



Sandwell Valley and Hilltop Golf Course Cycling Feasibility Study

Project Sandwell Valley and Hill Top Golf Course Cycling Feasibility Study					
Client	British Cycling				
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Executive Summary

This study considers the viability of a proposed new Urban Bike Park in the Sandwell Valley on land owned by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and Birmingham City Council. The two councils have joined forces to apply to British Cycling for funding to design and implement the scheme. The Feasibility Study has been developed in response to a brief issued by British Cycling in March 2020.

The Feasibility Study considers the Urban Bike Park proposal in the context of the 2022 Commonwealth Games and pertinent national regional and local strategies both for cycling provision and for strategic networks for cycling in the north-west of the Birmingham conurbation. The study also considers the relevant local planning constraints as set out in the Local Plans for Sandwell and Birmingham. These constraints are discussed in Sections 3 and 9 of the study.

Any new provision for cycling must be planned in the context of existing provision of different types of cycling offer. This analysis will support the long-term viability of the proposed Urban Bike Park and ensure a comprehensive spread of complementary cycling offers across the region. A full assessment of current cycling offers is presented in Section 4.

Section 5 of the study analyses the characteristics of the land upon which the proposed facility would be situated and identifies any constraints attached to these current conditions that should be factored into the detailed design process.

The project team has considered a number of options for the development of an Urban Bike Park in Sandwell Valley and these are discussed in Section 6 of the study. The main constraint that has been identified has been the lease agreement between Birmingham City Council and Mytime Active in respect of Hilltop Golf Course. This has defined two preferred options for the proposed Urban Bike Park.

Section 7 describes the two preferred options in detail including the types of cycling trails that will be offered, the supporting facilities that would be required and options for a new cycling hub building.

The Feasibility Study has canvassed opinion amongst a group of key stakeholders. Engagement has been limited to online interaction in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Section 8 describes the methodologies deployed and reports on the results. Responses have been generally favourable but some concerns have been expressed in respect of the impact of the proposed scheme on habitat and biodiversity, since much of the land identified for the scheme is protected by designations. The study team proposes that these matters can be addressed during later design stages if the scheme proceeds and could be offset by proposals for net gain included in the scheme.

The financial sustainability of the scheme is an important consideration. Section 10 considers the capital costs of the two options identified in Section 6 and assesses the revenue performance of the proposed Urban Bike Park over a 5-year period. This analysis concludes that the proposed facility would self-sustaining in revenue terms over this period.

In summary, the study concludes that there is a robust business case for the proposed Urban Bike Park both in respect of regional provision and financial sustainability.

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Introduction and background information

Jon Sheaff and Associates, working in collaboration with 'Architrail Velosolutions UK' and Shared Assets, have been commissioned to complete a feasibility study to assess the potential for the development of new cycling facilities in Sandwell Valley Country Park and Hill Top Golf Course.

The objective of the study is to consider the development of long-term infrastructure in the Sandwell Valley which supports all cycling disciplines and contributes directly to local and national priorities for cycling.

Sandwell Valley comprises of over 500 hectares of countryside in an urban setting. The site is designated as Green Belt, includes two working farms, three Local Nature Reserves, an RSPB Nature Centre, a Scheduled Monument and a mosaic of farmland, countryside and woodland.

Hill Top Golf Course adjoins Sandwell Valley and is an 18-hole public parkland golf course. The golf course is operated by Mytime Active on behalf of Birmingham City Council and is currently closed for re-development. The topography of the golf course offers opportunities for the development of mountain biking facilities.

There are existing cycling facilities within Sandwell Valley, including National Cycle Network Route 5, a Pump Track, cycle hire facilities and a network of cycle routes for cyclists of different abilities.

A number of major interventions are influencing the development of the proposals considered in this feasibility study.

The **XXII Commonwealth Games** are being hosted by Birmingham in the summer of 2022.

The Games programme includes competition in 26 different sports at 11 different venues across the West Midlands (with London's Lee Valley Velodrome hosting indoor cycling). The swimming and diving competitions will take place at a new Aquatics Centre being developed in Smethwick to the south of Sandwell Valley. Mountain Bike, Road Racing and Cycling Time Trials will all take place at Cannock Chase to the north of Birmingham.

The Games will include an extensive Cultural Programme, running between March and September 2022.

The **Sandwell Valley Master Scoping Study** has been commissioned by Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and is being developed in parallel with this feasibility study. The objective of the study is to strengthen Sandwell Valley's identity as a 'destination gateway' in Sandwell and the West Midlands region and to develop its potential as a locally, regionally and nationally significant visitor attraction.

The Study explores Sandwell Valley's potential and will guide its development over the next five years with the aim of developing a compelling cultural offer that will deliver a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits for residents and visitors. The Study will include a spatial masterplan, a future business model a detailed action plan and funding strategy. Key components of the Master Scoping Study are likely to include:

- The development of a new Urban Bike Park centred on Swan Pool and Hilltop Golf Course (the subject of this feasibility)

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- The re-purposing of Sandwell Park Farm as part of Sandwell's 'Inclusive Economy Deal'
- The re-definition of Sandwell Valley's urban agriculture offer and the development of Forge Mill Farm as a farming-related visitor attraction
- Measures to improve infrastructural connectivity to and within Sandwell Valley to reduce car dependence

The UK Government announced the £3.6 billion **Towns Fund** in September 2019. West Bromwich is one of three towns proposed by Sandwell Council that have been selected by the UK Government for the opportunity to bid for up to £25 million in funding.

The Towns Fund will seek to deliver against three priorities:

- Urban regeneration, planning and land use
- Skills and enterprise infrastructure
- Connectivity

The current West Bromwich AAP, which includes part of Sandwell Valley, will be qualified by an Interim Planning Statement to support the delivery of these priorities.

Sandwell Valley can contribute to outcomes two and three by providing capacity and partnerships for skills and through the development of 'green corridors' that will reinforce pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and connect the Valley's core offers (including the Urban Bike Park) to West Bromwich Town Centre.

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Project brief

The project brief includes consideration of options for the provision of a new bike park in Sandwell Valley and on Hill Top Golf Course.

The new facility could include the enhancement of the existing NCN5 provision, wider cycling connectivity locally and sub-regionally, the extension of the current MTB route, incorporating the new bike park into existing bike trails across the site, developing new family trails and a 'Learn To Ride' area.

In parallel, the project will consider the provision of cycle hire facilities, inclusive cycle facilities for people with disabilities, volunteering coaching and mentoring (a Women's Shed initiative) and the provision of community participation programmes.



Strategic Need and Rationale

The development of proposals has been based on an assessment of strategic need in the context of the following national, regional and local policies and strategies.

3.1 National Strategies

3.1.1 Sporting Future – A New Strategy for an Active Nation

Sporting Future was adopted by the UK Government in December 2015 to make the sport sector more resilient and to focus it on five key strategic outcomes:

- physical wellbeing
- mental wellbeing
- individual development
- social and community development
- economic development

The strategy aims to increase rates of participation in sport, in sports-related volunteering and experiencing of live sport for people from every background. The strategy further considers how national and international sporting success can be fostered and seeks to develop a more productive, financially sustainable sector with effective governance and leadership.

3.1.2 These principles are further expressed in Sport England's **'Towards an Active Nation'** strategy (2016-21), which sets out in detail how Sport England will invest resources in seven different programmes to support the delivery of the Government's Five Outcomes.

The Sandwell Valley/Hilltop Urban Bike Park has the potential to deliver against most, if not all of these programmes:

- Tackling inactivity
- Children and young people
- Volunteering
- Taking sport and activity into the mass market
- Supporting sport's core market
- Local delivery
- Facilities

3.2 Regional Strategies

3.2.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority has adopted the **West Midlands on the Move Physical Activity Framework (2017-30)** which identifies the need to increase levels of physical activity across the West Midlands conurbation. The study identifies that around one third of adults in the West Midlands is currently inactive and spends less than 30 minutes per week on physical activity. The estimated annual cost of this inactivity to the region is £147 million. The strategy is based on four ambitions:

- Making it easier and more desirable to move around the West Midlands
- Making it easier and more enjoyable to be outdoors in green and blue spaces and urban environments
- Improving how it feels to live in the region's streets and communities
- Improving people's life chances, wellbeing, employability and access to work.

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These ambitions are in turn expressed as six key themes which focus on the connectivity between physical activity, wellbeing and economic prosperity. These include:

Theme 1: Transport and HS2 growth - includes a commitment to encourage more people to walk and cycle by offering opportunities for everyone, including people with impairment, to participate in and enjoy the outdoor environment.

Theme 2: Housing and Land - includes a commitment to proactively seek to increase opportunities for outdoor exercise, both formal and informal (gyms, play equipment, health walks, games) by utilising outdoor spaces as much as possible in doing so, ensuring a systematic and joined up approach to the use of open green spaces, connecting open and wild spaces and canal networks with a clear outcome, focused around increasing activity levels and improving physical and mental wellbeing.

Theme 4: Creative and Digital – includes an aspiration to use technology, including open data sources, to get more people to take part in physical activity

Theme 6: Wellbeing – including a commitment to working with the community to extend community physical activity-based initiatives to raise awareness of mental health and improve wellbeing.

3.2.2 The Birmingham and Surrounding Areas Cycling Facilities Needs Analysis was produced in March 2020 by a partnership consisting of British Cycling, Birmingham City Council and Sport England. The Needs Analysis informs a long-term investment strategy for cycling facilities in Birmingham and the surrounding areas. The key drivers for the Needs Analysis are:

- Reducing physical inactivity
- Improving physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development and economic development
- Increasing physical activity through cycling
- Using the Birmingham Commonwealth Games as a catalyst to inspire more people to ride, connecting communities and building a lasting cycling legacy
- Making cycling the choice for shorter journeys and reducing car dependency
- Increasing cycling participation and opportunities for investment into traffic-free cycling routes, infrastructure and facilities
- Reducing car dependency, traffic congestion and improving air quality

The Needs Analysis assesses the provision of a number of different typologies of cycling provision:

- Community cycling hubs
- Closed circuit roads
- Indoor velodromes
- Cycle speedway
- BMX tracks
- Mountain biking

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The Needs Analysis makes nine recommendations, including the following:

Recommendation 1: Invest in ancillary provision at cycling facilities in order to help facilitate the growth and development of clubs and improve the cycling participant experience. This recommendation is identified as a short to medium-term priority and a medium-scale investment.

Recommendation 2: Invest in discipline-specific facilities where there is an identified need, ensuring both existing and new facilities are of the appropriate quality and level of provision to cater for future demand. This recommendation is identified as a medium-term investment priority and a large-scale investment.

The Needs Analysis identifies investment opportunities, timescales and potential budgets for provision in each of the six typologies of provision, identifying the potential for the development of an Urban Bike Park in the south of the study area.

3.2.3 The **Black Country Walking and Cycling Strategy and Implementation Plan (2016)** was commissioned by Birmingham City Council and the West Midlands Combined Authority to 'realise the full potential of walking and cycling's contribution to the health and wealth of the Black Country – creating more sustainable suburbs, towns and cities that are healthier, safer and more desirable places to live, work and learn.' The Strategy has four aims:

- Making cycling more inviting and attractive for everyone
- Making cycling safe and secure
- Making cycling easy and intuitive

- Normalising cycling to reduce inequalities

The Strategy identifies West Bromwich as a 'Cycling Investment Corridor'.

3.3 Local Strategies

3.3.1 The **Birmingham Walking and Cycling Strategy** was adopted in January 2020 and sets out a 10-year plan to ensure that active travel becomes the popular choice for short journeys and to increase opportunities for walking and cycling. The strategy reflects and develops the proposals set out in the Birmingham Connected transport strategy of 2014 and the 2018-22 Council Plan. Priorities for investment in cycling and walking capacity are detailed in a parallel Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.

The strategy has three objectives:

- To enable walking and cycling. Providing training, improving access to bikes, tackling safety issues and securing funding.
- To develop a great city for walking and cycling. Providing safe infrastructure, managing traffic, and maintaining streets.
- To inspire walking and cycling. Organising events, distributing information and evaluating outcomes

The Strategy includes several policies that are relevant to this feasibility study:

- Policy 1: Training and education – developing the confidence of people to cycle through the provision of facilities and training.
- Policy 2: Access to bikes – promoting bike hire at community cycling hubs

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- Policy 3: Personal safety - creating a safe and welcoming environment for cycling
- Policy 4: Funding - identifying resources to deliver the Strategy and Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- Policy 5: Walking and cycling infrastructure – designing, developing and promoting places to walk and cycle that are safe, convenient, comfortable, direct and coherent.
- Policy 11: Schools, business and local community - promoting cycling at places where people study, work and live.
- Policy 13: Events - support events that inspire more people to cycle.

The Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan includes a phased plan for the implementation of a comprehensive cycling network across Birmingham and improvements to the current network. Connectivity to Sandwell and Sandwell Valley will principally be through NCN Route 5 from Birmingham City Centre along the Birmingham Canal.

3.3.2 Sandwell Council adopted the **Sandwell Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan** in January 2020. The Strategy was developed in the context of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council's ambition to have 'a prioritised plan for the local network within Sandwell, which co-ordinates with the existing plans for the Black Country and for these to be integrated with the plans that are already in place for the West Midlands strategies for planning and transport.'

The Strategy assesses 15 cycle routes across the borough, identifying priorities for investment and proposing costs for a range of interventions on different routes.

The Strategy proposes improvements to National Cycle Route 5 to the south of Sandwell Valley

3.3.4 The **Sandwell Green Space Strategy 2020-30** recognises the important contribution made by green spaces to quality of life through the provision of social, economic and environmental benefits.

The Strategy references the physical and mental wellbeing benefits of the adoption of an active lifestyle and the opportunities for this presented by green spaces. The importance of walking and cycling in delivering these health benefits is also recorded.

The Strategy also suggests that the Sandwell Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan provides the strategic context for cycling provision and that the Highways, Transportation, Planning and Public Health departments are the delivery partners for enhancing cycling facilities and capacity across the borough.

3.4 Planning context

3.4.1 The **Birmingham Development Plan 2031** includes a number of policies that are relevant to this feasibility study:

Policy TP8 Biodiversity and geodiversity stipulates that the 'maintenance, enhancement and restoration of sites of national and local importance for biodiversity and geology will be promoted and supported'. These include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs). The northern edge of Hill Top Golf Course, where it fringes the Tame Valley, is designated as a SLINC site.

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Policy TP 10 Green Belt stipulates that 'There is a general presumption against inappropriate development within the Green Belt and such development will not be permitted unless very special circumstances exist'. The Birmingham section of Sandwell Valley is designated as Green Belt.

Policy TP 11 Sports Facilities proposes that the City Council will 'keep the provision of sports facilities within the City under review in the light of changing demands and preferences and where deficiencies and oversupply are identified in an up-to-date assessment, aim to work with partners to address this.'

Policy TP38 A sustainable transport network proposes that the delivery of a sustainable transport network will require 'Improved choice by developing and improving public transport, cycling and walking networks'.

3.4.1 The **Black Country Core Strategy 2011-26** is the effective planning policy and spatial plan for Sandwell. The Core Strategy will be replaced by the Black Country Plan, which is currently in development. The Core Strategy includes a number of policies of relevance to this feasibility study:

Policy CSP 2: By 2026, the areas outside the Strategic Centres and Regeneration Corridors will provide a strong Green Belt to promote urban renaissance within the urban area and provide easy access to the countryside for urban residents where the landscape, nature conservation and agricultural land will be protected and enhanced. The Sandwell Section of Sandwell Valley is designated as Green Belt.

Policy CSP 5: The large-scale land use changes proposed in the Core Strategy require an effective and integrated transport network.

This will serve existing and new developments and promote greater use of sustainable transport modes, (walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing).

Policy TRAN 4: Joint working between the four local authorities will ensure that the Black Country has a comprehensive cycle network based on integrating the four local cycle networks, including common cycle infrastructure design standards.

Policy ENV 1: Development within the Black Country will safeguard nature conservation inside and outside its boundaries by ensuring that development is not permitted where it would harm internationally (Special Areas of Conservation), nationally (Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves) or regionally (Local Nature Reserve and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) designated nature conservation sites. Locally designated nature conservation sites (Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation), important habitats and geological features are protected from development proposals which could negatively impact upon them. Parts of Jubilee Woods and the area surrounding and to the south of Swan Pool are designated as SINC sites and Priory Woods as a Local Nature Reserve.

Policy ENV 6: Development that would increase the overall value of the open space, sport and recreation network will be encouraged, especially in areas of deficiency. Each Local Authority will set out, in Local Development Documents and on Proposals Maps, policies and proposals for specific open space, sport and recreation facilities and planning requirements for open space, sport and recreation, in order to move towards the most up-to-date local open space, sport and recreation standards for each Local Authority.

Supply and demand analysis

The consultant team has assessed current local and sub-regional supply and demand and has identified gaps in provision to inform the development of options for the proposed bike park. This has been based on the consultant's database of facilities as well as the online mountain bike trail finding resources Trailforks.com and Moredirt.com as well as British Cycling's 'Birmingham Cycling Facility Needs Assessment'.

4.1 Current supply

Sandwell Valley Country Park has existing mountain bike (MTB) trails and a pump track nearby in Dartmouth Park. The Miner's Trail is a dedicated mountain bike trail in Jubilee Woods which includes 3km of Blue, Red and Black graded trails. These facilities are free to use, offer parking and bike hire (Valley Cycles in Dartmouth Park).

The trails are relatively short in length when compared with many mountain bike trail centres and venues, even for an urban location. The short length lends itself well to short, repeatable visits with beginners and improving mountain bikers however the offering doesn't have enough to occupy users for more than an hour or two. The technical red grade and black grade trails (braids from the main blue trail) are good for users to sharpen their skills but lack an adventure component as they quickly join the main trail again. The users capable of riding these sections are able to complete laps in only 10 minutes.

The trails themselves are well constructed, but could do with some maintenance and vegetation clearance to improve user experience and safety.

The pump track in Dartmouth Park is disjointed in terms of location from Swan Pool car park and its mountain bike trails, although it is in the area of other family attractions including an adventure play park. It has asphalt-surfaced bermed corners and crushed stone straights, which are in need of significant maintenance. The facility would benefit from a full asphalt surface/rebuild in order to provide facilities for wheel sports that are currently more popular than when the track was installed eight years ago.

4.2 Local supply

There are a number of locations for families and beginners to participate in off-road cycling within a 30 minute drive:

Pooley Country Park - B78 1JA (30 min drive)

Pooley Mountain Bike Trails is located at Pooley Country Park in Warwickshire and has three downhill runs graded red and black, as well as one blue cross-country trail. The offer includes:

- Parking - £1.50 up to one hour, £2.50 over one hour/all day.
- Toilets
- Café

Pooley Park Mountain Bike Club operates at the site and the club's aim "is to enable all riders the opportunity to develop their skills and fitness by developing the trails and social rides and coaching sessions". The club is currently redeveloping its 'Skills Area'.

Kingsbury Water Park Cycle Trails -B76 0DY (30 min drive)

Kingsbury Water Park has a number of surfaced trails around the site's 15 lakes and country park. These are targeted at family use.

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The only off-road offering is the bridleway around the southern perimeter of the Park.

Cycle hire is available at weekends and Warwickshire school half terms from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., (weather permitting). Other offers include:

- Car parking - Main Entrance £4.50 per car. £3.00 after 4 pm and all day November - February inclusive. Broomey Croft Entrance £3.00 per car.
- Toilets
- Bike Hire
- Visitor Centre

Cannock Chase Trail Centre - WS15 2UQ (40 min drive)

Cannock Chase trail centre is provided by the Forestry Commission and is the largest regional centre of its type. Trails are graded from Blue to Black and as downhill trails. Chase Trails volunteers operate at the site, working on maintenance and new trails. Facilities include:

- Parking
- Toilets
- Bike Hire
- Bike Wash
- Café

Expert riders looking for freeride/downhill riding would have to take a one hour-plus journey from Sandwell to FlyUp 417 Bike Park (Gloucestershire) or Eastridge Woods (Shropshire).

Ribbesford Bike Park, DY12 2TX (50 min drive)

Ribbesford is the only technical downhill site within one hour of Sandwell Valley. The site consists of 3 tracks with one being suitable for improving downhillers but has other facilities.

BMX Tracks and Pump Tracks

Despite being ridden primarily by BMX bikes, the growing popularity of public pump tracks lead to users of all wheel sports using them and a growing requirement for them to have a full asphalt surface. This drastically reduces maintenance and allows all users to learn and develop their off-road cycling skills. They are the ideal starting place for young riders and families, as well as providing a cycle playground that maintains children's interest, especially when combined with a café /retail/car park offer. These facilities ensure longer dwell-time and greater spend on parking and refreshments.

Sandwell Valley BMX Track (Dartmouth Park Pump Track) - B71 4AA (5 min cycle from Swan Pool or 10min drive). Facilities as follows:

- Asphalt berms and crushed stone straights (poor condition)
- Cycle Hire £6/hr/£9 for 3hrs/£12 for 5 hours

Perry Park BMX Track - B42 2EY (15 min drive)

National standard track with adjacent pumptrack (built in 2017).

Solihull Pump Track - B92 7RF (35 min drive)

- Asphalt berms and crushed stone straights
- Fair condition

Bilston Pumptrack (Greenway BMX Track) - WV14 0LH (20 min drive)

- Asphalt berms and crushed stone straights
- Fair condition

Dudley BMX Track - DY2 0DB (30 min drive)

- Unsurfaced
- Poor condition

Hilton Pumptrack/Play Track - WV4 6DN (25 min drive)

- Full asphalt surface
- Good condition

Mile Oak Pumptrack - B78 3NN (30 min drive)

- Asphalt berms and crushed stone straights
- Fair condition

Tamworth 4 Lane Track - B77 4BW (35 min drive)

- Asphalt berms and crushed stone straights
- Start Gate and events run regularly by the local club

4.3 Demand

Given the dispersed nature of competing offers and growing demand for family-friendly trails, there is a clear demand for further safe off-road cycle routes in north-west Birmingham.

There is a need to create longer trail networks as well as an urban 'bike park' for jumps and repeatable use. Blue grade trails should be at least 5km in length to attract more users and longer stays.

A bike park element is ideal for the location. To enjoy similar facilities, Birmingham residents must travel over an hour to Flyup Bike Park in Cheltenham.

4.4 Other sports facilities in and around Sandwell Valley

Sandwell Valley is predominantly a semi-rural area and the main leisure activities are walking and cycling.

Valley Cycles are based in the southern hub on the boundary between Sandwell Valley and Dartmouth Park and offers the following facilities:

- Enclosed 5 -7 a-side astroturf pitch
- Enclosed tennis courts
- 18-hole footgolf course
- 9-hole crazy golf course
- High ropes

Mytime Active are currently re-developing **Hilltop Golf Course** to offer the following:

- 9-hole golf course
- Driving range
- 18-hole footgolf course

Sandwell Park Golf Club to the south of Hilltop offers an 18-hole course.

Dartmouth Golf Course on the western edge of Sandwell Valley is a private 9-hole course offering 'a superb golf experience for golfers of all abilities'.

Sandwell Valley Sailing Club operates from the building on the northern edge of Swan Pool and offers opportunities for year-round casual sailing and competitive racing. The Club is also an accredited RYA training centre.

Dartmouth Park offers a cricket square.

To the west of Sandwell Valley, West Bromwich town centre offers a range of health and fitness offers including **West Bromwich Leisure Centre, Sandwell Gym** and **JD Gyms, West Bromwich**.

Site context

5.1 Site context

5.1.1 Topography

Land within the study area forms the valley of the River Tame and shelves gently from south-east by south to north-west by north. The 140m contour runs approximately east-west across the southern edge of Hill Top Golf Course and most of the land lies between this level and the 100m level of the river itself.

There are some local variations in level, some of which are man-made (the local interventions to levels that form part of the golf course) and some natural (the small hillocks that exceed 120m within Jubilee Woods).

5.1.2 Soils (see Figure 1)

The geology of Sandwell is dominated by the Great Boundary fault that runs approximately north to south between Hurst Green and West Bromwich and then north-eastwards towards Great Barr.

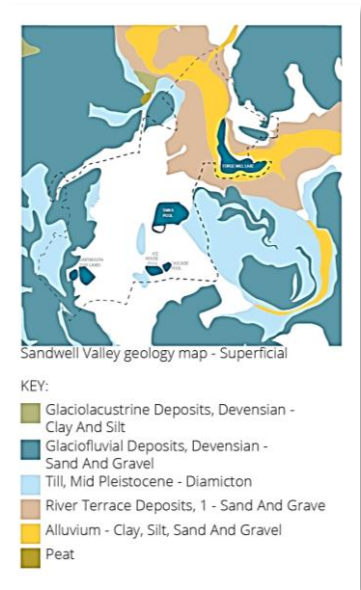


Figure 1: Surface Drift geology

Sandwell Valley is dominated by rocks of the Keele formation of mudstones and sandstones.

The larger part of the Valley is blanketed by extensive superficial glacial deposits of sands and gravels laid down periodically through the Quaternary Period. Most of these deposits are Till (boulder clay) or glaciofluvial sands and gravels. These deposits have been an important source of sands and gravels locally.

5.1.3 Drainage (see Figure 2)

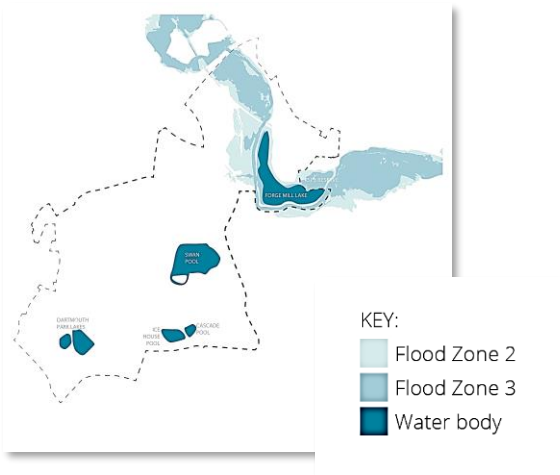


Figure 2: Drainage and Flood Risk

The valley of the Tame is the dominating feature of the drainage of north-west Birmingham and Sandwell Valley. The river runs for 95 kms from Oldbury, through north Birmingham to its confluence with the Trent north of Lichfield.

The course of the river within Sandwell Valley is designated as Zone 2 and Zone 3. Flood attenuation was created in Forge Mill lake in the 1980's and the lake's capacity is currently being expanded as part of a major flood alleviation project being implemented by the Environment Agency.

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5.1.4 Landscape Character (refer to Figure 3)

Sandwell Valley is located within the Cannock Chase and Cank Wood, National Character Area (67). This National Character Area (NCA) sits on higher land that predominantly consists of sandstone and the South Staffordshire Coalfield.

Sandwell Valley has a predominately semi-rural character, consisting of a mosaic of small open fields bounded by mature hedgerows, interspersed with areas of woodland (some designated as Local Nature Reserves) and open water. Current agricultural practice combines land set to arable production with areas set to pasture for the animals housed at Park Farm and Forge Mill Farm.

Hill Top Golf Course was formerly an 18-hole course consisting of open fairways, greens and sand bunkers, separated by belts of native and non-native trees.

The course has been in an un-managed condition for a number of years and is reverting to a natural condition with native wildflowers colonising open grasslands and scrub encroaching onto these from adjoining woodland zones.

5.1.5 Linkages

Sandwell Valley has an extensive network of footpaths and cycle routes, the most important of which is National Cycle Network Route 5 which runs along the western and northern edges of Swan Pool and connects Birmingham city centre to the south with the northern West Midlands and East Wales to the north.

The Valley is not well-served with public transport with bus services operating on roads to the north, west and south of the Valley. The nearest rail connections are West Bromwich to the south-west and Hamstead to the north-east.



Figure 3: Land Use

Options appraisal

6.1 Options

Initial discussions took place with Mytime Active (who lease Hill Top Golf Course from Birmingham City Council) on 23 August 2020.

Mytime Active communicated the fact that they have a fully consented scheme to re-develop Hill Top Golf Course (2019/0646). They are intending to commence work on site to deliver this scheme on or after 1 October 2020. The main components of the scheme are follows (see also Appendix 1: drawing 1940/06):

- The reduction of the existing 18-hole golf course to a 9-hole golf course, provided on the eastern side of the current site
- The development of a driving range in the centre of the southern area of the site
- The development of a foot golf facility on the western side of the site
- Alterations to ingress and egress arrangements
- The installation of an aggregates washing plant in the south-west corner of the site with materials from this being deposited onto the existing site to form the new facilities

The red line drawing that forms part of Mytime Active's consented scheme suggests that an area of the current course would not be affected by these proposals and is thus potentially, surplus to requirements.

The options detailed below have been developed in response to the site re-development proposals provided by Mytime Active.

6.1.1 Option 1

Develop new bike park facilities on the northern and western edges of the current golf course. Reduce the golf course to 9 holes on the eastern side of the site.

Strengths:

This proposal would provide the best set of outcomes from the perspective of cycling provision. The re-development of the western side of the site would take advantage of the prevailing topography and would be of a sufficient scale to offer a comprehensive range of offers.

Weaknesses:

This option does not coincide with Mytime Active's consented plans for the site. It is unlikely that Mytime Active would support this option given the momentum behind their current site re-development plans.

Mytime Active will derive revenue from the driving range and other golf facilities and a royalty from the deposition of materials associated with the aggregates washing plant onto the golf course. These revenues are likely to be integral to their business case for the management of the site.

Mytime Active has suggested informally that any lease agreement for use of all or part of the western edge of the current course would have to take this lost revenue into account. The cost of leasing this area of land is thus likely to render this option for the bike park unviable from a commercial perspective.

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6.1.2 Option 2

Develop new cycling facilities at the northern end of the current golf course to the north of the Mytime Active development 'red line'.

Strengths:

A good amount of space to develop new cycling facilities as part of an Urban Bike Park offer. Good connectivity across Park Lane to the proposed Bike Park hub and other Bike Park facilities/offers.

The option offers the potential to build green infrastructure and biodiversity connectivity within Sandwell Valley.

Weaknesses:

This is not the most topographically interesting part of the site. Earth-forming interventions might be required to create the levels needed for a good quality offer. Mytime Active would charge a rent for the use of this land. This is likely to be a sub-lease of their current lease agreement with Birmingham City Council. This cost has been factored into a viability assessment in the business plan.

6.1.3 Option 3

All cycling facilities offered on Sandwell Borough Council land.

Strengths:

The new facility would build on the existing Miner's Track mountain biking facility and would offer a tightly arranged series of offers, focused on the cycle hub. It would not be necessary to cross Park Lane to access facilities. The commercial case could be enhanced by not having to lease land from Mytime Active.

Weaknesses:

Loss of potential space on the east side of Park Lane would restrict the range of facilities on offer.

This might undermine the viability of the site as a regional attraction from a commercial perspective. This option would not offer the possibility of strengthening biodiversity linkages to Forge Mill lake.

6.2 Preferred Options

Following an assessment of Options 1-3 by the client team, it was agreed that the feasibility study should focus on Options 2 and 3.

Given the impact of Option 1 on Mytime Active's re-development proposal and the cost of using the western area of their site, this option was not considered to be commercially viable.

7.0

Scheme Components – preferred options (see also Appendix 2)

Drawings SAN002_1 and SAN002_2 describe two options for development based on the land available in the context of the two options. Option 1 uses the northern portion of Hilltop Golf Course. Option 2 uses the series of fields to the south of Swan Pool. Details of the trail-based elements for both options are as follows.

7.1 Green trail

This multi-use trail could circumnavigate Swan Pool providing a circuit of approximately 1.5km. Option 1 provides a further 1.6km loop on the Hilltop golf course side. Option 2 provides an additional 1.4km loop to the south of the site. The trail would have gentle gradients with a smooth crushed stone surface and can include some basic rolling features and be enjoyed by adapted bikes and beginners. There is also potential for this intervention to be used for trail running and 'park runs'. The trail tread is recommended to be 2m in width.

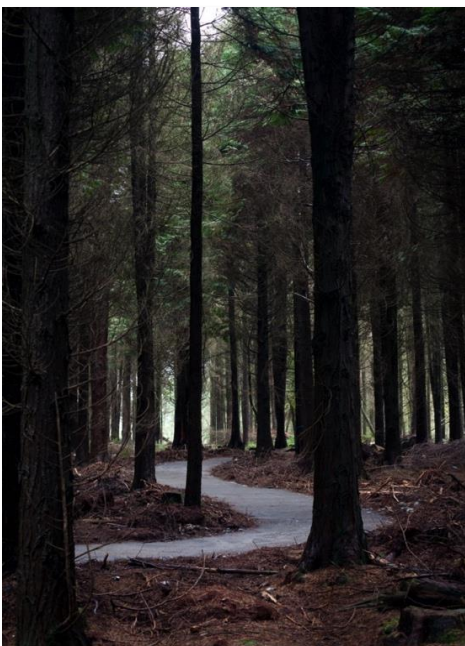


Figure 4 Green Grade Trail, Lanhydrock Estate, Cornwall

7.2 Blue grade MTB trails

When combined with the existing trails, the total trail length of Blue grade trail can be increased to in excess of 5km. A crushed stone MTB trail for beginner mountain bikers will make use of the existing topography to create an undulating trail with rolling features and banked turns. This is to be a fun trail that would also be enjoyed by more advanced riders and could be used as a warm up trail. Included in the Blue trail is a dual slalom track where riders can race head to head. Both layout options feature an extension either onto Hilltop golf course or the agricultural land to the south of Swan Pool. The trail tread is recommended to be 1.2m in width.



Figure 5: Blue grade flow trail, Plym Woods, Plymouth



Figure 6: Dual slalom blue grade trail, Hadleigh Country Park, Essex

7.0

7.3 Red Grade MTB trails

Trails of this nature (for intermediate-expert mountain bikers) have been purposely omitted by the consultant team. There is little steep topography, technical terrain, length or exposure that a true Red grade route requires. It's not impossible to construct this but a significant volume of imported material would be required to construct technical features typically found on Red grade trails. To compensate for the trail length, lack of trees and gradient, boulders and rock armouring would be required throughout. This is unlikely to be financially viable. Riders looking for this type of technical challenge are usually happy to travel long distances for it.



Figure 7: Red grade trail, Davagh, Northern Ireland

7.4 Orange grade MTB trails

The proposed options include 1.8km of descending bike park-style trails, with jumps, berms and other machine-built features with an all-weather crushed stone surface. There is ample space in the fields to the south of Swan Pool (marked on the plans) to take 4 x 450m jump trails. These are recommended to progress in level of difficulty from beginner to advanced. This is the approximate length of trails offered by Leeds Urban Bike Park. Users would travel around the Green or Blue route then ride and repeat the bike park trails.



Figure 8: Orange (2 Dot) Jump Track, Cathkin Braes, Scotland (dual slalom shown on left of image)

7.5 Learn to ride area

An area would be allocated for learning basic bike skills, such as stopping, starting, balance, steering and braking. This facility would have a smooth surface and would be suitable for British Cycling's 'Ready, Set, Ride' programme. Additional elements such as basic balance beams and rock steps could also be included to help beginner riders practice key bike handling skills.

7.6 Pump Track

A pump track is an off-road cycling facility defined as a closed loop with closely spaced rollers and rolling features with tight, bermed corners. Pump tracks provide a technical learning facility for the different disciplines and are a facility where riders can relax, ride themselves and watch and socialise with other riders.

A learning rider will initially pedal around the loop, but as their speed and skill increases, they will be able to generate speed from the corners and rollers without pedalling, which is the overall concept behind a pump track.

Once a rider is able to do this they can progress to being able to manual and jump between features in various combinations, limited only by their ability and creativity.

7.0

This highlights the inclusive nature of a pump track and its appeal to the widest possible range of rider abilities and bike users (both BMX and larger bikes).

Pump tracks also offer a range of other benefits. All features on the track are relatively low in elevation and the speeds involved are also low, keeping the safety risk factor to a minimum, whilst offering an exciting facility to ride. The pump track is also an excellent cross training facility for multiple biking disciplines. Riding a pump track involves using not only your legs, but also works your upper body and core muscles. Although riding without pedalling sounds easy, it is physically much more tiring than pedalling alone.

For riders who have mastered any given pump track, the number of laps completed is then usually only limited by individual fitness levels. The pump track will have a full asphalt surface to provide a maintenance free facility. This surface will also support use by other wheeled sports such as scooters and skateboards.



Figure 9: Pump track, Chopwell, Newcastle

7.7 Biodiversity enhancements

Sandwell Valley contains a number of designated Local Nature Reserves and SINCS, including SLINC's that fringe the banks of the River Tame at the northern edge of Hilltop golf course. The scheme offers the opportunity to develop improved green infrastructure and biodiversity connectivity between these protected 'islands'.

Hilltop golf course has not been managed for golf for a number of years and provides a series of mosaic habitats that are currently being re-colonised by native species, providing important habitat for small mammals, nesting birds and invertebrates. The formerly defined edges of the SLINC now include areas of extending scrub that also offer significant habitat potential.

Option 1 offers the possibility of forging stronger green infrastructure linkages between the Forge Mill RSPB Reserve and the Jubilee Woods and Priory Woods Local Nature Reserves.



Figure 10: Regenerating scrub – Hilltop Golf Course

7.0

Urban Bike Park hub building

The development of a hub building as a central service point is critical to both the operational and financial model for the proposed bike park.

The building on the northern edge of Swan Pool adjoins both the car park and the current Miner's Track. The building is located next to NCN Route 5.

The current building is partly occupied by the Sandwell Valley Sailing Club but is not fit for purpose. The cost of converting the current building to a new set of uses would not be economic when compared with the cost of providing a new building.

Sandwell Valley is designated Green Belt and there is a presumption against development as a consequence. Any proposed development would have to demonstrate that it had no significant impact on the visual quality of the Green Belt and that any proposed uses would be ancillary to the uses to which Green Belt land would be put.

A building on the same footprint and of the same scale and massing as the current building is likely to conform to these requirements (see Section 9.0).

Figure 11 shows the current configuration of the building.

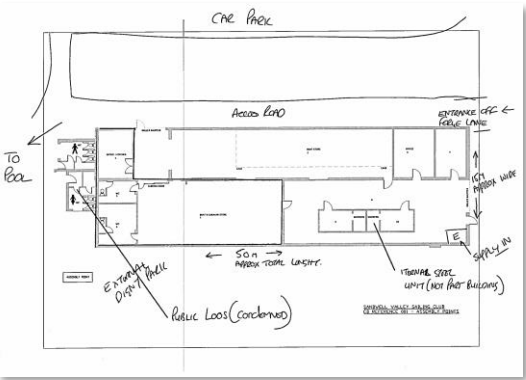


Figure 11: Swan Pool Sailing club building current configuration

In order to deliver a comprehensive set of outcomes in respect of health, wellbeing and social inclusion and to support the overall business case for the proposed bike park, a detailed schedule of accommodation has been developed for the building to include the following elements:

- Public toilets
- Showers for Sailing Club club patrons
- Reception/back office/staff toilets
- Café with outdoor space
- Training workshop suitable for training students to Cytech level 2 standard, including tools and equipment.
- Storage containers for bikes and equipment for recycling
- External storage for boats

A sketch design has been developed to capture these requirements (Figure 12)

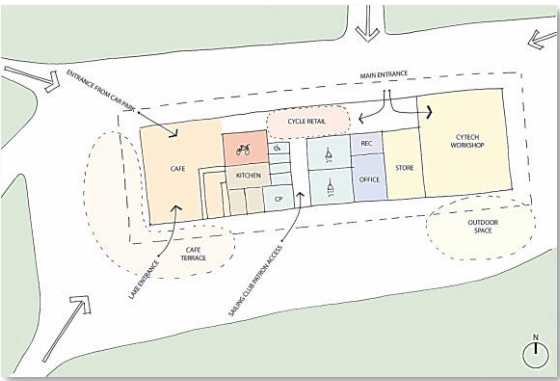


Figure 12: Bike Park hub building proposed configuration and schedule of accommodation

Café Seating:	150m ²
Servery:	30m ²
Kitchen & Store:	45m ²
Cycle Hire/ Repair:	30m ²
Cycle Retail:	60m ²
Female Changing Room:	35m ²
Male Changing Room:	35m ²
Changing Places:	12m ²
1no. Accessible WC	
3no. Unisex WC	
Staff Office/ Welfare:	35m ²
Reception:	15m ²
Cytech Training Space/	
Multipurpose Room:	200m ²
Store:	55m ²

7.0

Given constraints on budget, a further option for the hub building has been considered. This could be a temporary solution while funding for a new building is secured. This option would not offer facilities for the Sailing Club that makes use of the existing building

As part of the Places to Ride fund, an investment is being made to enhance the support facility offered at existing sites, through procurement of a small number of modular/container clubhouses, changing facilities and storage units.

British Cycling can offer support to clubs and organisations to create a base to develop their membership and participation across all cycling disciplines. To enable this, temporary building options have been developed to provide simple spaces to meet, change and socialise.

These modular units can be rented to clubs and groups with access to off-road cycling facilities, for a period of 3-5 years, with the aim of supporting the revenue streams that can support long-term sustainability.

A simple oversail structure would be installed to enhance the aesthetic qualities of the modular units and provide additional covered public realm

The modular/container solutions can be applied in a variety of settings to support existing cycling facilities, such as BMX tracks, speedway circuits, outdoor velodromes or closed road circuits.

Section 10 includes capital cost options for a modular approach and for a permanent building.

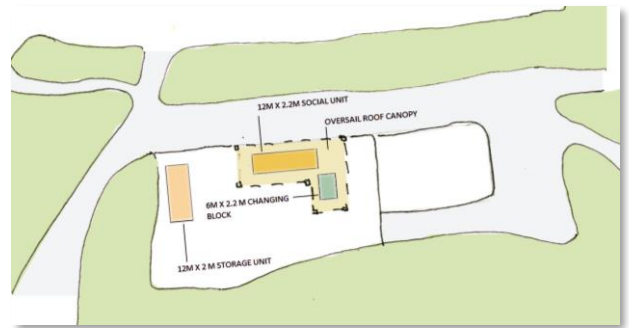


Figure 15: Potential configuration of modular units



Figure 13: Sketch of proposed fully-designed cycling hub building at Swan Pool



Figure 15: Simple timber oversail structure for modular units

Consultation and engagement

8.1 Engagement methodology

In order to assess local aspirations for the provision of new cycling facilities in Sandwell Valley and Hilltop Golf Course, an engagement process has been undertaken.

Appendix C lists organisations and individuals consulted in the course of developing this study. Consultation and engagement has been carried out in the context of Government and Local Authority advice on safe practice during the Covid 19 pandemic. Appendix C also details the engagement methodologies deployed in respect of each stakeholder. A full report of consultation and engagement can be found in Appendix D.

8.2 Summary of Engagement Findings

Responses to the feasibility proposals for the proposed urban bike park have been generally favourable. There is a recognition that the proposed bike park would add considerably to the leisure offer within Sandwell Valley and north-west Birmingham. Consultees also acknowledged the contribution that the bike park would make to physical and mental health and wellbeing and that the comprehensive range of offers would attract a large and varied audience.

Proposals for a new hub building to replace the current Sailing Club building were particularly well-received and there was a perception that a good quality building in this location would be a popular addition to facilities in the valley.

Concern was raised in respect of the possible impact of the proposed development of ecology, especially in the area to the south and east of Swan Pool. However, it was acknowledged that the

project offers potential for the enhancement of habitat continuity between the SLINC's along the Tame valley and the Local Nature Reserves to the south of Swan Pool

8.3 Impact of consultation on the proposed scheme

The consultation has not suggested a need to re-design the proposed scheme at this stage.

Concerns raised in respect of the impact on habitat and biodiversity will have to be carefully considered in the next stage of development, based on a comprehensive survey process.

Working closely with external partners (Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust, Sandwell Naturalists and the Environment Agency) will grant access to a considerable amount of existing data and expertise and will ensure a collaborative approach to design development that complements and reinforces current initiatives.

Planning advice

Views in response to the RIBA 2 Concept Design have been sought from Planning Officers from both Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council and from Birmingham City Council.

Officers consulted have raised a number of issues in response to the proposals that are summarised below. Planning officers have recommended an assessment of the need to commission an Environmental Impact Assessment for the proposal. It is recommended that a planning consultant should be commissioned to provide this advice in advance of any further design development culminating in a full planning application.

1) Green Belt

The land that forms the site of the proposed urban bike park development is designated as 'Green Belt' both within Sandwell and within Birmingham. 'Green Belt' designations include a presumption against development that might adversely affect the fundamental character of land. Areas of the site are already in lawful recreational use and a change of use to outdoor recreational use is not contrary to the Green Belt policy of the NPPF and is therefore not contrary to adopted Local Plans.

The provision of a new building is included within the concept design. New buildings to provide 'appropriate facilities' for outdoor recreational uses within the Green Belt are not inappropriate in principle, subject to them preserving the openness of the Green Belt and to their not conflicting with the purposes of Green Belt land. The site of the proposed building is that of the existing Sailing Club building and thus essentially a 'like-for-like' replacement and thus likely to be permissible in the context of a 'Green Belt' designation.

This new building would need to be designed to minimise its impact on the openness of the 'Green Belt' and the rural character of the area in general.

2) SLINC's and Nature Reserves

Sandwell Valley on both sides of the local authority boundary contains a number of Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation. Those of immediate relevance to the proposed site are:

Sandwell Valley SLINC
Tame Valley SLINC
Forge Mill Local Nature Reserve
Priory Woods Local Nature Reserve
RSPB Sandwell Valley Nature Reserve

It should also be noted that land in the vicinity of the proposed site is the subject of planning conditions requiring ecological mitigation in relation to the River Tame flood defence works.

The NPPF stipulates that Local Planning Authorities need to identify, map and safeguard components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity.

This Feasibility Study has identified opportunities to enhance connectivity between existing designated sites. More detailed design development will need to consider how biodiversity connectivity can be enhanced across the site.

3) Sites of archaeological importance

There is an area of potential archaeological interest within the BCC part of the site.

Planning advice

The 'Manwoods' site marks the position of a former timber-framed house dating to the 1600's.

To the south-east of the site, Park Farm is a Grade II-listed structure. However, given this site's distance from the proposed bike park and the nature of the development proposed development, it is not considered likely that there would be any significant conflict in terms of the impact of the development on the setting of this building.

Financial and governance considerations of preferred options

10.1 Scheme capital costs

Bike Park Options

Option 1

Item	Length (m)	Cost/m	Cost
Green Trail	3150	£60	£189,000
Blue Trail	4230	£50	£211,500
Orange 'Bike Park'	1800	£100	£180,000
Learn to Ride Area	Item		£50,000
Pump Track	Item		£125,000
Total			£755,500

Option 2

Item	Length (m)	Cost/m	Cost
Green Trail	2800	£60	£168,000
Blue Trail	4260	£50	£213,000
Orange 'Bike Park'	1800	£100	£180,000
Learn to Ride Area	Item		£50,000
Pump Track	Item		£125,000
Total			£736,000

Hub building – existing footprint of 789.36m²

Demolition @ £756/ m2 £59,200

New building as Figure 13 @ £2,700/ m2 £2,131,245

Landscape enhancements

Allowance for footpaths/cycle way enhancements, signage, interpretation £75,000

Allowance for habitat and biodiversity enhancements £50,000

Total scheme costs - Option 1 £3,070,945

Allowance for fees @ 10% £307,094

Sub total £3,378,039

Plus contingency – design risk @ 7% £236,463

Total Cost – Option 1 (with new building) **£3,614,450**

Total scheme costs – Option 2 £3,051,445

Allowance for fees @ 10% £305,145

Sub total £3,356,590

Plus contingency – design risk @ 7% £234,961

Total Cost – Option 2 (with new building) **£3,591,550**

Financial and governance considerations of preferred options

10.1 Scheme capital costs

Bike Park Options

Option 1

Item	Length (m)	Cost/m	Cost
Green Trail	3150	£60	£189,000
Blue Trail	4230	£50	£211,500
Orange 'Bike Park'	1800	£100	£180,000
Learn to Ride Area	Item		£50,000
Pump Track	Item		£125,000
Total			£755,500

Option 2

Item	Length (m)	Cost/m	Cost
Green Trail	2800	£60	£168,000
Blue Trail	4260	£50	£213,000
Orange 'Bike Park'	1800	£100	£180,000
Learn to Ride Area	Item		£50,000
Pump Track	Item		£125,000
Total			£736,000

Hub building – existing footprint of 789.36m²

Demolition @ £756/ m2 £59,200

Modular buildings with oversail as Figure 14

Large Park Storage	£43,760
Large Park Social	£63,650
Park change	£37,100
Concrete bases 75m ²	£10,000
Oversail 75m ²	£55,000
Allowance for M & E @ 10%	£20,951
Sub-total: modular buildings	£230,461

Landscape enhancements

Allowance for footpaths/cycle way enhancements, signage, interpretation £75,000

Allowance for habitat and biodiversity enhancements £50,000

Sub- total Option 1 £1,170,161

Allowance for fees @ 10% £117,016

Sub total £1,287,177

Plus contingency – design risk @ 7% £90,102

Total Cost – Option 1 (with modular building) **£1,377,279**

Total scheme costs – Option 2 £1,150,661

Allowance for fees @ 10% £115,066

Sub total £1,265,727

Plus contingency – design risk @ 7% £88,601

Total Cost – Option 2 (with modular building) **£1,354,328**

10.0

10.1 Overall model

It is assumed that the bike park and associated facilities will be run by the Sandwell Valley Country Park within the overall new model for the Country Park currently being delivered.

It is envisaged that Country Park overall will be run either by a separate business unit within the Council, an arms-length body owned by the Council, or by an independent organisation spun out from the current service. The final model is yet to be decided but the intention is that income generated within the park should be retained by the Country Park. Given that the bike park business model is reliant on secondary spend, we consider that the retail activities should be run by the Country Park who will be responsible for the costs and liabilities of maintaining the bike park.

10.2 Five-year financial model

Table 1 provides a five-year financial model for Sandwell Valley Bike Park.

10.2.1 Income

The income set out in the model assumes the following:

Contributions to two posts and associated activities by Sandwell Council Public Health and British Cycling of £87,500 per year in Year 1.

An additional grant of £35,000 secured to fund staff costs in Year 2 to replace the above funding.

The generation of income through:

- spend by visitors in the café
- spend by visitors in the bike shop and service centre

- additional income generated by securing grant
- commercial income to deliver training and education services and
- the retention of car parking fees – these are assumed to rise year on year (from £1.80 to £3.20) and the percentage of visitors arriving by car is assumed to fall year on year (from 20% to 16%) as sustainable travel to the site is promoted.

Income for the cafe, bike shop and service centre and the car park are calculated based on assumptions with respect to the number of trail rides. Based on the experience of the Leeds Urban Bike Park where annual trail rides of over 300,000 have been achieved, we assume 250,000 rides in Year 1 rising to 350,000 in Year 4 and Year 5.

10.2.2 Expenditure

10.2.2.1 Staffing

We have assumed that a Community Activator and Go Ride Coach will be employed full time and that additional sessional trainers will be employed. The budget for sessional trainers rises from £8,000 in Year 1 to £20,000 in Year 5, although this could vary depending on income secured from the delivery of educational and training services referenced above.

With respect to retail staff we have assumed that:

- bike shop and workshop staff rising from 1.5 FTE in Year 1 to 2.5 FTE in Year 5, and
- cafe staff will rise from 2.5 FTE in Year 1 to 3.5 FTE in Year 5.

Details are shown in Table 2.

10.0

No provision is made for an overall Facilities Manager post as this function will be included within the overall management of the Country Park and its assets. A recharge or contribution to these overall management costs is included separately.

10.2.2.3 Lease

Part of the site will need to be leased from MyTime Active. £15,000 / year plus VAT has been included to cover this cost.

10.2.2.4 Maintenance, repair and replacement

Annual maintenance costs for both the track and the building have been calculated at 1.5% of capital costs. With respect to the track, the full amount has been included from Year 1. For the building, the amount budgeted for maintenance and repair rises year on year to reach 1.5% in Year 4.

In addition to maintenance costs, it is recommended to set aside a sinking fund for both the track and the building for more substantial repairs and replacements. In each case, a figure of 1.5% of capital costs has been applied.

By Year 5 the total amount set aside for maintenance, repair and replacement is 18% of annual income.

10.2.2.5 Recharge to Sandwell Valley Country Park

An amount of £30,000 has been included annually as a contribution to the central management of the Country Park.

10.3 Profit and loss

Based on the assumptions set out above a cumulative surplus of £85,425 is anticipated over the course of the first 5 years of operation.

A small loss of -£6,265 is shown in Year 2 but this would be more than covered by the surplus in Year 1.

By Year 5 an annual surplus of £30,735 is anticipated.

Table 1: 5-year income and expenditure analysis

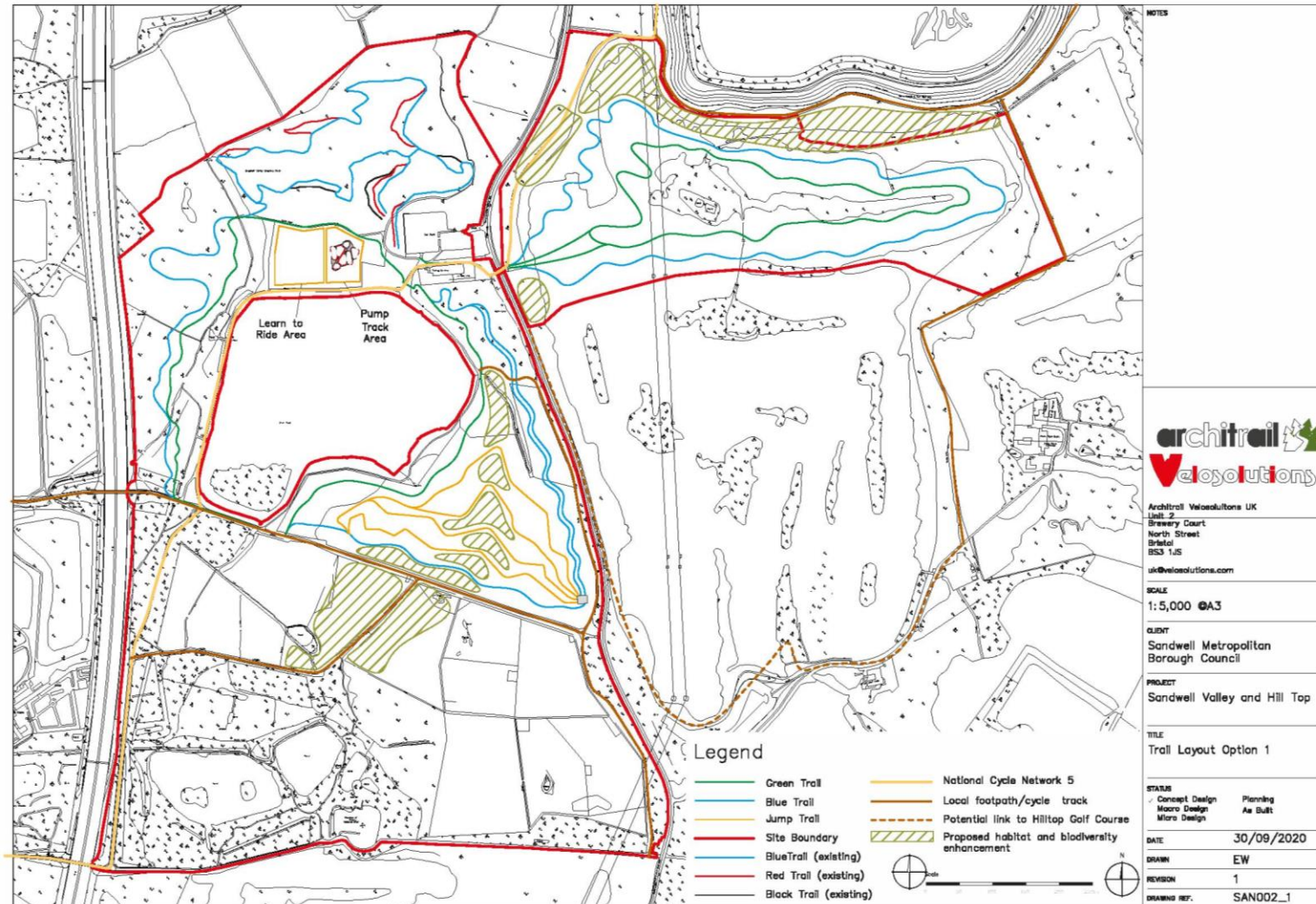
Sandwell Valley Bike Park - 5 Year Financial Model						
Income	Assumptions	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5
	No of trail rides (Leeds achieved 300,000)	250,000	275,000	325,000	350,000	350,000
Sandwell Council Public Health	Contributions to two posts	30,000				
British Cycling	Contributions to two posts and activities	57,250				
Other staffing grant (unconfirmed)			35,000			
Cafe	20% of trail rides x £3 / transaction (based on BC example)	150,000	165,000	195,000	210,000	210,000
Bike shop / service centre	0.5% of trail rides x £50 / transaction (based on BC example)	62,500	68,750	81,250	87,500	87,500
Education activities	Grant funded training, schools, alternative education providers	10,000	15,000	20,000	22,500	25,000
Other	Events, sponsorship, hire etc	10,000	12,500	15,000	17,500	20,000
Car parking	Starting at 20% of trail rides and decreasing by 1% / year Parking fees start at £1.80 and rising to £3.20	90,000	104,500	140,400	166,600	168,000
Total in		409,750	400,750	451,650	504,100	510,500
Expenditure						
Staffing	See 'Staffing' tab for assumptions	134,250	155,500	158,000	180,750	184,750
Cafe consumables	40% of turnover	60,000	66,000	78,000	84,000	84,000
Bike retail / workshop consumables	40% of turnover	25,000	27,500	32,500	35,000	35,000
Equipment		30,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Land lease	Land leased from MyTime Active estimated at £15k + VAT	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
Rates and insurances		8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	8,000
Cleaning	756m2 at £15/m2	11,350	11,350	11,350	11,350	11,350
Utilities	Based on BC example	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Annual maintenance (track)	1.5% of capital costs (£755,500)	11,333	11,333	11,333	11,333	11,333
Sinking fund (track)	1.5% of capital costs (£755,500) - from Y2	11,333	11,333	11,333	11,333	11,333
Annual maintenance (building)	Rising to 1.5% of capital costs (assuming £2.2M) by Y4	10,000	15,000	25,000	33,000	33,000
Sinking fund (building)	1.5% of capital costs (assuming £2.2M)	33,000	33,000	33,000	33,000	33,000
Recharge to SVCP	For overall asset and staff management	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Total out		392,265	407,015	436,515	475,765	479,765
Profit / loss		17,485	-6,265	15,135	28,335	30,735

Table 2: Proposed staffing structure

Sandwell Valley Bike Park - Staffing cost assumptions					
Roles	Y1	Y2	Costs Y3	Y4	Y5
Community Activator	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Go Ride Coach	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000
Trainers etc (sessional)	8,000	10,000	12,500	16,000	20,000
Bike staff (£10/h) - 1.5 FTE in Y1 rising to 2.5 FTE in Y5	30,000	40,000	40,000	50,000	50,000
Cafe staff (£9/h) - 2.5 FTE in Y1 rising to 3.5 FTE in Y5	46,250	55,500	55,500	64,750	64,750
Total staffing costs	134,250	155,500	158,000	180,750	184,750

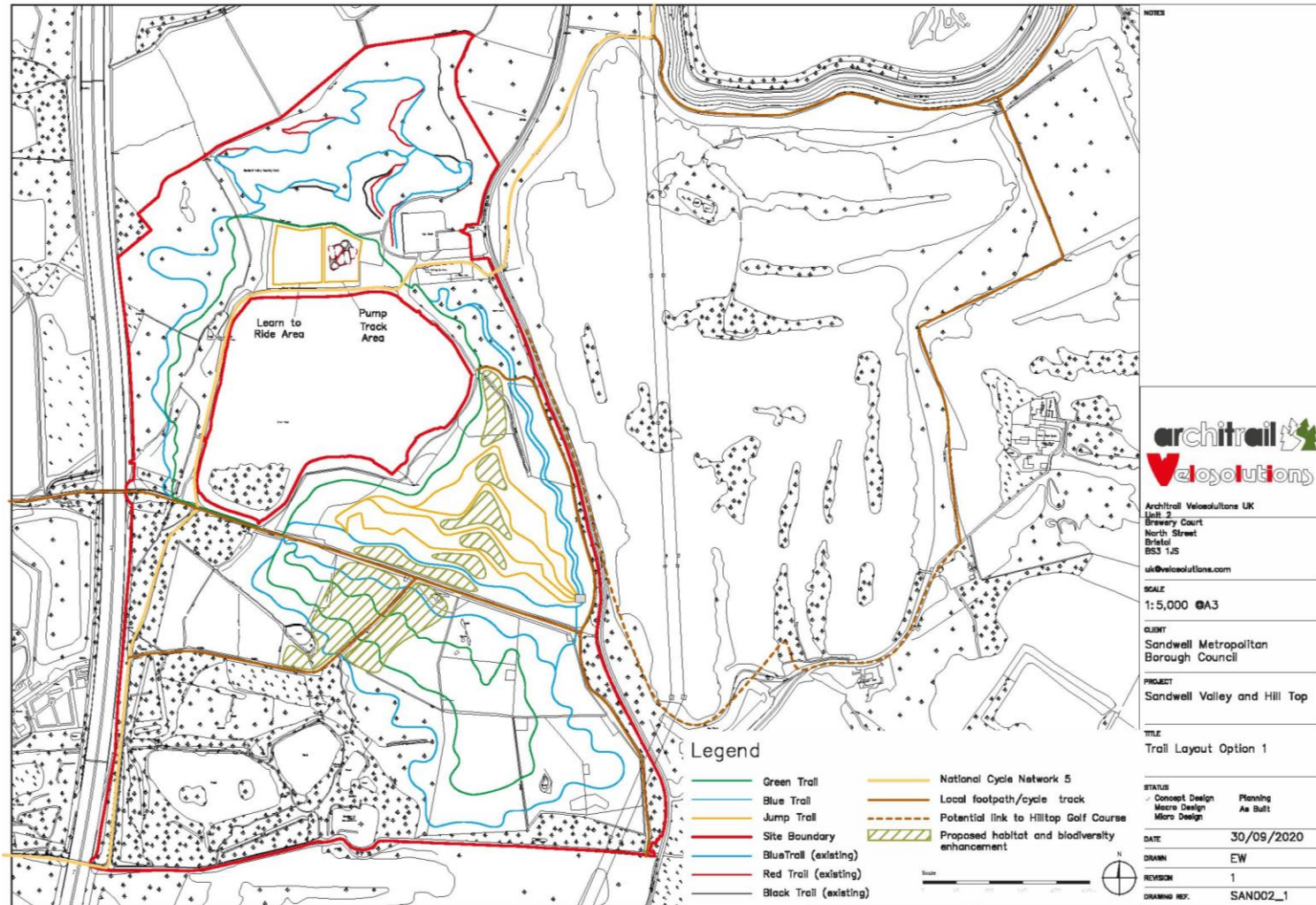
Appendix A

Development option 1



Appendix A

Development option 2



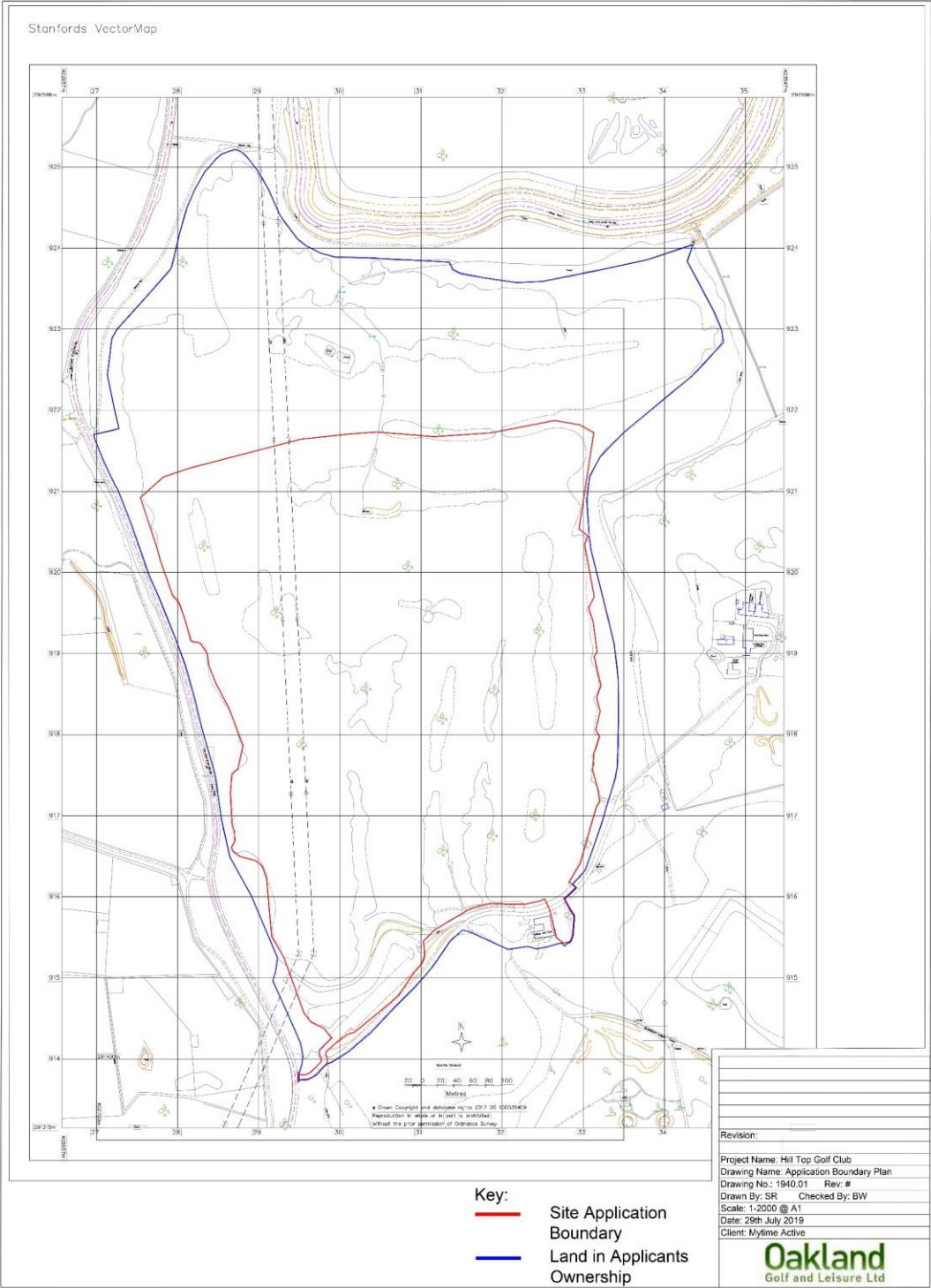
Appendix A

Preferred option masterplan



Appendix B

My Time Active Planning Red Line and Lease Plan boundary



My Time Active consented scheme



Appendix C

Consultation and engagement matrix

Sandwell Valley/Hill Top bike park feasibility							
Consultee approach list							
Jan-21							
Organisation	Name	Role	Contact details	Contact method	Status	Attended	Response
British Cycling	Andy Farr	Head of Business Planning and Transformation	AndyFarr@britishcycling.org.uk	Monthly reports/email	Complete		Ongoing discussions
	Stephanie Allmark	Legacy Programme Manager	stephanieallmark@britishcycling.org.uk	Monthly reports/email	Complete		Ongoing discussions
	Amy Gardner	Cycling Delivery Manager, West Midlands	amygardner@britishcycling.org.uk	Monthly reports/email	Complete		Ongoing discussions
Sandwell Council	Cllr Maria Crompton	Interim Leader and Cabinet Member for Safer Communities	maria_crompton@sandwell.gov.uk	MS Teams	Complete		Meetings of 26 November and 13 Jan
	Cllr Jackie Taylor	Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport	jackie_taylor@clr.sandwell.org.uk	Email briefing	Complete		
	Cllr Bawa Singh Dhallu	Local Member	bawa_singhdhallu@sandwell.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
	Cllr Laura Rollins	Local Member	laura_rollins@clr.sandwell.org.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
	Cllr Mohinder Singh Taggar	Local Member	mohinder_singhtagger@clr.sandwell.org.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
	Jane Lillystone	Service Manager - Leisure and Tourism	jane_lillystone@sandwell.gov.uk	MS Teams	Complete		Ongoing discussions
	Andy Miller	Strategic Planning and Transportation Manager	Andy_Miller@sandwell.gov.uk	MS Teams/email	Complete		See Section 9 of report
	Sunish Patel	Business Manager for Sandwell Valley	Sunish_Patel@sandwell.gov.uk	MS Teams	Complete		Ongoing discussions
	Matt Darby	Sandwell Valley Manager	matt_darby@sandwell.gov.uk	MS Teams	Complete		Ongoing discussions
	Matthew Hill	Sandwell Public Health	matthew_hill@sandwell.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
	Andy Thorpe	Healthy Urban Development Officer	andy_thorpe@sandwell.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
Birmingham City Council	Cllr Narinder Kaur Kooner	Local Ward Cllr	NarinderKaur.Kooner@birmingham.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
	Cllr Gurdeep Singh Atwal	Local Ward Cllr	GurdeepSingh.Atwal@birmingham.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
	Dave Wagg	Project & Client Manager, Strategic Sport	Dave.Wagg@birmingham.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		Ongoing discussions
	Chris Jordan	Assistant Director – Neighbourhoods	Chris.Jordan@birmingham.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
	Lydia Hall	Principal Planning Officer	Lydia.A.Hall@birmingham.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		See Section 9 of report
	Joe Hayden	Parks Manager	Joe.Hayden@birmingham.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
	Lee Southall	Area Parks Manager	Lee.Southall@birmingham.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
Panikos Panayiotou	Panikos Panayiotou	Sports Development Manager	Panikos.Panayiotou@birmingham.gov.uk	Email briefing	Complete		No response received
Mytime Active	Chris Deadman		Chris.Deadman@mytimeactive.co.uk	Email/meetings	Complete		No response received
	Jason Stanton		Jason.stanton@mytimeactive.co.uk	Email/meetings	Complete		Comments on timing of possible lease discussions received
Stakeholders	Carol Hartill	Dartmouth Park Friends	carolh.fodp@btinternet.com	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Adam Halling	Valley Cycles	info@valleycycles.co.uk	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete	6.1.21	See comments
	Ricky Burns Alex Mason	Lightwoods Community Cycling Club	ricky_burns@sandwell.gov.uk alex_mason@sandwell.gov.uk	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Lesley Easter	Smethwick Beat the Streets Community Cycling Club	(See all contact details below)	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	TBC	Chasetrails	https://www.chasetrails.co.uk/trailbuilding/	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Si Paton		si@pinkbike.com ; 07968229359	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Gary Stock	Sandwell Valley Sailing Club	Gary.stock@colourcables.co.uk	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Sam	Bikeability	tkahdra@hotmail.co.uk	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Margaret Shucker	Sandnats	Margaret.shucker@virgin.net	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Val Edkins	Friends of Sot's Hole	valerie@edkins.com	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete	6.1.21 & 7.1.21	See comments
	Simon Atkinson	Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust	simon.a@bbwt	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Terri	Sandwell Valley Park Run	sandwellvalley@parkrun.com	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Lesley Easter	Cycling Development Officer – West Midlands	lesley.Easter@cyclinguk.org	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Adam	Skillsloop	info@skillsloop.com	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete		No response received
	Sammy Pritchard	Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust	sammy.p@bbcwildlife.org.uk	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete	6.1.21	See comments
	Melanie Dinnis	Environment Agency	Melanie.Dinnis@environment-agency.gov.uk	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete	6.1.21	See comments
	Mike Bloxham	Sandnats	mikebloxham@talktalk.net	Zoom/MSTeams	Complete	7.1.21	See comments

Appendix D

Consultation and engagement responses

Sandwell Valley/Hill Top bike park feasibility		
On-line consultation events - comments received		
January 6th		
Abr.	Attendees:	Organisation
VE	Valerie Edkins	Chair, Sandwell Valley Naturalists
AH	Adam Halling	Valley Cycles
MD	Melanie Dinnis	Environment Agency
SP	Sammy Pritchard	Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust
Comment No./by	Content	Consultant team response
1 - AH	Will recording be available for participants	Refer to BC for view on GDPR
2 - VE	Can you forward the slide deck to participants	Yes - we will distribute the slide deck
3 - VE	Sailing Club building used to be the miner's rest club	
4 - VD	Are you aware of the pool in Jubilee woods that is the only site with Gt Crested newts	Thanks for this information
5 - MD	Need to discuss statutory consents with other parts of the EA	These discussions would take place at a later design stage
6 - SP	Nicola Ferrin is leading on ecology and biodiversity projects	We will contact her now and in any future design stage
7 - MD	Also working with Nicola on projects with european funding	We want the process to be joined up with existingsv initiatives
8 - MD	Also contact Simon Needle from BCC	We will contact him
10 - MD	Have you contacted Matt Darby?	We have discussed this project with him and Sunish Patel in context of Sandwell Master Scoping Study
11 - AH	We operate bike hire and offer cycling facilities in the valley currently. These new facilities will be a positive thing	You will be an important consultee looking forward. Part of the feasibility looks at future management of the facility
12 - VE	Is the money frm BC enough?	More match funding will be needed. Funds will be needed from multiple sources
13 - SP	What's the time scale for the project?	A very tight timescale. Places to Ride projects need to be completed by March 2020. If funded, the immediate issues would be resources, Planning and the design and construction process.
14 - MD	So summer for a Planning application?	An autumn Planning decision
15 - SP	What surveys have been done - many of these are seasonal (e.g. bats and invertebrates). This could affect when you get permission	None yet - we've provided Sandwell MBC with a list of surveys required.
16 - SP	Have you factored in Net Gain	Very aware of net gain. But there is potential to add net gain through proposed wildlife corridors
17 - SP	Lots of potential here but would need to be inbedded in management of these corridors	Yes - agree ongoing management is important
18 - VE	Sandell Naturalists have done lots of survey work	It would be really helpful if we could access any survey information that you hold
19 - VE	Crossing at Swan Pool car park - is this safe?	We can look at this in a later design stage. We'd work with Sandwell Transport Planners and incorporate into planning application
20 - MD	Curent speed limit might only be because of EA works being carried out	
21 - MD	Forge Mill lake is a reservoir under the Reservoirs Act	Noted
22 - MD	The EA would be involved and can comment in more detail once design has developed to the next stage	We'd suggest that a collaborative approach is the best approach to developing the next design stages
23 - MD	There are landscape works carrying out though the winter so there are opportunities to join to this project	
24 - VD	Very muddy around the Swan Pool - quite exciting if you're on a bike but not so good for pedestrians	We do want to encourage connectivity for cyclists and pedestrians. There is a sum in the cost plan for paths but this will have to be prioritised



Appendix D

Consultation and engagement responses

Sandwell Valley/Hill Top bike park feasibility		
On-line consultation events - comments received		
January 7th 2021		
Abr.	Attendees:	Organisation
VE	Valerie Edkins	Chair, Sandwell Valley Naturalists
MB	Mike Broxham	Sandwell Valley Naturalists
	Comment No./by	Content
	1 - VE	What is the pale blue area at top of Hill Top?
	2 - VE	What are the black lines around the biodiversity enhancement areas?
	3 - MB	You're showing Hill Top golf course with nothing happening on it.
	4 - MB	Sandwell Valley has over 4,000 species and is a prime biodiversity site. Sandwell Valley Naturalists have been gathering data in the Valley for 50 years but we are not included in the list of people consultants.
	5 - MB	Very keen on cycling. Like the proposals for Jubilee Woods and Hill Top. Not so keen on areas to south of Swan Pool - these are critical for biodiversity already. The grass field to the south of Swan Pool is a skylark meadow. These are the issues that you must discuss. There is a risk of disturbance from public use in these areas.
	6 - MB	The proposed enhancements to the south of the diagonal path are already prime biodiversity sites and they can't be enhanced at all.
	7 - MB	You're proposing to re-purpose grass pasture used by the Sandwell Valley farms.
	8 - MB	Can the project make the areas safer? Pedestrian footfall around Swan Pool is heavy and the cycle path needs some delineation at this point.
	9 - MB	There would be room for special events - the Swan Pool area has formerly been used for Cyclocross but only for special events. The area around Jubilee Woods and Hill Top could have the permanent interventions. Also having these around Swan Pool might be rather more controversial
	10 - MB	You need to talk to the Wildlife Trusts as well.
	11 - VE	Have you contacted Andy Street
	12 - VE	Do want me to put you in touch with Brum Bats
	13 - MB	The new building would be brilliant
	14 - MB	You should also talk to Sandwell staff
		Response
		(post session note) This is an open water area
		The back lines are notional and are just a drawing device. In reality, these won't be sharp lines and they describe extended habitat areas.
		My Time Active who manage the golf course have planning consent for the southern half of the site but have no commercial interest in the northern section so it is potentially available for the bike park.
		We've put the list together based on information from Sandwell and Birmingham but we welcome discussion with as many stakeholders as possible. This is the first stage in a longer process that will require many more discussions.
		If this area needs to be re-thought then this will happen. The purpose of this discussion is to tease out these issues so that the right proposals are put in place. That's the purpose of the consultation and others to follow. This is a very early stage and by no means the final design
		We are also working on a master scoping study for Sandwell Valley that includes a re-focusing of the farming operation.
		We want to engage with as many partners as possible to develop effective and correct solutions.
		Not directly - the WMA was not on the list of people we were asked to talk to. But we can capture others as required when developing the project.
		If the project proceeds, we'll need to gather detailed biodiversity data and accessing any information held by other partners will be useful
		We are working with Sandwell staff in the context of the Sandwell master scoping study

