



MAKING TRAX - HOBLINGWELL WOOD RECREATION GROUND SITE APPRAISAL

Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Area Site Appraisal

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Introduction



1.1

Introduction to the Project

Access Sport's Making Trax Programme was launched in 2011 to create a thriving youth cycling scene. The programme aims to achieve this by creating community clubs, new tracks, new coaches, new volunteers, new competitions and delivering directly to community partners such as schools, pupil referral units and disabled people's organisations.

Making Trax is now developing a network of over 50 inclusive community cycling clubs across the country. By using BMX and other non-traditional disciplines each club will make cycling accessible, relevant and welcoming for anyone, regardless of race, gender, sex, ability, religion or privilege.

Collectively these clubs will challenge attitudes to inclusion and diversity and make a vital contribution towards a more inclusive society.

Making Trax is exploring the possibility of developing a new BMX track at Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground, in the London Borough of Bromley. The site sits near to the National Trust's Petts Wood and Hawkwood and lies on the eastern edge of Chislehurst, overlooking the valley of the River Cray. The site is currently used for football, American football, rugby and has parking facilities, changing facilities and children's playground. It is home to Orpington Rugby Club and has a wide range of other users. It is managed on behalf of the council by IDVerde.

The Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground has been identified as a potential host site, after other sites in the locality were deemed less suitable. This report therefore offers further testing of site suitability by way of a detailed site appraisal.





Assessment and Context

2

2.1 Site location

Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground is situated in St Pauls Cray, Orpington, adjacent to Hoblingwell Wood, between Chislehurst and Petts Wood in the north east of the Borough of Bromley. The site is XX hectares.

The surrounding land comprises of residential properties to the north, east and south, and the site is contiguous to, and shares a boundary with, Hoblingwell Wood directly to the west.

The site is irregular in shape and is sloping both from west to east and south to north. To provide flat playing surfaces the land has been terraced in three large areas descending from south to north, with the main buildings, hub, which consists of changing rooms, a and club house at a higher level occupying the middle area of the site. The play ground also sits within this middle tranche of the recreation ground. The western portion of the site where it abuts the semi-natural Hoblingwell wood is more naturalistic in character, with a large area put to meadow.

The boundaries of the site are open on the western, northern and eastern sides and bounded by a native specie shelter belt between the recreation ground and adjacent residential properties to the north.

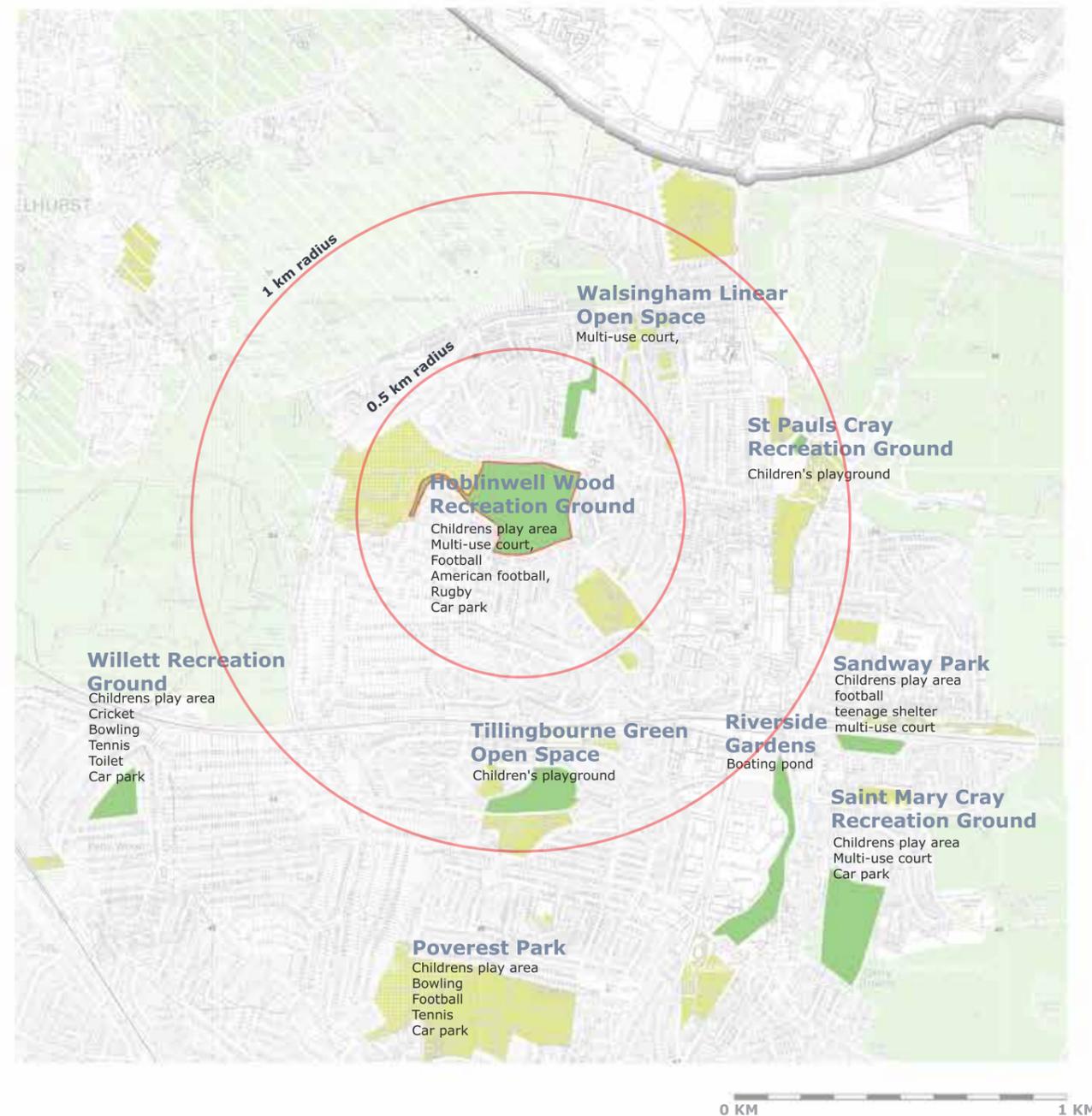
There are fine open views from the northern portion of the site looking towards Bexley and Dartford.



2.2 Open Space Context

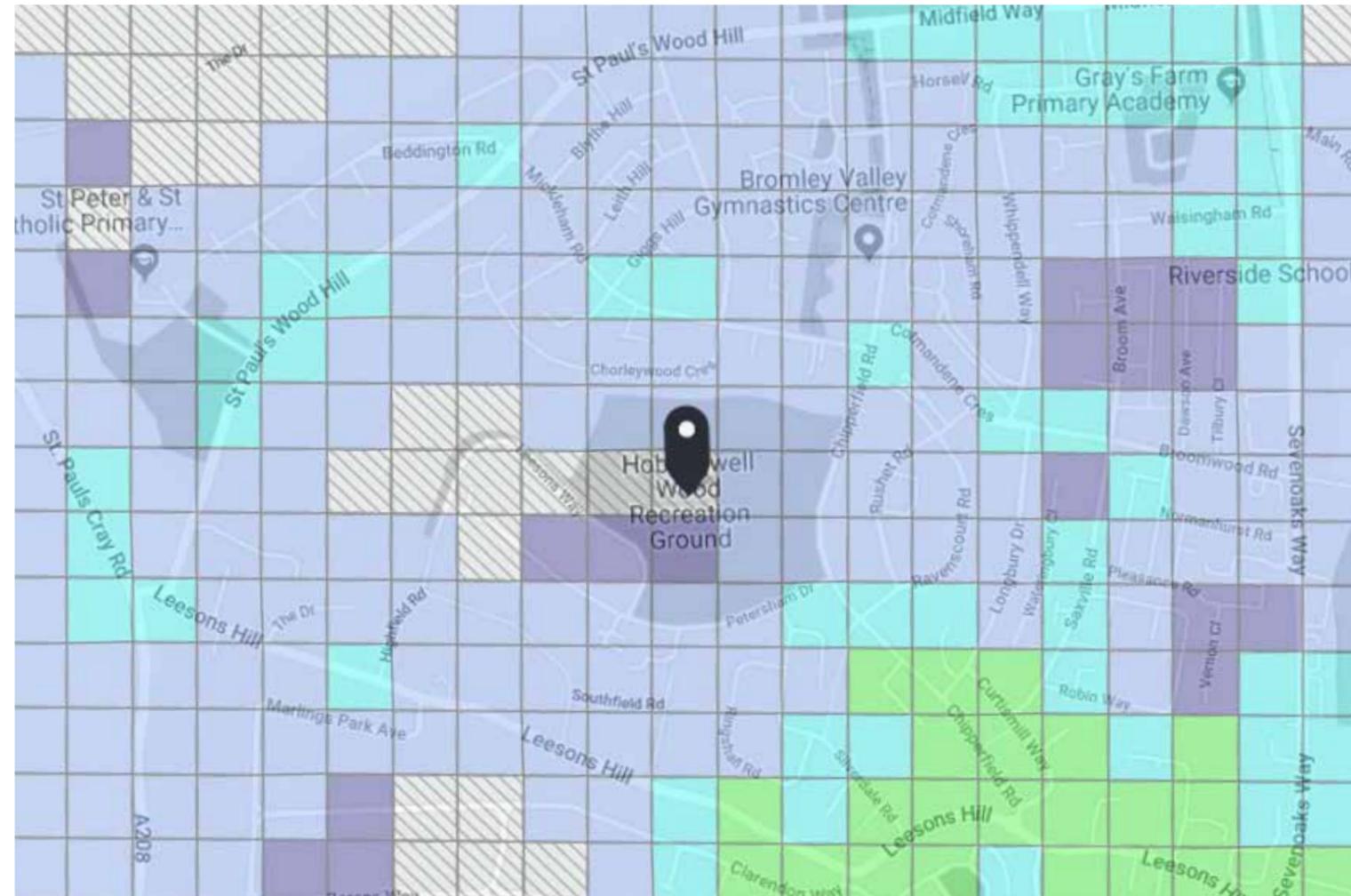
In the last London Borough of Bromley – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment(2017) Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground is considered a large district open space under the GLA Classification. Bromley has assessed it's character as 'natural/formal' (P.47 London Borough of Bromley – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment 2017). It is also classified as a natural/semi natural open spaces (P65. Ibid). Its facilities comprise of a traditional fenced, children's play area, a number of currently unmarked grass football pitches, a rugby pitch and 2 changing room blocks and a club house. The facilities are concentrated in the eastern and central part of the site. In aforementioned London Borough of Bromley – Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment(2017), within the audit of provision undertaken by the Borough, there is no assessment of quality of the parks and open spaces within the borough, although the current provision of facilities on the site, such as the changing rooms, football pitches and play facilities are in poor condition.

Although Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground sits within a largely urban area of the Borough there are large areas of Green belt land accessible to the west of the site, however this area contains little to no access to formal sports or play facilities. To the south and east of the site there are two other children's playgrounds, Tillingbourne Green Open Space and St Paul's Recreation Ground within a one kilometre radius. Within a 1.5 kilometre radius sits Willets Recreation Ground and Poverest park, which provide a greater range of sporting facilities, such as bowling, tennis, cricket and play areas.



2.3 Transport Connections

Public Transport Access Level or PTAL is a measure of access to the public transport network. For any given point in London, PTALs combine walk times from a chosen point to the network (stations and bus stops, for example) together with service frequency data at these locations. This provides an overall access index which can be allocated to nine accessibility levels between 0 and 6b. The PTAL rating for the Site is between 0 and 1b, indicating a “poor” level of public transport accessibility. This PTAL value has been extracted from TfL’s online PTAL calculator. However the south eastern corner of the site has much better ratings of 2 and 3.



2.3 Transport Connections

This section examines in more detail at the transport connections to the site.

Bus Accessibility

A number of bus stops are located on Chipperfield Road, directly adjacent to the site. Bus Route 431B, runs from St Pauls Cray to Trinity School, route R11 runs from Queen Mary's Hospital, through Sidcup, Foots Cray, St Mary Cray and Orpington to Green Street Green and the B14 runs from Bexleyheath, through Sidcup to Orpington, all of which link up to St Mary Cray train station.

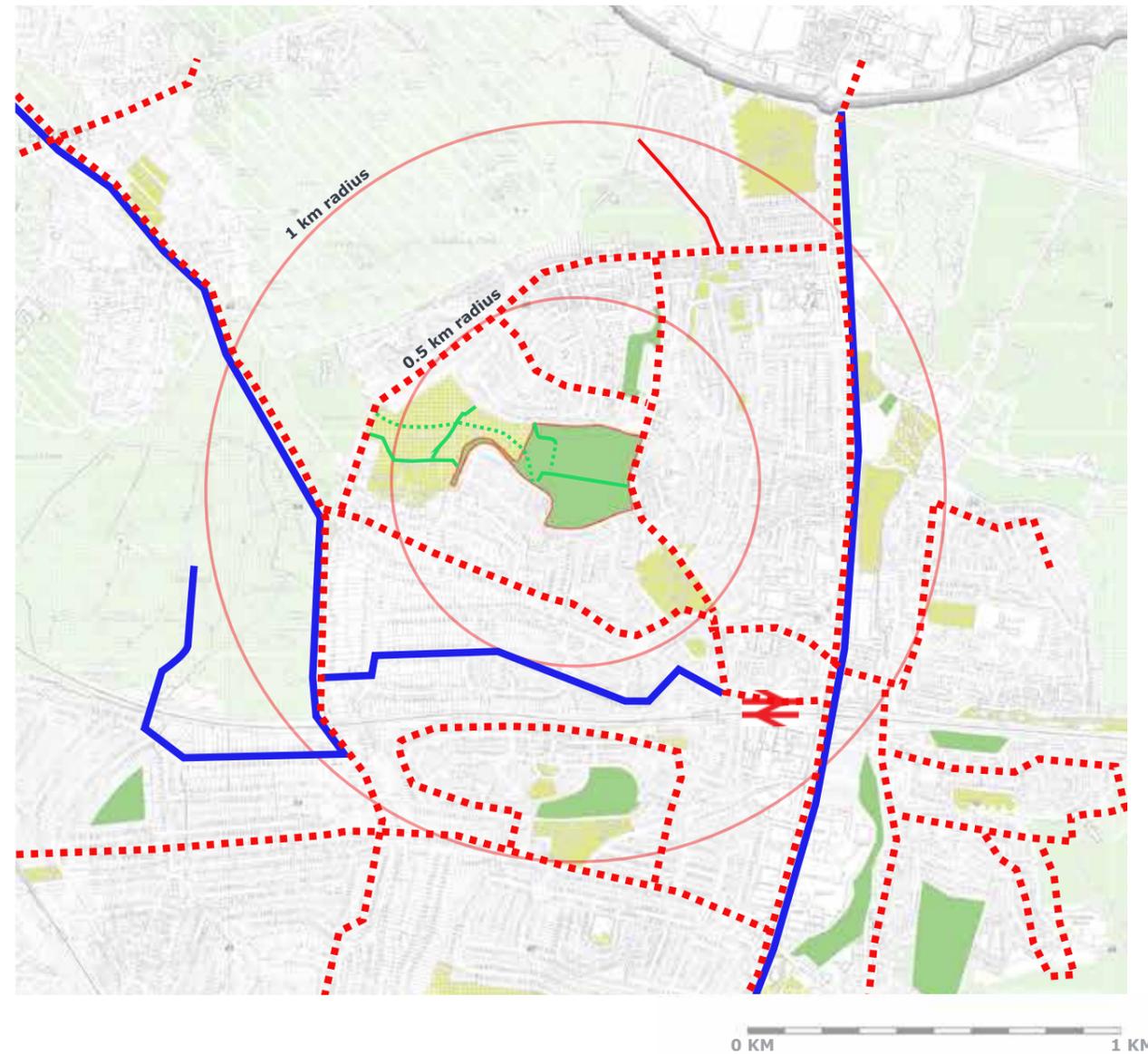
There are no London Underground stations within a reasonable walking distance of the site.

Train Accessibility

St Mary Cray station is located approximately 0.7 km walking distance to the north of the site, which equates to a walking travel time of around 12 minutes and provides direct train journeys to a number of train stations, including London Victoria.

Cycle Routes

Two local cycle routes to the west, south and east of the site.

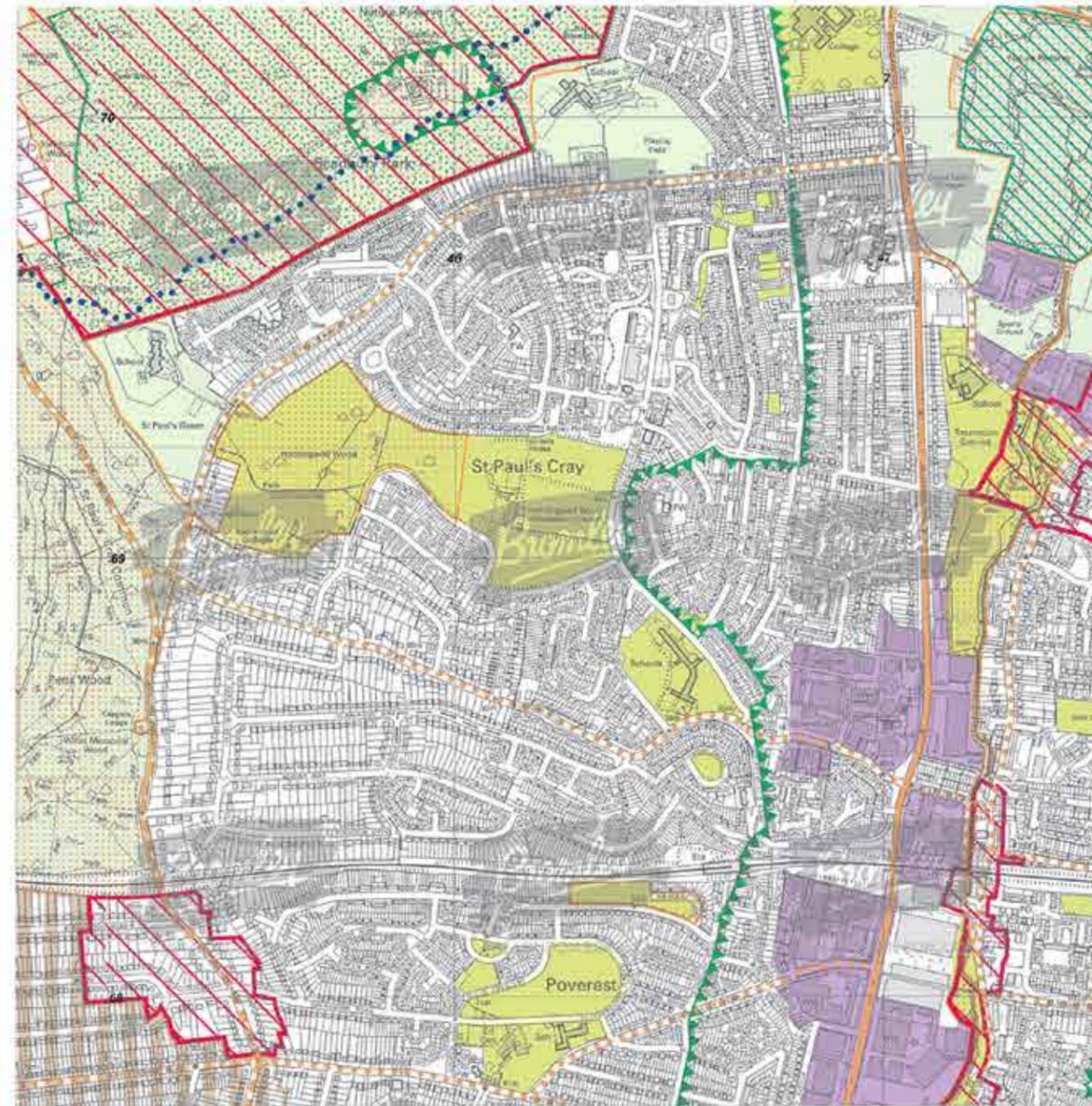


2.4 Designations and Listings

Hoblingwell Wood Recreation ground is designated as urban open land in the LB Bromley Local Plan, and the far western portion of the site, which sits adjacent to Hoblingwell Wood is designated as a SINC (Site for Nature Conservation). It site lies adjacent to, but outside, an area of Archaeological Significance.

There are 2 Grade ii listed buildings with 500 metres of the site Robin Hood Cottages, located at 2 and 3, St Pauls Wood Hill, now timber-framed two cottages, circa early C17th, with pantiled, steeply pitched roofs.

The site is not in the of any designated Bromley views.



	Green Belt		Water Development Easement
	Heritage Open Land		Proposed Sites
	Green Chain		Highway Proposed
	Urban Open Space		Bus Stop
	High Quality Open Space of Outstanding Natural Beauty		Biggin Hill Airport Public Safety Zone
	Site of Special Scientific Interest		Biggin Hill Public Safety Zone - Jetstream Park
	Local Nature Reserve		Strategic Route
	Site of Importance for Nature Conservation		London Electricity SAZ
	Area of Archaeological Significance		Local Distribution Route
	Area of Special Residential Character		The London Loop
	Primary Shopping Frontage		The Capital Ring
	Secondary Shopping Frontage		The Capital Ring and Green Chain Walk
	Water Frontage		The Capital Ring, Green Chain Walk & Waterfront
	Business Area		Green Chain Walk
	Conservation Area		Highways Map
	World Heritage Site		Boundary Boundary

2.5 Planning Policy Context

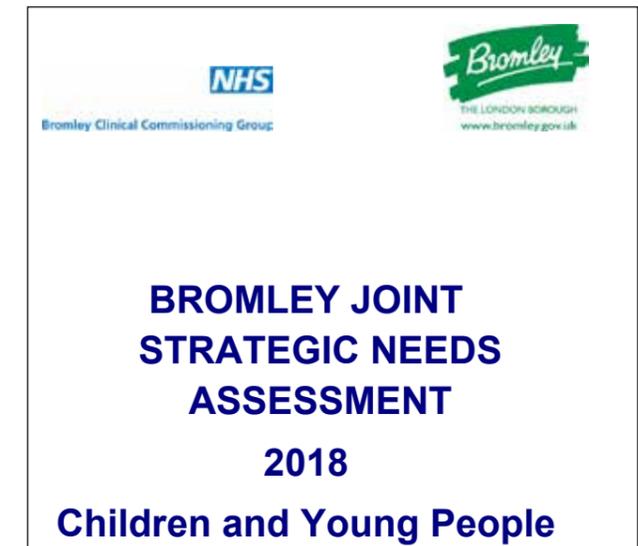
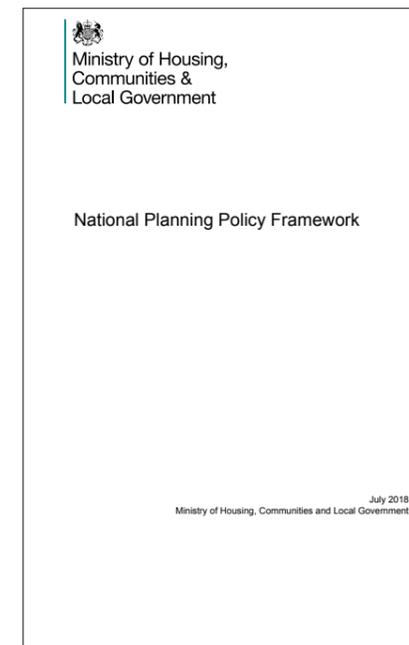
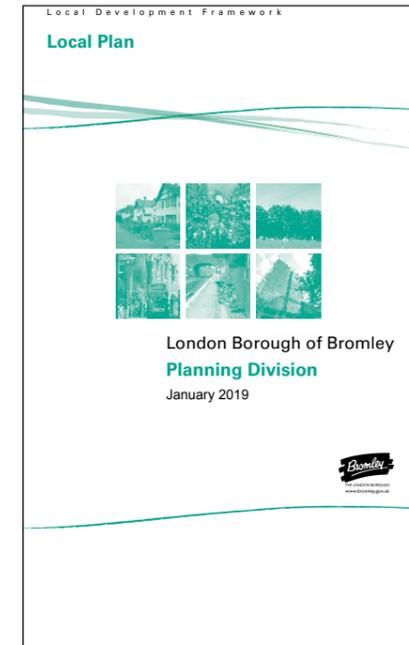
This section reviews the national, regional and local policies relevant to the development. Policies in the National Planning Policy Framework, the London Plan and in the Bromley Local Plan 2019 provide the overarching policy for development within the borough. The proposals will respond positively to these policies.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The London Plan is the statutory spatial development strategy for the Greater London area in the United Kingdom that is written by the Mayor of London and published by the Greater London Authority.

Both provide a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The National Planning Policy Framework and London Plan must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions.

The Bromley Local Plan 2019 sets out a number of other more detailed parameters for open space elements including biodiversity, design quality, access and movement, designing out crime, sustainability, the protection of historic features, trees. The project proposals will be compliant with these requirements.

Bromley JSNA has also informed this proposal. Factors which effect children and young people such as obesity and diabetes are increasing, and are greatest with children in the north and east of the borough and are therefore relevant policies in respect of this development.



2.6 Design Guidance

Best practice guidance on design and access issues should inform the proposals for the project. These include:

Design

Designing out crime (Design Council: 2015)

The value of public spaces (Design Council: 2014)

Community Green (CABE: 2010)

Principles of inclusive design (CABE:2006)

Design for Play: A guide to creating successful play spaces

British Cycling Handbook (2019)

London Cycling Design Standards (LCDS)

Bromley Design Guidelines

Access policies

The New London Plan (draft 2018)

Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment: (draft SPG 2104)

Accessible Sports Facilities Sport England 2010

Safety

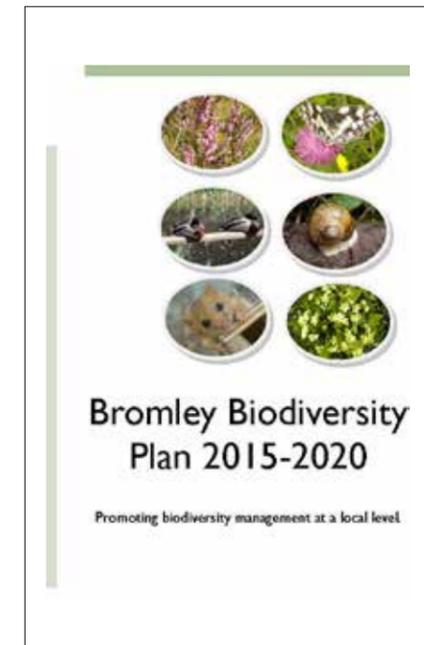
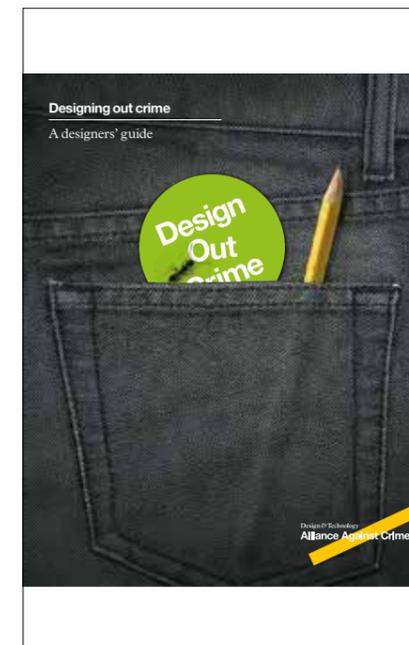
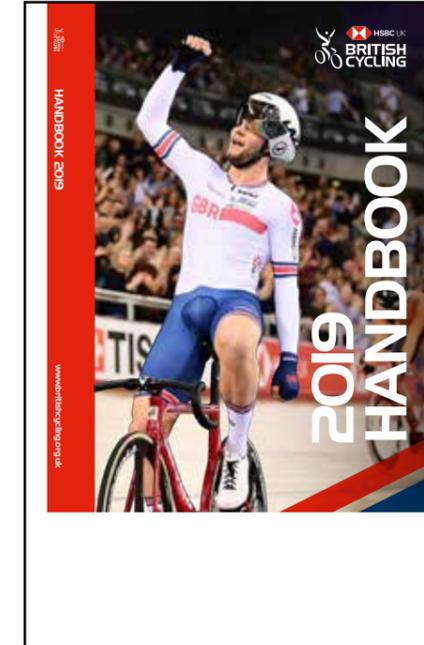
Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground Project proposals should follow the general guidance set in Secure by Design with the objective of creating an environment that is safe, attractive and calm for all users. The intention is also to help address known antisocial behaviour issues on the playing fields, both by design and programming. Specific design initiatives should address issues include designing out dead spaces, establishing clear sight lines, crown lifting trees and carefully selected proposed tree planting. Care must be taken to select hard landscape materials that are durable and robust.

Biodiversity

The project should contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the London Biodiversity Action Plan and the priority habitats identified within it. These include parks and urban green spaces, rivers and streams, woodland, meadows and pastures. The design actively should engage with these priority habitats ensuring conformity with London Plan Policy 7.19. The project should also contribute to London Borough of Bromley Biodiversity Plan.

Equality and inclusion

By incorporating the requirements of national, regional and local plan policies, the proposals should take into account the needs of all users of the environment including people with disabilities and mobility impairments, people of different genders and faiths .



2.7 History of the site

The first records of the local area appear in Medieval times. A place called St Paul's Cray London and known as alia Craie is mentioned in the Domesday Book, It takes it's name from the 11th century church St. Paulinus Cray which is dedicated to an early Christian missionary, Paulinus.

The Cray part comes from the river which flows along the eastern border of the village and lends its name to at least three other places, collectively known as 'The Crays' along its banks in the Cray Valley.

On the western side of St. Paul's Cray sits Hoblingwell Wood, which is said to contain a holy, or perhaps sacred or healing spring, more commonly referred to as a well. Legend has it that this well was home to some kind of elemental creature, perhaps a sprite, an elf or a goblin. In Old English, a creature of this kind was known as a 'hob', so the well became 'Hob's Well' or 'The Hobling Well' and over the years this has evolved into Hoblingwell. Hoblingwell Woods still exist but smaller in size than in earlier times. As can be seen from the 1895 Ordnance Survey map the site once formed part of Hoblingwell Wood.

Sometime after 1949 the eastern half was landscaped into an open grassed area and is now called Hoblingwell Woods Recreation Ground. It can be seen from aerial photos dating from 1949 that the current recreation ground was still largely wooded in character, with the adjacent housing developments just beginning to be constructed.



1895 OS Map with site indicated in red



Aerial Map of Site c.1949 looking west

2.8 Current Uses of the Site

Hoblingwell Wood recreation Ground currently has facilities for football, American football and rugby.

It is home to Orpington Rugby Football Club, who also manage the club house on site. It is used as a training ground for the Kent Exiles, an American football, team and hosts a weekly Parkrun. There is currently no user group but Friends of Hoblingwell Wood are an active neighbour and have also taken a keen interest in matters relating to the recreation ground. In the past Bromley Youth Services have also run activities in the park.



2.9 Site Images



Looking west over football pitches from Chipperfield Road



Looking south west over football pitches from Chipperfield Road



Looking west from Chipperfield Road



Looking north towards boundary with Chorleywood Crescent



Looking north towards boundary with Chorleywood Crescent



Site entrance from Chorleywood Crescent

2.9 Site Images



Looking east towards Chipperfield Road



Looking east towards Chipperfield Road



Looking east towards Chipperfield Road



Looking north toward existing play area towards Chorleywood



Informal path to playarea



Path from play area to Chorleywood Crescent

2.9 Site Images



Meadow Area



Meadow Area



Informal path into Hoblingwell Wood



Hoblingwell Wood notice board



Leesons Way site boundary



Looking south to Leesons Road boundary

2.10 Existing Conditions - Play Area and Changing Rooms



Carpark, clubhouse and changing rooms



Changing rooms



Play area



Looking from buildings hub towards Chipperfield Road



Changing rooms



Informal path near play arearea

2.11 Existing Conditions

Habitats & Botanical Interest

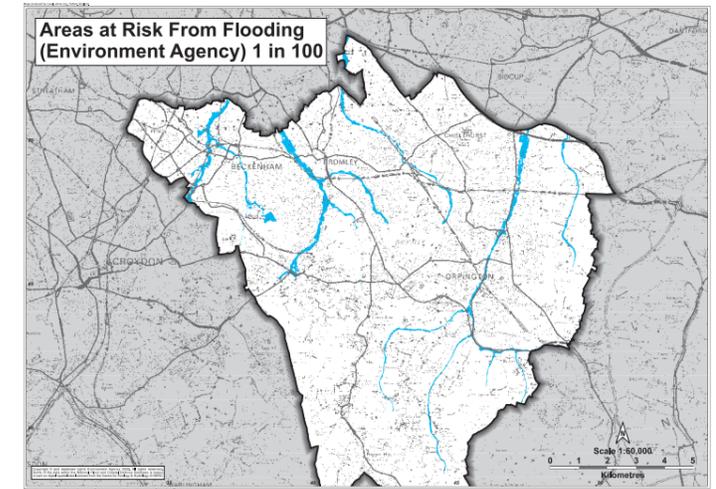
The habitats present on eastern side of the site are of limited ecological value, with the site comprising largely amenity grassland, although the native species buffer zone between the site and the neighbouring properties does provide good cover for nesting birds. These habitats are all common and widespread for the local area and are not considered to be ecologically important due to their botanically low species diversity. The area adjacent to the western portion of the site is a designated SINC, with local reports of varied fauna including reptiles, i.e. sloe worms and good diversity of flora including Pyramidal orchids and historic apple trees. An ecological survey has not been carried out.

Flood Risk

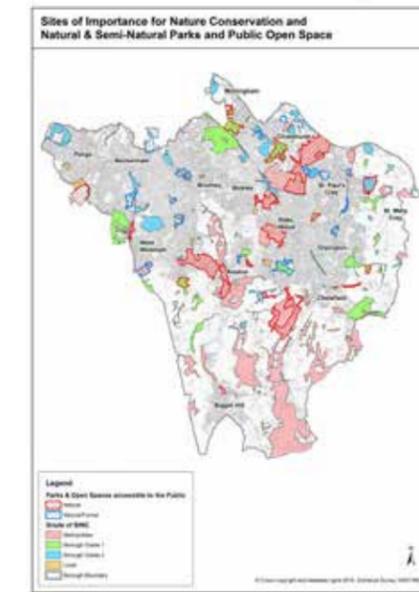
The site is not indicated to be located within an area at risk from significant flooding.

Archaeological Interest

The archaeological desk-based assessment has established that there are no designated assets on the site.



Areas of Flood Risk in Bromley



Sites of Nature Conservation in Bromley

2.12 Site Analysis

1. Landscape Character

The site has an open character, characteristic of archetypal playing fields typology, and slopes from east to west, with long, open views from the east of the site looking towards Hoblingwell Wood and from the top of the site to looking towards Dartford. Three flat terraces, with a series of grass pitches, occupy the eastern portion of the site. The main hub sits in the middle of the site and consists of a large carpark, changing facilities and a club house. A playground sits to the rear of the club house and also contains a ball games area. Parkland style trees wrap around portions of the playground and buildings hub. The western portion of the site that shares a boundary with the SINC Hoblingwell Wood is more naturalistic in character, with a long grass "meadow".

The Site is bounded by residential properties to the north, east and south. The eastern and southern site boundaries are open and are bounded by local roads. The site boundary on the north side consists of mature native species scrub forming a buffer zone between the site and the neighbouring properties of Chorleywood Road. There is an informal access from behind the properties and there is evidence of fly tipping and anti-social behaviour in this area.



Landscape Character

Legend

- Site boundary
- Play areas
- ← Long views
- Closed boundary - native species scrub
- Open boundary
- Parkland character
- Existing changing rooms
- Meadow/ long grass
- ▲ Slope

2.12 Site Analysis

2. Connectivity and access

Connectivity both to and within the site are poor. Although the site has very porous boundaries and therefore a good deal of informal pedestrian access, formal pedestrian access into the site is limited, with only a grassed pedestrian route from the northern most bus stop of Chipperfield road. There is however a surfaced path from the southern bus stop on Chipperfield Road to the buildings hub, it should be noted however there is a steep flight of stairs as part of the journey. A ramp does sit alongside the steps for bikes etc. however it could not be considered very accessible in terms of DDA compliance as its steepness is well outside the 1:12 limit of the regulations.

There is good connectivity to the grass pitches on the upper terrace from Leasons Way, with grassed pedestrian access to the pitches. There is paved pedestrian access from the carpark to the playground, however to progress on to the Chorleywood Crescent entrance to the park, one must pass through the play area, as the paths around the hub buildings stops. There is a strong desire line etched into the grass around the play area to the tarmaced path which leads to the Chorleywood Crescent site access.

As previously noted there is an informal access from behind the properties and there is evidence of fly tipping and anti-social behaviour in this area. It would be difficult to make any improvements to this entrance as it passes through the semi-private communal areas to the flats on the Crescent.



Site Connectivity

Legend

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|--------------------------|
|  | Site boundary |  | Informal path |
|  | Play areas |  | Ramp (not DDA compliant) |
|  | Formal access |  | Existing changing rooms |
|  | Informal access |  | Steps |
|  | Formal path |  | Bus stop |

2.13 Track Location Rationale

Option 1

This option locates the track on the lower terrace. This location is not well connected by any of the existing network of paths. If a new path was put in from the northern Chipperfield Road bus stop it is still not easily accessible from the carpark and building hub, which would necessitate a level change in the journey to the track. This location would also compromise the currently open views from Chipperfield Road and even with tree planting as screening this would significantly change this view.

Option 2

Whilst this location would be the least visible from the residential properties surrounding the site, it would compromise the naturalistic character of the area of the site and be very close to the boundary of the SINIC which might not be acceptable to local stakeholders.

Option 3

This location would be well connected to the parking, although it would comprise the views from the residential properties on Leasons Way.

Option 4.

This location connects the new track to the playground and hub facilities. Virtually level access can be obtained from the carpark. This location does not dramatically compromise any key views and offers the opportunity to extend the existing tree planting across the site.



Option 1 Track on lower eastern terrace



Option 2 Track in western quadrant



Option 3 Track on upper terrace



Option 4 Track adjacent to playground

2.14 Site Opportunities

The site location rationale for the new cycle track stems from the connectivity to the existing hub and level access from carpark in terms of accessibility, especially for those with limited walking capabilities. By improving the path network around the play to the new facility there will be a good connection from the Chorleywood Crescent entrance across the site from north to south. Also the impact on the views will be reduced in this location rather than if it were situated on the lower terrace and can be better mitigated from Chipperfield Road. This location also has the least impact on both the more naturalist western portion of the site and also the allows for maximisation of the eastern area for pitches. A potential downside of this location however is a limitation on the size of the facility.

There is the opportunity to strongly increase the biodiversity of the site by introducing further native species and ornamental trees into the site which will also help with views mitigation. The investigation into the history of the site shows that this area was once wooded and the concept of introducing further parkland planting re-connects the site with it's original character. Parkland style planting, where groups of high canopy trees are placed sparingly within the landscape allows maintains the visual permeability of the site, maintain sight lines under the canopy of the trees, for a sense of safety.



Landscape Character

Legend

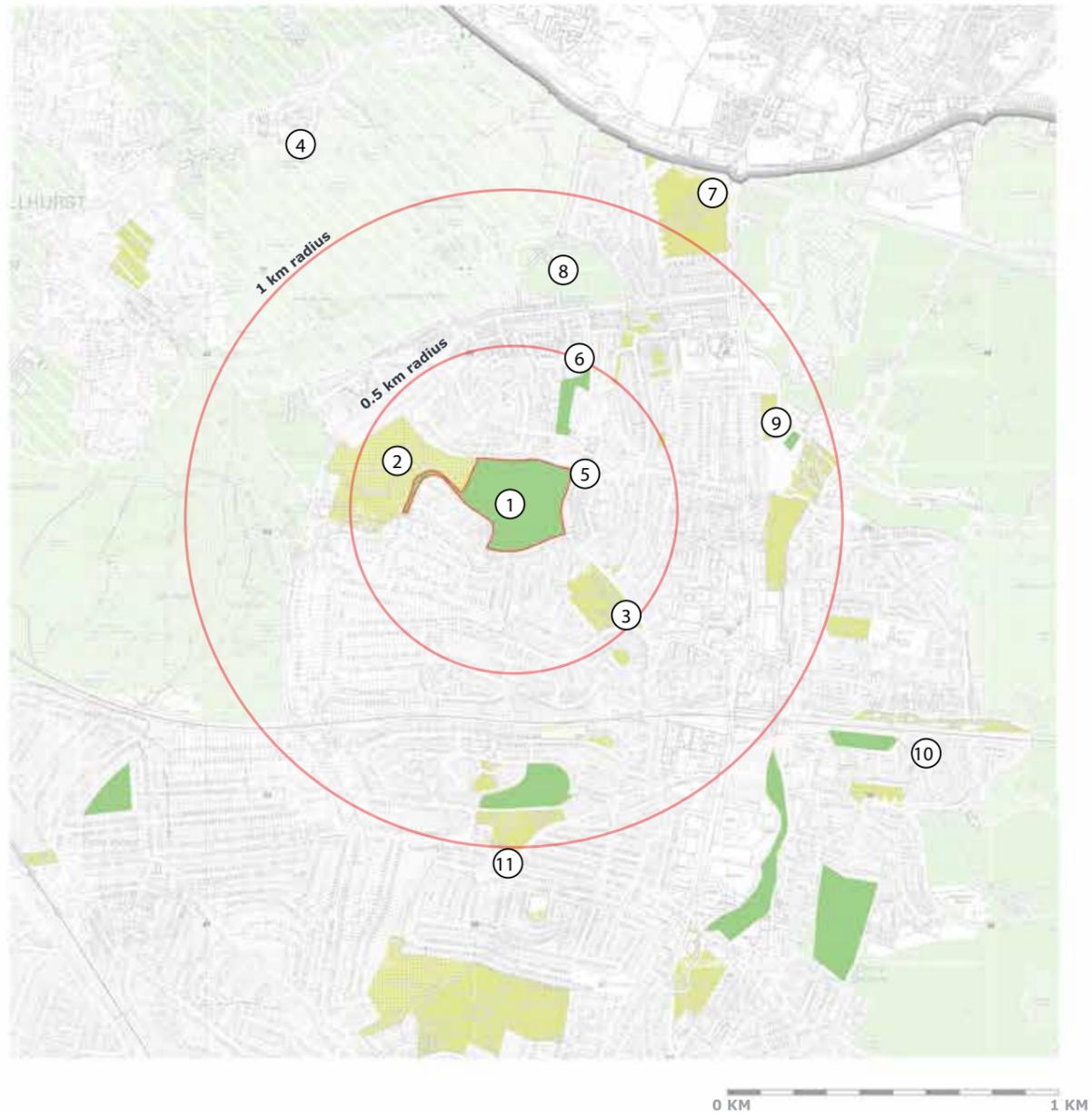
- | | |
|---|---|
|  Site boundary |  Existing changing rooms |
|  Play areas |  Steps |
|  Formal access |  Parkland character |
|  Path re-routed and extended |  Parkland character extension zone |
|  Existing tarmac path |  Existing meadow |
|  Proposed path (self-binding gravel) |  Proposed area of longer grass |
|  Proposed bike ramp or rails |  New community cycle facility |
|  Ramp (not DDA compliant) | |



Consultation &
Design
Development

3

3.1 Consultation- Potential Stakeholders (To be developed)



1. Orpington Rugby Club
Kent exiles American Football Club
2. Friends of Hoblingwell Wood
3. Leesons Primary School
4. St Peter & St Paul Catholic Primary Aca
5. Kings Church, St Pauls Cray - Youth Group
6. Bromley Valley Gymnastics Centre
7. Kemnal Technology College
8. Midfield Primary School
9. Riverside St Paul's Cray
10. Orchards Academy
11. Bromley Adult Education college

Other Local and Relevant Organisations

- Bigfoot Cycling Club
- Bromley Cyclists
- Bromley Mencap
- Bromely Parent Voice
- xbx Bromley
- London Gypsy and Travller Services
- Bromley Recovery College
- Local Neighbourhood POlice Team
- Community Links Bromley
- Marjorie McClure Special School

3.2 Design Narrative

The design narrative for Hoblingwell Wood Recreation Ground has been strongly influenced by the history and character of the site. As a once wooded area it would be appropriate both in terms of benefit to the site and also in reducing the impact on the local views that trees are introduced sparing around the new track. Leaving longer grass around the track would mitigate and soften the sometimes unattractive tracks and also will allow the new facility to sit within the existing landscape and further increase the biodiversity of the site.

This approach also accords with local policy. London Borough of Bromley's Biodiversity Plan aims to:

- Maintain, enhance and restore Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and other green spaces for biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Action Plan states that in developing design projects "consideration should be given to features adjacent to the development that may be affected by the scheme. For example when development is proposed adjacent to woodland, a buffer zone between the woodland and the development site should be considered." It also states that developers should look to design in opportunities to improve habitats for biodiversity conservation and to increase the overall quality of the development by enhancing existing habitats or creating new areas appropriate to the wider landscape context.



Sudbourne MTB Tracj

