

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

This summary considers comments grouped into themes which were made directly on the content of the draft management plan during public consultation carried out between 21 December 2015 and 5 February 2016. Where comments have been made which fall outside of this then they have not been included in the summary below. ALL comments (anonymised) can be viewed at www.testvalley.gov.uk/fishlake

Ref number	Comment made	Response/conclusion
1	MANAGEMENT (GENERAL COMMENTS)	
1.1	I would like to point out that in addition to the prolific orchids in compartment 1, there is another population of them towards the northern end of compartment 3 and the timing of grazing here may need to be adjusted to allow them to flower and seed	A detailed assessment of each compartment will be undertaken and a grazing regime most suitable agreed. An ongoing survey will be undertaken to ensure the regime is effective
1.2	I support the location of the 3 viewing platforms	Comment noted
2	ACCESS	
2.1	The complete length of Fishlake Meadows Road will require yellow line or no parking signs so visitors to the site have to use the proposed car parks	There is currently no requirement or evidence to suggest that such action would need to be undertaken. Comment will be shared with the local highway team
2.2	There should be pull in places on the main road for bus stops which will cater for local residents and others using public transport	A bus stop on Fishlake Meadows Road is available close to the site which allows travel from the main bus station
2.3	It would be also be necessary to make sure road users are aware that there is a 30mph limit from Cupernham Lane to the end of Fishlake Meadows Road	It is not anticipated that the management of the site as a nature reserve will increase the speed of traffic in the locations specified

2.4	Health and safety discussions should be held with the EA regarding the path alongside the Canal	A review of previous reports on the Condition of the canal and the tow path will be undertaken to establish any further works required. Consultation with the Environment Agency and Nature England will be required prior to improvements to access and in channel works can proceed
2.5	Page 9 refers to access and I think it should reflect the proximity to the residential areas in Romsey and its importance as one of the most readily accessible areas of countryside for many local residents. A few small improvements to the tow path would enable a much wider proportion of the population nearby to have good access to enable them to enjoy the wildlife and ecology of the local area	The value of access to the site has been acknowledged on page 13 point 2.2. Improvements to the surface of the canal tow path will be made to facilitate suitable access along this route and into the site.
2.6	The table on page 11 refers to Rights of Way. It should be noted that the barge canal tow path (FP10) does not connect to a footway at the far end of the Water Meadows but exits directly onto the A3057 where it is narrow and busy with a 50mph speed restriction. There is an aspiration to improve access from the north to the Water Meadows by providing a safe link from the tow path to the off road shared footway/cycleway through Timsbury which links to the Test Way	Comment noted but this is beyond the scope of this current management plan. Increasing public access on foot/cycle beyond Fishlake Meadows is considered in TVBC cycle strategy
2.7	It would be good to see that one of the operational objectives may be to improve access to and from the site as well as improving the access infrastructure within it. I appreciate this may be outside of the boundary of the water meadows themselves such as the car park on the housing	This will be an important element of the access assessment which will now be undertaken in the year one (page 19 operational objective - Improve access infrastructure)

	development off Fishlake Meadows and link to north described above, but it is an important aspect of ensuring the site can be accessed and enjoyed	
2.8	At this stage it is probably a case of acknowledging that potential use by cyclists should be considered when looking at improving the infrastructure within the site (as mentioned on page 22 part 7 of table)	Comment noted
2.9	In particular it is essential that for the public to accept restrictions that are necessary to preserve the wildlife interest that a good circular path is formed	Information will be made available onsite from the outset outlining why the site is important and where access is possible. A site warden will be present to engage with visitors
2.10	Proposals for public access show a complete lack of imagination. Public access is the main tangible benefit to the people of Romsey and must take priority. There should be circular walk around the entire perimeter of the site A firm commitment should be made and a plan provided showing this. This will save informal access into the site	The full access survey of the site has been brought forward to be completed by the end of year one. At this stage it is not possible to be more prescriptive as to location of further access routes as this work will involve ground surveys, may involve private land and will require various consents (including planning permission, Flood Defence Consent etc). It would be unwise to publicise a definitive route when we have no guarantee that it would be achievable
2.11	Boardwalks should be avoided due to cost	The lengths of boardwalks will be kept to a minimum unless no other suitable option exists
2.12	Wildlife has thrived because of the lack of public access (other than informal). My vote would be for minimal management and access should not be improved	Comment noted. The intention is to be facilitating public access into the site in balance with the need to protect the site's ecology. There is already informal access into the site which will need to be managed

2.13	We would like to see a commitment in the plan to physically establish and dedicate as a public right of way the missing link to join up footpath 502 to footpath 9.	The missing link is something that Hampshire County Council Countryside Service has been dealing with. The option for direct access into Fishlake Meadows from this route will be considered as part of the access survey which will now be undertaken in year one
2.14	We believe that the completion of the circular walking route and the maintenance of those paths for general recreation should be given equal weight and importance	Comment noted. In response to the comments made on access, in particular a circular route, the full survey of the site will be taken in year one.
2.15	We made our views known about our wish to have a path along the raised causeway from FP10 to the disused pump	Comment noted.
2.16	At no stage should access to any of Fishlake Meadows by pedestrians or wheelchairs (disabled access) be prohibited. We require to give the human race access to all areas to experience nature's flora and fauna	Physical access in to many parts of Fishlake Meadows will not be feasible as much of the site is underwater
2.17	Access to the central viewing point will be too far for many to walk. Additional access to the central viewing point should be made by boardwalk from the canal path	Comment noted. This will be included access assessment in year 1
2.18	Providing a hard surface on the towpath alongside the canal would be good especially in the winter months when it becomes extremely muddy	Improvements to the surface of the canal tow path will be delivered as part of the wider improvements to public access
2.19	Access also needs to be sensitively managed to ensure that it does not harm the wildlife and destroy the very experience people value so highly and I am pleased to see the plan's proposals for the area	Comment noted. Public access will need to be balanced with the requirement to appropriately manage the site
2.20	Fishlake Meadows should be made inclusive for a growing urban population providing walking, jogging and nature watching. It should also permit dog walking. A 2.5m all weather perimeter path should be provided to join up with	The access survey will be undertaken in year one. This work will inform the most appropriate location for access, the most suitable method of delivering this when considering the ground conditions and site

	access to the ear of Fishlake Cottage. Bins should be provided. A safe method of crossing the Fishlake Meadows road at the south west corner of the meadows to access the pavement will also be needed.	ecology. It is not possible to be prescriptive at this stage in the width of paths or material construction until further work is undertaken
3	WATERSPORTS	
3.1	There are 800 Scouts within the Romsey District. 10 th Romsey Scout group who have been using the footpath through Fishlake Meadows as part of the group's activities for a number of years. Fishlake would make a fantastic opportunity to as amenity kayaking. Currently we have to go outside the district to Eastleigh or Testwood.	<p>A full community programme to encourage groups and individuals to be involved with the management of Fishlake Meadows will be promoted. The site could be a valuable asset for the local scout groups with the opportunity to engage with activities to conserve the site, assist with access projects which could contribute to the various scout activity badges and Challenge Awards.</p> <p>Kayaking will not be promoted at this site on account of the likely disturbance.</p>
4	PARKING	
4.1	There is some confusion about parking at the northern end of the site. I believe this has misinterpreted the access point on the access map? Suggest this is clarified	A car park will be available at the southern end of the new development at Oxlease Farm.
4.2	It would also seem to be an appropriate time to try and negotiate use of world of waters car overflow car park by visitors to the reserve	Opportunities for further parking around the site will be explored once the freehold of the property is transferred
4.3	Have TVBC considered obtaining permission for provision of Sunday parking on the Belbin's Business park (Visitor park and walk)	See 4.2

4.4	Will the inner canal path be updated? At present it is very muddy and access points from neighbouring developments are often overgrown which is not ideal of residents	Yes. Improvements will be made to the surface of the canal tow path
5	CYCLING	
5.1	As the canal footpath is to be upgraded anyway surely it would be of greater environment benefit to take this opportunity to create a safe cycle route from Romsey along the Test Valley particularly to Mottisfont and other points north	In response to comments about public access the full access assessment to and within the site will be undertaken in year one. This will include access along the canal by bicycle
5.2	A continuous safe route from Lee Lane south of Romsey to the Plaza then along the canal to join up at Timsbury should be included in any future plans	Whilst the management plan deals with public access into and within the Fishlake Meadows it will not replace the existing strategies specifically written to deal with these wider access issues
5.3	Provision of cycle racks at suitable extremities is welcome	Comment noted
5.4	While I accept the canal towpath needs some remedial work doing it I am very much against it being made into a cycle path. The people who will lose out big time if this is done are walkers	Comment noted. See 5.1
6	EDUCATION	
6.1	Public access for quiet enjoyment and education is important.	Educational access will form an integral part of the management of the site and is a key operational objective (see page 19 Operational Objective - Develop the site for educational purposes)
6.2	Because of the importance of this area for a wide variety of wildlife, it is important that its value is not lost by a desire to open it up. It could become a valuable resource to educate young people. School visits could be encouraged by the	Managed public access will be made available in balance with the need to protect and manage the site for nature conservation. Educational access will form an important element to this and will be prompted

	provision of a pond dipping areas and carefully placed information boards	locally. (See page 19)
7	SITE SUPERVISION	
7.1	When everything is in place it is hoped that wardens will be employed to look after the whole site	A site warden will be employed to undertake day to day management and assist visitors with information about the site.
7.2	Wardening is needed to educate the public as to why there are some restrictions and help make the best use of the site	See 7.1
8	SPECIES	
8.1	Has the site been surveyed for clearing moths? Many nationally scarce moths live in exactly the same habitat as Fishlake. This may mean retaining certain trees, or creating more light for them. There are hard to find moths. The untouched nature of this wetland reserve would be perfect habitat	An audit of the current ecological survey work is currently being undertaken. Any will be included in a programme of resurvey
8.2	Several gaps in recording have been noted, particularly moths and amphibians	See point 8.1
9	DOG WALKING	
9.1	While it may be unavoidable to allow dog-walking on the proposed canal/perimeter footpaths I do hope the central path and hides can be dog-free	The intention is that dogs will not be permitted along the linear route into the site
9.2	Whilst I have no objections to dog walking along the public rights of way, clean up facilities will need to be provided as this is a constant problem along the section of the barge canal within the confines of the proposal. I fully agree that dogs should not be permitted along the permissive paths	See point 9.1. Bins will be provided at key access points into the site

	within the site to keep disturbance to a minimum (further comment made on suggested route)	
9.3	Allowing dogs on leads will also mean a big increase in dogs off leads. Only 10% of dog owners took any notice of the signs at Abbotswood stating dogs should be kept on a lead	A site warden will provide advice/assistance to those people who allow their dogs off leads. Signage will be provided to confirm what is permitted
9.4	I would be interested to know how you will propose to police the restrictions to dog walkers on the central path	See 9.3
9.5	Volunteer dog walkers who are wildlife friendly could act as ambassadors of good practice	Engaging with local dog walkers will be essential
9.6	Suitably located access points into the water (canal?) should be created to protect the remaining areas	Works along the canal will consider the need to include areas where access by dogs is permitted
9.7	I strongly believe that it should be compulsory for dogs to be on a lead when on the 2 footpaths for two reasons. It would protect wildlife especially birds and also prevent any worrying of cattle	Established use over many years along the current rights of way will be difficult to reverse. Control of any new access infrastructure will be required to avoid unnecessary disturbance
10	COMMUNICATION	
10.1	Social media should be used to publicise work and forthcoming events	Social media as well as more traditional forms of communication will be used to communicate the value of the site and encourage sustainable use
11	WATER LEVELS	
11.1	Many people seemed to fear that the reserve would somehow increase the likelihood of flooding in the adjacent Fishlake Meadows estate; i.e otters would have priority to people	It will be essential to communicate the message that this is not the case
11.2	Statement in 11.1, the EA sees no potential flood risk from Fishlake Meadows need further amplification. This is an incongruous statement given that in Feb 2014 the army were	The text in this part of the management plan has been reworded to reflect the association between the need to understand more about the sites hydrology

	deployed in response to sever flooding in Romsey to build a temporary structure to divert water from the overflowing Fishlake Meadows with the attendant threatened collapse of the weak bank on the western edge of the reserve	and to ensure appropriate management regimes are put in place. A hydrological study and water level management plan will be produced to understand fully the implications of site management
11.3	Fishlake Meadow is on a major flood plain which is vital and important for Romsey. Any development at Fishlake Meadows will materially reduce the valleys capabilities for water retention. Dredging is not the answer to flood threats. Holding back water so that it can slowly be absorbed by ground.	Assuming that development refers to the management of the nature reserve. The works planned will not materially change the sites ability to maintain water. A full understanding of how water enters and leaves the site will be undertaken (see page 19 specifically the operational objective “Develop an appropriate water management regime”). Periodic ditch management will be undertaken to ensure water is held onsite. No dredging has been suggested
11.4	In balance with nature conservation the site should be used as a flood plain to protect Romsey from flooding. If not already undertaken projections and modelling should be completed to establish and plan impact on the site from future increased flood risk	See point 11.3. A hydrological survey of the site will be undertaken in year one to gain a full understanding of the levels. The Environment Agency will be consulted at the outset of this work and the information / recommendation will be shared with them once completed
12	GENERAL COMMENTS ON PLAN	
12.1	The draft management plan is excellent. The shortness of this response is because there is nothing in the plan that I would wish to see changed and hope it will be adopted as currently written	
12.2	As a potential visitor to Fishlake I think it should be managed as a Wildlife Reserve with controlled access. It will be an ideal chance to manage the area as a flood plain to help	

	prevent flooding in Romsey, similar to Winnall Moor reserve in Winchester	
12.3	We were impressed with the draft plan and feel due consideration has been given to the need to keep the nature reserve flora and fauna protected whilst allowing controlled access to the public. We feel strongly that any excess and recreational use could be seriously detrimental to the rare habitats.	
12.4	We do not feel the plan fully meets the needs of the general public but serves the specialist users	
12.5	I think you have produced a splendid plan for the future of Fishlake Meadows which I fully support	
12.6	It is not entirely clear that the summary is not a summary of what is in the other document but contains additional material, particularly with regards to public access	
12.7	Highest priority is to ensure that the current diverse flora and fauna are fully protected and enhanced	
12.8	We welcome this document as a sound basis for safer guarding the future of the nature reserve conserving the unique assemblage of wildlife, particularly birds.	
12.9	It is necessarily written in a technical manner to address the interests of the various public bodies that will be involved and meet statutory requirements and at this stage is dealing with principles. Although the document is open to public comment it is unlikely that many people without knowledge of nature conservation will seek it out or appreciate why it is written in this format	
12.10	Getting the balance between competing views is comparable with trying to keep a spinning top in balance when the	

	rotation has stopped. Much patience and a long time are required. The plans is a good starting point but I would suggest that there is one person who is nominated to make key decisions after getting input from supporting organisations	
12.11	So far I have read only the summary management plan. What happened to the previous multi agency management plan to which there is no reference in the summary?	
12.12	I'm very pleased to see a very good plan that sensibly balances the essential support and enhancement of wildlife with the public access and recreation	
12.13	The draft management plan seems to be very detailed and appears a positive way forward. I know this is a 10 year plan but the Meadows will always need management to keep in good order so appreciate that continued funding will be important	
12.15	I would like the area to be preserved solely as a nature reserve. An area for children to play is not required as this will be detrimental to wildlife. It is not necessary to have a café or provide cycle paths	
12.16	Fishlake Meadows is an opportunity which should be grasped without hesitation, as it provides the chance to provide a much needed open space, natural environment leisure facility for walking and outdoor exercise which the town sorely needs	
12.17	The two document together give an excellent basis for the management of the site	