



CHIPPENHAM RIVERSIDE COUNTRY PARK

FUTURE MANAGEMENT

**DRAFT REPORT BY NATURAL ENGLAND AND WILTSHIRE COUNCIL - WORKING IN
PARTNERSHIP**

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Executive Summary

It has been a longstanding aspiration for Chippenham to better benefit from its location on the River Avon. The production of the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan is a significant step to achieving that goal. The draft Plan includes proposals for Country Parks along the valley, providing areas with long term protection. The intention is that the agricultural character and rural appearance of the area remain as is and enhanced where possible. The Plan proposals (Policy CH4) focus on greater public access to informal open space, new routes for walkers and cyclists and the enhancement of existing nature conservation interests.

This report was commissioned to provide answers to three key questions:

1. How should the country parks be managed?
2. What can the developers be expected to do?
3. How would they be funded?

This draft Plan can be seen as an important step toward realising community aspirations for the River Avon around Chippenham. More steps will follow and this report suggests what should happen next.

1. How should the country parks be managed?

The report recommends that management of the Country Parks should be delivered with separate governance arrangements for each of the green spaces but with an overarching Management Forum to foster partnership working and provide an element of community-led delivery. This would bring the following benefits:

- Enable trusted partnership arrangements to form between the management bodies at Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham and other existing bodies managing complimentary greenspaces.
- Provide an appropriate vehicle for the employment of a Countryside Ranger through funding contributions from the development of Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham who will oversee the implementation of management plan objectives at both Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham.
- Offer a simple mechanism for the local community to take an active role in the management and development of the Country Parks.

2. What can the developers be expected to do?

It is recommended that the largest Country Park areas, in the case of South West Chippenham, would transfer directly to a Community Interest Company. At Rawlings Green it would be necessary for the land to transfer to a Local Authority unless and until an arrangement is made similar to South West Chippenham.

The overall character and appearance of country parks would not radically change from the present. No significant lump sum investment is envisaged as a development cost. Necessary expenditure by a developer would be limited to ensure existing rights of way or new ones that may be necessary for connections to and from the development. There may also be measures to enhance biodiversity necessary to offset or mitigate impacts from development. Such measures will be a part of the master planning of each development proposal and directly delivered through the implementation of any planning consent.

Funding for the future maintenance of the areas will need to be agreed with each developer as a part of planning permission. Property management fees would be the main source of this funding at South West Chippenham. A commuted sum paid to Wiltshire Council would appear to be necessary at Rawlings Green, in accordance with established formula and would form an endowment. A different approach reflects the different stages reached by each developer and the very different size of country park that each is expected to provide. It is recommended that the Local Planning Authority seek a similar model to the one used at South West Chippenham, however this report addresses the proposals as currently being put forward. Funding from each developer will be necessary (around £20,000-30,000) to establish a Project Facilitation Team.

3. How would they be funded?

Developer costs of the Country Parks and funding contributions are envisaged to be reasonable and, in the case of the largest area, at South West Chippenham, relatively modest. There is also no significant or unrealistic financial burden on a Local Authority. Property management fees would be the main source of funding at South West Chippenham. Endowment interest is currently envisaged as the main source of funding at Rawlings Green. Pooled funding from endowment interest and management fees from each site would support a Countryside Ranger to oversee the development of the areas, including preparation of detailed management plans and the control of grazing rights. Together the Management Forum and Countryside Ranger will resource funding from external sources for capital projects over the longer term. Depending on the content of the management plan, Local Authority funding could be available to close funding gaps should they arise.

Recognising the River Avon valley will become a wider resource for the town than just its close association with the development of South West Chippenham and Rawlings Green, external funding will result in an equitable burden on residents, keeping fees to a minimum. Management involves minimum capital and modest revenue expenditure and the land would continue to have an agricultural income stream.

Next Steps

The planning process is a first part of managing new Country Parks. Master plans for each allocation would establish the site areas and some improvements that may be made by the developers themselves. Planning permission will see the land transferred to community ownership and funding provided for a Project Facilitation Team.

A Community Interest Company will be set up at South West Chippenham as residents start to move into the development. Similar arrangements may occur at Rawlings Green, but at present an endowment approach is recommended. A Management Forum will co-ordinate detailed management plans for each area and a Countryside Ranger will have responsibility for day to day management and the implementation of specific projects.

The report does not seek to provide all the detail for the delivery of the proposed country parks in Chippenham but provides a framework for how they can be delivered through co-operation between Wiltshire Council, Natural England, the developers and local interests (including town and parish councils). As the project proceeds detailed terms of reference for each tier of management, the scope of the project in terms of what may be included in the over arching management plan, individual activities appropriate to each country park and opportunities to access additional funding will emerge.

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1. Project Scope

- 1.1. Policy CH4 in the Pre-Submission Draft Chippenham Site Allocations Plan (Plan), as proposed to be modified, is set out below.

Box 1

Chippenham Riverside Country Parks

Land adjacent to and relating to the River Avon running through allocations at South West Chippenham and Rawlings Green will be developed for use as country parks, to include the following uses:

- informal open space
- extended existing and new rights of way
- areas for protection and enhancement of nature conservation interest
- sports pitches enhanced routes for cycling and walking to and from the town centre

Development will be subject to the requirements that no new buildings or structures are built within flood risk areas.

The use of these areas will take place in accordance with a management plan approved by the Council.

- 1.2. This report describes the full breadth of **future management options** available for the provision of the Country Parks. Originally these were intended to relate to the South West Chippenham area in the Parishes of Lacock and Chippenham, Rawlings Green in the Parishes of Langley Burrell and Chippenham, and East Chippenham area in the Parishes of Bremhill and Chippenham as identified in Policy CH4 of the Pre-Submission version of the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan. The future management options have been identified through face to face semi structured interviews, informal meetings and telephone consultations with representatives of both local and national organisations who have a potential interest in the ownership and future management of the Country Parks. We have also consulted with Natural England's Green Infrastructure network through an electronic survey.
- 1.3. Subsequent to the report first being drafted, there are now proposals to modify the Chippenham Site Allocations Plan including the removal of the development of land at East Chippenham from the Plan, removing the requirement for land at East Chippenham to be included within the Country Park Policy CH4. However, the information provided about the East Chippenham site, as well as the suggested management options are retained within this document as they helped shape the conclusions. In addition, there is a possibility that development in this area could be considered for future allocation at which point the findings of this report with respect to the Country Park associated with development at East Chippenham may be of relevance. For this reason we have kept the analysis of the Country Park at East Chippenham in the main body of the report. Consequently in places the report still refers to three Country Parks whereas only two of the Country Parks (the South West and Rawlings Green) are proposed to be implemented by Policy CH4. The information relating to East Chippenham is for information only.

- 1.4. **The aim** of this report is to identify and appraise options for governance, developer requirements, management and funding of the Country Park and from this analysis to set out the Terms and Requirements for developers that will ensure the future management of the Country Parks to published national standards.
- 1.5. **Funding**- the solutions for funding the future management of the Country Parks set out in Sections 4 and 5 of this report are based on the premise that there will be modest developer contributions available for maintenance and that there is a need to avoid a financial burden on the public sector. With these in mind the report:
- identifies likely cost headings and the possible indication of size and frequencies
 - identifies actual and possible income streams.
- 1.6. **Developer Terms and Requirements.** The report informs Wiltshire Council's role, as Local Planning Authority, to devise the terms and requirements for the areas to become riverside parks as a requirement of planning permission for each strategic site. It sets out a forward-looking, innovative approach favoured by all developers and contributing partner organisations, which will provide social, environmental and economic resilience for the management of the Country Park. Two sets of outputs are given.
- What form conditions and obligations may take as part of a consent.
 - How the areas could be treated in master plans.
- 1.7. **Governance and Ownership.** The report sets out the options for who will own the areas and lead on basic responsibilities for public liability, maintenance and finance and makes recommendations for the South West Chippenham and Rawlings Green sections of the Country Parks. The Country Park will serve a variety of uses and purposes, the following will be the main ones:
- Nature conservation and ecology.
 - Flood defence and storage.
 - Part of a wider pedestrian and cycle network.
 - Informal recreation.
 - Formal recreation.

2. THE ISSUE AND THE APPROACH TO FINDING A SOLUTION

Box 2

“Effective management relies upon the support of local groups, residents and community organisations. Community involvement is not a superficial exercise, it is fundamental to the long-term success of a park or green space and the contribution it can make to its locality. Some new streams of funding can only be accessed by community groups or by partnerships between local authorities and community organisations.

It is essential that these partnerships are forged and sustained. Partnerships with wildlife groups, play groups, sports clubs, residents groups, youth clubs and so on require effective leadership. It is through such partnerships that new energy is released. The suspicion people often have that the “decisions have already been taken and our views don’t count” can be broken down by effective consultation.”

Chapter 6 of the Green Flag Standard Guidance. (2009)

- 2.1 The Chippenham Vision states that Chippenham will recognise and build on its natural assets and its important heritage will be cherished. Its setting on the River Avon will be its defining and connecting feature combined with the historic centre, the market, pleasant parks and open spaces; creating a thriving artery and distinctive identity for the town.¹
- 2.2 Policy CH4 (as proposed to be modified) requires that farmed land adjacent to and relating to the River Avon running through allocations at South West Chippenham and Rawlings Green will be developed for use as country parks. The Country Parks should include the following uses as appropriate: informal open space, extended existing and new rights of way, areas for protection and enhancement of nature conservation interest, sports pitches, enhanced routes for cycling and walking to and from the town centre. Development will be subject to the requirements that no new buildings or structures are built within flood risk areas.²
- 2.3 This report proposes a collaborative approach to ensure the provision of the Country Parks. This will be achieved by facilitating partnership projects through the development of an overarching management plan across the Country Parks identified within the Plan and neighbouring open spaces.
- 2.4 The report also proposes that the delivery of the Country Parks’ design and management will have a strong emphasis on community-led initiatives. There are an increasing number of examples of community-led initiatives which are successfully delivering the ambition for natural assets and open spaces that the Chippenham Vision seeks. We have set a few examples of these out as case studies through the report. The advantage that community-led initiatives have over other methods of delivery is that they build a strong sense of ownership amongst users of greenspaces and improve social cohesion. (see Green Flag Standard Reference³ in Box 2).

- 2.5 The process followed to gather evidence and arrive at our conclusions in this report is described in Box 3. We initially planned to conduct mostly telephone interviews with interested parties but found that the value of information derived from our first face to face meetings justified making one to one face to face meetings the default for our meetings with other interested parties. We were also surprised at the number of organisations who were keen to have a stake in the management and ownership of the Country Parks. At the outset of these meetings it became clear that the planning process had resulted in a climate of competing interests over the management provision for the Country Parks. By allowing each of the developers to explore ways of collaborating through in-confidence discussions with us, we have begun building the groundwork for trusted partnerships to take on the overarching future governance and ownership of the Country Parks once the planning permission phase has been completed.
- 2.6 The face to face consultation exercise with developers and key partners, revealed a strong common interest in the facilitation of a collaborative, community-led approach to the establishment and future management of the Country Parks. All interviewees also spoke of the need to encourage more collaboration at the outset for future management of greenspaces provided through planning permissions.

Box 3

Report Process

Brief agreed between partners

Project Initiation Document developed and tested with report partners

Face to face meetings held with developers and their named partners for delivering the Country Parks provision.

Further face to face meetings and telephone conversations held with representatives of organisations named as likely to have an interest in the future management of the Country Parks during first round of face to face meetings.

Case studies and quotes gathered through internet search and e-survey with Natural England colleagues.

Report assumptions QA'd with national consultees, organisations and Wiltshire Council

3. GOVERNANCE OPTIONS FOR PROVISION OF THE COUNTRY PARKS

Box 4

“The key to success is early and regular community engagement which then enables a community-led approach to the management of community facilities. We find that weekly surgeries with the community are essential. At [Buckshaw Village](#), the role of Councillor Mark Perks, an energetic Councillor actively leading community work, particularly with the [youth association](#), is critical to successful management of the green infrastructure which ranges from low maintenance semi-natural woodland and wildflower meadows to intensively managed sports pitches.

As a result of investing in a community-led approach the community at Buckshaw Village has full trust and ownership in the management of greenspaces and other facilities of the development. They have refused a Parish Council, preferring instead to retain the existing governance arrangements with local council’s and our Management Company.”

Justin Herbert
Operations Director
Residential Management Group

3.1 **Governance Options**⁴. The following governance options that could be applied on the greenspaces at Chippenham Riverside Country Park have been identified:

Option 1: Management of the Country Parks delivered solely by a Local Authority (Wiltshire Council or Town/Parish Council).

Option 2: Management of the Country Parks delivered solely by a Mutual Body formed from a Local Authority.

Option 3: Management of the Country Parks delivered solely by a Property Management Company.

Option 4: Management of the Country Parks delivered solely by an Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)

Option 5: Management of the Country Parks delivered with separate governance arrangements for each but with a forum for collaboration across the whole of the Country Parks and neighbouring open spaces.

Option 6: Management of the Country Parks delivered through a new Community Interest Company or Charitable Land Trust.

3.2 The Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats that each Governance Option presented are summarised below:

Option 1: Management of the Country Park delivered solely by a Local Authority

Strengths	Simple funding mechanism utilising Local Authority funds. Dedicated countryside management team covering all Country Parks brings economies of scale and nurtures staff expertise.
Weaknesses	The funding mechanism is less equitable than some other governance arrangements as some parts of the community may have more limited access to Parks. Shrinking local authority budgets may mean that staff and services are stretched. Will need to compete with other requirements for annual funding revenues so hard to budget for the long term.
Opportunities	<p>Can secure grants that deliver across whole suites of greenspaces. E.g. Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Countryside Stewardship, European Union LIFE funding</p> <p>Can enable community-led delivery of some or the majority of the management of the Country Parks through the establishment of a team of volunteers and/or a 'Friends Of' group.</p>
Threats	<p>With the continued prospect of reduced public funding the Local Authority may find it harder to find the capacity to develop project bids for grants. Grants across a wider suite of Country Parks will have to be tailored to generic needs with less bespoke benefits for each Country Park.</p> <p>Volunteer groups may feel increasingly put upon if Local Authority staff are spread more thinly and can provide less support for management of the Country Parks.</p>

Option 2: Management of the Country Park delivered by a Mutual Trust formed from staff of an existing Local Authority

Strengths	Funding mechanisms can range from a simple mechanism of payment through a residents management fee, one off endowment or annual grant from the local authority to more complex funding mechanisms including fund raising and grant bids. The Not for Profit status of Mutual Trusts mean that overheads do not include payment of shareholder dividends and is subject to an asset lock. Dedicated team covering a wider suite of Country Parks brings economies of scale and nurtures staff expertise
Weaknesses	While the formation of Mutual Trusts to transfer Local Authority Countryside Department staff and expertise looks like an attractive option, the majority of Local Authorities that have explored this option

	have decided against it due to the complexity of the process. Local Authorities in Wiltshire are not considering this option at present.
Opportunities	Can secure grants that deliver across whole suites of greenspaces. E.g. HLF, Countryside Stewardship, LIFE A mutual will have in-house staff with a high degree of expertise in fund raising including securing income from grants.
Threats	The formation of a Mutual by a Local Authority could be seen as unfair competition for grants and income by existing NGOs making partnership work difficult.

Option 3: Management of the Country Park delivered solely by a Property Management Company

Strengths	Simple funding mechanism through management fee for new houses. Delivery of management by a professional team of land managers should ensure quality of the greenspace.
Weaknesses	Not very equitable when the new greenspace is located near to existing housing as is the case for both of the Riverside Country Parks.
Opportunities	Can include a high degree of community-led input into the delivery of the management of the Country Parks (See RMG case study).
Threats	Less incentive to draw in grant funding than other governance options.

Option 4: Management of the Country Park delivered solely by an NGO

Strengths	Funding mechanisms can range from a simple mechanism of payment through a residents management fee, one off endowment or annual grant from the local authority to more complex funding mechanisms including fund raising and grant bids. The Not for Profit status of NGOs mean that overheads do not include payment of shareholder dividends and is subject to an asset lock.
Weaknesses	While this option could be very equitable for park users there may be a degree of internal competition for funds between the Country Parks and other projects being delivered by the NGO. Ring-fenced budgets are vital.
Opportunities	This arrangement can include community-led participation with the recruitment of volunteers to help deliver the management of

	<p>the Park and park users represented on the management board of the Park.</p> <p>NGOs will have in-house staff with a high degree of expertise in fund raising including securing income from grants.</p>
Threats	Country Park users may have less of a sense of ownership in the management of the Country Parks than with Options 5 and 6.

Option 5: Management of the Country Parks delivered with separate governance arrangements for each but with a forum for collaboration across the whole of the Country Parks and neighbouring spaces.

Strengths	Allows a degree of collaboration in which the managing bodies for each of the Country Parks can play to each other's strengths to achieve effective management for the whole. For example a Management Company might be able to deliver a cost effective tree surgery service while an NGO provides an effective grant application service across the whole park. Funding some of the park management through collaborative partnership projects would increase the equitability of resourcing the Country Parks. It can also allow other land ownership to be included that are not subject to planning proposals.
Weaknesses	Collaboration between each separate management body (e.g. for Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham), would have to be fostered by a dedicated secretariat and would be subject to the enthusiasm to collaborate from each of the management body representatives.
Opportunities	A forum arrangement would increase the level of community-led management of the Country Parks, potentially involving a broad range of Park users.
Threats	The forum might not progress much past a talking shop unless there is a shared interest such as a Countryside Ranger employed by the forum.

Option 6: Management of the Country Parks delivered through a new Community Interest Company or Charitable Land Trust

Strengths	Funding mechanisms can be through residential management fees, one-off endowment or Local Authority funding, as well as from grants and potentially a variety of pay to use park services. Assures integrated management of the whole of the Country Parks.
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Weaknesses	Establishment of a new organisation will require initial investment in resources.
Opportunities	The new organisation will be able to access a range of grants. It will be well placed to develop a strong identity and suite of services for the Country Parks.
Threats	The organisation would be exposed to the full range of public liability and customer services issues unless these were underwritten by a Local Authority, Developer or third party partner organisation.

3.3 **Developer proposed governance arrangements.** The face to face interviews with each of the three developers revealed strong differences of opinion about how the future governance and management provision of the Country Parks should be provided but a common interest in a collaborative approach and the enabling of community-led initiatives.

South West Chippenham

3.4 The developers for South West Chippenham felt that the best approach for the Country Park at South West Chippenham was through a management fee for each household which funded management delivered by a new CIC (a [Community Interest Company](#)) solely for the South West Chippenham Country Park. The CIC could work with a Management Forum for all Country Parks (a variation of Option 5). A CIC has an asset lock and limitations on shareholder dividends and profits in place to ensure the main beneficiaries from its activities are Country Park users. They cited the development at Tadpole Farm near Swindon as a best practice example of this model.

Box 5

“We are very proud of [Tadpole Farm](#) and have enjoyed considerable uplift in the selling prices of houses in the development compared to neighbouring new residential developments. Residents clearly value the high quality of the development itself and the Green Infrastructure provision including a 40 Ha Nature Park that comes with it.”

Kenny Duncan

Crest Nicholson

3.5 The South West Chippenham site is proposed to include investment in wildlife habitats including new hedges, enhancements to the grassland habitats and a new wetland. The key to successfully managing these areas will be to employ a mixture of traditional hay-cutting and conservation grazing. The developer plans to provide all of the infrastructure for grazing management except a suitable herd of docile conservation grazing cattle which could be provided by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust or a local farmer. They were supportive of Option 5.

3.6 Developers at Rawlings Green thought that keeping the bulk of the costs of future management provision for greenspaces with the new residents through an annual

management fee arrangement to be unfair. As each resident purchasing a house in the new development agrees to pay a fee towards upkeep of the park, which will be enjoyed by users from existing residential areas which abut the new greenspaces. An equitable arrangement would therefore need to balance scales of resident and external funding.

Rawlings Green

- 3.7 The developer at Rawlings Green would prefer to pass management of the greenspace to an existing local council with an appropriate commuted sum. The developer indicated a strong desire to work with both new residents and the existing communities neighbouring the development to build a cohesive approach to future management of the greenspaces. They were supportive of both Option 5 and Option 6

East Chippenham

- 3.8 The developer at East Chippenham proposed to create and manage different areas of the park to include income generating features which would help pay for the upkeep of the Park. They were interested in a number of options for governance of the Country Parks including through a property management group and an existing NGO. They felt that their contributions to upkeep of the Country Park would be through investing in the income generating features and possibly through a commuted sum. They saw the possibilities as almost endless but identified the following under three categories as a starting point:

- Sport and recreation – for instance cricket ground, running track, games pitches, bowls, 9 hole golf course or putting green etc.
- Agriculture, horticulture and education – for instance wild flower hay meadows, community orchard, allotments, educational model farm etc.
- Conservation, wildlife and biodiversity funded through biodiversity offsetting, environmental grants and business Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) contributions – best suited north of the old railway (the North Wiltshire Rivers Route).

- 3.9 The developer noted that how much could be spent on setting up and creating the different aspects of each in these categories would depend upon the critical mass of housing that is permitted – clearly the greater the number of houses the greater the facilities and benefits that can be afforded. They were supportive of both the approaches set out in Option 5 and Option 6 and pointed to the Wiltshire Council owned and managed greenspace of Monkton Park as another element that could usefully benefit from management input through these Options.

4 GOVERNANCE OPTIONS WORTH FURTHER CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The face to face interviews with interested parties, the SWOT analysis of possible governance options and the key NESTA Rethinking Parks report reference (See Box 9) all

indicate that the following governance options could be used to develop a delivery solution for the Chippenham Country Parks.

Management of the Country Parks delivered with separate governance arrangements for each of the County Parks but with a forum for collaboration across the whole of the country parks. (Option 5)

- 4.2 Each developer has identified options for provision and management of Country Parks.. These could be progressed to establish separate governance arrangements for each site with a Management Forum for collaboration between the management bodies. Consultants for developers pointed to the Stanage Forum approach of consensus building as a best practice example of bringing a variety of interests together under a common management plan by working with the user groups at the outset to build a shared vision.⁵
- 4.3 Creating an overarching forum will foster partnership working and provide an element of community-led delivery of the Country Parks. It is essential though that the creation of the Management Forum is initiated by a Project Facilitation Team which has the necessary expertise and objectivity (see Box 6).³

Box 6

“On Saturday 29 March (2014), a public meeting was held in Hathersage by the PDNPA to 'help refresh the vision for the estate'.

They wanted to 'hear why it is important to people, what issues they think the estate will face over the next ten years, and how we can work together to sustain the estate environmentally, recreationally and financially to give it the best possible future'.

Wisely they had obtained the services of an external facilitator; the lack of trust drifted around the Hall like a bad smell.”

Post by 'SHARK' on UK Bouldering forum re community engagement facilitated by the [Stanage Forum](#)

Unified Governance and Ownership by an Existing Property Management or Non Government Organisation (Options 3 or 4)

- 4.4 Two charitable bodies and a management company have individually expressed an interest in bringing the provision and management of the sites under a single management structure, which they could lead. To varying degrees, each of these bodies would also make provision for enabling community-led collaborative partnerships. In the context of the inclusion of the former proposed allocation at East Chippenham they each to a lesser or greater degree stated that they would be interested in taking on some management responsibilities for the Wiltshire Council managed public open space at the neighbouring Monkton Park.
- 4.5 [The Land Trust](#) is a National Charitable Body with a rapidly expanding portfolio of Country Parks which it owns and holds in perpetuity. The Land Trust's preferred model of

ownership and governance is one in which a commuted sum is made by the developers which is held by the Land Trust. However the Land Trust is actively piloting and developing other innovative approaches to funding future management provision. Examples given include pilots with Hampshire County Council in which funding is collected as part of residents precept and used to fund Hampshire County Council Countryside Management staff to deliver the management plan on behalf of the Land Trust, and arrangement with property management companies in which residential management fees are utilised for Country Park management. Management is commonly delivered through a management partnership arrangement between the Land Trust and a local managing partner who works to an agreed management plan. A community-led approach to the development of the management plan is something that the Land Trust would be keen to pursue for Chippenham Riverside Country Parks.

- 4.6 [Residential Management Group \(RMG\)](#) is a large Property Management Company that provides a diverse range of services for both private sector and public sector clients. Its preferred model of ownership and governance is through a management fee arrangement with residents. It works to a detailed management plan format when delivering the management of greenspaces. RMG has accommodated planning requirements for greenspaces as diverse as supplying grazing animals (sheep) on a three monthly basis to leading the community engagement services traditionally supplied by a Parish Council (see Buckshaw Village case study.)
- 4.7 [The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust](#) is part of a Federated National Charitable Body. It has a long established presence in the Chippenham area providing a growing suite of services from outdoor education to advice on recycling. The Trust has entered into a partnership with Crest Nicholson to deliver the management of the 40 Ha Nature Park at Tadpole Farm through the Community Interest Company governance there and wants to play a central role in the future ownership and governance of Chippenham Riverside Country Parks.

Box 7

‘Wiltshire Wildlife Trust is confident that it can work with Wiltshire Council and any proposed developers to help design and subsequently manage future green infrastructure and open space for the benefit of people and wildlife. The Trust has an established track record in managing land for people and wildlife providing opportunities for communities to engage with the natural world and the health and wellbeing benefits that this brings’.

Stephen Davis
Wiltshire Wildlife Trust

Box8

“I think the formation of a new Community Interest Company has much to recommend it. Whatever the governance option that is settled on, I would be recommending to my Trustees that we should work in partnership with the Country Parks management team on collaborative projects between our own community land and that of the Country Parks.”

Philip Tansley
Chief Executive
[Chippenham Borough Lands Charity](#)

A New Community-Led Country Park Management Board or Community Organisation. (Option 6)

- 4.8 None of the consultees were strongly opposed to this option being explored further. There was particular interest in this option from Chippenham Borough Lands Charity, a local charitable body who own and manage land adjacent to the proposed South West Chippenham Country Park. This is a scenario in which the Country Park elements first begin to share a unified vision and some collaborative management (Option 5) and then explore if this governance and ownership structure is worth considering further. in the future

Box 9

“...it is clear that there is now an urgent need to establish new business models and promote radical innovation in how parks are supported and sustained in the future. For many, this will be a formidable challenge, but this process offers enormous potential to develop new models and offer communities and local organisations the opportunity to increasingly take control of neighbourhood assets, protect and improve their distinctive parks and generate additional income and resources from more sustainable and long-term sources.”

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- 4.9 All the Governance Options mentioned above are theoretically possible and workable in the context of Chippenham and there is overwhelming support from local organisations which should be utilised whichever option is taken forward.
- 4.10 **Having considered all the Options through the SWOT analysis and tested these with a range of partners we recommend Option 5, to create a new community-led Management Forum.** This would bring the following benefits:
- Enable trusted partnership arrangements to form between the management bodies at Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham and other existing bodies managing complimentary greenspaces.

- Provide an appropriate vehicle for the employment of a Countryside Ranger through funding contributions from Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham who will oversee the implementation of management plan objectives at both Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham.
- Offer a simple mechanism for the local community to take an active role in the management and development of the Country Parks.

4.11 However it is worth being aware that this Option could suffer from:

- The Management Forum failing to engage with the local community in a way that brings measurable value to the management and range of Country Park services.
- Lack of collaborative working by the Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham management bodies and existing organisations managing other associated greenspaces.
- The Management Forum serving only as a talking shop.

4.12 A Forum can co-ordinate different land owners' actions and be the means to produce a unified approach to the whole riverside through Chippenham. There can be different approaches by Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham developers to the delivery of Policy CH4 proposals just as there are a variety of other interests and ownerships along the river valley. There may be no benefit in having a one-size fits all.

4.13 Therefore the following solutions should be implemented and progress monitored:

- A **Project Facilitation Team** will ensure that the management plan elements for Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham have specific shared objectives to be delivered through the Management Forum. The Project Facilitation Team will also carry out community consultation as described in Chapter 6 of the Green Flag Standard. The Project Facilitation Team will be composed of Natural England, Wiltshire Council and/or independent consultancy personnel with the expertise to build trusted partnerships between the members of the Management Forum and the local community. It will operate in the first year of the Country Park development until the Management Forum is fully established.
- The **Management Forum** is convened by a Countryside Ranger employed by the Management Forum, and a steering group of representative interests with a clear mandate (established by the Project Facilitation Team), that ensures meaningful buy-in from each of the management bodies responsible for greenspaces in and around the Country Parks.
- The Management Forum Terms of Reference ensure that it has a clear function beyond a talking shop

5. SITE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INCOME GENERATION AND DEVELOPER REQUIREMENTS

Box 10

“Cuerden Valley Park (Lancashire’s Premier Country Park) is maintained and managed by Cuerden Valley Park Trust, an independent charity which receives no funding from Local Authorities towards the upkeep of the Park, relying instead on income from car parking and the numerous events held throughout the year at the Park.”

From the [Cuerden Country Park](#) web-site

5.1 **Common Characteristics.** Both Country Parks have their own, site specific characteristics which provide opportunities for the variety of ecosystem services⁴ that the green infrastructure will bring as well as management constraints that need to be factored in. However the following characteristics are common to all the Country Parks.

- Riparian habitats associated with the River Avon.
- Agriculturally improved floodplain grasslands
- Mature native hedgerows
- Mature isolated trees and small farm woods

Box 11

“[River Bourne Community Farm CIC](#) has taken on far more than I ever dreamed of when we started the project. This is due to the enthusiasm and energy of our volunteers. I felt I just couldn’t stand in their way. Now we are very hopeful that we can take on the creation and development of Riverdown Country Park (near Salisbury) with our Parish Council and other partners.”

Ben Parker
Chair of River Bourne Community Farm CIC

5.2 **An Agricultural Legacy:** All of the Country Parks are currently managed as commercial livestock farms. Rawlings Farm has a fine beef herd grazed by the tenant farmer and South West Chippenham is grazed by a dairy farmer under a tenancy arrangement with the Developer. All Developers are interested in adopting traditional agricultural practices as part of the management regime for their element of the Country Parks. This, combined with the rural setting of Chippenham provides an excellent opportunity for [Community Supported Agriculture](#) (defined as a partnership between farmers and consumers in which the responsibilities, risks and rewards are shared), to flourish across the Country Parks and local farmland.

5.3 Site specific opportunities: The developers for each of the Country Parks have begun to identify site specific opportunities through their landscape design analysis. They have also carried out some community consultation. The pre-planning approval stage of design development in which local residents are often opposed to the development is a difficult time to broker trusted partnerships for management of greenspace and other community facilities associated with the development. To help foster a community-led approach to management of the Country Parks, the Project Facilitation Team will carry out initial community engagement including questionnaires, liaison with community groups, presence at community events and resident surveys as part of the management plan process outlined in Section 6. We have identified the following potential opportunities over and above those proposed by the Developers for site-specific characteristics of each of the elements which would be worthy of consideration during this phase of community engagement:

- i. **Rawlings Green.** This site differs from the other Country Park by being predominantly on high ground with far reaching views. It also includes a linear coomb running down to the river. The Grade II listed farmhouse is yet to have its' final use determined. A pub or series of residential flats are both under consideration. There would be real potential for the farmhouse to become a community owned and managed asset to include a pub/café and smallholding for Community Supported Agriculture. The beautiful landscape views would also be a potential draw for tourists as well as visitors from elsewhere from Chippenham and so it is important to maintain the network of Public Rights of Way. Another possibility could be an outdoor educational centre for the Country Parks.
- ii. **South West Chippenham.** This site lies close to the local hospital. It could be a good location for a care farm to be established. Care Farms are currently aiming to grow from the existing 250 farm baseline to 800 plus farms by 2020. A Care Farm at this location could be run in-house by the Management Body or through a lease agreement with another partner. Public Health England working with Natural England is helping to raise this exciting target for expansion much further having determined the huge potential for Primary Care through care farming therapies. The Country Parks should provide a pedestrian and cycle route across the River Avon connecting to the town centre.

5.4 Calculation of Commuted Sums. In calculating commuted sums for each of the Country Parks it is important to consider the following:

- i. The need to maintain the land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition A registered member of the [Central Association of Agricultural Valuers](#) should assess any costs to bring the land into Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition.
- ii. Additional provision/costs agreed with each developer to cover bespoke issues for each of the three elements. For example:
 - Provision/contributions to cycleway and pathway improvements.

- Provision of biodiversity through the creation of priority habitats that enhance the value of the Country Park for users, particularly those that have potential to provide future income generation and wider ecosystem services.

5.5 A contribution for on-going maintenance commensurate with the scale of the Country Park should be negotiated.

5.6 Setting of Property Management Fees. Part of the aim of establishing governance which has strong park user and local community influence is to help ensure the equitability of funding provision for the Country Parks. The setting and review of Country Park's income from residential management fees will be a test of how well the governance arrangements are working. If fee payers feel they are getting good value for money this will be a testament to the Park's leadership and operations teams.

6. DELIVERING A VIABLE MANAGEMENT PLAN

- 6.1 The catalyst for delivering a viable management plan will be the grant of planning permission at South West Chippenham and Rawlings Green. Each will be supported by an agreed masterplan that defines the extent of the country park in these two areas and a Section 106 Agreement to secure initial funding for the Project Facilitation Team.
- 6.2 **Creation of a Project Facilitation Team.** To achieve viable governance and ownership for of the Country Park the developers need to provide sufficient funds for a Project Facilitation Team. The exact sums are to be determined through negotiation over a Section 106 Agreement which would also lay down the detail of what the Project Facilitation Team will achieve for the money. The Green Flag Standard guidance (appendix 2) lays out the questions that need to be asked to scope up a detailed brief. The indicative funding requirements are based on Natural England chargeable rates which are similar to independent consultant rates. (As an indication of cost it is suggested that a total budget of between 20 – 30k is provided from developers. Each developer’s contribution to the total budget should be varied to reflect the scale of the development.)
- 6.3 The Project Facilitation Team could be headed by either a Natural England or Wiltshire Council member of staff or a suitably qualified independent consultant. The rest of the team will be composed of a range of staff in Wiltshire Council and Natural England with the expertise to objectively advise on how to bring together the views of interested community groups and individual residents into viable management plan objectives for the Management Forum and Countryside Ranger. Natural England and Wiltshire Council have shared expertise in land management, access, recreation and public well-being including the establishment and sustainable management of Country Parks and other associated Green Infrastructure.

Prepare an overarching Management Plan

Box 12

Management Plan Process (CABE space)

Step 1 Where are we now?

Policy Context
Site Description

Step 2 Where do we want to get to?

Vision
Assessment and Analysis
Aims and objectives

Step 3 How will we get there?

Action Plan
Finance and resources

Step 4 How will we know when we have arrived?

- 6.4 The purpose of the Project Facilitation Team, ideally with a Countryside Ranger, will be to draft an overarching Management Plan following the Green Flag Award (Appendix 2) standard for Country Parks, enabling an on-going, community-led-approach and ensuring developer requirements are met before passing responsibility to the Management Forum and management bodies for Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham.
- 6.5 The final boundaries of the Country Parks will include the agreed areas of greenspace within each of the development proposals for South West Chippenham and Rawlings Green. The overarching Management Plan will ensure that all of the requirements and constraints set out in the Chippenham Site Allocation Plan are met for each element of the Country Parks. In developing the Management Plan, the Project Facilitation Team will also consider other existing green spaces that may be appropriate to include within its remit. For example discussions with the Chippenham Borough Lands Charity may identify opportunities for its integration with the wider country park areas.

Box 13

“ Parks have an inherent value in providing space for rest, relaxation and to connect with nature. But they also have a role to play in tackling climate change, in helping patients manage long-term conditions, in fighting the obesity epidemic, in teaching children about nature and food growth and so much more.”

Rethinking Parks

Nesta

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommended Governance

7.1 Chapter 4 concludes:

“Having considered all the Options through the SWOT analysis and tested these with a range of partners we recommend Option 5, to create a new community-led Management Forum .” (Paragraph 4.10)

7.2 **Figure 1, below** describes governance to establish Option 5. The proposal is for an overarching Management Plan of the Country Parks in Chippenham delivered with separate governance arrangements for each of the elements but with a forum for collaboration across the Country Parks and neighbouring open spaces

Figure 1: Outline Governance proposals



Recommended Ownership

7.3 It is recommended that ownership of the Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham Country Parks are held by management bodies that have the capacity to underwrite any liabilities and the motivation to develop site specific proposals with the local community. They also need to be able and willing to work within the recommended governance arrangement described in Figure 1.

7.4 The developers at South West Chippenham Country Park are committed to the formation of a Community Interest Company in partnership with a Property Management Company together with one or more of the partner organisations identified in Chapter 4 and other organisations that may come forward.

- 7.5 The developers at Rawlings Green are considering various options for the type of site specific management body to transfer management to. In common with the developers at South West Chippenham Country Park they would value input from the Project Facilitation Team to help facilitate arrangements with one or a combination of the partner organisations identified in Chapter 4 and other organisations that may come forward. Initially we recommend that Wiltshire Council take on ownership of the land from the developer until partner organisations who, together or solely have the capacity to deliver site specific proposals in concert with community groups take on ownership.

Recommended Management

- 7.6 We recommend that the management of the Country Parks follow the Green Flag Standard approach. This involves the creation of a Project Facilitation Team that will help establish the initial management plan for the Country Parks. Community involvement will be facilitated by a Countryside Ranger and the Management Forum to ensure the Country Parks reach their full potential and evolve to address the needs and wishes of the local community.

Recommended Resourcing

- 7.7 We recommend that initially, long term funding is secured at South West Chippenham through the residential management fee funding model proposed by the developers. The developers have indicated that they will set the residents management fee at a level not to exceed £300 per household per annum. Housing developments of this scale are typically developed and marketed over a timescale of around 5 to 8 years. This funding model would, therefore, be expected to generate up to £37,500 in Year 1. This would be well within the management parameters for the funding required to recruit a part time Countryside Ranger and having an initial maintenance budget for managing the land in its' current agricultural state before beginning transition to the completed Country Park design.
- 7.8 At Rawlings Green the Developers have indicated that they would be open to consider a range of funding models to provide management funding in perpetuity. These could follow the residential management fee funding model at South West Chippenham or be through an endowment contribution.

Recommended Process

- 7.9 Governance and management processes will not be in place over night. A recommended approach for establishing overarching governance and management arrangements is set out below:
- i. The Project Facilitation Team is appointed before development begins. This Team establishes its terms of reference and scope, draws up an overarching, community-led management plan based on the developers proposals and those of associated greenspaces. It also facilitates, with the developers, the establishment of the site specific management arrangements for both Rawlings Green and SW Chippenham based on the developers preferred funding model

- ii. Funding contributions from the developers are used to appoint a Countryside Ranger to oversee the delivery of the overarching management plan.
- iii. The Project Facilitation Team supported by the Countryside Ranger establish the Management Forum of relevant interests to deliver the overarching management plan and ensure co-operation between individual country park plans as they evolve.
- iv. A management body for the individual country parks is created to develop site specific proposals for each developed in consultation with the local communities at each site as they are developed.
- v. The management body for each country park oversees management and bids for additional resources based on priorities identified in the overarching management plan. These will enhance the value of the Country Parks and be self-funding/income generating thus reducing the burden on the core funding and releasing more funds for enhancement projects.

7.10 Suggested funding contributions for this process are as follows:

- i. Project Facilitation Team - £10,000 to £15,000 each from Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham to be contributed before development starts from commuted sums.
- ii. Countryside Ranger – annual provision from management fee or endowment interest of £20,000 each from Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham to be contributed in perpetuity through property management fees and/or endowment contributions.
- iii. Management Forum administration costs – annual provision from property management fees or endowment interest of £5,000 each from Rawlings Green and South West Chippenham to be contributed in perpetuity through property management fees and/or endowment contributions to the Management Forum.
- iv. Developer management contributions in perpetuity delivered through property management fees and/or endowment contributions– to be based on maintenance and replacement of core elements of Country Park design at each site these should include:
 - Hedge Cutting with a saw blade. Cut a third of hedges on rotation annually, budget for £384 per year plus VAT for every 3 miles of on side of hedge (reference John Nix Pocket Book 2016)
 - Tree Surgery for mature trees. £185 per mature tree – assume 10% of mature trees present on site will require tree surgery annually.(reference John Nix Pocket Book 2016)
 - Replacement of paths, fencing and other built infrastructure. Calculate as an annual cost spread over the life time of the infrastructure item.
 - Maintenance of non-agricultural, formal open space elements of Country Park – refer to Wiltshire Council commuted sum calculator for annual costs for these

elements. These are likely to be the most financially burdensome elements of the Country Parks and should be kept under review to check they are a valued resource by Park users. Some income could be generated by leasing the sports pitches at SW Chippenham to local sports clubs part of the year which in turn would increase the use of these facilities.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Summary of sources of additional funding modified from Greenflag Guidance

- National grant schemes such as the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Parks for People programme and agri environment schemes.
- Developing funding proposals for nationally and regionally controlled schemes and initiatives such as Local Economic Partnership programmes
- Bidding for locally distributed money for projects and initiatives such as crime reduction schemes;
- Bidding for local authority capital funds;
- Section 106 agreements and planning gain agreements negotiated through the Local Planning Authority from any additional commercial developers who may be active near the green space;
- The sale of assets, where the sale of the asset will not damage or devalue the green space itself and the benefits gained outweigh any potential loss;
- Increased income generation, from successful marketing of facilities, the introduction of new charges, increases to existing charges or the introduction of new facilities, products or services where a market demand has been identified;
- New business partners requiring a franchise or lease agreement;
- Local business sponsorship or benefactors;
- Launching a campaign and public appeal, enlisting the help of local individuals, business organisations, schools and youth clubs, community groups and volunteers.

Appendix 2

Questions to be Addressed In The Country Parks Management Plan – (From Green Flag Standard Guidance)

Know your site – Do you have a good understanding of the green space, its landscape, history, ecological value, amenities, the character of the surrounding area and who uses it and why?

How do you define the site and what else do you need to know?

Does the site meet your current objectives?

Management and maintenance – How are you doing things at the moment?

What approaches to management and to maintenance will need to be introduced to deliver the agreed priorities and objectives for the park or green space?

Incorporating policy and relevant data – How are your environmental/ conservation/ heritage/ play/health policies to be put into practice on this site? How are these issues to be worked out on the ground in this particular green space?

Analysis and assessment of priorities – How will the external data you have collected shape your plan?

Carry out a self-assessment using the Green Flag Award criteria

Resources – What funds are available for this site? As well as budget headings, identify staff, voluntary input, contributions from partner organisations and other departments. Identify possible sources of money, both internal and external.

Expectations and aspirations – What does the community expect? Are they consulted - if so, how, when and how often?

How will you ensure that all groups, i.e. children and young people, as well as older people, are included?

Most importantly how do you plan to use the results?

Agreed objectives – What are the investment/development priorities?

Have you agreed with community groups and all partners objectives for the time period of the plan? Are they achievable?

Partnerships – List the active partnerships that will be established as part of this plan.

Does a 'Friends of' / user group exist?
If not, how are you going to help to form one?

Skills and development – Do the right skills exist to deliver your plan?

If not, select appropriate training or recruitment options (horticultural, environmental, project management, community liaison, events production, marketing and so on)

Time-scale – What is the time-frame for the management plan? Is it five years, ten years?

How does it align with a corporate plan?

Are the investment/development projects in the right order and how long will each take?

Monitoring and review arrangements – How are you going to measure success (external validation, continuous performance assessment, Best Value inspection, EMAS, Investors in People, Quality Assurance)?

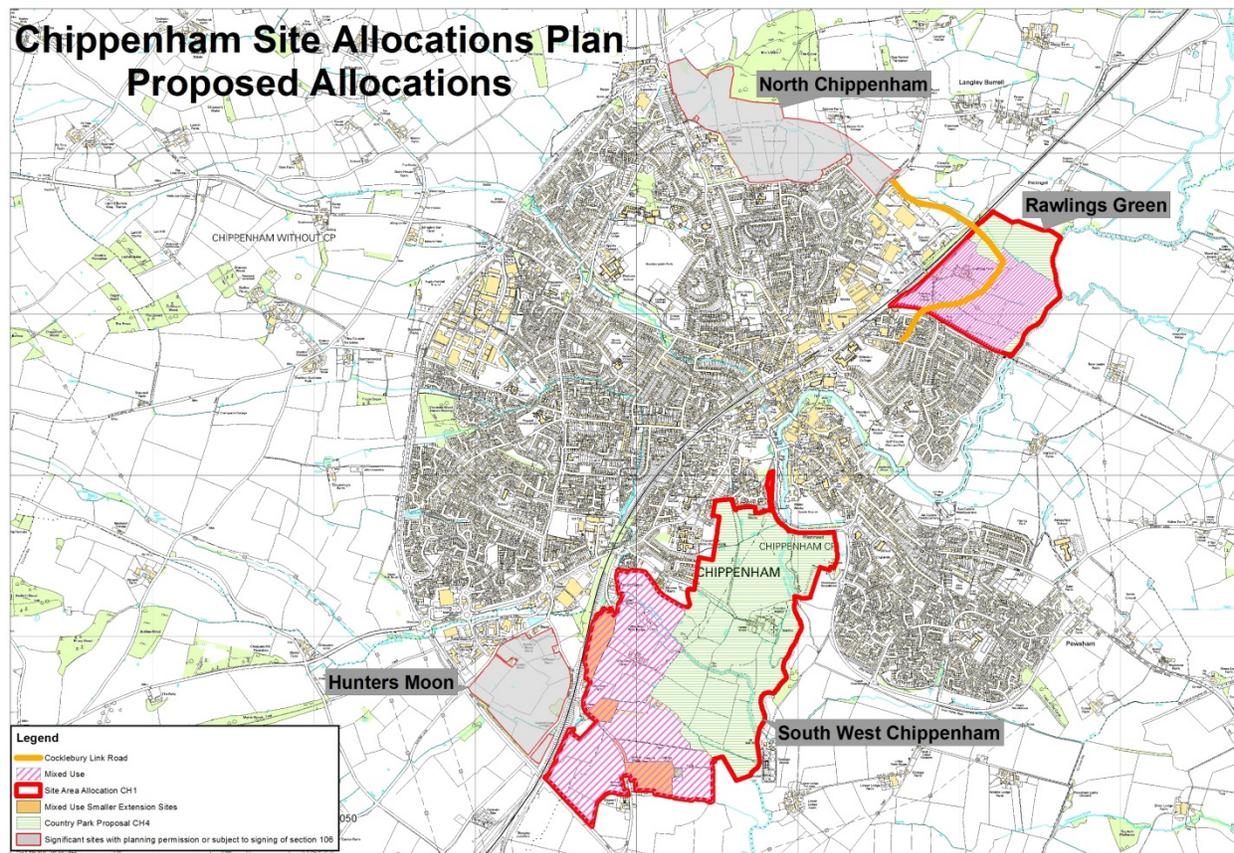
What kinds of checks are in place to make sure implementation is going to plan?

Project management – Who is responsible for development and then the delivery of the plan?

Spell out the project management requirements.

[Example of a Green Flag Standard Management Plan](#)

Appendix 3 : Map of Proposed Country Parks



Key References

1. [Chippenham Vision Strategy Document](#) (2008)
2. [Chippenham Site Allocation Plan](#) (2015)
3. [Green Flag Standard Guidance](#) (2009)
4. [Rethinking Parks Exploring New Business Models For Parks In The 21st Century](#) (2013) NESTA
5. [The economic benefits of Green Infrastructure: The public and business case for investing in Green Infrastructure and a review of the underpinning evidence](#) (2008), ECOTEC