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Hole Farm Woodland Creation Project

Consultation Report (November 2022)

The Consultation Report was produced by Forestry England in November 2022 prior to the design of the Project being finalised, however the findings of the Report remain valid as the fundamental scope of the Project has remained the same. The design changes which have taken place since November 2022 do not affect aspects of the Project which were raised during the series of consultation sessions set out in the Report, and thus the findings would not be considered to be affected by the further design changes.



Forestry England

Consultation Report Hole Farm

Final report

Prepared by LUC

November 2022

National
Highways



New Commu



The site where you are standing is called Hole Farm. National Highways recently purchased the 95-acre site which sits alongside the road and the Lower Thames Crossing.

Over the coming years we will be working with Forestry England to develop the site into a community woodland for everyone to enjoy. It will create new habitats for wildlife and provide a valuable addition to the network of connected woodlands nearby.

Forestry England

Consultation Report Hole Farm

Project Number
11797

Version	Status	Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
1.	Interim	C Peachey	P Smith	P Smith	20.03.2022
2.	2 nd Interim	C Peachey	P Smith	P Smith	27.05.2022
3.	3 rd Interim	C Peachey	P Smith	P Smith	30.06.2022
4.	4 th Interim	M Davies	P. Smith	P. Smith	27.07.2022
5.	Final	M Davies	C Peachey	P Smith	18.11.2022

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Registered in England
Registered number 2549296
Registered office:
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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Throughout the consultation and engagement process, Forestry England has invited ideas and welcomed feedback from local stakeholders on the Hole Farm proposals.

1.2 The outcome is presented in this Consultation Report and reflected in the development of the proposals.

Consultation Approach

1.3 Forestry England's consultation approach draws on the second edition of 'Involving People in Forestry: A toolbox' created by Forest Research, which provides background, guidance, and tools to involve people in woodland creation and forestry. The approach aims to:

- Focus on urban forestry given the location and context of Hole Farm.
- Be engaging to make forestry more relevant to the lives of local people.
- Be targeted to ensure wide range of views reflected in Hole Farm as an important part of the legacy of the Lower Thames Crossing.
- Be participatory.
- Help build relationships between National Highways, Forestry England, and stakeholders to inform development and direction beyond Hole Farm project completion.

1.4 The International Association for Public Participation has developed a 'Spectrum of Public Participation'. This illustrates the different levels of engagement and explains the type of obligations those managing the participation process have towards the public (see Figure overleaf).

1.5 Hole Farm is a community woodland project so whilst the project will 'Inform' and 'Consult', the aim has been primarily to 'Involve' and 'Partnership (or Collaborate)'.

1.6 Forest Research define 'involvement' and 'partnership' participation as follows:

- Involvement: encourage people to participate in generating options and potential solutions for forest management plans, projects or activities.

Inform	Consult	Involve	Partnership (or Collaborate)	Empower (or Control)
Public participation objective				
To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
Obligations to the public				
To keep the public informed	To keep the public informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	To ensure concerns and aspirations of the public are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	To look to the public for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate their advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible	To implement what the public decide

Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation website.

- Partnership (Collaboration): people directly participate in selecting the best-fit solution that will become the forest or woodland management plan, or in choosing and designing the activities and services provided. Influence and responsibilities are negotiated and shared.

The Purpose of This Consultation Report

1.7 This report details the measures taken to consult and involve the local community in the development, before the application was submitted.

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

1.8 Whilst there is no statutory requirement for consultation, public consultation is strongly encouraged in planning policy and guidance. This is summarised below.

NPPF para 132:

Design quality should be considered throughout the evolution and assessment of individual proposals. Early discussion between applicants, the local planning authority and local community about the design and style of emerging schemes is important for clarifying expectations and reconciling local and commercial interests. Applicants should work closely with those affected by their proposals to evolve designs that take account of the views of the community. Applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community should be looked on more favourably than those that cannot.

PPG Design: process and tools

Pre-application discussions are an opportunity for prospective applicants and the local planning authority to discuss the intended approach to a site and how design policies and guidance need to be applied. Giving authorities the opportunity to inform and influence the design of a proposed development early in the design process is more efficient than trying to implement suggested revisions at a later stage, particularly if this relates to a major proposal.

Reference ID: 26-009-20191001

Communities can effectively shape both design policies and development through a collaborative process of meaningful participation. Early engagement and linking engagement activities to key stages of design decision-making and plan-making can empower people to inform the vision, design policies and the design of schemes.

Engagement activities offer an opportunity to work collaboratively with communities to shape better places for local people. They consider how to embed empowerment, capacity building and employability opportunities for local people and organisations throughout the design process.

It is important that local planning authorities or applicants demonstrate how all views are listened to and considered...

Local planning authorities and applicants are encouraged to proactively engage an inclusive, diverse and representative sample of the community, so that their views can be taken in to account in relation to design. It is also important to consider maximising the opportunity for local communities to participate, such as working with established organisations or groups within the community and holding events at a time and location that are accessible. Language and presentation of design

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information is most effective when clear and straightforward.

Brentwood Strategic Policy BE14: Creating Successful Places

Design proposals will be expected to:

a. demonstrate early, proactive, inclusive and effective engagement with the community and other relevant partners;

b have regard to Supplementary Planning Documents and Guidance published by the Council, Essex County Council and other relevant bodies;

c. address feedback from the Council through its Pre-application Advice Service and where appropriate, feedback from an independent Design Review Panel.

Methodology

Stakeholder Analysis

1.9 As a starting point, Forestry England held a stakeholder mapping session to identify who we will be involving and collaborating with on the Hole Farm project.

1.10 This was held on 18 November 2021 with local authorities and the local community.

1.11 A stakeholder map to help participants think beyond the usual local community groups and users.



1.12 As part of the mind-map exercise notes were captured on how best to engage with each stakeholder and where they would fall on the spectrum of participation (inform, consult, involve, collaborate, empower).

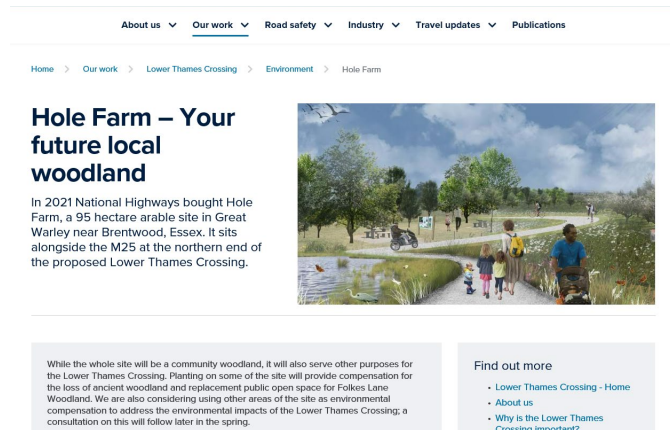
Temperature Check Questionnaire and Website

1.13 A printed questionnaire 'temperature check' was sent out to 7,000 households in the surrounding area as an initial capture of views (Appendix A). This included open questions and a basic, high level site map identifying the Hole Farm site. Questions were based on learning from previous consultations

and included a blank space for any thoughts respondents would like to share.

1.14 A webpage was set up with more information and with details on how to get in touch and submit a questionnaire:

<https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-work/lower-thames-crossing/environment/hole-farm/>



Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

1.15 A series of planned workshops were held to enable participants to further add to their temperature check feedback and to bring together a spectrum of views.

1.16 The workshops were attended by those who had asked to be contacted in their temperature check questionnaire response and specialist groups in the area.

1.17 The workshops were planned around 4 key considerations:

- Community and Recreation Workshop - 22nd February 2022
- Traffic and Access Workshop – 3rd March 2022
- Design and Delivery Approach Workshop - 8th March 2022
- Biodiversity Approach Workshop - 16th March 2022

1.18 Observations and notes were captured from participants and participants were invited to send further information about their views and the site to Forestry England staff.

Drop in Days

1.19 Forestry England held drop in sessions over two days engaging with the local community and a diverse range of interested parties on the Hole Farm Woodland design plan.

1.20 Representatives from National Highways attended throughout to support the open-days and be able to respond

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to any questions associated with the surrounding road network and the Lower Thames Crossing.

1.21 The drop in days were held at Folkes Lane, as seen in the images below which enabled those passing through who have not heard about the proposed Woodland Creation plans to join in. The drop-in day attendees met at Folkes Lane and we're given a tour of Hole Farm.



1.22 During the two days, Forestry England conducted tours of the site with local MPs, Natural England staff, Essex Bridleways Association, Thames Chase Trust volunteers, residents and neighbouring community members, Essex County Council staff, Trailnet, conservationists, local walking groups, horse riders, and cyclists.

1.23 Most of those who attended the tours were there out of general interest and were pleased to have the opportunity to learn about the design and feed in suggestions.



Great Warley Conservation Society

1.24 There is no local parish council representing the area.

1.25 Great Warley Conservation Society is a registered charity which undertakes meetings with local residents and liaises with local authorities concerning matters affecting the Great Warley area.

1.26 The first introductory session was held with Great Warley Conservation Society on Thursday 24 March, 6pm-7.30pm at the church hall in Warley, with Forestry England and National Highways.

1.27 A further in-person event was held with Great Warley Church Hall on Thursday 9th June 2022 between 5:30pm and 7pm.

1.28 The consultation started with Forestry England providing an overview of the Thames Beat and the Hole Farm project followed by an explanation of the current draft plan. Four main topics were discussed with the attendees: Trails, Access Points, Parking and Visitor Facilities, Trees.

Stakeholder Roundtable

1.29 Once the detailed design was prepared, Forestry England hosted a stakeholder roundtable to bring together key stakeholders to review the draft design and discuss how to maximise the opportunities in and around Hole Farm. This included what facilities could be brought forward as part of the application, to ensure the local community receive the full benefit of the proposals.

1.30 The event was held on Friday 1st July 2022 at the Thames Chase Forest Centre, Broadfields Farm, Pike Lane, Upminster.

1.31 Attendees included, Essex County Council, Brentwood Borough Council, National Highways and the Thames Chase Community Forest.

Final Public Consultation

1.32 The final public consultation on the Hole Farm Woodland project was undertaken over two drop-in days between the 2nd and 3rd of September 2022. Hosted by Forestry England, the Great Warley Rectory Hall, Warley, CM13 3JP was utilised as the location of the event.

Ongoing Consultation with Local Authorities and Technical Consultees

1.33 Consultation is currently being undertaken with a number of statutory consultees including:

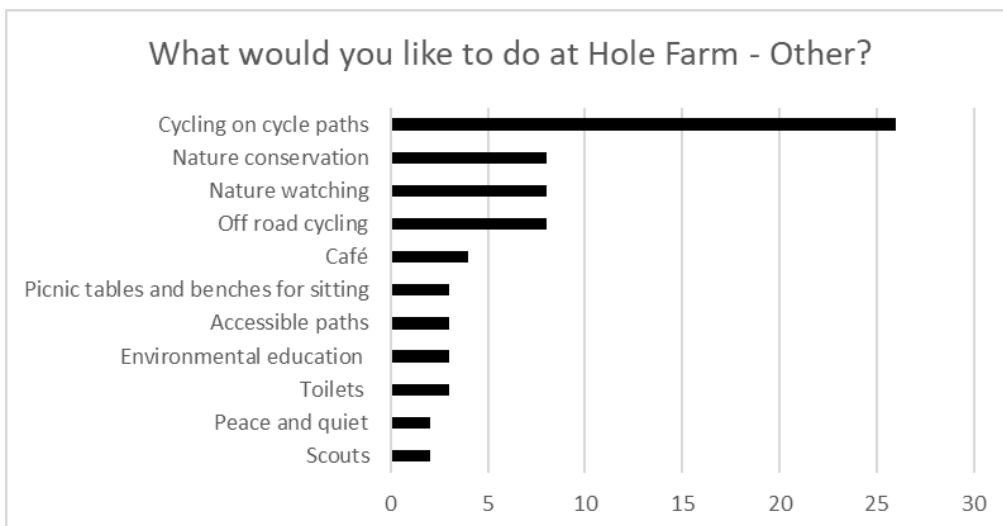
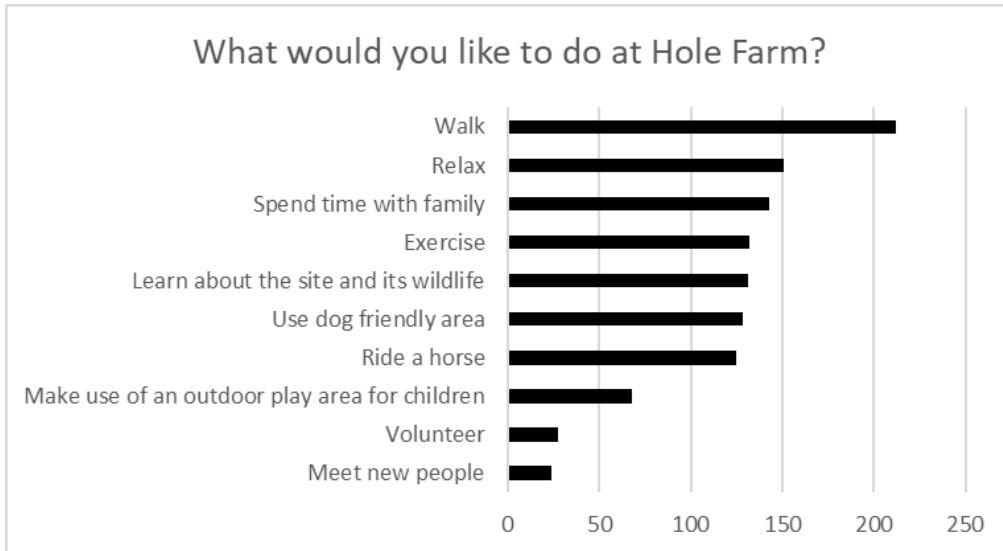
- Brentwood Council.
- Essex County Council Highways and Transportation Team.
- Historic England.
- Natural England.

Chapter 2

Temperature Check Questionnaires

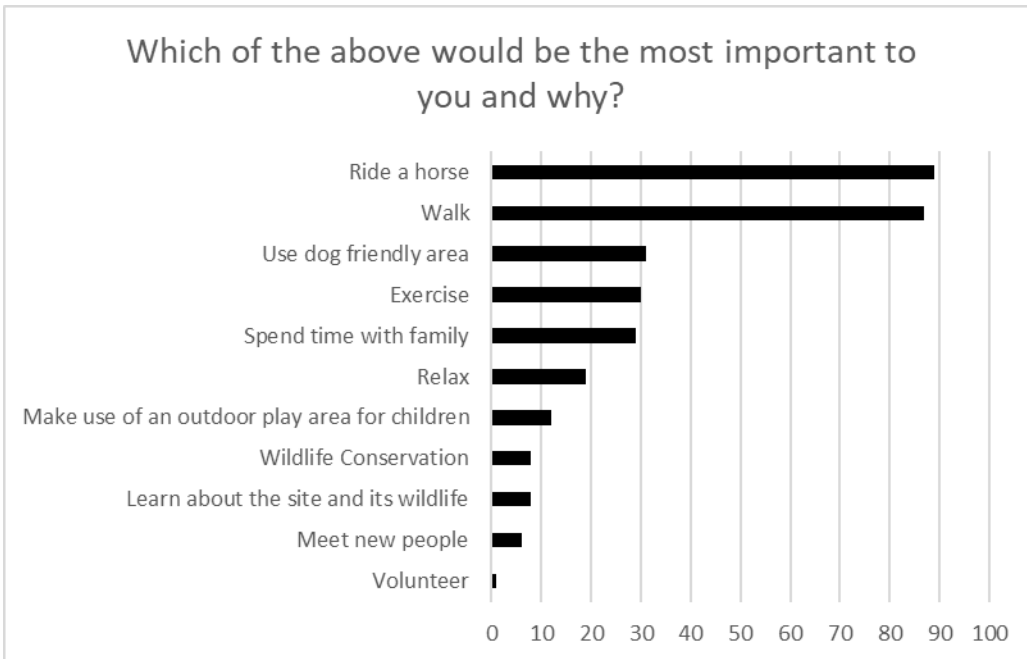
2.1 A temperature check questionnaire was sent to 7,000 households in the local area and 311 responses were received. The questionnaire feedback is presented on the following pages.

What would you like to do at Hole Farm?



2.2 People would like to do several activities. The most common activities were walking, relaxing, spending time with family, exercise, learning about the site and its wildlife, dog walking, riding a horse and cycling.

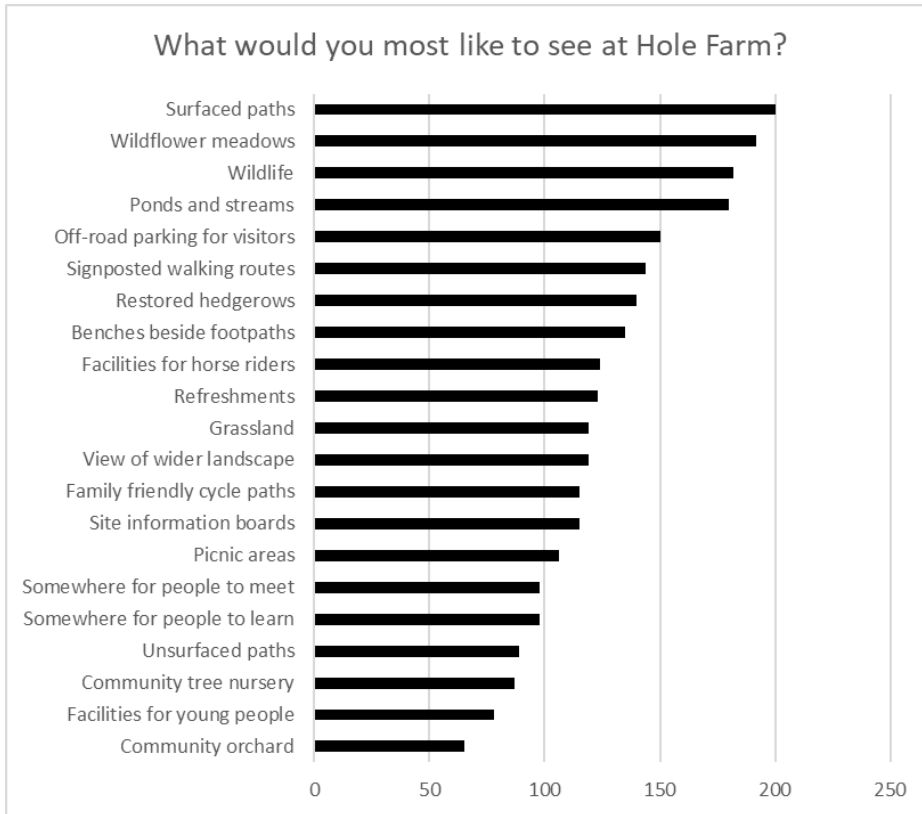
2.3 The activities deemed most important by respondents were riding a horse and walking. This was followed by exercise (of which cycling was mentioned frequently) and spending time with family.

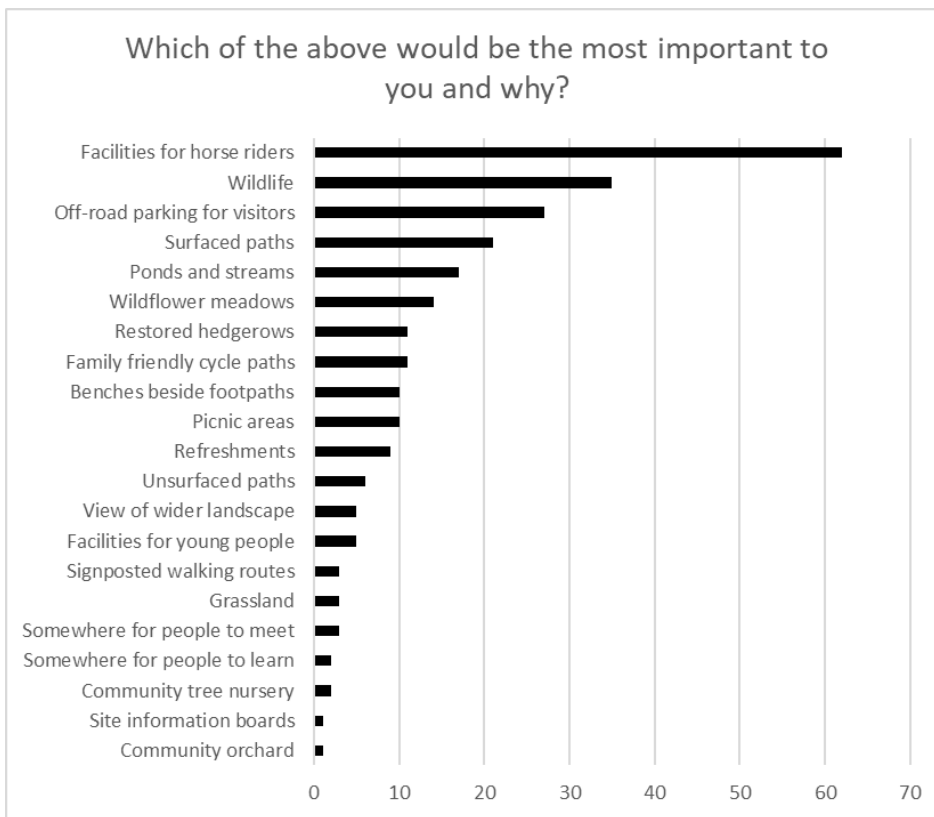


2.4 The following Word Cloud illustrates the most common phrases made in response to these questions.



What would you most like to see at Hole Farm (in addition to woodland)?





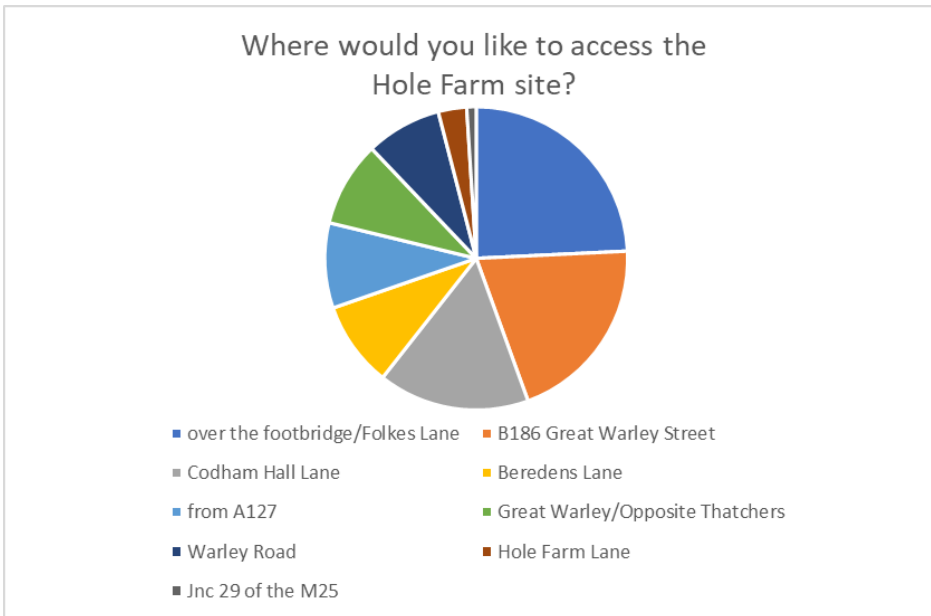
2.5 The most popular things that people wanted to see at Hole Farm were paths, car parking and a variety of natural landscape features. The most frequently mentioned were wildflower meadow, wildlife, ponds and streams, grassland, hedgerows and views of the wider landscape.

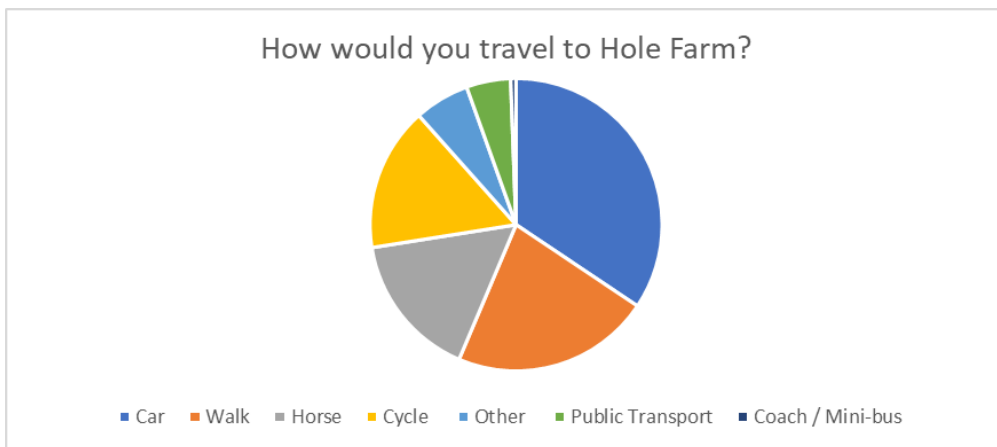
2.6 The deemed most important by respondents to see were facilities for horse riders. However, wildlife, car parking, surfaced paths, ponds and streams and wildflower meadows were also popular.

2.7 The following Word Cloud illustrates the most common phrases made in response to these questions.



Access and Travel to Hole Farm

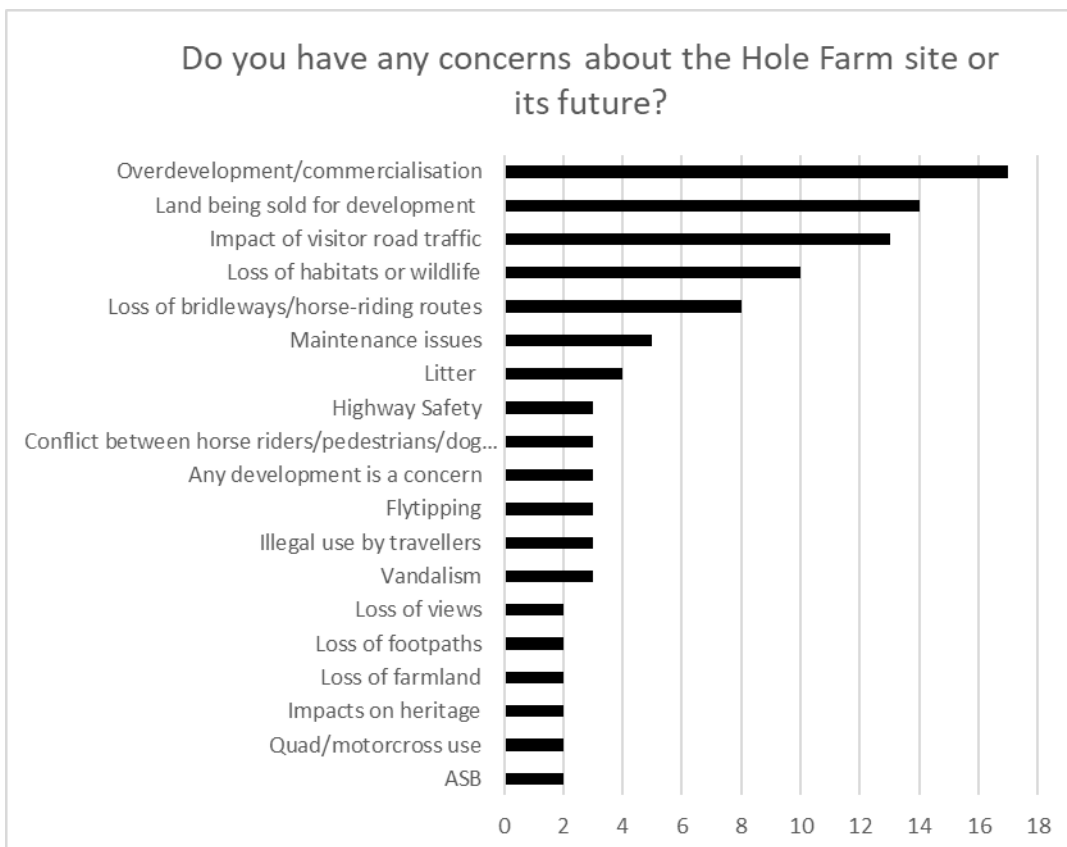




2.8 Around a third of respondents thought that they would travel by car whilst more than half would travel on foot, cycle or horse. Only a small number would travel by public transport.

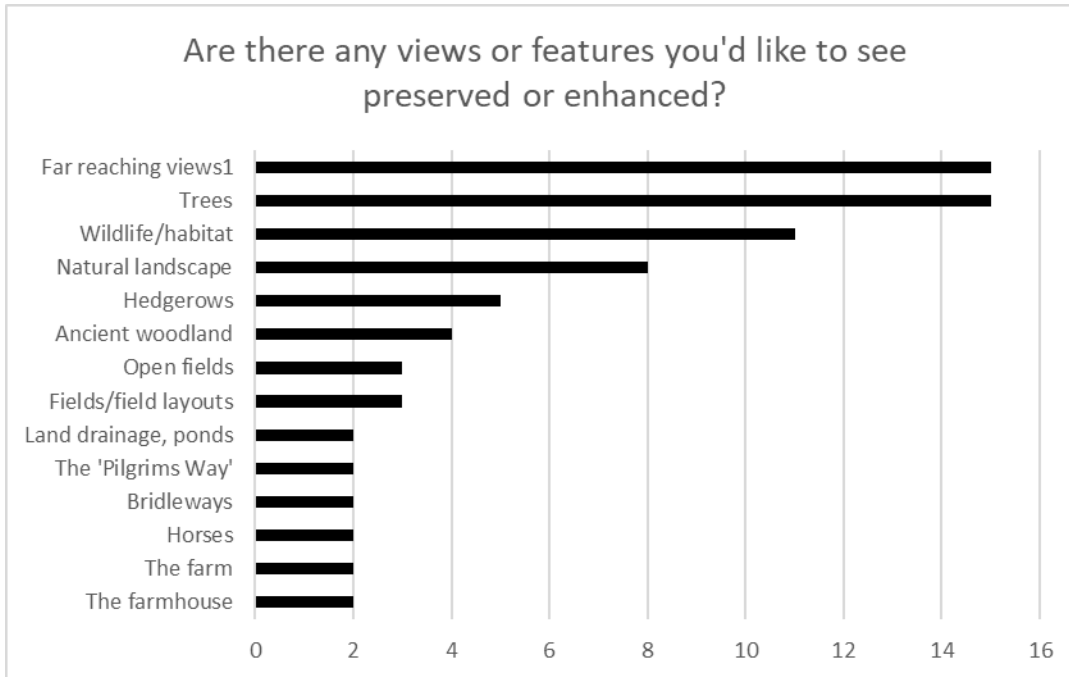
2.9 People wanted to access from a variety of different access points. The most common suggestions were the B186 (Great Warley Street), over the footbridge from Folkes Lane and Codham Hall Lane.

Concerns about Hole Farm or its future



2.10 The most mentioned concern was that the site may become overdeveloped/commercialised followed by a concern that the land may be sold for development and visitor road traffic. People were also concerned about possible loss of habitats/wildlife, loss of bridleways, and maintenance issues.

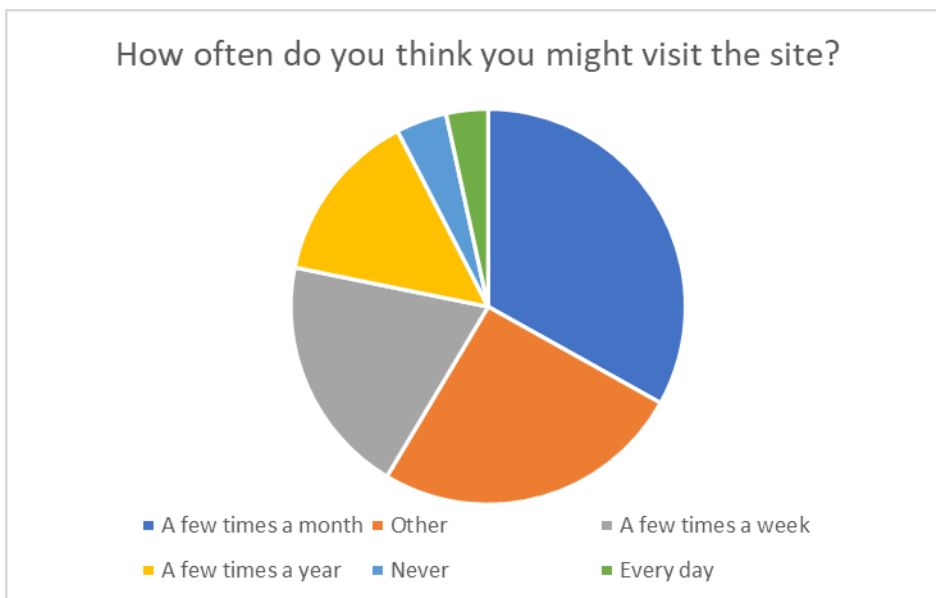
Views or features to be preserved or enhanced



2.11 People most commonly wanted to preserve or enhance far reaching views, natural landscape, trees and wildlife.

2.12 Particular views mentioned were views from Codham Hall Lane up to the brow of the hill, views of “the church”, the River Thames, Tilbury, Laindon Hills, London, views of the sunset, and the view from Beredens Lane.

How often do you think you might visit the site?



2.13 Over half of the respondents thought they would visit a few times a month or more.

How can we make Hole Farm the most inclusive environment it can be?

Paths
Riding Areas and paths for horse-riders.
Accessible, multi-user paths.
Benches for young and elderly family member to be able to rest on walking routes.
Ensure dogs are off leads in certain areas only
Plenty of trail options
Entrances
Access for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders
An easily accessible car park, providing spaces for people with disabilities.
Family friendly walking/cycling paths
Buggy friendly paths
Facilities
Playground facilities for SEN children.
Accessible toilets, open all year round
Accessible refreshment facilities
Accessible seating areas
Cheap / free facilities
Cheap refreshments
Vegan options
Toilets with nappy changing facilities.
Signage
Easy to read maps and signage in brail
Clearly signposted wide paths
Signage in different languages
Activities
Something for different age groups
School visits/children's facilities to learn about wildlife
Events for children, parents & children and the older generation. These should include learning and exploring the countryside.

Responses from Organisations

Great Warley Conservation Society
Would like to see the site continue to be used for walking and horse riding as permitted by the previous owner for many years.
The north-south bridleway must only be accessible for non-motorised vehicles other than residents. How will motorbikes/quadbikes/fly-tippers and litterers be discouraged.
Would prefer to keep it agricultural with footpaths and bridleways. All existing features should be preserved.
Tyler's Residents Association
Would like a visitor centre/building to learn about the surrounding areas and its historical value
Question whether the site would be staffed or maintained to a good standard in the future or would it be left for nature to take over
Preserve the many high vantage vistas for visitors to view.
A Visitor Centre would need to be erected fairly near to a 'free' car park for public use fairly near to the entrance.
The site should be well maintained, staffed and clearly signed.
Ramblers Association
If cycle routes are included, it would help if they were separate from walking routes because cyclists can affect walkers. Sometimes they go quite fast, and walkers have to keep looking out for them and stepping aside.
Places like Broadfields Farm and Hornchurch Country Park are good examples of how to provide all the features which would make it a pleasant place to visit. Lack of refreshment areas and toilets can be a disadvantage to visitors.
Essex Bridleways
Need a safe place to ride horses as there are a limited number in the area
Facilities for horse-riders including parking for horse boxes
Equestrian access, along with other users, to the new woodland would complement the existing bridleway network in the area, and the new equestrian accessible routes improved as a result of the LTC.
Would like to see dedication to the original routes through Hole Farm and Codham Hall. Hole Farm Lane was an ancient Pilgrims route. There are no horsebox parking areas in any Forestry sites in this area, other Forestry (Thetford) does.
Hole Farm is a vital link route from Brentwood down to Havering. The only alternative riders have are very busy roads. The only safe crossing over the A127 is on the link (Bridleway 183).
The Trails Trust, BHS member, Indoor Carriage Driving-UK, British Carriage driving member
Is it possible to include carriage driving?
Driving a horse or pony is a traditional, sociable way of enjoying the countryside. Modern carriages are lightweight and can fit through a horse-friendly gate of 140-150cms.
Cycle Brentwood
Would like to see safe cycle paths for families, with cycle links to other areas
Ingatestone Pedallers Social Cycling Group

Would like to see cycling tracks which would help link up other areas to the SW of Brentwood and away from main roads
Trailnet (Cycling Club)
We help people overcome perceived barriers to cycling, so having access to connected, off-road routes is very important to us.
Surfaced paths that are suitable for year-round cycling are important.
It is really important that the new site is not isolated from other local parks and woodland. Having walking, cycling and horse-riding links to places like Thorndon Country Park and Thames Chase are very important.
CTAC Private training and well-being centre
Would like to see the site used for environmental education, mental well-being drop-in centre, homeless pods

Conclusions and Key Themes

2.14 In addition to the responses to questions, a large amount of additional detail was captured in the questionnaires.

2.15 Considering the more detailed responses provided in the questionnaire the following themes were identified in the responses.

- Generally positive feedback was received. Over half of the respondents thought they would visit a few times a month or more.
- There was a considerable response from horse riders and cyclists hence the dominance of those views.
- Overall, there appears to be a preference locally for lower intensity uses, less development and more natural landscape.
- Existing walking and horse riding on the site, which has occurred over many years on informal paths/bridleways, was highly valued. In particular, the north-south lane which is known as 'Pilgrim's Way' and is thought to have some historic significance. There is a preference to maintain existing horse riding and footpath routes on the site and 'Pilgrim's Way' in particular. Some people also mentioned the need to preserve the listed buildings on the site.
- A large contingent, especially cycle and horse-riders, felt strongly that the site should be integrated into existing horse riding and cycle routes in the wider area to link up to the wider network.
- Overall, there is a lot of interest in the use of the site for cycling (cycle paths and off-road MTB), horse-riding, walking, however some concern about conflicts between users, especially dog walking and other uses.
- Far-reaching views were identified as features that they want to preserve.
- The most common concern raised was that the site would become over-developed with buildings/paths/car parking/activity.
- Whilst a few people wanted more extensive facilities (visitor centre/environmental education) most were keen on a limited number of facilities (small café, toilets) with an emphasis on preserving the natural landscape.
- Most respondents said they are keen to preserve and enhance woodland, mature trees, hedgerows, water, habitats and wildlife in general.
- There was concern about visitor road traffic. We discussed in the meeting potential ways to address this

concern. Convenient well-designed connections between routes on site and the wider PROW network and the bus stop would help discourage use of private vehicle.

2.16 In addition, to the above points concerns were also raised regarding the proposed Lower Thames Crossing, which is not directly relevant to the design of Hole Farm Community Forest.

Chapter 3

Stakeholder Engagement Workshops

3.1 This chapter summarises the main discussion points raised at each of the workshops.

3.2 Full notes taken at each workshop are attached in Appendix B.

3.3 Members of the public and other stakeholders made the following comments.

Community and Recreation Workshop

How can hole farm bring community together?

- Community orchard.
- Opportunities for volunteering including for the management of the site, forestry walks and talks on the environmental changes on the site.
- Tree Nursery, including learning opportunities for local people.

How will hole farm positively impact health and wellbeing?

- Current permissive bridle routes to be maintained and connected to existing bridle routes in the area.
- Maintain the existing private lane as a permissive path.
- Trail running routes.

What would a thriving community woodland at Hole Farm look and feel like?

- Provision of facilities will be needed, unclear what the public would like to see.

3.4 During open questions session the following issues were discussed.

Concerns around access to the Site

- Concerns were raised about traffic as access to the site by means other than the car was not great however several suggestions were made to improve connections to local bus, cycle, bridleway and walking routes.
- Concern about location of car parks

Ecology and Biodiversity

- Restore and create new hedgerows
- Meadowland creation
- Biodiversity corridors
- Concern that Ancient Woodland and trees are not removed.

Relationship to National Highways Lower Thames Crossing proposals

- Queries above where the funding will come from and if it will still go ahead if Lower Thames Crossing is not consented.
- Opportunities for future sponsors/partnerships.

Traffic and Access Workshop

What would be the best approach to access for the local community?

- Concerns that access will be centred too much on Brentwood residents.
- Several opportunities to link up the site to local areas were discussed.

How can we improve non-vehicular access?

- The cycle routes should be designed to government guidance LTN1/20.
- Would like to be able to cycle from Upminster to Brentwood without cycling through mud and not having to lift the bikes over access barrier.
- Access routes to be multi-user but designed so that there are no conflicts, so that everyone has safe and equal access.

What other sites should Hole Farm connect to?

- Ideally link Hole Farm to all local FE sites, Folkes Lane, Tylers Common, Thames Chase Forest Centre.
- Cycling/walking/riding bridge over A127 at Folkes lanes to Cranham, this is essential for non-car access.
- Links could be made to Tylers Common and related areas and you could utilise the existing parking area however concerns were raised about the safety of crossing Warley Road.
- B186 is a very busy road and walking along or across it should not be suggested.

- The De Rougement isn't far from Hole Farm and there could be some sort of car park.

3.3 During open questions session the following issues were discussed.

- Concerned about the impact on parking and traffic on the environment especially in combination with Brentwood Enterprise Park which is likely to be submitted for planning.
- Parking to be accessible to anyone with horse boxes.
- How much parking will be needed and what route would they use?

Design and Delivery Approach Workshop

How could the community be involved in creating the woodland?

- Community, planting certain areas such as the orchard, hedge rows, and pond edges, etc. would be a great thing to be involved in.

How could we work with local partners to plant the woodland?

- The Great Warley Conservation Society would like to be involved, as would the Essex Wildlife Trust. Question of keeping the community up to date through these meetings.

How can we keep the community up to date with progress as the woodland takes place?

- It would be great to have a diary for the events and workshops coming up.
- There are many groups that would help if the communication were provided in a timely manner.

3.5 During open questions session the following issues were discussed.

- Are there any species you are planning to design for to encourage repopulation?
- RSPB has done work to re-wet the woods and has experiencing restoring wetlands in the woodlands. There is an opportunity to design in wet features from the start, such as wet ditches.
- Mountain Biking: A downhill section of designated mountain bike track, designed for people who don't want to be doing big jumps, but enjoy a little bit of excitement. There would be a lot of people in the community who would be willing to help with the maintenance of the

track. It would be built by the professionals but once built I'm sure there would be no shortage of people who would want to get involved.

- History of Hole Farm Site: There was a more extensive networks of hedgerows, similarly ponds. The whole of the estate, and the reasons for the bridge being constructed, was that it was all part of the De Rougement Estate, that also encompasses Folkes Lane. This was farmed from Hole Farm as part of the De Rougement Estate. The Farm used to be known as Holy Farm. There was a well that was used for the Pilgrims. Hole Farm Lane was called Pilgrims Way. Walleys House was built in approximately 1450, it was just a square building with a roof, was extended later. It's been called Walleys because of the story that Pilgrims left their wallets there to be looked after. Another theory is that the name comes from Waylets which means crossroads – this may be more likely.

Nature and Biodiversity Workshop

- Lack of species diversity at present – planting should be both herbaceous and woody to add to diversity. Establish scrubby areas – not just trees.
- Hedgerows should be expanded.
- Land is probably of moderate agricultural quality and as such could be suitable for wildflower meadows
- There are buzzards and skylarks on site. Existing biodiversity should be safeguarded
- There should be areas for recreation to reduce conflicts between people and nature.
- Should retain water, increase the number of ponds, ditches and wet areas and not to too much drainage and trees near to wet areas.
- Dog ponds can impact aquatic species due to flea treatments and disturbance.

Chapter 4

Drop in Days

Detailed feedback

4.1 A summary of the feedback from the drop-in days is provided below.

Day 1, 12pm Tour

Attendees (x5):

- Local MPs x2
 - Interest in seeing multi-user pathways to encourage responsible use. Preference over shared paths than not permitting certain users.
 - Interest in increased connectivity for cyclists, such as linking the existing cycle trails to prevent the need to travel on busy roads.
- Natural England Employee – Tree Action Plan Team.
 - Attended to gain understanding of plans and the approach FE is taking.
- Local community member, leader of a popular Monday morning walkers group (up to 43 people on some walks)
 - Local walking groups supportive of the plans as likely to improve on current access and the scenery.
- Neighbouring Resident
 - Supportive of viewpoints to retain good views but shield from M25.
 - General support, no outstanding concerns.

Day 1, 3pm Tour

Attendees (x6):

- Essex County Council Employee.
 - Attended to learn from Forestry England approach to tree planting and take back ideas to ECC for their own tree planting objectives. Particularly interested in how large-scale planting is planned.
- Local walkers x 3
 - Supportive of community orchard.

- Would like to see paths opened as soon as possible so that the public can access the site despite trees not being very large.
- Essex Bridleway Association
 - Interested in retaining access.
 - Concerns for crossing M25 bridge.
 - Would like to see small provision of horse-box parking on a permit basis.
 - Eager to have a minimum of 3-mile long trail for horse riders.
- Local Resident

Day 1, 5.30pm Tour

Attendees (x8):

- Cyclists from Trailnet (x2)
- Local walkers (x3)
 - “It will be marvellous when it is done”
 - Supportive of car park, café, and toilets.
 - Would like to see wildflowers introduced across the site.
- Horse rider
 - Keen for access to be retained.
- Local community member and Thames Chase Volunteers (x2)

Day 2, 12pm Tour

Attendees (x2):

- Local community member, conservationist, and Great Warley Conservation Society member.
 - Would like to see more conifers planted for increased coverage during the winter.
 - Questioned the use of tarmac for the all-access trail, would prefer to see environmentally friendly alternative to tarmac.
 - Suggested getting in touch with local coppicing group which are located in Warley Place near to the Thatchers pub.
 - Interested in ensuring that the right trees, right place sentiment is followed. Concerned about previous tree planting whereby trees are now not surviving.

- Local resident and Thames Chase Community Volunteer.
 - Concerns for the speed of the Warley Road which is where the proposed car park is. Suggested a layby for traffic to pull off into if there are queues onto site.

Day 2, 3pm Tour

Attendees (x2):

- Local horse rider, member of Essex Bridleways Association
 - Supportive of the idea of increased open area, wider trails – this reduces the branches obstructing paths for horse riders and allows paths to dry out faster to reduce muddy trails.
 - Would like to see platforms for riders across the site.
 - Suggested that there could be up to 100 horses in the local area which are taken around the site at present.
- Local resident from Brentwood
 - Supportive of scrub area but would like to see more to for the benefit of wildlife and biodiversity.
 - Concerned that there are too many trees being planted, would prefer 40% tree coverage rather than the proposed 60%.
 - Questioned whether the ponds would dry up in summer and whether the impact downstream of leaky dams proposed has been considered.
 - Would be eager to see more conifers planted for winter coverage and foliage for bird life and wildlife.

Day 2, 5.30pm Tour

Attendees (x5)

- Codham Hall Lane resident.
 - Concerned by the use of Codham Hall lane if it is designated for public use. The team demonstrated that this was not planned and that instead access is suggested from Warley Road. Resident was happy with the proposal and the low use of the lane by rangers and maintenance vehicles.
- Local trail users and teachers at nearby school (x2)
- Horse riders (x2)

- Supportive of the grassy paths. Would like to be able to ride throughout the site and connect to other paths for riders.

- Horse Riders – Essex Bridleway Association would like idea of a 3-mile loop, small provision of horse box parking on a permit basis and higher barriers on the M25 footbridge crossing.

Summary of feedback

4.2 Most of those who attended the tours were there out of general interest and were pleased to have the opportunity to learn about the design and feed in suggestions. Many positive comments were heard throughout the day.

4.3 Broadly speaking, questions were raised surrounding the following topics:

- Traffic concerns- questions around the impact the project will have on local traffic and some concerns for the speed of Warley Road if this is to be used as the entrance to the site.
- Accessibility – questions around how people can access the site by public transport, walking, or cycling.
- Provision of services- support for small concession offer, particularly if located at a viewpoint, support for car park to absorb additional vehicles and alleviate pressure on surrounding roads, lay by, and car parks.
- Use for open habitat space – interest in increasing biodiversity and particularly wildflowers
- Questions around timings on the project. Residents are keen to see trees planted and paths put in for public access as soon as possible. Suggested to plant faster growing trees across the site.
- Questions around species being planted – one had an interest in seeing more conifers so that there is greenery during the winter months. Support for right tree right place.
- Questions around volunteering opportunities and community role – support for community orchard. Coppicing – suggestion to engage with local coppicing group near Thatchers pub.
- Questions around pathways being provided. Some were keen to see responsible multi use pathways rather than restricting use – encouraging respectful shared use. Low level technical bike paths were desired by Trailnet. There was concern from a local resident conservationist about use of tarmac and a preference for environmentally friendly infrastructure and use of materials.
- Cyclists – would like to see increased connectivity for cyclists to other sites and routes.

Chapter 5

Great Warley Conservation Society Consultation

First session

5.1 An initial session was held on 24th March 2022. The main discussion points and the project team's (FE and NH) responses are detailed below.

Brentwood Enterprise Park (BEP)

5.2 Members flagged concern around the impact (traffic, vehicles, entrances, views) of the BEP and connection to Hole Farm woodland development.

5.3 FE stated that a traffic survey will need to consider impact of Brentwood Enterprise Park.

Café

5.4 Members questioned need for Café and whether this would 'open the door' to future commercialisation of the site e.g. Go Ape was seen as particularly undesirable

5.5 FE and NH, spoke of benefits of a small café concession in terms of a sustainable business model, community facilities, security, and site supervision

Access/Car Park

5.6 Questions were raised about public access and how much of Pilgrims Lane is part of Hole Farm.

5.7 Members spoke of limited public transport and previously cancelled bus routes. Cars are currently parked on the surrounding lanes. Most notably Beredens Lane. There was much discussion on the location of a car park. Initial location identified by FE seen to be the preferable option

5.8 Concern that the more access points there are to Hole Farm the more people will park in the surrounding area. There was a preference to keep access limited to focus people into those entrances.

5.9 There was concern that if chargeable, car park visitors will choose to park on the surrounding lanes/roads. South Weald was noted as an example of this.

5.10 It was discussed that a 100 space car park could be beneficial to local community (church, EWT's Warley Place

etc). No concerns were raised over a car park around of this size

Biodiversity

5.11 Concerns were raised that it will look like other FE sites which are predominantly trees and surfaced paths. FE stated that our district ecologist is involved, and we will be working on the Lawton principles to create diverse habitats

5.12 Members said it is unlikely that volunteers from Warley will maintain all of the site. FE said that volunteers from further afield will be able to help with maintenance.

Woodland Naming

5.13 The following names were suggested:

- Parker Shaw
- Coombe Wood
- Hole/Holy Woods
- De Rougemont
- Heseltine Woods

Second session

5.14 The consultation started with Forestry England providing an overview of the Thames Beat and the Hole Farm project followed by an explanation of the current draft plan. Four main topics were discussed with the attendees.

5.15 The main discussion points and Forestry England's response are detailed below.

1. Trees

Species mixtures

5.16 FE explained the site will be planted with mixed broadleaf woodland with the predominant species being oak.

5.17 Questions were asked about the species mix at Folkes Lane and whether Hole Farm will be similar. Some people didn't think there was much oak there.

5.18 Edges will be planted with shrubs, similar to Folkes Lane, so visitors may not necessarily see all the different tree species that are growing in the woodland.

5.19 There were questions around what 'Feature trees' actually means and whether there will be a community orchard.

5.20 Attendees expressed that they didn't want to see anything too exotic but seemed to welcome the idea of feature trees in the landscape.

5.21 There were no objections to a community orchard.

5.22 FE explained that we need to create a resilient forest for future climates and therefore some trees will be non-native, but FE will not be planting anything invasive.

5.23 All trees will be grown in the UK, some may be locally sourced (e.g. black poplar from the TCT tree nursery)

5.24 There was a concern about the invasive nature of willows and how many willows will be planted on site. FE explained willows will only be planted in the wetland area and some areas will be left for natural re-gen.

5.25 FE were asked about the future management of the site, and how we will stop future developments taking place (apparently this has happened elsewhere).

5.26 FE explained that the site will be managed under a long-lease agreement from National Highways (NH). This will be similar to several other sites in the Thames Beat that FE manage under long-term agreements with other bodies.

5.27 It was explained that a Community Ranger may need to be assigned to the site to help manage it.

5.28 Rabbit guards and fencing will be needed to help initial establishment which will be removed later.

5.29 There were concerns raised about the management of 'Bluebell Woods' (Essex County Council owned woodland south of Hole Farm). These woodlands had some clearance carried out which has led to bramble taking over and the loss of bluebells.

5.30 Forestry England will look if any lessons can be learned in relation to similar blocks of woodland at Hole Farm.

2. Parking and visitor facilities

5.31 Attendees were surprised about the proposal of a 100-space car park. It was explained this was to provide enough spaces to stop visitors from parking on the roadsides.

5.32 Some saw this as losing open green space, which they believe should all be protected and were concerned that allowing a car park could encourage further development in the area.

5.33 De Rougemont Hotel is trying to claim their car park is brownfield land so that they can develop it, there was concern this could happen at Hole Farm in the future.

5.34 There was an ask for us to use an "eco-grid" system, or at least something that drains.

5.35 There was a request to expand Folkes Lane car park so that the car park at Hole Farm can be smaller.

5.36 There was a worry that cars would park along Bredon's Lane and Cobham Hall Lane instead of using the car park if there was a parking charge. How will we make the car park more appealing than parking on the road for free?

5.37 There was very little discussion around the café, toilets, community shelter and tree nursery.

5.38 Questions were asked about how many visitors we expected and how quickly visitor numbers will rise.

5.39 There were concerns about more visitors being attracted to the local area and that Great Warley has already seen an increase in the number of visitors from outside Brentwood. They don't want the area to become oversubscribed.

5.40 There were concerns that the B186 is already too busy and more visitors will increase traffic in the village, particularly if they're backing up to pull into the car park.

5.41 Forestry England will assess traffic as part of the Transport Statement to be submitted with the application.

3. Access points

5.42 There was a lot of concern over the access point being on the B186 as users frequently surpass to 40mph speed limit and there have already been accidents. The B186 is also used as a training run by cyclists groups every weekend and bank holidays.

5.43 Forestry England explained that they will be working with National Highways to find a safe access point along this road if this entrance goes ahead here.

5.44 There was a suggestion of traffic calming measures and a roundabout being installed to make the entrance and the road safer, however, others dismissed any suggestion of having the access point off the B186.

5.45 Residents suggested moving away from the B186 and focussing on moving the access and car park to the M25.

4. Trails

5.46 Questions were asked about who will use the 'multipurpose path' and if horse riders, cyclists and walkers will be separated or use the same paths (i.e. will there be a conflict of use).

5.47 Members did want too many signs and to keep signage to a minimum.

5.48 Residents questioned whether the public would be able to use Hole Farm Lane.

Conclusion

5.49 In general, there was agreement with the planting plan and tree selection. However, there were concerns about traffic generation, the location of the access and about cumulative additional built infrastructure in the area.

Chapter 6

Stakeholder Roundtable

6.1 To further enhance the extensive engagement process in preparation of the application, Forestry England hosted a stakeholder roundtable to enable detailed discussion of the proposals.

6.2 The purpose of the event was to bring together key stakeholders to review the draft design and discuss how to maximise the opportunities in and around Hole Farm. This included what facilities could be brought forward as part of the application, to ensure the local community receive the full benefit of the proposals.

6.3 The event was held on Friday 1st July 2022 at the Thames Chase Forest Centre, Broadfields Farm, Pike Lane, Upminster.

Attendees

Essex County Council

- Cllr Peter Schwier
- Cllr Graham Butland
- Cllr Mark Durham
- Mark Woodger

Brentwood Borough Council

- Cllr Chris Hossack
- Cllr Will Russell
- Alan Marsh

Forestry England

- Neil Kellet
- Sally James

National Highways

- Emily Dawson
- Josh Smith
- Claire Arnold
- Sam Nolan

Office of Julia Lopez, MP for Hornchurch and Upminster

- George Welch

Thames Chase Community Forest

- Dave Bigden

Discussion Questions

6.4 Stakeholders were presented with an overview of the draft proposals and a summary of the community feedback received to date. Attendees were encouraged to share ideas and engage in the discussion to ensure a broad range of views.

6.5 Discussion topics and questions included:

Connectivity

- How important is connectivity for green open spaces?

Community Facilities

- How can facilities at Hole Farm be made accessible for everyone from the local community?

Engagement with local businesses / community groups

- Are you aware of any local businesses or community groups that we should be speaking with to refine the proposals at Hole Farm?

Feedback

6.6 A summary of the feedback and comments received from stakeholders across each discussion topic is summarised below.

Connectivity

- There needs to be a consideration of wider connectivity.
- Connectivity is essential and the safety of users needs to be considered.
- Vehicle and pedestrian access need to be accounted for.
- Active travel should be considered and promoted through design.

Community Facilities

- Education offering should be aimed at all levels of education and development.
- Active travel and electric non-motorised vehicles should be reflected in design.
- Non-academic skills should be promoted through learning with opportunities to engage with local education institutions and community organisations in the future.

- Necessary to consider the importance of access for those with disabilities.
- Create provisions for a sensory walk and suggested the inclusion of elements around the forest to be part of a sensory experience.
- Address the issue of adverse community use and potential anti-social behaviour.

Community Engagement

- Stakeholders suggested a range of community, charity, and business groups which operate locally that may be interested in engagement around the proposals and future operations.

Chapter 7

Final Public Consultation

7.1 The final public consultation on the Hole Farm Woodland project was undertaken over two drop-in days between the 2nd and 3rd of September 2022. Hosted by Forestry England, the Great Warley Rectory Hall, Warley, CM13 3JP was utilised as the location of the event.

7.2 The event was advertised and made known to the public through various means of communication and promotion including through the Hole Farm webpage, social media, and mailing list. In addition, partner organisations and stakeholders shared the dates through their mailing lists and platforms.

7.3 A display stand was set up in the Thames Chase Visitor Centre, Upminster, Essex, RM14 3NS for the entire month of September. This contained brochures outlining the woodland design proposals and a suggestion box alongside the Hole Farm email account were provided as a mechanism for submitting views and feedback.

7.4 For those who could not attend the drop-in days or visit Thames Chase in person, information was also made available digitally via the Hole Farm website.

Drop-in Days Feedback

7.5 Whilst most responses to the proposed woodland design, tree species and planting were positive, several key points were raised that have been summarised below under each heading.

Codham Hall Lane

7.6 Concerns were raised regarding the use of Codham Hall Lane as parking for visitors accessing the site but not wanting to pay for parking in the proposed car park. As such, the question of how this will be combatted has been brought forward. Options for such were raised as per below:

- There is a grass ride people could park on.
- Could visitors enter the site across the southern boundary? If so, does a fence or hedgerow need to be installed here?

Road Safety and Traffic: B186

7.7 The largest concern raised over the course of the drop-in sessions related to the use of the B186 as the vehicular

entrance to the site with some attendees raising concerns about road safety given the existing amount of traffic on the road.

Hole Farm Lane

7.8 Former residents and former whole site owners of the site, The Wrights, still have access rights along Hole Farm Lane. Should a gate be installed, they wish to know the specification and how they will retain access. They have expressed that they do not want to need to get out of their vehicle to unlock a security gate every time they enter or leave the site.

7.9 The Wrights were informed of the proposed alternative access drive, to which they were in favour of following an understanding that this would be for the use of residents and Anglian water only, and not visitors.

7.10 It was also noted that the previous landowners did not allow horse riders up and down Hole Farm Lane.

Parking

7.11 Further to the above, concerns were raised that visitors driving to Hole Farm will likely try to park in laybys, streets, and local public houses. It has been posed as to how this will be prevented.

Connectivity to the Wider Landscape

7.12 Several consultation responses highlighted the need for more improved access to Hole Farm from the south:

- There is no pavement along the B186 connecting Hole Farm to Thames Chase.
- The proposed A127 footbridge will connect Folkes Lane (and subsequently Hole Farm) to Cranham. However, connectivity issues are still present over the railway line.

Summary

7.13 Overall, most responses to the proposed woodland design, tree species and planting were positive.

7.14 Most queries related to the size and the carpark, and the entrance point off of the B186.

7.15 There were several concerns raised in relation to Codham Hall Lane and other roads that could be used by visitors in attempts to park for free.

7.16 Some points were made regarding the connectivity to the south, and that it requires improvement. However, this unfortunately lies outside of the project remit.

Other Feedback

7.17 Over the course of September, as stated above, display boards and brochures were left in the Thames Chase Visitor Centre. Visitors were able to leave comment cards as responses, however very few were received.

7.18 The same information was also available for viewing on the Hole Farm Forestry England webpage with a link to the Hole Farm email address for comments.

7.19 The comments received through the above methods are listed below.

General Comments

7.20 There was a request to retain the views from Folkes Lane Woodland to Landon Hills.

7.21 Access, and egress for the car park on the B186 was raised as a primary concern. The size of the carpark was also questioned, namely that the 100-spaces being proposed was too large.

7.22 Finally, it was noted that access into Great Warley to the north of the site is via a permissive path and not a Public Right of Way.

Essex Bridal Association

7.23 The Essex Bridal Association responded to the consultation with questions regarding the access points and whether the “multi-user track” would also be intended for horse riding. If so, they have questioned as to how they can access the track from the carpark.

Thames Crossing Action Group

7.24 The Thames Crossing Action Group (TCAG) were primarily concerned over the lack of public transport and other sustainable and active means of access to the site. They state that this will lead to increased traffic on the roads and therefore, more air pollution and health impacts.

7.25 There were also issues raised regarding the level of air pollution given the site’s proximity to the M25.

7.26 Food security issues were also flagged following the loss of agricultural land at Hole Farm. As such, TCAG wish to see food production featured on the site, such as fruit trees or allotments.

7.27 The LTC tree nursery was questioned, however, due to this being separate to the community woodland and community tree nursery, comments were passed to National Highways.

Chapter 8

Ongoing Consultation with Local Authorities and Technical Consultees

8.1 The following table summarises the consultation undertaken with Local Authorities and technical consultees, and the key issues discussed.

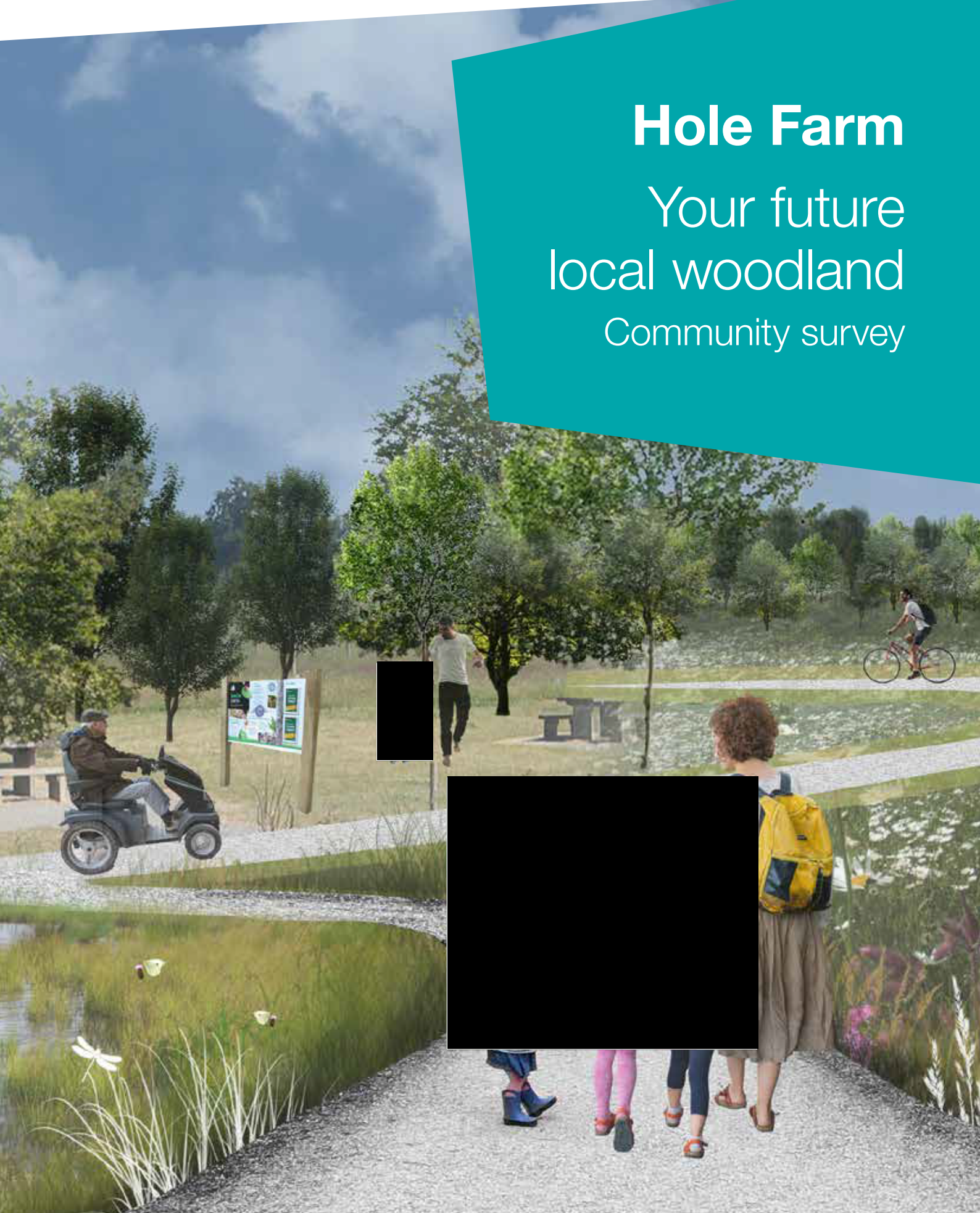
Date	Stakeholder	Key Issues Discussed
25 th January 2022	Brentwood Council	Initial discussions with policy and development management senior officers regarding the Hole Farm community forest project, prior to requesting pre-application advice from the Council. An overview of the project and the project timeline was provided. The intended programme of engagement with the Council was agreed. A number of key considerations were identified including planning policy and key stakeholders.
17 th August 2022	Brentwood Council Pre-application Advice	<p>Historic Buildings & Conservation Advice – A detailed response was provided on 15th June to the initial concept plan. The officer recommended support for the proposed application on the grounds that significance does not appear to be harmed by the intended new-use of land adjoining the curtilage of the listed building, re-purposing of existing buildings, and woodland planting. Opportunities to enhance the historic environment were suggested including heritage interpretation of Grade II Hole Farmhouse and Grade I St Mary’s Church, signposted permissive access to the War Memorial area of the conservation area, permissive car parking for visitors to St Mary’s Church and ensure that sightlines to Hole Farmhouse and St Mary’s are specifically addressed in the layout of the planting schedules.</p> <p>Planning Advice – advice was received on planning policy and initial advice was provided on highways and parking</p>
19 th May 2022	Essex County Council Highway Authority	No response received
17 th June 2022	Historic England	<p>Based on the information provided, Historic England has no objections to the proposed woodland creation at Hole Farm Community Woodland. That said, we do see scope for improvements to deliver enhancement from an historic environment perspective, particularly in responding to existing landscape features and character. In summary, these are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligning the new woodland blocks with existing or historic hedgerows and field boundaries. • Retaining the hedgerows and hedgerow trees as freestanding elements or, at least, ensuring they form the edges of new woodland blocks. • The arable field in the NW of the application site, lying to the west of the lane to Hole Farm and north of the public footpath, was recorded on the 1896 Ordnance Survey map as part of the late 19th century landscape park associated with The Squirrels (then Coombe Lodge). Amending the proposals to reduce planting density to create something akin to wood pasture or

Date	Stakeholder	Key Issues Discussed
		parkland with scattered trees and tree clumps would ensure it has a different character to the rest of the proposed community woodland and reflect patterns of historic land use.

Appendix A
Temperature Check
Questionnaire

Hole Farm

Your future
local woodland
Community survey



How to respond

- Email** send a scan or photograph of your comments to hole.farm@forestryengland.uk
- Online** fill in an online form at www.lowerthamescrossing.co.uk
- Post** to Forestry England, Thames Chase Forest Centre, Pike Lane, Upminster, RM14 3NS
- Drop point** hand a copy into the Thames Chase Forest Centre
- Event** Visit one of the Lower Thames Crossing community drop-in events

Wednesday 16 February 2022 4pm to 8pm

New Windmill Hall,
St Mary's Lane,
Upminster, RM14 2QH

Thursday 17 February 2022 4pm to 8pm

East Tilbury Village Hall,
Gloucester Avenue,
East Tilbury, RM18 8RB

**Please send us your feedback by
Wednesday 23 February**

Hole Farm – your future local woodland

In 2021 National Highways bought Hole Farm, a 95 hectare arable site in Great Warley near Brentwood, Essex. It sits alongside the M25 at the northern end of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing.

Over the coming years we will be working with Forestry England who will develop the site into a community woodland for everyone to enjoy. It will create new habitats for wildlife and provide a valuable addition to the network of connected woodlands nearby.

The site will then be managed by Forestry England on a long-term basis for the benefit of the local community.

Parts of the site will be used for the proposed Lower Thames Crossing project; an area will be required as replacement land for the Folkes Lane Woodland, and another area will be required to compensate for ancient woodland loss. We are also considering using other areas of planting on the site for Lower Thames Crossing environmental compensation, and a consultation on this will follow in the spring. Should the project be granted permission to go ahead, we will integrate these areas with the plans to use Hole Farm as a community woodland.

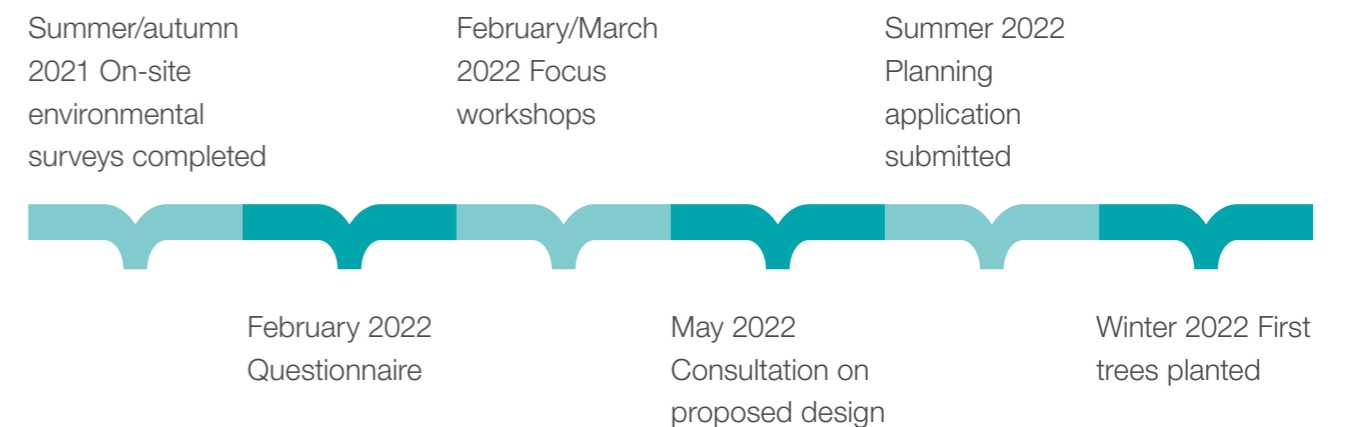
Get involved

We want the site to become an inspiring place for the local community to enjoy and explore. We are about to start planning how the woodland could look and feel, and what facilities it might offer for local people. To inform this, we are inviting our neighbours, local organisations and those who might like to visit the site in the future to share their ideas, local knowledge and any concerns they might have.

We would really appreciate you taking the time to complete this initial questionnaire, including making any notes or drawings on the map if applicable, and return to us by 23 February

Next steps

This is the start of the process, and there will be more opportunities to give your feedback and shape the future of the site.



The next step will be to review the responses to the questionnaire and share our findings with you. There will then be a series of focus workshops on key topics to give an opportunity to provide more detailed feedback.

Sign-up to attend focus workshops

Please tick the box(es) below to sign-up for virtual workshops to discuss the following topics with neighbours, local organisations, and representatives from National Highways and Forestry England. A video conference link will be sent to you via email – please ensure you provide your email address below.

- Community and recreation** 22 February, 6-7pm
- Site access, traffic, and public rights of way** 3 March, 6-7pm
- Design and delivery approach** 8 March, 6-7pm
- Nature and biodiversity** 16 March, 6-7pm

Survey

1. About you

Please provide your name, address and email address.

If you'd prefer your comments to be anonymous, please just let us have your postcode (first five digits), so we can understand where you live in relation to the scheme.

1a. Name:

1b. Address:

Postcode

1c. Email address:

1d. Are you responding on behalf of an organisation?

Name:

Type of organisation:

1e. Would you like to be kept in touch with future opportunities to be part of developing the landscape?

- Yes
- No

2. Hole Farm facilities

2a. What would you like to do at Hole Farm?

- Use a dog friendly area
- Spend time with family
- Volunteer
- Ride a horse
- Exercise
- Relax
- Learn about the site and its wildlife
- Meet new people
- Walk
- Make use of an outdoor play area for children
- Something else (describe below)

2b.

Which of the above would be the most important to you and why?

2c. What would you most like to see at Hole Farm (in addition to a new woodland)?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> View of wider landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grassland | <input type="checkbox"/> Community tree nursery |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wildflower meadows | <input type="checkbox"/> Wildlife |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ponds and streams | <input type="checkbox"/> Restored hedgerows |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Site information boards | <input type="checkbox"/> Signposted walking routes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surfaced paths | <input type="checkbox"/> Unsurfaced paths |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family friendly cycle paths | <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities for horse riders |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Picnic areas | <input type="checkbox"/> Benches beside footpaths |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Off-road parking for visitors | <input type="checkbox"/> Community orchard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhere for people to learn | <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhere for people to meet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities for young people | <input type="checkbox"/> Something else (describe below) |

2d. Which of the above would be the most important to you and why?

3. Where would you like to access the Hole Farm site?

Please show us on the map and describe below:



4. How would you travel to Hole Farm?

These could be existing or potential future access locations into and across Hole Farm

- Walk
- Cycle
- Car
- Horse
- Public transport
- Coach/minibus
- Other

Please tell us about your travel preferences:

5. Do you have any concerns about the Hole Farm site or its future?

Please show us on the map (if useful) and describe below:





6. Are there any views or features you'd like to see preserved or enhanced?

7. How often do you think you might visit the site?

- Every day
- A few times a week
- A few times a month
- A few times a year
- Never
- Other


8. Are you aware of anything special about the Hole Farm site?

Do you have any stories or historical facts about the Hole Farm site?

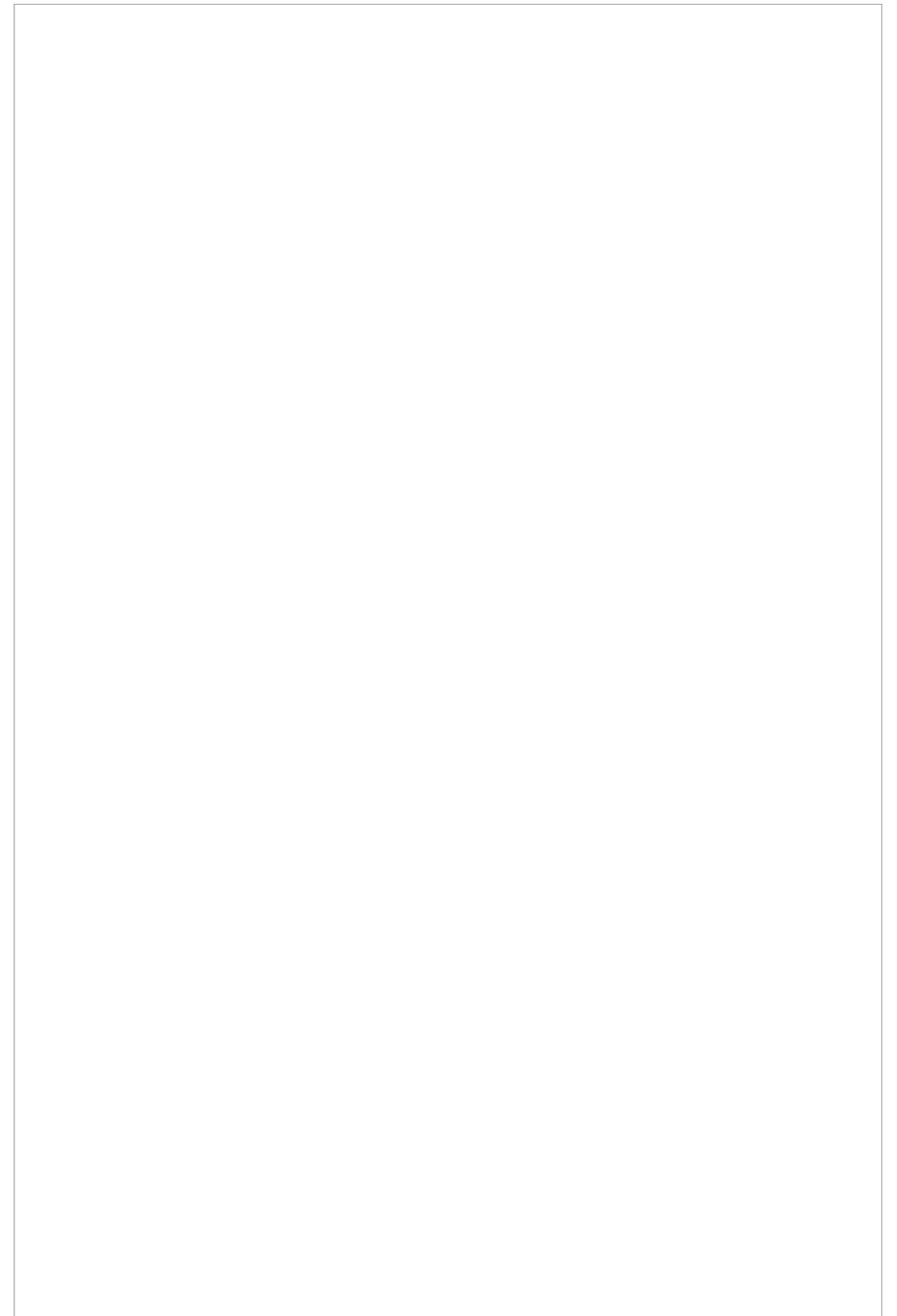
Please show us on the map (if useful) and describe below



9. How can we make Hole Farm the most inclusive environment it can be?



10. Is there anything else you'd like to add?





Thank you!

We really appreciate you taking the time to share your thoughts and ideas.

Contact us

Email: hole.farm@forestryengland.uk

Post: **Forestry England, Thames Chase Forest Centre, Pike Lane, Upminster, RM14 3NS Essex**

For alternative formats, please get in touch:
hole.farm@forestryengland.uk

We have done our best to make sure that this Survey has been sent to all households in the immediate surroundings of the new woodland site. If you know of anyone locally who hasn't received this and is keen to contribute, please contact us.



About Forestry England

We are part of the Forestry Commission, and we manage the nation's forests. For over 100 years, we have been growing, shaping and caring for over 1,500 of our nation's forests for the benefit and enjoyment of all, for this generation and the next. We've built walking, running and cycling trails, supplied England's largest amount of sustainably-sourced timber, and conserved the habitats of thousands of plants and animals. Forests improve the health and wellbeing of everyone and, with careful planning and expert management, our forests will continue to thrive. They help to offset carbon emissions, restore eco-systems and provide people of all ages and abilities with fresh air and spaces to enjoy. We are always thinking beyond today, planning and planting forests that will help create a sustainable future.

About the Lower Thames Crossing

The Lower Thames Crossing would connect Kent, Thurrock, Havering and Essex through the longest road tunnel in the country. It would link to the A2 and M2 south of the river, passing under the Thames, before joining the A13 in Thurrock and junction 29 of the M25 to the north.

The Lower Thames Crossing would reduce congestion at the Dartford Crossing by almost doubling road capacity between Kent and Essex, support economic growth and improve journeys across the Thames, making them quicker and more reliable.

Hole Farm is one of a number of initiatives that is being developed by National Highways to open up new areas of the landscape and connect local communities to the countryside.

These include the longest road tunnel in the UK to protect the Thames and nearby wetlands and seven green bridges to provide safe crossing points for people and wildlife. Two new public parks and a new community woodland, connected by more than 60km of new or upgraded pathways, will promote health and wellbeing across the region.

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Why do we collect personal data for the Lower Thames Crossing?

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- provide a response to a query that has been raised
- stay in contact with you if you have requested to receive regular updates about Lower Thames Crossing and/or are involved in one of our consultation exercises
- gather information (including land rights and your opinions) in relation to Lower Thames Crossing

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Registered office Bridge House, 1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford GU1 4LZ

National Highways Limited registered in England and Wales number 09346363

Appendix B
Stakeholder Engagement
Workshop Notes

Hole Farm Project Workshop: Community and Recreation

Discussion

How can hole farm bring community together?

- Bridleways:
 - Current permissive bridle routes to be maintained. These currently connect through Folkes Lane wood and Thatchers and should be included on the site maps.
 - Would like to see connectivity of other bridle routes in the area.
 - The original private lane used to be a right of way for pilgrims. Should be a maintained as a permissive right of way.
 - Support for extending the bridleway from Pages Wood to Folkes Lane, as well as creating access towards Thorndon from Codham Hall Lane through Bird Lane, or another bridleway route to improve safety and remove the need to ride on roads with traffic.
- Community Orchard was supported.
- Public interested in the opportunities for Volunteers on Site, FE response included:
 - We could provide community Forestry walks/volunteer groups for the management of the site and talks on the environmental changes on site.
 - TCT have a volunteer group, would be part of the same CF, there would be shared work across the sites.
- Tree Nursery is an opportunity if local people would like to see this. They provide learning opportunities for people, and we could tap into this.

How will hole farm positively impact health and wellbeing?

- Trail running routes mentioned as an area of interest.

What would a thriving community woodland at Hole Farm look and feel like?

- Provision of facilities will be needed, unclear what the public would like to see.

Open Questions

Concerns around access to the Site

- People are going to struggle to get to the site unless they are driving a car. Access to site is not great for cyclists, mentioned a lot about Thames Chase, not a safe cycle link between Hole Farm and Thames Chase. This is something that the public would like to see improved.
- Public keen to see improvements to current access routes, e.g. upgrading pathways/roads to enable horse riders to have safe access, improvements to Parapets.
- One brought up current access: "There are wider LTC connections looking at the access over Cranham. There are existing footpaths from Pages wood to Folkes Lane and onto Hole Farm."
- FE response: There is a 30-minute walk from Folkes Lane to Pages Wood, we are looking to promote this as a way to access different woodlands.
-

Questions around the Public Engagement Strategy

- Public keen to see us reach out to different user groups and community groups. Suggestions include:
 - o Sustrans
 - o Horse-riding groups
 - o Cycling groups e.g. Cycle Brentwood, local sustrans and cycling UK
- FE Response: Questionnaire has been sent out. Will be analysing this and feeding it into the design which will be used during a public consultation. Drop-in days will be held for people to come and provide input as well as making it accessible online.

Questions around timings of questionnaire:

- FE Response: Clarity of distinction between questionnaire and workshops. Aim was to create as many channels as possible to communicate. We wanted to open up other avenues to provide feedback, the questionnaire provides helpful tick box exercise and further reach. All engagement will be gathered, analysed, and trends identified to inform the design.
- Questionnaire is a baseline temperature check, before we begin conversations, capture the information initially. Then workshops are helpful to get to know local people and gather more detail.

Thoughts about Ecology and Biodiversity

(Reminded that there will be a workshop focused on this topic in the coming weeks, therefore, responses to these were kept brief).

- Where will we look to increase biodiversity?
 - o **Hedgerows** - looking at where there are existing hedgerows on the farm that we can restore and create new habitats.
 - o **Meadowland** also being looked into, would like to hear more from public whether this is of interest.
 - o **Biodiversity Corridors**: This is an objective that we would look at in the future, it is something that is planned down for the LTC and hoping to bring it up to Hole Farm. Green bridges would be vital to connect across the area over the M25.
- If LTC as a project does not get accepted, will Hole Farm still get constructed?
 - o Highways have made a commitment to go forward with Hole Farm. Due to resubmit planning this year for LTC. Hole Farm will go ahead of LTC receiving consent. Hoping that we can develop the plans over the next few months meaning we will be able to start planting in winter, ahead of the LTC schedule.

Interest in where the Hole Farm funding is coming from:

Highways Response: Within National Highways, we have central funding which will be applied for that will be deliver the community woodland. Given by department of transport to be spent on adding benefits to the community and the environment.

Interest in opportunities for future sponsors/partnerships:

FE Response: FE has sponsors for sites, particularly for tree planting. Currently we have live sites which have had sponsors purchasing saplings. There may be other opportunities for us to take on sponsors. This phase of civil engineering, such as for recreational aspects, will be funded by Highways. In the future there will be the potential for sponsoring work, e.g. tree planting, maintaining hedges and hedgerows, woodland management.

Interest in Research:

- One suggested that it would be good to complete sound and air pollution surveys to track the impact of Hole Farm on this data.

Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees removal concerns:

- FE response: None will be removed, hoping to allow these trees to have space to grow and naturally regenerate. Scheduled trees and veterans are a key asset, will be given space and retained.

Questions around parking:

- FE response: We have not yet assigned car parking sites. This is a key thing we want to get out of stakeholder engagement before we develop any plans.
- Highway's response: We don't have the answer yet as we don't know what the offering will look like, we would ask of this group what they would like to see, what would you like to see people doing? This will guide how many parking spaces we may or may not need.

Will it remain as Agricultural Land?

- FE Response: It won't be a traditional farm anymore, one options we could have are orchards across the site, which we would be able to provide to community groups, this would then be classed as agricultural. Traditional woodland practices could also be carried out, such as coppicing.
- Public expressed interest in orchards.

03.02.22 Hole Farm Workshop: Traffic and Access

Discussion Notes

MOP: Member of public

What would be the best approach to access for the local community?

- MOP "Access seems to be centred towards Brentwood residents".
 - o FE Response: there is a train station, we are interested in the opportunity this presents. There are bus stops as well, any feedback on those and the frequency of the services would be helpful. FE woodlands with the TC community forests, we are always looking for further opportunities to connect the existing 10 woodlands we look after, so there are other places that are being improved.
- Hole Farm runs alongside the B186, this is linked to Thames Chase. There is a missing stretch of pavement as you cross the B186 over the A127. This prevents any body who would like to use that as an access point. A pavement alongside this road, even multi-user, would allow this stretch to be opened up. Would like to see 1km of pavement along this route.
 - o Contrasting feedback about this. One person suggests moving a walkway away from this road. Railway crossing is needed to link up with Thames Chase site, this is the missing link and would create a continuous loop with Folkes Lane.
- Lots of these developments tend to start off as the wrong location, as they get more connected, they become the better location. This site gives us a chance to link up Hole Farm and the surrounding areas.
 - o FE Response: there is a public footpath between Pages Wood, Folkes Lane, and Hole Farm. The Forest Circle is a series of walking loops. Our mission with the TCT is to improve the connections between sites.

How can we improve non-vehicular access?

- The cycle routes should be designed to government guidance LTN1/20. MOP would like to be able to cycle from Upminster to Brentwood without being splatted in mud and not having to lift the bikes over access barrier (which breach disability legislation).
- MOP would like to see safe horse crossing, similar to the one linking Pages Wood and Harold Court to be incorporated for any road access.
 - FE Response: there is clearly a desire for bridleways to be considered on the site. It is good to hear you acknowledge the other sites we look after, it would be good to hear more from you about what you would like to see.
- Main access routes to the site should be multi-user but designed so that there are no conflicts, so that everyone has safe and equal access.
 - FE Response: all non-vehicular access was coming up even on the survey, in agreement that we need to invest equally into the different user pathways/access routes.

What other sites should Hole Farm connect to?

- Cycling/walking/riding bridge over A127 at Folkes lanes to Cranham, this is essential for non-car access.
- Ideally link Hole Farm to all local FE sites, Folkes Lane, Tylers Common, Thames Chase Forest Centre.
 - o FE Response: Thames Chase Trust keen on improving walking access to different sites. Hole Farm will be a key piece of this puzzle.
- One MOP suggests that if links could be made to Tylers Common and related areas you could utilise existing parking area.
 - o This is something we hope to look at, particularly around Folkes Lane. We would alleviate traffic by enabling people to cross over between sites. We would look at Tylers Common. There are great extended walks that we are recommending, but we need to strike the balance between providing accessible spaces with parking.
- Tylers Wood is a long way from Hole Farm, which is off the B186, there needs to be access from there to access Hole Farm. Tylers Common, Pages Wood, these are large areas and are up hill. Unfortunately, the B186 is a very busy road and walking should not be suggested, would be a danger to life. There doesn't seem to be any public transport to take you. Suggests that as you come from Tylers Common along Warley Road, if that could be excavated you would be away from traffic. Several areas where there is parking available are needed, to walk from already allocated car parks is not feasible. The De Rougement has a nice, wooded area which isn't far from Hole Farm, could establish something along there to get across, some sort of car park. Need to consider the safety of people walking from one site to another.
 - o FE Response: Pleasant Forest has a small car park, closely associated with that there is a fairly gentle sloping walk with points of interest, designed for people with wheelchairs and push chairs etc. This is an important consideration as it opens the site up to people with all different requirements.
- Tylers Common to Folkes Lane is used by walkers already, this would be a fantastic way of opening up from Harold Court to Hole Farm. Warley Road is a PR1, it is a dangerous road to cross, there is no point that you could contemplate getting people across safely without an underpass or overpass, it is a steep road where traffic is doing 50-60MPH.

General comments:

- Proposed Brentwood Enterprise Park about to hit the planning process. Asks whether there is joined up thinking with this and whether we are working closely with Essex County Council and Brentwood Enterprise Park. Brentwood has virtually non-existent public transport, this is a concern, particularly as most visitors are going to do so via car. Concerned about the impact on parking and traffic on the environment. This project may bring some advantages to increasing the demand for improved public transport.
 - o FE Response: we are in discussion with ECC, not yet Brentwood Enterprise Park. We will be having further discussions with stakeholders in the local area.

- FE Response: we are opening the discussion with the local community, as yet have made no decisions around what will be provided on site, this is what the workshops are for. Will also be looking into improving the walking routes from the train station to the site.
- Parking to be accessible to anyone with horse boxes.
 - FE Response: this is something we need to consider, there are a lot of people in the area who go horse-riding. Need to consider the size of the car park.
- How much parking will be needed and what route would they use?
 - FE Response: this is up for debate at the moment, it is information we are trying to gather from people.
- Budget inquiries
 - FE response: this is still a project in development, not sure yet what the budget will be. We are not going to have anything too big on the site, no forest centre, but we do need to gauge from people what they want us to see on the site.
- Process to decide which access routes will be adopted?
 - FE Response: we need to know from the local community how they wish to use the site, we also need to look at the traffic surveys, and how cars use the local area. We don't want to create difficulties to the local community. We would be looking to introduce looping routes for pedestrian and connecting routes for bicycles and horse riding.

Hole Farm Workshop: Design and Delivery Approach

How could the community be involved in creating the woodland?

Local Community Involvement:

“The major planting and landscaping, I assume, will be done by contractors. But for the community, planting certain areas such as the orchard, hedge rows, and pond edges, etc. would be a great thing to be involved in.

- FE Response: Planting the orchard is definitely something we would like the community to be involved with. This creates a lasting legacy and care on the environment. We will hopefully run sessions later on with the community on the care of the orchard.

How could we work with local partners to plant the woodland?

One MOP who lives close to the site and is part of a group due to meet up with FE on this project: The Great Warley Conservation Society would like to be involved, as would the Essex Wildlife Trust. Question of keeping the community up to date through these meetings. There are buzzards and herons on the site at the moment. Near to the site there has been wet areas which have been opened up, suggested that FE get in touch with neighbouring land owners.

How can we keep the community up to date with progress as the woodland takes place?

Communication:

“It would be great to have a diary for the events and workshops coming up.”

“There are many groups that would help if the communication is provided in a timely manner.”

FE Response: We will be keeping people up to date on the project. The public will be helping us develop the design. We will be updating people via email and our webpages.

General Discussion:

Species and Ecosystems:

“Are there any species you are planning to design for to encourage repopulation?”

FE Response: We are asking people in the area about the rare species in the area we may not have picked up on. We want to try and avoid having areas designed for a few species, want to create as many habitats as possible for a strong diverse ecosystem. This includes tree species as well. Asks that the community feeds into this.

Water courses:

RSPB done work to re-wet the woods, has experiencing restoring wetlands in the woodlands. We have an opportunity to design in wet features from the start, such as wet ditches. Could create willow habitat around these features. It is a good chance to be innovative and imaginative. Use the topography and network of rivers and streams.

Mountain Biking:

The Warley Gap bike park was not universally popular. Would like to see something along the lines of what there is down at Bedgebury. A downhill section of designated mountain bike track, designed for people who don't want to be doing big jumps, but enjoy a little bit of excitement, and use up as little of the land as possible.

There would be a lot of people in the community who would be willing to help with the maintenance of the track. It would be built by the professionals but once built I'm sure there would be no shortage of people who would want to get involved.

FE Response: We have a track at Ingreborne Hill, we have volunteers which help to maintain trails and tracks. We are trying to look to the future to get more volunteers to support with different tasks beyond planting. We would be working in partnership with Thames Chase Trust.

History of Hole Farm Site:

The area has been a farmland for many years. Within the information we have currently, there isn't evidence of woodland being lost. However, there is a loss of hedgerows, there was a more extensive networks of hedgerows, similarly ponds. There is likely to have been areas of woodland that has been lost but we don't have the data on this. At the top of the stie, there are already interesting trees, may indicate there was parkland.

Helen: Yes there was parkland, part of it is now the cricket club which was in a different location. That house was called Coombe Lodge and owned by the De Rougement Family. The whole of the estate, and the reasons for the bridge being constructed, was that it was al part of the De Rougement Estate, that also encompasses Folkes Lane. This was farmed from Hole Farm as part of the De Rougement Estate.

There used to be a lot more habitats across the site.

The Farm used to be known as Holy Farm. There was a well that was used for the Pilgrims. Hole Farm lane was called Pilgrims Way.

Wallets House history:

Was built in approximately 1450, it was just a square building with a roof, was extended later on. It's been called Wallet's because of the story that Pilgrims left their wallets there to be looked after. Another theory is that the name comes from Waylets which means crossroads - this may be more likely.

Edna - there is a great history of the area, a visitor centre could be what is needed. There is a lot of history.

Visitor Centre Plans:

We currently don't have solid plans for a visitor centre. In the area there is the Thames Chase Visitor centre. Would like to hear the public opinion on this, currently looking like the site would be more suited to a smaller café type infrastructure.

16.03.22 Hole Farm Workshop: Nature and Biodiversity

Discussion Notes

MOP: Member of public

FE: Forestry England

Which habitats and local species do you think will thrive at Hole Farm and have any been lost from the local area?

MOP question: Local resident that visits Hole Farm. There is a lack of species diversity present. Will there be an increase in tree species and increase in length and diversity of hedgerows, which will therefore increase animal species? Will vegetation planting include scrub areas? There is poor drainage on site, Grade 3 ALC quality, the site has required lots of artificial fertilisers decreasing the soil quality. Could wildflower meadows be incorporated into the design on the poor soil quality areas?

- FE response: Forest Research have produced a report suggesting tree species to be planted on site that has considered all the factors such as soil quality and drainage. We are at early stage in design but are discussing about potential natural regeneration areas that will produce scrub areas. Diversity of tree species are required to make the site resilient to climate change. Diversity of species and within species, looking at different genotypes local and national.

MOP question: Local resident that visits Hole Farm. Birds of prey species have increased, and swallow and wren species have decreased. Overall have noticed a fluctuation in bird species over 30 years. It looks like the artificial fertilisers have decreased diversity in the hedgerows. The map shown in the presentation shows water drainage and areas of standing water that are not present. Standing water was present on Hole Farm approximately 30 years ago. Edge of the fields are waterlogged. Why have the ponds disappeared but the field boundaries are waterlogged?

- FE response: Meeting with local land agent showed that there have been mole draining across the site, that is designed to move water off of the site. Over time, these mole drains have degraded and do not function draining water off of the site. However, the site being wet is positive for nature. One of the main causes for biodiversity loss is draining of the landscape, wet habitat is becoming more important in the face of climate change.

MOP: Highlight local bird species that decreased. There are more birds of prey species in the local area, is this causing a decline in smaller bird species?

- FE: Breeding bird surveys for Hole Farm have shown that wrens are the biggest bird species on site. On a national level there has been a decrease in pastoral farming, which has led to a decrease in invertebrates and therefore a decrease in some bird populations.
RSPB: RSPB Hope Farm had no predator control and songbird populations grew.

How do we achieve the best possible balance between supporting wildlife and creating a woodland for local people?

MOP question: Get What is the balance to achieve species diversity and plant vegetation tolerant of pedestrians? Looking at the opportunities to differentiate from other areas in the area, public parks, woodlands etc. What is the design of the open spaces and will there be pathways to direct pedestrian traffic?

- FE response: Landscape architect is not here today to provide a detailed answer. There will be footpaths criss-crossing the site, which will allow pedestrians to view areas of the woodland. There are multiple aims for this site. Footpaths will be created, and separate quiet areas will be created within the site. Vegetation screening and fencing could also be incorporated. There is issue with dogs using ponds, as this creates sediment disturbance, fencing could be used in this scenario.

MOP question: Will there be pathways that people will keep to and prevent the public walking into and disturbing the woodlands.

- FE response: Yes, there will be a public pathway for all abilities.

MOP question: Lots of trees will be planted on site which may affect deer population. How can you mitigate against deer impacts especially as it is located next to the A25 and may cause collisions? Will there be surveys around the year of soil pH levels and water levels on site before and after planting to show any differences? Could the community be involved in these surveys?

- FE response: In regard to wildlife management, wildlife rangers have conducted surveys and they have found that there is every type of deer present on site. Deer proof fencing can be constructed around the trees and pathways will be made within the site to allow deer populations to move freely. FE plan to conduct butterfly monitoring on site and further periodic bird surveys on site. New technology on site is environmental DNA analysis for soil samples that show species present through presence of their DNA. Range of fungi and invertebrates are present on site. Lots of opportunities for future community engagement for wildlife surveys. If there is anyone that like to be involved wildlife surveys, there will be email address at the end of the slide.

MOP: Very supportive of plans for water on site. The plan shouldn't be to drain the site, but restoring ghost ponds and creating ponds, re-channelling over areas, soft engineering of the site and matched planting such as willow. Tree planting can be too dense around areas of standing water, a less densely planted area is better for wildlife. Dogs going into ponds can create sediment disturbance but also tick and flea treatment affect invertebrates in water. Will there be a quiet open space where dogs have to be kept on leads? Natural regenerative is a great idea and leaving the existing hedgerows to grow further.

- FE: Noted and thank you for your emails on Hole Farm. There are potential areas for natural regeneration and fencing for dogs in sensitive areas.

What other nearby projects could we complement at Hole Farm to maximize the benefits for nature and biodiversity?

MOP question: Access to Hole Farm is limited, it would be nice to include pathway from Hole Farm to Tilbury Park.

- FE response: Last public workshop session we addressed connectivity on site. There will be public pathways within the site, and we can further look into public pathways between Hole Farm and Tilbury Park but this may not be possible.

General Comments:

MOP question: Will the buildings be included in the budget?

- FE response: This has not been confirmed and the design in the early stages. There is opportunity for sponsors for Hole Farm.

-

Comments answered after the public workshop by email:

MOP question : How many of the trees proposed to be planted at Hole Farm are being planted to relocate along the proposed Lower Thames Crossing Route?

- FE Response: We are at a very early stage and are still developing our plans for the site. No decisions have been made on how a community tree nursery on site could provide trees to be relocated elsewhere on the Lower Thames Crossing Route.

MOP question: What safeguards would be put in place to ensure the existing biodiversity is kept safe?

- FE response: Bird surveys by a qualified ecologist will be carried out before any ground works begin. There are no plans to remove existing vegetation from the site.

MOP question: Are the video recordings of these webinars available to watch again?

- FE response: Video recordings will not be available to be shared, however the information raised as part of the public consultation on plans for the site will be shared once these plans are progressed.