

North Kent Woods & Downs candidate National Nature Reserve

Visitor Access & Community Engagement Strategy and Implementation Plan

March 2025

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All photos were taken by Mark Bentley (TEP) unless otherwise stated.

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Introduction

In October 2024, The Environment Partnership, with CFP Landscape & Heritage, was commissioned by the Kent Downs National Landscape to prepare this Visitor Access and Community Engagement Strategy to support designation of the North Kent Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve (NNR).

Although the visitor access and community engagement elements were originally commissioned as two separate strategies, it was subsequently agreed with partners that they should be brought together into one document. This report sets out:

- The scope of the strategy and its context (Section 1.0)
- The results of desk studies, site survey work and engagement undertaken to understand current arrangements for visitor access and community engagement (Section 2.0)
- Objectives and a set of strategic proposals to guide the future development of visitor access and community engagement (Section 3.0); and
- A tabular register of detailed improvement proposals and engagement actions - the Implementation Plan (Section 4.0).



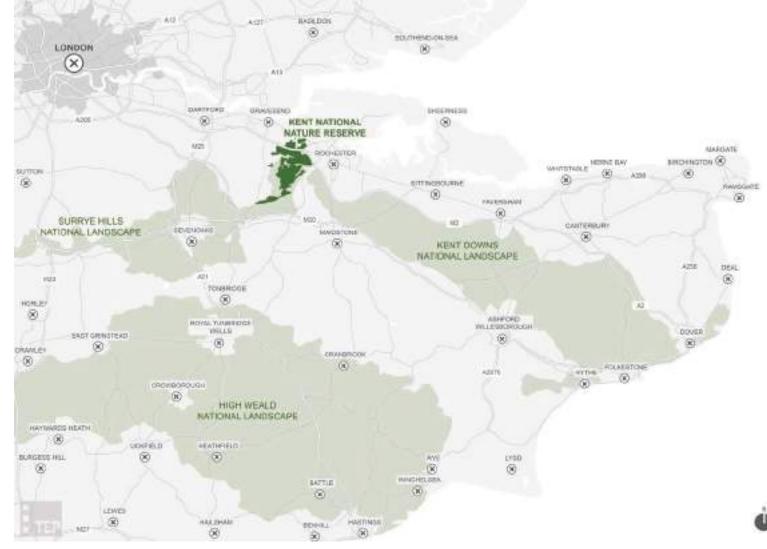
1.0 SCOPE & CONTEXT

1.1 Study area



Location

The candidate NNR is located at the northernmost edge of the Kent Downs National Landscape, which extends south to the Kent coast and west to the border with Surrey and Greater London. The NNR lies immediately adjacent to the urban areas of Gravesend, Strood, Rochester and Chatham. South-east London lies c. 20km to the north-west of the NNR.



North Kent Woods & Downs NNR - Location Plan

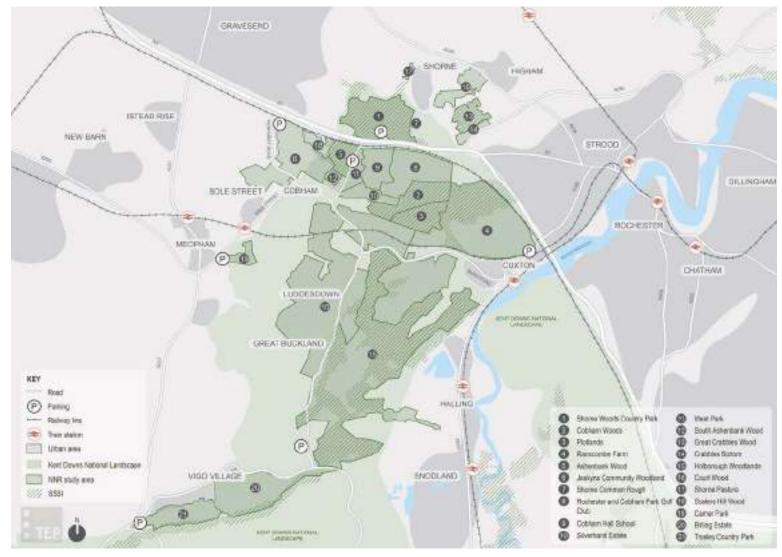


Composition

The study area, which covers more than 2,500 hectares, extends from Shorne Woods Country Park in the north to Trosley Country Park in the south, and from Ranscombe Farm Reserve in the east to Jeskyns Community Woodland and Camer Country Park in the west. It spans the parishes of Shorne, Cobham, Cuxton, Luddedown, Halling, Snodland and Birling.

Priority habitats present within the study area include ancient woodland, wood pasture, internationally important arable habitats and chalk grassland. Just under 1000 hectares within the study area are designated SSSI.

The Kent Woods and Downs NNR will be a partnership reserve, bringing together multiple landowners to drive landscapescale nature recovery, inspire people and promote learning. The study area includes 21 different landholdings. These include seven sites who have signed up as core partners, five that will be affiliate partners, and nine other sites who are engaged in the process, but whose status is yet to be confirmed. Affiliate membership has been introduced by Natural England to recognise that extensive partnership NNRs, such as this, often link to areas of land that are not eligible for declaration, but that would make a significant contribution to the NNRs functions (Natural England, 2023).



North Kent Woods & Downs NNR - Study area



Landscape character

Tucked in just beyond the noise and traffic of the A2/M2 corridor is a landscape of ancient woodlands, gentle grass-cloaked downs and productive orchards and vineyards. There is great diversity in the landscape. Visitors can enjoy a long woodland walk and then emerge into an open landscape with beautiful views out across downland. This variation between enclosure and exposure draws visitors through the landscape and creates a sense of exploration.

Visitor infrastructure

The extensive network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and permissive paths provide access to the area's internationally important habitats, picturesque villages and rich heritage.

Most visitor infrastructure is focussed at three sites. Shorne Woods Country Park and Jeskyns Community Woodland provide extensive facilities to the north of the study area. These sites provide easy routes into the landscape for all. Trosley Country Park to the south, offers a range of facilities and connections to the downs via the North Downs Way National Trail and the Weald Way long-distance path. The expanse of landscape to the centre of the study area is lightly served by visitor infrastructure, offering opportunities for quiet walks and seclusion.



1.2 Scope



Purpose

A key part of the NNR declaration process is to create a shared management framework. This details how partners will work together to achieve the desired outcomes for nature and people.

The management framework for the North Kent Woods and Downs NNR will bring together information from seven strategies and plans, including this one. The other strategies are:

- Landscape Character Assessment & Implementation Plan (Fiona Fyfe Associates, 2024);
- Veteran Tree Strategy & Implementation Plan (Treework Environmental Practice, 2025);
- Heritage Assessment, Strategy and Implementation Plan (Kent County Council. 2024);
- Grazing Strategy & Implementation Strategy (Russ Carrington, 2025);
- Deer Management Strategy & Implementation Plan (Anita Stone, 2025); and
- Environmental and Ecological Management Strategy & Implementation Plan (Various, 2025);

A brief introduction to each of these strategies and the areas of crossover and co-ordination with this strategy is provided in Section 1.4 below.

Scope

This strategy and its linked Implementation Plan address the following aspects of visitor access and community engagement:

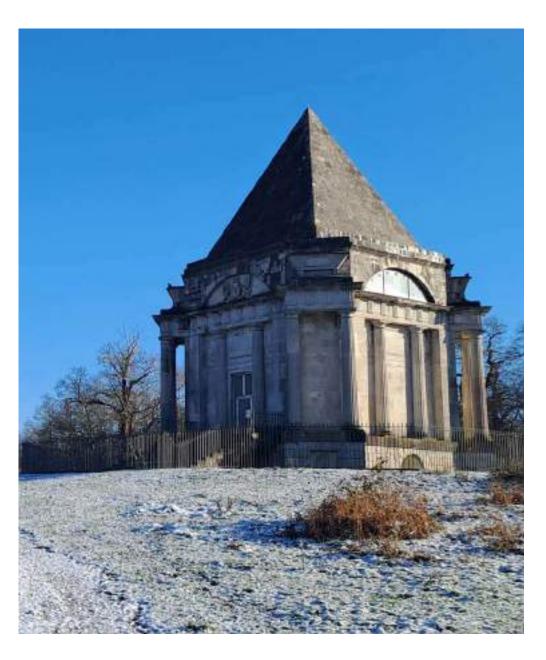
- Audiences
- Community Engagement
- Pre-visit information;
- Travelling to and from the NNR;
- Moving through the NNR;
- Wayfinding; and
- Safety and security.

Strategic recommendations and detailed improvement proposals are structured under each of these headings.

In addition, the following topics have been discussed with partners as part of the work, but are not part of the agreed scope of the strategy:

- Identity & branding;
- Story-telling & interpretation; and
- Public art.

These topics are touched on throughout this report, but will require further consideration and development.



1.3 Designation process

TEP Cfp

National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are the most important places for nature in the country. NNR declaration secures nationally important sites for nature recovery, environmental science and people, managed to high standards (Natural England, 2021).

Natural England is the designating authority for NNRs in England. It has the power to declare NNRs that meet the selection criteria and management standards it has set out. Natural England also has the power to de-declare NNRs should management not meet the required standards.

In England, there are currently 221 NNRs covering more than 100,000 hectares. 135 of these NNRs are managed by Natural England either on its own or jointly with other partners. The remainder are managed by Approved Bodies, i.e. organisations approved by Natural England to manage sites.

The North Kent Downs & Woods NNR will be a partnership NNR, managed by the core partners (Approved Bodies). The Sussex and Kent Regional Natural England Team identifed the North Kent Downs area as worthy of consideration for NNR designation and has been working closely with partners to support the declaration process. The three key steps to declaration are summarised in the adjacent diagram.







STEP 1 Gathering evidence to demonstrate that the site fulfils Natural England's requirements for NNRs

Step 1: Evidence gathering

The Kent Downs National Landscape Team has helped to co-ordinate the collection of evidence to demonstrate that the candidate NNR meets at least one attribute that is considered exemplary under the following purposes (Natural England, 2023):

- Nature makes a significant contribution to nature recovery in the locality and/or safeguards or recovers nationally important biodiversity & geodiversity.
- Science Provides opportunities for conservation and environmental science.
- **People** Encourages people to experience, engage with and enjoy nature in a variety of ways.

STEP 2

Undertake assessments and prepare strategies to inform the NNR's joined up management framework

Step 2: Management framework

Natural England has established management standards which are used to ensure that potential Approved Bodies understand and have the capabilities needed to manage the NNR to the required level. This requires a management plan to be prepared for the NNR and kept up-to-date. The standard requires that the management of designated features be exemplary and for the NNR to:

- Contribute to safeguarding and restoring ecosystems beyond its boundaries;
- Provide opportunities for public enjoyment, quiet recreation and engagement;
- Promote research into the natural

STEP 3 Natural England approves the information submitted and publicly declares the NNR designation

environment and knowledge sharing;

- Involve communities and stakeholders in its management;
- Share good practice to promote wider conservation goals; and
- Demonstrate exemplary conservation management.

The development of the suite of strategies outlined above, including this one, will establish the long-term framework for management.

Step 3: Public declaration

Once evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the candidate NNR meets the criteria for designation, Natural England will publicly declare designation. It is hoped that this will be achieved in March 2025, with the NNR launched in May 2025.

1.4 Management framework



As outlined above, this strategy is one of a suite of seven prepared to support the future management of the North Kent Woods & Downs NNR.

Each of the strategies is introduced below, along with a brief commentary on areas of crossover and co-ordination with this Visitor Access and Community Engagement Strategy.

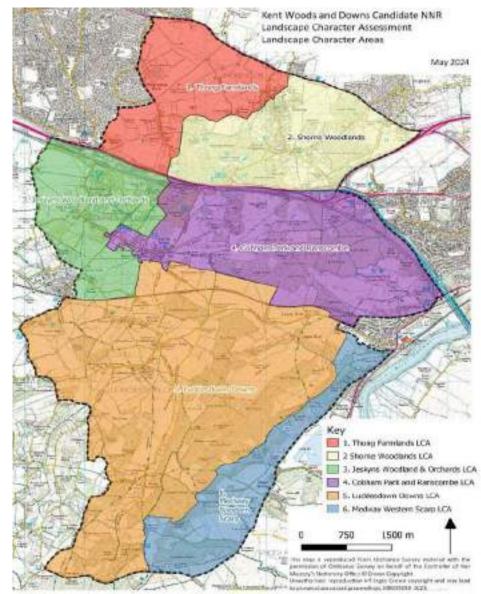
Landscape character

A Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) was prepared by Fiona Fyfe Associates between November 2023 and May 2024. The work provides a detailed and up-to-date landscape character assessment of the candidate NNR and its immediate surroundings. The assessment was undertaken prior to the decision, taken in December 2024, to include Trosley Country Park and the Birling Estate within the study area. Consequently, these sites are not addressed within the assessment and subsequent recommendations.

The LCA summarises the natural processes and human activities that have shaped the landscape, addressing its geology, habitats, cultural heritage and land use. It identifies six distinctive character areas within the study area. These are shown on the adjacent plan, which is taken from the assessment. One of the key aims of the Visitor Access and Community Engagement Strategy is to enable visitors to experience the breadth of landscapes, habitats and heritage of this part of North Kent. The LCA identifies the special qualities of each character area and recommends an 'aspirational strategy' for conservation of these qualities. This information has been used to inform a number of the proposals within this strategy, particularly the identification of gateway sites, the proposed network of primary walking routes and the promotion of car-free days out, with routes and itenaries that celebrate the special qualities identified.



The Implementation Plan, which accompanies the LCA, makes a series of specific recommendations structured under the topics addressed by the other six strategies. Those identified under the *Community Consultation* and *Visitor Access and Community Engagement* headings, are summarised in the table on the next page. Cross-references are included to the sections of this strategy where each recommendation is considered.



Study area - Landscape Character Areas (Fiona Fyfe Associates, 2024)



	LCA Implementation Plan Recommendations	Refer to
4.0	Community consultation	
•	Work with local people to undertake a 'favourite views' study for the Candidate NNR, in association with heritage and access strategies.	Section 3.9
•	Work with local residents and users of the Candidate NNR to find out where they would like new seating and/or interpretation as part of the community engagement and access strategies.	Section 3.9
•	Encourage local residents to retain and look after trees and wildlife within their gardens, educating them about the importance of trees and scrub to settlement character and biodiversity.	Section 3.4
•	Expand the activities of local groups who are actively researching local history and undertaking biodiversity surveys.	Section 3.4
5.0	Visitor access & engagement	
•	Retain the distinctive character of paths, tracks and lanes with historic origins by: (i) avoiding the use of modern urban materials and instead using locally sourced crushed stone or gravel; (ii) retaining historic boundary treatments along roads and tracks; and (iii) using cleft-chestnut pale post and rail, estate railings or native species hedgerows, where new boundary treatments are required.	Sections 3.8, 3.9 & 4.0
•	Improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists, particularly in locations where the lack of pavements/off-road paths and the volume of traffic make walking or cycling along roads exceptionally dangerous.	Section 3.8, & 4.0
•	Improve access from adjacent urban areas by: (i) improving footpath/cycle access and (ii) improving the access into the NNR from Strood under/over the A2/M2/HS1 infrastructure.	Section 3.6, 3.7 & 4.0
•	Create routes connecting with railway stations, including from Sole Street station and from stations along the Medway Valley line (e.g. Cuxton & Halling).	Section 3.7 & 4.0
•	Expand the network of permitted paths by working with landowners to promote new routes or new connections between existing routes.	Section 3.8 & 4.0
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• Themed trails - there may be opportunities for trails within the Candidate Section 3.8, NNR covering a wide range of landscape and heritage themes. 3.9 & 4.0

Veteran trees

An Ancient and Veteran Tree Scoping Survey was undertaken by Treework Environmental Practice between February and March 2024. The work provides a best estimate of the numbers of ancient and veteran trees across the study area and makes broad recommendations for the long-term management of the trees. As with the Landscape Character Assessment, the survey does not address Trosley Country Park and the Birling Estate.

The Scoping Survey estimates a population of 1,745 ancient and/or veteran trees, in addition to a "strong co-hort" of candidate and future veteran trees. Ancient and/or veteran trees were identified on all sites, with particularly high numbers found (or estimated) in Ashenbank Wood (131), Cobham Woods (126), Great Crabbles Wood (118), Holborough Woodlands (177), Ranscombe Farm (360) and Shorne Wood Country Park (223). Numbers identified or estimated on each of the sites are shown on the plan on the following page.

The Scoping Survey provides Tree Plans for each of the sites within the study area. It recommends that further survey work be undertaken to reach the project's vision of recording all ancient and veteran trees, and establishing long-term management objectives for each within an individual tree management plan.

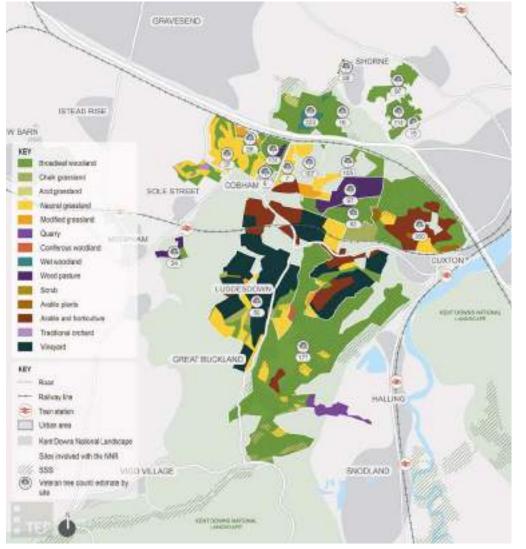
Visitor access, if not properly managed, can conflict with the successful management of ancient and veteran trees. Visitor access may impact on the health of trees through root disturbance and soil compaction, and the retention of decaying trees may place limitations on access. With this in mind, the conservation of ancient and veteran trees has been considered during the development of proposals for new NNR waymarked trails and improvements to access infrastructure.



Environmental & ecological management

A baseline botanical and habitat survey has been prepared for the study area. The broad habitat types recorded are illustrated on the plan on the following page. In addition, assessments have been prepared for invertebrates, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, lichen, funghi and bryophytes.





Study area - Broad habitat types & ancient /veteran tree distribution

The baseline botanical survey identifies populations of flagship, rare and notable species present within the NNR. These include Ground-pine (*Ajuga chamaepitys*), Broadleaved Cudweed (*Filago pyramidata*), Musk orchid (*Herminium monorchis*), Basil Thyme (*Clinopodium acinos*) and Fly Orchid (*Ophrys insectifera*). The locations of these species are recorded in the survey report and their sensitivity to disturbance and visitor pressure has been considered during the development of the proposals included in this strategy.

Each of the taxa specific assessments set out recommendations for the management of habitats to support species of conservation concern, including long-term survey and monitoring programmes. These should be considered on a case-by-case basis when planning and delivering the access improvements proposed in this strategy.

The candidate NNR provides a fantastic opportunity to engage local communities, and the public in general, in the conservation of the important habitats and species within the reserve. A key part of this is to introduce visitors to these habitats, so they can understand the differences between them, the ecological niches that they provide and how creating networks of high quality habitat can benefit us all. In developing the proposed NNR walking trails (see Section 3.8), we have sought routes that introduce visitors to the variety of habitats found across the NNR, providing opportunities for engagement.



Grazing

A Grazing Strategy and Implementation Plan has been prepared by Russ Carrington and Emma Douglas (2024). The strategy defines the individual grazing requirements of each of the sites within the study area, identifies areas where conservation grazing can be improved, and addresses the potential for local graziers to work with NNR partner organisations.



© National Trust/Jo Hatcher



The strategy addresses 19 sites within the study area. Trosley Country Park and the Birling Estate are not included. The assessment underpinning the strategy identifies:

- 515 hectares of land across the 19 sites identified as grazeable or in need of some animal intervention.
- Of this, 458 hectares (across eight sites) is already grazed. The strategy identifies opportunities to improve existing grazing across seven of the sites making up 188 hectares of grazeable land.
- Of the land not currently grazed, 44 hectares are identified as grazeable, although 2 or 3 of the sites identified are considered potentially not viable due to their small size, access restrictions and/or high levels of public access.
- Crabbles Wood is the only site not deemed to be grazeable.

The analysis included in the strategy notes the following constraints of relevance to visitor access:

- Busy roads, a railway and other public amenities are located in close proximity, which pose a risk to livestock and vice-versa;
- Farmers and graziers are largely disengaged as a result of the declining economics of grazing and

"hassle" of managing public access; and

- High footfall of dog walkers, increases the risks of attacks on livestock.
- The strategy also notes the significant opportunity to engage local communities in a variety of ways, e.g. as livestock checkers.

Five sites are identified where public access seriously impedes, but does not preclude, grazing. These are Shorne Woods Country Park, Cobham Wood, The Plotlands, Ranscombe Farm and Jeskyns Community Woodland.

The strategy notes that with the right infrastructure and effective communication with the public, technical constraints can be overcome and public support for grazing activities engendered.

Public access needs to be carefully thought through when planning the installation of fencing, gates and stiles for livestock management. In some areas of high visitor footfall, GPS livestock collar systems, e.g. NoFence, could help to reduce fencing on some sites, particularly the need for internal fencelines.

Deer management

A Deer Management Strategy has been prepared by Anita Stone (2024). This addresses the need for several partners to manage deer numbers on their land. Access and movement of visitors needs to be carefully considered when planning deer management activities.

Heritage

Kent County Council has co-ordinated the preparation of a Heritage Strategy for the candidate NNR. The strategy covers 10 key heritage themes, including communication and transport; woodland and forestry; industry; culture, education and religion; military and defence; and events and education.

In relation to communication and transport, the strategy highlights the network of historic routes, including hollow ways, and the wider network of Public Rights of Way that now support walking and riding. These often reflect historic connections between settlements within and adjacent to the study. The strategy notes that the NNR could help to deliver a co-ordinated framework of walking, cycling and riding routes that reflect and draw out the character of this historic network. This recommendation has been considered in developing the NNR specific routes described in section 3.8 below.

All of the key themes addressed within the Heritage Startegy identify the importance of preserving above and below ground remains of historic features, whether these be the result of the history of transporation, culture and religion, defence etc, and of undertaking additional research to further develop the historic record. In relation to the visitor access elements of this strategy, it is important that any improvement works are sensitive to recorded features and mindful of the potential for unrecorded features. The Heritage Strategy recommends the creation of detailed GIS mapping of historic environment data to form the basis of future research and land management decisions.

The Heritage Strategy notes that there are a large and enthusiastic group of stakeholders, individuals and groups, involved in heritage activities within the study area. It also points to the fact that many of the core partners have outreach as a core objective, and that a number of these sites have great potential for heritage-related events and volunteering opportunities. This is reflected in the recommendations for community engagement set out in Section 3.4 of this strategy.

1.5 Regional context



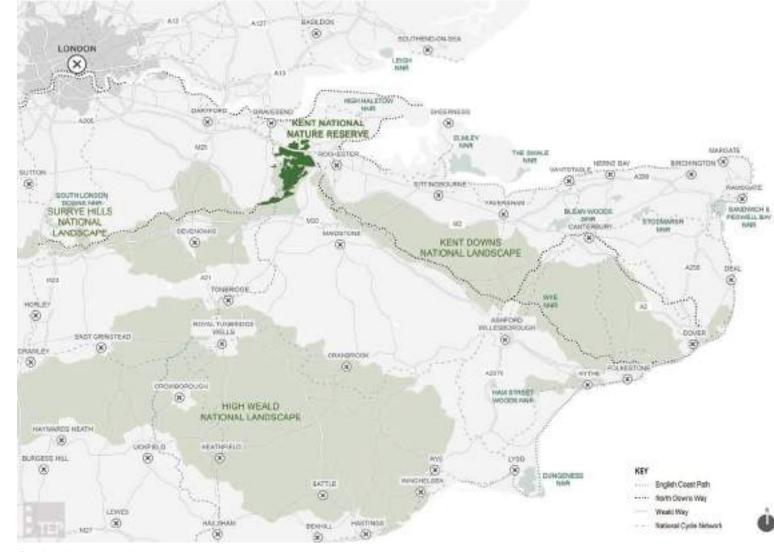
Proximity to major urban centres

The candidate NNR is located in close proximity to the towns of Gravesend, Rochester, Strood and Chatham and is only 20km from south-east London. As detailed in Section 2.1 below, the population within a short drive of the study area (25 miles) is over 8 million people. This presents a significant opportunity to engage a wide audience, but also a threat from visitor pressure.

Proximity to transport infrastructure

The A2/M2 passes through the northern section of the candidate NNR, connecting Dartford and south-east London with the Medway towns, Canterbury and the North Kent coast. Four junctions - two on the A2 and two on the M2 secton - link to roads that connect directly with the NNR study area.

For those not accessing the study area by car, the A2/M2 is an impediment to access. It severs the landscape of the Thong Farmlands and Shorne Woodlands from the parkland and downland to the south. This restricts north to south pedestrian, cycle and equestrian access to three highway bridges, all with very poor accessibility for non-vehicular traffic. The A2/MS corridor and the HS1 route also act as a barrier to access from adjacent towns



Regional context plan



and villages. The impacts of this are addressed in more detail in section 2.4 below.

Excluding HS1, which passes through the NNR landscape without stopping, two railway lines run through or immediately adjacent to the NNR. These are the Chatham mainline - linking London Victoria to Rochesterm, Chatham and the north Kent coast - and the Medway Valley line, which runs between Strood and Tonbridge, via Maidstone. Further details on the frequency of service and catchment areas for stations within or adjacent to the study area is provided in Section 2.5 below.

Gateway to the "green lungs" of Kent, Surrey and East Sussex

The candidate NNR sits at the northern edge of the Kent Downs National Landscape, which extends south-east towards the Kent coast and south-west to connect with the Surrey Hills National Landscape. The North Downs Way connects these landscapes, providing access for those on foot, on bike and on horseback.

A further National Trail - The King Charles III England Coast Path (South East) - runs just to the east of the candidate NNR over Rochester Bridge. Improved walking and cycle connections between the North Downs Way as it passes the Medway Viaduct and the Coast Path at Rochester Bridge would facilitate access between the North Downs, Greater Thames Estuary and North Kent Plain National Character Areas (NCAs), linking access to a wide range of important wildlife sites, including the following NNRs:

- Greater Thames Estuary High Halstow, Elmley and the The Swale NNRs;
- Kent Downs North Kent Woods & Downs (candidate), Lydden Temple Ewell and Wye NNRs; and
- North Kent Plain Blean Woods, Stodmarsh and Sandwich and Pegwell Bay NNR

The position of the candidate NNR, immediately adjacent to major urban conurbations and at the apex of the extensive green infrastructure described above, presents a fantastic opportunity for the NNR to act as a gateway into the "green lungs" of Kent, Surrey and East Sussex.

Nature Recovery in Kent

The draft Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) sets out the county's priorities for nature recovery. The strategy is framed around the Lawton principles, which focus on delivering better, bigger, more and joined up habitats. The North Kent Woods and Downs NNR will make a key contribution to the delivery of these principles and progress towards the Protected Landscapes nature recovery targets, which include:

- Restoring or creating more than 250,000 hectares of a range of wildlife-rich habitats within Protected Landscapes, outside protected sites by 2042 (from a 2022 baseline).
- Bringing 80% of SSSIs within

Protected Landscapes into favourable condition by 2042.

- Reaching 60% of SSSIs within Protected Landscapes assessed as having 'actions on track' to achieve favourable condition by 31 January 2028.
- Ensuring at least 65% to 80% of land managers adopt nature friendly farming on at least 10% to 15% of their land by 2030.



1.6 Landscape pressures



Population growth & housing

Kent and Medway's population grew by 144,000 (Office for National Statistics) between 2010 and 2021, which equates to an 8.4% increase. This compares to a 6.8% rise nationally.

Kent County Council has prepared housing-led population forecasts for the period from 2020 to 2040. These are based on the assumption that 222,757 new dwellings will be built during the period, and trends in fertility, mortality and migration rates up to 2020 will continue. A population increase of 391,200 is forecast for the Kent and Medway area by 2040, which is equivalent to a 20.9% increase. The projected growth in population will place significant additional pressures on greenspace across the county if, as expected, visitor numbers follow a similar trend.

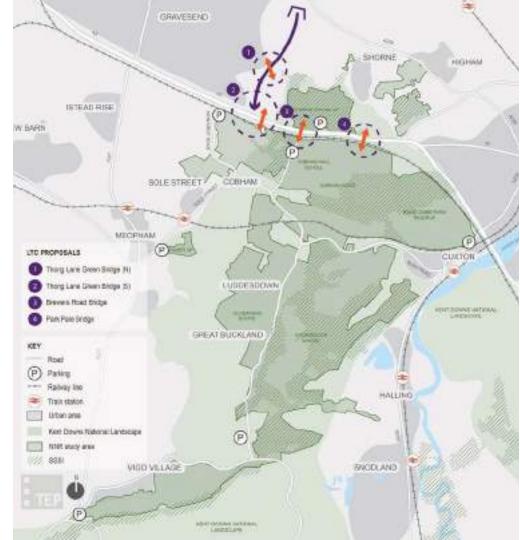
Lower Thames Crossing (LTC)

The Lower Thames Crossing is a proposed new road connecting Kent and Essex through a tunnel under the River Thames. The proposed route connects the M25 close to North Ockendon in Essex with the A2 just to the west of Shorne Woods Country Park.

At the end of January 2025, the UK Goverment indicated their commitment to delivering the scheme, and the planning application is due to be determined by 23rd May 2025. If approved, construction of the route will have long-term impacts on the landscape immediately to the north-west of the NNR study area, as well as impacting sites on either side of the A2/M2 corridor. The proposed route will sever the landscape connection between Gravesend and Shorne Woods Country Park, adding to the existing split caused by the A2/M2/HS1 corridor.

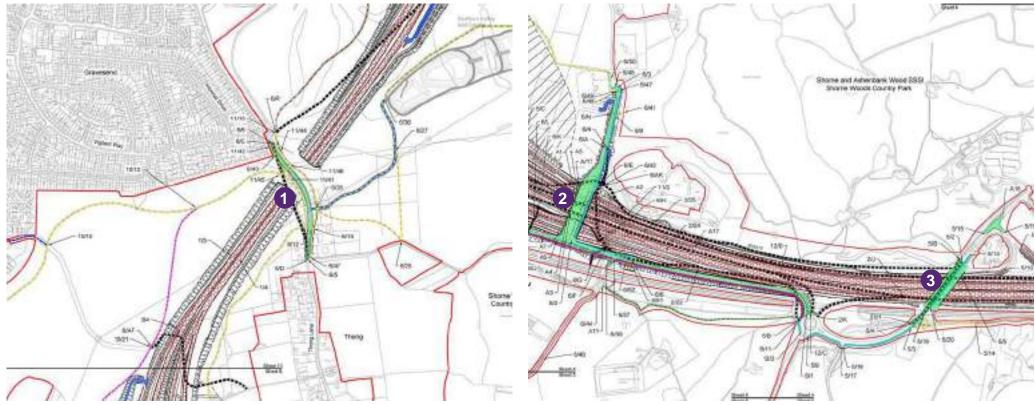
To support the integration of the new road into the existing highway, a series of new bridges are proposed as part of the scheme. These will support the re-routing of Thong Lane over the new highway (1) and the widened A2 (2), and the lengthening of the Brewers Road Bridge (3). It is not proposed to re-construct the Park Pale Bridge (4) to the east, although works are proposed to the highway on both sides. As part of the package of works, improvements to footways/ footpaths, cycle tracks and horse tracks/ bridleways are proposed (see plans on next page).

This strategy and implementation plan make reference to the LTC proposals where relevant. However, as the scheme has yet to be approved, the core recommendations and proposals are based on the existing highway network. Should the LTC scheme progress, this strategy will be reviewed and revised accordingly.



Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) - Proposed route and location of bridge works





Thong Lane Bridge South (1) and North (2), and Brewers Road Bridge (3) - Extract from Rights of Way and Access Plans (National Highways)



1.7 Demographics



Population size

The study area spans the local authority areas of Gravesham and Medway.

The 2021 Census data recorded the population living in Gravesham as 106,900 people, while the population of Medway was 279,800 people.

Age

Both Medway and Gravesham have relatively young populations with the median age being 38 years and 40 years respectively, compared with 41 for England. There are higher proportions of young people aged under 19 years in both Medway and Gravesham than the national average. This is also the case for all age ranges between 25 and 44. There are fewer people aged 60 or over than the national average.

Density

Population density in Gravesham and Medway is much higher than the Kent and national averages, with around 1,200 people per square kilometre in Gravesham and 1,000 people per square kilometre in Medway, compared to 400 in Kent and 430 in England.

Ethnic group, national identity, language & religion

Medway has a higher percentage of residents born in the UK (86.2%)

compared to Gravesham (80.8%). Gravesham has a larger percentage of people who identify as Asian, Asian British or Asian Welsh (11.2%) than Medway (5.9%). Gravesham also has a larger percentage of people who identify as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African (6.5%) compared to Medway (5.6%).

Across Kent, Gravesham has the highest proportion of Sikh residents, with 8,560 or 8.0% of residents, and the second largest proportion of Muslim residents with 3,326 or 3.1% of the population. Similarly there are 7,636 Muslim residents, 4,363 Sikh residents and 3,172 Hindu residents in Medway based on the last census.

There are significant numbers of people living in both Gravesham and Medway that speak English as a second language, cannot speak English well or at all. Within some neighbourhoods, at a hyper local level this can include around 1 in 4 residents.

The main languages other than English spoken in Gravesham include Panjabi, Romanian, Polish, Lithuanian, Slovak, Russian, Tamil and Portuguese. Within Medway, Romanian and Polish are the most common languages after English, followed by Panjabi.

Health & disability

In terms of overall health, the figures from the 2021 Census for both Gravesham and Medway are around the average for England, with 48.7% of residents in Gravesham and 47.5% in Medway reporting very good health (England 48.5%). The percentage of people in Gravesham that are disabled (under the Equality Act) is 0.9% lower than the national average at 16.4%. The figure for Medway at 17.4% is marginally above the national average.

Gravesham has some of the worst rates of childhood obesity seen in Kent, although there may have been some positive changes in recent years. Children in Year 6 living in Gravesham are more than twice as likely to be severely obese than children of the same age living in more affluent areas such as Tonbridge and Malling. In Medway there is a similar disparity between deprived and more affluent areas.

Labour market & deprivation

The economic profile of Gravesham and Medway reflects a legacy of low-skilled employment and a dependence on now declining economic sectors, specifically manufacturing through historical riverbased heavy industry. The current position is characterised by challenges of low productivity, a high proportion of low paid jobs, low qualifications levels and high unemployment. There are significantly lower proportions of managerial, administrative and professional occupations and intermediate occupations in Gravesham than nationally. Medway similarly has lower proportions of managerial, administrative and professional occupations, but performs better than the national average with respect to intermediate occupations.

In terms of deprivation, 45.1% of households in Gravesham are not deprived in any dimension compared to 46.5% in Medway. This is lower than the national average of 48.4%. 15.3% of households in Gravesham and 14.8% of households in Medway are deprived in two or more dimensions, higher than the national average of 14.2%.

Accessing the Countryside

National research shows that a range of demographic, socio-economic and cultural factors affect the degree to which people access the countryside.

- People experiencing higher levels of deprivation typically show lower levels of access to green space and the quality of green space is frequently lower in the areas where they live;
- Health inequalities A lack of access to green space contributes to health

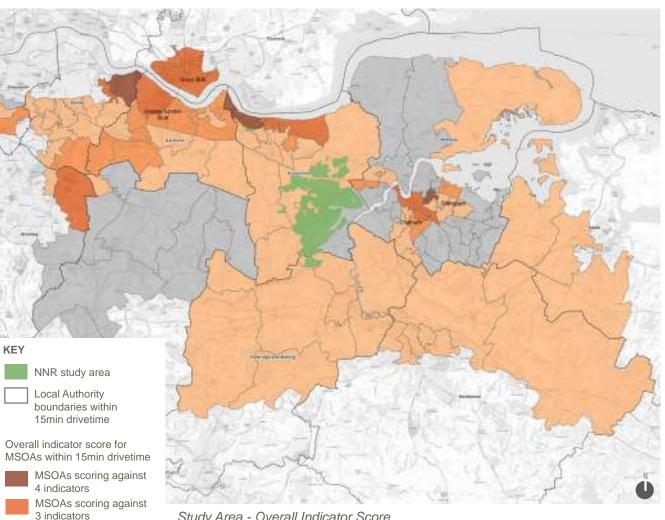


inequalities;

- Disabled people typically experience ٠ barriers to accessing the countryside and consequently visit less;
- People from ethnic minority • communities typically experience barriers to accessing the countryside and consequently visit less frequently; and
- Physically inactive adults and • children typically tend to access the countryside less frequently.

As part of this study we have considered measures against these criteria at a small geographical level (Lower layer and Middle layer Super Output Areas) within a 15 minute drive time of the study area. This has allowed us to identify where the highest proportions of LSOAs are against each measure.

The adjacent plan shows performance using a scoring matrix for these indicators. Out of a total of 124 MSOAs, 56 (45.1%) MSOA's score against 1 indicator, 13 (10.4%) MSOA's score against 2 indicators, 10 (8.1%) MSOA's score against 3 indicators, and 3 (2.4%) MSOA's score against 4 indicators. Using this methodology, 'areas of focus' can be identified where there are significant populations of residents that are likely to experience barriers in accessing the countryside.



Study Area - Overall Indicator Score

MSOAs scoring against

MSOAs scoring against

MSOAs scoring against

2 indicators

1 indicators

0 indicators

2.0 CURRENT ACCESS & ENGAGEMENT

2.1 Visitor numbers & catchment



Visitor numbers

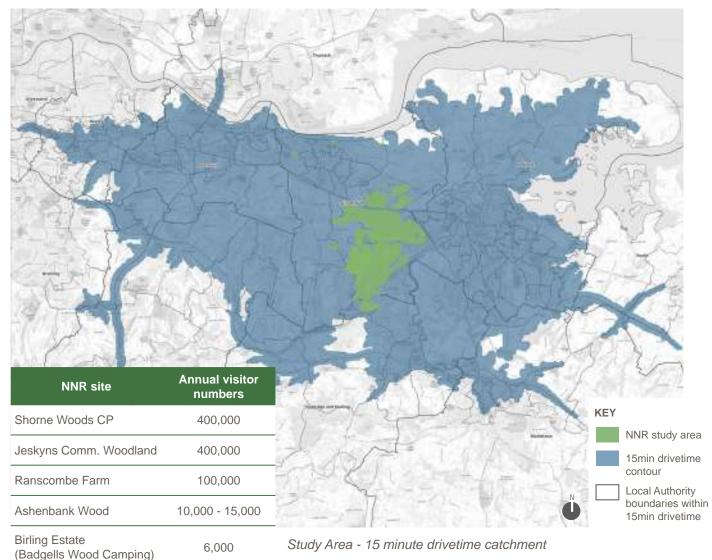
Together the NNR sites are estimated to attract more than 1 million person visits per year. Estimated visitor numbers for those sites where data is available are presented in the table below. It should be noted that there is currently no consistent methodology for recording visitor numbers across the partner sites.

Drivetime catchments

As outlined above, there are significant urban populations close to the study area. The following headline figures are drawn from the 2021 Census data:

- 350,000 people are resident within 5 miles of the study area;
- Over 1 million people are resident within 10 miles of the study area; and
- Over 8 million people are resident within 25 miles of the study area.

Further analysis has been carried out using drive-time mapping software. The 15 minute drive time contour for the study area is shown on the adjacent plan. It covers much of Gravesham and Medway boroughs, extending to Dartford and Bexley in the west. To the east, it extends to parts of the Swale Borough and Maidstone in the south-east.



2.2 Community feedback

In 2024, the Kent Downs National Landscape undertook a module of community consultation to seek input on the proposed North Kent Woods and Downs NNR.

Feedback was collected via an online survey that was promoted on social media and emailed out to stakeholders. 261 survey responses were received. The survey was structured by site, with six sites within the NNR study area included.

61% of survey respondents were over the age of 45. Only 5% were in the 18 to 24 bracket. 8% of respondents identified as having a disability that afftects their ability to access green space.

Enjoyment of nature, walking and dog walking were the three things that respondents identified most as the reason for their visit. Horse riding was also a frequently mentioned, particularly at Jeskyns Community Woodland.

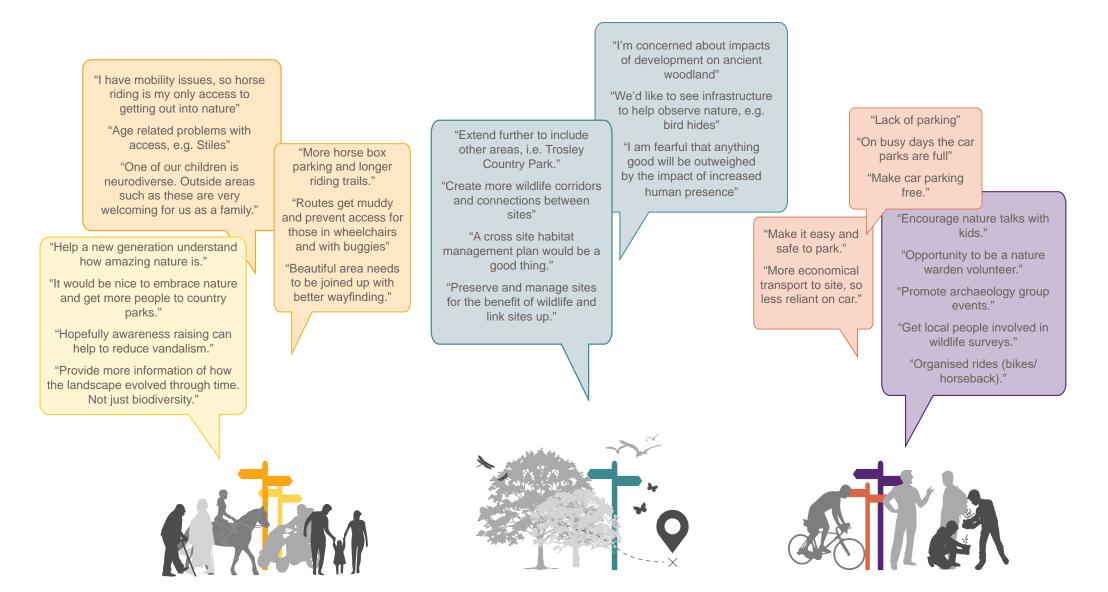
Footpaths, nature and the variety of the landscape, were consistently the top three things visitors liked most about each site. The three aspects that visitors most commonly disliked were difficulty parking, litter/vandalism, and uncertainty over which paths they could use. A selection of comments received from respondents is provided on the following page.

Site name	% travelling by car	To enjoy nature	To meet friends	Dog walking	Walking	Cycling	Running	Horse riding	History	Relaxation	Health & wellbeing	Likes (top 3)	Dislikes (top 3)
Ashenbank	70%											 Footpaths Nature Variety of the landscape 	 Difficulty parking Litter/vandalism Unsure which paths I can use
Camer Park	80%											 Footpaths Nature Facilities 	 Litter/vandalism Unsure which paths I can use Difficulty parking
Cobham Wood & Mausoleum	79%											 Nature Footpaths Variety of the landscape 	 Difficulty parking Litter/vandalism Unsure which paths I can use
Jeskyns Community Woodland	86%											 Footpaths Nature Variety of the landscape 	 Nothing Unsure which paths I can use Difficulty parking
Ranscombe Farm	88%											 Nature Variety of the landscape Footpaths 	 Difficulty parking Usure which paths I can use Litter/vandalism
Shorne Woods	86%											 Footpaths Nature Facilities 	 Litter/vandalism Difficulty parking Unsure which paths I can use
All	82%											 Footpaths Nature Variety of the landscape 	 Difficulty parking Litter/vandalism Unsure which paths I can use

Reasons for visiting







2.3 Pre-visit information

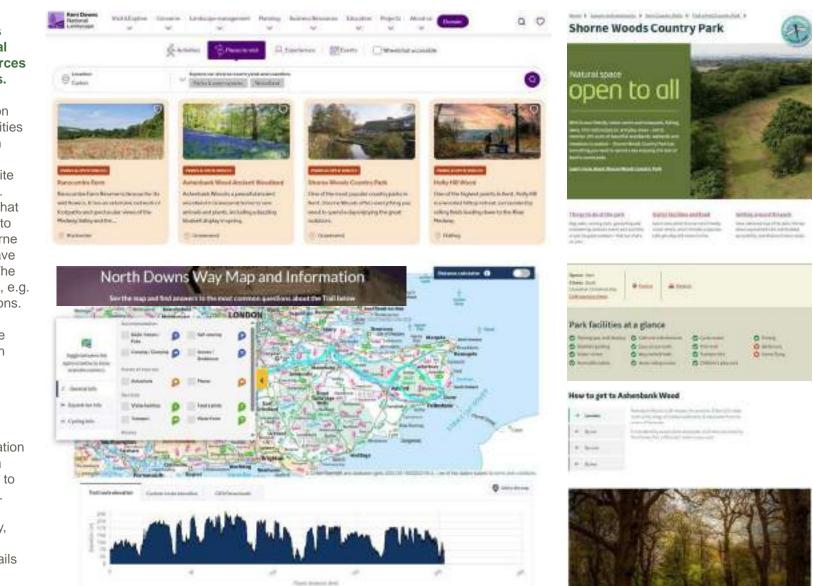


The websites of the Kent Downs National Landscape, North Downs Way, Visit Kent and each individual public site, serve as potential sources of pre-visit information for visitors.

All the public sites provide information addressing transport to the site, facilities provided and opening times. All, with the exception of the Woodland Trust site at Ashenbank Wood, include a site map with waymarked trails identified. The extent of information covering what users can do or see varies from site to site, reflecting the offer at each. Shorne Woods and Trosley country parks have downloadable accessibility guides. The other sites provide some information, e.g. accessible facilities and path conditions.

The Kent Downs National Landscape and Visit Kent websites hold a wealth of information about different sites and things to do. Visitor information is accessed by searching for places, activities or experiences. Map based content is provided as a result of the search, i.e. when an activity and location have been selected, rather than as a means to search. Links are provided to the websites of each destination site.

Information for the North Downs Way, including details and maps for each section, is hosted on the National Trails website.



2.4 Points of entry

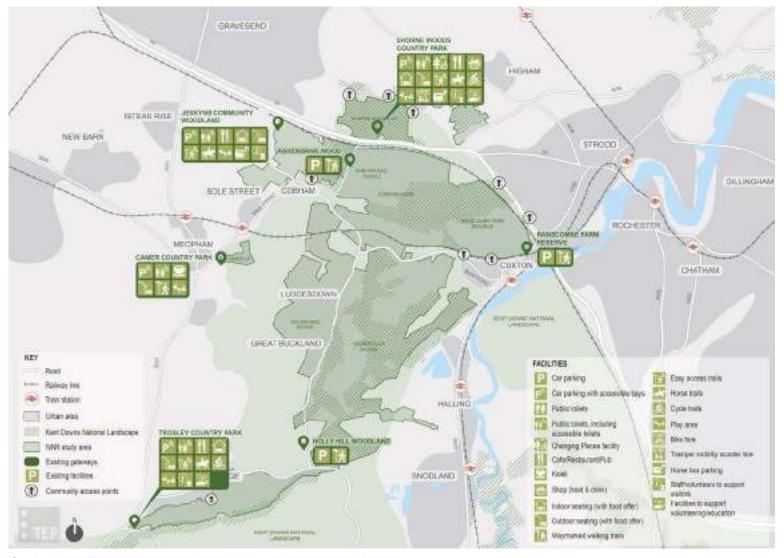


Gateways & community access

For visitors travelling to the study area by car, access is focussed at three gateway sites - Shorne Woods and Trosley country parks, and Jeskyns Community Woodland, All three sites have large car parks, toilets, a food and drink offer, play areas and extensive networks of waymarked trails. All three are difficult to access by public transport (see Section 2.5 for details). A fourth site, Camer Park, has a small/medium sized car park, cafe and toilets. It sits slightly detached from the rest of the study area, but visitors can access the landscape to the north, south and east via the extensive network of footpaths and bridleways. Three other sites provide alternative visitor arrival points, but offer limited car parking and no public facilities. These are Ashenbank Wood, Ranscombe Farm Reserve and Holly Hill Wood.

As the adjacent plan shows, points of entry are largely restricted to the edges of the study area, making the central areas relatively hard to access.

In addition to the visitor gateway, there are numerous points of access from adjacent towns and villages. These serve the immediate local community, and in some cases also provide routes into the study area for those arriving on public transport. Key community access points are identified on the adjacent plan.



Study area - Existing gateway sites & community access points

2.5 Travelling to the study area



Partners note that there is already significant pressure on parking, with all available spaces taken during busy periods at weekends and during the summer holidays.



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Access by bus

Five main bus routes serve the study area.

Route 151 - This route serves the towns and villages along the Medway Valley between Chatham in the north and West Malling in the south. The route includes stops opposite the Ranscombe Farm Reserve entrance on Sundridge Hill and in the villages of Cuxton and Halling. Services run roughly hourly in both directions from Monday to Saturday. Sunday services are reduced, but still run every couple of hours.

Routes 416 & 417 - Route 416 connects Gravesend with Meopham, routing via Shorne Woods Country Park, Cobham and Camer Park. Route 417 connects gravesend with the villages of Higham and Cliffe, routing via Shorne Woods Country Park. Both routes have very limited services from Monday to Saturday, with gaps in the timetable in excess of two hours. There is no service on a Sunday.

Route 306 & 308 - This route connects Gravesend with Vigo Village (306) and Sevenoaks (308), routing via Trosley Country Park. Combined, services run every 1-2 hours during the day from Monday to Saturday. There is no service on a Sunday.



Study area - Summary of bus routes & frequency of service

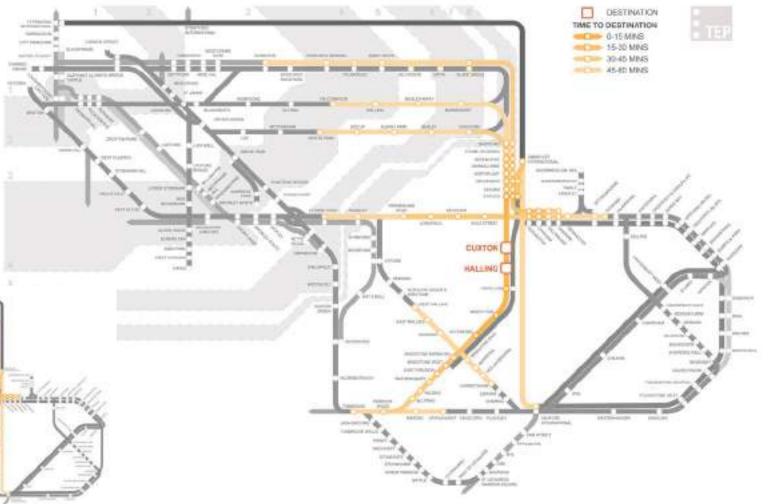


Access by train

The Medway Valley line - This line connects Strood with Tonbridge, running along the Medway Valley through Maidstone. The nearest stops to the NNR study area are Cuxton and Halling. From the stations there are footpath connections to Ranscombe Farm Reserve (Cuxton only) and the North Downs Way (both).

From Monday to Saturday services stop at both stations every 30mins in both directions. This decreases to every 60mins on a Sunday. The adjacent diagram shows stops on the railway network from which Cuxton and Halling can be reached within 60mins.

a manual surveyor our and detroit



Destinations within 60mins journey time of Cuxton and Halling stations (Above: Mon-Sat; Left: Sun)



The Chatham mainline - This line connects London Victoria with the north Kent coast, via Rochester and Chatham. The nearest stop to the NNR study area on this line is Sole Street. From here, there are footpath connections to Jeskyns Community Woodland and Cobham to the north, and Luddesdown and Halling to the south and east.

From Monday to Sunday services stop at Sole Street station every 60mins in both directions. This increases to every 30mins during the morning and evening peaks (Mon to Fri). The adjacent diagram shows stops on the railway network from which Sole Street can be reached within 60mins. This extends to London Victoria in the west and Faversham in the east.



Destinations within 60mins journey time of Sole Street station (Above: Mon-Sat; Left: Sun)

2.6 Moving through the study area



Public Rights of Way (PRoW)

An extensive network of PRoW crisscross the landscape. The footpaths into the study area from Strood and Cuxton in the east, Shorne village in the north and Cobham/Sole Street in the west, appear particularly well used.

Primary walking trails

Each of the public sites have waymarked trails (see Section 2.7 for details). In addition to these site-specifc routes, there are a number of longer walking trails that pass through multiple partner sites. The three that offer the greatest coverage are:

North Downs Way National Trail - runs through the study area from Trosley Country Park in the south to Ranscombe Farm Reserve in the north-west.

Weald Way long-distance path -

passes in and out of the study area, but connects Trosley Country Park in the south to Sole Street in the north-east.

Darnley Trail - This circular trail links Shorne Woods Country Park on the north side of the A2/M2 corridor with Cobham Woods, Ranscombe Farm Reserve, Ashenbank Wood and Jeskyns Community Woodland to the south.

These routes were identified early on in the development of this strategy



Study area - PRoW, primary walking trails, horse & cycle trails and easy access paths



as providing a structure of primary routes from which a network of NNR trails and car-free day out routes could be developed. The three trails were surveyed, with path conditions and infrastructure (i.e. gates, signage, benches etc.) recorded. The results of the survey work have informed the development of the strategic recommendations and detailed proposals set out in Sections 3.0 and 4.0 below.

Easy access trails (previous page)

Waymarked easy access trails are provided at Shorne Woods and Trosley country parks and at Jeskyns Community Woodland. These are characterised by widths greater than 1.5m, gradients less than 1 in 20, firm compacted aggregate surfacing and regular resting points. They support access for a range of visitors, including parents/carers with pushchairs and those using wheelchairs.

Horse & cycle trails (previous page)

Shorne Woods and Trosley country parks and Jeskyns Community Woodland offer waymarked horse trails. Those at Shorne Woods are also advertised for cyclists. The Darnley Trail is advertised for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, although some of the steeper and muddier sections would be off-putting to most riders. The North Downs Way has a 'Riders Route' designed for cyclists and horse riders.



Darnley Trail - Example survey outputs addressing trail surfacing, condition (highlighted areas) and infrastructure distribution

Note: Diagonal hatching shows extent of SSSI designation

2.7 Wayfinding



Waymarked trails

As noted above, the public sites within the study area offer a wide range of waymarked trails, with trail maps available on site and to download. Trails include:

- Short routes linked to play for children;
- Trails focussed on particular landscapes or habitats (e.g. Orchard Walk, Downland Trail);
- Easy access trails;
- Challenging routes;
- Heritage trails;
- Horse routes; and
- Shared use paths.

For visitors to each individual site, these trails are relatively easy to follow. However, for those following local trails that traverse multiple sites, e.g. Darnley Trail or Cuxton Heritage, navigation can be harder. The Darnley Trail as it routes around the south side of the mausoleum and through Ashenbank Wood, is particularly hard to follow.





Wayfinding signage

As a result of the many waymarked trails on offer, there is a considerable quantity and diversity of wayfinding signage. On occassions, marker posts will have in excess of 10 waymarker symbols in different colours and with arrows pointing in different directions.

Within Jeskyns and Cobham Woods, standard Forestry England and National Trust signage is used. These include monoliths and banner-type signage in addition to traditional marker posts. Elsewhere, directional signage tends to use traditional finger posts.

Map boards are provided at each of the public sites. Throughout the landscape, there are also a series of "Explore Cobham & Shorne's Countryside" map boards with interpretation.

As shown in the survey diagrams for the Darnley Trail in Section 2.6 above, the distribution of trail infrastructure varies significantly across the sites.

The NNR will introduce another layer of wayfinding. Recommendations on how best to manage this are set out in Section 3.9 below.



2.8 Safety & security



Difficult spaces

There are a number of areas, particularly associated with access across the A2/M2/HS1 corridor, where the fundamentals of layout and design, e.g. long dark underpasses, fully enclosed bridges, security fencing and sections of privately owned land, create spaces that feel unsafe and uninviting at any time of day. Achieving meaningful and longlasting improvements in these spaces is incredibly challenging.

Criminal damage, fly-tipping & ASB

All of the partners experience issues with criminal damage, theft and fly-tipping on or adjacent to their land. At certain locations, particularly along the A2/M2/ HS1 corridor, there are also issues with graffiti, quad bike/ motorbike use and ASB (e.g. fires).

Isolation

There are a number of locations within the study area that feel isolated. In areas of open landscape to the centre of the study area, this isolation may provide a sense of tranquility. However, in other locations, e.g. the section of the Darnley Trail between Brewers Wood and Ranscombe Farm, it can feel unsafe. Here, footfall is low and the paths are constrained on one or both sides by infrastructure and fencing. This creates the sense of being trapped.



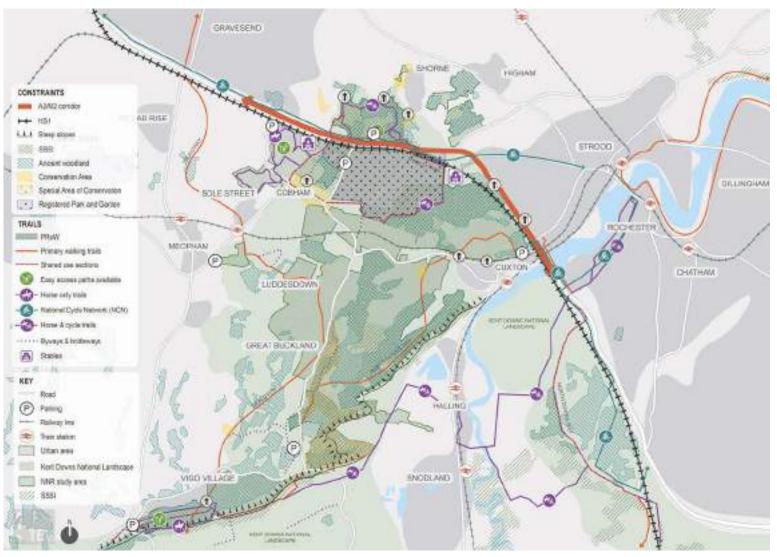
2.9 Access challenges



The adjacent diagram summarises some of the key constraints and opportunities on access flagged in Sections 2.1 to 2.8 above. These present a number of challenges for this strategy, including:

- How do we best balance the goals for people and nature?
- How do we address expected rises in visitor numbers and associated capacity issues?
- How can the existing uneven spread of visitor facilities be re-balanced?
- How can we encourage increased use of active transport and public transport?
- How can we better address the severence caused by the A2/M2/HS1 corridor and the knock on effects it has on visitor welcome and safety?
- How can we improve access for cyclists and equestrians, particularly through better trail connectivity?
- How can we improve accessibility, within the constraints posed by gradients, veteran trees, agricultural use, SSSI designation, conservation grazing etc.?

Recommendations and detailed proposals to address these challenges are set out in Sections 3.0 and 4.0 below.



Study area - Access constraints & opportunities

2.10 Community engagement



Events & activities

The adjacent table summarises the events and activity programme across the NNR sites.

The visitor offer across NNR sites is predominantly focused on self-led visits to the partner sites for walking, enjoying nature and socialising. More active forms of recreation such as running, orienteering, cycling and horse riding are offered in a number of locations.

The scale of events and activities delivered by partners across the NNR sites varies significantly. In terms of frequency and scale, Shorne Woods Country Park hosts the largest scale activity with an annual programme of events, including seasonal events, aimed mostly at a family audience. Events include walks, running events, arts and crafts sessions and seasonal adventures. Charges apply. Orienteering course maps can be downloaded from the website. An annual open day offers the opportunity for visitors to meet the management team, learn about how the country park is managed and ask any questions.

Over six thousand people attended events at Shorne Woods Country Park in 2023. Jeskyns Community Woodland offers a range of trails and self-guided routes. The events programme is typically delivered by third party

Site name	Managing organisation	Events & activities
Shorne Woods Country Park	Kent County Council	Extensive annual programme of events with mainly a family focus (charges apply). Seasonal events. Venue hire and organised kids parties. Annual open day for visitors to meet staff and learn about the management of the country park. Weekly parkrun (Saturday) typically attracting 100 participants. Nearly 6,200 people attended events in 2023.
Silverhand Estate	Vineyard Farms Ltd / MDCV UK	Annual Harvest event, with the last one attracting 250 people. Farmers markets, with an aspiration to run these monthly. Cellar door events linked to the vineyard. Small scale programme of seasonal events aimed at a family audience which include fungi and meadow walks, invertebrate and butterfly safaris. Charges apply to some events others, but others offered at no charge. There are aspirations to develop and grow the events programme.
Jeskyns Community Woodland	Forestry England	Events are typically run by third parties who book the site for recreational activities such as fun runs and orienteering.
Cobham Wood & Mausoleum	National Trust	Volunteers open the mausoleum on the 1st and 3rd weekends between April and September annually and participate in Heritage Open Days.
Badgells Wood Camping	Birling Estate	Nature/craft/bushcraft activities available for campers and non-campers, with coffee & tea facilities in the mornings at the weekend. The list of activities offered is growing each year.

organisations and includes fun runs and orienteering. Staff at the Silverhand Estate have recently started developing a programme of small scale family and seasonal events that complement the wine tasting and vineyard tours. Some events are offered at no charge. Cobham Woods has a limited events programme, with the Mausoleum being opened by volunteers every other weekend over the summer period. The Mausoleum is also opened for special events such as those through the Heritage Open Days programme. Event programmes are advertised directly by partner organisations with listings on the Explore Kent website. Otherwise there is limited marketing and promotion of events and activities with partner organisations tending to offer a tried and tested programme.

Discussion with partner organisations identified a lack of capacity, particularly staff time, to expand the events programme, or to change the existing offer. Partner organisations made comment that smaller scale events were resource intensive and time consuming in terms of planning and delivery and often attracted relatively small numbers of people. The weather also played a factor, adding risk to outdoor events including arts and culture. Income targets provide a further constraint on trying new things out.

Partners recognise that without additional funding/capacity, it is difficult to significantly develop the events and activities programme or to achieve greater co-ordination across partners.



Education

The adjacent table summarises the range of educational activities across the NNR sites.

Shorne Woods Country Park has a well-established education offer and an Education Ranger who works three days per week delivering activities with schools and providing training for the Level 3 Certificate in Forest School Leadership. This provides learners with the skills and knowledge to plan and run a Forest Schools programme. Officers from Kent County Council note that demand for education programmes form schools has declined since the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by the increased cost of transport. Consequently, there has been a shift in focus towards training teachers to lead and deliver Forest Schools programmes which can be done within school grounds or on other green spaces. Shorne Woods -Country Park is visited by schools from Gravesham and Medway (two local schools are in walking distance) and there is also regular use from local play groups and early years provision.

Ranscombe Farm offers self-led visits for schools supported by curriculum based materials developed through the National Lottery Heritage Fund project (completed in 2011). The farm is also used by local schools for self-led Forest School activity.

Site name	Managing organisation	Education
Shorne Woods Country Park	Kent County Council	Activities led by the Education Ranger include: (i) pond dipping; (ii) mini beast hunting; (iii) woodland studies; (iv) centre tours & sustainability; (v) natural arts & crafts; and (vi) sensory activities. The Forest School programme offers regular opportunities for all ages and abilities to gain confidence and raise self-worth through a series of hands-on tasks. The conference and education facilities at the park offer a range of services and activities that can be booked online. KCC offer Forest School Leadership training. Approximately 1200 - 1500 participants per year.
Ranscombe Farm	Plantlife	There is a downloadable education pack to support self-led visits. This is a legacy of the former National Lottery Heritage Fund project with Shorne Woods. Self-led Forest School activity by a limited number of schools. Occasional project based work with Higher Education providers (i.e. Masters students from the University of Greenwich).
Jeskyns Community Woodland	Forestry England	Self-led education offer with options for 1) 'Ranger in a Bag' 2) Fairy and Elf Village 3) Orienteering 4) Walking Trails, as well as downloadable curriculum based materials. External provider offers Forest School activities with Early Years children and families.
Silverhand Estate	Vineyard Farms Ltd/ MDCV UK	Potential to develop a Forest School offer, but limited visitor facilities and toilet provision are a barrier. The farm is used by Duke of Edinburgh students (self-led).
Cobham Wood & Mausoleum	National Trust	Historically self-led Forest School education activities have been delivered on site. No current education activity.
Ashenbank Wood	Woodland Trust	No formal education programme. Cobham Primary School have an informal agreement to use the woodland.
The Plotlands	West Kent Downs Countryside Trust	Three Forest Schools have previously used the site for education activities in the past.

The focus at Jeskyns Community Woodland is on self-led education visits using materials provided by Forestry England. Forest Schools activities are delivered by third party commercial providers. Other education provision is ad-hoc and small scale. The Silverhand estate has ambition to develop its offer but this is constrained by the current level of visitor facilities and toilet provision. External funding would allow for the expansion of education provision across NNR sites by increasing delivery capacity. It may also help to address barrierrs, e.g. transport to site.



Volunteer participation

The adjacent table summarises the range of volunteer activities across the NNR sites.

Volunteering programmes across partner organisations are typically well established and a priority in terms of community engagement activities. Conservation tasks are typically led by the ranger / site manager and volunteers significantly increase the resource available to carry out essential maintenance and conservation work. Partner organisations have indicated that programmes are well established and attended by regular volunteers, many of whom are skilled and experienced, having participated over many years.

Shorne Woods Archaeological Group (SWAG) was formed during the lottery project and expanded into Cobham Landscape Detectives. The group now has over 60 members and are selfgoverning. Volunteers are skilled in a range of activities including desktop research, carrying out digs, recording and identifying finds.

Kent County Council and Forestry England involve young people through structured volunteer activity. However, most volunteers tend to be older, retired and male. Partners recognise and value the skills and time given by

Site name	Managing organisation	Education			
Shorne Woods Country Park	Kent County Council	There is a well established conservation volunteer group that meets every Tuesday and Thursday. This is organised by the ranger team. There is an equivalent group that meet at Trosley Country Park on a Wednesday. In 2022/23, the conservation volunteers contributed 2422 hours of work. Shorne Woods Archaeological Group (SWAG), originally formed during the lottery project, has since expanded to form Cobham Landscape Detectives. This group has 60+ members who are skilled in a range of activities, including desktop research, digs, and identifying/recording finds. They use the barn at Shorne Woods as a base and frequently support experts on projects. The 'Challenger Troop' provides activities every week for young people. Bespoke activities are arranged for Special Educational Needs groups on request.			
Ranscombe Farm	The volunteer team are out every Wednesday carrying out practical conservation tasks n Plantlife also participate in wildlife monitoring and checking of livestock. There is scope for expa activities (e.g. research & social media), which may attract a broader range of voluntee				
Jeskyns Community Woodland	Forestry England	A volunteer group maintains the orchard, with two sessions per month. Forestry England have a realtionship with LINK19 College in Gravesend. This is a specialist college for 19-25 year old learners. Students participate 3 days a week in volunteer activity at Jeskyns during term time. There is potential to develop volunteer activity further including corporate volunteering.			
Silverhand Estate	There is currently a small pool of volunteers and volunteer conservation sessions take place on Thursday and Friday mornings. Tasks include conservation work, planting, vegetation management etc and survey work. There is scope for considerably more volunteer activity to support the conservation work.				
Cobham Wood & Out practic Cobham Wood & National Trust Mausoleum separate g		There are two volunteer groups, who meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays each week to carry out practical conservation work. As well as undertaking conservation work, the volunteers also carry out survey work and help to maintain access. The conservation work at Cobham Woods requires skilled volunteers to deliver management and maintenance activities sensitively. A separate group of volunteers open and staff the mausoleum during the summer season. Some of the volunteers at Cobham Wood have been involved for over 10 years.			
The Plotlands West Kent Downs Countryside Trust West Kent Downs		The Trustees are volunteers who help to manage the Plotlands. Volunteer sessions are held each Wednesday, but numbers participating are currently low. One member of the group carries out wildlife surveys. The group are considering offering project specific volunteer activity rather than regular work parties. The Cuxton Volunteer Group is active locally and attracts 15 people to sessions. The Trust would be interested in having volunteers with more of an interest in public engagement.			



existing volunteers, but also highlight the opportunities to expand the range of roles and to attract a broader audience. The challenge of attracting working age volunteers was noted.

Volunteer programmes are managed directly by each partner organisation and there is limited joined-up working with respect to delivery or promotion. Whilst many volunteers are motivated to volunteer time for a particular site often close to where they live - there are opportunities for greater co-ordination and promotion of opportunities.

The adjacent table summarises the spread of volunteer activities through the week.

Site name	Managing organisation	Volunteer activity	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Shorne Woods & Trosley Country Parks	Kent County Council	ConservationArchaeologyYoung people							
Ranscombe Farm	Plantlife	Conservation							
Jeskyns Community Woodland	Forestry England	ConservationYoung people							
Silverhand Estate	Vineyard Farms Ltd/ MDCV UK	ConservationYound people							
Cobham Wood & Mausoleum	National Trust	Conservation							
Ashenbank Wood	Woodland Trust	Volunteer Warden				ad-hoc			
The Plotlands	West Kent Downs Countryside Trust	ConservationSurvey work							

3.0 STATEGY

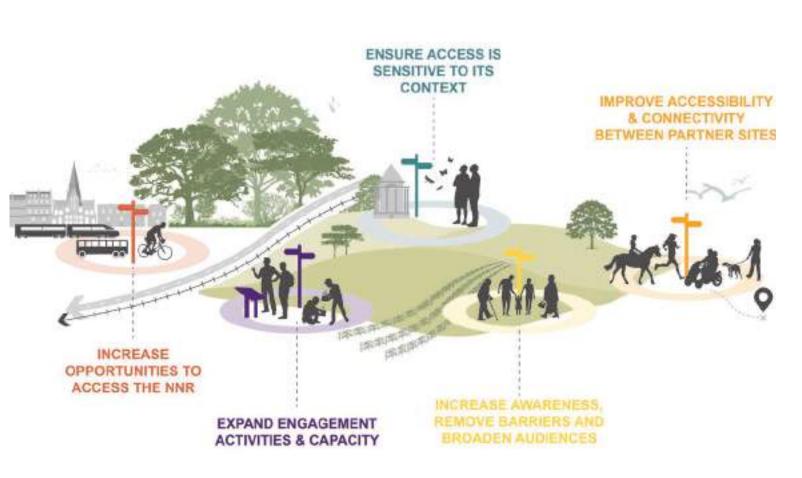
3.1 Guiding principles



The partners' vision is to provide high quality access that is attractive to a wide range of users and to engage audiences, particularly local communities and under-represented groups.

To guide the development of the strategic recommendations and detailed proposals set out below and in Section 4.0, the following guiding principles were agreed:

- Increase awareness, remove barriers and broaden audiences;
- Expand engagement activities and capacity to deliver;
- Increase opportunities to access the NNR;
- Ensure access is sensitive to its context; and
- Improve accessibility and connectivty between partner/affiliate sites.



North Kent Woods & Downs NNR - Guiding principles for visitor access & community engagement

3.2 Objectives

The objectives set out on this and the following page expand on the five guiding principles.

A set of objectives and associated goals have been agreed for each principle. The objectives convey overall intent, whilst the goals provide targets against which progress can be monitored and reported.

The detailed proposals set out in the Implementation Plan (Section 4.0) below cross-reference to these objectives and goals.

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INCREASE AWARENESS, REMOVE BARRIERS AND BROADEN AUDIENCES



EXPAND ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES & CAPACITY

	OBJECTIVE INPECIFIC COAL		SPECIFIC GOAL		
Increase awareness of the NNR and opportunities to get involved.	 Develop campaigns to highlight the significance of the NNR and opportunities for public engagement. Develop outreach and educational programmes. Inform communities about the 	Develop engaging events and activities programmes	 Create a dynamic programme of events and activities that caler to a wide audience. Develop social networks, a sense of community and connection to nature. 		
Reduce barriers to access and increase the confidence of	 Address physical, social and economic barriers which prevent groups from visiting and 	Contribute to improved health and well-being,	 Emphasise the health benefits of spending time in nature, promoting activities that contribute to physical and mental well-being. 		
under-represented groups to access the countryside.	 participating in activities. Work with communities in their local area and spend time discussing interests, motivations and barriers. Deliver supported visits to build confidence. Maintain on-going dialogue and 	Increase nature connectedness and increase the number of people taking action for nature	 Encourage participation that leads to greater engagement, e.g. arts, crafts and cultural activities. Promote activities that explore and address environmental issues, increase nature connectedness and positive action for nature. 		
	support through the transition to self-led visits.	Increase the skills and capacity of the	 Seek funding for additional staff an resources to support engagement. 		
Increase the range of audiences visiting NNR sites.	 Deliver tailored outreach, marketing and support for community organisations and community representatives. Promote activities that build confidence to visit the countryside. 	partnership to deliver the Community Engagement Strategy	 volunteering and education activities. Seek funding to support skills development in relation to the delivery of engagement activities. Ensure funding supports the 		
Increase awareness of the opportunities for	 Promote volunteer programmes to encourage diverse participation. 		long-term sustainability of engagement programmes.		





ENSURE ACCESS IS SENSITIVE

TO ITS CONTEXT



INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS THE NNR

OBJECTIVE	SPECIFIC GOAL	BVITOBLEO	SPECIFIC QOAL	OBJECTIVE	SPECIFIC GOAL	
Broaden the range of ocations through which visitors access the NNR.	 Improve the geographical spread of gateway sites. Improve visitor capacity at each gateway site within the natural limits of that location. Improve community access points that provide direct access to the NNR from adjacent residential areas. 	Provide and promote routes that enable all visitors to enjoy the landscapes, habitats and heritage of the NNR.	 Provide opportunities for visitors with a range of interests, physical abilities and levels of experience in the countryside. Support access on fost, by wheelchain/tramper, by bike and on horseback. Improve the network of easy access trails. 	Protect sensitive wildlife sites and features (e.g. veteran trees) from disturbance and damage	 Route primary NNR trails away from the most sensitive sites. Design infrastructure upgrades to protect sensitive features above and below ground. Clearly communicate the importance and sensitivity of ecological features to visitors. 	
Support and promote car free access to the NNR,	 Improve opportunities for active travel to and through the NNR. Improve connections with public transport and work with operators to improve services, facilities and information. Promote car-free days out with 	Ensure that visitors can easily navigate their way through the NNR.	 Ensure a clear sense of arrival into the NNR. Provide wayfinding infrastructure that supports the entire visitor experience from arrival to departure. Establish NNR waymarked traits. 	Conserve the landscape character and heritage of the NNR	 Avoid the visual intrusion of infrastructure and concentrations of visitors within the landscape. Design infrastucture upgrades to avoid damage to above and below ground heritage assets. 	
Provide visitors with the information they need to choose routes to, and locations within,	 example routes and itineraries. Provide comprehensive pre-visit information in a dedicated location. Provide information on the visitor experience as well as traditional 	Provide a safe space for everyone to enjoy the countryside.	 Work with Partners and Kent Police to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Increase visibility of people in the countryside. 			
the NNR that suit them,	'How to get there?' type information.	Promote connections between the NNR and the wider network of Green Intrastructure across Kent and	 Promote connections with other nature conservation sites. Promote the NNR with the Kent Downs National Landscape, National Trails and National Cycle 			

Sussex.

IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY & CONNECTIVITY

BETWEEN PARTNER SITES

Network.

INCREASE AWARNESS, REMOVE BARRIERS & BROADEN AUDIENCES



3.3 Audiences

The partnership will work to increase the range of audiences visiting the NNR, by reducing barriers to access and working to increase the confidence of under-represented groups.

Current audiences

The Kent County Council Country Parks Visitor Survey (2016) identified that at Shorne Woods Country Park:

- Most visitors are between 25 and 64 years old;
- Around two-thirds of visitors belong to socio-economic groups A/B or C1, suggesting a relatively affluent visitor base;
- Over 90% of visitors are from a white background; and
- The average visiting group consists of 2.82 people, with an average of 0.66 children between 4 and 12 years old per group.

The community consultation undertaken in 2024 (see Section 2.2 for details) found that:

- 51% of respondents resided in postcodes within the proposed NNR or within 2km of an NNR site.
- 54.4% of respondents travelled fewer than 5 miles to visit the proposed NNR area.

This suggests that current visitors are mostly local and tend to be more affluent, and that a range of audiences that national research identifies tend to use green space and the countryside appear to be under-represented. Discussion with partner organisations during the development of this strategy identified the desire to sustain existing core audiences, whilst increasing efforts to attract and engage more people from under-represented groups.

This principle is set out in the Kent Country Parks Strategy (2023-28) and is being adopted through projects such as the Gravesham Green Community Hubs and Kent Downs National Landscape Putting Down Routes initiatives.

CASE STUDY: PUTTING DOWN ROUTES



Putting Down Routes is a collaboration between the Kent Downs National Landscape and the North Downs Way National Trail. It aims to break down barriers to participation, increase accessibility and build confidence for all newcomers to the landscape. The project has two key components. Firstly to encourage new audiences from underrepresented communities to access and enjoy the landscape, and secondly to upgrade parts of the National Trail.

The North Downs Way has an ambassador programme, with ambassadors leading guided walks and activities addressing health and wellbeing, ecology, natural history, heritage etc. Through the Putting Down Routes, the National Trail are seeking to expand the programme with a focus on recruiting ambassadors from more diverse backgrounds and engaging under-represented communities. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training has been rolled out to ambassadors, as well as being offered to local businesses and visitor attractions along the trail.

With regards to improving trail infrastruture, Putting Down Routes is focussed on making the National Trail welcoming and accessible for more people. Works include improved surfacing to support use by those using wheeled mobility aids and the removal of physical barriers to open up lengths of the trail to users of wheelchairs, mobility scooters and parents/carers with children in pushchairs.

INCREASE AWARNESS, REMOVE BARRIERS & BROADEN AUDIENCES



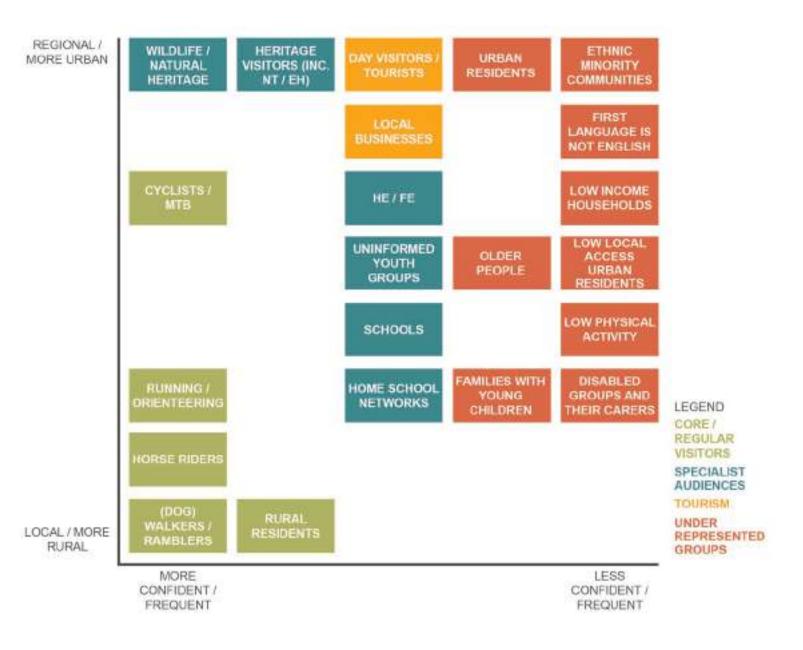
Future audiences

The adjacent matrix illustrates potential future audiences classified using the categories:

- Core / regular visitors;
- Specialist audiences (nature or heritage enthusiasts)
- Tourists, including day visitors and those staying in the region for multiple days; and
- Under-represented groups.

The matrix organises these potential audiences in relation to (i) their confidence in visiting the countryside and frequency of visits and (ii) whether they tend to be urban (more distant) or rural (more local).

As part of the development of this strategy, an exercise has been carried out to identify and map the distribution of community groups within the 15 minute drivetime contour, who could be engaged in the life of the NNR. Mapping of community groups and schools is provided in Section 4.2 below.



3.4 Community engagement





The partnership will develop a dynamic programme of events and activities that cater to a wide audence. Skills and capacity will be developed across the partnership to help deliver the programme.

Outreach & structured activity

Discussions with partner organisations clearly indicate that staff capacity and resources are a barrier to expanding the community engagement and visitor offer within each organisation. This stops them from addressing existing gaps in provision and working towards the vision for greater engagement. Whilst partners are delivering community engagement activities, this tends to be site based and focussed within organisations. There is a clear need to create new roles working across the partnership to co-ordinate collective and partner specific actions.

Outreach work is being delivered through specific projects such as Putting Down Routes and through the Green Community Hubs, where specific programme funding has been secured or allocated. Building trust and confidence with new audiences is a slow process and requires specific skills and dedicated resource.

This strategy recommends that new staff posts be created to work across the NNR. These could include a Community

Engagement Officer and Volunteer Co-ordinator and, should funding be available, a Partnership Manager or Co-ordinator. These roles focus on cross-partner working and enable a step change in delivery.

It is also recommended that structured programmes of activity be developed to enhance the skills and capacity of communities including those within 'areas of focus'. This should include area based working within neighbourhoods, e.g. recruiting and training Ambassadors, Green Champions, and Junior Green Champions.

Health outcomes in the region and more locally in Gravesham and Medway are poorer than national figures. Developing green health and wellbeing programmes that allow people to be more physically active and to spend time in nature can deliver positive outcomes. The Kent Green Social Prescribing Network has been identified by partners as an effective mechanism for delivery, and funding should be sought to extend the role and reach of this programme. Establishing a Women's Walking Group may also reduce barriers to participation, reducing gender and cultural barriers.

Specialist audiences, often motivated by a deep fascination and understanding of their area of interest, are important stakeholders and can help support wider community engagement. Many partners have expressed an interest in helping audiences connect with nature on a deeper level through repeat visits and engaging programmes of activity. Similarly, local business and commercial providers can provide expertise and the skills and capacity to help deliver shared objectives around recreation, leisure, hospitality and nature connectedness.

CASE STUDY: OUTREACH & STRUCTURED ACTIVITY

Working at a landscape scale is critical for nature recovery and there are a range of potential landowners and managers that are not currently engaged through the NNR process. Structured programmes of activity and outreach with other landowners could be further developed.

Please refer to proposals OS01-10 in Section 4.3 below.



This approach is one of working with organisations that are engaging with their communities. It represents a bottom up grassroots process rather than a top down one. This brings significant benefits in terms of participation and engagement and longer term sustainability. The partnership approach is a collaborative one that allows all parties to share and apply the learning.

In Kent, Putting Down Routes has successfully partnered with local voluntary and community based organisations to reach new audiences. These include:

- Black Girls Hike (www.bghuk.com)
- Wild with Wheels (www.wildwithwheels.com)
- East and Southeast Asian (ESEA) Outdoors UK (www.eseaoutdoors.uk)



A The

Events & activities

Events and activities can provide positive experiences and opportunities to connect with more people and a broader range of audiences. They can be particularly effective in providing opportunities to connect with people who are less confident in visiting the countryside.

The list below identifies events and activities that could support engagement in the Kent Woods and Downs NNR:

- Hold a North Kent National Nature Reserve Launch Event, potentially at Shorne Woods Country Park;
- Develop a programme of activities across partnership sites for the annual National Nature Reserve week celebration (12 days in May);

- Develop a visitor offer for the national annual Heritage Open Days (September);
- Develop a programme of family friendly activities throughout the year;
- Develop an arts and cultural events programme for family audiences;
- Develop materials to support self-led visits for families with young children;
- Develop a programme of activities as part of the Kent Walking Festival / Kent Goes Wild;
- Develop a programme of guided walks supported by volunteer walk leaders (linking to Community Green Champions).

Please refer to proposals EA01-08 in Section 4.3 below.

CASE STUDY: FESTIVALS



Festivals offer the opportunity for partners and stakeholders to come together and offer events and activities across multiple sites. Examples include:

- The Big Wigan Walk Week, with nine days of free events including naturethemed strolls around beautiful green spaces;
- Flashes Festival of Nature, which celebrates the Flashes of Wigan and Leigh National Nature Reserve; and
- The Cornish Seaweed Festival, which celebrates ocean diversity.

CASE STUDY: EVENTS & ACTIVITIES



National Nature Reserve Week is held annually and is promoted as a celebration of the most important places for nature. Other NNRs, such as the Lizard NNR, have successfully used this to promote a range of events and activities.

Arts and cultural events can attract new audiences and can be delivered at a variety of scales. The Choir with No Name performed at the Ainsdale Sand Dunes NNR Festival.

Purple Tuesday is a national campaign with events held across the world to promote accessibility every day, everywhere and for everyone. This provides an opportunity to promote access events at North Kent NNR.

Holkham National Nature Reserve & Beach offer wellbeing walks and a Walking Women group. The Camden and Islington Future Parks Accelerator project is a good example of approaches to using green space as a vehicle for improving health and wellbeing outcomes.

Seasonal events such as those at Halloween and Christmas can successfully attract family audiences and bring in visitors outside peak times. There is scope to put a 'twist' on these events to add to the novelty factor and keep the offer fresh.





Education & learning

There is a well established education programme at Shorne Woods Country Park. The current Education Ranger post is 0.6 Full Time Equivalent (FTE). This was previously a full time post funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund project. There is scope to increase capacity subject to external funding being available. This would allow greater education programme delivery and provide the resource to share skills with other project partners that may wish to develop their education programmes. Additional capacity for cross partner delivery would also be beneficial.

Developing links with the Kent County Council Greener Schools initiative would provide a route to working with schools that are already committed to increasing understanding about environmental issues. It may also provide a vehicle to develop and deliver topic specific engagement events and interpretation materials, e.g. how NNR sites are responding to the climate emergency.

Partners have identified the opportunity to develop connections with home school networks, encouraging greater use of the countryside for education outside mainstream structures.

There is scope to build links with colleges and education providers offering

land based courses and 'green jobs'. Partners have indicated an interest in developing opportunities for work based learning through traineeships and apprenticeships, which could be delivered across partner sites / organisations. Early careers experience is important in developing the skills of those entering the sector. Engagement of this type can also help to diversify the range of people entering the workforce.

Sharing learning from the management of partnership NNRs is a priority for Natural England. The establishment and management of the North Kent Woods and Downs NNR offers a fantastic opportunity to capture learning and to undertake research that can feed into the national NNR cohort.

There are further opportunities to connect and engage with u3a (University of the Third Age) groups in North Kent and with audiences that are likely to have an interest in the natural environment. u3a is a UK-wide collection of 1000+ charities that provide opportunities for those no longer in work to come together and learn for fun.

Please refer to proposals EL01-08 in Section 4.3 below.

CASE STUDY: EDUCATION & LEARNING

Education programmes offer the opportunity to connect with young people and their families. Holkham NNR offers learning programmes for primary, secondary and sixth form students and uniformed youth groups.

Sherwood Forest's education hub hosts organised learning adventures for school visits including: How nature thrives and sustains here; Minibeast hunt; Walking in Robin's footsteps; and Legends of Sherwood.



Work based learning through traineeships and apprenticeships provides opportunities for entry into the sector and can help diversify the workforce. The learning and skills gained by the trainees can also be transformational. The Mersey Forest 'More from Trees' project funded through the Green Recovery Challenge Fund, used a Green Task Force to work across multiple sites delivering conservation work. The project improved access to nature for veterans experiencing poor mental health, provided support and helped participants develop new skills and improve their lives.

Partners across the North Kent Woods and Downs NNR have been positive about the potential to work collaboratively and share skills and learning. There is scope for skills sharing and developing training programmes across organisations. Specialist support can be brought in where needed. The Stiperstones NNR has run courses such as an introduction to scything.



THE A

Volunteer participation

There is a significant scale of volunteer participation across partner organisations. Currently, this tends to be site and organisation specific. Through the NNR, there is scope to develop joint programmes to expand volunteering, attracting more participants and volunteers from a more diverse range of backgrounds. There is learning that can be taken from the Future Parks Accelerator programme - funded by MHCLG and The National Lottery Heritage Fund, and supported by the National Trust - that can be applied to developing new models for volunteer participation.

This strategy recommends the following actions:

- Develop a shared platform across the partnership to promote volunteering and volunteer opportunities;
- Develop a shared volunteer registration process to streamline volunteer recruitment;
- Create a new partnership-wide Volunteer Co-ordinator role;
- Develop an innovative volunteer programme that broadens the range of opportunities for involvement;
- Develop a Volunteer Trail Wardens programme (to complement the

KCC Countryside Access Wardens programme);

- Develop opportunities for volunteers to participate in heritage research and other heritage activities (including archaeology);
- Explore opportunities to develop corporate volunteering and promote this offer across the partnership.

Please refer to proposals VP01-07 in Section 4.3 below.

Measuring success

In addition to new staff posts, this strategy recommends the establishment of a Community Engagement Working Group to co-ordinate, plan and monitor progress in the delivery of the identified actions. This could be constituted to include visitor voices within the group.

This working group, in addition to having a co-ordination role, could monitor and evaluate outcomes. Subject to funding being secured, we have recommended specialist external consultant support for the monitoring and evaluation function.

<u>Please refer to proposals MS01-11 in</u> <u>Section 4.3 below.</u>

CASE STUDY: REMOVING BARRIERS TO VOLUNTEERING



We have a range of green volunteer opportunities available.

Frequently cited barriers to volunteering in green spaces include uncertainty about how to get involved, the time commitment, timing of the activities, type of activity, level of commitment and inclusivity issues. The Future Parks Accelerator (FPA) project found that these barriers could be addressed through: (i) better promotion; (ii) a simple registration process; (iii) providing a single point of contact; (iv) offering a wider range of opportunities; and (v) providing more flexible opportunities (e.g. one-off and family volunteering).

CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY BASED VOLUNTEERING

- The Flashes of Wigan and Leigh NNR are developing approaches to community engagement based around Community Organising and are working to streamline the volunteer model across Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Wigan Council and Forestry England.
- Natural Lizard promotes a range of volunteer activities including 'volunteering from home'.
- International Volunteer Day provides a focus for promoting volunteering and recognising the achievements of volunteers who already participate.

Helping from home

Are you unable to get out to valueber yet are still interested in hegong? Entow this limit to find and what you can do for natives and withfle from home and/or or your local polety.

Endod media



3.5 Pre-visit information

INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS THE NNR



The partnership will ensure that all visitors have access to the pre-visit information they need to choose the locations and routes within the NNR that best suit their needs and interests.

Dedicated & specific

The websites of the Kent Downs National Landscape, North Downs Way, Visit Kent and each individual public site serve as potential routes to pre-visit information for visitors to the study area. The NNR will add to this. Having multiple routes to engaging visitors can lead to the desire to draw information together. This rarely works, with messaging blurred, information less specific and harder to find, and content harder to map due to issues of geographical scale and volume of content.

It is recommended that a dedicated North Kent Woods and Downs NNR website be set up. This should be concise and focussed on the core information required by visitors and stakeholders. It can then signpost out to other relevant websites. Simplifying content also makes it easier to ensure that information is kept up-to-date. The Purbeck Heaths NNR website is a good example.

Clear & informative

Most decisions to visit are made at

home. It is essential that pre-visit information conveys that the NNR is welcoming, safe, accessible and worth visiting. Visitor information and imagery should show that everyone is welcome and support visitors to choose the locations and routes within the NNR that best suit their needs and interests. Specifically, visitor information should cover:

- Practical requirements
- Facilities
- The visitor experience
- Accessibility; and

• Layout (via NNR map).

It is important not to overlook the social and experience-focussed elements of pre-visit information. Who will be there, what to wear, and whether staff or volunteers will be there to help, are

CASE STUDY: PURBECK HEATHS NNR

The Purbeck Heaths NNR was declared in 2020. Like the proposed North Kent Woods and Downs NNR, it is partnership NNR, bringing together land owned by seven different landowners.

The NNR sits within the Dorset National Landscape and the South West Coast Path runs through the reserve. The National Landscape, coast path and each partner site have their own websites with visit

The NNR has a dedicated, concise and well-laid out website, with information orgnanised under 6 main headings. Under the 'Your visit' section, visitors can access an interactive map, as well as pdf downloads including the NNR map (right), a leaflet on car free days out and three specific itininaries.



INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS THE NNR



particularly important for individuals who have less experience visiting the countryside.

The adjacent diagram provides more detail on the recommended scope of previsit information.

Accessible

All information held on web pages should meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). Any hard copy previsit information should be available on request in alternative formats such as large print, braille, plain language and audio.

Co-ordinated & up-to-date

The NNR should be promoted through a range of websites, including

- Partner websites .
- Kent Downs National Landscape; .
- North Downs Way;
- Visit Kent: •
- Local businesses (e.g. Silverhand Estate, Moot Brew Co. etc)

It is important that visitor information is co-ordinated and kept up-to-date.

Please refer to proposals PV01-03 in Section 4.3 below.

Practical information

Opening times

Transport options

- Access on foot, by bike and on horse-back
 - Public transport, inc. hop-on hop-off service
 - Car parking, including pricing

NNR map

(interactive & pdf)

- NNR area. •
- Partner/affiliate site names
- Gateways & facilities. • Main road network. •
- Parking. •
- Train lines and • stations.
- Bus routes and stops. •
- Cycle routes.
- Primary walking routes.
- Symbol highlighting where additional waymarked routes are available at each partner site.
- Accomodation, e.g. • campsites.

Facilities

- Toilets
- Changing places facilities
- Cafes
- Visitor centres
- Picnic areas
- Plav areas
- **Bike hire**
- Tramper hire

Visitor experience

Activities

- self-guided trails
- volunteering days

Who will be there

- Staff
- Volunteers
- Organised groups
- Other visitors cyclists, dog walkers. families etc.

Conditions & what to wear

- Typical path/trail conditions at different times of year and in different types of weather.
- Any specific advice on what to wear, e.g wellies, shoes with good grip, etc.

Topography, character & what you'll

- How steep routes are.
- Whether the landscape is open or wooded/enclosed.
- Grazing animals.

Accessibility

- Accessible parking
- Accessible toilets & changing places facilities
- Accessible trails
- Support staff and literature



3.6 Visitor gateways & community access

INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS THE NNR



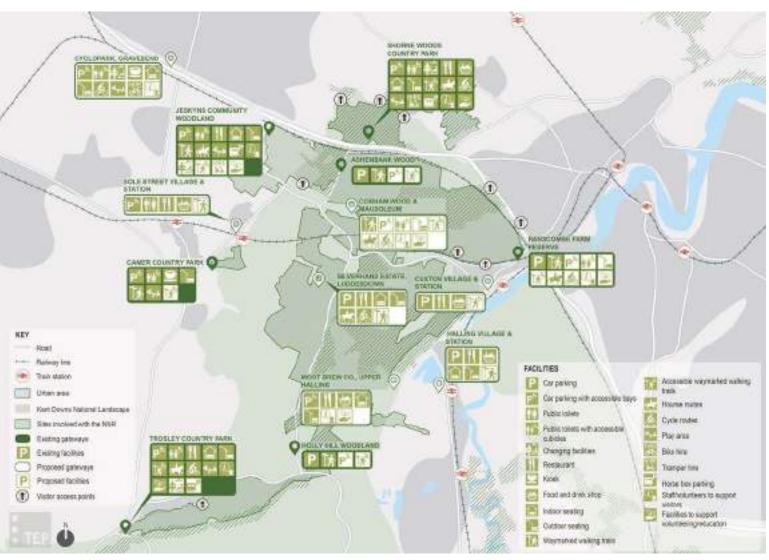
The partnership will work to broaden the number of locations through which visitors access the reserve. This will improve the NNR's capacity to accommodate visitors and support car-free access.

This section sets out recommendations for increasing the number of promoted visitor gateway sites, enhancing facilities at these gateways and improving community access points.

Gateways provide a point of access to the reserve for visitors travelling from somewhere other than immediately adjacent communities. Typically, they also provide some visitor facilities. Community access points typically have no visitor facilities and serve as points of entry for communities immediately adjacent to the NNR.

The following core requirements must be met by all gateways and community access points:

- **Orientation** signage must identify that visitors are entering the NNR and help visitors to orientate themselves.
- NNR offer signage & interpretation must introduce the NNR and the visitor offer.
- Wayfinding signage must clearly direct visitors to the main NNR



Proposed Gateways & Community Access Points

features and trails.

• **Restrictions** - signage must make clear any restrictions on access.

Gateway locations

Currently visitor access to the study area is focussed at Shorne Woods and Trosley country parks, and at Jeskyns Community Woodland. All three sites have substantial car parks, but notably relatively poor access to public transport. Four other sites, with limited capacity and facilities, provide alternative arrival points (see Section 2.4). This strategy proposes an increase in the number of promoted gateway sites, in order to provide better coverage of the landscapes, habitats and heritage of NNR and to support car-free visits.

The plan on the previous page shows the seven existing gateway sites, and an additional seven proposed gateways. The new gateways include three villages (Cuxton, Cobham & Halling) located immediately adjacent to the NNR, two private commercial sites (Silverhand Estate & Court Farm) and the National Trust's Cobham Wood & Mausoleum site.

The three villages offer relatively easy access to the reserve and have train stations, bus stops, shop(s), pubs/ restaurants/cafes and some limited parking (at stations or on-street). These gateways are central to proposals to promote car-free days out to the NNR.

The two commercial operators offer visitor car parking, a food & drink offer, toilets, and access to waymarked trails. Both already promote access to the National Landscape and North Downs Way on their websites. Silverhand Estate are engaged in the NNR as a core partner and have expressed their support for being identified as a gateway site.

Court Farm, in the village of Upper Halling, is home to a collection of private food and drink businesses, including a farm shop, a brewery and taproom and a pizza restaurant. The venue has a medium sized car park (c.40 spaces) and toilets. These organisations should be engaged by the partnership to explore whether they would be happy to be promoted as a gateway location.

Cobham village and the National Trust property at Cobham Wood lie at the heart of the NNR, with connecting paths and trails to multiple adjacent sites. Cobham village has a very small public car park (12 spaces), public toilets, and is on a bus route. The village also has a village shop and three public houses. The main entrance to the National Trust's Cobham Wood and Mausoleum site (South Lodge Barn) lies just to the east of Cobham Village. The Barn serves as a base for

Facilities

Car parking (either dedicated visitor parking or on-street)

Accessible parking (either dedicated visitor parking or on-street)

Toilets (visitor/public)

Accessible toilets (visitor/public)

Changing places facilities

Seated hot and cold drink offer (e.g. cafe, restaurant, pub)

Shop or kiosk (to purchase food & drink)

Indoor seating (associated with food offer)

Outdoor seating (e.g. picnic tables)

Waymarked trails (from gateway)

Waymarked accessible trails (from gateway)

Play area (within easy reach of the gateway)

Tramper hire

Horse box parking

Staff/volunteers available to support visitors (during opening hours)

Staff/volunteers available to support visitors (at peak times only)

Facilities to support volunteers (e.g. meeting/changing rooms)

Gateway facilities & hierarchy

INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS THE NNR

Section 4.3 below.

focus can be useful tools for change.

Please refer to proposals CA01-09 in

the National Trust team, but there are no public facilities at the entrance.

Up until the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a small car park opposite South Lodge Barn positioned on the edge of the adjacent farmland. When visitor numbers to open spaces and the countryside increased rapidly during lockdown, the car park was closed. Since then, the National Trust advertise Shorne Woods Country Park as the nearest visitor car park. This is 2.4km to the north and is not a practical arrival location. Both the National Trust and the West Kent Downs Countryside Trust, who manage the adjacent Plotlands site, note that visitor numbers have decreased since the car park closed. It is proposed that options to re-instate a car park be explored at or close to the Cobham Woods and Mausoleum site. Given the key location of the gateway, it would also be useful to explore options to provide visitor toilets in the vicinity of South Lodge Barn and to have a staff/volunteer presence at peak times to support visitors.

Gateway facilities

The range of facilities provided at each gateway will vary depending on visitor demand, site constraints and its setting.

In addition to developing facilities at the Cobham Wood gateway, a number of enhancements are proposed at other

locations. These are proposed to improve the welcome, support engagement and remove barriers to access. To support the development of proposals, a list of facilities was prepared and from this a hierarchy of gateways determined (see table above). The gateway categories provide different levels of support for visitors and are therefore suited to different audiences. In developing recommendations for gateway sites, we have sought to achieve a better balance in provision across the study area, whilst being sensitive to site context.

The plan above identifies existing and proposed facilities at each of the gateway locations. A written summary of the proposed enhancements at each site (GA01-14) is provided in Section 4.3 below.

Community access points

Nine community access points have been identified. Proposed enhancements at each are set out in Section 4.3 below.

In most cases enhancements are limited to improving signage and path surfacing, and removing barriers to access. However, there are two community access points, on the east side of Ranscombe Farm, that are particularly challenging and warrant a far more ambitious programme of improvements. In both locations, access is via a series

of bridges and underpasses, and in both cases the access feels unsafe and uninviting.

Community engagement will be key to the successful design and delivery of improvement works. As demonstrated by the Safer Snickets project below, public art combined with a nature conservation

CASE STUDY: SAFER SNICKETS

In Bradford, a project called Safer Snickets used community engagement to generate ideas to improve neglected spaces, with the aim to make them feel safer and improve how they are perceived. The alleyways ("snickets") suffered from a range of issues, such as flytipping and a lack of care, which led to underuse and safety concerns. The public art ideas realised included hop-scotch, footsteps trails and birds flying up to the sky. These interventions supported placemaking, and engendered a sense of community ownership and pride, which in turn increased use and imporved safety.





3.7 Travelling to & from the NNR

INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS THE NNR



The partnership will support active travel and encourage the use of public transport to reach the NNR. This will contribute to the core sustainability goals of the NNR and relieve pressure on car park capacity.

Recommendations draw on the results of the baseline assessment summarised in Section 2.5 and cross-reference to complementary strategies. These include the Gravesham Green & Blue Infrastructure Strategy (LUC, 2022) and the Gravesham Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP, 2022).

The Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) proposals, if approved for construction, will have a major impact on the landscape to the north of the study area, increase the visitor catchment to include south Essex and alter the Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network on both sides of the A2/M2 corridor. The recommendations outlined here and the detailed proposals included in Section 4.0 make reference to the LTC plans where relevant, but are based on the highway network as it is today. Should the LTC scheme be approved, this strategy will be reviewed and revised accordingly.

Walking & wheeling

Access to the NNR via footways and

footpaths is possible from a number of nearby towns and villages, including Gravesend, Shorne, Strood, Halling, Vigo Village, Meopham and Sole Street. However, there are significant barriers to access and accessibility along a number of these routes. Barriers include breaks in the footway along highways, the absence of dropped kerbs at junctions, poor footpath surfacing and gate infrastructure that limits accessibility.

It is recommended that improvement works be undertaken to address barriers along routes that connect the NNR study area to local communities and public transport nodes. These routes are identified in the plan on the following page, with further detail on proposed improvements provided in Section 4.0 below.

Primary walking trails through the NNR are addressed in Section 3.8.

Cycling

National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 177 runs along the A2 corridor from Northfleet to the west of the study area to Strood in the east, passing the entrance to Shorne Woods Country Park. NCN177 connects the urban areas of Gravesend and Strood with the key NNR gateway site at Shorne Woods. In combination, NCN routes 17 and 1, which run to the east of the study area, connect

COMPLEMENTARY PLAN: GRAVESHAM LCWIP (PJA, 2022)

The Gravesham Borough Council Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) summarises the findings of the Council's LCWIP study. LCWIPs identify and prioritise investment in new infrastructure with the aim of supporting a greater number of people to make journeys on foot or by cycle. The Gravesham Borough Council LCWIP recommends infrastructure improvements to seven routes (see below). One of the seven routes (Route 6) runs through the NNR study area. Three more run close to the study area, either connecting with existing routes that run into the NNR or finishing close to the NNR, with the possibility of extension. The role these routes could play in supporting active travel to and through the NNR study area has been considered within this strategy, with detailed proposals set out in Section 5.0 below.



Figure 6-1: Recommended LCWIP Cycling Network



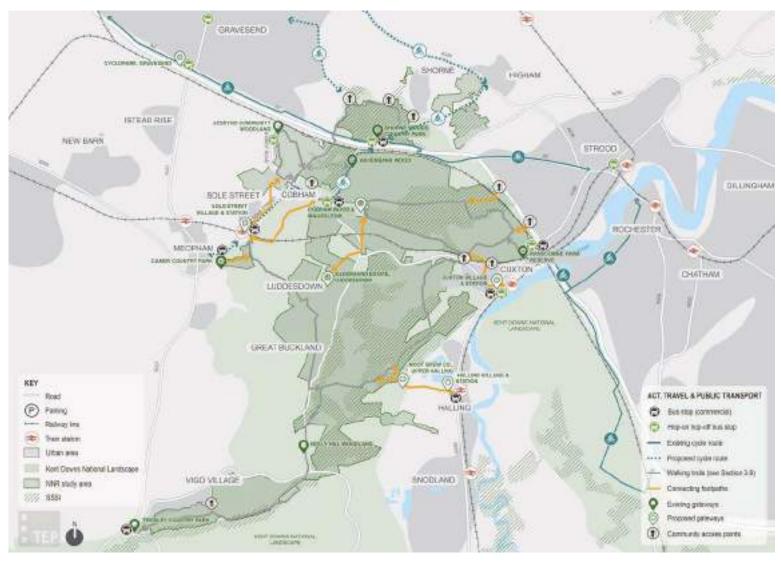
Rochester and Chatham with the NNR at Ranscombe Farm. These existing routes should be promoted as part of a package of active travel options to the NNR.

Gravesham Borough Council's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2022) recommends infrastructure improvements to create seven new cycle routes. Four of these would enhance access to the NNR. It is recommended that NNR partners support the delivery of these network improvements and, if delivered, promote them as part of a package of active travel options to the NNR.

In addition to supporting planned infrastructure improvements, NNR partners should also work with Sustrans and National Trails to promote the NNR within the literature for NCN routes and the North Downs Way Riding Route. Further detail on the latter is provided in Section 3.8 below.

Travel by bus

As detaled in Section 2.5, a number of bus services route through the study area. Along the Medway Valley, regular services run through Cuxton and Halling on routes between Chatham in the north and West Malling in the south. Services run roughly hourly in both directions from Monday to Saturday. Sunday services are reduced, but still run every couple of



Active travel & public transport

INCREASE OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCESS THE NNR



hours. At the main entrance to Shorne Woods Country Park and at Cobham village, which are on routes connecting Gravesend and Meopham, services are far less frequent during the week and there is no service on a Sunday.

It is recommended that discussions be held with Councils and bus operators to explore whether there is any scope to increase the frequency of bus services to Shorne Woods Counrty Park and Cobham. Once this is understood, more informed decisions can be made on the scope of complementary services, i.e. a dedicated NNR hop-on hop-off bus service.

To encourage bus use generally, it is recommended that NNR partners work with Councils and bus operators to provide shelters at stops within the NNR. To start with, this should focus on stops along existing timetabled routes. If a dedicated NNR hop-on hop-off bus service is progressed additional shelters at stops along the route should be provided.

Hop-on hop-off bus service

It is recommended that NNR partners explore options to introduce a dedicated hop-on hop-off bus service. The service should be designed to (i) address gaps in existing commercial bus services, (ii) serve NNR sites not on the existing network and (iii) offer new opportunities for car-free day out itineraries. To achieve these aims, the route should connect nearby towns, villages and train stations with NNR gateway sites, and provide a regular service at peak times, i.e. stops served at least every 90 minutes. The service should be accessible for those in wheelchairs and include for carriage of bikes and buggies.

There are many examples of similar services operating in National Parks, National Landscapes and in National Nature Reserves across the country. Some of these are highlighted on the following page.

An example timetable for a 90min circular route through the NNR study area, starting and ending at Strood Station, is presented in Section 4.3 below.

Travel by train

Train stations in Sole Street (Chatham mainline), Cuxton and Halling (Medway Valley line) are located immediately adjacent to the NNR. These provide ideal start and end locations for car-free day out itineraries. To support these, it is recommended that NNR partners work with Network Rail, train operators and Community Rail Partnerships to (i) improve accessibility at stations, (ii) promote car-free days out to the NNR and (iii) improve wayfinding information



Railwalks is working to build up a resource of walks around the UK that can be accessed by rail. Walks are available across all regions of the UK. Two of the advertised walks in Kent - Cuxton Rail trail and Halling rail trail route through the NNR study area.

and signage at stations. <u>Further details</u> are provided in Section 4.3 below.

Travel by car

Opportunities to increase car parking capacity at NNR gateway sites are limited. At Shorne Woods a number of options have been explored by Kent County Council in the past, but these have been ruled out. Car park expansion at many of the other gateway sites is constrained by landform (e.g. slopes), landcover (e.g. mature woodlands) and statutory designations/protections. As noted in Section 3.6 above, it is proposed that options be explored to re-provide car parking in the vicinity of Cobham Woods.

Jeskyns Community Woodland is one site within the study area where limited expansion of the existing car park facilities would likely be feasible. This is not something that Forestry England are currently interested in progressing and is not proposed in this strategy.

At Shorne Woods and Trosley country parks, a considerable proportion of the parking is on loose aggregate surfacing with no demarcation of bays. One opportunity to increase capacity at these sites, without expanding the footprint of the car park, is to introduce marked bays throughout. Introducing marked bays in this way has been shown to increase parking efficiency by up to 10%. Further details are provided in Section 4.3 below.

There are a number of sites that do not currently have dedicated or compliant accessible parking bays. This should be addressed in conjunction with complementary proposals to expand provision of easy access and enhanced access trails (see Section 3.8).

CASE STUDY: HOP-ON HOP-OFF BUS SERVICES

Hop-on hop-off bus services have been introduced to improve access to many National Parks, National Landscapes and National Nature Reserves, operating on weekends throughout peak spring/summer months to encourage car free visits and support point-to-point walks and rides. Services include the Purbeck Breezer, The Peak District's Hope Valley Explorer, Seven Sisters Country Park's Art shuttle bus, Titchwell's Coastliner and many more. Buses may be equipped with bike racks, offer step free access and often operate on an hourly basis. In most cases services connect nearby towns, villages and public transport nodes with key visitor destinations.



CASE STUDY: PURBECK HEATH NNR - CAR FREE DAYS OUT

The Purbeck Heaths NNR adverstise a range of car-free day out itineraries. The literature encourages travel to main entry points by train or bus, and then provides a range of options for onward travel, including walking trails, cycle routes and bus connections (Purbeck Breezer and seasonal shuttle service).

A series of car-free day out itineraries can be downloaded from the website. These provide route information, a list of facilities and details of the nearest public transport options. A QR code link to the online interactive visitor map is also included.

CASE STUDY: COMMUNITY RAIL NETWORK



Community Rail Network supports local communities to improve access, inclusion and the social value of their local railways. Communities can apply for small project funding for improvements, including signposting to things to do and creating welcoming gateways. In the Peak District, the High Peak and Hope Valley Community Rail Partnership have supported the local friends group to achieve their ideas and projects, including keeping their station vibrant, well- looked after and linked into their local community.

DAY OUT AT **EXPLORE THE** DAY OUT PURBECK HEATHS BROWNSEA HEATHS AT ARNE National Nature Reserve ISLAND 10EBTICH National State For walking Ballying Australian Contractor LOCKTON CAR FREE watery beaching The local space for a here! amating views heatthand accenation mailting, nature D/4/YS 18 wetters story, O/one phases walk from these plantations. 100404 Arthur antiquistant PURBECK adventuest treach carothy DEST MAYS TO TREAT. serves my clotent labour wy Train to Vierbien and relid Manthose and Diricites presents travel on the woeth weaths Mational Mature Ge president and press the prior fault RESEWAYS TO TRAVEL SHERVARCH FRE Semicratifian to Packets Demana his constrain with ferry proji. Lenging fee for Access the unity ris feet. Part of Hardworkstein sciences passinger nery ins place allowed ; Main service from FACILITIES NAME OF TAXABLE PARTY AND ADDRESS OF TAXABLE PARTY AND ADDRESS OF TAXABLE PARTY ADDRESS OF TAXAB PLAN WINDS OF DRIVE Barrinal a Carrowita-Plain 1244 montane int () 24m main to Rock are neveral THINGS TO SEE 🗢 xale. interventes block spans bay the of FACILITIES Nordern Fieren compolitio Listed and for our book M Skept mill. arring sharing to be and a C TOWARD C TANK that have had been been a service THINKIN DO SHEE C. Djecht micha C Cali peer along the concerns in Standing trend of the linking form the linking 44400 Birchike 💿 bis block at insert Indones Versitam etc. Robe: Expose the Rations Partnersh Manufilm Mail ENTRANCE FOR C Halass watching Autor weeking Free for these we'ves by take Enjoy the journey. Punde Teal (Starting shiples O Venerhot Designations which the Yune he to the over SHORT BREAKD not just the destination

3.8 Moving through the NNR

IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN SITES & ACCESSIBILITY ENSURE ACCESS IS SENSITIVE TO ITS CONTEXT



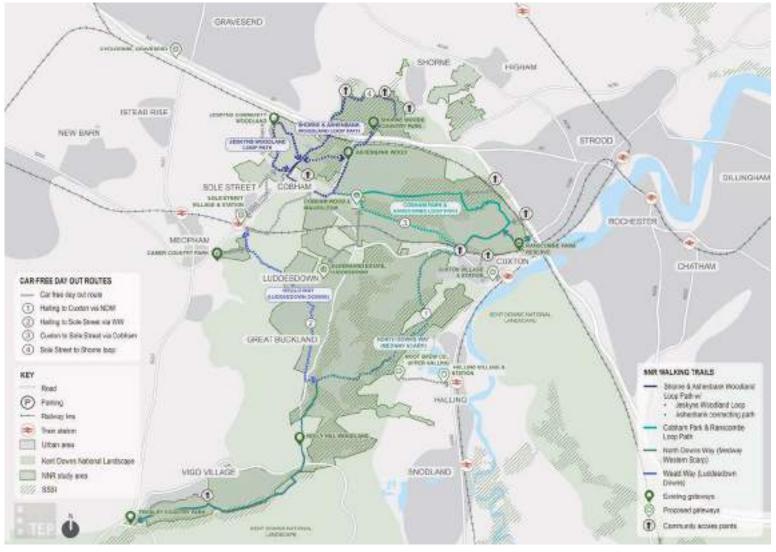
A core network of primary waymarked walking, wheeling and riding routes is proposed. These will provide opportunities for everyone to experience the beauty, ecology and heritage of the NNR.

NNR walking trails

This strategy proposes the development and promotion of four core NNR trails. These are shown on the adjacent plan. They build from the existing network of footpaths and waymarked trails and seek to:

- Achieve good coverage of the NNR, whilst being mindfull of sensitive habitats and features;
- Connect visitor gateways and community access points;
- Connect public transport nodes to support car-free days out;
- Take account of existing path condition and trail infrastructure (signage, benches etc.); and
- Provide safe routes, avoiding restricted or isolated locations.

The two trails to the south of the railway line follow sections of established longdistance paths - the North Downs Way and the Weald Way. The trails to the north of the study area combine the most attractive and well used sections of two established waymarked trails - the Darnley Trail and the Cuxton Heritage



Proposed NNR walking trails & car-free day out routes



Trail. Consideration was given to simply promoting or adapting the Darnley Trail. This is not recommended for the following reasons.

- Coverage The Darnley Trail has limited interaction with Jeskyns Community Woodland and Ranscombe Farm Reserve
- Condition Sections of the route are in relatively poor condition and/ or lack trail infrastructure (refer to Section 2.6);
- Quality of experience some sections, e.g. Park Pale Bridge to Ranscombe Farm, are restricted with boundaries to both sides - and relatively isolated; and
- Connectivety a lack of connectivity to gateways and community access points.

A brief description of each of the proposed trails is provided below. <u>Full</u> <u>details of each route and proposed</u> <u>improvements are provided in Section</u> <u>4.0</u>.

Shorne & Ashenbank Woodland Loop Path - A c. 7km loop trail that routes visitors through the picturesque village of Cobham, the woodlands of Shorne Woods and the open parkland of West Park. Parking and visitor facilities are available at Shorne Woods Country Park, with additional limited parking at Ashenbank Woods. The village of Cobham has a shop, public toilets and three pubs. The majority of the proposed route is in place as either PRoW or established waymarked permissive paths. The only missing link within the route is through the top section of West Park. A new path is proposed in this location. This would support a number of access improvements.



Jeskyns Woodland Loop Path - A 2.5km loop path that provides either a short circular walk around the northern section of Jeskyns Community Woodland, or an option to extend the Cobham Village and Shorne Woods Loop Path. For visitors arriving at Jeskyns, it provides a connection into the rest of the NNR.



Jeskyns-Ashenbank connecting path - A 1.3km section of trail connecting

Jeskyns Glades, east of byway NS311, with Ashenbank Woods. Along its length the landscape character shifts from the young woodlands and open grassland of Jeskyns to the ancient woodland and veteran trees of Ashenbank Wood. In combination with the southern section of the Cobham Village and Shorne Woods Loop Path it provides a c. 3.7km short loop walk through Cobham village, Jeskyns and Ashenbank Wood.



Cobham Park & Ranscombe Loop Path - A c. 8km loop trail that takes visitors through Cobham Woods up to the Mausoleum and then onwards into the Ranscombe Farm Reserve. Here it connects with the North Downs Way close to Cuxton before heading back westwards along the southern edge of the Plotlands and Cobham Wood. The trail captures many of the characteristic landscapes and habitats of the NNR study area and takes in some fantastic viewpoints and heritage features.

Facilities are available at the western end of the trail in Cobham village and at the

eastern end in Cuxton.



North Downs Way (Medway Western Scarp) - A c.12 km linear route that follows the North Downs Way from Cuxton all the way down to Trosley Country Park at the southern end of the NNR study area. It follows close to the Medway Western Scarp, providing occassional views east into the river vallev as well a views west over the downs. The route regularly shifts between woodland and open fields providing a varied outlook. Footpaths connecting the North Downs Way at Holborough Woods with Upper Halling and Halling provide the opportunity for a shorter c. 7km walk between Cuxton and Halling train stations.



Weald Way (Luddesdown Downs) -The Weald Way long-distance path



connects the Thames Estuary with the Sussex coast through the Weald of Kent. It runs through the NNR study area for c. 5km between Great Buckland and Sole Street, passing Luddesdown and Camer Country Park. As an established waymarked trail, it provides an ideal route for visitors to explore the Luddesdown Downs character area.



Car-free day-out routes

It is recommended that a series of carfree day out itineraries be promoted. The plan on page 57 identifies how sections of the proposed NNR walking trails could be combined to connect gateways with good public transport links. Suggested routes are:

- Halling to Cuxton via the North Downs Wav.
- Halling to Sole Street via the Weald Way.
- Cuxton to Sole Street, via Cobham.
- Sole Street to Shorne Woods loop.

Easy access & enhanced access trails

Making the North Kent Woods and Downs NNR a more accessible and inclusive space is a key focus for partners. As detailed in Section 2.6 above, a number of the partner sites have accessible facilities and wavmarked easy access routes. Shorne Woods and Trosley country parks provide accessibility guides addressing all aspects of a visit.

The proposals set out in Section 4.0 include for both general accessibility enhancements across the study area and targeted improvements to specific points of access, facilities and trails. This seeks to ensure that everyone can have the same quality of experience, whilst recognising that there are some barriers to access in the countryside which mean that not all areas can be fully accessible.

The Outdoor Accessibility Guidance (Sensory Trust, 2023) provides guidelines for three management zones:

A - Formal, intensively managed landscapes (e.g. recreational hubs);

- B Informal, moderately managed landscapes (e.g. country parks & urban fringe); and
- C Open, wilder, lightly managed landscapes (e.g. open countryside and nature reserve).

GUIDANCE: THE ACCESS CHAIN



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Fublic Summaries Interspect Associated an particularity on Perphasil and trachment mu An being party for groups according from any post classes The Access Chain (Sensory Trust) provides a structure for reviewing access arrangements. The guidance encourages:

- The provision of comprehensive pre-visit information:
- Maximising choices for travel to site and making those options as accessible as possible:
- Supporting visitors on arrival, e.g. staff and volunteer support;
- The creation of experiences of equal quality for all visitors; and
- Ensuring routes out of the site and connections back to transport are clear.

GUIDANCE: OUTDOOR ACCESSIBILITY GUIDANCE 2023

This guidance by Paths for All and Sensory Trust is designed to help make outdoor places, routes and facilities more accessible and outdoor experiences more inclusive. The guidance notes that... "an inclusive approach does not mean the same experience for everyone, but a combination of individual experiences adding up to something equally great for everyone." It builds on the core idea that providing for the widest range of users creates better places and richer experiences, which ultimately benefit everyone. The guidance identifies the following common barriers to access:

- Physical barriers steep gradients, steps, uneven path surfaces, limited seating;
- Limited infromation about accessibility:
- Lack of confidence, e.g. fear over safety or getting lost.
- Lack of accessible transport and parking options;
- Lack of staff awareness of access needs: and
- Poorly maintained environment.

Use of the guidance should support work with communities and individuals to plan, design and deliver improvements.



The visitor gateway at Shorne Woods would likely fall within Zone A. The remainder of the study area would split between Zones B and C. The guidance provides standards for each zone, addressing barriers, surfacing, path widths, frequency of resting points, gradient, distance and clarity of routes.

In line with the guidance, this strategy proposes (i) the expansion of easy access trails, with some new connections between sites and to key landmarks, and (ii) accessibility improvements to a network of longer more challenging routes, referred to as enhanced access trails. These routes are shown on the adjacent plan and characterised as follows:

Easy access paths - Routes with no stiles, steps or physical barriers, no gates narrower than 1.2m, widths greater than 1.5m, gradients less than 1 in 20, firm and even surfacing in all weather and resting points at least every 300m.

Enhanced access trails - Routes with no stiles, steps or physical barriers, no gates narrower than 1.2m, firm surfacing with some loose stones and debris, path widths of at least 1.2m (typically >1.5m), and resting points at least every 300m. The route would be suitable for a wide range of visitors, including those



Proposed accessibility improvements



using tramper type mobility scooters (or equivalent) and parents/carers with all terrain pushchairs.

Advice on the improvements - particularly the enhanced access routes - should be sort from an organisation experienced in the delivery and promotion of accessible walks and trails, such as Wild with Wheels (www.wildwithwheels.com).

For full details, please refer to proposals AT01-08 in Section 4.3.

Horse & cycle trails

The adjacent plan sets out proposals to create and promote a more coherent and accessible network of cycle and horse routes that link with stables, sites with horse box parking and the National Cycle Network. The network focusses on established long-distance routes (e.g. North Downs Way Riders Route) and stitching together existing routes to the north of the study area.

Full details of the proposals (HC01-07) are provided in Section 4.3.



Proposed horse and cycle trails

3.9 Wayfinding

IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN SITES & ACCESSIBILITY



NNR Identity & branding

Creating a distinct identity for the National Nature Reserve will support communication of the offer to visitors before they arrive and enable visitors to clearly identify when they are accessing the reserve. A short name and distinctive NNR reference colour will support the preparation of impactful communication materials, including the NNR website, printed materials, wayfinding signage (e.g. marker symbols) and interpretation. The Purbeck Heaths NNR is a good example of this approach.

Wayfinding signage

As outlined in Section 2.7 above, there is a myriad of wayfinding signage spread across the study area, directing visitors along National Trails, PRoW, local routes (e.g. Darnley Trail & Cuxton Heritage Trail) and more than 25 site-specific waymarked trails. The following hierarchy of wayfinding signage is recommended for the NNR.

Gateways & Community Access - NNR map board with introduction to both the NNR and partner site being entered, and distance-marked directional signage.

Key junctions - NNR map board and distance-marked directional signage.

Junctions with other paths - Directional signage.

Along NNR trails - Regular trail markers. It is recommended that a single colour be used for all NNR trails, with a numeric reference identifying the route and symbology to provide other trail information (e.g. horse trail, easy access route etc.). Where NNR promoted routes follow established trails (e.g. NDW), no additional way marking is required.

Public art

Public art is a fantastic way to create landmarks and points of reference across the landscape to assist wayfinding. There are already a number of examples across the study area. It should be used in combination with heritage features and natural landmarks, e.g. Ashenbank's 'octopus tree'?, to create alternative and adventurous ways for visitors, particularly children, to explore the landscape.

Community involvement

It is recommended that partners involve the local community and regular visitors in the planning of new trail infrastructure and wayfinding by:

- Seeking feedback on where new seating and/or interpretation should be located;
- Involving them in public art projects;
- Mapping 'favourite views' and using the map to inform the positioning of benches and interpretation/ wayfinding materials;

CASE STUDY: BECKENHAM PLACE PARK



Beckenham Place Park in the London Borough of Lewisham has recently undergone a major landscape restoration. As part of this, the wayfinding strategy has been refreshed. In addition to traditional signage (i.e. map boards, fingerposts and marker posts), the park offers a series of self-led nature and adventure trails. These make use of the varied habitats, heritage features and natural landmarks (e.g. the zig-zag tree) to help guide visitors around the landscape. A number of story adventure maps are also available, such as the Quercus Quest EcoSpy Mission, which draws inspiration from the park's veteran trees.

WAYFINDING WITHOUT SIGNS: ART, HERITAGE & NATURAL LANDMARKS



3.10 Safety & security



The community engagement and visitor access proposals set out above aim to create a safe and welcoming space for everyone to enjoy the countryside.

A range of proposals to support the safety of visitors to the NNR are outlined in Sections 3.4 to 3.9 above and detailed in Section 4. These include:

- Developing a Volunteer Trail
 Wardens programme
- Monitoring & recording anti-social behaviour incidents and their location.
- Developing processes to work with local police to identify and address hotspots of ASB or criminal behaviour.
- Improving safety at gateways and community access points.
- Introducing new sections of waymarked trail to avoid visitors routing through secluded areas or along roads.
- Routing NNR trails along busier and less secluded footpaths, with good visibility.
- Proposing safer road crossings and reduced speed limits.

The examples below highlight some of the structures already in place to support partners, and illustrate simple ways to increase the visibility of people in the countryside.

GUIDANCE: SECURING THE LANDSCAPE TOOLKIT

There are two initiatives in the Kent Downs area to tackle rural crime; Securing the landscape and Downs Watch. Securing the Landscape was set up to tackle illegal access and anti social behaviour in the area, in particular motorised access and flytipping. This initiative engages with Downs Watch which operates in a defined project area, Old Chalk New Downs.

The Securing the Landscape Toolkit has been created to join up the resources available to landowners and signpost to the relevant channels to assist with rural crime.

Key features of the toolkit include:

- Country Eye an app to report vandalism, fly tipping etc. Free to download.
- Tips on how to prevent crime
- Guidance on implementing security measures
- Guidance on reporting crime



CASE STUDY: PEOPLE IN THE LANDSCAPE

Pembrokeshire Coast offer the opportunity for micro volunteering. This is a flexible option for people using the national park in their spare time and enables everyone to contribute to the Look Wild Project by uploading images and text. This allows a broader audience to volunteer, contribute to their local landscape and help to build up useful information. Chiltern National landscape also offer flexible volunteering. One role is described as "enthusing visitors to the National Nature Reserves". These less structured volunteer options can help to foster more regular use of the landscape. This results in greater visibility of people in the countryside, which provides a greater sense of safety to less confident users.



4.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

4.1 Plan overview

This Implementation Plan provides a register of the projects and actions proposed to deliver the objectives and strategic recommendations outlined in Section 3.0 above.

The plan is presented as a series of plans and tabular information that locate and describe the proposed projects and actions. These projects and actions are discrete packages of work that can be programmed, costed and delivered by the partnership. They were developed with a c. 10 year implementation period in mind.

Proposal plans

For the community engagement strand, the plans set out in Section 4.2 map the distribution of schools and community groups identified within the 15 minute drivetime contour. Supporting MS Excel files with details of each of the identified schools and groups have been compiled and will be supplied separately.

For the visitor access strand, the plans locate each of the projects identified in the proposal tables. Point features, e.g. proposed gateway improvements, are identifed with symbols. Linear features, e.g. a proposed NNR trail, are broken down into sections based on their geography, the nature of trail (e.g. surface material, off-road/on-road) and the scope of the works proposed. Each discrete project has an alphanumeric code, which can be used to crossreference to information held in the proposal tables.

Proposal tables

The proposal tables provide the following information for each action or project:

- Short description
- Potential audiences (CE only);
- Site / Location;
- Lead organisation;
- Contributors;
- Indication of which objectives/goals the project/action contributes to.

For the community engagement strand, some outline cost information has been included. Cost information has not been included for the visitor access proposals. Where appropriate, this will be provided once the proposals have been agreed with partners.

A simple high, medium or low priority rating has been assigned to each of the visitor access proposals. This considers:

- Programming, e.g. required prior to or soon after NNR declaration;
- The extent to which the proposal addresses a gap in existing provision;
- Whether the works contribute to or support other proposals; and
- Contribution to the objectives set out in the strategy.



4.2 Proposal Plans



The following plans should be referred to when reading the detailed proposals set out in Section 4.3.

Plan A: Stakeholder groups mapping

Plan B: Schools mapping

Plan C: Transport, gateways & primary routes (North)

Plan D: Transport, gateways & primary routes (South)

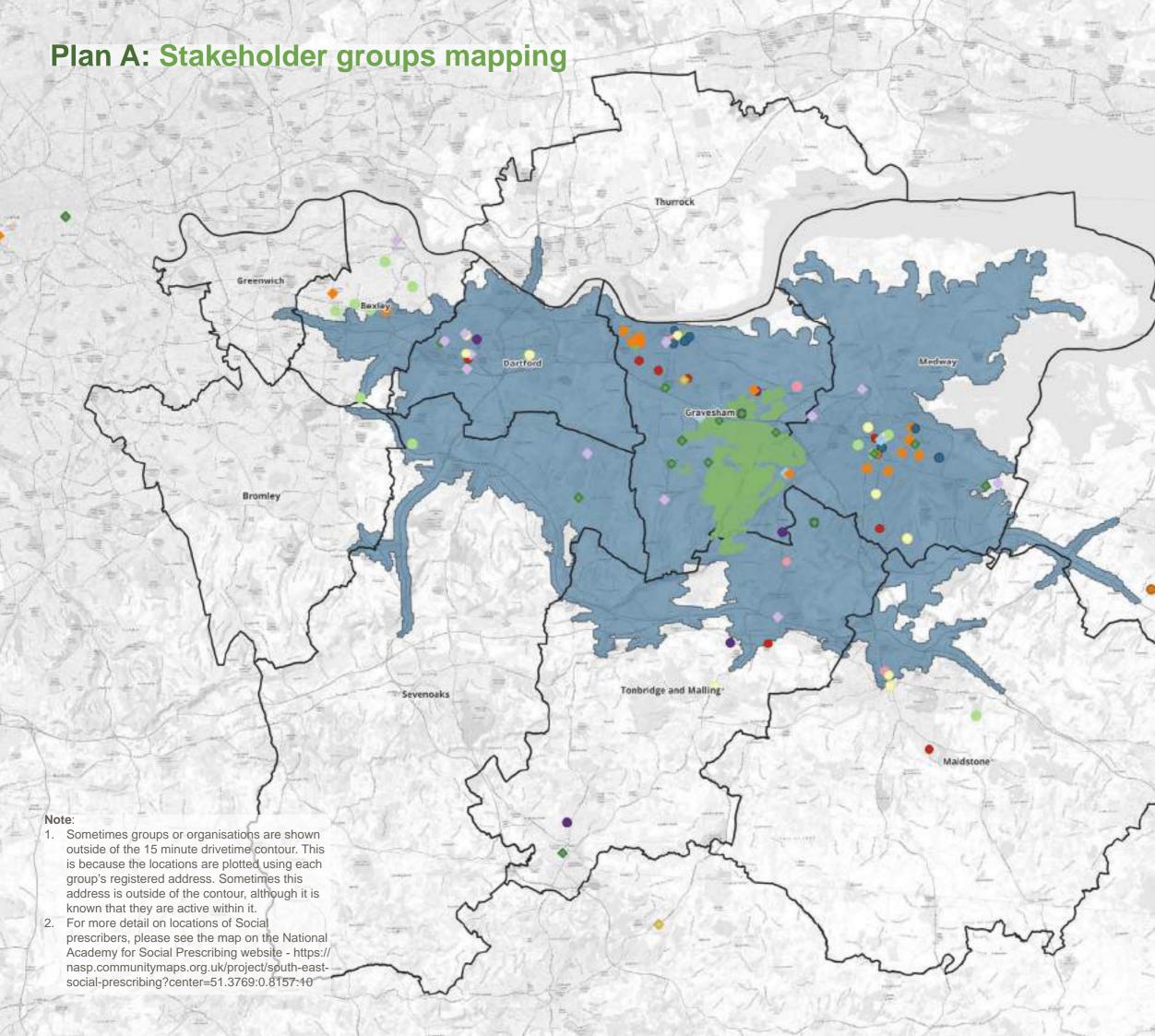
Plan E: Accessibility improbements (North)

Plan F: Accessibility improvements (South)

Plan G: Horse & cycle trails (North)

Plan H: Horse & cycle trails (South)





KEY

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NNR study area

15min drivetime contour

Local Authority boundaries within 15min drivetime

Community groups

- Business
- Community support
- Global majority
- History & heritage
- Homeless organisation
 - Mental & physical health
 - Nature & wildlife

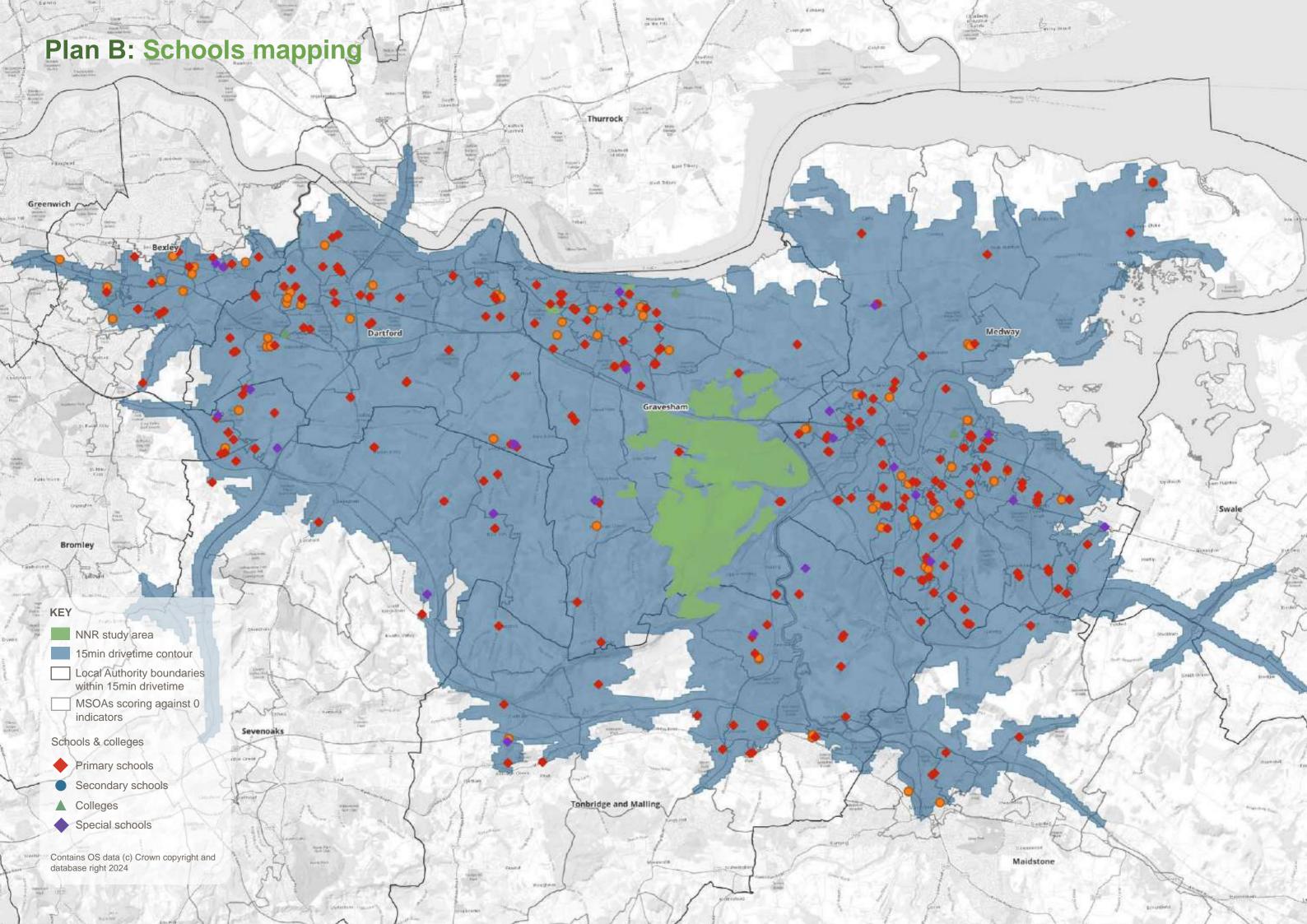
Older people

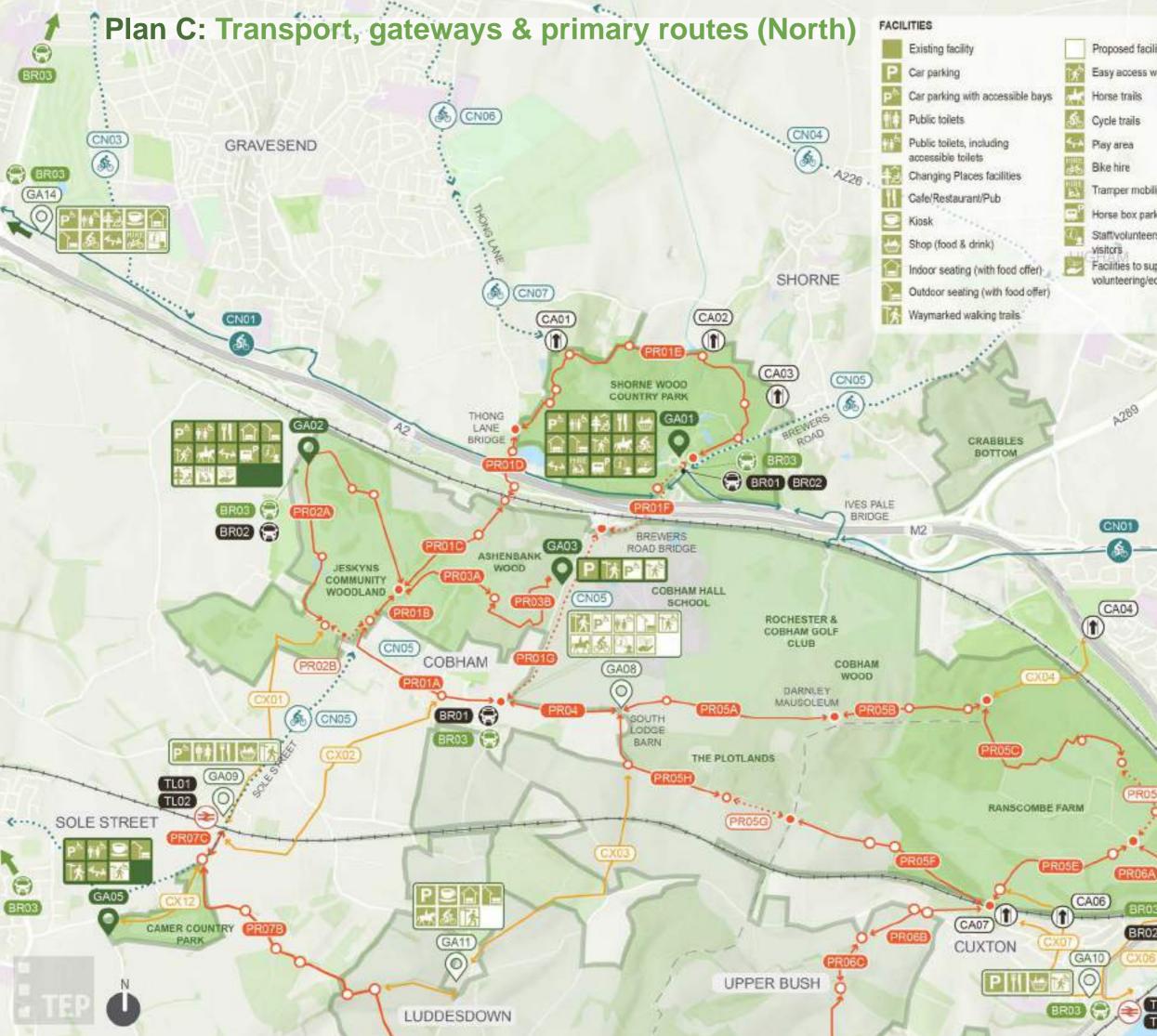
- Rural communities
- Special Educational Needs
- Sports & exercise
- Women

Swale

Young people & children

Contains OS data (c) Crown copyright and database right 2024





Proposed facility

- Easy access waymarked trail
- Horse trails
- Cycle trails
- Tramper mobility scooter hire
- Horse box parking
- Staff/volunteers to support
- Facilities to support volunteering/education

KEY

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XY01

- Study area
- Railway line
 - Train station
 - Bus route/stop
 - Hop-on hop-off bus stop
 - Existing gateways
 - Proposed gateways
 - Community access point
 - Existing cycle route
- Proposed cycle route
 - NNR Trail (existing path/track)
- NNR Trail (new/substantially altered path/brack)
 - Connecting path (promoted).
 - Wayfinding signage (primary)
 - Wayfinding signage (secondary)
- Proposal reference (renewal or enhancement of infrastructure) (XY02) Proposal reference (new/ substantially altered infrastructure)

BR03

(

STROOD

CN02

(CA05)

RIVER MEDWAY

G004

PR05D

BR03

BR02

TL01

TL02

-





substantially altered infrastructure)

100



X			
	KEY		
posed facilities	1	Study area	
essible waymarked walking		Railway line	
S	-	Train station	
mper mobility scooter hire	0	Hop-on hop-off bus	
flivolunteers to support tors	0	Existing gateways	
	0	Proposed gateways	
	۲	Community access point	
	-	Accessibility improvements (existing path/track)	
AM	••••	Accessibility improvements (new/ substantially aftered path/track)	
	3	Easy access trail (see Section 3.8)	
	-	Enhanced access trail	

63

0

XY01

(see Section 3.8)

NNR trail (not accessible)

Wayfinding signage (primary)

(XY02) Proposal reference (new/

Connecting path (not accessible)

Wayfinding signage (secondary)

Proposal reference (renewal or

enhancement of infrastructure)

substantially altered infrastructure)

STROOD

A2

(CA05)

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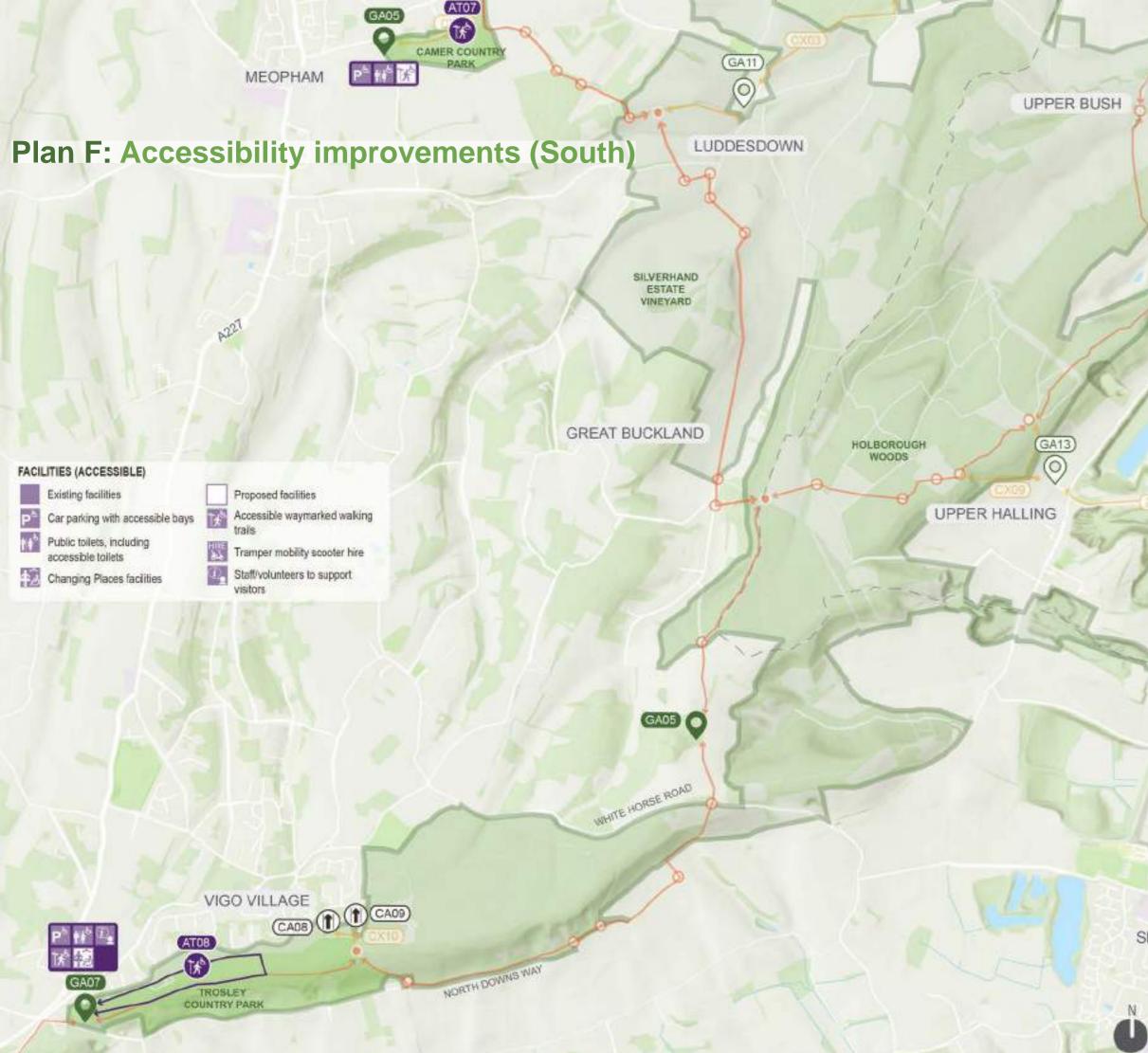
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AT06

G004



BLUE LAKE

SNODLAND

HALLING	2311
GA12	
Ţ	115
KEY	
	Study area
	Railway line
1	Train station
. 0	Hop-on hop-off bus
7-0	Existing gateways
Ò	Proposed gateways
Ó	Community access point
37	Accessibility improvements (existing path/track)
	Accessibility improvements (new substantially altered path/track)
6	Easy access trail (see Section 3.
6	Enhanced access trail (see Section 3.8)
S. 2 + 1	NNR trail (not accessible)
7	Connecting path (not accessible
•	Wayfinding signage (primary)
0	Wayfinding signage (secondary)
6700	Proposal reference (renewal or enhancement of infrastructure)
(XY02)	Proposal reference (new/ substantially altered infrastructur
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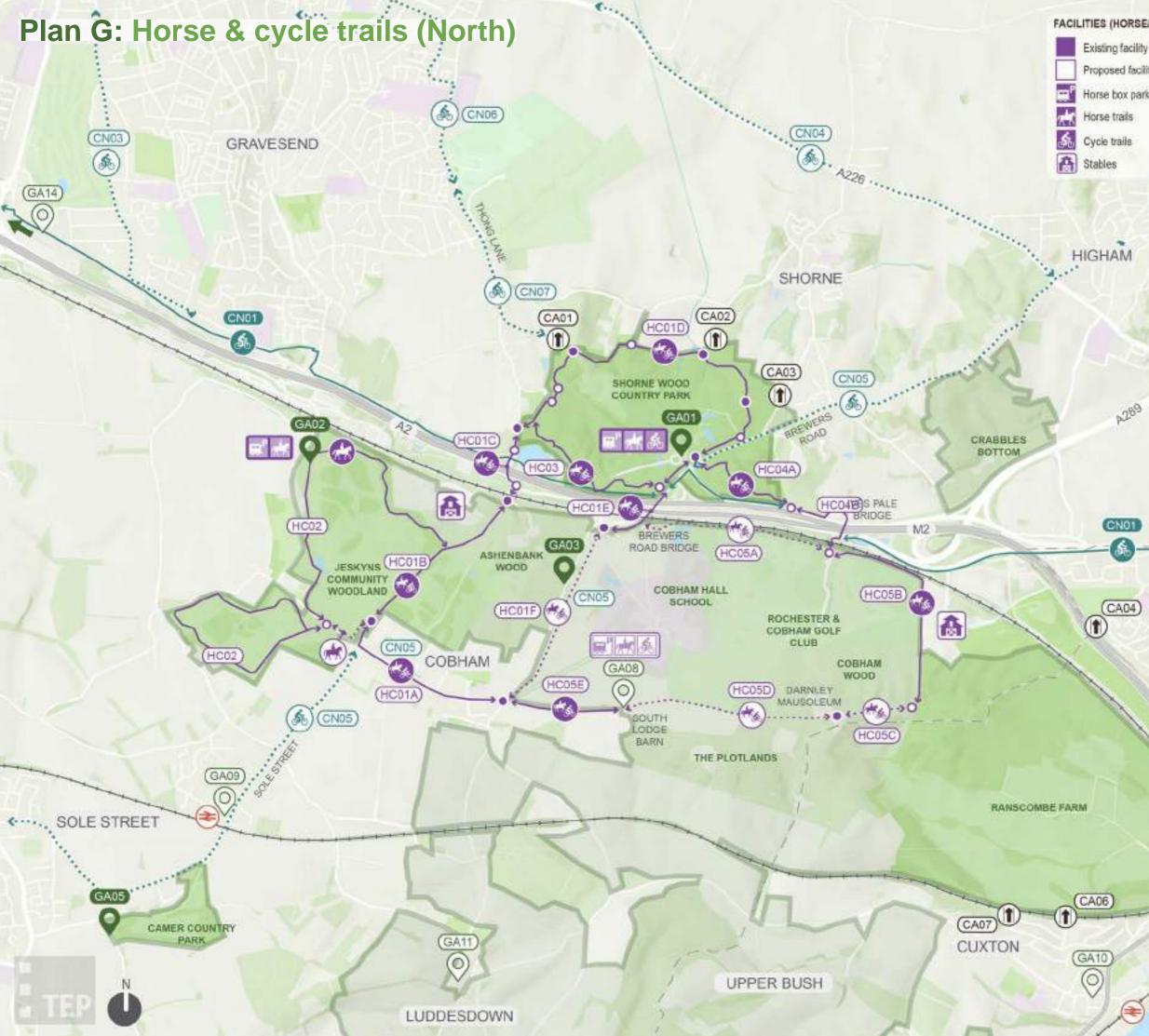
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FACILITIES (HORSE/CYCLE)

- Proposed facility
- Horse box parking

KEY

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XY01

(XY02)

- Study area
- Here Railway line
- (Reference to Train station
 - Existing gateways
 - Proposed gateways
 - Community access point
 - Existing cycle route
- ***** Proposed cycle route
- Cycle and/or horse trail (existing path/track)
 - Cycle and/or horse trail (new/substantially altered path/track)
 - Wayfinding signage (primary)
 - Wayfinding signage (secondary)
 - Proposal reference (renewal or enhancement of infrastructure) Proposal reference (new/ substantially altered infrastructure)

STROOD

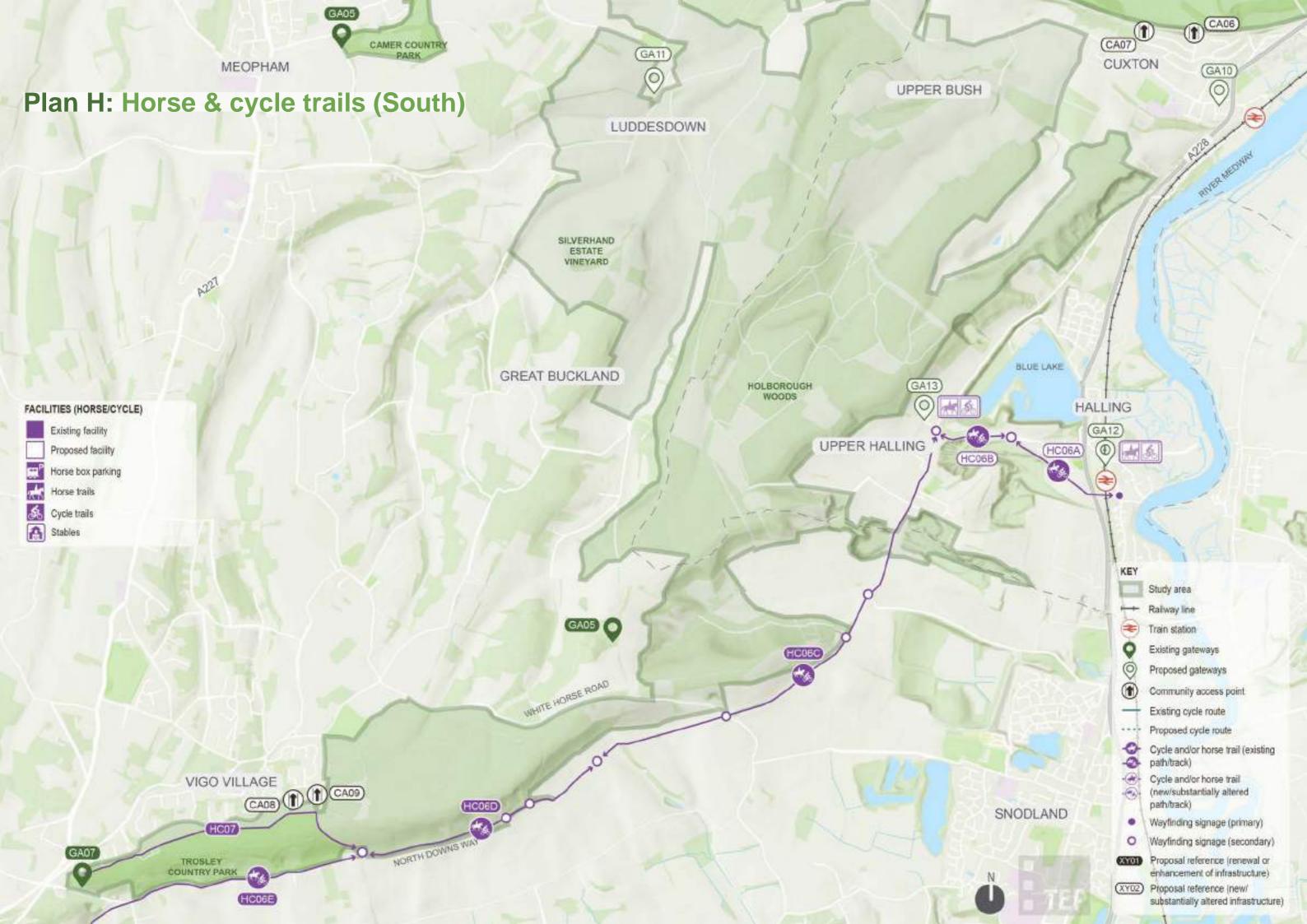
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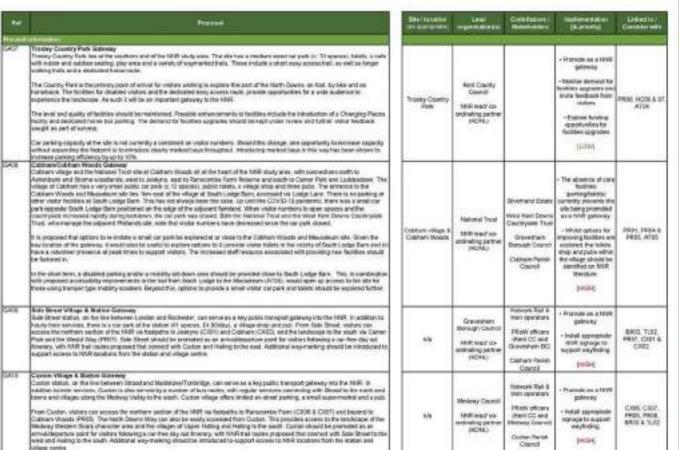
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4.3 Proposal tables

The tables below provide summary information for each of the identified community engagement and visitor access proposals.



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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

MARCH 2025

								(Contr	ibutio	n to ot	ojectiv	es/go	bals		
Ref	Action	Description / Justification	Potential Audience	Site / Location (as appropriate)	Lead Organisation	Contributors	Increase awareness of the NNR	Reduce the barriers for under-	Increase the range of audiences	ocial b	awarenes	Develop an engaging events and	activities programme Contribute to improved health and wellheing	wentering Increase nature connectedness	Increase the skills and capacity of the partnership	Outline Cost
	ch and Structured Activities									-						
OS01	and deliver community engagement and outreach	There is currently limited capacity across partner organisations and no dedicated role to co-ordinate across the partnership	All but with a focus on under represented groups	Urban communities inc 'areas of focus' and local area	Natural England / KDNL	/ All partners										£40 - £50k pa inc on costs (based on 1.0 FTE)
OS02	Deliver a programme of outreach work to encourage and support visits to the countryside.	Build upon the learning form Putting Down Routes project and engagement activity in Gravesham (Green Community Hubs).	Under-represented groups including: disabled people, those with learning difficulties, people who speak English as a second language / do not speak English. See target audiences Section 3.3.	Urban communities inc 'areas of focus' and local area. SWCP as a gateway.	Community Engagement Officer/ KCC	Medway Diversity Forum, bemix (social enterprise supporting people with learning difficulties)	•							•		Outreach and supported visit to SWCP : 5 x 2 sessions with a Ranger Outreach work through a charity hub to discuss/promote the NNR, followed by a supported visit. 10 x £200 = £2000.
OS03	Establish a Green Community Champions programme	Work with existing community groups and representatives (including friends groups / Green Spaces Networks) and recruit new volunteers to support local people with accessing the countryside. A Community Organising approach could harness local knowledge and help build confidence, local skills and capacity in a sustainable way. Link to Green Community Hubs.	Local communities from urban areas of Gravesham and Medway	Urban communities inc 'areas of focus' and local area	Community Engagement Officer / KDNL (?)	Other partners	•			•				•	•	£10k pa for training and support
OS04	Establish a Junior Green Champions programme	Establish a network of young people that would work with their peers to co-ordinate and help facilitate access to the countryside. Linked to Green Community Champions programme. Potential to link to national movements for Young Rewilders.	Local communities from urban areas of Gravesham and Medway	Urban communities inc 'areas of focus' and local area	Community Engagement Officer / KDNL (?)		•			•				•	•	Included above
OS05		Use existing models to increase participation from under represented groups and target audiences. Seek additional funding to expand / roll out further.	Under represented groups, particularly those within 'areas of focus'	Urban communities inc 'areas of focus' and local area. Gravesham and Medway green spaces	Gravesham / Medway Councils / CCGs	Other partners										Staff time
OS06	Develop Health Walks and wellbeing programmes	A range of accessible health walks and other wellbeing programmes.	Under represented groups, particularly those within 'areas of focus'	Urban communities inc 'areas of focus' and local area. SWCP as a gateway.	Community Engagement Officer / KCC	Local providers / businesses										£10k pa depending on scale. SWCP : Proposed wellbeing walk for adults over 10 weeks at both Trosley and Shorne. Cost per session £200 x 20 = £4000. Also 'quieter sessions' for children with hammocks/pillows/crafts and serenity. 3x sessions @ £200 + £300 materials = £900. Health and wellbeing engagement sessions with adults 3x sessions @ £200 + £300 materials = £900.

									Cont	ributi	on to	obje	ctive	s/goa	als		
Ref	Action	Description / Justification	Potential Audience	Site / Location (as appropriate)	Lead Organisation	Contributors	Increase awareness of the NNR	Reduce the barriers for under-	represented groups Increase the range of audiences	Reduce anti-social behaviour	Increase awareness of the opps for volunteer participation	ne range of	n engaging event orogramme	Contribute to improved health and wellbeing	Increase nature connectedness	Increase the skills and capacity of the partnership	Outline Cost
		To remove cultural and other barriers associated with walking activities. Recommendation from initial scoping report and supported by project partners and good practice review.	Women particularly those within 'areas of focus' and those where cultural barriers may otherwise limit participation.	Urban communities inc 'areas of focus' and local area	Gravesham Council / KCC - Others	Other partners							•				Staff time / £1k for expenses
	specialist audiences	Audiences with special interests in particular subjects - community, hobby, professional and academic audiences across wildlife and nature / heritage / archaeology / public health etc	Specialist audiences	Urban communities inc 'areas of focus' and local area	All partners	Other partners							•		•		Allow £1k pa for expenses
OS09		To engage more fully with local landowners, explore opportunities for joint working and to secure external funding. Deliver at a landscape scale and exploit economies of scale. Budget for introducing NNR events - one for landowners, one for businesses - repeated annually with specific channels for them to bring ideas/ issues proposals to the staff member. The Chalk to Coast project plans to develop a landscape corridor from the NNR to the Isle of Grain and around the North Downs to the Isle of Sheppey. This is essentially a super-cluster combining the North Kent Downs and Medway Gap, Hoo Peninsula and Swale Farm clusters. It may offer opportunities for wider outreach.	Local landowners and neighbours	Local landowners	Community Engagement Officer / KDNL (?)	Other partners							•		•		Staff time & £2k pa
OS10		Work with local businesses to support and promote commercial activity that improves the visitor offer and boosts the local economy. Could include micro-business providing events / activities and services. Budget for Introducing NNR events - one for landowners one for businesses - repeated annually with specific channels for them to bring ideas/ issues proposals to the staff member.	Local businesses (rural and urban) linked to the visitor economy	Urban communities inc 'areas of focus' and local area	Community Engagement Officer / KDNL (?)	Other partners							•			•	Staff time & £2k pa
Events	and Activities																
			All audiences (with targeted outreach)	Shorne Woods Country Park & others	Natural England / KDNL / KCC	Other partners									•		£10k pa for training and support
	across partnership sites for the	National publicity opportunity. Well established programmes of similar activity at other multi-site NNRs as identified in the Good Practice Review.	All audiences (with targeted outreach)	Shorne Woods Country Park & others	Natural England / KDNL / KCC	Other partners							•		•		£10k pa
			All audiences (with targeted outreach)	Shorne Woods Country Park & others	KCC / KDNL	Other partners							•				£5k pa

								С	ontri	bution	to ob	jectiv	/es/go	oals		
Ref	Action	Description / Justification	Potential Audience	Site / Location (as appropriate)	Lead Organisation	Contributors	Increase awareness of the NNR	Reduce the barriers for under- represented aroups	ncrease the range of audiences	Reduce anti-social behaviour Increase awareness of the opps for	volunteer participation Broadon the range of volunteers	Develop an engaging events and	activities programme Contribute to improved health and	lature connectedness	ncrease the skills and capacity of he partnership	Outline Cost
EA04	Develop a programme of family friendly activities throughout the year.	Site specific events tailored to the site to attract less confident visitors to the countryside. Could include seasonal events (Easter / Autumn / Halloween / Christmas and New Year) and events linked to national days (National Apple Day (and links to hops / vineyards), Big Garden Bird Watch, the Big Draw etc).	Family audiences including those within 'areas of focus'	Shorne Woods Country Park / Jeskyns Community Woodland / Silverhand Estate	Community Engagement Officer / KDNL (?)	Other partners	•									£25k pa nominal budget for external providers
EA05	Arts and Cultural events programme		Family audiences including those within 'areas of focus'	Shorne Woods Country Park / Jeskyns Community Woodland / Silverhand Estate	Community Engagement Officer / KDNL (?)	Other partners	•	•	•	•				•		£10k pa (Subject to external funding - ACE)
EA06			Family audiences including those within 'areas of focus'	Shorne Woods Country Park / Jeskyns Community Woodland / Silverhand Estate	Community Engagement Officer / KDNL (?)	Other partners	•	•	•					•		£10k pa
EA07	Develop a programme of activities as part of the Kent Walking Festival / Kent Goes Wild	including the Heart of Kent Walking Festival	All audiences including core audiences (with targeted outreach)	Shorne Woods Country Park / Jeskyns Community Woodland / Ranscombe Farm / Silverhand Estate	Community Engagement Officer / KDNL (?)	Other partners	•	•	•					•		£10k pa
EA08		extended / enhanced Darnley Trail and other	All audiences including core audiences (with targeted outreach)	Potentially all sites	Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator / KDNL (?)	Other partners	•	•	•					•		£2k training / expenses
Educa	ation & Learning		·			·										
	Link with KCC Greener Schools Initiative		Gravesham and Medway schools participating in Greener Schools in Kent	Shorne Woods Country Park / Jeskyns Community Woodland / Ranscombe Farm / Silverhand Estate	Community Engagement Officer	Other partners	•	•	•					•		Income generating
EL02	Secure additional funding to increase the capacity of the Education Officer at Shorne Woods Country Park	The current role is 0.6 FTE and was previously 1.0 FTE. There is potential demand for increased education programmes and to deliver training to schools, education providers and other partners to increase the use of the NNR sites for staff-led and self-led visits.	Local schools in Gravesham and Medway, particularly those in 'areas of focus'	Shorne Woods Country Park	KCC / Education Officer	Other partners		•	•					•		Approx £18k pa inc on costs. Potential to offset cost through income generation.

								C	ontri	butic	on to o	objec
Ref	Action	Description / Justification	Potential Audience	Site / Location (as appropriate)	Lead Organisation	Contributors	ncrease awareness of the NNR	Reduce the barriers for under-	increase the range of audiences	Reduce anti-social behaviour	Increase awareness of the opps for volunteer participation	Broaden the range of volunteers
EL03	Peer based support to increase skills and capacity for formal education / schools visits	Education programme at Shorne Woods CP is successful and includes staff led visits and Forest Schools training. Opportunities to upskill other partners, share learning and develop the offer across the partnership. To include Early Years through to KS1/2 (and KS3/4?)	Local schools in Gravesham and Medway, particularly those in 'areas of focus'	Shorne Woods Country Park	KCC / Community Engagement Officer	Forestry England, Plantlife & Other partners						
EL04	Explore the opportunities to connect with Homeschool networks and support visits	Opportunities to develop materials to promote and support self-led visits.	Homeschool networks in Gravesham and Medway	Shorne Woods Country Park / Jeskyns Community Woodland / Ranscombe Farm / Silverhand Estate	Community Engagement Officer	Other partners						
EL05	Build links with colleges and education providers offering land based courses and 'green jobs'	Opportunities for work based learning / traineeships and apprenticeships. Early careers experience is important in developing skills of those entering the sector.	Local and Kent based colleges and training providers (inc Hadlow College, Mid Kent College)	Shorne Woods Country Park / Jeskyns Community Woodland / Ranscombe Farm / Silverhand Estate / Ashenbank Wood / Cobham Woods	Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners			•			
EL06	Higher Education learning programme	Research and sharing the learning from developing and managing the North Kent NNR as part of the national NNR cohort feeding into annual HE Conference (May / June). Where appropriate develop links with HE institutions interested in research, experimentation and innovation, and monitoring opportunities within the NNR. Explore opportunities for Citizen Science projects within the NNR.		All sites	Natural England /	Other partners						
EL07	Build links with U3A groups within North Kent	Opportunities to engage with U3A groups in north Kent and with audiences that are likely to have an interest in the natural environment.	U3A Kent Network	Shorne Woods Country Park / Jeskyns Community Woodland / Ranscombe Farm / Silverhand Estate / Ashenbank Wood / Cobham Woods	Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners			•			
EL08	and materials that tells the story of climate change and how sites are	Raise awareness of wider environmental issues and biodiversity to increase understanding, leading to more people valuing the environment and taking action. Encourage steps towards giving time and volunteering.		Shorne Woods Country Park / Jeskyns Community Woodland / Ranscombe Farm / Silverhand Estate / Ashenbank Wood / Cobham Woods	Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners			•			

ctive	s/g	08	lls			
Develop an engaging events and activities programme	Contribute to improved health and	wellbeing	Increase nature connectedness	Increase the skills and capacity of	the partnership	Outline Cost
						Staff time
			•			
						£5k pa
			•			
						Staff time
						Staff time
						Staff time
						£5k pa
			•			

Community Engagement Implementation Plan (FINAL MAR25)

_								C	ontri	butio	on to	obje	ctive	s/goa	als	
Ref	Action	Description / Justification	Potential Audience	Site / Location (as appropriate)	Lead Organisation	Contributors	Increase awareness of the NNR	Reduce the barriers for under- represented groups	Increase the range of audiences	Reduce anti-social behaviour	Increase awareness of the opps for volunteer participation	Broaden the range of volunteers	Develop an engaging events and activities programme	Contribute to improved health and wellbeing	nnectedness	Increase the skills and capacity of the partnership
	eer Participation							1	1	1	1	1	, ,			
VP01	Develop a shared platform across the partnership to promote volunteering and volunteer opportunities	More effective communication with potential audiences offering a greater range of volunteer opportunities.	All audiences including core audiences (with targeted outreach)	All sites	Volunteer Co- ordinator	Kent Volunteer Partnership		•	•		•	•		•		
VP02	Develop a shared volunteer registration process to streamline volunteer recruitment	Single point of contact for potential volunteers. Consistent data collection and compliance / approaches to GDPR.	All audiences including core audiences (with targeted outreach)	All sites	Volunteer Co- ordinator	Kent Volunteer Partnership		•	•						•	
VP03	Create a new partnership-wide Volunteer Co-ordinator role	There is currently a lack of capacity and no role to co-ordinate volunteer activity across the partnership.	All audiences	All sites	Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners		•	•		•				•	
VP04	Develop an innovative volunteer programme that broadens the range of opportunities for involvement	Develop flexible opportunities such as one-off and family volunteering that widen participation and complement other existing structures. Also include research, wildlife recording, visitor welcome and engagement tasks (inc social media). A barrier to increasing the volunteer is staff working patterns which are predominantly Mon - Fri. Consider opportunities for Volunteering from Home - monitoring / editing / recording e.g presence for raptors and others from Silverhand Estate cameras on wildlife towers.	All audiences including core audiences (with targeted outreach). Young people and family audiences.	All sites	Volunteer Co- ordinator	Silverhand Estate		•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
VP05	Develop a Volunteer Trail Wardens programme	To proactively monitor access routes, report condition / damage and incidents (including ASB) and provide a greater presence across the access routes. Link to or deliver as part of the existing KCC Countryside Access Wardens programme.	Local communities & those from urban areas of Gravesham and Medway	All sites	Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners			•	•	•	•		•	•	•
VP06	Develop opportunities for volunteers to participate in heritage research and other heritage activities (including archaeology)	Recommendation from Heritage Strategy.	Local communities & those from urban areas of Gravesham and Medway	All sites	Volunteer Co- ordinator	Shorne Woods Archaeology Group (SWAG)			•		•	•		•	•	
VP07	Explore the opportunities for developing corporate volunteering and promoting this offer across the partnership.	Corporate volunteering is working well for Elmley NNR, supported by Projects for Nature - a platform connecting business with nature recovery projects across England. Silverhand Estate are thinking about entering this area and creating a brochure outlining their 'offer'.	Local businesses with commitment to CSR	All sites	Volunteer Co- ordinator	Silverhand Estate			•		•	•		•	•	
Measu	ring Success															
MS01	Establish a Community Engagement Working Group to co- ordinate, plan and monitor progress.	Establish a new structure to co-ordinate activity relating to community engagement. To be established within the wider governance model for the NNR. Any working group should be constituted to include 'visitor voices'.	N/A	All sites	Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners										

Outline Cost £25k set up cost + £5k maintenance pa Included above £40 - £50k pa inc on costs (based on 1.0 FTE) Staff time & allow £10K pa for additional staffing cover £5k pa training and expenses Staff time £10k set up & then income generating Staff time

								Co	ntribu	ution t	o obj	ectiv	es/go	als		
Ref	Action	Description / Justification	Potential Audience	Site / Location (as appropriate)	Lead Organisation	Contributors	ncrease awareness of the NNR	Reduce the barriers for under- epresented groups	the range	uce anti- ease awa	volunteer participation Broaden the range of volunteers	velop an engaging e	Contribute to improved health and vellbeing	ncrease nature connectedness	Increase the skills and capacity of the partnership	Outline Cost
MS02	Develop processes to monitor visitor numbers and visitor profile	There is currently limited data about visitor numbers and the profile of visitors across the NNR sites. Opportunity to use new approaches such as Active Xchange.	N/A		Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners									•	Staff time / external evaluation support
MS03	Monitor & record anti-social behaviour incidents and their location	Develop processes to work with local Police and identify hotspots and a targeted response.	N/A		Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners									•	Staff time
		Monitor through web / social media data and visitor surveys.	N/A		Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners									•	Staff time / external evaluation support
MS05	Visitor satisfaction	Overall visitor satisfaction through visitor surveys.	N/A		Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners									•	Staff time / external evaluation support
MS06	Reduced barriers to accessing the North Kent NNR	Quantitative and qualitative data from outreach work and visits (visitor survey)	N/A		Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners									•	Staff time / external evaluation support
MS07	people volunteer their time	New volunteer management would allow collection of consistent data and reporting. Volunteer satisfaction could be recorded through an annual survey.	N/A		Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners									•	Staff time / external evaluation support
MS08		Visitors / event participants reporting greater connection with nature / valuing nature more and increase commitment to take action for nature.	N/A		Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners									•	Staff time / external evaluation support
MS09		Self reported physical health and wellbeing outcomes through events / programming.	N/A		Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners									•	Staff time / external evaluation support
MS10	Financial sustainability	Increased income through car parking charges, fees and charges, secondary spend and external funding to support ongoing revenue costs.	N/A		Community Engagement Officer / Volunteer Co- ordinator	Other partners										Staff time / external evaluation support
MS11	Project Evaluation	Evaluation of the delivery of the Community Engagement and Access Strategy / Other workstreams.	External funding bodies		Evaluation consultant	Other partners									•	£10k pa (Establishing evaluation framework and tools, ongoing data gathering and annual reporting)

VISITOR ACCESS IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

MARCH 2025

									Cont	ributio	on to d	objecti	ives	
Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ase number of	t d	Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	Support better access for all	wayfinding	a safe and we hent for visito	Promote connections beyond the NNR Protect sensitive sites &	features Conserve landscape character & heritage
Pre-visit	information													
PV01	Your visit' page on the NNR website Prepare a 'Your visit' page on the NNR website. This should support visitors to choose the right locations and routes within the NNR based on their needs and interests. The page should cover: • Practical information, e.g. opening times and transport options • Facilities, e.g. toilets, food & drink offer etc. • Visitor experience, e.g. activities; who will be there; conditions and 'what to wear'; topography, character and 'what you'll see'. • Accessibility - parking, toilets/changing places, accessible/easy access trails, available support • NNR map - refer to PV02 below for details All information held on web pages should meet the Web Content Accessibility guidelines (WCAG). Any hard copy pre-visit information should be available on request in alternative formats such as large print, braille, plain language and audio	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Partners & web- developer	• Factor into NNR web- development [HIGH]	PV02 & 03			•	•	•	•	•	
PV02	NNR visitor map Prepare a visitor map(s) accessible from the 'Your visit' page of the NNR website. This should be viewable on the web page (potentially interactive) and also available for download as a pdf. The map should identify: • NNR area (core & affiliate sites) • Towns & villages • Public transport nodes, i.e. train, bus & NNR hop-on hop-off stops• Cycle network connections with the NNR • National Trails • Car parks • NNR gateway sites • NNR walking trails • Horse & cycle trails • Accessible trails • Landmarks (e.g. Cobham Mausoleum)	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Partners & web- developer	• Factor into NNR web- development [HIGH]	PV01 & 03			•	•	•	•		
PV03	NNR promotion Promote the NNR within literature and web content for Kent Downs National Landscape, National Cycle Network (NCN) routes, National Trails, Visit Kent etc.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	National Trails, Sustrans, Visit Kent	Prepare standard text and graphic content to support promotion [HIGH]	PV01 & 02							•	

							Ca	ontributi	ion to	objectives		
Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	Increase number of gateway sites & improve community Support & promote car-free visits	ocations ort better	Support wayfinding	d wel isitor ons t	Protect sensitive sites & features Conserve landscape character &	
	s (GA) (refer to Proposals Plan C)											
	Shorne Woods Country Park Gateway Shorne Woods Country Park has a large car park (259 spaces), toilets, a varied food & drink offer, indoor and outdoor seating, play areas and a variety of waymarked trails. There is a focus on making the site as accessible as possible, with accessible toilets, a changing places facility, inclusive playground, 2 miles of waymarked easy access trails, RADAR key operated mobility gates and tramper mobility scooter hire. Shorne Woods Country Park is and will remain a primary gateway to the landscape in this part of the NNR study area, catering for visitors with a variety of interests and needs. The breadth and quality of facilities should be maintained. Opportunities to expand parking provision have been explored by Kent County Council previously, with all options ruled out. Currently, 206 of the 259 parking spaces are on loose gravel surfacing and are unmarked. One opportunity to increase capacity without expanding the footprint of the car park is to introduce marked bays throughout. Introducing marked bays in this way has been shown to increase parking efficiency by up to 10%. The demarcation of bays can be done in a number of ways. Options include maintaining the loose gravel surfacing and setting markers within it (Jeskyns overflow car park) or, if maintenance of the gravel surfacing becomes an issue over time, a hybrid system can be employed with asphalt access roads serving loose gravel bays. This system is used successfully at Bedgebury National Pinetum in Kent.	Shorne Woods Country Park	Kent County Council NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)		 Promote as an NNR gateway. Monitor car parking capacity post declaration and consider demarcation as an option to increase efficiency. [LOW] 	PR01, HC01, AT03		•		•		
GA02	Jeskyns Community Woodland Gateway Jeskyns Community Woodland has a large car park (c. 200 spaces), café with indoor and outdoor seating, accessible toilets, play areas and extensive well surfaced easy access trails. Jeskyns provides an important arrival point for visitors wishing to explore the landscape to the north of the NNR study area, with continuous footpath connections through to Ashenbank Wood and beyond. It will be a key gateway site for the NNR. Possible enhancements to consider include the introduction of a Changing Places facility and offering tramper mobility scooter hire. Additional facilities to support NNR volunteering and education opportunities could also be developed in time to support proposals set out in the Community Engagement strand of this Implementation Plan. Although not proposed as part of this strategy, Jeskyns Community Woodland is probably one of the few sites within the study area where limited expansion of existing car park facilities would be feasible. The demand for facilities upgrades should be kept under review and further visitor feedback sought as part of surveys.	Jeskyns Community Woodland	Forestry England NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Gravesham Borough Council	 Promote as a NNR gateway. Monitor demand for facilities upgrades and invite feedback from visitors. Explore funding opportunities for facilities upgrades. [LOW] 	PR02, HC02, AT02		•		•		
GA03	Ashenbank Wood Gateway The main visitor entrance to Ashenbank Woods is from a small car park (c. 12 spaces) accessed from Halfpence Lane. The car park is surfaced with crushed stone, bays are unmarked and there are no dedicated accessible bays. There are no toilets, no food and drink offer, or picnic facilities. This is in keeping with the tranquil setting and the lower visitor numbers compared to Shorne Woods and Jeskyns. Facilities could be improved by introducing a dedicated accessible bay within the car park and potentially a short accessible compacted gravel (no-dig) path to increase opportunities for all visitors to experience the beauty of the woodland. Minor enhancements to accessibility should be considered with complementary proposals to create a new non-segregated footpath/cycle/horse access path through the adjacent West Park (PR01G). Proposal PR01G also recommends the creation of a new controlled pedestrian crossing between Ashenbank Woods and West Park.	Ashenbank Wood	Woodland Trust NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Gravesham Borough Council	Promote as a NNR gateway. Address with proposal PR01G. [LOW]	PR01	•	•		•		

									Con	tributio	n to ot	ojectiv	res		
Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ncrease number of gateway ites & improve community	ort & promo	Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	Support better access for all	Support wayfinding Provide a safe and welcoming	nvironment for visitors romote connections bevond	tes 1	ape cl	eritage
GA04	Ranscombe Farm Gateway The main visitor entrance to the Ranscombe Farm Reserve is from a small car park (c. 10 spaces) accessed from Sundridge Hill (A228). The car park is surfaced with crushed stone, with parking bays marked with concrete kerbs. A steep footpath leads upslope from the car park to a timber kissing gate. Here there is an interpretation board introducing the reserve. Beyond the kissing gate the path continues up across an area of grassland towards the Planttife compound at the top of the slope. The compound includes a small building, two composting toilets, two grass parking bays (marked as accessible) and a fenced area surfaced with gravel. This is used for guest/event parking. The toilets are provided for staff, volunteers and guests, rather than the general public. There is no food and drink offer on site. This is in-keeping with the setting and current visitor numbers. As an important gateway to the east side of the candidate NNR, it would be desirable to (i) improve access for visitors with disabilities and families with young children, (ii) have a volunteer presence at peak times and (iii) enhance facilities to support education and volunteering. Enabling access to toilet facilities at certain times, and potentially also introducing an accessible composting toilet, would further strengthen the offer. The focus of the access improvements in this part of the NNR is on promoting car-free access, with better links to public transport, and improvements to paths and cycle routes. However, it would be desirable to see a small increase in car parking capacity at the site, with at least two fully accessible bays and potentially some parent and child provision. This would support new audiences to explore the reserve. There is insufficient space to support an expansion of the existing car park, with the A228 immediately to the south and	Ranscombe Farm Reserve	Plantlife NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Medway Council	Occupants of private properties within the reserve		PR05, PR06A, CX06			U L						
GA05	Camer Park Gateway Camer Park Gateway Camer Park Sits to the western side of the NNR study area, separated from the rest of the reserve by a band of agricultural fields. Access between Camer Park and the rest of the NNR is via public footpaths connecting to Sole Street and Cobham to the north, and Luddesdown to the south-west. The park has a small/medium size car park (c. 36 spaces), a kiosk offering hot and cold drinks and food, outdoor seating, accessible toilets and a play area. The park provides a useful gateway to the west of the study area, with connections to the north and south of the NNR. The car park surfacing is in poor condition and would benefit from renewal. The offer at the park could also be enhanced by the introduction of a paved accessible route to support year-round access for those using wheelchairs and carers with children in buggies (AT07). Camer Park should be promoted as a gateway to the NNR. With regards to infrastructure improvements, there are other areas of the study area where access improvements would likely have a greater impact, i.e. support connections between sites, rather than simply within the site.	Camer Park	Gravesham Borough Council NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)		Promote as a NNR gateway. Infrastructure improvements are a lower priority in the context of the NNR as a whole. [LOW]	PR07, CX01, CX02 & CX12	•			•	(•			
GA06	Holly Hill Gateway Holly Hill Woodland is located west of Halling. It sits just outside of the NNR study area, but provides access to the southern sections of the reserve via the North Downs Way. There is a small car park (c.12 spaces) accessed off Holly Hill, but no other facilities. Holly Hill should be promoted as a NNR gateway. No infrastructure improvements are proposed.	Holly Hill Woodland	Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)		Promote as a NNR gateway. No infrastruture improvements proposed [LOW]	PR06	•								_

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	e u	Apromote	Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	Support better access for all	vayfinding	I safe and we lent for visito	Promote connections beyond the NNR Protect consistive sites &	rrotect sensitive sites & features Conserve landscape character & heritage
GA07	Trosley Country Park Gateway Trosley Country Park lies at the southern end of the NNR study area. The site has a medium sized car park (c. 70 spaces), toilets, a cafe with indoor and outdoor seating, play area and a variety of waymarked trails. These include a short easy access trail, as well as longer walking trails and a dedicated horse route. The Country Park is the primary point of arrival for visitors wishing to explore this part of the North Downs on foot, by bike and on horseback. The facilities for disabled visitors and the dedicated easy access route, provide opportunities for a wide audience to experience the landscape. As such it will be an important gateway to the NNR. The level and quality of facilities should be maintained. Possible enhancements to facilities include the introduction of a Changing Places facility and dedicated horse box parking. The demand for facilities upgrades should be kept under review and further visitor feedback sought as part of surveys. Car parking capacity at the site is not currently a constraint on visitor numbers. Should this change, one opportunity to increase capacity without expanding the footprint is to introduce clearly marked bays throughout. Introducing marked bays in this way has been shown to increase parking efficiency by up to 10%.	Trosley Country Park	Kent County Council NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)		 Promote as a NNR gateway Monitor demand for facilities upgrades and invite feedback from visitors Explore funding opportunities for facilities upgrades [LOW] 	PR06, HC06 & 07, AT08				•			•	
GA08	Cobham/Cobham Woods Gateway Cobham village and the National Trust site at Cobham Woods sit at the heart of the NNR study area, with connections north to Ashenbank and Shorne woodlands, west to Jeskyns, east to Ranscombe Farm Reserve and south to Camer Park and Luddesdown. The village of Cobham has a very small public car park (c.12 spaces), public toilets, a village shop and three pubs. The entrance to the Coham Woods and Mausoleum site lies 1km east of the village at South Lodge Barn, accessed via Lodge Lane. There is no parking or other visitor facilities at South Lodge Barn. This has not always been the case. Up until the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a small car park opposite South Lodge Barn positioned on the edge of the adjacent farmland. When visitor numbers to open spaces and the countryside increased rapidly during lockdown, the car park was closed. Both the National Trust and the West Kent Downs Countryside Trust, who manage the adjacent Plotlands site, note that visitor numbers have decreased since the car park closed. It is proposed that options to re-instate a small car park be explored at or close to the Cobham Woods and Mausoleum site. Given its key location, it would also be useful to explore options to (i) provide visitor toilets in the vicinity of South Lodge Barn and (ii) have a volunteer presence at peak times to support visitors. The increased staff resource associated with providing new facilities should be factored in. In the short-term, a disabled parking and/or a mobility set-down area should be provided close to South Lodge Barn. This, in combination with proposed accessibility improvement	Cobham village & Cobham Woods	National Trust NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Silverhand Estate West Kent Downs Countryside Trust Gravesham Borough Council Cobham Parish Council		PR01, PR04 &)		•		•		
GA09	Sole Street Village & Station Gateway Sole Street station, on the line between London and Rochester, can serve as a key public transport gateway into the NNR. In addition to hourly train services, there is a car park at the station (61 spaces, £4.90/day), a village shop and pub. From Sole Street, visitors can access the northern section of the NNR via footpaths to Jeskyns (CX01) and Cobham (CX02), and the landscape to the south via Camer Park and the Weald Way (PR07). Sole Street should be promoted as an arrival/departure point for visitors following a car-free day out itinerary, with NNR trail routes proposed that connect with Cuxton and Halling to the east. Additional way-marking should be introduced to support access to NNR locations from the station and village centre.	n/a	Gravesham Borough Council NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Network Rail, train operators & Community Rail Partnerships Kent CC PRoW officers Cobham Parish Council	Promote as a NNR gateway. Install appropriate NNR signage to support wayfinding. [HIGH]	BR03, TL02, PR07, CX01 & CX02,						•		
GA10	Cuxton Village & Station Gateway Cuxton station, on the line between Strood and Maidstone/Tonbridge, can serve as a key public transport gateway into the NNR. In addition to train services, Cuxton is also served by a number of bus routes, with regular services connecting with Strood to the north and towns and villages along the Medway Valley to the south. Cuxton village offers limited on-street parking, a small super-market and a pub. From Cuxton, visitors can access the northern section of the NNR via footpaths to Ranscombe Farm (CX06 & CX07) and beyond to Cobham Woods (PR05). The North Downs Way can also be easily accessed from Cuxton. This provides access to the landscape of the Medway Western Scarp character area and the villages of Upper Halling and Halling to the south. Cuxton should be promoted as an arrival/departure point for visitors following a car-free day out itinerary, with NNR trail routes proposed that connect with Sole Street to the west and Halling to the south. Additional way-marking should be introduced to support access to NNR locations from the station and village centre.	n/a	Medway Council NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Network Rail & train operators PRoW officers (Kent CC and Medway Council) Cuxton Parish Council	 Promote as a NNR gateway. Install appropriate signage to support wayfinding. [HIGH] 	CX06, CX07, PR05, PR06, BR03 & TL02						•		

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ncrease number of gateway sites & improve community	ort & promote	visitors to choose tions & routes	Support better access for all Support wayfinding	a safe and we nent for visito	Promote connections beyond the NNR Protect sensitive sites & features Conserve landscape character & heritage
GA11	Silverhand Estate, Luddesdown Gateway Silverhand Estate own a shop and pub in the village of Luddesown and offer a range of visitor tours and wildlife-focussed walks and talks (e.g. Orchid Walk & Talk, Wildflowers of Luddesdown, Butterfly ID for beginners, etc). Parking is available at the site for visitors to the estate and pub, with designated accessible bays provided. Accessible toilets are also available. The Weald Way (PR07) provides access north to Camer Park and Sole Street, and south and east to Holly Hill Woodlands, Trosley Country Park and Halling. Silverhand Estate at Luddesdown should be identified in NNR literature as a gateway site, with signage and way-marking installed to introduce the NNR and support access to other locations across the reserve, e.g. Camer Park, Sole Street and Cobham to the north, Trosley Country Park to the south and Halling to the east.	Silverhand Estate	Silverhand Estate NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	PRoW officers (Kent CC) Luddesdown Parish Council	Promote as a NNR gateway. Install appropriate signage to support wayfinding. [MEDIUM]	PR07, CX03	•					
GA12	Halling Village & Station Gateway Halling station, on the line between Strood and Maidstone/Tonbridge, can serve as an important public transport gateway into the NNR. In addition to regular train services, Halling is also served by a number of bus routes, with regular services connecting with Strood to the north and towns and villages along the Medway Valley to the south. Halling village offers limited on-street parking, a village shop, several pubs and a kiosk-style cafe (mornings only). From Halling, visitors can access the North Downs Way via footpaths up to and beyond Upper Halling (GA13). Visitors can then route north to Cuxton (proposed car-free itinerary route), south to Holly Hill Woods and Trosley Country Park, or west via Great Buckland and the Weald Way to Luddesdown, Camer Park and Sole Street (proposed car-free itinerary route). Additional way-marking should be introduced to support way-finding from Halling village and station to the NNR (CX08 & CX09).	n/a	Medway Council NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Network Rail & train operators PRoW officers (Kent CC and Medway Council) Halling Parish Council	 Promote as a NNR gateway. Install appropriate signage to support wayfinding. [HIGH] 	GA013, PR06, CX08, CX09	•	•				
GA13	Upper Halling (Moot Brew Co. & Court Farm) Gateway Court Farm in the village of Upper Halling is home to a collection of private food and drink businesses, including a farm shop (Court Farm Butchery & Country Larder), a brewery and taproom (Moot Brew Co) and a pizza restaurant (LUI-Gs Pizza). The venue has a medium sized car park (c.40 spaces) and toilets. The Moot Brew Co's website promotes access to the North Kent Downs as follows: "Walk - we're situated in the picturesque North Kent Downs, passed by both the North Downs Way and the Pilgrims Way. A perfect spot for walkers. We have ample parking available." The presence of core facilities, i.e. parking, toilets and a food & drink offer, make this an ideal gateway location on the western side of the NNR study area. The NNR lead/ co-ordinating partner should engage the businesses at Court Farm to explore whether they would be happy to be promoted as a gateway location.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Moot Brew Co. Court Farm Butchery & Country Larder LUI-G's Pizza	Engage businesses at Court Farm. Subject to their agreement, promote as a NNR gateway. [MEDIUM]	GA012, PR06, PR08, PR09	•	•				
GA14	Cyclopark, Gravesend Gateway Cyclopark is a multi-activity venue on the southern edge of Gravesend, with extensive cycling facilities. It is operated by the Cyclopark Charity on behalf of Kent County Council. In addition to the leisure activities, Cyclopark has a large car park (c.150 spaces; £1.90/ <4hrs and £7.00/ all day), toilets and a cafe. It is located on the NCN177 route, which connects through to Shorne Woods. Bike hire is available, but this is only for on-site use. In combination with proposals for a hop-on hop-off bus service and a better connected network of cycle trails (CB01 & HC01-05), Cyclopark could be promoted as a gateway to the NNR, both for those seeking a car-free day out using the hop-on hop-off bus service (BR03), or those parking at the venue and cycling into and around the reserve. The NNR lead/ co-ordinating partner should engage with the Cyclopark Charity and Kent County Council to explore the potential of promoting the venue as a gateway into the reserve. This should form part of a co-ordinated package of measures to support active travel (CN01-07) and the use of public/shared transport (BR01-03 & TL01-02).	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Cyclopark Charity Kent County Council	 Engage Cyclopark Charity and Kent County Council. Develop as part of a package of measures to support active travel and the use of public/shared transport. [MEDIUM] 		•	•			•	

Ref Commun	Proposal nity Access (CA) (see Proposals Plan C)	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	Increase number of gateway sites & immrove community	Support & promote car-free visits	oort visitors to choose the locations & routes	Support better access for all	: wayfinding a safa and walcomind	sate and welcoming ent for visitors	beyond &	landscape ch
CA01	Thong Lane Community Access Two footpaths (NS167 & NS170) meet at the north west corner of Shorne Woods Country Park. NS167 provides a direct connection to the park from properties on Thong Lane, and beyond that from the south-eastern edge of Gravesend. Currently, these routes and the access to Shorne Woods (CA01) are relatively low use, serving the immediate residential community on Thong Lane. However, as part of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) proposals, a new green bridge crossing is proposed as part of the re-routing of Thong Lane over the new highway. This would provide a more direct access from Gravesend. The proposals include for a new and improved bridleway access to Shorne Woods. Should these proposals progress, use of the route from Gravesend to this community access point would be expected to increase significantly. Complementary path and signage improvements through to Shorne Woods would be required. If the LTC proposals are not progressed, then the actions are to maintain the existing footpath network to provide unimpeded access to Shorne Woods and to provide appropriate NNR signage. If the LTC proposals do move forward, then more substantial infrastructure improvements may be required to ease the passage of people into the NNR.	Shorne Woods Country Park	Kent County Council - Highways, Country Parks & PRoW teams NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	National Highways LTC team Gravesham BC Shorne Parish Council	package of NNR signage works. • Infrastructure improvements required will vary depending on the LTC decision.	PR01, CN07	•	•						
CA02	Butchers Hill Lane Community Access This is one of two main points of access for those entering Shorne Woods from the village of Shorne. Access is via footpath NS167/167A, which connects Butchers Hill (junct. with Mill Hill Lane) in Shorne with the country park. The access is identified by a PRoW information board. The access is overgrown and in need of some management and improvement works. New signage identifying the NNR should be installed. As illustrated in Section 3.9 above, new signage should introduce both the NNR and Shorne Woods Country Park.	Shorne Woods Country Park	Kent County Council - Country Parks & PRoW teams NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Gravesham BC Shorne Parish Council	[MEDIUM] • Include within package of NNR signage works. • Undertake vegetation management works. [LOW]	PR01	•	•						
CA03	Woodlands Lane Community Access This is one of two main points of access for those entering Shorne Woods from the village of Shorne. Access to the country park is directly from Woodlands Lane. The access is identified by a horse stile and kissing gate. New signage identifying the NNR should be installed. As illustrated in Section 3.9 above, new signage should introduce both the NNR and Shorne Woods Country Park.	Shorne Woods Country Park	Kent County Council - Country Parks & PRoW teams NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Gravesham BC Shorne Parish Council	Include within package of NNR signage works. [LOW]	PR01	•	•						
CA04	Razorbill Close Community Access The access from Razorbill Close into Ranscombe Farm is well used by local residents, particularly dog walkers. Access to Ranscombe Farm is via an underpass beneath the M3 and a bridge over HS1. The entrance to the underpass is via a narrow squeeze between 2.0m high steel railings. Extensive graffit covers the walls of the underpass and obscures attempts to introduce a mural evoking the landscape beyond. Most of the underpass lights have been damaged. The land between the underpass and the bridge access over HS1 is privately owned. The woodland is of an even age and lacks character. Access through to Ranscombe Farm is via footpath NS183. This is partially obstructed in a number of places by large concrete blocks, which have been placed to prevent unauthorised vehicular access to the woodland. The bridge crossing over HS1 is framed by steel squeezes at both ends and flanked by high palisade security fencing. Once over the bridge the landscape opens out into the attractive mature woodlands of the northern section of the Ranscombe Farm Reserve. Even in the middle of the day, the access feels unsafe and uninviting. The fundamentals of the access layout and design, i.e. a long dark underpass, a section of privately owned and unmanaged woodland, and a bridge crossing framed by palisade security fencing, make achieving meaningful and long-lasting improvements incredibly challenging. Unauthorised vehicular access is clearly a significant issue, demonstrated by the fairly extreme measures employed to prevent access. These have a negative impact on the experience for all other users. Section 3.6 above provides examples of projects where challenging sites with safety concerns have been transformed. Community engagement in the design and installation of measures needs to be central to any improvements works. Public art combined with a nature conservation focus can be a useful tool for change. </td <td>Ranscombe Farm Reserve</td> <td>NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council & Medway Council PRoW teams</td> <td>Plantlife Local schools & community groups</td> <td> The designation/ launch of the NNR could provide a focal point for engagement activities. Explore funding streams to support improvements. Engage designers and engagement specialists with a proven track record. [HIGH] </td> <td>PR05, CX04</td> <td></td> <td>•</td> <td></td> <td>•</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td>	Ranscombe Farm Reserve	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council & Medway Council PRoW teams	Plantlife Local schools & community groups	 The designation/ launch of the NNR could provide a focal point for engagement activities. Explore funding streams to support improvements. Engage designers and engagement specialists with a proven track record. [HIGH] 	PR05, CX04		•		•				

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ncrease number of gateway ites & improve community	ote c	upport visitors to choose the ght locations & routes	Support better access for all	Support wayfinding Provide a safe and welcoming environment for visitors Promote connections beyond	nsitive sites &	Conserve landscape character &
:A05	Elgin Gardens Community Access The access from Elgin Gardens into Ransombe Farm is well used by local residents. Access to Ranscombe Farm is via two fully enclosed bridges over slip roads and two underpasses beneath the M3 and HS1. There are poor sightlines along the enclosed route, extensive graffiti and burnt out debris. As with the Razorbill Close access, the entry feels unsafe and uninviting at anytime of day, and the fundamentals of its layout make achieving meaningful and long-lasting improvements difficult. Proposals to improve this access should be progressed with those for CA04.	Ranscombe Farm Reserve	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council & Medway Council PRoW teams	Plantlife Local schools & community groups	• As per CA04 [HIGH]	PR05, CX05	<u> </u>		S I	•		5 D 5	
CA06	Whiteleaves Rise Community Access Ransombe Farm Reserve can be accessed under the railway from the top end of Whiteleaves Rise via footpath RS369. The access is well used by local residents. Access is via a narrow steel kissing gate (without RADAR key). The surfacing on both sides of the gate is uneven, with part of the frame of the kissing gate creating a step/trip hazard. The access has the potential to provide an attractive route into Ranscombe Farm for both local residents and those travelling to the NNR by train/bus. The installation of new accessible gate infrastructure (e.g. widened RADAR key operated gate), improved surfacing and new signage is proposed. As illustrated in Section 3.9 above, new signage should introduce both the NNR and Ransombe Farm Reserve.	Ranscombe Farm Reserve	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council & Medway Council PRoW teams	Network Rail	This is the most convenient route into Ranscombe Farm Reserve from Cuxton village and station. Include within package of NNR signage works. Undertake infrastructure improvements.	GA10, BR03, PR05, CX07	•	•		•	•		
CA07	Poplicans Road Community Access Ranscombe Farm Reserve can be accessed via a gated entry point from the end of Poplicans Road in Cuxton. This route also connects with the North Downs Way. The point of access to footpath RS324 is extremely defensive, requiring visitors to negotiate two steel fence squeezes and a narrow steel kissing gate (without RADAR key). This makes access difficult for all visitors and likely prohibits access for anyone in a wheelchair, with a buggy, or who has a disability or impairment. The access has the potential to provide an easy route into Ranscombe Farm or to the North Downs Way for both local residents and those travelling to the NNR by train/bus. The installation of new accessible gate infrastructure (e.g. widened RADAR key operated gate), improved surfacing and new signage is recommended. As illustrated in Section 3.9 above, new signage should introduce both the NNR and Ransombe Farm Reserve.	Ranscombe Farm Reserve	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council & Medway Council PRoW teams	Network Rail	[HIGH] • Include within package of NNR signage works. • Undertake infrastructure improvements. [MEDIUM]	GA10, BR03, PR05, PR06 CX07	•	•		•	•		
CA08	Erskine Road Community Access Footpath MR197A provides access to Trosley Country Park from Erskine Road in Vigo Village. NNR signage should be introduced. As illustrated in Section 3.9 above, new signage should introduce both the NNR and Trosley Country Park.	Trosley Country Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Country Parks team	Kent County Council Highways	Include within package of NNR signage works. [LOW]	CA09, PR06, CX10	•			•			
CA09	Commority Road Community Access Byway NS290 provides access to Trosley Country Park from Commority Road at the eastern end of Vigo Village. NNR signage should be introduced. As illustrated in Section 3.9 above, new signage should introduce both the NNR and Trosley Country Park.	Trosley Country Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council PRoW team	Kent County Council Country Parks team	• Include within package of NNR signage works. [LOW]	CA08, PR06, CX10	•			•			

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	Increase number of gateway sites & improve community	Support & promote car-free visits	Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	ort better	Support wayfinding Provide a safe and welcoming environment for visitors Promote connections beyond	trie NNK Protect sensitive sites & features	Conserve landscape character &
Cycle Ne CN01	twork (CN) (see Proposals Plan C) Promote National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 177			Crewell									
	National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 177 runs along the A2 corridor from Northfleet in the east to Strood in the west. It runs through the NNR, passing the main entrance to Shorne Woods Country Park. For the majority of its length, the route is along a dedicated cycle path. The only on-road section is just to the east Shorne Woods Country Park. Here, the route passes along Pale Park Lane and over the A2. NCN177 connects the urban areas of Gravesend and Strood/Rochester with the key NNR gateway site at Shorne Woods (GA01). It should be promoted as part of a package of active travel measures supporting access to the NNR. Proposals CN02 to CN07 below present opportunities to expand the cycle network locally, with improved connections between NCN177 and key locations to the north and south.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Sustrans	Gravesham Borough Council Medway Council Kent County Council	Promote as part of a package of active travel routes into the NNR. [HIGH]	CN02-07		•		•			
CN02	Promote NCN17 which connects NCN1 and Ranscombe Farm National Cycle Network (NCN) Route NCN17 connects NCN1, which runs through Rochester, with the Ranscombe Farm gateway (G004). It should be promoted as part of a package of active travel measures supporting access to the NNR.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Sustrans	Medway Council Kent County Council	Promote as part of a package of active travel routes into the NNR. [HIGH]	CN01 & C03-07		•		•			
CN03	LCWIP Route 3: Gravesend town centre to Singlewell (NCN177) The Gravesham Borough Council Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) (PJA, 2022) summarises the findings of the Council's LCWIP study. LCWIPs identify and prioritise investment in new infrastructure to support a greater number of people to make journeys on foot or by cycle. The Gravesham Borough Council LCWIP recommends infrastructure improvements to seven routes. One of the seven routes (Route 6) runs through the NNR study area. Three more run close to the study area, either connecting with existing routes that run into the NNR or getting close to the NNR, with the possibility of extension. Proposed LCWIP Route 3 would connect Gravesend Town Centre with Singlewell, where the route would join with NCN 177 (CN01). Progressing improvements along this route would open up a direct cycle route from Gravesend town centre to Shorne Woods Country Park. The LCWIP Route 3 proposal aligns with the aims of this strategy and, if progressed, should be promoted as part of the active travel network serving the NNR.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Gravesham Borough Council	Sustrans	The proposed route would enhance active travel options to the NNR. If progressed, it should be promoted as part of a package of active travel routes into the NNR.	CN01-02 & C04- 07		•		•			
CN04	LCWIP Route 5: Gravesend town centre to Higham Proposed LCWIP Route 5 would connect Gravesend Town Centre with Higham. On its own, the route does not provide access into the NNR. However, in combination with Route 6 (CN05 below) it could provide an alternative cycle connection to Shorne Woods Country Park. From an NNR perspective, proposals CN03 and CN06/CN07 would provide more direct connections into the NNR. LWCIP Route 5 would add to the active travel network as a whole and/or offer an alternative should one or both of CN03 or CN06/07 not be progressed. The LCWIP Route 5 proposal aligns with the aims of this strategy and, if progressed, should be promoted as part of the active travel network serving the NNR.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Gravesham Borough Council	Sustrans	[MEDIUM] • The proposed route would enhance active travel options to the NNR. • If progressed, it should be promoted as part of a package of active travel routes into the NNR.	CN01-03 & C05- 07		•		•			
CN05	LCWIP Route 6: Higham to Meopham Proposed LCWIP Route 6 would connect Higham and Meopham, running through the heart of the NNR. The route runs south from Higham to Shorne Woods Country Park via Peartree Lane/The Ridgeway/Brewers Road. From Shorne Woods the proposed route crosses the A2 and then progresses south along Halfpence Lane to Cobham. Visitor access proposal PR01G (below) recommends the introduction of a new non-segregated foot/cycle/horse track through West Park. If progressed, this would support delivery of LCWIP Route 6, providing a safer off-highway route to Cobham. From Cobham, the proposed route runs along Sole Street to Sole Street station and then on to Meopham via Camer Road. The LCWIP Route 6 proposal aligns with the aims of this strategy and, if progressed, should be promoted as part of the active travel network serving the NNR.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Gravesham Borough Council	Sustrans	[LOW] • The proposed route would enhance active travel options to the NNR. If progressed, it should be promoted as part of a package of active travel routes into the NNR.	CN01-04, C06-07, PR01		•		•			
CN06	LCWIP Route 7: Gravesend to Cascades leisure Centre Proposed LCWIP Route 7 connects Gravesend town centre with the Cascades Leisure Centre on the eastern edge of Gravesend. On its own, it does not provide access into the NNR study area. However, should the Lower Thames Crossing proposals be progressed, the opportunity may arise to extend the route south to connect with Shorne Woods (CA01). Refer to CN07 below for details.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Gravesham Borough Council	Sustrans	[MEDIUM] • The proposed route could enhance active travel options to the NNR in combination with elements of the LTC proposals. [LOW]			•		•			

									Cont	tribution	to objec	tives		
Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ncrease number of gateway sites & improve community	ò	Support visitors to choose the ight locations & routes	Support better access for all	oupport waymung Provide a safe and welcoming anvironment for visitors	Promote connections beyond the NNR	Protect sensitive sites & eatures Conserve landscape character &	voliserve ranuscape vna vvv
CN07	LCWIP Route 7 Extension: Cascades Leisure Centre to Shorne Woods CP (LCT) Based on the current highway network, any extension of proposed LCWIP Route 7 south to Shorne Woods would likely be entirely on highway and unsegregated. The Lower Thames Crossing proposals include for constructing a new green bridge which would route Thong Lane over the proposed new highway. The green bridge proposals allow for a 'new or improved bridleway' connection from just south of Cascades Leisure Centre to a point close to the north-west corner of Shorne Woods (CA01). If the LTC proposals progress, consideration should be given to extending LCWIP Route 7 south from the leisure centre to connect into the existing waymarked horse/cycle/pedestrian route around the outside of country park. This in turn could connect into a wider network of cycle paths within the NNR (see proposals HC01-07 below). If the LTC proposals are progressed, there may be opportunities to engage with National Highways to further enhance access to the benefit of the NNR.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Gravesham Borough Council National Highways	Sustrans	The planning decision deadline for the LTC proposals is currently set as 23rd May 2025. This proposal should be reviewed once a decision has been reached. [LOW]	CN01-06		•		•		ł		<u>, </u>

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	Increase number of gateway sites & improve community Support & promote car-free	ort visitors to	ocations ort better	Support wayfinding	i safe and we lent for visito	Promote connections beyond the NNR Protect sensitive sites &	/e landsc
	es & stops (BR) (see Proposals Plan C)												
BR01	Frequency of bus services Work with Councils and bus operators to explore if there is scope to increase the frequency of bus services at key locations within the NNR, particularly Shorne Woods Country Park main entrance (Brewers Road) and Cobham village (War memorial). Understanding the scope to increase the frequency of existing bus services should be a priority. Once this is understood, more informed decisions can be made on the routing/timetabling of the proposed hop-on hop-off bus service (BR03). The two proposals are not mutually exclusive, i.e. an increased frequency of existing bus services at key locations does not deliver all of the benefits that a dedicated hop-on hop-off service can bring, e.g. serving locations not on the existing bus network and connecting locations where existing journeys are long or awkward.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Councils, bus operators, partners	Progress engagement at the earliest opportunity. Should inform and complement proposal BR03 [HIGH]	BR02 & BR03							
BR02	Bus shelters Work with Councils and bus operators to provide bus shelters at key locations within the NNR. This should include consideration of locations on the hop-on hop-off bus route (BR03), which are not served by existing bus services. Locations are shown on Visitor Access Proposals Plan C.	Refer to Proposals Plan C	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Councils, bus operators, partners	Assess sites, prepare proposals, and explore funding opportunities. IMEDIUMI	BR01 & BR03							
BR03	NNR hop-on hop-off bus service Explore options for introducing a hop-on hop-off bus service serving the NNR at peak times. The service should be designed to address gaps in the public transport network and increase the possibilities for, and convienience of, car-free days out. The route should connect public transport nodes with NNR gateways. A circular route is proposed with a service from each stop at least every 90mins. An example timetable, based on Saturday morning drive times is set out below. Locations are shown on Visitor Access Proposals Plan C. The route starts and ends at Strood train station and alternates between transport nodes and NNR gateways. This avoids long journey times between pick-up and drop-off locations. The route also passes through Cobham village twice. Cobham village is at the heart of the NNR, with access to facilities and multiple trails. Strood train station (transport node) [10.00] Shorne Woods Country Park main entrance (NNR) [10.13] Cobham war memorial (NNR) [10.18] Jeskyns Community Woodland (NNR) [10.24] Gravesend train station (transport node) [10.55] Copcham war memorial (NNR) [11.01] Cuxtor village, Bush Road (NNR & transport node) [11.11] Ranscombe Farm (NNR) [11.14] Strood train station (transport node) [11.20] This route is provided as a guide. A more detailed route assessment, including further consideration of stops and connections with public transport services (e.g. train timetables) should be undertaken. The service should be accessible and include for the carriage of bikes and buggies.	Refer to Proposals Plan C	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Councils, bus operators, partners	Explore options for delivery and funding. Undertake a more detailed route assessment. [MEDIUM]	BR01 & BR02							

									Cont	ribution	n to obje	ectives
Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	Increase number of gateway sites & improve community	Support & promote car-free visits	Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	9	Support wayfinding Provide a safe and welcoming	environment for visitors Promote connections beyond the NNR Protect sensitive sites & features Conserve landscape character & heritage
Train lin TL01	es & stations (TL) (see Proposals Plan C) Work with stakeholders to improve accessibility at and near train stations serving the NNR Work with Network Rail, train operators, Councils, and Community Rail Partnerships to improve the accessibility at and near stations within the immediate vicinity of the NNR (i.e. Sole Street, Cuxton and Halling) and at key connecting stations (e.g. Strood and Rochester). None of Sole Street, Cuxton or Halling stations have accessible toilets or impaired mobility set-down areas. Sole Street and Halling stations only have step-free access to one platform. Cuxton station has step-free access to both platforms, but there are various obstacles to access on the approach along Station Road. Major infrastructure upgrades are unlikely in the near-term. However, small changes, particularly the removel of obstacles (e.g. providing drop kerbs, vegetation clearance along accessible routes and removing physical obstructions) can make a significant difference. It is also important to keep accessibility information up-to-date, so that users can be confident in the locations and routes they choose.	n/a	NNR Lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Network Rail, train operators, Community Rail Partnerships	Engage stakeholders and identify accessibility improvements. Ensure that accessibility infromation is kept up- to-date IMEDIUMI	PV01	•	•	•	•	•	,
TL02	Promote the NNR and provide wayfinding information at stations There are opportunities to promote visits to the NNR at nearby stations on the network (e.g. Strood, Rochester, Gravesend). Train stations are key points of arrival to the NNR. It is important that visitors are able to find their way easily to points of access into the reserve from arrival stations (i.e. Sole Street, Cuxton and Halling). Currently each of these stations has a map of the local area, which makes reference to the 'Kent Downs National Landscape' and identifies connecting footpaths and cycle routes. These could be updated to reference both the NNR and National Landscape and more clearly illustrate connections to NNR gateways and waymarked trails. It may also be appropriate to provide NNR specific information at stations, particularly during the first year after declaration (e.g. NNR summary information and a map).	n/a	NNR Lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Network Rail, train operators, Community Rail Partnerships	Engage stakeholders to improve information and signage at and in the immediate vicinity of train stations. [HIGH]		•	•	•		•	

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Ref	Proposal routes (PR) (see Proposals Plan C)	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	Increase number of gateway	improve c t & promo	Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	Support better access for all	Support wayfinding	Provide a safe and welcoming environment for visitors	Promote connections beyond the NNR	Protect sensitive sites & features Conserve landscape character &
R01	Cobham Village & Shorne Woods Loop Path This c. 7km loop trail routes visitors through the picturesque village of Cobham, the woodlands of Shorne Woods and the open parkland of West Park. Parking and comprehensive visitor facilities are available at Shorne Woods Country Park Gateway (GA01). Additional limited parking is also available at the Ashenbank Woods gateway (GA03). The village of Cobham has a shop, public toilets and three pubs to support visitors. In time, these facilities may also be supplemented by proposed gateway enhancements in the vicinity of the entrance to Cobham Wood (GA08). A section-by-section breakdown of the route and proposed infrastructure improvements is provided below. The majority of the proposed route is in place as either PRoW or established waymarked permissive paths. The only missing link within the proposed trail is through the top section of West Park (see PR01G). The proposed new path through West Park forms part of a number of access improvements and it is recommended that it is progressed as a priority. In advance of any works in West Park, the proposed loop path could either: (i) route along the eastern edge of Ashenbank Woods accessed from from the Brewers Road/Halfpence Lane roundabout or (ii) along the Darnley Trail from Shorne Woods through Brewers Wood and across the A2, connecting into proposed trail PR005 in Cobham Woods	Jeskyns Community Woodland Ashenbank Wood Shorne Woods Country Park West Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Country Parks, PRoW & Highways teams Gravesham Borough Council	Forestry England Woodland Trust	 The majority of the trail is in place. Completion of the trail and improvements along existing sections should be progressed as a priority. [HIGH] 	PR02-03, GA01 & 03, HC01, AT01		•		•	•	•	•	•
	 (see proposal HC04A-C). Section PR01A (The Street, Cobham): This section is along paved footpaths through the centre of Cobham. These are generally level and in good condition. The paths are narrow in places, which is the result of a combination of the historic layout of the village and the introduction of bollards to prevent rogue parking. Accessibility could be improved (see proposal AT01). Section PR01B (Byway NS311): This section is wide (>2m) and paved with a compacted aggregate (fine). It has become rutted and uneven in places, with areas of water pooling. Re-surfacing works are required along sections of the route. Section PR01C (Byway NS311): This section is wide (>2m) and paved with a compacted arushed stone (fine). The southern section just beyond the northern junction with the Jeskyns Woodland Loop Path is in good condition, but as the path rises between Ashenbank Wood and Chambers Hill Wood, the condition deteriorates significantly. Re-grading and re-surfacing works are required to address these issues and to improve drainage. Note: Improvements to this section of byway are proposed as part of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) proposals. Section PR01D (Thong Lane Bridge): This section connects the NS311 byway with the trails in the south-west corner of Shorne Woods Country Park. The route is along highway. There is no footpath along significant lengths of the route, with pedestrians required to walk along the carriageway. There may be opportunities to work with highways to provide a dedicated footpath where there is currently none. Note: Improvements to the Thong Lane Bridge are proposed as part of the LTC proposals. These include the construction of a widened green bridge with a new non-segregated footway/cycle/horse track, and improved connections to footpaths and bridleways to the north and south. Section PR01E (Shorne Woods CP): This section runs along the existing waymarked horse/cycle/pedestrian route which loops aroun	Jeskyns Community Woodland Ashenbank Wood Shorne Woods Country Park West Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Country Parks, PRoW & Highways teams Gravesham Borough Council	Forestry England Woodland Trust	 The majority of the trail is in place. Completion of the trail and improvements along existing sections should be progressed as a priority. [HIGH] 	PR02-03, GA01 & 03, HC01, AT01		•		•	•	•	•	
	 Section PR01F (Brewers Road Bridge): This section connects the path network at the southern end of Shorne Woods to a proposed new path through West Park (PR01G) via the Brewers Road Bridge over the A2. At the northern end of this section, there is currently no connection between the footpath that runs along Brewers Road south of the main entrance to the country park and the footpath over the bridge itself. The same is true on the south side of the bridge, with no footpath (only a wide verge) up to the entrance to Cobham Hall School. There may be opportunities to work with highways to address these missing links. A new connection into West Park would be required to provide access south towards Cobham (PR01G). Note: Improvements to the Brewers Road Bridge are proposed as part of the LTC proposals. Proposals include for the construction of a widened green bridge across the A2 with a new non-segregated footway/cycle/horse track connecting Shorne Woods with the northern edge of West Park. Section PR01G (West Park): An existing footpath (NS179) runs from just north of the war memorial in Cobham along the western edge of West Park. Just to the south of the Ashenbank Wood car park the alignment of the footpath shifts diagonally away from Halfpence Lane, meeting the A2 corridor midway along the northern edge of Cobham Hall School's grounds. A new non-segregated foot/cycle/horse track is proposed along the western side of West Park, connecting the war memorial in Cobham with the Brewers Road Bridge to the north. This would connect Cobham village with Ashenbank Woods (GA03) and Shorne Woods (GA01) providing a key access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders (see complementary proposals CN05, AT01 & HC01). Currently there is no designated crossing point between the footpath in West Park and the Ashenbank Wood car park and entrance. Pedestrians squeeze through a small gap in the hedge to make the crossing. The speed limit along Halfpence Lane in this location is 60mph. This makes the crossing	Jeskyns Community Woodland Ashenbank Wood Shorne Woods Country Park West Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Country Parks, PRoW & Highways teams Gravesham Borough Council	Forestry England	 The majority of the trail is in place. Completion of the trail and improvements along existing sections should be progressed as a priority. [HIGH] 	PR02-03, GA01 & 03, HC01, AT02				•	•		•	

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	increase number of gateway	sites & improve community Support & promote car-free	visits Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	Support better access for all	Support wayfinding	Provide a safe and welcoming environment for visitors	nnections t	Protect sensitive sites & features	Conserve landscape character & heritage
PR02	Jeskyns Woodland Loop Path This 2.5km loop path provides either a short circular walk around the northern section of Jeskyns Community Woodland, or an option to extend the Cobham Village and Shorne Woods Loop Path (PR01). For visitors to the NNR arriving at Jeskyns (GA02), it provides a connection into the rest of the NNR. The paths have gentle gradients and are paved with a compacted aggregate (fine). They provide easy access routes accessible to all visitors. Planning & delivery: The majority of the route exists, with well surfaced trails (PR02A). However, access between the byway (NS311) and the path network inside Jeskyns is restricted to one point (adjaent to Jeskyns Glades). Initially, the Jeskyns Woodland Loop Path could be advertised and way-marked from this single point. However, it would be preferable to introduce an additional point of access at the southern end of the byway. It is proposed that consideration be given to installing a new connecting path around the south-east corner of Jeskyns Meadows (PR02B). This would link up paths to the east and south side of Jeskyns Meadows and avoid the risk of pedestrians walking down Jeskyns Road from Cobham (no footpath) to the reach the access mid-way along the southern edge of the meadows.	Jeskyns Community Woodland	Forestry England NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Kent County Council PRoW	The trail exists and is in good condition. The proposed new section PR02B would enhance the offer and improve safety. [MEDIUM]	PR01, CX01, HC02B, AT02C				•		•			
PR03	Jeskyns/Ashenbank Connecting Path This 1.3km section of trail connects Jeskyns Glades, east of byway NS311, with Ashenbank Woods. Along its length the landscape character shifts from the young woodlands and open grassland within Jeskyns to the ancient woodland and veteran trees of Ashenbank Wood. In combination with the southern section of the Cobham Village and Shorne Woods Loop Path (PR01) it provides a c. 3.7km short loop walk through Cobham village, Jeskyns and Ashenbank Wood. It could also be used as an alternative east to west orientated path for longer walks between the Ranscombe Farm gateway (GA04) and Jeskyns Community Woodland Gateway (GA02). The first section of the route (PR01A) from byway NS311 through Jeskyns Glades to Ashenbank Pond is within Jeskyns Community Woodland and is paved with a fine compacted aggregate. The path is in good condition and no works are required. As the trail crosses the boundary into Ashenbank Wood it switchs to an unpaved path (PR01B). The first 200m of this path is across an area of grassland. It is level and even. On reaching the woods, the path moves upslope, winding its way through the southern section of Ashenbank Woods, up to the Woodland Trust car park on Halfpence Lane. Through the woods, the route is unpaved, uneven and muddy. There are also numerous obstacles, e.g. fallen trees, to navigate. The entire length of the path is within the SSSI and there is the understandable desire to leave all routes within the woodlands unpaved. In certain places the path has become extremely muddy and visitors have either trampled areas of adjacent woodland or created alternative routes. In these sections, a short length of no-dig path or boardwalk would significantly improve access and could be designed to avoid any negative impacts for specific trees or the woodland habitat generally. The route would be clearer for visitors and would discourage trampling and compaction of adjacent areas.	Jeskyns Community Woodland Ashenbank Wood	Woodland Trust NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Forestry England	 The trail exists. Minor improvements to the trail within Ashenbank Wood would signifcantly improve access. [MEDIUM] 	PR01								•	
PR04	Lodge Lane Connecting Path Lodge Lane (byway NS196) connects Cobham village with the entrance to Cobham Woods at South Lodge Barn. It provides access to a number of private residential properties along the lane and several commercial/farm yards. It is paved with asphalt and there are intermittent vehicular passing places and stone sett rumble strip traffic calming features. The byway is long and straight with good visibility. It is relatively quiet. It is noticeable that a worn path has formed along the grass verge for the first 250m of the lane when travelling from Cobham village. This suggests that a segregated path would improve access for pedestrians and may warrant further discussion/investigation.	n/a	Kent County Council PRoW team NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Cobham Parish Council Silverhand Estate	The trail exists. The introduction of a segregated path would improve access and warrants further discussion/ investigation. [LOW])	•		•			
PR05	Cobham Park & Ranscombe Loop Path This c. 8km loop trail routes visitors through Cobham Woods up to the Mausoleum and then onwards into the Ranscombe Farm Reserve. Here it connects with the North Downs Way close to Cuxton before heading back westwards along the southern edge of the Plotlands and Cobham Wood. The trail captures many of the characteristic landscapes and habitats of the NNR study area and takes in some fantastic viewpoints and heritage features. Facilities are available at the western end of the trail in Cobham village and at the eastern end in Cuxton. The northern or southern sections of the loop path can also be used in combination with PR04, PR01A and CX02 to provide a point-to-point route between Cuxton and Sole Street, connecting the two train stations. It is proposed that this be promoted as an NNR car-free day out itinerary. A section-by-section breakdown of the route and proposed infrastructure improvements is provided below. The whole of the proposed route exists as either PRoW or established waymarked permissive paths. However, it is proposed that some works be undertaken to the section at the far eastern end of Ranscombe Farm to shift the route slightly further away from the M2/HS1 corridor (as per the Cuxton Heritage Trail). The proposed changes would improve accessibility and visitor safety/perception of safety, and encourage use by a broader audience.	Multiple (see Visitor Access Proposals Plan C)	National Trust Plantlife Kent County Council PRoW team NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	West Kent Downs Countryside Trust Cobham Parish Council Cuxton Parish Council	The trail exists. The proposals for	PR01, PR04, CX02-09, HC05, AT05						•	•	•	•

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	r of	tes & improve community upport & promote car-free	Support visitors to choose the	ort better	Support wayfinding	safe and we ent for visito	romote connections beyond ne NNR	Indecode char	onserve landscape character &
	 Section PR05A (Footpath NS183): This section of footpath connects the entrance to Cobham Woods at South Lodge Barn with the Mausoleum. The path is wide (>2m), has a gentle gradient and is paved with a compacted crushed stone. It provides an attractive and characterful route up to the Mausoleum through open woodlands with scattered veteran trees. There are short sections which would benefit from re-surfacing, but on the whole path condition is reasonable. Accessibility for those with buggies or using mobility scooters is compromised by the gated cattle grid mid-way along the path (see proposal AT05A). Section PR05B (Footpath NS183): This section is a popular route connecting the community access from Strood (CA02) with the Mausoleum. The path is wide (>2m), has a gentle gradient and is paved with a compacted crushed stone. It provides an attractive approach to the Mausoleum through Cobham Wood from the top end of Ranscombe Farm Reserve. There are short sections which would benefit from re-surfacing, but on the whole path condition is good. Section PR05C (Footpath NS364/RS365/RS368): This section heads south and west through Ranscombe Farm along public footpaths. The route south through woodlands along footpath NS364 and RS365 is a wide (>2m) sloping forest track. It has become rutted by vehicular use, is muddy in places and would benefit from re-surfacing of the path with a compacted aggregate, in-line with similar paths through Cobham Wood, would improve accessibility throughout the year. This would enable a wider audience to enjoy the beauty of this section of the trail (see proposal AT05C). Section PR05D (Permissive path / footpath RS203): Currently, the permissive footpaths in this part of the Ranscombe Farm Reserve run along the boundary with the HS1 rail line. The path feels secluded, enclosed and unsafe. It is proposed that a slightly amended route be created/promoted, which follows field boundaries to the north, before cutting through the woodland c. 20	Multiple (see Visitor Access Proposals Plan C)	National Trust Plantlife Kent County Council PRoW team NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	West Kent Downs Countryside Trust Cobham Parish Council Cuxton Parish Council	The trail exists. The proposals for trail improvements, particularly those to the east of Ranscombe Farm would substantial improve access and open up the route to a broader audience. [HIGH]	PR01, PR04, CX02-09, HC05, AT05				Ξ΄ σ ·	20		e th		
	 Section PR05E (North Downs Way National Trail): This section forms part of the North Downs Way, passing through the open arable fields and grasslands of the southern part of the Ranscombe Farm Reserve. The first 250-300m heading west from the Ranscombe access road is a wide, level surfaced track. As the track reaches the tree line at the top of the hill, it narrows to 1.0-1.5m, being sandwiched between the tree line and the fenced field boundary. As the path drops downhill, it crosses the open fields in the direction of the railway line. Here the path is muddy and less firm underfoot. As with sections PR05C and PR05D, some limited widening of the path at pinch points, and path improvements in the muddier/slippier sections (e.g. compacted aggregate surfacing) would improve accessibility throughout the year, enabling a wider audience to enjoy the route (AT05E). Section PR05F (Footpath RS198 / Permissive path): This section passes through the woodlands on Mill Hill and then across the open grasslands of Brockles Field. The woodland has an open character with views out over the landscape to the south and is one of the most beautiful sections of trail in the NNR study area. The Mill Hill woodlands are part of the SSSI. Being on the crest of the hill, the wide path through the woodlands remains relatively dry and firm throughout the year. Some limited accessibility improvements are proposed (see proposal AT05F). Section PR05G: This section of path is neither a public footpath or a marked permissive path. However, it does form part of a well trodden route connecting the permissive path across Brockles Field with the public footpath running along the southern edge of Cobham Wood. The path is wide (>2m) and the surface generally even. There are some muddy/rutted sections which would benefit from path improvement works. The route lies just outside of the area designated SSSI. Section PR05H (Footpath NS180 / Byway NS196A): The final section of the trail follows the footp	Multiple (see Visitor Access Proposals Plan C)	National Trust Plantlife Kent County Council PRoW team NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	West Kent Downs Countryside Trust Cobham Parish Council Cuxton Parish Council	The trail exists. The proposals for trail improvements, particularly those to the east of Ranscombe Farm would substantial improve access and open up the route to a broader audience. [HIGH]	PR01, PR04, CX02-09, HC05, AT05						•	•	•	•

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ease numb	Support & promote car-free	visits Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	ort	Support wayfinding	Provide a safe and welcoming environment for visitors	ions	Protect sensitive sites & features
06	 North Downs Way (Medway Western Scarp) This c.12 km linear route follows the North Downs Way from Cuxton all the way down to Trosley Country Park at the southern end of the NNR study area. It follows close to the Medway Western Scarp, providing occassional views east into the river valley as well as views west over the downs. The route regularly shifts between woodland and open fields/grassland providing a varied outlook. Footpaths connecting the North Downs Way at Holborough Woods to Upper Halling (CX09) and Halling (CX08) provide the opportunity for a shorter c. 7km walk between Cuxton and Halling train stations. This is proposed as an NNR car-free day out route. Close to the village of Great Buckland, there is also the potential to route north-westards along the Weald Way to Luddesdown and Sole Street (PR07). Planning & delivery: A section-by-section breakdown of the route and proposed infrastructure improvements is provided below. The whole of the proposed route is along the North Downs Way National Trail. Any improvements suggested are minor and relate to survey work undertaken along the trail. Due to the hilly nature of the route and a number of narrow sections, access by tramper mobility scooter is not throught to be feasible, although this may warrant further discussion with the North Downs Way Tail Manager and Wild with Wheels, drawing on their experience of improving accessibility elsewhere on the trail. A number of improvements could be made that would support accessibility for other users, e.g. visitors with off-road buggies and some ambulant disabled people. Section PR06A (NDW): This short section runs from the Ranscombe Farm car park up to the junction with footpath RS203. The path is a narrow (c. 1.0m wide), running along the verge on the western side of the Ranscombe Farm access road. The path RS203. The path is a narrow (c. 1.0m wide), running along the verge on the western side of the Ranscombe Farm access road. The path is surfa	Silverdown Estate Holborough Woods Birling Estate Trosley Country Park	Kent County	Silverhand Estate Tarmac/Savills UK Birling Estate Kent County Council Country Parks team	The route is an established National Trail. Work with organisations to undertake improvements to support access and encourage new trail users. The sections between Cuxton and Halling provide the opportunity to provide a car-free day out itinerary and should be prioritised. [MEDIUM]	GA05, GA07, CA07, PR07, CX07-09, AT06								•
	 Section PR06D (NDW): At the southern end of Upper Bush village the North Downs Way returns to a footpath. The entrance and first section of path through a small area of woodland is very narrow in places (<1.0m), with encroaching vegetation to both sides. Up to the junction with the footpath leading to the village of Upper Halling, the route alternates between woodland, arable fields and areas of grassland. The lengths of path through woodland and along field margins are often narrow (<1.0m), uneven, muddy and rutted. There is frequently encroaching vegetation to either side. The route would benefit from path improvements and vegetation works to support access, whilst recognising the constraints of the environment through which the route passes (i.e. gradients, tree positions, agricultural use and SSSI designation etc.). Section PR06E (NDW): This short section runs through Holborough Woods between the two footpath connections down to the village of Upper Halling (CX09). As per section PR06D, the route would benefit from path improvements and vegetation works to support access, within the stated constraints. Section PR06F (NDW): This section runs between the southernmost footpath connection to Upper Halling (CX09) and the Medway Council boundary. Here the route connects via public bridleway NS245A to the Weald Way long-distance path (PR07). The route shifts between small open areas of grassland and mature SSSI designated woodlands. Through the wooded sections, the path is narrow with encroaching vegetation to either side. Sometimes vegetation almost entirely blocks the path. The route would benefit from path improvements and vegetation works to support access, which offers easy access. The central portion of this section, which continues through the woods to meet thely Hill woods, which offers easy access. The central portion of this section, which continues through the woods to meet Holly Hill. Termains wide, but is largely unsurfaced. The track is muddy and uneven in a num	Silverdown Estate Holborough Woods Birling Estate Trosley Country Park	National Trails Kent County Council & Medway Council PRoW teams NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Silverhand Estate Tarmac/Savills UK Birling Estate Kent County Council Country Parks team	undertake	CX07-09, AT06						•	•	•

								Contribution to objectives										
Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ncrease number of gateway sites & improve community	Support & promote car-free visits	Support visitors to choose the ight locations & routes	Support better access for all	Support wayfinding Provide a safe and welcomind	novue a safe and welcoming environment for visitors Promote connections beyond	he NNR Protect sensitive sites &		neritage			
	 Weald Way (Luddesdown Downs) The Wealdway long-distance path connects the Thames Estuary with the Sussex coast through the Weald of Kent. It runs through the NNR study area for c. 5km between Great Buckland and Sole Street (GA09), passing Luddesdown (GA11) and Camer Country Park (GA05). As an established waymarked trail, it provides an ideal route for visitors to explore the central section of the NNR. In combination with PR06 and CX08/CX09, it also provides a c 8.5km route connecting the train stations at Halling and Sole Street. It is recommended that this be advertised as an NNR car-free day out route. Planning & delivery: A section-by-section breakdown of the route and proposed infrastructure improvements is provided below. With the exception of the bridleway connection with PR06 at its southern end, the rest of the route is along the Weald Way. Any improvements suggested are minor and relate to survey work undertaken along the trail. Due to the hilly nature of the route, with steep and narrow sections, access by tramper mobility scooter is not considered to be feasible, although this may warrant further discussion with the North Downs Way Trail Manager and Wild with Wheels, drawing on their experience of improving accessibility elsewhere on the trail. A number of improvements could be made that would support accessibility for other users, e.g. visitors with off-road buggies and some ambulant disabled people. • PR07A (Weald Way - Footpath NS228): This section connects Great Buckland with the village of Luddesdown, passing through the vilneyards of Silverhand Estate. The route is primarily on unsurfaced paths through open fields. These are generally wide, firm and even. At the norther mend, the route is on-road through the village of Luddesdown. • PR07B (Weald Way - Footpaths NS241/NS225); Endieway NS242): This section connects Luddesdown with the eastern edge of Camer Park. It passes through areas of vineyard, pockets of woodland,	Silverhand Estate Camer Country Park	Kent County Council PRoW team Silverhand Estate NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Gravesham Borough Council Open Spaces team	 The route is an established long-distance path. Work with organisations to undertake improvements to support inclusive access and encourage new trail users. In combination with PR06 and CX08/CX09, PR07 provides a car-free day out route connecting Halling and Sole Street. [LOW] 	GA05, GA09, GA11, PR06, CX08-09			0	6				•				

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Ref	Proposal ng Paths (CX) (see Proposals Plan C)	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ase number of 8. improve cor	note car-free	ort visitors to cho locations & route	Support better access for all Support wavfinding	Provide a safe and welcoming environment for visitors	connection ensitive s	onserve lanascape character o
	Sole Street village/station to Jeskyns Community Woodland												
	This 1.3km route provides the most direct connection between Sole Street train station and Jeskyns Community Woodland. It is an attractive route through the village of Sole Street and orchards. Travelling from Sole Street station, the first section of the route is on the footway running along Sole Street. From the junction with Scratton Fields there is no segregated footway for 350m up to the entrance to the orchards (nr junction with Round Street). Pedestrians are required to walk along the carriageway. All other reasonable routes connecting to Jeskyns also require pedestrians to walk along the carriageway for a similar distance. The footpath (NS187) through the orchards is narrow, but clear and level. Access to Jeskyns at the northern end of the footpath is via a narrow steel kissing gate. Once into Jeskyns, the route connects with the easy access trail network (PR02/AT02). There are a number of barriers to accessibility through Sole Street village, including unnecessary steps along the path (e.g. outside no. 1 Scratton Fields) and junction crossings with no dropped kerbs (e.g. junction with Scratton Fields). These should be addressed to support accessibility. Access to the orchards from Sole Street is up a steep roadside bank (3 steps) and through a narrow steel kissing gate. This is a barrier to a number of users. Due to narrow width of the bank, it would be difficult to achieve a level access in this location. However, installation of a wider one-way or two-way self-closing pedestrian gate would support access for those with buggies and ambulant disabled users. A similar gate could be provided at the northern end of the orchard, where the route connects into Jeskyns Community Woodland.	Jeskyns Community Woodland	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Highways/PRoW team	Forestry England Landowners	• Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility [MEDIUM]	GA09, PR02, AT02	•			•	•		
CX02	Sole Street village/station to Cobham village This 1.9km route connects Sole Street train station with Cobham village, passing through arable fields and orchards. Travelling from Sole Street, access to the footpath (NS191) is immediately opposite the train station. The path routes across arable fields, connecting with a footbridge over the railway. North of the railway, the footpath (NS190) cuts diagonnally through a large area of orchards before entering Cobham village via the churchyard. There are a number of opportunities to improve accessibility along the route, including the replacement of narrow kissing gates with either a one-way or two-way self-closing pedestrian gate with a 1.2m clear width (preferred), or a wide mobility type kissing gate that can be	None	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Highways/PRoW team	Landowners	Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility [MEDIUM]	GA09, PR01, AT01	•			•	•		
CX03	opened with a RADAR key South Lodge Barn to Luddesdown This 2.3km route connects South Lodge Barn (Cobham Woods) with Luddesdown. Travelling south from South Lodge Barn, the route follows byway NS196A for 1km up to the junction with Cobhambury Road. There is then a short on-highway section (c. 200m), before the route joins footpath NS226 heading west. This footpath cuts through an area of woodland and across a field of vines, before meeting with Henley Street c. 200m north of The Lion pub and Silverhand Estate yard in Luddesdown. There are a number of opportunities to improve accessibility along the route, including path improvements along byway NS196A and either widening chicanes/gaps, or replacing them with accessible gates.	Silverhand Estate	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Highways/PRoW team	Silverhand Estate	Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility [MEDIUM]	GA08, GA11, PR05	•			•	•		
	Razorbill Close Community Access to Cobham Park & Ranscombe Loop Path This 0.7km route connects the community access at Razorbill Close (CA04) with the proposed Cobham Park & Ranscombe Loop Path (PR05). Proposed improvements at the access point, which includes the section of path up to and across the bridge over HS1, are set out above. From the HS1 bridge, footpath NS183 heads westwards in the direction of the Darnley Mausoleum. The path is wide (>2m) and paved with crushed stone. Subject to addressing barriers at the community access point, this route could create an accessible link into the NNR from the western edge of Strood.	Ranscombe Farm	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Ranscombe Farm Kent County Council & Medway Council PRoW teams	National Trust	No specific improvement works proposed [MEDIUM]	CA04, PR05	•			•	•		
CX05	Elgin Gardens Community Access to Cobham Park & Ranscombe Loop Path This 0.25km route connects the community access at Elgin Gardens (CA05) with the proposed Cobham Park & Ranscombe Loop Path (PR05). Improvements at the community access, which includes the underpass beneath the HS1 line, are set out above. From the underpass, footpath RS203 heads westwards to meet the North Downs Way at the junction with the Ranscombe Farm access road. The footpath is narrow and muddy/rutted in places. Path improvements along this connecting path, in combination with efforts to address barriers at the community access point, could create an accessible link into the NNR from the western edge of Strood.	Ranscombe Farm	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Ranscombe Farm Kent County Council & Medway Council PRoW teams		Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility [MEDIUM]	CA05, PR05				•	•		

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	Increase number of gateway sites & improve community	ort & promote	Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	Support better access for all	Support wayfinding Provide a safe and welcoming	ient for visitors connections beyo	
CX06	Cuxton station to Ranscombe Farm Reserve car park The most direct route between Cuxton train station and the Ranscombe Farm Reserve gateway is via Station Road, Sundridge Hill and Pilgrims Way (1.3km). Up to the southern junction of Pilgrims Way, Sundridge Hill has a segregated footway. From this point, neither Sundridge Hill or the Pilgrims Way have segregated footpaths. Although not ideal, Pilgrims Way is far quieter and offers a significantly safer on-highway route for pedestrians. At the top end of Pilgrims Way, pedestrians can join the segregated footway along the eastern edge of Sundridge Hill. This footway leads up to the Ransombe Farm Reserve car park. There are a number of opportunities to improve accessibility along the route, particularly on the final section between Pilgrims Way and the Ranscombe Farm Reserve car park. The uncontrolled crossing required to access the footway on the eastern side of Sundridge Hill has an awkward off-set, requiring pedestrians to cross on the diagonal. This is a busy road with fast moving vehicles, so any non- standard crossing arrangement adds to the hazard of crossing the road. There is currently no uncontrolled crossing between the footpath on the eastern edge of Sundridge Hill and the Ranscombe Farm Reserve car park. This should be addressed. There is a central island and space on either side of the carriageway to accomodate a crossing.	Ranscombe Farm	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Highways	Ranscombe Farm Kent County Council & Medway Council PRoW teams	• Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility and improve safety [MEDIUM]	GA04, GA10, PR06	•	•		•	(•	
CX07	Cuxton Station to Whiteleaves Rise and Poplicans Road Community Access Points Ranscombe Farm Reserve can be accessed from the residential areas of Cuxton village via the community access points at Whiteleaves Rise (CA06) and Poplicans Road (CA07). These c. 1.0km routes avoid the busy Sundridge Hill (see CX06) and pass a number of village facilities on Bush Road, including a small supermarket. Both community access points can be accessed on asphalt footways, with a substantial section of the route (c. 200m) being pedestrian only. There are some steep sections, with handrails provided, but no steps. If the barriers to access can be addressed at the two community access points (see CA06 & CA07), then these routes could provide safer, more attractive and more inclusive routes into Ranscombe Farm and the NNR. There are a number of opportunities to improve accessibility along the route. The path surfacing is variable and in need of re-surfacing, particularly the steeper pedestrian only sections. There are a couple of junctions (e.g. Whiteleaves Rise w/ Poplicans Road) without dropped kerb crossings, and a chicane and bollard on the pedestrian only sections of path, which could be replaced or removed.	Rancombe Farm	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Highways	Ranscombe Farm Cuxton Parish Council	deliver improvements	GA10, CA06, CA07, TL01, TL02	•	•		•	(•	
CX08	Halling village/station to Upper Halling via Vicarage Road The village of Upper Halling provides a gateway into the NNR study area, accessed via permissive paths through Court Farm (GA13). Upper Halling is c. 1.3-1.5km from the village of Halling and its train station (GA12). The route is fairly steep, but can be accessed via footways along the High Street and Vicarage Road. The route can be shortened slightly by routing via the footbridge (steps) over the A228 Rochester Road. The route up to Upper Halling is relatively long and steep, and access to the NNR beyond is up a very steep and uneven footpath (CX09). The route is therefore unlikely to be suitable as an access to the NNR for those using a wheelchair, ambulant disabled visitors or parents/carers with children in a buggy. Accessibility improvements are consequently not addressed here. However, at the northern end of Vicarage Road, where the route enters Upper Halling, there is a potential highway safety concern. The dropped kerb crossing in this location is positioned on a bend, with views from the footway obscured by a 2m high timber fence that extends right up to the carriageway. Visability at the crossing is poor and presents a significant hazard for pedestrians.	n/a	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Highways	Halling Parish Council	Work with Kent County Council highways to review and where necessary address safety concerns. [MEDIUM]	GA12, GA13	•	•			•	•	
CX09	Upper Halling (Moot Brew Co.) Gateway to North Downs Way From Court Farm, visitors can access the NNR study area and North Downs Way via footpath RS214, which routes north and south. The paths are narrow, uneven and very steep. They pass through an area of woodland designated as SSSI. Improvement works, beyond general PRoW maintenance, are not proposed.	Holborough Woods	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council & Medway Council PRoW teams	Halling Parish Council	No specific improvement works proposed [LOW]	GA12, GA13, PR06	•	•			•		
CX10	Vigo Village Community Access to North Downs Way Footpath NS356 (CA08) and byway NS290 (CA09) provide access to Trosley Country Park from Vigo Village. Footpath NS356 is wide, but unpaved and muddy. A new paved route (compacted aggregate) would improve access from the nearby residential areas along Erskine Road and connect with the paved easy access trail within the park. Byway NS290, which connects with the North Downs Way, is wide and even for most of its length. However, towards its southern end, the surfacing is rutted and prone to water pooling. Here, the access would benefit from path improvement works.	Trosley Country Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Country Parks and PRoW teams		Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility [LOW]	CA08, CA09, PR06	•	•					

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ncrease number of gateway sites & improve community	Support & promote car-free visits Support visitors to choose the	right locations & routes Support better access for all Support wayfinding	rovide a safe and welcor rironment for visitors	Promote connections beyond he NNR Protect sensitive sites & eatures Conserve landscape character & neritage
CX11	Camer Country Park Connection The car park and facilities at Camer Country Park are located at its western end. The Weald Way (PRO7) - which connects Sole Street in the north with Luddesdown, Great Buckland and Trosley Country Park to the south - runs along the eastern edge of the park. It is proposed that a fully paved route be constructed to link the car park with the bridleway to the east of the path (AT07).	Camer Country Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Gravesham Borough Council Kent County Council PRoW team		• Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility [LOW]	GA05, PR07, AT07	•		•	•	

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ase & ir	rt & promot∈	Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	Support better access for all	Support wayfinding Provide a safe and welcomind	nent for visit connections	the NNR Protect consitive sites &	Frotect sensitive sites &
	nanced Access Trails (AT) (see Proposals Plan E)													
AT01	 Cobham & Ashenbank Enhanced Access Trail This proposal seeks to enhance sections of the Cobham Village & Shore Woods Loop Path (PR01), to provide a 4.0km enhanced access trail following a loop starting and ending in the village of Cobham. The loop path will follow most of the PR01 route, with the exception of the top section through Shorne Woods. In line with accessibility standards, the route would have no stiles, steps or physical barriers, no gates narrower than 1.2m, firm surfacing with some loose stones and debris, path widths of at least 1.2m (typically >1.5m), and resting points at least every 300m. The route would be suitable for a wide range of visitors, including those using tramper type mobility scooters (or equivalent) and parents/carers with all terrain pushchairs. Advice on the detailed design of improvements, grading and trail description should be sort from an organisation experienced in the delivery and promotion of accessible walks and trails, such as Wild with Wheels (www.wildwithwheels.com). A section-by-section breakdown of the route and proposed infrastructure improvements is provided below. Section AT01A (PR01A) - Accessibility along the The Street could be improved by (i) introducing additional dropped kerbs to support access on the north side of the junction with Halfpence Lane (linked to PR01G), at the entrance to the Old Parsonage and near the junction with Sole Street; (ii) widening pinchpoints in the footpath by removing or repositioning bollards (e.g. adjacent to Scie Street), minor kerb re-alignments (adjacent to the Church) and clearance of vegetation at the back edge of footpaths (on approach to Scle Street; (iii) widening pinchpoints in the footpath sproposed path works. A resting place should be provided along this section. Section AT01B (PR01B) (Byway NS311): Refer to PR01B for proposed path works. A resting place should be provided along this section. Section AT01D (Permissive path): This is an existing permiss	Jeskyns Community Woodland Ashenbank Wood West Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Woodland Trust Gravesham Borough Council	Forestry England Cobham Parish Council Kent County Council highways Wild with Wheels	 Seek advice on the detailed design of improvements, grading and trail description from an organisation with first-hand experience. Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility Once improvements are in place promote the trail. [HIGH] 	GA03, GA08,				•				
AT02	Jeskyns Woodland Easy Access Trail The existing paths at Jeskyns are designed as easy access trails, with widths greater than 1.5m, gradients less than 1 in 20, firm compacted gravel surfacing and regular resting points. The landscape at Jeskyns is divided into three parts by Jeskyns Road and byway NS311. At these points, access to and from the community woodland is controlled by a combination of timber horse stiles and kissing gates, sometimes also with a vehicle gate. The kissing gates do not have RADAR keys and would be a barrier to those using wheelchairs/mobility scooters. The priority from an access perspective is therefore to upgrade this gate infrastructure with wheelchair accessible equivalents, e.g. one-way or two-way self-closing pedestrian gates with a 1.2m clear width. This change would support access for those using wheelchairs/mobility scooters, parents/carers with buggies and ambulant disabled users. The easy access trails and associated facilities should be promoted within NNR literature.	Jeskyns Community Woodland	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Forestry England	Wild with Wheels	Promote the trail as part of the NNR offer. Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility [HIGH]	GA02, PR02				•	•			
.T03	Shorne Woods Easy Access Trails Shorne Woods Country Park has more than 3km of easy access trails, with widths greater than 1.5m, gradients less than 1 in 20, firm compacted gravel surfacing and regular resting points. All kissing gates within the park are mobility gates which can be opened with a RADAR key. These easy access trails and associated facilities should be promoted within NNR literature. In combination with the improvements set out for proposal AT01, there is the potential to connect the easy access trails at Shorne Woods into the trail network to the south. In addition to the improvements listed for AT01D and AT01E above, there are a number of barriers to be addressed on the route between Shorne Woods visitor centre and the northern end of West Park/Halfpence Lane (AT03B). As noted under proposal PR01F above, there is currently no connection between the surfaced footpath that runs along Brewers Road south of the main entrance to the country park and the footpath over the bridge itself. The same is true on the south side of the bridge, with no footpath (only a wide verge) up to the entrance to Cobham Hall School. There may be opportunities to work with highways to address these barriers to access. Works should be designed to support access for a wide range of users, including those using tramper type mobility scooters (or equivalent) and parents/carers with all-terrain pushchairs. Note : Improvements to the Brewers Road Bridge are proposed as part of the LTC proposals. Proposals include for the construction of a widened green bridge across the A2 with a new non- segregated footway/cycle/horse track connecting Shorne Woods with the northern edge of West Park.	Shorne Woods Country Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council PRoW team Kent County Council Highways	Wild with Wheels	Promote the existing easy access trails as part of the NNR offer. Work with organisations to improve connectivity with trails to the south. [MEDIUM]	PR01, GA01 & 03, HC01, AT01				•				

Ref AT04	Proposal Lodge Lane Connecting Path Please refer to proposal PR04. PR04 notes that a segregated footpath along Lodge Lane would improve access for pedestrians and recommends further discussion/investigation. If this is progressed, then it should be designed as an easy access route, i.e. widths greater than 1.5m, gradients less than 1 in 20, firm compacted gravel surfacing and regular resting points.	Site / location (as appropriate) Cobham Woods &	Lead organisation(s) NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Contributors / Stakeholders National Trust	Implementation [& priority] • Discuss/explore potential access improvements along	Linked to / Consider with GA08, PR04,	Increase number of gateway sites & improve community Support & promote car-free	ort visitors to choose the locations & routes	t or	Provide a safe and welcoming (do	yond	Protect sensitive sites & features Conserve landscape character &	
AT05	Cobham Park & Ranscombe Enhanced Access Trail	Mausoleum	Kent County Council PRoW team	Silverhand Estate	Lodge Lane. [MEDIUM]	AT01 AT05		_					
	 This proposal seeks to enhance the proposed 8.0km Cobham Park and Ranscombe Loop Path (PR05) to support access for a wider audience. It is proposed that the route be upgraded to have no stiles, steps or physical barriers, no gates narrower than 1.2m, firm surfacing with some loose stones and debris, path widths of at least 1.2m (typically >1.5m), and resting points at least every 300m. Advice on the feasibility, design, grading and trail description should be sort from an organisation experienced in the delivery and promotion of accessible walks and trails, such as Wild with Wheels (www.wildwithwheels.com). This input is particularly important for the more challenging sections of the route - AT05C and AT05E to AT05H. A section-by-section breakdown of the route and proposed infrastructure improvements is provided below. Section AT05A (PR05A) (Footpath NS183): This section of footpath connects the entrance to Cobham Woods at South Lodge Barn with the Mausoleum. The path is wide (>2m), has a gentle gradient and is paved with a compacted crushed stone. Accessibility for those with buggies or using mobility scooters is compromised by the cattle grid and kissing gate (without RADAR key) arrangement mid-way along the path. It is proposed that the kissing gate be replaced with an accessible alternative, i.e. either a one-way or two-way self-closing pedestrian gate with a 1.2m clear width (preferred), or a wide mobility type kissing gate with a RADAR key. The surfacing could also be upgraded to a fine compacted stone finish (as used at Jeskyns and Shorne Woods) to make this section an easy access trail, opening up the mausoleum to an even wider audience. Section AT05B (PR05B) (Footpath NS183): This section is a popular route connecting the community access from Strood (CA02) with the mausoleum. The path is wide (>2m), has a gentle gradient and is paved with a compacted stone in cleassing gates be replaced with an ACDAR key. Section AT05B (PR05B) (Footpath NS183): This section heads s	Cobham Woods & Mausoleum The Plotlands Ranscombe Farm Reserve	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council PRoW team National Trust Plantlife	West Kent Downs Countryside Trust	 Seek advice on the feasibility and design of improvements, grading and trail description from an organisation with first- hand experience. Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility Once improvements are in place promote the trail. [HIGH] 	GA04, GA08, PR05, AT04, CA08							
	 Section AT05D (PR05D) (Permissive path / footpath RS203): Currently, the permissive footpaths in this part of the Ranscombe Farm Reserve run close to the boundary with the HS1 rail line. As detailed for proposal PR05D above, it is proposed that the path be brought further into the site and surfaced with compacted aggregate to improve accessibility throughout the year. This section of the trail lies outside of the SSI designation. Section AT05E (PR05E) (North Downs Way National Trail): Please refer to proposal PR05E for core improvements. In addition to these, some limited widening of the path to a min. 1.2m, and the introduction of compacted aggregate surfacing along the muddier sections would improve accessibility throughout the year. There are a number of other barriers to accessibility along the route, including a narrow kissing gate (without RADAR key) and a couple of steps near the end of the section on the approach to the railway bridge. It is proposed that the kissing gate be replaced with an accessible alternative, i.e. either a one-way or two-way self-closing pedestrian gate with a 1.2m clear width (preferred) or a wide mobility type kissing gate with a RADAR key, and some re-grading be undertaken to remove the need for steps. Section AT05F (PR05F) (Footpath RS198 / Permissive path): This section passes through the woodlands on Mill Hill and then across the open grasslands of Brockles Field. The Mill Hill woodlands are part of the SSI. Being on the crest of the hill, the wide path through the works at the entrance to Brockles Field to eliminate the need for steps. Section AT05G (PR05G): Please refer to proposal PR05F for core improvements. The path is wide (>2m) and the surface generally even. It is proposed to resurface the path with crushed stone to support accessibility. The route lies just outside of the assignated SSI. Section AT05F (PR05G): Please refer to proposal PR05F for core improvements. The path is wide (>2m) and the surface	Cobham Woods & Mausoleum The Plotlands Ranscombe Farm Reserve	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council PRoW team National Trust Plantlife	West Kent Downs Countryside Trust	 Seek advice on the feasibility and design of improvements, grading and trail description from an organisation with first- hand experience. Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility Once improvements are in place promote the trail. [HIGH] 	GA04, GA08, PR05, AT04, CA09			•				

							Contribution to objectives									
Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	Increase number of gateway sites & improve community sites & promote car-free	visits Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	Support better access for all	Support wayfinding Provide a safe and welcoming environment for visitors Promote connections beyond	the NNR Protect sensitive sites & features	Conserve landscape character & heritage				
AT06	Connection between Plantlife compound and the Cobham Park & Randscombe Enhanced Access Trail This short section of path runs from the Plantlife compound up to the junction with footpath RS203. The path, which routes along the western edge of the Ranscombe Farm access road, is paved with a compacted aggregate. It is smooth and level, but narrow (c. c.0.8-1.2m wide). It is proposed that the path be widened to 1.5m to support accessibility.	Ranscombe Farm	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council PRoW team Plantlife		Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility [HIGH]	GA04, PR05, AT05			•	•						
AT07	Camer Country Park Accessible Trail There is an existing advertised linear walk running east from the country park car park to meet the bridleway on the park's eastern edge. The majority of the route is unpaved and the trail map notes "the grass surface becomes very muddy and difficult to negotiate in wet weather, particularly in the winter months." The offer at the park could be enhanced by the introducing a fully paved easy access route, with widths greater than 1.5m, gradients less than 1 in 20, firm compacted aggregate surfacing and regular resting points. These improvements would also improve pedestrian access between the park and Sole Street.	Camer Country Park	Gravesham Borough Council NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)		Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility [LOW]	GA05, PR07, CX12			•	•						
AT08	Trosley Country Park Easy Access Trail Trosley Country Park has a 2.4km easy access trail, with widths greater than 1.5m, gradients less than 1 in 20, firm compacted gravel surfacing and regular resting points. The route connects with the visitor centre, cafe, accessible toilets and accessible parking. Surfacing on the southern section (North Downs Way) has become muddy and uneven in places and would benefit from re-surfacing.	Trosley Country Park	Kent County Council NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)		Work with organisations to deliver improvements that enhance accessibility [LOW]	GA07				•						

									Contr	ribution	to ob	ojectivo	es	
Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	Increase number of gateway sites & improve community	& promote car-free	Support visitors to choose the right locations & routes	Support better access for all	Support wayfinding Provide a safe and welcoming	environment for visitors Promote connections beyond	the NNR Protect sensitive sites &	features Conserve landscape character & heritage
	cycle trails (CT) (see Proposals Plan D)						-		\vdash		4	4	4	
HC01	 Shorne & Ashenbank Woodlands Horse & Cycle Trail It is proposed that the Shorne & Ashenbank Woodlands Loop Path (PR01) be promoted as a non-segregated foot/cycle/horse track. Section-by-section details are provided below. For details of proposed trail improvements, please refer to proposal PR01. Section HC01A (PR01A) (The Street, Cobham): On road between the war memorial and byway NS311. Section HC01B (PR01B) (Byway NS311): Wide (>2m) off-road trail surfaced with a compacted crushed stone (fine). Section HC01C (PR01D) (Thong Lane Bridge): On road between the northern end of byway NS311 and the footpath entrance to Shorne Woods Country Park from Thong Lane. Note: Improvements to the Thong Lane Bridge are proposed as part of the LTC proposals. These include the construction of a widened green bridge with a new non-segregated footway/cycle/horse track, and improved connections to footpaths and bridleways to the north and south. Section HC01D (PR01E) (Shorne Woods CP): This section runs along the existing waymarked horse/cycle/pedestrian route which loops around the country park. Section HC01E (PR01F) (Brewers Road Bridge): On-road and off-road. This section connects the waymarked horse/cycle/pedestrian route which loops around the country park. Section HC01E (PR01F) (Brewers Road Bridge): On-road and off-road. This section connects the waymarked horse/cycle/pedestrian route at the southern end of Shorme Woods to the proposed new horse/cycle/pedestrian path through West Park (PR01G) via the Brewers Road Bridge over the A2. Note: Improvements to the Brewers Road Bridge are proposed as part of the LTC proposals. Proposals include for the construction of a widened green bridge across the A2 with a new non-segregated footway/cycle/horse track connecting Shorme Woods (GA01) providing a key access for pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. It would also support improvements to the local cycle network (see CN05), with	Jeskyns Community Woodland Ashenbank Wood Shorne Woods Country Park West Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Country Parks, PRoW & Highways teams Gravesham Borough Council	Forestry England Woodland Trust	 The majority of the trail is in place. Completion of the trail and improvements along existing sections should be progressed as a priority. [HIGH] 	GA01 & 03, CN05, PR01, AT01				•				
HC02	Jeskyns Community Woodland Horse Trail This is an existing off-road horse trail at Jeskyns Community Woodland. Where the trail meets byway NS311 at its northern end the combined horse stile and kissing gate has been damaged and is in need of repair. The horse trail should be promoted within NNR literature.	Jeskyns Community Woodland	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Jeskyns Community Woodland		The trail should be promoted in NNR literature [HIGH]	GA02, PR02, AT02				•				
HC03	Shorne Woods Horse & Cycle Trail connection This route runs along the existing waymarked horse/cycle/pedestrian route which loops around the southern edge of the country park. It provides the opportunity to vary or shorten rides when used in combination with HC01, HC02 and HC04. The existing waymarked horse/cycle/pedestrian route around the outside of Shorne Woods Country Park should be promoted within NNR literature.	Shorne Woods Country Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Country Parks team		The trail should be promoted in NNR literature [HIGH]	GA01, PR01, HC01		•		•				
HC04	Brewers Wood to Park Pale Bridge Horse & Cycle Trail connection This route is part of the advertised Darnley Trail shared use path. It connects Shorne Woods Country Park with Cobham Wood and Ranscombe Farm, via Brewers Wood. The first section of the trail is along wide (>2m), paved woodland tracks (HC04A). The second section is on-road, crossing the M2 via the Park Pale Bridge (HC04B). The trail should be promoted in NNR literature. Note: The LTC proposals do not currently include for improved cycle/horse/pedestrian access across Park Pale Bridge, with proposals limited to improvements to cycle tracks and footways to either side.	Shorne Woods Country Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Country Parks, PRoW & Highways teams		Engage with National Highways LTC team, if the scheme is approved. The trail should be promoted in NNR literature [MEDIUM]	GA01, HC05		•		•				

								C	ontributi	ion to d	objectives	
Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	ncrease number of gateway sites & improve community	ort & promote ort visitors to	ations & rc better acc	wayfinding	Provide a safe and welcoming anvironment for visitors Promote connections beyond the NNR	Protect sensitive sites & features Conserve landscape character &
HC05	 Cobham Park Horse & Cycle Trail This trail seeks to address the desire expressed in the Community Consultation results (2024) for more, better connected and longer horse riding routes. This route connects existing waymarked horse trails, bridleways and byways, with sections of footpath which this plan suggests could be redesignated as bridleways. The route incorporates sections of the Darnley Trail which is advertised as a shared use horse/cycle/pedestrian trail. Section-by-section details are provided below Section HC05A: This section of footpath runs along the northern edge of Cobham Hall School's grounds and the Rochester and Cobham Golf Club. The LTC proposals for PRoW improvements, propose a new bridleway connection between the south side of the Brewers Road Bridge and this footpath, and the redesignation of the footpath as a bridleway. It is suggested in this plan that equivalent improvements could be progressed with the support of partners, whether or not the LTC proposals are approved. Progressing these proposals outside of the LTC scheme, would make sense if the proposed shared horse/cycle/pedestrian route through West Park (PRO1G/HC01F) was also progressed and if a suitable connection between the two could be established. Further investigations and discussions would be required to determine feasibility. Section HC05B: This section follows the route of the Darnley Trail and is advertised for use by cyclists and pedestrians. The section that runs along the HS1 line, to the north-east corner of the trail, is narrow with encoaching vegetation. Vegetation clearance and path improvement works are required to encourage use by cyclists and horse riders. Section HC05E & HC05D: The existing advertised Darnley Trail route runs just to the south of the mausoleum. Sections of the path are very narrow, muddy and steep (with steps), and there are a number of narrow kissing gates. Following survey, it was felt that the trail would not offer an accessible or enjoyabl	Cobham Hall School Rochester & Cobham Park Gol Club Cobham Wood	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) f Council PRoW team National Trust	West Kent Downs Countryside Trust	• Several sections of this proposed trail require further investigations to determine feasibility and discussions with partners to explore implications for management. [MEDIUM]	GA08, PR01, PR05, AT04, AT05			•			
HC06	North Downs Way (Medway Scarp) Riders Route This is part of the existing advertised North Downs Way Riders Route (Section 2: Oxted to Wye). From just east of Trosley Country Park, the route diverts from the main North Downs Way trail. The National Trails website notes that the route has undergone enhancement works in the past year to make it "more accessible for both keen and amateur cyclists and horse riders". The route should be promoted within NNR literature.	Trosley Country Park Birling Estate	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) National Trails	Kent County Council Country Park team	This trail should be promoted in NNR literature [HIGH]	GA07, GA12, GA13, PR06, CX08					• •	
HC07	Trosley Country Park Horse Route The country park has a waymarked horse route that takes in the woodland and grassland habitats of this part of the Medway Western Scarp. The southern section forms part of the North Downs Way Riders Route (PR06). The horse trail should be promoted within NNR literature.	Trosley Country Park	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL) Kent County Council Country Park team	National Trails	This trail should be promoted in NNR literature [HIGH]	GA07, HC06			•		•	

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Ref	Proposal	Site / location (as appropriate)	Lead organisation(s)	Contributors / Stakeholders	Implementation [& priority]	Linked to / Consider with	Increase number of gateway sites & improve community	note car-free	visitors to choose ations & routes	port better access	Support wayfinding	Provide a safe and welcoming environment for visitors	ions t	Protect sensitive sites & features Conserve landscape character &	heritage
Wayfindi WF01	Ing infrastructure (WF) (see Proposals Plan C) Gateways & Community Access Points														4
	It is proposed that all gateway sites and community access points display a National Nature Reserve map board with complementary information introducing the NNR and inset information focussed on the relevant partner site. Directional signage, with distances or times to key NNR locations, should also be provided. Directional signage (e.g. fingerposts) should ideally be shared to avoid clutter. However, where partner sites have a specific signage style and pallette (e.g. Forestry England and National Trust monoliths), it may be necessary to provide alternative NNR signs. In these	ldentified on Proposals Plan C	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Partner sites	Draft and agree signage strategy. [HIGH]	Multiple				•	•	•			
14/500	circumstances, NNR directional signage should be limited to a few key locations.								\rightarrow						
WF02	Primary wayfinding points These are key junctions (e.g. Five Throws in Cobham Wood), landmarks (e.g. the Darnley Mausoleum) and points of transition between sites (e.g. Thong Lane entrance to Shorne Woods). These are all locations where visitors may pause to orientate themselves. To support this, visitors should have access to either a full National Nature Reserve map board with introductory information, or a reduced board with the map only. Directional signage should also be provided.	Distribution indicated on Proposals Plan C	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Partner sites	• Draft and agree signage strategy. [HIGH]	Multiple				•	•	•			
WF03	Secondary wayfinding points These are junctions with other paths. Directional signage should be provided, but maps are not required.	Distribution indicated on Proposals Plan C	NNR lead/ co- ordinating partner (KDNL)	Partner sites	Draft and agree signage strategy. [HIGH]	Multiple				•	•	•			





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