

Impact Assessment

Assessment of: **Stover Country Park Restoration Project – funding bids**

Service: **Highways Infrastructure Development and Waste**

Head of Service: Meg Booth

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service:
Way and Country Parks Manager



Richard Walton, Public Rights of

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1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

Stover Country Park is owned and directly managed by Devon County Council. It is an important wildlife site and registered historic park which is highly valued by the community and visited by at least 200,000 people every year. A car park, Visitor Centre and network of footpaths provide access and a team of Rangers based at the site maintains the facilities and organises events and school visits. The centrepiece of the Country Park is Stover Lake, a protected wildlife site, as is much of the surrounding woodland and heath. The net cost to the taxpayer is approximately £0.20/capita. The boundary of the designated historic park extends over neighbouring privately owned land. Landowners include the Caravan Club, several individual farmers, Stover School and two mineral companies. The Council has established a Stover Park Advisory Board that brings these landowners, government agencies and local community and special interest groups together, to coordinate the management and strategic development of the Park.

2. Reason for change / review

In 2009 the historic park and several of its listed buildings were formally classified by Historic England as "At Risk" because of the deteriorating condition of specific structures and the loss of key landscape features and views. In addition, Stover Lake Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) was declared to be "in Unfavourable Condition" by Natural England in 2001 because of the deterioration of the lake's natural ecosystems. In response, the Council and partners commissioned research and in 2015 produced a Parkland Plan which sets out a wide-ranging, holistic programme of works to address these failures and return the heritage assets to good condition. Without action, the Council and its partners in the historic park may be seen to be neglecting nationally important heritage features. Additionally, visitor pressure on Stover Country Park has been increasing due to a growing local population, and the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic (with higher demand and use for accessible open spaces). The visitor facilities at the Park are struggling to cope with these pressures, and fragile wildlife habitats are also being damaged. Since 2015 the Council has been seeking funding to implement the Parkland Plan and make the Country Park more resilient to visitor pressures. An application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) in November 2019 was successful and funding of £341k was secured towards the £521k cost of a Development Phase (January 2021 – May 2022) to carry out detailed feasibility and secure all necessary consents. Subject to a competitive application process at the end of the Development Phase, the NLHF will be asked to award a further £1.92m towards the £3.61m cost of the Delivery Phase (Autumn 2022- Autumn 2025), which will implement the Restoring Stover Park project in full. The release of £1.92m funds from NLHF is contingent on match funding being secured including from DCC (£500k) and National Highways (£650k). In the long term, Stover Country Park will become more financially sustainable as a result of the project through the development of additional income streams and the reduction in outgoings through improved capital infrastructure. An impact assessment was undertaken in March 2020 prior to the Development Phase and is now being renewed for the Delivery Phase.

3. Aims / objectives, limitations and options going forwards (summary)

The Restoring Stover Park project will:

- Improve the day-to-day visit experience of current and new users.
- Help restore, protect, and enhance the Park's heritage assets and important habitats for plants and wildlife.
- Safeguard an important green space for future generations.
- Provide the opportunity to partner with local social care and health providers, helping to address inequality, leading to a reduction in the health and social disparities found in the local community.
- Make a significant contribution towards promoting health benefits as well as improving quality of life.
- Work towards being carbon neutral, whilst supporting visitors to adopt environmentally friendly behaviours.

The recommendations, flowing from the Parkland Plan, Council strategy and audience consultations support:

- Removing silt from Stover Lake SSSI that has damaged its wildlife value with the ambition of returning it to Favourable Condition.
- Repairing the Grade II*Granite Gatehouse (currently on the Heritage At Risk Register), restoring its landscape setting and making it available for public access.
- Recreating part of the Serpentine Lake, a historic landscape feature.
- Opening up key historic views through the Park.
- Creating new access circuits (including permissive agreements with adjacent landowners) and providing new robust amenity grassland areas to encourage people to explore the wider landscape and reduce visitor pressure on the SSSI Lake and immediate habitats.
- Providing new accessible interpretation throughout the historic park.
- Extending the Discovery Centre footprint, providing office space for staff, recreation space for volunteers, a new rentable indoor learning/exhibition/meeting space, external space for three mobile refreshment providers, bike parking and electric bike and mobility scooter charging area.
- Opening up the landscape around the Discovery Centre to create views to the lake and the historic park and make the centre more inviting.
- Maintain and improve the energy and waste efficiency credentials of the Discovery Centre
- Providing workshop space as a base for our volunteers and visiting groups, and home for a new Shed 'make and repair' projects.
- Enhancing the car park to improve provision for people with disabilities, allow for coach and community bus drop off by the centre, allocate parking for one coach, and increase car parking spaces by 10% within the existing footprint. This will also improve security and ease of use.

- Improving access to and within the Park, including making it easier for people to come by bus, bicycle or on foot.
- Making the park more financially resilient through new income-generating assets (rentable indoor and outdoor spaces and facilities, flexible refreshment provision, additional car park income).
- Developing a Business Plan, Conservation Management Plan and Management and Maintenance Plan for the long term.

Alongside physical works, the Project includes an extensive Activity Plan through which we will deliver:

- New staff and volunteers:
 - Project Officer
 - Community Engagement Officer
 - Project and Volunteer Administrator
 - Team of 'as and when' learning facilitators
 - Two seasonal trainee ranger placements
 - New volunteer roles: researchers, guides, support buddies, learning support, bike repairs and maintenance, mentoring
- Training and development:
 - Continuing Professional Development (CPD) package for education providers
 - Forest School training
 - Outdoor leader training
 - Accessing natural spaces for wellbeing training
 - Staff and volunteer training programmes
 - Core: safeguarding, first aid, volunteer management
 - Education support: education leader training, events, and outreach support
 - Outdoor learning: supporting outdoor learning and play, Forest School, accessing outdoor spaces for learning, guided walk training
 - Access: access awareness, autism awareness
 - Conservation: Seeds, growing and planting care, habitat restoration, site maintenance
 - Heritage: archive research for interpretation development
 - Project delivery: Social media, volunteer management

- Formal learning programmes and resources:
 - Revamped learning programme and resources for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and primary school pupils (resource packs, 6 workshops for EYFS/Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2 including pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)).
 - Forest School programme, resources, and promotional materials.
 - Two Forest School sites upgraded, including play equipment, compost toilets, shelters and water harvesting, and two new Forest School sites created.
- Informal learning programmes and resources:
 - Themed guided walks
 - Weekend and school holiday activities (trails, craft activities)
 - Micro tree nursery materials, kits, and promotional materials, including resources for planting trees at the Park
 - Stover Stories – creative storytelling and activities sharing the hidden heritage stories of Stover in partnership with Red Herring Theatre (on site and pop up)
- Volunteer programmes:
 - British Dragonfly Society Project to monitor species after the capital works
 - Heritage Stories research project to inform new interpretation
 - Volunteer group workdays for nature conservation
- Events and exhibitions:
 - Photographing Stover Photography Exhibition
 - Reopening celebrations and events
- Audience development projects:
 - Bike Repair Project in partnership with Cycling UK for young people and socially isolated older people
 - Visit support buddy scheme in partnership with volunteers from Home-Start and Living Options to enable vulnerable families and adults to visit and participate
- Health and wellbeing programmes:
 - Wellness in nature programme in partnership with local social and healthcare providers to provide support, activities and mentoring for local socially isolated and vulnerable adults and young people
 - The Shed project – community space and activities to build social interaction and share skills.
 - Holiday respite scheme for families with young children and young people affected by carers/parents use of drugs/alcohol
 - Wellness and sensory walks in partnership with Active Devon, Kingscote and Teignbridge District Council
 - On Yer Bike! Project in partnership with Good Cycling and Cycling UK

- Digital engagement:
 - New space/resource booking management system for staff
 - Refocussed website
 - New Stover Country Park app
 - Social media campaigns

In addition, we will:

- Generate new and stronger links with site users by developing our Friends of Stover Park group
- Further develop the Stover Park Advisory Board, cementing its role as the key management forum for the historic park that brings community groups and park users to the table alongside statutory agencies, public authorities, and landowners.

Limitations

The Restoring Stover Park project is complex and includes a wide range of capital building works and community activities. The primary limiting factor has been the amount of match funding that could be secured during the Development Phase. In a challenging financial landscape, applications for match funding have been constrained, with some bids unsuccessful. At the same time, increasing construction costs have been widely reported across all industries due to increasing materials costs and difficulty in securing labour. As a result, scope has had to be revised during the development phase with restoration of the Souterrain Stables and Ionic Temple (that are the property of Stover School) no longer feasible as part of this specific project. In addition, the proposed capital works relating to the sediment removal from Stover Lake has been reduced in scale.

Engagement with community groups during the Covid-19 pandemic has been difficult due to the required virus control measures. For some of the most vulnerable and under-represented audiences (such as socially isolated older people), engagement has been limited. The mitigation of potential future social/physical distancing requirements is proposed by developing a digital engagement offering, by delivering outreach into communities or audiences that cannot travel to Stover Country Park, and by creating indoor and outdoor meeting and learning spaces that offer greater flexibility for use.

Options Appraisal

In developing this project, we have considered options in depth. In summary, three options are presented:

i) Do Nothing / Status Quo: Stover Country Park is a popular and well managed green space, as recognised through achieving Green Flag Award status (the benchmark standard for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the United Kingdom and around the world). However, if additional investment cannot be secured, historic and wildlife value will continue to deteriorate resulting in loss of nationally important features. In addition to negative environmental impact, this could diminish reputational standing; and will limit the range and extent of new opportunities for underrepresented and socially excluded audiences.

ii) Incremental Approach: a phased approach with targeted funding towards individual features on a prioritised basis would be better than doing nothing. This could potentially allow for some works utilising Devon County Council capital budgets, or possibly through one of the proposed partners. This may need to be progressed should it not be feasible to bid for and secure funding as recommended within this report. This option does not optimise opportunity to attract match funding, and unfunded features will continue to deteriorate – possibly resulting in loss, and / or higher future costs of maintenance. Community- focused activities will also be limited.

iii) Progressing with the Restoration Project / Delivery Phase as recommended will optimise external funding and address the highest priority activities as assessed during the development phase. This will stop deterioration, safeguard key features of national significance; and enable delivery of high-profile activities to engage local communities.

4. People affected, diversity profile and analysis of needs

Community Engagement

Visitor Surveys have informed our knowledge of existing visitors: 62% of respondents were female; 37% were aged 65 and over, with a further 19.5% aged 55-64 years; 93.7% described themselves as White. This broadly reflects the local Devon demographic. The top three reasons for visiting are consistent across the various surveys and include:

- to walk/exercise (27%)

- to observe/study nature (25%)
- for peace and quiet (12%)

Walking the dog was also popular (9%) as well as feeding the ducks (8%).

There is also engagement by the Rangers with schools and educational facilities offering practical nature-based activities.

'Stover Volunteers' has been running for over twenty years. Around 13 regular volunteers come to the Park on the last Sunday of the month throughout the winter, from September to April

In developing our plans, we have taken a people-first approach. This has enabled us to place Stover Country Park at the heart of the local community. At our core, we aim to be a participatory organisation. Everything from our programming to our communications is based on an awareness of the needs of our local community, and commitment to being inclusive. We will achieve project success by planning for access and inclusion with targeted learning activities, high-quality interpretation, jobs and skills-development to create a high-quality user experience. This approach will help us to build a stronger, more inclusive and connected organisation.

In terms of building new audiences, a number of cross-cutting principles underpin our planning so that inclusion is championed in the broadest sense through each target group. These include widening access, targeting underrepresented communities, and developing a structured volunteer programme. This will ensure dedicated activity and provision is made to encourage the widest range of people to engage and guarantee equality of opportunity. This approach recognises that people cannot be pigeon-holed into one category but sit across audience groups which can vary depending on who they are visiting with or the activity they are participating in.

Underrepresented communities across audience groups, including people from lower socio-economic groups and different ethnic communities, are a key target audience for this project. When selecting target audiences, consideration has been given to focus on groups and partnerships which are more likely to reflect social and cultural diversity. We will work with them to understand their needs and the barriers to participation. Our approach will include targeted project work, communication and partnership working to increase the relevance and appeal of the Park.

Our target audiences are:

1. Socially isolated older people living in and around the Newton Abbot and Teignmouth area (accessed through existing care / health support pathways)
2. Local families with young children (pre-school – 11 years) living in local areas of multiple disadvantage (accessed through schools and partnerships with local organisations or DCC support pathways)
3. Local young people (16 – 25 years) with additional support needs for mental health and well-being (accessed through local support charities and Devon County Council networks / initiatives)
4. People from Asian, Black, and other ethnically diverse communities who do not traditionally visit SCP
5. Serious hobbyists and special interest groups (local and national, including FE/HE research students and academics and those active in climate change action/debates)
6. Volunteers (existing and new)

Skills

Our staff and volunteers will undertake training in the following areas (as required) to enable successful project delivery. Some training opportunities will also be available for teachers or organisational group leaders in the area who are interested in up skilling in delivering outdoor learning and wellbeing initiatives independent of Stover staff. Training and skills development opportunities include:

- Formal and informal learning
 - Forest school training
 - Outdoor leader training
 - Accessing natural spaces for wellbeing
 - Education leader training
 - Education activities support training
 - Guided walk training
 - Events support/outreach support
 - Bike repair and maintenance

- Health and safety
 - Safeguarding
 - First aid (annual)
 - Health and Safety (ongoing)

- Widening access
 - Autism awareness
 - Access awareness

- Project management and delivery
 - Social media training
 - Access awareness
 - Volunteer management

- Volunteer projects
 - Tree project training: seeds, growing and planting care
 - Habitat restoration (delivered by British Dragonfly Society)
 - Archive research for interpretation development
 - Site maintenance (ongoing for regular group workdays and new volunteers)

Learning

In July 2021, 116 local educators responded to an online survey, circulated in the final week of summer term. The respondents worked in a range of local settings including nine pre-schools/nurseries, 49 primary schools, nine secondary schools, six HE/FE colleges, three SEND settings, a youth service, three outdoor learning settings, seven childminding services, five home educators and two uniformed groups.

We have reviewed the feedback and conducted further research and development to investigate:

- Do we provide effective learning opportunities?
- Does Stover create inspiring and accessible learning environments?
- How do we place learning at the heart of our organisation?
- How can we build sustainable, meaningful, and creative learning partnerships?

Our resulting Activity Plan focuses on a revamped EYFS and primary school programme targeting KS1 and KS2 pupils. Our schools' programme will give pupils the opportunity to get involved and engaged with the outdoors through hands-on, safe experiences. The aim is to:

- Increase pupils' interaction with nature
- Support the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding
- Build pupils' confidence, resilience, and ability to assess and take risks
- Provide positive experiences of nature and wildlife
- Support pupils' health and wellbeing

The school programme will run in all weathers (subject to appropriate risk assessment), although some activities may only be offered at certain times of the year. Workshops will generally take place between 10am to 2.30pm. Schools will be welcomed to the site and receive a health and safety briefing. During the day, pupils will take part in a number of activities, games, and investigations, pre-selected from a menu. All activities are designed to take place outside with adapted to suit poor weather conditions.

The Development Phase has also enabled us to set out our aspirations, approaches, and policies in a Volunteer Strategy. We have a small, dedicated team of volunteers at SCP. Their feedback helped us develop our project programmes. The project offers the opportunity to formalise our volunteer offer, with new roles and opportunities as well as supporting policies and processes. This will enable us to develop relationships with new partners to widen our reach and offer training to new volunteers.

We aim to promote new roles and boost existing roles for 82 volunteers, including groups, families, and young volunteers (16 – 25 yrs.):

- On yer bike!

- Archive research
- Shed projects
- Bike maintenance
- Weekend and school holiday activities
- Site maintenance (individuals and groups)
- Forest school
- Outreach volunteers
- Dragonfly monitoring
- Tree nursery project

Wellbeing

Consultation with the local NHS Social Prescribing Team and other social/healthcare providers has shown us that there is an ever-increasing demand for services to support people’s mental health and wellbeing. This has become more acute during the Covid Pandemic. The project will enable us to become a hub to support people’s health and wellbeing in nature. Working in partnership with local providers, we will be able to offer leader training, facilitated visits and a safe space for people to meet, have fun and heal. People who engage in activities from this programme will be supported and encouraged to build a long-term relationship with SCP through our volunteering and events programmes. SCP will also provide bookable spaces for therapeutic sessions.

| Programme | Target audience(s) | Partners |
|--|--|--|
| Health and wellbeing in Nature Programme Facilitating people in local support groups through fortnightly meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Socially isolated and vulnerable people, including young people, living in and around the Newton Abbot and Teignbridge area (accessed through existing care / health support pathways) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kingscare ▪ PCN ▪ EYCN ▪ Active Devon |

| Programme | Target audience(s) | Partners |
|---|---|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Templer care PCN ▪ Newton West PCN ▪ Y-Project ▪ Sorting Office |
| <p>Community Shed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotion of new volunteer roles ▪ Shed training ▪ Men's Shed (monthly activities) ▪ Community Shed launched, building on learning from Men's Shed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Socially isolated older men ▪ Users transitioning from health and wellbeing hub activities ▪ Local people ▪ Special interest groups ▪ Asian, Black and other ethnically diverse people / communities ▪ 16- 25-year-olds with support needs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kingsbridge men's shed ▪ Active Devon County Council ▪ Cycling UK ▪ <u>SEND Colleges</u> ▪ <u>Kingscare</u> |
| <p>Holiday Respite Scheme</p> <p>Phase one: outreach / building relationships</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Young people (under 18) affected by their parent's/carer's or sibling's use of drugs and / or alcohol | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Y-Project – Children's Service ▪ EYCN ▪ Kingscare – young carers |

| Programme | Target audience(s) | Partners |
|--|--|---|
| Phase two: on site activities, leading to some young people moving on to engage with volunteering. | | |
| Wellness Walks Volunteer led walks in Stover Park 1 per month / 12 per year. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adults looking for a supported way to improve physical and mental health and wellbeing ▪ Core Audience Groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active Devon (walk leader training providers) |
| On your bike! During parks closure supporting the building of confidence and fitness to enable Newton Abbot to SCP by bike. 4.3 miles each way. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ People living in the local area looking for support to regain fitness or for social activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active Devon ▪ Cycling UK ▪ Good cycling ▪ Kingscare ▪ Sorting Office |

5. Stakeholders, their interest, and potential impacts

We have consulted with local organisations and stakeholders to help us further shape and refine our plans for project activities. The table below gives an overview of this consultation.

| Groups / stakeholders consulted | Focus for consultation |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Formal learning | |

| Groups / stakeholders consulted | Focus for consultation |
|---|--|
| 114 formal learning groups / schools consulted through digital survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New facilities, resources, programme development (schools / formal), work experience placements / young volunteering |
| Stover School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential partnership working |
| Exeter College Outdoor Education Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work experience opportunities ▪ Collaborative working opportunities ▪ Apprenticeships ▪ Programmes to enhance delivery of training course |
| Director of Forest Kindergarten | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CPD / training e.g., Circle of Life Rediscovery Programme |
| Health and wellbeing | |
| Natural England | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approaches to social prescribing in nature settings including referral pathways, partnership activity of Natural England sites |
| Local Primary Care Network social prescribers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Holistic approaches for supporting lonely and vulnerable people |
| Kingscare patient support charity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partnership working and support ▪ HOPE programme ▪ Supporting transition to other programmes / activities |
| Cycling UK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Opportunities for working collaboratively to produce a Newton Abbot focused project for cycling and skills development (bike mechanics) |
| Children and young people | |
| EYCN Teams (Children and Family Health) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Providing a joined up / enhanced service for families with young children ▪ Tailored school holiday programme targeted to support vulnerable families |
| Exeter Drugs Project | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ways SCP can support the Together project e.g., self-guided walks |
| Young Devon Charity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scoping opportunities for partnership project to support young people affected by family members who misuse drugs / alcohol (Y-Project) |
| Access and inclusion | |

| Groups / stakeholders consulted | Focus for consultation |
|--|---|
| Devon County Council Corporate Equality Officer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advice and signposting to ensure project is accessible to all |
| Hikmat Devon CIC | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling and supporting ethnically diverse communities living in Devon to access SCP |
| SENSE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible support to develop a sensory walk with the STRAVA App |
| Local Transport Devon | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhancing access to SCP |
| Special interest groups | |
| Newton Abbot Photography Group and SCP photography club(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring potential photography projects to support project delivery |
| British Dragonfly Society | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential partnership working to support habitat restoration work |
| Newton Abbot Town and GWR Museum | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible collaboration to support the sharing of SCP's heritage stories Opportunities for supporting heritage volunteers |

For capital works, consultation with the following stakeholders has been progressed:

| Stakeholder | Interest | Impact |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Natural England | SSSI Lake and habitats | Natural England are a consultee to any planning applications impacting the SSSI and therefore have acted as a key stakeholder in agreeing the plans to remove sediment from the lake. |
| Historic England | Historic Buildings | Historic England is the public body responsible for the historic environment and the heritage at risk status of the historic buildings. They have to be consulted as part of any design and listed building consent. |
| Teignbridge District Council | Listed building consents and match funding | TDC are being consulted as part of the Listed Building Consent applied to the Granite Gatehouse. There have also been ongoing discussions relating to whether S106 monies can be awarded as match funding to the project. |
| Imerys | Adjacent Landowner | The opportunity to dispose of lake sediment has been discussed but is not an option. |

| | | |
|---------------|--------------------|--|
| Sibelco | Adjacent Landowner | The opportunity to dispose of lake sediment has been discussed but is not an option. A permissive route is in the process of being agreed through their land for public walking. |
| Stover School | Adjacent Landowner | The School have been consulted throughout relating to their ownership of the Souterrain Stables and Ionic Temple and the opportunity for the restoration of these buildings to form park of the Restoring Stover Park project. |

6. Additional research used to inform this assessment

The following initiatives impacting local priorities have been taken into account:

Devon County Council Strategic Plan 2021-25 prioritises helping Devon respond to the climate and ecological emergency, and protecting the natural environment; working together to ensure all children are safe, healthy and can thrive; supporting sustainable economic recovery; tackling poverty and inequality; improving health and wellbeing and helping communities be safe, connected and resilient.

Devon County Council's 'Better Together' Strategic Vision 2020 and beyond prioritises the promotion of healthy lifestyles and increasing opportunities to enjoy Devon's environment, as well as supporting voluntary and community groups, and inclusive communities and promoting links between young and older people. Also ensuring young people have a quality education, good skills and opportunities.

The Joint Devon Health and wellbeing strategy 2020-25 prioritises creating conditions for good health; physical activity and social interaction, reducing loneliness and supporting people to lead healthy lives.

Devon Local Nature Partnership Prospectus has the stated outcomes that 'everyone in Devon has the opportunity, and the confidence, to be naturally active in order to improve their health and wellbeing'.

Devon County Council Community Insight Survey 2019

In addition to consultation and piloting, we have informed our developing plans through researching good practice in other organisations. Listed below are some of the key areas we focused on:

| Organisation | Area of focus |
|---|--|
| Resources / activities to support families with children under 11 years | |
| Forestry England, Woodland Trust, Highdown Gardens | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management of school groups ▪ Example activities for families / education groups ▪ Example resources for schools / families ▪ Digital resources ▪ Printed resources (see images below) |
| Devon Wildlife Trust | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Exeter Wild City Project ▪ Wildlife Garden Award – helping gardens to thrive ▪ Education team activities e.g. biodiversity / sustainability |
| Forest School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Training and CPD courses to inform our training programme |
| Supporting young people with SEND | |
| Museum of English Rural Life with Addington Special School | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Everybody Outdoors project ▪ Working with teacher panels ▪ Supporting students with complex needs to enjoy outdoor and immersive learning ▪ Developing a sensory programme (colours) |
| Formal Learning | |
| Eden Project School workshops and RHS Wisley Formal Learning Programme and Hampshire and IoW Wildlife Trust schools programme | <p>EYFS / primary school programming</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost per pupils ▪ Content: e.g. Facilitated workshop, free access to site, free teaching resources (pre – post visit), ▪ Base for bags and lunch space ▪ Free prep visit for teachers (see Appendix 2 for full details) ▪ Staffing ▪ Related family programming at Wildlife Trusts |

| Organisation | Area of focus |
|---|--|
| Field Studies Council | Approach to programme development: Whole range of workshops for EY – KS2 – clearly signposted offer for each Key Stage. Includes story based and sensory approach in EY/KS1 moving towards adventure and science approach in KS2. Gives reason to return in different key stages. |
| Health and wellbeing projects | |
| The Aging Well Project (Torbay | <u>Ageing Well Torbay – Looking after all our tomorrows today</u> |
| The Compass Project – Dancing out of isolation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project that uses local ambassadors to support delivery |
| Aging Better Test and Learn Programme | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with Asian, Black and other ethnically diverse people / communities across 14 partnership organisations <u>Ageing-Better-engaging-BAME-communities.pdf (tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)</u> |
| Organic Arts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling adults and young people with additional support needs through regular group working on community garden project. Programmes include: gardening, photography, arts. A free project mini bus runs every work day between Ide (where the farm is located) and Exeter. |
| Cycling UK | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fix, learn ride project engagement model |
| Volunteers | |
| National Trust And Volunteering with Wild East Devon And good museum practice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer with us this summer programme Citizen science projects Bioblitz events Digital support and opportunities |

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

Through our research, workshops and working with our external consultants, we have come to understand that access is more than creating a physically accessible environment. A barrier describes anything that stops or dissuades a person from visiting, enjoying or learning about the wildlife and heritage at Stover Country Park. We know that many of our visitors may face more than one barrier at a time. We have used the following tools and resources to enable us to better understand the barriers that may prevent people from visiting or engaging with our site.

Internal review tools:

- Kids in Museums Family Friendly checklist
- Learning Spaces checklist (using Clore guidance)
- Audit of current displays and exhibitions
- Summary of Access Audit (access consultants)
- Inspiring Learning For All review workshop
- Interpretation planning workshop
- Staff / volunteer surveys
- Learning Spaces planning workshop

User consultation tools:

- Round 1 consultation findings
- User and non-user consultation
- Education groups survey
- Partner consultation
- Piloting and testing of activities
- Visitor surveys

National reports and guidance:

- The Taking Part survey in England
- The Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. This provided us with trend data for how people use the natural environment in England. We used their visual story map to inform our thinking

<https://defra.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=d5fe6191e3fe400189a3756ab3a4057c>

Our thinking has also been guided by:

- Equality Act <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4>
- Advice from the government’s guidance on accessible communication and guidance from a range of charities including VocalEyes, RNIB, Action on hearing Loss.
- Historic England’s guidance on easy access to historic buildings and landscapes.

Outcomes

The table below sets out the general barriers to access, the people who may be affected by them, and some ways we are considering to overcome them through our project.

| Organisational barriers | Who is affected | Possible ways to overcome barriers |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| Lack of staff resources to be able to deliver a wider range of events and activities | All visitors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore new models for delivery e.g. ‘as and when’ team trained to support Forest School and other learning and engagement programmes, including outreach ▪ Explore different approaches to supporting site visits that don’t require a specialist ranger e.g. self-led resource bank, digital resources, explorer backpacks, activity stations |
| Not all staff feel confident to help all visitors. | Current and new staff Volunteers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff and volunteer training and development plan to support delivery of all project strands |
| SCP does not have an interpretation strategy for the Park and its learning programmes. | All visitors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with interpretation and design consultants to create an Interpretation Plan which provides information on the history of the site, the ecology of the site and helps visitors understand the stories associated with the Park. |
| Physical barriers | Who is affected | Possible ways to overcome barriers |
| The site has some physical barriers, including for example: | Families with young children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide clear information on our websites / leaflets / maps to enable people to make an informed decision about making a visit based on personal needs and |

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| <p>slope from the car park, uneven paths (in some areas), long walking distances between seating, no space to turn a wheelchair in the Discovery Centre toilet.</p> | <p>People with limited mobility and visual impairment</p> | <p>circumstances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look at examples of good practice for communicating possible barriers on our marketing and pre-visit information ▪ Site access audit to inform capital works e.g. new footpaths, new seating areas etc. ▪ Provide easy, signposted access to mobility scooters (including the opportunity to pre-book this resource) |
| <p>Interpretation and wayfinding signage is old and does not follow current access guidelines It makes it hard to read.</p> | <p>All people, especially blind and partially sighted people (including older people who may not describe themselves as visually impaired)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New interpretation and wayfinding signage / resources developed as part of NLHF project |
| <p>Most of our volunteering activities are physically demanding.</p> | <p>Some older people People with physical disabilities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explore different ways for people to volunteer their time to support the Park e.g. office-based roles, marketing, social media, photography, administration, learning support, family make a difference days |
| <p>Our consultation tells us we need more seating and shelter for visitors, especially beyond the Lake walk.</p> | <p>All visitors, but especially older people, those with limited mobility or carers with babies / young children</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure consultation is fed into our developing plans for the site to ensure they meet the needs of our users ▪ Consult with access panel to test developing plans |
| <p>Our current accessible toilets do not meet recent guidelines for changing places toilets, which means some people can only stay for a limited period or are unable to visit.</p> | <p>Wide range of visitors, including people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and people with a range of other disabilities</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure building works include a fully functioning Changing Places Toilet |

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| | including CP, MND, MS, stroke | |
| Our website and leaflets have limited information on physical access, which means it can be hard for visitors to make an informed decision about their visit. | Families People with physical disabilities, visual impairments, hearing impairments, elderly people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide clear information on our websites / leaflets / maps to enable people to make an informed decision about making a visit based on personal needs and circumstances |
| The weather: many people only visit when the weather conditions are favourable, there is limited under cover shelter and nowhere to warm up if wet and cold. | All | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure architectural and design plans allow for adequate shelter and protection to enable year-round enjoyment of the site and a range of learning spaces to extend and deepen the visit experience |

| Intellectual barriers | Who is affected | Possible ways to overcome barriers |
|--|---|---|
| There is limited interpretation or information on the site's heritage stories. | All visitors, but particularly those interested in local history and people stories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the possibility of a partnership project with the local museum e.g. research / exhibition / events programming Build a research strand into our Activity Plan, supported by local volunteers, to gain deeper insight and knowledge in the Park's heritage and people stories Include heritage programming into our general activities e.g. heritage walks, heritage talks |
| Difficulty of balancing needs and wants of informal group visits. | Families with a wide age range of children Group organisers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create family focus groups to help us develop our plans for the Park Comparator research to find out how other outdoor learning sites meet the needs of visiting groups |
| Some of our visitors have high levels of knowledge and experience but aren't always able to share this knowledge, or | Special interest groups Serious hobbyists Academics / | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan to collaborate with our visitors and supporters who have specialist interest to enable them to become partners on events, exhibitions, talks and walks to give them a strong sense of pride and ownership of the Park and share their deep knowledge with others |

| take their learning to a deeper level. | researchers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify strengths in our existing team of Rangers and Volunteers to act as learning champions Provide training in guiding and build confidence to lead walks. |
|--|---|---|
| Attitudinal barriers | Who is affected | Possible ways to overcome barriers |
| 'It's not for the likes of us': we need to work harder to reflect the life experiences of our target audiences and give these images higher profile in our marketing materials so they know people 'like them' are welcome and can enjoy the experience. | Asian, Black and other ethnically diverse people / communities. Non-traditional family units (e.g. single parent, multi-generation, same sex, special needs) Teenagers People with physical disabilities New, young mums | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure our marketing reflects a wide range of people visiting and enjoying our events and activities Ensure we communicate our breastfeeding is welcome message (and other family friendly resources) on site and online so young mums feel comfortable to visit and know where to go if they need to sit and feed in private Ensure ticketing for special events and activities reflect that families come in all shapes and sizes Plan to work consult with our existing and potential audiences, including children and young people, to help us reflect on our offer and develop our plans Take some of our programmes and activities to targeted places and organisations to encourage the wider community to engage with SCP and value it as a community resource |
| Some visitors, especially since Covid-19 lack environmental literacy and experience of visiting nature reserves. | Some first-time visitors Some people who live in urban areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure our new signage and interpretation enables people to learn about how to look after and respect the natural environment, and stay safe Ensure teaching about how to stay safe and look after nature is included as a golden thread in all our outreach and participation programmes and in our programme for visiting schools / youth groups (so they can share their learning with their parents) Encourage good behaviour in dog walkers by 'speaking to the dogs' rather than the owners in signage and leaflets Plan for our new interpretation to provide positive messaging about what is on offer for families and groups on the site that day |
| Lack of confidence in own | People living with | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in partnership with local care / health organisations to support more |

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| ability, fitness and knowledge. | physical disability, visual impairment, anxiety, learning disability, some elderly people | vulnerable visitors to visit and enjoy the Park through guided programmes and activities. |
| Risk adverse – fear of hazards, stranger danger, wildlife, dogs, wild animals. | Some families, particularly with daughters People with disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure teaching about how to stay safe and enjoy nature and wildlife is included as a golden thread in all our outreach and participation programmes and in our programme for visiting schools / youth groups (so they can share their learning with their parents) |

| Financial barriers | Who is affected | Possible ways to overcome barriers |
|---|---|--|
| People without their own transport find it hard to access the part as public transport is expensive and can be unreliable, the local bus service is not well promoted or used | Lower income families Older people who do not feel confident to take the bus (with their bus pass) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with DCC to develop sustainable transport plan Ensure we consider this barrier when developing partnership projects e.g. offer to provide transport costs, if necessary. We know, for example, if we want to work with people who have physical disabilities, or encourage them to work / volunteer on the project, we may have to offer a taxi service or other transport to enable them to participate |
| Some of our events may exclude people on a cost basis | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We need to ensure we consider cost barriers when producing new events and activities to ensure people are not prevented from participating |

8. Equality analysis

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The local authority must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where relevant, we must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. This means considering how people with different needs get the different services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

We also need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).
- The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:
 - Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
 - Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)
 - Fair
 - Necessary
 - Reasonable, and
 - Those affected have been adequately consulted.

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| <p>Characteristics</p> | <p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p> | <p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p> |
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| <p>All residents (include generic equality provisions)</p> | <p>Once works are complete, access to Stover Country Park will be improved for all audiences.</p> <p>We want to make sure that Stover remains accessible to all during the project, which will see a great deal of change happen over several years. Access to parts of the park that people are used to visiting will be restricted for some time as works are carried out and this could impact more heavily on people with additional needs. We need to have good communications with people and ensure that the works minimise disruption. We have proposed a period of outreach in the phase of capital works so we can take Stover out into community groups to communicate what is happening and encourage a visit at after completion.</p> <p>In general, as we develop new facilities and attract new audiences to the park, we could find that existing visitors are less receptive to the changes and wish things could have stayed as they were. This also</p> | <p>Ensuring that the Restoring Stover Park project is founded on principles of equality by consulting closely with our partners and the wider public as the project develops and our plans are implemented.</p> |
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| <p>Characteristics</p> | <p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p> | <p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p> |
| | <p>means good communications of key messages, explaining why the changes are needed. We will also ensure that staff and volunteers working at the park are trained and supported in equality and diversity. This will help new audiences find a welcoming environment and existing visitors can learn by example from the staff team.</p> | |

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| <p>Characteristics</p> | <p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p> | <p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p> |
| <p>Age</p> | <p>Some older people who currently visit the Park may find change confusing, and we will work with our key gatekeeper (Kingscare) and Age UK Devon to train staff and volunteers to support these visitors.</p> | <p>As we develop the new facilities, we will work closely with Kingscare and Age UK Devon to develop programmes and facilities that meet the needs of older people.</p> <p>Once complete, access to and through the Park will be improved, including public transport links, clearer signage, better directional waymarking, and enhanced sight lines.</p> |
| <p>Disability (incl. sensory, mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people</p> | <p>Some facilities may be less accessible in the short term and we are delivering outreach and will provide alternatives wherever possible. We will work with Living Options Devon, Kingscare and Home-Start to train staff and volunteers to support disabled and Deaf people and their carers.</p> | <p>As we develop the new facilities, we will work closely with Living Options Devon to develop programmes and facilities that meet the needs of disabled and Deaf people and their carers.</p> <p>The digital programme and specifically the App will allow visitors to deep dive into information that interests them in a format which is accessible.</p> <p>As outlined above, delivery of the physical works and the activities plan will enhance provision.</p> |

| Characteristics | Potential or actual issues for this group. [Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED] | How will the project / service / policy / activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p> |
|---|---|--|
| Culture and ethnicity: nationality/national origin, ethnic origin/race, skin colour, religion, and belief | Working with Devon Diversity Consultants to train staff and volunteers in culture and ethnicity awareness. | Working with Devon Diversity Consultants to develop programmes and facilities that involve members of different ethnic backgrounds. The Activity plan includes targeted on and off-site measures to optimise and increase participation. |
| Sex, gender, and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed) | No specific issues have been identified. The restoration project includes works that will improve visitor welcome and site safety. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure we communicate our breastfeeding is welcome message (and other family friendly resources) on site and online so young mums feel comfortable to visit and know where to go if they need to sit and feed in private. |
| Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership | No specific issues have been identified. The restoration project includes works that will improve visitor welcome and site safety. | |

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| <p>Characteristics</p> | <p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p> | <p>How will the project / service / policy / activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminate or reduce the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advance equality (meet needs / ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'). • foster good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>In what way do you consider any negative consequences to be reasonable and proportionate in order to achieve a legitimate aim?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p> |
| <p>Other relevant socio-economic factors such as family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, 'digital exclusion', access to transport options, rural/urban</p> | <p>Working with key partners (e.g. Home-Start, Y-Project, Kingscare) to train or support our staff and volunteers in supporting vulnerable families with young children.</p> | <p>Targeted outreach.</p> <p>Working with key partners to develop programmes and facilities that will make the site more accessible to families with young children.</p> <p>Working with Newton Abbot CIC to develop programmes and facilities that will make the site more accessible for people from economically disadvantaged areas.</p> |

9. Human rights considerations:

No specific Human Rights issues have been identified.

10. Supporting independence, wellbeing and resilience. Give consideration to the groups listed above and how they may have different needs:

In what way can you support and create opportunities for people and communities (of place and interest) to be independent, empowered, and resourceful?

The project includes plans to develop Stover as a Specialist Centre for Connecting People with Nature and a Hub for Health, Wellbeing and Enjoyment in Nature. We will provide practical courses, talks, walks, exhibitions, and volunteering opportunities in these programmes. All of the groups above will be encouraged and supported to take part in these activities and learn new skills.

In what way can you help people to be safe, protected from harm, and with good health and wellbeing?

The project includes works to improve the physical environment at Stover. This will help address potential perceived barriers relating to feelings of insecurity and encourage more people to get active in the outdoors by offering activity programmes and making them highly accessible (e.g., by working with partners to connect to people who wouldn't otherwise engage).

In what way can you help people to be connected, and involved in community activities?

Our volunteering and learning programmes will bring people together, allowing a variety of roles including practical tasks, visitor welcome, historic stories research or acting as Stover ambassadors. Our new workshop facilities will be the hub for community engagement, enabling people to get involved and learn new skills.

11. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 4c, otherwise complete the environmental analysis table):

| | |
|---|---|
| Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process | |
| Planning Permission | X |
| Environmental Impact Assessment | X |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment | |

| | Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these). | Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible). |
|---|--|---|
| Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost: | | |
| Conserve and enhance wildlife: | | |
| Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape: | | |
| Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage: | | |
| Minimise greenhouse gas emissions: | | |
| Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise): | | |
| Contribute to reducing water consumption: | | |
| Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level): | | |
| Other (please state below): | | |

12. Economic analysis

| | Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these). | Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible). |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Impact on knowledge and skills: | | The project will result in a broader and deeper skill set for the Stover staff and volunteer team. It will also extend the knowledge and skills of visitors to Stover Park. |
| Impact on employment levels: | | The project will create 2.5 FTE jobs throughout the Delivery Phase and generate spend of £2.2m on professional services / capital work. A long-term 0.5FTE post will be created to continue with Community Engagement following delivery. |
| Impact on local business: | | The improvements to Stover Park will make the area more attractive for day visits which will support existing businesses in the area. An increased opportunity for local caterers to offer their services at Stover will be created. |

13. Describe and linkages or conflicts between social, environmental, and economic impacts (Combined Impacts):

The project closely connects:

- Improved public understanding of the wildlife and heritage of Stover Park
- Improved access for people to the heritage
- Improved wellbeing and social capital for people visiting the park
- Better protected and maintained wildlife habitats and ecosystems
- More activities and events supporting increased economic activity
- Better infrastructure to enable increased visitor numbers whilst improving protection of vulnerable habitats.
- Improved access to the Park on foot, bicycle and by bus, alongside greater energy efficiency and better waste management

This holistic approach ensures people, nature and our historic environment can find an equitable and sustainable balance.

14. How will the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?

A Sustainability Assessment Matrix has been completed for the project and this indicates that the Restoring Stover Park project delivers a high level of economic, social, and environmental well-being. Potential negative impacts have been mitigated through the design of the project. The procurement processes ensure, through the specification of services and the tender assessment process, that mitigation is effective, and all positive outcomes are secured.

15. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

As a National Lottery Heritage Fund project, evaluation is required as a core thread which connects all capital work and community engagement.

Our evaluation plan has two purposes: proving what has been achieved, and also identifying what is improving as part of ongoing project activity. This includes proposals on the assessment of achievements, fostering an audience-led approach at the Park in the longer term and supporting research to assist with marketing. It is framed around the relevant NLHF outcomes, and the priority audiences identified for the project.

Project delivery will be co-ordinated by a project board and an advisory board, drawing on expertise from representative individuals and organisations.

With regards to conservation of heritage and biodiversity, monitoring will include reporting to statutory and advisory bodies; for example, in consultation with Natural England, it has been agreed that the lake will be monitored annually by an ecologist supported by trained volunteers to monitor key species to demonstrate improvements in condition.

Regular surveys will be carried out to monitor visitor use and satisfaction, to include consideration of audiences not accessing the Park.

The final evaluation report at the end of the Delivery Phase will serve two purposes – summative and formative. The report will use evidence from collected data to draw conclusions. There will be careful use of qualitative data including quotations to support impact conclusions, also linked to quantitative data. We will use a reflective approach, allowing for honest appraisal of results, with notes on what worked well and what did not, and actions and targets arising from the findings. We will provide coherent update reports, which follow an agreed format so that comparison is easier between years.

The Green Flag Award Scheme will be used to provide external assessment of quality standards in management and maintenance of the Park.