to improve accessibility, connectivity, use and safety.
4. To build on and strengthen existing local sustainability plans/initiatives.
5. To make Laigh Hills Park easier to locate from other parts of Dunblane. To make it easier to find your way around the park when you arrive, and through the Park to other destinations.
6. To make the most of key views, to, from and within Laigh Hills Park.
7. To create a park development/masterplan which connects with other key local environmental initiatives including education.
8. To identify improvements to the parks physical facilities such as; Sports pitch drainage, children's play, teen facilities, seating, & signage.
9. To define and improve the character of the place which makes Laigh Hills Park both a local and regional destination.



Fig 3.0 - Public Meeting Advert in 'The Wire' local advertising publication to over 4000 homes

range of more formal activities in the past than it is currently being used for. The community consultation explored some of these opportunities which subsequently influenced the development of the masterplan proposals with recommendations for an events programme.

Laigh Hills Park is currently a popular local destination for leisure, health, exercise, sports and outdoor recreation for local people. The park offers the opportunity to expand access to all of the above.

Where the park's primary paths and bridges are improved, the park also offers the opportunity to better connect local residential areas to local facilities and services orbitally within the wider movement framework of Dunblane.

## Community Consultations'

A project pre-start steering group meeting was held on the 12th of September 2013 in Dunblane. Meetings were held with Key local stakeholder representatives from organisations including the following:

- Dunblane Football/Soccer club
- Fishing – Forth Fisheries
- Forth Invasive Non Native Species Programme (FINNS)
- Sustainable Dunblane (green network map).
- Dunblane High School (presentation & workshop)
- Dunblane Primary School (presentation & workshop)
- Stirling Council Biodiversity Officer & Countryside Ranger

The above meetings included a site 'place-check' walkover with local people. Site photographs and comments were recorded on the day.

Baseline technical site appraisals were then carried out, and a draft project Vision Statement, Aims & Objects developed with

The Project's Draft Vision Statement, Aims & Objectives were developed with the steering group members. These were then presented at the community wide consultation event where no adverse comments were received.

### Masterplan Objectives:

*1. Provide a structured process through the development of a Park masterplan in order to document evidence gathered, record public opinion and to steer a strategic long-term process of change in Laigh Hills Park in order to support the above aims and aspirations of the local community.*

*2. To produce a masterplan report which identifies and supports funding applications from a robust evidence base.*

*3. Carry out a series of studies and consultations in order to understand who currently uses Laigh Hills Park and for what purposes, in order to make recommendations for new, improved or expanded park uses.*

*4. Carry out technical appraisals of the area to identify and understand the constraints and opportunities within the park.*

*5. Develop a deliverability strategy with recommendations for further detailed feasibility and/or technical studies to be carried out.*

*6. Develop a paths hierarchy and phased plan for appropriate physical path improvements reducing barriers to park access and/or circulation.*

*7. To enable The Dunblane Development Trust to co-ordinate and encourage new activities and to manage a park activities/events programme.*

*8. To make recommendations for ways in which to increase awareness of the Park's history to encourage local people and visitors to the area into the Park.*

*9. Make recommendations for the enhancement of the existing park's physical infrastructure and facilities including; park furniture, construction materials, methods and technologies through a Park Design Guide.*

the steering group.

Two presentations and consultation workshops were then carried out in Dunblane Primary School and Dunblane High school respectively - see technical appendix for summary reports.

A further Community wide Public Consultation event was then held on the 8th of February, 2014 (see fig. 3.0) in order to ask local people what their priorities are, and to confirm whether the project draft Vision, Aims and Objectives were appropriate for the project.

It was agreed that this approach was more likely to achieve what local people and visitors to the area actually wanted to see happen within the park, and was more likely to lead to solutions based on a common understanding with regard to the issues, opportunities and project constraints.

From this key milestone stage, questionnaires (hard copy & online version) were used to record and inform the masterplan proposals (see technical appendix).

It was agreed that the final draft strategic landscape masterplan would be made available in the local Library to allow for further community input and to ratify support before going forward.

Key findings from the community consultations:

1. Strong support for sensitive changes within the Park in terms of retaining the 'wild sense of place'.
2. Teenagers should be seen as young adults rather than a separate stereotyped 'group'
3. Toilets are a key need within the Park for both younger and older users particularly given the Park's edge of settlement context. Comfort break partners opening hours conflict with

peak main park use i.e. evenings and weekends for significant numbers in the population.

4. Primary age park users use **all** of the park for play including Natural Play in the landscape.
5. There is a strong need for path improvements (appropriate to the context & history of the Park) to reduce current barriers to the use of the park including as a route to other connections such as Schools, amenities, services and longer distance paths/ cycleways.
6. Increased use of the park for organised activities is supported eg. Highland Games.
7. Ponds and wetland improvements with educational use is an aspiration.
8. A park management plan is a key need.
9. Laigh Hills Park needs to be better publicised and more easily found by visitors to Dunblane.
10. Long distance views are recognised and supported through the consultation process as a key opportunity within the park.
11. Increased educational use within the park is also supported through the consultation.
12. Sports pitch drainage is now performing better on the lower pitch so upper pitch should be the focus where additional drainage provision is recommended.
13. The Draft - Vision, Aim & Objectives received no comment through the consultation process either for or against.
14. The main entrance bridge and the Haining/Faery Bridge should be prioritised for capital works.
15. There is a local aspiration for a Park Shelter' possibly including toilets - (not a 'Teen Shelter').
16. There is an aspiration for more seating within the park.
17. There is an aspiration for a picnic area including BBQ facilities.
18. There is an aspiration to include a feasibility study into micro hydro energy production on the Scouring Burn in the masterplan.

The design principles below were developed by Connon Design. These were then presented at the community wide consultation event in draft, where no comments were recieved.

**Masterplan Design Principles:**

- To make Laigh Hills Park a sustainable and inclusive place in the widest sense of the terms.
- To make the Laigh Hills Park more welcoming, legible and easy to find your way into and around without unnecessary signage & clutter.
- To make Laigh Hills paths network appropriately connected & as accessible as possible.
- To make Laigh Hills Park as safe & have as good a sense of safety as reasonably possible.
- To create design guidance which will assist and control future works within the park in a way which respects the desired quality of place and the agreed character of place which the community wish to maintain or enhance.
- To protect and enhance, where appropriate, the local habitats and associated ecology.
- To make informed management & maintenance recommendations which will help to achieve the core aims of the masterplan and to protect and enhance the positive local characteristics which make Dunblane unique as a destination.

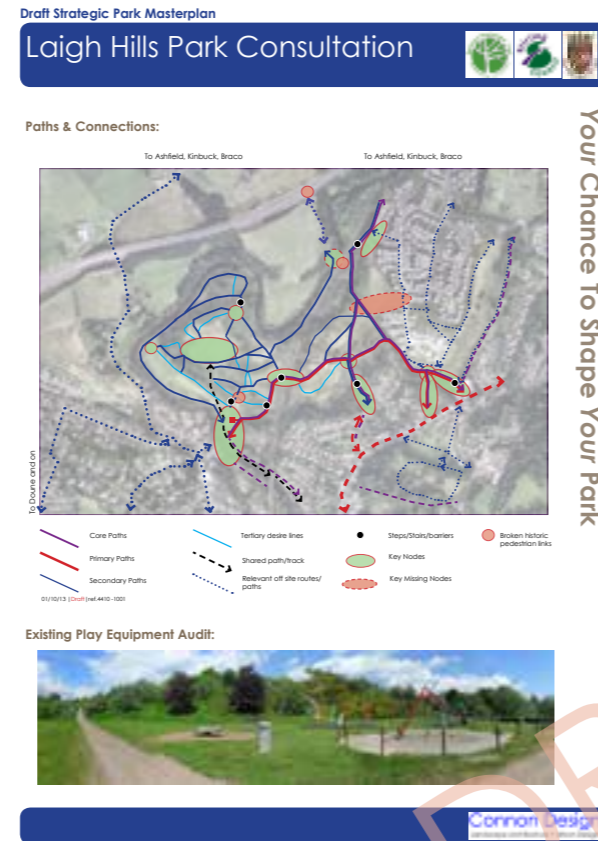


Fig 4.0 - A1 consultation information - paths analysis

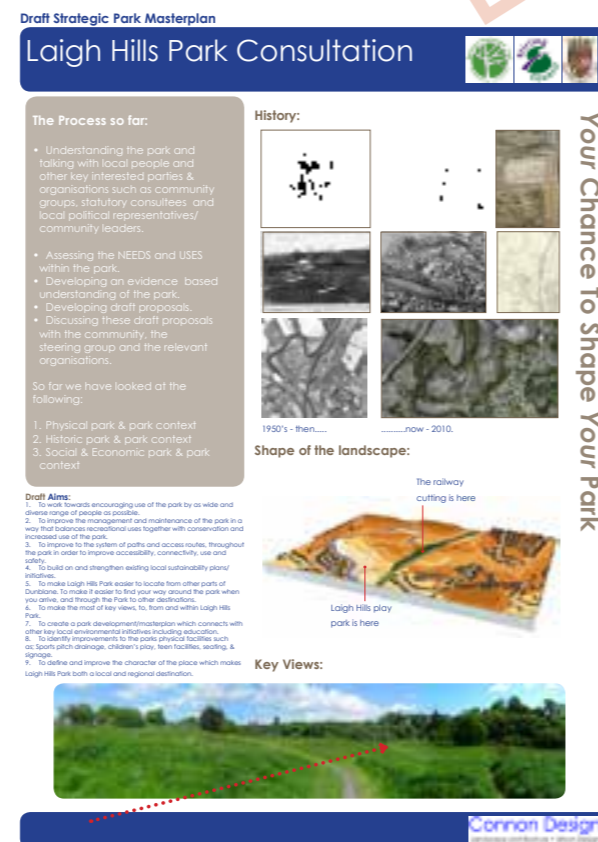


Fig 5.0 Typical A1 Consultation material

**Draft Strategic Park Masterplan**

**Laigh Hills Park Consultation**



Your Chance To Shape Your Park

**Uses Review Summary:**

**Historic Uses and/or Formally proposed Uses:**

- Golf
- Curling
- Football
- Shinty
- Bowling
- Putting
- Quoiting
- Badminton
- Croquet
- Animal Grazing (sheep Pasture)
- Fishing
- Leisure views
- Strategic defence
- Riverside walks
- General outdoor leisure and recreation
- Highland Games
- Sand and Gravel extraction

**Current Uses review:**

- Children's Playground + Natural Play
- Wild Swimming + paddling
- Sports - Football
- Orienteering/cross country running
- Walking
- Dog walking
- Wildlife watching
- Foraging
- BMX (& Cycling)
- Skateboarding
- Fishing
- Leisure/Historic Views
- Access to local path connections (alternative non vehicular routes) to/from schools
- Education (Scouts/Guides/Schools/Nurseries)

**Potentials Uses:**

- Increase habitat - wetland
- Better managed existing habitats - ecology to advise (native grass lands and less invasive native weeds & enriched woodlands where appropriate)
- Energy - micro hydro
- Cultural Events - Highland Games/Fireworks/Bonfire night
- Increased use as an alternative non vehicular commuting/safer route to schools etc.
- Historic interpretation and tourist destination within Dunblane
- BMX / off road bike track or a Pump Track
- Picnic ? BBQ area provision

**Constraints & Opportunities Summary:**

**Constraints:**

1. Steep slopes - topography
2. Allan Water & Scouring Burn (flood plains)
3. Existing buildings/development around entrances
4. Ecology & Habitat (particularly Otters, Voles & Bats - but also other issues)
5. Trees/woodland
6. Access - there is no disabled parking with in the park.
7. Existing railway cutting
8. Existing services - above and below ground.

**Issues:**

1. Limited funding available - support access to funding sources
2. Semi remote site (edge of main settlement) on peninsula
3. Play area improvements?
4. Currently limited scope for management of habitats within park
5. Anecdotally - flooding to upper (and lower) pitches.
6. Sports pavilion in poor state of repair.
7. Derelict Public Toilets.
8. Derelict seating.
9. High quality historic walls in poor state of repair.
10. Some paths eroded due to flooding.
11. No paths lighting.
12. Poor natural surveillance in some areas
13. Well used park for dog walkers - dog litter bins?
14. Derelict BMX track
14. Hard to find the park from the City centre (Visitors/Tourists)
15. Giant hogweed eradication.
16. Derelict paddling pond adjacent to formal play area
17. Replacement of main vehicular access bridge required.
18. Anti social behaviour - various types

**Opportunities:**

1. Hills/topography
2. Power production
3. Productive uses such as community orchards/fruit growing
4. Views to significantly wider landscape context
5. Historic & geographical interpretation
6. Improved paths network
7. Make it easier to find your way to & around the place including some targeted signage
8. Derelict Public Toilets
9. Derelict/poor condition seating/litterbins
10. Repair historic field boundary walls
11. Improved and structured approach to management of landscape for emerging aims of the master plan - i.e. Increased use/events
12. Improved entrance and connections to the park including key strategic connections e.g. Formalise Barbush desire paths through existing shelterbelt.
13. Improve Scouring Burns flood plain
14. Enriched Habitat creation within the above floodplain/wetlands area
15. Enrichment woodland planting as part of a management plan
16. Natural play - paddling pond - gravity fed fountains?

**Emerging Priorities Summary:**

(in random order)

**Top Priorities:**

- Replacement vehicular bridge at main park entrance.
- Replacement Public Toilets.
- Replace railway crossing bridge to eliminate steps.
- Paths improvements based on hierarchy of paths.
- Signage & make it easier to find your way around
- Play Equipment
- Sports pitch drainage - upper pitch.
- Maintenance to Sports Pavilion.
- Hog weed control.
- Enhance educational use.
- Redesign BMX or off road cycle feature.
- Maintain and enhance valued habitatsBBQ & picnic area upgrade.
- Comprehensive landscape management plan.
- PR and raising public awareness of the park and what it has to offer.

**Medium Priorities:**

- Seating & Park Furniture.
- Restoration or redesign of Victorian Paddling Pool.
- Temporary Events - Highland Games.
- Interpretation signage and view points enhancements.
- Wetlands, ponds & pools in & around Scouring burn.

**Long term Aspirations:**

- Micro hydro scheme feasibility study?
- Tea room / Summer Cafe feasibility study?

Fig 6.0 - Draft summary of the Park uses and the emerging constraints & opportunities with early priorities.



Fig 7.0 Typical excerpts from the community consultation questionnaire providing objective quantitative information.

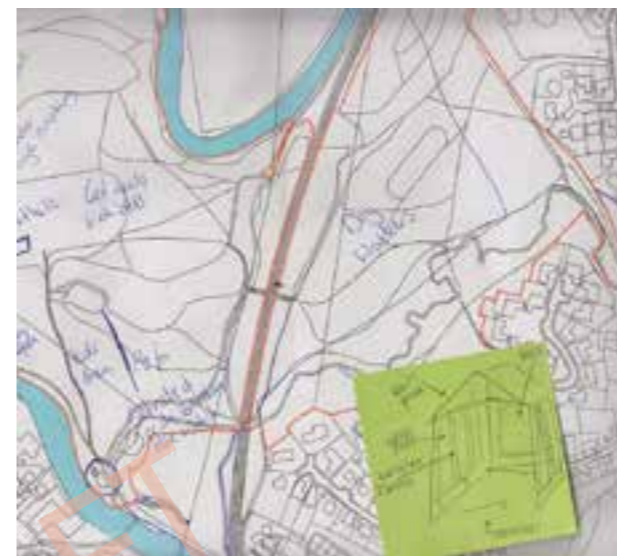


Fig 8.0 - Typical sketches by local High School Pupils



Fig 9.0 - Typical 'place check' feedback response.



Fig 10.0 - Questionnaire front cover (digital & paper)

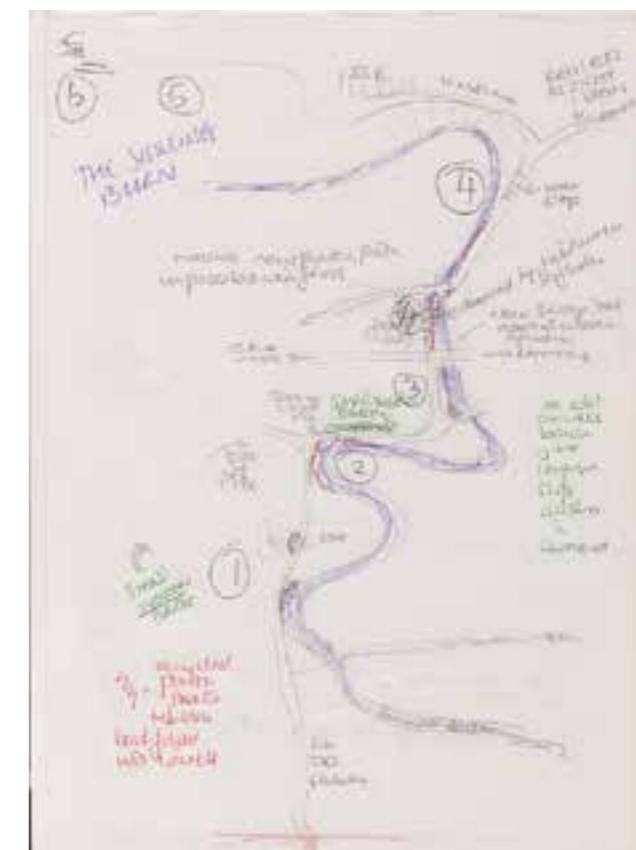


Fig 11.0 - Typical 'mind map' by local resident

**Historical Context**

The Etymology for Laigh Hills suggests that the name means - Low hills – Probably relative to the Holme Hill and surrounding hills, and which is part of the original *raison d’etre* for Dunblane - Dun – Castle/ Fort – Blane – Historic Land Owner). The strategic importance of the place was due to the topography and the relationship to the Allan Water – with a place to ford the river. The Cathedral significantly boosted the importance of the place which developed politically into a Burgh and associated market Town – The Burgh status allowing the political and economic control of trading activities associated with Movement Economics.

Laigh Hills is thought to have been the pre historic site of early settlement – pre Roman occupation and is also reported to have been subsequently the site of a Roman Camp. Though the evidence for both of the above is unsubstantiated at this time, the strategic physical advantages of the site – i.e. hilly topography and protection on almost all sides by both the Allan Water and the Scouring Burn with associated wetlands, are likely to have been historically significant during this time.

Most of the early detailed mapping evidence for the above is Ordnance Survey based, and is therefore early to mid 19th century only. Graphic evidence for the site history is however supported by engravings, drawings and photographs. The main landscape changes which occurred include the formation of the railway cutting in 1845 and the general natural regeneration of shrubs and trees most of which are the result of changed maintenance after the closure of the Golf Club. It is interesting to note the historic open views from key hill tops, to key landmarks in and around Dunblane, particularly the Hydro, the Cathedral, Holme hill locally (as well as local Buildings and features such as the Allan Water – the

old mill, the railway viaduct, and locally typical Victorian Villas, farm houses and their associated land uses). There are also notable expansive views to the wider geographic setting of the Park including Ben Vorlich, Ben Lomond, the Touch Hills and the Ochils.

The Laigh Hills landscape has historically been recognised as having poor agricultural value (The original plan to Feu the lands by the Cromlix Estate during the early 1870s was rejected on the ground that the land was too hilly and of poor agricultural value for people to use for subsistence growing). The agricultural value was regarded as being for rough grazing only or for recreational value as a Public Park. This has therefore been the prevalent historic use of the land with remnants of Victorian walks, curling ponds, and more recent golf course and BMX track still being evident on the ground.

From the study of the historic record for the site, the most useful information for this site, in terms of the strategic Landscape masterplan, has come mainly from the illustrations and early photographs than from historic mapping. What has been established through this review process is that the Laigh Hills park has had a number of historic uses, mainly associated with either agriculture - grazing of livestock, or leisure and recreational uses. This is likely to be due to the hilly topography and poor quality topsoil as highlighted above.

What is clear from a comparison between the 1950 aerial photographic record to the more recent 2010 aerial photographic record is that the vegetation is slowly changing the character of the park, as more natural regeneration of trees and shrubs takes place - see fig. 14&17. This has informed the development of the masterplan proposals with regard to recommendations for a park management and maintenance plan, and also in terms of proposals to protect key long distance views from strategic hilltops within the Park.



Fig 12.0 From 100 Years of Golf In Dunblane



Fig 13.0 Historic golf course plan - Greens, Tees & Fairways



Fig 14.0 1950s Historic Aerial photograph



Clubhouse on Laighills

Fig 15.0 - Club house on the scouring burn with Dunblane Hydro in the distance. Note historically more open views.



This photograph, taken in 1918, shows Jim Reid on the left of the 18th green.

Fig 16.0 - Historic Golf Club house with scouring burn in foreground & Barbusch drumlins in the background (now housing)



Fig 17.0 Contemporary aerial photography with trees and shrubs regeneration.

### Environmental Context

An environmental analysis of the Park has been carried out and, together with the framework studies highlighted above, has informed the masterplan proposals. This has looked specifically at the following elements:

### Topography

A topographic study has been carried out in 3D (see Fig.18.0) based on ordnance survey data. The park is characterised by the hilly underlying topography with significant implications in terms of historic use, current & future use, particularly in terms of paths connecting through the Park.

The mainline railway cuts through the park and is a significant barrier to access and connectivity from the eastern to the western side of the Park and beyond.

The masterplan has sought to reduce the necessity to make further significant alterations to the existing topography in terms of cut and fill. This is in order to both protect the existing landscape character, and to reduce the carbon cost associated with significantly reshaping the landscape form. This is specifically relevant to the pedestrian crossing over the railway and any future improvements to this element that are developed.

### Existing Utilities & Services

An existing utilities services desk review has been carried out for the park's extents. There are two main known service corridors within the Park - see technical appendix. The first carries overhead power lines approximately parallel with the west side of the railway corridor. There are therefore significant implications for works in this part of the site. This has informed the approach being recommended with regard to pedestrian bridge improvements over the railway.

There is an electrical services corridor (see technical appendix) which passes under the existing footpath and which connects Barbush with Bamyle & Ramolye. This is unlikely to have significant impacts on proposals within this area.

Other unrecorded services may be present within or around the site and site investigations should be carried out in accordance with current best practice.

### Movement framework - Paths, Access, Legibility & Connectivity

A full existing and connecting paths study has been carried out (see appendix). This has identified formal, informal paths and movement routes in and around the Park. This has allowed a paths hierarchy to be developed which has then been reviewed through the consultation process with local people and key stakeholders.

A Core Paths review has also informed the masterplan together with a review of other paths and access strategies in the local area. These include: The Dunblane Green Travel map, CSGN strategy, Sustrans NCN and the Sherrifmuir planning proposals.

Key destinations have been considered through the above process and include; local schools, services, shops & amenities and public transport connections. This study has considered local housing within the settlement and also connecting local communities. It is noted in the emerging settlement plan that the car parking provision for the railway station is currently at capacity and that improvements to pedestrian or cycling links should be considered.

Through the draft aims and objectives, the need to minimise signage has emerged as a key objective in developing an appropriate design response to the site. Local perception of place has therefore been considered and, together with



Fig 18.0 - 3D topographic model of the site, developed for this project & based on OS levels data

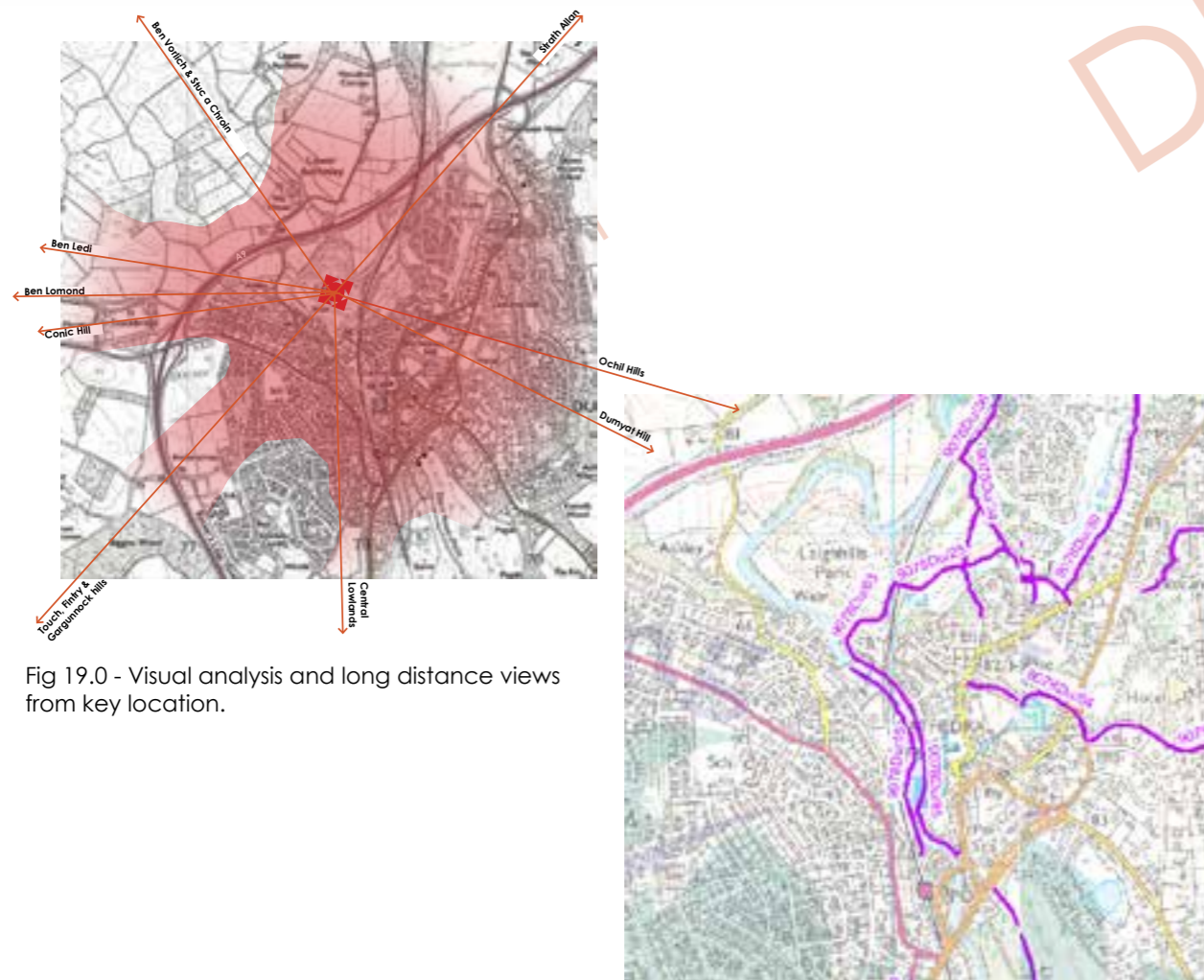


Fig 19.0 - Visual analysis and long distance views from key location.



Fig 20.0 - Core paths data 2010

objective mapping and study work, has also informed the masterplan design development.

The larger extent of Dunblane is within reasonable walking distance of Laigh Hills park (see fig 22.0 & 23.0 - from the technical appendix). The park is within approximately 5-10 minutes walk of 19 bus stops and also the mainline Stirling to Perth Dunblane railway station. There are two public car parks within approximately 10 minutes walk of the Park including one car park which is within a 5 minute walk of the park.

Although there is no dedicated public car park for Laigh Hills Park and vehicular access is very constrained, the need for additional car parking is reduced due to the walkable scale and public transport provision highlighted above. There may however be a need for dedicated disabled car parking closer to the main entrance to the park.

**Existing Civil Engineering, Paths & bridges infrastructure**

An engineering review has been carried out by Millard Consulting in order to report on the condition of all primary and secondary paths within the park. This has included a visual survey of the shared vehicular and pedestrian access bridge over the Scouring Burn adjacent to the Haining & Faery Bridge entrance to the Park (see technical appendix).

The above engineering report has informed the masterplan in terms of proposals for replacement paths, steps, bridges and boardwalks and future site engineering investigations works.

**SEPA - Hydrology & flooding review**

A desk review of the current SEPA Indicative River and Coastal Flooding mapping has been carried out and has informed the proposals within the

masterplan - particularly in terms of paths/ access design proposals. These proposals take into account the flood plain and respond in the selection of materials and construction types that are proposed.

**SNH Landscape Character Context (framework)**

A desk review of existing SNH landscape character assessments has been carried out and has informed the development of a more detailed local landscape character assessment within the park.

**Connon Design Detail Landscape Character Appraisal**

A detailed landscape character appraisal has been developed in order to support the masterplan. This has identified and mapped landscape character components within the Park and has informed the design proposals within the masterplan in terms of landscape management proposals - particularly with regard to the proposals for managed natural grassland areas, the Park design guide and the areas of proposed native woodland in the 'wilder' character areas of the Park.

**Vegetation**

A study of vegetation has been a key tool in understanding how the site is changing over time in response to changes in the way the landscape is managed. This has been recorded and used to inform the consultation discussion and subsequent proposals within the landscape masterplan - particularly in terms of opportunities for the protection of key long distance views and management of existing habitats (see Historic Context above & technical appendix).

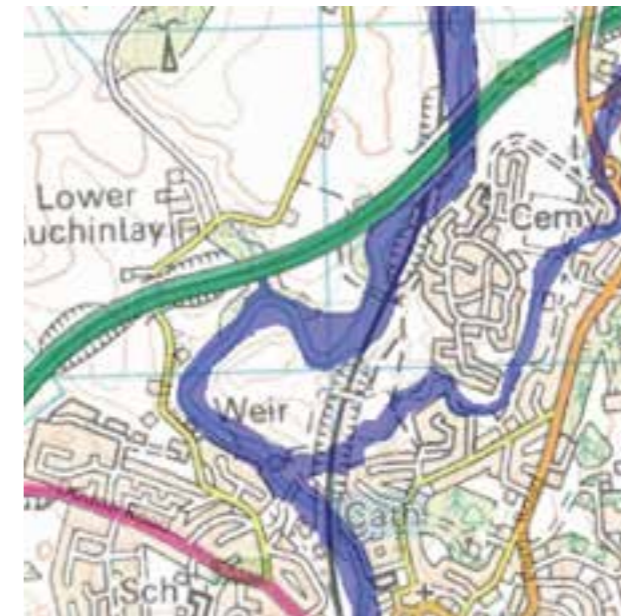


Fig 21.0 - SEPA 2014 indicative flood risk mapping

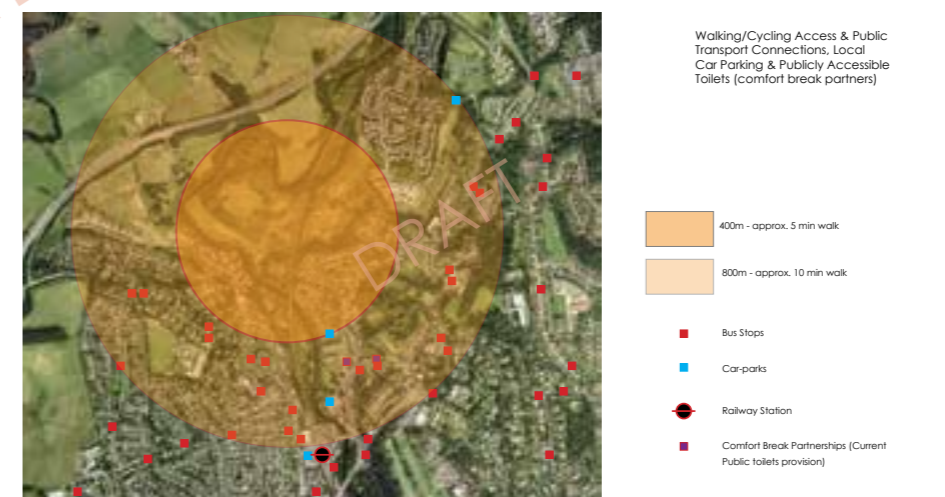


Fig 22.0 5-10 minute walking in relation to key public transport and local 'comfort partners' (toilets).



Fig 23.0 - Walking scale centred on main settlement with park in context.



Fig 24.0 - Existing paths hierarchy analysis diagram.

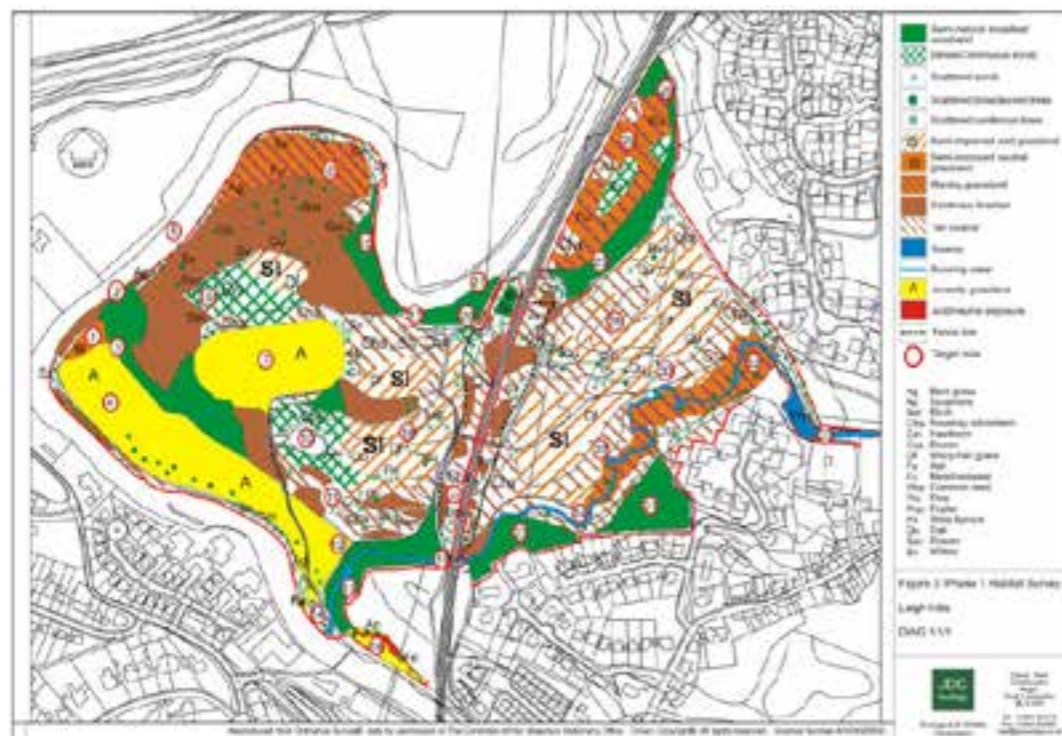


Fig 25.0 - Excerpt from Preliminary extended phase one habitat survey.

### Photographic Appraisal

An extensive photographic survey of the park has been carried out across all seasons with the exception of summer at this stage (due to the project scope & programme). This information has specifically strengthened the opportunity and location for a view point interpretation location as part of the masterplanning process (see technical appendix for panoramic photographic review).

A preliminary visual appraisal has been carried out on site in order to assess the strategic long distance views from key hill top locations within the site (see technical appendix).

It is also recognised that sequential views are also an important aspect of this park, and which are also reflected in the masterplan proposals.

### Ecology

An Extended Phase One habitat preliminary survey has been carried out by JDC Ecology, in order to inform the design process.

European protected species known to be present within the Park are:

1. Bats
2. Water voles
3. Otters

Further ecological & habitat studies are recommended where physical or management proposals from the Strategic Landscape Masterplan have the potential to impact on sensitive habitats.

Non-Native invasive species: Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) is known to be present across much of the site. There is an ongoing programme of eradication being carried out by various local organisations under the Forth Invasive Non Native Species Programme. It is recommended

that the extents of the existing Hogweed be mapped in order to monitor the success of the ongoing eradication programme.

Invasive *native* species:

There are a number of invasive *native* species present in the park for example Bracken (*Pteridium*). It is recommended that these be controlled through the development of a park wide Management plan with the aim to manage desired wildlife habitats, to increase biodiversity in the park and to maintain long distance visual amenity in continuum with the historic and social traditions of the park.

### Play area/Skate Park/BMX

A review has been carried out into the existing play area, skate park and BMX track provision. This has been used through the consultation exercise to develop a better understanding of local users needs and aspirations for the park into the future.

In addition to general park wide improvements, a redesign of the semi derelict BMX track offers the best opportunity to increase provision for teenagers and young people within the park.

### Sports Pitches and Sports Pavilion

A elementary review has been carried out into the two grass sports pitches for which there is a high demand for football use (240 members in Dunblane Soccer Club, Thistle local Football Soccer Club & visitors on match days). Both sports pitches have had some drainage improvements with the lower pitch being reported by the Dunblane Soccer Club to be much better. The upper pitch drainage remains problematic and currently restricts use through the wetter, winter months.

There are artificial all-weather pitch facilities which are available for local use

at Dunblane High School and which has good parking provision. This currently meets the need for football training, and while there is some aspiration locally for a 4G pitch, Laigh Hills Park is considered inappropriate for this level of investment given the lack of parking.

The sports pavilion is currently leased by Dunblane Soccer club who have responsibility for internal maintenance. The external building fabric is the responsibility of Stirling Council who currently have a programme for essential works to keep the building wind and water tight.

### Materiality & Place-making

A photographic record of the park has been developed, recording the existing patterns of landscape/streetscape materials, colours and detailing in and around the area. This has informed the process specifically in relation to designing with local identity and in accordance with the current National 'Place-making' agenda.

### Framework & Baseline studies conclusions

The above studies and community consultations have provided a clear direction for the project in the form of the vision statement. The aims and objectives provide a structure and system to both support the development of, and measure the success of the project moving forward. The synthesis of all of the above elements and information is therefore reflected in the development of the masterplan proposals.

The Framework is supported by a combination of both quantitative & qualitative data analysis. This is available within the technical appendix and is reflected in the masterplan proposals.

## 3.0 MASTERPLAN PROPOSALS

The above site appraisals and studies, including the stakeholder consultations, have been assimilated and have informed design decision making throughout the Strategic Landscape Masterplanning Process. It is recommended that these studies continue to provide information and evidence in support of all future detail design projects within the park including feasibility studies.

Further technical studies such as detailed topographic surveys, tree & woodland condition and trees in relation to demolition design and construction analysis should also be carried out on an individual project by project basis.

The masterplan proposals for Laigh Hills Park comprise:

1. Physical proposals
2. Use & management proposals

The masterplan spatial layout drawings illustrate the main *physical* proposals for the Park and Park environs (see drawings: 4410-001 & 4410-002 current revisions).

### Physical Proposals

#### Park Entrances

All park 'gateways' /entrances should be improved with detailed designs with the aim to increase both local peoples' and visitors' ability to find, and access the park.

A detailed design brief is recommended for the main park entrance at the Haining/ Faery Bridge entrance and should include traffic control measures to limit vehicular access to the park to all but emergency and maintenance vehicles.

#### Paths Improvements Generally

The main opportunities identified for

physical infrastructure change within the park are improvements in the path network including access/egress and through connections - particularly the upgrading and relocation of the low level pedestrian bridge over the railway. Improvements to the primary and secondary paths will allow better access to significantly greater parts of the park, and for a wider and more diverse range of people.

An improved primary through path has been identified as a high priority within the masterplan. This main path has the potential to significantly meet the aims of the project in terms of inclusively, equality and sustainability. It would, with appropriate detail design, reduce barriers for people who wish to access the park and it would allow the park to be used as an alternative route connecting residential areas to local schools, services, work places and other key destinations. This proposal would also strengthen links to strategic public transport connections and long distance paths including the railway station and the National Cycle Network.

Improving internal circulation paths throughout the site will allow access to be made to the 'wilder' areas for a wider range of people for leisure, recreation and for educational purposes.

Dunblane, like many urban environments is nearing capacity where private cars are increasingly one of the main modes of transport. The above proposals would provide a meaningful opportunity to assist in reducing and better balancing, alternative modal transport choices by local people.

#### Improved Access & Paths Connections

The masterplan proposes a new park access route which would formalise the current informal link between the Barbush estate and the eastern section of the park. This would provide the opportunity to create a more accessible route with

smoother gradients, connecting to the existing green/pedestrian path network in a logical and legible way, commensurate with achieving the aims of the masterplan. It would also allow controlled maintenance vehicles into the park to maintain this eastern area of the park for the future.

### Sports Pitches

The main recommendation for the sports aspect of the park is to build on the success of the lower pitch park drainage with a similar improvements to the upper pitch.

The recommendation for a park maintenance guide should allow for appropriate annual maintenance which maintains the grass pitch provision and drainage to Sports Scotland amenity grass sports pitch standards.

### Play Area

Play provision should continue to be maintained for as long as safely possible with a detailed design for the play area developed which increases the provision for toddlers and which, over time, reduces the visual impacts of the equipment selected within the overall context of the park. A detailed design exercise is recommended for this area of the park with further consultation specifically with parents, toddlers groups and local Nurseries.

### Viewpoint Enhancements

Key views and a desire to protect and enhance the 'natural' feel of the park with its countryside character have driven the proposals for proposed physical improvements. This includes the proposal for a panoramic viewpoint location with interpretation information within the park.

## Proposed Park Pavillion & Toilets

The existing public toilets within the park are in a derelict state of repair and are scheduled for demolition.

Fully accessible modern Public toilets are regarded locally as being very important in terms of meeting the key aim of a more inclusive public park. It should be noted that the current comfort partnership facilities are often unavailable at key times when the park is most likely to be used and by the largest number of people for leisure and recreation i.e. at evenings and weekends. It is noted however that this element will require to be funded by the local community, both in terms of capital costs and future running costs.

## BMX Track

The BMX track is in derelict condition but offers an opportunity to expand on the success of the Skate park facility with improvements to this type of facility. From the evidence gathered at local schools, there is support from the younger members of the local community to see this element of the park developed and would further help to meet the aims and objectives of the masterplan.

## Park Furniture

Improvements to park furniture include; replacement seating, picnic tables and BBQ facilities. Educational and interpretational signage are also recommended at key locations across the whole park.

## Native Woodland Planting

Mixed native woodland planting is recommended to the steeper slopes within the park. This will increase the park's biodiversity and strengthen the wildlife corridors, within and through the park.

## Community Orchard Planting

A community orchard area is proposed to south west facing slopes as shown on the masterplan drawings.

## Ponds & Wetlands

There are a number of historic ponds and semi natural wetland habitats in various locations across the park. It is recommended that these be re-formed and or created with a detailed design brief to maximise wetland & associated habitat creation.

## Feasibility Studies:

1. Upgrading the pedestrian bridge over the railway to modern standards of accessibility. Where the railway line is scheduled for electrification, the opportunity should be taken to raise the bridge crossing and to locate the bridge to better link with the primary paths in a way which improves ease of movement through the park (and with out the need for additional signage).
2. Drainage and Hydrology study of the upper sports pitch.
3. An investigation into the potential for micro hydro power should be considered on the Scouring Burn.
4. Ponds construction & wetland habitat management proposals including; greater areas of open water should be investigated on the Scouring Burn (and two other locations within the park). The aim should be to enhance and encourage wildlife habitat while maximising this amenity value for local park users.

## Use & Management Proposals:

### Park Management Plan

A detailed Landscape Management Plan is recommended in accordance with the agreed Vision, Aims & Objectives. This should cover sports pitches, recreation and play area maintenance & management and habitat management for the more semi-natural areas of the park.

### Park Events Co-ordination

A local community Trust such as the Dunblane Development Trust in co-ordination with Stirling Council, might take responsibility for the co-ordination of a programme of activities and organised uses within the Park.

These might could include:

- A revived 'Highland Games'. Similar events which are appropriate to the context.
- Arts/sculpture trails/events
- Educational programmes including; Organised litter picks or Environmental Education through seasonal walks and talks with ecologists and park rangers.
- Increased sports such as co-ordinating the rebuilding of the BMX facility as a pump track (with volunteer help - and young person direct involvement)
- The making of and installing of bird and bat boxes within the site with the involvement of local schools and nurseries.
- Bulb and wildflower planting (& management)

### Local Nature Reserve (LNR)

Further consultation should be carried out with Scottish Natural Heritage to assess whether Laigh Hills Park could be designated as a LNR.

## Green Flag Award Status

The Green Flag award Scheme is a nationally recognised bench mark aimed at raising the standards of sustainable parks and green spaces. The following are the eight key criteria against which projects are assessed for inclusion under the scheme:

1. A welcoming place
2. Healthy, safe and secure
3. Clean and well maintained
4. Sustainability
5. Conservation and heritage
6. Community involvement
7. Marketing
8. Management

The proposals within the strategic landscape masterplan take all of the above into consideration with the exception of marketing. An appropriate marketing strategy is therefore a key recommendation for the project going forward.

## Further Research

It is recommended that detailed research into who is using the park's primary through paths, when and for what purpose, is carried out. Research should include local households and should focus on determining how many more people would use the park as a route to connect to other parts of Dunblane. The aim would be to develop quantitative information in support of demonstrating the reductions in carbon and also the increases in public health benefits.

## 4.0 Park Design Guide

### Hard Landscape

#### Materials, colour, maintenance & sustainability generally

All materials selected for use within the park should be from local suppliers and local sources where possible. All timber must be FSC certified.

The selection, specification and detailing of materials must aim to maximise the serviceable lifetime of each element within the park while minimising the maintenance required. Each element within the Park must be approved on this basis with Stirling Council. It is noted that a balance will require to be made on elements where capital costs are outweighed by the ongoing high maintenance costs.

The materials palette and colour selection for elements within the Park must minimise visual impact within the Park context. Colours and finishes must therefore be selected or specified with a view to long-term weathering to mid tone colours. Black, white or other target primary finishing colours must be avoided within the Park except where they are necessary for health and safety reasons. To reduce visual impacts within the Park, consideration should be given to a the selection of colours within the local context against which elements will be predominantly seen by most people.

All timber must be either untreated durable hard wood or, semi-durable softwood with an appropriate finish. Where durable hardwood is specified or selected, timber should not have an applied finish, relying instead on inherent natural preservatives and should be allowed to weather to it's natural colour. Where semi-durable softwood is used, applied finished must guarantee a minimum 25 years of serviceable life. All timber must be detailed

to shed rain water - particularly where end grain is exposed.

All metalwork should be either nonferrous metals such as stainless steel and finished through shot peen blasting in order to reduce inappropriate visual impacts. Where ferrous metals are specified or selected, all metal work must be galvanised and or painted/finished in accordance with the above guidance on colour.

Where possible, combinations of metal and timber detailing should be used to maximise the longevity of all elements.

Litter bins and metal sign posts should be designed & detailed (or specified) and finished around ground level in order to reduce the impacts of corrosion through disposal of unfinished soft drinks (bins must have drainage provision within the collection chamber) and dog urine (within 300mm of ground level).

All elements specified or selected must aim to reduce the potential for vandalism. All park furniture must have concrete anchor foundations with fixings to reduce the potential for vandalism and should be robustly designed. It should be noted that there is no such thing as vandal proof.

All stone should, where possible, be natural stone from Scottish or UK quarries.

Acrylics/plastics should only be used where there is overwhelming evidence to show that they are sustainable in whole life cost terms and where this includes disposal/recycling costs. Appropriately specified, detailed and finished natural materials should prevail in most circumstances to ensure that elements are fit for purpose.

### Soft Landscape

All plants must be Scottish native and must be of local provenance with supporting

certification.

### Exceptions

The existing play area should continue to be maintained with historic colour schemes. Future play equipment should aim to maximise the use of timber elements and to reduce the use of primary, high visual impact colours.

Temporary installations, festivals or events within the park are excluded from the above.

Temporary flags or banners are also excluded from the above.

'Naturalised' rather than fully native plant stock may be considered.

### Site Specific Design

In order to enhance and strengthen the individual character of Laigh Hills Park as a distinct local place, consideration should be given to the design of site specific furniture. It should be noted that the capital costs of site specific responses are generally higher than mass manufactured elements, and that replacement parts costs are also correspondingly often higher. Site specific elements should therefore be carefully considered for key areas only such as gateways and entrances, or where there are sufficient repeat elements to achieve economy of scales.



The following are typical examples of elements which are deemed to be typical examples of elements appropriate for use within the Park and the Park environs.

Typical seating & Picnic Tables



All seating must be set within an area of hard landscape such as stone dust, setts or paving in order to reduce maintenance.

Typical litter bins



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All litter bins must be set within an area of hard landscape such as stone dust, setts or paving in order to reduce maintenance. Litter bins must be seagull proof, rain proof, must include smoking ashtrays and must conform to Stirling Councils maintenance/service access requirements. All litter bins must be located discretely with provision at key entrances/egress points to the park and within amenity areas only. Bins must be for general litter **and** dog litter. No separate dog litter bins should be provided.

Typical directional signage



Park signage must be minimised with ease of navigation through the park environment supported through the design of the paths network and other physical elements within the park. The main aim of directional signage must be as a last resort. Information signage including clear park rules for responsible use of the park including the Scottish Countryside Access code should be contained within a general information sign close to the main park entrance (Haining/Faery Bridge). This should be considered as an opportunity for a site specific design solution.

Typical interpretation signage



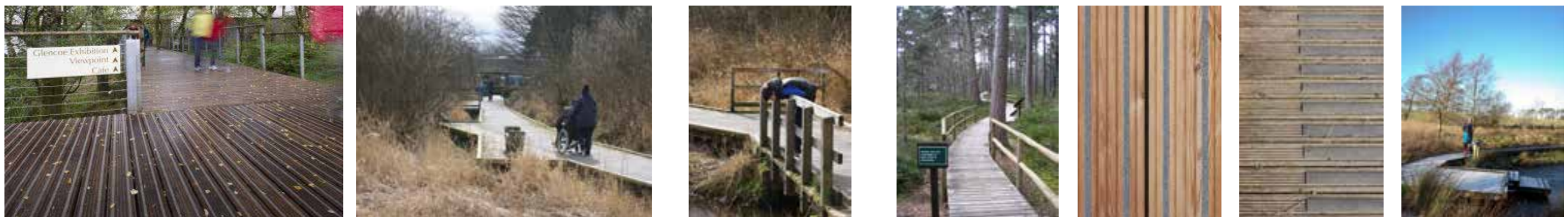
Existing Dunblane mapping has been developed by the Dunblane Development Trust. This must form the basis for future interpretation and mapping signage within Laigh Hills park for reasons of consistency. A detailed design project is recommended to expand the educational, historical and view-point interpretation opportunities within the Laigh Hills Park.

Bollards/vehicular control



Bollards must be consistent in appearance across the whole site. Bollards should be demountable only where maintenance and emergency vehicles require access.

Typical boardwalk & decking



Boardwalk & decking must be appropriately detailed with durable non-slip strips.

**Typical play equipment**



Before the specification of any generic play equipment, a detailed design highlighting the play value must be developed. Toddlers play equipment must be located within a open and easily policed area, with seating or supervising adults.

**Typical Walls/fences**



Existing walls must be reconstructed to match existing. Proposed walls must respect local historic wall building construction types including coping. Opportunities to reinforce this high quality local pattern should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen the sense of local place which makes Dunblane distinct nationally. Fences should be either post and wire field boundary types or simple post and rail estate fencing only. Opportunities for feature metal work should be reserved for main entrances only.

**Typical paths**



All proposed paths must be detailed and finished in order to minimise visual intrusion into the context and setting of the park through the use of local stone dust or local stone aggregates (where paths are proposed to be sealed surfaces). The aim of the path design must be to meet current equality standards, and to allow reasonable access to the park in accordance with the aims of the masterplan. Where limited areas of paving are necessary, then stone paving slabs or setts should be high quality natural stone.

## 5.0 Priorities & Implementation

The following are a list of project priorities as agreed by the steering group in Spring 2014. The priorities are not fixed and will require to be reviewed periodically and in response to funding opportunities as they become available.

1. Detailed design brief for the replacement main vehicular and shared pedestrian access bridge at the Haining/Faery Bridge and this main park entrance.
2. Safety works in and around areas of the path network which are collapsing due to erosion
3. Fundraising.
4. All park entrances - detail design briefs required.
5. Feasibility study for Park Shelter and Public Toilets – including costing and funding options
6. New & upgraded formal, sealed paths following the Allan Water to connect with path to the historic curling pond at the north of the site.
7. A detailed park wide management and maintenance plan.
8. Feasibility study to upgrade and improve accessibility of the pedestrian bridge over the railway. This must adhere to the Strategic Landscape Masterplan in terms of achieving non stepped access over the railway and must link at or close to existing levels in order to minimise cut and fill. The location of the bridge should be adjusted North East of its current location in order to make the Primary Paths network clear and Legible and therefore minimising the need for additional park signage.
9. A feasibility and detailed design brief

should be developed for the main park entrance at Haining/Faery bridge and which should resolve controlled access to the park for maintenance and emergency vehicular access only.

10. Detailed designs are recommended for the other access/egress points to/from the park. Further community consultation and negotiations with the Greenbelt Company should be carried out in order to explore the opportunity for a new park access route to Barbush. This will have direct implications for design and maintenance proposals in the eastern area of the park which is currently constrained for access by maintenance vehicles.
11. Feasibility Study for Micro-Hydro on the Scouring Burn.

### Funding Strategy & Grant Funding Opportunities Summary

The funding strategy has 6 key elements:

- Ensure funding applications are made by an appropriate body. This could be the Dunblane Development Trust although consideration could be given to setting up a linked body with charitable status to help overcome issues where one trust can only apply say once per year and to overcome any de minimis grant aid issues. Gaining charitable status might bring difficulties but is recommended.
- Understand the different types of fund available and ensure there are activities targeted at grant applications, sponsorship, community fundraising activities, donations and investments. Understand what each potential funder is looking for and meet their rules or aspirations. It is important to distinguish general fundraising – where local residents could carry out activities to generate funds towards the overall cause – from specific grants, where an application will be made

for a specific element – say sports pitch drainage – and where the precise costs is known at the outset.

- Develop a balance of quick wins to ensure momentum (quick applications for small grant sums that have only marginal impact but provide a feel good factor) together with the slower, bigger applications. Expect over half of all applications to be unsuccessful but don't become disheartened despite the wasted time in an unsuccessful application.

- Create partnerships or work with others if it can help meet the bigger picture. The local authority, schools and others may have better opportunities for winning certain funds, so best to team up with them than go alone and submit an unsuccessful application. This also spreads the support base.

- Maintain a grant funding schedule. Keep track of deadlines, responsibilities and new funds as they come on stream. Grant funding is a constantly changing world so it needs to be monitored effectively.

- Maintain a positive, even aggressive approach to fundraising, as it's easy to become disheartened, so working to deadlines and dividing responsibilities will help keep a funding team active and positive. Some elements of the Strategic Masterplan can be targeted relatively simply in funding terms. For example, the micro hydro feasibility study is a suitable candidate for funding through the CARES scheme and an application could be submitted in early course.

Another priority might be to work with Sport Scotland to prepare the way for an application for sports pitch drainage. Preliminary steps, such as calculating precise costs and full scope of work could start now and might be funded through one of the Sport Scotland or 2014 grants.

A further liaison should be developed with the Forestry Commission and Scottish Natural Heritage to plan for grant applications for biodiversity, land management, tree planting and general habitat work.

There are regional funds which might be useful towards the costs of community orchards, possibly some invasive species removal and some educational work. These funds need to be monitored regularly as they will have closing dates and may no longer be available at the ideal time. A list of some of these relevant funds and further funding detail is available in the appendix.

Other aspects may be difficult to fund specifically, for example, there are few grants that specifically target a toilet block. But these elements could form part of an overall strategic park application for which the Lottery Fund and charitable trusts may offer the most likely sources of funding. Again regular monitoring is required as these funds change on a regular basis.

Please refer to the technical appendix 4 for the full Funding Strategy including a list of current potential funding organisations.

## 6.0 Conclusions & The Way Forward

This Strategic Landscape Masterplan is the first stage in a process of information gathering, strategic thinking and long-term planning. It sets out a shared Vision for the future direction of the Laigh Hills Park, with agreed Aims and Objectives. It identifies detailed design projects with indicative budget cost estimates to inform the prioritisation of improvement projects. It also highlights where further detailed study work is required in order to best target consultants' time and associated costs.

The process thus far has developed a robust evidence base in support of the proposals for both physical interventions and changes in the way the Laigh Hills Park is cared for, managed and maintained going forward. It is acknowledged that the current capital funding context is, and will be for sometime to come, incredibly constrained. For this reason, this report (and associated reports) should be used as evidence to support funding applications, giving potential funders confidence that funding will be targeted, prudent and better able to meet the needs and aspiration of the local communities and key stakeholders involved in making Dunblane a more sustainable and desirable destination and place for people to live.

## 7.0 Technical Appendices

Please refer to the attached drawings, supporting technical reports and technical appendix report.

DRAFT

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