

Eastleigh Borough Council
Stoke Park Farm – Proposal for consultation

Site Name	Stoke Park Farm
Report	Proposed Scheme
Version	Document Creation
Title Number	HP727269
Total Area	103.44 hectares (255.6 ac)
Name of Author	Rory Watson-Newman
Date of Report	10 th October 2022
Distribution	Internal Only



This report outlines a potential scheme for the land and buildings located at Stoke Park Farm.

The information within is to be considered indicative.

Contents

Eastleigh Borough Council
Stoke Park Farm – Proposal for consultation

Introduction 3

Background 4

Location 5

Composition 6

Ambition 7

Indicative Land Use 9

Summary 12

Further Reading 12

Introduction

This document provides an overview and a potential scheme for Stoke Park Farm for consultation.

Such schemes, by nature are long term. Whilst this document represents existing considerations, it is not intended to remain static, it should evolve as proposals are brought forward and opportunities emerge.

Prior to implementing or committing to this proposal further research, explorations, surveys and a feasibility study must be undertaken.

Any queries regarding the content of this document should be sent by email to Rory Watson-Newman rory.watson-newman@eastleigh.gov.uk

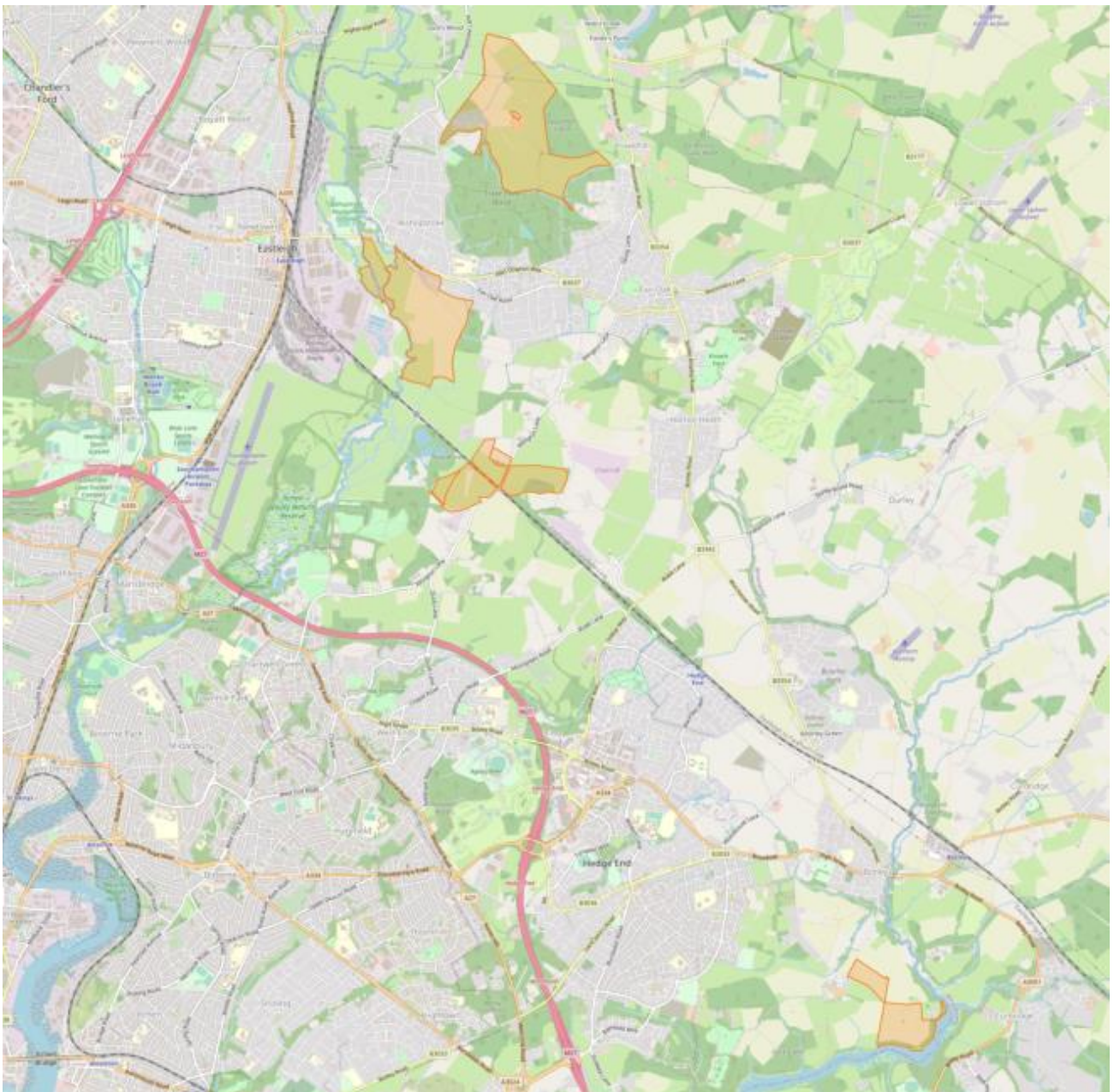


Background

Stoke Park Farm was recently acquired by Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) as part of their broader strategic land acquisitions that equate to 243.23 hectares of agricultural land. The strategic land was purchased with the insight to generate credits that developers or other agencies could purchase in order to offset their nutrient outputs.

In addition to the offset scheme, the Council are exploring additional uses of the strategic land such as generation of further mitigation credits, Solar PV, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and tree planting schemes.

Strategic Land (edged and shaded orange)



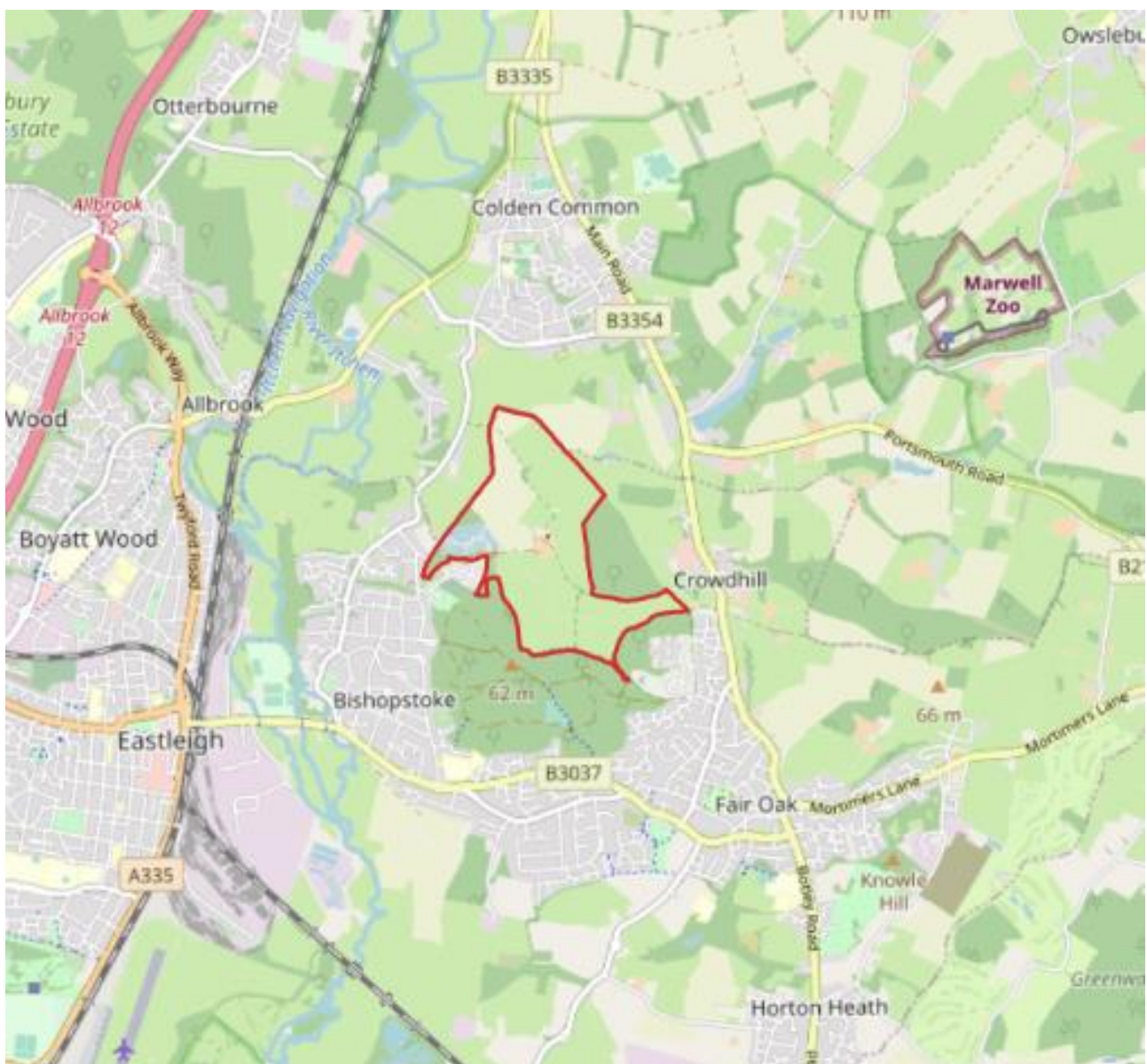
Location

Stoke Park Farm is located off Stoke Common Road on the outskirts of Bishopstoke within the Borough of Eastleigh.

Address :- Stoke Park Farm, Stoke Common Road, Bishopstoke, Eastleigh SO50 6DW

Bishopstoke lies to the Southwest, Fair Oak to the South East, Colden Common to the North and in part the land borders the local authority of Winchester.

Stoke Park Farm (edged red)



Composition



Stoke Park Farm occupies 103.44 hectares (255.6 ac) of an undulated landscape.

The farm incorporates:

- Main vehicular access via Sewall Drive (off Stoke Common Road)
- Subsidiary tracks dissecting and providing access within the holding
- Public Rights of Ways crossing the land equating to 4.75km
- Improved grassland – formerly pasture for 250 dairy cattle
- Barns, buildings and milking parlour of circa 3400 sq m (36600sq ft) in total
- Auxiliary hard standings of circa 3 acres
- Farmhouse and garden of circa 1 acre
- Fishery that farms ornamental carp occupying circa 14 acres
- Woodland, parkland trees and varied tree/hedge lines occupying in excess of 17 acres
- Main river and tributary ditches

In the vicinity are a selection of Ancient woodlands; Stoke Park Woods operated by the Forestry Commission is to the South, Upperbarn Copse and Crowdhill Copse both operated by the Woodland Trust to the West.

Judges Gully Copse and Brick Kiln Copse, both within the boundary, are non-statutory designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC).

Soil is described as freely draining slightly acid loamy soil to the South, and slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils to the North.

The main river corridor, unsurprisingly, is identified as Flood Zone 2 and 3. The remainder of the land is Flood Zone 1, but evident on site are pockets of particularly wet ground.

The Agricultural Land Classification is Grade 4 (poor quality agricultural land) which has been historically demonstrated by the land laid to grass with sparse and occasionally trialed forage crops.

Ambitions

Stoke Park Farm provides Eastleigh Borough Council with the opportunity to share the land with the community and initiate a diverse range of immersive experiences. Creating an inclusive environment where people and wildlife can thrive.

The themes outlined below give a context of the proposed ambitions.

Community

By providing greater access to nature EBC can create an environment to improve health and well-being and attract an increased number of users from a broader and more diverse demographic.

The proposed scheme would:

- Create additional and alternative public access across the site
- Improve signage and accessibility
- Support community engagement and cohesion
- Encourage the sense of place and responsibility
- Provide intergenerational interaction opportunities
- Inspire the creation and display of varied forms of art

Environment

With a long-term management strategy the site lends itself to promote, protect, restore and enhance the environment.

Whilst not exhaustive the opportunities include:

- Habitat creation and enhancements
- Restoration and creation of woodlands
- Planting and improved management of trees, shrub and hedgerows
- Species management including introduction, translocation or eradication
- Improved recreation and green infrastructure
- Water attenuation, diversion and improvements
- Provision of and to showcase alternative resources of energy
- SANG – to assist elevating threat to New Forest
- Encourage and support sustainable modes of transport

Education

By partnering with charities and training providers, an educational hub would be created whereby groups or individuals can train and / or gain knowledge, whilst assisting with the creation and ongoing management of the site.

Applicable programmes would:

- Facilitate the engagement with land, environment and wildlife-based learning
- Explore incorporation of construction and maintenance, horticulture and animal care

Eastleigh Borough Council
Stoke Park Farm – Proposal for consultation

- Target - Students, NEET, Ex Services, SEND, Older Adults (inc. LD &PD), BAME, Community
- Offer outreach learning potential via schools, colleges, charities, volunteering,
- Enrich and upskill the community
- Inform and raise awareness of the important relation between access and wildlife

Commercial

The scheme will be self-financing with revenue sought and generated in various ways. The existing built form would be adapted and repurposed to facilitate commercial and educational space, with enhancements within the surrounding landscape enabling the ability to draw from additional funding opportunities.

The income streams are summarised as:

- Nutrient Credits and developers' contributions
- Local Nature Partnerships
- Let Property – Commercial, Residential, Fishery and Community / Educational space
- Land Management Subsidies
- Educational and Arts & Culture funding
- Visitor Centre and Parking
- Related grants and initiatives

Indicative Land Use

Wider Landscape

Ecological surveys and subsequent reports are due to be compiled which will provide a greater insight into and understanding of the attributes and habitats both within, and in close proximity of the Land. Following the review and evaluation of this information the Council will be better placed to create a detailed Land Management Strategy, that explores the prospect to improve and enhance the biodiversity.

In advance of a detailed strategy the sketch below compartmentalises the land based on the existing features and attributes. It aims to assist with:

- Progressive change of use to support environmental initiatives
- Pragmatic and phased implementation aligned with resources
- Provision of additional public access
- Inclusion of the built form and other let property
- Retention of areas in the current form whereby practicable
- Enhancement of existing wildlife corridors



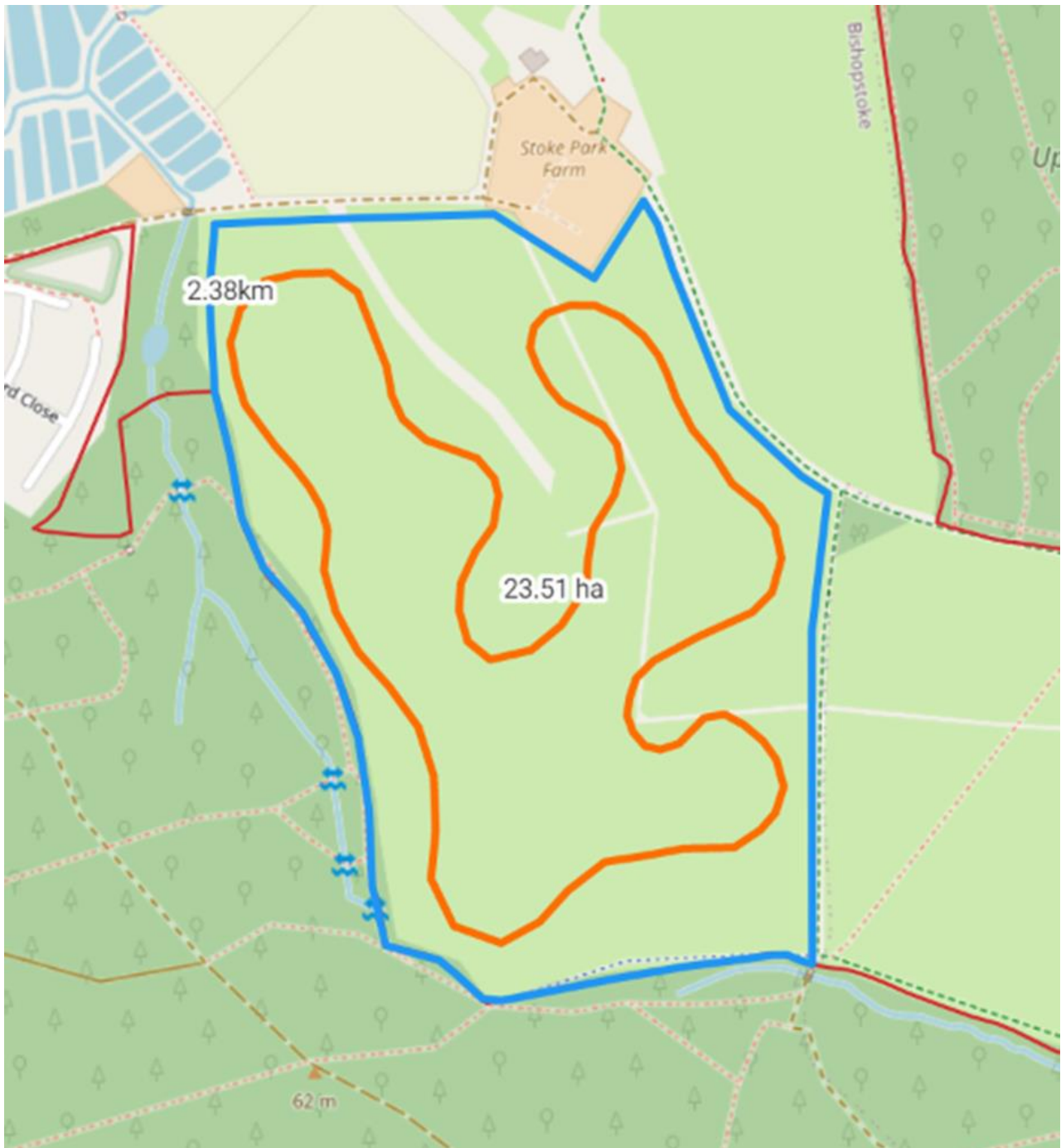
Public Access

Eastleigh Borough Council
Stoke Park Farm – Proposal for consultation

The network of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) crossing the land compliments the connectivity between Fair Oak and Bishopstoke, and relations with Stoke Park Woods, Upperbarn Copse and Crowdhill Copse.

In addition to the existing PRoW, it is envisaged that an area of land would be set aside for visitors to roam and enjoy the natural landscape. An area in excess of 20 hectares with circulating informal walking routes could be set aside and meet the Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) criteria.

The sketch below is indicative of the area that could potentially facilitate a SANG.



Summary

The proposed scheme demonstrates the opportunity for Eastleigh Borough Council to create an inclusive environment where people and wildlife can thrive. This would be delivered by encouraging public use, repurposing the built form and adjusting the management of the wider landscape.

The attributes of Stoke Park Farm provide the necessary framework to:

- Improve the health and well-being within our community,
- Restore, protect and enhance the natural environment,
- Enrich, upskill and educate visitors,
- Operate at a level that is commercially viable

This document highlights that a multifaceted site comes with a host of possibilities and in turn invites the reader to contribute with comments and ideas to support the proposal to fruition.

Further Reading

- The Natural Choice: Securing The Value of Nature
- Levelling Up the United Kingdom
- Environment Act 2021: Biodiversity Net Gain
- EBC Biodiversity Strategy 2022 – 2032
- EBC Health and Wellbeing Corporate Strategy (2018)
- EBC Climate Change and Environmental Emergency Strategy
- EBC Tree Strategy 2022 -2030