

**Cabinet Report - 10 Year Sandwell Valley Master Plan - Appendix D: Consultation Themes and Responses**

Comment	Theme	Response
Longer options for walking routes, as well as shorter ones for different abilities	Accessibility and Connectivity	The walking trails will be updated, with improved signage to designate walking route types.
Improved disability access to sites	Accessibility and Connectivity	As part of the infrastructure investment, we will be improving accessibility to Swan Pool, Forge Mill Farm, and Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre. Further scoping work will be completed to identify improvements to disability access across Sandwell Valley, and potential additional funding sources for this.
Transport between the sites	Accessibility and Connectivity	The land train and cycle hire will provide additional routes between the sites for all abilities. In addition, people are still encouraged to walk and enjoy the nature of Sandwell Valley in between the sites.
Improvements to the Swan Pool Car Park, to allow for cash payments	Accessibility and Connectivity	As part of the feedback from this consultation, we will work with parking colleagues to explore options to improve use of this car park.
Support for increase and improvements in signage	Accessibility and Connectivity	Signage and way finding will be improved across Sandwell Valley to enable visitors to find the destination they are heading for, but also discover new elements of Sandwell Valley for the first time.
Concern about entrance and exit options encroaching on green space / woodland introduction of a park and ride scheme	Accessibility and Connectivity Accessibility and Connectivity	The proposed improvements to the car parks, increasing the number of designated bays through suitable markings, and using an alternative exit for large event days is designed to provide a solution to the traffic on peak days, but also to avoid green space or woodland being used for new exit / entrance options. We will continue to review this option with our transport partners.
Car park and entrance road from Salters Lane needs refurbishment (pot holes)	Accessibility and Connectivity	The proposed infrastructure improvements include repairs to the car parks and entrance from Salters Lane.
More links for public transport to Sandwell Valley	Accessibility and Connectivity	Sandwell Valley benefits from good transport links, unlike other Country Parks. West Bromwich Town Centre, and bus and metro links, are within ten minutes walk of Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, and bus routes that stop near Forge Mill Farm. We will improve the signposting to these transport links.
Problems with car parking facilities, not enough car parking available	Accessibility and Connectivity	The proposed improvements to the car parks, increasing the number of designated bays through suitable markings, and using an alternative exit for large event days is designed to provide a solution to the traffic on peak days and to provide more car parking spaces.
Parking issues for residents during peak visitor days and major events	Accessibility and Connectivity	For large events which impact local residents, we have worked on off site parking, premium on site parking, and temporary parking restrictions. We will continue to monitor this for large events, and work with residents on sourcing a solution to these issues.
Concern about the use of Europa Estate as an exit during peak days	Accessibility and Connectivity	This is proposed for large events and peak days associated with this. This will be for a limited number of days per year. However, this is currently a proposal and will be subject to further discussion with residents.
Return of pedalos to the lake at Dartmouth Park	Attractions	This will be scoped in the first year of the master plan to establish whether this is a viable option, and to procure a partner if this is the case.
Concern about the Sandwell Valley Amusements not in keeping with the Country park	Attractions	The Sandwell Valley Amusements has become a part of Sandwell Valley, and is enjoyed by many families as an affordable day out. We are currently about to tender for the delivery of this attraction for the next few years.
Support for the increase in sporting facilities, cycle hire, and adventure golf at King George V Pavilion	Attractions	The investment into the King George V pavilion and procurement of a partner for this will provide cycle hire facilities, sporting facilities, and adventure golf for visitors.
Refurbishment for 'The Fort' in Dartmouth Park	Attractions	This is not within scope of the master plan for Sandwell Valley. However, we will work with the Friends of Dartmouth Park and other stakeholders to consider what investment is required to improve the facilities and how best to implement these.
Improved football and sports facilities Improved watersports facilities	Attractions Attractions	The Master Plan includes proposed improvements to the current tennis courts, planned to be a play zone with multi-sports activities. We will also renew the King George V Playing Fields to be bookable for football, during football season. The Master Plan includes a new water sports facility at Swan Pool.
Increase in healthy food offers	Catering	We have recently updated our menus to provide a broad range of offers, including vegan and gluten free options. Healthy options are available on all menus, and we will continue to review this.
Increase in use of locally sourced produce and food in sales	Catering	We are currently planning menu improvements to include locally sourced produce and food, and increasing the offer in our shops for this. This includes food grown at Sandwell Valley (excluding meat produce).
Concerns about charging for entry to the park	Charges	Sandwell Valley Country Park and Dartmouth Park - including all Green Spaces in Sandwell - are free to access. The facilities within the park may incur charges, such as catering and use of attractions.
Affordable pricing for events and activities at Sandwell Valley	Charges	It is intended that Sandwell Valley is an affordable day out, whatever your means. So visitors are able to enjoy the countryside with no spend, but those visitors that do want to spend on attractions, catering, and facilities can do so. Our fees and charges are set and approved by Cabinet and are intended to be affordable. Some events and activities are premium, and targeted at an audience who are more likely to spend this amount.
Concern about costs and the impact on other services	Charges	The Sandwell Valley Master Plan has been tested with financial experts, CIPFA Cco, and a ten financial model produced based on the investment. It is intended to produce a surplus, reducing the current net annual cost to the Council of £700,000 for Sandwell Valley.
Concern about the commercialisation of Sandwell Valley	Charges	The Master Plan is focussed on the improvements to the offer at Sandwell Valley, which has a commercial focus to achieve revenue plans as set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Access to Sandwell Valley Country Park is free of charge, although some facilities and offers are charged for.
Removal of parking charges	Charges	Charges are set annually by Council. We do not propose removing the parking charges at Sandwell Valley. The parking charges help to maintain the sites and car parking facilities.
Improved gardens at Dartmouth Park	Conservation and Land Management	The Master Plan addresses improvements to Sandwell Valley, and Dartmouth Park is considered in the plan as a gateway to Sandwell Valley. We will continue to work closely with the Friends of Dartmouth Park and other stakeholders to maintain and improve Dartmouth Park.
Better litter management across Sandwell Valley	Conservation and Land Management	As part of the infrastructure investment, we will explore the use of bins and whether smart bins can be trialled in some locations. We will also use signage and interpretation to promote people picking up their litter and the impacts of littering to nature and wildlife.
Introduce safe BBQ Areas	Conservation and Land Management	We do not currently plan on introducing BBQ areas, but will consider this further in the development of a conservation and heritage management plan for Sandwell Valley.
Ensuring Sandwell Valley is maintained for the benefit of birds and wildlife	Conservation and Land Management	We will work with stakeholders, such as SANDNATS, RSPB, and BBC Wildlife, to develop a Conservation Plan for Sandwell Valley which will look at how best to support the birds and wildlife in Sandwell Valley.
Increase in park rangers and general security of the sites	Conservation and Land Management	We will review the resources required for the conservation and heritage management when developing this plan.
Ensure the bee hives are retained	Conservation and Land Management	The bee hives at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre will be maintained, but may move location. This will be considered as part of the design plans, ensuring the bees can be maintained.
Concerns about the land train impacting on wildlife	Conservation and Land Management	The land train will be operated in a way as to not impact the wildlife of Sandwell Valley. We are currently exploring sustainable ways of operating the land train and this will be a key factor in the procurement of the land train.
Concern about additional lighting and the impact on the environment and nature	Conservation and Land Management	There are no plans to introduce artificial lighting to Sandwell Valley Country Park, beyond that already exists.
Impact of increased cycling across the site on nature and conservation	Conservation and Land Management	We will work with stakeholders, such as SANDNATS, RSPB, and BBC Wildlife, to develop a Conservation Plan for Sandwell Valley which will look at how best to support the birds and wildlife in Sandwell Valley, whilst allowing cycling to be a positive impact.
Increase in CCTV and monitoring of antisocial behaviour	Conservation and Land Management	In developing a Conservation and Heritage Management Plan, we will consider the security and anti-social behaviour impacts and how these can be addressed. The investment includes an increase in CCTV at the three main sites of Forge Mill Farm, Swan Pool, and Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre.
Increase in wildflowers, dedicated areas for natural habitat	Conservation and Land Management	We will work with stakeholders, such as SANDNATS, RSPB, and BBC Wildlife, to develop a Conservation Plan for Sandwell Valley which will look at how best to support the birds and wildlife in Sandwell Valley, and to increase natural habitat where possible.
Potential ecological impacts on wildlife and birds of the Swan Pool proposals	Conservation and Land Management	The final plans for Swan Pool Watersports Centre will be subject to planning permission, including ecological impact assessments.
More education around wildlife and conservation across Sandwell Valley	Conservation and Land Management	We will increase the interpretation of wildlife and nature across Sandwell Valley, and create a space to showcase the ecology and conservation of Sandwell Valley at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre.
Increase in bird nesting boxes	Conservation and Land Management	We will work with stakeholders, such as SANDNATS, RSPB, and BBC Wildlife, to develop a Conservation Plan for Sandwell Valley which will look at how best to support the birds and wildlife in Sandwell Valley, and to increase natural habitat where possible.
Look at the sustainability of the new buildings / refurbishments	Conservation and Land Management	We will work with stakeholders, such as SANDNATS, RSPB, and BBC Wildlife, to develop a Conservation Plan for Sandwell Valley which will look at how best to support the birds and wildlife in Sandwell Valley, and to increase natural habitat where possible.
Work with SANDNATS, RSPB, BBC Wildlife and other stakeholders to maintain conservation and promote this for education	Conservation and Land Management	As part of the design and planning permission process, ecological impact assessments will be completed for all proposals.
Ecological surveys and impact assessments will need to be completed for the proposed developments	Conservation and Land Management	As part of the Master Plan, it is proposed to invest in the King George V Pavilion and to seek a partner to deliver Cycle Hire from this location.
Reopening of the cycle hire facility Bike washing facilities	Cycling Cycling	We will consider this as part of the infrastructure spend, and the viability of this idea. We will consider this as part of the infrastructure spend, and the viability of this proposal. We will work with colleagues and stakeholders to fully assess the potential impacts and risks associated with this proposal, as well as the benefits.
Concerns about E-Bike Charging Points and the use of E-Bikes in pedestrian areas	Cycling	As part of the Master Plan, a new and expanded café is proposed for Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre. We are planning to have dog friendly access to at least parts of this café.
Introduction of dog friendly café access Introduction of dog washing facilities	Dog Facilities Dog Facilities	We will consider this as part of the infrastructure spend, and the viability of this idea. This idea has been added to the Master Plan, with implementation planned in Phase One (24/25 financial year).
Introduction of a dog walking area for dog walkers to let their dogs off leads	Dog Facilities	We are currently working on a five years events strategy, and will consider all potential events at Sandwell Valley as part of this.
Classic car show event at Sandwell Valley Showground	Events	Our annual events plan for Sandwell Valley includes art classes and events, and we will look to increase these subject to the viability and attendance.
Art classes at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	Events	In 24/25 financial year, we will pilot this idea alongside the Children's Festival to be held in the summer. We will continue to explore this idea for further camping events, dependent on the viability and attendance.
Consideration for camping events in Sandwell Valley	Events	Our annual events plan for Sandwell Valley will include a trial of a number of market days at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre.
Increase in farmers markets and markets at Sandwell Valley	Events	Our annual events plan for Sandwell Valley will include a number of events for older people, particularly during non peak days. We will continue to scope the viability and attendance at these events.
Sporting and other activities for the over 50s and older generations	Events	The number of large scale events at Sandwell Valley Showground will be managed carefully to minimise the disruption to local residents and to ensure maximum benefit for the borough and visitors. We will continue to engage residents as we develop the events schedule for major events, and to seek ways to minimise impacts on the local area and maximise benefits.
Concern about large events, and the impact on residents	Events	The number of large scale events at Sandwell Valley Showground will be managed carefully to minimise the disruption to local residents and to ensure maximum benefit for the borough and visitors. We will continue to engage residents as we develop the events schedule for major events, and to seek ways to minimise impacts on the local area and maximise benefits.
Increase the number of large events at Sandwell Valley Showground	Events	Our annual events plan for Sandwell Valley will include a trial of a number of exercise and sporting activities at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre.
Increase in exercise classes and sporting activities for visitors	Events	The completion of the play and education barn at Forge Mill Farm is due in the Summer 2024. The Master Plan also proposes investment in phase 3 (26/27 financial year) into a new food and education barn.
Improved farming education facilities	Forge Mill Farm	Forge Mill Farm Shop and entrance toilets will be refurbished and expanded in Autumn 2024. This includes a large shop, additional toilets and baby changing facilities, and better disabled access to the farm.
Needs expansion of the Forge Mill Farm shop	Forge Mill Farm	The design proposals within the master plan have been worked on by architects and cost consultants. However, these will be subject to final design work, and we will work stakeholders to ensure the final designs deliver what is expected (including working with the Sailing Club and other water sports groups, for Swan Pool).
Further engagement with residents and stakeholders in the final designs and proposals	General	This will be scoped in the first year of the master plan as part of the development of a Conservation and Heritage Plan, including scoping potential funding.
Question about heritage maintenance of the heritage assets across Sandwell Valley	Heritage Management	This will be scoped in the first year of the master plan as part of the development of a Conservation and Heritage Plan, including scoping potential funding.
Investment is needed in Priory Woods and other heritage sites in Sandwell Valley	Heritage Management	We will include a museum in the new Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre to cover the history of the site, and interpretations of the farm equipment and practices used.
Investment into restoration and preserving the farm heritage of Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	Heritage Management	As part of the planning permission process for the proposed improvements to Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, we will consult with Historic England and liaise closely with our heritage officer. We will also work with other stakeholders on the final design elements of this site.
Historic England and other stakeholders will need to be consulted on the proposals for Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	Heritage Management	As part of the Master Plan, it is proposed to invest in a new heritage discovery zone that will provide play and learning facilities for children and babies, as well as older children. The new play and education barn at Forge Mill Farm will also provide further play facilities for these age groups.
More play facilities for children and babies	Play and Children	We will complete a procurement exercise for a renewed offer at Sandwell Valley Amusements in 24/25 financial year.
Improved fair ground offer	Play and Children	As part of the Master Plan, it is proposed to invest in a new heritage discovery zone that will provide play and learning facilities that are accessible for all learning abilities and disabilities, as well as older children. The new play and education barn at Forge Mill Farm will also provide further play facilities for these age groups.
Increase in disability accessible play facilities	Play and Children	The master plan includes additional and improved toilet and baby changing facilities at Swan Pool, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, and Forge Mill Farm.
Improved and increase in the toilet facilities and baby changing facilities	Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	The Master Plan includes an expanded café offer at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, allowing for outside seating, expanding the seating capacity inside to 80 covers, and providing a new menu and catering offer, including self service items.
Improved café offer at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	The farm animals were removed from Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre in 2018, and now have a permanent and larger / more suitable home at Forge Mill Farm. It is not proposed to reintroduce farm animals to Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, and to retain this at Forge Mill Farm.
Farm animals at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	We will work with stakeholders in the final design for Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre improvements to ensure access is maintained as far as possible throughout the year to the toilets and café facilities.
Café and toilets at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre open even when hired out for weddings	Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	We will work with stakeholders in the final design for Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre, including Historic England and our heritage officer. We will continue to scope the viability of a retractable roof, and will compare this to the costs and requirements for a marquee.
Concern about retractable roof and the impact on the aesthetics and heritage of Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	It is proposed to include a museum on the heritage of the site, and an ecology room for visitors to explore the ecology and conservation of Sandwell Valley. A programme of events and activities for visitors, to include weekends and peak days, will provide additional benefits.
Increase in facilities and activities at Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	There is a need to achieve additional income from venue hire for the revenue targets for Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre. It is anticipated that the site will have between 30 - 40 weddings a year, focussed on evenings and non peak days.
Concerns about the use of Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre as a Weddings venue	Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	As part of the wedding booking process, terms and conditions will require suitable behaviour for participants in the wedding. Deposits will be taken to ensure this happens.
Concern about wedding hire increasing traffic and anti-social behaviour	Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre	