

# **A Management Plan for Stoke Park Estate**



## **2013 - 2018**

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## 1.0 Introduction

Stoke Park Estate has had a complex and fascinating history. The landscape we see today is primarily an 18<sup>th</sup> Century parkland which has been remodelled over time making the most of the natural topography.

The park has seen a variety of buildings, monuments and structures come and go over time. Some still exist in varying states and some have been lost. The Dower House (although no longer part of the estate) remains a prominent building overlooking the site and a number of historically important monuments are still visible around the site. Anti-aircraft batteries in the estate defended the city during the Second World War. The Purdown Telecommunications Tower built in the 1970's is now a prominent building in the estate landscape. The M32 was constructed through the estate as one of the main routes into the expanding city. The NHS hospital complex on the Northern part of the site was developed by a consortium of builders who also carried out considerable restoration to the historic landscape.

Today Stoke Park occupies a visually prominent ridge which extends a green finger into the heart of Bristol, forming a prominent landmark and greenway entrance for both motorists entering or leaving the city via the M32 and the residents in the neighbouring housing developments.

### 1.1 The Reason For Producing The Management Plan

This plan sets out to describe the site today and to explain why it looks and works the way that it does. It seeks to identify the current and conflicting demands of the site users and it proposes a sustainable management guide that will conserve, restore and enhance the historic and ecological importance of the site whilst improving public access and enjoyment.

A guide to Producing Park and Management Plans by Cabe Space states that “the primary reason for developing a management plan is to aid the efficient and effective management of the site.” In fulfilling that aim this strategic management plan will provide a structure for the future management and maintenance of Stoke Park Estate.

### 1.2 Purpose Of The Plan

Stoke Park Estate has been surrounded by a changing landscape for many years. Society and its demands change with time and the management of the plan must react to those changing demands.

Stoke Park Estate is a significant site for the citizens of Bristol and South Gloucestershire and it is important to ensure the estate is managed in a sustainable way for future generations.

This plan will:

- Assist the Estates Management Team in the efficient and effective long-term management of the site.
- Provide continuity by providing a stable plan when personnel change.
- Enable management and key stakeholders to identify significant projects that are presently beyond their financial resources so that additional capital and revenue can be sought and grant applications made.

- To monitor and assess change on the site.
- To ensure that all interested parties agree to the standards and objectives outlined in the plan.
- To promote positive use of the site, for example by reducing anti-social behaviour.
- Provide aims with which to approach other organisations and council departments with a view to working together to achieve mutual objectives.
- Allow estate officers to prepare a rolling 5 year work plan that will be reviewed annually to manage the site in the medium term.
- Enable the estate officers to prepare detailed work plans for site staff that will be implemented through on-going maintenance and manage the site in the short term.
- Inform user groups and individuals about the long-term future of Stoke Park Estate and to outline the site management and the reasons behind any major changes.

### **1.3 The Process Used To Produce The Plan**

Extensive research into the history of Stoke Park Estate was carried out in 1991 by Land Use Consultants in the production of the Stoke Park Masterplan, prior to the transfer of the estate to Bristol City Council. Further to this many of the key stakeholders have researched and reported information regarding the estate and a draft management plan was produced in 2010 by Mark Gundry, BCC project manager prior to the transfer of the estate. Much of the information has fed into this management plan and as the estate begins its life in BCC ownership further consultation and reports will develop to inform the management.

Consultation with the stakeholders, both site and non-site users, local groups and communities will be carried out via email, public exhibitions and online consultation during February and March 2013. Results will become available in April 2013 once the consultation period has been concluded.

Future consultation will occur as the 5 year work plan is updated and when the management plan is due to be reviewed in 2018.

### **1.4 The Life of the Plan**

- The plan contains a 5-year work plan that will be reviewed and updated annually with stakeholders and key members of staff.
- The implementation and monitoring of the plan will be the responsibility of the Estates Business Manager, Estates Planning Officer and Estates Management Team Leader.
- The plan will continue to be reviewed and reprinted every 5 years.

### **1.5 Vision and Themes**

Stoke Park Estate has come into the management of the Bristol City Council Heritage Estates Management Team. The historic estates are now to be managed by personnel working across the sites; Ashton Court Estate, Blaise Castle Estate, Kings Weston Estate, Oldbury Court, Snuff Mills, Stoke Park Estate and The Downs. It is the ambition that a

management plan will be developed for each site and there will be consistency in the way in which they are managed.

### **1.5.1 Vision Statement**

The vision is to protect, maintain and enhance the historic, wildlife and landscape features in an area of countryside within Bristol, for the benefit and enjoyment of local communities and visitors.

### **1.5.2 Key Themes**

#### **Enjoyment**

To increase public appreciation of the estate, enhance the visitor experience and develop engagement with local site users. Recreation; visitors will be able to cycle or undertake healthy walks from the centre of Bristol and from the urban areas of South Gloucestershire enjoying the views and tranquillity of the special rural landscape. Visitors can enjoy picnics, walks, exercise and experience the delights of the play opportunities provided by the natural features of this dramatic landscape.

#### **Access**

To provide an estate that is accessible to all within the natural constraints of the site.

#### **Landscape**

To ensure that the estate is sensitively managed and that all areas of the historic estate are maintained and enhanced.

#### **Wildlife**

To ensure wildlife habitats within the site are monitored, maintained and enhanced. Conservation; the landscape will be highly valued for its managed and thriving nature conservation habitats and for its variety of rural wildlife.

#### **Anti-social Behaviour**

To ensure that anti-social behaviour is controlled and its impact reduced.

#### **Management and Resources**

To ensure that Stoke Park Estate is sustainably managed and resourced, health and safety of visitors is maintained and that the estate continues to be a great asset to present and future generations.

## 2.0 Policy Context

The management of Stoke Park Estate is in accordance with wider strategies. The city council is guided by the Corporate Plan, The Bristol Partnership Community Strategy and other key strategic documents. National and local strategies provide guidance to formulate objectives.

### 2.1 The Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan sets out what, within available resources, Bristol City Council plan to achieve over the next three years towards the delivery of the longer-term vision for the city. The Corporate Priorities and Medium Term Financial Plan can be viewed at [www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk)

#### 2.1.1 Parks and Green Space Strategy (2008)

The Parks and Green Space Strategy (P&GSS) outlines a 20-year investment programme for the future provision of green space and the facilities and services that should be provided. Its core vision is to create a city with good quality, attractive, enjoyable and accessible green spaces which meet the diverse needs of all Bristol citizens and visitors.

The P&GSS can be viewed at [www.bristol.gov.uk](http://www.bristol.gov.uk)

The P&GSS has eight objectives:

1. Raise the quality of parks and green spaces.
2. Encourage greater use and enjoyment of Bristol's parks and green spaces by all sectors of the community.
3. Contribute to the wider planning of the urban fabric of the city by providing a range of good quality parks and green spaces, which play a significant role in meeting the needs of balanced and sustainable communities and enhancing the urban landscape, to help make Bristol a green and sustainable city.
4. Protect needed green space from development.
5. Rectify shortage in particular types of green space across the city to ensure all residents have access to formal, informal, natural, sports and children and young people's spaces.
6. Provide a clear basis for the beneficial investment in green spaces – identifying those areas of Bristol where investment and improvements in green space are most needed – helping the council 'spend better'.
7. Encourage active and healthy life-styles and promote social inclusion.
8. Encourage community participation in the improvement and management of green spaces.

The following table shows how the policies in P&GSS relate to Stoke Park Estate Management Plan.

Ref	Policy Detail	Stoke Park Estate Management Plan Response
<b>Formal Green Space</b>		

FG3	Restore, enhance and safeguard key historic estates and parks, respecting historical features whilst responding to modern day needs.	A conservation strategy for listed structures and Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM) will be produced. Monuments and historic features will be protected. Sir Johns Land wall will be restored and maintained. It is also an ambition that a landscape restoration plan will be produced subject to funding.
<b>Natural Green Space</b>		
NG2	<p>Improve maintenance and management regimes ensuring optimum conditions for wildlife alongside attractive, welcoming and easily accessible places for people to enjoy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Develop a skilled dedicated workforce specialising in management of nature conservation sites, with suitable specialist equipment.</li> <li>➤ Improve entrances and routes through natural green space to improve welcome and security.</li> </ul>	<p>Grounds, woodlands and lake maintenance schedules will be informed from ecological surveys and act on the recommendations. Hay is only cut after flowers have set seeds.</p> <p>Where possible minimum intervention will occur after trees fall allowing natural regeneration.</p>
NG5	Create new habitats for wildlife to remedy shortfalls in natural green space.	<p>Grounds, woodlands, lake and scrub maintenance schedules will be informed from ecological surveys.</p> <p>The potential of creating new areas of wildflower meadow and wildlife sanctuary areas will be investigated.</p>
<b>Active Sports Space</b>		
AS5	Enhance the wider park environment for informal sport.	The nature and landscape of Stoke Park offer many opportunities for informal sports such as jogging and cycling.
<b>Land Management Policies</b>		
LM6	Develop the role of on-site parks staff and dog wardens to tackle problems of dogs' mess and uncontrolled dogs through education, encouragement and enforcement.	Estates staff are to receive training to enable them to educate, encourage and as necessary issue fixed penalty notices for fouling and uncontrolled dogs. Close liaison with the dog warden service will be developed.
LM8	Build into our green space planning measures to adapt to, and mitigate, the effects of climate change; including trees for shade, drought resistant planting and water storage.	The larger and more mature trees provide shade at various locations. The number and quality of the trees contribute to the mitigation of decline in urban air

		quality and the development of urban hot spots.
LM9	Adopt sustainability targets in the management of Bristol's parks and green spaces.	The management plan seeks to undertake a range of sustainability measures, which form part of the Estates EMAS commitment.
LM13	Put measures in place to reduce motorbike access to green space whilst seeking to enable the fullest access for legitimate users.	The management plan outlines in the 5 year work plan that kissing gates and new fencing will be installed to control access and reduce unauthorised vehicle access.
<b>Delivery Policy</b>		
D1	Support participation and involvement in parks and green spaces through consultation, participation in active management of spaces, volunteering, education and outreach activities.	Stoke Park Estate works with the Stoke Park Delivery Group and Stoke Park Action Group to increase consultation and community participation. Volunteers are actively encouraged on the site, such as the current workplans with The Conservation Volunteers. The annual walks and talks program of events enables discovery, education and enjoyment of Stoke Park Estate.
D2	Increase use and enjoyment of spaces through a range of activities including providing health and exercise related opportunities, events, festivals and improved information provision.	The need to provide and increase the use and enjoyment of Stoke Park Estate has to be carefully balanced with the protection of its natural and historic environment. However, the site is open to events appropriate to the estate providing they do not have a detrimental effect on the environment. The planned installation of Walks For Health way marked routes in 2013 will encourage exercise. Site information via interpretation media, websites, guided walks will improve visitor awareness of the estates assets.

## 2.2 Bristol Strategic Context

This management plan complements the wider strategic context of Bristol City Council and its partners. It seeks to achieve the objectives of the strategic framework by translating those policies that are appropriate to the management of Stoke Park Estate.

The management of Stoke Park Estate has been governed and guided by local policies

and strategies. These are listed in appendix 2 along with regional and national policies that have guided the development of Stoke Park Estate Management Plan.

## 3.0 Site Description

### 3.1 Name of the Site

The site outlined in red on the ownership map (appendix 1) is known as Stoke Park Estate.

### 3.2 Location

Stoke Park Estate is located on the north-eastern edge of Bristol. The boundary between Bristol City and South Gloucestershire crosses the northern end of the site, approximately 80% of the open space is within the Bristol ward of Lockleaze and the remainder within South Gloucestershire. The carriage drive from the Duchess Gate on Stapleton Road to the underpass on the M32 lies within the Bristol ward of Eastville.

### 3.3 Ownership

In 1998 the Stoke Park Estate was acquired by a consortium of three house builders from the Frenchay Health Authority with the intention of developing the former hospital site including the Dower House for housing. The Consortiums Section 106 agreement with South Gloucestershire Council, the planning authority for the development, set out clear conditions for the historic parkland of the estate to:

- Protect it from development
- Ensure its proper future management
- Protect its historic heritage
- Ensure its continued historical restoration
- Set up a Parkland Committee of key stakeholders (the Consortium, South Glos, Bristol City Council and the Avon Gardens Trust) to oversee the parklands management and to agree a suitable custodian for its future protection.
- Transfer the freehold of the parkland from the Consortium to South Glos on the completion of the development with an endowment of funds to provide for its future management.

The completion of the Consortiums development saw a period of consultation on different options for the future protection and management of the estate. The Parkland committee and South Glos reached an agreement that Stoke Park Estate should be transferred to Bristol City Council, an authority experienced in managing and restoring large historic estates in the public domain.

Bristol City Council's Cabinet approved the proposal for Bristol City to acquire Stoke Park Estate at a cabinet meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2009. Following a period of negotiation, legal due diligence searches and the reaching of an agreement on a financial dowry of £1.5 million to be provided by the Consortium all parties agreed to the process of transfer.

In January 2012 the ownership of Stoke Park Estate was transferred to Bristol City Council. The area transferred into BCC ownership is 108 hectares (267 acres), the majority of which forms a substantial part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Stoke Park Estate and includes an area of fields at the southwest end originally part of the historic Health House estate, now the Priory Hospital and includes a substantial length of the original 18<sup>th</sup> Century Heath House

estate wall still standing in Sir John's Lane. However, it excludes the Dower House and the former hospital site.

Lockleaze open space which is already owned by BCC and which lies adjacent to and contiguous with the Western boundary of Stoke Park was originally part of the historic estate. BCC intends including this area within the future management boundary for Stoke Park Estate.

### 3.3.1 Scope

The management prescriptions in this plan only cover the area of Stoke Park Estate that was transferred to Bristol City Council (see ownership map Appendix 1). The following areas were not included in the transfer and so therefore not covered in this report:

- The Dower House and former hospital grounds (Private dwellings)
- Duchess Park (with the exception of the valley containing the carriage drive down to Duchess Gate).
- The land occupied by the repeater station on Purdown.
- Lockleaze Open Space (Already owned by BCC)

## 3.4 Site Summary

Stoke Park Estate is 108 hectares (267 acres), it is a considerable public open space that forms an integral and important part of Bristol's heritage. The estate is a unique green space that is rural in character and yet lies within only two miles of Bristol city centre. It occupies a visually prominent ridge which extends a green finger into the heart of Bristol, forming a prominent landmark and greenway entrance for motorists entering or leaving the city via the M32.

An important function of Stoke Park is a green wedge into the city and a link for city dwellers into the country. Its proximity to the centre of Bristol and its topographical prominence, make it a significant and an important recreational resource to both the City and adjacent urban areas of South Gloucestershire. It has high nature conservation, landscape and amenity values, and contains many historic features.

Although largely surrounded by urban development at Lockleaze, Stapleton and the University of the West of England, the estate is widely visible over large areas of north-east Bristol and beyond. The woodland on the crest of the ridge forms a backdrop to the house and park, creating the illusion of a rural setting.

## 3.5 Site History

Stoke Park is a remarkably intact 18th Century parkland located on the northeast edge of Bristol. Listed grade II on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest it was developed by Thomas Wright for the Berkeley family between 1749 and 1786. Stoke Park has previously been described by English Heritage as one of the nation's most 'at risk' historic environments.

Stoke Park was designed for Norborne Berkeley, when he died the estate passed to his sister, the Dowager Duchess of Beaufort. The Berkeley family made their fortune principally from the Kingswood coalfields in Bristol.

Thomas Wright, who is increasingly acknowledged as an 18th Century landscape designer

of equal importance to 'Capability' Brown and Humphry Repton, remodelled the parkland over a 37 year period. Wright worked in the style of his period, creating flowing 'natural' landscapes with tree clumps and borders. However, within this framework he experimented with ideas, in particular to his experience as an astrologer, mathematician and architect. Wright is now recognised as a leading exponent of Rococo Gardening.

At Stoke Park Estate, Wright designed new gardens, buildings and landscape features making the most of the estates natural topography to provide a setting for the Dower House. Stoke Park is the best documented and most complete surviving design of his work. Unique to Stoke Park is the way in which Wright designed the woodlands, creating outdoor "rooms" and designed walks.

For much of the 20th century Stoke Park was a psychiatric hospital and the estate closed to the public. As a result the main structural elements of the Wrights original 18th Century scheme have survived largely unchanged, although gradually declining with the loss of parkland trees, the neglect of the woodland and structures and the loss of peripheral areas of the estate. The decline in the quality and condition of the landscape was accelerated by the construction in 1968 of the M32 through the lower part of the park; a time in which the historical importance of the estate was not recognized.

However, since 1988, the park's decline has been halted and gradually reversed, initially through the voluntary efforts of the Stoke Park Restoration Trust (SPRT) who commissioned Consultants to research and develop restoration and management proposals for all of the remaining historic landscape.

In 1998 the site passed from the ownership of the local health authority to a Consortium of developers who carried out significant restoration works to the historic landscape in combination with a housing development to the north of the Dower House on the site of the former hospital buildings, including re-creating the original carriage drive from Duchess Gate.

Today the parkland comprises semi-natural habitats including semi-improved neutral and calcareous open grassland, several broad-leaved woodlands and plantations, areas of regenerating scrub, a number of veteran trees, a restored Duchess pond as well as several restored listed structures associated with the landscape laid out by Thomas Wright and other archaeological features.

Throughout the period of the housing consortium's ownership, the majority of Stoke Park was open to the public. As a result it is loved and highly valued by the communities who live around it. Residents in adjacent Lockleaze and Stoke Park have ready access to the estate via public rights of way, through the woodlands and across the grassland. The estate is used for informal recreation including dog walking, jogging and fishing as well as for pedestrian and cycle access linking UWE, Eastville and Lockleaze. A development of residential homes on the former Hewlett Packard site directly abutting the historic woodlands on the northern boundary of the estate continues to increase the numbers of people using the estate.

Stoke Park is served by two Cycle City corridors. The Western Link to UWE runs along its northern boundary, linking Romney Avenue to UWE and Coldharbour Lane. The Southern link to UWE utilises the restored carriage drive across House Park linking to Stapleton Road via an underpass under the M32.

While motor cycling, joy riding and vandalism have significantly decreased within the estate over recent years, they still occur requiring regular coordination with the local community police to manage.

### **3.5.1 Key events in the development of Stoke Park Estate.**

The following is a summary of key events in the historical development of Stoke Park.

Principal dates:

1338	Berkeley Family take over Stoke Gifford.
1563	Manor House built.
1743	First evidence of Berkeley's improvements in the park.
1749	Thomas Wright starts work at Stoke. First phase of house building. Bladud's cell and barn gateway built.
1754-6	Rotunda built, Duke of Beaufort's memorial erected.
1760	Second stage of house building.
1761	Obelisk erected. Temple of Horatii and Curatii built. Simms Hill bridge built.
1762	Duchess Gate built.
1768	Duchess pond dug. Norborne Berkeley leaves for Virginia.
1770	Norborne Berkeley dies.
1781	Oval garden designed by Wright.
1786	Thomas Wright dies.
1799	Duchess of Beaufort dies.
1870	Stapleton Woods on Purdown sold for Rifle Butts for the Franco-Prussian War.
1908	Stoke Park Leased.
1915	Beaufort family sell Stoke Park to the Reverend Burden.
1939	Obelisk Struck by Lightning.
1940	Anti Aircraft Battery Constructed on Purdown.
1949	Hospital taken over by the National Health Service.
1968	M32 built through the Park.
1997	Stoke Park sold by Frenchay Health Authority to a consortium of house builders.
1999	S.Glos S106 agreement with Consortium setting out parkland restoration and management works.
2004	Completion of restoration works to Dower House.
2004	Restoration of Star Hill Monument.
2005	Completion of repairs to the tunnels, obelisk and pond.
2006	Contaminated land in woodland cleared.
2009	Clearance of Oak Saloon.
2009	Parkland Committee inaugurated.
2011	Parkland Committee agreement to transfer Stoke Park to Bristol City Council.
2012	Transfer of Ownership to Bristol City Council.
2012	Stoke Park Estate Delivery Group Formed.

## **3.6 Heritage Values**

### **3.6.1 Historical Value**

A summary of the importance of Stoke Park Estate:

- Nationally important and remarkably intact designed 18<sup>th</sup> century landscape with a continuity of use dating back to 1563.

- Grade II listed on English Heritage's Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest.
- Designed by Thomas Wright, an 18th century landscape gardener acknowledged as of equal importance to Capability Brown.
- Wright's best surviving and most documented landscape work.
- Contains Grade II listed historic structures and features.
- Importance as a historic designed setting to the Dower house.

### 3.6.2 Archaeological Value

Archaeological value:

- Archaeological remains including lynchets and pillow mounds or burial mounds.
- Has surviving medieval field boundaries.
- Contains Scheduled Ancient Monumnet (SAM) Anti Aircraft battery from an important period of contemporary history.

### 3.7 Natural Heritage

Stoke Park Estate is of significant conservation importance, which is reflected by the designation of County Importance for Nature Conservation that covers the majority of the site.

A Bristol City Council audit of Stoke Park Estate SNCI in 2004 stated that 'Stoke Park is of particular value for a wide range of species-rich habitats and plant communities present within its boundaries. Few other areas within Bristol City offer such a large expanse of species-rich and diverse habitat'.

Stoke Park Estate is predominantly a grassland and woodland site with landforms that include a dry valley bottom, steep scarp slopes, and a flat plateau on the top of the site. The Park site has a range of habitats including semi-natural grassland which is species-rich on the steepest scarp slopes, wet grassland in the lower bowl around two artificial ponds, ancient semi-natural woodlands and hedgerows and several mature parkland trees designated as veteran trees of significant intrinsic value. The component habitats are complex and in varying states of natural succession arising from under resourced management.

South West, South Gloucestershire, and Bristol Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitat priorities considered relevant to Stoke Park are:

1. Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
2. Lowland meadows
3. Parkland
4. Ponds and open water
5. Hedges and field margins
6. Veteran trees
7. Wood pasture

The most valuable habitat features are the woodlands, particularly Long Wood, Hermitage Wood and Barn Wood, and the sloping areas of more species-rich calcareous grassland.

### 3.7.1 Nature Conservation Value

- Designated a SNCI (Site of Nature Conservation Interest).
- Contains a wide variety of high nature conservation habitats.
- Large scale habitats so close to the city centre.
- Contains ancient woodlands.
- Valuable scrub and hedgerow habitats.
- Contains remnants of species rich limestone meadows.
- Contains a significant number of veteran trees.
- Contains ponds of value to wildlife.
- Value as a wildlife corridor between city and countryside.

### 3.7.2 Landscape Value:

- Prominence as a green landmark and greenway entrance to the city.
- Unspoilt pastoral rural setting.
- Dramatic topography of steep sided spurs.
- Visually significant woodlands on crest of ridge.

### 3.7.3 Woodlands

The woodlands are ancient and semi natural and although extensively re-planted they continue to support a diversity of native trees and shrubs, with oak, ash and beech dominant to the canopy. The woodlands and mature parkland trees have the potential to be of significant value for certain groups of invertebrates, particularly those dependant on dead wood habitats.

There are valuable hedgerows that link woodland and other habitats and act as field boundaries; however these are suffering from a lack of management and in many cases are being overtaken by scrub.

### 3.7.4 Veteran Trees

The open parkland is also interspersed with veteran trees, mainly English Oak. Some of these have suffered severe damage, mainly from children building dens and lighting fires. Future management of these trees, e.g. for public safety, will need to be mindful of the potential some have for harbouring protected bats.

### 3.7.5 Grassland

From a farming perspective, the grassland can be broadly defined as parkland (including some of the steep banks) and meadow, with a small area indicative of neglected wood pasture (backed up by historical maps) that could be restored as such. From an ecological perspective, further definitions can be applied to grassland types, relating to the degree of species-richness within localised swards; ranging from species-poor ubiquitous grassland types dominated by False oat-grass, to less common species-rich communities containing Agrimony, Quaking grass and Spiny rest-harrow, for example. The more interesting grasslands are almost invariably on the steeper slopes where scrub has not yet managed to take hold. A further grassland type, damp grassland / rush pasture, can be found in the valley bottom near the fishing lake.

The grassland on the upper scarp slopes is subject to scrub regeneration. Although beneficial to wildlife, the growth of the scrub is inconsistent with restoring the 18th Century designed landscape. It should be cleared back, only retaining sufficient scrub to promote wildlife movement within the site. Bird communities should be recorded within scrubland so

that they can be taken into consideration prior to any scrub clearance. With appropriate management in the future, the site offers considerable potential for enhancing the habitats of species that are already present or could be encouraged to start using the site. The small area of calcareous grassland at Duchess Gate has been found to support one County Notable Plant Species. The area of grassland at Duchess Gate is covered in anthills, indicating that it is unimproved grassland.

The grassland on top of the plateau is best described as meadow and distinctly different from that on steeper and lower lying grounds, being in most parts species-poor (with pockets that are semi-improved), although soil types are similar. Factors that are clearly different are topography, drainage, and past management.

The grassland supports a population of small mammals such as field vole/mouse which provide prey for a number of birds of prey including owls, buzzards and kestrels. The grassland should be managed to maintain these populations of mammals and birds by allowing some areas to be left uncut for 2/3 years using a rotational cutting regime which will also reduce scrub invasion. Baseline surveys will be carried out recording the wildlife and from the survey recommendations a grassland strategy and maintenance regime will be produced.

### **3.7.6 Water Bodies and Wetlands**

Other features of the open parkland include two water bodies, one a recently created fishing lake (Duchess Pond), and another that acts as a flood pond. There are few wetland features of significant value, but two of the field ponds could contain great crested newts, one being known to contain smooth newts. There is further potential to improve the ponds within the estate by enhancing the features described above. The management of the ponds will be informed by baseline surveys and is likely to include the provision of a balance of open water and aquatic marginal vegetation such as reed beds in order to provide important habitats for aquatic plants, invertebrates and birds.

### **3.7.7 Plant Species**

Plant species will be identified through a baseline survey as outlined in the 5 year work plan.

### **3.7.8 Birds and Bats**

The site as a whole is also likely to be of significant local value for birds and bats; the linked nature of the many woodlands and areas of scrub almost certainly add to the value of the site for many of these species. There is evidence of green woodpeckers (using the ant hills in the wood pasture area), kestrels, skylarks, song thrushes and a range of woodland birds. Bird species will be identified through the baseline survey as outlined in the 5 year work plan.

### **3.7.9 Wildlife and Plants**

The mosaic of scrub, grassland and woodland is likely to provide habitat to mammal species of local and national conservation importance including bats and hedgehogs.

Initial assessment of potential value for wildlife and plants suggests:

- Valuable potential skylark nesting on upper reaches.
- Green woodpecker feeding and nesting.

- Song thrush and bullfinch habitat with connection to neighbouring gardens.
- Little owl nesting and feeding.
- Potential barn owl nesting and feeding.
- Over-wintering for field fares and redwings.
- Valuable song bird habitats in the form of scrub.
- Roosting and feeding potential for several bat species.
- Great crested newt habitat around the small field pond.
- Hedgehog habitat in woodland, scrub and hedgerows.
- Slow worm, lizard and grass snake habitat.
- Diverse indigenous grass species.
- Various other grassland flowers, herbs and plants.
- Small mammals such as field vole and mouse.

Species priorities potentially relevant to Stoke Park Estate include:

1. Song thrush
2. House sparrow
3. Barn Owl
4. Bullfinch
5. Slow worm
6. Great crested newt
7. Hedgehog
8. Pipistrelle bat
9. Skylark

Other important species relevant to Stoke Park Estate include:

1. Green woodpecker
2. Little owl
3. Fieldfares and redwings
4. Woodcock
5. Dung beetle
6. Meadow ant
7. Butterflies such as small tortoiseshell, gatekeeper and common blue
8. Moths
9. Damsel/Dragonflies such as banded demoiselle and emperor dragonfly
10. Badgers

### **3.7.10 Landscape Value**

Landscape Value:

- Prominence as a green landmark and greenway entrance to the city.
- Unspoilt pastoral rural setting.
- Dramatic topography of steep sided spurs.
- Visually significant woodlands on crest of ridge.

## **3.8 Cultural Heritage**

### **3.8.1 Recreational Value**

Recreational value:

- Value for informal recreation for the local community.

- Close proximity to the centre of Bristol providing value and function as a green wedge into the city providing a link for city dwellers into the country.
- Under used and new increased public access providing the opportunity for enhancing its use for public recreation and enjoyment.
- Value as a protected green space in the face of continuing surrounding urban development.
- Commanding views across Bristol and South Glos.
- Network of public rights of way and informal footpaths.
- Access and links to key cycle corridors.

### 3.9 Built Heritage

#### 3.9.1 Landscape Designations

Stoke Park is covered by the following series of landscape designations:

- Registered Grade II Listed Historic Landscape - On the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens, although this extends beyond the area of Consortium ownership to include Simms Hill, Duchess Park and Lockleaze.
- Conservation Area - All of the estate within Bristol City is included in the Stapleton and Frome Valley Conservation Area.
- Area of Archaeological Significance - All of the estate north of the M32 but excluding Simms Hill, is covered by this designation.
- Site of Nature Conservation Interest - Much of the estate is a county Site of Nature Conservation Interest.
- City Wide Site of Nature Conservation Interest -most of the estate within Bristol is a City Wide Site of Nature Conservation Interest.
- Public Rights of Way: - there are a number of public rights of way across the estate.

#### 3.9.2 Built Structures

The following built monuments and structures are within Stoke Park Estate, locations are marked on the monuments map in appendix 1:

Map Ref	Compartment	Built Structure	Designation
1	Barn Wood Tunnel	Barn Wood Tunnel Washpool	Listed Grade II
2	Washpool	Barnwood Pond	N/A
3	Barn Wood	Beaufort Memorial	Listed Grade II
4	House Park	Star Hill Obelisk	Listed Grade II
5	Duchess Gate	Duchess Gate	Listed Grade II
6	Long Wood & Hermitage Wood	Hermitage Wood Tunnel	Listed Grade II
7	Purdown	WWII Anti Aircraft Battery	N/A
8	Sir Johns Lane	Sir Johns Lane Wall	Within curtilage of listed Grade II Heath House

### 3.10 Legal Agreements

#### 3.10.1 By-laws

There are no by-laws which apply specifically to Stoke Park Estate. However, the following legislation framework governs the current management activity on site:

Legislation	Relevance	Responsible Organisation
Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000	Public access in and around the site	Bristol City Council
Crime and Disorder	Community Safety	Avon and Somerset Police Authority and Bristol City Council
Disability Discrimination Act 2005	Access and participation for all people regardless of ability	Bristol City Council
Occupiers Liability Act 1984	Health and Safety of visitors	Bristol City Council
Road Traffic Acts	Motorcyclists illegally accessing the site	Avon and Somerset Police Authority
The Environmental Protection Act 1990	Litter, fly tipping and abandoned vehicles	Bristol City Council

#### 3.10.2 Designations

Stoke Park Estate is covered by a number of statutory designations.

- Grade II listed monuments (designated by English Heritage)
- Grade II listed Register Park of Special Historic Interest (English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest).
- Scheduled Ancient Monument

#### 3.10.3 Partnership with South Glos Council as Joint Planning Authority

A historically significant part of Stoke Park Estate is within the area administrated by South Gloucestershire Council (see council boundary map Appendix 1). South Gloucestershire Council therefore remains a key partner and stakeholder in Stoke Park Estate, retaining planning control over historic monuments, public rights of way and trees via listed building and rights of way legislation and current tree preservation orders within this area of the estate. Where intending to carry out works to any of these features BCC will liaise at the earliest opportunity with South Gloucestershire Council in order to ensure the issues are dealt with in a mutually swift and efficient manner to the satisfaction of all parties.

In addition, to satisfy the requirements of the Stoke Park Section 106 agreement (South Glos Council Planning reference P97/2145) unless agreed in writing with South Glos Council all management works carried out by Bristol City Council, its agents or its successors in title within the area of Stoke Park lying in South Gloucestershire, shall be undertaken in exact accordance with the latest version of this management plan that has been approved in writing by South Gloucestershire Council.

## 4.0 Community Use

Stoke Park Estate will be managed:

- As a local, community green space to meet the needs of both the city centre residents, residents of Lockleaze and the increasingly high density communities on two sides of the park in Bristol and South Gloucestershire.
- As a destination park for the wider community of Bristol and adjacent area of South Gloucestershire.
- As an important regional historic landscape and heritage site, attracting visitors including tourists to Bristol and the wider area.

### Community Engagement

Wild City is a three-year project that began in 2011, the project aim was to deliver a broad range of community engagement projects using contact with the natural environment to meet the needs of deprived communities and priority groups in the City of Bristol. The project provides opportunities for people to experience, enjoy and access the natural environment in creative and meaningful ways. The project is co-ordinated by a dedicated project officer who is implementing projects and co-ordinating the input of a number of partner organisations.

Wild City will achieve the following objectives:

- **Health and Well Being**

To improve the physical and mental well-being of deprived communities and priority groups.

- **Young People**

To engage young people in a range of projects related to the natural environment, accessibility, physical activity and learning.

- **Welcome, Safe and Accessible**

To promote the increased use of green spaces by local communities through projects that encourages community involvement and develops community pride and sense of ownership. Under use of green spaces is a particular problem in the more deprived areas.

- **Sustainable and Inclusive**

To ensure that green spaces are managed sustainably with the inclusive involvement of diverse sections of the local community.

Wild City began engaging with community groups at Stoke Park Estate in 2012 and are completing projects at the estate in response to the above objectives. The projects are outlined in the 5 year work plan (page 31) and include producing an access audit report, an estates leaflet, the installation of notice boards on site, way marking health walks and working with Stoke Park Action Group on the development of an action group website.

### 4.1 Consultation

Bristol City Council will undertake consultation with the local community and other key stakeholders and partners in order to:

- Inform of the BCC's Stoke Park management plan.
- Understand the local communities' present and future needs in relation to access, use and enjoyment of Stoke Park.
- Build community support and engagement with BCC as the new land owner.
- Promote a wider and stronger public appreciation of the historical significance and

value of the estate and the importance of its conservation and protection.

## **4.2 Community Groups**

### **Stoke Park Action Group**

A community based group formed in 2009 with the role of supporting the future management of the estate, running events and raising funds for estate projects.

### **Stoke Park Delivery Group**

A delivery group (initially Steering group) was created in 2012, formed of key stakeholders. The Bristol City Council Estates team attend meetings with SPDG every 3 months in order to feed local community input into the estates management, continuing restoration and development for public enjoyment. In later years once the management of the estate has reached an agreed level of operational practice and the management plan has been agreed the frequency of the meetings could be reduced.

### **Bristol Parks Forum**

Bristol Parks Forum is a network of individual community groups and organisations that are working to improve parks and green spaces in Bristol. It is supported by Bristol Parks but acts independently. The group consists of around 80 members representing many different neighbourhoods and green spaces across Bristol.

## **4.3 Visitor Facilities**

Currently no visitor facilities exist on site. It is an ambition to build a service building on the estate; this could include toilets, a visitor centre, café, or storage for the ranger service. The implementation of a service building will be dependent on external funding.

## **4.4 Access**

Stoke Park Estate will be an estate accessible to the public throughout the year, however at occasions it may be necessary to restrict access for operational and health and safety reasons. Improvements to the access of the estate will be made in conjunction to the access audit report.

### **4.4.1 Footpaths**

A number of Public Rights of Way and informal footpaths provide access across Stoke Park Estate. Public Rights of Way are marked the map in appendix 1.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) identifies the increased use of public rights of way in open parkland and through the woods, mainly due to the new housing developments and the re-created carriage drive providing informal pedestrian and cycle access into the heart of the estate. Work with the key ROWIP partners (Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City Council, South Gloucestershire Council and the West of England Partnership) in the future may include, for example, the provision of interpretation and promotion of access to Stoke Park Estate by public transport. This is also one of the aims of the Higher Level Stewardship; the promotion of the public access and understanding of the countryside.

Bristol City Council is tasked under the ROWIP to develop a network of safe and attractive routes which improve opportunities for sustainable access and which meet the present and future needs of all members of the community, including those with visual impairments or mobility problems. To achieve the ROWIP vision, the network of public footpaths linked in Stoke Park Estate will be enhanced and made more accessible. An access audit will be

carried out for the site, of which the recommendations will be actioned upon.

#### **4.4.2 Cycling**

Stoke Park Estate is currently served by two Cycle City corridors. The Western Link to UWE runs along the northern boundary of the site. This links Romney Avenue to UWE and Coldharbour Lane. The Southern Link utilises the restored carriage drive linking Stapleton Road via an underpass under the M32 to UWE.

#### **4.4.3 Parking**

Whilst there is parking available on the public roads within residential areas surrounding the estate, it is inappropriate to encourage site users to park in these areas. Therefore, car parking areas located around the perimeter of the site would be an asset and are an aspiration of the estate management. Car parking areas will need to be investigated taking into account the historic and ecological aspects of the site.

There are currently plans for a park and ride system to be developed alongside the M32. This may have effects on the estate and will need to be monitored.

### **4.5 Recreation Use**

On site activity at present includes residents walking their dogs, joggers, cyclists using the cycle paths, the fishing syndicate and occasional users including sledging, picnicking and the unauthorised motorcyclists.

A key theme of the future of the estate is the recreation aspect of the site; with the vision that visitors will be able to cycle or undertake healthy walks from the centre of Bristol and from the urban areas of South Gloucestershire enjoying the views and tranquillity of the estate. Visitors will be able to enjoy picnics, walks, exercise and experience the delights of the play opportunities provided by the natural features of this dramatic landscape.

### **4.6 Events**

Events are an important element in the social and recreational use of an estate. They are also important for raising income for the estate. The program of events will include small scale events arranged by Bristol City Council as well as externally organised events of varying scales. All potential event organisers must first apply to the council's Event Permission Team for a licence and must be agreed with the estates management team and the Safety Advisory Group (SAGE). Site fees are charged together with a refundable bond to cover the cost of any reinstatement works that may be required due to the event taking place.

A yearly program of walks and talks events will be held at Stoke Park Estate. These events will:

- Encourage more people to discover Stoke Park Estate
- Enable people to learn about the historical and natural heritage of the estate.
- Encourage more people to become involved in helping look after the estate.
- Enable people to enjoy being in a natural green space.
- Enable people to develop a sense of local community.

## 4.7 Children and Young People

Stoke Park Estate has a rich and varied landscape providing excellent opportunities for the informal play needs of local children, including a wide range of natural play opportunities such as trees, shrubs and mounds. Stoke Park Estate also offers the opportunity to be used as an area for informal activities, including kite flying, picnics, frisbee, ball games. It would not be appropriate to construct a formal play area on Stoke Park Estate as this would be a visual intrusion on the historic landscape. Formal play areas are available nearby in Gainsborough Square and at the adventure playground on the western boundary in Lockleaze accessible via local cycle routes.

Instead activities sensitive to the site should be explored for children and young people, for example a geo-teering course or a nature and historic treasure trail could be designed.

## 4.8 Education

It is important that people have the opportunity to increase their understanding and enjoyment of Stoke Park Estate, its wildlife, landscape, history and archaeology. There is potential for both formal and informal educational use of the estate. The annual walks and talks program will create opportunities to enable people of all ages to discover, learn and enjoy the features of the estate.

At present there are no formal arrangements with school, youth and educational groups visiting the site, so it is not possible to gauge how many educational visits take place at Stoke Park Estate each year. Due to the open nature of the site, groups are able to visit without booking and hence there is only anecdotal evidence in relation to visits.

The consequence of education groups attending site independently, without informing the estates team, may result in groups not fully engaging with Stoke Park Estate. This could lead to an unfilled experience both for the visitor and the estate in regards to educating its visitors about the site. Interpretation improvements and the annual events program should improve this.

## 4.9 Interpretation

### 4.9.1 Signage

The signage at the estate will be kept to a minimum to avoid the proliferation of unsightly signage clutter and visual intrusion into the historic landscape. The signage will follow the marketing and branding as used across the Bristol heritage estates, appropriate to the rural and historic heritage of the sites.

### 4.9.2 Interpretation Facilities

The fascinating history of Stoke Park Estate offers considerable potential for interpretation and education. Interpretation of the historic and natural environment will enhance local community and visitor enjoyment of the estate as well as increase understanding and appreciation of its historic and ecological value, and the need for it to be protected. Interpretation could also explain any visible management activities such as coppicing.

Interpretation methods could include:

- Onsite interpretation panels and signage
- Leaflets

- Web site information
- Guided walks

## **4.10 Web-pages**

The Bristol City Council website features web pages about Stoke Park Estate. These pages contain general information about the estate including the layout and management of the site, activities, events, history and features.

As the Stoke Park webpages evolve it is an ambition that a selection of PDF's incorporating the management plan, historical information and maps can be viewed and downloaded.

The chair of Stoke Park Action Group (SPAG), Steve England has developed a Stoke Park Facebook page and it is hoped that a central SPAG website will be developed to include updates of works and projects that the action group are undertaking and the groups future plans, together with the group aims and information for new members to become involved.

## **4.11 Antisocial Behaviour**

### **4.11.1 Motorcycles**

Motorcyclists scrambling and joy riding have been an on-going issue since the park opened to the public. Bristol City Council will continue to work with the police, the local community and the ranger service to co-ordinate and implement reasonable measures to prevent illegal entry to the estate. New estate fencing and kissing gates will be installed to control the access of unauthorised vehicles, together with signage to provide clear indication to potential perpetrators of its illegality.

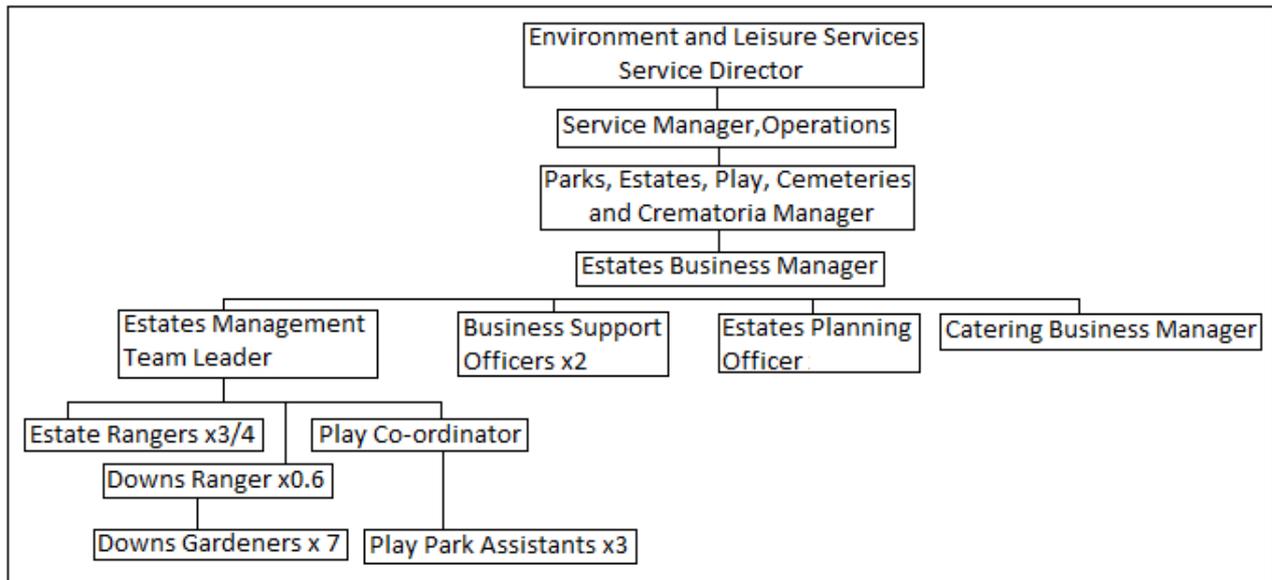
### **4.11.2 Dog Fouling and Dog Behaviour**

With increasing numbers of residents the issue of responsible dog ownership is important to ensure the safety of site visitors and the maintenance standards of the estate. Issues of site users not clearing up after their dogs and owners not responsibly controlling dogs could be addressed with additional dog bins being installed onsite, appropriate code of conduct displayed in notice boards and the ranger service and dog wardens providing education to site users together with referrals to dog and owner training sessions.

## 5.0 Management and Resources

### 5.1 People with responsibility for Stoke Park Estate

Within the operations section of Environment and Leisure Services, the staff structure to implement the management plan will be as per the below structure.



Overall responsibility for the management of Stoke Park Estate rests with Bristol City Council.

The management of Stoke Park Estate rests within the Estates section of The Environment and Leisure Service. Stoke Park is within the remit of the Parks Estates, Play, Cemeteries and Crematoria Manager. The Estates Business Manager is responsible for the management of all the heritage sites including Stoke Park Estate. The Estates Management Team Leader reports to the Estate Business Manager and is responsible for grounds management to include monitoring the quality of the work, implementing the management plans and reporting to the Stoke Park Delivery Group on progress with planned works. The Estates Planning Officer also reports to the Estates Business Manager and is responsible for managing the built structures, events and for monitoring the management plan implementation, producing and updating the plan as required.

The Estates Support Officers manage the enquiries and complaints received relating to

Stoke Park.

A site ranger was appointed in November 2012 on a six month secondment. The ranger joins a team of rangers that work in the Bristol Estates. It is an ambition that a site presence will be maintained after the Stoke Park Ranger secondment comes to an end. The rangers responsibility includes the day to day management of the site, working on projects, assisting and leading volunteer groups.

Events are managed through the Event Permissions Team in close consultation with the Estates Planning Officer and the wider estates team.

There are specialist officers that the operations section can call upon for advice on specialist subjects such as ecology, structural engineers or legal.

## **5.2 Volunteers**

Volunteers have already begun work on various projects in the estate. The Community Volunteers (TCV) currently volunteer on site and have been working to improve entrances as per the 5 year work plan (page 31). The Probation Service also contributes volunteer time onsite and is currently completing vegetation clearance work on site.

As per the 5 year work plan the continuation and development of volunteers contributing and participating to the estate will be encouraged as they are an invaluable source of knowledge, skills and labour.

## **5.3 Grounds Maintenance**

Grounds maintenance is to be carried out to a specification which will be produced in year one. It is important that this specification takes into account the information collated from the ecological base line surveys and acts on the recommendations made. The grassland strategy will be informed by the survey results.

The grassland is currently hay cut once annually under a contract agreement with a Farmer from Chepstow who pays a small amount to the estate and who removes the hay for his own use. The steeper slopes are cut by an alpine style mower that can work on the steep slopes. The grassland and slopes towards the north east end of the site are managed to a higher degree to ensure that they provide an appropriate setting to the Dower House.

## **5.4 Structures and Monuments**

Structural reports are to be completed in year 1, appropriate actions will be delivered from the reports. Where appropriate structures and monuments are to be fenced / protected to meet Health and Safety Regulations and English Heritage regulations for protection of historic monuments.

## **5.5 Financial**

### **5.5.1 Endowment**

Stoke Park Estate was transferred to Bristol City Council with endowment or dowry of £1.5 million provided by The Consortium. £1.2 of this dowry will be invested by Bristol City Council to fund initial set up costs and to generate income for the sites long term management and continuing restoration. The remaining £300, 000 will be set aside to fund the stabilisation and restoration of the historic Heath House Estate wall in Sir John's Lane.

Most of the endowment fund will be used to finance set up costs. It is anticipated that the estates budget can be supplemented by DEFRA under the Environmental Stewardship Scheme and Single Farm Payment funding.

## 5.6 Revenue

In the early years costs will largely be met from the endowment, but in the longer term the net cost of maintenance of the estate is likely to be in the region of £80 - £100k pa. It is estimated that in the long run annual costs of £130, 000 will be required for a ranger, and routine management and maintenance costs.

In the short and medium term appropriate levels of maintenance will be established which will balance with sustainable income levels received from the endowment, topped up by grant aid (e.g. from Rural Payments Agency).

In the long term additional sources of capital and income will be sought to supplement the future revenue costs of the estate.

## 5.7 Grant Aid

There are a number of grants available, most of which are used to support management and restoration works. Bristol City Council anticipates making continuing grant applications where eligible to support its aim to support sustainable financing for Stoke Park. The principle grant schemes that will be investigated are as follows:

- Single Farm Payment
- The Countryside Stewardship Scheme
- Woodland Grant
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- English Heritage Gardens Grant Scheme

### 5.7.1 Other Sources of Revenue

Ways in which to increase revenue and capital funding will be identified and pursued. This will include:

- Section 106 contributions
- Sponsorship of leaflets/walking routes from city initiatives
- Event Licence Fees
- Film Licence Fees
- Firewood
- Interpretation board donations
- Catering concessions
- Donations of materials
- Seat donations

Additional contributions for restoration and improvement works to the estate will be sought from Section 106 contributions from local development in both Bristol and where possible from South Gloucestershire Council.

Funding is frequently raised on other Bristol Parks and Estates by local friends and action groups towards improvements benefitting visitors to the sites. This could include new seats, signs or even contributions to restoring historic structures and planting trees.

## 5.8 Sustainability and EMAS

Bristol City Council is committed to improving the local environment and helping to improve it for the future. We recognise that our wide range of activities and services have positive and negative impacts upon the environment, and that we have a leading role to play in creating a sustainable city. To achieve this goal an Environmental Policy is in place and an environmental management system was implemented in 2006 called EMAS (Environment Management Audit Scheme). EMAS is an independently verified system that ensures that significant environmental impacts are monitored and managed, and overall environmental performance is continually improved. The Environment and Leisure Department is EMAS registered, as part of the corporate system. The council subscribes to a quarterly database that is available on the intranet called CEDREC to enable departments to keep up to date with legislation.

Most aspects of the management of Stoke Park Estate will fall within the remit of EMAS, and be open to external audit.

### **5.9 Approved Pesticides**

Herbicides, chemicals, paints and other materials are all COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) regulated and usage is kept to a minimum. A list of approved pesticides can be found in the appendices.

### **5.10 Recycling**

Hay cut material will be removed from site for use by the farmer. All rubbish collected by working parties where practical will be sorted and recycled where possible.

### **5.11 Peat**

There will be no peat usage on Stoke Park Estate.

### **5.12 Litter Bins**

The presence of litter bins and other site furniture can be inappropriate as well as visually detrimental to the landscape quality of such a historic and rural landscape as Stoke Park Estate.

Ashton Court Estate currently managed by BCC has a policy of no litter bins for this reason and relies on educating people to take their litter home with them. The policy is effective in the context of the vision of Ashton Court Estate as a country park and currently there is no reason to persuade the management team that bins should be introduced. A similar policy will be adopted for Stoke Park Estate.

### **5.13 Risk Assessments**

Bristol City Council provides public open spaces in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act and various statutory guidelines. The council's health and safety committee meets regularly and provides the reporting mechanism to ensure that health and safety issues are dealt with in an organised and systematic manner. There is a multifaceted approach to health and safety issues, each one designed to control hazards and risks in various work areas. The following methods and procedures are utilised to ensure that there is a safe environment for both the public and the members of staff:

- H&S induction for new employees
- Risk Assessments
- COSHH Assessments
- Safe and lone working procedures

- Safe chemical storage, application and disposal (where chemicals are used)
- Core and specific training e.g. manual handling
- Defined roles and responsibilities
- Effective communication methods
- Emergency procedures
- Effective reporting and investigating procedures
- Recognised First Aiders
- Manual handling procedures

Risk assessments, condition surveys and Health and Safety audits will be carried out by the Estates team and their agents for Stoke Park Estate. These will be filed in The Estates Office, Ashton Court Estate. Site contractors will be required to complete and supply to BCC their own risk assessments for their staff and equipment prior to work on site.

The Parks and Estates Service has a Health and Safety Support Park that it can use to ensure that all works carried out on site by volunteer groups are carried out safely (copies available from the Parks and Estates Offices). This involves training individuals to carry out risk assessments in advance of the work, and how to give a talk on tool use before every work party starts work. No work should be carried out unless such a trained person is present on site.

All parkland trees will be inspected by the park department's arboriculture section on a 2-4 year cycle (to be identified in an asset and condition survey risk zoning exercise). This determines all planned maintenance that should take place. Contractors under instruction from the arboriculture section normally undertake response works. Woodland trees are subject to inspection every four years. Apart from those works identified as being necessary through the survey, there is a policy of non-intervention unless a fallen tree causes an obstruction.

All monuments and structures will be condition surveyed.

Fencing and hard standings are checked on an ad hoc basis by the Estates Planning Officer and site Ranger.

## **6.0 Monitoring and Review**

### **6.0.1 Five Yearly**

- The Estates Planning Officer will review the whole management plan

document.

- Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs) to be checked for favourable conservation status. SNCI survey is undertaken by The Parks and Estates Service. The cycle of re-surveys for the favourable condition status of SNCIs is subject to determination (first time audit of all city SNCIs is ongoing), it is expected to be 5 yearly for meadow habitat and 10 yearly for woodland habitat.

### **6.0.2 Bi-annual**

- Monitor satisfaction of site users through user surveys.
- All listed structures and monuments inspected.
- Non-listed structures are inspected.
- Condition of trees to be checked and recorded.

### **6.0.3 Annual**

- The Estates Planning Officer will review the yearly work plan and set out a new yearly work plan.
- Elm trees and Ash trees checked for disease by staff on site.
  - Monitor and record the number of events.
  - Monitor income and expenditure against annual budgets.
  - Review EMAS action plan.
  - Risk assessments carried out by the Estates Management Team Leader.

### **6.0.4 5 Times Per Year**

- Management Team report to the Stoke Park Delivery Group.

### **6.0.5 Monthly**

- Monthly spending monitored by Estates Business Manager against annual budget.
- Estates Management Team Leader formally monitors quality of work against specifications.
- Complaints are monitored and reported to the management team as appropriate.

### **6.0.6 Weekly**

- Informal grounds maintenance quality inspections carried out by the Ranger.
- Vandalism and anti-social behaviour is monitored by the site ranger.

## 7.0 A Five Year Work Plan

The work program has been divided into six key themes that encompass management issues – enjoyment, access, landscape, wildlife, anti-social behaviour and management and resources. The work program will be subject to change from outside influences including pressures from site users, from the results of surveys or monitoring and the availability of finance. Some objectives have been identified as being ambitions but they cannot be scheduled to implement at present until finance has been identified.

### Enjoyment

To increase public appreciation of the estate, enhance the visitor experience and develop engagement with local site users.

### Access

To provide an estate that is accessible to all within the natural constraints of the site.

### Landscape

To ensure that the estate is sensitively managed and that all areas of the historic estate are maintained and enhanced.

### Wildlife

To ensure wildlife habitats within the site are monitored, maintained and enhanced.

### Anti-social Behaviour

To ensure that anti-social behaviour is controlled and its impact reduced.

### Management and Resources

To ensure that Stoke Park Estate is sustainably managed and resourced, health and safety of visitors is maintained and that the estate continues to be a great asset to present and future generations.

## 7.1 Objectives

Many of the costs shown are estimates. There are 4 bands of estimation < £5k, £5-£15k, £15-£30K and >£30k.

No	Objective	Lead Officer	Y1 2013/ 14	Y2 2014/ 15	Y3 2015/ 16	Y4 2016/ 17	Y5 2017/ 18	Cost Band
1	Publicise actual commencement of BCC ownership and	BCC Management	#					N/A

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	management of Stoke Park.	Team						
2	Set up Stoke Park web page on BCC web site.	Communications and Marketing Team, Estates Planning Officer	#					<5K
3	Design and install new entrance signage at key access points.	Estates Planning Officer	#					5-15k
4	Produce estate visitor map	Wild City Project Team	#					<5K
5	Produce visitor leaflet.	Wild City Project Team	#					<5k
6	Develop walking routes and way mark.	Wild City Project Team	#					<5k
7	Develop guide for walks	Wild City Project Team	#					<5k
8	Design and install interpretation boards on marked walks and at historical and ecological features.	Estates Planning Officer		#				5-15k
9	Investigate provision of viewfinders at key viewpoints.	Estates Planning Officer			#			<5k
10	Produce and implement a guided walks and talks program of events.	Estates Planning Officer	#	#	#	#	#	<5k
11	Produce an events policy for Stoke Park Estate in line with a citywide approach to events.	Estates Planning Officer, Event Site Permissions Officer	#					n/a
12	Identify an Events Working Group to meet as required with Event Permissions Section to investigate the options for events at Stoke Park.	Estates Planning Officer, Event Site Permissions Officer	#					n/a
13	Carry out access audit.	Wild City Project	#					n/a

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14	Act on recommendations of the first access audit and identify where improvements can be made.	Estates Planning Officer	#						15-30k
15	Manage the informal access points into the estate and close off/open up as appropriate.	Estates Planning Officer and Estates Management Team Leader	#	#	#	#	#		5-15k
16	Enhance the access points; when new pedestrian gates/barriers are required replace with wheelchair friendly design, ensure appropriate signage is in place. Ensure emergency vehicle access is available to site.	Estates Management Team Leader	#	#					5-15k
17	Maintain all access points and ensure pinch points have suitable, maintained surfaces.	Estates Management Team Leader	#	#	#	#	#		<5k
18	Improve gradient surrounding concrete raft bases of entrances and paths to facilitate wheelchair access.	Estates Management Team Leader and Estates Planning Officer		#	#				<5k
19	Carry out a condition survey of all paths, trackways and fencing.	Estates Management Team Leader, Estates Planning Officer		#					n/a
20	Act on results of condition survey to improve pathways and tracks, infilling ruts.	Estates Management Team Leader		#	#	#	#		5k - 15k
21	Ensure obstructions are cleared from pathways and tracks maintaining access.	Estates Management Team Leader	#	#	#	#	#		<5k
22	Create/enhance and maintain footpaths, bridlepaths and cycle paths.	Estates Management Team Leader	#	#	#	#	#		5-15k
23	Investigate the possibility of erecting 'brown' informative directional signs in the city to guide visitors to all 'destination parks' including Stoke Park Estate	Estates Business Manager			#				n/a

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24	Update emergency access map and re-issue to emergency services.	Estates Planning Officer	#						n/a
25	HGV vehicle access point/loading area developed for event infrastructure to be delivered into the site.	Project Officer			#				>30k
26	Produce a grassland strategy in response to the baseline studies carried out.	Estates Management Team Leader	#						n/a
27	Manage the grassland.	Estates Management Team Leader	#	#	#	#	#	#	<5k
28	Prepare a strategy for the future management of scrub areas to balance the sometimes conflicting pressures of ecology, landscape, access and archaeology.	Estates Management Team Leader	#						n/a
29	Implement an ongoing programme of scrub management subject to above strategy, to include areas surrounding the scheduled ancient monuments and the hedgerows.	Estates Management Team Leader		#	#	#	#	#	n/a
30	Produce a woodland strategy. (including management of hedgerows and options for planting trees alongside M32)	Arboricultural Officer	#						n/a
31	Map the veteran trees.	Arboricultural Officer	#						n/a
32	Ensure management of the veteran trees considers both public safety and wildlife (e.g. bats)	Arboricultural Officer	#						n/a
33	Review the lake management.	Estates Business Manager		#					n/a
34	Produce a grassland strategy in response to the baseline studies carried out.	Estates Management Team Leader	#						n/a
35	Produce a specification for grounds maintenance.	Estates Management Team Leader	#						n/a
36	Set up future grounds maintenance contract.	Estates Management Team Leader		#	#	#	#	#	n/a

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37	Monitor the quality of works against the specifications.	Estates Management Team Leader		#	#	#	#	n/a
38	Map areas of invasive species. e.g Himalayan Balsam, Japanese Knotweed.	Estates Management Team Leader	#				#	n/a
39	Control invasive species on a rotational basis.	Estates Management Team Leader	#	#	#	#	#	<5k
40	Undertake a fungi survey.		#	#				<5k
41	Review the provision and design of all 'park furniture' e.g. seats, litter and dog bins, signage, obstacle fences etc. and produce a design guide.	Estates Management Team Leader and Estates Planning Officer		#				n/a
42	Install estate benches. (Memorial benches)	Estates Planning Officer	#	#	#	#	#	<5k
43	Remove redundant concrete fence posts on higher plateau.	Estates Management Team Leader	#					<5k
44	Carry out GIS asset survey of Stoke Park.	GIS Cartographer	#					n/a
45	Create detailed estate CAD map as a tool to assist estate management planning and implementing continuing restoration works.	GIS Cartographer	#					<5k
<b>Wildlife</b>								
46	Undertake baseline survey for reptiles, amphibians, mammals, plants, birds and invertebrates.	Nature Conservation Team	#	#				>5k
47	Develop and implement actions from baseline survey to enhance conservation interest.	Nature Conservation Team		#	#			5-15k
48	Record bird communities within scrubland so that consideration can be taken for scrub clearance.	Nature Conservation Team	#	#				>5k
49	Investigate the potential for creating new areas of wildflower meadow and wildlife sanctuary areas in	Estates Management Team Leader			#			n/a

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	carefully selected locations.							
50	Review routes for footpaths in potential wildlife sanctuary areas and wildflower meadow areas.	Estates Management Team Leader			#			n/a
51	Act on review to create wildflower meadow and wildlife sanctuary areas.	Estates Management Team Leader			#	#	#	<5k
<b>Antisocial Behaviour</b>								
52	Educate and encourage responsible dog ownership; dog behaviour and dog fouling. Dog Warden service to assist.	Ranger Service	#	#	#	#	#	n/a
53	Installation of new estate fencing and other fencing including kissing gates to control access particularly by unauthorised vehicles.	Estates Management Team Leader	#					5-15k
54	Improve the enforcement of the forbidding lighting of fires and camping onsite.	Ranger Service	#	#	#	#	#	n/a
55	Produce visitor code of conduct as in operation at all other estates.	Estates Planning Officer	#					>5k
56	Review the estate byelaws.	Estates Business Manager					#	n/a
57	Work closely with the local beat officer and community officers and increase police presence where required.	Ranger Service	#	#	#	#	#	n/a
58	Effectively remove evidence of antisocial behaviour and implement a system for a rapid response to initiate repairs and works to deter similar incidents.	Estates Management Team Leader	#	#	#	#	#	>5k
59	Effectively remove waste disposed on site.	Ranger Service	#	#	#	#	#	>5k
60	Maintain engagement with site users, encourage and work with volunteer groups.	Estates Management Team Leader						<30k
<b>Management and Resources</b>								
61	Estate site presence to be maintained.	Environment and	#					

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		Leisure Management						
62	Agree annual budget requirements including future revenue budget projections over 5, 10 and 15 years.	Estates Business Manager	#	#	#	#	#	n/a
63	Review and monitor of the management plan and 5 year work plan.	Estates Planning Officer	#	#	#	#	#	n/a
64	Identify and actively pursue opportunities to generate additional capital and revenue funding for Stoke Park.	Estates Business Manager	#	#	#	#	#	n/a
65	Audit the EMAS action plan	Estates Business Manager	#	#	#	#	#	n/a
66	Carry out listed and unlisted structures and SAM condition survey.	Estates Planning Officer	#					<5k
67	Protect the monuments/historic features.	Estates Planning Officer	#	#	#	#	#	>30k
68	Procure consultants to prepare Sir Johns Lane wall restoration proposals.	Estates Business Manager	#	#				n/a
69	Undertake all necessary consents for Sir Johns Lane wall proposals.	Project Leader	#	#				n/a
70	Implement Sir Johns Lane proposals.	Project Leader		#	#			
71	Maintain the Stoke Park Delivery Group to represent the local community and other key stakeholders and partners in the management of Stoke Park.	Chair of SPDG	#	#	#	#	#	n/a
72	Ensure health and safety measures are maintained.	Estates Management Team	#	#	#	#	#	n/a
73	Consider suitable areas for car parking and investigate options, permissions and grant funding.	Estates Business Manager		#				n/a
74	Investigate and apply for appropriate stewardships and grants.	Estates Business Manager	#	#	#	#	#	
75	Investigate, encourage and continue working with	Estates Management	#	#	#	#	#	n/a

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	volunteers, e.g. TCV, community payback.	Team Leader						
76	Produce appropriate risk assessments and keep accessible records.	Estates Management Team	#	#	#	#	#	n/a

## 7.2 Ambitions

Additional objectives have been identified but they cannot be scheduled to implement at present until finance has been identified:

- Produce a landscape restoration plan to link with HLF bid.
- Produce conservation strategy for listed structures.
- Apply for English Heritage/HLF funding to restore and protect Beaufort's Tomb
- Apply for English Heritage/HLF funding to install handrails/fencing to Barn Wood Tunnel and Pond and Hermitage Wood Tunnel.
- Apply for English Heritage/HLF funding to preserve and restore SAM anti aircraft battery on Purdown.
- Apply for a woodland improvement grant.
- Apply for a Higher Level Stewardship.
- Investigate options and feasibility to install power and water provisions onsite.
- New entrance and car parking to be designed, appropriate planning permissions gained, funding identified and obtained, building works completed.
- New estate service building designed, appropriate planning permissions gained, funding identified and obtained, building works completed. (This could include visitor toilets, cafe, visitor centre, education centre or depot for ranger service)
- Carry out drainage recommendations to open site up for events.