

Agenda Item No: 5
Report To: Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date: 26th November 2013
Report Title: Update on Conningbrook Lakes Country Park
Report Author: Mark Carty



Summary: The main focus of this report is to inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposed future management proposals for Conningbrook Lakes Country Park, and in particular the arrangements being made for the integration of water sports activities on the site.

The Report provides an overview of the work undertaken jointly by officers and the Ashford Leisure Trust in putting in place the relevant operating policies and procedures relating to the management and coordination by ALT of water sports activities on the main lake by accredited clubs and associations.

The report also provides a brief update on the progress made in negotiating management agreements with the agreed operating partners.

Key Decision: NO

Affected Wards: All

Recommendations: For Information Only

Policy Overview:

Financial Implications: N/A

Risk Assessment NO

Equalities Impact Assessment NO

Other Material Implications: N/A

Exemption Clauses: N/A

Background Papers: Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Management Strategy / Expected Management Requirements (Early Years Access)

Note: The various 'live documents' referred to in paragraph 14 are available on request to Simon Harris (Culture & Environment / simon.harris@ashford.gov.uk)

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Report Title: Update on Management Arrangements for Conningbrook Lakes Country Park

Purpose of the Report

1. To inform the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the proposed future management and integration of water sports on the site and progress by officers on preparing the Conningbrook Country Park.

Background

2. Members will recall that Cabinet has recently received two reports on the Conningbrook Country Park i.e. 13th June 2013 (minute 36/06/13) and 11th July 2013 (minute 79/07/13). These reports followed a series of meetings held by the Conningbrook Members Working Group, the last of which was on 27th June 2013.
3. These meetings noted the encouraging progress on all aspects of the project and agreed and recommended the following:
 - a) the principles of a Commercial Agreement and authorisation for officers to finalise the agreement including transfer of land;
 - b) arrangements for early works and for officers to undertake all appropriate design and procurement given a further £200K (in addition to the £87K previously agreed) of capital funding;
 - c) that Management Agreements should be agreed by officers with the three 'operating partners' namely Ashford Leisure Trust (ALT), Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) and Mid Kent Fisheries (MKF);
 - d) that the Council lead on marketing and a promotional pack using a £5K revenue growth item in 2014/15;
 - e) that the balance from the allocated KWT subsidy payment in 2013/14 support the purchase of a Park Rangers vehicle.
4. Officers have been working hard over the last three months to progress the project and much operational research work focussed on water sports has been completed concerning the management arrangements which this report focuses on. It is anticipated that the management agreements will be finalised shortly and be ready for signature once the respective licence and lease agreements between ABC and Brett are concluded.
5. ABC and Brett are currently finalising the relevant agreements that will secure the country park, namely the licence and lease and section 106 and commercial agreements. The Section 106 agreement will secure the grant of the Lease on the commencement of the Brett planning permission and will reflect the summary heads of terms approved by Cabinet on 9 May 2013, thus securing ABC's long term interest in the country park.
6. Officers are working on the tender documents for the 'early years public access' works as detailed in the Cabinet report on 11th July 2013. These include a temporary access road, wooden-clad containers for storage, additional disabled parking, a floating pontoon, safety equipment and a culvert

to connect the southern part of the country park where the main lake is situated with the northern part. These will be tendered once the respective licence and lease agreements between ABC and Brett are concluded for a spring opening.

Management agreements with proposed 'operating partners'

7. Officers have been working closely with the proposed operating partners, discussing the level of expertise and skills required to manage the early years operation. Such dialogue, alongside discussions with other external professional organisations and individuals including RoSPA, Governing Bodies (Triathlon, Rowing, Canoeing), the KCC Sports Facility Manager, the Kentish Stour Countryside Project and clubs that intend, specifically, to use water, has helped inform operational specifications and risk assessments.
8. Site visits to Leybourne Lakes, Hillingdon Outdoor Activity Centre (Berkshire) and Shorne Woods Country Park (Gravesham) have also supported officers shape the management of the park and particularly the water sports on the site. This report provides the conclusion of such research and explains the work to be undertaken in the next few months.
9. The draft document 'Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Management Strategy / Expected Management Requirements (Early Years Access)' attached as Appendix A, provides the framework and approach to the respective agreements, management areas and specialist expertise, governance and partnerships as previously agreed by the Conningbrook Member Working Group. The Management Strategy includes the requirement for operating partners to draft a management plan for approval by ABC within 3 months of signing their agreements.
10. It also includes the need for each operating partner to participate in a quarterly Management Board chaired by ABC, and monthly meetings where ABC will monitor each individual operator on a one-to-one basis. The interests/concerns of the various 'end users' / stakeholders' (such as water sports clubs, fisherman etc.) will be represented by the relevant operating partner.
11. It is proposed that the overall management of water sports activities on the main lake will be coordinated by ALT who will manage access onto the lake by specialist water sports clubs and organisations such as the Pirates Canoe Club, Ashford Tri Club, and Sea Cadets, etc. ALT seconded a member of staff with experience in managing water sports facilities and associated projects, as well as personally participating in a number of water sports activities to ensure that a sound understanding of needs and requirements were understood and fed into ALT's business plan, risk assessment and subsequent management plan.
12. Officers and ALT have engaged both separately and as a group with the key users and it is clear that their experience and expertise in managing and operating all aspects of water sports and member activities is now robust and relevant to Conningbrook Lakes.

Update on policies and procedures by ALT related to water sports activities

13. ABC and ALT are currently finalising various policies and procedures relating to the use of the lake by specialist clubs and associations to ensure that the relevant health and safety procedures and practices are in place, and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) has been engaged to provide advice and guidance and to make recommendations towards finalising and implementing a management plan.
14. There are a number of on-going operational documents and procedures that are required when operating a sports area. ALT are currently compiling the following documents ¹ to manage access to the lakes and mitigate all identified risks :
 - **Risk Register** (a health and safety risk assessment) and safety review report
 - **Contractor document** (e.g. management of aquatic weeds, hedge cutting etc.).
 - **Hire requirements to external organisations** (e.g. water-sports clubs)
 - **Normal Operating Procedures (NOP)** document
15. As mentioned above, extensive discussions have taken place with a number of specialist clubs and associations that have expressed a strong interest in making use of the lake and associated facilities for water sports activities, including Pirates Canoe Club, Ashford Sea Cadets, Ashford Tri Club, Trispirit Events and Dover Rowing Club. All of these clubs have a proven track record of organising water sports activities and they currently all adhere to and comply with the policies, procedures and regulations of their respective governing bodies, and in the case of Ashford Sea Cadets also follow Ministry of Defence guidelines. Their on going compliance will be monitored by ALT.
16. ALT is also drawing up a provisional timetable and allocation of space on the main lake to ensure safety and effective coordination of the lakes and facilities. Areas of the main lake will be demarcated by buoys to provide each user group with a safe and suitable environment for their respective activities, and to avoid any conflict between different user groups. These areas will be finalised in due course once the various operational procedures have been agreed.
17. A business plan is currently being prepared by ALT based on the outcomes of the discussions with various user groups and an analysis of projected operating costs.
18. Discussions are also ongoing with British Rowing on possible 'taster events', but the timing of these is very much dependent on when the agreements between ABC and Brett are concluded. However, Brett has been very accommodating in the past on providing the location over to clubs to run 'one day' events (e.g. triathlons), so it may still be possible to organise such events in the near future. Other clubs and associations will also be welcomed to use

¹ These documents are available on request.

the facilities and organise their own events, subject to meeting all the operational requirements referred to above.

Conclusion

19. Officers jointly with ALT have undertaken significant research and sought the advice from experienced and specialist water users, including commissioning professional risk assessment work. To this end, significant progress has been made in negotiating management agreements with the agreed operating partners, and in putting in place the relevant operating policies and procedures relating to the management and coordination of water sports by ALT. Although it is currently not possible to provide a definite date for the opening of the Country Park, due to concluding the relevant agreements between ABC / Brett, it is still hoped that the country park will open for 'early access' in spring 2014.



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Management Strategy

Expected Management Requirements (Early Years Access)

3RD Draft / 12 November 2013



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ACCRONYMS

ABC - Ashford Borough Council

ALT – Ashford Leisure Trust

EA – Environment Agency

EMS - Ecological Management Strategy (Oct 2012, Bioscan Report Ref: 1353R5fv)

KWT – Kent Wildlife Trust

MKF – Mid Kent Fisheries

I. Background

1. Ashford Borough Council has been working with the Brett Group for a number of years on proposals to develop and transform a former gravel extraction site at Conningbrook into a country park. The development of the country park will be funded by an 'enabling development scheme' led by the Brett Group, of up to 300 houses on part of the site.
2. The ***Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Business and Operating Plan*** (November 2012) proposed that the country park will include a range of leisure and recreational facilities centred on the main lake, as well as extensive areas set aside primarily for nature conservation. The plan is the culmination of extensive consultations, held with a broad range of stakeholders and potential end users.
3. Stakeholders agreed the following vision for the Country Park: -

"Conningbrook Lakes will be transformed to create a new country park at the gateway to the Stour Valley. It will contain the existing Julie Rose Stadium and will provide opportunities to expand the existing leisure facilities offered to include a range of water based sports and other activities. The development of the country park will also contribute to biodiversity through the enhancement of habitats throughout the site, and will also provide new links to established public rights of way and cycle routes".
4. The Brett development will fund financial contributions payable to ABC (secured by s106 agreement) for the creation of the *country park*. The Section 106 Agreement will also provide Ashford Borough Council with a long-term interest in the country park land (owned by Brett) through a long-term lease (this is still being negotiated).
5. An 'early years access' plan to bring forward public access to the Conningbrook Lakes Country Park has been agreed with the stakeholders and granted planning approval (Planning Committee May 2013). This allows Ashford Borough Council to undertake some works and provide a temporary access road from Julie Rose Stadium, parking, storage containers, office and workshop buildings, slipway, floating pontoons, together with lifelbelts, signage and parking control plus change of use of land to use as a country park.
6. If all goes to plan it is hoped that the early years' access will begin sometime around Summer 2013. It will be necessary for the management of the site to be agreed and appropriate operators in place. This Management Strategy aims to provide the framework for such and act as an overarching document for all those involved or wishing to be involved in the Conningbrook Lakes County Park development and operation.

II. Introduction

7. This document sets out the 'key management roles and responsibilities' that are expected of the respective '**operating partners**' to be appointed by Ashford Borough Council during the 'early years access' of the Conningbrook Lakes Country Park and its ongoing development.
8. When fully implemented Conningbrook Lakes Country Park and the associated residential area will comprise of five discreet management compartments (See Appendix A). These compartments are identified in the '**Ecological Management Strategy**' (**EMS**) for the Conningbrook Lakes development as a whole, which was prepared by Bioscan on behalf of the Brett Group, following extensive consultations with **Ashford Borough Council (ABC)** and **Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT)**.
9. The Ecological Management Strategy provides the general framework for good ecological management and will serve as a reference point for the future development of specific management plans for the respective 'compartments' of the country park which are: -
 - Compartment 1 - Northern field, lake and adjacent section of river
 - Compartment 2 - Residential area
 - Compartment 3 - Lake, river and wet woodland within LWS
 - Compartment 4 - Southern grasslands and adjacent river
 - Compartment 5 - Recreational lake and activities centre
10. Four compartments (Compartments 1, 3, 4 and 5), including the main lake, form the country park. During the early years access the country park will be operated by Ashford Borough Council 'under licence' from the Brett Group. During this early years access licence period a temporary access route will be provided and the facilities of the Julie Rose Stadium made available for park visitors / users, as detailed in ABC's planning application 'Early Access Works to Conningbrook Lakes Country Park'.
11. In order to effectively integrate and coordinate the management of these four compartments, management agreements will be negotiated with three 'operating partners', each of which has specialist expertise and appropriate specialist skills & resources. It is envisaged that the following 'operating partners' will be appointed: -
 - Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT) – to manage the nature conservation areas and to perform 'wardening' functions;
 - Ashford Leisure Trust (ALT) – to manage the activity programme, including water sports and recreation;
 - Mid Kent Fisheries (MKF) – to manage fishing and to perform water bailiff duties.
12. Section V explains the governance arrangements which includes the Council setting up and coordinating a *Management Board*. This will

oversee the delivery of the country park and include representatives of the three operating partners, as well as the Brett Group and (in time) representatives of groups/organisations using the country park as appropriate.

13. In the longer term it has been suggested that a '*community management trust*' may be set up in order to facilitate and promote the further involvement of the local community.
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III. Approach to Agreements

14. As explained above, management agreements will be directly negotiated with each of the three 'operating partners'.
15. The operating partners will each undertake the management of designated compartment(s) in accordance with agreed 'heads of terms and resources'. These will be drafted in consultation with each operating partner and evolve into a *management agreement*.
16. Each management agreement will refer to this document – The **Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Management Strategy**. In undertaking their management agreement, operating partners will be signing up to this strategy. Thus it is vital that all the operating partners approval this document and adopt its principles and understand and acknowledge the workings, role and responsibilities of others as described within this document.
17. As there are a number of operating partners who will need to work together and appreciate different management requirements for the country park to ensure good practise in partnership working is understood and transparent from the outset.
18. As well as the general legal information contained within a management agreement such as insurance and public liability and termination clauses, each agreement will include:
 - Specific roles and responsibilities
 - Overarching service outcomes (expectations on which an evolving management plan will be based)
 - Payment/fee arrangements (if appropriate)
 - Sign up to specific documents (i.e. Management Strategy)
 - Participation in the Management Board (refer section V)

Management Plans

19. It is expected that all management agreements will include the need for the operating partner to develop and deliver *a management plan*.

20. Given that the country park in the early years is a new entity, ABC believes that the management plan for each operator needs to evolve overtime.
 21. With this in mind it is expected that the management agreements will have overarching service outcomes that the management plan will take and apply aims and objectives to. The first draft of the management plan should be in place within three months of signing the management agreement and from that point or before it will be monitored, developed and changed within the first year in consultation with ABC and others as appropriate.
 22. Each *management plan* will take account of and be consistent with the 'Ecological Management Strategy' and vision within the 'Business and Operating Plan'.
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IV. Management Areas and Specialist Expertise

23. There are four compartments (Compartments 1, 3, 4 and 5), including the main lake, that form the country park.
 - Compartment 1 - Northern field, lake and adjacent section of river
 - Compartment 3 - Lake, river and wet woodland within LWS
 - Compartment 4 - Southern grasslands and adjacent river
 - Compartment 5 - Recreational lake and activities centre
24. Compartment 2 is the Residential area and when fully built will be managed by a management company selected through tender and appointed (by the developers) prior to occupation of the first residential unit. This is outlined in the *Residential Management Proposal (October 2012)* prepared by BDB on behalf of the Brett Group.
25. Each of the following sections (A to C) looks at the different compartments and explains the necessary roles and responsibilities required to effectively manage it. This information is to be used to formulate the management agreements for each operating partner but as stressed previously it is important that all operating partners fully understand and appreciate all that is required to effectively deliver a country park.

A. Nature Conservation Areas (Compartments 1, 3 & 4) / Environment, ecology & biodiversity

26. A specialist nature conservation organisation (Kent Wildlife Trust) will be appointed to undertake the management of the country park environment, land, habitat, conservation and ecology in accordance with agreed 'heads of terms and resources' that will be detailed in a *management agreement* to which (in due course) will be appended a site specific detailed *management plan* (see below).
27. The appointed nature conservation organisation will implement a *management plan* (to be agreed) that will cover all areas designated for nature conservation (Compartments 1, 3 and 4), including the section of the River Stour Ashford to Fordwich Local Wildlife Site (LWS) (see Appendix B) that is within the site. The *management plan*, which will be prepared during the 'early years licence period' in consultation with ABC, will take account of and be consistent with the *Ecological Management Strategy*.
28. The appointed nature conservation organisation will engage a Park Ranger (or Assistant Park Ranger) with knowledge of and experience in environmental and park/habitat management within a busy public setting. A detailed job description will be agreed between ABC and the appointed nature conservation organisation with key elements of the role to include planning and executing works on site, creating a local volunteer base and liaising with other contractors, residents, visitors, councillors, etc.
29. Although the primary function of these compartments is nature conservation, the management plan will also take account of the requirements for informal recreation (including fishing, walking & cycling) and education as secondary functions.
30. It is envisaged that conservation grazing will be an important element of management of these areas, although in the early years 'licence period' there may be a need to reduce existing grazing pressure to allow 'recovery' of areas that have until now been intensively grazed by sheep.
31. The appointed nature conservation organisation will be responsible for the maintenance of stock fencing and for ensuring the grazing regime is appropriate to the aims and objectives set out in the EMS.
32. The appointed nature conservation organisation will organise an appropriate volunteer programme in support of conservation objectives and to promote community involvement / ownership.

Compartment 1 – Northern field, lake and adjacent section of river

33. Compartment 1 is located to the north of the proposed residential development and has been designated as an area for conservation / habitat mitigation work, which will include the creation of an area of wet woodland and two ponds as part of mitigation works associated with the loss of existing habitats due to residential development.
34. The 'northern lake' at the southern end of Compartment 1 is currently used to breed coarse fish to restock the main lake. It is proposed that this lake will eventually (in the medium term) be made available for family fishing. The compartment is bordered by the River Great Stour to the east.
35. During the early years' access period this compartment may not require active management by the appointed organisation as mitigation works by the developer will be ongoing.

Compartment 3 – Lake, river and wet woodland within Local Wildlife Site

36. This compartment is located south of the northern meadow (Compartment 1) and is at the heart of the designated Local Wildlife Site. A key feature is the 'eco lake' that was added to the Local Wildlife Site in 2005 on the basis of its use by wintering-bird species. In the long term the management of the interface between the residential area (Compartment 2) and the 'eco-lake' will be a key challenge.
37. During the early years' access period some active management of this compartment will commence, including possibly the thinning of selected trees around the 'eco-lake'.

Compartment 4 – Southern grasslands and adjacent river

38. This compartment comprises a narrow strip of land between the River Great Stour and the main recreational lake, with a larger area of grassland to the south of the lake.
39. During the early years access period this compartment will be the most actively managed of the nature conservation areas, although even here the emphasis will probably be on reducing grazing pressure to allow a period of 'recovery'. Moreover, this compartment includes Brett's 'retained land' and 'haul road' (see Section 5. below).

Expected Management Requirements (Compartments 1,3,4)

General

- Undertake to provide 'park warden' duties and functions for the management of the country park;

- Develop and implement a management plan in accordance with the agreed *Ecological Management Strategy* (EMS) and in consultation with Ashford Borough Council, the Brett Group and the Environment Agency.
- Manage a grazing regime in accordance with the agreed management plan.
- Monitor and maintain condition of boundary and stock fencing and gates in all areas managed by KWT as defined in Schedule 3.
- Maintain paths and signage within the designated nature conservation areas;
- Make adequate arrangements for the management of litter and other such waste generated on the site.

Community Engagement

- Develop and implement an appropriate volunteer programme in support of conservation objectives and promote community involvement / ownership;
- Organise and implement an environmental education programme in conjunction with local schools and the local community;
- Engage with other organisations with an interest in nature conservation, such as the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP) with a view to developing partnership working opportunities.

B. Recreational Lake and Activities Centre (Compartment 5) – including Country Park Gateway / Sport, recreation and leisure

40. A specialist sport, recreation and leisure organisation (Ashford Leisure Trust) will be appointed to effectively oversee, manage and develop public access, sports, recreation and leisure programmes in the country park, including the main recreational lake, also maximising the integration of the country park with the Julie Rose Stadium thereby securing economies of scale, especially in the early years.
41. The appointed leisure operator will be responsible for landscape maintenance of Compartment 5 from the entrance to the Country Park up to the lake edge and up to and including the boundaries of Compartments 2 and 4, as well as specified park infrastructure (temporary and permanent) including but not limited to:
 - Litter and dog bins
 - Seating, picnic tables, etc.

- Gates and fences
 - Signage & public art
 - Car parking machines
 - Slipway & pontoons
 - Storage areas & buildings etc.
42. In managing the landscaped areas, the leisure operator will be guided by the EMS.
43. The leisure operator will also be responsible for managing recreational access to the lake by specialist clubs and associations (such as the Sea Scouts, canoe and sailing clubs, triathlon clubs, etc.) and will ensure that the relevant health and safety procedures and safeguards are in place. Members of the public will not be able to use the lake except under the jurisdiction of bona fide clubs and associations, with appropriately trained coaches and full risk assessments, etc.
44. These organisations have the necessary expertise to manage and develop their specialist activities under their own coaches, officials and governing bodies. While this arrangement removes specialist burdens from the chosen leisure operator, the operator will nonetheless be well placed to minimise any potential for incompatible uses, such as sailing conflicting with angling, for example, and will also market and promote the park through their existing promotional activities.

Expected Management Requirements

General

- Comply with relevant health and safety, environmental and sport and leisure legislation;
- Develop and implement a Management Plan to include an Activity Development Plan in accordance with the agreed environment management strategy (EMS) and the guidelines as detailed in Schedule Three;
- Implement and manage car parking regime including appropriate traffic control measures on the Site taking account of projected visitor numbers and ensure the provision of traffic marshalls on event days to direct traffic away from the Brett Vehicular Access Point;
- Control access to the Site according to agreed 'hours of opening' as defined in the Management Plan (or as may be varied by agreement with ABC).

Grounds maintenance

- Make adequate arrangements for the management of litter and other such waste generated on the site and monitor and ensure emptying of litter and dog bins;
- Daily inspection and maintenance of safety belts around main lake;
- Maintain water sports infrastructure (i.e. slipway & pontoons, etc)

- Maintain storage areas / containers and any shelter that may be erected;
- Monitor and maintain condition of boundary and stock fencing (where appropriate) and gates;
- Maintain all grass areas within Compartment 5 either by mowing or grazing (may be assigned to KWT);
- Maintain footpaths, access ways and parking areas and any other park infrastructure within Compartment 5 (i.e. seating, picnic tables, signage & public art)

Management of Water Sports

- Manage (and coordinate) recreational access to the lake by specialist clubs and associations (such as the Sea Scouts, canoe and sailing clubs, triathlon clubs, etc.) according to an agreed bookings procedure;
- Ensure all relevant health and safety procedures and safeguards are in place and implemented;
- Market and promote the water sports / recreational offer of the Country Park;
- Manage and develop programme of community engagement for the site;
- Maximise the integration of the Country Park with the Julie Rose Stadium thereby securing economies of scale

C. Main Lake and North Lake / Fishing

45. ABC will draft and agree a *licence* with a specialist fisheries operator setting out the terms and conditions under which fishing will operate on the main lake and smaller northern lake. The appointed fisheries operator will liaise closely with appointed leisure operator to ensure that fishing is well coordinated with other activities on the main lake. No fishing will be permitted in the 'eco-logical lake'.
46. The appointed fisheries operator will be guided by the EMS and will liaise closely with *the operating partner responsible for nature conservation* with regards to the proper management of lakeside 'edges' within designated nature conservation areas, water quality, etc.
47. The appointed fisheries operator will perform the role of 'water bailiff' and be responsible for ensuring that all fishermen using the lake comply with relevant 'codes of conduct' / park '*byelaws*' / health and safety protocols etc).
48. The fisheries operator will be permitted to let the fishing rights to individuals and/or clubs as laid out in the *licence agreement*.

Expected Management Requirements

General

- Comply with relevant health and safety, environmental and sport and leisure legislation.
- Participate as required in regular meetings of the Management Board which includes the Council's representative.
- Liaise closely with Ashford Leisure Trust ("ALT") to ensure that fishing is well coordinated with other recreational activities taking place on the main lake.
- Liaise closely with the operating partner responsible for nature conservation, the Kent Wildlife Trust with regards to the proper management of lakeside 'edges' within the designated nature conservation areas.
- Perform the role of 'water bailiff' and be responsible for ensuring that all fishermen using the lake comply with relevant 'codes of conduct' / park 'byelaws' / health and safety protocols, licence terms etc.
- Regularly monitor water quality and weed/algae levels and bring any concerns and/or recommendations to the attention of the Council, particularly where there might be impacts on the safe use of the lake by other recreational users, including swimmers.
- Undertake and/or commission weed control measures as and when appropriate and as approved by the Council and Brett Group as appropriate.
- Explore the possibilities for developing family fishing.

Maintenance of infrastructure

- Maintain any parking areas specifically reserved for anglers
- Maintain all banks, landscaping and fishing platforms in good repair and ensure platforms and surrounding areas are free from litter.
- 11. MKF and its associate members shall ensure that it abides by all appropriate laws and Country Park regulations.

V. Governance and Partnership

Coordinating the Roles of Operating Partners

49. Ashford Borough Council will monitor the management agreements in place with each partner. Each operating partner will be required to attend quarterly performance review meetings with the Council's named contact to monitor the management agreement, support the formation of the management plan (to be developed over first year of operation) and assess it's performance.
50. All operating partners will be expected to assess the impact and quality of its services to the benefit of the users and objectives of the operating partners providing an annual performance report at a fourth performance review meeting with ABC to be held on or near the first anniversary of the management agreement.

51. An annual performance report shall include customer feedback, information of the past year's services outcomes and a statement of how the operating partner has assisted in the delivery and vision of the country park as outlined in the of the *Conningbrook Lakes Country Park Business and Operating Plan*.

Management Board





52. A Management Board ('the Board') chaired by ABC will be formed to support and coordinate the operations of the country park.
53. Each of the operating partners will be required to attend and participate.
54. *The role of the Board is to:*
- coordinate local operations;
 - work through the detail of any site management issues;
 - help identify other partners to support and fund the management plans of each of the operating partners;
 - identify any barriers, gaps and needs for future operation and in particular community engagement;
 - consider how to improve current service provision/ways of working together;
 - advocate the work of the operating partners in the local area to other stakeholders.
55. Sub groups of the Board maybe set up to monitor specific issues or research/deliver on particular topics (e.g. educational work). One such group suggested is a **Stakeholder Group** of all the clubs and community groups that may use or visit the site regularly. This will support communication for the benefit of all the operators and the users.
56. This governance structure is visualised in Appendix 3

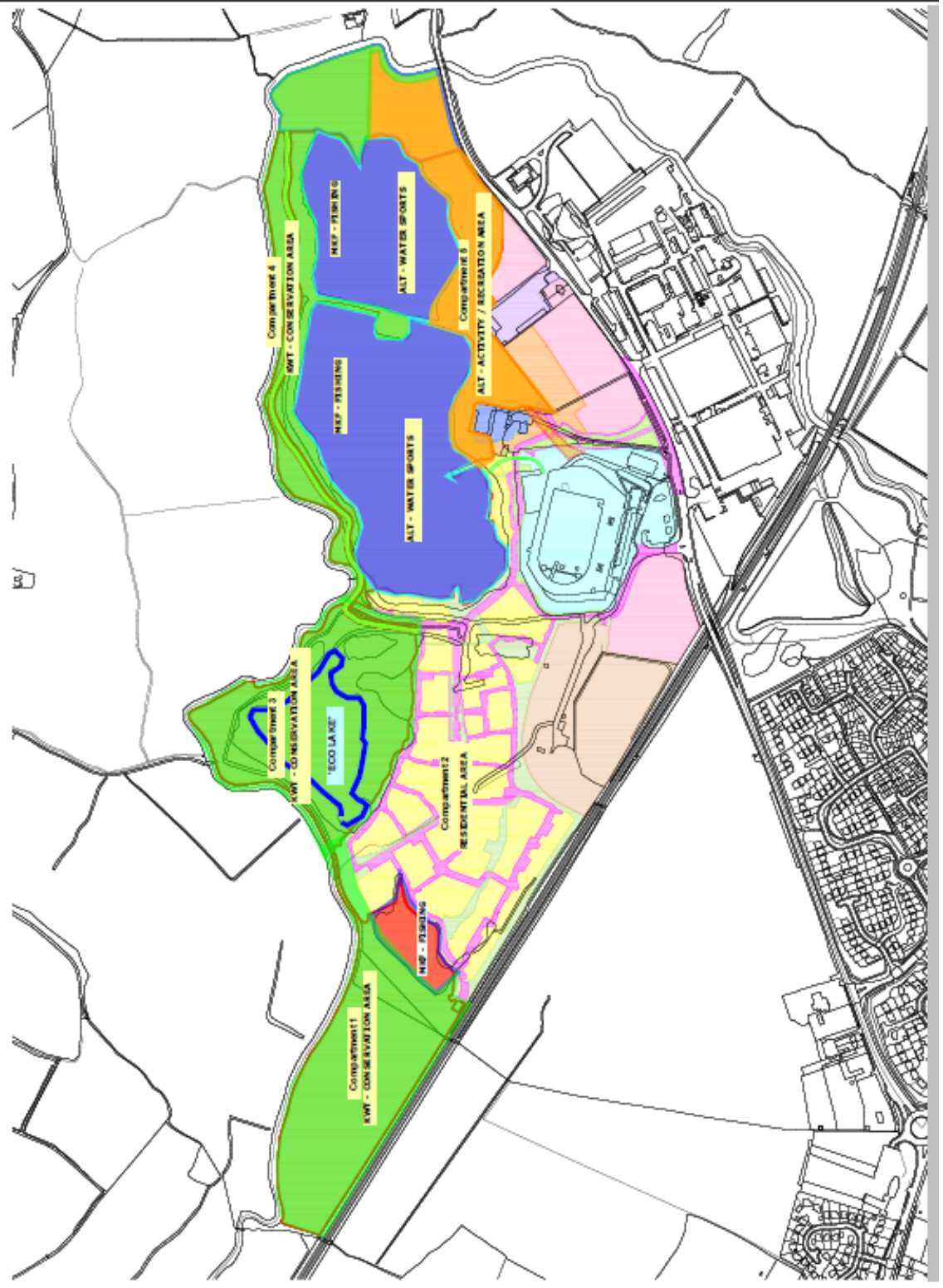
[TO BE FINALISED].

57. Over time it is envisaged that a new *community management trust* might be formed to assume the overall role of site management and community liaison so that ABC and the Brett Group can eventually step back and this will ensure a seamless partnership and business operation at the Park.

APPENDIX 1: CONNINGBROOK LAKES COUNTRY PARK - MANAGEMENT ZONES

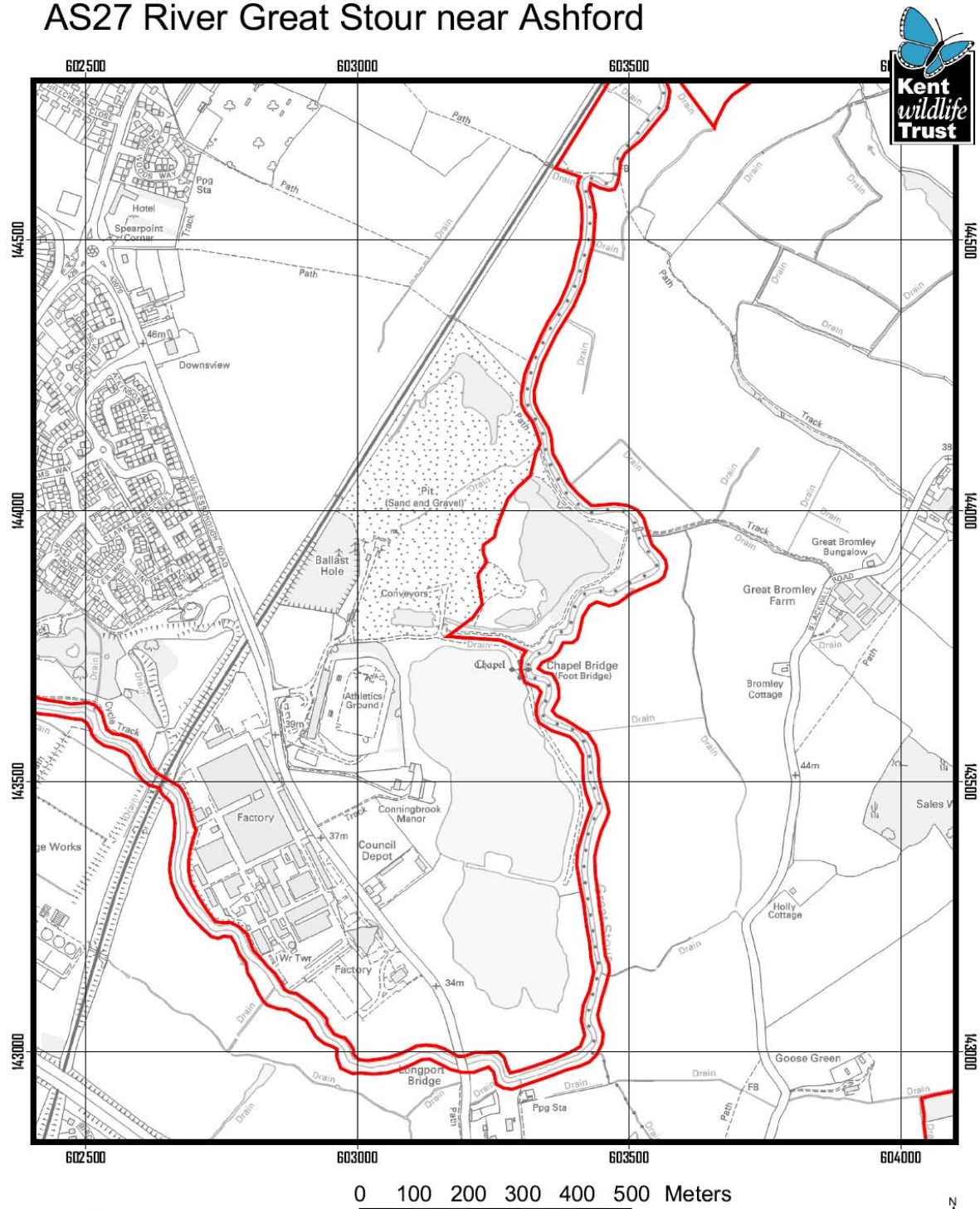
Key to Management Zones

	Areas managed by Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT)
	Northern Lake - managed by Mid Kent Fisheries (MKF)
	Main Lake - managed jointly by Mid Kent Fisheries (MKF) & Ashford Leisure Trust
	Areas managed by Ashford Leisure Trust (ALT)



APPENDIX 2: River Stour Ashford to Fordwich Local Wildlife Site

AS27 River Great Stour near Ashford



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 2011 Ordnance Survey 100019239

 LWS Current

Your living landscape. Your living seas.

APPENDIX 3: Governance Structure

[TO BE FINALISED]

DRAFT