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# *STOKE PARK ACCESSIBLE PATH – PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSE REPORT*

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## **Purpose of this report**

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Public consultation is important in understanding the views and concerns of local residents, users of Stoke Park Estate, stakeholders and the general public. Responses from public consultations, along with other factors, are taken into account when making final decisions. Bristol City Council is committed to delivering the Stoke Park accessible path proposal and over 50% of respondents to the public consultation supported the proposal. Feedback we received as part of the consultation has led to changes being made to our initial proposal. We've also looked at several alternative routes suggested by a range of respondents, to make sure we're taking forward an appropriate route.

Please read this report alongside the Design Review document released at the same time, which details our decisions on the different elements of the scheme.

## **Common issues raised by respondents**

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A number of common issues were raised by respondents, which can be summarised as follows:-

- 1. 56 (24% of total) respondents wanted to ensure Stoke Park remained wild, or expressed similar sentiments**
- 2. 50 (21% of total) respondents were concerned about the behaviour of cyclists**
- 3. 30 (13% of total) respondents mentioned an alternative alignment**
- 4. 20 (9% of total) were concerned about surfacing the carriage drive**
- 5. 16 (7% of total) respondents were concerned about the width of the path**
- 6. 13 (6% of total) respondents were concerned about motorbikes**

A brief response to each of these issues is set out in the following sections:

### **Keeping Stoke Park wild**

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56 (24% of total) respondents expressed a desire in their response for the park to “remain wild”, or used phrases that have similar meanings.

The objective of the proposal is not to urbanise Stoke Park Estate, it's to support and encourage more walking and cycling by new and existing residents in Lockleaze while making it easier for less able people to use the park. A number of users with mobility impairments have responded to the consultation to say that they can't access the park at all at the moment.

Rather than creating new paths, we're surfacing existing paths – our archaeological investigations show the carriage drive is between 2.8 metres wide and 4.1 metres wide, so the old path is either as wide or wider as our proposed path in most places.

Renovating the historic carriage drive is a key part of the approved Stoke Park Conservation Management Plan, and we're trying to achieve a solution that allows broad accessibility, landscape-appropriate surfacing colouring, manageable maintenance costs, and an overall improvement to Stoke Park.

The Conservation Management Plan (CMP) identifies the surfacing of the carriage drive as a key improvement, and during the consultation on the CMP the improvement of historic paths within Stoke Park was one of the most popular measures with around 75% support.

Historic England, through the Conservation Management Plan, support the gravel surfacing of the carriage drive, though as stated in their response in Appendix A we will need to work closely with them to ensure their concerns are heard. Avon Gardens Trust "strongly agree" with the improvement of the path.

Natural England's view is that "Natural England supports the objective to create a new multi-user accessible route within Stoke Park. Encouraging people to sustainably enjoy and spend time in natural spaces, benefits health and wellbeing and fits in with our conservation strategy and the Defra 25 year plan."

The design of the path will be sensitive to the aesthetics of the park, especially as it is a registered landscape. Here are a few ways that we will look to ensure this:

- ✓ **We propose surfacing existing paths and widening in places rather than creating new paths**, which limits the impact on vegetation
- ✓ **We propose using a compacted gravel surface**, because it's the view of Historic England that this is the most appropriate surface for Stoke Park. Although we would like to respect the wishes expressed by the public consultation for a similar surface to the existing Stoke Park path, Historic England only regard a gravel surface as acceptable, meaning using any other surface creates a significant risk the work might not receive planning consent.
- ✓ **We propose not lighting the path**. This is a hard decision, as lighting provides a sense of security for people who might not otherwise use the park, but the adverse effects on ecology and wildlife are paramount. We're looking into the possibility of improving lighting at the entrances to the path. If improvements are taken forward, this lighting would be outside the park and will provide better visibility for those entering the park.
- ✓ **We propose sensitive construction methods that reduce impact on the park**. We'll be making a specific adjustment to our construction processes to preserve the archaeological value of the historic carriage drive. Any future investigation will be able to access the undisturbed archaeological remains. We've agreed a suitable construction method with archaeologists.
- ✓ **Taking into account clear feedback, the path is proposed to be three metres (3.0m) wide**. A wider path would allow more people to use the path more easily, but we understand the concerns raised regarding the effect on the park.
- ✓ **We aren't proposing to construct Option 1A**, which would go through an area of trees within Barn Wood (though without damaging them). Our goal with Option 1A was to better connect up the proposed path with the existing path, while also creating an accessible route through the woods. However, we've listened to feedback and we'll use the Option 1 route on the existing vehicular track.
- ✓ **We aim to minimise any impact on trees**; plus, we've commissioned a tree survey and we're working alongside the Council's Tree Officers on the project.
- ✓ **This project will help deliver some of the important work set out in the Conservation Management Plan**, both by achieving one of its key goals and by making it easier for the Parks Service to find the funding to complete the rest of the plan's goals. This work is aimed at safeguarding Stoke Park Estate into the distant future.

We want as many of Bristol's citizens as possible to responsibly enjoy Stoke Park Estate. Many of the responses we've received emphasised the mental and physical health benefits of having a park like this on your doorstep, as well as the incredible views and expanse of greenery. Improving the paths in the Estate will mean people that have historically been excluded from the park will be able to enjoy these benefits, as well as connecting up Lockleaze with other areas of Bristol to encourage citizens not to use their cars.

## Making sure cyclists' behaviour is acceptable

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50 (21% of total) respondents expressed concern regarding cyclists, primarily due to speeding concerns and sharing the path with pedestrians.

It is important to stress that there will always be a small minority of people that misuse a public amenity. Any user of the path, whether pedestrian, runner, cyclist, wheelchair user, or anybody else, should respect each other regardless of what method of transport they are using.

The Council is aware that there is a particular focus on cyclist behaviour, and as a standard part of our assessment we have sought to establish how shared usage works in other Bristol parks. Within a parkland environment with a similar incline, it has been shown that most cyclists travel at a reasonable speed (between 8 and 10mph on average). More importantly than the numbers, the vast majority of cyclists do slow down and tend to be respectful around other users of the path – just as the vast majority of walkers, runners, wheelchair users and other users are respectful to cyclists.

The proposed Option 1 and Option 1D sections are also mostly flat along their proposed route, unlike the existing Stoke Park path which is a very steep hill. Not only will this make it easier for all users to use the path, it will also tend to result in lower speeds from cyclists.

**The Council want to ensure that we listen and adapt our proposal using the feedback we've received. The following is a non-exhaustive list of things we'll investigate as ways of improving the proposal:**

- Ensuring an access barrier is provided at the eastern end of Option 1, which has been suggested as a potentially unsafe corner if cyclists proceed at speed out onto Jellicoe Avenue
- There are two livestock gates along Option 1 planned as part of the Countryside Stewardship works, one near Romney Avenue and another near Jellicoe Avenue. We can aim to make sure these gates are constructed before or at the same time as the path. **These gates will require all users to stop and open the gate.** There will be no ability for cyclists (or anybody else) to travel from one end of the park to the other at high speeds.
- Similar to Victoria Park, we can provide cobbled strips on the path when approaching access points – such as Romney Avenue, path junctions, entry points into the woods, and on the hill down towards Jellicoe Avenue. These discourage high speeds while alerting cyclists of an access point ahead.
- In any publicity of the path, we can look to ensure that a 'code of conduct' for all users is emphasised so that right from the beginning a culture of respect is in place.
- We can also emphasise the value of the path as a leisure route in any publicity, with reference to the existing Long Down Avenue delineated path to UWE.
- We can also provide signage as part of the path – this will be appropriate to Stoke Park, and make use of the livestock gates planned for either end of Option 1. For example, we can mount on each gate a blue roundel reminding all users that it's a shared path. Outside of the park, we will place signs stating that use of the park by motorbikes is illegal.
- Issues have been reported with speeding cyclists as well as drainage issues at the bottom of the existing path, near the M32 underpass. Our Parks colleagues are planning to solve both these issues with a cattle grid near the underpass that will stop livestock, drain standing water, and ensure cyclists travel slowly. There will be a pedestrian gate alongside the grid. This isn't work taking place as part of the path project, but is another area where your concerns are being taken on board.

- The plans to graze the park with cattle will also be a factor in making sure everybody travels at a reasonable speed.

Overall, we think these improvements will help make sure that all users are as respectful as possible. As stated before, there will always be a small minority that misuse a public amenity but users of Stoke Park worried about cyclists can be assured that we understand your concerns and have acted to make sure our proposal takes them into account.

## Alternative route alignments

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30 (13% of total) respondents mentioned preferring an alternative alignment in their responses. The alternative alignments are summarised below:

- **Alternative 1:** A small change from Option 1 – rather than a diagonal spur across the field to the existing Cheswick shared path, a straight spur alongside the woodland and out a different existing exit.
- **Alternative 2:** A path beginning at the same western entrance as Option 1, progressing around the edge of the park past the Vench and towards Long Wood, then progressing around the edge of Long Wood, connecting directly between Long Wood and Hermitage Wood, before passing around the southern edge of Hermitage Wood to reconnect with Option 1, where it continues along the carriage drive to Jellicoe Avenue.
- **Alternative 3:** A direct north-south route from Cheswick to the M32.
- **Alternative 4:** A more direct path between Romney Avenue and the M32 underpass near Broomhill, either through the Pale Plantation or around the edge of the Pale Plantation
- **Alternative 5:** Starting from Stoke Land adjacent to the M32, travel directly alongside the M32 to meet up with the existing path at the M32 underpass.

You can view all alternatives on a map at <http://bit.ly/stokeparkalternatives>

No final decisions on route had been made prior to the consultation, to give us as much time as possible to evaluate all suggested alternative options received by the end of the consultation. We had, however, put a lot of thought into our proposal to make sure the public consultation involved people discussing a realistic proposal.

### Alternative 1

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This change was suggested by a stakeholder, and has been mentioned in conversations with other stakeholders. The reasons for our diagonal spur are:

- ✓ It connects directly with a proposed access route for the new housing on the Romney Avenue site, providing joined-up infrastructure between Council projects and easy access to Stoke Park Estate for new residents.
- ✓ It's flatter than the proposed change – the straighter north-south route is a 1 in 10 incline in places. In an ideal world, the path would be no steeper than 1 in 12 at any point so that it's easy for everyone to use.
- ✓ It's further away from the trees – the closer you get to the trees, the more likely you are to damage tree roots and have to maintain the path much more to remove leaves and windfall debris.
- ✓ There's already a clear informal path trodden into the grass, as the 'fallen tree' entrance is very popular.

Overall, although there are positives with a straighter north-south spur (chiefly a visual impact improvement) there are significant downsides from an accessibility point of view, as well as maintenance issues for Parks.

**Decision:** The Council will not progress this alternative route.

### Alternative 2

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This alternative was mentioned by 24 (10% of total) respondents, and so is an option we have investigated closely. The positives that have been described by the two originators of the proposal are:

- 1 Better links to woodland areas for those with disabilities
- 2 Less visual impact
- 3 Better views
- 4 Corners and curves mean slower cycling speeds
- 5 Still provides a link between Lockleaze and the existing path
- 6 Avoids surfacing the carriage drive
- 7 Doesn't go through ancient woodland

As this has received interest from 10% of respondents, we've ensured we evaluate its merits in detail, with input from our Parks service, the Police, our design teams and others.

As the Council proposal is intended to benefit those and other mobility difficulties, the consultation was a valuable opportunity to understand whether those with disabilities felt that the path was a positive idea, and it is useful to know whether those with disabilities prefer Alternative 2 for its links to the woodland areas.

Of the 23 people who answered "Yes" to the question "Are you disabled?", 2 mentioned Alternative 2. This is roughly in line with the overall level of interest in Alternative 2, and suggests that the alternative is not more attractive to people with disabilities than the existing proposal. 69.5% of those with disabilities agreed or strongly agreed with the Council proposal.

Regarding point 7, the Council Option 1 proposal does not affect any ancient woodland.

The Conservation Management Plan proposes surfacing the carriage drive and providing gravelled paths into the woodland areas – these proposals have already been consulted on, with improved paths a priority for 75% of respondents.

The Parks Service reported that Alternative 2, as it's aligned close to the woodland edge, will increase the need for maintenance to clear windfall debris and leaf litter, and being too close to the trees would mean tree roots could damage the path.

The Parks Service and the archaeological survey have also made it clear that the carriage drive is of historical interest, and needs to be preserved. We've made a change to our usual construction methods so there will be limited impact on the historical construction and nothing stopping any future archaeological investigation. This has been agreed with the supervising archaeologist. It is worth noting that Alternative 2 still requires the surfacing of a significant length of the eastern section of the carriage drive.

The Police have stated that paths for pedestrians and cyclists should not run to the rear of and provide access to gardens, rear yards or dwellings, which the western edge of Alternative 2 would do.

The gradient of Alternative 2 is steeper than the council proposal, up to 1:10 in places. This would be difficult for those with mobility difficulties to use and encourage higher cycling speeds. In addition, the corners of the path may lead to users taking straight-line paths across the grassland, resulting in informal paths being created (like the ones through the switchbacks of the existing Stoke Park path). There's also one relatively blind corner with very limited visibility, which will increase the danger of collisions between cyclists and other users rather than reducing it.

Finally, we are concerned that if we proceed with this alternative, it won't receive planning consent, as Historic England have concerns that it will duplicate existing paths (the carriage drive) and planning officers are likely to place weight on Historic England's view. Natural England have also stated they "would not advocate multiple paths within the same area".

We want to make sure we have fully considered proposals supported by the local community – that’s why the above includes views from as many different stakeholders as possible, including Historic England, Natural England, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, the Parks Service, and our Engineering Design Team.

**Decision:** The Council will not progress this alternative route, but will take into account the value of woodland access and seek to bring forward the already-planned gravelled woodland accesses.

### *Alternative 3*

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This alternative has been suggested in several informal conversations with consultees. This route would involve a direct route either directly from Long Down Avenue through Long Wood, or potentially using the existing shared-use Cheswick path down to the edge of the woods, and then cutting directly through the park, past Duchess Pond, and meeting up with the M32 underpass.

We haven’t identified a way of undertaking this route that doesn’t involve large-scale use of switchbacks on hills, as well as creating a vertical line in the park that would be highly visible. It would also involve significant damage to the woodland, through loss of trees and vegetation.

**Decision:** The Council will not progress this alternative route.

### *Alternative 4*

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A more direct path between Romney Avenue and the M32 underpass was one of our original ideas, as it more directly connects Lockleaze with Broomhill and vice versa, providing a quicker connection for a journey that a number of local people make. It is also something that has been brought up in consultation responses and conversations.

However, the gradient of the hill between Romney Avenue and the M32 underpass is steep in places, and would require us to create lots of switchbacks in the route that would lengthen the route, need the loss of quite a lot of trees and vegetation, increase the visual impact of the route, and make it a less appropriate feature in a parkland environment. Some of our stakeholders have told us this would be an unacceptable addition to the park.

**Decision:** The Council will not progress this alternative route.

### *Alternative 5*

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This alternative has been suggested in several informal conversations with consultees. There is already an access track that runs alongside the M32 for some of this route. It would be a fairly low-impact path, and would service some of the areas east of the Park.

However, it wouldn’t improve access for residents of Lockleaze, which is one of our objectives for in the project. We need to be able to show that our proposal will mean more people in Lockleaze will use the park, either for pleasure or for travelling through it. It’s overall a positive idea, but it’s not appropriate as part of this proposal.

**Decision:** The Council will not progress this alternative route as part of this project.

## Surfacing the carriage drive

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20 (9% of total) respondents wanted the carriage drive not to be surfaced, and another area to be used instead – either because of the historic value, the archaeological value, or other reasons.

Surfacing the carriage drive is a key part of the Conservation Management Plan document – this has already been consulted on and approved, so much of the scheme is likely to happen whether it's through our project or the Conservation Management Plan proposals. We have undertaken an archaeological survey along Option 1 to investigate the existing carriage drive construction, providing a valuable record.

Also, surfacing the carriage drive won't affect the archaeological value of the remnants of the old path – any work that is done if the proposal progresses to this stage won't remove anything from areas of the site with archaeological value.

We've made sure, through a change to our usual construction methods, that the archaeological value of the carriage drive will be protected – we'll be placing a geotextile membrane between the post-medieval construction and our modern additions, so any future archaeological investigation won't be affected.

## The width of the path

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16 (7% of total) respondents expressed concern at the width of the path.

A large majority of respondents would prefer the path is three metres rather than wider. Three metres is hard to visualise, but it's the same width as a lot of the Stoke Park carriage drive when it's freshly mown and it's the same width as the recently upgraded shared-use path in Victoria Park. It's also the same width as some of the diagonal paths in Queen Square.

Most shared-use paths are built to this width as it's the recommended minimum width, and the ones that aren't are usually wider. We want to allow people to walk side by side easily, pushing pushchairs or using wheelchairs without issue. We also want cyclists and other users to be able to pass each other easily as well.

In most places, the carriage drive is already three metres wide, or generally at least 2.5 metres wide. Archaeological trial pits show that in places, it's four metres wide.

## Making sure motorcycles don't use the park

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13 (6% of total) respondents expressed concern that the path may make illegitimate use of the park by motorbikes more attractive.

We were aware of this existing issue potentially being something people were concerned about, so we have consulted the Police. The official view of the Police on this matter is that the upgraded path is unlikely to make any difference to the use of the park by scrambler motorbikes, as they tend to prefer using unsurfaced paths and areas.

The work we are proposing to do to improve access at some entrances should make it more inconvenient for motorbikes to use the park, and won't make it any easier. The Police have said their preference is for as many secured entrances as possible – Countryside Stewardship works or other projects may address other access points.

It's likely that the fencing work proposed through the Countryside Stewardship work will also reduce the motorcycle problem in Stoke Park, as there will be barriers to motorcycle movement across the estate.

Community engagement is also planned to increase awareness of the importance of Stoke Park Estate among young people, to create a sense of ownership.

We're also planning on putting up more notices outside the park to state that motorcycles using the park is illegal, and that vehicles may be subject to Section 59 seizure.

## Next steps

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We will be submitting a planning application to both Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council by the end of February, and all Stoke Park Estate stakeholders will be notified once this planning application has been submitted.

The planning application will also involve another consultation, so there will be another opportunity to provide your views on the proposal.

The detail of our decisions on the different elements of the scheme – which will inform the planning application – are in the Design Review document released alongside this one.

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# *Appendices*

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# *Appendix A*

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## Stakeholder responses

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The below includes the views of stakeholders regarding the scheme and is included so that we have full transparency of the views that have contributed to us taking forward the proposal.

The responses are verbatim – we have not made any edits for readability.

### Stakeholder 1

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**Stakeholder:** Friends of Stoke Park member 1

**Response:**

[Email response]

To add to your notes my concerns regarding the carriage drive being used are around what the intention of the project is - ie what is the intended outcome?

If the path is being created to provide a walking route to Broom Hill there are already existing walking routes which are far quicker and regularly used.

If the path is being created to enable better access to the park for the new housing and existing users then it's bypassing all of the woodland entrances, therefore not improving access. If I had a mobility problem or was pushing a buggy I wouldn't want to follow a steep path to the bottom of the park and back up again. Those with mobility issues prefer to walk in the upper woodlands - this has been observed by walking with the Wednesday walking group and talking with other park users.

This only leaves one potential benefit, which would be for cyclists. There is already an existing cycle path connecting Lockleaze with Broomhill which passes through Cheswick. The existing part of this path which runs through the Estate by the Dower House often has conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians - especially children, I can see this as being an issue if a multi use path was created on the existing carriage drive, which would be very problematic in the downhill woodland section as you simply wouldn't see cyclists coming at speed where there is tree cover. To prevent this from happening you could use gravel rather than a paved surface, but again this wouldn't meet the objective of making the path accessible for those with mobility issues or push chairs.

A paved path following the carriage drive would spoil the open feeling of the park and it would be a blot on the landscape. If it went round the edges of the field it would be less obvious and would provide access to 3 parts of the woodland people are presently unable to access without crossing the field. It would also hold use for the expanding forest school/nursery which use the estate regularly and represent a large group of people using the park for education purposes.

When you undertake surveys of people using the estate it would be helpful to have an understanding of what people want, as in my personal observations it's mainly better access to the park, as opposed to better transport links. Transport links to Frenchay/Broomhill already exist, whereas there are very limited pathways within the estate.

[Meeting notes]

First and foremost, it was important for you personally that the park remain unchanged, because of the value you derive from the wildlife and the unmanaged beauty of the park (among other reasons). However, you understand the value of opening up the park in terms of its benefits to those with mobility issues or pushchairs.

You felt that the plans were already a little advanced as we were proposing three options, and would rather the consultation have taken place at an earlier stage. While recognising the value of the carriage drive as a straightforward cut-through of the park, you felt its effects on views and on the park overall would be strongly negative.

As part of this discussion, you proposed an alternative potential route for a path. I have drawn up what I understand your suggested route to be and created a map available [here](#). As we only discussed the bit from the fallen tree, I've added in the rest as an additional bit of route, and it would be great if you could confirm that was roughly where you feel the path would cause least harm while enabling people to access the woodland trails.

At the end of our meeting, we briefly discussed amenities such as benches to improve the accessibility of the park. If you do have any suggestions for locations, that would be much appreciated, but I take from our discussion that almost anywhere would be of value, especially at the top of the slopes of the existing path, alongside any proposed path, and in the woodland areas.

Finally, we discussed methods of promoting the consultation and you mentioned that for any kind of in-person stall in the park, the hours of 10-11am and 5-6pm would be particularly good to talk to dogwalkers and commuters respectively.

## Stakeholder 2

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**Stakeholder:** Historic England

**Response:**

Further to our meeting on 28th November, we wish to confirm our position on the Stoke Park accessible path proposals.

Stoke Park's inclusion on the Register of Park and Gardens as Grade II is recognition of its national importance and significance. As you are aware the park was placed on Historic England's Heritage at Risk (HAR) register, in 2009. The original historic setting of the park has been irreversibly altered over the last century, transforming the landscape from a largely rural to an urban park. Not only has this had a detrimental impact on the aesthetic values of the designed landscape, but also fundamentally altered its layout, character and atmosphere. This coupled with the decline in the management and maintenance (pre-Bristol City Council ownership) and on-going problems of vandalism and anti-social behaviour has led to its placement on the register.

The preparation and delivery of the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) 2016, funded by Historic England and Bristol City Council (BCC), has been a major step forward in guiding BCC in the overall care and conservation of the park, so that it can, over time, be removed from the HAR register.

One of the key elements that the CMP tackles is access & circulation, addressing both the conservation and restoration of key routes and, following consultation undertaken by BCC prior to and during the CMP's preparation, responding to the public's desire for improved accessibility. The CMP identifies that 'improving footpaths will improve the appearance of the landscape, enhance the sense of welcome it gives to visitors, help interpret its historic design and encourage more exploration and use of the wider parkland for all.'

One of the many significant surviving features of the original designed landscape is the serpentine drive, laid out between 1725 and 1768, approaching from Bristol to the south-west, running along the top of the Purdown Ridge, entering Stoke Park west of Purdown Camp. This has been identified in the accessible path

proposals as Option 1 and, in part, Option 1d. Paths and carriage drives from this period were traditionally made of gravel, beaten soil, sand or stone dug from nearby quarries, and it is this use of local materials that helps to give historic landscapes their particular character. Previous excavations of the old drives within the park in 2001 identified an original gravel surface underneath later surfaces of tarmac and limestone slabs. We note that the results of archaeological test pits undertaken this year, as part of the accessible path application, further reinforce the proposal, identifying the original surface as 'medium-large limestone rubble layered with smaller limestone rubble, with an upper surface of fine fragments/crushed limestone which in places was patched with ash and slag.'

We consider the re-introduction of original surfacing is key to the appearance and interpretation of the historical paths and drives within this sensitive setting. One of the key proposals to improve circulation, therefore, is to 'seek to restore a single, wide gravel-surfaced ride following the historic drive along the Purdown ridge, creating a route that is accessible for all, including maintenance and emergency vehicles, circa 3m wide, informed by archaeological investigations.'

We consider the proposal to resurface the carriage drive in tarmac is contrary to the objectives of CMP and will not contribute to the restoration of the drive, or contribute to the enhancement of the historical character and setting. As outlined in previous correspondence and prior to the public consultation on the accessible path commencing, there are many examples that can be referenced where gravel/ bound gravel surfacing has been used in similar, sensitive settings which are used all year round by both pedestrians and cyclists.

Regarding the introduction of two new 'spurs' into the parkland connecting to the carriage drive, we accept that a new connection will need to be introduced to link the Lockleaze estate, from Romney Avenue, to the carriage drive (route Option 1) as this is the proposed location identified in the CMP for future visitor facilities and a potential car park. Regarding the second spur, we acknowledge there will be greater footfall into the park from the proposed Romney House development to the north. However, our concern is that it risks setting a precedent for further spurs being introduced into the park in the future, as a result increased development pressures, negatively impacting on the historic layout, fabric and setting of the park. This second spur would need, therefore, to be considered as an exception to the objectives of the CMP and designed to achieve minimal visual impact.

In order to establish a clear circulation hierarchy that enables the principal surviving historical routes to be clearly interpreted and appreciated we consider that the proposed spurs should be differentiated from the principal carriage drive in width and surface treatment in order delineate them as secondary routes. In the CMP original, secondary circuits are proposed circa. 1.8m wide (subject to archaeological evidence) and gravel surfaced.

Regarding access through the scheduled monument, Purdown anti-aircraft battery, the CMP proposes to maintain the alignment of the carriage drive through the monument. We note that Option 1d does not maintain the alignment of the carriage drive and proposes to run along the southern edge of the monument. The provision of a route through the anti-aircraft battery enables the public to better appreciate and interpret this historic landmark, which will in turn increase public awareness, communal value and help to provide a degree of informal surveillance against future vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Therefore, we consider that Option 1d should follow the alignment of the original carriage drive through the monument and be gravel surfaced, as proposed in the CMP. We consider that a temporary diversion would need to be provided when restoration works to the monument require it to be closed off. Our understanding is that the public will still be allowed to access the monument through the proposed east and west gates when the adjacent parkland is being grazed, based on previous discussions with BCC. A permanent, diversion south of the monument would impact on its setting and potentially impact on the undesignated archaeology of Purdown Camp which extends beyond the scheduled area, in particular given the gradient in this area.

The sensitivities of the scheduled monument and park require close, collaborative working between BCC departments and stakeholders to establish a collective understanding and agreement on the objectives and

proposals within the CMP, and to ensure that these are implemented. We are happy to discuss these in further detail for clarification.

### Stakeholder 3

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**Stakeholder:** Friends of Stoke Park member 2

**Response:**

[Email]

Further to my response to the consultation on the all-weather path proposed for Stoke Path (see response ID below and in subject line), I wish to submit the additional attached map and photo, which outline the alternative proposal being suggested by some users of Stoke Park (some of whom are also members of Friends of Stoke Park). This idea has already (prior to the start of the public consultation) been submitted directly to Project Managers Kurt Sheibl and Richard Bourne via email, but I attach it again for completeness. Some other respondents to the online consultation may also refer to supporting this alternative idea.

This alternative proposal aims to give the following benefits:

- i) Link up to existing woodland paths in Long Wood, Hermitage Wood and Barn Wood, so that those with mobility issues can access everything that the woodland has to offer, rather than being confined to a linear path across the top field
- ii) Have far less visual impact than the council's suggestion, as it closely follows the top edge contour of the field. Because the top edge is the highest part of the park you will only really notice the path when you're on it
- iii) the higher elevation of the path will provide better views down to the bottom of the park and to the wider views beyond
- iv) because it's not a straight path, there will be less opportunity for cyclists to exceed a sensible speed
- v) it still provides the 'transport link' to the existing hard path (down to Duchess Gate) that the council want to provide
- vi) It will allow park users to continue to appreciate the historic carriage track across the top field in it's original form, which gives far more opportunity for historic appreciation than surfacing over it ever will
- vii) It won't go through semi-ancient woodland, like one of the council's preferred options does

### Stakeholder 4

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**Stakeholder:** Natural England

**Response:**

[Email]

Natural England in principle supports the objective to create a new multi-user accessible route within Stoke Park. Encouraging people to sustainably enjoy and spend time in natural spaces, benefits health and wellbeing and fits in with our conservation strategy and the Defra 25 year plan.

Our main advice would be that any additional pathway must fit within the overall objectives of the Historic Parkland Restoration Plan and be in line with what Historic England deem acceptable within the designated landscape. Natural England would not advocate multiple paths within the same area and would favour a more natural and traditional type of path surfacing, again we would refer to Historic England for their views of what is in-keeping within the designated area. Overall it is key that the landscape impacts are considered and any underlying archaeological interest features are protected.

In terms of other wider impacts, Natural England would expect the Council to ensure that this project accounts for protected species and sensitive habitats (including those being restored) in the direct location of the route

and surrounding area. The construction techniques would need to be carefully controlled and managed to ensure that habitats are not damaged during the project. Additionally, the Council will need to liaise closely with the Rural Payments Agency and NE to make sure that any necessary changes are assessed in terms of the Rural Land Register and the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

In terms of our view on the route options currently proposed, we do not feel able to comment specifically without knowing that the above considerations have been fully addressed, but we would however like to state that we are concerned about option 1A because of the ancient woodland present in this location and the potential loss of habitat that could occur.

## Stakeholder 5

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**Stakeholder:** Little Foxes Forest School

**Response:**

[Meeting notes]

Overall, everyone at the Little Foxes Forest School that you asked was really positive about the path improvements. You said that you have parents coming to you that aren't sure how to access Stoke Park, because there isn't really an easy way to make use of the park with a buggy.

### Surfacing

- The current mown grass path (1A/1C on our map) is more or less okay with an outdoor-ready double buggy in the summer, but in the winter it's impossible to use.
- 1A/1B/1C on our map would be really positive route options for the school, both to connect to the Cheswick Village cycle path (which you currently use for some of your trips, especially when you have heavy equipment) and for a direct connection to the 'triangular grass' entrance which you use on a daily basis
- Currently, the state of the 1C section of path means you're likely to avoid that area to use the cycle track instead.
- Some people cycle from the Stapleton area to access the school in the summer, but aren't able to in the winter because of the condition of the path
- You'd overall prefer an all-weather surface similar to the existing Stoke Park path

### Access controls

- Minimotos are getting in to the park through the chicane at the M32 underpass
- The entrance into the woods at the north is used by your vehicle each Monday to transport your equipment, and by Steve England every other Monday for vehicular access for conservation work. We'll take this into account with our work on access controls.

### Lighting

- While recognising the positive potential of lighting, overall, you'd prefer the path wasn't lit because of the discussed effect on visual impact and ecology.

Plus, you mentioned how difficult the Romney Avenue Bus Link is for you, requiring you and your parents to make big circular trips to Filton Avenue every time instead of travelling up Romney Avenue. I don't think that's likely to change, unfortunately, but I will keep you in mind if I hear of any proposed changes to the bus link.

## Stakeholder 6

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**Stakeholder:** Avon and Somerset Constabulary

**Response:**

[Letter]

Thank you for taking the time to meet with my colleagues and I regarding the above proposals.

You have requested comments from A&S Police at this early stage due to the existing issues of anti-social behaviour in the locality stemming from mopeds and scramblers using the area.

I am a Crime Prevention Design Advisor (CPDA) with a responsibility for Crime Prevention through Environmental Design projects within Bristol. As a Constabulary we offer advice and guidance on how the built environment can influence crime and disorder.

The Bristol Development Framework Core Strategy (adopted June 2011) states that *one of the overarching issue for ensuring a sustainable future is reducing the opportunity for crime.*

Bristol Local Plan – Site Allocations and Development Management Policies – (Adopted July 2014) section DM28: Public Realm states that *Development should create or contribute to a safe, attractive, high quality, inclusive and legible public realm that contributes positively to local character and identity and encourages appropriate levels of activity and social interaction. Section 4 adds that development will be expected to: Reduce crime and fear of crime by creating a well-surveyed public realm that is well managed and cared for;*

Sections 58 and 69 of the National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 both require crime and disorder and fear of crime to be considered in the design stage of a development.

The following comments have been agreed with local Officers following our site visit and the information currently available;

- We would not be in favour of the proposed footpath/cycle route being lit. For the majority of the proposed route there would be no natural surveillance what so ever and lighting could then possibly encourage individuals to gather without the likelihood of being observed. Lighting may also give users a false sense of security.
- Routes for pedestrians and cyclists should not run to the rear of and provide access to, gardens, rear yards or dwellings as these have been proven to generate crime. We would therefore prefer the 'red' route as indicated on your preliminary plans.
- Discussions with local Officers regarding the surface dressing of the path indicated that this was unlikely to have an impact on nuisance users. Scrambler bikes would not be deterred by gravel paths as they are designed for 'off road' use with tarmac paths being equally unappealing to this user group.
- We consider the proposal of a new 'play/adventure' area to the rear of homes on Romney Avenue likely to create a 'honey pot' for nuisance behaviour. This area would be well hidden from vehicular and pedestrian routes due to the well-established trees and hedges in the location, but close enough to Romney Avenue to encourage individuals to gather here. We feel it is highly likely that, should a 'play area' be established here, local residents are likely to be subjected to nuisance behaviour which will result in calls for service to the Police. This is, in our view, not acceptable or, indeed necessary. The Vench adventure playground is a stone's throw from the location of the new proposed play area and is, according to local knowledge, underutilised. May we respectfully request that this idea is reconsidered with any funding allocated for play in this area, redirected to existing facilities which may then be appropriately managed and therefore less likely to create issues for local residents.
- All legitimate entry points to the park and footpaths must have robust barriers (such as K barriers to comply with document M) to deter individuals from accessing the park with scramblers and mopeds. These legitimate access points should also have CCTV cameras which should provide identification

quality images. CCTV is not only an evidential tool but can be an effective deterrent to nuisance behaviour. We fully accept that those individuals who are determined to gain access, will still do so due to the very nature of the open space, however, robust barriers and CCTV may deter some individuals.

- It is our understanding that livestock will also be introduced to the area at some point, the above measures may also deter those intent on theft and or damage to animals and fencing.

We would welcome the opportunity to comment further once a more detailed proposal has been presented.

## Stakeholder 7

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**Stakeholder:** Friends of Stoke Park

**Response:**

[Meeting notes]

No official response received, however, the notes of the relevant Friends of Stoke Park meeting below:

### Proposed All-Weather Path

1. Kurt and Richard introduced the proposal for an accessible all-weather path. Kurt noted this was at the very early stages of planning only, and the purpose of attending was to get early feedback from the FoSP. Kurt circulated a plan which had 4 route options on it (1A to 1D). Kurt clarified BCC were not currently planning on taking forward route options 2 and 3 circulated to a few people previously by email which would have connected with the M32 underpass. These are not being taken forward to consultation due to the steep slopes and gradients.
2. Kurt noted this proposal was part of proposals to support the new Lockleaze Housing, including the Romney House and Crome Road sites.
3. Kurt said that BCC was currently planning on a path construction similar to the path from the Dower House to the M32 underpass. [Name redacted] asked if it could be a gravel path instead, similar to Westonbirt. Richard said this could have additional maintenance implications to the Council.
4. [Name redacted] expressed concern about cyclists going through the park at speed with near misses with pedestrians as he has seen on Concorde Way. He also noted there is an existing cycle path from Romney Avenue, along the side of the Vench running in parallel to Long Down Meadows and joining onto Long Down Avenue.
5. [Name redacted] also noted [Name redacted] had put forward an alternative suggestion for the path, which would be closer to the edge of the park (by the Vench and the woods).
6. The public consultation will be on the TravelWest website and will run from 24 Sept to 26 Oct and Kurt confirmed that there would be an open question at the end for additional comments / suggestions or for people to say that they don't support any of the route options. Following this consultation, the council hope to submit a planning application for the preferred route option in December 2018 which would allow for more comment and feedback.
7. Kurt is happy to receive comments / feedback directly by email .
8. The cost of the path is not yet known.

## Stakeholder 8

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**Stakeholder:** Gainsborough Court

**Response:**

[Meeting notes]

The project team met with the residents of Gainsborough Court and chatted to three residents. All were broadly in support of the scheme and wanted greater access to Stoke Park, including improvements to access barriers so that they were able to enter it.

## Stakeholder 9

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**Stakeholder:** Lockleaze Walking Group

**Response:**

[Meeting notes]

Overall, you felt the path improvements would be positive for Stoke Park, even though they don't connect up all the areas you'd like them to. We discussed that hopefully Parks will be able to improve more paths with their Heritage Lottery Fund bid.

For you, access through the opening near the vehicle gate is most important, as well as being important for local groups like the runners. You would support lighting, like the cat-eye lighting seen on some cycle paths in the Netherlands.

You were also keen both to provide bins for dog waste, and see what possible improvements could be made in terms of requiring dogs to be kept on the lead in certain areas. Both of these might be outside of our remit, as we need to check with Parks about requiring any bin collections.

In terms of other improvements, benches near the lake would be positive.

## Stakeholder 10

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**Stakeholder:** Lockleaze Planning Group

**Response:**

[Meeting notes]

The project team attended the Lockleaze Planning Group and provided an update, alongside representatives from architects for one of the planned housing developments as well as other groups.

Ten residents were in attendance. A general update was provided and resident questions answered.

## Stakeholder 11

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**Stakeholder:** Lockleaze Community Conversation

**Response:**

The project team attended the Lockleaze Community Conversation and provided an update, alongside updates on a number of different topics.

There was discussion regarding restricting cycling speeds, as well as drainage issues near the M32; however, the Stoke Park path proposal overall was not of major interest to the majority of attendees, suggesting limited strong opinions either way.

## Stakeholder 12

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**Stakeholder:** Countryside Stewardship meeting

**Response:**

The project team attended the Countryside Stewardship discussion on the 23rd of October, and the accessible path was also on the agenda.

Four residents were in attendance. Those in attendance were already aware of the scheme but there was discussion regarding which council departments were responsible for the scheme and what were the reasons behind the scheme's creation.

## Stakeholder 13

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**Stakeholder:** John James Court retirement homes

**Response:**

[Meeting notes]

When attending the meeting at John James Court, we spoke to seven residents who discussed the proposal with us. Most were in favour - those that had mixed views were unsure because they were unable to walk to the Park anyway, so the proposed improvements would not benefit them. There was therefore a related discussion regarding access improvements for John James Court residents through the proposed housing nearby.

## Stakeholder 14

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**Stakeholder:** Councillor Gill Kirk

**Response:**

As a Lockleaze councillor I have taken account of a wide range of views expressed concerning the Stoke Park Accessible path, including from within the Friends of Stoke Park Group of which I am a member. I have attended some of the consultation drop in sessions and I also chaired the public meeting which drew an attendance of around 30 people following a widespread leaflet drop to 3000 local homes, promotion through the local magazine and social media. I consider the consultation to have been well managed, with good community engagement. I was pleased to see early engagement with key stakeholders such as the Friends group, and the local community forum group, and also a wide range of opportunities for people to engage in drop ins, a public meeting, and through the on-line and paper surveys. Paper questionnaires have been readily available in key local community hubs.

I have had very few emails (either for or against) about this issue directly to me through my councillor email. However I have heard a range of opinions anecdotally and verbally expressed which I will attempt to summarise.

Those opposed to the proposed path have primarily expressed these concerns:

- 1) That the path would damage the landscape of the Park by its visual impact, with some concerned about the choice of the route on the original historic carriageway, feeling it would be wrong to build a path on this ancient route.
- 2) It would encourage too many people to visit the Park (or travel through it) so that it would lose its current natural, undeveloped, peaceful atmosphere.
- 3) A shared path would allow cyclists to dominate and to speed through and this would be a danger to pedestrians and spoil the atmosphere of the park.
- 4) There are fears that this path might lead to further paths or overdevelopment of the Park.
- 5) A fear for impact on wildlife habitat, especially if the path were lit.
- 6) Some feel the Path not is needed as a cycle route as there is a cycle path not too far away in Cheswick village just outside Stoke Park that could be better utilised.
- 7) Some disabled people can already access the Park if they really want to .
- 8) some fear accessible entrance points to Stoke Park will allow in motorbikes and increase Anti-social behaviour.
- 9) Some feel the path can't do 2 things at once, ie improve transport links AND improve accessibility.

Some local stakeholders have not objected in principle to the path but have suggested amendments, and have said they would prefer an alternative route for the path that runs closer to the tree line and has less of a visual impact.

Those who have supported the path proposal have given the following reasons:

- 1) The Path would allow much needed disabled access to Stoke Park. Some Disabled and elderly residents have said they cannot currently get into the park at all, or if they can, they are not able to walk very far in it, due to lack of a surfaced path, and lack of accessible entrance points for electric wheelchairs, mobility scooters. Currently many disabled people lose out on the health and wellbeing benefits of the green space on their doorstep,
- 2) Mothers using prams and pushchairs would be more likely to bring their children to Stoke Park if there were a path.
- 3) Some residents don't use Stoke Park often, because they are scared of slipping and falling over on muddy surfaces.... the path would help this.
- 4) It would help to have a path when organised evening activities such as wildlife walks take place in the park, to reduce risk of people stumbling and hurting themselves when the light and visibility are poor.
- 5) Seating and signage in addition to the path would be appreciated especially by older people. It would help them navigate the park and have places to rest.
- 6) The improved cycle route would help cyclists access different sides of the path. Some currently cycle on the grass but this can be difficult especially in bad weather, as winter,
- 7) Parents could help teach their kids to ride bikes if there were a path.
- 8) More activities such as fun runs could take place in the park with a path.
- 9) A path would allow for better emergency access for ambulances, and police.
- 10) a Path would reduce the impact of traffic associated with forthcoming new housing development in the area
- 11) A Path would help children/staff use active travel to get to the new secondary school Trinity Academy, planned for Romney Avenue 2019.

- 12) As part of a sustainable transport plan the wider benefits in taking more cars off the road, and opening up new walking and cycling routes would help to benefit the congestion on the Muller Road corridor.
- 13) Opening a walking/ cycling route through Stoke Park would help to reduce Air Pollution by encouraging more people to walk and cycle if they can, and reduce the total numbers of cars on the roads.
- 14) The historic cart track was intended to be a route for people to use through Stoke Park and is an appropriate choice for an accessible path.

Whilst taking this wide range of views into account, I am on balance in favour of the Accessible Path. However I would like the suggestions and feedback of local residents and Park users expressed in the consultation to be taken into account if and when final design plans are made.

I consider the 3 main advantages of building the path relate to public health benefits:

- 1) Addressing Equalities access requirements will ensure that our local green space is inclusive and accessible to all, including those with disabilities. This is essential to ensure everyone will have access to the health and wellbeing benefits of green space, and the ability if they choose, to improve their physical outdoor activity levels.
- 2) Opening a new walking / cycling route in Stoke Park will help to encourage active travel and address the worsening traffic congestion problem on our roads in Lockleaze. It is in my view necessary to get more cars off the road and to upgrade sustainable transport for the future, when new housing developments will add around 1000 new homes to the Lockleaze area.
- 3) One of the key health risks in this part of the city is poor air quality. Reducing congestion and encouraging active travel will help reduce the numbers of car journeys made and therefore a new walking/cycling route can be expected to contribute to a reduction in Air Pollution.

Thank you for considering my views

## Stakeholder 15

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**Stakeholder:** Cllr Estella Tincknell

**Response:**

I see the result of the consultation is very close. A priority for the council must be to ensure that any route across or into Stoke Park genuinely improves access for those who cannot currently use it. Ensuring that the design means access is provided for people who are disabled and using wheelchairs, and those pushing buggies, is therefore vital. This should not come into conflict with use as a through route for cyclists.