

Otterpool Park Recreational Pressure Surveys

1.0 Introduction

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 implement the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in England and Wales, which requires the assessment of plans and projects for their potential to affect sites of European nature conservation importance (including Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas). As part of the proposed creation of the new garden settlement at Otterpool Park, and in consultation with Natural England, there is a requirement to assess recreational pressure on nearby protected environmental areas, notably the Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay Special Protection Area (SPA) and Wye and Crundale Downs (SAC). These sites have been identified through consultation with Natural England as being potentially vulnerable to increases in recreational pressure. The following sections contain data tables obtained from visitor surveys in relation to the Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment and Wye and Crundale Downs SAC.

2.0 Methodology

Visitor surveys were undertaken at locations within the Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC and Wye and Crundale Downs SAC, taking place over the course of four days – two consecutive weekdays (30th/31st August 2017) and a weekend (23rd/24th September 2017). Survey locations and methodology were agreed following discussion with representatives from Natural England and the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). An email from Natural England dated 31/07/17 states that:

'Broadly speaking, I agree with your proposed approach in terms of visitor survey questionnaire methodology, and that you intend to visit Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment Special Area of Conservation (SAC)..... Having spoken with some of my colleagues who are Responsible Officers for nearby designated sites, and [REDACTED] at the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), I would like to suggest the following sites which you may want to consider including in your scope:

- *Wye and Crundale Downs SAC – this site is likely to be a draw for visitors particularly to the National Nature Reserve. The car park you suggest would be an ideal location capturing most visitors here.'*

For the Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment SAC and Wye and Crundale Downs SAC, we proposed to engage with a representative sample of visitors and undertake face to face interviews. The specific objectives of the survey were to gain an indicative idea of visitor numbers, explore characteristics of visitor trips and the distances people travel to the site.

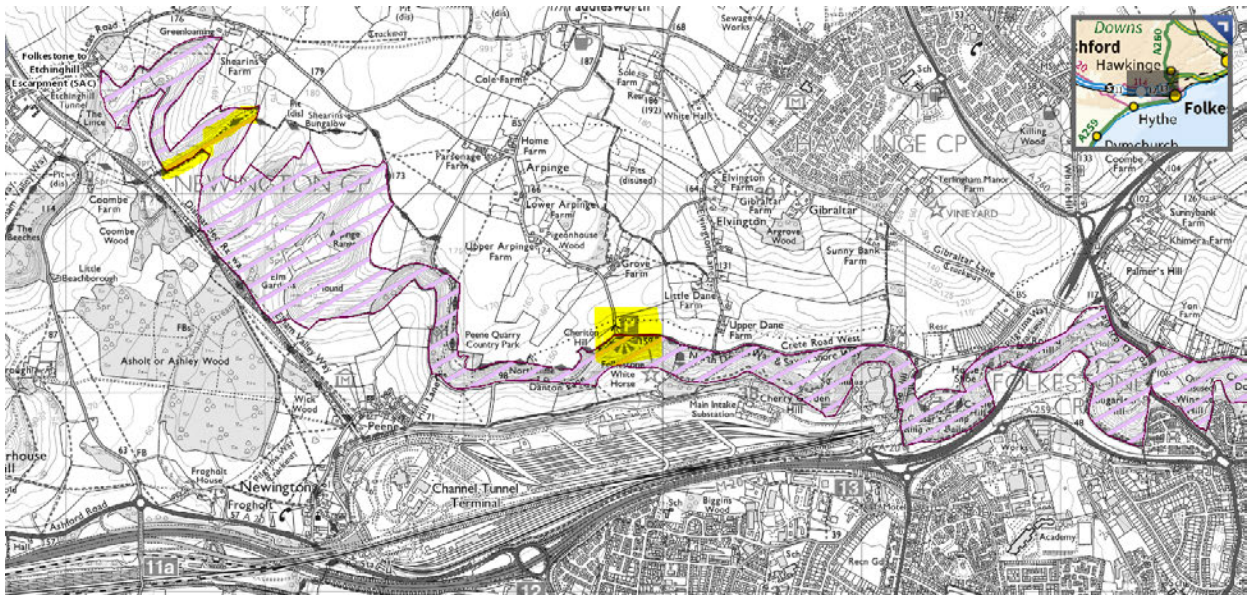
Each survey day included early morning (7am – 9am) and early evening (5pm – 7pm) visitor counts and interviews (where visitors may be more likely to be local residents) as well as periods during the day (proposed to be 10am – 12pm and 2pm – 4pm). Surveyors were situated at specific locations within the SAC and undertook counts of visitor numbers within specific time periods as well as interviews with visitors. Over the four days, a total of 164 surveys were recorded.

3.0 Data Tables

Location 1 – Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment

The Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment is an extensive area (over 180 hectares) of chalk grassland located to the north of Folkestone in Kent. The site is designated as a SAC for its dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites (the site is home to three nationally rare plants). The escarpment is bisected by the A20, however it remains one of the largest remaining areas of unimproved chalk downland in Kent.

Two starting points (highlighted below) were selected at the Folkestone to Etchinghill Escarpment, one in the north of the survey area just outside Etchinghill and the other along North Downs Way overlooking the Channel Tunnel. These were chosen as suitable and safe areas to park the car before commencing with the surveys. For this location, the group of four surveyors were split into two pairs (pair at each point) to ensure all areas of the SAC were covered to capture all users.



Survey Date 1 (Thursday 31st August 2017) – the weather conditions on Survey Date 1 were a mixture of sunshine and showers. In total, there were eight surveys recorded.

Survey Date 2 (Saturday 23rd September 2017) - the weather conditions on Survey Date 2 were mainly dry and overcast. In total, there were 88 surveys recorded.

1. Are you on holiday to the area or is today's visit part of a day trip?

Time	Thursday 31 st August					Saturday 23 rd September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Holiday					0	1				1
Day Trip		3	4	1	8	14	24	24	17	78
Live Locally					0		4	2	2	8

2. If visit is part of a day trip, ask for home postcode?

Time	Thursday 31 st August					Saturday 23 rd September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
CT15 7DF		1			1					
Hawkinge			1		1					
Whitfield			1		1					
Maidstone			1		1					
CT19 4JY						1				1
Sandgate						1		1		2
Etchinghill						2		1	1	4
Folkestone						1		4	1	7
Lyminge						1				1
Hythe						1	1			2
Hawkinge						1		3	4	8
Folkestone						2	9	4	4	19
Canterbury						1				1
Ashford							2		1	3
Etherington Lane							1			1

Sittingbourne						1			1
CT18 8DA						1			1
Cheriton						2	1		3
CT19						3	1		4
Cherington						1			1
CT18 8BD						1			1
CT18							1	1	2
Ostend, Belgium							1		1
CT19 5AT							1		1
Peene							2		2
Christchurch, Dorset							1		1
CT18 8AY							1		1
Dymchurch TN29 0NN							1		1
CT20							1		1
Newington							2		2
CT20 3RA								1	1
CT6 8BZ								1	1
CT18 8AN								1	1
Dover								1	1
London								1	1

3. How often do you visit the site?

Time	Thursday 31 st August					Saturday 23 rd September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Most days			1		1	8	15	7	8	38
About once a week		1			1	3	9	7	5	24
At least once a month					0	3	3	(Visited whilst going to George's Barn and Railway Museum 8	3	17
Once every 2 or 3 months		2	3		5		3	4		7
Less frequently				1	1			1	3	4

4. How did you travel here today (tick main form of transport)?

Time	Thursday 31 st August					Saturday 23 rd September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Private vehicle (Car/van/minibus)			3		3	8	17	18	12	55
Public transport (bus/train)					0			2		2
Walk		3	1	1	5	6	7	7	6	26
Motorcycle					0					0

Bicycle					0		3	2		5
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5. What is the main purpose of your visit today?

Time	Thursday 31 st August					Saturday 23 rd September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Walking		2	3	1	6	4	5	10	6	25
Dog Walking			1	1	2	8	17	11	10	46
Mountain biking/cycling					0		3			3
Exercise (e.g running/jogging)		1	1		2	3	4	2	4	13
Nature/birdwatching			1		1			2		2
Photography			1		1					0
Other					0		Kite Flying Runners who parked their car at the bottom of the hill. Bootcamp training meet up a group to train. Paragliding	Ramblers Group Blueberry picking Picnic Chill and enjoy the view Not well signposted Day out for the children	Enjoying family day out Enjoying the view	

6. How long have you spent or do you intend to spend here today in total?

Time	Thursday 31 st August					Saturday 23 rd September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Up to 1 hour					0	5	16	17	12	50
A couple of hours		2	2	1	5	9	14	7	4	34
Half a day			2		2	1		3(1 Full day)	3(1 Full day)	7
Don't know					0					0

7. Why have you chosen this site over others?

Time	Thursday 31 st August					Saturday 23 rd September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Close to where I live		1	2		3	9	20	20	11	60
Variety of tracks and paths		3	3		6	7	16	11	8	42
Quality of landscape/scenery		2	3	1	3	11	16	15	12	54
Wildlife offer					0	2	1	-	2	5
Other (write below)			View and fresh air		0	Number of different running		Quiet and interesting Peaceful Beautiful		

						routes and steep inclines. Boys enjoy it		View Sheer edges – wind direction Scenic		
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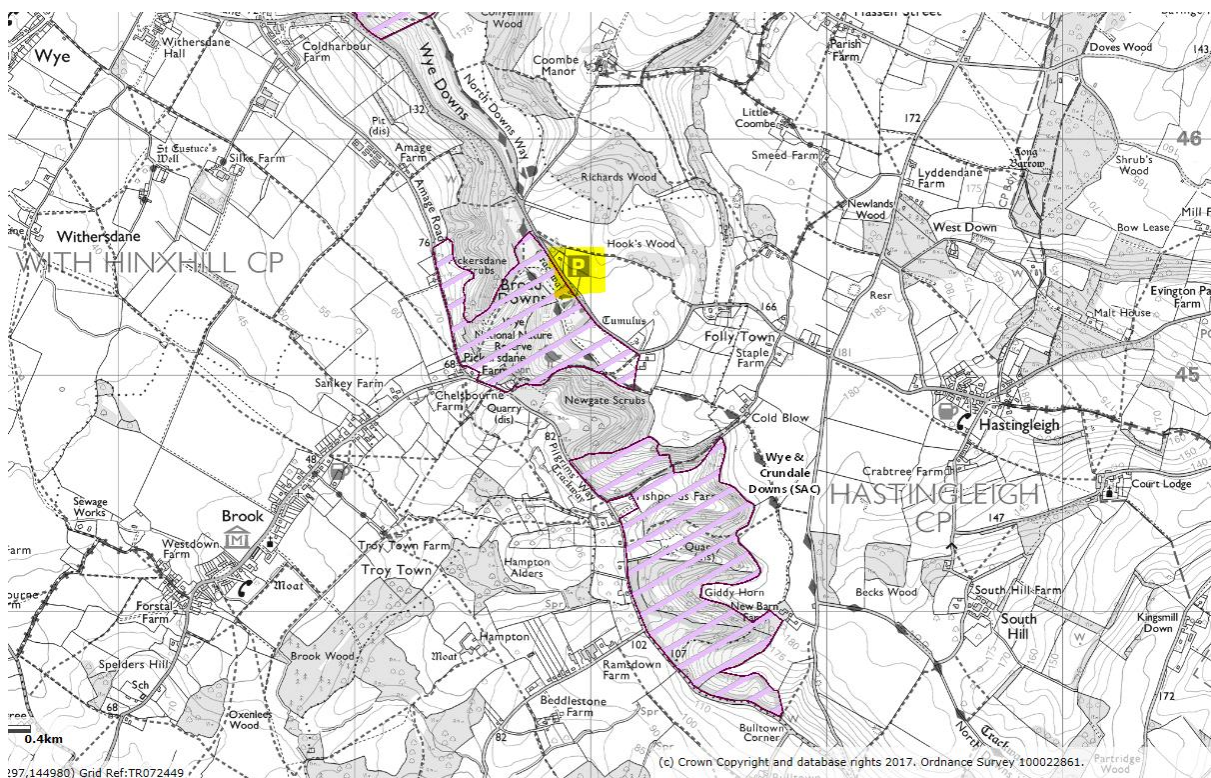
8. Including yourself, how many people are with you during your visit here?

Time	Thursday 31 st August					Saturday 23 rd September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Number of 0-18 year olds					0		3	15	2	20
Number of 19-25 year olds		1			1	9	11	6	9	35
Number of 26-59 year olds		1	4	1	6	15	31	72	18	136
Number of 60+ year olds		1	1		2	3	6	13	2	24

Location 2 – Wye and Crundale Downs

The Wye and Crundale Downs SAC is an extensive area of approximately 110 hectares of chalk grassland located between Wye and Hastingleigh. The site qualifies as a SAC due to the semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies such as dry grasslands and scrublands on chalk or limestone, including important orchid sites. The Downs sit in between the M20 and A28 to the north of Ashford (southern edge of the North Downs).

The selected starting point (highlighted below) at the Wye and Crundale Downs was chosen as a suitable and safe area to park the car before commencing with the surveys.



Survey Date 1 – Wednesday 30th August – the weather conditions on Survey Date 1 were windy for the majority of the day within the survey times. Only three surveys were recorded.

Survey Date 2 – Sunday 24th September - the weather conditions on Survey Date 2 were dry and sunny for the majority of the day within the survey times. In total, there were 65 surveys recorded.

1. Are you on holiday to the area or is today's visit part of a day trip?

Time	Wednesday 30 th August					Sunday 24 th September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Holiday		1			1		1			1
Day Trip		1	1		2	5	14	30	15	64
Live Locally					0		1	1		2

2. If visit is part of a day trip, ask for home postcode?

Time	Wednesday 30 th August					Sunday 24 th September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Bromley		1			1					
Canterbury			1		1					
Folkestone								1		1
Canterbury						1		1	4	6
Ashford						1	2	10	5	18
Dover									1	1
Not given						1		1	1	2
Sellindge						1				1
Brook/Wye						1				1
Fishponds Farm							1			1
Wye							5	8	2	15
CF4 5SB							1			1
Chilton/Westwell							1			1
Kingswood							1			1
BN21 1UF							1			1
Brook							2	1		3
Tunbridge Wells								1		1
Lydden								1		1
Elham								1		1
Maidstone								1		1
Boughton								1		1
Waltham							1	1		2
Holland								1		1
Sevenoaks								1		1
Westbourne								1		1
Hastings								1		1
Gravesend									1	1
Bilsington									1	1
Crundale							1			1

3. How often do you visit the site?

Time	Wednesday 30 th August					Sunday 24 th September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Most days					0	1	3	3	2	9
About once a week					0	2	6	7	1	16
At least once a month					0	2	3	3	1	9
Once every 2 or 3 months			1		1		3	6	5	14
Less frequently		1			1		2	13	6	21

4. How did you travel here today (tick main form of transport)?

Time	Wednesday 30 th August					Sunday 24 th September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Private vehicle (Car/van/minibus)		1	1		2	4	11	26	14	55
Public transport (bus/train)					0		1 (Train to Canterbury then North Downs Way)	1		2
Walk					0	1	5	5	1	12
Motorcycle					0					0
Bicycle					0					0

5. What is the main purpose of your visit today?

Time	Wednesday 30 th August					Sunday 24 th September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Walking		1	1		2	4	5	22	13	44
Dog Walking					0	1	9	9	2	22
Mountain biking/cycling					0					0
Exercise (e.g running/jogging)					0		2			2
Nature/birdwatching					0		2			2
Photography					0		1			1
Other					0		Opportunity to get out of the house			
							Looking at different species, good for my health and wellbeing.			

6. How long have you spent or do you intend to spend here today in total?

Time	Wednesday 30 th August					Sunday 24 th September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Up to 1 hour			1		1		10	13	5	28
A couple of hours		1			1	5	6	14	4	29
Half a day					0			5	2	7
Don't know					0					0
							1			1

7. Why have you chosen this site over others?

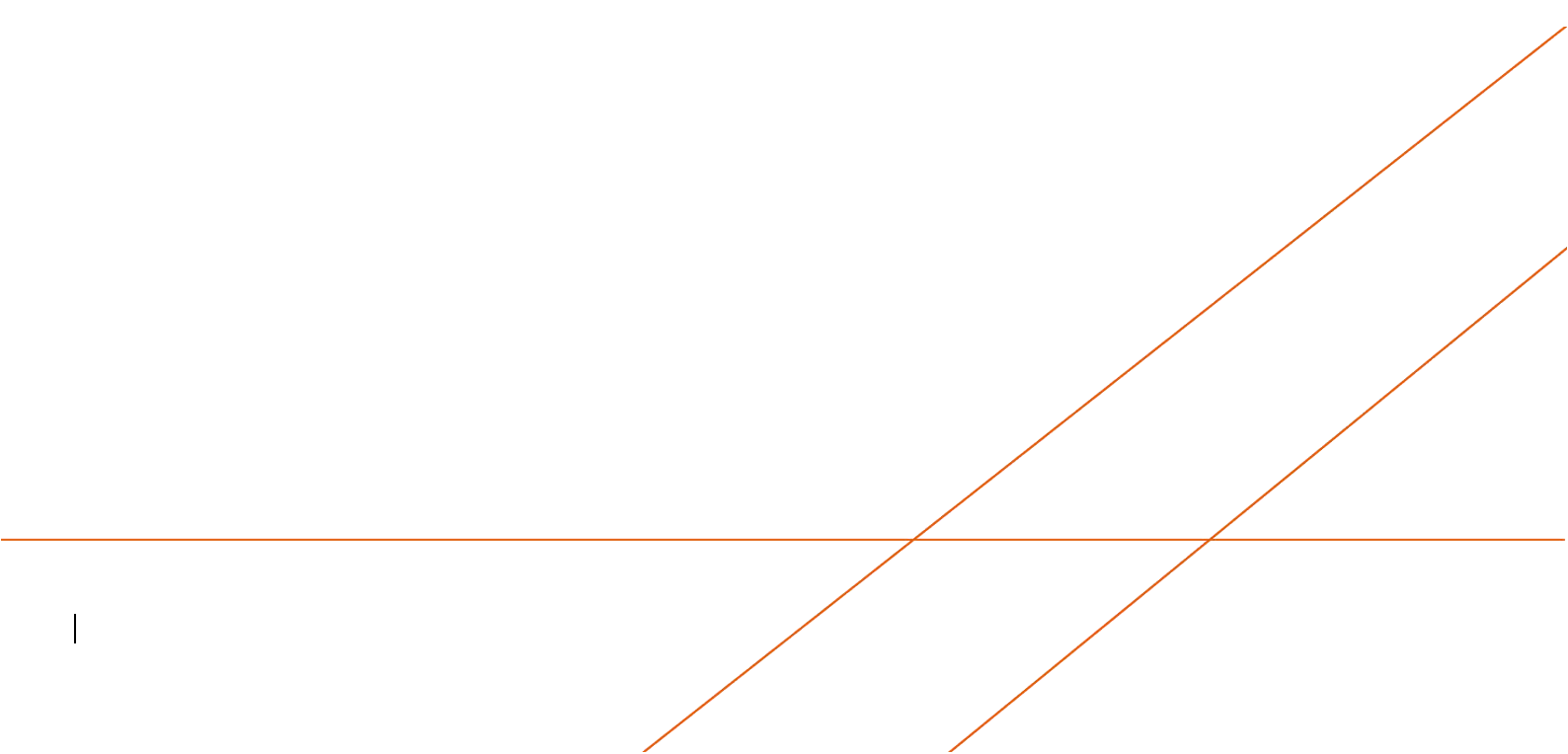
Time	Wednesday 30 th August					Sunday 24 th September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Close to where I live					0	3	11	13	5	32
Variety of tracks and paths		1			1	5	5	9	2	21
Quality of landscape/scenery			1		1	5	13	16	5	39
Wildlife offer					0	1		1		2
Other (write below)					0		Nice walk	Recreational		
							Quiet and secure			
							Views			
							The site is one of the reasons they moved to this location.	Views		
								Nice pubs in the area.		
								Have not visited the area in a while but wanted to make the most of the weather.		
								Change from the beach and convenient.		
								Meet up with friends		
								Wanted to go for a nice walk and this is the perfect location		
								Fresh air		

								On my way home		
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8. Including yourself, how many people are with you during your visit here?

Time	Wednesday 30 th August					Sunday 24 th September				
	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total	7.00-9.00	10.00-12.00	14.00-16.00	17.00-19.00	Total
Number of 0-18 year olds					0		5	3	3	11
Number of 19-25 year olds					0	1	6	20	6	33
Number of 26-59 year olds		3	2		5	5	15	39	8	67
Number of 60+ year olds		12			12	1	6	13	8	28

80 Fenchurch Street
London
United Kingdom
T: +44 (0) 20 7812 2000
arcadis.com



Appendix F –Landscape Statement

Note to be forwarded to Natural England - Landscape v.3 9th February 2023

- 1.1 An application for outline planning consent for the Otterpool Park new garden settlement was originally submitted in February 2019 (planning application reference no. Y19/0257/ FH). Following submission of the outline planning application (OPA) a number of consultation comments have been received from statutory consultees and the public. Amendments to the OPA were submitted 31 March 2022 to address the comments received on the original submission and to assist with the delivery of the development across the long term.
- 1.2 Consultation comments upon the amended OPA regarding landscape and visual impacts were received from Natural England (NE) 15 July 2022.
- 1.3 In response, the Applicant submitted a reply to NE's comments on 31 August 2022 and also submitted updated application documents, namely the Strategic Design Principles (Application Doc Ref OP5 Appendix 4.3), the Green Infrastructure Strategy (GIS) (Ref OP5 Appendix 4.11) and the Design and Access Statement (Ref OP5 Appendix 4.16).
- 1.4 The LPA subsequently met with NE to discuss the proposed tiered planning process and general approach to conditions/S106, should the application be approved. One matter that arose from this discussion concerned the proposed advanced structural planting, in particular the timely delivery of structural planting in advance of construction and the potential use of larger plant stock where land availability is an issue to this. The Applicant, along with the LPA met with NE on 26th September 2022 to discuss this. The text below provides an amplification of the matters discussed, and further detail of the tiered planning process in respect of landscape and visual matters .
- 1.5 The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) and GIS contained within current application documents outlines the proposed approach to the delivery of advance structural planting shown on the Parameter Plans. Namely the implementation of a substantial amount of this by year 5 following construction commencement, the planting of the majority of the remainder by year 10, leaving just those areas of 'phase-specific' planting (whose locations cannot be determined at this time) to be planted as those parcels of land come forward for development.
- 1.6 The justification for this approach (as set out in the LVIA and GIS) is related to the nature of the planning application (i.e. being an 'outline application' there is insufficient detail to determine the precise location of built form and hence the location of all structural planting areas) and the uncertainty around which order development parcels are constructed, and hence when planting is required.
- 1.7 The LPA's Environmental Impact Assessment advisors (Temple), which included a team of experienced landscape architects, reviewed this approach, and found it to be sound in respect of providing an applicable degree of mitigation – cognisant to the effects upon landscape character and visual amenity as set out in the LVIA.
- 1.8 The LVIA and GIS (along with other documents within the outline planning application such as the Strategic Design Principles) also describe how other relevant mitigation will be further developed, refined and ensured through the course of the future tiered planning process (i.e. Tiers 2 and 3) so that it complies with national and local policy and avoids or minimises impacts to the AONB and other sensitive landscape and visual receptors.
- 1.9 The LPA have drafted planning conditions and S106 obligations to achieve this. A draft of these conditions was shared with NE on 23 September 2022 and discussed at a meeting with them that day. An updated set of conditions was shared with NE in late January 2023.

1.10 In addition to being able to formally comment upon these more detailed submissions through this condition discharge and reserved matters process, NE will be invited by the LPA to respond to relevant aspects of the emerging proposals before they are approved.

1.11 In respect of landscape-related matters, the conditions include:

Tier 2 – Key Phase Definition

- A plan and schedule demonstrating which of the Structural Planting units indicatively shown on Figure 106 of the GIS would be delivered in that Key Phase, and confirmation that their inclusion within the subsequent Key Phase submission would comply with the principles and notes associated with Figure 106.
- A statement setting out the proposed scope and content of the subsequent Key Phase submission (including deliverables that would address the structural planting and other LVIA-related mitigation) and their relationship and interface with other Key Phases and reserved matters applications (where already approved or submitted).

Tier 2 – Key Phase Submission

- Phase-level Masterplans and Design Codes - showing how, in terms of open space, built form layout, proposed variations in the height of the buildings and roofscapes, and materiality, the development in that Key Phase would integrate into its setting (both in terms of its setting with adjoining Key Phases and the wider landscape surrounding the overall application site) and provide space for strategic planting (including the structural planting shown on GIS Figure 106).
- Phase level supplementary LVIA (if required) – the scope of which would be agreed prior to submission with LPA, but likely to be supported by verified wireframes and rendered views.
- A ‘Strategic Planting Report’ containing:
 - Plans showing the proposed delivery of the structure planting units (set out indicatively in Figure 106 GIS) associated that Key Phase (and demonstrating those units which are considered to have the greatest visual effect) and confirming the progress on the implementation of structure planting approved units in relation to other Key Phases.
 - A programme for the implementation of the structural planting units associated with the Key Phase, including which of these would be considered advanced planting (cognisant of the need for the planting to perform its mitigatory function as quickly as possible).
 - Further details upon the structural planting units’ proposed species selection, micro-siting (in relation to any further arboricultural and archaeological survey data collected during Tier 2) and future management (including how this integrates with the Long-Term Stewardship Vehicle) – making sure that these comply with the structural planting principles, notes and indicative layout shown on Figure 106 of the GIS.
- Green Infrastructure and Arboricultural Statement which demonstrates:
 - Compliance with the Green Infrastructure Principles of the GIS:

- Compliance with proposed quantum of all informal and formal open space required – as set out in the Open Space Standards in the F&HDC Places and Policies Local Plan;
- Identification of trees to be removed and trees to be retained and protected in advance of Reserved Matters Applications and in accordance with Figure 106 of the GIS and approved Open Space and Vegetation Parameter Plan;
- An overview of the responsibilities for delivery and ongoing management of green infrastructure within the Key Phase; and
- An up-to-date arboricultural survey and arboricultural impact assessment conducted to BS 5837:2012 if arboricultural features are impacted.

Tier 3

- For each Reserved Matters Application the following would be provided:
 - detailed landscape designs and specifications;
 - a programme for their implementation;
 - management responsibilities and maintenance schedules; and
 - a design statement that demonstrates how the landscaping scheme accords with any approved details as part of the approved Key Phase submission.

1.12 The flow diagram below shows the tiered approach and key LVIA-related related elements of the LPA's draft conditions.

1.13 The applicant also wishes to share with the LPA and NE an update on the progress made (since submission of the OPA) upon the potential early implementation of advance structural planting. This includes the detailed surveying of some structural planting sites that are within the applicant's ownership and/or control, and progression with draft planting designs, considerations regarding the timely procurement of planting stock (given potential challenges to supply and the resilience of plant stock to climate change). Whilst this is not material for formal consideration as part of the OPA it should reassure the LPA and NE that the applicant is committed to bringing about early delivery of the advance structured planting

1.14 In conclusion, when the:

- applicant's response to NE's concerns (dated August 2022);
- the updated application documents (dated August 2022);
- Temple's endorsement of the findings of the LVIA and the approach to advance structural planting; and
- the LPA's draft conditions/S106 obligations

are read together it is considered by the Applicant that, both, a robust assessment has been submitted and that the necessary mitigation can be provided and will be secured.

- It is hoped to take the OPA to Folkestone and Hythe's planning committee as soon as possible. The Applicant and the LPA would therefore welcome NE's confirmation of their latest position.

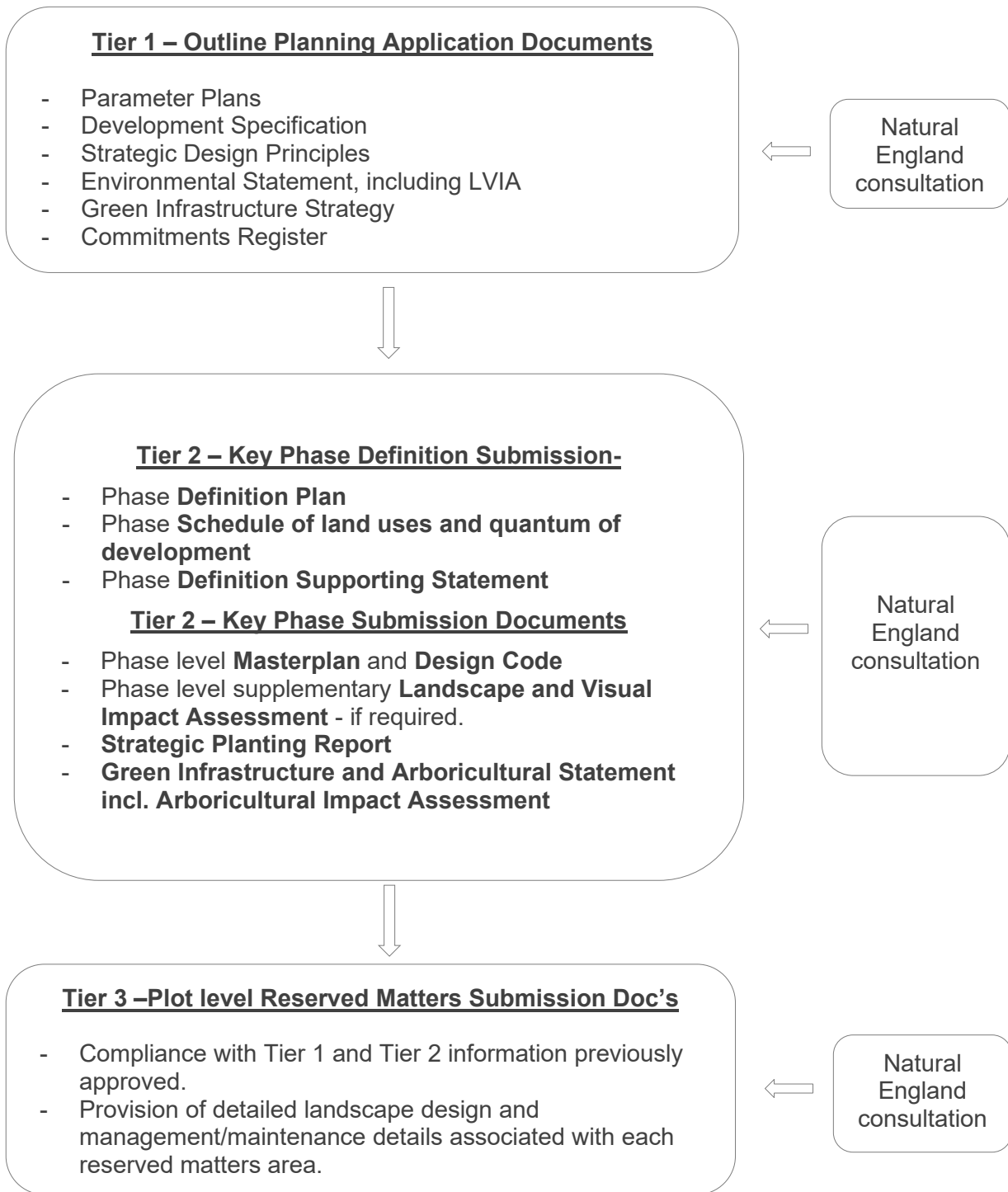


Diagram 1: Tiered approach and LPA's draft condition approach regarding landscape matters (NE's views welcome and this is also subject to further discussions with the Applicant)