

2020 - 2030



Stockwood Park Management Plan

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Luton

A. Foreword

Luton's greenspaces contribute to delivering our 2020-2040 vision for the town - to achieve a healthy, fair and sustainable town, where everyone can thrive and no-one has to live in poverty.

Luton 2020-2040 is a town-wide vision built around a single-unifying mission for everyone in Luton – to ensure that everyone in our town has the opportunity to thrive and no-one has to live in poverty. Poverty and inequality are at the heart of some of the most significant challenges in Luton.

The value of greenspace has been reinforced during the coronavirus pandemic with Luton's parks, children's play and countryside areas seeing a huge increase in use.

We know that well maintained parks attract people, business and investment to the town. They are socially inclusive spaces providing free access to opportunities for recreation, mental relaxation and just maintaining our health and well-being through being in the great outdoors.

Our greenspaces also contribute to the climate change agenda providing eco-system services to benefit the community. These range from large expanses of grassland that accommodate surface water run-off to trees and shrubs that capture carbon and remove pollutants from the air that we breathe.

The Stockwood Park landscape, its history and veteran trees provide a true sense of place to the local community and provides a place where friends and families can meet with the space required to take exercise in a natural setting while easily observing social distancing.

This management plan, produced with the help of our partners and the local community sets out the current vision for the park and includes information about the local context, history and make-up of the park. In pursuit of excellence, the Luton Parks and Countryside Service manage the park to meet standards set out in the Green Flag Award's Raising the Standard Manual - the nationally recognised quality indicator for parks and green space.

All this is why, as a council, we are committed to protecting and improving our high quality greenspaces.

I would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to contribute to consultations and park user surveys which have informed this management plan for Stockwood Park.

I hope that you continue to enjoy the park and all that it has to offer.

Mark Fowler
Chief Executive, Luton Council



B. Introduction

Stockwood Park covers an area of approximately 98.77 hectares and provides the local district park facility for residents in the Farley and South Wards of Luton. The park has become a regional significance with the addition of the Stockwood Discovery Centre and was officially opened to the public on 18th August 1954.

It is bounded by two roads (London Road and Farley Hill) which are both routes to/from the town centre. There is easy access from J10a of the M1. The park has a number of popular features and facilities which result in it being one of the most visited parks in Luton. These features and facilities include:-

- Stockwood Discovery Centre
- Golf Centre including a municipal 18 hole golf course and junior golf academy
- Rugby Club
- Football pavilion and pitches
- Athletics Centre
- Children's play areas
- Allotments
- Riding Stables
- Picnic areas
- Identified Heritage and Health Walking routes
- Areas of designated County Wildlife Site
- Areas for informal recreation

In 2012, the Luton Friends of Parks and Green Spaces nominated the park for inclusion in the Queen Elizabeth II Playing Field Challenge. This nomination was approved by the LBC Executive and the playing fields and surrounding areas of the park were designated as a QEII Playing Field.



The management plan is for the period of 2018-2028. It updates the previous plan prepared by Luton Borough Council and is informed by The Big Farley Local Plan which targets to make improvements to local green space. <http://localtrust.org.uk/our-work/big-local/big-local-areas/farley-hill>

The Luton Strategic Vision for Sport

https://www.luton.gov.uk/Leisure_and_culture/Active%20Luton%20and%20Inspire%20Luton%20Sports%20Village/Pages/Sport-and-physical-activity-our-policies-and-strategies.aspx

The Playing Pitch Strategy 2014-2021

https://www.luton.gov.uk/Leisure_and_culture/Lists/LutonDocuments/Word/Luton%20Playing%20Pitch%20Strategy%202014-2021.doc

C. The Purpose of the Plan

This management and development plan sets out a strategic approach to guide management and development of the park and promotes a co-ordinated approach to management of the park in line with the policies of Luton Borough Council. It seeks to ensure that future development of the park preserves the heritage of the park, trees of veteran age class, manages habitats in areas of the County Wildlife Site and provides multifunctional greenspace that meets with the needs of the local community and organisations resident in the park.

The plan sets out an agreed vision for the park and includes information on the local context, site designations, history, nature and make-up of the park, standards of maintenance to be achieved and future development plans and issues.

The plan is a working document and informs all those with an interest about management, maintenance and future development issues. It is written for a wide audience including stakeholder groups, park maintenance teams, development and technical officers, LBC planners, local residents and Green Flag judges.

The Stockwood Discovery Centre set a benchmark in relation to building design and which future management and development of the park aims to achieve. The plan sets out the broad direction and guidelines for future maintenance and development of the park, taking into account its historic and natural features. It sets out how this process will be financed and managed and considers the potential for sourcing funding to restore elements of the original park landscape. This is therefore a key document and is the 10 year plan subject of a review at 5 yearly intervals. Reviews of the plan have the input of the Friends of Luton's Parks and Greenspaces, a Luton wide group with an interest in Luton's green space.



D. A Brief History of the Site

Stockwood Park has always had close historical connections with Luton. The Rotherham family, which rose to national prominence at the end of the fifteenth century, once owned the land but subsequently sold it to Richard Crawley in 1708.

In 1712 Richard Crawley and his family moved to Stockwood but in 1740 the old house was destroyed by fire and a new Stockwood House was built and completed for the marriage of John Crawley and a young heiress, Susanna Sambrooke.



(Photograph by kind permission of Malcolm Randall, Luton South Conservations Society)

It was at this time that the estate was laid out in the traditional parkland style with copses and trees to create pleasant vistas for the family and their guests as they walked around the estate. A ha-ha was constructed between the house and the parkland to provide uninterrupted views of the estate from the house; some sections of this ha-ha still remain.

Subsequent generations of the family occupied the house until 1939 after which it was used as the Queen Alexandra's Hospital for sick children (re-located from London because of the war). During all this time, the landscape of the wider estate remained largely unchanged since it was originally laid out in the 18th Century. Luton Borough Council bought the estate in 1945 and over the next few years the football and rugby pitches were created in the flatter northern parts of the park.

In 1958, due to the inappropriateness of the house for improving medical developments, the hospital was closed and by 1964 the house had fallen into disrepair and was all demolished apart from the stable block and the walled gardens. In 1986 management of Stockwood House came under the management of Luton Borough Council's, Leisure and Cultural Services and a museum was officially opened to the public in July of that year.

In the late 1960's/early 1970's the athletics track and golf course were created. With its fairways, bunkers and additional tree planting, the golf course has introduced significant changes to the landscape but all of the old copses have been retained as part of the new landscape.

In 1991 a new building was constructed to house the Mossman Carriage collection and a shop area and gallery was built around a 16th century timber framed house rescued from Park Street in the centre of Luton.

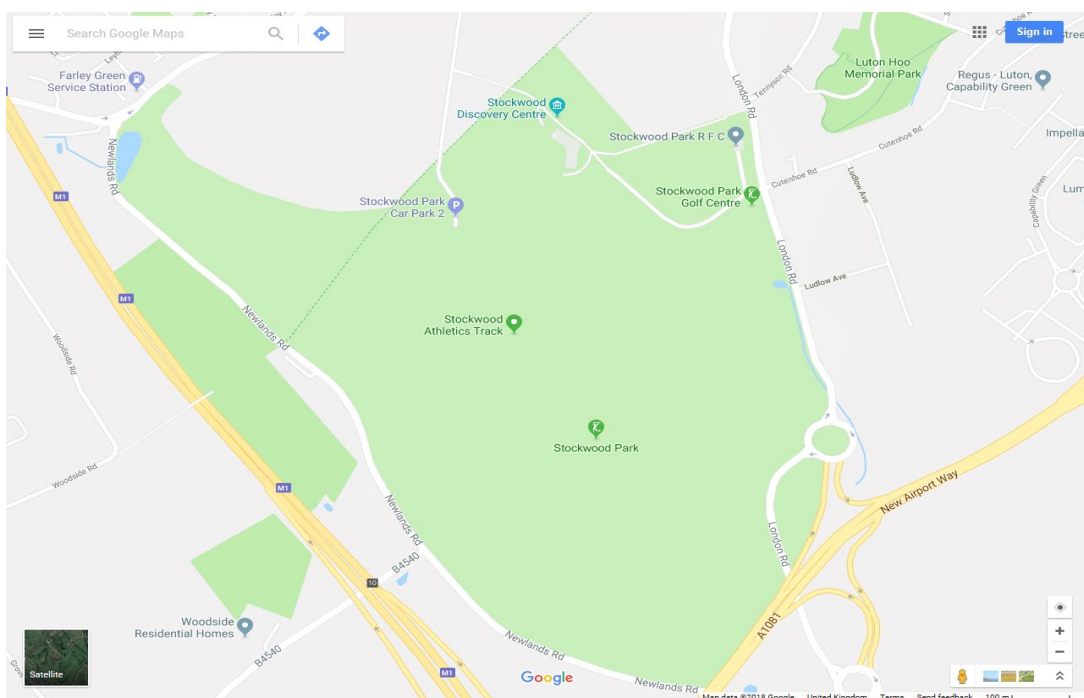
Luton Borough Council secured funding from Heritage Lottery Objective 2 and The East of England Development Agency to develop a regionally significant educational facility. The £6m Stockwood Park Discovery Centre substantially improved the museum and introduced the world gardens and an improved visitor experience to the park.

E. Site Location

Stockwood Park is located in South Ward at the southern end of Luton it is bordered by roads on four of its five sides. The fifth (south east) boundary borders farm land. There is adjacent housing along the North West (Farley Hill) boundary and the eastern (London Road) boundary. The north eastern boundary borders large properties on Whitehill Avenue.

The park provides District Park facilities for the South Wards and the District and Neighbourhood park facility for the Farley Hill estate. Both communities have good access to the park by foot, bicycle and car.

There is good access from the M1 motorway via junction 10a which is important for the sustainability of the Stockwood Discovery Centre, an educational facility of Regional importance.



F. Vision Statement

The Vision for Stockwood Park has been developed taking account the views of the various stakeholders consulted during the preparation of the plan and the strategic direction identified in the Green Space Strategy. The vision was subject of a review by the Luton friends of Parks and Green Space in 2016.

THE VISION

The vision is for a park highly regarded and supported by residents as a site of locally valued multifunctional green space and historical importance with good quality sports, recreational and heritage facilities. A park in a natural setting, providing a quality visitor experience in a safe, well-maintained environment and offering open space for a range of healthy pursuits and family activities. A site with valuable wildlife habitats, veteran trees and good access to the countryside.

G. Brief to the Management of the Park

The Parks and Countryside Service which is part of Luton Borough Council's Inclusive Economy Directorate manage and maintain parks, open spaces and outdoor sports provision in Luton.

We maintain all of our parks and opens spaces to the standards laid out in the Green Space Quality Manual provided by the London Benchmarking Group to which we subscribe (A copy of this can be provided upon request).

The manual is a guidance document to assist with the setting, maintaining and improving quality standards across our parks and although it is not a technical manual, it is aimed at using common sense principles.

The management plan provides a strategic overview of how the park should be managed to ensure that it meets the needs of the local communities and protects the important historic and natural character of the park. This is important to guide the management and development of the park so that it does not, over time, lose the key characteristics of the site.



H. Mission Statement for the Parks and Countryside Service

The Parks and Countryside Service is committed to creating and maintaining a safe, healthy and clean environment within the parks, facilities and open space provision in Luton and to improving both the quality of the environment, the recreational amenities and the enhancement of the lives of those who live and work within the borough.

The service seeks to ensure that all its activities have regard and are referenced to Luton Borough Council's Corporate Objectives and Vision.

The aims of the Parks and Countryside Service are:

- Plan, develop and promote a diverse and balanced leisure use, achieving the maximum benefit for all parks and open space users.
- To conserve and enhance the natural environment and ecological balance in parks taking into account the sustainable needs of the environment and wider community.
- Provide excellent and best value services to all customers.
- To increase, broaden and encourage community involvement and participation in the planning and managing of parks facilities, increasing significantly public awareness of the value of parks.
- To understand and respond to issues of public safety and community concern that relate to parks.
- To maximise support for park development and maintenance through external funding opportunities.
- To provide adequate levels and distribution of parks and open spaces.

I. Aims and Purposes of the Site

Stockwood Park provides the local community with an area of aesthetically pleasing open space and opportunities to experience a more natural environment that is not found in other local parks. The park offers free access to opportunities for pursuit of a range of outdoor leisure and social activities. It provides a place for local people of all ages to meet, walk, sit, play and enjoy a natural environment in the County Wildlife Site.

The strategic plan for provision identifies that People's Park should offer the following range of quality open space facilities to local households within a 300 metre radius:

- Large open area of grassland to accommodate informal recreation
- Children's play area
- Teenage provision
- Quiet areas for contemplation
- Seating
- Circulation paths
- Natural area
- Car parking

1.0 A WELCOMING PLACE

Luton Borough Council takes pride in their parks and open spaces and strives to ensure Stockwood Park is a welcoming place for local people and visitors to the town. The park offers the opportunity to host large events throughout the year.

1.1 Welcome

Analysis of the Park Users online survey reports that 67% of the people that use the site visit it more than once a week. This suggests that the site is perceived to be a welcoming place and that people are encouraged to return on a regular basis.

1.2 Good and Safe Access

The park currently has two main entrances (London Road and Farley Hill). In addition, there is a vehicle/pedestrian access for the allotments (also off London Road), pedestrian access from Newlands Road, Whitehill Avenue and from Farley Hill. The London Road access has excellent links to major routes (i.e. the M1 at J10a and the A1081/A505 to the east)

Improvements to park access were realised as part of the Discovery Centre project. These included the extension of the route into the park from London Road and provision for parking of coaches.

There are two public Rights of Way (RoW) associated with the park. The historic Lawn Path runs diagonally across the park, south west from Whitehill Avenue to Newlands Road. When the estate was in private ownership it was fenced on both sides to prevent the public from having access to any other part of the estate. It is now unfenced and surfaced. These RoWs provide an accessible route for adjacent local communities to access this District Park. The other RoW runs west from the Farley Hill access road to Farley Hill. It is partly surfaced and forms part of the new multi-user/cycle route through the park from the allotments entrance in London Road.

There are good links to the countryside Rights of Way network to the west via the Newlands Road entrance. The council promote links to other green spaces in the area including a series of heritage and health walks in and around the park taking in Kidney Wood and Memorial Park to the east and Winsdon Hill to the north. Leaflets produced by Luton Borough Council and Sustrans show the routes that include Stockwood Park. On Tuesday's, Sustrans carry out health walks from the MIND centre in the town centre up to the park where participants can purchase refreshments before making their way back to the town centre. On occasions and weather permitting, there is a health walk on a Thursday which also visits this park.

The park has a total of 7 car parks. Apart from the golf centre car park, park visitors are allowed to park in whichever car park is most convenient to them. This appears to provide sufficient capacity for 'normal' daily and weekend visitor number. For large events, a joint management group, with the permission of the Parks and Countryside Service, designates an agreed area of the park for additional parking.

1.1.1 Access Improvements

- Access improvements undertaken at Stockwood Park include:
- Increased range of events in the park
- Improved car parks
- Increased seating
- Improved lighting
- Provision of toilets
- Better signage

A separate pedestrian route from the Farley Hill Road entrance continues to be an aspiration. Further improvements identified are included in the Action Plan (see section 12).

1.3 Graffiti Removal

As part of our aim to make the borough safe, green and clean, we are committed to removing graffiti as soon as practicable. If the graffiti is of a racist or offensive nature, this is removed within 24 hours of it being reported. If it is too large for our Play Area Technicians, our central Street Cleansing Team will remove it.

Our team of Play Area Technicians are responsible for the removal of such vandalism and do so without the use of chemicals in order to minimise the impact on the environment.

1.4 Signage and Interpretation

The main entrances (London Road and Farley Hill) have colourful branded 'Stockwood Park' signage and maps of the park are located at the London Road entrance, the entrance to the Discovery Centre and at the picnic area in the park.

The Discovery Centre has excellent signage throughout and the Heritage Health Walk route includes a number of informative interpretation boards.

Leaflets relating to the park and its facilities are available from the Discovery Centre.

Other pedestrian/cycle entrances and routes through the park have the standard blue signage and in addition to this, there are traditional style 'multi-finger' iron posts and maps of the park displayed at the picnic area and the London Road entrance.

A great deal of interpretive information is available in The Stockwood Discovery Centre about the Stockwood estate and its historical uses and a large interpretation board at the entrance provides a map of the park. In addition, there are interpretation boards on the route of the Heritage & Health Walks and leaflets and booklets about the history of the park/estate are available in The Discovery Centre gift shop.



Work to revisit and update the Interpretation Plan for the park which was developed as part of the HLF Discovery Centre project is one of the future projects to be considered to publicise the parks' heritage, biodiversity and various facilities to as wide a range of potential visitors as possible. This may include review of park layout plans, publicity material, interpretation boards and events. This will ensure that visitors are made aware of the full range of attractions and facilities which the park offers and that they have an enjoyable and rewarding experience when they visit.

1.5 Pathways

Our pathways are inspected at regular intervals as they also fall under our infrastructure remit. When an issue arises in relation to our paths, our Play Area Technicians are deployed to the site to carry out an immediate inspection and arrange for repairs to be carried out based on a priority level due to budget restraints.

1.6 Issues

1.6.1 Junction 10a Improvements

Luton Borough Council has implemented the improved Junction 10a of the M1 Motorway. This project is important to the economic regeneration of the town.

The new road layout and roundabout adjacent are situated adjacent to Kidney Wood (London Road) and this lead to some loss of park land and a realignment of the golf course.

However, mitigation in relation to the project has delivered improvements to access and local biodiversity including a health and restoration project.

1.6.2 Vandalism and Anti-Social Behaviour

There is very little vandalism on the site. Occasional nuisance behaviour includes unauthorised off road motorcycles.

1.6.3 Unauthorised Encampments

Unauthorised encampments occasionally appear in Stockwood Park. Procedures are in place to deal with this particular problem in conjunction with bailiffs employed by the council and the local police to ensure that encampments are removed as soon as possible.

Due to the high volume of travellers that illegally encamped in Stockwood Park last year, additional security and prevention methods were installed which appears to have deterred further larger encampments this year.

1.7 Equal Access for All and Pedestrian Safety

A multi-user route from London Road, next to the allotments provides a vehicle free access from London road to the Discovery Centre and the wider network of paths within the park. There is currently no separation of pedestrians and vehicles arriving via the Farley Hill entrance. On event days, the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) requires organisers to include measures to address this.

The Parks and Countryside Service has used differential mowing to create pedestrian routes through the grassed areas to help alleviate this.

2.0 HEALTHY, SAFE AND SECURE

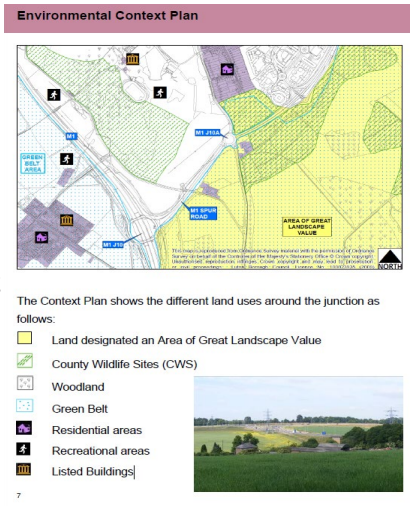
Health and safety is a high priority for Luton Borough Council's Parks and Countryside Service and therefore we take pride in ensuring that all visitors to our parks feel safe and secure when using our facilities.

In addition to this, all council staff working in parks and green spaces is clearly identifiable by their council uniform. This helps establish a sense of presence in the park and aid members of the public to identify the people that can help them.

Upon analysis of the park user survey, none of the users feel unsafe when visiting Stockwood Park; they all either feel safe or very safe which is evidenced in the appendices.

2.1 Child Protection

Luton Borough Council has a safeguarding policy and training programme that all staff are invited to attend outlining child protection uses and staff responsibilities.



Excerpt from J10a Exhibition Leaflet

All personnel likely to come into contact with children or vulnerable adults are DBS checked and a copy of their certificate is held on their personnel file.

2.2 Health & Safety Policies

Luton Borough Council takes a proactive and comprehensive approach to the management of health and safety in parks including:-

- Every employee reads and signs the Council's Health and Safety Policy; a copy of which is held on their personnel file.
- Training needs are identified via the council's 'Check-In' procedure (Appraisal)
- Copies of training certificates are held on their individual files as well as on the central recording system (I-Trent).
- The council has a Health and Safety Manager who is supported by 2 Health and Safety Advisers, and they are responsible for recommending, updating and implementing health and safety policies for all employees within Luton Borough Council.
- All employees undergo regular health checks including hand and arm vibration assessments and hearing tests via the corporate Occupational Health Team.
- A Lone Working policy is in place to protect employees.

2.3 Legislative Issues

In the course of managing Stockwood Park the Luton Borough Council's Parks and Countryside Service must take account of the requirement to ensure that a number of statutory duties are undertaken:-

- **The councils duty to ensure Health and Safety in relation to Parks and Open Spaces**
- **This includes tree inspections, play site inspections, inspection of grounds within the Parks responsibility.**
- **The council as a principal litter authority has a statutory duty to undertake cleansing activities under Section 89 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.**
- **Section 40 of the Natural built Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 imposes a duty on local authorities to have regard for conservation and biodiversity.**

In addition, there is a requirement to comply with the following legislative issues:

- **COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health)**
- **Pesticide Legislation**
- **Planning Policy Guidance 17**
- **New European Playground Standards (BS EN 1176, BS EN 1177)**
- **Reduction in Green Waste Targets**
- **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)**
- **Race Relations Amendments Act**
- **Health and Safety at Work Act**

2.4 Appropriate Provision of Quality Facilities and Activities

A dedicated team of Play Area Technicians are qualified in Playground Standards, maintenance and health and safety.

They are responsible for carrying out regular play area inspections which are recorded on our Down To Earth Play database which holds a record of all play equipment, play equipment specifications and reports of damaged/broken equipment and surfacing.

All issues raised are recorded on the council's reporting system (APP also known as Flare) and the issues are assigned to the relevant officer for a response where the area is then either repaired or the area is made safe.

Requests to hold event area assessed and applications are supported with the risk Assessment procedures required. Approval is given when these have been completed and returned to a satisfactory standard.

2.5 Safe Equipment and Facilities

Play area inspections are carried out quarterly by our Play Area Technicians who inspect each piece of equipment on every Luton Borough Council owned play area and report their findings by means of inspection sheets.

All of our play equipment meets the European Standard for play equipment (EN1176) and our play area surfaces meet the European Standard for play surfacing (EN1177).

- Members of public can also report issues of this nature by contacting our Customer Services department on 01582 546000, our mobile app which can be downloaded as <http://environment.luton.gov.uk/reports/home>, Twitter (@lutoncouncil) or (<https://twitter.com/lutoncouncil>) or Fix My Street <https://www.fixmystreet.com/>

Sports pavilions are regularly used by a variety of sports clubs and therefore regular inspections are carried out at all sites 3 times a week. Inspections include repair issues, water quality, tests for Legionella, fire alarms and a wide range of other health and safety issues.

2.6 Community & Personal Security

All operatives working for the Parks and Countryside Service undertake an important visible staff presence when on site and carrying out their maintenance work by means of Luton Borough Council uniform with a branded logo, high visibility outerwear and carry identification badges.

In addition to this, Luton Borough Council have local Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the council has a Neighbourhood Enforcement Team who have community safety accredited powers (the first in Bedfordshire).

Their role is to ensure residents and visitors respect the local environment including our parks and open spaces. They will also provide additional support in areas where anti-social behaviour has been identified.

2.7 Control of Dogs/Dog Fouling

Dog fouling is one of the most offensive types of litter which is why the Parks and Countryside Service has a dedicated litter crew who are also responsible for emptying dog waste bins and clearing dog fouling from parks and open spaces. This task is carried out several times per week and at the weekends during the summer months and our bins are identified as suitable for wrapped dog waste.



Park users are more aware of the fines now if caught allowing their dog to foul and are increasingly proactive in terms of using the dog bins that are site. The council's Enforcement Officers utilise the Keep Britain Tidy campaign materials to reduce the number of incidents.

Stockwood Park is very popular with dog walkers, the majority of whom are responsible and considerate when they visit the park but there is the occasional problem of dog faeces on games pitches which is kept to a minimum. The Dog Warden Service provides a visual deterrent and advises dog owners of the requirements in relation to dog fouling.

3.0 WELL MAINTAINED AND CLEAN

As a Parks and Countryside Service we take pride in our parks and green spaces and therefore like to ensure they are well always maintained and clean. Appearance is of the upmost importance as is cleanliness and hygiene. A parks user survey that has been carried out, this is one of the factors the public see before they enter a park or open space.

Evidence from the Park User online survey shows that almost all of the people that visit the site find the standard of cleanliness fair or above.

3.1 Litter and Waste Management

Luton Borough Council has a Waste Management Strategy (2016-2026) which is adhered to by the Parks and Countryside Service. This equates to litter clearance and emptying the bins several times per week. During the summer months, the Parks and Countryside Service has a dedicated litter team who carry out this task more frequently including weekends due to the increased use by parks users, event organisers and visitors. These teams consist of both permanent and seasonal staff in order to meet the demands of the service.

Luton Borough Council is dedicated to recycling 100% of its green waste, especially within the Parks and Countryside Service. They have a contract with the Waste Management Division to reduce the waste generated in Luton to a minimum.

Fly-tipping, graffiti and broken glass is dealt with on a response basis and cleared immediately as this is the most effective course of action in preventing an escalation of the problem.

3.1.1 Fly Tipping

Our reporting system shows that between January to December 2017 Luton Borough Council Parks and Countryside Service only received 1 report if fly tipping within Stockwood Park and this was as a result of travellers which were on site for a minimal amount of time. This was cleared by our staff immediately after the travellers left the site.

3.1.2 Recycling

The following recycling bins can be found located Stockwood Park Rugby Club:

- 3 x 1000 litre glass bin
- 2 x 1100 litre mixed dry recycling
- 1 x textile bank

3.2 Horticultural Maintenance

Maintenance standards are carried out as per the Green Space Quality manual (2024). Although the Parks and Countryside Service are responsible for the management of the parks across the borough, the Discovery Centre Gardens is the responsibility of the Luton Cultural Trust staff that transferred from the Parks and Countryside Service a few years ago and are supported by volunteers.

3.3 Arboricultural Maintenance

The Parks and Countryside Service Arboricultural Officers are responsible for the management and maintenance of the council’s tree stock. The strategic approach to tree management is currently subject of review. It is policy that **all** trees on council owned property are deemed to be protected. The council’s Arboricultural Officer only recommends removal where there is a health and safety concern.

The service utilises the computer software, ArboTrack to assist in the management of the town’s tree stock. The system is linked to a Graphical Information System (GIS) and enables records of tree inspections to be recorded on site via hand-held tablets.

The Parks and Countryside Service are currently working closely with Treework Environmental to review the Luton Tree Strategy in order to align more closely with the Environment/Climate Change Strategy. This policy is now available on [our website](#).

3.4 Building and Infrastructure Maintenance

3.4.1 Building Maintenance - Council buildings in Parks are managed via the council’s Property and Construction department and is the responsibility of the Parks and Countryside Service in-house team to ensure they are clean and well maintained.

3.4.2 Infrastructure Maintenance - All play areas are regularly checked by our Play Area Technicians as outlined above (2.1 Appropriate Provision of Quality Facilities and Activities). These inspections allow the Parks and Countryside Service to provide a continued high standard of safety and cleanliness as well as extending the life expectancy of the equipment.

A full and up to date list of play equipment and specifications is held by the Parks and Countryside Service Play Area Technicians who undertake regular inspections in line with the Play Area Inspection procedure laid out in the Parks and Countryside Service Quality Management System. A copy of the inspection sheet is shown below.

There are two play areas in the park; the first is (LBC site no.13) which is located near the centre of the park at the end of the main avenue from Farley Hill Road. The play area is fenced with bow top railings and has one gate. It has a good range of equipment installed at two levels with a natural fall in level of about 1 metre between the two. This play area provides the following facilities:-



Play Equipment

- Swings (Flat and Cradle)
- Slide
- Bespoke Sit-On Wagon
- Climbing Units for Various Ages
- Spring Rocker

Ancillary Items

- Benches
- Litter Bins
- Signs
- Gates
- Safety Surfacing
- Seating

The picnic area adjacent to the play area also includes some natural play.

The location of the existing play area is very close to the historic ha-ha which would have separated the house and gardens from grazing cattle. A quality audit undertaken by Clive Payne Consultancy identified that in order to fully meet the needs of the local community, Stockwood Park should provide both the District and Neighbourhood Park facilities to serve the Farley Hill Estate. It is therefore a long-term aspiration that the play facility be relocated to Farley Fields; the playing fields adjacent to Farley Hill Road to ensure that the park can better meet the needs of the adjacent community in the Farley Hill Estate.

A RoSPA report rates the site as Medium Risk and Partially Accessible in relation to its suitability for disabled users. Fully DDA compliant facilities are included in the Stockwood Discovery Centre.

Annual inspections of all play facilities are undertaken by Zurich Insurance and our own Playground Technicians also carry out play equipment inspections every 3 months which are then recorded on a database provide by DTE. Our staff also carry out the inspection on behalf of the Discovery Centre for the area they provide to the public with concerns highlighted if required as we are not responsible for their upkeep but advise where required.

INSPECTION/ACTION SHEET FOR PLAY SITES LUTON BOROUGH COUNCIL		DATE TIME INSPECTOR SITE No: 13. Stockwood Park	
PLAY COMPONENT & SAFETY SURFACE	SAFE & SECURE	FAULT	IMMEDIATE ACTION TAKEN
1. Approach to Site			
2. Signs (x1)			
3. Gates (x1)			
4. Fencing			
5. Bins (x2)			
6. Seats (x2)			
7. Surfacing Tarmac Path			
8. Bark			
9. Rubber Tiles			
10. Swings (8SA) (x2 Sets) – Cradle			
11. Swings (8F & 10F) a) 8F Cradle b) 10F Flat			
12. Slide Stand Alone			
13. Chuckwagon			
14. Climbing Unit (Hoops)			
15. Spring Rockers (x3) a) Cray Nellie b) Crazy Hen c) Ziggy			
16. Wooden Horse			
17.			

18.				
19.				
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25.				

Sheet Checked		Date:	
ITEM	RECTIFICATION	WORK COMPLETED	DATE

VANDALISM COST	

ITEM	Additional Comments

3.5 Equipment Maintenance

Well maintained equipment is critical to the health and safety of our operatives, users of the park.

- All staff are appropriately trained in the use and maintenance of equipment.
- Adequate risk assessments have been prepared for all equipment and are updated where required. These are accessible to all personnel and held in the head office.
- Machinery will only be always operated by trained staff and to the required specification with safety guards in place.
- All staff must wear the appropriate uniform and personal protective equipment whilst at work.
- Vehicles and machinery are maintained to a high standard by our Fleet Department in order to prevent inefficient running and potential leaks of harmful substances
- Fuel and other materials are secured and stored in agreed storage containers/areas.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Luton Borough Council approach to the natural and built environment and meeting responsibilities in relation to minimising waste and pollution is as follows:-

4.1 Managing Environmental Impact

Management and maintenance of Stockwood Park by the Parks and Countryside Service has regard to the council's Corporate Policy, their Environmental Strategy and to a number of other key documents including:-

- Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) (www.bedscape.org.uk/BRMC/newsite/index.php?c=bedslife_bap)
- Stronger Community in Luton 2019-2023 (<https://lutonbc.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/sites/chief-executive/Shared%20Documents/SCS/Stronger-Communities-Strategy.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=LKoWMr>)
- The Green Space Strategy Review 2014 www.luton.gov.uk/Environment/Lists/LutonDocuments/PDF/Planning/Local%20Plan/Greenspace%20strategy%20review%20report.pdf

The Parks and Countryside Service continues to work to meet the requirements of these key documents by minimising the impact of the service on the environment. Where possible, parks vehicle use dual fuel using LPG and diesel products which have reduced levels of particulates.

4.2 Chemical Use

The Parks and Countryside Service no longer uses herbicides and pesticides in the general park maintenance regime and where chemical application is required it is done so in strict accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and is fully justified.

4.3 Peat Use

The Parks and Countryside Service avoids using peat or products containing peat where possible.

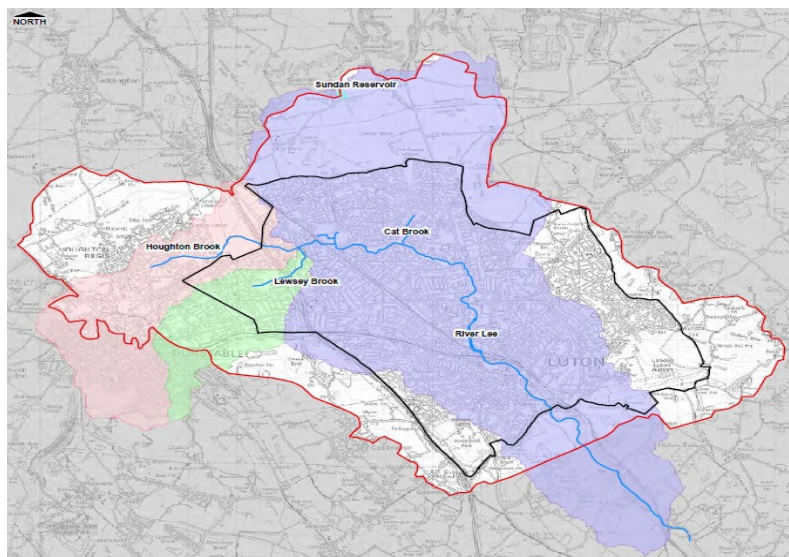
4.4 Climate Change Adaption Strategies

The Luton Local Plan takes into account all adaption strategies relating to climate change including the effects of:-

- Environmental impact of development
- Landscape setting
- Biodiversity
- Historic environment
- Design
- Water resources
- Pollution and contamination

The above issues are all taken into consideration throughout the planning process to ensure developments protect and enhance the natural and historic environment of Luton with none/minimal adverse effects to wildlife and biodiversity.

Luton Borough Council has a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which includes the latest adaption strategies. Lewsey brook which runs through the park is a tributary of the River Lea. It is the responsibility of the Environment Agency to coordinate the management of any flood risks from the watercourses across the area.



Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Map

The QEII Playing Fields award gives the park a higher level of protection in relation to the local planning policy. Planting trees assists with flood alleviation.

5.0 BIODIVERSITY, LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE

Luton Borough Council recognises the importance and value of nature conservation and the need to protect and enhance the green network as well as the heritage of its sites.

Stockwood Park is important parkland and local landscape within the borough of Luton and has very rich mosaics of habitat and should therefore be protected. The park is home to an area of extensive ancient woods as well as mature veteran trees with a rich and varied ecology; described as being set in an eighteenth century 'romantic' landscape.

5.1 Management of Natural Features, Wild Fauna and Flora

The Parks and Countryside Service refers to the Greenspace Quality Manual which was developed by the London Benchmarking Group. It applies these standards to all areas of the park

5.1.1 Wildlife

In 2008, staff working within the grounds of the Discovery Centre carried out a survey of the birds that frequent the park on a regular basis and the list is as follows:-

Mistle Thrush	Spotted Flycatcher	Swallow
Song Thrush	Goldcrest	Great Spotted Woodpecker
Blue Tit	Chiff Chaff	Green Woodpecker
Coal Tit	Garden Warbler	Little Owl
Great Tit	Blackcap	Wood Pigeon
Long Tailed Tit	Wren	Cotton Gull
Nuthatch	Duncock	Pheasant (Male)
Treecreeper	Crow	Kestrel
Chaffinch	Jay	Sparrow Hawk
Green Finch	Magpie	Collar Dove
Gold Finch	Starling	* Herring Gull
Blackbird	Pied Wagtail	*Redwing
Robin	House Martin	*Lapwing
		*Kite
		*Only frequent the park occasionally

This list will undoubtedly be different today with the likes of the Spotted Flycatcher and Garden Warbler becoming rarer and Kites and Buzzards becoming more common.

5.1.2 County Wildlife Site (CWS) and Other Wildlife Areas

An area of approximately 40 ha of the park (approx 40%) is designated as County Wildlife Site and has nature conservation value (see appendix 1 (existing Stockwood Park CWS)). A vegetation survey of the whole site (see appendix 3) summarised its character as:

“The site consists of a large area of parkland on clay-with-flints and upper chalk containing neutral and calcareous grassland of varying quality, ranging from extensive areas of close-mown amenity grassland to species-rich communities on the roughs of the golf course in the south west of the park that have been previously identified as a CWS. The park also contains numerous scattered mature and over-mature trees copses of broad-leaved and mixed woodland and ponds.”

The copses date from when the estate was first laid out. A number of the ‘over mature trees’ (25) were identified in an additional survey, carried out at the same time as being biologically significant trees (see appendix 3).

Nearly all of the CWS is within the area covered by the golf course, the exception being a small area of approximately 4 ha in the western corner of the park. It is planned to develop management guidelines for the CWS to assist the golf course Manager to manage the roughs for biodiversity.

Other areas of biodiversity interest include a long narrow woodland strip (approximately 0.5 ha) between the allotments and London Road, Cutenhoe Pond adjacent to London Road and boundary hedgerows.

5.2 Conservation of Landscape Features

- The stable block adjacent to the car park, now incorporated into the Discovery Centre.
- The historic walled garden and period garden areas associated with the house.
- The ha-ha, now mostly filled in, which was constructed to the south of the house (part of it can still be seen near the children’s playground).
- The lodge house at the Farley Hill entrance, now in private occupation but still an important visual element at the park entrance.
- Lawn Path, the ancient right of way running through the park, previously grass, now tarmac.
- The original parkland trees of Ancient Tree classification and copses which gave structure and visual unity to the landscape and provide valuable habitats for wildlife.
- Historic trees of veteran classification, boundary wall and some lodge gate entrances around the periphery of the park.

The assessment also notes that there was once an ice-house in the park but that there are now no visible remains of this.

The assessment notes that these features all reflect the historic nature of the park and should be managed accordingly and interpreted so that visitors are made aware of their value and importance and the historic value of the park. Work to achieve this is ongoing.



This photograph (right) was provided by kind permission of Malcolm Randall, Luton South Conservation Society

5.2.1 Landscape Management and Maintenance

A number of different organisations contribute to the management of the park. Apart from the Rugby Club, each resident organisation is responsible for managing its own leased area (but as required by their appropriate leases). The Parks and Countryside Service manages the football and rugby pitches, allotments, informal recreational areas and car parks and is responsible for tree works in all areas of the park.

In order to protect the Heritage and Biodiversity interest on the site, appropriate surveys are undertaken where required in advance of development projects (e.g. bats, breeding birds). The development of management objectives for the County Wildlife Site (CWS) and other sites of wildlife interest is required to ensure that management is appropriate.

A number of future projects to restore original features of the park have been identified and these include surveys of the boundary wall (Newlands Road), original gateway features and the original extent of the ha-ha, to assess the likely costs of reinstatement, either in their own right or as part of a larger parkland restoration project. This work would provide the evidence base to support and identify appropriate funding sources.

The old stable block and walled gardens have been restored as part of the Discovery Centre development. The plan identifies future projects to continue this restoration of the historic elements of the park such as restoration of the entrances to the ha-ha and boundary wall either in their own right or as part of a larger parkland restoration project.

In 2016, the Parks and Countryside Service were able to complete grass cutting every 3 weeks but it is hoped that from 2017, with the aid of an additional grass cutting gang, this regime can be reduced to every 2 weeks on main areas and 3 weeks for cutting out.



(Photograph by kind permission of Malcolm Randal, Luton South Conservation Society)

5.3 Conservation of Buildings and Structures

The boundary wall was a low (approximately 1.5mtr) brick wall running south from the Newlands Road entrance to the southern end of the park, a distance of approximately 800 metres. Large sections of the wall no longer exist.

Of more recent historic interest is a second world war Pill box (Type 21) located near the park's London Road boundary. Although built as a robust structure this is showing signs of deterioration. It has recently been included on the Local List.



6.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Luton Borough Council is committed to involving the local community and providing opportunities for local people to participate and feed into the management decision making process.

The Parks and Countryside Service also has an online survey which informs management of how the park is perceived by residents, parks users and visitors to the site. This information is invaluable to the service as it provides feedback in relation to the needs of the community.

6.1 Community Involvement in Management and Development

Community involvement is always welcomed through both practical volunteer activities or by involvement in the management of the park via a variety of means. Practical volunteer activities are available at the Discovery Centre both in the gardens and in the exhibition and display rooms.

Signposts, a local homeless charity have also run clean up events in the park where a team in excess of 40 volunteers cleaned seats and signage, picked litter and cut epicormic growth from trees. This has taken place for a few years and continues to be an ongoing event.



The Cultural Services Team provided free lunch and drinks for each volunteer in recognition of their contributions.

In addition, the Parks and Countryside Service have facilitated a range of volunteer tasks including:

- Planting hedgerow whips
- Clearing debris from Cutenhoe Pond
- Hedge laying
- Tree planting
- Litter-picking

Currently opportunities for community involvement in the management of the park include:

- Area forums
- Meetings of Allotment Committee which is linked to the Stockwood Leisure Gardens Association
- Sports Club management committees
- Participation in The Discovery Centre visitor surveys
- Meetings of the Friends of Luton's Parks and Green Spaces group

- The community consultation initiative “Your Say, Your Way” which helps local people identify priorities for their area and then provides opportunities for local groups to develop projects to meet the priorities and take part in an event where local people vote for projects to receive funding.
- Involvement in the Farley Big Local project.

6.1.1 Information on Levels of Use

We run an annual [User Survey](#) from our website which provides data on park usage and where we can gather feedback from Parks Users. A copy of last year’s report for our parks can be available on request.

6.2 Description and Facilities

The park includes a wealth of landscape and historic features and sport and play facilities which add to the user experience and are managed by organisations resident in the park through appropriate land lease arrangements with the Council. Generally, the park is well maintained and attractive, retaining a great deal of its historic parkland character.

6.2.1 Areas for Informal Recreation

The park provides attractive areas of greenspace for informal recreation which are important to the local community as they can use them for walking, relaxation, family gatherings and informal games.



1. There is a tree lined avenue of veteran trees on either side of the drive which provides access from Farley Hill Road where vistas look out towards the Farley Hill estate and provide a real sense of place. Two large chainsaw sculptures (an owl and a squirrel) created from the trunks of oak trees which were felled can be seen on the drive.
2. A smaller area south of area 1 between the access road and the Discovery Centre gardens, with the historic Lawn Path dissecting it diagonally, south east/north west. The main interest here is also the veteran trees alongside the access road.
3. Another smaller area south of area 2, to the west of the access road and bordered by Lawn Path to the west incorporates a family friendly picnic area with natural play opportunities to enhance the visitor experience. There is a small area of green space on the other (south) side of the playground from which children playing in the playground can be observed.

These areas for informal recreation in total occupy approximately 7% of the park.

As highlighted in the Green Space Strategy 2014, there is a need to improve a number of path networks, circulation paths and through routes. Consultation undertaken by the Big Farley Local Project identified that this is a barrier to the Farley community, making effective use of their local park.

6.2.2 Walking and Cycling in the Park

The Council is keen to encourage walking and cycling to and within the park and is working with partners to complete a network of walking and cycling routes linking the park. Sustrans has included routes through the park in a local cycle leaflet which is widely distributed along with in their health walk leaflet.

There are a number of walking groups/ projects who regularly use the park e.g. Stopsley Striders and Walk the Talk.



The plan includes a requirement to investigate solutions to further improve the path network and to provide better access routes from the Farley estate working with the Farley Big Local project.

6.2.3 Stockwood Park Discovery Centre

www.lutonculture.com/stockwood-discovery-centre

Successful bids to Heritage Lottery Fund, Objective 2 and East of England Development Agency realised the Stockwood Discovery Centre, a facility of regional significance. The Centre incorporates the Mossman Collection, redevelopment and extension of the Period Gardens with historical, world gardens and environmental themes.



During works to establish this new facility in the park, Luton Borough Council created a new Cultural Services Trust which now manages the Stockwood Discovery Centre and the popular Couture cafe/restaurant in the park.

Displays in the Discovery Centre explore the history of the region from prehistoric times to the evolution of Stockwood House and the Farley estate. Other attractions include the Mossman carriages collection, the Bagshawe rural crafts collection, exhibition gallery, sculpture garden (incorporating sculptures by Ian Hamilton Finlay), restaurant, shop and children's play area.

The Centre is the hub of the park and provides new opportunities for the community to engage with the park through a varied events programme including daytime and evening classes in practical crafts and a programme of summer music events.

In the courtyard units, Luton Borough Council's Adult Social Care Services run a social enterprise for adults with learning and physical disabilities. In here they repair and recycle bicycles.

The Stockwood Discovery Centre is marketed as a regional attraction aiming to attract 125,000 people per year.

The gardening team at the Discovery Centre ensures that the high levels of garden maintenance care expected by visitors are maintained. The team also works with a number of regular volunteers who assist the team with the horticultural duties.

The Discovery Centre development included new technology including green roofs, timed lighting and biomass boilers to reduce the carbon footprint of the building.

6.2.4 Golf Centre and Golf Course

www.activeluton.co.uk/stockwood-park-golf-centre

The Golf Centre (see appendix 1) 18-hole golf course and more recently created junior golf academy occupy approximately 55 % of the park, including all of the southern half part of the park. Over half of the course is within the designated County Wildlife Site area. The golf course is one of the few municipal courses in the area and attracts golfers from a wide area. The Golf Centre is managed by The Active Luton Trust who also maintains the fairways and greens.



The council's Parks and Countryside Service, Arboricultural Officers provide advice on tree management and the council also advises on any priority works required. The golf course and greens are well managed and a course Development Plan currently in development provides an opportunity to consider how management can contribute to improving the biodiversity value of the County Wildlife Site. Key actions from this work will further inform the Stockwood Park Management and Development plan.

6.2.5 Athletics Centre

www.activeluton.co.uk/stockwood-park-athletics-centre

The Stockwood Park Athletics Centre is also managed by Active Luton Trust and is the home for the Luton Athletics Club. It is located in a natural bowl near the centre of the park (see appendix 1) and has an eight track class 1 (i.e. national standard) track with seating for about 200 people. Additional facilities include a weights gymnasium, a clubhouse and a full sized football pitch which is the 'home' ground of the Luton Town Ladies Football Club. A number of events are arranged throughout the year at Stockwood Park including 'Race for Life' and an annual 10k running event. There is good liaison with Luton Borough Council, Parks and Countryside Service who book events, ensure that licences are in place to enable events and liaise with other facilities in order to avoid conflicts. There are a total of approximately 20 athletics meetings a year and football games on most Sundays throughout the football season.



6.2.6 Stockwood Park Rugby Club

www.stockwoodparkrfc.co.uk

Stockwood Park Rugby Club is a private club which has played in the park for over 60 years and which has had its own clubhouse in the park for about forty years. It is located on the east side of the park, next to the London Road and is only a few minutes from Junction 10 M1 and the town centre. The club has use of four pitches, two of which are leased and two of which are rented on an 'as required' basis (see appendix 1).



The club has ample parking for both cars/coaches as there is an overflow car park. The entrance to the car park has a height restriction barrier which is maintained by the Parks and Countryside Service despite the club being privately owned.

The rugby club and associated pitches occupy approximately 5% of the park.

6.2.7 Farley Fields Football Pavilion and Pitches

The football pavilion and football pitches are located in an area of open space in the north western sector of the park; this area known as Farley Fields is located adjacent to the Farley Hill Estate. These are maintained by the Parks and Countryside Service staff and are inspected 3 x per week to ensure that they are fit for use and of a good standard for hire.

There are a total of 5 pitches; all of which are for adult use. This is the most open part of the park and important to the local community. It provides recreational space for organised sport, a range of informal recreational activities and events required of a local district park facility. The sports pavilion is accessible from the park via a track which leads from the car park off Farley Hill Road.

In addition to the football pitches, there is also 1 x Gaelic pitch and a total of 3 x rugby pitches which are available for hire through our Parks Facilities Unit.

6.2.8 Allotment and Leisure Gardens

www.sites.google.com/site/stockwoodallotments

The allotments and Leisure Gardens are located in the north eastern sector of the park (see appendix 1). Access is via an entrance off London Road.



The site is popular and there is a waiting list for plots. Some areas of the site are currently leased to the stables for grazing. These may be returned to allotment use at the end of the current lease due to increasing waiting lists.

The site is currently subject to a shared Management Agreement between Luton Borough Councils Parks and Countryside Service and the Luton Leisure Gardens Association.

A Parks and Countryside Service audit of allotment sites identified the need to improve some of the existing infrastructure including fencing and provide toilet facilities. New fencing was secured and the plot-holders secured funding for a compost toilet on the site which has been a great success.

The Service is also developing an Allotment Management Plan as part of a suite of strategic documents to inform management decision making in relation to local green space. Issues from the developing Allotment Management Plan that relate to the Stockwood Park Allotment and Leisure Gardens will be incorporated in future revisions of this management plan. The allotments occupy approximately 6% of the park.

6.2.9 Riding Stables

<http://www.baylands-equestrian.co.uk/>

The riding stables are located centrally between the Active Luton Golf Centre and the Stockwood Discovery Centre and have been operating since 1993. Prior to this, the stables were managed in-house by LBC and the current provider took over the lease in June 2008. Their lease also includes an exercise/training area and as riders become more competent, they are also allowed to ride around the park. In the future, the owner would like to offer carriage rides around the park. Through an arrangement with Luton BC Parks and Countryside Service, the stables also lease some areas of the allotments which they use for grazing. Discussions are currently taking place to consolidate these separate areas into one larger area to make the facility easier to manage for both parties.



6.2.10 Other Local Amenities

Stockwood Park is the largest, easily accessible green space and the District Park facility for people living in south Luton. There are two other smaller green spaces nearby. Memorial Park which is included in a Built Environment Conservation Area which serves communities in West Hill Road/Cutenhoe Road area and Kidney Wood, an area of semi-natural woodland with County Wildlife Site designation. These are both to the east of London Road, owned by the Council and include features of historical interest.

7.0 MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION

The Parks and Countryside Service employs a market-driven approach to marketing in order to find out what customers want from their local park. The council provides a range of online community channels that enables people to interact with each other and share information about events within the park, their experiences and provide feedback.

7.1 Marketing and Promotion

Promotion for Stockwood Park runs through many channels, including the social media and web presence of [the Culture Trust](#) and on the [Step Forward app](#) and web pages. We also have a monthly parks newsletter [which you can read and sign up to on our website](#). We also utilise the on-site noticeboards with information.

The Discovery Centre and the Golf Centre are the main focus of marketing in relation to Stockwood Park as these facilities draw in the majority of users. Both the Active Luton Trust and the Cultural trust have dedicated marketing officers. Parks events are given a high profile in LBC publications and via the LBC web pages. A range of leaflets relating to the parks facilities are available in the Discovery Centre.

7.2 Appropriate Information Channels

- Luton Borough Council provides a range of appropriate information channels that can be accessed by the public. These include:-
- Luton Borough Council webpage (www.luton.gov.uk)
- Facebook (www.facebook.com/lutoncouncil/)
- Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/lutoncouncil/?hl=en-gb>)
- Twitter (@lutoncouncil) or (<https://twitter.com/lutoncouncil>)
- Flickr (www.flickr.com/photos/lutonboroughcouncil/)
- You Tube (www.youtube.com/user/lutonboroughcouncil)

Each of the above sites are closely monitored by our Marketing and Communications team to ensure they are used appropriately and remove any contributions that break the rules or guidelines of the relevant community.

7.3 Events and Special Events

Many events and activities held at Stockwood Park are managed by our Parks Facilities Unit and although they are predominantly organised by external organisations wishing to use our open space as a venue, the Parks Facilities Unit closely monitor the use, ensure the correct legal documentation is provided (i.e. insurance/risk assessments) and provide access to the site at the time of the event.

7.3.1 Management of Events

Large events are generally well organised by the various resident organisations and local groups/communities. Each event is reviewed by our Parks Facilities Unit and the council's Safety Advisory Group (SAG) to ensure all necessary safety and security measures are in place for when the events takes place.

A range of regular events take place in Stockwood Park which include military style fitness classes, Luton primary and high schools cross country championships, car boot sales, Stanley Thurstons Fair and circuses. There are annual events which are held in Stockwood Park such as the annual country fayre, Eid prayers and festival and a range of circuses and the Luton Festival of Transport, Radio Rally and the Race for Life organised by MacMillan.

2024 also saw Stockwood Park hosting one of the biggest national events of the year in the Radio One's Big Weekend. A large amount of preparation work had to go into this, particularly in regard to protecting veteran trees. This event saw over 100,000 music fans attending a such a high-profile event.



7.4 Appropriate Education and Interpretation Information

It is important that general information about the park is available to the public including its history, development and purpose of any works that take place on the site, interpretation of the park features and provision of details about the facilities. It is also critical that the public are consulted upon and involved in any future proposed changes to management, maintenance or development of the park. Non-users also need consulting and this is carried out through use of Luton's Area Committees structure where the local community are invited to local Area Committee meetings on a quarterly basis to raise issues and respond to consultations.

8.0 MANAGEMENT

A Green Space Strategy Review was carried out by the Greensand Trust on behalf of Luton Borough Council which informed the Local Plan 2011-2031. This document highlights the importance of green spaces as well as setting appropriate standards of provisions.

As part of the ongoing management plan, the Parks and Countryside Service will submit an application to Keep Britain Tidy where it will be assessed against the Green Flag criteria in 2018; the feedback received from the judges will inform the management planning process for the future improvement and development of the park.

8.1 Staffing Structure

The Parks and Countryside Service benefits from a dedicated team of grounds maintenance and sports pitch marking staff that are trained to carry out the various maintenance tasks required within the park. The Parks Staffing Structure is a well-defined document which can be found in the appendices.

Since 2023 we have a dedicated Parks Team which manage the district and neighbourhood parks.

8.2 Quality and Performance



The Parks and Countryside Service measures performance using a number of external and internal performance systems including maintenance of an ISO (9001-2018) accredited Quality Management System since 2000 and benchmarking with other local authorities through the APSE (Association of Public Service Excellence) Performance Network.

The service is developing management and development plans for all of Luton's district and neighbourhood parks. The plans will set out the vision and purpose of each park and include an improvement action plan.

At an operational level, monthly area inspections are undertaken by the Parks Operations Manager and the Area Parks Officers who agree actions to resolve outstanding maintenance issues and resolve problems.

8.3 Training & Qualifications

As part of the Neighbourhood Services section of Luton Borough Council, the Parks and Countryside Service is committed to ensuring their employees are competent in undertaking a range of horticultural, arboricultural, conservation and grounds maintenance tasks where required.

The Parks and Countryside Service previously commissioned training related to the Green Flag Award, the national quality indicator for Parks and Open Spaces. The sessions were well received, and they included a practical element which allowed the delegates to undertake an assessment of a local park using the Green Flag criteria. It is anticipated that further training will be organised for new members of staff and as a refresher for those who have already completed the training previously.

The Parks and Countryside Service previously organised Veteran Tree Management, orchard creation and orchard restoration training for Parks employees and the Arboricultural Team.

The service currently has 1 apprentice.

8.4 Financial Management

Procurement is monitored as part of the quality management system and a team monitor all spend above £5000. Orders are raised on the central system called Authority Financials Purchasing (AFP). This allows the service to monitor and track expenditure. Any orders above the £5000 threshold have to be raised via our in-house Procurement Team following a stringent process in line with the UK law by the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

Procurement in Luton Borough Council was centralised in November 2015 whereby all spend requirements above £5000 are now managed by a team of skilled procurement professionals and orders are raised on the central system called Authority Financials Purchasing (AFP). This allows the council to monitor and track the Parks and Countryside Service expenditure in respect of maintenance on a park by park basis.

With a wide range of organisations and providers contributing to the park it is difficult to assess the total cost of the offer at Stockwood Park. The Parks and Countryside Service continuously reviews the service in light of the significant austerity measures so it is not yet clear what affect this may have on the service at Stockwood Park.

9.0 LINKED POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The future management and development of the park has to be considered within the context of the current and future policies and strategies, both regional as well as local. These include:-

- Luton Local Plan 2011-2031
- Luton Tree Policy and Tree Management Framework (2021-2031)
- Luton Investment Framework 2015-2035
- Luton Borough Council Corporate Plan 2021-2023
- Luton Green Infrastructure Plan
- Green Space Strategy Review (2014)
- Luton Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2016-2031
- Equal Opportunities Policy and Strategy (Luton Borough Council)
- Luton Strategic Vision for Sport & Physical Activity
- Playing Pitch Strategy for Luton Borough Council 2014-2021
- Environment/Climate Change Strategy

10.0 CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

This plan sets out the actions identified and prioritises them with a view to working towards achieving the vision for the park over the 10 year period 2020-2030.

WARDOWN PARK MANAGEMENT

PLAN APPENDIX 1:

Continuous Action Plan

Stockwood Park Continuous Improvement Action Plan 2024-2034

✓ = Achieved • = Planned

Action ID	Priorities 2019/2029	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	Who	Notes
1. A Welcoming Place														
		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		
1.1	Respond to issues from masterplan review		✓	•	•								All	
2. Healthy, Safe & Secure														
		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		
2.1	Install vehicle-free entrance route to Stockwood Park from Farley Hill	✓											Parks Service/ Highways	Completed
2.3	Remove older play area by back of Discovery Centre			•									Greenspace Manger	Planned
3. Well Maintained and Clean														
		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		
3.1	Improve the play facilities on Farley Fields	✓											LBC	Completed
3.2	Resolve issues with the Hamilton Finlay sculpture where sculpture is fixed to a decaying tree			•									Cultural Services Trust	As part of the Master-planning exercise
3.3	Replace bins over whole site			•									Operations Manager	Planned
3.4	Install dog poo signs in response to community complaints		✓										Operations Manager	Completed
4. Environmental Management														

		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		
4.1	Identify Veteran Tree Protection Zones in the park	✓											Arboricultural Officer	Report completed with recommendations
4.2	Create veteran tree management plan		✓	•									Arboricultural Officer	Underway
4.3	Deliver actions from veteran tree review		✓	•	•								Arboricultural Officer	Planned
4.4	Carry out sonic tomograph of selected trees on the site			•	•								Arboricultural Officer	Planned
5. Biodiversity, Heritage and Landscape														
		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		
5.1	Re-establish links with the Luton Heritage Forum	✓											Parks Service/ LFPGS	Ongoing
5.2	Seek funding to restore and interpret WWII Pill Box						•						LBC	Explored through Master Plan exercise
5.3	Seek funding to survey the ha-ha, boundary wall and entrance features to assess cost and consider their reinstatement						•						LBC	Explored through Master Plan exercise
6. Community Involvement														
		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		
6.1	Continue to provide support for the organisations and groups using Stockwood Park (e.g. Rugby Club, Culture Trust, Stables, Groundwork etc)	✓	✓	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	All staff	Ongoing
6.2	Support the Stockwood Park Allotment Association with administration and oversight where required	✓	✓	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Horticultural Supervisor	Ongoing
6.3	Complete Peace Garden Initiative tree planting of 104 trees as part of their community Covid memorial project	✓											Arboricultural Officer, Arboricultural Technician, Horticultural Coordinator	Completed

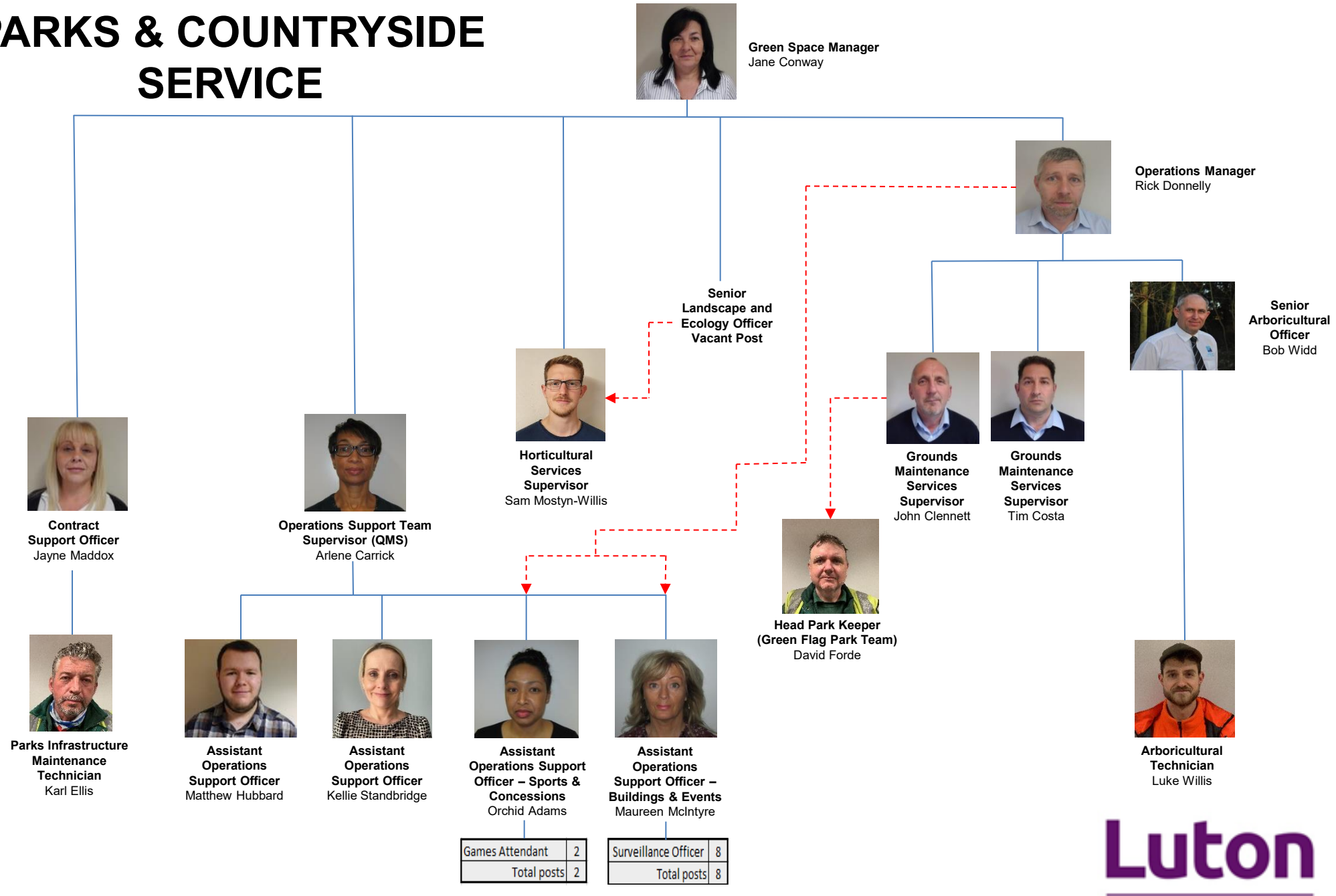
6.4	Carry out preparation works for the Radio One Big Weekend.	✓											Arboricultural officer, Greenspace Manager, Operations Officer, Ecology Officer	Completed – big success!
6.5	Put on guided walks in the park	✓											Horticultural Coordinator	Completed butterfly walks
6.6	Encourage events at the Discovery Centre to utilise the park and surrounds (e.g. Wildlife Trust walks, school trips etc)	✓	✓	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Operations Manager	Ongoing
6.7	Work with councillors and community to install 'Legend of the Bench'		✓										Parks Team	Completed
7. Marketing and Communication														
		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		
7.1	Continue to utilise the noticeboards and digital newsletter to promote the activities in the park	✓	✓	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Horticultural Coordinator	Ongoing
8. Management														
		24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34		
8.1	Application for Green Flag assessment	✓	✓	✓	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Horticultural Coordinator	Ongoing
8.2	Update Continuous Improvement Action Plan	✓	✓	✓	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Horticultural Coordinator	Ongoing
8.7	Parks Service staff to attend Green Flag Award training	✓											Parks Staff	Completed
8.3	5-year review of Management Plan		✓					•					Parks & Countryside Services	Completed
8.4	Review and update the Continuous improvement Action Plan as required	✓	✓	✓	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	Parks & Countryside Services	Completed

WARDOWN PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN

APPENDIX 3

Parks Service Organisational Structure

PARKS & COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE



2020 - 2030



Stockwood Park Management Plan

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