

Statutory Consultation 2022

Preliminary Environmental Information Report

Volume 3: Appendix 13.1

Open Space Survey Methodology

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This Appendix sets out the context, methodology and results of open space surveys undertaken to inform the Health and Community assessment reported in **Chapter 13 in Volume 2** of the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR).
- 1.1.2 Open space surveys have been undertaken in the study area to gather data on the usage patterns and quality of open spaces near the Proposed Development. The following types of surveys have been undertaken:
- a. Open space quality assessments;
 - b. Open space user counts; and
 - c. Open space user questionnaires.
- 1.1.3 The information collected will help to inform the assessment of the impacts of the Proposed Development on local community resources.
- 1.1.4 Surveys have been undertaken as follows:
- a. Spring 2019 (quality assessments, user counts and user questionnaires);
 - b. Early summer 2019 (user counts and user questionnaires);
 - c. Late summer 2019 (user counts and user questionnaires); and
 - d. Autumn 2019 (user counts and user questionnaires).
- 1.1.5 The surveys were undertaken prior to any changes in usage resulting from the Covid-19 lockdowns.
- 1.1.6 Community resources to be surveyed have been selected through desk studies and consultation with the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.1.7 The methodology set out below has been shared with Luton Borough Council and feedback incorporated where appropriate.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Quality Assessments

- 2.1.1 The purpose of undertaking quality assessments is to verify resources identified via desk studies. Quality assessments gather data on the condition and context of community resources and on the sensitivity of resources and receptors, allowing informed judgements to be made about the likely levels and nature of usage, and of the magnitude of impact of the Proposed Development.
- 2.1.2 Quality assessments are not typically seasonal, since the quality of an open space is unlikely to vary from season to season. A single series of quality assessments has therefore been undertaken in spring 2019.
- 2.1.3 Quality assessment locations are those considered most likely to have significant direct or in-combination effects from the Proposed Development, i.e. those within the Proposed Development boundary or directly adjacent.

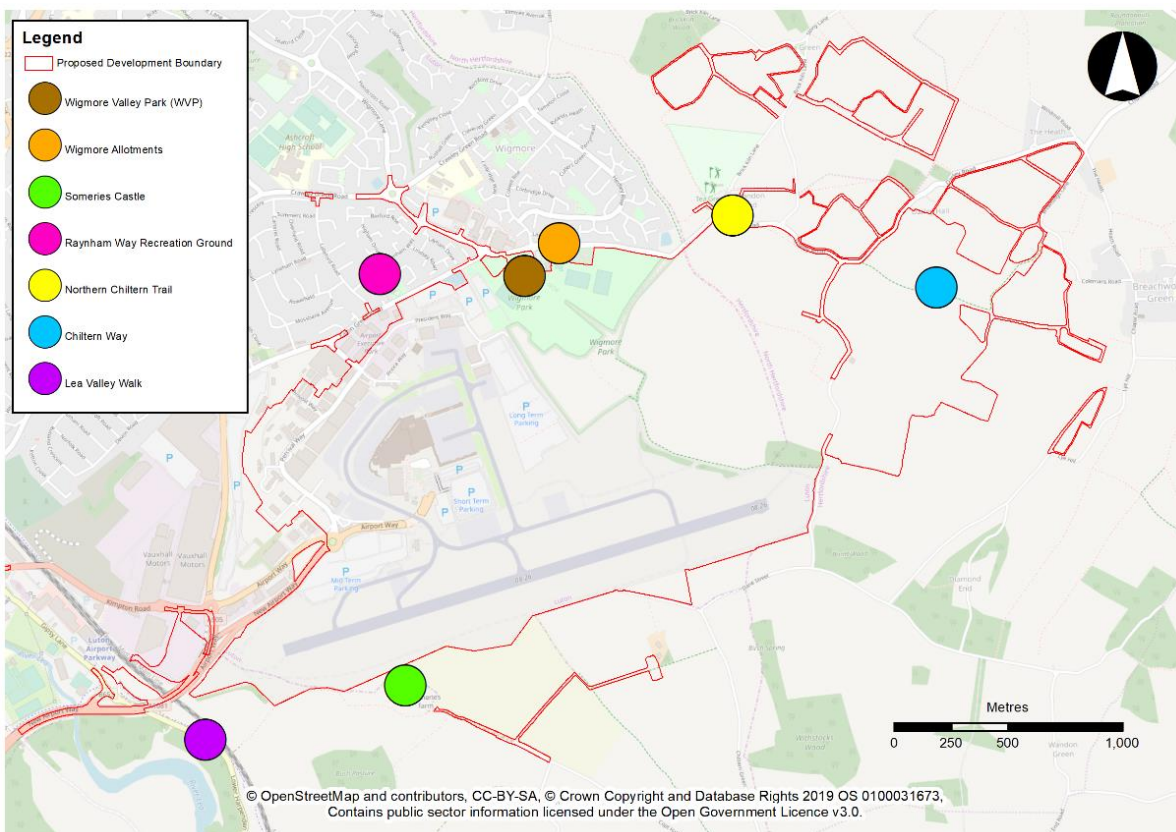
2.1.4 Quality assessments have been undertaken at the following seven locations:

- a. Wigmore Valley Park;
- b. Wigmore Allotments;
- c. Lea Valley Walk;
- d. Chiltern Way;
- e. Northern Chiltern Trail promoted Public Right of Way;
- f. Someries Castle; and
- g. Raynham Way Recreation Ground.

2.1.5 Following the recording of information, an assessment of the effects of the Proposed Development has been made following the methodology set out in **Section 13.5** of the **Chapter 13** in Volume 2 of the PEIR.

2.1.6 **Inset 1** below shows the locations of quality assessments undertaken.

Inset 21: Quality assessment survey locations



2.2 User Count Surveys

2.2.1 User count surveys have been conducted at open spaces, recreational spaces, recreational routes and Public Rights of Way that will be directly affected by the Proposed Development.

2.2.2 The purpose of undertaking user count surveys is to obtain information on the number of users and patterns of usage.

- 2.2.3 User count surveys have been undertaken at the following locations:
- a. Wigmore Valley Park (see **Inset 2**); and
 - b. Four recreational routes east of the airport (see **Inset 3**).
- 2.2.4 Patterns of usage can vary during the day, week and season. Therefore, a series of user count surveys have been undertaken throughout 2018 and 2019 to obtain a representative data sample of usage. The surveys have been scheduled to cover different seasons, inclusive of school term-time, holiday periods, weekdays and weekends. Surveys have been undertaken throughout the duration of daylight hours.
- 2.2.5 User count surveys aim to avoid adverse weather conditions which may affect usage of open spaces. Weather conditions have been recorded for each survey.
- 2.2.6 User count surveys are undertaken in 15-minute periods, and all activities observed in the open space are recorded.

User Count Surveys – Wigmore Valley Park

- 2.2.7 User count surveys have been undertaken at Wigmore Valley Park throughout 2019. For each survey period (spring / early summer / late summer / autumn), surveys were planned on a weekday (term time), weekday (school holidays) and weekend.
- 2.2.8 The location of user count surveys was selected during the first site visit. The chosen location is shown in **Inset 2**. The location was selected because of its extensive 360-degree view over a large proportion of Wigmore Valley Park, including the car park, children's play area, skate facility and large open spaces in the north and west extent of the park. A limitation of the location is that it may not capture all users of the park, particularly those in the southern, more densely vegetated area. However due to the 15-minute duration of the survey, it is anticipated that most users would be recorded as they traverse through the open space.

Inset 2: Wigmore Valley Park user count survey location



User Count Surveys – Recreational routes

2.2.9 Surveys of recreational routes (including some Public Rights of Way) have been undertaken at four sites to the east of the airport. The routes selected for user counts surveys are shown in **Inset 3** and are as follows:

- a. No. 1 - Kings Walden 043 footpath, which crosses the ridgeline of Winch Hill and connects Eaton Green Road and Winch Hill Road;
- b. No. 2 – Undesignated footpath within Wigmore Valley Park, which follows the eastern edge of the existing airfield and south east boundary of Wigmore Valley Park;
- c. No. 3 – Public footpaths FP29 and FP38 and public bridleways BW28 and BW37, which follow the mature hedgerow to the south east of Wigmore Valley Park and east of the airfield between Eaton Green Road and Winch Hill Road; and
- d. No. 4 - Kings Walden 052 public bridleway, which connects between Coleman’s Road (near Breachwood Green) and Eaton Green Road, and partially serves as a section of the Chiltern Way long distance footpath.

2.2.10 Surveys were undertaken at four locations shown on **Inset 3**. For each survey period, a weekday (7am-7pm) and weekend survey (8am-6pm) has been

undertaken. These survey times are in-keeping with industry standards for undertaking Public Rights of Way surveys.

- 2.2.11 Surveys have been undertaken throughout daylight hours, and each user was recorded traversing along the route. The mode of travel was recorded.

Inset 23: Recreational route user count survey locations



2.3 User Questionnaires

- 2.3.1 User questionnaires have been targeted at users of open spaces that will be directly affected by the Proposed Development. Wigmore Valley Park has therefore been selected as the location for user questionnaires.
- 2.3.2 The purpose of undertaking user questionnaires is to obtain more robust data and ascertain the sensitivity of community resources and receptors, and to understand the patterns of usage. Demographic data of users was also collected in order to inform the **Draft Equalities Impact Assessment**.
- 2.3.3 Usage patterns of open spaces can vary during the day, week and season. Therefore, a series of user questionnaires have been undertaken throughout 2019 to obtain a representative data sample of usage. User questionnaires

have been undertaken in parallel with user count surveys for Wigmore Valley Park.

2.3.4 The times and dates of surveys have been selected to include school term times, school holiday periods, weekdays and weekends. Surveys have been undertaken throughout the duration of daylight hours.

2.3.5 User questionnaires have aimed to avoid adverse weather conditions which may affect usage of open spaces. When weather conditions have been particularly poor, surveys have been postponed due to the likelihood that fewer people would be visiting the open space.

2.3.6 Users have been asked a series of questions designed to capture data on their demographic background, reasons for visiting Wigmore Valley Park, usage patterns and attitudes towards the airport in relation to their use of the open space.

2.3.7 A copy of the user questionnaire can be found in **Appendix 13.3**.

2.3.8 Limitations of the data are noted below:

- a. users under the age of 18 have not been surveyed;
- b. not all users of Wigmore Valley Park have been approached;
- c. users of Wigmore Valley Park undertaking exercise (running / cycling / football / skate park) have generally not been approached to avoid disturbance;
- d. some users approached have been unwilling to take part;
- e. some users have indicated that English is not their first language, therefore they were unable to take part; and
- f. families with children using the child play areas were generally not approached to avoid disturbance.

2.3.9 Full results from surveys undertaken are documented in **Appendix 13.2 Open Space Survey Results**.