

Our Ref: JM/DW/128858/003

Date: 20 June 2019

NYMNP
20/06/2019

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Jill Bastow
The Planning Department,
North York Moors National Park Authority,
The Old Vicarage,
Bondgate,
Helmsley,
YO62 5BP

Dear Jill Bastow

128858 – Proposal for New Boardwalk, Footbridge and Car Park at Forge Valley, Scarborough.

Fairhurst have been instructed by Scarborough Borough Council to submit a full planning application for the proposed improvement works at Forge Valley.

The proposed works comprise of the replacement of the existing boardwalk; construction of a new bridge and car park; and improvements to existing car parks to provide additional parking spaces. These improvements are proposed to provide all year round accessibility, suitable for wheelchair users, walkers and runners (Non-Motorised Users (NMUs)).

As you are aware, Fairhurst submitted a pre-application request. The response included a scope of documents to support the application have been agreed by the planning officer and are as follows:

- Site Location Plan;
- Existing and Proposed Site Layout Plan;
- Planning Statement
- Proposed Elevations;
- Environment Agency Bespoke Permit Application;
- Design and Access Statement;
- Flood Risk and Drainage Statement;
- Arboricultural Implication Assessment;
- Tree Survey Report;
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey; and
- Construction Method Statement.

I trust the above is self-explanatory but should you any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Josh Murphy
Graduate Planner
Planning and Development

NYMNPA

20/06/2019



Forge Valley, Design & Access Statement

Presented by Fairhurst
June 2019
128858 Document No. 801
on behalf of Scarborough Borough
Council



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Forge Valley, Scarborough - Job No. 128858

Document no. DID/128858/801

	Name	Date	Signature
Produced	Naomi King	05/06/19	
Checked	Emily Russell	20/06/19	
Approved	Stephen Goodchild	20/06/19	

Issue	Date	Status	Description	Produced	Checked	Approved
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This document has been prepared by Fairhurst on behalf of Scarborough Borough Council in support of proposals for the boardwalk replacement and access improvements in the Forge Valley Nature Reserve, Scarborough.

The Design and Access Statement (DAS) will provide sufficient detail and a clear understanding of the project to enable the North York Moors National Park Authority to determine the detailed application setting key design principles proposals – showing why they are appropriate in terms of use and how they respond to local context.

The document establishes the context for the proposed layout. It is considered that the proposed layout, appearance and overall amount of development meet client and community aspirations whilst according fully to Government objectives for sustainable development and relevant planning and design guidance.

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introduction & guidance

Fairhurst have been appointed by Scarborough Borough Council to prepare this Design and Access Statement for the proposed boardwalk replacement and access improvements in the Forge Valley Nature Reserve, Scarborough.

This document sets out the following:

- Details and appraisal of the site and its surroundings;
- The site/area specific design principles identified during the design process; and
- The proposed design solution.

The proposed layout comprises of a replacement boardwalk, a footbridge, and additional parking facilities and footpaths. The existing boardwalk will be replaced and a new footbridge will connect with public rights of way, opening up walks to explore the natural landscape. Parking facilities will be improved with ten additional parking spaces, two disabled spaces and two spaces for mini buses.

The Need for a Design and Access Statement

Changes to the planning system require that most planning applications should be accompanied by a DAS.

Guidance sets out that any DAS should explain the design thinking behind a planning application, highlighting the various design principles and concepts that have informed proposals, outlining also how access has been dealt with and incorporated into proposals.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) sets out the Governments requirements for the planning system and how these are expected to be applied. It provides a framework within which local people and their accountable councils can produce their own distinctive local and neighbourhood plans, which reflect the needs and priorities of their communities.

NPPF states:

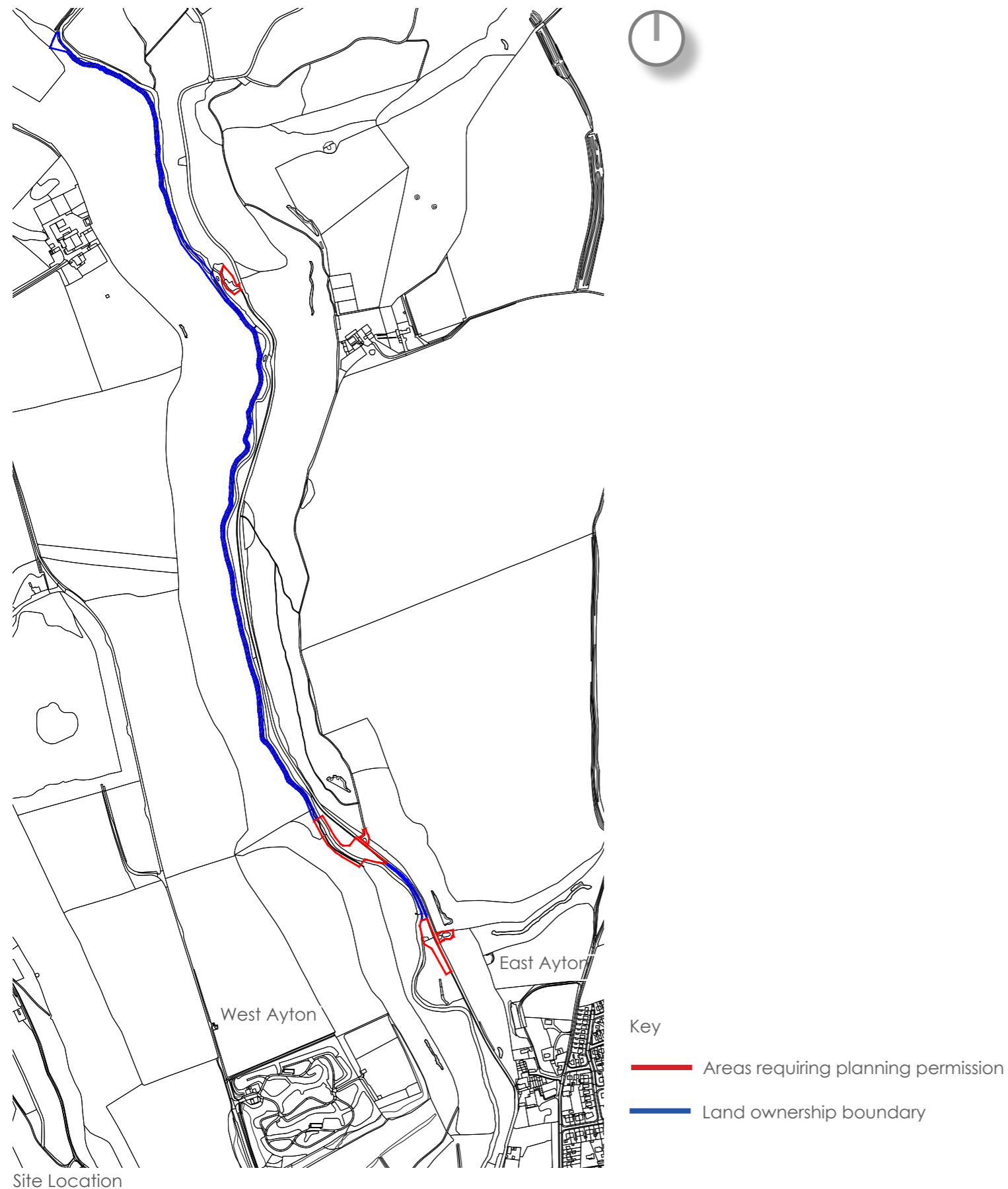
Achieving sustainable development means the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways:

- an economic objective - to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and

healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and

- an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimizing waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Successful design is dependent upon achieving an appropriate relationship between development objectives, development form and a positive response to local conditions. This can help to achieve memorable places with their own distinct character that contain public areas that are safe, accessible, pleasant to use and human in scale.



The development proposals attempt to achieve the following broad objectives:

- To provide an all year round accessible route along the course of the existing boardwalk suitable for wheelchair users, walkers and runners;
- To create a new footbridge at the southern end of the boardwalk to connect with public rights of way on the East Ayton side of the River Derwent;
- To create a new car park with two spaces specifically for disabled persons and additional spaces for cars; and
- To provide a first class educational, recreational and tourist destination for those with accessibility needs so they can access the full length of the nature reserve.

The main objectives are to create a high quality environment that makes a positive contribution to the local context. The main design principles incorporated in the proposals are:

- To improve accessibility to the nature reserve, including those with accessibility and visual impairment needs;
- To create an attractive destination for locals and tourists to visit;
- Provide legibility through clearly recognisable routes and signage;
- To provide opportunity for the involvement of school groups and local people through interpretation and management;
- To ensure the development displays a high standard of design;
- To provide appropriate seating opportunities; and
- To provide bins for litter disposal.

site analysis

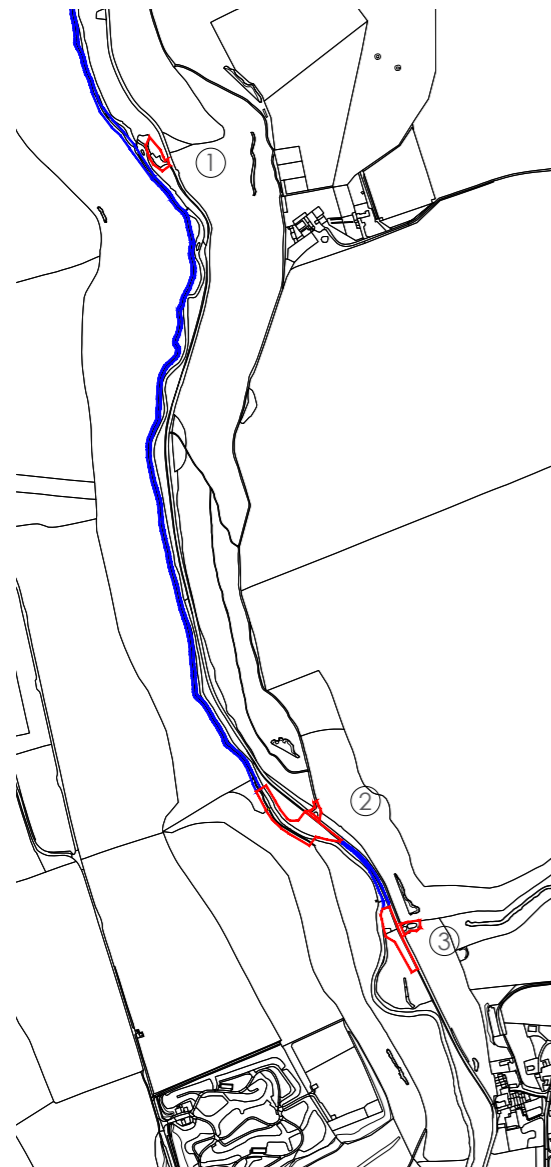
The site is located in the Forge Valley Woods National Nature Reserve, on the west side of Seavegate. The site is also within the North York Moors National Park. The site currently includes a boardwalk on the west side of the River Derwent and informal parking facilities on the east and west sides of Seavegate. The proposed development will replace and enhance the existing facilities, as well as provide a footbridge at the south of the site area, formalised parking facilities and an improved footpath network.

The existing boardwalk was created in the year 2000 to enable wheelchair users to access the nature reserve. The boardwalk is now an uncomfortable ride for wheelchair users due to modifications made to the footbridge to add grips. A section of the boardwalk is at a steep gradient which is unsuitable for those with accessibility needs.

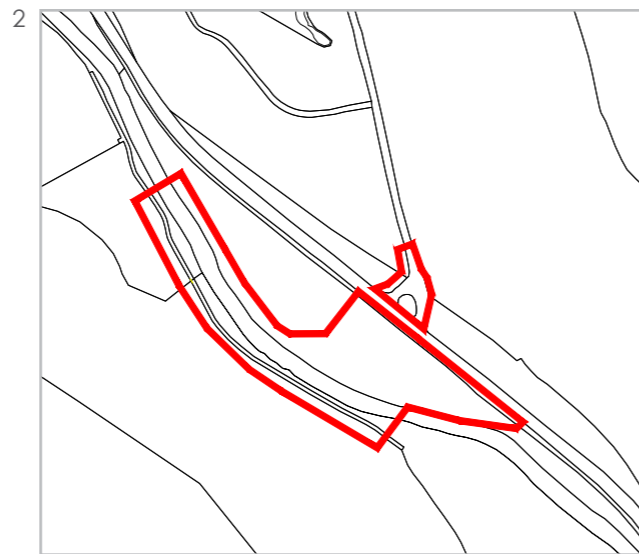
The three areas requiring planning permission explained in more detail on the following page.



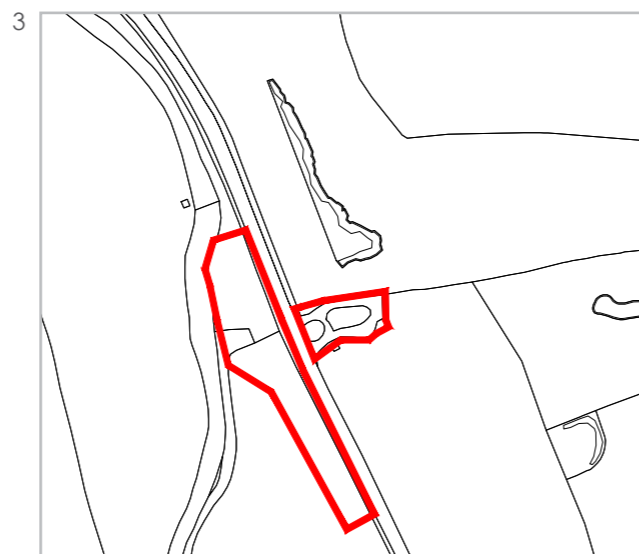
Context photos showing the existing footbridge



Old Man's Mouth car park:
The existing car park is an informal parking area with space for approximately 10 cars. The entrance to the car park is off Seavegate, however there is a steep drop down from Seavegate into the car park. The space has a picnic facility, an interpretation panel and a footpath to connect the car park to the existing bridge. The space is surrounded by trees and vegetation.



Bridge crossing:
The existing site consists of the Wallis Quarry informal car park on the east side of Seavegate. To the west of Seavegate is woodland surrounding the River Derwent.



Footpath improvements/ landscape restoration:
The existing site consists of informal parking facilities on the east side of Seavegate. Land adjoining Seavegate on the west side is used as an informal layby, though is not officially allocated as one. This results in cars parking in close proximity to mature trees including a "champion" horse chestnut tree. This is leading to soil compaction which may damage the tree.

site analysis

The Forge Valley Woods is designated as a National Nature Reserve (NNR) and a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), as well as being within the North York Moors National Park. The woods are considered to be one of the best examples of mixed deciduous woodland in north-east England, with tree species' including alder, willow, elm, sycamore and oak. The woods also support a rich population of breeding birds.

The majority of the development proposals are outside the SSSI and NNR boundaries and therefore the effect of the proposals on these is expected to be minimal. The three areas requiring planning permission lie outside the NNR boundary, with the exception of the two existing informal parking areas on the east side of Seavegate. As the proposed development in these areas is to formalize the existing parking areas, there will not be a change in land use and the effects on the designations will not be significant due to like for like changes.

Similarly, the areas of the proposed development which are within the SSSI boundary are the areas where improvements to the existing infrastructure are proposed. The new bridge crossing and footpath network to the south of the scheme are outside the SSSI boundary.

The site area contains a range of tree species. The overall quality of trees is fair with a diverse range of ages. The majority of trees surveyed in the site area are category 'B.' These should be retained where possible and protected throughout any new development.

The following opportunities and constraints have been identified for the overall site area:

Opportunities:

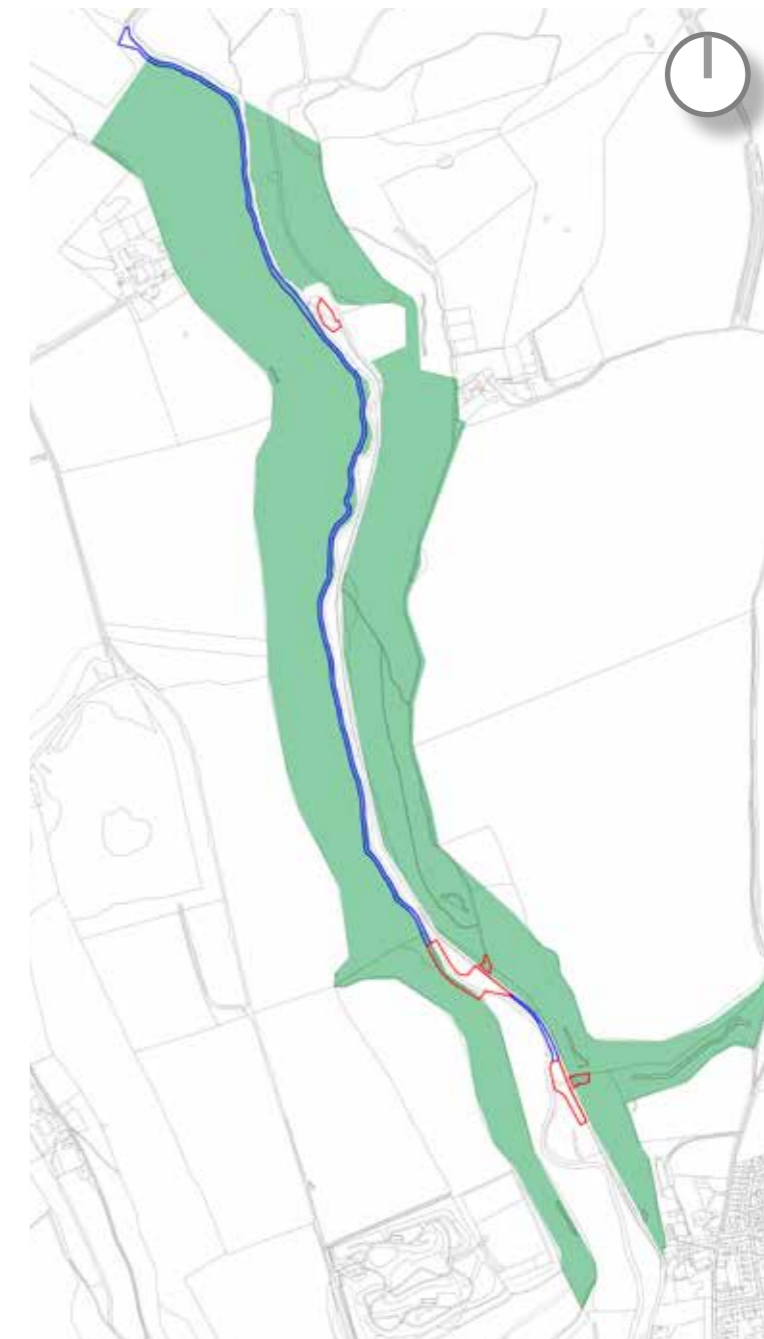
- Existing parking provision which can be improved/enhanced;
- Existing PRoW's to tie in with new footpath routes;
- Well wooded throughout;
- Potential to enhance the existing outdoor leisure facilities including the picnic area; and
- Existing screen vegetation creating privacy/green aspect external frontages.

Constraints:

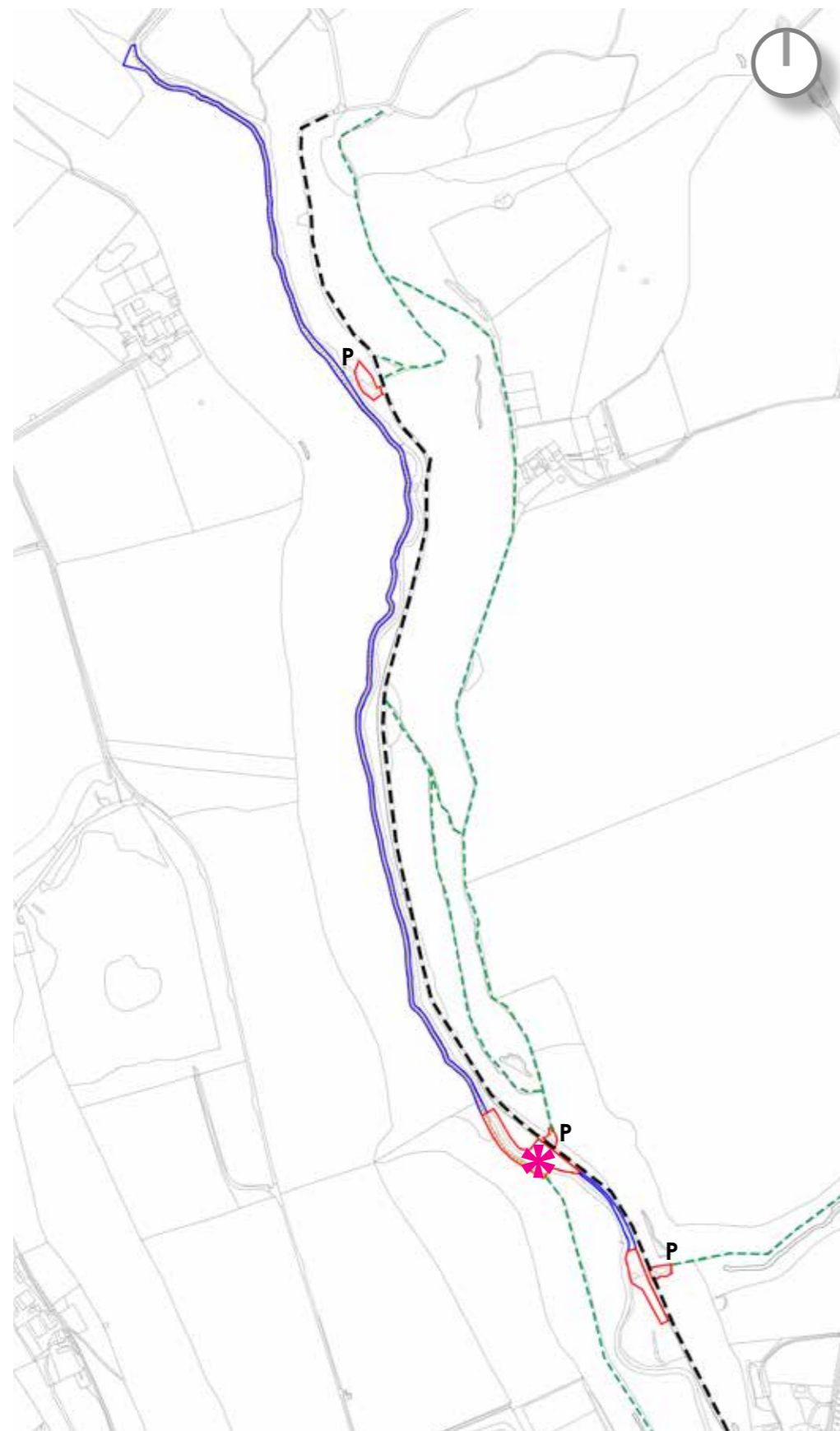
- The existing footpath along Seavegate which is overgrown and in close proximity to/ not separated from Seavegate (however there may be opportunity to improve this outside the scope of this project);
- Traffic noise and speed along Seavegate; and
- Dense wooded context.



SSSI surrounding the site area



NNR surrounding the site area



Main routes surrounding the site area

- Key
- Existing
- — — Main vehicular route along Seavegate
 - - - Wider PRoW routes
- Proposed
- P Improved parking facilities
 - * Disabled parking facilities and new bridge crossing
 - Boardwalk replacement

The existing and proposed accessibility for individual user groups are detailed below.

Car users

Car users can access the boardwalk by parking at the Old Man's Mouth car park and crossing the footbridge onto the board walk.

As part of the development, existing parking facilities will be formalized to ensure efficient parking. Spaces for mini busses will be included in the Old Man's Mouth car park and by the new bridge crossing to provide easier access for larger groups of visitors. The new car park adjacent to the bridge crossing will also include disabled spaces which will enable users to park on the same side of the road as the proposed bridge.

Cyclists

Cyclists can currently lock their bikes at the Old Man's Mouth car park.

Four additional cycle hoops will be provided at the Old Man's Mouth car park as part of the proposed scheme, allowing more cyclists to make use of the boardwalk.

Pedestrians

The existing boardwalk can be accessed from West Ayton by walking along the Public Rights of Way routes which pass Ayton Castle. The boardwalk is accessible to walkers at the northern end of the site area by using the PRoW routes to access the Old Man's Mouth car park and crossing the bridge onto the boardwalk.

The boardwalk is less easy to access for those in East Ayton who wish to walk from the village.

At times of heavy rainfall, the Public Right of Way leading to the footbridge from West Ayton is often flooded and difficult, if not impossible, to walk along. The proposed footbridge would therefore allow walkers coming down the boardwalk to cross and use the East Ayton side to get to their destination.

The proposed developments will also enable residents in East Ayton to access the boardwalk at the southern end. Residents will be able to walk along the Seavegate Gill path and walk a short distance along Seavegate to the footbridge.

Disabled users

Currently, the boardwalk is unsuitable for wheelchair users due to the uneven surface and steep gradient.

The proposed boardwalk would have a non-slip surface and a gradient suitable for wheelchair users. The proposed disabled parking and footbridge would allow users to park adjacent to the boardwalk and unload onto a hard surface.

Potential future access development

In the future there is potential to improve the footpath which runs along the west side of Seavegate. The current route is in close proximity to the road and disliked by the local community. This would enhance the scheme by providing improved access, particularly between the two areas to be developed to the south of the site area.

design development

Initial designs proposals were presented at a consultation event which was held in order to give members of the public opportunity to voice opinions and comments. These initial designs are provided below.

A total of 24 paper responses were received at the consultation event, with a further 6 responses received following the event via email. The responses to the design proposals were generally positive; with over half the responses received expressing favour towards some, if not all, aspects of the proposed developments.

Positive comments included better access for wheelchair users, and that improvements would be an asset for both locals and tourists.

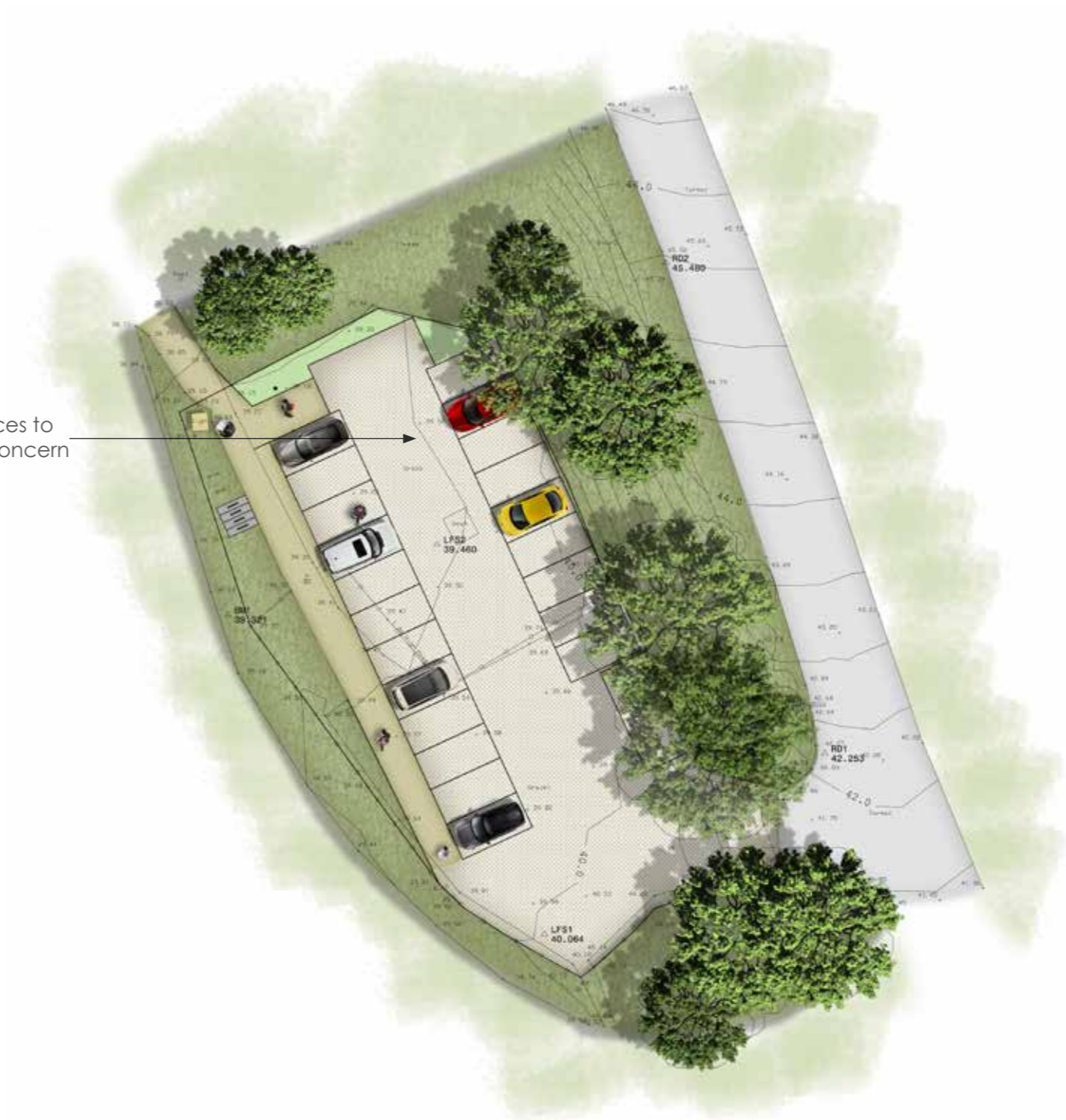
Concerns expressed by a number of people included:

- Increased litter, fly tipping and fires;
- Increased problems associated with dog walking;
- Loss of vegetation; and
- Large amount of parking provision in the overall scheme.

The design proposals were amended post consultation to take into account the comments received.

- The overall number of car parking spaces was reduced following concerns that the number was too high;
- The lay-by and adjacent footpath was completely removed following concerns that the lay-by appeared too 'urban,' would visually increase the width of the road, and would be a hazard for drivers entering/ exiting the lay-by;
- The number of parking spaces in the Old Man's Mouth car park was reduced, making space for a potential picnic area to the northern end of the space; and
- The proposals will include increased signage in relation to keeping dogs on leads, dog fouling and providing dog waste bins.

Number of parking spaces to be reduced following concern the number is too high.



Initial design of Old Man's Mouth



Path to be better aligned to the existing footpath along Seavegate.

Initial design of the bridge crossing



Lay-by to be completely removed due to safety and aesthetic concerns

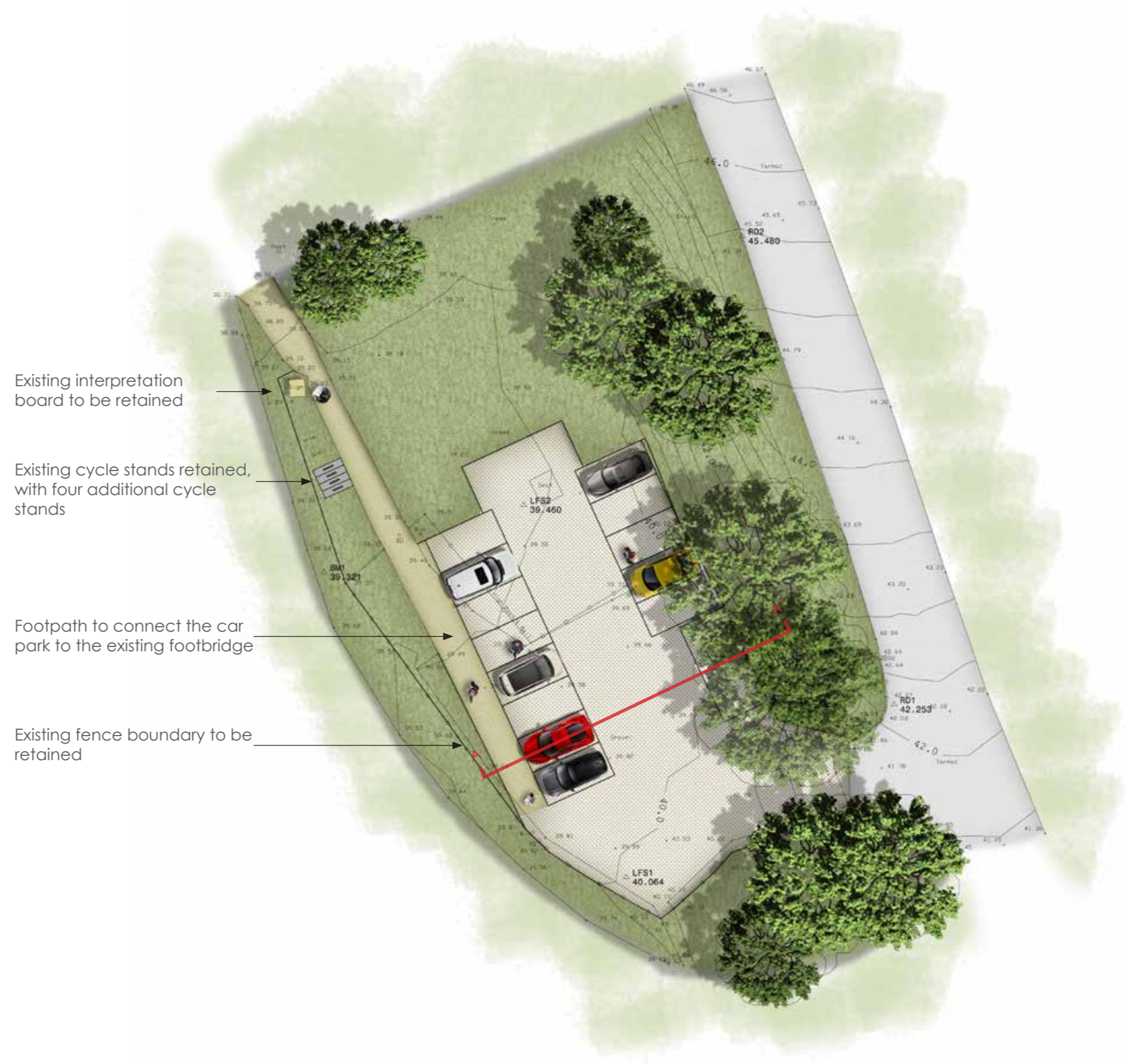
Initial design of the footpath enhancement, including lay-by.

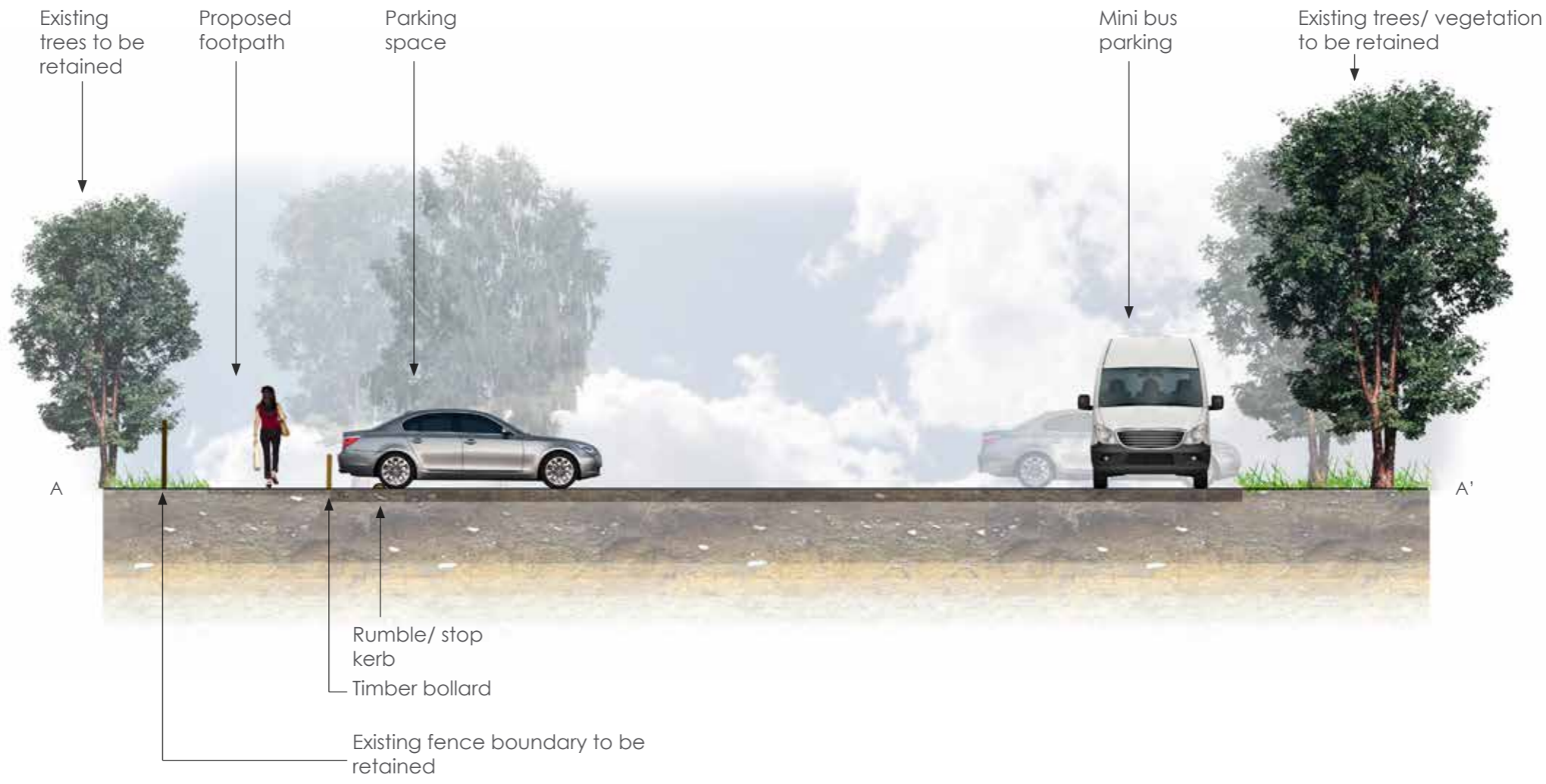
design solution - old man's mouth

The Old Man's Mouth car park will be extended to allow for additional parking spaces. This will include provision for mini bus parking to enable groups of visitors, such as school groups, to easily access the nature reserve.

These development proposals attempt to achieve the following broad objectives:

- Make efficient use of the space by formalising the existing car park and creating space for additional parking facilities, while maintaining space for a picnic area;
- Promote sustainable travel by providing an additional four cycle stands in the car park;
- Provide easier access to larger groups to access the nature reserve by providing a mini bus parking space.
- Maintain existing interpretation facilities to inform people about the area;
- Create a sustainable development, which is appropriate to the location and existing nature of the site; and
- Promote high standards of design in terms of overall layout.





Typical section through car park

design solution - bridge crossing

The proposed bridge crossing is located at the southern end of the Nature Reserve, connecting with surrounding Public Rights of Way.

Parking facilities adjacent to the boardwalk will include spaces for two disabled vehicles to load and unload onto a hard standing. A parking space for a mini bus will also be provided to ensure ease of access for larger groups. Bollards will be positioned around the car park.

Existing parking facilities across the road in the Wallis Quarry car park will be formalised to make parking more efficient.

These development proposals attempt to achieve the following broad objectives:

- Make efficient use of the space by formalising the existing car park and creating space for additional parking facilities ;
- Provide easier access to larger groups to access the nature reserve by providing a mini bus parking space;
- Include interpretation facilities to inform visitors about the area;
- Encourage pedestrians approaching from East Ayton to cross over the river and walk along the boardwalk, rather than walk along the highway as they now have to do;
- Create a sustainable development, which is appropriate to the location and existing nature of the site; and
- Promote high standards of design in terms of overall layout.



Location of 12m long 1.5m wide proposed footbridge. This will have a non-slip surface for a powered wheelchair

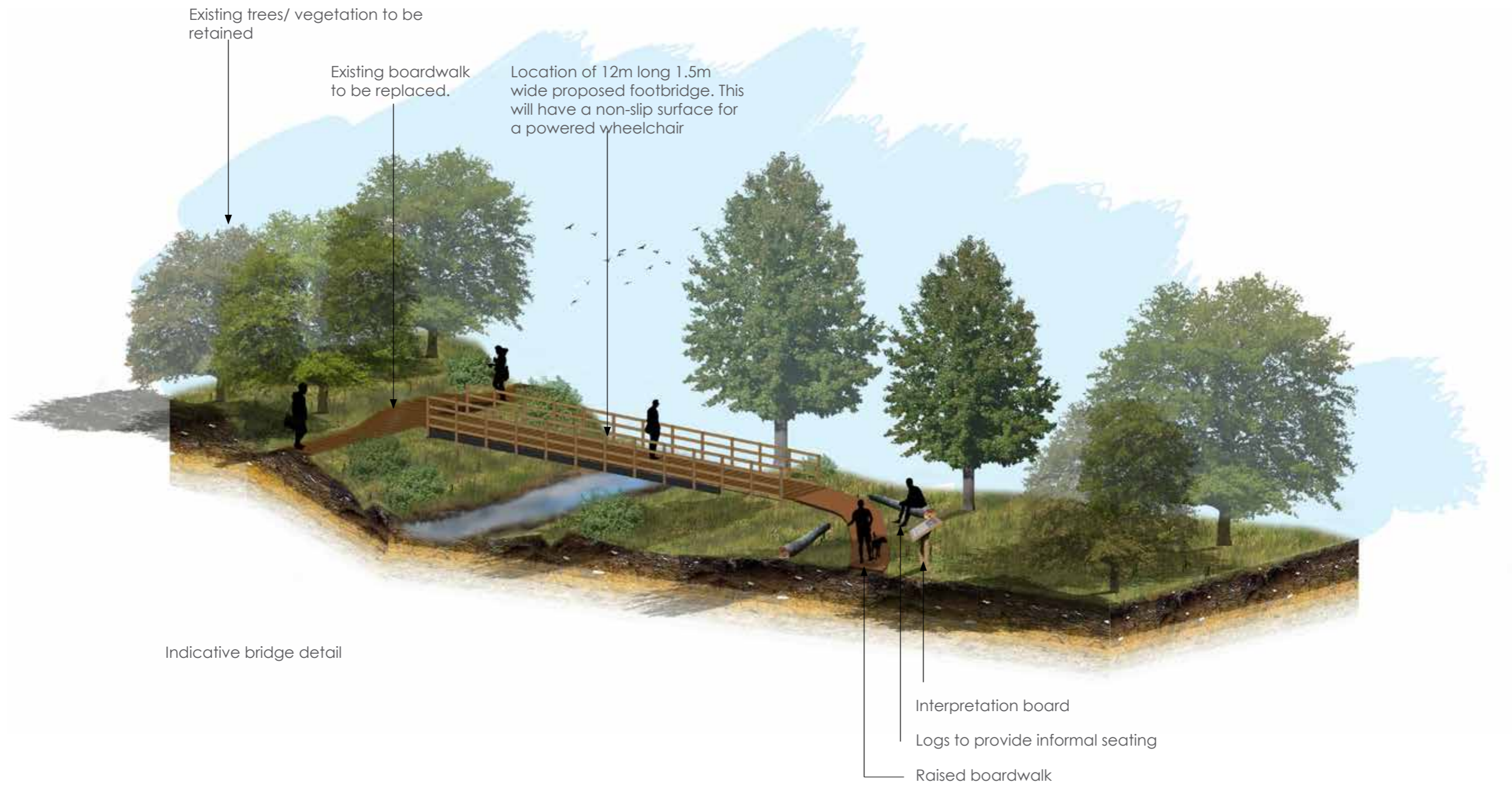
Logs to provide informal seating

Existing boardwalk to be replaced.

Two disabled parking spaces

Mini bus parking

Footpath to connect the footbridge with the existing footpath along Seavegate



design solution - footpath enhancement/ landscape restoration

The proposed pedestrian footpath connects to the existing footpath along Seavegate, providing an attractive route away from the main road. Users can walk through the woodland, with logs providing informal seating facilities. The path reconnects to Seavegate opposite the parking area, enabling users to cross directly from the car park onto the footpath.

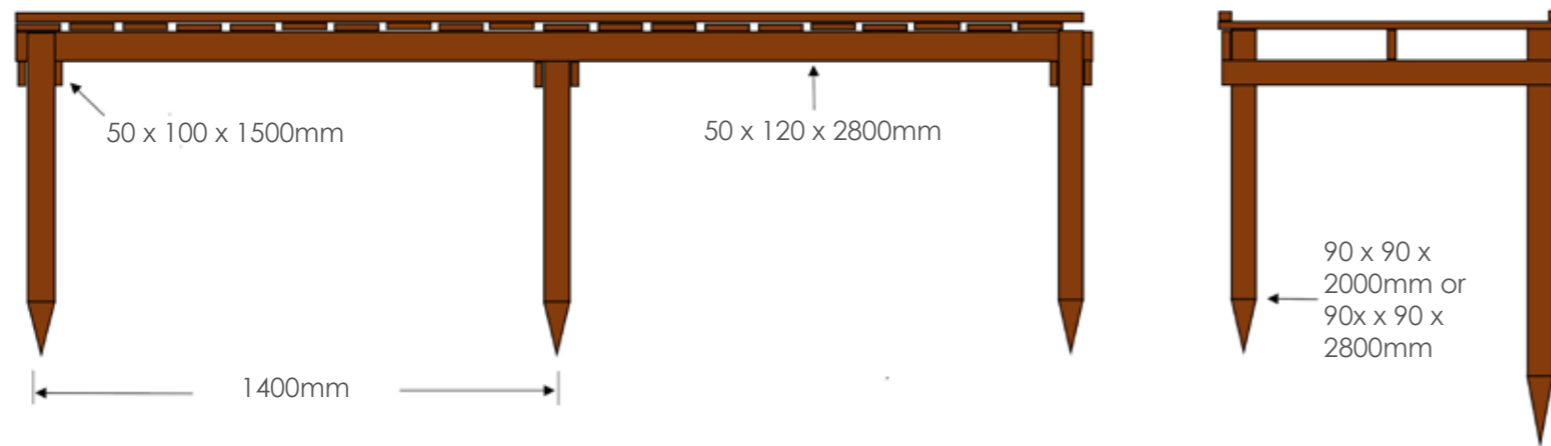
These development proposals attempt to achieve the following broad objectives:

- Make efficient use of the space by formalising the existing car park;
- Encourage people to visit the woodland by providing a footpath away from the main road;
- Provide protection and screening from the main road through the use of grass mounding;
- Provide replacement native tree planting to mitigate for any loss;
- Discourage cars from driving over vegetation and compacting tree routes;
- Discourage overnight campers driving onto the area;
- Create a sustainable development, which is appropriate to the location and existing nature of the site; and
- Promote high standards of design in terms of overall layout.





Typical boardwalk cross section



The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities (NPPF-Section 12).

The Construction Method Statement details how the proposals will be constructed and measures to be taken on site. It includes information on:

- Design and construction
- Site designations/ environmental protection
- Construction method
- Preliminary and temporary site measures
- Pollution control plan
- Timing/ schedule of works
- Hours of operation
- Insurances
- Compounds
- Site Demobilisation
- Future maintenance

Details of materials and site designation/ environmental protection have been provided below. Further information around technical design can be found in the Construction Method Statement.

Materials

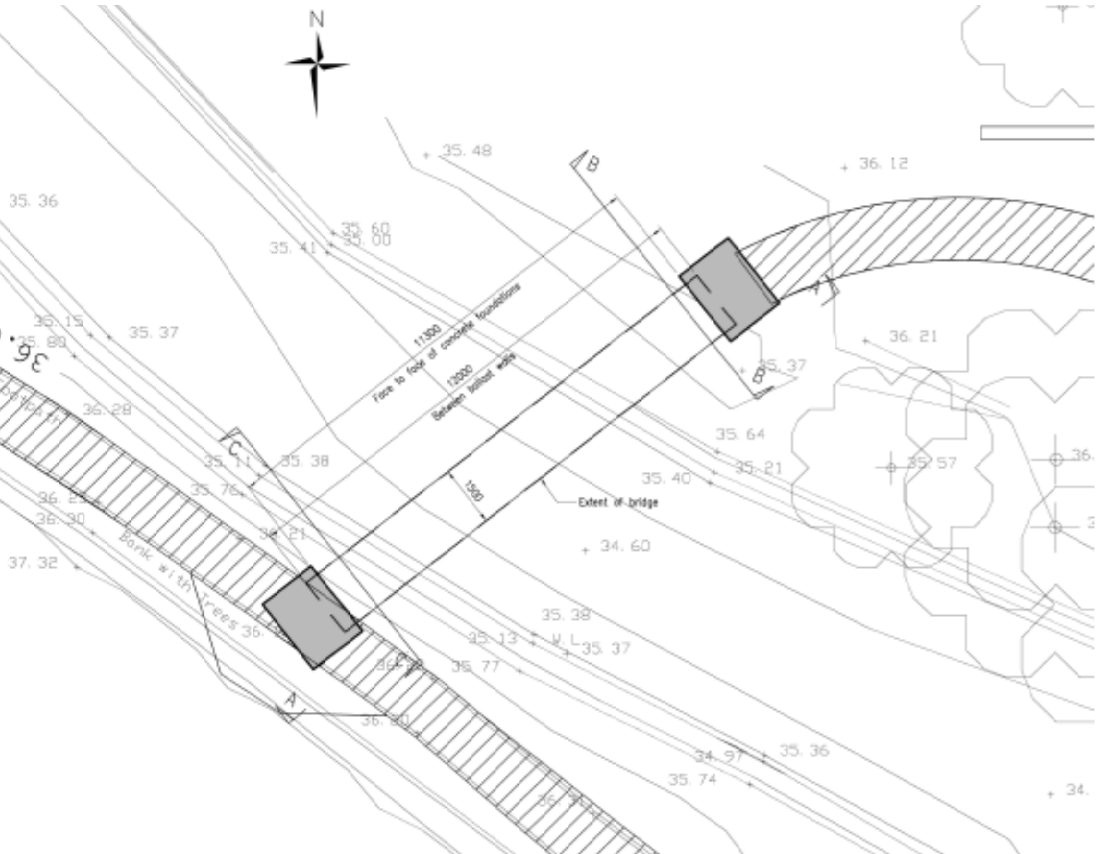
Imported quarried aggregate will be required for the construction of both the car park and footpaths. Aggregates are to be sourced from local quarries to minimise delivery distance and suitable 'as dug' material is to be utilised wherever possible to alleviate the amount and cost of imported aggregate materials. Recycled plastic will be used for the footbridge and boardwalk. The proposed footbridge and replacement boardwalk will be constructed using a recycled plastic product.

Site designations/ environmental protection

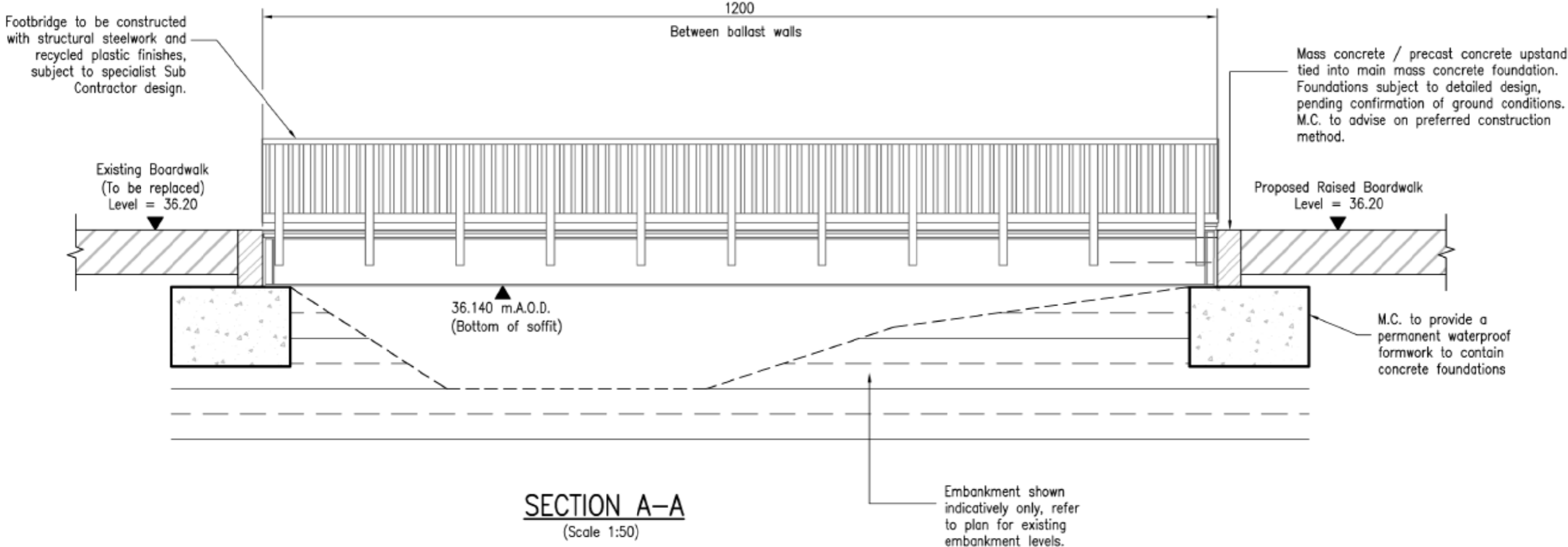
The site is designated a Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) and a National Nature Reserve (NNR). Full environmental protection measures are to be in place prior to any works taking place, including a Bespoke EA Permit, protected species licences and supporting method statements. Working closely with Natural England will ensure the protection of the SSSI through the process.

These measures contribute to the scheme being a sustainable development which is sensitive to the environment and local context.

As discussed in the design development section, measures will be included to state the importance of the valley and to encourage users to sensitively use the area.



Foundation Plan and Section of Proposed Bridge



Interpretation Strategy

Forge Valley History

Forge Valley was formed by the glacial melt-water after the Ice Age. The valley is orientated along the River Derwent and is now covered in woodlands thought to be 6000 years old. Forge Valley is named after 14th Century iron forges that were fueled by charcoal that was made in these woods. There was a foundry to the north of the valley in 1798. There are other geological features within the valley, and numerous quarries have been within the area.

Raincliffe Woods Community Enterprise

Raincliffe Wood Community Enterprise (RWCE) was established in April 2015 with a mandate from Scarborough Borough Council (the owners of the Woodland) to take over the management of this important landscape feature overlooking Scarborough which includes Forge Valley. RWCE is a Not-for-Profit Community Interest Company owned by its Members (stakeholders) and managed by a Board of Directors. Scarborough Borough Council chose RWCE to undertake the management of the woods, initially under a licence to manage the woodland and to organise events, and subsequently to be responsible for virtually the entire management by way of a 30 year lease. RWCE have partnered the woodland management with the Woodland Trust, to provide management advice.

RWCE are actively involved in the works for this project and will have ongoing involvement. RWCE have three key objectives:

- Wildlife
- People
- Enterprise

These three broad themes will be paramount to the works at Forge Valley.

A number of surveys were undertaken at the existing boardwalk location to indicate tourism demand and future growth. These were carried out during 2018 (over May Bank Holiday weekend and during August). The surveys found that:

- Day visitors are more likely to be part of an organised walk/ educational group;
- Awareness amongst those with accessibility needs of the boardwalk is low and there is no signage to indicate that such a feature exists;
- Increasing awareness is key to maximising the tourism potential, especially for those with accessibility needs;
- The car parking spaces limit the daily numbers of visitors arriving by car.

The survey results show that access to nature based tourism is key to visitor experience.

Inclusive Design

As a key aspect of this project is the inclusive accessibility, this theme will be explored further. Potential ways this could be included would be:

- Working with schools to encourage woodland accessibility experiences for young people;
- Audio interpretation for partially sighted;
- Working with vulnerable user groups;
- Utilise and add to existing signage/ interpretation; and
- Enhance information relating to historic aspects of the area; particularly visible elements.

A holistic approach consisting of wayfinding principles should be adopted. Some best practice principles consist of:

- Coherent and consistent systems;
- Designed for all people;
- Informative; and
- Sustainable.

RWCE have recently met with Natural England, Environment Agency, North York Moors National Park, Scarborough Borough Council and Scarborough Conservation volunteers to discuss the future Woodland Management Plan. This will map out the approach to how RWCE manage the changing landscape of the woodlands as a consequence of Ash Dieback disease, the creation of a new generation of trees and the type of trees to re stock with. Many species are regenerating naturally even with deer grazing the new growth. RWCE are also engaging with local school children to involve them in this unique landscape. This will tie in with the proposed works at Forge Valley.

Consultation Event and Ongoing Community Engagement

A public consultation event was held on Monday 20th May between 2pm to 7pm, at Derwent Valley Community Library and Resource Centre, West Ayton. Further information regarding this can be found in the Planning Statement.

Prior to the event opening to the public, a group of Year 6 pupils and teachers from East Ayton Primary School attended. There is an aspiration for the school and pupils to be further involved with RWCE and Forge Valley. In particular the area of enhanced landscape and the use of the valley for an outdoor woodland classroom environment. This will aid the pupil's wellbeing and development, both social and academic and give them strong links to the area, to help future proofing.

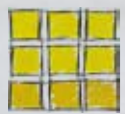
Members of the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society also attended the consultation event. Fairhurst and RWCE are keen to work with this group throughout the process, to help connect the public further to this unique and interesting site.

RWCE has confirmed plans to work closely with Sheffield Hallam University Geography Department. RWCE will be the client for first year students, who will work on how the geology, geography, archaeology, history and human influence has shaped the woods we see today. The students will also consider ways this can be conveyed to visitors and educational/ special interest groups.

conclusion

The proposed scheme is in line with the Council's design principles and has taken into account design guidance from other sources. Improved parking facilities, a new bridge crossing and landscape restoration area have been proposed and this provides for a well-proportioned scheme.

The layout responds well to its site context and has been designed to be sensitive to the surrounding environment. The site will provide improved access to the boardwalk for locals and visitors, and will be more accessible to those with accessibility needs.



FAIRHURST

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Forge Valley

Planning Supporting Statement

June 2019

NYMNP
20/06/2019



FAIRHURST

CONTROL SHEET

CLIENT: Scarborough Borough Council
PROJECT TITLE: Forge Valley
REPORT TITLE: Planning Supporting Statement
PROJECT REFERENCE: 501
DOCUMENT NUMBER: JM/DW/128858/501
STATUS: DRAFT/FINAL/FOR REVIEW

Issue & Approval Schedule		Name	Signature	Date
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	Checked by	Michael Jones		June 2019
	Approved by	Dominic Waugh		June 2019

Revision Record	Rev.	Date	Status	Description	Signature		
	1					By	
						Check	
						Approve	
	2					By	
						Check	
Approve							

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8.0	Conclusion

Abbreviations

Arboricultural Implication Assessment – AIA

Disability Discrimination Act – DDA

Forge Valley Woods National Nature Reserve – FVWNNR

National Planning Policy Framework – NPPF

National Planning Practice Guidance – NPPG

Natural Nature Reserve – NNR

Non-Motorised Users - NMUs

North York Moors National Park Authority – NYMNPA

Public Right of Way – PROW

Raincliffe Woods Community Enterprise – RWCE

Site of Special Scientific Interest – SSSI

Statement of Community Involvement - SoCI

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1. This Planning Supporting Statement has been prepared by Fairhurst on behalf of Estates and Projects at Scarborough Borough Council, in relation to a full planning application for the construction of a new bridge and improvements to existing car parks to provide additional parking spaces within the Forge Valley National Nature Reserve (FVWNNR), located within the North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPA).
- 1.2. The construction of a new bridge and improvements to existing car parks, which are considered as a part of this Planning Supporting Statement, form part of a wider scheme of improvement works within Forge Valley. Part of the wider scheme includes the installation of replacement boardwalks. However, this aspect of the proposed scheme will not require planning permission as they are a like for like replacement of the existing structures, as confirmed in a pre-application response by NYMNPA on 25th March 2019.
- 1.3. As part of this planning application, Fairhurst have prepared this Planning Supporting Statement, which covers the following issues:
 - Site and Surroundings;
 - Proposed Development;
 - Planning History;
 - Planning Policy and Guidance;
 - Planning Considerations; and
 - Conclusions.

2.0 Site and Surroundings

- 2.1. Accompanying Site Boundary Plan (Drawing No: 128858-8001) shows that the application site is split into three locations, which are all located within the NYMNPA boundary.
- 2.2. The application sites are located adjacent to Seavegate, which is a road that runs through the centre of the FVWNNR and connects Forge Valley to the villages to the south and further into the National Park to the north (as shown on Drawing No: 128858/8001). All of the application sites are located within the designated Natural Nature Reserve, which was established to protect habitats, species and geology, and to provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research. Most of the application sites are also designated as the Raincliffe and Forge Valley Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to the areas of Ancient Woodland.
- 2.3. Forge Valley is located in North Yorkshire Moors National Park and connects at its north end to the extensive rural communities of Hackness, Langdale, Troutsdale and the North York Moors. These communities have started to diversify into tourism with the conversion of farm buildings and cottages and also camping and caravan sites. They consist of several B&Bs, two country hotels and a farm produce shop. At the southern end of the application site are the two villages of East & West Ayton and the A170 Scarborough to Thirsk road. The facilities in these villages now support the wider tourism economy along the Vale of Pickering.
- 2.4. The nearest residential properties are located within East Ayton, approximately 0.5 miles from the nearest proposal site (Insert C of Drawing No 128858/8001). The majority of the proposal sites are surrounded by large vegetation, which provides screening from the neighbouring properties. As the surrounding area is the FVWNNR, the sites consist of a large range of vegetation, including a vast amount of woodland. Much of these areas are protected and are maintained by the NYMNPA.
- 2.5. The planning application consists of three separate sites, all of which are located within the FVWNNR. The most northern site consists of Old Man's Mouth car park,

which is currently a small informal car park, surrounded by various types of vegetation.

- 2.6. The small wooded area in which the new footbridge and car park is to be constructed is located directly adjacent to the River Derwent. The proposed footbridge and car park, which is sited opposite the Wallis Quarry (Insert Plan B of Drawing No 128858/8001), will link directly to the existing boardwalks. The car park is located just outside of the SSSI.
- 2.7. The most southern site also consists of an informal parking area and areas of vegetation. Seavegate links and runs through all three sites, connecting them to the north and south of the FVWNNR.
- 2.8. The River Derwent is a main feature within the FVWNNR and flows towards the East coast. The River Derwent flows through the centre of FVWNNR and adjacent to the individual sites (As shown on Drawing No 128858/8001). Due to the close proximity of the river, the application sites are located within Flood Zone 3.
- 2.9. The existing boardwalk, which will be replaced, provides access through the FVNNR and follows a public right of way (PRoW) for the majority of its 2.3 kilometre length alongside the River Derwent (As shown on Drawing No 128858/8001).

3.0 Planning History

- 3.1. A planning history search has been undertaken using the NYMNPA online planning application search facility and has not found any relevant planning applications within any of the application sites or surrounding area. This has also been confirmed by NYMNPA within the Pre-application response received on the 25th March 2019.

Pre – Application Response

- 3.2. A Pre-application enquiry (NYM\2019\ENQ\15366) was submitted to NYMNPA on the 25th March 2019. It was submitted to seek advice from planners at NYMNPA in advance of a formal planning submission, to determine the acceptability of the proposed improvements at Forge Valley and to understand the likely material planning considerations in the determination of a subsequent planning application.
- 3.3. A response from NYMNPA was received dated 16th April 2019 and responded to the questions set out within the pre application covering letter and identified some material planning considerations, which need to be assessed within a planning application, and are considered below within this Planning Supporting Statement.
- 3.4. In regards to which aspects of the scheme require planning permission, NYMNPA confirmed that the *“replacement of the existing timber boardwalk with either timber or 100% recycled plastic following the same route as existing with splayed passing places would be considered repair and maintenance rather than new development and as such the works will not require planning permission”*.
- 3.5. The response outlined that NYMNPA had already been in discussions with Scarborough Borough Council, the Environment Agency (EA), the Highways Authority, Raincliffe Woods Community Enterprise (RWCE) and the Park Services Directorate regarding improvement works at Forge Valley.
- 3.6. The response outlined that there had been no previous planning applications or enquiries on the site or immediate vicinity, which include works such as what this

proposed in this planning application. The response also highlighted that NYMNPA were unable to comment on potential concerns from West Ayton Parish Council.

- 3.7. The pre-application response outlined that, the principle of the proposed works meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and stated that proposals such as what is being submitted in this application are also deemed acceptable in principle as they, *“enhance the existing facilities and opportunities in the Forge Valley for visitors to understand and enjoy the special qualities of the National Park thereby meeting one of our statutory purposes as set out in the 1995 Environment Act”*.
- 3.8. However, as there was no detailed design submitted with the pre application, NYMNPA could not confirm whether the proposed scheme is in accordance with any of the policies in the adopted Core Strategy and Development Policies Document (2008). Although it was confirmed that *“in principle such works would promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park”*.
- 3.9. The Pre-application response also confirmed that the proposed scope of supporting documents listed within the covering letter, was sufficient for the purposes of validating the application and are as follows:
- Application Forms;
 - Site Location Plan;
 - Location Plan;
 - Relevant drawings (in accordance with the validation check list);
 - Planning Statement;
 - Design and Access Statement;
 - Arboricultural Implication Assessment;
 - Phase 1 Habitat Survey;
 - Construction Method Statement; and
 - Flood Risk and Drainage Assessment/ Drainage Statement.

4.0 Public Consultation

- 4.1. The NYMNPA's Statement of Community Involvement (SoCI) "Involving People in Planning" document (2014) was consulted prior to undertaking any public consultation. It was considered that the proposed works did not require any formal consultation prior to submission of the application. This is due to the proposed works not falling within the set criteria that would enable the requirement for a public consultation. However, in order to provide clarity on how the proposal will positively improve the FVWNNR, it was considered best to engage with the local community prior to finalising the design of the proposed works.
- 4.2. Therefore a public consultation meeting was organised by the RWCE with the assistance from Fairhurst. The consultation event took place on Monday 20th May between 2pm to 7pm, at Derwent Valley Community Library and Resource Centre, West Ayton. The consultation event was advertised by RWCE via their Social Media page and physical notices pinned at existing car parks in the study area.
- 4.3. The first hour of the event was a session delivered to Year 6 pupils of East Ayton Primary School, staff members and the head teacher. A presentation was delivered to the pupils about Forge Valley and why the development is needed, with the children engaging well. The pupils then had chance to see the design proposals with explanation from Fairhurst and RWCE personnel.
- 4.4. The remainder of the event was open to members of the public to drop in and see the proposals. The event was well attended with a constant flow of attendees throughout, with 30+ people attending. Attendees were able to discuss the project with staff members, complete a feedback form or return comments via email at a later date. A total of 24 paper response forms were received at the event, with a further 6 responses received following the event via email.
- 4.5. The event was also attended by members of the Fairhurst design team, who were able to discuss any feedback as well as answer any questions regarding the proposal. Following the consultation event, the designs of the proposed works were amended from the initial pre application design. The accompanying Design and

Access Statement (Document No: DID/128858/801) outlines these post consultation designs.

- 4.6. In order to gather the opinions of the participants, a comments sheet was produced and distributed around at the event, and then collected after the event had ended. To allow for further representation, a 2 week consultation period then followed. This allowed for any further responses from the event or responses from those who were unable to attend.
- 4.7. Once the consultation period had ended the responses were gathered and reviewed by Fairhurst and discussed with the Client. A summary was produced of the overall responses in order to understand the general consensus of the proposals, which can be seen below within Table 1.

Aspect of Proposal	Summary of comments
Replacement boardwalk	The general response to this was positive, with respondents noting their favour of the use of recycled plastic. It was requested that the removal of the existing boardwalk includes any old pieces of the previous boardwalk which still remain.
New bridge crossing and car park	The response to the new bridge was mixed. Some respondents expressed favour about the improved accessibility for disabled users, as well as closer access to the boardwalk for residents in East Ayton villages. Others had concerns about the bridge encouraging anti-social behaviour, including the use of motorbikes.
Old Man’s Mouth car park improvements	The response to this was favourable.
New Lay-by	There was concern that the lay-by would appear too ‘urban’ and would not fit in with the surrounding landscape. There were also safety concerns for drivers accessing and exiting the lay-by.

Table 1 – Summary of Comments

- 4.8. The responses to the proposals were generally positive, with a vast majority expressing favour towards some, if not all, aspects of the proposed scheme. There was a general understanding that the proposals will directly benefit the public and environment, whilst supporting the FVWNNR. The responses also commented on the potential for better access for wheelchair users, and that the improvements would be an asset for both locals and tourists.
- 4.9. Some responses included ideas and suggestions, with several respondents suggesting the use of signage to state 'No Camping/ Fires/ Fly Tipping' etc.
- 4.10. Some concerns were raised, including the current and potential speed of traffic along Seavegate and the proximity of the footpath to the road. A warning sign about the footpath along the main road was also suggested. Other concerns included the potential for increased litter, fly tipping and fires as well as increased problems associated with dog walking, specifically letting dogs off the lead and dog fouling. Therefore, the proposals will include increased signage in relation to keeping dogs on leads, dog fouling as well as providing litter and dog waste bins (as shown on Drawing No: 128858/8003).
- 4.11. The comments from the consultation were then embedded into the design of the proposal, most notably being the reduction of hardstanding within the car parking areas. The number of parking spaces in the Old Man's Mouth car park was reduced, making space for a potential picnic area to the northern end of the space. The formalisation of the existing Lay-by area, located within the most southern application site (Insert Plan C - Drawing No: 128858/8001), was also removed from the final design. This would allow for a reduction in hardstanding and provide opportunity to enhance this area for biodiversity/landscape. The proposals will also include increased signage in relation to keeping dogs on leads, dog fouling and providing dog waste bins.

5.0 Proposed Development

- 5.1. Firstly, this section of the Planning Supporting Statement sets out the proposed development as the subject of this planning application. The proposed development is to provide a new footbridge and car park, and improvements to three car parks within Forge Valley.
- 5.2. The boardwalk was created in the year 2000 to provide an accessible public route through the FVNNR, in particular for wheelchair users. However, in recent times the condition of the boardwalk has deteriorated, due to the continued exposure to very damp conditions. As a result, the structure has had to be modified over the years to make it safer for Non-Motorised User's (NMU's). There is also a lack of connectivity between the existing boardwalk and car parking areas and the wider countryside. The car parks are currently not adapted for the demand in visitors and do not cater for disabled users/vulnerable user groups (young, elderly, partially sighted etc.).
- 5.3. RWCE are a community interest company, whose purpose is to increase public access to the woodlands and maximise the public amenity, mindful of the environment and sensitivity of heritage within the Derwent River corridor. RWCE will be the leaseholder of the proposed scheme. The community enterprise has successfully applied through an Expression of Interest for 100% capital funding to undertake improvements, which include the provision of a new footbridge/car park and improvements to three car parks within Forge Valley. Scarborough Borough Council intends to implement the proposed improvement works in order to improve and safeguard the existing infrastructure within FVWNNR.
- 5.4. The proposed bridge (as shown on Drawing No: 128858 – 8004) will provide access directly to the boardwalks on the east and west bank of the River Derwent at the southern end of the FVWNNR. It will be designed to sufficiently to allow river flow underneath when in flood and will offer an additional 30% in maximum flow volume to the bridge higher upstream in the FVWNNR.
- 5.5. The new bridge and replacement boardwalk will also be designed to accommodate the load of a powered wheelchair for increased accessibility. It will also be constructed of 100% recycled plastic, which provides a low maintenance alternative

to wood and is long lasting, coming with a manufacturer guarantee of a minimum of 25 years, although it is expected to have a lifespan of up to 50 years given the locations limited direct exposure to UV. The use of plastic will not create any harmful contamination to the sensitive flora and fauna with no measurable traces due to degradation.

- 5.6. A new car park will also be created to serve the proposed bridge (insert Plan B of Drawing No: 128858/8004). Two of the parking spaces within the car park will be for disabled vehicles to load and unload on to the hard standing, connecting directly to the boardwalk. The improvements to the car parks will include formalising some existing areas, including the existing Old Man's Mouth car park (as shown on drawing 128858/8003) and the parking to the South of FVWNNR (as shown on Drawing No 128858/8005).
- 5.7. The improvements will provide for a more sustainable parking arrangement in the area, making it easier for all users to access the FVWNNR. The overall car park improvements will include an additional 10 car parking spaces, two mini bus bays and two disabled bays.
- 5.8. It is also important to note that the proposals considered within this planning application are part of a wider scheme, which includes replacing the existing boardwalk that currently provides access through the FVWNNR. The boardwalk, which was installed in 2000, follows a PRoW for the majority of its 2.3 kilometre length alongside the River Derwent and is located entirely within the FVWNNR. However, following a formal pre-application response from NYMNPA, it has been confirmed that this aspect for the scheme does not require planning permission, due to the nature of the repair works.

Need for Proposed Improvements

- 5.9. As stated above, the improvements are needed in to order facilitate access for all users. Wheelchair users have been adversely affected the most as a result of the numerous modifications and dilapidation. Due to the poor design of the modifications, the boardwalk does not enable a wheelchair user to easily pull in to the seating areas. There is also an uncomfortable ride for wheelchair users, who

experience a repetitive bumping over the non-slip strips. Access to the boardwalk for wheelchair users and pushchairs is also restricted to Old Man's Mouth Car Park.

- 5.10. Access in and out of the Old Man's Mouth Car Park is difficult due to the steep entry and exit slope. This is especially difficult for vehicles adapted for wheelchair users with tail lift features as the steep slope causes serious grounding of the tail lift, and can also occur on long wheelbase vehicles and those fitted with tow-bars. At present, the surface in the car park and pathway to the boardwalk is uneven, muddy and does not encourage wheelchair users on to the boardwalk which is clean and even.
- 5.11. As a result of the above, the current provision of infrastructure within FVWNNR does not meet current the Disability Accessibility Standards or the requirements within the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA).
- 5.12. Research has identified accessibility tourism as a sector with significant growth in demand and there is a need to provide facilities to continue an enjoyable visitor experience. A recent tourism survey for the Borough of Scarborough clearly identifies the Experian market segment of Senior Security (elderly people with assets who are enjoying a comfortable retirement) as a significant sector at 13%, followed by Suburban Stability and Aspiring Homemakers at 11% each. This project is ideally positioned to meet their needs and interests.
- 5.13. As a result of the proposed footbridge at the southern end of the boardwalk, new circular walk opportunities for tourists in the locality will be created. The location also provides access to Ayton Castle and shorter walks from both East & West Ayton suitable for tourists using the catering and accommodation locally. The footbridge also provides the opportunity for the local school and the residents of East and West Ayton to explore the lower end of Forge Valley and the castle as a short circular walk. This planning application will look to safeguard the existing provision of infrastructure, as well as provide improved access for all the community, which include measures to address existing known antisocial behaviour in the area.

Construction Method of Proposed Improvements

- 5.14. Construction of the proposed works will be dependent on funding. However the construction period is expected to start early 2020. All work is expected to be completed by August 2021.
- 5.15. The proposed footbridge will be constructed of recycled plastic and will be designed, manufactured and installed by a specialist sub-contractor. The bridge is to be prefabricated, transported to site and installed via a crane located within the newly constructed car park. Reinforced concrete pad foundations are to be utilised to support both ends of the bridge (as shown on Drawing No: 128858/3000).
- 5.16. The proposed car park located adjacent to the footbridge will be constructed using a reinforced gravel grid. Imported quarried aggregate will be required for the construction of both the car park and connecting footpaths. A well compacted Type 3 sub-base is to be used in conjunction with a geotextile layer to provide a sufficient base below the gravel grid whilst also maintaining permeability and free drainage, providing appropriate SuDS attenuation and levels of treatment. During the construction period, the new car park will be utilised for the crane, which is to be used for the installation of the proposed footbridge.
- 5.17. As part of the proposed development, a small number of trees will need to be felled. All required tree felling will be carried out in accordance with the recommendations within the EcoNorth AIA report. Works will be carried out using the appropriate equipment, techniques and qualified personnel. This will be done outside the bird breeding season to avoid disturbance. There are 9 trees to be removed to make way for the car park by the bridge crossing. These come from tree group G034. It is noted in the AIA that some trees within this group could be removed for the development to proceed if it is not possible to integrate them within the design. As a result, 6 trees are also being planted in this area and 11 trees are being planted in the footpath restoration area. In total 9 trees are being removed and 17 planted in replaced. As detailed in the AIA, the trees to be removed are in tree group GO34 (missed species). A small proportion of tree removal is considered acceptable as this would not impact significantly on the wider group.

- 5.18. Due to the close proximity to the River Derwent, works carried out near any water course are regarded as high risk, with the potential to cause pollution, silting and erosion. Therefore, special attention will be given during construction in order to prevent any such contamination. Materials will be stored away from all water courses and covered when necessary to reduce sediment run-off. Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH) statements will be available for all hazardous materials, with any materials considered hazardous to be stored in a locked container within the Contractor's compound.
- 5.19. As the development is located within a National Nature Reserve and includes the construction of a bridge and footpath within 8m of the river's edge, an EA Bespoke Permit has been applied for. A copy of the application has been attached to this planning application. The application includes an 'Environmental Management System' report, (Document No: DID/128858/03) which outlines good practice for the operation and maintenance of the works and *"ensure the effectiveness and reliability of the system over the lifespan of the development, and minimise the risk from potential hazards"*.

6.0 Planning Policy Assessment

- 6.1. This section of the Planning Supporting Statement sets out the planning policies that are of particular relevance to the proposed development.
- 6.2. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sets out the duties decision makers in the determination of planning applications and states:
- "If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the Planning Acts the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise"*.
- 6.3. Other material considerations which have been taken into account include the revised NPPF published in February 2019 and the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) published in March 2014.

National Planning Policy

- 6.4. The revised NPPF was published in February 2019 and provides the National Planning Guidance, which this application will be determined against and is a material consideration in the determination of this application. As per Annex 1 of the NPPF, weight will be attached to policies contained within the North York Moors National Park Authority Core Strategy and Development Policies Document (2008) (NYMNPAA Core Strategy) in accordance with their conformity with the NPPF.

Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

- 6.5. Paragraph 7 of the NPPF, states that sustainable development has three dimensions: an economic role; a social role and an environmental role. It states the following on each dimension:

***“an economic role** – contributing to building a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right type is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth and innovation; and by identifying and coordinating development requirements, including the provision of infrastructure;*

***a social role** – supporting strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by providing the supply of housing required to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by creating a high quality built environment, with accessible local services that reflect the community’s needs and support its health, social and cultural well-being; and*

***an environmental role** – contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity, use natural resources prudently, minimise waste and pollution, and mitigate and adapt to climate change including moving to a low carbon economy”.*

- 6.6. Paragraph 8 of the NPPF states that the three dimensions outlined above are mutually dependent and should not be addressed in isolation. Fairhurst considers

that the proposals represent sustainable development and accord with Paragraph 8 of the NPPF in the following ways:

- 6.7. The proposed scheme will perform the economic role by ensuring that FVWNNR remains accessible, with such improvements to the accessibility enhancing the tourist opportunities and experience within the area.
- 6.8. Socially, the role of the proposal will be to facilitate the local communities' ability to be "healthy" and to improve access within the National Park and FVWNNR, by increasing walking & cycling opportunities. As identified on NYMNPA's online Proposals Map the entire scheme forms part of a PRoW within the National Park. Therefore, the proposed scheme will help to continue the long-term accessibility to the PRoW and surrounding National Park.
- 6.9. RWCE has confirmed plans to work closely with Sheffield Hallam University Geography Department. RWCE will be the client for first year students, who will work on how the geology, geography, archaeology, history and human influence has shaped the woods we see today. The students will also consider ways this can be conveyed to visitors and educational/ special interest groups. Members of the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society also attended the consultation event. Fairhurst and RWCE are keen to work with this group throughout the process, to help connect the public further to this unique and interesting site.
- 6.10. RWCEs continued social commitments that provide "future proofing" of the National Nature Reserve can have wider benefit for the public, which can include the provision of tourist information regarding the geology, archaeology and history of the Forge Valley and provide visitor information and signage. The scheme is therefore considered to perform a social role by not only allowing university student's greater access to study the site, but will also provide valuable visitor information.
- 6.11. Fairhurst consider that the environmental role of the proposed scheme will assist in the maintenance of the FVWNNR, which was established to *"protect important habitats, species and geology, and to provide 'outdoor laboratories' for research. In turn this offers great opportunities to schools, specialist interest groups and the*

public to experience wildlife at first hand and to learn more about nature conservation”.

- 6.12. Fairhurst also consider there will be a net gain in biodiversity through the proposals, a there will be an increase in tree planting, currently degraded areas will be restored and enhanced (Drawing No: 128858/8005) and the scheme will provide more information to the public about the important environmental sensitivity of the area, thereby educating users and promoting sensitive use of the area. As previously outlined measures will be in place through the construction process to safeguard and protect the environmental sensitivities of the valley.

Promoting the Rural Economy

- 6.13. Section 6 of the NPPF sets out planning aims in relation to supporting a prosperous rural economy. Paragraph 83 states that, to promote a strong rural economy, planning decisions should enable:

- a) *“the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well-designed new buildings;*
- b) *the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;*
- c) *sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments which respect the character of the countryside; and*
- d) *the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship”.*

- 6.14. As mentioned previously, Fairhurst consider that the proposed development is in line with the NPPF as it supports economic growth in the local rural area; by ensuring that the FVWNNR is protected and enhanced through projects such as the proposed improvement works.

- 6.15. The improvement works will provide better connectivity throughout the FVNNR and to the National Park, meaning local services and community facilities can attract

additional custom and enhance the tourist opportunities, in accordance with paragraph 83 of the NPPF.

Promoting High Quality Design

- 6.16. Section 12 of the NPPF requires all development to provide high quality design, as it is a key aspect of sustainable development. Paragraph 127 (a) stipulates the need for developments which *“will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development”*.
- 6.17. The design of the bridge has been informed by the surrounding landscape and existing infrastructure. The bridge and boardwalk will be constructed from recyclable material, which is designed to replicate traditional materials that will blend into the surrounding context of the site. The car parks are also designed to incorporate the soft informal design of the existing parking areas.

Conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment

- 6.18. Section 15 of the NPPF sets out the national policy for conserving and enhancing the natural environment. Paragraph 172 of the NPPF states that *“great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues”*.
- 6.19. The typical subtle design and scale of the footbridge, is comparable with the existing footbridge at the Old Man’s Mouth Car Park within the area, and has been designed appropriately for development within the National Park. The car park will provide the much needed additional formal parking arrangements to the National Park and prevent unnecessary damage to parts of the landscape, due to off road parking. Therefore, it is considered that the development will protect and provide enhancement the local landscape within the National Park by safeguarding areas and educating users on sensitive uses in the area.

- 6.20. Section 17 of the NPPF states that *“in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting”*.
- 6.21. Non- designated Heritage assets are known to exist within close proximity to the Old Man’s Car Park. The proposed works to the car park improvements in this area have been designed to safeguard any heritage assets. This embedded design has been considered and outlined further in this Planning Supporting Statement. Following a desktop review of the Historic Environment Records, it was found that there were not any further heritage assets within close proximity to the other remaining application sites. The scope of works within this car park will look to enhance any further heritage features and include findings within the Interpretation/Signage Strategy.

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.22. Paragraph 170 (a) of the NPPF states that planning decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by *“protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)”*.
- 6.23. A Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Tree Survey have assessed any habitats present and their suitability to support a range of protected and notable species, as well as for evidence of the species being present themselves.
- 6.24. The area is designated a National Nature Reserve, due to the Ancient Woodland present within the Forge Valley. Therefore a Stage 2 Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA) has also been provided with this application. This provides a tree protection plan that summarises the tree work to be undertaken; identifying those trees that are to be removed and/or retained, how the tree root zones will be affected, and how trees to be retained will be protected during construction.

- 6.25. Paragraph 175 of the NPPF sets out the principles local planning authorities should apply when determining an application, “to protect and enhance biodiversity”. Paragraph 175 (b) states that:

“Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (either individually or in combination with other developments) should not normally be permitted. Where an adverse effect on the site’s notified special interest features is likely, an exception should only be made where the benefits of the development, at this site, clearly outweigh both the impacts that it is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest”.

- 6.26. Due to both the low scale nature of the proposed works and careful design and placement of the infrastructure, it is considered that there will not be any negative impacts on either the SSSI or FVWNNR and measures will be put in place through the construction period (see Construction Management Plan) to ensure limited disturbance through this period. In the long term there will be likely benefits due to educating users on the sensitive use of this important environment and the defined pathways will restrict intrusion into the wider sensitive environment.
- 6.27. Based on the above, it is considered that the proposed development will not have negative impacts on the environment and will, therefore, be in accordance with the policy aims of Section 15 of the NPPF. It should be noted, as a result of the findings within the Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the recommended additional protected species surveys will be undertaken, which will consider Bats, Water Voles and Otters.

Flood Risk

- 6.28. Section 14 of the NPPF stipulates that where development is necessary for areas of high flood risk, it should be made safe for its lifetime without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 6.29. A Flood Risk and Drainage Statement has been produced in support of this application, which identifies the key criteria relevant to the site in terms of flood risk

and discusses considerations that should be given to enable the site to be developed.

- 6.30. Paragraph 163 of the NPPF states that *“when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment it can be demonstrated that... the development is appropriately flood resistant and resilient”*.
- 6.31. The assessment concluded that the development site to be at high risk of river flooding but a low risk of surface water flooding, although the redevelopment of a nature conservation and biodiversity area is considered a water-compatible development. It is also concluded from the findings that the proposed works are considered appropriate for the site and will not increase the flood risk on site or elsewhere.
- 6.32. Based on the findings within the Flood Risk and Drainage Statement, it is considered that the proposed development will not have negative impacts on flood risk or drainage and will, therefore, be in accordance with the policy aims of Section 14 of the NPPF.

North York Moors National Park Planning Authority Core Strategy

- 6.33. As the site falls within the NYMNPA area, appropriate local development policy context will be considered. Currently, applications are being decided using the statutory development plan, which comprises of planning policies from the North York Moors National Park Core Strategy and Development Policies Document (2008).
- 6.34. Core Policy A of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document states that *“the Local Development Framework seeks to further the National Park purposes and duty by encouraging a more sustainable future for the Park and its communities whilst conserving and enhancing the Park’s special qualities”*. As stated previously, in line with the NPPF, the proposed scheme will perform an

economic role by ensuring that Forge Valley remains an accessible National Nature Reserve.

- 6.35. It will also provide a social role by facilitating the need of the local communities by improving access (including the PRoW) within the National Park and National Nature Reserve. Environmentally the proposed scheme will assist in the maintenance of the FVWNNR, which was established in order to prolong the existence of the Ecological assets within the area. It is therefore considered that the proposed scheme is in line with Core Policy A of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.
- 6.36. Core Policy C of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document states that *“the quality and diversity of the natural environment of the North York Moors National Park will be conserved and enhanced. Protected sites and species will be afforded the highest level of protection with priority also given to local aims and targets for the natural environment”*.
- 6.37. The proposed scheme is located within the ecological designations of a SSSI and FVWNNR. Due to the low scale development footprint of the proposed improvements, it is considered that there would not be any negative impact on the natural environment as a result of the proposed scheme in the long term and will likely provide benefit. As stated previous, a Phase 1 Habitat Survey has provided a range of required mitigation and recommendations of further survey work in order to *“provide an appropriate level of protection to legally protected sites and species”*, in accordance with Core Policy C of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.
- 6.38. Core Policy G of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document states that the *“high quality sustainable design will be sought which conserves or enhances the landscape setting, settlement layout and building characteristics of the landscape character areas identified in the North York Moors Landscape Character Assessment”*. The application site is located within Forge Valley, identified as within the North York Moors Landscape Character Assessment.

- 6.39. The proposed scheme is considered to adhere to the characteristics outlined, due to the subtle design of the low scale development, which will not impact on the wider landscape. Therefore it is considered that the proposed scheme is in line with Core Policy G of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.
- 6.40. Core Policy H of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document states that the *“the rural economy will be strengthened and supported by providing local communities with a range of opportunities for entrepreneurship, education and training. This will be achieved through, Sustainable tourism based on recreation activities and tourism development related to the understanding and enjoyment of the Park”*. It is considered that the core principle of the proposed scheme is to provide enhanced access within the National Park. In turn, this is to promote sustainable tourism in the area, which is currently popular with tourists and local residents, in accordance with Core Policy H of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.
- 6.41. Core Policy I of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document states that *“the provision of new health, sport, education and other community facilities will be supported; where they will provide an essential facility to support the local community”*. As stated previously, in line with the NPPF, the proposed scheme is to promote and enhance the community facilities within the National Park. Enabling greater access for a wide range of users will in turn provide an essential facility to the local community. Therefore it is considered that the proposed scheme is in line with Core Policy I of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.
- 6.42. Core Policy M of the NYMNPA Core Strategy and Development Policies Document states that *“the Park Authority will work to improve accessibility to services and facilities within and beyond the National Park for all users and to encourage more sustainable patterns of travel”*. The proposed scheme is needed as the current provision of infrastructure does not meet current the Disability Accessibility Standards or the requirements within the DDA.
- 6.43. The improvements within this application will encourage further access to more of the National Park’s services and facilities. Furthermore, it will promote more

sustainable travel, by allowing local residents to use the infrastructure to move around the National Park. Therefore it is considered that the proposed scheme is in line with Core Policy M of the NYMNP Core Strategy and Development Policies Document.

- 6.44. Development Policy 2 of the NYMNP Core Strategy and Development Policies Document states that *“Development will only be permitted where it will not lead to an increase in flood risk elsewhere”*. As stated previously, a Flood Risk and Drainage Statement will be provided within the application in order to determine the scale of impact towards the risk of flood and provided suitable mitigation. The development of a new footbridge will also be constructed to provide sufficient flow underneath the spans for the river in flood and will offer an additional 30% flow volume to the bridge higher upstream, as required by the Environment Agency.
- 6.45. Development Policy 3 of the NYMNP Core Strategy and Development Policies Document states that *“To maintain and enhance the distinctive character of the National Park, development will be permitted where; a high standard of design detailing is used whether traditional or contemporary, which reflects or complements that of the local vernacular”*.
- 6.46. As has been previously stated, the subtle design of the improvement works incorporates the existing character of the National Park. The development of the bridge will be in keeping within the surrounding area, as the design of it will be similar to the existing bridge within the Forge Valley Nature Reserve.
- 6.47. Development Policy 7 of the NYMNP Core Strategy and Development Policies Document states that *“proposals for development that would have an unacceptable impact on the integrity or setting of a Scheduled Monument, or other sites or remains considered to be of national archaeological importance will not be permitted”*.

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- 6.48. Paragraph 48 of the NPPF says that decision-takers may give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of the emerging plan; the extent to

which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies; and, the degree of consistency of the policies in the emerging plan to the policies in the NPPF. It is considered therefore that the North York Moors Preferred Options Draft Local Plan (2016) can be given some weight due to being sufficiently advanced and relatively close to adoption and therefore will be considered within this letter.

6.49. Draft Policy CO1 of the Draft Local Plan states that proposals for new, improved or supporting infrastructure within the National Park will be permitted where:

- a) *“They represent the least harmful option reasonably available having regard to any operational requirements and technical limitations that are applicable;*
- b) *The design minimises impact on visual amenity, including the character and appearance of the locality and the wider landscape;*
- c) *They will not result in harmful impacts upon features of ecological, archaeological, architectural or historic interest”.*

6.50. The design of the proposed improvement works has been influenced by the significant protection of the surrounding land and will result in the implementation of the least harmful design. Therefore, design features such as the majority of the material to be used to be understood to be 100% recycled plastic, which will have a lifespan of between 40 and 50 years.

6.51. The improvement works are to be designed with minimal impact on visual amenity within the National Park and have considered the main environmental features of the National Park, SSSI, National Nature Reserve and Ancient Woodland designations.

6.52. Draft Policy CO4 of the Draft Local Plan states that *“Development proposals should protect and where appropriate enhance existing networks of Public Rights of Way, linear routes and other access routes used by pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders”.*

6.53. The proposed works consist of various improvements to and around a PRoW. The PRoW serves the majority of the FVWNNR, making it a popular and well publicised walkway and its continued existence is well supported by Scarborough Borough